

A HISTORY OF ROSE HILL OXFORD



**A report for the Oxford Preservation Trust
by Liz Woolley**

Updated October 2021



James Ward (1769-1859), View of Oxford taken from Rose Hill, c.1836. Oil on panel, 5¾ x 15½ ins.

“In the early 19th century the view from Rose Hill was one of the most beautiful in the world, when the spires and towers of Oxford could be observed as one travelled along it between the meadows and cornfields.” C Violet Butler, 1958¹

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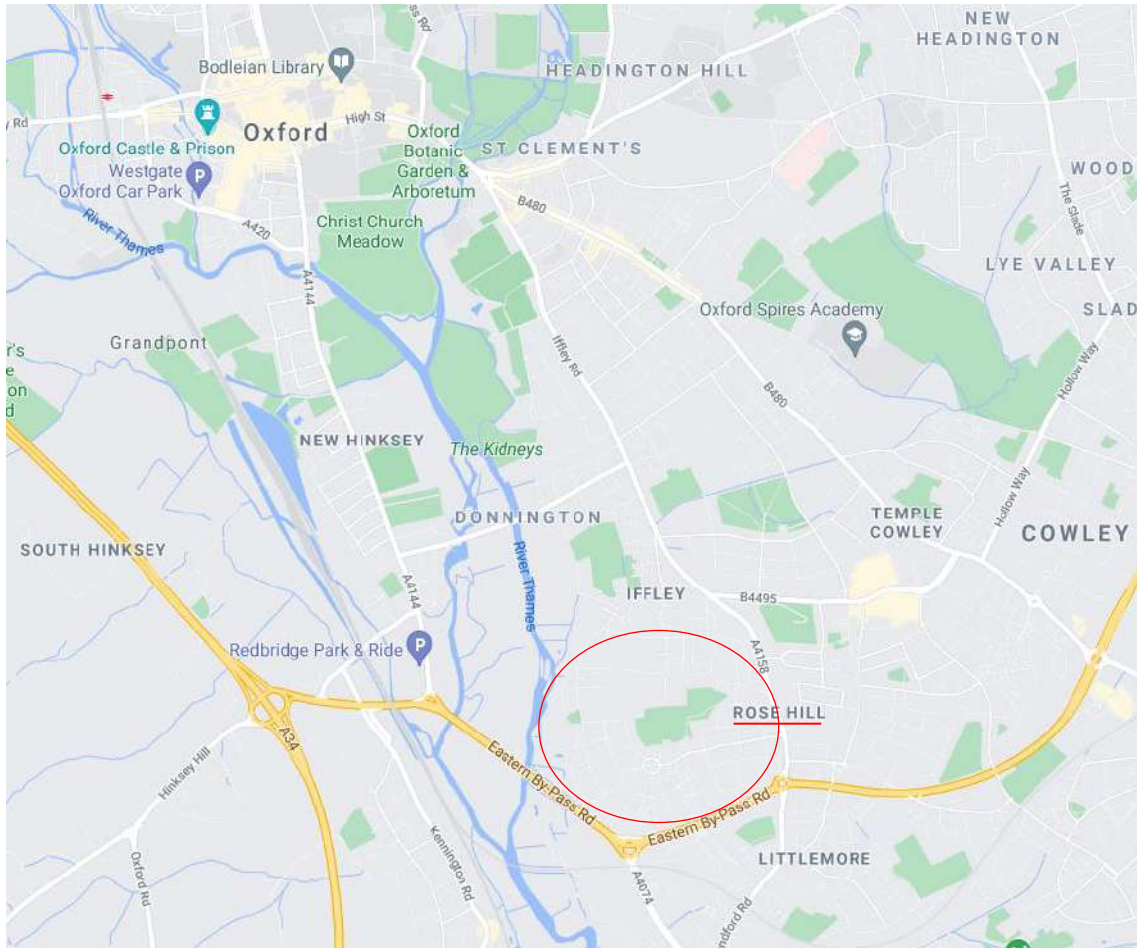
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Front cover: Rose Hill from the air, 2021, Google maps.

¹ Ann Spokes Symonds, *The Changing Faces of Rose Hill* (Robert Boyd, 2000), p.6.

INTRODUCTION

Rose Hill is a residential area about 2½ miles south-south-east of the centre of Oxford, bounded to the north and north-west by Iffley village, to the east by Cowley, to the south by the eastern by-pass and Littlemore, and to the west by the River Thames. ‘Rose Hill’ is also the name given to the A4158 connecting the Iffley Road (via its extension Henley Avenue) to the eastern by-pass; it is the main road through the area and runs along the eastern side of the settlement of Rose Hill.

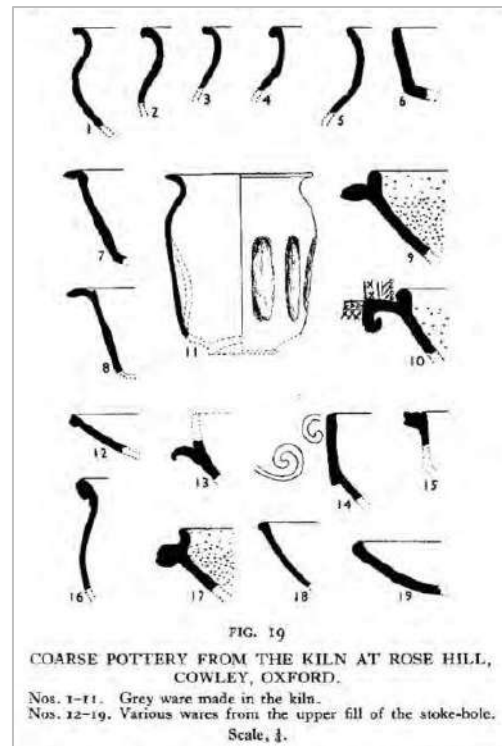
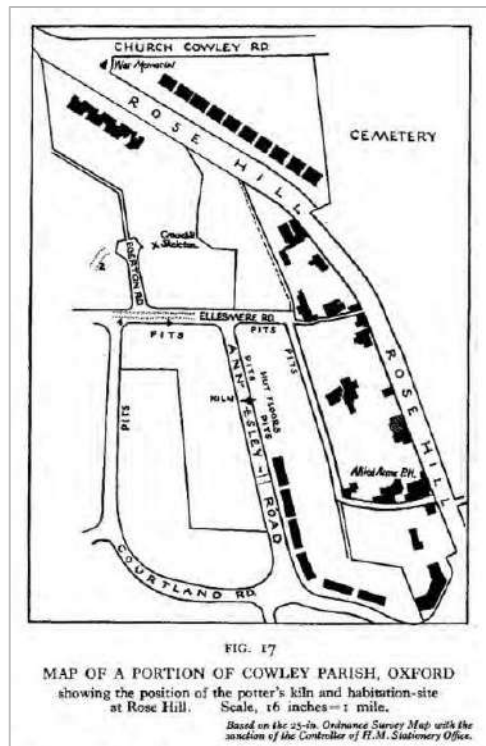


Google maps.

EARLY SETTLEMENT OF THE ROSE HILL AREA

Rose Hill is generally thought of as a 20th-century suburb of Oxford, but in fact this area has been occupied for centuries. When the northern part of the modern estate was being built in 1935, Early to Middle Iron Age ditches and evidence of later Roman activity were uncovered. The ditches confirmed the presence of a settlement enclosure; a sherd of Early Iron Age ware of Glastonbury type, with spiraliform decoration – together with several other rims and sherds of hand-made ware – indicated occupation during the transition period between the Early Iron Age and Romano-British times. Two Roman pottery kilns were discovered, relating to a pottery industry of national significance, evidence of which has been found across the eastern part of Oxford from Barton, through Cowley to Rose Hill and Blackbird Leys. As well as the kilns, there was a good deal of evidence of Romano-British habitation in the area, including habitation-pits and hut-floors.²

² DB Harden, “Two Romano-British Potters’ Fields near Oxford”, pp.81-102 in *Oxoniensia* Vol 1 (1936), p.99. Oxford City Council, *Iffley Village Conservation Area Appraisal* (2009), p.5.



(Left) Map of Roman sites at Rose Hill and (right) coarse pottery from the Roman kiln at Rose Hill. Some specimens of the pots found, including a vase and a dish, are in the Ashmolean Museum.³ Images from DB Harden, "Two Romano-British Potters' Fields near Oxford", *Oxoniensia* Vol 1 (1936), pp.95, 98.

Further evidence of a sequence of at least five ditches of Early to possibly Late Iron Age, and of limited Roman activity in the 2nd to 4th centuries AD, was found when the site of the King of Prussia pub was excavated in 2008.⁴

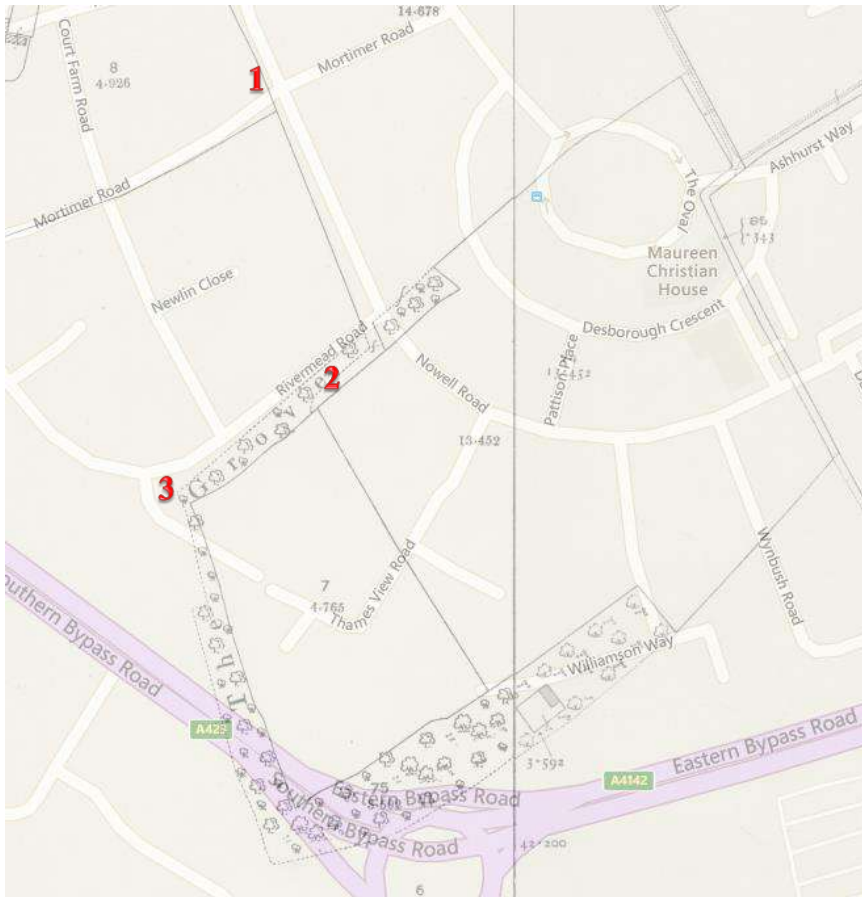
In the medieval period the Rose Hill area was mainly open fields. Investigation of field names using maps, property deeds and charters has shown that 'Barrow Hill' was in the vicinity. The 'barrow' may come from *bearu*, an Old English word for a small wood. By the 18th century Barrow Hill had been cleared and become part of the open fields. 'Bears Hedge Furlong' was a field on both sides of the Iffley/Cowley border, roughly around the southern part of where Courtland Road in Rose Hill is now. The 'bears' come from the Middle English word *berse* meaning 'an enclosed or fenced-in part of a forest'.⁵

One area of Rose Hill remained wooded for over 1,000 years: the Grove. This existed before the Norman Conquest and was mentioned in the Domesday Book as an area of coppice, and later in a 13th-century deed. In the 19th and 20th centuries the Grove is shown on maps as a small border of coppiced woods around three sides of two adjacent fields called Grove Close and Upper Grove Close.

³ Ann Spokes Symonds, *The Changing Faces of Rose Hill* (Robert Boyd, 2000), p.5.

⁴ John Moore Heritage Services, *An archaeological evaluation at King of Prussia, Rose Hill, Oxford* (2008), p.12, and site archive for watching brief and evaluation of the site of the King of Prussia, Rose Hill (2008), Oxfordshire History Centre, OXCMS: 2008.84.

⁵ Katie Hambrook, "Iffley and Rose Hill place names and field names", pp.3-4, Archeox: The East Oxford Archaeology & History Project, *Place names* (2013), <http://www.archeox.net/investigations/iffley-parish-place-names.html> [accessed 9 May 2021]. Oxford City Council, *Iffley Village Conservation Area Appraisal* (2009), p.6.



A modern map of part of Rose Hill, overlaid with the equivalent 1898 Ordnance Survey map (25-inch to the mile) which shows the position of the wooded area called 'The Grove'. The positions of surviving oak trees (see below) are marked with red numbers. From The National Library of Scotland georeferenced maps tool, <https://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore>.

Remarkably, three oak trees from the Grove still remain in the modern estate, on Rivermead Road, plus another further north on the corner of Mortimer and Nowell Roads, which sat originally near the corner of another field boundary. Their positions are marked on the map above, the numbers equating to the present-day photos below.



1. *Oak tree at the junction of Nowell and Mortimer Roads.*



2. *Oak tree outside 7 Rivermead Road.*



3. *Two oak trees at the junction of Rivermead Road and Clinton Close.*

In medieval times the Grove was probably much larger, extending over those fields and beyond. A number of field names reveal the process of clearing local woodland: 'New Close' and 'The Breach' were named when parts of the Grove were cleared and made into new fields ('breach' being a medieval word used when woodland was turned into arable).⁶

⁶ Katie Hambrook, "Iffley and Rose Hill place names and field names", pp.3-4, Archeox: The East Oxford Archaeology & History Project, *Place names* (2013), <http://www.archeox.net/investigations/iffley-parish-place->

THE 18TH CENTURY: A SETTLEMENT ON THE ROAD TO LONDON

The settlement of Rose Hill was established in the 18th century between the ancient villages of Iffley and Cowley, on the main road between Oxford to London via Henley. Remarkably, a highway stone of 1635, marking this route, survives on the western side of the road (now called ‘Rose Hill’), opposite the junction with Church Cowley Road. This stone is the oldest highway stone in Oxfordshire, and one of the oldest in the country; it is listed Grade II.⁷



The highway stone on Rose Hill, opposite the junction with Church Cowley Road. The inscription reads:

*HERE [ENDETH]
IFLY HY
WAY 1635*

Originally this road to London, called the Henley Road, branched off the Cowley Road near the present Circus Street.⁸ In the late 1770s (see over) it was extended to reach the Plain, just south-east of Magdalen Bridge, and was later more commonly known as the Iffley Road.

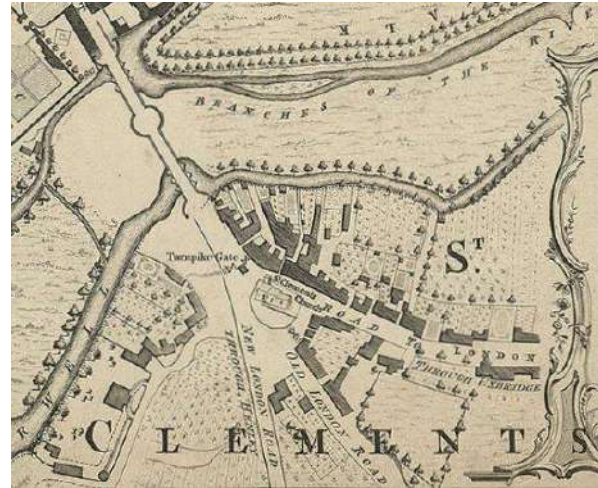
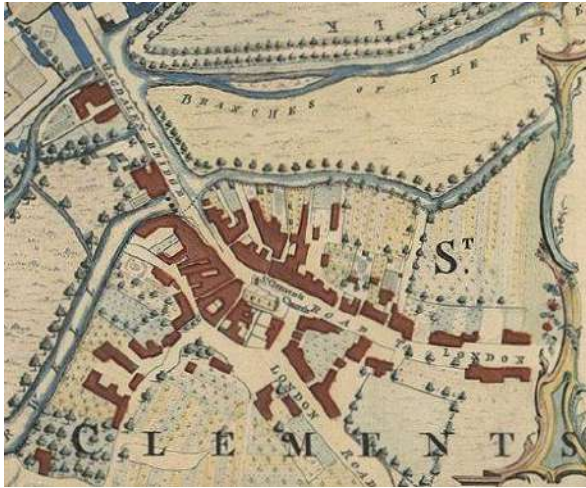
A milestone slightly further south of the highway stone, and on the opposite side of the road, outside 37 Rose Hill, dates from 1736. This was when the London–Henley–Oxford road was turnpiked, and this was the last milestone before the road reached its destination at the toll gate at the Plain, a mile further north. The road to London via Henley became a much less important route when the road to London through St Clement’s, Headington and Uxbridge opened in the late 18th century (see Faden’s map, overleaf).⁹

names.html [accessed 9 May 2021]. Oxford City Council, *Iffley Village Conservation Area Appraisal*, p.6.

⁷ Stephanie Jenkins, “Oxford boundary markers: Rose Hill (1635)”, http://www.oxfordhistory.org.uk/streets/wayside_stones/boundary/1600s/highway_rose_hill.html [accessed 5 May 2021]. Historic England List Entry no. 1046588, <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1046588> [accessed 5 May 2021].

⁸ See “Plan of the District Called Hockmore Street being Part of the Parish of Iffley in the County of Oxford, 1847”, Oxfordshire History Centre <https://www.oxfordshirehistory.org.uk/public/maps/tithe/zoomified/zoom.htm?Iffley> [accessed 15 May 2021].

⁹ Stephanie Jenkins, “Oxford Milestones: London–Henley–Oxford turnpike “and “Oxford Milestones: Rose Hill”, http://www.oxfordhistory.org.uk/streets/wayside_stones/milestones/london_henley_oxford/index.html and http://www.oxfordhistory.org.uk/streets/wayside_stones/milestones/london_henley_oxford/rose_hill.html [accessed 5 May 2021].



(Left) Extract from Isaac Taylor's map of 1750, showing Magdalen Bridge and the Plain (with St Clement's Church) before the Henley (or Iffley) Road was extended to meet it. Hence the Cowley Road is marked as the 'LONDON ROAD' (and St Clement's High Street as the alternative 'ROAD TO LONDON').¹⁰ (Right) William Faden's 1789 re-engraving of Taylor's map, showing the Henley (or Iffley) Road having been extended to the Plain, the 'NEW LONDON ROAD THROUGH HENLEY'. The Cowley Road was now the 'OLD LONDON ROAD' and St Clement's High Street the 'ROAD TO LONDON THROUGH UXBRIDGE'.¹¹



The milestone (c. 1736) outside 37 Rose Hill. The inscription reads:

LONDON
56
HENLEY
21
OXFORD
1

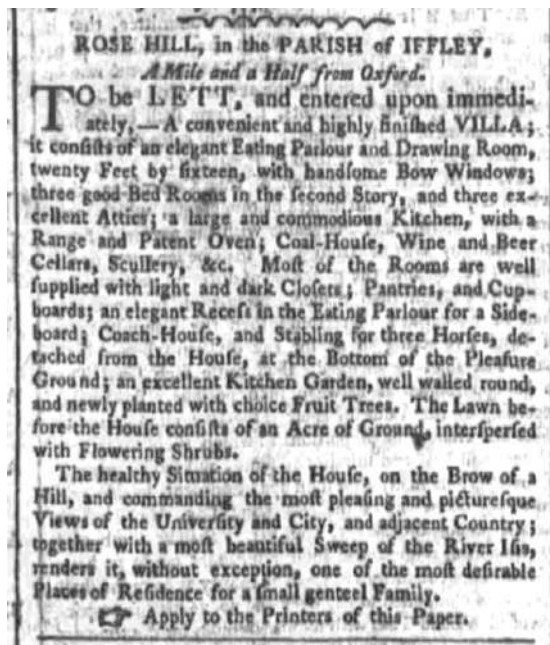
The Arabic numerals indicate that this inscription dates from the 19th century; the original 18th-century inscription with Roman numerals is on the other side, but is much harder to read. Like the highway stone further north, the milestone is listed Grade II.¹²

¹⁰ Map surveyed by Isaac Taylor in 1750 and published by William Jackson in 1751, Oxfordshire History Centre, POX0251004.

¹¹ William Faden's 1789 re-engraving of Taylor's map of 1750, showing changes on the ground, Oxfordshire History Centre, POX0251006.

¹² Stephanie Jenkins, "Oxford Milestones: London–Henley–Oxford turnpike" and "Oxford Milestones: Rose Hill", http://www.oxfordhistory.org.uk/streets/wayside_stones/milestones/london_henley_oxford/index.html and http://www.oxfordhistory.org.uk/streets/wayside_stones/milestones/london_henley_oxford/rose_hill.html [accessed 5 May 2021]. Historic England List Entry no. 1046591, <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1046591> [accessed 5 May 2021].

The first references to buildings in Rose Hill appear in the 1790s. These include a report in *Jackson's Oxford Journal* of September 1791 of an Oxfordshire game duty certificate granted to a 'Charles Auriol Esq of Rose Hill',¹³ and a lease of May 1793 concerning "that piece or parcel of arable Land situate lying and being on the west side of and adjoining the turnpike road leading from Oxford to a place called or known by the name or sign of the King of Prussia in the parish of Cowley otherwise Temple Cowley ... together with all erections and buildings erected and built or now erecting or building thereon...".¹⁴ This land was leased by Thomas Benwell, Gent, who lived at a house called 'Rose Hill' in the parish of Iffley, after which the present Oxford suburb is believed to have been named. Benwell occupied the house until his death in 1811; his estate included 'Four cottages with land on the west side of the turnpike road from Oxford'.¹⁵



Jackson's Oxford Journal, 7 April 1798.

Rose Mount (now 50 Rose Hill) has a date of 1791 on the gable end. It is positioned at right angles to the main road, facing towards Oxford, and it may be the house described in *Jackson's Oxford Journal* in April 1798 (left) as being in "a healthy Situation ... on the Brow of a Hill, and commanding the most pleasing and picturesque Views of the University and City, and adjacent Country; together with a most beautiful Sweep of the River Isis, [which] renders it, without exception, one of the most desirable Places of Residence for a small genteel Family".¹⁶

Between 1830 and 1833 Rose Mount was the home of Jemima Newman, mother of [later Cardinal] John Henry Newman. She and her two daughters Harriett and Jemima moved here from Brighton to be near John Henry and to help him in his work at the University Church of St Mary (of which he was vicar 1828-1843) and in Littlemore (which was part of St Mary's parish). They created an apartment for him at Rose Mount from which he could see both the University Church and Iffley Church; he thought his study "delightful" and the view "too good for me".¹⁷

¹³ *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 10 September 1791. I am grateful to Stephanie Jenkins for supplying this and subsequent references to *Jackson's Oxford Journal*.

¹⁴ Copy lease for £200, 31 May 1793, Oxfordshire History Centre, NM5/34/D1/7.

¹⁵ Copy of will of Thomas Benwell, 27 April 1811, Oxfordshire History Centre, NM5/34/D1/15. Copy lease, 7 November 1812, Oxfordshire History Centre, NM5/34/D1/16. Stephanie Jenkins, "Oxford Medical men: John Ireland (1745-1839)", http://www.oxfordhistory.org.uk/doctors/apothecaries/ireland_john.html [accessed 5 May 2021]. E Marshall, *History of Iffley*, p.10, quoted in "Parishes: Iffley", pp.189-206 in *Victoria County History of Oxford, Vol 5, Bullingdon Hundred* (London, 1957).

¹⁶ *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 7 April 1798, p.2.

¹⁷ Ann Spokes Symonds, *The Changing Faces of Rose Hill* (Robert Boyd, 2000), p.13.



Rose Mount (50 Rose Hill) in (left) 1993 and (right) 2021, built (according to the date on the gable end) in 1791. In the colour photograph the small building to the left, immediately behind the boundary wall, may be a carriage shed. The adjacent pink cottages at the far left – 54 Rose Hill – are probably early 19th-century; they appear on the Iffley tithe map of 1847 (see later). Rose Mount is included in Oxford City Council's Heritage Asset Register.¹⁸ Black and white image from Ann Spokes Symonds, *The Changing Faces of Rose Hill* (Robert Boyd, 2000), p.13.

Various Rose Hill properties were advertised in *Jackson's Oxford Journal* in the early 1800s, suggesting that the area contained several salubrious residences and – though at least two miles from Oxford – was viewed as a desirable place to live, thanks to its elevated position and views towards the city and across the surrounding countryside. By 1805 Mrs Sydenham had moved her private school from Headington to larger premises at Rose Hill.¹⁹

will commence.

TO be SOLD by AUCTION, by Messrs. MALLAM and FREEMAN, on Thursday the 29th of November, 1804, and following Day, — All the elegant and genteel HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE, CHINA, GLASS, and other Effects, of Lady MOSTYN, removed from her House, Rose Hill, to the Great Room, Blue Boar Inn, Oxford; comprising Four-post and other Bedsteads, with Moreen and other Furnitures, eight fine seasoned Feather Beds, six Mattresses, twelve Pair of Blankets, Quilts and Counterpanes, three solid Mahogany Bureaus, Wardrobes, Chest of Drawers, Mahogany Chairs, with Morocco and other Covers, Card and other Tables, capital Monthly Clock in a Mahogany Case, Kitchen Requisites, &c.

To be viewed three Days previous to the Sale, and Catalogues had at the Inns in Abingdon, Faringdon, Banbury, Woodstock, Thame, the Place of Sale, and of the Auctioneers, Oxford.

N. B. The above Goods are all modern, and laid in about eighteen Months since.

Jackson's Oxford Journal, 17 November 1804.

MRS. SYDENHAM respectfully informs her Friends and the Public, that she is removed from Headington to a much larger House at Rose Hill, within a Mile of Oxford, where she has Room to accommodate Ten more Pupils. Her Terms are Eighteen Guineas a Year, and One Guinea Entrance, including Washing.

Drawing, Dancing, and French Masters will attend on the usual Terms.

13 April 1805.

Freehold Cottage, within two Miles of Oxford.

TO be SOLD by AUCTION, by Mr. TRASH, on Friday next, the 20th day of October, 1809, between the hours of Four and Six, at Mr. Burrows's, the sign of Admiral Bowyer, — A newly-built COTTAGE and GARDEN, pleasantly situated on that charming eminence called Rose Hill, in the parish of Cowley, Oxon.

For further particulars apply to the auctioneer, opposite the Town-Hall, Oxford.

14 October 1809.

¹⁸ 50 Rose Hill, Oxford City Council Heritage Assets Register, https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/3976/50_rose_hill_nomination_form [accessed 5 May 2021].

¹⁹ *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 17 November 1804, p.2; 13 April 1805, p.3; 14 October 1809, p.3.

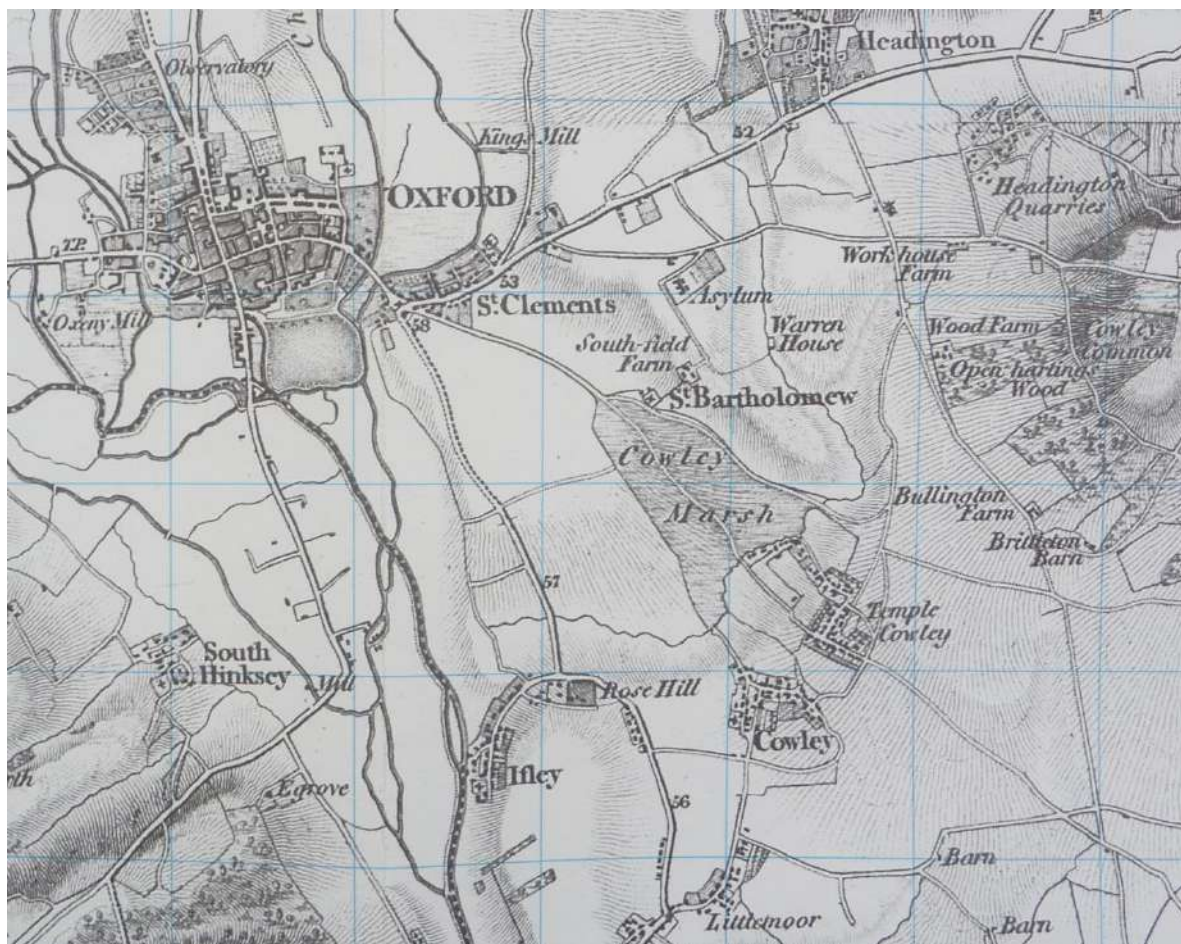
Several very suspicious persons have for some days past been lurking about the villages in the neighbourhood of this city, particularly at Iffley, Rose Hill, &c. The gang consists of three or four men, accompanied by as many women, having large packages with them, who enter the houses of the inhabitants under the most frivolous pretences. The public cannot be too much on their guard against such a banditti.

Inevitably, however, genteel residences attracted the unwanted attention of criminal gangs, and in February 1810 Jackson's was warning of the activities of such "banditti" in Iffley and Rose Hill.²⁰

Jackson's Oxford Journal, 10 February 1810.

19TH-CENTURY DEVELOPMENT IN ROSE HILL

Rose Hill is represented on the one-inch Ordnance Survey (OS) map of 1830-33 (below) as a settlement of about a dozen buildings.



Extract from the one-inch (1:63,360) Ordnance Survey map of 1830-33, with Rose Hill lower centre.

²⁰ *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 10 February 1810, p.3.

The settlement included the eponymous house ‘Rose Hill’, former residence of Thomas Benwell. Since at least 1830 it had been occupied by a somewhat eccentric Scottish doctor called John Ireland (1745-1839), who was listed in *Pigot’s Directory* of that year under ‘Nobility, Gentry and Clergy’.

Herbert Hurst described Ireland as “*a most successful medical practitioner, a self-styled MD [medical doctor], the last gentleman in the neighbourhood to sport a pigtail and ruffles at his wrists*”²¹ and William Tuckwell remembered that “*Ireland represented the matriculated apothecaries of that date, men who made up their own medicines, attended ladies at the most interesting period of their lives, sold Epsom salts, blisters, hair powder, across the counter of the shops which they called their surgeries. Some remained humble to the end; not so Ireland, who somehow obtained a Scotch degree, discarded the surgery, and set up a brass plate as Dr Ireland on his house in Pennyfarthing Street [now Pembroke Street]. He was a grandiloquent, pompous man ... a dissolute old scamp withal; some of the stories told by him I should not like to quote. I remember his swing along the street with cane held at attention; recall his stalking into my mother’s drawing-room with his new honour fresh upon him, and bespeaking her congratulations on the fact that he would ‘enter the Kingdom of Heaven as a Doctor of Medicine’. I saw him later in extreme old age; he said that he was ninety-nine years old – he was nothing like so old – but he added, with his hands aloft, ‘My memory is in ruins’.*”²²

Another building which was well established by the time of the 1830 OS map (p.7, above) was the King of Prussia public house (seemingly sometimes called the Admiral Bowyer)²³ which is mentioned in a lease of 1793.²⁴ King Frederick the Great of Prussia was a popular figure in England in the 18th century; his birthday, 28 January, was often celebrated in Oxford by the ringing of bells and the lighting of bonfires. England and Prussia were close allies in the Seven Years War of 1756 to 1763 (a struggle for global primacy between Britain and France). The pub was rebuilt in 1879,²⁵ with a tap room and parlour either side of the bar, living accommodation for the publican and his family, and a yard behind. To the south, on the other side of a narrow lane, was a stable, pigsty, garden and skittle alley.²⁶



*The King of Prussia pub building of 1879, pictured in around 1910. The single-storey building to the left was the pub’s stable, on the other side of the lane. Image from Ann Spokes Symonds, *The Changing Faces of Rose Hill* (Robert Boyd, 2000), p.17.*

²¹ Herbert Hurst, *Ramble and Rides around Oxford* (Oxford, 1885), pp.116-7.

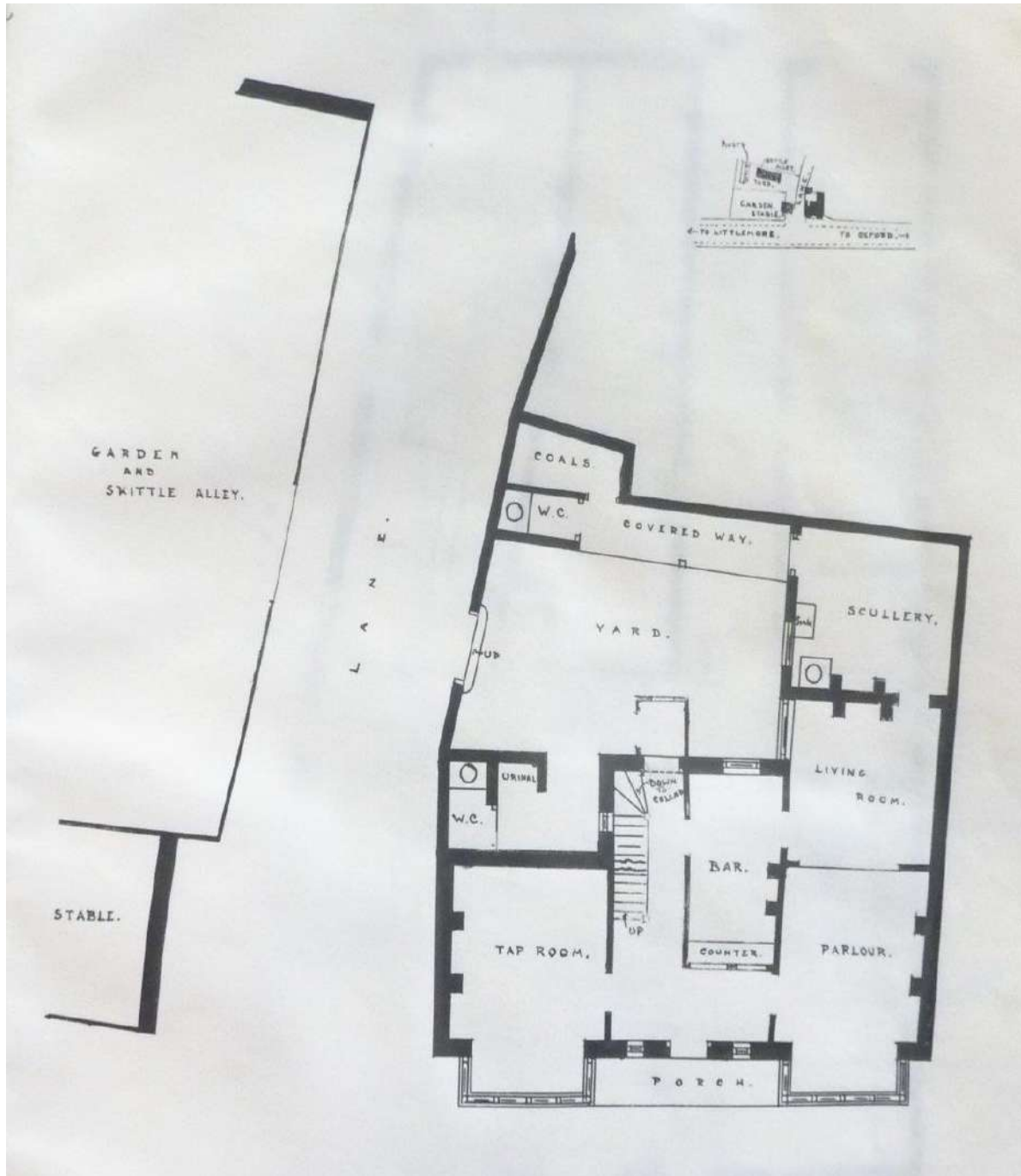
²² William Tuckwell, *Reminiscences of Oxford* (Cassell, 1901), quoted in Stephanie Jenkins, “Oxford Medical Men: John Ireland (1745-1839)”, http://www.oxfordhistory.org.uk/doctors/apothecaries/ireland_john.html [accessed 5 May 2021].

²³ Conveyance of message and premises in Cowley, formerly called the King of Prussia and the Admiral Bowyer, 14 August 1843, Oxfordshire History Centre, GB 160 SL40/1/D/7. *Jackson’s Oxford Journal* 14 October 1809, p.3; 2 October 1813.

²⁴ Copy lease for £200, 31 May 1793, Oxfordshire History Centre, NM5/34/D1/7.

²⁵ Ann Spokes Symonds, *The Changing Faces of Rose Hill* (Robert Boyd, 2000), p.21.

²⁶ The King of Prussia, Rose Hill, Cowley, in the volume of block plans of freehold public houses and properties owned by Morrell’s Brewery (undated, but pre-1914), Oxfordshire History Centre, B25/1/Y3/1.



Plans of the King of Prussia pub, drawn before it was re-named the Allied Arms in 1914. From a volume of block plans of freehold public houses and properties owned by Morrell's Brewery (undated), Oxfordshire History Centre, B25/1/Y3/1.

In October 1914, soon after the outbreak of the First World War, a group of soldiers motivated by anti-Russian feeling knocked down the inn's sign, which had a portrait of the King of Prussia on it. It was decided to change the pub's name to 'The Allied Arms' and a new sign, featuring an English, French and Belgian soldier, was installed. In 1935 the pub was completely rebuilt again, this time slightly further south, with a sign depicting a golfer, a cricketer and a rower linking arms.²⁷

²⁷ Ann Spokes Symonds, *The Changing Faces of Rose Hill* (Robert Boyd, 2000), p.21. Malcolm Graham, *Oxford in the Great War* (Pen & Sword, 2014), pp.105-6.



*The King of Prussia pub building of 1935, pictured in 1999. Image from Ann Spokes Symonds, *The Changing Faces of Rose Hill* (Robert Boyd, 2000), p.22.*



(Left) The inn sign of the Allied Arms in 1938 (image from the Oxfordshire History Centre, POX0063596); and (right) a later version of the sign, now in the Museum of Oxford's collection (image courtesy of the Museum of Oxford).

In the 1970s the name was changed to 'The Ox' but it reverted to the King of Prussia in 1996. The pub suffered an arson attack in 2006 and was demolished soon afterwards; a Co-op shop now occupies the site.²⁸

²⁸ Ann Spokes Symonds, *The Changing Faces of Rose Hill* (Robert Boyd, 2000), p.21. *The Oxford Times*, 9 August 1996. *Oxford Mail*, 12 July 2006.

In 1835, soon after the OS map on p.7 above was drawn, a Methodist chapel was built in Rose Hill by Henry Leake, a gentleman of means who lived with his mother in a house on Church Way in Iffley village called Rivermead. He and/or his father were probably trustees of the Wesley Memorial Church on New Inn Hall Street in the centre of Oxford. On moving to Iffley in 1833, Leake had joined a group of Methodists who held their services in a Mr Gordon's cottage. Leake may have been a lay preacher, because it was said that one Sunday, when a local preacher failed to arrive, he took the service.²⁹

The group soon outgrew the cottage and after holding their services in a stable in a tanner's yard for some time, it was decided to find a site for a new chapel. The Donnington Hospital Trust were the major land owner in Iffley village, but were unwilling to provide land for a Methodist chapel, so the group looked further afield. Henry Leake leased a site on the London to Henley Road at Rose Hill from an Oxford print seller, Thomas Taylor,³⁰ and paid for the construction of the chapel, helped by gifts totalling £30 from Methodist friends. The laying of the foundation stone in June or July 1835 took place at 5am to enable people to go to work afterwards. At the opening of the chapel later that year, the assembled crowd was too large to fit inside, and so they had to adjourn to the waste land opposite.³¹

Early services were described thus: *"From the gallery over the porch, Mr Joseph Shirley would lead the singing on his piccolo ... assisted by a few supporters (who might be termed the choir). ... Three quarters of the congregation were unable to read and others were not able to afford to buy a hymn book out of their meagre earnings of 8 to 12 shillings a week. The practice then was for the preacher to give out a hymn two lines at a time and thus it was sung. Sometimes even the preacher was unable to read, and he, fully inspired, would learn by heart the scriptures and hymns and managed quite well in this manner ... The service was naturally slow, but the address was oft times of an hour's duration and was not considered to be long."*³²

The chapel had a burial ground, an unusual feature for a village chapel. This was because the then vicar of St Mary's Church in Iffley had raised objections to allowing one of the Methodist group, a Brother Dyer, to be buried in the churchyard there, and so the Methodists decided that they needed a burial ground of their own. The earliest recorded burials at Rose Hill date from 1842, though it seems likely that there were internments before that. It is said that some important people associated with the Temperance movement are buried there.³³

²⁹ Stephen Roper & Freda Hoare, *Rose Hill Methodist Church, Our history* (1985), <https://rosehillmethodists.org.uk/about/our-history/> [accessed 10 May 2021]. Alison Butler, Mission & Heritage Officer, Wesley Memorial Church, Oxford, pers comm, May 2021.

³⁰ Lease on a cottage and garden at Rose Hill, from Thomas Taylor to Henry Leake, 24 March 1835, Oxfordshire History Centre, NM5/34/D1/23. Taylor's business was at 119 High Street: Stephanie Jenkins, "The High: 119, Ede & Ravenscroft", <http://www.oxfordhistory.org.uk/high/tour/south/119.html> [accessed 21 May 2021].

³¹ Stephen Roper & Freda Hoare, *Rose Hill Methodist Church, Our history* (1985), <https://rosehillmethodists.org.uk/about/our-history/> [accessed 10 May 2021]. Alison Butler, Mission & Heritage Officer, Wesley Memorial Church, Oxford, pers comm, May 2021.

³² *History of Rose Hill Chapel*, typed manuscript (1942), Oxfordshire History Centre NM5/34/PR1/1.

³³ Stephen Roper & Freda Hoare, *Rose Hill Methodist Church, Our history* (1985). <https://rosehillmethodists.org.uk/about/our-history/> [accessed 10 May 2021]. Rose Hill Methodist Church, Oxford City Council Heritage Assets Register, https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/3965/rose_hill_methodist_church_nomination_form [accessed 5 May 2021].



*Looking south along the main Rose Hill road towards Rose Hill Methodist Chapel and, to the left of it, Prospect Villa, in a photograph of unknown date. Image from Ann Spokes Symonds, *The Changing Faces of Rose Hill* (Robert Boyd, 2000), p.26.*



Another view of Prospect Villa, with the chapel to the right. The villa and the adjacent bank, which raised it up from the road, were demolished when the Rose Hill main road was widened, seemingly in the 1930s.³⁴ Image from the Oxfordshire History Centre, 81-2238.

Despite the impressive attendance at the chapel's opening ceremony in 1835, congregations in the early years were small, with between 40 and 50 members in 1837, rising to 63 by 1839. In that year, Henry Leake conveyed the chapel to the Wesleyan Methodists for a nominal 10 shillings.³⁵ By 1842 he had established a charity school adjacent to the chapel, with a schoolmaster who lived in nearby cottage.³⁶ He also founded a benefit society and bought ten acres of land, which he let out in allotments of a quarter of an acre at nominal rents.³⁷

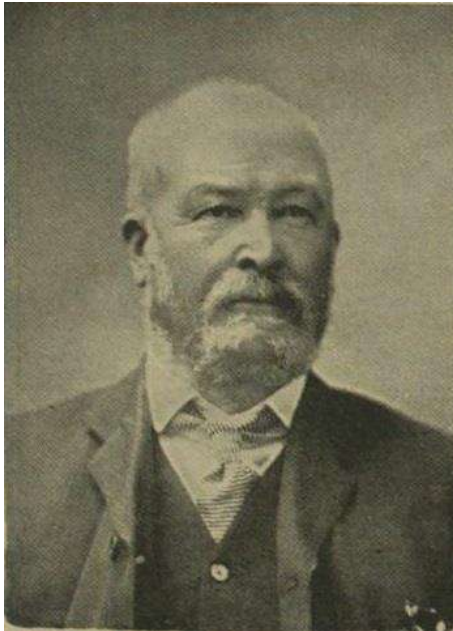
³⁴ Ann Spokes Symonds, *The Changing Faces of Rose Hill* (Robert Boyd, 2000), p.26. Photograph of road widening at Rose Hill, dated ?1930s, Oxfordshire History Centre, 18020.

³⁵ *Victoria County History of Oxford, Vol 4, the City of Oxford* (1979), p.421. Stephen Roper & Freda Hoare, *Rose Hill Methodist Church, Our history* (1985), <https://rosehillmethodists.org.uk/about/our-history/> [accessed 10 May 2021].

³⁶ Lease of cottage at Rose Hill bounded by the charity school ["lately erected"] and the Wesleyan chapel, 9 July 1842, Oxfordshire History Centre, NM5/34/D1/27. Release and Conveyance of cottage at Rose Hill bounded by the charity school and the Wesleyan chapel, from Henry Leake, gent, to Benjamin Leonard, Rose Hill, schoolmaster, 24 December 1847, Oxfordshire History Centre, NM5/34/D1/29.

³⁷ *Victoria County History of Oxford, Vol 4, the City of Oxford* (1979), p.421.

The chapel nearly closed in 1850, when the incumbent minister expelled almost all the members for their sympathies with the leaders of the Wesleyan Reform movement. By March 1851, only six members remained; the membership crisis culminated in the sale of the chapel back to Henry Leake in June 1860 for £125. The following year he sold it to the United Methodist Free Church Trust for the same sum and it was re-opened as a United Methodist Free Church.³⁸



*Henry Broadhurst (1840-1911), a leading early British trade unionist and Lib-Lab politician, the first person (in 1885) from a working-class or labour movement background to hold a ministerial post. He grew up in Littlemore, the son of a stonemason, and later acknowledged his debt to the Sunday School at the Rose Hill Methodist Chapel, which provided his early education.³⁹ Image from *The Reformers Yearbook 1905*; digital copy at <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?curid=40374093>.*

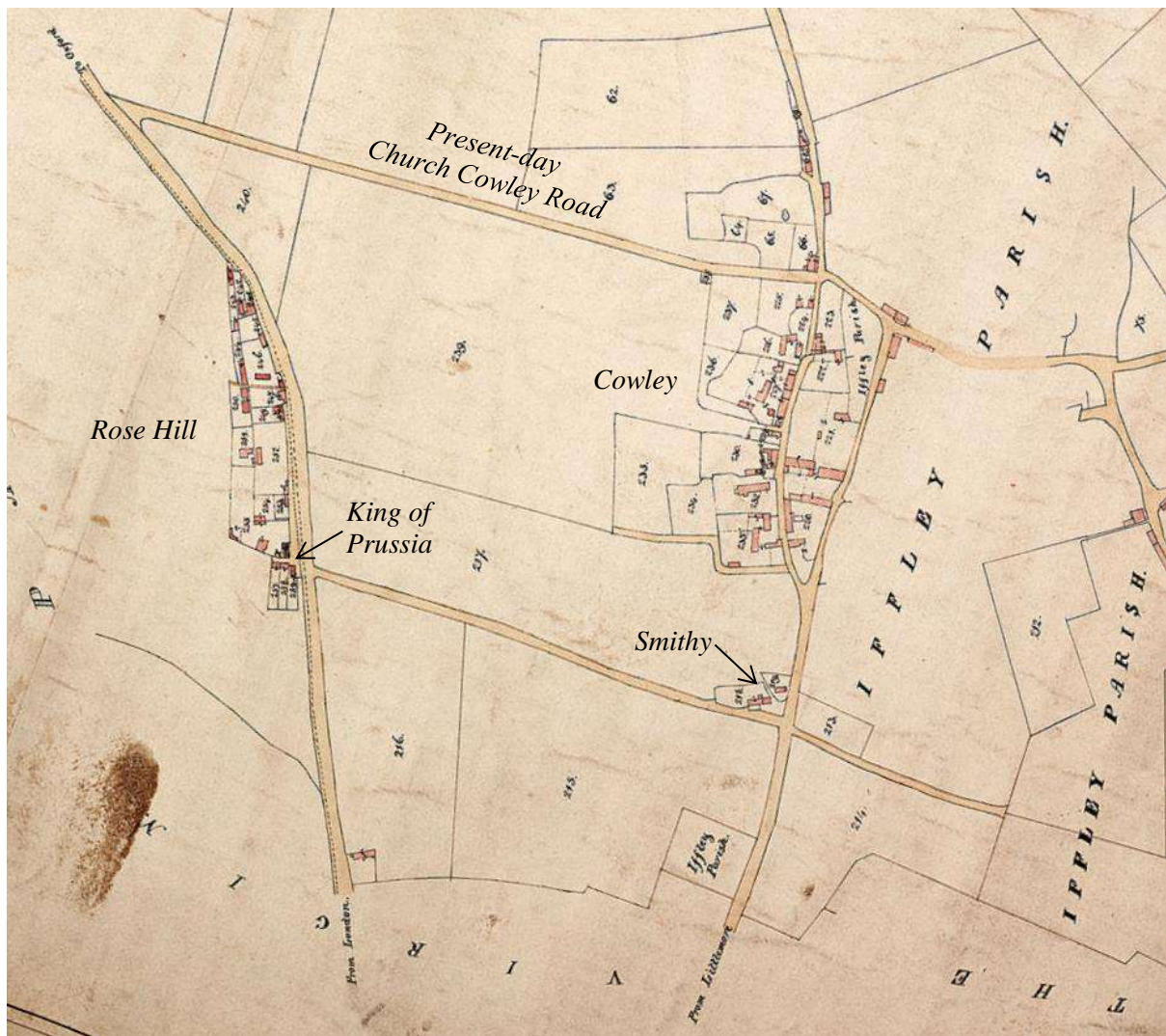
The church's graveyard was extended in 1868 with the purchase of a cottage and garden. A new vestry was added and the graveyard walled and fenced in 1886. There was an active Sunday School, with popular outings like boat trips to Nuneham House. In 1907, the church became a United Methodist Church. Gas was installed in 1921, water in around 1923, and electric light and central heating in 1929. The building was enlarged in 1942 (forming the current chancel), and a new hall built at the rear in 1958, for youth work. A resident minister was appointed in 1946. The last burials took place in the churchyard in 1962.⁴⁰

³⁸ *Victoria County History of Oxford, Vol 4, the City of Oxford* (1979), p.421. Stephen Roper & Freda Hoare, *Rose Hill Methodist Church, Our history* (1985), <https://rosehillmethodists.org.uk/about/our-history/> [accessed 10 May 2021].

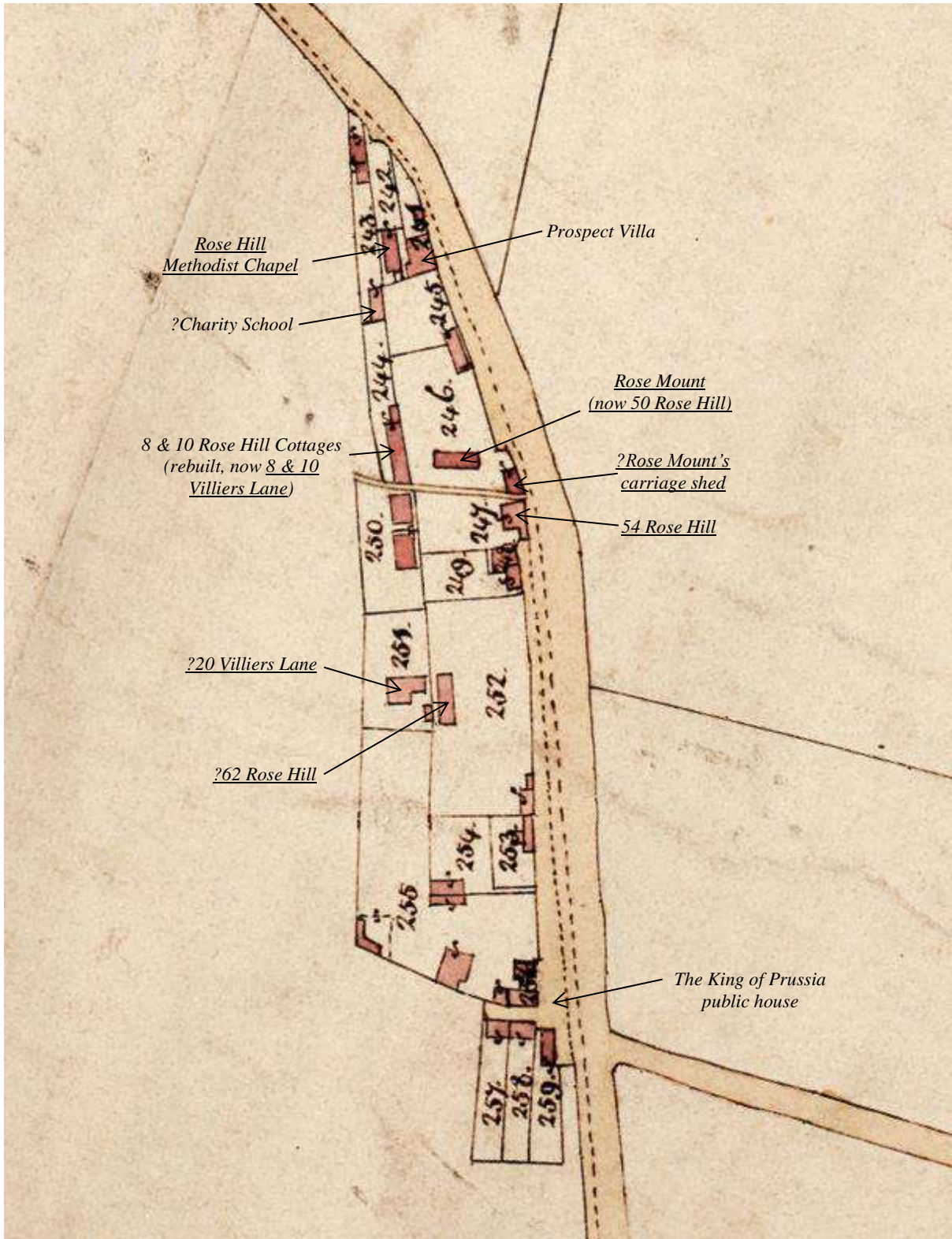
³⁹ *History of Rose Hill Chapel*, typed manuscript (1942), Oxfordshire History Centre NM5/34/PR1/1. Wikipedia, "Henry Broadhurst", https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Broadhurst [accessed 21 May 2021].

⁴⁰ "Parishes: Cowley: Protestant Non-conformity", pp.76-96 in *Victoria County History of Oxford, Vol 5, Bullingdon Hundred. Victoria County History of Oxford, Vol 4, the City of Oxford* (1979), p.421. Stephen Roper & Freda Hoare, *Rose Hill Methodist Church, Our history* (1985), <https://rosehillmethodists.org.uk/about/our-history/> [accessed 10 May 2021]. Rose Hill Methodist Church, Oxford City Council Heritage Assets Register, https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/3965/rose_hill_methodist_church_nomination_form [accessed 5 May 2021].

Rose Hill is next depicted on the Cowley enclosure map of 1848:



Extract from the Cowley enclosure map of 1848. The road running north of Rose Hill and Cowley is now Church Cowley Road. The road running parallel to this, between the smithy and the King of Prussia pub, had disappeared by 1876 (see p.18 below). Its modern remnants are an entranceway between nos. 85 and 89 Rose Hill (leading to no. 87), and the ward boundary which runs between the back fences of houses on Westbury Crescent and Kelburne Road. Plan of the Parish of Cowley in the County of Oxford, 1864, signed James King, apporioner, 1848 and 1853, Oxfordshire History Centre, 112/M.



A larger-scale extract from the Cowley enclosure map of 1848, showing Rose Hill only, and with annotations. Buildings whose names are underlined still exist. Plan of the Parish of Cowley in the County of Oxford, 1864, signed James King, apportioner, 1848 and 1853, Oxfordshire History Centre, 112/M.

The 1848 enclosure map (pp.14 & 15 above) shows two buildings which are probably the current 20 Villiers Lane and 62 Rose Hill, suggesting that they had been built by this time. These two houses still exist, and are on the City Council’s Heritage Assets Register, together with the adjacent 64 Rose Hill (Rose Villa).⁴¹ The latter appears to be later in date, and has a distinctive round tower with slated conical roof. The three houses have been much altered and extended, so that they are now interlocking, but they are a remarkable survival from the pre-20th-century settlement of Rose Hill.



Looking east from Villiers Lane in 2021: (left) 20 Villiers Lane ('Almonds') and (right) 20 Villiers Lane, behind it the gable end of 62 Rose Hill, and to the right of that, the tower and roof of 64 Rose Hill ('Rose Villa').



An extract from a modern map showing how the buildings of 20 Villiers Lane, 62 and 64 Rose Hill (Rose Villa) now interlock. Image from Oxford City Council’s planning applications website for 20 Villiers Lane, <https://public.oxford.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=map&keyVal=PTLQA1MF16F00> [accessed 15 May 2021].

⁴¹ 20 Villiers Lane with 62 and 64 Rose Hill, Oxford City Council Heritage Assets Register, https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/3975/20_villiers_lane_62_and_64_rose_hill_nomination_form, [accessed 5 May 2021].

The 1848 map also shows 8 and 10 Rose Hill Cottages (now 8 and 10 Villiers Lane). These were lived in the Pulker family, who had been the Iffley area for many generations. The cottages were probably built as labourers dwellings, as they were much more modest than grander houses like the nearby Rose Villa. They were condemned in 1959 and rebuilt in their current form.



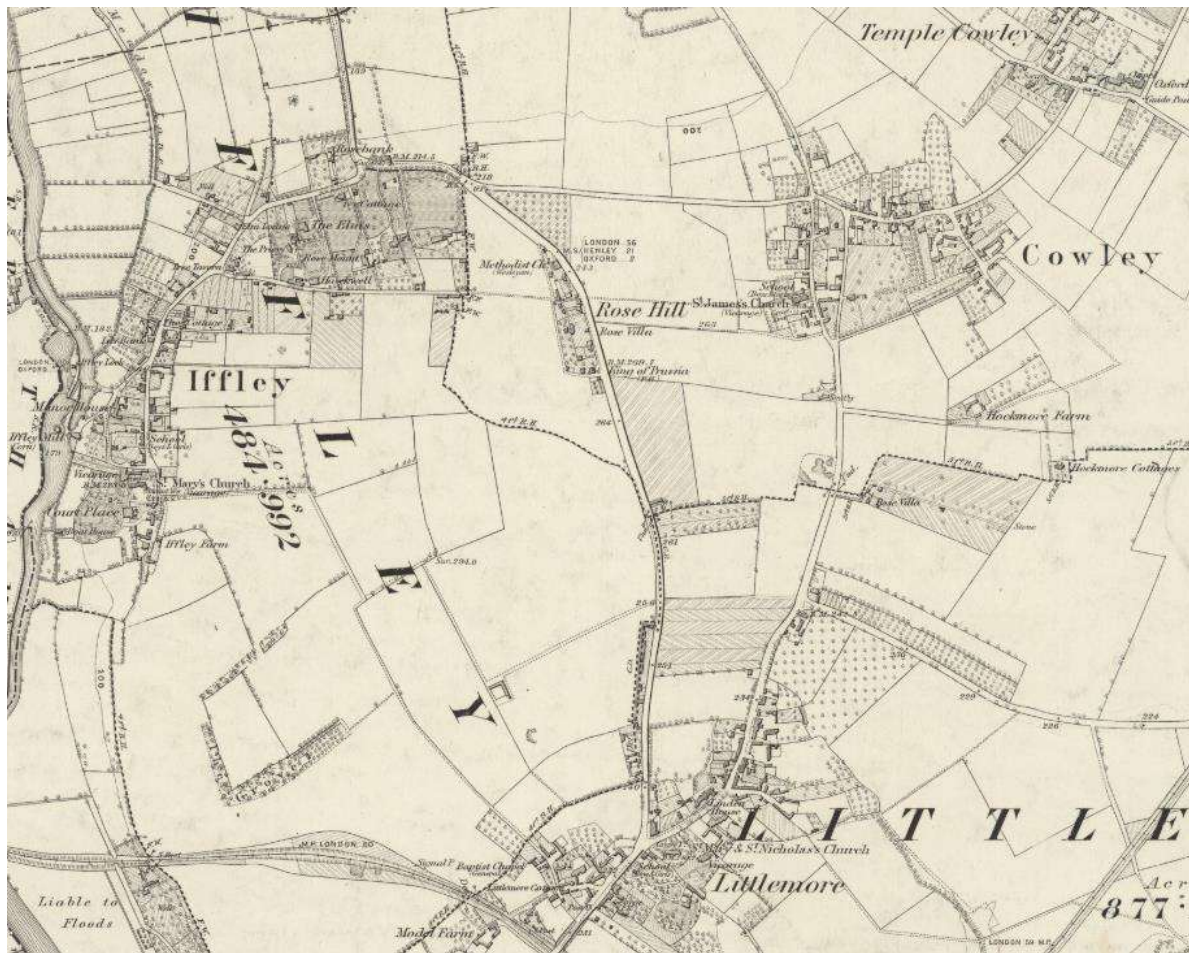
(Left) William and Alice Pulker outside 8 Rose Hill Cottages on the occasion of their golden wedding anniversary in February 1939. Mr Pulker, who was a builder's labourer and gardener, died in 1943 and Mrs Pulker in 1945. (Right) two of the Pulkers' daughters, Lily and Bessie, outside the wash house at the back of 8 Rose Hill Cottages in about 1908. Their older brother Bill lived at 10 Rose Hill Cottages from when it was rebuilt in the early 1960s.⁴² Images from Ann Spokes Symonds, *The Changing Faces of Rose Hill* (Robert Boyd, 2000), pp.81-2.



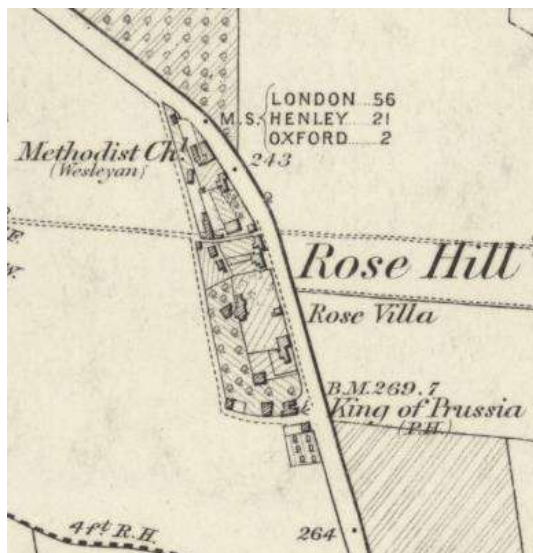
(Left) 8 Rose Hill Cottages (now 8 Villiers Lane) in the early 1920s, with Bessie and Lily Pulker at the gate; and (right) 10 ('Rambler Cottage') and 8 Villiers Lane as rebuilt in in the early 1960s (the extension at the front of no. 8 is a later addition). Black and white image from Ann Spokes Symonds, *The Changing Faces of Rose Hill* (Robert Boyd, 2000), p.12.

⁴² 1911 census, 1939 register, birth registrations, via www.ancestry.co.uk [accessed 27 May 2021]. Ann Spokes Symonds, *The Changing Faces of Rose Hill* (Robert Boyd, 2000), pp.12, 81.

By the mid-1870s Rose Hill was a settlement of about 20 buildings (one the pub and one the Methodist church), surrounded by open fields, as shown on the 1876 OS map below.



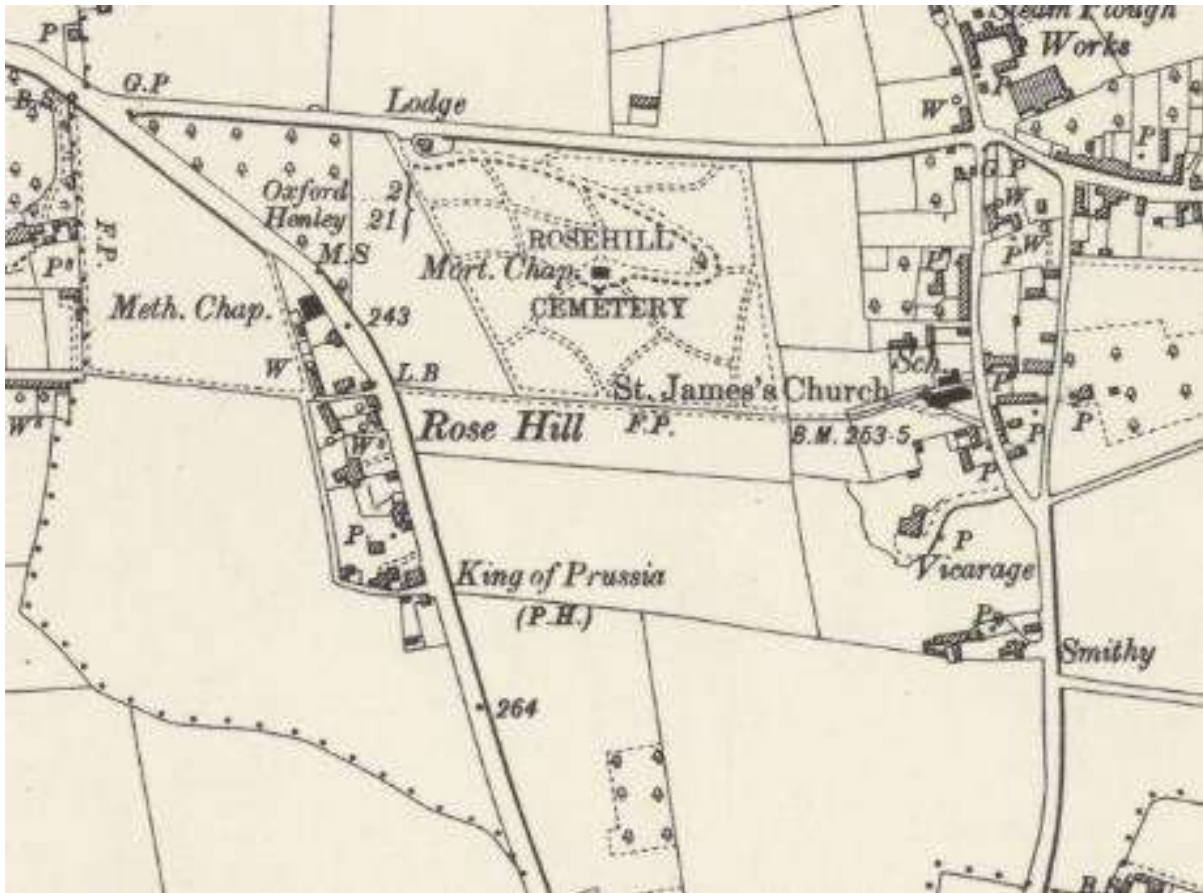
Extract from the 1876 (six-inch to the mile) OS map (Berkshire sheet 4),⁴³ showing Iffley, Rose Hill, Cowley and Littlemore. The four settlements were still separated by open fields. The road from the smithy south of Cowley, leading westwards to the King of Prussia (shown on the 1848 enclosure map, p.14 above), appears to have become no more than a track, or even just a field boundary.



Close-up extract from the 1876 OS map above, showing Rose Hill, still a settlement of only about twenty buildings. The Methodist Church, the mile stone ('MS'), Rose Villa (64 Rose Hill), and the King of Prussia are labelled.

⁴³ National Library of Scotland, <https://maps.nls.uk/view/102339905> [accessed 16 May 2021].

In the early 1890s land to the north-east of Rose Hill was given over to one of three new municipal cemeteries.



Extract from the 1898 (six-inch to the mile) OS map (Oxfordshire sheet 39.8),⁴⁴ showing the newly-established cemetery to the north-east of Rose Hill, with its footpaths, mortuary and chapel.

There was a pressing need for new burial grounds in Oxford, and in 1883 the cemetery committee of the Local Board had resolved to buy 26 acres of land at Rose Hill from Christ Church for a new cemetery. However, the parties could not agree on a price, and so negotiations dragged on until 1889, by which time the new City Corporation had been formed. In 1889 and 1890 the corporation bought instead land for three smaller cemeteries: 11 acres at Rose Hill from Christ Church, 13 acres at Cutteslowe from the Dean and Chapter of Westminster, and 8 acres at Botley from the Earl of Abingdon.⁴⁵ Each site had an appointed superintendent, a chapel, caretaker's house, office, entrance gates, a surrounding iron fence, and grave spaces divided into sections by cast iron standards with figured and lettered labels attached; the total cost was approximately £25,000. The cemeteries were opened on 12 March 1894 by the Provost of The Queen's College and parts of all three cemeteries were consecrated by the bishop of Oxford in 1901.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ National Library of Scotland, <https://maps.nls.uk/view/101458026> [accessed 16 May 2021].

⁴⁵ *Victoria County History of Oxford, Vol 4, the City of Oxford* (1979), p.364.

⁴⁶ *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 15 October 1892, p.6c-d; 13 October 1894, p.6c; 12 October 1901, p.5.



By the time Rose Hill Cemetery was consecrated in 1901 there had already been 382 burials. It now contains 19,743 burials, including 28 Commonwealth graves from First World War and 58 from the Second World War. It is now closed to burials.⁴⁷



Probably the most famous person buried at Rose Hill Cemetery is Sergeant-Major Edward Brooks (1883-1944), a labourer from Headington who was awarded the Victoria Cross in July 1917 for ‘most conspicuous bravery’ whilst in action near Saint-Quentin in France. He came home on leave to be presented with the medal by the King at Buckingham Palace and on his return to Oxford that evening was greeted by the Headington Silver Band, a large party of dignitaries including the Mayor, and thousands of cheering well-wishers.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Jackson’s *Oxford Journal*, 12 October 1901, p.5. Stephanie Jenkins, “Burial grounds: churchyards and cemeteries”, http://www.oxfordhistory.org.uk/burials/burial_grounds/index.html [accessed 5 May 2021]. Ann Spokes Symonds, *The Changing Faces of Rose Hill* (Robert Boyd, 2000), p.33. “Rose Hill Cemetery”, Find a Grave, <https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/2139858/rose-hill-cemetery> [accessed 10 May 2021].

⁴⁸ Rose Hill Cemetery, section G2, plot 119. Stephanie Jenkins, “Headington History: People: Sergeant-Major Edward Brooks V.C. (1883-1944)”, http://www.headington.org.uk/history/famous_people/brooks_edward.html



Tom Morris (wrongly named here as 'F Morris') was the first superintendent of Rose Hill Cemetery and was himself buried there.⁴⁹ Image from the *Oxford Journal Illustrated*, 28 March 1917, p.12.

EARLY 20TH-CENTURY DEVELOPMENT

Until the early 20th century there was no housing on the eastern side of the main Rose Hill road, but in 1906 a grand mansion, originally called 'Cingaltree' (later 'Singletree'), was built on land between the road and the cemetery. It was for William Loxley, partner in the building firm Benfield & Loxley, but he died before he could move in, aged only 52. His widow Sophia and daughter Ethel lived there however, until the former's death in 1931.⁵⁰ The house can be seen on the 1921 OS map overleaf.

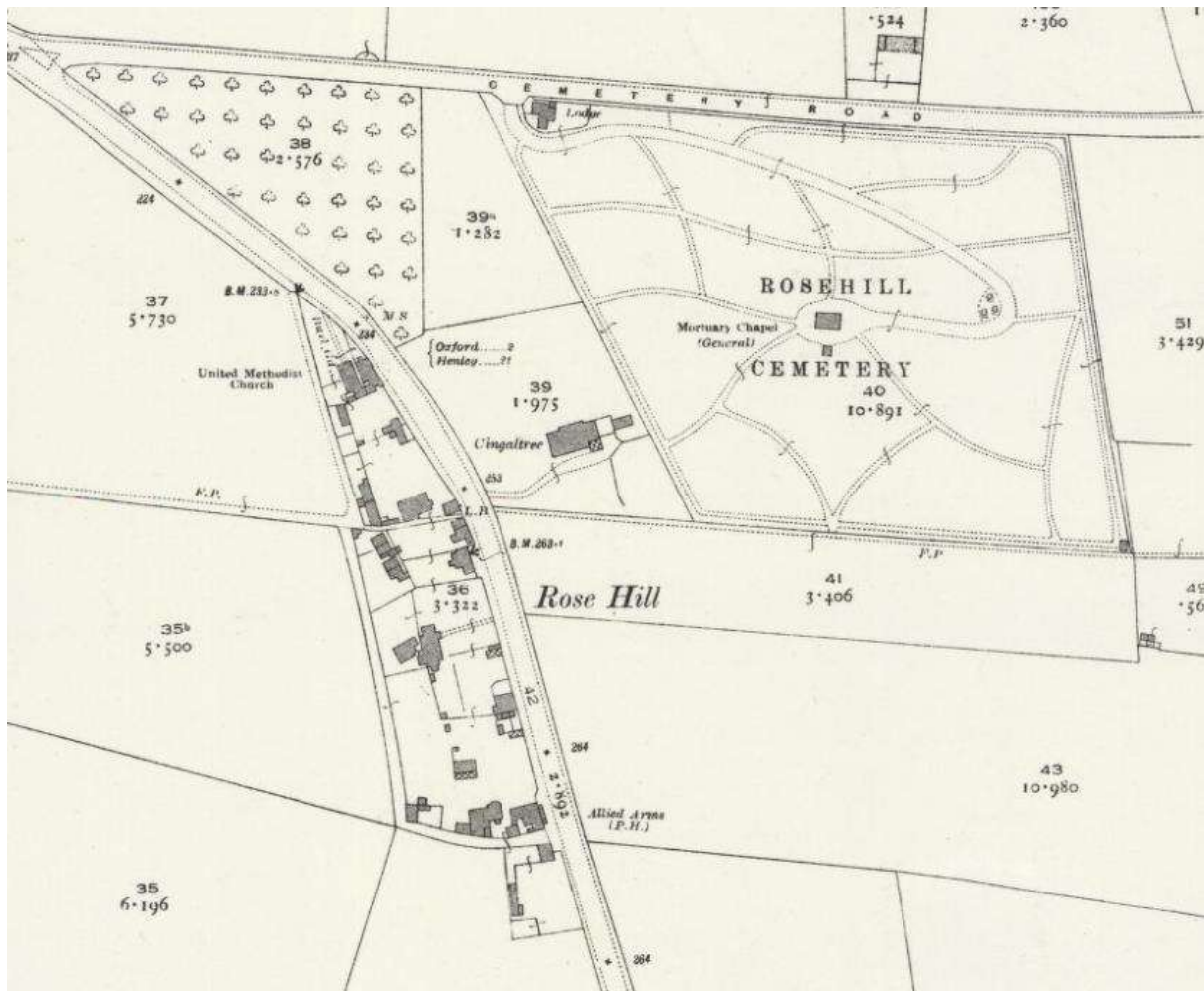


Singletree, 43 Rose Hill, built in 1906.

[accessed 10 May 2021].

⁴⁹ Rose Hill Cemetery Register of Graves, p.25, via www.ancestry.co.uk [accessed 21 May 2021].

⁵⁰ *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 11 August 1906, p.6. Kelly's *Directory of Oxford*, volumes for 1908 to 1932. William and Sophia Loxley's grave, Rose Hill Cemetery, section C3, plot 85.



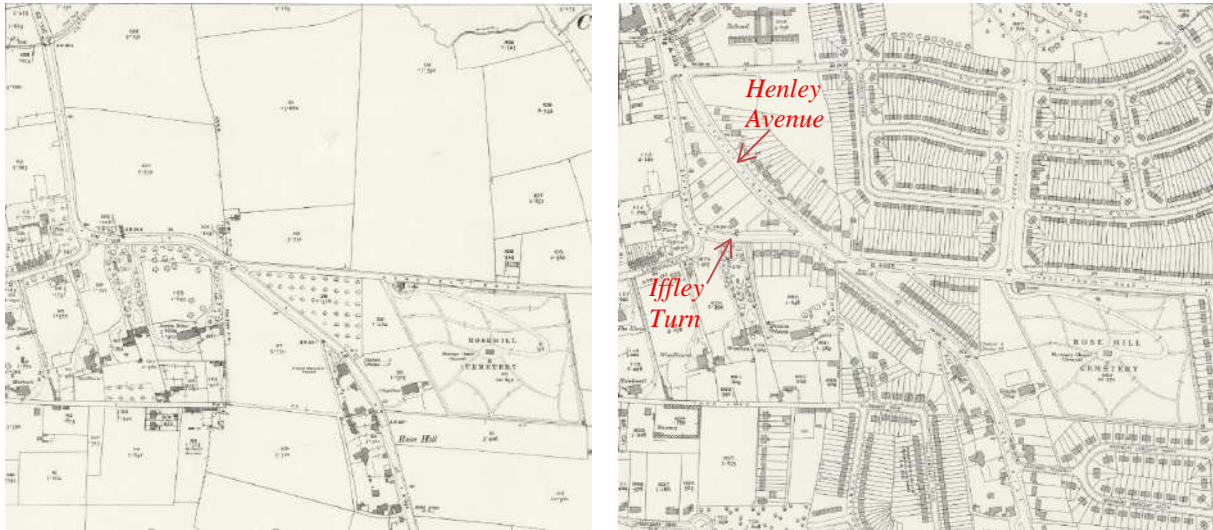
Extract from the 1921 (six-inch to the mile) OS map (Oxfordshire sheet 39.8),⁵¹ showing the Loxleys' house Cingaltree between Rose Hill and the cemetery. Note that the road running along the top of the cemetery (now Church Cowley Road) is labelled 'Cemetery Road'. The King of Prussia had by now been renamed 'The Allied Arms'.

Following her mother's death, Ethel Loxley found the house too big for her and so had another smaller house built next door (now 71 Rose Hill) and moved in to that. The main house was sold to the City Council, who rented it out to Frank Pakenham, Labour councillor for the Cowley & Iffley Ward from 1937 to 1940. He and his family changed the name to 'Singletree'. In 1939, with war imminent, the Pakenhams handed the house over to be used by evacuees from London; it was chosen as a refuge for a group of blind people from the East End and later other evacuees joined them. Towards the end of the War the house provided emergency classrooms for school children, and a nursery. In the early 1950s the Catering and Homecraft Department of the St Ebbe's-based Oxford College of Technology, Art & Commerce [later Oxford Polytechnic] was housed at Singletree, before it moved to the newly-built College of Further Education on Oxpens Road. Thereafter Singletree became an educational resource centre and then the Council built the present sheltered accommodation on the site, incorporating the original house into the scheme.⁵²

⁵¹ National Library of Scotland, <https://maps.nls.uk/view/106017522> [accessed 16 May 2021].

⁵² Ann Spokes Symonds, *The Changing Faces of Rose Hill* (Robert Boyd, 2000), pp.9-11. *Victoria County History of Oxford, Vol 4, the City of Oxford* (1979), p.461.

In 1922, with motor traffic increasing, a new section of road – called Henley Avenue – was cut between the Iffley Road from north of Iffley Village to the foot of Rose Hill, straightening out the route. The new road had in fact first been mooted in the early 1870s, partly as a job-creation scheme.⁵³ The old stretch of road, with a right-angle bend in it, was retained as ‘Iffley Turn’.



Extracts from (left) the 1921 and (right) the 1937 OS maps, the latter showing Henley Avenue, a new section of road built in 1922.



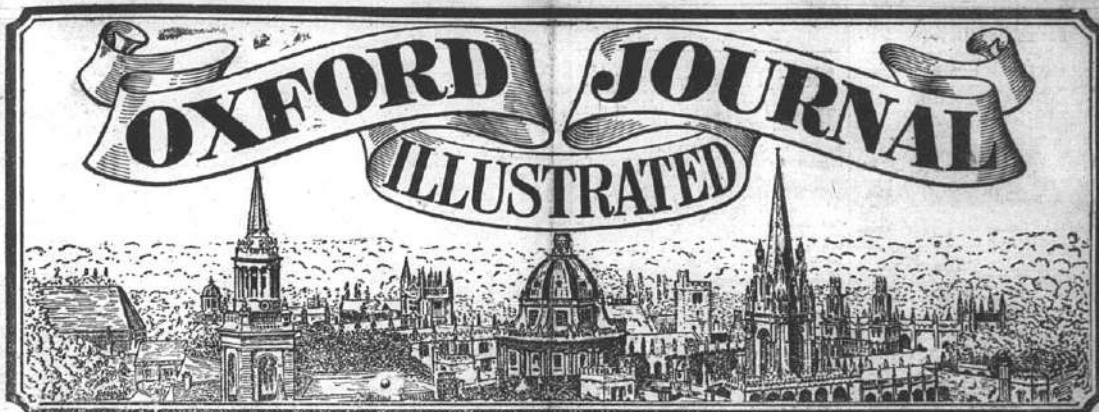
A year later a war memorial to soldiers of the Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry (OBLI) who had died in the First World War was erected a little further east, on the eastern side of Rose Hill at its junction with Church Cowley Road. It was originally proposed that the regimental memorial should be sited close to the Ox & Bucks barracks at Bullingdon Green in Cowley, but no suitable site could be found, and so instead it was built on a triangle of land at Rose Hill donated by Christ Church. The location was chosen specifically so that the memorial could be seen against the sky. It was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens and unveiled on Remembrance Day in 1923.⁵⁴

*The OBLI war memorial at Rose Hill, unveiled on 11 November 1923 by Major-General Sir John Hanbury Williams, KC, KCVO, CMG, and dedicated by Bishop Shaw. Additions were made to it as a result of the Second World War. It is a Grade II listed structure.*⁵⁵

⁵³ *Oxford Journal Illustrated*, 17 May 1922, p.7. Ann Spokes Symonds, *The Changing Faces of Rose Hill* (Robert Boyd, 2000), p.6.

⁵⁴ Stephanie Jenkins, “Oxford War Memorials: OBLI, Rose Hill”, http://www.oxfordhistory.org.uk/war/obli_memorial_rose_hill/index.html [accessed 5 May 2021].

⁵⁵ *Oxford Journal Illustrated*, 14 November 1923, pp.1, 3. Historic England List Entry no. 1369419, <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1369419> [accessed 5 May 2021].



ESTABLISHED 1753 AS "JACKSON'S OXFORD JOURNAL."

WITH WHICH ARE INCORPORATED THE "OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY NEWS" AND THE "WANTAGE HERALD."

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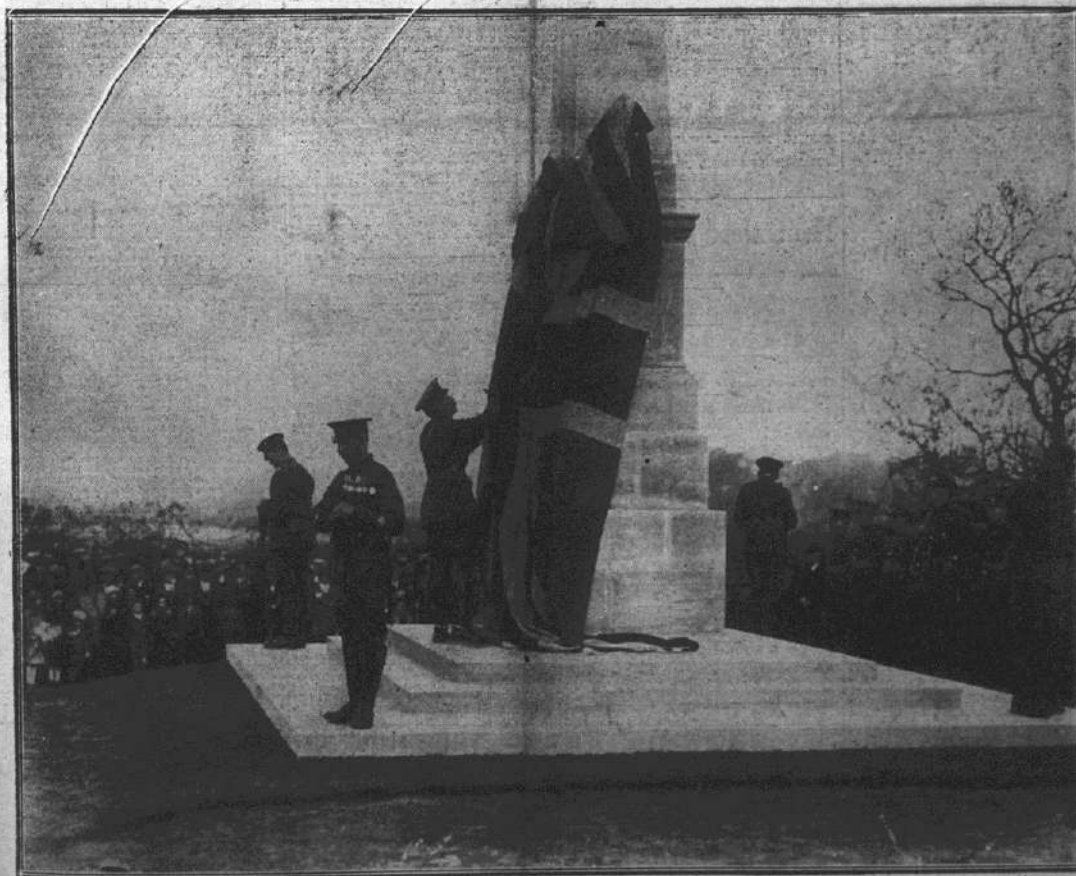
No. 9863, [New Series 733.]

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 1923.

Price 2d.

UNVEILING OF THE O.B.L.I. MEMORIAL

Large crowds gathered at Rose Hill on Sunday afternoon to witness the unveiling by Major-General Sir John Hanbury Williams, K.C.B., K.C.V.O., C.M.G., of the 49th and 52nd Light Infantry War Memorial. A report of the ceremony will be found in a news page.—(O.J.I. photos).



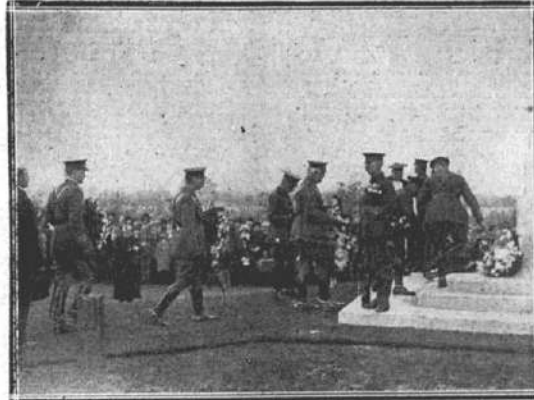
Major-General Sir John Hanbury Williams unveiling the memorial.

Oxford Journal Illustrated, 14 November 1923, p.1.

INCIDENTS AT THE UNVEILING OF THE O.B.L.I. MEMORIAL.



Bishop Shaw dedicating the memorial.



Many floral tributes were placed on the memorial after the ceremony.



A wreath was placed on the memorial by Major-General Sir John Hanbury Williams.

Oxford Journal Illustrated, 14 November 1923, p.3.



The splendid simplicity of the memorial can be seen by the above reproduction.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FIRST ROSE HILL HOUSING ESTATES, AFTER THE FIRST WORLD WAR

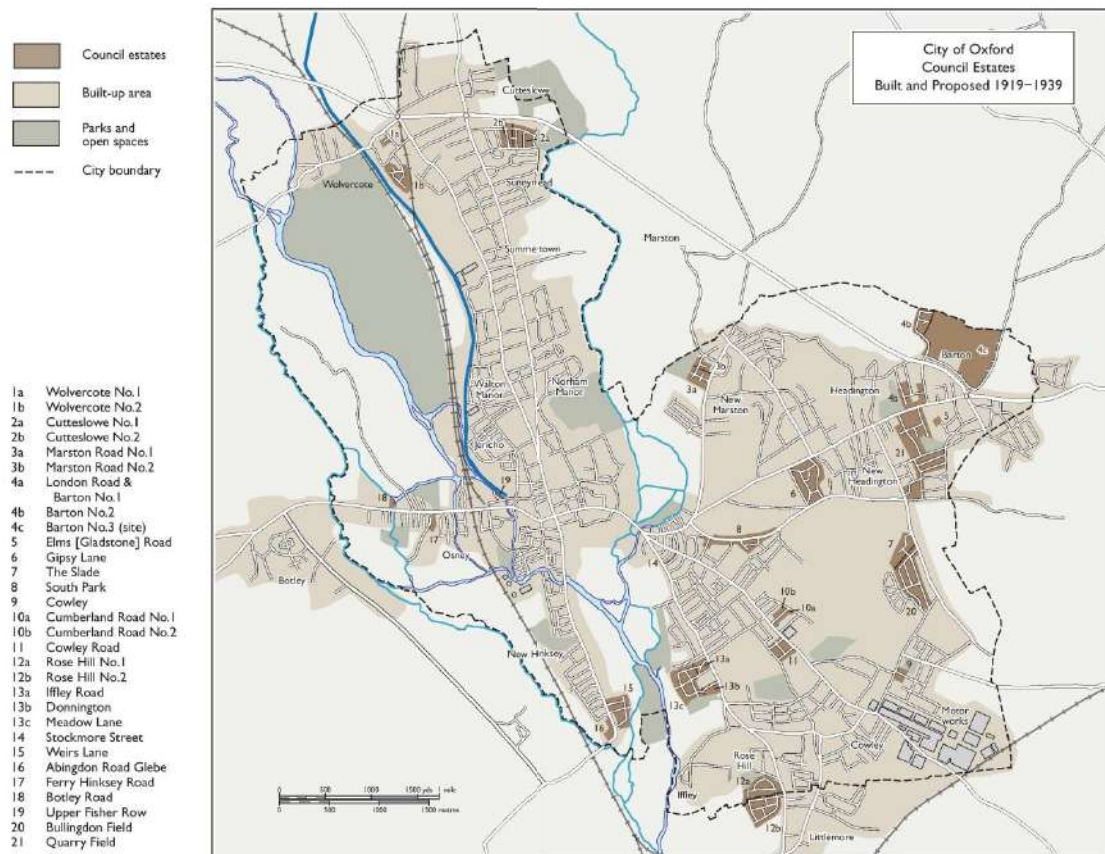
At the end of the First World War scarcely any houses had been built in Oxford for four years and there was political pressure from national government to build 'Homes for Heroes', impelled to a degree by fear of revolution. Housing for the working population was already in short supply, but for reasons of economy and for fear of offending vested interests, the largely non-political City Council had always been reluctant to intervene in the housing market. In 1919, there was no hint of the city's industrial future, and the Council saw the replacement of sub-standard houses in inner-city areas like St Ebbe's and St Aldate's as its main challenge. However, the meteoric rise of the car industry in the 1920s led to rapid population growth and created a massive new demand for cheap housing. In February 1931 there were 5,450 applicants on the City Council's register, some of whom had put their names down four years earlier.⁵⁶

Under the 1930 Greenwood Act local authorities were empowered to identify and clear slum areas, and were obliged to provide alternative housing, for which subsidies were provided.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Malcolm Graham, *Wholesome Dwellings: Housing Need in Oxford and the Municipal Response, 1800-1939* (Archeopress, 2020), pp.36, 72, back cover.

⁵⁷ *Your House, My House, Oxford Suburbs 1800-2001*, Oxfordshire Studies, 2001,

Between the wars the Council built more than 2,000 new houses, mostly at Rose Hill, Freelands off the Iffley Road, Weirs Lane off the Abingdon Road, and in Headington, Cutteslowe, New Marston and Wolvercote. This was a substantial achievement, changing the face of the city and creating a sizeable municipal housing stock that is, by and large, still in use today, although many of the houses are in private ownership. In the same period however, more than 4,700 houses were built by private developers, most of them in areas added to the city when the boundaries were extended in 1929, and many of them north of Summertown, beyond the ring road.⁵⁸



Map of Oxford's inter-war council estates, derived from a map in the Oxford Municipal Tenants' Handbook of 1947, from Malcolm Graham, Wholesome Dwellings: Housing Need in Oxford and the Municipal Response, 1800-1939 (Archeopress, 2020), pp.14-5. Most of the new housing estates after 1945 were built east and south-east of the city, notably at Rose Hill, New Marston, Northway, Wood Farm, Cowley airfield off Barns Road, Blackbird Leys, Town Furze in New Headington, Horspath Road, Headington Quarry, Slade Park, and the Laurels.⁵⁹

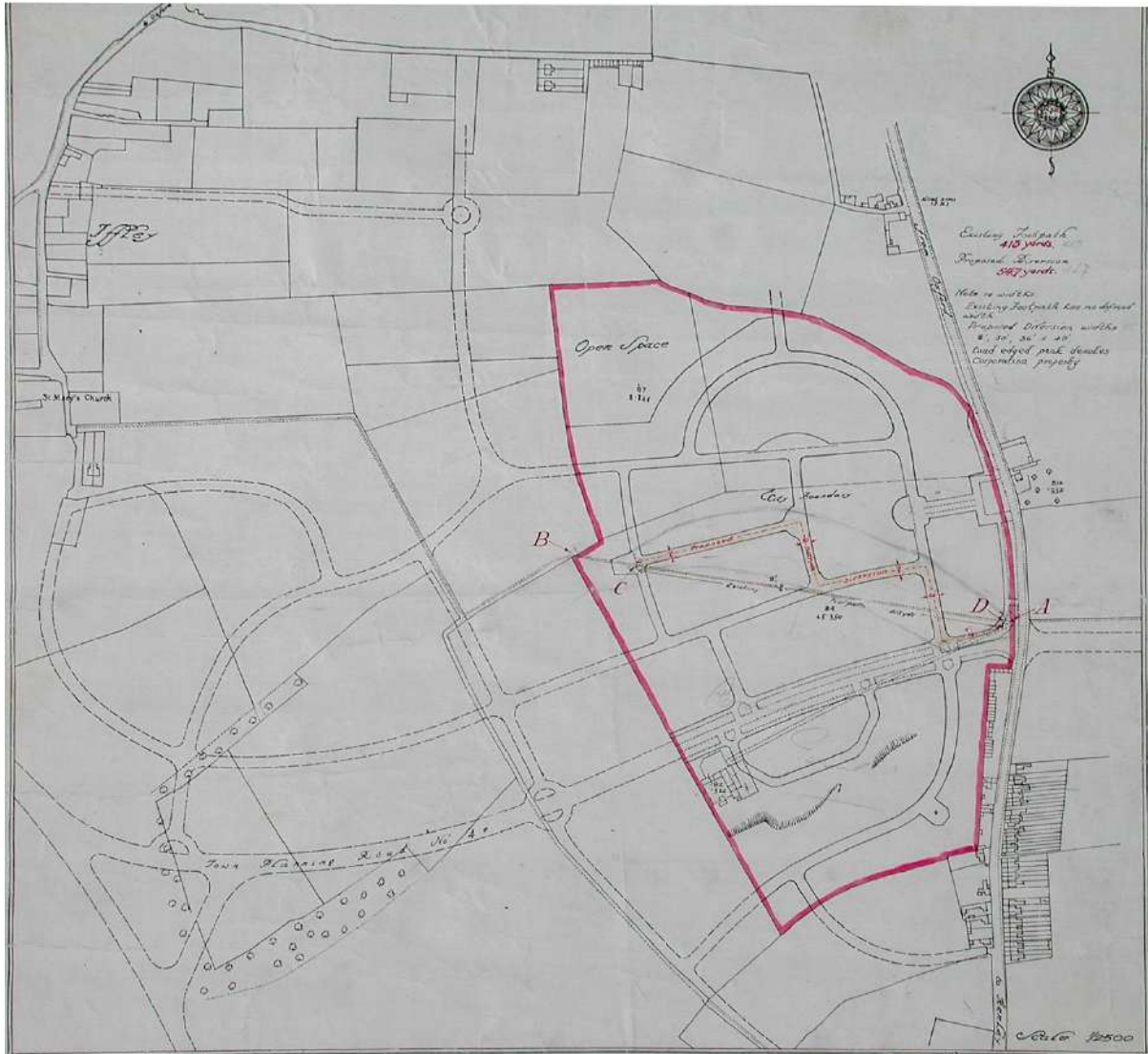
Rose Hill had been offered and rejected as a potential site for council housing in 1921, but much of the area was brought within the new city boundary in 1929. In September 1930 the City Engineer reported to the Council's Housing Committee that 55 acres belonging to the Donnington Hospital Trust could be bought quickly for £135 per acre. He began work on the

www.oxfordshirehistory.org.uk/public/YHMH/index.htm [accessed 4 May 2021].

⁵⁸ Malcolm Graham, *Wholesome Dwellings: Housing Need in Oxford and the Municipal Response, 1800-1939* (Archeopress, 2020), p.72. *Victoria County History of Oxford, Vol 4, the City of Oxford* (1979), pp.206-7.

⁵⁹ *Victoria County History of Oxford, Vol 4, the City of Oxford* (1979), pp.208.

layout of an estate at Rose Hill, the first stage of an ambitious five-year plan which would have seen 2,250 council houses built there using subsidies provided under the Wheatley Housing Act of 1924. However, the development was deferred until 1932/3 as a budgetary saving, and in 1933 the national Government cancelled the Wheatley Act, meaning that in Oxford, as elsewhere, the era of local authorities building to meet general housing need came to an abrupt end.⁶⁰



*Plan of the Rose Hill estate as originally envisaged in 1931, with space for 2,500 houses. The road layout proposed a link with Abberbury Avenue in Iffley village, where the building of large private houses had begun in 1927, but this feature was dropped from the adopted scheme. Several roads were also planned to connect Rose Hill with the intended by-pass to the south (now the ring road), and the estate was to continue beyond the by-pass towards Littlemore; neither of these things happened either. Image from Malcolm Graham, *Wholesome Dwellings: Housing Need in Oxford and the Municipal Response, 1800-1939* (Archeopress, 2020), p.65.*

⁶⁰ Malcolm Graham, *Wholesome Dwellings: Housing Need in Oxford and the Municipal Response, 1800-1939* (Archeopress, 2020), p.38.



*The City Engineer's original (1931) proposals for the lay out of the Rose Hill estate, north and south of the planned by-pass. Image from Malcolm Graham, *Wholesome Dwellings: Housing Need in Oxford and the Municipal Response, 1800-1939* (Archeopress, 2020), p.38.*

Having bought the land at Rose Hill, the Council pressed on with proposals to build there, though on a less ambitious scale. In 1933 the City Engineer prepared plans for 145 houses on what was to become Rose Hill No.1 Estate, to accommodate people from slum clearance areas in the city centre and in Cowley. The contract to build the houses was awarded to Copp Bros of Barry in South Wales, whose tender price was £44,260. Work began in April, closely supervised by the Council. New roads called Rowney Place, Spencer Crescent, Dashwood Road and Ashhurst Way were laid out; these, and roads on later estates at Rose Hill, were mostly named after men who had been Oxfordshire politicians or High Stewards of Oxford University. The first fifteen families moved in to the new estate by the end of 1934 and all the houses were completed by April 1935. The scheme left vacant the main road frontage, and the Housing Committee considered selling it off or leaving it as open space, before deciding in December 1934 to develop it with shops and 32 flats, some specifically for old people.⁶¹

⁶¹ Malcolm Graham, *Wholesome Dwellings: Housing Need in Oxford and the Municipal Response, 1800-1939* (Archeopress, 2020), p.40. *Your House, My House, Oxford Suburbs 1800-2001*, Oxfordshire Studies, 2001, www.oxfordshirehistory.org.uk/public/YHMH/index.htm [accessed 4 May 2021]. Ann Spokes Symonds & Nigel Morgan, *The Origins of Oxford Street Names* (Robert Boyd, 2011).



Aerial view of Rose Hill, June 1935, showing the newly-completed Rose Hill No. 1 Estate, before shops and flats were built on the strip of land to the east, between it and the main road. To the north, beyond the boundary hedge, and linked to the council estate by a single road (Rowney Place) the Iffley Turn estate was also under construction. This was one of the many contemporary private estates in and around Oxford catering for housing demand from the slightly better off. Image from the Oxfordshire History Centre, POX0123291.

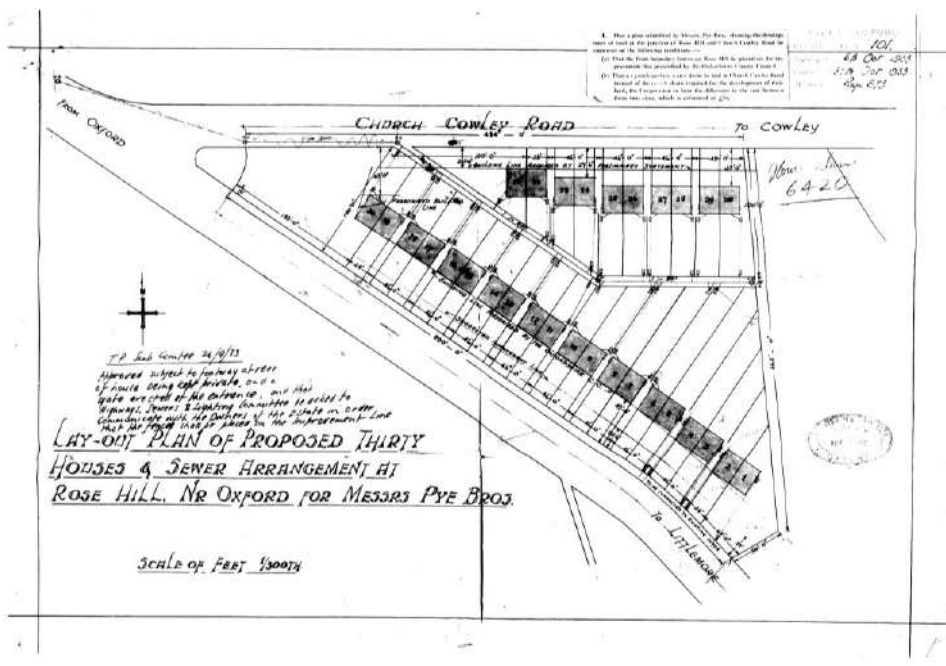


Shops in the parade facing Rose Hill's main road, with flats above, built in 1937. When this photograph was taken in around 1961, 90 Rose Hill was Kandies confectioner's shop and no. 92 was D Morgan's bakery. Image from the Oxfordshire History Centre, POX0601026.



The parade buildings are thoughtfully designed, with deep roofs, stone-clad semi-circular turrets (giving access to the flats above the shops) and decorative half-timbering and brickwork panels.

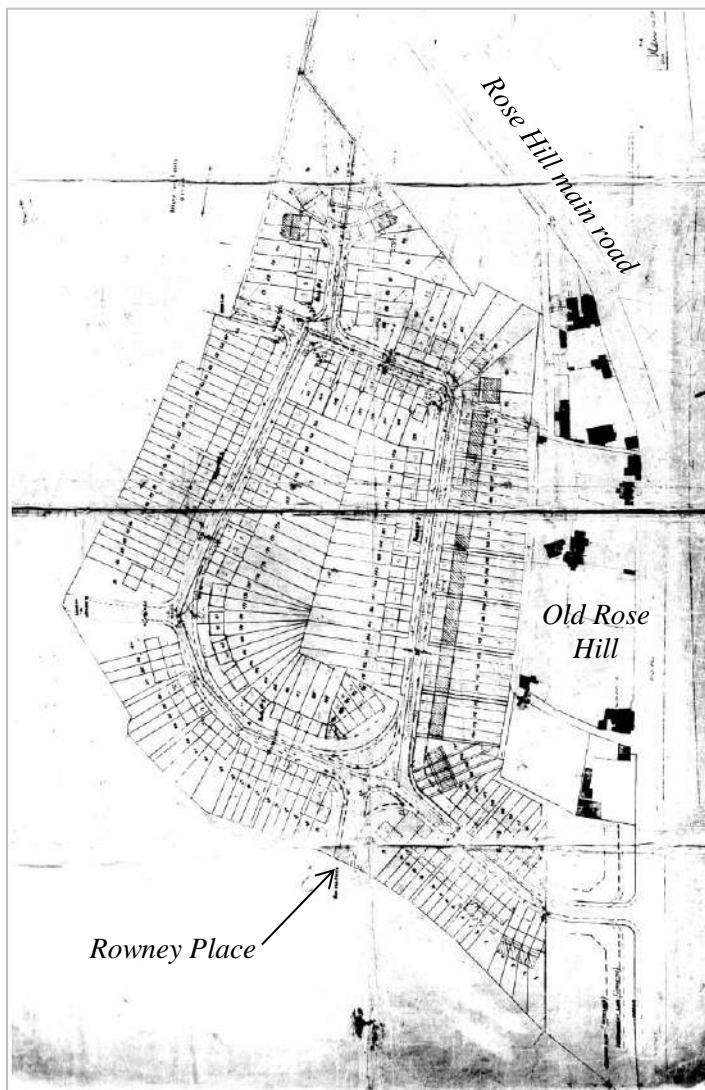
Whilst the Council's Rose Hill No. 1 estate was being built, private estates were under construction to the north and north-east. In 1934 the Kennington building firm Pye Bros completed 30 semi-detached houses on the V-shaped plot of land between Church Cowley Road and the eastern side of Rose Hill. The following year the firm submitted plans for 18 houses of similar design opposite, on the western side of Rose Hill, on land previously owned by Corpus Christi College.⁶² By this time, houses further south along the eastern side of the main Rose Hill road, either side of the new Westbury Crescent and as far south as the junction with the new Ashhurst Way, had been completed (as can be seen on the aerial photograph on p.28 above).



Plans submitted by Pye Bros in 1933 for 30 semi-detached houses between Rose Hill and Church Cowley Road. City Engineer's Deposited Estate Plan no. 101, Oxfordshire History Centre.

⁶² City Engineer's Deposited Estate Plan no. 101 (1933) and City Engineer's Deposited Building Plan no. 7424 NS (1935), Oxfordshire History Centre. First edition 25 inch OS map (1876), Oxon 39.8, with boundaries of College properties marked in pink, regarding Cowley and Littlemore; undated annotations, Corpus Christi College archives, Maps 291.

In December 1934 builders JE Cammell submitted plans for the Iffley Turn Estate.⁶³ This was also on land previously owned by Corpus, bordered by Iffley village to the north and west, the historic Rose Hill settlement to the east, and the Council's new Rose Hill No. 1 Estate to the south. The Iffley Turn estate comprised almost 200 houses – mostly semis but some in groups of four or six – designed by the architect FA Sutton. They were built on four new roads called Annesley, Courtland, Egerton and Ellesmere, names which continued the theme of Oxfordshire politicians and High Stewards of the University. The roads had been laid out, and work had begun on some of the houses, by mid-1935 (see the aerial photograph on p.28 above). Hunsdon Road was developed a couple of years later by builders Benfield & Loxley, with 18 semis designed by the Oxford architect Harry W Smith.⁶⁴ The estate was connected to the Council's estate by only one minor road, Rowney Place, perhaps in deference to new owners like WT Earp, who wrote to the Town Clerk in November 1933 advising him that most local residents on the Iffley Road Estate had put all their savings into the houses they occupied, and trusting that the City Council will take into account that *“if they build an inferior type of house, it will tend to lower the value of their property (my own included).”*⁶⁵



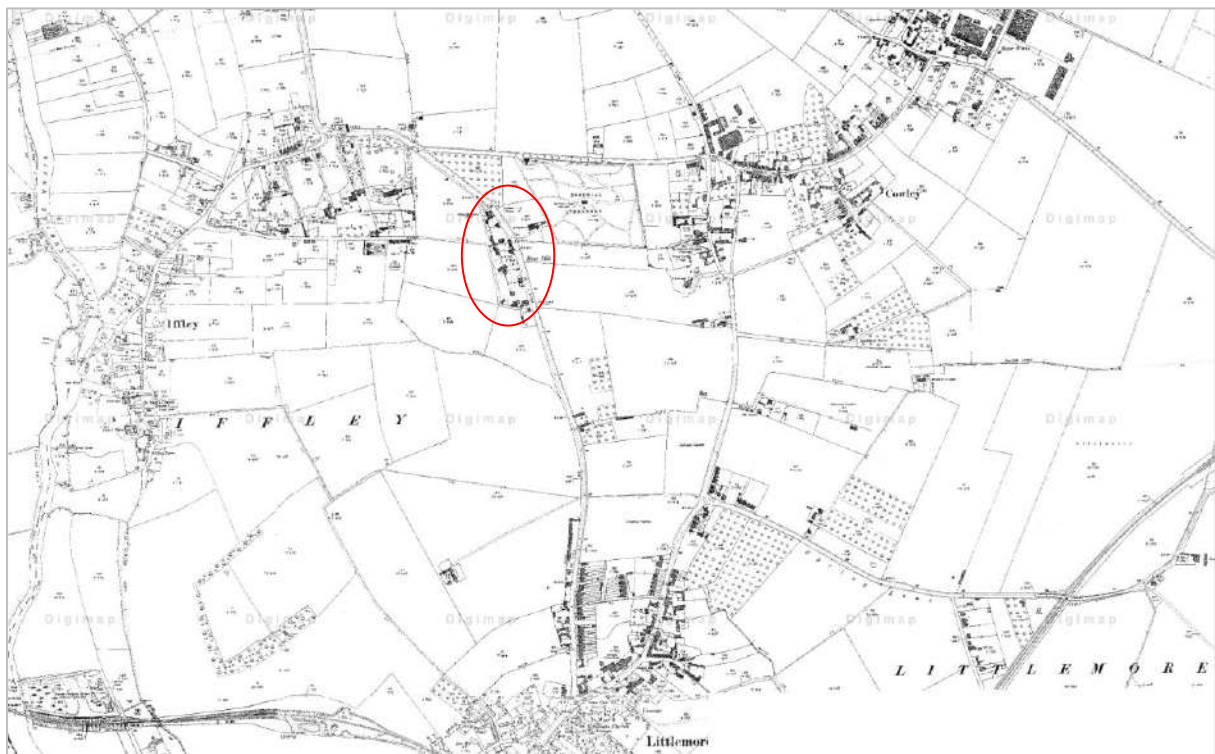
JE Cammell's plan for the layout of the Iffley Turn Estate (with added labels), submitted to the City Engineer in December 1934. City Engineer's Deposited Estate Plan no. 115, Oxfordshire History Centre.

⁶³ City Engineer's Deposited Estate Plan no. 115 (1934), Oxfordshire History Centre.

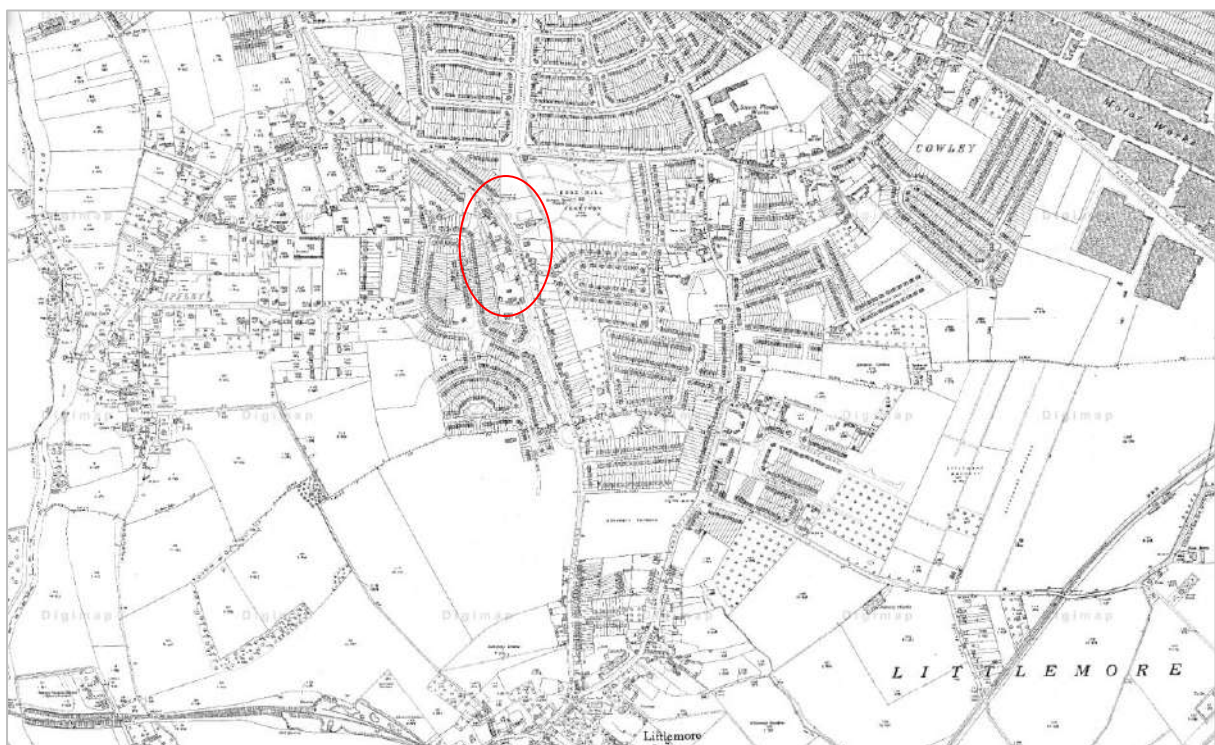
⁶⁴ City Engineer's Deposited Estate Plan no. 153 (1937), Oxfordshire History Centre.

⁶⁵ Malcolm Graham, *Wholesome Dwellings: Housing Need in Oxford and the Municipal Response, 1800-1939* (Archeopress, 2020), pp.65-6.

The 1921 and 1937 Ordnance survey maps show the enormous development which took place in the inter-war period:



Extract from the 1921 OS map (six-inch to the mile, Oxfordshire sheet 39.8) showing Iffley, Rose Hill (ringed in red), Cowley and Littlemore as small settlements still separated by open fields. The embryonic Cowley car works can be seen near the top right-hand corner.



Only 16 years later, in 1937, Iffley, Rose Hill and Cowley have become contiguous and the motor works have expanded hugely. The same area is outlined in red as in the 1921 map above.



Houses on the privately-developed Iffley Turn Estate are mostly in blocks of two or four. Many have attractive decorative coloured glass in their front doors and windows and no. 21 Annesley Road has a charming 'sunrise' front gate, which may be original.

By March 1937 the City Engineer had prepared plans for the Council's Rose Hill No. 2 Estate, immediately to the south of No. 1 Estate, and Taylor Woodrow's tender for building 272 houses there was eventually approved. Ashhurst Way was extended westwards and Spencer Crescent southwards, and new roads called Fiennes, Asquith, St Martin's, Jersey, and Devereux Place laid out. The houses had all been handed over, albeit not quite finished, by November 1939.⁶⁶

The City Council's Planning Office took great care over the layout of the roads, street lighting, sewers, and drains. Even the road name plates were specially designed (right). To ensure that houses got enough sunlight, there was seventy feet between them across the street, and there was a very low density of houses to the acre: just under eight in the pre-war estate, and even fewer in the greater part of the post-war estate. (Current Council guidance is for between 20 and 40 dwellings per acre.⁶⁷) Houses had generous gardens. To provide a pleasing street picture, roads were curved rather than on a rectilinear grid, and open green space, grass verges, and trees were incorporated in the design.⁶⁸

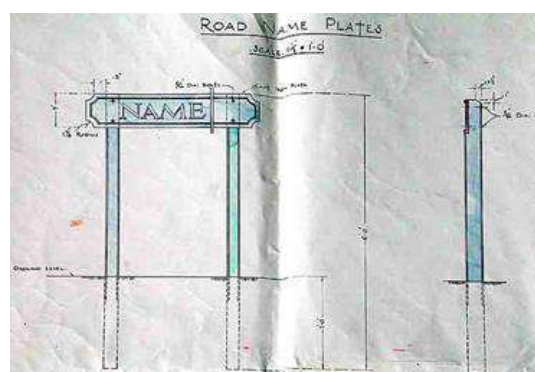
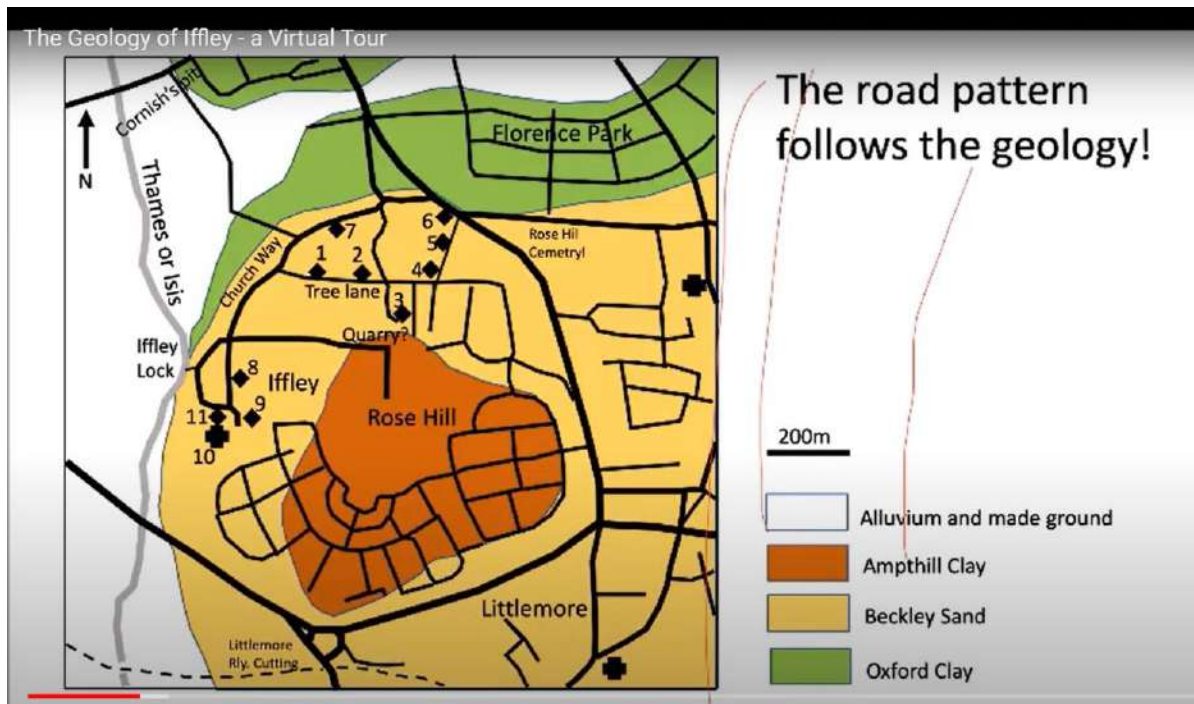


Image from the Oxfordshire History Centre, D209365a.

⁶⁶ Malcolm Graham, *Wholesome Dwellings: Housing Need in Oxford and the Municipal Response, 1800-1939* (Archeopress, 2020), p.46.

⁶⁷ Oxford City Council, *Local Plan 2036, Density: Background Paper*, file:///C:/Users/Computer.000/AppData/Local/Temp/OLP2036_BGP___Density.pdf [accessed 23 May 2021].

⁶⁸ *Your House, My House, Oxford Suburbs 1800-2001*, Oxfordshire Studies, 2001, www.oxfordshirehistory.org.uk/public/YHMH/index.htm [accessed 4 May 2021].



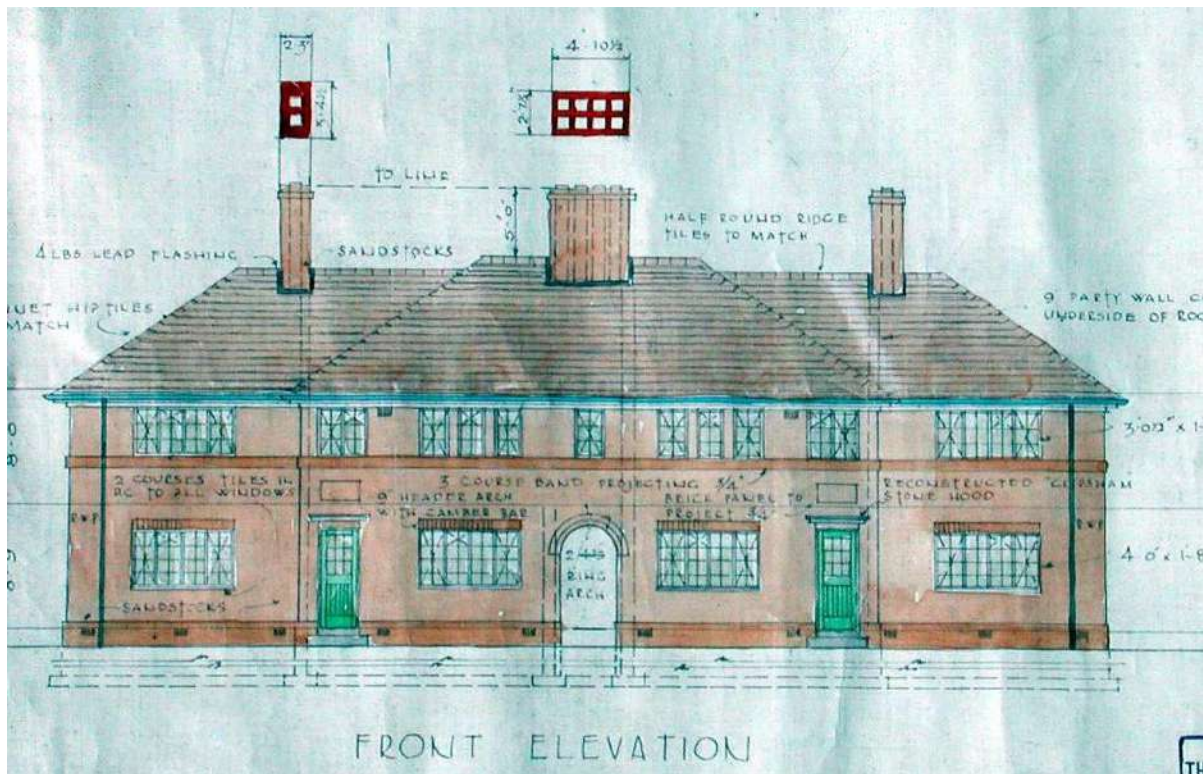
The road layout of the estate was to some extent dictated by the topography, which in turn depends on the underlying geology. Whereas Iffley village, to the north, is on Beckley Sand (a fairly sandy, loose bedrock), Rose Hill is on a higher 'knob' of Amphill Clay. Image from "The Geology of Iffley - a Virtual Tour" by Bruce Levell (Professor, Oxford University Department of Earth Sciences), lecture delivered to the Iffley History Society, 20 January 2021.

The buildings on the estate were carefully arranged so as to avoid the long straight rows of uniform terraces which characterise Oxford's Victorian suburbs, and certainly to get away from the squalor and chaos of the cramped courtyards in the old city centre, from which a proportion of Rose Hill's new residents had come. Hence the houses took on different forms, lending diversity into the street picture. Around a third of the dwellings on Rose Hill's pre-war estates were semi-detached, and 7% were one-bedroomed flats (including 16 bedsits for older people), but most of the houses were arranged in short terraces of three, four or six. These had shared open green spaces in front of them, markedly different from the front gardens on contemporary privately-built estates, which were separated into private areas with hedges and fences. Despite the fact that the council estate housed many car factory workers, particularly after the Second World War, the houses were planned for people without cars, and so there were no garages or off-street parking spaces; car ownership did not become widespread until the end of the 1970s.⁶⁹

The Council planners wanted to ensure that each block of houses, whether semi-detached or terraced, had a unity of composition. A Georgian style of architecture facilitated this, and each terrace was treated as one building, not divided vertically into units, but rather with horizontal lines emphasised. Hence the individuality of each constituent dwelling was subsumed into the composition of the whole block. Either the centre or the end units projected, and doorways were subdued or were tucked around the side. Access passageways added symmetrical or central accents to the building; the chimneys on the roof, and even the drainpipes, reinforced its symmetry. Similar concerns governed the design of the semi-

⁶⁹ *Your House, My House, Oxford Suburbs 1800-2001*, Oxfordshire Studies, 2001, www.oxfordshirehistory.org.uk/public/YHMH/index.htm [accessed 4 May 2021].

detached houses: in one design, one of the houses was set a little further back, giving the impression of one, rather than two separate, dwellings. Unity of design was further achieved by the use of red brick and red tiles right across the estate. The standard of construction of the houses was very high, and the process carefully controlled by building by-laws.⁷⁰



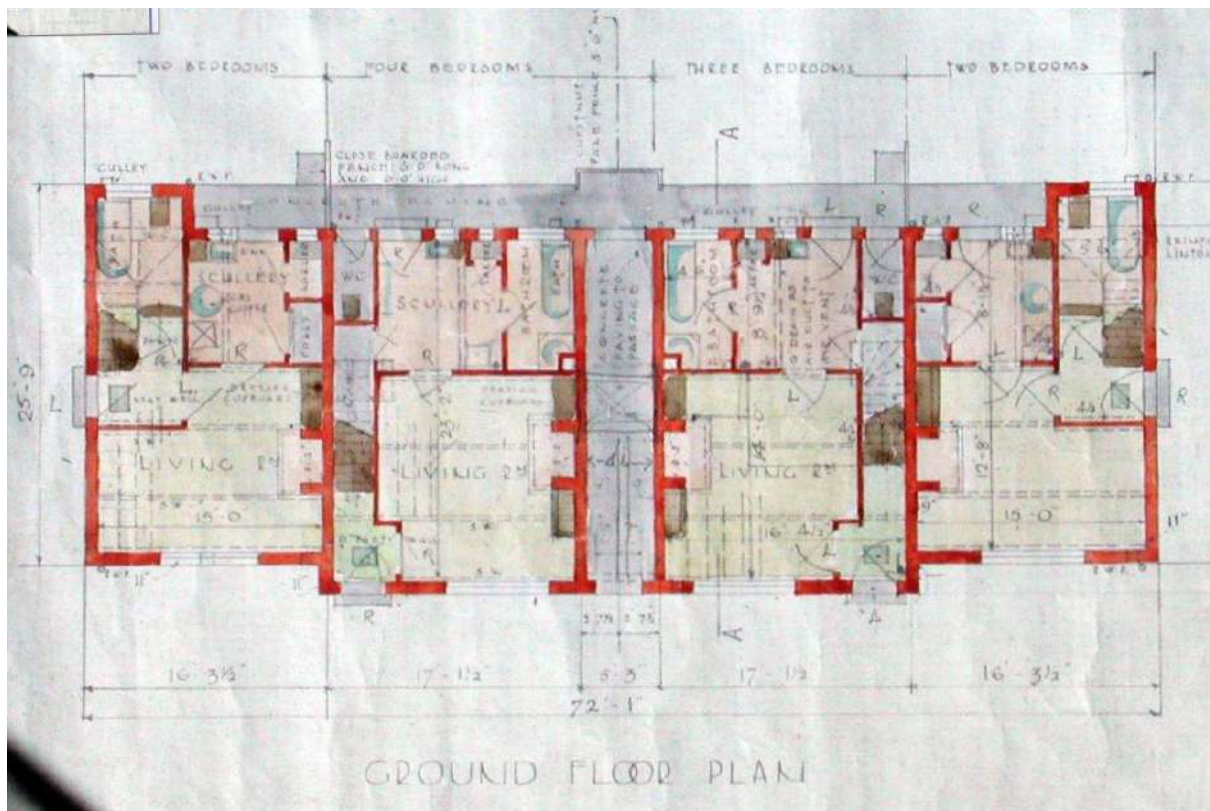
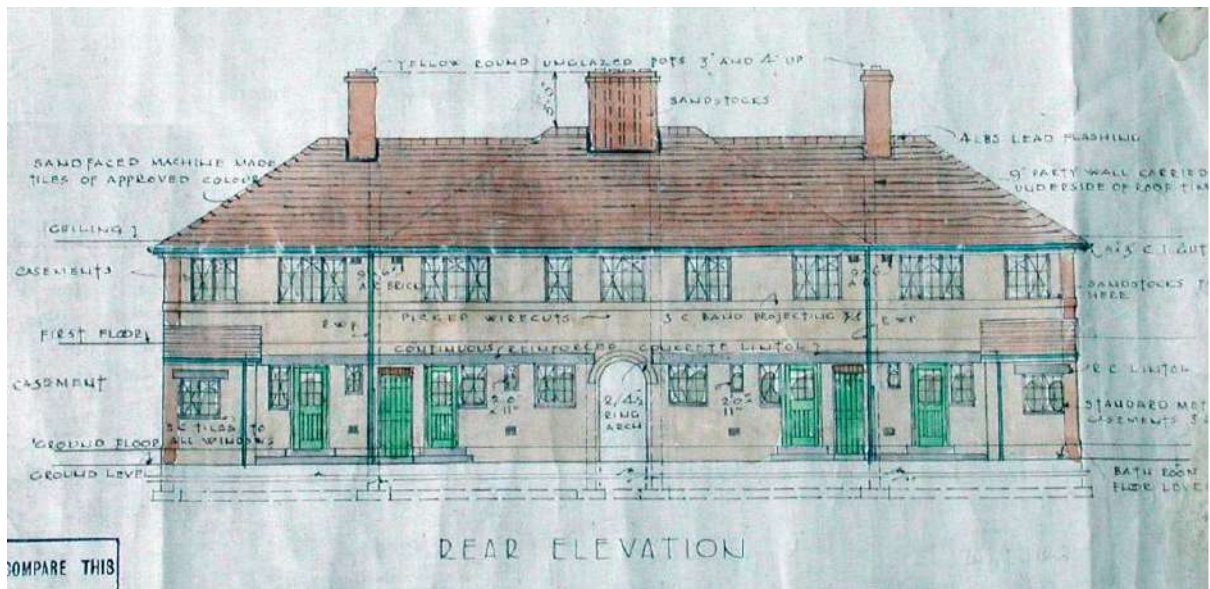
Plan for the front elevation of houses in a terrace of four on the Rose Hill Estate, February 1934. On the pre-war estates (Nos. 1 and 2) there were eight different types of terraced house plan, and four of semi-detached.⁷¹ Image from the Oxfordshire History Centre, POX0222309.



The houses as built: a terrace of four on Rose Hill Estate No. 2, built 1938-9, St Martin's Road.

⁷⁰ *Your House, My House, Oxford Suburbs 1800-2001*, Oxfordshire Studies, 2001, www.oxfordshirehistory.org.uk/public/YHMH/index.htm [accessed 4 May 2021].

⁷¹ *Your House, My House, Oxford Suburbs 1800-2001*, Oxfordshire Studies, 2001, www.oxfordshirehistory.org.uk/public/YHMH/index.htm [accessed 4 May 2021].



Rear elevation and ground floor plans for houses in a terrace of four on the Rose Hill Estate, February 1934. The block incorporated two two-bedroomed houses either side of a three-bedroomed house and – utilising the space above the central ground-floor passageway – a four-bedroomed house. Images from the Oxfordshire History Centre, POX0222308 and POX0222310.



(Above) Flats for aged persons, facing the main Rose Hill, soon after completion; the first residents moved in in the autumn of 1936.⁷² Image from the Oxfordshire History Centre, POX0222286.



(Left) the City of Oxford's coat of arms is carved in stone on panels between the first-floor windows above the entrance doors.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR

The Second World War inevitably interrupted development at Rose Hill, but in 1944 the City Corporation approached Lincoln College asking to buy 16 acres of the college's land to the south-west of the existing Rose Hill estate, so that the estate could be expanded westwards. The Assistant Bursar replied that *"the College view with regret the desire of the Corporation to purchase this field, on which they place a high value for its probable use as an alternative to their present playing field in Bartlemas, which is on the small side"* but that *"although reluctant to sell, [they] do not feel, however, that they can stand in in the way of your Corporation's plans for housing development, and they are prepared to negotiate terms for sale"*. The college was advised by its surveyor that they should accept the Corporation's offer of £2,100 because, due to various difficulties with the site, they were unlikely to be able to sell it to a private developer for a higher price, at least in the immediate future. These difficulties included *"The very depressing and unattractive approach through the Corporation Housing Estate on the East, the houses of which are occupied by those removed from areas of Slum Clearance."*⁷³

In the end the Corporation paid Lincoln College £2,200 for the site, and in 1945 Ashhurst Way was extended westwards and Lambourn, Danvers and Cottesmore Roads (names

⁷² Malcolm Graham, *Wholesome Dwellings: Housing Need in Oxford and the Municipal Response, 1800-1939* (Archeopress, 2020), p.40.

⁷³ Letters dated 12 June and 4 November 1944 in Lincoln College Archives, *Rose Hill Correspondence, 1940-1945* (LC/EL/MOD/10).

suggested by the college)⁷⁴ were laid out. Soon afterwards further land to the west was acquired and the Oval and a series of new roads radiating out from it were established.

In the post-war estate, about 16% of the dwellings were flats and just under a quarter were detached bungalows, but the majority of the houses were semi-detached. There were several practical reasons for this: semis provided a convenient solution to the problem of access to the garden, back door, coal shed and dustbin; they did not require expensive back service lanes; and they allowed more light into the houses. But more importantly, large numbers of semi-detached houses had been built nearby by private developers in the years immediately before and after the War, and this was the type of house which people now wanted to live in.⁷⁵

The flats on the post-war council estate were mostly built traditionally, of brick and slate, but the houses were nearly all prefabricated. This method of construction was chosen because there was a severe shortage of skilled labour and building materials after the War, and because it was cheaper. Prefab bungalows were built, for example on Lambourn Road, between 1946 and 1949. They were well-designed and some had big gardens; hence they were perhaps surprisingly popular with occupants.⁷⁶



A prefab bungalow on Lambourn Road. The bungalows were built in rows at an angle to the road. Image from Remembering Rose Hill through the Ages, Facebook, posted 10 December 2016 by Patsy Bond Peck, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/RememberingRoseHill/> [accessed 25 May 2021].

⁷⁴ Letters dated 19 December 1944 and July 1946 in Lincoln College Archives, *Rose Hill Correspondence, 1940-1945* (LC/EL/MOD/10).

⁷⁵ *Your House, My House, Oxford Suburbs 1800-2001*, Oxfordshire Studies, 2001, www.oxfordshirehistory.org.uk/public/YHMH/index.htm [accessed 4 May 2021].

⁷⁶ Ann Spokes Symonds, *The Changing Faces of Rose Hill* (Robert Boyd, 2000), p.17.



Aerial views looking south over Rose Hill, in 1947. In the middle distance, a group of white prefab bungalows in diagonal rows can be seen on and around Lambourn Road. They were situated between the pre-war estate (to the left) and the Oval (to the right), which had been laid out but not yet built upon. Images from Britain from Above, EAW003945 & EAW003944



There were four other main types of houses on the post-war estate, which took their names from the companies which produced them: Howard houses, Orlit houses, Glen Lyon bungalows, and Minox houses. The first to be put up after the War were the Orlit and Howard houses. The Orlits were semis made of concrete: concrete posts were erected and concrete panels slotted between them to form a cavity wall. They had flat tarred roofs and their undressed concrete walls gave them a somewhat bleak appearance. Later the City Council put pitched tiled roofs on them, and rough-cast and pebble-dashed the exteriors.⁷⁷



Orlit houses on Wynbush Road in 1967, having had their roofs raised and their concrete walls coated in pebbledash. Image from the Oxfordshire History Centre, POX0221822.

The Howard houses were factory-made and of sturdy construction, with iron girder frames faced with steel cladding. They were brought on to the site on RAF transporters called ‘Queen Marys’ which were normally used for carrying aircraft. They had asbestos sheeting covered with rendering; as with the Orlits, the Council eventually put pebbledash cladding on the walls. Many of the Howard houses were renovated in 1989 and in 2000 about 200 remained on the estate.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ *Your House, My House, Oxford Suburbs 1800-2001*, Oxfordshire Studies, 2001, www.oxfordshirehistory.org.uk/public/YHMH/index.htm [accessed 4 May 2021]. Ann Spokes Symonds, *The Changing Faces of Rose Hill* (Robert Boyd, 2000), p.20. *Oxford Mail*, 10 July 2009.

⁷⁸ *Your House, My House, Oxford Suburbs 1800-2001*, Oxfordshire Studies, 2001, www.oxfordshirehistory.org.uk/public/YHMH/index.htm [accessed 4 May 2021]. Ann Spokes Symonds, *The Changing Faces of Rose Hill* (Robert Boyd, 2000), p.20.



Howard houses on Danvers Road in October 1967. Image from the Oxfordshire History Centre, POX0221799.

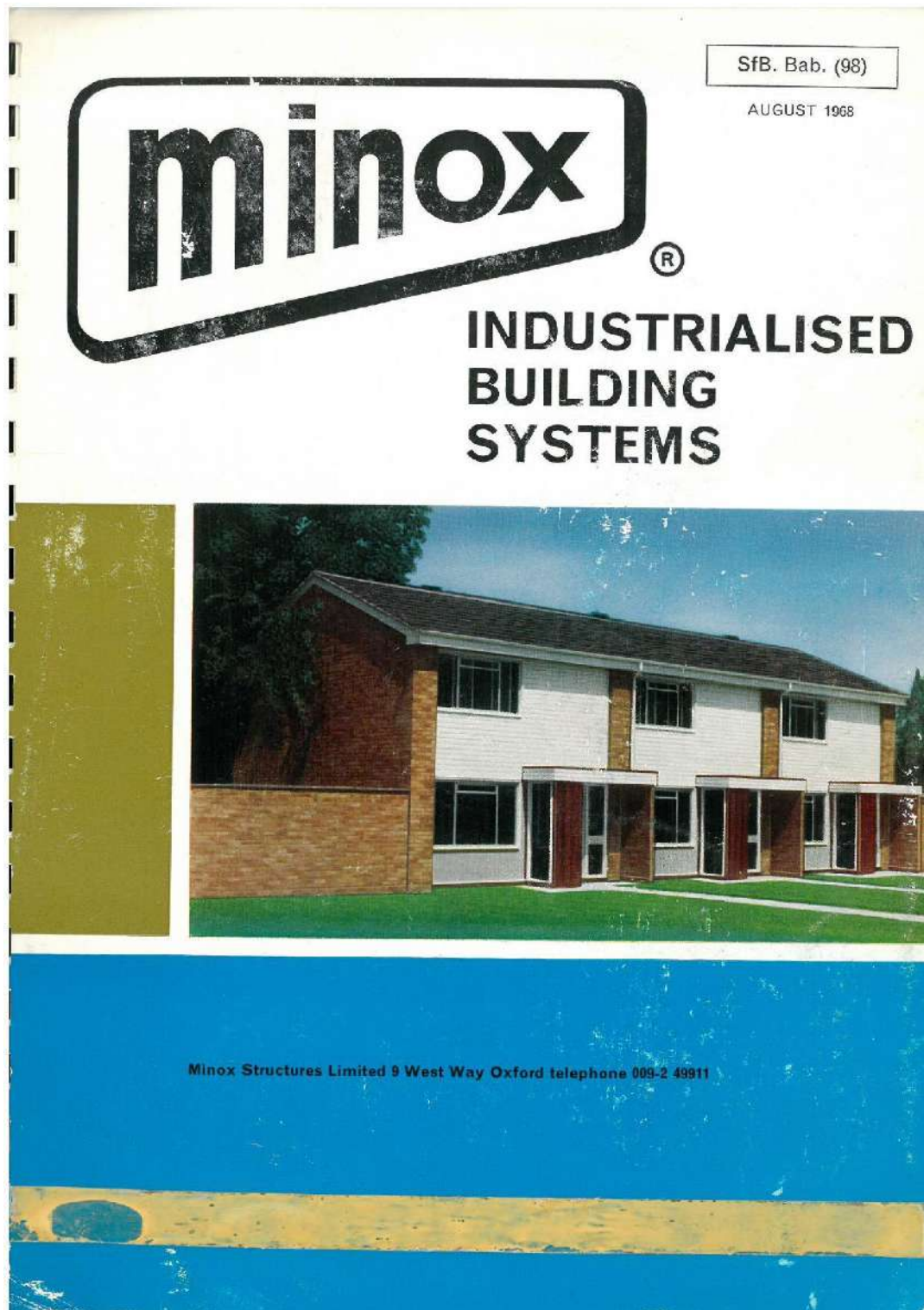


Howard houses on Rivermead Road in 2021.



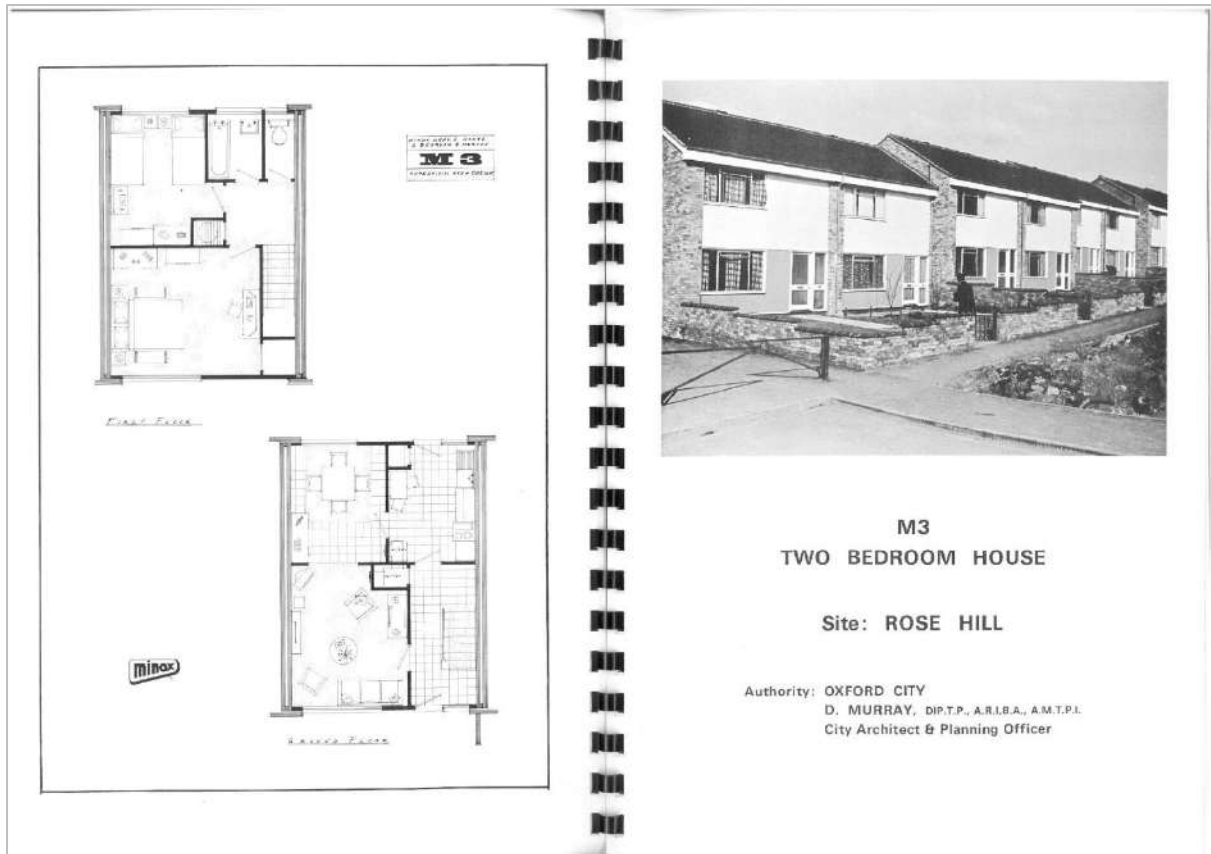
Since being sold off by the Council, some of the Howard houses have been radically altered by their owners, like this one on Court Farm Road.

The Minox houses were timber framed with wood panels and brick infill. Their shells were factory-built by the Botley building firm Minns. In the 1970s the Council put brick and white wood cladding on their walls, making them look more like traditionally-built houses.⁷⁹



Front cover of Minns's brochure for the Minox Industrialised Building Systems, August 1968. Image courtesy of Kevin Minns.

⁷⁹ *Your House, My House, Oxford Suburbs 1800-2001*, Oxfordshire Studies, 2001, www.oxfordshirehistory.org.uk/public/YHMH/index.htm [accessed 4 May 2021].



Pages from Minns's brochure for the Minox Industrialised Building Systems, August 1968. Image courtesy of Kevin Minns.



Minox houses on Williamson Way, 2021.

The prefab bungalows which had been put up immediately after the War were demolished and replaced with Glen Lyon bungalows in the late 1960s. These were steel-framed and had pebbledash walls.⁸⁰



*A Glen Lyon bungalow on Asquith Way, 1960s. Image from *Your House, My House, Oxford Suburbs 1800-2001*, Oxfordshire Studies, 2001.*



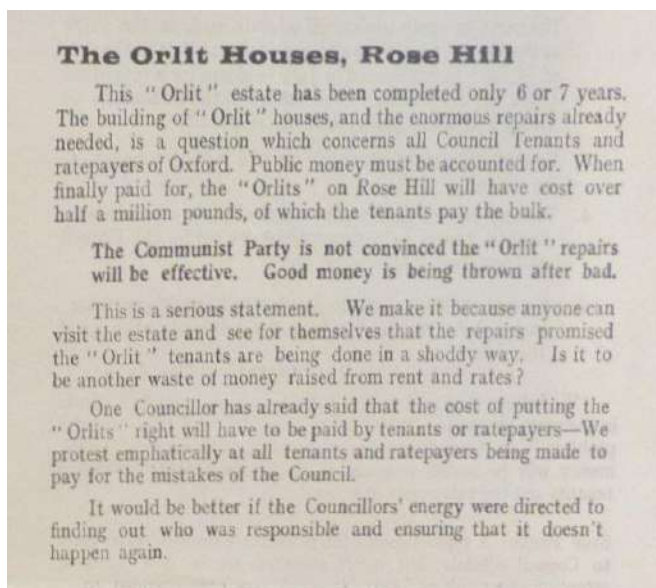
A Glyn Lyon bungalow on Lambourn Road, 2001. Image from the Oxfordshire History Centre, POX0222487.

⁸⁰ *Your House, My House, Oxford Suburbs 1800-2001*, Oxfordshire Studies, 2001, www.oxfordshirehistory.org.uk/public/YHMH/index.htm [accessed 4 May 2021]. Ann Spokes Symonds, *The Changing Faces of Rose Hill* (Robert Boyd, 2000), p.19.



The post-war estate also had some privately owned self-build houses, like these on Rivermead Road, photographed in 1967.⁸¹ Image from the Oxfordshire History Centre, POX0221815.

Some of the prefabricated houses experienced structural problems, particularly the Orlits, in which the main concrete beams were liable to deteriorate, sometimes leading to subsidence. Within only five years of the houses having been erected, there were complaints that major repairs were already required, but that these were not being carried out properly by the Council's contractors, or not carried out at all. In a pamphlet presented to the Housing Committee in March 1955, the Cowley and Iffley Branch of the Communist Party called for an enquiry into "*the Orlit Housing scandal*" and the sacking of Council officials responsible for the Orlit houses.⁸²



Extract from "Oxford's Housing and Repairs Scandal", a pamphlet submitted to the Housing Committee by the Cowley and Iffley Branch of the Communist Party, 28 March 1955, Oxfordshire History Centre, O45/1/A2/16.

⁸¹ *Your House, My House, Oxford Suburbs 1800-2001*, Oxfordshire Studies (2001), www.oxfordshirehistory.org.uk/public/YHMH/index.htm [accessed 4 May 2021].

⁸² Cowley and Iffley Branch of the Communist Party, "Oxford's Housing and Repairs Scandal" (28 March 1955), Oxfordshire History Centre, O45/1/A2/16.

The deterioration of the Orlit houses was a national not just a local problem, and central government provided grants for repairs and rebuilding. Oxford City Council made improvements to the structure of the houses and some were subsequently pulled down and rebuilt in a similar style using yellow or red brick. In 2000 there were still 105 Orlit houses on the estate but almost all of them were demolished in 2009.⁸³



(Left) possibly the last remaining original Orlit house on the Rose Hill estate, on Nowell Road, and (right) its semi-detached pair which has been rebuilt in brick.

Both pre- and post-war estates included sheltered housing for the elderly, some of which was provided by agencies outside the Council. Butler House on Ashhurst Way was built and managed by the Oxford Cottage Improvement Society (OCIS, later to become the Oxford Citizen's Housing Association) and named after C Violet Butler (1884-1982) who was on its committee. Miss Butler was a philanthropist, social researcher, and educator, whose book *Social Conditions in Oxford*, published in 1912 and based on her interviews with local people, had highlighted the poor conditions in which many Oxford citizens lived and worked, particularly in inner-city areas like St Aldate's. Butler House was designed by the well-known Oxford architect Thomas Rayson; unfortunately the contract was dogged with problems, including a post-war shortage of bricks, and the fact that the workforce kept leaving for better-paid jobs at Morris Motors and Pressed Steel. The building finally opened in May 1961 however, with Miss Butler as guest of honour.⁸⁴

⁸³ *Your House, My House, Oxford Suburbs 1800-2001*, Oxfordshire Studies, 2001, www.oxfordshirehistory.org.uk/public/YHMH/index.htm [accessed 4 May 2021]. Ann Spokes Symonds, *The Changing Faces of Rose Hill* (Robert Boyd, 2000), p.20. *Oxford Mail*, 10 July 2009.

⁸⁴ *Your House, My House, Oxford Suburbs 1800-2001*, Oxfordshire Studies, 2001, www.oxfordshirehistory.org.uk/public/YHMH/index.htm [accessed 4 May 2021]. Ann Spokes Symonds, *The Changing Faces of Rose Hill* (Robert Boyd, 2000), pp.23-4. Brian Harrison, "Butler, (Christina) Violet (1884-1982)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004). C Violet Butler, *Social Conditions in Oxford* (Oxford, 1912).



*Miss Butler (with black top and necklace) at the centre of a happy group at Rose Hill Community Centre in 1958. Image from Ann Spokes Symonds, *The Changing Faces of Rose Hill* (Robert Boyd, 2000), p.39.*



Violet Butler by Peter Wardle, 1968. Image from Barnett House.

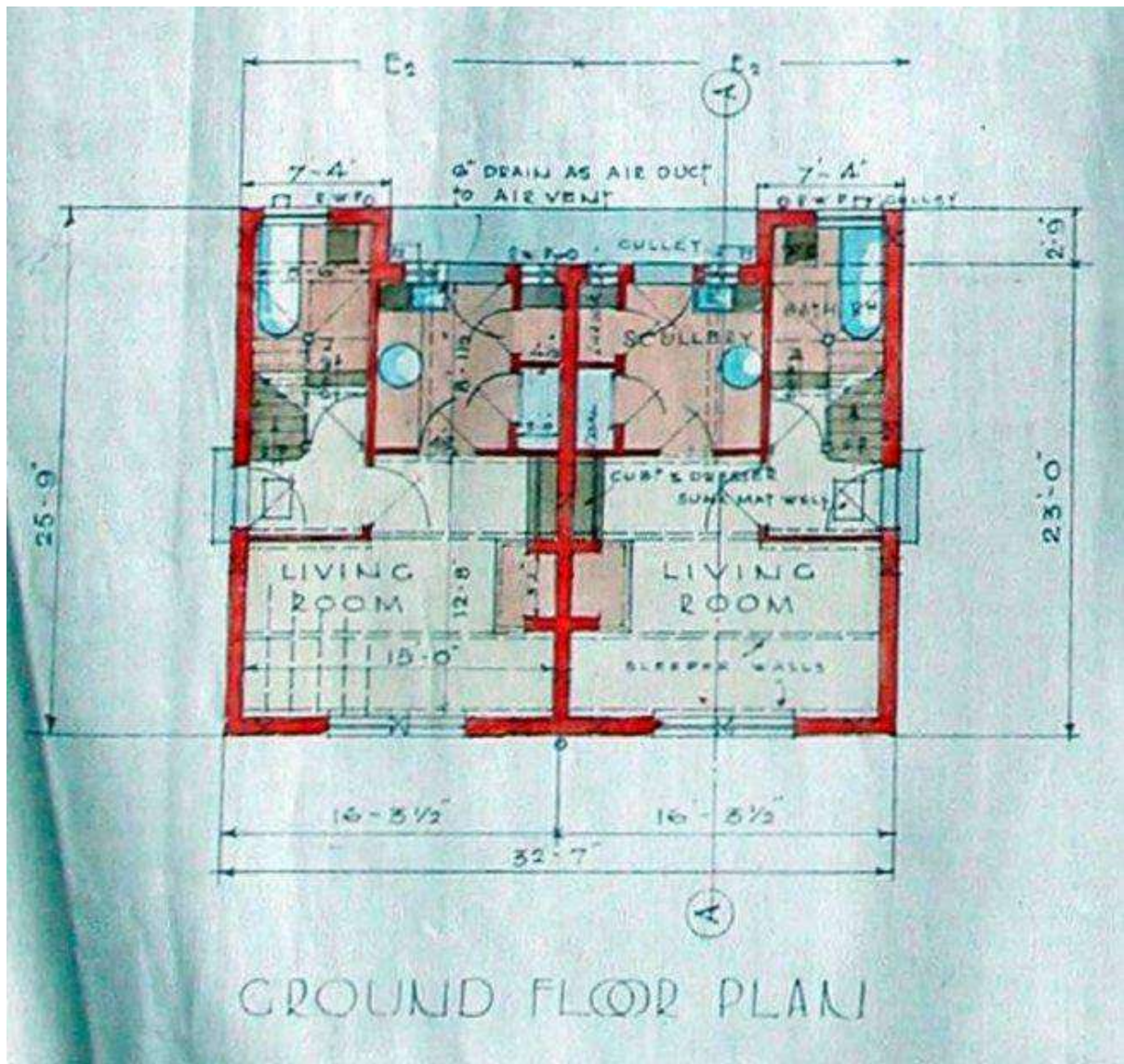


(Above) Butler House, accommodation for elderly people, on Ashhurst Way.



(Left) the foundation stone on the eastern end wall of Butler House: Oxford Cottage Improvement Society, 1960, Thomas Rayson, Architect..

On the pre-war estate, council houses were let unfurnished but they did have some features and fittings such as built-in wardrobes, fireplaces for coal fires, and airing cupboards. The kitchens (or sculleries) were equipped with a gas copper (for heating water for washing), a larder and a coal store. The prefabs were centrally heated by a stove in the living room which also heated the water. This system was copied in the Glen Lyon bungalows, which, like the Minox houses, originally had a warm air system, the air being pumped into the rooms through ducts. The prefabs were unusual in that they also came equipped with a fridge: most tenants elsewhere would not have been able to afford one.⁸⁵



Details of plans drawn up by the City Engineer's Department for houses in blocks of four on the pre-war estate at Rose Hill, 1934. Note the fireplaces in the living room, the fitted cupboard and dresser in the hall, and the circular copper in the scullery. Image from the Oxfordshire History Centre, POX022299.

⁸⁵ *Your House, My House, Oxford Suburbs 1800-2001*, Oxfordshire Studies, 2001, www.oxfordshirehistory.org.uk/public/YHMH/index.htm [accessed 4 May 2021].

LIFE ON THE ESTATES

Tenants were encouraged to have a sense of pride in their house and home by the Council, whose policies aimed at maintaining the uniform and tidy appearance of the estate. No alterations to the outsides of the houses were permitted, though the Oxford Municipal Tenants' Handbook, published in 1935, stressed that "*the only restrictions are those intended to maintain the property and ensure the well-being of all the residents*". Letting conditions included weekly payment of rent, a ban on carrying on any form of business without the Council's prior consent (very strictly enforced), the requirement to keep the property in a "*clean and orderly condition*" and agreement to let Council officials inspect the property at any reasonable hour. After complaints from neighbours, tenants were required to obtain consent before keeping "*pigs, rabbits, pigeons, fowls, or any animal likely to be a source of annoyance*". The Housing Committee banned the growing of vegetables in front gardens, and published formal regulations for garden structures – including fences – limiting their size, materials and position. The Council encouraged cultivation of the spacious gardens on all its estates, partly as a means of modifying working-class leisure. The tenants' handbook gave grave warnings against letting gardens become overgrown, and encouraged excellence by introducing an annual gardening competition in 1935, with cash prizes for the best front and back gardens, corner plot gardens and hedges.⁸⁶



*Detail from the cover of the Oxford Municipal Tenants' Handbook, 1935. The comforting image of an idyllic English village (albeit one with electricity wires) was doubtless intended to convey a sense that the City Council strove to ensure the well-being of its tenants. The handbook listed letting conditions, warning for example against noisy pets, and included gardening tips and helpful advice about council services. Image from Malcolm Graham, *Wholesome Dwellings: Housing Need in Oxford and the Municipal Response, 1800-1939* (Archaeopress, 2020), p.58.*

⁸⁶ Malcolm Graham, *Wholesome Dwellings: Housing Need in Oxford and the Municipal Response, 1800-1939* (Archaeopress, 2020), p.59. *Your House, My House, Oxford Suburbs 1800-2001*, Oxfordshire Studies, 2001, www.oxfordshirehistory.org.uk/public/YHMH/index.htm [accessed 4 May 2021].

The fact that the early houses were populated largely by former inner city dwellers from parishes including St Giles's, St Thomas's, St Ebbe's, St Aldate's, and St Clement's made the estate a one-class community. But it was a somewhat disjointed one, with its members coming from different areas. People may have missed familiar neighbourhoods where everybody knew everyone else, and the proximity of the town centre. However, in some of the inner city areas, living conditions in old and poorly-maintained terraces and tenements had become squalid. Perhaps a brand new house with all the amenities that we now take for granted would have compensated for people's enforced relocation. However, for many tenants, finding the rent was an on-going struggle, particularly for those who had been moved out of cheaper housing as part of slum clearance programmes. Not only were they paying more than they had for the old houses which they had been forced to leave, but they also had the additional costs of travelling to work and furnishing their new homes. Taking in lodgers was an obvious solution, but the Council became alarmed that this was leading to overcrowding – a survey of 1926 revealed that sitting rooms were being used as bedrooms – and resolved that no lodgers would be permitted without written permission. Non-payment of rent brought the threat of eviction, though in fact the Council was reluctant to use the eviction process, preferring instead to negotiate the paying-off of arrears with a fixed weekly sum.⁸⁷

Increasingly the Rose Hill estate housed newcomers to Oxford, particularly those taking up jobs at the nearby Cowley car works, which expanded enormously in the 1930s. Hence the estate became more mixed and its reputation as one of the council estates for former slum dwellers – and hence not quite 'respectable' – diminished. Prejudice against such estates had led to the building, in 1934, of the notorious Cutteslowe walls between a private housing development off the Banbury Road and the adjacent council estate. To some extent this was echoed at Rose Hill, where the road which was initially planned to connect the council estate to the village of Iffley was never built, and only one street – Rowney Place – connects the council estate to the contemporary privately-built estate north of it. In fact the regulations that governed letting on the Council's estates ensured that tenants were perfectly respectable: they had to be married and the husbands in work.⁸⁸

Council estates originated as the solution to severe housing shortage, and the Addison Act of 1919 and subsequent housing acts financed the building of houses, but not the creation of communities like those that had evolved over centuries in towns and cities. New council estates like Rose Hill were mostly located on the periphery because that was where suitable building land was available, and reasonably-priced. National Government anticipated that commercial interests would supply social facilities, and with no special government funding, the City Council was typically slow to remedy the deficiencies of the new estates. However, in the late 1930s, the Council began to collaborate with the Oxford Council of Social Services (OCSS), a voluntary organisation which was the local branch of the National Council of Social Services, established in 1919. Together they opened a community centre in a hut on Council-owned land at Rose Hill in July 1937. Following this, the City Council became one of the few local authorities in the late 1930s to recognise its responsibility for providing social and recreational opportunities in outlying areas.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ *Your House, My House, Oxford Suburbs 1800-2001*, Oxfordshire Studies, 2001, www.oxfordshirehistory.org.uk/public/YHMH/index.htm [accessed 4 May 2021]. Malcolm Graham, *Wholesome Dwellings: Housing Need in Oxford and the Municipal Response, 1800-1939* (Archaeopress, 2020), p.57.

⁸⁸ *Your House, My House, Oxford Suburbs 1800-2001*, Oxfordshire Studies, 2001, www.oxfordshirehistory.org.uk/public/YHMH/index.htm [accessed 4 May 2021].

⁸⁹ Malcolm Graham, *Wholesome Dwellings: Housing Need in Oxford and the Municipal Response, 1800-1939* (Archeopress, 2020), pp.59, 72.



Rose Hill's community centre was the first of its kind in the city. It was a large wooden building on the corner of Ashhurst Way and Spencer Crescent, costing £400. By March 1938 it was being managed by a committee of local residents, and covering its costs by putting on dances and other events. There were lots of activities and clubs and, during the War, a municipal restaurant.⁹⁰

*A party at the Rose Hill Community Centre in 1951. Image from Ann Spokes Symonds, *The Changing Faces of Rose Hill* (Robert Boyd, 2000), p.40.*

The community centre burnt down in 1955 [the cause of the fire was never discovered] and was replaced with a new brick building on the Oval, which opened in 1956.⁹¹ Bill Buckingham, who went on to become the spokesman for the Rose Hill and Littlemore communities for well over 40 years, organised the building of the new community centre.



*(Left) Bill Buckingham (left) and the Mayor William Gowers at the Rose Hill Community Centre in 1954; and (right) Bill Buckingham in 2014. Mr Buckingham served as a parish councillor, on the Bullingdon Rural District Council for 12 years, on South Oxfordshire District Council for 17 years, and as city councillor for Rose Hill from 1991 until his retirement in 2006. He was Oxford's Lord Mayor in 1994/5. He worked at the Cowley car works for almost 40 years before retiring in 1984; he died in 2017, aged 96.⁹² Black and white image from Ann Spokes Symonds, *The Changing Faces of Rose Hill* (Robert Boyd, 2000), p.92. Colour photograph by Jon Lewis, *Oxford Mail*, 5 October 2017.*

⁹⁰ Malcolm Graham, *Wholesome Dwellings: Housing Need in Oxford and the Municipal Response, 1800-1939* (Archeopress, 2020), p.59. Ann Spokes Symonds, *The Changing Faces of Rose Hill* (Robert Boyd, 2000), pp.36-7.

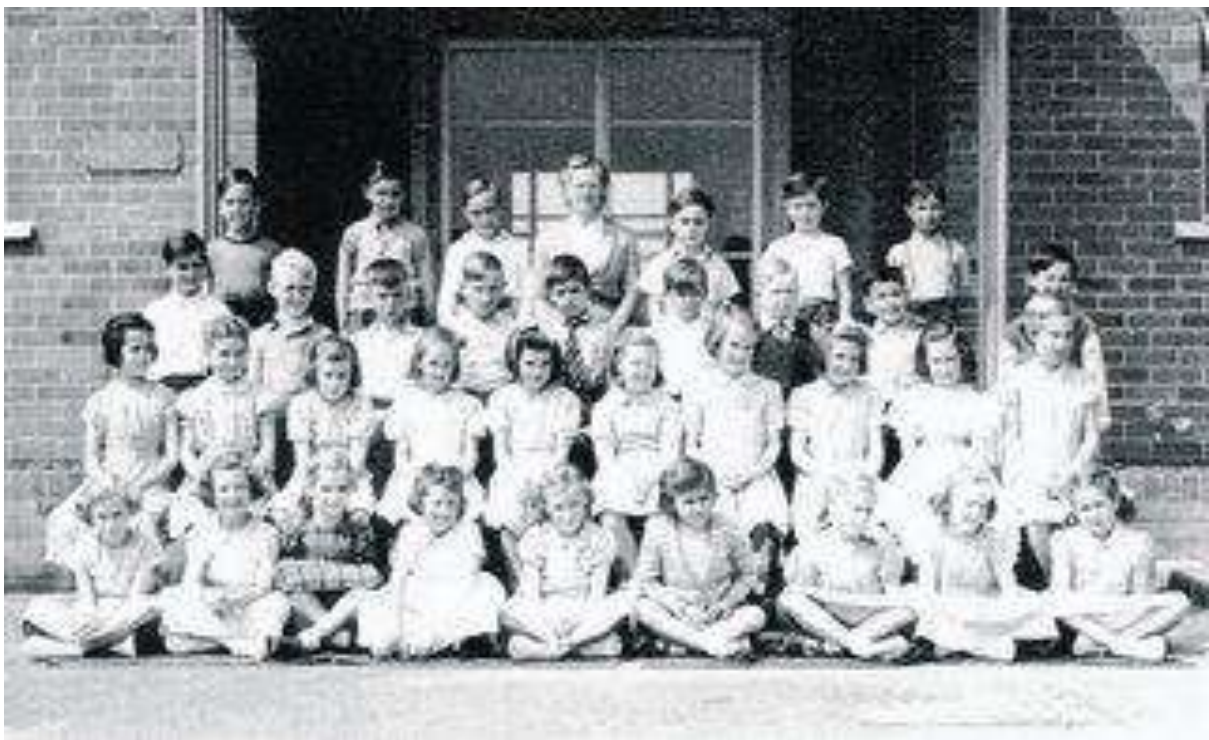
⁹¹ Ann Spokes Symonds, *The Changing Faces of Rose Hill* (Robert Boyd, 2000), pp.36-7.

⁹² "Tributes to former Lord Mayor of Oxford and Rose Hill stalwart Bill Buckingham", Oxford City Council website, 22 June 2017.

https://www.oxford.gov.uk/news/article/465/tributes_to_former_lord_mayor_of_oxford_and_rose_hill_stalwart_bill_buckingham [accessed 11 May 2021]. *Oxford Mail*, 29 June 2017.

In 2014 Mr Buckingham broke ground to mark the start of work on a replacement community centre on Carole's Way off Ashhurst Way. Two years later, watched by hundreds of local residents, he cut the ribbon to open the new centre, where the Bill Buckingham Ballroom is named in his honour. He described the new building as "out of this world".⁹³

After the Second World War, several junior mixed schools were established in the outer suburbs including, in 1950, Rose Hill Primary School on the Oval. The showpiece buildings created interest from far and wide and attracted delegations from Denmark, Switzerland, Sweden, Germany, Australia and British Guiana. At the official opening on 10 July 1952 John Christi, Principal of Jesus College, surprised the 200 parents and 80 official guests assembled in the hall with his view of the new school: he said that Westminster and Winchester, two public schools where he had been headmaster, could not boast such fine classrooms as Rose Hill.⁹⁴



Miss Leafe's class of 6- and 7-year-olds at Rose Hill Primary School, spring 1951. In September 1952, a new school uniform was introduced in maroon and turquoise (later changed to navy), with caps for boys, berets for girls, and badges and ties for both.⁹⁵ Image from the Oxford Mail, 12 September 2011.

⁹³ "Tributes to former Lord Mayor of Oxford and Rose Hill stalwart Bill Buckingham", Oxford City Council website, 22 June 2017.

https://www.oxford.gov.uk/news/article/465/tributes_to_former_lord_mayor_of_oxford_and_rose_hill_stalwart_bill_buckingham [accessed 11 May 2021]. *Oxford Mail*, 2 February 2016.

⁹⁴ *Oxford Mail*, 12 September 2011. "Parishes: Iffley" pp.189-206 in *Victoria County History of Oxford, Vol 5, Bullingdon Hundred*. *Victoria County History of Oxford, Vol 4, the City of Oxford* (1979), p.459.

⁹⁵ *Oxford Mail*, 12 September 2011.



Aerial view looking south over Rose Hill, in 1953. The buildings of the new school are in front of the Oval. Image from Britain from Above, EAW050093.

The Rose Hill estates were designed with a plenty of open space and they still benefit from lots of green, communal areas, not least the large playing fields and recreation ground behind the new community centre. To the north-west are the Lenthall Road Rose Hill Allotments, which have been in place since 1947. The 6.7-acre site slopes westwards towards Iffley village, with views over Iffley church to Boars Hill and beyond. There are 88 ‘10-pole’ plots, each measuring about 7 yards by 35 yards (many of which are divided into half or quarter plots), a shop, a children’s play area and two wildlife areas.⁹⁶



The Lenthall Road Rose Hill Allotments. Image from Lenthall Road Rose Hill Allotments Association website, <http://lrrhaa.org/gallery> [accessed 25 May 2021].

⁹⁶ Lenthall Road Rose Hill Allotments Association, <http://lrrhaa.org/about-2/> [accessed 11 May 2021].

To the west of the estate is Rivermead Nature Park, which has been leased by Oxford City Council from the University of Oxford since 1990.



It is a mosaic of lowland, mixed deciduous woodland with elements of calcareous alkaline fen, wet woodland, a stream, drains, rough grassland, scrub and a pond, all on a gentle slope down to the eastern margin of the River Thames. It is managed in partnership with the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT).⁹⁷



Looking west from the edge of Rivermead Nature Park, across the River Thames.

In the 1950s this area was home to the track of the Baskerville Hounds, Rose Hill's popular and successful cycle speedway team.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Judith Webb, *BBOWT Wild Oxford Project, Rivermead Nature Park: Report on the third year 2016-2017* (March 2018), https://www.bbowt.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-08/wild_oxf_proj_rivermead_2016-2017_jw_rpt.pdf [accessed 11 May 2021].

⁹⁸ Mike Wiggins, post on *Remembering Rose Hill through the Ages*, Facebook, 20 July 2021, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/RememberingRoseHill/> [accessed 20 August 2021].

Rose Hill's elevated position still affords good views over the surrounding countryside, just as it did centuries ago. The contrast between these wide vistas and the narrow and intriguing lanes of old Rose Hill are one of the area's great charms.



Looking west towards Boars Hill from Radford Close.



Footpath from the northern end of Villiers Lane to the main Rose Hill Road.



Footpath along the side of the Rose Hill Methodist Church.

THE ORIGINS OF STREET NAMES IN ROSE HILL⁹⁹

Annesley Road	After the Rt Hon Arthur Annesley, Viscount Valentia, MP for Oxford from 1895 to 1917. Commanding Officer of the Queen's Own Oxfordshire Hussars 1894-1904. Said to be the most handsome man in the House of Commons.
Ashhurst Way	After William Henry Ashhurst (1778-1846), Sheriff of Oxfordshire 1810-11 and MP for Oxfordshire 1815-1830. ¹⁰⁰



The spelling of Ashhurst Way varies on maps and other documents - and even on adjacent council-owned properties.

Asquith Road	After Herbert Henry, First Earl of Oxford and Asquith (1852-1928), Prime Minister 1908-16.
Carole's Way	After Carole Roberts, long-serving City Councillor for Northfield Brook, Rose Hill and Iffley, and Temple Cowley, and manager of the Rose Hill and Donnington Advice Centre. She died in 2015, aged 71, during the period in which the new Rose Hill Community Centre was being built. ¹⁰¹
Clinton Close	After Geoffrey Clinton, overlord of Iffley in the 12 th century. Road officially named May 1949.
Constance Norman Way	After Connie Norman, head of Rose Hill First School, who retired in 1977 after 40 years of service as a teacher. ¹⁰²
Cottesmore Road	After John Cottesmore, whose family held land in and around Iffley in c. 1418-35. The name was suggested by Lincoln College, who sold the land to the City Corporation in 1945; it came from a title deed in the college archives. Road named in 1946.
Court Farm Road	After Court Place Farm, one of three local manor houses where courts were held.
Court Place Gardens	After Court Place Farm, one of three local manor houses where courts were held.

⁹⁹ Most of this information is taken from Ann Spokes Symonds & Nigel Morgan, *The Origins of Oxford Street Names*, (Robert Boyd, 2011).

¹⁰⁰ Ann Spokes Symonds, *The Changing Faces of Rose Hill* (Robert Boyd, 2000), p.19. "Ashhurst, William Henry (1778-1846), of Waterstock, Oxon", *The History of Parliament*, member biographies, <https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1790-1820/member/ashhurst-william-henry-1778-1846> [accessed 25 May 2021].

¹⁰¹ *Oxford Mail*, 11 August 2015.

¹⁰² *Oxford Mail*, 15 April 2008; 11 April 2016.

Courtland Road	Unknown.
Danvers Road	After Sir Robert Danvers, Oxfordshire MP in the 15 th century, who was from a local family with land holdings in and around Iffley. The name was suggested by Lincoln College, who sold the land to the City Corporation in 1945; it came from a title deed in the college archives. Road named November 1946.
Dashwood Road	After Sir Henry Dashwood (1816-89) of Kirtlington Park, High Steward of Oxford University, High Sheriff of Oxfordshire in 1867 and Lord Lieutenant in 1883.
Desborough Crescent	After the Earl of Desborough, for many years Chairman of the Thames Conservancy. Road named in November 1946.
Devereux Place	After Robert Devereux, High Steward of Oxford University 1596-1601. Road named c. 1948.
Egerton Road	After John Egerton (1622-1686), second Earl of Bridgewater, High Steward of Oxford University in 1663. Named July 1935.
Ellesmere Road	After the first Earl of Ellesmere (1800-57) statesman and poet, a High Steward of Oxford University. Road named July 1935.
Fiennes Road	After William Fiennes, first Viscount Sele & Saye (1582-1662), of Broughton Castle near Banbury. Lord Lieutenant of Oxford in 1642. The family were parliamentarian supporters and William raised an army to occupy Oxford during the Civil War. Road named in June 1938.
Hunsdon Road	Probably after Henry Carey, Lord Hunsdon, High Steward of Oxford University in 1592. Road named in 1936.
Jersey Road	After Sir Victor Albert George Child-Villiers, 7 th Earl of Jersey (1845-1915), High Steward of Oxford University and Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire 1887-1915, Governor and Commander-in-Chief of New South Wales 1891-3. Road named in 1948; see also Villiers Lane.
John Parker Close	After John Parker (1914-1989), a long-standing Labour city councillor and Mayor of Oxford 1986/7. ¹⁰³
Lambourn Road	After EA Greening Lamborn, local historian and headmaster of the East Oxford Council Boys' Elementary School, who lived in Littlemore. Unfortunately when the name was recommended by the Steward of Lincoln College, he misspelt it. Ironically, Greening Lamborn was particularly sensitive about the spelling of his name, and would return post unopened if it had been addressed incorrectly. ¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Ed Turner (City Councillor for Rose Hill & Iffley), pers comm to Shona Carr (Oxford Preservation Trust), June 2021. *Oxford Mail*, 15 April 2008. Stephanie Jenkins, "Lord Mayors of the City of Oxford, 1962–today", http://www.oxfordhistory.org.uk/mayors/1962_today/index.html [accessed 9 June 2021].

¹⁰⁴ Letter from Lincoln College Steward to the City Engineer, 29 July 1946, Lincoln College Archives, Rose Hill Correspondence, LC/EL/MOD/10. "Blue Plaque for Greening Lamborn", 17 September 2010, BBC Oxford, http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/oxford/hi/people_and_places/history/newsid_9005000/9005847.stm [accessed 10 May 2021].

Lenthall Road	After William Lenthall (1591-1662), Royalist politician who served as Speaker of the House of Commons during the Civil War. He matriculated at Oxford University but left in 1609 without taking a degree. Also after his descendant Miss Jane Lenthall of Lucia House, Iffley. Road named c. 1947.
Mortimer Road	After the Mortimer family, who had land holdings in and around Iffley prior to 1500. The name was suggested by Lincoln College, who sold the land to the City Corporation in 1945; it came from a title deed in the college archives. ¹⁰⁵
Newlin Close	Possibly after a local family who gave a chalice to Iffley Church in 1679. Road named in 1946.
Norman Brown Close	After Norman Brown, Chairman of the Rose Hill Community Centre in the 1960s. ¹⁰⁶
Nowell Road	After Dr Thomas Nowell (1730-1801) and his wife Sarah who were distinguished inhabitants and benefactors of Iffley and who by 1789 had acquired Iffley Manor. Road named in 1946.
Orchard Court	Unknown.
Pattison Place	After Mark Pattison (1813-84), Rector of Lincoln College. The college sold the land here to the City Corporation in 1946. Pattison was an author and journalist with a high reputation as a tutor, and a leader in university reform. Road named c. 1948.
Radford Close	After the Revd John Radford (d. 1851), Rector of Lincoln College. The college sold the land here to the City Corporation in 1946. Road named in 1948.
Rivermead Road	Because of proximity to river and meadows; or possibly because Revd Henry Leake, the founder of Rose Hill Methodist Church, lived in Rivermead House in Church Way in Iffley. ¹⁰⁷ Road named in 1946.
Rose Hill	After a house called Rose Hill, occupied in the 1830s by the eccentric doctor Samuel Ireland. Road officially named by the Council in 1930.
Rowney Place	After Thomas Rowney, High Steward of Oxford University in 1691 and MP for Oxford 1706-1754.
Singletree	After a house of that name on this site, built in 1906 for the Loxley family.
Spencer Crescent	Possibly after John Spencer-Churchill, 10 th Duke of Marlborough (1897-1972), High Steward of Oxford University 1937-1972.
St Martin's Road	Unknown.

¹⁰⁵ Letter from Lincoln College Steward to the City Engineer, 29 July 1946, Lincoln College Archives, Rose Hill Correspondence, LC/EL/MOD/10.

¹⁰⁶ Ann Spokes Symonds, *The Changing Faces of Rose Hill* (Robert Boyd, 2000), p.46.

¹⁰⁷ Stephen Roper & Freda Hoare, *Rose Hill Methodist Church, Our history* (1985), <https://rosehillmethodists.org.uk/about/our-history/> [accessed 10 May 2021].

Thames View Road	On the edge of the Rose Hill estate, with views towards the River Thames. Road named in 1969.
The Oval	After the shape of the street. Road named in 1946.
Villiers Lane	After Sir Victor Albert George Child-Villiers, 7 th Earl of Jersey (1845-1915), High Steward of Oxford University and Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire 1887-1915, Governor and Commander-in-Chief of New South Wales 1891-3. Road named 1939; see also Jersey Road.
Williamson Way	After the Revd Tony Williamson (b. 1933), City Councillor 1961-67 and 1970-88, Lord Mayor in 1982/3, a worker priest at the Pressed Steel Works for over 30 years, Oxford Diocesan Director of Education 1989-2000, and Canon of the Cathedral. Road named in summer 1967.
Wynbush Road	After the Wynbush family, who had land holdings in and around Iffley prior to 1500. The name was suggested by Lincoln College, who sold the land to the City Corporation in 1945; it came from a title deed in the college archives. ¹⁰⁸ Road named in c. 1948.

¹⁰⁸ Letter from Lincoln College Steward to the City Engineer, 29 July 1946, Lincoln College Archives, Rose Hill Correspondence, LC/EL/MOD/10.

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