

The development of middle-class housing in Western
Sheffield during the 19th Century

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Abstract

This thesis considers the development of the western suburbs of Broomhill, Broomhall, Endcliffe and Ranmoor, which became the largest concentration of middle class housing for Sheffield during the nineteenth century. The primary source of data has been the deeds of a wide range the larger houses in the area. This has been supplemented by fieldwork to study individual houses and the suburbs as a whole. After an introduction indicating the scope of the research and the sources used, the main body of the work is divided into two broad sections. The first part describes the background to Sheffield's suburban development and then proceeds to the general trends of extra-urban settlement. The processes of such development are then dealt with under the headings of land availability and ownership, together with the involvement of architects, builders and prospective clients. This part of the thesis concludes with a survey of house styles, layout, technology and gardens. Subjects in the first part of the thesis are then illustrated by the second part of the thesis, which consists of case studies of the main suburbs that lie within the study area. Each suburb has been dealt with under the headings of location and topography, development, architecture and residents. In conclusion, Sheffield is considered in the context of general studies of middle-class suburban development and in relation to other provincial industrial cities, notably Glasgow, Birmingham, Nottingham and Newcastle. The thesis suggests that Sheffield developed suburbs to cater for its most prosperous citizens in a manner that followed the general pattern to be found in other large cities. However, as a result of the character of the inhabitants, as described in Chapter 2, the scale and style of building was quite distinctive.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Scope of the research

Although the title of this thesis refers to “middle -class housing” the term is used as little as possible in the text to describe the residents of the suburbs, and then only in McCord’s sense of a ‘convenient social shorthand’¹. The term has been avoided partly because the exact definition of “middle-class” has been the subject of so much inconclusive debate that it cannot be used precisely. It is so nebulous and open to so many interpretations: “middle class” may evoke anything from Pooter of “The Laurels”, Brickfield Terrace² to the grandest of the Forsytes.³ However, an attempt has been made to follow Daunton’s suggestion that evidence should always be interpreted in the light of contemporary culture and society.⁴ Accordingly, it seemed more appropriate to use terms current during the nineteenth century as being more likely to reflect the way in which the inhabitants saw themselves. Contemporary records would appear to indicate that those who came to occupy the houses described in this study rarely regarded themselves as members of a middle class. References were more likely to be made to the “respectable classes” as a label which newspaper correspondents were likely to apply to themselves and their friends. In the latter part of the century newspaper reporters, in the sycophantic style of the time, referred to ‘the merchant princes’ who built ‘opulent’ houses on the western fringes of the town.⁵ Residents do not appear to have referred to themselves in such terms and, with the possible exception of John Brown, did not seek ‘opulent’ houses. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Hunter published a book of genealogies of what he called ‘*minorum gentium*’ or ‘the lesser gentry’, which contained many of the families who will be mentioned as early ground landlords of western Sheffield.⁶ Hunter, as was common in the town at that period, used the term ‘gentleman’ loosely, to mean one who had earned sufficient to be able to give up employment, rather than in the sense in which authors such as Jane Austen used it. ‘The respectable, prosperous or property-owning classes’ were expressions regularly used in Sheffield newspapers to describe the successful manufacturers and merchants who provided the town with its civic and industrial leaders, and who were to populate the new western suburbs. Leader chose to refer to the most successful of his fellow citizens as those members of ‘the industrious classes’ who rose to be regarded as ‘first rank among his fellows’ and eventually to join ‘families of superior station’ who ‘sat on their own land’.⁷ He did concede that as the century proceeded Sheffield produced a crop of ‘modern manufacturing nabobs’.⁸ Houses were described as ‘first-class’, suitable for ‘genteel families’ or ‘of a respectable class’ in advertisements. Newspapers regularly carried advertisements that were suitable for ‘capitalists’ and this does not seem to carry any

¹ McCord, N. *North-East England* B.T.Batsford, 1979. p. 16

² Grossmith, G. and W. *The diary of a nobody*. Bradbury and Agnew, 1892

³ Galsworthy, J. *The Forsyte saga*. William Heinemann Ltd., 1906

⁴ Daunton, M. J. *House and home in the Victorian city*. Edward Arnold, 1983

⁵ For example, *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 14th August, 1975

⁶ Hunter, J. *Familiae minorum gentium*. 5 volumes. Harleian Society. 1895

⁷ Leader, R.E. *Sheffield in the eighteenth century*. Sheffield. The Sheffield Independent Press Ltd., 1901. p.6

⁸ *Ibid.*

pejorative overtones. Modern historical studies, such as the recent history of the Sheffield Club frequently use the word 'elite'⁹ but this term does not seem to have been commonly used in nineteenth century Sheffield. Sheffield's richest inhabitants, especially at the end of the century, when the wealth of steel makers, such as the Vickers family, was very great, were also resolutely independent and unlikely to accept categorisation as 'elite'. Whenever a collective phrase is required to describe the residents of western Sheffield, as far as possible, one of contemporary usage, such as the selection mentioned above, will be found.

In geographical terms the location of 'western Sheffield' is taken to lie broadly within the oblong shown on Map 2. At the eastern edge is Broomhill, the site of the first substantial development of houses for the prosperous when Sheffield began to recover from the trade depression that followed the Napoleonic Wars. The western boundary is formed by the various Ranmoor Land Societies, which were established in the last quarter of the century. By the final decade of the century, their network of roads was sparsely lined with houses, indicating that the limit had been reached of stimulating a market for housing for the middle classes in this region. The area studied covers some six square miles stretching from approximately three-quarters of a mile to four miles west from the town centre along the north bank of the Porter. This development took place mainly in Ecclesall Bierlow, the township adjoining the township of Sheffield in the west, with some later extension into Nether Hallam and Upper Hallam. These formed part of the old parish of Sheffield, which was incorporated into the new borough of Sheffield in 1843. During the course of the nineteenth century the progression westward spread to the newly built areas of Broomhill, Broomhall, Endcliffe, the Endcliffe, Tapton and Ranmoor complex and, finally, the Ranmoor Land Societies.

In considering housing development within these geographical boundaries emphasis has been placed on those houses and schemes which gave the area its high reputation. It is hoped to demonstrate how such a reputation was achieved and how it was maintained even when Broomhill came to have a plebeian core and even Broomhall came to include quite modest houses. As a rule of thumb, a detached villa set on a quarter-acre site has been taken to represent the lowest level of housing upon which western Sheffield's reputation was built. From this base the apex was Endcliffe Hall. To understand why houses were built at a particular time, in a particular style and cost it has been necessary to look at the character and financial state of the occupants.

The most common occupation for the residents of the best parts of western Sheffield given in contemporary directories is 'merchant and manufacturer'. This is singularly unhelpful as there is no indication of what commodity was involved and the scale of the operation can be estimated only from what an individual was able to expend on housing. However, it is clear that the time at which a house was built, and its expense, was largely governed by the state of Sheffield's economy. The increased prosperity of the light trades led to the building of Kenwood and Abbeydale outside the town but it was the wealth of the burgeoning heavy trades that led to the building of the largest houses, mainly in the 1860s. These were to form the highest level of housing in western Sheffield.

⁹ White, A. P. *Formation and development of middle-class urban culture and politics: Sheffield 1825-1880*/ Ph.D. Thesis University of Leeds, 1990.

The study of such housing in this thesis is a response to a request for more research on middle-class housing made by Simpson and Lloyd, the editors of *Middle-class housing*,¹⁰ in 1977, who pointed out that very little research had been done on middle-class housing. Today, twenty years later, the emphasis still seems to be on working-class housing and few comprehensive studies of middle-class housing have been made.

Such neglect appears to be unfortunate for several reasons. Slum clearance carried out by local authorities in the course of the twentieth century and bomb damage during the Second World War has removed large areas of Victorian housing for the poor. However, much of the housing intended for the upper parts of the middle-class, being solidly built and often located in areas not targeted in bombing raids, still stands, even if in adapted form. As a result, a large proportion of surviving Victorian building stock consists of middle-class housing. This allows the layout, architecture and even interior design to be studied at first hand. Later owners have often obliterated original internal features, both in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, all houses have been viewed with an awareness of the need for caution when making attributions and, whenever possible, expert guidance has been obtained before dating questionable features. Apart from architectural interest, the housing of the more affluent residents of a town, although catering for a minority, was created for a group with an influence on its economic and social life which far exceeded their numbers. As a result, their chosen life style is very relevant to understanding the history of any town.

Finally, there is the important element of choice: the working class, like the poor, has housing imposed upon them. In the early part of the nineteenth century choice was restricted to whatever speculative builders felt able to build and let at an affordable rate. Later, charitable organizations such as the Peabody Trust, provided what they considered to be the best designed living accommodation that could be built for an affordable rent. When local authorities took responsibility for housing the poor cost was still the ultimate factor governing the type of provision. Councils wished to provide pleasant and healthy living accommodation, but this had to be within a price range which the council could fund and then be rented at a level which potential residents could afford. For the affluent members of society the style, extent and location of accommodation were only limited by the amount of disposable income that they felt able and willing to allocate for the purpose.

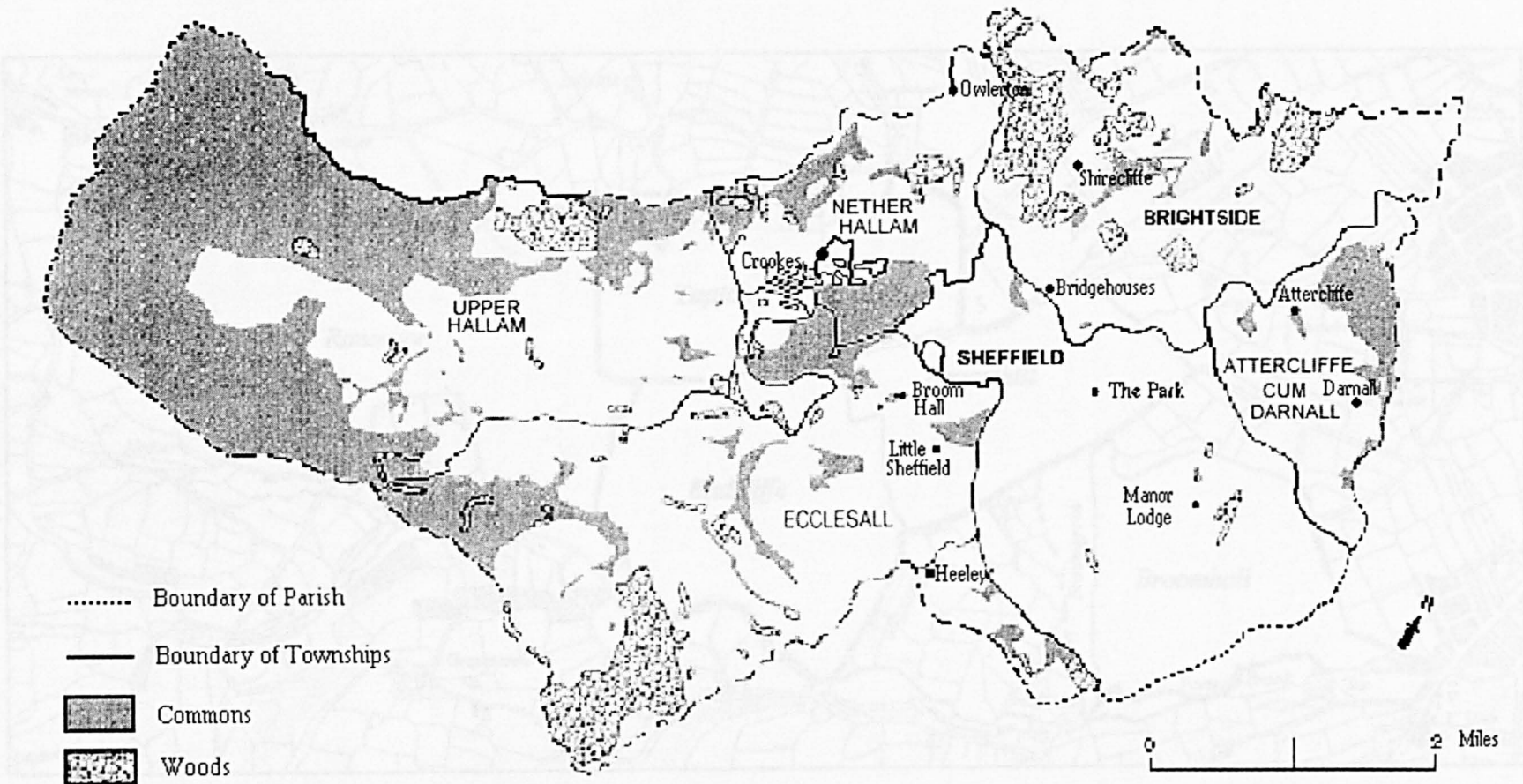
A reading of Simpson's thesis¹¹ on the West End of Glasgow suggested that a similar wide-ranging study could be made of the western suburbs of Sheffield. Simpson attempted not only an account of how and why the West End of Glasgow was built, but also a social profile of its inhabitants and an indication of their life-style. This study of Sheffield will deal with those residents of the town during the nineteenth century who, by virtue of income, had the widest choice open to them. To some extent the western suburbs of Sheffield represent the prosperity of the town in bricks and mortar. They show the taste and aspirations of those best able to have the optimum life-style available at that time and place. Studies of housing of the poor and the working class reveal the living standards of those who laboured in Sheffield's staple trades¹².

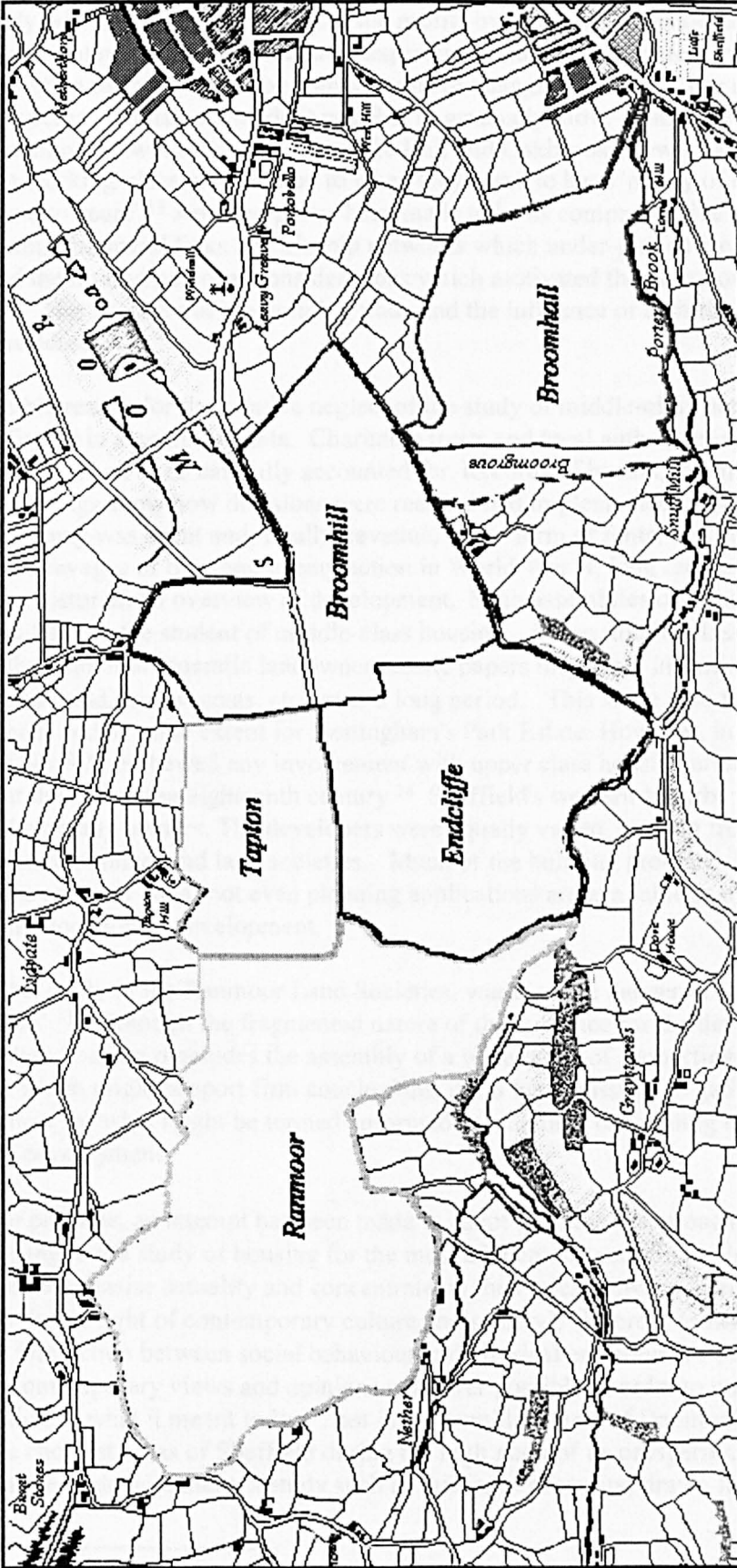
¹⁰ Simpson, M. A. and Lloyd, T. H. *Middle-class housing in Britain*. Newton Abbott: David and Charles, 1977. *Preface*

¹¹ Simpson, M.A. *Middle-class housing and the growth of suburban community in the West End of Glasgow, 1830-1914*. B.Litt. Thesis. University of Glasgow, 1970.

¹² For example, Pollard & Holmes, eds. *Essays in the economic and social history of South Yorkshire*. 1976.

Map 1: The Parish of Sheffield with Township boundaries





Map 2: Outline map of the study area

This study will explore the spending of the profits by those who considered themselves the creators of whatever prosperity the town experienced during the nineteenth century. Social mobility within the classes can be seen in terms of changing domicile. For a fortunate minority success in business made it possible to gradually move from the enforced environment of the working class. Endcliffe Hall and Oakbrook show what type of accommodation working-class men aspired to when they came to have 'plenty of money, money enough and to spare'.¹³ An attempt has been made to be as comprehensive as possible, investigating the social links and kinship networks which under-pinned the changes in land usage and the myriad personal considerations which motivated the house owners and occupiers. The structure of the building trade and the influence of architects have also been considered.

One possible reason for the relative neglect of the study of middle-class housing is the great difficulty in assembling data. Charitable trusts and local authorities spent public money and that had to be carefully accounted for. Records of housing committees and council meetings show how decisions were reached and implemented, accounts show how and why money was spent and, finally, revenue, in the form of rents, was collected. Despite the ravages of time and enemy action in World War II, long ranges of data survive to give the historian an overview of development. Such assemblies of information are rarely available to the student of middle-class housing. When middle-class suburbs were built on the land of aristocratic landowners estate papers may yield information on decisions to build, leases, costs, etc., over a long period. This is the case for Edgbaston, Birmingham and to some extent for Nottingham's Park Estate. However, in Sheffield, the Dukes of Norfolk eschewed any involvement with upper class housing after an abortive scheme at the end of the eighteenth century.¹⁴ Sheffield's western suburbs were built on land held by many owners. The developers were equally varied, ranging from individuals to speculative builders and land societies. Much of the building pre-dates local planning regulations so, until 1864, not even planning applications are available as a rough guide to the rate and location of development.

Ling, in his study of the Ranmoor Land Societies, warns of the danger of 'ignorance based speculation'.¹⁵ Although the fragmented nature of the evidence for the development of middle-class housing precludes the assembly of a wide range of supporting statistical evidence which might support firm conclusions, it has been possible to gather sufficient data to allow for what might be termed 'informed speculation' concerning many aspects of suburban development.

Wherever possible, an attempt has been made to adapt Daunton's approach¹⁶ to working class housing to the study of housing for the most affluent. According to his guidelines, this should emphasise actuality and concentrate on the typical, always interpreting the evidence 'in the light of contemporary culture and society'. In order to illuminate 'The complex interaction between social behaviour and physical environment', the aim will be to quote contemporary views and opinions wherever possible in order to convey 'an appreciation of what it meant to live', not in the humble streets of Daunton's study, but rather the choicest areas of Sheffield during the high noon of its prosperity. Given the varied nature of development, a study such as this is, of necessity, drawn from fragmented

¹³ Browning, R. *Poetical works*. Edinburgh: W.P.Nimmo, Hay and Mitchell, (n.d.) (Up at a villa – down in the city p.592)

¹⁴ Olson, D.J. *House upon house*, in: Dyos & Woolf *Victorian city*. p.333-358

¹⁵ Ling, M.C. *The Freehold Land Societies*. M.A. Thesis, University of Sheffield, 1975. p.83.

¹⁶ Daunton, M.J. *House and home in the Victorian city*. Edward Arnold, 1983

sources. Such evidence is often dismissed out of hand as merely 'anecdotal'. However, in his thesis on the development of Edgbaston, David Cannadine comments that, "*Although much of the detail in this narrative is seemingly trivial, it is necessary in order to establish precisely the undulating course of the estate's development.*"¹⁷ By drawing on a wide variety of small sources of evidence, it is hoped that a reasonably comprehensive view of the development of Sheffield's western suburbs has been achieved.

To a great extent the historian is source-led and sources are as unpredictable as a coal seam in fractured strata: large seams of data appear unexpectedly and then dwindle to nothing just as abruptly. Accordingly, subjects one might wish to pursue are not dealt with because no material was traceable and, conversely, certain areas are dealt with comprehensively because a large amount of material has survived. Although the availability or dearth of material on certain aspects of this study may skew the emphasis on certain topics it does not detract from the overall structure.

1.2 Review of the literature on middle-class housing

1.2.1 Introduction - General surveys

'Housing has been a long-standing preoccupation of urban elites – and of urban historians' remarked the reviewer of 1987's crop of periodicals in *Urban History Yearbook*.¹⁸ However, a survey of the literature seems to indicate that emphasis has been laid upon working-class concerns rather than those of the middle-class.

The birth of urban history in Great Britain is usually dated as the Leicester Conference of 1966. In his introduction to the published proceedings of the conference¹⁹, Professor Briggs commented that the historian of a city 'must also be a historian... of families, businesses, social and political movement, buildings, and of culture and styles.'²⁰ He also noted that:

*There is a particular urgency behind urban studies in this country just because of the speed of the progress of urban transformation... The visual dimension of urban studies is so important that it is remarkable how often it has been neglected.*²¹

He recommended the use of 'maps, plans, pictures and photographs' as well as 'more analytical sociological approaches' and saw the future of the discipline aided 'with the help of camera and computer'. Finally he expressed the conviction 'that there is not one valid approach to urban history but many, and that different kinds of historian are needed just as different kinds of technique or insight'. Stating his own preference

...for the kind of urban history which is placed in a bigger and perhaps sturdier historical framework, the kind of social history which ignores neither politics nor ideas and relates forms and styles to facts and figures,

¹⁷ Cannadine, D. *The aristocracy and the towns in the nineteenth century, a case study of the Calthorpes and Birmingham 1807-1910*. (D Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1975)

¹⁸ *Urban History Yearbook*. University of Leicester, 1987.

¹⁹ Dyos, H.J., ed. *The study of urban history*. Arnold, 1968

²⁰ Briggs, A. Foreword, in: Dyos. *Study of urban history* p. vi

²¹ *Ibid*, p. vii

he indicated what he deemed to be 'of central importance to research'.²²

He believed that there was much to be said for approaching the problems both of the history of individual cities and of urbanisation in the terms in which contemporaries approached them. Thus, when talking of social categories:

...to begin by looking at the categories contemporaries used themselves rather than by superimposing upon them our own more sophisticated categories, and to go on to examine and to evaluate social argument, with all its limitations in which contemporaries indulged. This process is the very reverse of seeking 'a time dimension' for our own problems and points of view. Likewise, in bringing to bear quantitative evidence, much of it unknown to contemporaries, it is valuable to seek to understand what they made or did not make of quantitative evidence. Through this line of entry which entails total immersion in reports, periodicals and newspapers, there can be a recovery of the sense of immediacy - at times even of the sense of shock which is essential in recreation of the past as the achievement of a sense of perspective.²³

The collection of papers for which Professor Briggs provided the introduction was 'the first symposium of its kind to be held in Britain'. Attendance was by invitation and included most of the names that were to loom large for the next decades. Papers covered sources such as the census enumerators' returns and town plans as well as the application of technology, as in the computer analysis of census data. The approach of geographers was represented by Conzen²⁴ and that of architects by Jones²⁵, in addition to those of political, social and economic historians. No paper was concerned directly with middle-class housing but Reeder's 'A theatre of suburbs' described the patterns of development of Western London in the nineteenth century and pointed to the need 'to define more precisely the movements of London's elites and their imitators'. He concluded that 'suburbia has many complexities'.²⁶

In his concluding paper 'Towards a definition of urban history', Professor Checkland warned against 'judging their performance against ideal, and so false, criteria'. Speaking of research in his own department at Glasgow he commented, 'The middle-class has rather fascinated us, Michael Simpson has been looking at the rise of the West End of Glasgow' and that, in general, the approach of the members of the department could be said to be 'positivistic and pragmatic'²⁷.

After this concerted attack on the problems of what might be called 'what and whither urban history', the next seminal work was *The Victorian City* edited by Dyos and Wolff

²² Ibid, p. ix

²³ Ibid, p. x

²⁴ Conzen, M.R.G. The use of town plans in the study of urban history, in: Dyos. *Study of urban history*. pp. 113-130

²⁵ Jones, F.M. The aesthetic of the nineteenth-century industrial town, in: Dyos. *Study of urban history*. pp. 171-182

²⁶ Reeder, D.A. A theatre of the suburbs: some patterns of development in West London, in: Dyos. *Study of urban history*. p. 271

²⁷ Checkland, S.G. Towards a definition of urban history, in: Dyos. *Study of urban history*. p. 360

and published in 1973²⁸. Although emphasis was on London, and the problems of the capital are not directly comparable with those of provincial cities, the essay on 'Slums and suburbs' by Dyos and Reeder²⁹ does have some pertinent remarks on the building of suburbs and the possible connection with the development of slum property. It seeks 'to look at some of the ways in which their individual characteristics were mutually delimited' and is 'concerned chiefly with economic forces because we believe that, apart from the multiplication of the population, these were most fundamental'. As a result, the emphasis is mainly upon the effect of the flow of capital on building. In Volume II, Olsen's chapter, 'House upon house', compares estate development in London and Sheffield. However, in comparing land owned by Eton College with Norfolk land he points out that 'Eton College developed Chalcots as an exclusively middle-class residential suburb; the Norfolk Estate had an overwhelmingly working-class and industrial character.' As a result Olsen's work has little relevance to a study of middle-class housing in Sheffield.

A further major compilation in the field was *The pursuit of urban history* edited by Fraser and Sutcliffe (1983)³⁰. This reflects the interests of urban historians in the eighties. Like *The study of urban history* it includes contributions from other disciplines such as P. Burke's 'Urban history and urban anthropology of early modern Europe'³¹. A Marxist view is given in Morris's 'The middle-class and British towns and cities of the Industrial Revolution'³². 'The architecture of public and private life - English middle-class society in a provincial town 1780-1850' by Davidoff and Hall³³ concentrates on the changing role of women, and Crossick in 'Urban society and the petty bourgeoisie in nineteenth century Britain'³⁴ considers a sub-stratum which is examined in more detail in a book which he edited in 1977 entitled *The lower middle-class in Britain 1870-1914*.³⁵

Apart from the 'triple pillars' of the world of urban history mentioned earlier the main source of information on the field is *Urban History Yearbook*. This chronicles publications and research, casting its net widely. Each edition contains conference reports as well as reviews of recent periodical articles, theses and books together with a bibliography of books on urban history. All of these sections aim for international coverage wherever possible. Keynote articles are also printed which reflect areas of special interest. The 1987 edition³⁶ had three important articles concerned with the middle-class: 'Studying the middle-class in nineteenth century urban Britain', divided into 'Perspectives, sources and methodology in a comparative study of the middle-class in nineteenth century Leicester and Peterborough', 'Record linkage and the exploration of nineteenth century social groups' and 'Division and cohesion in the nineteenth century middle-class'. Although indicating

²⁸ Dyos, H.J. & Wolff, M., eds. *The Victorian City*. 2 vols. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973.

²⁹ Dyos, H.J. & Reeder, D.A. "Slums and suburbs", in: Dyos & Wolff. *The Victorian City*. vol. 2 pp. 359-388

³⁰ Fraser, D. & Sutcliffe, A. *The pursuit of urban history*. Arnold, 1983.

³¹ Burke, P. Urban history and urban anthropology in Early Modern Europe, in: Fraser & Sutcliffe. *Pursuit of urban history*. pp. 151-168

³² Morris, R.J. The middle-class and British towns and cities of the Industrial Revolution, in: Fraser & Sutcliffe. *Pursuit of urban history*. pp. 287-306

³³ Davidoff, L. & Hall, C. The architecture of public and private life - English middle-class society in a provincial town, 1780-1850, in: Fraser & Sutcliffe. *Pursuit of urban history*. pp. 363-381

³⁴ Crossick, G. Urban society and the petty bourgeoisie in Nineteenth Century Britain, in: Fraser & Sutcliffe, *Pursuit of urban history*. pp. 307-329

³⁵ Crossick, G. *The lower middle-class in Britain, 1870-1914*. Croom-Helm, 1977.

³⁶ *Urban History Yearbook*, 1987.

interest in the middle-class none of the items has any direct bearing on the actual built environment of any 'middle-class', however the various authors interpret this term.

In 1992 publication became twice yearly under the name *Urban History*. The editor took the opportunity to assess the aims and objects of the discipline. The coverage remained as comprehensive as that of its predecessor.

1.2.2 *Studies of middle-class housing*

Background Studies. In *House and home in a Victorian city* Daunton surveyed working-class housing from 1850 to 1914 but some of his remarks seem to have equal relevance to the study of other types of housing. He observed that, although working-class housing as a topic has not been neglected,

*Nevertheless, much of what has been written has been marred by an inadequacy of approach. The bulk of the literature has considered policy rather than actuality; it has concentrated on the pathological rather than the typical... The result is that little is as yet known about the manner in which most people were housed in the cities of Victorian and Edwardian Britain.*³⁷

Daunton also points out the weaknesses of the approach of various disciplines to the question of housing: 'The nature of the urban environment has been studied from a number of directions, but the result has not been altogether satisfactory.'³⁸ His main criticism of historical geographers was that their extensive studies of social segregation have 'a starting point that is all too often a desire to establish whether a given town fits the competing generalized descriptions of American cities in the literature of urban geography'. This he contrasts with the need for the nature of physical form to 'be interpreted in the light of contemporary culture and society'³⁹.

Historians of town planning are also condemned for having 'an internal, linear and Whiggish account' of the development of sewage, building codes and finally comprehensive planning without considering 'how the activities of the planners and their precursors related to the social and economic structure of the period'.⁴⁰ He approved of Swenarton's view that 'historians have dealt with politics, society and the economy but have ignored everything else.' Similarly, he approved of the approach of anthropologists and behavioural scientists to the urban environment, which illuminates 'The complex interaction between social behaviour and the physical environment.'⁴¹

Daunton saw his task as answering the question, 'What was it like to live in this 'monotony of order' which constituted working-class housing'. A study of Sheffield's middle-class housing could seek to explore the variety available to a class whose choice was only limited by the proportion of disposable income which it was willing to devote to housing. Thus, like Daunton, it would be possible to arrive at 'an appreciation of what it meant to live in the streets during this unique phases of urban development.'

³⁷ Daunton. *House and home*. p. 1

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 2

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 2

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 6

Each edition of *Urban History Yearbook* bears witness to the abiding interest in what constitute the middle-class and the sub-strata within such a class. McCord, in *North East England*, suggested that much of this concern may be misplaced. He accepted that,

*It would make the historian's task much easier if we could use class terminology with reasonable levels of precision... In practice such an approach is fraught with many serious difficulties.*⁴²

As a result he suggested that class can best be used 'as a convenient social shorthand'. In general he believed that,

*On the whole the evidence suggests that any very comprehensive and continuous co-operation on the basis of a major social class has been abnormal and unusual rather than a typical situation.*⁴³

Concerning the so-called 'middle-class virtues' he pointed out that,

*Thrift, hard work and respectability have been attributes much valued by many workers, while they have not been unknown among the country's aristocracy.*⁴⁴

Certainly, working-class readers coming to many works of sociology and social history are surprised to find that attitudes common in their home environment appear to have been pre-empted to the middle-class. Perhaps it is only the limited circulation of such works amongst the working class that has allowed this misapprehension to go unchallenged so often. McCord concludes that,

*...it is better to avoid the misleading precision of class terminology and to accept that diversity and complexity of behaviour at all social levels has been the norm.*⁴⁵

Like Daunton he criticised emphasis on 'the pathological rather than the typical' and draws attention to the fact that 'the evolution of modern British society must contain very significant elements of success and achievement'. He suggested that emphasis on 'the darker aspects' is partly the result of the nature of the sources: Royal Commissions are not appointed 'to investigate the continuance of normality', whilst 'unusual and untypical events tend to be meat and drink to the press'. In addition 'political and ideological controversy' have affected some historians for he contended that 'It would probably be fair to say that the holding of strong political opinions is more common among modern historians than it is in society in general.' Finally he recommended the adopting of 'a spirit of healthy scepticism in approaching much recent writing' as,

It may well be that no other historical context [than modern British history] has suffered more from the unthinking use of our modern ideas

⁴² McCord. *North-East England*. p. 16

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 16

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 17

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 18

and beliefs about society as a yardstick by which to judge the affairs of a past which was in many ways very different. ⁴⁶

1.2.3 City Studies.

Simpson, the student mentioned by Professor Checkland above, completed his thesis *Middle-class housing and the growth of suburban communities in the West End of Glasgow, 1830-1914*⁴⁷ in 1970. His aim had been 'to show by what process a suburb was developed'. This was to include 'the economic and social activities and attitudes through out the period' and his net was thrown widely to include everything from cultural values and social attitudes to the organisation of households and the amenities with which they provided themselves. Being a realist he noted that 'The choice of topics to be studied in depth has been much conditioned by the availability of source material'.⁴⁸ His comment that 'middle-class housing and suburban life have so far been given little attention' remains true.⁴⁹

In 1977 Simpson and Lloyd, edited *Middle-class housing in Britain*⁵⁰ and the introduction draws attention 'to the unjust and increasingly disturbing neglect of a major topic in modern social and cultural history'. Their hope was that, 'If this collection of essays opens the door to more systematic and comprehensive studies of the history of middle-class housing by students of the several related disciplines it will have served its purpose.'⁵¹ The collection included chapters on a number of towns including Sheffield, Nottingham and Hampstead as well as Glasgow. The approach to each town varied considerably according to the viewpoint of the author.

Unfortunately, this seminal work has yet to bear much fruit and there seems to be considerable scope for studying this aspect of individual towns. Some chapters, although emphasising other aspects of urban life, contain material that can be used to draw comparisons with Sheffield's suburbs.

Although the information on Nottingham's main middle-class suburb, 'The Park', contained in the chapter in *Middle-class housing*⁵² is brief, more information was contained in a survey of the work of its leading architect, Thomas Chambers Hine⁵³. A further article on another Nottingham architect, Watson Fothergill⁵⁴, also contained information on the creation of the Park Estate.

*Tyneside classical*⁵⁵ concerns the creation of a planned town centre in Newcastle in the first half of the nineteenth century. Housing was only part of this great scheme but there is enough information to indicate the type of housing offered to Newcastle's affluent citizens.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 19

⁴⁷ Simpson. *Middle class housing* p. iii.

⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 1

⁴⁹ Ibid. p. iii

⁵⁰ Simpson & Lloyd. *Middle-class housing in Britain*.

⁵¹ Ibid., Preface.

⁵² Ibid., pp. 153-169

⁵³ Brand, K. *Thomas Chambers Hine: an architect of Victorian Nottingham*. 2nd ed. Nottingham: Nottingham Civic Society, [1989?]

⁵⁴ Brand, K. *Watson Fothergill: architect*. Nottingham: Nottingham Civic Society, 1981.

⁵⁵ Wilkes, I. & Dodds, G. *Tyneside classical*. John Murray, 1964.

Cannadine's *The aristocracy and the towns*⁵⁶, as its title implies, deals with urban development as an aspect of aristocratic estate management. This case study deals with Edgbaston, sometimes referred to as 'the Belgravia or "West End"' of Birmingham. From time to time, Broomhill and other suburbs have been referred to as the Edgbaston of Sheffield, so comparisons can be made.

1.2.4 *Sheffield Studies*

Although there is no study of Western Sheffield that parallels Simpson's account of the West End of Glasgow, the area has been the subject of a number of studies of varying depth and extent. An early account of Sheffield's suburban development, much quoted by later writers, is a chapter entitled 'Saving the suburbs' in Stainton's *The making of Sheffield, 1865-1914*⁵⁷. Stainton was a journalist rather than an historian, but his account is of special interest because, writing in 1924, he was able to talk to old inhabitants of the town and to draw upon his personal knowledge. The sub-title of the chapter, 'How the Land Societies helped in a great work', indicates the main theme.

More recently, a noted local historian, Mary Walton, brought out three pamphlets that deal with the parishes of Sharrow⁵⁸, St. Peter's Abbeydale⁵⁹, and St. Bartholomew's Highfield⁶⁰. Based on a very extensive knowledge of early land ownership in this area, these works give a useful introduction to the development of the land and the often convoluted relationships between landowners. These pamphlets are of special interest as they deal with the area bought by George Wostenholm, a pioneer in the development of Sheffield's suburbs and also in the use of Land Societies for this purpose.

One of the first studies by a non-Sheffield resident was Olsen's paper 'House upon house'⁶¹, which appeared in Volume II of *The Victorian City*. In this, he compared estate development in London and Sheffield. It is clear that he had a low opinion of Victorian housing, be it for workers or the middle-class. However, he considered that the Norfolk Estate in Sheffield, like the Eton Estate at Chalcots to which he compared it, to be a telling example because by 'the unremarkable quality of the management and the indifferent nature of the results', they are like 'second-rate books which often have more to tell the intellectual historian than do masterpieces'. Sheffield comes in for harsh strictures:

*Nor can Victorian Sheffield, either those parts owned by the Duke of Norfolk, or elsewhere, be easily described as other than a blot on an otherwise magnificent landscape.*⁶²

Olsen points out that, 'Sheffield was a wealthy town, but not one whose wealth was of the sort to encourage good architecture or urban design'⁶³. Further, it 'never was, and

⁵⁶ Cannadine. *Aristocracy and the towns*.

⁵⁷ Stainton, J.H. *The making of Sheffield, 1865-1914*. E. Weston & Sons, 1924. pp. 180-223

⁵⁸ Walton, M. *A history of the parish of Sharrow, Sheffield*. [Printed by Greenups], 1976.

⁵⁹ Walton, M. & Mettam, G.R. *A history of the Parish of St. Peter, Abbeydale, Sheffield*. [Printed by Greenups]. 1972.

⁶⁰ Walton, M. *A history of the Parish of St. Bartholomew, Sheffield*. [Printed by Greenups], 1976.

⁶¹ Olsen, D. J. 'House upon house', in: Dyos & Woolf. *The Victorian City*. Vol. 2 pp. 333-358

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 337

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 341

probably never could have become, a place where people of wealth, leisure and taste would willingly congregate'⁶⁴. He considered that, 'The flight to the suburbs and beyond was an early and understandable phenomenon for all who could afford the move'⁶⁵.

Olsen's work was mainly concerned with the unsuccessful attempt to develop Alsop Fields as a residential area at the end of the eighteenth century and the building of working class housing in the Park area. One item of relevance to the present study, when taken in conjunction with development in western Sheffield, is an incident concerning Albert Sorby, who planned to build Park Grange. In 1835 his brother wrote to Michael Ellison, the Duke of Norfolk's agent, complaining that an unusually restrictive clause had been placed in the lease and could not be agreed to 'in case he should... be driven away by the nuisances which surround him'⁶⁶. It is noted by Olsen that the houses erected on this part of the estate in the 1830s and 1840s were, 'by far the most pretentious ever built on the estate'. Apart from the reference to Park Grange, Olsen's work did not shed any light on the development of middle-class housing in Sheffield.

Essays on the economic and social history of South Yorkshire (Pollard and Holmes, 1976⁶⁷) included a piece by Doe on 'Some developments in middle-class housing in Sheffield 1830-1875'⁶⁸ which was balanced by Gaskell's 'Sheffield City Council and the development of suburban areas prior to World War I'⁶⁹. Dr. Doe's all too brief essay touches on the various middle-class enclaves of the city to indicate that, 'the foundations of important social, political and architectural changes in the housing field lie in the extension of middle-class suburbs.'⁷⁰

In the following year, Simpson and Lloyd's *Middle-class housing in Britain* included a chapter on Sheffield by Professor Tarn⁷¹. Taking Buck's 'The East Prospect of Sheffield' engraved in 1740 as his starting point, he sketches the development that gradually clothed the hillsides with substantial houses, concluding that, for the Western suburbs, the unique topography had been matched by the buildings.

As the three items above were parts of collections, the treatment of the subject was, of necessity, brief. However, a number of theses have considered some aspects of Sheffield housing in greater depth. Gill's, '*Til we have built Jerusalem*'⁷² is sub-titled, *A study of the correlation between social thought and physical planning in Britain during the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries*. Its range in both space and time was wide and some interesting points are made, especially the failure of yet another aristocratic town plan when Earl Fitzwilliam's design for the Bright Street area proved to be unworkable in 1819.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 343

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 343

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 343

⁶⁷ Pollard & Holmes, eds. *Essays in the economic and social history of South Yorkshire*. 1976.

⁶⁸ Doe, V.S. 'Some developments in middle-class housing in Sheffield, 1830-1875, in: Pollard & Holmes *Economic and social history of South Yorkshire*, pp. 174-186

⁶⁹ Gaskell, S.M. 'Sheffield City Council and the development of suburban areas prior to World War I', in: Pollard & Holmes *Economic and social history of South Yorkshire*, pp. 187-203

⁷⁰ Doe "Some developments...", p. 174

⁷¹ Tarn, J.N. 'Sheffield', in: Simpson & Lloyd, *Middle class housing*, pp. 170-213

⁷² Gill, R. '*Til we have built Jerusalem*'. Ph.D. Thesis. University of Sheffield, 1960.

In 1979 Passmore's thesis, *The mid-Victorian mosaic: studies in functional differentiation and community development in three urban areas, 1841-71*⁷³, compared Sheffield with Leeds and the Potteries, but the study was confined to working class housing. The Sheffield areas covered (Garden Street, Attercliffe Road and the St. Paul's district) are remote in distance and style from the Western suburbs.

Ling's *Freehold Land Societies: their contribution to the development of Sheffield 1850-1905*⁷⁴, brought the view of a town planner to the field and his conclusions concerning the aims and achievements of the Land Societies and also the motivation of the major land holding residents of the period make a very useful contribution to any further study that includes the area.

Another thesis, Caulton's *The tentacles of slumdom: a case study of housing and urban structure in Sheffield 1870-1914*⁷⁵, although also submitted in the Department of Town and Regional Planning, gave a comprehensive account of the areas studied. There is an emphasis on the planning aspect, which had little effect on the mainstream of middle-class development, and also on the effect of improved transport, which again was not as crucial to the location of middle-class housing as it was for worker housing. Earlier, Caulton had contributed one of the papers in *Urban development and planning in Sheffield since the beginning of the industrial era*⁷⁶, which offered guidelines for an approach to the investigation of the urban structure of Sheffield. Such guidelines could usefully be applied to any investigation of the city's middle-class housing.

P.J. Nunn's thesis, *Management of some South Yorkshire estates in the Nineteenth Century*⁷⁷ includes a discussion of Sheffield as an example of aristocratic estate management. Treating the Norfolk estate in some detail, the author confirms that the Dukes of Norfolk had, from the latter part of the eighteenth century, withdrawn from Western Sheffield. No evidence is provided for the choice of this course of action. Whilst Nunn provides some useful background information on the actions of Sheffield's largest landowner, the nature of the thesis excludes any reference to middle-class housing.

In 1990 A.P. White completed a thesis on, *Formation and development of middle-class urban culture and politics: Sheffield 1825-1880*⁷⁸. This concentrates upon an urban elite as represented by the members of the Sheffield Club. Although not directly related to housing, it does shed light on one of the many circles that linked the inhabitants of Sheffield's largest houses.

1993 saw the publication of the three-volume centennial history of Sheffield⁷⁹, advertised as the 'definitive' history of the city. This work certainly fills a long-felt gap in gathering together the latest views on many aspects of Sheffield life. Covering a broad canvas, the

⁷³ Passmore, R. *The mid-Victorian mosaic*. Ph.D. Thesis. University of Sheffield, 1975.

⁷⁴ Ling. *The freehold land societies*.

⁷⁵ Caulton, T.J. *The tentacles of slumdom*. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Sheffield, 1980.

⁷⁶ Caulton, T.J. 'Development of working-class housing in Sheffield since the industrial era: an attempt to outline some possible areas of research, in: Naslas, M. *Urban development and planning in Sheffield since the beginning of the industrial era*. University of Sheffield, Department of Town and Regional Planning, pp. 15-27

⁷⁷ Nunn, P.J. *Management of some South Yorkshire landed estates in the Nineteenth Century*. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Sheffield, 1983.

⁷⁸ White, A.P. *Formation and development of middle-class urban culture and politics: Sheffield 1825-1880*. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Leeds, 1990.

⁷⁹ *The history of the city of Sheffield 1843-1993*. 3 vols. Sheffield Academic Press, 1993.

contributors had little space for references to the middle-classes and their living habits so only a few pages in the chapter on architecture are relevant to this study.

In 1996 N. Flavell completed his thesis on, *The economic development of Sheffield and the growth of the town c1740-c1820*. Although the period covered by this thesis ends before the main period of western suburban expansion, it includes valuable background information concerning the nature of the town at the beginning of the nineteenth century and the manner in which the citizens of Sheffield began to accumulate the wealth which enabled them to contemplate the expense of suburban living. Flavell's chapter on early speculative builders and the materials and methods they used indicates the nature of the trade and its building tradition at an early period, establishing a useful foundation from which to consider the manner in which the trade developed to meet the need to construct residential areas.

This survey of the existing work on either urban history or the history of Sheffield reveals two main points. First, apart from Simpson's thesis on the West End of Glasgow, there does not appear to be any other comprehensive research to which a study of Sheffield's Western suburbs could be directly compared. However, studies such as Cannadine on Edgbaston⁸⁰, *Tyneside classical*⁸¹, and the various short studies^{82 83 84} of Nottingham's Park Estate do provide sources from which a framework of comparison can be constructed. Secondly, theses concerned with Sheffield itself are mainly concerned with aspects of the city's life far removed from the field of middle-class housing. Despite this, it is often possible to extrapolate information to show the background against which the western suburbs were created and the influences which shaped them.

Whilst this thesis draws on the expertise of local writers such as Ling, Caulton, and Flavell, the guiding principles of Simpson, Dauntton and McCord have been adopted in formulating a multi-disciplined approach to the development of Sheffield's middle-class housing. This survey of existing literature would seem to demonstrate that there is scope for such a study.

1.3 Sources

This thesis is, of necessity, shaped by the available sources. Each of the major sources will be considered in turn, noting their strengths and weaknesses. They form ten groups.

1. Deeds
2. Maps
3. Directories
4. Newspapers
5. Census returns
6. Local Authority records
7. Archives in private hands
8. Pictorial material
9. Field work
10. Supplementary sources

⁸⁰ Cannadine, D. *The aristocracy and the towns*. Leicester University Press, 1986.

⁸¹ Wilkes & Dodds. *Tyneside classical*.

⁸² Edwards, K.C. 'Nottingham', in: Simpson & Lloyd. *Middle class housing*, pp. 153-169

⁸³ Brand. *Thomas Chambers Hine...*

⁸⁴ Brand. *Watson Fothergill...*

1.3.1 Deeds

In addition to sources which are widely used for the study of urban history, both in Sheffield and other areas, it has been possible to draw on a category of material which, so far as can be ascertained, has not been used extensively in previous research, i.e., deed packets.

The Registry of Deeds at Wakefield contains memorials of deeds of property in the West Riding from 1704-1970. However, it was decided that, wherever possible, an alternative approach would be adopted, that is, to seek access to the deeds themselves. A large proportion of the properties to be studied is now in the hands of public bodies: the University of Sheffield, Sheffield Hallam University, the Area Health Authority and the Local Authority itself. All these bodies have kindly given access to their deeds as have smaller land owners such as Sheffield High School for Girls and Birkdale School, as well as private individuals. The advantage of this approach is that, whereas the memorial of a deed only gives basic information on a specific transaction, deed packets often become a catchall for a wide range of miscellaneous items that have accrued over the centuries. These may include birth, marriage and death certificates, wills, and cases for litigation, land society records, letters, sale catalogues and a wide range of maps and sketches. Such items provide information on the development of land in the area, the cost of development and the names and motives of developers, thus yielding valuable data for the study of the economic and social conditions in which building took place. This rich collection of original sources underpins this thesis. A direct approach to the present owners of the property to be studied has had several unexpected benefits. One comes into contact with officials and solicitors who often have a wide knowledge of specific buildings and the area in which they stand. Such people often suggest extra sources of information and provide introductions to both occupiers and other official bodies. Having established contact with solicitors, architects and local government officials, some were often willing to offer advice and suggest further sources of information. Some private owners have been willing to give access to property and, in the case of old established families, have records and correspondence relating to the house and its owners.

It is difficult to give a meaningful indication of the deeds seen, either by listing the land or the houses covered by individual deeds. Deed packets are usually manila folders approximately 36x24cm, closed by red tape. The number of deed packets for a single property can vary from one to up to six for a very complex history. The number of packets does not necessarily depend on the size of house or plot of land but rather complications concerning transactions or family history. The range of contents can be illustrated by the contrast between the deeds of the Botanical Gardens and those of Oakholme, now Crewe Hall, a hall of residence of the University of Sheffield.

The land for the Botanical Gardens was bought by a group of speculators in 1834 and the institution had a chequered history for the remainder of the century. However, all this information had to be gathered from other sources as the deed consists of a single sheet which states that the Town Trustees will allow the Sheffield City Council to have the use of the land for a peppercorn rent. No information as to the title of the Town Trustees or their predecessors as owners of the land is given.

In contrast, the deeds for Oakholme amount to six bulging folders filled to splitting point and only held together by red tape. Of the many hundreds of houses for which deeds have been seen Oakholme is the most comprehensive. The house only dates from 1828, but the owner was an attorney who was involved with his neighbours in two court cases over water

rights. The pleas for both cases are included in the deeds. Burbeary, the owner, described how he selected the site and prepared it for building. In support of his own title he included a copy of the title of the entire Broomhall Estate (of which his land had originally been a very small part), dating back to the 16th century. He assembled testimony from old inhabitants of the area to describe the area at the time of the Ecclesall Enclosure Award of 1788 and also subsequent changes. Other witnesses testified to the lifestyle of his neighbours and his servants testified to the domestic processes for which water was used. The written evidence was supported by a number of maps, some hand coloured, showing the various houses in some detail, general views of about 20 acres of Broomhill and a sketch plan of the water supply of the neighbourhood.

These deeds contain a wealth of detail concerning topography and social life as well as the development of an estate in the course of the nineteenth century. Most deeds lie between the two extremes described. By piecing together evidence from many sources it has been possible to trace the sale of the Norfolk and Gell lands, which was the first stage in the development of the western suburbs. Subsequent developments, whether the piece-meal style of Broomhill, the planned building of Broomhall and the Ranmoor Land Societies or the mansions of Endcliffe and Tapton, have all been traced by their deeds, giving an unusually comprehensive view of the little explored subject of middle-class housing.

Having emphasised that the wide variety of land or development which can be found in the deeds of a single property a very rough indication of the scope of deed research can be given by the following figures:

Number of properties for which deeds have been seen

Sheffield Area Health Authority	54
Birkdale School	5
Sheffield City Council	416
Sheffield Girls High School	8
Sheffield Hallam University	39
Sheffield Territorial	2
Sheffield University	117
Trent Regional Health Authority	1
Total	642

1.3.2 Maps

Maps are the essential basis for a study of this kind in order to establish the spatial relationship of the various developments and their changing position in relation to the urban centre of Sheffield. The Library and Department of Geography of the University of Sheffield, the terriers of Sheffield City Council, the collections of the city 's museums, art galleries and libraries as well as the map collection of the British Museum have been checked for relevant maps and plans.

Maps have been supplemented by estate plans, township rating plans and sketches of individual land holdings produced by various members of the Fairbank family, the town 's leading surveyors for the early part of the century. Deed packets have also provided plans for building schemes such as the Endcliffe Building Company and the Ranmoor Land Societies.

The shortcomings of the information that can be derived from the maps are, first, that only Fairbank's map of 1795 and the O.S. map, surveyed in 1890 and published in 1893, cover the whole area studied; secondly, only the O.S. map surveyed in 1851 and published in 1853, together with that of 1890 give house by house detail; thirdly, there is no early contour map for the whole area to give a clear view of the terrain before building began, and finally, information drawn from other sources has indicated that some early town maps, especially White's 1841, give a general rather than precise location for new building and so must be used with caution.

1.3.3 Directories

A few directories of Sheffield were published in the eighteenth century but they rarely distinguish between the location of place of business and any private residence. During the nineteenth century directories of Sheffield were published from 1821 at approximately ten-year intervals for the remainder of the century. Early directories provide rather sparse information, giving only an alphabetical list of names and a classified list of occupations for the township of Sheffield. Gradually other townships were included and from 1841 an alphabetical list of streets and their inhabitants make it easier to chart suburban development. As the century progressed, directory introductions stopped giving emphasis to the town's early history and concentrated on its amenities. In the course of the century an increasing number of firms placed advertisements in directories. Such advertisements give a broad indication of the growing range of facilities available to the residents of the town.

Some of the problems of directory information include the fact that the numbering of suburban streets only took place in the latter part of the century and, even then, it can be erratic. Accordingly, tracing the exact location of new houses can be difficult. Furthermore, information on the townships of Nether and Upper Hallam can be patchy. Farmers are often excluded and directories are often slow to pick up new building on the western edges. Finally, strict accuracy cannot be assumed in directory entries so, if possible, information gained from them has been cross-checked.

1.3.4 Newspapers

Sheffield had one or more newspapers throughout the nineteenth century, the *Iris* and *Sheffield Mercury* at the beginning of the century and later the *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* and the *Daily Telegraph*. These have been studied for:

1. advertisements for land/houses/domestic technology. Although the information included in such advertisements varies, they can indicate the time at which property came on the market, the cost of land, the rent of houses, builders, developers and house owners, as well as other persons connected with the housing market.
2. advertisements for money available for investment. These indicate the sums readily available, mainly from sources within the town but also from other places. Such advertisements are also an indication of the involvement of local solicitors as intermediaries.
3. contemporary views of the state of trade in the town and of its social and political life. This is not only useful in providing the background against which

suburban development took place, but also provides relevant information on the individuals connected with development either as consumers or providers. Such information can indicate their place in local society together with business or social links and even their financial standing.

Newspapers are, however, an imperfect source of even local information since, especially in the early part of the century, they tended to devote most of their space to national and international events. As Sheffield was a small town the editors possibly felt that most of their readers had already heard of local news by word of mouth and so they did not need to devote their precious space for such matters. In the early decades of the century editors also seem to have felt that they should be very careful of appearing partisan on all but the most worthy or bland of local issues. The two periods of imprisonment served by Montgomery, the editor of the *Iris*, after reporting social unrest in the town, may well have reinforced this inclination to be circumspect. Finally, newspapers, then as now, emphasise the pathological. Information on conflict and crime is readily available but it is more difficult to find comprehensive information concerning the normal activities of any level of society.

1.3.5 *Census*

From 1841 the Enumerators returns for the Census give, household by household, the name, relationship to the head of household, sex, marital status, occupation, age, rounded down to the nearest five for those above the age of fifteen, and nationality of each resident. From 1851 this was extended to give place of birth and the exact age of each person was given. It was also intended that employers should give the number and sex of their employees.

The Census Enumerators' returns from 1841 to 1891 are a useful source for a range of information, including the changing nature of an area over time and the occupations which were yielding profits to fund the various levels of housing in western Sheffield, together with changing family circumstances which influenced choice of accommodation.

However, although the entries appear to have a high rate of accuracy the user must be aware of the possibility that errors can occur from the slip of a pen or the mis-hearing of a name or place. This is most likely for the birthplace of those originating in areas with a strong regional accent to which the Enumerator was unaccustomed. Furthermore, where newly developed areas met, there may be omissions owing to misunderstanding of the exact borders to be covered. Usually this is relatively unimportant, but it can leave an unfortunate gap when a key large house has been omitted. Again, in developing areas without firmly established street names or house numbers it can be difficult to establish the routes taken by the enumerator. Confusion can also occur as the route taken can vary from census to census.

A minor disadvantage can be the handwriting of an Enumerator, which can make some entries a matter of interpretation rather than actual reading, and, finally, recording the work force of an employer is erratic, though the reason for this is not known. It may be the result of the unwillingness of families to reveal such matters to a stranger. This delicacy may also account for the masking of bastardy by attributing a child to its grandmother, rather than to an unmarried daughter, even though it is clear that, had

motherhood occurred at such an advanced age, the matter would have found a place in record books.

The prosperous residents of western Sheffield fall broadly into Classes I and II of the census returns but this cannot be used as a measure of affluence. For instance, an attorney would fall into Class I but it is not possible to distinguish between the impecunious beginner and a leader in the field.

1.3.6 Local Authority records

These include a wide range from many departments. Rate books, census returns and collections of local material found in the Archives and Local Studies Departments have been supplemented by the maps, indexes, council minutes and miscellaneous items held in the Conveyancing and Land and Planning Departments.

1.3.7 Archives in private hands

Wilson Papers: Business and family papers are held at Sharrow Snuff Mill, where the family has lived and traded since the middle of the eighteenth century. Account books, deeds, maps, letters, family scrapbooks are only some of a wide range of items which have been accumulated over two centuries. Survival of individual items seems to have been entirely a matter of chance, so the information is very patchy. However, the Wilsons were great land buyers in the early part of the nineteenth century so there is useful information on the extent, cost and use of their land. This is especially useful as the family was not governed by the vagaries of the town's staple trades and so their actions are a counterpoint to that of most of their fellow-townsmen. Family diaries and scrapbooks cast light on social life in the second half of the nineteenth century, as the Wilsons were always part of the main kinship networks in Sheffield. As two members of the family are still associated with the Mill, it has been possible to draw upon their recollections and contacts to extend the information available in written form. Finally, almost all the houses either built or inhabited by the family are still standing to provide a useful case study of social mobility over two centuries expressed in bricks and mortar.

Wilson (of Broomhead) Letters: This Wilson family, distantly connected by marriage to the family mentioned above, were land owners and solicitors in the Sheffield area at the beginning of the nineteenth century. A number of letters sent to them by various relatives in other towns have survived and are in the possession of a descendant of the family. Unfortunately, none of those sent by the Sheffield family themselves have been found. However, inferences can be drawn of the life style of Sheffield's wealthy lawyers and landowners.

The main importance of both of these sources is for insight into the social structure of Sheffield life, a topic upon which very little primary material is available.

1.3.8 Pictorial material

The layout of estates, architectural style and house design are best conveyed by graphic means rather than words.

1. *Paintings and sketches*: Sheffield's museums and art galleries contain many examples of Sheffield in the nineteenth century. Although such records are by no means comprehensive, they give a broad indication of the nature of the suburbs and examples of individual houses.

2. *Photographs*: these are relatively rare for the more exclusive suburbs. Most of those available are undated but appear to have been taken at the end of the nineteenth century or the early part of the twentieth. Whenever possible, photographs of houses since demolished, such as Five Oaks on Glossop Road, have been compared with the large scale O.S. maps of 1851 and 1890 to see if any changes to the outline, such as porches or bay windows, had taken place. As much of the housing stock is still standing, it has been possible to take photographs of houses of special interest.

3. *Ground plans*: sale catalogues drawn from a variety of sources often give enough information to enable a ground plan to be constructed. Public bodies and individual owners are amazingly tolerant of a total stranger asking to wander through their property with tape-measure and camera, so it has been possible to make a number of "on-site" sketches.

1.3.9 *Field work*

1. Not being a native of Sheffield, I felt it necessary to become thoroughly acquainted with the western suburbs so virtually the whole area that forms the subject of this thesis has been thoroughly explored on foot. Sites of special interest have been visited more frequently and photographs taken. This exploration of 'shapes on the ground' made it possible to appreciate the way in which terrain influenced development and to compare the relative ease or difficulty of access to a given area. Such exploration high-lighted the architectural styles which found favour, and allowed comparison to be made of the work of various builders and architects, where known, and to become aware of the way in which elevation and distance from town effect climate. Access from town and features likely to make a site more or less desirable for building purposes were noted. After the suburbs in this study had been thoroughly explored on foot the existing terrain was compared with early maps and descriptions of the area.

2. Permission has been obtained from the relevant owners to make an internal examination of the three 'great houses' in the area in order to make notes of internal architectural features, dimensions, layout and traces of early domestic technology. Visits to property owned by the University of Sheffield were often taken with the guidance of members of the estates and garden maintenance departments. The staff of Sheffield Hallam University and the Area Health Authority gave similar help. All of these employees were willing to give their professional opinion on the fabric of the buildings and the way in which they had been altered over time.

3. Similar developments such as Edgbaston, Birmingham and The Park at Nottingham have been visited and photographed in order to compare layout and architectural style with that of Sheffield.

As a result of this fieldwork it has been possible to come to know the area of study thoroughly both in documents and on the ground. Lacking comprehensive studies on any aspect of the built environment of the western suburbs to act as a foundation which a researcher might take as a starting point, personal exploration of area and of hitherto unused documents connected with it have formed the basis for much of this study. The visits to Nottingham and Birmingham have made it possible to put this knowledge in the context of contemporary development of a similar nature in other towns.

1.3.10 Supplementary sources

In order to make this study as wide-ranging as possible, in the manner advocated by Simpson and Daunton, a number of specialists from other fields have been interviewed. Advice was sought on aspects of associated fields that might be applicable to this study and reading lists obtained for obtaining further information. The names and range of expertise of the various specialists consulted will be found under 'Acknowledgements'.

Chapter 2

Background to Sheffield's suburban development

2.1 Introduction

The growth of the western suburbs needs to be seen against an outline of Sheffield itself for the rate of growth, and the extent of such growth, was governed by the state of the town's economy. Also, the size and style of houses reflected standards that had been engendered in the town and the terrain of the parish of Sheffield determined the location. This chapter gives a general overview of the topography, economic development and social structure of the town. Each aspect will be expanded in the case studies of individual suburbs.

2.2 Topography: a general overview of the western terrain.

The author of a twentieth-century survey of Sheffield was of the opinion that 'The natural conformation of the ground upon which the City of Sheffield is built has been at once the origin of its prosperity and the prime determinant factor of its growth.'¹ In the vicinity of Sheffield were to be found iron ore, coal-measure sandstone for making grindstones, limestone for flux, extensive woods to provide charcoal, many streams of a suitable size with a steady flow of water to supply water power for grinding and a topography which allowed the early form of furnaces to be built in places that benefited from natural draughts. The survey concludes that 'Rarely has a primary community found itself so little dependent on outside aid for its raw materials and energy.'²

The site of this fortunate coming together of natural resources was centrally located, being almost equidistant from the east and west coasts and approximately half-way between London and Edinburgh. However, the hills and rushing streams which helped to make Sheffield ideal for metal workers deterred the road, and later the railway, builder and the main North-South lines of communication tended to skirt the town some distance to the east. The disadvantage of the lack of direct land routes was compounded by the fact that Sheffield did not have a navigable river.

During the early period the problem of communication was not serious, as the first main Sheffield product was to be knives and they were relatively small and light, as well as not being susceptible to damage, so the town's output could be sent out by packhorse. By the eighteenth century some of the natural resources were failing: dwindling supplies of wood for charcoal were replaced locally by exploiting the coal found in the area, but the exhaustion of iron necessitated importing ore from Sweden. This need to transport a heavy product led to increasing pressure to improve water-borne access to the town. By 1751 Sheffield's largest river, the Don, was made navigable to Tinsley, only three miles away. Finally, in 1819 a canal was constructed from Tinsley to Sheffield so that goods could be transported directly from the town to the coast.

The nature of the terrain also determined the site of the steel industry, which dominated Sheffield's economy in the second half of the nineteenth century. Transport of heavy raw

¹ Abercrombie, L.P. & Mattocks, R.H. *Sheffield: a civic survey*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1924. p. 1.

² *Ibid.* p. 7

materials and transport for the resulting heavy goods required access to both the canal and the railway. Rail transport, beginning with the Sheffield-Rotherham railway of 1837, followed the river valleys and the banks of the Don provided the only large areas of flat land in the town, which were needed for the extensive plant needed for steel production.

Besides determining the site for industry the landscape also shaped housing development. Workers needed to be housed close to the factories, so, increasingly as the century progressed, working-class housing was concentrated to the east of the town. The more prosperous could move to the west, which was kept relatively free of pollution by the prevailing winds. Housing tended to hug the main roads and road patterns were determined by the hills and river valleys, so the main lines of access to western Sheffield were by Ecclesall Road, running along the banks of the Porter, and Glossop Road giving access to Broomhall, then Fulwood Road and eventually leading to the most distant outposts. The hilly nature and generally higher altitude of the exposed land at the extreme western edge of this area resulted in a colder climate, which may have discouraged residential settlement.

Thus the development of Sheffield and its adjoining townships was affected by two main influences: the hills which surround the area and the rivers cutting through the hills. The hills and rivers determine the location of all local roads so that they radiate from the centre of the town, either following the streams along the valley floors or along ridge-ways over the hills. According to Abercrombie, '...there are few English cities that show anything comparable to Sheffield's range within the municipal boundary from 1500 feet to 90 feet, in a line almost due west to east.'³ This rise to the west was to have a considerable influence on housing development in the nineteenth century. Potential colonists of the land west of the town had to consider accessibility in terms not only of distance but also of altitude.

The mixture of rivers and hills resulted in what Abercrombie described as 'zoning by natural selection'⁴. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Sheffield's cutlery industry was of two kinds. The use of waterpower led to the spread of small workshops close to the many wheels on the various rivers. In the centre of the town workshops and houses were mixed indiscriminately, with the majority of cutlers living in houses attached to their works. Cutlery workshops, even the premises of the few large firms, covered a comparatively small area, as did the early steelworks concentrated in the town. The great expansion of the steel industry in the mid-nineteenth century required large flat sites, which were only to be found on the fields to the east of the town.

According to Hunter's lyrical description Sheffield has 'five rivers, like the fingers of the hand, flung from dark mountains.'⁵ Besides influencing the location of roads and industry, this combination of rivers and hills made for attractive scenery which produced favourable comments from both visitors and local writers. Apart from the practical influence of the mixture of rivers and hills both visitors and local writers noted the attractive scenery which surrounded the town. In 1833 White noted the 'abrupt declivities, the gentle sloping banks and the boldly swelling hills which rise in picturesque disorder near the conflux of the rivers Don and Sheaf'⁶. Similar attractions, away from the smoke of the town and the new steel works to the east, were to draw residents to the Western suburbs.

³ Ibid. p. 1.

⁴ Ibid. p. 13

⁵ Hunter, J. *Hallamshire*. Ed. by A. Gatty. Sheffield: Pawson & Brailsford, 1869, p. 3

⁶ White, W. *History and general directory of the Borough of Sheffield*. Sheffield, 1833. p. 1

2.3 Economic development

The prosperity of Sheffield had been based on what came to be known locally as the 'light trades'. Pollard⁷ divides these into:

1. goods made from iron and steel; cutlery, joiners' tools, saws, skates, agricultural implements, fenders, pins and needles, etc.
2. silver, silver plate and allied trades
3. ancillary trades; handles, cabinet cases etc.

All of these trades, except those involving silver, had the advantage that a skilled man could set up in business with very little capital. This led to a large number of 'little mesters' (the local term for small independent artisans). The disadvantage was that the trades brought in small profits.

Writing in 1814 T. A. Ward asserted that, 'A plum [i.e. £100,000] is not my ambition. Besides, who in Sheffield ever became rich by trade? It is said that several have by saving their little profit.'⁸ Those who made the most profit did so by factoring and steel making, then sometimes trying to expand into banking. This was a high-risk strategy, for the first two families to attempt it, the Broadbents and the Roebucks, soon became bankrupt. The men cited by Ward as possibly having become rich by trade were all associated with silver-plating. As outlined in Flavell's study,⁹ this trade, based on a discovery by a local man in the 1740s, demanded a higher level of investment to set up in business but yielded a proportionately high level of return.

During the course of the nineteenth century Sheffield's cutlery trade increased considerably. Pollard¹⁰ concluded that there was a rapid expansion of the 'light trades' in the first half of the nineteenth century. This continued to the mid-1860s, reaching a peak for most branches as they dominated the international market. By the 1870s mounting tariffs and foreign competition limited Sheffield's trade but even by the end of the century, the light trades formed a significant part of Sheffield's economy.

Before considering the economic state of the town in the nineteenth century as portrayed in the local newspapers and twentieth-century economic histories of the period, it should be noted that the experience of individuals in the group under consideration could run contrary to the general trend.

During the early years of the century the newspapers continually referred to the depressed state of trade and the resulting hardship, not only for workmen, but also for employers struggling to pay wages and increased poor rates as their trade diminished. Certainly a number of deeds for property such as Endcliffe Hall and Brunswick House bear witness to land changing hands because cutlers and silver-platers of quite high standing had been driven to bankruptcy. In contrast, John Rimington, the attorney, wrote to his wife concerning his own finances. He lamented the distress in the town yet mentioned that the

⁷ Pollard, S. *A history of labour in Sheffield*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1959. p. 50

⁸ Ward, T.A. *Peeps into the past*. Sheffield & London: Sir W.C. Leng & Co. Ltd. 1909. p.212

⁹ Flavell, N.

¹⁰ Pollard. *History of labour*. p.125

profit from one of his ventures would be sufficient to pay for the new coach which he had ordered in London. At the same time he had been able to buy the Hillsborough estate and was in the course of refurbishing the house and garden at some expense.¹¹

Attorneys, as a group, were probably better placed than most to weather financial storms. The most successful members of the profession in the town, such as Wake and Watson, were able to afford substantial houses on the hills overlooking the town. The sight of the stable prosperity of members of the legal profession, in contrast to the vagaries of trade, may have been more of an incentive for Sheffield's manufacturers to educate their sons for a profession than the wish to enhance family status. T.A. Ward cites a number of the town's leading inhabitants who were able to improve their already large houses during difficult financial times¹² and the members of the kinship network who could afford to buy most of the Norfolk and Gell land in the Broomhill and Broomhall area obviously were not too seriously affected by trade problems¹³. The majority of this group was manufacturers. The exceptions were John Watson, the attorney, and the Wilson brothers who made snuff.

The landownership of the Wilson family and its place in the social life of the town will be referred to in Chapter 4 but here they provide an example of an occupation outside the staple trades of the town. Snuff and associated tobacco products provide a small luxury, which was one of the last things that even the poorest were willing to forego, so the Wilsons, like purveyors of alcohol, had a relatively steady income whatever the state of trade in the town. Their changing use of surplus capital in the course of the nineteenth century illustrates the growth of the number of options available.¹⁴ At the beginning of the century their capital was almost entirely invested in land. As the century progressed they retained much of their land but began to invest in the increasing variety of stocks and shares available in the town. Their investments were so prudently made that by the 1840s they had more capital to invest than could be readily deployed in the town. By mid-century one of the brothers was drawing an annual income of some £20,000 a year, mainly from national or international share investments.

Although the overall pattern was of growth the trade of the town was marked by frequent spells of depression and these became more prolonged after 1874. To judge by local newspaper comments the town seemed to be more conscious of the depressions than of the main trend of prosperity. The nineteenth century began badly, as the town, like the rest of the country, suffered from the trade restrictions resulting from the Napoleonic Wars. Newspapers frequently reported action taken to relieve the suffering caused by lack of work and the high price of provisions.¹⁵ By 1820 the town was still suffering from post-war depression and T. A. Ward¹⁶ recorded a meeting held to discuss 'the distress of the trades of Sheffield', adding that, 'we suffer as the rest of the country does'. In February of 1826 the Master Cutler called a public meeting concerning rumours questioning the soundness of local banks. A further crash was avoided. By the following month commerce in the West Riding generally was said to be still unfavourable but at the end of the year trade was said to be improving and 'bodes well for 1827'¹⁷.

¹¹ Rimington, J. [Letter] [Wilson (of Broomhead) family correspondence in private hands.]

¹² Ward, T.A. *Peeps*. p. 187

¹³ See Chapter 5.

¹⁴ Chaytor, M. *The Wilsons of Sharrow: the snuff-makers of Sheffield*. Sheffield: J.W. Northend Ltd., 1962.

¹⁵ For example, *The Iris*, 1st January, 1800

¹⁶ Ward. *Peeps*. p. 264

¹⁷ *Sheffield Mercury*, 25th February, 1826

The 1830s were also difficult and in January 1838 a combination of trade depression and bad weather made it necessary to raise a public subscription to alleviate the distress of the poor. Even in 1841 the editor of the local directory looked back to 'the great commercial panic of 1837, which was brought about chiefly by the over-speculation of the three previous years, and the baneful effects of which, Sheffield like other manufacturing towns of this kingdom, has not yet recovered.' The decade ended with a raise in the poor rate for 1846-9, 'owing to the depression of trade'. Despite such times of distress some men prospered. During the decade it was possible to find local investors for projects such as the Botanical Gardens, the General Cemetery and the Collegiate and Wesleyan schools.

The second half of the century brought more optimism. The Sheffield Independent's editorial greeting the New Year in 1853 was of the opinion that 'the last two years that have elapsed... have doubled the prosperity of the country'¹⁸. Sheffield had undoubtedly shared in this prosperity. For the town, the great change in the middle decades of the century was the rapid growth of the steel industry. Modest family firms such as those of Brown and Firth, begun in the 1840s, had grown to concerns numbering employees in thousands in establishments covering many acres to the east of the town.¹⁹ Pollard was of the opinion that Sheffield rode the trade swings of the light trades easily²⁰, though this may be more apparent in retrospect than in the experience. In the second half of the century the relatively mild ebbs and flows of the light trades were of less importance to the town than the peaks and troughs of the steel industry.

Even so, circumstances could still change quite rapidly. According to the Sheffield Independent in January 1859 'The year 1857 opened with brilliant promise of commercial prosperity and closed with commercial paralysis. The year 1858 opened with distrust and difficulty but, in a trading sense, has surpassed expectations... Have we not, then, every ground to look forward to the coming year as one of prosperity.'²¹ The situation might partly be a matter of perspective rather than fact as, in the same edition an auctioneer, a regular advertiser, took space to give 'Mr. Rowland Ward's Annual Address to his friends'²². In it he lamented 'The year 1858 has been one of unprecedented depression affecting alike the Agricultural and Commercial Classes.' Whatever the truth of the situation, by 1859 the Sheffield Independent was claiming that 'Sheffield is larger by thousands and richer by millions than a few years ago'²³.

In 1823 Greaves had set up the first cutlery factory in the town at Sheaf Works. By 1850 about 6 firms could number workmen by hundreds and by the end of the century firms such as Walker and Hall, Mappin and Webb, George Wostenholm and James Dixon and sons each employed close to a thousand men whilst the giant Joseph Rodgers had nearly 2,000²⁴. However, the small firm remained the norm and Pollard²⁵ points out that, of the twenty-nine bankruptcies noted in the local newspapers, from 1857 to 1893 the majority had aggregate assets of less than £9,000 and liabilities of about £46,000, demonstrating that large credit still enabled a business to be set up with a small amount of capital.

¹⁸ *Sheffield Independent*, 31st December 1853

¹⁹ Tweedale, G. *Steel city*. Oxford. Clarendon Press, 1995

²⁰ Pollard. *History of labour*. p.125

²¹ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 1st January 1859

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* 19th November 1859

²⁴ Pollard. *History of labour*. p. 124

²⁵ *Ibid.* p. 132

The situation was rather different for the leaders of the steel industry. Increasingly large amounts were needed to finance the huge capital investment to keep up with developments in the trade and this led to a need for limited liability companies, taking away the power wielded by individuals that had characterised the rise of the industry.

The economic development of Sheffield was not only important as the source of the disposable income that the town's prosperous citizens could devote to housing. The nature of the trades conditioned the attitudes of the inhabitants. Recent research²⁶ seems to support the view that, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, even the town's most prosperous men had come from very small beginnings. Silver-platers had accumulated their wealth by husbanding small profits from the cutlery trade then pooling resources in partnership to muster the capital needed to establish a new trade. Inherited wealth or massive profits were not part of the Sheffield experience.

The steel industry also had small beginnings, but, especially after the growth of the arms industry, profits were generated at a level hitherto unknown in the town. However, to a considerable extent the first generation of steel making giants remained conditioned by their early background. Having humble origins, and little example of ostentatious living in the area, they had a modest view of the lifestyle to which they might aspire. Both light and heavy industry entrepreneurs were aware of the fluctuations and uncertainties of their business and, as quoted above, newspaper reports demonstrate how keenly such swings were felt in the town. Long after the town's leading manufacturers had reached a high level of prosperity they continued, in their private lives, to exercise the financial caution of men in much humbler circumstances. By temperament and training Sheffielders were not lavish spenders.

To summarise, the influence of Sheffield's economy on suburban development was two-fold. First because it generated the income used to fund housing and secondly because the experience of the industrialists in their working environment seems to have influenced them in deciding when, and at what level, income could be devoted to improving their living conditions. Topography helped to determine the economic development of Sheffield and it will be suggested that a combination of topography and economic development shaped the social structure of the town and the attitudes of the inhabitants both to the town and its suburban development.

2.4 Social structure

In *London, a social history*, Porter²⁷ notes that, 'great cities tend to be the singular products of social, economic and political ecosystems', but this is qualified by the assertion that, 'People make their own cities'.²⁸ Sheffield will be studied to consider three aspects of its social structure that might be expected to influence the type of housing erected in the suburbs and also the lifestyle of those who lived there. This will be done by considering characteristics common to the town in general, then by attempting to identify those within the town from whom the small proportion of the inhabitants who actually settled in the suburbs was drawn. Finally the lifestyle of these settlers and the way it influenced the type of housing and use of space within houses will be considered. It will be suggested that Sheffield reflects the character of its citizens, so an outline of the nature of the citizens is a

²⁶ Flavell, N. *The economic development of Sheffield and the growth of the town, c1740-c1820*. (Ph. D. thesis. University of Sheffield, 1996)

²⁷ Porter, R. *London: a social history*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1994. p. 5

²⁸ *Ibid.* p. xv

prerequisite to understanding the city. The inhabitants appear never to have been given to introspection, so sources of information are limited. Contemporary opinions of the people of Sheffield can be supplemented by the work of historians who have touched upon the town. One might look for special insight from historians who have had a long association with the area: in the nineteenth century, Hunter,²⁹ a locally-born cleric who produced the standard history of the area in 1819, and Leader,³⁰ proprietor of one of Sheffield's leading newspapers and amateur historian; in the twentieth century Walton,³¹ again Sheffield born and City Archivist, and Hey,³² a University of Sheffield Professor, Sheffield born though raised at nearby Penistone.

2.4.1 Inhabitants: nature and opinions

Hey, writing at the end of the twentieth century, is mainly concerned with the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, drawing upon a wide range of early records to which he applies modern standards of historical research. He identifies the earliest influences that moulded the character of Sheffield inhabitants. A number of factors are suggested which gave the town a strong sense of identity. He portrays a strong sense of community resulting from geographical isolation but, possibly even more important, the sense of community reinforced by the unusual extent to which all the inhabitants were concerned with one industry. Rather in the way that a mining village has a strong sense of unity as almost no-one lives in the village who does not work in the mine, so almost no-one lived in Sheffield who was not connected with some aspect of the metal working trades. This shared work experience, when reinforced by lack of outside influences, made for a strong sense of identity. Even in-comers to the town were only drawn from a very limited geographical area.

Apart from those engaged in the staple trades, 'Sheffield had few professional people or urban gentry at this time' [i.e., 1680-1740]³³. No magistrate lived within the urban township during the town's early history and even in the eighteenth century only James Wilkinson of Broomhall lived relatively close to the town. It may be concluded that, 'Sheffield was a working town whose culture was dominated by the workplace.'³⁴

Hey's study does not go beyond 1740 but the characteristics he identified seem to have been deeply rooted, for Leader's description of Sheffield at the end of the eighteenth century indicates little change. He believed that, 'The habits of an essentially conservative people like the natives of Hallamshire are as abiding as their speech.'³⁵ Social differences were still limited, 'If there were many poor, there were few who were truly wealthy. A very modest competence enabled a man to pass for rich in those days'.³⁶ He quotes Samuel Roberts as believing that, in the middle of the eighteenth century, £100 a year was, 'a handsome income, qualifying its possessor for the first rank among his fellows; and £500 was a fortune which justified retiring from business.' As an example of what such wealth could bring Leader cites the Rev. John Pye of Nether Chapel who, on a salary not in excess of £100 a year, 'kept a horse and could pay a servant £12 per annum'.

²⁹ Hunter, J. *Hallamshire*. Sheffield: Pawson & Brailsford, 1869.

³⁰ For example: Leader, R. *Reminiscences of old Sheffield, its streets and its people*. 2nd ed. 1876.

³¹ Walton, M. *Sheffield*. Sheffield: Sheffield Telegraph and Star Ltd., 1948

³² For example: Hey, D. *Fiery blades of Hallamshire: Sheffield and its neighbourhood, 1600-1740*. Leicester: Leicester University Press. 1991

³³ *Ibid.* p. 98

³⁴ *Ibid.* p. 93

³⁵ Leader. *Reminiscences*. p. 3

³⁶ All remaining quotations on this page are from Leader. *Reminiscences*.

Like Hey, Leader notes the change amongst the upper levels of local families. By the end of the eighteenth century it was, 'exceedingly striking to notice how many of the leading families who had given distinction to the neighbourhood and tone to its society had... gone away or gone under'. A leaven was given to the town from, 'a certain number of cultivated clergy and some of the leading families gave their sons to the medical and legal professions'. However, this was balanced by the fact that, 'The best families passed away to places presenting larger opportunities, or to more attractive country estates'.

The result of the town's social structure was that, 'the tone of the town intellectually was low, while any signs of culture and refinement were rare. That part of the community which affected any of the cultivated and graces of 'society' was small and narrow'. Those who attended the town's assemblies and other social events tended to be clergy, lawyers, apothecaries, surgeons or shopkeepers. Indeed, 'From the prominence of the names of shopkeepers in places of trust and public enterprise, it is evident that they ranked quite as high as local manufacturers - perhaps almost higher than any but the largest.'

Innkeepers also played an important part in the life of the town, 'the prominent position which their [the inns'] landlords took in the affairs of the town and the manner in which the learned professions were recruited from their sons' indicates their relative affluence. Noting that, 'the intimate part these houses played in the life of the town, when they were accepted meeting places for the leading citizens, and the rendezvous where all public, and a large measure of private, business was transacted', Leader underlines the lack of official centres in the town. His view that, 'Sheffielders have ever been prone to scoff at airs of superiority or indications of vaulting ambition' can be supported by many instances in the nineteenth century. Examples in other parts of this study will illustrate just how little it took to be construed as 'airs' or 'vaulting ambition'.

Hunter, writing at the beginning of the nineteenth century, also seemed to find Sheffielders much as they had been a century earlier. He, like many writers of the time, was more of an antiquarian than a historian. His sympathies lay with an earlier 'merrie England' as he begins with the declaration that, 'The age of Pericles of our little district was unquestionably under the Tudors.' At that time he believed 'it was the seat and favourite residence of a race of ancient nobility by whose history it becomes connected with the general history of this great kingdom.'¹⁷

Despite frequent periods of trade recession the overall trend for most of the nineteenth century was for an increase of wealth in the town. Contemporary accounts in newspapers and directories indicate that the new-found wealth made little impact on the town or the lifestyle of its most prosperous inhabitants. Directory compilers, depending on sales to local people, tend not to be over-critical but Sheffield directories are forced to admit that 'the great seat of cutlery'¹⁸ had limitations as a place of residence. The editor of *The Iris*, possibly seeking to flatter his public, reporting the ball held to celebrate the Peace of Amiens in 1801, assured his readers that 'our powers are certainly inadequate to convey any idea of the splendour, the taste and the elegance of the affair.'¹⁹ This seems to be a minority view of life in the town.

In 1828 Blackwell lamented that 'The mercenary views of individuals, the caprice of some, and the lawless will of others, was suffered to mar the fair condition of the town, by

¹⁷ Hunter. *Hallamshire*. p.iii

¹⁸ White, W. *General directory of... Sheffield...* Sheffield: White, 1841. p. 1

¹⁹ *The Iris*. 28th October. 1801

buildings at once unsightly and disproportionate.⁴⁰ As a result, 'the footpaths were narrow and incommodious, the streets dirty and crowded by vehicles and animals, the town ill-lighted and badly watched.' Even the 1818 Improvement Act had not made any significant changes, 'buildings more like the hovels of 1650 than the buildings of 1821 are seen to frequently rear their heads and disfigure by their grotesque appearance the uniformity of some of our best and most popular streets.' The deterioration of the town made rapid progress for 'some persons yet living recollect when corn waved on the site of Howard Street and the streets adjacent but St Paul's is already blackened by smoke'. Blackwell concludes that the state of the town is the result of the character of the people: 'the retention of their ancient roughness of character, to the disparagement of the various refinements and improvements of modern times.'

The next directory, published by White in 1833, tried to be tactful by stating that Sheffield, '...is generally amongst the last, but often amongst the most judicious, in adopting modern improvements',⁴¹ and laying emphasis on the magnificent scenery close to the town. Pigot, a London publisher was more forthright: 'Amusement appears to be a secondary consideration, as scarcely any town equal in extent possesses fewer resorts for the votaries of fashion and gaiety.'⁴² This directory had a heading for those considered to be members of the 'Gentry and clergy': only 188 suitable candidates could be found for this heading.

The consistent adherence to the values established in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries can be seen in the views of another local historian, Mary Walton. This writer had a great understanding of the town and its people, having lived in Sheffield since her birth at the beginning of the twentieth century and, as archivist, having had an unrivalled opportunity to know the town through its records. She had a great affection for the town but, in typical Sheffield fashion, this did not blind her to its faults and limitations. In her view, 'Sheffield [was a town], whose people dourly devoted themselves to the practice of the useful arts'.⁴³ As a result, 'The conclusion cannot be avoided that all Sheffield's efforts towards artistic or cultural ends were fatally hampered by the isolated position of the town, the people's preoccupation with practical affairs and their reluctance to do anything on a sufficiently large scale.'⁴⁴

Although many attitudes remained deeply entrenched, Addy and Pike's 'Sheffield at the opening of the twentieth century'⁴⁵ shows some changes amongst the members of the city's population who were considered to be of sufficient importance to merit inclusion in its biographical dictionary. Many of the old names found at the beginning of the century are missing and replaced by relative newcomers and Sheffield now supported a much greater number of industrialists and professional men. However, the main cause for change seems to be founded in the biographies of even the 'core families'. Men who had been educated locally, had married local girls and had lived always at least within easy reach of the town, had brought up their sons in a very different way. Public schools, ranging from relatively minor to Eton, sometimes followed by university, produced men with much broader horizons, a greater knowledge of the world outside Sheffield and a link into an 'old boy

⁴⁰ *Sheffield directory and guide; containing a history of the town...* Sheffield: John Blackwell, 1828.

⁴¹ White, W. *History and general directory of the Borough of Sheffield...* Sheffield: William White, 1833. p. 101

⁴² *Pigot and Co.'s National commercial directory...* London & Manchester: J. Pigot & Co., 1834. p. 924

⁴³ Walton. *Sheffield*. p. 10

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* p. 232

⁴⁵ Addy, S.O. & Pike, W.T. *Sheffield at the opening of the 20th century: contemporary biographies..* Brighton: W.T. Pike and Co., [n.d.] (Pike's New Century Series, No. 4)

network' instead of the old kinship connections. This widening of social circles brought wives who were accustomed to London society or at least of the greater provincial cities. Better transport encouraged a very different life style: by 1900 a large house at Ranmoor no longer sufficed for many of Sheffield's richest inhabitants.

If Sheffield had indeed ever had a Golden Age it had passed without trace in the years covered by Hey and Leader. Writing of the mid-nineteenth century Walton concluded that, 'there was no dignity, and no sense of the need for it'⁴⁶: Sheffield seems to have remained the 'working town' described by Hey. To some extent the strong sense of community in the town was reinforced by the fact that those who differed, or wished to differ, from the norm left. Those who succeeded, like the Shores, 'then followed the classic pattern of investing their commercial wealth in land and establishing themselves as rural gentry.'⁴⁷

2.4.2 Defining the 'significant minority'

As a number of historians⁴⁸ have pointed out, the middle class did not exist as a monolithic entity but as many layers, subtly merging. Such a class, as Cannadine reports in relation to Birmingham, was 'increasing alike in numbers and prosperity'⁴⁹ in the course of the nineteenth century. The characteristics indicated above were common to all levels of Sheffield's inhabitants but it was to be members of the small group which constituted the town's wealthiest inhabitants who led the move ever further west in the course of the nineteenth century. Those who, like their Birmingham contemporaries, 'have basked in the sunshine of commercial prosperity'⁵⁰ and so had become richer than most of their fellow citizens, spear-headed the move west. They were followed by what Cannadine refers to as 'the middle middle class'⁵¹: a somewhat larger group, consisting of those in very comfortable financial circumstances. These two groups provided the commercial and civic leaders of the town and its industries. The groups were by no means mutually exclusive or static. Firth and Brown, the builders of the two largest houses in the western suburbs, although not born into abject poverty, had very humble origins and were by no means alone in climbing the ladder of success, even if few climbed as high. Although no doubt petty snobbery was not unknown, the tradition of 'little mester' may have made Sheffield a much more open society than that to be found in many provincial towns. As mentioned above, a small number of the most successful moved away from Sheffield but those leading industrialists and professional men who chose to remain in Sheffield largely followed the old habits of mind. Chaytor commented that, for the Wilsons, 'it was business and trade which was ever their main concern, the enlargement of their capital and the development of their properties. These were matters to which, like many of their contemporaries, they preferred to give their time and energy.'⁵² The obituary of Charles Belk describes the quintessential Sheffielder. Belk had been a Master Cutler, a Church Burgess, president of the Chamber of Commerce a Justice of the Peace and a member of the Literary and Philosophical Society. However, 'he had little of the ambition which animates some men for the labours and honours of the recognised walks of public life. Never animated, as too many manufacturers are in these degenerate days, by the desire to grow rich no matter

⁴⁶ Walton. *Sheffield*. p. 188

⁴⁷ Hey. *Fiery blades of Hallamshire*. p. 191

⁴⁸ For example, McCord. *North-east England*, and White. *Middle-class urban culture and politics*.

⁴⁹ Cannadine. *Aristocracy and the towns*. p. 100

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* p. 99

⁵¹ *Ibid.* p.

⁵² Chaytor. *Wilson of Sharrow*. p. 59

whether populations be sacrificed to the getting thereof. He had in fact, a keen sense of what was due to reputation of his firm and that of the city. Excellence of manufacture, the highest possible excellence was the animating principle of his commercial career. To this everything was subordinated.⁵³

In public life, exchanges in the Council Chamber could be very revealing of Sheffield attitudes. To give two examples: in 1859 a debate was reported⁵⁴ at which the Ecclesall Improvement Bill was rejected. In the course of a heated discussion a supporter of the bill was asked if he wished to beautify the town. This might be regarded as a laudable intention but it was recognised, as no doubt the speaker intended, as a reproach. The accused recoiled from such an imputation and replied that to 'charge him with any such intention was monstrous'. At the end of the century, the council was offered the opportunity of buying Endcliffe Hall. Here philistine Sheffield was in full cry as councillors vied with each other to decry the suggestion.⁵⁵ No mention was made of Sir John Brown's many acts of generosity to the town or that the furnishing of the Hall had been specifically commissioned to exhibit the best local talent. The house fell into the hands of developers and the contents auctioned, the sad newspaper comment was that, all the good items were bought by outsiders and only second-rate things attracted Sheffield bidders.⁵⁶

During the course of the nineteenth century Sheffield became increasingly prosperous. Those who derived the greatest benefits from this, the leading cutlers and especially the great steel manufacturers, could be said to belong to a 'transitional class' for most of them reached the pinnacles of industrial power, and commensurate financial reward, from relatively humble beginnings. Such men received their schooling in the town with boys drawn from a similar background, sharing the same ethos and limited knowledge of the outside world. Even the families of men successful in their field lived in small houses close to the noise and dirt of the town's numerous small works. Although such men as Brown and Firth travelled widely to sell their wares these were predominantly business trips which do not seem to have left time for close observation of the lifestyle of other cities.

Thus, prosperity came to a generation without large expectations or even traditions of graceful living. This age of innocence was not to last. Although the first generation was very influential in the development of Western Sheffield, shaping the landscape and building the great houses that grace Ranmoor, Tapton and Endcliffe, many of the next generation were more carefully nurtured. Such young men became part of a national network of acquaintances, became accustomed to a more leisured lifestyle and married young women met in this wider world. Expectations changed with improvements in transport so a single house was no longer considered sufficient for a wealthy gentleman. Rather than commission a large ornate mansion in Western Sheffield, it became the custom of men like the younger Vickers to have a sizeable house in Sheffield, a hunting lodge and estate elsewhere, and a base for the social season in a fashionable part of London. By the end of the century T.E. Vickers had a London home at 35, Park Street, Grosvenor Square 'one of the most fashionable thoroughfares in the West End of London'⁵⁷, backing on to the mansion of the Duke of Westminster. To have a house of over 30 rooms in such a location would seem to indicate that Vickers's life was now centred on the metropolis rather than at the Sheffield home at Bolsover Hill, which he had bought in 1869.

⁵³ Obituary in the deeds of Holmewood, in the possession of the owner

⁵⁴ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 19th November, 1859

⁵⁵ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 28th January, 1893

⁵⁶ *Sheffield Telegraph*, 21st April, 1893

⁵⁷ Wilson (of Sharrow) family papers in private hands.

The industrial world was changing and the coming of the limited liability company, together with the huge investment required to keep pace with developments in the steel industry, ended the era when one man could come from nothing to control a huge company. Even if the opportunity had been available, few of the second generation, and even fewer of the third, had the interest or the talent to play a major part in the companies that their families had started. The Wilson Scrapbooks chart the demise of many of the erstwhile great families as young Firths, Mappins and their contemporaries spurned the Sheffield work ethic and fell prey to drink, gambling and women in an almost aristocratic manner.⁵⁸ Thus the links between Sheffield and the families who had spearheaded the prosperity of the city in the mid nineteenth century were weakened by the end of the century and the social and civic life of the city were left in the hands of men who, though wealthy, did not have the money or the economic power enjoyed by Mark Firth and John Brown.

As Sheffield has never been the kind of town to have a Social Register, information on the composition of the group who could afford the most substantial houses has to be drawn from a variety of sources. However, they might be expected to be found amongst those who were active in the various forms of government in the town and those who were most successful in its staple industries. A recent thesis⁵⁹ discusses the place of the Sheffield Club in the life of the town. The author considers the Club to have been a 'meeting place for the occupants of the commanding heights of political, economic and social power in the town', describing his work as a 'study of the elite of the industrial and professional middle class in nineteenth century Sheffield'. The term 'elite' is one that sits uneasily with the attitude of Sheffielders of all levels of society. As illustrated by the uneasy relationship between the Town Trustees and their Collector mentioned below, the citizens of the town had difficulty with accepting the notion of *primus inter pares*, let alone acknowledging that one section of the community might constitute an 'elite'. Cannadine describes the inhabitants of Edgbaston, the Birmingham suburb to which western Sheffield is sometimes compared, as being 'august and self-assured people'.⁶⁰ Self-assured certainly seems the adjective which is most applicable to the residents of Sheffield.

For the first part of the century the Town Trustees, the Church Burgesses and the officers of the Cutlers Company represent those most active in public life. Often the same families, such as the Withers and the Wards were represented on all three bodies. It seems likely that, to become members of such oligarchies men should be not only esteemed by their peers but feel able to spare time from their business to undertake such duties. An indication of income can be gleaned from the frequent publication in the local newspapers of subscription lists for poor relief or other good causes. Here the same names appear again and again in approximately the same ranking. Since this was a very public declaration of charity it seems likely that a man would feel obliged to contribute at a level in keeping with his standing in the community, as under-subscription would be taken as a statement of meanness or a tacit admission of business failure.

Such lists chart the changing social mix of the town and the changing nature of economic and political leadership. In general, it can be said that, of all occupations, the legal profession provided the safest and most consistent source of wealth. Bankers could achieve a greater level of wealth, but the crash of the Parker Shore Bank in 1843 showed

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ White. *Middle class urban culture and politics*.

⁶⁰ Cannadine. *The aristocracy and the towns in the nineteenth century*. p. 200

the dangers of family banking. The joint-stock bank provided wealth and status for its directors, but not on the scale wielded by the family banks in the early part of the century.

Another indication of place in the community was attendance at great public occasions, such as funerals. The funeral of James Montgomery in 1853 was such an event: as prime mover in all of the town's good causes and the centre of its intellectual life, Montgomery's interment was attended by all the town's leading citizens and the order of mourning was a public indication of each man's rank in the town. In 1880 Mark Firth's funeral was a similar testimony of public regard. Although some families were represented at both events, such as the ubiquitous Wilsons of Sharrow Mill, the ascendancy of the steel-makers over the cutlers and silver-platers, who had led the mourning for Montgomery, can clearly be seen. From 1843 a new form of local government supplanted the old Burgesses and Trustees. The lists of mayors, aldermen and councillors indicate the new political leaders and the occupations from which they were drawn. When Sheffield finally overcame its abhorrence of the cost involved and established its own law courts the new JPs were drawn from the same group that already provided civic leadership.

Lists of public office holders are by no means a comprehensive guide to men of considerable wealth and economic influence in the town. As newspaper editors mentioned ruefully from time to time, many of the town's most successful businessmen considered that private affairs left them no time for public duty. By the end of the century Sheffield's *Who's who* of 1905⁶¹ showed that even the sons of men such as Firth and Jessop, who had discharged their civic duties, now favoured 'country pursuits'. A general guide to the most successful businessmen can be found in contemporary reports and from more recent studies of the cutlery and steel industries.⁶² Figures for the wages of working men in various trades are usually available,⁶³ but the incomes of men in the highest ranks of manufacturing industry are rarely made available to the public. Accordingly, any hierarchy of Sheffield's 'merchant princes' cannot be precise. However, the names of those usually regarded to be the leaders in their particular fields, together with the names of those active in local government show the citizens most likely to be able to pay for the best kind of housing. Pawson and Brailsford's guide to Sheffield published in 1862 indicates the leading manufacturers in the various Sheffield trades⁶⁴ and Tweedale confirms and expands the list for the end of the century⁶⁵. The choices made by these men will demonstrate the locations and architectural styles favoured by the group and also indicate the level of expenditure that they felt commensurate with their station.

Although it is possible to broadly identify the level of society from which the 'significant minority', with whose housing this study is concerned, it is not possible to be precise as to the number involved or even to the percentage of the population which they constitutes. As Powell observed 'If the middle classes are hard to define, they are equally difficult to count.'⁶⁶ Statistics for the number of houses built in Ecclesall and Nether and Upper Hallam in the course of the nineteenth century are not a useful guide to the number of houses built for the wealthy, nor the graduation in size of such houses. Even though the western suburbs undoubtedly formed the greatest concentration of the best middle class

⁶¹ *Sheffield and District who's who*. Sheffield: Sir. W.C. Leng & Co., 1905.

⁶² E.g. Pollard. *History of labour* and Tweedale. *Steel city*.

⁶³ For example, in Pollard. *History of labour*.

⁶⁴ *Pawson and Brailsford's illustrated guide to Sheffield and neighbourhood*. Otley: Amethyst Press, 1971. [Reprint of the edition of 1862]

⁶⁵ Tweedale. *Steel city*. p. 65

⁶⁶ Powell, C.G. *An economic history of the British building industry 1815-1979*. London: Methuen, 1980. p. 184

housing in Sheffield there were pockets to be found in Sharrow and Pitsmoor, whilst the Park, despite the town coming ever closer to its borders, still retained families such as the Robertses and Hadfields who had settled there when it was relatively remote. It is not possible to arrive at a precise figure for the merchants and manufacturers and professional men with an income above a given level. Even estate developers and speculative builders do not seem to have been able to estimate correctly the numbers who might be drawn to the plots of over ¼ acre and to houses costing more than £500.⁶⁷ Burnett suggests that the nineteenth century produced 'a tier of middle classes' and 'at the top were the great industrialists, merchants and bankers.' Then, 'in the middle the members of the professions both old and new, the lesser factory owners and the senior clerks'⁶⁸. He concludes that these two layers plus the lowest level of the middle class, and those described by the census as being of independent means, constituted the middle class at the middle of the nineteenth century and that it could be roughly estimated to constitute one-sixth of the total population. The reputation of the western suburbs was based upon houses built for those with the very highest level of economic success, that is, those constituting Burnett's top tier.

2.5 Social profile

Having outlined the groups of leading cutlers, steel-makers and professional men who settled in the western suburbs it is useful to consider the social life which they led, which in turn influenced the type of housing which they considered necessary. Sheffield's newspapers, especially in the first part of the century, contain little information relating to the social life of the town, apart from announcements of gatherings for dances, card playing or the local theatre season. For information concerning who attended such events and what it was like to participate in them one must look elsewhere.

The historian could not ask for a better guide to all aspects of the life of the town than Thomas Asline Ward.⁶⁹ Related to everyone and interested in everything, Ward also found time to record his doings in diaries and kept up a voluminous correspondence, some of which has survived. Wherever two or three were gathered together in Sheffield to form a committee or a society then Ward was likely to be one of the number, probably acting as secretary. He was a man of infinite variety, a supporter of good causes, town improvements, literature and science, yet found time to take an active part in local politics and the work of the Cutler's Company. His character was unusually well balanced for he was a devout Christian and connoisseur of sermons who not only took delight in the theatre but also the company of actors, indeed convivial meetings of all kinds, even indulging in a little gambling in his youth.

The one thing that all this activity left him little time for was business. Luckily he was the much-indulged son of the second marriage of one of the town's prosperous cutlers. Joseph Ward, his father, allowed him much leeway to pursue his various interests for it was obvious that, although no businessman, neither was he a dilettante and that he played a useful part in the life of the community. Though far from being a typical Sheffielder in his zest for travel and new experiences, his upbringing was typical of that of many sons of the more prosperous families of the town. He had been educated at the local grammar school and his oldest friends had been fellow-pupils. His sisters had been sent away to school like many of their contemporaries.

⁶⁷ Burnett, J. *A social history of housing 1815-1985*. 2nd ed. London: Methuen, 1980. p. 98

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* p. 98

⁶⁹ Ward. *Peeps*.

Looking back on the early decades of the century he remembered it as a time when it was possible to be personally acquainted with all the men who took a leading part in the social, economic and civic life of the town. As a young man he seemed to be part of a group who were continually meeting to exchange gossip or views over tea or a meal. The distances over which much of this social intercourse took place is indicated by the sites of some of the houses to which he was a visitor shown on Map. 3. It can be seen that living on the periphery of the town at Park Grange, Broomhill, Meersbrook or even Norton did not prevent families from having close social contact. Ward was a great walker and would be quite likely to walk from Park House to Norton (a distance of about six miles) but it is not clear whether others, especially the ladies, made their visits on foot, on horseback or by some wheeled conveyance. Though, if Ward's conduct is representative, Sheffield ladies were expected to be hardy. In 1814 he married Ann Lewin, a native of Hackney. The hills of Sheffield must have been quite a contrast to the flat land to which she was accustomed. The lady enjoyed poor health, mainly chest complaints, and, at thirty, could qualify as a 'geriatric mother'. However, in early March of the following year, he took Ann, now three months pregnant, for a walk to make her 'bride visit' to his friends at Tapton Grove and Stumperlowe Hall.⁷⁰ This is a round trip of at least ten miles from their home in the Park and the severity of the climbs is formidable even when in good health and wearing walking clothes and sensible shoes. Doing it in the formal dress of a lady of the period, and being sufficiently neat and tidy, after miles of country lanes and town streets, at the end of it to be introduced to strangers must have been quite a feat of endurance. However, the episode does give an indication of the distances over which social life was conducted outside the town.

Just as Hey pointed out that many of Sheffield's most successful citizens left the town when they became successful in the eighteenth century⁷¹, so, at the end of the nineteenth century, the most successful steel makers no longer had their principal residence in the town and had ceased to take an active part in the social and civic life of the city. After retiring in 1899, the survivor of the two Vickers brothers who had spearheaded the success of the family firm in the armaments trade lived in London. Bernard Alexander Firth retained the family home at Tapton Edge but, like his father before him, spent most of his time at a second home at Hope in Derbyshire where it was possible to spend a more countrified existence.

As members of Sheffield's wealthiest families distanced themselves a rather less wealthy stratum of society now provided the social and civic leaders. A view of the life lived by this group was provided by Selina Wilson, second daughter of George Wilson, snuff manufacturer and owner of Tapton Hall in succession to Edward Vickers. In 1940 Selina, by now Lady Smith, came back to her old home at Tapton Hall to escape the bombing close to her house in the south of England. She felt that this was a time of great uncertainty for her family, especially as her young grandsons were now serving in the armed forces. In the hope that the war would be brought to a successful conclusion and that the young men would return safely, she occupied her time by writing down her recollections of her girlhood so that the new generation would have a record of how their family had lived in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.⁷²

Her recollections conjure up a very different world from that which T.A. Ward knew, much wealthier and with a taste for expensive pleasures. Selina recalled her parents attending

⁷⁰ Ibid. p. 226.

⁷¹ Hey, *Fiery blades*. p. 191

⁷² Smith, *Lady S. [Memoirs]* [Wilson (of Sharrow) family papers in private hands.]

social functions to which everyone arrived in a family carriage, and where liveried footmen were in attendance at dinner parties. In wintertime she and her siblings gave skating parties on the lake at Tapton Hall, with a band playing to entertain participants and spectators. Each autumn the family decamped to their moors at Moscar to indulge in the Wilson obsession with shooting. (By this time the various branches of the family had divided into the 'hunting' Wilsons and the 'shooting' Wilsons: the Tapton Hall Wilsons favoured shooting.)⁷³ Just as the Wilson family had been a part of the kinship network of prosperous families who bought land in western Sheffield at the beginning of the century so, at the end of the century, they were central to the group of wealthy families who chose to remain in the city and lead its business and civic life, in succession to the likes of Mark Firth and John Brown. Selina's sister married into the Mappin family and her brothers allied with the Dixon and Jackson families, prominent in the silver-plate and tool making trades respectively. Selina and her friends resembled the young T.A. Ward and his circle of the early part of the century insofar that Sheffield was the centre of their activities. However, the wealth of Sheffield had increased immeasurably: far from 'a plum' being the height of achievement, Selina's father, George Wilson, had used the profits from the family snuff mill so astutely that he died leaving about £500,000,⁷⁴ in comparison to the £600,000 left by Mark Firth.⁷⁵ Such wealth allowed its possessors to enjoy a very comfortable life-style but does not seem to have widened intellectual horizons or led to a spate of building large and expensive houses.

Changes in the course of the nineteenth century were not just a matter of increasing wealth. Social structure and individual expectations also altered as society became more complex. This was of great importance for the rank in society from which the inhabitants of the middle level of housing in the western suburbs was drawn. The increasing size of the large firms generated a need for accountants, managers and factory inspectors; the extension of local government required town clerks, chief constables and the like, while the growing business world required bank managers, department store owners and all strands of society seemed to need the services of a growing number of legal men. All these groups had to be housed in a manner commensurate with their income and place in society and both social and economic expectations rose in the course of the century. When the Sheffield Banking Company was founded in 1831 the directors expected their new manager 'to reside on the premises... to keep the Bank and other rooms clean; to find a servant to light the Bank fires' as well as performing his managerial functions. His senior clerk was expected to sleep on the premises as an extra safeguard.⁷⁶ By the 1860s Barber, the then manager, lived in a fine house at Broomhall. Portraits of this august personage make it quite clear that bank managers could no longer be expected to involve themselves with the efficiency of charwomen, or to live in the hurly-burly of the centre of town.⁷⁷ On the other side of the estate Leng, the owner of the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* could afford to buy not only a large house for his own occupation but also the adjoining property,⁷⁸ whereas Montgomery, the editor of *The Iris* at the beginning of the century, lived in the crumbling building in the centre of the town where the paper was published. Montgomery, despite his elevated social position in the town, could only afford one of the houses making up The Mount on his retirement.⁷⁹

⁷³ Chaytor. *Wilson of Sharrow*. p. 158

⁷⁴ Wilson, G. [Will]. [Wilson (of Sharrow) family papers in private hands.]

⁷⁵ Firth, M. [Will] in family hands.

⁷⁶ Leader, R.E. *The Sheffield Banking Company*. Sheffield: J.W. Northend, 1916. p. 28

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Deeds of 38 Collegiate Crescent Sheffield Hallam University collection.

⁷⁹ White. *General directory*. 1849. p. 143

Thus, although the second half of the nineteenth century saw a huge increase in the wealth of the leading industrialists, which funded the likes of Tapton and Endcliffe Halls, their numbers were very small. The size of the western suburbs at the end of the century testifies to the much greater number of smaller industrialists and those employed in the new occupations mentioned above who needed accommodation to suit their new affluence.

The decades from 1840-1860 were a time of great change and growth for Sheffield. At mid-century Ward was complaining that while he had formerly known all the inhabitants of the town he could now hardly name one in ten of the residents in the new villas that were transforming Broomhall Park.⁸⁰ The changes that took place in the latter part of the century are illustrated by *Who's who in Sheffield*,⁸¹ published in 1905. This book gives potted biographies, often accompanied by photographs, of what were considered to be the leading figures in many aspects of life in the town. Not only is the book much larger than any similar work would have been for the early years of the nineteenth century, but it also reflects the greater complexity of public life brought about by the growth of the professions, the increase in local government due to national and local legislation and effects of the joint stock company.

Although the Church Burgesses, Town Trustees and Master Cutler were all respected men in the town they had long yielded political precedence to the elected representatives. Justice no longer came from men living outside Sheffield but from magistrates drawn from the inhabitants. In industry, the old pattern of firms headed by one man or a small group of partners still survived, but pride of place went to the limited liability companies, headed by directors, with only the name of the founder, such as John Brown or Thomas Turton, surviving.

Entries in *Who's Who in Sheffield* highlight the change in education. William Newbould, the builder of Broomhill, like many of his contemporaries, had received his limited education from the surveyor, Joseph Fairbank.⁸² T.A. Ward, a generation later, had benefited from what he describes as a rather limited education at the local grammar school.⁸³ A small number of prosperous fathers, such as John Rimington of Hillsborough, sent their sons to boarding school.⁸⁴ This might enable them to broaden their network of acquaintances, which would be beneficial in later life.

It should be emphasised that even early in the century, Sheffield was not devoid of knowledge of the outside world. The coterie in which T.A. Ward moved had extensive connections: Ward himself frequently travelled to London and throughout England for pleasure as for business. Members of the kinship network, such as the Newboulds and the Wilsons, experienced the pleasures of Matlock, Harrogate and even Bath. The relatives of Mrs. John Rimington were well connected and moved in circles reminiscent of those described by Jane Austen. However, none of these families seems to have attempted to expand Sheffield's social horizons as a result of their own experiences. The town did have its own intelligentsia, with bluestockings like Miss Bailey of Burn Greave and Miss Shore of Meersbrook setting up short-lived literary magazines, whilst Montgomery and his circle set up reading clubs and the Literary and Philosophical Society.⁸⁵ However, the numbers involved were very small in comparison with the size of the population. In 1841 Holland, a

⁸⁰ Ward. *Peeps*. p. 318

⁸¹ *Sheffield and District Who's Who*.

⁸² Fairbank Collection AB3

⁸³ Ward. *Peeps*. p. 1.

⁸⁴ Rimington, J. [Letter] [Wilson (of Broomhead) family correspondence in private hands.]

⁸⁵ Ward. *Peeps*.

local man, wrote regretfully of the town that 'we fear that to exhibit a taste for either [science or the fine arts] rather deteriorates than improves the position of an individual in the estimation of the public'.⁸⁶

Census returns and directories indicate that women headed a substantial number of households in the western suburbs. They are usually variously described as annuitants, of independent means or owners of property. Information concerning their personal lives is sparse as they took no part in public life and private papers are few. At the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century boys and girls seem to have received their elementary education together. Both William Newbould and John Brown are said to have met their future wives in this way. Daughters of the wealthier and more progressive men were sent to various boarding schools, more as a way to give polish to their manners, and possibly to meet other young ladies with eligible brothers, than to further their academic advancement. In the early decades of the nineteenth century the young women in T. A. Ward's circle broadened their social circle by visits to local spas such as Matlock and Harrogate, sometimes, as in the case of the Wilson girls, as attendants to a grumpy elderly male relative. A number of Sheffield's leading residents took wives from outside the area. At the beginning of the century, John Rimington had married a kinswoman raised in the south and accustomed to fashionable gaiety. Mark Firth's first wife was the daughter of a local metal worker but after her death he married the daughter of a mayor of Nottingham who was to be hostess to royalty at Oakbrook. In the Vickers family the austere T. E., rather surprisingly, married a young girl who had studied art in Paris, and his brother married an American. Even George Wilson chose a wife from the south and their daughter remembered her father taking an almost mischievous delight in mildly shocking his wife's perception of what constituted correct behaviour. Although such outside influences may have had some leavening influence on insular Sheffield it does not seem to have been extensive.

For most young, or even more mature, females matrimony was the goal. Much has been made of the vulnerable position of wives before the Married Woman's Property Act of 1877 but at least some Sheffield men tried to safeguard the financial position of their female relatives. Such was the case of the Greaves family who, at the end of the eighteenth century, discharged their responsibility by setting up one of their girls with a substantial dowry and marrying her to a prosperous young man, Joseph Wilson. Unfortunately, foolhardy speculation on the part of the husband brought the family, now augmented by a number of young children, to bankruptcy. Considerable time and money had to be expended by the Wilsons and their kinship network to support the family and to set up a new business. Possibly as a result of this incident members of the network often went to considerable lengths to ensure that the wording of wills made it very clear that money was left to a woman in her own right and the right protected by trustees. Although marriage was the ultimate aim it was not necessarily a secure haven and in western Sheffield there were probably almost as many varieties of the married state as there were marriages. Within the kinship network a Spooner marrying one of the Newbould girls was said to have abused her to the point of a mental breakdown. Miss Walton commented ruefully, 'I had always imagined the good yeomen of the farms of Ecclesall Bierlow as perhaps a little narrow, a little rough in manner, a little 'close', but fundamentally sensible, good hearted, fond of their simple comforts and the respect of their wives. I now wonder, feeling that I have been disillusioned, how many 'Cold Comfort Farms' there may have been among those green and pleasant hills'.⁸⁷ Certainly, deeds of land in various parts of the Upper Hallam indicate that at least some farmers in the area seem to have been fond of procreation but very wary

⁸⁶ Holland, G.C. *The vital statistics of Sheffield*. London, Sheffield: [printed], 1843. p. 33

⁸⁷ Walton, M. *History of St. Peters* p.18

of matrimony. Over two generations the Elliotts of Hanging Water delayed marriage until within days of the birth of an heir. Bastards were provided for by families living in the Tipton area and John Greaves of Broombank sent his bastard child to be cared for at Oakbrook Farm⁸⁸ where possibly the offspring of irregular unions provoked less adverse comment than closer to the town. Perhaps morals were looser in areas away from the pressure of the centres of organised religion in the town.

Joseph Wilson, the bankrupt mentioned above, added insult to injury by decamping to London with his housekeeper and then compounded the affront by inviting his wife to come down to make a *menage a trois*. Her tart response was that it was her annuity, not her person, which he found attractive and both would be staying in Sheffield.⁸⁹ At the other end of the spectrum John Rimington preserved a touching attachment to his wife into middle age. His wife, Mary, 'enjoyed' poor health and while John worked long hours and worried about her she attended a whirl of balls and theatre visits with her relatives in Bath and London. She outlived him by many years but the marriage seems to have been happy and the letters of their son, and only child, portray a loving and close family relationship.⁹⁰ This is in marked contrast to the letters that the children of William Wilson wrote to him. They can be seen desperately searching for scraps of gossip which will divert the wrath of their irascible father from the two topics which are always the true reason for the letter: lack of academic success and an urgent need for yet more money.⁹¹

Given the vicissitudes of matrimony and the hazards of childbirth, it is perhaps not surprising that there were a large proportion of spinsters in western Sheffield. Those who did not have a source of income from inheritance could be in a sorry plight as the rapid rise and fall of many small schools in the area testify. Apart from the keeping of a school there were few options open to a woman. A number of women continued in the family home as housekeeper to an unmarried brother. Benjamin and Miss Withers lived together at The Willows for almost half a century and, after his death, she willed money to have a window dedicated to his memory in the cathedral. His will, perhaps in recognition of those less fortunately placed than his sister, left money to establish a pension fund for maiden ladies.⁹² Nearby, Miss Cadman kept house for her brother George at Westbourne. In middle age she married but was widowed shortly afterwards and returned to the family home⁹³. One of the Wilson girls also married quite late in life but was widowed shortly after the birth of a daughter. As the widow of the Reverend A. Mackenzie she was not destitute but she returned to the family home to rejoin her siblings. The Wilson men married late, or not at all, but did not choose to share a house. As a result their sisters moved from house to house as required for housekeeping duties, or, when a brother married, moving in at the annual child-bearing or at times of illness. For ladies 'richly left' life could have been quite pleasant. If their wealth attracted suitors to the Harrison sisters of Weston none were successful and the ladies lived together, devoted to good works in the splendidly sited family home. Even though Sheffield approached ever nearer in the course of their lives the extent of the grounds ensured that 'every prospect pleases', and, if man was being vile, despite all the religious establishments which they funded so freely, at least it was out of earshot. The Shore sisters of Meersbrook were able to weather the crash that brought down the family bank in 1843 and ended their days at the ancestral home. There are many instances of ladies, such as the Watsons of Shirecliffe, who came from families who were capable of

⁸⁸ Deeds of Oakholme in the University of Sheffield collection

⁸⁹ Wilson of Sharrow papers

⁹⁰ Wilson of Broomhead papers

⁹¹ Wilson of Sharrow papers

⁹² *Pawson and Brailsford's illustrated guide*. p. 92

⁹³ Ward. *Peeps*. Passim.

funding substantial dowries which might have been attracted a Sheffielder looking for a bargain and yet they stayed single. It can only be supposed that they chose not to exchange the safety of home, and a future of well-funded spinster-hood, to the unknown perils of matrimony. Especially for the eldest girl in a family, often expected to take some responsibility for younger siblings from an early age, the prospect of yet more child care as a wife may not have been appealing. Evidence of the ever-present dangers of childbirth was all around in the form of many widowers and motherless children. T.A. Ward's mother became pregnant in middle age, having not borne a child for many years. Very conscious of the peril in which she found herself, she made her will in case she did not survive. In the event she produced another son and lived for many years. It was ironic that it was Ward's wife who, also becoming pregnant again in middle age but after years of ill health, succumbed and left him a widower.

In terms of education for women Sheffield was home to one of the pioneer schools in providing a serious education for girls, as opposed to the polish of a few social skills. The Girls' Public Day School Trust opened a school in Sheffield in 1878,⁹⁴ first in Surrey Street but by 1884 it had moved to Broomhill, taking premises at Rutland Park.⁹⁵ The movement to establish such a school in the town had begun some years earlier as 400 shareholders, taking £5 shares, were required before the central authority would sanction the opening of a school. Sheffield, with its emphasis on the practical in all fields seems an unlikely place in which to find supporters for a movement to provide girls with an academic education equal to that offered to boys and offering the possibility of entry to higher education for those whose wanted it.⁹⁶ The school numbered Mrs Kingsford Wilson [nee Dixon] and her sisters amongst its supporters. This interest would seem to have stemmed from the Dixon family, as the Wilsons never appeared have cared greatly for education for themselves, let alone their womenfolk. Sheffield already had the benefit of the Notre Dame school, established in 1864. This was closer to the town, having bought 'the beautiful and spacious Residence of Springfield', which provided extensive grounds and commodious buildings. The school had very comprehensive aims. It was a 'Boarding and select school for the education of young ladies' providing the 'usual course of studies' which included French. Provision was also made for a 'Day school for the middle classes of society' as well as the training of pupil teachers and a night school for those unable to attend during the day. Early in the century Miss Cadman, the Misses Shore and Miss Bailey of Burngreave were numbered amongst the blue-stockings of the circle in which T.A. Ward moved but no member of the Wilson family was ever mentioned in this connection. One of the earliest headmistresses of the Girls' High School was an example of the way horizons were broadening for women. Widowed by the death of her husband, an inspector of schools who was based in Sheffield, she helped guide the school in its early days and was so successful that she was moved to become one of its most successful pioneers in other towns. However, Who's who in Sheffield, published in 1905 only found three women suitable for inclusion. In all cases this was in connection with their charitable work. An example of how little traditional ideas on the role of women had changed was that one of their number, Miss Cleghorn, headmistress of Heeley Bank Girls ' School was especially noted for her work in the improvement of the teaching of needlework.

This short outline of the kind of lives led by the women of western Sheffield led is an indication of how little is known of their views, or indeed, the part they played in determining suburban home life. Although the information available is sparse the examples

⁹⁴ Kamm, J. *Indicative past*. London: Allen & Unwin, for the Friends of the Girls' Public Day School Trust, 1971. p. 63

⁹⁵ *History of Sheffield*. p. 311

⁹⁶ Kamm. *Indicative past*. p. 83

cited do indicate the wide range of female experience in western Sheffield. For at least a proportion of the women who came to the western suburbs a great deal of flexibility was required in order to maintain a stable family life when income, for better or worse, could alter considerably in the course of a life-time. Deeds of property mention members of the brewing and printing trades, as well as merchants and manufacturers, who came to the western suburbs only to succumb to bankruptcy. Such changes in circumstances must have been severe for a wife who had been raised in comfortable circumstances and had no practical experience of housework or thrift. It was probably easier to adapt to improved finances. Mrs Thomas Firth spent her long widowhood in the comfort of her Broomfield Road house with a cook and a maid to wait upon her, but this was a woman who knew very well what it was to black-lead a stove and clean a privy since, for most of her married life, she had to cope with raising a large family on a low wage. The recollections of James Dixon or Selina Wilson (fortunate to be born into prosperous families, and never to know financial insecurity), portray women who enjoyed active social and domestic lives, accepting life as they found it in a very Sheffield manner, but their opinions and the minutiae of their daily lives remain obscure.

From the section on the character of Sheffield and its inhabitants it will be seen that Sheffielders, of all ranks, were not in the business of seeking role models upon which to conduct their behaviour or life style. White notes⁹⁷ that 'it has been asserted that the industrial bourgeoisie failed to develop their own set of values and adopted those of the aristocracy.' He suggests that, 'The Sheffield elite had a long tradition of association with the local aristocracy.'⁹⁸ However, this seems to have been on a formal basis, such as local aristocrats attending the Cutlers' Feast or Ward and his friends being invited as part of the huge party to celebrate the coming of age of the heir of Wentworth.⁹⁹ There was none of the intimacy of the kind that some of the North East industrialists enjoyed with aristocratic families who shared their enthusiasm for Pre-Raphaelite art, such as the Trevelyans of Wallington or George James Howard, ninth Earl of Carlisle.¹⁰⁰ Such intimacy would allow the life-style of the aristocracy to be observed at first hand, as a basis for emulation. Nor did Sheffield enjoy the cosy paternalism which the house of Norfolk displayed towards Glossop, where the ladies of the family presided at local charity bazaars so that aristocratic fashion and demeanour could be studied at close quarters for possible later imitation.¹⁰¹ Indulging in the sports of hunting and shooting is often cited as an example of the way in which the *nouveau riches* tried to follow the ways of their social superiors. In the second half of the nineteenth century a growing number of Sheffield's industrialists bought moorland or joined local hunts. Rather than being imitation, this seems to have been carrying on long-established habits. Early in the century *The Iris* frequently contained references to the various hunts in which the citizen's of the town took part,¹⁰² Even the Wilsons, never anxious to spend, made an exception for sport and William Wilson bought a gun licence for each of his sons as soon as they became old enough to have one.¹⁰³ A love of country pursuits seems to have been deeply ingrained in the men of Sheffield where the links between town and country had always been close. The only difference was that, with increasing wealth they were able to pursue hobbies on a larger scale.

⁹⁷ White. *Middle class urban culture and politics*. p. 245.

⁹⁸ Ibid. p. 254

⁹⁹ Ward. *Peeps*. p. 304

¹⁰⁰ *Pre-Raphaelites: painters and patrons in the North East*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Tyne and Wear Museum Service, [1989] [Catalogue of an exhibition at Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne, 14 October 1989-14 January 1990.]

¹⁰¹ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* 5th August, 1854

¹⁰² For example, *The Iris*, 27th November, 1807.

¹⁰³ Chaytor. *Wilson's of Sharrow*. p. 93

Sheffield's citizens seem rather to have been so self-confident that it appears unlikely that they could believe any class or individual could offer a role model, or that it would ever occur to them that one might be needed. This firm faith in self-belief is demonstrated by William Butcher's conflict with the Town Trustees. The leader of the Town Trustees had long been known as the Town Collector. Having held this post for some years Butcher discovered that, for a short period, many years earlier, the title of Town Regent had been used. Accordingly, Butcher took to signing himself as Town Regent. This was not well received by his colleagues who regarded it as all too authoritarian and a minute was passed stating that this must cease. Butcher, as confident in his reading of the situation as his colleagues were in theirs, continued to use the title until his death.¹⁰⁴ Each man seems to have done what he pleased, guided by his own entirely idiosyncratic standards. This attitude extended to the selection of housing.

The nature of Sheffield society and the mind set of its inhabitants has been dealt with in some detail as it conditioned the life lived in the town and the type of housing which was considered desirable by the wealthiest sector of the community. It has been said that the 'the history of Birmingham was very largely the history of the public lives of Edgbaston's most celebrated inhabitants', in the suburb that was 'but the Council House at home'¹⁰⁵. In similar fashion the development of Sheffield was to a great extent moulded by the residents of the western suburbs. Consequently, this research has been mainly concerned with this very small sector of the community. As White noted, the town's very large industrialists were few but 'they cast a long shadow'¹⁰⁶. He concludes that, 'the elite members of the middle class were using [large houses] to consolidate their own power.'

This may have been the case in some instances but, for the Firths and their neighbours their 'power' came from an innate sense of self-worth and a confidence in their products which needed no trimmings to reinforce it. Families like the Wilsons and the Jessops did not take part in field sports to emulate the aristocracy since Sheffielders, as mentioned above, at all levels of the population, had a long history of enthusiasm for the chase. Even at the beginning of the nineteenth century *The Iris* often had references to the exploits of the Sheffield hounds, noting their outing to Barlborough in November 1807.¹⁰⁷ Later in the year it noted the death of the man who had been their huntsman for many years. This would seem to indicate that the hunt was not a recent foundation.¹⁰⁸

Their choice of housing illustrates the style of life they found attractive and the level of income they were prepared to devote to housing. When Sheffield's industrialists came into possession of the highest incomes the town had ever known the western suburbs, the size of plot, houses and variety of accommodation which they provided exemplify the choice of life style which they selected. The lack of ostentation and great size, together with an emphasis on comfort, is at least open to the interpretation that house and garden were for the pleasure of the individual and his family rather than a creation motivated by a wish to follow fashion or to impress. The manner in which the development of the western suburbs took place will be considered in the next chapter.

¹⁰⁴ *The records of the Burgery of Sheffield, commonly called the Town Trust*. London: E. Stock, 1897.

¹⁰⁵ Cannadine. Thesis p. 201

¹⁰⁶ White. *Middle class urban culture and politics*. p. 245

¹⁰⁷ *The Iris*, 27 Nov. 1807.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.* 4 Dec. 1807

Chapter 3

Extra-urban settlement

3.1 Introduction: the changing nature of the town

The town created by industrious cutlers changed radically in the course of the nineteenth century, both in size and in prosperity.

In 1801 the township of Sheffield consisted of 31,314 inhabitants living in the 3,436½ acres which constituted its area¹. Most of the township's houses lay within a compact area, lining a few streets on the west banks of the Don and Sheaf. Fairbank's map of 1795² shows almost all of the area to be built up, in-fill having taken over the orchards and gardens shown on earlier maps. Advertisements in local newspapers at the end of the eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth century indicate that spacious properties were still available within the confines of the town, though usually, when such properties came on the market, the new owner developed the land rather than leaving it unchanged. Some prosperous citizens, especially doctors, continued to live close to the centre of the town.

However, as visitors had frequently noted, the town was dirty and without any attractive architectural features. The compiler of a recent anthology of items concerning the town confessed that 'a certain depression of the spirits can set in at the repetition of the words "filth", "squalor", "smoke" and "flowing gutters".'³ As the years progressed and the growing population made the environment ever less attractive and the green enclaves in the town disappeared the town, never attractive in itself, became increasingly undesirable. Newspapers then, as now, tended to emphasise the extreme and sensational and so present a distorted view, but even making allowance for such bias, *The Iris* reported a noisy, dirty town plagued by petty crime together with the inconvenience and danger of heavy traffic in narrow streets.

The town was paved, lit, cleansed and provided with water after a fashion but all these provisions left much to be desired. Their limitations are indicated by the reminiscences of a silver-plater looking back to the Sheffield of his boyhood. Speaking of the town in the last quarter of the eighteenth century Samuel Roberts remembered it as, 'in a very rude state in every respect, being only partially flagged, with many of the stones loose'.⁴ Lighting was inadequate for, 'there were very few lamps, and these feeble, and far apart, often not lighted or blown out. There were also projecting spouts from between the gutters of the roofs, from which during rain the water flowed in streams. Lanterns were dimly seen in the streets like fireflies flitting about... A farthing candle was stuck in some of the shop windows, just serving to make the darkness more dark.'⁵ The streets themselves were 'generally in a very disorderly state, manure heaps often lying in them for weeks together.'⁶

¹ White. *History and general directory*. 1833. p. 6

² Fairbank, W. and son. *A map of the Parish of Sheffield*. Sheffield, 1795

³ Pybus, S. 'Damned bad place, Sheffield', *an anthology of writings about Sheffield through the ages*. Sheffield. Sheffield Academic Press, 1994.

⁴ Roberts, S. *Autobiography and select remains*. London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1849. p.21

⁵ *ibid.* p.13

⁶ *ibid.* p. 22

Roberts's description of the primitive means of cleansing the streets using water from Barker's Pool creates a hilarious picture, needing a Breughel to do it justice. The reality would probably have been less amusing to experience.

Townships	No. of acres	Population									
		1801	1811	1821	1831	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891
Sheffield	3028	31314	35840	42157	50011	67967	83447	97718	91358	91801	91416
Eccleshall	4343	5362	6569	9113	14279	20003	24552	38771	49674	58790	68987
Brightside	2821	4030	6899	6615	8968	10089	12042	29818	48556	56721	67083
Attercliffe	1297	2281	2673	3172	3741	4156	4873	7464	16574	26068	35891
Nether Hallam	1832	1974	2384	3200	4658	7275	8897	19758	31810	47615	58215
Upper Hallam	6330	764	866	1018	1035	1396	1499	1643	1974	2513	2709
Total	19651	45725	55231	65275	82692	110886	135310	185172	239946	284408	324291
% change			20.79	18.19	26.68	34.10	22.03	36.85	29.58	18.53	14.02

Table 3.1: Population of Sheffield Townships 1801 to 1891 (Sources: White's *Directories... of Sheffield*)

Apart from Barker's Pool the other main supply of water was the small quantity brought from the hills to the west of the town to a 'receptacle' in Townhead Street and then by a few

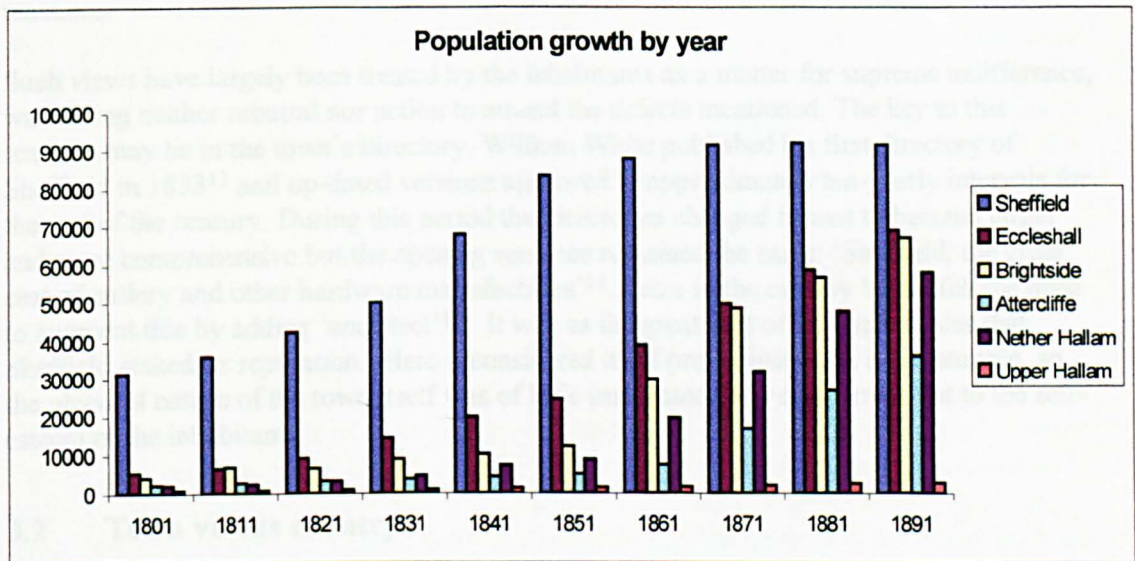


Figure 3.1: Township population growth by year 1801-1891

pipes to the principal streets. Some of this water was also distributed by water-barrel men who took it round the streets in fifty-gallon casks mounted on a wheelbarrow. In 1793 the state of the town was causing so much concern that a group of leading citizens perambulated the streets to take note of the extent of the problem. *The Iris* reported tartly that, 'Little except the dirtiness of the streets appears to have been noticed.'⁷

A bill for the improvement of the town was finally obtained in 1818⁸ after much bitter dissent generated by concern about the possible cost. The powers of the Commissioners appointed under the act were limited and restricted to an area within a radius of ¼ from the

⁷ *The Iris*. 5 April, 1793

⁸ White, W. *History and general directory*. 1833, p.73

parish church. Many citizens felt that even such powers as had been obtained were not well used. Although *The Iris* announced in 1831 that the names of streets were now painted in white letters on black boards and ‘placed in conspicuous situations’,⁹ the 1833 compiler of the local directory complained that even street numbering was not carried out well and the numbers were irregularly placed and often effaced.¹⁰ He felt that the town needed a Paving Act, ‘as the practice of electing commissioners for each township meant that the chosen improved their own estates, while the more crying nuisances of the town are neglected’.¹¹

People are often drawn to a town from outlying districts in order to maintain political contacts, the transaction of legal affairs or for commerce, but Sheffield was not a centre for such activities. Those whose business did lie in the town generated a need for retail traders, public houses and the talents of a few professional men but urban amenities in the town were few, and usually plain, in comparison to those of towns of similar size (as noted in the previous Chapter).

This is not to say that the town was so isolated that its inhabitants were unaware of the state of other towns, or of the low opinion which visitors expressed of Sheffield. Certainly Sheffield has never made a favourable impression on visitors. Almost every study of it, including the recent centennial history¹², includes a selection drawn from the seemingly endless supply of derogatory remarks made by commentators over the centuries. Its remoteness, dirtiness and lack of fine architecture in the town centre have all excited adverse reactions.

Such views have largely been treated by the inhabitants as a matter for supreme indifference, warranting neither rebuttal nor action to amend the defects mentioned. The key to this reaction may lie in the town’s directory. William White published his first directory of Sheffield in 1833¹³ and up-dated versions appeared at approximately ten-yearly intervals for the rest of the century. During this period the directories changed format to become larger and more comprehensive but the opening sentence remained the same: ‘Sheffield, the great seat of cutlery and other hardware manufactures’¹⁴. Later in the century White felt the need to augment this by adding ‘and steel’¹⁵. It was as the great seat of its staple trades that Sheffield staked its reputation. Here it considered itself pre-eminent and incomparable, so the physical nature of the town itself was of little importance and quite irrelevant to the self-esteem of the inhabitants.

3.2 Town versus country

However, the disparity between the dirt of the town and its surrounding beautiful scenery, which caused so much comment from visitors, did not escape the notice of its inhabitants. Even before the nineteenth century there had been a slow de-camping to the country by some, though by no means all, who could afford it. Although country living might appear attractive in comparison to the noisy and noisome town, it was not unalloyed pleasure and the decision to move was not undertaken lightly.

⁹ *The Iris*. 12 April. 1831

¹⁰ White. *History and general directory*. 1833. p. 74

¹¹ *ibid.* p. 75

¹² *The history of the City of Sheffield, 1843-1993*. Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 1993. volume II: Society. p. 33

¹³ White. *History and general directory*. 1833

¹⁴ *ibid.* p. 1

¹⁵ White. *General directory and topography*. 1864. p. 7

The advantages of the countryside were readily apparent, and frequently listed in advertisements for available land in the area. Away from the chimneys and workshops of the town the air was clear, a house would be easier to keep clean and breathing problems would be fewer. The country was considered healthier, being away from epidemics which troubled large centres of population. This point was reinforced when cholera ravaged the town in 1832. Pure water was also a bonus, as was the quietness, so unlike the hurly-burly of the town. Children could play safely close to home and the risk of petty theft diminished. Fine views were yet another asset and also, a considerable of some importance, investment in land was one of the best places to keep money in case of future need. In addition, residents in the more sparsely populated townships could expect to pay lower Poor Rates.¹⁶

Against these benefits there were a number of possible problems. As mentioned in Chapter 2, moving from the centre of Sheffield was not just a matter of distance but also a change of terrain that influenced climate. High winds could make hilltop living bleak and increase the difficulty of travelling even short distances. Differences in climate can still be experienced at the end of the twentieth century: winter rain in the centre of Sheffield can mean sleet at Broomhill and snow on the heights of Ranmoor. For most of the nineteenth century winters were much more severe than now so the problem of access to the town was exacerbated.

Not only distance but access could be a problem. Once away from the comparatively good turnpikes, or the often less-good roads maintained by the individual townships, the suburban dweller was responsible for his own access road. Negotiating a right of way to remote sites could be a difficult and ultimately expensive business. A new house site had to be reachable in all weathers and, especially in the winter, passable without the aid of daylight. Although many of the new country dwellers were to some extent self-sufficient, keeping livestock and growing vegetables and even corn, there was still the need to obtain basic ingredients from town. Unless the householder had progressed to the rank of 'gentleman' on retiring from business, he would need to reach the town on an almost daily basis. All social contact and churchgoing would imply a journey with all the problems this might entail. Such journeys had to be made over poor and often ill-repaired roads. Even late in the century and on comparatively good roads such journeys could be hazardous.

The suburban householder was especially vulnerable at night since he was responsible for lighting his own way. Even after the 1818 Improvement Act lighting was restricted to an area of three-quarters of a mile from the Parish Church. Lack of light made the traveller vulnerable to footpads. All goods and services had to be obtainable on a fairly regular basis from the town and servants had to be provided with accommodation or be able to travel in daily. Children, if not educated at home or at a boarding school, would also have to travel regularly to town. In general, therefore, suburban living could involve a considerable amount of cold, wet and discomfort for all but the immediate family of the area's few carriage owners.

Even country living did not entirely dispense with the problem of neighbours. William Wilson was in dispute with his Endcliffe neighbour over field gates;¹⁷ Burbeary of Oakholme was continually in dispute with one or other of his neighbours trying either to divert or to pollute his water supply,¹⁸ and William Newbould was taken to court by a neighbour who had an argument with a Newbould employee.¹⁹

¹⁶ White. *History and general directory*. 1833. p.77

¹⁷ Chaytor. *Wilson's of Sharrow*. p. 95

¹⁸ Deeds of Oakholme, University of Sheffield collection of deeds.

¹⁹ *Sheffield Mercury* 12 July 1828

Building a house in the country was not just a matter of choosing a small plot of land with a pretty view and then being able to afford to build a house on it. To this had to be added the expense of obtaining a good, ample and regular supply of water, together with disposal of sewage and rubbish, as well as providing access to the site. Such considerations explain the popularity of old-established sites such as Endcliffe Hall. A new owner could be sure that at least the area was readily habitable, rather than going to the expense of putting up a new house and finding water was not available during a dry spell. Land close to existing roads, such as William Newbould's Broomhill site, also recommended itself: in good weather the Newboulds could walk or ride to their works at Little Sheffield along the field paths bordering Broomgrove and the Porter and in bad weather they could take a longer route using Brook Hill and Broad Lane.

Whether to live outside the town was a decision needing considerable thought, and in the early days of what might be called 'extra-urban' development, required a certain spirit of adventure. Moreover, at any time it required a level of wealth found in only a minority of Sheffield's inhabitants. To identify those who, throughout the nineteenth century, set the standard of suburban living, it is necessary to establish what might be termed the 'significant minority'. This consisted of men who not only could afford a high level of housing but who actually wished to spend for such a purpose. It should be emphasised that in Sheffield, the ability to afford something and actually buying it were not necessarily the same thing. The identity and size of this group will be discussed later in this chapter.

3.3 Suburban settlement

3.3.1 The national scene

The term 'suburbia', like 'middle class', is difficult to define and both terms have had a bad press. In his introduction to *The rise of suburbia*, Thompson writes, 'Suburbia rose between 1815 and 1939, an unlovely, sprawling artefact of which few are particularly fond.'²⁰ In his study of the design of suburbia Edwards, writing from the point of view of the architect and town planner, states that 'Suburbia is a dirty word. This is natural enough for, with rare exceptions, the appearance of Britain's suburbia is at best dull, and at worst hideous.'²¹ The areas of Sheffield that are the subject of this study bear no resemblance to either description. Simpson notes that most cities in Britain, Europe, North America and what he calls the old 'white dominions', all have a 'West End' of sorts occupied largely by the middle-class which usually implies 'a superior, sophisticated residential neighbourhood immediately beyond the central business district'.²² Sheffield's equivalent to such areas is to be found stretching out from Broomhall to Ranmoor. They form a level of suburban development that received local approval when built and still preserves a reputation as desirable locations.

As Edwards points out 'The appearance of suburbia depends on the manner in which houses, streets, fences and planting related to each other, even more than the design of the houses themselves, while its character is the result of the social and economic circumstances of the people for whom it was built.'²³ He suggests that:

²⁰ Thompson, F. M. L. *The rise of suburbia*. Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1982. p. 2

²¹ Edwards, A. M. *The design of suburbia*. London: Prentice Hall Press Ltd., 1981. p. 1

²² Simpson, M. A. *Middle-class housing and the growth of suburban community in the West End of Glasgow, 1830-1914*. (B. Litt thesis. University of Glasgow, 1970) p. 2

²³ Edwards. *Design of suburbia*. p. 1

*'A discussion of suburbia must therefore consider not only the architectural style of the houses and the forms which they took, but also the social habits of their occupants, the shape and character of any gardens, the manner in which the streets were laid out, and how the houses related to them, the ways in which the trees were planted and the type of trees employed, the effects of transport and of legislation on housing lay-out and perhaps most important of all, how much the inhabitants of suburbia could afford to spend on their homes.'*²⁴

Concluding that suburbia is a matter of atmosphere, he is of the opinion that a similarity of atmosphere is an element which places such as Wimbledon, Park Village, Edgbaston and St. John's Wood have in common. It will be suggested that Sheffield's western suburbs share something of the atmosphere of such places and yet remain distinctive, reflecting the character of the inhabitants and the town in which they made their living.

One of the earliest of this attractive type of suburb was Park Village, Regent's Park built by Nash in 1824, and described as 'pastoral in its inspiration and romantic in its intent'²⁵. Its success led to the development of the Eyre Estate, St. John's Wood, as a residential enclave of 'villa-residences', either detached or semi-detached. Such villas in the regency and early Victorian period came in a wide variety of styles and were often finished with stucco and then painted. Later, brick came into favour, often ornamented with increasingly elaborate barge-boarding as part of a gothic, many gabled style. This was succeeded by the 'Queen Anne' fashion, characterized by white-painted wood-work, square-headed windows, eave-cornices, tile hanging and rubbed-brick ornaments. The century ended with the vernacular-inspired houses pioneered by Norman Shaw, which led to a vogue for half-timbering of the type that characterizes 'Craggside', the Northumberland home of the Tyneside industrialist and armament manufacturer, William Armstrong.

Edwards suggests that, the 'Arcadian landscape of big houses in wooded plots of half an acre of land'²⁶ mask any irregularity of house design. It will be suggested that this was the case in much of western Sheffield. However, this was 'a pattern of development which could only be used by in the wealthiest estates.' As the wealthy 'are a small minority of society, and there are others, less prosperous than they, who also wanted detached, individually-designed houses set in their own grounds'²⁷ there was a need for what he calls 'pseudo-Arcadia'²⁸. In Sheffield such a need was met by much of the development in the Broomhill area in the second half of the century and also inspired the establishment of the Ranmoor Land Societies.

3.3.2 Suburban settlement - Sheffield

Much of the area that is considered in this study fell, at least initially, within the definition of 'Arcadia' but the later development of Broomhill provides an example of the move to 'pseudo-Arcadia'. It was only with the development of Broomhill that Sheffield could be said to have a suburb mainly inhabited by the affluent. However, there was a long tradition of those closely associated with the trades of the town living outside the urban centre.

²⁴ Ibid. p 2.

²⁵ Ibid. p. 13

²⁶ Ibid. p 25.

²⁷ Ibid. p. 25.

²⁸ Ibid. p. 25.

Early varieties of 'extra-urban' living

At the simplest level this took the form of combining farming with metalworking. The use of waterpower encouraged settlement close to the wheels. These were built along the banks of the various rivers that converged on Sheffield. This tradition of country living may well have been the reason that many town dwellers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, both artisans and the more affluent, took gardens on the edge of town when their work required them to live in the town.²⁹ These gardens were used partly as allotments, mainly for growing flowers and fruit, rather than for vegetables to supplement family diet. Such gardens seemed to play a much larger part in life than allowing a man to indulge in a taste for horticulture. Garden leases were frequently advertised in the local newspapers and it can be seen that they often contained what can best be described as fine weather chalets of the type which can still be seen in the outskirts of Copenhagen, Oslo and towns such as Lund in southern Sweden. Here the owner and his family could spend summer evenings or holidays. The most extensive had beds and cooking facilities and were sometimes advertised as suitable for an invalid needing to recuperate in a healthy location.

These gardens with their 'garden houses' provided a convenient and relatively inexpensive way in which a man might live close to work yet continue to enjoy the benefits of the country. James Montgomery had such an establishment close to the Glossop Road before he retired and took up residence in the newly completed 'The Mount' at Broomhill.

Apart from the garden house there was another way of mixing town and country for those who could afford it. This was a form of seasonal migration. When T.A. Ward was a young man his family lived in a house adjoining their works on the corner of Howard and Eyre Streets, one of the better parts of town although houses and workshops were built cheek by jowl in the customary way. In April of each year they took up summer quarters in a villa which they owned called Park House. This was hardly a mile away and the town house of the family and their country residence were probably within sight of each other, but Park House, as its name implies, was set in Sheffield Park, amongst green fields and above the smoky town. Each October, when the summer stench had abated and the possibility of bad weather made the daily journey to work a problem, the family packed up and returned to Howard Street.³⁰

It is not possible to say how prevalent this type of split living was in the town but advertisements for summer leases of houses close to the town seem to indicate that the Wards were not the only family to combine town and country. John Rimington, the legal advisor of the Cutlers' Company, was in the habit of eating and sleeping in his chambers in town when bad weather made the journey difficult to his house at Hillsborough.³¹

Growth of 'extra-urban' settlement

As described earlier in this chapter, Sheffield was a physically unattractive town in the eighteenth century and became increasingly so in the nineteenth. However, it could still be appreciated from a suitable distance as though 'dirty and comparatively mean within [the town] presents a striking object from many parts of the surrounding hills'³².

²⁹ Unless otherwise stated data on early gardens has been taken from Leader. *Reminiscences*.

³⁰ Ward. *Peeps*. (Various comments, *passim*)

³¹ Wilson (of Broomhead) family correspondence in private hands.

³² Hunter. *Hallamshire*. p. 3

Certainly, in the last quarter of the eighteenth century some of the richest of Sheffield's inhabitants began to build large houses within commuting distance of the town. Such movement of wealthy merchants is common to many English towns and is usually attributed to a wish to emulate the country houses of the gentry³³. Sheffield did have homes of the gentry in the vicinity, such as Broomhall and Stumperlowe and Fulwood Halls, so emulation may well have been the case in Sheffield, as no expression of an explicit reason for moving out of town has been traced from the men concerned. However, given the Sheffielder's boundless self-confidence, of which many instances will be mentioned in this study, it seems possible that the choice of location for houses such as Meersbrook or Page Hall was, at least in part, only an extension of a tradition of country living in a town where there had never been a clear-cut distinction between the urban and the rural.

As shown on Map 3, early settlers on the periphery of the town seem to have chosen any rural location that took their fancy, at any point of the compass. Some, like the Watsons of Shirecliffe Hall, built a new house on an old established site; others marked out new territory like Roebuck at Meersbrook. Sites which were easily accessible at a meeting point of roads, such as Highfields and the Sharrow area, attracted a clutch of settlers at the end of the eighteenth century, including Sitwell at Mount Pleasant and Henfrey at Brightfield. However, relatively difficult access did not necessarily deter the settler and William Shore carved out an estate at Tapton Grove. The Park also attracted a number of early settlers as it combined fine views of the town with proximity. This soon proved to be a weakness as Leader pointed out for many early 'country houses' had 'suffered the decadence that attends upon properties overtaken by the extension of a great manufacturing town'.³⁴ It will be seen that this could sometimes be a slow process and some outposts stood for a long time because the owner had affection for the site or was unable to find a buyer, but eventually Sorby left the Park and Bailey departed from Burngreave. Industry was to engulf any residential area that was found convenient for its purpose. In his history of the Sheffield and Rotherham Bank Leader gave profiles of the bank's directors during the nineteenth century, including their place of residence. Writing at the beginning of the twentieth century he regularly echoes Virgil's lament 'how altered, how changed'³⁵ after chronicling that yet another gracious residence had been overtaken by industry.

Despite the huge increase in the amount of land used for industrial development in the course of the nineteenth century, especially as a result in the massive increase in the steel industry, there was still an ample supply of pleasant green-field sites within reach of the town. The difference was that changes of land usage and increased pollution limited the location of the areas from which the town could be safely admired. As a result, the sites for houses of the prosperous became concentrated in a broad wedge to the west of the town. Here, the hilly land, not easily reached by navigable river or rail, was unsuitable for the development of heavy industry and the prevailing westerly wind kept out air-borne pollution from the increasingly industrialised eastern side of the town.

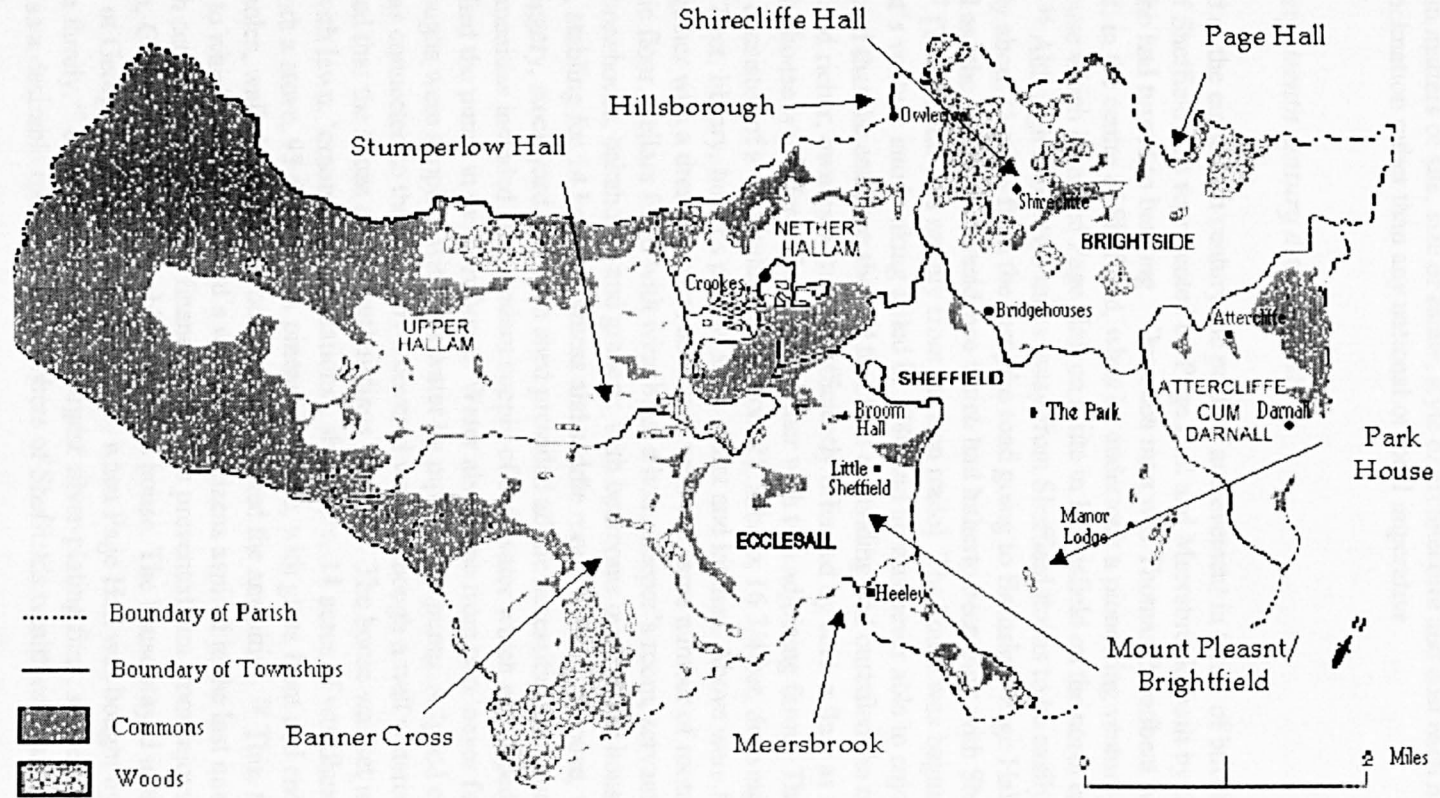
In considering the largest houses built around Sheffield during the nineteenth century the most striking feature, especially when compared with similar levels of development in other towns, is the degree to which they reflect the independent spirit of the inhabitants, which the commentators quoted in Chapter 2 found to be characteristic of Sheffield. There is little sign of rivalry to have the largest, most expensive or fashionable house in the area. Nor was there

³³ See, for example, Girouard, M. *The Victorian country house*. Rev. and enlarged ed. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1979. p. 291

³⁴ Leader. *Sheffield in the eighteenth century*. p. 108

³⁵ Leader. *Sheffield Banking Company*. p. 69

Map 3: Sites of early 'extra-urban' houses



emulation either of each other or the few aristocratic models available in the area. A brief survey of nineteenth-century building around the town will indicate the nature of this tendency and will be illustrated further in the case studies of individual suburbs. It will be seen that in matters of site, size of estate, style of architecture and cost each man followed his own inclination rather than any national or local imperative.

Late-eighteenth century development

At the end of the eighteenth century the peak of achievement in terms of building in the vicinity of Sheffield was represented by Page Hall and Meersbrook, built by the newly rich factors who had turned to banking. One such man was Thomas Broadbent who lived at Hartshead, in the centre of Sheffield, when he undertook a pioneering venture by starting to build a house which he called Page Hall on a site in Ecclesfield on the north east boundary of the town.³⁶ Although about two miles away from Sheffield it was to be easily accessible as it was only about ¼ miles from the turnpike road going to Barnsley. Page Hall was acclaimed as 'the handsomest residence which had hitherto been built with Sheffield made capital'.³⁷ [The capital was mainly from the iron trade] The house was begun in 1773 but Broadbent's venture into banking failed in 1780 and he was never able to enjoy Page Hall. Leader noted that the entrance showed that lack of funding had curtailed the original design but later, and richer, owners were not sufficiently offended by such a flaw as to amend it.³⁸ In 1824 the house was offered for sale, together with two adjoining farms. The 'elegant mansion' consisted of a vestibule, dining room 28 ½feet x 16 ¾feet, drawing room 28 ½feet x 17feet, library, butler's pantry, store closet and kitchen. Above were five lodging rooms together with a dressing room and there were the same number of rooms and a closet on the attic floor. Cellars fitted with wine bins, a housekeeper's room, servants hall, scullery, laundry, brewhouse, bakehouse and granery, with bedrooms over, coach house for 4 carriages, stabling for 14 horses, harness and saddle room, barn, cow house, waggon shed, kennel, piggery, stock yard and open shed provided all the necessities for country living. Further amenities included an abundant supply of soft water which was piped to the vinery and supplied the pump in the brewhouse. Water also came from two 'never failing' springs. Stable troughs were supplied with soft water by pipes and a pump. A 'good circular water closet' was connected to the house by a covered way. Although a well watered site, it was emphasised that the house and its outbuildings were dry. The house was set in pleasure gardens with lawn, 'ornamental plantations', shrubbery, 14 acres of woodland, gazebo and vinery, with a stove, 93 feet long. A pineapple house, with glass front and ends, heated by five fire holes, walled garden and orchards completed the amenities.³⁹ This, then was the life-style to which one of Sheffield's wealthiest citizens aspired in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Even though financial reverses prevented him from enjoying it another local man, George Greaves, was able to buy the house. The house stayed in the family until the death of George Bustard Greaves in 1834, when Page Hall was bought by a member of the Dixon family,⁴⁰ owners of one of the largest silver-plating firms, so the house was regarded as a desirable residence by members of Sheffield's wealthiest inhabitants for almost a century.

³⁶ Vickers, J.E. *Old Sheffield town: an historical miscellany*. [Sheffield?]: Applebaum Bookshop Ltd., 1978. p. 148

³⁷ Hunter. *Hallamshire*. p. 170

³⁸ Leader. *Reminiscences*. p. 108

³⁹ *The Iris*, 24 August, 1824

⁴⁰ Deeds of Page Hall in the Sheffield City Council collection of deeds

As both Broadbent, and his fellow would-be banker Roebuck, the builder of Meersbrook, were soon bankrupt, the citizens of Sheffield may well have felt initially that it was wise to be relatively modest in outlay for dwelling places. Mount Pleasant was built by the well-connected attorney, Francis Hurt, on a slightly more modest scale. Other attorneys such as John Watson of Shirecliffe Hall, Wake at Osgathorpe and John Rimington at Hillsborough adapted the site of older foundations to suit their needs. Rimington had a London-born wife so it may have been at her behest that the house was extensively refurbished although it was only a few years old when he bought it. No architect has been traced in connection with any of these houses. Most were of a relatively plain Georgian style, often in red brick and with a large door case as the only concession to ornament, so perhaps an architect's expertise was not required.

A rather more modest type of house was built by the silver-platers, such as William Newbould, who had made a complete break between the work and living places by building the house which would give its name to the suburb of Broomhill. Even at this more modest level only a very small number of Sheffield's inhabitants could afford such expenditure, and by no means all of those who could, availed themselves of the possibility.

Early nineteenth century development 1800-1850

Trade difficulties associated with the Napoleonic Wars and their aftermath reduced the demand for large houses around Sheffield even further. A few substantial houses straggled along the main roads out of Sheffield. On the west side of the town Brunswick House was built close to the lane which was to be incorporated into the Glossop Road and, where several roads met, a clutch of houses might appear as in the Highfields area. However, Thomas Holy's land had been laid out for building as early as 1808⁴¹ but no houses were built. By the opening of the Glossop Road in 1821 the Newboulds still had few neighbours. Their cousins, the Harrisons, had built a rather more impressive house called Weston, on what came to be known as Whitham Road. The houses of nearby Broomhill are described under the relevant case study. However, briefly, the early houses in the area consisted of the home of the Unitarian minister, Moor Oaks. Dr. Philipps [*sic*], his stipend presumably supplemented by a private income, had replaced an earlier building with a house which, from the only surviving blurred photograph, seems to have been in a Jacobean style, probably of brick⁴². A 'pleasure garden' was laid out on part of the ten-acre site. However, Westbourne House, its neighbour, Westbourne, and Benjamin Withers's The Willows, all modest Georgian houses of brick or stucco on sites of about one acre, were much more typical of the aspirations of silver platers in the early decades of the nineteenth century.

At this period a countrified site could still be found quite close to the town. Thomas Holy, probably the largest landowner on the western side of the town, was able to have a substantial house set in a large garden, relatively free of neighbours, at what is now the bottom of the busy shopping street called The Moor.⁴³ Although this was still quite a rural area Holy had not only his house but also his works close by, thus maintaining the old tradition of living close to where one worked. For those seeking greater separation between home and work the Park area offered splendid views over the town. Three generations of the family of T.A. Ward lived at Park House in the course of the nineteenth century. The Ward

⁴¹ Fairbank, J. & Fairbank, W. *Map of the environs of Sheffield*. 1808. (Kelham K1917.115)

⁴² Collection of illustrations concerning Broomhill made by Eva Wilkinson, Secretary of the Broomhill Action and Neighbourhood Group

⁴³ Deeds. Sheffield City Council collection of deeds

home was an attractive brick building but the home of the architect, Hadfield, was of stone in the gothic fashion, as were those of his associates who chose to live in the area. Probably the most unusual house in the Park, or possibly even in Sheffield was Queen's Tower, built for Samuel Roberts.⁴⁴ This is a good example of the way in which Sheffield's inhabitants felt free to pursue their own point of view or taste in architecture. It is not clear why Roberts, a self-opiniated protestant of almost Calvinistic austerity, an example of what Burns called 'the uncow good',⁴⁵ should have been enamoured by that 'daughter of debate', Catholic Mary, Queen of Scots. However, his hobby was to collect information and relics of the lady, particularly if connected to her long imprisonment at Sheffield. Queen's Tower is a romantic castle, of the type to be found in *Les tres riches heures du Duc de Berry*, a fairy-tale place, never intended to be defended or defensible. It is quite unlike anything else to be found in Sheffield: even Banner Cross appears sturdy and practical in comparison.

The opening of the Glossop Road at the end of 1821 began a new era for the Broomhill district. The new turnpike made it much more accessible from the town. Within the next few years all but one of the sites which offered the maximum use of the road without actually having to pay a toll had been taken. At least half of these houses were built for an owner-occupier. The building of so many houses, of such size and built so closely together may well have created a false impression of the number of Sheffield residents with the will and wherewithall to build more large houses in the vicinity. Speculative building beyond the toll bar at the end of the decade had limited success and only two pairs of semi-detached houses were built in what was to become Broomhill Terrace. It would seem that the demand for large houses on acre sites was very limited and the downturn of trade in the 1830s encouraged a more modest style of living.

William Flockton's The Mount, first advertised to the public at the end of 1831,⁴⁶ offered a fine compromise. The impressive exterior concealed spacious accommodation, available without the expense of a detached house and the shared, and comparatively small, garden reduced the cost of outside maintenance. This compromise between cost and amenities was to set the trend for future building in the area rather than the Mount View houses built for the Ward/Payne families. Oakholme, a plain ashlar-finished house in the classical style, set in an eight acre site on the western boundary of Broomhill was built in 1828. Adjoining the eastern boundary of Oakholme was Ashdell, built in 1838. These were the last large houses in substantial grounds to be built in Broomhill. Although the area remained highly desirable it could no longer easily accommodate estates of such a size and the richest inhabitants of the town began to look further west.

As Edwards points out, 'Arcadia... was a pattern of development which could only be used in the wealthiest estates.'⁴⁷ Cowen's view of western Sheffield painted in 1838⁴⁸ shows that Broomhill and Broomhall had, accidentally and entirely without anyone intending it, come to have an 'Arcadian' appearance. Set against a soft green hillside the great classical set pieces of The Mount and the Wesleyan School contrast with the Gothic Collegiate School and the extensive glazing at the Botanical Gardens. Broomhall, Oakholme, Ashdell and the few smaller houses emerge from the trees which mark the boundaries of their grounds and the whole pleasing scene is drawn together by the honey-coloured stone which has been used for most of the buildings. Quite by accident, and as the result of many independent decisions to

⁴⁴ Vickers. *Old Sheffield Town*. p. 74

⁴⁵ Burns, R. *Address to the uncow guid, or the rigidly righteous*, in: *Poems and songs of Robert Burns*, edited and introduced by James Barke. London: Collins. 1955.

⁴⁶ *Sheffield Mercury*. 17 December, 1831.

⁴⁷ Edwards. *Design of suburbia*. p. 25

⁴⁸ Cowen, W. *Sheffield from the south-east*. 1838. (Kelham K1919.28)

build, for almost a decade Broomhill displayed a mixture of many architectural styles spread over a lightly wooded hillside. This was to be the nearest approximation that Sheffield would ever have to the arcadian estate which Flockton's ambitious scheme envisaged for Endcliffe Vale.⁴⁹

It was apparent that further development would necessarily alter the landscape for the worse and end its fragile charm. Further to the west the owner of Endcliffe Hall, William Brailsford, had become bankrupt, as had his immediate predecessor. One of the partners of the bank, which was the bankrupt's major creditor, was convinced that the bank's money could be recouped by developing the Endcliffe land as a prestigious residential estate. The scheme was put in the hands of William Flockton and he took the opportunity to design an Arcadian landscape in the manner of Decimus Burton's design for Hove.⁵⁰

Flockton's brochure for the scheme shows an imaginary landscape, which skilfully incorporates the Endcliffe terrain and its existing buildings, the Hall and Endcliffe Crescent. He then superimposes winding paths between a number of new houses in a wide variety of architectural styles, ranging from a classical villa to a miniature castle, complete with flag flying from its tower.

Such flights of fancy were not for Sheffield and none of the projected houses was built. Future development to the west of Endcliffe was to result in the largest concentration of fine houses ever to be built in the vicinity of the town but, in typical Sheffield fashion, it came about in a quite *ad hoc* manner as the result of a number of quite independent decisions by monied individuals rather than as the result of any grand design.

The Nineteenth Century development, 1850 to 1900

In the early decades of the nineteenth century it had been not unusual to find houses advertised as a 'genteel country residence... ten minutes walk from the town'.⁵¹ Subsequently, increased prosperity and the accompanying rise in population had the result that, 'Sheffield, like the dragon of Wantley, gobbles up its own green border and demands each year its toll of the neighbouring fields.'⁵² It was said that, even before building took place, 'neighbouring fields... display... those signs of wear and tear and fatigue which woods and fields show under the pressure of an overgrown population'.

Those benefiting from the improved financial climate at mid-century had to travel a greater distance to find a desirable site. Once found, the increased level of prosperity allowed some of the leading cutlers to build houses that were impressive by Sheffield standards. George Wostenholm had a house erected as the centrepiece for the 150-acre estate he had built up at Sharrow. Wostenholm travelled widely on business, especially in America. Unlike most Sheffielders he seems to have been sufficiently impressed by what he observed on his travels to have both the house, Kenwood, and its grounds designed in a manner hitherto unknown in the vicinity of the town. Wostenholm had been one of the first residents of The Mount, William Flockton's great classical terrace at Broomhill. Having experienced the architect's style and quality of workmanship at first hand, he gave him what seems to have been his first commission for a large detached house. The result was of comparatively modest size

⁴⁹ Flockton, W. *View of Endcliffe Vale Estate*. [Illustrated brochure] 1841. (Kelham J1902.35)

⁵⁰ Burton, D. A project for development at Hove in Edwards p. 14

⁵¹ *The Iris*. 14 April 1800

⁵² Armitage, H. *Chantrey land: being an account of the North Derbyshire village of Norton*. Sheffield: Sheffield City Libraries, 1981. (Reprint of ed.: London, Sampson Low, 1910.) p. 236

compared with the extravaganzas of some Victorian industrialists in other parts of the country but the house was spacious and built in an attractive, rather light ‘Strawberry Hill’ Gothick manner. Contemporary reports describe it as being in the Tudor/Gothic fashion.⁵³ Its size and style are shown in Figures 3.2 and 3.3. To set the seal on his concept Wostenholm had Stanton limestone used for the house and it was set in gardens designed by Robert Marnock, the erstwhile curator of the Botanical Gardens.

Another leading cutler, Joseph Rodgers, chose a different location, architect and architectural style. Abbeydale House was said to have been built, ‘regardless of expense’. It was designed in the Italianate style by William Rooke-Harrison.⁵⁴ However, neither the architect nor the style found favour with the up-and-coming steel makers who were about to reach heights of wealth not previously known in the area.



Figure 3.2: Kenwood

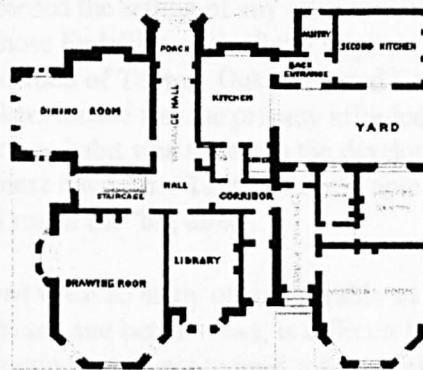


Figure 3.3: Kenwood - ground plan

Most of their building endeavours were concentrated in a relatively small area, as if men brought up in the crowded town still sought company. Their humble beginnings may also account for the relatively low level of expenditure. The houses described below may have been the epitome of opulent living by Sheffield standards, but no steel baron was ever bankrupted by extravagant building costs. The nucleus of this great development was Tapton Grove.⁵⁵ Towards the end of the eighteenth century Joseph Badger, who had a good eye for a site, had selected a plot on the extreme edge of the newly enclosed Crookes Moor that still provides one of the most breathtaking views in the area. By 1790 the house, which he had built as a speculation, was bought by William Shore, the banker, and greatly expanded by the new owner. By the time the widowed Mrs Shore died in 1853 the house was regarded as old fashioned and the purchaser, Edward Vickers had it demolished and replaced by a modern house which he named Tapton Hall. The Hall stood almost at the north end of its eight-acre site and looked down on another house lower down the slope, Endcliffe Hall.⁵⁶ This was originally a very old manor house that had been neglected for most of the eighteenth century. After it was sold by the Duke of Norfolk, various owners repaired and then rebuilt the old Hall. By the time Vickers came to rebuild Tapton, Endcliffe Hall was in the hands of a very successful silver plater, Henry Wilkinson. Although not as impressive as Tapton Hall, Endcliffe was a substantial house, having a smaller garden but being surrounded by a large amount of vacant land, part of the unsuccessful Endcliffe Vale Estate.

⁵³ *Sheffield Illustrated. Views and portraits, which appeared in the Sheffield Weekly Telegraph during the year 1885.* Sheffield: W.C. Leng & Co., [n.d.] p. 28

⁵⁴ *Sheffield Illustrated: views and portraits which have appeared in the Sheffield Weekly Telegraph.* Sheffield: W.C. Leng & Co., 1884. p.60

⁵⁵ Deeds of Tapton Hall, collection of the Sheffield Masonic Hall Company Ltd.

⁵⁶ Deeds of Endcliffe Hall, collection of the Yorkshire and Humberside TAVR Association

The two large houses were in relatively close proximity although each owner held a considerable amount of surrounding land.

By 1860 the steel industry was entering a period of unprecedented growth and profitability. One of the recipients of these dividends was Mark Firth. He chose to build a new house on the old Oakbrook Farm, which adjoined the western boundary of Endcliffe Hall. Firth retained the farm rather than clearing the site.⁵⁷ Oakbrook was not conspicuously larger than existing houses in the Sheffield area but its twenty-six-acre, landscaped site was more extensive than the norm.

Within a few years Wilkinson decided to retire and Endcliffe Hall came on the market. The Hall was sold to John Brown who quickly had it demolished and replaced by a new Endcliffe Hall which was not only much larger and ornate than anything Sheffield had seen before but also, with its forty-acre landscaped site, far exceeded the setting of any other manufacturer's mansion. Records do not suggest why Brown chose Endcliffe, with all the large vacant area to the west at his disposal. Certainly the juxtaposition of Tapton, Oakbrook and Endcliffe suggests that whatever else Sheffield's steel makers looked for, the privacy afforded by large remote sites was not amongst them. This gregarious habit was shown in the development that took place in the immediate vicinity during the next few years. Tapton Edge, Tapton Court and Thornbury and a number of others huddled round the 'big three'.

This concentration of large houses, cheek by jowl when so many other desirable sites were close by, which would have afforded greater privacy and better views, is difficult to explain. Certainly the new residents were sufficiently prominent men not to need reflected glory of living close to the greatest steel makers. Similarly, Vickers, Firth and Brown had nothing to gain from mutual proximity. It would seem that in Sheffield a man chose a site that appealed to him, regardless of neighbours. As all three men had begun life in the over-crowded centre of Sheffield where not only houses but also workshops jostled for position, the fact that Tapton looked down on Oakbrook and Endcliffe, or that Oakbrook was built close to the Endcliffe boundary rather than being centrally located on its plot, hardly seemed a disadvantage.

Newcomers to the area were not tempted to emulate either the scale of house or site of the existing residents: Sheffield seemed to have acknowledged that Endcliffe Hall represented a peak of conspicuous consumption which no one else wished to emulate. In earlier times the general view in England was that a man needed five acres and a cow to live comfortably. In nineteenth century Sheffield, to judge by the appearance of the Tapton, Endcliffe and Ranmoor area (which was to constitute the greatest concentration of very upper middle-class housing to be built in the vicinity of Sheffield) the optimum seems to have been eight acres and what estate agents described as 'an Ornamental sheet of water'.⁵⁸

In deciding on the size, style and location of their houses Sheffield's richest inhabitants chose to ignore the examples provided by the town's few aristocratic connections. Two such examples were available to them in the course of the nineteenth century. The 1828 Sheffield directory referred to the 'beautiful modern-gothic mansion'⁵⁹ of Banner Cross. This was a very old house that passed into the hands of General John Murray. He decided to have the house virtually rebuilt, only retaining a small part of the original structure.⁶⁰ An architect with a national reputation, James Wyatt, was employed to carry out the work. Murray died

⁵⁷ Deeds of Oakbrook, collection of Sheffield City Council

⁵⁸ For example. *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* 24 December 1858

⁵⁹ *Sheffield directory and guide*. 1828 p. lxxviii

⁶⁰ Linstrum, D. *Sir Jeffrey Wyatville*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972. pp. 130-131

before the ambitious scheme was completed but the work was carried on under his heir, the Reverend William Bagshaw. Stone for the house was brought from Baslow and Welsh and Westmorland slate was used for the roof. Various marbles were used for fireplaces that were made in Derby and London. The house itself cost £9,000 and stables, offices and a terrace brought the total cost to £20,000. At the same period some of the town's leading manufacturers were taking the great step of living 'in the country', rather than living next to their works. Such men were content to take plots of not more than an acre, bordering the Glossop Road, and build upon them houses required to be worth not less than £500.⁶¹

Later in the century, in 1858/9, an even more prestigious member of the upper class refurbished a house in the town itself. The Duke of Norfolk, wishing to strengthen his links with the town, had his agent move out of The Farm so that it could be made suitable for his 'occasional residence'.⁶² The work was entrusted to the Duke's Sheffield architects, Weightman, Hadfield and Goldie. Although the cost was not made public the local newspapers were enraptured by the 'quiet elegance' of the building and published a room by room account of each room and its furnishing.

Despite this enthusiasm in the press, the completion of The Farm did not result in a proliferation of towers in the new houses of Sheffield residents any more than Banner Cross had spawned the importing of stone to build miniature castles. Sheffield's residents probably felt more in tune with a more down-to-earth member of the gentry, Rev. James Wilkinson. Towards the end of the eighteenth century he had felt the need for extra accommodation at his family residence, Broomhall.⁶³ Accordingly, he had had Badger build a large new wing to his house in the classical style with an ashlar exterior. The result is very pleasing in itself but sits uneasily with the half-timbered old hall which it abutts. This cavalier attitude to the niceties of architecture, as well as the economy of using an existing wall as part of the new structure, is more in keeping with the manner in which the town's most prosperous men built their houses. Certainly, neither Banner Cross nor The Farm inspired a rash of look-alikes built by Sheffielders wishing to emulate the upper classes.

This section of the thesis has been concerned with the housing of a very small minority of the inhabitants of Sheffield: the most successful of the town's manufacturers and professional men, the most prominent men in civic life. Such men were not concerned with suburban development, rather with finding a pleasant site, accessible from the town, with a house of sufficient size and comfort to suit their needs at a price that they were willing to pay. Having the greatest ability to pay, the wealthiest could purchase any site which appealed to them and, usually having the option of more flexible working hours than those in a humbler situation, could choose sites further away from the work-place than someone needing to start early and finish late. Once a fairly remote house was completed the owner often wished to improve access, and any road improvement made the area more attractive to potential neighbours.

An example of this unintentional 'pioneering' of an area was the building of Oakbrook by Mark Firth. He was attracted to the site, although access was by a public cart track that was notorious for poor maintenance and frequent flooding. Once the house was completed Firth prevailed upon the Nether Hallam vestry to improve and re-locate the road.⁶⁴ His great influence in the town as a leading steel manufacturer enabled him to overcome the

⁶¹ Deeds of property demolished prior to the building of the Hallamshire Hospital, collection of Sheffield Area Health Authority

⁶² *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 6 August 1859

⁶³ Wigfull. *Broomhall Sheffield*. p. 170

⁶⁴ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 25 June 1859

considerable opposition to his plan. It seems likely that the improved road encouraged the building of more large houses in the area and the later development of the Ranmoor Land Societies.

This stratum of society represented by Firth and his neighbours was very thin. Below came a much wider band of men not quite so wealthy, but with much the same requirements. The similarity of needs usually meant that both groups favoured the same areas. However, the richer men chose to live in relatively close proximity one to the other in a loose group of large houses with grounds covering several acres, while men in the second group, willing to afford half-acre to one-acre sites, often established the nucleus of a suburb. The western suburbs of Sheffield were built by and for these two groups who constituted the most financially successful men in the town. The previous chapter considered who constituted these groups and the life-style that determined the type of accommodation they required.

3.4 The Great Houses - the high point of Western development

The case studies of individual suburbs in subsequent chapters largely deal with housing for the very prosperous. Before turning to the development of residential enclaves that could be described as suburbs consideration should be given to the group of houses referred to briefly in the previous section: the small group that marked the highest standard of living accommodation achieved in the Sheffield area. Such houses demonstrate the highest aspirations of some of the town's wealthiest inhabitants. Their size of house and grounds were the benchmark against which lesser suburban housing would be measured, and exemplified the taste of the most affluent. An investigation of the Western suburbs will show to what extent they influenced the locations chosen for the suburbs and what influence they had on the architecture of suburban houses.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, a number of large houses encircled Sheffield from an early period but Map 1 shows the complex of houses which represented the greatest concentration of wealth and power in nineteenth century Sheffield. This was the location, size and style of residence considered most desirable by some of Sheffield's most wealthy and successful men. The map shows that there are three very large houses with a number of smaller houses clustered about their flanks rather like three large whales attracting a school of smaller fish. A more detailed examination of the three largest houses will illustrate what Sheffield regarded as the height of fashion, opulence and even extravagance. Although highly regarded by their owners, and the town at large, it should be noted that no house in the Sheffield area was considered worthy of inclusion in Girouard's *The Victorian Country House*.⁶⁵ This survey shows that even Endcliffe Hall, the *sine qua non* of luxury in Sheffield eyes, pales to insignificance when compared to the extravaganzas of some other industrial magnates.

This is not to disparage the Sheffield houses. Of even the largest, only Endcliffe Hall was built to impress. Firth of Oakbrook and Vickers of Tapton Hall built for their own satisfaction: in true Sheffield style they acted to please themselves and were largely indifferent to the opinion of others. Sheffield has no examples of the expensive extravaganzas built, from reasons of pride or just the sheer delight in building, by the *nouveaux riches* industrialists such as Thomas Harris, a successful glove maker, who built the ornate 'Stokesay Court' in Shropshire.⁶⁶ The Marnock gardens in which Sheffield's

⁶⁵ Girouard, M. *The Victorian Country House*. Rev. and enl. ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985. pp. 205-212

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* p.421

great houses stand are similarly modest: no one channeled a fortune into garden creation in the manner of the owner of Biddulph Gange, James Bateman, who, when it had to be sold, commented ruefully that 'I only wish now that I had not expended so much money upon it.'⁶⁷ Even family rivalry did not stimulate building in the manner of the Crossley family of Halifax, each one attempting to exceed the other.⁶⁸ In Sheffield three of the Firth brothers lived in close proximity. Oakbrook was the earliest and the finest, but it is evident that the builders of Riverdale and Tapton Edge made no attempt to compete with their brother. Local attitudes are well summarized in a contemporary view of Birchlands, one of the smaller houses in the area: 'It is a roomy and comfortable house, with no ostentatious architectural features to arrest attention or excite remark. Birchlands was built for the convenience of its owner, more than as a show house for the multitude.'⁶⁹

Although such houses are the nearest equivalent that Sheffield has to what Girouard calls 'the power houses'⁷⁰, where the aristocracy maintained the social contacts that underlay their power, insofar that that they were places where clients and political or business contacts could be entertained, even Endcliffe Hall was built 'for the convenience of its owner' as a home as well as a show-place. The three largest houses of the group show how personal taste, family circumstances and business finances produced three very different houses in such close proximity.

To some extent this section could be headed 'now thrive the armourers'⁷¹, for it is ironic that, after centuries of producing tools for the beneficial tasks of agriculture and the home, it was only when Sheffield turned to the means of destruction that great wealth came to the town.

3.4.1 Tapton Hall

Although Endcliffe Hall, and to a lesser extent Oakbrook, received the most attention the first 'great house' in the area constructed by a steel magnate was Tapton Hall⁷². This house has possibly the best site in the area. It sits on a plateau just below the brow of the hill and has superb views across the valley of the Porter. The attractions of such a site had been noted by the town's leading architect/builder, Joseph Badger, as soon as the land became available after the Ecclesall Enclosure Award of 1788. Badger's plain house was quickly bought by William Shore and considerably expanded to become a 'gentleman's residence',⁷³ suitable for a member of the town's leading banking family. He gave it the name 'Tapton Grove'. It was the grove within which the house was set which enabled the owner to enjoy the splendid view and yet be well protected from the winds that sweep in from the moors. William Shore brought his new bride to Tapton Grove and, after his death, she spent her long widow-hood there until she died in 1853. Fairbank's sketch of Endcliffe Hall includes the only pictorial record of Tapton Grove that has been traced.⁷⁴ Although the sketch is rough it indicates that Tapton Grove was much smaller than its neighbour, the recently re-built Endcliffe Hall.

⁶⁷ Hayden, P. *Biddulph Grange*. London: National Trust, 1989. p.144

⁶⁸ Girouard. *Victorian country house*. pp.205-212

⁶⁹ *Sheffield Illustrated*. Sheffield: Sheffield Weekly Telegraph. 1884. p. 14

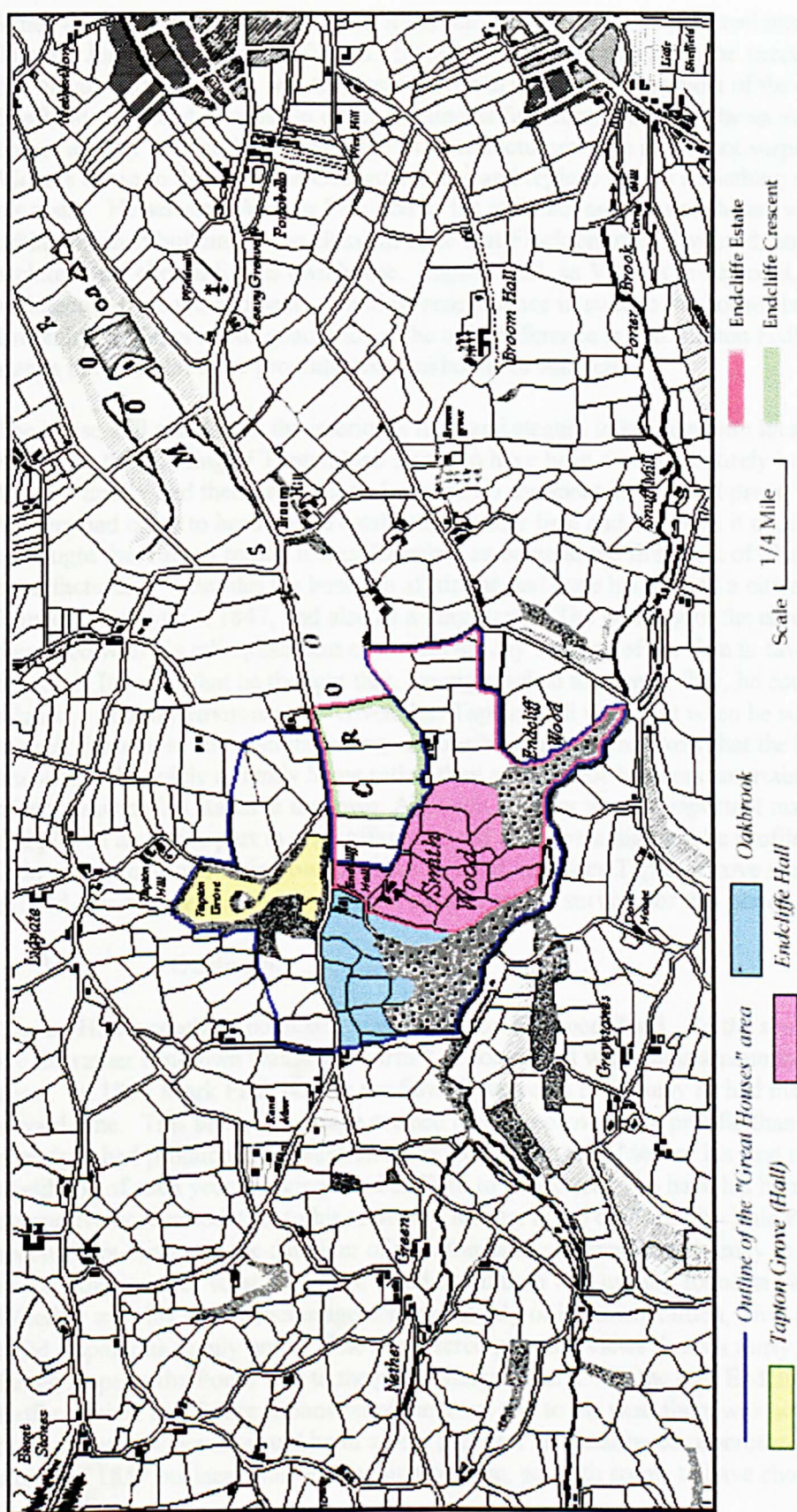
⁷⁰ Girouard, M. *Life in the English country house*. Yale University Press, 1978. p.2

⁷¹ Shakespeare, W. *Henry V*, Act I, Scene ii.

⁷² Unless otherwise stated data concerning Tapton Hall has been taken from deeds in the hands of the Sheffield Masonic Hall Company Ltd.

⁷³ Leader. *Reminiscences*. p. 40

⁷⁴ Fairbank, W. *A view of Endcliffe Hall and Tapton Hill near Sheffield*. in: *Field-book cxi*, p. 102 (Sheffield City Archives)



Map 4: The 'Great Houses' area

When the house came on the market, it attracted the attention of two steel manufacturers: Thomas Jessop and Edward Vickers. It was Vickers who was to be the successful bidder, but the attraction for him was the site rather than the house. For most of the century few Sheffielders valued antiques in either housing or furniture, seeking to be as modern in their homes as they liked to think they were as manufacturers. So it was not surprising that Vickers chose to demolish the Georgian house and replace it with something rather more to his taste. He selected William Flockton as his architect and the new house was a chaste, ashlar-finished building in the classical style that Flockton often favoured, and which the architect had chosen for his own house. Tapton Hall, as Vickers re-named it, broke no architectural ground and bears a marked resemblance in style to the houses built at Broomhill in the previous generation. The only difference is that Tapton Hall is larger and stands in more elaborate grounds than Oakholme or Ashdell.

The house still stands and the interior is light and elegant in keeping with its airy site. However, the building of Tapton Hall seems to have been a matter entirely between the Vickers family and their architect and excited no comment in the local press. Edward Vickers had come to head an old established family firm and had built it up until, at the time he bought the Tapton estate, it was described as being in the first rank of Sheffield steel manufacturers.⁷⁵ Besides his business affairs he had done his duty as a citizen, as a Town Trustee, as mayor in 1847, and also as a magistrate. The building of the new house coincided with his relinquishment of the day-to-day running of the firm in favour of two of his sons. It seems that he thought that, having reached the age of fifty, he could afford to relax in a country environment. Given that Tapton Hall was built when he was distancing himself from civic and manufacturing responsibilities it seems likely that the house was intended to be solely a family home rather than a centre for business entertaining or a means of emphasising his status in the town. Although Vickers was an important manufacturer and had played an active part in civic affairs, he did not have a high public profile so there was little newspaper interest in how or where he lived, nor does Tapton Grove seem to have excited any comment in the few private records which survive for this period.

3.4.2 Oakbrook

Tapton Hall's southern boundary was formed by Fulwood Road. To the south of the road lay the rather run-down Oakbrook Farm⁷⁶, a homestead with fields amounting to about 26 acres. In 1859 Mark Firth bought the farm. Two years previously he had married for the second time. This second marriage seemed likely to prove more prolific than the first, for already it had produced two children to add to the two daughters of his first marriage. The likelihood of each year bringing another Firth to house seems to have led him to seek alternative accommodation to his relatively modest home on Endcliffe Vale Road. The second Mrs Firth was the daughter of a Nottingham alderman and so may have had a rather wider experience of what social life could entail than was usually found in Sheffield.⁷⁷ Whether with his wife's encouragement or entirely of his own volition, Firth undertook to build a spacious family home. The site offered pleasant views down a fairly gentle south-facing slope to the Porter and to the green banks beyond. To the east Endcliffe Hall made a buffer against any future expansion of the town and to the west there was nothing but farmland, so the new house would be in a very pleasant and healthy environment. After the trade slump of 1857 business was once again booming, so Firth seems to have chosen a good time

⁷⁵ Tweedale. *Steel city*. p. 65

⁷⁶ Unless otherwise stated data concerning Oakbrook are taken from deeds in the Sheffield City Council collection

⁷⁷ Marshall, A.C. & Newbould, H. *The history of Firths 1842-1918*. Sheffield: Thomas Firth and Sons, Ltd., 1924.

to divert surplus income to cover building expenses. The final bonus of the site was that its eastern boundary was the Oakbrook. This ensured a well-watered site and the stream was the boundary that marked the end of Ecclesall Bierlow and the beginning of Upper Hallam. As the most sparsely inhabited of all the Sheffield townships its rateable value was very low, an asset that was highly prized by industrialists who had already moved into the far west of the township.⁷⁸

Firth's treatment of the site was unusual in several ways. First, he retained the building that already existed. The farmhouse was refurbished and turned into a small home-farm to supply the new owner. Secondly, a large part of the estate was landscaped. It was not unusual for a settler in western Sheffield to purchase several fields, build a house in one, landscape a small area and use the remainder as farmland, either for himself or by letting. Firth not only dammed the Oakbrook so that, like Tapton Hall, he had a small lake, complete with fountain, and he also had everything except the home-farm and walled kitchen garden landscaped and turned into a 'pleasure garden'.

Once again the Flockton family was chosen to design the house.⁷⁹ An Italianate style was selected, unlike anything hitherto seen in western Sheffield. The form was pleasing and the rooms spacious but, like Tapton Hall, this was a family house of domestic proportions. In 1874 to 1875 the architects were recalled to extend and improve the house. The completion of the alterations coincided with Firth acting as host to the Prince and Princess of Wales. As with Tapton Hall, the building of Firth's Oakbrook, although the home of a powerful manufacturer and a man active in public affairs had not received much public notice. However, alterations to a house that was to receive royalty generated much local newspaper attention.⁸⁰ With typical modesty Firth thought it necessary to disclaim publicly that the alterations were inspired by the coming visit, rather they were long planned changes to accommodate the changing needs of his growing family.⁸¹ Firth appears to have been a very truthful man so this may well have been the case, though it does seem that the sudden proliferation of lavatories and en-suite bathrooms, not to say a billiard room and smoking room, was at the very least fortunate for a house which was expecting such illustrious guests. Royal fever gripped even prosaic Sheffield, at least if contemporary newspaper accounts are to be believed. The *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* reached for superlatives to assure its readers that the visitors would find nothing wanting in the facilities awaiting them. The house offered 'every conceivable comfort and luxury that taste can suggest and wealth ensure.'⁸²

Even with the extensions and alterations, Oakbrook remained a home rather than a great house designed for entertaining. Cornices, internal decoration and fireplaces are all relatively plain and entirely what might be expected from such a pillar of the New Connexion Methodists of the town. Firth was also one of the first of the town's manufacturers to show an appreciation for the old rather than tearing out everything, even if of fairly recent construction, in order to replace it with something 'modern'. The Royal visit was partly in order to open Firth Park that had been formed from the grounds of Page Hall. A hammered steel fireplace was taken from the old house to be fitted in a room at Oakbrook and the oak bookcases, made from trees grown at Page Hall, were also saved to be placed in the library of Oakbrook. Firth's house, now a school, retains much of its woodwork, which must have been one of the most pleasing features of a building which still has traces of the restful

⁷⁸ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 25 June, 1859

⁷⁹ *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* 19 August 1875.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*

welcoming home it once was. Of all the relics of Firth's house the bookshelves from Page Hall are probably the finest. The wood glows from the walls of the small library, tempting the visitor to stroke the silky finish and reflect that this must have been a very pleasant haven for a man plagued by many cares and obligations.

Oakbrook, even after the 1875 extensions, is by no means a vast house and its compact shape and plain exterior are in marked contrast to its neighbour to the east, Endcliffe Hall.

3.4.3 Endcliffe Hall

Of all the houses built by Sheffield's leading manufacturers Endcliffe Hall was generally acknowledged by the town's inhabitants to be the largest, finest, most expensive and standing in the largest and most elaborate grounds.⁸³ This was a judgement with which the owner, Sir John Brown would have heartily agreed.

To understand why Endcliffe Hall is so different from all the other 'great houses' of Sheffield and why no-one tried to emulate it, let alone surpass it, it is necessary to understand the character of its builder and how it differed from that of his fellow citizens. Brown was a flamboyant bantam cock amongst the drab farmyard fowl who were his fellow industrialists. Endcliffe Hall was his supreme creation and reflects his character. The portrait painted to commemorate his term of office as Mayor shows him standing foursquare and confident, in a posture reminiscent of Holbein's painting of Henry VIII.⁸⁴

In his business life Brown was known for his seizing of opportunities and taking chances where lesser men would have opted for caution. In public life he also had a flair for the dramatic. As a noted patriot he was quick to raise a troop from amongst his workmen for the newly formed Volunteers. When another industrialist matched this, Brown topped it by raising a second troop. No one else was tempted to follow his lead. To ensure that his men did not lack spiritual comfort he built All Saints for them in Ellesmere Road, close to Sheffield's industrial centre. This was often affectionately known as 'John Brown's church', and he did not disdain to attend the church himself, in some state, though there were other churches nearer to his home. His public generosity was well known and he also found time to participate in public life, as Town Trustee, Mayor, Master Cutler, magistrate and Deputy Lord-Lieutenant of the West Riding. A naturally gregarious man he welcomed opportunities for extending hospitality and celebrated everything from his Mayoralty to his birthday.

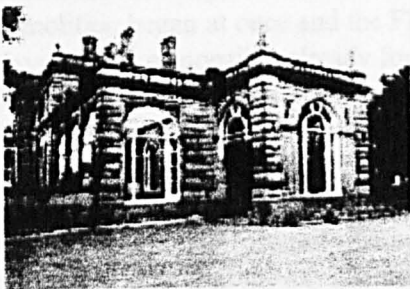


Figure 3.4: Endcliffe Hall

Before Brown attained the heights of the steel industry all his immediate family had been engaged in various aspects of the building trade. This may account in some measure for his great interest in the refurbishment and building of houses. When he first became affluent he leased Shirle Hill in the Sharrow area, an old house which had been allowed to decay. Brown spent a considerable amount on bringing it up to a standard fit to accommodate the increasing

⁸³ Unless otherwise stated data concerning Endcliffe Hall have been taken from deeds in the Yorkshire and Humberside TAVR collection of deeds.

⁸⁴ *Catalogue of the costly and very valuable furniture...* [etc.] London: Maple & Co. Ltd., 1893. (Copy in the Brotherton Library, University of Leeds)

number of clients who visited his Atlas Works and needed lodging and entertainment during their stay.

By 1863 he seems to have decided that Shirle Hill no longer suited his requirements and so bought Endcliffe Hall when it came on the market. The hall was relatively new but Brown had had enough of adaptations and alterations: he would build a new Endcliffe Hall that would embody the best that Sheffield could produce. In choosing Endcliffe Brown showed that he had no interest in a remote and exclusive site. Large tracts of Ranmoor farm-land were readily, and cheaply, available to the west where a man could have unbroken views all around with no possibility of being overlooked by neighbours. At Endcliffe he had Edward Vickers overlooking from the north and, although the grounds of Endcliffe were extensive, the site of the house was very close to the boundary with Oakbrook in the west and Endcliffe Crescent pressed up against the eastern boundary.

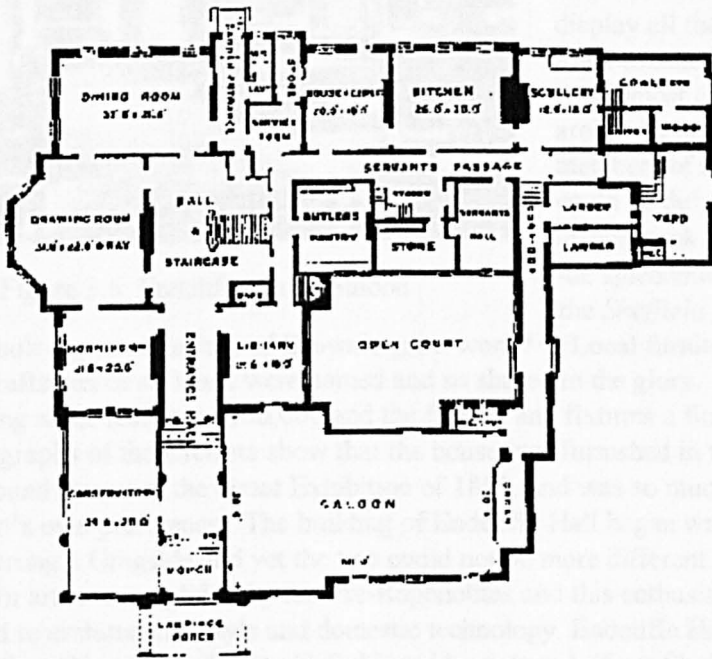


Figure 3.5 Ground Floor Plan of Endcliffe Hall

Some, with long memories, might consider Endcliffe an unlucky estate for it was the siren that had tempted two of the three previous owners on to the rocks of bankruptcy. Any disadvantages were outweighed by the attractive south facing slopes of the estate with charming views down to the Porter and the green banks beyond. Also, it was readily accessible from town, thanks in part to the efforts of Mark

Firth, who had pressed for Fulwood Road to be upgraded to a proper road rather than the poorly maintained public cart track, which it had been since time immemorial.

Brown immediately made it clear that he was attracted to the site rather than the hall itself. Demolition began at once and the Flockton partnership was invited to design a new hall. Having been responsible already for the classical simplicity of Tipton Hall and the Italianate Oakbrook, the Flocktons chose a style for Endcliffe that Hunter described as 'Italian in the French manner'.⁸⁵ In the twentieth century Pevsner was less kind, calling it 'Italianate with some dissolute decoration'.⁸⁶ In Brown the architects had no compliant employer, willing to leave everything in the hands of experts. He took a keen interest in all aspects of the building, initialling plans to signify his approval or making notes for alterations. Visiting the house, it is clear that the key element that he required in design was ornament. This is a house built for a man who considered that the prime purpose of any surface was to act as a basis for decoration. A small example of this love of ornament for its own sake is to be found in the treatment of the top rail of the low balcony in front of each of the main bedroom

⁸⁵ Hunter. *Hallamshire*. p. 379

⁸⁶ Pevsner, N. *The buildings of England. Yorkshire. revised edition*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1967. p. 466

windows. The outward facing surface is scarcely visible to the naked eye from ground level yet it is decorated, as is the surface facing towards the room and even the narrow edge which would be seen if the occupant of the room were to look down upon it. All this on a rail hardly two inches deep and 1 inch wide and unlikely ever to receive close scrutiny. The stone and wood surfaces of Oakbrook are smooth and invite an admiring touch, whereas the surfaces of Endcliffe are eye-catching, but the sharp edges of carving, which cover virtually everything, deter the hand.

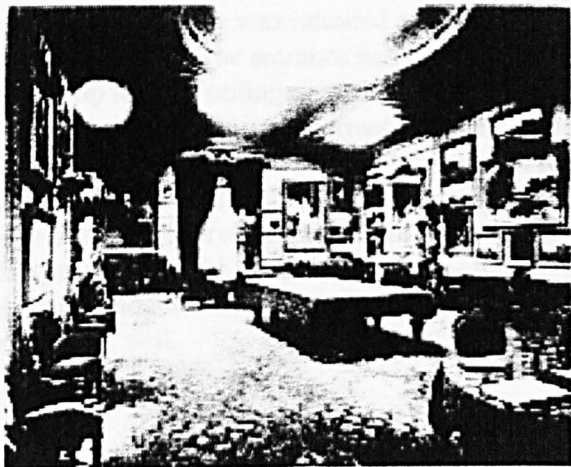


Figure 3.6: Endcliffe Hall - Saloon

the whole town was aware of Brown's great work.⁸⁷ Local furniture makers, stove makers and craftsmen of all kinds were named and so shared in the glory. It was said that the building alone had cost £100,000 and the fittings and fixtures a further £60,000. Photographs of the interiors show that the house was furnished in the highly ornate style that had found favour at the Great Exhibition of 1851, and was so much in accordance with Brown's own preference. The building of Endcliffe Hall began within a few years of that of Armstrong's Cragside and yet the two could not be more different. Armstrong had a love of modern art as exemplified by the Pre-Raphaelites and this enthusiasm for the new seemed to extend to architectural style and domestic technology. Endcliffe Hall, in comparison, with its 1851 furnishings was almost old-fashioned by national, if not Sheffield, standards by the time it was completed in 1865.

When Brown took up residence at Endcliffe Hall he was at the zenith of his career. It seemed that he had received every high office available in the town and his firm was a leader in its field, yet almost as soon as he came to the house problems arose. Like some hero in a Greek tragedy, guilty of hubris, the golden young man who had seemed to succeed in everything he attempted was increasingly plagued by difficulties and his personal, public and business life went into a long, slow decline for the next thirty years.

The key element in this decline seems to have been his state of health. By the end of 1864 he was missing board meetings owing to ill health and he was unable to take his place as Master Cutler at the end of 1865 for the same reason. The exact nature of his complaint was never mentioned and it is difficult to suggest what could have been so incapacitating, and yet not life threatening, for so long. It may have been at least partly due to a form of mental stress as two years before his death he was declared legally insane.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 24 May, 1865

⁸⁸ 'Death of John Brown' *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* 28 December, 1896.

However, it was not entirely a story of gloom and Brown seems to have enjoyed entertaining at Endcliffe at least until 1875. Having seen the saloon *en fête* for a formal evening given by the present owners, the Yorkshire Volunteers, it is possible to imagine how the house looked in the days of its glory. With all the lights blazing the house glows like a jewel in its green setting and the saloon itself, decorated with banks of flowers and the regimental silver gleaming on the tables, gives an indication of the splendid effect Brown wished to create.

Although the house was intended as a showcase and place for entertaining it is not overwhelming. The entrance hall does not soar to great heights and the fireplaces do not tower up to lofty ceilings. Although the rooms are spacious, it is possible to work in the drawing room, even in its current relatively sparsely furnished state, without feeling overwhelmed by the size. Indeed, filled with the heavy furniture that the Browns favoured, it may well have seemed crowded. Even a childless couple, given that the house had a large complement of servants, would not rattle around in a house the size of Endcliffe and, though the years did not bring the success for which Brown might have hoped, he and his wife could look around them and reflect that, for a builder's son and an auctioneer's daughter, they had done very well.

3.5 Conclusion

Tapton, Oakbrook and Endcliffe were the benchmarks against which all Sheffield houses were measured. For almost a decade after the completion of Endcliffe the area attracted a number of fine houses. However, the builders did not seek to match the big three in size of house or estate. Vickers, Firth and Brown seem to have set a level that was larger and more expensive than any of their contemporaries thought necessary for comfort or status. The relative modesty of the housing requirements of Sheffield's *nouveaux riches*, with its emphasis on practical rather aesthetic considerations, can be linked to the experiences of their formative years.

The fate of the three houses may be seen as an indication of the changing nature of Sheffield society. When Endcliffe Hall was sold at the end of the century no private buyer could be found for the elaborate, and by now old-fashioned house. Nor was the large estate found sufficiently attractive for a new owner to follow Brown's example and buy it in order to demolish the Hall and replace it with modern home. Mark Firth had a large family but, although Mrs Firth spent her widowhood at Oakbrook, none of the children wished to take over the old family home. The house did remain in private hands, being bought by a member of the Laycock family. The Laycocks had been amongst the earliest industrialists to move out of Sheffield, going to Stumperlowe on the extreme western edge of this study. Laycock, although not being on the high level achieved by Firth was a successful industrialist. He spent a considerable amount on refurbishing the house so Oakbrook did not suffer the ignominy of Endcliffe Hall. Edward Vickers of Tapton had been the first steelmaker to come to the area and he was the first to leave. None of his sons wished to take over Tapton Hall, possibly indicating the future trend of the offspring of Sheffield's richest inhabitants having wider horizons and looking away from their birthplace. Tapton Hall's new owner was drawn from that solid core of Sheffielders who, though they were wealthy, saw their future always to lie at Sheffield.

Chapter 4

The land, land-ownership and development

4.1 Introduction

The transformation of green field sites into suburbs is usually complex and even small transactions may take a long time to complete. The processes of change can be considered under a number of headings.

1. How information on land availability was disseminated
2. How sales were transacted.
3. The use of surveyor or architect to prepare an estate for sale.
4. The process of buying land.
5. The exploitation of an estate.
6. The relationship between landowner and builder.

A popular illustration for histories of housing is George Cruikshank's cartoon 'London going out of town, or the march of bricks and mortar'¹. This shows terrified hayricks, broken fences and dying trees being overwhelmed by a phalanx of building tools supported by artillery of bricks being spewed out from a range of brick-kilns. The advance of western Sheffield was by no means as rapid as the cartoon might suggest. The time lag between finding a site, making a purchase and finally constructing a house could be a long drawn-out procedure.

4.2 Land availability

Advertisements of land for sale were placed in Sheffield's newspapers throughout the nineteenth century but such advertisements accounted for only a small proportion of the land sold. Most of the Norfolk and Gell land changed hands without any newspaper mention of availability. In a small, close-knit community such as Sheffield no doubt a great deal of information was transferred by word of mouth, those wanting to sell being well acquainted with those willing to buy. For large holdings more formal procedures were required.

An example of the way a prosperous family bought and sold land, together with the way in which they used their purchases, can be found in the records of the Wilsons. The various branches of the family of Sharrow Mill were heavy investors in land throughout the century and a number of sale catalogues kept by the family indicate the network by which information on sales was disseminated. Broomhall Park was sold privately in 1802.² A catalogue was produced for a further sale in 1810 but again the purchases seem to have been made privately.³ The brochure only gives the name of the auctioneer and no information on the source of the brochure. In the same year Banner Cross was offered for

¹ For example, Burnett, J. *A social history of housing 1815-1985*. 2nd ed. London: Methuen, 1986, between pages 52 and 53 and Marshall, J. & Willox, I. *The Victorian house*. London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1986. p.9

² Wilsons & Co. (Sharrow) [*Archives at Sharrow Mill*]

³ Copy of catalogue in the Wilsons & Co. (Sharrow) [*Archives at Sharrow Mill*]

sale. This sale had a much larger brochure, the cover being printed in an eye-catching red⁴. The brochure indicated that 'printed particulars' could be obtained at inns in Chesterfield, Nottingham, Mansfield, Derby and Leeds as well as from two London attorneys, seeming to indicate that it was hoped that the sale might attract interest over a wide area.

Probably the most important sale of land in the vicinity of Sheffield came in 1850.⁵ This was the Norton estate of the bankrupt Shore family, some 2,100 acres lying mainly in Derbyshire on the southern boundary of the Parish of Sheffield although a small portion was in the Heeley area. A large catalogue was issued prior to the sale, giving maps indicating the location of the various lots, brief descriptions of each and large sketches of the most important houses. As befitting such an important sale the catalogue was available at the chambers of a number of London solicitors, in addition to two Sheffield legal firms, also Fowler and Son, land agents, and the offices of the auctioneers. Inns continued to be a centre for the dissemination of information on land sales as the catalogue was to be had at any of the principal inns at Sheffield, Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool, Doncaster, Chesterfield, Derby and Birmingham.

The Wilson family records⁶ suggest that that the brothers kept abreast of land sales and acquired 'printed particulars'⁷ of most important sales: catalogues for sales of Broomhall, Banner Cross, Gell's Tpton Estate and Parker's Norton Estate are still amongst the archives at Sharrow Mill. The earliest catalogues bear annotations in the spiky handwriting of the second Joseph Wilson, giving bids, and prices obtained, for most lots, sometimes giving the name of the purchaser. This may have been for future reference, as members of the family were considerable buyers of land, mainly in the vicinity of the Mill. However, at least two local attorneys were used to carry out negotiations on behalf of members of the family, sometimes attending sales and sometimes carrying on purchases, initiated either by the Wilsons or a prospective vendor. Such transactions could be long drawn-out and tedious, the sale of a quite small plot of land lasted so many years that the elderly vendor, who declared herself to be too old to be hurried, died before agreement could be reached and the sale was finally completed by her heirs. Annotations on bills from attorneys indicate the frustrations of conducting business before the invention of the telephone. It was not unusual for an attorney to arrange a meeting, travel to keep the appointment at some outlying spot to find that his object had 'been called away on business' or 'had not yet returned'. Payment claimed for having 'waited upon' a client was often a literal description. All members of the Wilson family drove a hard bargain and this could lead to a long delay in achieving an end. At mid-century the second William Wilson married and wished to buy a large house. There were many approaches to owners of possible property and offers from prospective vendors over several years before he finally bought Dore Moss, about five miles SW of Sheffield in what was then the Derbyshire village of Dore.

Preparing an estate for sale involved a great deal of effort and some expense as it had to be divided into suitable lots and a surveyor employed to verify the area. When the first William Wilson died in 1843 the family employed William Flockton to survey the estate. Flockton does not seem to have had any formal training in surveying but, as with architecture, picked it up as he went along. The measurement of this estate, and also legal disputes such as Burbary of Oakholme's long drawn-out battles with his neighbours, reveals the commanding position which the Fairbank family held in all questions

⁴ Copy of catalogue in the Wilsons & Co. (Sharrow) [*Archives at Sharrow Mill*]

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ Wilsons & Co. (Sharrow) [*Archives at Sharrow Mill*]

⁷ *ibid.*

concerning land in Sheffield. Generations of Fairbanks were the leading surveyors in the area for almost a century. The family was the ultimate point of reference in any dispute as a result of the library of plans and notes, which the firm had built up over the years.⁸ It is a mark of Flockton's supreme self-confidence that, when his measures did not match those on early Fairbank plans of Norfolk land, in a testy exchange of letters with the Fairbank of the day, he would go no further than say he could not agree to the earlier quantities, implying that they were wrong and he was right.⁹

The expectations of those at the top end of the housing market are outlined by T.J. Flockton in advice offered to the Trustees of the Boys Charity School in 1859¹⁰. Changes in land use were beginning to take place close to land that they owned on the borders of Tapton and Ranmoor. Flockton, as Architect to the Trustees made a number of points. As 'houses of the better class' were being erected in the area they could hope to attract those wanting to build 'villas with from ½ to four or five acres'. Such people 'will without hesitation spend about £1,000 to £3,000 on the purchase of a site when they would on no account erect a house on a site saddled with a proportionate ground rent'. Accordingly he advised against offering ninety nine year leases but rather to have the land divided into lots and an approach road made as it became necessary to make them accessible, once permission had been obtained for the sale of land. The road would have to be 'serpentine' as the land 'being rather steep' this would be the only way to effect a 'moderately easy approach'. He recommended that the availability of the land should be brought 'under the notice of the public' as soon as possible as the Trustees had already lost the opportunity of selling to Mark Firth. At the time the land was being farmed by a tenant at a rent of £120 per year and the rent would only be required to be reduced as and when land was taken for building. The decision to sell off the farm must have been a bitter blow to Gatty, the tenant. Earlier in the year he had been a strong opponent of the suggestion of improving Fulwood Road,¹¹ perhaps fearing that it might encourage further settlement and hasten the change from farming to housing in the area. Flockton expected that plots exceeding three acres could be sold for £400 per acre and smaller plots for £500. By 1863 the first plot had been sold to become the site of T.J. Mappin's home, Thornbury. In the event Mappin gave £630 per acre for a six-acre plot and Flockton admitted that this was more than he would have considered the land to be worth. Possibly it was an act of generosity on the part of Mappin to a worthy charity.

As even the purchase of a small plot of land suitable for a single house could involve negotiations, delay and expense, it was hardly surprising that, as Ling found in his study of the Ranmoor land societies, the majority of purchasers preferred to buy a house rather than to buy land and then becoming involved in yet more waiting and cost arising from commissioning a builder and having a custom-made house.¹² Given this understandable reluctance it is not surprising that, for all but the largest houses, the initial selection of a site and the choice of the style in which to build fell in the first instance to a builder, the buyer or renter then making a choice from completed products. A middle option was advertised in Flockton's publicity for The Mount. Here, prospective buyers were offered the opportunity to view a shell then if the style and location were acceptable, the interior could

⁸ Deeds of Oakholme, University of Sheffield collection of deeds

⁹ Wilsons & Co. (Sharrow) [*Archives at Sharrow Mill*]

¹⁰ Unless otherwise stated all data in this paragraph has been taken from the deeds of Thornbury, Sheffield Area Health Authority collection

¹¹ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 25 June 1859

¹² Deeds of Thornbury, Sheffield Area Health Authority collection of deeds

be adjusted to individual needs.¹³ Such scope was only available for houses in the course of erection. However, purchasers of completed houses were not averse to making radical changes to layout. Deeds of the houses built in the 1820s at the junction of Glossop and Clarkehouse Roads show that individual houses were split into two and then later owners reverted to use as a single house.¹⁴ As described later in the chapter, a house might be radically altered when it changed hands or family circumstances varied.

4.2.2 Land ownership in western Sheffield

The township of Sheffield was one of the six that made up the large parish of Sheffield. Fairbank's map of 1771¹⁵ shows it to have been a compact town lying close to the conjunction of the Don and the Sheaf with Coal-pit Lane and Blind Lane forming the south-western boundary. By 1797¹⁶ the town was still relatively compact and westward expansion had been limited to the building of Carver Street and further expansion was indicated by staking out a long new street, to be called Rockingham Street. This slow development in 26 years, when the town was experiencing a hitherto unknown level of prosperity, did not prepare the inhabitants for the rate of change on the western boundary in the next century. However, Coal-pit Lane was part of the boundary between Sheffield and its western neighbour, Ecclesall Bierlow. This boundary stretches north from the Porter in a highly irregular manner which is very difficult to trace, but it is clear that any westward movement would have to be made by Sheffield spilling over into the next township.

Ecclesall landowners, both large and small, with holdings conveniently located for Sheffield's over-spill, were always willing to accommodate prospective builders and, when Nether Hallam, and even remote Upper Hallam, came under the developer's eye, outright sale or building leases were always readily available. Indeed, eager suppliers often outstripped demand.

The area covered by this study lies about a half-mile west of the Ecclesall border as shown on Map 1. At the beginning of the nineteenth century it was farmland with a few hamlets and isolated farms scattered over it. By the end of the century the area had been transformed into the suburbs of Broomhill, Broomhall and Ranmoor. The boundaries of the study area are a broad indication rather than a precise delineation, as what was regarded as the location of a suburb could vary over the years and also it is sometimes necessary to consider land outside the boundaries in order to understand changes within.

The earliest map of the area is a reconstruction of the land surveyed by John Harrison for the lord of Sheffield in 1637.¹⁷ The field patterns and footpaths shown survived well into the nineteenth century and some of them can still be traced in twentieth century streets and roads. Ownership of this land had descended, by marriage, to the house of Norfolk;¹⁸ by the end of the eighteenth century it fell broadly into three parts:

1. a central area bordering Fulwood Road, constituting the 170 acres of common land known as Crookesmoor;
2. land to the north and west of Crookesmoor owned by the Duke of Norfolk; and

¹³ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 17 December 1831

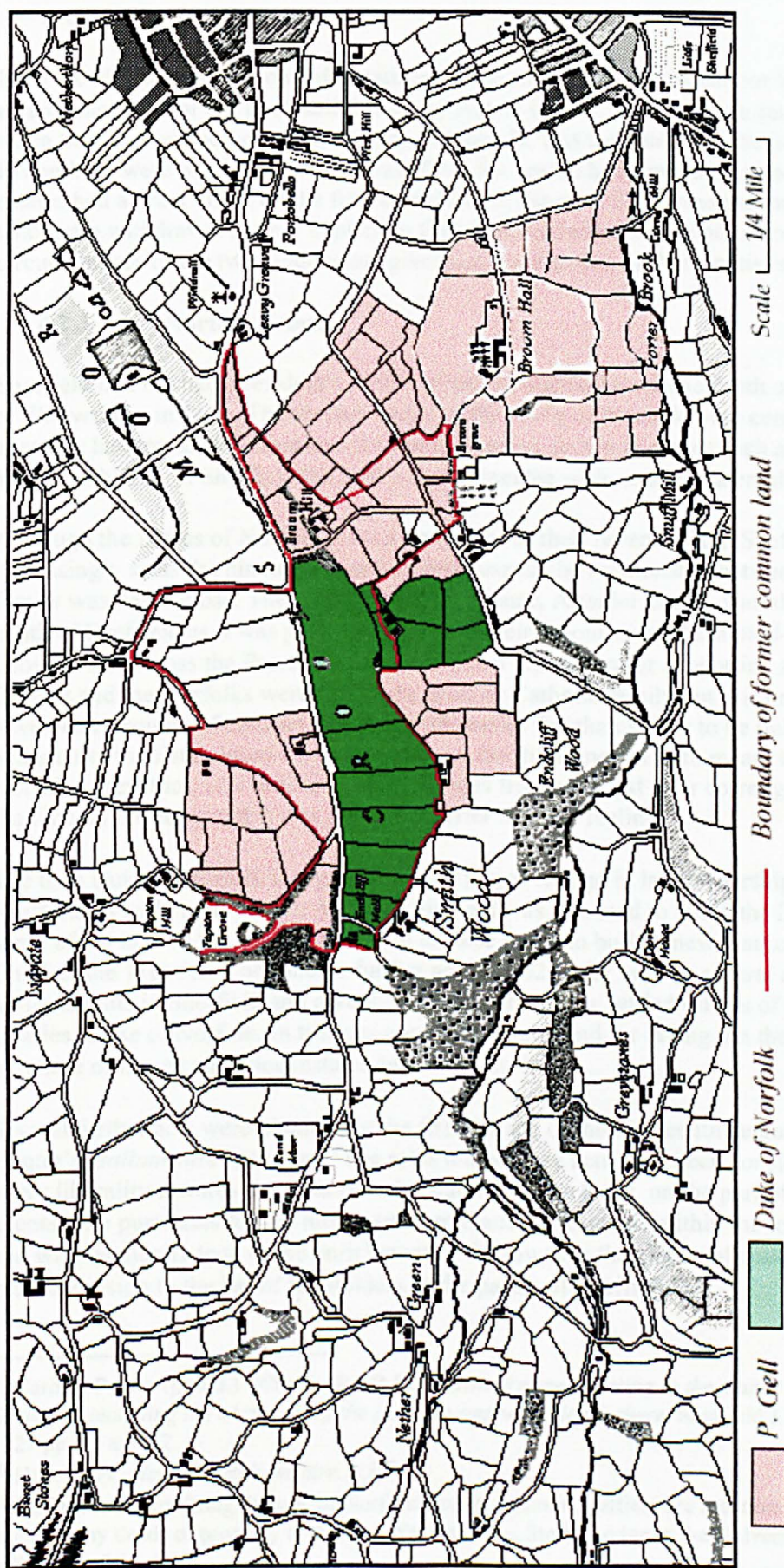
¹⁴ Deeds of 387 Glossop Road & 1 Clarkehouse Road, University of Sheffield collection of deeds

¹⁵ Fairbank. *A correct plan*.

¹⁶ Fairbank. *A plan of the town*.

¹⁷ Scurfield. *Seventeenth century Sheffield*. pp. 150 and 156

¹⁸ Hunter. *J. Hallamshire* p. 105



Map 5: Major Landowners 1800

3.

3. another area to the south and west of Crookesmoor owned by the Lords of Broomhall.

Both the Norfolk and Broomhall estates were augmented by Crookesmoor land after awards made under the Ecclesall Enclosure Act of 1788¹⁹. This increase came just at a time when both the aristocracy, in the person of Norfolk, and the gentry, in the person of Gell of Broomhall, were beginning to withdraw from the area. The fragmentation of such large estates had a great effect on the future land use in the area. Clear reasons for such a wholesale withdrawal are not explicit in the records of either estate but an outline of the circumstances of the two landowners gives some indication of their motives.

4.2.3 Norfolk Estate

Sheffield had not had a resident member of the aristocracy since the death of Gilbert, Earl of Shrewsbury in 1616. The various heads of the house of Norfolk were content to be absentee landlords. Hey mentions the family interest shown at places such as nearby Wentworth, but 'in Sheffield the lord was an absentee with no such paternal interest.'²⁰

Although the Dukes of Norfolk drew a great deal of their revenue from Sheffield, increasingly so as the nineteenth century progressed, the relationship between town and family was never close. The main Norfolk residence, Arundel Castle, was about as far south of Sheffield as it was possible to get and their favourite northern *pied-a-terre* at Glossop was across the Pennines. Sheffield had a reputation for supporting all forms of Dissent and the Norfolks were England's premier Catholic family but this never seems to have been a source of conflict, perhaps both parties felt themselves to be linked by an aversion to the Established Church. However, the difference in faith meant that the Norfolks drew their stewards and other officials from amongst their co-religionists rather than local families and this was a further barrier to close feeling.

The then Duke of Norfolk instigated the first major change in landownership in western Sheffield as early as 1765. An Act of Parliament was obtained to allow the Duke to sell some of his land to the west of Sheffield to raise funds to build a new market for the town. Charles, the 11th duke, obtained a further act in 1802 '...for vesting several messuages and heriditaments in Sheffield and divers detached parts of the settled estates of the most noble Charles, Duke of Norfolk, in trustees upon trust to sell and for laying out the monies in the purchase of more convenient estates and otherwise'.²¹

Several further acts were obtained in the first decade of the nineteenth century and Hunter's *Hallamshire* notes that 'The sales under these acts have been considered with every liberality towards the tenants and occupiers of the lands, on the part of his Grace's agents. The purchases for the most part been made by residents within the town and parish, and will eventually tend to the enrichment of the town, as they have, of course produced a great accession to the list of freeholders in the parish of Sheffield'.²²

¹⁹ Carolus Paulus (pseud.) [Charles Paul] *Unpublished pages relating to the manor and parish of Ecclesall, including the enclosure of the common and waste lands there*. Sheffield J.W. Northend, 1927 pp. 71 and 72

²⁰ Hey. *Fiery blades of Hallamshire*. p.84

²¹ Various acts permitting the sale of Norfolk land in western Sheffield are mentioned as part of the title in many deeds of property in the area. For example, Storth Lodge in the University of Sheffield collection of deeds

²² Hunter. *Hallamshire*. p. 162

The 1797 map of Sheffield²³ shows part of the Norfolk estate called 'Alsop Fields' laid out for building. This scheme, carried out by the 9th Duke's Sheffield agent, Vincent Eyre, did not attract builders of the high standard or to the extent which had been anticipated and this seems to have deterred the Norfolks from any further dabbling in the development of middle class residential enclaves.²⁴ However, there appears to have been no compunction in selling land in western Sheffield. Possibly the Norfolks felt that their estates, both in Sheffield and in other parts of the country, were so extensive that their prestige would not be affected by the sale of a few thousand acres. In Sheffield itself they remained the largest landowner, so their influence in the town was undiminished.

The decision to sell large tracts of land was in marked contrast to the other 'noble proprietor' of Ecclesall Bierlow, Earl Fitzwilliam. Although Lord of the Manor, Fitzwilliam only held land on the extreme west of the township, adjoining Ecclesall Woods. Rowley suggests²⁵ that, for personal and political reasons, the Fitzwilliams were always unwilling to sell their land: however, they do not seem to have been averse to granting building leases when approached. Of the 15.1.29 acres of Crookesmoor that were awarded to Fitzwilliam by the 1788 Enclosure Act²⁶ almost all was immediately made over to Philip Gell in the general exchanging of land which went on after the award (see Map XXX). A small triangle was retained at the junction of Newbould Lane and Clarkehouse Road and this was soon to become the site of 'The Willows', a pleasant villa fronting a large garden.²⁷

Most of the Fitzwilliam land was sufficiently remote to present little attraction to builders until the twentieth century. Whilst being unwilling to sell the Earl does not seem to have been tempted to acquire land closer to Sheffield as Norfolk and Gell withdrew from the area.

4.2.4 Broomhall Estate

In 1561 Anne Swyft, the heiress of Broomhall married William Jessop of Rotherham. During the next seven generations succeeding Jessops extended their land holding. After the death of the last male heir the estate was divided between two daughters as shown in the family tree. A son of the elder daughter became Vicar of Sheffield and lived at Broomhall for most of the second half of the eighteenth century²⁸. Being a bachelor with ample means, he had no great incentive to exploit his Broomhall properties, especially as, being the last survivor of his family, he inherited his father's property at Boroughbridge. As he became increasingly infirm he spent more time at his old family home and died there in January 1805. In 1801 he had made a will leaving all his moiety of Broomhall to his kinsman, Philip Gell.

Gell seems to have been attached to his own family estate in Hopton, Derbyshire and was not tempted to resettle at Broomhall. By the end of the eighteenth century he was experiencing financial problems, his father having died in 1795 leaving more bequests than

²³ Fairbank. *A plan of the town*.

²⁴ Olsen. 'House upon house'

²⁵ Rowley, G. 'Landownership in the spatial growth of towns: a Sheffield example', *East Midland Geographer*, 6, 200-213

²⁶ Carolus Paulus. *Unpublished pages*. pp.71 and 72

²⁷ Deeds, Girls' Public Day School Trust collection of deeds

²⁸ Unless otherwise stated data concerning the Broomhall Estate has been taken from deeds of *Southbourne*, Park Lane, Broomhall in the Sheffield Hallam University collection of deeds.

could be readily accommodated by his estate. In addition, Philip had married in 1797 and had a wife and growing family to support.

Winding up the estate proved to be a long drawn-out affair. According to the Act of Parliament, which was obtained in 1818, sale of all the Broomhall lands was desirable as they lay 'at a great distance from the principal family estates in Derbyshire... and will not be convenient to be held herewith'. The sale would fund the purchase of an estate at Bradborne for the lands 'were not only in the estimation of the said Philip Gell of equal value with the said undivided moiety [Broomhall], but had also been ascertained to be so by competent and skilful persons employed to value the same estates'. Some land, not requiring parliamentary sanction had already been sold but at the time of the Act there remained 446.2.31 acres that brought in an estimated rent of £1,992.9.10. The estate, including its timber, was estimated to be worth £59,779.15.4.

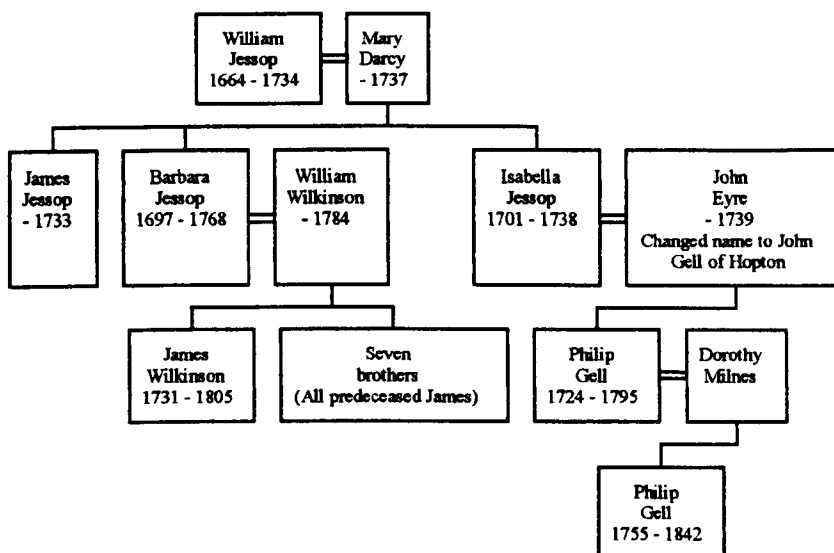


Figure 4.1: Descendants of William Jessop

4.3 Land Sales

From the foregoing brief outline of the families owning the bulk of the land in western Sheffield, it can be seen that they had neither strong personal ties to the area nor sufficient knowledge of Sheffield to give them the foresight to envisage the rate at which it would expand. Such ties and knowledge might have inclined an owner to take a special interest in local development. For the Norfolks, it was sensible to consolidate their holdings in the east; and Philip Gell wanted to simplify his estate management and avoid having to administer part of it from a considerable distance.

Not wishing to glut the market and thus devalue land prices both owners divested themselves of these lands during an extended period of over a quarter of a century. The necessity to obtain Acts of Parliament to empower sale and various other legal complications also added to delay. Sale of the Broomhall Estate was further delayed by the need to advertise for possible alternative heirs, and then to weed out the crop of impostors this produced.²⁹ Sales seem to have been made both by public auction and private contract.

²⁹ Ward. *Peeps*. p. 68

Especially in the period following the Enclosure deeds for land in western Sheffield indicate that many sales were made as a result of both Norfolk and Broomhall leaseholders buying their freehold and taking the opportunity of extending boundaries by acquiring newly available adjoining land.

From Map 2 it can be seen that the most important Norfolk sales for future suburban development were those of Endcliffe Hall and its western neighbour, Oakbrook Farm.

However, in the first part of the century, by far the most important sales, in terms of freeing land for development, was that of the extensive holdings of the owners of Broomhall (see Map 6).

As mentioned above, Hunter's *Hallamshire* points out that the land that the Duke of Norfolk sold so cheaply provided prime building sites and ultimately produced handsome profits for the purchasers.³⁰ Nunn's study of the Norfolk estate offers no suggestions as to why all the land to the west was sold.³¹ Similarly no reason can be evinced for the Gell sale: he seems not to have considered alternative options such as its use as building land. Cannadine lists the advantages which the aristocracy gained from 'catering' for tenants of the highest social class, but he suggests that, in some cases, 'the landowners' estate was too disadvantageously situated to attract the middle classes, as was the case with the Norfolks in Sheffield'.³² However, it seems likely that he was referring to Norfolk land in the centre and to the north of the town, as the land to the west, which was sold by the early decades of the nineteenth century, seems to have been almost as advantageously situated in relation to Sheffield as the Calthorpe land was in relation to Birmingham.

The Calthorpes of Edgbaston had shown that non-resident landlords could reap a rich income from land adjoining an expanding town, funding a rich life-style far beyond anything that could be expected from agricultural rents.³³ They had an estate of 2,064 acres, approximately one mile from the centre of Birmingham. p. 89 Cannadine notes that, 'The successful development of their Edgbaston estate brought the Calthorpes extensive private wealth, which made possible aristocratic fulfilment, to an extent and in a manner which the purchase of [another agricultural] estate would ultimately have denied them.'³⁴ This development had been laid down at the end of the eighteenth century, starting in 1786, even though the family moved to their seat in Ampton in Suffolk in 1783.³⁵ As a result 'the lines of future policy for the development of the Edgbaston Estate were clearly laid down at the end of the eighteenth century.'³⁶

At Nottingham the Duke of Newcastle hung on to The Park, despite the fact that, '...Newcastle finances were seldom other than slender'.³⁷ Eventually, after leases were issued in 1822 the estate became an important source of revenue. It can only be supposed that Sheffield was considered too small and unimportant to produce inhabitants requiring expensive housing in the vicinity, or that neither Norfolk nor Gell wanted the bother of involvement in developing land through building leases. This policy produced a very open

³⁰ Hunter. *Hallamshire*. p.162

³¹ Nunn. *Management of some South Yorkshire landed estates*

³² Cannadine. *Aristocracy and the towns*. p.218

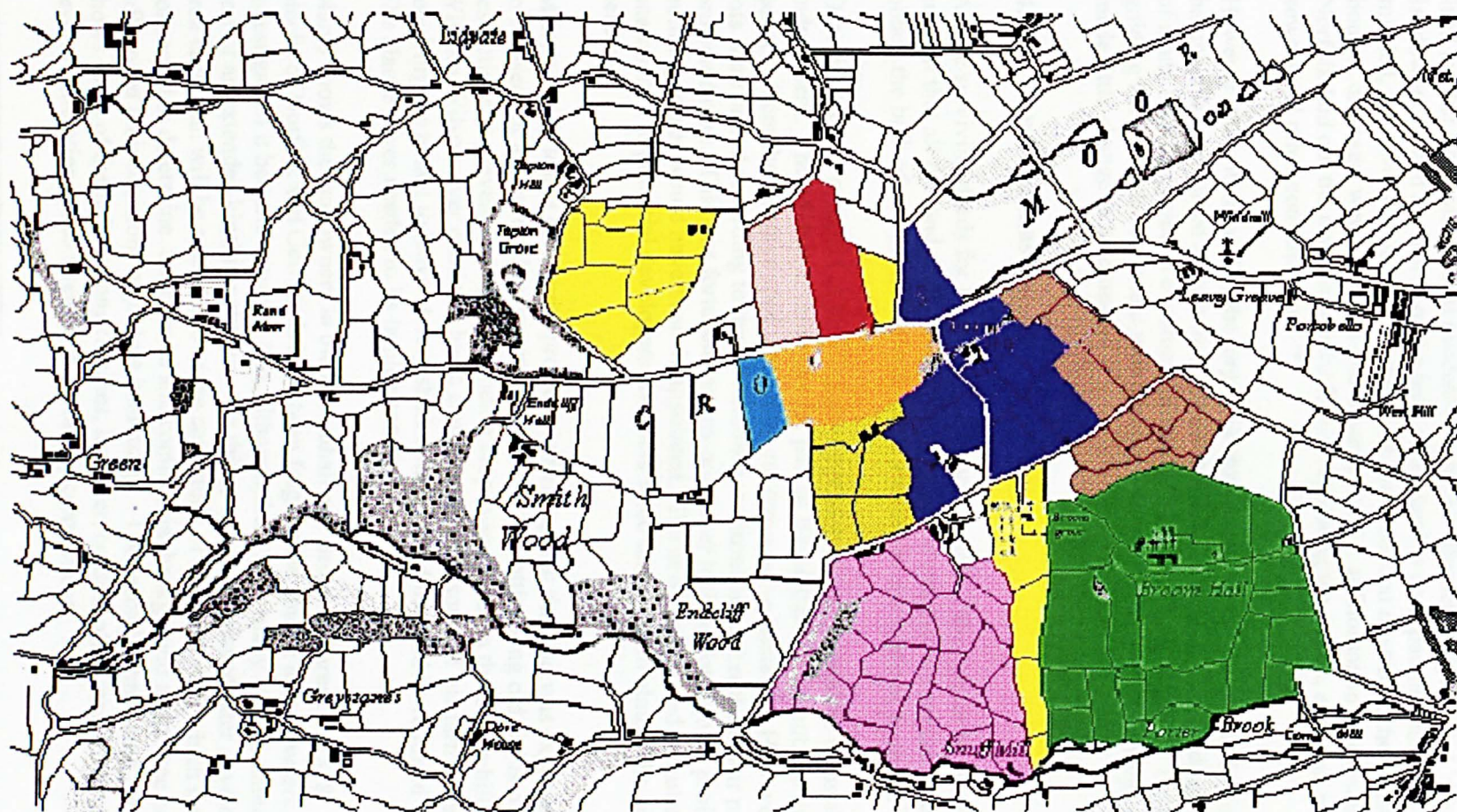
³³ *Ibid.* p. 89

³⁴ *Ibid.* p. 147

³⁵ *Ibid.* p.91

³⁶ *Ibid.* p.92

³⁷ Brand, K. *The Park Estate, Nottingham*. Nottingham: Nottingham Civic Society, 1985. p.13.



Kinship network owners

Map 6: Landownership at the opening of the Glossop Road, 1821

land market from which local residents benefited. Burnett suggests that 'where a single landowner owned the whole or the bulk of the land in an expanding town he could, if so minded, lay down regulations for the width and direction of streets, the construction of houses, drainage, water supplies and other matters... at Glossop in Derbyshire the Duke of Norfolk laid out the town in regular forms, regulating the streets, avenues, passages, drains, sewers and other conveniences'.³⁸

However, the withdrawal of the largest landowners removed the possibility of Sheffield having a large planned suburb on its western edge. Instead, *ad hoc* building using the land of many small proprietors eventually provided housing for the affluent. Lacking a strong guiding hand this development took place gradually and, at first, the change of ownership made little change to land usage.

4.4 Land Purchasers

All the surviving deeds for land sales in the area, whether the vendor be Norfolk or Gell, suggest that all the land was sold as agricultural land and that the purchaser expected to obtain the bulk of any profit the land might yield to be the result of farming.³⁹

Occasionally the prospect of building development was mentioned as a possible extra inducement. The 1810 sale catalogue for part of Broomhall Park mentions the potential benefits from the turnpike road planned to cut through the estate.⁴⁰ However, the various lots were priced according to their desirability as farmland rather than their proximity to the projected road. This was fortunate, as any purchaser looking for a quick profit from building leases would have been disappointed. The new road proved singularly unattractive to potential developers and plots stood unused until almost the end of the century.

Many sales or leases came with provisos indicating that the land was expected to continue to be used for agricultural purposes. Rights to drive cattle along old rights of way and restrictions to prevent damage to standing crops were usual in the Broomhill area⁴¹. William Wilson, ever cautious, had a clause inserted in some of his farm tenancies requiring the tenant to leave at very short notice should the land be required for building.⁴² The clause never needed to be implemented.

Map 3 shows the landowners in the Broomhall and Broomhill areas in 1818. The solid blocks of Norfolk and Gell lands have been fragmented among many owners. On investigation it became apparent that, although there were many owners, almost all were part of an extended kinship network. As this group underpinned later development in the area each man will be considered in the case study of the areas with which they were connected to determine their social and commercial background and to see how this influenced their decisions regarding land usage. The second abbreviated family tree below shows some of the links among families: however, cousins often married cousins over several generations, thus strengthening family connections.

³⁸ Burnett. *Social history of housing*. p.11

³⁹ This supposition is made from examining the collections of deeds quoted in the case studies.

⁴⁰ Copy of catalogue in Wilsons & Co. (Sharro) [*Archives at Sharro Mill*]

⁴¹ Deeds of Five Oaks in the Sheffield Area Health Authority collection of deeds.

⁴² Lease for Tom Cross Farm in the Wilsons & Co. (Sharro) [*Archives at Sharro Mill*]

4.4.1 The kinship network of landowners

The kinship network of which these landowners were a part was not a mere ‘kissin’ cousinage’ whose acquaintance was only occasionally reinforced by meetings at family christenings, weddings and funerals. At the end of the eighteenth century banking, commerce and many other aspects of life were much less reliably structured and it behoved the prudent man to deal with someone he knew whenever possible. This group was connected by marriage, religion and often occupation. Mutual support was available not only in business affairs but also for letter carrying, the purchase of personal items, large and small, and even financial support when bankruptcy loomed.

Most of the families in this network had at least one member connected with silver plating, the most profitable and prestigious of the Sheffield trades. When their trade ‘journeys’ took them to other towns they acted as an informal postal system and took letters and messages to various friends or business acquaintances for any other member of the family as required. Visits to London were especially valued and shopping lists from relatives for everything from tea to fur tippets would be taken. Professional men such as John Watson could expect to have family business put their way.

In a time when trade was often uncertain and the state provided no support the family was the ultimate source of help in time of trouble. When Joseph Wilson became bankrupt it was a group of relatives who provided for his wife and young children and performed the thankless task of sorting out his finances and making a firm foundation for future solvency.⁴³

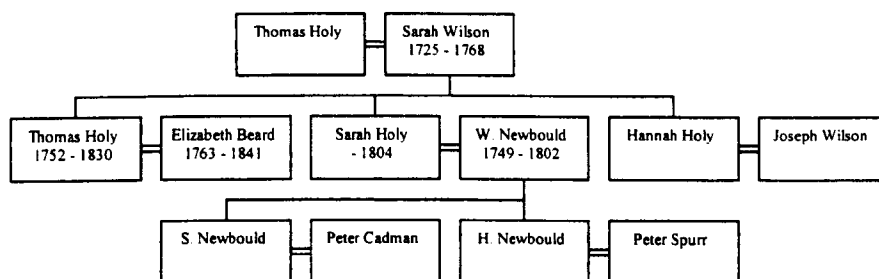


Figure 4.2: Descendants of Thomas Holy linked to the property-owning kinship network (Note: Various members of William Newbould’s family married into the Watson of Shirecliffe Family)

In the matter of land purchase there is no direct evidence that this was a group decision. However, the pioneer of development on the outskirts of the town was Thomas Holy, probably the senior and most respected member of the group. When a secure haven was sought for profits from silver plating then it may well be that his decision encouraged others to follow his example. Once the purchases were made the group would be able to share their experiences of success and failure in the land market. The influence that various members of the group had on the development of their land will be considered in the case studies of individual suburbs. It will be seen that, despite the difficult trading conditions of the first decades of the nineteenth century, all were relatively prosperous men and were usually content not to take any action to attract developers to their land. Perhaps surprisingly, only William Newbould was drawn to settle in the area. His relatives all stayed in old-established areas, such as Shirecliffe and Highfield.

⁴³ Data on the kinship network taken from the Wilsons & Co. (Sharrow) [Archives at Sharrow Mill]

The case studies under which individual members of this kinship group are discussed are as follows: the Newboulds, Cadmans, Spurrs and Spooners under Broomhill and John Watson under Broomhall. Thomas Holy and the Wilson family were not directly connected with any one case study area but their attitude to land purchase is relevant to the development of the western suburbs as a whole.

4.4.2 Thomas Holy

Thomas Holy (1752-1830) seems to have had a seminal influence on suburban development in western Sheffield. He was one of Sheffield's most successful citizens, seeming to have the skill to serve God and Mammon with equal success. He was one of the founders of Methodism in Sheffield and his wife's family had regularly played host to John Wesley and other leaders of the faith whenever they visited the area.⁴⁴ This did not distract him from carrying on his trade as a silver-plater, travelling widely both in England and America in order to sell his wares. The Weston Park Museum contains a number of items that testify to the high standard of the work his firm produced. Success in business enabled him to make large contributions to a variety of charities and good causes. Whenever subscription lists were published in contemporary newspapers Holy's name would always be found amongst the most generous contributors.⁴⁵

Even after such donations Holy still had profits to spare and when the Duke of Norfolk first began to sell land Holy was one of the largest purchasers. Most of this land was very close to the town but eventually the western borders of his holding reached out to the borders of Broomhall Park and Broomhill. As early as 1808 it is shown as marked out for building.⁴⁶ Since trade was in a depressed state during the Napoleonic Wars building was slow. Although there is no written evidence of his motives or rationale Holy seems to have had a clear idea that the land was suitable for a superior type of residential development, unlike anything hitherto seen in Sheffield. As his finances were healthy he had no inclination to make a quick profit from the land by encouraging the erection of shoddy cottages and workshops. He had no wish for extravagant living himself, by carving out a large estate from part of the land and having a fine new house built on it. Instead he continued to live in the same pleasant but unpretentious house close to his works on the Moor (now the site of Atkinson's department store).

The building leases which he issued are very much like those which his kinsmen were to issue some twenty years later and seem to have been based on those issued by the Church Burgesses.⁴⁷ Their most important stipulations concerned the type of building, its minimum cost and, most important, the length of the lease. Deeds for some of the earliest houses built upon Holy's land seem to indicate that a decision had been made early in the nineteenth century that all building on his land, from Wilkinson Street to the western boundary of his estate, should exclude all non-residential development. The houses were to have a minimum worth, which ensured that any house would match the top end of existing housing in the town, and long leases of 800 years would be issued to encourage investors.

⁴⁴ Unless otherwise stated, the data on Thomas Holy are taken from: Seed, Rev. T. A. *Norfolk Street Wesleyan Chapel, Sheffield*. Sheffield: Jarrold and Sons, [n.d.] p.105

⁴⁵ For example subscriptions for relief of the poor in *The Iris*, 1 January 1800

⁴⁶ Fairbank. *The environs of Sheffield*.

⁴⁷ Data on early Holy leases are taken from deeds of University of Sheffield property in Wilkinson Street. Data on Church Burgesses' leases has been taken from Postles, D. 'The residential development of the Church Burgesses' estates in Sheffield', *Trans. H.A.S.*, 10 (5), 1979, 1-23

Apart from establishing a benchmark for leases his other contribution to the development of middle class housing in Sheffield lay in staking out such a large area for 'superior' housing. This was a bold move for memories were long in the town and many could still remember the failure of the Alsop Fields⁴⁸ scheme to justify the high standard of building development expected of it. If Norfolk failed how could Holy hope to succeed? Faith in Holy's sound financial judgement may have encouraged his kinsmen to buy adjoining land on the off-chance that it might at sometime yield a profit beyond that produced by mediocre farm land.

4.4.3 Joseph and William Wilson

Although the Wilson family⁴⁹ did not buy land that was central to the building of the western suburbs, their land owning is of interest for two reasons. First, their wealth did not depend on the trade cycles of Sheffield's staple trades and so, with a steady source of income, they were able to buy whenever land that seemed a suitable investment to them became available. Secondly, Wilson land was re-sold, at a considerable profit, to be developed into two of the amenities that were to make the western suburbs popular: the Botanical Gardens and the General Cemetery. In the second half of the century a later generation of the family was in the position to control much of the development in the Tapton area.

The Wilsons were snuff makers and, in the early part of the century, took every opportunity to buy land that lay in the vicinity of their mill, ranging from Sharrow to Oakbrook Farm, far to the west, in Upper Hallam. Early land purchases were made with family funds then divided between the brothers, Joseph taking land to the east and William land to the west. When Joseph decided to build a house, it was a relatively modest affair close to the mill. Neither brother moved across the Porter to his new land holdings. The land that they bought was not particularly well suited to either farming or housing so they were not pressed for building leases. As their business was successful they had no incentive to try to develop the land themselves. However, they were always quite willing to sell if approached with a good offer. As a result their land on the Broomhall side of the Porter became the Botanical Gardens and their land on the opposite bank became the General Cemetery. A nucleus of land close to the mill remained in family hands until the second half of the twentieth century.

4.5 The early ground-landlords

The influence of a ground-landlord could be decisive in deciding the type of development that could take place upon his land. As Postles points out, 'The regulation of building standards before the introduction of the local building bye-laws, was determined by the landowners who granted the building leases'.⁵⁰ Olsen comments that Sheffield building leases were much less stringent in Sheffield than in London and many other parts of England.⁵¹ Even so, they usually covered a number of important points, which included:

- size of plot

⁴⁸ Olsen. 'House upon house'.

⁴⁹ Unless otherwise stated data concerning the Wilson family has been taken from records at Wilsons & Co. (Sharrow) [*Archives at Sharrow Mill*]

⁵⁰ Postles. 'The residential development of the Church Burgesses' estates' [Unless otherwise stated data in this section on the land policy of the Church Burgesses has been taken from this article.]

⁵¹ Olsen. 'House upon house' p. 364

- building line
- orientation of house
- minimum worth of building
- type i.e., terrace, semi-detached, detached
- fabric i.e., brick, stone, stucco etc.
- elevation
- garden provision
- boundary fences - height and style
- widows - restrictions to prevent over-looking
- out-buildings - type, size, location
- footpath or road - need to provide and repair or contribute to cost
- drains etc. - need to provide and maintain or contribute to cost
- insuring building to at least a minimum amount
- * non-residential use excluded

It is one thing to require all or any of these things but quite another to enforce them. Olsen and others have suggested that a building lease could be a mere paper tiger and that ground-landlords were unwilling to go to the trouble and expense of enforcing them by going to court^{52 53}. In Sheffield, at least in the western suburbs, such leases seem to have been complied with voluntarily. This may have been partly the relationship between landowner and builder. Any Broomhall builder might have felt it foolhardy to antagonise his landlord since the landlord, John Watson, was not only one of the town's leading solicitors but also the legal adviser of one of the most successful banks. There was another aspect of self-interest in so far as almost all the leases in the area were for 800 years so there was no advantage in building something which would only survive for a short period - houses in western Sheffield were intended to be a very long-term investment.

Aristocrats such as Norfolk took a long-term view of their estates, tenure was expected to pass smoothly through the generations, so it was important to be able to review the situation, and re-value if necessary, at regular intervals. Accordingly, it was normal to issue leases for 99 years or three lives. Such leases were common in London, where much of the land developed for the best housing was the property of aristocratic families.⁵⁴ Edgbaston, part of the Calthorpe Estate was also built on the basis of a 99-year lease.⁵⁵ The disadvantage of this type of lease was that it encouraged shoddy building in the first instance, as it was considered uneconomic to erect a building that would remain in good order for longer than the period of the lease. As the date of expiry approached there was no incentive to keep a building in good repair so an area might be allowed to deteriorate, to the detriment of the estate as a whole.

The other major landowner in Sheffield, the Church Burgesses, issued leases varying between long leases and those for 99 years. In the sixteenth century they favoured 21 years or three lives and then they turned to 800-year leases in the mid-eighteenth century. Policy seems to have changed in about 1778 and, thereafter, a 99-year building lease was standard. No reason has been traced for this change. Whatever the period of lease, willing lessees always seemed to be found.

⁵² Ibid. p. 364

⁵³ Dyos. *Study of urban history*.

⁵⁴ Summerson, J. *Georgian London*. Rev. ed. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962. p. 40

⁵⁵ Cannadine. *Aristocracy and the towns*. p. 91

Thomas Holy, the first major developer in Western Sheffield, opted for 800-year leases: he may have believed this would encourage investors. The strategy seems to have been sufficiently successful to set a precedent, not only for his relatives, but also for all future landowners in the area.

The first generation of land purchasers brought little change to western Sheffield. All of the new landowners had important characteristics in common:

1. Comfortable financial circumstances, so there was no inclination to attempt to maximise return by using the land for building.
2. No use of capital to develop part or the whole of the land into a country estate for their own occupation or, with the exception of William Newbould, to even settle there themselves.
3. No use of own capital for any form of speculative building.

As land purchase was a form of investment against bad times rather than a much-needed source of income, the part they played in development tended to be passive in the first two decades of the nineteenth century. However, when the Glossop Road made land in the area desirable to developers, all the members of the clan followed Holy's example and issued leases that ensured that the majority of the land in the area would become the site of substantial houses. The first tentative beginnings of the middle class suburbs began under their auspices, but not funded by their capital. Nor did they play any part in pioneering the area as a suitable place for successful men, like themselves, to settle.

Having outlined the key importance of the ground-landlord in the timing and style of development it should be noted that no ground-landlord wished to be involved in the high risk and expensive business of actually building houses. To study the building of the western suburbs it is necessary to consider those who actually raised the capital and put houses on the ground.

Chapter 5

Architects and Builders

5.1 Architects and architecture

The recent centennial history of Sheffield included a chapter by Harman and Harper on the architecture of Sheffield. This began, 'For much of our period, the architecture of Sheffield has been viewed without enthusiasm.'¹ It continued with a selection of unenthusiastic opinions made by visitors, from the many at their disposal. As usual, middle-class housing was the Cinderella of the study. Space demanded that this was a whistle-stop tour of Sheffield's architecture and only a few pages could be devoted to Residential Buildings, and of this only a little over a page concerned middle class housing. In contrast, a chapter on housing before the First World War and another on housing policy after 1914 gave a comprehensive view of working class housing.²

Harman and Harper suggested that, as a result of Sheffield being exclusively a manufacturing town, by the mid-nineteenth century it lacked a substantial core and had few of the wealthy and cultivated families found in Leeds or Manchester. The hills surrounding the town 'brought both geographical and cultural isolation' without the opportunity for exchange of ideas so 'men with the breadth of vision necessary for great architecture are few'. As the industrialists were almost all of relatively humble origin, 'They looked no further than the local architectural profession for the design of their buildings and knowing little of architecture they were undemanding patrons.'

In considering those mainly responsible for designing this lack-lustre city the authors felt that 'the same insularity affected the profession' and this 'tended to produce complacency and mediocrity'. As a result of Sheffield's 'relatively late and rapid development as a large industrial city' it 'is unusual, therefore, in lacking the grandeur associated with a major city.' It is difficult for the untrained observer to comment on the standard of suburban architecture in Sheffield, as any comments are only a matter of personal taste rather than being based upon a standard of what constitutes good architecture. However, a similar lack of architectural awareness seems to have been typical of the residents of the western suburbs. Books on architectural style emphasise the 'battle of the styles'³ which went on during the nineteenth century but it seems unlikely that this was a constant topic of conversation in the drawing rooms of Sheffield. Contemporary reports on the largest houses show that the steel makers did not look for pure architectural style, indeed the emphasis often seems to have been on comfort rather than style.⁴ It may be that the insularity of Sheffield architects did result in mediocrity and that the town's showpiece, Endcliffe Hall, deserved Pevsner's dismissive remarks.⁵ However, it pleased the owner, was widely admired locally and, to the untutored eye, it still appears attractive. The western suburbs were built for an unsophisticated market but, even if an individual may find ashlar stone work, classical lines and a building line far back from the road rather more attractive

¹ Harman, R. & Harper, R. 'The architecture of Sheffield', in: *History of the city of Sheffield*. pp. 33-64 (Subsequent quotations are from this source.)

² Craven, A. M. 'Housing before the first World War.' in: *History of the city of Sheffield*. pp. 65-75

³ For example, Steegman, J. *Victorian taste*. London: Century, in Association with the National Trust, 1987. p. 105

⁴ *Sheffield Illustrated*. 1884. p. 14

⁵ Pevsner. *Yorkshire*. p. 466

than rock-faced gothic placed well to the fore,⁶ the mingling of style and lay-out does not detract from the over-all effect which generations of residents, and visitors such as Betjeman, have found attractive.

5.1.1 The Architectural Profession

According to Summerson⁷ there was no such thing as an architectural profession until half way through the eighteenth century. Prior to this period 'The high-sounding title 'architect' was adopted by anyone who could get away with it.'⁸ However, in the course of the nineteenth century architecture participated in a period of change in which many new professions emerged and existing ones became more formalised. Powell noted that 'the profession [of architecture] developed significantly in the course of the century'⁹ and the 3,000 architects listed in the 1851 Census had increases to over 10,000 by 1901. The influence of professionalism can be seen in that the 8% of architects who were members of the RIBA had grown to 15% by 1901. To foster the idea that the architect required very special and specific skills, 'From the 1820s architects gradually divorced themselves from direct involvement in building, seeking instead to represent and protect clients' interest, in addition to maintaining design responsibilities'¹⁰. Increased specialisation led to the establishment of organisations such as the Institute of Civil Engineers in 1818, the Builders Society in 1830 and the Surveyors Institution in 1868.

The Institute of British Architects, founded in 1834, sought to enhance professional standing by a 'drive to discourage the older style builder architect'.¹¹ Although Sir John Summerson was of the opinion that 'the profession of the 1860s was a gentleman's profession - but only just',¹² members were able to convince the public that their responsibilities and creative skills merited the customary fee of 5% of building costs. However, 'Their art was directed much more towards public buildings, churches and town and country mansions'¹³ rather than suburban houses.

5.1.2 Sheffield Architects

National trends in the profession, mentioned in the previous section, can be seen at work in Sheffield. In the first, nineteenth century trade directory of Sheffield, issued in 1821,¹⁴ there are four firms of architects and all listed themselves also as surveyors. A similar directory published in 1895 listed fifty-one architects.¹⁵

Professor Welsh mentions that, prior to about 1830 Sheffield imported architectural expertise for its major buildings and that, during the next generation, two types of architects

⁶ Betjeman, J. 'The best and the worst of an era.' *Daily Telegraph & Morning Post*, 3 July 1961.

⁷ Summerson. *Georgian London*.

⁸ Summerson. *Georgian London*. p. 70

⁹ Powell. *British building industry*. p. 69

¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 28

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Summerson, J. *The London building world of the eighteen-sixties*. London. Thames and Hudson, 1973. p.20

¹³ Burnett. *Social history of housing*. p. 25

¹⁴ *Sheffield general and commercial directory*. Compiled by R. Gell and R. Bennett. Sheffield: [Printed at the Independent Office], 1821.

¹⁵ *Sheffield City Directory, 1896, etc.* (2nd ed.) Sheffield: Pawson & Brailsford, 1896.

began to practice in the town: those recruited from the ranks of the building trade such as Samuel Worth and William Flockton, and those professionally trained.¹⁶

Both Worth and Flockton distanced themselves from their origins in the building trade. Worth, from his first entry in the directory of 1828,¹⁷ calls himself 'architect and surveyor'; the building part of the family business was always listed separately in the name of Henry Worth. In 1837 William Flockton placed an advertisement in the *Sheffield Independent* to announce that he intended to cease being a builder in order to concentrate upon being an architect.¹⁸ This division may not have been entirely clear cut as the family firm, which he now headed, continued to be involved with speculative building¹⁹ and he also undertook surveying. In his capacity as a surveyor he was responsible in 1843 for measuring and dividing into lots for auction the estate of the recently deceased William Wilson. Although a relative newcomer to the field his rate for surveying seems to have been very close to that charged by the old-established Fairbank firm.²⁰

At the beginning of the nineteenth century much of the building of substantial houses was still organised by the town's leading firm of surveyors, the Fairbank family. Many of the largest houses were the work of Joseph Badger, who was variously described as a builder or an architect. Badger seems to have sensed the coming split in function and was said to have become the pupil of James Wyatt about 1793.²¹ Badger's work on the core of Tapton Grove precedes this date but no detailed description of it survives. Houses built by Badger at the very beginning of the nineteenth century, such as Westbourne at Broomhill, were in a plain Georgian style and did not display any remarkable architectural finesse, nor did they resemble the style that Wyatt used at Banner Cross. It is not possible to assess to what extent architectural training received from an architect of national reputation added to the experience which Badger had gained by working in the building trade.

For the majority of the nineteenth century Sheffield had two leading architectural practices. The first was that of Weightman and Hadfield.²² Both were initially articled to Woodhead and Hurst, a Doncaster practice which had been called upon on a number of occasions at the beginning of the nineteenth when Sheffield felt the need to import architectural expertise for the design of public buildings such as the General Hospital. Weightman then went on to gain experience in the London offices of Barry and Cockerell before returning to Sheffield in 1822. Hadfield also gained London experience, working for P.F. Robinson who was one of the founders of the Institute of Architecture, but he began his career with an even greater advantage: he was well connected, his uncle being Michael Ellison, the Agent for the Duke of Norfolk's Estates in Sheffield.

The original partners in the firm, and their successors, were responsible for a number of public buildings, not only in Sheffield but also over a wide area and this left them little time for domestic architecture. Probably their most important building in western Sheffield was the Collegiate School built on Broomhall land in 1836. Their involvement with the building of houses was too limited to have any impact on the appearance of the western suburbs. The earliest house that can be attributed to them was advertised in 1853. This was described as a 'Gothic dwelling'²³, designed by Weightman, Hadfield and Goldie, offering

¹⁶ Welsh, S. *Some Sheffield architects of the past*. Unpublished paper provided by Dr. R. Harper.

¹⁷ *Sheffield directory and guide*. 1828.

¹⁸ *Sheffield Mercury*. 20 April 1837

¹⁹ Deeds of 54, *Wilkinson Street*, University of Sheffield collection of deeds.

²⁰ *Wilsons & Co. (Sharrow) [Archives at Sharrow Mill]*

²¹ Biographical dictionary of Sheffield architects and surveyors c1700-1950. manuscript in the possession of Dr. R. Harper

²² *Some Sheffield architects*. [Stephen Welsh papers]

²³ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*. 2 April, 1853.

the usual three reception rooms and six bedrooms but having the novelty of a separate bathroom as well as a dressing room. This small commission does not seem to have led to the practice to an extensive involvement with the growing market for domestic houses. Between 1851 and 1852 the firm re-built the Old Hall at Glossop for the Duke of Norfolk and designed an Italianate garden for it, complete with fountain. Given this example of their capabilities it might have been expected that they would become involved in the building of the 'Great Houses' for the newly rich steel manufacturers. Possibly other commitments left them no time to accept such commissions, if offered. In 1858 they undertook the refurbishment of The Farm for the occasional use of the Duke of Norfolk. Although this was done in a manner much admired by the local newspapers other architects did not replicate the style. It was 1865 before the firm built another mansion. This was Thornbury built for F. T. Mappin, close to the western boundary of Ranmoor. A restrained style was used in contrast to the opulence of The Farm. Probably the most unusual contribution that the firm made to Sheffield's housing stock was Bleak House, built for John Fowler, an iron-master with artistic tendencies. The house was in a style described²⁴ as 'picturesque Old English' using sandstone with timber facing and pebbledash topped off with a tiled roof. This style is in marked contrast to the existing houses in the area and was not imitated by future neighbours.

By far the greatest involvement by architects in the building of western Sheffield was that of the firm founded by William Flockton and then carried on by members of his family and various partners throughout the nineteenth century.²⁵ Despite the importance of the firm no comprehensive study has been made of either the firm as a whole or of individual members. It has been necessary to assemble information from deeds, supplemented by directory and census material and any other passing references that have been traced. William Flockton appears to have had no formal architectural training but had a thorough grounding in building principles, having worked with his father, one of Sheffield's most enterprising and successful builders. (The career of Thomas Flockton is considered under Builders.) After completing his basic education William Flockton began working with his father in the family firm. He seems to have aspired to being an architect from an early age, designing a complex of public baths set in pleasure gardens by the time he was twenty.²⁶ Though entirely self-taught, wide reading and natural talent more than compensated for lack of formal training.

Having declared, 'Architecturally, Sheffield is a miserable disappointment', Pevsner included two of Flockton's early works amongst the relatively few pieces of suburban architecture worthy of note in his survey of the buildings of Sheffield.²⁷ The Mount was conceived when Flockton was only twenty-six and was his first attempt to cater for the highest levels of the housing market. It is a remarkably ambitious work, especially as the family firm had only just recovered from the failure of his attempt to provide western Sheffield with a fashionable bathing facility.

By 1841 he had become involved in the scheme to re-build Bakewell church, work which was to be spread over many years,²⁸ but by 1845 he had become architect for the Endcliffe Vale development scheme.²⁹ Like the Broomgrove Baths this was a glorious failure but it

²⁴ *150 years of architectural drawings – Hadfield Cawkwell Davidson, Sheffield. 1834-1984.* Sheffield: Hadfield Cawkwell Davidson and Partners, 1984. [Catalogue of an exhibition held at the Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield, 10 March – 8 April, 1984.] p. 67

²⁵ The involvement in building of various members of the Flockton family is referred to in the case studies of the suburbs with which they were associated.

²⁶ *Sheffield Mercury*, 21 October 1827

²⁷ Pevsner. *Yorkshire*. p. 446, 458 & 466

²⁸ Brighton, J.T. *William Flockton's 'Gothic education'*. *Sheffield Art Review*, 1979, 21-28

²⁹ Flockton. *View of Endcliffe Vale Estate*.

appears to have confirmed his reputation as a man of vision and a capable, if on this occasion, unsuccessful builder. About this time he seems to have decided, in typical pragmatic Sheffield fashion, that, if he could not convince his fellow citizens to fund the buildings that he felt the town deserved then he would build them what they wanted, to the best of his ability. Having a growing family to provide for (he had married before he was twenty) and a practice to build up, he began to demonstrate his ability to provide whatever a client required. When a local architect declared that his client was asking the impossible by requiring a house which almost teetered on the brink of an old quarry Flockton was the man entrusted with completing the work.³⁰ A nineteenth century commentator described the attitude of Nash as a man who 'was prepared to build pagodas, pavilions, Grecian temples, Gothic castles, Gothic churches or abbeys suited either for suburban residences or manorial dwellings – anything at any price... the most splendid effect at the least possible price'.³¹ This seems an attitude with which Flockton could agree, and which was appreciated by Sheffield's cost-conscious inhabitants.

By the end of the decade he received his first commission for a large private house, building Kenwood for George Wostenholm, one of the town's leading cutlers. The result was an attractive house with an almost jewel-like interior. Although the architectural style was not requested by other manufacturers the man was and Flockton seemed to become the architect of choice for the manufacturers who were beginning to settle close to the boundary of Ecclesall and Upper Hallam. Tapton Hall, Oakbrook and others in the area demonstrate the variety of styles within Flockton's range. They also show how he was able to meet the relatively modest demands of his clients and place them within a pleasing exterior, despite the fact that no one architectural style found favour in Sheffield. Even when involved with the 'mansions' of the merchant princes he did not despise smaller commissions and designed the first house (Storth Lodge, Fulwood Road) for the earliest Ranmoor Land Society.³²

After the death of William Flockton the firm was carried on by his son, Thomas James, who had had an excellent education with a number of London firms but who seems to have lacked his father's natural flair. However, he and his various partners, went on to design some of Sheffield's leading public and private buildings. T.J. Flockton became advisor to a number of institutions and guided the Trustees of the Boys Charity School in the development of their Ranmoor land in the 1860s.³³ He also played a leading part in the establishment of a professional association for architects in Sheffield.³⁴ Despite his many activities in the town in later life he was to be yet another example of a successful man who chose to live outside Sheffield, moving to Worksop.

As in most things, Sheffield was late in establishing a Society of Architects, Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds and Bradford, Newcastle, Birmingham and Leicester already having societies 'actively at work in the interests of the Profession, and furthering Architectural education'³⁵ when the Sheffield society was set up in 1887. Lists of the work of Sheffield's leading architectural practices show what a small proportion of their work was for domestic architecture.³⁶ Even allowing for the fact that such lists are only concerned with major works, great houses such as Endcliffe or Oakbrook, and that humble villas might be

³⁰ Deeds of *Oakholme* in the University of Sheffield collection of deeds.

³¹ Ferguson, J. *History of the modern styles of architecture*. 1862, cited by L.F. Cave *The smaller English house, its history and development*. London: Robert Hale, 1981. p. 217

³² Deeds of *Storth Lodge* in the University of Sheffield collection of deeds.

³³ Deeds of *Thornbury* in the Sheffield Area Health Authority collection of deeds

³⁴ Harper, R. *The Sheffield Society of Architects, 1887-1987*. Sheffield: Sheffield Society of Architects, 1987.

³⁵ *Ibid.* p. 1

³⁶ For example, *150 years of architectural drawings*.

omitted, the number is small. Having consulted deeds, newspaper advertisements and, after 1864, planning applications, it would appear that the involvement of architects in the designing middle class housing is low in comparison with that of other towns such as Nottingham and Newcastle upon Tyne.

5.2 Housing design: the use of architects

In Nottingham the ‘father of Midlands architecture’, T.C. Hine, was the Surveyor for the Duke of Newcastle’s Park Estate at Nottingham.³⁷ Although he had a very busy practice, designing many of the leading commercial, ecclesiastical and municipal buildings in the area, he found time to design many of the houses on the estate. As Surveyor all housing plans had to be submitted for his inspection and many other Nottingham architects, such as Watson Fothergill, designed for the Estate, ‘builder speculators’ being in the minority. Hine was a business associate of the Sheffield M.P., Mundella, but the Nottingham custom of employing an architect for suburban villas, if noticed, did not commend itself to Sheffield house builders.

Hine was designing for a similar social stratum to that occupying the suburbs of Western Sheffield. Residents in both Sheffield and Nottingham were willing to buy in the same price range, yet architect-designed houses did not commend themselves to the Sheffield clientele. Reasons for this may possibly lie in two places: first, in the nature of Sheffield society, and secondly, in the standard of architecture in the town.

As part of the great transformation of Newcastle upon Tyne in the 1830s and 1840s John Dobson, the leading architect of the region, and some of his contemporaries designed houses for the prosperous at the then edge of the town at Eldon Square and Leazes Terrace.³⁸ However, in general, it seems to be accepted that extensive involvement by architects in suburban development was not the norm throughout the country.

The nature of Sheffield society and its limiting effects on all aspects of local life has been dealt with in Chapter 3. In the field of domestic architecture the parochial character of Sheffield is demonstrated by the preference for local architects when, by mid-century, members of the most prosperous stratum of the community were beginning to consider building houses that would need the expertise of an architect. This may have been the result of them having confidence in local Sheffield ability, or of not wishing to seem *outré*, or perhaps because the local architects were cheaper and understood local taste.

Initially, the untrained William Flockton seems to have been the most popular choice though this may have been because Weightman and Hadfield were too heavily committed with public and ecclesiastical work to undertake domestic projects. Consideration of the houses which Flockton and his contemporaries built, mainly in the Tapton, Endcliffe and Ranmoor area, illustrates the scale and style of design which found favour in Sheffield. These houses also demonstrate the talent of local architects and how they worked within the constraints of cost and site imposed upon them by clients. Records do not indicate whether taste was entirely client led or whether clients relied on professional guidance offered by the architect.

Where reference has been found to relations between architects and their clients it suggests that Sheffield manufacturers were as sure of their judgement in architecture as they were in everything else. When Worth claimed that he was being asked to build Ashdell on an

³⁷ Brand. *Thomas Chambers Hine*.

³⁸ Wilkes & Dodds. *Tyneside classical* p. 122.

impossible site he was dismissed and William Flockton called in to achieve the impossible.³⁹ Later, John Brown gave his personal attention to the designs of Endcliffe, going through them and initialling those of which he approved.⁴⁰

Although Sheffield's western suburbs have suffered little radical change two architect-designed houses which might have been of special interest have been lost. In Broomhall Park the only the architect-designed house to be traced, the work of the firm of Hadfield, Weightman and Goldie, described earlier, has been demolished to make way for the headquarters of the YMCA, thus removing the only example of their venture into building on this estate. No illustration or description of the house has been found either in the archives of the Broomhall Residents Association or those of the Planning Department of the Local Authority. In Victoria Park, Abbott, T.J. Flockton's partner, build a house for his own occupation, Mona House that was at the bottom of Westbourne Road. It is one of only two that have been lost from the original housing stock.

Walking round Victoria Park, guided by the planning applications, comparing architect-designed houses with those erected by builders, it is rarely possible to detect any special style or feature which clearly marks the architect's house as a superior product. In visiting the houses, or studying sale plans, it does not seem that the interiors varied at all between designed or off-the-peg houses. Victoria Park was intended to attract the same clientele that made Broomhall Park Estate the most successful housing development of the 1850s. Despite the lack of architectural involvement, Broomhall displays a wide variety of invention and Victoria Park can seem rather lacklustre in comparison. Also, for some of the larger houses in Broomhall, such as Belmont, in Collegiate Crescent, builders proved to be able to achieve quite a complex ground plan.

Three examples of architects building for their own occupation survive in the area: William Flockton at 275 (now 305) Glossop Road, Samuel Worth at 1, Westbourne Road, and T.J. Flockton at 21 Westbourne Road. Flockton seems to have built the Glossop Road house in 1835, initially with the intention of renting or selling it, as it was advertised in the glowing terms that characterised Flockton's publicity.⁴¹ Possibly not immediately finding any takers Flockton moved into the house himself and found it so convenient for his needs that he remained there until his death in 1864.⁴² The house survives, but only just. The large garden, reaching back to Wilkinson Street, in which it stood, had long been truncated for further development and the area immediately around the house has been covered with tarmac to provide car-parking space. The interior of the house has been thoroughly gutted; all the original internal walls and staircase have been removed and all the interior has been covered with wood chip wallpaper and magnolia-coloured paint. Although it is no longer possible to see any vestige of the internal style favoured by Flockton the exterior is of ashlar and in the classical style which he favoured for his early buildings. It displays the subtle use of incised lines in the stonework to outline windows or other features which re-occur in Flockton designed houses as diverse in location and period as the early semi-detached houses of the 1830s in Wilkinson Street to Storth Lodge at Ranmoor built in the 1860s. Flockton's home has one unusual feature: its orientation. Almost all early houses in the western suburbs take advantage of the views and the opportunity to have the much-valued south facing aspect. Although Flockton had a large plot for his house it is built quite close to the Glossop Road and faces up hill in a north-easterly direction. When built, his house would look up to his only near neighbour, William Fairbank of Westhill (now the

³⁹ Deeds of *Oakholme*, University of Sheffield collection of deeds.

⁴⁰ Goddard, J. 'Endcliffe Hall: the residence of a gentleman industrialist', in: *Aspects of Sheffield. Discovering local history – 1*, edited by Melvyn Jones. Barnsley: Wharmcliffe Publishing, Ltd., 1997. pp. 226-244.

⁴¹ *Sheffield Mercury*, 2 May, 1835.

⁴² Deeds of 54, *Wilkinson Street*, University of Sheffield collection of deeds.

West End public house), putting the old surveyor in daily sight of the young contender who was challenging the monopoly of surveying in the town which the Fairbank family had held for so long.

Shortly after the completion of The Mount, Samuel Worth built a house on the opposite side to the Glossop Road that he called Broomhill Villa.⁴³ Worth also came from a family of builders and Henry Worth, probably his brother, was responsible for a number of early houses in the Claremont area of Broomhill.⁴⁴ Samuel was first the assistant and then the partner of J. Botham⁴⁵ and went on to be involved with the design of a number of public buildings such as the new Cutlers' Hall and the entrance to the General Cemetery.⁴⁶ Broomhill Villa is much the same size as Flockton's house on Glossop Road but has high columns supporting the porch, echoing the style of The Mount. Worth used a similar style a few years later when he was responsible for the original design of Ashdell that was built not far away.⁴⁷ After a few years Worth moved closer to the centre of town and spent the last decade of his life at Worksop.

By 1853 T.J. Flockton, the eldest son of William, had built himself a house at the opposite end of the street, at that time called Broomhill Terrace, (now Westbourne Road) from the house built by Worth.⁴⁸ Like his father, T.J. Flockton chose an unusual site for his house. With the 16 acres of what was shortly to become Victoria Park to choose from, he selected a steeply sloping site which had been used as a stone quarry at the beginning of the century. The house is set quite close to the road and to its neighbour to the east. As the plot is long and narrow any future neighbour to the west would also be close at hand. The main entrance to the house faces west and allows no room for an attractive approach to the house. The style of architecture is vaguely Tuscan with a rather truncated tower. The interior of the house was radically changed in the twentieth century when it was used as a teacher-training centre with much use of chipboard to produce flush doors. It has now stood empty for a number of years and has been vandalised. However, on visiting the house, the rooms do not seem to have had elegant proportions nor were there any indications of it ever having offered any particularly fine style or level of comfort that one of Sheffield's leading architects might have designed both for his own pleasure and as an example to potential clients.

The style of architecture favoured by the builders and residents of western Sheffield will be discussed under the individual case studies. In general it can be said that the architecture of western Sheffield was predominantly gothic. There are examples to be found of classical style and, first in Broomhall and then Broomhill, Dutch gables were to be found. However, the universal use of stone, relatively high stone walls, many trees and the frequent use of a building line set far back from the road irons out differences of style and the impression of gothic gables prevails.

5.3 Builders

5.3.1 The part played by builders in development

In the creation of Sheffield's Western suburbs ground landlords played an important part. First, by making land available for building, then by specifying the layout of roads and

⁴³ Deeds of *Mount View*, Sheffield City Council collection of deeds.

⁴⁴ Deeds of properties in *Claremont Place*, University of Sheffield collection of deeds.

⁴⁵ *Sheffield Mercury*, 17 June, 1826.

⁴⁶ *Some Sheffield architects*.

⁴⁷ Deeds of *Oakholme*, University of Sheffield collection of deeds

⁴⁸ Deeds of *21, Westbourne Road*, University of Sheffield collection of deeds.

building lines which established the shape of a development and finally, by setting the terms of building leases, which determined the basic level of development. In Sheffield the ground landlord exercised the only form of housing regulation until quite late in the century as the town did not introduce bylaws until 1864. From the surviving housing stock it is clear that the builders of western Sheffield achieved a high standard of quality, workmanship and materials without any municipal regulation. However, virtually all Sheffield's landowners took no part in the actual building of houses.

A number of individuals, acting independently, and a few small groups, were responsible for instigating building. These ranged from owner/occupiers such as Burbeary of Oakholme, Shepherd of Ashdell and Butcher of Five Oaks who commissioned large houses for their own occupation, to what might be termed 'gentleman developers' such as Parker of Broomgrove, Hobson of Taptonville and, on a much larger scale, Wostenholm of Kenwood, who bought large areas and, having taken a prime site for their own residence, controlled development on the remainder of the estate and profited from ground rents. Organisations, such as the Endcliffe Building Company, and the members of the Ranmoor Land Societies, were responsible for the development of land, without necessarily wishing to live in the area. The actions of these groups will be studied under the relevant case histories.

However, the decision to build for much of western Sheffield, lay with the speculative builder and Simpson has pointed out that such men carried the heavy responsibility of deciding what constitutes good middle-class standards and fashion at a given time in his particular area.⁴⁹ Another commentator on the trade noted that, 'the necessity to build an easily saleable or lettable house almost demanded that builders should not be innovatory' and so they usually worked from 'experience and empirical knowledge' which allowed them to judge the site possibilities and, 'the prevailing house forms of the locality'. Concluding that, 'the speculative builder was no innovator in design, building techniques, materials or anything else: he broadly followed existing local trends, building in the only way that a highly traditional and conservative industry knew'.⁵⁰ Given the great financial risk that such a builder was required to undertake, a risk which richer, and wariar, men (such as landowners) were careful to avoid, it is hardly surprising that this was the case. In Sheffield such caution was doubly wise as Flockton's failed attempts at Broomgrove Baths and the Endcliffe Vale Estate indicate that the unusual was not highly valued in the town. For those who wished to be aware of current ideas an increasing number of periodicals were published, such as the *Builder* from 1842 and then *Building News*, as well as architectural journals. A small proportion of houses was built to the specifications of resident occupiers and a somewhat larger group was built on behalf of developers looking for rental income, but a greater number were undertaken by local master builders, usually the head of a small family firm. Cave suggests that, in the course of the nineteenth century, speculative builders were able to operate on a larger scale and, by keeping the cost of basic materials to a minimum, produce 'impressive-looking houses', with curved front walls, semi-circular or segmented semi-hexagonal bays, shutters, broad over-hanging eaves, wrought iron balconies, canopies, porches, railings, scrapers, knockers and lamps, all calculated to catch the eye of potential clients.⁵¹ Ornate or plain, it was the master builder, often the head of a small firm, who took the greatest financial risk of actually building houses. For this, funding had to be found for men and materials with profit coming only at the end of the enterprise when the house was ready for sale or rent.

To ensure an even cash flow a builder had to be keenly aware of what would be marketable: the slightest miscalculation could bring down even successful men. This need

⁴⁹ Simpson. *Middle-class housing*. p. 21.

⁵⁰ Burnett. *Social history of housing*. p. 87

⁵¹ Cave. *The smaller English house*. p. 209

to ensure financial stability made for great caution. It might have been supposed that landowners, as prosperous men, would have been better fitted to understand what would attract a middle class market. However, it was the builder, who rarely rose above the level of artisan, who was required to assess what would be a suitable location, price and style of architecture to attract buyers.

It was the builders, rather than the landowners of early Broomhill, who decided on the uniformity of stone as a building material, which was to be the most characteristic feature of all the Western suburbs. Even at mid-century, when Church land was offered with the option of using brick, or even allowing commercial development, it was the local builders who decided that development should continue in the manner to be found elsewhere in Broomhill. Builders have sometimes been reproached for conservatism but the type of villa built in Western Sheffield throughout most of the nineteenth century obviously found ready acceptance with the public. Had there been a strong demand for novelty, no doubt builders, ever sensitive to their market, would have met the need.

Since it was the speculative builder who was so closely involved with the 'decision to build'⁵² for much of Western Sheffield, it would be useful to discuss the size and nature of the town's building trade. Unfortunately it is the nature of small firms, leading a hand to mouth existence, to leave few records. Writers of building history have noted the general dearth of information concerning the industry in all parts of the country.⁵³ An attempt will be made to give some indication of the nature of the Sheffield building trade and put it in the context of what is known about the industry in general.

5.3.2 The size of the building industry in Sheffield

There is little direct information available on the size and nature of the building trades in Sheffield in the nineteenth century. Some data can be drawn from contemporary local trade directories: however, this is difficult to assemble in a meaningful manner, as editors often changed the headings under which the various tradesmen were listed. The earliest comprehensive directory, published in 1828,⁵⁴ has headings for *bricklayers and slaters, plasterers, plumbers and glaziers, slaters, slate merchants, timber and raff*⁵⁵ *merchants* as well as *house painters*. The most comprehensive heading is for *joiners, carpenters and builders*, of whom there were sixty-one. A number of names are common to various headings, sometimes they are the same person, sometimes they are apparently members of the same family, who often occupy premises close together.

Some men were listed under more than one heading and other sources indicate that by no means all working tradesmen were listed in directories, so it is difficult to estimate the total number of men involved in the trade. Directories also excluded the casual labourers, both semi and unskilled, who formed an important part of the building work force. The figures in Table 1 are drawn from local directories from 1821 to 1841. This gives an indication of the number of crafts involved and their growth during the period. Few building firms seem to have felt a need to take advertisements in directories. In 1849 a *Portmahon* firm offered their services as 'joiner, bricklayer, masons, builders and contractors'.⁵⁶ No further advertisements appeared until two builders associated with the development of Broomhall Park Estate advertised in 1856. William Clark, (late Clark and Hague) set up on his own as

⁵² Powell. *British building industry*. p. 1

⁵³ *Ibid.* p. 31 & 33.

⁵⁴ *Sheffield directory and guide*. 1828.

⁵⁵ *raff* – wood shavings and chippings

⁵⁶ White. *General directory of Sheffield*. (1841) [Advertisement]

a joiner and builder.⁵⁷ His early career is mentioned later in this chapter. Another member of the Hague family, publican of the Mason's Arms, Park, seems to have been in a more extensive line of business, being not only a 'mason, builder and bricklayer and stonemason', but having his own stone quarries at Grimethorpe and Cricket Road.⁵⁸ In 1856 Henry Water, 'master builder and manufacturer of stone fittings' placed an advertisement⁵⁹ but no trace of his work has been found in western Sheffield. However, in the same volume, George Chadwick informed the public that he was a general builder and contractor who had been operating for twenty years and had a large and well selected stock of building materials in all branches of the business including bricks, tiles and drain tiles.⁶⁰ At this period Chadwick was building some of the earliest, and smaller houses on the Victoria Park Estate.⁶¹ The statement that he had been in business for twenty years suggests that the making of the Endcliffe Vale Road in the early 1840s⁶² must have been one of his earliest commissions.

In succeeding directories few names remain constant, indicating the difficulty of surviving in such a fickle trade. Deeds and newspaper reports testify to the frequency of bankruptcy at all levels of the building trade. A few firms lasted for two generations and an even smaller number went on to a third generation. Lacking any other evidence, it is possible only to make a guess at the relative prosperity of firms operating over a long period on the basis of the address of the place of business, if it is assumed that the most successful firms would choose to move to the newer 'respectable' areas such as Rockingham Street, Division Street and Devonshire Street. The rise and fall in prosperity of some master builders can be gauged by their changing place of residence.

As the demand for houses increased throughout the country basic building methods did not change but there was a growth in the number of builders merchants who were able to supply wholesale a number of components which, in earlier times, had to be made individually on site or nearby. Robinson⁶³ describes houses going up in that area in the 1870s and 80s that were aimed at a similar market to those erected at Taptonville in Broomhill. He comments that one of the builders active in the area had a joinery business with his own works and the products were used not only for the porch of his own house in Moncrieffe Road but also in a terrace which he built, 'whose hallways are packed with examples of his firm's joinery'. Another builder, Francis Smith, 'used standard ready-made doors and windows and so on'. Robinson notes that Sharrow and Nether Edge provide many examples of 'the simple variations of detail which a typical builder of the period could employ to give each house its individual character'. Most of the examples which he quotes are for smaller houses than those discussed in this study and the creator of what he considers 'some of the area's more interesting houses', the firm of Henry and Robert Brumby,⁶⁴ was only responsible for a few of the late in-fill of small houses at Broomhill, such as Rutland Park. The most notable examples of mass-production in the Broomhill area are the stone heads that adorn many doorways in streets of quite small houses such as Parker's Road as well as the later houses in Endcliffe Crescent. However, the great expansion in the availability of mass-produced items for the building trade enabled a builder such as Francis Dickinson to create his ornament-laden houses at Broomhill that could then be sold at a

⁵⁷ White. *General directory of Sheffield*. (1856) [Advertisement]

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Deeds of 2, *Southbourne Road*, Sheffield City Council collection of deeds

⁶² Wilsons & Co. (Sharrow) [*Archives at Sharrow Mill*]

⁶³ Robinson, G. 'They built Nether Edge', in: *They lived in Sharrow and Nether Edge: a miscellany by the Nether Edge Neighbourhood Group Local History Section*. Sheffield: Nether Edge Neighbourhood Group, 1988. p. 41-46.

⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 43

high price, but if every novelty had had to be created individually on-site, the price would have been prohibitive.

Builder's merchants were much more inclined to advertise than their customers. In 1833 a plumber named Robert Drury offered his services to the public⁶⁵ and such an early advertisement may have been an indication of his wish to be known and expand his trade for in ensuing directories he was a regular advertiser and the advertisements record his ever expanding scope. He took a two-page advertisement to illustrate his 'ornamental chimney tops, of various sizes and patterns, warranted to stand'. He also supplied a comprehensive selection of items such as light and dark Roman cement as well as having a 'marble chimney piece depository'. Drury obviously prospered and by 1849 his firm had increased its range still further offering plate and sheet glass 'cheap and elegant for house glazing'.⁶⁶ He was the most consistent advertiser but by no means alone. In the same year Watson Bros. offered 'flagging and paving, street grates, earthen-ware drain pipes as well as soughing, draining and concrete and asphalt pavement' which 'they are now executing in the best manner and on the lowest terms'.⁶⁷ Another firm supplied not only wholesale and retail slate but also made bricks and terracotta, besides operating as 'general commissioning agents'.⁶⁸ Charles Brown of Carver Street, a cousin of John Brown, the steel-maker, advertised a willingness to have 'slaters sent to all parts of the country'.⁶⁹ The main family firm of Samuel Brown and sons were still taking full-page advertisements in 1864 to show not only their range of slates but also lightning conductors.⁷⁰ Some advertisers seem to have been generalists, such as John Armitage jnr., who was not only a joiner and builder but also an undertaker, packing case maker and collector of rents.⁷¹ The increasing variety of glass available to the building trade was indicated by the two pages taken by John Winch. His range covered not only all types of glass for building purposes but also items for the kitchen and garden. A two page advertisement covered 'Hartley's Patent and Rolled and Fluted Glass for skylights, conservatories, warehouses etc. , where great strength needed, cast rough plate glass for roofs and floors, polished and silvered plate glass of premier lustre and reflective quality, stained and ornamental for conservatories, doors etc.' In addition he had 'glass milk pans the nicest vessels for holding milk or cream, preserve and pickle jars, glass propagators for seeds, pastry pins and slabs, cucumber glasses etc. etc.'⁷² Armitage also had a wide range, including fire bricks, drainage pipes, chimney tops ... architectural ornaments, figures fountains, vases in artificial stone, suitable for Park, Pleasure Ground or Garden.⁷³ In 1864 John Matthews, joiner and packing case maker offered advanced technology to provide many products at his St. Mary's Steam Joinery Works, such as 'every description of architraves, moulding, plinths, spouts, doors, windows, garden lights, greenhouses etc. manufactured by steam power and improved patent machinery... the trade supplied'.⁷⁴ Others concentrated on small items such as 'locks, East India Black Buffalo horn knobs, drawer knobs, escutcheons, door finger plates and Aberdeen and other bell pulls'. Ivory bone and wood knobs for drawers and doors were also available.⁷⁵ As mentioned elsewhere, a wide range of internal fitments was also available, notably stoves. All these advertisements are useful indications of the widening range of products available to the builder and many examples

⁶⁵ White. *History and general directory*. 1833. [Advertisement]

⁶⁶ White. *General directory*. 1849. [Advertisement]

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* [Advertisement]

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* [Advertisement]

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* [Advertisement]

⁷⁰ White. *General directory and topography*. 1864. p. 137. [Advertisement]

⁷¹ White. *General directory*. 1860. [Advertisement]

⁷² *Ibid.* [Advertisement]

⁷³ *Ibid.* [Advertisement]

⁷⁴ White. *General directory*. 1864. [Advertisement]

⁷⁵ White. *General directory*. 1849. [Advertisement]

of everything from chimneys to door furniture can still be seen in many houses in the western suburbs.

Another type of advertiser sheds a little light on an aspect of which very little trace remains: interior decorating. One of the earliest advertisers, the West End General Painting Establishment, established in 1846, claimed that, in that time, the owner had been 'invariably consulted on the arrangement of colours in most of the respectable Houses in the neighbourhood'.⁷⁶ In the same year another firm aimed for the top end of the market: John and Joseph Rodgers, formerly Rodgers and Styring. As general decorators the firm seems to have aimed to be truly comprehensive and au fait with every fashionable taste, offering 'paper hanging, panelled decoration, borders etc. in Alhambra, Gothic and other styles of Architecture, from designs by Owen Jones, Pugin and other eminent artists. A great variety of the latest and best French Patterns constantly on hand'.⁷⁷ In 1864 Edward Eadon, carver, gilder, cabinet maker and upholsterer informed the public that he intended to continue the family firm of Eadon and son, but flattered potential customers that he would 'make such Improvements in his Trade as the increasing importance of Sheffield demands'.⁷⁸

As described in the previous section, apart from the handful of large houses in the Endcliffe, Tapton and Ranmoor complex, few of Sheffield's suburbs were created by architects. The bulk of the housing stock was the work of a large number of builders. Although their work is everywhere to be seen there is very little surviving information about the men involved. Drawing on a wide variety of records it is possible to glean a little information concerning the most prominent firms. The general impression is that work was carried out by small businesses, working with little capital and often falling into the abyss of bankruptcy. It is possible to see what size, architectural style, estate layout and cost they considered most likely to appeal to the type of clientele they wished to attract, and also to estimate how successful they were in their predictions.

5.3.3 Building firms: work and prosperity

Two studies give information on the state of the building trade in Sheffield prior to the building of the western suburbs indicate the base from which later builders were able to develop. Aspinall outlined the business affairs of Thomas Sambourne, Sheffield's only example of a land developer in the last quarter of the eighteenth century.⁷⁹ Postles studied the development of Church Burgess land at the end of the eighteenth century and the early decades of the nineteenth.⁸⁰ Church Burgess land stretched westward from the centre of the town and formed the site for developments such as Devonshire Street that involved builders such as Thomas Flockton who were to be instrumental in suburban development. Writing of the development of Church Burgess land, Postles⁸¹ describes 'The archetypal builder' who 'lived in the area and developed a few building lots near his house and yard.' Such houses, 'usually valued at £60-70 per house', were let to petty craftsmen and tradesmen.⁸² More recently Flavell's study of Sheffield up to 1825 supports the view that local builders were in a very small way of business and offered few opportunities to construct any thing

⁷⁶ White. *General directory*. 1856. [Advertisement]

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* [Advertisement]

⁷⁸ White. *General directory and topography*. 1864. [Advertisement]

⁷⁹ Aspinall, P. 'Thomas Sambourne: a building speculator in late eighteenth century Sheffield', *Transaction of the Hunter Archaeological Society*, 10, 1979, 161-166

⁸⁰ Postles. 'Residential development.'

⁸¹ *Ibid.* p. 362

⁸² *Ibid.*

but what might be considered 'fourth class' housing.⁸³ The case study of Broomhill will demonstrate that, although lacking experience, members of Sheffield's building trade were able to rise to the challenge of erecting something as imposing as the façade of The Mount and quickly adapted to the increase in size and architectural refinement required for the houses built near the new Glossop Road. For speculative builders the problem seemed to lie not in finding competent workmen, or even of finding finance for a project, but rather of maintaining a cash flow between enterprises. For those working in a small way, financing was something to be acquired from any source that came to hand. As the century progressed, Sheffield newspapers regularly offered an increasingly wide range of funds available for investment. Sources included solicitors, sometimes local but also from London or other towns and, by the second half of the century new sources such as the Hallamshire Private Funding Society were offering sums from £5 to £1000 to interested parties.⁸⁴ A builder, particularly at the beginning of his career, would probably acquire money in much more *ad hoc* manner and contacts were likely to be made by word of mouth.

Initially, a builder needed to secure a building lease. If he was fortunate, this might be offered at a peppercorn rent or on some form of deferred ground rent until building was completed. The next step was to find an investor with a little capital who could supply the sixty pounds or so required to fund a small house. The money would then be handed out piecemeal as materials or wages made necessary. Alternatively, a ground landlord, or an investor who had acquired a building lease, might fund a builder. Whatever the means, the investor looked to recoup his investment by renting the property and the builder took his small profit to fund his next project. Such profit would rarely be sufficient to fund an entire new house, merely enough to make a start, then the process of looking for a source of additional finance began again. If a builder was able to carry on this financial balancing act for a number of years, he could hope to establish a reputation as a reliable craftsman and backers would be easier to come by. Working on such a limited budget, a great deal of luck entered into who prospered and who failed, as even the best workmen could be caught between creditors or fall on bad times when the town's staple trade suffered from depression.

5.3.4 Examples of building firms: work and prosperity

Sheffield did not produce the local equivalent of a Cubitt, nor is there enough information to outline the working of an individual firm in the manner of Dyos's study of Edward Yates⁸⁵. However, the progress of the firm of Thomas Flockton can be traced from the early years of the century until his death in 1842. Flockton, was one of that much-maligned race, the speculative builder. Although such men were responsible for much of the housing stock, not only in Sheffield but also throughout the country, little has been written about them. Accordingly, it seemed useful to glean as much as possible about one member of this neglected group in an attempt to shed some light on the problems and achievements of an individual builder and, if possible, put it in the context of the building trade in general.

Having followed the fortunes of builders during the nineteenth century, both in Sheffield and in other towns, it seems to the author that the successful man needed strong nerves to survive the financial uncertainty associated with his trade. An amenable relative in a

⁸³ Flavell. *The economic development of Sheffield*.

⁸⁴ *General and commercial directory and topography of the Borough of Sheffield...* Sheffield: Francis White & Co., 1861. [Advertisement]

⁸⁵ Dyos, H. J. 'A Victorian speculative builder : Edward Yates,' in Dyos, H.J. *Exploring the urban past, essays in urban history*. Edited by David Cannadine and David Reeder. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982. pp 179-181

stable trade willing to help with cash-flow problems was an asset which could save a builder from the bankruptcy which befell so many. Good luck was the final element which ensured that a man, after a lifetime of precarious financial arrangements, ended his life solvent and living comfortably rather than destitute and dependent upon parish assistance. Size of firm was not necessarily a safeguard against financial problems. Limiting risk and having a good reputation for probity, which would reassure nervous potential financial backers, seem to have been the best buffers against bankruptcy.

Certainly it was not a trade holding out good prospects, as it was a notoriously precarious occupation. For the jobbing builder work tended to be seasonal and, even in season, irregular and dependent on the weather. Life for the master builder was hardly any better: a hand-to-mouth existence with the spectre of bankruptcy ever at his shoulder. For every Thomas Cubitt, controlling a vast building empire and ending his life not only solvent but honoured by a knighthood,⁸⁶ the trade could show thousands of builders struggling for existence. By the nature of their work such men leave few records of their existence. The few studies of the building trade and individual builders may well be the result of the difficulties involved in gathering data. However, enough information has been gathered on the life and work of Thomas Flockton to give a brief outline of his working life and his place in the building of Sheffield.

The young Flockton had to make his living in especially difficult conditions as trade was universally depressed as a result of the Napoleonic Wars. The first mention of him places him living in humble circumstances as a tenant of a small cottage at Hawley Croft at the end of 1803.⁸⁷ Leader describes it as an area which was first a location of large houses, built on green field sites by the town's affluent citizens in the 1720s.⁸⁸ As the century progressed streets and courts made up of houses and workshops engulfed them and the area had become very down-market by the beginning of the nineteenth century. Flockton occupied one of three houses built on land owned by the Church Burgesses. The ground rent for all three was only 15 shillings implying that the accommodation was modest.⁸⁹

Shortly before his death, at the time of the census taken in the summer of 1841, Flockton, his wife and son, Henry, were living in a house recently completed by his eldest son, William. There could have been no greater contrast with his origins in Hawley Croft. Broomfield was a prime green-field site, close to the Glossop Road. Flockton's house was one of a pair of semi-detached houses, skilfully camouflaged to give the appearance of a single substantial mansion, built of ashlar, in a vaguely Strawberry Hill Gothick style. Inside there were many tasteful features such as fine cornices, ogee arches on the door panels and unusually deep skirting boards to mark it out as something altogether superior to some of the rather Spartan speculative building going up close by. Looking out of his windows he could see two of William's great creations. To the north was the successful residential development of the terrace known as 'The Mount', housing some of Sheffield's most respected citizens. South was the equally monumental Wesleyan Proprietary School. Living, even if only for a short period, in such a fine setting must have been profoundly satisfying to one who had known the squalor of the old quarter of the town. The satisfaction may have been intensified by the proof that the next generation of Flocktons was moving from the base that he had provided to achieve even greater things.

⁸⁶ Hobhouse, H. *Thomas Cubitt, master builder*. London: Macmillan, 1971.

⁸⁷ *The Iris*, 30 January 1803

⁸⁸ Leader. *Reminiscences*. pp.196 and 197

⁸⁹ *The Iris*, 30 January 1803

As far as can be ascertained, Thomas Flockton was of humble origins and made his way in the world without any family help. It is said⁹⁰ that the fortune of Newcastle's leading builder, John Grainger, who came from similarly humble stock, was based on marriage to a lady with considerable business acumen and a dowry of £3,000. No doubt all builders would wish to be so lucky. Grainger was an active worker for the Methodists in his youth and this brought him to the attention of prosperous members of that community who then regularly put work his way. There is no record of Flockton's religious affiliations but he does seem to have made a business connection with Thomas Holy, a leading figure in Sheffield's Methodist community. Flockton took a number of leases on land owned by Holy, beginning close to the western edge of the town, when it barely reached to Carver Street, and gradually moving further out to the top end of Wilkinson Street. He obtained a number of mortgages from Holy to enable him to develop the sites.⁹¹ This connection, dating from the early years of Flockton's career can only have reflected well upon him, as Holy was well known to be not only a man of great probity but also one of the soundest businessmen in the town.

Not only did Flockton start with few advantages, he also worked in a time of great trade depression and uncertainty in the town. At the beginning of the century the Napoleonic Wars restricted markets and when peace returned trade was still erratic, with rapid changes from recovery and recession. Lloyd⁹² suggests that the recovery of 1814-16 was followed by a slump in 1818-20, recovery peaked in a boom in 1825 that was followed by another slump in 1826-31. Recovery returned in 1832-6 to be followed once more by slump in 1837-40. Flockton managed to ride this roller-coaster of economic trends in the town and to end his working life in comfortable circumstances, leaving his wife provided with a house in pleasant surroundings in which to pass her widowhood, each of his sons with a trade and even modest dowries for his daughters.

Though starting his working life as one of the 'archetypal builders' described by Postles⁹³ the location of some of his early speculations can be traced in trade directories. This is because, more than any of his contemporaries in the town, he tended to give his name to each new group of houses which he built, for example, 'Flockton's Houses', 'Flockton's Row', and 'Flockton's Yard'⁹⁴. Flockton appears not to have been content to spend his life scraping together the funds to erect basic, if well built, mixtures of small houses and workshops. He early identified the importance of the westward expansion of the town and participated in building the area around Division Street, which had established a reputation as a location for 'respectable' artisans. He had brought his family to nearby Rockingham Street by 1821 and, from this base, his buildings were to be ever further westward and he aimed at an ever more prosperous section of the community. By 1828 his precocious son, William, was already taking an important part in deciding the future of the family firm⁹⁵ However, William Flockton would not have been able to expand to Broomhill without the building skills and sound business practices that he had learned from his father. He also had the benefit of the reputation for sound building and financial probity that his father had established. As a builder he had left the town the better for additions to its building stock which were sound, whether they were amongst the mixed accommodation offered in Jessop Street or set in the green fields of Wilkinson Street. No detached house built by Thomas

⁹⁰ Ayris, I. *A city of palaces: Richard Grainger and the making of Newcastle upon Tyne*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Libraries and Information Service, 1997. p. 31

⁹¹ Deeds of 54, *Wilkinson Street*, University of Sheffield collection of deeds.

⁹² Lloyd, G.I.H. *The cutlery trade: an historical essay in the economics of small-scale production*. London: Longmans, 1913. pp. 193 & 195.

⁹³ Postles. 'Residential development.'

⁹⁴ *New, general, & commercial directory of Sheffield and its vicinity...* Compiled by R. Gell. Manchester: [Printed at the Albion Press], 1825.

⁹⁵ *Sheffield Mercury*, 21 October 1827

Flockton has been traced so it may be assumed that the short terrace of three houses and a pair of semi-detached houses built in Wilkinson Street in the 1830s represent the high point to his career.⁹⁶ Most of the other, later, houses in the street are built to a high standard but, on close inspection, Flockton's work stands out with its attention to detail. The houses are of a dark red brick with stone dressing: quoins at the corners, drip moulding in front and frame to the windows, doors and gate-posts which still bears traces of its original fine chiselling. The stone is now blackened with over a century of Sheffield's pollution but when it was new the contrast between brick and the light honey colour of the local stone must have been very striking. By always seeking to up-grade the type of houses which he built, correctly gauging the state of the housing market, not to say the taste and pockets of prospective clients, Flockton was able to live out his retirement in comfort until his death in 1845 at the age of 70.

Thomas Flockton's career demonstrates how an ambitious man identified the trend of Sheffield's prosperous citizens to move west. He then took sites in the area, at the same time moving up-market from the small houses and workshops with which he had begun his working life to accommodation likely to attract a more affluent clientele. Beginning in the centre of the town he gradually moved westwards, starting in the Division Street area and ending on the outskirts of Broomhill. In the second half of the century the most important builders to be identified with the growth of western Sheffield tended to concentrate on one or other of the suburbs so their work will be considered under the relevant case study.

5.3.5 Builder, landowner and client relationships

William Fowler, the developer of Victoria Park, came from a long-established firm of surveyors⁹⁷ so was well placed to be aware of building practices in the town. In 1854 he wrote that he had had an agreement with a local builder for the erection of a number of houses and that, on completion, he would grant a lease to the builder, or a person designated by him. The lease would be for a term and rate of ground rent already agreed between landowner and builder. Fowler affirmed that 'arrangements of this kind are frequently made between the Owners of Land and Speculative Builders.' The arrangement can be seen to have operated at Broomhall Park as the deeds of a number of early houses in Collegiate Crescent and Broomhall Road contain phrases such as 'the house completed and a lease yet to be issued'.⁹⁸ The arrangement seems to have worked well at Broomhall Park but Fowler had to look for another builder, as Bradbury, the party to his agreement, became bankrupt before any houses were even started. Problems between the various parties involved in the building of a house sometimes came to public notice when matters had to be settled in court.

In 1805 J. Wainwright, a local surveyor felt it necessary to take an advertisement in *The Iris* to rebut charges that he had made false measurements to benefit masons, builders and contractors who had employed him. He re-affirmed his willingness to survey estates and buildings 'on the shortest notice' and produce plans, elevations and drawings also 'on the shortest notice'.⁹⁹ In the same year there were a series of charges and counter-charges made in the advertisement columns of *The Iris* as the slater responsible for the roof of the Carver Street Chapel and the chapel building committee disputed the standard of

⁹⁶ Deeds of 54, *Wilkinson Street*, University of Sheffield collection of deeds

⁹⁷ Unless otherwise stated all the data in this paragraph are taken from the deeds of *Sunbury*. the University of Sheffield collection of deeds.

⁹⁸ For example, the deeds of 9, *Collegiate Crescent*, in the collection of Sheffield Hallam University.

⁹⁹ *The Iris*, 1 August 1805

workmanship.¹⁰⁰ Later in the century, in 1826, Samuel Brown, father of the future Sir John, took his client, the steel manufacturers, Marshalls, to court over some work done for them in Wellington Street. Brown claimed that the architect employed by the firm, Joseph Botham, did not provide an adequate plan so he had to bring in a surveyor, John Leather, in order to complete the work. A sympathetic court awarded Brown £118.¹⁰¹ Botham felt obliged to take an advertisement to defend his reputation, listing his testimonials from a number of leading citizens such as Thomas Holy. He pointed out that he was so successful that he had had to take his assistant, Samuel Worth, into partnership in order to cope with his busy practice.¹⁰² Such public disputes may have represented only a small proportion of all disputes over building, etc., and many (such as the dispute over Ashdell referred to above) may have remained only the subject of local gossip.

For the majority of the nineteenth century the common practice was to rent a house rather than to buy it.¹⁰³ However, in western Sheffield a relatively high proportion of residents actually commissioned a house rather than renting. Prior to the opening of the Glossop Road all Broomhill's small group of inhabitants owned their houses and most of the building carried out immediately after the opening of the road was also for owner/occupiers.¹⁰⁴ It was only when accommodation was built aiming lower down the market that rental property became available. In each of the suburbs it is noticeable that the early large houses, such as Belmont at Broomhall Park or Tapton Grange and Ranfall at Ranmoor, which gave an area its reputation as a desirable residential enclave, were owner-built. Even three of the nine members of the Endcliffe Building Company chose to live on the estate though some, like T.A. Ward, used their houses as rental property. Others sold on after a short period of time for the houses to be used as rental property by a second generation of owners. Although house ownership was quite widespread amongst Sheffield's wealthy inhabitants renting was also an option; John Brown rented Shirle Hill before building Endcliffe Hall¹⁰⁵ and Samuel Butcher ended his life in baronial fashion by renting Banner Cross.¹⁰⁶

As the size of the housing market grew a number of middle-men appeared to facilitate the smooth transfer of house to buyer or tenant. As early as 1807 a stationer named Warner advertised that he intended to offer a service to cover private contracts, gardens and lodgings and all kinds of property.¹⁰⁷ By mid-century an increasing number of auxiliary services became available. Professional men rarely advertised but in 1849 a Rotherham-based land agent and surveyor offering his services and a Mosborough 'architect and architect's comptoir' could be employed for commission ranging from 2½% to 7½%.¹⁰⁸ Most services advertised were associated with some aspect of finance in the housing market. Hewett and Allott, public accountants, auditors, valuers and commercial agents provided 'valuation of property and machinery for the purposes of mortgages or division of interest carefully made'.¹⁰⁹ Bradley, a stockbroker and share broker, also operated as 'rent-collector and estate agent' whilst another accountant had the benefit of 'nearly fourteen years clerk to the High Bailiff of the County Court'.¹¹⁰ As Broomhill's building boom of

¹⁰⁰ *The Iris*, 15 January, 1805

¹⁰¹ *Sheffield Mercury*, 6 May, 1826

¹⁰² *Sheffield Mercury*, 17 June, 1826.

¹⁰³ Burnett. *Social history of housing*. p. 100

¹⁰⁴ Deeds of property demolished for the building of the Royal Hallamshire Hospital in the collection of Sheffield Area Health Authority

¹⁰⁵ Deeds of *Shirle Hill*, in the Sheffield City Council collection of deeds.

¹⁰⁶ White. *General directory and topography*. 1864.

¹⁰⁷ *The Iris*, 3 February 1807

¹⁰⁸ White. *General directory*. 1849. [Advertisement]

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.* [Advertisement]

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* [Advertisement]

the 1850s began, an enterprising resident offered himself as an 'Estate agent, collector of rents, debts etc. Some years experience in property management, superintending repairs, alterations etc. Residence at Broomhill will allow him to accompany interested parties. Accounts settled quarterly or monthly'.¹¹¹ Another Broomhill resident offered a wider range of services as 'accountant, house, land and commission agent, coal and coke agent and agent for two insurance companies'.¹¹² Possibly aiming for the upper end of the market, Henry Hamer, estate and mercantile agent,¹¹³ gave references from the mayor, Thomas Jessop and William Overend, Deputy Lieutenant of the West Riding. As Hamer could afford to live in Sharrow Lane his business would seem to have been flourishing. Possibly the widest range of services could be had from a firm acting as 'surveyors, house and estate agents and collectors of rents. Diagrams of any size executed to order. Architects, mechanical and perspective drawings. Mortgages obtained on eligible securities. Sale of property effected by private contract'.¹¹⁴ For those wishing to publicise their wants or offers in the housing market Carr of Holly Street claimed to have been providing an advertising agency since 1843 with 'bill posters and circulars delivered'.¹¹⁵ Such advertisements by no means included all those seeking to ease transactions in the housing market but they indicate the growth of businesses connected with the housing market and the part played by both private transactions and publicity other than that available by taking advertisements in local newspapers. The growing number of estate agents listed in successive directories give another indication of an ever-increasing market.

5.3.6 Financial aspects of house-building

Of all those connected with the development of an estate or the erection of a single house the builder was the most financially exposed. No record has been found of either a landowner or an architect in western Sheffield becoming bankrupt as a result of building speculative housing, nor of a client having financial problems as the result of the expense of having a house built. Builders however, whether erecting small houses in town or villas in the suburbs, regularly fell into financial difficulties. It is difficult to arrive at an estimate of the scale of expenditure that was involved in the building of Sheffield's suburbs.

Guides abounded for both client¹¹⁶ and builder. As early as 1804 Sheffield's booksellers were advertising the availability of Crosby's *Builder's New Price Book* for 1804. Here a surveyor, assisted by 'several Experienced and Eminent Builders and Surveyors' gave 'Correct and Complete Tables of the various Work in Building, with the exact prices paid to Journeymen by the first Surveyors in London'. For an outlay of three shillings a builder could have prices for all branches of carpentry and joinery, bricklaying and mason's work, slaters and paviours, plasterers, carvers and gilders as well as painters, glaziers and plumbers was included. Advice on the cost and instructions for purchasing all kinds of materials was given as well as an engraving and all relevant information for erecting a Full Third-rate House'.¹¹⁷ This would seem to indicate that the book was intended for the small builder catering for the lower end of the market, such as the development in the Division Street area. In March of the same year Taylor's *Builder's Price-Book* also appeared at local bookshops. For two shillings and sixpence it offered, 'Prices allowed by the most

¹¹¹ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 17 June 1854.

¹¹² White. *General directory*. 1856. [Advertisement]

¹¹³ White. *General directory and topography*. 1864. [Advertisement]

¹¹⁴ *General and commercial directory*. 1861. [Advertisement]

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.* [Advertisement]

¹¹⁶ Wheeler, G. *The choice of a dwelling*. London: John Murray, 1871.

¹¹⁷ Crosby's *Builder's New Price Book (Crosby's Builder's Price Book) for 1804*. London, 1804.

eminent surveyors in London to the several Artificers concerned in Building'.¹¹⁸ Apart from these basic works a number of other works were available in Sheffield, which were aimed at the more ambitious builder. Eleven volumes, ranging from Plaw's *Sketches for Country Houses, Villas and Rural Dwellings* to Soane's *Designs for Temples, Garden Buildings &c. were*, all priced at about eleven shillings and sixpence.¹¹⁹ An aspiring young builder such as William Flockton would have been able to acquire at least a theoretical knowledge of a wide range of buildings even if he could not afford pupilage with an architect. Advertisements usually mentioned that 'a premium', or even 'a substantial premium' would be required for training a boy in the mysteries of the architect's profession.¹²⁰ The experience of the pupils of that 'best of architects and land surveyors', Mr. Pecksniff, suggest that such money was not necessarily a sound investment.¹²¹

Potential residents were given advice on the proportion of income that should be devoted to building, or more likely renting, a house. Walsh's *Manual of domestic economy*, published in 1857 was aimed at 'families spending from £100 to £1,000 a year'¹²² and Mrs Beeton's *Book of household management* published in 1861 seems to be aimed at a similar income group.¹²³ Architects, such as Wheeler gave examples of the type of house that might be expected for a given outlay.¹²⁴ However, most writers seem to have London or the south of the country in mind and there is little indication of the relative costs of building in the metropolis as opposed to building in the provinces, more especially a large industrial town. In 1857 Walsh writes of houses which let for about £55 a year as being 'of the ordinary style' in 'inferior streets'.¹²⁵ Houses in Beechhill Road at Broomhill¹²⁶ or in Sandon Place on the outskirts of Broomhall could be had for £40-£50¹²⁷ and neither owner nor tenant would have regarded the locations as being inferior streets. He suggests that such houses could be built for from £800 to £1,000.¹²⁸ In Sheffield £1,000 would have bought all but the very largest built at Broomhall at about the same period¹²⁹ so it seems that prices in the town were much lower than in London but there is insufficient evidence to estimate what percentage of total outlay that might be.

Mrs Beeton thought that a family with an income of about £300 could be expected to employ a maid-of-all work and a nursemaid whilst for £500 a housemaid, cook and nursemaid could be afforded.¹³⁰ The census returns for Sheffield's western suburbs suggest that the average villa on its ¼ acre plot would usually be serviced by a cook and a maid. The few advertisements for servants that mention wages suggest that local employers offered considerably less than the £14-£30 and £9-£14 given by Mrs Beeton and that a wide range of skills was expected for modest salaries.¹³¹

118 *The Iris*, 3 March 1804

119 *The Iris* 29 March 1804

120 *The Iris* 27 May 1802.

121 Dickens, C. *The life and adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit*. London: Chapman and Hall, 1844.

122 Walsh, J. H. *A manual of domestic economy suited to families spending from £100 to £1000 a year*. 2nd ed. London: G. Routledge & Co., 1857

123 Beeton, I. *The book of household management*. London: S. O. Beeton, 1861.

124 Wheeler. *Choice of a dwelling*. pp. 152-204

125 Walsh. *Manual of domestic economy*. p. 99

126 *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 4 January 1870

127 *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 4 January 1860

128 Walsh. *Manual of domestic economy*. p. 96

129 Deeds of various properties in Collegiate Crescent, Sheffield Hallam University collection

130 Beeton *Book of household management*. p. 8

131 For example, *The Iris*, 18 October 1804

The actual outlay on a given house in Sheffield is also often difficult to estimate. For completed houses the given cost covers both the house and the plot upon which it stands, so it is not possible to differentiate between the cost of building and the cost of land. Building leases issued before a house was built usually state that it must be worth at least a given amount. The earliest leases issued in the Broomhill area gave a minimum worth of £300, rising to £400 and sometimes £500 for a detached house.¹³² In the course of the century this basic amount changed very little and some of the Ranmoor Land Societies were giving a minimum as low as £200 to £400 in the second half of the century.¹³³ It is clear that this figure of worth was only a benchmark to establish a basic level beneath which development would not be allowed to fall. Another figure quoted in a lease might be that the completed house should be insured for a given sum. This seems to range from one-third to one-sixth of the expected sale price of the house so again it is not a sure indicator.¹³⁴ According to the deeds, the semi-detached houses at Endcliffe Crescent were said to cost £800, or £900 if three storeys high, though it is not clear if this means that the members of the Endcliffe Building Company were allowed to buy their houses at cost price.¹³⁵ It is certain from the deeds of houses at Broomhall Park, which were sold by a builder immediately after completion, that the value of a completed house was considerably in excess of the basic worth stipulated by John Watson. The most expensive houses were sold for over £1,000 and even small houses at the east end of the estate were sold for more than £600.¹³⁶

The range of house prices on individual estates will be considered in more detail in the relevant case study but, in general, it would seem that builders chose to build houses capable of being sold at a price considerably above the basic worth set by the ground landlord and that this price varied over time and according to location. Actual cost of building, as opposed to selling price is also difficult to estimate as prices of raw materials and labour costs quoted in contemporary builder's guides and histories of the building trade usually refer to the London area. However, Powell¹³⁷ suggests that a builder might expect to build in 15% to the sale price of a house to provide his profit. From this it should be possible to estimate the outlay and income of some of the builders who have been identified as being active in the various suburbs.

As Cannadine has pointed out¹³⁸ the supply of middle-class housing invariably exceeded demand. The problems experienced by the Endcliffe Building Company, the Victoria Park Estate and later the Ranmoor Land Societies, in attracting residents testify to the difficulty in estimating demand in western Sheffield. No suggested motive has been found for builders to raise the relatively large amount of capital needed to complete a single villa for an uncertain market when, for a similar amount he could complete a terrace of cottages which might find ready takers. A builder might find it more satisfying to complete a villa using good quality materials rather than running up shoddy cottages; and working on estates such as Broomhall Park would enhance the reputation of a firm and lead to greater opportunities. However, the main reason influencing a builder's choice of building type may have been more prosaic: a villa needed only one buyer, the transaction could be completed quickly and cash-flow maintained to move on to the next project. Even if a buyer could not be found then the house only needed one tenant and, as advertisements

¹³² For example, deeds of property demolished for the building of the Royal Hallamshire Hospital in the collection of Sheffield Area Health Authority.

¹³³ Ling. *Freehold Land Societies*. p. 26

¹³⁴ For example, deeds of various properties in Broomgrove Road, Sheffield Hallam University collection

¹³⁵ Deeds of Endcliffe Crescent, in the University of Sheffield collection of deeds

¹³⁶ Deeds of various properties in the Broomhall Park Estate, Sheffield Hallam collection

¹³⁷ Powell. *Economic history of the British building industry*. p. 28

¹³⁸ Cannadine. *Aristocracy and the towns*. p. 113

pointed out, rents in the western Sheffield area were 'readily collectable'.¹³⁹ Property at the low end of the market carried the danger that a buyer might have problems with raising the necessary funds quickly, a number of buyers might have to be found or, if let, there was the problem of rent falling into arrears, or, even worse, a 'moonlight flit'. On balance, middle-class housing might pose fewer problems for a builder. This supposition appears to be supported by Cannadine's view that Edgbaston's builders seem to have found the erection of working class housing a very risky undertaking as tenants were likely to be unable to pay rent during a slump whereas middle-class occupants were better placed to weather trade down-turns.¹⁴⁰ From the ground-landlord's point of view the bankruptcy of a builder of a middle-class house was a problem for his client whereas if building went smoothly it reflected well on the estate.¹⁴¹

Although sufficient information has not been traced to form the basis for a comprehensive study of the part builders played in the development of western Sheffield's the involvement of a number of firms have been traced and such activities will be discussed under the relevant case study. For all but the minority of houses which were 'bespoke', the successful builder needed to assess the wishes of his potential clients in terms of size of plot, size of house, architectural style and internal amenities. The next chapter will consider the evidence that indicates the preferences of Sheffield's prosperous citizens.

¹³⁹ e.g. sale catalogue for properties in the Broomhill area in the deeds of Sunbury, Sheffield University collection

¹⁴⁰ Cannadine. *Aristocracy and the towns in the nineteenth century*. [Thesis] p. 216

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

Chapter 6

Houses and gardens in western Sheffield

6.1 Housing types

Burnett concludes that, 'most Victorian middle class houses were speculatively built rather than commissioned'.¹ Speculative builders faced, 'The necessity to build easily saleable or lettable houses' and this 'almost demanded that builders should not be innovative'² Accordingly, 'What the suburbans expected of their houses can be gathered partly from treatises of contemporary architects and designers which were written as a guide to builders and clients and partly from what we can infer from the shapes on the ground'.³

As early as 1806 advertisements appeared in *The Iris* announcing the availability of handbooks for builders, so guidance was available at a relatively modest price.⁴ By mid-century the town had an Academy for builders, the Henry Bloor School of Architecture.⁵ There seems to be no trace of the scope of its syllabus but the venture was short-lived so it would appear that builders did not feel the need for formal guidance. Although no evidence has been traced of the sources to which Sheffield builders turned for guidance shapes on the ground still show the size and layout that found favour with Victorian residents. A walk through Broomhall, up to Broomhill then out to the western edge of Ranmoor confirms that the preferred style of living was in a stone-built, detached villa set on a comparatively small plot of land.

6.1.1 Terraces

Only Broomhill provides an example of a grand terrace, indeed it is the only extensive terrace built in any part of Sheffield, apart from Broomhall Place, built at the same period. This terrace, now demolished, built on the eastern boundary of the Broomhall Park Estate, had a classical façade but lacked the fine site and spacious interiors that characterised The Mount. Deeds of the property seem to indicate that it had a chequered history and shoddy building gave rise to problems as early as 1853.⁶ The Mount was William Flockton's first attempt at providing housing for the very prosperous and he tackled the challenge with his usual panache. His advertisement heralding the enterprise in December 1831 declared, 'The mansions will be substantially built and in design and taste far exceeding any of the present erections in the neighbourhood of Sheffield.' Flockton planned 'six mansions with coach houses and stables to be 'built so as to form a handsome Ionic edifice'.⁷ It is notable that the word *house* is never used in the course of a long advertisement but much repetition of *mansion* indicating that this was housing for the very top of the market. Each mansion was to have a spacious dining and drawing rooms, each 20'x15' in addition to a breakfast room and library, six bedrooms, storeroom, two kitchens, extensive cellars and a wide

¹ Burnett. *Social history of housing*. p. 190

² Ibid. p. 20

³ Ibid. p. 194

⁴ *The Iris*, ... 1804

⁵ White. *General directory*. 1849 p. 512

⁶ Deeds of Broomhall Place, collection of Sheffield City Council

⁷ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 17 December 1831

entrance hall. Two of the houses would have slightly larger reception rooms of 25'x15'. Each house would have a separate garden and a shared summer house and 'ornamental piece of water'. The garden was a relatively small area as the noble edifice was, in fact, a brilliant solution to the problem of making the best possible use of an awkward triangle of land restricted by two roads.

As the interior of the terrace has long been gutted to accommodate commercial tenants it is not possible to see the effect of the original layout, but it seems to have offered very spacious accommodation. Cowen's view of western Sheffield⁸ painted in 1841 shows how attractive the finished building was with its honey coloured frontage set amongst the trees and fields which still characterised that part of Broomhill. Even at the end of the twentieth century the facade is still very fine and The Mount was one of the few Sheffield buildings to draw a kind word from Pevsner in his survey of English buildings.⁹

Although The Mount soon attracted a full complement of residents, Flockton did not attempt any further terrace building. Terraces were no longer fashionable by the 1830s but Sheffield was never quick to follow fashion so the lack of further terrace building might indicate that Flockton and his fellow builders did not judge terrace building to be sufficiently remunerative or likely to find a ready market.

6.1.2 Semi-detached houses

Shortly before The Mount was completed the Endcliffe Building Company had constructed the most elegant complex of semi-detached houses ever to be built in Sheffield. The layout described in the case study of Endcliffe (Chapter 9) seems to show at least some influence from Regent's Park, though writ very small. The accommodation was much smaller than that offered by The Mount. All the houses offered the same ground floor layout: ¹⁰ at the front a dining room and drawing room, each 19'x15½' and to the rear two rooms 15' x 15½'. Some houses offered bedrooms on one floor above and the larger type had yet another bedroom floor. The houses are pleasant if plain both internally and externally and offer nothing which could not be obtained much closer to the town. The attraction of Endcliffe Crescent lay entirely in its landscaping and environment. Like The Mount this development attracted a steady stream of residents but does not seem to have been sufficiently successful to invite emulation.

Although the format of semi-detached houses grouped on an estate in the Endcliffe Crescent style did not set a trend there were to be many more semi-detached houses mingled with the villas of the western suburbs. A peculiar feature of the semi-detached house in Sheffield was that the party wall frequently did not go straight through, one house having a wide front and the other a wide back.¹¹ Estates such as Victoria Park show this type of house intermingled with the more usual practice of having one house the mirror image of its companion. The advantage of semi-detached houses over villas was predominantly price. Whilst retaining the amenities of a site in a prestigious location a semi-detached house could offer only slightly reduced accommodation within a shell very similar to neighbouring villas. Semi-detached houses usually occupied slightly smaller plots, which reduced the cost of land and garden maintenance for the occupier and allowed the builder to fill awkward remnants of land. Despite the disadvantage of cost it seems that it was the ambition of most residents to move to a detached villa. Both deeds and

⁸ Cowen, W. *Sheffield from the south-east*. 1838. [Oil painting K 1919.28]

⁹ Pevsner. *Yorkshire*. p. 466

¹⁰ Endcliffe Crescent deeds, in University of Sheffield collection of deeds.

¹¹ Porter, W.S. ed. *Handbook and guide to Sheffield* [for the meeting of the British Association held in Sheffield, 1910] [n.p.]: British Association, 1910. p. 119

directories give examples throughout the century of families moving from semi-detached houses to villas in close proximity so the attraction seems to have been the house rather than the wish for a different area that motivated the change.

6.1.3 Detached houses

The pioneers who had taken up residence bordering the newly opened Glossop Road built themselves detached houses on plots ranging from a quarter of an acre to a little over one acre and this was the pattern taken up by speculative builders. The favour that it found can be judged by the extent to which it proliferated from 1830 to the end of the century. The largest houses such as Endcliffe Hall and Oakbrook were usually referred to as a 'mansion'.

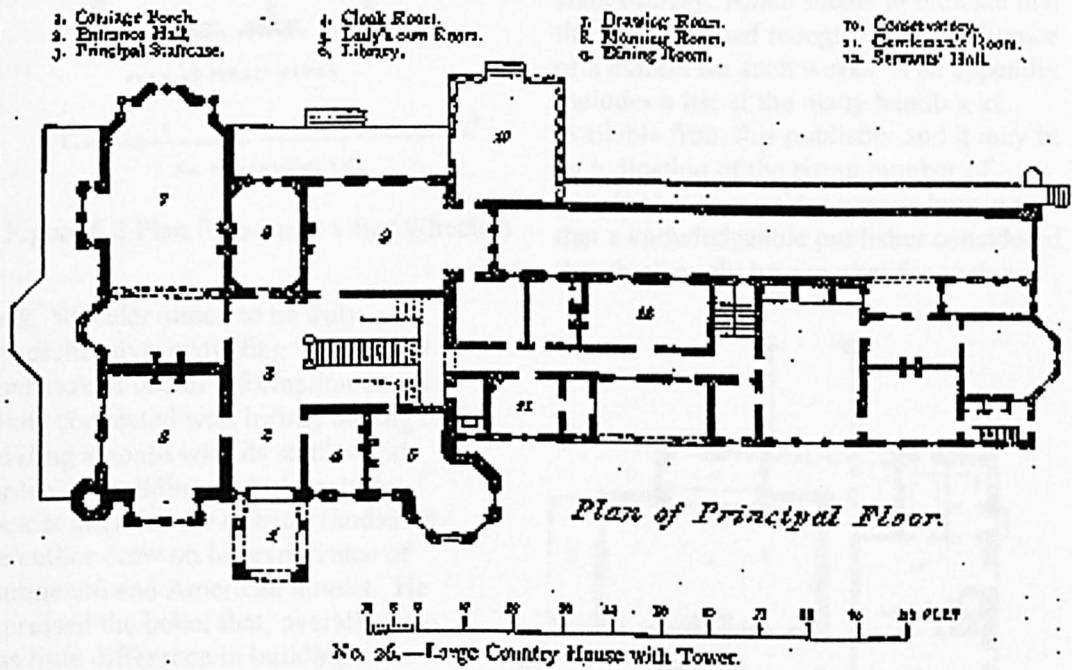


Figure 6.1: Wheeler's model of a country house or mansion

Wheeler suggests that a mansion can be distinguished by the possession of 'unity of design and dignity of effect', having 'certain features that lift it beyond the attainment' of a merely enlarged country house. It should be 'a building of such dignity and extent to mark it as the family residence of a person of wealth and of assured social position', 'placed in grounds of sufficient size, with enough of a park-like character to make it a country seat'. Even if the size of estate is relatively small 'it should possess such a grandeur of outline and completeness of secondaries in the way of entrance gates, approaches and the like, as to mark its importance'.¹²

The majority of the houses considered in this study would fall under the heading of 'villa'. Wheeler admits that this term is used so loosely to describe such a wide variety of detached houses that it is difficult to define. He suggests that it 'should be trim and carefully finished, and in conformity to some known architectural style'. The materials should not be too rough nor the plan too irregular but always be 'associated with ideas of finish and refinement' and, even, if relatively small 'should have its immediate surroundings, as its grounds, gates, fences and the like, of cultivated aspect and delicate finish'.¹³ Cave is rather

¹² Wheeler. *Choice of a dwelling*. p.193

¹³ *Ibid.* p.153

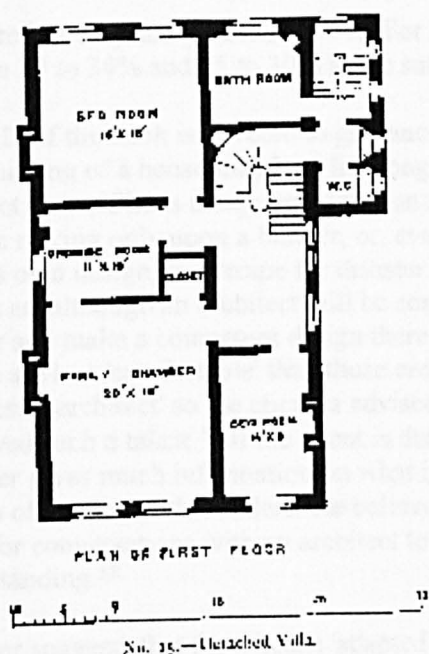


Figure 6.2 Plan for a small villa (Wheeler)

book. Wheeler aimed to be truly comprehensive, providing 'A practical handbook of useful information on all points connected with hiring, buying or building a house with its stables and garden-outbuildings'. Although the book is intended for a British audience the author drew on his experience of continental and American houses. He expressed the belief that, overall, there was little difference in building costs between London and the provinces so his figures could be taken as a guide nation-wide.¹⁵

A chapter is devoted to aspects of renting a house, checking every aspect from the law of landlord and tenant to potential problems of rats or mice drowning in the cisterns, Wheeler considered the problems associated with buying a completed house. As a general guide he suggests 'calculations made by prominent valuers' indicate that costs should be based upon 'the obtainable rent' and the value of a leasehold 1st class house can be

less kind, suggesting that 'villa' during the nineteenth century 'meant any house slightly out of the ordinary, with a suggestion of architectural pretensions' while 'cottage orné' meant 'something difficult to describe'.¹⁴

Wheeler's *The choice of a dwelling*, published in 1871, forms a useful starting point for putting the houses of western Sheffield in the context of the generality of nineteenth century housing. The author, an architect, states in his preface that the book had been suggested by the publisher, John Murray, which seems to indicate that the publisher had recognized the existence of a market for such works. The appendix includes a list of the many handbooks available from this publisher and it may be an indication of the rising number of people able to consider private housing that a knowledgeable publisher considered that there might be a market for such a

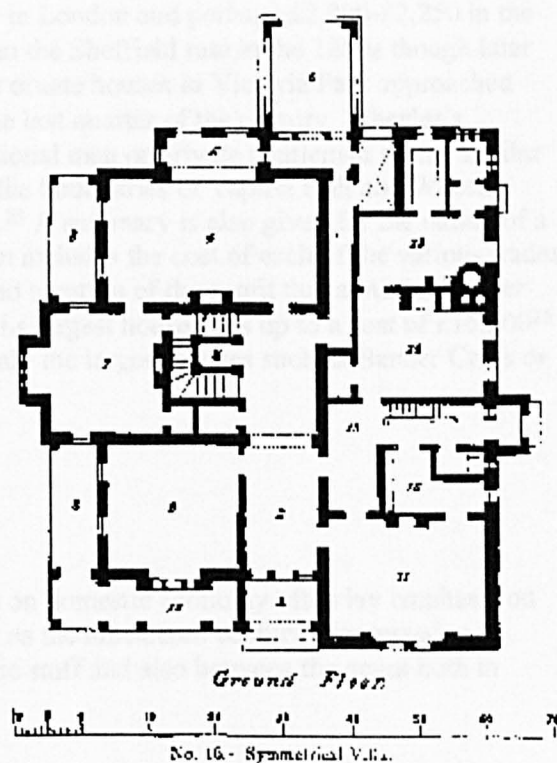


Figure 6.3 Plan for a symmetrical villa (Wheeler)

¹⁴ Cave. *Smaller English house*. p. 214

¹⁵ Wheeler. *Choice of a dwelling*. p. 120

computed as 16 years purchase or 6%. For freehold a first class house in the country could be from 30 to 34% and 25 to 30% in the suburbs.¹⁶

The bulk of the book is devoted to guidance for a man about to commission a house for 'The building of a house may be a life-long satisfaction or a burden of care'.¹⁷ As an architect himself he is unequivocal that an architect is needed and that undertaking such a venture relying only upon a builder, or, even worse, expecting a builder to interpret a client's own design, is a recipe for disaster. He admits that, even then, the result may not be perfect as, although an architect will be competent to act as an intermediary with the builder and make a competent design there are often complaints that architect designed houses are less 'comfortable' than those erected by a builder. A 'special talent is required in a domestic architect' so the client is advised to look for an architect who has already displayed such a talent.¹⁸ If the client is determined to undertake the project with a builder Wheeler gives much information on what is required in various types of houses and the pitfalls of dealing with builders. He believed that such information could also be used as a basis for conversations with an architect to ensure that client and architect have a perfect understanding.¹⁹

Wheeler suggests that for a house 'adapted to the wants and tastes of a family of moderate means, but who require somewhat of elegance in their home belongings' the lowest rental would be £50 to £60 a year.²⁰ This would seem to be somewhat above the Sheffield rate where a house, such as those in Beechhill Road, with similar amenities to the ground plan shown below, could be had for about £40 a year. He suggests that a detached house of the type shown above might cost £2,350-£2,600 in London and perhaps £2,000-£2,250 in the country.²¹ Again, this seems to be higher than the Sheffield rate in the 1850s though later prices for some of Francis Dickinson's more ornate houses in Victoria Park approached these figures²² indicating a rise in costs in the last quarter of the century. Wheeler's 'symmetrical villa', a residence for a 'professional man or private gentleman seems similar to some of the larger houses to be found on the boundaries of Tapton Hall and Wheeler gives an estimated cost of just under £3,000.²³ A summary is also given for the outlay of a house costing almost £2,500. The breakdown includes the cost of each of the various trades and the architect's commission but there is no mention of the profit that a master builder might expect to make on such a venture.²⁴ His largest house goes up to a cost of £16,500²⁵ that is approaching a price range in which only the largest houses such as Banner Cross or Endcliffe Hall could be placed.

6.2 Layout and room size

Social history and nineteenth century books on domestic economy often lay emphasis on the increasing formality of middle-class life as the nineteenth century progressed, a growing segregation of family from domestic staff and also between the sexes both in

¹⁶ Ibid. p. 90

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 95

¹⁸ Ibid. p. 104

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 103

²⁰ Ibid. p. 152

²¹ Ibid. p. 167

²² Deeds of 15, Southbourne Road, in private hands

²³ Wheeler. *Choice of a dwelling*. p. 170

²⁴ Ibid. p. 124

²⁵ Ibid. p. 193

family and social situations²⁶. It is noticeable that Wheeler, although treating each room in the house individually from formal drawing-room to servants quarters and amenities such as bathrooms and billiard rooms, dwells only on practical considerations and makes no mention of a need to segregate the sexes or family from servants. Such separation may have been possible for those who occupied Sheffield's larger establishments but for most of the residents of the western suburbs, inhabiting a villa on a plot of ¼ acre to 1 acre such segregation does not seem to have been possible or regarded as necessary.

Public rooms usually consisted of drawing room, dining room and, often rather smaller, a room variously described as morning or breakfast room, or, less frequently, study. Above would be four to six bedrooms and, at an attic level, one or two small rooms for servant accommodation. A house of this size provides ample accommodation for two people, allowing hobbies to be indulged in privacy and a room kept in state to admit visitors while the clutter of family life goes on elsewhere. For the many families with children of both sexes, often covering a wide range of ages, life must have offered little opportunity for privacy. Genre paintings of the Victorian period depicting various aspects of the domestic life of the wealthiest sections of the middle-class seem to indicate that, by modern standards, an amazing number of people had to be accommodated in one house.²⁷ Often, in smaller houses, all the girls would share a bedroom and another room would accommodate the boys. Even at the beginning of the century some of the most prosperous families, such as the Wards and the Wilsons sent both boys and girls away from home to be educated. However, for the majority of villa-dwellers, children were educated locally, so a house would be occupied by possibly eight or more members of the family as well as domestic staff. Aged relatives could augment the number still further. The use of space was not only affected by the size of a family to be accommodated but also by the functions carried on in the house. Birth, death and the nursing of any illness that may occur between now usually take place outside the home but in the nineteenth century this was unusual. Giving birth was a painful and dangerous experience, all too often resulting in the death of the mother and possibly the baby too. Even with the solid internal walls of the houses in the western suburbs it must have been difficult to shield the children of the house from their mother's suffering, not to say the disruption to household routine. The diary of James Howarth of Sharrow,²⁸ who died at the age of eighty in 1891, is full of reminders of the close acquaintance which people of his generation had with the death in both human and animal form. He records many long vigils with family and friends who suffered from a variety of diseases, and deaths, both sudden or after prolonged suffering. Relatives of Mrs Rimington of Hillsborough, writing to her in the early part of the century seem to be continually relating the ailments of themselves and their neighbours. In the days before antibiotics, painkillers and good dentistry it would seem that a large number of households were likely to have family members who were not enjoying the best of health. Caring for more serious illnesses such as tuberculosis when good sanitation and copious supplies of hot water were not readily available must have strained household routine. The diaries of T. A. Ward and the records of the Wilsons of Sharrow record the need for accommodation to be found for a nurse, and possibly a female relative to take over the running of the household. As an alternative, grandparents would be required to take in their grandchildren in times of infection or maternal illness.

²⁶ For example, Davidoff, L. & Hall, C. 'The architecture of public and private life, English middle-class society in a provincial town 1780-1850', p. 327 in: Fraser & Sutcliffe. *Pursuit of urban history*. p. 327; and Thompson. *Rise of suburbia*. p. 13

²⁷ Frith, W.P. *Many happy returns of the day*. Oil on canvas. 1856. Corporation Art Gallery, Harrogate. (A painting showing parents, grandparents and ten children of varying ages.)

²⁸ Howarth, J. *Jottings regarding the Howarth family and the events of the life of James Howarth, 1811-1891*. [Manuscript in family hands.]

Emphasis has been placed upon the size of households and the problems with which a family might have to cope as both were important factors in determining the amount of space which a family would require, and the way that space was used. In the light of such likely requirements the standard villa to be found in Broomhill or Broomhall, with its three reception rooms and four to six bedrooms was by no means as spacious as might at first appear. If the drawing room was kept in a state to receive visitors, the dining room used for eating, then the majority of family life must have been carried on in the morning room, always the smallest of the three. For many of the families who lived in the type of accommodation commonly found in areas such as Taptonville or Collegiate Crescent to achieve any degree of privacy or a mixture of quiet and noisy pursuits must have been difficult. Those who could afford to move to larger accommodation as family size grew. William Wilson abandoned the convenience of living at the Mill House and moved to Brightfield when it became apparent that each year was to bring yet another hale and hearty Wilson into the world. When his son George married he took the end house of The Mount. Rather than move as his family grew he bought the next house and amalgamated the two so the family had eight reception rooms and twelve bedrooms over which to spread themselves but this option was only open to the wealthier section of the community. Larger houses certainly simplified the problem. James Dixon remembered that he and his seven siblings were allowed to run wild over the grounds of the family home, Stumperlowe Hall, having indulgent parents who rarely seemed to be concerned about their safety. The Hall was large enough to have nursery accommodation well away from the adult members of the family. ²⁹

Families limited to the medium sized villas of the western suburbs usually were restricted to two domestic servants: a maid and a cook, with possibly a nursemaid if there were a number of young children.³⁰ Being accustomed to sharing space within a family the residents had no compunction in crowding servants into cramped conditions. An attic, freezing cold in winter and stiflingly hot in summer, measuring 11'9" x 8'1" and tucked under the eaves so that it was only possible to stand erect in the centre of the room has been described as quite adequate to accommodate cook, servant and, if required nurse maid, as 'all that they would need was a single wash-stand and a truckle bed each'.³¹ Many houses had only one staircase so there was no possibility of separating mundane activities such as taking up coal or water to upstairs rooms, or bringing down slops and ashes, from family movement about the house.

The Georgian houses of Broomhill have all been demolished except numbers 387 and 389 Glossop Road and 1 and 3 Clarkehouse Road. In all cases the interiors have been altered to suit university or commercial use as well as undergoing radical alterations by nineteenth century owners. The oldest detached house in the area is 9 Broomfield Road, which was completed in 1841. The house stands on a ¼ acre plot and offers a large hall from which there is access to a drawing room of 18'2" x 14' and a dining room of 18'5" x 13'10". To the rear is a breakfast or morning room of 13'11" x 7'10" and a large kitchen of 14'9" x 13'3". Below are keeping, wine, coal and wood cellars and above four bedrooms and a dressing room. A small attic provided servant accommodation. A pump situated close to the kitchen window supplied water. Across the courtyard a small out- building provided the usual 'conveniences'. There was also a coach-house with stabling.

This house is of special interest, as it is known to be one of the earliest examples of speculative building in the area. The builder seems to have judged the market well, as it never lacked prosperous tenants. Certainly the basic layout of drawing room, dining room,

²⁹ Wilson (of Sharrow) family papers in private hands.

³⁰ This conclusion is drawn from an examination of the Enumerators Returns for the Censuses for the area over the period 1851-91.

³¹ Conversation with former local resident.

breakfast room and kitchen seems to have been the pattern for all future building in western Sheffield. Measurements might vary a little but the basic requirement of three reception rooms remained the same. Very few offered an extra ground floor room such as the library offered by Flockton at The Mount. The ground floor seems to have always been the preferred site for reception rooms. Even in surviving Georgian houses such as Broomhall or the Mill House at Sharrow there is no indication of the style of first-floor living popular in London and fashionable towns such as Bath.

The 1851 O.S. map³² show that most houses, whether in Broomhill, Broomhall or Endcliffe, were of a plain box-like shape but the 1892 O.S.³³ and later ground plans indicate that, as mentioned earlier, changing fashion resulted in the addition of bay windows and bathrooms in the course of the century. Some owner-occupiers undertook radical changes so that the house occupied a much greater proportion of its plot. At 13 Lawson Road the addition of bays to each window, a mini-conservatory accessible from the drawing room and an Art Nouveau study to the rear extended the original plain house much closer to its garden boundaries.

A more extreme example of alteration is to be found at Mount View. A modest foursquare house was built on a half-acre site early in the 1840s. A generation later the son of the builder, David Ward, had brought the family firm to great heights of prosperity and could afford much more elaborate accommodation. Rather than follow the trend to move to Ranmoor he had Mount View transformed into an Italianate villa with numerous bay windows, often with balconies and balustrades and a large porch with Corinthian pillars. The new confection was topped off with a rather squat tower. To make a suitable setting for his jewel Ward had the grounds landscaped and installed a great range of conservatories so that he could practice his hobby of orchid-growing.³⁴ He also acquired as much land as possible from neighbouring land-owners so that, at a time when almost all Broomhill's remaining land was falling to builders increasingly creating small houses, he stood out against the trend and created a miniature country estate which lasted until his death.

It would appear that the number of rooms and the size of such rooms varied only within a small range for the majority of the houses in the western suburbs. This seems to have been sufficient for most family needs though expansion, rather than removal, was an option for those who could afford it.

6.3 Building Materials

It was said that the first brick house in Sheffield was built in Pepper Alley about 1693. The editor of the 1833 local directory quotes an opinion that 'the novel structure was viewed by the inhabitants with wonder and ridicule, they supposed it to be built of such perishable materials that it would soon yield to destruction'³⁵. The Unitarian Chapel of 1700 and brick houses dating at least from the first half of the eighteenth century still stand in the Pepper Alley area to testify to the lasting quality of brick as a building medium. Carver Street Chapel, built at the beginning of the nineteenth century at the foot of what was to become the main road leading westwards from the town, was constructed in brick. As streets began to be built beyond the chapel the mixture of houses and workshops was also of brick. A

³² Ordnance Survey. *Sheffield*. 1853. Scale 60 inches to 1 mile. [Surveyed 1851]

³³ Ordnance Survey. *Yorkshire (West Riding) [Sheffield]*. 1894. Scale 25.344 inches to 1 mile [Resurveyed 1889-90-92]

³⁴ *Deeds of Mount View* in the Girls' Public Day School Trust collection of deeds.

³⁵ White. *History and general directory*. 1833. p. 46

map of Sheffield published in 1822³⁶ shows that a few villas had begun to straggle westward, such as Brunswick House (now 305 Glossop Road) and a scattering of houses bordering the streets which Thomas Holy had had marked out on his land as early as 1808.³⁷ All of this building was carried out in brick: plain Georgian villas in red brick with stone dressings to windows and doorframes, sometimes with a small porch supported by stucco pillars. Brick built villas on plots of about 800 yards seems to have characterised the manner in which the town was expanding westwards.

In the flurry of building which took place close to the junction of Clarkehouse and Glossop Roads in the years immediately following the opening of the Glossop Road at the end of 1821 a radical change took place in the choice of building material. The preferred building material for existing houses in the Broomhill area seems to have been brick, with possibly a stucco finish. Houses built by the very wealthy such as Page Hall, Meersbrook and Mount Pleasant were all of brick; stone-built Hillsborough seems to have been the only exception though the timber-frame Broomhall had a stone extension added towards the end of the eighteenth century. Five Oaks, probably the first house completed at the Broomhill road junction was built of stone, as was Broom Cross, built a few years later. Stone abounded close by; adjoining Broomfield were what was known as the Nether and Far Stone-pit Fields³⁸ before the area became gentrified, and there were many small quarries marked on early maps.³⁹ The ready availability of stone is indicated by the fact that not only villas but also the early commercial development adjoining Fulwood Road were built of stone. Many early houses such as Oakholme or Pisgah House have rockeries, not of the usual small blocks but of huge boulders up to five feet long, which might suggest that they were ready to hand when the house was built. A complete change from brick to stone did not come about as a result of an immediate transformation. Deeds of property from Broomhall out to Ranmoor indicate that fire-clay was also widely available and houses on the south side of Glossop Road were built of brick as was Egerton House, built in 1829 close to Five Oaks, and the pair of semi-detached houses that formed the beginning of Broomhill Terrace. The brick-work of the surviving house at the junction of Glossop and Clarkehouse Roads [now the Department of History of the University of Sheffield] is unusual as it is much darker than that to be found in other early houses and seems to display the marks of the firing, forming a subtle attractive pattern on the walls. As the bricks are unmarked it is not possible to tell if they were made on site or the work of a local kiln. However, William Flockton's choice of stone for The Mount when building started in 1832, followed by his use of stone for the Wesleyan College in 1836, seems to have set the seal of approval on the use of stone. Thereafter it was to be the preferred building material in western Sheffield.

Clarkehouse, built in the early 1830s on the southern edge of Broomhill, was to be the last large brick-built house in the district and was unusual in being the only house in the area to be advertised as being of a cavity wall construction.⁴⁰ Oakholme, built in 1828 and Ashdell in 1838, were both of stone. Villa Nova (6 Beechhill Road), built in the early 1840s, was the last brick villa and when it was extended later in the century the low Georgian style house was augmented by an incongruous stone-clad three storey block attached at the rear. Towards the end of the century a small amount of in-fill of short terraces was built of brick. Virtually all detached houses, from Broomhill out to the extreme west of Ranmoor, were to

³⁶ *Plan of Sheffield engraved for the History and directory of Yorkshire published by Edward Baines, Leeds, 1822.* [Plan held separately at Kelham Island museum as K97.22, but probably originally part of *History, directory and gazetteer of the County of York...* Leeds: Edward Baines, 1822]

³⁷ Fairbank & Fairbank. *Environs of Sheffield.* 1808

³⁸ Deeds of *Five Oaks* in the Area Health Authority collection of deeds.

³⁹ Deeds of *Ashdell* in the University of Sheffield collection of deeds.

⁴⁰ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent.* 15 April, 1854

be stone built for the remainder of the nineteenth century, possibly because of its availability throughout the region as even the Ranmoor Land Societies advertised that stone for building could be dug on the site.⁴¹ Flockton and the early builders used large blocks of stone with an ashlar finish, later, this was to be superseded by the cheaper alternative of using smaller blocks with a hammered finish. The increasing cost of stone as against brick may be indicated by the fact that commercial development at Broomhill in the second half of the century was carried out in brick whereas in the 1830s the humblest shop was of stone. From about 1830 to the end of the nineteenth century stone was to be the preferred building material for houses with any pretensions to be of a 'respectable class'. No evidence has been traced regarding the reason for this ascendancy so it can only be surmised that, at least initially, stone was chosen because its ready availability in the area made its cost competitive in relation to brick. Once stone became associated in the public mind with what constituted a solid and desirable house then builders continued to use it as a signal of the type of clientele for which an estate was intended.

6.4 Domestic Technology

The level of domestic comfort offered by a house was determined, not by the splendour of its reception rooms and family apartments, but the provision for cooking, heating and its sanitary arrangements. Evidence of exactly how such things were managed in western Sheffield are hard to discover. While inertia, financial considerations or nostalgia have retained many original features, the practical disadvantages of Victorian kitchen and bathroom facilities ensure every effort is made to replace them. A few vestiges, supplemented by contemporary advertising give some indication of the original provision made.

6.4.1 Kitchens

Only Ashdell Cottage, built before 1850, has been found to retain its original kitchen layout though the memories of some of Broomhill's octogenarian residents suggest that such kitchens were once common in the area. From the scanty evidence available it seems that kitchens usually had wooden storage on one or two walls, consisting of two or three deep shelves at the base with rather less deep cupboards above, all painted light green. This was sometimes supplemented by cool storage in a cellar in the form of a food safe with a slatted front to keep out flies or vermin. Sinks were usually at mid-thigh rather than waist level, possibly to facilitate the washing of clothes. Many houses had sculleries or outside wash houses for laundry or dirty work but these were by no means universal. Sheffield was a centre for the production of all kinds of stoves and fireplaces so builders and their clients probably were aware of the latest developments in such items. One of the earliest illustrations in a Sheffield directory, in 1825, was for Green and Picksley's 'patent economical kitchen ranges',⁴² with which, it was claimed, it was possible to roast, steam and bake for families from five to fifty with just one small open fire. The firm seems to have had a special interest in domestic technology as it also stocked a local invention, Marshall's 'improved patent washing machine'. This labour-saving device was said to 'work remarkably easy, without any injury to the clothes, and upon the best plan that has been offered to the public'. A few years later Picksley became one of the partners in the Endcliffe Building Company, occupying one of the houses himself. Unfortunately there is no indication that his kitchen range was taken up by the Company, or used in his own house.

⁴¹ Ling *Ranmoor Land Societies*. p. 52

⁴² *New, general, & commercial directory of Sheffield and its vicinity...* Compiled by R. Gell. Manchester: [Printed at the Albion Press], 1825. Between pp. 40 and 41.

One of Picksley's competitors, Longden, Walker and Co., also offered economical kitchen ranges. Such stoves probably served the majority of houses and one of the recently built houses at Taptonville was advertised in the 1850s⁴³ as having a 'first rate Longden stove', so the firm had a long-standing reputation. Cove suggests that 'inventions which were the novelties of the Great Exhibition of 1851 became the basis of many modern domestic appliances and services' so that the improved kitchen stoves, baths and gas lighting on display helped to encourage their use.⁴⁴ Sheffield was certainly a large exhibitor of fireplaces so the town may have been well placed to benefit from improvements in associated fields.

The only example of a Victorian stove found *in situ* is at Endcliffe Vale. This house was built for one of the bankers developing the estate in the 1840s and was probably designed by the architect of the scheme, William Flockton. One of the cellar kitchens still has a stove on which the name Walker, Eaton and Co. is embossed, a firm listed as stove makers in the local directory for 1841.⁴⁵ As well as being steel refiners the firm made 'ornamental, kitchen and hot air stoves', also 'cooking apparatus'.⁴⁶ This range is more compact than that made by Picksley but seems to have offered a variety of cooking options and even had decorated panels on the oven doors which must have looked attractive when newly black-leaded. It is a useful example of a piece of equipment chosen by one of the town's leading architects for the home of a wealthy man. The second kitchen has what appears to be a rather later model but it does not display any radical improvements.

Gas may have been used for cooking in some houses by the end of the century as it was widely available in the area but there is no evidence of a move away from the use of anything other than coal-fired ranges.

As indicated by the number of entries favourably mentioned in the Great Exhibition of 1851,⁴⁷ Sheffield had a number of successful stove manufacturers. In keeping with current taste, most of the entries that received favourable attention were highly ornate. Stuart and Smith were said to be 'an establishment which ranks high among those of that famous industrial town [Sheffield]'. Grates known as the 'Sylvester' have 'formed an era in domestic economy and comfort'. Ornament ranged from a 'Trefoil Grate' of 'dead' and burnished steel with or-mulu [sic] enrichments 'to a medieval style 'designed by H. Duesbury, an architect of ability'. The firm was thought to be 'displaying enterprise, taste and clever mechanical execution'. A fender by Hoole and Robson was 'remarkable for the grace of its design as well as the beauty of its execution – qualities for which this eminent firm have obtained much celebrity'. The combination of steel and bronze elicited the comment that 'there is no class of our native manufacturers who have made greater advances in the field of improvement than those connected with the polished steel trade.' The stove grates of Hoole and Robson were said to be 'of great attraction to those who desire to combine elegance with comfort' at home. In 1856 Robertson, Carr and Steel offered 'every variety of warm air stoves, register stoves, grates, fenders, fire-grates' of which 'All their designs have been produced by 1st rate artists within the last three years'.⁴⁸ Henry E. Hoole and Co., exhibitors in 1851, offered a similar range, including fire irons. Their advertisement was especially eye-catching, as it was quite small and set upon an

⁴³ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 18 June 1853

⁴⁴ Cave. *The smaller English house*, p. 222

⁴⁵ White 1841

⁴⁶ White 1856 p. 18

⁴⁷ *The Great Exhibition, a facsimile of the Illustrated Catalogue of London's 1851 Crystal Palace Exposition*. New York. Gramercy Books, 1995. [Subsequent quotations are from this source.]

⁴⁸ White. *General directory*. 1856. [Advertisement]

otherwise entirely blank page.⁴⁹ As well as the stove itself the surround was an important feature of the decoration of any room. In 1860 Joseph Hadfield stocked Italian, Belgium and Derbyshire marble chimney pieces as well as wash tables, dressing tables and slabs of every shape and size required by cabinet makers. All these items could be seen at the firm's showrooms and builders could be supplied with stone chimneypieces of every shape and size for kitchens, lodging rooms and sitting rooms at a very low price. Hadfield also supplied that other necessary item, the headstone. The advertisement suggests that the cost of a headstone could be the same as that of a drawing room fireplace.⁵⁰ The firm of Edwin Smith stocked both stoves and chimneypieces. The latter could be obtained in British and foreign marbles 'fitted up with suitable stoves of the newest designs and at the lowest possible prices'. As well as providing monuments the firm also took death masks and, as an unexpected extra, was the depot for Dr. Arnold's hydrostatic or floating beds for invalids.

6.4.2 Bathrooms

During the Victorian period writers offering advice on household management usually managed to draw in the old adage 'cleanliness is next to godliness' and advocated the provision of adequate facilities for personal hygiene. Loudon was one of the earliest to commend the bathroom, in 1838,⁵¹ but a commentator notes that it was to be many years 'before they were common even in wealthy households'.⁵² In Sheffield both Page Hall⁵³ and the smaller Brightfield were advertised early in the century as having bathrooms, the Brightfield bath being of wood with copper fittings. There is no indication of the exact size or nature of such a room. After mid-century the facility became more readily available though a builder providing a bathroom for a house in Broomhall thought it to be sufficiently novel to feature it in capital letters in his advertisement.⁵⁴ Clarkehouse, sold at the same time had a bathroom although it had been built in the 1830s, but the owner, Mr. Dewsnap, was a sybarite by Sheffield standards and had lavished a very large amount of money on his house. As early as 1833 Robert Drury, in addition to his extensive stock of building materials stated 'the trade supplied on advantageous terms with every article of plumbers and glaziers use', including lead pipes of every size, brass and lead pumps of every kind, hot and cold baths and shower baths. Also stocked were 'house and decorative paints, imitations of woods and marble in superior style'.⁵⁵ As the 1850s drew to a close bathrooms were mentioned rather more frequently in advertisements for property though when Burngreave was advertised for sale in 1854 its Bathroom still merited a capital letter.⁵⁶ The contents of such rooms can be surmised from contemporary local advertisements. In 1849 an ironmonger and manufacturer of cooking apparatus also stocked a wide variety of baths. These included 'shower, sitz, hip, slipper, sponging and every other description of bath in the most improved forms, as used at the hydropathic establishment and as recommended by the Faculty, for the use of private families.' A postscript noted that all baths were 'made of the best Tin Plate, and well painted and the prices are modest'. In addition the firm supplied a useful service as 'kitchen copper utensils etc. re-tinned and repaired, on the shortest notice and on reasonable terms'.⁵⁷ In 1856 a sheet iron and zinc worker offered 'baths of all descriptions, wholesale and retail, shower,

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ White, W. *General directory*. 1860. [Advertisement]

⁵¹ Loudon, J.C. *The suburban gardener and villa companion*. 1838. pp 675-6 (Cited by Rubinstein. *Victorian homes*.)

⁵² Rubinstein, D. *Victorian homes*. Newton Abbott: David and Charles. 1974. p. 94

⁵³ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*. 2 April, 1853

⁵⁴ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*. 9 April, 1853

⁵⁵ 1833 directory

⁵⁶ S.I. 1 July 1854

⁵⁷ 1856 directory ad

hip and slipper baths let out'.⁵⁸ A wide variety of services were obtainable from a firm which would carry out employment as 'Plumber, glazier, gas fitter, painter, paper-hanging' as well as erecting hot and cold baths and installing water closets.⁵⁹

No Victorian bathroom fittings seem to have survived in western Sheffield nor is there evidence on the use made of them or how highly they were rated as a selling point. The Sambourne diaries give an example of how such rooms were used by a family with Sheffield connections that had moved to London.⁶⁰ Linley Sambourne was a well-known cartoonist for Punch and lived a comfortable middle-class life. The Sambourne home is probably the most widely known example of middle-class Victorian housing as it is now belongs to the Victorian Society and features in any number of films and television dramas whenever a Victorian setting is required. The editor of Mrs Sambourne's diaries mentions that only the male members of the family used the bath, washing in the cold water which it provided. For the women the ritual of a warm sponge bath in front of the bedroom fire continued to be the custom.⁶¹ It is suggested that this was the normal practice, as the sexes did not share a bathroom. In the Sambourne household the owner was in the habit of using the marble bathtub for rinsing his photographic prints.⁶² It would seem that not only the working classes adapted baths to uses for which they were not originally intended.

6.4.3 Sanitary arrangements

Desirable improvements to domestic technology were often slow during the nineteenth century, even for those in comfortable financial circumstances. In his survey of Victorian homes Rubinstein notes that 'As with plumbing... precept outran practice.' It is easy to forget that 'in the nineteenth century all these installations [toilets] had to be propagated, financed and universally installed'.⁶³ Various forms of 'convenience' seem to have been available in Sheffield from an early period. In 1805 a local stone and marble merchant was advertising, complete with illustration, a 'new invented water closet' which, 'for a cost of £5/5/0' was 'warranted to keep sweet and clean: not liable to freezing or out of Order from Paper, which is so common with Water-closets'.⁶⁴ Water closets, type unspecified, were amongst the many items available from Robert Drury in 1833.⁶⁵

Providing an effective installation seems to have remained a problem, for in 1860 'Wright's patent self-acting water closet... free from all the defects of water closets in general use' claimed that it 'does not easily get out of order' and 'no effluvia can escape into the dwellings.' The advertisement draws attention to the fact that this product can be installed by an 'ordinary plumber', is easily operated by adult or child, quiet and as 'Any desired quantity of water can be used... in situations where water is scarce the expenditure can be economical'.⁶⁶

By implication, some items on the market might need specialist fitting, create problems when used by children, be noisy as well as noisome and lead to an expensive consumption

⁵⁸ *ibid*

⁵⁹ *ibid*

⁶⁰ Nicholson, S. *A Victorian household, based on the diaries of Marion Sambourne*. Stroud: Alan Sutton Publishing Ltd., 1994.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* p. 87

⁶² *Ibid.* p. 87

⁶³ Rubinstein. *Victorian homes*. p. 94

⁶⁴ *The Iris*. 13 July, 1805

⁶⁵ 1833 directory

⁶⁶ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*. 7 January 1860

of water. With such potential drawbacks it is hardly surprising that the water closet was often relegated to the yard and that the earth closet had its advocates until well into the century. In 1824 one of the advantages of Page Hall was its 'good circular water closet' attached to the house by a covered way.⁶⁷ However, by the 1850s new houses at Broomhall were regularly advertised as having a water closet⁶⁸ and this seems to have been the beginning of the water closet being accepted as one of the basic requirements for a new home.

The efficiency of a water closet depended not only on the fitment but, to an even greater extent, on the sewage system of the area and the manner in which the two were connected. The builders of houses in new areas were required to share the cost of providing drains with the ground landlord and to agree to pay a proportion of the cost of any future maintenance.⁶⁹ The earliest pipes were usually intended to drain away surface water but by mid-century pipes were laid to cope with sewage. By 1853 the drainage system for Victoria Park was laid under the roads before plots on the estate were advertised for sale.⁷⁰ A decade later the Local Authority finally undertook a scheme of sewage disposal for the town.

Even the best sanitary ware and drainage system were useless if the two were not properly connected. Advice for potential builders and homeowners always recommended great vigilance to ensure that plumbing was carried out correctly and gave examples of the horrors which could ensue from slovenly work.⁷¹

6.4.4 Water supply

The township of Sheffield had a Water Company from the middle of the eighteenth century. Water was brought from the West and, by the end of century, several small reservoirs were constructed on Crooks Moor. Further dams were created in the course of the nineteenth century,⁷² but the demand for water always seemed to exceed supply and the cost of supply was always above what the individual was willing to pay. In September 1802 *The Iris* complained of the scanty supply of water after a dry spell⁷³ and by 1828 a letter to the *Sheffield Mercury* stressed the need for a 'constant and copious supply of water'⁷⁴ in the town. By 1833 the Hadfield dam was constructed on Crooks Moor so as 'to render the present inefficient supply more commensurate with the present increased state of the town, in many of the modern parts of which, no water pipes have yet been laid'.⁷⁵ By 1837 water could now reach 'even to the tops of the houses in the highest parts of the town and suburbs'.⁷⁶ At this time almost all the pipes were of cast iron rather than of wood. All these improvements were expensive and the water rate increased by 40% after the completion of the work. However, it was said that the rate was still lower than that in many

⁶⁷ *The Iris* 24 August 1824

⁶⁸ For example, *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 4 June 1853 and 5 August 1854

⁶⁹ Wording similar to that used in the deeds of 14, Collegiate Crescent, dated 17 June 1854 was usual in all the western suburbs. The owner of the house 'will as often as occasion shall require at his or their own expense sufficiently repair maintain and keep in good repair and condition... privies drains gutters and watercourses now or hereafter belonging thereto

⁷⁰ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 31 December 1853

⁷¹ Wheeler. *Choice of a dwelling*. p. 239

⁷² White. *General directory and topography*. 1864. p. 29

⁷³ *The Iris*. 23 September, 1802

⁷⁴ *Sheffield Mercury*. 5 January, 1828

⁷⁵ White. *History and general directory*. 1833 p. 47

⁷⁶ White. *History and general directory* 1837 p. 10

towns and about one third lower than the amount allowed by the Act passed in 1830, 'for the better supplying town and parish with water'.⁷⁷

As water was brought to the township of Sheffield from the west, residents on the western verges were well placed for supplies from the Water Company from its inception. The Rev. James Wilkinson was one of the first to take advantage of piped water, though his home, Broomhall, already had a large pond close to the house and the grounds contained a number of springs.⁷⁸ Small streams and springs provided well-watered sites stretching from Broomhill out to Ranmoor. Both land and houses were frequently advertised as providing ample supplies of hard and soft water.⁷⁹ The Ordnance Survey map of 1851⁸⁰ shows that, although some of the largest houses might have piped water, pumps and troughs were to be found in many courtyards. William Newbould's home at Broomhill had a large pond, but its location, downhill of the house suggests that its function was as a duck pond or for ornament, rather than for water supply.⁸¹ William Burbairy of Oakholme recorded that in 1824 he made an intensive investigation of the Broomhill area when looking for a site for his new house and the crucial factor in making his choice was a constant supply of good water.⁸² When the Endcliffe Building Company developed its site (at what is now Endcliffe Crescent) a large reservoir was made in the north west corner of the estate from which water was piped to individual houses. The reservoir was retained until the last quarter of the century.⁸³

The surviving records of the Water Company are fragmented until the second half of the nineteenth century. However, they do supply evidence that the prosperous residents who settled at Broomhill after the completion of the Glossop Road took advantage of the proximity of the Water Company pipes laid under the road.⁸⁴ In 1840, 278 feet of pipe was laid to connect The Mount and further extensions were made as the Broomfield area developed. It is possible that even the earliest houses bordering Glossop Road, built in the 1820s, may have had some kind of piped water supply as Five Oaks, built in 1823, required a new three-inch pipe in 1858. Inspection books for the 1870s make it clear that all new houses in the Broomhill area now had piped water and that water usage was becoming more sophisticated with the developments in indoor plumbing, bathrooms and flush toilets.

It is not clear what volume of water users could expect from the Water Company in the early part of the nineteenth century, but the supply seems to have been limited, erratic and of varying quality. By 1809 a system of wooden pipes enabled consumers to have water supplied three times a week for two hours, this was reduced to twice weekly in time of drought. Even in 1859 it was considered that 'House to house supply, laid from cellar to attic under constant pressure, available at any moment for every purpose of necessity or convenience, was practically unknown'. Supply was still restricted to a few hours per day and varied according to the level of the reservoirs. In 1875, after the completion of the Dale Dyke, the Water Company expected to be able to supply each member of a population of about half a million with twenty gallons a day.⁸⁵ It was thought that large houses 'where baths are frequently used' took 50 gallons a head per day. This can be contrasted with the

⁷⁷ White. *General directory*. 1841 p. 13

⁷⁸ Deeds of Oakholme, in the University of Sheffield collection of deeds.

⁷⁹ For example, *Sheffield Mercury* 2 May 1835. House near Wilkinson Street 'never failing supply of purest spring water and reservoir with soft water'

⁸⁰ O. S. 1851

⁸¹ William Newbould's house and land. SheD 234S

⁸² Deeds of Oakholme, University of Sheffield collection

⁸³ Deeds of Endcliffe Crescent, University of Sheffield collection

⁸⁴ Sheffield Water Company. *Inspection Books*. (18.. to 18..) [Data in this paragraph and the next are drawn from this source, except where noted.]

⁸⁵ White. 1879 p. 175

estimated daily consumption in Great Britain at the end of the twentieth century of approximately 315 gallons per person.⁸⁶

The complexity of domestic water usage even at an early period is illustrated by Burbeary's record of the use of water in his household in the 1840s.⁸⁷ Rather than one or more taps providing water from a single source, the practice was to use water of varying purity according to the purpose for which it was intended. Part of the water was taken from the Water Company's lead pipes under Glossop Road; other water was drawn from a stream which formed the eastern boundary of the property, held in a reservoir and conducted by lead pipes to the house, kitchen yard, stable yard and garden. Water in the stable yard was held in massive troughs. All this had been done 'at great expense'. Both kitchens in the house had a 'self-supplying boiler' and water was also piped to the housekeeper's room and cellars. No matter how thorough a householder's provision might be, he was still vulnerable to problems created by neighbours. Burbeary found that his 'beautifully clean water' was continually muddied and often in short supply when his neighbour began diverting water from the stream that formed their mutual boundary. Water drawn from the tap over the kitchen copper was now only fit for washing the coarsest clothes and even this was only possible after putting soap into the copper, skimming off the resulting scum and dirt and sieving the remaining water through a cloth. Water from the storage tap was too bad to use for hand washing so water had to be brought from the pump in the kitchen yard for this purpose and also for washing crockery and kitchen utensils. Even seemingly clear water, to be used for drinking, if left in a pitcher or basin, formed a 'considerable sediment'. Burbeary described these processes as a 'very great inconvenience', which seems like a masterly understatement to describe the vastly increased labour required to feed and keep clean a household of about ten people. Having won a court case to prevent the diversion of water by his eastern neighbour (John Greaves), Burbeary found that a decade later John Shepherd, his northern neighbour, had built a privy overhanging the stream and another law-suit ensued.

By the 1870s a much greater variety of water use had become customary. In 1877, number 11, Broomfield Road required a cistern on its roof and a supply of water to a cold tap in the cellar, a one-gallon iron cylinder in a kitchen cupboard, connected to the boiler, as well as hot and cold water in the kitchen and butler's pantry. A bathroom with an iron bath connected to hot and cold water, a cabinet bath and a water closet, together with a further closet in the landing, all required water supply.⁸⁸ Such provision was not uncommon in the street; one house even had a water supply in the greenhouse.⁸⁹

6.4.5 Gas supply

The Sheffield Gas Light Company was formed in 1819. By 1828 the local directory noted that 'it has been carried in some directions to a great extent beyond the limits of the town'⁹⁰. By 1853 both the Ecclesall and Nether Hallam Vestries had agreed to the laying of pipes beneath their highways, despite some opposition.⁹¹ In the 1830s it was felt that, even though there was suitable coal readily available in the area the result of 'some

⁸⁶ *The water friendly home guide...* Water Services Association. n.d. p. 1

⁸⁷ Deeds of Oakholme, University of Sheffield collection of deeds. Subsequent quotations are from the same source.

⁸⁸ Sheffield Water Company. *Inspection books*.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Sheffield directory and guide...* 1828. xxxvii

⁹¹ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 26 April 1853.

mismanagement it [the gas supply] is inferior to that of many of the smaller towns'⁹² Whatever its shortcomings, gas was felt to be a great improvement on the old oil lamps which had been used to light the streets of the town and illuminate its shops. Gas lighting had reached Broomhill by 1828, though maintaining the service seemed to have been a problem as a one-guinea reward was offered for information on the breakage of gas lamps in the area.⁹³ The gas company was also concerned about unauthorised use, as a fine of £5.5.0 was made for anyone found using gas lamps 'beyond the time contracted for'.⁹⁴

By mid-century gas was widely used in houses as well as for lighting streets and shops. New houses in Broomhill and Broomhall Park were often advertised as being fitted with gas and even the buffer zone houses, renting for a mere £19.0.0 a year were fitted with 'gas and other necessary features'.⁹⁵ Houses 'fitted with gas throughout' were available even as far out as Endcliffe Crescent.⁹⁶ Gas, though providing a brighter light than candles, was considered to provide an inferior light to that of oil lamps until the invention of the incandescent gas mantle in the 1880s. Gas mantles increased the amount of light from a jet by six-fold without increasing the amount of gas used so it was a significant economy. Other disadvantages of using gas were fumes, heat and deposits of sooty smuts on furnishings so oil lamps were often used in conjunction with gas for domestic lighting.⁹⁷ Despite such problems Sheffield directories advertised wall fittings and gasoliers in a wide variety of styles as well as a great choice of ornamental oil lamps. In 1856 the Sheffield United Gas Company manufactured gas burners for dwelling houses and supplied and fitted them up with chandeliers, lamps, pendants and burners of every description, 'all put up on shortest notice and upon the most reasonable terms'.⁹⁸

Although gas cookers were available by the end of the century⁹⁹ there is no evidence of the extent to which they were used in western Sheffield. In his advice to potential house builders Wheeler says 'there is scarcely any reason to employ gas as a substitute for ordinary fuel' though he concedes that 'a small apparatus is economical and serviceable...for the nursery, or for night use or for an invalid'.¹⁰⁰ Such equipment may be the 'portable domestic gas apparatus' manufactured locally by a gas engineer in 1860. Wheeler favoured 'gas stoves' for warming dressings rooms, passages or parts of the house used only occasionally but for general use he believed they could 'never supersede the open cheerful fire-place' as all other systems 'are attended with trouble, and all are expensive both in first application and in maintenance'.¹⁰¹ From practical experience it can be said that it is not possible to adequately heat a house of the size, described above, in Broomfield Road. However, houses in Broomhall which use open fires in conjunction with central heating are a reminder of the charm of a wood or coal fire. To enjoy such a fire fully it is necessary to have some one to clean it out, ensure that it is lit in time to warm the room before it is used, replenish the coal and regularly remove any soot generated. The availability of servants to do this no doubt delayed the development of gas fires that did not display the drawbacks described by Wheeler. By the last quarter of the nineteenth century some houses, such as 13, Lawson Road, had the benefit of a hall stove, which helped to take the chill of the air in the house in general.

⁹² *History and general directory*. p. 118

⁹³ *Sheffield Mercury* 12 January 1828

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*. 4 January 1860

⁹⁶ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*. 10 August 1853

⁹⁷ Hardyment, C. *Behind the scenes, domestic arrangements in historic houses*. London, National Trust, 1997. pp.171-181

⁹⁸ *General directory of the Town and Borough...* 1856 [Advertisement]

⁹⁹ Wheeler. *Choice of a dwelling*.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.* p.247

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

However, by the end of the century Sheffield was looking forward to the wider use of a new power source: electricity. The editor of 'Sheffield at the beginning of the twentieth century' was of the opinion that 'Coal gas as an illuminant seems destined to be a thing of the past and electricity is beginning to be used instead of open fires. We may at least entertain the hope... that our houses may be warmed... by a force that will make our lives brighter than they have been of late years.'¹⁰² There is no suggestion that the new force could be adapted for cooking, nor indeed that gas was used for such a purpose.

The earliest large house in the country to be effectively lit by electricity was Cragside in Northumberland where Lord Armstrong had pioneered domestic electric lighting.¹⁰³ John Tasker of Sheffield set up his Telephone Exchange and Electric Light Company in the same year. This became the Sheffield Electric Light and Power Company and by 1899 Sheffield City Council took over the company. At this time there were only 688 consumers who paid four pence per unit for their supply.¹⁰⁴

6.5 Interior Decoration and Furnishing

The taste in architecture favoured by the inhabitants of western Sheffield can still be clearly seen, indicating the range of styles favoured by the wealthy and very wealthy. Very little direct evidence survives of the manner in which the villas and mansions were decorated and furnished. Cannadine describes Edgbaston as 'A region of tree-lined roads and exquisitely tasteful houses, with their libraries, music rooms, tennis courts and croquet lawns, rose trees and rhododendron bushes'.¹⁰⁵ Houses such as Oakbrook, Thornbury and many of their smaller sisters could claim almost all of their amenities, but whether they could be called 'exquisitely tasteful' is difficult to determine. Newspaper reports on the lives of the town's great men often refer to their good taste but whether this would have been recognised as such in a wider and more sophisticated world is uncertain.

The only comprehensive account of the décor and contents of a Sheffield house concerns the greatest dwelling, Endcliffe Hall. A detailed sale catalogue was issued when the house was sold in 1893 and this contains a detailed list of the contents of the house, illustrated by a number of black and white photographs.¹⁰⁶ In a recent short study Julie Goddard, a local antique dealer, has discussed the house as an example of local taste and standards.¹⁰⁷ After the usual caveats regarding the limited nature of Sheffield's standards on such matters, Goddard concluded that the house followed current protocol for interior decoration in a manner that was intended to show the owner 'both as a modern technocrat and a gentleman'. Modernity was indicated by the use of iron joists and concrete floors to make the house fireproof, retractable Belgian-made louvered iron shutters secured the ground floors and the cooking ranges could use gas as well as coal. Furnishings were largely in the styles shown in the Great Exhibition of 1851 and the later exhibition of 1862, including 'a variety of styles ... prevalent throughout the mid-Victorian era and frequently used together'.

According to Goddard, the public rooms followed the current protocol for suiting furniture to individual rooms. John Brown made a deliberate decision to use local craftsmen to

¹⁰² *Sheffield at the beginning of the twentieth century*. p. 50

¹⁰³ *Cragside*. National Trust, 1981. p. 5

¹⁰⁴ *Sheffield at the beginning of the twentieth century* p. 50

¹⁰⁵ Cannadine. *The aristocracy and the towns in the nineteenth century*. p.200

¹⁰⁶ *Catalogue of the costly and very valuable furniture...*

¹⁰⁷ Goddard. 'Endcliffe Hall'.

create the interior of his home, taking a keen personal interest in progress. That Endcliffe Hall exemplifies accepted thinking on interiors suggests that, even if Brown himself was not personally acquainted with works on the subject, the local craftsmen whom he employed were, and that such thinking appealed to him. Goddard suggests that the use of the latest classical style 'was calculated to show Sir John both as a modern technocrat and gentleman. It hinted at his modernity yet aligned him with a tradition embraced by the English aristocracy for over two hundred years.' Although such a style might be regarded as modern in Sheffield it was by no means *avant garde*. Webb's Red House, built for William Morris in 1859 had pointed to a new style of architecture,¹⁰⁸ which was to be taken up by Armstrong when he began work on Cragside in 1869, only four years after the completion of Endcliffe Hall.

The furnishing, interior decoration and the pictures chosen by Armstrong show him to have been a man with a much wider acquaintance with the 'modern' than that of Brown or his Sheffield contemporaries.¹⁰⁹ However, in the context of Sheffield, Brown chose the leading craftsmen and they produced work which he found to be pleasing. Newspaper reports when the house was first completed laid emphasis on the use of local craftsmen. The two leading cabinet-makers employed at Endcliffe, George Eadon and Son and John Manuel and Son had already been employed in an earlier building project, which had also been widely reported in the local press. This was the refurbishment of The Farm by the Duke of Norfolk in 1859. He had had the house made suitable 'for his occasional residence'¹¹⁰, employing a number of local craftsmen and several of these were later employed at Endcliffe. Newspaper accounts of the work at both houses brought their names to public notice and, in later years, advertisements for the sale of furniture might include 'made by Manuel' as a guarantee of their high quality.¹¹¹

Such large enterprises were few in Sheffield and the bread and butter trade for such craftsmen came from supplying the rather more modest dwellings that constituted the bulk of the western suburbs. The possibilities available to such residents are indicated by the advertisements placed by tradesmen in local directories and newspapers. What found favour can be inferred by the nature of the firms who proved to be the most successful and the few fragments that remain in individual houses. The only illustration of the interior of a villa, as opposed to that of a mansion, is a painting of the home of Dr. Thompson, a local art lover. Thompson's sculpture collection appears to have been kept in a spacious room with walls decorated in a rather dark green to show off the white of the marble. A white ceiling reflected light into the room and both cornice and statue niches were painted white. Artificial light came from a large brass gasolier suspended from a very ornate ceiling rose gilded and highlighted with pale green touches. The room was close-carpeted, having a floral pattern predominantly green and red. The only furniture shown was a circular table covered with a deep green cover, with a floral fringe, beside a low padded chair. Such was the salon of a man noted in the town for his good taste.

For many towns the advertisements in local directories offer clues as to the range of furnishing and fashion available locally, sometimes having illustrations but Sheffield was resolutely practical and the majority of advertisements are concerned with a bewildering array of sharp instruments. An indication of the range of decoration available to the Sheffield public is given by an early advertiser, the West End General Painting Establishment, established in 1846. It claimed that the owner had been 'invariably consulted

¹⁰⁸ Coote, S. *William Morris, his life and work*. London. Garramond Publishers Ltd., 1990. pp. 147-151

¹⁰⁹ *Cragside, Northumberland*. National Trust, 1981

¹¹⁰ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 6 August 1859

¹¹¹ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 23 December 1854

on the arrangement of colours in most of the respectable Houses in the neighbourhood'¹¹² In the same year another firm also indicated that it aimed at the top end of the market: John and Joseph Rodgers, formerly Rodgers and Styring. As general decorators the firm seems to have attempted to be truly comprehensive and au fait with every fashionable taste, offering 'paper hanging, panelled decoration, borders etc. in Alhambra, Gothic and other styles of Architecture, from designs by Owen Jones, Pugin and other eminent artists. A great variety of the latest and best French Patterns constantly on hand'.¹¹³ This firm was certainly successful as it was chosen to decorate first The Farm and then Endcliffe Hall. Newspaper reports of their work at these prestigious houses must have provided valuable publicity. The only regular advertiser to break this rule was the firm of J. Jones and Son. As early as 1849 he was advertising 'drapes and floor coverings and paper-hanging'¹¹⁴ and by 1860 had expanded to the extent that they could offer an 'illustrated catalogue by post'¹¹⁵ in order to accommodate a greater number of customers. As well as providing all kinds of household linen and wall coverings the Jones family appear to have been especially proud of their stock of beds as various types of massive four posters always illustrated their advertisements. The business seems to have prospered as the family lived first in one of the largest houses at Broomgrove and the next generation moved to a newly completed house in Collegiate Crescent. The *Illustrated guide* to Sheffield of 1862 included advertisements for what were to become Sheffield's two leading department stores, Cockaynes and Cole Brothers.¹¹⁶ By the end of the century both stores had considerably increased the size of their premises and the scope of their stock. The weddings of members of the families occupying the largest of the houses in the western suburbs were often catered for and the long lists of presents which were a feature of the newspaper reports of such events may well have been purchased locally.¹¹⁷ Such lists provide a useful indicator of what was considered necessary for setting up house. In comparison with the lists of house contents offered for sale in the early part of the century they show a marked increase in the range of objects to be found the houses of Sheffield's prosperous inhabitants.

By the second half of the century the town had a number highly regarded cabinetmakers, notably Arthur Hayball, whose submissions to the Great Exhibition excited much favourable comment. A great deal of Hayball's later work was for churches and other institutions and the favourite craftsman for the domestic market seems to have been John Manuel. He does not seem to have needed to advertise in his own right but after the favourable publicity which he received for his work at The Farm and Endcliffe Hall furniture appearing in sales would sometimes be described as Designed by Manuel. Manuel's trade enabled him to afford a new house at Lawson Road, where his built-in bedroom furniture is still a by-word in the area for the excellent workmanship of its well-fitting drawers and doors. Another local firm Johnson and Appleyard also sometimes merited notice in sale lists. George Eadon, of a firm which was later to work at The Farm and Endcliffe Hall, took a directory advertisement in 1849 offering to provide 'carpets, room papers floor clothes to order', as well as working as 'carver, gilder etc., manufacturer, upholsterer'.¹¹⁸ In 1864 Edward Eadon announced that he intended to continue under the old title of Eadon & son, providing carving, gilding, cabinet making and upholstery but 'will make such Improvements in his Trade as the increasing importance of Sheffield demands'.¹¹⁹

¹¹² *General directory of the Town*. 1849 [Advertisement]

¹¹³ [ibid. [Advertisement]

¹¹⁴ [ibid. [Advertisement]

¹¹⁵ *General directory of the town, borough, and parish*. 1860 [Advertisement]

¹¹⁶ *Pawson and Brailsford's illustrated guide*. [Advertisements]

¹¹⁷ For example, *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*. 12 June 1895

¹¹⁸ *General directory of the Town*. 1849. p. 8

¹¹⁹ *General directory and topography*. 1864 [Advertisement]

Such firms, providing a custom-made service if required, aimed at the very top of the market. However, a number of generalists, such as Jones and his competitors, provided a range of services to furnish the houses of those who, though prosperous, had means which restricted them to the villas rather than the mansions of western Sheffield. What either the custom-built or ready-made furniture actually looked like is difficult to determine. From advertisements for sales in local newspapers it appears the Sheffielders liked their furniture to be 'modern' but recent research suggests that the Sheffield concept of 'modern' could be decades behind what was considered fashionable in other parts of the country. Perhaps this was the reason that it was so common for houses to be furnished with second-hand items. At the beginning of the century Thomas Wilson, a prosperous bachelor with plenty of money to spend, furnished his fine new house by attending sales.¹²⁰ A generation later his even richer nephew, George, was happy to buy Tapton Hall complete with the furniture of the previous owner.¹²¹

Such a pragmatic approach to furnishing was not limited to Sheffield as by no means all householders were dedicated followers of fashion in the manner lampooned in the pages of 'Punch'. Linley Sambourne, one of the Punch cartoonists, married in 1874 and his new house was decorated in the style favoured by the Aesthetic Movement, then in fashion. Having once made a nod to the demands of fashion the couple decided that the décor suited them and, although fashion changed, their home was basically unaltered for the remainder of the century. Mrs Sambourne, the daughter of a wealthy stockbroker, had travelled extensively in Europe before her marriage yet her opinions were prosaic in a manner that would have been quite acceptable in Sheffield.¹²² On visiting Kelmscott Manor she thought the house 'lovely for its oldness' but was even more struck by it being 'so so artistic and grubby'. Far from admiring the décor, she thought the dining room 'painfully plain', and was much more inclined to stare at Miss Morris and wonder 'why she dressed in such a sloppy way with no stays'.¹²³ Oscar Wilde's home she found to be a 'weird house, dullish', and the man himself part of a 'rather slow dinner', notable only for the fact that he spilt claret all over her dress.¹²⁴ If these were the reactions of a woman who had had the benefit of a wide education and mixed with some of the leading figures of the London intelligentsia then the burghers of Sheffield, in their remote northern fastness dominated by industry, can hardly be blamed for lacking sophistication.

Even when a rising star in the art world came within their purview with the commission given to John Sargent to paint the portraits of the daughters of T. E. Vickers and other members of the Vickers family,¹²⁵ other residents of the town were not inclined to employ him. It is perhaps unfortunate that it was Albert and not T.E. Vickers who chose to be painted by Sargent. The artist's 'Lord Ribblesdale' embodies all the insouciant authority of the aristocracy. Photographs of the martinet who was the driving force of what was to become the huge Vickers industrial empire suggest that a portrait by Sargent might have made an interesting companion piece, capturing the confidence of the new entrepreneurial class.

It seems likely that taste and fashion in Sheffield was determined to some extent by the tradesmen and shopkeepers of the town. Trade papers and travelling salesmen would keep them broadly aware of what was available in London and prevailing trends would then be filtered by their knowledge of local taste. For the richest families such as the Vickerses and

¹²⁰ Chaytor. *The Wilsons of Sharrow*. p. 42

¹²¹ *Ibid.* p. 161

¹²² Nicholson, S. *A Victorian household*.

¹²³ *Ibid.* p. 154

¹²⁴ *Ibid.* p. 55

¹²⁵ Hamilton, J. *The Misses Vickers: centenary of the painting by J.S. Sargent*. Sheffield: Sheffield Arts Department, 1984.

Firths an increasing amount of travel to London and Paris allowed them to select at first hand but, as Goddard noted, fashion could be very slow in making its way to Sheffield. Steegman commented that the 'study of Taste provides almost no constant values'.¹²⁶ He then cites instances of the lapse from favour in the Victorian fashionable circles of the furniture of Chippendale, the architecture of Robert Adam and paintings of Constable and Turner, whilst lesser men, whose names would now hardly merit a foot-note in a history of the arts, were lauded. Sheffield's sluggish response to changes in fashion and abiding tendency to weight comfort in preference to style seems in keeping with the character of the town as outlined in Chapter 2.

6.6 Gardens

As mentioned elsewhere, the early houses built at Broomhill that set the style of the area were usually on plots ranging from a quarter of an acre to a little over one acre. If a road contained more than a small number of houses on more restricted sites it detracted from the effect of spaciousness that prosperous Sheffielders found attractive. However, few wished to have the expense of maintaining a large 'pleasure garden'.

Of the minority who aspired to something larger Sir John Brown's Endcliffe Hall was the most extensive. The hall stood in about 40 acres but almost half of this was woodland.¹²⁷ When renting Shirle Hill Brown had provided the house with a vinery, peach house, and pine pits as well as a conservatory and the pleasure grounds were said to be 'tastefully laid out' with the 'choicest shrubs and evergreens'.¹²⁸ Once he acquired Endcliffe Hall the existing garden, which had been designed by John Law, was completely remodelled. According to the sale brochure when the estate was finally sold, there was an Italian Garden as well as 'extensive pleasure grounds' which had, like Shirle Hill, 'choice flowering and evergreen shrubs' which included deodora, Wellingtonias, silver birch, firs, ash and rhododendrons as well as its original timber. 'Lengthy asphalted walks and paths intersected the extensive and well-kept lawns and shrubberies which are enlivened by tastefully arranged flower beds' and the garden included the obligatory ornamental lake 'with island', all set in 'the beautiful undulating park'. Apart from the ornamental part of the garden and its 160-foot long conservatory there were large kitchen gardens and green houses. Such was Sheffield's greatest suburban garden. The gardens at Endcliffe were designed by the architect, T. J. Flockton.¹²⁹

The owners of a number of Sheffield's largest houses employed the services of Robert Marnock. During a long lifetime (1800-1889) Marnock built up a national and international reputation. Early in his career, in 1836, Marnock was commissioned to design Sheffield's Botanical Gardens and then was appointed its first curator. During his stay at Sheffield he built up such a thriving private practice, besides being involved with a number of horticultural publications, that it was felt to be impinging on his work at the Botanical Gardens. He resigned in 1837, by which time he had designed at least one large garden in the area, at Samuel Roberts's, Queen's Tower. This seems to have established his reputation in the area for, although Sheffielders rarely employed architects from outside, Marnock was invited back on a number of occasions. He designed the grounds of Kenwood in 1846 and in 1860 worked on the grounds of the Duke of Norfolk's newly refurbished The Farm. To the west, Thornbury, in 1868, had gardens laid out to his design.

¹²⁶ Steegman. *Victorian taste*. p.2

¹²⁷ Deeds of *Endcliffe Hall* held by the Yorkshire and Humberside TAVR Association

¹²⁸ Deeds of *Shirle Hill*, in the Sheffield City Council collection of deeds

¹²⁹ Hindmarch, D. & Podmore, A.J. *Endcliffe Hall in the Manor of Hallamshire*. The Officers' Mess, 4th Battalion Yorkshire Volunteers, n.d. p. 22

Probably one of his last commissions in the area was for the gardens of Bleak House in 1879. Fowler, the builder of Bleak House had departed from the long-standing tradition in the area of building stone houses in a vaguely Gothic style by having what was called the 'Old English' style¹³⁰ yet the garden designer chosen was the tried and tested Marnock.

His largest undertaking connected with domestic architecture was the laying out of George Wostenholm's Kenwood estate for building purposes. The curving tree-lined roads that he designed were widely admired at the time. His work certainly seems to have been highly regarded by Sheffield's civic leaders as Marnock was called upon to design both Weston and High Hazels parks. His style was said to be 'distinguished by picturesqueness and good taste'.¹³¹ Looking at the private gardens mentioned above which were designed by him as they are shown on the O.S. maps of 1851 and 1894, together with the vestiges remaining at Thornbury, it seems at least possible that what endeared him to Sheffield householders was that, although if required he could design labour-intensive Italianate flower gardens, he could also design pleasing vistas relying heavily upon low maintenance grass and shrubbery.

One of Marnock's successors at the Botanical Gardens was John Law. He too had a private practice and resigned from his position as curator in 1859 in order to further it.¹³² The extent of his practice was indicated by the twenty satisfied customers listed in the advertisement announcing his retirement. These included householders from Broomhill, Broomhall, Endcliffe and Sharrow.¹³³ However, the gardens are all of a much more modest scale than those designed by Marnock. His largest commission seems to have been for Endcliffe Hall¹³⁴ when Henry Wilkinson owned it. At that time the estate was much smaller than that created by John Brown. A small oil painting of about 1860 probably gives an indication of Law's work. The garden seems to have taken advantage of the natural features of the landscape, lawns surrounding the house then sloping down to the Porter between high trees, giving a Capability Brown effect. The view, taken from the south west gives no sign of ornate bedding but the sharp fall of the land as it nears the river has been used to form a small rocky waterfall leading to a small pool beside banks of red flowering shrubs.¹³⁵ A painting of Norwood at about the same period indicates a similar fondness for greensward and high trees by the owners of large houses.¹³⁶ No illustration of a villa garden has been traced.

Private practice does not seem to have been as lucrative as Law had hoped and he appears to have left Sheffield in 1862, since the last directory reference to him is in 1861. After this time there does not seem to be any information on how, or by whom, Sheffielders had their gardens designed. A comparison of the 1851 and 1894 O.S. maps for the area indicate some change in ground plans. The main difference by the end of the century seems to be the proliferation of glass houses. Descriptions of Endcliffe Hall¹³⁷ and Oakbrook¹³⁸ list vineries and conservatories. The other hallmark of a garden owned by a man of the highest standing was to have what agents called 'an ornamental sheet of water',¹³⁹ often graced by a fountain.

¹³⁰ *150 years of architectural drawings*. p. 67

¹³¹ *The concise dictionary of national biography*. Vol. 2. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 1950

¹³² *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*. 19 March 1859

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ Brammall, J.W. *Endcliffe Hall*. Oil on canvas. (K1958.12)

¹³⁶ Vawser, G.R. *Norwood*. Oil on canvas. (K1919.62)

¹³⁷ 'The public advantages of personal munificence', *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 22 May, 1865.

¹³⁸ *The Iris*, 24 April, 1824

¹³⁹ Deeds of Endcliffe Grange, University of Sheffield collection

Walking through the western suburbs it seems that the original inhabitants valued a green setting relatively screened from public gaze. Much of Broomhill, Broomgrove and Broomhall still had massive trees when the land was first developed and some deeds indicate the nature of such trees that were retained, sometimes at the behest of the ground landlord. Below the rank of Endcliffe Hall and Oakbrook few had grounds of more than eight acres and T.J. Flockton, writing in 1862, was of the opinion that most potential owner/builders would look for sites between one and four acres.¹⁴⁰ Most of the houses that line the suburban roads are smaller than this, often decreasing in size as the century progressed. Victoria Park in the 1850s advertised the provision of plots of a quarter acre¹⁴¹ but the plots sold were often much smaller and even used for a pair of semi-detached houses rather than detached villas.

Preference for the bulk of residents seems to have been for a plot of modest size, which would allow for an impression of greenery to be maintained without involving expensive maintenance. 'Daisy rakes', 'garden engines' and a wide variety of wirework, ranging from garden seats to gazebos were all available for the garden enthusiast and advertised in the local directories of the period. Both seeds and plants were readily available (and similarly advertised) and Broomhill usually had a nursery garden tucked into some unused pocket of land for most of the century.¹⁴² Sheffield supported a number of horticultural societies from early in the century and Leader chronicles the many small allotments to be found, especially to the west of the town.¹⁴³ Once the gardens became building plots most inhabitants seem to have lost their taste for direct involvement in gardening and employed the services of a gardener. In the early part of the century T.A. Ward was in the habit of hiring female help on an occasional basis to keep his garden in order¹⁴⁴ but by the second half all the gardeners listed as living in the small courts at Broomhill are men!¹⁴⁵ For a minority, gardening was a hobby to be carried on with professional help in the manner of David Ward who relaxed after running his cutlery firm by growing orchids in the range of hot houses that he built close to the Glossop Road.¹⁴⁶

6.7 Conclusion

Modern social historians, and American visitors to Great Britain in the nineteenth century, tend to reproach Victorian householders and builders for an unwillingness to apply technological advances to domestic tasks.¹⁴⁷ The slow adoption of all types of indoor plumbing, the resistance to any form of heating except the dirty, inefficient labour-intensive open fire, and a lack of interest in novelties such as the ice-box are usually accounted for by the fact that Great Britain had an ample supply of cheap domestic labour. In fact, the 'servant problem' seems to have been a constant source of complaint by those who could afford servants, whether in England or America. To judge by early advertisements that appeared in the *Iris*, prospective employers in Sheffield expected a range of skills in return for low wages.¹⁴⁸ The family of Mrs Rimington of Hillsborough lived in and around London at the beginning of the nineteenth century and letters from her sister and mother

¹⁴⁰ Deeds of *Thornbury*, in the University of Sheffield collection of deeds.

¹⁴¹ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*. 31 December, 1853

¹⁴² *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*. 24 Feb. 1824

¹⁴³ Leader. *Reminiscences*. Ch. VII. Old Sheffield gardens. pp. 145-165

¹⁴⁴ Ward. *Peeps*. p. 230

¹⁴⁵ Census Enumerators Returns for Broomhill, 1841-1891

¹⁴⁶ Stainton. *Making of Sheffield*. p. 280

¹⁴⁷ For example, Rubinstein. *Victorian homes*. p. 99

¹⁴⁸ For example, 'underservant who understands dairy business, washing and getting up linen' for £6 p.a., *The Iris* 3 February, 1809

often refer to the vagaries of the servants.¹⁴⁹ In the last quarter of the century Marion Sambourne frequently confided to her diary the problem first of finding servants, then of keeping them and, not least, ensuring that they worked during the, frequently brief, time they were employed.¹⁵⁰

It seems at least possible that such women would have welcomed devices that enabled the house to operate more smoothly. However, as it is often pointed out, the idea for an invention, such as the water closet, was not quite the same as designing one that worked reliably.¹⁵¹ As a result householders may have preferred to stick with old ways until a new development had a proven record of reliability, and was reasonably priced. A reeking water closet, which was continually in need of a plumber's attention, was not an improvement on having a maid taking a slop bucket out each morning. Americans had a much greater incentive to attempt new types of domestic technology and, if such inventions did not succeed at first, to persevere until they did. *At home: the American family 1750-1870*¹⁵², draws on the letters and diaries of women from all parts of the United States: their comments are a reminder of the appalling climatic conditions in which the majority of the population lived for most of the year before the advent of central heating and air-conditioning. The heat of summer, from the Dakotas to the humid southern states ensured a ready market for any device for keeping food cool, no matter how inefficient it might be initially. Similarly, the bitter cold of the northern and central states in the winter concentrated the mind on improved heating methods. It seems at least possible that it was climate as well as lack of domestic servants that drove improvements in domestic technology in America as, although help might be scarce in the towns of New England immigrant labour was widely available elsewhere. The census returns for coastal Washington State indicates that in some households, such as those of prosperous sea captains, the level of domestic help could be quite lavish by English standards, partly as a result of the availability of cheap Chinese labour.¹⁵³

This chapter concludes the general surveys of the background to suburban development in western Sheffield: the ensuing chapters are case studies of the main suburbs, which illustrate the way development took place over the period of the study.

¹⁴⁹ Wilson (of Broomhead) family correspondence in private hands.

¹⁵⁰ Nicholson. *Victorian household*. pp. 65-68

¹⁵¹ Rubinstein. *Victorian homes*. p. 82

¹⁵² Garrett, E. D. *At home, the American family 1750-1870*. New York: Harry N. Abrams Inc., 1990.

¹⁵³ Copy of the 1890 census return for the house, displayed at Rothschild House, Port Townsend, Washington State, USA.

Chapter 7

Broomhill

7.1 Introduction

At the beginning of the nineteenth century 'Broomhill' meant a large, new house set in green fields, the home of its builder, William Newbould. By the end of the century it meant the thriving and prestigious suburb which covered the fields in which the house had stood. The transformation is worthy of study as development took place in an entirely *ad hoc* fashion. The western suburbs of Sheffield were regarded as the greatest concentration of Sheffield's most affluent citizens. Development at Broomhill, Endcliffe, Tapton and Ranmoor consists of a number of purely residential enclaves that were created to the plan of one man or a group of men acting in concert. Although Broomhill is a much more varied area it is usually included in this list of desirable areas and many visitors, not least John Betjeman, have had kind words for it.

Betjeman's reference to Broomhill is quite a brief mention in a longer article on Sheffield but his approval has been much cherished by local residents. He speaks of avenues of 'gabled black stone houses' where 'holly and private cast-iron lampposts light the gravelled drives... Greek, Italian Gothic, they stand in winding tree-shaded roads, these handsome mansions of the Victorian industrialists who had made their pile from steel and cutlery in the crowded mills and slums below. They lived in what is still the prettiest suburb in England.'¹ Perhaps the poet was over-generous in his praise in order to achieve literary effect but certainly the area still has charm, although the reference to 'black stone houses' shows how time had changed the honey-coloured buildings shown in early paintings of the hillside, despite its distance from the pollution of the town.

However, Broomhill is quite unlike the other western suburbs in many ways. It evolved in an entirely unplanned manner as the result of a number of land-owners, each with his own family and financial considerations, exploiting his land in a way that seemed favourable to his needs. The result is, in effect, an urban village, providing all the facilities needed for a community. Almost from the beginning Broomhill has had its own commercial centre, providing all the shops required to feed and clothe a family. Public houses, schools, churches and chapels are all to be found there and other facilities such as the Botanical Gardens are just outside its boundaries. Such diversity of provision implies a very mixed population and as early as 1841 working-class accommodation and houses for the very pettiest of *petit bourgeoisie* out-numbered those inhabited by the upper range of the middle class. As the century progressed this imbalance between middle class housing and that of the less well endowed increased in favour of the latter. Despite this, Broomhill retained its reputation as a desirable middle class suburb. Cannadine suggests² that it is often a relatively small number of large houses which give an area its reputation and this is especially true of Broomhill: it is noticeable even in the earliest local directory that has an alphabetical street listing.³ Most of the large houses whose image is conjured up by the name 'Broomhill' are listed under Glossop or Clarkehouse Road or even Western Bank. Under the heading 'Broomhill' are to be found a collection of small shops, public houses

¹ Betjeman. 'The best and the worst of an era.' 1961.

² Cannadine. *Aristocracy and the towns in the nineteenth century*. [Thesis] p. 252

³ White. *General directory...* 1841.

and the homes of petty tradesmen. Despite this, the idea of Broomhill as the name of a superior residential area had already taken hold and was to persist throughout the century.

The complexity of Broomhill would provide material for a lengthy monograph in its own right. To make a case study illustrating the development of middle-class housing it is necessary to disentangle that element from the development of Broomhill as a whole. Having done this, it is possible to consider the core upon which its reputation depended, how it developed and the way the very success of Broomhill as a suburb curtailed the expansion of the best type of middle-class housing in the area and led to the building of new suburbs further west. Having identified the shared characteristics and distinctive features that mark Broomhill in comparison to the other western suburbs the case study describes the location and topography of the area. The remainder is divided into three main headings, to instil some kind of order on Broomhill's long and involved history. First, a chronological account of the development of the main estates and the attitude of each owner to land usage is given, and this is followed by an account of the builders who carried out development and of the styles of architecture employed. Finally, the residents drawn to the suburb are considered. Although this method results in a certain amount of overlap between various locations and their developers, this appeared to be necessary to clarify a complex situation.

7.1.1 Shared characteristics

As the first and the largest western suburb Broomhill illustrates a number of the characteristics that were to be re-echoed as development was continued further west. These include the popularity of sites providing clean air and fine views, preferably on a south-facing slope. Old roads, tracks and field layouts often provided the framework around which development took place. Accessibility and the availability of a water supply were also crucial factors in the choice of building sites.

The importance of the ground landlord in determining the way in which an area developed can clearly be seen, together with the effect such decisions had on future expansion and profitability. Decisions of ground landlords, builders, developers and potential residents were influenced by the financial and family circumstances of those involved, affecting the timing and type of development. Changes of architectural style, building materials and level of affluence can also be seen as Broomhill grew in the course of the nineteenth century.

7.1.2 Distinctive features

Although Broomhill shares all these characteristics with other areas it differs from them insofar as there were a number of ground landlords involved. After 1821 each man developed his land in what he perceived to be the best way to exploit it profitably. This required a judgement of the type of demand, both at the time of development and in the future, also, of the amount of capital, if any, needed to develop the site, and finally, it needed the kind of investors who might be tempted to finance such development. As a result of its multiplicity of ground landlords Broomhill does not present the relatively homogeneous face of Broomhall Park or Endcliffe Crescent but rather a chequer-board effect. Within a few years Broomhill had the finest example of terraced housing in the region and, only a few yards away, the beginnings of its own slum.

Despite such diversity Broomhill acquired, and retained, throughout the nineteenth century, a reputation as a desirable place of residence for Sheffield's more affluent citizens. In the beginning it attracted some of those who could be considered the town's leading citizens as well as being the most prosperous. Initially, development after the opening of the Glossop

Road did not result in the owners of Moor Lodge, The Willows or Westbourne moving west in search of the isolation which had originally drawn them to Broomhill. However, as the century progressed, the leaders of the cutlery trade, who had been the earliest settlers in the area, became wealthier and more numerous just as unplanned development was restricting the number of sites suitable the type of establishment which they favoured. As a result, such men were attracted ever further west but Broomhill, though no longer the chosen location of the wealthiest, continued to attract the comfortably off. To comprehend when, how and why Broomhill developed as it did it is necessary to study the location and topography of the area and its land owners and developers.

7.2 Location

Broomhill was the earliest western suburb close to the township of Sheffield. Unlike its southern neighbour, Broomhall, it does not have clearly defined boundaries. During the nineteenth century the name slides uncertainly on maps of the area, indicating a lack of clarity as to what exactly constituted Broomhill, a problem shared by twentieth century residents. For the early part of the nineteenth century much of the area was referred to merely as 'land formerly part of Crookesmoor' and, when a church was built in 1869 it was called St. Mark's, Broomhall. Ecclesiastical, local government and even national voting areas all set varying boundaries for Broomhill. The nearest things that the area has to natural boundaries are the old roads, which pre-date any housing in the area. Clarkehouse and the old Hallam Gate Roads mark the south and north boundaries. The ancient track, Tree Root Walk, makes a boundary to the east, whilst the grounds of Oakholme mark the beginning of the old Endcliffe Estate. This gives an area of a little over 110 acres, making this by far the largest of the suburbs that will be considered. These markers have been taken as a rough outline of the area to be studied, but where land outside has developed strong links to the core area it has been included.

Broomhill is unique amongst the western suburbs in being created on a green-field site, originally the common land of Crookes Moor. The first mention of the name 'Broomhill' is to be found on Fairbank's map of the Parish of Sheffield published in 1795.⁴ The town of Sheffield is shown to lie about a mile to the east. All the intervening land is almost entirely agricultural. Villages and hamlets to the west of Sheffield were connected to the town by a network of ancient roads, often little better than tracks. A road connecting the Porter with the village of Crooks to the north crossed the main route west. A house is shown in the south-east quadrant of the crossroad and beside it the name 'Broomhill'. The crossroads make the area readily identifiable on a survey of Crooks Moor made just before the Enclosure Act of 1788. This shows all the land close to the crossroads to be entirely devoid of buildings. The nearest building lay about ¼ mile west of the crossroads and this was the stand of the Sheffield Racecourse. Its presence may have made this relatively remote area rather better known to the inhabitants of Sheffield than any other part of the enclosed land. The new house, sketched in a Fairbank notebook of 1790,⁵ was built by one of the town's successful silver-platers. In the notebook it is headed 'William Newbould's house and land held of J. Wilkinson' so the house seems to have acquired the name of 'Broomhill' within the period 1788 to 1795. No matter how the notion of 'Broomhill' may have changed in the course of the nineteenth century the house, and the crossroads close by, were to be the hub from which the suburb developed. The Newbould family extended their land holdings in the area until they held over thirty acres and this estate was to become the nucleus of the suburb of Broomhill. Newbould's estate, although remote from the built up area of the town, was well sited in relation to the existing road network. As

⁴ Fairbank. *Map of the Parish of Sheffield*. 1795.

⁵ Sheffield City Archives. Fairbank Collection SheD 234 S

later advertisements for the area were to say,⁶ it offered all the benefits of the country within reach of the town.

It should be noted that, although Broomhill was only about a mile from the parish church and close to one of the main roads out of the town, access did present problems. Even in a town noted for its steep roads this road was notoriously difficult and hard on the horses who had the misfortune to travel it. Even though the road is no longer quite as steep as it was at the beginning of the nineteenth century it is a long steep climb on foot, requiring the leg action for climbing stairs in many parts rather than that of walking. Lack of road maintenance in the 1980's revealed some of the problems that it must have offered to earlier pedestrians and riders. Both road and the area immediately in front of buildings were covered with large cobbles. In common with much of this part of Sheffield even modern drainage is not sufficient to prevent torrents of water swirling down making the cobbles extremely slippery and passing traffic throws up waves of dirty water. This is difficult enough to negotiate in trousers and stout flat shoes; for a servant in a long skirt and carrying provisions it must have been extremely hazardous and positively dangerous in icy weather, whilst a little snow would make it virtually impassable for wheeled traffic. Thus, the pleasures of country living had to be weighed against the difficulty of travelling badly made and unlit roads in order to get to the town whether for business, pleasure or to gather provisions.

The location of the area which came to be known as Broomhill, and its position in relation to the town at the beginning of the nineteenth century, are shown on Map 2. Broomhill occupied a green field site, most of it lying within the common land of Crookesmoor. The land slopes steeply down to the Porter and had many streams that flow down to feed the river. A road that led due west until it met the boundary of Crookesmoor at which point it turned north provided the main link with Sheffield. A public cart track bisecting the common land gave access to land further west. These two roads were supplemented by a number of cart tracks so that, when Broomhill finally was developed for building purposes it already had the basis of a network of roads. The land itself was rough and uneven, not lending itself readily to agriculture.

7.3 Topography

The land upon which Broomhill was built resembled that shown on Fairbank's sketch of Endcliffe: a rising hillside with a few widely scattered small farms in the distance. Fulwood Road, which bisects Broomhill land, was a narrow track cut into the side of the hill, forming a ledge from which the land falls away sharply on the south side so that houses at ground level facing the road will have one or two storeys exposed at the back. Broomhill House was built in the lea of the hillside and further sheltered from winds by an old copse to the west, supplemented by a hedge planted round the house itself. Land rises from the Porter, relatively gently until it reaches Broomhall then with increasing steepness to the heights of Crooks and Ranmoor. Thus Broomhill House had the advantage of uninterrupted views to the east and south without the disadvantages of an exposed position. These views were regarded as amongst Broomhill's prime attractions in the first half of the century. The Mount was said to 'Command one of the most extensive and beautiful diversified views in the neighbourhood of Sheffield, fronting towards the Norton and Meersbrook hills and having the richly hued Moors of Derbyshire as a background'.⁷ Looking south about ½ mile over the fields were the roof-tops of Broomhall, Broomgrove and Clarkehouse, all surrounded by trees. Slightly to the south-west were the small

⁶ *Sheffield Mercury* 2 May 1835

⁷ *Sheffield Mercury* 7 December 1831

homesteads of Moor Lodge and Broombank with Endcliffe Grange and Hall beyond. The few habitations which existed were all beyond the boundaries of the old common land but Newbould may not have considered himself to be a pioneer of new land, rather extending the rim of existing development, that was slowly creeping up Brook Hill, his main link to the town. This seeming anomaly of remoteness to south and west, coupled with proximity to the edge of development to the east, is explained by the existence of a road which started at West Bar, rose steeply up Brookhill then Broad Lane then skirted Crookes Moor to Lydgate and finally over the moors to the towns and ports of the west. As mentioned earlier this road was very steep but it did connect the town with open countryside and for some time had attracted a scattering of substantial houses, especially on sites adjoining the road that offered south facing aspects.

Most of the surrounding land had been part of Crooks Moor and, even south of the common land, field names such as the Oat Close indicate that it was only suitable for hardy crops. Adjoining the house were the Far and Near Stonepit Fields and, to the west, one of Newbould's neighbours was extracting sandstone, leaving the extensive disused quarry shown on the 1853 O.S.⁸ A later owner leased the land for the extraction of fire-clay so the coarse grazing land was pitted with various workings which altered the flow of water over the land. However, the existence of stone and fire clay was to make the area attractive to builders when suburban expansion began.

Advertisements for the land during the nineteenth century usually referred to the area as 'well-watered'.⁹ In practice this could range from land from which water could be pumped to downright soggy. Broomhill's streams and springs are no longer evident but even with twentieth century drainage a spell of wet weather brings water coursing down Nile Street till it meets a stronger stream coming down Glossop Road and the two join forces to gush down the hill to Clarkehouse Road. Although relatively dry cellars are to be found in the west end of Broomfield Road, to the east the cellar of the vicarage is said to produce strange and large fungi and residents of the south end of Beech Hill Road have had occasion to punt across their flooded cellar in a tin bath in order to retrieve their possessions.¹⁰

The builder of Oakholme gathered information on the state of the land at the time of the Enclosure and the period immediately before.¹¹ Witness after witness testified to the rocky nature of the land, often shelving too steeply for cattle to cross. Further information was also given concerning water, including springs, in the area. A stream crossed the Fulwood Road marking an old boundary between Endcliffe Grange and an isolated portion of Norfolk territory left in a sea of Broomhall land. This farm on Norfolk territory was so inconsequential that it did not even have a name of its own but was known by that of its current tenant though the area was sometimes referred to as Broombank. Again field names such as the Rough Field and Briery Acre indicate poor farming land. As the land upon which William Newbould built his house was rough agricultural land he and future settlers in the area could not expect to turn it into profitable farming land. They seem to have been drawn to the area for other reasons: clean air, pretty views, relatively cheap land and a location accessible from the town.

⁸ Ordnance Survey. *Town of Sheffield. Six-inch map. Sheets 294 & 295.* Southampton: Ordnance Survey, 1853. (Surveyed 1851).

⁹ For example *Sheffield Mercury* 3 March 1827

¹⁰ Conversation with local residents

¹¹ Deeds of Oakholme in the University of Sheffield collection of deeds

7.4 Land ownership

7.4.1 Early development: 1800-1820

During the first two decades of the nineteenth century Broomhill land remained in the hands of the owners shown on Map 6. The area attracted few new residents. Those who came were mainly owner- occupiers of houses built upon plots of at least an acre. By 1820 there were only 6 residents scattered widely over the hillside and the remaining acreage was given over to tenant farmers or farmed by a resident owner on his own behalf.

Map 5 shows the way the common land was divided¹² among landowners following the Enclosure Act of 1788.¹³ It can be seen that the major beneficiaries were the Duke of Norfolk and Philip Gell, the heir to the Broomhall Estate. As explained in Chapter 4, neither of these two landowners wished to retain holdings in western Sheffield and their land was disposed of to a variety of owners in the early years of the nineteenth century.

Map 6 shows land ownership in 1818.¹⁴ By now the land has been divided between a number of small owners. What is not immediately apparent is that almost all the owners are related and are, as mentioned in Chapter 4, part of an extended kinship network. The exception was a block of land to the west of Newbould's house, which was bought by Robert Brightmore and John Greaves. Most of the members of the family group had become wealthy in the silver-plating trade and it seems to have been generally agreed that the safest place for at least some of the profits was to invest it in land. During the first two decades of the century the new landowners, including those outside the kinship network, seem to have made no effort to develop their land and it remained in agricultural use, mainly let to tenant farmers.

The year 1818 was of great importance to the landowners of the Broomhill area as the act to enable a turnpike road to be made to the west had finally been passed. The need for such a road had long been talked of, so the potential value of land as building sites was known. The route the new road (known as the Glossop Road) took made the Broomhill area much more accessible from the town. The road, although rising as soon as it left West Street, was by no means as steep as the existing Broad Lane and Brook Hill route and presumably had a better surface. Of all the members of the kinship network only the Newbould family had chosen to live at Broomhill and even William Newbould junior left soon after the opening of the Glossop Road in 1821 so the area was to be exploited by absentee landlords.

7.4.2 Land ownership and development - 1821-1850

In November of 1821 the Glossop Turnpike Road was opened. This was to be a great instrument of change for the Broomhill area. The old road west via Broad Lane was steep and difficult and there was felt to be a need for an alternative. In 1818 a bill was obtained to enable a turnpike road to be constructed from Sheffield to Glossop. As a result, a Trust was formed to finance and control the project. Joseph Fairbank, the leading local surveyor, was

¹² Paul, Charles [Carolus Paulus, pseud.] *Unpublished pages relating to the manor and parish of Ecclesall, including the enclosure of the common and waste lands there*. Sheffield J.W. Northend, 1927 p. 69

¹³ *Map of the Township of Ecclesall Bierlow in the Parish of Sheffield with the numbers referring to a survey thereof in 1807*. Bag. C. 301 folio 26. Sheffield City Archives

¹⁴ *Map of the Township of Ecclesall Bierlow... 1807*

appointed by the Trust to carry out the work. The chosen route cut directly across the Broomhill area from Clarkehouse Road to Fulwell Road.

The new road had the potential for bringing great change because it made Broomhill land much more accessible from Sheffield. The building of the road proved to be very difficult and Broomhill's landowners had ample time to consider the possible effect upon the worth of their holdings. However, they were no doubt aware that roads did not necessarily attract builders. In 1810, as a result of the impending extension to the Sparrow Pit turnpike [later known as Ecclesall Road], Broomhill land was advertised for sale as being of special interest to developers: a decade later, no building had taken place.

Various alternative types of development were possible. One option was that William Newbould, as the largest landowner in the area, might have bought adjoining land in order to make his holding into a regular shape, readily divided into building lots. This would have given him complete control of development in the area. Alternatively, one of the smaller landowners, such as Spurr, could have extended existing holdings in order to have a controlling interest in the area. Yet another possibility was that resident landowners could have set their faces against change and refused to allow newcomers into the area thus severely restricting the scope for development. None of these options was taken.

Of the members of the kinship network almost all followed Holy's example in that control was maintained over development through building leases that excluded anything but residential use and fixed a minimum worth for houses. The two landowners lying outside the network had financial circumstances that differed from those within the group and this influenced their approach to development. By 1821 Broomhill had six main landowners, Spurr, Newbould, Cadman and Spooner from within the kinship network and two outsiders: Brightmore and Greaves. As their decisions had a long lasting influence on the way in which Broomhill developed each will be considered in turn. Land was readily available for building purposes, though all landowners, except John Greaves, were willing to adopt an entirely passive role. All the members of the kinship network had bought Broomhill land initially as a secure haven for capital accumulated from some form of trade. These men had no immediate incentive to maximise the return on their property, nor did they wish to exchange the safe investment in land for a more exposed entrepreneurial role as a property developer. Men wishing to settle in the area initiated the earliest changes that took place in Broomhill after the opening of the Glossop Road. The newcomers and their requirements identify the current prosperous class and the estimation of that class as to what constituted desirable housing.

Broomhill no longer attracted professional men such as the Reverend N. Philipps, looking for a home set in 10 acres of parkland, nor the upper ranks of the silver platers. Instead, the new men were mainly manufacturers in the light trades who had weathered the recession of the early decades of the century and were looking for a plot of about one acre upon which to build a house within easy reach of their place of business.

Although it was the development of middle class housing that gave Broomhill its reputation as a desirable suburb, within a decade of the opening of the Glossop Road part of Robert Brightmore's land was leased to a number of builders on which not only small cottages were built but also commercial premises were erected.

By 1838 the population of Broomhill was deemed to be sufficient to support one of the first horse omnibus services to the newly opened railway station.¹⁵ White's 1841 directory, the first to have a street by street guide, lists some of the earliest tradesmen in the area.¹⁶ Of the

¹⁵ Vickers, J.E. *A popular history of Sheffield*. East Ardsley: EP Publishing Ltd., 1978 p. 51

¹⁶ White. *General directory...* 1841.

36 residents listed under the heading 'Broomhill' only three were 'gentlemen', one of them, W. B. Mitchell, being the nephew of the ground landlord, Brightmore. It is clear that the neighbourhood already had many of the amenities of a small village including four inns, a number of tailors, a shoemaker, shopkeeper, grocer, butcher, cow-keeper and milliner. Many of these small shops still exist, Mr. Middleton's shop being occupied by a long succession of butchers until it finally closed in the mid 1990s. The prosperous inhabitants who lived in the large houses that gave Broomhill its reputation as an affluent suburb were listed mainly under Glossop Road, what was briefly known as 'Botanic Garden Road', or even Western Bank. A mark of the area's growing importance was that by 1849 Broomhill had a Police Station¹⁷ and by mid century a Registry Office.¹⁸ In later years Broomhill came to have its own druggist and hairdresser as well as a growing number of shopkeepers. A sign of the changing nature of the area was that John Howden of 13, Broomhill offered his services as an 'estate agent, collector of rents and debts etc.'¹⁹ Throughout the century Robert Brightmore's land provided sites for commercial development and, from mid-century, more of the land of other owners came to be used for similar purposes. Shops seem to have been regarded as a useful amenity rather than a nuisance by the increasing number of prosperous residents whilst the festering courts which lay behind the shops were tactfully ignored in all contemporary descriptions of Broomhill; so its reputation was unimpaired.

Peter Spurr²⁰

The land which potential new residents found most attractive in the first instance was that of Peter Spurr, a merchant and manufacturer specialising in razors and surgical instruments. He appears to have been successful even during the difficult trading years at the beginning of the century. By 1809 he had expended over £5,000 on about 44 acres of Gell land, which lay to the north of Broomhill, lying between Tree Root Walk to the east and the land of his kinsman, William Newbould, to the west. Despite this heavy outlay he was able to take a large house at Highfield in 1814.²¹ Part of the Broomhill land was sold or exchanged and in 1818 he took out two mortgages on the remaining land. As shown on Map 6, this was the most easterly of Broomhill land. It had the added advantage that the new road gave easy access to plots on either side. The first toll bar was placed just within the boundaries of Spurr's land but he was able to offer a right of way by a rear entrance which allowed lessees to make the maximum use of the new road without having to pay a toll. The rapidity with which such plots were taken seems to indicate that this facility was highly prized.

Spurr's land adjoining the new road was all leased within a few years of the opening even though no advertisement of availability was made in any local newspaper. Information may have been available by word of mouth or by posters and handbills. Spurr seems to have profited from the transition of his land from agricultural fields to building sites with very little effort. Two fields were transformed into eight building plots without the expense of laying out roads as the long, narrow plots opened off from north and south of the turnpike. He was able to make his mortgage interest payments from the first ground rents and later letting seem to have been used to fund his retirement in 1824 at the age of fifty six, the year he became Master Cutler, a position held by his father in 1781. His experience in the housing market may have tempted his fellow landowners to hope for similar easy profits but few in western Sheffield were fortunate enough to make such quick and effortless profit.

¹⁷ White. *General directory...* 1849.

¹⁸ Ordnance Survey. *Town of Sheffield*. 1853. (Surveyed 1851).

¹⁹ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*. 17 June 1854

²⁰ Unless otherwise stated information concerning Peter Spurr is taken from the deeds of Five Oaks and neighbouring property in the Sheffield Area Health Authority collection of deeds

²¹ Ward. *Peeps*. p. 212

Mention has been made elsewhere concerning the influence that a ground landlord could have upon the manner in which an estate was developed by the terms of the building leases that he issued. Spurr made very few demands in his leases. Emulating his kinsman, Thomas Holy, he issued 800 year leases and required that only residential building would be allowed, using the same long list of excluded industries. However, any size and shape of plot seems to have been available and the minimum worth of any house built was set at only £300, the same or even below the level which Holy set for Wilkinson Street.²² Apart from specifying that the house should be 'good and substantial' no stipulation was made as to fabric or style. Having leased all his land on the north side of the road, in 1823 he raised the minimum worth of a house to £400 for plots on the south side but this seems a low level given that he was finding such ready clients.

The builders having been given such freedom from restrictive leases it can be seen that the type of housing which took place at Broomhill was entirely a reflection of the taste and aspirations of those builders. The building that took place in 1824 on the south side of the Glossop Road still survives. The houses are of the same dark red brick used for the earliest houses in Wilkinson Street. The style is of a plain Georgian. Several have graceful bow windows looking south to the Porter but the only ornaments are fanlights over the front doors and, sometimes, a porch with Grecian pillars. Even the most elaborate house is no larger or finer than Brunswick House, [now number 299 Glossop Road] one of the early outposts to be built on the west side of the town at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

However, the very earliest houses that were the result of the small building boom stimulated by the opening of the Glossop Road were on the north side of the road. These houses were demolished in the 1960s to make way for the Royal Hallamshire Hospital. Unfortunately, no clear photographs of the area have been found nor has it been possible to obtain any descriptions of the houses. It might have been expected that they would resemble the houses already in the area such as Broomhill House or Westbourne and certainly Egerton House, built in 1829, was of brick and built in the Georgian style. However photographs taken at the beginning of the twentieth century have recently been found of both the interior and exterior of Five Oaks, the largest house of the new building.²³ It was built of ashlar and in an unusual hybrid architectural style.

This use of stone was to make an important change in building material. Hitherto brick had been the chosen material for all levels of housing in Sheffield, even for the largest such as Page Hall or Meersbrook. The choice of stone for Five Oaks may have been influenced by its ready availability: close to the boundary of the house lay the Far Stone Pit Field. To the west of the Glossop Road was an old sandstone quarry, which had been abandoned early in the century and later became the site of the home of the architect T. J. Flockton. In the second decade of the century stone was taken from Spurr's land for the building of the Glossop Road. Whatever the reason, William Butcher, the builder and occupier of Five Oaks set an important trend for almost all building that took place in the nineteenth century, used stone rather than brick, not only in Broomhill but also in Broomhall and out to Ranmoor.

Spurr's lessees chose to limit themselves to plots of ½ to 1 ½ acre. The houses seem all to have been worth considerably more than the minimum set by Spurr. Within a few years houses were being sold for £750 and the photographs of Five Oaks show that even the original block of the house was probably worth more than £1,000. At least two of the plots on the south side of the road were used for the erection of semi-detached houses though

²² Deeds of 54, Wilkinson Street in the University of Sheffield collection of deeds

²³ Album of sepia photographs in private hands

they were later adapted to be single houses. This seems to be another indication that Spurr gave his lessees a very free hand.

The type of development that was taking place is illustrated by an advertisement in *The Iris* for 27 April 1824 placed by William Atkinson.²⁴ Having taken one of the first leases at the beginning of 1823, he had had two houses built upon the site and was living in one of them. The other was described as 'substantially built... fitted with neat and expensive features, and in every respect suitable for the residence of respectable families'.²⁵ Like his own, the house had a dining room, drawing room, breakfast room and large kitchen on the ground floor with four bedrooms and a dressing room above. In addition, it had extensive cellars and 'detached offices'. Mention was made of the splendid views and the convenience of being close to the Glossop Road, though potential clients were assured that the houses were 'built a convenient distance from the road and each other'. Further benefits were the 'pleasure garden and shrubbery tastefully laid out at the front' and the plentiful supply of soft water, so that 'being so desirable for convenience, health and comfort the Estate is worth attention for the investment of money.' This suggests that Atkinson was offering the possibility of purchase as rental property as well as becoming a resident owner like himself.

Newbould family²⁶

William Newbould, the elder, was a Wesleyan Methodist and a silver-plater, one of the most successful men of his generation, mainly specialising in button making, probably the most profitable section of the trade. That his family had been esteemed by their fellow citizens is shown by his father holding the position of Master Cutler in 1751 and his brother, Samuel, took the title in 1800²⁷, but his own financial standing can be estimated in his charitable contributions. Subscription lists for good causes ranging from food for the poor to building a hospital were all published in the local newspapers, names listed in descending order according to the amount subscribed. His kinsman, Thomas Holy usually headed such lists, but Newbould himself was never far behind.²⁸ His equivalent in terms of standing and means in the second half of the century was to be found in the upper ranks of the steel makers. As an affluent man Newbould was able to live in a place which attracted him. Broomhill seems to have offered spacious green surroundings and unspoilt views. Later in the century similar things attracted the steel makers but Broomhill was the victim of its own early success and could no longer provide them so it was necessary to move to Ranmoor.

William early took advantage of the dismemberment of the Broomhall Estate, obtaining first leases and then buying freeholds as they became available. His interest was not in land development but rather to acquire a pleasant site upon which to build a house in which to bring up his growing family. As adjoining land became available it was bought for family use or to be let for pasture.

William Newbould died long before the opening of the Glossop Road turned Broomhill into a desirable residential area. The Newbould family remained at Broomhill with the second son, William Newbould the Younger taking responsibility for his widowed mother and siblings.²⁹ Button making was declining so, apart from rent from agricultural land, the

²⁴ *The Iris* 27 April 1824

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Unless otherwise stated data concerning William Newbould is taken from the deeds of Mount View in the Sheffield City Council collection of deeds

²⁷ *The Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire in the County of York*. Sheffield. [n.d]. p.29

²⁸ *The Iris* 1 January 1800

²⁹ Will of William Newbould (the elder), copy in private hands

main source of income was the family coalmine at Intake, which suffered from an explosion and labour troubles. Either from lack of financial acumen or the result of difficult trading conditions, Newbould found it difficult to finance dowries for his sisters, who all married within a few years of each other. Then his youngest brother, George, decided to exercise his option to take a cash payment in exchange for his share of family assets. By the time the Glossop Road opened Newbould was the largest landowner in the area but the deeds of his property show that he had serious financial problems and teetered on the brink of bankruptcy.

Throughout the 1820s he attempted to juggle creditors against income. Seeing the rapidity with which Spurr was able to lease his land may have inclined Newbould in 1827 to have Fairbank draw up a plan of how the Newbould Broomhill estate might be divided into building plots.³⁰ This was rather a half-hearted affair, amounting to little more than showing how, without any road-building, the maximum number of plots of about ½ acre could be carved out of his irregularly shape estate, whilst leaving Broomhill house marooned on a one acre site bordering the turnpike. By the time the plan was completed it seems to have been evident that the take-up of Spurr land had satisfied the immediate need for suburban living and that Newbould's financial problems needed a swift solution.

Sympathetic creditors allowed land to be sold off as buyers were found. The break-up of the Newbould estate began with the sale of Broomhill House together with just over an acre of land to a Newbould relative, Thomas Watson in November 1829. Watson occupied the house and William Newbould took up residence close to the family mine at Intake.

By October 1831 he was allowed to sell more of the estate, the proceeds to go in agreed amounts to his creditors. All the land to the south and east of Broomhill house went to William Butcher, the owner of Five Oaks, the largest house built on Peter Spurr's land. Butcher seems to have made the purchase partly as an investment but mainly in order to have control of any future development in the area. During Butcher's lifetime (to 1870) no attempt appears to have been made to promote the land for building purposes. Leases were issued from time to time but the O.S. map surveyed in 1851³¹ shows that the majority of the land remained vacant.

The new road had cut across the western corner of Newbould's land creating two large triangular plots that might have seemed very unlikely sites to catch the attention of a potential buyer. However, they were to become the sites of two of western Sheffield's most outstanding buildings. Shortly after the sale of land to Butcher, William Newbould sold the northern triangle to William Flockton. The distinguished career of this architect is outlined elsewhere but this purchase is of interest as it marked Flockton's first attempt at housing development.

Flockton advertised his project in December 1831. It was to be a grand terrace of a size and high standard hitherto unknown in any part of Sheffield. It has been said that the building was known as Flockton's Folly.³² In fact his folly had been to suppose that the new residents drawn to the area in 1823/4 would support a leisure complex to the south of Glossop Road. This was centred upon warm and cold baths but also providing a landscaped pleasure garden and refreshments.³³ The concept proved to be too sophisticated for local taste and the venture failed within a few years. It is a testimony to the financial acumen of the Flockton family that very shortly after the financial loss incurred by the public baths

³⁰ Fairbank, J. *Plan of the Broomhill Estate divided into lots for building purposes*. [1827] SheD 235S

³¹ Ordnance Survey. *Town of Sheffield*. 1853. (Surveyed 1851).

³² Wilson (of Sharrow) family papers in private hands.

³³ *Sheffield Mercury*, 21 October 1827

scheme William Flockton was able to raise the capital necessary for another ambitious venture. The terrace, known as The Mount, was much more to public taste and within a year the eight houses were occupied. Residents were drawn from the ranks of Sheffield's leading industrialists, professional men and intellectuals.³⁴

Despite the success of the scheme Flockton did not attempt any further large building undertakings in the area. However, he was involved in the impressive development that took place on the southern triangle, the Wesleyan Preparatory School. In 1835 the Anglicans of the town set up a company to establish a boarding school to teach the sons of members of the Church of England.³⁵ The development of this scheme is described in the chapter on Broomhall. Almost before the school was complete the Wesleyans decided to have their own school, but envisaged something on a much grander scale. At first land was taken from the owner of Broomgrove, lying immediately to the west of the Collegiate School. Before building began the trustees decided to take the Newbould site, for unexplained reasons, even though the Broomgrove transaction was so far advanced that they had to pay an expensive fine to be allowed to withdraw.³⁶

The advantages of the new site, in comparison to the first choice, are not obvious. The trustees put the building in the hands of William Flockton and he created another massive set piece to balance The Mount. The sale of the land to the Wesley College trustees cleared Newbould's most pressing debts and brought his mortgage repayments to a level that he could meet from his income. In 1841 he made his final sale of a single field lying to the west of Glossop Road. This was bought by the Ward and Payne families, who were linked by trade partnership and marriage. After this sale Newbould retained the remaining four fields³⁷ and drew rent from their use as agricultural land until his death in 1852. In 1853 his heirs began to develop the land in the light of the very different housing market then in operation.³⁸

Peter Cadman ³⁹

The land which formed the north west boundary of Broomhill was owned by yet another Newbould relative, Peter Cadman.⁴⁰ The Cadmans remained very prosperous throughout the early decades of the nineteenth century and by 1820 had moved out to Handsworth where they took to the life of country gentlemen, though the family cutlery firm still traded in Sheffield. Their Broomhill field fell sharply away from the Fulwood Road so offering little attraction to builders and they were content to leave it as agricultural land. Although living far from Broomhill the family continued to take an interest in the area and extended their holdings westward in 1826 when Gell's final holding in the area, the Tapton Estate, was sold.⁴¹ Further additions came with the death of William Newbould in 1852. He left

³⁴ White. *General directory*... 1841.

³⁵ Details of the scheme and its intention in the deeds of the Collegiate School in the University of Sheffield Hallam collection of deeds

³⁶ Hunter. *Hallamshire*. p. 226

³⁷ Fairbank, J. and Son. *Plan of those parts of the Broom Hill Estate which remain in the hands of William Newbould in March 1837*. SheD 240S

³⁸ For example the smaller semi-detached houses of 7-29 Beech Hill Road

³⁹ Unless otherwise stated data concerning the Cadman family has been taken from deeds of property in the Endcliffe Avenue area in the Birkdale School collection of deeds

⁴⁰ *Particulars of Tapton Hill and other valuable freehold estates ... sold by auction ... 3rd February 1826*. [Printed by G. Ridge, Sheffield, 1826] (Annotated copy in Wilsons & Co. (Sharrow) [Archives...])

⁴¹ Will of William Newbould (the younger), copy in private hands

his remaining land to his nephews.⁴² Soon after this division of the estate the Cadman nephew bought out his Spurr cousin and thus acquired land bordering the Glossop Road.⁴³ As a result the Cadman family extended their holdings in the area just as the successful economy of Sheffield was generating a boom in suburban development. It will be seen that their decisions on the way in which their land should be developed had considerable effect on the changing shape of Broomhill.

William Spooner⁴⁴

Unlike his cousins, Spooner was a farmer. Although he followed the example of his relatives in not seeking to exploit his land for building purposes, he followed Brightmore insofar that commercial development was not excluded. His family had acquired large tracts of land in various parts of Sheffield over many years.⁴⁵ Their frugal living seems to have allowed them to accumulate considerable savings so they were able to buy large tracts of Gell land in the Tapton area to augment their Hallamgate Farm, which had already been enlarged by allotments awarded to the Spooners at the time of the Enclosure.⁴⁶ The land that they had acquired at the time of the Enclosure became the site of the most mixed development in Broomhill prior to 1850. By the 1820s their land, close to Fulwood Road as it meets the road to Crookes, was part of the early commercial development of Broomhill. Adjoining land was used for allotments whilst large villas with long gardens, Pisgah House and The Grove, were built at the top of the hill.

Robert Brightmore⁴⁷

The largest landholding outside the kinship network was that of Robert Brightmore. His approach to the exploitation of his Broomhill land differed from that of his neighbours, although he shared a similar background. Brightmore came from a family of prosperous cutlers and had been Master Cutler in 1809.⁴⁸ A bachelor, with a reputation for closeness with money,⁴⁹ he had bought some 12 acres of Norfolk land in 1806. Every effort appears to have been made to exploit what was, even by the standards of the area, very poor agricultural land by extracting fire clay and stone as well as letting it for grazing. He seems to have ceased trading and left Sheffield before the opening of the Glossop Road and may have needed to maximise his income in order to fund his retirement as a 'gentleman'.⁵⁰

Broomhill's landowners within the kinship were willing to give building leases that made very few demands on the lessee. However they all, with the exception of Spooner, did make one basic requirement: all forms of trade were forbidden. In this they followed the example of Thomas Holy. This had the effect of halting mixed development at the bottom on the Glossop Road and making development to the west purely residential, thus encouraging the most prosperous members of the community to take up plots where they

⁴² Deeds of Broomhill School, Sheffield City Council collection of deeds

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Unless otherwise stated data concerning the Spooner family is taken from the deeds of Tapton Mount school for blind children in the Sheffield City Council collection of deeds

⁴⁵ Walton & Mettam. *A history of the Parish of St. Peter*. 1972. pp.18-19.

⁴⁶ Paulus. *Unpublished pages*. 1927.

⁴⁷ Unless otherwise stated data concerning Robert Brightmore is taken from the deeds of Ashdell in the University of Sheffield collection of deeds

⁴⁸ Ward. *Peeps*. p. 152

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ There are no local directory entries for Brightmore in the 1821 or subsequent directories and his will describes him as a gentleman residing at Matlock.

would be protected from industrial pollution. Brightmore was the one exception to this unspoken agreement. His family had already been responsible for mixed development in the Broad Lane area, which adjoined what had been the family home.⁵¹ Development on his Broomhill land was allowed to be of a similar type.

The Glossop Road cut through his land, about 8 acres lying to the west of the road and the



Figure 7.1: Commercial development, Broomhill

remainder lay to the north of the site of The Mount. This area, bordered by the Glossop Road to the west, Fulwood Road to the north and Newbould lane to the east was very accessible and so lent itself to commercial development. Brightmore did not lease his land in large plots as Spurr had done. Instead, from 1827 to 1831 he issued nine leases to a number of developers for small plots without any restriction on use, value of property or fabric for building on his land that lay within a triangle formed by the three roads. This action had a crucial effect on the development of the district as it removed any chance of it remaining a place of exclusively residential housing of the highest class. Within a short space of time the lessees had built public houses, beer shops, work shops and huddled courts on sites smaller than the gardens of the new houses fronting the Glossop Road. Some of the commercial development still survives and their stone frontage shows that by the 1830s stone was the preferred building material for even the humblest construction (see Figure 7.1).

In 1838 Brightmore sold his land to the west of the Glossop Road. It was bought by John Shepherd, a successful ironmonger, who built himself a large house, Ashdell, on the western boundary. Thus, Brightmore's land was developed at two extremes: the leases produced Broomhill's first slums and mixed development and the sale to Shepherd was the last example of a purchaser wanting to build a house in extensive grounds in the manner of Broomhill House or Moor Lodge.

John Greaves ⁵²

John Greaves was an attorney who bought a small farm, sometimes referred to as Broombank, from the Norfolk Estate in 1806. He seems to have had trouble living within his means as, despite making no improvement to the farm house, he took out a number of mortgages over the years on the property he owned and none had been repaid at the time of his death. After the first year he lived in the farmhouse himself, working the land or letting it to a tenant. Part of the land was sometimes used as a market garden.

⁵¹ Deeds of property in Charlotte Street in the Sheffield City Council collection of deeds

⁵² Unless otherwise stated data concerning John Greaves has been taken from the deeds of Oakholme in the University of Sheffield collection of deeds

The surge of interest in developing the area tempted him to draw the attention of the public to his land. On 13th January 1824 *The Iris* carried an advertisement for a 'very desirable freehold estate' of over 16 acres which included a house and a cottage, 'situated in a genteel and improving neighbourhood and is one of the most eligible for a country residence in the vicinity of Sheffield.'⁵³ Mention was also made of the extensive views coupled with a sheltered position and the advantage of being close to both the Glossop and Clarkehouse Roads. Should the estate not be required for residential purposes it contained a 'valuable bed of clay and it is supposed a vein of coal also'.⁵⁴

This suggestion of potential for industrial development can hardly have endeared him to his neighbours at Moor Lodge and Oakholme. When it failed to attract a purchaser Greaves began making preparations to develop the land himself, diverting the stream on his western boundary to supply a brick kiln, but this brought him into conflict with Burbeary of Oakholme, who owned the water rights, and the attempt came to nothing. Greaves died in 1830 with his various mortgages still outstanding and the land undeveloped. Eventually his creditors sold the land. It was bought on 27 August 1835 and formed part of the marriage settlement of Elizabeth Butcher of Five Oaks and George Longford Fosberry, a Liverpool merchant.⁵⁵ Now with an absentee landlord, the land continued to be used for agricultural purposes until mid-century and the next stage of development in Broomhill.

7.4.3 Land ownership and development - 1851-1900

In the decades immediately following the opening of the Glossop Road, Broomhill was without any serious rival as a centre of suburban development. Its growth after the initial burst of activity in 1823-5 was slow and the failure of the ambitious Endcliffe Crescent scheme to be completed and the lack of success of the Endcliffe Vale project seems to indicate not only that these schemes were overly ambitious but also that there was a very limited market for the upper range of housing at a time of trade difficulties.

During the second half of the century the scale of prosperity in Sheffield produced a greater number of affluent citizens requiring housing and a wider range of disposable income to fund such housing. Broomhill faced competition in this housing market from nearby Broomhall then Ranmoor. Across the Porter George Wostenholm began to develop his Sharrow estate.⁵⁶ The north and east sides of the town were very vulnerable to industrial encroachment yet Pitsmoor still offered attractive sites for villa residences and The Park retained the loyalty of families such as the Wards and Roberts who had settled there early in the century.⁵⁷ Although Broomhill no longer attracted the richest inhabitants, land-owners began to take a rather more active part in exploiting their property. Builders seem to have considered the area to be a suitable site for substantial houses and the houses attracted prosperous residents.

Immediately after mid-century Sheffield entered a period of prosperity as outlined in Chapter 2. Its impact on Broomhill can be seen by comparing the O.S. map of 1851⁵⁸ with

⁵³ *The Iris*. 24 January 1824

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Deeds of Sunbury, in the Sheffield University collection of deeds.

⁵⁶ Robinson, G. (with additional material by L. Everson and E. Oldfield). 'George Wostenholm' in: *They lived in Sharrow and Nether Edge*. Sheffield: Nether Edge Neighbourhood Group, Local History Section, 1988. pp. 21-24

⁵⁷ Data taken from local directories 1821 - 1902

⁵⁸ Ordnance Survey. *Town of Sheffield*. 1853. (Surveyed 1851).

White's map of Sheffield published in 1853.⁵⁹ The 1851 map shows that, although the main arteries of traffic through Broomhill had been established and that settlement had increased since the opening of the Glossop Road, much land remained vacant. Apart from a ribbon of commercial development bordering the road to Crookes, the land north of Fulwood Road remained empty. The map of 1853 shows that considerable development had taken place within a short space of time and almost all Broomhill's minor roads had been laid out. The extent, and nature, of this new building demonstrates the numbers and level of prosperity of those who benefited the increase of trade in the borough.

The speed with which Broomhill was able to cater for the increase in demand for middle-class housing was partly because it coincided with a change in ownership of much of the vacant land and the new owners were all much more entrepreneurial than their predecessors. Six landowners were responsible for much of the new development: John Hobson, the Vicar of Sheffield, Spooner family, Cadman family, John Shepherd and William Fowler. The estate of each owner will be considered in turn, to demonstrate differing approaches and the varying degree of success with which these efforts were met before attempting to assess the impact on Broomhill as a whole. Their activities generated an internal market within Broomhill with conflicting aims as to the direction development should take.

There were to be few more villas on quarter-acre sites south of the Fulwood Road, but rather terraces or rows of closely packed semi-detached houses such as those of Ashdell Road, pleasant enough in their way, but taking away much of the cachet which the area had once had. However, development was finally to take place on the north side of the Fulwood Road. Here, much land still lay in the hands of the three recipients who had been given allotments at the time of the Enclosure: the Spooner family, the Shore family and the Vicar of Sheffield. To the east of Hallamgate Road, Samuel Parker had begun leasing Parker's Road by 1830,⁶⁰ but the demand for large houses was soon exhausted and most building on land at the cross-roads owned by the Spooners was of the kind to be found on Robert Brightmore's land.

John Hobson: Taptonville Estate ⁶¹

In 1853 the winding up of the Shore estate (which had begun with the collapse of the Parker, Shore bank in 1843), finally reached the stage where the Shore land at Broomhill could be sold. The new owner was John Hobson, a scissor-smith, who lived at Endcliffe Vale and had works at Arundel Street on the west side of the town. Hobson bought a little over ten acres, an oblong field stretching up the hill from Fulwood Road.

He immediately began work on a house for himself at the north east corner of the land and, at the same time had a road made which bisected the estate from top to bottom. His method of development was similar to that used by Samuel Parker both at Parker's Road in the 1830s and then, a little later, at Broomgrove.⁶² This method enabled a landowner with a relatively small amount of land to choose the optimum location for his own home, retain control over the nature of development around his home, and draw an income from the rest of the estate with the minimum amount of outlay or delay. This system proved as effective

⁵⁹ *Sheffield: this new plan of Sheffield is reduced from the large Ordnance Survey and comprises all the subsequent Improvements, new streets etc. from 1850 to 1853.* Sheffield: W. White, 1853. K.1911.28

⁶⁰ Deeds of 172, Whitham Road, in private hands

⁶¹ Data have been taken from the deeds of property on this estate in the University of Sheffield collection of deeds and property in the collection of deeds of Sheffield City Council

⁶² Deeds of property in Broomgrove Road, Sheffield Hallam collection

for Hobson as it had for Parker and White's map of 1853 shows that a considerable amount of building had already taken place on the estate. Hobson issued leases which were similar to those given by Spurr and the other landowners south of Fulwood Road. Hobson's only innovation was in the name that he gave to the house and to the estate. The house was called Tapton Elms and the estate Taptonville. Previously all housing in the area had wished to claim proximity to the original gentry house in the area, Broomhall, hence Broomhill, Broomfield and Broomgrove. Hobson looked west and pointed to the newly re-built Tapton Hall, at that time his nearest neighbour.

Vicar of Sheffield: Lawson Road/Sale Hill ⁶³

The land immediately to the west of that of Hobson had been allocated to the Vicar of Sheffield. It was not until mid-century that the law was changed to enable the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to issue long building leases, though this only allowed for leases of 99 years, much shorter than the 800 years common in western Sheffield. Possibly to encourage potential builders to overlook this disadvantage the church leases were much less demanding. Commercial development was not excluded, nor was building required to be carried out in stone.⁶⁴ Two streets were driven through, called Lawson Road, paying tribute to one of the owners of the living of the Vicar of Sheffield, and Sale Hill commemorating the then vicar.

Both of these developments were simple affairs, created mainly by driving straight roads on a north south line, so sacrificing the possibility of the fine views for which early Broomhill had been noted. By cutting two roads the Church land could not offer the depth of plot to be found at Taptonville so the building line is closer to the street. However, the leases required houses to be of a substantial value signalling that they were not to be areas of 'second class housing'. Hobson continued the local custom of issuing 800 year leases whilst the Church land was only for 99 years. It is significant that, although the two estates adjoin, the 800-year leases of Hobson's estate proved much more attractive than the shorter leases offered by the Church, even though they did not exclude commercial development or require the use of stone.

William Fowler: Victoria Park Estate⁶⁵

To the south of Fulwood Road the land formerly owned by John Greaves finally, at the end of 1853, came into the hands of an owner who wanted to be an active developer rather than merely issue building leases if requested to. The new owner, William Fowler, was a member of a long established family of surveyors and land valuers. Fowler quickly had the land laid out with curving roads and by 1854 advertised it as the Victoria Park Estate, offering plots of 1/3 acre or more for 'houses of a respectable class'.⁶⁶ From the layout of the estate and the wording of his advertisements it seems possible that Fowler hoped to attract builders and owners who had failed to find a plot on the Broomhall Park Estate. However, Victoria Park did not have such an attractive setting and lacked the feeling of spaciousness which characterised Broomhall, where the newly cut Victoria Road was

⁶³ Data on this estate has been taken from the deeds of property in the Sheffield Hallam University collection of deeds

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Unless otherwise stated the data concerning the Victoria Park Estate have been taken from the deeds of Ashdell Grove in the Sheffield City Council collection of deeds and the deeds of Sunbury in the University of Sheffield collection of deeds, supplemented by the deeds in the hands of private residents on the estate

⁶⁶ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* 31 December 1854

making more building plots available in that desirable area. The development of Taptonville and the Church land meant that Fowler also had to contend with an internal housing market at Broomhill itself.

Initially a number of builders were attracted to the new estate. John Bradbury, who had been responsible for some large houses at Broomhall Park, took the most extensive plot. In September 1854 he took almost all the land adjoining Oakholme, which would have ensured any houses built having the benefit of its green hedges. However, before any houses were built he became bankrupt in May 1855. The builder who was responsible for making the roads of the estate, Adam Chadwick, took two prime sites adjoining Clarkehouse Road and eventually completed five houses, two medium-sized villas and three much smaller. By 1859 he too was threatened with bankruptcy and, although he managed to avoid disaster, he undertook no more building on the estate. Another builder, Benjamin Gregory, took land at the north of the estate but it was some time before any building took place and it was to be small semi-detached houses, hardly likely to give the estate the high reputation for which Fowler had clearly been hoping. One Smith, an accountant and investor took the land adjoining that leased to Gregory, but no house was built. Fowler was able to re-assign it to Thomas Moore, a successful brewer, who built the largest house on the estate, Ash Grove. However, development was slow in the next few years and the estate still did not attract the high calibre of investor for which Fowler seems to have been aiming. Lacking the patience, and possibly the sound finances, of the Watsons

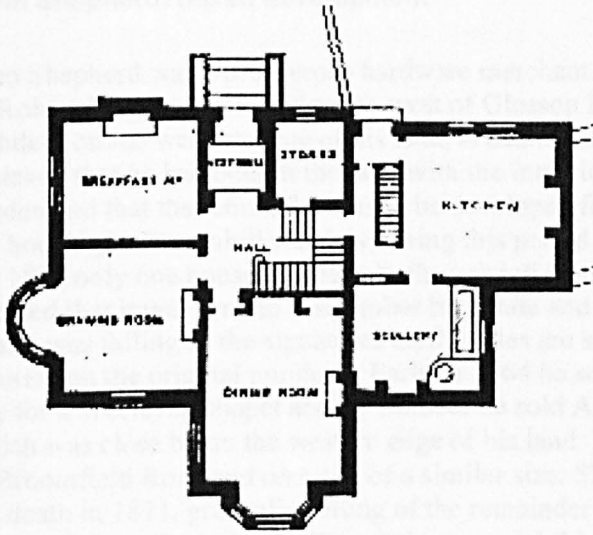


Figure 7.2: Sunbury

of Broomhall Park, Fowler attempted to attract investors by offering building leases which did not include the strict covenant against commercial development common to earlier Broomhill land owners. As a result, by 1860 one of the main roads on the estate had a hotel with bowling green at one end and at the other a villa in which the owner had located his blacking factory, complete with towering chimney, in the grounds behind his home. The proud owner illustrated

his advertisements with the house, complete with its offending chimney. The picture (Fig. 7.2) is a good indication of the style and size of many of the larger houses on the estate, together with the size of plot and building line. Such development deterred both speculative builders and owner-occupiers, as it removed the security provided by strict building leases. Such leases ensured that an estate would hold its value as a residential area and not lapse into the mixture of manufacturing and housing from which most suburban residents were trying to escape. The hotel and factory also alarmed Wilson, the owner of Oakholme, whose land adjoined Victoria Park to the west. In order to prevent any further undesirable development Wilson bought the remaining vacant land on the west side of Westbourne Road and it remained unbuilt until the 1930s. It was almost ten years before confidence seems to have returned and further building took place on other parts of the estate. A number of houses were built for owner occupation. One of the largest was St. Cecilia House, completed in 1869. (Ground plan, Fig. 7.3, elevation, Fig. 7.4) This was designed by Weightman and merited a mention in *Building News*.⁶⁷ The house and its ground plan are shown, but, despite the favourable review, it sits rather awkwardly on its corner site,

⁶⁷ *Building News* 3 April 1868 p. 226



GROUND PLAN.

1/2" = 1 foot to a foot scale

Figure 7.3: St. Cecilia House

hemmed in by two roads, looking rather cramped. Across the road, Flockton's partner, Abbott, built a house for his own occupation. It appears to have been a modest villa, much smaller than T.J. Flockton's house at the north end of the estate. Unfortunately there seems to be no record of its appearance before it was demolished by a singularly badly aimed bomb during a Second World War raid which damaged the Botanical Garden area and St. Mark's when attempting to hit the munitions factories on the other side of Sheffield.

Compared with Broomhall Park Estate, Victoria Park had rather a pinched and skimpy effect. This, together with Fowler's disastrous

decision to relax the terms of his building leases, prevented it attracting enough builders of large houses in sufficient numbers to give the estate a reputation as a prime residential area. The history of the estate demonstrates the problems that can effect an area when the unspoken consensus of aims between ground landlords is breached.

Cadman family: mainly 'second class housing'⁶⁸

The final large area of vacant land belonged to the Cadman family. As described above the majority of this land had been acquired in the early years of the century but it had been added to by purchases at the Gell sale of 1826 and further augmented by inheritance from William Newbould in 1852. Finally the family decided to push for development and seem to have decided that the best option was to maintain the ban on industrial development but to lower their sights a little in terms of the level of housing which might be attracted. In the same year that Fowler advertised his estate 'for houses of a respectable class' the Cadmans were advertising their land, some of it quite close to that of Fowler, as 'suitable for second class housing, for which there is much need in the area'.⁶⁹ This advertisement signalled the end of the kind of building that had made Broomhill's reputation. Although there were to be exceptions, such as Melbourne Avenue, building in the last quarter of the century was predominantly of long terraces, such as Spooner Road that catered for the shadowy area where the prosperous artisans met the very lowest ranks of shabby gentility. On land bordering the south side of Fulwood Road commercial building took place to cater for Broomhill's expanding population.

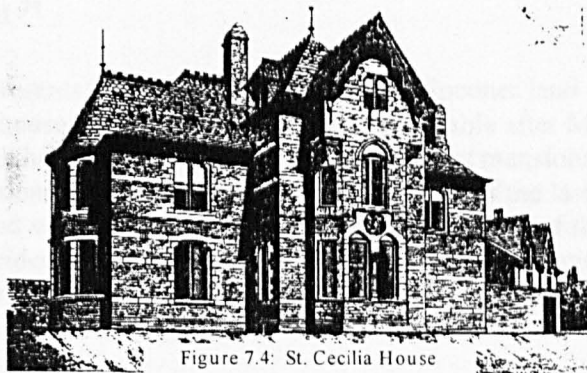


Figure 7.4: St. Cecilia House

⁶⁸ Data taken from the deeds previously cited in this chapter in connection with the Cadman family

⁶⁹ Sheffield Independent 6 May 1854

John Shepherd: mixed development ⁷⁰

John Shepherd was a prosperous hardware merchant. In 1838 he had bought the eight acres of Robert Brightmore's land to the west of Glossop Road. The building of his house, Ashdell, on the western edge of his land, is dealt with elsewhere, His neighbour, Burbeary, believed that he had bought the land with the intention of only retaining a small portion as a garden and that the remainder was to be developed for housing. Possibly because demand for housing in Broomhill was low during this period such development did not take place. By 1850 only one house had been built, Ashdell Cottage. By 1864 Shepherd seems to have decided that it was time to dismember his estate and retire. It may well have been that his health was failing as the signatures on the sales are shaky and quite unlike the confident flourish on the original purchase. Early in 1864 he sold land bordering Fulwood Road as a site for a Wesleyan chapel and by October he sold Ashdell then retired to Ashdell Cottage, which was close by on the western edge of his land. His new home was in a style similar to 9, Broomfield Road and on a site of a similar size. Shepherd lived at Ashdell Cottage until his death in 1871, gradually selling of the remainder of the estate. In 1869 he sold land to his son-in-law, Frederick William Primrose, and this became the site of Summerfield, one of the more imaginative later developments in Broomhill. In the same year land was sold to Henry Hedley Moore. This was used mainly for commercial development where it bordered Fulwood Road, and, to the south, a terrace and a row of houses, packed as closely together as possible without actually turning them into a terrace. His leases must have been loosely worded, and it is an indication of the way in which the area was now being viewed by developers, that both the commercial area and the terrace form one of the few pockets of brick-buildings in western Sheffield.

Spooner family: mixed development ⁷¹

The development of Spooner land represents two extremes. In the 1860s Spooner land near Tapton was sold for the sites of large houses when the area became fashionable after Mark Firth moved to nearby Oakbrook. Such houses rank below all but the greatest mansions. Little change came over the use of Spooner land at Broomhill until the death of the last member of the family in 1876. His land was mainly inherited by various members of the Cadman family who seem to have decided that its proximity to Broomhill's commercial centre made it suitable terraced housing of a mundane type, close to the lowest level to be found in the neighbourhood.

Despite this lowering of standards Broomhill retained its reputation as a desirable place of residence, its reputation based on the houses built in the first half of the century. For the inhabitants of Sheffield suburbs do not seem to have been graded as fashionable or unfashionable but rather according to what extent they were perceived to offer those things that the people of Sheffield found attractive.

7.4.4 Building Development

This study deals with the highest level of housing available in western Sheffield, which provided examples of the environment and life style created by and for the most affluent of the town's inhabitants. In order to focus on the highest housing level, it is necessary to disentangle the two threads of development that occurred following Brightmore's decision

⁷⁰ Unless otherwise stated data concerning the development of John Shepherd's land has been taken from the deeds of Ashdell in the University of Sheffield collection of deeds

⁷¹ Unless otherwise stated data concerning Spooner land has been taken from the deeds of Broomhill School in the Sheffield City Council collection of deeds

to sell his land without any restrictive covenants. The early commercial development in Broomhill was at the junction of the road to Fulwood with the road to Crookes. Although the land was all leased within a few years it was some time before building was completed. At the worst it was cramped courts and tiny back-to-back houses and at the best short terraces with pocket-handkerchief sized gardens. In the course of the century commercial development came to line Fulwood Road until the building of the Wesleyan chapel signalled the beginning of the residential area and, on the north side, Taptonville prevented any further extension westward. The proximity of Taptonville to the commercial area seems to imply that shops were considered to be a useful amenity rather than something necessarily to be shunned when looking for a place of residence. Another strand of mixed development reached south down Glossop Road. Initially the area immediately above The Mount was occupied by two modest villas⁷² but by the 1860s they had been replaced by shops.⁷³ It would seem that, although commercial development did not spell the death-knell of Broomhill as a desirable residential area it did confine the space available for such development and, in places, there was a jostling for position. Stainton speaks of 'the ragged fringe' which developed round Sharrow's 'genteel garment'.⁷⁴ By the end of the nineteenth century Broomhill's genteel garment was surrounded and shot-through by ragged areas yet, as Betjeman's comments show, the reputation set by 1821 persisted for the area as a whole into the next century.

Builders

None of Broomhill's early landowners wished to undertake the financial risk involved in developing his land by building houses himself. Although renting was by far the most popular method of obtaining accommodation, there was always a minority who wished to have a purpose built house of their own. Peter Spurr was fortunate enough to attract the latter group for much of his land.

One such owner-occupier, William Butcher of Five Oaks, took the bulk of the land that William Newbould vacated in the 1830s. He represented what might be called the latent approach to land ownership. He bought the land close to his house, thereby giving himself control over his immediate environment. As one of the town's most successful merchants he had no need to make the maximum amount of profit from his possession. If a potential owner-occupier or builder applied for a lease, and he considered the proposed house would not detract from the area, then he was quite happy to grant a lease, but he did not actively seek such applications.

In 1831 Broomhill attracted the rising star amongst Sheffield's architects. William Flockton was a young man of great talent and ambition, untroubled by any doubts as to his talent as an architect or of the capacity of his builders to carry out his grandiose schemes. The Glossop Road had left two triangles of land severed from the main part of Newbould's estate. The northerly triangle appeared to offer little potential other than for a clutch of small cottages. Flockton saw it as the site for a masterwork, The Mount, a terrace of eight houses but a terrace the like of which Sheffield had never yet seen, and was never to see again. This magnificent piece of classical architecture dominated the hillside and was a landmark for miles around. In a town whose inhabitants had an eye for style and grace this would have become the centrepiece of an elegant suburb. Flockton managed to fill his terrace with men of standing in the town but the enterprise was not such as to tempt him to take more land in the vicinity. A fellow architect took land across the Glossop Road and

⁷² Ordnance Survey. *Town of Sheffield*. 1853. (Surveyed 1851).

⁷³ White, W. *General directory of the town, borough, and parish of Sheffield...* Sheffield: White, 1860

⁷⁴ Stainton. *Making of Sheffield*. 1924. p.215

built a house which he called West Mount.⁷⁵ This echoed the classical style of The Mount and was built so as to blend in with the central portion and leave open the possibility of the building of an East Mount to turn the site into a stylish crescent. However, Sheffield was not the kind of town where the housing market could be architect-led and no further grand designs of domestic architecture were to be created in Broomhill.

Owner-occupiers took two further large plots. John Shepherd took the bulk of the Brightmore land on the west side of Glossop Road and built Ashdell, choosing a site of such unsuitability that it drove his first architect to give up the commission before it was completed. The site did allow Shepherd to divert the majority of his neighbour's water for his own use and pollute the remainder with his sewage until his exasperated neighbour took him to court to prevent this practice. Eventually Shepherd built himself Ashdell Cottage and, having retired there, laid out the rest of his estate for building in the 1860s. By this time Broomhill was no longer attempting to attract the highest levels of the housing market.

Adjoining Glossop Road William Newbould sold a final part of his estate in 1841. The buyers were two families, the Wards and the Paynes, linked in trade partnership and marriage. Two similar houses were built on the acre site, neat stone villas which both came to be referred to as Mount View. David Ward died soon after coming to Broomhill but, a generation later his son, another David took over the firm when he became twenty one and turned it into one of the leaders of the field. Unlike most of his contemporaries he did not move west but used his wealth, as described earlier, to buy up all the open land adjoining Mount View and almost double the size of his home. Keeping this land clear until his death allowed a pocket of large, secluded houses, including a spacious vicarage for St. Mark's, to be erected when almost all the other building going on in Broomhill was in-fill of 'second-class' housing.

Of the earliest houses at Broomhill only Westbourne can definitely be attributed to a builder. Few of the early builders of Broomhill have been identified except for the small speculative builders who took leases from Robert Brightmore. Most of the early 'villa residences', such as Five Oaks, seem to have been 'be-spoke', but there is no trace of who carried out a client's wishes. The first detached house in Broomfield Road was built for rent.⁷⁶ A pawnbroker named Robert Naylor ploughed the profits from his pawnbroking business in Fargate into a large villa and was able to draw a regular rental income for twelve years before the house was sold. It is known that Fairbank was responsible for the staking out of the land but there is no indication of architect or builder.

For the period 1855-65 only the deeds of property in Victoria Park offer any firm information on builders working in the Broomhill area. William Fowler, the owner/developer of the estate, was well placed, as a member of a long-established family of surveyors, to know, and be known, by Sheffield builders. A number of builders took plots of various sizes when the estate was projected. Only one of the builders who had taken a prominent part in the development of Broomhill were attracted to Victoria Park, one John Bradbury. As noted in the Broomhill case study, Bradbury was responsible for some of the most inventive houses on the estate. He took the largest plot on the estate, in a very attractive position. Unfortunately, he seems to have been unable to maintain a satisfactory cash flow as he transferred to the new estate and he became bankrupt before he undertook any building at Victoria Park. Adam Chadwick, a builder who specialised in road construction, having made the roads on the Endcliffe Vale Estate in the 1840s, laid the roads on the new estate. Chadwick took a number of building leases for small plots. After

⁷⁵ Data on the Mount View area have been taken from the deeds of Mount View in the Sheffield City Council collection of deeds and the deeds of adjoining property in the Girls Public School Trust collection of deeds.

⁷⁶ Data on 9, Broomfield Road is taken from deeds in the hands of the owner.

erecting several modest houses close to Clarkehouse Road, he too experienced financial problems but he was fortunate in having a brother in the silver plating trade who was able to come to his aid and avert bankruptcy. Chadwick's experience is an example of how even a man with a long history in the trade, undertaking a number of successful ventures, could be brought down by a very small problem. He owed John Shepherd of Ashdell a comparatively small amount for hardware that he had purchased. Shepherd threatened legal action if he did not receive immediate payment. Without his brother's assistance Chadwick's business would have collapsed as his credit was stretched to fund the, as yet incomplete, houses at Victoria Park. This episode seems to have curtailed the amount of building that Chadwick was able to undertake at Victoria Park. Having made verbal agreements with Bradbury and Chadwick, Fowler had expected to be drawing ground rents within about two years of laying out Victoria Park. The problems of the builders therefore hindered his own financial plans, especially as an investor who had taken a prime site did not fulfil his commitment to build. These financial setbacks may have encouraged Fowler to issue the unrestricted building leases that were to have such a detrimental effect on the development of the estate.

From October 1865 all buildings required planning permission from the Local Authority.⁷⁷ This allows development in the area to be followed more easily as the builders and architects involved with Broomhill can be traced in the register of planning applications. By this time almost all the large and medium sized houses in the district had been completed but a few plots remained at Broomfield. Also the eventual break-up of Mount View and the re-shaping of the boundaries of Oakholme freed more land in desirably secluded areas. One builder stands out for the range and imagination of his various enterprises: Francis Dickinson who lived on the fringe of Broomhill in a modest house at Oaks Bank.⁷⁸

The first building project of Dickinson which it has been possible to trace took place quite close to his home. Although Robert Brightmore had leased his Broomhill land in the 1820s and 30s not all the leases had actually resulted in building as Horsfall, a small builder with interests in many parts of Sheffield, had died after exploiting only part of his land. In 1868/9 plans drawn up by the firm of Blackmore and Withers were submitted for planning permission on behalf of Dickinson. Two short terraces, Chandos Street and Nile Street were built as a result of the submission, small houses with tiny gardens very similar to those built by Horsfall. It may be that Dickinson had the plans drawn up by a firm of architects at a time when he was unsure of the procedure for obtaining planning permission as he soon went on to much more ambitious projects, apparently without any outside assistance. In 1869 he built the north-eastern end of Newbould Lane, land which faced the garden of The Mount. Instead of cramming a small terrace into the area he adopted a curved building line placed well back on the plot. Three pairs of large semi-detached houses, the equal of many to be found at Taptonville, looked out onto a small crescent, low walls allowing an impression of shared open space. Over the next few years he built the north side of Westbourne Road and adjoining Ashdell Road, the houses being sturdy but cramped and unremarkable. However, by 1875 he turned his attention to Broomfield. Although some early building had taken place in the 1840s indecision over the location of the church seems to have delayed further expansion until the final siting and completion of St. Marks. Between 1875 and 1878 he completed Broomfield Road, usually having found a buyer on completion, or soon after. The houses on the south side of the road are medium sized gothic villas ornamented with barge boarding of a type to be found in many nearby developments. They demonstrate a great weakness, which marred much of Dickinson's

⁷⁷ Sheffield City Council catalogue of planning applications 1865 to date kept at the Town Hall

⁷⁸ Data concerning Francis Dickinson has been drawn in the first instance from the catalogue of planning applications. Where such property is now in the possession of Sheffield City Council, the Area Health Authority or the University of Sheffield the deeds have been consulted.

work: cramming too many large houses on a small plot. His houses on the south side of Broomfield Road occupy a site which would have sufficed for a single house in the 1820s and as a result the rear entrances almost abut the pavement. The four houses on the north side of the road were much more elaborate. Numbers 13 and 15 have been demolished to make way for a block of flats to house staff of the Hallamshire Hospital but number 11 still remains and, for a short time in the 1980s, was in private hands. It would seem that Dickinson judged that the way to attract buyers was to embellish his houses with as many opulent touches as possible. No 11 has barge-boarding everywhere, even sporting a lacy fringe round its tower and the roof is ornamented with a cockscomb of ornamental wrought iron work topped off with an ornate lightning conductor. Even the rear stable block and chicken house had a pediment and fretwork trim with a fancy clock at the centre. The interior was decorated with very large door furniture, intricately engraved brass panels from which ornate brass knobs project and heavy finger-plates. Each of the reception rooms had ornate cornices, heavy ceiling roses and brass rods from which pictures or tapestries could be hung. Fireplaces were huge, decorated with marble of various colours, brightly coloured tiles and yet more brass, with massive engraved brass fire-dogs in front. It would seem that Dickinson was determined that this was to be a house redolent with touches of individuality which could be described as 'having had no expense spared'. A terrace and balustrade led up to steps and a half-glazed door beneath a heavy arch. The house has the same building line as the earlier houses in Broomfield Road and blends with its neighbours but demonstrates the usual flaw with Dickinson's larger houses. Having spent so much on decorative touches he had to economise by putting a house suited to a ½ acre plot on a ¼ acre plot. Number 11 Broomfield Road was built in a massive Italianate style and was so large that it faces east/west instead north/south like the rest of the street in order to fit into the relatively small plot. The same flaw can be seen in a house that he built in Southbourne Road. [Number 15] Despite a large area of land being available he took a long narrow plot upon which the house reaches almost up to the boundary wall on one side and barely has room for a drive on the other. Inside the house displays his fondness for ornamental door furniture and fireplaces and the main reception rooms have such an abundance of brightly coloured fruit on the cornices that they seem in danger of falling off. As neighbouring houses were so close door glass and that of landing and bathroom windows are of stained glass of a brilliance rarely found in the area. Besides building in Victoria Park, Dickinson took part in the nearby prestigious development in Oakholme Road, creating his usual large houses on relatively small plots. This combination may have been a matter of choice rather than necessity for, from observation of the western suburbs in general, it seems that prospective residents preferred outlay to be devoted to the house rather than acquiring a half acre site which would require extensive services from a gardener. At the same period he also completed the north end of Glossop Road with brick-built commercial premises. By July of 1881 Dickinson finally became a victim of the uncertainty of the building trade and was declared bankrupt. His future career has not been traced but as a memorial he left some of the most ambitious houses in Broomhill to be undertaken by a builder without architectural guidance. Although his houses may be rather ornate for good taste he seems to have gauged correctly what would appeal to an affluent clientele and the large houses described were taken by some of Sheffield's most successful industrialists, professional men and civic leaders.

7.5 Architecture

As the oldest of the western suburbs Broomhill shows the changing taste in architecture of the middle classes over almost a century. The western suburbs are usually, quite rightly, thought of as a symphony of stone buildings and green trees. Broomhill contains what could be regarded as the fault line between the use of brick and stone. This change does not seem to have occurred as a result of purely aesthetic considerations. Stone was abundant

and cheap in the area, so cheap that even the artisan cottages were built of this material. The rise in favour of the gothic style no doubt helped to confirm stone as the best building material and then the Sheffield dislike of change prevented any movement later in the century to the Queen Ann and vernacular styles which favoured other materials.

Broomhill began as a cluster of plain Georgian houses in brick, or possibly in some cases in stucco, stone rarely being used. It is difficult to be certain as almost all the earliest buildings at Broomhill have been demolished so their appearance can only be surmised from sketches, photographs or descriptions in estate agent catalogues. A brief survey of the houses that formed the core of large houses in the area shows the change from Georgian brick to Gothic stone. Broomhill House and its earliest neighbours no longer survive so it is not possible to know their exact size and style. A few sketches and hazy photographs seem to indicate that they resembled the early houses that still remain in other parts of western Sheffield.⁷⁹

A photograph of Broomhill House, taken in the twentieth century, shows a square stucco building with a low pitched roof and bay windows. The bay on the south west side seems to have been an addition made after the 1890 O.S. It is not possible to say if the stucco finish was a later addition. A number of Georgian houses in western Sheffield now have a stucco finish but it is known that originally they were of brick so it may be that changing fashion or deteriorating brickwork dictated the alteration.

The ground plan of the original house at Broomhill is shown in a Fairbank notebook of 1790. At about the same time that William Newbould was building his new home his Wilson cousins were building or adapting existing houses for themselves.⁸⁰ The Mill House at Sharrow and Joseph Wilson's Westbrook are plain, four-square Georgian brick houses with fan-lights over the door and a large arched landing window as their only ornament. Sharrow Mill House has windows with small panes and a central casement, held closed by a small metal hook. Fairbank's notebook shows that Clifford, Thomas Wilson's house, was of similar design and with the same landing window.⁸¹ As Joseph Fairbank, the surveyor, and Joseph Badger, the architect, were involved in these enterprises and also did work in the Broomhill area it seems not unlikely that similar styles were employed.

From Fairbank's ground plan the Newbould house appears to have been a square house with a wing to the west, pleasantly situated on a grassy knoll with a garden to the south and an orchard close to the stable block. The house was set in a garden of a little over half an acre but enjoyed an open view over pasture which had a large pond to the east. The house was altered considerably over the years to accommodate changing family circumstances. A west wing seems to have been added by the time of William Newbould's death and this was occupied by his widow. After her death the house was re-modelled. Fairbank valued the house in 1829 and his plan shows a square house with a five-sided bay at the south east corner. It is described as having five lower and five upper rooms with stabling, cow house and offices outside and the pond is still shown to the south. Fairbank valued the house as worth an annual rent of £80 or for sale at £1,333.6.8.⁸² The house with 1.2.9 of grounds was sold at the end of the year for £2,400.⁸³

⁷⁹ Unless otherwise stated all illustrations mentioned are in the collection of illustration concerning Broomhill made by Eva Wilkinson, Secretary of the Broomhill Neighbourhood Group

⁸⁰ Chaytor. *Wilson's of Sharrow*. 1962. pp.40-42

⁸¹ Walton. *History of the Parish of Sharrow*. (Illustrations between pp. 20 and 21)

⁸² Sheffield City Archives CP41-(47)-5

⁸³ Deeds of Mount View, in the Sheffield City Council collection

One of Newbould's first neighbours in the Broomhill area was Joseph Badger who built Westbourne House for his own occupation on a site adjoining Tree Root Walk, the eastern boundary of this study. Badger was the most successful builder/architect in Sheffield at the end of the eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth. A photograph, taken just before the house was demolished late in the twentieth century, shows a plain building with a low-pitched roof and a heavy porch with a small balcony above. The house seems to have been of stone. Bay windows appear to have been a later addition, as they are not shown on the 1851 O.S. The house is of special interest as it shows the preferred style of the architect/builder most widely employed by Sheffield's prosperous citizens and indicates that the level of income of such a man could equal that of many merchants and manufacturers in the light trades.

Possibly the last house built by Badger before his death was Westbourne, immediately to the west of Westbourne House, completed about 1810. Only the gatehouse survives, in a much-altered form but showing a plain Georgian façade of stone and low pitched roof. A sketch of Westbourne made in 1863, when compared with a photograph taken in the twentieth century shows few major changes had been made to the house before it was demolished. Westbourne was a much larger house than its neighbour. Steps led up to a porch that had an elaborate frieze supported by Ionic pillars. Drip moulding went round the entire house and the ground floor windows had ornamental canopies.⁸⁴ Like its neighbour, Westbourne did have some alterations to its original compact shape. The type of stone used seems to be indicated by the boundary walls which still exist but the gate house which has also survived now has a stucco finish and it is not possible to tell if this is the original material or a later amendment.

To the west both Moor Lodge, also built about 1810, and The Willows have been demolished. A very hazy photograph taken before Moor Lodge was demolished shows a large house with Jacobean gables but it is not possible to tell whether it was built of brick or stone. In 1876 a sale catalogue was issued which describes the elaborate interior of a large and sophisticated house, complete with billiard room and indoor plumbing.⁸⁵ It seems likely that the house was extended and altered internally by two generations of the Philipps family but, other than a mention that the house was built of stone there is no indication of its style of architecture. References to The Willows are few but, from the outline on the 1851 O.S., it seems to have been a comparatively small and plain house suitable for the retirement of a bachelor and his spinster sister. It was demolished soon after her death so it may have been regarded as too old-fashioned for re-sale or letting.

Of the buildings erected after the opening of the Glossop Road the earliest, on the north side of the road, have been demolished to make way for the Hallamshire hospital. Folk memory can be short and little seems to be remembered of them other than they were brick houses which stood at the head of long tree-lined drives. Unfortunately neither the university nor the Area Health Authority take photographs of property before they demolish it so there seems to be no way of checking their appearance. Surviving evidence suggests that they were in a variety of styles. At least two of them, Five Oaks and Broom Cross were built of stone. A collection of sepia photographs of Five Oaks has recently been unearthed⁸⁶. They show the house in an extended form at the end of the century but it is clear that the original central block shown on the 1850 O.S., was by no means large but had two large bow windows. The extension dates at least from 1890. The style used for Five Oaks does not seem to have been common in the area, or in other parts of Sheffield, but the choice of stone as the building material was to spread throughout western Sheffield. The last to be built of this group of houses, Egerton House, was also the last to be demolished.

⁸⁴ *Collection of illustrations...* Eva Wilkinson collection

⁸⁵ Deeds in the Girls' Public Day School Trust collection

⁸⁶ Album of sepia photographs in private hands.

It was seen to be a brick-built Georgian house, similar to the early houses in Wilkinson Street or nearby Villa Nova in Beechhill Road. It seems possible that at least some of the neighbouring houses to Five Oaks were similar to the houses of at the same period which survive on the south side of the road. These are all brick built and large enough to have been converted into pairs of semi-detached houses at various periods of their existence. The facades are plain Georgian, sometimes broken by graceful bow windows looking south across large gardens and large arched windows illuminating the stair landing. Pillared doorways are the only ornaments. Surviving interior ornament varies from delicate almost rococo plasterwork to huge ceiling roses.

Building in the period immediately after the opening of the Glossop Road benefited from the talents of at least two architects. Flockton's



Figure 7.5: The Mount

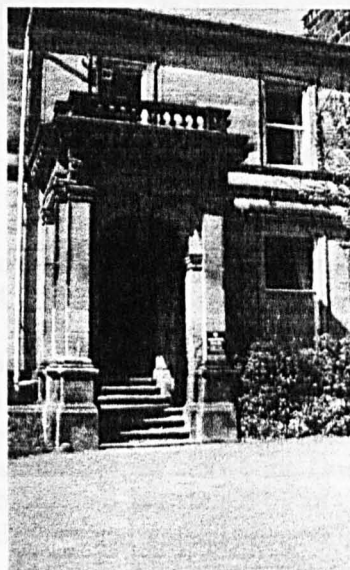


Figure 7.6: Oakholme

splendid The Mount is a *tour de force* in the classical style with Ionic pillars, carried out in honey-coloured stone in ashlar. This terrace of eight houses dominates the hill-side (Fig. 7.5) On the other side of the Glossop Road Samuel Worth built West Mount in the same style and fabric so that the two made a harmonious whole. However, after West Mount economy once again became a prime consideration and the adjoining sites on Broomhill Terrace had two pairs of plain Georgian brick semi-detached houses, perched precariously on steep land and without an approach from the front. To the west both Oakholme and Ashdell are stone built houses in the classical style. Ashdell had the benefit of the talents of both Samuel Worth, who designed the building, and William Flockton who completed it when Worth and John Shepherd, the owner, disagreed. The main ornament of each house is the porch, the pillars of Oakholme being decorated with heavy swags (Fig. 7.6), whilst that of Ashdell had Ionic pillars of the kind which the architect, Samuel Worth used for his own house built at the end of Broomhill Terrace. Ashdell is the plainer building of the two but the surprising thing about it is its site. With eight acres to choose from Shepherd had the house perched on land which shelves so steeply that it could almost have been a quarry rather than a natural formation. The site is also on the border of his land and virtually overlooks his neighbour whereas, it might have been expected that he would have looked for privacy and rural views rather than the midden and stable block of Oakholme. These two houses exemplify what constituted the highest level of building in the Broomhill area. Comparison with illustrations in the chapters on Broomhall and Ranmoor will show that they compare quite favourably with anything built later in the century except the group of mansions in the Tapton, Endcliffe and Ranmoor area.

Broomhill was not to be characterised by one architectural style. Housing in the vicinity of Broomfield Road, one of the earliest residential streets to be developed in the area, provides an example of the wide variety of styles used during the forty years between the first and



Figure 7.7: Corner of Broomfield Road and Newbould Lane



Figure 7.8: No. 9 Broomfield Road

last houses to be constructed there. In 1841 Flockton built a pair of semi-detached houses at the west end of the newly cut, and as yet unnamed, Broomfield Road.⁸⁷ They were in a Strawberry Hill Gothick style, built in ashlar (Fig. 7.7). The next plot was left vacant but in the same year 9 Broomfield Road was built in the *cottage orné* style, its high gables and barge boarding, a novel style for the area at that period (Fig. 7.8). At the end of the street Villa Nova reverted to the Georgian brick style found in the Wilkinson area. Finally, on the west side of Glossop Road, the two houses known as Mount View were built. One of these houses still stands but the original house, with its ashlar finish, is overlaid by an elaborate Italian façade, including numerous bay windows, balconies and a small tower (Fig. 7.9). From the outline shown on the 1850 O.S.⁸⁸ it would seem that both houses began life as modest, plain houses of a scale similar to those on Broomfield Road.



Figure 7.9: Mount View

It was to be almost thirty years before Broomfield was completed and the later houses all display the ornate style which the builder, Francis Dickinson, considered, rightly it would seem, likely to attract ready buyers. He chose an Italianate style to place between the two early houses and then used variations of ornate Gothic style for the remainder of the street (Fig. 7.10). Dickinson's houses display the growing tendency in the latter part of the century to put large houses on relatively small plots. Despite the wide



Figure 7.10: No. 11 Broomfield Road

⁸⁷ *Plan of William Flockton's lot near Broomhill, measured 18 June 1840.* SheD 161S

⁸⁸ *Ordnance Survey. Town of Sheffield. 1853.* (Surveyed 1851).

variety of styles the use of stone throughout and the consistency of wall height, combined with a building line set well back from the road prevent any jarring effect.

An overall impression of the result of early building can be gained from Cowen's painting of western Sheffield, done in 1841.⁸⁹ Broomhill and the area to the west appear as an Arcadian landscape with honey-coloured buildings glowing on green hillsides. By mid-century *ad hoc* building at Broomhill had come close to ^{the} wide variety of architectural styles spread over an open landscape which Flockton had depicted in his publicity for the failed Endcliffe Vale Estate. Perhaps it is symbolic that the high walls of The Mount conceal the low courts which had already been built to the rear of its stable block; behind the idyll a hint of Broomhill's less romantic future was already lurking.

The majority of Broomhill's building stock still survives and it is evident that, although the overall impression is of Gothic architecture, there are examples of Georgian and Classical styles as well as a wide interpretation of Gothic.

For its earliest residents the Broomhill area offered sheltered, well-watered sites with fine views, which were accessible from the town and work place. Proximity to relatives, and the possibility of supplementing income by letting adjacent land to tenant farmers, were other potential advantages.

The handful of large houses that constituted Broomhill before 1821 were occupied by families such as Newbould, Withers and Cadman who were from the class of prosperous members of Sheffield's staple trades from which Master Cutlers and civic leaders such as Town Trustees, Poor Law Guardians and Highway Commissioners were drawn.

Although Broomhill was comparatively remote its residents were not isolated from any kind of social life. The young Newboulds participated in the 'almost daily fashion of drinking tea at one another's houses'⁹⁰ and were to be found visiting not only in the town but also houses scattered on the fringes of Sheffield. It is not clear whether such visits were made on foot, by riding or some wheeled means of conveyance. Certainly, long walks up and down Sheffield's hills can hardly have been conducive to ladies arriving in an unruffled state. The Newbould sisters also mingled with a wider range of society as their travels included a trip to Matlock.⁹¹ Miss Cadman of Westbourne, who was rather older, undertook charitable work, being Stewardess of the Female Benefit Society in 1806. Apart from a brief marriage she lived at her brother's home and the pair visited friends together or, in turn, hosted teas or dinner parties.⁹² Once the population of Broomhill began to expand residents were no longer so closely bound by ties of religion, occupation and proximity.

When the opening of the Glossop Road made the area more accessible the new generation of men attracted to the area were of similar standing and Broomhill, though by no means the only option, remained a popular choice for successful attorneys and manufacturers, such as Butcher, the cutler and steel manufacturer who built Five Oaks and Burbeary, the attorney, of Oakholme. At any time such people form only a small proportion of the population of a town and their level of disposable income gives them a wide range of choice. So, even though the town's population increased considerably in the decades 1831-51 only a small number could aspire to the kind of house which was being built at Broomhill.

⁸⁹ Cowen. *Sheffield from the south-east*. 1838

⁹⁰ Ward. *Peeps*. p. 6

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.* p. 112

There were two main elements in shaping the further development of the area. The first was that the most affluent members of the community, with whom this study is concerned, changed not only in character but also in the size of income. Steel making produced profits the like of which had never been seen in the town so the new men had scope for choice inconceivable to the leaders of the cutlery industry. Such men could aspire to large houses in spacious grounds. Broomhill no longer had sufficient undeveloped land to accommodate such wishes.

Even those with more modest ambitions, requiring only a few acres, who could have built on the Broombank Estate or the vacant Newbould land were no longer tempted to the area. It could be seen that the town was expanding westwards at a rate undreamed of at the beginning of the century. Broomhill had no buffer zones between its middle class areas and those inhabited by artisans so money might be expended on an expensive house and garden only to find the neighbouring field transformed into a clump of houses which obscured the view. Combined with this was the rising number of petit bourgeoisie who were drawn to the area who could only afford a much more humble level of accommodation. The Cadman advertisement of 1853 offering sites for 'second class housing for which there is much need of in the area'⁹³ voiced an evident market but sounded the death knell of the time when all the houses of Broomhill 'sat in their own grounds'.

The development of a small area in which commercial, and a little industrial, development took place did not seem to deter settlement by the more prosperous, possibly because such development was confined to a relatively small area and seemed unlikely to spread. However, this, together with the way in which roads carved up Broomhill and prevented any large area being safeguarded as an exclusive residential area, probably discouraged any further settlement by the very wealthy. Directories and census returns for the second half of the century seem to indicate that Broomhill was favoured as staging post by men on their way up. Thus, Mark Firth moved west to Broomhill at mid century when he was a young entrepreneur but, when the family firm became more successful, he moved to the greener suburb of Endcliffe.

With the expansion of the suburb after mid-century the social balance began to alter. The largest houses at Taptonville, Sale Hill, Lawson Road and Victoria Park still provided homes for prosperous manufacturers, but men of the middle rather than the highest level of prosperity. Since the residences of such men were spread over a wide area, divided by main roads and even pockets of commercial or working-class development, Broomhill did not have any natural focal point. As a result it lacked the strong sense of community which could be found in Broomhall, or even the strong sense of local identity which was later to result in the building of St John's Church at Ranmoor.

The main focus of community life in the area appears to have centred on various religious groups. In this field the non-conformists led the way. In 1862 the foundation stone was laid for the New Connexion Chapel, close to the junction of Glossop and Fulwood Roads. In the following year Broom Park Congregational Church was built just south of the junction of Glossop Road and Newbould Lane.⁹⁴ Wesley College had had its own chapel constructed shortly after the school⁹⁵ was completed but a chapel for the community of Broomhill was built in 1865.⁹⁶

The established church had rather a humble beginning for an area with so many Anglican residents. The late arrival of a church in Broomhill, and the modest scale of the first

⁹³ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* 6th May 1854

⁹⁴ *White General directory...* 1864. p. 15

⁹⁵ Hunter. *Hallamshire*. p. 227

⁹⁶ White. 1879 p. 186 {}

attempt, casts a light on the priorities of the local inhabitants. William Butcher had offered a site for a church on his Broomfield land, close to his home, Five Oaks as early as 1848.⁹⁷ Possibly because most of the wealthiest inhabitants possessed their own transport, enabling them to attend the Parish Church or St. George's, Broomhill, despite a rising population, experienced a delay of over a decade before even a temporary church appeared.

Eventually, prosperous Broomhill acquired an 'Iron Church'. This was a prefabricated construction of corrugated iron of a type, probably similar to that now mouldering away on Chesterfield Road, which was often used in new centres of population until something better could be afforded. A local newspaper described the new place of worship as being 90x50, able to seat 625 and with 'fittings of the ordinary kind'.⁹⁸ Another source suggests that the church would seat 605, including 35 free sittings.⁹⁹ Funds for the enterprise were raised as a result of the efforts of the Vicar of Sheffield, the Reverend Dr. Sale, with the help of a loan from four local gentlemen, William and Samuel Butcher, J. N. Mappin and H. Rodgers. In 1859 the church was ready for worshippers, having cost £1,700, which was to be repaid from pew rents.¹⁰⁰

The Iron Church was an interim measure. In March 1867 a new Ecclesiastical District of Broomhill was established with a population of 8,000 and 'rapidly rising'.¹⁰¹ The church for the new district was not to actually be at Broomhill, but to finally make use of Butcher's site at Broomhill and be called St. Mark's. At a cost of about £10,000, seating was to be provided for 950 worshippers. This was not to be an example of local expertise as it was designed by Crossland, of Leeds and London, and the building contractor was the firm of Chambers and Son of Ripon. It was found impossible to build on the original site whilst still using the Iron Church so Butcher provided alternative land close by. On completion of the new building the Iron Church was dismantled for re-use elsewhere and Butcher took back his first building site. St. Mark's, on its completion in 1869,¹⁰² gave the Anglican community a place of worship more in keeping with the fine chapels already existing in Broomhill.

Shortly before the opening of St. Mark's the Sheffield Times published a series of articles on Sheffield churches. An anonymous journalist, 'Criticus', wrote these articles describing the religious establishments, commenting on the structure, sermon and congregation. Although the overall tone was serious the writer indulged in some arch comments on what he saw and his articles are useful in giving an outsider's view on Broomhill society when the area was reaching its hey-day. His comments indicate that, although a change in public perception may have directed the steel barons further west Broomhill still had many affluent residents.

The visitor tactfully described the Iron Church as 'by no means ugly' and did not make invidious comparisons with Broomhill's non-conformist establishments. After describing the plain gothic structure, with small tower, spire, bell and small porch, of the Iron Church Criticus praised the 'light and cheerful interior'. He was not able to locate the free sittings but commented that 'there are not many [poor] in this locality and they would be rather out of place at the Iron Church'. Though he hastens to add that no doubt they would be heartily welcomed. For their pew rents the congregation were 'well cushioned and made very

⁹⁷ Criticus [psued.] 'St Mark's or the Iron Church, Glossop Road' *Sheffield Times* 1869, 1870 and 1871 [Number XVI in a series of seventy two articles on Sheffield churches.] Sheffield Archives Jackson Collection 1303

⁹⁸ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 19 November 1859

⁹⁹ Criticus. [psued.] 'St Mark's'.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 19 November 1859

¹⁰² Criticus [psued.] 'St Mark's'.

comfortable'; even having the convenience of umbrella holders. Possibly tongue in cheek, he notes the fine sight of the 'beautiful silk umbrellas with pearl and ivory handles 'making a very attractive and aristocratic appearance' and the embroidered velvet ledges of the pews. The total effect he finds 'really pleasing to observe such signs of taste and opulence.'

Passing from the building to the some 400 members of the congregation, he observed that they were drawn from 'those who live in handsome villas with pleasure grounds and conservatories'. He felt, 'that I was amongst the *elite* of Sheffield church going society... the occupants of many of the best residences and villas in the neighbourhood... mayors, aldermen, councillors, solicitors, brewers, merchants and manufacturers and independent gentlemen.' The ladies, of whom there were many, were especially admired in their 'real seal skin and sables, silks and satins, velvets and merinoes.' In fact it was 'a real pleasure to worship in such society ...so devout, and so decorous and so well behaved'. He noted that many of the congregation 'were gentlemen who have to think hard all the week, and ladies to whom abstruse speculations would not be natural' and so the 'evangelical' minister tempered his sermon to suit them. Criticus felt that congregation and minister, who was 'thoroughly evangelical and abhors ritual', were as one 'on the importance and propriety of religious conservatism...not generally inclined to be radicals either in religion or politics.' As further proof of the high calibre of the congregation he noted that the collection on 'Hospital Sunday' always 'far exceeds' that from any other place of worship, being over £100.

It is unfortunate that this series of visits took place before the building of St. John, Ranmoor. A comparison between the two congregations in the matter of time taken to build, and also the expense lavished upon the building would have provided a useful contemporary opinion upon the difference between Broomhill and the area which had overtaken it as the preferred location for the town's wealthiest citizens.

Besides visiting the Iron Church Criticus also went to Broomhill's other places of worship. His first visit was to the Wesley Chapel on Fulwood Road, which was the work of a Leeds architect, William Hill.¹⁰³ The Wesleyans had begun building a chapel in October 1865, expending some £7,000 on land and the chapel itself. The building was 'a decided ornament to the neighbourhood', being of 'rock-faced stone with cleansed dressings', with 'a graceful tower and short spire'. It included accommodation for a Sunday school and a chapel-keeper's house. Further improvements were still to be made, such as replacing the hired organ with their own instrument, and possibly expanding the Sunday school that was proving very successful. The land adjoining was chapel property and so could be used for a site, whilst preventing the land being used by a speculator 'for a public house or any other building' which might not meet with the approval of the congregation. Internally, the chapel was well decorated and lit by gas, giving it 'a very elegant and cheerful appearance'.

Criticus made much of the gothic design of the chapel, claiming to have entered in the belief that he was coming to a church, so Anglican was the architecture. He found the congregation 'moderately numerous, and highly respectable', numbering about 400. Like the congregation at the Iron Church, those present were drawn from villas in Endcliffe and Ranmoor as well as Broomhill itself, 'the quality...was decidedly superior'. It was felt that 'Upon the whole the congregation was fashionable - although there was no effort in that direction. They seemed as though they could not have appeared otherwise, for all was natural and free from ostentation.' Those present were drawn from men of independent means and those occupying 'important public positions in the town' as well as 'ladies of equal consideration and excellence'. Such 'very select' people occupied the body of the chapel whereas the 'lower orders occupied the upper regions'. Perhaps the congregation, as

¹⁰³ Criticus [pseud] 'Wesley Chapel, Fulwood Road' *Sheffield Times*... [No. XXXVI in a series on Sheffield churches.]

well as the building has Anglican overtones for Criticus noted that 'the singing was discreetly energetic and guardedly vigorous. There was not that entire unlocking of the floodgates which is not uncommon in Methodist chapels.'

The first of Broomhill's places of worship had been the New Connexion chapel, opened in April 1863.¹⁰⁴ Mark Firth, a notable benefactor of all New Connection causes, had laid the foundation stone of the chapel. It was built on a site adjoining Glossop Road, close to The Mount. The architect, T.J. Flockton, had designed it in the classical manner, reflecting the style that his father had used for The Mount. Criticus found the building, which had cost £3,000, to be 'externally... of beautiful design and exquisite workmanship' and the gas-lit interior 'spacious, light, cheerful, elegant and attractive'. Indeed, everything looked 'new, beautiful and artistic'. Despite these attractions the service was sparsely attended, with only about 150 worshippers rather than the 1,000 which it was capable of accommodating. Criticus mentioned, in mitigation, that it was a wet day. Those who were present 'were generally of the upper and respectable class', not many poor people attending and no special accommodation being provided for them, possibly because 'it is not necessary in that elevated suburban region'.

Such then were Broomhill's places of worship, with the non-conformists leading the way. Criticus made a teasing contrast between the touches of finery to be found in the ornamentation of the interior of the Iron Church and the elegance of the congregation and its rather mundane exterior. However, once St. Mark's was completed the congregation soon established a meeting hall closer to the commercial centre of Broomhill and this became the centre for much philanthropic work, and doubtless a useful meeting point for the Anglican ladies and young people of the district.

Apart from its religious life little seems to have been recorded concerning everyday life in Broomhill. Many of the male residents would be known to each other in the course of business or in carrying out civic duties. Early presidents of the Sheffield Literary and Philosophical Society, Arnold J. Knight, James Montgomery and the Reverend N. Philipps, lived at Broomhill. In the second half of the century they were followed by Dr. H.C. Sorby, a noted scientist, and the Reverend S. Earnshaw, an early supporter of the college, which was to be the pre-cursor of the university. For almost half a century the librarian of the society was David Parkes of Broomfield, a cutler who, self-taught, became a student of languages with an international reputation.¹⁰⁵ All these activities took place in town rather than the suburb and were entirely male-oriented. However, the acquaintances made this way often also had a social aspect and, to judge from the amount of inter-marriage that went on, many of the residents were on visiting terms. J.E. Cutler, who lived to become the second-longest serving officer of the Hallamshire Rifles,¹⁰⁶ spent his domestic life within a small area of Broomhill: he grew up in one of the new houses built after the opening of the Glossop Road. As a young man he married one of the daughters of William Butcher, just across the road. The young couple moved next door to Butcher and remained there for the remainder of their lives.

7.6 Conclusion

The early core of large houses in spacious grounds built before the opening of the Glossop Road, though few in number, established Broomhill's reputation as a desirable residential

¹⁰⁴ Criticus [pseud] 'Broomhill New Connexion Chapel' *Sheffield Times*... [No. XLV in a series on Sheffield churches.]

¹⁰⁵ *Sheffield and district who's who*. p. 241

¹⁰⁶ *Sheffield and district who's who* p. 126

area. Later houses such as Oakholme and Ashdell continued this tradition but the houses built on Spurr's land along the Glossop Road in the 1820s indicated that Broomhill's future lay in a growing population requiring smaller accommodation. Increasing popularity moved requirements down still further and much of the building after 1840 was at the basic benchmark of this study: substantial houses on a quarter acre plot. This level was sufficient to preserve the reputation established by the builders of Broomhill House, Westbourne, Moor Lodge and the other pioneers.

Broomhill, being the most varied of the western suburbs, and existing for the greater part of the nineteenth century, changed most in size, character and the section of the community to which it appealed as the century progressed. Initially the attraction of the area lay in the opportunity to enjoy clean air, clean water, tranquillity, extensive views, not to say lower rates and level of crime while not having to far to travel to work in the town. The area became more accessible just at a time when prosperity was rising in the town, thus making such pleasures available to a greater number of people. During the 1830s a number of desirable extras were added to the original attractions: the Botanical Gardens¹⁰⁷ were only the first of the recreational opportunities to be provided on the borders of Broomhill. A shareholder and his family were admitted for a fee of 10/6 per annum.¹⁰⁸ By 1856 it had 'The gymnasium and school of arms'. This establishment had been set up by a group of shareholders, close to the Wesleyan College. It was an 'Extensive brick building, comprising billiard and news rooms, a rifle gallery, an American bowling alley, a racket court, commodious dressing rooms and a large gymnasium, well fitted for the practice of athletic exercises, fencing etc.'. ¹⁰⁹ A superintendent was employed to oversee the establishment but it does not seem to have met a public need for, by 1860, it had ceased to function.¹¹⁰ The Broomgrove Bowling Green was a more popular venture. It was 'tastefully laid out' in 1851 at a cost of £500 and 'is for the use of none but shareholders'.¹¹¹ A number of cricket grounds were within easy reach.¹¹² The population was considered to be sufficiently numerous and affluent by 1838 for Broomhill to have one of the earliest horse omnibus services to provide an hourly connection to the town and the recently opened railway station at a cost of three-pence per journey.¹¹³ Such a service must have made the area more attractive to a slightly less affluent section of the community who were not able to keep a carriage, and also made it possible for the ladies of Broomhill to shop in the superior stores of the town such as J. Jones and Cockayne. The frequency and variety of destinations increased as the century progressed and Broomhill was said to have the best and cleanest cabs, though descriptions of their condition and the unreliability and uncivil conduct of the drivers make it appear that travel was hardly a pleasurable experience.¹¹⁴ To some extent features which began as desirable amenities grew to be viewed as less desirable in the course of time. Glossop Road, Broomhill's original link to the town altered from offering access for the few to a source of ever-increasing traffic by the end of the century, with the attendant noise and stench of frequent horse-drawn vehicles. Houses with long gardens and high hedges such as Five Oaks were protected from such problems but smaller houses higher up Glossop Road were much more vulnerable. An early attraction of Broomhill had been the variety of educational establishments available in the vicinity. As well as the Collegiate School for Anglican families and the Wesleyan school for non-

¹⁰⁷ White, W. *History and general directory...* Sheffield: William White, 1837. p. 85

¹⁰⁸ White. *General directory...* 1856 p. 13

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.* p. 14

¹¹⁰ No entry has been traced in directories after 1856

¹¹¹ White. *General directory.* 1856 p. 14

¹¹² Stainton. *Making of Sheffield.* pp. 200-202

¹¹³ Vickers. *Popular history of Sheffield.* p. 57

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 54

conformists there were many smaller day and boarding schools for both girls and boys.¹¹⁵ In 1884 Broomhill became the home of one of the Girls' Public Day School Trust establishments, a pioneering movement to encourage education of a high academic standard for middle class girls.¹¹⁶ At the lower end of the social scale Broomhill's Board School was built on one of the Newbould fields which had been inherited by the Cadman family.¹¹⁷ A School for the Blind was built on Spooner land off Manchester Road¹¹⁸ and an increasing number of the larger houses such as Westbourne came to be used for schools. They seem to have proliferated to such an extent that when Francis Dickinson built his large houses on Broomfield Road in the 1870s the usual list of obnoxious and undesirable trades which were prohibited had been extended to include the keeping of a school.¹¹⁹

The very popularity of Broomhill inevitably increased the density of housing. Broomfield Road, when the first houses were erected in 1841, offered clear views over a field to the still comparatively quiet Glossop Road and then the elegant rear elevation of the Wesleyan Proprietary School in the middle distance. The preponderance of empty plots ensured that each house sat in an island of green and to the rear the hedges of Broomhill House offered protection from the winds. By 1880 each house had a relatively close neighbour, the view to the south was blocked by houses and the hedges of Broomhill House had been replaced by the pairs of small semi-detached houses of Watson Road. For newcomers it still offered a pleasant place to live but early settlers found that all its early charms were being crowded out so that, if they wished for a similar environment, it would be necessary to move further west. Habit, the proximity of church or chapel and the increasing number of shops which were so convenient for small errands seem to have encouraged many long-term residents to forgo rural charm.

In the last quarter of the century all the remaining land in Broomhill was used for building purposes. As shown on Map 8 (Chapter 11), all the grounds of Broomhill's large, Georgian houses, such as Moor Lodge and Oakholme, had fallen into the hands of builders. Although some schemes were carried out with a certain skill, such as the communal garden of Summerfield, designed by the architect, James Hall, or the small crescent at the top of Newbould Lane, built by Francis Dickinson. The in-fill became increasingly cramped, the plots of Rutland Park being much smaller than those of its neighbour, Victoria Park. Much of the later building, like Spooner Road to the north of Fulwood Road, or Ashdell and Ashgate Roads to the south, though not offensive to the eye, were of the kind of lack-lustre cramped development which has given suburbia a bad name. These areas housed families drawn from a much lower rank of society, verging on the 'shabby-genteel'. Although this type of resident came to outnumber the 'elite' described by Criticus, Broomhill retained the reputation it had gained even before the opening of the Glossop Road.

The continued popularity of Broomhill made it a very profitable investment for those who had bought land there early in the century. The Newboulds bought their land when Gell was selling his estate for £120 per acre and the expected return was a rent of £4/10/0 per acre. By the last quarter of the century their heirs could ask over £2000 per acre and expect ground rents of around £110 per acre.¹²⁰

¹¹⁵ Entries for schools are found under the heading 'Academies' in most of the directories of the period.

¹¹⁶ Kamm, J. *Indicative past*. London: Allen and Unwin, for the Friends of the Girls' Public Day School Trust, 1971. p.63

¹¹⁷ Deeds of Broomhill Board School, in the Sheffield City Council collection of deeds.

¹¹⁸ Deeds of the School for Blind Children in the Sheffield City Council collection of deeds.

¹¹⁹ Deeds of 13 and 15 Broomfield Road, Area Health Authority collection of deeds.

¹²⁰ Deeds of Broomhill Board School in the Sheffield City Council collection

Chapter 8

Broomhall Park Estate

8.1 Introduction

Of all Sheffield's nineteenth-century housing projects Broomhall Park Estate was the closest to the town and probably the most successful. As in other cities, the supply of middle class housing usually exceeded demand and, as a result, some schemes never proceeded beyond the surveyor's drawing board whilst others, though started with high hopes, took so long to complete that the end product bore little resemblance to the original concept. Broomhall Park Estate was virtually completed within twenty years and the majority of the houses that were to give the estate its character were built over an even shorter period of about a decade. All but two of them still stand along the roads staked out a century and a half ago. In high summer, when leaves conceal recent extensions built by Sheffield Hallam University and the glass and brick intrusion of the YMCA, and early morning keeps all residents in bed, it is still possible to experience the green and quiet atmosphere, coupled with an air of gentility, which first attracted Sheffield's prosperous citizens to the area. Tranquillity, seclusion, greenness and quiet, all within easy reach of the town proved to be a potent attraction: Broomhall Park was never to lack for owner-occupiers, speculative builders, or a constant stream of potential tenants.

Broomhall deserves close investigation because of its success and luckily it is possible to study the area in some detail to consider where, when, how and by whom the estate was built and the nature of the resulting estate, as almost all the housing stock remains with little obtrusive in-fill. Sheffield Hallam University owns a large part of the property, and has been most generous in providing access to deeds and the interior of houses. The remaining part of the estate is in private hands but the owners are almost all part of a very active and well organised residents association, complete with its own archivist. Both individually and as a group the private residents have provided a wealth of deeds, supplementary information and access to property. Accordingly it has been possible make a more comprehensive study of Broomhall than of any other suburb.

8.2 Location and topography

Map 1 shows the extent of the Broomhall Park Estate and its location on the eastern border of Ecclesall Bierlow. The map also indicates the position of the estate in relation to the extent of the built up area of the township of Sheffield. Broomhall, the house from which the estate took its name, was about one mile from the Parish Church and was readily accessible from the town via its own carriage road that linked it to the western edge of the town. Later the Ecclesall Road provided good access, actually passing through the lower part of the estate, and to the north the Glossop Road also improved access. The house stood almost at the centre of a park of a little over 100 acres, divided into twenty two fields of various sizes on a gentle south facing slope reaching down to the Porter.

In 1791 David Martin published a print¹ of the view looking towards Broomhall. Stainton describes it as showing that, 'beyond Gell Street was green fields and stone walls with the trees of Broomhall Spring abounding... the great entrance to Broomhall was at the foot of

¹ Martin, D. *Part of Sheffield from the north side of Broomhall Spring*. Black and white engraving. Kelham Island K1907.17

Clarence Street of to-day with the great horse-dyke stream tumbling down the slope from Leavy Greave close to the gates'². The estate was well watered from a number of springs which bubbled up in the lower fields and the name Leech Field seems to indicate a damp environment. In 1810 the land was said to be 'in excellent condition, great part in grass,' so suitable for agricultural use, but in addition, most parts were 'beautiful situations for Building upon, the Roads are easy' and some parts would be 'considerably improved in value by the Turnpike Road from Sheffield to Buxton, Castleton and Manchester adjoining thereto.'³ The gentle south facing lie of the land and the views across the river towards Sharrow and Norton added to the attractions of the estate. Writing in 1819 Hunter⁴ described the house as pleasantly situated and 'embossed in trees'. Even by the 1840s the estate retained a number of trees in the vicinity of the house.

8.3 Development

8.3.1 Landownership

For centuries the Hall had been the seat of the lord of Broomhall and, as the gentry home closest to Sheffield, had been a place of some importance. However, in the years immediately prior to Watson's purchase it had rather a chequered history. In 1734 the male line of Jessop had failed, leaving two sisters as co-heiresses. One married a Wilkinson of Boroughbridge and the other Eyre of Hopton in Derbyshire. Neither gentleman wished to exchange his family home for Broomhall so it was without an owner-occupier until a son of Barbara Wilkinson returned to Sheffield as its vicar and took up residence in the family home in 1754.⁵

The Reverend James Wilkinson made some alterations to the house in 1784, including building a room in which he could conduct affairs in his capacity as justice of the peace. The result was a fine new west wing graced by an elegant door with sunburst fanlight grafted on to the original half-timbered mediaeval cum Tudor house. In 1791 the house was attacked by a mob protesting about recent enclosure of common land and some damage was done⁶. This, and increasing ill health, seems to have inclined Wilkinson to spend more and more time at his Boroughbridge estate where he died in 1805⁷. Before his death he passed total control of the Broomhall Estate to his only surviving co-heir, Philip Gell⁸. (The Eyres having changed their family name in connection with another inheritance.)

8.3.2 Land Usage 1802-1835

The land in the Parish of Sheffield that Phillip Gell inherited amounted to some 450 acres. One of the first parts to be sold off was Broomhall itself and the fields in the immediate vicinity. A Fairbank map shows 'The part of the Broomhall Estate purchased by John Watson in 1802'⁹. Watson was a very successful attorney, cushioned by inherited wealth. As he played such a crucial part in determining the development of Broomhall Park he will be studied further under the section on the ground landlord. His purchase of most of Broomhall Park was made as an investment and, remaining at the family home of

² Stainton. *The making of Sheffield*. p.197

³ Sale catalogue, Wilsons & Co. (Sharrow) [*Archives at Sharrow Mill*]

⁴ Hunter. *Hallamshire*. p. 361

⁵ *Ibid.* p.268

⁶ Vickers. *Old Sheffield town*. p. 35

⁷ Hunter. *Hallamshire*. p. 268

⁸ *Ibid.* p. 370

⁹ Fairbank & Fairbank. *A plan of the part of Broomhall Estate*.

Shirecliffe Hall, he was not tempted to turn it into a family estate. For almost thirty years the Broomhall land was used primarily for farming while Watson considered various possible ways of exploiting his investment to best advantage. The eventual success of the Broomhall Park Estate seems to indicate that he finally made the best possible decision.

Purchase appears to have been a private transaction that took place shortly after Gell obtained control of the estate. Watson seems to have taken over the house and its associated lodge and farm buildings together with 105.1.7 acres that surrounded them, then divided into fields. Its boundaries were the Broomgrove Estate to the west, Hanover Street, the old boundary between Broomhall and Norfolk land, to the east, the Porter to the south. To the north a field boundary marking the point where good farmland gave way to rough broken ground made a natural limit to the estate.

The sale seems to have left the Reverend James Wilkinson with some rights over the Hall itself as it was only after his death that the contents were put up for auction and the building advertised for rent. The sale of 'rare and modern furniture' was held in May 1805¹⁰, shortly after his death. Even before the furniture was sold, an advertisement had appeared offering the house to let 'entire or divided into two dwellings, making two very good mansions with a necessary and separate conveniences and the Tenant or Tenants may be accommodated with any reasonable quantity of land in good condition'.¹¹ By May of 1808 the house was once again advertised: 'The principal part of the mansion house at Broomhall, now occupied as a boarding school for young ladies: with spacious garden and pleasure grounds, a few closes available. Enquire Mr. Gregory.'¹² For many years the west, and oldest part, of the house continued to be used as a school under various proprietors, first by a Quaker, William Singleton and, after 1817, by George Wilkinson. The east wing had one, or often two tenants. In addition the L-shaped buildings to the west of the house, which had probably constituted the home farm for the hall, together with some adjoining land, was rented to tenant farmers¹³. Pasture was also advertised for anything from 2-40 acres, the 'eating [that is, grazing] to take place on the premises with the use of cow house, stables and the estate's plentiful supply of water if required'.¹⁴

Rent from the house and the use of the land for agricultural purposes provided Watson with a modest return on his investment but he seems to have considered a radical change in 1810. In April 1810 the trustees of the turnpike from Highfields to Sparrowpit Gate agreed to extend the road to Manchester in the west and eastwards from Highfields to Sheffield, this part to pass through the lower part of Broomhall land.¹⁵ [This was to become known as the Ecclesall Road.] Sale plans were printed offering almost half of Watson's land for sale at an auction to be held on 25 May, 50.0.20 acres to be offered in 16 lots.¹⁶ It seems possible that a private transaction took place rather than a public auction. As a result Watson retained the core of the estate, about 80 acres, whilst his Wilson kinsmen took all the land, some 22 acres, between the Porter and the proposed road.¹⁷

After the sale Watson continued for more than two decades to rent out the house. The land that he retained was let for agricultural purposes. Taylor's Map of the town and environs of

¹⁰ *The Iris*. 5 May, 1805

¹¹ *Ibid.* 28 March, 1805

¹² *Ibid.* 20 May, 1808

¹³ Wigfull. *Broomhall*. p.169

¹⁴ *The Iris* 28 March 1805.

¹⁵ *Act... for enlarging the terms and powers for... the roads from Little Sheffield... to Sparrow Pit Gate... and for making certain other roads to communicate therewith*. 1811. Copy in Wilsons & Co. (Sharrow) [*Archives at Sharrow Mill*]

¹⁶ Sale catalogue in Wilsons & Co. (Sharrow) [*Archives at Sharrow Mill*]

¹⁷ List of the land held by Joseph and William Wilson at Sharrow Mill, in Wilsons & Co. (Sharrow) [*Archives at Sharrow Mill*]

Sheffield, published in 1832, show the advances which Sheffield was making towards Broomhall and the changes which seem to have been underway on the estate itself. All the land to the east of Broomhall was marked out as building ground and the majority of the park was laid out in a grid of similar density. A road passed directly in front of the hall and only the Nether Meadow immediately south of the house remained clear. The first new building had already appeared on the estate, a short terrace of houses facing east across Hanover Street, the eastern boundary of the estate. The small size of the houses was similar to that be found in the streets which were stretching out from Sheffield.¹⁸ This suggests that Watson was contemplating developing the majority of his estate in a manner similar to that found in the Division Street area, with fairly narrow streets lined by a mixture of small houses and workshops, leaving Broomhall marooned in a few acres in the centre of the estate.

White's map of Sheffield, published in 1841,¹⁹ shows a very different scheme in progress. The catalyst for this radical change of plan seems to have been the scheme to establish a Collegiate School in the town. On 13 October 1834 a meeting was held at the Cutlers' Hall which decided that an institution should be founded to be called the Sheffield Proprietary School which would provide 'a sound education for the youth of the upper classes, preparatory to the University course or to commercial pursuits'. The situation was considered to be 'in the best and most picturesque part of the suburbs, and is quite outside the smoke and bustle of the town.'²⁰ As Broomhall had been used for a succession of boarding schools the estate probably seemed a very suitable location for the new venture. A committee of shareholders and 12 trustees was appointed and by 14 November an agreement had been reached with Watson to buy 2.2.0 acres of Broomhall land at a cost of £1035.19.0, or approximately £400 per acre.²¹ The coming of the school boosted land values on the estate and when an extra 1.0.26 acres was required in march 1836 the price had soared to £917.15.3. The school authority would also contribute half the cost of making their land accessible from the Ecclesall Road. Watson was to be responsible for making further roads running north and east across the estate that could be used by the school. This was done by constructing a new road called Collegiate Crescent. Access over the estate was also improved by upgrading the old carriage road that linked the hall to its lodge, to be called Broomhall Road and a spur track from the hall to Clarkehouse Road was also improved. [Un-named until about 1870, then known as Park Lane.] Figure 8.3 shows the gentle slope of the site of Broomhall Park Estate and the rural nature of the area shortly after the completion of the school. Only the roof of Southbourne can be seen above the trees near the school and the hill to the north, later to be part of Broomhill, is still bare of houses.

White's map of 1841²² shows these roads completed. On the eastern border of the estate Hanover Terrace, William and Wharncliffe Streets had been laid out and some houses built. The most important developments shown were Broomhall and Sandon Places that were to form the eastern boundary of what was to become Broomhall Park Estate. Once Watson had established the basic layout of the estate actual development seems to have taken place as a result of private transactions as no advertisements have been found for the new estate in local newspapers.

During the 1840s only four leases were issued but they illustrate the diversity of size, cost and type of development which was to characterise the estate. The first lease in the estate

¹⁸ Taylor, J. *A map of the town and environs of Sheffield*. London: [Engraved by Josiah Neele], 1832

¹⁹ White W. *Map of Sheffield*. 1841. (K1974.483)

²⁰ Deeds of the former *Collegiate School* in the Sheffield Hallam University collection of deeds. All the ensuing data in this paragraph is taken from the same source.

²¹ White. *Map of Sheffield*.

proper was issued in 1842 to William Hutchinson, a prosperous cutler, building for his own occupation [now 30 Collegiate Crescent]. The house was built in a plain Georgian style and, when it was sold after Hutchinson's death in 1867 it raised £1,250. It was to be six years before another lease was issued [6 Broomhall Road]. This house was also built for the owner's occupation but the style was rather more ornate with a heavy porch supported by classical pillars. In the following year the first building speculator arrived, George William Travis. The house that he built [4 Broomhall Road] was similar in style to that of Hutchinson. By 1859 Travis was able to sell the house, as a residence, rather than to continue rent it out, for £1,000. Mr. Travis's next venture was to take a plot to the west of Hutchinson. Here he built a house in a rather more elaborate style that echoed the Gothic architecture of the Collegiate School. During the course of building a buyer was found for the house and on completion Benjamin Vickers bought it for £1,410. In the same year Travis took a much smaller plot at the eastern end of Collegiate Crescent.²³ Here he built a pair of semi-detached houses. Thus the early houses varied between Georgian, Classical and Gothic styles of architecture and were built for owner occupation, by a builder, and taken over by a purchaser immediately on completion or built for rent until a purchaser could be found.

During the 1850s speculative builders took an increasingly prominent part in the development of the estate though a small number new residents built for their own occupation taking relatively large plots. Such houses contributed to the high reputation that Broomhall enjoyed. By 1855 almost all the plots available along the original roads had been taken and a further road was laid across the southern part of the estate, called Victoria Road. Within ten years all this land was also taken. Occupying a rather less favourable part of the estate, being low-lying and rather damp in places, whilst the south side of the road backs on to the Ecclesall Road buffer zone, Victoria Road lacks some of the charm of the older part of the estate but does not detract in any way from the over-all effect of the estate.

The final scheme was composed of:

- a) a three-acre site sold for building of Collegiate School;
- b) Broomhall to be left in small garden and sublet to two or three tenants according to demand;
- c) east and south fields let off for lower middle class housing forming a 'buffer zone' from which industry and commerce were excluded thus protecting the more exclusive area;
- d) inner area of about 60 acres which surrounded the hall let on building leases of 800 years for houses to be worth at least £500, most of those actually built being worth much more, up to around £1,500 for the largest;
- e) during the development period rental income was maximised by letting farm land for 'eating' or as allotments until taken up for building.

8.3.3 The building of the estate

Advantages of the estate

The site had the natural advantage of proximity to the town and gentle south facing slope, as well as the availability of some building materials on site, i.e., stone from a quarry on north-west side of Collegiate Crescent and close to the surface on other parts of the estate. Clay was also available and, therefore, brick making could be carried on in the south fields. In addition, there was a good water supply from springs running down to the Porter and

²³ All the data in this paragraph are taken from deeds in the Sheffield Hallam University collection of deeds.

Water Company pipes had already been laid to Broomhall by the previous owner, Rev. J. Wilkinson.

The estate also benefited from the growth of local amenities:

- the Botanical Gardens opened close to western border in 1836;
- the General Cemetery opened across the Porter in 1837: together with the Botanical Gardens this ensured a continuation of fine views in the area;
- bordering residential development, such as Broomgrove and Broomhill, was all for a high class of housing which had covenants that excluded trades;
- the Collegiate and Wesleyan Schools ensured easy access to good education;
- proximity to town made it easy for servants to travel in daily rather than having to be housed on the premises, and the keeping of horses, and possibly some kind of conveyance, became an optional extra rather than a necessity;
- Broomhall Lodge, on the eastern border of the estate, was on the boundary of the area within the jurisdiction of the Improvement Commissioners. Thus, the residents of the new estate could expect to have lights, their route home maintained, and to be protected at public expense. Security was offered within the estate by the lodges and gates at the main entrances - this was a welcome reassurance as other newly built western areas were outside the Sheffield police area, often poorly lit and relatively isolated. Regular reports in local newspapers of burglary in the vicinity were a constant reminder of their vulnerability.
- the involvement of the Watson family was a form of 'quality assurance' given their reputation for probity;
- leases had the minimum of restrictions required to safeguard standards combined with maximum freedom in the funding of leases and building and of architectural style;
- establishing a level of cost and density simplified the process of having a house built;

Disadvantages of the estate.

These were all relatively minor and were usually mitigated to some extent.

- proximity to town could result in the estate soon being engulfed, as happened in towns such as Glasgow. Consequently, the vulnerable eastern boundary was guarded by the new 'buffer zone', other flanks already having been made safe by recent development in Broomgrove and Clarkehouse;
- pollution from industry in Division Street area: however, smoke was usually carried eastwards by the prevailing winds;
- limiting of original fine views: but most of land on south side of Ecclesall Road not developed till almost the end of the century;
- damp ground especially in lower fields: drainage took care of this problem in this area, the last to be developed;
- exclusion of everything but houses meant travelling to church, to shop or for entertainment: this was not a problem on an estate intended for the 'carriage trade' and even for the occupants of the smaller plots who did not have this amenity there were regular omnibus services passing close to the borders of the estate and, in fine weather, the town was only a pleasant stroll away, even for ladies. Men on the estate might be expected to be members of the various clubs in the town and so would not miss the companionship available in a public house;
- poor lighting in the area was supplemented by residents providing large lamps over gates or along drives.

Failing any documentation giving Watson's reasoning in deciding how to develop the estate, it can only be deduced from maps and the deeds of the houses that were built in the park. White's map of 1841 has been often found to give an approximation of new development rather than an accurate representation. However, it does indicate Watson's strategy. The grid system of the 1835²⁴ map has been thinned out and the, as yet unnamed Collegiate Crescent exists, though albeit not quite following the graceful curve which it now exhibits. The most important change shown is the development of a buffer zone on the eastern fringe of the estate, and to a lesser extent, facing the Ecclesall Road. Deeds for this area show that only the most respectable of houses were allowed and all forms of business rigorously excluded.

As the 1840s proceeded trade revived and business confidence recovered from the failure of the Parker Shore bank in 1843, the Broomhall Park Estate was ripe for development as a choice residential area. It possessed many natural advantages that can be seen in paintings and lithographs made at the time. They show green wooded slopes with the Collegiate School, Wesley School, the Botanical Gardens and a handful of villas, mostly of honey-coloured stone, combining to make an idyllic landscape. Across the Porter the 'abrupt but broken and verdant acclivity'²⁵ of the General Cemetery extended the green prospect. The only potential threat to this rural charm was to the east. Although the main thrust of building was still about a quarter of a mile away, close to Rockingham Street, most of the intervening land was marked out for building. It was only a matter of time before a mixture of working class housing and small workshops would be nudging the boundary of Broomhall.

This threat was dealt with by some very sophisticated land management. Rather than trying to market the whole area for upper middle-class housing a portion of about 60 acres was marked off to be designated the 'Broomhall Park Estate'. Its select nature was signalled by establishing four lodges at its main entry points with gates to keep out the lesser orders. Within this area Broomhall Road was laid out to form an east-west axis with the curve of Collegiate Crescent unifying the whole area: nothing as mundane as a 'street' was to be found in this select enclave. To the east the threat of creeping industrialization was checked by the buffer zone of plain but respectable and visibly at least 'lower middle-class' housing occupying the eastern fields of the original park. Similarly land was set aside to shield the new houses from development along the Ecclesall Road.

The eastern 'buffer zone' occupied most of the field adjoining Hanover Street. It consisted of a series of terraces running north-south but not so tightly packed as those envisaged in the 1832 map. The red brick houses were of the kind usually described as 'neat' or 'respectable' by contemporary advertisements. In general, the further west the street the larger would be the house and the greater the likelihood of it having a small garden attached. The earliest houses, Hanover Place and Hanover Buildings, together with a group on William Street, were completed early enough for them to be included on Taylor's map published in 1832. By 1841 the most prestigious of the houses of this area were completed: Broomhall Place and Sandon Place looking west towards the park itself. They marked the transition from brick to stone and had a handsome ashlar finish. A classical style of architecture and front gardens marked them as a superior style of residence. However, the boundary which marked the change from 'very desirable respectable' to 'genteel' was formed by the lodges and their gates which marked off Broomhall Park Estate proper, now safely protected from eastern encroachment by this wide band of industry-free housing designed to attract the *petite bourgeoisie*.

²⁴ Pinnock. *Map of Sheffield*. 1835. (K1911.1)

²⁵ White. *History and general directory*. p. 76

Broomhall Park was transformed into a highly regarded residential area with remarkably little outlay or financial risk on the part of John Watson. The old hall had been built on a well-watered site and its original reservoir still existed, but its owners had been quick to take advantage of the establishment of a water company in the eighteenth century and have water piped to the house. Thus, builders had the choice of well water or piped-water and Watson did not need to become involved in long and expensive negotiations for way-leaves and pipe laying. Having staked out the main road system of the estate and a water supply and drainage system beneath them builders and house owners became responsible for a proportion of the cost of laying and future maintenance of drains, roads and pavements. The cost of constructing an infrastructure for development was negligible and the risk of investing capital in housing stock was always borne by others.

By establishing the main thoroughfares Watson determined the shape which the estate would take and his building leases controlled the density of building along the roads. As Broomhall Park was already well wooded he did not feel any need for extra roadside planting as Wostenholm had undertaken on his Kenwood estate. However, the leases did forbid the felling of large trees near the boundaries of a plot so the roads had leafy borders overhanging the stone boundary which was built to mark off each new house. As Flockton promised potential settlers at the Endcliffe Vale Estate²⁶ new residents at Broomhall Park would not have to wait twenty years to have the benefit of mature trees in their gardens.

Once the estate was staked out and its gates and lodges built Watson seems to have not felt any need for newspaper advertising to attract potential builders. Given the adverse economic climate of the late 1830s and 1840s plots went slowly at first, but with a secure income from other sources Watson could afford to be patient. Since the potential building land was not advertised, word of the availability of the new estate must have travelled via personal contact. Certainly a number of the early settlers were drawn from very close to the borders of the Park.

At mid-century the economic climate began to improve. Each week the local newspapers carried advertisements vaunting the competing attractions of other salubrious sites in western Sheffield to those who benefited from the towns increased prosperity, whilst recognising that this very prosperity was making the central area increasingly crowded and polluted. Broomhall Park attracted settlers while nearby land, such as Victoria Park and Endcliffe Crescent, languished because Watson offered a protected environment, and a protected environment meant a protected investment. It is noteworthy that a number of the earliest owner-builders connected with Broomhall Park were drawn from Watson's own profession, prudent legal men, noted for their circumspect investments.

The O.S. map of the area in 1851²⁷ shows that much building had taken place since the first resident had come in 1842. There were now a total of twenty-two houses, including three detached houses and three pairs of semidetached houses just completed but without gardens laid out. All the prime sites on the north side of Broomhall Road had been occupied and a number of south-facing plots on the high side of Collegiate Crescent. A locally produced map published in 1855²⁸ claimed to show all building which had taken place since the 1851 O.S. It shows considerable activity in many parts of Sheffield, including the virtual completion of building lining Broomhall Park's original roadways. As a result of this success another, as yet unnamed road, had been laid out to exploit the field south of Broomhall Road. The attached maps show the progress of the estate and the attached photographs illustrate the finished product.

²⁶ Flockton. *View of Endcliffe Vale Estate*.

²⁷ Ordnance Survey. *Sheffield*. Southampton: Ordnance Survey, 1853. Scale 60 inches to 1 mile. [Surveyed 1851]

²⁸ White, W. *Map of Sheffield*. Sheffield: W. White, 1855. (Kelham K1911.28)

The virtual completion of the estate by 1853 coincided with the death of John Watson. Control of the estate passed to his sons, who had followed their father into the family legal firm.²⁹ This new generation continued to administer the estate much as their father had done and the post 1853 leases are phrased in the same terms as their predecessors. However, the completion of the 'buffer zone', especially bordering the Ecclesall Road, was considered to require a more interventionist policy than had previously been the case. New buildings lining the road were advertised as Watson property, and Broomhall Place also reverted to family possession after a rather chequered history. Watson family policy seems to have been to keep a watching brief on the area to ensure that no business failure or long-standing vacant lot detracted from Broomhall Parks environment, and, in time, detracted from its reputation as a desirable residential area.

Ground landlord

The success of the estate, both initially and after completion, was not merely a happy accident but rather a tribute to the business acumen of the ground landlord: John Watson. As his influence was so decisive it is instructive to preface a study of Broomhall with an outline of his family and status since this has bearing on the manner in which the estate was developed and the timing of that development.

The Watson family was part of the kinship network that took such an active part in the purchase of land offered for sale by the Gell and Norfolk estates. Watson's elder brother was a silver-plater but John was trained as a solicitor.³⁰ Broomhall Park was bought as an investment and, remaining at the family home of Shirecliffe Hall, he was not tempted to turn it into a family estate. For almost thirty years the Broomhall land was used primarily for farming while Watson considered various possible ways of exploiting his investment to best advantage. The eventual success of the Broomhall Park Estate seems to indicate that he finally made the best possible decision.

By Sheffield standards the Watson family represented 'old money'. Unusually for the town, this money was not originally derived from the cutlery trade. John Watson's grandfather, William, who founded the family fortune, had been one of Sheffield's leading inn-keepers in the middle of the eighteenth century.³¹ Referring to taverns, Leader notes 'the prominent position that their landlords in past days took in the affairs of the town and the manner in which the learned professions were recruited from their sons'.³² During a long lifetime of ninety seven years William Watson not only found time to run a number of successful inns, take an active part in civic affairs as a Town Trustee from 1741-84, but also to father twenty three children.³³

Again to quote Leader, Sheffield like other provincial towns 'laboured under the disadvantages of very primitive monetary methods ... reasonably safe investments apart from mortgages or leases of Norfolk Estate land were few'.³⁴ William Watson put his money into land. By the beginning of the nineteenth century the twenty three children of William Watson had produced only two surviving male heirs, Thomas and John, brothers who came to an amicable division of the family estate.

John left the vagaries of trade for the comparative security of practising law whilst Thomas, the elder brother, carried on the family traditional trade of inn keeping for a while and then

²⁹ Deeds of Broomhall property in the Sheffield Hallam University collection of deeds

³⁰ Leader. *Sheffield in the eighteenth century*. p. 279

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid. p.272

³³ Ibid. p.279

³⁴ Leader. *Sheffield Banking Company*. p. 1

became a successful silver-plater. His income was also supplemented by income derived from his grandfather's Hagg Estate, occupied by old William at the time of his death. John took the other family property, Shirecliffe Hall, which was leased from the Duke of Norfolk. This had been the family home of old William's son. Following a common Sheffield practice of buying property for the site rather than the building, the Watsons replaced the old mansion with what Hunter, writing in 1819, described as 'a modern house'.³⁵

At the beginning of the new century John Watson was a recently married man of twenty-six with a pleasantly situated new house to the north-east of Sheffield in Brightside Bierlow. The house was set in a rural landscape, high enough to have spectacular views of the surrounding countryside yet sufficiently well-wooded to have protection from cold winds, and all within easy riding distance of Sheffield where he was beginning a career as an attorney. As a well-connected young man he could expect to have a successful career if he proved to be at all competent. Time proved him to be extremely competent and he became one of the town's foremost legal men. By 1825 he was law clerk to the River Dunn Company and Deputy Steward of the Court of Requests of the Manor of Sheffield. In 1828 he added the post of attorney to the Assay Office but in 1836 he probably secured his most important position on becoming attorney to the town's first Joint Stock Bank, the Sheffield Banking Company, a post he was to hold until his retirement in 1850.³⁶ By this time the post had become something of a family fief and he was succeeded by his son, who held the post for the rest of the century.

From this brief survey it can be seen that, as a potential land developer, John Watson had a number of advantages:

- a) He had inherited a comfortable income drawn from landed estates and some secure investments.
- b) He developed a successful legal practice, which was not only profitable but put him in a most favourable position to be aware of the financial state both of the town in general and of individuals.
- c) As a professional man, especially one cushioned by land ownership, he was not effected by the commercial ups and downs that plagued many other developers.
- d) On a personal level, he belonged to the extended kinship network that had bought property in western Sheffield and, with varying degrees of success, had tried to develop it. Thus he had an intimate knowledge of the pitfalls involved.
- e) Although his family was large his children showed a marked reluctance to leave home. The daughters all remained unmarried so no dowries depleted the family capital. Once educated, the sons came into the family firm so money was not required to set them up in business, and as only two of the four married, and then quite late in life, there was little expense for setting up separate establishments.

John Watson's bachelor cousin, William Newbould, of Broomhill, struggling to fund brothers with little business sense, sisters who required dowries and the seemingly endless capital investment required by the family mine, may have regarded him with a little envy.

³⁵ Hunter. *Hallamshire*. p. 394

³⁶ Data on the career of John Watson has been taken from entries in contemporary local directories

Leases

As mentioned in chapter 3, a ground landlord could exert considerable influence over the development of his estate through the terms of the building leases, which he issued. Leases for Norfolk property were for a relatively short period, usually ninety-nine years or three lives. The middle class landowners, such as Watson, favoured a much longer lease, 800 years being the most common length. Both those building for their own occupation and speculative builders, were granted leases for this period and were bound by the same terms. The usual stipulations related to:

1. building line;
2. building materials to be used;
3. height and style of boundary walls;
4. obligations regarding provision of paved area fronting house;
5. obligation to contribute to the maintenance of such pavement and to share in the cost of the maintenance of roads, sewers and water pipes;
6. prohibition of all noxious or other trades as well as the sale of intoxicating liquor;
7. speculative builders, especially after the very early period, might be given a time limit within which to complete building and the minimum worth of such building.

Apart from the costs included in the terms of the lease, Watson seems to have paid for the initial laying of roads and also for the building and maintaining of the lodges and their associated gates as well as providing the lodge keepers. This was a marked difference from the Endcliffe Building company and the later Ranmoor Land Societies where, as described in the relevant case studies, residents were subject to many restrictions and extra maintenance costs. Another characteristic of the Watson estate was that many of the leases were issued retrospectively so that there is no way of knowing the nature of the original agreement or how restrictive it may have been. Phrases such as 'having built a house at his own expense', 'having built a house for which no lease was given', 'having built a house for which only verbal consent was given' preface many of the final leases, which state the ground rent and the specifications mentioned above. This type of business practice could only be carried on successfully when the relationship between the parties concerned was such that an oral agreement carried considerable weight.

Indeed, such a free and easy attitude towards building leases seems to pre-suppose a great deal of confidence between landowner and builder. In a large estate such as Birmingham's Edgbaston, where a succession of estate managers and builders were concerned, such a method of business would have been a recipe for disaster, but Broomhall Park was of small acreage and the property of one family in direct control of development. Family legal and banking connections seem to have ensured a workable approach.

Speculative Builders

The actual construction of the estate was undertaken by a combination of owner- occupiers, resident developers and speculative builders.³⁷ As the Flocktons had withdrawn from the building trade before the period of greatest expansion in western Sheffield Broomhall Park Estate offers the first opportunity of tracing the part which individual builders played in the development of an estate. Although the owner-builder may have set the highest standards of housing the majority of the estate was the work of speculative builders.

³⁷ Data on the building of the estate have been taken from the Sheffield Hallam University collection of deeds unless otherwise stated

While establishing the 'buffer-zone' to the east of the main estate Watson had dealt with a number of builders³⁸. The main speculative builders connected with the park itself seem to have been drawn from those who took part in this early development, often taking up residence where they were able to keep a close eye on their more expensive projects to the west. The 'buffer-zone' development was a project that probably attracted the better class of builder, offering an opportunity to build houses that would readily attract buyers or tenants. Deeds for this area suggest that a number of small firms were able to raise the necessary capital, but even Watson was not infallible in his choice of builders and at least two of the early builders fell prey to the constant threat to builders: bankruptcy. Pickworth and Walker took a number of plots, as did Clark and Hague. William Clark hardly had time to build a short terrace bearing his name before he became bankrupt. Hague seems to have survived the crash and went on to be responsible for some of the large houses on the estate itself.

Speculative builders did a wide range of work on all parts of the estate and, as with architects, it is difficult to attribute a particular style to a particular builder, however, George Hague seems to have had a talent for the imaginative use of space. It seems possible that Hague was one of a family variously described as carpenters, joiners, builders, masons and bricklayers, working in the Park area from at least 1821. His career as an independent builder appears to have begun about 1849, by which time he was working on the 'buffer-zone' terraces and took up residence in one of them, Henry Street. Later building on the estate itself seems to have brought a modest level of prosperity, enabling him to live in the comfortable petite bourgeoisie streets on Broomhall's eastern border, but considerably below the level of accommodation provided by even the smallest house on the estate. He was responsible for one of the large houses in north-western Collegiate Crescent that established the reputation of the estate. Having built two pairs of semi-detached houses on the north side of the crescent he took four plots on the south side, each of which was given a distinctive treatment. The architectural style will be discussed elsewhere but it should be noted that he added a number of small houses to the estate without in any way detracting from the overall impression of spacious living. The rising prosperity of Hague and Travis was indicated by their changing places of residence during their working lives.

The career of the other main builder on the estate, George William Travis, seems to have been rather more remunerative. He first appears in local directories as a joiner and builder of Fitzwilliam Street in 1833 but by 1849 he was at William Street, near to George Hague. It seems likely that he was responsible for the 'buffer-zone' street that bears his name, Travis Place. By 1848 he had raised sufficient capital to move into building villas rather than terraces, and by 1852 he was able to erect one of the most expensive houses on the estate, 30, Collegiate Crescent. This was sold to Benjamin Vickers for £1,410, considerably above the £500 base value which the ground landlord required. Two years later he completed No. 34 for the Reverend L. Sale at a cost of £1,800. Having built some of the most impressive houses on the estate he was also responsible for one of the 'closes' similar to those built by Hague. His association with the Broomhall Park Estate extended from the earliest phase to the final development when Victoria Road was laid out. Like Hague he seems to have exercised caution in his financial transactions, finding a certain buyer for a completed house before embarking on another so that credit was not over-extended. Only later, when the desirability of Broomhall was firmly established, did they venture on more complex projects such as Mackenzie Crescent and Wilton Place.

By the 1870s Travis was coming to the end of a successful working life and was able to buy a small house in Broomhall Park itself. The original core of the house seems to have been a small one-down, one-up cottage, possibly associated with Broomhall when it still

³⁸ Data on the building of the buffer-zone area have been taken from the Sheffield City Council collection of deeds

had a home farm. Two wings had already been added when Travis took over the house. He then began an extensive programme of home improvements.

The original central room was transformed into an entrance hall with an elaborate plaster ceiling, originally painted to resemble wood with gilt highlights on the moulding. From the hall a noble staircase rises. It was obviously intended for a much larger house but ceilings have been lowered or floors raised to accommodate it. Even with all these alterations Travis found that he had run out of house but still had yet more staircase to accommodate. An ingenious solution was found to the problem by turning the staircase back on itself to run along the bedroom walls. This makes access to the bedrooms difficult as they can only be approached by edging along the narrow gallery between wall and stair rails. Presumably Travis thought this a small price to pay if no part of the staircase went to waste. Every ground-floor room has a different fireplace, each of a style and size unusual in such a small house. One is ornamented with fine flower tiles in a manner hardly matched by any fireplace at Endcliffe Hall, another marble monster is so large that it almost takes up an entire wall.

This house has been described in some detail as it is the only example which has been traced to a master builder constructing a house which demonstrated his own taste in the centre of one of the town's most prestigious residential areas; a house surrounded by others that he had made in a manner that he judged potential buyers would find attractive. Only one builder could actually afford to have a new house on the estate of a size and style equal to that of Broomhall's prosperous residents. This was Roger Brown, who leased a large plot on the south-east side of estate, sub-letting a great part of it but retaining a large area for his own house, Penrhyn Cottage. The name may be an allusion to the trade with which his family was most closely connected. Although the Browns carried out various types of building work they usually advertised themselves as slaters and Summerson³⁹ mentions that the widespread use of slate for roofs began with the exploitation of the Penrhyn slate quarries. One member of the Brown family branched out into another trade, in which he became spectacularly successful. Even after Sir John Brown became a steel magnate he retained business links with his builder father, Samuel, so the family building firm, including Roger Brown, may have had access to capital denied to their competitors.

Owner-occupiers

Men commissioning houses for their own occupation were amongst the earliest builders of the estate and had an important influence not only in establishing but also in maintaining its reputation as a prestigious residential area. Initially they took large plots and built some of the most ornate houses and then they tended to be amongst the longest staying residents. Directories show occupiers of rental property moving after stays of as little as a year but owner-occupiers often lived out the remainder of their lives in houses they had built when the estate was new. This tended to stabilise the social tone of the estate.

Resident developers.

The most prominent of these was Benjamin Wightman, a solicitor who had been living on the edge of the estate at Sandon Place. He acquired a prime site to the west of Broomhall itself and built a family enclave: a large house for his own occupation and a smaller house for the two spinster sisters of his mother who had just retired from keeping a successful ladies boarding school at Bellefield. Within a few years he went on to acquire all the land adjoining his own as well as the plot immediately in front on the south side of Broomhall Road. This gave him control of the way in which the area in which he lived was to be developed as well as being a sound investment. Within the next few years he disposed of

³⁹ Summerson. *Georgian London*. p. 81

most of the land either to owner builders or to the most prestigious speculative builders working in the area. In 1853 he bought Broomhall Place and other property in the buffer zone which must have provided a good rental income, easily overseen. Private developers seem to have attracted speculative builders, described above, who had access to sufficient capital to fund the building of the substantial houses, similar to those already on the estate.

8.4 Physical nature of estate

8.4.1 Design.

As mentioned earlier, Watson initially laid out two main thoroughfares: Broomhall Road running East-West in front of the Hall and Collegiate Crescent coming up from Ecclesall Road, curving behind the Hall and culminating in lodge and gates as it met the 'buffer zone'. When this area was rapidly taken up a further road was staked out to exploit the field in front of the Hall. This proved to be rather a mixed development as the lower side of Victoria Road, as it became known, faced north and, being at the bottom of the slope tended to be shadowy; and, as it backed on to the Ecclesall 'buffer zone', tended to attract less impressive houses. There are more semi-detached houses and facades are plainer.

Plots were allocated in a wide range of shapes and sizes, from several acres to a mere 800 square yards. The building line, especially for the early large houses that formed the appearance of the estate, was set well back from the road, often up to two-thirds of the length of the plot. This placing of houses at a distance from the road ensured that the estate retained an open effect and made the roads appear to be spacious thoroughfares in a rural setting. Once the plot was taken it was usual to have only one house upon it, or possibly a pair of semi-detached houses. Again, no hard and fast rule seems to have been applied. George Hague took a large plot of land at the south-east end of Collegiate Crescent. Across the street were three villas and two pairs of semi-detached houses on quite narrow plots. Behind, facing Broomhall Road, were two of the earliest large villas, numbers 4 and 6. On a plot similar in size to that occupied by number 4 Hague built a short terrace of four houses, then a pair of semi-detached houses, forming the west side of Wharncliffe Road. A further pair of semi-detached houses facing Collegiate Crescent completed the grouping.

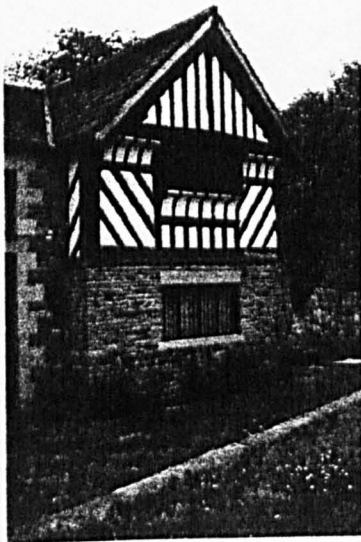


Figure 8.1: Broom Hall - West Wing

These houses had small gardens and were all built of stone in a Dutch style, with high hipped or steep gables. This was in marked contrast to the east side of Wharncliffe Road where groups of red brick houses crowded close to the road. Having made a strong statement that the west side of the road heralded a superior area Hague split the remainder of his land into two plots, each opened up for building by a short road with a turning circle at the end. The first plot was called Mackenzie Crescent and consisted of two villas facing Collegiate Crescent, two facing the approach road and the inner area had two more pairs of semi-detached houses. The next group, Wilton Place, has marginally larger houses but on slightly smaller plots and, at the inner end, just one pair of semi-detached houses. The next two plots each have two villas facing the road and then a pair of semi-detached houses at the head of the drive. As the building line changed almost imperceptibly and all the buildings are of the same kind of stone it is possible to walk up Collegiate Crescent without

realising that it does not consist of a similar mixture of substantial detached and semi-detached houses on both sides of the road. Even when walking up the drives of The Elms

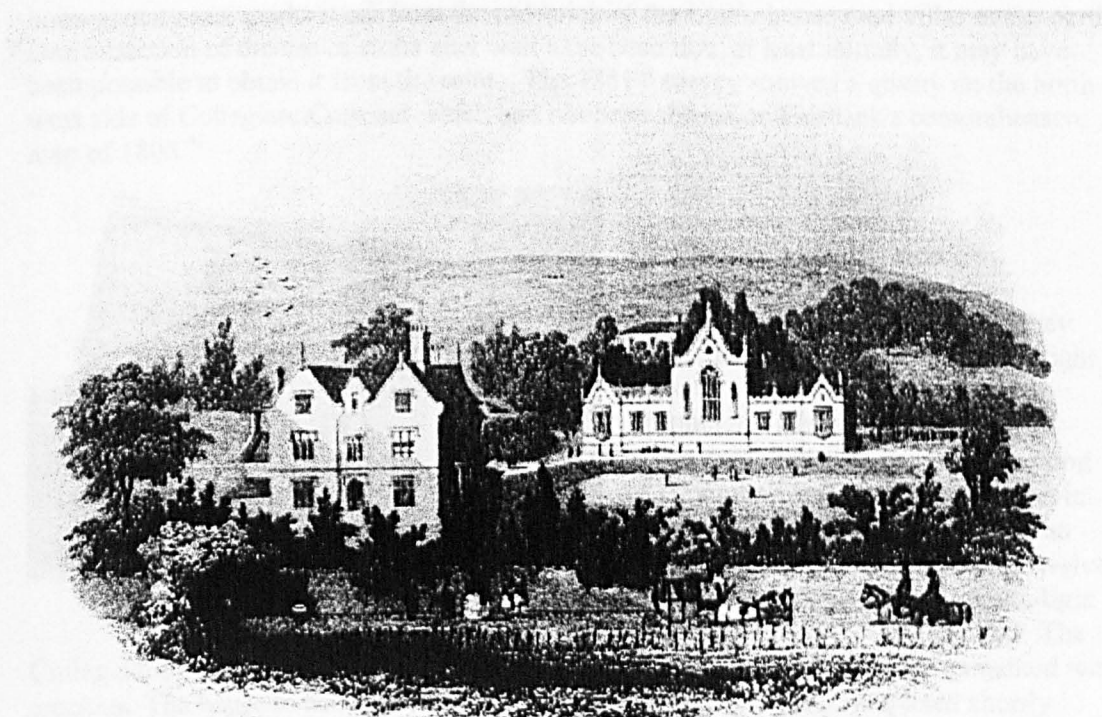
and Beech Dell the houses look pleasantly secluded rather than cramped. Twenty one houses and two groups of four houses were packed into an area occupied by a mere four houses facing Broomhall Road. Yet that the difference is hardly noticeable to the passer-by is a tribute to the skill with which two speculative builders were able to make use of available land.

Although the most substantial houses were built along Broomhall Road and the north side of Collegiate Crescent, a great variety of treatment was allowed at the east end of the Crescent. As described above, builders seem to have vied in creating imaginative schemes for putting the maximum number of houses in a comparatively small space without sacrificing the overall impression of a superior residential area. This treatment allowed an almost imperceptible blurring of the change from the large Broomhall Road houses to the buffer zone of Sandon Place and its neighbouring streets. The estate had almost a *trompe l'oeil* effect in that the whole area conveys a spacious up-market impression despite containing a number of houses of modest size (see Map VII).



Figure 8.2: Broom Hall - East Wing

8.4.2 Architecture and gardens



Sheffield Collegiate School

Figure 8.3: Sheffield Collegiate School

Broomhall Park offered two very different examples of architectural styles to its early settlers Broom Hall itself (Figure 8.2) was severely classical whilst the new Collegiate School (Figure 8.3) was gothic. The first three houses on the estate were plain Georgian relieved by classical porches but by mid-century gothic in the manner of the school seems to have gained favour and various forms of gothic became predominant as the estate was completed. The semi-circle formed by Collegiate Crescent and Broomhall Road is a record of what was considered fashionable or desirable in Sheffield at mid-century and the layout and density of housing show the general environment which found favour with the town's prosperous citizens. The cost of the houses, either to buy or to rent, is evidence of the price range that such men were able and willing to meet. As to the take up of houses, and their cost, this seems to have held constant throughout the rest of the century seems to imply that taste and expenditure changed little. As mentioned above, a number of early leases were retrospective but some prior discussion must have taken place to establish the general nature of the proposed house. Although Watson was prepared to allow considerable leeway, one basic stipulation seems to have been that all building of both houses and walls must be of stone.

The earliest houses usually have Georgian proportions and windows with small panes of glass. Later development reflects the repeal of the window tax (1851) and improvements in glass production so windows become large, often with large sash windows set into large bays on at least one of the ground floor rooms and sometimes also at bedroom level. Once having complied with the basic stipulation that the house must be of stone, both owner and speculative builder were free to build in any size or style. For most of the early houses the stipulation seems to have been interpreted as an ashlar facing similar to that found on the west wing of Broomhall, although with typical Sheffield thrift this was sometimes confined to the house wall facing the street. Later builders were to cut costs by using roughcut stone. However, the overall use of stone of some description gives the estate a pleasing homogeneity and marks it off from the red-brick of the Clarkehouse road villas to the north. One attraction of the use of stone may well have been that, at least initially, it may have been possible to obtain it from the estate. The 1851⁴⁰ survey showed a quarry on the north-west side of Collegiate Crescent which had not been shown on Fairbank's comprehensive map of 1808.⁴¹



Figure 8.4: Early Broomhall house

For those building for their own occupation the relatively loose requirement for stone meant that they could indulge in any architectural flight of fancy which appealed to them. Broomhall offered two architectural styles to its first settlers. The new wing of Broomhall was in the classical style, built in honey-coloured stone with an ashlar finish. A plain façade with twelve-pane sash windows had only a fan-light over the front door to ornament it. The

Collegiate School, also stone built, was in the Gothic style, its high gables ornamented with crockets. The house to accommodate the Headmaster and boarders, completed shortly afterwards, was in a rather plainer Gothic manner. William Hutchinson, the first person to take a building lease on the estate, opted for a plain Georgian box, with twelve-paned sash windows on either side of a front door which was set under a small plaster pediment supported by Doric pillars. The next two houses to be built were also basically Georgian,

⁴⁰ Ordnance Survey. *Sheffield*. 1853.

⁴¹ Fairbank & Fairbank. *Map of the environs of Sheffield*.

but rather larger and with more ornament., such as incised stone trim to the windows and porches supported by columns with elaborate capitals in what might be called a composite style.



Figure 8.5: A 'superior' Broomhall house



Figure 8.6: Semi-detached house, Broomhall

For speculative builders architectural freedom allowed them to find decorative features that would appeal to a desire for a 'personalised' residence amongst potential clients without eating too deeply into their profit margins. In seeking a guide to the taste of the income group they were targeting they had only to look at the homes of the early residents of the estate. The nature of the building leases gave prospective builders great flexibility: if the market for large houses seemed to have dried up then it was possible to erect a pair of semi-detached houses or a small crescent and then return to 'mansions' when the market picked up. A flexible approach to architectural style resulted in a mixture of the early Georgian style houses displaying ornate pillars and the later houses built close to the Collegiate School tending to echo its 'Tudor Gothic' style. Smaller houses to the east had Dutch hipped roofs next to steep gables with elaborate barge boarding. (Figures 8.4 to 8.6) are examples of the various styles to be found on the estate.



Figure 8.7: Gate-keeper's lodge, Broomhall

Interiors⁴² also varied widely with even the smallest houses having spacious rooms, usually with high ceilings. As a minimum houses could be expected to have at least three reception rooms, usually described as dining room, sitting room and breakfast room. In addition would be a kitchen, with possibly a scullery, 'usual offices' and a full range of cellars. Above would be at least four bedrooms, often with at least one dressing room and one or more attics above. An example, typical of the smaller houses on

⁴² Data on room sizes, layout and internal features are drawn from internal inspection of the property of Sheffield Hallam University, supplemented by the file of housing advertisements kept in the archives of the Broomhall Residents Association and personally collected brochures produced by local estate agents

the estate was offered in 1853,⁴³ was a detached residence in Collegiate Crescent on a plot of 860 sq. yards. It had two sitting rooms, 2 kitchens, store closet, 5 bedrooms and water closet. Outside there was room for stables if required. The cost of the house is not given but the ground rent for a 800 year lease was £5.3.9.

At the top end of the market, a 'mansion' would have extra ground floor rooms, usually described as a study and morning room, and a greater number of bedrooms, dressing rooms and servant accommodation in the attics. Outside would be a stable block and, less frequently, accommodation for a coachman. From observation, and also from recent estate agent brochures, it would seem that public rooms were usually in the region of 20x16ft.

One of Broomhall's attractions lay in its infinite adaptability at all levels. Even after a house was completed the ground landlord appears to have been willing that each succeeding owner should be free to alter or amend to his heart's content. Did he wish to embellish a plain facade of a Georgian-style house with a bay window or Gothic porch, then this was allowed, and if he wanted a large bathroom he was at liberty to construct a first floor protuberance balanced on unsightly steel supports. All sizes, shapes and styles could be achieved without leaving this attractive and conveniently situated enclave.

Gardens⁴⁴ were often elaborately landscaped, Mr. Wightman's coming complete with large pond fed by a stream which was crossed by its own wooden bridge. The owners of Sheffield's largest houses tended to recall Marnock, the first curator of the Botanical Gardens, to design their gardens, but a number of Broomhall residents were happy to employ one of his successors, John Law.⁴⁵ Philipps, one of the tenants of Broomhall, Henry Rossell and the Reverend Dr. Sale of Collegiate Crescent were amongst the satisfied customers, who provided references to the high standard of his garden designs. The layout of some of the earliest gardens can be seen on the O.S. of 1851. A wide variety of wrought-iron ornamental arches, gazeboes and other garden ornaments were illustrated in local directories as being available from local manufacturers to tempt the discerning house owner.

Intricate filigree plaster work ceilings; elaborate cornices, friezes and ceiling roses; splendid marble and tile fireplaces together with massive door-cases all gave the public rooms an air of luxury. As most of the houses were built at a time when the influence of the Great Exhibition of 1851 had even reached provincial Sheffield, everything that could be was heavily ornamented. More modest residences made do with plainer cornices, plainer marble fireplaces, and lower skirting boards but, as with the exterior, a determined effort was made to indicate that this was a residence intended for the discerning client.

8.4.3 Interior design and domestic technology.

Surviving examples of interior decoration are hard to come by but Sheffield had a number of decorators who claimed to have the widest possible range of English and Continental wallpapers with advice available from men experienced in the latest fashion all, a very Sheffield consideration, at the most competitive prices. A number of local stores offered a great range of both furniture and fittings, again at the most economical level. A regular advertiser of such items, and a pioneer of catalogue selling, was Mr. J. Jones, a long time resident of Collegiate Crescent so well placed to be aware of the kind of merchandise which would attract his neighbours.

⁴³ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* 10 June, 1853

⁴⁴ Layout of gardens has been taken from the O.S. of 1853 and 1894; also some deeds refer to trees of special concern

⁴⁵ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* 19 March, 1859

Sheffield prided itself at being on the leading edge of technology and Broomhall's builders appealed to this pride by emphasising in their advertisements that their genteel residences came with every modern convenience. Local directories and newspapers frequently advertised the latest developments in cooking apparatus, washing machines, patent mangles, gas lighting and plumbing. Attention was drawn to the fact that this was a well-watered site but, more important, Water Company water was laid on and houses lighted by gas. Even the luxury of indoor plumbing was widely available. An indication of what builders regarded as important selling points is an advertisement of 1853 which boasts in capital letters that the house has a BATH ROOM. It also mentions at the end that it was designed by a member of one of the town's leading architects firms, Weightman and Goldie.⁴⁶ Obviously architecture came a poor second as an attraction when ranged beside the delights of indoor plumbing.

This advertisement is the only one traced which mentions that a house has been architect designed. Presumably it did not prove to be a great draw and the experiment was not repeated. Of all the many deeds examined for Broomhall property, both owner-built and the work of speculative builders, not one bears a margin plan signed by an architect. If Broomhall was in fact built without architectural involvement then the pleasing proportions, tasteful interiors and not least the fact that all are habitable after standing almost one hundred and fifty years, are tributes to the skill of the master builders who created them.

8.5 Financial investment

Estimating the investment and return of the builders and occupiers of Broomhall Park Estate is even more difficult than accessing the financial involvement of the Watsons.

From what little evidence is available it seems that most of the early houses cost the first purchaser £1,000 to £1,450. Presumably this gave the builder some profit but what that profit margin was, or how it compared with the percentage of profit obtainable from less expensive property it is not possible to determine. Another unknown quantity is the difference in cost of buying directly from a builder as opposed to having a house custom built.

Both owner-built and speculative housing seem to have held their price throughout the century with very little fluctuation. Money to fund mortgages was readily available, as was demonstrated each week by advertisements in local newspapers offering a wide range of loans. From the deeds of Broomhall property it would seem that a large number of legal men were giving mortgages on behalf of their clients. Another source was from spinsters or widows in need of a safe investment for their capital. Some of these ladies were from nearby areas such as Broomhill but others were drawn from various parts of the country.

From noting the lapse of time between which a builder sold houses it would seem that, if possible, one house was sold before another was begun. The optimum situation seems to have been to find a firm buyer for the house before it was completed. Like the Watsons the builders of Broomhall tried to limit their risk-taking. It is possible the Watsons, via their banking connections, may have been able to facilitate credit for their developers, such as Travis or Hague, but no evidence of this has been traced.

⁴⁶ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* 9 April, 1853

8.5.1 Rents

Advertisements show that the earliest of the 'buffer zone' houses built on the east side of Wharncliffe Road could be rented for nineteen pounds per annum.⁴⁷ The best of the 'buffer zone' property, such as Sandon Place, could command rents of about £40 a year,⁴⁸ similar to that required for the newly built semi-detached houses on Broomhill's Beech Hill Road. Presumably, Broomhall Park Estate itself could attract proportionally higher rates but no figures are available. Books, such as Mrs Beeton's *Household Management*,⁴⁹ gave guidelines on the proportion of income that should be committed to housing. As mentioned earlier, her figures seem to have been based on costs in London and the south so it is likely the prices in Sheffield would be lower but there is insufficient evidence to suggest what percentage of cost this might be.

8.5.2 Watson's outlay and return

The rapid take-up of building plots and the resulting attractive residential area mark Broomhall Park estate as a successful piece of estate management. It remains to examine it as a financial investment for the Watson family.

	Acreage	Estimated rent	Estimated sale price per acre
Broomhall Estate	446.2.31 acres	£4.7.6d. per acre	£148.0.0d.
Broomhall Park	105.1.07 acres		£140.0.0d.
Watson's sales	Acreage		Sale price per acre
1810	22.1.05		£150.0.0d.
1818	2.1.00		£275.0.0d.
1835 (March)	2.2.14		
1835 (May)	1.0.28		£500.0.0d.
1836	1.0.24		£900.0.0d.
Total	29.2.31	Total sale price	£5,510.4.3d.

Table 8.1: Watson's investment and returns

The size of the financial investment and the return it made is difficult to determine, as information is very fragmented. Sale documents rarely distinguish between the price of land and the price of buildings. Thus, the estimated worth of the entire Broomhall estate is given in terms of rent or price per acre, even though farms and houses were included in the sale. Similarly, the total price that Watson paid for Broomhall Park does not mention how this was divided between cost of land and cost of buildings. Approximations have been arrived at by drawing on information gleaned from other sources; for example, the estimated rent and sale price of Broomhill House in 1829,⁵⁰ as provided by Fairbank, the local surveyor, is known and has been used to estimate the rental worth of Broomhall. The cost of land sold by Watson to the Wilson brothers in 1810⁵¹ is known and has been used as a basis for the cost of farmland at the beginning of the century.

⁴⁷ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* ...

⁴⁸ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* 4 January, 1860

⁴⁹ Beeton, I. *The book of household management*. London: S. O. Beeton, 1861. p.8

⁵⁰ Sheffield City Archives CP41-(47)-5

⁵¹ Document in Wilsons & Co. (Sharrow) [*Archives at Sharrow Mill*]

An attempt is made in Table 8.1 to indicate the extent of Watson's investment and to provide some information on his returns. The figures are drawn from the deeds of the Collegiate School, houses built in the Park and its 'buffer zone' together with those of adjoining estates which mention Broomhall.

The estimates should be considered in the context of the contemporary financial market. At the time of the initial purchase, land formed the most stable investment. The nature of the development was such that even if it did not necessarily maximise the possible return it did provide a relatively problem-free business venture. Watson's scheme had the paramount advantage, which is encapsulated in a contemporary advertisement for similar property, of offering 'easily collectable rents'⁵². He had ensured himself a steady income without the possibility of bad payers, bankrupt tenants or moonlight flits.

Of Watson's total purchase of 105.1.07 acres, he sold, prior to estate development 29.2.31 acres. The land he allocated to a buffer zone was 7.3.24 acres, leaving approximately 68 acres for the development of Broomhall Park Estate. After 1836 no further land appears to have been sold, only 800-year leases being available.

These figures exclude the costs of development, which fell into two parts: development of roads, drains, and sewers (50% of which was payable by each person taking a building lease); and the cost of four lodges with gates and keepers. A lodge at Endcliffe Crescent was sold for £100 so the Broomhall Park lodges, that if anything are plainer, seem likely to have cost no more than a total of £400. Road building, especially as residents and the Collegiate School contributed to the cost, are unlikely to have required a large outlay of capital by John Watson.

8.6 Residents

The level of prestige that Broomhall acquired as a residential area was established and maintained by the owner/occupiers who formed the earliest and longest staying inhabitants. Such inhabitants formed the fixed points around which a constantly changing number of tenants moved. Tenancy was much more common than home-ownership in the nineteenth century and this gave a great deal of flexibility to prospective residents and presented property owners with the challenge of attracting and maintaining customers who might be bound by a tenancy as short as three months. Such a fluid market meant that a change of fashion could bring rapid change to an area if it was perceived to be less attractive or its houses too large or old-fashioned to appeal. The range of houses available for rent in Broomhall was sufficiently wide to allow prospective tenants considerable choice. Changing fortunes of business or family circumstances could result in frequent trading up or down according to variations of income or requirements. A number of Broomhall residents were happy to be able to make such changes without going outside the estate.

8.6.1 Origin

The earliest settlers were often 'waiting in the wings' when the estate was first opened for development, living in nearby streets which, in turn, were often close to their place of work. Broomhall Park offered an exclusively residential area in relatively close proximity to such work places⁵³. The first lease taker, William Hutchinson, moved only a few hundred yards from the section of Broomhall itself which he was renting, to build a house

⁵² Sale catalogue in the deeds of properties in Collegiate Crescent in the Sheffield Hallam University collection of deeds.

⁵³ Data on the origin, status and movement of the inhabitants of Broomhall has been obtained by taking the names mentioned in deeds for the area then tracing them in contemporary local directories and in Census Enumerators' returns.

at the western junction of Collegiate Crescent and Broomhall Road. Another early settler was Benjamin Wightman, one of a number of lawyers who were attracted to the estate, who moved from Sandon Place, just outside the gates of the Park.

Some of the Trustees of the Collegiate School, such as the Cocker family, were also attracted to the new estate whilst yet others were business partners, already living close to each other, who decided to avail themselves of the opportunity to live within a relatively short journey to their place of business. Thus, the steel-makers, Doncaster and Charlton, came in from Upperthorpe to live at nos. 17 and 21, Broomhall Road.

8.6.2 Status

Broomhall was not the chosen abode of the 'movers and shakers' of the town: steel magnates, mayors and leading figures in local political life tended to seek the wide acres of Ranmoor, often pausing at nearby Broomhill on their rise to success. Broomhall tended to attract the most solid of the much broader strata of successful professional men and manufacturers in the many branches of the cutlery trade. There were a few exceptions, such as the Doncaster family of steel makers whose enterprise might well have funded an eight-acre estate further west, or Leng, the crusading newspaper proprietor who was active in public life.

Figure 8.7, which is a copy of a directory page for 1860 shows the mixture of occupations represented by the inhabitants shortly after the completion of most of the estate.⁵⁴ To take a further sample from the directories that White published at decennial intervals would show a similar rank of society and a similar distribution of occupations. Names might change and there might be a slight shift of balance between professional men and manufacturers but the overall picture remained the same throughout the second half of the century.

8.6.3 Occupations

Of the professions, attorneys formed the largest group and often occupied the largest houses. Once Rev. Sale took up residence and his house became the recognised home of the Vicar of Sheffield, Broomhall attracted lesser clergymen, some of other denominations or connected in some way to either the Collegiate or Wesleyan Schools. Few doctors were attracted to the estate, seeming to prefer; to congregate together, often along the Glossop Road where they were close to hospitals and possibly more accessible for night emergencies. Of the newer professions, Broomhall had its resident bank manager in the shape of Mr. Barber, the manager of the Sheffield and Rotherham Bank. Only one occupation could be carried on within the bounds of the estate, teaching, and throughout the century a number of both men and women established either day or boarding schools in their homes. Although alcohol was rigorously excluded those who produced it in large enough quantities to become wealthy were welcome residents.

The majority of the estate's inhabitant tended to describe themselves as 'merchants and manufacturers', carrying on some branch of the cutlery trade. Some were more successful than others, and the size of their houses testified to this. Quite a number became so successful that they could retire from trade and be described as 'gentlemen'. A sprinkling of other occupations, varying a little with each new trade directory, shows that anyone from an auctioneer to a draper, or even a publisher of directories, was welcome on the estate: the criterion for acceptance seems to have hinged on ability to afford a house there rather than any particular social status.

⁵⁴ White. *General directory of ... Sheffield. (1860)* p. 402

17 Foote Mrs Julia	Peckett Thomas	Crookes George, agent
Broomgrove Road.	Fisher P. warehouseman	Banks John, agent
3 Waterhouse Mrs S.	Smith Mrs Mary	<i>Collegiate Crescent.</i>
4 Harwood Mrs Hank.	Peckett Timothy	30 Stacey Mrs Ann
6 Eyre E. J. meat	<i>Sandoe Place.</i>	24 Steel Henry F. mfr
8 Oates Thomas, agent	3 Samuel B. manfr	20 Birks Edw, clerk
10 Hobbethwaite F.	5 Baker Wm. F., C. S.	28 Richardson S. mfr
16 Bell James, manfr	7 Cockayne Wm. jun.	32 Truswell Mrs Ann
Bramson Thomas, solr	9 Milliken Wm. mfr	34 White W. publisher
Frith Peter, manufr	11 Turton Mrs W. Y.	36 Radon J. A. mstr
Parker Samuel, gent	13 Barker G. gent	38 Jones John, draper
Bingham Edw. grocer	15 Murphy A. J. G.	40 Mountain Rev Thos.
Jessop Sidney, mfr	<i>MacKenzie Place.</i>	42 Earl H. H. agent
Dixon Mrs Ann	7 Harrop Alfred, mfr	44 Rodgers Jph. gent
Self John, manfr	9 Thornhill Charles	46 Spencer Wm. mfr
Cum Miss Mary	5 Broadley Jno. mfr	48 Cocker Samuel, mfr
Gilman Duncan	4 Bury W. T. merchant	Chambers Chas. next
<i>Broomgrove Crescent.</i>	8 Blacome Charles	Nebstrop Joseph, mfr
Taylor Mr. R. T.	2 Jones Mr J. H. & Mrs	Hutchinson Wm. mfr
Shera Hy. M. Esq.	1 Marsden George, mfr	Vickers Benj. manfr
Kirkby Samuel, mfr	Broomhall Park.	Sole Rev Dr. vicar
Gunn Mrs Isabella	Rusker Mr James Hy.	Abraham Miss E.
Osborn Samuel, mfr	Appleby Mrs Sarah	Rossell Henry, mfr
Broomhall Road.	Hunt Fild. <i>Broom Mall</i>	Adams John E. school
4 Moore Chas. traveller	Fowkes Major <i>do</i>	Fernell W. B. solr
Travis G. W. builder	Phillips Mrs & Miss <i>do</i>	Ward Rev E. D., Col.
Swettenham Miss A.	Phillips R. N., Esq. <i>do</i>	<i>Lyfiate School</i>
Dixon Mrs Ann	Crosses Jonathan, mfr	Roberts Miss M. A.
Lee Mrs Sarah	Doncaster Daniel, mfr	Haywood Mrs Mary
Simmonds Rev W. T.	Watson J. assayer	Coker Thos. F. mfr
Wood J. H. surveyor	Sissons Wm. gent	Briggs Wm. engineer
Broomhall Place.	Charles John, roller	Groves Mrs Mary
17 Wright Rev H. H.	Wightman Benj. solr	Parker Wm. merchant
19 Burdon Wm. F.	Wigham Mrs	Hawksley J. W. manfr
21 Wild Hy. & Misses	Fawcett Miss	Russell John, manfr
25 Newbould Mrs My.	Horson Wm. manfr	Paul Rev Richard
27 Ellison Misses	Cowlishaw J. V. mfr	Roberts Thos. clerk
29 Brown Saml. slater	Bury Edw. Jas. mfr	Milton Place.
31 Smith Miss L.	Shepherd R. M. & Mrs	Charles W. T. roller
33 Saville G. grocer	Fadley Wm. manfr	Casson Major
35 Birks W. H. brewer	Brinkley Mrs T.	Shirley John, traveller
37 Pearson Edw. clerk	Brinkbank A. mfr	Chamberlain Mr James
Brown Mr. Roger	Johnson Mrs H. S.	Bradbury Edw. mfr
<i>Weymouth Villas.</i>	Primrose Fild. Wm.	Bingham Mr George
Ward Wm. manufr	<i>Victoria Mount.</i>	Rutherford Wm. agt
Moordunne Mr James	Pearce Jph. sen. gent	<i>MacKenzie Crescent.</i>
Watson Mr George	Prest J. B. wine mfr	Rayner Thomas, solr
Beeth Mr John	Baines Chas. wine mfr	Barker Rand. traveller
<i>Sandy Bush.</i>	Allen Thomas, tailor	Strentfield E. B. mfr
Grindred Mrs Sarah	Salt Thos. auctioneer	Wrecks G. B. druggst
Powell John, traveller	Wild Charles, mfr	Whelan E. grocer
Wason Samuel, mfr	Lansden Rev R. C.	Legg Mr Wm.
	<i>Broomgrove Vale.</i>	Buxton H. Vincent
	Lothhouse Thos. agt	Schindfield Isaac, mfr

Figure 8.3: Directory page for 1860

Yet another group represented a constant presence: ladies with private incomes, though on occasion this might be supplemented by keeping a day or boarding school, though, in keeping with the genteel reputation of the estate, this was usually referred to as a 'ladies seminary'. Broomhall's homogeneity and carefully defined borders made it an ideal form of almost 'sheltered housing' for ladies living alone, if they were fortunate to have been left the means to enjoy it. Gentility and ease of access to the town made the estate a popular choice for 'relicts' and maiden ladies.

8.6.4 Movement

The level of prestige that Broomhall acquired as a residential area was established and maintained by the owner-occupiers who formed the earliest and longest-staying inhabitants. Such residents formed the fixed points around which the constantly changing tenants moved. Tenancy was much more common than home-ownership in the nineteenth century and this meant that the housing market needed to be much more responsive to individual needs. If a man decided that his financial situation was stable having selected a suitable location he would indulge himself by having a house custom-built, then the investment of capital, or a mortgage, would make him think twice before engaging in the trouble and expense of selling that house and re-locating. Things were much simpler for a tenant. Any capital he might have was placed either in his business or invested and he was only committed to a lease which might be for as little as three months. As each quarter day approached the local newspapers filled with advertisements extolling the virtues of property to let, Broomhall Park Estate being amongst the sites available.

As family circumstances changed with marriage, the arrival of children, grown children leaving home or the death of the breadwinner, then a house could readily be selected which was better suited to new circumstances. Following population moment in the area shows changes of address resulting from everything from business success or failure to crossing to the sunnier side of the street.

In this fluid housing market the flexibility of Broomhall's building leases and the resulting wide range of housing within its boundaries meant that it could satisfy a wide range of requirements. A number of Broomhall's residents were happy to confine their changes to the options available on the estate. It even allowed a bereft lady the possibility of staying in an area that she found congenial when her income was reduced to an annuity.

Even owner-occupiers had considerable choice. One of the earliest settlers, W.B. Fernell, took an acre site adjoining the Collegiate School and built himself a house there. Within a year he thought it might be an improvement to enlarge his grounds. The acre to the north had been provisionally assigned to a speculative builder, but as no building had actually begun he was able to acquire the site on condition that he built a substantial house there within five years. In the event the Watson family was content to allow him to develop it entirely as pleasure gardens and he remained in the house on its two acre garden until his death a quarter of a century later. By then his two sons were married and settled further west so it was sold to Leng, the newspaper proprietor. He, in turn, decided to buy the house on his northern boundary, either to control the use or as an investment that it would be easy to oversee. Similarly, Daniel Doncaster settled in Broomhall Road and, when his son eventually married, another house was acquired at the east end of the road then extra land with which to make an extensive garden.

Thus, all ranges of resident could be accommodated within the estate. Once attracted to Broomhall there was little need for a major re-location.

8.7 Conclusion

Broomhall's attractions were encapsulated in an advertisement placed anonymously in the *Sheffield Independent* in 1853 offering houses 'combining all the advantages of Country and Town, residences are well adapted to Gentlemen engaged in Business, being near to the Town, yet sufficiently removed from it to avoid all its nuisances.'⁵⁵

As almost all of Broomhall Park Estate predates legislation giving local authorities power over housing the density of housing was entirely determined by John Watson. Similarly the standard of housing and their amenities were the result of agreement between builder and ground landlord. The actual way the estate was laid out for development was also the decision of the ground landlord. Architects do not seem to have had much involvement with the design of individual houses, apart from the instance of Weightman, quoted above. A later development at the corner of Hanover Street and Ecclesall Road claimed to be the work of 'a respectable architect', but as it was being sold by the creditors of yet another bankrupt builder⁵⁶ it would seem that architectural involvement was not a happy association for Broomhall developers.

The resulting estate is a tribute to the intentions of Watson and the skill of his builders. It is difficult to imagine that local planning intervention or professional architectural expertise could have resulted in a significant improvement in the final result. The standard of workmanship and design is such that, walking around the estate, it is virtually impossible to identify the speculative buildings from those that were custom built. A remarkable feature of the estate is the community spirit that it seems to have engendered from an early period. The estate had a strong Quaker community, centring on the Doncaster and Barber families and others linked to them through marriage or religion. The group had a flourishing 'Pen and Pencil' society that existed for a number of years to encourage a mixture of pleasant social intercourse and an interest in the arts.⁵⁷ From the inter-marriage which took place on the estate it is clear that the residents shared a number of common interests in charitable affairs, culture and religion so that meeting on such formal occasions encouraged neighbourliness among many of the residents.

Opening the estate for building just as the housing market became buoyant and judging correctly what potential residents required, as well as the relatively small size of the estate resulted in a momentum of building which brought about the rapid completion of the estate. This avoided the long hiatus between initiating a scheme and its completion, which often resulted in both ground landlords and builders lowering their standards. Stone walls and mature trees confer unity on the estate and have allowed it to retain its special character even after decades of invasion by both university and commercial tenants. Broomhall was able to retain the reputation which rested on the large houses bordering Broomhall Road and the west end of Collegiate Crescent: the name 'Broomhall Park Estate' evoked the houses of the Vicar of Sheffield or Leng, the crusading newspaper owner. Although Wilton Place and Mackenzie Crescent might offer accommodation no better than could be found in other parts of the town they merged into the estate without disrupting the atmosphere of the area, allowing a man of modest means to share in the cachet associated with the largest houses on the estate.

⁵⁵ Sale brochure in the deeds of property in Collegiate Crescent in the Sheffield Hallam collection

⁵⁶ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*

⁵⁷ Doncaster, R. 'The Pen and Pencil Society 1868-1908', *Journal of the Hunter Archaeological Society*, 15, 1989, 48-55

Chapter 9

Endcliffe

9.1 Location and Topography

The area known as Endcliffe is shown on Map I. It lies between the Porter and Fulwood Road, bounded by Broomhill to the east and the Oakbrook, making the boundary between Ranmoor and Ecclesall, to the west, covering some 110 acres. The land is relatively sheltered and provides a pleasant south-facing slope, much less steep than that at Ranmoor, to the river. Endcliffe was relatively close to Sheffield, even in 1803 it was advertised as being about $\frac{1}{4}$ hour ride from the town.¹ As it lay quite close to the Glossop Road the completion of this road in 1821 would have made the ride much easier. By mid-century, it was also more easily accessible via Clarkehouse Road. The land was well-watered and was quite good for agriculture, containing two farms, Endcliffe Hall, and its smaller off-shoot, Endcliffe Grange. During the course of the nineteenth century internal boundaries passed through many changes as various owners attempted to adapt the estate for various building purposes.

Field-Book cxi, page 102.

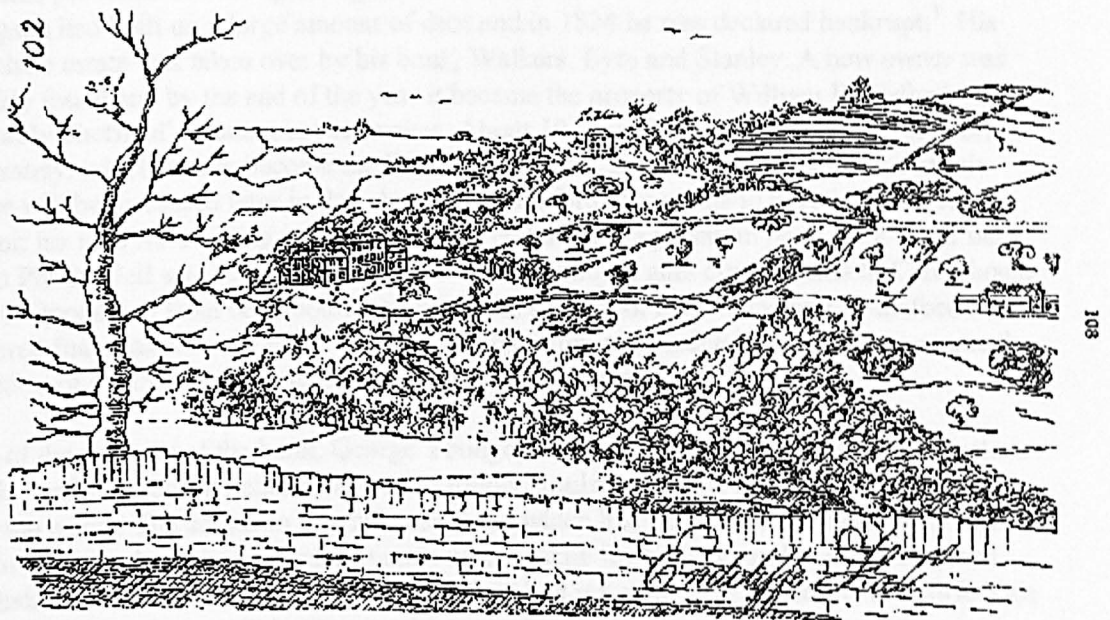


Figure 9.1: Fairbank's sketch of Endcliffe Hall

The best impression of Endcliffe early in the century is to be found in a sketch in a Fairbank Field-book². The view is taken from across the Porter; the river itself being mainly concealed from view, but the southern boundary of Endcliffe Wood indicates its course. The south-facing slope can be seen to rise ever more steeply, with only a few houses amongst a mixture of fields and woodland. Endcliffe Hall, as rebuilt by William Hodgson, is shown on the left and, on the right of the sketch, are the farm buildings and cottages that constituted

¹ The Iris 31 March 1803

² Hall, T.W. *The Fairbanks of Sheffield 1688-1848*. Sheffield: Northend, 1932. p. 108

Endcliffe Grange. Higher up the hill, midway between the two parts of Endcliffe, is Tapton Grove. Above Endcliffe Grange are two of the three fields that were soon to be the site of Endcliffe Crescent. The combination of farmland and woods with only a scattering of houses was typical of all the land considered in this study, only the degree of steepness varied.

9.2 Development

Changes of ownership at Endcliffe Hall were always pivotal to land usage of the area as a whole. At the beginning of the century Endcliffe Grange had already been added to the Broomhall Estate and by 1806 the Duke of Norfolk had sold off Endcliffe Hall itself. Despite its name the hall seems to have been allowed to become a run-down farmhouse. It was bought by Alexander Goodman, a prosperous silver plater who may have been attracted to the area as the uncle of his wife, William Shore, had settled at Tapton Grove, which was only separated from Endcliffe by the Fulwood Road. However, Goodman died in 1808 when still in his thirties and his widow moved back to Sheffield. The estate was bought by another silver plater, William Hodgson. The new owner seems to have been unmarried and devoted much time and energy to his new estate. The hall was virtually re-built and Hodgson extended his boundaries as far as the Grange, letting much of his land to tenant farmers as the Norfolk Estate had done.

The early part of the century was a difficult time for Sheffield trade and, either from business problems or over-spending on his new house, or a combination of both, by 1820 Hodgson had built up a large amount of debt and in 1824 he was declared bankrupt.³ His Endcliffe estate was taken over by his bank, Walkers, Eyre and Stanley. A new owner was quickly found and by the end of the year it became the property of William Brailsford, probably Sheffield's leading cabinetmaker. About 10 acres of the estate had been sold off separately, which was to become the Endcliffe Crescent Estate. (The development of this estate will be discussed later in this chapter.) Brailsford also seems to have intended to exploit his land for building purposes. To this end he paid a premium price for a small field when Phillip Gell sold Endcliffe Grange in 1826, hoping to gain direct access to Clarkehouse Road. Opposition from neighbours prevented the success of his scheme and Brailsford also suffered financial reverses so by 1836 he was bankrupt and Endcliffe once again became the property of a bank, in this instance Rimingtons and Younge.⁴

One of the partners of the bank, George Younge, was convinced that the best way to make a profit from this sudden acquisition was to follow Brailsford's plan and turn the area into a housing estate. The access to Clarkehouse Road which had been denied to Brailsford was obtained, a road was laid in order to open up the estate for building and a prospectus was published for the most exclusive estate Sheffield had yet seen, to be called the Endcliffe Vale Estate.⁵ (This scheme will be discussed later in this chapter.)

Endcliffe Hall and the land immediately surrounding it, as shown on Figure 9.2, was let to various tenants for two or three years and then it was sold to yet another silver-plater, Henry Wilkinson⁶. This owner seems to have made minor improvements to the hall but lived well within the income from his thriving business. After a successful business life, crowned by

³ Deeds of *Endcliffe Hall*, in the Yorkshire and Humberside TAVR collection of deeds.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Flockton. *View of Endcliffe Vale Estate.*

⁶ Deeds of *Endcliffe Hall*, in the Yorkshire and Humberside TAVR collection of deeds

being Master Cutler and Mayor of the borough of Sheffield, Wilkinson decided to retire to a smaller house at nearby Endcliffe Vale and the hall was once again sold, in 1863.⁷

The new owner, John Brown, brought the property to its brief hey-day. Brown immediately had the existing house demolished and replaced it with the mansion that was to be the largest and most expensive house Sheffield had seen. He also acquired the land adjoining his house, which had been part of the Endcliffe Vale Estate but, in twenty years, had failed to attract any builders. Brown's Endcliffe Hall Estate has been discussed together with the other 'great houses' of the area. In the context of the development of the Endcliffe area, it added to the reputation of the land in the vicinity and gave stability to the western edge until almost the end of the century.

By the end of the century Endcliffe had become three separate entities: Endcliffe Hall, Endcliffe Crescent Estate and Endcliffe Vale Estate. Change was beginning to take place in the last decade. Endcliffe Hall was sold. Brown's illness, the death of his wife and his increasingly long absences from Sheffield meant that the hall had long ceased to be a centre of social life. The new owners rented it out for weddings and parties and it dwindled to a shadow of its former splendour. Housing development took place on the land to the south of the house but at least it was of a character that did not jar with the existing houses of Endcliffe Vale. To the east, where Endcliffe bordered Brocco Bank, a more radical change took place. Here a number of small terraces appeared, quite respectable but far inferior to all the earlier building in the Endcliffe area, signalling that any remaining land would fall to clerks and small shopkeepers where once a single mansion might have stood.

Having outlined the general trend of development in the Endcliffe Crescent and Endcliffe Vale will be examined in more detail as examples of differing approaches to estate development.



Figure 9.2: Plan of Endcliffe Cresc.

9.2.1 Endcliffe Crescent

The first attempt to use Endcliffe land for a housing development followed quickly on the heels of the burst of building activity at Broomhill after the opening of the Glossop Road at the end of 1821. Three fields, which had been part of the Endcliffe Hall estate of the bankrupt William Hodgson, were advertised for sale in October 1824 and by December a sale had been concluded to the Endcliffe Building Company. Such a company seems to have been a novel idea for Sheffield as no evidence has been found of a similar enterprise either before or since.

The new company had nine members. Thomas James Parker and John Brown were partners in a law firm. Brown's brother-in-law, T.A. Ward, was also a member. Ward and another member, Charles Picksley, was an old friend from the

⁷ Ibid.

time when they were brother officers in the Volunteer force raised at the beginning of the century. Picksley in turn seems to have brought in John Green, his partner in the town's leading hardware business. Martin Marshall and Thomas Marsden appear to have been connected with the metal working trades so this could have brought them into contact with Ward who was an active member of the Cutlers' Company. Marsden also worked as a joiner so he would have practical knowledge of the building trade. It has been impossible to make a positive identification of the final member, James Appleby, but the above links would suggest that most of the participants were well known to each other, either socially or by way of business, prior to the formation of the scheme.

The few surviving records of the company give no indication of the organisation of the group, the origin of the scheme or what the participants hoped to achieve. Designated to sign documents on behalf of the company was T.A. Ward, who was an investor in many schemes, taking shares in everything from the Gas Company to the Music Hall. Although he makes passing references to such investments in his diaries and letters he appears to have not considered his involvement with this particular scheme worth mentioning. As all the original houses built by the company, together with almost all the later development, is now the property of the University of Sheffield it has been possible to study in considerable detail the manner in which the estate was developed.

The chosen site had a number of natural advantages. It was readily accessible from the town via the Glossop Road after which only a short stretch of the badly maintained Fulwood Road had to be travelled to reach the new estate. The site was well watered with a stream coming down the hill from the heights of Tapton and natural springs in the north west corner of the land. Here a reservoir was constructed from which water was piped to each house. This appears to have provided an unfailing supply as, even though the reservoir no longer exists, the area where it stood supported moss and squelched under foot even after the two most severe seasons of drought in Sheffield during the late twentieth century. The site also provided clay for bricks and kilns were provided on the site but once building was completed they were removed and residents were forbidden to extract further clay.

The charm of the proposed residential enclave lay in its setting; houses grouped around a sweeping carriage drive in a sylvan setting. A large central area was designated as a communal lawn and the building line ensured that each house stood well back on its plot, thus adding to the open aspect of the estate. All internal boundaries were kept to the minimum so that nothing could detract from the overall view. The layout of the scheme can be seen on Figure 2. Endcliffe Place, as it was referred to in early documents, was clearly intended for a superior clientele. The 'exceedingly picturesque site'⁸ of 'that delightful country retreat'⁹ was advertised as being suitable for the 'Gentleman and man of business'¹⁰ The exclusive nature of the development being indicated by the lodge guarding the main entrance from Fulwood Road. Having houses encircling a circular carriage drive on a private estate was a layout not previously seen in Sheffield. Business and pleasure (courting a young lady from Hackney) had taken Ward to London on many occasions in the previous decade, and the design may have been inspired by observing development in Regents Park and on the Eyre Estate at St. John's Wood.

The twenty-acre site bought by the company was laid out with building plots round a central area of about four acres, surrounded by a low hedge. Initially four pairs of semi-detached houses were built on the western edge of the estate. The expectation seems to have been that

⁸ *Sheffield Mercury*. 6 June, 1985

⁹ *Sheffield Mercury*. 13 June, 1835

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

a similar group might be erected on the eastern side, linked by a terrace to the north to give the effect of a large horse shoe shape cradling the central green area. By April 1827 the first group of houses was ready for occupation. It was hoped that the remaining building plots would attract 'Mansions or respectable Country Villas'¹¹ on plots of about one acre but it was almost 20 years before any further building took place. The Endcliffe Building Company did not wish 'to confine the purchaser or lessee to any particular style of elevation' but the plan 'must be approved by the parties as a guard against the erection of buildings of an objectionable description'¹². However, it was to be in the 1860s and 70s that the estate was completed by two large pairs of semi-detached houses on the eastern edge and two large villas to the north. By this time taste had changed and, instead of the uniformity advocated in the original documents of the company, later building was of stone, in the gothic style favoured in Broomhall and Broomhill.

Regulations concerning the early development of the estate were unusually strict, controlling not only the use of the central area but also the exterior of the houses and the planting allowed along plot boundaries. Semi-detached houses were described as 'two houses being one building', set on two ground plots which should 'appear to be as nearly like one entire plot as possible', nothing except a 'slight wire fence' was allowed to indicate the boundary between one house and the next. Only dwelling houses were to be allowed on the estate and they must keep to an agreed building line. Planting round the central area and in front of plots could only be of 'holly, privet, quick or some other live wood', no fences of 'dead wood' or any other material were allowed. Uniformity was also ensured by the requirement that any building of 'red or brick colour' must be 'stuccoed or cemented or coloured like stone or of a light colour'.¹³

Every effort was made to ensure that the estate would be preserved and maintained in the manner intended by the founding members of the company. The land was divided into twenty-four parts and each was allocated a number of 24ths according to his holding. Each member's portion determined the amount which he would be required to contribute to the maintenance of the reservoir, lead pipes leading from it, roads and the central lawn. Members were required each year to elect from their number one or two men to oversee the good management of the estate, a fine of £5 being payable for any refusal. Once having served, a member could not be called upon to serve until all other members had taken a turn.

The actual accommodation offered was quite modest, a relatively small house, usually set on a long narrow plot of about ½ acre. Each house had a dining room, 15'x15', and sitting room 15'x19', at the front and a morning room and kitchen at the back of a similar size. Four bedrooms of the same size above, together with servant accommodation above for those of three storeys completed the living space. All of the houses in Endcliffe Crescent are now used for university accommodation and the original fireplaces and doors have been removed, together with most of the original fittings. The few cornices and staircases that remain suggest that the original interiors were as restrained as the exteriors. Only the size of the rooms can be observed. They are well-proportioned, though they have the relatively low ceilings favoured in the Georgian period rather than having the high ceilings which were to be a feature of later building on the estate. Endcliffe houses were no more spacious than many that could be found much closer to the town; certainly they were more compact than the new houses bordering the Glossop Road at Broomhill. Direct comparison is not possible as the leases for houses at Broomhill only specified a minimum worth, £300 for the earliest houses and then £400 when it became apparent that the area was attracting a superior type

¹¹ Ibid.

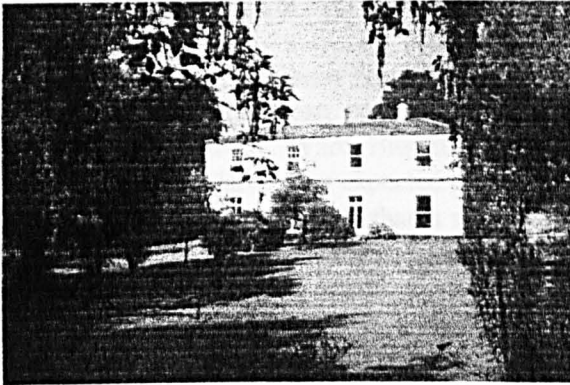
¹² *Sheffield Mercury*. 22 March, 1828

¹³ Deeds of Endcliffe Crescent property, in the University of Sheffield collection of deeds

of resident building for his own occupation. At Endcliffe, deeds stated that houses were to be of two types: two storeys and three storeys, the layout and size of rooms to be the same for each type. Once the four pairs of semi-detached houses were completed they were allocated to members by drawing lots. £800 was paid for a two storeys house and £900 for three storeys, any outbuildings would be an extra charge. Houses could be rented for £40 and £50 respectively.¹⁴

The remaining land on the estate was also allocated by lot. The narrow strip along the southern boundary was designated as allotments so that each of the completed houses could have a kitchen garden as well as the 'pleasure garden before each house'. Land to the north and east was intended for future building. It seems to have been assumed that this would be undertaken by at least some of the original members of the company. The standards of the estate were to be maintained by the requirement that any further pairs of semi-detached houses should cost no less than £800 and individual houses no less than £500. If a member leased his ground for building he was required to charge 1d per yard in ground rent.¹⁵

Although at least three of the original members of the company took up residence in the



Figures 9.3 and 9.4: Houses in Endcliffe Crescent

houses which they had had built, and the estate never seems to have wanted for tenants, further development was slow. Part of the problem may have lain with the very precise view the originators of the scheme had of how the estate should be constructed. Endcliffe Place offered a guarantee of a high standard of environment, its generous open spaces offering an aspect usually only to be found for a house standing in considerable grounds. The attractive lodges and the well-kept reservoir were all very desirable but they came with a price and they also required a degree of commitment from individual house owners. Olsen was of the opinion that 'Building leases remained in general loosely drawn on all estates in Sheffield throughout the century.'¹⁶ The regulations of the Endcliffe Building Company not only had the usual requirements of payment to establish and maintain the infrastructure, the exclusion of all trades, conforming to a building line and the use of a particular building fabric but also added costs of joint areas and severe restrictions on planting.¹⁷ Such extra commitments may well have deterred potential investors when the estate had to compete with other areas such as Broomhall, offering attractive surrounding with fewer overheads and restrictions.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Olsen. 'House upon house'. p. 344

¹⁷ Deeds of *Endcliffe Crescent* property, in the University of Sheffield collection of deeds.

It is difficult to make a direct comparison between costs of houses at Endcliffe Place and similar development in other parts of western Sheffield. Leases usually require that a house should be 'worth' at least a given sum. This seems to indicate that this should be the basic price at which the house could be sold, i.e. the cost of building plus a notional amount of about 15% for the builder's profit. The 'worth' quoted usually appears to bear no relationship to either what the house actually cost to build, nor what it was eventually sold for. 'Worth' seems to have been merely an indication of the basic figure beneath which a ground landlord was not willing to have spent on property on his estate. Builders invariably expended considerably more on the fabric of a house. In 1834 the Holy family issued the first lease on their land close to the Broomspring Bar. This required the house to be worth at least £300. On completion the house was sold for £728 [now 5 Claremont Place}. Although set on a relatively small plot the house was detached and provided accommodation a little larger than that on offer at Endcliffe.

The Endcliffe Building Company required that a house should 'cost' a set amount. It is not clear if this means basic cost of building, to which a builders profit would be added. In addition to the cost of the house the owner would have annual costs to support the communal area and have limited control over what he could plant in his own garden.

The Endcliffe Building Company seems to have intended its estate to attract men of taste, though not necessarily the most prosperous, from the professional men and merchants and manufacturers in the town. Ward, Brown, Parker and Pickslay were all members of this social group. It might have been expected that they would be in a better position to assess what would attract such a clientele than a speculative builder drawn from a much humbler place in society. The Endcliffe Building Company took just under 2 ½ years to move from the purchase of land to having houses ready for occupation. The scheme was begun at the time when Peter Spurr's Broomhill land was being leased at a very rapid rate but by 1827 the supply of potential builders was running dry in Broomhill. Endcliffe, being rather more remote stood less chance of attracting investors. It had the added disadvantage of overheads and unusually strong restrictions on what an owner might do with his property. Like the Broomhill landowners, the members of the Endcliffe Building Company found that they had over-estimated the number of affluent men who would wish to move out of Sheffield.

Architecture



Figure 9.5: Porch head

Apart from one pair of semi-detached houses, Endcliffe Crescent retains all its nineteenth century houses. Mature trees have been allowed to obscure the open effect intended by the founders of the estate so it is not possible to take a photograph conveying the effect of the original layout. Figures 9.3 and 9.4 indicate the great change in style and scale between the first stage of building and later development. The carved heads that decorate the porch of the house of Figure 9.5 are examples of a vogue that swept western Sheffield in the latter part of the century. They are to be found on very large houses, such as Riverdale, and there are so many in St. John's church that a number of elderly inhabitants have childhood memories of being kept occupied through long sermons by trying to count them. At the other end of the scale even very small terrace houses in Parker's Road, Broomhill, also have doorways adorned with the same range of medieval heads.

The first eight houses on the estate are in a very plain Georgian style. The white stucco walls are broken by sash windows with small panes and doors, at the side rather than facing the gardens, are without elaborate porticoes and are only relieved by unostentatious fanlights. However, the very plainness of the frontage adds to the pleasing contrast of the white walls against a green setting.

On the western side of the estate the two large semi-detached houses built in the second half of the century form a great contrast. They are built of rock-faced stone in an ornate gothic style. Barge-boarding and heavy gabled porches decorate these houses and windows are of large panes of glass, often set in a bay. A similar style of architecture was used for the two houses on the north side of the estate but these are very large houses with pretensions to be 'mansions'. The effect is heavy and in marked contrast to the lightness of the Georgian part of the crescent. As mentioned above, the building leases specified that all houses should not show any brickwork but be of stone, or have a stone-coloured finish. Whilst adhering to the letter of the lease the contrast between the stucco of the early houses and the rock-faced stone of the later additions stretches the terms of the lease in a manner which cannot have been envisaged by the founder members of the Endcliffe Building Company. However, despite variety of the estate has a unique charm and Tarn declared that 'The gem of the whole area [of Western Sheffield] without any doubt is Endcliffe Crescent'.¹⁸

9.2.2 Endcliffe Vale Estate

After the bankruptcy of William Brailsford in 1836 his bankers, Rimington and Younge, faced the task of retrieving as much as possible of their losses from the disposal of the estate. Despite the fact that Endcliffe Crescent had attracted no further investors since the completion of its first stage in 1827, George Younge was convinced that the best way for the bank to recoup its losses was to exploit the land as a superior housing development. To this end he had the up-and-coming architect, William Flockton, draw up a brochure outlining the scheme. The 'View of Endcliffe Vale Estate, showing its capabilities'¹⁹, issued in 1841, shows Flockton at his most exuberant. A splendid portrayal of the scheme, hand-coloured in some instances, showed sweeping roads and randomly placed houses, in a wide variety of styles, set down without any boundary walls. It was said to be a mixture of existing roads and houses mingled with possible development but the scene seems to be largely imaginary. The scheme has a passing resemblance to a plan which Decimus Burton drew up for Hove, but the nearest example of a great mixture of architectural styles in a rural setting was to be found at the village of Edensor, which the Duke of Devonshire had had built in the grounds of Chatsworth, in the then fashionable 'picturesque' manner. An aristocrat might compel his tenants to occupy an architectural fantasia but persuading Sheffield's merchant class to invest in such an exotic concept proved well nigh impossible.

The brochure showed a fairy-tale landscape dotted with various interpretations of the 'villa residence', no two being alike. Having described the nature of the site the written description indicates what might be found attractive when selecting a place of residence. Flockton announced that the new estate was intended for the 'Gentry, Merchants and Manufacturers of Sheffield and its vicinity'. Much emphasis was laid on the desirability of the site for 'it is generally admitted that the suburbs on the western side of Sheffield stand unrivalled... for the variety and richness of picturesque scenery interposed with numerous elegant suburban

¹⁸ Tarn. 'Sheffield'. p.182

¹⁹ Flockton. *View of Endcliffe Vale Estate*.

Residences and magnificent public Edifices'. However, 'none [of the sites] can excel, and very few will bear comparison with Endcliffe Vale' for the site 'is the climax of splendid and beautiful suburban scenery and salubrity... nothing to taint the atmosphere'. Besides having the most desirable south-east aspect a 'lofty range of hills rising immediately behind, forms a grand and imposing background to the whole, sheltering it from the NNW and NE winds'. Also the 'sylvan scenery' of the River Porter enhances the 'park-like scenery of the property... being surrounded also by other Estates appropriate to the most desirable purposes'. Attention was drawn to the proximity of the Botanical Gardens, the Collegiate and Wesleyan Schools and that the owners planned to allocate a site for a church. As all the forest trees shown and most of the shrubbery already existed there would be no need to wait twenty years before they provided 'that shelter, privacy and ornament, which is absolutely necessary to a country residence'. On a more practical level' the purest water' and various building materials were available on the site.¹

Ground was to be leased at 1d per yard on long leases and 'within a reasonable period' residents would be able to buy the freehold at the cost of twenty years' rent. Although Flockton correctly described the advantages of the site, if in rather florid language, such over-blown flights of fancy were not to Sheffield taste. The picture showed about thirty-six houses on the estate, of which, presumably, one was Endcliffe Hall and Endcliffe Crescent might also have been expected to figure, but the concept is so imaginative that it is impossible to be sure of identifying their place in the scheme. The 1851 O.S. shows that, despite the high hopes of George Younge and his architect, only six houses bordered the sweeping roads and carriage drives that had been laid across the estate to open it up for development. Of these only the house called Endcliffe Grange Cottage approaches the scale the landowners had hoped for. James Sanderson, of Sanderson Brothers, one of the earliest important steel- manufacturing firms of the town, took eight acres on the eastern edge of the estate, formerly the site of cottages used by farm labourers. A large house replaced the cottages, having a garden close to the house and a shrubbery with two ornamental lakes to the south. Another early settler was George Ridge, the publisher of the Sheffield Mercury, who took an acre site bordering the eastern end of Endcliffe Vale Road. Two further houses of modest size were built close by and, at the other end of the estate, William Younge, brother of George, had a pair of large semi-detached houses built and occupied one of them himself. Although the deeds² do not have a signed margin plan it seems possible that this pair of houses were designed by Flockton as they resemble a pair which he is known to have built only a few years earlier at Broomfield. George Younge, the prime mover of the scheme, was not attracted to the estate and remained at his original home, Sheaf House. Over the next thirty years a number of houses came to line Endcliffe Vale Road, though none approached the size of Endcliffe Grange Cottage.

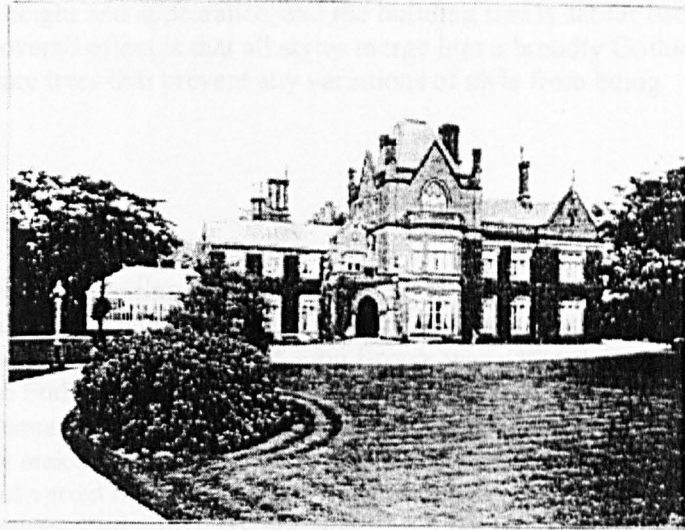
Endcliffe Vale Estate, like Endcliffe Crescent before it, demonstrated that Sheffield's inhabitants were not to be tempted by elaborate schemes. Further proof of this was to come with the disappointing response to the Ranmoor Land Societies. However, some of that very limited pool of very rich men continued to be attracted by the scenery of western Sheffield, but preferred to choose sites at random rather than be part of a planned estate.

¹ Ibid.

² Deeds of 91, *Endcliffe Vale Road*, in the owner's possession.

Architecture

Flockton's original concept for the Endcliffe Vale Estate runs through the whole gamut of architectural styles but the reality was to be much more mundane. The small houses at the east end of the estate are similar in size and style to those to be found in the Broomhill in areas such as Sale Hill or Lawson Road. The most splendid house on the estate Endcliffe Grange, is shown in Illustration 5, described as 'one of



1899. ENDCLIFFE GRANGE. RESIDENCE OF MR. C. W. KAYNE. SHEFFIELD ILLUSTRATED.

Figure 9.6: Endcliffe Grange

the most charming of the many beautiful suburban residences in which our merchant princes have their homes'³. It is an example of the way in which the increased level of prosperity in the town enabled greater amounts to be spent on housing. The first, and only, large plot taken in the late 1840s was taken by one of the town's largest steel producers at that time, indeed, the employer of various members of the Firth family who were later to be at the forefront of a new, and greater, wave of steel-makers.

In 1867 the Sanderson family sold the house, now called Endcliffe Grange, to Thomas Jessop. The Jessop family had been prosperous much longer than the Firths or John Brown, probably even longer than the Vickers family. As successful cutlers they had been able to have what was described as 'a pleasant and large house' with a beautiful garden and 'lake of considerable size' at Blast Lane before spread of industry made the area undesirable. Moving from cutlery to steel converting the family became wealthier. It seems to be an indication of the fact that housing was not a field of rivalry amongst manufacturers that, when his bid for Tapton Grove was unsuccessful, he did not increase his offer. When it came on the market within a year he allowed it to go to Edward Vickers. Although well able to afford land in the area and build a house to his own specifications he chose to live in rented accommodation at Sharrow for over a decade until the location of Endcliffe Grange and its potential for re-development took his fancy. Jessop's refurbishment of the house made no attempt to out-do any of the 'big three', although he was well able to afford to at least equal both Oakbrook and Tapton Hall. Rather it is yet another example of a house 'built for the owners convenience' without regard to what others might do. Jessop commissioned Charles Unwin, of a long-established but middle-ranking firm of Sheffield architects, to virtually re-build the house, retaining only the original west wing. The result was described as 'having in it much of the Tudor period, though not what architects call a 'pure example'⁴. This last phrase could be applied to almost any of Sheffield's domestic architecture, which always seems to have been governed by whatever client and architect found visually appealing, rather than conforming to any pre-determined standard. Improvements to house, outbuildings and garden were said to have cost about £10,000⁵ and

³ *Sheffield Illustrated*. p. 166

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

so it was probably the most expensive house to be built on the estate. As in other parts of western Sheffield, what all the houses have in common is that they are all built of stone, all have stone walls of the same height and appearance, and the building line is set far back on each plot. From the road the overall effect is that all styles merge into a broadly Gothic effect, often set amongst mature trees that prevent any variations of style from being obtrusive.

9.3 Residents

Endcliffe Hall attracted a number of leading silver platers in the first half of the century and Henry Wilkinson played an active part in local politics, becoming Mayor while living at Endcliffe Hall. The next owner of Endcliffe Hall, Sir John Brown was without doubt the most important resident in the Endcliffe area. However, the two owners of what came to be known as Endcliffe Grange, James Sanderson and then Thomas Jessop, were only slightly lower in the hierarchy of steel makers. The residents of the slow and patchy development bordering Endcliffe Vale Road varied from a newspaper publisher to a brewer, but all were men in comfortable circumstances. Endcliffe Crescent, apart from the two large houses that bordered Fulwood Road, tended to attract professional men such as the attorneys Brown and Parker who had been members of the Endcliffe Building Company. The rented property on the Endcliffe Crescent estate was a popular roosting place for men on the way up, such as Mark Firth before he built Oakbrook and Samuel Butcher before he moved to the grandeur of Banner Cross. A large number of the residents were probably known to each other by way of business but Endcliffe does not seem to have had any distinctive social life of its own and, especially after the building of St. John's, the common ground seems to have been found at Ranmoor.

9.4 Conclusion

The three elements that constituted the Endcliffe area melded to make a pleasing whole, despite the great variety of types of development and the time span in which that development took place. Endcliffe retained a high reputation as a desirable residential area throughout the century and only the building society area close to Brocco Bank brought a touch of lower middle class housing to the area at the end of the century. This was not sufficient to detract from the high reputation enjoyed by the neighbourhood.

Chapter 10

Ranmoor

10.1 Introduction

Ranmoor was the last of the western suburbs to be developed. It is something of an anomaly, for the name became synonymous with the highest level of housing in the Sheffield area yet it contains the largest number of housing estates that did not achieve the success hoped for by the proprietors. This case study will consider how reputation and reality came into being.

10.2 Location

Ranmoor is the only suburb to lie in the 'extensive, wild and thinly populated'¹ township of Upper Hallam, the township that makes up the north-west part of the parish of Sheffield. In 1801 the township had a population of only 797 spread over its 8,836 acres, making it the largest and most sparsely populated township in the parish. Although the population increased slowly during the first half of the century, and rather more quickly in the second half, Upper Hallam retained its position well to the bottom of the league of township populations.

The reconstructed map of Harrison's survey of 1637² shows only a single unnamed habitation south of the point where a number of tracks straggled westward. By 1795 Fairbank's map³ gives the same meeting of tracks as 'Ranmoor', one of a number of scattered hamlets in the township. Ranmoor lay on the border of Upper and Nether Hallam, and was divided into Upper and Lower Ranmoor. The hamlet lay close to the point where the road going west from Sheffield to Fulwood met a road going north to Sandygate and Crosspool. Upper Hallam is a very hilly region, with the land rising ever more steeply from the valley of the Porter and becoming wilder as one moves west. Thus, of all the settlements in Upper Hallam, Ranmoor was best placed to be a site for housing development as it was the area closest to Sheffield and lay on ground which, while sloping fairly steeply, was not precipitous like that to the north and west. It was also relatively accessible as it lay close to the main road connecting Sheffield with Upper Hallam. The road, though going over difficult terrain and poorly maintained, at least gave direct access to the area and was capable of improvement by any developer who was sufficiently determined and wealthy.

In addition to the problem of establishing good all-weather access to Ranmoor and building on its steep hillsides, the height of the land and its exposed nature resulted in a climate more severe than that to be found closer to the town: snow comes earlier and lies longer in Upper Hallam and both gardens and houses need protection from the winds that buffet the area. Despite these disadvantages Ranmoor offered the attraction of fine, unbroken views across the Porter, unpolluted air, low rates and an abundance of land which was somewhat cheaper than that available closer to the town.

¹ White. *History and general directory*. 1833. p120

² Scurfield. 'Seventeenth-Century Sheffield'. p.156

³ Fairbank. *Map of the parish of Sheffield*.

10.3 Land ownership

As shown on the Harrison map⁴, Upper Hallam land had been owned by the Dukes of Norfolk but it was amongst the first of the Norfolk lands in the west to be sold in order to finance improvements to the town. Some of the most westerly land was sold under the first act of Parliament allowing such sales in 1784.⁵ Acts in 1802, 1805 and 1810⁶ allowed further sales that included all the land in the Ranmoor area.

The new landowners, such as Edward Sheardown and members of the Pye-Smith family, were prosperous men who were investing money made in Sheffield and they did not settle in the area. In some cases, however, notably the Elliott family, Norfolk tenants were able to buy their land and continued farming, sometimes extending their holdings. Even in the Ranmoor area Upper Hallam does not provide good farming land and the rental or income from farming was relatively low. Noting the way in which the value of agricultural land in the east increased when it was sold for building purposes Upper Hallam landowners were willing to sell whenever a buyer could be found.

10.4 Communications

The opening of the Glossop Road had made Broomhill much easier to reach and so more attractive to potential developers. For Ranmoor, up to two miles further west and situated in much more rugged country, the question of access was even more important. Broomhill and Ranmoor were linked by the old track which had crossed the common land of Crookesmoor and then wound out to Fulwood, making steep turns to avoid the most difficult terrain and boggy sections caused by the streams draining down to the Porter from the heights of Ranmoor. Nether Hallam had traditionally maintained the portion of the road that had crossed the common but the Enclosure Award gave the land to the north of the road to Ecclesall. This led to a wrangle between the two authorities, which began with the Award in 1788 and was still simmering in 1853, so a bad road was made worse by lack of maintenance.

At a Vestry meeting in 1859 the inhabitants of Upper Hallam met to consider the problems of the road as it passed through their township. They were asked to consider the proposition that they should 'take into consideration the necessity of repairing the watercourse and raising and widening the road at Oakbrook and levelling part of the road between Oakbrook and the Ranmoor Inn'⁷. Although the road looks relatively straight on contemporary maps it was pointed out that where the road passed Tapton Hall there was 'a somewhat deep hollow and an awkward bend' and it was suggested that the road might be straightened and the hollow filled. Beyond this point the road passed between the land of Oakbrook to the south and a farm owned by the Trustees of the Boys' Charity School to the north. Here the road climbed a small knoll and required further straightening. The need for action was admitted but the fear of expense, especially for costly drainage, deterred action and so a committee was once again formed to consider the problem further.

⁴ Scurfield. *Seventeenth century Sheffield*.

⁵ Hunter. *Hallamshire*. p.158

⁶ *Ibid.* p.162

⁷ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* 25 June, 1859

Yet more difficulties existed further west where the road, still classed as merely 'the public cart track to Fulwood'⁸, needing to avoid difficult ground, made 'a steep curve to the left, followed immediately afterwards by an equally steep ascent to the right, thus in fact forming a semi-circle of steep ascent and descent'⁹. Wostenholm, who owned the land within the semi-circle, had turned an old footpath into a road and offered to allow it to become a public road if he was reimbursed for the cost of making the road, the land to be a gift to the township. The meeting rejected this suggestion out of hand but, eventually, reason prevailed and later in the century the road was adopted and now forms the line of the road to Fulwood.

Despite the rejection of plans for improvement in 1859 the pressure of Mark Firth, the new owner of Oakbrook, and the influence of other wealthy men who settled in the area in the 1860s, the road was eventually improved. Even before improvement took place an omnibus was advertised¹⁰ as running from Sheffield to the Ranmoor Inn four times a day by 1854 so the area was reachable, even if with difficulty, not only by the rich steel makers who came west but also by those without private transport.

James Dixon, a resident of the area from early childhood, recalled¹¹ that he began his working life by riding to the family business at Cornish Place from Stumperlowe Hall, which formed one of the westward boundaries of the Ranmoor Land Societies which were to develop the area. As a young, married man he remained in the neighbourhood and had to rely on a variety of transport, ranging from the omnibus to borrowing his father's carriage for formal occasions. As a child his mother's preferred means of transporting her eight children was by driving them in the family wagonette. Despite an early advertisement declaring that Ranmoor was an easy walking distance from Sheffield it is in fact a long steep climb even to the Ranmoor Inn and increasingly so to reach any of the Land Society estates. Those on the far western edge of the area were at least fifteen minutes walk from the omnibus stop. Without a variety of means of transport available both the breadwinner and his family were remote from the town or sources of even the most basic requirements to a greater extent than in any existing suburb.

Ease of communication with Sheffield does not seem to have been a crucial factor in the development of the Ranmoor area. At mid-century, despite being only connected to the town by the track which had served a handful of residents for centuries, it attracted rich settlers such as Mark Firth to Oakbrook and the Dixon and Laycock families to even more remote Stumperlowe. Yet even though the coming of an omnibus service in the fifties and road improvement in the sixties brought a small expansion in the number of middle-class residents this was not to anything like the extent hoped for by the members of the various Land Societies. The charm of Ranmoor's open spaces attracted a small number of men who had a taste for such things, but the remoteness of its location and a climate rather more severe than that of Sheffield were enough to deter large numbers of settlers.

10.5 Development

By the end of the nineteenth century Ranmoor was regarded as the most desirable of the western suburbs but development did not really begin until about 1860. Unlike Broomhill, Ranmoor was not a green-field site. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, it was a

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* 5 August, 1854

¹¹ Newspaper cutting from unknown source in the Wilson (of Sharrow) family papers.

small, but thriving, hamlet, with the inhabitants engaged in industry rather than agriculture. Two sandstone quarries and the Ranmoor Cutlery Works provided employment and individual craftsmen worked wheels on various streams in the area. Directories suggest that for the first half of the century growth was slow but by 1813 Ranmoor had a Wesleyan Chapel and this was later followed by a school. A beer house developed into a public house and eventually the hamlet had two public houses, the Highland Laddie and the Ranmoor Inn, and a grocer's shop. This would suggest that Ranmoor was regarded as a focal point for the scattered farms in the area as well as by the cutlers and quarry workers. By 1851 a short terrace had been built and a few cottages from which a small number of residents commuted to Sheffield from this remote but healthy spot but even by 1854 it was described as merely 'a hamlet with a Methodist Chapel. Here are steelworks.'¹²

Despite this unprepossessing description, Ranmoor had already attracted a developer. The first major purchaser of land with a view to housing development occurred in 1853 when George Wostenholm of Sharrow, one of Sheffield's leading cutlers. He is usually regarded as being single-minded in his pursuit of excellence and success in his chosen trade, even refusing public honours when they conflicted with his business trips. However, if he had a hobby, it might be said to be housing. No statement has been traced that explains his dabbling in housing: he certainly did not need a supplementary source of income and, even if he had, as an astute business man he would not have looked for it in the uncertain field of estate development. Endcliffe Crescent and Endcliffe Vale were nearby examples of how difficult it could be to create a successful residential area. It has been suggested that Wostenholm was impressed by townships which he had seen on his many trips to America and that this stimulated him to build his house, Kenwood, and lay out part of the surrounding land as a tree-lined housing estate calculated to attract very prosperous residents.

As he began to lay out his Kenwood estate, Wostenholm took a bold step and bought land to the west of the township of Ranmoor in 1853. This was 26½ acres of the Storth fields that were owned by Edward Sheardown and rented to tenant farmers. The land was sloping, uneven, poor farming land and not an obvious choice for a building site. Its attraction was in it lying close to the road to Sheffield, partially bounded by other tracks and having a footpath crossing the centre of the estate. Thus, its main advantage seems to have been the possibility of opening up lines of communication in a number of directions, though it was clear that a programme of road improvement was required to make the site attractive to potential builders.

Having paid £5,600 for the land, Wostenholm made a further investment in the property by up-grading the foot-path and constructing two roads (to be called Gladstone and Graham Roads) at a cost which he estimated to be £500 for a total distance which had taken up 1 acre of his land. He claimed this was now worth almost £500¹³. The new roads, as shown on Map 2, opened up the estate in two curves linking existing roads to the western edge of his land. Wostenholm raised a mortgage of £3,000 on the property so he had annual interest rates of 5% to meet. Part of this outlay was met by selling off four plots, each of about one acre, for building purposes. In every case the price was almost twice that which he had paid in 1853 but this could probably be justified as his road making was improving the value of the area.

¹² *Post Office Directory of Sheffield, with the neighbouring towns and villages*. London: Kelly & Co., 1854. p. 58

¹³ Deeds of *Storth Lodge*, in the University of Sheffield collection of deeds

By 1859 he wished to safeguard against further expense by applying to the Upper Hallam Vestry to have his roads adopted as public highways. He suggested that throwing the road open would be a great public improvement and that gentlemen living in the immediate locality were willing to subscribe to the cost of further improvements of communication in the area, for which he would supply the land¹⁴. This proposition was supported by Holmes, the Local Authority Surveyor, as being likely to encourage building and increase the rateable value of the township. Possibly fearing encroachment on their fine views and the attraction of settlers who might become a charge on the rates rather than raising rateable value, the proposal was rejected. This rebuff may have dampened Wostenholm's enthusiasm for his project though he retained his land for some time, selling a large plot to Mark Firth in 1861 for the building of the New Connexion Theological College, an addition which added considerable status to the area. In December 1861 he withdrew completely from Upper Hallam. The four plots he had sold realised £2,168 and the bulk of the estate was sold in 1861 for £7,488, making a surplus of £4,074 on his original investment. Even if it is assumed that he retained his £3,000 mortgage for the full eight years and paid interest of £1,200 as well as spending £500 on roads, he had still made a profit of £2,374, possibly a little more, as those buying plots were required to contribute to the cost of road building. The total profit of the transaction was considerably in excess of having the capital invested to bring in the usual return of 5%.¹⁵

After 1861 Wostenholm was involved in Land Society development in the land near his home but these developments were intended for those with more modest resources than the minimum house worth of £500 which he had required in Upper Hallam. The motivation for his scheme at Ranmoor is still obscure. When he bought the land in 1853 the main centre of suburban development was Broomhill. In that year much of Broomhill land to the north of Fulwood Road became available for building for the first time. Both Cadman and Fowler were advertising building land so, although there was an increase of building after mid-century, there was no reason to think that there would be insufficient land available to supply demand. Should Broomhill become too urban then much of Endcliffe Crescent and Endcliffe Vale remained vacant, offering sites much more accessible and less exposed.

However, by the time that Wostenholm sold his land important changes were beginning to take place in the housing market. In 1853 Tapton Grove, the most westerly estate of Nether Hallam came on the market following the death of its owner¹⁶. As explained elsewhere its new owner planned to turn it into a housing estate but without success. It was soon re-sold and the new owner, Edward Vickers, one of the town's leading steel makers, had the house demolished and replaced by a larger and more modern mansion. This lack of success of the Tapton enterprise might have been taken to indicate that there was no market for housing estate development further west and so Wostenholm was doomed to failure. Moreover, the arrival of Vickers heralded a change of the character of the area. By 1858 another steel maker, Mark Firth, bought a farm close to Tapton Hall (as Tapton Grove had been renamed). The crucial difference was that the farm, Oakbrook, lay over the township boundary and was in the part of Upper Hallam known loosely as Ranmoor.

Firth attended the same Vestry Meeting of 1859 at which Wostenholm failed to find support for his road building program in order to press his own desire for road improvements, offering financial aid. This offer was met with little enthusiasm but Firth declared that he would remain in the area and build his house at Oakbrook, with or without

¹⁴ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 25 June, 1859

¹⁵ Ling. *The freehold land societies*. p.25

¹⁶ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* 14 May, 1853

road improvements¹⁷. Pressure from Firth and his supporters eventually led to improvement of Fulwood as it passed between Tapton Hall and Oakbrook to the junction of roads at Ranmoor. By the end of 1859 the Trustees of the Boys' Charity School, who owned the land between Tapton Hall and the hamlet of Ranmoor, were seeking advice from their surveyor, T.J. Flockton, on how best to attract buyers to their land of the calibre of Vickers and Firth¹⁸. Thus a process began which was to result in the greatest concentration of large houses in any part of Sheffield. The arrival of John Brown at Endcliffe Hall made the area the site of Sheffield's greatest mansion.

Firth was referred to as 'the pioneer of Ranmoor'¹⁹ and certainly he contributed to the improvement of communication in the area. At the time of the royal visit to Oakbrook a local newspaper noted that 'After he erected Oakbrook, gas and water found their way to the locality'. It also credited him with at least partly inspiring 'the rage for Ranmoor' which had resulted in 'many pleasant places being crowned with the finest residences in the neighbourhood – the homes of the merchant princes of Hallamshire'. However, Firth was primarily concerned with housing for his personal needs rather than any scheme for suburban development. His wealth and status gave him influence with bodies such as the Vestry Meeting that facilitated the bringing of amenities to the area in which his house was situated. No doubt visitors to his home noted that Oakbrook had a pleasant location yet was still accessible for a man with business concerns in the town. Firth's example attracted two of his brothers to settle in the area. This clutch of Firths may well have contributed to giving Ranmoor its reputation as the most prestigious of the western suburbs. Although the example of Firth may have encouraged others in the highest income bracket to come to the area the most distinctive form of development in the vicinity of Ranmoor took place as a result of the setting up of a number of Land Societies.

10.6 Land Societies

M.C. Ling's thesis on the Ranmoor Land Societies²⁰ considers this type of development from the aspect of a town planner. His comprehensive survey gives a very useful view of how these societies were established and of their varying fortunes. He describes the chief function of such societies as 'to purchase an estate of freehold land, to divide it into individual allotments and to sell these off to the members of the society at a price considerably less than they would otherwise have to pay for a plot of a similar size on the open market.'²¹ Such societies became very popular after the Reform Act of 1832, which gave the franchise to forty-shilling freeholders. This method of giving artisans the possibility of influencing affairs was especially attractive in Sheffield with its very independently minded work force and land society development took place in the Walkley area. When Wostenholm withdrew from Ranmoor he became involved with a number of such societies, beginning with the Nether Edge Land Society, which occupied land close to his home, Kenwood.

Ling was of the opinion that 'The man to whom we can give the credit for introducing the land society idea to outer Sheffield' was Wostenholm.²² However, The Ranmoor Land Societies do not seem to have been driven by the same wish for self-help found in other

¹⁷ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* 25 June 1859

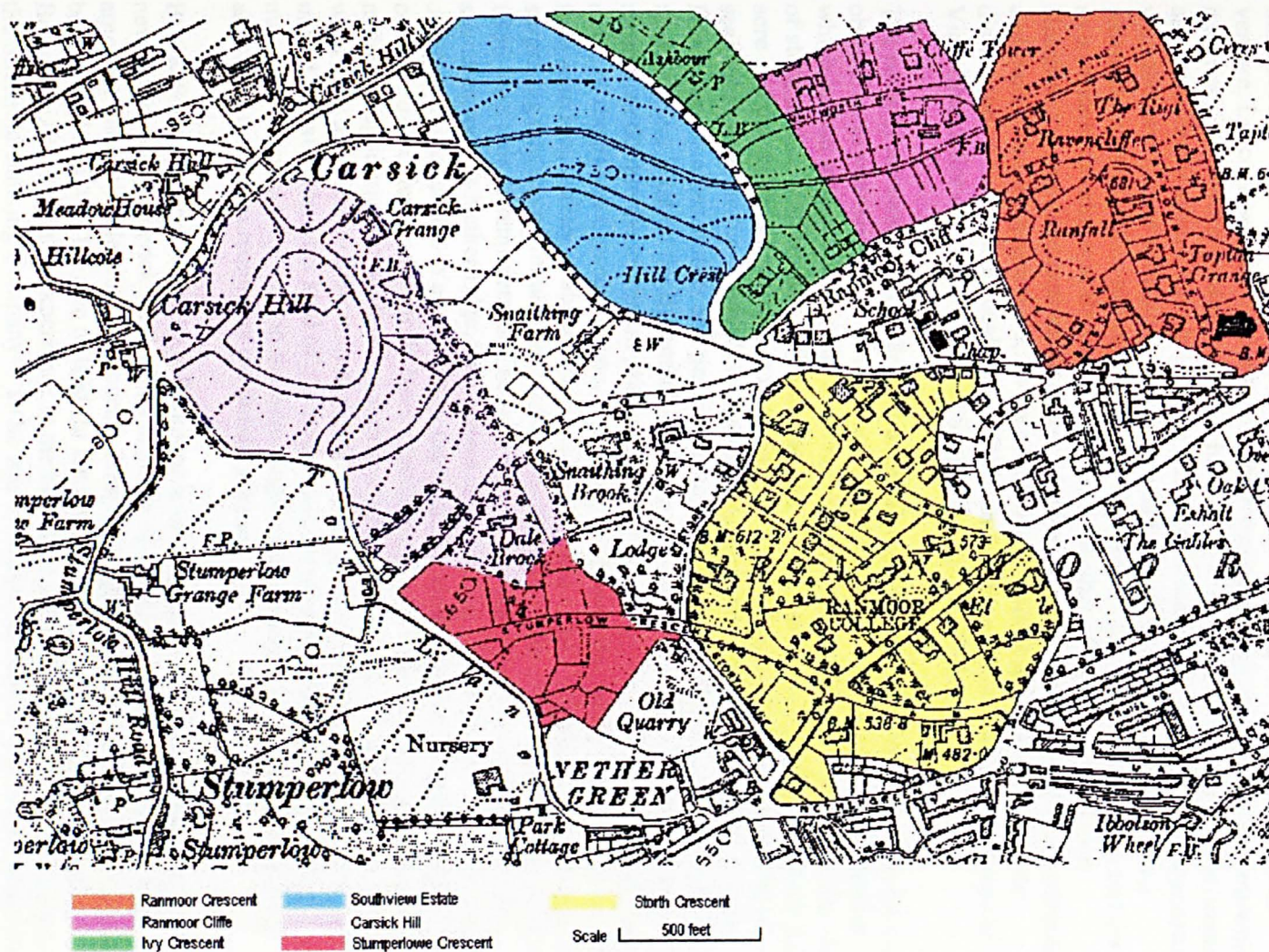
¹⁸ *Deeds of Thornbury*, in the Sheffield Area Health Authority collection of deeds...

¹⁹ *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*. 14 August 1875

²⁰ Ling. *The freehold land societies*.

²¹ *Ibid.* p. 11

²² *Ibid.* p. 22



Map 7: Ranmoor Land Societies

parts of Sheffield. The first society to be set up was on the land which Wostenholm had developed, the land passing initially to a middle-man, Thomas Steade, a developer and builder with whom Wostenholm frequently worked in Sharrow. Steade immediately sold to the consortium which was to set up the society proper. The new owners were W.E. Laycock, William Jeffrey and Henry Hutchinson²³. It is difficult to suggest what might have brought what seem to be three very disparate men together on such a business venture. Laycock was the town's leading hair-seating manufacturer, a family firm which he had made sufficiently profitable enable him to buy Stumperlowe Grange by mid-century and transform it from a farm house into a country house which could stand comparison with the new houses springing up at Tapton and Endcliffe. William Jeffrey was a pawnbroker living close to John Hobson at Taptonville, the estate that Hobson had created as a resident developer at Broomhill. The third member of the group was Henry Hutchinson, a surgical instrument maker who had bought a large plot from Wostenholm and built himself a house there, a villa of relatively modest size but which had the distinction of having been designed by William Flockton. (Storth Lodge, residence of the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sheffield until the 1990s.)

The rules of the new society were a strange mixture²⁴. The land had been sold with the obligation to maintain the strict covenants that Wostenholm had imposed on the plots which he had sold previously: the usual restrictions against all forms of trade, houses to be of stone and to conform to a building line. Each of the early plots sold was of about one acre and the minimum worth was to be £400 or £500. Size of plot and worth of house seemed to indicate the standards of the best houses in an area like Broomhall. Indeed, Hutchinson's elder brother and partner in the family firm had the distinction of taking the first building lease on the Broomhall Park Estate. Henry Hutchinson built a house worth more than double the minimum price required. The society was launched in 1862 under the name of the Storth Crescent Estate. The estate of some twenty-six acres was divided in to forty-one lots, mainly of about ½ acre. Given the size of plot and the strict covenants it is surprising that the minimum worth of houses on most of the estate was £200 for a villa and £350 for a pair of semi-detached houses. Such costs seem more appropriate for land societies such as Nether Edge, which were aimed at the *petite bourgeoisie* rather than that of a prestigious estate. Yet, even with the regular omnibus service established by mid-century, the society could hardly have expected to tempt large numbers of such people to make a long journey to work. Also, it seems unlikely that Laycock and Hutchinson would want such an estate on their doorstep. Although the society appeared to be sending out mixed signals as to what kind of clientele it wished to attract the plots were sold and a number of houses were built in the following decades, mainly of a value considerably above the minimum require by the building leases.

By 1869 a private developer took Ranmoor land to use as a private building estate. The new owner was Frederick Bardwell, a member of the Bardwell family who had been amongst Sheffield's leading auctioneers for most of the century, Bardwell senior having been associated with the sale of land for the Endcliffe Building Company in 1824.²⁵ Besides his considerable experience in the housing market Bardwell was also a director of the Sheffield Banking Company²⁶ so he was in a good position to assess the mood of the town.

²³ Deeds of *Storth Lodge*, in the University of Sheffield collection of deeds

²⁴ Ling. *The freehold land societies*. p.23.

²⁵ Deeds of the *Endcliffe Building Company*, in the University of Sheffield collection of deeds

²⁶ Leader. *The Sheffield Banking Company*. p. 86

In 1869 the heirs of George Waterfall advertised land which was 'well-fitted for the erection of First Class houses... in the immediate neighbourhood of newly-built mansions of Mark Firth Esq.; James William Harrison Esq.; and W. Howson Esq.'²⁷ Bardwell bought the land, 8.3.18 acres, for £5,000, approximately £550 per acre.²⁸ The land, known as the Upper and Lower Robin Fields lay in a very favourable site for development as it adjoined the estate of the Boys' Charity School Commissioners which, as the advertisement noted, had already been used for prestigious housing. Of all Ranmoor's available land it was the most easterly and so closest to the town. The site sloped quite steeply, which gave fine views over the valley and ensured that it was well drained. The conduit of the Sheffield Water Company crossed the northern part of the field so an alternative source of water was readily available.

As the estate was long and narrow, stretching up hill and tapering at the northern end, Bardwell decided upon a simple road pattern. The northern tip was cut off and from this building plot a road ran downhill, splitting the site in two and connecting all building plots with Ranmoor Road and thence to Fulwood Road. That this was intended to be an up-market estate was indicated by the fact that building leases required houses to be worth at least £1,000 or a pair of semi-detached houses to be worth £1,500. This was a basic value set well above the level set by any existing or future land society. Broomhall Park Estate also set much lower rates but the actual worth of the best houses built on the estate was over £1,000 so Bardwell seems to have been hoping for a similar level of development. He re-named his estate the Ranmoor Park Estate and the 'Park Estate' part of the title may have been an attempt to link it in the public mind with Broomhall, the most successful of the inner suburban developments. However, it did not offer the curving roads and lodge gates that marked Broomhall as a superior development.

By 1874 Bardwell had sold seven building leases but after 1875 demand weakened. Bardwell was well placed to be aware of the state of the housing market, expansion was slowing down and the supply of housing for the prosperous classes was exceeding demand. As a single owner Bardwell had been able to adapt his land quickly to a marketable state and once the housing climate was no longer favourable he was able to withdraw just as quickly, having found a buyer who took a more sanguine view of the housing situation.

10.7 Ranmoor Crescent Estate

The buyer of Bardwell's land was F.E. Leggoe.²⁹ Although listed in contemporary directories³⁰ as a steel merchant, Leggoe had been involved in a number of building schemes. In 1869 he had bought the Watt Field which adjoined Bardwell's land to the west, then in 1875 he sold it together with Bardwell's land to D.H.Q. Coupe and T.P. Peel. Even before buying the land Coupe and Peel, acting as part of a Provisional Committee of five members, had issued an 'Estate Prospectus', indicating that the new society was to be conducted in the same way as the Storth Crescent Estate. When the roads and sewers were finally completed modifications were made to the original estate plan, allowing for thirty-six plots rather than the thirty-one originally envisaged. However, increased capacity was not met by increased demand. Even when plots were sold no houses were actually erected even though the minimum worth was set at £800 for a detached house or £1,200 for a pair of semi-detached houses, considerably below the level set by Bardwell. The O.S. of 1890

²⁷ Ling. *The freehold land societies*. p. 75

²⁸ Deeds of *Ranfall*, in the Sheffield Area Health Authority collection of deeds

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ White. *General directory and topography*. p. 120

shows a field with roads and not a single house built on the original Ranmoor Crescent land.³¹

Part of the problem may have lain with the nature of the site. It had been opened up by putting an east-west road connecting Cross Pool Road with Darwin Lane across the northern tip, following the line of the Sheffield Water Works Company conduit. A serpentine road, which was to give the estate its name, wound through the lower part. This winding road was made for practical as well as cosmetic reasons since the steepness of the west side of the field made it a difficult building site. The steepness of the plots on the western side may well have deterred potential buyers. When building finally took place in the twentieth century gardens had to be made in a series of narrow terraces above which the houses tower like ramparts, accessible only by steep steps.

Despite the waning interest in the existing estates further Land Societies were formed, though the land available for purchase was further west and more rugged in character and so might be supposed to be even less attractive to potential investors. By the 1880s the Ivy Crescent, Stumperlowe Crescent Estate, Carsick Hill, Ranmoor Cliffe and Snaithing Park Estates had been formed. Their relative positions can be seen on Map 2. As adjoining land was taken up, proprietors reached agreement so that roads linked estate to estate and to the main link with Sheffield, the Fulwood Road. The O.S. of 1890 shows the very limited success of the societies. The main contribution which the Societies made to the area seems to have been the establishment of an elegant network of curved roads which set the layout for building which was not to take place until the next century. The strict covenants of the land societies prevented the whole area from being used for any kind of mixed industrial or commercial development or the building of small terrace houses. Stone was established as the required building fabric so that, as with the inner suburbs, houses and their boundary walls have an element of homogeneity even though they may have been built half a century apart.

Although actual building in the Ranmoor area was limited landowners further west still cherished hopes of turning their farmland into building sites. Both H.I. Dixon of Stumperlowe Hall and Laycock of Stumperlowe Grange had taken the opportunity of extending their estates by acquiring adjoining farmland whenever they became available. The deeds of both houses³² have estate plans of the 1880s and 1890s showing 'proposed roads', often linking with neighbouring estates. The roads were never made but the plans demonstrate that even some of Sheffield's wealthiest citizens were willing to profit from parts of their estates falling to the builder. Just as, at the beginning of the century, land at Broomhill, Broomhall and Endcliffe had far exceeded the demand for middle-class housing, the same situation existed on the far western fringes at the end of the century.

In the course of the nineteenth century land values in the Ranmoor area rose considerably. The Norfolk Estate sold the poor farm land at £60 per acre, about half the amount that Gell could command for Broomhall land. In 1854 Wostenholm was prepared to pay £200 per acre for such land with a view to exploiting its potential as building land. After laying down the foundations for such development he was able to sell the land on at £400, though claiming that it was worth at least £500. In 1859 T.J. Flockton was advising the Town Trustees that their land, which lay to the east and was better suited to development, could command £500 for small lots and £400 for larger areas. In the event they received more than £600 per acre only a few years later. Ling suggests that land prices for later land society land was much higher, rising to £800 for Carsick Hill and in the region of £1,200

³¹ Deeds of *Ranfall*, in the Sheffield Area Health Authority collection of deeds

³² Deeds of *Fulwood House*, in the Trent Regional Health Authority collection of deeds...

for Ranmoor and Stumperlowe Crescents.³³ It seems strange that prices should continue to rise even when it was very evident that demand for houses in the area was dwindling rapidly. From the size of plot and the minimum worth of house required by the early societies it would seem that it was their ambition to emulate the success of Broomhall Park Estate. Indeed, Bardwell at Ranmoor Park seems to have copied the highest level of development at Broomhall by setting a minimum level that was only to be found in the very best parts of Broomhall. However, as Thompson remarks, the ground landlord proposes but the builder disposes.³⁴

Although a few builders, such as Francis Dickinson,³⁵ a leading Broomhill developer, were tempted to dabble with the estates the general reaction of the cautious building trade was that these were estates that would not attract either commissions for individual houses or tenants for completed houses. Ling has calculated that the seven Land Societies owned a little over 100 acres, of which 90 acres was divided into building lots. However, as the O.S. surveyed in the early 1890s shows, a great deal of this acreage remained vacant and most building was concentrated on the eastern edge. Most of the building in the Ranmoor area took place in the decade 1854-1875 even though the majority of the societies only were fully constituted after that date. This failure to have houses built is in contrast to the high reputation that Ranmoor enjoyed as a residential area. In describing Edgbaston, Cannadine observes that there 'were found those expensive dwellings, few in number but great in area, which were responsible for the estate's exalted reputation'³⁶. The same phenomenon can be seen in other Sheffield suburbs but it is especially the case for Ranmoor. The description of the many benefactors of St. John's church demonstrates that most of them were in fact drawn from adjoining areas such as Endcliffe and Tapton to the east and Stumperlowe to the west. It was the image of the grand houses such as Oakbrook or Tapton Hall that sprang to the public mind when thinking of Ranmoor rather than the group of modest houses that actually constituted the village.

The Land Societies however, needed to attract a more modest level of settler if their land was going to emulate the success of Broomhall Park and, like Mitchell's attempt to develop Tapton Grove as building land, the societies had misjudged the public mood. The house, reincarnated as Tapton Hall, was to remain a large private house of the highest standard for the rest of the century. Settlers looking for a similar amount of space went to the far west, to Stumperlowe Hall and Stumperlowe Grange. Land Society property was eventually adapted to the needs of those who wanted rather more modest accommodation set in a few acres in the manner of Tapton Court or Birchlands. It is clear that few society members bought plots upon which to build for their own occupation and, after holding land for a number of years which had to be paid for, yet brought in no income, many of the original purchasers were only too ready to sell their land. Thus, a sizeable holding could be gradually acquired as the site for a sizeable house such as Ranfall. Advertisements drawing attention to the proximity of a Land Society to the homes of the likes of Firth and Brown seem to have held little attraction to the investor who wanted a villa on ¼ to ½ acre. Despite the blandishments of the Societies the verdict of Sheffield's prosperous citizens resulted in the greater part of the most westerly suburb coming to replicate in many ways the Broomfield of the first half of the century. There was a scattering of large houses on large plots, interspersed with a few more modest villas rather in the manner that Edwards described as 'Arcadia'.

³³ Ling. *The freehold land societies*. p. 92

³⁴ Thompson, F.M.L. 'Hampstead', in Simpson & Lloyd. *Middle class housing*. p. 112

³⁵ Ling. *The freehold land societies*. Table B pp. 57-58

³⁶ Cannadine. *The aristocracy and the towns in the nineteenth century*. p. 252

10.8 Architecture

The style of the houses built during the most rapid development the style was relatively plain. One of the earliest houses to be built in the region, Flockton's Storth Lodge, was a modest Gothic stone house, the barge boarding of the gables being its only ornamentation. The interior was similarly plain without elaborate cornices or an elegant staircase. This simplicity was also to be found in the early houses on Bardwell's estate. For both detached and semi-detached houses the style is plain and solid, unlike the gothic exuberance of those built at Endcliffe at a similar period. No carved heads or porches with small marble pillars are to be found here. All the houses have bay windows facing east on to the road over a small garden so views were likely to be restricted by any future building across the street. The majority of the houses built on Land Society Estates are in the plainest of the architectural styles to be found in areas such as Taptonville at Broomhill. Such estates provided mundane, middle-of-the-road housing of a type that was readily available in much more convenient locations closer to the town. Only the largest houses, such as Ranfall and Ranmoor Grange, have extensive gardens and good views. Given the exposed nature of the site it is perhaps surprising that none of the houses has a porch. The low minimum worth required by the later Societies seems to have encouraged the building of houses of a modest size. However, there were a few exceptions, such as Snaithing Brook where Henry Andrews bought a number of adjoining plots in order to build a spacious house in large grounds with wide views over open country. Andrews had been one of the earliest settlers in the Tapton area but moved when other mansions surrounded his estate. It may be that he was one of the few who truly valued the views that western Sheffield offered. Although views were often cited in advertisements for land sales as an attraction, estate layout usually ensured that houses overlooked each other rather than the open countryside. The building line for most of the estates was usually set relatively close to the road so the passer-by is not offered the impression of greenery to be found in Broomhill. Only the lack of success that the Societies experienced in disposing of sites ensured that residents had open views.

As the area covered by the Ranmoor Land Societies was only partially built upon in the nineteenth century it now presents a mixture of architectural styles and building materials. However, walking through, using the 1890 O.S. map as a guide, it becomes clear that the original houses conformed to the regulations set down by the Societies. These regulations almost all followed those laid down by the Storth Land Society, the first to be established. These in turn were based on the requirements of Wostenholm's early building contracts, which followed closely those of building leases issued for Broomhill and the better parts of Broomhill. The strict regulations on the use of stone for walls and the height of such walls gives the area some uniformity even where twentieth century building is to be found as the original plot holders were required to place boundaries on their land even if no house building took place. As with the inner suburbs, landowners and builders seemed willing to adhere to such regulations in the belief that they maintained the value of an area, to their mutual benefit.

An exception to the rule is Tylecotes, built on the Storth Crescent Estate in 1880 by James Dixon, a junior partner in one of Sheffield's largest cutlery and silver plating firms. From his memoirs³⁷ Dixon seems to have been a mild man and an unlikely rebel, nor does he seem to have had strong views on architecture or a great interest in any of the arts. However, in 1873 he had married and rented a house in the old village of Ranmoor. With a growing family he decided to remain in the area but to have a house built. Accordingly he

³⁷ Newspaper cutting from unknown source in the Wilson (Sharrow) family papers

bought a plot from Henry Hutchinson, one of the founders of the Storth Crescent Land Society. The plot adjoined Hutchinson's Storth Lodge. The house was to be built by Dixon's brother-in-law, the architect Herbert Wightman. Possibly the young architect wished to display his command of a modern style almost unknown in Sheffield at the time as the house was to be brick with the upper half covered in tiles 'like many south country houses'. Dixon recounts that when the house was at first floor level 'several neighbours (!) [sic] sent in an objection, as they did not like the style.' Although, 'There was at one time a likelihood of a lawsuit over it we carried the day and the house was finished as designed.'³⁸ Dixon may have been able to flout regulations because he was extremely well connected, his father and father-in-law were very important members of Sheffield's light trades and two of his brothers-in-law were amongst the town's leading solicitors. Other potential residents without such powerful relatives might not have been able to contravene regulations with impunity, although it may be that Sheffield was content to stay with prevailing styles for no further houses like 'Tylecote' appeared around the town.

10.9 Residents

Although the O.S. published in the last decade of the century shows that, despite the efforts of a number of developers over a period of almost forty years, the area was still sparsely populated, its residents created a focal point unlike anything to be found in other suburbs. If, to use Cannadine's phrase, the western suburbs were the town council at home then Ranmoor was the home of the aldermen and St. John's church was where they came to pray. When he visited Broomhill Criticus commented that the congregation was drawn from Tapton and Endcliffe as well as the immediate vicinity. The building of St. John's thinned the ranks of the very wealthy who worshipped at Broomhill as the residents of those areas turned westwards.

J.W. Harrison, a wealthy cutler, had been an early settler at Ranmoor, moving from the western edge of Broomhill to take one of the earliest building leases on Bardwell's Ranmoor Park Estate. When the estate began to hang fire and Bardwell sold the bulk of the estate, Harrison bought the vacant plot adjoining his house, Tapton Grange, and offered it as the site for a church. This gesture not only gave Harrison the reputation of a local benefactor but also safeguarded his property from possible undesirable development. Another former resident of Broomhill, J.C. Mappin of Birchlands, donated the £15,000 required to build a church. Gibbs, of Flockton and Gibbs, designed a building in the 'Early Gothic' style and the great and good of the area vied to adorn its interior in a lavish style not to be seen elsewhere in Sheffield. Cowlshaw of Tapton Cliffe, Mappin's nephew, gave the pulpit, the font was the gift of W.H. Brittain of Storth Oaks. A list of donors reads like a list of the leading members of the town's staple trades. The organ was given by C. H. Firth of Riverdale. His father, Thomas, and all the Firth family, had been staunch supporters of the New Connexion and Firth money had been a major source of funding for Ranmoor College that trained ministers for this sect. It is not clear when C. H. Firth joined the Anglican Communion but it does seem that increased prosperity encouraged a move to the established church: the Wilsons of Tapton Hall and Lady Brown were just two local examples of the move from Wesley.

Unfortunately the splendid church had a relatively short life and it was severely damaged by fire on Sunday, 2 January 1887. The prudent congregation had had the building well insured and, undeterred, they had an even better church re-built. It was designed by

³⁸ Ibid.

Flockton and Gibbs in 'English Geometric' and built of 'finely dressed Ancaster stone'³⁹, making a fine meeting point for the scattered community. Tarn described it as 'sumptuous and confident far beyond any religious building in the town'⁴⁰. The cost, size and splendour of St. John's would seem to indicate that, even more than the Iron Church of Broomhill, this was a church intended for those who had been blessed with worldly success. In St. John's the wealthy of the Ranmoor district had a focal point for religious and social life and an arena for expensive displays of piety. Even for those outside the Anglican community the amount of intermarriage suggests that families were well known to each other by virtue of common links of charitable, cultural or business links. The area seems to have needed no other public amenity except the church for such inhabitants had tennis courts, croquet lawns and lakes for winter skating parties on their own estates. Personal carriages could take the family to cultural and social events in the town and the men could meet at the Sheffield Club to talk business and politics in a comfortable but informal atmosphere. Most of the largest houses had what amounted to a home farm for the supply of fresh food that could be supplemented from Broomhill or Sheffield. Increasingly as the century progressed horizons widened and shopping trips, holidays and honeymoons could be taken in London or the capitals of Europe.

10.10 Conclusion

In the period after 1860 Ranmoor passed from being a hamlet to being the most valued suburb in Western Sheffield. However, 'Ranmoor' was used as a generic term rather than a precise location. The little hamlet of Ranmoor continued to exist but the area gained its reputation from the 'Great Houses', most of which, in fact, lay in Tapton and Endcliffe. The Land Societies hoped to gain lustre from such neighbours, but failed to realise the hopes of their investors.

The perceived advantage of the Land Societies was that they allowed small investors to buy land which they would not otherwise have been able to afford. Land in the Storth Crescent and Ranmoor Park areas rose considerably in price as developers changed it from fields to building sites. The early take up of plots for building on these two estates seems to have raised expectations that single plots could also be bought reasonably cheaply and quickly re-sold at a considerable profit. As usual, the expected level of demand for middle class houses was considerably in excess of the actual requirement. Also, a Land Society was a clumsy mechanism for estate development. A single developer, such as Fowler at Victoria Park, could buy an estate, lay roads, advertise availability and have the first speculative builder or owner/occupier beginning work within six months. Land Societies moved much more slowly. First the original owner sold to a developer, who then looked for a group of men willing to raise a mortgage to take over the land. This group had to find sufficiently like minded persons to form a society, have the layout and number of plots agreed, roads laid and then plots auctioned. All this could take a considerable amount of time in which the housing market, due to trade conditions or the availability of new estates in other parts of the town, might change greatly. Even when the Society was organised and the plots sold builders had still to be found. As Ling points out, most people want a house, either to buy or to rent, not to start the lengthy process of finding a suitable builder, agreeing a price and style, then waiting for it to be completed, in the hope that it will turn out as they had envisaged.

³⁹ Ling. *The freehold land societies*. p. 83

⁴⁰ Tarn 'Sheffield' p. 187

The slow take-up of the Land Society estates, compared with contemporary development elsewhere, might suggest that the more conventional approach of areas such as Sharrow were found to be more attractive. Ranmoor also suffered from its relatively remote location, especially in the case of those estates on the western and northern perimeters. Life on the periphery could be quite attractive for those with a very high income. James Dixon went to school each day to Whiteley Woods, with the coachman leading his pony. As a child grew older boys, and in some cases girls, were sent to boarding school. Large houses had accommodation for indoor and outdoor staff and a variety of means of private transport would be available, thus allowing a family to enjoy an active social life. In many cases food grown in the grounds and home farms supplemented supplies brought from Sheffield. Distance was never a problem for the wealthiest families: the circle in which T.A. Ward moved in the first part of the century included families from Stumperlowe Hall, Meersbrook and Norton, with both young people and their elders meeting on almost a weekly basis at some social gathering. In the last quarter of the century wealthy families such as the Dixons of Stumperlowe and the Wilsons of Tapton Hall were part of a social set that mingled regularly, private transport being supplemented by the hiring of larger vehicles such as omnibuses for excursions of large parties to events such as skating parties at Clumber Park. However, for those only able to afford a modest villa of about £500, the number of servants was probably restricted to a maid and a cook. The man of the house might be able to commute to work in Sheffield by using the omnibus service but no easy transport was readily available for the women of the family to shop or socialise. Social historians often mention the restrictions which suburban living imposed upon women. It has been suggested in the case studies of Broomhall and Broomhill that this was not necessarily the case but it would seem that, for those at Ranmoor the remote location and lack of amenities would make it less attractive to potential settlers.

Ranmoor's Land Societies, like other ambitious schemes such as Endcliffe Crescent and Endcliffe Vale, did not live up to the expectation of investors. The area drew a sprinkling of modest semi-detached houses and a few larger detached residences for those sufficiently prosperous to have some flexibility of working hours. Stumperlowe and Endcliffe Halls were the sites of two very old houses for the gentry. During the second half of the nineteenth century each became the nucleus for a group of houses for what might be called the 'captains of industry'. Such captains were few in number, and for every captain there was a much larger group of junior officers. The Ranmoor Land Societies tried to develop the farmland between the two outposts of Stumperlowe and Endcliffe to attract this larger, but not so wealthy, segment of the population. The attempt seems to have failed because what such clients required was a completed house, spacious but not overly large, set on a plot of about ¼ acre or less and this could be obtained much closer to Sheffield in places like Broomhall, or the newcomer on the other side of the Porter, Sharrow. The wide open spaces of Ranmoor only attracted those who were rich, liked a rural setting and were prepared to pay for large sites. As at the beginning of the century, such people were a very small minority and the kudos of living near them did not have the drawing power which developers such as Bardwell had hoped. Although Ranmoor did not attract enough settlers to make the Land Societies a financial success the *idea* of Ranmoor in the public mind remained as the desirable place 'to which the eyes of the merchant princes turned' when they looked for a home.

To a certain extent the low density of housing which gave the few houses built on Land Society ground such wide views and a spacious setting was the result of the failure of the Societies, and landowners on the western edge, to develop their land successfully. Had the area attracted settlers to the same extent as Broomhill the building leases would have resulted in streets bordered with houses similar to those at Taptonville on the larger plots

and in-fill similar to the smaller houses in Victoria Park. However, low demand allowed those few prosperous men who did wish to settle in the area to buy a number of adjoining plots to form a small estate of an acre or so. As all the surrounding land was still vacant such houses appeared to be set in an extensive rural setting. For the last two decades of the nineteenth century the failed Societies allowed Ranmoor to give the impression of Arcadian development which had characterised Broomhill in the 1830s. The comparative failure of the Societies and private developers to tempt builders or settlers to the western edge preserved the rural landscape upon which the reputation of Ranmoor was based.

Chapter 11

Comparisons and conclusions

11.1 Introduction

This chapter is intended to place Sheffield in context with other provincial cities. Comparisons will mainly be drawn with Birmingham, Glasgow, Newcastle and Nottingham, as each city has been the subject of research into some aspects of middle-class housing. A brief indication of the nature of each city will be given so that suburban growth can be seen as an aspect of urban life rather than in isolation.

At the end of his study of the Ranmoor Land Societies Ling warned against the dangers of 'ignorance-based speculation'¹. The study of middle-class housing in an area such as the western suburbs of Sheffield, with its lack of comprehensive records, does not lend itself to providing statistically based results such as those to be found in the work of Nunn² and Cannadine³. Drawing on the many, but disparate, sources available for the study of western Sheffield it has been attempted to strike a mid-point and make what might be considered 'informed opinion' on the causes and nature of development. Such an approach is appropriate because the concept of middle-class housing is elusive and closely associated with what Ling referred to as the feature of an area that, 'is usually termed its *character*'⁴. This study has not sought to define what constitutes middle class or suburbia; rather it follows the example of Simpson (whose thesis on the West End of Glasgow is the only wide-ranging study of a prestigious suburban development found by this writer), by investigating the pattern of development of an area consisting of adjoining suburbs, which is widely accepted as having been inhabited predominantly by the wealthier citizens of Sheffield. The main body of this thesis, especially the case studies, has sought to establish, as far as possible, the means by which the harmonious diversity which characterises western Sheffield was achieved. Daunton's method⁵ of setting out the actuality of living and the use of space in working class housing has then been adapted to the experience of the middle class.

As Simpson pointed out, most large towns have an area occupied by its most prosperous inhabitants, which lies to the west of the urban centre.⁶ The paucity of studies on the creation of such suburbs has limited the ability to draw comparisons between Sheffield and other provincial towns. Although, apart from Simpson's work on the West End of Glasgow, there are no parallel studies giving a comprehensive view of nineteenth century middle class housing in other provincial cities, research in allied fields make it possible to place the Sheffield experience in a wider context. Comparison is possible with Birmingham, Glasgow and, to a lesser extent, Nottingham and Newcastle upon Tyne in relation to landownership, housing development and architecture. Comparing Sheffield to these towns, it can be seen that the same broad processes took place, but local circumstances resulted in differences in the way in which development took place and the form that development took. The case studies of Sheffield's western suburbs illustrate the way the wealthier citizens chose to be accommodated. However, little information appears to be available for such cities to determine the use of space and the reality of living in such areas which Daunton considers necessary for a proper understanding of the reality of the living conditions of a social group.

¹ Ling. *The freehold land societies*. p. 83

² Nunn. *Management of some South Yorkshire landed estates*.

³ Cannadine. *Aristocracy and the town*.

⁴ Ling. *The freehold land societies*. p. 85

⁵ Daunton. *House and home in the Victorian city*.

⁶ Simpson. *Middle-class housing*. p. 70

Such an understanding is desirable as a goal, but gathering data with which to reach a conclusion is very difficult. Despite the scarcity of relevant information it has been possible to give some indication of the space and dimensions favoured in nineteenth century Sheffield by the study of existing buildings and ground plans relating to early use. Although information is scanty concerning the life-style for which this space was required, reference to the few primary sources available gives some insight into the attitudes that conditioned the choices made by Sheffield's most prosperous citizens. Some aspects of social life which were common to all the western suburbs, such as the life of female residents, are outlined in Chapter 2 to illustrate the 'actuality of living' in the area. These attitudes appear to have changed little in the course of the century. However, the great increase in the personal wealth of the wealthiest, together with an increasing awareness of what could be bought, resulted in the changes of style exemplified by Newbould's house, built at Broomhill at the end of the eighteenth century, and Endcliffe Hall, the most splendid of all Sheffield's nineteenth century houses, completed in 1865.

11.2 Birmingham: Edgbaston

Cannadine makes it clear that his thesis on Edgbaston is primarily concerned with the landowner, rather than the estate itself⁷ and his subsequent book, *The aristocracy and the towns, 1774-1967*⁸, as its title indicates, does not focus on estate management although it is based on the Edgbaston estate papers. This precludes consideration of many of the topics dealt with in this study, but his wide-ranging work does allow some useful comparisons to be made with Sheffield's western suburbs. In wealth and local standing the inhabitants of Sheffield's western suburbs were clearly the local equivalent of those of Edgbaston but land ownership imposed a different type of development, whilst local character resulted in a different style of building. By the early nineteenth century the Calthorpes had expanded their original holding of 1,700 acres to 2,064, virtually dominating the land market to the west of Birmingham.⁹ The West End of Glasgow had 23 owners of its 1,250 acres but western Sheffield was even more fragmented. Once the Duke of Norfolk and Gell of Broomhall had sold off their land, few of the new generation of landholdings were of more than forty acres. Cannadine was of the opinion that Edgbaston land 'if it was an oasis' for its inhabitants 'it was a gold-mine for the Calthorpes',¹⁰ so, in selling their land, Norfolk and Gell may have foregone a great opportunity.

Calthorpe land was always available only on leaseholds of ninety-nine years, their preferred tenants were to be 'those people who, having acquired a moderate competence wish to retire to a small country house, and therefore take just as much land as would be sufficient for the purpose.'¹¹ Such men were also regarded as highly desirable by Sheffield's landowners but, as Flockton affirmed in 1859, Sheffield's inhabitants able to afford plots of more than an acre could only be tempted if land was available for purchase.¹² Large tracts of western Sheffield were always available for purchase. At the beginning of the nineteenth the best farmland at Broomhall could be had for £120 per acre and the wilder Norfolk land for £60 per acre. The westward spread of housing drove up these prices considerably by mid-century yet buyers were still to be found. Both the Calthorpes and Sheffield landowners, such as William Fowler of Victoria Park, found that 'the reality of economic circumstances'¹³ prevented them from adhering to their original intentions of admitting only a certain type of client.

⁷ Cannadine. *Aristocracy and the towns in the nineteenth century*. [Thesis] p. 206

⁸ Cannadine. *Aristocracy and the towns*.

⁹ *Ibid.* p. 89

¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 124

¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 93

¹² *Deeds of Thornbury*, in the University of Sheffield collection of deeds.

¹³ Cannadine. *Aristocracy and the towns*. p. 122

Although the residents of western Sheffield matched the incomes of the best suburbs in other towns they differed in attitude. In Edgbaston the exacting requirements of the ground landlord 'made it impossible for the majority of... inhabitants [of Birmingham], even to entertain the prospect of living there',¹⁴ and 'the low density, the lack of industry, the excellence of house construction and the relative affluence of the inhabitants, allied with the advantages of the location and topography, distinguished Edgbaston from all other areas around Birmingham'¹⁵. Edgbaston was, throughout the nineteenth century 'the premier suburb'. Similar conditions required by ground landlords coupled with natural advantages gave western Sheffield a similar reputation. In both towns local industrialists were 'increasing alike in numbers and prosperity'¹⁶ and ground landlords were anxious to attract those 'opulent inhabitants... who have basked in the sunshine of commercial prosperity.'¹⁷ However, ground landlords were in a similar position to Shakespeare's Glendower, who would 'call up the spirits of the vasty deep' He was met by Hotspur's cynical 'but will they come?'¹⁸ All too often, for the landlords, the answer was no, and the wealthy clients whom they wished to attract were proof against all blandishments. In Birmingham, the Calthorpes were 'limited by the size of the market'¹⁹ and, 'if they could keep out those whom they did not want, it did not automatically follow that they could attract those whom they *did* want'.²⁰ This raised the question of whether the economy of Birmingham generated a sufficient number of wealthy people to entirely fill the estate in the way its owners desired. Even if they came initially there was no way to compel them to stay. Ultimately, it became apparent that 'there were simply not enough of the respectable middle class, even in a town with an economic structure as favourable as Birmingham, to fill up the whole estate with villas'.²¹ These comments and conclusions are equally valid for the situation in Sheffield except that, whereas in Birmingham the problem existed for one ground landlord, in Sheffield it was experienced not only by a number of men, varying widely in personal circumstances, but also bodies such as the Endcliffe Building Company and the various Ranmoor Land Societies.

Despite the wishes of the owning family, Edgbaston displayed almost as wide a diversity as Broomhill. According to Cannadine, in this it was like most middle-class suburbs in nineteenth century England, being an 'ecological marvel... combining high social status with broad social spectrum'. Houses were 'comfortable but not extravagant'.²² At one extreme were, 'the great hardware princes at the centre of the estate, set in grounds of several acres, often costing in excess of £2,000, complete with stables and servant quarters', serviced by five or more servants'. Then, 'at the other extreme were those small houses, costing £500 or less, to be found on the periphery of the estate'. What he regarded as 'the broad crescent of middle-middle-class houses', were the 'prosperous and comfortable' residences of the upper level of professional men who could afford a house in a large garden staffed by three or more servants.²³ This range encompasses the levels of housing which have been studied in the suburbs of western Sheffield.

The social life of the "'Belgravia" of Birmingham'²⁴ can be studied in the pages of *Edgbastonia*, a free periodical, founded by a local resident in 1881, which was distributed monthly to the residents of the suburb.²⁵ The novels of Francis Brett Young, who was a native

¹⁴ Ibid. p. 121

¹⁵ Ibid. p. 122

¹⁶ Ibid. p. 100

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 97

¹⁸ Shakespeare, W. *Henry IV, Part I*, III. i.

¹⁹ Cannadine. *Aristocracy and the towns*. p. 110

²⁰ Ibid. p. 111

²¹ Ibid. p. 219

²² Ibid. p. 202

²³ Ibid. p. 201

²⁴ Ibid. p. 198

²⁵ Ibid. p. 207

of Birmingham, give a fictional portrayal of Edgbaston life at the end of the nineteenth century. From these and other minor sources Cannadine concludes that, 'at the turn of the century [Edgbaston was] complacent, assured and exclusive, seeking in its leisured existence that aristocratic world which was just beyond the horizon'²⁶, for, despite material success, in Birmingham the 'middle class's sense of social insecurity, as elsewhere, was profound'.²⁷ The notion that members of the new middle-class were uncertain of their position in society and wished in all things to ape their betters may be true in some cases but it does not seem to fit the generally agreed view of Sheffield character outlined in Chapter 2. For the wealthiest of Sheffield's steel makers the native self-assurance, bred of being Sheffield born, was reinforced by the certainty that they were pre-eminent in their field, the only goal for which most of them strove. The nature of heavy industry was likely to confirm further this self-confidence: looking out of one's office window to see a work-force numbered in thousands pour through the factory gate, massive instruments of war and civil engineering under construction, not to say representatives of the leaders of many nations coming to negotiate for armaments, seem likely to feed the self-esteem even of a man who had not had the initial good fortune to be born in Sheffield. Even if it is supposed that such men craved acceptance by the Dukes of Norfolk or Devonshire there is still the question of whether country houses were built as an attempt to follow an aristocratic model.

It is suggested that, rather than being simply a wish to emulate the aristocracy, an appreciation of country living and the elements which are considered to be desirable features of such a residence, are innate human characteristics and examples are to be found in many societies over a long period of time. An early example of this was to be found in the writing of Pliny the Younger in the first century A.D. He described his country house in Tuscany²⁸, where he had especially chosen a healthy location and had built on rising ground, so there were splendid views, yet the site was sheltered from harsh winds. A south-facing aspect enabled him to enjoy the maximum amount of light. The location had an ample supply of water at all times of the year yet was well-drained and the water was dammed to make an attractive small lake which was used to supply fountains so that the pleasing sound of falling water was always to be heard. In the garden were to be found areas of light and shade, whilst colourful and aromatic plants were grown to please the senses. The house itself could accommodate both family and friends and allowed scope for dining and a variety of recreations. From the estate surrounding the house a wide range of food was available. This was a wealthy man, able to afford all the elements he considered desirable for a pleasant life. The general characteristics of the house and estate, allowing for the fact that it was designed for a warmer climate, included everything that generations of wealthy individuals have found attractive, whether or not they were of the nobility.

A house in the country in an attractive setting, is a concept found attractive to a large proportion of the population; it is only the size of residence and its amenities that can be afforded that varies. When an individual becomes suddenly wealthy it may well be sensible to observe to what purposes others have put their wealth. To consider these options, then pick and choose whatever appeals, is not necessarily emulation in the sense of slavish imitation. It seems at least plausible that Firth built Oakbrook as a result of a liking for country living which seems to be inherent to a large section of the human race. Having been brought up in cramped conditions, adjoining a communal midden and within sight and sound of the steel-making process, he was aware of all the inconveniences of urban living and so, as soon as he could afford to, moved to the edge of the town. As business prospered he moved further out to ever larger houses, culminating in Oakbrook. Although wealthy enough to build something much more elaborate, even able to own a number of larger houses which he used as rental

²⁶ Ibid. p. 214

²⁷ Ibid. p. 222

²⁸ Pliny, the younger. *Pliny: a self-portrait in letters*. Translated and introduced by Betty Radice. London: Folio Society, 1978. pp. 108-112

property, Oakbrook suited him and he was not tempted to build the likes of a miniature Chatsworth, or even the more modest Haddon Hall. Edgbaston's upper echelons may have wished to ape the aristocracy but it is suggested that the life-style of the similar level of the population in Sheffield was guided mainly by personal preference.

11.3 Glasgow: the West End

To turn to suburban life in another large town, M.A. Simpson's thesis was concerned with *'Middle class housing and the growth of suburban communities in the West End of Glasgow, 1830-1914'*²⁹. Within the limits imposed by the availability of data, the author explored the process of developing a suburban area from the involvement of landowners, builders, developers and house buyers and then discussed both the exterior and interior of accommodation provided before outlining the life-style of the residents.

As a town, Glasgow was very different from Sheffield. Simpson described it as being, 'a strikingly handsome Victorian city... with a great collection of public buildings and fine houses as any city in the western world' and enjoying 'a wide range of cultural activities'³⁰. He refers to the inhabitants of the West End as the 'haute bourgeoisie... falling within the Registrar-General's present Social Classes I and II', that is, the upper ranks of industrialists and members of the professions, 'all occupations carrying high income and prestige'³¹. By the 1830s this segment of Glasgow's inhabitants 'had a clearly defined set of criteria by which to judge a potential suburb'. The primary requirement was that 'it should be exclusively for the upper middle class' or, as one developer described his wares, 'Dwelling-houses of a superior description'³². Earlier attempts to establish colonies of middle-class housing on the west side of Glasgow had been engulfed by commercial development but in the course of the nineteenth century landowners were able to maintain most of the land from two to five miles from the town as a middle class preserve. This was done partly by the same unspoken consensus to exclude non-residential development as was common in western Sheffield, and partly because increased distance from the town centre made the land less liable to pressure for industrial or commercial development. The area chosen for development amounted to about 1,200 acres, almost half of which, the part known as Kelvinside, had one owner while the remainder was split into many small holdings³³.

One of the smaller estates, Dowanhill, was advertised in 1880 as being prepared to offer to feu [the equivalent of to lease] land for the erection of houses worth about £1,600 'which are presently much wanted in the locality'³⁴. This is a much higher level than was usual in Sheffield except for the largest and most prestigious sites, such as that of Thornbury, and, as mentioned earlier, Sheffield's potential homebuilders would not consider leasing an expensive plot, preferring to buy outright. Whatever the market value of the finished house the method of building seems to have been common to both towns. As almost all houses were speculative, 'building them was a hazardous venture' since, 'most firms were small, undercapitalised, short of management skills and survived only for one generation, many ending in the bankruptcy court'. Houses normally took from twelve to eighteen months to complete, which is close to the two years usually allowed in Sheffield. Unsurprisingly, builders 'proceeded with extreme caution'³⁵. The problem of tracing information seems also to be common, for Simpson laments that, 'little has come to light on the builders of the West

²⁹ Simpson. *Middle class housing*.

³⁰ Simpson. 'The West End of Glasgow'. p. 44

³¹ *Ibid.* p. 47

³² *Ibid.* p. 47

³³ *Ibid.* p. 56

³⁴ *Ibid.* p. 63

³⁵ *Ibid.* p. 63

End³⁶. The main differences seem to have been three. First, there appears to have been some degree of architectural input, either by the builder commissioning plans, or, more usually, plans being drawn up by an estate architect³⁷. Some of Glasgow's leading architects, such as Alexander 'Greek' Thompson, were employed by estates for this purpose³⁸. Once completed, a building would be put in the hands of a 'house factor' so that it could be auctioned or a private contract organised. The use of factors seems to have been well established by the 1860s, taking over from builders, lawyers or accountants who had sometimes undertaken such work. Finally, it was usual in Scotland for house to be sold and terraces let, unlike the English practice of renting for all but a minority of the population³⁹.

11.4 Newcastle upon Tyne

No comprehensive study of Newcastle upon Tyne has been made which would allow it to be compared with Sheffield in any detail. However, 'Tyneside Classical'⁴⁰ and recent work on Grainger, the town's leading builder,⁴¹ indicates that Newcastle had a much more sophisticated style of urban architecture than that which was to be found in Sheffield. This might well be expected in what was a regional capital rather than merely a provincial town. John Dobson, probably the greatest architect of the North East, provided some of the elegant squares and terraces which housed many of the town's prosperous citizens in the first half of the century. William Armstrong, a great industrialist and armament manufacturer, can be compared with his Sheffield competitors such as Brown, Firth and Vickers. Armstrong lived in a house on the edge of the town, in Jesmond Dene, but in his later years was attracted to the wilds of Northumberland where he built Cragside. This project became almost a hobby in which he applied his engineering skills to supplement the talents of his architect, Norman Shaw. Armstrong retired to Cragside and gave Jesmond Dene to the town as a public park. In the vicinity of this amenity the suburbs of Jesmond and nearby Gosforth were developed and attracted many of what Cannadine had termed the 'middle- middle- class' much as the western suburbs attracted a similar income group in Sheffield.

11.5 Nottingham: The Park Estate

In the course of the nineteenth century a number of light industries were attracted to Nottingham. Housing for the expanding population was hampered by the lack of available land as both the civic authorities and the Duke of Newcastle, the major land owners in the town, were unwilling to make their land available for building purposes. Various schemes were mooted for The Park, land owned by the Duke of Newcastle, but most of the development did not take place until the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The chapter on Nottingham in *Middle Class Housing*⁴² is unfortunately rather brief and the short studies of The Park Estate, produced locally, are concerned mainly with its architecture.⁴³ Although a few plain Georgian stucco houses were built at the beginning of the nineteenth century the major period of development was in the last quarter of the century. As at the Newcastle suburbs of Jesmond and Gosforth, the building medium was brick. This, combined with a building line which usually pressed close to the road emphasises the different styles used and gives an impression of busy diversity, very different from the tranquil uniformity created by the high stone walls and green trees of western Sheffield.

³⁶ Ibid. p. 64

³⁷ Ibid. p. 63

³⁸ Ibid. p. 80

³⁹ Ibid. p. 64

⁴⁰ Wilkes, & Dodds. *Tyneside classical*.

⁴¹ Ayris. *A city of palaces*.

⁴² Edwards. 'Nottingham'.

⁴³ For example, Brand. *The Park Estate, Nottingham*.

11.6 Sheffield: the Western suburbs

Having considered the various types of suburban development in other towns, Broomhill offers the most complex example of the form such development took in Sheffield. Broomhill, as the oldest suburb, became the most densely populated and displayed the greatest variation in income groups. It experienced the accumulation and then dismemberment of a number of small estates such those of Broomhill House and Moor Oaks. Also, in Taptonville and Victoria Park, it showed the ways in which small estates could be exploited, with varying degrees of success. Within the space of one hundred years Broomhill progressed from an isolated house, through an 'Arcadian' stage to become an area offering many of the amenities of a small town to its residents.

Broomhill, in contrast, became a residential enclave, successfully staving off the potential of encroachment by the growing town. Skilful management resulted in the estate being completely developed so that a range of income groups, within the middle class, could be accommodated without detracting from the overall high reputation which it enjoyed. Endcliffe Crescent and the various Ranmoor Land Societies demonstrated two different approaches in which a group of developers might attempt the exploitation of a site. Each experienced problems and a limited success in achieving their original aims, such problems illustrating the difficulties which housing developers encountered in the first and then the second half of the nineteenth century. The various case studies illustrate what was found attractive to Sheffield's affluent citizens in the course of the nineteenth century and the manner in which the concept of affordable style and comfort changed in the course of the century.

Wherever possible, the aspirations of this group, and the ground landlords, architects and builders, who tried to divine what such aspirations might be, have been considered. Without correctly assessing such aspirations it was impossible for developers to achieve success for their projects. Simpson suggests that 'The speculating landlord had the advantage that they were from the same social class as their potential clients and might therefore be expected to be aware of contemporary taste and resources'.⁴⁴ He concludes that landowners, each man acting independently, were principally responsible for an area becoming a middle class suburb, motivated by personal inclination to bring this about, rather than being influenced by any private or government agency.⁴⁵ This seems to be true to some extent in the case of Thomas Holy. Having bought much of the Norfolk land that lay on the western edge of the town, his decision to exclude industrial development set a relatively high minimum worth for any house built. Maintaining this position over decades as no clients came forward to develop the land he set a precedent to be followed by his kinsmen who held land further west. However, once having made this decision most landowners took a passive role and, within the limits of use and cost set by the ground landlord, it was largely men of a very different social background who were actually responsible for determining the nature of development. As mentioned in the case study of Broomhill, builders, with their practical knowledge of the housing market in which they worked were of the opinion, sometimes rightly, that an estate could attract a higher class of client than the nervous landowner supposed.

Residents of Glasgow's West End 'had every material necessity for a long, successful and interesting life'.⁴⁶ The same was true of the western suburbs of Sheffield, ranging from the splendour of Endcliffe Hall to the villas on ¼ acre sites in Broomhill. This is not to say there were not those who might 'lead lives of quiet desperation'.⁴⁷ Death, disappointment, mental and physical illness, not to say business failure and even suicide and murder, were not

⁴⁴ Simpson. *Middle class housing*. p. 379

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* p. 376

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* p. 399

⁴⁷ Thoreau, H. *Walden, or a life in the woods*. London: Chapman & Hall. 1931.

unknown in the greatest houses but at least they were suffered in pleasant surroundings. This is not a flippant judgement, lightly made, for those, like the Firths, who had experienced life's hardships when labouring under the added burden of poverty, may have been able to take a little comfort from this small blessing.

Glasgow was said to have houses that were the 'product of high aesthetic standards'.⁴⁸ This was not usually the case in Sheffield. Although local journalists were ever willing to reach for hyperbole in describing the opulence and good taste of the 'merchant princes' none had any formal training likely to give him an appreciation of the arts and few seemed to have natural good taste of the kind which led a number of north eastern industrialists to patronise the Pre-Raphaelites both for works of art and interior decoration. However, lack of taste or experience did not prevent Brown, the Mappins and their circle from buying works of art. The mayor summed up the local attitude to art when he opened the Mappin Gallery, declaring proudly 'There is nothing *outré* here'.⁴⁹ Even when Sargent, then a rising young artist, with an international reputation was chosen by the wife of T.E. Vickers to paint her daughters the resulting portrait was not sufficiently admired for other Sheffield industrialists to employ him, or even for local newspapers to comment on his presence in the town.⁵⁰

The taste in architecture favoured by the inhabitants of western Sheffield can still be clearly seen, as well as the range and style bought by the wealthy and very wealthy. A minority of residents displayed a wish to divert from the mainstream of styles. Batty Langley, timber dealer and later one of Sheffield's Members of Parliament, seems to have fancied himself as something of a wit as he named his house on the steep slope of the Manchester Road "Langhill". A surprise awaited visitors as, at the rear of the house a flight of steps led down to the garden and child-sized replicas of the participants in the Mad Hatter's tea party beckoned them down. At Victoria Park the owner of Ash Grove enlarged his house in 1870 in preparation for the entertaining he planned for his mayoral year. This entailed building a ballroom topped by a sham tower. The retiring room for the ballroom took the form of what he referred to as a "Turkish Divan", complete with red plush sofas round the walls and a domed ceiling of coloured glass. However, such flights of fancy seem to have been few.

The changes in western Sheffield are best appreciated by comparing Fairbank's map of 1795 with the Ordnance Survey maps issued at mid-century and in the final decade. An overview of the area when all the building schemes had been set in place can be seen on Maps 7 and 8. The gradual merging of town and country and the extent of suburban development are clearly apparent. By the end of the century the density of housing indicates that Broomhall and Broomhill were no longer the location for, 'houses that sat on their own grounds'.⁵¹ Although their housing densities increased between 1851 and 1893 they still compared favourably with other parts of the city. Further west, the houses of the Endcliffe, Tapton and Ranmoor complex demonstrate the comparatively modest acreage required by the most prosperous residents who still maintained their main place of residence in Sheffield. However, it should be remembered that by the last quarter of the century many of the owners of the larger houses, such as Mappin of Thornbury, had a London residence and a shooting lodge in addition to their main place of residence. On the extreme western edge, the 1893 map clearly shows where the enthusiasm of developers has not been matched by the market for middle-class housing as the roads of the various Land Societies wind over the heights of Ranmoor, lined by only a handful of houses.

To look at changes more closely it is necessary to compare the great houses of the beginning of the century with their successors. Page Hall and Meersbrook indicate that the earliest

⁴⁸ Simpson. *Middle class housing*. p. 395

⁴⁹ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 27 July 1887

⁵⁰ Hamilton, J. *The Misses Vickers*

⁵¹ Leader. *Reminiscences of old Sheffield*. p.162

successful residents did not favour the west. In acreage it is difficult to compare these houses with Oakbrook or Endcliffe Hall as the residents of the early houses also owned adjoining farms. However, in terms of the number and size of rooms, the later houses were not significantly larger. Their greatest advantages lay in the amenities which domestic technology made possible such as the number of bathrooms and the luxury of indoor sanitation. Leisure facilities, such as billiard rooms, croquet lawns and tennis courts also distinguished later houses from their predecessors. At the highest level, houses became more comfortable and hygienic and, although there are insufficient grounds to make direct comparisons, it seems likely that interior decoration was more lavish but the over-all size does not seem to have increased significantly.

A parallel can be drawn between the homes of two men who stood outside the mainstream of Sheffield's richest inhabitants and those of their contemporaries. Samuel Shore, who took over Meersbrook from its bankrupt builder, founded a family that combined success in banking with advantageous marriage. With success they followed the practice frequent in Sheffield, of leaving the town. However, they did not move far, as marriage to the heiress brought them Norton, just over the border in Derbyshire. T. A. Ward noted that the old Norton Hall was virtually rebuilt, even though Sheffield was suffering much hardship at the time. At the hall, standing in an estate much more extensive than that of Broomhall, the family lived in considerable state, but the life of country gentry seems to have robbed them of the financial acumen upon which the family fortune had been founded and in 1843 the Parker, Shore Bank crashed. It was 1853 before it was possible for the assignees to sell the bulk of the estate. It appears to have been anticipated that the estate would be sold piecemeal but the hall and the entire estate found a single buyer.

Many of Sheffield's leading manufacturers have been mentioned as residents of the western suburbs but the only man who might be ranked with Vickers, Firth and Brown did not choose to live in the area, nor is his name to be found amongst the benefactors or civic leaders of the town. Charles Cammell came to Sheffield as a young man and when he had reached a modest level of prosperity took up residence in a house in the Botanical Gardens at Broomhill. However, as soon as trade improved he took the opportunity of moving out to Loxley Hall. From Loxley he moved to Norton Hall and its extensive estate when it was sold by the assignees of the Shore family. No suggestion has been found that Cammell's firm was significantly more profitable than that of rivals such as Vickers so it seems at least possible that, had they so wished, at least a few of the Sheffield born manufacturers could have afforded a much more lavish life-style than that which they enjoyed in western Sheffield.

In the second half of the century the wealthy manufacturers such as T. E. Vickers and T. F. Mappin acquired substantial second homes in London and many had land over which they could shoot within easy distance of their homes. A map of the land of the Bradfield Game Association shows families such as the Firths, Vickers and Wilsons had large holdings.⁵² The change in scale of living can be seen even at less elevated levels of wealth. For example, the son of Wightman, the solicitor who was a pioneer developer of the Broomhall Park Estate, had a turreted house built on the shores of the Ladybower Reservoir as well as a home at Hallam Gate.

Thompson's *Rise of respectable society* allows Sheffield to be considered against a wider background of suburban development.⁵³ He suggests that 'Membership of the ruling class can be measured through ownership of country houses of specific size' and that 'The same principle can be applied through all layers of society, grading people through the size of house occupied. House structure, therefore, can be seen as a form of social structure'. He

⁵² Map of the land preserved for the Bradfield Game Association. 1881. Kelham Island K.1919-23

⁵³ Thompson, F.M.L. *The rise of respectable society: a social history of Victorian Britain 1830-1900*. London: Fontana Press, 1988. pp 152 & 153



Map 8. White's map of Sheffield, 1889

considers that 'The very wealthy could manipulate their environments to suit their personal needs and tastes' and that social mobility was a matter of moving over stepping stones which marked the stages from the restrictions of poverty through the various levels of empowerment conferred by increasing wealth. His discussion of the proportion of the newly rich who wished to emulate or gain acceptance by the ruling class does not seem to be directly relevant to the building of Sheffield's wealthiest citizens. However, his comment that, 'practically all the creators of Middlesbrough... built country houses in the vicinity but away from the smoke of their blast furnaces', echoes the trend amongst the steel manufacturers of Sheffield.⁵⁴ These men were amongst those who 'had sufficient wealth to gratify an ambition to live in the country in style, while most likely remaining active in business or professional life and investing only a small proportion of total assets in country property'.⁵⁵ This provision of 'plenty of guest rooms, and perhaps a ball room ... stables and coach-house: scope for a bit of hobby farming and large-scale gardening; and opportunities for riding, hunting, and shooting'⁵⁶ was much closer to the facilities to be found at the likes of Oakbrook and Endcliffe, in keeping with the cautious attitude of the men of Sheffield.

The Ranmoor, Tapton and Endcliffe complex is an example of, what Thompson found to be, 'typical also for the fringes of the built-up area of large towns, especially in the most favoured scenic locations, to be liberally peppered with large villas in their own mini-parks'⁵⁷.

although the parks tended to be much smaller than the fifty acres which he suggests as an upper limit of extent. Much of western Sheffield would seem to fall under the heading of the 'Town villas and villas on the outskirts... essential links in the upper-middle-class chain which ran from the suburbs to the houses in the country.'⁵⁸

11.7 Theories of suburban development

Thompson's introduction to 'The rise of suburbia' published in 1982⁵⁹ makes a useful basis upon which to consider the Sheffield experience in the light of more generalised works on suburban history. It discussed the approach to suburban development taken by a number of researchers drawn from the ranks of urban geographers and architectural historians as well as economic and social historians. Various theories of suburban development were posited. Some emphasise the importance of moral imperatives or a wish to emulate the upper classes as important factors in shaping suburban living.⁶⁰ Such theories often seem to disregard Dauntton's recommendation to emphasise reality as experienced by inhabitants of an area. Rather, they sometimes suggest that they were drawn up by those without any personal experience of choosing a house, or even family life in town or country, for some of the basic factors determining the desirability of urban, and especially terrace living, are not mentioned. Family life often includes crying babies and boisterous children creating noise even in the best-regulated households. Domestic violence, drunkenness, noisy parties or musical entertainment are all prone to disrupt the peace of terrace living and lax housekeeping in just one house can breed vermin which will invade adjoining households no matter how much elbow grease and Lysol are expended.

It has also been suggested that suburbia was the result of a relatively new wish for privacy and that such seclusion away from the workplace and the urban centre restricted female life. Cultures in which urban living has been favoured by the wealthy seem to indicate that an

⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 162

⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 163

⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 164

⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 166

⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 166

⁵⁹ Thompson. *The rise of suburbia*.

⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 4

element of seclusion was often preferred by those who could afford it, and that this is not some novelty resulting from Victorian moral precepts. Bannister Fletcher commented that in Roman cities 'the absence of windows towards the street was probably due to a desire for privacy and 'Rooms were lighted by openings onto an internal court... as in Eastern houses to this day.'⁶¹ High walls similar to those that provided a private environment in the wealthy sectors of ancient Rome can still be seen in Italian cities such as Lucca. Similarly, the busy street life of Arab cities was kept well apart from family life. In Spain the restoration of El Greco's house in Toledo provides an excellent example of an early seventeenth century house which presents high walls to the street behind which the domestic life of the family could be carried on away from the public gaze. Even in Sheffield, successful manufacturers such as the Jessops could have a house in Blast Lane, close to the town yet large enough to boast that feature so dear to the hearts of Sheffield inhabitants, a lake. If housing which was acceptable to those with an income which allowed them an element of choice could be found within an urban environment then many would opt for the convenience and control over one's work-force which living close to the work place could give. Once the centre became over-crowded and unpleasant to a degree that out-weighed such benefits then a change of location became desirable. Increased pollution from existing industry and the pressure to develop all conveniently placed land for industrial expansion may well have been the driving force for the movement away from the centre of town rather than a new-found desire for privacy or class segregation. Movement from the centre of town is often referred to as 'the flight to the suburbs'. It is suggested that flight, with its implications of fear, is quite alien to the phlegmatic Sheffield character. Rather, as sensible people, they were aware that the quality of life available close to the town was deteriorating and so made a staged withdrawal to areas which they found more attractive. The advantages of suburban living are essentially practical as they offer circumstances that provide a buffer against the inconveniences of living cheek by jowl with those whose mode of life is not always entirely compatible.

Nor does suburban living necessarily imply a restricted life for women. To take two Sheffield examples: Mary Firth and Selina Wilson. Mrs Firth brought up her large family within sight and sound of the steel works at which her husband was employed, subject to the endless noise and pollution that steel production involves. There was no place where the children could play under her eye and, if they played on the nearby road they would have been in danger from the traffic generated by the steel works and users of one of the main roads out of the town. It is hard to believe that when family prosperity allowed her to move with the younger children to a detached house with a garden on the borders of Broomhall she regarded the move as anything but a blessing. Her widow-hood was spent at Broomhill, even further from the town centre but her sons all lived within easy walking distance so that she was able to lend support when sickness or even death brought problems to the family. The Broomhill New Connexion Methodist Chapel provided a centre for religious and social life just as the Scotland Street Chapel had done in the early years of her marriage.

The family of George Wilson had never experienced poverty yet, when Selina Wilson married, her mother bought her a house close to the family home and the two visited on almost a daily basis in the manner usually associated with the support found in working class families living in towns. In general, even the wealthiest of the industrialists seemed to maintain their family ties: John Brown counted his kinsman, Roger Brown, builder and slater, amongst those fit to meet Lord Palmerston on his visit to Shirle Hill and Mark Firth invited his reclusive youngest sister, Elizabeth, to the civic reception given for the Prince and Princess of Wales on their visit to Sheffield. The detached and semi-detached houses of suburbia may indeed lend themselves to a life style moulded by the moral precepts mentioned by Thompson but the purely practical advantages of such houses should not be overlooked. Nor does suburban living necessarily pre-empt strong family ties and neighbourly attitudes.

⁶¹ Fletcher, B. *A history of architecture on the comparative method*. 11th ed. London: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1963. p. 191

This seems especially likely to have been the case in Sheffield where families had kinship links strengthened over several generations.

11.8 Conclusion

Thompson suggests⁶² that 'The stiffening of historical research by the incorporation of a conceptual framework is all to the good'. However, data collected concerning the western suburbs of Sheffield, both from documentary sources and from observing the built environment, does not seem to lend itself to entirely support any of the theories to be found in Thompson's survey. To become involved in controversies such as those concerning privacy and the place of women is to enter shaky ground, as conclusions possible on the available evidence tend to be subjective. There is a danger that such theories can become Procrustean beds for which data must be skewed to fit. Tabulating housing density, construction and rental or purchase costs and land values is very difficult for the complex subject of upper levels of middle class housing and to do so from the fragmented data available for Sheffield might seriously mislead a reader. It seems more prudent to paint a broad picture and give what appear to be pertinent examples that indicate the actuality of life in western Sheffield. The town does exhibit the trend towards suburban living in the course of the nineteenth century, which is to be found in most provincial cities. Evidence would seem to support the thesis that Sheffield developed suburbs to cater for its most prosperous citizens, following the general pattern found in other large industrial cities. However, as a result of the character of the inhabitants, as described in Chapter 2, the scale and style of building was quite distinctive. As recently as 1993 the industrialists of Sheffield were described as 'Arrogant, stubborn and short-sighted - they think they know it all'.⁶³ This is rather a harsh indictment but it does draw attention to the native self-confidence which ensured that the newly rich entrepreneurs of the nineteenth century did not exchange the imposed restrictions of poverty only to voluntarily submit to the straight-jacket of fashion. Burnett suggests that 'To a large degree the choice of a house was unconscious and irrational'.⁶⁴ Such an opinion, emphasising free will rather than a determinist view of house selection, seems to be supported by the manner in which Sheffield's western suburbs developed.

Individual self-confidence lends itself to the haphazard type of development that took place in western Sheffield and resulted in the downfall of any attempts at a regimented grand design in the manner of Endcliffe Vale. Reference is often made to the strict segregation of the classes, which resulted from suburban development. In Sharrow, Miss Walton commented that, 'The distribution of these types [newly wealthy industrialists, lower middle class and urban labourers] was not sharply defined or in segregated areas... one road often showing a sharp drop in average income compared with the next'.⁶⁵ This was not only true of Sharrow. William Shore was happy to settle at Tapton Grove though there was a small settlement of metal workers close to his gate and, at a later period, squalid courts and humdrum terraces mingled with Broomhill villas. Even Ranmoor's most successful Land Societies rubbed shoulders with quarries and industrial works. Only Broomhall and Endcliffe could claim to be exclusive enclaves.

Thompson noted that, in 1982, 'the tally of modern scholarly studies of suburbs is not a long one' but each 'adds to our understanding of how and why the suburban environment came into existence'.⁶⁶ Even in 1998 the situation, especially in relation to middle-class suburbs, remains much the same. The present study is intended to add Sheffield to the short list of

⁶² Thompson p. 4

⁶³ *Sheffield Star*, 8 December 1993

⁶⁴ Burnett p. 109

⁶⁵ Walton, M. *A history of the parish of Sharrow*. p. 35.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* p. 5

investigations, attempting to explore those 'diverse influences which determined timing... and physical and social shape' of suburban development.⁶⁷ Should a sufficiently large body of such studies be made at some future time it may then be possible to construct a national survey of the way in which the prosperous were housed in the nineteenth century.

⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 4

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Addenda and Points of Clarification.

General note: various versions of the names of places and persons have been found in the sources used in this research. The practice has been adopted of using the form found, e.g., Crookes Moor, Crooks Moor, Rand Moor, Ran Moor and Ranmoor, rather than using a standard form. Broom Hall has been used for the original house on the Jessop Estate and Broomhall Park for the estate created by John Watson.

p.55: Page Hall was advertised for sale in 1824 but the deeds of the house make it clear that it remained the property of the Greaves family until the death of George Bustard Greaves in 1834. Presumably the advertisement did not attract a suitable offer. This was not unusual, for instance Brightfield was offered for sale by the Wilson family but withdrawn when only low offers were received. It too was sold privately some years later.

p.134: The article on 3 July 1961 refers to Broomhill, of which Taptonville, despite its name, is usually considered to be a part.

p.146: Sarah Wilson, who married the first Thomas Holy on my abbreviated family tree, was the sister of Joseph Wilson of Sharrow Mill. Another Joseph Wilson, son of Sarah's eldest brother, John, married her daughter, Hannah.

Thomas Watson, brother of John of Shirecliffe Hall, married the niece of Joseph Wilson of Sharrow, and their daughter married Peter Cadman. The Watsons had already married into the Newbould family on at least two occasions in the nineteenth century. *see*: Hunter, *Famillae Minorum Gentium*. pp.708/9

p.215: T.A. Ward (p.316), says 'Mr. Jessop ... bade £11,000 for Tapton'. A note mentions that it was in fact bought by Robert Brightmore Mitchell and that "Mr Ward, hearing that this was for a Building Society, exclaimed 'What desecration'. For reasons which I have not been able to trace the scheme failed and Tapton Grove was sold on to Edward Vickers.

p.217 Chaytor (p.13) says, 'The family had been connected with Methodism since its inception' and goes on to elaborate on this. He also states that Thomas Holy, nephew of Joseph Wilson the first, was 'the leading Methodist layman in Sheffield at the time'. Holy was assisted in sorting out Joseph's business affairs by a Wesleyan minister, Alexander Mather, who remained a life-long family friend. I am not sure of the religion of Joseph's wife, Ann Greaves, of the Page Hall family.

Joseph Wilson, the second, married the sister of the Rev. Henry Pearson, Vicar of Norton: this may mark the point where the Wilsons began to depart from Wesley. The heir of the second Joseph married the daughter of Robert Frederick Wilkinson of Brittain, Wilkinson and Brownell. Her brother, Frederick, was a great friend of T.A. Ward so I suppose they may have been Unitarians. I am not sure if they were related to Henry Wilkinson of Endcliffe Hall.

John Brown married Mary Schofield at Queen street Chapel in 1839, it is listed in a directory for 1841as being an Independent Chapel at that time. Mary's father Benjamin, and some of his sons, were auctioneers for much of the nineteenth century, settling at Broomhill in the 1830s. The family was not central to my research but I noticed the name from time to time. The latest mention, to which Mr. Alan Cass drew to my attention, was a Schofield concerned with a United Methodist event at the beginning of the twentieth century.

C.H. Firth was still living with his mother and sisters in 1860, all of whom were life-long New Connexion Methodists. He married the daughter of Thomas Branson, religion unknown to me. His second wife was Marion Bathurst King, daughter of Rev. Richard

King of Lancaster. If she was an Anglican this may account for his expensive gift to St Johns', Ranmoor.

p.217 (lines 13-14) I think that this section might be re-phrased to the effect that 'Although some houses exhibiting some of the Arts and Crafts features of Tylecoe were built on the south side of Fulwood Road by 1892, the Land Societies continued to resist any departure from the use of stone within their boundaries. (Ling cites examples of this, p.70)''