

**The Other Architects Who Made London:  
Planning and Design of Speculative Housing  
*c.* 1870 - 1939**

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## **Abstract**

Successive house building booms from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century until the Second World War left their indelible mark on London's built environment and shaped it decisively. In terms of the sheer size of area covered, the dispersed, suburban London of terraced, semi- and detached houses that we know today was to a large extent created then. Much of this housing was built by private firms for an assumed demand, speculatively. That is the kind discussed in this thesis. Despite this legacy, the questions of who those involved in house design were and how they went about it is an under-researched topic surrounded by assumptions that are often difficult to substantiate. This research takes the contribution of these 'other' often anonymous architects seriously and aims to shed more light on a culture of housing design that has left us with such an extraordinary heritage.

The thesis is structured in six chapters. The first one outlines the topic and the methodology, and reviews related existing literature. Chapter two examines who the architects and designers of speculative housing were by using a quantitative analysis of Richmond building applications 1886-1939. Chapters three to five focus on one case study each. The first, in chapter three, discusses the planning and development of a speculative housing estate in Lambeth, the Minet estate, and the numerous parties involved in its planning and construction. Chapter four examines the work of Norfolk & Prior, a firm of architect-surveyors in Lewisham, and discusses this particular crossover occupation and its role in speculative housing at the time. Chapter five, the third case study, focuses on the work of the Reader Brothers, one of the numerous small family firms of builders who were important for speculative house building and who also often took a leading role in design. Chapter six considers the key findings of this thesis and further implications of the research for our understanding of the history of London's housing.

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# **Chapter One**

## **Introduction**

## 1.1 Introduction

The aesthetic appeal and architectural quality of speculative suburban housing of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century has long been a subject of controversy and at times of fierce criticism, especially from the post-war architectural establishment. However, even the critics cannot deny lasting popular appeal in contrast to recently built housing, much of which even the Greater London Authority admits is ‘shamefully poor’.<sup>1</sup> The frequent use of the terms ‘Victorian’ or ‘Edwardian’ in sales brochures of estate agents today is also a reflection of the continuing popularity of housing of those periods among the general population. Among today’s architects, Victorian housing in particular is often praised for its robustness, adaptability and liveliness of design. In a recent survey among architects in the UK, ‘more than half hailed the Victorian era for producing the greatest legacy’.<sup>2</sup> In comparison, only 3.5 % favoured recently built housing.<sup>3</sup> Prominent contemporary housing architects such as Alison Brooks also draw inspiration from 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century precedents for their own work.<sup>4</sup>

Notwithstanding its undeniable popularity and influence, how average, common housing of the period was designed is still an under-researched area and not often recognised as an achievement of its architects. Recognition is generally reserved for rare examples of speculative housing designed by pioneering architects such as Shaw, Godwin and Unwin, whose works have been well researched and documented. However, the generally high quality of common housing during the period 1870-1939 is as interesting as the undisputable achievement of those outstanding architects. It is such ordinary speculative housing of the period, planned by generally little known designers who were not necessarily formally trained, that this thesis focuses on.

The question of who the designers of speculative housing of the period were is still surrounded by several unproven assumptions. It is, for example, a widely held belief

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<sup>1</sup> *London Housing Strategy*. (London: Greater London Authority, 2010), p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> Will Hurst and Marguerite Lazell, ‘Government Fails on Pledge for Good Design’, *Building Design*, 3 October 2008, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Edwardian or inter-war housing was not featured as one of the options in the survey. However, Victorian housing is illustrated by a photo of terraced housing which is probably Edwardian, because it features rectangular window bays. It seems to suggest that in the survey these two periods were perceived as one and the same.

<sup>4</sup> Alison Brooks, Matthew Lloyd and Alex Lifschutz, ‘Talk: My London Vernacular’ (Centre for London’s Built Environment, 2009).



that speculative housing somehow happened without any input from architects.<sup>5</sup> In *Victorian Housebuilding*, Kitt Wedd states, for example, that a ‘second influence on mass-market house design was the absence of professional architects’.<sup>6</sup> Such assumptions are possibly encouraged because the topic is often only very briefly dealt with in relevant publications. In *The Growth of Victorian London*, for example, Olsen states that ‘the design of speculative housing lay with the builders, whose views on architecture remained traditional’.<sup>7</sup> Olsen may have been aware that even in speculative housing, architects were often involved, as some of his estate case studies suggest, but he did not give the topic much attention.

Apart from the suggestion that speculative housing was created without architects, another unsubstantiated proposal is that new design was not necessary as standard templates could be used directly or designs could be copied from pattern-books. This view is, for example, expressed by R. Lawrence in *The Book of the Edwardian and Interwar House*: ‘Builders did not need architects because they could find designs in pattern-books and publications such as the *Illustrated Carpenter and Builder*’.<sup>8</sup> However, copying and adaptation of known elements has always been part of architectural design; someone still had to be responsible for that process, which is an important part of the planning and design of buildings. Much of the literature acknowledges that, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, other visual printed sources, such as magazines and trade brochures, became more widely available, and replaced pattern-books as a source of inspiration for those involved in housing design.<sup>9</sup> This in itself suggests that the function of pattern-books then was similar to that of visual sources such as architectural magazines today, which are also used for architectural inspiration, without necessarily being drawn on as a template that can be built from directly without any further design.

This thesis demonstrates that speculative builders played an important role in many design decisions, but also examines more closely than has been done before how far

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<sup>5</sup> This view was also reiterated at the aforementioned talk on the influences of housing history on London. Brooks, Lloyd and Lifschutz.

<sup>6</sup> Kitt Wedd, *Victorian Housebuilding* (Shire Publications, 2012), p. 18.

<sup>7</sup> Donald J. Olsen, *The Growth of Victorian London* (London: Batsford, 1976), p. 158.

<sup>8</sup> Richard Russell Lawrence, *The Book of the Edwardian and Inter-war House* (London: Aurum Press Ltd, 2009), p. 12.

<sup>9</sup> Stefan Muthesius, *The English Terraced House* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), p. 252.

architects or surveyors have been involved in speculative housing of the period and what influence they had. Where architects and surveyors have not been involved, how was the design arrived at, and how did the housing and those involved in its design manage to be so successful without input from trained architects? The thesis concludes that designers of speculative housing were often professional in the sense of being experienced and competent, even if designing was not their only occupation.

The following chapters also show that, not only were architects involved in speculative housing between 1870 and 1939, but that it was actively planned and designed, often with a degree of sophistication and often by very able individuals. Sometimes they were architects by title. However, many of those responsible for planning and design were not architects at all but surveyors and/or builders. In the thesis title, these individuals are referred to as ‘other’ architects. This term implies firstly that they were architects in terms of the work they did as building designers, even if not always by title, and secondly that they are not usually the kind of architects who are discussed in architectural history. It is the work of these other architects that is the topic of this research. To appreciate their work, we need to suspend our understanding of current occupational boundaries and hierarchies, and instead judge the work itself as an architectural achievement. Their work is also relevant for a more comprehensive understanding of London's urban development history and can potentially provide inspiration for today’s urban planning and policy.

The thesis also proposes that it is important to study those involved in average speculative housing design, rather than its most outstanding examples, because the legacy of such housing of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century is in many respects inspirational: a better understanding of its pre-construction planning and design stages and whether they have anything to do with quality would inform future housing policy, building and design. Speculative housing of the period under review seems to contradict the conventional wisdom that good architecture is necessarily driven by an ingenious individual. This wisdom might hold true for many types of buildings, but in mass housing, the examples of this period seem to show that the opposite can also be possible; popular and vibrant architecture was planned by individuals from a wide range of backgrounds who were not necessarily ingenious or avant-garde, and not always formally trained, but who still created, often in collaboration, a well-accepted type of

housing with enduring appeal. This suggests that a culture that fosters quality can be more important than creative design genius alone.

The aim of this study is by no means to undervalue architectural creativity and innovation, which was also important during this period and was led by well-known architects that were widely emulated. However, the thesis is not concerned with the one-off exceptional example, but with how design happened in ordinary housing. Even today, there is no lack of outstanding, high-quality, luxury housing projects in London, many of which can be admired in affluent areas of London, such as Chelsea or parts of Docklands; it is the quality of average housing which currently is the area of concern.

### *Period of Study*

The period of the study ends in 1939 because the way speculative housing was designed changed significantly after the war. There were several factors that influenced this change. Immediately after the war, most new housing was publicly funded and controlled, and much of the privately financed housing production was focussed on the repair and restoration of existing buildings. Another key factor was that, with the legal protection of the architect's title in 1938, it became more difficult for others, such as surveyors or draughtsmen, who, before 1938, would simply call themselves 'architects & surveyors', to access this field of work. The protection of titles and occupations contributed to increased specialization and a clearer delineation of occupations. Lastly, the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947 introduced the need for a planning application, which contributed to a clear separation of the design and planning stages of the work from the construction stages and made it more likely for an architect to be responsible for the first part of the work.

The start date of the study period is more difficult to pinpoint to one specific year or policy, and it would be arbitrary to try to do so. The research interest, as aforementioned, is very much about late Victorian and Edwardian housing design culture. It is at the core of the thesis question. It is therefore crucial that the study is rooted in the late Victorian period while covering a sufficient timespan of subsequent change. 1870 as a year was chosen because it is when development began on the Minet estate, which the first case study in chapter three is based on.

## 1.2 Literature Review

The body of literature available on the history of housing, and also that of speculative housing, is vast and the following review therefore has to be highly selective. It is divided into three main sections. The introductory section explores publications about key occupations involved in the design of speculative housing *c.* 1870-1939 and their roles and relationships in general. The next section discusses publications about the key occupations in more detail in two parts: the first focuses on the role of the two professions, architects and surveyors, and also reviews the literature on the wider theme of professionalization and specialization, for which *c.* 1870-1939 was a key period, and in particular how professionalization affected design practices in speculative housing. The second part focuses on literature touching on the design of speculative housing by builders, who are generally seen as one of its key drivers. The second main section is closely linked to those discussions and examines how far the housing of *c.* 1870-1939 can be seen as vernacular; housing of the period is often seen as vernacular in the sense of 'design without professionals'. The last main section reviews how selected key publications approach speculative housing as part of London's urban development and planning, and its wider economic and social framework.

### *Key Roles and Occupations*

The question of who designed speculative housing has been addressed in terms of occupations by a number of recent publications, which have begun to challenge the widely held assumption that it was designed by builders. In particular Frank Trowell's research on speculative house building in Leeds, J.W.R. Whitehand's and C.M.H. Carr's research on Birmingham and London, and M.A. Johnson's study of the 'Sunderland cottage' have shown that architects were in fact more involved in the design of speculative housing than previously thought.<sup>10</sup> In his article 'The Makers of British Towns: Architects, Builders and Property Owners, *c.*1850-1939', J.W.R. Whitehand

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<sup>10</sup> Frank Trowell, 'Speculative Housing Development in Leeds and the Involvement of Local Architects in the Design Process 1866-1914', *Construction History*, 1 (1985), 13-24; J.W.R Whitehand, 'The Makers of British Towns: Architects, Builders and Property Owners, *C.*1850-1939', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 18 (1992), 417-438; Michael Andrew Johnson, 'The Sunderland Cottage: The Favourite and Typical Dwelling of the Skilled Mechanic', *Vernacular Architecture*, 41 (2010), 59-74.

asks who the designers were of common building types such as housing.<sup>11</sup> He takes a historico-geographical approach and discusses not only housing, but also those responsible for the creation of residential, commercial, institutional and public urban areas. Whitehand makes a very convincing argument for a more informed discussion of who the designers of England's housing at the time were. He relates and combines the results of the dispersed and often local studies of others and also includes new quantitative research of building applications. He also briefly discusses the role of architects and the use of pattern-books in speculative housing, and his conclusions clearly challenge often-repeated preconceptions. One of the sources he draws on is a study on speculative housing development in Leeds 1866-1914 by F. Trowell.<sup>12</sup>

A noteworthy feature of Trowell's findings was the widespread use of architects to prepare the building plans deposited with the local authority. There is no doubt that some of these architects were builders calling themselves architects. But the fact that 82% of houses in approved building applications were designed by architects who at some time during the study period had a town-centre practice, suggests that architects, albeit broadly defined, may well have played a more widespread role in Victorian residential development than has been often assumed. Before Trowell's detailed studies of deposited building plans it had been widely thought that the form taken by the majority of Victorian dwellings reflected the use by local builders of readily available pattern-books.<sup>13</sup>

Whitehand widens the scope of research on architects' involvement in speculative housing to Birmingham and a small sample from London (Table 1, p.13). His key conclusion is that architects were more involved in the design of speculative housing than previously thought. Besides Whitehand and Trowell, other research of particular local areas further confirms that the role of architects in speculative housing of the time has often been underestimated, even in the case of standard local housing types. Michael Johnson, for example, studied the Sunderland cottage in 'The Sunderland Cottage: 'The Favourite and Typical Dwelling of the Skilled Mechanic'', a particular regional single-storey house type for working-class tenants, mainly built in the late 19<sup>th</sup>-

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<sup>11</sup> Whitehand, p. 418.

<sup>12</sup> Trowell, 'Speculative Housing Development in Leeds and the Involvement of Local Architects in the Design Process 1866-1914'.

<sup>13</sup> Whitehand, pp. 430-431.

and early 20<sup>th</sup>-centuries.<sup>14</sup> Johnson comes to the conclusion that ‘most of the cottages were designed by Sunderland’s preeminent architects’.<sup>15</sup>

Table 1. Applications for speculatively-built houses prepared by architects, builders and others in various areas in Birmingham and London, 1918-1939 (J.W.R. Whitehand and C.M.H Carr, ‘The Creators of England’s Inter-war Suburbs’, *Urban History*, 28 [2001], 218–234).

	Person/firm preparing application					
	Architect or related profession		Builder		Other	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Four Birmingham study areas	40	58	23	33	6	9
Four supplementary Birmingham study areas	21	64	5	15	7	21
All Birmingham study areas	61	60	28	27	13	13
Four London study areas	21	36	27	46	11	19

Sources: Building applications and Kelly’s Directories

This recent research points in a new direction, but we have still only begun to understand who those responsible for the planning and design were. For one, Whitehand’s approach is historico-geographical, rather than architectural history, and therefore does not explore the work of the architects he mentions or how they defined themselves. There is also no detailed study so far addressing this question in particular in relation to London. Furthermore, research to date does not sufficiently consider the working world in speculative housing at the time. Generally, there is a tendency to apply today’s understanding of its boundaries. The available literature is, for example, often focused on a distinction between architects versus builders, but neglects the involvement of other construction occupations. This perception is based more on an understanding of relationships in today’s construction industry rather than on a historical perspective. By simply applying such occupational categories, the significant changes in the roles and relationships of the built environment that have taken place since 1939 have been ignored. These categories should be seen in their historical context to clarify the roles beyond a mere occupational label.

<sup>14</sup> Johnson.

<sup>15</sup> Johnson, p. 72.

How unclear the categories were and that they often overlapped is also confirmed in trade directories of the period. The publishers themselves did not quite know how to categorize the occupations. For example, under the listing for ‘architects’ in *The Post Office London Directory for 1882*, several symbols indicate the other occupations that the same individual or business could also hold (see Figure 1).<sup>16</sup> The symbols indicate if they were concurrently also e.g. surveyors, estate agents or civil engineers. Such an overlap of professions would be quite unusual in today’s *Yellow Pages* under the listing ‘architects’. Those listed as ‘builders’ in the 1882 directory might also be carpenters, bricklayers, surveyors, undertakers, house agents or contractors, depending on the symbol in front of the listing, while surveyors might also be listed as builders, land agents, house & estate agents, valuers, auctioneers or architects. The 1882 trade directory reflects the fact that the design process then was not as regulated, specialized and clearly separated from construction as it is today. To understand the role and contribution of the different occupations to the design of speculative housing, it is necessary to distinguish what these categories meant at the time. The following sections deal with literature about the complexities and changes in the role of these different occupations.

### *Professions and Specialization*

As the following chapters demonstrate, the two key professions involved in the design of speculative housing c. 1870-1939 were architects and surveyors, whose roles have changed significantly since. At least until the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the occupation titles could be used interchangeably, and still in the 19<sup>th</sup> and even early 20<sup>th</sup> century there was much overlap (discussed in more detail in the introduction to chapter four). Secondary literature about the history of these professions helps understand the roles of architects and surveyors at the time.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the architect-developer, still active in the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century in such eminent figures as John Nash, had become a rare exception. In late 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century London, most eminent architects worked on larger, non-

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<sup>16</sup> *The Post Office London Directory for 1882* (London: Kelly’s Directories Ltd, 1882).

residential buildings and on private houses, but not usually on speculative housing. However, there were exceptions of pioneering speculative housing developments of outstanding quality such as Bedford Park and later the Garden Suburbs of Brentham and Hampstead, both designed by well-known architects. The contribution of recognised architects to those developments, men such as Richard Norman Shaw, Edward Godwin, Raymond Unwin or Barry Parker, is well documented, e.g., in Andrew Saint's book *Richard Norman Shaw* or Aileen Reid's PhD Thesis *Edward William Godwin (1833-86): Towards an Art-Architecture*.<sup>17</sup> Unwin was the most prominent figure in the planning of many of the Garden City-inspired developments, and also had a key influence on London's early 20<sup>th</sup>-century emerging town planning policies. A detailed history of one of these early Garden Suburbs can be found in Aileen Reid's *Brentham: A history of the pioneer garden suburb 1901-2001*.<sup>18</sup> Those leading architects have set precedents that also influenced the housing discussed in the following chapters, but the main focus of this study is on much less known individuals.

This thesis also addresses the question of what drove professionalization of design. The period chosen for this study was in many respects decisive in shaping today's understanding of professions in the built environment and in establishing its boundaries. The industrialisation of the 19<sup>th</sup> century brought with it an 'enormous increase in public and commercial commissions: town halls, hospitals, museums, banks, hotels, etc.', which was an important driver of the growth of professions in the built environment.<sup>19</sup> The amount and scale of this work made an architect as specialized designer necessary and viable. The key components that define today's built environment professions in England and also fence them off from other occupations developed then to a large extent: legal protection of titles, professional memberships and qualifications with entry requirements, and planning and building regulations supporting the need for professional expertise. In *The Rise of Professional Society: England Since 1880*, Harold Perkin calls the 20<sup>th</sup> century that of the 'increasingly professional expert'.<sup>20</sup> This is certainly true for the production of housing.

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<sup>17</sup> Andrew Saint, *Richard Norman Shaw*, rev. edn (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010); Aileen Reid, 'Edward William Godwin, 1833-86: Towards an Art-Architecture' (London: Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London, 1999).

<sup>18</sup> Aileen Reid, *Brentham: A History of the Pioneer Garden Suburb 1901-2001* (Brentham: Brentham Heritage Society, 2000).

<sup>19</sup> Roger Dixon and Stefan Muthesius, *Victorian Architecture* (Thames and Hudson, 1985), pp. 10–11.

<sup>20</sup> Harold Perkin, *The Rise of Professional Society: England Since 1880* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 2.



The end of the period of this study can be seen as a key turning point in the professionalization of design, which is also reflected in the literature of the time. In *How should we rebuild London?*, first published in 1945, C.B. Purdom comments slightly pejoratively on the professionalization in the building industry by describing the architect's role as 'no longer a craftsman but a mere designer'.<sup>21</sup> However, Purdom is generally positive about the architect's role as a crucial design profession in the future.

'In the rebuilding of London, architecture will have an unprecedented opportunity ... Is the architect capable of using the opportunity? ... For I think we owe it to ourselves to give him the chance. All future building should be in architectural hands, and every part of London should be under architectural supervision. Many more architects will be required than have hitherto been employed and great expansion of the profession should be anticipated'.<sup>22</sup>

The central role Purdom gives to the professional, in the form of planner, architect or engineer, is further confirmed by the illustrations accompanying the book (e.g. Figure 3 & 4). From a contemporary perspective, it is not surprising that Purdom suggests architects should be responsible for building design. It is more surprising that his quote suggests that they were not before 1945, and that he describes the shift as so sudden. After 1945, the small family speculative building business discussed in chapter five, who combined being developer, designer, estate agent, construction and project manager, was largely succeeded by the more specialized work relationships suggested by Purdom and that we know today.

A key publication about the history of the architectural profession in Britain, which has not yet been surpassed in depth and detail, is Barrington Kaye's book on the development of the architectural profession in Britain, which traces the steps from the beginnings of the profession to the first formalised university education and to the eventual statutory protection of the title.<sup>23</sup> In *The Victorian Architectural Profession*, Frank Jenkins suggests that the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the 'battle of architectural

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<sup>21</sup> C.B. Purdom, *How Should We Rebuild London* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1945), p. 129.

<sup>22</sup> Purdom, p. 133.

<sup>23</sup> Barrington Kaye, *The Development of the Architectural Profession in England. A Sociological Study* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1960).

professionalism’, which ‘was being waged for the acceptance of the architect, not only as an artist and technician but as a professional man, secure and respected in the Victorian social hierarchy’.<sup>24</sup> The establishment of the RIBA and the statutory registration of architects were important steps in achieving this.

By the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the surveying profession retreated to a large extent from design responsibilities but, as this thesis shows, it was crucial for the design of housing between 1870 and 1939. A comprehensive account of its history can be found in F.M.L. Thompson’s *Chartered Surveyors: Growth of a Profession*<sup>25</sup>. This is an invaluable overview of the history of the surveying profession, but its role in speculative housing design at the time has rarely been discussed in any detail, a lacuna which this thesis addresses in chapter four. It also suggests new insights into why architects were unsuccessful in achieving the statutory protection of their work, despite their best efforts, unlike in many other European countries.<sup>26</sup> In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the protection of architects’ work was debated in parliament, the design of architecture such as speculative housing was not exclusively in the hands of architects but also in those of other occupations that contested vehemently the architect’s exclusive claim for legal protection as building designer. The architectural profession never achieved legal protection of their work in England, but only a protection of the title ‘architect’ in 1938. In chapter four, the occupation of the architect-surveyor is discussed in more detail, a crossover title that expresses this overlap in responsibilities at the time.

In the professionalization of the planning stages of housing, increased state involvement and control played an important part and also impacted on the private sector. The politics of this increasing state invention to provide good quality housing also for those on lower incomes is examined for example by Mark Swenarton in *Building the New Jerusalem*.<sup>27</sup> Part of this involvement was increased building and town planning legislation and also state-financed development of housing. While this thesis is about speculative, privately financed housing, rather than public housing, the history of public

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<sup>24</sup> Frank Jenkins, ‘The Victorian Architectural Profession’, in *Victorian Architecture* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1963).

<sup>25</sup> F. M. L. Thompson, *Chartered Surveyors: The Growth of a Profession* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968).

<sup>26</sup> Stephen Brookhouse, *Professional Studies in Architecture: A Primer* (RIBA Publications, 2013), p. 14.

<sup>27</sup> Mark Swenarton, *Building the New Jerusalem: Architecture, Housing and Politics 1900 - 1930* (Watford: IHS BRE Publisher, 2008).

housing is relevant, as state-financed garden-city type developments such as the Well Hall Estate in Eltham (Royal Borough of Greenwich, London) influenced speculative house builders, encouraging them to follow new styles and ideas.

Increasing specialization is also reflected in contemporary literature of the time. The influence of architects gradually grew in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (see chapter two), but other occupations such as surveyors and builders were also involved in design. The uncertainty of who should be responsible for the design of housing caused friction between the various parties. The emerging architectural profession would have liked to see that part of the housing production come within its exclusive sphere of influence, an ambition expressed in *House Building 1934-36* in a sketch comparing housing by an architect to that designed by a builder (Figure 2).<sup>28</sup> In this probably hypothetical project, the author's intention was to demonstrate and promote the positive contribution that the architect's design expertise could make to speculative housing. The sketch might be slightly over-simplified propaganda, but the suggested contrast is striking and visualises these conflicting responsibilities. The distinction 'architect-designed' was made, a term that can be found even today in sales brochures for speculative housing.

While the influence of architects was limited in common speculative housing in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, their role was more central in housing for wealthy owner-occupier clients, commissioning a house for themselves (see chapter two). The role of the architect in the design of private houses for individual clients is documented with some irony and caricature in *The Honeywood File: An Adventure in Building* and *The Honeywood Settlement* by Harry B. Creswell.<sup>29</sup> These books have become standard reading for architectural students taking the final registration exam, because they explain the pitfalls of contractual relationships and construction administration in an entertaining narrative. However, this thesis shows, the degree of control in the architect's hand in *The Honeywood File* cannot be compared to the role and involvement of architects in speculative mass housing (see chapter four).

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<sup>28</sup> Ernest Betham, *House Building 1934 - 36* (London: The Federated Employer's Press, 1934).

<sup>29</sup> Harry B. Creswell, *The Honeywood File: An Adventure in Building* (London: Faber & Faber, 1929); Harry B. Creswell, *The Honeywood Settlement* (London: Architectural Press, 1930).

As part of a professionalization of the design process, the education of the architect changed from apprenticeship to formalized university education. In *Architecture: Art or Profession*, Mark Crinson and Jules Lubbock take a critical view of the way architectural education has developed and created a specialized discipline of ‘paper’ designers with little contact to the craft of building. Crinson and Lubbock also describe the informal and unregulated nature of the design process at the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, ‘at that time the skills of designing, measuring, surveying and making specifications could belong to the architect, the surveyor, the builder or any one of a number of designations’.<sup>30</sup> A professionalization of housing design also had other indirect implications. The establishment of architecture as a discipline exclusively responsible for design developed its own dynamic and values, which has also been pointed out, for example, by Helene Lipstadt in *Bourdieu’s Bequest*.<sup>31</sup> Being chiefly responsible for housing design, the profession also inevitably assumes authority over questions of taste and to a degree becomes the judge of what is good or bad design. This specialization by definition brings along with it a distancing from popular taste because the specialist’s idea of good design develops its independent dynamic at odds with that of the general population.

Popular taste as a potentially positive influence on architectural design was rediscovered in post-modernism (e.g. by Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown in *Learning from Las Vegas*) to appeal to the non-specialist, non-professional, to the common man.<sup>32</sup> This fact in itself, however, also confirms the contrast between the taste of design specialists and that of the wider population. Venturi and Brown, although trying to appeal to popular taste, analysed it from the perspective of an outsider (Figure 5). This contrast between architect’s and popular taste existed even before the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The only difference is that the relationship and the role of the designer in relation to ordinary architecture like housing had changed. After 1945 in particular, mass housing had become part of the architect’s chief sphere of influence. This distance to popular taste was a luxury the speculative builder of the period could not afford. They had to carefully bear in mind the saleability and popular appeal of their products. The Readers

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<sup>30</sup> Mark Crinson and Jules Lubbock, *Architecture: Art or Profession?* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), p. 41.

<sup>31</sup> Helene Lipstadt, ‘Bourdieu’s Bequest’, *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 64 (2005), 433–436.

<sup>32</sup> Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour, *Learning From Las Vegas: The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1977).

(see chapter five), for example, were responsible for many aspects of the housing they produced, e.g. the design as well as the marketing and sale. Today's body of literature dealing with the topic of vernacular design, discussed in the next section, often focuses on this distinction between expert-, architect-design and that without.

Between 1870 and 1939, there were close links between the housing designed by architects and that designed by speculative builders. Architect-designed housing often provided a template that speculative builders would follow, a subject discussed by Neil Jackson in *The Speculative House in London c1832-1914*, and for a later period by Miles Horsey in *London Speculative Housebuilding of the 1930s: Official Control and Popular Taste*.<sup>33</sup> Although not a central topic in this research, some of the sources used confirm that published examples of architect-designed housing were imitated by builders. Figure 6, for example, shows a page from a magazine called *Bungalows and Small Country Houses*, which was kept in the Reader Bros office. All the houses illustrated in the magazine are architect-designed; this page is particularly interesting because it demonstrates the influence of published architect-designed houses on speculative house builders. The little sketch, which was scribbled onto the page by one of the Readers, also shows how the ideal of the country house served as a template and was adapted for a higher density semi-detached suburban setting. The example also reflects how publications such as magazines took on the role of pattern-books as an inspiration for speculative housing design. Figure 7 and 8 show designs by the Readers that might have been influenced by examples from *Bungalows and Small Country Houses*.<sup>34</sup>

### *Builders as Designers*

There is a large body of literature addressing the role of speculative builders during the period, but it rarely discusses their design contribution in much detail. This thesis shows that it was significant. H.J. Dyos' research published in 'The Speculative Builders and Developers of Victorian London' focuses on the business of speculative builders as key

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<sup>33</sup> Neil Jackson, 'The Speculative House in London C1832-1914' (unpublished PhD, Polytechnic of the South Bank, 1982); Miles Horsey, 'London Speculative Housebuilding of the 1930s: Official Control and Popular Taste', *London Journal*, 11 (1985).

<sup>34</sup> *Bungalows and Small Country Houses* (London: The Architect, 1925).

drivers of urban development, but does not discuss their design work.<sup>35</sup> It should also be kept in mind that the term ‘builder’ could have a number of different meanings in speculative housing in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. For example, ‘builder’ could mean speculative or contracting builder. It would be more likely for a speculative builder than for a contracting builder to be involved in the design of housing. And a ‘speculative builder’ may not actually be a builder in the literal sense of being physically involved in constructing buildings, but often rather a developer or builders’ manager. Examples of these varied roles can be found throughout the case study chapters. A good explanation of the different types of builders, both contracting and speculative, and their roles can be found in Neil Jackson’s PhD thesis *The Speculative House in London c1832-1914*.<sup>36</sup> His research topic is close to that of this thesis and has been a very useful secondary source. Jackson’s approach to the topic, however, was different from the one taken here, with each of his thesis chapters covering specific wider themes, such as ‘The Business of Speculative Building’ or ‘The Development of Architectural Style’. One of Jackson’s key interests was the development and adoption of architectural style. It is interesting to note that he also mentions designers but concludes that he could not find much evidence of architects being involved in design.<sup>37</sup> This could perhaps partly be explained by the earlier period (c. 1832-1914) he discusses. Chapter two of this thesis shows that the involvement of architects steadily increased from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In terms of the contribution of speculative builders, the assumption of designing by pattern-book is often repeated in the literature. In ‘Infinite Variety in Brick and Stucco: 1840-1914’, for example, Susie Barson suggests that, at least until 1870, ‘most building was carried out by builders with only their pattern-book to guide them’.<sup>38</sup> Barson, however, does recognise the contribution of professional architects and surveyors to common speculative housing: ‘Some estates would employ an architect or a surveyor to ensure the quality of building, the aesthetic appearance of individual houses and the

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<sup>35</sup> H. J. Dyos, ‘The Speculative Builders and Developers of Victorian London’, *Victorian Studies*, 11 (1968), 641–690; H. J. Dyos, *Victorian Suburb: Study of the Growth of Camberwell* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1961).

<sup>36</sup> Neil Jackson, pp. 8–23.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>38</sup> Susie Barson, ‘Infinite Variety in Brick and Stucco: 1840 – 1914’, in *The London Suburb*, ed. by Andrew Saint (London: Merrell Holberton Publishers, 1999), p. 68.

architectural coherence of the estate'.<sup>39</sup> Barson found one of the most convincing examples of a near match between a pattern-book elevation and houses that were actually built (Figure 10). However, the clear differences between the pattern-book elevation and the built houses even in her example also reinforces the point that pattern-books did not completely replace a bespoke design process, even in cases where they clearly seem to have been used as a reference. How this bespoke process took place is a central part of the enquiry of this thesis and will be discussed further throughout the chapters.

The term 'pattern-books' is open to much misunderstanding. A problem is that the term suggests a direct copy of published drawings, as is the case with textile pattern-books. In architecture, they are therefore often misunderstood as a replacement for an architect, designer, or someone in that role, which is questionable. Peter Guillery points out that, in architecture, there is little evidence for a direct translation of such published example drawings into buildings. In a recent paper on the topic, he stated that 'few whole-house patterns jumped from page to site, and after 1870 the pattern-book genre merged into that of the Builders' Manual'.<sup>40</sup> The author also could not find any evidence in the houses studied for this thesis of a direct copy from examples in pattern-books.

In *British Architectural Books and Writers 1556-1785*, a key publication on the topic, Eileen Harris discusses such ambiguities in the understanding and use of the term 'pattern-books' and states that 'books of designs, indeed most illustrated architectural books, are often described as pattern-books' - in her view incorrectly.<sup>41</sup> She proposes instead a slightly more narrow definition of pattern-books in architecture as 'a collection of ideal, untried designs (...) for a particular publication (...) with the express purpose of assisting the reader in making a choice'.<sup>42</sup> Under this definition, pattern-books are essentially 'books with examples' to draw on. This definition of the term is more useful, as such examples were not necessarily copied in their entirety, but only certain features or parts were adopted and incorporated into the design, which could have been the role

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 67.

<sup>40</sup> Peter Guillery, 'Georgian London's house plans: variation and standardization', paper for seminar: 'Pattern-books: could they provide a solution to today's housing crisis?' at Alan Baxter Associates, 27 September 2007, p. 6.

<sup>41</sup> Eileen Harris, *British Architectural Books and Writers 1556-1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 34.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

of a builder, architect or draughtsman. Architects and designers today still draw heavily on examples from various sources, which does not mean that a person is not required to still make sense of those examples and adopt or interpret them to suit a specific purpose.

The role of speculative builders such as the Readers (chapter five), who also designed the houses they built, was that of a ‘master builder’, who would employ the different trades and direct them. As part of this role, such builders also created their own design drawings. A famous example of one particularly successful such master builder is Thomas Cubitt. Hermione Hobhouse’s exhaustive academic study in *Thomas Cubitt: Master Builder* recounts the history of this particular builder who was also involved in speculative housing.<sup>43</sup> As one of the largest and most successful builders of his time, Thomas Cubitt could by no means be considered as typical or ordinary; he is credited with having revolutionized the industry by being one of the first to establish a builder’s yard with a permanent workforce, which became the model for today’s large contractor. Although Hobhouse’s study deals with a period slightly earlier than that of this research, it helps to explain business practices and contractual relationships of a construction industry that was in many ways still similar in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to Hobhouse, Cubitt set up his own surveying and drawing office within his firm early in his career in order to be ‘independent of architects’.<sup>44</sup> While Thomas Cubitt probably did not design the buildings himself, his younger brother Lewis Cubitt was also an accomplished engineer and architect.

The prominence of Thomas Cubitt and the archival material available on his business made him an ideal research subject. Publications on small builders of the time, however, are rare. An unusual book in this regard is *Reader Bros: Builders of Repute*, which was written and self-published by Josephine Boyle, daughter of Edgar Reader, the last family member to be actively involved in the business.<sup>45</sup> Boyle’s book describes the history of the family business over two generations from the 1880s to the 1960s. Boyle gives a unique insight into the business and family history, but she is not as interested in the Readers’ work as architectural history. As explained in the ‘Methodology’ section below, the original archive material, which Boyle deposited with the LMA, is needed to

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<sup>43</sup> Hermione Hobhouse, *Thomas Cubitt: Master Builder* (London: Macmillan, 1971).

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>45</sup> Josephine Boyle, *Builders of Repute: The Story of Reader Bros* (Havant, 2002).



bring out that aspect of the Readers' work. Although comprehensive studies of smaller speculative builders of the period are rare, a number of journal articles discuss some outstanding speculative builders of the period, such as 'Willett Built' by David Prout, 'Whatever happened to Jonathan Carr?' by Andrew Saint and 'Rebuilding London: Abraham Davis and his Brothers 1881 – 1924' by Isobel Watson.<sup>46</sup> It is apparent from these studies that speculative builders were often key drivers of the design intentions and the quality of the architecture, even if they may not always have been their own architects. The case study of the Readers addresses their role as housing designers (chapter five).

The novel *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropist* gives some revealing insights into the world of builders engaged in domestic buildings of the time.<sup>47</sup> It has to be kept in mind that the book describes the world of specialized contracting builders rather than of speculative builders. However, it is likely that the labourers were moving between these two fields of work, as was the case with the Readers. Although Tressell's account is fictional and obviously coloured by his political agenda, it gives a plausible insight into the hierarchies of a small firm of Edwardian housepainters. While this thesis is not a social history of speculative builders and does not claim to give detailed insights into their economic struggles, several builders are discussed who worked their way up from very humble beginnings to comfortable economic status, such as the Readers (chapter five) or James Watt (chapter three). Their biographies would be interesting material for further social history research, which is, however, beyond the scope of this thesis and the expertise of the author.

It is also interesting that Owen, the hero of the novel, engages at some point in the preparation of design and working drawings for a highly decorated room in a 'French style' for a very wealthy client. Owen is the only one of the labourers trained in the craft of painting and decorating. As part of that training, he has also been educated in draughting to prepare designs for such elaborate painting jobs. As discussed in chapter five, the skill of designing and draughting as required for the particular tasks of a trade was much more widespread among builders than it is now. It is easy to imagine that

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<sup>46</sup> David Prout, 'Willett Built', *Victorian Society Annual*, 1989; Andrew Saint, 'Whatever Happened to Jonathan Carr?', *London Journal*, 12 (1986); Isobel Watson, 'Rebuilding London: Abraham Davis and His Brothers, 1881 – 1924', *London Journal*, 29 (2004).

<sup>47</sup> Robert Tressell, *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropist* (St Albans: Granada Publishing, 1965).

such skills were simply applied by some capable builders to designing a whole house. Today, it would be rare for speculative builders to act as their own architects, as the Readers did. Builders would be unlikely to be involved in design to a large degree; it would be outside their role. Design skills are not developed because contractual relationships are clearly specified and regulated. One party designs, the other builds. The implicitly anti-collaborative nature of this division of labour and responsibilities is one of Marion Bowley's points of criticism in *The British Building Industry*.<sup>48</sup>

### *Vernacular Design?*

This thesis deals with aspects of the vernacular in architecture on different levels. The vernacular is considered in the general sense that it focuses on common, ordinary architecture, rather than outstanding, recognisable examples. Peter Guillery examines this particular perspective in the recently published *Built from Below: British Architecture and the Vernacular*: 'Studies of what is vernacular about architecture in Britain ... are beginning to explore a point of view, one that sees the local, indigenous, ordinary, everyday, popular, nostalgic or numerous'.<sup>49</sup> This viewpoint is in direct contrast to the usual focus of 20<sup>th</sup>-century architectural history on the recognized, an approach exemplified by Nicholas Pevsner's much-quoted distinction between Lincoln Cathedral as architecture and a bicycle shed as a building.<sup>50</sup> Pevsner's statement articulates what he thinks architectural history should concern itself with and implies a hierarchy of design and purpose that is reflected in most architectural history. This thesis consciously seeks to move away from this bias towards recognized architecture. Despite this general tendency of architectural history to focus on masterpieces accepted as being created as the result of a directing architectural genius, an interest in ordinary architecture also has a long tradition and can be found, for example, in the writings of Adolf Loos.<sup>51</sup>

Vernacular is traditionally defined in terms of roles and relationships. In the narrowest sense, vernacular architecture refers to buildings built by people for themselves in a pre-

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<sup>48</sup> Marian Bowley, *The British Building Industry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966).

<sup>49</sup> Peter Guillery, ed., *Built from Below: British Architecture and the Vernacular* (Oxon: Routledge, 2011), p. 1.

<sup>50</sup> Nikolaus Pevsner, *An Outline of European Architecture*, rev. edn (London: Thames & Hudson, 2009), p. 10.

<sup>51</sup> Adolf Loos, *On Architecture*, rev. edn (Riverside California: Ariadne Press, 2002).

industrial society without involvement of experts, such as professional builders or architects.<sup>52</sup> Commonly, however, the study of vernacular architecture focuses on the distinction between buildings designed by professionals, and those built by craftsmen without architects' involvement. This perspective is exemplified in the title of Bernard Rudofsky's seminal book *Architecture without Architects*.<sup>53</sup> In *Dwellings*, Paul Oliver states, for example, '... it is contended that 'popular architecture' designed by professional architects or commercial builders for popular use, does not come within the compass of the vernacular'.<sup>54</sup> As discussed, speculative housing of this period is also often regarded as part of this vernacular tradition of design without architects. This thesis shows that such distinctions are not as clear as we may assume. Examined closely, the boundaries between professional and amateur designer, architect- and builder-designed, expert and non-expert become much less distinct.

The history of modernism has also been led by the focus on outstanding buildings and architectural genius, as expressed for example in Nikolaus Pevsner's seminal work *The Pioneers of the Modern Movement*, first published in 1938.<sup>55</sup> Pioneering architects of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius or Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, became the heroes of the fast developing architectural profession. What also follows from that historiography is an often-distorted view of the architect's actual influence on design. Andrew Saint discusses the usually unrealistic lionisation of 'The Architect as Hero and Genius' in *Image of the Architect*.<sup>56</sup> The modernist ideal of the all-powerful architect, who singlehandedly designs and master-plans entire cities has never been the reality of the world of architecture and construction. There were perhaps short periods after the Second World War in unique circumstances when an architect indeed had such powers, as for example in the case of the master-planning and designing of Brasilia by Oscar Niemeyer, but every architect working in practice today knows that the image is usually far from reality.

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<sup>52</sup> Paul Oliver, 'Ethics and Vernacular Architecture', in *Ethics and the Built Environment* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 116.

<sup>53</sup> Bernard Rudofsky, *Architecture Without Architects* (UNM Press, 1964).

<sup>54</sup> Paul Oliver, *Dwellings: The Vernacular House World Wide* (Phaidon Press, 2007), p. 15.

<sup>55</sup> Nikolaus Pevsner, *Pioneers of Modern Design: From William Morris to Walter Gropius*, rev. edn (London: Penguin, 1991).

<sup>56</sup> Andrew Saint, *The Image of the Architect* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), pp. 1–18.

The distinction between architecture worthy of study and mere buildings has been reflected in the attitude of most early 20<sup>th</sup> century architects and historians towards speculative housing. It is unsurprising that in his influential work on the history of housing in England, *Das englische Haus* (The English House), first published in 1904 in German and later translated into English, Hermann Muthesius deals only marginally with ordinary, typical speculative housing, as he was primarily interested in larger country and suburban houses, designed by English Arts & Crafts architects and designers such as William Morris, Phillip Webb, Richard Norman Shaw and W.R. Lethaby.<sup>57</sup> The housing Muthesius documented in his book and his praise for English Arts & Crafts domestic architecture, as an alternative to late 19<sup>th</sup>-century historicism, were highly influential on early modernist architects in Germany.

The post-WWII architectural establishment regarded most speculative housing of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century as historicist and reactionary, and in particular had a negative perception of the inter-war London suburb, which was often frowned upon as banal.<sup>58</sup> In this regard, the positive view of the English inter-war suburbs expressed in *The Castles on the Ground* by J.M. Richards, first published in 1946, although it is an important exception, cannot be seen as representative.<sup>59</sup> During the 1970s and 80s, criticism of post-war modernist architecture mounted and interest in pre-1945 housing experienced a revival. It is perhaps no coincidence that Richards' book was republished in 1973, when the modernist tendency to reject popular appeal in favour of architectural innovation was being re-evaluated. The difficult relationship of architects to the suburbs was also the subject of discussion in *Dunroamin: The Suburban Semi and its Enemies*, first published in 1981, which promoted the architectural qualities of the inter-war suburb, capturing this change in attitude.<sup>60</sup> Several attempts have been made since then to redeem the suburb as a relevant contribution to architectural design.

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<sup>57</sup> Hermann Muthesius, *The English House*, ed. by Dennis Sharp, rev. edn (London: Frances Lincoln, 2007).

<sup>58</sup> See for example Paul Oliver, Ian Bentley and Ian Davis, *Dunroamin: The Suburban Semi and Its Enemies*, 2nd edn (London: Pimlico, 1994), p. 27. Ian Davis describes his first day in architecture school in 1953 where he was taught that Le Corbusier is good, but the interwar Edgware suburb he lived in is bad architecture.

<sup>59</sup> J.M. Richards, *The Castles on the Ground: The Anatomy of Suburbia* (London: Architectural Press, 1946).

<sup>60</sup> Oliver, Bentley and Davis.

A renewed appreciation of late 19<sup>th</sup>-and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century London's suburban housing in architectural circles in the 1970s and 80s also coincided with a rise in market value and general popularity.<sup>61</sup> This was supported by various other circumstances. A technical factor was the invention and availability of chemical damp coursing which made it easier to restore old houses to a similar standard of hygiene and comfort as more recently built ones. Other crucial contributors to this rise in popularity were the availability of mortgages for older houses and the Leasehold Reform Act of 1967, which stipulated that leaseholders now had the right to purchase the freehold of their houses.<sup>62</sup> The significance of this act cannot be underestimated, as it also questioned and transformed a long established system of leasehold estate development and management with feudal characteristics (discussed in chapter three).

The revived interest in ordinary housing built before 1939 is reflected in a number of publications since the 1980s on particular types or periods for an audience ranging from homeowners to architectural experts. A key publication among these is *The English Terraced House*, by Hermann Muthesius' great-nephew, Stefan Muthesius, which underlines the importance of this particular typology to the history of English housing.<sup>63</sup> Stefan Muthesius dedicated a short section at the very end of the book to 'the designers' but also acknowledges the lack of research in this area and that they are hardly ever mentioned or discussed in his book.<sup>64</sup> According to Muthesius, 'increasingly, the best architects turned away from terraced housing and all other kinds of speculative housing. This is particularly true for London from the 1830s and 1840s onwards'.<sup>65</sup> Stefan Muthesius' *The English Terraced House* is one of the most comprehensive publications on Victorian and Edwardian speculative housing in general, as the terrace was such a prevalent house type during the period. It has also been an important reference for this thesis, together with *Victorian Architecture*, another work by Stefan Muthesius and Roger Dixon, which contains a section on domestic architecture and also one on the development of the architectural profession.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Neil Jackson, p. 281.

<sup>62</sup> Tanis Hinchcliffe, 'The Housing Market in Islington Between the Wars' (unpublished PhD, London: University College London, 1991), p. 9.

<sup>63</sup> Stefan Muthesius.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 251.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> Dixon and Muthesius.

It is apparent that Stefan Muthesius' view of occupational hierarchies in the built environment reflects the modernist tradition of architectural historiography. He suggests that 'the lowest class of architect is hard to delineate, but those who drew plans and elevations of houses for builders came under it'.<sup>67</sup> This thesis explores the limitations of such perceived hierarchies. Although the designers of common speculative housing were generally smaller local businesses (as chapter two shows), and not leading architects, their output is today perhaps more appreciated than that of many eminent post-war architects. A number of key publications on particular periods and types of housing have followed, such as *The Edwardian House* by Helen Long and *The Edwardian and Interwar House* by Richard Russell Lawrence.<sup>68</sup> These publications, however, focus on aspects such as the style, layout, interiors and detailing of the buildings. Those involved in the design and its practices are touched on only briefly.

The renewed post-modern interest in popular and ordinary architecture also reflected a desire to move away from elitist architecture, to give the user what they want, and to give them a higher stake in the production of the built environment. A number of recent publications have focussed in particular on the relationship of occupants to their house. Deborah S. Ryan, for example, underlines the relevance of Britain's popular domestic culture in her book, *The Ideal Home*, on The Daily Mail Ideal Home Show.<sup>69</sup> The inhabitation of suburban housing is also the subject of Paul Barker's recently published title *The Freedoms of Suburbia*.<sup>70</sup> Barker also defends and advocates the architecture of suburban housing, but rather than focussing on the production of housing, his book is particularly interested in capturing the life of suburban buildings as they are inhabited and adapted by their users. This, he suggests, is as much part of their architectural appeal as their original design. His work can be seen as part of a line of thought in architectural history interested in the effects of the inhabitation and adaptation of buildings by the user as an essential part of architecture. The desire to bridge the gap between expert and non-expert, and to allow for a greater involvement of the user and

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<sup>67</sup> Stefan Muthesius, p. 251.

<sup>68</sup> Helen Long, *The Edwardian House: The Middle-class Home in Britain, 1880-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993); Lawrence.

<sup>69</sup> The event tellingly has its beginnings in the inter-war period when mass home ownership became possible for the first time through the emergence of a larger wage earning middle class and the wider availability of mortgages through Building Societies. Deborah S. Ryan, *The Ideal Home Through the 20th Century* (London: Hazar Publishing, 1997).

<sup>70</sup> Paul Barker, *The Freedoms of Suburbia* (London: Frances Lincoln, 2009).

local community in design has become an important topic today in architectural discourse and also in planning policy. This can be seen, for example, in recent publications in architectural theory such as '*Occupying Architecture: Between the Architect and the User*' and '*Non-Plan: Essays on Freedom, Participation and Change in Modern Architecture and Urbanism*'.<sup>71</sup>

In current planning policy, the Localism Act 2011, has placed closer participation and involvement of users and locals at the top of its agenda.<sup>72</sup> The evidence discussed in the following chapters shows that much of the housing was built and designed by businesses and individuals based locally, who often had a significant financial but also personal stake in its success. The builders would often live in some of the houses themselves, and were essentially building their own future neighbourhood. This direct involvement in design and production of key stakeholders could be seen as part of the success of the housing, and is discussed further below, in particular in the concluding chapter.

### *Urban Development and Planning*

Studying architects, surveyors and builders involved in the design of common speculative housing also helps us to understand better their contribution to London's urban development. For this, sources on London's urban and local history are particularly relevant. An influential early study of the history of London's development is *London: The Unique City*.<sup>73</sup> First published in English in 1937, it was written by Steen Eiler Rasmussen, a Danish architect and town planner, who travelled frequently to London and who was fascinated by its particular urban characteristics. He was particularly intrigued that London's pattern of housing development was significantly different from other large European capitals that experienced extensive periods of growth since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. While most other European capitals developed along the model of Vienna and Paris of a compact city with perimeter apartment blocks of uniform height, London's 19<sup>th</sup>-century development was generally more dispersed. To

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<sup>71</sup> Jonathan Hill, *Occupying Architecture: Between the Architect and the User* (Routledge, 1998); Jonathan Hughes and Simon Sadler, *Non-Plan: Essays on Freedom, Participation and Change in Modern Architecture and Urbanism* (Routledge, 2013).

<sup>72</sup> 'Localism Act 2011' <<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents/enacted>> [accessed 13 September 2013].

<sup>73</sup> Steen Eiler Rasmussen, *London: The Unique City* (London: Cape, 1937).

Rasmussen, the reasons for London's dispersed development are manifold but can only be explained by taking into account various components of London's history such as cultural traditions, types of government, legal frameworks, traditions for development (leasehold system) and transportation. An analysis of the relationship of these components is what Rasmussen set out to accomplish in his book. The result was a still-widely read urban and architectural history of London, placing various aspects of its development in context to draw 'one complete picture of the development of the town'.<sup>74</sup> Part of his analysis also takes into account the crucial role of the suburban housing development in creating London's dispersed character. Due to the vastness of the topic, Rasmussen's study inevitably opened up topics for further research, one of which is how speculative housing was planned.

H.J. Dyos' book *Victorian Suburb: A Study in the Growth of Camberwell*, first published in 1961, was of mould-breaking importance to urban history and helped to establish it as a university discipline.<sup>75</sup> While studies such as Rasmussen's provided a wider overview of the whole of London's history, Dyos researched one particular area, Camberwell, in detail, analysing various components of its growth such as transportation, estate ownerships, the speculative builders involved or the business and financing of the developments. This study of the history of one part of London also shed new light on the whole. Dyos' urban topographical and multifaceted approach has been very influential and has, for example, been incorporated, under the editorship of F.H.W. Sheppard, into the research and publications of the *Survey of London*. The *Survey of London* has developed and continued this tradition of the study of a wide range of London's architecture, which includes estate development and also less prominent buildings in each area. Other studies influenced by Dyos' approach are, for example, F.M.L. Thompson's *Hampstead – Building a Borough, 1650-1964* and Isobel Watson's *Gentlemen in the Building Line: the Development of South Hackney*.<sup>76</sup> Other more general local history studies of London's suburbs have followed since Dyos work, such as *A History of Petts Wood* by Peter Wayward.<sup>77</sup> While these studies of particular areas

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<sup>74</sup> Rasmussen, p. 24.

<sup>75</sup> Dyos, *Victorian Suburb: Study of the Growth of Camberwell*.

<sup>76</sup> F. M. L. Thompson, *Hampstead - Building a Borough, 1650-1964* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974); Isobel Watson, *Gentlemen in the Building Line: The Development of South Hackney* (London: Padfield, 1989).

<sup>77</sup> Peter Waymark, *A History of Petts Wood* (London: Petts Wood and District Residents Association, 1983).



explain certain aspects of their local history and development, the question - how the houses and estates were designed and by whom - is again only discussed marginally.<sup>78</sup> Publications of *The Survey of London*, historians from which have been closely involved in the supervision of this thesis, touch on those involved in the design of speculative housing, which is also discussed in its new volume on Battersea.<sup>79</sup> However, the topic is raised on a case-by-case basis, rather than in relation to London or the period as a whole.

The study of urban topography was also pursued outside academia by historians such as Alan Jackson, whose research focussed on Edwardian and interwar suburban housing. On a London-wide scale, Alan Jackson's *Semi-detached London: Suburban Development, Life and Transport, 1900-39* examines a crucial period in London's housing, which saw key changes in architecture and new ideas such as the Garden City Movement and the 'Homes for Heroes' housing programme.<sup>80</sup> Jackson's work on London suburbs places a strong emphasis on the social and economic circumstances that created the demand and support for suburban expansion. These circumstances include the rise of a salaried middle class and the much wider availability of mortgages for purchase rather than the renting of houses. With his book, Jackson made a crucial contribution to the understanding of London's housing development by placing it in a wider context of social urban history.

The particular characteristics of London's low-rise housing development are also linked to its estate planning traditions. One of the writers who discusses those traditions is Donald J. Olsen. His intricate explanation of the mechanics of estate development helps the reader to understand and appreciate the crucial role that estate surveyors had in acting both as developers and town planners to ensure the success of the estate and its future viability. In *Town Planning in London: The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* and in *The Growth of Victorian London*, Olsen examines estates such as the Bedford Estate, the Foundling Hospital Estate and the Chalcots Estate as detailed case studies.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Dyos, *Victorian Suburb: Study of the Growth of Camberwell*, pp. 93, 120.

<sup>79</sup> Colin Thom, ed., *Survey of London, 50: Battersea* (Yale University Press, 2013).

<sup>80</sup> Alan Jackson, *Semi-detached London: Suburban Development, Life and Transport, 1900-39* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1973).

<sup>81</sup> Donald J. Olsen, *The Growth of Victorian London* (London: Batsford, 1976); Donald J. Olsen, *Town Planning in London: The Eighteenth & Nineteenth Centuries*, 2nd edn (London: Yale University Press, 1982).

The possibility of turning into a slum was a threat to every estate development, particularly those outside of the most fashionable areas of the West End. To avoid this, estate owners of the 18<sup>th</sup>-and 19<sup>th</sup>-centuries devised careful town planning strategies to attract well-off tenants. Those strategies meant that controlling and maintaining a high design standard was crucial to the success of any housing development. This evidence is in stark contrast to the idea that speculative housing happened without having been carefully planned and controlled. In particular, chapter three on the Minet Estate contributes to this discussion by examining the ways in which the landlord and the estate surveyor influenced and exerted a certain amount of control on the development of the estate.

For most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, estate planning was to a large extent in the hands of the landowner, with a local authority reserving the right only to approve the road layout but the influence of councils steadily increased. The Building Acts and local by-laws introduced with the Public Health Act of 1875 provided certain generally applicable planning guidelines, in terms of building lines, street widths and building heights.<sup>82</sup> In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the Housing, Town Planning etc. Act 1909, the Housing and Town Planning Act 1919, and the Town and Country Planning Act 1932, the government gradually began to take a more active role in development control. This culminated in The Town and Country Planning Act of 1947, which made a planning application to the council statutory for the first time. The influence of the changing legislation also had an impact on speculative housing design. *The History of Building Regulation in London 1189-1972* provides a thorough, but also rather dry and factual, historical account of how regulations have shaped the built environment of the city and have been shaped by it.<sup>83</sup> S. Martin Gaskell examines the Victorian origins of building regulations and also their influences on housing in *Building Control: National Legislation and the Introduction of Local Bye-laws in Victorian England*.<sup>84</sup> *Victorian Building Regulations: Summary tables of the principal English building acts and model by-laws 1840-1914* gives an even more detailed account of this particular period in

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<sup>82</sup> Barson, p. 97.

<sup>83</sup> Clifford C. Knowles and Peter H. Pitt, *The History of Building Regulation in London 1189-1972* (London: Architectural Press, 1972).

<sup>84</sup> S. Martin Gaskell, *Building Control: National Legislation and the Introduction of Local Bye-laws in Victorian England* (British Association for Local History, 1983).

which the foundations were laid for the present building acts and regulations.<sup>85</sup> It explains how the regulations gradually developed to take into account aspects such as the design of open space, room heights, structure, wall thicknesses, new materials and, in particular, drainage design to prevent cholera outbreaks and therefore improve public health, then a particularly pressing concern.<sup>86</sup> Legislation influenced the roles and relationships in housing design in several respects. The increasingly detailed requirements for applications to the council, for example, supported the growth of the architectural profession as specialist building designers, a subject discussed in the introduction to chapter two below.

A good analysis of the impact of changing building regulations on the design of speculative housing in particular for the inter-war period is A.M. Edwards' *The Design of Suburbia: a Critical Study in Environmental History*.<sup>87</sup> Edwards outlines convincingly how planning guidelines for housing developed by councils determined street and house layouts down to details such as the placement and size of trees along the street. In its focus on design and planning, his book is in many respects close to the topic of this thesis. However, Edwards also mainly refers to pattern-books and to floor plans and designs published in trade journals to explain the design process.<sup>88</sup> As aforementioned, it is, however, an over-simplification to explain all housing of the period as a mere product of copied plans from publications, as there was usually a process of adaptation and further design, as the large number of custom design drawings studied in the following chapters shows. The influence and use of publications such as journals is discussed further in the case studies and particularly in chapter five in relation to speculative builders acting as their own architects.

The main focus of the thesis is architectural and not primarily concerned with the economic and social struggles or successes of builders, architects and surveyors involved in speculative housing, which come across in the biographies of the individuals discussed in the following chapters. Although this has not been the goal or expertise of this author, a social historian may draw further conclusions from the

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<sup>85</sup> Roger H. Harper, *Victorian Building Regulations: Summary Tables of the Principal English Building Acts and Model By-laws 1840-1914* (London: Mansell, 1985).

<sup>86</sup> Gaskell.

<sup>87</sup> Arthur Middleton Edwards, *The Design of Suburbia: a Critical Study in Environmental History* (London: Peabody Press, 1981).

<sup>88</sup> Edwards, pp. 72–73.

information presented. The case study of the Minet estate (chapter three) shows, for example, that the planning of the estate by house typologies reflected directly the social hierarchies at the time. Although the clear division into different taxable classes according to size had been abandoned with the 1844 Metropolitan Building Act, the architecture of the housing still clearly expressed the social status of its inhabitants, their relationships, and also their aspirations – this could be seen for example in the size of the house, typology, decorations, window sizes, separate side entrances for servants and so on.<sup>89</sup>

Numerous other publications deal explicitly with the history of housing in terms of the life of occupants and as part of society and culture. John Burnett's *A Social History of Housing, 1815 – 1985* takes this line of inquiry, providing a history of housing, which tries to explain its development through a multidisciplinary approach in terms of its social, economic and architectural determinants and also links it to crucial political changes.<sup>90</sup> As well as covering this wide range of aspects, Burnett gives a comprehensive overview of the history of the main architectural developments. While the book is a national history of housing, London is often the focus as a case study and the largest city in Britain. Burnett's work has been useful to this research for its wider social and economic background, but does not explain in detail the design processes involved.

Housing development during the period 1870-1939 was closely linked to particular economic relationships and hierarchies of land- and home ownership, still reflected in today's terms such as 'estate agent' and 'landlord'. The latter in particular clearly conveys the relationship between land ownership and political power or status. Such economic aspects of London's housing history are discussed, for example, in Avner Offer's *Property and Politics: 1870-1914*.<sup>91</sup> Other such multidisciplinary research approaches examine particular aspects such as the socio-economic circumstances of housing production. In *Housing in Urban Britain 1780-1914: Class, Capitalism and Construction*, for example, Richard Rodger offers a study that seeks to explain the

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<sup>89</sup> Neil Jackson, p. 89; Dixon and Muthesius, p. 30.

<sup>90</sup> John Burnett, *A Social History of Housing, 1815-1985*, 2nd edn (London: Methuen, 1986).

<sup>91</sup> Avner Offer, *Property and Politics 1870-1914: Landownership, Law, Ideology and Urban Development in England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

market forces which generated the Victorian suburban expansion, analysing market influences such as demand, supply as well as other social and cultural factors.<sup>92</sup>

How much housing can tell us about the way we perceive and inhabit the city is also demonstrated by Richard Dennis in *Cities in Modernity: Representations and Productions of Metropolitan Space, 1840-1930*, which analyses the representation of the city in subjective materials such as novels.<sup>93</sup> To Dennis, the analysis of the perception and inhabitation of housing provides a lens through which wider geographical and social trends become apparent. Such wider economic developments evidently had a key impact on speculative housing and are therefore also important as a wider context for this thesis. The impact of the leasehold development system, which gives the landlord a particular tool to exercise development control, is discussed for example in chapter three. Although this is not primarily a socio-economic history, this thesis helps us to better understand certain aspects of the business side of those involved in the design of speculative housing. Chapter two shows, for example, that most of them were based locally.

### *Conclusion*

The literature reviewed above related to speculative housing and its roles and relationships shows that there are still gaps with regards to the designers and their work. Those involved in planning and design, and how they arrived at their decisions, are usually only marginally considered. If designers of speculative housing are studied, it is not usually the average man, but the well-known architects of the time. And yet these *other* architects contributed to the creation of a large part of London's suburban fabric. The design process of average housing is an interesting topic for further research because the resulting architecture was often exemplary. It has produced a very rich heritage of housing, usually without a celebrated architect and often even without someone with an architectural education - in some cases by amateurs and autodidacts. This is an astonishing achievement, which will be examined further in this thesis. The

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<sup>92</sup> Richard Rodger, *Housing in Urban Britain, 1780-1914* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989).

<sup>93</sup> Richard Dennis, *Cities in Modernity: Representations and Productions of Metropolitan Space, 1840-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

key general themes discussed in the above literature review will also be examined throughout the thesis and picked up in chapter six.

### 1.3 Methodology and Sources

The original research in this thesis draws on a variety of sources, which can be broadly grouped into three types. The first is information published at the time that provides glances into the culture of housing design of the period and helps to understand the wider context of the case study research. This first type of source includes ephemera, particularly sales brochures for housing developments, auction catalogues, journals such as *The Builder* and *The Illustrated Carpenter & Builder*, and books such as *House Building 1934 - 36*, which touches on architects' involvement in house building at the time, and *An Introduction to the Development of Private Building Estates and Town Planning*, written by a local surveyor discussing common practices of speculative housing development.<sup>94</sup> This first type of fragmented information is integrated into the overall discussions throughout the thesis along with secondary literature.

An example of this first type of source is a sales brochure for Edwardian middle class suburban terraced housing in Streatham Hill (Figure 9). The sales brochure was prepared in 1908 at a time of a housing sales slump, when it was particularly important to stand out. The brochure shows an example of architect designed speculative housing. The design by the architects Messrs Taylor & Sons is used as a sales pitch to ensure buyers of the high quality of the development. This example suggests that professionalization was not only driven by regulations and state control but that architect involvement was also valued to promote a sense of quality.

The second type of source is 'building applications' to the local District Surveyor, such as those in Figure 26 - Figure 28. This source is particularly important in chapter two for the analysis of a building application sample from the London Borough of Richmond Local History Archive, which holds an unusually detailed collection of

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<sup>94</sup> Betham; Francis Howkins, *An Introduction to the Development of Private Building Estates and Town Planning* (London: Estates Gazette, 1926).

applications for the period of this study.<sup>95</sup> These building applications were ‘notices of the intention to erect a new building’, consisting of plans showing the drainage, along with a completed form.<sup>96</sup> These could then be checked by the District Surveyor against compliance with the Building Acts and local bye-laws. It is worth mentioning that these ‘building applications’ or ‘building notices’ should not be confused with today’s ‘planning applications’, which were only introduced with the Town and Country Planning Act in 1947 and also require approval on grounds of architectural appearance or massing.<sup>97</sup>

The third type of source is specific archive collections of businesses or individuals involved in speculative housing. This is the most important type for the three case study chapters of this thesis. The following collections were chosen for the case studies:

- ‘Minet Estate’, an estate owned by the Minet family and largely developed between 1870 and 1910 in Lambeth, which is unusually well documented in terms of archival sources. The archive was deposited when the estate was sold to the council in the 1960s. The estate itself is a good example of thoughtfully developed late Victorian and Edwardian speculative housing. This collection is the key source for chapter three.
- ‘Norfolk & Prior’, a firm of Surveyors, Architects, Auctioneers and Estate Agents based in Lewisham. The collection is held in Lewisham’s Local History Archive and provides evidence of the firm’s involvement in the design and development of speculative housing and also of their communication and relations with builders and developers. The key partner responsible for the architectural work, Edward A. Stone, joined the firm in 1897 as an apprentice, then went on to set up his own business in 1923 and later became a successful theatre architect. This collection is the key source for chapter four.
- ‘Reader Bros’, a small firm of speculative builders based in Hackney and operating from the 1880s to 1963 mainly in the north-east of London. The archive is held at the London Metropolitan Archives (LMA). The Readers were

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<sup>95</sup> ‘Collection of Building Plans, 1878-1968’, *Richmond Local Archive Online Catalogue* <<http://www.calmview.eu/Richmond/calmview/>> [accessed 28 May 2013].

<sup>96</sup> ‘Collection of Building Plans, 1878-1968’.

<sup>97</sup> The ‘building applications’ used as one of the sources in this thesis are essentially the predecessor of today’s applications to building control, which are also today still checked by the council for compliance with building regulations.

skilled designers and acted as their own architects for most of their projects. The archive also documents and helps to understand how they achieved this. This collection is the key source for chapter five.

The case study research in chapters three to five is largely qualitative, based on these three collections. However, this empirical approach is combined with quantitative analysis of building applications in chapter two, which helps to provide a wider context. The case study chapters three to five are introduced with a discussion of a related wider topic in order to integrate them into the wider theme.<sup>98</sup> Chapter five, for example, focuses on the Readers as a case study, but also discusses the role of speculative builders in housing design more generally.

The thesis is not limited to one particular locality in London other than being focussed on areas of suburban growth where most of the house building activity of the period took place. A focus on one locality in particular did not seem suitable simply because there is no area to the author's knowledge that has sufficient archive material to representatively answer the research question. A choice of one locality in particular would also be arbitrary as the design of common speculative housing was in many respects comparable across today's Greater London. The most suitable approach was therefore to draw on archives with the best documentation regardless of area.

In terms of how the sources are used, the study is primarily interested in an architectural, rather than, for example, socio-economic history of the roles involved. Issues such as social hierarchies and education of the individuals involved will inevitably play a role, but this is not the main focus of this thesis. As an architectural history, a qualitative analysis of visual sources is an important part of the research. However, it should be pointed out that this thesis is not focussed on architectural style, but rather on the design process and roles of individuals involved. These detailed glances into the design processes of speculative housing of the time are then pieced together to create an overall impression, which, however, does not claim to be complete or conclusive in every respect.

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<sup>98</sup> Olsen used a similar approach in *The Growth of Victorian London*. In Chapter five, for example, Olsen first discusses the topic of the Victorian suburban growth of London in a wider sense by highlighting different important aspects. Then, he focuses on one estate in particular, the Chalcot Estate. Olsen, *The Growth of Victorian London*, p. 247.



## **Chapter Two**

### **Who Designed London's Speculative Housing?: Key Roles and Complicating Factors**

## 2.1 Introduction – What is Meant by ‘Design’?

A definition and discussion of what is meant by ‘design’ in this thesis seems useful before examining the main question of who designed London’s speculative housing. As the following discussion will show, the meaning and use of the term design has changed over time, certainly since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and uncritically applying the term to the period could confuse the answers. The term ‘design’ was in common use in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which is confirmed in the titles of popular books of example housing designs, such as *An Encyclopædia of Cottage, Farm, and Villa Architecture and Furniture: Containing Numerous Designs for Dwellings (...)*, first published in 1833, and *Bungalows and Country Residences: A Series of Designs and Examples of Recently Executed Works*, first published in 1891.<sup>99</sup> However, those who designed speculative housing at the time would not have necessarily used the term to describe their main work. In the case studies of the following chapters, the general impression is that design was less seen or conducted as a specialist activity, but much more a necessary and integral part of other kinds of occupations. Those who designed the houses usually did so as part of their work as surveyors, architects, builders or builder managers. It was one of the tasks of their work, but not necessarily the main one. The rise and establishment of the architectural profession during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century coincided with an increasing specialization and with the establishment of design as an activity separate from construction. Our understanding of design today is largely a result of these developments.

A closer look at today’s general use of the term ‘design’ seems a good starting point for a definition of the term as used in this thesis. The term has a number of meanings and is used in different contexts, some of which can be immediately ruled out and need not be discussed, as they clearly do not apply to this study; in this thesis, the term evidently refers to architectural design, rather than product or fashion design, for example. This research is also focussed on ‘design’ as a process and activity, rather than describing something that looks good, e.g. ‘this is a good design’. According to Oxford Dictionary,

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<sup>99</sup> John Claudius Loudon, *An Encyclopædia of Cottage, Farm, and Villa Architecture and Furniture: Containing Numerous Designs for Dwellings ... Each Design Accompanied by Analytical and Critical Remarks ...* (Longman, Orme, Brown, Green, & Longmans, 1839); Robert Alexander Briggs, *Bungalows and Country Residences. A Series of Designs and Examples of Recently Executed Works* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1891).

the definition of the verb ‘to design’ is to ‘decide upon the look and functioning of (a building, garment, or other object), by making a detailed drawing of it’.<sup>100</sup> It is worth noting that this definition links ‘design’ to making drawings, which were an important source for this research, and their use in speculative housing of the time is discussed throughout this thesis. Collins English Dictionary defines ‘to design’ more widely as ‘the act of working out the form of something (as by making a sketch or outline or plan)’.<sup>101</sup> For this thesis, this definition seems more useful; ‘working out the form of something’ is not restricted to drawings, even if drawings are often used as a tool. Broadly speaking, this is the definition used here in the thesis, but it is worth to delve slightly deeper into design theory, before we settle for this still vague explanation, and to discuss the term in more detail in both its general use and also in relation to architecture in particular.

As reflected in these dictionary definitions, ‘to design’ describes a certain part of the overall production process. If we see the design process as decisions necessary to devise production, then everything man-made first has to be ‘designed’ somehow. The decision to make something always precedes the action, even if it happened within a split second in the mind of the person making it. This is a definition of ‘design’ proposed by Victor Papanek: ‘all men are designers. All that we do, almost all the time, is design, for design is basic to all human activity. The activity and patterning of any act towards a desired, foreseeable end constitutes the design process’.<sup>102</sup> In this sense, ‘design’ could even be applied to a seemingly mundane activity such as preparing dinner, for example. It would take an idea of the outcome in the mind of the cook, procurement of necessary ingredients, and planning of the cooking process, before the meal can be created. Evidently in practice it is very difficult to distinguish at what point ‘design’ of the dinner stops - unless the cook strictly follows a set recipe - and when preparation begins as these two are so closely intertwined and the process is reiterative. In speculative housing around the turn of the century, this distinction is even more difficult to make. This process of devising the building may happen at any stage of the pre-construction phase and even during construction.

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<sup>100</sup>‘Design’, *Oxford Dictionaries* (Oxford University Press, 2010) <<http://oxforddictionaries.com>> [accessed 10 December 2012].

<sup>101</sup>‘Design’.

<sup>102</sup>Victor Papanek, *Design for the Real World: Human Ecology and Social Change* (Thames & Hudson, 1985).

In today's working world, the devising before production is usually a distinct occupation. Architectural design is therefore separated from construction and is performed by a particular occupation - often architects. Adrian Forty explains that our current use of the term 'architectural design' developed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and it became 'everything in architecture that was non-material. (...) In other words, 'design' concerns what is *not* construction'.<sup>103</sup> As such, design describes a division of labour, separating devising from making, or design from construction. However, in practice this distinction is problematic, because design and construction are often difficult to separate.

Plato, as the philosophical father of the concept of 'division of labour', in *The Republic*, his utopian vision of a better society, described a minimum state as consisting of a farmer, builder, weaver, shoemaker and 'one or two others to provide for our bodily needs'.<sup>104</sup> It is interesting to note that their roles are distinguished by the particular products they make, for example shoes, woven goods or buildings. Even if we divide the work further, for example into making shoelaces, leather for shoes, stitching of the leather and so on, each of these activities can still be clearly distinguished. However, unlike these divisions of labour focussed on particular products, the distinction is less clear for different parts of a process that is in practice linked and intertwined, such as design and construction. It is therefore easier to establish who produced a drawing, if it is signed for example, than who 'designed' the building, because a number of people usually had some influence in the overall process.

In the UK today, the term 'design' is part of our everyday vocabulary and we take the division it implies between devising and making for granted. In a pre-industrial society, however, the one who made the shoes, for example, would most likely also have been the person who 'designed' the product. John A. Walker, the author of one the first histories of design, highlights how closely linked our use of the term 'design' is linked to our modern, industrialised society:

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<sup>103</sup> Adrian Forty, *Words and Buildings: a Vocabulary of Modern Architecture* (Thames & Hudson, 2004), p. 137.

<sup>104</sup> Plato, *The Republic* (Penguin Books, 2007), p. 103.

in the modern period one of the key differences between craft and design is that in the former, the making process from conception to execution is undertaken by the same person or a small team of people. A division of labour between designers and makers, in other words, does not exist – or not to the same extent – as it does in industry.<sup>105</sup>

To some degree, the production of speculative housing at the time was in that sense still partly a pre-industrial process.

The division of labour implied by the term ‘design’ is related to that of the occupation of ‘architect’, as design is often used to describe what architects do. In *Professional Studies in Architecture*, Stephen Brookhouse, one of the key authorities on the topic of professional practice, describes an architect as ‘a professional building designer’.<sup>106</sup> Today, building design is a key part of what architects do and how they see their own profession. In *Design and their Consequences*, Richard Hill explains this specialization by describing the architect’s work as: ‘architects draw and they make designs but they are not engaged in manual work on site’.<sup>107</sup> Architects are responsible for *conception*, while others, such as builders and craftsmen, are responsible for *making*. It is worth noting that for other key occupations in the construction industry such as builders and surveyors, the verb describing their work is more clearly linked to their occupation: builders *build* and surveyors *survey* - even if this may not always be the case and is only part of the scope of their work.<sup>108</sup> As much as ‘design’ is linked to an architect’s work, most would still insist on distinguishing themselves from ‘designers’.<sup>109</sup> One reason is that the term is not representative of the full range of architectural services; the management of the building process, for example, would be excluded.

This separation between building and design was further reinforced by the shift in architectural education from apprenticeships to classrooms when, in the early 20<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> John Albert Walker and Judy Attfield, *Design History and the History of Design* (Pluto, 1989), p. 38.

<sup>106</sup> Brookhouse, p. 9.

<sup>107</sup> Richard Hill, *Design and Their Consequences: Architecture and Aesthetics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 2.

<sup>108</sup> In German, there is also no verb specifically describing the work of architects. The verb ‘entwerfen’ is usually used, which could be translated as ‘designing’ but the meaning is actually closer to ‘devising’. In product design, however, either the English word ‘design’ is used, or the German word ‘gestalten’, which could be translated as ‘form giving’.

<sup>109</sup> For Allison and Peter Smithson, for example, “‘design’ was a dirty word”. Forty, p. 136.

century, architecture became a university discipline in Britain.<sup>110</sup> The changes in the educational system both reflected and supported the establishment of architectural design as a distinct activity within the construction industry. As the following thesis shows, the process of this change, however, was more complex than simply from apprenticed to university-educated architects. Architectural design and draughting skills were practiced by and taught not only to architects but also to other occupations of the construction industry such as surveyors and builders. The study of Edward Stone's education in chapter four shows that surveyors were, for example, also trained to design houses, as this task was still in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century not seen as an expertise reserved for architects alone.

The division of the production process into design and making, as much as it is part of today's industrialised economies, brings with it a number of complications. In relation to architecture, design requires the non-material imagination of construction, which, in contrast, involves physical work with concrete materials. It follows that those who design, such as architects, need to develop an understanding of something that they may have never actually done themselves. The approach to architecture of a classroom trained design specialist is generally one based on theoretical knowledge rather than building experience. It is like a dentist who would need to describe in detail how to do a filling, without ever actually having done one. In this regard, architects with practical training often have an advantage, because it is easier for them to imagine construction. In the case of those speculative builders who were also their own architects, which is discussed in chapter five, there was a closer link between design and building and the knowledge was largely acquired on site, rather than in classrooms.

Another consequence of the separation between design and building into separate roles is the transfer of information from one to the other. The work of an architect is based on creating information for this transfer, which usually takes the form of drawings or specifications. A shoemaker or joiner, who controls every part of the design and production of the product, would only need to transfer information to him- or herself. In *Designs and their Consequences*, Richard Hill also discusses the complications in this

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<sup>110</sup>Forty, p. 138.

transfer of information.<sup>111</sup> He points out that Alberti was mistaken when he suggested that the builder was ‘but an instrument in the hands of the architect’, as the information cannot be transferred to a builder like it could to a machine.<sup>112</sup> Hill discusses different approaches to bridging this separation between design and construction, and this is a crucial challenge for both builder and architect in order to create successful architecture. The cause for architectural failures is all too often that this transfer of information did not work well.

Alberti’s description of the architect as the head, and the builder as a mere tool, was a Renaissance aspiration rather than the reality of the construction world of the time. His detailed explanation of what he meant by ‘architect’ also suggests that his idea of the occupation was not an accepted fact:

For it is not a carpenter or a joiner that I thus rank with the greatest masters in other sciences; the manual operator being no more than an instrument to the architect. Him I call an architect, who, by sure and wonderful art and method, is able, both with thought and invention, to devise, and, with execution, to complete all those works, which, by means of the movement of the great weights, and the conjunction and amassment of bodies, can, with the greatest beauty, be adapted to the use of mankind: And to be able to do this, he must have a thorough insight into the noblest and most curious sciences. Such must be the architect.<sup>113</sup>

This division between devising and making, that Alberti aspired to, only became common practice with the industrial revolution. With the surge in number and complexity of public and commercial building in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the size of the market for architects as specialized ‘building designers’ expanded exponentially, and created the economic conditions for the growth of the profession.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Richard Hill.

<sup>112</sup> Leon Battista Alberti, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books* (MIT Press, 1988), p. 3.

<sup>113</sup> Alberti, p. 3.

<sup>114</sup> Dixon and Muthesius, pp. 10–11.

The rise of design as a distinct role and the complications this created provoked diverse reactions in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. John Ruskin, and also many Arts & Crafts architects inspired by his writing, was critical of the separation between designing and making:

We are always in these days endeavouring to separate the two; we want one man to be always thinking, and another to be always working, and we call one a gentleman, and the other an operative; whereas the workman ought often to be thinking, and the thinker often to be working, and both should be gentlemen, in the best sense. As it is, we make both ungentle, the one envying, the other despising, his brother; and the mass of society is made up of morbid thinkers, and miserable workers. Now it is only by labour that thought can be made healthy, and only by thought that labour can be made happy, and the two cannot be separated with impunity.<sup>115</sup>

However, Ruskin's position was in fact more complex and subtle than simply a return to medieval craft-based production, as is sometimes suggested. He acknowledged that there is a certain justification or practical necessity for the separation of design and making, but he distinguished the two by the scale of the work:

All ideas of this kind are founded upon two mistaken suppositions: the first, that one man's thought can be, or ought to be, executed by another man's hands; the second, that manual labour is a degradation, when it is governed by intellect. (...) On a large scale, and in work determinable by line and rule, it is indeed both possible and necessary that the thoughts of one man should be carried out by the labour of others (...). But on a smaller scale, and in a design which cannot be mathematically defined, one man's thoughts can never be expressed by another: and the difference between the spirit of touch of the man who is inventing, and of the man who is obeying directions, is often all the difference between a great and a common work of art.<sup>116</sup>

This quote suggests that Ruskin supported an architect's role to devise an overall scheme, but regarded it as equally important that the builder has an input in the detailed

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<sup>115</sup>John Ruskin, *The Nature of Gothic* (London: George Allen, 1892), p. 29.

<sup>116</sup>Ruskin, p. 28.



design of his part of the work. Ruskin, however, also reiterated that an architect should be close to the construction work on site, and that ‘the architect’s work’ should be ‘in the mason’s yard with his men’.<sup>117</sup> It is worth noting, that not all Arts & Crafts designers and architects followed Ruskin’s advice. Edward William Godwin, for example saw himself as an artist who did not want to be involved in the mundane endeavours of construction on site, as Aileen Reid, his biographer, has pointed out.<sup>118</sup>

This division of design and construction continues to create both opportunities and tensions. Marian Bowley, for example, identified the ‘integration between the design and production processes’ as one of the key problems and sources of conflict in her analysis of the construction industry of the 1960s.<sup>119</sup> Bowley makes the intriguing suggestion that the design process should be controlled by ‘the person whose money is going to be risked in the production project’.<sup>120</sup> This was in fact the case with many of the speculative builders of the housing discussed in this thesis. They were clients, developers, builders and also those selling the houses. Although they often did not design the houses themselves (see section 2.3 below), they carried the greatest financial risk and therefore also had a high degree of influence on the design.

Our perception of design and building as two distinct activities also has implications for our perception of architectural history, which generally follows a clear hierarchy of roles. With some exceptions, architectural history concentrates on those who designed the architecture and rarely focuses on those who constructed the buildings. This is also often more difficult to determine, as a large number of people are usually involved. In reality, of course, it is equally not that easy to attribute design authorship – even for buildings where it seems to be a clear case, such as those designed by famous architects like Le Corbusier.<sup>121</sup> Such complexities of authorship are easier to ignore when there is a known name behind the building design. In speculative house building of the time, however, the ‘designer’ was not usually placed in the same prominence and isolation as in high-profile architecture. The ‘architects’ of the houses here discussed were not necessarily in charge; they were not necessarily particularly innovative, certainly not

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<sup>117</sup>Ruskin, p. 30.

<sup>118</sup>Reid, ‘Edward William Godwin, 1833-86: Towards an Art-Architecture’.

<sup>119</sup>Bowley, pp. 445–451.

<sup>120</sup>Bowley, p. 446.

<sup>121</sup>Judi Loach, ‘Lecture on Le Corbusier’ (University of Kent, 2012).

avant-garde; they were also not necessarily the sole-authors. They were, however, those who generally ‘decided on the look or functioning of’ the buildings and usually also used drawings for this purpose.<sup>122</sup>

While the terms ‘architect’ and ‘design’ are at the core of this research, it is therefore important to bear in mind that this is often a theoretical division, viewed from today’s vantage point, and that such distinct roles did not necessarily exist within the overall production process at the time. The term ‘design’ seems to work best for those situations where conceiving and making are very clearly separated but, as we will see, this is not always the case. In this regard, this thesis is also a product of our more specialized working world today. At the time, design was not an activity, which could always be clearly separated from that of building. It happened throughout as part of the planning process of these buildings. The skills of the ‘architects’ of the buildings discussed in this thesis were often as much about adaptation, adjustment and co-ordination, and the design role sometimes consisted largely of ‘collating and presenting information (mainly but not exclusively in drawings) in a form that will be comprehensible to authorities, buyers and to some extent, but by no means exclusively, to builders’.<sup>123</sup> This should, however, not suggest that their work or contribution was insignificant, on the contrary. The study of these architects of speculative housing demonstrates that successful architecture was created and operated within a building culture rather than through individual genius. This is the very point of the particular approach of this research.

## **2.2 Key Roles at Different Stages of the Design Process**

Who then designed London’s speculative housing of the period? Who were the unknown architects of such a large part of London’s residential fabric? Was it designed by speculative builders as commonly assumed and reflected in the literature, or did architects and other construction professions have a role to play? As highlighted in chapter one, research to date is fragmented, but has begun to point towards some answers. In his PhD case study of part of Leeds completed in 1985, F. Trowell

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<sup>122</sup> See definition of ‘design’ in Oxford Dictionary discussed above

<sup>123</sup> Andrew Saint to David Kroll, ‘Chapter 5’, 28 November 2012.

questioned the prevalent myth that before 1945 England's cities were designed without architects.<sup>124</sup> Trowell discovered in his analysis of building applications 1876-1910 that 85.6% of the applications were 'submitted by depositors who called themselves architect'.<sup>125</sup> He conceded that he was not able to confirm the validity of their claim of the title architect, but he also indicated that 64% of the applications were deposited by architects with a town centre practice.<sup>126</sup>

Recognising that Trowell's findings of Leeds could change our understanding of how English towns were made, the urban geographer J.W.R. Whitehand pursued further research into the topic by widening the geographical scope. He published a number of research studies about the makers of British towns with particular attention to their architects.<sup>127</sup> Overall, Whitehand confirmed Trowell's findings that the involvement of architects was more frequent than previously thought. Whitehand's main focus was on Birmingham but he also touched on London in his research. As part of his research, he examined a sample of 59 speculative interwar housing applications in four London boroughs. Whitehand observed that 36% were deposited by 'architects or related professions', 46% by 'builders', and 19% by 'others' (Table 1, p.13). Incidentally, the share of architects in the total market was significantly higher in Birmingham (60%) than in London (36%). Whitehand's findings also indicate that the firms who prepared the building applications were usually local with only some based in central London (Figure 11).

More recently, M.A. Johnson researched architects' involvement in his study of the late 19th and early 20th century 'Sunderland Cottage', a particular type of working class housing.<sup>128</sup> His conclusions underline Trowell's and Whitehand's findings. Johnson discovered that 'most of the cottages were designed by Sunderland's pre-eminent architects and that they formed an integral part of the architects' work'.<sup>129</sup> In the

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<sup>124</sup> Frank Trowell, 'Nineteenth-Century Speculative Housing in Leeds: With Special Reference to the Suburb of Headingley, 1838-1914' (University of York, 1982).

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., p. 234.

<sup>126</sup> Trowell, 'Speculative Housing Development in Leeds and the Involvement of Local Architects in the Design Process 1866-1914'.

<sup>127</sup> Whitehand; J.W.R. Whitehand and C.M.H Carr, 'The Creators of England's Inter-war Suburbs', *Urban History*, 28 (2001), 218-234; C. M. H. Carr, *Twentieth-Century Suburbs: A Morphological Approach* (Routledge, 2001).

<sup>128</sup> Johnson.

<sup>129</sup> Johnson, p. 72.

introduction to the recently published volume on Battersea of the Survey of London, Colin Thom also touches on this topic and further corroborates architects' involvement before 1945: 'the evidence for Battersea suggests that, contrary to common opinion, architects or surveyors were fully engaged in house design and development'.<sup>130</sup> All of the above mentioned recent studies agree that architects were more involved in the design of speculative housing in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries than previously thought. The research in this thesis contributes to these findings and expands on their perspective, but also redefines their question by broadening it beyond architects' involvement alone. Little research so far has focussed on London. The studies to date also do not answer or touch on the question at what stage architects were involved; e.g. did they supply a rough drawing, details, or did they manage the construction process? Furthermore, previous research does not take the complexities of the working world in speculative housing at the time sufficiently into consideration, and often tends to wrongly apply today's understanding of its boundaries. All too often, the literature is, for example, singularly focussed on architects versus builders and neglects the question of the involvement of other construction occupations.

To begin with, it should be acknowledged that the occupations responsible for the design of speculative housing typically differed depending on the stage of the planning and construction process, which is therefore divided into three main stages in Table 2 (p.52), with typical key design roles for each. The first stage, the site layout of the housing, was almost always created by a surveyor, usually for the purpose of selling the individual building plots at an auction (e.g. Figure 41-45).<sup>131</sup> The second stage, the overall appearance of the houses (e.g. Figure 33), was indeed often designed by architects - as we will see in the next section - but other occupations such as surveyors, architect-surveyors or builders were also involved. During construction, however, architects were hardly ever involved, and the speculative builders or their builders' manager usually managed this stage themselves. These typical stages described in Table 2 are reflected in literature of the time, and can also be found in every estate development that has been discussed in this thesis – the Minet estate (chapter three),

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<sup>130</sup> Thom.

<sup>131</sup> We might now call it a 'master plan' or 'urban design'. This process and the design of the overall site layout will be discussed in more detail in chapter three.

Walthamstow auction plans and the Foster estate (chapter four), and also the estates that the Readers worked on (chapter five).<sup>132</sup>

Table 2. Typical key stages and occupations in the planning and design process of London speculative housing, 1870-1939.

<b>Stages</b>	Typical starting point: Agricultural land	1.) Planning of site and road layout	2.) Design of buildings and application to local authority	3.) Detailed design and construction	Completed buildings
<b>Key occupations and roles</b>	Landowner	Auctioneer, Surveyor, Architect	Surveyor, Architect, Builder's manager, Builder	Builder, Builder's manager	Buyer, Tenant

The typical starting point for housing development during that period was a landed estate that had so far been in agricultural use, which applies to any of the housing discussed in the following chapters. Many of these estates had manorial residences, but most of these often-beautiful buildings were lost to the expansion of the city. Once the land was considered ripe for development (e.g. the land was close to an already built up area or a convenient transport link), the first planning stage was the preparation of a road and building plot layout, usually for the purpose of selling individual plots at an auction to builders. The layout of the estate and the individual building plots was generally based on an established pattern of fairly standardised plot widths.<sup>133</sup> Creating this layout was typically and naturally the responsibility of the surveyor (who was usually also the auctioneer or closely worked with one), because it was considered a measuring (rather than design) task of establishing and realising the development value of the land. It was not primarily seen as an urban design exercise in our contemporary understanding. This, however, does not mean that the estate layout was necessarily monotonous and could not at times involve fairly complex master planning as the example on the Minet estate shows (chapter three). Creating such estate plans was part of the education of surveyors, which is discussed further in chapter four.

<sup>132</sup> See for example: Howkins, *An Introduction to the Development of Private Building Estates and Town Planning*.

<sup>133</sup> See more detailed discussion of estate layouts in chapter three.

This second stage, the design of the buildings, is the least clear in terms of the occupations involved, as no single one was responsible for it. This stage will be discussed in more detail in the next section. Generally, those who designed the houses, and also prepared the building applications to the local authority, belonged to one (or several) of these main occupations: builders, architects or surveyors. The boundaries between these, however, were so fluid that it is difficult to determine their precise market share. It was common that the building design was prepared by either a surveyor or an architect. Both of these occupations were trained to prepare drawings and also design houses. Often, it was someone who did both - an architect & surveyor. If the builder himself had the ability, then he would generally design the houses and also prepare the application himself.

Examples for all of these cases can be found in the building applications discussed in the analysis of building applications below and in the case studies of the other chapters. Reader Bros, Sheppard Bros, Edmundson & Sons (all chapter four), and Thomas Arundell (chapter three) are examples of builders who also designed the houses they constructed. Examples of surveyors who also provided house designs are the Drivers on the Minet estate (chapter three) and Norfolk & Prior (chapter four). A good example of an architect who designed a large amount of speculative housing is Reginald Rowell discussed below in this chapter (Figure 19). Before the protection of titles, almost any combination of these three, builder, architect and surveyor, was possible. There are also several examples of individuals throughout the case studies that use more than one title. James Edmondson describes himself as Builder & Surveyor (chapter five), Charles Farley describes himself as Builder & Architect (chapter four), and the most common by far was the already mentioned combination of Architect & Surveyor, a title used by a Norfolk & Prior (chapter four) and also by many of those responsible for the building applications in Richmond researched below in this chapter.

During construction, the third stage in Table 2, it was rare that surveyors or architects were involved in speculative housing of the period, unless it was a large housebuilder such as Ideal Homestead who had their own in-house architects (see chapter five). As a rule, work on site and detailed design during construction were managed by the builders themselves. Architect's supervision or management of the construction was unnecessary when the builders were lessees or freeholders, which was usually the case, rather than

contractors. In other words, they were at that point their own clients and it was therefore in their interest to achieve a certain level of quality; their commercial success and livelihood was dependent on being able to sell the houses.

It is also worth noting that speculative builders did not necessarily personally construct the houses, but often rather held a managerial role. With small local speculative builders, the owner of the building firm would typically manage the trades and construction, and also often to more or less a degree the design. It was also possible that the speculative builder was more what we would now call a developer, and employed others, so called builders' managers, to manage the construction on site. Richard Reader, for example, worked at different stages in his career as an employed builder, on his own account, and as a builders' manager for Barclays, another speculative builder (see chapter five). Another example of such a builders' manager is Fred Curtis (see chapter three), who worked in this role for the estate owner William Minet, when he commissioned the construction of some houses directly, rather than lease the land to other builders.

Table 2 describes a typical process but there were of course exceptions. In the case of pioneering developments such as Hampstead Garden suburb, architects had a more central role in the planning and design process. However, even in the case of Bedford Park, for example, it is not clear who designed the overall estate layout.<sup>134</sup> The developer Jonathan Carr made a conscious decision to give well-known architects the opportunity to design the houses, but even for Bedford Park, the architects did not supervise the work during construction.<sup>135</sup> When the architectural profession lobbied for a greater involvement in the design of speculative housing in the 1930s,<sup>136</sup> then they probably had in mind a more leading role for all planning and design stages, as well as being responsible for the management of the construction on site. The role and responsibilities of architects were also to some degree dependent on scale. For blocks of flats, architects' involvement and supervision was the norm, which can also be seen in the large number of architect-designed examples in Sydney Perks' book on flats.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Andrew Saint to David Kroll, 'RE: Question About Richard Norman Shaw', 22 May 2013.

<sup>135</sup> Andrew Saint to David Kroll, 'RE: Question About Richard Norman Shaw', 20 May 2013.

<sup>136</sup> Betham.

<sup>137</sup> Sydney Perks, *Residential Flats of All Classes, Including Artisans' Dwellings* (B.T. Batsford, 1905).

### 2.3 Evaluation of Richmond Building Applications 1886-1939

This chapter supplements the findings of the case studies in chapters three to five, which are largely empirical, with quantitative research, which helps to place them in a wider context. A comprehensive collection of building applications from the period in Richmond, which has recently become accessible, proved to be an apt primary resource for this purpose. With funding from the Heritage Lottery fund, the Volunteer Support Group of the Richmond Local History Archive recently catalogued a collection of around 22,000 building applications from the late 1870s to the 1960s, many of which have also been made available online.<sup>138</sup> The comprehensiveness of this collection is unique among Greater London boroughs during this period. In most other London boroughs, building application collections have not or have only partially survived. The Richmond building applications are also unusually detailed in that they contain complete design drawings of the houses at a scale of 1/8" to 1'-0" (close to metric scale 1:100).<sup>139</sup> The Richmond building applications therefore offer a unique opportunity to further substantiate the qualitative research of the other chapters with quantitative analysis. Out of this collection, a sample of 205 random applications has been selected for the evaluation in this chapter (see appendix). This sample was examined to find answers to key research questions of this thesis. The obtained results offer unique insights, which help to form a wider context for the more detailed case studies of the other chapters. The sample encompasses applications from today's borough of Richmond (Figure 14), but the findings broadly tie in with the case study findings of the other chapters from other Greater London boroughs.<sup>140</sup> The sample applications were not chosen by a particular address but simply by picking random boxes from the collection.<sup>141</sup> To be representative, it was, however, crucial that the applications would not by coincidence all come from the same area. Figure 14 shows the locations of the

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<sup>138</sup> The author could not ascertain why the collection starts in the late 1870s. It may have been the result of the Public Health Act 1875, but, according to S. Martin Gaskell, plans already had to be deposited since the Local Government Act 1858. Gaskell, p. 23.

<sup>139</sup> This also shows that building application details and requirements were not uniform throughout the area that is today's Greater London, but that each area and borough followed somewhat different standards. The building applications held at Lewisham Local History Archive are generally less detailed, and often only show a floor plan (see chapter four).

<sup>140</sup> A difference that should be pointed out here is that the applications for Richmond were more detailed than those for some other boroughs in that they always contained elevations of the houses. This was not always the case in Lewisham, for example, in particular before the turn of the century.

<sup>141</sup> The boxes were in alphabetical order of street names. The boxes that were chosen have applications for streets starting with the letters A, D, E, F, K, L, M and S.



surveyed building applications by address. The map confirms that the sample of 205 applications is fairly evenly spread throughout what is today's London Borough of Richmond.

The methodology of investigating these building applications for the purpose of this thesis was inspired by Tressell's aforementioned study of building applications in Leeds and also by Whitehead and Carr's aforementioned analysis of a sample of 59 applications in London and of 102 applications in Birmingham (Table 1, p.13). The findings of this study are, however, not directly comparable as the data was collected and analysed under different premises. Whitehead and Carr's table of the person/firm preparing applications has three categories: 'Architect or related profession', 'Builder' and 'Other'. The following analysis, however, uses slightly different categories: 'Architect', 'Architect & Surveyor', 'Surveyor', 'Builder' and 'Other'. The terminology is based on the title that the firm or individual states on the application or drawing. Architect & Surveyor is listed as a separate category. This has been influenced by the research in chapter four, which further underlines that Architect & Surveyors played a key role in the design of speculative housing of the period. There is another significant difference in the data collection, which makes the studies not directly comparable. Unlike the study of Whitehead and Carr, the following evaluation of the Richmond sample does not list the person/firm preparing the application, but instead the person/firm preparing the drawings, as only then can we safely assume that they designed the houses. Many of the applications were submitted and even prepared or filled out by speculative builders, but they were often only the clients and someone else prepared the design for them. This difference in methodology helps to explain discrepancies between the following results in this chapter and those of Whitehead and Carr outlined in Table 1.

Certain limitations should be kept in mind when evaluating the results presented in this chapter. An obvious one is the size of the sample of 205 building applications. In future research, it would be useful to study a larger sample, but for the purpose of this chapter and with the limited resources of time and manpower, the analysis based on this sample has proven to be very informative. Another limitation of the research is that we do not have much background information about the individuals studied. For example, we do not know how established the individuals or firms were in their occupation. For this

reason, the qualitative research of the following chapters complements this chapter well as it helps us to develop a more detailed and specific understanding of particular cases, taking personal biographies into account.

It was important for the following evaluation of the applications not to alter the person's or firm's description of their own occupation. In a few instances, a person such as Reginald Rowell, who was one of the most prolific local housing architects, appears therefore both under 'Architect' on some applications as well as under 'Architect & Surveyor' on others, because of how he described himself on these.<sup>142</sup> As titles were not protected, it seems impossible to make an assessment, which of these architects or surveyors were 'legitimate' and which were not. With the development of professional bodies, registration and university education, boundaries between occupations only slowly became more clearly established. R. Rowell for example only became ARIBA after already having successfully practiced for a number of years.<sup>143</sup> This is also the reason why the proportion of the 'Other' category is rather large. If the authorship of the drawings was not clearly identifiable, rather than making difficult to verify assumptions, these applications are listed under 'Other'. Many of these applications listed as 'Other' were indeed submitted by builders, but this does not automatically mean that they were also the architects. The available evidence suggests that in many of these cases, the builder simply obtained the design of the houses from an unidentified source, such as a relative or someone else capable.

Richmond cannot be considered typical for the whole of Greater London in every respect during the period. However, for the purpose of identifying key occupations responsible for the design of speculative housing, the area covered is still sufficiently indicative for a wealthier growing Greater London suburb of the time. Table 5 (p.62) shows that there were active speculative housing developments throughout the period, and that most of the surveyed applications in the sample were for terraced, semi-detached and detached houses. The borough is fairly affluent on average, but it also comprises areas as diverse as Barnes, Sheen, Twickenham and Teddington, which each had their own local council then. The following evaluation of the sample has also been

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<sup>142</sup> Local Studies Volunteer Support Group, *The Building of a Borough* (Richmond: London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, 2012).

<sup>143</sup> 'Collection of Building Plans, 1878-1968'.

informed by and broadly ties in with chapters three to five, based on case studies from other Greater London areas, such as Lambeth, Lewisham and South Woodford. The trends observed in the following analysis of building applications can therefore be seen at least as indicative of key occupations involved in growing suburbs within Greater London, even if the percentages may be different in less affluent or denser suburbs, for example.

The first findings we will consider, outlined in Table 3 (p. 60), respond directly to the central question of this chapter: who designed London's speculative housing of the period? The table shows that a large share of the housing, in fact the largest overall share, 26% in total, were designed by architects - meaning a firm or person that identifies their occupation as such on the application and drawings. The share of those describing their occupation as surveyor is 4%. Many of those with a surveying background would have, however, described themselves as architects & surveyors for the purpose of these applications, which at 17% also constitute a significant proportion. Roughly half of the total designs, 47%, could be clearly identified to have been prepared by architects, surveyors or architect-surveyors. The proportion of design drawings prepared by builders themselves stands at only 9%. A proportion of those in the 'Other' category were probably also designed by such builder-architects. However, it is not clear to what percentage, as the authorship of these drawings is unclear as mentioned above. The pie chart makes it easier to visualize the percentages. These results indeed confirm that architects played a key role in the design of speculative housing in Richmond 1890 – 1939. The table, however, also shows that surveyors and in particular architect-surveyors, whose background and training could come from either, were equally important.

As telling as Table 3 is for the whole period from 1890 to 1939, it does not, however, take into account change over time. Table 4 shows that there was indeed significant change over time and that the share of professionally designed housing gradually increased from a total of 35% in the 1890s, to 39% in the 1900s, to 45% in the 1920s, to 66% in the 1930s. Architects' involvement also increased from 14% in the 1890s, to 20% in the 1900s, to 27% in the 1920s, to 42% in the 1930s. The share of architect-surveyors in the 1890s was as high as that of architects, which reflects that those involved in housing design in the late 19th century were prudent to call themselves

‘Architect & Surveyor’. It would increase their potential client base, irrespective if their main source of income was surveying or architectural design. The changes apparent in Table 4 clearly reflect a process of professionalization in house building over the period, and mirror the rise in professional qualifications and classroom education.<sup>144</sup> The high share of professionally designed housing in the 1930s shows that the above described division of work and shift from workshop to the design office had already been taking place before the legal protection of the architect’s title in 1938.

As mentioned above, the type of occupations responsible for the design also depended to some degree on the type of housing. Blocks of flats, for example, were almost always designed by architects or surveyors. It is therefore also relevant to consider what type of housing was analysed in the sample. Figure 12 shows that most of the surveyed applications in the sample were for terraced (50), semi-detached (81) and detached (57) houses, which reflects the kind of housing built in Richmond over the period, and also London in general. As is well known, the common type of housing that was built, however, also changed during the period. While in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, terraced housing was still the most common type, semi-detached houses became the norm in London’s suburbs during the inter-war period. This change is also reflected in the surveyed sample of building applications (Table 5), which shows that terraced house building decreased significantly over the surveyed period. In the 1890s, terraced houses constitute by far the largest share of the sample (81%). This share decreased to only 14% in the 1930s. As one would expect, the share of semi-detached houses increased over the period from 17% in the 1890s, to 42% in the 1900s, to 49% in the 1920s, and then dropped slightly to 43% in the 1930s.

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<sup>144</sup> The rise in professional education is discussed for example in: Crinson and Lubbock, p. 2.

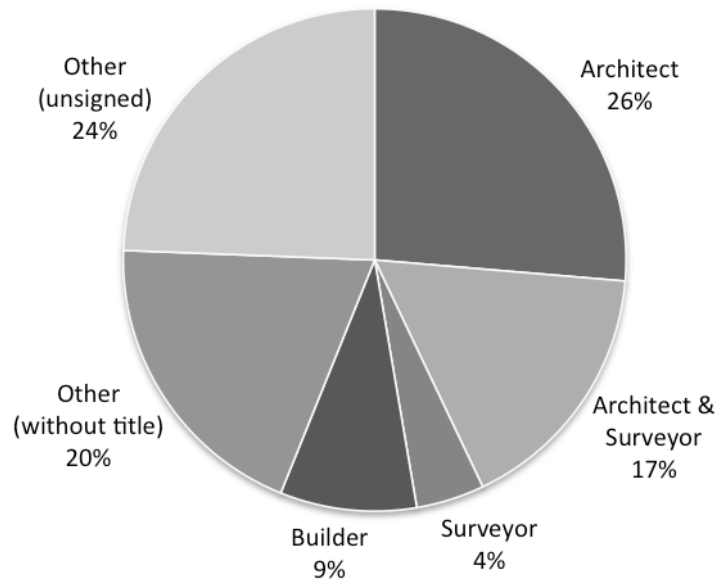
Table 3. Occupations responsible for the design of housing in Richmond, 1886 - 1939

Occupation	Application sample	Percentage
Architect	54	26%
Architect & Surveyor	34	17%
Surveyor	9	4%
Builder	18	9%
Other (without title) <sup>a</sup>	40	20%
Other (drawings unsigned) <sup>b</sup>	50	24%
<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Sample of 205 building applications held in Richmond Local Archive (see list of applications in appendix)

<sup>a</sup>Application drawings are signed, but without occupation title. Most of these were prepared by or for the builder, but authorship is still generally unclear, and they have therefore been listed separately.

<sup>b</sup>Application drawings are unsigned and authorship cannot be established.



The pie chart illustrates the share of each occupation. The survey is based on a sample of 205 random building applications in Richmond (see list of applications in appendix). The proportion of architects, surveyors and architect-surveyors makes up 47%. On 9% of the applications, builders identified themselves as the authors of the designs. The occupations responsible for the remaining drawings are unclear. We can assume that some were prepared by builders themselves, or capable others, but probably not professionals (in a sense of it being their main or only work) as these tended to identify their authorship.

Table 4. Breakdown of application sample by occupation and decade

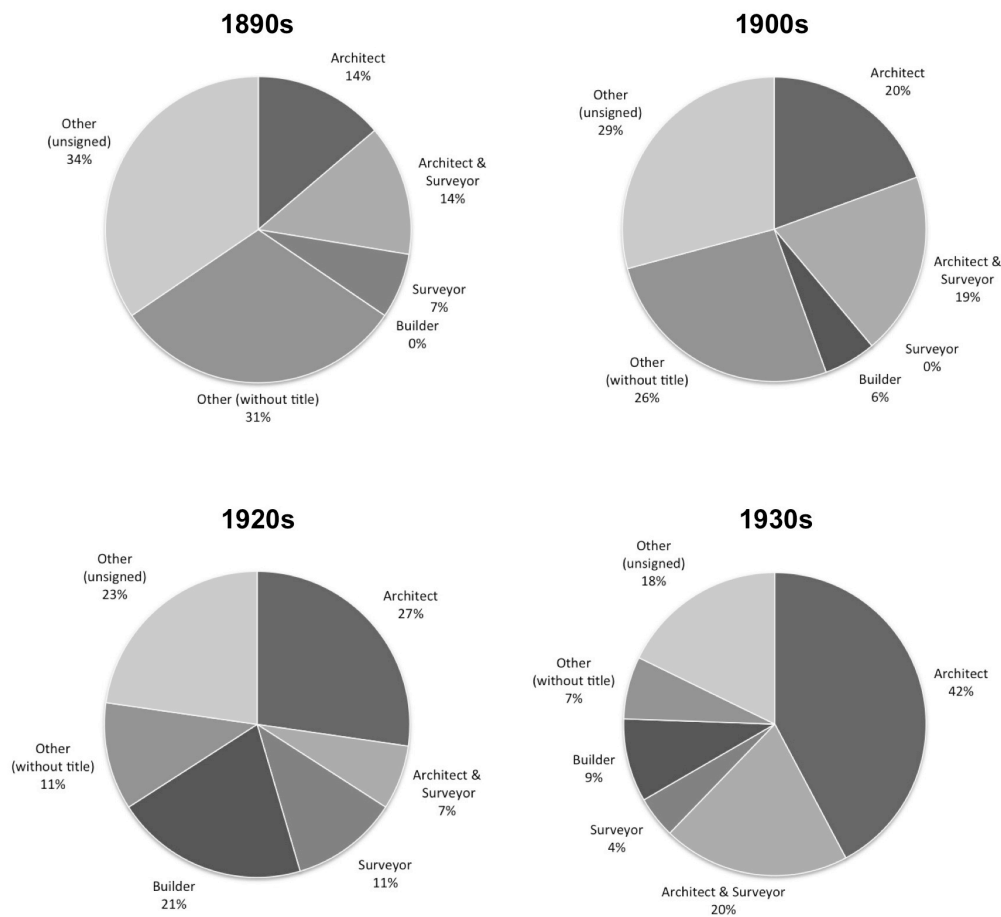
Occupation	1890s		1900s		1920s		1930s	
	Sample	%	Sample	%	Sample	%	Sample	%
Architect	4	14%	14	19%	12	27%	19	42%
Architect & Surveyor	4	14%	14	19%	3	7%	9	20%
Surveyor	2	7%	0	0%	5	11%	2	4%
Builder	0	0%	4	6%	9	20%	4	9%
Other (without title) <sup>a</sup>	9	31%	19	26%	5	11%	3	7%
Other (unsigned) <sup>b</sup>	10	34%	21	29%	10	23%	8	18%
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Sample of building applications held in Richmond Local Archive (see list of applications in appendix)

Note: For the 1880s and 1910s, the sample is too small to draw meaningful conclusions and has therefore been omitted.

<sup>a</sup>Application drawings are signed, but without occupation title. Most of these were prepared by or for the builder, but authorship is still generally unclear, and they have therefore been listed separately.

<sup>b</sup>Application drawings are unsigned and authorship cannot be established.



The break-down of the surveyed application sample by decade and occupation shows that the share of professional titles used on the applications increased from 35% in the 1890s to 66% in the 1930s (see list of surveyed applications in appendix).

Table 5. Breakdown of sample by dwelling types and decades

Dwelling type	1890s			1900s			1920s			1930s		
	No of Applications	No of dwellings	%	No of Applications	No of dwellings	%	No of Applications	No of dwellings	%	No of Applications	No of dwellings	%
Terraced houses	13	199	81%	18	161	41%	9	54	32%	5	52	14%
Semi-detached houses	11	42	17%	31	162	42%	13	81	49%	20	161	43%
Detached houses	5	5	2%	19	27	7%	17	24	14%	12	26	7%
Tenements	0	0	0%	3	40	10%	0	0	0%	2	60	16%
Flats	0	0	0%	0	0	0%	0	0	0%	4	73	20%
Bungalows	0	0	0%	0	0	0%	6	8	5%	0	1	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source:* Random sample of 205 building applications held in Richmond Local Archive (see list of applications in appendix)

The trend away from terraced to semi-detached housing reflects changing tastes and policy favouring lower densities, seen as a healthier and safer environment.<sup>145</sup> The trend was reinforced through the town planning schemes adopted by councils from the 1920s onwards. These were imposed by local councils to limit housing densities and encouraged the building of semi-detached houses rather than terraces. Perhaps most surprising about the housing types is the sudden rise in flats built in Richmond during the 1930s, when a total of 36% of the surveyed number of dwellings were either tenements or blocks of flats. Bungalows only appeared in the application sample during the inter-war period, mainly in 1930s. As these figures of Table 5 are based on a sample, they are naturally only an approximation. However, even in this small sample, the figures are largely consistent with trends reflected in the remaining case studies and discussed in the literature.

In our analysis so far, another aspect that has not been considered is the number of houses built at once, which is reflected in the size of the application, and which also can be indicative of the size of the house builder, developer or financial means of the land owner. As a tendency, the more houses were built at once, the larger the organisation and financial means had to be of the speculative builder proposing them. Figure 13 shows that roughly half the applications were at a small scale of only 1-2 houses (100). Only 32 of the applications were for more than 10 dwellings. Figure 13 is revealing as it reflects the size of the businesses operating in house building in Richmond. It suggests that the majority of speculative house builders operated at a small scale, building only a couple of houses at a time. This conclusion is consistent with Whitehand's and Carr's

<sup>145</sup> See for example: Burnett, p. 222.

findings.<sup>146</sup> Figure 13 also shows that the majority of the surveyed applications were indeed from speculative builders building several houses, rather than owner-occupiers building a house for themselves: Out of the total 205 applications, 59 were for only one house. An undeterminable share of these would have been by owner-occupiers, rather than speculative builders, but this still does not invalidate the overall picture that emerges from the evaluation of the total application sample.

Relating the application sizes to occupations, we can draw further conclusions about those responsible for the design of the dwellings (Table 6). Involvement of a professional was much more likely either in applications for only one house, or for large applications. This may seem contradictory but there is a simple explanation. Some of the applications for only one house would have been for owner-occupiers, who were generally less experienced in house building and more likely to rely on experts to design the house for them. These were the kind of architects' commissions for affluent owner-occupiers that Creswell describes in *The Honeywood File*.<sup>147</sup> Equally, an individual or firm building at a large scale of a whole estate, one or several streets, or a block of flats, would also be very likely to appoint a professional for the design of the housing. A total of 70% of applications for 10 or more dwellings can therefore clearly be identified to have been designed by architects or surveyors.<sup>148</sup> Applications with a few houses, such as 2-5, would have been the typical size of building work undertaken by the small speculative builder; it is no coincidence that the identifiable share of builder-designed dwellings is the highest in this category (13%), with the unknown share in 'Other' likely to increase the real figure even further. These enterprising small speculative house builders were also less likely to engage a professional and were most likely to either rely on their own design and drawing skills, or to appoint a draughtsman or relative for example. Cases of such speculative house builders are discussed in more detail in chapter five. The Reader Brothers, for example, also submitted most of their house building projects before the First World War in phases of a few houses at a time.

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<sup>146</sup> Carr.

<sup>147</sup> Creswell, *The Honeywood File: An Adventure in Building*.

<sup>148</sup> The real figure could be even higher as even some of those in the 'Other' category would have probably been architects or surveyors.



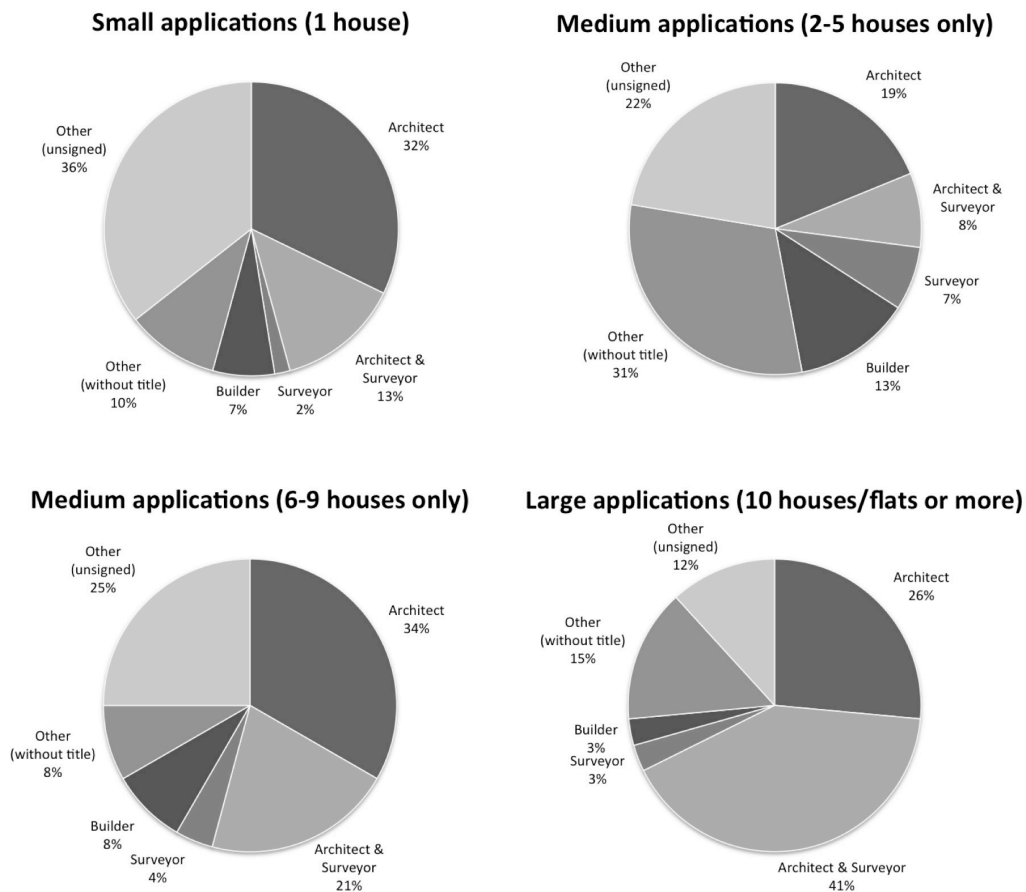
Table 6. Breakdown of sample by application size and occupation

Occupation	Houses or flats per application							
	1		2 to 5		6 to 9		10 or more	
	Sample	%	Sample	%	Sample	%	Sample	%
Architect	19	32%	16	19%	8	33%	9	26%
Architect & Surveyor	8	14%	7	8%	5	21%	14	41%
Surveyor	1	2%	6	7%	1	4%	1	3%
Builder	4	7%	11	13%	2	8%	1	3%
Other (no title) <sup>a</sup>	6	10%	26	31%	2	8%	5	15%
Other (unsigned) <sup>b</sup>	21	36%	19	22%	6	25%	4	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Sample of building applications held in Richmond Local Archive (see list of surveyed applications in appendix)

<sup>a</sup>Application drawings are signed, but without occupation title. Most of these were prepared by or for the builder, but authorship is still generally unclear, and they have therefore been listed separately.

<sup>b</sup>Application drawings are unsigned and authorship cannot be established.



The charts illustrate that, for large applications, 70% can be identified as designed by a professional architect, surveyor or architect-surveyor. The proportion of architects' involvement is particularly high for applications for just one house, as these were often for owner-occupiers, who were more likely than speculative builders to rely on architects. Small speculative builders working on a few houses at the time (2-5) were the least likely to use architects or surveyors (see list of surveyed applications in appendix).

Who designed the housing in Richmond was also related to where their business was based. Those firms or business listed on the application form as ‘architects’ that were based in central London (34) were almost always professional architects, surveyors or both, rather than builders or amateur architects. Of those listed as ‘architect’ on the application form, roughly half were based locally (102).<sup>149</sup> A further 23 of businesses were spread around other areas of today’s Greater London with only one outside. These findings are consistent with the case study of Norfolk & Prior (chapter four) whose work was almost exclusively local. For most of their career, the Readers (chapter five) were also based locally to where they designed and built houses. The impression that speculative house building of the period was largely a village industry seems to also hold true for the design of the housing, which is reflected in Figure 15 and Table 7.

Table 7. Business locations of those acting as ‘architects’ on application sample

<b>Business location</b>	<b>Number of applications</b>	<b>Architects/Surveyors<sup>a</sup></b>
Local <sup>b</sup>	102	51
Central London <sup>c</sup>	34	31
Other non-local	23	14
Unknown <sup>d</sup>	46	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>96</b>

*Note:* Table shows all those who filled in their name on the application form under the heading ‘architect’, even if this was not their occupation, or if they would not generally describe their occupation as architects (see application form examples below)

<sup>a</sup>Column shows only those businesses that clearly identified themselves by title as Architect, Surveyor or Architect & Surveyor on drawings or application

<sup>b</sup>Businesses based in or within 2 km of today’s LB Richmond

<sup>c</sup>Businesses based in or within 2 km of the City of London or Westminster

<sup>d</sup>No address available

The fluid boundaries between occupations working in housing construction and design are also reflected in the letterheads of further correspondence sometimes attached to the building applications. Figure 16, Figure 22 and Figure 23 are examples of local businesses, much like Norfolk & Prior in chapter four, which combined the role of surveyors, auctioneers, estate agents and valuers with an architectural service for designing houses. The owners of these three businesses are either F.A.I. (Fellow of the

<sup>149</sup> If they were listed as ‘architects’ on the form, this does not mean they actually were architects. It was just that they filled in this field indicating they took on the responsibility associated with the role (see for example Figure 26).

Auctioneers' Institute) or F.S.I. (Fellow of the Surveyors' Institute). Chapter four shows that the examination for Fellowship of the Surveyors' Institute also involved the design of houses and planning of housing estates. This was consistent with the traditional role of land agents as discussed in chapter four. The letter head of Figure 17 indicates a business closer to that of the Readers (chapter five) - a 'builder of repute' who were capable of also providing plans and specifications for their own work, essentially acting as their own architect. Figure 19 shows the letterhead of the prolific local architect R.B. Rowell (1875-1966) who was responsible for the design of several hundred houses and entire streets in the area.<sup>150</sup> He often, but not always, described himself as architect & surveyor on his letterhead, rather than simply as architect, in order to increase his client base.

The variety of occupations responsible for the design of speculative housing during the period can also be seen on design drawings submitted with the applications in Richmond. Figure 29 and Figure 30 show examples of drawings by the local surveyor Ernest Pennington, attached to a building application in 1898 for terraced houses. The plan and elevations are pragmatic without unnecessary architectural embellishment. This is not to say that this is necessarily specific to his profession as surveyor. We can see that Edward Stone (chapter four), also a surveyor, designed more elaborate and architecturally ambitious houses. The plan of the Pennington designed terraced houses is an example of a central stair flight sandwiched between the dining room and parlour. On paper, this seems like a very efficient plan, but the experience of such a house plan in reality feels very constrained, as the overall staircase and corridor space are smaller than in Figure 33, for example.

An example of more elaborate drawings can be seen in Figure 33, an application for terraced houses in 1901. The local architect Frank J. Brewer was also more innovative in the style of his elevations with Arts-and-Crafts-inspired detailing, such as mullion casement windows, prominent chimneys and what appears to be pebbledash render on the first floor.<sup>151</sup> The rounded gable roof that Brewer designed over the bay windows

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<sup>150</sup> Local Studies Volunteer Support Group.

<sup>151</sup> These are features of Edwardian houses influenced by the Arts and Crafts style as identified by Trevor Yorke, who wrote a number of architectural style guides with particular focus on domestic architecture. Trevor Yorke, *British Architectural Styles: An Easy Reference Guide* (Newbury: Countryside Books, 2009), p. 50.

was probably too complicated and unpractical to build for the speculative house builder, and was therefore replaced by a more conventional pitched gable when the houses were built. Figure 35 shows a particularly attractive drawing by builder-architect E.A. Dawson, based in Teddington, for terraced and detached houses in Atbara Road, 1904. The floorplans are particularly well arranged, efficient and even innovative for their time. Breaking with the tradition of the usual rear kitchen/scullery, it is instead located in the middle and the dining room faces the rear garden, as it often does in houses today.

Overall, there is a sense that the occupation title also suggested the kind of market that the firm targeted, although this was only a tendency rather than universally the case. ‘Architect’ had the tendency to sound more up-market for those wanting more elaborate or complex designs. ‘Surveyor’ suggested a more pragmatic approach and generally one more focussed on estate planning. ‘Architect & Surveyor’ would appeal to both types of work, which explains its popularity. Builders who also designed the houses they built, could target any of these markets. We can see in chapter five that builders such as James Edmondson & Sons designed and built for the middle to upper end of the market, whereas others like the Readers designed and built houses for both the lower end as well as the top end of the market.

## **2.4 Other Relevant Considerations and Complicating Factors**

The analysis of Richmond building applications provides an invaluable overview of key responsibilities in speculative housing design. The reality of the working world at the time, however, was more complex than the quantitative analysis of these applications, expressed in neat percentages, may perhaps suggest. The case studies in the following chapters are therefore equally important for a more comprehensive and detailed picture.

It is important to bear in mind that the above analysis of building applications is based on drawings as the key source. The initial discussion in this chapter about ‘design’ recognized that drawings and specifications are a key tool for the transfer of information from design to building. It is evidence of a formal design process, one that did not just happen at the spur of a moment. Drawings point to a modern construction world in which design is generally a specialism separate from building. However, design was of

course not only limited to drawings and their author was not the only architect of the building.

It has often been suggested that pattern-books were used instead to copy from, making drawings largely unnecessary. All the evidence found by the author in archives, however, suggests that this assumption is not correct for the period of this research. Proponents of the pattern-book idea must feel frustrated with the evidence presented in this thesis. The above analysis of Richmond applications, for example, seems to provide irrefutable evidence that custom design drawings, rather than merely a process of building from pattern-books, were used for the housing. The case studies in the following chapters also show that drawings were used for the houses built on the Minet estate (chapter three), those designed by Edward Stone (chapter four) and also for the houses designed and built by the Readers (chapter five). The Richmond building application analysis and also the case studies in this thesis have only been possible because records, many of which are drawings, have survived. However, for most houses built in London during the period of this study, drawings have not survived - assuming they existed in the first place.<sup>152</sup> Is it plausible that in some cases, builders simply used rough sketches, copied from other built precedents, and then built the houses based on previous experience with the available parts?

There has been much support, often not very well researched, for this view in the literature. In *The Edwardian and Inter-war House*, as mentioned in the introduction to chapter one, for example, Lawrence suggests that speculative builders generally did not use any drawings to build their houses. He supports this argument with a quote from an article in the *Illustrated Carpenter and Builder*:<sup>153</sup>

At present the great majority of builders work to plans produced in their own offices. (...) It is undeniable that a sound well-planned house can be erected

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<sup>152</sup> For some of the building applications in other London boroughs, only basic block plans survived, which cannot be seen as evidence that drawings were used for building the houses. Even if slightly more detailed floor plans were submitted, one could argue that they may have been prepared for this purpose but not as a design to build from.

<sup>153</sup> Lawrence.

almost equally well from a series of sketches on the back of an old envelope as from a neatly executed and carefully coloured working drawing.<sup>154</sup>

The quote, however, is taken out of context and the article's author did, in fact, not try to suggest that builders built without drawings, on the contrary. He actually confirms that most speculative builders indeed prepared drawings for construction, but that these were just not usually 'neat' enough in order to advertise the house to potential purchasers. The article's author in fact continues:

In most cases, however, an attempt is made to produce a proper plan before building operations are commenced, but the results are seldom such as would inspire the enthusiasm and confidence of a prospective purchaser.<sup>155</sup>

The purpose of the article titled '*A neatly drawn plan helps to sell the house*' was to provide a short lesson, a kind of crash course, for the 'amateur draughtsman' to prepare drawings that are presentable enough for selling the house. The subject of the article itself, in fact, confirms that there was a ready audience of 'amateur draughtsmen', such as the Readers (chapter five), who indeed prepared their own house designs and would have been interested in suggestions on how to improve these in terms of layout and presentation.<sup>156</sup>

The suggestion that the great majority of builders in the inter-war period worked from sketches on the back of envelopes is contradicted by the evidence available and discussed so far. We know that large inter-war house builders like Laing, Wates and Ideal Homestead either had their own in-house architects or employed other architects who designed the houses for them (see chapter five). Even smaller builders that worked on estates alongside the Readers either prepared their own design drawings (e.g. Edmondson & Sons) or they had others who prepared these for them (e.g. D.S. and A.S. Barclay). The sources examined in this thesis so far suggest that drawings were indeed widely used during the period of the study. It is difficult to try to examine if some

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<sup>154</sup>Draughter, 'A Neatly Drawn Plan Helps to Sell the House', *The Illustrated Carpenter and Builder*, 04 April 1935.

<sup>155</sup>Draughter.

<sup>156</sup> It is also worth remembering that the article was published in a journal for builders, and that the author may therefore have been biased when he states that the great majority of plans were produced in the offices of the builders themselves, possibly over-emphasizing their contribution.

houses may have also been built without the use of drawings. Those sketches on the back of an envelope - if this is how some houses were indeed designed - rarely survived. In the following case studies, we can see house sketches such as those by Charles Farley (chapter three), a builder who also described himself as architect, but it was Edward Stone who converted Farley's sketches into scaled drawings that could be used to build from.

It is clear that building applications to the local municipality required increasingly detailed design drawings, as those discussed in this chapter show (e.g. Figure 20). These growing regulatory requirements suggest that building without drawings became increasingly unlikely. With the Metropolitan Local Management Act 1855, each new house to be built within the area administered by the Metropolitan Board of Works would require an application to the Vestry to approve its connection to the main sewer along the street. The quality of these applications, however, could vary from one house to the next and also from one area to the other. The building applications in Lewisham, for example, were less detailed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century than in Richmond (e.g. Figure 163). As a general tendency, however, building applications showed some kind of floorplan of the proposed house, usually drawn to scale. And overall, the required drawings became increasingly more detailed. Certainly after 1900 with the creation of the Metropolitan Boroughs, a drawn floorplan to scale and often also elevations became the norm, such as those we can see in the Richmond applications.

In addition to increasing requirements for drawings by the municipality, in the case of leasehold developments, rough sketches would also generally not have been deemed acceptable for the freeholder to issue a lease to the builder. As will be seen in the following case studies, estate owners often required leaseholders to produce drawings for approval before the lease was signed. This was the case on the Minet estate, and also on other estates, such as the St German estate in Hither Green. Drawings were important for freeholders because they provided a degree of certainty of what was proposed, and could be valued based on similar houses that were already built. In the inter-war period, leasehold developments became rare, but building societies, providing finance to builders before construction, also required drawings (Figure 37). The drawings and specifications gave them tangible information in order to assess the amount of finance required and the security that the proposed house, when completed, would provide in

return. Undoubtedly, these requirements for drawings imposed by the municipality for building applications as well as those imposed by estate owners or lenders increased the workload for specialists. As the above analysis of Richmond building applications shows, builders often gave this work to surveyors, architects, draughtsmen or someone else able to do it. A number of firms recognised the opportunities and specialized in providing ‘plans from sketches’ for purposes such as building applications (Figure 38).

As important as drawings were, design evidently also happened outside. Overall, there is clear evidence that builders required less detailed drawings in order to construct a house than would be expected today. In an issue of *the Illustrated Carpenter & Builder* of 1878, for example, one of the house designs, which was prepared in response to a reader’s request, is accompanied by the following explanation: ‘If ‘A Working Man’ is connected with the building trade, the drawings herewith will be sufficient for him’ (Figure 39).<sup>157</sup> So even if there were drawings, these could be basic and the expertise of the builder would make up the remainder of the detail. It is therefore not surprising that there are hardly any construction details among the drawings that survived and that have been examined in this thesis. The Norfolk & Prior archive, for example, only contains one set of construction details for an elaborate timber bay window (chapter three). As discussed in the case of Norfolk & Prior, this lack of detailed planning could of course result in some unexpected discrepancies between the design drawings and the actual building.

Despite the discussed evidence of the use and at least increasing importance of drawings, it is conceivable that some houses were built with only very basic drawn, or even sketched, information. In the case of the builder James Watt, for example, there is a suspicious lack of drawings on record for some of the houses that he constructed. For example, no floor plans have survived of the first houses built by James Watt in Catford; the only ‘drawings’ that have survived are hand-drawn sketches of the building footprint for the building application (Figure 163). Even for many of the houses Watt built in the early 1900s, when he worked with Norfolk & Prior, no drawings survived other than very basic outline plans for the building application prepared by Stone (see chapter three). Although there is no way of verifying it, it is theoretically possible that

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<sup>157</sup>Frederick Collings, ‘636. Small Houses’, *The Illustrated Carpenter and Builder*, 01 February 1878.



Watt partly relied on experience, plans from previous work and on sketches, rather than on detailed drawings for every new set of houses he built.

It would have inherently been more difficult to build from very basic drawings and sketches the more complex and less standard the building was. And as a tendency, we can see that for larger buildings in particular quite elaborate drawings were prepared beforehand (see for example the blocks of flats on the Minet estate, chapter three). For this reason, larger building applications for 10 or more dwellings were also almost always designed by a professional architect or surveyor (Table 6). It is, however, easier to imagine that smaller, very common, more or less standard house types could have been built without elaborate drawings or by reusing drawings - such as the typical London terrace illustrated in Rasmussen's history of London for example (Figure 40). It would have also been easier to copy the design from other houses in the area. Many of the before mentioned first houses by James Watt, with only vague, not to scale, hand drawn sketches in the building application, were of this type.

As mentioned, the following case studies show that the houses as built were often different, and sometimes quite significantly, from their initial design drawings. This also indicates that at least part of the construction of the houses took place without formal, scaled drawings. Speculative builders often changed particular details during construction, either to simplify the design, to add embellishments (e.g. decorative terracotta tiles), or to add architectural features seen in literature or other houses in the area. It explains why, in London, one can find stretches of very similar houses with slight variations in details and applied decorations. Drawings were then used as guidance with other considerations such as buildability, available parts and builder's taste also playing a role in the detailed construction. As discussed in the case study of Norfolk & Prior (chapter four) and the Minet estate (chapter three), such on-site design decisions appear to have been common in speculative housing of the time.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> After the design had already been prepared, the builder Charles Farley, for example, wrote to Stone that he has already ordered different windows he intends to use and that he wants to add mock timber to the facade (see chapter three).

## 2.5 Conclusion

The evaluation of Richmond building applications 1886 - 1939 above identifies key roles and responsibilities and provides us with quantitative evidence that the housing was not simply made by craftsmen from standard templates, but that it was in fact largely custom-designed. We can see that architects were involved and responsible for the design of a large share of the housing (Table 3). Surveyors also played an important role, and even more so the crossover occupation of architects & surveyors, which could come from either background. The quantitative analysis has also shown that the role of professions became increasingly important for the design of the houses, with the share of architect- or surveyor- designed housing increasing steadily throughout the period (Table 4). Furthermore, the scale of house building also affected the roles involved in its design. Small speculative builders constructing a few houses at a time were most likely to prepare their own designs and building application drawings. Professions were more likely to be involved at a large scale, such as estates with a large number of houses or blocks of flats, or at the scale of only one house for wealthy owner-occupiers building their own house (Table 6). It is also interesting to note that the designers of speculative housing were largely based locally (Figure 15). The share of professional architects or surveyors, however, was the highest for those based in central London (Table 7, p.65).

The detailed discussion of the term ‘design’ in the beginning of this chapter helps to appreciate that design could rarely be isolated and attributed to one particular person, but rather usually took place at different stages. The key roles were different depending on the stage in the design process (Table 2, p.52). The overall estate layout was almost always designed by surveyors, so that the roads could be laid out and the plots could be sold at auction. For the design of the houses themselves architects had indeed a key role, as well as architect-surveyors, surveyors, draughtsmen and builders. The analysis of the Richmond building applications concerns this stage of the process. During construction, architects were hardly ever involved in speculative house building - not even in such a pioneering development as Bedford Park. The detailed design was usually managed by speculative builders themselves or so-called builders’ managers. Some large house builders, such as Ideal Homestead, were an exception as they began to establish their own architects’ departments in the inter-war period.

As the Richmond building applications show, drawings became increasingly a key part of statutory requirements and were indeed used widely, whether they were prepared by the builders themselves, or by a surveyor, architect or draughtsmen. It is still possible that smaller standard building types, such as the typical London terrace, were in some cases built with only very basic drawings or sketches, or by reusing drawings from a similar house design, but this is difficult to verify. While drawings were important, it is also clear that design continued during construction and that details were determined by available building parts and by instructing trades such as the plasterer verbally and with sketches.

Overall, housing design of the period can only be understood in the context of its working world where boundaries between building and design occupations were different from today and often less specialized, which is also reflected in the letterheads of those who designed the housing in Richmond. Research to date has not adequately addressed these complexities. From the evidence presented in this and in the following chapters, it is apparent that housing design of the period *c.* 1870-1939 was neither solely in the hands of builders, guided only by pattern-books, nor was it solely or mainly architect-led with builders only responsible for construction, but the reality was somewhere in between and, as so often in history, much more messy. How this happened in detail for particular estates, streets and businesses will be explored in detail in the following chapters.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Estate Planning and Housing Design: The Case of the Minet Estate 1870 - 1910**

### 3.1 Introduction – Estate Development and Planning in late 19<sup>th</sup> century London

An estate is a good starting point for the case study research because many decisions taken in the early stages of estate development decisively influenced the overall design of the housing. This chapter, unlike chapters four and five, is therefore about an estate rather than a particular individual or business. At the same time, this case study is also about the key figures involved in the development of the Minet estate, all of whom had a share in the planning, design and production of the housing – estate owners, surveyors, developers and builders. All of these were in effect the ‘architects’, some, of course, more than others. While it is not always possible to identify the key decision makers and authorship without doubt, this case study will try to bring out their roles based on the sources available. This chapter also explores the link between the management and planning of the Minet estate, and the design of the individual houses. This helps to understand the process of speculative housing development at the time and is also a useful background for the following chapters.

Why the Minet estate? The most obvious reason is that a good archive documenting the planning of an estate at the time is rare and herein the Minet archive is an exception. Other surviving archives held by private organisations are often difficult to access, as they might still be in use and are therefore confidential, or there is simply no commercial interest in making them available.<sup>159</sup> The Minet estate archive is fairly comprehensive (although not complete), well-maintained and easily accessible thanks to a unique combination of circumstances. The first of these is that one of the last family owners, William Minet, was a passionate antiquarian who was similarly thorough with the collection and archiving of the Minet estate documents.<sup>160</sup> Furthermore, the documents are no longer in the possession of an actively managed private estate, as the estate was sold to the council in 1968. Finally, William Minet financed the building of a public library, the Minet Library, where the estate archive is stored today and publicly accessible.<sup>161</sup> The estate archive was donated to the library after the sale of the estate. Apart from the availability of the information, another, perhaps obvious, reason for the

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<sup>159</sup> The author made several unsuccessful attempts to gain access to a number of private archives, e.g. the Merchant Taylor Company, Wates or John Laing.

<sup>160</sup> William Minet accumulated a significant collection of Surrey Estate deeds which are still available for access today.

<sup>161</sup> Incidentally, the library is located right next to the former estate office.

choice of the Minet estate as a case study is that most of it was speculative housing and the main phase of development falls into the period studied in the thesis. Most of the housing on the estate was built between 1870 and 1910 in two principal phases, first under James Lewis Minet's ownership, then under William Minet's. These phases reflect changing approaches to estate planning and comprise the building of a large variety of types of housing, ranging from compact terraced houses, semi-detached and detached houses, to blocks of flats.

The Minet estate is also useful as a case study for this thesis, precisely because it was not avant-garde, but because much of it was in many respects ordinary. Yet, to call the estate typical would be an exaggeration, and it is unlikely that there is an estate which is typical in every respect. The Minet estate is typical in the sense that it is not pioneering or experimental such as Bedford Park or Hampstead Garden Suburb. However, the estate is in some ways also very specific and quite unusual, for example in that the later phase in the development was not purely profit driven but partly philanthropic, which can be seen in the donation of Myatt's Fields Park and the Minet Library. The park in particular gives the estate an unusual sense of tranquillity. The estate was also (probably unusually) well managed and resourcefully planned which has left us with largely very attractive and still popular residential architecture. Many of the houses were built for and initially occupied by fairly well-to-do tenants. Thus the estate is not representative in every respect, but to find such an estate is likely to prove futile as the mutation of different ownership types and their different objectives alone are numerous, ranging from freehold societies, wealthy private investors, philanthropic companies providing housing for lower income groups, to uncountable small enterprising speculative builders of wide-ranging backgrounds and means. It would be an enormous endeavour to find typical case studies for all these different types.

While it is difficult to define what constitutes a typical estate, certain generalisations can be made. As a very fundamental distinction, speculative housing estates of the period were developed in one of three ways:<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> The basic distinction between these three methods of speculative development: leasehold, freehold and direct contracting can be found in various books on the topic. In this case, it is largely based on Howkins, *An Introduction to the Development of Private Building Estates and Town Planning*.

- 1.) By contracting builders directly to construct the houses
- 2.) By selling the land as freehold to builders
- 3.) Or by letting the land as leasehold to builders

Each of these systems of estate development had an impact on the resulting architecture and on the degree to which the estate owner controlled the quality of the housing. As an important context to the case study, it seems useful to summarise these different methods of development, even if they are fairly well known.

The first of these three methods - to contract builders directly to build all the houses on an estate - was uncommon in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century because of the high risk and initial investment involved. Exceptions can be found such as some of the houses built on the estates owned and developed by Archibald Cameron Corbett (see chapter four). But even with the financial resources of one of London's largest developers of speculative housing at the time, Corbett abandoned his experimentation with direct contracting of the building work and reverted to leasehold and freehold development.<sup>163</sup> Most speculative housing estates in late 19<sup>th</sup> century London were therefore either leasehold or freehold developments. Rather than financing the building of the houses themselves, it was expedient for the estate owner to spread the financial risk to a number of different builders or developers by letting individual building plots to them as leasehold or by selling plots to them as freehold. The pattern of dividing the land along roads into small adjacent plots (large enough for the construction of a house) was ideal for this system. And this required a much lower initial investment on the part of the estate owner. A small speculative builder could raise the funds for building a house on one of the plots. Larger builders, who were able to raise sufficient capital, could take on a number of plots and sometimes entire streets, or occasionally even a number of streets, such as Watt did in Lewisham (see chapter four). Large housebuilders who purchased, developed and built whole estates, however, were rare until the inter-war period, when it became easier for builders and also buyers of houses to obtain finance.<sup>164</sup>

Francis Howkins, an early 20<sup>th</sup> century estate surveyor and agent, compared the advantages and disadvantages for the estate owner of selling the freehold or of letting

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<sup>163</sup> Godfrey Smith, *Hither Green: The Forgotten Hamlet* (G. Smith, 1997).

<sup>164</sup> Whitehand, p. 432.

the land as leasehold in his book *An Introduction to the Development of Private Building Estates and Town Planning* (Table 8).<sup>165</sup> In his comparison, the finances required and the risks involved for the estate owner were important factors. To develop an estate by selling the freehold was the lowest risk option with the quickest return and it was widespread in late 19<sup>th</sup> century London. Much of the Foster Estate in Lewisham, for example, was sold to different speculative builders as freehold (see chapter four). The estate owner would usually finance the construction of the roads and then sell the freeholds of the individual house plots to builders. Maps (Figure 43 to 46) from auction catalogues in Walthamstow show an example of the sale of building plots in stages as freeholds, after the roads were constructed. Alternatively, land was sold without roads but in manageable plot sizes directly to speculative builders (for example Figure 42 & 41). The advantage of selling the freehold was the swift release of capital invested in the estate (which could then be reinvested). However, by selling the freehold, the estate owner relinquished most of his influence on the architecture, and the control over the quality of the housing passed to the builder.<sup>166</sup> The builder effectively became the owner of his own 'estate' (even if it was only the size of a few house plots) and thereby also had more influence on the architecture of the buildings themselves.

Table 8. Comparison of the two main methods of developing land (Francis Howkins, *An Introduction to the Development of Private Building Estates and Town Planning* [London: Estates Gazette, 1926], p. 204).

<i>By Selling Freehold.</i>	<i>By Letting the Land.</i>
1. The owner parts with all legal ownership in the land on completion of purchase.	1. The owner is not free from responsibility until the leases have been taken up by the builder.
2. The owner will probably not obtain such a good return on his outlay as under a lease.	2. The owner will probably obtain a larger return on his outlay than if he sold freehold, <i>i.e.</i> , after he has sold the ground rents created.
3. The owner obtains the almost immediate return of his outlay and profits (if any).	3. The owner may have to wait some considerable time before his ground rents are secured; after which they have to be sold in order to obtain the capitalised value.
4. The owner need not necessarily exercise any supervision over construction of the buildings erected on the land.	4. The owner must exercise supervision over the construction of the buildings as the value of his ground rent is partly determined by this.

<sup>165</sup> Howkins, *An Introduction to the Development of Private Building Estates and Town Planning*.

<sup>166</sup> The freehold conveyance often had conditions attached such as a minimum cost of the houses to be built on the land. But these mechanisms of control were not as detailed as those usually contained in leasehold building agreements. And they were more difficult to enforce, once the land was sold outright.



The third method, to develop an estate by letting land to different builders as leaseholds, was common in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but was in decline toward the end of the century and seems to have been hardly used after 1914.<sup>167</sup> Land was leased to speculative builders (typically for a period of 99 years) in the same way as it would have been leased to different farmers when it was in agricultural use. The estate owner would charge an annual ground rent which was paid by those who owned the leasehold at the time. After the lease fell in, e.g. after 99 years, the land returned to the freeholder, often heirs of the estate owner who agreed the lease. By letting land as leasehold, the estate owner usually had a longer term interest in the development, and therefore usually tried to retain a higher degree of control over the planning and design of the housing. This control could range from a detailed master plan to a more indirect influence consisting of the management and approval of the builders' own designs. The long term financial return from a leasehold development was potentially significantly higher than that from selling the freehold. The annual ground rent could provide a continuous source of income for the estate owners and their heirs.<sup>168</sup> Most of the Minet estate was developed by letting land as leaseholds to various builders. The Minet estate provides a particularly good research study as these various degrees of planning control and their effects are clearly evident in the different stages of the development. This will be discussed in more detail in the following case study.

The method of estate development employed at the Minet estate (letting leasehold plots to various builders) had a long tradition in London. In its basic characteristics, this system was inherited from Georgian estate planning and management.<sup>169</sup> It was refined and perfected on Georgian estates such as the Bedford estate in Bloomsbury, where it was developed into a sophisticated system of urban development and planning. The roles and relationships between estate owners, estate surveyors, builders and tenants were also already established. In *Town Planning in London: the Eighteenth and*

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<sup>167</sup> Edwards, p. 22.

<sup>168</sup> The Leasehold Reform Act 1967 prompted the end of the Minet estate private ownership of the estate, and it was sold to the Council. The Leasehold Reform Act fundamentally challenged century old ownership structures that were still based on those of feudal landed estates. The Act meant that property that had been in ownership by the estate as the freeholder for centuries could be acquired by the tenants who previously only owned the leasehold for a limited time.

<sup>169</sup> For a discussion of the Georgian leasehold development in London, see for example: Elizabeth McKellar, *The Birth of Modern London: The Development and Design of the City, 1660-1720* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), pp. 38–40.

*Nineteenth Centuries*, Donald J. Olsen discusses this tradition of estate planning in detail and his book was a reference for this chapter.<sup>170</sup> As reflected in the title, Olsen implies that urban planning in London existed even before there was a coordinated attempt by a London-wide municipal body, and also before the term ‘town planning’, was in general use in estate development.<sup>171</sup> Olsen suggests that town planning in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century was led by the estate rather than by a central municipal body, which is also corroborated in this case study.<sup>172</sup> However, it also adds additional detail to the mechanics of the planning process and the roles of parties involved such as that of the estate surveyor. That estate management and planning in London shared a common origin and were still closely linked even in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century is also reflected in the title of the above mentioned book *An Introduction to the Development of Private Building Estates and Town Planning*, published on the topic in 1923.<sup>173</sup> Howkins himself was not trained as a town planner, as the occupation was only gradually emerging, but his book was based on his experience of working as an estate surveyor and agent in Edwardian Golders Green during its initial development.<sup>174</sup> His book is therefore an invaluable record about speculative estate development at the time. Howkins’ aim was to provide a sort of handbook for anyone interested in being involved in the development of estates - the kind of advice and knowledge an estate surveyor would have provided at the time to the estate owner.

While owners or their agents themselves controlled the planning of the estate, their freedom was to some degree constrained by the building acts and the local by-laws. The building acts set out minimum requirements, for example, for fire safety, drainage, road widths, building heights, building lines and rights of light. Although their main purpose

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<sup>170</sup> Donald J. Olsen, *Town Planning in London: The Eighteenth & Nineteenth Centuries*, 2nd edn (London: Yale University Press, 1982).

<sup>171</sup> Bernard Nurse mentions, for example, that, on the Dulwich estate, the term ‘town-planning’ was used by the governors for the first time in 1909 in a letter, coinciding ‘with the debate on the Housing, Town-planning etc. Act of 1909’. Bernard Nurse, ‘Planning a London Suburban Estate: Dulwich 1882–1920’, *The London Journal*, 19 (1994), 54–70 (p. 66).

<sup>172</sup> In a short review shortly after publication, J. Mordaunt Crook criticised Olsen's book as a misnomer. Crook argued that town planning is ‘the control of urban environment in the public interest’ and could not be applied to the planning of one estate following the agenda of the private owner independent of its wider urban context. J. Mordaunt Crook, ‘[untitled]’, *The English Historical Review*, 81 (1966), 850.

<sup>173</sup> Howkins, *An Introduction to the Development of Private Building Estates and Town Planning*.

<sup>174</sup> It is interesting to note that Howkins worked in the same area of London where Hampstead Garden Suburb is located, Unwin's pioneering townplanning masterpiece. Hampstead Garden Suburb broke the planning conventions of the time to such a degree, that the bye-laws of the building acts had to be challenged in parliament in order to build it. In contrast, Howkins’ account of his experience on the other side of Golders Green reflects conventional speculative estate planning of the time.

was the safety of the housing, the building acts and their local by-laws also influenced and, to a degree, coordinated the appearance and layout of the housing. For example, the minimum street width of 40 feet set out in the acts became the norm. Another important influence was that buildings could only be as high as the street was wide, resulting in a maximum of three to three and a half storeys (Figure 49). Buildings could, of course, be higher, up to a maximum of 80 feet, if the street was wider. Other regulations, such as those on fire safety, also influenced the appearance of buildings, in particular the façade materials. These could not be combustible unless a special dispensation was granted. This regulation supported the use of brick as an economic, non-combustible material. Decorative features also had to be non-combustible, which made stone or concrete particularly suitable, whereas external timber decoration required a separate application within the area of the London Building Acts until the inter-war period. The regulations on fire safety were also responsible for the construction of parapet party walls between houses, the purpose of which were to prevent fire spread from one roof to the next. These also disappeared in the inter-war period. Building acts concerning access to light determined minimum distances between houses, and ensured sufficient daylight and minimum garden sizes. However, within the constraints of the building acts, estate planning was still largely in the hands of the owner.

While estate planning was constrained by the building acts to some degree, there was no London-wide municipal body of development control that would actively influence and coordinate it. A municipal planning department in today's sense did not exist before 1947. The mandatory applications to the district surveyor were therefore building applications, aimed at safeguarding minimum standards of the health and safety of the houses, but not planning applications in today's sense. To some degree, planning control was instead exercised by the estate owner or his agent. The district surveyor had little power to object or influence a road layout unless it contravened the building acts, e.g. if the roads were not wide enough or did not have a sufficient gradient for surface water drainage. Due to this lack of London-wide town planning powers, the roads of one estate often did not connect with those of the one next to it.<sup>175</sup> This lack of coordination was one of the main points of criticism of this system by the pioneers of town planning in England. And it was one of the reasons why many of its proponents

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<sup>175</sup> This is also the case to some degree on the Minet estate, but an even better example is the junction between the Foster and Corbett estate (see chapter four).

called for a London-wide town planning body that would be able to exert more influence on the layout of the individual estates and the coordination between them.<sup>176</sup>

As a context for the following case study, it is worth considering that in the 18th and 19th centuries, the absence of town planning schemes on an urban scale was compensated on a smaller scale by the estates themselves. It was only in the mid-20th century that planning between estates was more actively controlled at a municipal level. London-wide town planning control was only effectively put in place with the Town and Country Planning Act in 1947.<sup>177</sup> Before the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947, the municipal bodies, such as the local council, the Metropolitan Board of Works or the London County Council, checked compliance with restrictive by-laws to ensure health and safety of new development. However, the council had very little power to actively direct urban planning of an area unless it compulsorily purchased the land. At the turn of the century, whoever owned land also largely determined its planning, as long as it was compliant with the building acts and their by-laws. The role of the Minet family was therefore key in the development and planning of the estate. Today, the appearance of the buildings requires council approval, but in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the appearance only had to be approved by the estate owner or his agent.

### **3.2 Early History of the Minet Estate before 1870**

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the main part of the Minet Estate was located in the Parish of St Giles Camberwell with small portions to the north and to the south in the Parish of St Mary Lambeth. The boundary of Camberwell was adjusted in 1900, and since then, most of the estate is part of Lambeth with only a small part in the north in Camberwell which is now part of the London Borough of Southwark.<sup>178</sup> In the 17th century, the estate probably belonged to the Manor of Milkwell, which extended into Herne Hill to

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<sup>176</sup> See for example: Raymond Unwin, *Town Planning in Practice: An Introduction to the Art of Designing Cities and Suburbs* (London: T. Fisher, 1909), p. 2.

<sup>177</sup> As Ashworth suggested, 'it was one thing to have a Town Planning Act and rather a different one to have town planning'. Earlier town planning acts, the *Housing and Town Planning Act* of 1909 and 1919, the *Town Planning Act* of 1925 and the *Town and Country Planning Act* of 1932, did not transfer powers sufficiently to the municipality to be effective. William Ashworth, *Genesis of Modern British Town Planning* (Routledge & Kegan Paul PLC, 1954), p. 191.

<sup>178</sup> The estate is mentioned in Dyos, *Victorian Suburb: Study of the Growth of Camberwell*. But Dyos only touches on the estate very briefly, as most of it was outside the boundary of Camberwell that he used.

the south.<sup>179</sup> The ownership of the manor passed hands numerous times and it was split into smaller estates in the process.<sup>180</sup> One of these parts was sold to Sir Wyndham Knatchbull-Wyndham in 1747, the 6th Baronet of Mersham Hatch in Kent.<sup>181</sup> After Wyndham's death, it passed to his uncle Sir Edward Knatchbull in 1762, an Irish politician. Knatchbull Road, the longest road on the estate, was named after him. In 1770, Hughes Minet purchased the 109 acre plot of land now known as the Minet Estate from Edward Knatchbull for £4700, and it was owned by the Minet family until 1968. The owners of the estate in sequence are as follows:

- Hughes Minet (1731 – 1813)
- Isaac Minet (1767 – 1839)
- James Lewis Minet (1807 – 1885)
- William Minet (1851 – 1932)
- Susan Minet (1884 – 1960)

Most of the building of the estate took place under the ownership of James Lewis Minet and William Minet.

Although this is not central to the theme of this thesis, a brief summary of the ownership and also fascinating family history is helpful as a background to the discussion of the later 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries development. Hughes Minet's grandfather, Isaac Minet, was forced to flee under very difficult circumstances from Calais to Dover in 1686 after Louis XIV revoked the edict of Nantes in 1685 and a subsequent period of severe persecution of Huguenots in France. The names of Calais Street and Cormont Road on the Minet estate are reminders of the family descent. Isaac Minet's dramatic journey is captured in his diaries which one of the decedents, William Minet, edited and published in 1892 in *The Huguenot Family of Minet*.<sup>182</sup> After his escape, Isaac joined his brother Steven Minet's merchant business in Dover and took over after Steven's death in 1690. By the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, under the ownership of William Minet, Isaac's son, the business had also moved into banking and insurance. His nephew, Hughes

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<sup>179</sup> F. H. W. Sheppard, ed., *Survey of London: Volume 26: Lambeth: Southern Area* (London: LCC, 1956), p. 142.

<sup>180</sup> Sheppard, *Survey of London: Volume 26: Lambeth: Southern Area*, p. 142.

<sup>181</sup> The Baronetage was bestowed on his ancestor Sir Norton Knatchbull in 1641.

<sup>182</sup> William Minet and Issac Minet, *The Huguenot Family of Minet* (London: Spottiswoode, 1892).

Minet, and Steven Minet's grandson, Peter Fector, both worked in the business from a young age and each eventually received a share in the partnership drawn up in 1759.<sup>183</sup> Not long after William Minet's death in 1767, Hughes Minet retired first from the business in Dover in 1770 and then from the part of the business based in London five years later. Hughes' decision may have been influenced by grief from the death of his wife in 1768 at the age of only 31.<sup>184</sup> The relationship with Peter Fector, the other partner, was also problematic. After Hughes' retirement, Peter Fector became the sole owner of the business.<sup>185</sup>

Hughes' sale of his share in the banking and insurance business afforded him the funds in 1770 to purchase the land now known as the Minet estate in Camberwell and Lambeth.<sup>186</sup> Hughes Minet acquired the estate in Lambeth/Camberwell as an investment rather than to live on it, possibly in expectation of rising land values from London's expansion.<sup>187</sup> During his ownership, the income from the estate came chiefly from leasing the land on an annual ground rent for agricultural purposes. In the late 18th century, a group of farm buildings was located in the centre of the estate next to the site of the present-day junction of Knatchbull and Denmark Road (Figure 54). Until the 19th century, most of the surrounding area and also most of the estate itself remained agricultural, with the exception of a few buildings on Camberwell Green and Camberwell Road (Figure 53). In 1818, Camberwell New Road was built connecting Camberwell Green with Kennington Common, which had a decisive impact on the development of the estate. The first speculative housing on the estate was built along Camberwell New Road from 1819 onwards (Figure 55). By then, the owner was Hughes Minet's son, Isaac Minet. But building activity on the estate was still sluggish with most of the houses on Camberwell New Road dating from much later, 1838 to 1845 (Figure 66). Isaac's son, James Lewis Minet did not initiate any new building activity on the remainder of the land until the 1860s. Much of the surrounding area had

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<sup>183</sup> Hughes Minet was given one-sixth and Peter Fector one-third. When Hughes Minet married in 1761, his share was also increased to one-third.

<sup>184</sup> Minet and Minet, p. 162.

<sup>185</sup> In 1842, Peter's grandson John Fector sold the business to the National Provincial Bank of England.

<sup>186</sup> Hughes also obtained other landed property, the largest of which was a farm in Hayes, Middlesex in 1774. Half of the farm he acquired through inheritance. The other half, he purchased from his cousin Daniel Minet, Minet and Minet, p. 164.

<sup>187</sup> Howkins described this strategy of buying land before it is ripe for development as 'holding for a rise'. Howkins, *An Introduction to the Development of Private Building Estates and Town Planning*, p. 11.

been built up already between the 1840s and 1870s - before the Minet estate's main development phase began (Figure 57).

The construction of the railway line through the Minet estate in the early 1860s was an important factor in its development. Until then, the usual modes of transportation for the suburban residents of the area had been walking or the omnibus, leaving from Camberwell Green. The main local coach operators in Camberwell had changed in 1835 to omnibuses, and the service became increasingly more affordable.<sup>188</sup> Camberwell New Road station located in the north-east of the estate opened in 1862, which was the first railway station in Camberwell (Figure 60-61).<sup>189</sup> Camberwell New Road station was in use until 1916, when it was closed due to service cuts during the war and never reopened.<sup>190</sup> The former station building is today used as a car repair centre (Figure 62). The nearest station is now Loughborough Junction to the south of the estate, which was opened in 1864.

For the construction of the railway line, station and associated buildings, J.L. Minet sold part of the estate to the London Dover and Chatham Railway (LDCR). The construction of the railway through the estate disrupted the established leases and ultimately prompted the first substantial phase of speculative housing development on the estate. This began with the construction of some houses and shops across from the station in the 1860s. The next ones to follow were the houses along Lilford Road and Paulet Road in the 1870s; Lilford Road was crucial to connect the estate with the area east of the railway line (Figure 66). In 1872, J.L. Minet sold the separate, smaller southern portion of the estate (which can still be seen on the estate map of Figure 56). This separate part of the estate appears to have been built up by its new owners.

The railway, however, did not have the sudden, over-night impact one might perhaps imagine, as the building dates of the houses on the estate show (Figure 66). The building plots along Paulet Road, for example, were available for building from 1870, but it took until 1880 for the houses to be completed along the road - 18 years after the railway station had opened. The remainder of the estate was only completed in the

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<sup>188</sup> Dyos, *Victorian Suburb: Study of the Growth of Camberwell*, p. 69.

<sup>189</sup> A. Gray, *The London, Chatham & Dover Railway* (Rainham Kent: Meresborough, 1984), p. 65.

<sup>190</sup> A. Gray, p. 207.

1900s. The slow pace of development of the estate before 1870, lagging behind the surrounding area, cannot be explained by on-going agricultural leases which may have prevented J.L. Minet from letting the land for building houses. The largest plot on the estate, for example, held by Joseph Myatt, was let on a yearly lease in the 1830s, as were many of the others.<sup>191</sup> Myatt began market gardening on the estate in 1817 and the land was still leased under his name until 1869.<sup>192</sup> Other large lessees, such as Samuel Mayhew, a carpenter on Camberwell Green, also leased their plots over several decades and more.<sup>193</sup>

It is possible that it was partly a sense of loyalty towards long-standing existing tenants, such as the Myatt family, that prevented J.L. Minet from releasing the land for building. The overall impression that emerges is that J.L. Minet had a rather hands-off approach to the development of his estate in Camberwell and did not see it as a priority to expedite the building of houses. The management of the estate and collection of the ground rents was entrusted to the estate surveyors, Messrs Driver.<sup>194</sup> Whatever his reasons were, J.L. Minet did not take steps to initiate housing development before the construction of the railway in 1862. Apart from some houses across from the station, substantial residential construction on the estate only began after 1870 when Myatt's market garden was re-leased (Figure 66).<sup>195</sup> This relative lateness in the development of the estate also created opportunities and enabled the Minets to tailor the planning of the estate more carefully to the character of the then already built-up surrounding area.

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<sup>191</sup> 'Minet Estate Archive, Camberwell & Lambeth 1767-1970', IV/83/1/1/6, Lambeth Archives Department.

<sup>192</sup> Joseph Myatt initially leased his plot on a 10 year term, but is listed on the lease map by Messrs Driver from 1841 as a yearly tenant. He died in 1855 but, according to the rental records, the business continued under his name until 1869. Incidentally, Myatt is credited with having popularised Rhubarb as food rather than medicine. 'Minet Estate Archive, Camberwell & Lambeth 1767-1970', IV/83/2/1/1; Sheppard, *Survey of London: Volume 26: Lambeth: Southern Area*, pp. 141-145; 'Minet Estate Archive, Camberwell & Lambeth 1767-1970', IV/83/2/1/4; 'Transcript of Burials' (Nunhead Cemetery, Linden Grove, Camberwell, 1855), p. 71, DW/T/0524, London Metropolitan Archives.

<sup>193</sup> 'Minet Estate Archive, Camberwell & Lambeth 1767-1970', IV/83/2.

<sup>194</sup> See more about the history of the Drivers in the next section

<sup>195</sup> Contrary to popular belief, Myatt's Field, the park named after Myatt, is not on the land that was originally leased by Myatt. His market garden was instead located on the south east of the estate and was slightly reduced in size by the construction of the railway through the estate since the early 1860s (Figure 56).



### 3.3 House Building on the Minet Estate 1870 – 1885: The Parsons & Bamford Lease

On 24<sup>th</sup> August 1869, the remainder of Myatt's market garden was leased to the builders Parsons & Bamford for the purpose of building houses. This new lease agreement was a significant step in the residential development of the estate, which was accompanied by a number of drawings which laid out the new roads and determined the architecture of the new housing. One long new road, Paulet Road, was to be constructed in parallel to the already existing Knatchbull Road, with a number of shorter connecting roads in between. The housing was planned along the new roads as terraces, semi-detached and detached houses (Figure 64).

Parsons & Bamford leased the land for 99 years at a rate of £1008 annual ground rent, which was a substantial sum at the time.<sup>196</sup> In comparison, the ground rent of the previous lease paid by Myatt's estate after the construction of the railway was £160 annually. This rise in ground rent gives an idea how much more profitable it was for the estate owner to 'grow' houses rather than crops (in this case by 675%). The agreed £1008 annual ground rent was a large sum, and, as was common in leasehold development, not all had to be paid immediately. Often, in the first year, only a small, nominal sum, a so-called peppercorn rent, would be charged. In this case, however, the payment was phased, as lessees could not expect to build all houses in the first year and receive an immediate rental income. Thus, the annual ground rent for the lease was to be £250 in the first year, £400 in the second year, £550 in the third, £700 in the fourth, £850 in the fifth and finally in the 6th year, the full £1008 was due. The lessees, Parsons and Bamford, agreed to erect all the buildings, drainage, boundary walls, and roads. Their income would either come from letting the houses or from sub-leases of the building plots to other builders.<sup>197</sup>

The lease agreement between J.L. Minet and Parsons & Bamford was drafted by the estate surveyors, Messrs Driver, who performed a key role in the subsequent development of the estate. The firm had managed the estate on behalf of the Minet

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<sup>196</sup> Equivalent to £728,000 of per capita GDP in 2011, 'Measuring Worth' <<http://www.measuringworth.com/ukcompare/>> [accessed 7 March 2012].

<sup>197</sup> 'Minet Estate Archive, Camberwell & Lambeth 1767-1970', IV/83/1/5/1/24.

family since 1818, then trading as A. & E. Driver. Messrs Driver did not only prepare maps and surveys of the property, but were also responsible for drafting and administering lease agreements, and for collecting and keeping a record of the ground rents on the Minets' behalf. The Minet estate was only one of many properties that Messrs Driver managed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1869, they were, in fact, one of the most eminent surveyors, auctioneers and land agents in London, involved in many high profile property transactions at the time. The family business was then led by Robert Collier Driver (1816-1898).<sup>198</sup> According to *Stapleton's Real Estate Practice Management*, between 1860 and 1875, R.C. Driver 'was responsible for a million pounds of property sales per annum', second only to John Clutton.<sup>199</sup> The family firm Messrs Driver could already then look back to a long tradition; it 'was founded in 1725 by brothers, Samuel and Charles Driver - bakers, nurserymen and landowners who turned from tilling the land to measuring it'.<sup>200</sup> The business still operates today as part of Drivers Jonas Deloitte, one of the largest property consultants in Europe.<sup>201</sup>

In their role as auctioneers, Messrs Driver were typically concerned with the sale of estates, leaseholds or other properties. As land agents and surveyors, they managed the rental of estates and prepared detailed maps for the purpose, as they did in the case of the Minet Estate. The size of the business of Messrs Driver suggests that the Minet estate was not unique but was probably managed in a similar way as other estates on their books. Robert Collier Driver's work on another (more prominent) estate around the same time is discussed in the Kensington volume of the Survey of London. Driver worked for the Earl of Ilchester on the planning of the Holland Park Estate. In this case, Driver's responsibility was to prepare plans simply for the purpose of determining the value of the land. The Earl wrote a letter to Lady Holland to calm her about any potential building activity, 'the only plan my Agent [Robert Collier Driver] drew out simply so as to get to the value of the land was villas with gardens £200 and over, the smallest we should think of but hoping to get offers for larger tenancies'.<sup>202</sup> So, Driver's

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<sup>198</sup> Hugh Barty-King, *Scratch a Surveyor* (William Heinemann Ltd, 1975), pp. 259–260.

<sup>199</sup> Anthony Banfield, ed., *Stapleton's Real Estate Management Practice* (London: Estates Gazette, 2005), p. 6.

<sup>200</sup> 'Drivers Jonas Deloitte - About Us', 2012 <<http://www.djdeloitte.co.uk/uk.aspx?doc=846>> [accessed 6 March 2012].

<sup>201</sup> 'Drivers Jonas Deloitte - About Us'.

<sup>202</sup> F. H. W. Sheppard, *Survey of London: Volume 37: Northern Kensington* (London: LCC, 1973), p. 126.

role was not primarily architectural, but the boundary between this primary function of valuation and his architectural role was often fluid.<sup>203</sup>

The eminence of Messrs Driver makes information about the firm reasonably easy to find. The lessees, the builders Parsons and Bamford, however, are much more elusive. According to the lease agreement of 1869, it was a partnership of the builders James Henry Parsons of 59 Gray's Inn Road and Samuel Bamford of Brixton. Samuel Bamford, born in 1822, is registered as a builder living with his family in Flaxman Road in 1871, very near the new development.<sup>204</sup> In 1861, James Henry Parson, born in 1816, lived with his wife Jane and four children in Acton Lane (off Gray's Inn Road) as an 'architectural modelor'.<sup>205</sup> In 1871, the family lived in No.1 Knatchbull Road, in one of the houses he built, where he is registered as a builder. Only 11 of the over 300 proposed new houses of the lease were in fact constructed by either Parsons or Bamford (Figure 67).

Although Parsons and Bamford were the signatories on the lease, the person pulling the strings in the background was the solicitor George Jeremiah Mayhew. He was a partner in the firm of solicitors Mayhew, Salmon, and Whiting, of No. 20, Great George Street, Westminster and lived in Sevenoaks.<sup>206</sup> According to the estate rental records, Mayhew 'represented' Parsons & Bamford.<sup>207</sup> Apart from those 11 plots actually built by either Parsons or Bamford, Mayhew arranged and sub-leased the individual house plots to other builders. Mayhew also arranged the initial finance for building the roads and infrastructure from Lady Adela Hutt, who invested £3500 against the security of the

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<sup>203</sup> The author has been in contact with the archivist at Drivers Jonas Deloitte for further details of Messrs Driver other housing design work at the time, but he could not find any further related sources.

<sup>204</sup> '1871 Census Return of England and Wales', p. Class: RG10; Piece: 679; Folio: 145; Page: 32; GSU roll: 823331., The National Archives, Kew.

<sup>205</sup> The title looks to be spelled 'modelor' rather than 'modeler'. The author is not sure what this meant. It might refer to someone who made architectural models or maybe casts of architectural decorations, but could also possibly refer to a draughtsman; Elisabeth McKellar explains that, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a model could mean an architectural elevation or drawing. '1861 Census Return of England and Wales', Class: RG 9; Piece: 108; Folio: 10; Page: 24; GSU roll: 542575., The National Archives, Kew; McKellar.

<sup>206</sup> It is possible that G.J. Mayhew had a previous relationship to the estate. A certain Sam Mayhew, was a carpenter on Camberwell Green who owned the lease of the triangular shaped plot between Camberwell Green and Camberwell New Road on an annual rent of £ 160 per year. He had a son of the same age by the name George Mayhew. But this might be coincidence.

<sup>207</sup> 'Minet Estate Archive, Camberwell & Lambeth 1767-1970', IV/83/2/1/10.

signed lease agreement as mortgage.<sup>208</sup> All these above mentioned key figures involved in the lease agreement played an important role for the following development of the estate, but their relationships were complex and can be quite confusing. To clarify their roles, the organisational flow chart of Figure 122 should help. As a brief summary, their main roles could be described as follows: James Lewis Minet was the freeholder; James Henry Parsons and Samuel Bamford were the lessees; Messrs Driver was the estate surveyors who drafted the lease; George Jeremiah Mayhew was the solicitor who arranged the finance, represented the lessees and sub-leased to other builders; and finally Lady Adela Hutt provided the finance to start the development and to build the infrastructure.

For the topic of this thesis, the Parsons & Bamford lease agreement is a useful document in many regards. At first glance, it simply appears to set out the conditions of sale. But a careful read of the ten handwritten pages of legal jargon reveals that there is more behind it. Besides its legal and financial implications, the leasehold agreement also entailed a meticulous planning of the development of the estate – what we might now call an architectural master plan. It is therefore worth restating it without legal jargon to clarify its architectural intent. When the lease was drafted in 1869, most of the new estate was expected to be completed within six years in line with the gradually increasing ground rents. Parsons & Bamford agreed to the following programme:<sup>209</sup>

Time (in years)	No. of houses/buildings to be completed			
	Detached	Semi-detached	Terraced	Pubs
2	3	15	25	
3	4	20	50	1
4	7	35	80	
5	9	55	120	2
6	10	75	150	

The remainder (about another 65 houses) was to be completed after nine years. However, the pace at which sub-leases were taken up by other builders was not in line

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<sup>208</sup> She was the wife of Sir George Hutt, a Mayor General and later Secretary to the Royal Commissioners of the Royal Hospital Chelsea. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, women appear to have played an important role as investors in speculative housing.

<sup>209</sup> 'Minet Estate Archive, Camberwell & Lambeth 1767-1970', IV/83/1/5/1/24.

with the expectations of the lease agreement. This six-year plan with an annual ground rent increasing to £1008 was never put in place. Rather than the expected six years, it took several decades for the whole of the Parsons & Bamford plot to be built up. According to the rental records, Mayhew paid J.L. Minet only rent that he actually received from the sub-leases, even if it was short of the £1008 target. In 1892, Mayhew, unable to pay his arrears, had filed for bankruptcy and - in the words of Driver's rental records - 'absconded'.<sup>210</sup> The annual ground rent payments were not nearly in line with the agreed six-year plan of the original lease. 22 years after the original lease agreement of 1869, Mayhew's annual ground rents amounted to the considerable sum of £928, but they were still £80 short of the originally agreed sum of £1008 which was to be paid from 1875 onwards. After Mayhew relinquished the lease, William Minet, J.L. Minet's son, had to abandon 'all arrears of rent'.<sup>211</sup> Still, the Minet family did not make a loss. William Minet now received an annual ground rent of £928 in 1892, increased from £160 in 1869, without having used any family funds to build the houses or indeed the additional roads. The cost for the construction of the houses and infrastructure was born by the lessees.

It is difficult to ascertain if Mayhew miscalculated his venture into speculative housing or if, in fact, there were other reasons that led to his bankruptcy. According to the terms of the lease, Mayhew could divide and apportion the full annual ground rent of £1008 to the individual building plots as approved by the estate surveyors.<sup>212</sup> The total number of building plots was around 315, which means the ground rent Mayhew paid to Minet was on average about £3 4s per plot. Mayhew could then issue sub-leases to other builders for the individual plots at a higher ground rent, often twice as high. For 27 Paulet Road (the rear of which was facing the railway depot), for example, Mayhew paid £1 to J.L.Minet in annual ground rent, but he sub-leased the same plot to Richmond Nurse for £2.<sup>213</sup> Of course, in return, Mayhew had the additional costs and responsibilities of building the roads and services, and of managing the development. However, this may well have been a profitable enterprise. Whether the Parsons & Bamford lease agreement was indeed viable or not for Mayhew is now difficult to verify. All we know for certain

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<sup>210</sup> 'Notices of Intended Dividends', *The London Gazette* (London, 22 October 1894), 5846 (p. 557); 'Minet Estate Archive, Camberwell & Lambeth 1767-1970', IV/83/2/1/10, 50.

<sup>211</sup> 'Minet Estate Archive, Camberwell & Lambeth 1767-1970', IV/83/2/1/10, 51.

<sup>212</sup> The condition in the Parsons & Bamford lease was that for sub-leases, the ground rent per lease shall not exceed 1/6 of rack rental (not less than £2).

<sup>213</sup> 'Minet Estate Archive, Camberwell & Lambeth 1767-1970', IV/83/1/3/28.

is that he went bankrupt, losing the leases in 1892, which then reverted back to the freeholder William Minet. As a result of Mayhew's bankruptcy, the person with the greatest financial loss appears to have been Lady Adela Hutt, who relinquished 'all her interest in the plots of land' on the Minet estate and would have had to turn to Mayhew's bankruptcy estate to try to recover some of her investment.<sup>214</sup>

The conditions of the leasehold were originally complemented by about 20 drawings attached to the agreement. Despite the Minet family's disciplined archiving, these drawings have unfortunately been lost. However, we know what they depicted because it is clearly described in clause 9 of the lease agreement.<sup>215</sup> Drawing no. 1 was a plan of the sewers to be built by the lessee (except for the sewers along Knatchbull and Denmark Road which were already constructed). Drawing no. 2 was the key overview plan which showed the position of the roads and houses and would have looked somewhat similar to Messrs Driver's lease plan (Figure 64). According to Clause 8 of the lease agreement, the lessee agreed to complete the roads with footpaths (not less than 40 feet wide) within one year and agreed to maintain them unless they were taken over by the local authority. The overview drawing no. 2 also established the building lines of the front of the houses which the lessee agreed to adhere to. Other crucial architectural drawings, numbered 3 to 15, were a series of ground floor plans and street elevations detailing the design of the proposed houses. By signing the lease, Parsons & Bamford (and any sub-lessees) agreed to follow these architectural drawings, 'unless otherwise approved by the estate surveyor', who was Messrs Driver at the time.<sup>216</sup> The resulting architecture reflects the fairly rigorous nature of this master plan. In particular the houses built in the 1870s and early 1880s follow this very orderly and uniform appearance set out in the drawings that were part of the Parsons & Bamford lease (Figure 69-74).

To some extent, one could argue that the Drivers' drawings were prepared, as in the case of the Holland Park estate, 'simply so as to get to the value of the land', which was needed as a basis to agree the ground rent and for Mayhew to secure the mortgage from

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<sup>214</sup> 'Minet Estate Archive, Camberwell & Lambeth 1767-1970', IV/83/1/5/1/24.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid.

<sup>216</sup> 'Minet Estate Archive, Camberwell & Lambeth 1767-1970', IV/83/1/5/1/24, Clause 9.

Lady Adela Hutt.<sup>217</sup> But the Drivers' scheme also determined the architecture of the estate beyond a mere valuation, as outlined in Clause 6:

The messuages or dwellinghouses shops and public houses herein before agreed to be erected shall be built according to the several ground plans and elevations of each different class of erection hereinto annexed and marked from No. 3 to No. 15 inclusive unless the Lessor or the Surveyor shall approve of or give written consent to any alterations that may be submitted from time to time by the Lessees and no Public house Shop or Stabling other than those shown on the said plan No. 2 shall be erected on the Land hereby agreed to be demised unless by consent in writing of the Lessor or the Surveyor.<sup>218</sup>

The architectural consistency of the early part of the estate is in itself a testimony that the design of the houses originated from one hand and was determined by an architectural master plan, such as the one outlined in the lease agreement with its attached drawings. The drawings attached to the Parsons & Bamford lease agreement were adhered to for the street layout and also for the design of most of the houses at least until about 1890. By then, it probably became clear that Mayhew could no longer fulfil his obligations of the lease.<sup>219</sup> Unless the proposed type or style of the houses was not in accordance with market demand, there was little incentive for Mayhew or the sub-lessees to deviate from the lease agreement as drafted by Messrs Driver. Any divergence from it would have generated additional costs for the lessees. Changes had to be approved first by the estate surveyor, in this case Robert Collier Driver. And apart from disrupting the construction programme, they would have also resulted in higher surveyor and solicitor fees. Minor internal changes were of course possible and these were indeed made, as can be seen in the differences between the two ground floor plans for Paulet Road; the façade is identical, but the two slightly different ground floor plans show that modifications were made from the standard plan template (Figures 77-78).

In the 1870s, an estate office was established first in Harold Street, then in Knatchbull Road. The estate agent was J. Blenkin, whose role would have become necessary when

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<sup>217</sup> Sheppard, *Survey of London: Volume 37: Northern Kensington*, p. 126.

<sup>218</sup> 'Minet Estate Archive, Camberwell & Lambeth 1767-1970', IV/83/1/5/1/24, Clause 6.

<sup>219</sup> Mayhew's bankruptcy case began in 1890 but was not decided until 1892 'Notices of Intended Dividends', 5846.

the development on the Parsons & Bamford lease took off. Blenkin presumably acted on behalf of the freeholder checking that the houses were built as agreed in the lease (effectively as the estate surveyor based on site). We know that Blenkin was the one who submitted (and most likely prepared) the building applications for the houses to the local district surveyor. The drawings for the applications were more or less based on the agreed plans and elevations. It is not clear who employed Blenkin; it may have been Mayhew who needed someone on site to oversee the development, or he may have been employed directly by J.L. Minet. Whoever employed him, it seems likely that Blenkin's earnings came from the fees outlined in the Parsons & Bamford agreement for dealing with the leases of the individual plots.<sup>220</sup>

The clauses of the lease agreement with Parsons & Bamford complemented and further detailed the information of the plans and elevations by specifying, for example, the materials of the houses. According to Clause 7, only high quality bricks and stonework were to be used on the street facades. Lower quality bricks could be used on the side and rear walls. As well as façade materials, the treatment of plot boundaries was also outlined in the lease agreement. Between houses and street, fences were to be erected consisting 'of iron railings on a stone curve or on a wall along the whole of the present and intended new roads'.<sup>221</sup> The lease agreement also specified the erection of 'divisional brick walls between the various lots as shown on the said plan No. 2 at least 6 feet for A and B type houses, and 5 feet for the others.'<sup>222</sup>

The Clause No. 5 was crucial in the Parsons & Bamford lease as it set out the cost of the proposed houses. In this clause, different house types were allocated according to their cost across the plots (A-F) which also decisively influenced the social structure of the proposed housing (at least in the first decades after construction) and any other permitted uses on the land:

The cost of the various messuages or dwellinghouses public houses shops and stabling hereinbefore agreed to be erected shall be as follows: - Detached houses

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<sup>220</sup> According to the lease agreement, the surveyor was to charge £4.4s shillings for 'making plans survey certificates and drawings plans and lease and counterpart including certificate of the houses and buildings being completed'. If more than two plots were included in the lease, however, the fee was reduced to £1.1s., 'Minet Estate Archive, Camberwell & Lambeth 1767-1970', IV/83/1/5/1/24, Clause 17.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid., Clause 12.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.



shown on plots coloured red and marked A on the said plan No. 2 to cost not less than £1200 each, and semi-detached houses on the same plot to cost not less than £1000 each. Semi-detached houses shown on the plots coloured green and marked B on the said plan No. 2 to cost not less than £800 each. Terraced houses shown on plots coloured purple and yellow and marked C and D on the said plan No. 2 to cost not less than £600. Houses shown on plots coloured blue and marked E on the said plan No. 2 to cost not less than £300 each. Houses or Shops shown on plots coloured brown and marked F on the said plan No. 2 to cost not less than £500 each, and the stabling shown on the same plots to be erected according to plans and specifications to be approved by the Surveyor. The said two public houses shown on plots edged orange and marked G and H on the said plan No. 2 to cost not less than £1500 each.<sup>223</sup>

An ordnance survey map of 1916 with a reconstruction of the colour coding as described in the above clause illustrates Driver's townplanning scheme for this part of the estate (Figure 68).<sup>224</sup> The allocation of the house types was largely determined by its relationship to the railway and the station. The plots right next to the railway on Paulet Road were the least attractive for potential tenants; Driver allocated the smallest and cheapest houses (Type E) to these plots (Figure 69). The bigger terraces (Type D) were those located slightly further away from the railway but they were still too close to demand high rents (Figure 70). The biggest terraces with an additional lower ground floor (Type C) were again positioned slightly further away from the noisy and smoky railway (Figure 71). The semi-detached houses (Type B) are located on the more attractive side roads, suitable for a higher class of dwellings (Figure 72). The highest class of dwellings, the detached houses (Type A), were located furthest away from the railway, along Knatchbull Road, facing land which would have been still unbuilt at the time and later became Myatt's Fields Park (Figure 73). Driver's map of the leases issued until about 1890 shows that the lower classes of houses were built first (Figure 64); many of the house plots coded as A, however, were still not leased to builders in 1890. This explains why the south side of Upstall Street, built in about 1891, was built up with lower class terraces rather than with semi-detached houses as probably

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<sup>223</sup> Ibid., Clause 5.

<sup>224</sup> The reconstruction is largely based on simply matching the types of houses (e.g. terraced, semi-detached etc.) as set out in clause 5 to the types of houses actually built.

originally planned. These terraced houses in Upstall Street are also built in a more decorative later style, clearly deviating from the more restrained facades of Driver's scheme of 1869, the architecture of which would have looked out of date by then. The 1891 census confirms that in Carew Street (Type E), for example, those listed as household heads generally held manual occupations, such as plumber, builder, cabinetmaker, milkman, laundry man or painter, whereas the houses along Paulet Road (Type C&D) were rented by a higher number of those with clerical occupations.<sup>225</sup> The houses with shops (Type F) were near Camberwell New Road Station (Figure 74). Unsurprisingly, with the station closed, many of the shops have been converted for residential use.

The distribution of the houses by cost reflected economic demands and also social hierarchies of the time. The cheaper houses were allocated on less desirable, and the most expensive houses on the most desirable plots (Figure 68). A similar layering of the cost of houses around the railway can be found in other areas in London. The housing between Hither Green Station and Manor House Gardens, for example, shows a similar gradual transition from small working class terraced housing near the railway to upper middle class semi-detached and detached houses nearer the park. What is particularly interesting about Driver's colour coded map is that there was in fact a master plan setting out the type and cost of the houses (and with it the social structure) before they were built. It did not just happen, but a conscious and well-coordinated effort of planning it in this way took place. The type and size of houses to be built was not, as often assumed, simply left to the builders. In the 1860s and 70s, the use of specific house types of different sizes was also not anymore determined by the building acts. It could, however, have been at least influenced by them. The house classes, which were established for taxation purposes in the 1774 Building Act, were only abolished with the 1844 Metropolitan Building Act.<sup>226</sup>

The distribution of the houses was subject to the market forces of Victorian London, but it did not passively mirror them. It would have been thinkable, for example, to build the same terraced housing throughout the whole site, as other estates did nearby. But this would have probably resulted in an area with tenants on overall lower incomes

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<sup>225</sup> '1891 Census Return of England and Wales', RG 12/462 Folio 153–155, The National Archives, Kew.

<sup>226</sup> Neil Jackson, p. 98.

throughout, which in turn would have lowered the achievable ground rents for the freeholder. Instead, Drivers' scheme actively influenced the future occupation of the site through resourceful planning as outlined in the Parsons & Bamford lease agreement. This carefully drafted agreement was a conscious effort to establish a mixture of tenants to ensure the future viability of the estate. This planned, gradual layering of the housing from cheaper to more expensive away from the railway also sheds new light on possible reasons for the building of Myatt's Fields Park on the estate later on. The park would provide an important incentive for builders to take up the plots for the more expensive detached and semi-detached houses along Knatchbull Road. Before the park was laid out, the detached and semi-detached houses on Knatchbull Road and adjacent side roads were clearly not as popular with builders as the less expensive terraced housing. Without the park, the character of the whole of the Minet estate may have easily been determined by the lower class of houses of the first phase near the railway on Paulet Road and Lilford Road. However, Booth's map of the area from 1899 shows that the creation of the park had the desired effect and successfully raised the profile of the estate; the housing near the park was clearly inhabited by wealthier tenants than those living in the areas to the east and west of the estate (Figure 87).

The same layering of house types away from the railway can also be seen to the north-east of the estate, along Flodden Road, Baldwin Crescent, County Grove, the north end of Knatchbull Road and McDowall Road. The houses near the railway along Mc Dowall Road and the north end of Knatchbull Road are smaller terraces. Those further away from the railway, along Baldwin Crescent and Flodden Road, are larger semi-detached and detached houses. For this part of the estate, the builders Henry Fulcher and George Harris took on a lease for £205 ground rent annually.<sup>227</sup> The lease appears in the rental records in 1882, and was probably set up in 1877, comprising the land around Baldwin Crescent.<sup>228</sup> The conditions and details of this lease are lost, but were presumably similar to those of Parsons & Bamford lease, yet at a much smaller scale. Again, Fulcher and Harris only built a few of the houses themselves (7 in total) and sub-leased the remaining plots to other builders (Figure 67).

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<sup>227</sup> Henry Fulcher lived nearby in Cambria Road, '1891 Census Return of England and Wales'.

<sup>228</sup> 1877 is the year when the 99-year lease period for the plots around Baldwin Crescent begins (see Figure 65).

### 3.4 House Building on the Minet Estate 1885 – 1910

After 1885, with the succession from James Lewis Minet to William Minet, the planning of the estate changed fundamentally, even if this difference was not instantly apparent in the architecture. Initially, William Minet inherited lease agreements that had already been set up under James Lewis Minet's ownership and the signature of the earlier estate planning can therefore still be seen in some of the buildings constructed after 1885. However, the architecture of those parts of the estate that were yet undeveloped or without building leases would be markedly different. If the development before 1885 was crucially influenced by the building of Camberwell New Road and the newly constructed railway and station, for the remaining undeveloped parts, the relationship to the surrounding areas to the north-west and south-west was particularly important. The layout of the new part of the estate was probably not coincidental. The development after 1885 clearly linked the estate to the well-to-do area with large semi-detached housing immediately to the south-west (Figure 88), while separating it from the less desirable area to the north-west with its already built-up dense terraced housing. The new roads, Brief Street, Calais Street and Cormont Road were approved by the London County Council (L.C.C.) on 10 March 1891 (Figure 86). Cormont Road and Brief Street are clearly orientated towards the southwest, while avoiding as much as possible road connections to the lower-income area to the northwest. The only connection to the northwest, the extension of Calais Street towards Lothian Road, was approved by the L.C.C. later in 1893, as if it was an unavoidable compromise.

Probably even more important than the road layout was the creation of Myatt's Fields Park in linking the estate also in character to the more generously spaced housing of the southwest. William Minet donated the park to the newly formed L.C.C. in 1889, soon after he inherited the estate.<sup>229</sup> The park was designed by England's first professional woman landscape gardener Fanny Rollo Wilkinson.<sup>230</sup> The donation of the park made a crucial contribution to create an enduringly attractive surrounding for the housing of the estate and its vicinity, and was one of several generous philanthropic acts by William Minet. However, whether intentional or not, the park was also an important asset to the future viability of the estate, as it raised the profile of the adjacent housing and helped to

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<sup>229</sup> 'Obituary: Mr. William Minet', *The Times*, 24 January 1933, p. 12.

<sup>230</sup> Rebecca Preston, 'Extended History', *Myatt's Fields Park*  
<<http://www.myattsfildspark.info/extended-history.html>> [accessed 17 April 2012].

attract well-to-do tenants. As mentioned above, the effect of this can be seen in the distribution of wealthier tenants around the park than in much of the houses further away (Figure 87). Although the houses facing the park were occupied and probably intended for upper-middle class tenants, those planned after 1885 were generally terraces rather than semi-detached or detached houses. At the turn of the century, William Minet also directly commissioned the building of flats, the largest of which, Calais Gate, also faces the park. It is possible that William Minet increased the density of the housing also because the estate ran out of free building plots, but past experience of the development before 1885 had also proven that smaller terraced housing was more quickly taken up by lessees than the larger more expensive detached and semi-detached houses. Despite the higher density of the narrow terraced house building plots and the blocks of flats along Calais and Cormont Road, the park and the surrounding trees made the adjacent housing appear spacious and almost village-like.

William and James Lewis Minet's approach to the management of the estate were decidedly different. All the evidence indicates that William was much more closely involved and played a more active role in the next phases of estate development than James Lewis had before 1885. The Parsons & Bamford lease agreement was drafted in a way that James Lewis Minet neither had to visit the estate frequently, e.g. to discuss the work, nor was he obliged to invest his own funds. The management of the estate and its development was dealt with by his agent, Messrs Driver. William, on the other hand, took a much more active interest in the day-to-day work of the estate development. Evidently, he did not manage the estate on his own but employed Fred Curtis as his agent. However, William Minet visited the estate weekly, approved many of the drawings personally, as his signature shows, and Curtis did not take any significant decision without first consulting him.<sup>231</sup> A brief summary of the typical roles in the development of the estate after 1885 can be seen in the organisational chart of Figure 123.

Fred Curtis' role on the estate is slightly confusing and was probably not always clearly defined but developed over time. Curtis was not trained as a surveyor or estate agent but

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<sup>231</sup> 'Minet Estate Archive, Camberwell & Lambeth 1767-1970', Fred Curtis letter book (uncatalogued), e.g. letter 78; Newspaper cutout: 'The Passing of William Minet', *The Free Press*, 27 January 1933, IV/83/1/5.

as a bricklayer. He was born in 1861 in Gloucestershire, moved to the estate in his 20s and lived there for about 20 years.<sup>232</sup> It might be because of his lack of formal training that he used the term ‘agent’ (Figure 90) or also ‘clerk to William Minet’ but never the term ‘estate surveyor’ - unlike his successor, A.J. Carpenter, who described himself both as agent and at least since the 1930s as chartered surveyor.<sup>233</sup> The impeccable English and professional competency reflected in Curtis’ letters, however, are evidence that he was educated and capable to perform his role, despite his apparent lack of formal surveying qualifications. The letters also show that by 1901, he was responsible for rent collection, the management of building agreements and maintenance work, acting as estate agent on William Minet’s behalf. However, in both the 1891 and 1901 census, Curtis describes himself as ‘Builders’ Manager’.<sup>234</sup> His role also appears to have been to manage the Cooperative Builders, as he often signed the drawings on their behalf (e.g. Figure 99).<sup>235</sup> As his signature was on the drawings for Calais Gate, for example, it would seem that he also managed the construction of blocks of flats on the estate. A number of drawings for houses and blocks of flats built by the Cooperative Builders on the estate were signed by Curtis, which presumably means that he was the author, but this cannot be verified with absolute certainty. By 1911, Curtis had moved out into the country to Godstone, Surrey, where he retired from the building trade and lived with his wife as a poultry farmer.<sup>236</sup> A.J. Carpenter succeeded him and worked on the estate until the 1950s (Figure 120 & 121).

During James Minet’s ownership, the housing was well planned and carefully laid out but in some instances also fairly repetitive, such as the terraces along Paulet Road (Figure 79). As outlined above, the reason for this standardised appearance was that elevations and floor plans for each house type were imposed by the freeholder on the various lessees. Under William Minet, however, the system changed: rather than the freeholder imposing the design of the houses, it was proposed by the lessees and then approved by the freeholder. Neither of these two systems was unique to the Minet estate. Most of the leasehold housing at the time would have been developed in either

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<sup>232</sup> ‘1891 Census Return of England and Wales’.

<sup>233</sup> ‘Minet Estate Archive, Camberwell & Lambeth 1767-1970’, IV/83/1/5/1/3.

<sup>234</sup> ‘1891 Census Return of England and Wales’; ‘1901 Census Return of England and Wales’, The National Archives, Kew.

<sup>235</sup> The Cooperative Builders were set up by William Minet for work on the estate and will be discussed further later in this chapter.

<sup>236</sup> ‘1911 Census Return of England and Wales’, The National Archives, Kew.

one of these two ways. The design was either imposed on the lessee by the freeholder or it was proposed by the lessee and then approved by the freeholder. The difference between these two systems might seem like a mere formality, but it was a formality with clearly visible architectural consequences. The duality of these two systems resulted in an entirely different type of estate architecture, which explains why the parts of the estate planned and built before 1885 are more uniform in appearance, and why those parts built afterwards appear much more diverse.<sup>237</sup> Crucial to the appearance of the houses, after 1885, the designs were not prepared by one surveyor, but instead by the numerous lessees or whoever they appointed. A letter dated 5<sup>th</sup> April 1904 by Fred Curtis to Peter Arundell, one of the most active builders during William's ownership, reflects this new system for the later phases of the estate:

Mr. Minet has approved your plans of the houses you are proposing to erect in Calais St. + if you will let me have duplicates of them + of the specifications for their construction when you return the enclosed building Agreement duly signed (...) the matter can be settled before I leave town on Saturday next. Yours truly,  
F. Curtis.<sup>238</sup>

Before 1885, Messrs Driver had provided the builders with designs for the houses, but under this system, the builders had to produce their own designs. This also meant that each builder would create different houses. The result of these two systems is evident in the architecture of the estate; in Paulet Road, for example, all the houses have the same façade, while in Calais Street almost each house looks different. This new system of development under William Minet therefore also resulted in an aesthetic shift.

This new system is explained in a letter by Fred Curtis of 5<sup>th</sup> of September 1901 to W.J. White, a potential lessee for 14 Calais Street:

In reply to yours of the 4th inst. the ground rent for the first six months of the Lease would be a pepper corn only. I have not yet submitted this matter to Mr Minet as he is not in London, so that while I have no doubt that he will agree to assist you in the building of the house proposed, this or any other letter of mine

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<sup>237</sup> This is by no means an assessment of the quality of the earlier versus the later housing on the estate.

<sup>238</sup> 'Minet Estate Archive, Camberwell & Lambeth 1767-1970', Fred Curtis letter book (uncatalogued).

must not be taken to bind him in any way until I have an opportunity of consulting him. The usual way of proceeding is this: you would have plans & specifications of the house prepared & obtain an estimate of the cost from the builder, entering into a Building Agreement with Mr Minet. You would pay down to him the difference between the amount you propose to borrow and the cost of the house. He enters into a contract with the Builder & pays him & when the house is completed grants you a lease which you mortgage to him to secure the amount he has advanced, the first instalment becoming due the next quarter day (...).<sup>239</sup>

The letter also indicates that individual lessees could build their own custom made houses, which means that they were built by an owner/occupier rather than speculatively for an anticipated demand. Indeed, this appears to have been the case with many of the houses facing the park on Calais Street and Cormont Road. Owner/occupiers, even as leaseholders, who built their own houses were unusual at the time, unless they were speculative builders themselves.<sup>240</sup> A comparison with the 1901 census confirms that many of the initial lessees of the houses along Calais Street and Cormont Road also occupied the houses (and these lessees were not themselves the builders of the houses).<sup>241</sup> While many of the houses directly facing the park on Calais and Cormont Road were built by owner/occupiers, most of the houses even after 1885 were still constructed by speculative builders who generally built a number of adjacent houses (Figure 67). The above letter by Curtis also demonstrates that William Minet assisted leaseholders with finance. The role of the estate owner in this case was crucial in facilitating building work. William would advance the mortgage amount to the lessee so he or she had the funds for the construction of the house. Once the house was built, the lessee could take out a mortgage against it and pay William Minet back. It was an intelligent system which allowed William to keep his investments and risk low, but at the same time encouraged potential tenants to take on the leasehold and enabled them to build their own houses.

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<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

<sup>240</sup> Norfolk & Prior (see chapter four), for example, only worked on one private house for an owner/occupier.

<sup>241</sup> '1901 Census Return of England and Wales', RG 13/420 Folio 10–26.



The question remains whether builders or owners of houses built after 1885 prepared their own designs or appointed architects or surveyors. Not all of the designs submitted for William Minet's approval seem to have survived, but for the 17 designs that are still available in the archive, authorship is split as follows by occupations.<sup>242</sup>

- Unsigned/signed by lessee 7
- Prepared by Builder 4
- Prepared by Architect & Surveyor 6

The drawings submitted by the builders A.B. Gee (e.g. Figure 91 & 97) and Andrew G. McDowall were all unsigned or signed only by the lessee, which does not mean they designed them, but probably just approved them. Those drawings that were prepared by builders themselves were all by T.H. Arundell for P. Arundell & Sons (e.g. Figure 106), except for one probably prepared by Fred Curtis for the Cooperative Builders, of which he was also the manager, as mentioned above (Figure 99). Of those designs by an Architect & Surveyor, Ernest Avern prepared five, all for P. Arundell (e.g. Figure 102), and one was prepared by the local Architect, Surveyor & Builder, Michael Tieleman (Figure 94).<sup>243</sup> The data sample is, of course, too small to draw any reliable generalisations, but reflects the occupations involved in the design of the housing surveyed in chapter two.

### 3.5 The Estate Builders and Developers after 1885

Among the speculative house builders on the estate after 1885, the two that stand out as the most prolific are Andrew McDowall and Peter Arundell & Sons (Figure 67). The latter of these, Peter Arundell & Sons constructed more than 50 houses on the estate over a period of about 20 years, beginning in the late 1880s as a sub-lessee to Mayhew in Upstall Street. In the early 1900s, the business was based in 49 New Cross Road. Despite being one of the most productive builders on the estate at the time, Peter Arundell & Sons were at least initially a small sized family firm. Peter was born in Cheltenham in 1850, where his father worked as a plasterer. The family moved to

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<sup>242</sup> 'Minet Estate Archive, Camberwell & Lambeth 1767-1970', IV/83/1/5.

<sup>243</sup> The spelling of his surname, Tieleman, is not quite clear as his handwriting is very difficult to decipher. But we know that he was based in 18 Acre Lane, Brixton, '1891 Census Return of England and Wales', RG 12/407 Folio 123.

Bermondsey, presumably for work reasons, where his father Thomas Arundell established his own small firm as house decorator, employing two men in 1871.<sup>244</sup> His son Peter, then 25, also worked as house decorator, presumably in the family business. When he set up on his own, Peter Arundell continued the family tradition but moved from house decorating into house building, initially at a similarly small scale of business as his father, employing two men and one boy in 1881, then based in Deptford.<sup>245</sup> By 1891, Peter Arundell had moved to Camberwell, first to Loger Street, a road with small working class terraced housing, and then, by 1901, to nearby 49 New Cross Road.<sup>246</sup> Peter's eldest son, Thomas Henry Arundell, born in 1880, also started in the family business as his father before him. Thomas Henry began as carpenter and joiner. For joinery in particular, some basic draughting skills were useful and probably common. Thomas Henry used his draughting skills to also prepare elevations and floor plans for some of the houses that Peter Arundell & Sons built on the Minet estate. By 1911, Thomas Henry Arundell had moved with his wife into 32 Calais Street into one of the houses built by the family business.<sup>247</sup> Peter Arundell & Sons were also active as builders outside the Minet estate and in 1912 created a cinema in Woolwich.<sup>248</sup> They had bought premises in 93-94 Woolwich New Road and added a large hall to create the cinema.<sup>249</sup>

For most of the houses built by Peter Arundell & Sons, drawings have survived in the Minet estate archive (Figure 101-109). As discussed previously, such drawings were required for approval by the estate agent, Fred Curtis, and the freeholder, William Minet. For many of the houses built by Peter Arundell & Sons, the drawings were prepared by the Architect & Surveyor Ernest Avern, based in Fulham. Avern (1860-1942) was a sole practitioner, working from home.<sup>250</sup> He was employed for over 10 years as an architect's assistant before working for himself.<sup>251</sup> Rather than simply drawing one house which is then repeated, all the houses that Avern designed, such as the terraces in Halsmere Road, were conceived as one ensemble and he prepared one

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<sup>244</sup> '1871 Census Return of England and Wales'.

<sup>245</sup> '1881 Census Return of England and Wales', The National Archives, Kew.

<sup>246</sup> '1891 Census Return of England and Wales'; '1901 Census Return of England and Wales'.

<sup>247</sup> '1911 Census Return of England and Wales'.

<sup>248</sup> The connection between house builder and cinema owner was not as unusual as it may seem. The builder James Watt also built and operated several cinemas in Lewisham (see chapter four).

<sup>249</sup> Andrew Saint, ed., *Survey of London, 48: Woolwich* (London: Yale University Press, 2012).

<sup>250</sup> '1901 Census Return of England and Wales'.

<sup>251</sup> '1881 Census Return of England and Wales'.

elevation showing the whole stretch of houses (Figure 102-104). For other houses built by Peter Arundell & Sons, the designs were prepared by a certain T.H.A., which must stand for Thomas Henry Arundell, Peter's son, who held a very active role in the family business. The houses designed by Thomas Henry Arundell were visibly less intricate and more conventional than those designed by Ernest Avern, which does not necessarily mean that they were of lower quality. The houses in Brief Street were designed by T.H. Arundell and built by Peter Arundell & Sons, as were those along the north side of Halsmere Road (Figure 106-109).

The estate builder Andrew McDowall was even more productive than Peter Arundell but, unfortunately, the drawings for his houses did not survive. Two drawings, however, survive of houses built by his son, Andrew *George* McDowall.<sup>252</sup> The two are easy to confuse as they carry the same first and surname. The father built around 80 houses on the Minet estate, the son continued the business after his father's death in 1890 and built about 13 houses. Andrew McDowall, the father, was born in Scotland in 1848. He first worked on the estate as a joiner and then began to build his first houses in the late 1870s in Paulet Road, also initially as a sub-lessee to Mayhew. The first house he built on the estate was at 2 Paulet Road, where he also took up residence and where, in 1881, he is registered in the census as a Master Carpenter employing four men and one boy.<sup>253</sup> It is interesting to note that in the same year, he took out a lease to build eight substantial semi-detached houses in Penford Street (Figure 72). It seems astonishing that this would have been possible with only five employees (but he may have taken on additional or casual staff). Andrew McDowall went on to build most of his houses at the north end of Knatchbull Road (Figure 81) and on a newly constructed road, McDowall Road, named after him (Figure 80). The name is a reflection of William Minet's humility in these matters; he also preferred Myatt's Fields Park to be named after a lessee of the estate rather than after the Minet family.<sup>254</sup> As McDowall's building work on the estate increased, he leased a builder's yard on the estate for £3 annual ground rent, which was taken over by his son after his death.<sup>255</sup> Andrew George McDowall, the son, built the first houses on his own account at the young age of 22 by taking out a lease in 1894 for

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<sup>252</sup> The only drawings that survived were of 5, 6, 9, 10 & 11 Cormont Road built by the son, Andrew George McDowall. The drawings are without signature and could have been prepared by him. 'Minet Estate Archive, Camberwell & Lambeth 1767-1970', IV/83/1/5/1/17.

<sup>253</sup> '1881 Census Return of England and Wales'.

<sup>254</sup> 'The Passing of William Minet'.

<sup>255</sup> 'Minet Estate Archive, Camberwell & Lambeth 1767-1970', IV/83/2/1/9.

5 & 6 Cormont Road, and further leases in the same street in 1894-95 and along Calais Street in 1895 (Figure 83). The unusual façades seem to indicate a certain lack of experience but also a willingness to experiment. He lived in Lambeth until his death in 1936 at the age of 65.

Another firm of builders that made a significant contribution to the architecture of the estate and that deserves particular mention were the Cooperative Builders. Their role on the estate and relationship to William Minet was unique among the builders on the estate. Rather than speculative builders taking out leases, they were contracting builders, effectively acting as estate builders, generally commissioned for all maintenance work. Apart from this frequent, yet fairly small-scale building work, William Minet also contracted them directly for the construction of a number of blocks of flats on the estate, e.g. Calais Gate (Figure 110-116), Hayes Court (Figure 117-121). The Cooperative Builders also built a number of terraced houses on the estate for owner/occupier leaseholders, such as 11 Calais Street (Figure 92 & 93) and 3 & 4 Cormont Road (Figure 98 & 99).

William Minet was instrumental in setting up the Cooperative builders in 1889, as a letter of March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1933 to Messrs. Deloitte, Plender, Griffiths & Co. by A. J. Carpenter, the estate surveyor during the inter-war period, confirms:

Mr. W.J. Carpenter (father of the present tenant) was employed on joinery work at the Minet Library in 1889, when the Contractors went into liquidation, and Mr. Minet financed and formed the Cooperative Builders Ltd. of which W.J.C. was leading joiner and the secretary. Later he was responsible for the joinery work at (inter alia) 48 Gloucester Square and Hadham Hall and, with his position of Resident Manager of Longfield Hall, he came into close association with W.M. When in 1919 the joinery shop in Flodden Road was erected W.J.C. carried out all work on the Estate that his experience qualified him for and the conditions of his tenancy were personally arranged between W.M. and himself. In 1923 W.J.C. employed his son W.E.C. in the shop and in 1926 retired and handed over his business and stock to W.E.C.<sup>256</sup>

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<sup>256</sup> 'Minet Estate Archive, Camberwell & Lambeth 1767-1970', IV/83/1/1/7.

Although the precise details of the business organisation of the Cooperative Builders are unknown, the name suggests that they were part of the cooperative movement and the employees were presumably also the owners and shared the profit. The social agenda suggested in the name of the firm of builders again attests to William Minet's philanthropy. He generally showed great consideration for the wider social impact of the way the estate was developed. At the same time, however, it was crucial and also beneficial for William Minet to be able to rely on a responsible and reliable firm of builders for recurring maintenance work. The Cooperative Builders were an independent firm who also took on work outside of the estate, but their links to William Minet and the estate were very close. As the one surviving job book of 1901 reveals, most of their work was based on the estate.<sup>257</sup> This is also exemplified by the relationship and dual roles of Fred Curtis, who acted as their builders' manager but also as William Minet's estate agent.

William Minet commissioned the construction of five blocks of flats in total, all built around the turn of the century: Burton House (1892), Calais Gate (1903), Orchard House (1897), Dover House (1899) and Hayes Court (1900). The blocks of flats appear to have been designed by Fred Curtis, although this cannot be confirmed with certainty. The drawings for Calais Gate, for example, were signed as 'Minet Estate Office' (Figure 111), and many features such as the windows match those on other drawings signed by Fred Curtis (Figure 98-100). At the turn of the century, blocks of flats, such as those built on the Minet estate, were fairly unusual in the vicinity, although similar examples can be found in other London's suburbs (e.g. Maida Vale). Rather than letting the Ground on 99 year leaseholds, William Minet directly funded the construction of the buildings and let the flats directly to tenants on annual leases. A letter of 3<sup>rd</sup> Aug, 1901 by Fred Curtis describes the available flats in Hayes Court to a potential tenant:

Madam, In reply to your letter of the 1<sup>st</sup> instant, addressed to the Cooperative Builders Ltd, I have to say that the Flats at Hayes Court, Camberwell New Road which have just been finished are divided into two sections, one containing five rooms in each set & the other containing four. The five-rooms flats consist of

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<sup>257</sup> 'Minet Estate Archive, Camberwell & Lambeth 1767-1970', Co-operative Builders job book 1901, uncatalogued.

two sitting rooms, two bedrooms, kitchen, bathroom (hot & cold water) larder and coal cellar. A separate locker is provided with each set for the storage of bicycles etc. Hot water is supplied constantly to all kitchens, bath & lavatories, free of charge from an independent boiler outside the buildings. All the flats are wired for electric light and gas pipes are laid to the side of all fireplaces for supplying gas fires as required. A caretaker will reside upon the premises to keep the stairway & grounds in order. The rents of those at present unlet are given below but I may say that there will probably be none left in October.

Two roomed flats

1 <sup>st</sup> floor	Nos 16	£64 per annum
2 <sup>nd</sup> “	“ 17, 18, 29	£52 “ “
3 <sup>rd</sup> “	“ 19, 20, 32	£51 “ “

The Flats are let on Yearly Agreement only, the rent which includes all rates & taxes being payable monthly in advance (...).<sup>258</sup>

The blocks of flats also reflect William Minet’s direct involvement in the development of the estate. The construction of the flats required a much larger initial investment and continuous management for rent collection and maintenance. Yet the potential income appears high as the above annual rents of around £ 50-60 suggest. The annual rent for one flat alone was many times higher than the annual ground rent for any of the house plots. The rental records show that the income from rack rent, as opposed to ground rent, was already rising in the 1890s through leases that had fallen in. Building flats was a logical step to increase the rental income and to intensify the use of the land. At the same time, the blocks of flats were carefully spread out over the whole estate and were mixed with other types and sizes of accommodation. The creation of Myatt's field park had reduced the land available for building on the estate significantly. With the construction of flats, however, William Minet compensated for the loss of building land to the park. The park and the villas facing it created an air of exclusivity, while the blocks of flats increased the density and provided a reliable and potentially very profitable long-term source of income for the estate owner. The mixture of housing types also meant that different types of tenants and social classes inhabited the estate.

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<sup>258</sup> ‘Minet Estate Archive, Camberwell & Lambeth 1767-1970’, letterbook by F. Curtis, uncatalogued .

To cater for a range of tenants' needs also safeguarded the viability of the estate. This mixture of low- and high-rise housing types surrounded by greenery is in many ways ahead of its time and can be found in much later modernist and even contemporary housing schemes.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

A perhaps all too obvious but also key conclusion from this case study of the Minet estate is this: it was planned. The housing was not somehow generated by by-laws and pattern-books. It was actively planned and designed, and its development managed, at times with a high degree of sophistication – reflected for example in the Parsons & Bamford lease agreement drafted by Messrs Driver. The estate was carefully planned in a sense that formal planning tools were used, mainly building or lease agreements, drawings and specifications. And the estate was also planned in a sense that its arrangement and layout were carefully considered. As the case study has shown, the roads, green spaces, types and sizes of housing were deliberately laid out to respond to their surroundings and also to the market conditions of the time. This process itself was, of course, not always linear and as much a commercial necessity as an architectural one. A crucial part of Messrs Driver's role, for example, was to establish and clarify the precise value of the building plots so that lease agreements could be signed and finance obtained. The result, however, was a comprehensive master plan with unmistakable architectural implications. Overall, the considered planning and management of the development was an important reason for the success and quality of the housing on the estate to which William Minet contributed considerably during his ownership. His intentions were not only to create as many houses as quickly as possible, but instead he took a long-term view of the impact of many of his decisions.

The contrast between the earlier development phase under James Lewis Minet and the later phase under William Minet is striking, and it is only partly due to changing architectural preferences of the time. As discussed above, an important reason for this contrast can be found in the nature of the lease agreements with the builders. In the earlier stages of development before 1885, the design was prepared by the freeholder's agent, the estate surveyor, and imposed on the lessees. In the later phase after 1885, the main responsibility for design was with the leaseholder, and the freeholder only

approved it. The nature of the lease agreements played a key role for the architecture on the Minet estate. And this duality can also be related to other speculative housing in London. Any speculative housing estate that was consciously planned would have had to adopt one of these two extremes – either the design was led by the estate owner or it was led by the builder of the individual houses.

To some degree, the greener, more loosely planned, village-like later phase after 1885 and the more rigidly planned earlier phase were also products of their time. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the density and rigidity of Victorian speculative terraced housing, of the so-called by-law housing, was often blamed for poverty and squalor. Long before it became official town planning policy in the inter-war period, more green space around the houses was a widely propagated solution to create healthier places to live in. As quoted by Arthur M. Edwards, G.L. Saunders stated in a paper to the influential National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, ‘It is already clearly demonstrated that the more you pack the people together, the greater is the amount of disease and death’.<sup>259</sup> Bedford Park, begun in 1875, was one of the first housing estates to give form to such ideas. While the Minet estate could not be considered a part of this architectural avant-garde, the planning after 1885 still seems to have been influenced by such ideas. The more spacious later phase of the Minet estate, with generous vegetation and meandering roads, has certain parallels with the housing to the southwest of the estate but also with the green and somewhat irregular layout of Bedford Park, which seems more than coincidental. William Minet was probably aware of Bedford Park and envisaged a similarly spacious, greener surrounding for the housing on his estate. The Minet estate might not have been avant-garde, but its planning was nevertheless clever and forward-thinking in many respects. One of these is the mixture of low rise housing with blocks of flats, which was fairly unusual at the time. Many much later modern 20<sup>th</sup> century housing schemes were also planned with a mixture of housing densities surrounded by greenery.

The case of the Minet estate supports the premise that town-planning control in a sense already existed in 19<sup>th</sup>-century London but was exercised through estate management rather than by the municipality. In this case study, the processes and roles involved in

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<sup>259</sup> Edwards, p. 78; G L Saunders, ‘Transactions of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Sciences’ (Sheffield Meeting, 1865), p. 454.



the planning and building of an estate are examined in particular detail. The complexity of the planning process itself is striking, even if some of the details may have been specific to the Minet estate. Although the roles and titles of those involved were less specialized than today, the nature of the work was in many ways surprisingly similar. The study shows the importance of the lease agreements as a tool in this planning process. The leases required drawings and specifications, which helped to create a market for architects and surveyors. Much of the evidence of this case study also points to the particularly influential role of the estate surveyor and estate agent. As mentioned before, the significance of the surveying occupation for design of speculative housing in general has been underestimated in much of the literature on the subject to date. That topic will be explored further in the next chapter.

## **Chapter Four**

### **The Role of Architect-Surveyors in Speculative Housing: The Case of Norfolk & Prior 1893 – 1923**

#### 4.1 Introduction - The Occupation of the Architect-Surveyor

Among the occupations involved in planning and design of speculative housing in London around the turn of the century, one of the most prominent was that of the ‘architect & surveyor’ or ‘architect-surveyor’, which is also reflected in the building application sample discussed in chapter two.<sup>260</sup> Kaye explains the term as applying to ‘those who practiced both professions’.<sup>261</sup> However, it was more than simply a combination of the two titles but had the characteristics of an occupation in its own right with its own professional body. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the architect-surveyor filled an important gap in the market. Today, this occupation has been divided into either one of the two, architect or surveyor. The process of professionalization, which led to the protection of the title ‘architect’ in 1938, also meant that grey-zones between professions were undermined and gradually removed.

While there was no code of conduct outlining the role, this flexibility was also a principal reason for the occupation’s existence and success. In the worst case, as neither title was protected, ‘architect & surveyor’ was used by persons involved in construction, even if their actual work had little to do with it. As discussed further later on in this chapter, the builder Charles Farley, for example, describes himself on his letterheads as Builder, Architect & Surveyor. In practice, however, he acted only as builder and outsourced the design and drawing work to others. In the best cases, however, the term ‘architect & surveyor’ referred to a particular type of expert, one whose role would link the traditionally more artistic occupation of the architect with the more practical of the surveyor. In this regard, the role was ideal for the pragmatic and commercial requirements of speculative housing. The case of Norfolk & Prior gives a unique insight into the work of such architect-surveyors around the turn of the century and their involvement in housing. The main source for the research is Norfolk & Prior’s housing work in the Lewisham local history archive collection, which has been, to the author’s knowledge, for the first time systematically analysed in this chapter.<sup>262</sup> This case study

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<sup>260</sup> Throughout this paper, ‘architect-surveyor’ and ‘architect & surveyor’ will be used interchangeably. At the time, a practitioner would use the title ‘architect & surveyor’, as frequently found as a signature on building act applications. Later on, this seems to have been merged into the term ‘architect-surveyor’ by historians (e.g. Stefan Muthesius, Barrington Kaye, F.M.L. Thompson).

<sup>261</sup> Kaye, p. 76.

<sup>262</sup> The archive has been used by the local historian Ken George for an article on Edward Stone’s involvement in cinema design, but there are no published texts about Norfolk & Prior’s housing work:

aims to make this unique material more easily accessible and relates it to London's housing history.

To put the work of Norfolk & Prior into a wider historical context, it is useful to first discuss the occupation of the architect-surveyor in more general terms. Its story and the reasons for its disappearance are best told by discussing its professional bodies. The first attempt of establishing one was the Society of Architects and Surveyors in 1834, just before the forming of the Institute of British Architects in London in the same year. According to Kaye, it was 'an attempt by the architect-surveyors (...) to ally themselves with the architects rather than with the measurers'.<sup>263</sup> The architect members, however, strived for a separation of their profession from that of the measurers in order to protect the reputation of architects, since performing both roles had led to cases of corruption.<sup>264</sup> The architects consequently formed the Institute of British Architects with a code of conduct excluding measurers. The Society of Architects and Surveyors protested fervently because many of their members earned part of their living as measurers. Rather than amending the code of conduct, those members of the Society of Architects and Surveyors deemed compliant were invited to join the Institute of British Architects. This ultimately led to the dissolution of the Society of Architects and Surveyors in the same year.<sup>265</sup>

The conflict, however, was far from resolved. Many practitioners still did not fall into either category, and 'several provincial societies [of architects], as was to be expected, admitted both architects and surveyors'.<sup>266</sup> In London, however, architect-surveyors' best option of professional recognition and association was the Institute of Surveyors (IS), established in 1868. Due to the varied types of roles of surveyors, the IS was less restrictive in its membership policies than the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA).<sup>267</sup> Measuring, for example, was excluded by the RIBA, but was an essential part of the surveying profession and formed the basis of the modern quantity surveyor.

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Ken George, 'Edward A Stone: The Early Years of a Pioneer Cinema Designer', *Picture house*, 2007, 40–58.

<sup>263</sup> Kaye, p. 76.

<sup>264</sup> Kaye, pp. 72–73.

<sup>265</sup> Kaye, p. 78.

<sup>266</sup> Kaye, p. 91. In the case of the Sheffield Society of Architects and Surveyors, for example, this was also reflected in the name.

<sup>267</sup> The Institute of British Architects received the Royal Charter in 1837. Its name was Royal Institute of British Architects in London until 1892, then Royal Institute of British Architects

Indeed, architectural design was still considered an integral part of the IS schedule of professional services until at least the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The 1935 edition of the *Schedule of Professional Charges for Surveyors*, for example, still contains a range of design related responsibilities. A scale of professional charges is suggested for ‘the laying out of development of estates; for approving plans submitted by lessees, and inspecting buildings during progress; for land surveying and the preparation of plans and maps; designing new buildings, architectural work’.<sup>268</sup> The latter is further outlined in detail by referencing parts of the RIBA schedule. These design responsibilities are also a reflection of the membership of architect-surveyors with the IS providing architectural services as part of their work.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the argument for legal protection of the work and title of architects gained momentum among RIBA members in order to ensure professional standards, to establish credibility as a profession, and to bring it in line with developments in other European countries.<sup>269</sup> An important step in this direction was the amalgamation of the Society of Architects with the RIBA in 1925 to create a unified professional body. To architect-surveyors, however, legal protection of the architect’s title and work would mean a threat to their own less specialized occupation. The basis of their occupation was precisely the provision of services not restricted to one particular specialization, but a wide-ranging expertise adapted to the construction industry at the time. Kaye explains the foundation of two professional bodies for architects and surveyors in the 1920s with this imminent threat of the protection of the title ‘architect’:

Although the professions of architect and surveyor may be said to have become distinct by the middle decades of the nineteenth century, there still remained a large number of persons who practiced both, and who styled themselves ‘architect and surveyor’. (...) there is little doubt that one of the aims of professional closure was the elimination of this class, or at least the control of their activities through a code of conduct. When the Institute’s aim to close the profession was explicitly avowed, the architect-surveyors awoke to the danger

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<sup>268</sup> ‘The Surveyor’s Profession’, *The Chartered Surveyors’ Institution Transactions*, LXXII (1939), p. 495.

<sup>269</sup> Kaye, p. 148.

they were in, and two associations were formed within the space of a year to protect their interests. These were the Incorporated Association of Architects and Surveyors, (IAAS), founded in 1925, and the Faculty of Architects and Surveyors, founded in 1926.<sup>270</sup>

The IAAS protested in vain against the Bill for protection of the title, as proposed by the RIBA, as being too restrictive. It might count as an initial success that the IAAS was made part of the title protection committee. At the time, the president of the IAAS was no other than Edwin Lutyens himself. However, the long-term survival of the IAAS as a body for architects, surveyors, and those practicing both, fell victim to the increasingly clear separation of the two professions, with most members having to choose either membership with the RIBA or with the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS).<sup>271</sup> By the 1980s, the membership of the IAAS had changed significantly, and only a small minority were architects or surveyors.<sup>272</sup> In 1993, the IAAS changed its name to Association of Building Engineers (ABE) because it (according to their own explanation) better reflected the expertise of its current members and was understood internationally.<sup>273</sup> This name change, however, also showed that the architect-surveyors, which the Institute originally represented, did not exist anymore. There were now either architects or surveyors, and they already had their respective professional bodies to represent them.

The architect-surveyor could be seen as the remnant of a long tradition that hardly distinguished between the two occupations. Before the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the surveying and architectural professions in England were not clearly discernible and the titles could at times be used interchangeably, which was also reflected in the nomenclature.<sup>274</sup> The architect Christopher Wren, for example, officially held the title ‘Surveyor of the King’s Works’. With his wide-ranging expertise on various construction related topics, Wren is

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<sup>270</sup> Kaye, p. 151.

<sup>271</sup> The Institute of Surveyors became the Institute of Chartered Surveyors in 1930 and then in 1945 the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors.

<sup>272</sup> ‘1925-2010: 85 Years of the ABE, a Brief Summary’, *Building Engineer*, September 2010, 28–30 (p. 3).

<sup>273</sup> ‘About The ABE [The Association of Building Engineers (ABE)]’, 2011 <<http://www.abe.org.uk/about/>> [accessed 20 July 2011].

<sup>274</sup> Kaye, p. 75n.

regarded as a role model by the surveying as much as by the architectural profession.<sup>275</sup> Another particularly striking example of this overlap of professions is perhaps the origin of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) itself. The Surveyors' Club, founded in 1792, was an early predecessor of today's RICS. The founders, the City Company Surveyors, were more architects than surveyors in today's understanding of the term. According to Thompson, 'it was only the intensification of specialization in the course of the nineteenth century which made these Surveyors more surveyor than architect, and turned the Surveyors' Club into the social preserve of surveyors'.<sup>276</sup>

This overlap in professional traditions shows that the involvement of surveyors such as Norfolk & Prior in housing design in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was not in any way unusual but rather self-evident. As construction and development consultant, surveyors also performed architectural services particularly for building types such as housing. As quoted in 1940 in *Transcripts*, Phillip Stubbes describes the role of the surveyor in 1583 as a consultant who helps the landlord to manage and develop his/her property: 'When a gentleman ... hath a farm ... to let he causeth a Surveior to make strict inquirie what may be made of it'.<sup>277</sup> The emerging surveying profession evolved partly out of this role in management and development for landed estates. Thompson describes the land surveyor from 1600 to 1800 as a 'competent craftsman and draughtsman, sometimes with a sufficiently refined feel for shape and form to make him a minor artist'.<sup>278</sup> Their responsibility to the clients was 'to design or procure for them houses, estates, bridges, or roads, or to perform whatever service it may be they have in mind'.<sup>279</sup>

This account of the surveyor's role in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and its overlap with that of the architect is also corroborated by John Summerson in *Georgian London*: 'he [the surveyor] was qualified not merely to survey land but to supervise building work and measure it for estimating and pricing. He would figure as an architect, indeed, in the early part of the eighteenth century the terms were almost synonymous'.<sup>280</sup> This

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<sup>275</sup> In a brief history of the surveying profession, published by the Chartered Surveyors' Institution in 1940, Wren is described as the 'Surveyor *par excellence*'. 'The Surveyor's Profession', p. 490.

<sup>276</sup> Thompson, *Chartered Surveyors: The Growth of a Profession*, pp. 71–72.

<sup>277</sup> 'The Surveyor's Profession', p. 490; Phillip Stubbes, *Anatomy of the Abuses in England in Shakspeare's Youth, Part II: The Display of Corruptions Requiring Reformation*, ed. by Frederick J. Furnivall (London: The New Shakspeare Society, 1882), p. 29.

<sup>278</sup> Thompson, *Chartered Surveyors: The Growth of a Profession*, p. 19.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>280</sup> John Summerson, *Georgian London* (Barrie & Jenkins, 1988), p. 47.

tradition of the estate surveyor as administrator and advisor on every aspect of development and best use of landed property also influenced the profession of the surveyors that were active in the London housing boom during in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Surveyors might act as consultants advising on matters ranging from valuation, sale, town planning, site and road layout, building plans and elevations, to construction details and drainage.

Norfolk & Prior were not alone in combining the role of estate agents with planning and design of housing. The architect-surveyor H.H. Church (1827–1914), based in Woolwich, is another example of a local surveyor and estate agent working on estate layouts and also on the design of buildings: ‘From 1889 Church was responsible, frequently as the lessee, for overseeing and designing the rebuilding of the greater part of Powis Street, Hare Street and Green’s End, as well as for the first buildings of Woolwich Polytechnic, Woolwich Baths and Woolwich Public Library (...)’.<sup>281</sup> H. H. Church had family links going back to at least the 1830s in Woolwich businesses that combined building, surveying, estate agency and auctioneering. In his research on those responsible for the creation of England’s inter-war suburbs, Whitehand came across a number of estate agents that were also involved in housing design, for example ‘Spooner & Tew, describing itself as Auctioneers, Estate Agents, Surveyors and Valuers, submitted applications to build houses widely within Birmingham’.<sup>282</sup>

Another example of a surveyor and estate agent involved in the planning of a London suburb in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century is the above-mentioned Francis Howkins.<sup>283</sup> He first trained with a firm of agricultural auctioneers and estate surveyors. After his articles, he worked for a dubious firm of auctioneers who bought land on the coast, laid out roads and sold off the plots. He was then employed by William Hollis, an auctioneer and surveyor based in Finchley. In 1905, Howkins set up on his own as surveyor and estate agent in Golders Green, which at the time was on the verge of being developed for suburban housing (Figure 124). Howkins obtained his first significant commission by presenting a local estate owner with a development scheme (presumably containing at

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<sup>281</sup> Saint, *Survey of London, 48: Woolwich*.

<sup>282</sup> Whitehand and Carr, p. 226.

<sup>283</sup> The following information on Francis Howkins is based on: Howard Farrow, *Work in Progress: Howard Farrow Limited, a Story of Fifty Years 1908 - 1958* (London: Morley Publishing Company, 1958).



least a road layout and indication of building plots) for his estate and by proving to him that the land could be drained. His work for the estate owner reflects this tradition of the land and estate surveyor as development advisor and planner.<sup>284</sup> Based on his experience in Golders Green, Howkins wrote a notable number of publications related to the development of London's suburbs: *The Housing Acts 1890-1909 and Town Planning*, *The Story of Golders Green and Its Remarkable Development*, and *An Introduction to the Development of Private Building Estates and Town Planning*.<sup>285</sup> The latter has been used as one of the sources for this thesis and contains one of the best explanations of early 20<sup>th</sup>-century traditions of speculative housing development and planning that the author could find.

The examples of H.H. Church in Woolwich, F. Howkins in Golders Green, as well as examples of letterheads of other such businesses mentioned in chapter two (Figures 22 & 23), show that the role of local surveyors and estate agents in London's developing suburbs around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was not necessarily restricted to the sale and rental of properties, but could extend to an architectural role. It shows that Norfolk & Prior were not unique in this regard. As discussed, historically, surveying was not only closely linked to estate agency, but also to architectural planning and design, and to estate development and town planning. Defying our current understanding of professional categories, the work of the estate agents and architect-surveyors Norfolk & Prior needs to be seen in the context of this diverse tradition of the surveying profession at the time and that of the architect-surveyor in particular. The case of Norfolk & Prior, who played a crucial role in the development of Lewisham, will help our understanding of this unique occupation of the architect-surveyor and of design practices in speculative housing in late 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century London.

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<sup>284</sup> Despite some success in obtaining commissions as an estate surveyor, the future of Howkins' surveying and estate agent business was by no means secure, highlighted also by the location of his office one mile away from the station. While working as surveyor on the Woodstock Estate, Howkins bought the plant and materials of a bankrupt road construction contractor with the financial support of Howard Farrow. They took over as contractors for roadwork. This new construction business continued to thrive particularly in the post-war reconstruction period.

<sup>285</sup> Francis Howkins, *The Housing Acts 1890-1909 and Town Planning* (London: The Estates Gazette, 1910); Francis Howkins, *The Story of Golders Green and Its Remarkable Development* (Golders Green: Ernest Owers, 1923); Howkins, *An Introduction to the Development of Private Building Estates and Town Planning*.

## 4.2 Business History of Norfolk & Prior, 1893 - 1923

As a background to the study of Norfolk & Prior's housing design, a brief history seems useful of the business and their main partners, as well as the area they operated in. Norfolk & Prior were based in today's London borough of Lewisham, an area at the heart of the suburban housing boom of the time. The business was originally founded in 1893 under the name Philipps & Norfolk by Harry Frank Philipps and James Norfolk. Their first and later main office was located near Catford Bridge rail station (Figure 133). When Philipps retired in 1899, Norfolk formed a partnership with the employee Stanley Prior (Figure 135), and the name was changed to *Norfolk & Prior*. This new partnership, however, was only short-lived as Norfolk died soon after. Prior continued the business and formed a partnership with the employee Edward Stone (Figure 136) in 1901, which lasted until 1923. During this period, further branches were opened near the rail station in Lewisham, Forest Hill (Figure 134), and for a short period in Regent Street (opened in 1921). After their split in 1923, Prior carried on the businesses in Lewisham, and Stone the one in Regent Street.

This period of the partnership between Prior and Stone from 1901 to 1923 is the main focus of this chapter. For one, it is the period which is most comprehensively covered by the records available in the archive collection. Secondly, after Edward Stone left, the Lewisham part of the business had hardly any involvement in housing design. He had been the main person responsible for the architectural side of the business. This also means that the work discussed in this paper is mainly his, but it needs to be seen in the context of Norfolk & Prior as a business. As the topic of this thesis is the planning of housing, this chapter is primarily concerned with their work as architects & surveyors in Lewisham. However, Norfolk & Prior were also auctioneers, estate agents, valuers and assessors (Figure 128 - 131).

Like other London suburbs, Lewisham was transformed from a village in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century to a densely built-up metropolitan borough in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>286</sup> Between 1881 and 1901, the population of the parish of Lewisham doubled from 53,065 to

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<sup>286</sup> This paragraph on the general history of Lewisham is largely based on: John Coulter, *Lewisham: History and Guide* (Stroud: Alan Sutton Publishing Limited, 1994).

108,846 inhabitants, and further increased to 140,470 in 1911.<sup>287</sup> In 1893, when Norfolk & Prior were established, Catford was still only sparsely built up and most of the construction took place from the 1890s onwards until the First World War. During the inter-war period, the main activity of development moved further out to Bromley, Lee or Grove Park. The demand for new housing was great and successful speculative builders in the area accumulated great wealth.<sup>288</sup> At the time when Norfolk & Prior began operating in Lewisham, it was a fairly affluent area and most of the houses were built for middle-class tenants. Coulter points out that in the 1901 census 'Lewisham had a higher percentage of commercial clerks than any other part of London'.<sup>289</sup> Booth also describes most parts of Lewisham as well-to-do in his notebooks and maps.<sup>290</sup> Sam Myers states in 1949: 'Lewisham was for over half a century the Elysium of South East London. When you made or saved enough money in Bermondsey or Deptford, you moved to one of the thousands of speculatively built villas that lie in the turnings on both sides of Lewisham High Street'.<sup>291</sup> This large influx of new tenants, albeit generally well-to-do, gradually pushed out the rich that had still resided in Lewisham in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

Prior was born in 1875 in Catford. He joined Phillips & Norfolk in 1895 at the age of 20, shortly after it was established. Stone, born in 1880 in Rotherhithe, joined Phillips & Norfolk in 1897, at the age of 17. Stone was from a fairly comfortable background; his father, Abraham Stone, was the landlord of a Tavern in Rotherhithe and later of a hotel in Erith, Kent. He also owned various stocks and eight terraced houses in Bexleyheath.<sup>292</sup> Both Stone and presumably also Prior originally started as apprentices in the business. Unfortunately, there is no record of Prior's apprenticeship contract but Stone's has been retained (Figure 137). Their swift rise to ownership of the business is remarkable, and the precise reasons for this are subject to speculation. It is, however, clear that both partners had complementary personalities and skills that suited their field

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<sup>287</sup> Coulter, p. 76.

<sup>288</sup> James Watt was the most successful speculative builder in Edwardian Lewisham. At the time of his death in 1932, his estate was estimated to be worth £ 827,227 This is comparable to about £ 40 million today, measured by the retail price index, and about £ 160 million, measured by average earnings. Ken George, 'James Watt (1856-1932), Master Builder', 2006, 920 WATT, Lewisham Local History Archive.

<sup>289</sup> Coulter, p. 81.

<sup>290</sup> Charles Booth, 'Charles Booth Online Archive' <<http://booth.lse.ac.uk/>> [accessed 10 August 2011].

<sup>291</sup> Coulter, p. 87.

<sup>292</sup> For the business biography, the author is much indebted to the thoroughly researched essay by Ken George, 'Our Mr Stone: The Life and Works of E.A. Stone, F.S.I.', 2004, 920.STO, Lewisham Local History Archive.

of work. These complementary skills were also reflected in their specializations within the firm and contributed to its success. While Prior's main responsibility was auctioneering and estate agency, Stone's was surveying and architectural services. As both partners received their training within the same business, this specialization simply seems to have reflected their personal talents and preferences.

Prior was a shrewd businessman, emotional, extroverted, and he seems to have been swift in taking up opportunities for profit.<sup>293</sup> He moved in various local social circles and through those probably had good business contacts. He was a freemason, an accomplished local sportsman, and he was also elected as a local councillor in Catford between 1912 and 1919. He was, however, not a skilled draughtsman and was therefore unsuited for that part of the surveying business.<sup>294</sup> Stone, on the other hand, was much less sociable and 'preferred to remain in the background'.<sup>295</sup> His letters also reveal a person of sober, considered and introverted character, rarely showing emotions. He was a meticulous and skilled draughtsman and surveyor, which is reflected in the quality of his drawings. The business of Norfolk & Prior thrived, fuelled by the booming housing development of Lewisham and the varied business opportunities this offered. There are no salary books from before 1914 but, from 1901 to 1914, a total of seven new apprentices and five new staff (as branch manager or clerk) were employed.<sup>296</sup> In 1921, the salary book suggests a total number of 11 full-time staff employed at Norfolk & Prior which includes admin staff. Another evidence of the financial success of the firm is Prior's ownership of a Rolls Royce in the early 1930s and the considerable inheritance he left after his death in 1935.<sup>297</sup>

The First World War interrupted the work of the firm and also housing construction in the area in general.<sup>298</sup> During the war, Prior served briefly with the Army Service Corps

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<sup>293</sup> An episode that illustrates Prior's astonishing entrepreneurial spirit is when he was once disciplined by the Surveyors' Institute for selling coal from his estate agency because it was not deemed consistent with the professional code of conduct 'Prior Collection', Item 955, A84/28, Lewisham Local History Archive

<sup>294</sup> This can be seen in his attempts to continue this side of the business after Edward Stone's departure. The drawings he produced are clumsy and amateurish compared to Stone's work. After Stone's departure, the architectural business of the firm declines to only a few minor commissions.

<sup>295</sup> Ken George, 'Our Mr Stone: The Life and Works of E.A. Stone, F.S.I.', p. 25.

<sup>296</sup> 'Prior Collection', Item 378.

<sup>297</sup> 'Prior Collection', Item 702.

<sup>298</sup> Work did not immediately cease at the start of the war. Initially Norfolk & Prior continued to work, for instance, with a builder on a housing development in Wembley until as late as December 1914.

from October 1917 to January 1918 but returned home suffering from shell shock and requiring hospital treatment, which lasted until the end of the war.<sup>299</sup> After the war, Stone tried to expand the business beyond its local base in Lewisham by initiating the opening of a new branch in Regent Street in 1921. This step also reflected Stone's architectural ambitions. He had already designed a few local cinemas (some of them were also used as ice rinks) but, in order to develop this into a London-wide business, a more central and prestigious location was crucial. From 1921, Stone was therefore based in the new Regent Street branch along with Gordon Prior (Stanley Prior's cousin), while Stanley Prior continued to be based in Catford. The move to Regent Street, however, proved to be the downfall for the partnership. In 1923, Stanley Prior became increasingly concerned about the losses that the Regent Street branch accumulated. As a locally minded businessman, having lived and worked in Catford all his life, he suggested closing the Regent Street branch. Stone responded by proposing a split of the partnership. He only wanted to retain the unprofitable Regent Street branch and the rights to the name *Norfolk & Prior*.<sup>300</sup> All other branches would fall to Prior. The other assets of the firm, such as shares, were to be split evenly.

Financially, this arrangement seemed advantageous for Prior.<sup>301</sup> However, Stone's insistence on the rights to the name is also plausible from his perspective. He needed a name of a firm with an established history of projects to attract more architectural work and to provide his existing clientele with a sense of continuation. Stone also seemed only too happy to cut his ties with the less prestigious suburban branches. Considering the discrepancy in profitability between the Lewisham and the Regent Street branch, Stone's decision is unlikely to have been motivated financially. It seems more likely that his priority was to improve his social status with the Regent Street business and to develop his architectural career, which proved to be successful in the long run.<sup>302</sup> Prior retained the other branches and initially even continued against their agreement under the name *Norfolk & Prior* until 1925, when Stone took him to court. Consequently,

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Construction even commenced on site but must have stopped soon after as the houses were never completed.

<sup>299</sup> Ken George, 'Our Mr Stone: The Life and Works of E.A. Stone, F.S.I.', p. 26.

<sup>300</sup> 'Prior Collection', Item 1312.

<sup>301</sup> Although Prior did not see it that way. In his letters to Stone, he insisted on being compensated for the losses of the Regent Street branch in case it was profitable in the future. Ibid.

<sup>302</sup> A possible further reason is that the personal relationship between Stone and Prior had deteriorated. The communication in letters between the two became increasingly heated prior to the split.

Prior changed the business name to *Stanley F. Prior* and carried on the business in Lewisham until his unexpected death in 1935. After the breakup of the partnership, Prior's firm did very little architectural work as this had never been his forte. The only housing he worked on in an architectural role after 1923 was 12 semi-detached houses in Fordmill Road in 1924 and seven houses in Perry Hill in 1926. After 1935, the head office in Catford continued under his name until 1983 as an estate agency and is today still used as such (Figure 133). The other branches are now used for other purposes or the buildings no longer exist.

After the split from Prior, Stone went on to make a name for himself as one of the most active cinema architects in London during the interwar period, a career which began during his time at Norfolk & Prior. Stone designed his first cinema in 1908 on behalf of Norfolk & Prior for James Watt, a very successful local builder with close ties to the firm. The cinema was located in Catford and was also a roller skating rink.<sup>303</sup> Since then, Stone continued to secure further commissions for designing cinemas. Among the most prominent examples of his work are a series of Astoria cinemas. Out of those still in existence, the Brixton Astoria Theatre (1929), now called the Brixton Academy (Figure 147), and the Warner Theatre at Leicester Square (1938) are probably the most prominent. Others include the Finsbury Park Astoria (1930), now used as a church, and the Charing Cross Road Astoria (1927, Figure 146), which gained fame as a performance venue and was only demolished in 2009 to make way for the new Crossrail station. An important theatre designed by Stone is the Prince Edward theatre in Soho, today a prominent venue for Musicals (Figure 148). After the Second World War, Stone formed 'Stone, Toms and Partners', an architectural practice in partnership with Thomas R. Somerford who he had collaborated with previously for some of his cinemas.<sup>304</sup> The practice continued under the name even after Stone's death in 1963 and was sold in the 1980s.<sup>305</sup>

Most of Stone's cinemas have been very successful as entertainment venues; some even acquired lasting London-wide fame such as Brixton Academy and Charing Cross Road Astoria. It speaks for Stone's cinemas and their flexibility that several remained popular

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<sup>303</sup> Ken George, 'Our Mr Stone: The Life and Works of E.A. Stone, F.S.I.', p. 6.

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>305</sup> Edward Albert Stone, *Collection of Drawings*, 1963 1880, RIBA Drawings Collection.

venues even after having been converted for other uses such as concerts (e.g. Brixton Academy) or as a place of worship (Finsbury Park Astoria). To a degree, their architecture reflects the pragmatic design approach that Stone developed during his work and training in Lewisham. The street façade of the cinemas usually forms the main architectural gesture, drawing the attention of passers-by, while the side and rear elevations are restrained and functional with little or no decoration and often random window placement (Figure 146 & 147). Lewisham's Edwardian housing was also designed in this classical tradition; it was the street façade that mattered most, the sides and rear were secondary. For most of Stone's later cinemas, the interior design, for which he often cooperated with other architects, was also very important. It is unknown if Stone continued to work on housing after his split from Prior. According to a former employee, the business records of Stone, Toms & Partners or the business in Regent Street have not been archived except for a few of his drawings for cinemas which were passed on to the RIBA drawing collection.<sup>306</sup> The rest seems to have been lost.<sup>307</sup>

### 4.3 Edward Stone's Training and Education

Stone's training is particularly interesting in relation to the thesis questions, as it shows that surveyors were indeed trained as housing designers. His training began with his apprenticeship at Philipps & Norfolk in 1897 (Figure 137). His contract states that he was articulated for two years for the sum of £52-10-0 and that he would earn five Shillings every week for the last year.<sup>308</sup> At the time, apprenticeships were the standard method of training for surveyors. Thompson explains that, 'as a profession with its roots in practice, rather than in ideas and principles, the training of the surveyor has traditionally been on the job, and the most approved method of acquiring a professional education had been to serve articles of three or five years with a surveyor of established reputation'.<sup>309</sup> For this reason, the surveying profession was reluctant to change to full-time university education, which was only established in any significant numbers in

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<sup>306</sup> Eliot Walker to David Kroll, 'RE: Edward Stone', 21 July 2011.

<sup>307</sup> For more information about Stone's cinema work, please see: Richard Gray, 'The Astoria Finsbury Park and Edward Albert Stone', *Picture house*, 2001, 44–47; Ken George, 'Edward A Stone: The Early Years of a Pioneer Cinema Designer'.

<sup>308</sup> 'Prior Collection', Item 327.

<sup>309</sup> Thompson, *Chartered Surveyors: The Growth of a Profession*, p. 202.

London after 1945.<sup>310</sup> After the apprenticeship, Stone went through the process of taking the Examinations which had become compulsory for Fellowship of the Surveyors' Institute (SI) in 1891. To prepare for these, he took the course offered by the private school of Parry, Blake & Parry (Figure 138) as most surveyors studying in London for the SI Examinations did at the time.<sup>311</sup> The course could be taken in three different ways: as an evening course, as full-time studies in their office, or by correspondence. It was the latter that Stone opted for. This meant that assignments were sent to him by post, which he had to complete and return. For Stone, as a busy partner in the firm, this method was more convenient than attending evening courses in Westminster.

The SI Examinations were divided into three different routes, reflecting the three branches of the profession: Land Agents, Valuers and Estate Agents, or Building Surveyors. The duties of the branch of Building Surveyor (sub-division III) were detailed as: 'The construction of buildings, development of building estates, and the measurement and valuation of artificers' work'.<sup>312</sup> This option is further elaborated as applying to 'those whose work is allied to Architecture, Quantity Surveying, or Superintendence or direction of Building works'.<sup>313</sup> This 'sub-division III' was then further divided into either Building or Quantities. The 'Building' route that Stone took included the following subjects: Constructive & Working Drawings, Quantities (basic only), Drainage and Sanitation, The London Building Acts, Arbitrations, Iron & Timber Roofs, Specifications, Report Writing, Development of Building Estates, and Road Making (see Figure 139, markings by Stone). The aim of these courses was not only to teach a theoretical understanding of the topics. It was a course with practical exercises to be sent back by post requiring the student to be able to produce drawings, reports or specifications. The course on Constructive & Working Drawings, for example, entailed 'Drawings of all classes of work, including designs for Small Buildings, [...] to be worked out neatly in pencil, and corrected'.<sup>314</sup> This branch of the examinations was

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<sup>310</sup> For a history of the education of surveyors, see Thompson, *Chartered Surveyors: The Growth of a Profession*, pp. 220–221.

<sup>311</sup> Thompson, *Chartered Surveyors: The Growth of a Profession*, p. 215.

<sup>312</sup> Richard Parry, E.H. Blake and Albert E. Parry, *The Surveyors' Institution Examinations: Particulars of the Courses of Preparation* (London: James Truscott & Sons Ltd, 1908), p. 7.

<sup>313</sup> Parry, Blake and Parry, p. 7.

<sup>314</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.



essentially also an architectural training and the ideal preparation for architect-surveyors working on London's suburban housing development.

All of these courses were relevant to Stone's work for Norfolk & Prior in Lewisham (Figure 141-144 are examples from his course work exercises). For the subjects 'Report Writing' and 'Development of Building Estates', for example, a typical assignment was to write a report that would advise the landowner or potential investor on the layout and viability of a development. The example report on an estate in Thornhurst, Surrey, shows that the development of London's suburbs played an important role for this course (Figure 140 & 141). The pragmatic approach to laying out this probably imagined housing development followed established London traditions and was largely determined by financial considerations; the land owner would be responsible for providing the roads, and the adjoining land would then be divided into plot sizes for houses to be built on. The estates laid out in Lewisham also followed this same principle (see next section of chapter).

Concerning the methods of development, the author of the sample report on this estate in Thornhurst gives the following recommendation:

Owing to the great demand for building land in the neighbourhood I strongly advise that you should cut up the land for building and sell the plots by auction freehold. This method may not yield quite so large a return as letting on ground rents or building yourself, but it will be more certain and far more rapid.<sup>315</sup>

In this brief recommendation, the author touches on the three key methods at the time for developing estates for the landowner: selling the plots as freehold to builders; letting them on ground rents (leasehold); or directly employing builders for the construction of the houses. All three methods have different advantages for the estate owner (see also chapter three for further details of these methods). Generally speaking, the landowner retains the greatest degree of control over the development and potentially the greatest long-term financial return by directly employing builders, but this also requires the highest initial financial investment and risk. Selling the freehold plots gives the least

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<sup>315</sup> 'Prior Collection', Item 602.

control but the quickest financial return. Letting the land on leases is a middle ground between the two other methods; some degree of control is retained through the lease agreements, but the initial investment is not as high as directly employing builders. Both the 'freehold' and 'letting on ground rents' method had in common that the land was divided into smaller plots for speculative builders to build houses on. This parcelling of the land was important for the system to work, as many of the speculative builders were small local businesses that could only raise sufficient capital to build a few houses at a time.<sup>316</sup> These would then be sold or rented in order to raise capital for the construction of the next number of houses. With the rise of building societies in the inter-war period, funds became more easily available for the house building industry, for both house owners and builders. The available deeds of conveyance in Lewisham Local History Archive indicate that the method of selling the plots to builders by freehold, as described in the course work, was frequently employed in the development of Lewisham (e.g. Figure 151).<sup>317</sup>

The course work of the SI examinations shows that Edward Stone was not a surveyor who accidentally stumbled into designing houses in Lewisham, but that this role was part of his training. The 'Building' route of the examinations, it is clear that this provided the best possible preparation for designing London's suburban speculative housing and for managing its development and construction. The work of an architect-surveyor like Norfolk & Prior is unmistakably reflected in this route which means that others like Stone were trained for and performed a similar role. With strong links of other parts of the surveying profession to the construction industry as estate agents and auctioneers, those choosing the examination's 'Building' route were ideally placed to act as architects for London's suburban housing.

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<sup>316</sup> For more details about the financing of Victorian speculative building, see: Dyos, 'The Speculative Builders and Developers of Victorian London'.

<sup>317</sup> Many of the available deeds of conveyance in the Lewisham Local Archive, e.g. from the Foster Estate, are deeds for the outright sale of the freehold to builders, rather than leasehold agreements. Unfortunately, the archive is by no means complete and does not hold any deeds for the Corbett/St Germans estate.

#### 4.4 Norfolk & Prior's Role in the Planning and Design of Lewisham's Housing

Norfolk & Prior's role in the housing development of Lewisham needs to be seen in the context of London's suburban building boom at the time, as their office was located in the middle of it, near Catford Bridge station (Figure 154). Stone and Prior knew the local speculative builders and had close business links to them, not least because they were also involved in auctions of land, and in the sale and rental of houses. It was only self-evident, with Stone's draughting skills and training, that the firm would also provide architectural design services. With these close links to local builders, Norfolk & Prior were involved in the planning and design of countless houses in Lewisham, the quantity and geographical spread of which are impressive and can be seen in Figure 153, which also illustrates that Norfolk & Prior's business was predominantly local. According to the available records in the archive collection, almost all of their work was in Lewisham within walking distance of their main office.<sup>318</sup> It is interesting to note that Stone and Prior, as well as most of the builders they worked with, also lived in the area. The houses were designed and built by locals who also lived in them, as was the case with much of the housing surveyed in chapter two. The builders were their own customers and also the neighbours of their future customers, which could have had a positive effect on the quality of the houses. For most of Norfolk & Prior's architectural work, the clients were speculative builders who had acquired building plots from estate owners.

One of the largest estates in the area was the St Germans estate. The estate owner was Sir Archibald Cameron Corbett who bought it from the Earl of St German in 1896. Archibald Corbett (1856-1933) was a well-known politician and philanthropist. He represented the Glasgow Tradeston constituency as a Member of Parliament in the House of Commons from 1885 to 1911.<sup>319</sup> He was also one of the most active developers of speculative housing in London's suburbs around the turn of the century. He began by managing the Woodgrange Estate for his father Thomas Corbett and then took over the business after his death in 1880. First Thomas and then Archibald Corbett

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<sup>318</sup> There were only two exceptions: the design of houses in Acton for Charles Farley in 1904 (discussed below) and of flats in Wembley for Rudd & Evans in 1914. The flats in Wembley were never completed because the development coincided with the beginning of the First World War. The houses in Acton were only partially completed because of Farley's bankruptcy. Both of these jobs also stem from local business connections. The builders Farley and Rudd had previously worked as builders in Lewisham.

<sup>319</sup> Smith, p. 40.

acquired and developed a number of estates in the London suburbs: the Woodgrange Estate, Forest Gate (1877); Clementswood Estate, Illford (1880); Grange Estate, Illford (1894); St. German's Estate, Hither Green (1896); Downshall Estate, Seven Kings (1898); Eltham Park, Eltham (1900).

As discussed in chapter three, the estate owner usually financed and commissioned the construction of the roads as a first step of the development, which was also the case in Lewisham. After building the roads, the estate owner was then in a position to sell building plots along the roads as freehold or to let them on ground rents to speculative builders (Figure 150 & 151). The map of Corbett's St Germans Estate shows an example of such an estate road layout, although it was also an unusual case in that the landowner acted as the main builder for the first part of its development (Figure 149). In most cases, these builders were only able to raise sufficient funds to construct a few houses on a stretch of connected plots at any one time. After completion, they would then sell the completed houses or let them to tenants on annual leases if a sale was not possible. Norfolk & Prior's sales brochures indicate that the houses were generally sold to investors as buy-to-let rather than to owner-occupiers who only became common in the inter-war period.<sup>320</sup> The funds raised from the sale could then be used to purchase the next number of plots. This process was repeated on all the projects that Norfolk & Prior worked on and, in a nutshell, describes the business model of speculative builders in Lewisham.<sup>321</sup> The number of connected plots of each builder varied, starting from as little as one or two (e.g. Figure 151), and extending occasionally to a whole street (e.g. Arran Road, built entirely by James Watt), but the basic principles were the same. The practice of selling the plots to various builders ensured a degree of variety in the development that might have otherwise been unbearably repetitive. The reason for this practice was primarily financial. Before mortgages became more easily accessible through building societies, there were only a few builders with the funds to buy whole streets or even estates on their own accounts.<sup>322</sup> The resulting variety of the developments, as we have seen on the Minet estate discussed in chapter three, often

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<sup>320</sup> 'Prior Collection', Item 1378.

<sup>321</sup> A detailed account of the typical development methods at the time can be found in: Howkins, *An Introduction to the Development of Private Building Estates and Town Planning*, pp. 202–271.

<sup>322</sup> Dyos, 'The Speculative Builders and Developers of Victorian London'.

greatly contributed to their enduring appeal. This aspect has usually been ignored by critics of Victorian and Edwardian housing pointing to its supposed monotony.<sup>323</sup>

In 1896, the first year of the St. German's estate development, the building applications to the district surveyor were submitted directly from the Corbett estate office, which indicates that his business also acted as the main contractor for the first year.<sup>324</sup> This is corroborated by the local historian Godfrey Smith, who states that Corbett 'experimented with direct labour for the St. German's estate but talks about losses occurred during the first year and he reverted again to contract'.<sup>325</sup> Presumably, this means that after 1897 Corbett generally did not sell the leasehold or freehold but contracted the builders directly. In the last phases of the estate development, however, it appears that Corbett sold some of the building plots outright to the builder Fred Taylor.<sup>326</sup> Even if the precise contractual arrangements between the builders and Corbett are difficult to establish without records of legal documentation, it is evident from the district surveyor's returns that a series of different builders constructed the houses over a period of 18 years, building up the estate one stretch of houses at a time.<sup>327</sup> Among those builders working on the Corbett estate were Bassett & Son, J. Lawrence, T.A. Boughton, J. Watt, J. Johnson, W. Rolfe and F. Taylor. They were based locally and many of these builders also constructed houses in other parts of Lewisham. The Corbett estate office also dealt with the sale of many of the houses directly (Figure 177).<sup>328</sup>

Considering the number of houses that Edward Stone was involved in, it would be easy to over-value his contribution; he was by no means the chief architect of Lewisham as this map might lead us to believe (Figure 153). His role in the design of the houses varied and was at times limited. The question begs where Norfolk & Prior's design stopped and the builder's work started? A short answer would be that both Stone and the builders he worked with, not either or, designed the houses. As discussed in chapter

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<sup>323</sup> Unwin, as part of his argument for more creative town planning, for example, refers to the so-called 'bye-law' housing as 'endless rows of brick boxes'. Unwin, p. 4.

<sup>324</sup> District Surveyor's Returns, 1896, LCC/AR/BA/4/67/037, London Metropolitan Archives.

<sup>325</sup> Smith, p. 40.

<sup>326</sup> Taylor sold the houses himself along with the freehold, which suggests that he also owned it (Figure 203). His building applications also referred to him as the sole owner of the land.

<sup>327</sup> District Surveyor's Returns for Lewisham and Catford, 1896-1913, LCC/AR/BA/4, London Metropolitan Archives

<sup>328</sup> 'The Corbett Estates', 1906, A67/26, Lewisham Local History Archive.

two, the terms ‘designer’ or ‘architect’ inherently imply a single authorship and absolute power of decision. Today, we tend to conceive of design as a separate activity that precedes construction. However, certainly in the case of Lewisham’s speculative housing, the distinction between the role of design and of construction was not as clear-cut. Authorship was a shared responsibility, determined by a number of factors. Design could happen at various stages of the production of the houses and Stone was not necessarily involved in all of these. The authorship could, to varying degrees, be attributed to Stone, to the builder, or could simply be a reflection of the local building and development traditions that influenced it. Stone’s role as architect-surveyor was as much and probably often more about working out practicalities within established frameworks than about his own creative expression.

As mentioned before, the suggestions are still ubiquitous today that housing at the time was somehow constructed from pattern-books and therefore required little planning. However, the resources required and financial risk involved in speculative housing alone meant that some form of planning was required, one that was based on tried and tested techniques and standards. Lewisham’s houses were neither built as direct copies from a pattern-book, as occasionally suggested in the literature, nor generally from ‘sketches on the back of an old envelope’.<sup>329</sup> While many components of the houses were based on standard sizes and types (e.g. windows, doors, lintels, bricks), standard plans always had to be adapted to the particular circumstances. There were no ready-to-build design patterns that could be built without changes. There were, however, many standard parts and traditions of housing development and of craftsmanship that were a strong influence. As the following examples show, for Lewisham’s housing, pattern-books were possibly used as a source of inspiration but not to build from without a process of adaptation. It seems plausible that pattern-books were used in much the same way as we use magazines with photos and illustrations of built examples today for inspiration. Pattern-books could not replace planning but were used to enhance it along with inspirations from other sources, such as built precedents and local building traditions. The use of drawings and the influence of pattern-books on Norfolk & Prior’s housing will be examined further below.

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<sup>329</sup> Lawrence, p. 15.

For speculative housing, detailed specifications, used as a contract between builder and client, were not usually required as speculative builders were both, builder and client. They would purchase materials based on their experience, rather than by using architect's specifications. The only specifications that Norfolk & Prior might prepare for the builders were those on the last page of the Building Application to the District Surveyor. More detailed specifications were only used if the estate owner employed contracting builders to construct the houses.<sup>330</sup> Or they were used if the estate owner made it a condition of the lease agreement that general specifications had to be provided by the builder for quality assurance.<sup>331</sup> As many standard parts were used in housebuilding, in most cases, detail drawings were also not usually required. The responsibility for much of the detail was with the craftsmen, such as the plasterer, carpenter and bricklayer. This is also reflected in the general lack of dimensions on the drawings.

It is also possible that dimensions were not required because they could be taken with a scale ruler from the drawings, but it seems more plausible that dimensions were not needed for the same reason that details were not generally provided by an architect. The details would be worked out by craftsmen using standard components; the dimensions could be adjusted accordingly. Drawings were only a guide, albeit to scale, of what the building should look like, depicting the general arrangement of the parts. It was not necessarily intended to specify all these parts in detail, as they were known to the craftsman. It was also easier to work out much of the construction details in direct communication between the craftsmen involved because they worked directly for the speculative builder, who was also the client, and therefore had authority to make changes at any time during construction. For those reasons, details would usually not need to be specified by an architect before construction. The work of Norfolk & Prior discussed in the remainder of this chapter helps to clarify the amount of details and drawing provided for various houses they were involved in.

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<sup>330</sup> This was the case when Prior prepared specifications for the developer/land owner Mitchell who contracted the builder Woodham to construct houses in Fordmill Road in 1924. 'Prior Collection', Item 289.

<sup>331</sup> The builder Charles Farley, for example, had to provide specifications for his proposed houses in Acton to the estate owner and freeholder (See section on Farley below in this chapter). 'Prior Collection', Item 987d.

One of the most important parts of Norfolk & Prior's architectural services was to prepare building applications to the District Surveyor under the London Building Acts (LBA), which needed to be submitted before construction (Figure 152). However, these applications did not necessarily involve much design work, as they only required a partial floor plan. As townplanning applications did not yet exist and building applications were not concerned with the appearance of buildings, elevations were not always needed in Victorian and Edwardian Lewisham (see also discussion in chapter two about the varying standards of building applications across London in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century). An important aspect of these building application drawings was to establish the drainage of the houses, which needed to be approved by the district surveyor. One of Norfolk & Prior's key roles as architect-surveyor was to mediate between builder and council as a technical expert, dealing with this regulatory control. The nature of this mediating role formed the basis of an increasing workload in the architectural field and of an expansion of construction professions. As mentioned before, particularly the introduction of a townplanning application after the Second World War greatly increased the workload for architects.<sup>332</sup> The building applications, however, were only part of Norfolk & Prior's work, as architect-surveyor and their involvement would often go further. They often also provided floor plans and elevations, and in some rare cases even architectural details. The degree of detail depended on how standard the building part, house type or floor plan was. Even if most elements were based on other typical examples, some adaptation of these was always necessary. As the following examples show, standard floor plans could sometimes be reused but usually needed to be adjusted for example according to varying plot dimensions, house sizes, changing fashions, or technological improvements (e.g. kitchen, bathrooms).

#### **4.5 Norfolk & Prior's Work and their Builder Clients**

Norfolk & Prior worked for several different builders in Lewisham (Figure 153).<sup>333</sup> It would be difficult to discuss the work for every one of them in the same degree of detail. The following account therefore had to be selective by focussing in more detail on the work for some of these builders, in particular Charles Farley, James Watt and

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<sup>332</sup> Today, applications to the council are still a crucial part of the architect's work and to a degree often prompt the appointment.

<sup>333</sup> The builders that the author could find records of are: James Watt, C. Craggs Storey, W. Rolfe, H. Woodham & Sons, G. H. Walker, Fred K. Taylor, W. Bailey, A. Bagge and C. Farley.



Fred Taylor, while only touching on the work for others such as James Laird, Charles Walker and George Walker. That selection was based on the material available and on the volume of work that these particular builders produced with Norfolk & Prior's involvement. There were other prolific builders in the area who are not discussed because they did not or only on a rare occasion employ the services of Norfolk & Prior as architect-surveyors.

The most detailed record of Norfolk & Prior's architectural services is available for the work they did for the builder Charles Farley. His letterheads indicate that he lived and worked in Catford, then in Brighton Road, Purley, and then moved to Horn Lane, Acton for a new housing development that he secured leases for.<sup>334</sup> During his time in Catford, Farley built a fair number of houses and the contact with Norfolk & Prior must have been established then. However, there is no indication that Farley employed their services when he worked in Catford. From 1899 to 1901, Farley constructed in several steps a total of 57 houses in Davenport Road as the freeholder, one of which also became his residence until he moved away from Catford (Figure 158 & 159). In 1902, he also built several houses in nearby Farley Road and Laleham Road. For the houses in Davenport Road, Farley submitted his own building applications, and the basic drawings were signed by him. The houses are a copy of a typical London terraced house of the time, but Farley added his own little twist. The entrances are decorated by a rather unusual lintel detail which is difficult to classify in its stylistic influence (Figure 160). As there is no indication of any involvement from an architect, it seems likely that it was Farley's own design, probably together with the plasterer who built it.

Albeit an experienced speculative builder, Farley was by no means the most productive of those working with Norfolk & Prior. Their work for Farley is well recorded for other reasons. For one, he is one of the few clients of Norfolk & Prior who they worked for outside of Lewisham. This means that most of the communication between Stone and Farley took place via letters, rather than via verbal communication, which would have been the norm. The other reason is that Farley's letters were kept in the Norfolk & Prior archive because he declared bankruptcy in July 1905. Prior was appointed as a member of the committee of inspection. At that point, Farley owed Norfolk & Prior £155-8s-6d,

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<sup>334</sup> 'Prior Collection', Items 987d-f.

which was a large sum at the time, considering that new terraced houses in the area could be purchased for £310.<sup>335</sup> Norfolk & Prior kept a meticulous record of their correspondence and scope of work as proof for the bankruptcy court in order to claim a percentage of the remaining estate. Stone prepared a list of all the work done to date and the fees (Figure 156). This list shows clearly that Stone prepared the designs for the proposed housing and also acted as a technical consultant regarding the drainage. In summary, these were the services that Stone provided for Charles Farley:

- Design with floor plans, front and back elevations
- Surveying and levelling of proposed road and sewers for Acton Council
- Drainage applications with block plans
- Brief specification required by freeholder's architect

The specifications were not for Farley's benefit but, as a condition of the leasehold, for the freeholder to check and approve the materials of the new houses built on his estate. The elevations and floor plans, however, were prepared by Stone for the construction of the houses, not only as a leasehold condition. In one of his letters, Farley stated that he required tracings for Cumberland Road immediately, because he had 'nothing to work to'.<sup>336</sup> Yet, he also indicated that he would make changes to his liking and changes on site which might differ from the plans and elevations provided by Stone. In one of his letters, Farley instructed Stone: 'Please show partition, I can put the Brick partition then where I like afterwards'.<sup>337</sup>

While Farley had an influence on the architecture of the houses, Stone could clearly be seen as the designer, at least of the overall external appearance and floor plan layout. Farley expressed how pleased he was with the drawings when he saw them for the first time.<sup>338</sup> However, he also added his own suggestions and preferences: 'I want a little wood on top floor and Stucco work'.<sup>339</sup> He also stated that he had already purchased windows and therefore wanted to use them. This correspondence confirms that Stone was the architect, but his work was dependant on Farley's quite specific ideas and

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<sup>335</sup> For example those sold by F. Taylor (Figure 203).

<sup>336</sup> Farley's letter to Stone, 18.08.04, 'Prior Collection', Item 987d.

<sup>337</sup> Farley's letter to Stone, 20.08.1904, Ibid.

<sup>338</sup> Farley's letter to Stone, 20.08.1904, Ibid.

<sup>339</sup> Farley's letter to Stone, 26.07.1904, Ibid.

instructions as client and builder, and also on the parts available. It also shows that the design was not fixed when the builder used the drawings. He used it as guidance but varied it on site to his own liking or to take account of practical considerations such as available parts (windows in this case). The building's appearance was a result of the collaboration between architect and builder. The separation between design and construction stage was not clear-cut. Charles Farley also provided Stone with rough sketches of his floor plan ideas, but these were not to scale and were not useable as floor plans to build from (Figure 157). Farley therefore needed Stone to provide him with floor plans and elevations to build the houses. Farley, however, could make up the internal decorations or make alterations to his own liking based on what was available on the market.

In terms of London's speculative housing of the time, the correspondence between Norfolk & Prior and Charles Farley is a rare record of communication between builder and architect. With the other builders in Lewisham, the communication took mainly place verbally, and written communication, even where it has been preserved, was usually very brief and not very informative.<sup>340</sup> However, there are other types of useful records of Norfolk & Prior's work, such as a great number of drawings.

Among their work for Lewisham's builders, of particular interest is that for James Watt, who was by far the most prolific among them (Figure 161). Houses built by him can be found all over Lewisham. The local historian Ken George estimates that Watt built an astonishing total of 2203 houses in Lewisham in his lifetime.<sup>341</sup> James Watt's career beginnings, however, were rather humble. He came to Catford from Scotland in 1883 with the builder James Laird, and worked for him initially as a foreman. In 1890, Watt set up on his own and built his first two houses in Wildfell Road, Catford (Figure 164).<sup>342</sup> According to Ken George, in 1892, he built No. 38 and 40 across the road and then moved there. Watt then went on to build a row of terraced houses in Wildfell Road (Figure 165) and in nearby Brookdale Road, and eventually the whole of nearby Morena

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<sup>340</sup> A typically short note from James Watt reads, for example, 'Dear Sir, Please hurry plans for 69-79, Downhill Road, Catford. I am, Yours truly, J Watt', 'Prior Collection', Item 1080.

<sup>341</sup> Ken George, 'James Watt (1856-1932), Master Builder'.

<sup>342</sup> According to George, Watt's first houses are 37 & 39 Wildfell Road. However, the author could not verify this information with absolute certainty because the building act case files are not clear. The maps were not drawn to scale and the houses were not yet numbered. *Ibid.*

Street in stages from 1894 to 1897 in exactly the same style.<sup>343</sup> These small houses feature some Italianate detailing such as round arches over the entrance also used in many other terraced houses of the time.<sup>344</sup>

Watt only began employing Norfolk & Prior for building applications in the early 1900s. And even then, only some of the applications were prepared and submitted by Norfolk & Prior, while others were still prepared and submitted by Watt's own office. Figure 153 is therefore by no means a complete account of Watt's building work in Lewisham but only indicative of applications that were submitted by Norfolk & Prior on his behalf. Watt's first application for the houses in Wildfell Road was submitted by himself (Figure 163). The lack of scale and the freehand sketch of the drainage (in red) show that it was not prepared by an architect or surveyor. We do not know if Watt was using more professional drawings for the construction of his first houses. Judging by the quality of the building application drawings, it seems possible that Watt made do with his own skills and, rather than employing a professional designer, based the construction more on his experience as a builder, possibly on copies of plans he obtained elsewhere. However, there is no certainty for lack of evidence.

The obvious question is: what prompted Watt to employ Norfolk & Prior if he first worked without them? When the Board of Works for the Lewisham District was abolished in 1900 and replaced by the Metropolitan Borough of Lewisham, the requirements for building applications also increased. This undoubtedly made it more complicated for a builder to submit his own applications with only sketchy information. The quality of drawings and information submitted by Watt for his houses in Wildfell Road (Figure 163) would not have been sufficient for applications after 1900; they were more detailed and included for example the gradient of drainage runs along the street and a plan of external walls, also indicating the position of bathrooms and kitchens (Figure 152). Those gradually increasing requirements for the applications to the

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<sup>343</sup> *Building & Drainage Applications 1856-1900*, Vol. 50, Lewisham Local History Archive

<sup>344</sup> Italianate features were common in Victorian domestic buildings. Osborne House for Queen Victoria and Prince Albert was completed in 1851 in that style and its features were widely imitated. The style received its name because it references Italian Renaissance architecture of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In ordinary speculative housing, the style was mixed eclectically with other influences and can often only be identified in certain features such as characteristic round arches or eaves supported by brackets. See for example: Trevor Yorke, *British Architectural Styles: An Easy Reference Guide* (Newbury: Countryside Books, 2009), p. 42; Trevor Yorke, *The Victorian House Explained* (Newbury: Countryside Books, 2005), pp. 46-48.

council were part of the rising involvement of an architect or surveyor in speculative housing.

Watt's first houses in Wildfell Road and Morena Road are in themselves typical and unremarkable but they already indicate the style of much of his future work. The houses built by him in the next 15 years in Lewisham vary in size and type, but they generally use the same stylistic elements of Italianate round arches over the entrance doors and angled bay windows with stucco decorations (e.g. Figure 166). Watt continued to use variations of the style of these first houses. The reasons for this astonishing consistency are subject to speculation. It is, however, clear that these features were easy to apply to a typical terraced house at the time. Millar's *Plastering, Plain and Decorative* shows that such stucco details were at the core of the plasterer's repertoire around the turn of the century.<sup>345</sup> Skilled plasterers, with a sufficiently large workshop for storing and producing the moulds, were capable to prepare and apply such standard decorative stucco elements with little additional instructions needed. The techniques for external stuccowork and internal plastering were similar; the main difference was that, externally, a cement-based mixture was used instead of the plaster used internally. However, both were considered part of the plastering trade at the time, the skills and techniques of which are well documented in Millar's guidebook. External stucco was formed with concrete either in-situ (on site) with special tools or temporary moulds (Figure 171), or, where possible, the stucco was cast off-site in moulds and then integrated as one of the building blocks of the wall (Figure 170).

The use of these typical and standardised decorative elements meant that the plasterer could apply and set them out on site to his own details without the need for detailed architectural drawings. Millar confirms that popular moulds were reused to copy decorations for different buildings; he laments that 'jerry-builders (...) often obtain copies of the models at unfair prices and by unjust means'.<sup>346</sup> Alternatively, and particularly on prominent public buildings, such decorations were formed in stone. This was, however, more labour intensive, and in speculative housing, the more economic option would have been to create large decorative elements in concrete. Other standard components such as windows or brick sizes would also shape the elevation and

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<sup>345</sup> William Millar, *Plastering, Plain and Decorative*, 2nd edn (London: Batsford, 1899).

<sup>346</sup> Millar, p. 229.

determine sizes of openings set out on site. An architect or surveyor, such as Stone, therefore only needed to arrange the placement and type of these elements on the drawings; the detailed construction and setting out could be left to the discretion of the builder.

Watt continued to use similar external decorations for his houses for almost two decades before he changed style. He was still using the same style for example for houses in Torridon road built in 1908, which by then must have looked out of fashion to the educated customer (Figure 166). Watt's stylistic continuity, however, also had a number of advantages. Tried and tested components made the production of the houses more effective and would keep costs predictable. It is also likely that Watt would therefore continue to build in the style that had been well accepted with customers in the past and what, from experience, he knew would sell. While there were other styles used in Lewisham, Watt's preferred façade type was not unique to his houses. It was used by several other local builders and the same style also found its way into Stone's drawings for example for houses in Bromley Road for the builder Barley in 1902 (Figure 179). And the same style was even used for other sizes of houses for tenants with higher incomes. The houses built by James Laird (the builder that Watt used to work for) along Lewisham Park in 1904-05 are an example of the same style applied to substantially larger dwellings for wealthy upper-middle class tenants (Figure 180). Although the houses are semi-detached and significantly larger than Watt's first houses in Wildfell Road, the style has similarities, which can be seen in the semi-circular door arches with keystones, for example.

The origins of Watt's preferred style are not easy to pinpoint. As mentioned before, he was not the only one to use it in Lewisham and not the first. He was also not the only one to use it London-wide. In fact, the houses he built are very close in style and detail to the house that Rasmussen identifies as the typical London terraced house of the time in *London: the Unique City* (Figure 40).<sup>347</sup> Corbett, for example, also used a similar style and details as Watt for houses constructed in Illford (Figure 178). The prevalence of the style in the area indicates that local precedents seem to have been an influence on Watt's houses. While the style and overall composition of Watt's houses built in

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<sup>347</sup> Rasmussen, p. 301.

Lewisham bear some resemblance to pattern-book examples, as far as the author could establish, they are never identical copies (see for example Figure 185 & 186). Furthermore, as Henry Glassie pointed out, pattern-books were also themselves influenced by built examples in the first place. As mentioned, Watt's preferred Italianate round arches were also used in other examples of well-known residential genteel architecture such as Osborne House built for Queen Victoria and Prince Albert in 1851, which contributed to the popularity of this style.<sup>348</sup> Additionally, the style could be easily produced because, as shown above, the skills and components were readily available (e.g. stucco from standard moulds).

In 1907, the style of Watt's houses suddenly changed when he built those in Ravensbourne Park (Figure 187 - 190). Subsequently, Watt also used the same new design for his houses built in Arran Road from 1908 onwards (Figure 168) and those in 1910 in Eliot Park (Figure 182 & 183). Many of their features, such as hanging tiles, first-floor render, timber bays and half-timbering, were inspired by Arts and Crafts and Vernacular Revival ('Olde English'), rather than the classical tradition.<sup>349</sup> Despite the change in style, the continuity in the overall configuration of the houses is remarkable. The houses in Eliot Park were built in a different style but still essentially follow a similar elevation layout as older houses in the area. This is particularly apparent when comparing the elevations with other houses built in Lewisham Park by James Laird (Figure 183 & 181). The main change to Watt's earlier houses is the new porch and the bay window, formed in timber with tile hangings rather than in brick and stone. Such timber bay windows with tile hangings were pioneered for example in houses in Bedford Park designed by Edward William Godwin in the 1870s. Consequently, the style became fashionable and was widely adopted in London's speculative housing, initiated by builders such as William Willett.<sup>350</sup> Arts & Crafts or Vernacular Revival inspired features (as in Watt's houses) continued to influence the style in London's speculative housing of the inter-war period.<sup>351</sup> Apart from being fashionable, however, timber bay windows might have also been more economic and cost effective by

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<sup>348</sup> Yorke, *The Victorian House Explained*, pp. 46-48.

<sup>349</sup> Trevor Yorke, *The Edwardian House Explained* (Newbury: Countryside Books, 2006), pp. 44-50; Trevor Yorke, *Arts & Crafts House Styles* (Newbury: Countryside Books, 2011), p. 40.

<sup>350</sup> Prout.

<sup>351</sup> Yorke, *British Architectural Styles: An Easy Reference Guide*, p. 55.

eliminating the need for additional brickwork and concrete, and by making use of technological advances of timber processing for joinery items (see also chapter five).

After Ravensbourne Park, Watt continued to use this new style for most of his new houses before 1914. He had, however, been comparatively late to move away from Italianate detailing, even compared to some other builders in the area. Fred Taylor, for example, built houses without any distinctly Italianate features on the façade already in 1903 in Lewisham, bringing them somewhat closer in appearance to the red-brick aesthetic of Arts & Crafts housing (Figure 197). It is conceivable that it was a change in market conditions which upset Watt's usual routine and prompted him to update the style of his houses to appear more fashionable to a choosier clientele. By 1907, when he began building the houses in Ravensbourne Park, the housing market in London had fallen into recession.<sup>352</sup> Even in an area as popular as Lewisham, Watt therefore had to make an additional effort to ensure that houses were appealing to potential buyers. This was particularly true for the upper-middle class market that the large semi-detached houses in Ravensbourne Park, Eliot Park and even Arran Road were aimed at.

The drawings for the Ravensbourne Park houses are one of the very few construction details for speculative housing in Norfolk & Prior's collection (Figure 189 & 190). For one, detailed drawings were useful because of a deviation from previous construction standards. However, more importantly, this change in style to timber window bays for the houses in Eliot Park contravened the building regulations at the time and therefore prompted a discussion with the District Surveyor. As a remnant of the building laws passed after the great fire of London, exposed timber on a house façade still needed special dispensation because it constituted a potential fire hazard. The District Surveyor therefore insisted that the timber bays needed to be made from hardwood rather than cheaper softwood. Without the District Surveyor's special permission, the timber bay windows that became the norm in the inter-war period, were still in contravention of the London Building Acts in the Edwardian period, and were therefore more common outside London where the acts did not apply.<sup>353</sup>

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<sup>352</sup> Offer, p. 261.

<sup>353</sup> Edwards, p. 68.



While the number of houses built by Watt was unparalleled, there were other builders that worked with Norfolk & Prior, who also made a significant contribution to Lewisham's housing. One of these was Fred K. Taylor, who moved into the area from West Dulwich in 1903 and who lived on the St Germans estate in 171 Wellmeadow Road, Hither Green. Most of the houses that Taylor built were located on the southwestern end of the Corbett estate. This was the last part of the estate to be developed, which is also why some of its roads (e.g. Merchiston Road) were not yet on the Corbett sales brochure map published in 1906 (Figure 149). According to the district surveyor's returns, Taylor built his first houses in the area in Ardfillan Road in 1903. Initially, he was still based in 21 Park Road, West Dulwich, but moved to Hither Green in the same year. The last houses he built in the area were in Brownhill Road and were begun in 1910. In these eight years, Taylor left a distinct mark on the appearance of this part of Hither Green. Houses built by him can be found in Ardfillan Road, Torridon Road, Ardoch Road, Birkhall Road, Dowanhill Road, Balloch Road and in Brownhill Road. In all, he built a total of well over 300 houses on the Corbett estate, a remarkably high number of houses completed within such a short period for a small local builder.

It appears that Corbett employed a mixture of development systems on the St Germans estate (Figure 149). The district surveyor's returns and also the available conveyance deeds suggest that, in Lewisham, many landowners sold the plots to speculative builders with the freehold. Corbett was an exception in this regard. In the first years, as well as being the landowner and developer, Corbett also appears to have taken on the role of main builder. In 1896, the building applications for houses on the estate came directly from Corbett's St Germans Estate Office, from a certain W.J. Walker. This is also confirmed by the direct sale of houses as advertised in Corbett's sales brochure of 1906. By the time Taylor began building houses on the estate, however, Corbett had reverted to selling the leasehold or the freehold of the plots to other speculative builders. Taylor sold the houses he built with the freehold, which suggests that he also owned it (Figure 201). Taylor must have had access to considerable financial resources in order to construct such a large number of houses within only a few years and to also purchase the freehold of these plots. Much in contrast to Watt's humble beginnings in Wildfell Road, Taylor also lived in a fairly substantial semi-detached house in Wellmeadow Road which suggests that he was financially already well off when he moved into the area.

Taylor initially did not work with Norfolk & Prior but with a different architect-surveyor called E.J.W. Hider based in 8 Cliffords Inn, Clerkenwell. Hider prepared (unusually detailed) building applications with plans and elevations as well as detailed construction drawings for Taylor's houses in Ardfillan Road, Balloch Road and Dowanhill Road (Figure 196). The style of the houses is a composed and pragmatic reinterpretation of a common Edwardian type. Hider's house designs have typical rectangular bay windows, which were typical in the Edwardian period. However, the common external stucco is stripped away. It is probably too far-fetched to regard Taylor's red brick houses in Lewisham as Arts & Crafts, but at least for the choice of materials, Hider may well have taken some inspiration from it. For each row of terraced houses, he slightly varied the details, such as the entrance porches or gables, and also the configuration of the floor plans (Figure 192 & 193). The main features of the facades, however, are very similar throughout. The quality of Hider's drawings and his skilled variations of a standard house type carry the hand of an experienced housing architect-surveyor who employed a well-rehearsed stylistic routine.

For his houses in Ardfillan Road, Dowanhill Road and Balloch Road, Taylor employed Hider to prepare the design and also the building applications. In 1907, however, Taylor switched to Norfolk & Prior instead as architect-surveyors for the construction of 41 houses in Ardoch Road (Figure 194) and 36 houses in Muirkirk Road (Figure 198). In 1909, Taylor built a further 19 houses in Merchiston Road (Figure 199) and, in 1910, eight houses in Brownhill Road and six houses in Hither Green Lane in 1910 (Figure 197), all of these with Norfolk & Prior. The reasons for Taylor's switch from Hider to Norfolk & Prior are subject to speculation. A local architect-surveyor might have been more convenient and cost effective. It is also likely that Taylor saved money because the scope of Norfolk & Prior's services was not as extensive as Hider's.

Whereas Hider effectively supplied new floor plans, elevations and details for each of the rows of terraces, Norfolk & Prior only provided drawings for one house type, which was then repeated over and over in slightly different configurations (Figure 200). Out of Hider's slight variations of the same theme, one generic type - more or less a copy of his design - found its way into the elevations and plans that Stone prepared (Figure 200). To Taylor, the advantage was that he did not have to obtain new designs for each of the

houses. Norfolk & Prior only had to prepare a building application for each new row of terraces. Stone only had to supply new drawings when the standard house type could not be used. After Norfolk & Prior took over from Hider, Taylor went on to build the same house with minor variations (Figure 194 - Figure 199). The repeated reuse of this exact same template was possible because he built only one house size on the Corbett estate. Today, Taylor's reuse of Hider's designs without his involvement would have probably been a copyright breach unless there had been an agreement in place that Taylor owned the rights to the design. Whatever the legal details were, Taylor appears to have found a successful formula that he had no desire to change. Combining several of Hider's designs, Stone created one standard house type. Taylor could then simply reuse this same type for the remaining houses that he built in the area after 1906. To achieve variation, he mirrored the position of the bays occasionally. Or he simply reused one of Hider's previous designs (such as in Ardoch Road) for another part of the estate.

Some of Hider's drawings were clearly prepared and used for construction. Others were prepared by him for building applications to the District Surveyor. Additionally, drawings also seem to have been required for approval by Corbett as the estate owner. Although the evidence suggests that Taylor owned the freehold, the Corbett estate office still appears to have maintained a certain degree of control over the development. In one letter to Stone, Taylor mentions that he has 'received the plans approved by the Corbett Estates, so everything is now in order' (Figure 206). This particular letter referred to the corner house of Muirkirk/Merchiston Road, when Taylor diverted from his standard house design. The house had to be set back from the pavement and the plan therefore had to be changed to be narrower and longer. Since the corner house had to be approved by the Corbett estate office, we can assume that drawings of the houses were generally required for approval (Figure 200).<sup>354</sup> Thus, the purpose of Stone's drawings was not only as construction information but also to comply with conditions imposed by the estate owner.

While Hider was clearly the designer of Taylor's first houses, in this particular case, an important part of Stone's role was again to interface with the council for the building

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<sup>354</sup> Unfortunately, the author could not find any deeds for the Corbett estate for further clarification.

applications and to adapt Hider's designs. For a creative spirit like Stone with serious architectural ambitions, the copy of someone else's work was probably unsatisfactory. Even when Hider's involvement ended, the main variations in the design were initiated by Taylor rather than by Stone. One of these changes was, for example, the entrance canopy. Taylor replaced the original, tiled canopies with mock concrete balconies with metal railings. This becomes apparent when comparing Stone's drawings with those of Taylor's sales advert depicting the built houses (Figure 201). The balcony was unusable, but added playfulness to the otherwise serene facade. The balcony is not the only discrepancy to the original design; the ground floor plan in the advertised houses is also longer to the rear than in Stone's drawings. That changing the porches was Taylor's decision is confirmed in a letter to Stone when the District Surveyor questions the change. As in the case of Farley mentioned above, the builder used the drawings as guidance but made his own alterations on site.

In much of the work for Watt and for Taylor, it is difficult to see Stone's unmistakable signature as a designer. Judged purely by his work for Watt and Taylor, Stone rarely expressed his own individual style in the design of many of the houses he worked on. The builders appear to have followed their own style and ideas and Stone's signature is often difficult to identify in the design of the houses. It is easier to spot a 'Watt house' in Lewisham than a 'Stone house'. Watt generally followed the style he already knew, and Taylor, as it turns out, received the main style of the houses from, Hider, rather than Stone. It is clear that in Lewisham's housing, Stone often had to subordinate his own ambitions of self-expression to the framework of a local house building industry and its traditions. This did not make the houses eye-catching and conspicuous, but they generally blend in with others built in the area. Maybe this could be seen as part of Stone's achievement, which was not about his authorship. The houses were not meant to be different, but were part of a tradition and local house building industry. The houses were meant to appeal to residents who expected a degree of familiarity in the design of their homes. This familiarity was even retained when style changed. Individuality could take place behind a familiar façade. Adolf Loos famously suggested that a house, unlike a work of art, has to please everyone, and that '[t]he work of art is revolutionary; the house is conservative'.<sup>355</sup> This was certainly true for speculative housing in Lewisham

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<sup>355</sup> Loos, p. 82.

at the time. It was not about the signature of the architects of the houses. The style was often a decision of the builder following local traditions, and Stone was one of those who helped putting it together and helped facilitating it. The authorship of the designer was generally secondary, but the resulting houses were in this case no less attractive for it. This subordination of architectural self-expression was perhaps difficult at times for Stone, but that could be an assumption based on our idea of architectural design led by individual authorship. Stone, however, did go on to leave his own mark as a designer on London's cinemas later on.

#### **4.6 Edward Stone's Architectural Influence**

Despite this apparent lack of Stone's architectural signature in much of the work discussed so far, there were still traces of his influence on the design of the housing that he worked on. Even with regards to Watt's houses, an argument for Stone's creative contribution can be made. As discussed above, he cleverly updated Watt's style from Italianate to one inspired by Arts & Crafts and Vernacular Revival by adapting the façade materials and decorations of the houses without completely reinventing their design (Figure 183). Stone hence contributed to the appearance of a large number of houses built by Watt after 1906, and thereby left his mark on Lewisham's housing. Evidently, Stone's redesign of Watt's houses was not pioneering, but the houses gained a new, timelier appearance, while maintaining a sense of familiarity and continuity with local traditions and other housing in the surrounding area. Generally, Stone's role was to help with the planning of houses within existing, fairly prescriptive traditions. However, he also designed houses that carry his signature more clearly.

A good example of Stone's creative contribution is a row of houses that he planned for Charles Walker in Fermor Road (Figure 212 & 213). At first glance, the overall appearance of the houses simply reflects local traditions; a street façade with a single-storey, rectangular bay was common in Lewisham in the Edwardian period. The houses are also similar to others that Charles Walker built previously in Riseldine Street (Figure 214) and even those in Kilmorie Road, which have rectangular bays with brick corners. On Stone's elevations, the width of the large first floor window elegantly relates to the bay below, but Walker did not follow Stone's design in every detail and built the houses with slightly smaller windows with two rather than three mullions.

The most elaborate and distinct contribution by Stone, however, was the flamboyant entrance porches. Each pair of canopies forms a small, pitched roof separated by a brick wall, which provides privacy to the entrance area of each house. The canopy rests on a column, which is supported by an extended bay window sill. This detail looks beautiful on the elevations, but unfortunately it never found its way into the built houses. Walker seems to have simplified the detail to make it easier to build. Stone's signature can also be seen in the floor plans. He included a rear wing, but only on the ground floor, which improved daylighting compared to the more typical double-storey rear wing. At the same time, Stone still managed to create space for a kitchen, dining room and living room on the ground floor. For the houses in Fermor Road, Stone skilfully combined local traditions with some of his own ideas which are particularly apparent in the unusual entrance canopies.

Other houses carry Stone's mark as a designer even more noticeably. In 1910, Stone prepared design drawings for two rows of terraced houses in Brownhill Road and in St Fillan Road for the builder A. Bagge (Figure 217 & 216). The elevations of these houses are distinctly different from those generally built in the area at the time. The façades have an unusually great number of features and intricate details such as different bay windows, different types of oriel windows, elaborate entrance canopies, mock timber gables, a rendered finish to the second floor and lowered eaves. In this instance, Stone had room for more extravagant creativity and expression, yet the buildings are also possibly some of the least successful examples of his work – which might not be entirely his responsibility. His original drawings suggest potentially beautiful houses. Much of what he intended, however, was not built. The details were probably too fussy and complicated to build for Bagge because he altered several of them such as omitting the lowered eaves. Immediately after completion, even with the alterations to Stone's original design, the houses may still have been quite attractive, but they have been badly maintained since then. Their deterioration is exacerbated by their location on a main road within a generally slightly run-down surrounding. Skilled restoration could probably bring back some of the original splendour. Today's deteriorated condition of the houses, however, suggests that Stone's intricate design was not as successful as some of his less expressive ones. The complicated façade required more maintenance and made future neglect by users even more obvious. The houses in

Brownhill Road have not stood up well to the test of time. In comparison, Taylor's and also many of Watt's houses, for example, still look as attractive today as they probably did shortly after completion.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, discrepancies between Stone's drawings and the houses as built were common; the houses for Bagge are no exception. While Stone designed the overall appearance, looking closely, the builders rarely followed Stone's drawings in every detail. It appears that the more elaborate and complicated his designs were, the less likely it was that they would be built exactly as intended. Another example of this discrepancy between drawings and building is the pair of houses in Verdant Lane built by G. W. Richards (Figure 218 & 219). The houses resemble the semi-detached house type that Stone designed for Laird for Lewisham Park and those for Watt in Ravensbourne Park. The bays of the houses in Verdant Lane are constructed in brick and concrete with recessed windows, but without the stucco decoration of the houses in Lewisham Park. In Verdant Lane, the most non-standard façade details were the paired windows above the entrance doors and the curved canopy. Again, neither of these details was built as drawn, and the builder, Richards, opted for a simpler version instead.<sup>356</sup> These discrepancies between drawings and buildings are interesting because they confirm that the control over the design was not solely in the hands of Stone. At the same time, however, they also show that Stone's drawings, although not always taken literally, were indeed used as guidance during construction.

Many of the more prolific builders that Norfolk & Prior worked with such as J. Watt, J. Laird, F. Taylor, C. Walker, G. Walker, and C.C. Storey demonstrated an astonishing continuity in the style of houses they built. There were, of course, overlaps but as a tendency, each of these builders had a preferred house style and type. The builder of some houses could be identified by appearance because he built other houses of the same or very similar style somewhere else in Lewisham (e.g. Figures 166 & 176). For the builders, repetition of a tried and tested design increased efficiency in planning and construction. This stylistic continuity of each builder shows that, as the main decision maker, his influence on the appearance of the houses was crucial. However, as shown above, it does not necessarily mean that builders designed the houses themselves. The

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<sup>356</sup> The canopy could have been demolished over time, but there are no brackets or fixing points left that indicate that it was ever there.

analysis of Norfolk & Prior's housing work shows that builders still often obtained designs originally from someone else.

So far, this chapter has discussed those houses in Lewisham that were built with Norfolk & Prior's involvement at the planning stages. However, there are also a number of designs in their archive that were not built. Among these unbuilt designs is a series of drawings, for example, which were not made for one particular road but which appear to be generic (Figure 230). It is not clear if Stone or someone else in the office was the author as there are no initials or signature on the drawings. The style of the houses suggests that they were produced in the early years of Norfolk & Prior, possibly by one of the original partners. The purpose of these drawings is not clear. Many of them seem to make a point of further optimizing typical house types of the time through intelligent planning. The design of a semi-detached house shown on Figure 230, for example, makes use of the attic space and provides an additional rear conservatory. It is conceivable that these generic drawings were used as an example to show to potential clients. They might have been a marketing tool to demonstrate the added value to potential clients of employing Norfolk & Prior. It is also conceivable that they might have been used as kind of custom-made design patterns, which were sold to build from, but the author could not find any houses in Lewisham that followed these drawings.<sup>357</sup> Many of the proposed desirable features, such as bedrooms in the attic or rear conservatories, were rare in the houses built at the time. The drawings do, however, contain popular features such as square bay windows which were also used on other Norfolk & Prior houses in the area (e.g. Figure 209). Other unbuilt designs in the Prior collection include several incomplete drawings by Stone. On those of Figure 231, for example, he used the same type of timber bay window as for the semi-detached houses in Eliot Park, but in this case for terraced houses. Stone's attempt to apply these bays to terraced houses along with different roof shapes and porches obviously failed as the façade became convoluted and over-complicated to build.

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<sup>357</sup> Although this appears to have taken place in Walthamstow, for example, where, according to Neil Houghton, an ancestor of a prolific local surveying firm of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the builder's merchant Willam Fuller & Co. provided typical house designs along with the materials. Neil Houghton, 'RE: Speculative Building in Walthamstow', 6 September 2011.



#### 4.7 Norfolk & Prior's Floorplans and Interior Design

It must seem a striking omission that, throughout this thesis, the interior of the houses has hardly been discussed. In the following, this section will try to address some of this omission. However, overall the focus of this thesis is on those who designed housing and Norfolk & Prior do not appear to have had much involvement in the interior design and decoration of speculative housing. The interior decoration generally seems to have been in the hands of speculative builders and their craftsmen themselves, probably by using components available from local suppliers and merchants (Figure 240). There is evidence in the Norfolk & Prior archive that Stone worked on shop interiors, for example, but there is no evidence of any such detailed interior design for houses. In terms of the house interiors, Norfolk & Prior's involvement would only go as far as providing floor plans, but any other interior detail and decoration appears to have been the responsibility of the builders. Floorplans were often based on generic types and they were not usually specific to one particular builder but to the size or type of house. This meant that the same, or a very similar floorplan, would be used by a number of different builders. As the most basic distinction, Norfolk & Prior's floorplans can evidently be differentiated as depicting terraced or semi-detached houses. Detached houses were an exception among Lewisham's speculative housing of the time. A rare example is the house built by George Walker in Rutland Walk (Figure 208 & 209) which is detached because only one house could fit on this plot. Besides this rough distinction between terraced and semi-detached houses, the most obvious differences between Norfolk & Prior's floorplans can be seen in the particular articulation (or omission) of the rear wing.

One terraced house floorplan type that was common in Edwardian Lewisham has a long rear wing accommodating the kitchen and scullery on the ground floor and a bathroom and bedroom on the first floor (Figure 228). This type has a long tradition in London's housing and can also be found in Victorian pattern-books (Figure 223). However, where the widths of the plots allowed it, the tendency was to build houses with no rear wing instead (Figure 229). This type without a rear wing was common in the later parts of the Corbett estate, for example. This type was also sometimes built with only a small toilet added onto the rear protruding from the rear façade. The omission of the rear wing improved daylighting to the ground floor and made the construction more efficient. The

disadvantage, however, was that the plot had to be slightly wider to accommodate the same number of rooms.

The wet rooms such as kitchen and bathroom had become more hygienic in the Victorian period through improved drainage and new appliances. This could have helped to make a more compact floorplan type without a rear wing acceptable, thereby placing the bathrooms and kitchen closer to the other living areas. The third type of terraced house plan was a mixture between the first with a long rear wing and the second without (Figure 228). This third type could have, for example, a shortened rear wing which only accommodated the bathroom at the ground floor and sometimes a bedroom on a first floor. The advantage of this type was improved day-lighting while the number of rooms was still maximised. For this third type, Stone could use his creative planning skills most effectively in optimising the spatial arrangement. He often used this floorplan type for those houses where his involvement in the design was the greatest.

The floorplans for semi-detached houses can also be roughly distinguished by the articulation of the rear wing. The first common type of semi-detached house floorplans is very similar to the first type of terraced house floorplans (Figure 224). The main difference is that the semi-detached version allowed for a gap between every second house. This spacing of the houses provided better daylighting and a wider garden but its main appeal was probably the increased social status of a semi-detached house. It was and still is considered a luxury compared to a terraced house, even if there was not much space in between semi-detached houses built in Lewisham at the time.

This first type of semi-detached house floorplan was used, for example, by Watt in Bargery Road and also Eliot Park but, perhaps surprisingly, it was not the most common type. Even when it was used, then usually not along the whole road but only for a number of houses; other floorplans were used for adjacent houses even if the façade remained the same. This was the case, for example in Bargery Road. Other popular semi-detached house floorplan types essentially mirrored the position of the rear wing to align with the side wall of the house, rather than with the party wall (Figure 225). This type was used by Laird in Lewisham Park and by Watt in Bargery Road, Ravensbourne Park, Eliot Park and Arran Road for example. Both, the first and second type, maximize

the number of rooms while still allowing enough space for gaps between the houses so that the houses can be sold as *semi-detached*. The third semi-detached floorplan type made do without the rear wing (Figure 226). As with the comparable terraced house floorplan without a rear wing, the omission of the rear wing also improved daylighting and made the houses more efficient to build. In order to still achieve the same number of rooms on fairly narrow plots, this third semi-detached floorplan type is generally deeper than the first two (at its narrowest point, of course). And in the example shown, the rooms that could not be accommodated in the rear wing are instead in the attic.

Generally, neither Stone, nor the builders he worked with, ‘reinvented the wheel’ with regards to floorplans. They generally copied typical types that were widely used throughout London. The first terrace house floorplan type with a long rear wing was particularly widespread, and matches the before mentioned ‘most common London house’ identified by Rasmussen (Figure 40). Stone can, however, be attributed with designing very skilled examples that optimised and varied common floorplan types, which is demonstrated, for example, on the plans for houses in Fermor Road (Figure 213) and those in Brownhill Road (Figure 217). To further discuss the floorplans and interior with regards to topics such as decorations and use is beyond the remit of this thesis, and has been comprehensively discussed in other literature.<sup>358</sup>

#### 4.8 Conclusion

Considering that this chapter is about Norfolk & Prior as one of the ‘other architects who made London’, the conclusion of this chapter is perhaps surprising. On the one hand, Norfolk & Prior are not the chief architects of Lewisham’s housing we might have perhaps imagined. As this discussion of the work has shown, Stone’s influence was often limited and the design of the housing was by no means under his sole control. Instead, design decisions were often made by builders or were determined by available components and local building traditions of craftsmen such as plasterers. Stone often rather assisted in the planning as one of the players within the framework of a complex local housing industry. On the other hand, this analysis of Norfolk & Prior’s work provides a lens through which we can see the connections between the work of different

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<sup>358</sup> For further information on internal decorations in Edwardian houses, see for example: Long, *The Edwardian House: The Middle-class Home in Britain, 1880-1914*.

speculative builders and how it shaped an area such as Lewisham. Norfolk & Prior were not single-handedly responsible for the design of speculative housing in Edwardian Lewisham, but they were one of its key figures and a crucial link between different builders. The case study therefore helps to explain the planning and design process of the houses and decisions that influenced the shape and appearance. It shows that the design was more complex than a clearly defined architect-builder hierarchy. Rather than originating from the pen of a single author, the architecture was often determined by a combination of factors with a variety of authors. This, however, does not necessarily make it any less interesting.

Edward Stone's role in Lewisham's housing was the opposite of the modernist ideal of the all-powerful architect, modelled after 20<sup>th</sup>-century heroes like Le Corbusier. This ideal imagines architects in full control of the design and planning, and the builders as merely those executing their creations. In the case of Norfolk & Prior, the architect was instead just part of a wider process, one of those that facilitated it, rather than the sole or even chief author. If the design of all housing that Norfolk & Prior worked on had carried the signature of one author, any attempt to introduce variety would have felt contrived. Every building would have pointed to the style of one architect. This was not the case in Lewisham. The housing discussed in this chapter was part of a wider tradition; the architect or authorship was in the background. The contribution of various players is part of what makes the design interesting and successful. Stone's role as a designer was rather humble but still interesting. It was to facilitate rather than to dictate. Design in this case was not about the architect, or about the builder, but more about the tenant or buyer.

Edward Stone was perhaps at his best as an architect when he could use his creativity in certain details but when he, at least partly, subordinated exuberant self-expression to local house building traditions and the expertise of some of experienced builders he worked with, like Watt. He was the most successful when he acted more as an aid in the design process rather than with a dictatorial hand. In Lewisham's housing of the period, rather than with one architect, the responsibility for the design was shared among several parties, creating a variety that was not contrived but partly accidental and therefore often very interesting. Just as an entirely Edward Stone-designed Lewisham would have probably been monotonous and undesirable, so would have been one

entirely built by Watt in his preferred style. Stone was one of the architects of Lewisham, but the real architects were therefore also the builders that he worked with who seemed to have had a great deal of influence, which was as crucial as his. As it stands, this patchwork of houses by different builders reflecting different styles and influences has helped to create architecturally attractive and diverse neighbourhoods. Rather than a whole area with large numbers of houses produced by one volume house builder, it was small, local businesses based in the area that constructed the houses. The builders of the houses in Lewisham also had the greatest stake in their quality, as their livelihood personally depended on the sale or rental of them. Today, self-built housing is sometimes cited as a possible alternative to the monotony of today's impersonal volume house building, and as an alternative to the top-down approach of today's housing development. The example of Lewisham shows that the construction and planning of housing by small, local businesses could be another alternative.

The analysis of Norfolk & Prior has also shone more light on the particular crossover occupation of the architect-surveyor. At worst, it was simply a title anyone could use without any actual skills justifying it, as was the case with Charles Farley. At best, however, architect-surveyors such as Edward Stone were technically competent designers and planners. Being particularly active in speculative housing, such architect-surveyors filled a crucial gap in the market at the time. The rise of architect-surveyors but also their ultimate disappearance was shaped by increasing regulations. As the case study has shown, Norfolk & Prior were often employed by local builders to deal with increasingly more complex building applications to the council, and this was an important part of their role. As discussed in this chapter, a builder like Watt was still able to make his own application quite easily for his first houses in Wildfell Road (Figure 163), but this became more difficult for building applications in the Edwardian period (Figure 152). The complexity and scope of the applications continuously rose. After the Town & Country Planning Act in 1947, it would have been unthinkable for a builder to prepare his own applications to the council unless he had specialist training to do so. The increasing regulation of the professions, however, also proved to be the architect-surveyors' downfall, as they had to choose between either the architectural or the surveying profession after protection of the architect's title in 1938.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Speculative House Builders as Architects: The Case of the Readers 1898 – 1939**

## 5.1 Introduction - Speculative House Builders as Architects

The case studies of the previous chapters provided valuable insights about architects of London's speculative housing and the associated planning process. The material discussed above refutes common assumptions, particularly the one that housing was generally designed by builders. Through these case studies and their complex business networks, we have seen that other occupations such as surveyors, architects and draughtsmen undoubtedly played an important part in the planning of house building. The involvement of these other architects, in a sense of someone specifically responsible for the design, was much greater in speculative housing than is widely presumed. Conversely, however, it would be wrong to conclude that builders were not involved in the design of housing and never acted as architects themselves. The foregoing case studies also show that there were instances in which small builders in particular designed the houses they constructed (see for example Peter Arundell & Sons on the Minet estate in chapter three). The contribution of builders as their own architects should not be overlooked and the picture would be incomplete without a case study that focuses on this key figure. The aim of this chapter is to try to develop a better understanding of such speculative builder-architects and to move beyond common myths and misconceptions. Builders who also planned the homes that they constructed, and how this took place in practice, are the core topics of this chapter. The introductory part of the chapter discusses these topics in a wider context. The second part of the chapter focuses on the Readers and their business networks as one of the few cases in which substantial archival material about such a builder-architect of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century is available.

The term 'builder-architect' indicates that there was no division of labour between designing and building, describing someone who performed both roles. This combination of roles reminds us of pre-industrial times, discussed in chapter two, when the division of labour was less evolved. It inevitably evokes the popular myth of the 'master builder', an experienced craftsman who was able to build or direct the trades as necessary, but who was also able to plan a building on his own account. In architectural history, such an individual is often painted as a larger than life figure. In *The Image of the Architect*, Andrew Saint discusses the architects and builders of medieval cathedrals who epitomise the idea of such a master builder. Saint quotes a letter by Ruskin in

which he explains to a friend: ‘the cathedrals were built by companies of men who travelled about, popularly known as ‘Longeur du Bon Dieu’. They had Masters of Works, whose name might, or might not, be of celebrity. He would sketch, plan, and give each inferior workman his bit to do, as he liked best (...).’<sup>359</sup> Should we then imagine the speculative builder-architects of London’s housing at the time as such ‘Masters of Works’?

While there are some parallels, the reality of the work was not as glamorous as we may imagine. A key reason why some speculative builders continued to rely on their own design skills was probably economical. Employing an architect was an extra expense for the small speculative builder that he would seek to avoid if possible, as the fees would have to come out of his profit margins.<sup>360</sup> It is most likely that the builder Thomas Henry Arundell (see chapter three), for example, developed some basic draughting skills for this very reason.<sup>361</sup> Evidence of builders preparing their own house designs can also be found in Victorian literature. In order to make an argument for legal protection of the architect’s work, the architect Andrew Dewar, for example, complains in 1870 about this practice:

In the country towns of Britain we have men calling themselves architects and builders, who, in the evening, are endeavouring with rough horny hands and opaque understanding to draw plans and elevations, and during the day are engaged in the more congenial occupation of hewing stone or planning wood. The result of their lucubrations is a class of buildings which seem to be manufactured by the yard, or moulded by the dozen.<sup>362</sup>

Where did these builders learn the skills to draw architectural plans and elevations? For many crafts such as stone masonry, painting & decorating, plastering, joinery or carpentry, draughting was a useful skill and part of the trade. Being able to create orthographic drawings may not have been an essential requirement for all those who worked in these trades but it was practiced and necessary for the execution and planning

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<sup>359</sup> Saint, *The Image of the Architect*, p. 34.

<sup>360</sup> Stefan Muthesius, p. 251.

<sup>361</sup> See Minet Estate case study

<sup>362</sup> Andrew Dewar, ‘The Dignity of Architects’, *The Builder* (London, 8 January 1870), pp. 25–26 (p. 25).



of more elaborate work.<sup>363</sup> In *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropist*, for example, the main character, Frank Owen, works at a small firm of painters and decorators in Hastings, Rushton & Co. There he prepares a design for a painted ceiling for one of the jobs.<sup>364</sup> His employer, Rushton, approaches Owen with the words: ‘You’re a bit of a hartist, ain’t yer?’, which is all the qualification Owen needs.<sup>365</sup> To complete the work, Owen searches ‘through old numbers of the *Decorators’ Journal* and through the illustrations in other books of designs for example of Moorish work, making rough sketches in pencil’.<sup>366</sup> It is a fictional account, of course, but the process by which the design for the ceiling comes about probably reflected the actual experience of the author, Robert Tressell, who had worked as a painter and decorator for much of his career. As we will see in the following case study, the Readers came from a family of safe builders and designers, and the father of the founding brothers was employed as an engineer draughtsman in a locksmith factory. It seems plausible that these draughting and designing skills were passed on within the family and then eventually applied by Richard Reader in particular to the design of houses.

Further evidence confirms that draughting and designing was a much more integral part of the building trades in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century than it is today. In 1878, *The Illustrated Carpenter & Builder* held a competition for the design of a ‘compact cottage’, ‘suitable for a Workman, such as may be built singly or in pairs, at a cost not to exceed £150 each’. The competition was limited to ‘workmen (journeymen and apprentices) in the building trades’, which in itself shows that they were expected to be able to design houses. The requirements were that the design would include a ‘brief specification (...) at least one elevation, and ground and chamber plan, on one sheet’. The competition attracted several hundred entries and proves that there was no shortage of builders at the time who knew how to design houses (Figure 233). In each of its issues, the *Illustrated Carpenter & Builder* published house designs, usually in response to a readers’ request (Figure 234).<sup>367</sup> These were presumably widely imitated by house builders, in the same

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<sup>363</sup> Kit Wedd, ‘Lecture: The Small Contractors and Their Workmen’ (Art Workers’ Guild, 6 Queen Square, London WC1, 2012).

<sup>364</sup> As Tressell was making a political point of course about capitalism. Owen’s boss, Mr. Rushton, takes most of the client’s fee for the work, exploiting Owen’s skills and labour. Tressell.

<sup>365</sup> Tressell, p. 118.

<sup>366</sup> Tressell, p. 121.

<sup>367</sup> The *Illustrated Carpenter & Builder* also had a ‘designing club’, where members could submit designs for publication.

way as Frank Owen consulted the *Decorator's Journal*, or Richard Reader consulted *Bungalows and Small Country Houses* (see case study below).<sup>368</sup> A compilation of house designs from the *The Illustrated Carpenter & Builder* was published as a book in 1908,<sup>369</sup> and example house designs submitted by readers continued to feature in the periodical, which advertised itself as having 'the widest circulation among tradesmen', also in the interwar period.

Formal technical training was still in its infancy at the turn of the century; most of it took place informally on the job.<sup>370</sup> There was, however, no shortage of instruction books, such as the series on various building and architectural draughting topics published by B.T. Batsford, Holborn, or by Cassell, Petter, Galpin & Co, for example, which could be used by an autodidact.<sup>371</sup> Draughting was also taught in evening classes, such as those held by the Science and Art Department, South Kensington, although it is not clear how widely such classes were attended by speculative builders.<sup>372</sup> Stefan Muthesius suggests that,

after 1870 some sort of elementary art training under the strict and methodical supervision of South Kensington would be available to most children, but secondary schooling and more specialist training had a slow start, apart from some evening classes. By the 1890s, however, many building manuals, like Rivingtons' and Mitchell, are arranged according to the South Kensington Syllabus and the stages of the examinations reflected in the hierarchy among builders and architects.<sup>373</sup>

The course offered by the Science and Art Department (from 1899 part of the Board of Education), South Kensington, on Building Construction is particularly interesting as an

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<sup>368</sup> *Bungalows and Small Country Houses*.

<sup>369</sup> *Modern Cottages and Villas: a Series of Designs for Small Houses Costing from £150 to £1000, Selected from the 'Illustrated Carpenter and Builder'* (John Dicks Press, 1908).

<sup>370</sup> Stefan Muthesius, p. 252.

<sup>371</sup> E.g. Charles Frederick Mitchell, *Building Construction and Drawing*, 1888; H.W. Roberts, *Architectural Sketching & Drawing in Perspective* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1916); Ellis A. Davidson, *Drawing for Stonemasons* (General Books, 2012); Ellis A. Davidson, *Linear Drawing, Showing the Application of Practical Geometry to Trade and Manufactures*, 1868; Ellis A. Davidson, *The Elements of Building Construction and Architectural Drawing* (Cassell, 1869).

<sup>372</sup> Boyle, for example, mentions that the Readers took evening classes but does not give any further details where Boyle, *Builders of Repute: The Story of Reader Bros*.

<sup>373</sup> Stefan Muthesius, p. 252.

early example of formal technical training, targeting those involved in building construction such as draughtsmen, builders, surveyors or architects. The 1903 course syllabus shows that architectural draughting and also sketching were an essential part of it, with the focus being on drawing of ‘Building Construction, not drawing in the abstract’.<sup>374</sup> A typical examination question would, for example, require the student to draw an elevation of a 4’ x 2’6” casement window to scale.<sup>375</sup>

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, formal technical training became a more integral part of the building trades. The LCC’s Brixton School of Building was established in 1904.<sup>376</sup> By the 1930s, *The Illustrated Carpenter and Builder* featured every week a section dedicated to a different aspect of the examinations by the City and Guilds of London Institute, which had been first established in 1876 to improve the technical education of craftsmen. For each of the topics, such as carpentry and joinery, some aptitude in orthographic drawing was essential to complete the examination. The number of institutions that provided technical training increased in the inter-war period, with some offering evening classes, such as the London based Technological Institute of Great Britain, founded in 1917 (Figure 232), and others offering tuition by post, such as the Bennett College in Sheffield. Overall, however, a history of crafts skills education in England seems to be missing and the available information is fragmented, which would be a useful area of further research.

The design of houses was made easier by the high degree of repetition and standardisation in speculative housing. As discussed in chapter three, this standardisation already began with the layout of the estates, which was, as we have seen in the previous case studies, usually prepared by surveyors before the auctioning of the plots. For a typical London terrace, the plot width to which a builder worked did not vary significantly (Figure 40). In *Lost London*, Philip Davies provides a compelling, if even perhaps exaggerated, illustration of the influence of traditional surveying practices on estate layouts during the Georgian and early Victorian period, highlighting this high degree of repetition:

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<sup>374</sup> Charles Frederick Mitchell and George Arthur Mitchell, *Building Construction and Drawing* (B.T. Batsford, 1902), p. 353.

<sup>375</sup> Mitchell and Mitchell, p. 385.

<sup>376</sup> ‘Brixton School of Building Collection’, 1902, GB 2110 BSB, London South Bank University.

Neighbourhoods were laid out by surveyors who used acres, furlongs, rods and chains – measurements which had been in common usage for marking out arable land since the ninth century. An acre was the length of a furlong (660ft) and its width was one chain (66ft). For shorter lengths a perch, a pole or a rod were used. There were four rods to one chain and a London workman's house had a frontage of one rod – 16 ft 6 in – so entire districts were created based on endogenous proportional relationships.<sup>377</sup>

During the period *c.* 1870-1939, plot width varied more than suggested by Davies. The substantive collection of auction plans from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century held at the local history archive in Walthamstow shows plot widths that varied anywhere from about 15 to 20 feet for terraced and up to even 50 feet for the highest class of detached houses (Figure 236-237).<sup>378</sup> 16, 17, 18, 19 or 20 feet and even 15 feet were all common widths. The estate layouts discussed in the previous case studies also show a certain variation in the plot widths (see for example Figure 237). But even if we take a certain variation into account, the configuration of the basic, common terraced and semi-detached types would not need to change significantly. If the typical site was between 15 to 18 feet, the options for the builder to depart from the standard Victorian floor type with a long rear wing (such as the one in Rasmussen's illustration, Figure 40) were limited, unless he would accept a reduction in the number of rooms. If the plot was wide enough, say 25 feet, a semi-detached house with a small passage at the side would be preferred as it was regarded as being of higher status than a terraced house and could therefore be sold for a higher price.

The repetition and standardisation apparent in the plot layouts continued in the construction details of the houses. Details such as wall materials, wall thicknesses, foundations, and floor and roof construction were influenced by the London Building Acts (as discussed in chapter two) but also by the available parts. Typical bay, door and window widths, for example, were set out to brick dimensions; a typical entrance door opening of a 17 feet terraced house, for example, was therefore likely to be four bricks wide. A bay window was also set out to brick lengths. Many of the standard parts like interior plaster decorations, fire places, decorative tiles, ironwork as well as sanitary

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<sup>377</sup> Philip Davies, *Lost London, 1870-1945*, rev. edn (Coxley Green: Atlantic Publishing, 2012), pp. 7–8.

<sup>378</sup> Walthamstow Local History Archive, W72.2

fittings and drainage components could be bought from builders' merchants such as Young & Marten in Stratford (Figures 238 & 240). Other 'non-standard' parts, such as unusual brick shapes or terracotta decorations, were available from specialist suppliers (Figure 239). Builders' merchants were also often themselves directly or indirectly involved in house building. The Readers, for example, built houses for two different families of builders' merchants, the Barclays and the Rayners, in the early years of their career (see case study below). The parts available from such suppliers were undoubtedly important for designs. Stefan Muthesius explains that 'much of the designing was done not on site for a particular building, but by or for the firms, whether by eminent architects like Adam, or later by unknown designers trained in South Kensington principles'.<sup>379</sup> The influence of the available parts on the design has been discussed in more detail by Helen Long.<sup>380</sup>

It would, however, be wrong to conclude that the design of the houses was simply a case of choosing components from a builders' merchant catalogue. One of the most distinctive architectural features for a typical late Victorian or Edwardian London terrace, for example, was its external decorative mouldings (e.g. Figure 162). The variation of such decorations distinguished one builder's house from another's while the basic form of the house often remained very similar. The evidence suggests that many of these external decorative mouldings were not produced in large factories and sold by builders' merchants, but were produced by fairly small-scale local plasterers.<sup>381</sup> Dewar's description of speculative housing as buildings 'moulded by the dozen' can therefore be understood quite literally – these decorative features, both external and internal, were probably literally often made in moulds.<sup>382</sup>

The techniques used to make such mouldings are explained for example in the before mentioned Millar's *Plastering, Plain and Decorative* (Figures 170-175).<sup>383</sup> These external decorative mouldings could be cast in the plasterer's workshop by pouring concrete into moulds. Once the concrete was solid, the moulding could be fixed in place on site. Some others, such as stringcourses for example, could be made on site directly.

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<sup>379</sup> Stefan Muthesius, p. 253.

<sup>380</sup> Helen Long, *Victorian Houses and Their Details* (Routledge, 2012).

<sup>381</sup> None of the main builders' merchant catalogues on record held at the RIBA contain external concrete or stone decorative features.

<sup>382</sup> Dewar, p. 25.

<sup>383</sup> Acanthus, '24409. Cement Castings', *The Illustrated Carpenter and Builder*, 1890, 40; Millar.

In these cases, the mould would temporarily be fixed to the construction below until the concrete was dry. The appearance of these finished mouldings was probably originally similar to Portland stone, as the common mix with the Portland cement at the time would result in cream colour, stone-like mouldings. The workshop where these mouldings were produced could be fairly small, as the space only needed to be large enough to store the moulds. A typical local builder's yard or plasterer's workshop (e.g. in the back of a shop) would have been sufficient.<sup>384</sup> For large, prominent plasterers such as George Jackson, based in Rathbone Place, near Oxford Street, their main source of income probably came from more complicated, custom plastering work rather than from typical speculative housing (Figure 241).

The technique of making these moulds is significant for the planning of London's typical late Victorian and Edwardian houses, because it means that part of the design could be determined at the level of decorative parts. This technique of building with moulds lent itself to a certain degree of repetition; it was more efficient to reuse a mould for at least a dozen houses, rather than for just one. At the same time, the scale of production was such that it also allowed for variation. Decorative elements of a standard facade could easily be varied depending on the kit of moulds that the local plasterer had available in his workshop. And this manufacturing process at a fairly small scale allowed for 'limited editions' of a custom mould for just one row of houses, for example. For a custom design for only one house, it would have been more efficient to have the decorations made in stone by a mason, rather than to create a mould first.

This process of being able to re-use moulds evidently simplified the design of the houses for the builder, because one of the designers was the plasterer or the stonemason who provided the decorative features and was probably often involved in some way in their design. If a plasterer already had the cast for one particular size and type of decorative lintel, no drawing or new design was needed to reproduce this lintel. Example books of decorative features and passed-on knowledge within the trade were probably important sources for the design of new moulds. According to Millar, moulds, even from more prominent building projects, would also sometimes be sold on and then

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<sup>384</sup> Architectural Mouldings based in Gloucester still today produce plaster and concrete casts in a workshop with the same traditional technique described by Millar.

reused for less important buildings.<sup>385</sup> Another way of creating a mould of a popular feature was to take a ‘screen’, a sort of imprint of a decoration that was already in place on a building, which allowed the replication of this particular feature. Skilled plasterers were also able to produce their own designs, as specialist manufacturers such as Architectural Mouldings Ltd, based in Gloucester, still do today, often with inspiration from examples in books.<sup>386</sup> By the time the Readers began building houses at the turn of the century, Italianate features, for which these concrete castings and mouldings were so important, had generally fallen out of fashion.<sup>387</sup> However, even then, available parts were still important for the design. The timber bay windows for example, which became popular in the 1900s (see also chapter three) and ubiquitous in the interwar period, could be produced cheaply thanks to advances in wood working machinery and were available to order as standard building parts (Figure 243).

## 5.2 The Readers in the Context of London’s Speculative House Builders

This case study is different from the others in that the primary sources used are not entirely new material. A detailed history of the Reader Brothers has already been written by Josephine Boyle.<sup>388</sup> When her father, Edgar Reader, died, Boyle inherited the Readers’ business archive. Boyle organised the material and traced the history of the business and also the buildings that were constructed by two generations of her family of builders. She selected material from the Readers’ business archive, which was then deposited with the London Metropolitan Archives. She recognised the uniqueness of the archive, and made it and its story available to the public. The aim of this case study is not to compete with or repeat her research, but rather to examine the material from a different angle. The focus of Boyle’s study of the Reader Brothers is a family and business history, and in these regards, this case study relies on her extensive research. This chapter, however, examines all the material available on the Readers, both the primary sources as well as Boyle’s research, and also takes the opportunity to discuss this unique primary source of speculative builder-architects of the time as part of the wider history of speculative housing and its design.

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<sup>385</sup> Millar, p. 229.

<sup>386</sup> For example: James Ward, *Elementary Principles of Ornament* (Chapman and Hall, 1890); F. S. Meyer, *Handbook of Ornament: Grammar of Art Industrial and Architectural Designing*, 1896.

<sup>387</sup> Yorke, *The Edwardian House Explained*, pp. 44-64

<sup>388</sup> Boyle, *Builders of Repute: The Story of Reader Bros.*

The case study of the Readers is naturally not representative in every respect and it is therefore worth noting how the Readers compared to the wider industry of Edwardian and inter-war speculative house builders. During these periods, speculative house building underwent several significant changes, which have been researched and discussed in detail elsewhere, by Whitehand for example.<sup>389</sup> Some key changes, however, should be noted here. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and even in the Edwardian period, most house builders were still small-scale businesses operating locally typically moving on from working on one estate at a time to the next.<sup>390</sup> This was also the case with speculative builders in Lewisham. Even James Watt, who was by far the largest builder in the area, constructed hardly any houses outside of Lewisham. During the inter-war period, mortgage finance from building societies became more easily available to both builders and homeowners.<sup>391</sup> Even those with average incomes could afford to become homeowners. For builders, easier access to finance meant that they were able to raise funds to buy larger plots of freehold land at a time, and that a greater number could act as developer-builders, laying out and constructing roads as well as houses.<sup>392</sup> Before 1918, with the exception of a few very wealthy individuals such as Archibald Cameron Corbett, hardly any speculative house builders developed entire estates in different regions around London at once. In the inter-war period, we see for the first time a number of large, not yet quite national, but certainly inter-regional house builders and contractors such as Wates, John Laing and Ideal Homestead that could buy several large estates at a time in different regions and also construct the houses on their own account (Figure 252-250).<sup>393</sup> The type of organisation necessary for these large-scale operations was different and more specialized than that of smaller to medium-sized builders such as the Readers. Ideal Homestead for example had their own in-house specialists for almost every part of their work. Among these specialists they also employed architects and surveyors (Figure 254). John Laing generally employed outside architects as their self-published book on ten of their inter-war housing developments shows (Figure 250).<sup>394</sup>

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<sup>389</sup> Whitehand and Carr; Whitehand.

<sup>390</sup> According to Dyos, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, about one third of the speculative builders in London only constructed 1-2 houses per year. Dyos, 'The Speculative Builders and Developers of Victorian London'.

<sup>391</sup> Peter Scott, 'Marketing Mass Home Ownership and the Creation of the Modern Working-class Consumer in Inter-war Britain', *Business History*, 50 (2008), 4-25.

<sup>392</sup> Whitehand, p. 432.

<sup>393</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 432.

<sup>394</sup> John Laing, *Laings 10 Estates* (Mill Hill, c1937), Hendon Local History Archive.



For the Sunnyfields estate in Mill Hill, John Laing held a competition and employed a number of progressive architects, which has often been seen as a rare example of architects being employed by a speculative builder at the time.<sup>395</sup> However, the experiment was not in fact that architects were employed, as this was typical for John Laing according to the review of their main projects. The experiment was that the design was to a greater extent under architect's leadership and control, rather than under that of the builder. It is likely that a general lack of control was also meant when architects complained that most speculative housing was built without the involvement of architects.<sup>396</sup> It was not so much that the role of an architect did not exist in speculative housing, but that much of it was performed by the builder himself, even if an architect provided some basic design drawings. The discussion in the inter-war period about the lack of involvement of architects in speculative housing, evidenced in *House Building 1934-36* and discussed in *Dunroamin: The Suburban Semi and Its Enemies*, should be seen in this context.<sup>397</sup>

How did the Readers fit into this picture? Over a period of 38 years, from 1901 to 1939, they constructed houses in a number of areas largely in today's North London (Figure 251). Yet they did not operate at the same scale as large inter-war house builders such as Wates. In fact, for most of their career, the Readers still operated locally. In the Edwardian period, they - both their builders' yard and even their homes - essentially moved with the work from one estate to the next. The two founding brothers, Thomas and Richard Reader, began as small local builders constructing only a stretch of several houses at a time in Walthamstow and Leytonstone, but their business grew quickly with the housebuilding boom of the early 1900s when they secured a number of building plots for upper-middle class residences on the Monkams estate. At that time, a photo of their work crew (presumably their whole work force at the time) suggests that they employed about 20 tradesmen (Figure 247). With the introduction of the land tax in 1909, Richard Reader took on employment for another builder, the Barclays, as a

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<sup>395</sup> Simon Pepper, 'John Laing's Sunnyfield Estate, Mill Hill', in *The Edwardian Age and the Interwar Years*, The Cambridge Guide to the Arts in Britain, 8 (Cambridge: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1989).

<sup>396</sup> Betham.

<sup>397</sup> Betham; Oliver, Bentley and Davis.

builders' manager on one of their sites. Over subsequent years, with two world wars affecting their business activities, the Readers' work force fluctuated considerably.

In the 1920s, the Readers rebuilt their business largely as a result of municipal contracts from the Poplar and Hackney council. It was only in the late 1920s through the income from that work that they were able to set up a permanent builders' yard in Homerton, (and one which was not based on the building site itself). The location of this yard was conveniently close to their main building sites for the councils in Hackney and Poplar. Through their success in winning commissions from the council, their workload rose significantly in the late 1920s and the Readers employed a fairly sizeable work force up to the Second World War. The precise numbers of staff are not clear but in the years 1925 to 1930, the Readers completed several hundred council houses as well as some speculative housing. The substantial size of their work force in the 1930s is reflected in the photo of their joinery workshop, which alone had 15 staff (Figure 248).

In the early 1930s, the Readers shifted their work back to the private sector and to speculative house building because, rather than contracting out the work, Poplar council changed to direct labour. Again, the Readers generally focussed the main part of their work on one area at a time. This time, this area was Chingford, where they built an astonishing number of houses within only a few years, part of the remarkable and until now unsurpassed productivity of London's housing construction of the 1930s. The second generation of the Readers, Richard Reader's sons, Richard Francis, John Thomas, and Edgar Charles Reader took over the business in the late 1940s and continued it until the mid 1970s. After the Second World War, the market for builders of the size of the Readers had changed. In the first decade after the war, it was again public contracts for war repairs and reconstruction that sustained their business. Speculative house building activity only picked up again slowly in the 1960s. The plot-by-plot house building prevalent before the Second World War had suited the small entrepreneur builder. This type of expansion of London, however, had come to an end with the introduction of the Green Belt and has not since reappeared. After the Second World War, the Readers never resumed house building at anywhere near the pre-war scale and it was no coincidence that one of the very few new speculatively built housing developments of the Readers after the Second World War was in Chelmsford, outside of London's Green Belt.

#### 5.4 The Reader Brothers – their Family History and Early Years

At its core, like many other speculative house builders of the time, the Readers were a family business. While the main focus of this chapter is not the Readers' family history, a brief introduction is useful to understand how they came to be builders and how they acquired their skills. The two founding brothers of the building firm were Thomas Joseph Reader (1870-1935) and Richard Alfred Reader (1876-1950, Figure 244). Their father, also called Thomas Joseph Reader (1846-1897), was a manager in a lock factory and later, in the 1891 census, was listed as an engineer draughtsman.<sup>398</sup> He acquired the skills for his work in the lock factory of his father William Reader (1804-1865), who was an ironmonger, locksmith and bell hanger in Cullum Street, City of London.<sup>399</sup>

The sons of Thomas Joseph Reader Sr. grew up in a family with a tradition of manufacturing, draughting and practical work. In the 1890s, Thomas Joseph Reader Jr.<sup>400</sup> began his career as an engine fitter. Richard Alfred Reader worked as a plumber and gasfitter and had therefore some experience of work on building sites. Other family members already worked in the building trade.<sup>401</sup> The opportunity for Richard and Thomas Reader to become builders came through contact with the Rayners. Their cousin (nephew of the brothers' mother, Cecilia's), Fred Kearney, worked for the builder Edwin Isaac Rayner, and probably introduced the Readers.

The Rayners were established builders and key figures in the construction and development of Wanstead's housing. E.I. Rayner was a builder and also owned a builders' merchants in Maud Road. Rayner & Bridgland were house agents based in 6 Hughenden Terrace.<sup>402</sup> William Rayner (1806-1885), the father of Edwin Isaac, was born into a family of bricklayers and initiated the speculative building business of the family. According to Boyle, the Rayners built houses in 'South Hackney c1851-1875,

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<sup>398</sup> For clarity, the father will be referred to as Thomas Joseph Reader senior from now on.

<sup>399</sup> William Reader did quite well as a safe maker from the 1860s but the children could not successfully continue the family business and had to declare bankruptcy in 1872, probably partly due to the gambling habits of one of his sons (who was unsurprisingly also called William).

<sup>400</sup> From here on, Thomas Joseph Reader Junior will simply be referred to as Thomas Joseph Reader, or Thomas Reader.

<sup>401</sup> They had an uncle who was a carpenter and builder.

<sup>402</sup> 111 High Road Leyton today.

Gravesend c1865-1903, Stratford, Leyton, Leytonstone, Wanstead and Snaresbrook c1881-1915'.<sup>403</sup>

It was for the Rayners that the two Reader brothers, Thomas and Richard, built their first houses on the Spratt Hall Estate, Leyton, first in 16-66 Dangan Road (Figure 258) then in 22-25 Spratt Hall Road (Figure 259).<sup>404</sup> The design and building application for the houses in Dangan Road was prepared in 1898 by the local architect and surveyor, Douglas Matthew. It is not clear where the finance for their first houses came from, but the Rayners were a likely source; the Readers may even have acted initially as contracting builders for the Rayners rather than as lease- or freeholders. For their houses in Spratt Hall Road, the Readers copied the design from their cousin, Fred Kearney, who built numbers 32-37 on the same road. It is possible that the design originally also came from Douglas Matthew as there are similarities to the houses in Dangan Road.

For the Readers' next houses in Grove Green Road in Leytonstone (Figure 260) and also those in Princes Avenue in Finchley (Figure 261), which were begun around 1902, Alexander Martin provided the design as architect & surveyor. In the 1901 census, Alexander Martin was listed as 'Architects Assistant', which implies that he was in employment for an architect at the time and probably prepared the designs for the Readers outside his regular working hours.<sup>405</sup> On the drawings, Martin described himself with the catch-all term 'Architect & Surveyor'. He lived in 4 Connaught Road, Leytonstone, which was literally around the corner from their building site in Grove Green Road. In their early years, the builders' yard and office of the Readers moved with their work, and in 1905, their office was based in 1 Princes Avenue, one of their newly built houses, which was also the home of Thomas Reader and his wife.<sup>406</sup> The design for both Grove Green Road and Princes Avenue is similar, but the latter has a slightly more decorative façade.

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<sup>403</sup> Boyle, *Builders of Repute: The Story of Reader Bros*, p. 240.

<sup>404</sup> We have already seen on the Minet estate that builders signed subleases or contracted others to build the houses on their behalf.

<sup>405</sup> '1901 Census Return of England and Wales'.

<sup>406</sup> Before they moved around a lot from Mare Street, Navarino Road to Groombridge Road, which was also their previous business address. Later, by 1918, they moved to 53 Princes Avenue.

In the beginning of their career as builders, the Readers relied on architects to provide designs for their houses. The Readers only occasionally prepared their own copies of drawings by others, possibly with some additional information, such as the amended drainage plan for 325-359 Grove Green Road, which was signed by Thomas J. Reader but was based on the original plan prepared by Alexander Martin. Initially, the Readers may not have been experienced enough to come up with their own designs for their houses, as they were finding their feet in the market and were still learning their trade. They therefore relied on experts (architects/surveyors) such as Alexander Martin, who prepared the design for them in tried and tested styles that had already proven to be sellable. The first Readers' houses with rectangular bays in Dangan Road, Spratt Hall Road, Grove Green Road and Princes Avenue were variations of one of the most popular and typical Edwardian terraced house design in London. However, after a number of years working as builders, Richard Reader in particular, the younger brother, gradually picked up the skills and confidence to become essentially the firm's own architect.

There is no evidence of formal architectural training for the first generation of the Reader Brothers or of their having taken any particular exams. The family tradition of making, draughting and also technical designing over at least two generations, however, seems to have provided informal training. The brothers' grandfather designed and produced safes, their father was an engineer draughtsman, and painting watercolours had also been a family hobby, a tradition that Richard Reader and then his son Edgar continued. This background must have been an influence on the brothers and some skills were probably passed on from father to son. There is, however, evidence of formal training in the second generation. John Thomas, Richard Reader's son, completed the licentiate examination of the builders' institution in the 1930s. Boyle also mentions that the Readers took drawing classes, although it is not clear where and when. Maybe the best training that the Readers received as architects was to be directly involved in building the houses and solving practical problems during the work.

## **5.5 The Monkham's Estate and Richard Reader's First House Designs**

Building work on the Monkham's estate in Woodford, which began in about 1904, was defining for the Readers. It was around that time that their initial reliance on the services

of other architects ended and when Richard Reader, rather than more or less tracing and adapting drawings by others, began to prepare his own designs. The style of their houses also changed and became much bolder. In line with fashion of the time, it was influenced by the Arts & Crafts and Vernacular Revival with features such as half-timbering and tile-hanging.

The Monkams estate is located near Woodford Station, which opened in 1856. Suburban housing was gradually built in the surrounding area, as families of the gentry moved out and their estates became available for development.<sup>407</sup> The houses built on the estate were for fairly well-to-do buyers, with one of the more expensive detached houses for sale for as much as £1200 (Figure 274).<sup>408</sup> The local authority responsible for administering the building applications at the time was Woodford Urban District Council, which was outside the London Building Acts area. The estate was bought by James Robert Twentyman for £60,300 in 1903 for development. As was the case with the other estates discussed in this thesis, the estate owner appointed surveyors to prepare road layouts with details of the sewers and building plots, which were submitted in 1904 to Woodford Urban District Council for the approval of the road layout, first for Monkams Avenue and Monkams Drive (Figure 265), and later in the same year also for Kings Avenue and Queens Avenue. Twentyman appointed the auctioneers & surveyors Cockett and Henderson of 72 Bishopsgate Street, who still exist today as estate agents, and the auctioneers & surveyors Mabbett and Edge of 127 Mount Street, Grosvenor Square. Twentyman financed the construction of the roads and then sold the plots to speculative builders for the construction of houses.<sup>409</sup>

The development of the Monkams estate is not only interesting with regards to the houses built by the Readers but also with reference to those of other builders who constructed houses on the estate (Figure 266). Some of the other builders were already more established and experienced than the Readers who had only been in the business for a few years. Among the builders on the estate was James Edmondson who, along with W.J. Collins, was one of the two main builders of houses in Muswell Hill, a

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<sup>407</sup> W.R. Powell, ed., *A History of the County of Essex* (London: Victoria County History, 1973), vi, pp. 338–344 <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=42791>> [accessed 8 July 2013].

<sup>408</sup> For the same sum, two large terraced houses could be bought on the St Germans estate in Hither Green at the time (see chapter three).

<sup>409</sup> The plots were probably sold to builders as freeholds, as the houses were then sold as freeholds when completed, but this is not quite clear.

masterpiece of Edwardian suburban development; Edmondson was also responsible for its attractive high street.<sup>410</sup> In many ways, Edmondson's firm was the kind of model that the Readers followed from thereon. It was an established speculative firm of housebuilders, also run as a family business over several generations, who produced their own house designs with a fairly distinct style. James Edmondson's father Isaac Edmondson had also been a builder, and James took over the business when Isaac retired in the early 1900s. The Edmondsons also seem to have acted as their own architects. The firm's drawings were signed as J. Edmondson & Sons or Edmondson Ltd, and the Edmondsons were also named as 'Architect' on the building application (Figure 275-276). In the 1911 census, James Edmondson described himself as 'Builder and Surveyor'; thereby highlighting that he not only built the houses but also prepared the drawings and designed them. In the same 1911 census, James Edmondson's son, Percival Maud Edmondson, then 23 years old, was listed as 'Architect', while his other son, Albert James Edmondson, 24, was listed as 'Builder', presumably working for Edmondson & Sons. The drawings prepared by the Edmondsons for the Monkams estate are throughout of very high quality, as are the buildings they constructed on the estate.

Apart from Edmondson, other prolific builders on the estate were Sheppard Bros, based nearby in Snakes Lane in Woodford Green. The two brothers who lived in Snakes Lane at the time were Herbert Sheppard (b.1869) and John Henry Sheppard (b.1863).<sup>411</sup> The latter identified himself as an architect on their drawings (Figure 280). Their father James Sheppard (c1830-1911) was also a builder from Berkshire who moved with the family to Woodford Green in the 1880s. His other son Frederic Sheppard (b.1867) was a carpenter and presumably also involved in the family business. The Sheppard family continued to work as builders in the area until the 1990s, when the business was dissolved.

Most of the main builders on the estate were their own architects, but there were also exceptions. Flaxman & Wright, for example, who only built a small number of houses (in Monkams Avenue and later separately in Monkams Lane), used as their architects,

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<sup>410</sup> Jack Whitehead, *Growth of Muswell Hill* (Jack Whitehead, 1995); Long, *The Edwardian House: The Middle-class Home in Britain, 1880-1914*, p. 60.

<sup>411</sup> '1911 Census Return of England and Wales'.

H & F Worrow Architects, based in Mincing Lane House, Cheapside E.C (Figure 281). The Barclays, who built quite extensively on the estate, also relied on others to design their houses who were not always identified on the drawings. Edmondson also designed some of the Barclays' houses on the Monkams estate. When the building activity and sales slowed down after 1909 with the introduction of the land tax, Richard Reader went on to work as a builders' manager for the Barclays, the brothers Samuel Headrick Barclay and David Skene Barclay, and also designed houses for them in Lower Clapton (see below).<sup>412</sup> Unlike the Readers, the Barclays appear to have been the kind of speculative builders who were not directly involved in the day-to-day construction of houses, more what we would today call developers. This impression is also reinforced by the addition of 'Esq' behind David Skene Barclay's name on the drawings prepared for him by others (D.S. Barclay Esq).

Stylistically, the houses on the Monkams estate have much in common, even though they were built and designed by different builders. The origins of the style are not easy to pinpoint, which is also why it is sometimes described as 'Edwardian Freestyle', referring to the free play and layered arrangement of volumes, with architectural features from varied sources. Much of the extensive exposed timberwork and also the self-conscious, pronounced chimneys, for example, reference architecture such as Bedford Park. Other features such as the large porches and balconies are reminiscent of houses on the seaside and also in British colonies. In general, the architectural exuberance of these houses was intended to give a potential purchaser a sense of abundance and luxury, much in contrast to the more uniform terraced houses in today's inner London, which were still restrained by the London Building Acts.

This stylistic revival of old vernacular English architecture, perceived as rural, with exposed timberwork became very popular in the early 1900s for suburban houses.<sup>413</sup> It gave the owners a sense that they indeed lived outside the city, in the tranquillity of the country. It was, of course, a nostalgic view of life in the country, but one that was widely felt and was picked up on in estate agents' brochures on London's suburbs at the

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<sup>412</sup> Barclay Bros. were timber merchants based in Devonshire Square E.C. 'Building Applications', London Borough of Redbridge, Local History Archive.

<sup>413</sup> For a good discussion of this Tudoresque style and the reasons for its popularity, see Andrew Ballantyne and Andrew Law's chapter in: Guillery, pp. 123–144. Ballantyne and Law suggest that the Tudoresque style appealed to English buyers because it resonated with widely felt cultural values of personal freedom and independence.



time. An information brochure published by the estate agent William Hollis in 1911 in Hendon, for example, emphasizes the countryside-like characteristics of the area. The introductory page reads: ‘The physical characteristics of the district are mainly rural and the area generally is one of great natural beauty’.<sup>414</sup> These qualities are further emphasized by the illustrations in the brochure (Figure 282). Comparable brochures were published in most of London’s Edwardian and inter-war suburbs. This desire for the calm and natural beauty of rural life, away from the crowdedness and grime of the city, was echoed in the architecture of suburban house builders. Consistent with this fashion, the style of the houses on the Monkams estate also imitated what was perceived as rural architecture. The number of architectural publications on rural houses or those inspired by them exploded around the turn of the century. The Readers themselves owned such publications. One retained in their archive was *Bungalows and Small Country Houses*. Although it was published in 1925, it confirms this influence on the Readers, which can already be seen in the design of their houses from about 1904 onwards and continued during the inter-war period. No. 2 Monkams Drive, although built around 1910, is closely similar to one of the houses in *Bungalows and Small Country Houses* (Figure 271-273).

In their sales brochure for 2 Monkams Drive, the Readers claim that the houses were ‘a copy of one of our most eminent Architect’s designs’.<sup>415</sup> It is not clear which eminent architect they referred to and it is likely that the influence actually came from varied sources, but the sales advert confirms that the imitation of architects’ designs played a role. The stylistic similarities between the houses on the estate reflect what was popular at the time, but the degree to which they followed the same style also suggests that there was some exchange and mutual inspiration between the different builders. At 26 and 28 Monkams Drive, for example, the Readers worked as builders for David Skene Barclay, and Edmondson was the architect (Figure 276 & 277).

Half-timbering and other exposed timberwork was only possible to this extent in areas like Muswell Hill or Woodford because the houses were outside the area of the London Building Acts, which still in the Edwardian period prohibited the use of exposed timber for fire safety reasons, and which could only be circumvented by obtaining a special

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<sup>414</sup> William Moore, ‘Hendon, Mill Hill & Golders Green’, 1911, p. 7, L942-1911, Barnet Local History Archive.

<sup>415</sup> Boyle, *Builders of Repute: The Story of Reader Bros*, p. 56.

dispensation. This special dispensation was indeed applied for on occasions as exposed timber became increasingly popular in the early 1900s (in Eliot Park in Lewisham, for example, see chapter three) but only after the trend had already been set from suburbs outside the London Building Acts area (e.g. Bedford Park). It has been suggested that the increasing popularity of timber bay windows and other external timber features was due to cheap imports of timber from the Baltics.<sup>416</sup> Yet, the import of timber had started centuries before and it seems more likely that technological improvements in processing timber made it easier and therefore cheaper to produce more complex joinery items such as timber porches and bay windows in large numbers (Figure 242 & 243). It is also possible that timber bays became popular precisely because it had been an unattainable luxury previously. In the same way as Victorian houses showed off the amount of glass after the window tax was abolished in 1851, suburban houses outside the London Building Act area could show off the amount of exposed timber as a luxury that was not previously possible for the majority of the population who had up to the 1900s lived largely within the County of London (today's inner London).

The Readers' first venture into speculative building was slowed down after the introduction of the 1909 land tax, which severely affected the sale of houses on the Monkams Estate and the Readers only completed three houses afterwards. As mentioned, Richard Reader went on to work as a builders' manager for the Barclays in Lower Clapton.<sup>417</sup> In a similar role as Fred Curtis as builders' manager on the Minet estate (chapter three), Richard Reader also designed the houses and prepared drawings (Figure 295 & 292). In a letter to his wife, Richard Reader described this part of his work:

I have got a very busy week this week, having got the 12 sets of plans back from the plan printers. I have got to colour them all and put the red drains in and send them in to the Town Hall and Spring Gardens [London County Council] and very glad I shall be to see the back of them once more.<sup>418</sup>

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<sup>416</sup> Whitehead.

<sup>417</sup> Barclay Bros. were timber merchants based in Devonshire Square E.C. 'Building Applications'.

<sup>418</sup> He wrote the letter to his wife and children in August 1914. He was in London while they were in Littlehampton for holidays. Boyle, *Builders of Repute: The Story of Reader Bros*, p. 61.

The Barclays were officially the builders of Leadale Road and also sold the houses (Figure 289), but Richard Reader managed the day-to-day building activity and was also responsible for wage payments to the builders.<sup>419</sup> This work for Barclay could be seen as a temporary set back for the development of the Readers' own business, but in the long run, it provided Richard with the skills to manage a large work force – a skill that helped to build their business into an established building firm with their own builder's yard and a large work force during the inter-war period.

The First World War interrupted speculative house building in London. Richard and Thomas Reader were not drafted into the service on the front because of poor eyesight.<sup>420</sup> Thomas Reader took a job with a petrol company, booking orders from depots. Richard Reader was drafted into the Arsenal in Woolwich as 'First Class Examiner of big guns'.

## **5.6 'Homes for Heroes' in Poplar and Hackney, and the 1920s**

After the war, the 1919 Housing and Town Planning Act allowed the government to subsidise the building of houses for the working classes, a programme which was also nicknamed 'Homes for Heroes' after David Lloyd George's 1918 election campaign promise 'to make Britain a fit country for heroes to live in'.<sup>421</sup> It was this programme that allowed the Readers to establish their business after the war, initially not as speculative but as contracting builders. The Readers completed an astonishing number of houses and also flats for various London borough councils; this constituted the main part of their workload in the 1920s. The councils offered the building contracts through tendering, and usually accepted the lowest bid, provided that the builders were considered competent. An important concern was to keep the costs low, which was also reflected in the design.<sup>422</sup> Richard Reader's experience in managing large numbers of staff and their payroll when working for the Barclays would have helped him to submit cost-competitive tenders, which was essential to win these council contracts for the Readers. The houses, which the Readers built for the council, were designed by council

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<sup>419</sup> Boyle, *Builders of Repute: The Story of Reader Bros*, p. 60.

<sup>420</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>421</sup> David Lloyd George, 'Speech in Wolverhampton', 1918.

<sup>422</sup> How, after much initial enthusiasm to provide superior homes, cost eventually became a primary concern, is discussed by Swenarton in *Building the New Jerusalem: Architecture, Housing and Politics 1900 - 1930*.

architects such as Harvey Heckford, the Engineer and Surveyor of the Borough of Poplar.

Their work for the council was essential for the re-building of their business after the war and is interesting in itself. However, as it is not the focus of this thesis, it shall only be discussed briefly here. The Readers started building houses for the Hackney Borough Council in 1920 in Gunton Road, Clevelys Road and Casimir Road (Figure 297). In 1921, the Readers commenced the construction of a further 15 houses in Baldock Street and in Ridgdale Street in Bromley by Bow (Figure 298). In 1923-1925, the Readers built houses in Kingsfield Street, Billson Street, Parsonage Street and Stebondale Street, also for the London Borough of Poplar (Figure 299). In the same year, the Readers also won a contract from the council to build houses in Millwall Park, Poplar, on Manchester Road, Manchester Grove and East Ferry Road. From the mid-20s onwards, Poplar Borough Council changed its policy to build flats rather than houses, in line with many other London councils. In 1926 the Readers began Glengall Grove (24 houses, 40 flats) and St. Leonard's Street in Bow. Two years later, Richard Reader began work on 16 flats in Naval Road, 64 flats in Devons Road, and 6 flats in Gale Street, Bromley. In May 1929, Readers won a contract for building 108 houses in British Street, Isle of Dogs. In 1931, however, Poplar Council changed its policy and started to build all of its estates by direct labour. This put an end to the Readers' work for Poplar Council, which had been their main client in the 1920s.<sup>423</sup>

In the 1920s, only a few of the Readers' projects were privately financed housing. The first speculative houses that they built after the First World War were on the Avenue Farm estate in Child's Hill (North West London) as a leasehold development (Figure 302 & 303). Their work on the estate began in 1923 and lasted until about 1930. During this time, they built two houses in Cricklewood Lane (begun in 1922) 17 houses in Lyndale Avenue (begun in 1923) another 16 houses in Hocroft Road (begun in 1925). The style of the houses was partly a continuation of their work on the Monkams estate, although Richard Reader's design was now more restrained and less decorative, as if the council work had had an impact on his own. The houses in Lyndale Avenue have

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<sup>423</sup> Hermione Hobhouse, ed., *Survey of London: Volumes 43 and 44: Poplar Blackwall and Isle of Dogs* (English Heritage, 1994), pp. 23–37 <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=46467>> [accessed 23 August 2012].

extended, low eaves which were popular in inter-war houses and which were first used by Charles Voysey (Figure 304). At the same time as their work in Child's Hill, the Readers also built 12 large semi-detached houses in Hervey Road in Kidbrooke, S.E., begun in 1925 (Figure 306). The design was very similar in style to those built in Cricklewood Lane.

The establishment of the Readers' own builders' yard in 1928 in Hackney was largely made possible based on work for councils. The Readers bought land at the end of Sidney Road (after 1938, it was called Kenworthy Road) and the buildings of the new builders' yard were designed by Richard's son Edgar Reader, then 22 years old, who had presumably learned to design houses from his father.<sup>424</sup> The building application was also submitted by Edgar in 1928. The work and income that made this possible came primarily from work for councils. That these council projects must have been lucrative was also reflected in the Readers' greatly improved private finances. Both Richard and Thomas Reader were able to own a car, which was uncommon at the time, and also had the means for regular family holidays to Eastbourne.

## 5.7 The Speculative House Building Boom of the 1930s

The Readers' work on privately financed developments took off, after 1931, when Poplar Borough Council changed to direct labour, and the Readers began to look for other opportunities. In the late 1920s, construction activity in the private sector had picked up substantially and overtook that of the public sector. Availability of mortgage finance from building societies made home ownership affordable for an ever-increasing proportion of the population.<sup>425</sup> Increased mortgage availability to owner-occupiers was also apparent in the houses built by the Readers. In the mid-1930s, Boyle states that, 'prospective buyers were given copies of 'How to Own Your Home' published by the Huddersfield Building Society', which supplied mortgages for prospective buyers of Reader houses.<sup>426</sup> The expansion of London's transport system into these outer suburbs of what is now Greater London made it possible to develop these areas for housing. Land to build on was also abundantly available in these outer boroughs at comparatively

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<sup>424</sup> Boyle, *Builders of Repute: The Story of Reader Bros*, p. 95.

<sup>425</sup> Scott.

<sup>426</sup> Boyle, *Builders of Repute: The Story of Reader Bros*, p. 118.

low costs. As a result, Greater London experienced a private house building boom in the 1930s at an unprecedented scale. The purchase of houses has not since been as affordable as in the 1930s when the average house price was less than three times the average salary.<sup>427</sup>

One of the first speculative ventures of the Readers in the 1930s was the construction of five exclusive detached houses in 42-52 (even) Canon's Drive on the Canons Park estate in Edgware, which is now a conservation area (Figure 308-309). The involvement of the Readers in this exclusive housing estate was initiated by Thomas Reader, who was more of a risk-taker than his brother Richard. The estate was owned by George Cross, a hotel entrepreneur. The architect A.J. Butcher A.R.I.B.A. planned the innovative layout of the estate around some of the existing trees in 1927, taking cues again from Bedford Park in this regard. Butcher also designed a few of the first houses, which stylistically set the tone for the other houses to follow (Figure 310). The building plots were leased to various builders between 1927 to 1936, such as the Sandon Brothers, H.A.J. Copps, Sword Daniel and Co, and F.W. Bristol and Co.<sup>428</sup>

The style of the houses built by the Readers on the Canons Park estate is distinctly different from that of any previous or later Reader houses. The design is bold and echoes progressive residential architecture such as the Hampstead Garden Suburb for example in its style and materiality (red brick without any decoration). The way entrances face the corner is also a distinct influence from Unwin's *Townplanning in Practice* (Figure 311). Boyle suggests that the houses were designed by Thomas Reader's 21-year-old son Clayton, who had 'like his cousins (...) attended house design classes'.<sup>429</sup> It seems, however, somewhat unlikely that they were the work of someone who tried his hands on housing design for the first time.<sup>430</sup> The estate was initially not a success as in 1937, only two of the Reader houses were inhabited; the houses were

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<sup>427</sup> 'Live Tables on Housing Market and House Prices - Statistical Data Sets - Inside Government - GOV.UK' <<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-housing-market-and-house-prices>> [accessed 9 July 2013].

<sup>428</sup> 'Canons Park Estate Conservation Area Designation and Policy Statement' (Harrow Council, 1990), p.

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<sup>429</sup> Unfortunately, Boyle does not state which classes he took. Boyle, *Builders of Repute: The Story of Reader Bros*, p. 103.

<sup>430</sup> The author could not find any building applications for the estate.

possibly too expensive for those buying in the area. Today, however, the houses on the estate are very exclusive and highly sought after.

A substantial part of the Readers' work in the 1930s took place in Chingford, on two estates – the Cherrydown Farm estate and the Chingford Heights estate (Figure 312). The density of the housing was set out in the 1933 Town Planning Scheme for Chingford, which had been prepared following the 1925 Town Planning Act. The maps of Figure 313 illustrate the substantial amount of housing that the Readers constructed in this area within a period of only six years. Their work in Chingford began in 1930 with a building application to build 52 houses on Cherrydown Farm estate. In the years between 1930 and 1936, the Readers built houses on the Chingford Heights estate in Hurst Avenue, Priory Avenue, Priory Close, Sewardstone Road South and also in Wellington Avenue. According to Boyle and the signature on the drawings, the houses in Chingford were designed by John Thomas Reader, Richard's son (Figure 314). John Thomas Reader completed a Licentiate Diploma of the Institute of Builders (L.I.O.B.) and, along with Edgar Reader, he increasingly took on the design role previously held by Richard Reader. The style of John Thomas was a continuation of Richard Reader's work and was probably still overseen by him, even if the drawings were signed by his son (Figure 315-317). Key motives, such as the half-timber, tile-hangings and overhanging eaves, continued to be used in the design of the Chingford houses. Richard Reader's trademark of showing the driveway in perspective on the elevations was also used on the Chingford drawings (Figure 316). Whether or not these drawings were by Richard himself or by his sons, it shows that their schooling happened within the family.

The last estate that the Readers completed before the Second World War was the Broadfields estate in Winchmore Hill (Figure 318-322). It previously belonged to the Albion Brewery, which had been based on this estate in Winchmore Hill and also in Whitechapel. In 1931, the owner William Thomas Paulin died and his heirs sold the properties. Alfred Savill & Sons and the local firm of auctioneers E.J. Westoby auctioned the Broadfields estate in 1931. The estate was sold to the local builder Arthur Ingram, who built three roads, Broadfields Avenue, Cresswell Way and Paulin Drive, and divided the land into lots. These were then auctioned by Chamberlain & Willows of 23 Moorgate (Figure 320). The Readers bought two lots with land in all three roads.

Richard Reader designed the houses, and they began work on 51-61 Cresswell Way in 1933 and completed the last houses in Paulin Drive in 1937 (Figure 323-325).<sup>431</sup> The houses that they built on the Broadfields estate are perhaps Richard Reader's most mature designs. The designs are playful but without the fussy, sometimes convoluted details of his earlier work in Lower Clapton or on the Monkams estate.

During the 1930s, apart from speculative housing, the Readers also occasionally built individual houses as contracting builders for owner-occupiers. In 1931, they built a bungalow in 53 The Avenue, in 1934, a detached house in 225 Old Church Road, and in the following years houses in 26 Leadale Avenue and in 26 St Catherine's Road. Edgar Reader designed a house for Janet McLachlan in Orpington Road, Chislehurst, called 'Little Kingsdale', which was built in 1936.

With each new housing estate they worked on, the locations of the Readers' construction activity moved further and further away from the centre of London. The last development they commenced before the Second World War was on the Church Hill Estate in Loughton (Figure 327). The first building applications were submitted in 1938 and the Readers only completed the construction of a small number of the houses before the war (Figure 326). In 1939, they completed 1-11 and 21-24 Hill Top Close, and 67-75 Roundmead Avenue. The building applications for 1-18 Greens Close were passed right after the war began but were not built for 15 years.

Of particular interest for this thesis is the sales agreement for the Church Hill estate. It was drawn up by the surveyors and auctioneers Alfred Savill & Sons. To ensure a high standard and consistency of architectural design, the sales agreement stipulated for all plans 'to be prepared by Mr R.C. Foster and his fees paid' and 'to be approved by Messrs Alfred Savill & Sons, surveyors of the Maitland Settled Estates and their fees of £1.1.0 for each building (...) to be paid'.<sup>432</sup> The Readers could negotiate that the plans would instead be prepared by Christopher Cable of Hillcrest, Cuffley, Herts, who had already done the same for the houses of another builder on the estate, C.H. Tysoes, at 2-

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<sup>431</sup> There is an interesting example of an intervention by the council making use of its new town planning powers. Southgate Council compulsorily purchased a strip of land to retain as amenity space. The Readers were then compensated for losing the plot for 114 Wades Hill and part of the gardens of 58 to 80 Broadfields Avenue. The Readers' estimate for the loss was £586 10s. After negotiations, which ended only in May 1939, the Readers accepted £250 as compensation.

<sup>432</sup> Boyle, *Builders of Repute: The Story of Reader Bros*, p. 144.



20 Roundmead Avenue. After the war, there was further dispute about the terms of the sales agreement. The Readers' solicitor, Arthur Bates, wrote a letter to the previous owner stating that 'the stipulation as to the plans being prepared by Mr. Cable and to the approval by Mr. Maitland's surveyors will add to the expense. My clients, as you no doubt know, are builders of repute, and are capable of preparing the plans without the assistance of an architect'.<sup>433</sup> It is no coincidence that this phrase 'Builders of Repute' became the surtitle of Josephine Boyle's book on the Readers. Arthur Bates implied that reputable builders, such as the Readers, were capable and experienced enough to be their own architects and that they were able to prepare drawings. We have seen that there were indeed a number of such 'builders of repute' - the Readers, the Edmondsons or the Sheppards for example - involved in the design and construction of London's speculative housing during the period of this study.

The Second World War interrupted construction activity for London's house builders, and it took years even after the war for it to resume slowly. Richard Reader's three sons were not drafted due to poor eyesight. During the war, the Readers constructed air-raid shelters for Hackney Council. The three sons continued the business after the death of the founding brothers, Thomas Reader and Richard Reader. Thomas Reader died from thrombosis on 9 November 1934. His estate was around £32,000 when he died, largely made up of interests in property. Richard Reader died 28 August 1950. As mentioned, immediately after the war, the Readers mainly worked on reconstruction of war damage rather than building new houses and never resumed speculative house building at pre-war levels. One of the few new housing developments after the war and the last that the Readers built was in Barnfield Mews, Chelmsford, in the 1960s, designed by the local architect Derek Walden (Figure 331-332). Richard Reader's sons continued the business until 1974 when the two older brothers, Richard Francis Reader (1903-1978) and John Thomas Reader (1904-1976), retired. The youngest brother, Edgar Charles Reader (1905-1994), continued some building work until 1977.

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<sup>433</sup> Ibid., p. 172.

## 5.8 Conclusion

As this case study shows, the Readers, in particular Richard Reader and then his sons, designed most of the houses that they built themselves; the founding brothers relied on other architects only in the very beginning of their career and then when they worked for councils. Richard Reader in particular was in effect also the Readers' architect, even if he may have considered himself firstly a builder or builders' manager. He was, as his solicitor put it, a 'builder of repute', one who was also able to prepare his own designs. He was passionate about both the design and building of his houses, and, even outside of his work, it is apparent that he loved to design and create. On a photo with his three children, he poses with them and the locomotives he had designed and built for them (Figure 246). This creativity is also particularly apparent in the houses the Readers built for themselves, with elaborate custom made features such as fireplaces (Figure 334). The Readers were among the many architects that are the topic of this thesis, who held the role without necessarily holding the title, but who were key in creating the London we inhabit today.

This case study of the Readers and other builders that worked alongside them, such as the Edmondsons and Sheppards, clearly contradicts the popular idea of the 'pattern-book' as a replacement of the architect. In this case, it was not the pattern-book that replaced the architect, but it was the Readers themselves who performed this role. They indeed used publications, but only much in the same way as most architects still do today, as one source of inspiration. We have seen from the publications in their possession and the sketches that they left in some of them, that they took inspiration from literature such as *Bungalows and Small Country Houses*.<sup>434</sup> Such publications were their 'pattern-books', but they did not replace the need for an architect, quite on the contrary. Other sources of inspiration for the Readers' designs were built examples. According to Josephine Boyle, the Readers would also often copy particular features that they liked on other houses they saw.<sup>435</sup>

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<sup>434</sup> *Ideal Home* is another publication of which several issues are part of the Readers collection at the LMA. 'Ideal Home', LMA/4430/04/01/033-038, London Metropolitan Archives.

<sup>435</sup> Josephine Boyle, 'Discussion About the Readers at Her Home', 2010.

Undoubtedly, the designs by Richard Reader and his sons were not avant-garde, but were largely an imitation of the work of others, using widely accepted and therefore marketable styles. The Readers' houses of the 1930s for example, such as those in Winchmore Hill (Figure 324) and in Loughton (Figure 328), echo the style of much earlier precedents such as the Well Hall estate in Eltham, designed in 1915 by the architect Frank Baines. The purpose of the Readers' architecture was not to be daring and radically different, but to be sellable and successful in providing desirable housing. In these regards, most of their buildings have stood the test of time.

A key part of the nature of the Readers' work and also its quality was that they were personally responsible for all parts of the production of their houses, from conception, to construction, to sale. The Readers oversaw all parts of this process and were the main stakeholders in both the success and failure of their buildings at a very practical level; if they were shabby and unsellable, for example, then this would also have been the Readers' responsibility. While it was of course in their business interest to keep the costs low, jerry-building was not, as poor quality would have been detrimental and potentially ruinous to their business. The Readers often lived on or near the estate where they built the houses, and their customers were often also their neighbours.

As part of the Readers' business archive, Josephine Boyle inherited the tools that Edgar Reader had kept close to his desk in the builders' yard in Homerton containing the following: 'set square, chain & markers used for setting out buildings. Marble paperweight, stool, file box, waste-paper basket, toffee tin, cigar box containing pencils etc., letter rack' (Figure 245). These tools used by the Readers reflect this nature of their work encompassing the various stages of the building process, and are very telling about the kind of architects and builders they were. Edgar Reader needed the set square, chain and markers to survey the site and to set out the buildings. The photo of these tools illustrates that the building stages were as much a core part of the Readers' work as the design phases. Evidently, only in the beginning of his career did Richard Reader physically build hands-on on site. For most of his career, his daily role was managerial tasks of planning, directing and coordinating. Perhaps the Readers were, after all, in some respects like the Masters of Works, as Ruskin had described the architects and builders of medieval cathedrals. Evidently the Readers only built humble suburban houses rather than cathedrals, but Ruskin's statement could also be used to describe

Richard Reader's daily work in a nutshell: 'He would sketch, plan, and give each (...) workman his bit to do'.<sup>436</sup>

At a time of increasing specialization, when the tasks and training of designing and building seem to drift ever further apart, the case of the Readers is of particular interest. Builders such as the Readers who also design the houses they construct are probably a rare exception in today's construction industry in Britain. Conversely, today's training for architects has come into criticism for not being practical enough and too detached from the practicalities of construction.<sup>437</sup> Much could be said for fostering an architectural education that involves practical building work on a construction site. It seems no coincidence that some of the best and most influential architects and designers of the last 100 years - Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Dieter Rams, Jonathan Ive and Peter Zumthor, just to name a few - grew up with and learned from craftsmen fathers or relatives and were often initially trained as craftsmen. The time of speculative house building of the kind built by the Readers may have past, but there are lessons to be learned from the closer link between design and building, apparent in their work and also in that of other builders in their time.

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<sup>436</sup> Saint, *The Image of the Architect*, p. 34.

<sup>437</sup> Amanda Leveté, 'Why we should train architects on the job', *Building Design*, 19 November 2010

## **Chapter Six**

## **Conclusion**

## **6.1 Introduction**

In the published literature, as discussed in chapter one, speculative housing of the period *c.* 1870-1939 has rarely been described as having been actively designed. Instead, it has typically been presented as having been built according to illustrations readily available in publications, which builders only had to reuse. The reality, however, was more complex. The previous chapters have shown that speculative housing of the time was ‘designed’, in a sense that its appearance was tailored specifically for each building project, and that the planning and design was as relevant a determinant as for example social and economic circumstances. The study has sought to develop a better understanding of the design process of ordinary speculative housing *c.* 1870-1939 and the roles of those involved, an approach which provides a new perspective for the study of speculative housing of that period and another tool to unlock its history.

This concluding chapter will first synthesize key findings of the previous chapters and discuss them in relation to each other. Then, the implications of those findings for our understanding of the history of speculative housing in London will be discussed. In addition, the limitations of the findings here presented and possible opportunities and directions for further research will be explored.

## **6.2 Key Research Findings**

This study concludes four main things. First, no one particular occupation was responsible for the design of speculative housing *c.* 1870-1939 - various occupations had a share – in particular architects, surveyors and builders. Second, the roles of those involved in design often overlapped and were less specialized, which could have advantages. Third, identifying these key roles helps elucidate the design process and our understanding of the architecture. Fourth, the planning and design stages of estate development had an important influence on the architecture, with two fundamentally different systems standing out in particular. These four main points will be elaborated in this section.

The research has defined a clearer idea of the occupations involved in housing design, which is relevant in order to understand the design process and to interrogate the

common, often unfounded preconceptions in published literature discussed in chapter one. The previous chapters confirm that the three main occupations engaged in the planning and design of speculative housing were architects, surveyors and builders, and also give a better idea of the share of each in the design of the houses, which is demonstrated in chapter two as quantifiable evidence, whereas chapter three to five support that evidence through empirical studies. Chapter two also shows that those occupations became increasingly specialized from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and that architects became increasingly involved and dominant as the main designers of housing. This is particularly evident in the analysis of building applications, which also shows that the crossover occupation of architect-surveyor was important in speculative housing until, in 1938, the statutory protection of the title ‘architect’ completed the split of the two occupations, further solidifying the specialization through legal boundaries.

The thesis also sheds new light on the role of the designer in speculative housing at that time. The tendency up until now was to ignore it. Part of the problem in understanding how housing was designed then is that it is not possible to neatly attribute the design process to one occupation, which has perhaps caused the confusion found in what has been published on the subject; it is inaccurate, for example, to credit only builders or only architects. The previous chapters show that a number of different occupations were involved and had a share. The overlap of responsibilities is demonstrated by the examples of design by estate managers (e.g. Fred Curtis on the Minet estate, chapter three), by surveyors and architects (e.g. Edward Stone, chapter four), and by builders and developers (e.g. Readers, Edmondsons, chapter five). Those examples also show that, although design was not the responsibility of one distinct occupation, it was still carefully considered and it was a relevant part of the work of those various occupations.

The overlap in roles could have certain advantages. Builder-architects, such as the Readers, Edmondsons or Sheppards (chapter five), had a great deal of control over design and could manage it throughout construction. They had a significant influence on its quality and the success of their product. Builders like the Readers, for example, also often moved with their work and lived in one of the houses they built on an estate, in which case the first tenants or buyers were also their neighbours. The builders’ reputation was at stake if the quality of the houses did not hold up to expectations. Additionally, those builder-architects were also often skilled designers. Today’s

popularity of Muswell Hill and its charming high street can at least partly be attributed to the quality of the builder-architect James Edmondson's work. Admittedly, some early Readers' houses were perhaps over-ambitiously designed and difficult to build (e.g. Figure 290), but much of their housing has equally retained its long-term appeal (e.g. Figure 304, 323 & 329). An architect-surveyor, such as Edward Stone of Norfolk & Prior (chapter four), was further removed from construction, but the building process was managed by the speculative builder, such as James Watt, acting as the site architect or builders' manager. In this case, the quality of the architecture depended to a large degree on the skills of the builder and only partly on Edward Stone as the designer. The built-quality and continuing appeal of the housing designed by Stone therefore greatly varied. The houses he designed for James Watt, for example, were generally always built to a high standard (e.g. Figure 167); those designed for other builders, however, were not always as successful and well built (e.g. Figure 216).

The case study chapters also help to relate the key roles more clearly to the design of housing estates. The main roles can broadly be divided into three categories:

1. A surveyor or architect who designed the overall estate layout, and sometimes the house plans and front elevations (e.g. Drivers on the Minet estate, chapter three).
2. An estate surveyor who worked for the landowner in a managerial capacity, e.g. collecting ground rent, but who could also have a hand in the design and supervision of building work for some of the houses (e.g. Fred Curtis on the Minet estate, chapter three).
3. Those who designed the individual houses, usually for speculative builders and developers. They were generally architects or surveyors (e.g. Norfolk & Prior, chapter four), often-anonymous draughtsmen capable of designing houses (examples can be found in chapters two to five), and sometimes the builders themselves (e.g. the Readers, Edmondsons or Sheppards, chapter five).

The conclusion drawn from the case study examples of housing development is that the overall system of estate development and its roles and relationships had an important influence on the design. Two fundamentally different systems stand out, which were also both used on the Minet estate, and are discussed in chapter three. Mention of those



two systems can also be found in other literature on the topic.<sup>438</sup> This thesis highlights their particular significance for our understanding of the design of housing estates. As discussed in chapter three, in the first system the landowner (or the surveyor as his agent) imposed designs on the builders (e.g. the earlier phase of the Minet estate, Figure 68-74). Such a ‘master-planned’ approach usually led to a more coherent appearance.<sup>439</sup> The system, however, was less flexible and it happened frequently that, due to unforeseen circumstances, the original master-plan was abandoned or adjusted. The circumstances could vary but on the Minet estate, as discussed in chapter three, it took much longer to implement the initial master-plan than set out in the programme of the lease agreement; by the time the last streets of the master-plan were being developed, the style of the original plans and elevations was too long out of date, and the last set of houses were built to new designs (Figure 76).

As discussed in chapter three, the second system meant that the landowner issued leases, or sold the freeholds, and the builders could propose their own designs, often to his or her approval. This generally resulted in the estate having a more diverse appearance. The later phases of the Minet estate (chapter three) and the later phases of the Corbett estate in Hither Green, discussed in chapter four, are examples of the second system. On the Corbett estate, the builder Fred Taylor, for example, built to designs supplied by architect-surveyors he appointed (Figure 192-205). The Monkams estate, discussed in chapter five, was largely built to designs prepared by the various speculative builders who had purchased the plots (Figure 265-281). In reality, the two systems often co-existed, as on the Minet estate; an estate owner may have begun with a ‘master-plan’, with a layout, elevations and plans for all the houses to be built, but development would not go as planned, and the strategy changed after only part of the estate had been built to the original plan.

Understanding the fundamental difference between the two systems for the appearance of estates is relevant for the analysis of the design of a particular area. It helps to explain what happened during its planning and development stages, which system was used in a

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<sup>438</sup> Dixon and Muthesius, p. 58.

<sup>439</sup> The term ‘master-plan’ seems apt to describe the approach, although the word itself does not appear to have been in use yet in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. ‘Master Plan.’ *Merriam-Webster.com*. Merriam-Webster, 20 Sept. 2013. <[http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/master plan](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/master%20plan)>.

particular case and how the roles already discussed influenced key design decisions. For example, it should be immediately apparent in the appearance of the architecture if an estate was 'master-planned', e.g. planned and built under the first system described with strict control exercised by one estate owner or developer. If there was a master-plan with elevations and plans provided by the estate, prepared by a surveyor, then the appearance would be less varied and clearly follow a particular template (e.g. Figure 68 - 74). An estate of more varied appearance with mixed styles indicates that the builders were free to propose their own designs, and that it developed under the second system (e.g. Figure 98). Long stretches of similar houses on an otherwise not obviously coherently master-planned estate indicate that one builder had the resources to buy a number of connected plots (as free- or leasehold) and took responsibility for the design of those houses (e.g. Figure 168 & 176). Builders who prepared their own designs, such as the Readers or Edmondsons, tended to vary them more frequently. On the Monkams estate, for example, each stretch of houses is a unique design, even if it is inspired by similar stylistic motifs. Builders who used architects or architect-surveyors tended to vary their design less often and rather reuse designs they worked with previously, so as not to incur additional costs. Fred Taylor, for example, essentially built the same type of house on the Corbett estate, reusing designs prepared by the architect E.J.W. Hider for the first few houses (Figure 194 - 201).

The particular emphasis of this thesis on design roles also adds another perspective to the detailed decorative parts of the houses. The previous chapters have shown that for much of speculative housing *c.* 1870 – 1939, design was not as hierarchical a process as we would perhaps assume, and it was not necessarily in the hands of only one person alone. In other words, having a design by an architect or architect-surveyor, such as Edward Stone for example, did not exclude other design input from those responsible for the construction and building parts. There are different examples in the previous chapters. The houses as built often looked different than the original design (e.g. Figure 212, 213, 216 & 217); builders could change the initial design to suit their needs. Those examples show that houses could be designed both by architects in terms of overall form, but also partly by builders in detail in terms of decorations. This would explain why one can often find a number of very similar houses in London that vary in their detail and decoration (e.g. Figure 162).

### 6.3 Relevance for History of Speculative Housing

This thesis makes an original contribution to knowledge by providing us with a better understanding of who those involved in the design of speculative housing in the period c. 1870-1939 were and what the nature of the process was. We can now take London's speculative housing of that period out of the mysterious realm of 'architecture without architects' and see it more clearly as a result of considered design decisions - made by architects, surveyors, builders and draughtsmen, often working together. The research discredits oversimplified assumptions, which suggest that there was no design process at all, or that it merely consisted of reusing widely published plans and elevations. Speculative housing of that time can still be regarded as 'vernacular', but only in the wider sense described by Peter Guillery, as 'local, indigenous, ordinary, everyday, popular, nostalgic or numerous'.<sup>440</sup>

This thesis broadly supports the direction taken by Whitehand, Trowell and Johnson, as described in the literature review in chapter one.<sup>441</sup> Their findings have all shown that architects were more involved than previously thought. However, the research presented here goes beyond looking for architects' involvement in the design of speculative housing, and adds additional detail about who was really involved in the design process. The case study chapters three to five in particular give us a more detailed picture of who the designers were and what they did. The case study approach used was also necessary in order to look beyond occupational labels, which had different connotations at the time than they have today. Combinations of occupations such as 'Estate Agent, Surveyor & Architect', for example, which seem surprising for us today, were common in speculative housing at the time, and we have seen examples in letterheads of such businesses in various areas (e.g. Figure 22, 23, 130 & 131). The case study in chapter four of Norfolk & Prior discusses such a business in detail.

The findings presented here disprove suggestions that architects had no involvement, a proposal put forward, for example, by R. Lawrence with regards to early 20<sup>th</sup> century

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<sup>440</sup> Guillery, p. 1.

<sup>441</sup> Whitehand; Trowell, 'Speculative Housing Development in Leeds and the Involvement of Local Architects in the Design Process 1866-1914'; Johnson.

housing.<sup>442</sup> It has also been suggested that architects had at least very little involvement in the design of Victorian and Edwardian housing.<sup>443</sup> The sample analysed in chapter two supports this suggestion by demonstrating that the proportion of architect-designed housing increased only slowly from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards; in the 1890s, only 14% of the houses in the applications sample analysed were designed by architects (Table 4, p.61). While this can be taken as confirmation that architects had only a small share of the design of speculative housing in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, it would conversely be wrong to conclude that no ‘architects’ were involved, in a sense that the houses were not consciously designed. It should also not be overlooked that, already in the 1890 sample, another 14% of the houses were designed by architect-surveyors (Table 4, p.61). The correct statement that the majority of speculative housing was not designed by architects by title in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century has often been understood to mean incorrectly that it did not need to be designed at all. This thesis shows that, where no architects were involved, then others designed the houses, effectively acting as architects, even if not as professional architects by title. The previous case studies have shown that there were those who designed the houses, effectively acting as architects, whatever they were called by title at the time. Edward Stone’s training for fellowship with the Surveyors’ Institute, discussed in chapter two, has shown that architects were by no means the only occupation educated in the design of buildings at the time (Figure 138 & 139). This thesis takes the position that, at a time when occupations overlapped so much, it is necessary to look beyond titles and instead consider their design work itself and take it seriously as an architectural achievement.

The analysis of design roles and relationships also challenges other assumptions. In the literature, as well as in the public consciousness, speculative housing of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century is often characterized as repetitive, a point made for example by Unwin, when he criticises the supposed monotony of Victorian speculative housing, by Rasmussen, when he discusses more positively the ‘standard London house’, or by Philip Davies when he discusses the standardisation of building plots.<sup>444</sup> The findings of this thesis do not invalidate their observations. However, by considering the design and building processes of the housing in more detail, this impression of sameness and

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<sup>442</sup> See literature review in chapter one, Lawrence, p. 12.

<sup>443</sup> See literature review in chapter one, Neil Jackson, p. 13; Barson, p. 68; Stefan Muthesius, p. 251.

<sup>444</sup> Unwin, p. 2; Rasmussen, p. 301; Davies, pp. 7–8.

standardisation is surprisingly contrasted by one of diversity and segmentation. Although speculative house building around the turn of the century was still based on fairly typical plot sizes and parts, the previous case studies show that much was also custom-designed for each number of houses at a time. Speculative builders and businesses responsible for building and designing the houses were typically local and small, and often a large number of them were involved in each development. This segmentation is apparent, for example, in the large number of speculative builders that were involved in (and often in control of their part of) the design and construction of the housing on the Minet estate (Figure 68). The large number of builders that Norfolk & Prior worked with in Lewisham (Figure 153, chapter four) and also of those that worked on the Monkams estate (Figure 266, chapter five) paint a similarly diverse picture.

Although housing development around the turn of the century was strictly hierarchical, engrained in feudal traditions of landlords granting leases, and large areas were often in the hands of one person or business, it was rarely all undertaken or managed by the landowner himself but the responsibility and varying degrees of control for building the houses were distributed among a large number of individuals or businesses through the sale, leasehold or freehold, of the individual building plots. As we have seen on the Minet estate, for the first phases the various speculative builders were legally obliged to follow the designs of the surveyor employed by the estate owner, as outlined in the lease agreement. However, even then, they had a degree of freedom in altering the plan, internal decorations and finishes. In small-scale speculative house building discussed here in this thesis, there must have been a close, direct relationship to the construction project. We can see that although the elevations were the same in the early stages of the Minet estate, the plans were not always identical (Figure 77 & 78). In the later phases of the building of the Minet estate, the leaseholders (who were either building speculatively or for themselves) could propose their own designs to the estate owner, or his surveyor (Figure 92 - 109).

## **6.5 Limitations and Opportunities for Further Research**

Further research could take different directions. One potential area for further research would be the analysis of the route to increasing specialization and reactions against it, in particular the discussion that took place in Parliament around the architects' registration

bill. This discussion seems to have been influenced by overlapping responsibilities for design among occupations, as evidenced in this thesis. The architects' registration bill was first rejected a number of times during the inter-war period, before it was passed in two stages in 1932 and 1938. The evidence explored in this thesis shows that several occupations besides architects, such as surveyors, builders and draughtsmen, had a share in designing buildings. The impression is that those engaged in such occupations did not willingly give up part of their livelihood and leave the market to architects alone; this has been discussed in the introduction of chapter four in particular in relation to the occupation of architect-surveyors. The opposition of those occupations to the architects' registration bill may have been a key reason why the architects' lobby could only pass a bill that protects the title, but not an exclusive right to the work of building design itself, as is enforced in other European countries such as France and Germany, where the need to involve an architect in such work is legally protected. To substantiate the hypothesis that the overlap in occupations was a key factor in the form of British registration, it would be necessary to study contemporary discussions around the bill in the context of the evidence of overlapping occupations presented in this thesis.

Another area for further research would be to compare the case studies of different estates discussed in this thesis (in particular the Minet estate) more systematically to a greater number of other estate case studies and explore similarities and differences. A comparative study of a greater number of estates could help to clarify further how the two systems of development observed in the case studies of this thesis are expressed in speculative housing in London in general. This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the planning and design process in speculative housing and estate planning in general. There are a large number of estates that have not yet been researched, as well as numerous already completed studies, often written for other purposes and from a different perspective.<sup>445</sup>

Conservation area reports prepared for local council planning departments are one example where historical studies of particular estates play an important role. The particular approach taken in this thesis and its lessons could be interesting for this purpose. Unless they are prominent examples, conservation area reports of speculative

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<sup>445</sup> For example: Nurse.

housing estates rarely include the story of their planning and the decisions of those who created them, but it would be particularly relevant for the purpose they are written for. It would provide a different emphasis in the study of an area's history by giving greater consideration to the key individuals and decisions that drove pre-construction planning phases of speculative housing. The case study of the Minet estate in chapter three highlights the impact planning and design decisions had on the architecture in terms of the appearance and layout of the estate and buildings. This perspective would shift the emphasis in our understanding of how each area developed, who drove the design and what the influence of particular individuals was. It could give these individuals a more active role than they are often granted in local history research. As this thesis has shown, the different roles involved in the design also played a role in the appearance of the estates. One possible approach would be to try to understand the influence of the planning and design stages on whether or not those estates remained successful architecture and attractive places to live today.

The case studies and findings presented here could also be relevant for architects and planners inspired by examples of speculative housing from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Recent contemporary housing abounds with architecture that has drawn inspiration from historic, vernacular precedents of that period, for example two recent housing projects which received prestigious RIBA Stirling Price nominations or awards: 'Accordia' in Cambridge and the Newhall housing development in Essex (Figure 335 & 336). Both of those consciously draw inspiration from 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century estate planning with repeating, elongated plots, and common housing typologies such as terraces, back-to-backs, two-up-two-down, semi- and detached houses.<sup>446</sup>

Inspiration from historic precedents for new developments as exhibited in the examples above has a long tradition in London. Although early modernist housing architects attempted a radical break with past typologies and advocated high-rise point or slab blocks, there was also a more romantic side to it. In particular the typology of the terrace, so popular in the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, never quite disappeared. Key examples of early modernist terraced housing in London are those designed by Berthold

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<sup>446</sup> Alison Brooks, for example, discussed the influence of late 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century housing for her own designs in a talk at the Centre for London's Built Environment. Brooks, Lloyd and Lifschutz.

Lubetkin and A. V. Pilichowski in 1935 in Genesta Road, Plumstead, and also those designed by Erno Goldfinger in 1-3 Willow Road in Hampstead, completed in 1939.<sup>447</sup>

One of the most striking examples of post-war modernist housing inspired by historic examples is Alexandra Road. The scheme was designed in the late 1960s by the architect Neave Brown and built between 1972 and 1978. The development is finished in exposed concrete with flats arranged in terraces over several levels. Brown was appointed by the London Borough of Camden Director of Housing Sydney Cook who tried to break away from the preference of post-war public housing for high-rise blocks of flats. Despite its radically different appearance, according to Brown, Alexandra Road is a modern interpretation of the continuity of historic English terraces such as those in Park Crescent designed by John Nash in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>448</sup>

Brown was not the only modern architect of the 1960s who learned from historic examples of terraced housing. The compact terrace that had been so common in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was a key inspiration for housing designed and developed by ‘Span Development’, led by Eric Lyons and Geoff Townsend. From the early 1950s to the late 1960s, Span created some of the most celebrated modern speculative housing developments in England many of them located in Greater London.<sup>449</sup> By the 1980s, post-modern housing design was generally marked by a re-evaluation of historic precedents, which, rather than rejected, were explicitly referenced. An early and particularly successful example from the late 1970s is St Mark’s Road, designed by Jeremy and Fenella Dixon, which marked a return to more ‘vernacular’ forms and references Victorian terraces with its repeating bays (Figure 337).<sup>450</sup>

More recently, the architect and urban designer Richard MacCormac demonstrated that Victorian housing development could provide a template for a sustainable expansion of existing cities to address the current housing shortage. As part of a research project called ‘sustainable suburbia’, he undertook a comparative study of two neighbouring

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<sup>447</sup> Alan Powers, ‘Models for suburban living’, in *Eric Lyons & Span*, ed. by Barbara Simms (London: RIBA Publishing, 2007), p. 27.

<sup>448</sup> Residents of the estate produced a documentary with an interview with Neave Brown and a booklet with a good summary of its history: *One Below the Queen: Rowley Way Speaks for Itself* (digital:works, 2010) < <http://www.rowleyway.org.uk/index.html> >.

<sup>449</sup> *Eric Lyons & Span*, ed. by Barbara Simms (London: RIBA Publishing, 2007), p. 203.

<sup>450</sup> Neil Jackson, p. 282.



areas in Milton Keynes: Greenley and Wolverton. The first was built in the 1970s as leafy, semi-detached housing; the latter was built in the 1880s and is made up of late-Victorian terraces. He concluded that ‘in spite of the smaller plots and higher densities of Wolverton, the dwellings are seen as more desirable than in the more traditionally suburban Greenleys’ which is reflected in sale values.<sup>451</sup> Wolverton also fulfils other criteria for sustainability, such as a density that enables efficient public transport and encourages walking.

MacCormac’s findings were picked up by Jon Neale in a detailed report on the future of residential development prepared for Knight Frank in 2009. To address the current housing shortage, Neale advocates adding to and expanding existing urban areas, rather than creating new satellite towns. The report recommends that Georgian and Victorian residential development should be emulated for sustainable future housing development:

Our Georgian and Victorian neighbourhoods, with their mix of townhouses, villas and flats, could offer a better model for future development at densities that support successful communities and local services. The future lies not in homogeneous blocks of small flats but in an updated version of our own traditions, from the garden square to the town house and the mansion flat.<sup>452</sup>

Neale’s recommendation is evidently not to imitate the historic styles, but rather to learn from the principles of planning desirable urban neighbourhoods. The planning processes of late 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century housing are at the core of this thesis and can be particularly well understood in the case studies of particular areas and estates such as the Minet estate (chapter three) or the Monkams estate (chapter five). This research is therefore of particular interest to urban designers and architects, and those case studies could inform the planning of new neighbourhoods and densification of existing ones, taking into account not only typologies but the design and planning processes involved. The Minet estate in particular has all the ingredients praised in Neale’s report as a model for future development, and others beyond:

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<sup>451</sup> Richard MacCormac, *Sustainable Suburbia: Work in Progress* (London: MacCormac Jamieson Prichard, 2005), p. 7.

<sup>452</sup> Jon Neale and others, *The Future of Residential Development: Unlocking the Housing Market* (London: Knight Frank, 2009), p. 29.

- Diverse housing types such as terraced, detached, semi-detached houses, houses with shops, blocks of flats, as well as other community buildings such as a library, church and a community hall.
- An overall fairly high average density with an abundance of private and communal amenity spaces, which means that the development still has a leafy village-like feel.<sup>453</sup>
- The houses are flexible and adaptable. They can be occupied by families or as houseshares, and can potentially be converted into flats and back into houses if necessary.
- The development was built up gradually by various builders and architects, giving it a sense of variety within a coherent and managed whole.

In addition to today's challenge of creating high quality and sufficient new housing, retrofit of existing housing is an area of significant growth to make it more energy-efficient and sustainable. Chimney Pot in Salford is an example of a very successful re-development of late-Victorian terraced housing where the developers and architects took a radical approach. The façades and streets were kept but the entire houses behind were replaced. The initial idea was to at least retain the party walls, but a key reason for replacing the buildings behind the façades was that new buildings, unlike conversions or extensions, are not subject to VAT in the UK.<sup>454</sup> From a heritage perspective, it would have been preferable to retain more of the existing houses. However, examples in this thesis also show that the plans behind façades were not as fixed in the first place and were often adapted by the various builders to suit their own requirements. As described in chapter three, the houses along Paulet road on the Minet estate, for example, had the same façade but the layouts behind could vary. Projects like Chimney Pot in Salford show how desirable even very basic terrace housing of the time can be today, and even more so if it is updated to current standards of comfort, modern conveniences and

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<sup>453</sup> It would be useful to calculate the overall density of the Minet estate in future research, but it is clear even without a calculation that, similar to Wolverton, much of it is built up as terraces, and there are even some blocks of flats. The higher density of the blocks of flats is offset by the generous communal amenity space of Myatt's Fields Park.

<sup>454</sup> André Mulder, 'Heritage and its role in revitalising the housing market', 23rd ENHR Conference, 5-8 July 2011, Toulouse France <<http://www.enhr2011.com/sites/default/files/Paper-Mulder-WS03.pdf>> [accessed 24 April 2014]

energy efficiency. It could be seen as a testimony to the adaptability of the Victorian terraced that the layout can cope with radical alterations.<sup>455</sup>

A particular quality of speculative housing studied in this thesis was that its design, although specific for each development, was also often generic in its typology. The plan types used by James Watt (chapter four) repeated, even when certain design features were changed and updated. This approach is in direct opposition to housing design as an individual piece of art that is very site-specific, such as the *Unite d'Habitation* by Le Corbusier. In architectural design, however, more specific can also often mean less flexible. This is another lesson we could learn from housing of that period, to design with adaptability in mind, rather than creating precious, unflexible pieces of art. Today, in particular design standards such as 'lifetime homes' are so specific that in recent London housing many bedrooms only allow for one possible position of each piece of furniture. Part of the appeal of much late 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century housing is its inherent adaptability and flexibility, qualities that make it long-lasting and therefore truly sustainable.

So far, however, such inspiration from late 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century housing has usually focussed on form and typologies. Inspiration from historic precedents could take into account the process, roles and relationships involved in its design and construction, which, as this thesis suggests, were also relevant to its success and can provide useful lessons. As discussed, speculative housing *c.* 1870 – 1939 involved complex networks of local businesses and an often-overlooked element of building specific custom-design and construction. The case study of the Minet estate has shown, for example, how important the involvement and influence of various speculative builders was for its gradually developed, varied appearance. At the same time, the development process of the estate was also carefully managed, creating a sense of coherence. An opportunity for further research would be to consider how such processes could inform current planning and design of housing. This aspect could be particularly relevant in light of today's urban planning agendas supporting greater participation of the local community and influence of users and other stakeholders on the design. In the

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<sup>455</sup> It is the author's intention to also further explore the implications of this research to current challenges of retrofitting existing housing. He is currently involved in the organisation of a workshop on the topic at a conference at Newcastle University with Sofie Pelsmaker, a researcher in sustainability at UCL.

early 21<sup>st</sup>-century planning system, dispersal of power in housing development typically means that potential residents and neighbours are consulted and can express their preferences. To go further than this is often difficult to achieve in practice, and there are very few examples of projects that reach the ‘Citizen Power’ stages of Arnstein’s often cited ‘ladder of participation’.<sup>456</sup> In the reality of the house building industry discussed in this thesis, a large number of speculative builders and other stakeholders had significant influence on the outcome. The speculative builders on the Minet estate, however, also show that stakeholders’ participation in their case was also linked to sharing responsibility and liability, which generally also involved engagement in terms of finances and time.

It is not the intention to mis-represent speculative house building of the period examined here as a utopian community project. It took place within the economic framework of a cutthroat capitalism, with rough working conditions, little job security, fickle markets and frequent bankruptcies. The influence on the design and built-quality, which the speculative builders and those they worked with had on the houses, also came with an equal amount of responsibilities and liabilities. If builders like the Readers did a good job, the houses would sell. If not, though the houses may still have sold, the builders’ reputation could be damaged. The builder’s expertise and vision, as well the people he worked with, were key in creating good products and in being competitive: the houses indeed carried the mark of those who designed and constructed them, for better and for worse. Many successful examples of well-built housing have survived to this day and continue to be appreciated by the residents, but there equally was no scarcity of jerry-building tales.<sup>457</sup>

## 6.6 Conclusion

This thesis has identified key roles and relationships in planning and design of speculative housing *c.* 1870 – 1939, and uncovered evidence that its appearance was not usually created by craftsmen simply applying standard templates, but rather that it was in fact largely custom-designed. The case studies have confirmed that architects were

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<sup>456</sup> Sherry R. Arnstein, ‘A Ladder of Citizen Participation’, *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 35 (1969), 216–224.

<sup>457</sup> Neil Jackson, p. 284.

indeed involved and were responsible for the design of a significant share of housing, that surveyors played an important role, and that the particular crossover occupation of architect-surveyor was even more important. The analysis of a sample of building applications in chapter two has also demonstrated that the role of professionals became increasingly important, with the share of architect- or surveyor-designed housing increasing steadily from the 1890s to the 1930s, and taking over from the predominance of builder- or draughtsmen-designed houses.

The findings could be of practical relevance for different disciplines. This research helps to explain the complexities of the pre-construction planning and design process to designers and planners of new housing, who take inspiration from and want to study housing of the period. A more informed understanding of these processes should replace the currently prevalent idea of being able to replicate the appeal of Victorian housing by employing a formulaic pattern-book approach, which was supposedly used then to design and build houses. For local and urban historians, and those involved in preparing and using conservation area reports for example, the information presents useful comparisons with their own localities, which help in identifying key roles behind the planning and design. Furthermore, the findings could be useful to those (economic historians for example) interested in how small professional businesses such as surveyors and architects operated in the construction world of the period. Overall, the thesis contributes to a more profound understanding of the complexities of the planning and design process in speculative housing in the period *c.* 1870-1939.

There is still much scope for further analysis of building applications and for case studies of other estates and housing developments. Case studies undertaken so far show that the planning process was much more carefully considered than is often believed. They suggest that the use of standard components and typologies, such as terraced houses, does not exclude custom design by capable individuals, but actually makes it necessary if the houses are to hold wider and lasting appeal. The dispersed control and responsibilities over the design of the houses by those involved in its planning and construction could hold certain lessons also for today's housing development, which has often been criticised for its top-down approach. It was part of the success of the housing studied, that the 'typical' and 'customary' was combined with individual creativity and initiative of those involved: builders and craftsmen, as well as architects and surveyors.

The reality of typical speculative housing design of the period appears to lay somewhere in between the most popular myths - somewhere in between the master builder, at the one extreme, who miraculously constructed a house without drawings, only based on his superior expertise or with a pattern-book in his hand, and, at the other extreme, an exclusively architect-led design with the builder only executing instructions provided by professional drawings.

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## Illustrations

**SURVEYORS.**

*See also Agents—Estate & House; Agents—Land & Estate; Architects; Auctioneers; Builders; District Surveyors in 'CITY DIRECTORY'; Engineers—Civil; Land Surveyors; & Ship Surveyors.*

Marked thus † are Builders.  
 Marked thus \* are Land Agents.  
 Marked thus § are House & Estate Agents.  
 Marked thus ‡ are Valuers.  
 Marked thus || are Auctioneers.  
 Marked thus ¶ are Architects.

**SURVEYORS' INSTITUTION (THE),**  
 (Incorporated by Royal Charter),  
 12 Great George street SW.

*President,* Edward Ryde, esquire; *Treasurer,* Charles Drummond, esq.; *Hon. Sec.* John Wornham Penfold, esq.; *Secretary,* Julian C. Rogers, esq.

*Preim. Exam.—Jan. annually.*  
*Proficy. Exam.—April biennially.*

Marked † are Fellows of the Institution of Surveyors.

†Adams Charles F. 57 Coleman st. City EC  
 Allen Henry R. Mem. San. Inst. architect & sanitary surveyor, 50 Finsbury sq EC  
 Allport Wm. 8 Queen Anne's gate, Westminster SW  
 ‡Andrews Edwd. 57 Limerston st. Fulhm. rd SW  
 ¶Arding, Bond & Buzzard, 22 Surrey st WC  
 Argent Eugene, 7 Duke street, Adelphi WC  
 †Baddeley Edwd. 26 Bishopsgate st. within EC

**DRAUGHTSMEN.**

*See also Artists; also Surveyors.*

Marked thus † are Carriage.  
 Marked thus \* are Lithographic.

Abram & Sons, Middle Temple gate EC  
 Andrew William, Munn & Co. 67 Strand WC  
 Balcomb J. T. (on wood), 23 Southmptn. blds WC  
 \*Bates Edwin & Son, 5 Wine Office court EC  
 Beeforth John Peter (on wood), 40 Wellington street, Strand WC

**ARCHITECTS.**

*See also Architects—Naval; also Surveyors.*

ROYAL INSTITUTE OF BRITISH ARCHITECTS,  
 9 Conduit street, Hanover square W

*President,* George Edmund Street, R.A., F.S.A

*Vice-Presidents,* { Prof. Thos. Hayter Lewis, F.S.A  
 Horace Jones  
 Ewan Christian

*Secretary,* William Henry White

Marked thus † are Surveyors.  
 Marked thus § are Estate Agents.  
 Marked thus || are Civil Engineers.  
 Marked thus \* are Brewers' Architects.  
 Marked thus † are Fellows of the Royal Institute of British Architects.  
 Marked thus • are Associates.

\*Abbott John Octavius, 6 Whitehall SW  
 Abrahams Edmund Phineas & Co. 148 Cheapside EC  
 Adams Alfred John, 18 Queen's rd. Bayswr W  
 †Adams Cole Alfd. 14 Holden ter. Pimlico SW  
 \*Aimé Charles, Wool Exchange EC  
 †Aitchison George, B.A., A.R.A. 150 Harley st W  
 †Alexander & Gibson, 9 Great James st WC  
 Alexander Horace Aug. 72 Cannon street E

**BUILDERS.**

*See also Bricklayers; Carpenters; Contractors; Oven Builders & Surveyors.*

Marked thus \* are Carpenters.  
 Marked thus † are Bricklayers.  
 Marked thus ‡ are Surveyors.  
 Marked thus § are Undertakers.  
 Marked thus || are House Agents.  
 Marked thus ¶ are Contractors.

¶Abraham Robert, 18 & 19 North st. Poplar E  
 Adams John, 134 Great Titchfield street W  
 Adams Joshua, 1 Fitzroy street, Fitzroy sq W  
 Adamson Thos. Hy. & Sons, Turnham green SW  
 Aldin Chs. & Sons, 39A, Queen's gate grdns SW  
 Aldridge Robert, 40 Hart street, Bloomsbury WC  
 Allard Alfred, St. James' works, 5 Rodney st. Pentonville N

Figure 1. Extracts from Post Office London Trade Directory 1882 of occupations involved in design of housing. (*Historical Directories*, University of Leicester, <http://www.historicaldirectories.org/hd/>, accessed August 14, 2010)

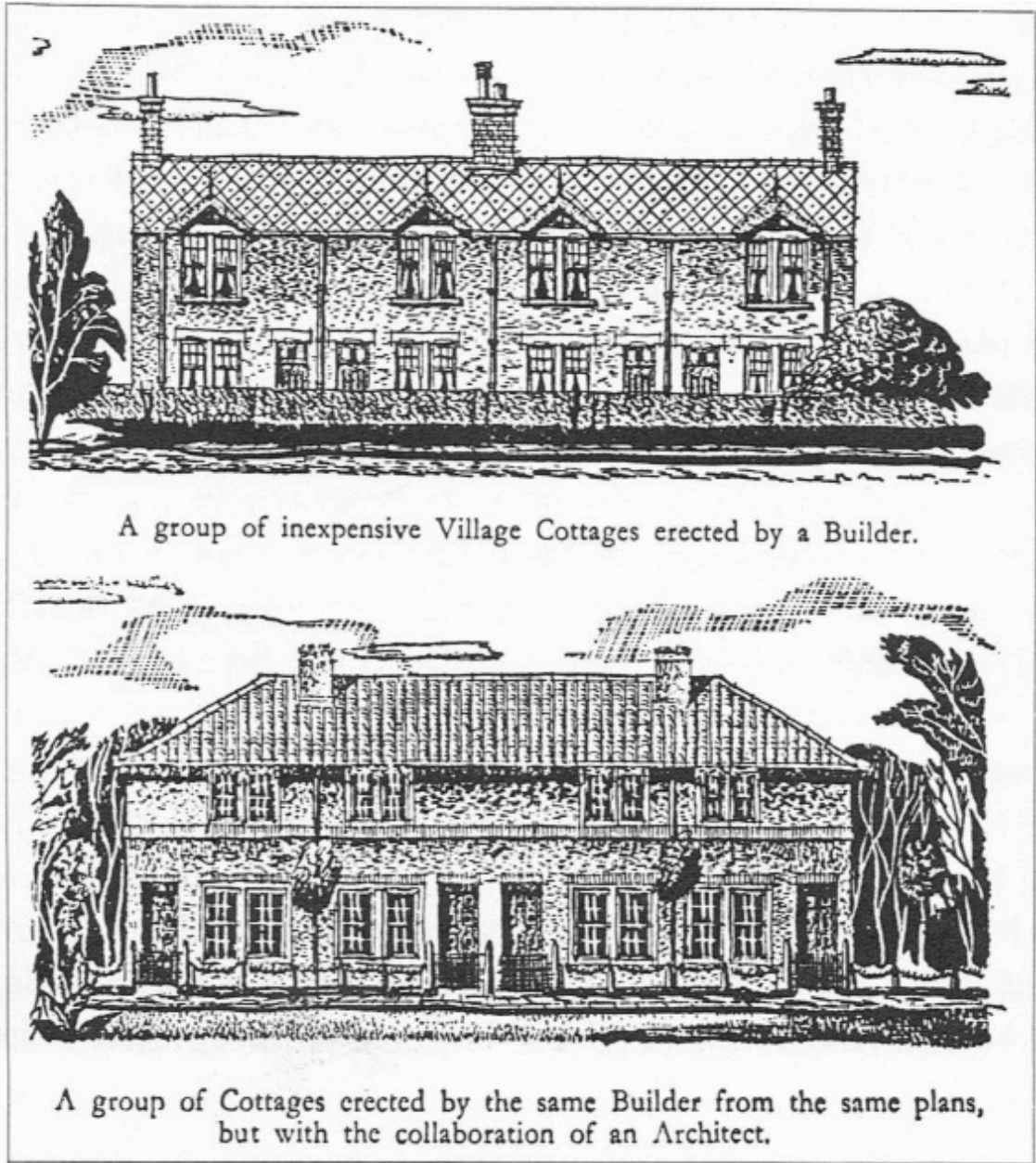


Figure 2. Illustration comparing the style of housing designed by a speculative builder and by an architect in the 1930s (Ernest Betham, *House Building 1934 - 36* [London: The Federated Employer's Press, 1934], p. 112)



Figure 3. Illustration titled 'Expectation' shows a professional in the foreground, possibly a town planner or architect, in front of a map of London with various planning reports attached to it (C.B. Purdom, *How Should We Rebuild London* [London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1945], p. 1).



Figure 4. Illustration titled 'Vision' shows again the same professional in the foreground in front of a map of London erasing outer parts of it with a sponge; the road network of the central part has been redrawn (Ibid., p. 198).

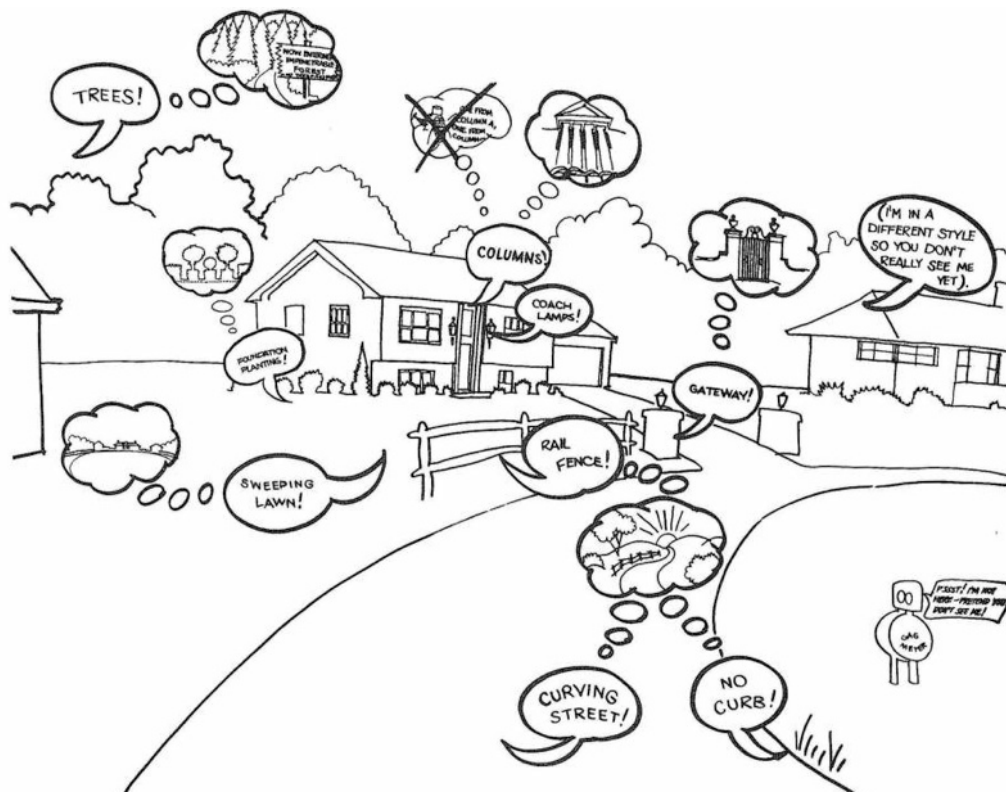


Figure 5. 'Precedents of Suburban Symbols,' Learning from Levittown studio, Yale, 1970. Venturi interprets what typical elements of a suburban house signify to its residents and the potential implied associations (Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour, *Learning From Las Vegas: The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form* [Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1977], p. 159).

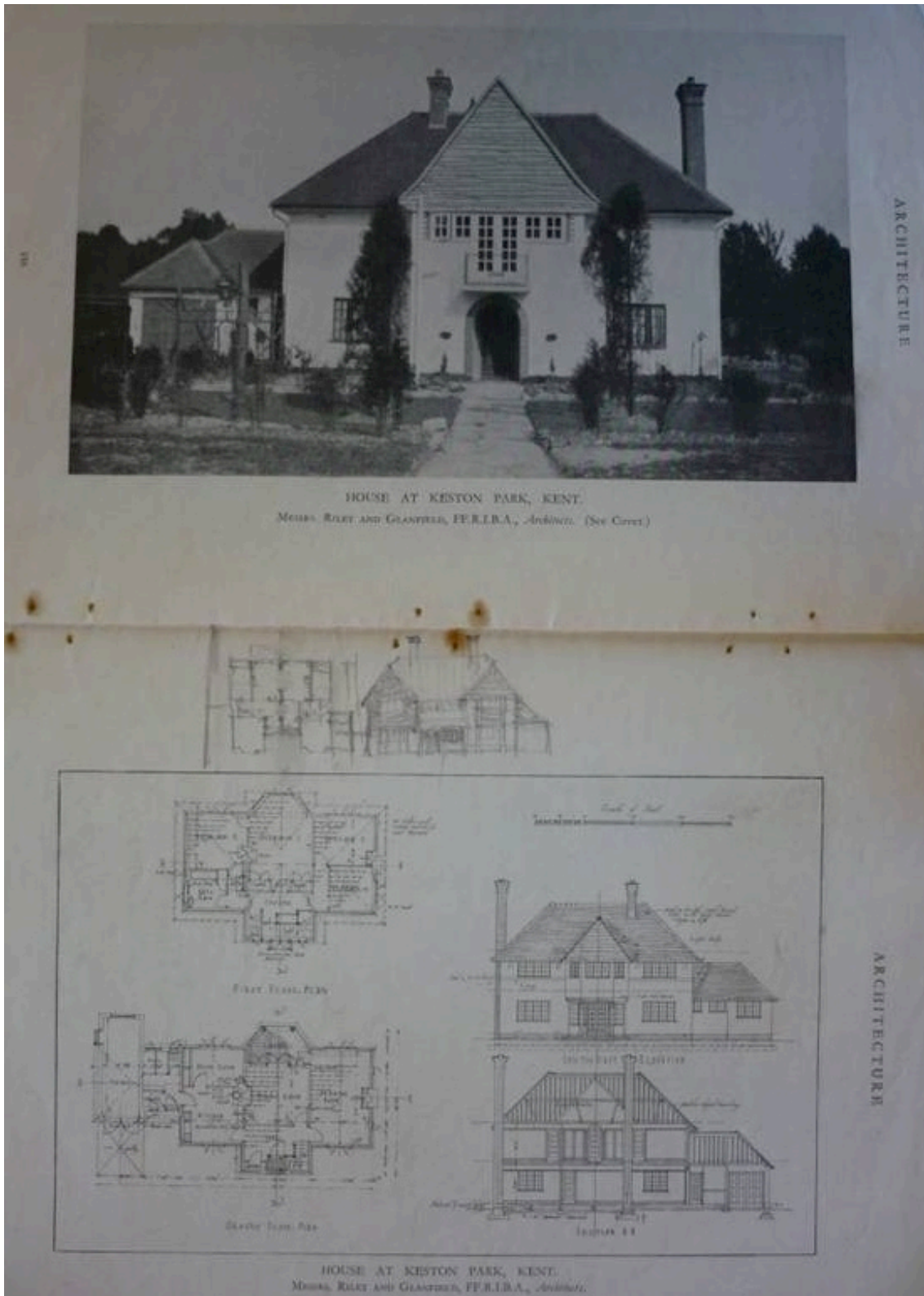


Figure 6. Pages 158 & 159 of 'Bungalows and Small Country Houses'. One of the architectural magazines that belonged to the Readers and that was used as a source of design inspiration. The page shows a house at Keston Park, Kent by the architects Riley and Glanfield. The sketch in the middle is by one of the Reader brothers (probably Richard). The sketches on the page, which are inspired by the house in the magazine, resemble some of the sub-urban houses that Richard was designing at the time, probably those in Hervey Road (*Bungalows and Small Country Houses*, The Architect [London, 1925], held in: Reader Brothers Collection, LMA/4430/04/01/007, London Metropolitan Archives).

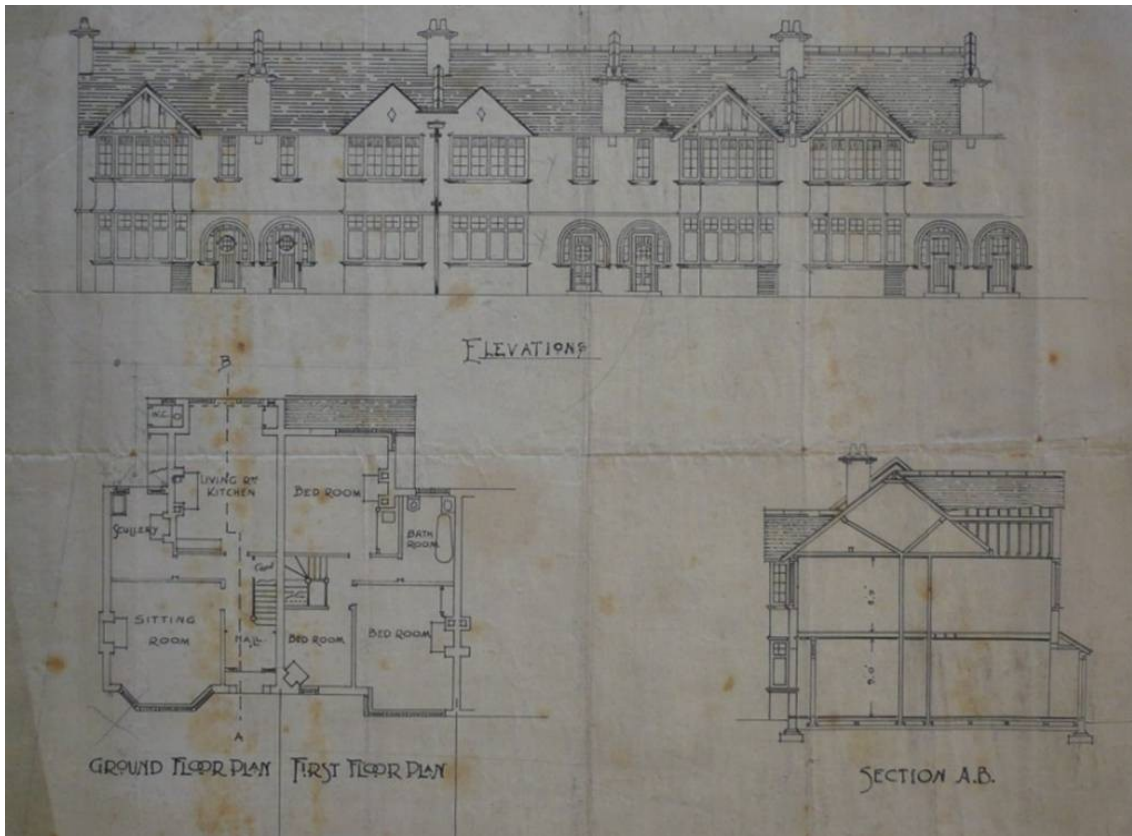


Figure 7. Drawing by Richard Reader for houses in Leadale Road, Clapton (Reader Brothers Collection, LMA/4430/05/030, London Metropolitan Archives).

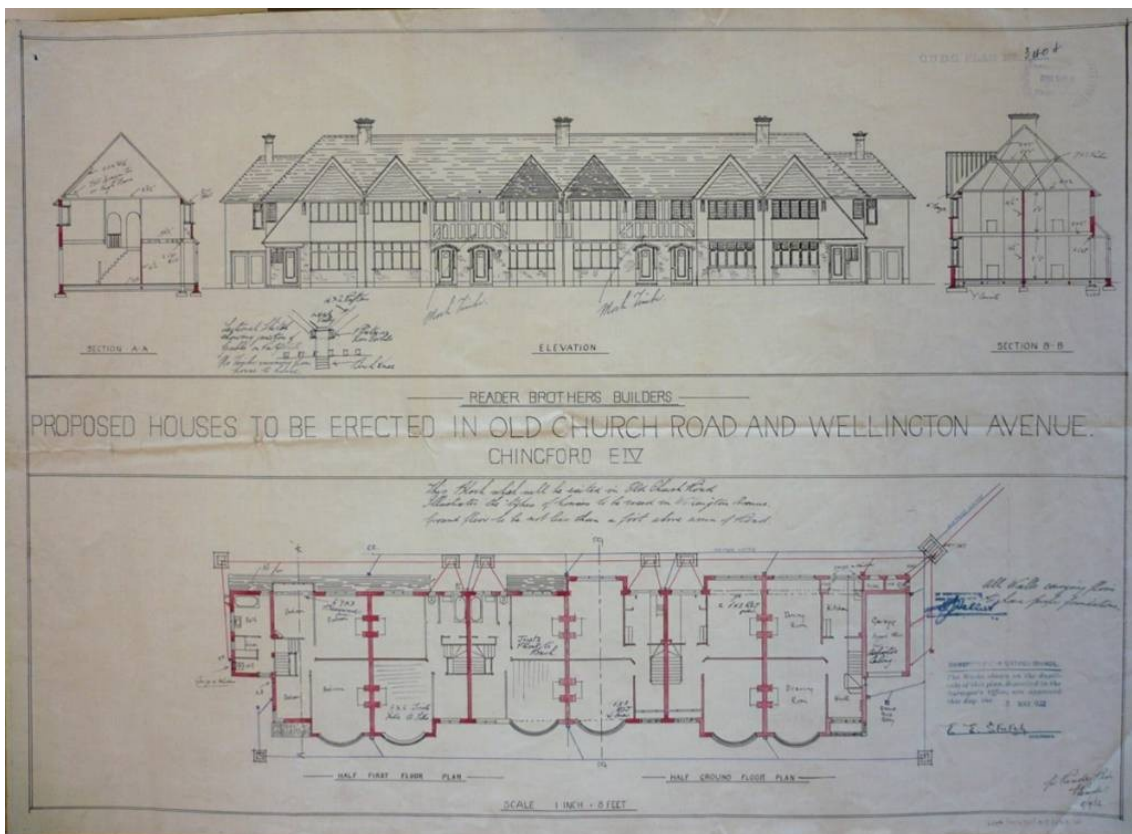


Figure 8. Drawings by Edgar Reader for houses in Old Church Road and Wellington Avenue, Chingford, 1932 (Reader Brothers Collection, LMA/4430/05/022, London Metropolitan Archives).

1908 STRAETHAM. Date 1908

**ROBERT H. MILLER'S ESTATE,**  
Wyatt Park Road, Streatham Hill.

---

THE EXCEPTIONALLY WELL-BUILT,  
FREEHOLD OR LONG LEASEHOLD

**MODERN RESIDENCES**

On this Estate are being offered for Sale by the Owner and Builder, at the Moderate  
Price of

**FIVE HUNDRED GUINEAS**  
EACH.

Lease for 99 Years, at a Ground Rent of . . . £8 per annum.  
Lease for 999 Years, at a Ground Rent of . . . £9 per annum.

Excepting Nos. 4 & 5, the Ground Rent of which is £9 each  
for Lease for 99 years and £10 each for Lease for 999 years.

Or FREEHOLD: 26 Years' Purchase of Ground Rent added.

---

**EASY TERMS OF PAYMENT.**

If desired, £75 of the purchase-money may be paid in Cash and the remainder  
can remain on Mortgage for Five Years, at Five per cent. per annum, repayable by  
instalments at any dates during that period, or on a Mortgage, reducible at not less  
than £10 per annum, at Four-and-a-Half per cent. per annum; interest to be charge-  
able on the net quarterly balances; or Terms can be arranged to suit Purchaser's  
convenience.

The Rental Value of these Houses is estimated at £45 per annum.

**THE ARCHITECTS.**

To meet this demand the owner decided to erect on the Wyatt Park Road Estate only such  
properties, entrusting the designs to a firm of first-rate architects, Messrs. Taylor & Sons, Northbury,  
and an inspection of the property is the best evidence of their complete success.

**THE ILLUSTRATIONS.**

To give those interested a general idea of the property, plans and illustrations of the front  
and back views are shown herein, as well as engravings of the interior of the principal rooms,  
furnished in an artistic and inexpensive manner. These illustrations will speak for themselves.

**SPECIFICATION.**

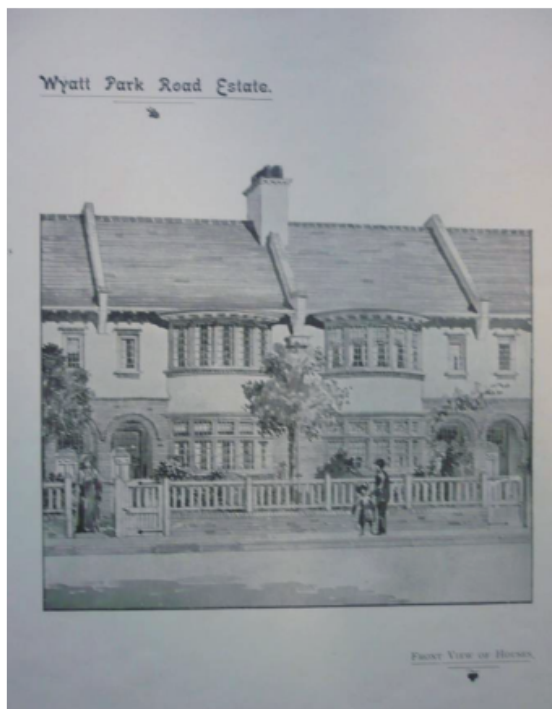
As the construction of the Houses on this Estate is of such a high grade, and so vastly  
superior to that usually found in property of similar value, the Architects' own Report is printed on  
one of the following pages, under the heading—"Particulars of Construction."

**INSPECTION OF PROPERTY.**

If the reader has not sufficient practical knowledge to fully appreciate the various  
details, it is hoped that he will submit the specification to a qualified person, or, what would  
be still more convincing, to arrange for his own surveyor to view the property, and if this can  
take place at an early date, he would have the advantage of inspecting some of the houses in  
course of construction. The more minute the examination, the more apparent will be the fact  
that the houses are of really artistic design and excellent workmanship.

**AN ASSURANCE.**

On the conveyance of the property the owner's legal responsibility as to the construction  
and all kindred matters ceases, but so assured is he of the reliability of all work and materials  
employed, that should any defect show itself within twelve months from date of purchase, which  
in his opinion he is morally responsible for, he would make the same good at his own expense,  
it being always understood that he is to be the sole arbiter in such matters.



**PARTICULARS OF CONSTRUCTION.**

The construction of these houses is of the soundest, all the walls are built solidly of  
hard Berkshire stock bricks, the external pointing being done with cement, and rest on a bed  
of cement concrete nowhere less than 12in. thick, with damp-proof courses formed of two layers  
of slates bedded solidly in cement; the rough cast is composed of two coats of cement rendering  
finished with special spar finish.

The internal partition walls (with the exception of one minor one) are of brickwork, thus  
adding to the stability and comfort of the house.

The timbers throughout are of sound Baltic, while the roofs are covered with first quality  
Welsh slates from the world-famous quarries of Lord Penrhyn, the top of hips being covered with  
lead, the eaves are finished with special cast iron gutters and rain water pipes, discharging into a  
separate system of surface water drains in the front.

The window frames are all English made, most of them being specially designed, while  
the bay windows are constructed with patent draught proof fillets, which ensure a tight fitting  
convenient free from the usual rattle and disconcerting draughts.

The other joinery is of an equally sound type, and attention is directed to the staircase  
with its open "Well," oak handrail, square newels, etc., which give it a quiet and refined  
appearance so lacking in even much larger houses.

The Hall floor is paved with pitch-pine block flooring, laid in concrete on a solid bed of  
cement concrete, and a similar bed of concrete is laid under the whole of the other ground floors.

The Cellars in the Basement have cement floors, and are quite dry and well-ventilated; in  
addition, a separate and independent drain ensures the speedy removal of any ground moisture.

The drainage system throughout is of the best construction, all pipes are of highly  
glazed stoneware with cement joints laid on a bed of compact concrete, with inspection chambers at  
all main junctions so that each drain can be easily inspected; the ventilation of the drains has  
had special attention, and the whole work has been carried out under the strictest supervision  
of the Sanitary Authorities and subjected to their hydraulic tests.

The painting and decorations are carried out with the best materials in a first-class  
manner, and while this branch of the work is easily inspected, the fabric of the building has  
been carried out in an equally sound manner.

The garden fences are constructed of English oak, the divisions between the yards  
are of brickwork, while the ground part of the fences next the Road are also of brickwork.

Figure 9. Pages from sales brochure of Wyatt Park Road, 1908 (Housing Ephemera Collection, Museum of London).



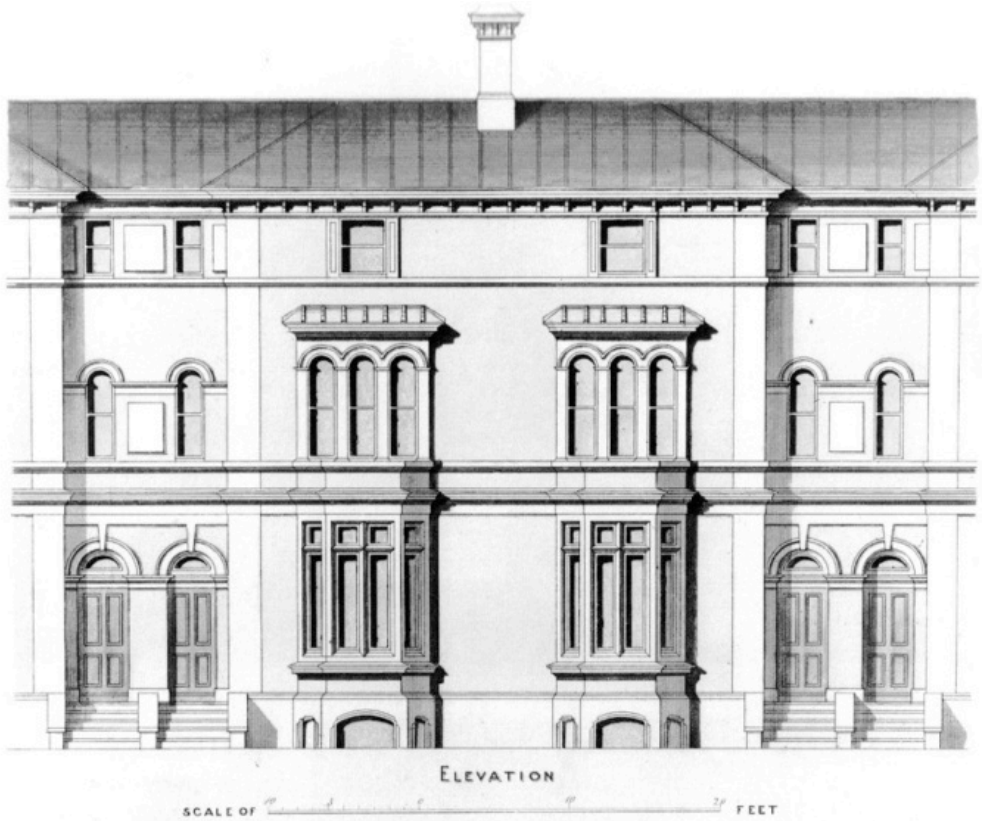


Figure 10. Example of close resemblance (but not a match) between a pattern-book drawing and houses as built (Andrew Saint et al., *London Suburbs* [London: Merrell Holberton Publishers, 1999], pp. 84 – 87).

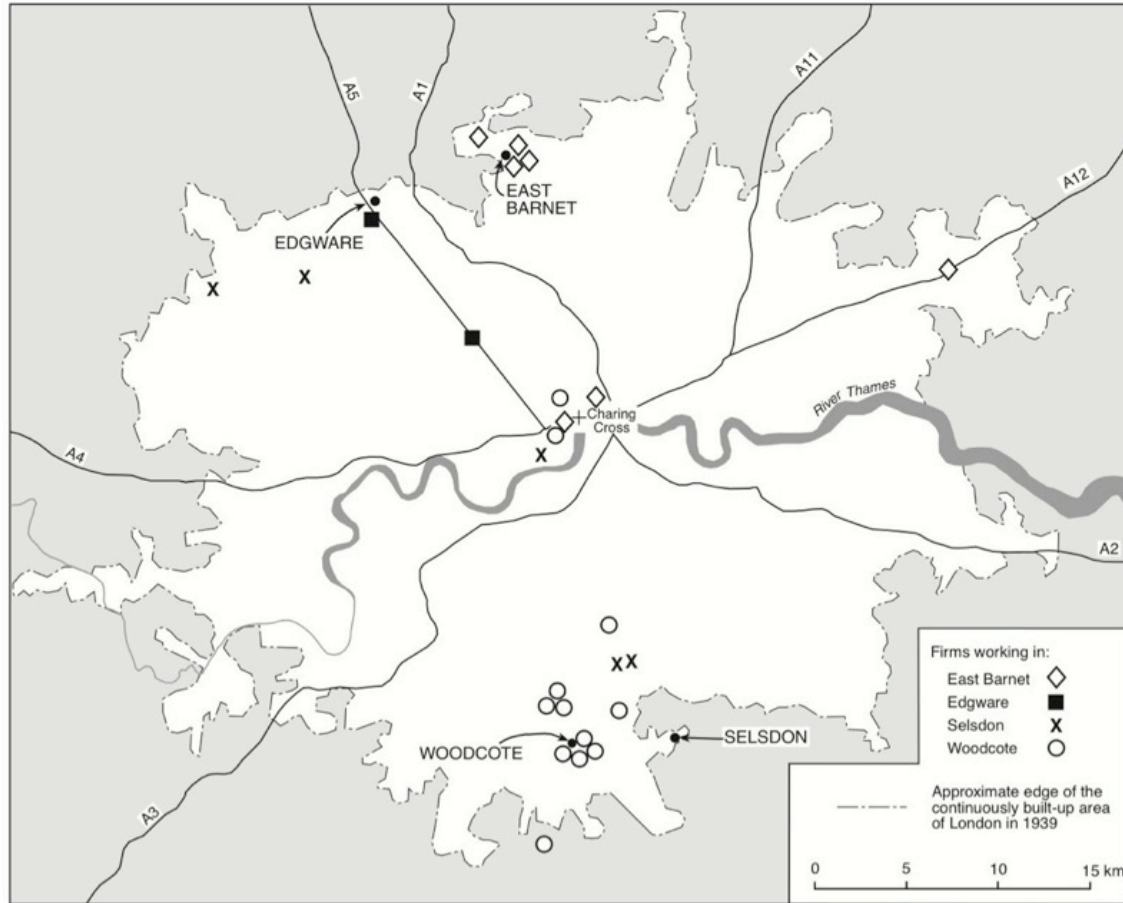


Figure 11. Location of firms preparing building applications in four study areas in London, 1918-39. *Source:* Local authority building applications (J. W. R. Whitehand and C. M.H Carr, 'The Creators of England's Inter-war Suburbs,' *Urban History* 28, no. 2 [2001], 232).

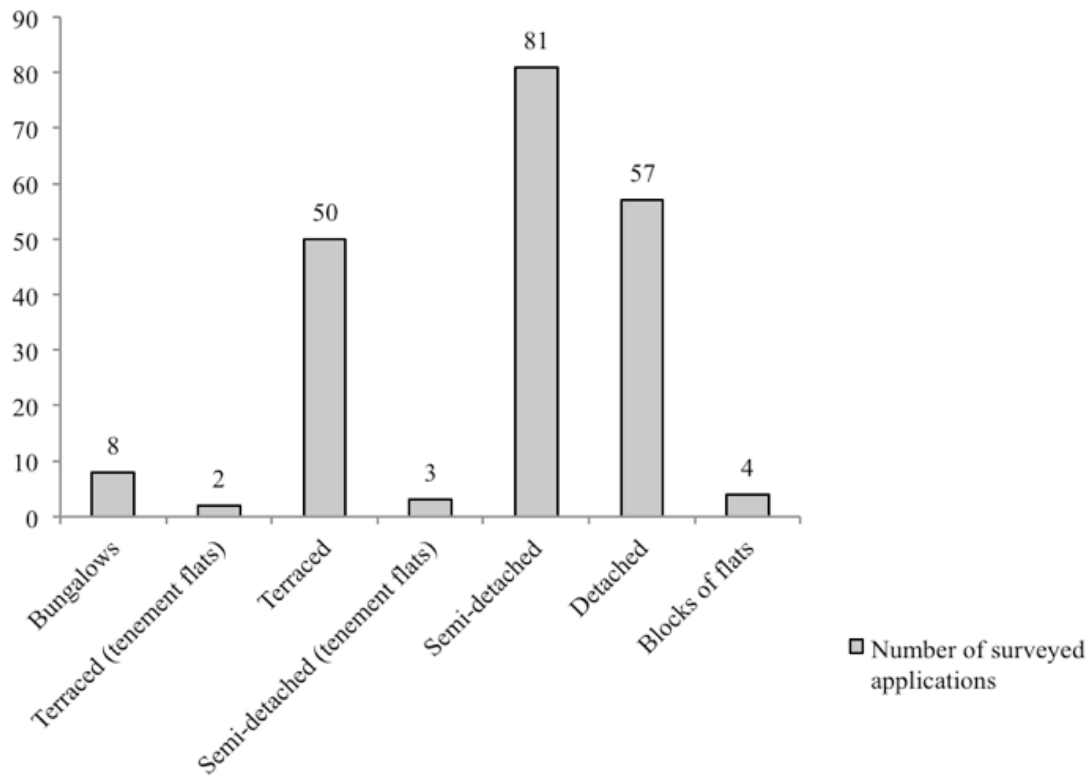


Figure 12. The graph shows a breakdown of the application sample by house type. Most of the applications were for terraced (50), detached (57) and semi-detached (81) houses. The bungalows were all built in the inter-war period. Five applications were for buildings that looked like houses but were in fact tenements (see list of surveyed applications in appendix).

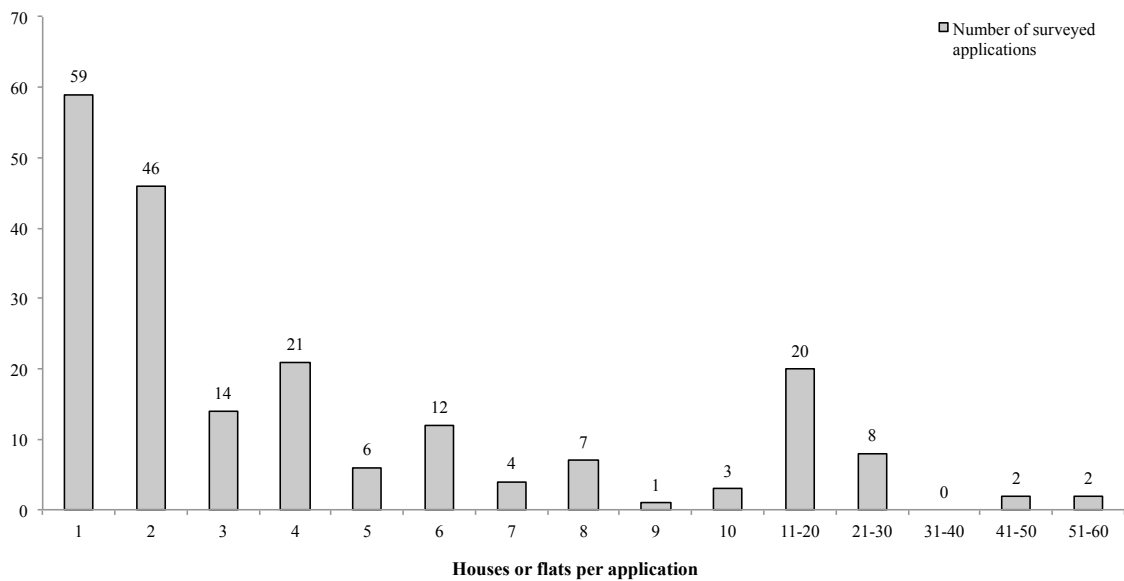


Figure 13. Breakdown of sample by applications size. Most of the applications were for a small number of houses or flats at a time, which was typical for speculative housing development at the time. Some of the applications for one house were for owner-occupiers rather than for speculative housing. About half (105) of the applications were for 1-2 houses (see list of surveyed applications in appendix).

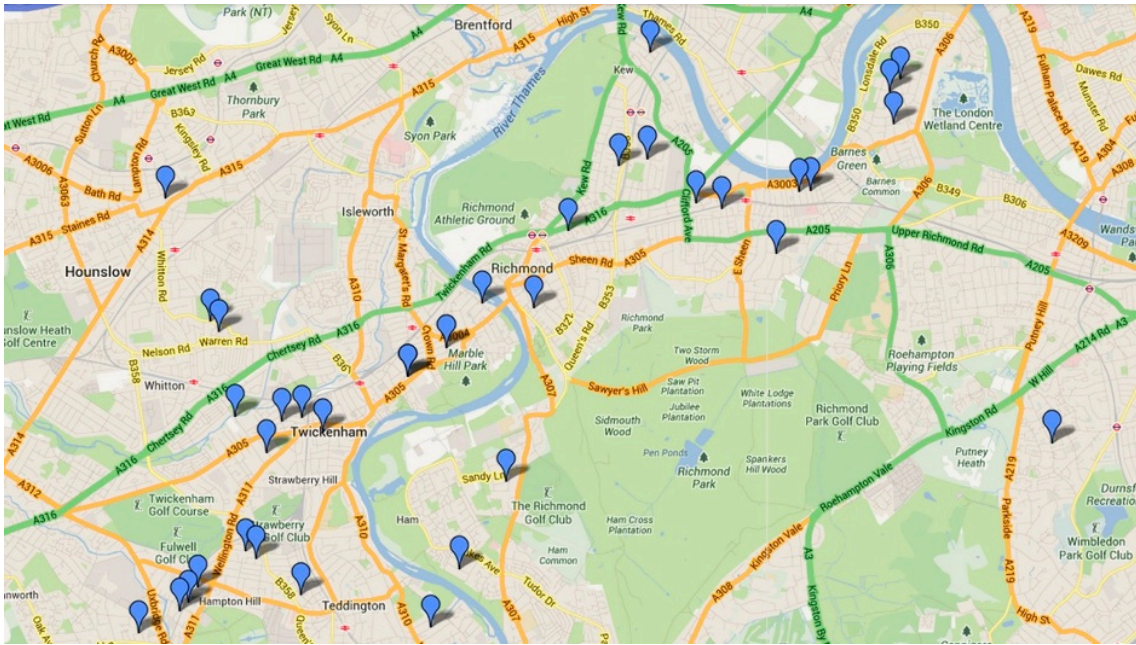


Figure 14. Map of today's London Borough of Richmond. Blue markers show the geographical spread of the building application sample, 1886-1939 (www.maps.google.co.uk, Richmond Local History Archive, see list of surveyed applications in appendix).

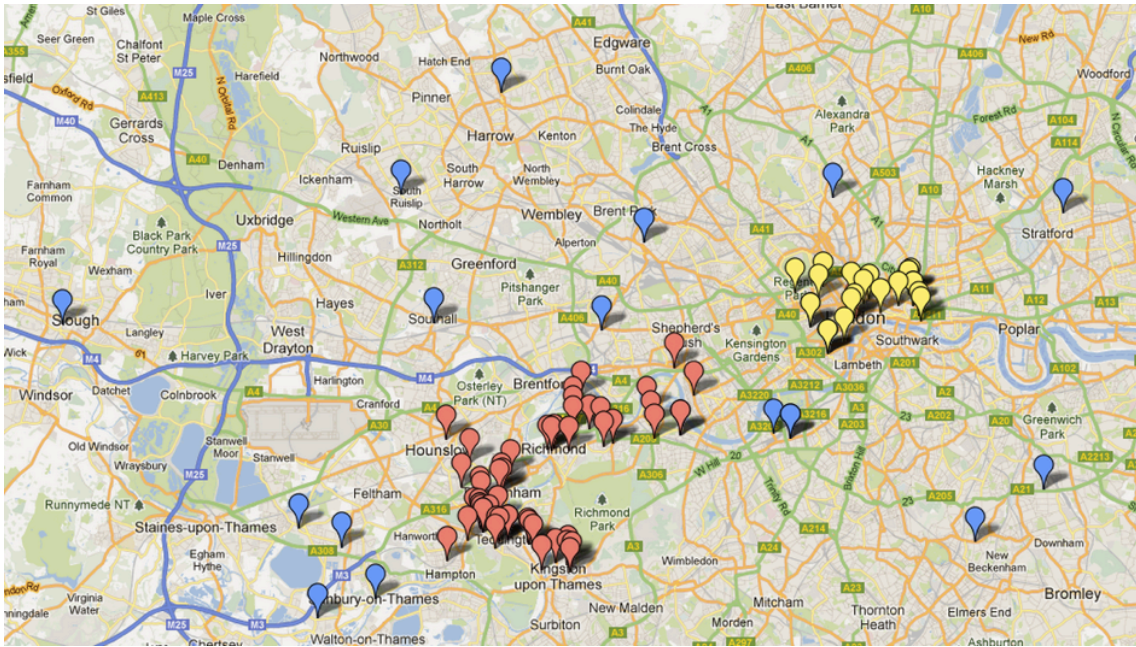


Figure 15. Map of business locations of the 'architects' of the application sample. Red markers indicate those based locally (within two miles of or in today's LB Richmond), yellow those based in the City or Westminster, and blue those based elsewhere (www.maps.google.co.uk, Richmond Local History Archive, see list of surveyed applications in appendix).

Telephones { Prospect 4482 & 4483.  
Sutton 2695.  
Sutton 2629.

15

MESSRS:-

**ROSEVEARS**  
F.S.I.

Chartered Surveyors, Auctioneers,  
VALUERS, LAND & ESTATE AGENTS.

JOHN A. ROSEVEAR, F.S.I., F.A.I., M.R.S.A.I.  
ERNEST J.H. CUMBERS, F.S.I., A.A.I.

ESTABLISHED 1894.  
OFFICE HOURS:- 9.30 - 6.30.  
SATURDAYS - 5.0.

F.P. Kindell Esq.,  
Engineer & Surveyor,  
Barnes Urban District Council,  
Council House,  
High Street,  
Mortlake, S.W. 13.

C/W.

335, Upper Richmond Road,  
East Sheen, S.W. 14.

(IMMEDIATELY OPPOSITE "HARE & HOUNDS" HOTEL.)  
AND AT CHEAM AND WORCESTER PARK, SURREY.

March 23th. 1930.

Dear Sir,

re "Leinster House Estate".  
St. Leonards Road, East Sheen, S.W.

We herewith submit on behalf of our client, the purchaser of the property, a plan showing the proposed lay-out of the above estate for the erection of 32 private houses with attached garages and shall be glad if you will kindly bring this before the next Meeting of your Council.

We shall be glad to have your Council's certificate of approval in due course.

Yours faithfully,

ERNEST J.H. CUMBERS  
SURVEYOR  
29 MAR 1930  
Received

Encl. 1.

Figure 16. Letter from Messrs Rosevears. The preparation of estate layouts and also house designs had traditionally been a role of land & estate surveyors (Richmond Local Archive, PLA/02625).

W. H. Pecover,

Building  
Contractor.

WORKS:  
KINGSWAY, SHEEN.

Plans, Specifications, and  
Prices Submitted.

46, Kingsway,

Sheen, S.W.

April 1921

Dear Sir -

Enclosed please find amended plan  
showing drains for Nos 4, 6, 8, 10 & 12  
Kingsway. Also amended plan of 1st floor  
of Nos 4 & 6 Kingsway

Yours faithfully  
W. H. Pecover

Borough Surveyor  
Council House  
Mortlake S.W.14

Figure 17. This letter, which was attached to the building application, was from a builder like the Readers (see chapter five), who also provided architectural services, such as plans and specifications, as indicated on the letterhead (Richmond Local Archive, PLA/05304).

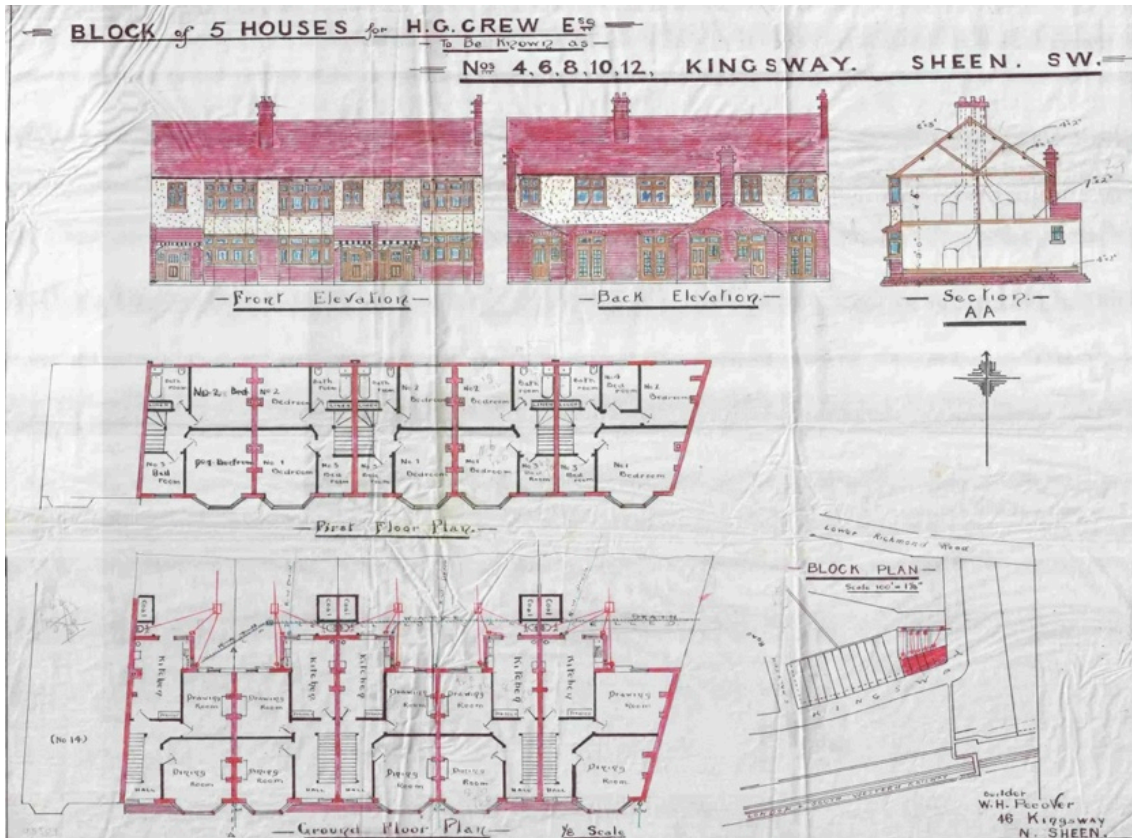


Figure 18. The builder W.H. Pecover created his own design drawings, as in this example of five houses in Kingsway, 1921, but he also built a number of houses in Richmond that were designed by others (Richmond Local Archive, PLA/05304).

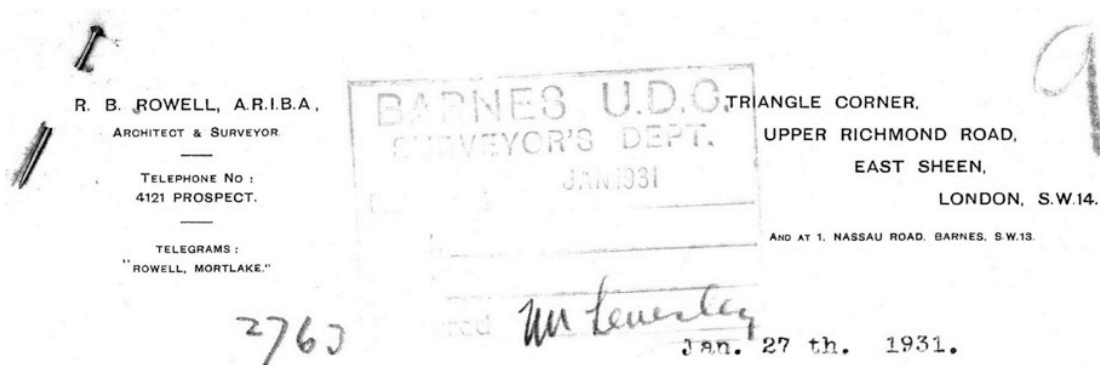


Figure 19. Reginald B. Rowell (1875-1966) was the most prolific architect in Richmond in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His work was largely residential, much of it for speculative builders, but he also designed the Chapel for East Sheen Cemetery, 1906, and the Picturedrome cinema in Sheen Lane, 1910 (Local Studies Volunteer Support Group, *The Building of a Borough* [Richmond: London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, 2012]).

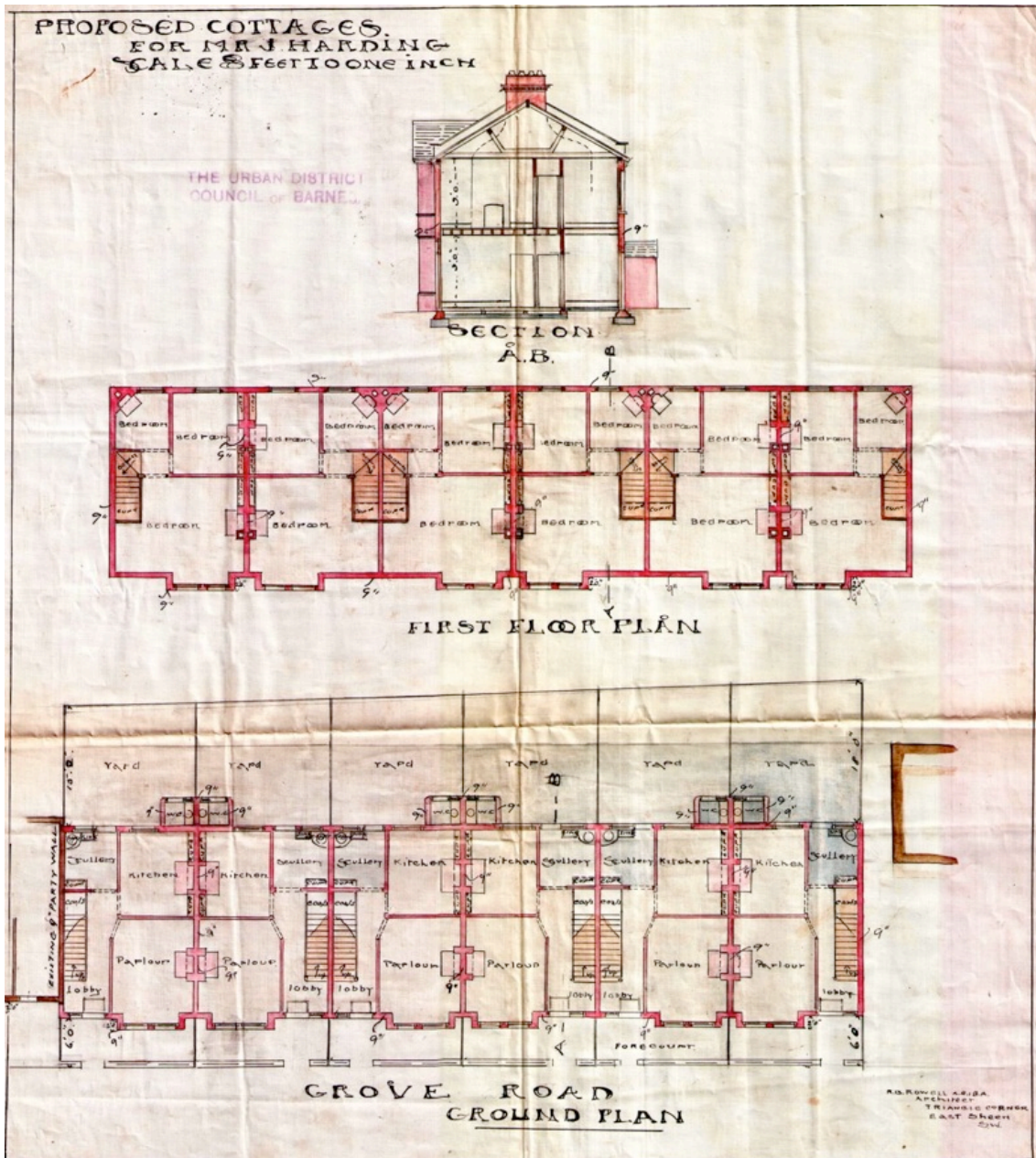


Figure 20 Application drawings for terraced houses in Grove Road, 1903, by Reginald B. Rowell (Richmond Local Archive, PLA/03556).



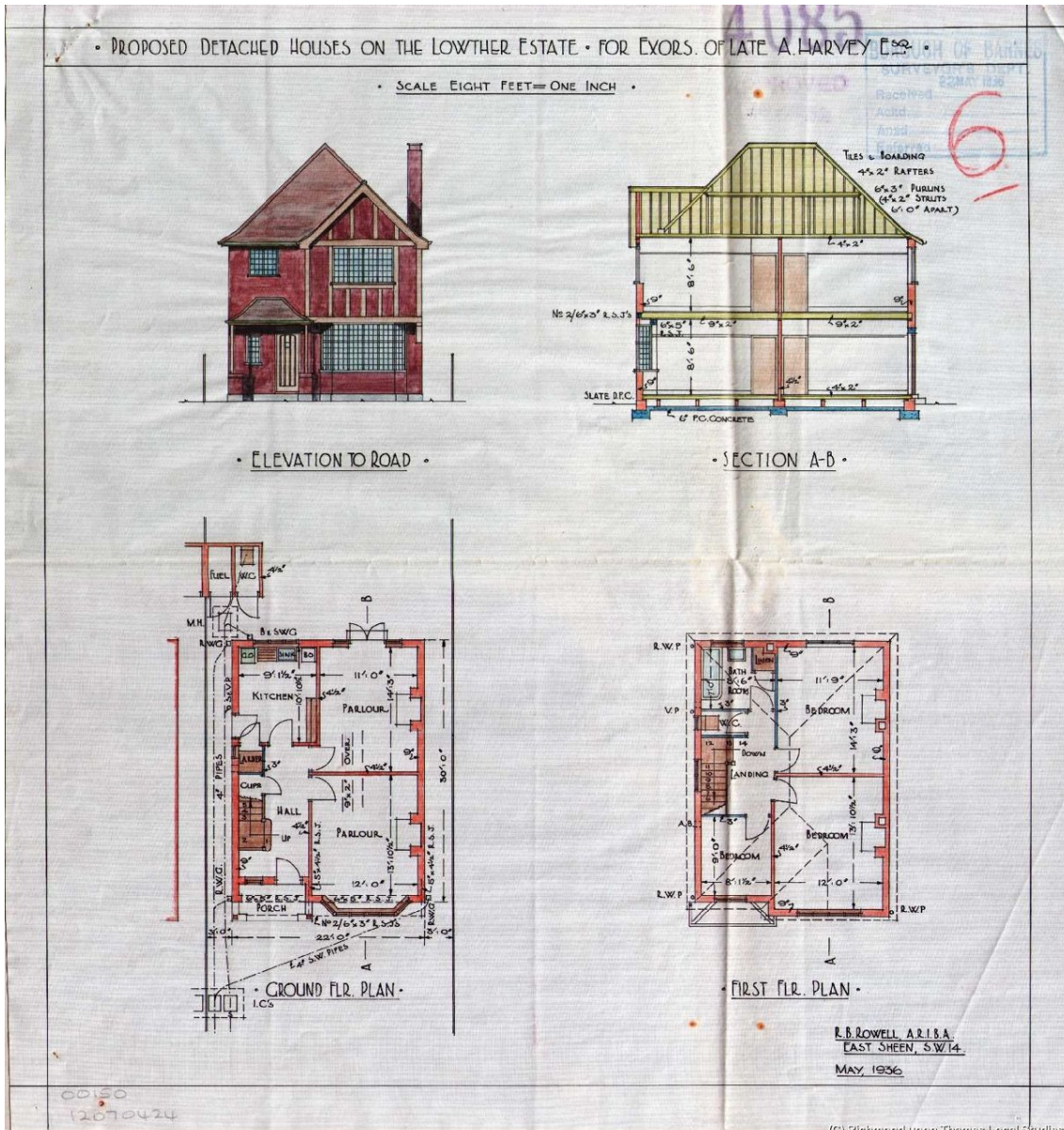


Figure 21. Application drawings for a detached house designed by R.B. Rowell in 1936 (Richmond Local Archive, PLA/00150).

Fulwell Land & Estate Offices

Opposite entrance to Fulwell Golf Course

64 WELLINGTON ROAD

HAMPTON HILL

FULWELL STN. SOUTHERN RLY.

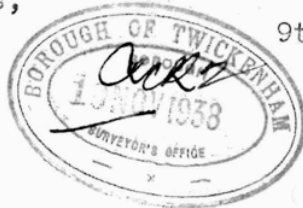


A/S.

WM ALEXANDER F.S.I ARCHITECT AND SURVEYOR AUCTIONEER AND ESTATE AGENT

The Surveyor,  
Twickenham Borough Council,  
Municipal Offices,  
TWICKENHAM.

Wednesday  
9th November 1938.



Dear Sir,

60/72, SUNNYSIDE ROAD, TEDDINGTON.

I have pleasure in enclosing herewith amended lay-out plan of the above, and shall be glad to have a note of the Council's approval in due course.

I take it that no further form is necessary.

Yours very truly,

Figure 22. Letter by W.M. Alexander, 1938. A combined business of Architect, Surveyor, Auctioneer and Estate Agent was not uncommon, which is discussed in more detail in chapter four (Richmond Local Archive, PLA/09686).

FRM/WD.

EDWIN EVANS & SONS,  
253, LAVENDER HILL, CLAPHAM JUNCTION, S.W.11.

BRANCH OFFICES

8 ST JOHN'S HILL, CLAPHAM JUNCTION, S.W.11 | 146 KINGSTON ROAD, MERTON PARK, S.W.19.

ESTABLISHED 1880.

PARTNERS:

EDWIN EVANS, J.P., F.A.I.  
B. GRAHAM EVANS, F.S.I., F.A.I.  
F. R. MYHILL, P.A.S.I., Q.S.A.

AUCTIONEERS, ESTATE AGENTS,  
CHARTERED SURVEYORS & VALUERS,  
ARCHITECTS.

TELEPHONE: BATTERSEA 50 (2 LINES)

Figure 23. Letterhead of Edwin Evans & Sons, another example of such a combined business, 1923 (Richmond Local Archive, PLA/05306).

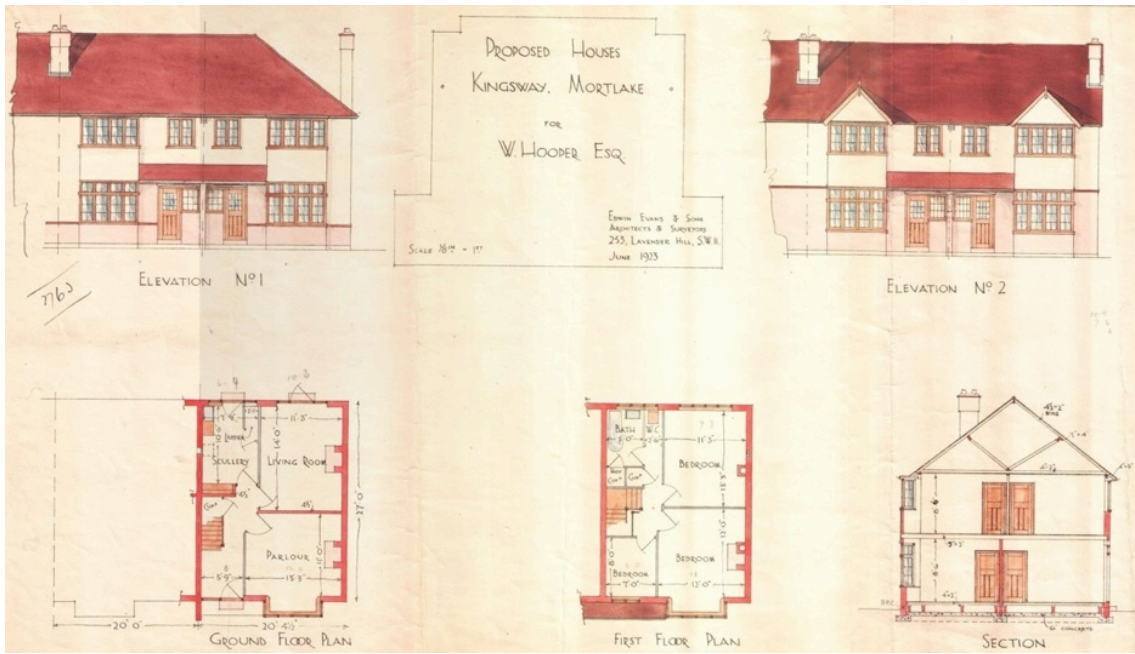


Figure 24. Drawings by Edwin Evans & Sons for 23 terraced houses in Kingsway, 1923. The design is simple but carefully and clearly set out (Richmond Local Archive, PLA/05306).



Figure 25. Photo of the houses in Kingsway designed by Edwin Evans & Sons today.

TEDDINGTON.

02611

No. 539.

No. of Plan 810  
 Date when received Mail 4<sup>th</sup> June 1<sup>st</sup> 1896  
 Name of Owner Mr Jb. White  
Tulwell Rd  
 Name of Architect Mr E. Rice  
 Name of Builder Mr Rumsey  
 Nature of Buildings 1 pair  
semi-detached cottages  
16-18  
 Situation Sunnyside Road  
Princes Road

NOTICE TO ERECT BUILDINGS.

Description 2 Cottages  
 Situation Edwin R<sup>d</sup> Twickenham  
 Owner R. Jeffrey  
 Builder Chas Drake

Date 26<sup>th</sup> Oct<sup>r</sup> 1900

Twickenham Urban District Council

09702

Figure 26. Examples of application cover page for Teddington and Twickenham from turn of the century. The information required was not standardized, not even across all councils of today's LB Richmond. While Teddington Council requested the architect's name, Twickenham did not (Richmond Local Archive, PLA/09702 & PLA/02611).

Borough of



Richmond (Surrey).

Reg. No. of Plan.....

Form to be attached to Plan of Proposed Buildings, deposited with the Borough Engineer and Surveyor on the.....day of.....192 .

Name and Address of Proprietor	...	...	...	...	<u>H. Joyce &amp; Son</u>
Name of Architect or Builder	...	...	...	...	<u>80 The Green Twickenham</u>
Situation of Proposed Building	...	...	...	...	<u>Sudley Rd.</u>
Describe Building	...	...	...	...	<u>3 Dwelling Houses</u>
State what Materials will be used	...	...	...	...	<u>Bricks.</u>

Figure 27. Example of the first section of a Richmond building application from 1931, which gives the option to indicate either Architect or Builder (Richmond Local Archive, PLA/02647).

To the Council of the Borough of Twickenham.

I, the undersigned, hereby give notice that I intend to erect the undermentioned building or buildings, or to alter an existing building within the Borough of Twickenham, as described in this notice and shown upon the plans and sections submitted herewith, and I undertake to conform with the Byelaws and Regulations of the Council relating thereto.

The following are the particulars of the intended work:—

Name and Address of Owner Messrs Shindler, Winter, Snyer & Ross, 74 Millon St. E.C.

Name and Address of Architect or ~~Builder~~ A. PLAMOS & SON, 16 City Road E.C.

Situation of Building or Buildings (if more than one the number of buildings to be stated)  
FIFTY FOUR (54) FLATS FRONTING UPON DUCKS WALK & RIVERSDALE GARDENS TWICKENHAM.

If the notice relates to proposed additions or alterations, describe the extent of such additions or alterations

— NEW BUILDINGS.

intended to be used as FLATS

The external and party walls will be constructed of BRICKWORK, 14" & 9" thick

Extent of open space at the rear of intended building or buildings, exclusively belonging thereto

Width — Depth not less than 60' Superficial feet see layout plan.

The ~~floor and~~ roof timbers will be of fir or pine of sound and good quality, of the sizes stated below, and in every respect in accordance with the provisions of the byelaws relating thereto:—

FLOOR JOISTS.

Length in Clear Bearing.	Distance apart measured from centre to centre.	Sizes (Depth by Breadth).	If herring bone strutting will be used state number of rows.	Remarks.
<u>PATENT HOLLOW TILE &amp; REINFORCED CONCRETE CONSTRUCTION</u>				The trimmer and trimming joists will be of dimensions equal to lin. greater than the thickness stated for the corresponding floor joists.

COMMON RAFTERS.

PURLINS.

Length in Clear Bearing.	Distance apart measured from centre to centre.	Sizes (Depth by Breadth).	Length in Clear Bearing.	Distance apart measured from centre to centre.	Size (Depth by Breadth).

Level of lowest floor above pavement of street 19.50. above ordnance datum.

The roof will be covered with STANDARD FLAT ROOFING.

The drainage will be carried out in accordance with the drainage plan deposited herewith.

The building or buildings will be supplied with water laid on from the mains of the Metropolitan Water Board.

Signature A. Plamos & Son (architect.)

Address 16 City Road Fenchurch Square E.C.

Dated this 9<sup>th</sup> day of May 1935.

Figure 28. Example of a Twickenham building application from 1935. Again, there was a choice to indicate the name of either the architect or the builder (Richmond Local Archive, PLA/02651).



Figure 29. Block plan for a larger application of 48 houses, prepared by local surveyor Ernest Pennington, 1898 (Richmond Local Archive, PLA/03468)

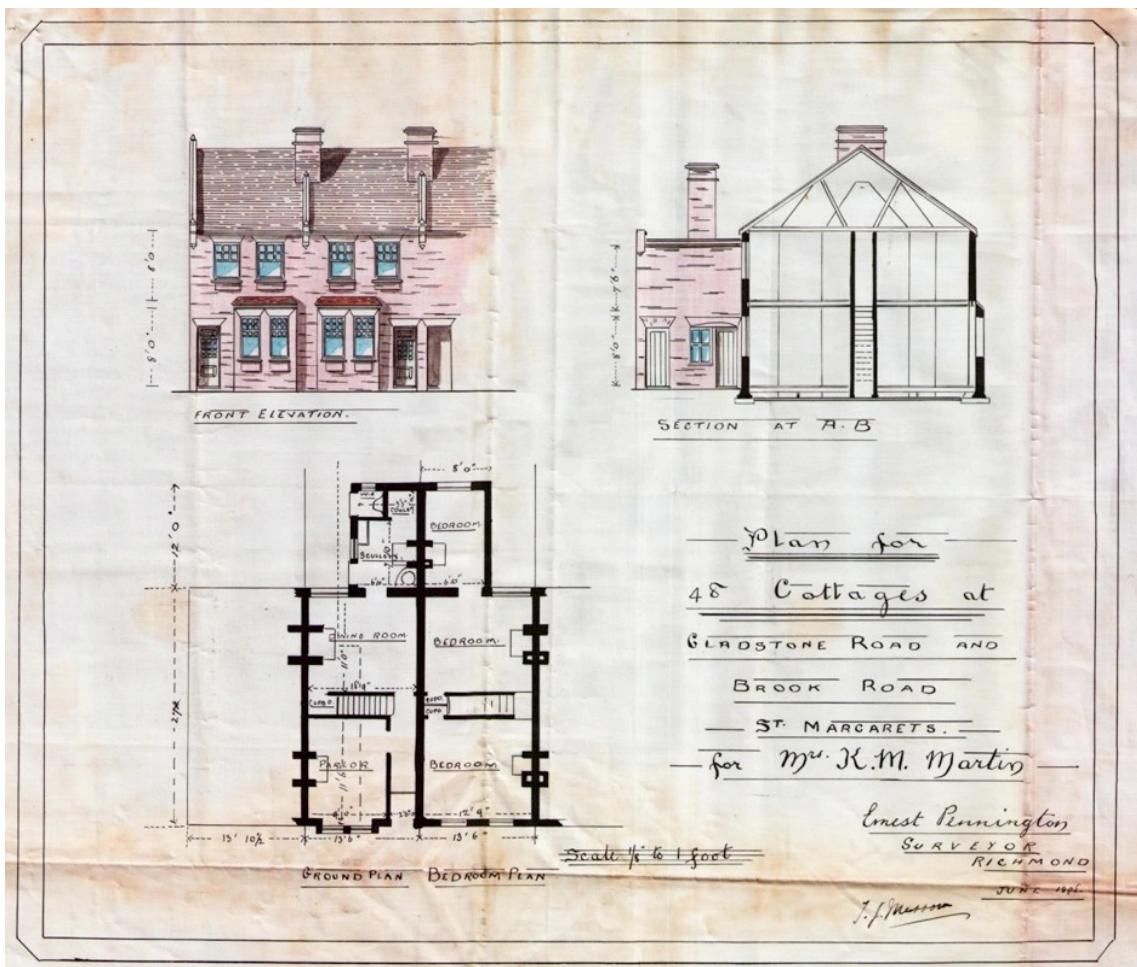


Figure 30. House design for same application by local surveyor Ernest Pennington, 1898 (Richmond Local Archive, PLA/03468)

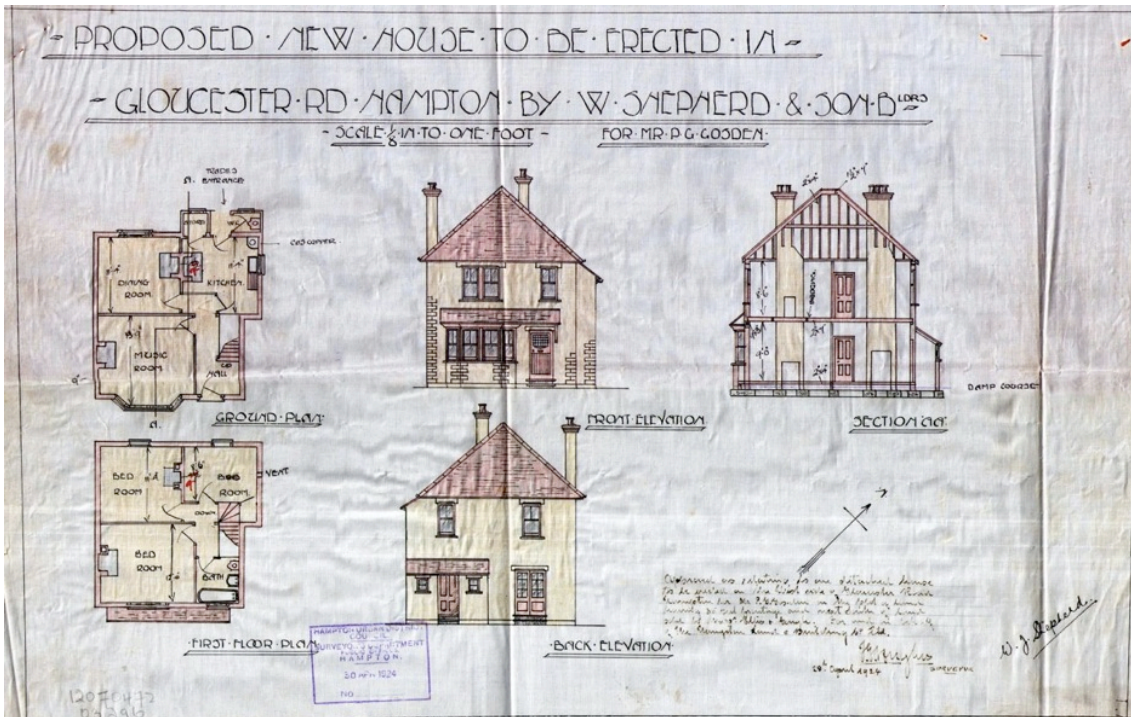


Figure 31. Application drawings for a detached house, 1924, by builder W.J. Shepherd (Richmond Local Archive, PLA/03281)

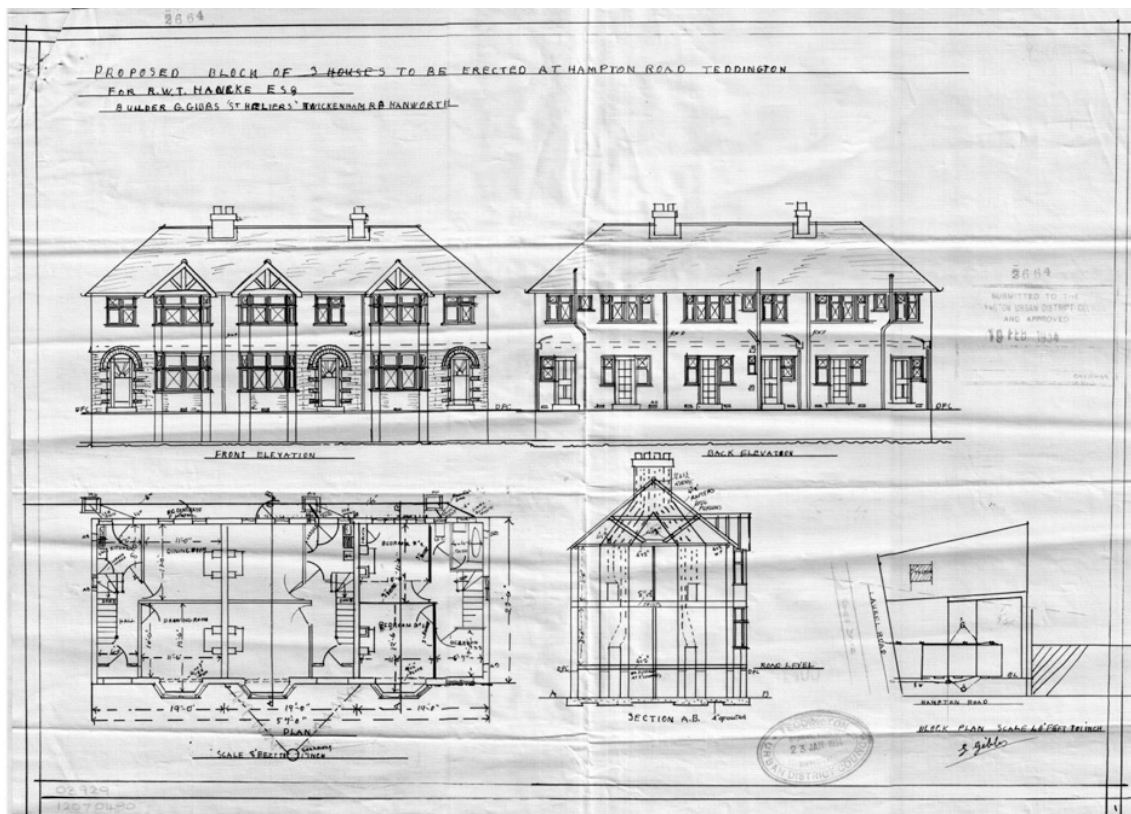


Figure 32. A rather crude application drawing by the builder G. Gibbs, 1934 (Richmond Local Archive, PLA/03929)

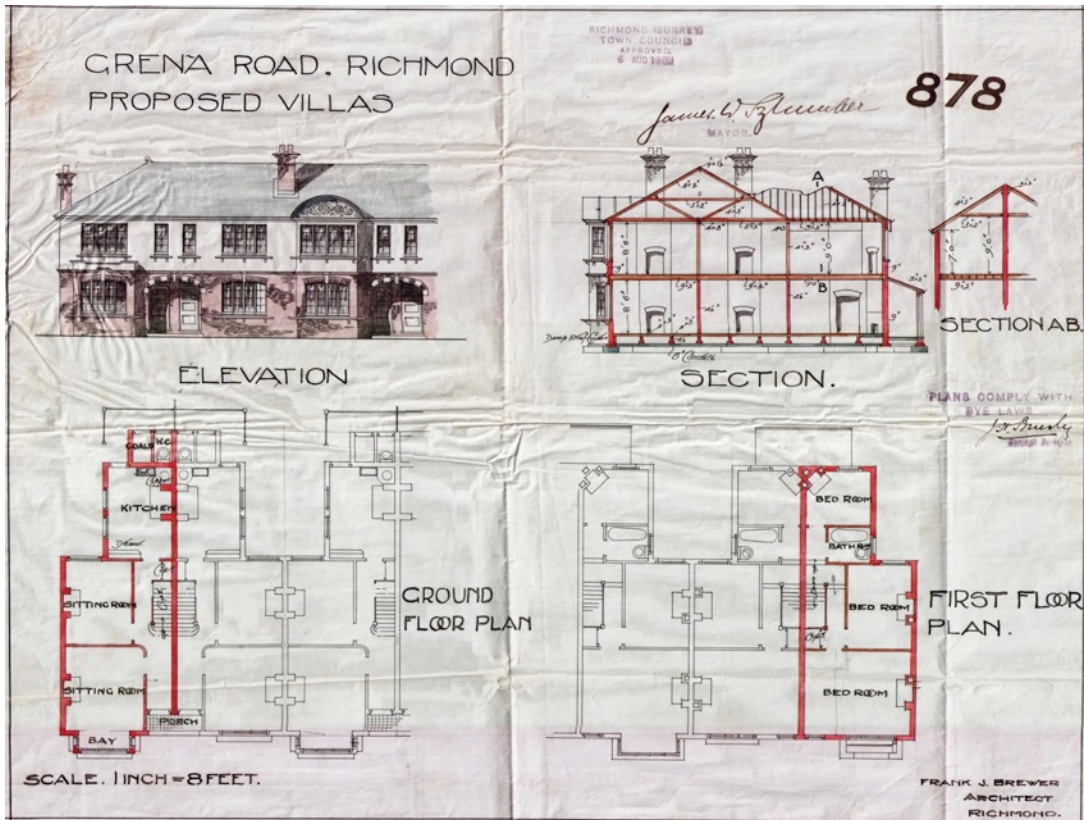


Figure 33 Application drawings for 12 terraced houses in Grena Street, 1901, by architect Frank J. Brewer, also a prolific local architect. In the 1910s, he formed Brewer, Smith and Brewer who were responsible for around 200 applications in the area (Richmond Local Archive, PLA/03468).

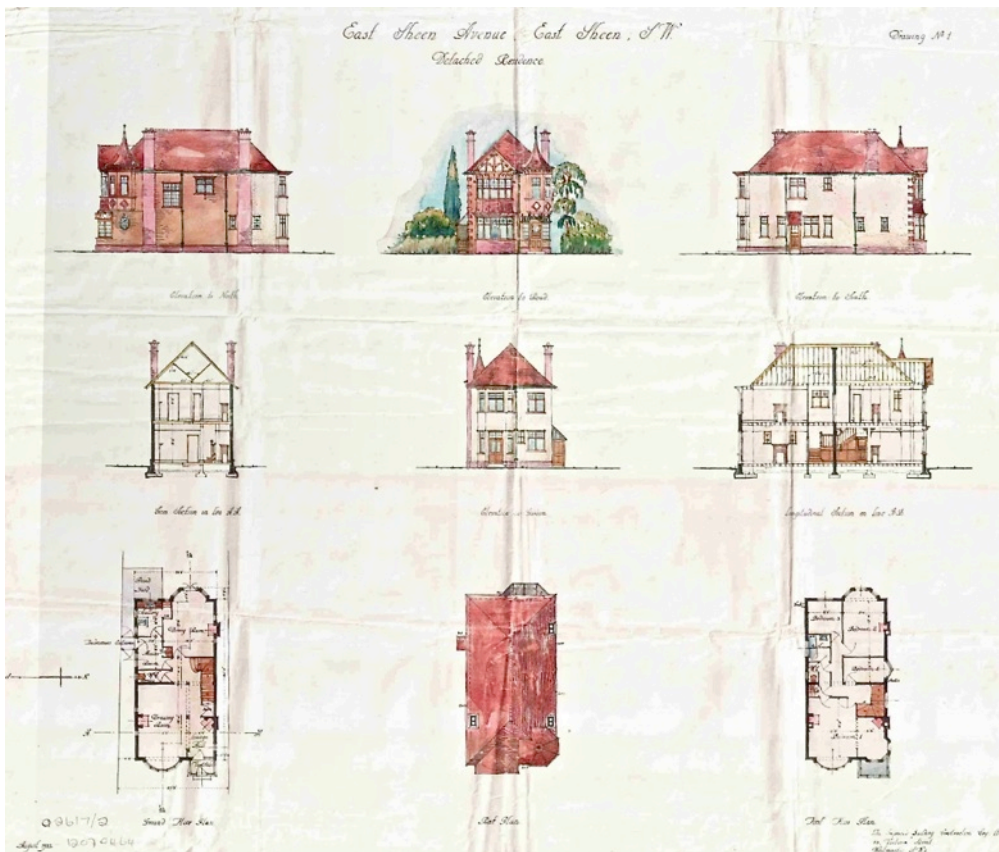


Figure 34. A graphically unusually elaborate building application drawing for a corner house, 1922, designed by the architects' department of the Improved Building Construction Company Ltd, 53 Victoria St, SW1 (Richmond Local Archive, PLA/02617).



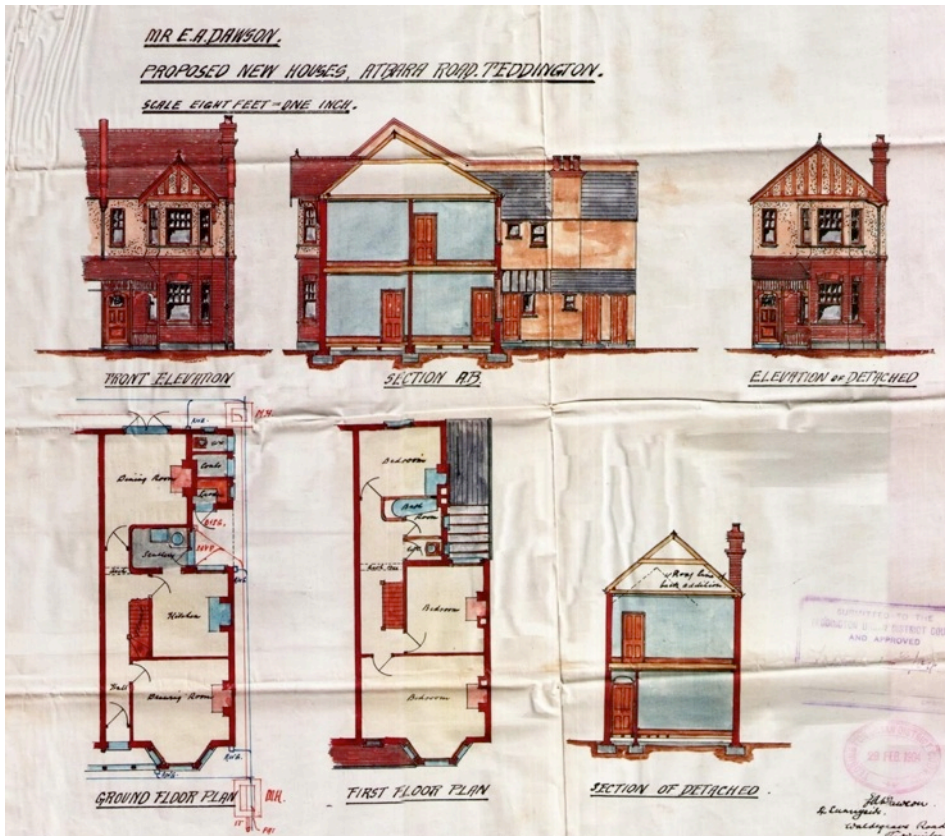


Figure 35. A particularly attractive drawing by builder-architect E.A. Dawson, based in Teddington, for terraced and detached houses in Atbara Road, 1904. The floorplans are particularly well arranged, efficient and even innovative for their time. Breaking with the tradition of the usual rear kitchen/scullery, the kitchen is located in the middle and the dining room faces the rear garden (Richmond Local Archive, PLA/00175).

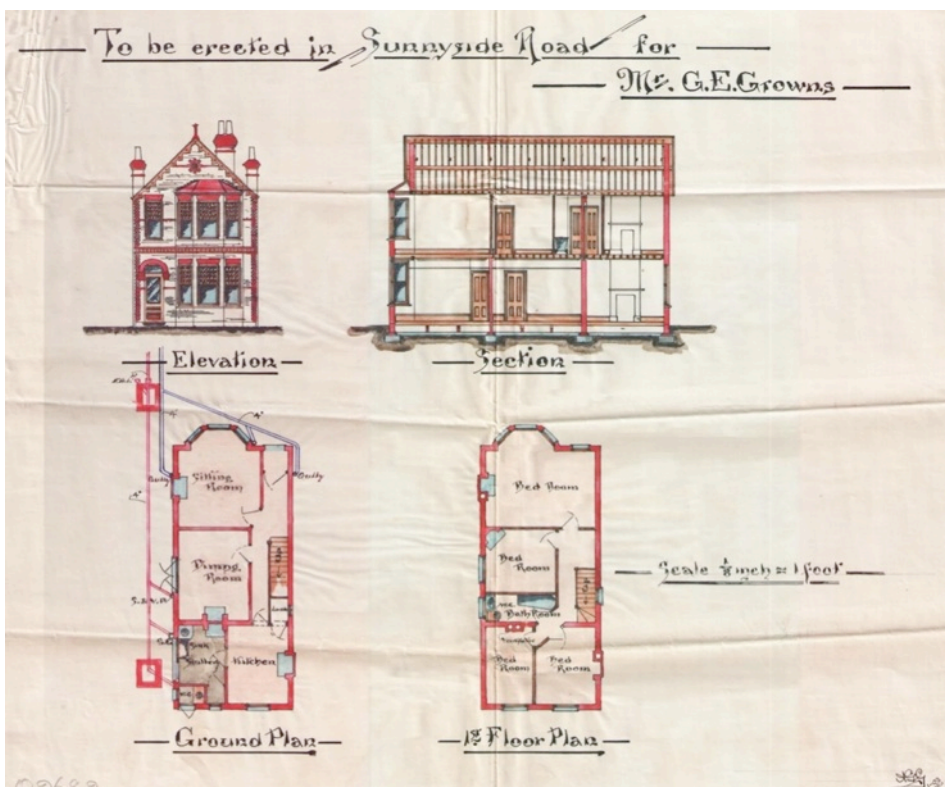


Figure 36. A house in Sunnyside Road, built by G.E. Grows and designed by his relative, A.G. Grows, 1903 (Richmond Local Archive, PLA/09689).

JANUARY 11, 1935 THE ILLUSTRATED CARPENTER AND BUILDER 85

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Figure 37. Advert by Halifax Building Society offering building finance, which can be arranged based on 'plans and specifications' (*The Illustrated Carpenter and Builder*, February 11, 1935).

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Figure 38. Advert for 'The London Drawing and Tracing Office, Ltd' (*The Illustrated Carpenter & Builder*, January 18, 1935, p. 179).

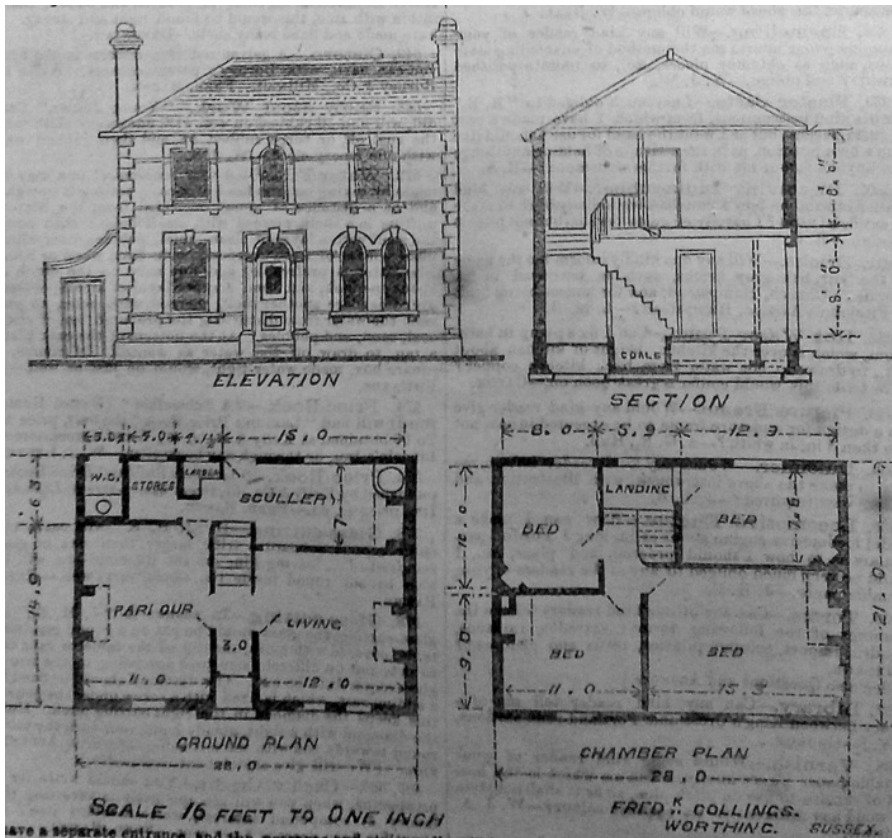


Figure 39. A design for a small house by Frederik Collings, Worthing (*Ibid.*, January 25, 1878).

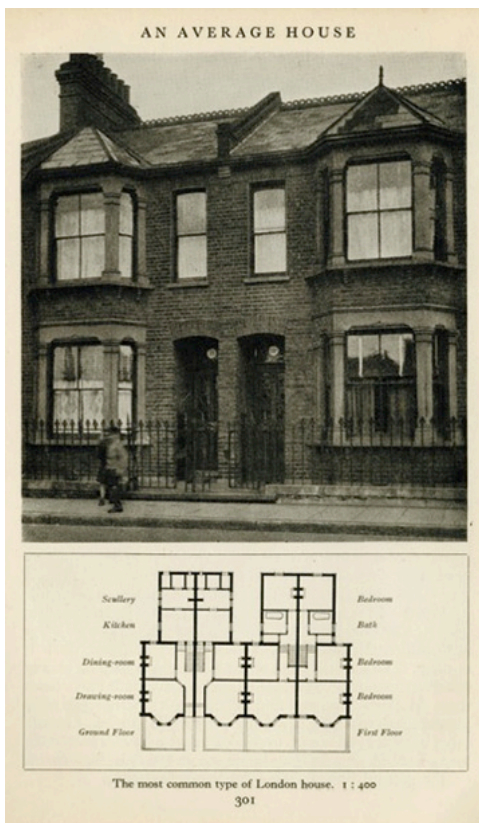


Figure 40. Illustration of a typical London terrace according to Rasmussen (Steen Eiler Rasmussen, *London: The Unique City I* [Cambridge: MIT Press, rev. edn 1974], p. 301)

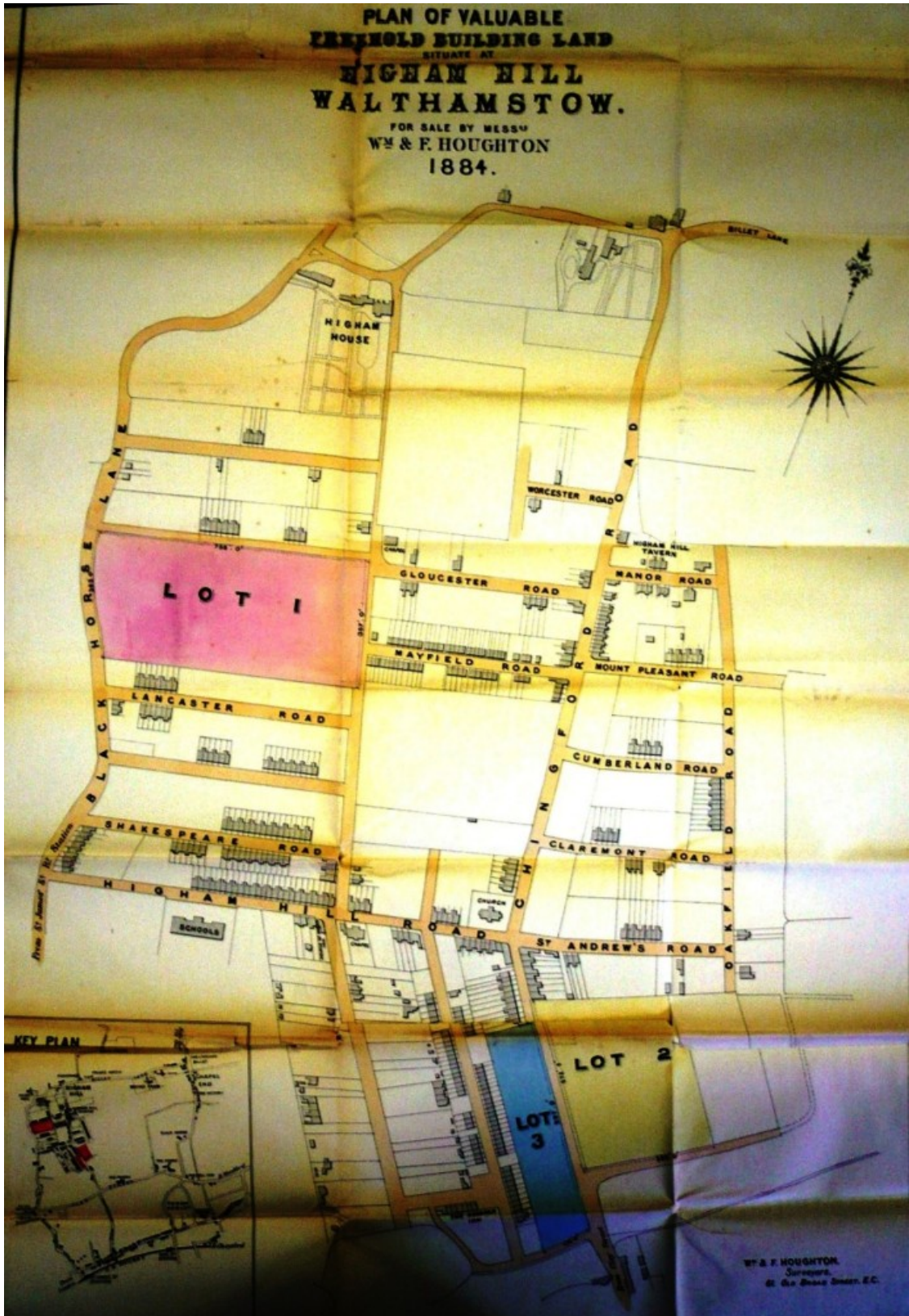


Figure 41. Auction catalogue map for freehold land with a frontage to Blackhorse Road, Higham Hill 1884 (Walthamstow Local History Archive, W72.2)

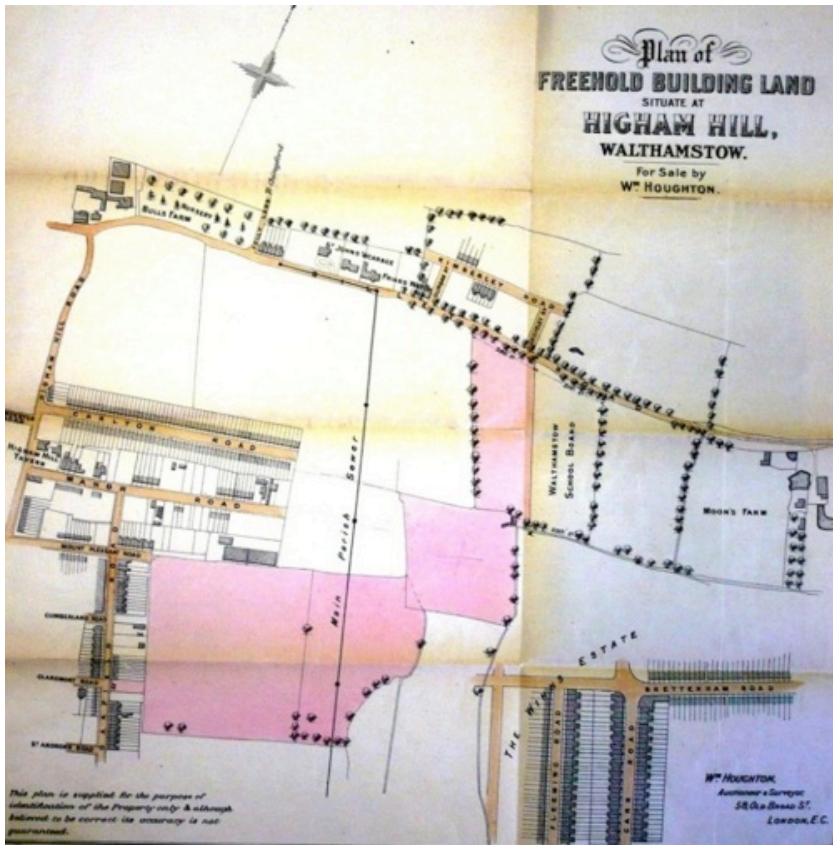


Figure 42. Auction catalogue map for freehold land with a frontage to Billet Road, Higham Hill, 1908 (Ibid.)

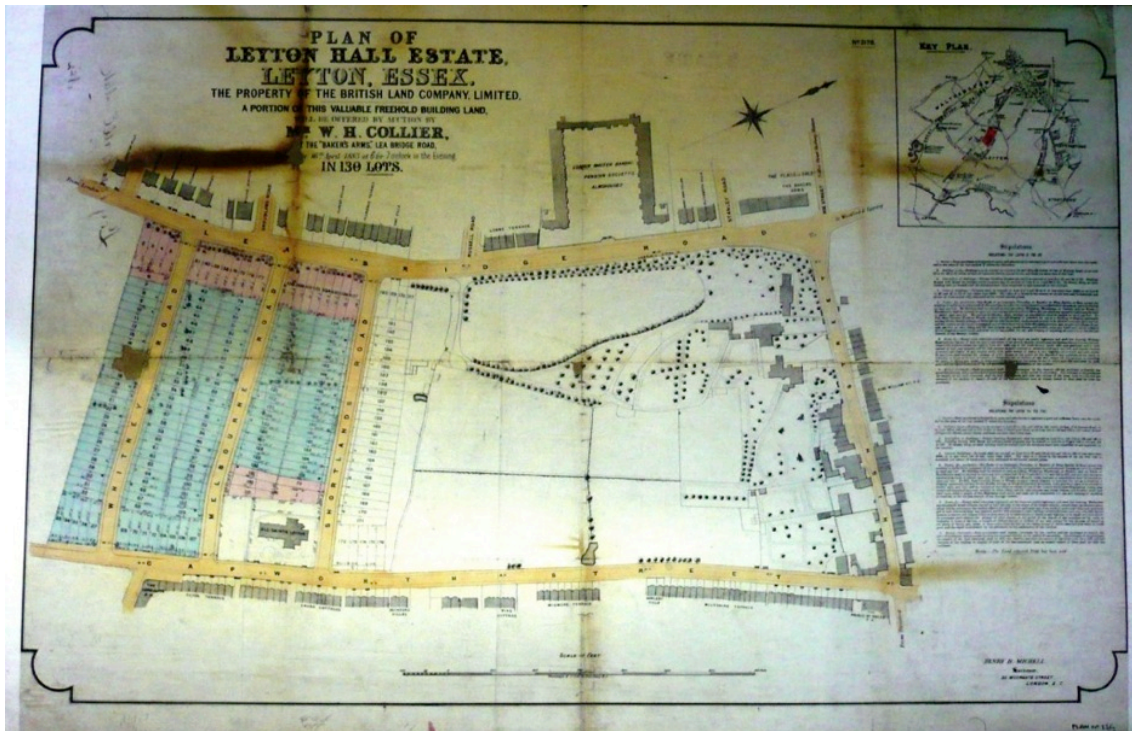


Figure 43. Auction catalogue map from Leyton Hall estate, Leyton, 1883 (Ibid.)

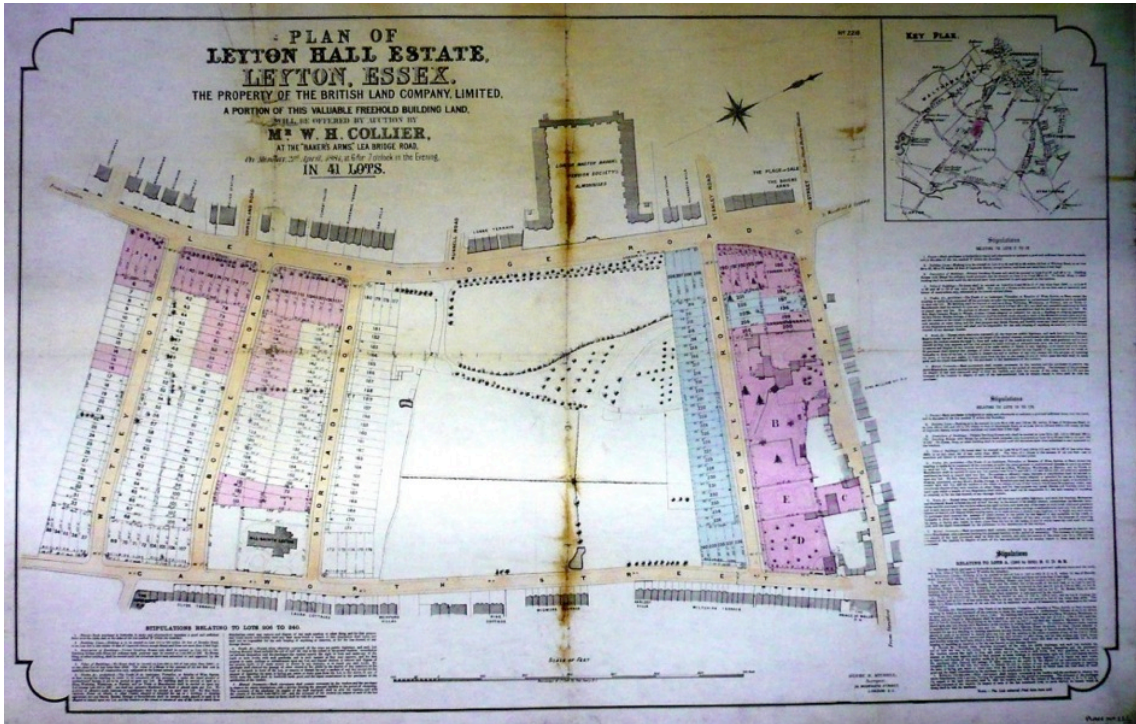


Figure 44. Auction catalogue map from Leyton Hall estate, Leyton, 1884 (Ibid.)

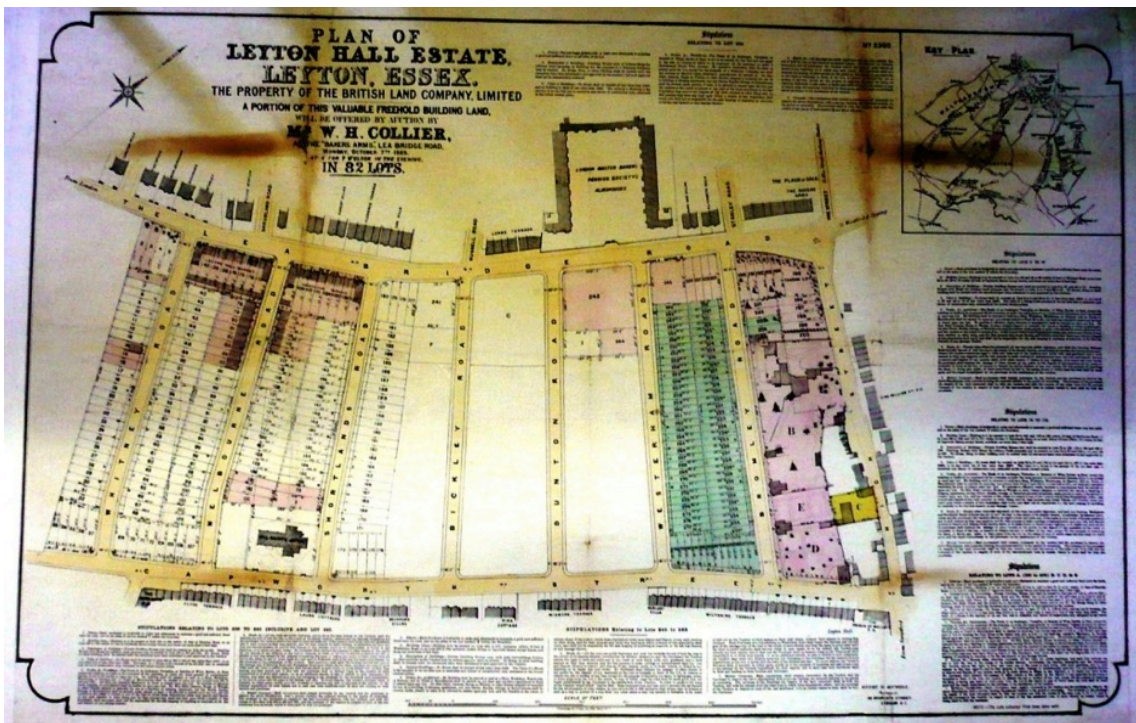


Figure 45. Auction catalogue map from Leyton Hall estate, Leyton, 1889 (Ibid.)

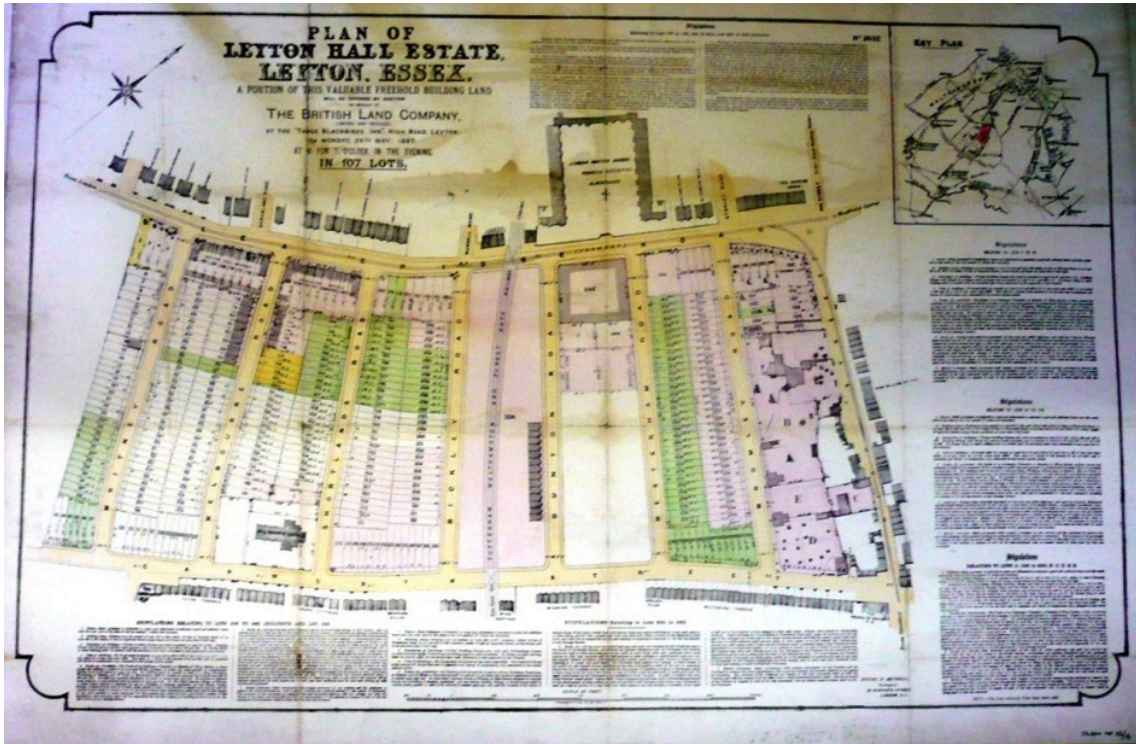


Figure 46. Auction catalogue map from Leyton Hall estate, Leyton, 1897 (Ibid.)

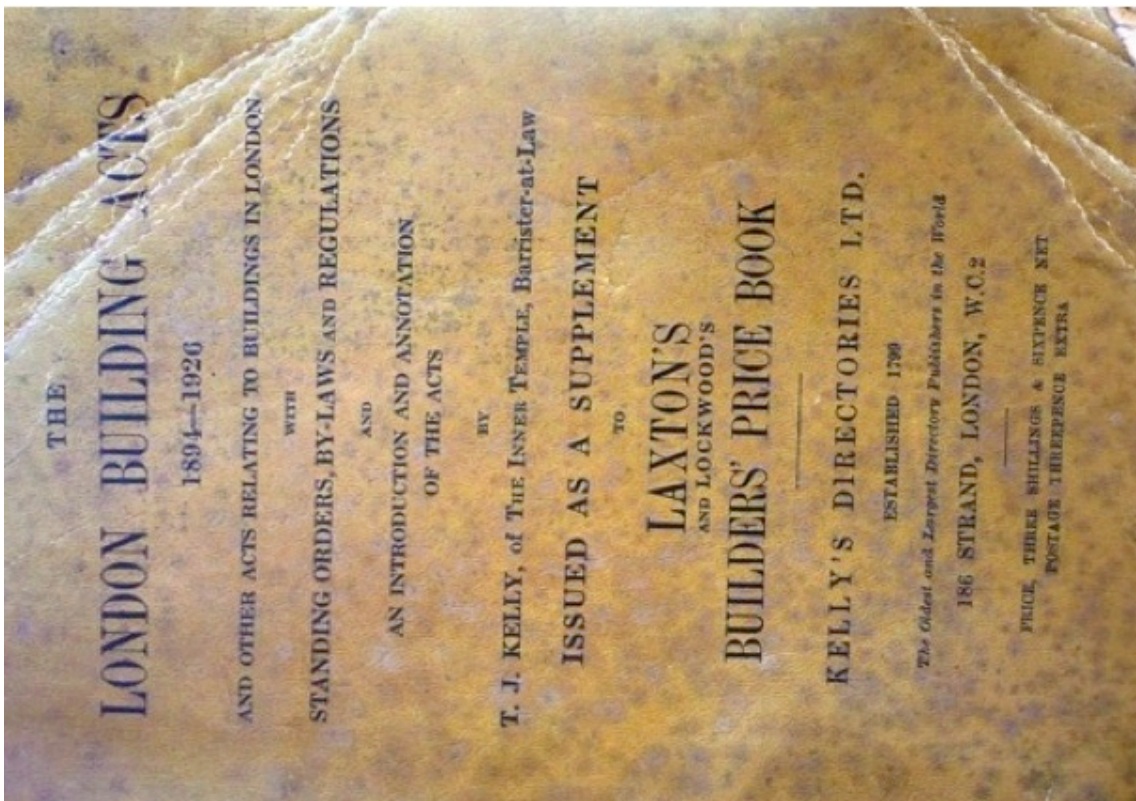


Figure 47. Title page of book with London Building Acts 1894-1926 (*The London Building Acts 1894-1926* [London: Kelly's Directories Ltd, 1927])

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Figure 48. Contents page (Ibid.)

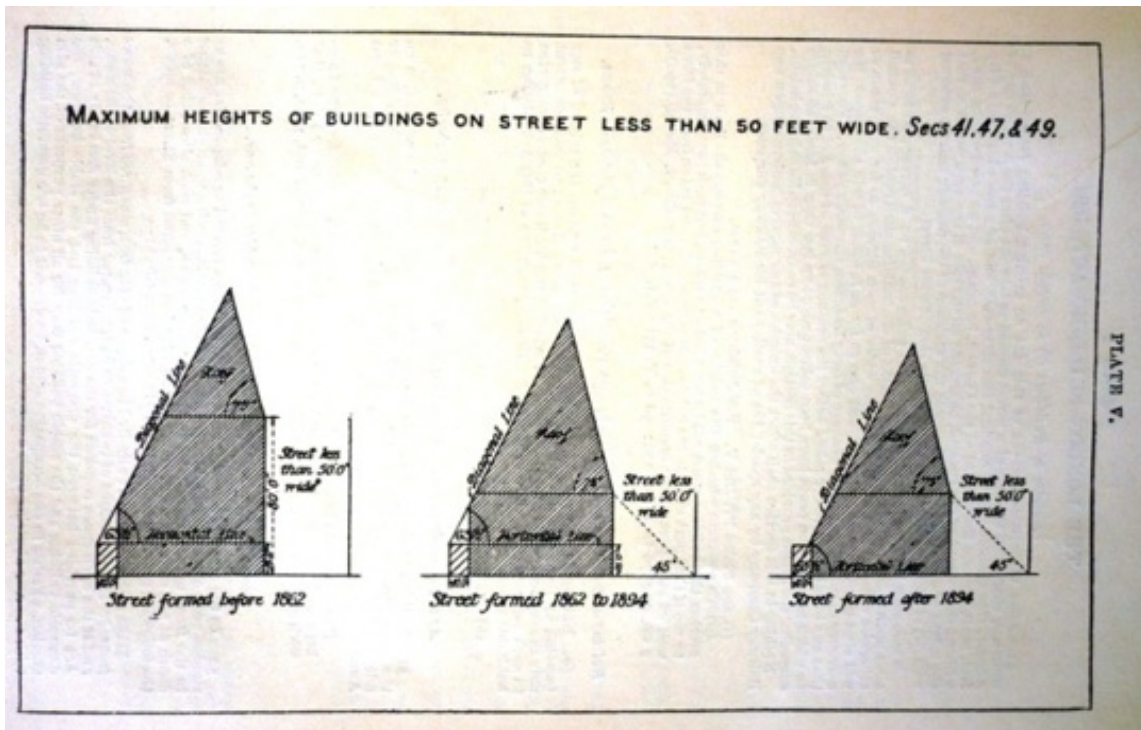


Figure 49. Maximum building height on street less than 50 feet wide (Ibid., Plate V)



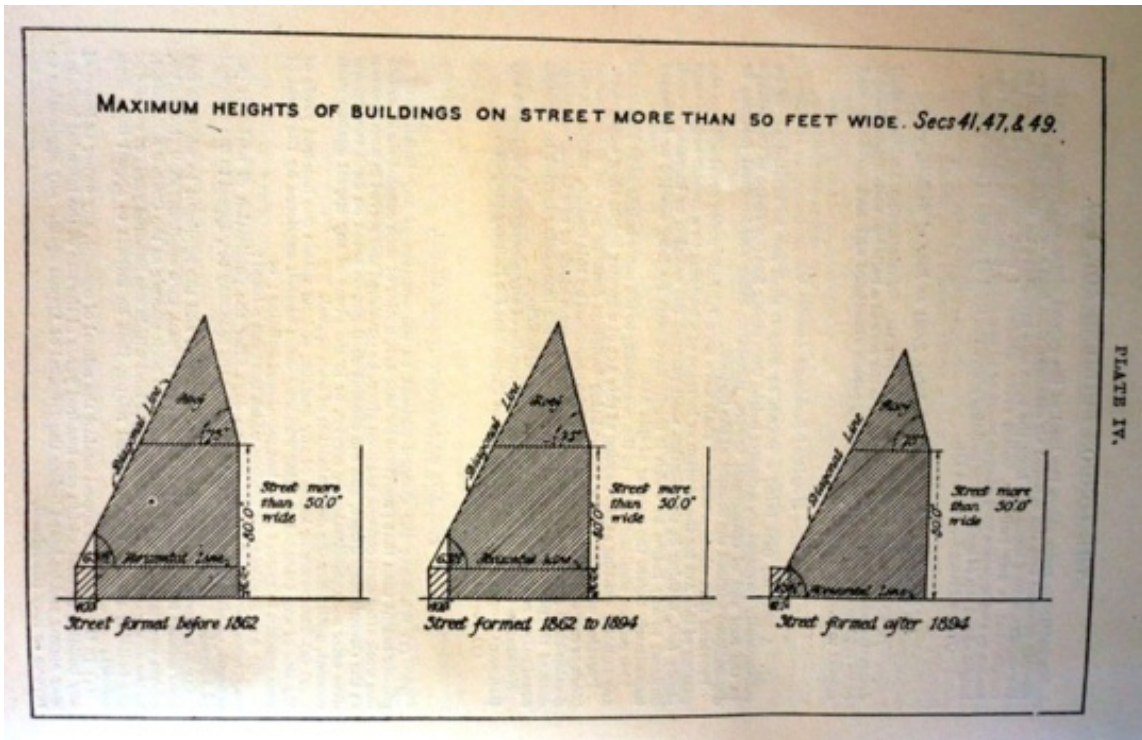


Figure 50. Maximum building height on street more than 50 feet wide (Ibid., Plate IV)

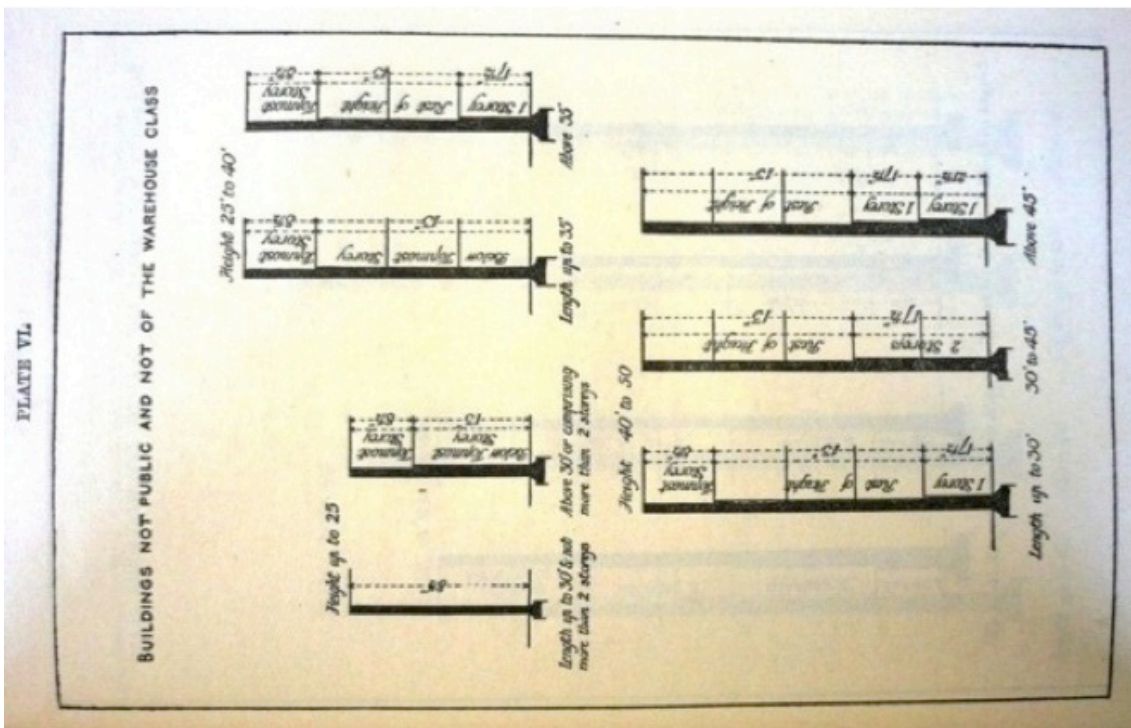


Figure 51. Minimum wall thicknesses for houses (Ibid., Plate VI).



Figure 52. Map of north Lambeth, 1840, with estate boundary outlined in red (*Map of London and its Environs* [London: B.R. Davies, 1840]).



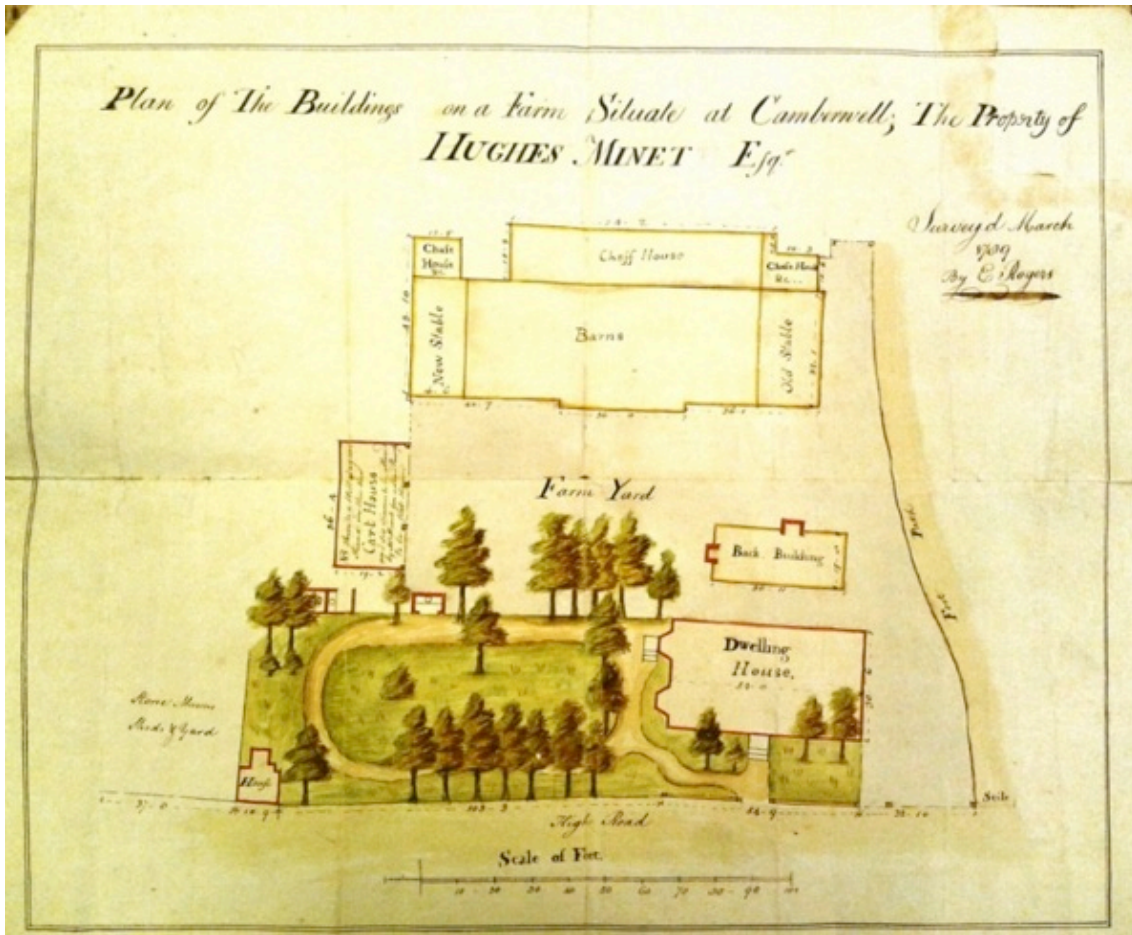


Figure 54. The farm buildings that were located on Camberwell Green in 1792 (Ibid., IV/83/3/1/1).



Figure 55. Map of area and estate dating from around 1820. Camberwell New Road was built in 1818 and is shown on the map. The lack of houses suggests that the map might have been begun earlier than that and was already slightly out of date by 1820 (Ibid., IV/83/3/1/5).

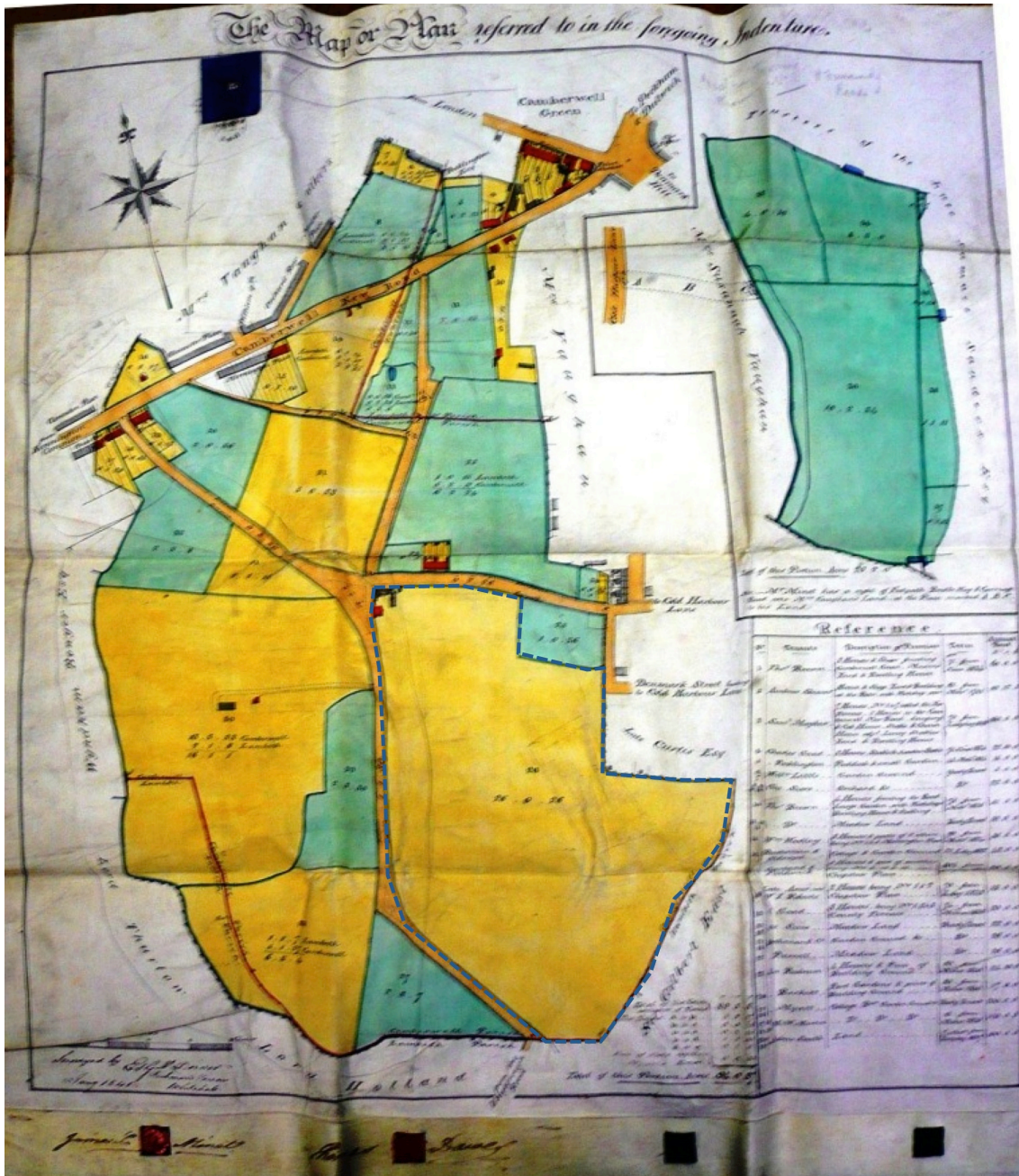


Figure 56. Lease map 1841. The estate was not anymore managed as one farm, but was split up into smaller separate leases. The lease that was held by Joseph Myatt for market gardening is outlined in blue (Ibid., IV/83/1/1/6).



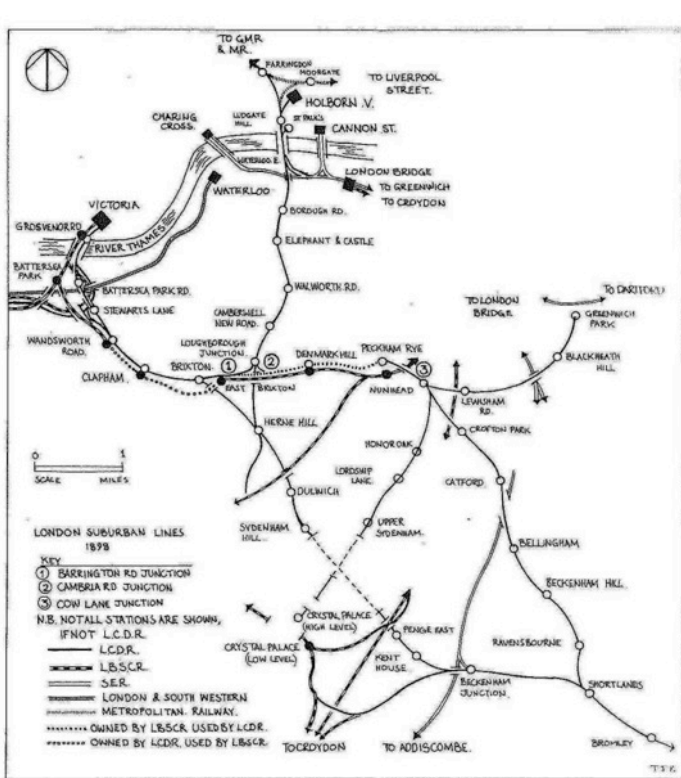
Figure 57. Ordnance Survey Map of area from 1870



Figure 58. William Minet (1851 – 1932). He inherited the estate in 1885 and oversaw the planning of the second substantial development phase (<http://landmark.lambeth.gov.uk>).



Figure 59. Design for a plaque with the family crest of a cat. Minet means 'Kitty' in French. The cat motif can be found in decorations around the estate (Minet Estate Archive, IV/83/3/1/26).



Map 12: London Suburban Lines 1898

Figure 60. Map of railway lines of Dover railway (A. Gray, *The London, Chatham & Dover Railway* [Rainham Kent: Meresborough, 1984], p. 52).



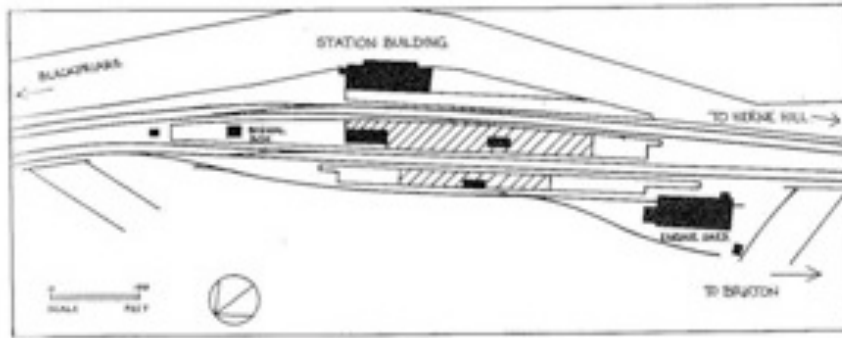


Figure 61. Camberwell New Road Station, 1906 (Ibid., 65).



Figure 62. Photo of Camberwell New Road Station today

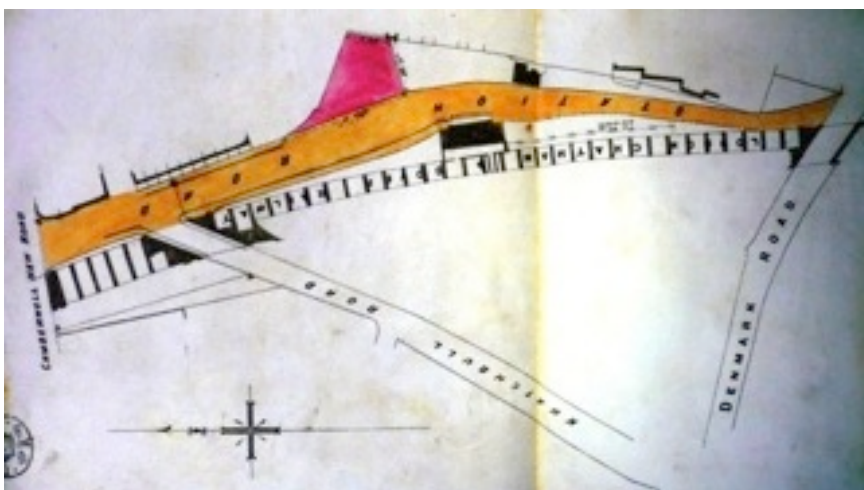


Figure 63. Conveyance map from sale of land to the railway (Minet Estate Archive, IV//83/1/3/35)

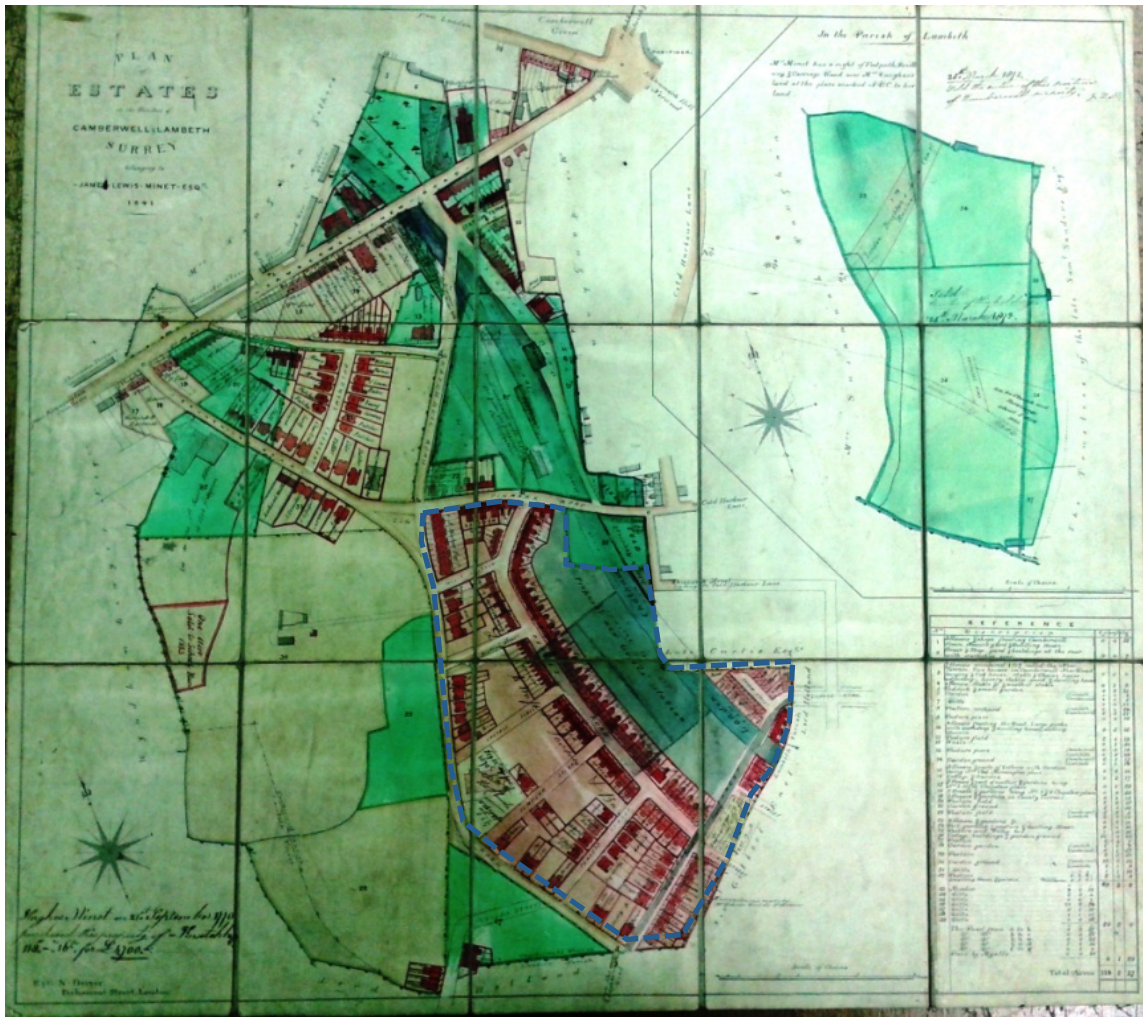


Figure 64. Map of the estate dating from about 1890, but begun in 1843 (see also larger copy in appendix). It was produced by Messrs Driver, and was updated over the years to record each new lease that was issued. The map was essential as an estate management tool. The border of Myatt's lease held from 1817 until about 1860 is outlined in blue by the author. Part of this plot was sold to the railway, the remainder then became the Parsons & Bamford lease in 1869 (Ibid., IV/83/3/1/7).

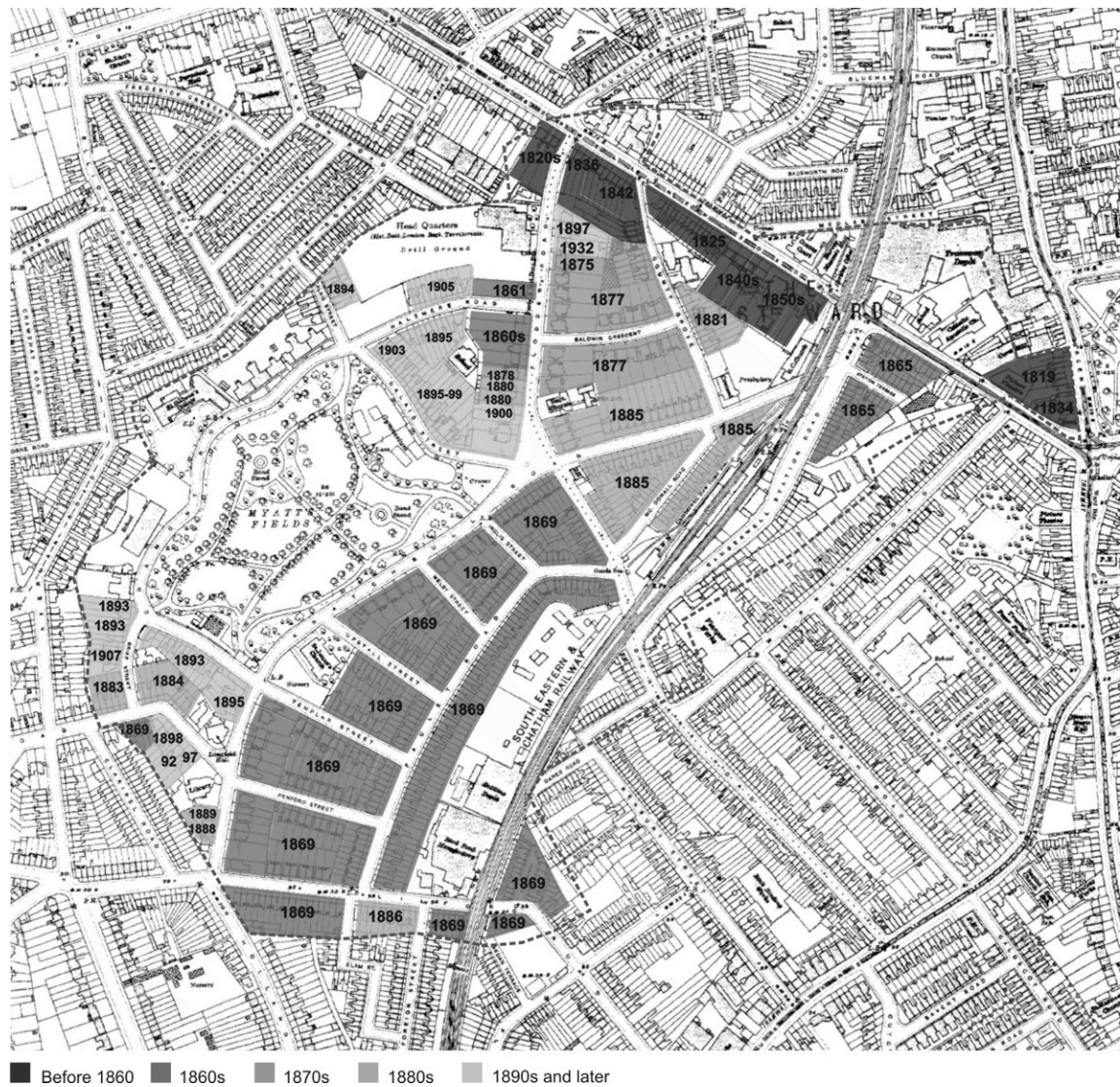


Figure 65. 1916 OS Map of the Minet estate with dates indicated when the lease terms start for each part of the estate. This shows quite clearly how the estate was developed and leased in segments (The lease terms on this map are largely based on a hand-sketched map from the archive and cross-referenced with samples of deeds, *Ibid.*, IV/83/3/1/18).



Figure 66. 1916 OS Map of the Minet estate with approximate built dates of the houses, which are often much later than when the lease term and development of this portion of the estate began. (Built dates are largely based on: Collissons & Dawes, 'Miss Susan Minet to Peter Brissault Minet Esq. and Others: Conveyance of Miss Minet's Camberwell Estate', June 1, 1952, IV/83/1/1/8/1, Lambeth Archives Department.)

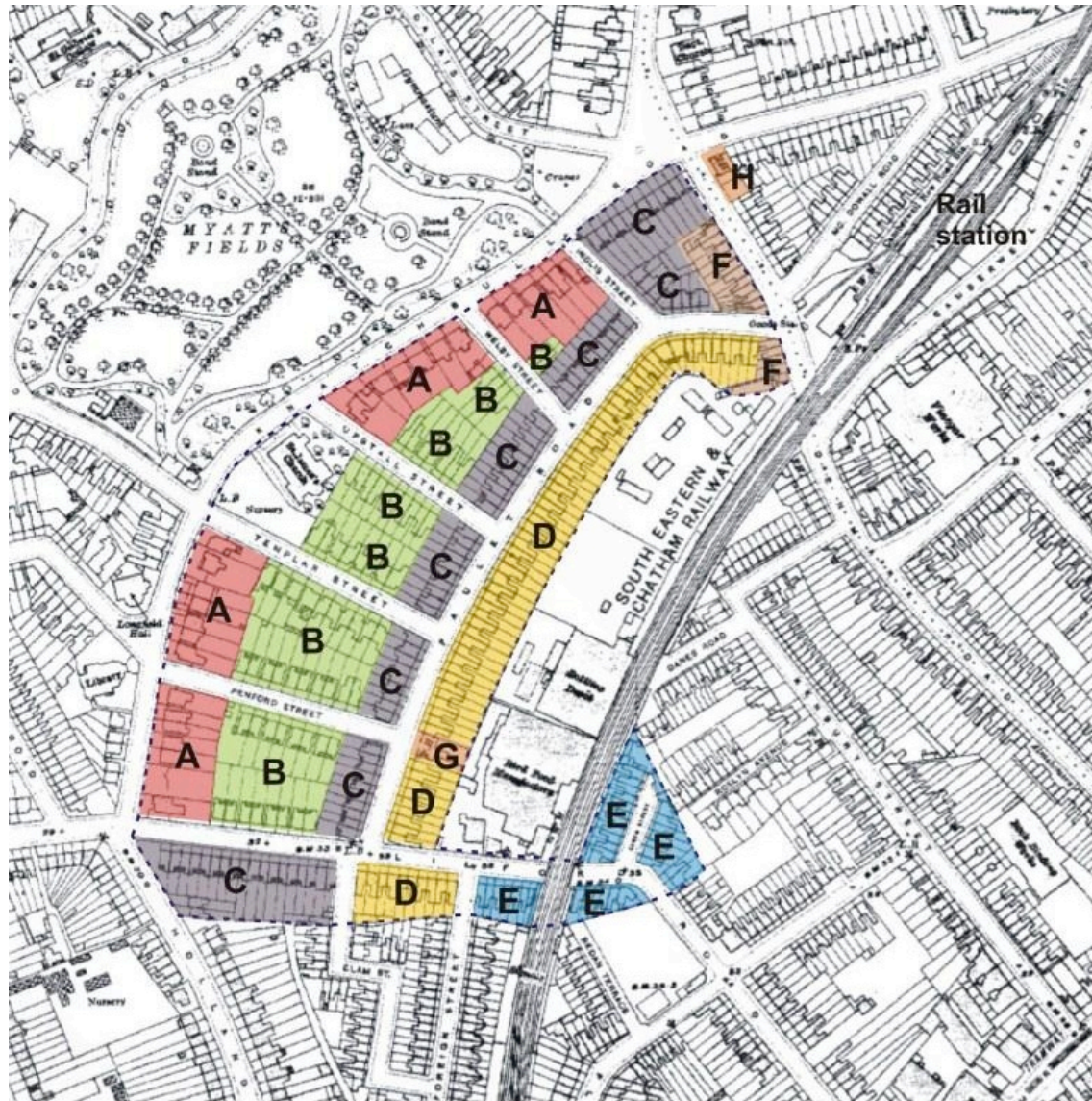


County Series 1:2500, 2nd Revision, 1916

**Builders/Lessees:**

■ Other builders (2 lots and less)	■ No data
■ Lee	■ Cooper
■ Skam	■ Arundell
■ Mayhew	■ Cooperative builders
■ Johnson	■ Fulcher
■ Parsons	■ Smith
■ Jury	■ McDowall

Figure 67. 1916 OS Map of the Minet estate with names of the lessees indicated by the author (see also larger copy of map in appendix). The map is largely based on a list of leases compiled by Collissons & Dawes in 1952. The lessee was often but not always the builder. The information this is based on does not clearly distinguish between lessee and sub-lessee. The map is therefore only indicative but does give a good overall impression of the number of different lessees and builders involved (Collissons & Dawes, 'Miss Susan Minet to Peter Brissault Minet Esq. and Others: Conveyance of Miss Minet's Camberwell Estate', June 1, 1952, IV/83/1/1/8/1, Lambeth Archives Department).



Plot code	Type of building	Minimum cost of building
A (red):	Detached houses	£1200
	Semi-detached	£1000
B (green):	Semi-detached houses	£800
C (purple):	Terraced houses	£600
D (yellow):	Terraced houses	£600
E (blue):	Houses	£300
F (brown):	Houses or shops	£500
G (orange):	Public house	£1500
H (orange):	Public house	£1500

Figure 68. Reconstruction of colour coding of plan No. 2 originally attached to the Parsons & Bamford lease agreement. This colour coding set out the types of houses to be constructed by cost and also the location of other uses such as pubs and shops. A 1916 OS Map was used for the reconstruction of the colour coding.



Figure 69. House type E (min cost £ 300), next to the railway on Lilford Road



Figure 70. House type D (min. cost £600), terraced, Paulet Road



Figure 71. House type C (min. cost £600), terraced but slightly bigger than type D (an additional lower ground floor), Lilford Road



Figure 72. House Type B (min. cost £800), semi-detached, Penford Street





Figure 73. House Type A, semi-detached (left, min. cost £1000), detached (right, min. cost £1200)



Figure 74. Type F (min. cost £500), Houses with shops, Denmark Road

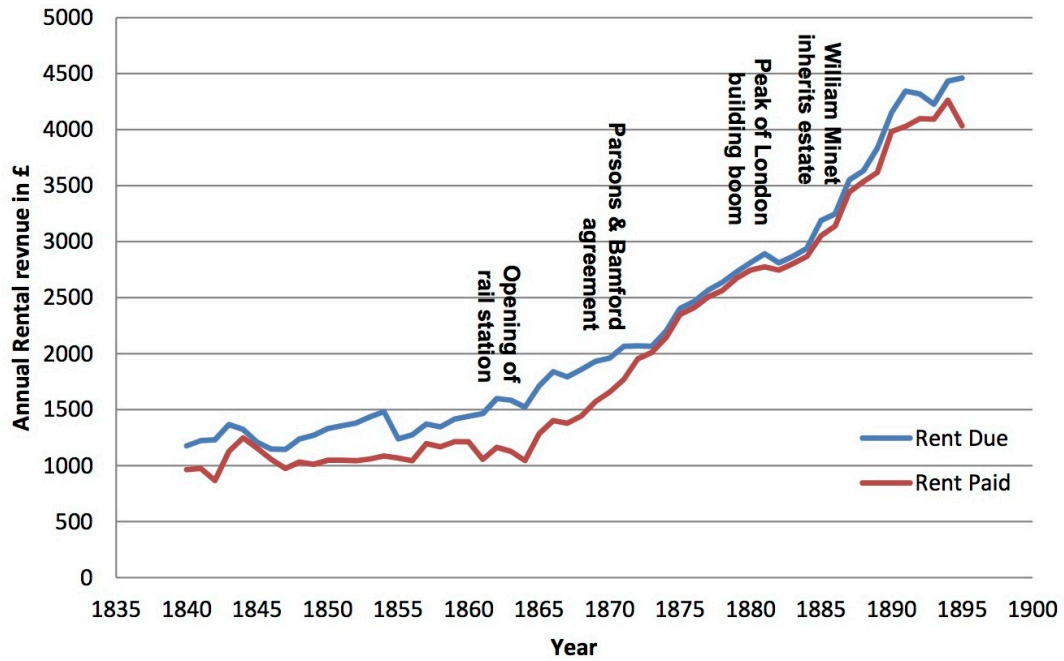


Figure 75. The rental revenues reflect the built up of the estate with houses. After a few decades with little change, the rent paid increases from £1284 in 1865 to £4035 in 1895, which was largely due to the build-up of the estate from 1865 onwards. The recession of the early 1880s causes a slight dip in rental income. The graph is based on the rental accounts that Messrs Driver kept for the Minet family (Ibid., IV/83/2)



Figure 76. Terraced houses on the south side of Upstall Street, built in the early 1890s. The earlier semi-detached houses built on the North side (not in this picture) indicate that the street was originally intended for a higher class of houses with wider plots. But the plots for semi-detached and detached houses were slow to be taken up by builders, and the lower class terraced housing was built first.

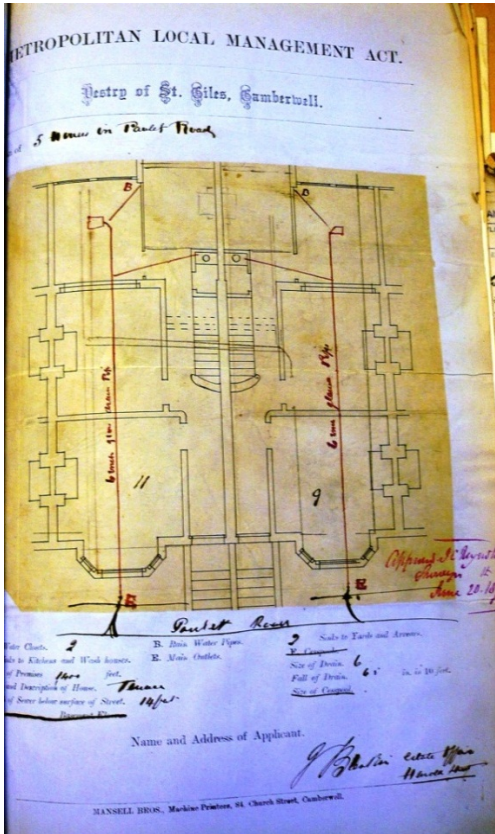


Figure 77. Plan for building application to the District Surveyor for 9 & 11 Paulet Road, 1874.

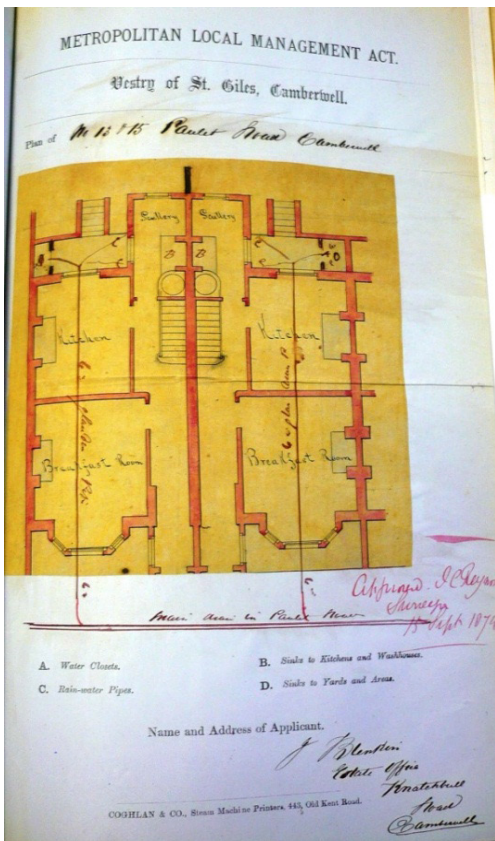


Figure 78. Plan for building application to the District Surveyor for 13 & 15 Paulet Road, 1874.



Figure 79. Photo of houses along Paulet Road, built by different builders but to the same template as defined in Parsons & Bamford lease agreement.



Figure 80. Terraced houses built in McDowall Road by Andrew McDowall 1886-1889



Figure 81. Knatchbull Road (north), houses left built in 1886-1889 by Andrew McDowall. Houses right built in 1885 by Edward Taylor and John Cooper.



Figure 82. Houses built by Andrew McDowall in 1886 to a design very similar to those he built in County Grove and also Knatchbull Road



Figure 83. Houses built by Andrew McDowall's son, Andrew George McDowall, in 1895. A.G. McDowall took over after the death of his father in 1890. The unusual, in some ways innovative yet erratic facades of these houses seem to reflect a lack of experience and routine of the only 23 year old builder.



Figure 84. Semi-detached houses to the right along Baldwin Crescent, constructed 1879-1882 by various builders. Terraced houses to the rear along Country Grove were built by Andrew McDowall.



Figure 85. 'Type A' detached houses along Flodden Road, constructed in 1879 by different builders.

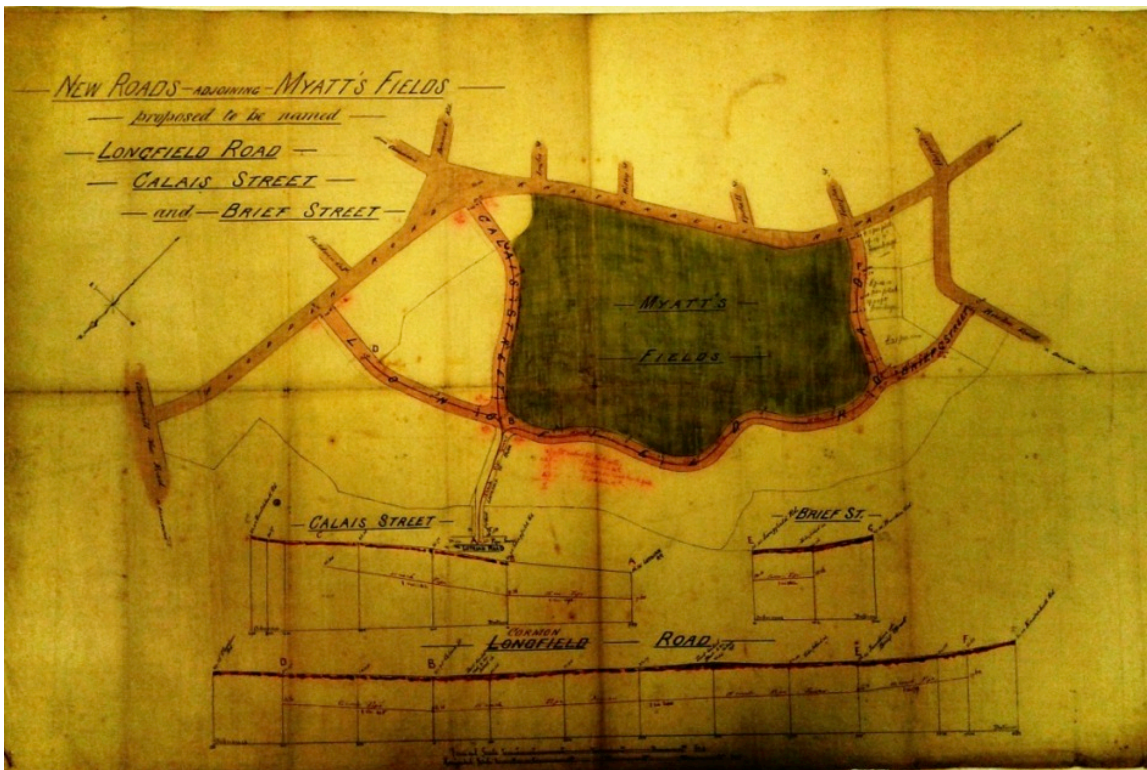


Figure 86. Drawing submitted to the L.C.C. for approval of new streets around the park. These were approved in 1891 to a minimum width of 40 feet. (Ibid., IV/83/3/1/18)



Figure 87. The 1899 Booth map illustrates the effect of the park on the social structure of the area very clearly. The surrounding areas away from the main roads are generally marked in 'purple' as 'mixed, some comfortable others poor', or 'pink' as 'fairly comfortable, good ordinary earnings'. The houses around the park, however, are generally 'red' signifying 'middle class, well-to-do'. It was these parts of the estate that were largely built after William Minet inherited it (<http://booth.lse.ac.uk/>).



Figure 88. Semi-detached houses in Wiltshire Road, a wealthy upper class area to the south of the Minet estate built slightly earlier (see Booth Map). The Minet estate was consciously planned to relate as much as possible to the upper class area to the south, and to separate it from the lower-middle class terraces immediately to the west and east.



THE CO-OPERATIVE BUILDERS, LTD  
Fred Curtis 9<sup>th</sup> Aug. 1893  
MANAGER

Figure 89. Signature of Fred Curtis, 1893. He was also the manager of the Cooperative Builders, who did much of the maintenance on the estate and also built block of flats for William Minet.

Cheques and Money Orders  
to be made payable to F. Curtis.

Office closes at 5.30 p.m.  
1 p.m. on Saturdays.

MINET ESTATE OFFICE,  
54 KNATCHBULL ROAD,  
CAMBERWELL, S.E.

Receipt No..... 190

Dear Sir (or Madam),

I have to apply to you for the  
sum of £..... being One Quarter's  
Rent in respect of.....  
.....  
.....  
due this day to Mr. William Minet.

Yours truly,  
F. CURTIS,  
*Agent.*

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM WITH YOUR REMITTANCE.

Figure 90. A form for collection of rent arrears. Fred Curtis acted as William Minet's agent from the 1890s to about 1910 (Ibid., IV/83/3/1/28).

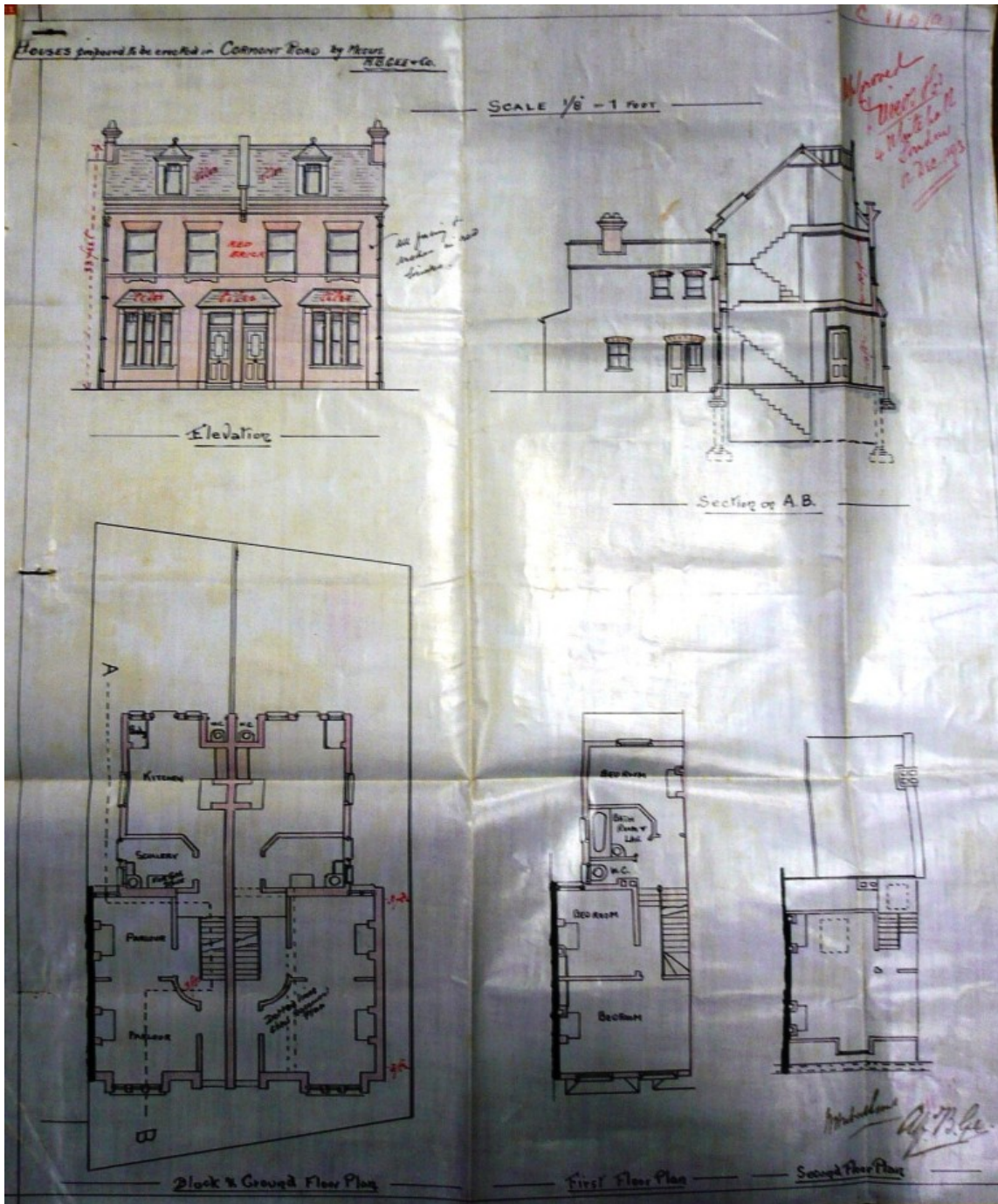


Figure 91. Drawing of 7 & 8 Cormont Road built by A.B. Gee in 1893. In the first years of William Minet's ownership of the estate, the approval of drawings was still undertaken by the surveyors Messrs Drivers. Later in the 1890s, Fred Curtis assumed the role of estate agent and was based at the estate office in 54 Knatchbull Road. A.J. Carpenter succeeded him in about 1910 (Minet Estate Archive, IV/83/1/5/1/18).



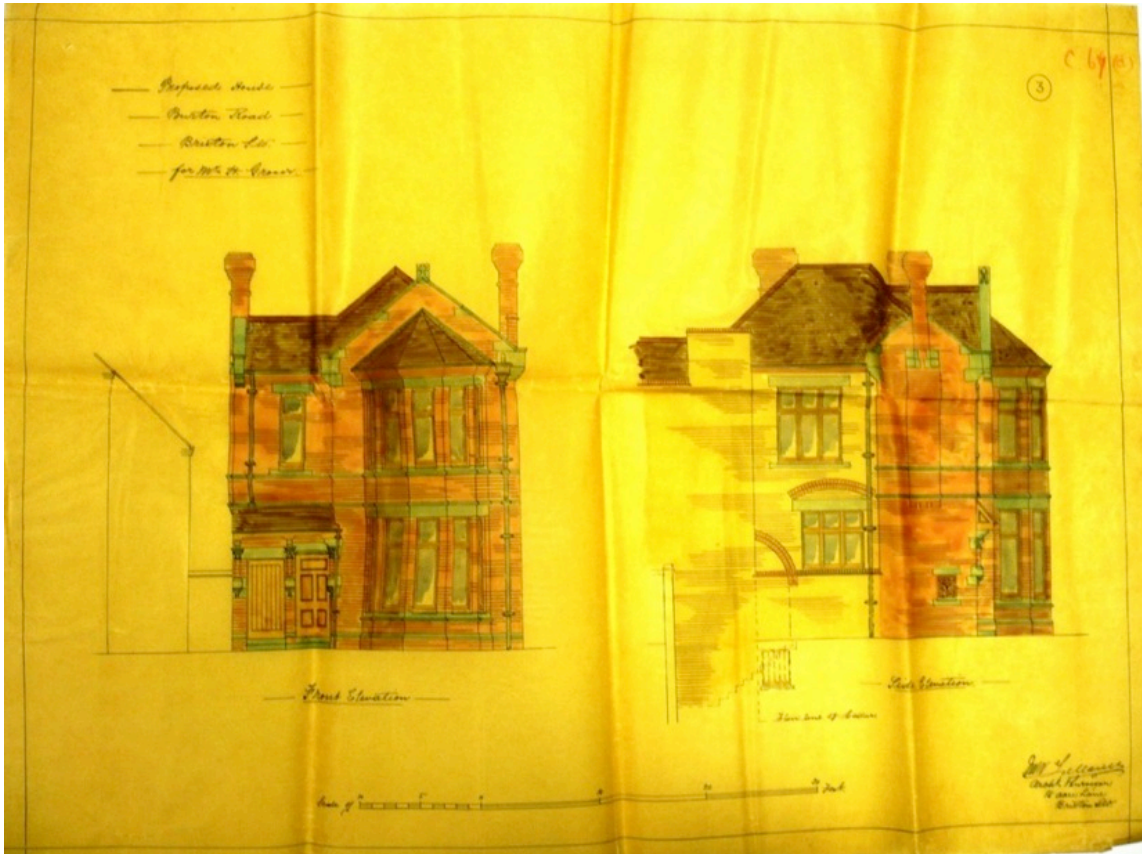


Figure 94. A more elaborate, individually designed, substantial semi-detached house with basement at 90 Burton Road. The design is prepared by a local architect-surveyor for Henry John Grover (Ibid., IV/83/1/5/1/5).

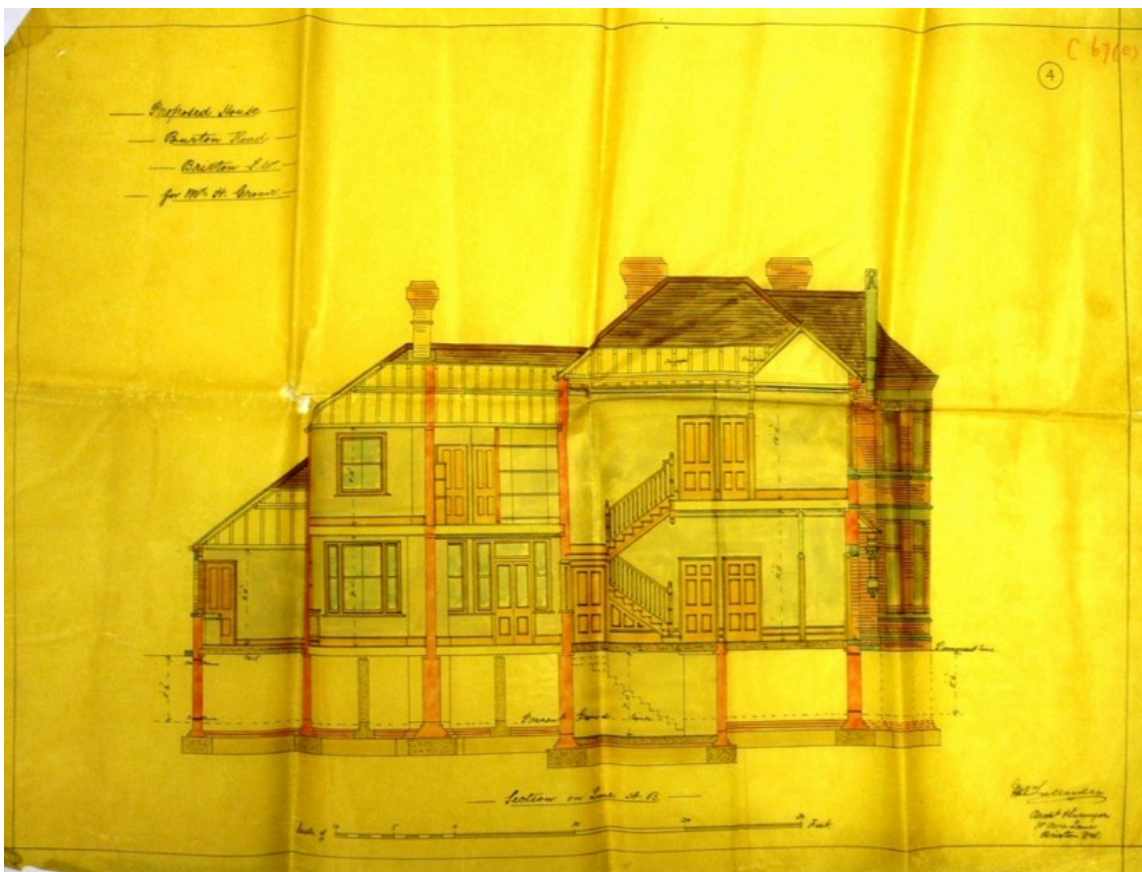


Figure 95. Section of the same house (Ibid.).



Figure 96. 2, 3, 4 & 5 Brief Street as built by Alfred Benjamin Gee in 1894.

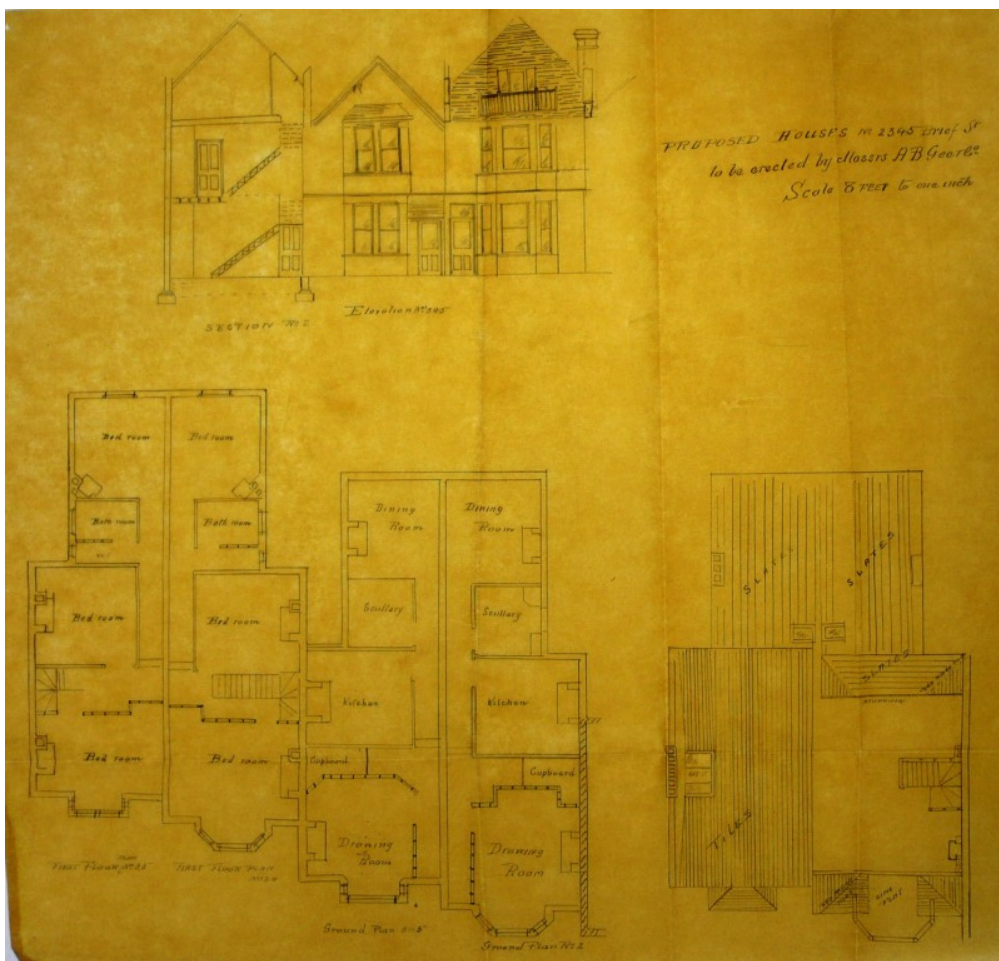


Figure 97. Drawings of questionable quality for houses in 2, 3, 4 & 5 Brief Street. The drawings appear to have been prepared by someone who does not draw for a living, such as a surveyor or architect. Apart from the quality, this is also indicated by the missing signature on the drawing. This strongly suggests that they are either from Gee, the builder, himself or someone else with basic drawings skills who he employed casually (Ibid., IV/83/1/5/1/2).



Figure 98. 3 & 4 Cormont Road (middle), signed by and probably designed by the estate agent Fred Curtis in 1903 on behalf of the Cooperative Builders. The style of the windows, lintels and string courses can be found in other houses signed by him.

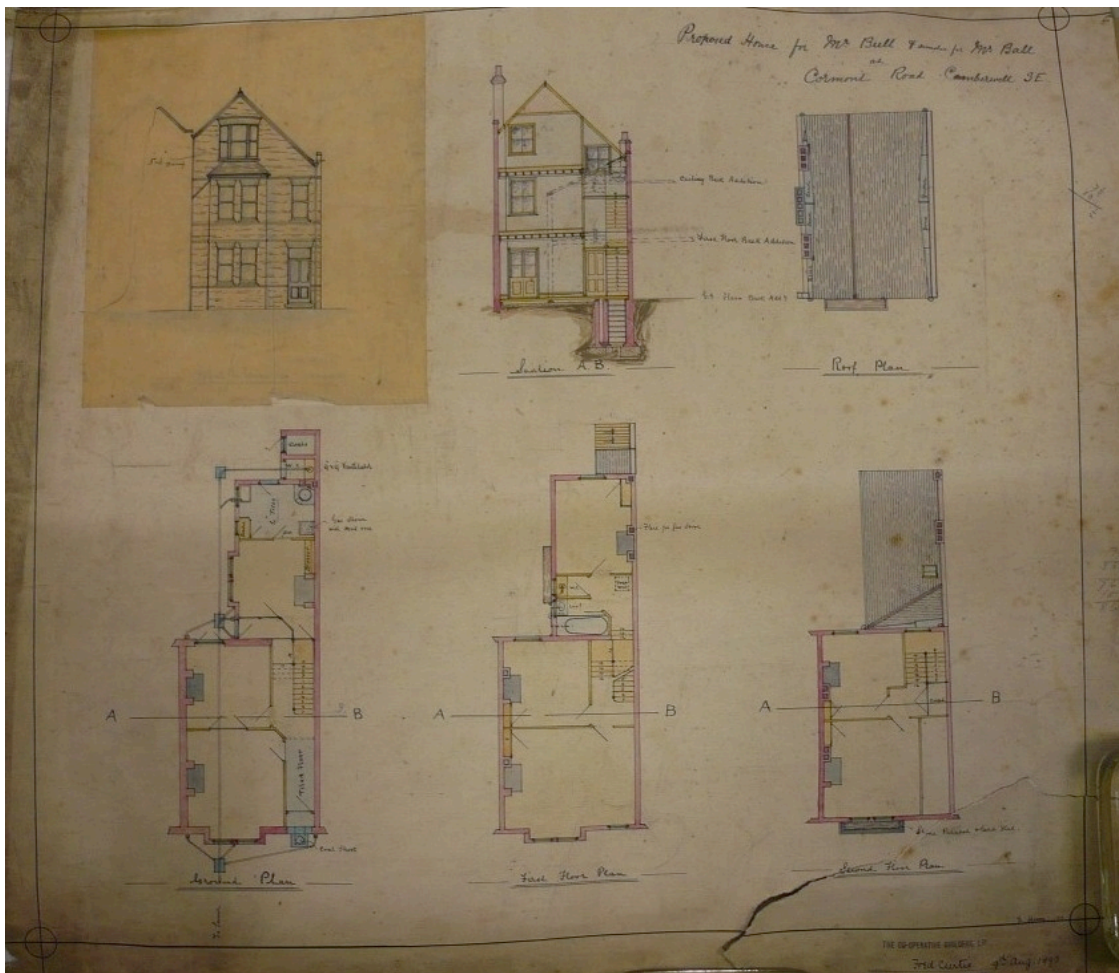


Figure 99. Drawings for 3 & 4 Cormont Road signed by the estate agent and manager of the Cooperative Builders, Fred Curtis, in 1903. Overall a pragmatic yet resourceful design. The roof shape follows the stair position, which creates an unusual street façade (Ibid., IV/83/3/1/27).

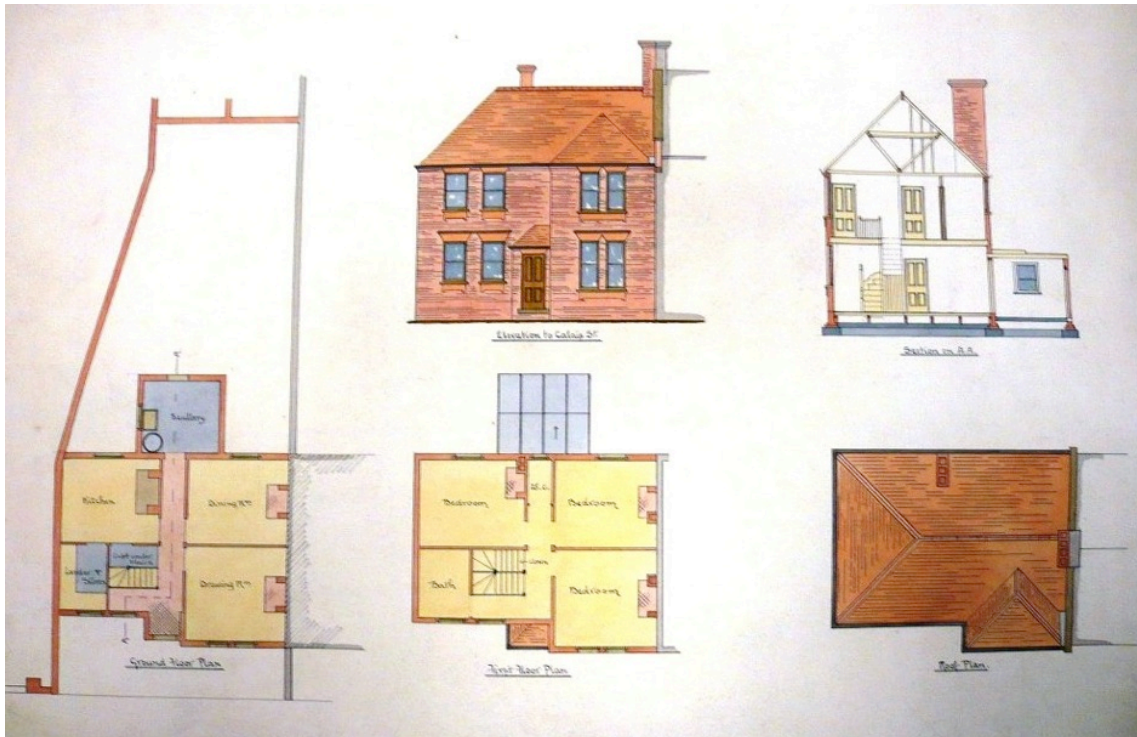


Figure 100. Another house in Calais Street with the same window and lintel style as those in Cormont Road, 1908, signed as 'Minet Estate Office', presumably also designed by Fred Curtis, the estate agent at the time (Ibid.)



Figure 101. Both houses to the left and right were built by P. Arundell. The ones on the left in red brick are designed by architect-surveyor Ernest Avern, the ones on the right by Thomas Henry Arundell.

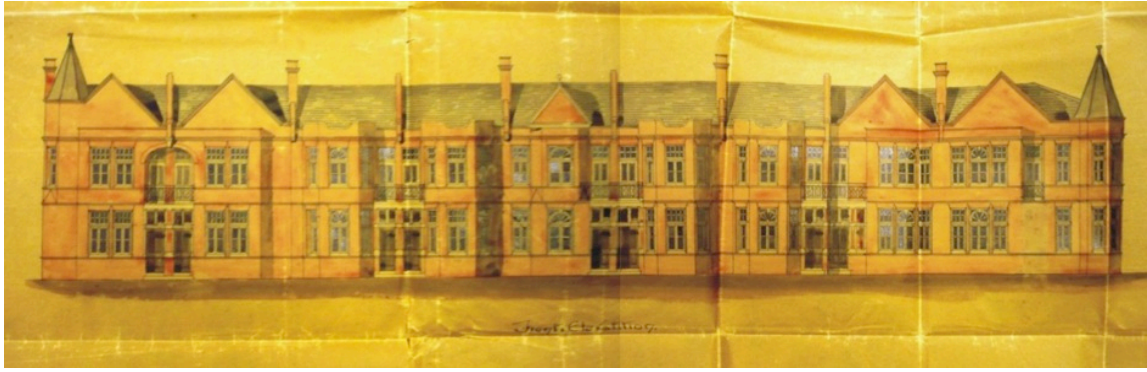


Figure 102. Houses in Halsmere Road, built by P. Arundell, designed by the architect & surveyor Ernest Avern (Ibid., IV/83/1/5/1/23).

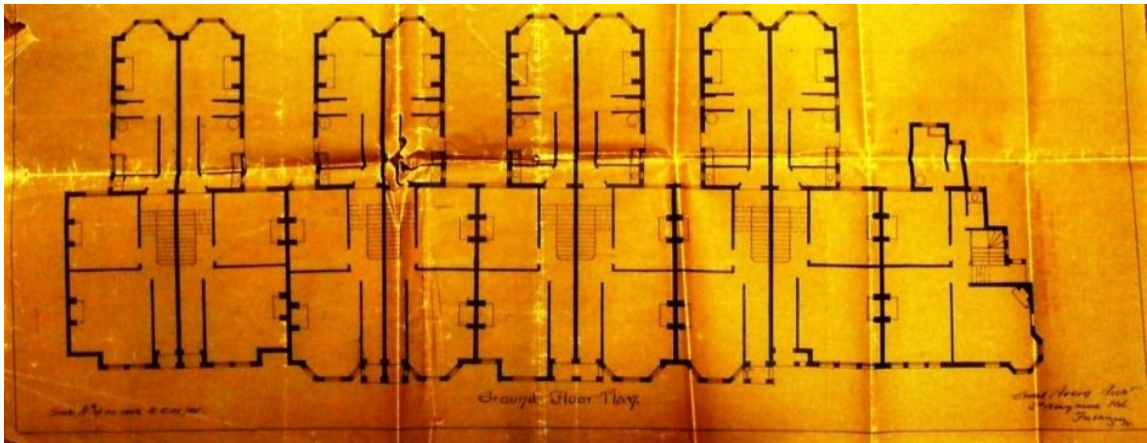


Figure 103. Floorplans of the same houses (Ibid., IV/83/1/5/1/23).



Figure 104. The same houses today in Halsmere Road.



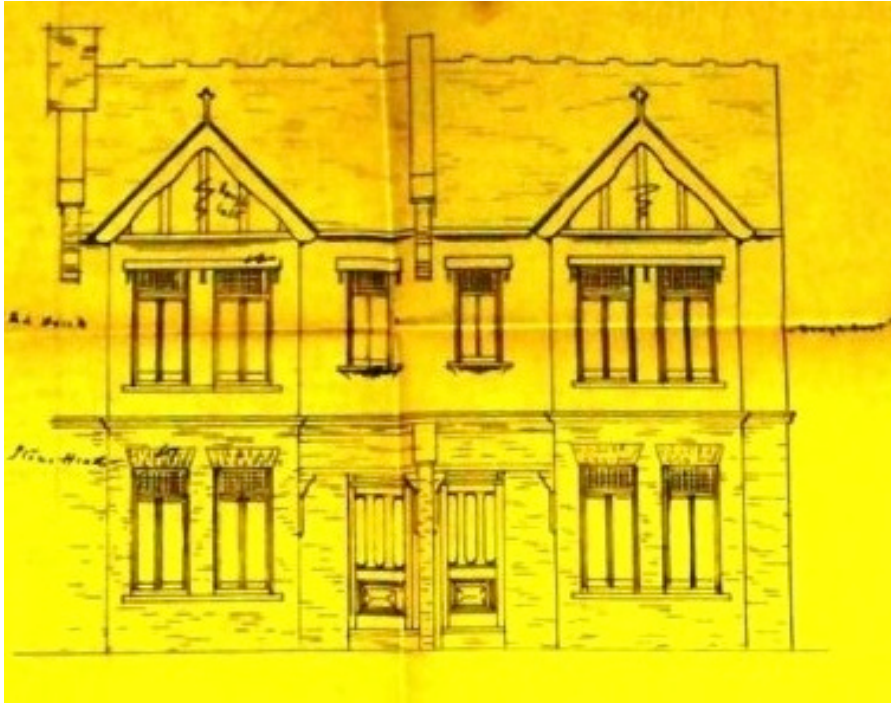


Figure 105. Elevation of houses in Halsmere Road. The estate agent and estate owner as arbiters of taste. The timber panelling and lintels are crossed out to indicate that they are not approved by the freeholder. This removal of external timber may have been because of the London Building Acts (*Ibid.*, IV/86/1/5/29).

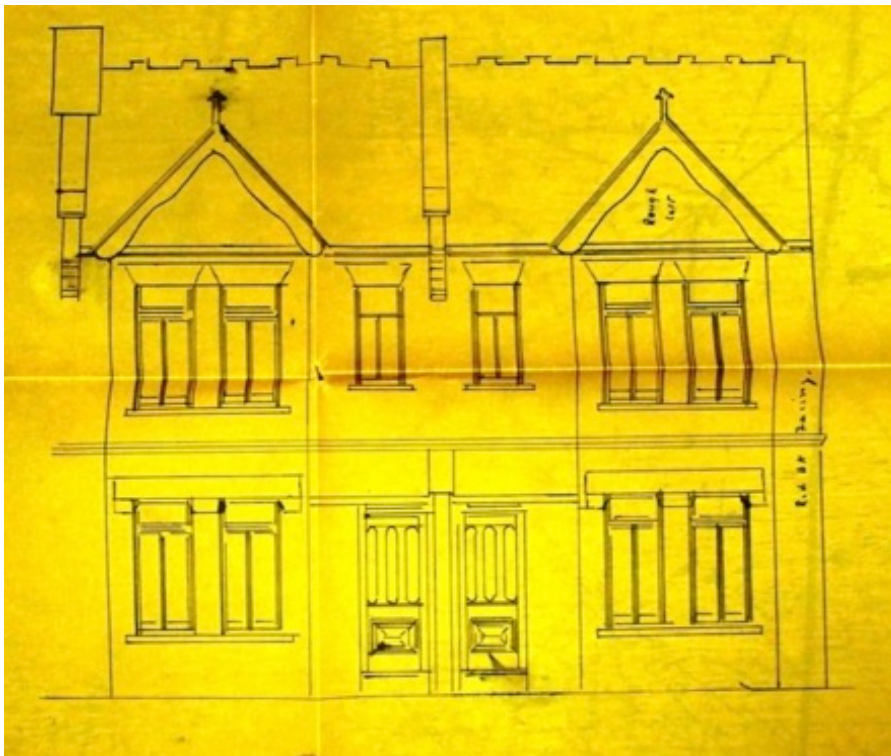


Figure 106. The revised elevation (drawn by Thomas Henry Arundell) more or less as built below. The rough cast on the ground floor has been removed and the lintels amended. The timber panelling to the gables has been replaced with rough cast (*Ibid.*).



Figure 107. The same houses above as built by Peter Arundell in Halsmere Road.

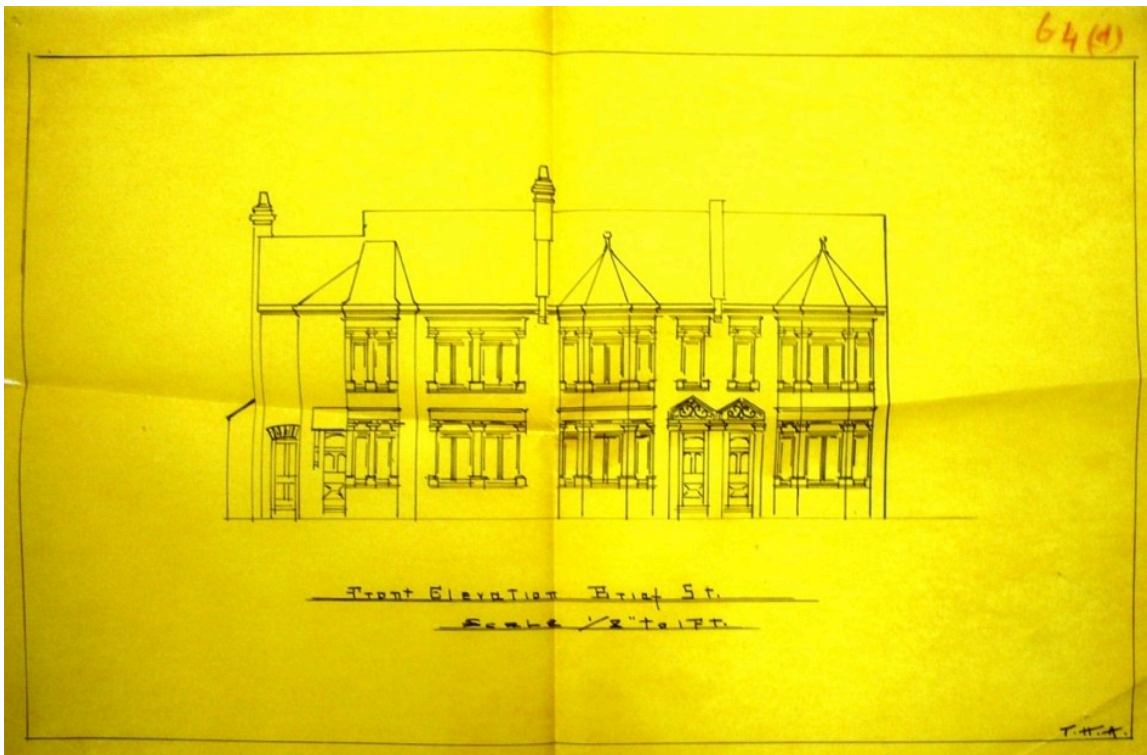


Figure 108. Houses in Brief Street, built by Peter Arundell & Sons in 1907. Drawing by T.H.A., which probably stands for Thomas Henry Arundell, Peter's son (Ibid., IV/83/1/5/13).

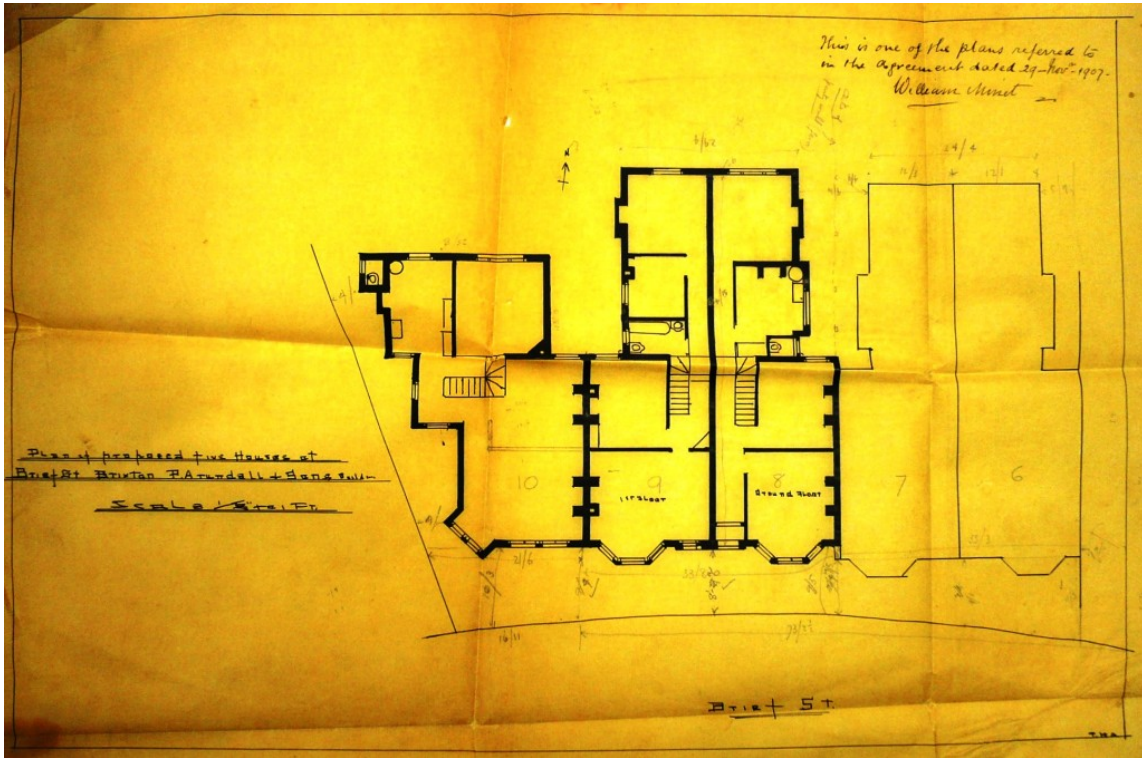


Figure 109. Floor plans for the same buildings. The site was previously used as builder's yard of the Cooperative Builders during construction of the flats in Cormont Road and Hayes Court (Ibid.).

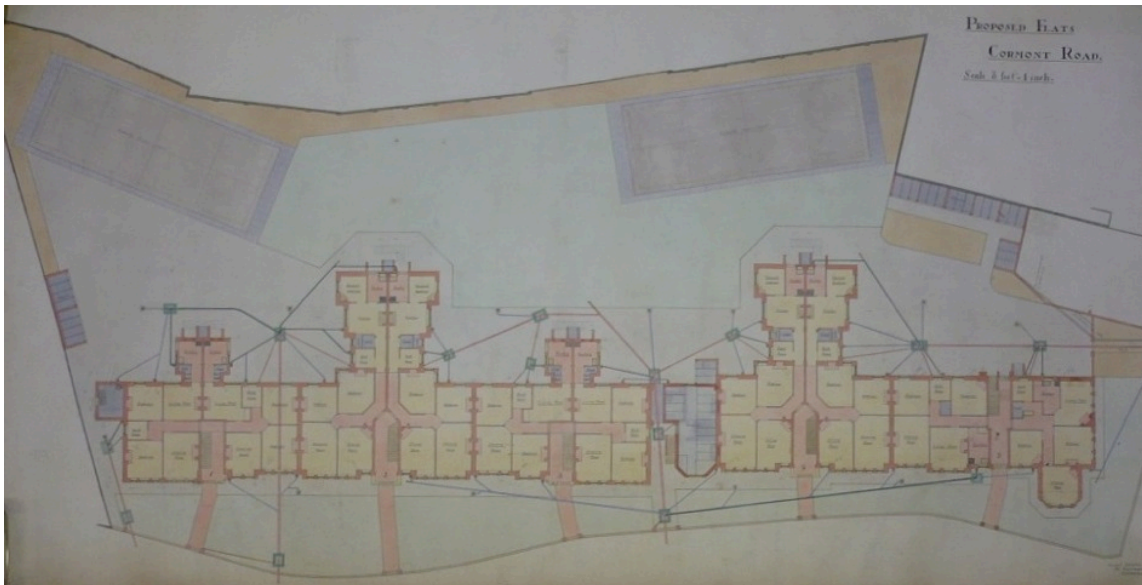


Figure 110. Floor plan of 'Calais Gate', a large block of flats on Cormont Road. The drawings are signed by the Minet Estate Office, 54 Knatchbull Road, and built in 1903-04 by the Cooperative Builders, who had their yard in Brief Street (Ibid., IV/83/3/1/14).

MINET ESTATE OFFICE  
 54 KNATCHBULL ROAD  
 CAMBERWELL S.E.  
 November 1903

Figure 111. Signature on drawings for 'Calais Gate' (Ibid.)

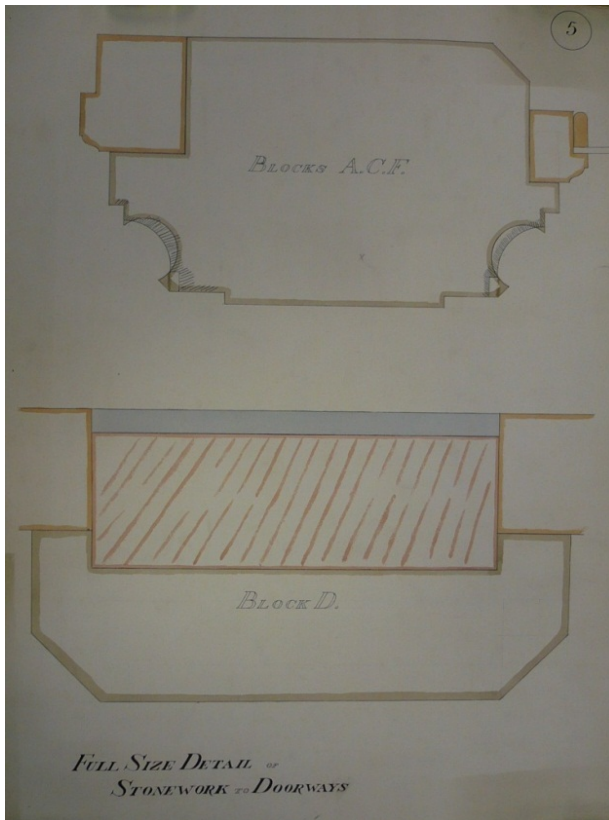


Figure 112. Details for stonework drawn at scale 1:1 for flats in Cormont Road (Ibid.).

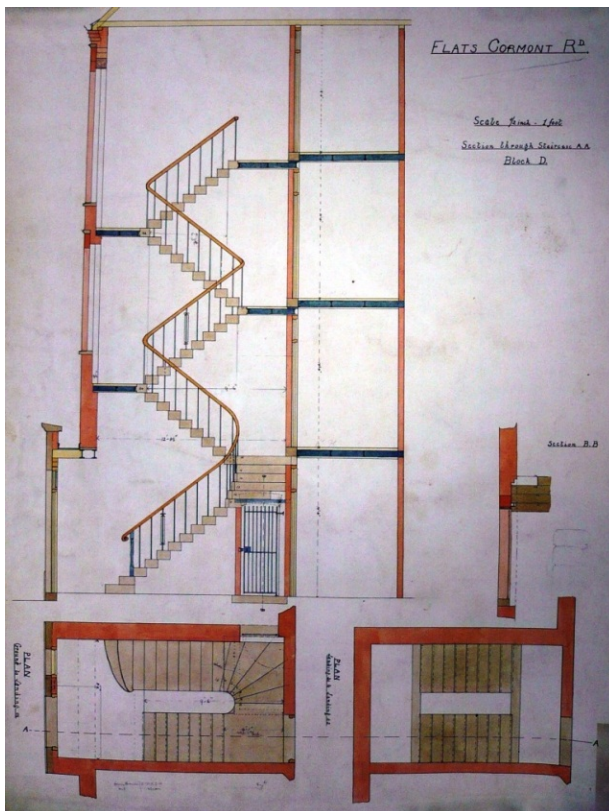


Figure 113. A section of the staircase for flats in Cormont Road. The details are not labelled and convey the information graphically rather than through text. There were presumably separate specifications but much was probably communicated verbally as the estate office and builders were essentially both employed by the Minet estate (Ibid.).

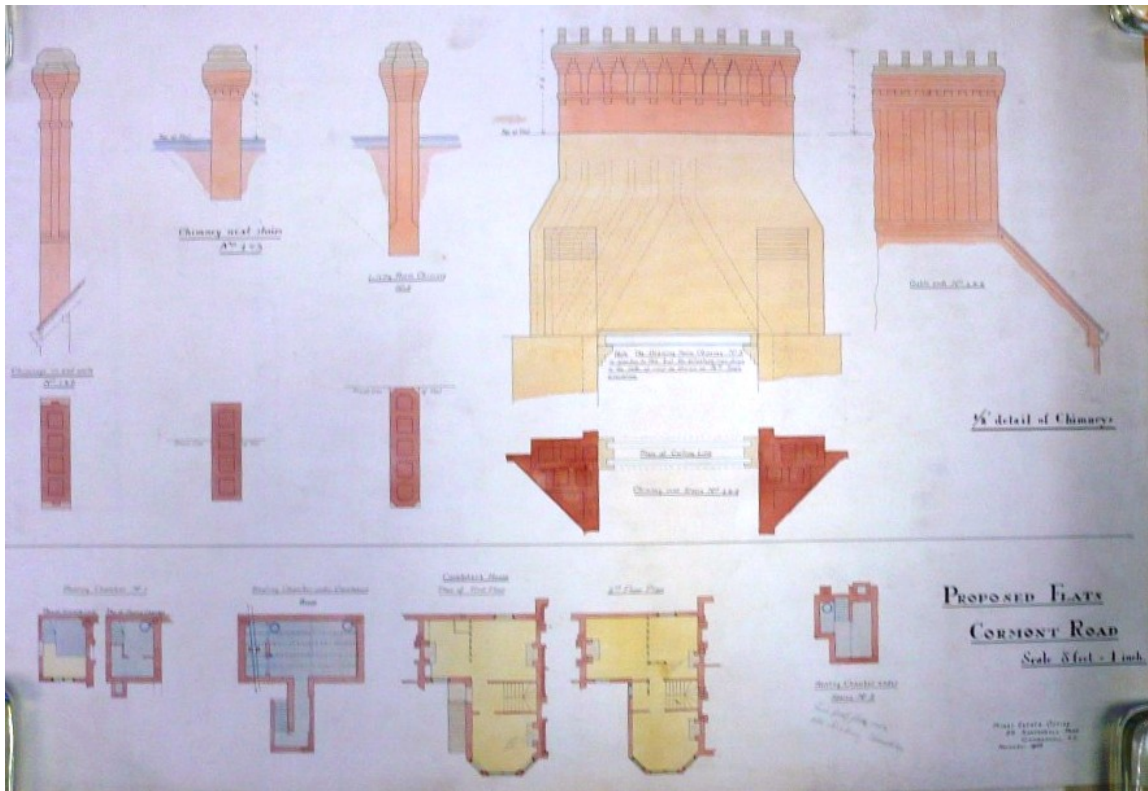


Figure 114. Chimney details. The drawings for Calais Gate include a number of details, particularly elements of decoration (Ibid.).

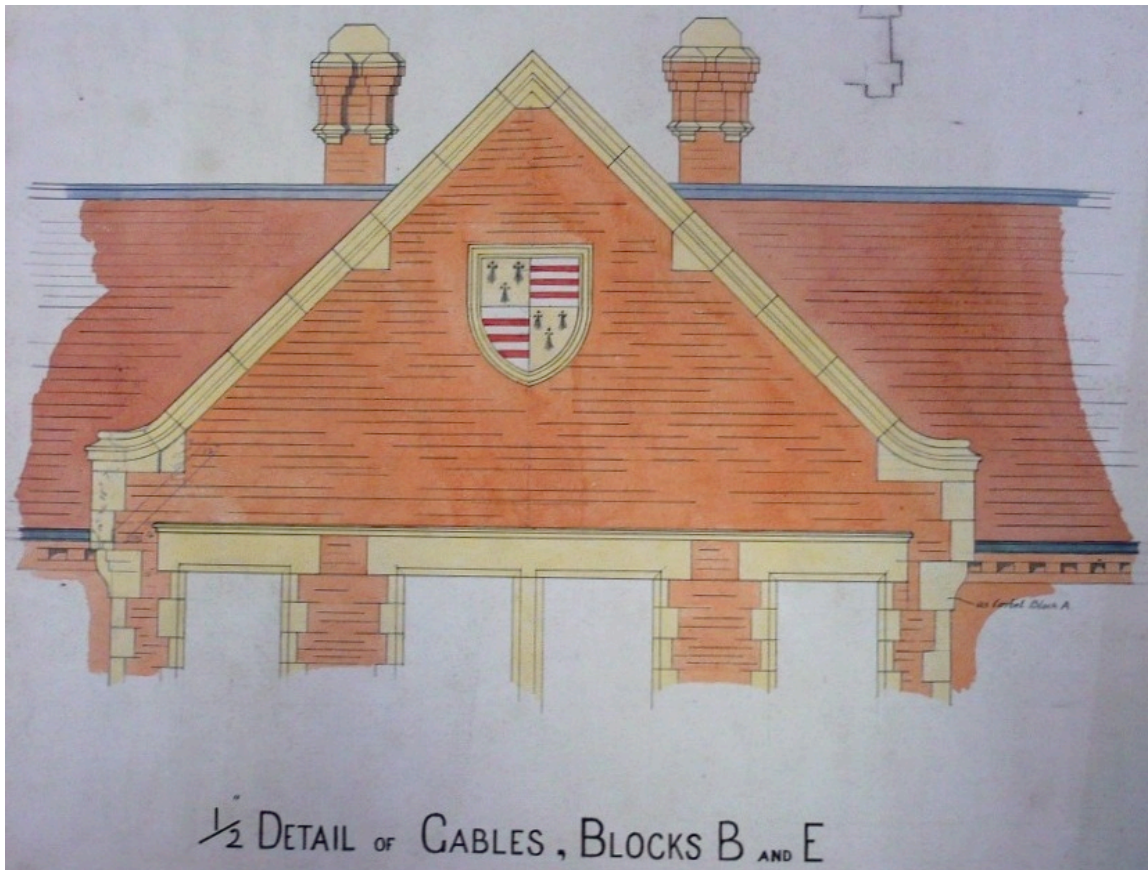


Figure 115. Drawing of gable for Calais Gate (Ibid.).



Figure 116. View of Calais Gate from Cormont Road



Figure 117. Hayes Court flats, 1901, Camberwell New Road, built by the Cooperative Builders. The drawings are signed by the builders themselves. The author is therefore unclear, but might have been again the estate agent and builders' manager F. Curtis.

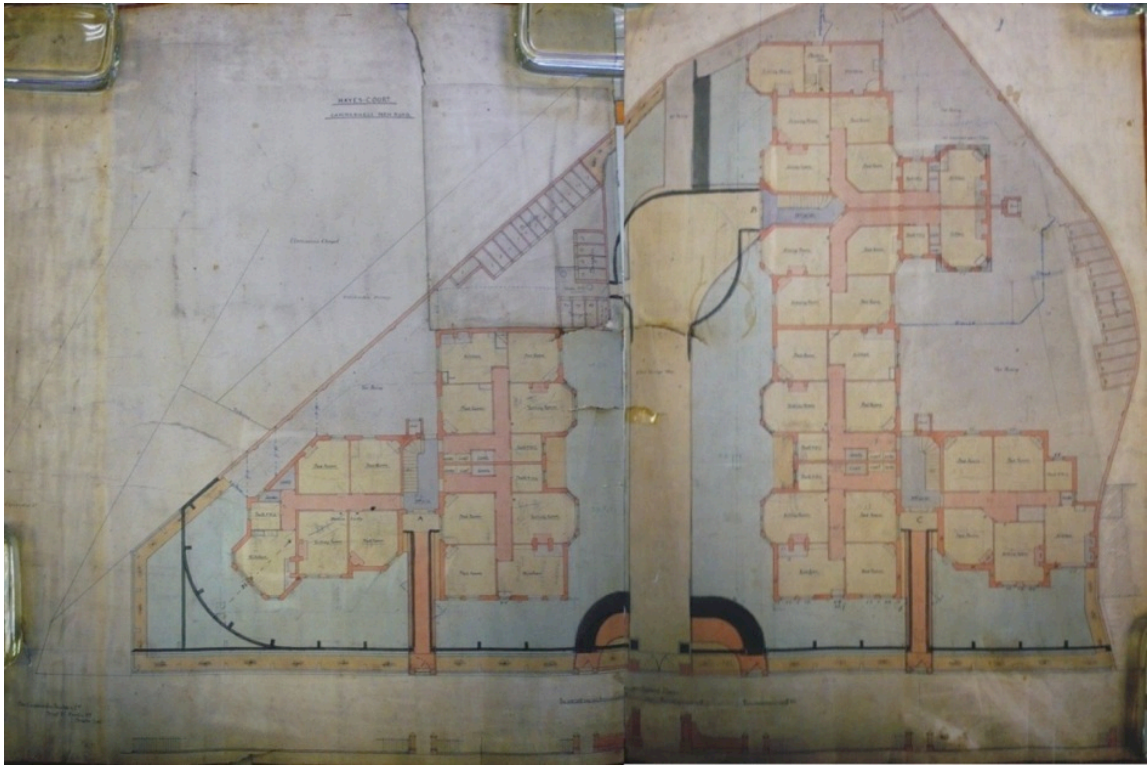


Figure 118. Ground floor plan of Hayes Court (Ibid., IV/83/3/1/15).

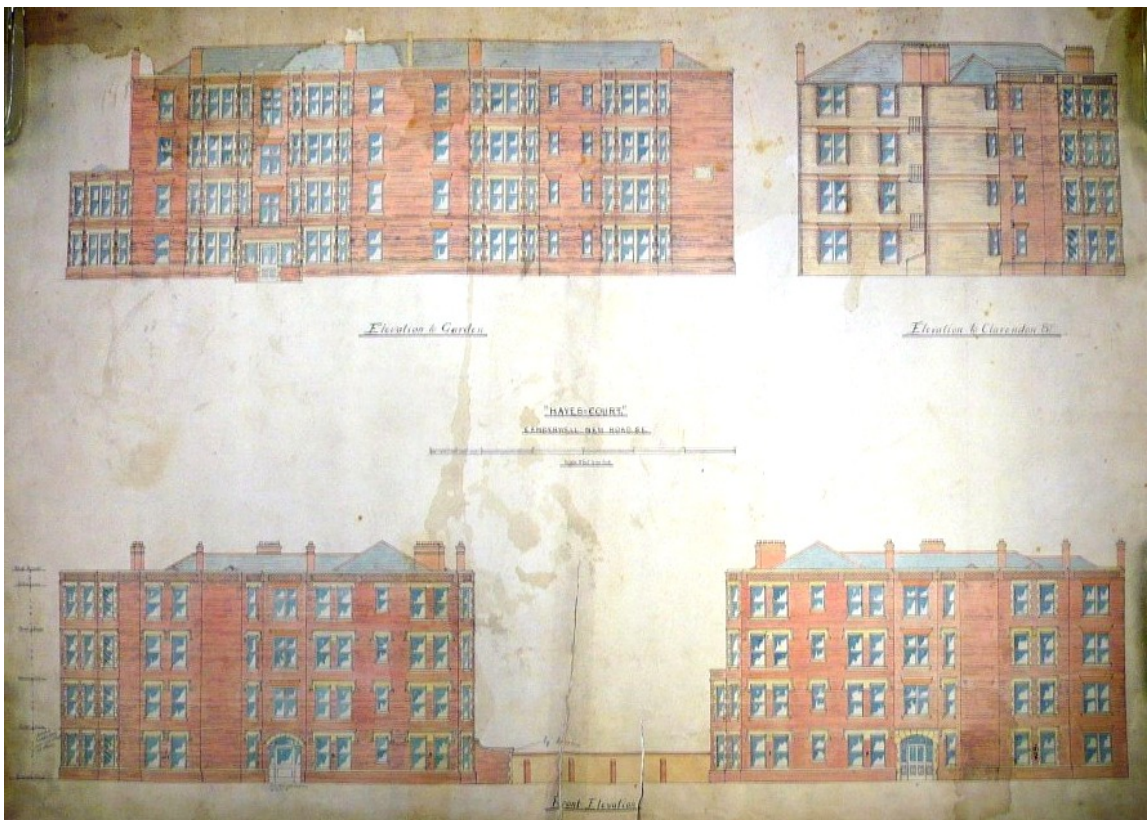


Figure 119. Elevations of Hayes Court (Ibid.).

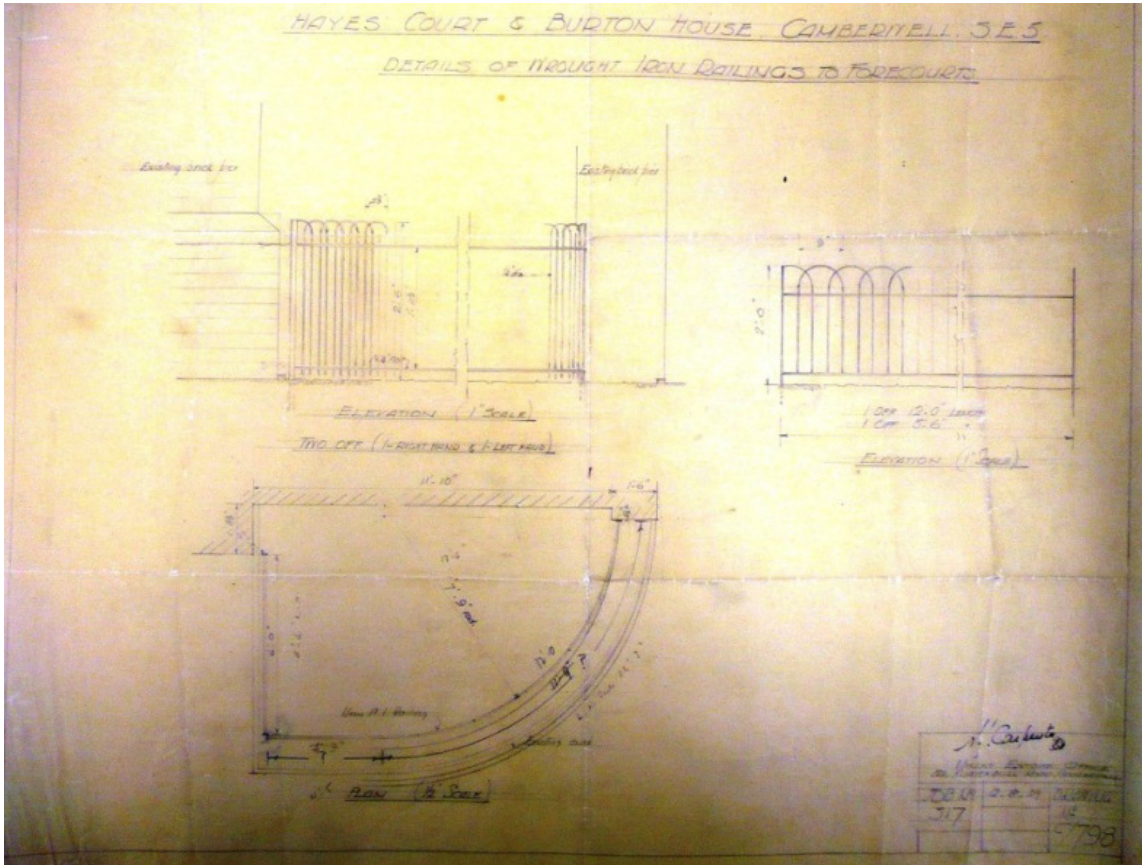


Figure 120. Part of the estate management was the design of landscaping and fencing to maintain and enhance the appearance of the managed buildings of the estate. The drawings were produced in 1929 by A.J. Carpenter, who was the estate agent and surveyor since about 1910 and retired in the 1950s (Ibid.).

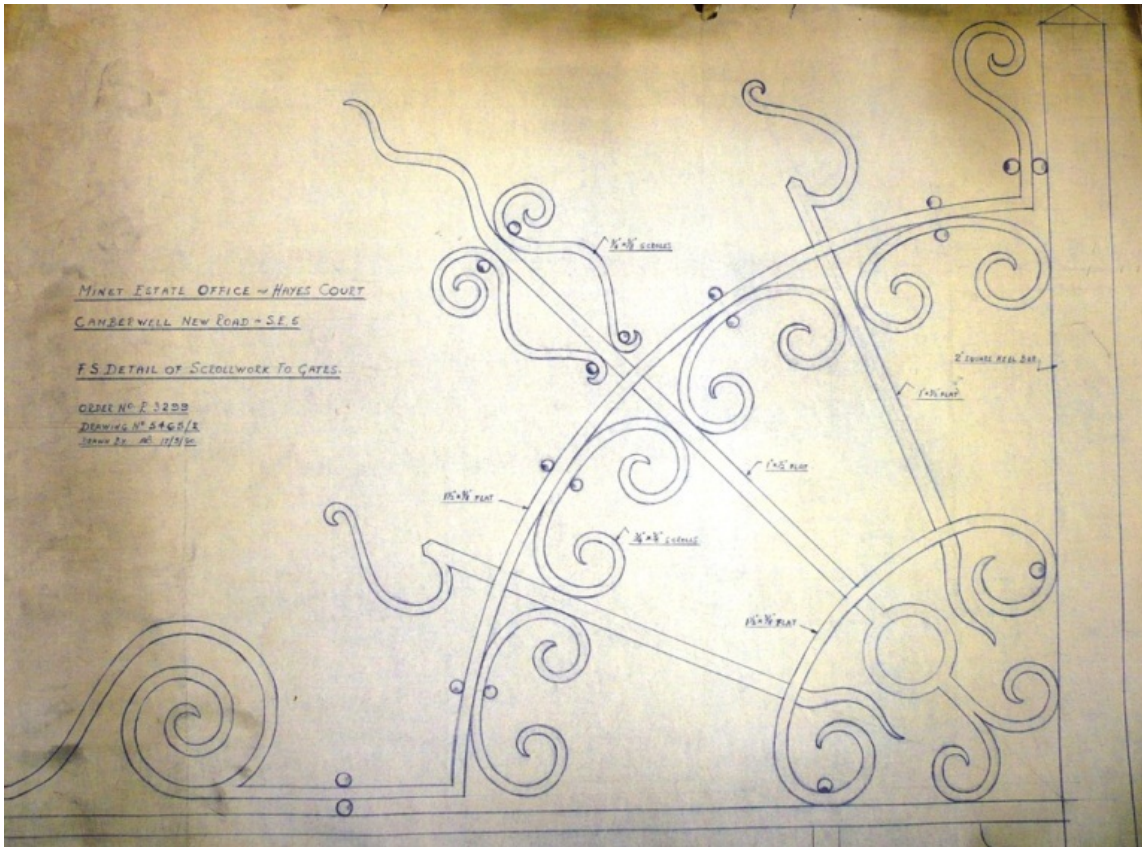


Figure 121. Details of metal work for the gate of Hayes Court (Ibid.).



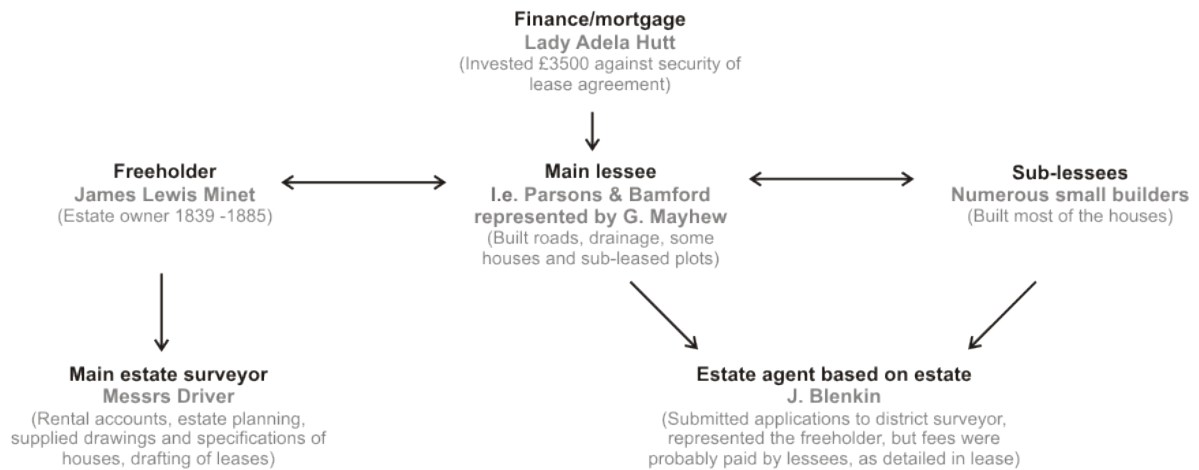


Figure 122. Minet estate organisational flow chart 1839-1885. These roles and relationships determined the first major phase of the estate development during James Lewis Minet’s ownership.

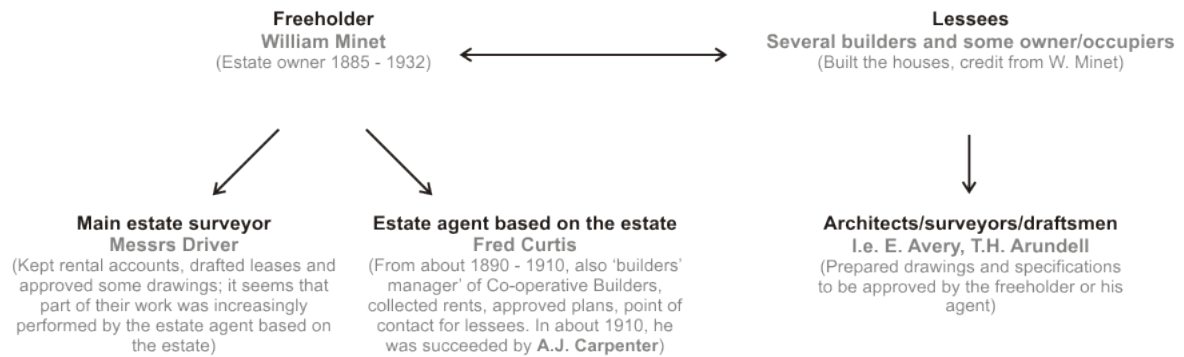


Figure 123. Minet estate organisational flow chart 1885-1932. These roles and relationships determined the second major phase of the estate development during William Minet’s ownership.



Figure 124. The Crossroads at Golders Green, 1906 (Farrow, *Work in Progress: Howard Farrow Limited, a Story of Fifty Years 1908 - 1958*, p. 26).



Figure 125. Advert for Ernest Owers, surveyors and estate agents in Golders Green (Ernest Owers, 'The House Hunters Guide to Golders Green & Hendon', 1922, Barnet Local History Archive).

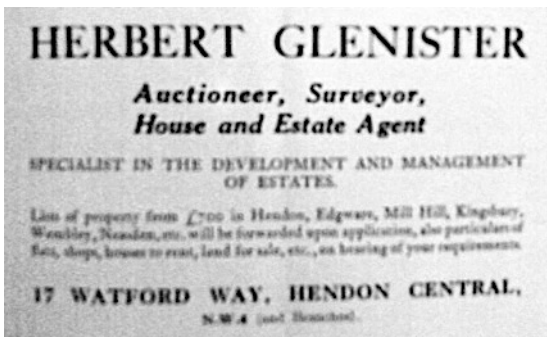


Figure 126. Advert for Herbert Glenister, surveyors and estate agents in Hendon Central ('Residential Attractions of Hendon & District', 1924, Barnet Local History Archive).

The Oldest Established Estate Agency in Ilford.

**WM. ASHMOLE, F.A.I.,**  
**AUCTIONEER,**  
**Surveyor and Estate Agent,**  
**BROADWAY, ILFORD,**  
*(Next the London and County Bank).*  
ESTABLISHED 1862.

Invites Owners wishing to **SELL** or **LET** their Properties to send him full particulars, together with the price or rent required.

*No Charge unless a Sale or Letting is effected.*

**RENTS COLLECTED. ESTATES MANAGED.**

Rents collected regularly in the following Neighbourhoods:

Barking	East and West Ham	Stratford
Barkingside	Ilford	Woodford
Chadwell Heath	Leytonstone	etc., etc.
Dagenham	Plattow	

HOUSES  
LAND

GROUND RENTS  
RENTATIONS

FARMING  
FURNITURE

BUSINESS  
STOCK-IN-TRADE

*And every description of Property Let, Sold or Valued.*

**INVENTORIES and VALUATIONS made for Probate and Legacy Duties, etc.**

LAND AND GROWING CROPS MEASURED.

**PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS PREPARED.**

**AGENT for the Principal Insurance Offices.**  
Telephone: ILFORD 600.

Figure 127. Advert for W.M. Ashmole, surveyors and estate agents in Ilford ('Ilford, Seven Kings & Goodmayes: The Official Publication of the Urban District Council', c. 1905, 914.267/455, Ilford Local History Archive).

**PRACTICALLY WITHOUT RESERVE.**

**CATFORD, S.E.**

---

Particulars and Conditions of Sale  
OF THE **LEASEHOLD**

**VILLA RESIDENCE**  
KNOWN AS  
No. 64, Bradgate Road, Catford, S.E.  
RENTAL VALUE  
**Per £35 2s. Annum.**  
LANDLORD PAYING RATES AND TAXES.  
Held on Lease for a term of 99 years from the 29th September, 1883, at a Ground Rent of £3 10s. per annum.  
ALSO THE LONG

**LEASEHOLD VILLA**  
KNOWN AS  
No. 57, Dowanhill Road, Catford, S.E.  
LET AND PRODUCING  
**Per £28 Annum.**  
Held on Lease for a term of 99 years from March 26th, 1895, at a Ground Rent of £3 14s. per annum.  
AND THE

**FREEHOLD WEEKLY HOUSE**  
KNOWN AS  
No. 139, Brookdale Road, Catford, S.E.  
LET AND PRODUCING  
**Per £31 4s. Annum.**  
LANDLORD PAYING OUTGOINGS.

---

**MESSRS.**  
**NORFOLK & PRIOR**

Have been favoured with instructions to Sell by Auction at the  
**"BLACK HORSE" HOTEL, RUSHEY GREEN, CATFORD, S.E.,**  
**On Thursday Evening, June 23rd, 1910, at 7.30 p.m.**

For Particulars and Conditions of Sale apply to the respective Solicitors, Messrs. JAMES & CHARLES DODD, 77, High Street, Lewisham [for the first two lots], and Messrs. F. DUKE & SON, Solicitors, St. Olave's House, 18 & 19, Ironmonger Lane, E.C. [for the third lot], and of the  
**AUCTIONEERS, Messrs. NORFOLK & PRIOR, 4, Station Buildings, Catford Bridge, S.E.**  
Telephone—"BURGESS, LONDON." Telephone No.—LEE GREEN 556.

Figure 128. Pages from auction catalogue, Norfolk & Prior, 1910 (Prior Collection, Item 1378).

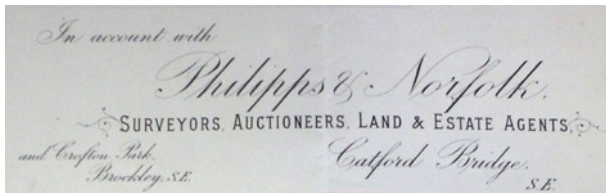


Figure 129. Norfolk & Prior letter heads reflecting the different stages of the firm. First stage: Philipps & Norfolk 1893-1901 (Prior Collection).

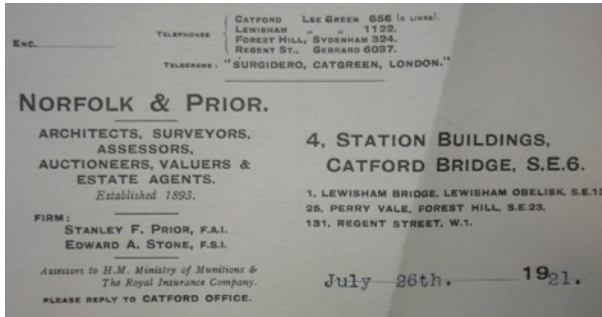


Figure 130. Second stage: Norfolk & Prior 1901-1923 (Ibid.).

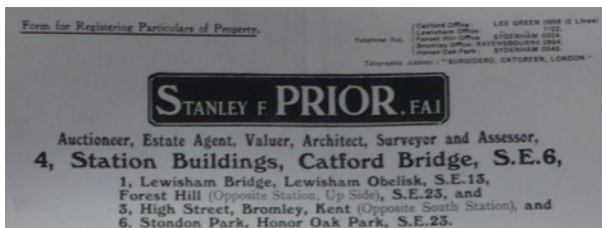


Figure 131. Third stage: Stanley F. Prior 1923 onwards. The position of the title 'Architect' in the title head is most prominent during the partnership with Stone (Ibid.).



Figure 132. Design for shop sign for 131 Regent Street, W.1. (Ibid.).



Figure 133. Former head office of Norfolk & Prior, 4 Station Buildings, Catford Road. The premises are today used as a letting and estate agency.



Figure 134. Former branch of Norfolk & Prior in Devonshire Road, Forest Hill (white & red shop sign).



Figure 135. Stanley Prior, F.A.I. (Photo from: 'Auctioneers' Institute: The Chairmen of the London Branches', Prior Collection, Item 946).



Figure 136. Edward A. Stone, F.S.I. (Photo from an article in the 'Old Kent Road Astoria Souvenir')

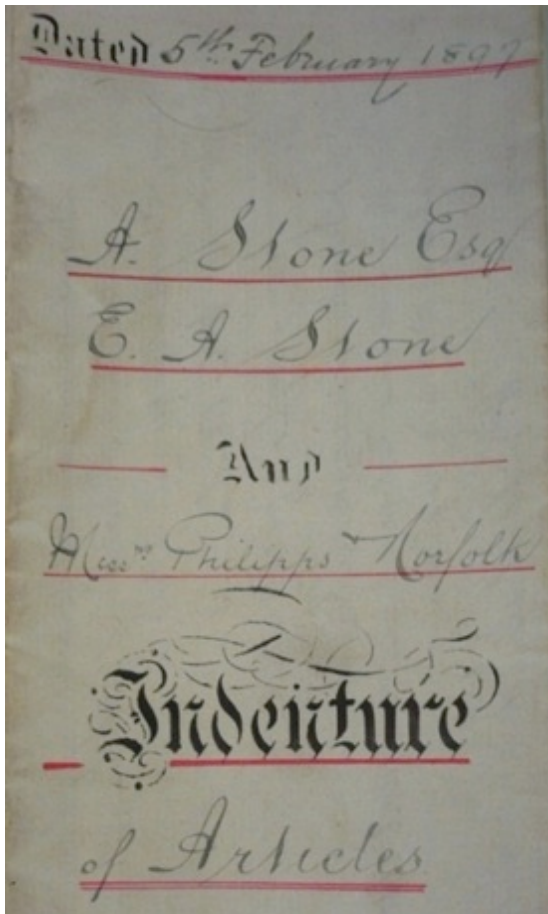


Figure 137. Indenture of Articles, E.A. Stone, cover page (Prior Collection, Item 327).

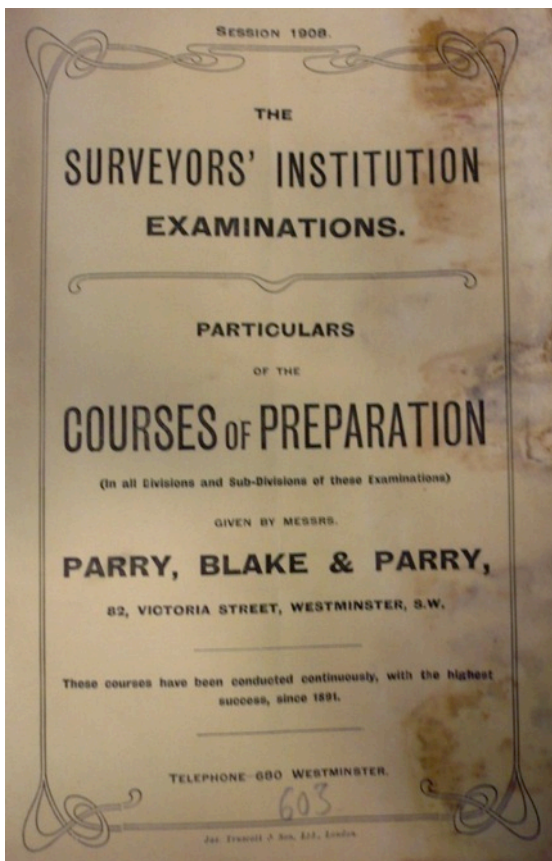


Figure 138. Preparation Course for Surveyors' Institution Examinations, 1908, cover page (Ibid., Item 603).

Some of the papers set at the Final Examinations are on the same subjects as those at the Intermediate but of a higher nature. In arranging these courses, it has been assumed that the student has, in such cases, some elementary knowledge.

The subjects dealt with in the complete course in any one sub-division are as stated below :—

Sub-division I.	Sub-division II.	Sub-division III.
Forestry, Timber Valuing and Measuring (out-door)	Forestry, Timber Valuing and Measuring (out-door)	QUANTITIES Quantities (lower paper)
Ditto (in-door)	Local Taxation	CONSTRUCTIVE & WORKINGS DRAWINGS
Local Taxation	PRINCIPLES & PRACTICE OF VALUATION	Constructive and Working Drawings (lower paper)
Botany of Grasses	Arbitrations	Drainage and Sanitation
Agricultural Chemistry	Enfranchisement of Copyholds	*The London Building Acts
AGRICULTURAL VALUATIONS	Compulsory Purchase Acts	†The Public Health Acts
Arbitrations	Law of Vendors and Purchasers	Arbitrations
Agricultural Law	Drainage and Sanitation	Iron & Timber Roofs
Report Writing	Report Writing	Specifications
		Report Writing

\* For London Candidates only. † For Country Candidates only.

Also any two of the following optional subjects, to be selected by the candidate :—

Sub-division I.	Sub-division II.	Sub-division III.
Algebra	Algebra	Algebra
Animal Physiology	Hydrostatics	Development of Building Estates
Copyholds	London Building Acts	Hydrostatics
Hydrostatics	Parochial Assessments	Parochial Assessments
Parochial Assessments	Road Making	Road Making
Road Making		Mechanics
Drainage and Sanitation		

The subjects printed in capital letters are "Typical" subjects. See note on page 12.

Figure 139. Preparation Course for Surveyors' Institution Examinations, The three subdivisions with Stone's ticks to mark his choice (Ibid., Item 603).

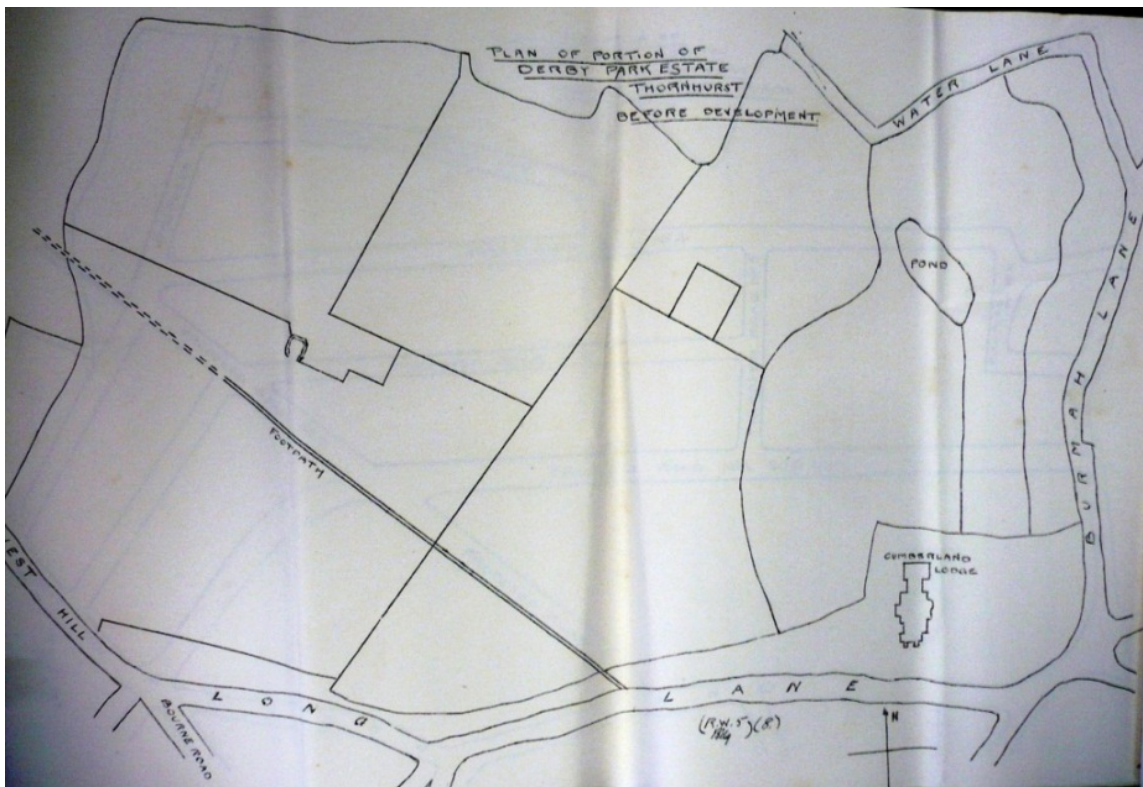


Figure 140. Exercise from Preparation Course showing a suburban estate before development (Ibid., Item 602).

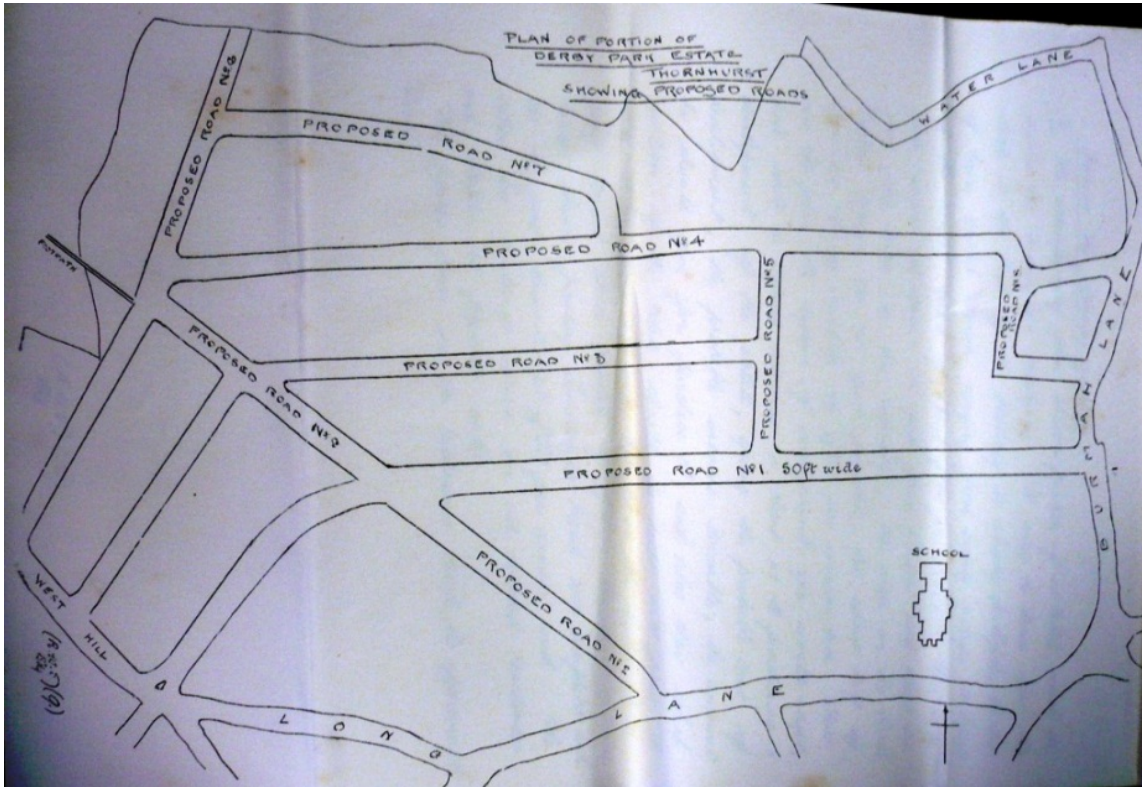


Figure 141. Same exercise showing the estate after development (Ibid.).

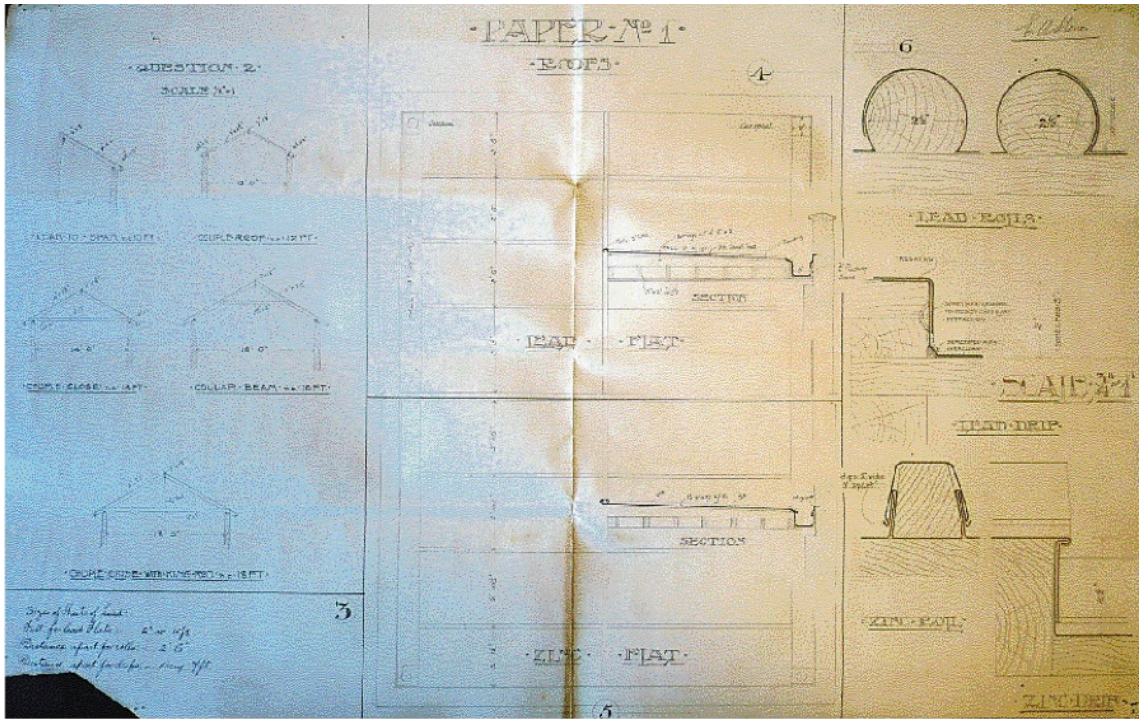


Figure 142. Construction details by Stone for the Preparation Course (Ibid., Item 601).



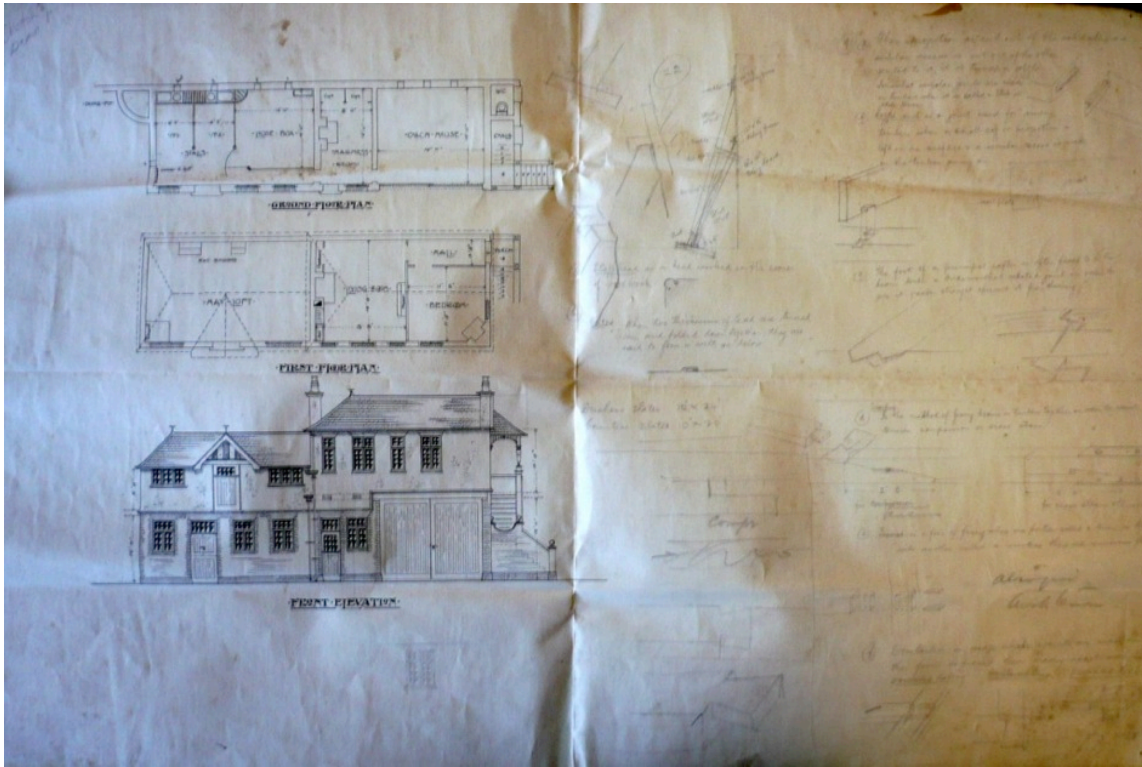


Figure 143. Architectural drawings by Stone for the Preparation Course for the Surveyor's Institution *Examinations* (Ibid., Item 601).

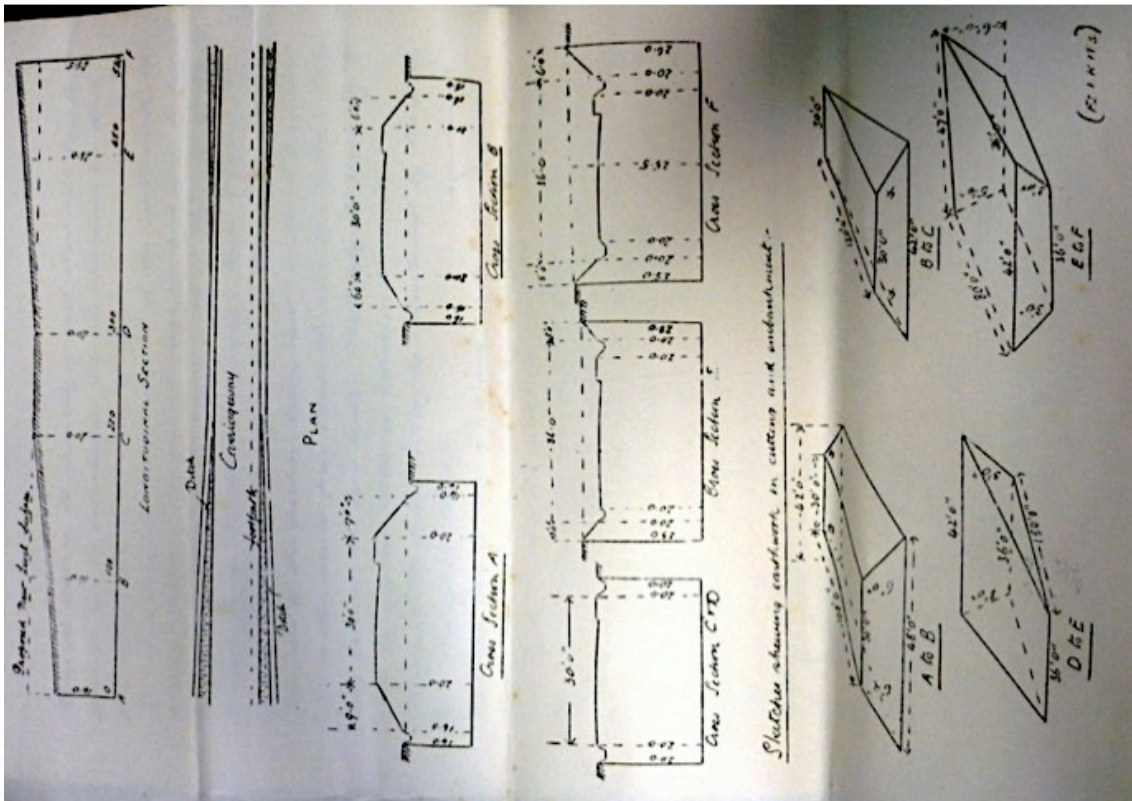


Figure 144. Road gradients for rainwater drainage, from the Preparation Course for the *Examinations* (Ibid., Item 601).

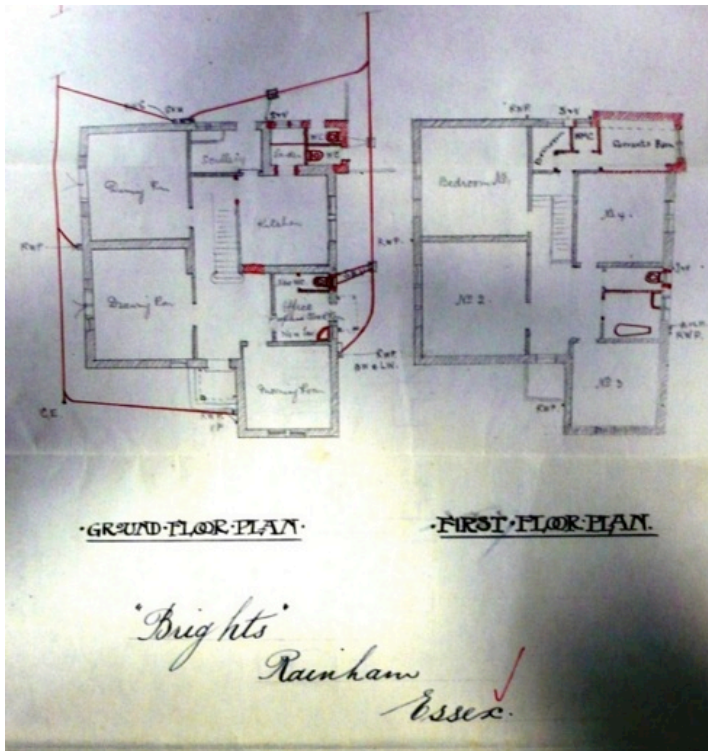


Figure 145. Exercise for the Preparation Course for the Examinations. Stone was asked to indicate house drainage, as required for applications to the local district surveyor (Ibid.).



Figure 146. London Astoria, Charing Cross Road, designed by Stone, opened 1927, demolished in 2009.



Figure 147. Brixton Astoria, designed by T.R. Somerford and Stone, opened 1929, now Brixton Academy.



Figure 148. Prince Edward Theatre, Soho, designed by Stone, opened 1930.

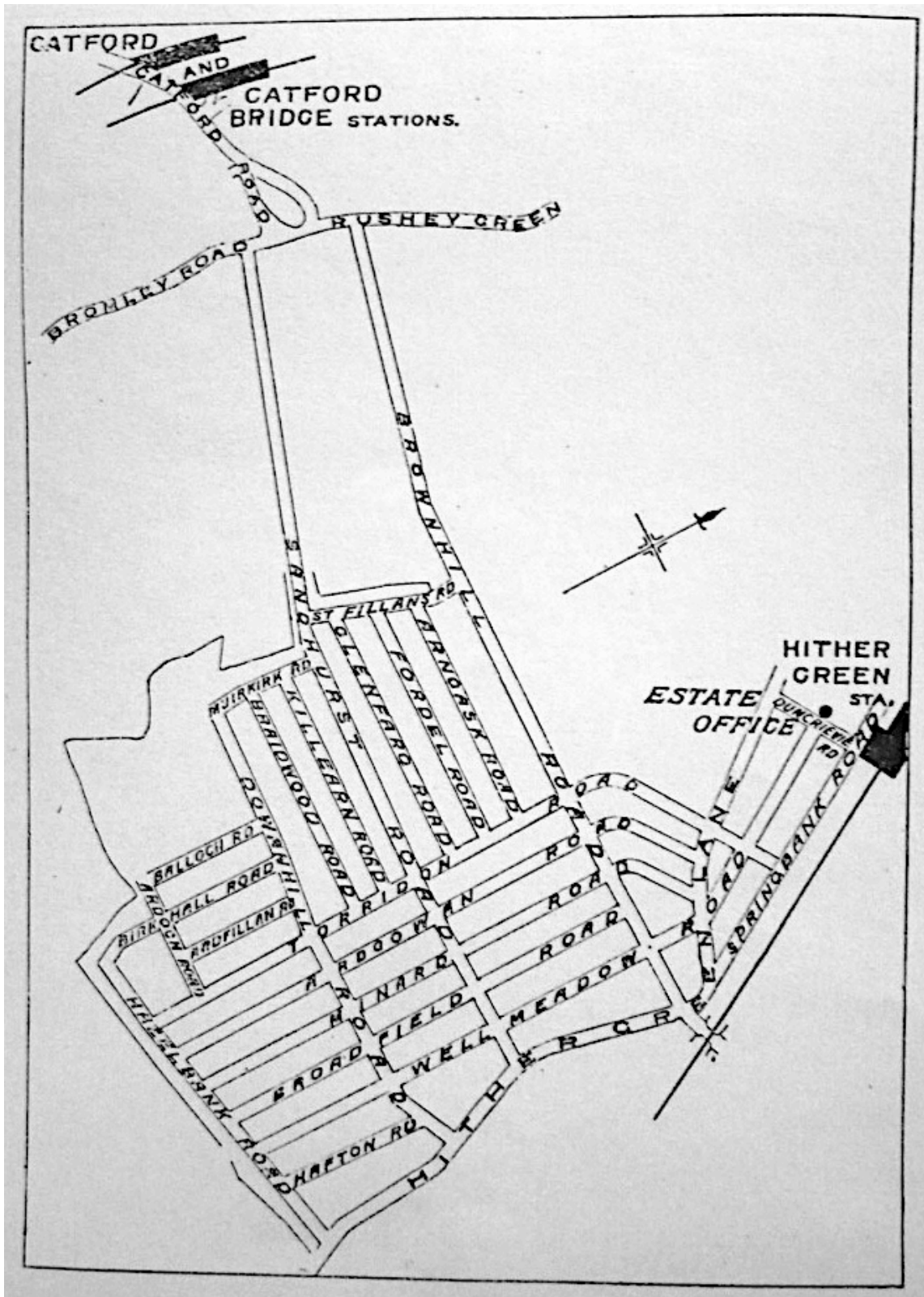


Figure 149. Map of St. Germans Estate from Corbett's sales brochure. One of the largest estates in the area. A number of Norfolk & Prior's clients built houses on this estate ('The Corbett Estates', 1906, A67/26, Lewisham Local History Archive).

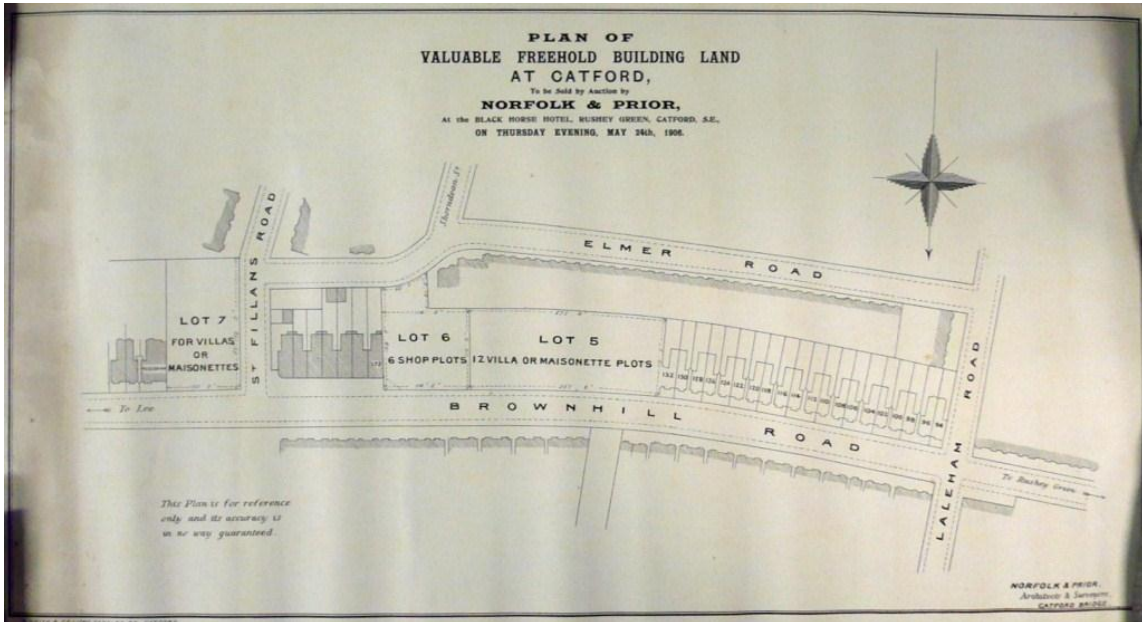


Figure 150. Map of Auction Catalogue, 1906, Brownhill Road (Prior Collection, Item 1586q).

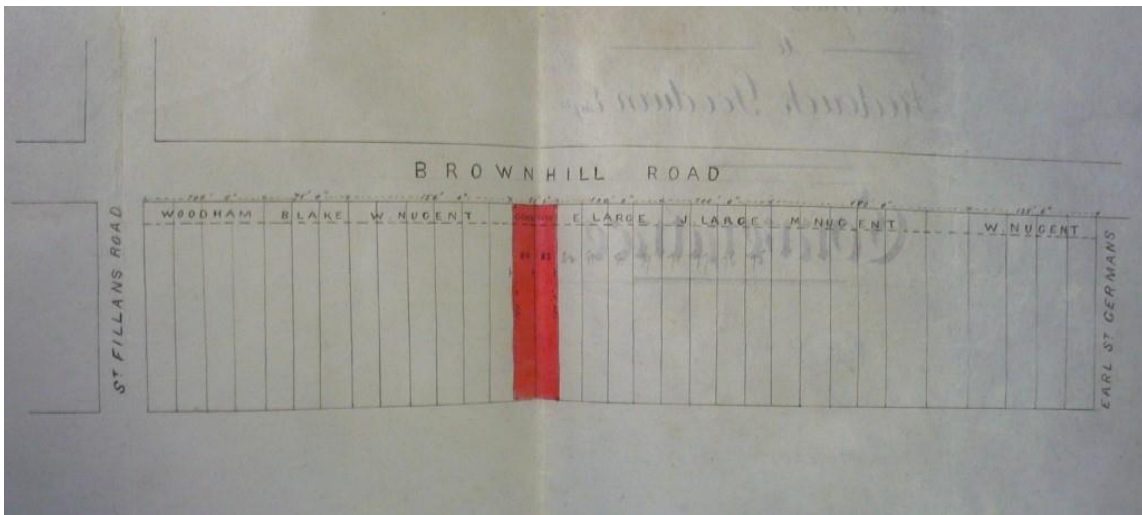


Figure 151. Map from deed of conveyance, 1898, Brownhill Road. The red colouring indicates the land sold as freehold to the builder. The names of the other builders (e.g. Woodham, Blake etc.) who bought the other plots are also on the map. The building plots are next to, but not part of the St Germans Estate ('Harry Robbins Esq and others to Frederick Goodwin Esq Conveyance', 12 October 1898, A81/50/2, Lewisham Local History Archive).

**PLANS AND SECTIONS TO BE ON THIS FORM OR ON LINEN;  
DUPLICATE COPIES MUST BE ON LINEN.**

**Estimated Cost of the portion of the Work between the front to be drained and the Sewer**  
which will be estimated by the Council, and must be paid for before the work is begun.—

For	feet in length of	inch Drain, average	E	s.	d.
depth	feet, at	per foot			
opening into Sewer, at	each	each			
Ascertained Cost of Work			£		
Balance to be paid the Council			£		

N.B.—Any excess in the above Estimate will be returned, and any deficiency must be paid on the completion of the Work.

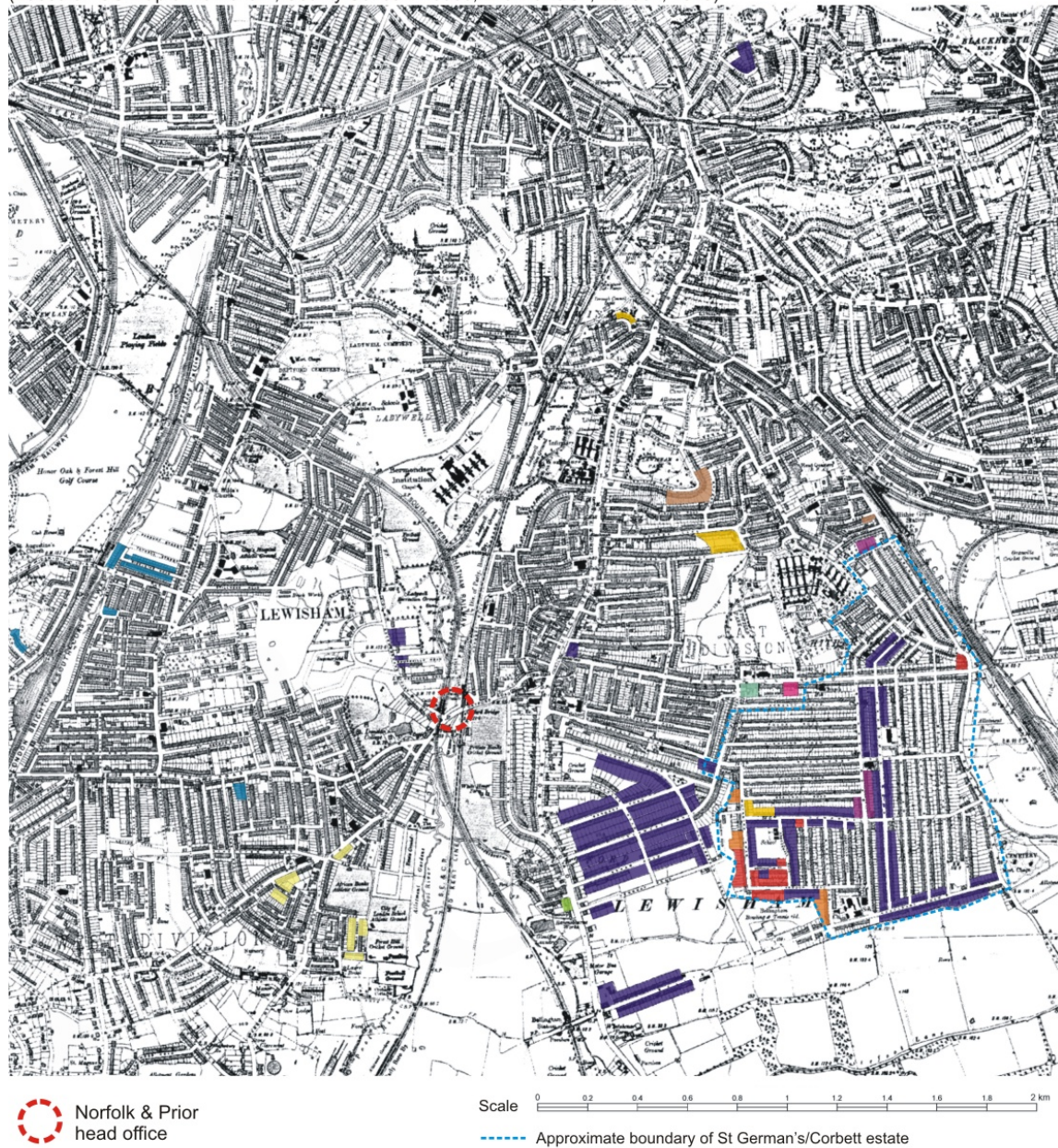
**DETAILED DESCRIPTION to be filled in by the Applicant.**

Size of Drains and description of Pipes and Concrets	
Intercepting Trap, description of	
Inspection Chambers, construction of and description of same (specification of Council on front page)	
Air Inlets, description of	
Soil and Ventilating Pipes, Size, Material and Joints	
Rain-water Pipes, Size and Material	
W.C.'s, description of Apparatus, how connected to Soil Pipe and arrangement for Flushing	
Anti-Siphonage Pipes, description of	
Waste Pipes from Baths, Sinks and Lavatories, method of dealing with same	
General Remarks	

**A DUPLICATE COPY OF THE PARTICULARS MUST ALSO BE DEPOSITED.**

Figure 152. Two centre pages of a building application for the builder Woodham & Sons for houses in Brownhill Road, partly completed with drawings by Stone. This was the standard form in use during the Edwardian period in Lewisham. Such an application was required to be submitted to the local district surveyor for approval under the London Building Acts. A crucial part was the drainage, which had to be shown on the plans and also described in detail. The appearance was not subject to an application. The requirements were not necessarily consistent throughout London. In some Boroughs, elevations were required, but not in Lewisham (Prior Collection, Item 633).

**Map of Housing with Norfolk & Prior as Architects & Surveyors**  
 (Based on OS Map of Lewisham, County Series 1:10560, 2nd Revision, London, 1919)



**Colours indicate houses constructed by the following builders:**

<span style="color: #90EE90;">■</span> Bagge	<span style="color: #D2B48C;">■</span> Laird	<span style="color: #FFD700;">■</span> Storey	<span style="color: #FFFF00;">■</span> G. Walker
<span style="color: #90EE90;">■</span> Baileys	<span style="color: #FF8C00;">■</span> Rolfe	<span style="color: #FF0000;">■</span> Taylor	<span style="color: #483D8B;">■</span> Watt
<span style="color: #800080;">■</span> Hughes	<span style="color: #008000;">■</span> Rudd	<span style="color: #0000FF;">■</span> C. Walker	<span style="color: #FF00FF;">■</span> Woodham

Figure 153. Location of housing that Norfolk & Prior worked on as architect-surveyors between 1900 and 1914 (see also larger copy of map in appendix). The different colours identify the builders of the houses (Based on OS Map of Lewisham, County Series 1:10560, 2<sup>nd</sup> revision, London, 1919).

### Map of Area in 1898

(OS Map of Lewisham, County Series 1:10560, 1st Revision, London, 1898)

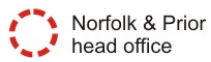
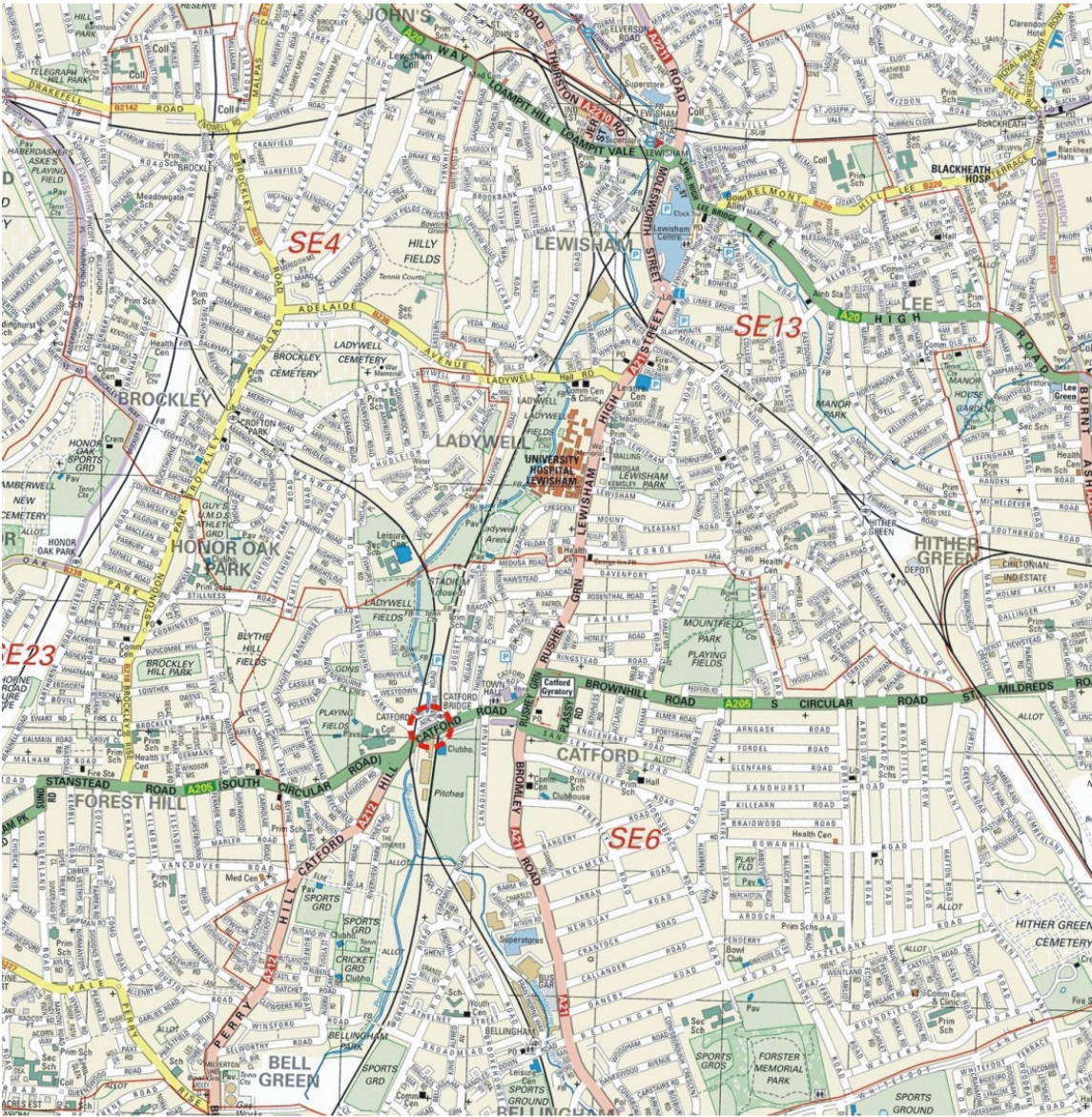


Figure 154. Map of Area in 1898, around the time when Prior and Stone joined the business (Reproduced from OS Map, County Series 1:10560, 1<sup>st</sup> revision, London, 1898).



London Street Map of Area, 2011




 Norfolk & Prior  
head office

Figure 155. Street map of the same area today (Reproduced from [www.streetmap.co.uk](http://www.streetmap.co.uk))

TELEPHONE N° 170 DEPTFORD. TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS BURGIDERS, LONDON.

Charles Farley Esq.  
In account with  
*Norfolk & Prior.*  
ARCHITECTS, SURVEYORS, AUCTIONEERS, LAND & ESTATE AGENTS.  
2, Station Bldgs, Catford Bridge, SE

March 1905

1904	June 1st	To receiving your instructions to prepare the following plans	
	July, Aug & Sept	- Set of plans for 8 houses Woodlands Avenue comprising ground floor 1st floor top floor front elevations back elevations & drainage plan	6 6
		- do do for 12 houses Woodlands Avenue comprising as above	6 6
		- do do for 15 houses Sunnyside Avenue comprising as above with elevations for elevations	7 7
		- do do for 2 double houses containing 8 flats Cumberland Avenue comprising as above	8 8
		- Making 4 tracings of cat & rat & paving same	6 6
		" " " " " " " " " " " "	6 6
		" " " " " " " " " " " "	7 7
		- Making accurate copy of cat & rat for Acton Council respecting houses Brighton Avenue Acton	1 11 6
		- Preparing five sets of drainage applications for five houses in Cumberland, Highland & Sunnyside & Woodlands Avenues	8 3 -
		- Making 3 tracings of each of the above applications in all	4 4
	Oct 8	- Charges for surveying & leveling proposed roads & sewers on the estate with reference to sewer app for the Acton Council & preparing plans	10 10 -

TELEPHONE N° 170 DEPTFORD. TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS BURGIDERS, LONDON.

In account with  
*Norfolk & Prior.*  
ARCHITECTS, SURVEYORS, AUCTIONEERS, LAND & ESTATE AGENTS.  
2, Station Bldgs, Catford Bridge, SE

1905

		To making 2 tracings of above & coloring same	3 8 -
		- making 1 tracing of levels of roads & sewers amended as required by Acton Council	1 1 -
	Nov	- charges for surveying plot of land at the corner of Brighton Avenue & Stone Lane & taking levels re	2 2 -
		- preparing plans for 5 shops on above site comprising front side back elevations, basement shop & 2nd floor plans & section & coloring same	22 1 -
	Dec	- preparing block plans of drainage for proposed shops amending same as required & making 4 copies	4 4 -
		- Making 2 tracings of each of the set of plans for proposed shops & coloring same making alterations as required by Freeholders, Architectural Council & Acton	28 12 -
		- Preparing 2 copies of brief specification required by Freeholders & Architect	1 1 -
		- One out of pocket including fares, lunches & re interviews with Acton Council, yourself & re	10 -
	1st March	- To charge for preparing block plan showing the whole of estate & plot at corner of Kings Road & making 2 tracings & coloring same	5 5 -
			155 8 6

Figure 156. List of work completed for Charles Farley, written by Edward Stone for Farley's bankruptcy trial to claim unpaid fees from his estate (Prior Collection, Item 987e)

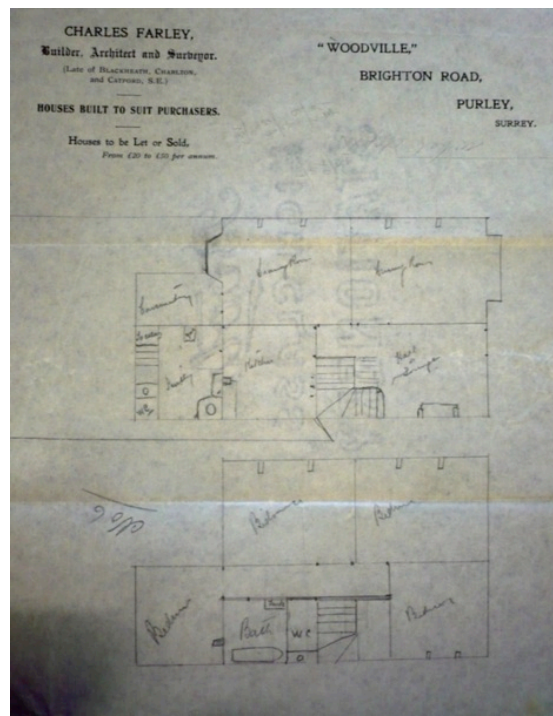


Figure 157. Sketches by Charles Farley to communicate his floor plan ideas to Edward Stone, 1904 (Ibid., Item 987f)



Figure 158. First type of houses built by Farley in Davenport Road, begun in 1899. He built 17 of this type.



Figure 159. Farley subsequently built 34 houses of this type in Davenport Road, begun in 1900.



Figure 160. Unusual entrance detail of Farley's houses in Davenport Road.

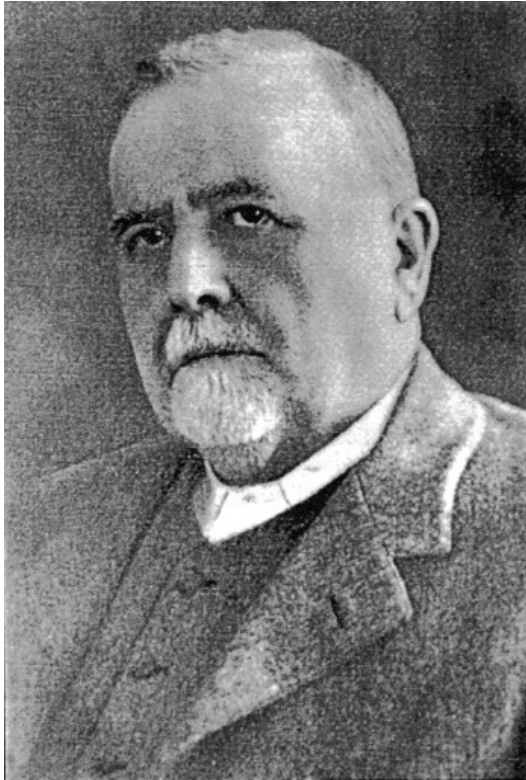


Figure 161. James Watt (1856-1932). Scottish builder who moved to Lewisham in the 1880s (Ken George, 'James Watt (1856-1932), Master Builder', 2006, 920 WATT, Lewisham Local History Archive).



Figure 162. Entrance door details (ca. 1905) of houses built by Watt on the Corbett Estate. While the overall configuration is the same, its details vary from house to house.

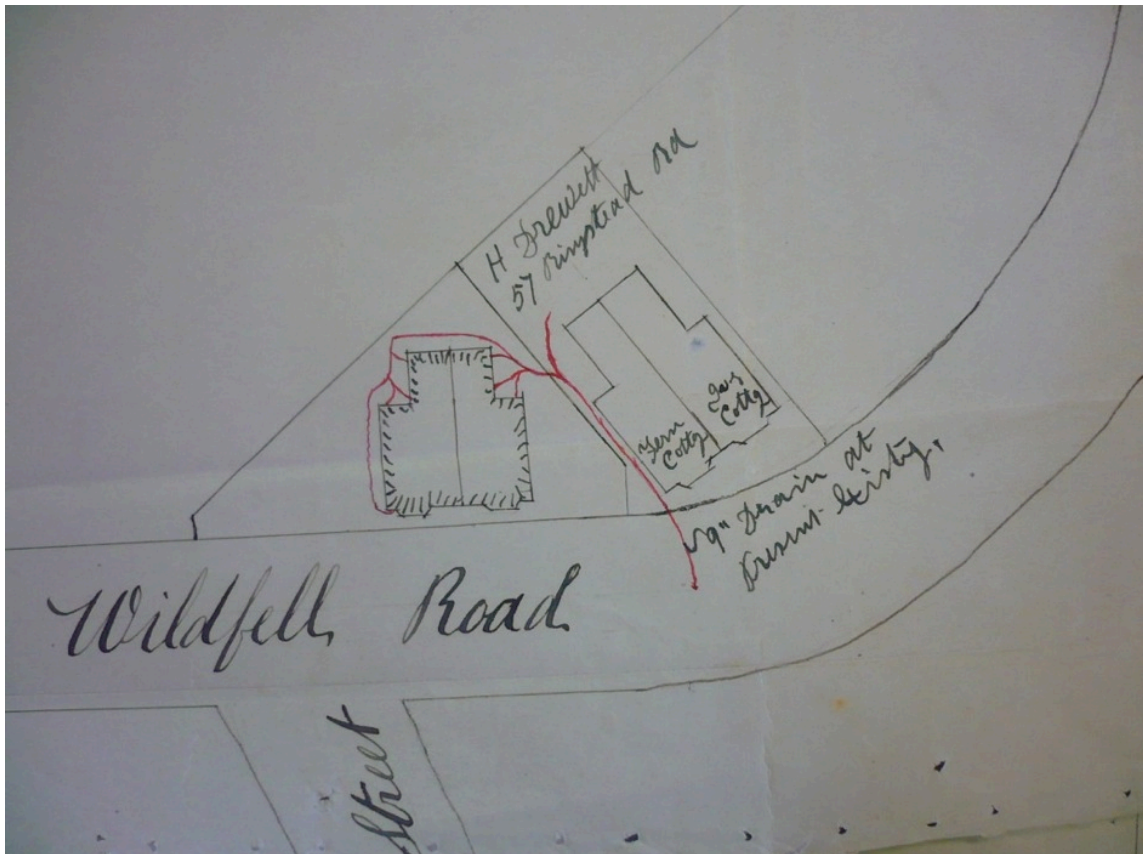


Figure 163. Drawings submitted with the building application for some of the first houses built by Watt in 1890. The drawings are not to scale and the drains are drawn free hand with red ink, probably by Watt himself. The building applications became more demanding in accuracy and technical detail in the Edwardian period, which was one of the reasons for a builder to employ an architect or surveyor such as Norfolk & Prior to deal with the applications (Building & Drainage Applications 1856-1900, Vol. 50, Lewisham Local History Archive).



Figure 164. 37 & 39 Wildfell Road, Lewisham, two of Watt's first houses built in 1890. Watt's houses closely followed the style of others that already existed in the area.



Figure 165. The first row of terraces built by Watt in Wildfell Road, 1894.



Figure 166. Torridon Road 83-101, part of the Corbett Estate. Built by Watt in 1908, still in a similar style as his first houses above, but now with double-storey bays.



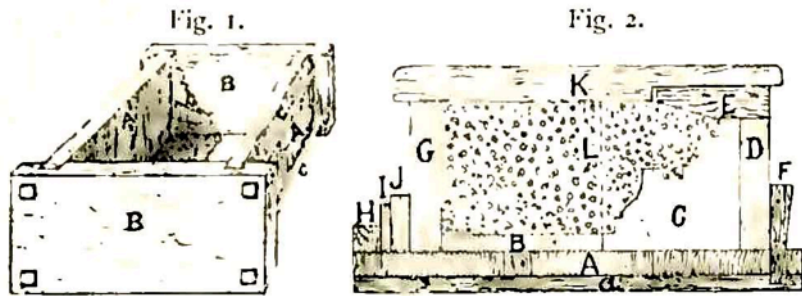
Figure 167. Substantial semi-detached houses in Inchmery Road, built by Watt c. 1906.



Figure 168. Houses built by Watt in Arran Road from 1911 onwards. The style of his houses had changed from Classical influences to those of the Arts & Crafts movement with features like tile-hanging, half-timbering and the upper window panes divided up.

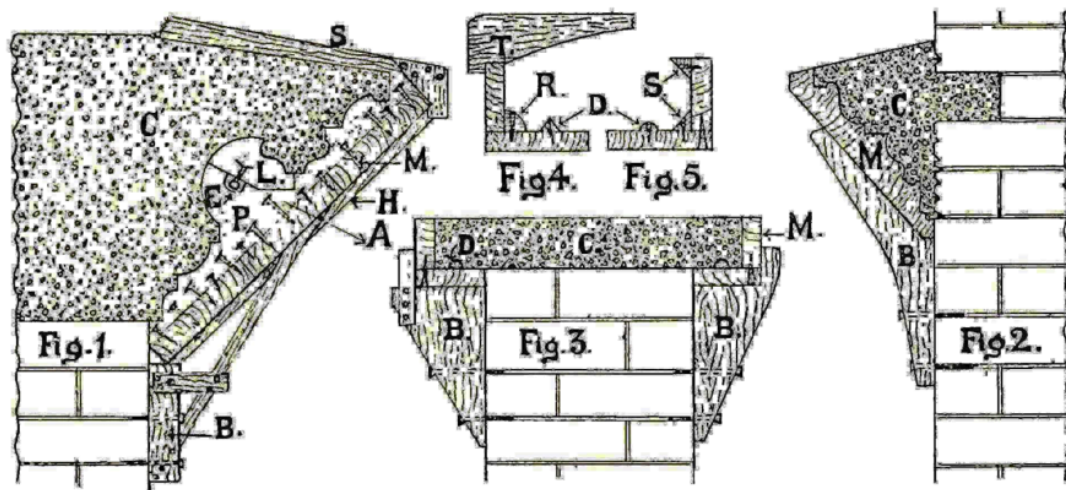


Figure 169. Houses in Arran Road built by James Watt. On the left the 'older' style, on the right the 'newer' style but otherwise the same configuration and layout.



No. 201.—FIG. 1.—BOLT MOULD FOR CASTING BLOCKS, &C.  
 FIG. 2.—SECTION FOR COMBINED WOOD AND PLASTER  
 MOULD FOR CASTING LABEL AND STRING MOULD-  
 INGS, &C.

Figure 170. Method for making moulds for external decorative stucco components to be cast off-site (William Millar, *Plastering, Plain and Decorative*, 2nd ed. [London: Batsford, 1899], p. 306).



No. 203.—SECTIONS OF MOULDS FOR CASTING CONCRETE MOULDING. "IN SITU."  
 Fig. 1.—Combined Master and Wood Moulds for a Cornice. Fig. 2.—Wood Mould for String Mouldings. Fig. 3.—Mould for Coping. Fig. 4.—Mould for Saddle-back Coping. Fig. 5.—Mould for Coping with Chamfered Angles.

Figure 171. Method for making moulds for concrete string courses, cornices and coping, to be cast in-situ. Such string courses and cornices were also popular on speculative housing around the turn of the century (William Millar, *Plastering, Plain and Decorative*, 2nd ed. [London: Batsford, 1899], p. 308).

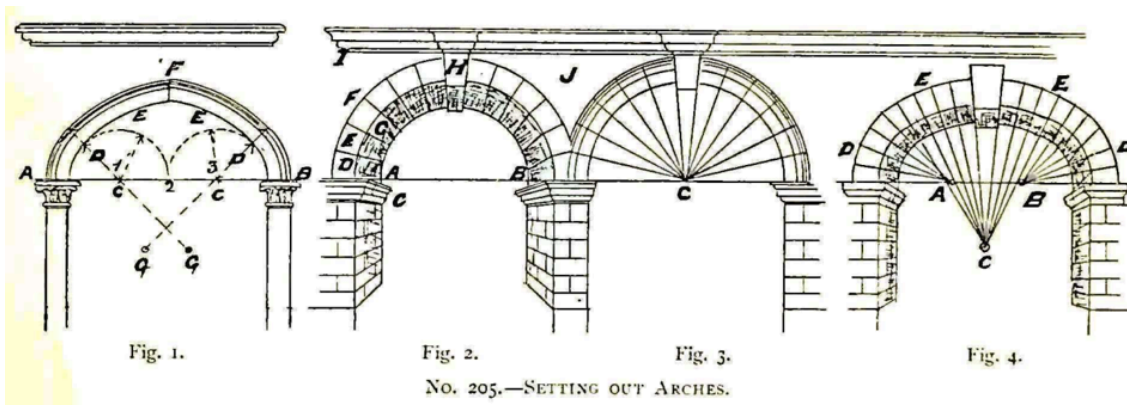
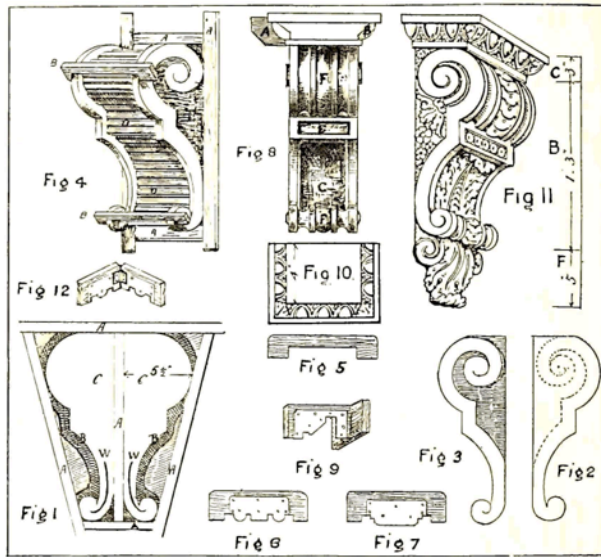


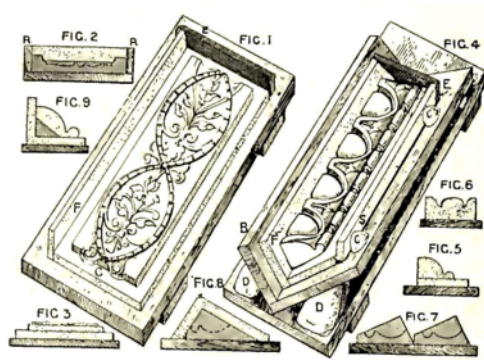
Figure 172. Method for setting out arches, similar to many of those also used in speculative housing in London at the time (William Millar, *Plastering, Plain and Decorative*, 2nd ed. [London: Batsford, 1899], p. 519).





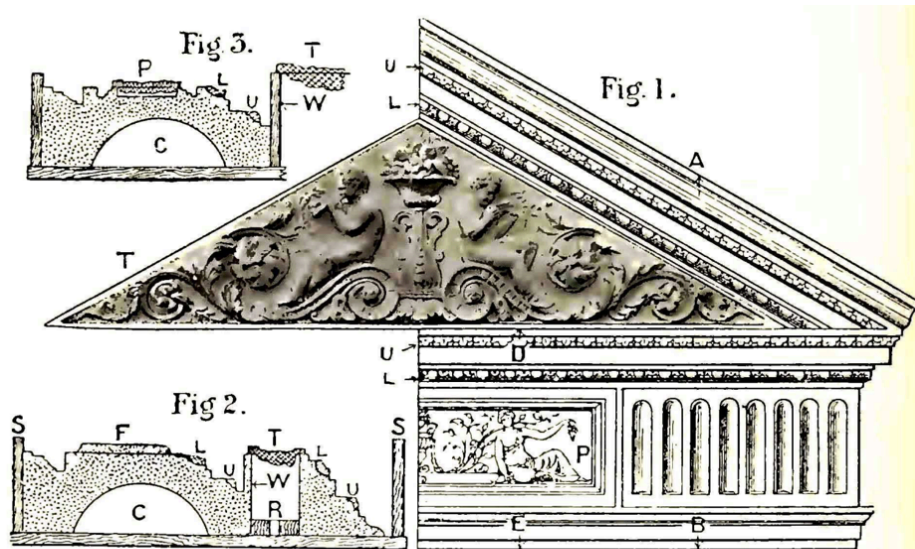
No. 98.—MAKING THE MODEL OF A TRUSS.

Figure 173. Method for making a model and casting mould for a truss (William Millar, *Plastering, Plain and Decorative*, 2nd ed. [London: Batsford, 1899], p. 292).



No. 89.—FIG. 1.—MAKING A FRONT WAX MOULD.  
FIG. 4.—MAKING AN OPEN FRONT WAX MOULD.

Figure 174. Method for making a wax mould (William Millar, *Plastering, Plain and Decorative*, 2nd ed. [London: Batsford, 1899], p. 254).



No. 152.—FIG. 1.—ELEVATION OF OVERDOOR, PALACE CLUB, LONDON, DESIGNED AND MODELLED BY WM. MILLAR, 1875.  
FIG. 2.—SECTION OF REVERSE CASTING MOULD, THROUGH A B. FIG. 3.—SECTION OF REVERSE CASTING MOULD, THROUGH D E.

Figure 175. Casting moulds for an overdoor plaster pediment (William Millar, *Plastering, Plain and Decorative*, 2nd ed. [London: Batsford, 1899], p. 390).



Figure 176. Houses in the foreground built by Watt on the St Germans estate, ca. 1905. Taylor's houses in the background.

18
19

HOUSES containing One Sitting-room, Kitchen, Scullery, and three Bedrooms and Bathroom, with Hot and Cold Water supply, and W.C.

999 YEARS' LEASE.

	Price.	Ground Rent.
At Eltham Park, - - -	£255	£4 16 0
Do. End Houses,	263	5 4 0
At Mayfield, - - -	222	4 16 0
Do. End Houses,	230	5 4 0
At St Germans, - - -	252	4 18 0
Do. End Houses,	260	5 6 0

To arrive at Freehold Price, add to the above price 24 times the Ground Rent.

Figure 177. Pages from Corbett's sales brochure of the house type built by Watt on the St. Germans estate ('The Corbett Estates', 1906, A67/26, Lewisham Local History Archive, pp. 18-19)



Figure 178. Corbett houses of the same type on Mayfield Estate in Kirfauns Avenue, Goodmayes, Illford, 1899 (Alan Jackson, *Semi-detached London: Suburban Development, Life and Transport, 1900-39* [London: Allen and Unwin, 1973], plate 7)

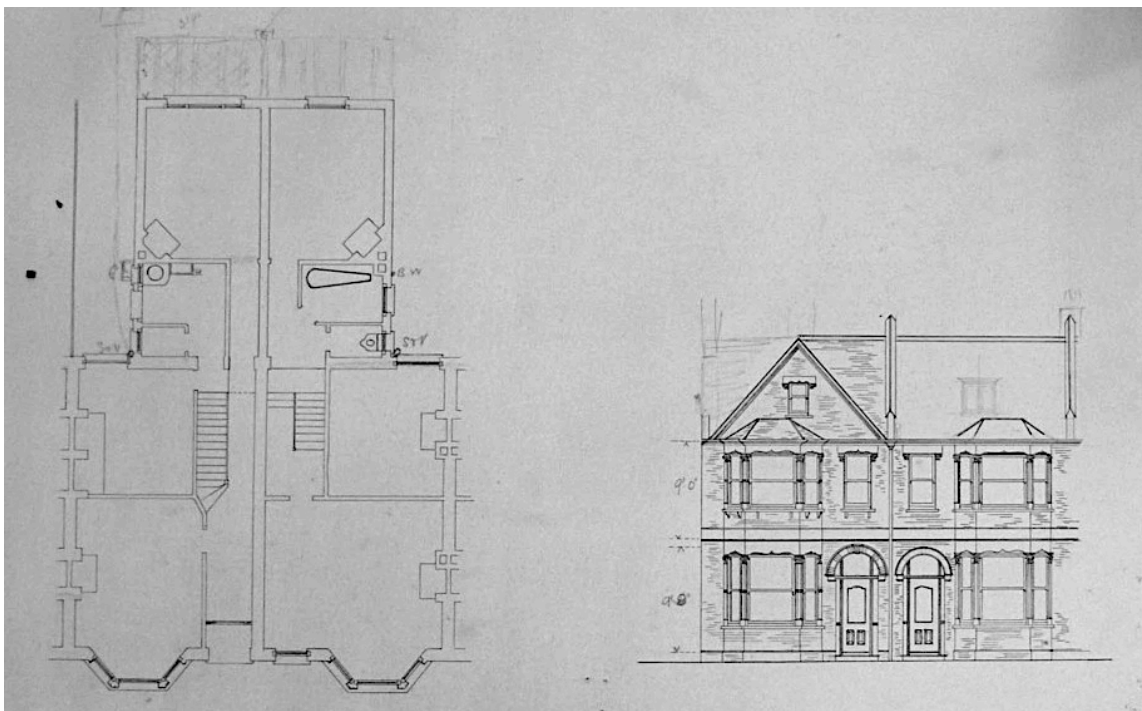


Figure 179. Drawing by Stone of proposed terraced houses, Bromley Road, built by Barley 1903, now a retail park (Prior Collection, Item 1514)



Figure 180. Houses in Lewisham Park, built by James Laird in 1904-1905



Figure 181. Norfolk & Prior's elevation for the above houses in Lewisham Park (Prior Collection, Item 1032)



Figure 182. Houses in Eliot Park, built by James Watt in 1910

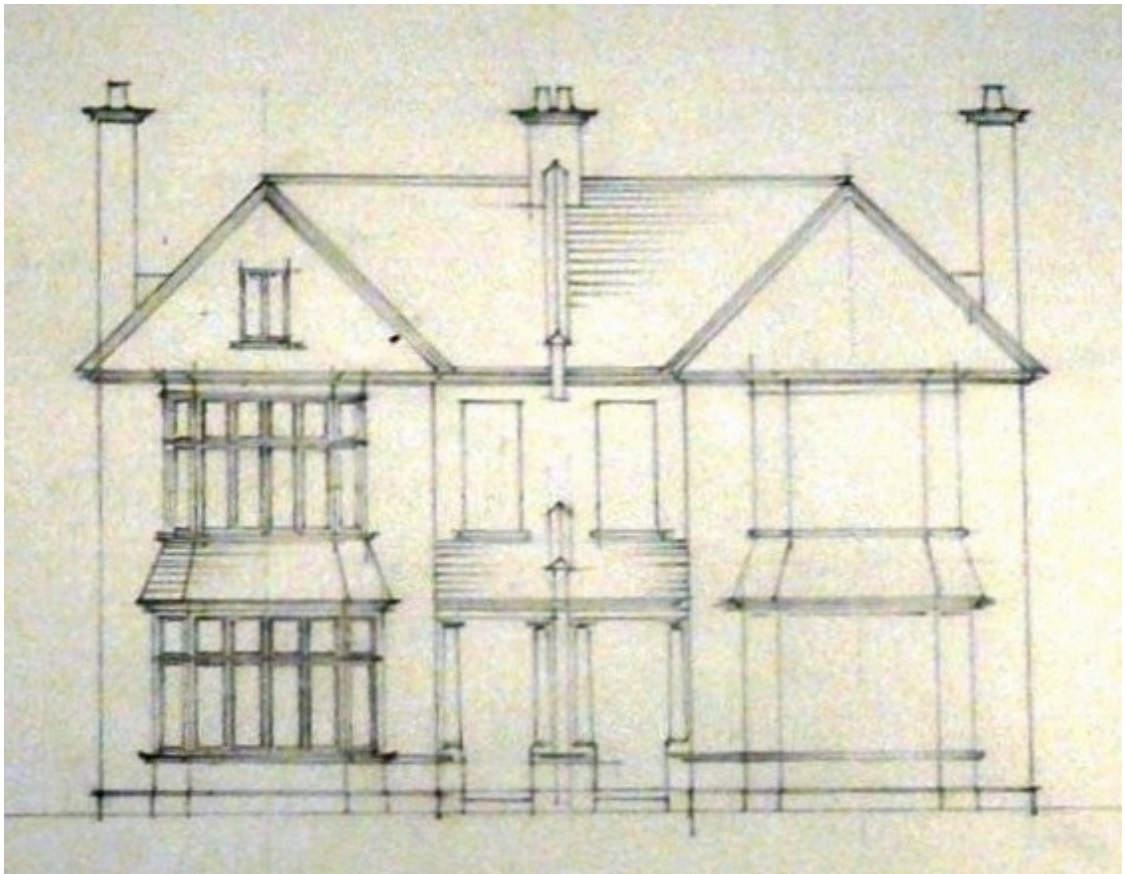


Figure 183. Norfolk & Prior's proposed elevation for the above houses in Eliot Park (Prior Collection, Item 1555)



Figure 184. Houses in Bellingham Road showing stylistic transition from classical features to Arts & Crafts as 'neighbours'. The style change only affected bay windows and façade decoration but not the principle configuration of the houses, which is almost identical.



Figure 185. Elevation of 'Semi Detached Nine Roomed Houses' from *The Builder's Practical Director*. The elevation bears resemblance to the semi-detached house below in Lewisham Park. A lower ground floor was rarely built in Lewisham and seems to have become unpopular by the turn of the century (A.H. Payne, *The Builder's Practical Director* [London: J. Hagger, 1855], p. 66).

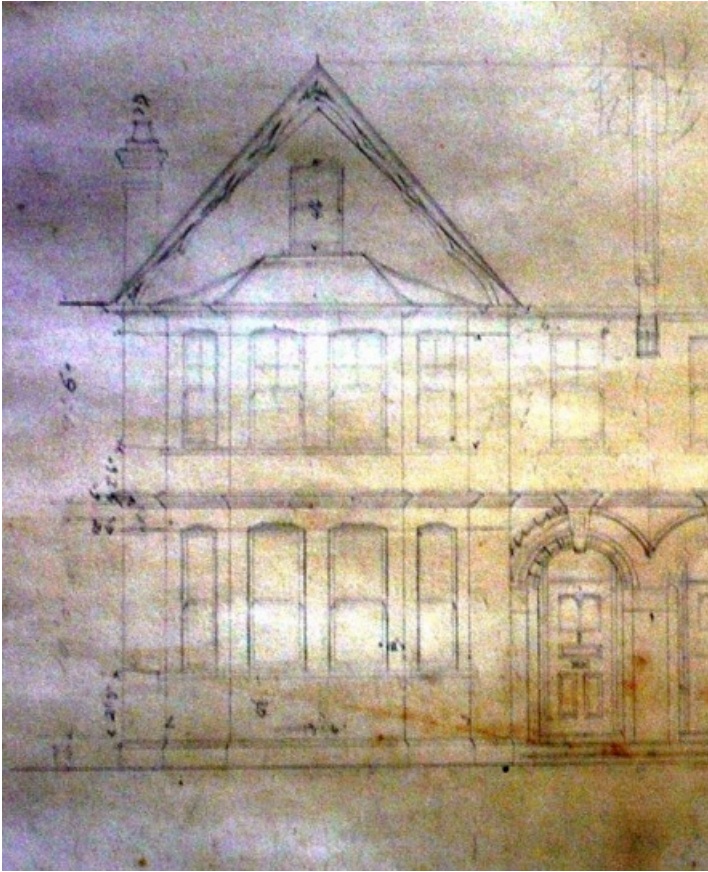


Figure 186. A rare example of a drawing with dimensions. Drawing by Norfolk & Prior for Houses in Lewisham Park, 1904-1905, built by James Laird (Prior Collection, Item 1032).



Figure 187. Houses in Ravensbourne Park, built by James Watt in 1907

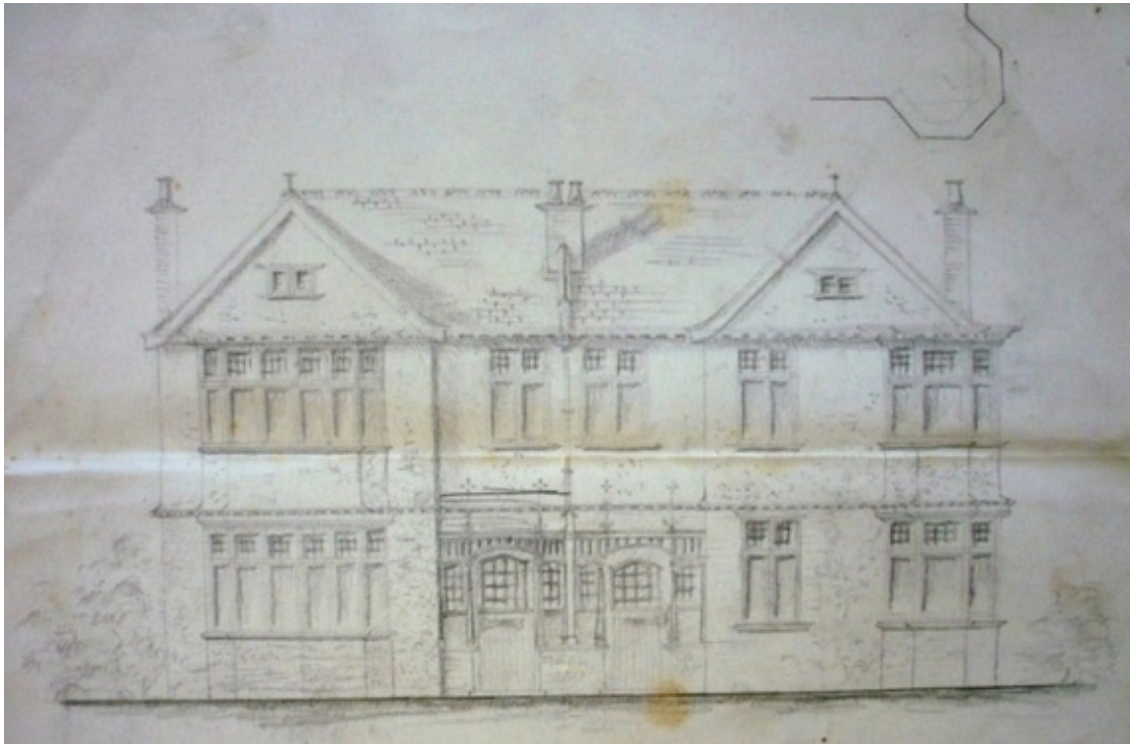


Figure 188. Sketch elevation by Stone for houses in Ravensbourne Park. A similar design was also used for the houses in Eliot Park (Prior Collection, Item 1077).

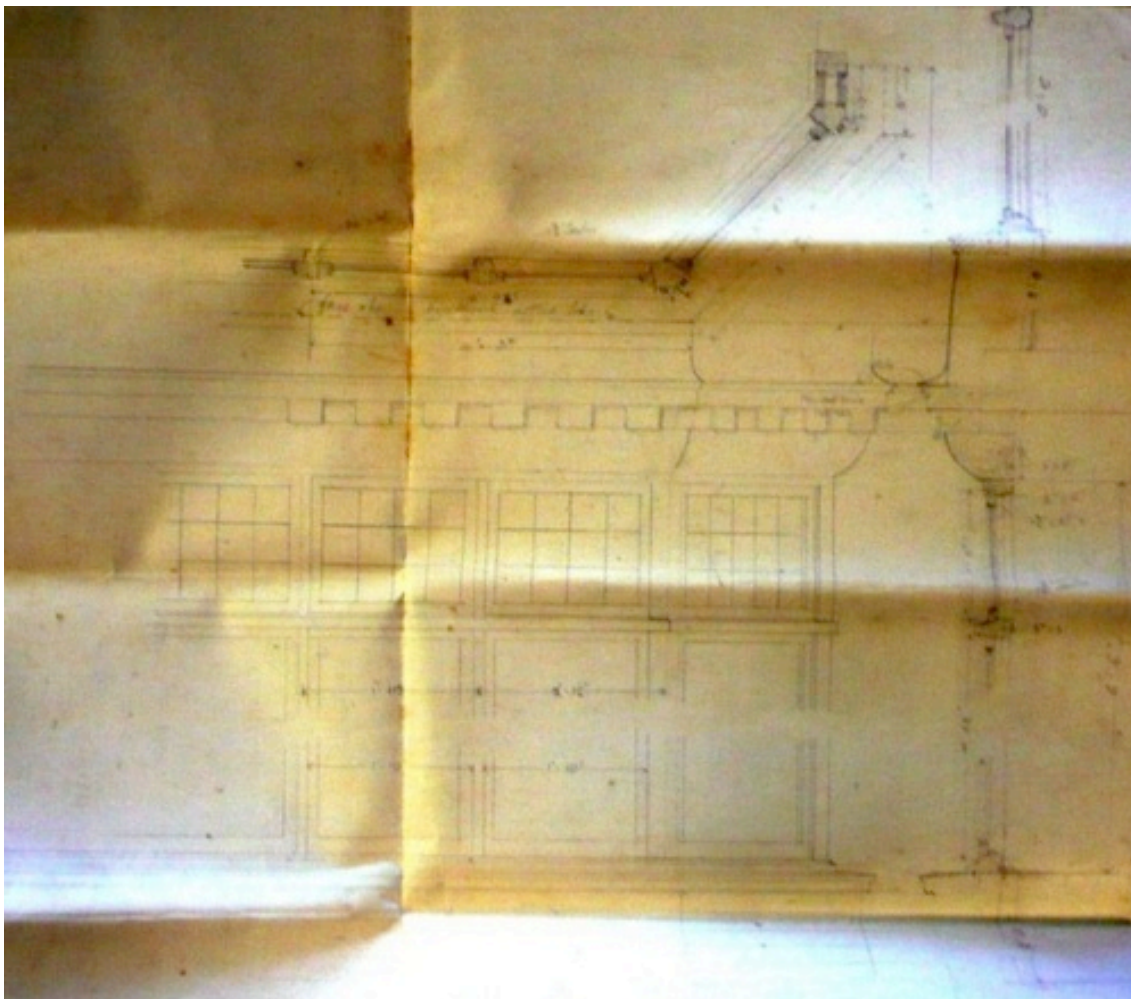


Figure 189. Details for the new type of timber bay windows by Stone (Ibid., Item 1077)



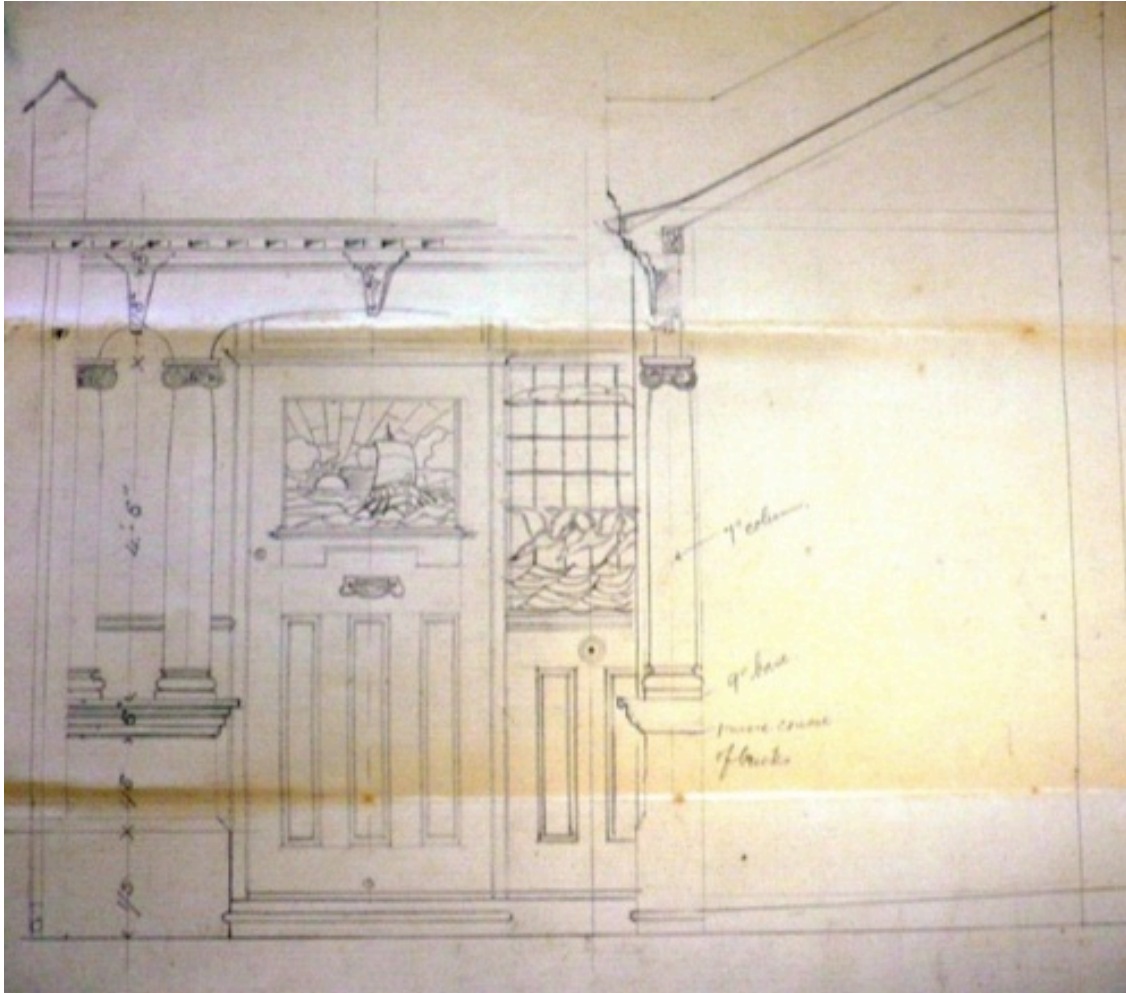


Figure 190. Detail design of the new type of entrance porches by Stone (Ibid., Item 1077)



Figure 191. First row of terraces built by Taylor in Balloch Road, 1905. All the houses were originally finished in red brick.

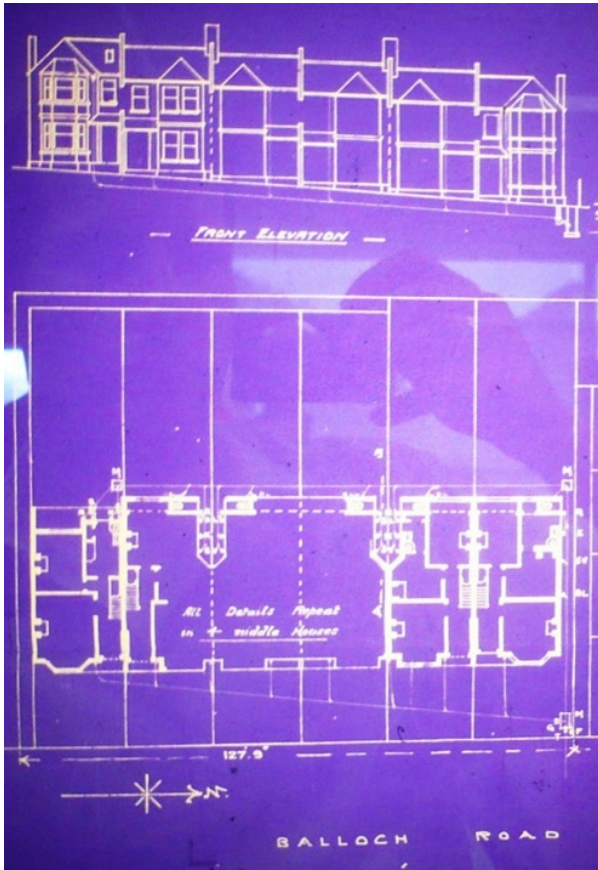


Figure 192. Building Application drawings for above houses by architect & surveyor E.J.W. Hider, 1905 (Building and Drainage Applications, Balloch Road, Lewisham Local History Archive)

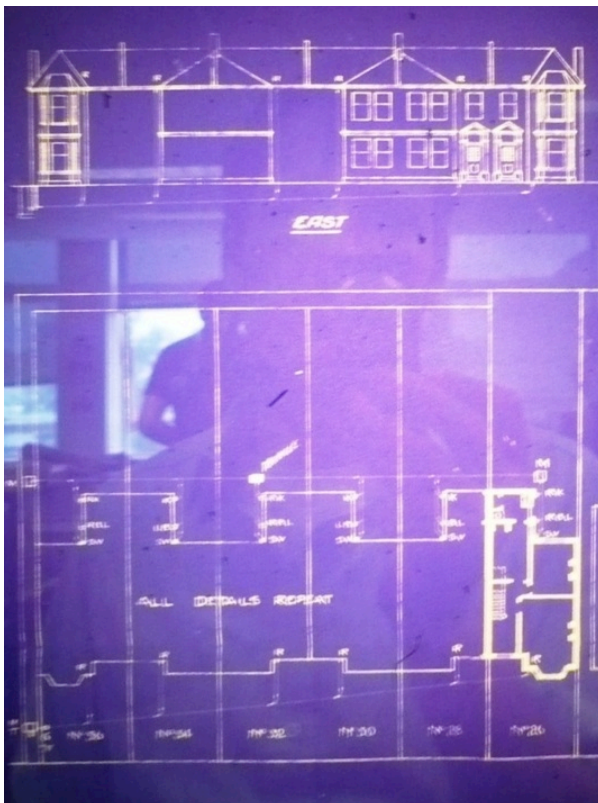


Figure 193. Building application drawings by Hider for another row of terraces in Balloch Road, 1905 (Ibid.)



Figure 194. Taylor built large parts of Ardoch Road, starting in 1906. The houses were originally all in red brick. The render was applied by later owners.



Figure 195. Watt and Taylor as 'neighbours' in Ardoch Road. Watt's houses can be seen in the back, built in 1906. Taylor's houses are in the foreground, built in 1907. The preferred style of each builder is easily recognisable.



Figure 196. Balloch Road. Right: houses built by Taylor, 1905, with E.J.W. Hider as architect-surveyor. Left: houses built by Watt, 1905.



Figure 197. Houses in Brownhill Road, 1910, built by Taylor. He continued to reuse the same house type and style in red brick with reduced ornamentation.



Figure 198. Houses in Muirkirk Road, built by Taylor in 1907



Figure 199. Merchiston Road. Houses on the right and left back are built by Taylor in 1909. Front left and in the centre rear are houses built by Watt.

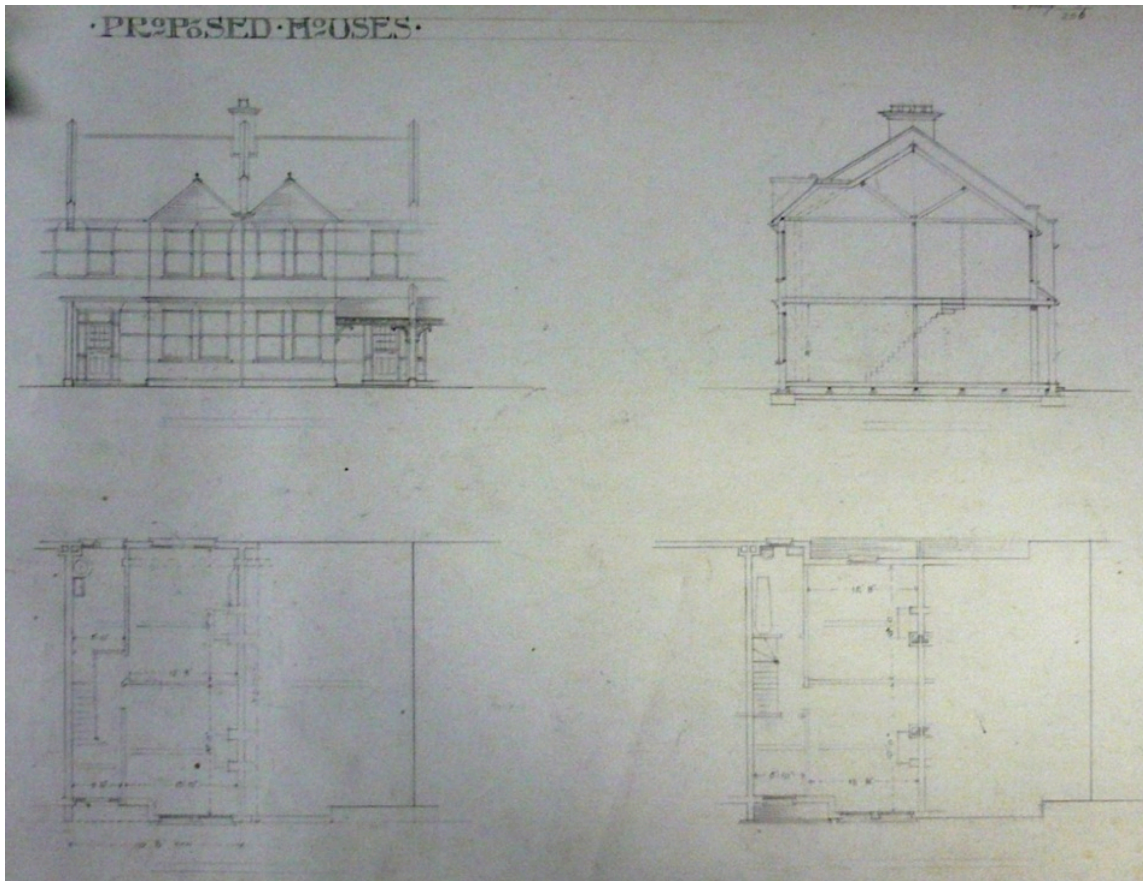


Figure 200. Drawings for Fred K. Taylor by Stone. Taylor reused this design with some small alterations for his houses built after 1906 (Prior collection, Item 1535).

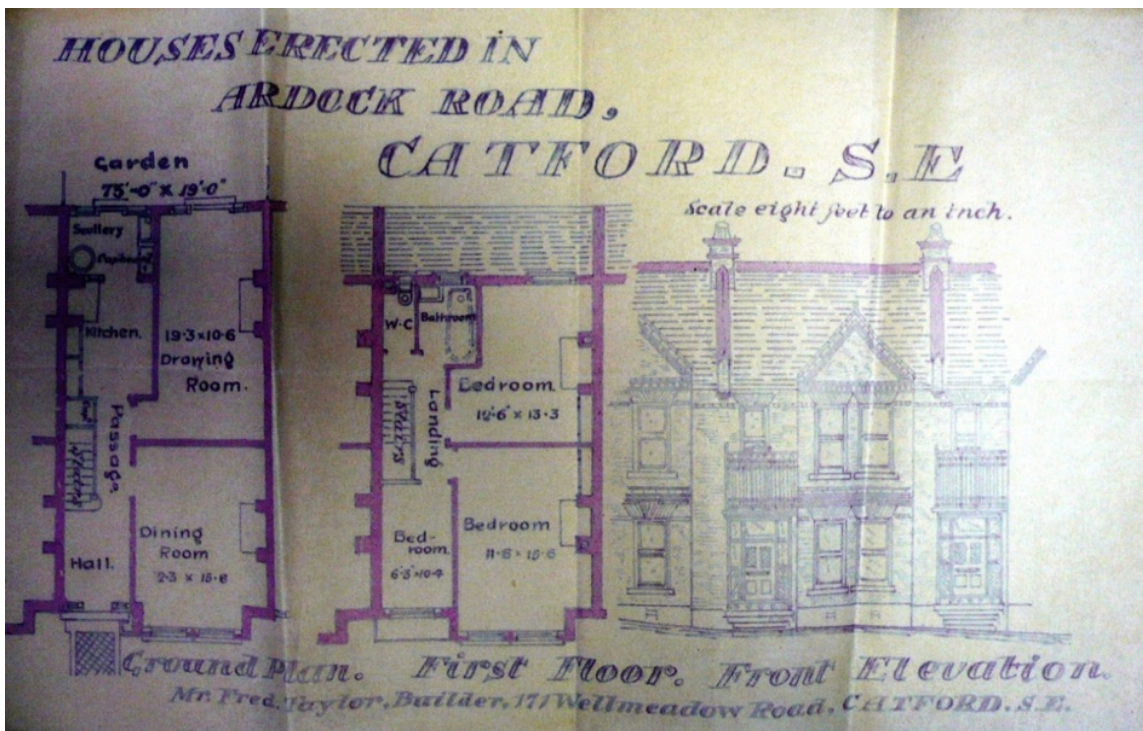


Figure 201. Advertisement of the same type of houses, built by Fred K. Taylor in Ardoch Road (Ibid., Item 629)

Close to several Railway Stations and Trams and Buses. Trains 20 minutes to London Bridge. Reduced Season Ticket Rates.

**TO BE LET OR SOLD.**

High and . . .  
 Healthy . . .  
 Position . . .


RENTS  
 From . . .  
**£26**  
 UPWARDS.

3 Sitting Rooms,  
 2 and 4 Bedrooms,  
 Bath, Hot and Cold.

LARGE GARDEN  
 WITH  
 RACE TERRACE

VENETIAN BLINDS  
 In all Windows  
 BACK AND FRONT

GAS  
 laid on throughout  
 with  
 METER IN KITCHEN



Open . . .  
 Country . . .  
 Around . . .

PRICE  
 From . . .  
**£290**  
 UPWARDS.  
 LONG LEASE.

EASY TERMS  
 OF  
 PURCHASE  
 WITH  
 SMALL  
 DEPOSIT.

FREE CONTRACTS.  
 ROAD AND SEWER  
 TRENCHES.

SEND A POSTCARD FOR ILLUSTRATED PARTICULARS TO  
**FREDERICK TAYLOR,**  
 Builder,  
 171, Wellmeadow Road, Catford, S.E.

or to  
**E. J. W. HIDER,**  
 Architect and Surveyor,  
 8, Clifford's Inn, E.C.

Figure 202. Advert for the first phase of Taylor's houses in Catford, designed by the Architect & Surveyor E.J.W. Hider (John Clark and Cathy Ross, *London: The Illustrated History* [Penguin, 2011], p. 236)

**Convenient Houses for Sale.**

—Nos. 343 to 353 (odd),—  
**Brownhill Road, Catford.**  
 CASH PRICE **£310.**  
 Lease 99 Years. Ground Rent £6 6s. per annum.

Or on Easy Terms **£20** deposit, **£10** costs, including Land Registry, Fees and Stamps, Road and Paving charges. The vendor is prepared to arrange a mortgage of **£200** with a Building Society, to be repaid by monthly instalments of **17s. 8d.** for **21** years, and a second permanent mortgage of **£90** at 5% interest. The annual payments would then be less than rental value.

	£	s.	d.
Mortgage to Building Society of £200, monthly payments			
£1 7s. 8d. ... ..	16	12	0
5% interest on £90 ... ..	4	10	0
Ground Rent per annum ... ..	6	6	0
	<b>£27</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>

No. 355 (corner house). Cash Price **£320.**  
 Ground Rent £6 10s. Freehold can be bought at 25 years' purchase.

For further particulars apply to:—  
**FREDK. TAYLOR,**  
 - BUILDER, -  
**171, Wellmeadow Road,**  
**CATFORD, S.E.**

Printed by A. SMITH & Co., 30, Sangley Road, Catford, S.E.

Figure 203. Sales brochure for houses in Brownhill Road, built by Fred K. Taylor (Prior collection, Item 629)

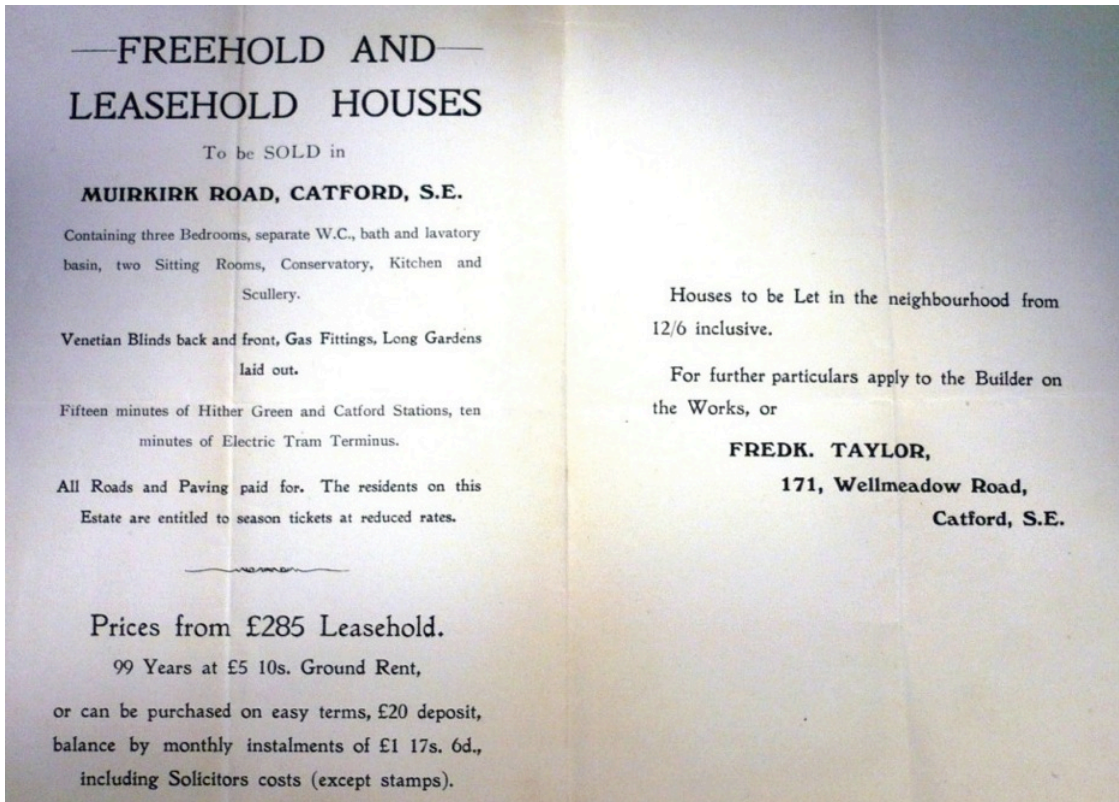


Figure 204. Sales brochure for houses in Muirkirk Road, built by Fred K. Taylor (Prior collection, Item 629)



Figure 205. 171 Wellmeadow Road, Taylor's residence in Hither Green. Also on the Corbett Estate but not built by Taylor.

FRED. TAYLOR,  
BUILDER.

171, WELLMeadow ROAD,  
CATFORD, S.E.,

13<sup>th</sup> Feb 1908

Dear Sirs

re Corner house, Merrick Rd.

I have just received the plans approved by the Corbett Estates, so everything is now in order. I shall be on job tomorrow morning if you wish to see me about anything before sending in the plans to the Borough Council.

Yours truly,

Fred. Taylor

Wm. Norfolk & Prior

Figure 206. Letter from Taylor to Norfolk & Prior indicating that plans needed to be approved by the Corbett estate office (Prior collection, Item 636)



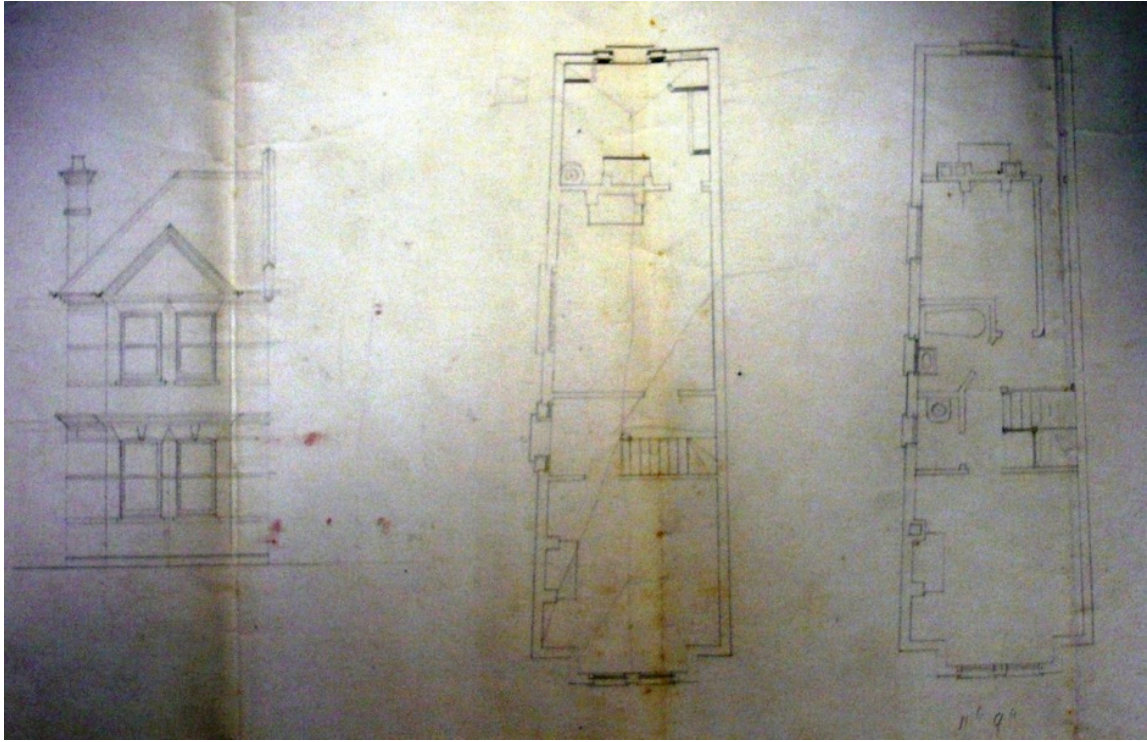


Figure 207. Drawings by Stone for house on the corner of Muirkirk Road and Merchiston Road. The standard plan had to be elongated to achieve a setback from the pavement. This was probably a requirement from the district surveyor whose responsibility it was to approve the building line along the street frontage (Ibid., Item 629).



Figure 208. House built by George Henry Walker Esq. in Rutland Walk, 1908

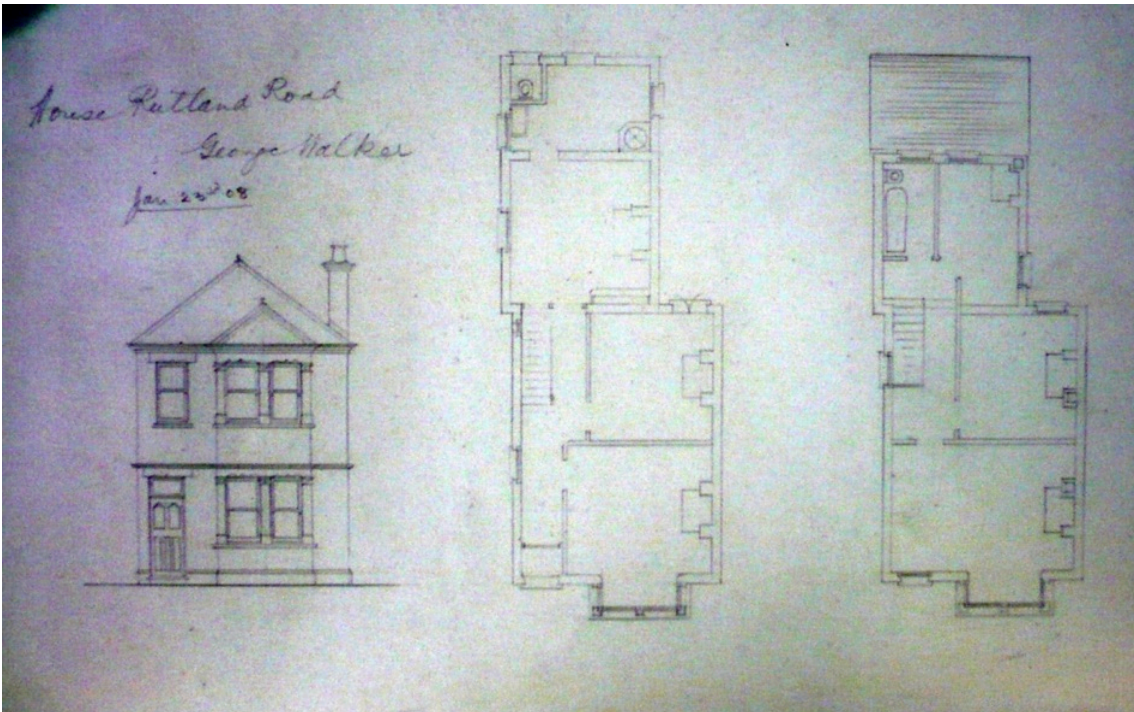


Figure 209. Design by Stone of the above house in Rutland Road (now called Rutland Walk) for George Walker, 1908 (Prior collection, Item 1565)



Figure 210. 122-124 Catford Hill, built by George Henry Walker. Note that the façade columns were not built as shown on Stone's drawings below.

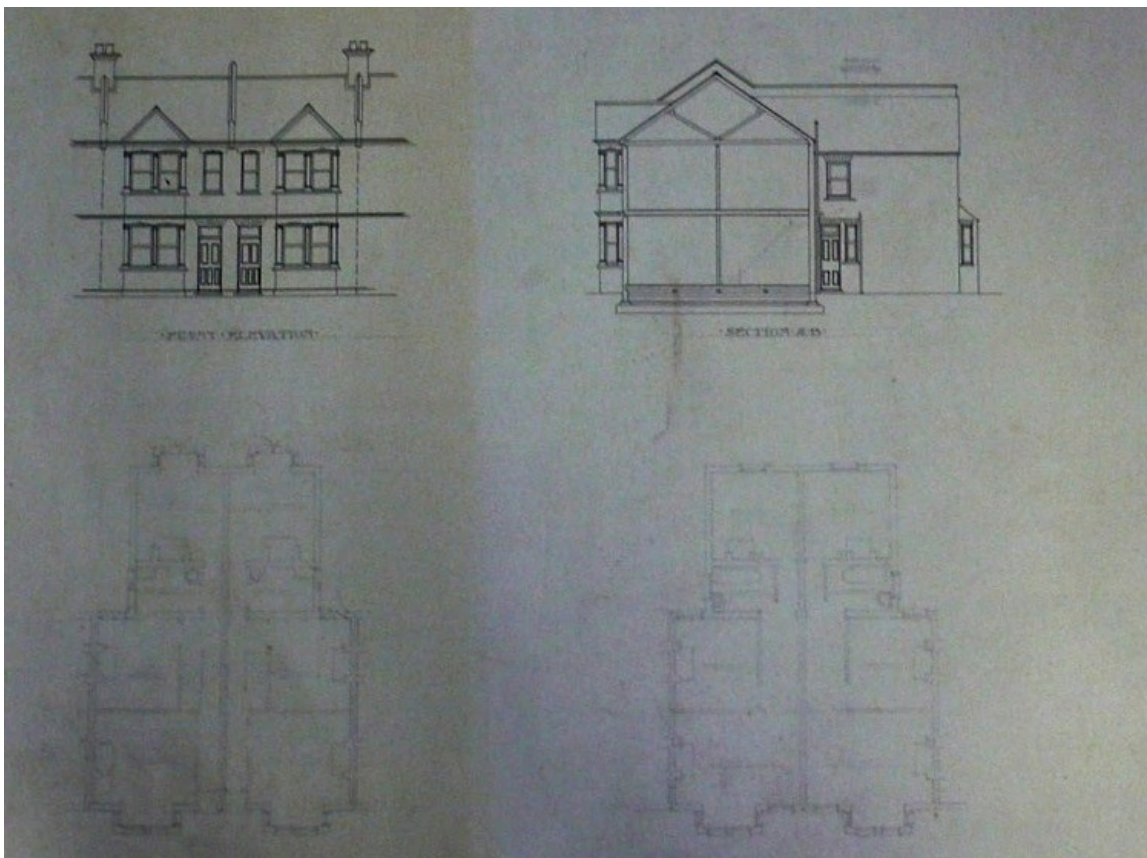


Figure 211. Stone's proposed drawings of above houses in Catford Hill for George Walker (Prior collection, Item 1553)



Figure 212. Houses in Fermor Road, built by Charles Walker, 1909

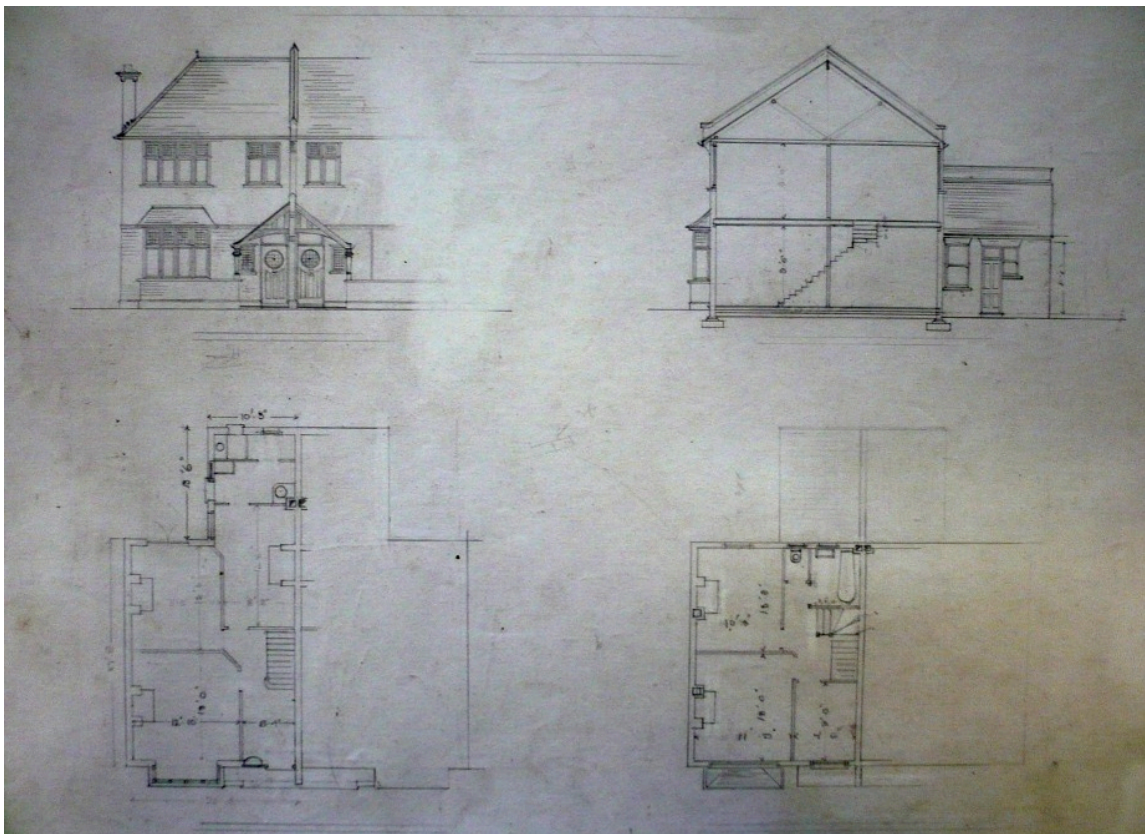


Figure 213. Drawings by Stone for Fermor Road. The design follows closely Charles Walker's preferred configuration: his trade-mark single storey square bay window. The main variation is the more elaborate porch. Looking closely at the drawing, the porch was not built as originally intended (Prior collection, Item 817).



Figure 214. Riseldine Street, built 1908-1913 by Charles Walker. He lived nearby in 'The Laurels', Elsinore Road, Catford.



Figure 215. Dunoon Road, built by Charles Walker, 1906, blockplans only by Stone



Figure 216. Houses on Brownhill Road, built by A. Bagge, designed by Stone

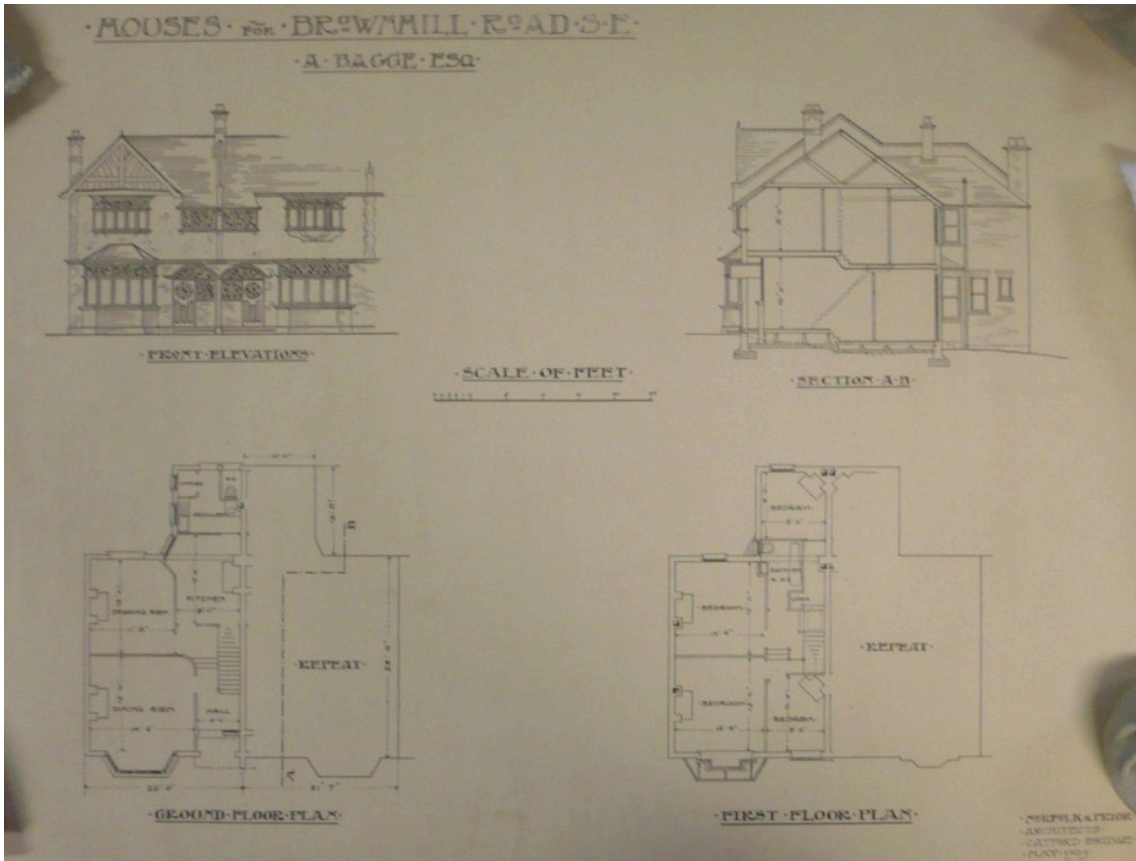


Figure 217. Stone's proposed drawings for A. Bagge of houses above (Prior collection, Item 1535)



Figure 218. Houses in Verdant Lane, built by W. Richards in 1908. As with most houses designed by Stone in Lewisham, there are discrepancies between the design drawings and buildings.

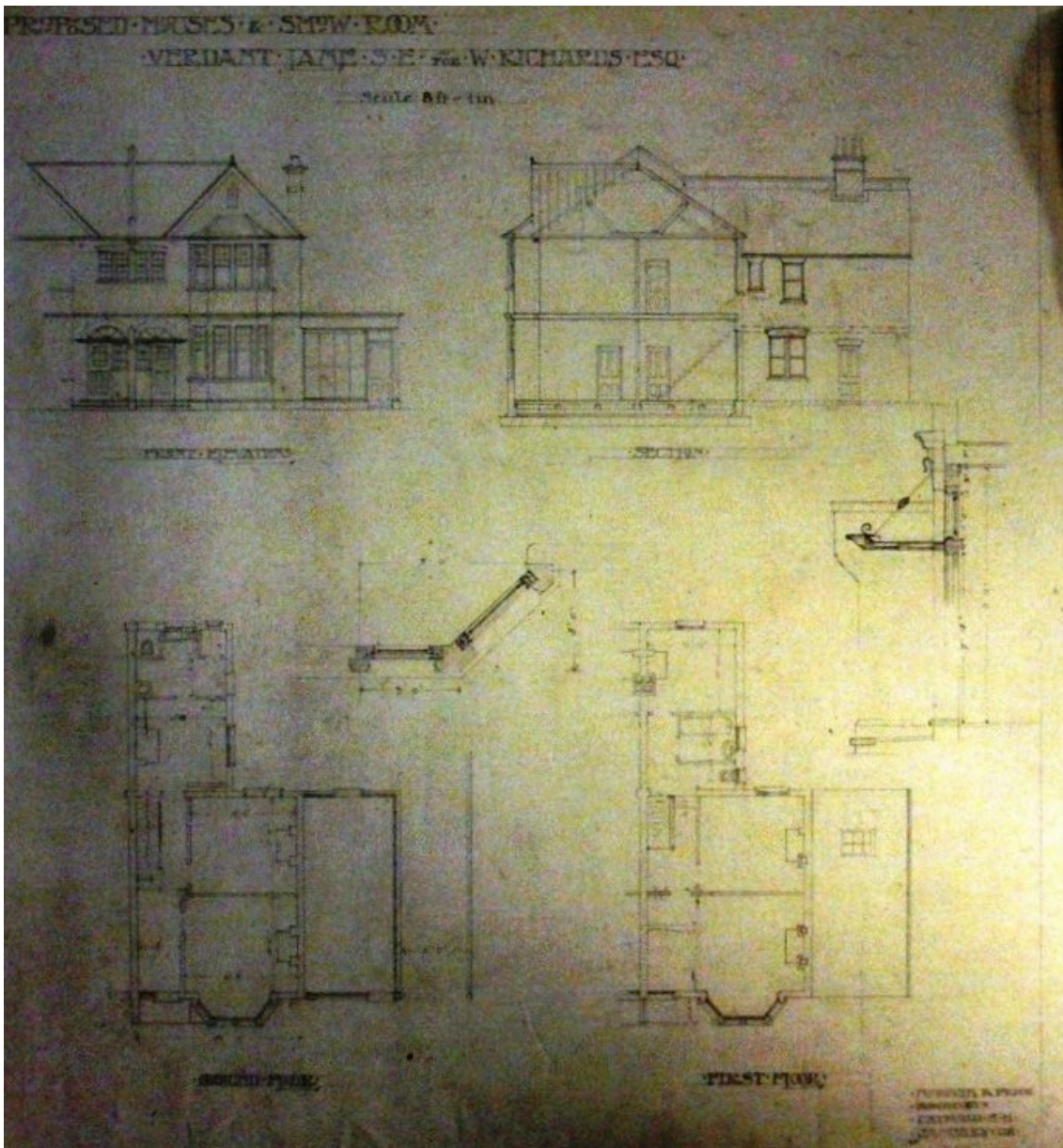


Figure 219. Drawing by Stone of above houses in Verdant Lane, 1908. For these houses, Stone varied the elevations already adopted for Ravensbourne Park and for Eliot Park; the houses have stone or concrete, rather than timber bays, but without stucco decorations (Prior collection, Item 1538).

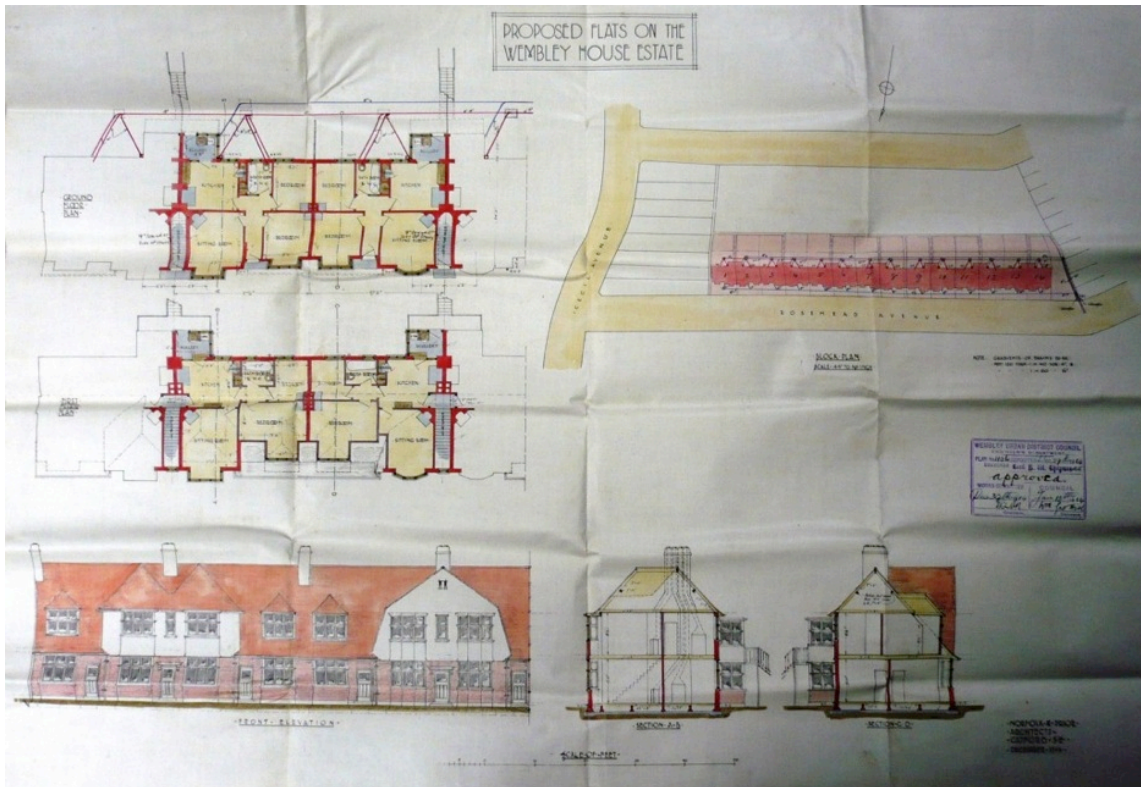


Figure 220. Drawings by Stone for flats on the Wembley House Estate, 1914. It is one of the two ill-fated housing developments outside Lewisham that Norfolk & Prior were involved in. This one was never built. The work ceased because of the start of the First World War. After the war, instead of flats, houses were built to a different design (Ibid., Item 630).

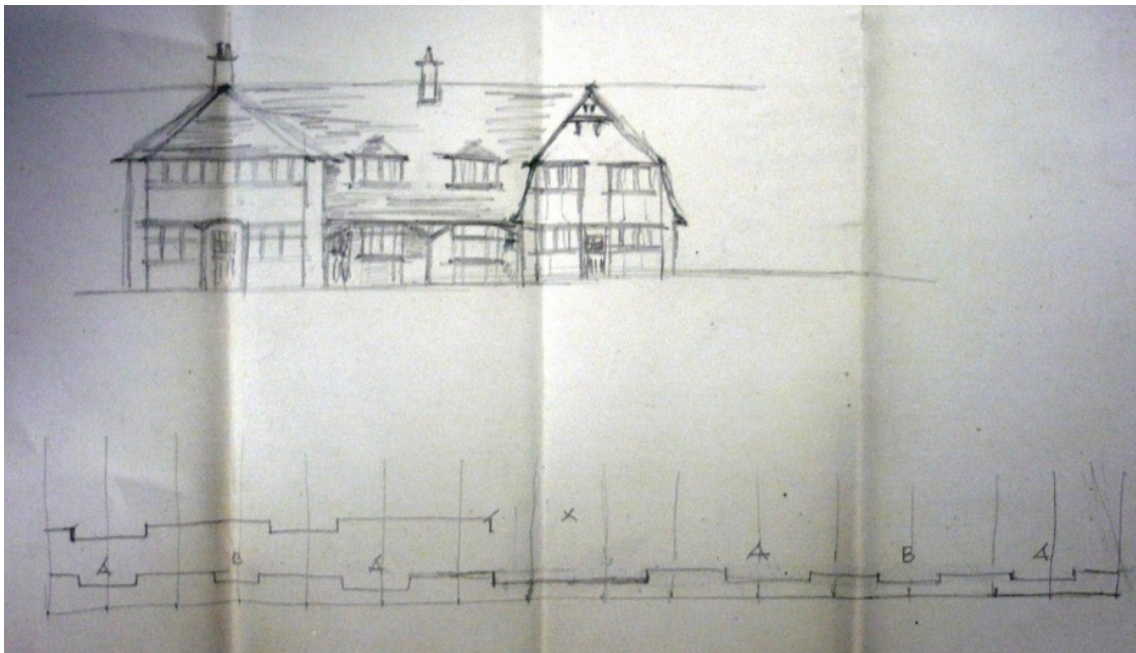


Figure 221. Sketches by Stone for the same flats on the Wembley House Estate, 1914 (Ibid., Item 630).



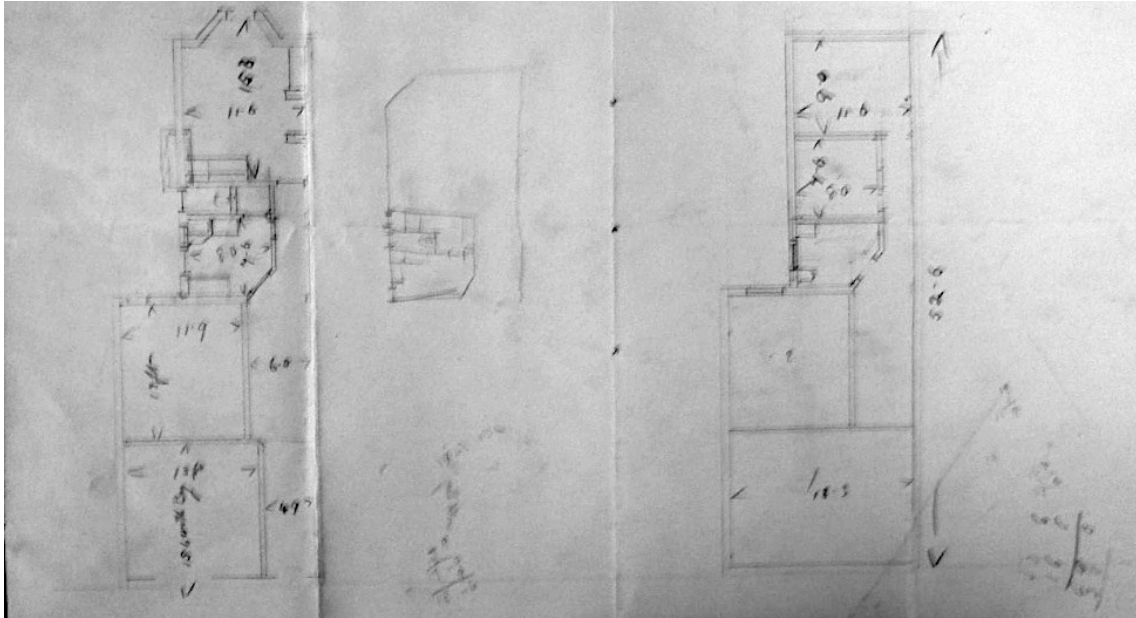


Figure 222. Sketch floor plan by E. Stone for houses along Brownhill Road for the builder H. Woodham, 1907, showing a process of working out room sizes. For many of the houses Norfolk & Prior worked on, there are no floor plans or elevations in their archive, only block plans for building applications (Ibid., Item 633).

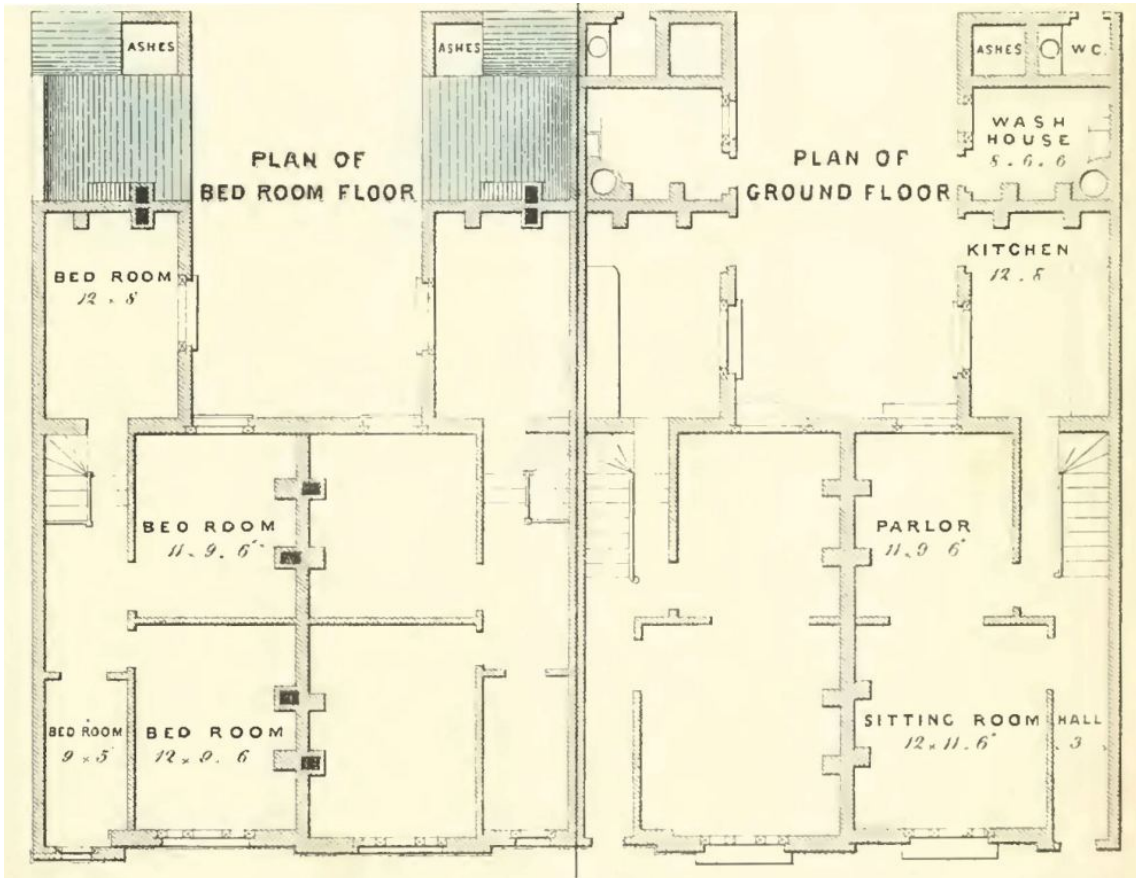


Figure 223. Similar ground floor plan type from *The Builder's Practical Director*, a popular pattern-book (A.H. Payne, *The Builder's Practical Director* [London: J. Hagger, 1855], p. 58).

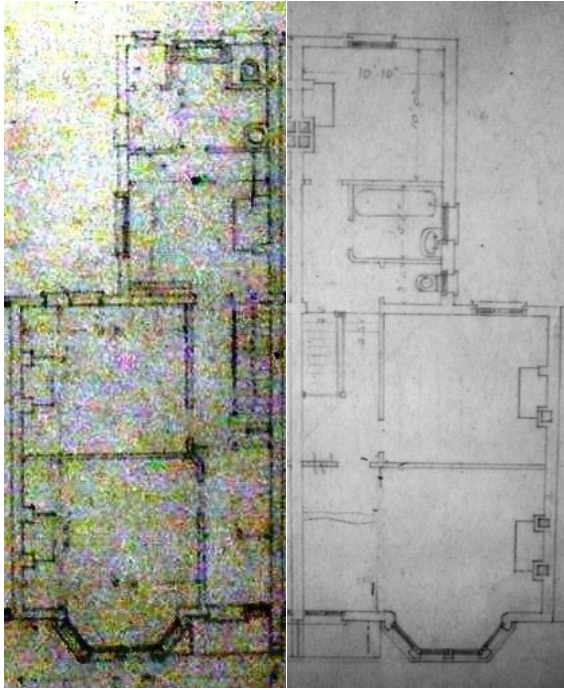


Figure 224. Semi-detached house floorplan type 1. Left: Ground floor. Right: First floor. The floorplan type is similar to the terraced house floor plan type 1. The rear wing adjoins the shared party wall. This example is from houses in Verdant Lane, 1908, for the builder J. Richards. A similar plan was also used by Watt in Bargery Road, for example (Prior collection, Item 1538).

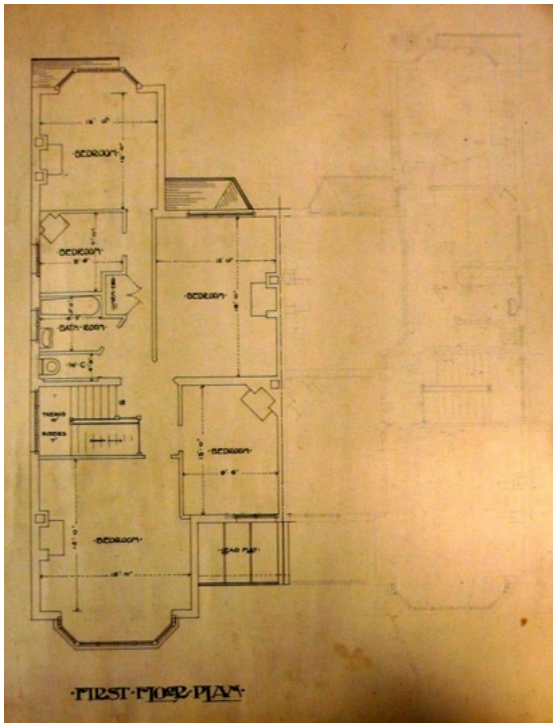


Figure 225. Semi-detached house floorplan type 2. The rear wings are on the outside, not on the shared wall. This example is from Laird's houses in Lewisham Park. A similar plan was also used by Watt in Eliot Park and Arran Road, for example.

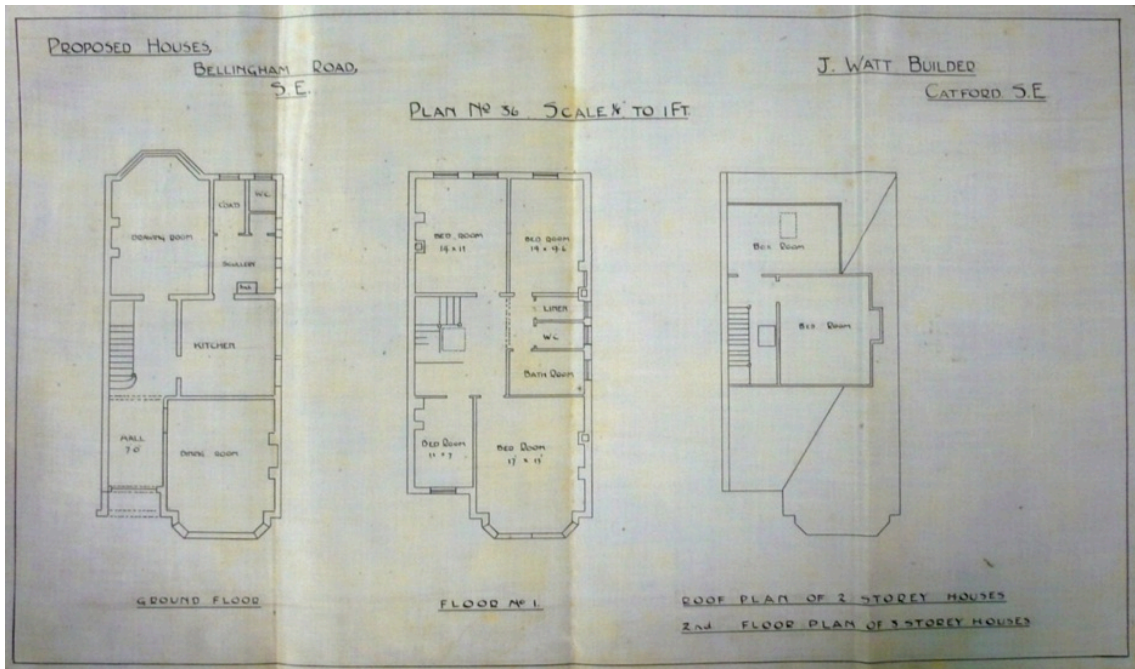


Figure 226. Semi-detached house floorplan type 3, without rear wing. This example is from houses in Bellingham Road built by James Watt.

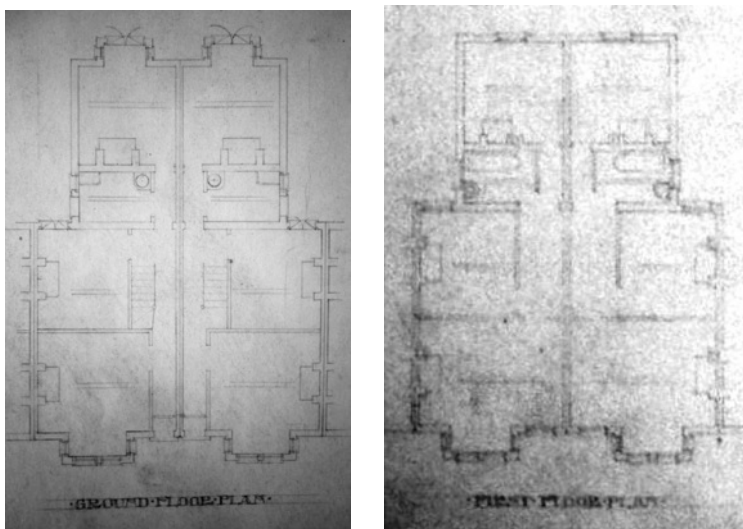


Figure 227. Terraced house floorplan type 1. This type with a long rear wing is very compact and maximizes the number of rooms on a narrow plot, but the poor daylighting to the rear was often criticised. The example is from houses built by George Walker in Catford Hill.

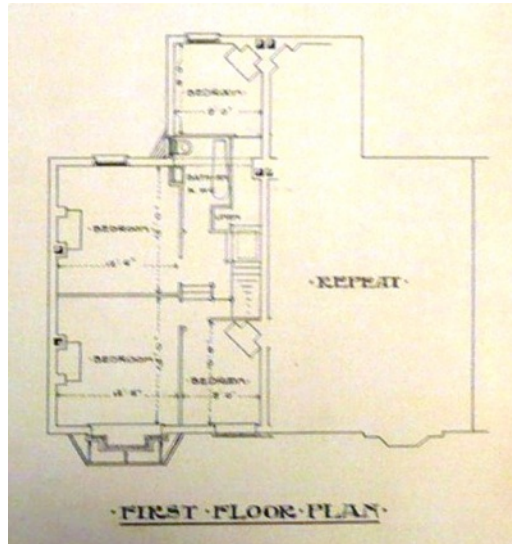
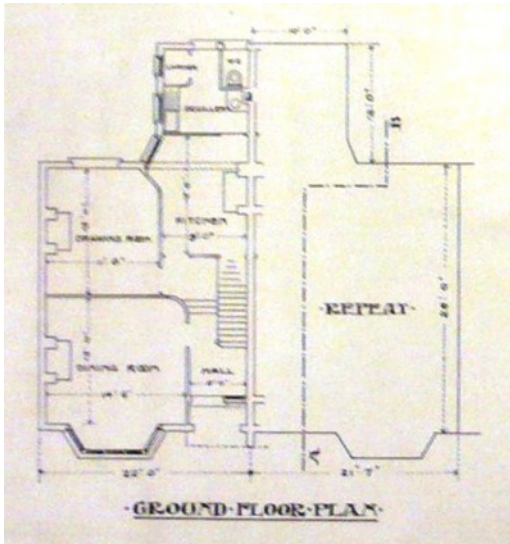


Figure 228. Terraced house floorplan type 2. Many of the terraced houses built during the Edwardian period in Lewisham are a middle ground between type 1 and type 3. The rear wing has not been completely omitted but is significantly reduced

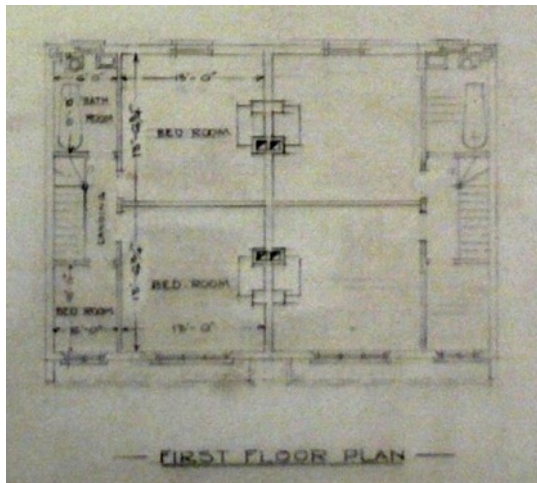
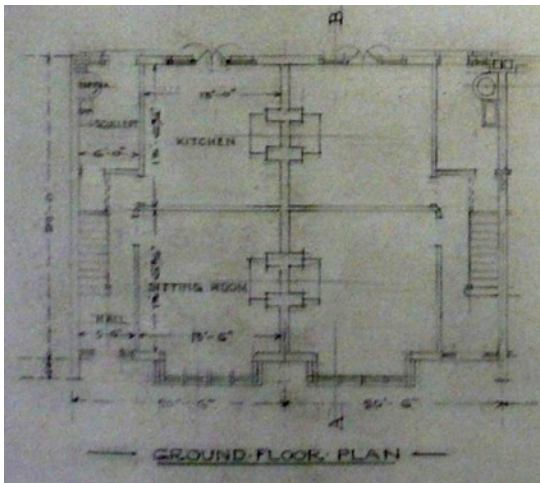


Figure 229. Terraced house floorplan type 3. This type without a rear wing was used on much of the later stages of the Corbett Estate, for example by the builder Taylor. It is economic to build and has good daylighting but usually requires slightly wider plots than type 1 to achieve the same number of bedrooms. This example is from houses built by J. Hughes in Verdant Lane.

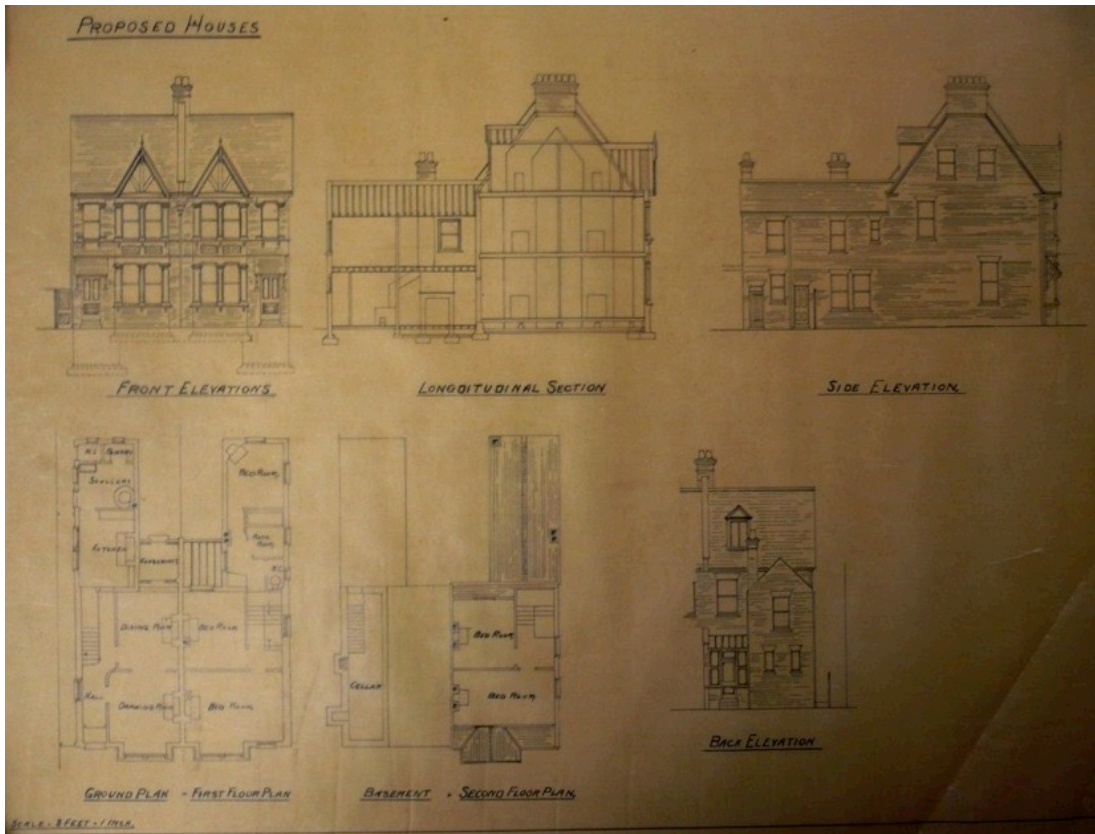


Figure 230. One of the generic drawings in the Norfolk & Prior collection. The design is not related to a particular street. The floorplans are slightly unusual with attic rooms and flank wall windows. This type of street façade, however, with its square bay windows was very popular all over London in the Edwardian period.

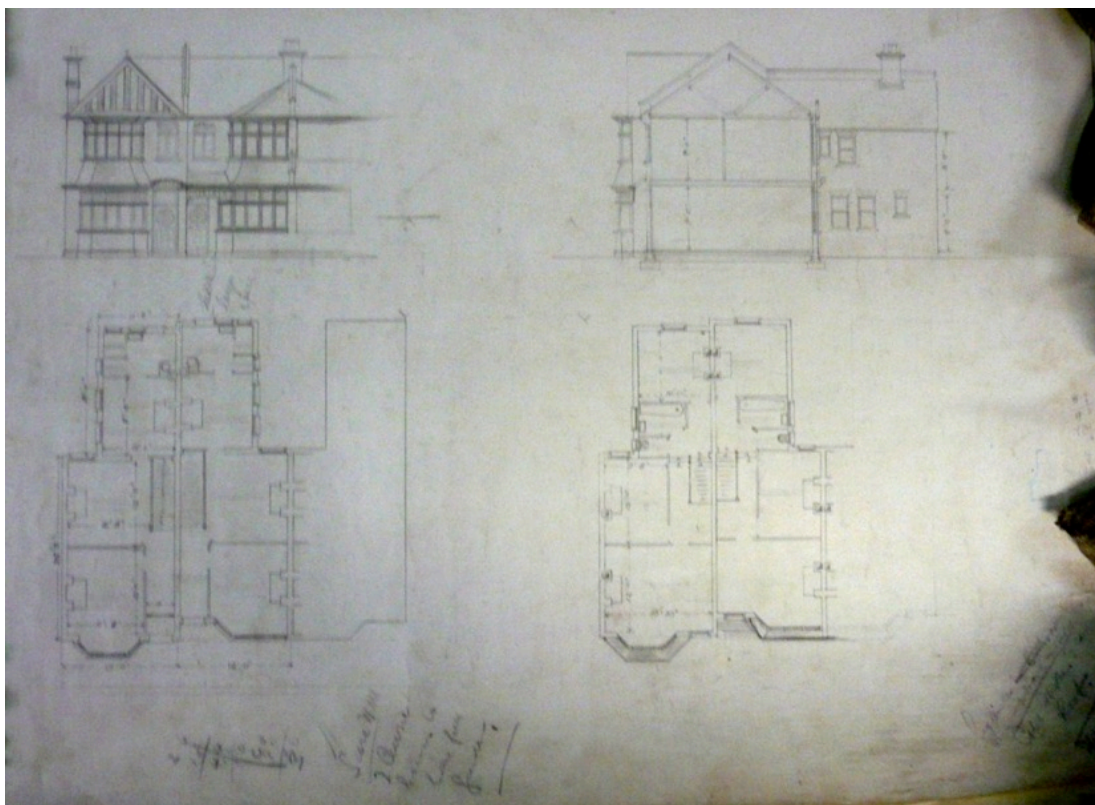


Figure 231. An attempt by Edward Stone to integrate the new timber bay window type that was used for the semi-detached houses of Eliot Park into a row of terraced houses. The attempt appears to have failed as the drawing is incomplete and the design was not built.

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Study at home with The T.I.G.B. for a worth-while post. Qualify as L.L.O.B., A.M.I.Struct.E., M.R.San.I., etc. Write to-day for FREE Guide—containing widest choice of specialised technical courses in the world—including Building Construction, Surveying and Levelling, Reinforced Concrete, Foundations, Specifications and Quantities, Sanitary, Electrical and Mechanical Engineering, etc.

The **TECHNOLOGICAL INSTITUTE of GT. BRITAIN**  
 108, TEMPLE BAR HOUSE  
 LONDON, E.C. 4  
 (Founded 1917)



Figure 232. Advert for technical training courses by 'The Technological Institute of Great Britain' (*The Illustrated Carpenter & Builder*, 1935).

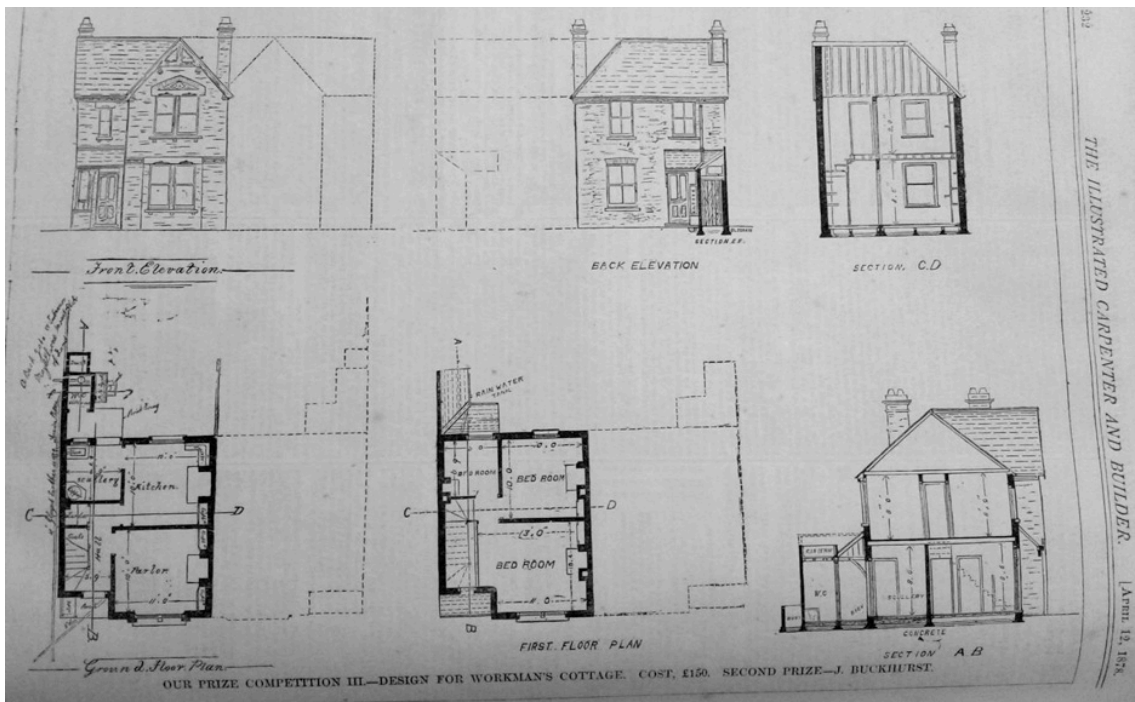
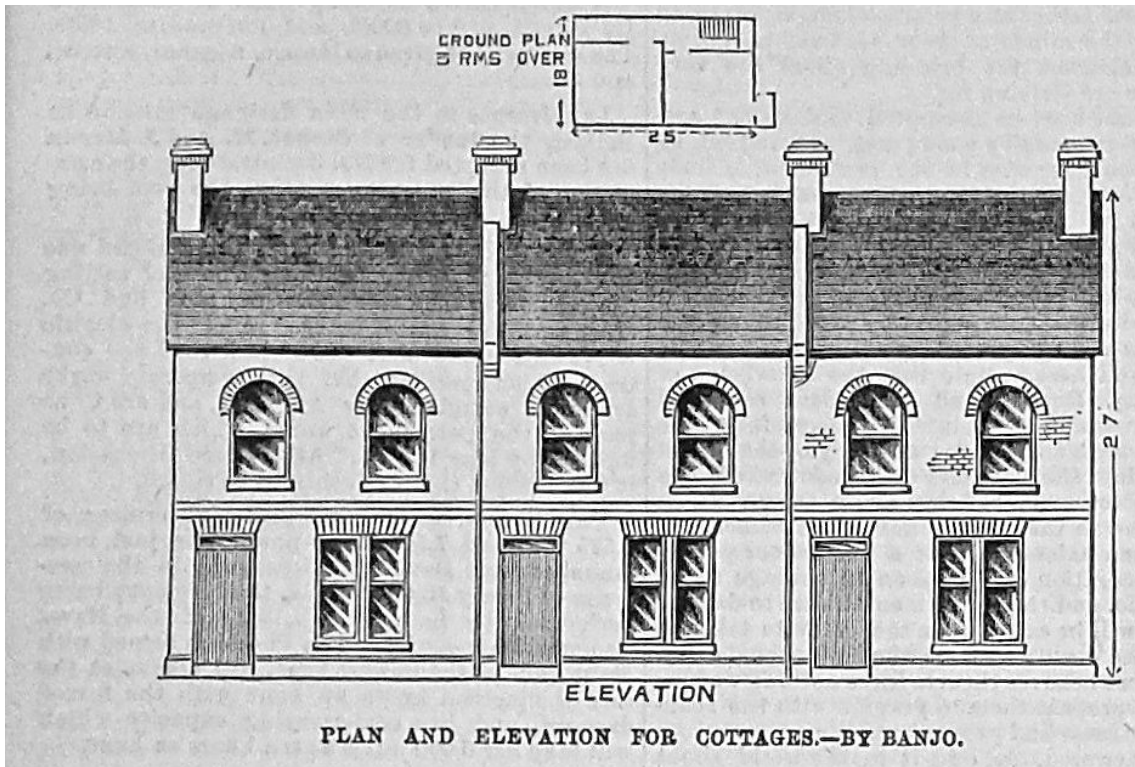


Figure 233. Second Price in competition for a design of a workman's cottage (*Ibid.*, April 12, 1878, p. 232).



23032. **Cottage.**—I send Mr. J. Davies a sketch, which I hope will suit him; can be built for £140 each. Should be pleased to supply working drawings for small fee. Editor has address.—BANJO.

Figure 234. One of the many house designs published in the Illustrated Carpenter & Builder in 1890 in response to readers' requests. Such designs were probably widely imitated by builders (Ibid., July 11, 1890, p. 57).

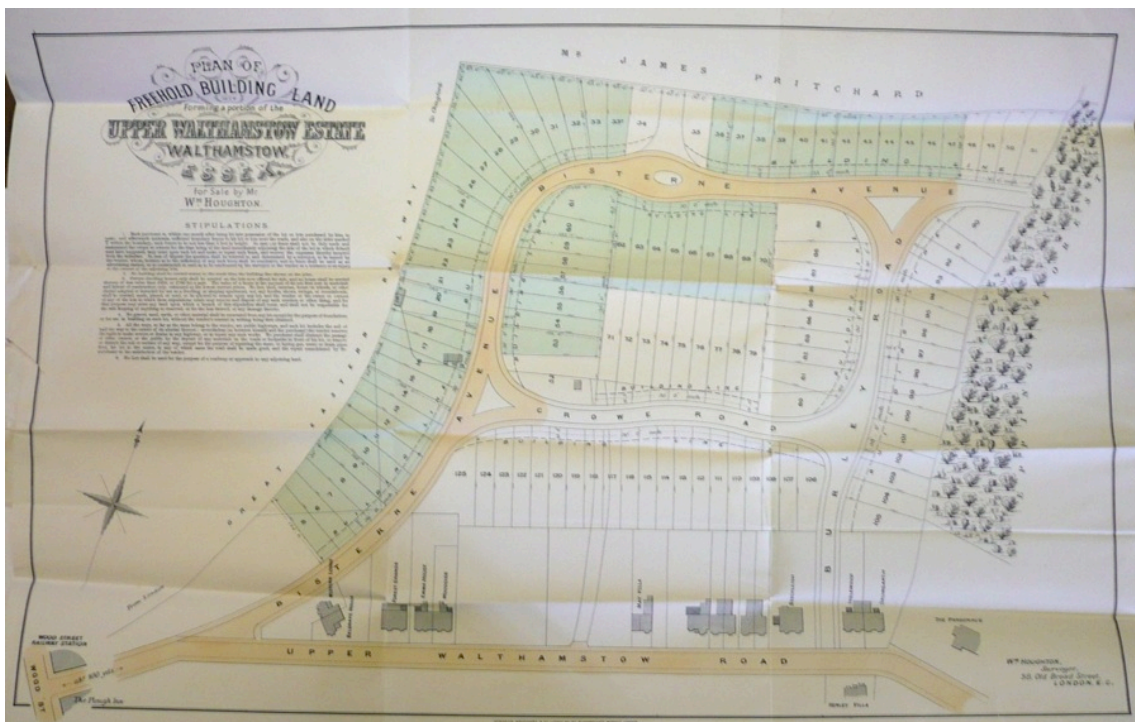


Figure 235. Example of a particularly spacious estate layout for the Upper Walthamstow Estate, 1894, with typical lot widths of 30 feet, aiming to attract wealthy tenants (Walthamstow Local History Archive, W72.2)

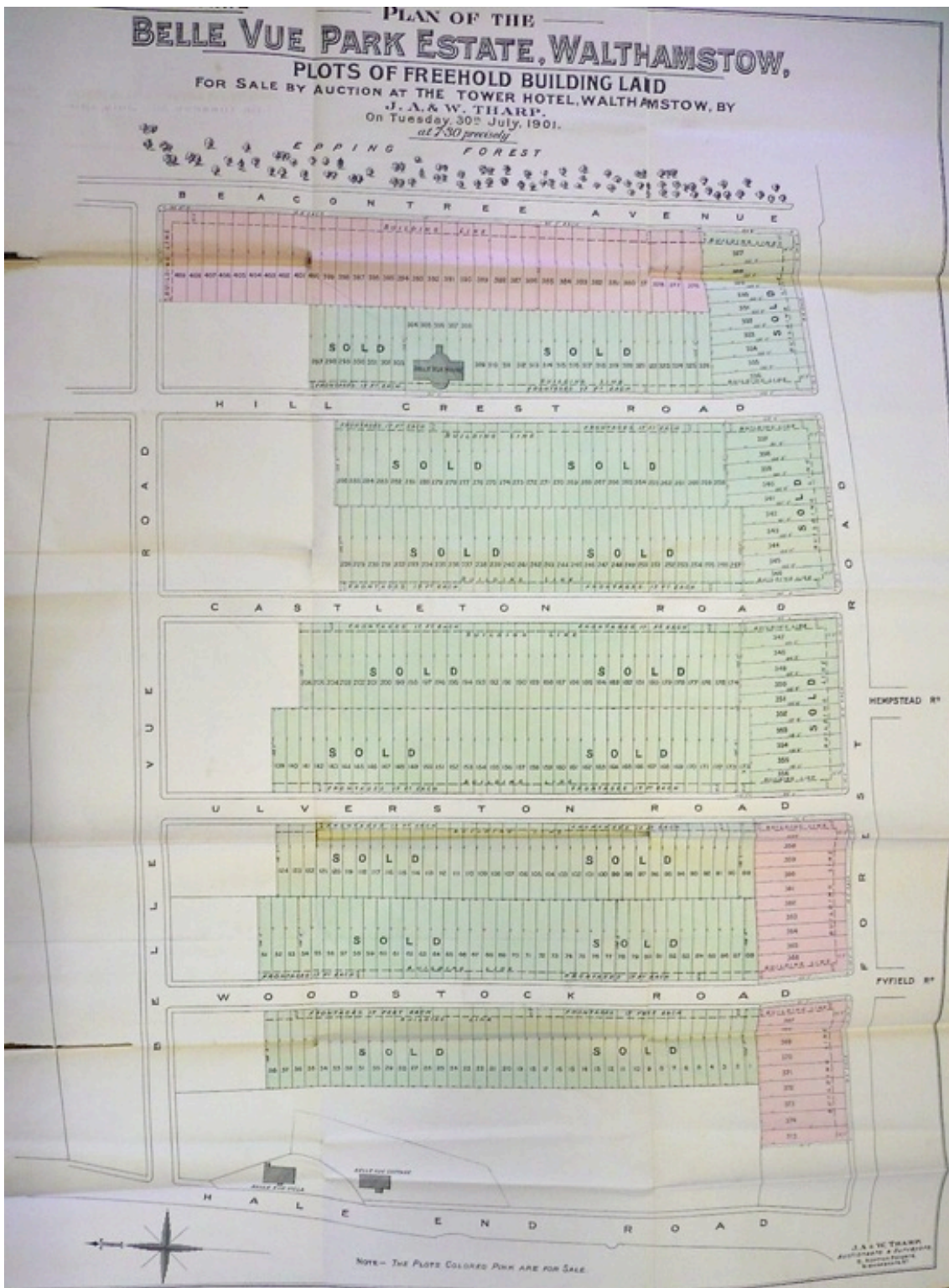


Figure 236. Example of the Belle Vue Park estate in Walthamstow laid out in lots of 17 feet width, 1901 (Ibid.)



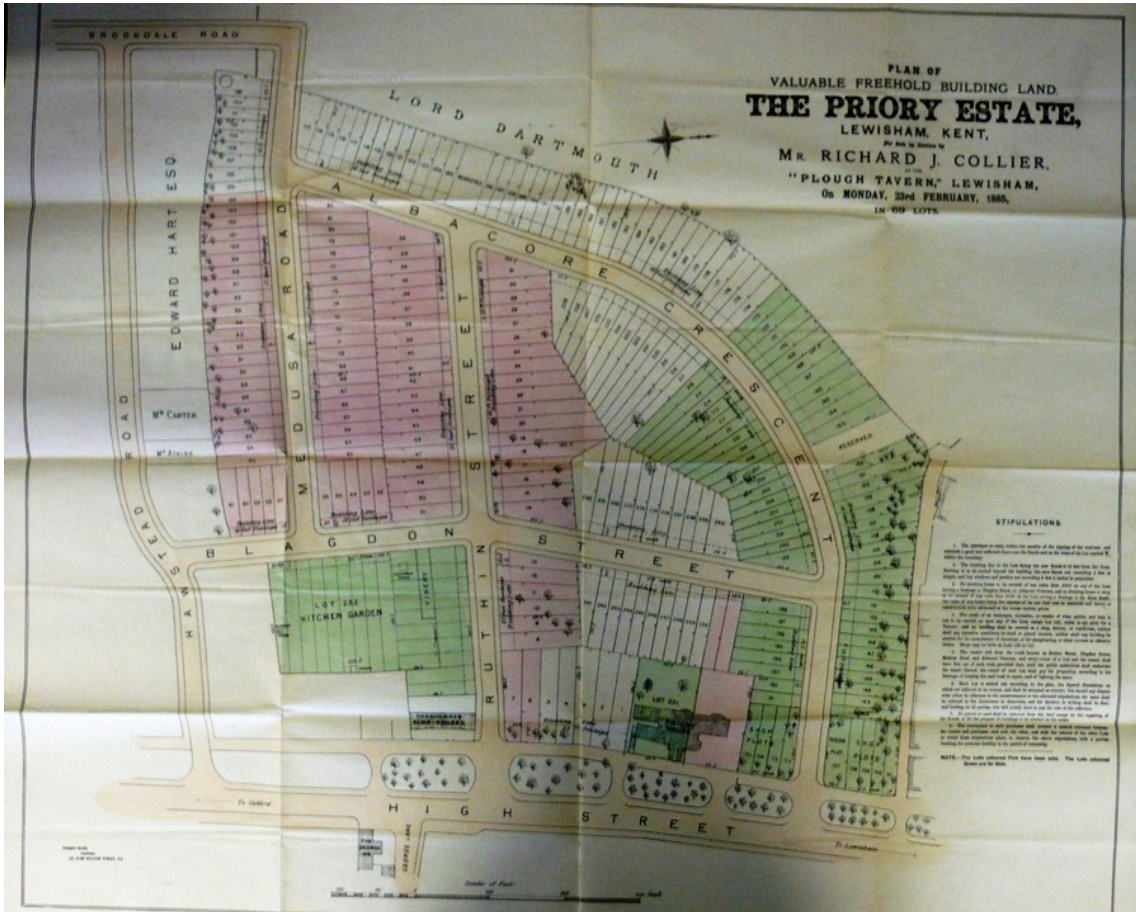


Figure 237. A plan from an estate auction in Lewisham, 1885. The width of the lots is clearly stated as it determined the type of house (e.g. terraced, semi-detached) that could be built on it. The lot widths varied from 17 feet to 23 feet (Ibid.).

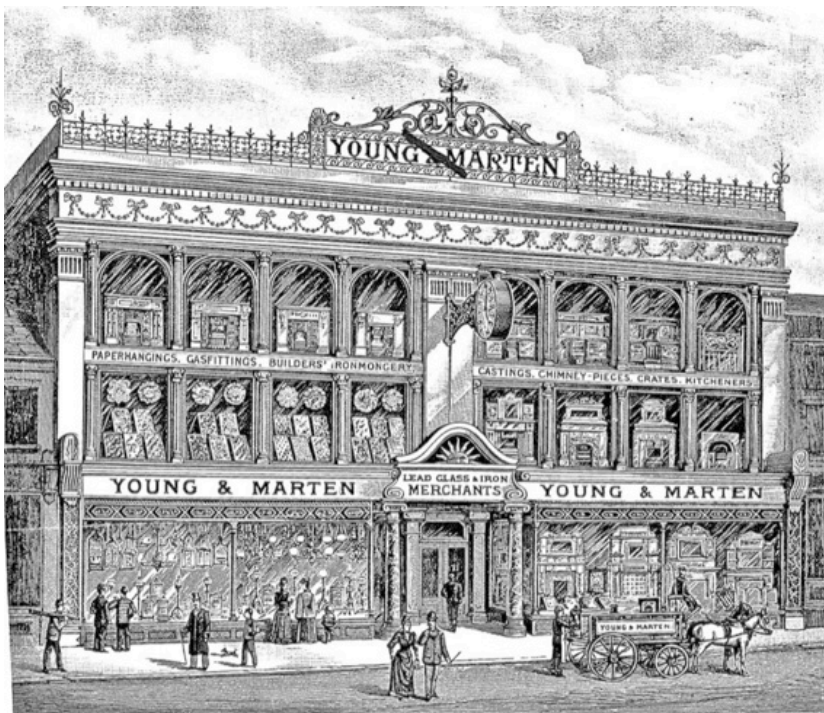


Figure 238. Drawing of the main showroom of Young & Marten Builders' Merchant in Stratford, East London (*The Victorian House Catalogue: Young and Marten*, c1895 [Sidgwick and Jackson, 1990])

ESTABLISHED UPWARDS OF 70 YEARS.

# WOOD & IVERY, LTD.,

Head Office: **ALBION BLUE & RED BRICK WORKS, WEST BROMWICH, STAFFS.**

Branch: **BLUE & RED BRICK WORKS, RADNALL FIELD, OLDBURY.**

**FIRE BRICK WORKS, HURST, NEAR STOURBRIDGE.**

NOTE.—All Communications to be addressed to the Head Office.

## Specimens of Manufacture.

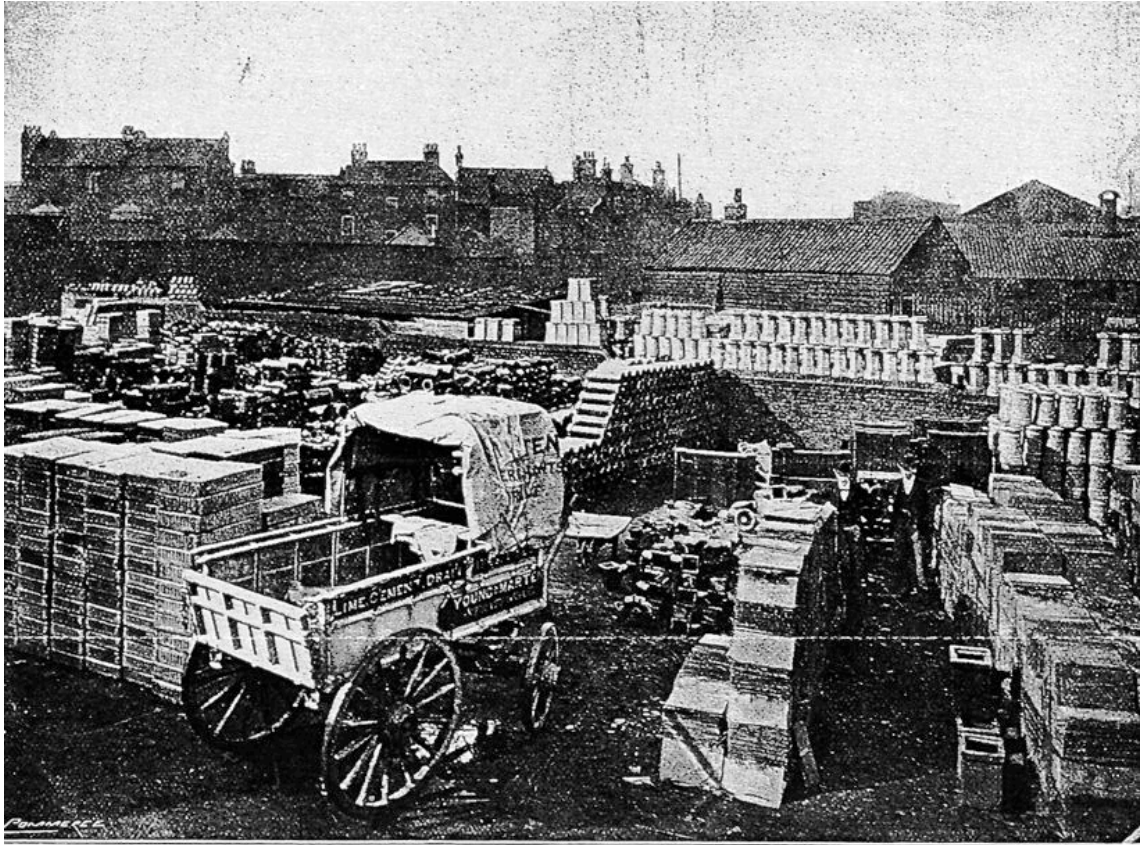


REGISTERED  
Telegraphic  
Address—  
"IVERY,  
West  
BROMWICH."  
—  
QUALITY  
CANNOT BE  
SURPASSED  
—  
Weekly  
Make,  
400,000.

Telephone  
Number —  
5,046.

WRITE FOR  
Testimonials.  
Illustrated  
Catalogue  
AND  
PRICE  
LIST,  
Free upon  
Application.

Figure 239. Advertisement for brick and terracotta by Wood & Ivery Ltd (Ibid.)



Wharf Department, Stratford Market. From a photograph.



Interior of Store, 220 x 40 feet. From a photograph.

Figure 240. Photos of the store and yard from the Young & Marten catalogue (Ibid.).



Figure 241. Preparation of ornaments & patterns for mounting onto plaster ceiling & woodwork at George Jackson plasterers (Photo by Ernest Milner, BB85/3447).

**SKILSAWS ARE MADE IN 4 SIZES**

Weights - - - 12 lbs. to 34 lbs.

Depths of cut - - 1 1/8 in. to 4 1/2 in.

Motors - - - Universal A.C. or D.C. (all voltages).

**PRICE: £20 to £55.**

**SKILSAW**

**THE ORIGINAL PORTABLE ELECTRIC SAW**



Write for Illustrated Catalogue to  
**THE BRITISH EQUIPMENT**

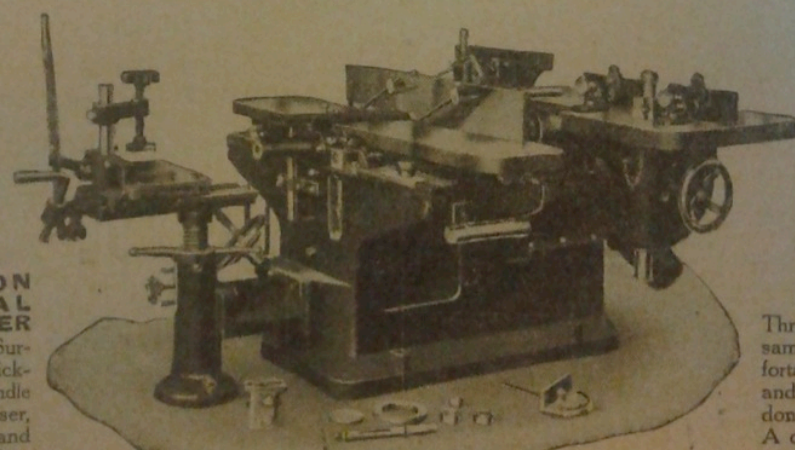
CUTS TEN TIMES QUICKER THAN BY HAND  
Wood, Brick, Tiles, Stoneware, Metals.

7

**MACHINES IN ONE!**

**THE WILSON UNIVERSAL WOODWORKER**

is a Saw Bench, a Surface Planer, a Thicknesser, a Vertical Spindle Moulder, a Mortiser, a Boring Machine and a Tenoning Machine.



3

**JOBS AT ONCE!**

Three men can, at the same time, work comfortably on the WILSON and every job can be done quickly and easily. A complete plant in one machine.

Figure 242. Advert for a 'Skilsaw' (above) and 'The Wilson Universal Woodworker' (below). The advancements in woodworking technology in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century facilitated more efficient and cheaper production of complex joinery items such as windows bays and porches which experienced a boom in domestic architecture in the Edwardian and particularly the inter-war period (*The Illustrated Carpenter & Builder*, November 15, 1935).

Friday, February 1, 1935.

# MORGAN BROS.

## Weatherproof Casement Windows, etc.

**Height**

A1	15/3	14/9	14/3
B1	25/9	25/-	24/3
C1	38/-	37/-	36/-
D1	51/-	49/9	48/6

**Height**

A2	10/-	9/6	9/3
B2	16/9	16/-	15/-
C2	22/9	21/9	20/6
D2	30/9	29/6	28/3

**Height**

E1	50/-	47/6	45/-
E2	77/6	75/6	73/6
S1	97/6	95/-	93/6
F1	76/-	74/-	72/-
F2	65/9	64/-	62/3

**G1**

28'x6'	26'x6'
11'-	10/6
(6x2) Oak Sill	
10/3	9/6
(4x2) Oak Sill	
6/9	6/6
(No Sill)	

**G2 G3 Etc.**

*Wing frames are made at short notice to any size or design.*

**SPECIFICATIONS OF WINDOWS.**

**FRAMES**  
4' x 2 1/2' Good seasoned red deal. Moulded rebated and grooved.

**SILLS**  
6' x 2 1/2' with 1' draught & storm check.

**SASHES**  
1 1/2' Moulded rebated and throated. Hung as shown.

All desirable grooving is done to frames and sashes to receive window board, cement key, and to guard against weather.

**DELIVERIES.**  
Orders Value £10 & over are carriage paid to any goods station within 100 miles. Local orders are delivered by our lorries.

SEND FOR FULL LIST.

## COWLEY :: UXBRIDGE

Telephone : UXBRIDGE 210

Figure 243. Advert for windows and doors to standard sizes, delivered to any goods station in London (Ibid., February 01, 1935).



Figure 244. Thomas Joseph and Richard Alfred Reader, the founding brothers of Reader Bros, 1899 (Josephine Boyle, *Builders of Repute: The Story of Reader Bros* [Havant, 2002], p.33)



Figure 245. '(...) found during the cleaning out of 75 Monkams Avenue in March 1990. Set square, chain & markers used for setting out buildings. Marble paperweight, stool, file box, waste-paper basket, toffee tin, cigar box containing pencils etc., letter rack. From E.C. Reader's desk, formerly in the office at Sidney Road Homerton.' (Photo and notes from Josephine Boyle's personal collection).

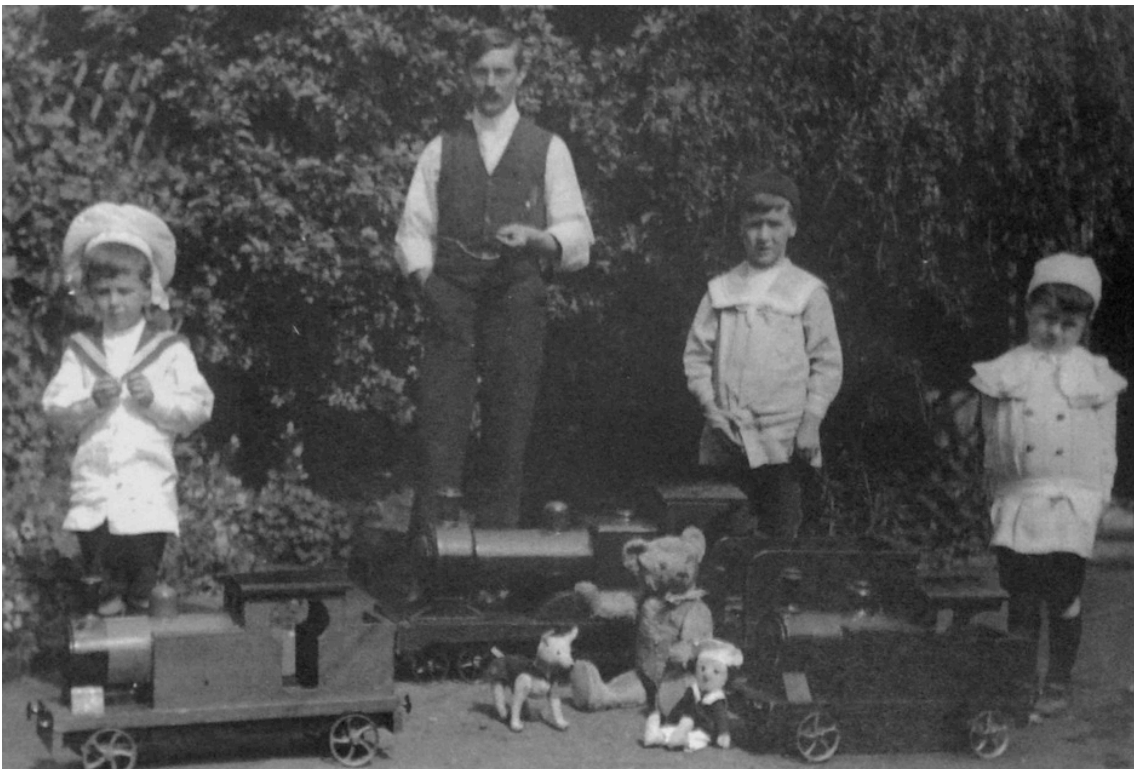


Figure 246. Richard Reader with his three children and toy locomotives that he made for them (Boyle, p. 53)



Figure 247. Richard Reader (in the back, wearing a bowler hat) with their team of builders in front of a house under construction on the Monkams estate, c. 1908 (Ibid., p. 52)



Figure 248. Tom Reader (centre, front) with the joinery staff in their builders' yard in Homerton, 1920s (Ibid., p. 107)

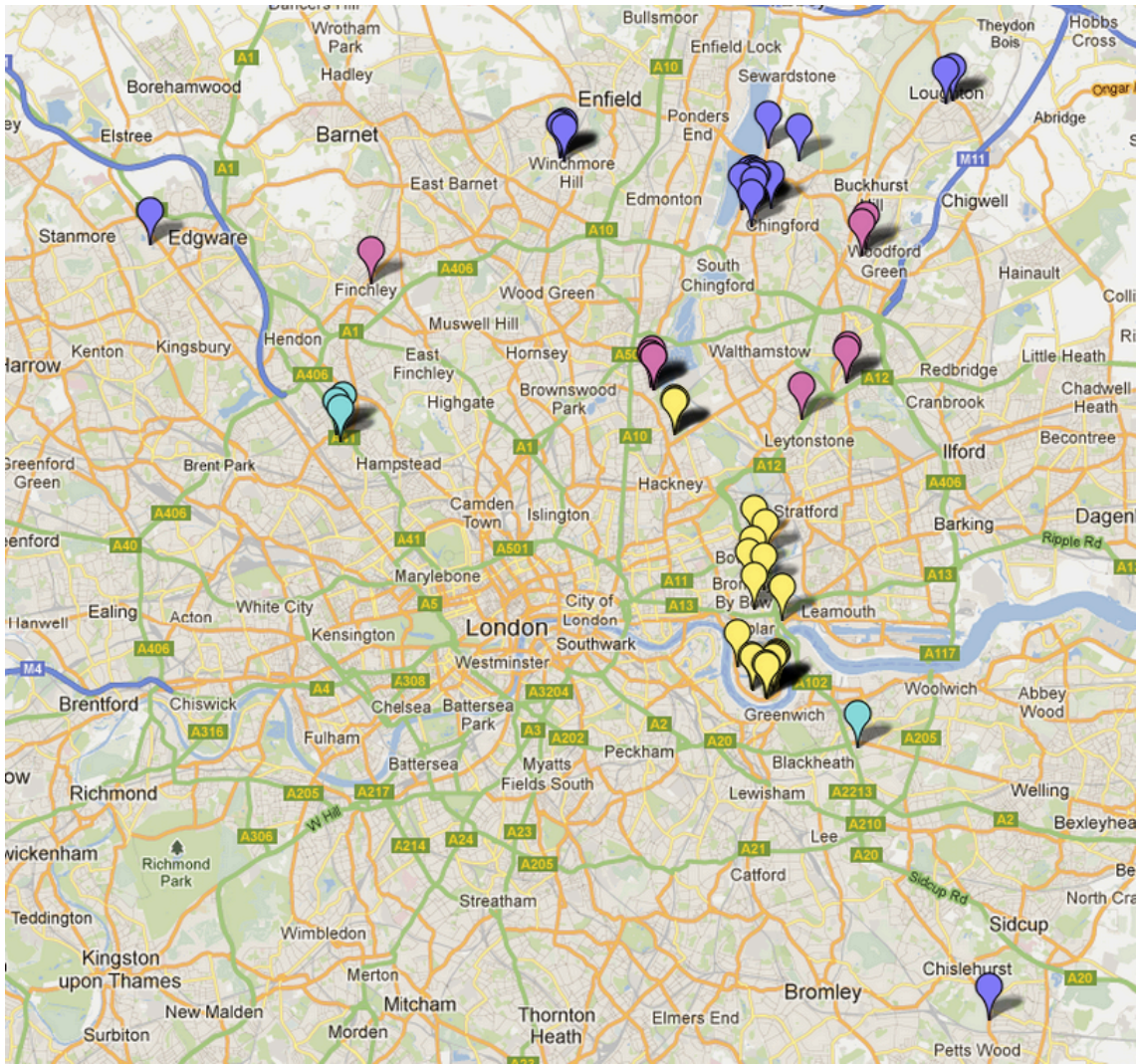


Figure 249. Edgar Reader (back left, with Homburg hat) with their team of builders (Ibid., p. 105).



Figure 250. John Laing and New Ideal Homesteads were speculative builders and developers who constructed whole estates of houses in a number of different suburbs in London during the inter-war period. According to their brochures, these estates were generally constructed with the help of architects (left: 'Laings 10 Estates', c. 1937, Hendon Local Archive, right: 'New Ideal Homesteads Sales Brochure', c. 1935, Greenwich Local History Archive).









Legend		
Marker	Period	Housing type
	1898-1914	Speculative
	1920-1930	For council
	1923-1930	Speculative
	1930-1939	Speculative

Figure 251. Map of housing built by the Readers 1898 to 1939, coloured by type and period. Each street with Reader houses is represented by one marker. The number of houses per street varies (map created by author in Google maps based on Boyle, pp. 214-216).





Figure 254. The organisation of New Ideal Homesteads Ltd, one of the largest speculative house builders in inter-war London. New Ideal Homesteads had their own in-house architects ('New Ideal Homesteads Sales Brochure', c. 1935, Greenwich Local History Archive).



Figure 255. 1880 OS map of the Spratt Hall estate, Wanstead

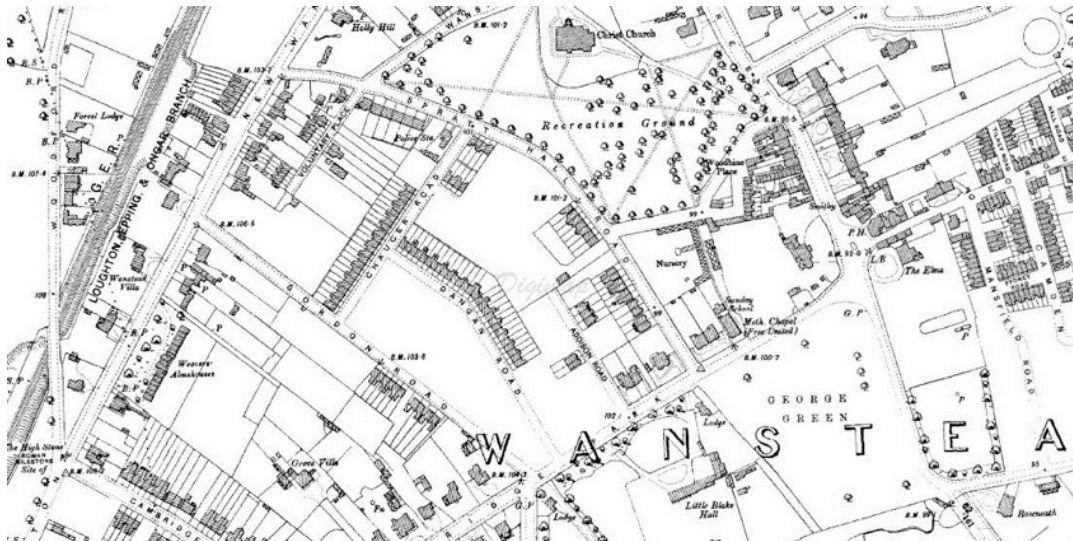


Figure 256. 1890 OS map of the Spratt Hall estate, Wanstead

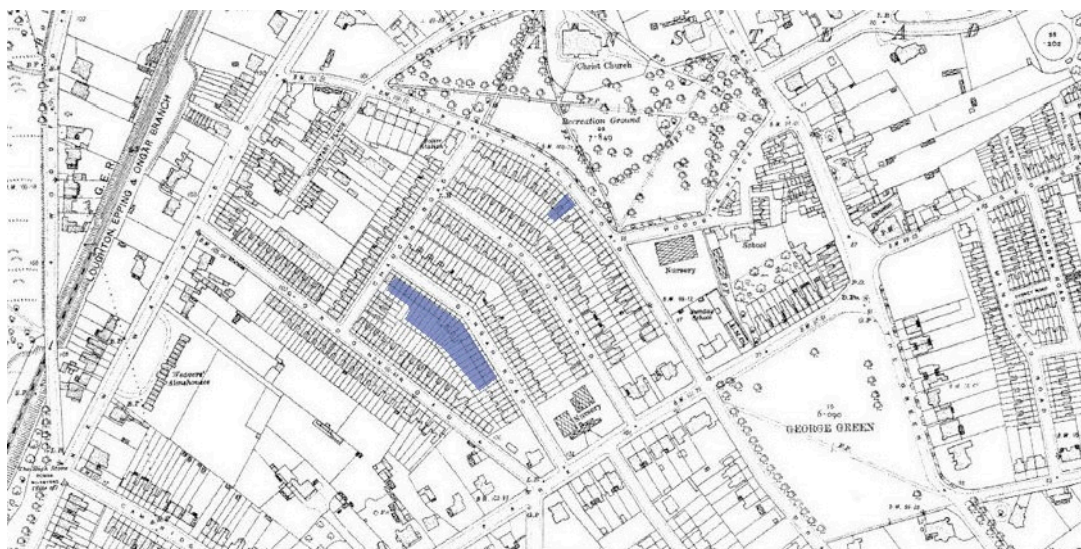


Figure 257. 1910 OS map of the same area with the first houses built by the Readers highlighted in blue



Figure 258. The first houses built by the Readers in 16-66 Dangan Road, built c. 1898 for the Rayners, a local family business of speculative builders who also owned a builder's merchant. The houses were designed by the architect-surveyor Douglas Matthew.



Figure 259. Houses built by the Readers in 22-25 Spratt Hall Road on the same estate in 1899.



Figure 260. 325-359 (odd) Grove Green Road in Leytonstone, c. 1902, designed by the architect-surveyor Alexander Martin, based in Leytonstone



Figure 261. Houses in Princes Avenue, Finchley, c. 1902, also designed by Alexander Martin



Figure 262. 1896 OS map of area North-East of Finchley station

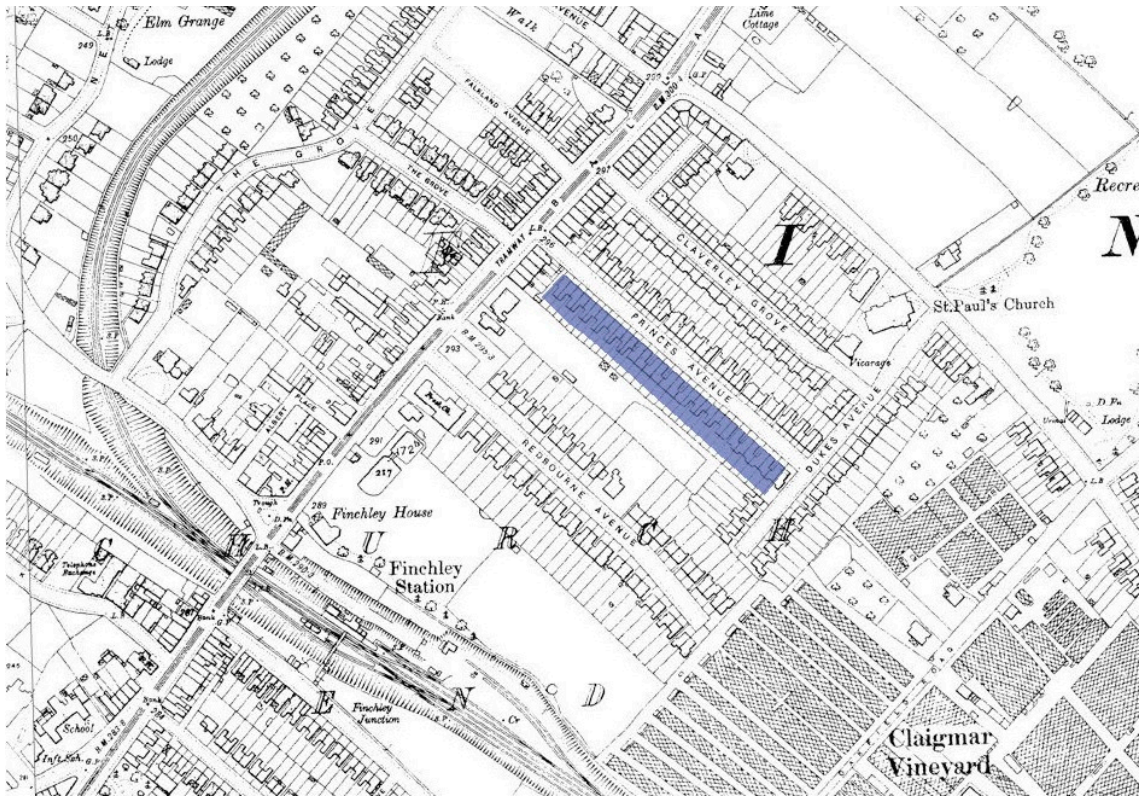


Figure 263. 1913 OS map of the same area with the Readers houses in Princes Avenue highlighted in blue

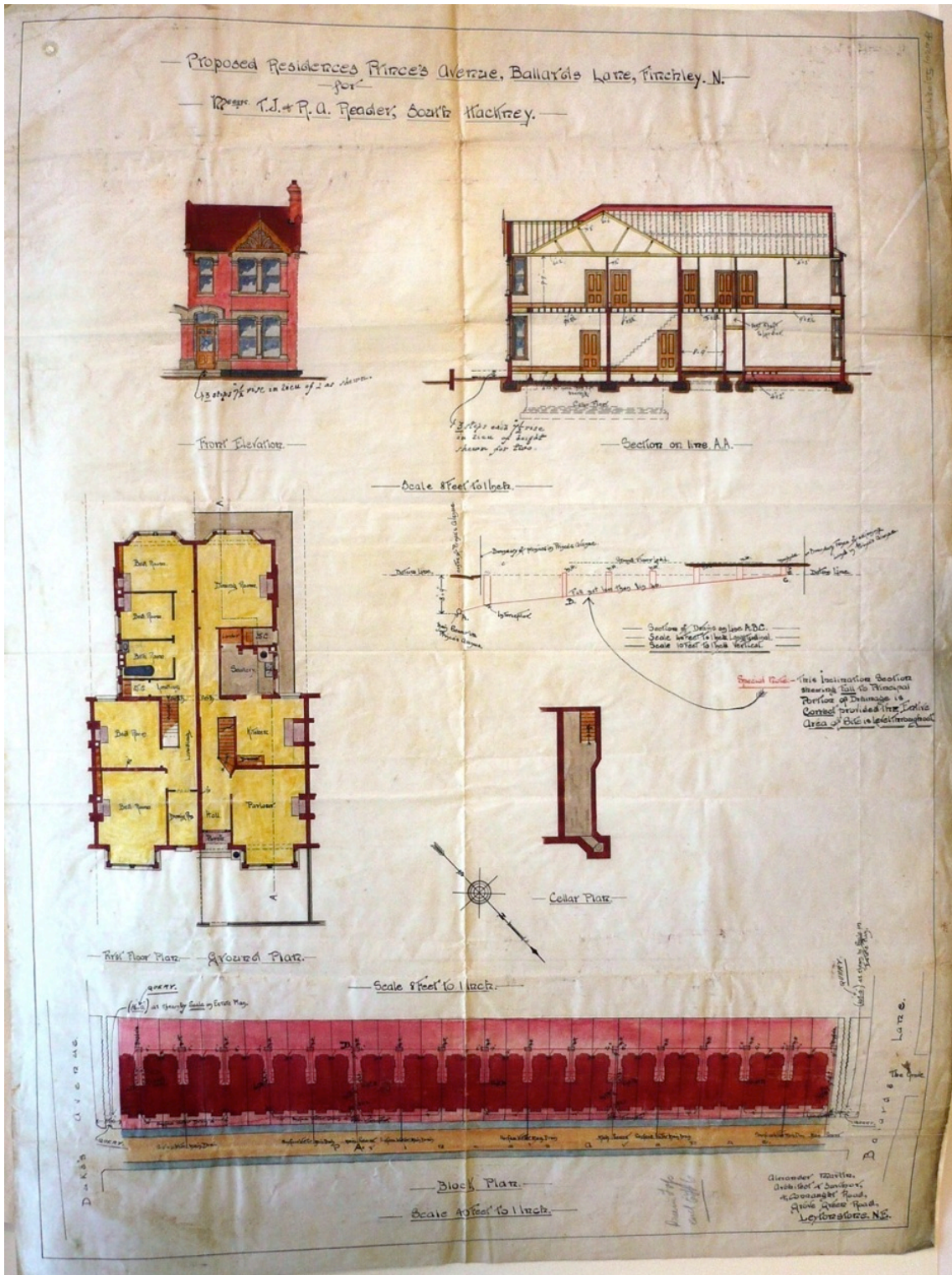


Figure 264. Drawing by Alexander Martin for the houses in Princes Avenue shows a deep terraced house plan with a long rear wing. The plan is based on the standard type found across London and also in pattern-books, but Martin's variation is unusually efficient, achieving an unusually high number of rooms, with a total of four bedrooms on the first floor (London Metropolitan Archive, LMA/4430/05/029)



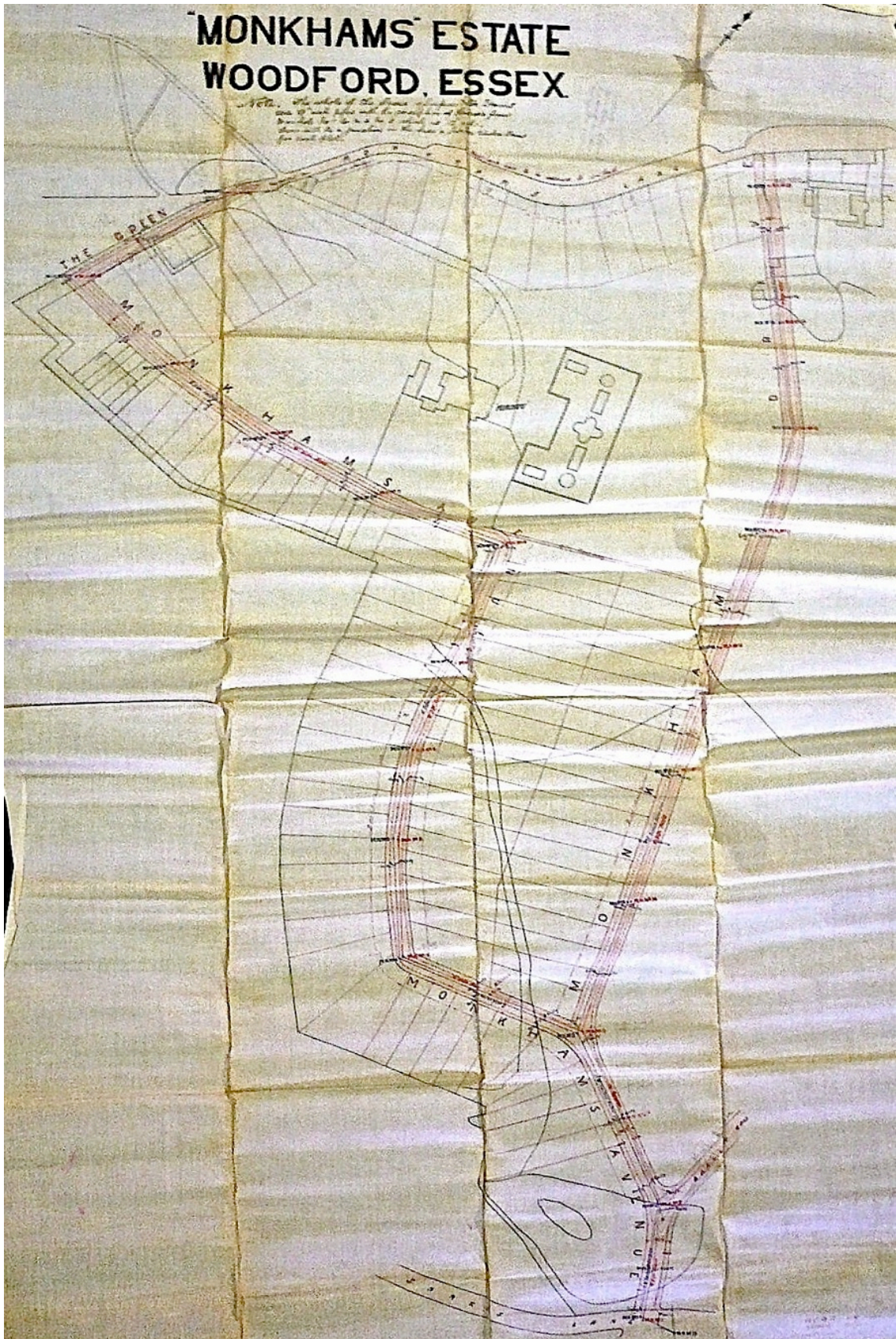


Figure 265. Map of application to Woodford Council for Monkham's Avenue and Monkham's Drive, May 1904. The layout was prepared by the auctioneers & surveyors Mabbett & Edge. The individual plots were then sold to different builders (Woodford Urban District Council, 'Notice of Intention to Erect New Building', No. 2093, 1904, Redbridge Local History Archive).

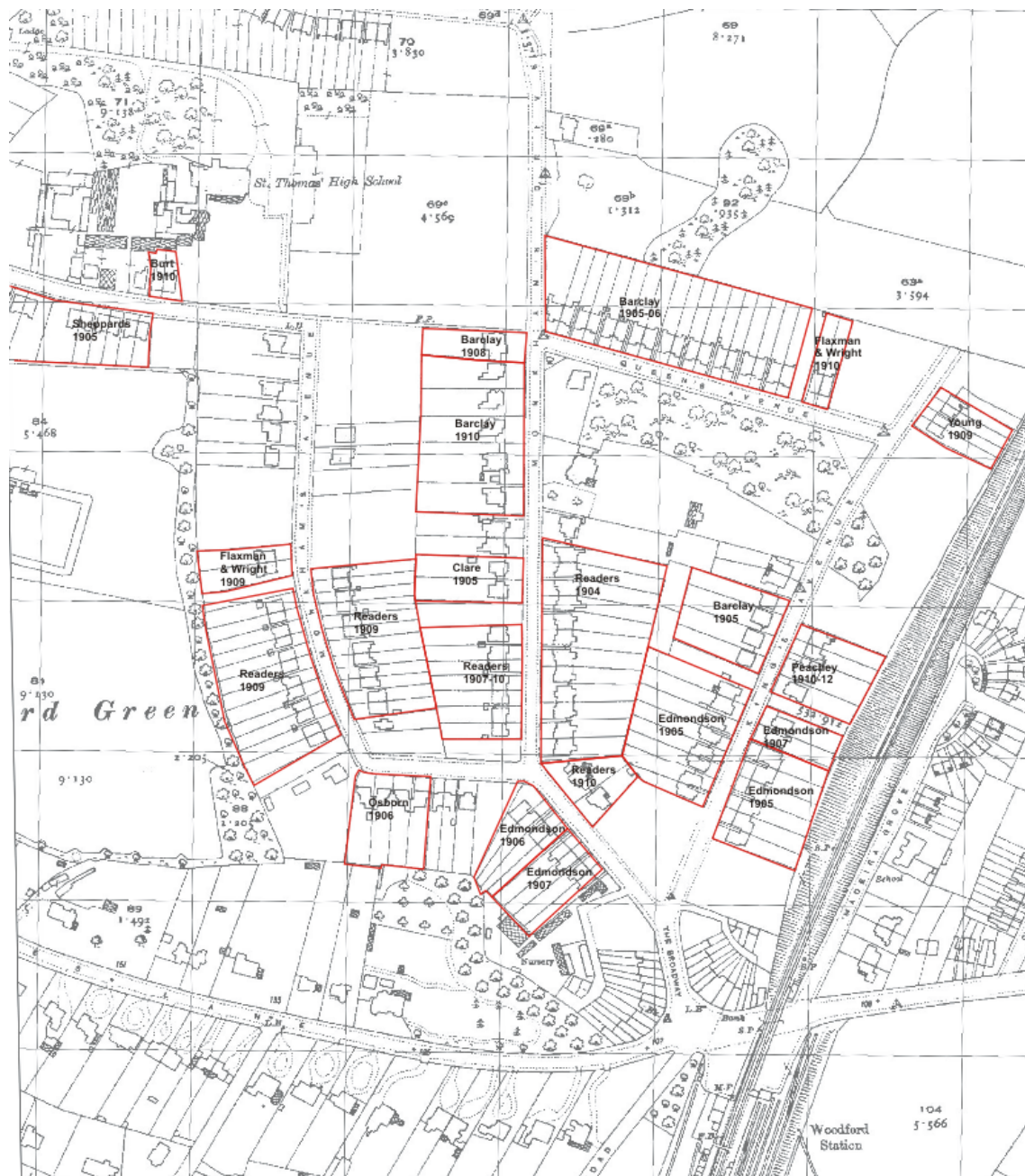


Figure 266. 1918 OS map of Monkham's Estate with the names of the main builders and the year of when the building applications of their stretch of houses were submitted to Woodford Council

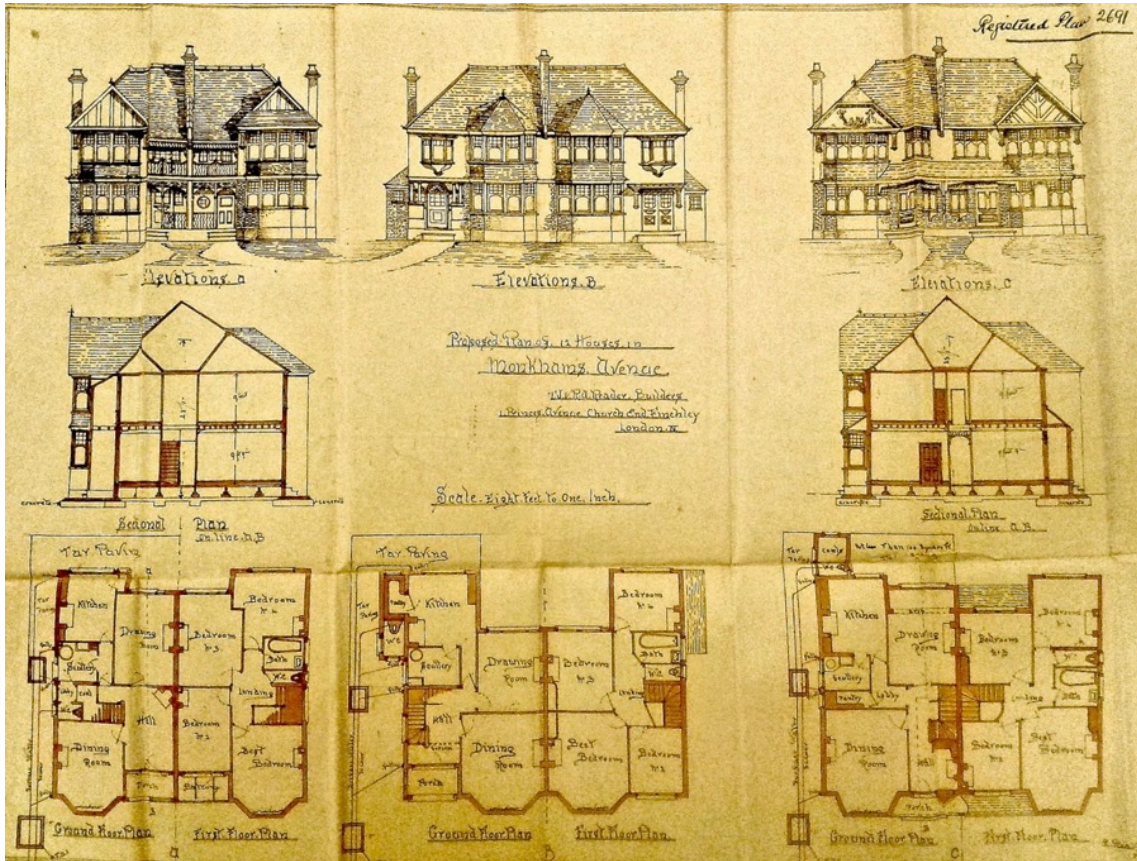


Figure 267. Building application plans for 12 houses in Monkham Avenue, designed by R. Reader, 1909 (Woodford Urban District Council, 'Notice of Intention to Erect New Building', No. 2691, 1909, Redbridge Local History Archive)

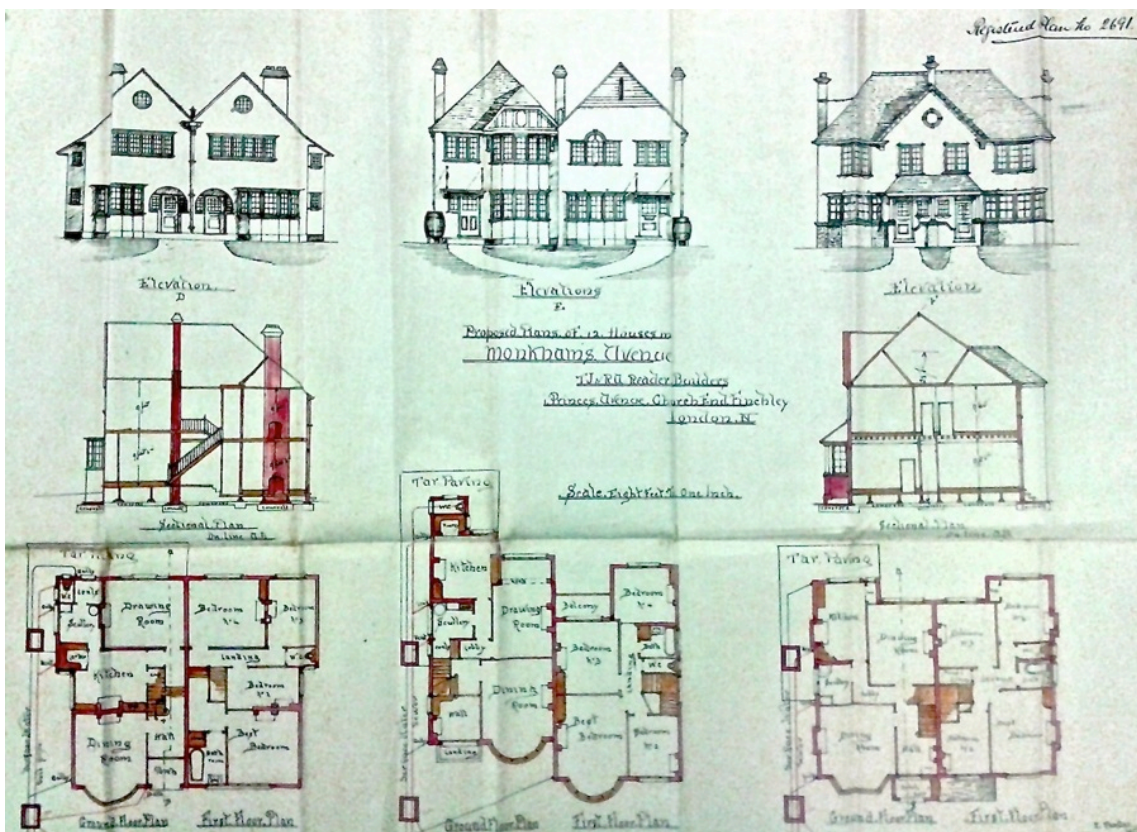


Figure 268. Building application plans for 12 houses in Monkham Avenue, designed by R. Reader, 1909 (Ibid.)



Figure 269. Houses by the Readers in Monkham Avenue, c. 1909. The different house types alternate.



Figure 270. Houses by the Readers in Monkham Avenue, c. 1909



Figure 271. No. 2 Monkams Avenue, built and designed by the Readers. The building application was submitted in 1910 (Woodford Urban District Council, 'Notice of Intention to Erect New Building', No. 2656, 1910, Redbridge Local History Archive).

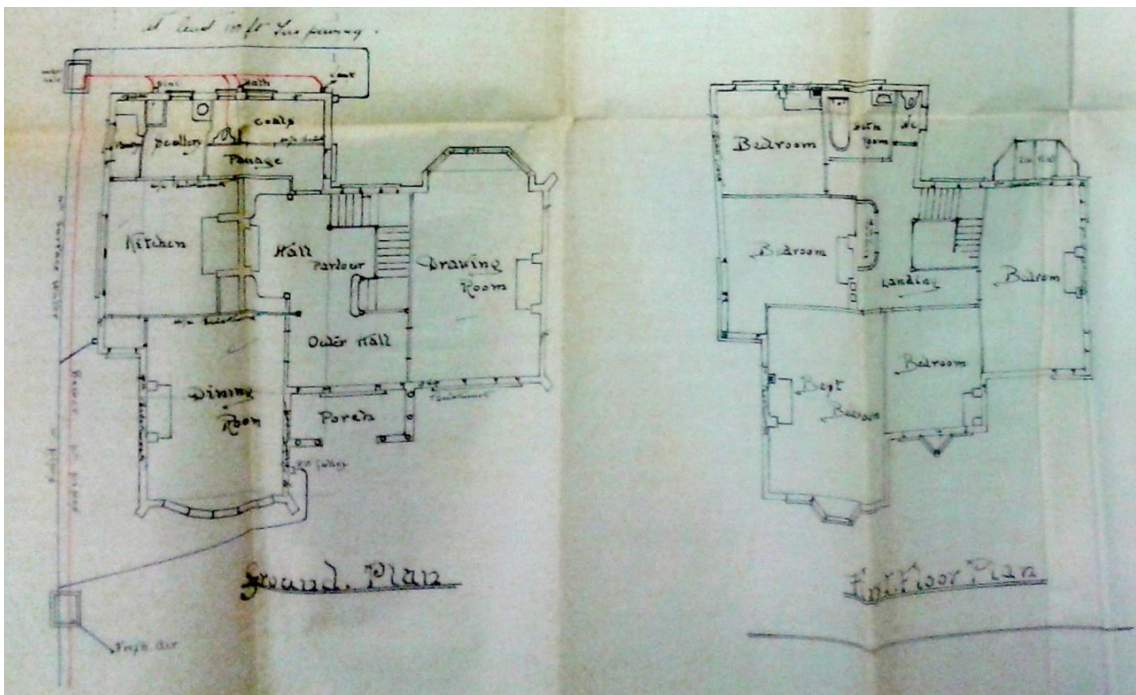
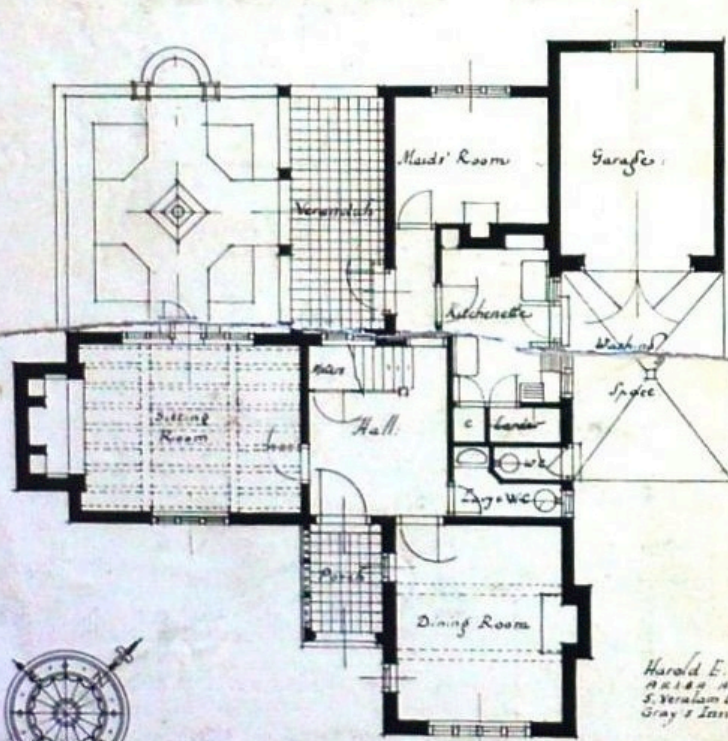


Figure 272. No. 2 Monkams Avenue floor plans. The house is accessed via a central hall with the other rooms loosely arranged around it (Ibid.).



GROUND FLOOR PLAN:

Harold E. Moss  
 A.R.B.A. Architect  
 2, Verulam Buildings  
 Gray's Inn, W.C.1

TUDOR COTTAGE, KINGSTON HILL.

HAROLD E. MOSS, ARCHITECT

Figure 273. Tudor Cottage, Kingston Hill, built 1923, designed by the architect Harold E. Moss, ARIBA. Both the facades as well as the floorplan share many similarities with 2 Monkams Avenue (*Bungalows and Small Country Houses*, The Architect [London, 1925]).

## Monkham's Drive.



Frontage 110 ft.; entire depth of Land 148 ft.  
Entire finish to choice.

### SPECIFICATION:

It is quite impossible to describe these houses in a few words. They are a copy of one of our most eminent Architect's designs. They have magnificent Rooms, and the Hall and Staircase is fit for a Mansion. One of them has accommodation for a Motor Garage at the side, fitted and finished in keeping throughout.

SIZE OF ROOMS:		GROUND FLOOR.	
Dining Room ...	15 ft. 6 in.	by	23 ft.
Hall Parlour ...	16 ft.	"	20 ft.
Drawing Room ...	15 ft.	"	24 ft.
Kitchen ...	16 ft.	"	15 ft.

SIZE OF ROOMS:		FIRST FLOOR.	
Best Bedroom ...	24 ft.	by	15 ft. 6 in.
Small Dressing Room			
Front Bedroom ...	12 ft. 6 in.	"	12 ft.
Billiard Room or			
Side Bedroom ...	22 ft. 6 in.	"	15 ft.
Servant's Bedroom ...	15 ft.	"	13 ft.
Back Bedroom ...	14 ft.	"	13 ft.

Wardrobes, Linen Cupboards, etc., etc.  
PRICE:—  
**Freehold—£1,200.** Motor Garage Extra.

THE BEST VALUE TO BE HAD ROUND LONDON.

Figure 274. Advert for 2 Monkams Drive (Boyle, p. 56)

No. **2456**

Property *Eight Houses*

Position *Monkham's Drive*

Owner *J. Edmondson Ltd.*

Builder \_\_\_\_\_

Architect *Edmondsons*

Date of Receipt *20 Sept. '06*

Date of approval *2 1906*

Date of Completion \_\_\_\_\_

Figure 275. On the application envelopes, the Edmondsons always identify themselves as their own architects. Their drawings are also signed as J. Edmondson & Sons and they have a consistent style and type (Woodford Urban District Council, 'Notice of Intention to Erect New Building', No. 2456, September 20, 1906, Redbridge Local History Archive).

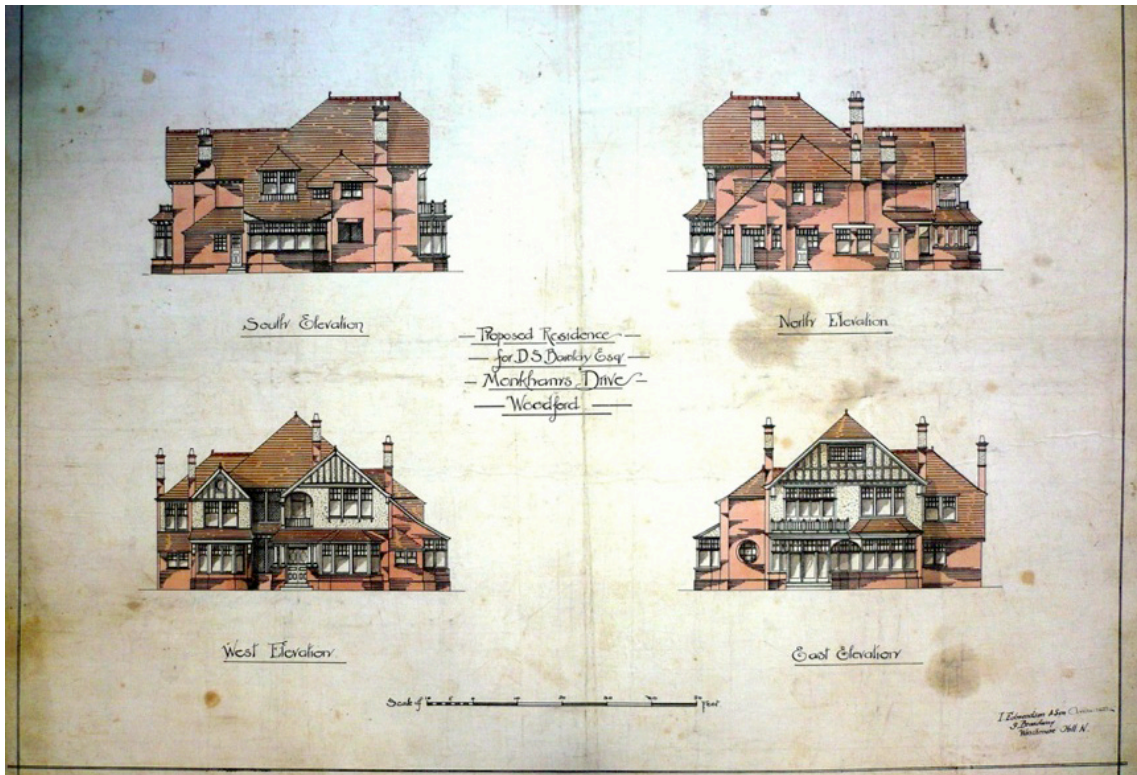


Figure 276. Design by J. Edmondson & Son for D.S. Barclay for a house in Monkham Drive (now demolished). The house was built by the Readers working for Barclay. Richard Reader later worked for Barclay as builders' manager (Reader Brothers Collection, LMA/4430/05/028, London Metropolitan Archives).

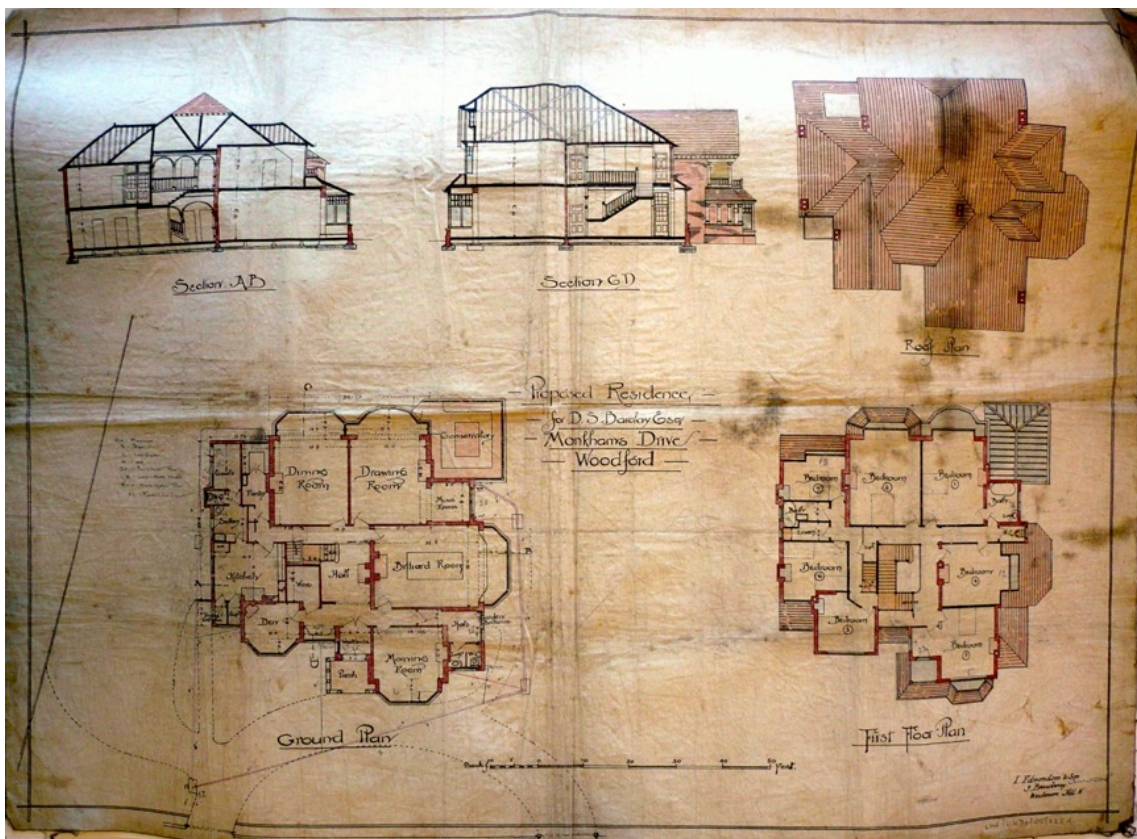


Figure 277. The plans and elevations are very professionally drawn and laid out. They unmistakably carry the signature of an experienced and skilled designer (Ibid.).





Figure 278. Building application drawings for houses in Kings Avenue by J. Edmondson & Son, 1905 (Woodford Urban District Council, 'Notice of Intention to Erect New Building', No. 2331, 1905, Redbridge Local History Archive).



Figure 279. Houses built by Edmondson in Kings Avenue, c. 1905, an example of Edwardian speculative housing of a high standard

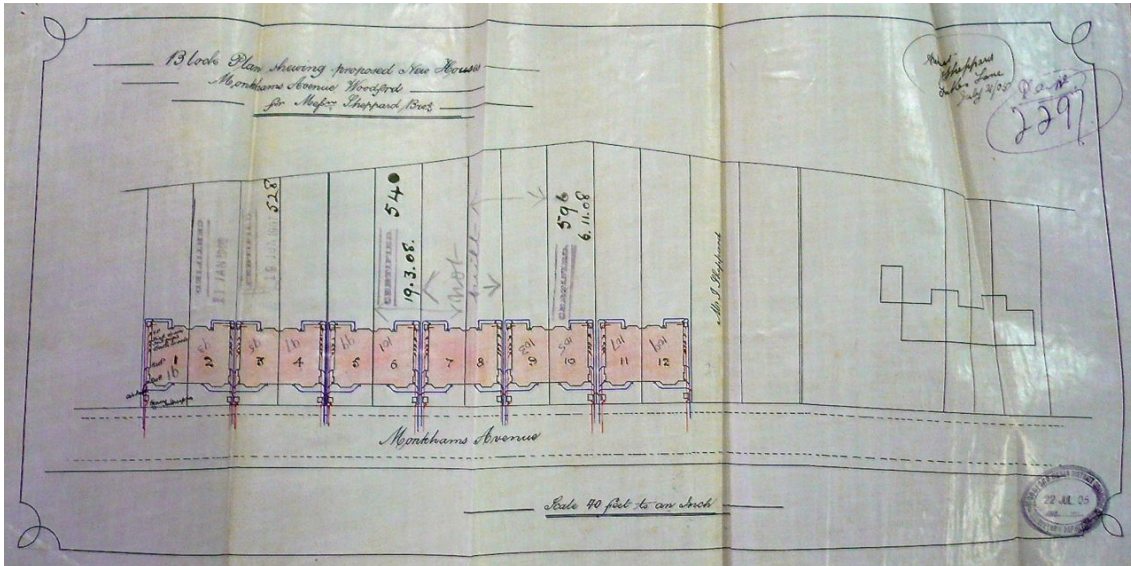


Figure 280. Block plan from building application for 12 houses in Monkham Avenue by Sheppard Bros, 1905. The drawings are submitted by John Henry Sheppard as 'architect' (Woodford Urban District Council, 'Notice of Intention to Erect New Building', No. 2297, 1905, Redbridge Local History Archive).

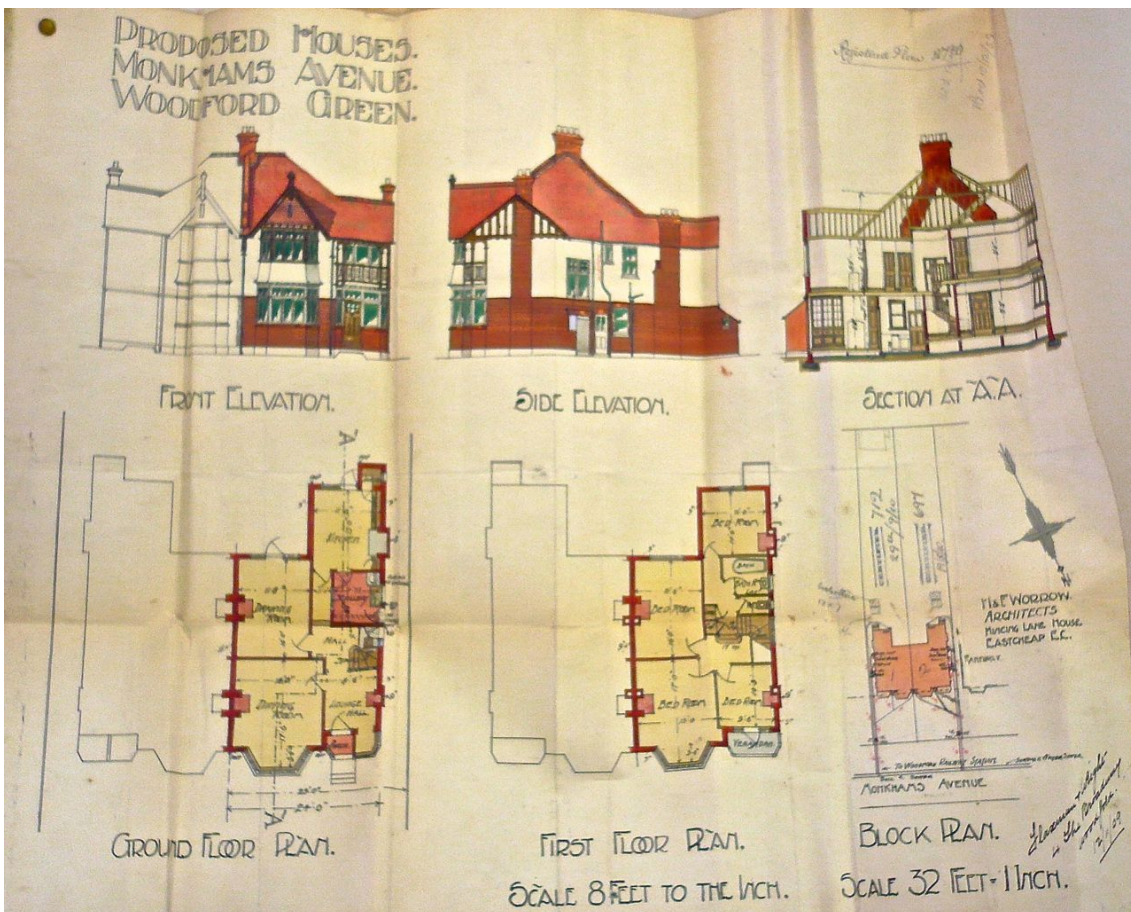


Figure 281. Drawings of two houses in Monkham Avenue, 1909, designed by H & F Worrow and built by Flaxman & Wright (Ibid., No. 2710, 1909).



Figure 282. One of the many photos in an estate agents' brochure on Hendon, Mill Hill & Golders Green, 1911, advertising and highlighting its 'natural beauty', as a particular selling point for prospective tenants and house buyers (W. Moore, *Hendon, Mill Hill & Golders Green*, 1911, L912-1911, Barnet Local Studies & Archives)



Figure 283. The impression of rural living is also reflected in the brochures that advertised the suburban houses. In reality, these houses were built with gaps of only a few meters between them, but the architecture clearly reflects the ambition of rural living (New Ideal Homesteads Sales Brochure, c. 1935, Greenwich Local History Archive).

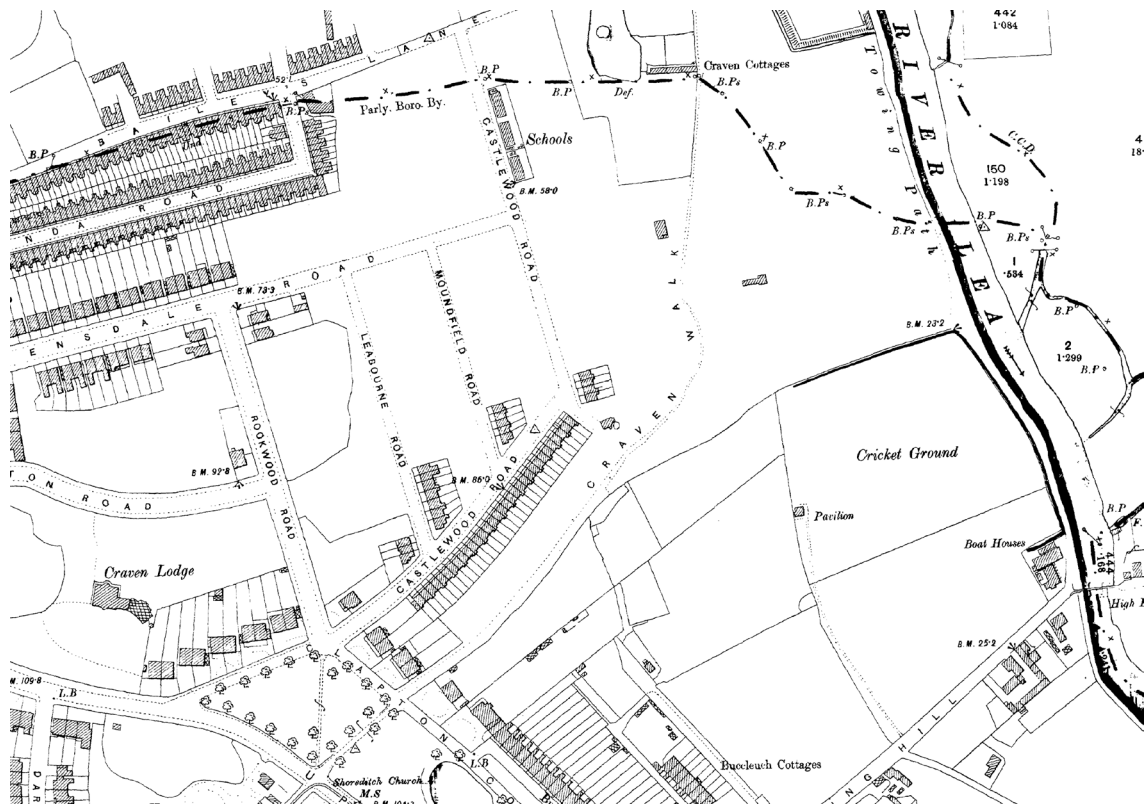


Figure 284. 1890 OS map of Upper Clapton, Hackney

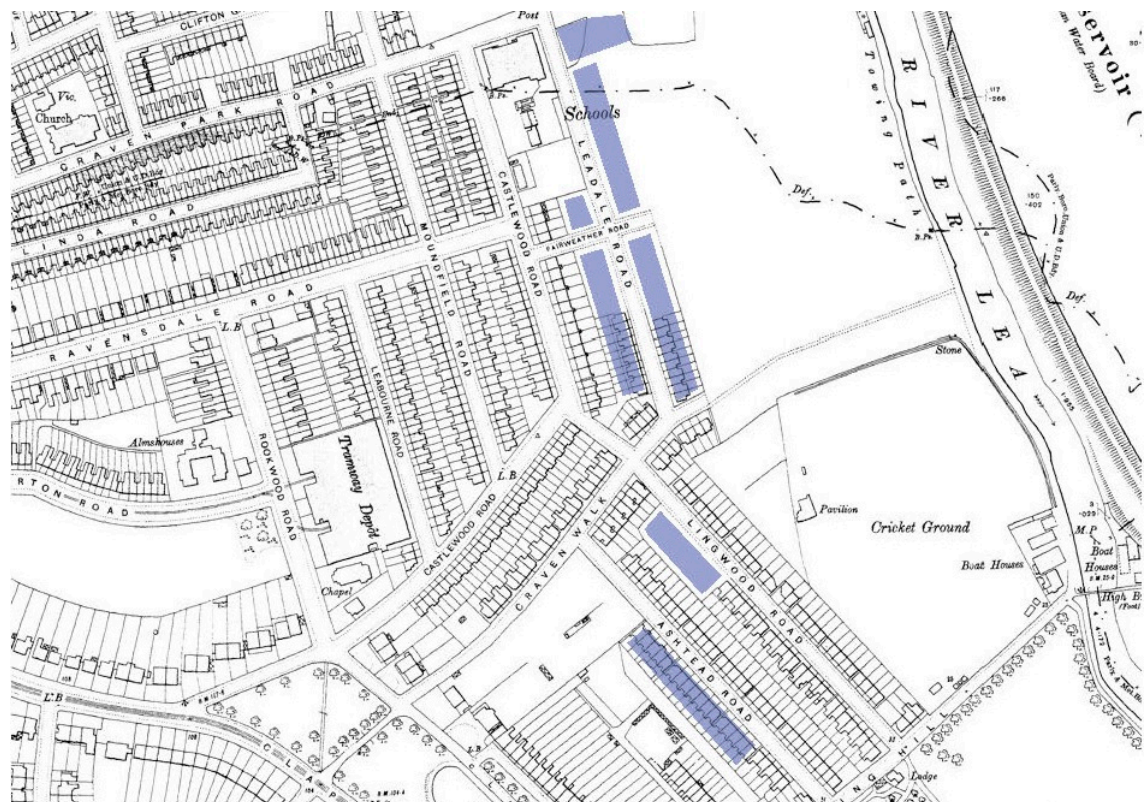


Figure 285. 1915 OS map of Lingwood and Leadale Road, in Upper Clapton, Hackney. The houses built by Barclay with Richard Reader as builders' manager are highlighted in blue. Some of the houses are not yet on the map.

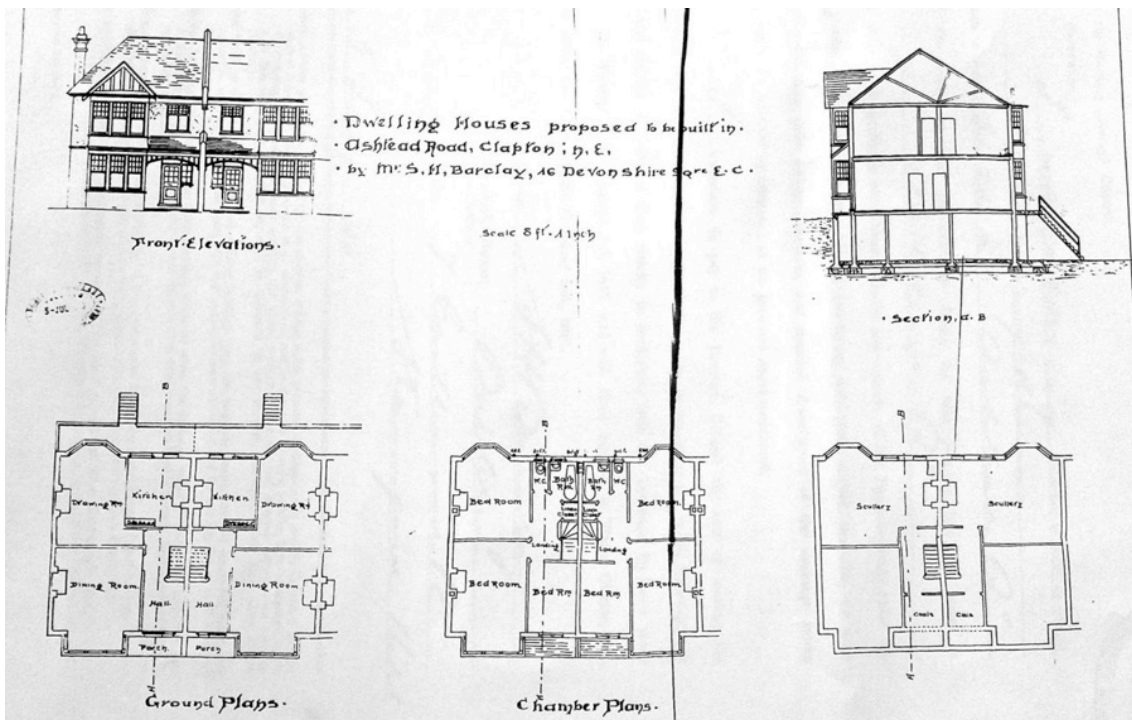


Figure 286. A building application from 1910 for houses in Asstead Road, Upper Clapton, by S.H. Barclay before R.A. Reader was involved. It is not clear who the architect was as all the drawings are unsigned, but the application was made by S.H. Barclay himself (Hackney Borough Council, 'Notice of Intention to Build', No. 114, July 5, 1910, Hackney Local History Archive).

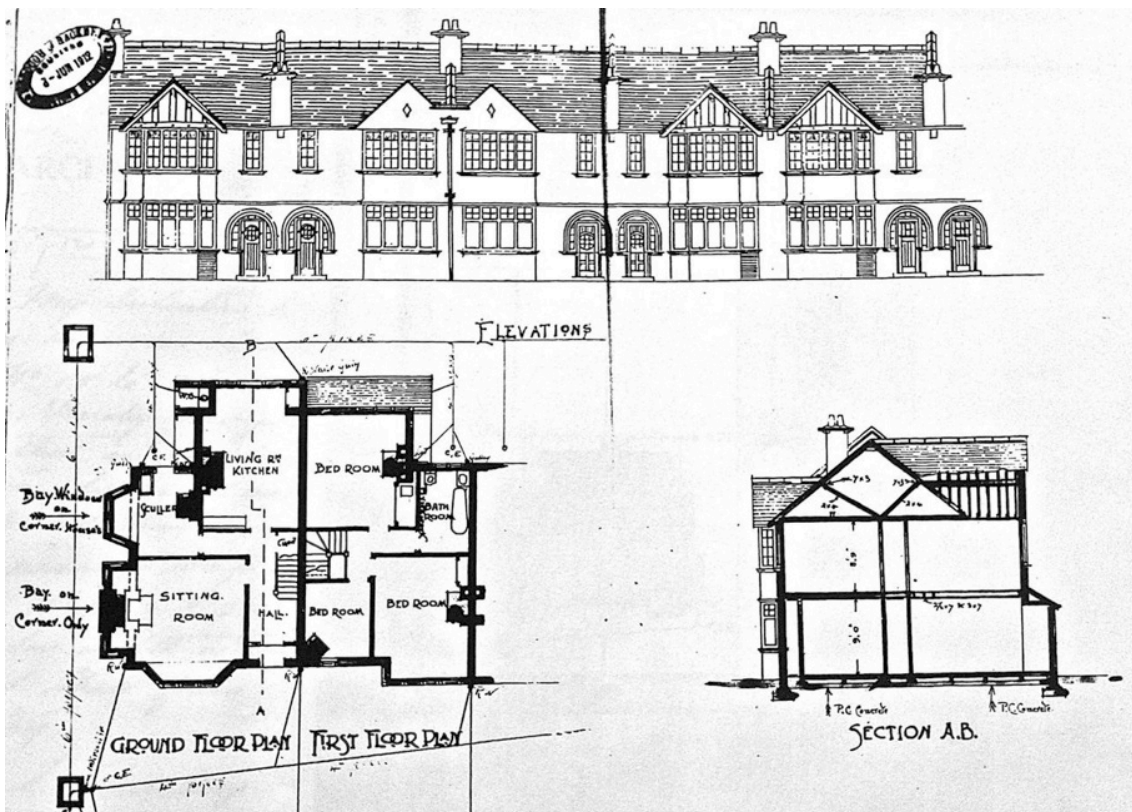


Figure 287. Plans from application for houses in Craven Walk, submitted to the District Surveyor in June 1912 by R.A. Reader. It is not clear if the design was prepared by Richard A. Reader; the drawings are unsigned, the style of the writing is different from his other drawings (caps) and his trademark driveway below the elevation in perspective is also missing. 1-41 Leadale Road were also built in the same style; the application for these was submitted by R.A. Reader in December 1912 (Ibid., No. 185, November 11, 1912).

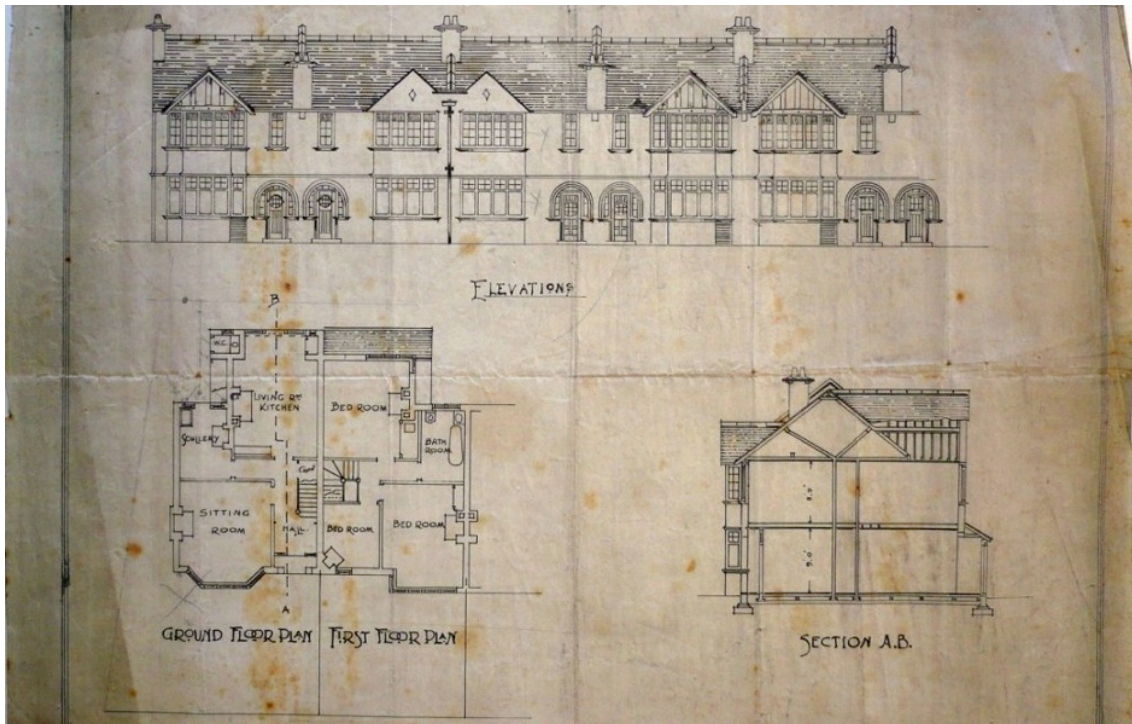


Figure 288. The design for Craven Walk is in the Readers archive but is also unsigned (Reader Brothers Collection, LMA/4430/05/030, London Metropolitan Archives).



Figure 289. Houses in Leadale Road, Upper Clapton, for sale by Barclay, built c. 1913. Richard Reader was the builders' manager but the design for the houses shown on the photo was probably not by him as he had only just taken over and the designs (see drawings for Craven Walk above) do not carry his handwriting (Boyle, p. 58).



Figure 290. Houses in Asstead Road, Upper Clapton, for D.S. Barclay. R.A. Reader brings in the more elaborate style that he had successfully employed on the Monkams estate. The design drawings for these houses are unmistakably his. The houses have not been well maintained but one cannot escape the feeling that the style that worked well on the spacious Monkams estate, did not perhaps work as well within the confines of the much denser terraced housing in Hackney. The last houses built before the war in Leadale Road are much less exuberant, as if R.A. Reader had learnt that same lesson.

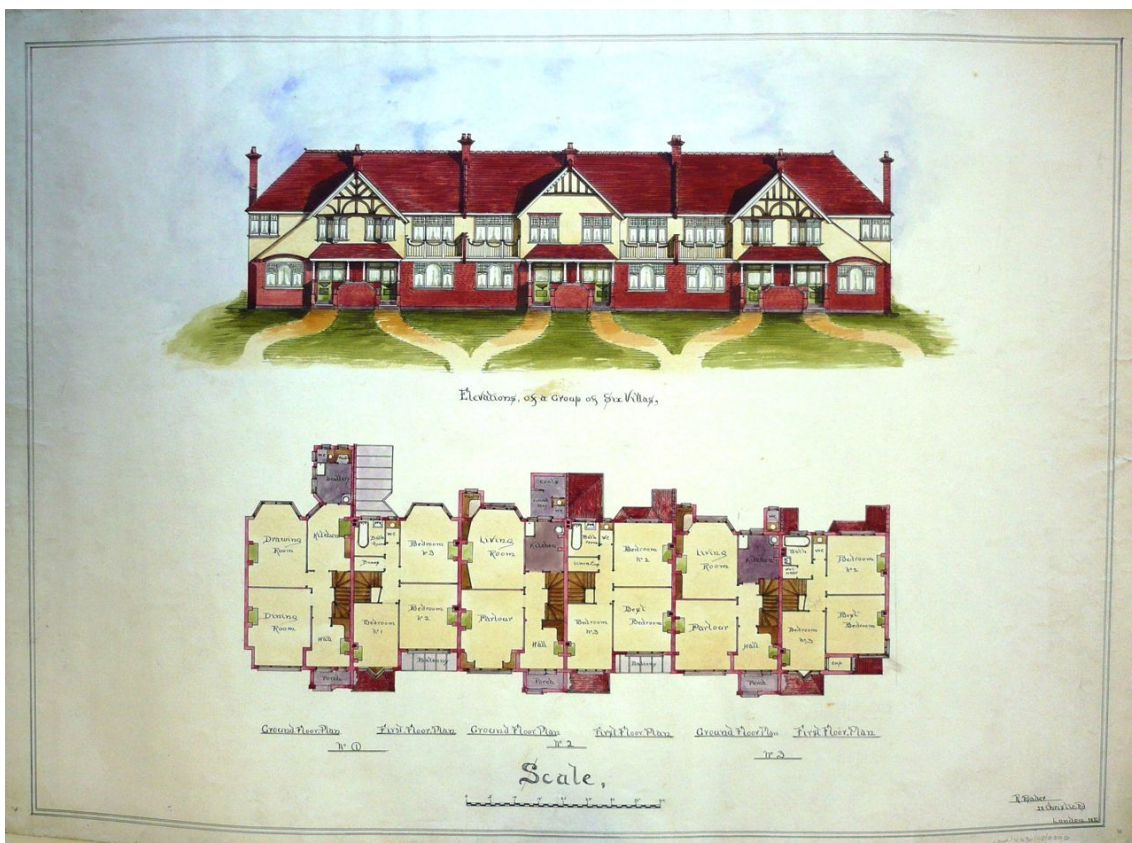


Figure 291. A design in the Readers' archive which was used for the houses in Asstead Road (Reader Brothers Collection, LMA/4430/05/030, London Metropolitan Archives)

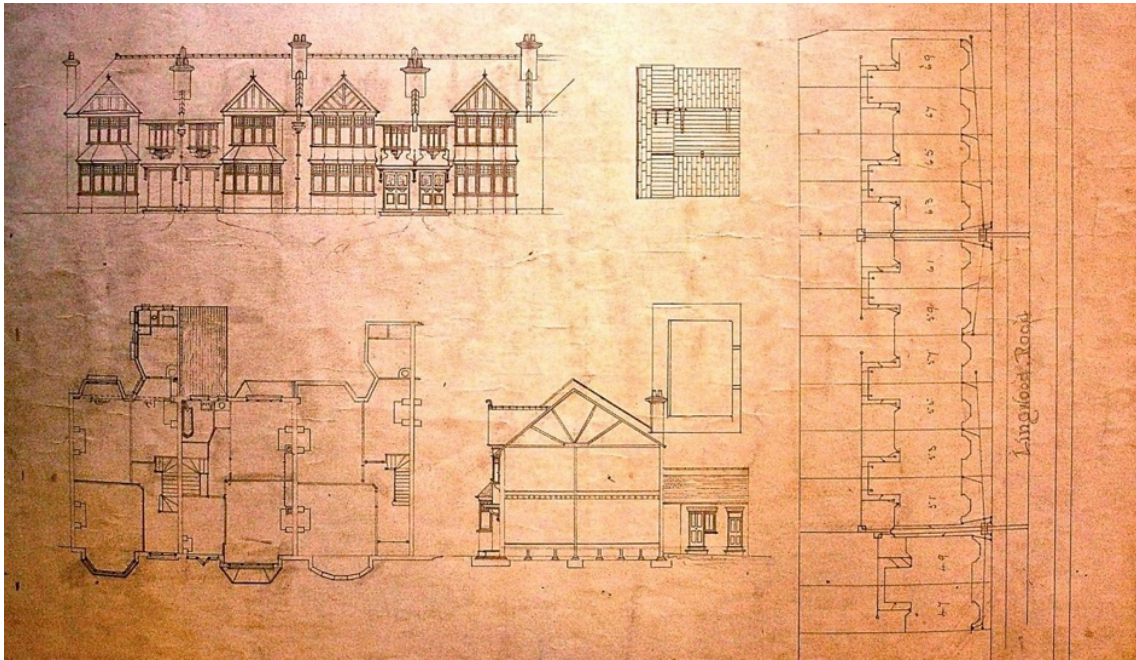


Figure 292. 12 Houses in Lingwood Road, designed by Richard Reader as D.S. Barclay's builders' manager, 1912 (Ibid.).

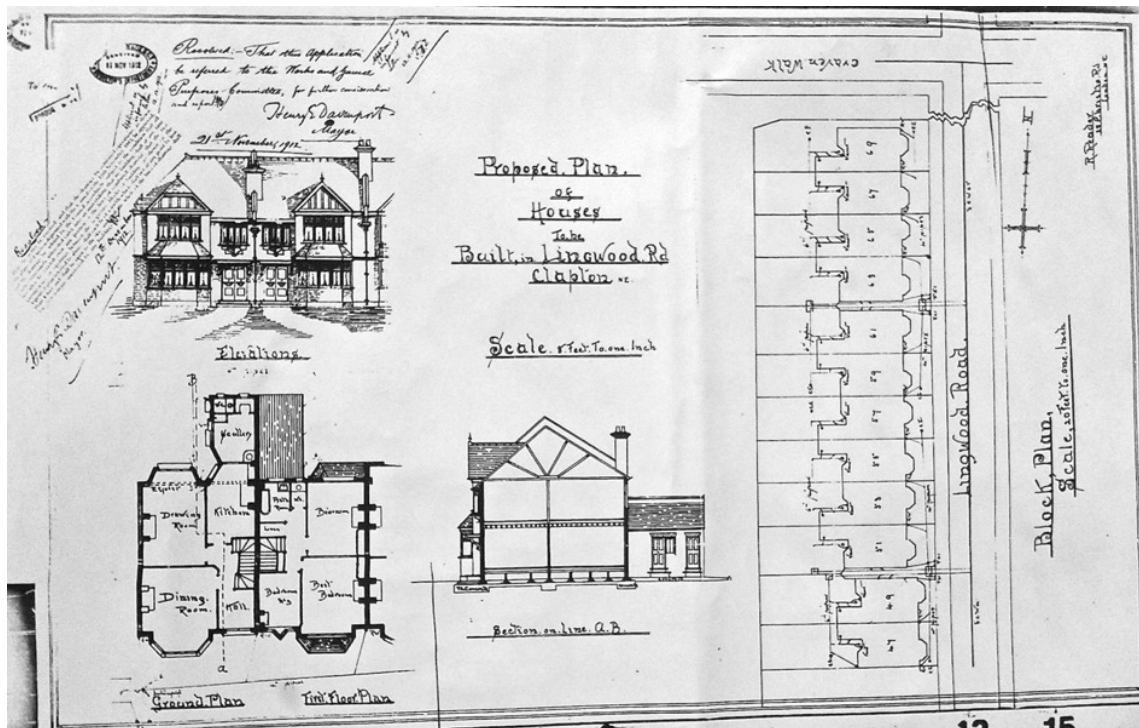


Figure 293. Tracing of the drawing that was submitted as building notice and drainage application to the District Surveyor in November 1912. By then, R.A. Reader left his mark on the design of Barclay's houses (Hackney Borough Council, 'Notice of Intention to Build', No. 185, November 11, 1912, Hackney Local History Archive).





Figure 294. Houses in Lingwood Road today, built c. 1913. Note the festoon on the gables which Edmondson had used widely on the Monkham's estate.

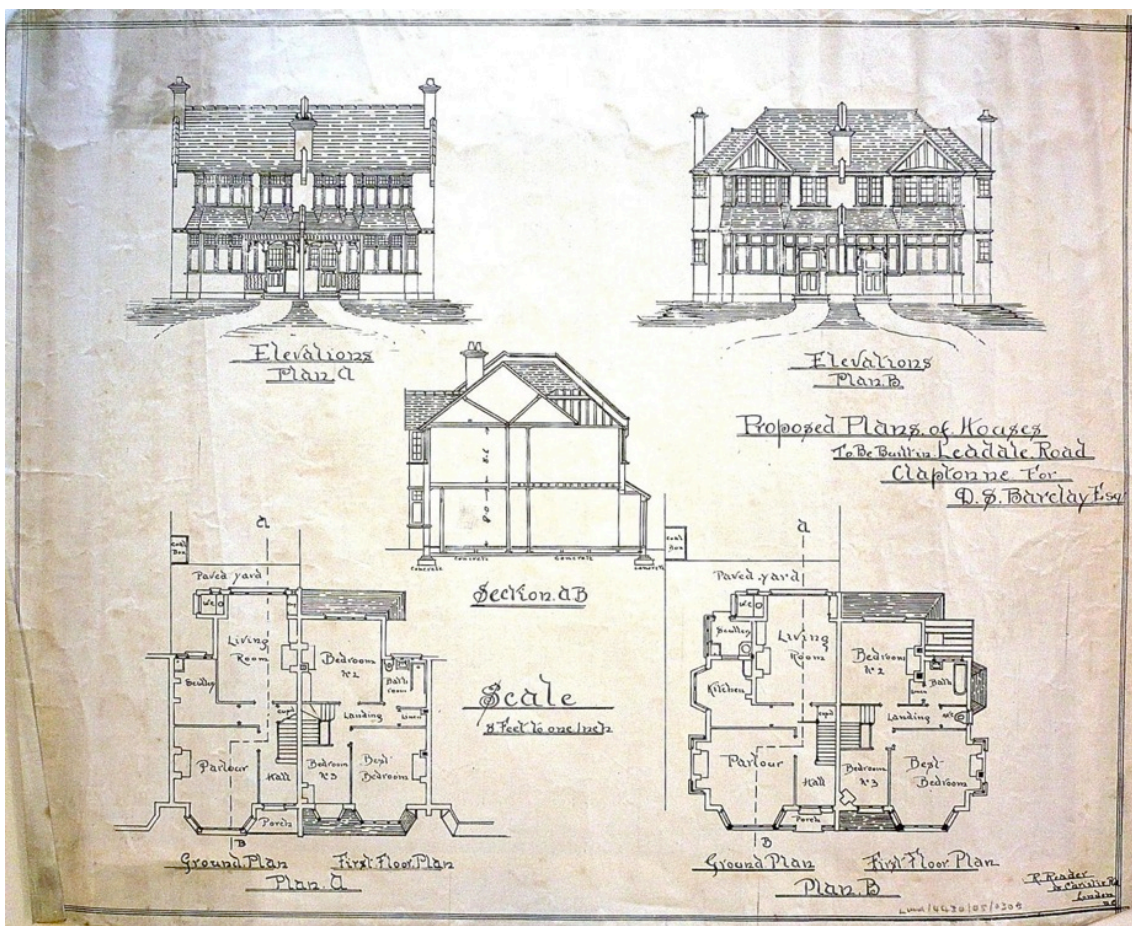


Figure 295. Houses in Leadale Road, Clapton, designed by Richard Reader as D.S. Barclay's builders' manager. The building notice was submitted as late as August 1914, but they were still built (Reader Brothers Collection, LMA/4430/05/030, London Metropolitan Archives).



Figure 296. One of the few pairs of semi-detached houses built for D.S. Barclay in Upper Clapton, 1914-1915, designed by R. Reader.



Figure 297. Cleveleys Road, Poplar, built in 1920. Some of the first houses built after the war by the Readers for Poplar council.



Figure 298. Baldock Street, Bromley by Bow, c. 1923. Perhaps some of the most attractive inter-war terraced houses built by the Readers for Poplar council in a neo-georgian style with carefully detailed rolled lead-covered bay windows and canopies.



Figure 299. Kingsfield Street, Poplar, c. 1925. A more restrained and standard, but well-maintained example of the neo-georgian council house type, built by the Readers.



Figure 300. Block of flats in Gale Street, c. 1928. One of the blocks of flats built by the Readers for Poplar council in the late 1920s before they changed their policy to employ direct labour after 1931.

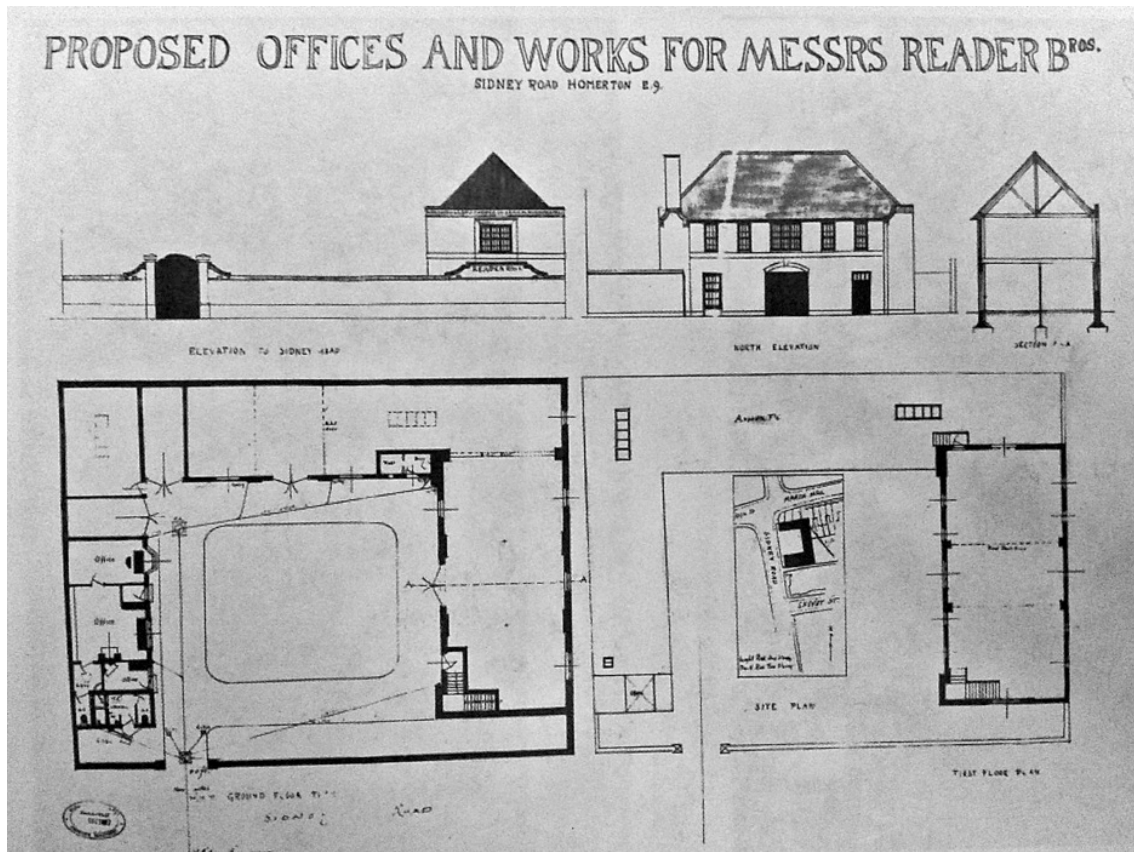


Figure 301. Building application for the Readers' builders' yard with offices in Homerton (Boyle, p. 106)

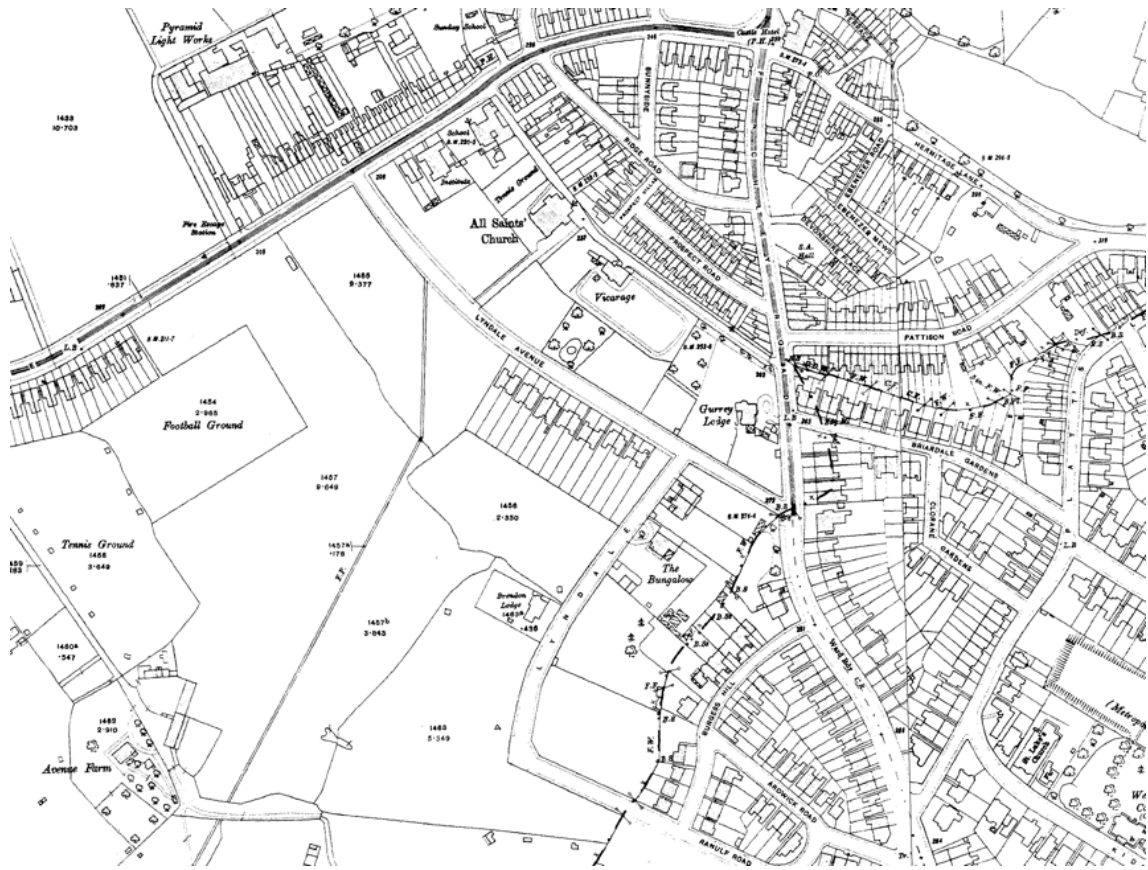


Figure 302. 1904 OS Map of Avenue Farm estate in Child's Hill with Avenue Farm to the bottom left

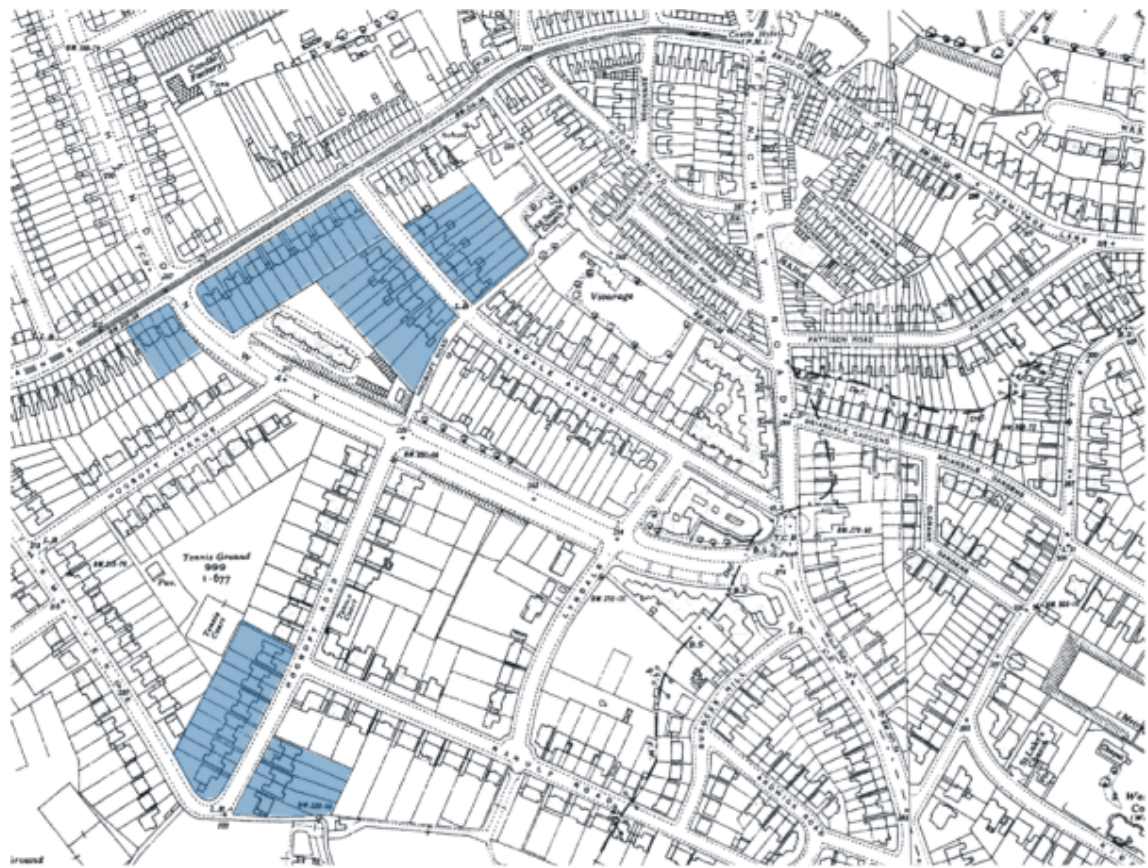


Figure 303. 1930s OS Map of the same area with the Reader houses highlighted in blue



Figure 304. One of the first speculative houses built by the Readers after the First World War in Lyndale Avenue, c. 1923, on the Avenue Farm estate. The design is a continuation in style from their work on the Monkham's estate.



Figure 305 Houses built by the Readers in Lyndale Avenue, c. 1925, also on the Avenue Farm estate. The design is similar to one of the types built in Monkham's Avenue before the war.



Figure 306. Large semi-detached houses by the Readers in Hervey Road, Kidbrooke, S.E., c. 1926.

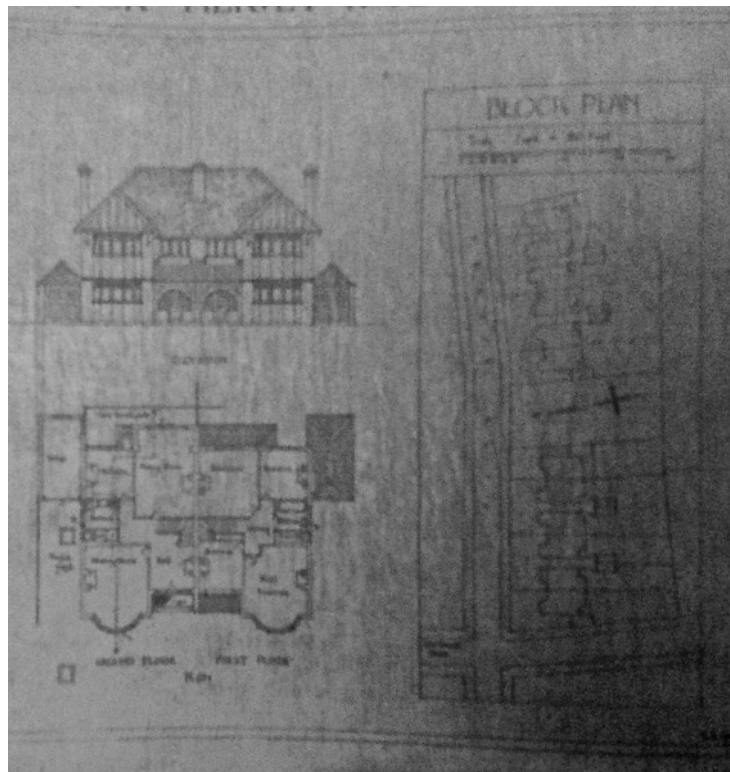
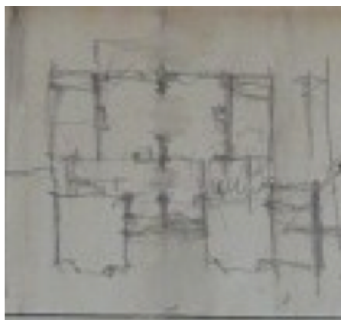


Figure 307. Drawings for the 12 houses in Hervey Road by R. Reader, 1925 (right). The sketches on the left are taken from one of the architectural magazines in the Readers archive: *Bungalows and Small Country Houses*, published in the same year, see previous page (Boyle, p. 88).

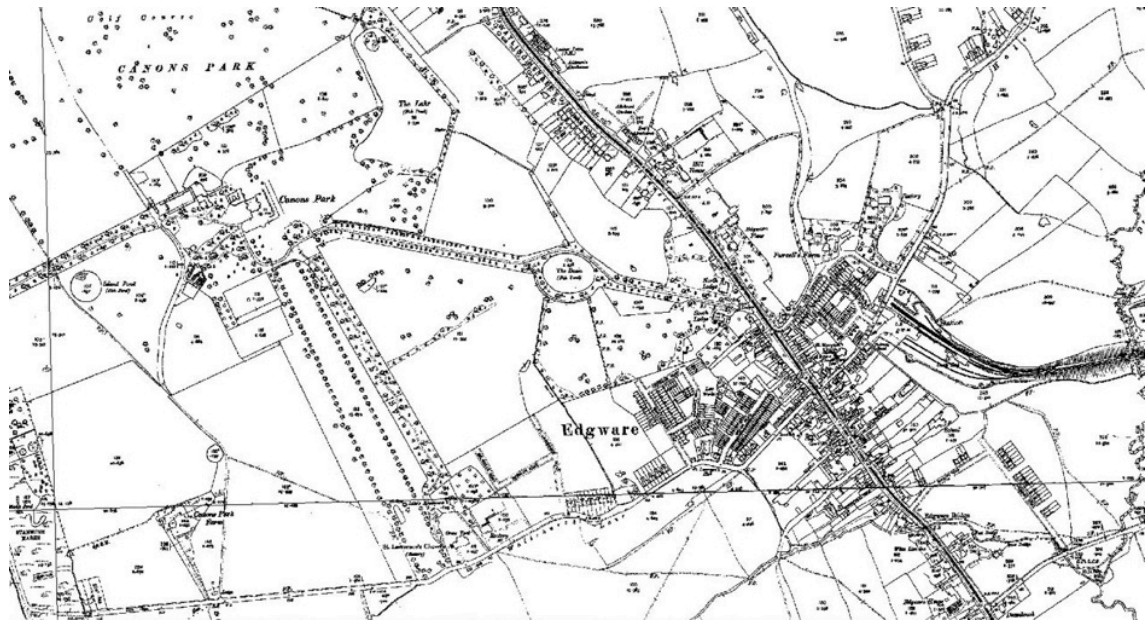


Figure 308. 1914 OS map of Canons Park estate.

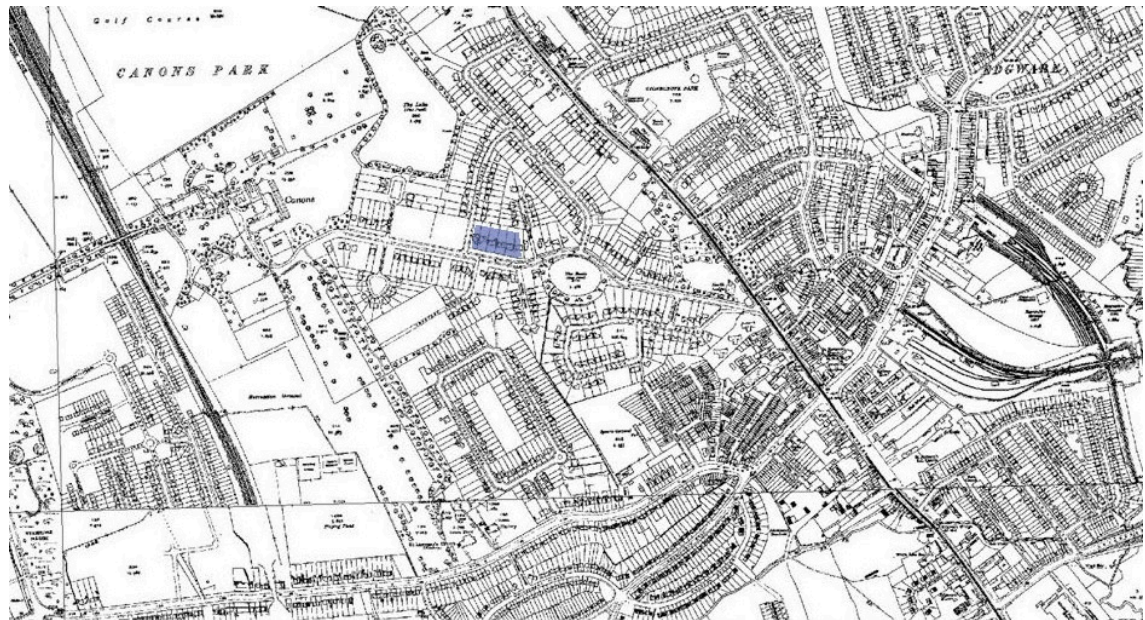


Figure 309. 1935 OS map of Canons Park estate. A.J. Butcher's layout incorporates the existing topography. The density is lower than much of the surrounding housing and the houses are of a high standard. The development overestimated the market and only sold slowly. The five Readers houses are highlighted in blue.





Figure 310. An elevation of one of the houses designed by A.J. Butcher which set the tone for the estate. The Readers opted for a red brick façade instead without timber panelling, but still incorporated the ‘farmhouse’ character in terms of the building forms (‘Canons Park Estate Conservation Area Designation and Policy Statement’ [Harrow Council, 1990], p. 8).



Figure 311. A corner house on Canons Drive, built by the Readers c. 1930. The design is unmistakably inspired by Hampstead Garden Suburb. The corner entrance is a solution proposed by Raymond Unwin to avoid unattractive blank party walls. He used these corner entrances for Hampstead Garden suburb and also discussed them in detail in his design textbook *Town Planning in Practice: An Introduction to the Art of Designing Cities and Suburbs*.



Figure 312. 1920 OS map of Chingford shows that it was still largely agricultural. Cherrydown Farm is in the centre. Most of the area was built up in the inter-war period.

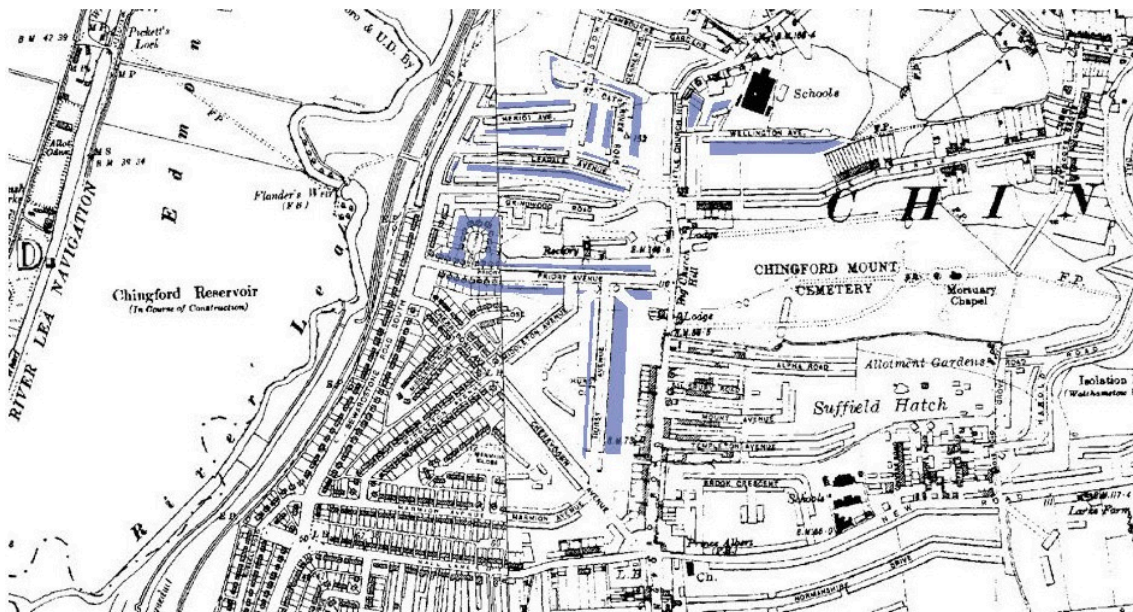


Figure 313. 1946 OS map of the same area with Readers' houses highlighted in blue.

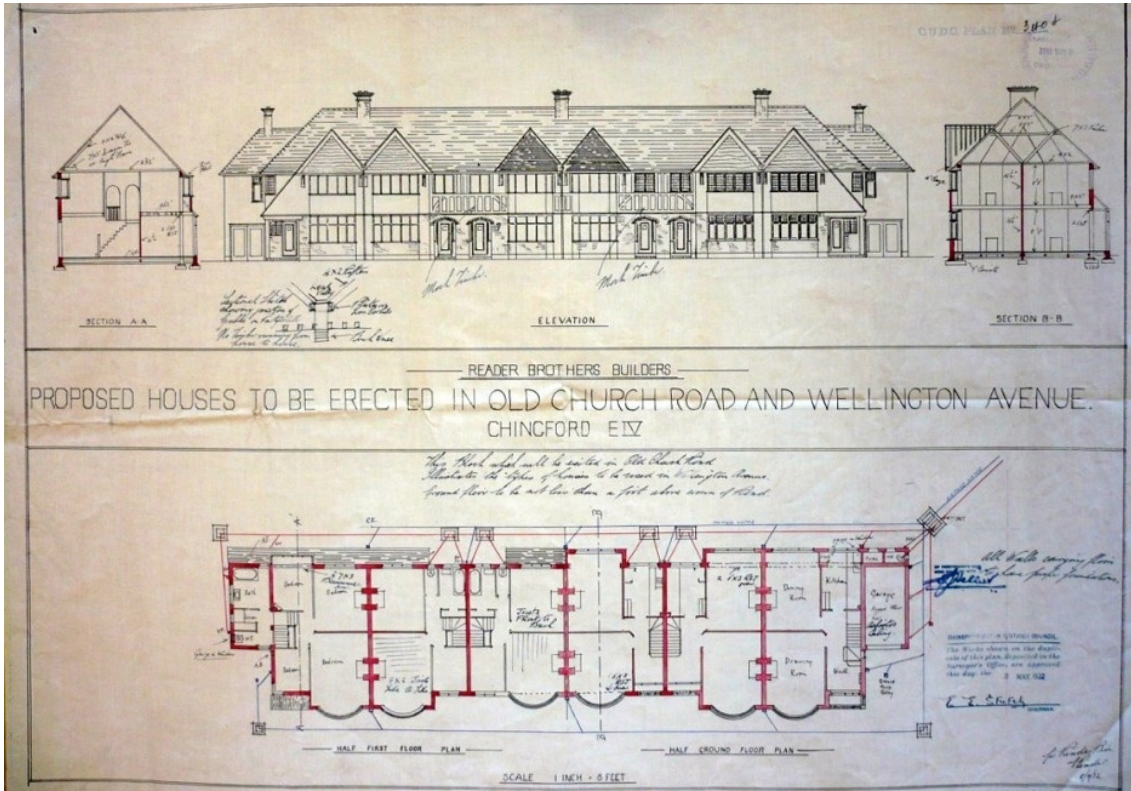


Figure 314. Drawings for houses in Old Church Road and Wellington Avenue. The drawings also include sizes of floor joists, foundations and drainage for approval by the district surveyor (Reader Brothers Collection, LMA/4430/05/022, London Metropolitan Archives).



Figure 315. Houses built by the Readers in Priory Avenue to roughly the same design but with more mock timber.

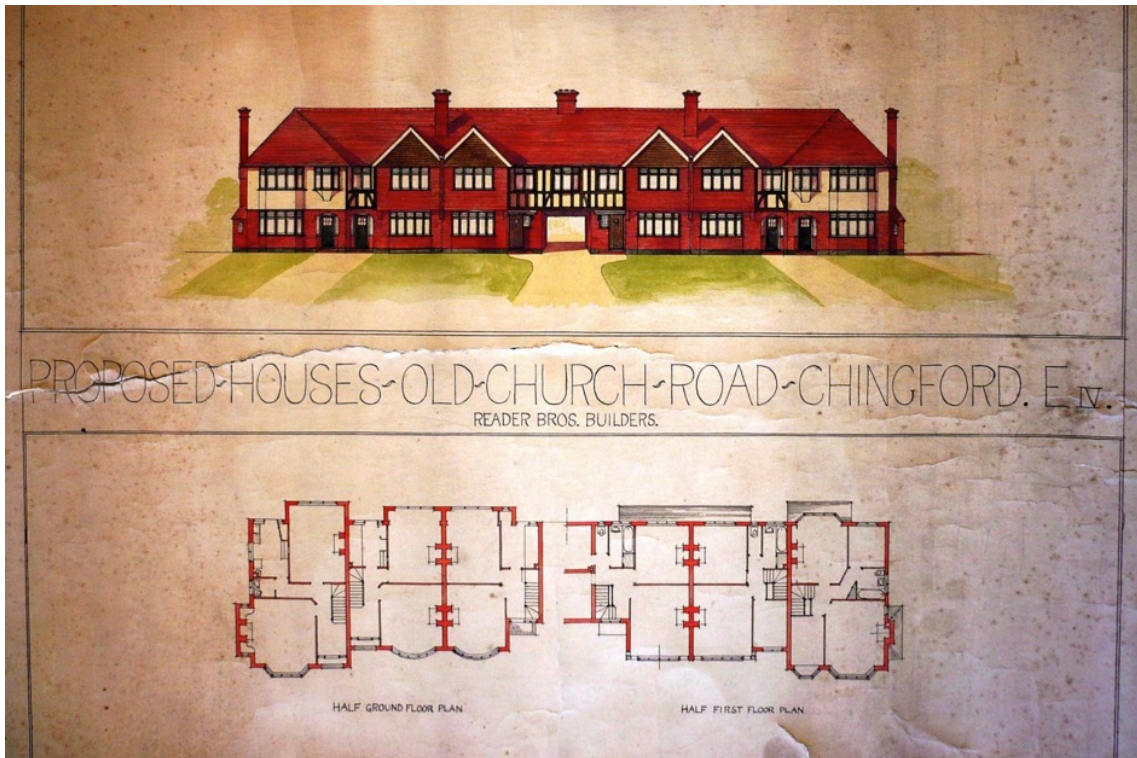


Figure 316. Designs for houses in Old Church Road by the Readers, c1932 (Ibid., LMA/4430/05/030).



Figure 317. A similar design with some small alterations was used for these houses built by the Readers in Hurst Avenue, c. 1932.

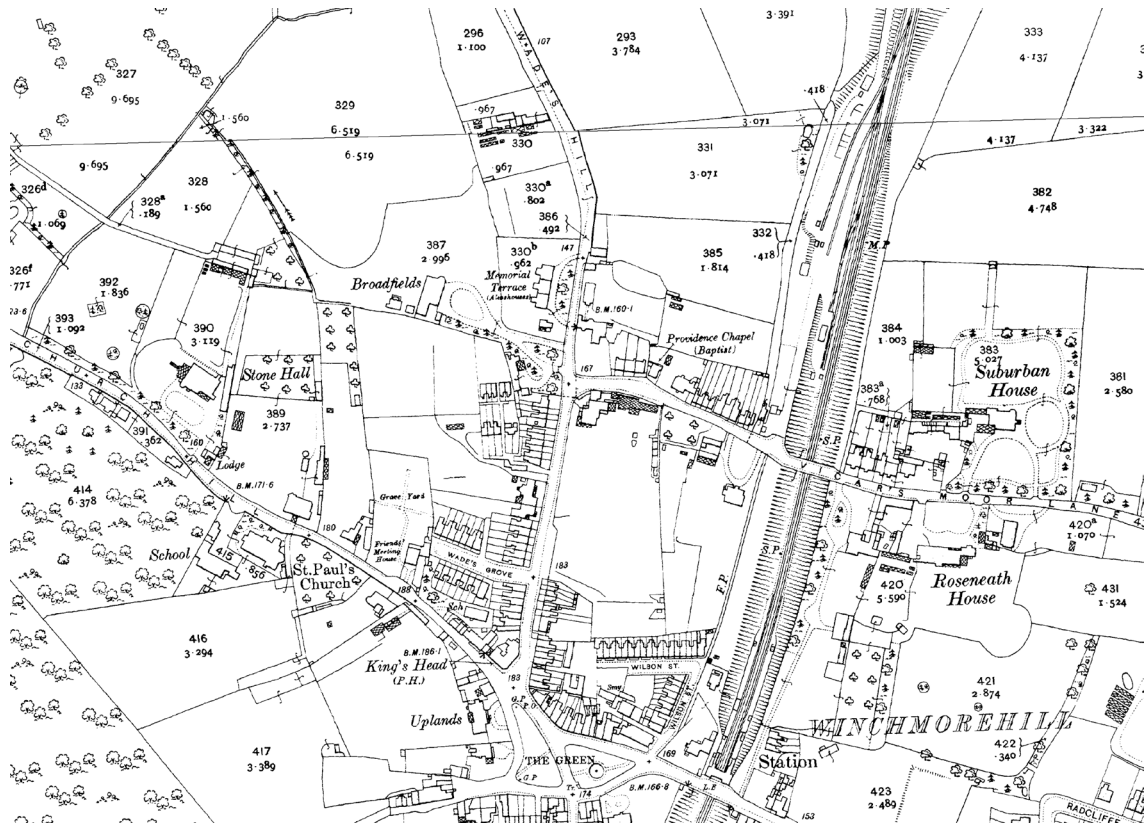


Figure 318. 1913 OS map of Winchmore Hill showing the rail station and Broadfields farm

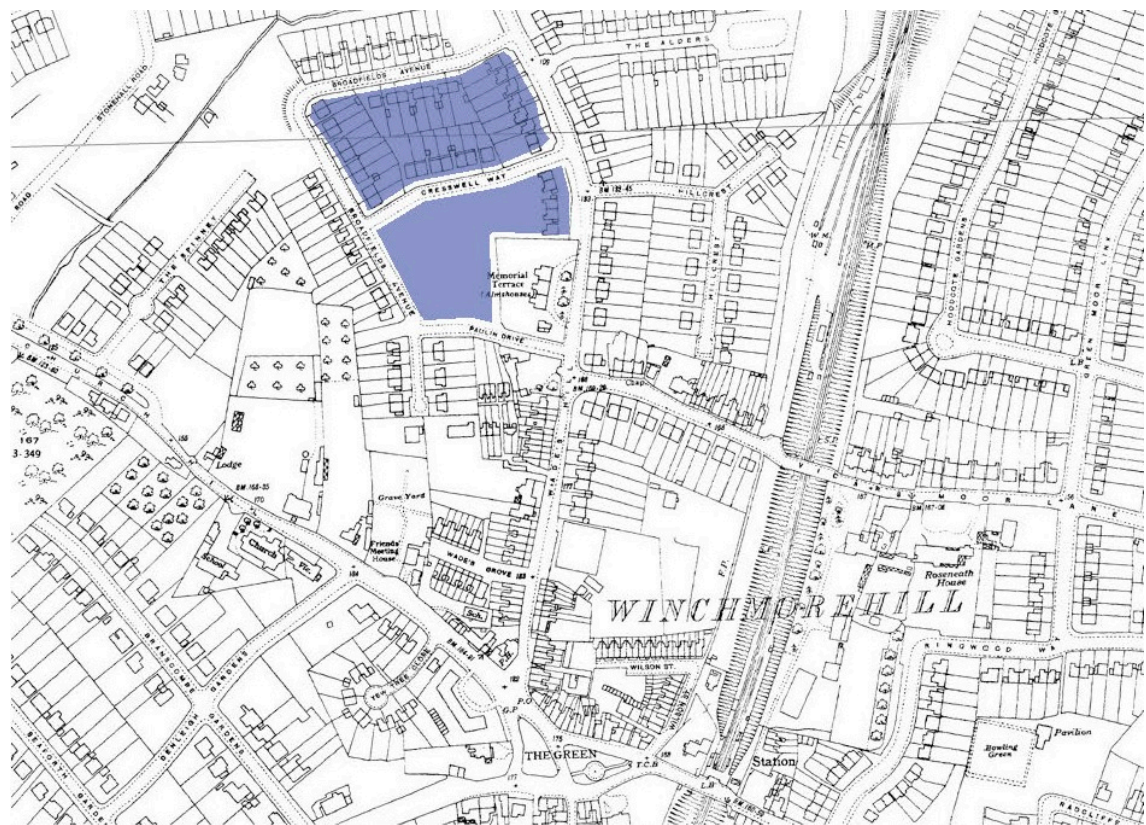


Figure 319. 1935 OS map of Winchmore Hill. The two lots of the Broadfields estate purchased by the Readers are highlighted in blue.

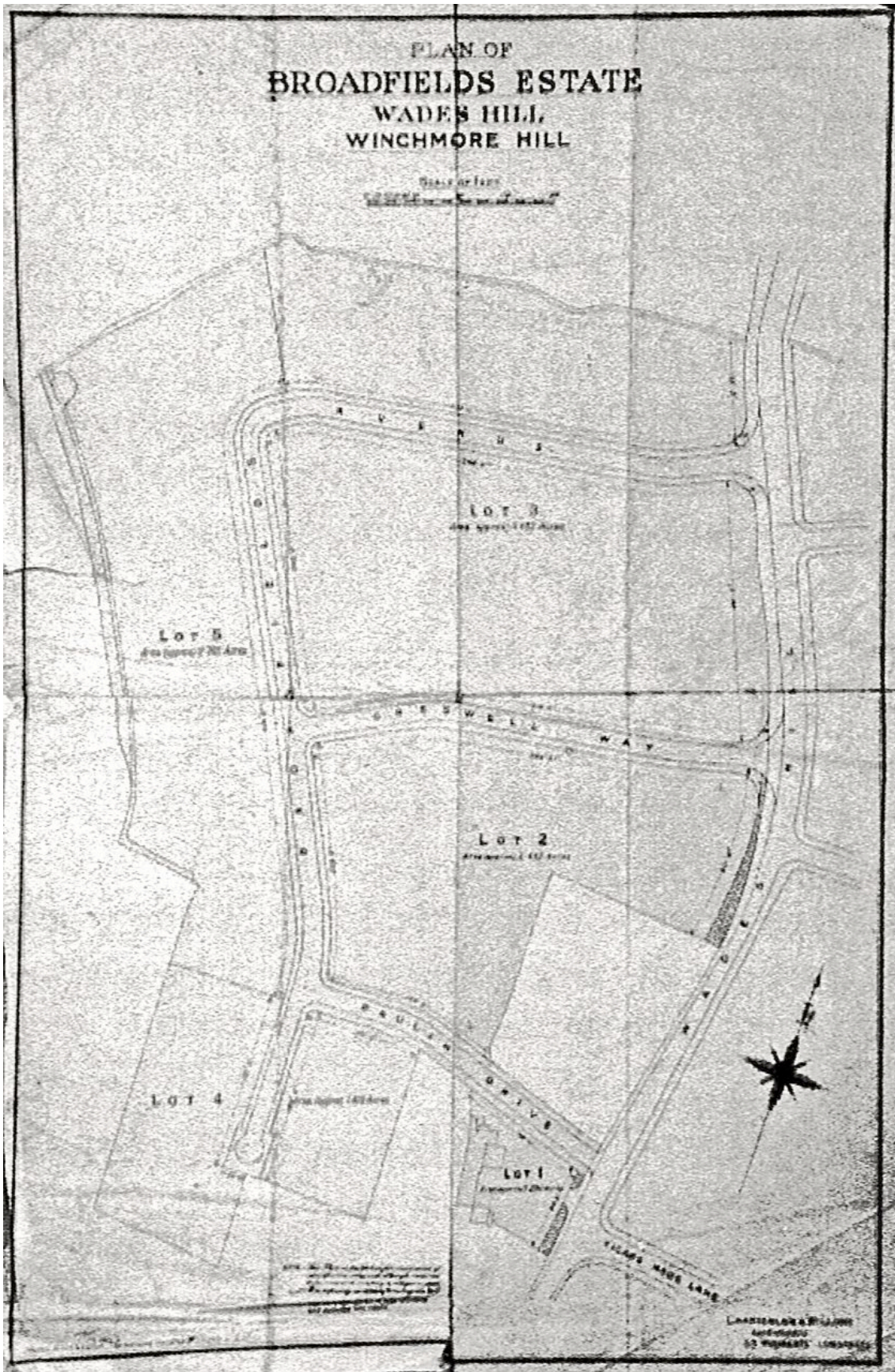


Figure 320. Auction catalogue map of Broadfields estate. The Readers purchased lots 2 & 3 (Boyle, p. 152).



Figure 321. Map of Broadfields estate building plots (Reader Brothers Collection, LMA/4430/05/113, London Metropolitan Archives).



Figure 322. Map of Broadfields estate with block plans of houses and drainage runs (Ibid., LMA/4430/05/114).



Figure 323. Reader houses in Cresswell Way on the Broadfields estate, Winchmore Hill, *c.* 1935



Figure 324. Reader houses in Cresswell Way on the Broadfields estate, Winchmore Hill, *c.* 1935





Figure 325. Houses in Wades Hill on the Broadfields estate in Winchmore Hill, c. 1935



Figure 326. 1939 OS map of Church Hill Estate, Loughton, with the plots built up by the Readers before the Second World War highlighted in blue, and those after in purple.



Figure 327. Map of the Church Hill estate in Loughton. The last housing development by the Readers before the Second World War (Boyle, p. 158).



Figure 328. Readers' houses in Hill Top Close built just before the Second World War, c. 1939



Figure 329. Readers' houses in Hill Top Close built just before the Second World War, c. 1939



Figure 330. Houses built by the Readers in Hill Top Close after the Second World War, 1950s

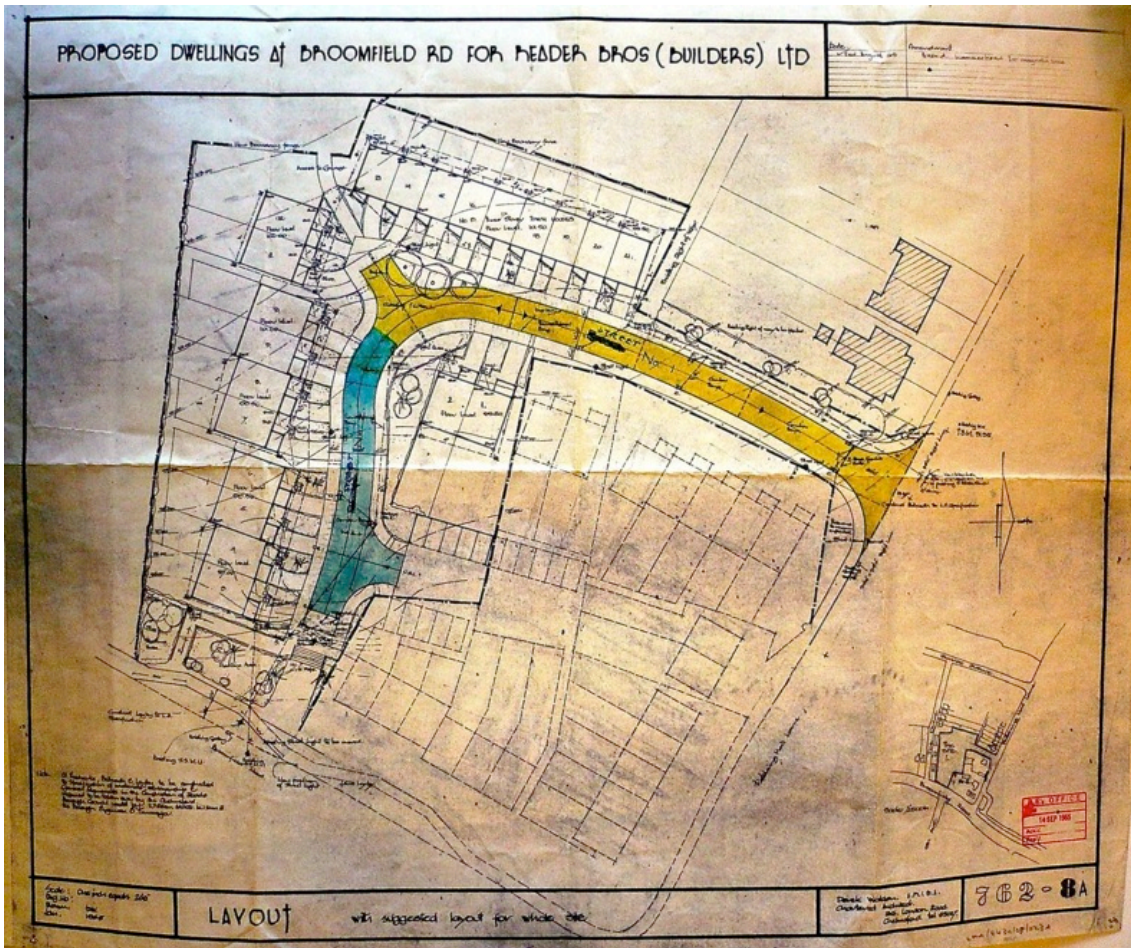


Figure 331. One of the few new housing developments built by the Readers after the Second World War on Barnfield Mews off Broomfield Road in Chelmsford (Reader Brothers Collection, LMA/4430/05/023, London Metropolitan Archives)



Figure 332. The houses in Barnfield Mews built by the Readers

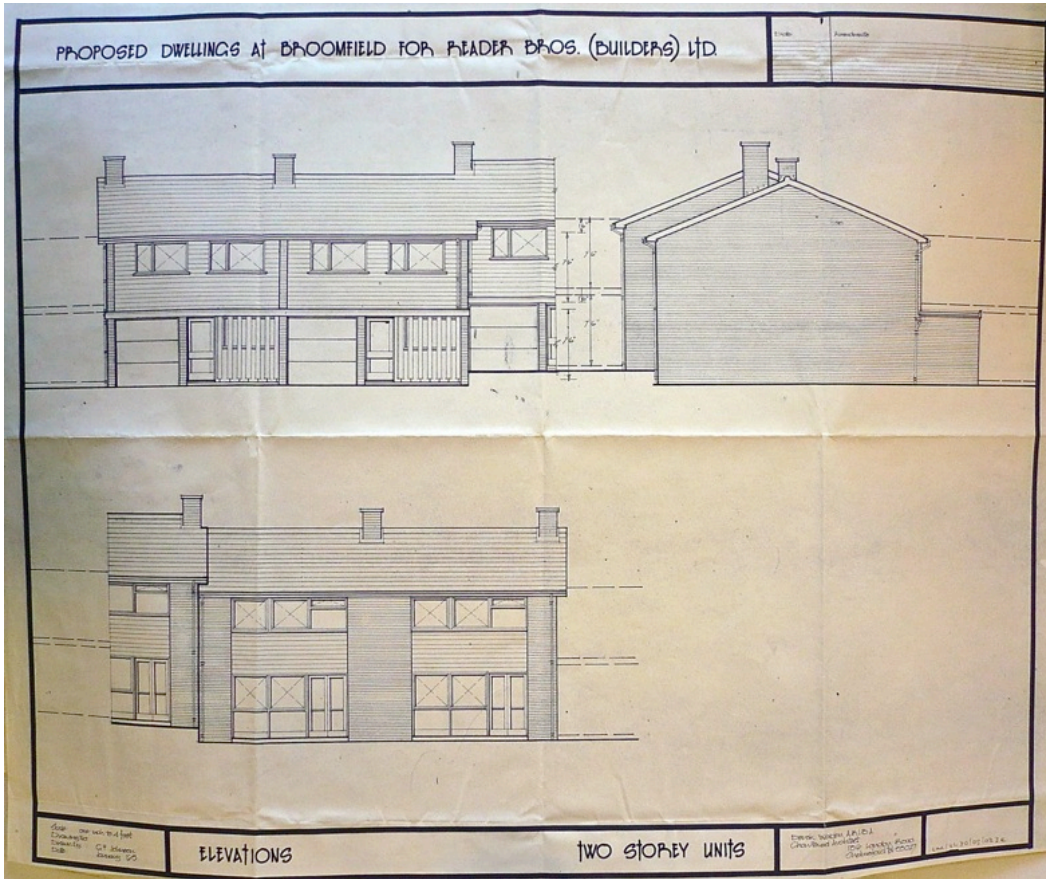


Figure 333. Elevations of the houses built by the Readers. The architect for the entire estate was Derek Walden, ARIBA, based in 186 London Road, Chelmsford (Ibid., LMA/4430/05/023).



Figure 334. Fireplace in dining room of 13 Priory Avenue, Chingford, 1931 (Photos from Josephine Boyle's personal collection)



Figure 335. South Chase housing, 2012, Architect: Alison Brooks



Figure 336. Accordia housing, Cambridge, 2008, Architects: Feilden Clegg Bradley, Maccreanor Lavington, and Alison Brooks



Figure 337. St Mark's Road Housing, London, 1979, Architects: Jeremy and Fennela Dixon

## **Appendix**







1908	Knellier Rd, Whitton	05242	Semi-detached	H.J. Rudge, 4 Prospect Crescent, Whitton	unknown	Other (signed but no title)
1909	Knellier Rd, Whitton	05243	Semi-detached	C. Rickard, 4 Cedar Ave, Whitton	unknown	Other (signed)
1910	Knellier Rd, Whitton	05244	Semi-detached	J. Mills & Son, Kneller Rd, Whitton	unknown	Other (signed but no title)
1911	Savile Road, Twickenham	08845	Semi-detached	J. Hebblethwaite, Gould Road, Twickenham	unknown	Other (signed)
1912	Dunley Rd, Richmond	02847	Terraced	H. Joyce & Son, 80 The Green, Twickenham	unknown	Other (signed)
1922	Savile Road, Twickenham	08846	Detached	G.E. Snell, 63 Aragon Road, Twickenham	unknown	Other (signed)
1924	Edwin Rd, Twickenham	02806	Terraced	A. B. Couch, Ashley Rd, Hampton	unknown	Other (signed)
1925	Savile Road, Twickenham	08850	Semi-detached	G.J. Croach, Builder, Mount Felix, Walton-on-Thames	unknown	Other (signed)
1926	Savile Road, Twickenham	08851	Semi-detached	J. Moore, 31 Talbot Rd, Isleworth	unknown	Other (signed)
1929	Suffolk Rd, Barnes	09717	Detached	unknown	unknown	Other (signed)
1929	Suffolk Rd, Barnes	09719	Detached	Ives Bros, 13 Lowther Road, Barnes, S.W.	unknown	Other (signed)
1929	Sunnyside Rd, Teddington	09687	Detached	E.C. Prosser, 27 Stuart St, Luton Beds	unknown	Other (signed but no title)
1930	Augustus Road SW13	00130	Detached	Ives Bros, 13 Lowther Road, Barnes, S.W.	unknown	Other (signed)
1930	Suffolk Rd, Barnes	09713	Detached	F.G. Fox, Builder & Decorator, 27 Chisworth St, Paddington W2	unknown	Other (signed)
1932	Eastbourne Gardens, East Sheen	02827	Semi-detached	Janis Wells, Cross St, Hampton Hill	unknown	Other (signed)
1934	School Road, Hampton Hill	08828	Semi-detached	G. Singleton, School Road, Hampton Hill	unknown	Other (signed)
1935	Savile Road, Twickenham	08847	Semi-detached	Gilbert Saville Ltd, 64 Wellington Rd, Hampton Hill	unknown	Other (signed)
1936	Savile Road, Twickenham	08843	Terraced	Cromer Land & Real Estate Co Ltd, 7 New Square	unknown	Other (signed)
1936	Savile Road, Twickenham	08848	Semi-detached	Cromer Land & Real Estate Co Ltd	unknown	Other (signed)
1936	Savile Road, Twickenham	08844	Semi-detached	J. Butler, 32 Colonial Avenue, Whitton	unknown	Other (signed)
1938	Kneller Rd, Whitton	05259	Bungalow	Mutual Real Estate Investment Co Ltd	unknown	Other (signed)
1938	Sunnyside Rd, Teddington	09686	Detached	J. Butler, 28 Eastbury Road, Kingston on Thames	W. Alexander, F.S.I., Architect & Surveyor, Auctioneer & Estate Agent, 64 Wellington Rd, Hampton Hill	Architect & Surveyor
1938	Sunnyside Rd, Teddington	00168	Semi-detached	W.B.Fanning, 28 Eastbury Road, Kingston on Thames	W. Alexander, F.S.I., Architect & Surveyor, Auctioneer & Estate Agent, 64 Wellington Rd, Hampton Hill	Architect & Surveyor
1938	Atbara Road, Teddington	00435	Detached	Mrs. Winney, Station Road, Hampton Wick	W.E. Bruce, Seymour Road, Hampton Wick	Other (signed but no title)
1938	Atbara Road, Teddington	00436	Detached	W.B.Fanning, 28 Eastbury Road, Kingston on Thames	W.E. Bruce, Seymour Road, Hampton Wick	Other (signed but no title)
1939	Sunnyside Rd, Teddington	09709	Semi-detached	J. Wallis, 2 Avon Cottages, Walpole Crescent	W.E. Bruce, Seymour Road, Hampton Wick	Other (signed but no title)
1939	Sunnyside Rd, Teddington	09707	Semi-detached	W.H. Pecover, Builder, 210 High St, Walskstone	W.E. Bruce, Seymour Road, Hampton Wick	Other (signed but no title)
1923	Kingsway, Barnes	05307	Terraced	W.H. Pecover, Builder, 210 High St, Walskstone	W.H. Pecover, Builder, 210 High St, Walskstone	Builder
1921	Kingsway, Barnes	05304	Terraced	H.G. Crew Esq	W.H. Pecover, Builder, 46 Kingsway, Building Estate, Sheen, SW	Builder
1923	Kingsway, Barnes	05294	Terraced	unknown, probably same as builder but not clear	W.H. Pecover, Builder, 46 Kingsway, Building Estate, Sheen, SW	Builder
1923	Kingsway, Barnes	05305	Terraced	W.H. Pecover, Builder, 46 Kingsway, Building Estate, Sheen, SW	W.H. Pecover, Builder, 46 Kingsway, Building Estate, Sheen, SW	Builder
1923	Kingsway, Barnes	05306	Terraced	W.H. Pecover, Builder, 46 Kingsway, Building Estate, Sheen, SW	W.H. Pecover, Builder, 46 Kingsway, Building Estate, Sheen, SW	Builder
1923	Fulwell Rd	09707	Semi-detached	W.J. North, Norman Hurst, Princes Rd	W.J. North, Norman Hurst, Princes Rd	Other (signed)
1901	Atbara Road, Teddington	00165	Detached	E.T. Moore, 170 Acce Road, Kingston on Thames	unknown	Other (signed)
1901	Atbara Road, Teddington	00166	Detached	W.H. Pecover, Builder, 46 Kingsway, Building Estate, Sheen, SW	W.H. Pecover, Builder, 46 Kingsway, Building Estate, Sheen, SW	Other (signed)
1925	Atwood Avenue, Richmond	00132	Detached	W.T.A. Froude, 194 Lew Road, Richmond	W.T.A. Froude, 194 Lew Road, Richmond	Other (signed but no title)
1925	Atwood Avenue, Richmond	00135	Detached	W.T.A. Froude, 4 Walpole Avenue, Richmond	W.T.A. Froude, 4 Walpole Avenue, Richmond	Surveyor
1925	Atwood Avenue, Richmond	00133	Detached	W.T.A. Froude, 255 Stanmore Gardens, Richmond	W.T.A. Froude, 255 Stanmore Gardens, Richmond	Surveyor
1925	Atwood Avenue, Richmond	00134	Detached	W.T.A. Froude, 4 Walpole Avenue, Kew Gardens	W.T.A. Froude, 4 Walpole Avenue, Kew Gardens	Surveyor
1926	Atwood Avenue, Richmond	00140	Detached	W.T.A. Froude, 4 Walpole Avenue, Kew Gardens	W.T.A. Froude, 4 Walpole Avenue, Kew Gardens	Surveyor
1927	Atwood Avenue, Richmond	00136	Semi-detached	W.T.A. Froude, 4 Walpole Avenue, Kew Gardens	W.T.A. Froude, 4 Walpole Avenue, Kew Gardens	Surveyor
1926	Atwood Avenue, Richmond	00137	Terraced	G.W.F. Bates, 30 Halfway St, Barnes	Wainwright James, Architect, Eastbourne & Barnes	Architect
1926	Atwood Avenue, Richmond	00138	Terraced	G.W.F. Bates, 30 Halfway St, Barnes	Wainwright James, Architect, Eastbourne & Barnes	Architect
1926	Atwood Avenue, Richmond	00139	Terraced	G.W.F. Bates, 30 Halfway St, Barnes	Wainwright James, Architect, Eastbourne & Barnes	Architect
1903	East Sheen Av, SW14	02821	Semi-detached	F. Barall	William Hunt, Architect & Surveyor, Domington House, Norfolk Street, Strand, WC	Architect & Surveyor
1903	East Sheen Av, SW14	02821	Semi-detached	unknown, probably same as builder but not clear	William Hunt, Architect & Surveyor, Domington House, Norfolk Street, Strand, WC	Architect & Surveyor
1903	East Sheen Av, SW14	02814	Semi-detached	unknown, probably same as builder but not clear	William Hunt, Architect & Surveyor, Domington House, Norfolk Street, Strand, WC	Architect & Surveyor
1903	East Sheen Av, SW14	02815	Semi-detached	unknown, probably same as builder but not clear	William Hunt, Architect & Surveyor, Domington House, Norfolk Street, Strand, WC	Architect & Surveyor

List of surveyed building applications (Richmond Local Archive, Collection of Building Plans