

**A BRIEF HISTORY OF  
EAST OXFORD,  
THE FAIRACRES ESTATE,  
THE IFFLEY ROAD ESTATE,  
AND CHESTER STREET**

**Liz Woolley, January 2020**  
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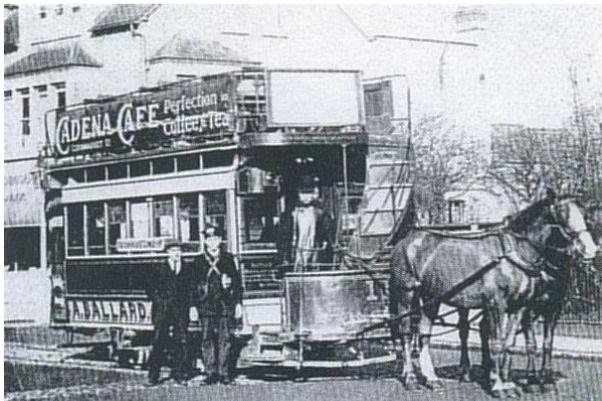
## OXFORD'S EXPANSION AND A NEW DEMAND FOR HOUSING

*“[The suburbs have] grown up around Oxford on every side like a huge swelling which needs to be cured.”*

The suburb of East Oxford developed in the latter half of the nineteenth century as a result of a pressing need for housing outside the city's existing boundaries.

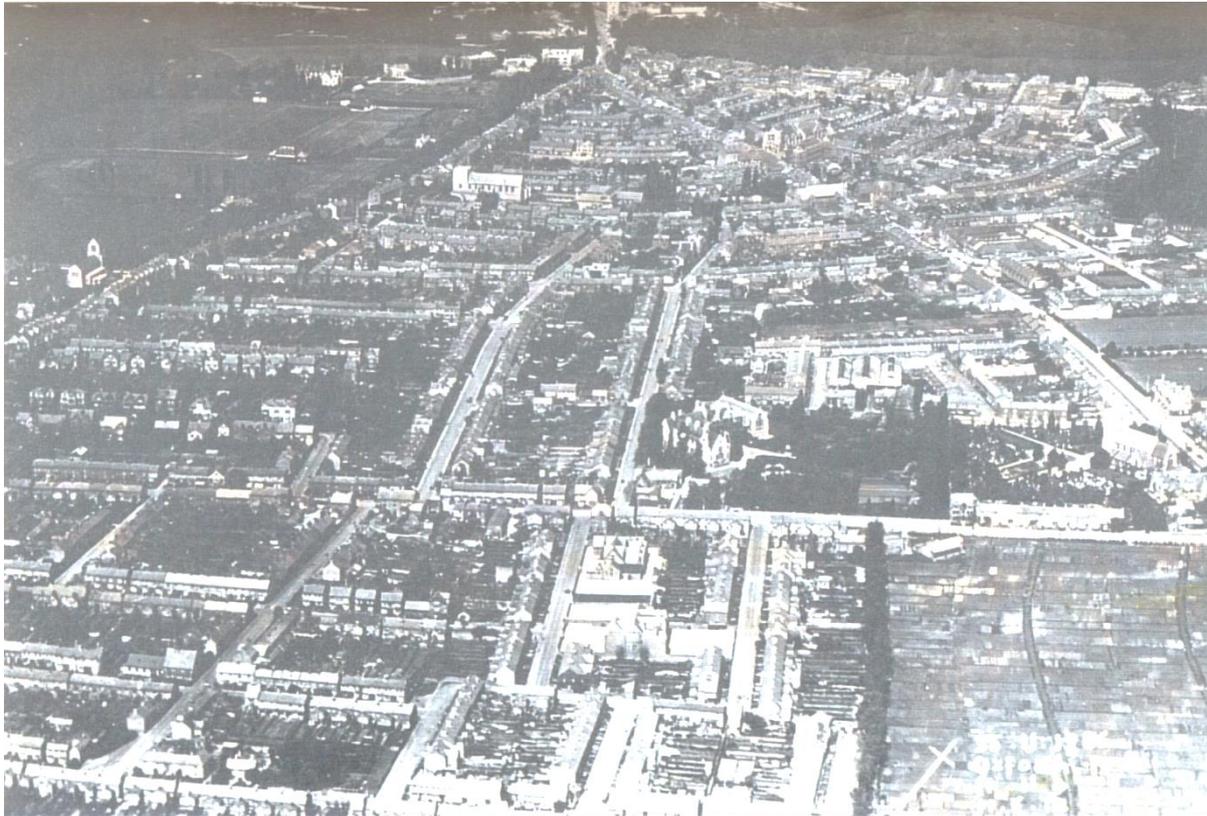
Like almost all towns and cities, Oxford expanded rapidly during the nineteenth century: its population rose from 12,000 in 1801 to 24,000 in 1850 and it more than doubled again to 49,000 by 1901. This was due to a number of factors. As elsewhere, there was a general movement of the population away from the countryside and into urban areas as people – particularly the young – sought higher-paid jobs and better working conditions. Although Oxford had no major manufacturing industry to attract rural migrants, the university supported a substantial service industry. In the 1850s it began a series of reforms which led to a large increase in the number of students, and hence in the number of academic staff. This in turn produced an expansion in demand for goods and services which provided more employment for ordinary working people. In 1877 college dons were allowed to marry for the first time and whilst the majority of them moved out of their college rooms into the newly-developing suburb of North Oxford, the presence of their wives and families stimulated a further increase in demand for goods and services across the city. As time went on, Oxford became increasingly residential all year round as these academic families settled, and from the 1860s onwards the development of the tourist industry brought further trade to the city over the summer months in particular.

As the nature of employment changed there was a growing divergence between people's homes and their workplaces and Oxford's central parishes became less and less residential and more and more commercial. As the colleges expanded they demolished existing dwellings in the city centre to make way for new buildings to accommodate their students. Meanwhile, a desire for civic improvements on the part of the city corporation led to the clearance of inner-city slum areas such as St Aldate's, St Ebbe's and St Thomas's, and the dispersal of their long-established communities. As Father Benson said of East Oxford in 1887: *“...a large proportion of the ignorant and rambling poor have been driven within our borders by the improvements in many parts of Oxford.”* Land values and property prices rose as competition for central sites grew, and so ordinary people looked for lower rents in the cheaper suburbs, which could now be reached more conveniently by bicycle (introduced in the 1860s) and by the horse tram (1880).



*A horse tram near the end of Southfield Road, at the terminus of the line which ran from Carfax, along the High Street and up the Cowley Road. Horse trams were introduced to Oxford in 1880 to service the expanding suburbs. By 1913 they had been replaced by motor buses, established by an enterprising young man called William Morris.*

The development of the suburbs all around the city's medieval core was extraordinarily rapid – between 1850 and the eve of the First World War the city's footprint quadrupled and thousands of new red and yellow brick houses, the majority of them terraced, were erected on what had previously been open farmland. As the Reverend Robert Charsley lamented “[*The suburbs have] grown up around Oxford on every side like a huge swelling which needs to be cured*” and Gerard Manley Hopkins in his 1918 poem *Duns Scotus's Oxford* wrote despairingly of this “*graceless growth*” which had given the city a “*base and brickish skirt*”.



*Looking across East Oxford towards Magdalen Bridge (top centre) in 1918. Almost all the buildings in this photograph had been erected in the previous sixty years.*

### **ENCLOSURE OF THE COWLEY FIELDS, 1853**

East Oxford was part of this rapid expansion, prompted by the enclosure, in 1853, of hundreds of acres of meadows and marshland belonging to the ancient parishes of Cowley, Iffley and St Clement's. This land stretched from the banks of the River Cherwell at Magdalen Bridge, south-eastwards to the old Roman Road [now Roman Way, which runs along the side of what is now the Mini car factory] and to the borders with the settlements of Horspath, Littlemore and Iffley. A brook, now known as Boundary Brook, ran east to west across the area. There were a few isolated houses on the roads leading out to Bartlemas (St Bartholomew's) and to the village settlements of Church Cowley, Middle Cowley (or Hockmore Street), Temple Cowley, Rose Hill and Iffley. There was some housing in St Clement's, an area not part of the city of Oxford until 1835. To the south and east of St Clement's, however, Cowley Fields lay unenclosed and undeveloped, preserved in their rural state by inter-mixed land ownership.

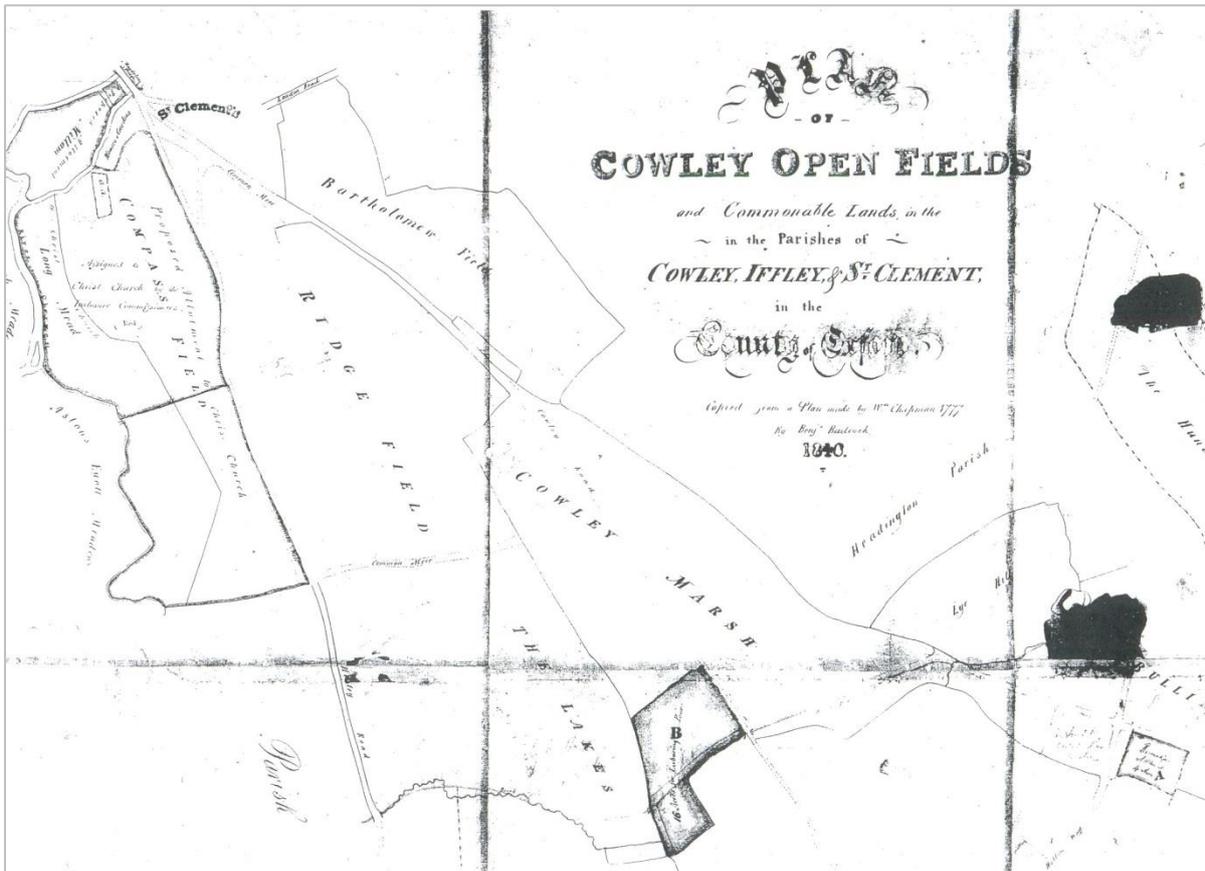


The 1830 Ordnance Survey map above shows a cluster of buildings in St Clement's as far east as the church, which had been relocated from its previous site just to the east of Magdalen Bridge (where the Plain roundabout is now) in 1829. Further up Headington Road was Headington Hill Hall (marked H), the home of the Morrell brewing family, first built in 1824. Across the road, Cheney Lane branched off to the right at The Rise (R), a house later owned by the Morrells. Along Cheney Lane (which led to the farm associated with Headington Workhouse) was the Warneford Asylum, opened in 1826.

Cheney Farm (C) was just north of the asylum. Further east of the asylum was Warren House, more recently called Warren Cottages, which were bought by the Warneford Hospital in 1919 and occupied by hospital staff until the demolition of the buildings in 1986.

South of the asylum was Southfield Farm (now the site of Southfield Park flats) and, further down the hill, the Hospital of St Bartholomew (Bartlemas) with its fourteenth-century chapel marked with a cross. The low-lying land from here towards Cowley and Temple Cowley was Cowley Marsh; skirting the north-eastern side of this marsh was the road which is now Barracks Lane. This led to Bullington Green, a large open space, partly in Cowley parish and partly in Horspath parish, which was used for field sports in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. To the south-west of Barracks Lane was the Cowley Road, a raised causeway across the middle of the marsh leading to the ancient village of Temple Cowley. Cowley Marsh was not ploughed but was used for grazing, recreation and, in the eighteenth century, for the cutting of peat for fuel.

The larger meadows and fields north of Boundary Brook included Millam (or Milham), Long Mead (or Long Meadow), Compass Field, Ridge Field, Bartholomew Field, the Lakes, and Lye Hill. To the south were Wood Field, Fur Field, Broad Field, and Church Field.



*Cowley Open Fields in 1846, from a plan by Benjamin Badcock. The sixteen-acre area labelled 'B' was "Assigned to the Labouring Poor"; this eventually became the Elder Stubbs allotments.*

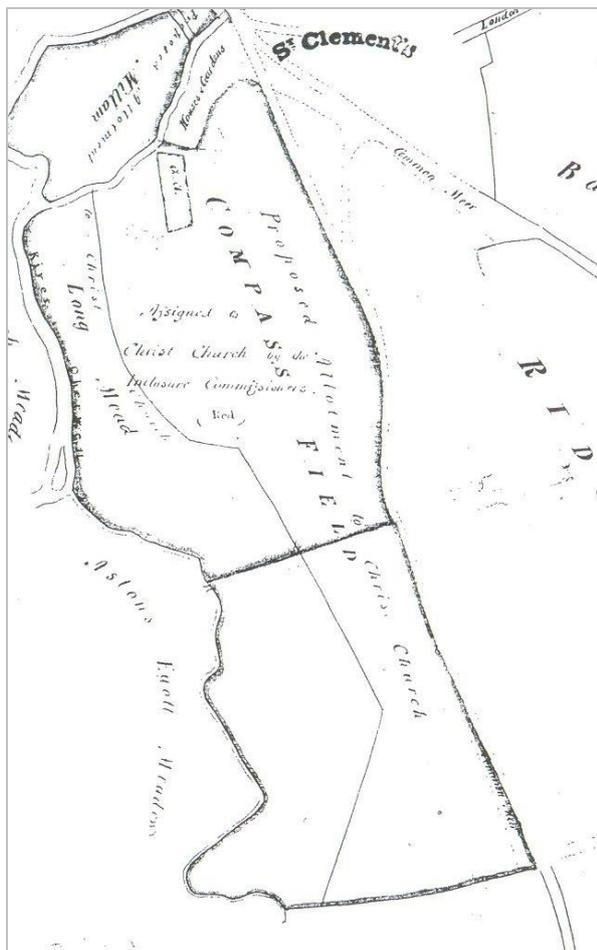
These large fields – each of several hundred acres – were sub-divided into furlongs (‘furrow-longs’), each roughly 220 yards long, the distance that a team of oxen could plough before needing to rest. Furlongs were the unit of crop rotation, and were in turn divided into narrow strips, each approximately 5½ yards (a perch, rood or pole) wide. An owner or tenant might possess many such strips, scattered across the large area, ensuring that no one person benefitted or suffered from having all his land in a particularly good or bad part of the field.

The map overleaf shows a section of these strips in Cowley Open Fields, each assigned to a named tenant. The characteristic ‘reverse S’ shape of the strips is the result of them having been ploughed from the centre outwards since medieval times. The plough had a board on only one side and the team of oxen would veer slightly to the left as they approached the end of the strip before turning through 360° to return down the other side. This was the method of cultivation which produced ‘ridge and furrow’, remnants of which can still be seen in South Park at the foot of Headington Hill.



*Detail of Cowley enclosure map, 1853, showing the long narrow strips, each assigned to a named tenant or owner.*

This system of strip farming in large communal fields had been in place throughout central England since the tenth century, but from the eighteenth century onwards land began to be enclosed and redistributed. Cowley's yeoman farmers, with an eye on profits to be made by selling off their land for housing development, had wanted an Enclosure Act in 1821, and on 13 October of that year they held a meeting in the King's Arms in Oxford to discuss it. However, Pembroke College, the lord of the manor of Temple Cowley, held up the award until 1853, and insisted on a supplementary award (granted in 1856) to protect its manorial rights.



As a major landowner to the south-east of Oxford, Christ Church also resisted the proposed Parliamentary Enclosure of the Cowley Fields in the 1820s and again in the 1840s, worried about what it saw as the inevitable rash of working-class housing which would spring up once enclosure took place.

The college's main concern was "to prevent the building of shabby or unsightly houses within view of our Meadow or path" and it was only once it had secured from the Enclosure Commissioners the whole of Compass Field and Long Mead (right) that the college finally agreed to enclosure in 1853.

*Detail of the 1846 field map showing Compass Field "Assigned to Christ Church by the Inclosure Commissioners".*

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Road

Enclosure extinguished forty-seven rights of way across the Cowley Fields and redistributed the land so that each owner, tenant or commoner with rights to graze animals was allocated their holdings all in one place. Hence land was now owned or tenanted in blocks, rather than in widely-scattered narrow strips, and this allowed, for the first time, the sale of plots for housing development. The pattern of distribution of the land at enclosure became the basis for the subsequent layout of the streets in East Oxford, and this explains the somewhat unusual pattern of many short streets intersecting each other as plots of land were sold off and developed bit by bit.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SUBURB OF EAST OXFORD

*[Home to the] "residuum of the thriftless, careless, lazy, ne'er-do-well sort whose nomadic instincts prevent them from settling down to anything".*

Following enclosure in 1853, owners were quick to sell their blocks of land for housing development. In general, the areas closest to Magdalen Bridge were built up first: Alma Place was named after the Battle of Alma in 1853. However, development was very patchy, and building plots were being sold in far-flung Charles, Percy and Catherine Streets as early as 1859. This area, beyond Magdalen Road, was what the local vicar the Reverend Benson called "*the wild and straggling settlement of Robin Hood*".

Development quickly gathered pace and in October 1864 *Jackson's Oxford Journal* reported:

**It is, however, in the eastern outskirts of the city that the greatest extension is taking place. Iffley and Cowley Roads present a large number of new residences, and the ground between these roads and St. Clement's is being cut up into a legion of new streets. The houses are for the most part of an ornamental appearance, exhibiting a pleasing variety of style, and they appear to find occupants with great readiness. Early in the season a large tract of ground, forming a portion of what used to be known as Cowley Marsh, was brought into the market, and has been divided by the purchasers into allotments, so as to enable persons of limited means to become their own landlords.**

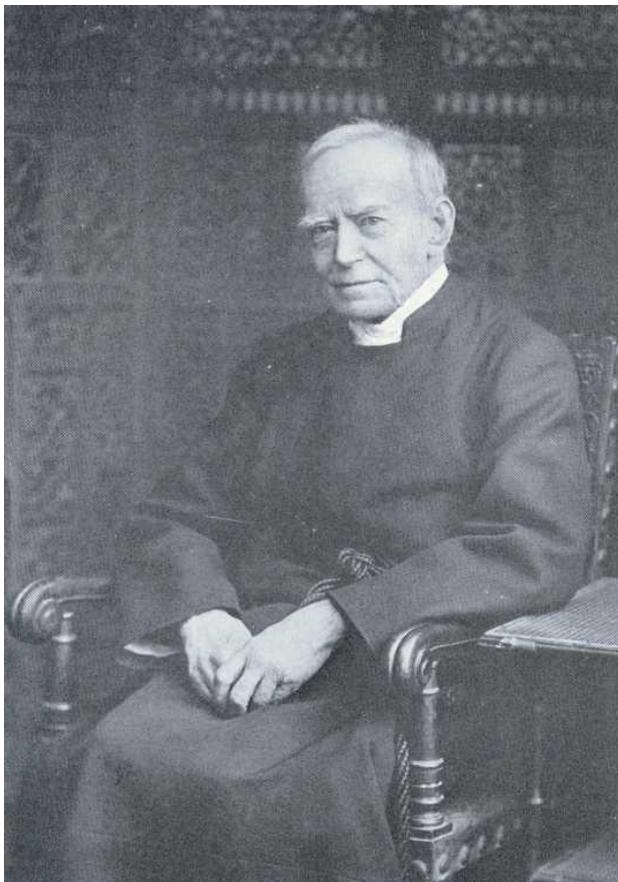
East Oxford was different to the suburbs to the north, south and west of the city in that far more of the land here was in private hands at enclosure, rather than being owned by colleges, the church or aristocrats, as was the case elsewhere. Land in North Oxford, for example, was owned largely by St John's, and in West Oxford by Christ Church. These colleges leased their land rather than sold it, and so had a great say in how development took place there. But in East Oxford there were many more small, private landowners, and so development took place in a far more piece-meal fashion and with much less dominance by a single institution. Even the Hursts – five siblings from a family of Cowley farmers, who between them owned all the land in the area between the Iffley and Cowley Roads and what were to become James Street and Magdalen Road – chose to sell their land to small speculators rather than to lease it, and hence to have no say in its development.

Particulars and Conditions of Sale  
 OF  
 TWENTY-TWO LOTS  
 OF VALUABLE & EXCEEDINGLY DESIRABLE  
**FREEHOLD**  
**BUILDING LAND,**  
 SITUATE  
 IN JAMES' STREET, ON THE HENLEY ROAD,  
 AND WITHIN  
 The Parliamentary Boundary  
 OF  
**THE CITY OF OXFORD,**  
 Which will be Sold by Auction,  
 BY  
**MR JONAS PAXTON**  
 AT THE  
 CAPE OF GOOD HOPE INN, ST. CLEMENTS, OXFORD,  
 On Tuesday, May 31st, 1864, at 5 o'clock in the Evening.

The Lots may be inspected at any time previous to the Sale, and further Particulars ascertained of Mr. J. C. DUDLEY, Solicitor, Oxford; or of the Auctioneer, Bicester.

E. SMITH AND SON, PRINTERS, BICESTER.

*Notice of auction of part of the Hurst family's estate, 1864. The auctioneer was Jonas Paxton. 'Henley Road' was an earlier name for the Iffley Road.*



*In 1870 the parish of Cowley St James (serving the Cowley villages) was subdivided and a new parish, that of Cowley St John, was formed to serve the rapidly expanding population of the city suburb of East Oxford. Father Richard Meux Benson (1824-1915, left), vicar of the parish of Cowley St James, became the first vicar of the new parish of Cowley St John. He had founded the Society of St John the Evangelist, the Cowley Fathers (or the Cowley Daddies as they were affectionately known) in Marston Street in 1866, the first stable Anglican Community for men in England since the Reformation. The churches of SS Mary & John on the Cowley Road (1875-93, and St John the Evangelist on the Iffley Road (1896), were built on land purchased by him, and he was also instrumental in establishing several schools in the growing suburb of East Oxford.*

The streets between the Iffley and Cowley Roads had been laid out, though by no means densely populated, as far east as Howard Street by 1878. The majority of house-building was carried out by small speculators, often local tradesmen, who then sold their newly-built properties for a profit or kept them and lived on the letting income, perhaps occupying one of the houses themselves. The majority of houses were erected by local builders, in a variety of styles (one of the great charms of East Oxford). Most adhered to the building line (the standard distance that houses were to be set back from the pavement) and to building regulations which were introduced in Oxford in the mid-1860s. These new local by-laws meant that almost all houses built after 1866 had rooms and windows above a minimum size, mains water and mains drainage, and their own privy, albeit in the back garden rather than in the house itself. These by-laws also ensured that the terraced house with a downstairs front room for best, a middle room for the family, and a scullery at the back, plus three bedrooms upstairs (one for the parents, one for the boy children and one for girl children), became the standard format for working-class housing throughout England. Hence so-called ‘by-law housing’ of this type can be found right across the country.

East Oxford was to some extent blighted by its generally low-lying situation, its proximity to the poor neighbourhood of St Clement’s, and by the toll gates at the Plain (below, either side of where the Victoria drinking fountain is now) which formed a barrier until 1874, separating the area from the rest of the city and adding to delivery bills. Hence fashionable development was impossible, and the area instead became a generally respectable workers’ suburb with



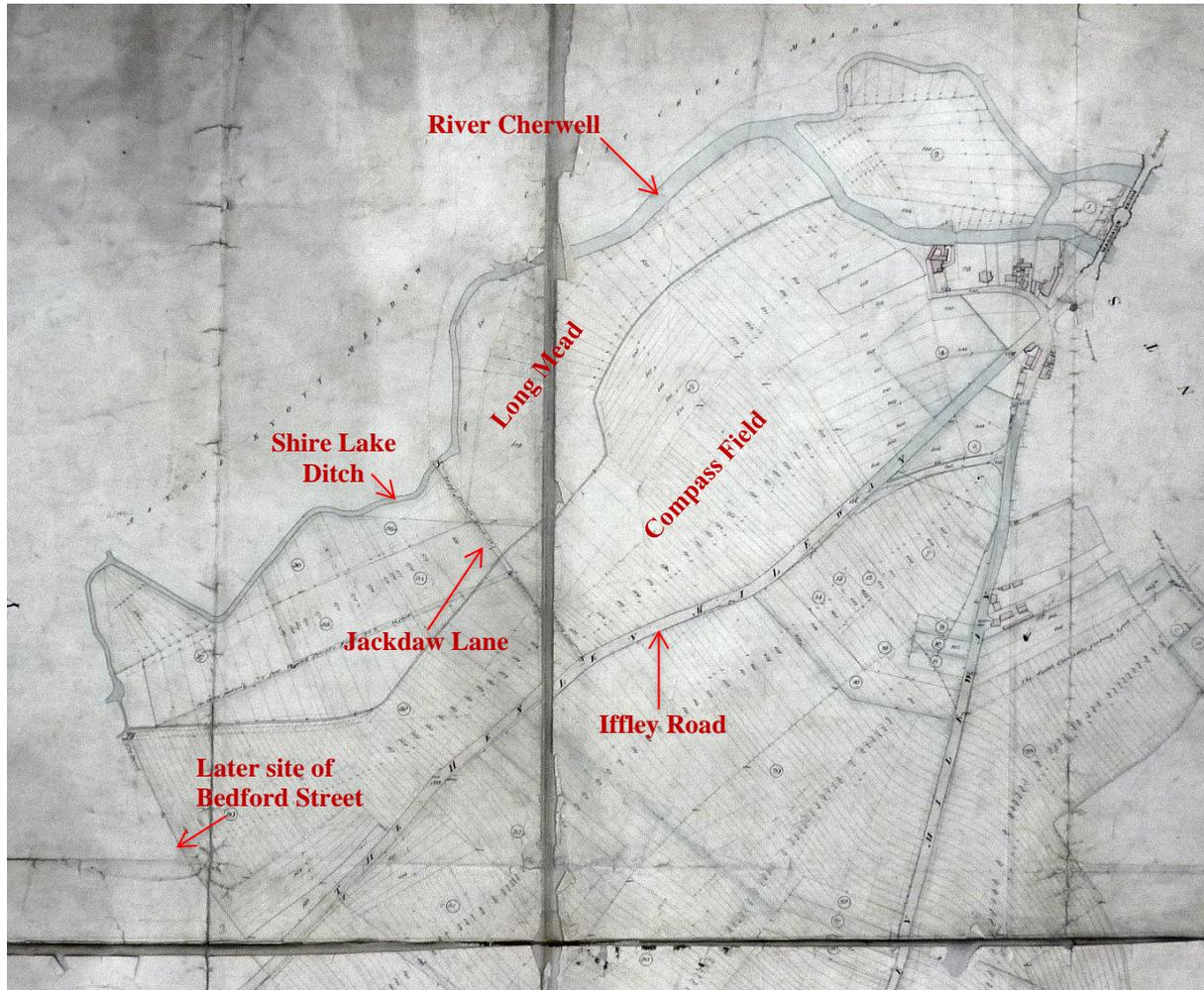
pockets of poverty and enclaves of comparable wealth, the home of college servants, skilled artisans, labourers and those who were described in a letter to *Jackson’s Oxford Journal* as a “*residuum of the thrifless, careless, lazy, ne’er-do-well sort whose nomadic instincts prevent them from settling down to anything*”.

*Looking south-east from Magdalen Bridge towards the toll house at the Plain, with the toll gates either side of it.*

By 1900 virtually all the land between and immediately either side of the Cowley and Iffley Roads had been built upon, though some individual plots lay undeveloped or served as gardens for decades, waiting for their owners to save up enough money to start building. In 1901 there were 2,500 houses in Cowley St John, and the population of the parish now exceeded 11,000, greater than that of any other whole town in Oxfordshire. The parishes of St Clement and Cowley St John together housed almost 14,500 people – over a quarter of Oxford’s population. Hence the ‘centre of gravity’ of the city had shifted quite dramatically to the south-east in the preceding fifty years. This effect became even more pronounced after the First World War thanks to William Morris, one of East Oxford’s most famous sons. The development of his car manufactory led to the building of hundreds of new houses beyond Howard Street in the 1920s and ’30s, eventually joining the city to the villages of Temple Cowley, Hockmore Street and Church Cowley.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LAND TO THE WEST OF THE IFFLEY ROAD

Before enclosure in 1853, Compass Field and Long Mead, which were both in Cowley Parish, ran north–south, parallel to the Iffley Road and to the west of it. The River Cherwell forms the north-western boundary of this area, separating it from Christ Church Meadow. The division between Compass Field and Long Mead appears to have followed a rise in the ground between the Cherwell’s alluvial floodplain in the west and the first river terrace in the east, possibly reflecting the different agricultural possibilities of the high- and low-lying land.



*Extract from the Cowley Enclosure Map of 1853 (with west at the top) showing Long Mead and Compass Field to the west of Iffley Road (which is labelled 'Henley Mileway').*

Aston’s Eyot and the Kidneys, both small islands amongst the abraded channels of the River Cherwell, lay to the west, in the pre-1972 county of Berkshire. Aston’s Eyot (originally a detached part of Hormer Hundred, which formed part of the manor of Lewknor, a village on the edge of the Chilterns) belonged to All Souls College from the mid-fifteenth century until 1891, when it was bought by Christ Church.

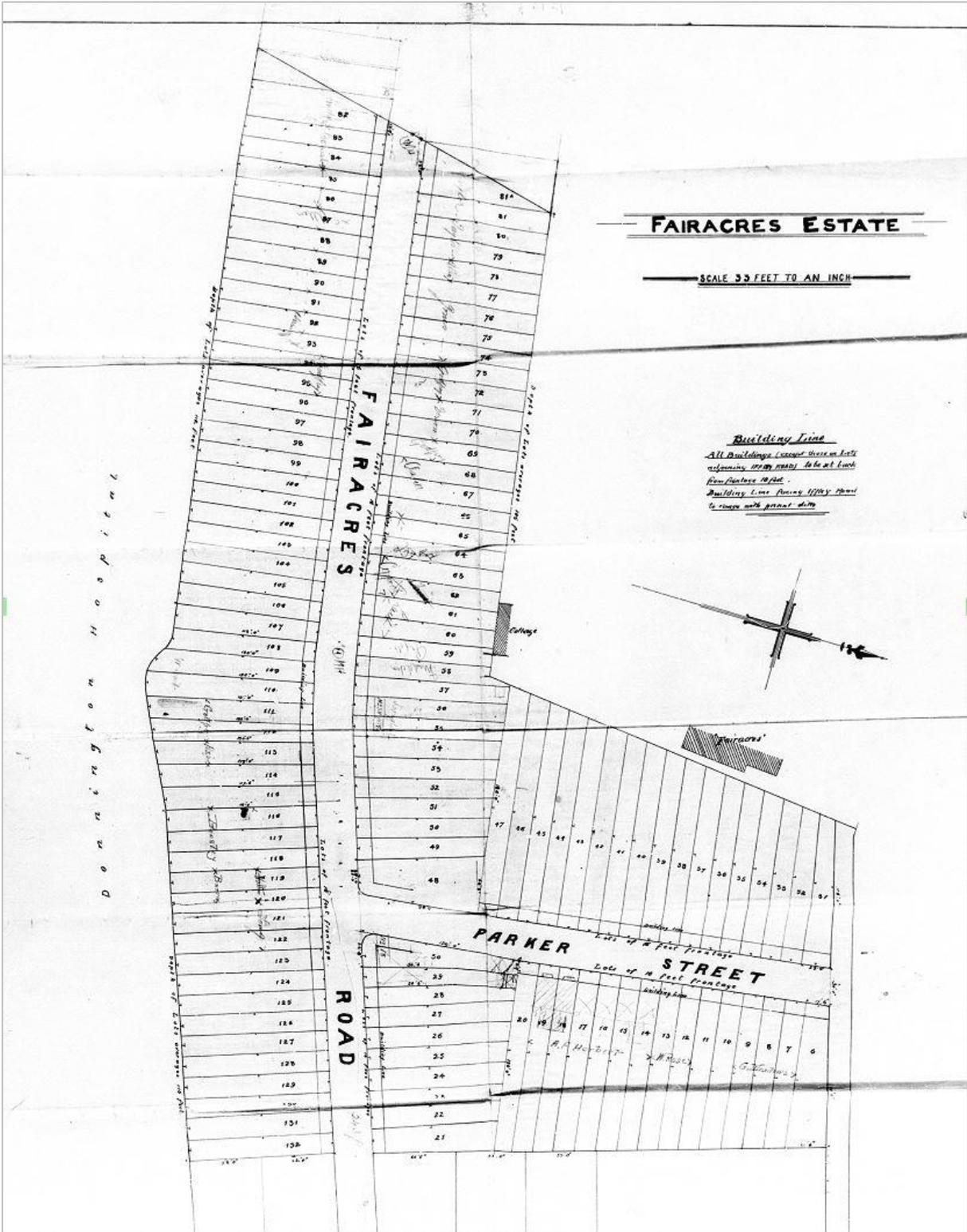


This aerial photograph taken during the severe floods of 1947, and looking south-west, shows some of the ancient meadow boundaries. Angel and Greyhound Meadows (labelled AG, in St Clement's parish) are in the foreground, with Magdalen Bridge and the Plain easily identifiable. The trees along the banks of the Cherwell (RC) make the river's course easy to pick out. The smaller, unbroken patch of water above the bridge is Milham Meadow (MM), and the much larger patch beyond that is Christ Church Meadow (CC). (The Abingdon Road and the built-up area to the west of

it, Grandpont (G), are beyond this, in the distance.) Up from Milham, and to the left of the river, is Long Mead (LM), the hedge along its eastern (nearer) side showing up well. Beyond the oval running track, the straight line of Jackdaw Lane (JL, built in 1853) can be seen. The small water course that shows above Jackdaw Lane and at right angles to it, winding across the dry land, is part of the Shire Lake Ditch (SL). Where it merges with the larger flooded area (to the right of Chester Street, CS) is roughly where Cowley meadows met Iffley meadows. Donnington Bridge and its approach road had not yet been built when this photograph was taken.

### **The Fairacres Estate**

To the south of Long Mead and Compass Field were Lower Field and Iffley Meadow, which were in the parish of Iffley, and which were enclosed in 1830 and assigned to Magdalen College. A large villa called Fairacres House was built soon afterwards on a thirty-acre plot created by this enclosure. In May 1887 Magdalen approved a plan by the builders Castle, Field & Castle for the development of series of large houses on a ten-acre estate between Fairacres House and the Iffley Road. However, the overall scheme may have been too ambitious, because a year later only three lots on the main road had been sold to private buyers (now nos. 268-272 Iffley Road). Magdalen College therefore agreed that the Oxford Working Men's Benefit Society (later the Oxford Industrial & Provident Land & Building Society) could buy the rest of the estate for £3,500 [about £287,000 in today's money], and develop it on more modest lines. The society had been established in 1860 to finance the building of working men's cottages, to be offered by ballot to any member investing at least £20 [about £1,200 in today's money]. The society's new plan for the estate made no changes to the Iffley Road frontage, but the thirty-eight large plots originally envisaged for new streets called Fairacres Road and Parker Street became 127 much narrower plots, with only sixteen-foot frontages. The existing drive to Fairacres House became Daubeney Road, named after an early occupant of the villa, Charles Daubeney, a noted chemist, botanist and geologist.



The Oxford Industrial & Provident Land & Building Society's plan for the Fairacres Estate, 1889 (west at the top, Iffley Road running along the bottom of the image).

Magdalen College placed minimum values upon the largest houses, those on the Iffley Road, and for this frontage the college's Estates Bursar insisted on seeing plans before building commenced. On other parts of the new estate, no house was to be built "of less cubical content than, or of inferior construction to, the smallest house which previous to the 14th day of July 1888 has been erected and

**"FAIR ACRES" BUILDING ESTATE.**—Important building operations have been commenced on this estate, situate on the Iffley Road. It will be laid out with two roads of 30ft. The main road will be immediately opposite Charles-street; with one cross road leading into the occupation road to "Fair Acres." The whole of the estate has been purchased from Magdalen College for the sum of 3500*l.*, by the Oxford Working Men's Building Society, except plots Nos. 1, 2, and 3, which were sold privately by the College. It is proposed by the Building Society to lay the front plots from 60 to 40 feet frontage, with a frontage of 16 feet to all back plots. Houses on the front plots will follow the present class of house already built on the Iffley Road. Those at the back of the estate will be chiefly workmen's cottages. On plot 1 two villas in the Swiss style of architecture are being built.

*Jackson's Oxford Journal. 13 October 1888.*

completed on the neighbouring Aston [Street] Estate". This may explain why the streets on the Fairacres Estate contain houses generally more substantial and of a higher building quality than those on the streets between Iffley and Cowley Roads.

**The Iffley Road Estate**

Land to the north of the Fairacres Estate and south of Compass Field and Long Mead had been assigned to a solicitor, Henry Walsh, at enclosure. The land was in two parcels, the northern part known as 'Greens' and the southern part as 'Mariners Lands'. The enclosure award decreed that Walsh was obliged to contribute towards the upkeep of the newly-laid out Jackdaw Lane, which ran across the northern boundary of his land, and to the newly-laid out Iffley Footway (now Meadow Lane) which ran to the west.

Persons interested	Allotments		Tenures	No on Map and Description	Extent		Tenure
	No on Map	Extent a r p			a	r p	
Walsh Henry (aka Walshes known as "Mariners Lands")	39	8 5 14	Against the allotment numbered (33) and the Coffin and Henley Turnpike road	561 562 572 600 622 614 617 619 734 732 317 363 Land and Common rights in respect thereof	7	1 20	Freehold
Same (aka Walshes known as Greens)	33	16 2 25	Against the "Iffley Footway" from the point marked "D" to the point marked "aa" on the said Map	15 150 217 229 255 234 292 360 414 476 430 part of 566 part of 632 part of 635 723 753 773 323 339 337 915 925 957 953 945 1021 1035 1062 1101 1103 1172 1202 1221 1229 1217 1249 1253 1294 1301 1343 1350 1364 1370 1372 1375 1445 1473 part of 1503 1505 1519 1535 1572 1535 1601 and 1603 Land and Common rights in respect thereof	21	35	Freehold

Extract from the 1853 Enclosure Award, allotting two parcels of land totalling just over twenty-eight acres to Henry Walsh.

Henry Walsh practised as an attorney and his business premises were on New Inn Hall Street. In 1890 he sold his land beside the Iffley Road, an "entire and unprepared estate", to Walter Gray and James Mace Dormor. Gray was an experienced property developer and Dormor was a wealthy brewer's manager who lived at 'Melcombe', a substantial villa on the Iffley Road, at the corner of Stanley Road. As partners in development, Gray provided the expertise and

Dormor the capital. A year earlier, in 1889, Gray had laid out the Donnington Field Estate, on Donnington Field, an area of eight acres belonging to Donnington Hospital which had remained undeveloped for nearly thirty years while building progressed fitfully around it. The charity had sold the field to Gray for £2,817 [about £231,000 in today's money] and he had laid out lots with sixteen-foot frontages on to Magdalen Road and two new roads called Essex Street and Hertford Street.

Gray and Dormor laid out the Iffley Road Estate land in 275 lots, those on Iffley Road itself with thirty-two-foot frontages whilst the rest had frontages of sixteen feet to new roads called Bedford, Argyle, and Warwick Streets, named after county towns. A fourth street, Chester Street, ran through estate, but the original plan was that it wouldn't have any houses fronting on to it.

A demarcated building line ensured that the houses were set back a standard distance from the pavement. Almost six acres of land between Jackdaw Lane and Chester Street was to be set aside for a recreation ground, on the understanding that if this did not come about, Warwick Street could be extended north to meet Jackdaw Lane (what was later to be called Stratford Street).

Your Committee report that Mr. J. M. Dormer, of Iffley Road, has deposited a plan for the laying out of a building estate between Iffley Road and the Iffley footpath, upon which it is proposed to make four roads, to be named respectively Chester Street, Warwick Street, Argyle Street, and Bedford Street, and has asked upon what terms the Council would make up and take over the proposed roads as public highways.

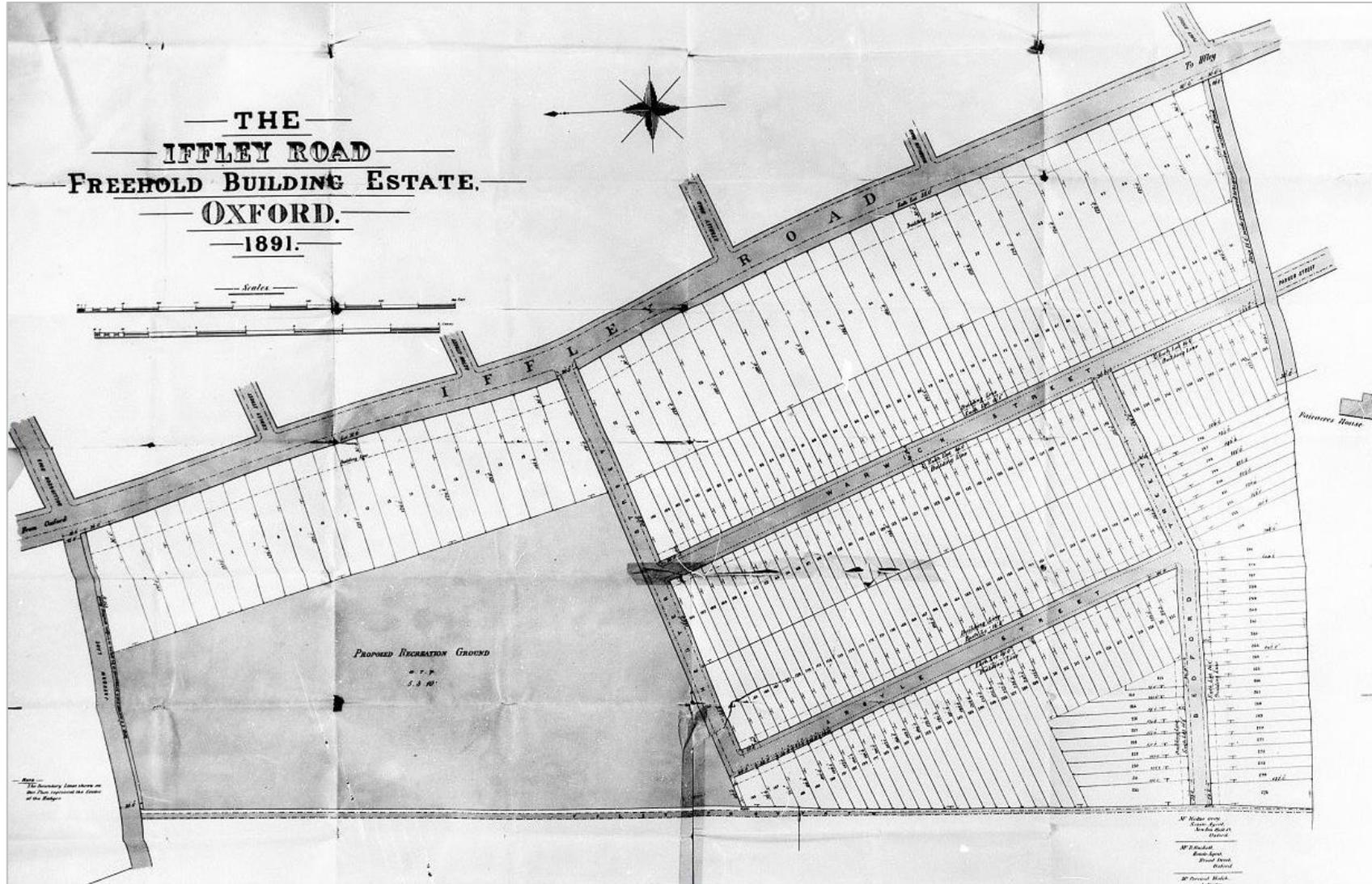
The plan also included the reservation of strips of land at the north and south ends of the Estate to enable the existing roads there to be of the required width of thirty feet where they are taken over as public roads.

One other feature in the scheme is the appropriation of about five and three-quarter acres of land in the north-west part of the Estate for the purposes of a public recreation ground, but the promoter reserves the right, in the event of this land not being purchased for this purpose, of extending Warwick Street northward to Jackdaw Lane, and of laying out the land on either side of it in building plots.

Your Committee recommend the plan to the Council for approval upon the above-named conditions, and upon the further condition that a five-foot footpath should be made from the west end of Chester Street to the Iffley Footpath, and that this short path and also the west end of Bedford Street should communicate by gate with the said Iffley Footpath, these additional works to be at the cost of the promoter.

As regards the question of the terms upon which the roads should be made and taken over, your Committee recommend that the City Engineer be directed to make an estimate of the cost as early as possible and report thereon.

*Report of the City Council's General Purposes Committee (new building estates), Oxford Chronicle, 7 February 1891.*



The Iffley Road Estate plan of 1891, showing plots on Warwick, Bedford and Argyle Streets (east at the top)  
Originally there were to be no plots fronting on to Chester Street.

**NOTICES.**

**IFFLEY ROAD, OXFORD.**

VERY ELIGIBLE

**FREEHOLD PLOTS OF LAND**

FOR BUILDING, OR FOR GARDEN ALLOTMENTS.

**TO BE SOLD ON EASY TERMS.**

**T**HE FREEHOLD ESTATE in Iffley Road, overlooking the river Isis and commanding extensive and exceedingly beautiful views of the surrounding country, is about to be laid out as a BUILDING ESTATE.

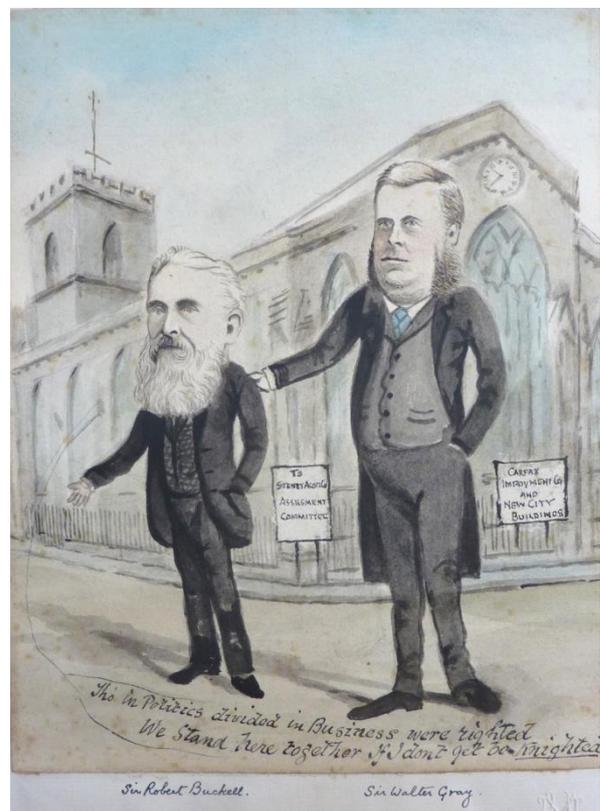
The land facing the Iffley Road will be sold in plots having a frontage of 32 feet, and a depth of about 200 feet each. The plots on the other part of the estate will have a frontage of 16 feet and a depth of from 120 to 200 feet each. The roads will be made, curbed and channelled, the sewer and surface water drains laid, and the footways paved with blue bricks, the whole cost of which will be included in the purchase moneys, and no further charge made to the purchasers. Possession will be given on payment of the deposit money, and the balance may be paid off by monthly instalments. Interest at the rate of 5 per cent. per annum will be charged only upon the exact amount owing from month to month. The balance may be cleared off at any time without notice. No charge whatever will be made for working expenses.

Applications to be made to and further information obtained of Mr. WALTER GRAY, 30, New-Inn-Hall Street, and of Mr. ROBERT BUCKELL, 2, Broad Street, Oxford, where plans of the Estate may be seen.

The Council approved the estate plan in February 1891 and soon after lots were being offered for sale by private contract on easy terms, with possession on deposit and the rest of the purchase price payable by monthly instalments. Gray enlisted the help of his friend and business associate Robert Buckell, an auctioneer, in selling the lots.

*Advertisement for freehold plots of land for sale on Chester Street, Oxford Chronicle, 28 February 1891.*

*Robert Buckell (left), coal merchant, later auctioneer, Liberal Mayor of Oxford six times between 1885 and 1919, with Walter Gray (right), speculative property developer and Conservative Mayor of Oxford four times between 1888 and 1902. Though of different political parties, the two men were friends and business associates, and together dominated Oxford local politics in the late nineteenth century.*



## WALTER GRAY



Walter Gray played a major role in the economic and political life of the city of Oxford for over forty years. He was born in Weston in Hertfordshire in 1848, the son of a hurdle-maker. In his late teens he joined the Great Western Railway where his first job was as a porter at Chalk Farm; he and two other porters shared the same bed in three shifts and Gray later claimed that he had never slept so well.

Gray progressed to ticket-collector and at the age of only twenty-two became stationmaster at Waddington in Lincolnshire. The station was used by one Colonel Shaw-Stewart, who often travelled to Oxford where he was involved in the plan to build Keble College. Shaw-Stewart was impressed with the young stationmaster and decided that he would make an excellent Steward for the new college. Hence in 1870 Gray came to Oxford to work at Keble where he was given a free cottage and a salary of £50 a year [about £3,100 in today's money]. He did well in the job, and in his spare time educated himself in finance by reading newspapers and talking to members of the Conservative Club to which he belonged.

Gray ingratiated himself with the Warden of Keble, Dr Talbot, and his wife, partly by giving investment advice which turned out to be sound. In 1877 it was recommended by a Government Commission that college dons should be allowed to marry, and Gray foresaw the need for new housing in Oxford. He took his chance, borrowed £600 [about £40,000 in today's money], bought a plot of land in north Oxford from St John's College, and drew up plans for three houses. He then took a train to London and visited Mr Gorman, who was preparing to come to Oxford as the new curate of the University Church. By the end of their meeting, Gorman had bought all three houses, despite that fact that only one of them had been built. Walter Gray's career as a speculative property developer was launched.

In 1882 Gray was able to give up his job at Keble and over the next two decades made his fortune as the main developer of North Oxford, and the developer of estates in other parts of the city as well. His political career also took off: in 1881 he had been elected a Conservative councillor for the North Ward and later became an Alderman, Justice of the Peace and Chief Magistrate. He was elected Mayor four times between 1888 and 1901 and was knighted in 1903.

In 1917, when the Oxford MP Lord Valentia retired from the House of Commons, Gray decided to try for Parliament, but the Tory selection committee chose instead the historian JAR Marriott. Gray went off on holiday in Northumberland to get over the disappointment, and died there in 1918. He is buried in Wolvercote Cemetery.

*Gray's head carved in stone in the Council Chamber corridor of the Town Hall, which opened in 1897.*



As the Iffley Road Estate was being laid out, Christ Church, again fearing encroaching suburbia, strengthened its eastern defences by purchasing thirty acres of land at Aston's Eyot from All Souls. It seems that the college intended to lay out a new walk along the eastern bank of the river and to connect this to the existing walk on Christ Church Meadow by a new bridge, but this plan was never realised.

A NEW WALK FOR OXFORD.

We (the *Oxford Magazine*) trust that we are not violating the mysteries of the business of two great Colleges, when we announce that a completed bargain makes it now certain that the "Green Bank" or "Aston's Eyot," as legal documents call it, is to come into the hands of Christ Church at no very distant date. The land consists of thirty acres, filling the space between the New Cut and the Freshman's River, and reaching back to the Shine Ditch, at the foot of the Running Ground. Our readers will be glad to know that the purchasers are not intending to lay it out—*à la Grandpont*—in submarine villa residences. It will probably be joined to Christ Church Walks by a light bridge, and surrounded with a gravel path and shrubberies, much like the ground between the New Cut and the Cherwell. Everyone will rejoice at the extension of the charming walk by the water-side.

*Oxford Chronicle,*  
14 March 1891.

In October 1891 *Jackson's Oxford Journal* reported that Chester, Warwick, Argyle and Stratford Streets were four of almost thirty city streets which were being built or extended:

**CORPORATION WORKS.**

The following are the principal new works and improvements executed during the year by the Corporation staff, under the direction of the City Engineer, Mr. W. H. White, M.Inst. C.E. :—

Four new streets and extensions have been made at the joint cost of the Corporation and the owners, viz., Barnet-street, Holybush-row (continuation southward from High-street, St. Thomas's), and extensions of Percy-street and Osney-lane. An unusually large number of new streets have been laid out and partially made at the cost of the owners of building estates, viz., Bardwell-road, Norreys-avenue; Chester, Warwick, Argle, and Bedford-streets; Divinity, Southfield, Bartlemas, and Warneford-roads; a new road east of Holywell Church, not yet named, and a footpath from Love-lane to Holywell-street.

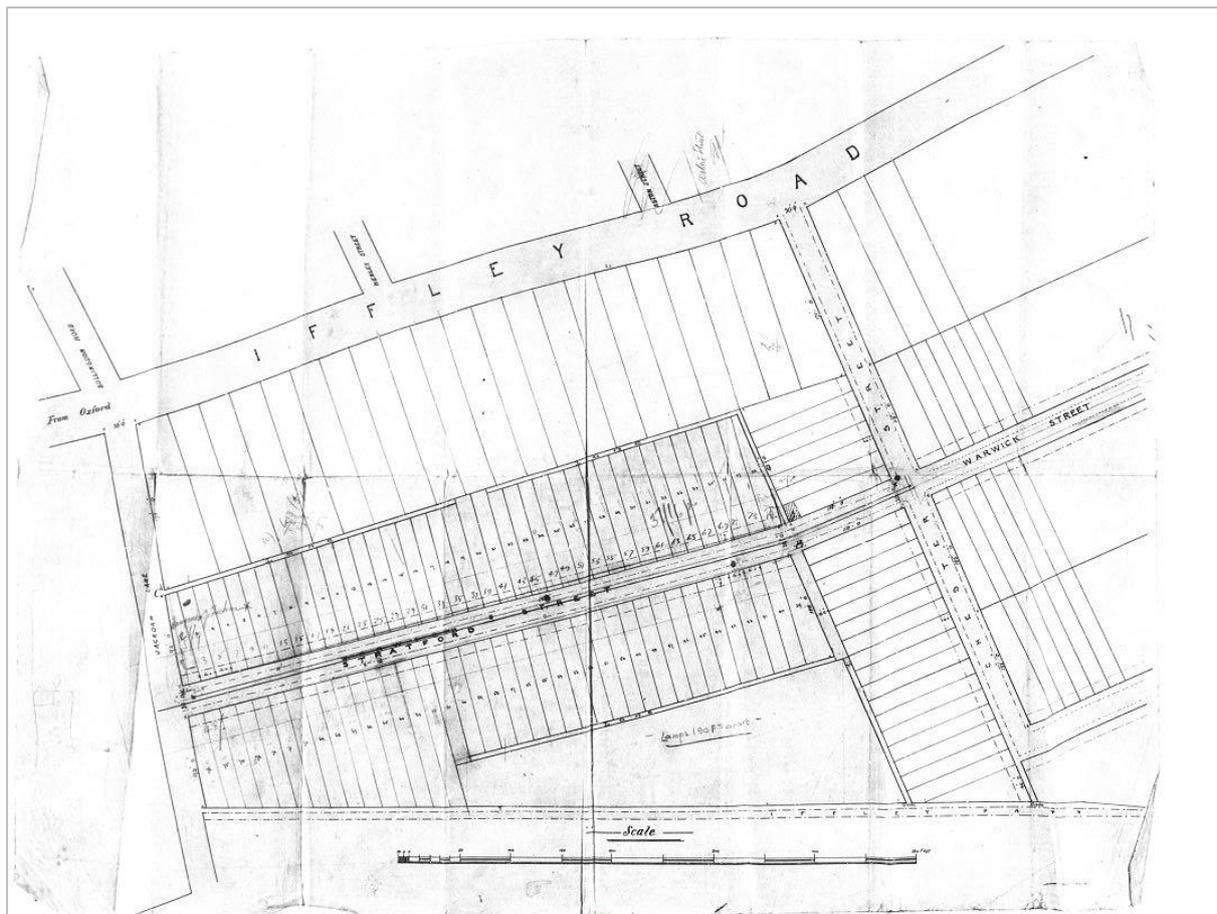
Church-street (St. Thomas's) Divinity-walk, and part of Love-lane, having become unnecessary, have been closed by order of Quarter Sessions.

*Jackson's*  
*Oxford Journal,*  
17 October 1891.

Extensive works were necessary to prepare the land for building and the dumping of house refuse (or “*pestilential stuff*”) on areas close to where houses were being built gave rise to considerable controversy. In August 1892, for example, an Iffley Road resident implied that the practice had caused the recent death of two of his children. His allegations were systematically denied by the city authorities, and the Medical Officer of Health reported that the children had in fact died of whooping cough and convulsions.

The initial development of the streets was sporadic. Much of the work was undertaken by small speculative builders, who each bought several adjacent plots and built groups of terraced or semi-detached houses on them. The character of the dwellings was determined by the local building by-laws and by restrictive covenants in the deeds to each property, requiring that they be of harmonious design with their neighbours.

By 1892 the idea of creating a large new recreation ground to the north of Chester Street had been abandoned and Thomas Henry Kingerlee, one of largest builders in Oxford, had bought that plot of land and laid out lots for twenty-four new houses on the northern side of Chester Street. He also planned a further seventy-six new houses either side of an extension to Warwick Street, later to be called Stratford Street, though these were not built for some time. A small area was left as open ground, behind the gardens of the houses on the south-western side of what was to be Stratford Street, and running down to Meadow Lane.



*Kingerlee's plan for the northern side of Chester Street, and for Stratford Street, 1893 (east at the top).*

Works to lay out the streets on the Iffley Road Estate continued throughout 1892, 1893 and 1894 and in October 1895 *Jackson's Oxford Journal* reported that sewers and drains were being laid:

**NEW STREETS.**—The work of sewerage, draining, and forming the under-mentioned new streets has been commenced and proceeded with:—Hollybush-row extension, Jowett-walk, Hill View-road; Strathfield, Oakthorpe, Beecheroft, Thorncliffe, and Sunningwell roads; Norrey's-avenue, Wytham-street; Newton, Edith, Chilswell, Bardwell, and Chalfont roads; Chalfont-road extension; Frenchay, Staverton, Linton, and Northmoor roads; Divinity, Warneford, Southfield, and Bartlemas roads; Essex, Hertford, Chester, Bedford, Argyle, and Warwick streets, Fairacres-road, and Parker-street.

*Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 12 October 1895.

By this time the north side of Chester Street had been built up, as had a large part of the west side of Argyle Street. There was scattered development on other nearby streets. Queries about the salubrity of the Iffley Road Estate do not seem to have exercised any long-term influence over the development and it, and the adjoining Fairacres Estate, were almost completely filled with houses by 1914.

The foundations of St Edmund's and St Frideswide's Church were laid in 1911 on land at the corner of Jackdaw Lane and Iffley Road, donated by an anonymous benefactor. This church was built to cater for East Oxford's growing Catholic population. An Anglican Convent had been established at Leopold Street by the Sisters of the Love of God in 1906 and shortly afterwards the community moved to its present home in Fairacres House. In 1922 Fairacres Road was extended westwards over an area of gardens and orchard to provide additional street frontage for housing plots running down to Meadow Lane.

Aston's Eyot, in the west, became a rubbish dump for the city in the early twentieth century, resulting in the land rising by two metres by the time this use had finished in the mid-1940s. Later, the island became covered with scrub and was used as a pig run, with one area briefly used as a rugby pitch. Now it is managed as a nature reserve by Friends of Aston's Eyot in partnership with Christ Church. The use of the land just east of the eyot as a scrap yard had become established by 1970 and continues to this day. New school buildings for SS Mary & John's Junior School were erected to the west of Meadow Lane, with access from Bedford Street, during the 1970s. This used a previously undeveloped section of the former meadow land, in addition to public open space. A large part of the meadow was retained as a school playing field at the end of Bedford Street.

The Kidneys was used as an area for landfill of municipal waste until the mid-1970s, after which part of the area next to Meadow Lane was converted to allotment gardens whilst the rest became a public open space owned by the City Council. Land further north, corresponding with the remainder of Long Mead, had become a recreation ground by this

time. A new development of houses, Eyot Place, was built on land between Stratford Street and Meadow Lane in the mid-1990s.

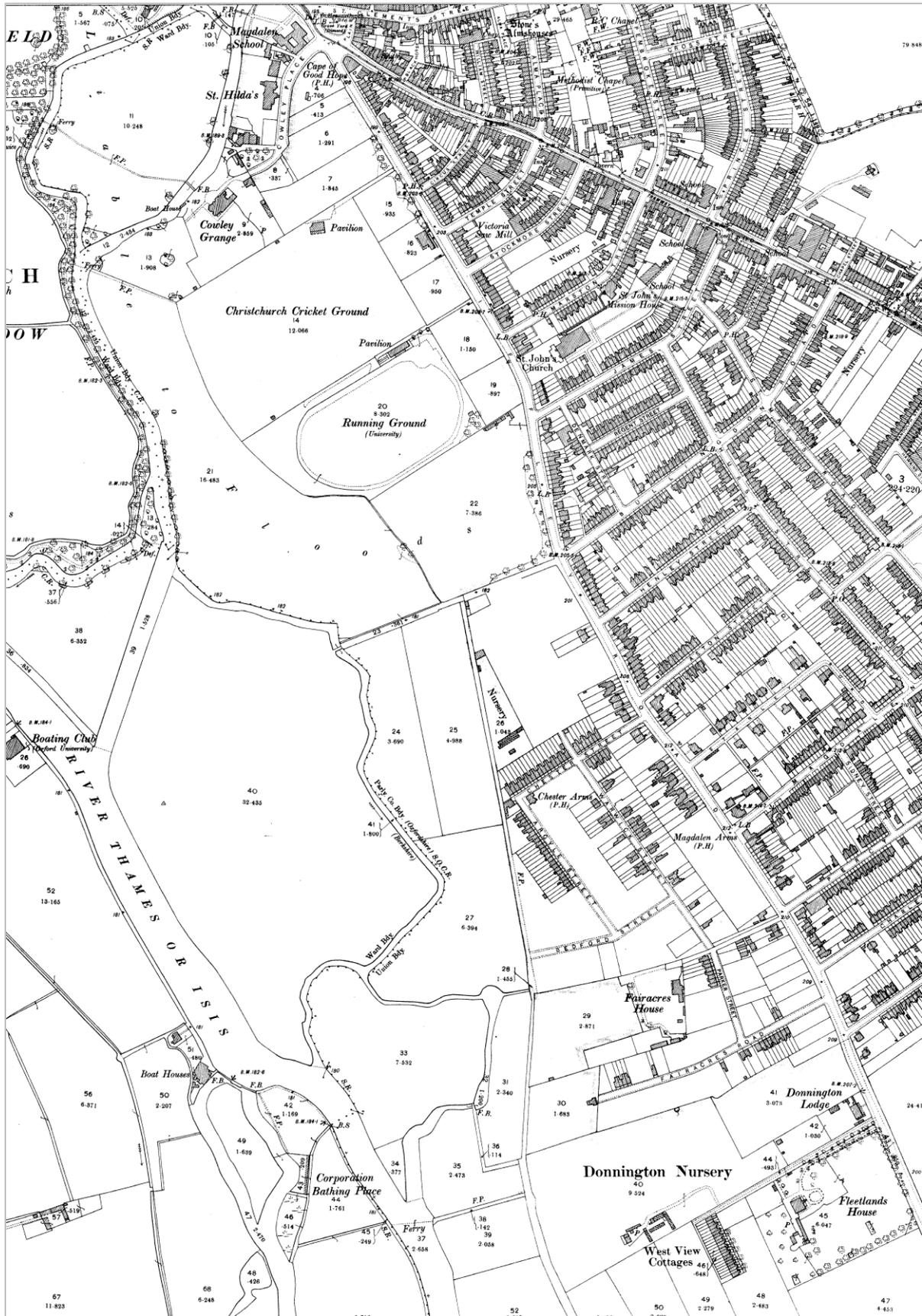
Further north, beyond Jackdaw Lane, the area allotted to Christ church at enclosure became the site of the college's sports ground and the university sports ground, thus providing the desired buffer between the college's main site on St Aldate's and housing in East Oxford.

Extracts from the 1878, 1890, 1921 and 1939 Ordnance Survey maps on the following pages show how the area developed over this sixty year period.

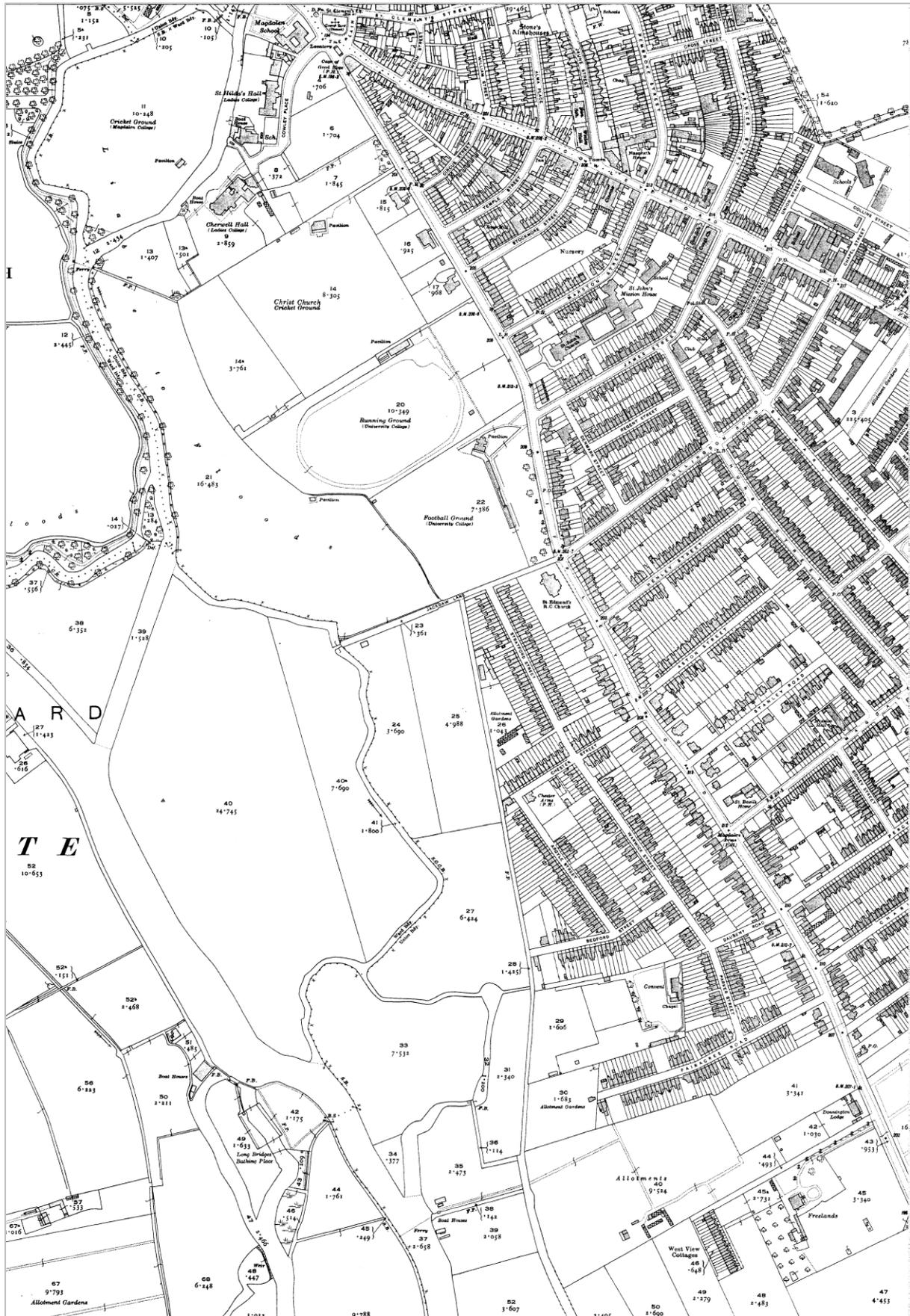


*In the late 1970s over-enthusiastic collectors of old bottles and pot lids dug deep through the ashes and waste that had been dumped on Aston's Eyot over several decades. This resulted in very large and untidy holes, some of which were a danger to walkers and dogs, and Christ Church found themselves obliged to erect this notice as part of a scheme to improve the area.*

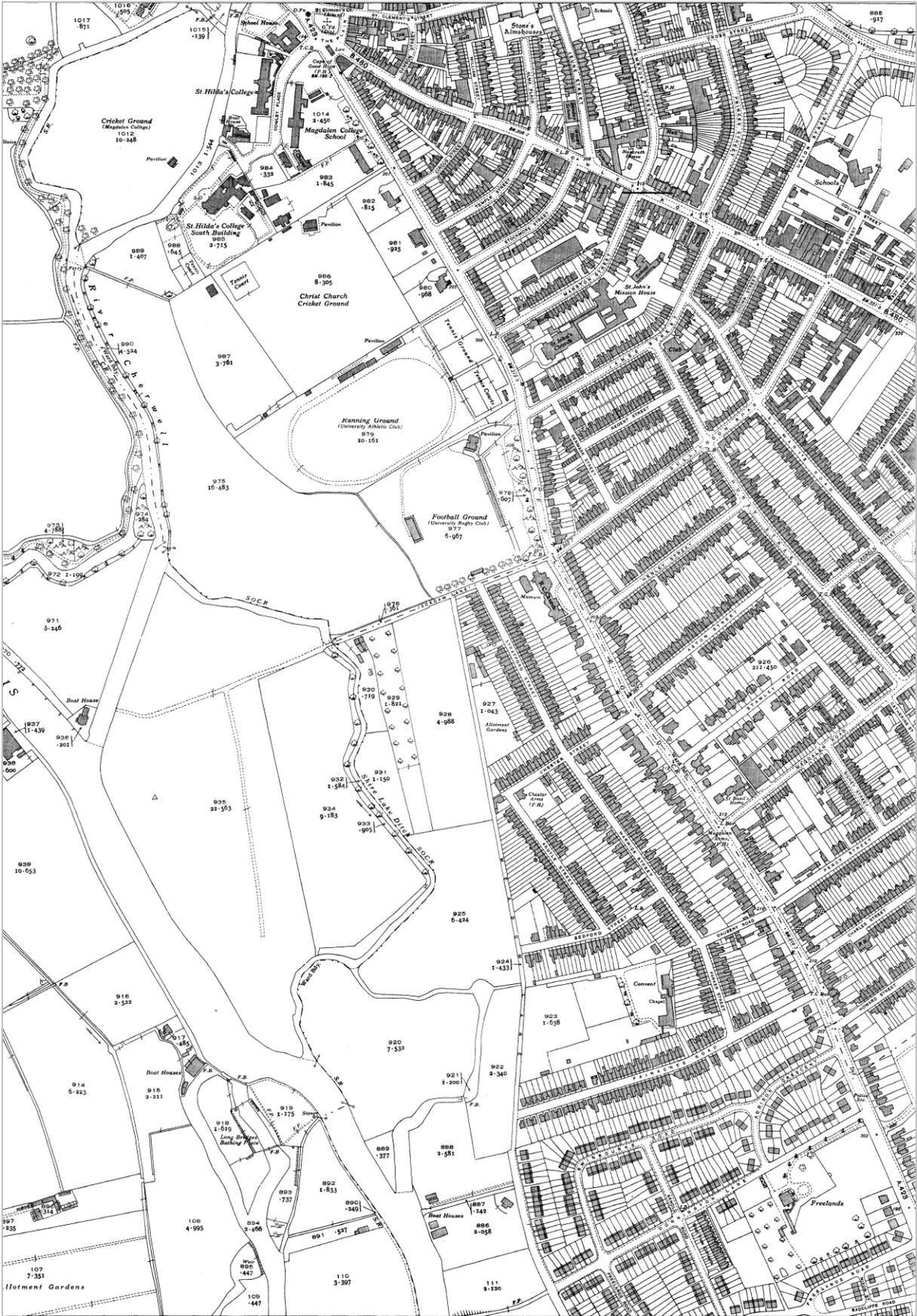




Extract from the 1900 (Second Series) Ordnance Survey map showing the area south of Magdalen Bridge and west and east of the Iffley Road. Notice the horse tram lines running along the Cowley Road.



Extract from the 1921 (Third Series) Ordnance Survey map showing the area south of Magdalen Bridge and west and east of the Iffley Road.

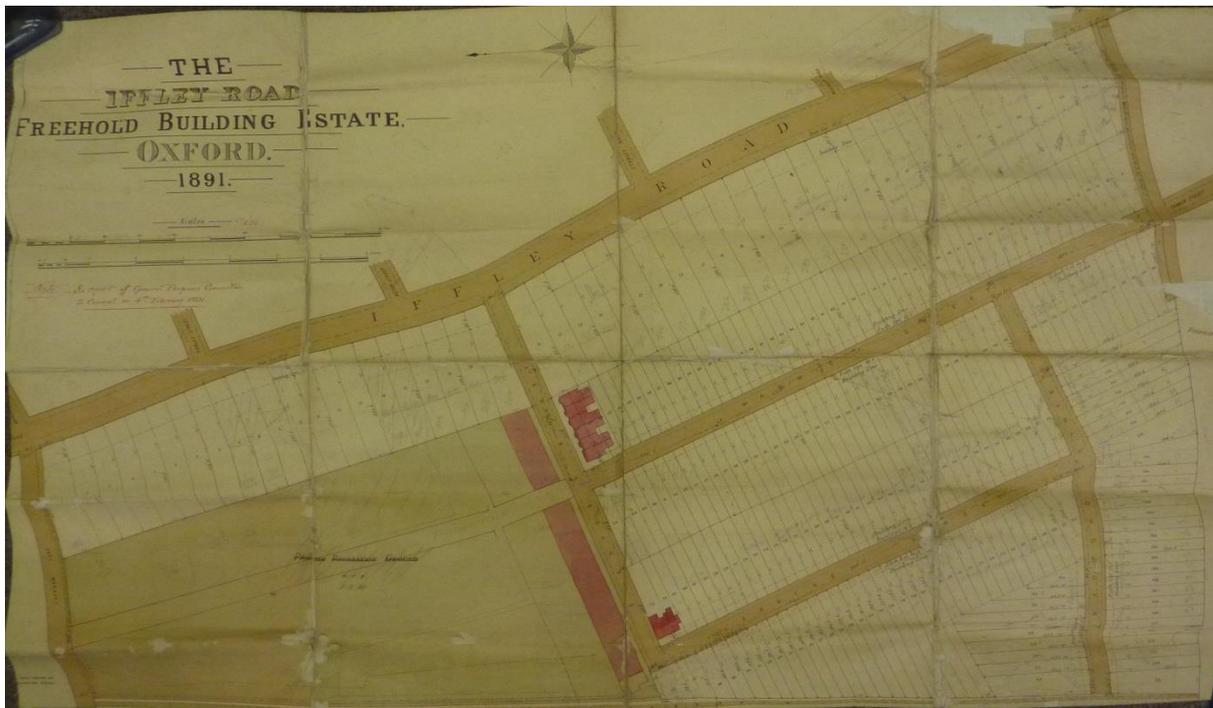


*Extract from the 1939 (Fourth Series) Ordnance Survey map showing the area south of Magdalen Bridge and west and east of the Iffley Road.*

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHESTER STREET

As mentioned above (pp. 13-14), Walter Gray and James Dormor's original plan for the Iffley Road Estate was for there to be no houses fronting Chester Street. Instead, the sides of plots on Iffley Road, Warwick Street and Argyle Street would lie along Chester Street's southern side and at the eastern end of its northern side, and a large recreation ground would take up the rest of the space on its northern side. However, by 1893 this idea had been abandoned and Thomas Henry Kinglerlee had bought what would have been the recreation ground from Gray and Dormor, and laid out plots for twenty-four new houses on the northern side of Chester Street.

Meanwhile, Mr T Gable, proprietor of the Balloon Inn at 23 Queen Street, had bought six plots of land at the north-eastern end of Warwick Street and submitted plans to build four cottages on plots at right-angles to these, fronting onto Chester Street, with a passageway down the side of the most easterly house giving access to the backs of all four properties. The plan left room for one similar cottage and a shop on the corner of Chester Street and Warwick Street, to be built later. The four cottages (now nos. 1, 3, 5 and 7 Chester Street) were erected in 1893 by the builder James Ward of Cambridge Terrace in St Ebbe's.



*An amended version of the 1891 Iffley Road Estate plan, showing the houses now proposed to front on to Chester Street.*

Kinglerlee submitted his plans (overleaf) for the twenty-four new terraced 'cottages' on the northern side of Chester Street in November 1892. They were to be in pairs of identical design with, on the ground floor, a sitting room at the front and a kitchen and scullery behind. On the second floor of each house there were to be three bedrooms.

BUILDING NOTICE.

No 1994

CITY OF OXFORD.

THIS IS TO GIVE NOTICE,

That it is my intention to commence building in accordance with plans deposited herewith, and with the following description:—

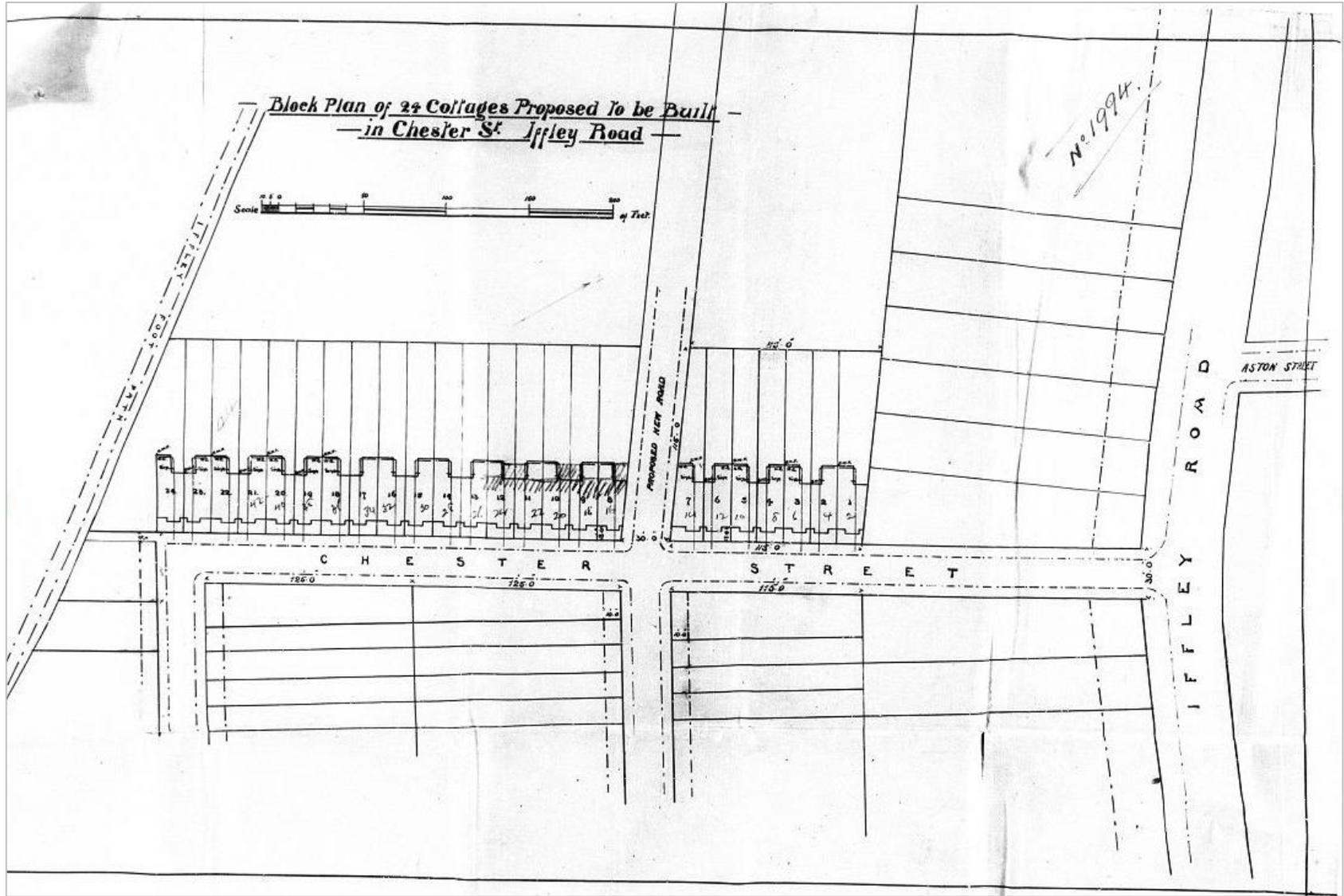
1	Number of Houses, Shops, &c.	24 Houses.
2	Situation of ditto ditto	Chester Street N.W. side.
3	Level or intended level of Cellar, or lowest floor, with reference to surface of Street	One foot below.
4	Width of frontage abutting on Street or Road	About 410 feet
5	Area of land on which the House or Houses are intended to be erected	About 410 ft. by 115 ft.
6	How the Property is to be Sewered	Into main Sewer.
7	What Provision is to be made for the Surface-Water Drainage—Front Back	Into main surface drain.
8	How supplied with Water	From City Works.
9	Number of Waterclosets	One to each house.
10	Name of the Owner	Mr J. H. Kingerlee
11	Address ditto	Queen Street
12	Name of the Builder	as above
13	Address ditto	ditto

N.B.—Where there is a public sewer in the street or road near the site, the closets and sinks are to be in all cases connected with the same, but the water from the roofs and yards is to be drained off separately.

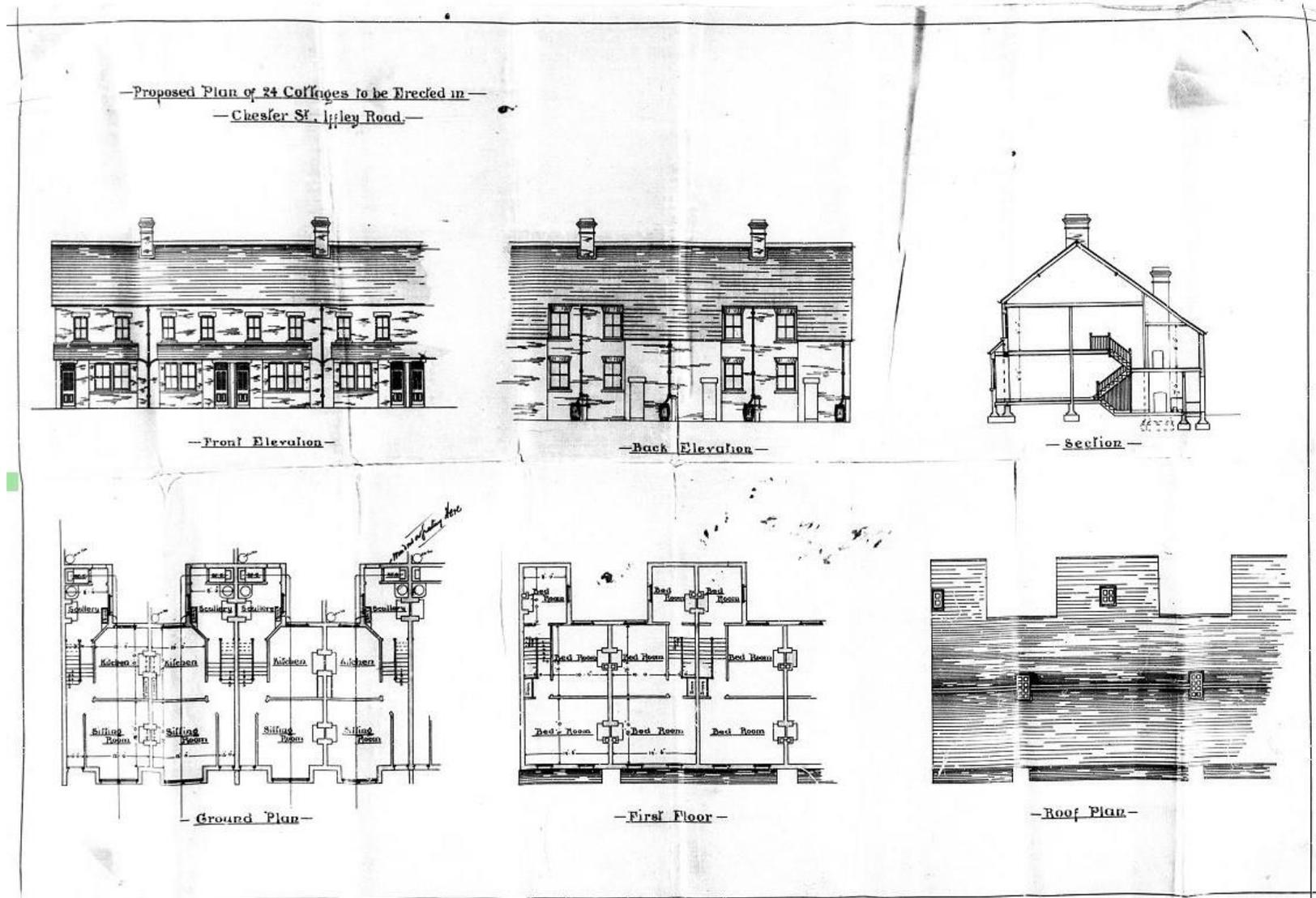
Signature of Applicant Thomas Henry Kingerlee

Residence Queen St. Date 12 Nov 1892

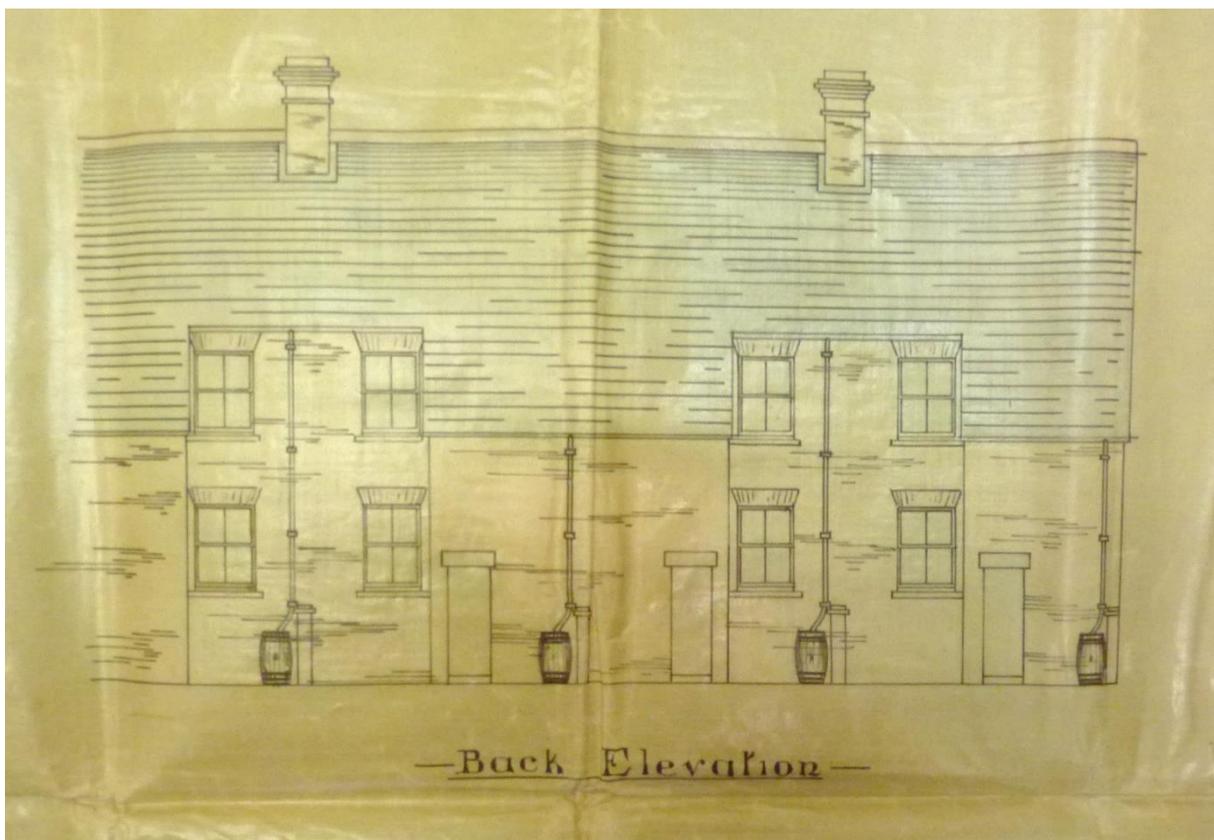
Front page of TH Kingerlee's plans for twenty-four terraced houses on the northern side of Chester Street (nos. 2-48), submitted to the City Council's Chief Engineer on 12 November 1892.



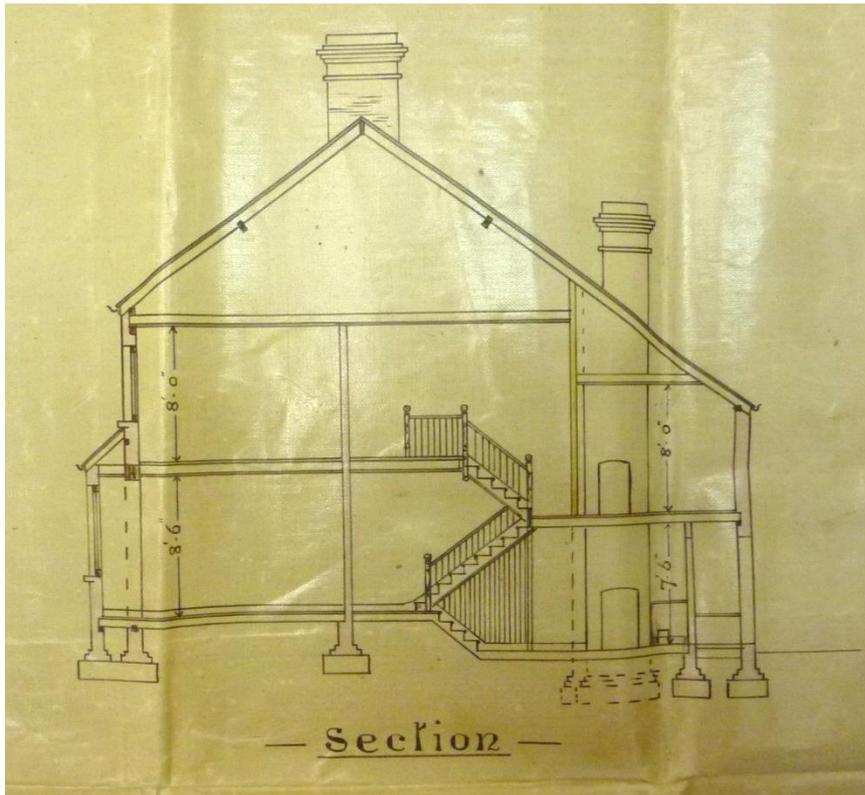
Second page of TH Kingerlee's 1892 plans for twenty-four terraced houses on the northern side of Chester Street (nos. 2-48), showing the proposed layout of the dwellings.



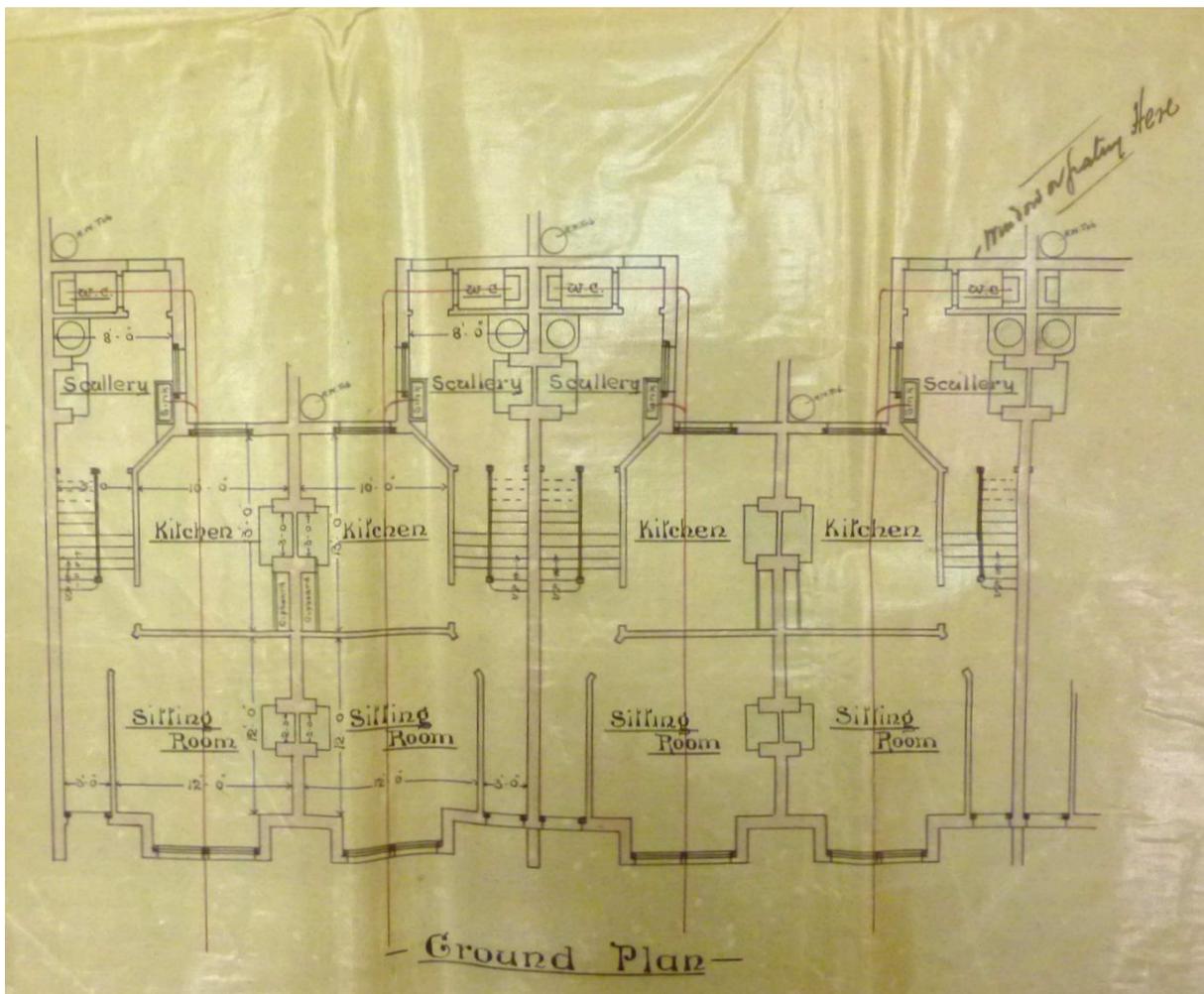
Third page of TH Kingerlee's 1892 plans for twenty-four terraced houses on the northern side of Chester Street (nos. 2-48), showing the design of the dwellings (larger scale versions given below).

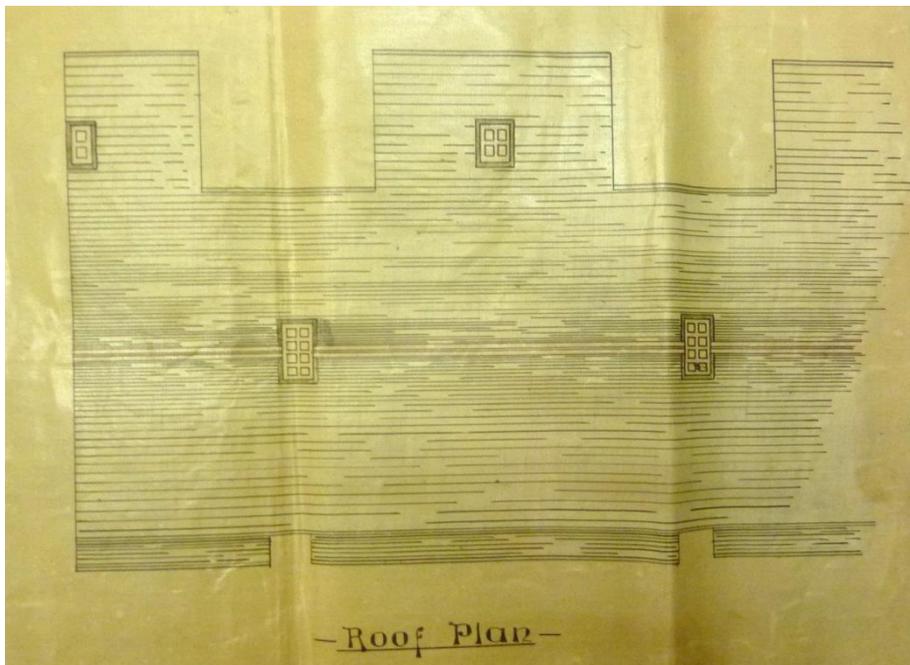
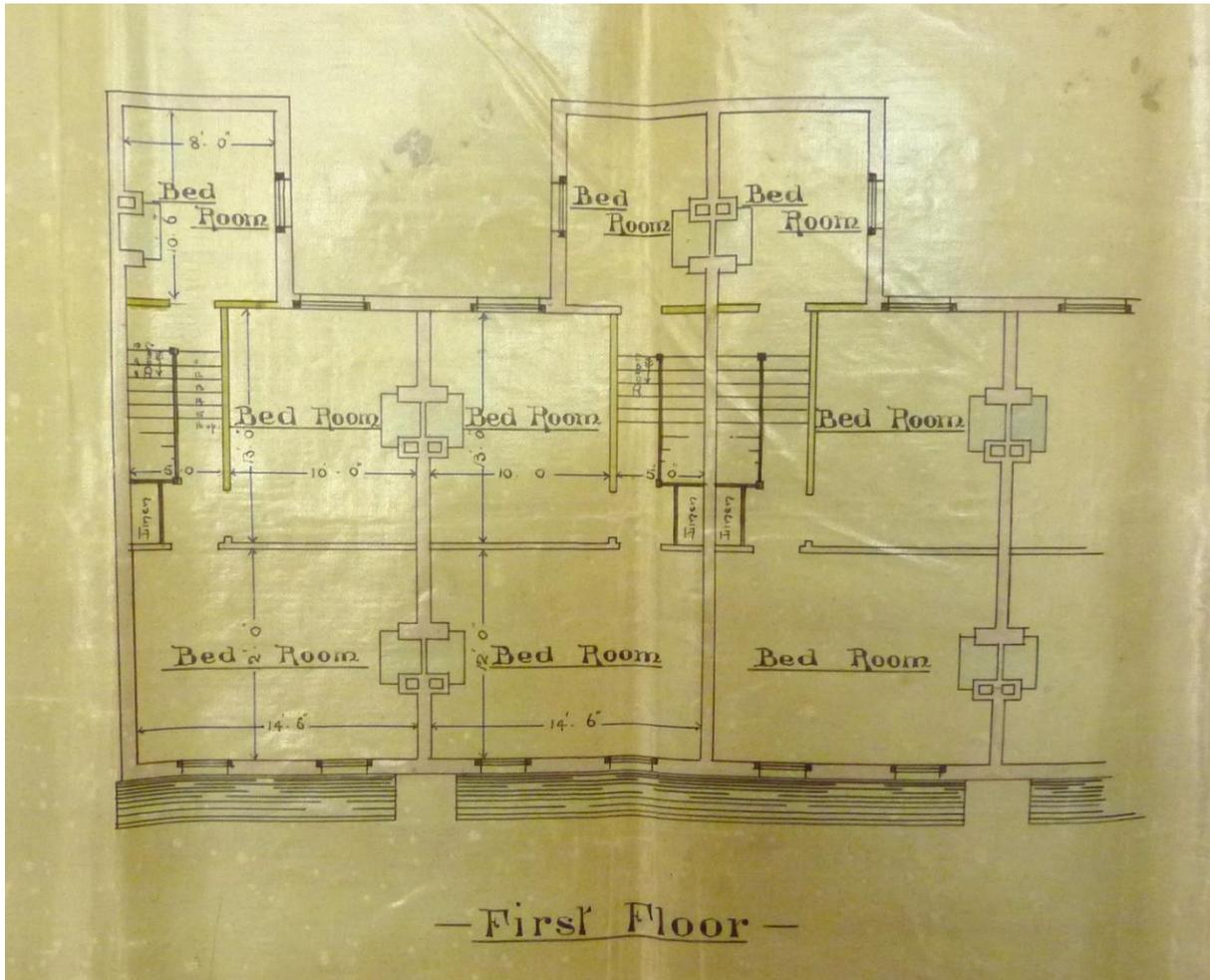


*Close-ups of the third page of Kingerlee's 1892 plans for twenty-four houses on Chester Street (nos. 2-48): front elevation and back elevation (notice the rain barrels).*



*Close-ups of the third page of Kingerlee's 1892 plans for twenty-four houses on Chester Street (nos. 2-48): north-south section and ground plan.*





*Close-ups of the third page of Kinglerlee's 1892 plans for twenty-four houses on Chester Street (nos. 2-48): first floor and roof.*

Kingerlee's plans were approved by the City Engineer on 7 December 1892, on condition that the space underneath the houses "be filled up with builder's or other dry and inoffensive rubbish, and that a continuous bed of cement concrete six inches thick be laid upon it at or above the level of the damp courses". Building commenced at the Iffley Road end of the street; almost immediately the fact that the council had allowed large amounts of household rubbish to be dumped on to the previously empty site was raised. The fear was that if the houses were built on top of it, or even near "stuff which for years must be in a state of slow decomposition, the exhalations from the water that would get into it could not but be deleterious to the health of the people living near it." Such concerns had been heightened by an influenza epidemic earlier in the year, which had claimed eighty-nine lives and caused the university to delay the start of Hilary Term by two weeks. Kingerlee (who was himself a

Mr. KINGERLEE said he was prepared to accept the suggestion to remove the refuse to a depth of 115 feet from the road. The Council had created this nuisance themselves, and the plans of the houses having been passed they had shot hundreds and hundreds of loads of house refuse there. To get out of the difficulty he proposed to take the stuff 115 feet farther off the sites of the houses, but to meet Mr. Underhill he would go fifty yards away from the road. He thought it was a most unfair thing of the Council to create a nuisance and then not step forward and help to remove it. He did not know why he should be at the cost of removing thousands of loads. He called attention to the state of Cripsey-road when it was laid out with this stuff, and he should like for any one to point out a house there which was not well drained; he had not heard of a case of diphtheria there or on the Iffley-road, but he had heard of them in St. Clement's, where none of the stuff had been shot. The Council placed large piles of it on Port Meadow, where children played on it, and on Cripsey, where men dug it in, and if it was so dangerous he thought the Council ought to put a stop to it. (Hear, hear.)

member of the council) said that he intended only to spread the household rubbish on what would be the gardens of the houses, and to bury it three feet deep. However, a committee of the council decided that this would "not by any means remove the serious danger of this immense mass of pestilential stuff" and Kingerlee was obliged to agree to remove all the rubbish within 115 feet of Chester Street.

*Jackson's Oxford Journal,*  
10 December 1892.

Chester st. from Iffley rd.  
SOUTH-EAST SIDE.  
1 Hannisett William Hy  
3 Manley John Job  
5 Colyer Hy. Theophilus  
7 Owen George Gunn  
.....here is Warwick st.....  
NORTH-WEST SIDE.  
2 Walker John Richard  
4 Rogers Thomas Howard  
6 Brown John William  
8 Talbot Mrs  
10 Roomes Chas. modeller  
12 Plummer Frank  
14 Clark Horace  
16 Cullimore Wm. Charles

In 1894 (left) the four houses built on the southern side of the street by James Ward (nos. 1-7) were occupied, as were the first six (nos. 2-12) built on the northern side by Kingerlee. No. 1 was for a time a general shop; in the late 1920s it was the Azra Knitwear Depot.

By 1895 Kingerlee was advertising houses in Chester Street as 'some of the BEST COTTAGES in Oxford to be let or sold':

*Extract from Kelly's Directory,*  
1894-5.

**T**O be LET or SOLD,—No. 1, Staverton Road, three reception rooms, six bed rooms, bath room, and usual offices. Rent moderate.—No. 8, Banbury Road, Summertown, dining and drawing rooms, four bed rooms, bath room, and usual offices. Rent moderate.—Also some of the BEST COTTAGES in Oxford to be Let or Sold, situated in Chester-street.—For particulars of the above apply T. H. KINGERLEE, 35, Queen-street, Oxford.

*Jackson's Oxford Journal, 23 February 1895.*

## THOMAS HENRY KINGERLEE



The building firm of Kingierlee was one of the largest employers in Victorian Oxford and its activities transformed the physical fabric of the city. Moreover, the company's founder, Thomas Henry Kingierlee (*left, as Mayor of Oxford in 1898*), had a profound influence over Oxford's political, religious and commercial development.

Thomas was born in Banbury in 1843, and started working for his father as a plumber and glazier at the age of fifteen. Ten years later he took over the business and by 1881 he was describing himself as a 'master builder' employing twenty men. In 1883 he, his wife and three children moved to Oxford, at a time when the city was expanding rapidly and builders were in great demand. His business thrived and within only a few years Kingierlee was employing several hundred men and building scores of houses, as well as religious, commercial and public buildings all over city. Kingierlee kept many of the houses that he built, rather than selling them, and by the turn of the century he was the biggest house builder and landlord in Oxford, and he wielded considerable power on the City Council, serving as a Liberal councillor for the West Ward, Mayor (twice), and Sheriff. He was also a leading member of the Congregational Church and, as a staunch tee-totaller, encouraged his workforce to join the YMCA, Temperance string bands, cricket teams and mutual improvement clubs, all supported by the company.

By the mid 1930s Kingierlee & Sons had built over seven hundred new houses throughout the city's suburbs, making it by far the largest developer in Oxford. About half of these were off the Botley Road, where two new streets, Helen Road and Henry Road, were named after Thomas's two eldest children. The company was also responsible for numerous major buildings including Oxford's first electricity station, at Osney (1892); Frank Cooper's marmalade factory on Park End Street (1903); the Cowley Road Methodist Church (1904); the Oxford Picture Palace on Jeune Street (1911); the New Theatre (1933), and almost all the buildings on the Pressed Steel site at Cowley (late 1920s to early 1970s).

Thomas Kingierlee died in 1928 (leaving an estate worth about £1.2 million in today's money) but by then his two sons were running the company. It is still going strong and recently celebrated its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

*Left to right, four generations of the Kingierlee family in 1927: Henry Stephen (Harry); Thomas Henry; Thomas Henry (Tom); and Stanley John (Jack). The firm is now under the directorship of Tom's son David Kingierlee.*

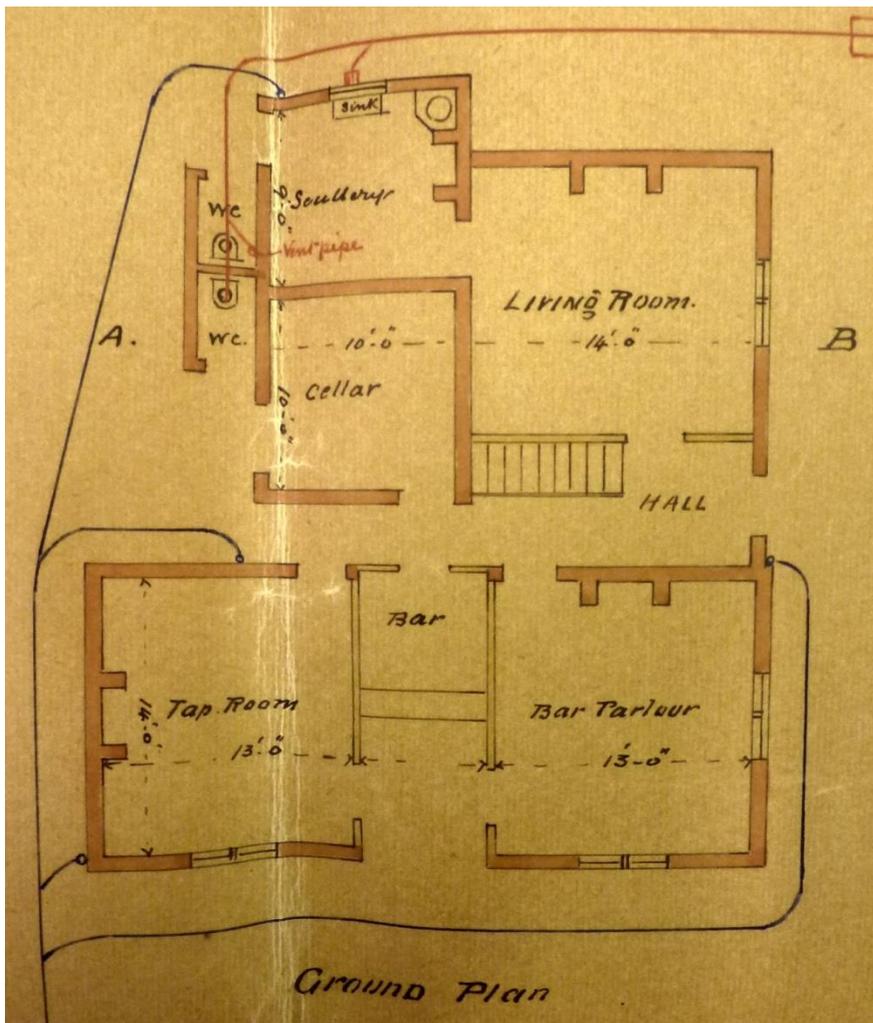


Chester st. from Ifley rd.  
 SOUTH-EAST SIDE.  
 1 Davis Henry William  
 3 Manley John Job  
 5 Moore Thomas Charles  
 7 Owen George Gunn  
 9 Coles Frederick C  
 .... here is Warwick st. ....  
 NORTH-WEST SIDE.  
 2 Walker John Richard  
 4 Rogers Thomas Howard  
 6 Brown John William  
 8 Talbot Mrs  
 12 Plummer Frank  
 14 Pitt William P  
 16 Cullimore Wm. Charles  
 18 Howse Henry  
 24 Maycock Joseph  
 26 Brimfield Samuel H  
 28 Holton Albon George  
 30 Jennings John Albert  
 32 Atkin Ernest  
 34 Owen Joseph

In October 1895 it was reported that the laying of drains and sewers was underway and by the end of that year, 9 Chester Street, on the southern side, had been built, probably again by James Ward, as it is in the same style as nos. 1-7. Later the house was occupied by Albert Nicholls, a fly (taxi cab) proprietor.

Kingerlee had by now completed and let out fourteen houses on the northern side. 16 Chester Street, on the corner of what was to become Stratford Street, was a general shop run by William Cullimore.

*Extract from Kelly's Directory, 1895-6.*



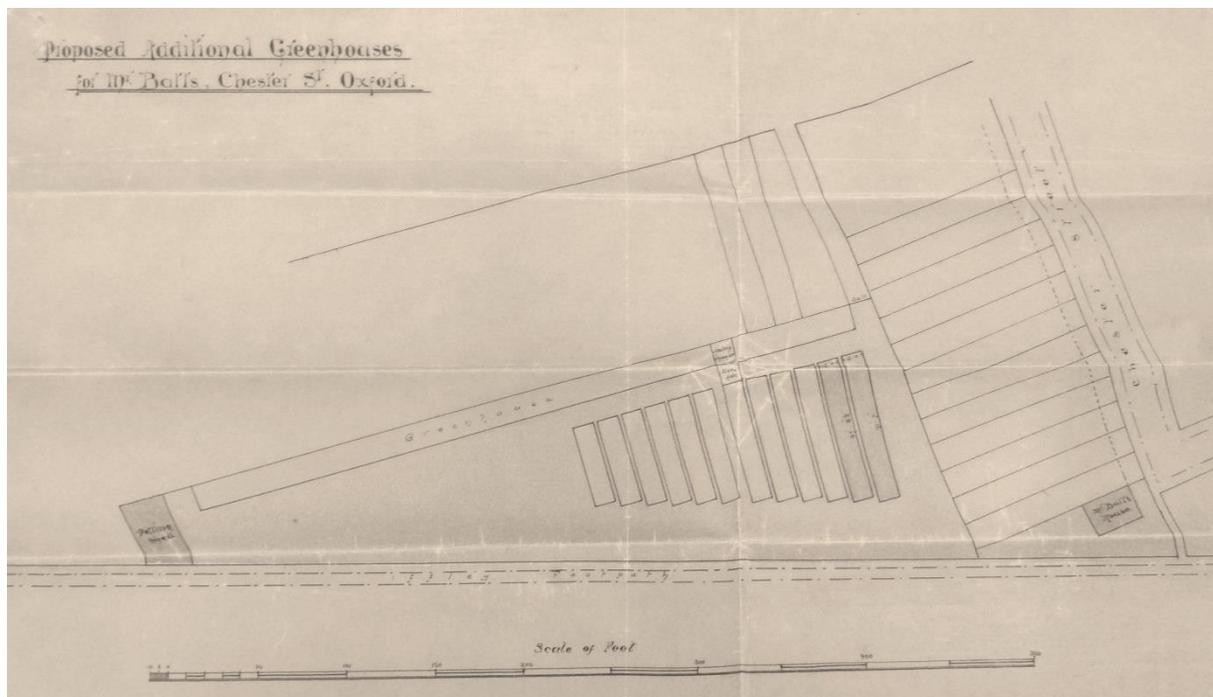
In 1896 the Chester Arms was built on a large plot on the corner of Chester Street and Argyle Street by Walter Wilkins of Hythe Bridge Street. The owners of the pub were Messrs Weaving & Son, proprietors of the Eagle Brewery on Park End Street. On the ground floor were a separate tap room (to the left of the entrance on Chester Street) and a parlour (to the right), with a central bar between them, serving both. Behind were a living room and scullery for the landlord and his family and above, four bedrooms:

*Part of Walter Wilkins's plans for the Chester Arms, 1896.*

By October 1896 there were thirty-two houses on the street, of which Kingerlee had built twenty-five; four of these he had already sold. Originally the house at the western end of the row – no. 48 – sat on a large triangular plot, with Meadow Lane running to the west of it. However, Kingerlee subdivided the plot and built an additional house on the end – no. 50 – with its front door on Chester Street and an additional downstairs bay window on the side,

**BEDDING PLANTS CHEAP.**  
**IN VARIETY.** Window Boxes tiled and Gardens laid out. Cucumbers, Tomatoes, Vegetables, Fresh-Cut Flowers.  
**WREATHS, CROSSES, BOUQUETS, &c.,** made up on the shortest notice.  
 All kinds of Linn, Peat, Sand and Coarse Fibre always in stock.  
 Inspection of the Nursery invited.  
 Orders by post promptly attended to.  
**A. BATT'S,**  
**THAMES NURSERY, CHESTER STREET, AND AT 61 & 63, WOODSTOCK ROAD, & OXFORD MARKET.**

overlooking Meadow Lane. Kingerlee sold this house to Mr Batts, a greengrocer of Woodstock Road. In 1896 Kingerlee built thirteen very large greenhouses and a potting shed for him on the open piece of land behind 32-44 Chester Street. A passageway at the south-western end of what was to become Stratford Street, leading behind 16 Chester Street, gave access to Mr Batts's 'Thames Nursery'.



*Kingerlee's 1895 plans (with east at the top) for thirteen greenhouses for nurseryman Mr Batts, with a potting shed at the northern (left-hand) end and a heating chamber and store connecting the very long greenhouse running north-south with those to the west.*

**NORTHAMPTON BREWERY COMPANY, Ltd.,**  
 Desire to draw particular attention to the Home-Brewed Character of their  
**ALES AND STOUT.**  
 THEY ARE OF SUPERIOR EXCELLENCE AND PURITY.  
**LIST OF PRICES.**

PER GALLON.		Digestive Stout.
Family Pale Ale.	Mild Ales - 1/5, 1/2, 1/4, 1/6, 1/8, 2/-	
SPECIALITY HOP.	Amber Ales - - - - - 1/5, 1/2, 1/4	
Forms an agreeable and strengthening Tonic.	India and Pils - - - 1/5, 1/2, 1/4, 1/6	
	Digestive Stout - - - 1/2, 1/4, 1/6	

DELIVERED FREE IN ANY SIZED CASE.

AGENT— **W. SMITH,**  
**CHESTER STREET, IFFLEY ROAD, OXFORD.**

Mr Batts did not live in the house at no. 50 but instead rented it out to William Steventon (whose family remained there until at least the late 1970s). The ground floor was used as business premises, initially by a baker and agent for the Northampton Brewery, William Smith, and later by a baker, SJ Avery

When John Albert Jennings, landlord of the Boar's Head in Queen's Lane, applied to transfer his licence to the newly-built Chester Arms, Thomas Henry Kingerlee, who was a staunch Congregationalist and teetotaler, objected to the application. He gave evidence to the council's licensing committee that he had sold four houses on Chester Street with a distinct covenant that they were not to be converted into licensed houses of any description, because he had bought the plots of land on that condition. He contended that if an alcohol licence was granted to the Chester Arms, the remaining twenty-one houses that he had on Chester Street would not sell well, because they were immediately opposite the pub. Several tenants had already told him that if an alcohol licence were granted they would have to look for other houses elsewhere. In fact, John Jennings, the man applying for the licence, was himself one of Kingerlee's tenants, having moved into the newly-built no. 30 in 1895, and then into no. 22 the following year.

Despite Kingerlee's objections, the licence was granted and John Jennings became the first landlord of the Chester Arms. Various additions were made to the building, including a new coal shed and urinal, in the late 1890s. By 1903 the landlord was Alfred Thomas, and in August of that year he was summoned for selling beer after hours. At 11.35pm on 24 July the policeman on duty in Chester Street, PC Furnage, had seen a man "*leave no. 11 Chester Street without a hat and go in one of the back doors of the Chester Arms*". Fifteen minutes later the man emerged with the landlord's daughter, Ethel Thomas, and when apprehended on Warwick Street she was found to be carrying a gallon of ale in a jar under her skirt. Her father was fined £5 and twelve shillings costs [about £440 in today's money].

In 1914 (by which time Weavings Eagle Brewery had been taken over by Hall's) a large club room was built on to the Chester Arms, fronting Argyle Street. (This was later demolished and a house now occupies the site.) The originally very large garden of the pub was (and still is) used for the Oxfordshire game of Aunt Sally. In 1974 Ken Warmington, a former member of the Royal Green Jackets regiment (previously the Ox & Bucks Light Infantry) took on the tenancy and changed the name to the Royal Green Jacket with two bars called the Peninsular Bar and the Volunteer Bar. He made the pub into an unofficial museum of the regiment, full of regimental pictures, photos and ornaments. In 1990, when he left, the pub changed its name back to the Chester Arms. In 2012 there was a failed attempt to turn the pub into a private house; instead it was taken over by new landlords and given a fresh lease of life.



*The main door of the Chester Arms. Image courtesy of Simon Somerscales.*

The plot on the north-eastern corner of Chester Street and Warwick Street, beside 9 Chester Street, remained empty for several years until F Martin of 22 Divinity Road built a new house and corner shop (now nos. 9a and 11) there in 1898. The shop was initially shared by two businesses, a grocers and a butchers. Later it became a confectioners, a hairdressers and a second-hand goods shop.

**OXFORD.**  
**IMPORTANT SALE OF VALUABLE**  
**FREEHOLD & LEASEHOLD PROPERTIES**

**LEASEHOLD HOUSE,** 74, Kingston-road.  
**FREEHOLD HOUSE,** 45, Ifley-road.  
**TWO FREEHOLD HOUSES,**  
 Nos. 10 and 10a, Circus-street, Ifley-road.  
**FREEHOLD HOUSE,**  
 2, Chester-street, Ifley-road.  
**FREEHOLD RESIDENCE,** 212, Ifley-road.

**Messrs. R. BUCKELL and SON**

**H**AVE been favoured with instructions from the Exors. of the late Henry Carter, deceased, to **SELL** the above Valuable Properties by **PUBLIC AUCTION** at the Golden Cross Hotel, Cornmarket-street, Oxford, on **WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 3rd, 1900,** at Six for Seven o'clock in the Evening, in the following Lots:—

**Lot 5.—Freehold Brick-built and Slated DWELLING-HOUSE, No. 2, Chester-street, Ifley-road, Oxford, containing Entrance Passage, 2 Sitting Rooms, Kitchen, Larder, Coal Cellar and w.c. on the Ground Floor; 3 Bedrooms on the Upper Floor; with Garden Back and Front; now in the occupation of Mr. J. R. Walker, at a rental of 6s. per week, Tenant paying all Rates except Water Rate.**

*The Oxford Times, 29 September 1900.*

time. None of the households on Chester Street had a live-in servant in 1901, even though other houses in the area did contain them – usually a young ‘maid of all work’ in her first placement after leaving school.

There were fifty-five adult men living in Chester Street aged fourteen or over [the compulsory school leaving age was twelve in 1901]. Of these, 95% were employed (see over). They had jobs in shops; in the food and drink trades (including butchers and bakers); in building (including carpenters, decorators and a stonemason); and in other services (including gardening, printing and tailoring). It’s likely that some who were domestic servants and gardeners had work at one or other of the nearby large houses - Fairacres House, Donnington Lodge and Freelands House - which had existed prior to enclosure. Chester Street men were also occupied in offices as clerks and book keepers and in public services such as the Post Office and the police force. Some worked as teachers; others were in domestic service, several of them at the colleges. These jobs were typical of the time: before the advent of William Morris’ car factory, Oxford was very much a service town rather than a manufacturing one, and the presence of the university meant a high demand for services such as tailoring and the provision of food and drink. There was also a growing public and business bureaucracy and, of course, a buoyant building trade, supported by the rapidly-expanding suburbs.

By 1900 all Kingerlee’s house on the northern side of Chester Street were occupied, either by tenants, or by people who had bought the properties themselves, often at auctions like the one advertised to the left.

By the time the census was taken on 31 March 1901 there were thirty-one properties on Chester Street housing 147 people, with an average household size of 4.74. Nineteen of the households (61%) contained children under the age of fourteen, with an average of 2.3 children in those households. Hence the family units were not particularly large, with the notable exception of the Crawford family at no. 30 (a household of twelve people, five of them young children); the Thomas family at the Chester Arms (ten people with three young children); and the Ball family at no. 44 (nine people with five young children). The majority of houses contained four or five occupants, as was typical in this part of East Oxford at the

## **Men's occupations in Chester Street in 1901**

### Food and drink trades

Licensed victualler (Chester Arms)  
Butcher (x4)  
Fruit salesman  
Baker's assistant (x2)  
Provisions merchant's assistant  
Grocer's assistant

### Building trades

Builder's foreman  
Stonemason  
Plumber  
Carpenter (x2)  
House painter and decorator (x4)  
Bricklayer's labourer  
General labourer (x2)

### Shop assistants

Stationer's assistant  
Draper's porter  
Jewellery assistant

### Education

Pupil [apprentice] teacher  
Elementary school teacher  
Herbarium assistant and science teacher

### Office and public service workers

Commercial clerk  
Lay clerk  
College buttery clerk  
Book keeper  
Assistant librarian  
Post office worker (stamper)  
Police constable  
Police pensioner  
Auctioneer's office boy

### Domestic service

College servant  
Gardener (x5)  
Butler  
General domestic servant  
House boy

### Other services

Tailor  
Printer  
Lithograph painter  
Laundry man  
Billiard marker  
Stationery engine driver

A few of the younger men in Chester Street – grown-up sons still living at home – had jobs as shop assistants and labourers, but the majority of men were in skilled and semi-skilled occupations. These were good jobs, but none-the-less three households in Chester Street contained one or two boarders to provide an extra income, and 20% of the street's forty-nine adult women also did paid work, suggesting that their earnings were necessary to support the family. Traditionally wages in Oxford were low compared to those in other towns and cities (due mainly to a dense urban and rural population and a lack of manufacturing) and even at the turn of the century a relatively high proportion of working-class women had jobs in order to supplement the household income. In Chester Street four women were laundresses, three were dressmakers (probably working from home), one was a housekeeper, one an elementary school teacher and one an assistant in a grocer's shop, all occupations which were common for women throughout Oxford's working-class parishes. The laundry trade employed large numbers of women at this time in East Oxford (and in Headington and Summertown), and most of the work was done at home, in the outhouse at the back. Laundry was brought by cart from the colleges and from wealthy households in town, distributed to the laundresses, washed by hand in a large copper in the outhouse, and hung to dry in the long narrow gardens typical of these houses. Gardens were sometimes referred to as, for example, 'six-sheeters' or 'eight sheeters', depending on their length.

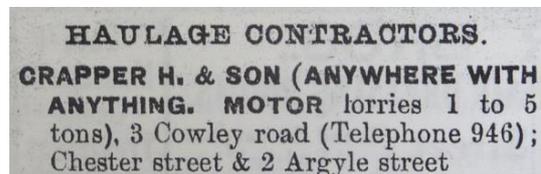
## Women's occupations in Chester Street in 1901

Dressmaker (x3)	Housekeeper
Laundress (x4)	Grocer's shop assistant
Elementary school teacher	Living on own means (i.e. on a pension) (x2)

In 1901 just over half of Chester Street's residents had been born in Oxford. Another 16% came originally from elsewhere in Oxfordshire and 29% had been born outside the county. Again, this was fairly typical of the demographic of East Oxford at the time, with local people moving into newly-built houses in the expanding suburb, either from other streets nearby, or from poorer accommodation in the older inner-city parishes like St Aldate's, St Ebbe's and St Clement's.

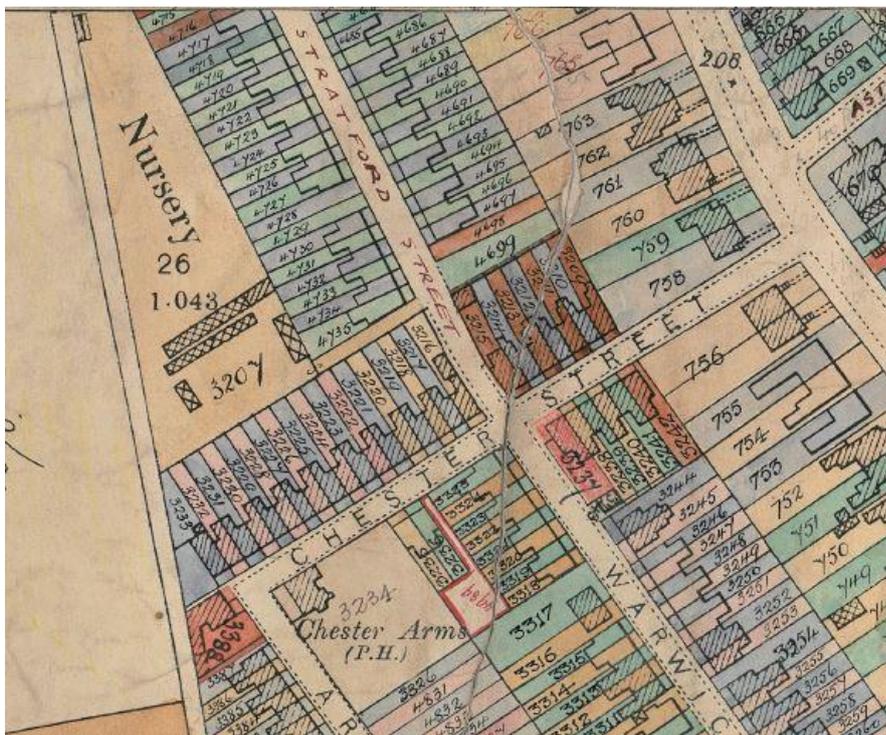
The street was completed in 1903 when two more houses, nos. 15 and 17, were built on the plots on the south-west corner of the junction between Warwick Street and Chester Street.

In 1911 a two-storey workshop for Andrews Furnishers Ltd was built behind no. 17, and in the mid 1920s Harold Crapper had premises there.



*The Oxford Directory, 1925.*

The 1910 District Valuation Survey (below and overleaf; sometimes known as the Lloyd George Domesday Survey) showed that of the thirty-four properties on Chester Street, TH Kingerlee still owned fifteen of them, and was renting them out to tenants at between £15 and £20 a year [about £1,200 to £1,600 a year in today's money, average for East Oxford at the time]. Of the remaining houses, nine were owned by other landlords and rented out, and the rest were owner-occupied. The houses were reckoned to be worth between £200 and £300 [about £16,000 to £23,500 in today's money].



*Extract from the map accompanying the 1910 District Valuation Survey (which was based on the 1899 OS map). The numbers refer to those in the left-hand column of the schedules on the pages below. The colours were simply to make adjacent properties easier to distinguish.*

Parish of COWLEY ST JOHN

No. of Assessment	No. of Poor Rate	Christian Names and Surnames of Occupiers	Christian Names and Surnames of Owners, with their Residences	Description of Property— If an Inn, &c. the name or sign by which known	Street, Place, Name, and Precise Situation of Property	Poor Rate						Reference to Map	Extent as determined by Valuer				Original Gross Value	Deductions for					
						Estimated Extent	Gross Annual Value	Rateable Value	Acres	R.	P.		Y.	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
4	3205	1950	Cooper G.H.	Range etc	246	8	7	10	393 <sup>K</sup>			29	21	240	25								
4	3206	1	Hingetree	Land	42	5	2		393					30									
4	3207	2	Gamma	Buildings	} <del>Stratford St</del> Stratford St	20	16		} 393 <sup>PQ</sup>	1		11	24	770	75								
4	3208		Wild	ekusony Garden		30	25																
4	3209	3	Walker John R <sup>d</sup>	House etc	2	15	12		393 <sup>R</sup>			6	22	265	212								
4	3210	4	Rogers Tho R <sup>y</sup>	Hingetree Y.H.	4	15	12		393 <sup>R</sup>			6	22	265	209								
4	3211		Brown John W <sup>d</sup>		6	15	12		393 <sup>R</sup>			6	24	265	209								
4	3212	5	Glanville Edw W <sup>d</sup>		8	15	12		393 <sup>R</sup>			6	24	265	209								
4	3213	6	Harris Geo W <sup>d</sup>		10	15	12		393 <sup>R</sup>			6	24	265	209								
4	3214	7	Woodford John C		12	15	12		393 <sup>R</sup>			6	24	265	209								
4	3215	8	Pell W J P		14	15	14	10	393 <sup>R</sup>			8	11	280	222								
4	3216	9	Bullimore W <sup>d</sup> L	Self	16	19	15		393 <sup>R</sup>			7	19	300	244								
4	3217	1990	Horsman land T	Self	18	15	12		393 <sup>R</sup>			6	22	270	238								
4	3218	1	Pritchard Tho J <sup>r</sup>	Self	20	15	12		393 <sup>R</sup>			6	27	265	209								
4	3219	2	Castle John James	Maycock J <sup>r</sup> P <sup>l</sup>	22	15	12		393 <sup>R</sup>			6	27	265	209								
4	3220		Maycock J <sup>r</sup> P <sup>l</sup>		24	15	12		393 <sup>R</sup>			6	27	265	209								
4	3221	3	Bales William	Self	26	15	12		393 <sup>R</sup>			6	27	265	209								
4	3222	4	Carbester etc	Maycock W <sup>d</sup>	28	15	12		393 <sup>R</sup>			6	27	265	209								
4	3223	5	Crawford J <sup>r</sup> R <sup>y</sup>	Hingetree Y.H.	30	15	12		393 <sup>R</sup>			6	27	265	209								
4	3224		Howell William		32	15	12		393 <sup>R</sup>			6	27	265	209								
Total							307	251															

Extract from the 1910 District Valuation Survey for 2 to 32 Chester Street.

Parish of COWLEY S. JOHN

No. of Assessment	No. of Poor Rate	Christian Names and Surnames of Occupiers	Christian Names and Surnames of Owners with their Residences	Description of Property— If an Inn, &c. the name or sign by which known	Street, Place, Name, and * Precise Situation of Property	Poor Rate						Reference to Map	Extent as determined by Value				Original Gross Value	Deductions for		
						Estimated Extent		Gross Annual Value		Rateable Value			Acres	R.	P.	Y.		Buildings and other Structures, including Machinery.	Timber.	Amount from other Parishes, in the Parish.
						£	s.	£	s.	£	s.									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18			
4	3225	1993	Jacobs Adelaide	Hingulce T.H.	House etc	34		15	12	393 <sup>q</sup>			6	27	265	209				
4	3226		Galpin Henry J.P.			36		15	12	393 <sup>q</sup>			6	27	265	209				
4	3227		Tubby John			38		15	12	393 <sup>q</sup>			6	27	265	209				
4	3228		Thicke Mary S			40		15	12	393 <sup>q</sup>			6	27	265	209				
4	3229		Melner Arthur			42		15	12	393 <sup>q</sup>			6	27	265	209				
4	3230	6	Worland John H.	Self		44		15	12	393 <sup>q</sup>			6	27	265	209				
4	3231	7	Kobbs W. R <sup>d</sup>	Hingulce T.H.		46		15	12	393 <sup>q</sup>			6	27	265	209				
4	3232		Cooper William			48		15	12	393 <sup>q</sup>			6	27	265	209				
4	3233	8	Stevenson William	Self		50		20	16	393 <sup>q</sup>			12	30	400	329				
4	3234	9	Lambert Tho B	Kells Oxford Brewery & Pub				48	38	10					2500	1426				
4	3235	2000	Luthmore W. Ch.	Lambert T.H.		17		15	12	393 <sup>q</sup>					260	208				
4	3236		Chapman Frank			15		15	12	do					260	208				
4	3237	1	Howell Evan G.	Howell E.G.		11		30	24				11		1275	367				
4	3238	2	Heasman Cecil L.	Gabell W.		9		16	13											
4	3239	3	Lewendon James	Edon		7		12	13	do					300	244				
4	3240	4	Baker Henry	Baker Henry		5		16	13	do					300	244				
4	3241	5	Bearritt Alfred K.	Lousley Tho		3		16	13	do					310	254				
4	3242	6	Corrall Alfred	Self		1		17	13	10	do				340	270				
4	3243	7	Proffitt Joseph D.	Howell E.G.	Shop	1	Harwood St	8	7	10			3		85	63				
4	3244	8	Money Percy	Self	House etc	3		18	14	10	393 <sup>q</sup>				350	254				
Total								368	286											

Extract from the 1910 District Valuation Survey for 34 to 1 Chester Street.

Chester Street remained a residential street with a handful of shops and a pub until 1971, when the Seventh Day Adventist Church opened at 1A Chester Street. It was on land previously occupied by the garden of 210 Ifley Road (a house built in 1893, later the Melville Hotel). In 1962 there had been plans to build four open car ports with two-storey maisonettes above them on the site, but these were withdrawn, as were plans two years later for three two-storey houses with garages behind. Instead, a scheme by the Oxford Architects Partnership for a new church were given approval in 1966 and it was completed five years later.

**CHESTER STREET.**  
 From 210 Ifley road to  
 2 Argyle street.  
 Map F 8.  
 South-east side.  
 Seventh-Day Adventist  
 Church  
 1 Walter Eric R  
 3 Knappett Edmund  
 5 Saw Mildred E  
 7 Hollington Kenneth  
 9 Emanuel Mrs. O. M  
 9a Sewing Machine Aids,  
 sewing machine dlr  
 11 Hawken Nicholas J  
 11A, Wakelin T. C. second-  
 hand goods dlr  
 .....here is Warwick st.....  
 15 Wheal Mrs. W. A  
 17 Hemming Allan  
 Royal Green Jacket PH  
 ..... here is Argyle st .....  
 North-west side.  
 2 Beesley W  
 4 Laurance Anthony J  
 6 Richards Peter  
 8 Dalton Howard F

*Kelly's Directory, 1976*

10 May Miss G  
 12 James Mrs. W. N  
 14 Salmon V  
 .....here is Stratford st.....  
 16 Walker R. & J. grocers  
 16 Walker Rt  
 18 Ginever Ellis M  
 20 Morrissey Edwd  
 22 Stone Mrs  
 26 Beaumont Miss W. M  
 28 Flynn V  
 30 Coxhill F. A  
 32 Annely F. I  
 34 Barnett Miss  
 36 Lowth Geo  
 38 Roe V  
 38 Watson Saml  
 40 Price A. M  
 42 Bandrowski M  
 44 Asif Mhd  
 46 Opara Rt  
 48 Shepherd V. E  
 50 Steventon Leonard H

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