

RESEARCH REPORT SERIES no. 44-2012

FREEHOLDERS' HOME ESTATE, EASTBOURNE, DARLINGTON, COUNTY DURHAM

HISTORIC AREA ASSESSMENT

Joanna Smith



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DARLINGTON,
COUNTY DURHAM
HISTORIC AREA ASSESSMENT**

Joanna Smith

NGR: NZ 30254 14145

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ISSN 2046-9799 (Print)

ISSN 2046-9802 (Online)

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Front cover - No. 79 Cobden Street in 2012 (DPI43816)

SUMMARY

The suburb of Eastbourne lies on the east side of Darlington, extending out from the railway related development around Bank Top along Yarm Road. It began as a contained and isolated estate, laid out in 1851 around Bright Street and Cobden Street and built up with housing incrementally over the following decades. The Freeholders' Home estate, as it was initially known, forms the subject of this historic area assessment. It was developed by the Darlington and South Durham Freehold Land Society, influenced by a national movement intended to widen land ownership and broaden the electorate. What emerged was an area with a distinctive townscape, characterised by a varied housing stock and long rear gardens. Whilst unusual in the context of Darlington, this type of development has parallels elsewhere in the country.

CONTRIBUTORS

Report by Joanna Smith. Photography by Alun Bull, Dave Macleod and Simon Taylor. New maps by Philip Sinton

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The fieldwork for the project was undertaken by Joanna Smith with the assistance of York-based colleagues Simon Taylor, Lucy Jessop and Matthew Whitfield. Other help of various kinds was provided by Jon Bedford, Jon Clarke, Peter Guillery, Alyson Rogers and June Warrington. Carol Pyrah, Planning Director, North East, proposed Darlington as a study area and information and advice was supplied by Catherine Dewar and Heather Nelson and Timothy Crawshaw of Darlington Borough Council.

Much of the documentary research was carried out at the Centre for Local Studies at Darlington Library (CLSDL) and the assistance of Katherine Williamson and other staff members is gratefully acknowledged. Information was kindly supplied by the Cinema Theatres Association. The report also draws heavily on the Victoria County History volume, and accompanying publication *The Townscape of Darlington*, produced by the team led by Gill Cookson. I wish to thank Graham Potts for making his considerable research on Darlington architects available to me and to particularly thank David Howlett for placing at my disposal his extensive knowledge of Eastbourne

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ARCHIVE LOCATION

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DATE OF ASSESSMENT

From February 2011 to November 2012

CONTACT DETAILS

Joanna Smith, Assessment Team South, English Heritage, 1 Waterhouse Square, 138-142 Holborn, London, EC1N 2ST

Telephone: 020 793 3741, email Joanna.Smith@english-heritage.org.uk

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SUMMARY OF CHARACTER

This assessment explores the character of an area of Darlington's eastern inner-suburbs and was undertaken in 2011-12 as the pilot phase of a national study on suburbs by English Heritage. Using the methodology of a Historic Area Assessment it aims to provide an enhanced understanding of a particular locality and its special qualities and defining characteristics. The assessment makes no recommendations but is intended to be useful in the future management of the built environment it seeks to define and describe.

- The area known as the Freeholders' Home estate was the initial development of what, over time, has become the suburb of Eastbourne. This formed part of a wider pattern of detached or satellite suburban expansion to the north and east of Darlington largely driven by railway related development. The eastern suburbs did not emerge from an initial phase of large suburban villas with substantial grounds but directly from the annexing of agricultural land for industrial and residential use.
- The estate is residential, with a varied stock of predominantly private housing serving a socially mixed community. It has some commercial premises and amenities but these are limited, comprising a few shops, a small park and an institute and hall. However, it has a relatively low density of development and a townscape with a subtle diversity, setting it apart from the wider suburb. Predating the garden-suburb movement, the estate represents a preceding form of suburban development in which gardens, variety and the picturesque matter in a different way.
- The estate was laid out in 1851 and was steadily built up thereafter until all plots had been filled by the 1930s, with a main phase of building activity during the second half of the 19th century. Since the 1950s there has been a degree of densification with infill buildings and some medium-scale redevelopment.
- The impetus behind its development was not primarily commercial but rather social reform and occurred against a background of rapid industrial expansion, dramatic population growth and denser occupation of the town centre. The organisation responsible for the development, the Darlington and South Durham Freehold Land Society, planned the layout of the estate but did not build any of the houses. Despite some renaming of roads and subdivision of plots, the layout of the estate has endured and continues to underpin the suburban landscape.
- The houses of the estate are a mixture of terraces, short rows, semi-detached and detached dwellings. Historically these have provided a range of accommodation for middle-class and working-class residents, generally of middling quality. Aspects of development were influenced by limited building controls imposed by the society as well as local authority building bye laws. The houses are usually of two storeys, without basements, or bungalows. The range of building materials is limited, principally brick, and architectural ornament is

generally modest and sparingly deployed. There is often a slight variation of design within a group or row of buildings, reflecting a pattern of small-scale development that persisted well into the 20th century. In recent decades the architectural character of the estate has been significantly but gradually modified by modernisation and personalisation of properties.

- The estate has a horticultural heritage, with market gardening and domestic cultivation shaping its early character and maintaining a significant presence into the inter-war years of the 20th century. Gardens remain a significant feature of the estate and its southern edge is defined by a public park.
- There are two listed buildings in the estate, but no conservation area. It retains a considerable number of houses of local architectural interest and a townscape with historic integrity and aesthetic appeal.
- Prominent local figures were involved in the initial development and the estate has attracted a number of notable residents over time. But the area also has considerable historical interest because of its association with a national movement that contributed to Victorian urban expansion. This is the only development of its kind in Darlington but it has equivalents across the country, with which it shares certain characteristics.

INTRODUCTION

Suburbs cover a lot of ground and are home to the majority of the English population. This fact alone justifies serious research into their historical development and special character. But suburbs are not always perceived as environments with intrinsic historic or heritage value and suffer from a range of threats. English Heritage has produced guidance documents on suburbs that highlight key issues such as: infill development or redevelopment at higher density; the impact of demographic change (leading to subdivision or conversion) and low housing demand (leading to abandonment and clearance); incremental and unmanaged change and dealing with the economic and social deterioration of neighbourhoods.¹

Historically suburbs were often derided or ignored by historians and cultural commentators, and, although now the object of much academic interest, overarching analyses that embrace the buildings and spaces and view the suburban landscape in an integrated manner are rare. Perceptions about the nature of suburbs are heavily influenced by the garden-suburb movement but suburban development has a much longer ancestry and physical evidence, in the form of buildings and road networks, survive from earlier periods. To provide the context and understanding needed for the better protection and management of suburbs, English Heritage has initiated a project as part of the National Heritage Protection Plan.² Broadly its aims are to undertake the analysis and research of a representative range of suburbs from the mid 19th century to the present day, to synthesise existing knowledge about suburban development and to make this enhanced understanding accessible through publication.

The project commenced in 2011 with this pilot study of Darlington. The methodology used was that of a Historic Area Assessment, as set out in the English Heritage guidance *Understanding Place, Historic Area Assessments: Principles and Practice*.³ This approach aims to provide a clear understanding of the historical development of a place, of how and why it assumed its present form, and to distinguish its more significant elements. It also seeks to ascribe local and/or national significance and interest. The area of the town selected for rapid assessment was the Freeholders' Home estate in Eastbourne. This was because of its intrinsic qualities, and as an example of less well understood aspect of suburban development, that is the role of the Freehold Land Movement, while also reflecting general trends of 19th century urban growth. An external survey was undertaken of the area in February and March 2011, followed by selective documentary research.

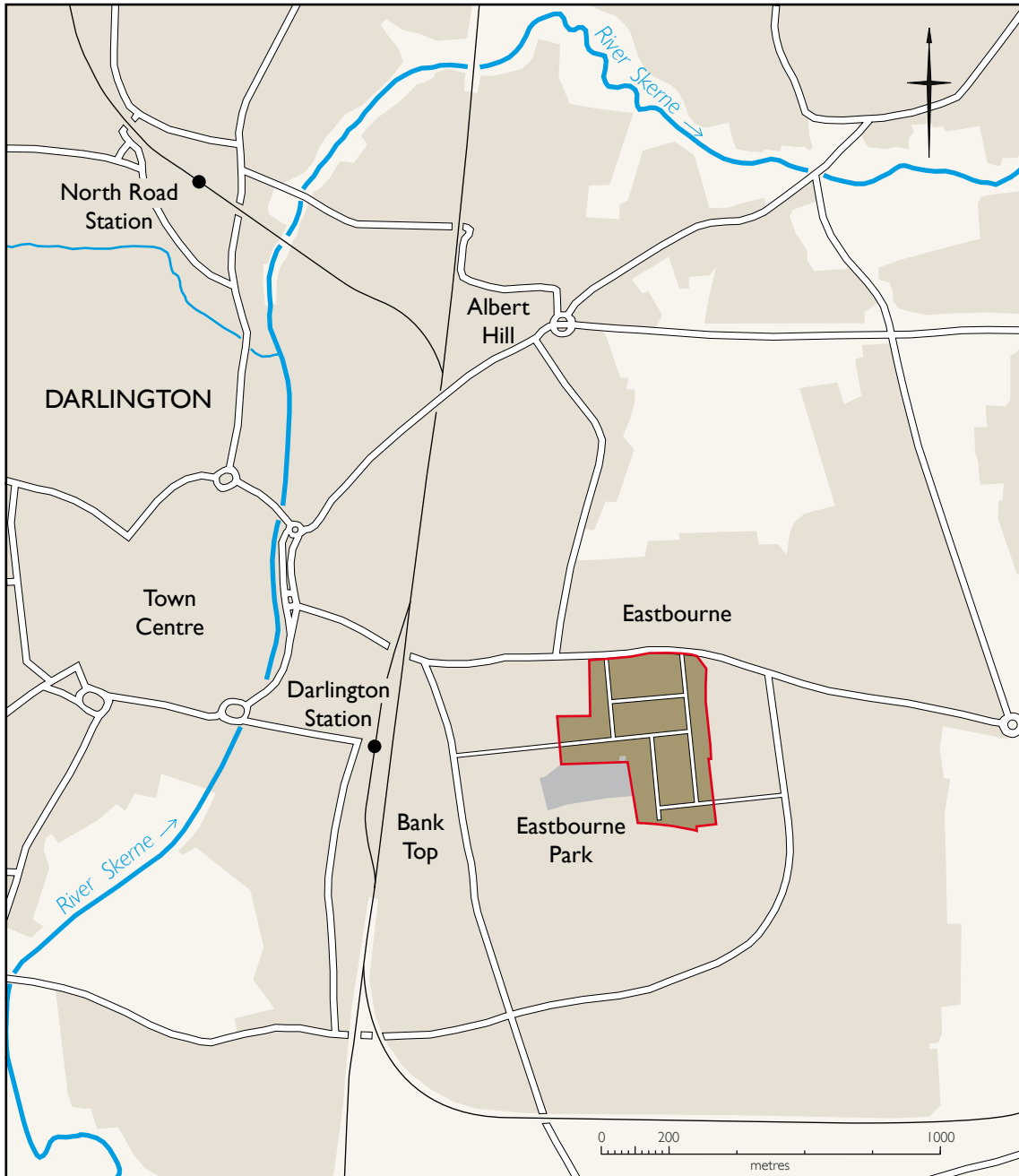


Figure 1 Location map showing the position of the Freeholder's Home Estate in relation to Darlington Town Centre

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

At the beginning of the 19th century Darlington was a market town with a notable textile trade, producing linen and worsted yarns and cloths, and a tanning industry. The prosperous settlement was situated immediately to the west of the river Skerne, and, although it had a population of 4,670 in 1801, the town remained essentially contained within its medieval bounds.⁴ During the first half of the 19th century the population more than doubled, reaching 11,582 in 1851.⁵ Much of this growth was sustained by the existing large-scale industries of the town, which from 1825 were supported by the opening of the Stockton to Darlington Railway. The railway line was located to the north of the town and in 1841 it was joined by another line to the east that linked Darlington with York, developed by the Great North of England Railway.⁶

Following various mergers and amalgamations, this became the North Eastern Railway in 1854, running between London and Edinburgh. The railways began constructing engineering facilities at Darlington as well as attracting other industries because of the rail links to sources of coal and iron. An iron industry rapidly emerged and the population boomed, more than doubling again to 27,729 between 1851 and 1871.⁷ In 1867 borough status was conferred on the town. Expansion beyond the historic limits was underway

by the 1830s and the railways encouraged the development of two, initially separate, colonies or suburbs; Hopetown to the north and Bank Top to the east. From the 1850s another detached industrial settlement grew up at Albert Hill, where the lines met. In the late 19th and early 20th century Darlington's suburban expansion followed broadly conventional lines, with industrial working-class districts focused to the north



Figure 2 An aerial view of the eastern suburbs of Darlington in 2012. The Freeholders' Home Estate lies beyond the expanse of Eastbourne Park and allotments. The foreground housing is predominantly late-19th century, the more distant development dates from the 20th century (NMR 28310/036)

and east and middle-class development favouring the west. During the same period the population continued to grow, doubling yet again to 1911, when it reached 55, 631.⁸

Development on the eastern outskirts of the town had commenced in the early decades of the 19th century but significant urban expansion was initiated by the establishment of the railway colony around Bank Top in the 1840s. This had a population of 1,185 by 1851 living in streets of often poor-quality houses, and its first permanent church, St John the Evangelist, opened in 1850.⁹ Further east, suburban development began in 1851 with the isolated Freeholders' Estate; which adopted the name Eastbourne in 1862.¹⁰ The two areas became linked by ribbon development during the 1870s but the cost of land in the area seems to have remained low, providing sites for the Darlington Union Workhouse (1870), a fever hospital (1872-4) and a smallpox hospital (1903).¹¹ Engineering rapidly superseded iron manufacture in Darlington, and its development, along with other industries, encouraged this eastern expansion although the most significant area of industrial growth was to the north and north-east. In 1915 and 1930 the county borough of Darlington expanded the town boundaries promoting new eastern developments. These included a substantial area of council housing built around a radial street, Geneva Road, during the 1920s and 1930s.¹² After the end of World War Two, as traditional industries declined, new businesses were encouraged to set up on the eastern periphery in a trading estate, leading to further residential development.¹³

The role of the freehold land society

The development of the Freeholders' Home estate commenced with the acquisition of part of Dodmires Farm, 46 acres of land lying on the south side of the road to Yarm, roughly 1 kilometre from the town centre.¹⁴ The purchaser was John Harris, engineer, later contractor, to the Stockton and Darlington Railway Company and one of the presidents of the Darlington and South Durham Freehold Land Society.¹⁵ This was the first (and probably only) estate developed by the society, which had been launched in 1849 under the banner of 'gardens for the industrious' and 'land for the people'; its stated purpose to 'bring within the reach of the Working Classes ... the means of obtaining a plot of Freehold Land sufficient in value to confer the right of voting'.¹⁶ As the name suggests, the society was a local initiative but it also formed part of a national movement, rooted in radical politics such as Chartism, traditions of religious dissent, temperance and working class self-help and mutual improvement. The movement started in Birmingham in 1847, drawing on earlier precedents such as building clubs and the political activities of the Anti-Corn Law League and spread rapidly with at least 184 societies in existence by 1854.¹⁷

The Darlington society followed the usual practice of operating primarily as a land provider. The Dodmire estate was divided into 'allotments' or plots, each of sufficient value to pass the forty-shilling threshold required to qualify for a vote (for the county constituency) [Fig. 3]. Members purchased shares, one per plot up to a limit of six, and the allotments were distributed by ballot. The society was responsible for making the land suitable for development, including laying out roads, and made the allotments available at the cost price. This meant a share of around £20, available at a fortnightly subscription of 2s 6d, could purchase land of a market value of £50.¹⁸ No development

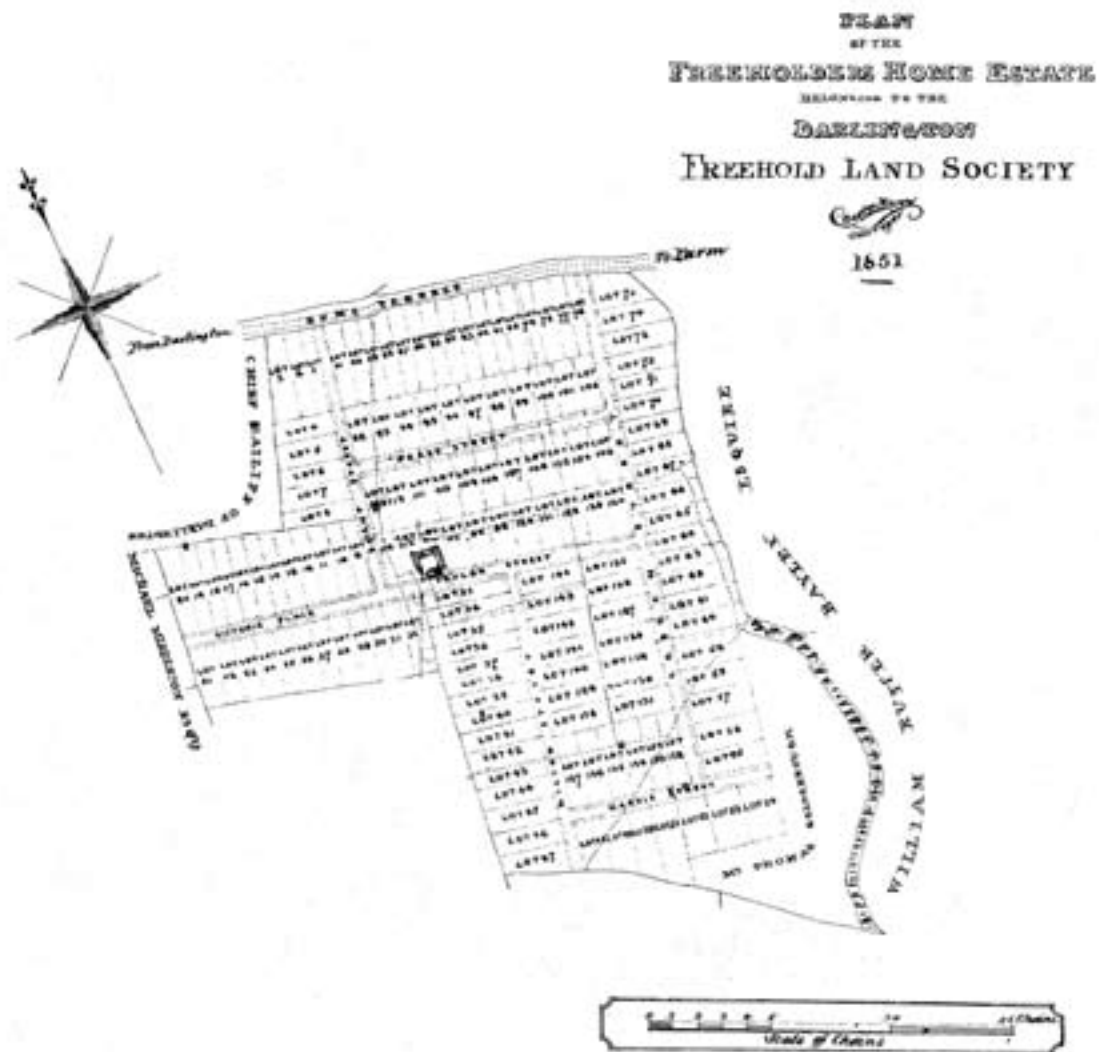


Figure 3 Plan of the Freeholders' Home Estate in 1851 showing the plot layout. The only extant buildings, Dodmires Farm and a cottage, are also marked (Centre for Local Studies at Darlington Library).

was required but certain restrictions were imposed - the land was only to be used for gardens, agricultural produce or dwelling houses, although rear workshops were allowed. Use of the underlying clay for bricks was permitted for the building of a dwelling but not for commercial exploitation.¹⁹ Other conditions specified a building line 15ft from the road and forbade noxious trades and the selling of alcohol.²⁰ These restrictions seem to have still been in force in the early 20th century.²¹

Membership of the society was open to all, irrespective of 'age, sex or party'.²² The latter referred to political allegiance. In its early years the freehold land movement had a close association with liberalism and its leading politicians, such as Richard Cobden, John Bright and Joseph Hume, provided active support. The promoters of the Darlington society, Henry Pease, John Church Backhouse and John Harris, had a similar political bias; all were local Quaker businessmen and in 1857 Pease followed his brother into parliament as the Liberal representative for South Durham.²³ These sympathies were

reflected in the selection of street names for the suburb (see below). However, as the open nature of the membership suggests, it was beyond the society to command direct political influence. Any political momentum would also have been affected by the Second Reform Act 1867, which broadening the eligibility to vote and created a parliamentary borough in Darlington. Nonetheless, a liberal and self-improving sensibility was evident in the activities of some of the suburb's original residents, notably George Harker, John Rennison and William Snaith, who were involved with setting up and running the Darlington Working Men's Equitable Permanent Building Society and a co-operative venture, the Darlington Corn Mill Company Ltd.²⁴

Self-improvement was an important aspect of the Freehold Land Movement and it was in this spirit that the Darlington society appealed to the 'working men of Darlington and of the County of Durham' to join, expressing hopes of a membership of thousands.²⁵ But while the purchase of shares may have been within the reach of some skilled workers the means to build a home were generally not. The records of the Darlington and South Durham Freehold Land Society do not appear to have survived but the early occupants of the suburb included small businessmen and tradesmen as well as labourers.²⁶ A few modest cottages were built on individual plots but the majority of the working-class houses were speculatively developed rows or terraces. However, these may have represented a better standard of accommodation than in other districts because of the less intensely developed character of the suburb and access to gardens.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE FREEHOLDERS' HOMES ESTATE

Initial development (1851-1861)

At the time of its acquisition in 1851 Dodmires Farm lay at the edge of the township boundary. However, it was only half a kilometre from the railway colony at Bank Top, already under development around the railway line and station, and from the burgeoning industrial settlement at Albert Hill, just over a kilometre to the north.

The estate occupied farmland previously owned by one of the society's promoters, John Church Backhouse,



Figure 4 Detail of the OS map, published in 1881 but based on a survey of 1854 so showing the initial phase of development. (© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. English Heritage 1000/19088 2012)



Figure 5 Painted street sign on No. 129 Bright Street, reflecting the mixture of local and national figures after whom the streets in the estate were named. (P5924001)

and had an underlying geology of boulder clay.²⁷ Laid out across five fields, the embryonic suburb was formed of six streets extending southwards from the existing road to Yarm and was initially known as the Freeholders' Homes estate. When it was renamed Eastbourne in 1862, it was still the only significant development in the locality.²⁸ Several of its roads were named after political luminaries (Bright Street, Cobden Street), as was the section of Yarm Road within the development (Hume Terrace), while others probably honored the society's presidents (Harris Street and Pease Street).

Taylor Street was named after James Taylor, one of the leading campaigners of the freehold land movement and founder of the Birmingham society.²⁹ The radical poet John Milton was presumably the source of Milton Street, while patriotic sentiment likely inspired the naming of Victoria Place.

The arrangement of roads and subdivision of the intervening land into 144 rectangular allotments (Fig. 3) was overseen by the society's surveyor, George Mason.³⁰ The plots were, on average, 10,000 sq ft (900 sq m) in extent but there were variations in shape; some had narrower frontages of between 40ft (12.19 m) and 60ft (18.29 m) but were very deep, up to 265ft (80.77 m), while others were wider, up to almost 100ft (30.48 m), but shallower. Amalgamation of plots, permitted by the society rules, enabled even larger holdings to be achieved although there were still 104 allotments in 1854.³¹

Development began immediately with around 15 or 16 houses standing by 1854. Dodmires farmstead was retained, as, perhaps, was an existing cottage on Bright Street.³² This was a slow rate of progress, the society acknowledged it as 'a gradual increase', but the initial efforts of most of the freeholders seem to have been focused on cultivating the land as much as building houses.³³ In 1854 more plots contained garden buildings than dwelling houses and at least one greenhouse was standing by 1857.³⁴ The 'rapidly-improving horticultural condition of various allotments' was partly credited to the encouragement of the Horticultural Society, founded in 1846 with the support of the Pease and Backhouse families.³⁵

House building continued at a steady rate through the 1850s, reaching approximately 65 dwellings by the time of the census in 1861. Development was stronger at the northern end of the suburb, notably on Hume Terrace and the south side of Pease Street, while the southern section, which contained proportionally more of the amalgamated plots, remained as gardens and orchards. The kinds of houses being built were diverse from the outset, ranging from substantial two-storey, 3-bay houses fronting onto the roads (Fig.



Figure 6 An example of the initial phase of development, No. 10 Bright Street (P5924002)

X) to single-storey cottages at the back of the plots (see pages 21-7).

The early residents of the estate were similarly mixed. Middle-class occupants ranged from small businessmen - drapers, merchant tailors, corn merchants, iron founders and the like - to clerks, agents and dealers. Of these many kept at least one servant.³⁶ Working-class residents included skilled craftsmen as well as agricultural labourers. Men whose employment derived from the railway were well represented across the social range, from contractors to engine builders and fitters, signalmen and labourers. Almost half of the heads of households had not been born in Darlington, though most came

from the north of England apart from a few incomers from Scotland and Ireland. By 1858 the estate seems to have acquired some basic services including a shop on Yarm Road, run by Edward Harrison, and a beer retailer, Mary Hope.³⁷ This despite the society's restrictions and the apparent success of the Darlington society in 'converting ... its members into steady members of society, and instead of finding them at the ale-house'.³⁸

In the absence of society records it is now difficult to identify members who achieved the goal of building dwellings on their plots. One example may be John Berwick Abbey, who owned the ground that now equates to Nos 138-142 Yarm Road and 9-17 Bright Street.³⁹ Described variously as a brass founder and railway contractor he apparently had No 142 Yarm Road built for his own occupation between 1851 and 1854



Figure 7 The house on Hume Terrace built by John Berwick Abbey, now No. 142 Yarm Road (DPI43796)

(Fig. 7).⁴⁰ Another may be John Rennison, who gave his occupation as engine fitter in the 1861 census and probably built No. 43 Bright Street in the early 1850s (Fig. 8).⁴¹ The builder and contractor, George Pattison, constructed two dwellings during the 1850s, Nos 148- 150 Yarm Road, one for his own occupation and the other for rent.⁴² His business premises, a saw mill, slate yard and joinery shop, were located nearby at Bank Top.⁴³

Continuing development (1861-1900)

The suburb remained slightly distant from the town during the latter decades of the 19th century although the gap was diminishing. In 1870 the poor law guardians erected a new institution, the Darlington Union Workhouse (later East Haven Hospital) on the land adjoining Bright Street.⁴⁴ By the end of the century development had spread eastwards from Bank Top



Figure 8 No. 43 Bright Street probably dates from the early 1850s but was extensively modernised in the inter-war years (P5924003)



Figure 9 Extract of the OS map, surveyed in 1896 and published in 1898, showing the level of development across the estate, the presence of orchards and the extent of Darlington's eastwards expansion. (© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. English Heritage 1000/19088 2012).

along Yarm Road as far as the workhouse, and was extending eastwards from Neasham Road. However, the estate remained surrounded by farmland to the south and east.

House building continued steadily, reaching around 235 properties by the end of the 19th century.⁴⁵ During this period the emphasis shifted from construction of detached residences to semi-detached houses, short rows and terraces. A number of undeveloped plots remained, particularly on Victoria Place and Milton Street, while others, often those at the road junctions, were already undergoing further division by the 1870s to enable

denser development.

The census returns for the estate indicate that the social range of middle-class and working-class occupants was maintained throughout the late 19th century. In addition to the small businessmen and skilled workmen, many employed in the railway and iron industry, its more notable residents included a pro-disestablishmentarian pastor, J. H. Gordon, living at No. 61 Cobden Street in the 1870s and a female artist, Mary Bigland, at No. 16 Bright Street in the 1880s.⁴⁶ The brewer T.H. Hinde, whose family owned the Ridsdale Street Brewery, was living in No. 51 Pease Street by 1900 (Fig. 10).⁴⁷ Gordon, Bigland and Hinde presumably rented their dwellings but one property, No. 18 Milton Street, was owned and occupied by William Brown, editor of the *Stockton and Darlington Times*.⁴⁸

Building plans submitted to Darlington Council survive from the late 1860s and give some idea of who was building in the estate.⁴⁹ These plans included detached houses built for individual owners, sometimes designed by local architects such as Robert Bland Dixon, responsible for two houses on Cobden Street in 1867 and 1871 and one on Milton



Figure.10 No. 51 Pease Street. This substantial property was occupied by the brewer T.H. Hinde in the early 20th century (P5924004).

Street in 1867.⁵⁰ Some of the residents were also building speculatively; for example Thomas Braithwaite, who built on Cobden Street and Pease Street in the 1860s (see page 27). Other developments were standard commercial speculations, the largest being a row of twelve four-room cottages, Nos 25-47 Milton Street, constructed by the Watson Brothers, builders and contractors in 1875-6.⁵¹ A likely source of funding for some of the house building activity in the estate was the permanent building societies, which were increasing in

number and capacity during the second half of the 19th century. One example may be William Berry, who was building speculatively on Pease Street in the 1860s and was a member of the Darlington Working Men's Equitable Building Society.⁵² One property at the corner of Eastbourne Road and Cobden Street was owned by the Darlington Onward Building Society, which achieved notoriety in the 1890s because of a fraud by its secretary.⁵³

Horticultural activity remained an important element of the estate. A plant nursery operated from Cobden Street between 1873 and 1878, operated by William Shenessy.⁵⁴ No. 70 Milton Street, later Milton Nursery, seems to have been in a similar use by 1881 and several market gardeners were living in the suburb at this time.⁵⁵ Mention is also

made of greenhouses, orchards and gardens well-stocked with fruit trees in newspaper adverts from the 1870s to the 1890s.⁵⁶

Other small scale businesses were present, including a 'feather renovating works' on Bright Street.⁵⁷ The former Dodmires farmstead (on the site of Nos 139-149 Eastbourne Road) contained a joiners shop in the 1870s; although partially converted to housing in 1891, this use persisted into the next century (Figs 11,12).⁵⁸ The relatively large plots permitted the construction of cartsheds and outbuildings, as occurred at No. 79 Milton Street, built for a butcher in 1875, and No. 154 Yarm Road, occupied by a provision dealer in the 1890s.⁵⁹ The number of shops in the suburb increased; No. 29 Bright Street contained a shop that also apparently functioned as a beer retailer.⁶⁰



Figures 11 (left) Detail of the OS map of 1896-8 showing the buildings occupying the site of Dodmires Farm (highlighted in red) (© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. English Heritage 1000/19088 2012) and 12 (right) Nos 139-149 Eastbourne Road in 1973, showing the Joinery Works that had occupied the remnants of the farm for over a century. (Centre for Local Studies at Darlington Library)

The mature estate (1900-1945)

In the first decades of the 20th century the estate was subsumed into the wider suburb of Eastbourne, which was itself finally integrated into the expanding town. In 1904 the Darlington Corporation tramline was built to a Cobden Street terminus. By 1912 its road network had been linked through to Neasham Road and development by Darlington Garden Suburb Company Ltd had begun on the north side of Yarm Road.⁶¹ But the former Freeholders Homes estate remained at the urban periphery until overtaken by ribbon development along Yarm Road and the laying out of Geneva Road in the 1920s. The ground to the south remained open; encompassing a public park, opened in 1902, and, by the 1930s, a large expanse of allotments.

House building continued on the undeveloped plots until only four remained in 1915.⁶² These were filled in the inter-war years, along with as development on the former gardens of some of the detached houses. Almost all of this residential development was semi-detached. As development pressure on land within the original suburb increased horticultural use diminished, although orchards were still present on Victoria Place,



Figure 13 Extract of the OS map, surveyed in 1913-4 and published in 1915. By this date the estate was edged by Eastbourne Park and had been linked to the eastern development off Neasham Road. Only a few undeveloped plots remained. (© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. English Heritage 1000/19088 2012).

Cobden Street and Harris Street in 1915 and the plant nursery on Milton Street continued.⁶³ Amenities for residents improved significantly when No. 17 Cobden Street was converted into an institute (Fig. 14) and Eastbourne Hall was constructed at the rear in 1933.⁶⁴ This was followed in 1939 by the Regent Cinema on the site of Nos 3-5 Cobden Street.⁶⁵ Built for a local circuit controlled by Thomas Thompson and designed by J H Morton & Son.⁶⁶ Improved shopping facilities included a purpose-built one-storey grocery shop, built at No. 140 Yarm Road in 1936.⁶⁷

Change and redevelopment (1945-2012)

Development around the Freeholders' Home estate reached its present extent in the 1960s with the construction of local authority housing around Melsonby Crescent. However, the presence of Eastbourne Park and the allotments prevented its complete encirclement. New house building within the original suburb has been achieved by



Figures 14 (left) No. 17 Cobden Street, converted into the Eastbourne Institute in 1933 (P5924005) and 15 (right) Eastbourne Care Home, Cobden Street (P5924006).

densification, principally infill development on former gardens to the side or at the rear of existing houses between the 1950s and the 1970s, and redevelopment of entire plots. The first major new addition was Regents Court, two blocks of flats constructed at the north end of Bright Street in the 1970s.⁶⁸ Since the 1980s this has been followed by the replacement of the former cinema by a nursing home (Fig. 15) while Eastbourne Joinery Works, Eastbourne Road and Milton Nursery, Milton Street have been redeveloped as housing, renamed Kay Grove and Keats Court respectively. Nos 97-111 Eastbourne Road, on the north side



Figure 16 Extract of the OS map, surveyed and published in 1939, showing the mature estate and surrounding development (© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. English Heritage 1000/19088 2012).

of the street, were cleared as part of the redevelopment of the final section of the East Haven Hospital site, which had expanding into the rear gardens of several houses on Bright Street and the properties on Eastbourne Road in the post-war years. In the early 21st century a cul-de-sac of private housing, Cobden Court, with access from the east side of Cobden Street, has been squeezed onto a pocket of undeveloped land.

Broader social trends such as increased car ownership have had an inevitable impact, ranging from the construction of individual garages and paving of front gardens to the establishment of two commercial garages (in Milton Street and Harris Street, the latter now demolished) and a petrol station (on Yarm Road).⁶⁹ A number of local shops and other facilities have closed giving an impression of a more exclusively residential suburb than was historically the case. The popularity in recent decades of home improvements has also left its mark on the many of the properties in the estate.



Figure 17 Nos 139-149 Eastbourne Road are post-war replacements for an extremely modest group of four late-19th century houses (P5924007)

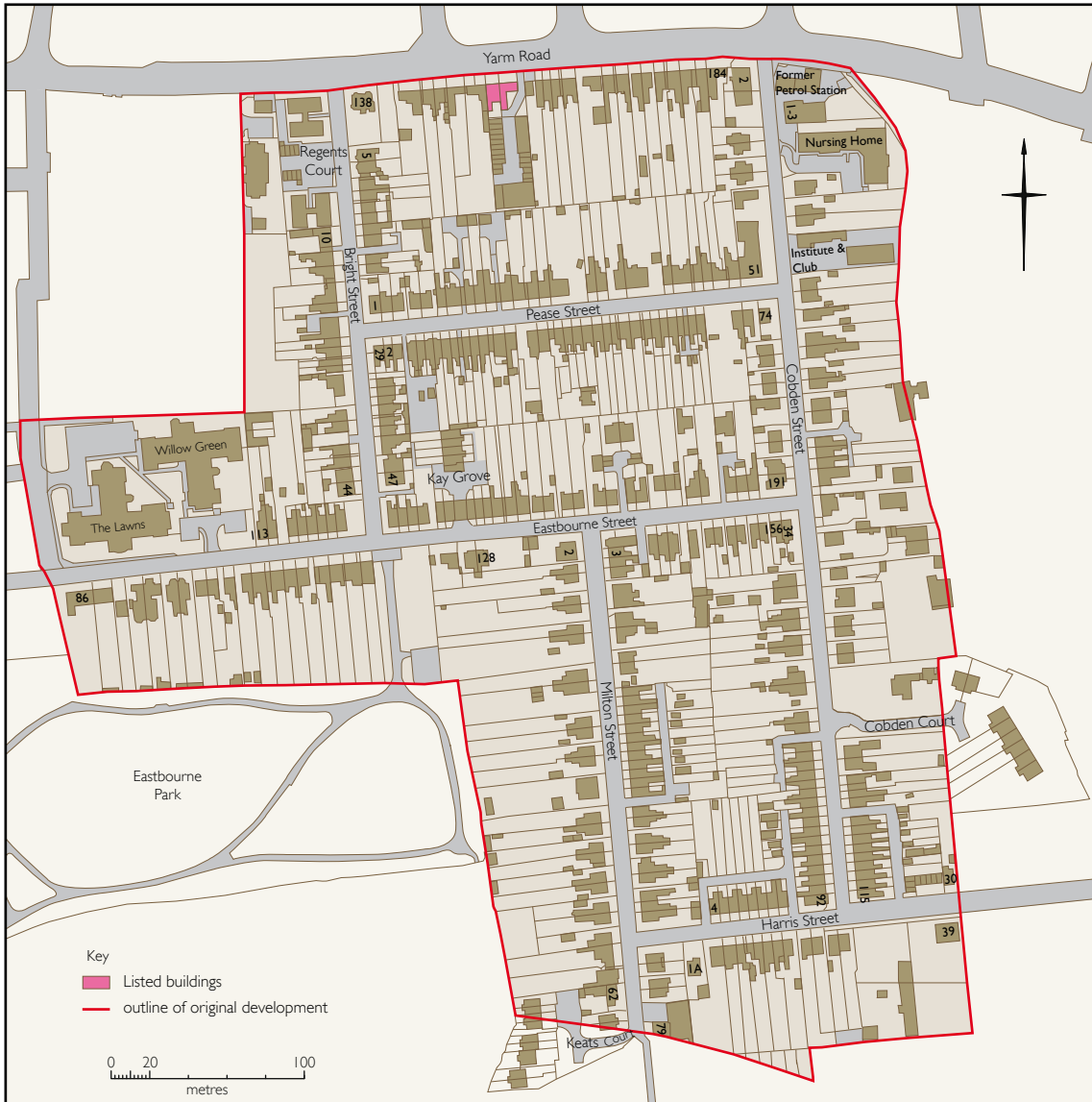


Figure 18 Map of the Freeholders' Home Estate in 2012.

THE CHARACTER OF THE ESTATE

Within the suburb of Eastbourne, the former Freeholders' Home estate forms an enclave that is distinct from the surrounding development. Built up between the 1850s and the 1930s, the estate is less densely developed than the more uniform terraces of working-class housing to the east around Neasham Road, dating from the 1890s and 1900s.⁷⁰ While its housing is generally older and more architecturally varied than development north of Yarm Road and further east, around Geneva Road, which was influenced by garden city planning and predominantly dates from the inter-war period.

The estate is a residential area of mainly private housing occupied by a socially mixed community. It has few commercial premises and its amenities are limited to a few shops, a small park to the south (Eastbourne Park) and an institute and hall. Other facilities, such as public houses, schools or purpose-built places of worship, were built elsewhere in the suburb.

Although relatively small in extent, encompassing six streets on the south side of Yarm Road, the built environment has a subtle diversity. The density of development varies but is mainly low because of the existence of generous gardens, a legacy of the original plot layout. The houses are mainly located towards the front of the plots although there are, in places, more complex patterns of development. The streetscapes vary, sometimes continuously built up, elsewhere intermittent, the houses a mixture of short rows, terraces, semi-detached or detached. Selective redevelopment from the mid 20th century has affected most streets in the estate.

Social character

Historically the estate had a socially mixed character, combining different grades of middle-class and working-class accommodation within the same street. This diversity had its origins in the Freehold Land Society, which imposed no restrictions on the value of dwellings to be erected. Once building began it encompassed owners building for their own occupation and/or speculatively for rent as well as commercial operations undertaking small-to-medium scale



Figure 19 Mr and Mrs Masterman pictured outside their house at Hume Terrace (now No. 184 Yarm Road) in the first decade of the 20th century. Masterman was a small businessman, a hay and straw dealer, and therefore typical of the many residents in the estate (Centre for Local Studies at Darlington Library).

developments for letting or sale.

The early occupants of the estate were typically small businessmen, craftsmen, clerks and skilled artisans, as well as retired farmers and widows, and approximately 19 of 83 households had at least one servant in 1861.⁷¹ But there were also general labourers, including Irish immigrants.⁷² Thereafter the estate's population has maintained a wide social range (Fig. 19), no doubt influenced by the surrounding suburban development during the 20th century and its mixture of private and public housing.

The intention of the society was to broaden access to land and its choice of site was influenced by factors such as suitability and cost.⁷³ In the mid-to-late 19th century the distance from the town did not present too great a problem to the wealthier resident - they had their own means of transport. But it may have been more of an issue for less affluent occupants although a significant number worked for the railway or in the iron and engineering industries and would have been relatively locally employed at Bank Top or Albert Hill. In 1880 a horse tram service began operating between the town centre and Bank Top, although this closed five years later.⁷⁴ In 1904 Darlington Corporation opened an electric tramline that ran as far as Cobden Street (Fig. 20). This was replaced by a trolleybus system in 1926 that ran initially to Geneva Road.⁷⁵

Although the estate had a mixed pattern of housing there was some social graduation within the development. Hume Terrace and Victoria Place (now Yarm Road and Eastbourne Road respectively) seem to have had a slightly higher status, as their names might suggest, with a greater proportion of affluent detached and semi-detached houses. However, this distinction has been lessened by post-war clearance, densification of plots and the changing character of Yarm Road. The social variety of the estate's housing has also narrowed in one other regard; via the clearance of its humblest dwellings on Eastbourne Road (now Nos 136-140) in the 1980s.



Figure 20 The tram at its Eastbourne terminus in 1904-5 (Centre for Local Studies at Darlington Library)

Layout: streets and plots

The road network, which remains that laid out by the Darlington and South Durham Freehold Land Society in 1851, forms a slightly irregular grid. Most of the street names - Bright Street, Cobden

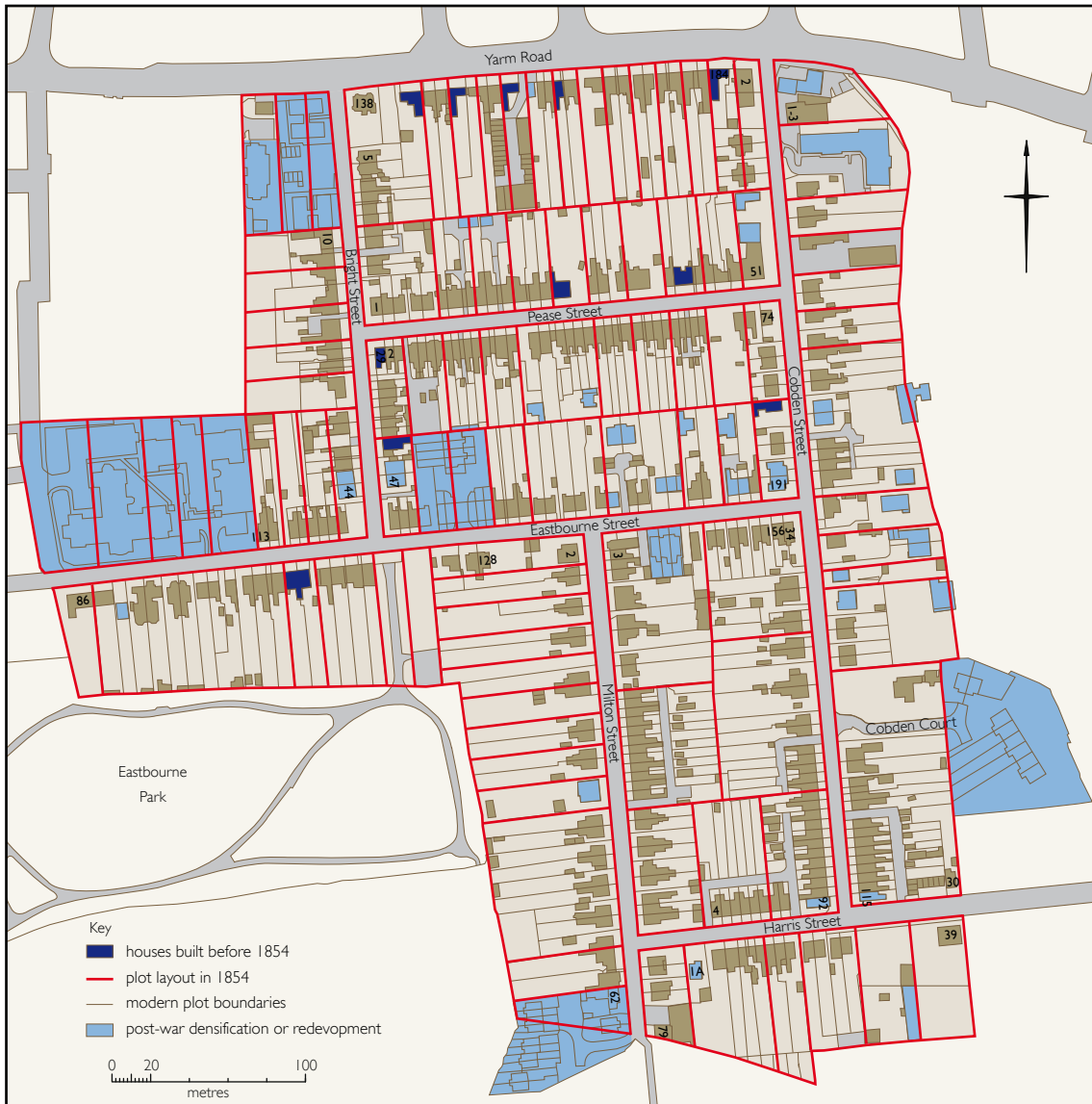


Figure 21 Map showing the surviving buildings of the initial development, the relationship of the modern plot layout to the original scheme and the locations of post-war development.

Street, Harris Street, Milton Street and Pease Street - are unchanged. The exceptions being Victoria Place and Taylor Street, subsumed into Eastbourne Road in the early 20th century, and Hume Terrace, which seems to have passed out of use in the late 1890s. As an isolated development, the only constraints on the original layout were a retained farmstead and cottage and a meandering farm track, which formed the eastern boundary. Yarm Road, the only pre-existing routeway, formed its northern limit and the other streets initially ended at the edge of estate until linked into the wider suburb in the early 20th century.⁷⁶

In 1851 an area of 46 acres of level ground was initially subdivided into 144 rectangular 'allotments' or plots, orientated either east-west or north-south. This plot layout still underlies the present pattern of property boundaries but has been significantly modified (Fig. 21). Rare examples of complete plots include Nos. 166 Yarm Road, 15 Cobden

Street, 27, 37 and 70 Pease Street and 86 Eastbourne Road. The original allotments were of a generous size, of between 9,000 (8,000 sq m) and 14,000 sq ft (1000 sq m) with frontages that varied from 40ft (12.19 m) to almost 100ft (30.48 m).⁷⁷ This allowed for flexibility in the initial positioning and number of houses per plot, but also provided the space for subsequent infill and back land development.

As the estate was built up the density generally varied between one and four dwellings per plot although a corner plot could accommodate more by building on both frontages. Houses were usually built near the street, observing a 15ft building line, but a few were placed at the back or to the side of the plot. In the 19th century denser development was rare, the most extreme example was probably Nos 26-28 Bright Street, where the single plot had a row of four houses with four cottages at the rear (the latter now demolished), accessed via a passageway (Fig. 22).⁷⁸ Post-war developments have introduced higher densities and more intensive layouts into the estate.

Although some plots remained empty of buildings until the interwar years, subdivision of other plots was occurring by at least the 1860s. Corner plots were particularly vulnerable. For example, the house at No. 43 Bright Street was built at the north end of a plot on Bright Street and Eastbourne Road between 1851 and 1854.⁷⁹ In 1869 a terrace of three houses, Nos 131-135 Eastbourne Road, were planned at the southern end of the plot (Fig. 22).⁸⁰ Around a century later the intervening ground was filled with a pair of bungalows, Nos 45-47 Bright Street.⁸¹ While lateral subdivision of plots was common throughout the 19th and early 20th century, axial subdivision has been more characteristic of the late 20th century.

Where development was continuous, rear access for waste disposal and other purposes necessitated the inclusion of a passageway or carriageway within the row. Some of the larger rows and terraces were provided with back lanes. This adaptation of the layout has particularly affected the southern part of the estate. Several medium-scale residential developments in the late 20th century have introduced cul-de-sacs such as Kay Grove, Keats Court and Cobden Court into the road layout.

Residential buildings

The estate has a notable variety in its housing, a legacy in part of piecemeal development and limited building restrictions. The preference for building certain types of houses has fluctuated over time following broader trends and reflecting demographic influences. In the 1850s development pressure was low and the earliest houses were detached



Figure 22 Detail from the OS map of 1896-8 showing Nos 26-28 Bright Street (highlighted in turquoise) and No. 43 Bright Street/Nos 131-135 Eastbourne Road (highlighted in orange) (© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. English Heritage 1000/19088 2012).

properties, thinly distributed around the estate apart from Yarm Road. But within a decade short rows and semi-detached houses were being built. The eastwards expansion of the town, much of it industrial in character, contributed to an increase in demand for housing although this followed a pattern of building cycles with Darlington experiencing peaks of building activity in 1864, 1876, 1903-1905 and 1911, and a notable low in the 1880s.⁸² In the estate the construction of terraces was occurring in the 1860s and 1870s, particularly in the southern section, and few detached houses were built after the 1880s. Thereafter there was a brief flourish of row building in the 1890s but the dominant house type between the 1890s and 1930s were semi-detached pairs. This responded to the character of surrounding development, from the expanse of terrace housing to the west and lower-density, garden-city type estates to the north and east. Post-war house building has followed a conventional pattern of piecemeal infill, as well as discreet areas of redevelopment.

Single Houses

Although not the most common type, single houses exist throughout the estate, often built as detached dwellings but many now abutting other properties as a consequence of later development. The main period of their construction was from the 1850s to the 1870s although there has been a resurgence in the second half of the 20th century. Detached houses were the earliest form of development in the estate, varying in status from modest single-storey cottages to substantial two-storey dwellings. All the remaining detached houses on single plots have been compromised by adjacent development or loss of ground, but an idea of their original spaciousness can be gained from No. 86 Eastbourne Road (1860s), Nos 27 and 37 Pease Street (1851-4 and probably 1860s) and No. 79 Cobden Street (1860s) (Fig. 29). Indeed, the siting of houses to one side of the plot frontage rather than centrally was common, presumably done with the possibility of subsequent development in mind. There have also been instances of single dwellings being converted into two properties, including Nos 1-3 Cobden Street, Nos 47-47a Pease Street and No. 156 Eastbourne Road/No. 34 Cobden Street (Fig. 23). Twentieth-century detached houses have usually taken the form of post-war bungalows, either replacing older properties or as infill developments.



Figures 23 (left) No. 156 Eastbourne Road; an example of detached house of the 1860s or 1870s, later subdivided into two properties (P5924008) and 24 (right) No. 154 Yarm Road, built between 1851 and 1854 (listed Grade II) (DPI43799)

The earliest houses of the 1850s and 1860s still had what is generally regarded as a late-Georgian character. These were brick-built, of two-storeys with symmetrical three-bay facades, shallow eaves with modest dentil cornices and slate roofs. They had sash windows and the central doorways were usually given simple rectangular fanlights and pilaster door surrounds. The best preserved house of this type is No. 154 Yarm Road (1851-6, listed grade II), originally numbered as part of Hume Terrace (Fig. 24).⁸³ More altered examples from these initial decades existence at Nos 1-3 Cobden Street, 39 Harris Street, 88 Eastbourne Road, 58 Milton Street and 43 Pease Street. A late example of the type would appear to be No.124 Eastbourne Road, planned in 1892 (Fig. 26).⁸⁴



Figures 25 (top left) Flora House, No. 53 Cobden Street dates from the 1860s or 1870s. (P5924009); 26 (top right) No. 124 Eastbourne Road; a rare example of a detached house from the 1890s (P5924010); 27 (bottom left) stylistic eclecticism at No. 9 Milton Street, built in the 1860-70s (P5924011); 28 (bottom right) No. 116 Eastbourne Road, a rare example of a three-storey house. (P5924012)

By the 1860s ground-floor bay windows were making an appearance, either singly or in pairs. No. 53 Cobden Street (Fig. X) and No. 30 Bright Street are well-maintained examples; the latter also has a pair of round-headed ground-floor windows hinting at a greater stylistic eclecticism. One property, No. 9 Milton Street (Fig. X), dating from the

1860s or 1870s is a mixture of classically-derived symmetry with vaguely Gothic detailing to the window and door heads and cornice. The more full-blooded suburban detached villa, with polychrome brickwork, double-height bay windows, tall decorative chimneys and an ornate timber-porch, only made its appearance in the 1920s at No. 138 Yarm Road (with an associated semi-detached pair at Nos 5-7 Bright Street).

Smaller two- bay houses of a similar character were also built in the second half of the 19th century, such as No. 152 Yarm Road (late 1850s, listed grade II) and No. 17 Cobden Street (1860s). Victoria House, No. 116 Eastbourne Road (1860s or 1870s) is a rare example of a three-storey house, with a raised ground floor (Fig. 28). As plots were filled separately built adjoining dwellings resulted, usually identifiable by their different roof heights, such as Nos 18-20 Milton Street (1870s and 1880s) and 50-52 Cobden Street (1890s).



Figure 29 No. 79 Cobden Street, the best preserved example of a back-plot, more rustic style of house (P5924013)

Detached cottages, perhaps quite rural in appearance, featured strongly on the east side of Cobden Street. Sometimes located at the rear or the side of the plot, these buildings were orientated towards the gardens and, in some instances, the house may have replaced a garden building.⁸⁵ A one-storey brick cottage with high dormer windows at No. 37 Cobden Street was still standing in c.1910 but has long since been demolished.⁸⁶ Some sense of the picturesque character that was present in these early developments is still evident at No. 79 Cobden Street (Fig.29). This back plot-house probably dates from

the 1860s but has been enlarged; a rambling assemblage, it has gables complete with decorative barge boards and ornamental timber-work, bay windows and a battlemented back range.

Another building of a less obvious suburban character is No. 24 Cobden Street, a house with a relatively short frontage but quite deep in plan, dating from the early 1850s.⁸⁷ This initially occupied a corner plot with two frontages which may explain its uncertain orientation. A similar arrangement pertained at No. 43 Bright Street, built between 1851 and 1854, given a suburban makeover in the inter-war years, complete with a two-storey mock-Tudor bay window (Fig. 8).⁸⁸ No. 29 Bright Street (Fig. 30) is another curiosity and may have originated as early-to-mid 19th century cottage, predating the creation of the suburb and depicted on a plan of the Freeholders' Home estate in 1851.⁸⁹ This building, of partly rendered brick, has a first-floor oriel window to Pease Street and a modern entrance on Bright Street. From the 1870s, if not earlier, the building contained a shop and sometime off-license on the ground floor, the removal of which has only heightened



Figure 30 No. 29 Bright Street. Formerly a shop with accommodation above, now entirely residential. (DPI43820)

its oddity.⁹⁰ It also incorporates an early street sign to both elevations, an L-shaped stone block at the corner, carved with the street names picked out in black paint.

The majority of the single houses were solid middle-class properties built for small businessmen or those with a moderate private income. One such was William Snaith, the first owner of No. 88 Eastbourne Road, in residence by 1871.⁹¹ Snaith had risen through the ranks of the Stockton and Darlington Railway Company to the position of station auditor.⁹² Other examples included John Berwick Abbey and George Pattison (see pages 10-11). The largest properties contained nine or more rooms; No 156

Eastbourne Road and No. 61 Cobden Street (demolished) both had a drawing room, dining room, breakfast room and kitchen and pantry on the ground floor with five first-floor bedrooms.⁹³ No. 10 Bright Street was described as having 'six good rooms' in 1882, including four bedrooms; No. 9 Milton Street (Fig. 27) also had four bedrooms, a bathroom and an entrance hall.⁹⁴ Ancillary structures within the grounds included outbuildings such as stables and coach houses, as well as conservatories or greenhouses and tool sheds for plants and garden equipment.⁹⁵

Pairs of houses

Pairs of houses are present throughout the estate and characterize stretches of certain streets notably Milton Street and Eastbourne Road. Built from the 1860s, initially quite varied in arrangement, the standard semi-detached pair with side access was the most common house type being built between the 1890s and 1930s. Initially they were often quite substantial middle-class houses occupying laterally divided plots, only a step down in status from the detached houses, but after the First World War they were generally infill developments, typical suburban semis with smaller gardens (Figs 36,37).

In the 1860s and 1870s the trend was for pairs to occupy the full frontage of the plots, for example at Nos. 9-11, 14-16 and 38-40 Bright Street, Nos 118-120 Eastbourne Road and Nos 180-182 Yarm Road. Of the same character as the detached houses of the period, the attached pairs were usually mirrored two-bay houses of brick with roofs of slate, ground-floor bay winds and a modest degree of architectural ornament to the door surrounds, cornices and window heads. Where they differed was in the incorporation of a means of rear access, which was variously provided in the form of a central carriageway (Nos 14-16 Bright Street and Nos 180-182 Yarm Road), a central shared passageway between the front doors (Nos 118-120 Eastbourne Road and Nos 38-40 Bright Street) and separate passageways in the outer bays (Nos 9-11 Bright Street). A less usual arrangement was that of Nos 27-29 and 31-33 Cobden Street, apparently built as two unattached pairs in the 1870s and 1880s. Perhaps the best of the early semi-detached



Figures 30 (top left) Nos 180-182 Yarm Road, a pair of houses occupying the entire plot frontage and incorporating a central passage for rear access (P5924014); 31 (top right) Nos 89-91 Cobden Street, built in 1865 for the brickmaker George Walters (AA02705); 32 (middle left) Nos 9-11 Bright Street, a pair built with passageways in the outer bays (P5924015); 33 (middle right) Nos 113-5 Eastbourne Road. The timber verandah has a grain finish, once a popular external finish in Darlington (P5924016); 34 (bottom left) Nos 126-128 Eastbourne Road, a turn-of-century pair (P5924017); 35 (bottom right) Nos 5-7 Bright Street, a 1920s pair of a strongly suburban character (P5924018).

pairs is Nos 89-91 Cobden Street (Fig. 31), built by a brickmaker George Walters in 1865.⁹⁶ Walters acquired the plot, perhaps through membership of the Freehold Land Society, and constructed one house for his own occupation and the other for rental, a form of small-scale development that occurred elsewhere in the estate.⁹⁷ The pair, of painted brick, have a wide frontage, with two generous bays to each house, ground-floor bay windows and paired windows above and a hipped tiled roof. More unusually the return elevations step out, almost filling the plot.

The internal arrangements of the grander semi-detached houses were similar to those of the detached houses, with perhaps up to seven rooms and three or four bedrooms. Some also possessed a similar range of outbuildings such as stables and coach houses, and, in the case of No. 108 Eastbourne Road a motor house (the original name for a garage), present by c.1910.⁹⁸

The next phase of semi-detached houses, under construction in the 1890s and 1900s, tended to follow the conventional arrangement of an attached pair with side access. Some were one-off developments but there were also larger groups of three or four pairs on Cobden Street, Eastbourne Road and Milton Street, which from 1902 backed onto Eastbourne Park, and Cobden Street. The west end of Eastbourne Road, still known as Victoria Place in 1915, was amongst the more desirable locations in the estate and several substantial pairs were built here. These houses have a more eclectic architectural character, although still broadly conforming to type: Nos 113-115 Eastbourne Road (c.1900) (Fig. 33) has a timber-work verandah between the bay windows with painted oak 'graining'⁹⁹, a bargeboard to the eaves and exaggerated drip moulds to the stone window lintels; Nos 90-92 Eastbourne Road (c.1907) has two-storey bay windows overlooking the park (Fig. 53); and Nos 126-128 Eastbourne Road (c.1900) has front gables with tiled heads, pebble-dashing to the first floor and stone to the ground floor (Fig. 34). On Milton Street the single development at Nos 40-56, on the west side of the road, is of a slightly higher status than that of Nos 53-65, to the east. Both were built in the early 1900s but the latter are more compact and have only one window per floor (the upper originally of paired sashes with a central mullion), minimal decoration and significantly smaller gardens.



Figure 36 Nos 7-9 Pease Street, an example of inter-war development (P5924019)

When house building resumed after World War One, it was in the form of semi-detached housing of the same lower-middle-class or upper-working-class character as the encircling development along Yarm Road and Kensington Gardens. Pairs of semis filled the last undeveloped plots, such as Nos 17-23 Harris Street and Nos 98-100 Eastbourne Road, or subdivided plots, for example Nos 67-73 Milton Street, Nos 144-154 Eastbourne Road and Nos 4-10 and 71-77 Cobden Street. In appearance these buildings were a continuation of

pre-war styles but with a preference for two-storey bay windows, often shallower in depth, asbestos roof tiles laid diagonally and architectural glass to the upper window lights, side windows and door lights (Fig. 37). A few pairs were built in the post-war years, some constructed in the favoured style of brick cross walls, with elevations of render and tile-hung upper floors, such as Nos 175-179 Eastbourne Road. Recent infill development in the 1990s at Nos 42-44 Bright Street approximates the Victorian and Edwardian semi-detached houses of the estate with their one-storey bay windows but with added integral garages.



Figure 37 Nos 20-22 Cobden Street an example of inter-war development (P5924020)

Terraced Houses

Extended rows make up a significant proportion of the housing stock in the estate, notably at the south end of Cobden Street (Figs 39, 41) and the south side of Pease Street. However, these are not the more standard terraces of working-class houses that characterise the streets to the west of the Freeholders' Home estate around Neasham Road. Nor do any back-to-back houses, or the local variant sometimes known as 'two-in-one' or 'back and front' houses, seem to have been built on the estate.¹⁰⁰ Instead the rows and terraces are often the consequence of varied small-scale developments of three or four houses, incrementally built up (Fig. 38). Their period of construction was limited, occurring from the 1860s until the 1890s, although the form was revived in the late 20th century. The early terraces were the densest form of housing development in the estate until the second half of the 20th century and were achieved by building across the frontage of single or amalgamated plots, or along their length, with a commensurate reduction in rear ground. Although generally considered an urban house type, their density here is often lowered by the presence of long rear gardens.

Although most streets in the estate contain rows of various lengths, the most extensive are Nos 60-92 Cobden Street (Fig. 41), which is faced by a shorter terrace at Nos 99-115 (Fig. 39), and Nos 32-60 Pease Street. Extended rows dominate the west end of Harris Street, at Nos 4-18 and Nos 1-15, and both sides of Pease Street, including Nos 6-12, 14-22 and 21-25. Some of the developers were local businessmen who also lived in the estate. Thomas Braithwaite, a hosier and haberdasher, gave notice of his intention to build a house on Cobden Street and on Pease Street in 1867, followed two years later by four more houses on Cobden Street. This probably initiated the development of the extended row at Nos 60-92 and Braithwaite remained living in Cobden Street during the 1870s.¹⁰¹ Matthew Gale, a leather cutter, had begun the development of a row of four houses, along with four rear cottages, by 1861. He then occupied one of the houses at Nos 22-28 Bright Street.¹⁰² Other businessmen trying their luck with small scale development in the estate included William Berry, a Darlington tailor, who gave notice of plans for seven houses, two group of three and four, on Pease Street in 1868.¹⁰³ While James Fenwick, a pub landlord in Brompton on Swale, North Yorkshire, used



Figures 38 (top left) An example of incremental development resulting in a continuous frontage at Nos 158-164 Yarm Road. The earliest house, No. 162, was built in the 1850s while the pair to the right followed in the 1860s or 1870s and the property to the right in the 1880s or 1890s. (P5924021); 39 (top right) The south west side of Cobden Street, Nos 99-115, in 2012 (DPI43810); 40 (bottom left) Nos 21-25 Pease Street. A short row of three houses dating from the 1860s or 1870s, (P5924022); 41 (bottom right) Nos 60-76 Cobden Street, a group of 1890s houses added to an existing row. (P5924023)

his inheritance to set up as a joiner and builder in 1895, and had completed Nos 16-18 Harris Street and Nos 60-69 Cobden Street before going bankrupt in 1899.¹⁰⁴ Only two longer terraces were built. In 1869 Mr Hutchinson gave notice of plans for ten houses on Cobden Street (Nos 99-113).¹⁰⁵ The largest development was by a firm of builders and contractors, the Watson family, who built twelve houses at Nos 25-47 Milton Street in 1875-6.¹⁰⁶

The rows and terraces are all plainly treated, built of red or pink brick with slate roofs and minimal stone dressings, limited to window and door lintels, and simple brick dentil cornices. Most have ground-floor bay windows, highlighting the front parlour or sitting room, although this feature was omitted from some, such as Nos 35-41 Bright Street (c.1870) and Nos 131-137 Eastbourne Road (c.1869). Most houses have a similar classically derived door surround as the other types of houses in the estate. Rows constructed in the 1860s or 1870s were more likely to have two chimney stacks, mid-pitch to the front and rear of the roof, such as Nos 82-88 and 99-113 Cobden Street, Nos 25-27 Milton Street and Nos 38-42 and 60-66 Pease Street. Thereafter ridge stacks became the norm. A number of chimneys retain their tapering square castellated terracotta pots. Few developments deviated from this basic pattern: Nos 20-26 Bright Street (1870s) have a



Figures 42 (left) Relatively well-preserved back yard walls, complete with openings, to the rear of Nos 131-137 Eastbourne Road (P592400X) and 42 (right) Example of a 1890s back lane surfaced in blue-grey scoriae bricks to the rear of Nos 60-90 Cobden Street (DPI43818)

continuous stone cill band on the first floor; Nos 21-25 Pease Street (1860s or 1870s) (Fig. 40) have raised brick surrounds to the windows and doors; while Nos 6-12 Pease Street (c.1900) mixes red and pink bricks to decorative effect and has two-storey bays windows.

Internally, the usual arrangement was a living room and kitchen on the ground floor with sculleries extending at the rear and two or three bedrooms on the first floor. The smallest houses, a row of four cottages that were rebuilt as Nos 136-140 Eastbourne Road in the 1980s, had only one ground floor room, a combined living room/kitchen.¹⁰⁷ The building line required by the Freehold Land Society ensured small front gardens, while back wings or back yards housed the privies and coal houses. Some rows had back lanes, which enabled coal deliveries and rubbish removal via openings in back yard wall examples of which still survive at the rear of Nos 131-135 Eastbourne Road (Fig. 42). Such lanes meant detached rear gardens for those houses that had them. Some lanes were added retrospectively to existing developments in the 1890s, including sections of Nos 60-92 Cobden Street and Nos 4-18 Harris Street (Fig. 43).¹⁰⁸ Passage or carriageways for rear access also feature in the terraces, for example at Nos 23, 36 and 64 Pease Street, 37 Bright Street and 5 Harris Street.

Redevelopment in the late-20th century has introduced new rows of houses into the estate. Examples such as Nos 139-149 and 136-140 Eastbourne Road have a traditional appearance, built of red brick with tiled roofs.

Other buildings: commercial premises and suburban amenities

The estate has a small number of shops and offices on its main thoroughfare Yarm Road, a garage on Milton Street and an institute and club on Cobden Street but previously had a wider distribution of shops, a suburban cinema and several back-street businesses. The latter have fallen victim to changes in patterns of employment, shopping and leisure in the late-20th century.

Today only one local shop remains in the area, a convenience store created in the ground floor of a 1870s house at No. 172 Yarm Road.¹⁰⁹ One of the first was at No. 29 Bright Street (see pages 23-24). As the estate was developed the provision increased, including No. 156 Eastbourne Road (built in 1897 by John Wright Watson) and No. 36 Pease Street (from the 1890s), as well as butcher at No. 136 Yarm Road (built, along a rear slaughterhouse in 1896) and a drapers shop at No. 184 Yarm Road (present by the late 1950s).¹¹⁰ These were ground-floor premises with accommodation above and have now been converted, or reverted, to residential use. No public houses were built in the estate, the Freehold Land Society leases prohibited the sale of alcohol although it would appear that beer was being retailed from 1858.¹¹¹ In the 20th century, two purpose-built single-storey shops were built on Yarm Road, one at No. 140 (1936, now demolished) and at No. 156 (c.1960).



Figure 44 Map extract of 1896-8 showing the plant nursery at No. 79 Milton Street (highlighted in purple) and the outbuildings at No. 70 Milton Street (in green) (© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. English Heritage 1000/19088 2012).

Commercial and industrial premises were also built behind houses; rear workshop construction was permitted by the Freehold Land Society but not noxious trades. These back-plot businesses have now dwindled to Milton Street Garage, and a disused yard of sheds at No. 154a Yarm Road. The former was established in the mid 20th century and replaced a complex of outbuildings used by the Wrightson family, whose members included butchers and builders, for whom the adjoining residence, No. 70 Milton Street, was constructed in c.1875 (Fig. 44).¹¹²

The Yarm Road yard contained stables, hayshed, cartshed and barn by the late 19th century, and was used by a provision dealer in the early 20th century (Fig.

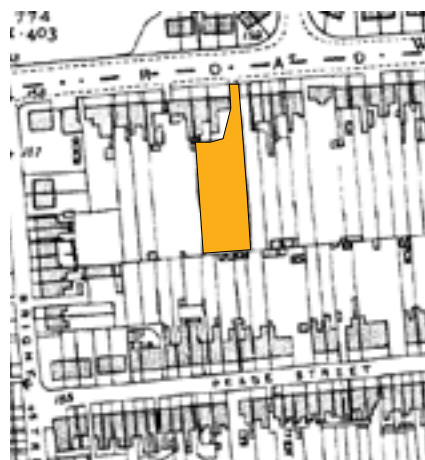


Figure 45 Map extract showing No. 154a Yarm Road in 1939 (© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. English Heritage 1000/19088 2012).

45) and later became a motor car garage.¹¹³ Other notable small businesses in the area were a joinery works on Eastbourne Road and a plant nursery on Milton Street. Eastbourne Joinery Works at Nos 143-149 Eastbourne Road¹¹⁴ remained active until the 1980s (Figs 11, 12).¹¹⁵ Milton Nursery, No. 70 Milton Street had a similar longevity (see page 32).

There were few amenities within the estate until the inter-war years, although its residents benefited from the opening of Eastbourne Park in 1902 (see following section). In 1933 Eastbourne Hall and Institute (Fig. 46) was opened at No. 17 Cobden Street.¹¹⁶ This functioned as a social centre for local residents from a converted house and purpose-built hall, a modest building with an unadorned brick-and-render exterior. This



Figures 46 Eastbourne Hall, Cobden Street (P5924025) and 47 (right) View along Cobden Street in 1973 with the tower of the Regent Cinema visible in the distance. (Centre for Local Studies at Darlington Library)

was joined by the more glamorous Regent Cinema in 1939; a substantial building with seating for 1050 people. Designed by J H Morton & Son, it had a Moderne yellow brick exterior with a thin rectangular tower (Fig. 47), complete with projecting fin; the stone-faced ground floor, which incorporated a shop, was detailed with black bands.¹¹⁷ This became a bingo hall in the 1959 and was demolished in 1989.¹¹⁸

The suburban landscape

The designed landscape consists primarily of gardens and one significant public open space, Eastbourne Park. The insistence on a building line by the Freehold Land Society resulted in small front gardens as a minimum, while the depth of the plots allowed many houses to possess long rear and, as a consequence of subdivision of ground, sometimes narrow back gardens. These generally have a discreet presence, a character that is shared by Eastbourne Park, which is partially edged by building.

The front gardens of the estate are generally enclosed by low brick walls or hedges,



Figure 48 An aerial view showing the rear gardens, detached and otherwise, of the southern part of the Freeholders' Home Estate. (NMR 28211/008)



Figures 49 (top left) The surviving garden wall at No. 2 Milton Street (P5924026); 50 (top right) an example of a rear garden separated from the house by the back lane at No. 4 Harris Street (P5924027); 51 (bottom left) view of the rear gardens at Nos 50-52 Cobden Street (P5924028); 52 Milton Street Nursery in 1965 (Centre for Local Studies at Darlington Library)

wooden fences, wrought-iron gates and railings. These likely reflect the original forms of enclosure although the great majority are of recent construction. Among the few surviving historic garden features are the brick and stone walls and piers at Nos 20 Bright Street and 53 Cobden Street and a tiled pathway at No. 30 Bright Street. But no historic railings remain, perhaps as a consequence of a programme of systematic removal during World War Two. Rear gardens, particularly on corner plots, were often enclosed by higher brick walls, examples of which survive at No. 2 Milton Street (Fig. 49) and No. 51 Pease Street.

Historically some undeveloped plots and rear gardens were used for commercial horticultural purposes. Orchards were a significant feature of the estate from the 1850s to the 1920s and two plant nurseries were in existence in the mid-to-late 19th century. Eastbourne Nursery operated from various premises on Cobden Street between 1873 and 1878. It was run by William Shenassy, previously gardener to John Harris, one of the Freehold Land Society's directors.¹¹⁹ From here he sold fruit trees, shrubs, garden and farm seeds and had a residence built at No. 122 Eastbourne Road in 1876.¹²⁰ The nursery on Milton Street (see page) was apparently established by 1881, when it was occupied by gardener and florist John Brand.¹²¹ The site is described as having two large vinerias, cucumber, potting and tool houses as well as a large kitchen garden in 1894.¹²² The expanse of greenhouses and outbuildings (Fig. 52) was cleared for redevelopment in the

late-20th century. However, beyond the possible survival of fruit trees in rear gardens, these uses appear to have left few traces.¹²³

Private gardens were also highly cultivated, with the first mention of a 'newly erected' greenhouse on land at the junction of Milton Street and Taylor Street (now Eastbourne Road) in 1857.¹²⁴ The early years of the estate coincided with a national craze for greenhouses and conservatories following the Great Exhibition in 1851 and such structures were popular locally with the prominent Darlington Quaker families who had a strong horticultural tradition.¹²⁵ A local builder, William Richardson became something of a specialist, and may have supplied the greenhouse, complete with patent hot-water apparatus, noted at a property on Hume Terrace in 1876.¹²⁶ In addition to fruit trees and kitchen gardens at least one garden contained a croquet lawn in 1877.¹²⁷ Around 1910 a number of gardens retained tool houses, notably on Cobden Street and Milton Street.¹²⁸ Non-agricultural facilities included a pigeon loft at No. 9 Milton Street and piggeries, at Nos 88, 108 and 115 Eastbourne Road, and, as has been noted, stables, coach houses and cart sheds and the first motor house.¹²⁹ Detached garages probably now constitute the majority of garden outbuildings, as well as greenhouses and sheds; many are of modern constructions but older fabric may survive.

Although not part of the original estate, Eastbourne Park is bounded on its north and east side by Eastbourne Road and Milton Street. This space was created on 7 acres of farmland by Darlington Borough Council in 1902, partly to provide public open space for the intensively developed district around Neasham Road.¹³⁰ An undeveloped plot on the south side of Eastbourne Road was acquired to form an entrance to the park. A second adjoining plot (No. 122 Eastbourne Road), formerly the property of the gardener William Shenassy, was apparently also



Figures 53 and 54 The front (top) and rear elevations (bottom) of Nos 90-92 Eastbourne Road, showing the buildings orientation towards the park. (P5924029-030)



Figure 55 Eastbourne Park entrance (DPI43808)

purchased but was only cleared and incorporated into a widened entrance in the late 20th century.¹³¹ The opening of the park influenced development on the unbuilt plots on the south side of Eastbourne Road and west side of Milton Street, encouraging the construction of quite substantial semi-detached properties and, in one instance at Nos 90-92 Eastbourne Road, the orientation of the houses towards the park (Figs 53, 54). The present entrance, which probably contains some original elements, has brick walls, stone piers, a single cast-iron gate pier and a pedestrian gate (Fig. 55).¹³²

Architectural character: building materials and style

Located within an area of boulder clay and clay and sand it is unsurprising that the use of brick is almost universal throughout the estate.¹³³ A brickworks was in existence on the north side of Yarm Road by the 1840s and brick manufacture became a prevalent industry in the surrounding area during the second half of the 19th century, notably at Bank Top and Albert Hill.¹³⁴ Indeed, one of the town's brickmakers, George Walters, who was involved with the Hermitage Hill Brick and Tile Works at Bank Top, built Nos 89-91 Cobden Street and resided there.¹³⁵ However, it remains unclear whether any houses were actually built from bricks using clay taken from the plots, as was permitted by the Freehold Land Society.



Figure 56 (top left) an externally expressed flue at No. 51 Milton Street (P5924030); 57 (top right) and at No. 27 Cobden Street (P5924031); 58 (bottom left) and at No. 172 Yarm Road (P5924032); 59 (bottom right) an example of an erratic party wall at No. 116-118 Eastbourne Road (P5924033)

The prevalent brick colour is a light red; for the houses this is sometimes paired decoratively with a darker red brick, although in a few instances red or white facing bricks have been used for front elevations. A bond of header bricks alternating with either three or five courses of stretchers is sometimes used to a banding effect, but generally the brickwork is plain. Its quality is variable, at its most extreme perhaps in the contrast between the crude brickwork of No. 7 Milton Street and the

well built adjacent property, No. 9 Milton Street. One unusual feature is the external expression of the merging chimney flues at the gable head in a number of late 19th century houses. This appears to be a very local building technique and visible examples exist at Nos 41 Bright Street, 27 and 93 Cobden Street, 20 and 51 Milton Street and 172 Yarm Road (Figs 56, 57, 58). There are also instances of erratic party walls, presumably a consequence of the piecemeal way in which frontages were built up, such as Nos 108-110 and 116-118 Eastbourne Road (Fig. 59).



Figure 60 Stone blocks and rubble construction in the pier and front wall of No. 142 Yarm Road (P5924034)

A rare exception to the prevailing brick is No. 142 Yarm Road, which is built of stone rubble (Fig 60).¹³⁶ Although the house is now rendered, it has been speculated that reused square railway sleepers were used in its construction; this is plausible as the original occupant, and probable developer, was John Berwick Abbey, a railway contractor.¹³⁷ Less locally sourced building materials used in the estate include the slate roof tiles and dressed stone used for window and door lintels and coping and pier caps on garden walls. While the blue-grey scoriae bricks used to surface the back lanes were manufactured from slag in Middlesbrough by the Tees Scoria Brick Co.

Ltd., and dealt from their offices at Bank Top.¹³⁸

The architectural character of the estate derives principally from its main phase of development between the 1850s and the 1900s. This was a period of great stylistic eclecticism, with historical revivals producing a rich mixture of classical, gothic, picturesque and vernacular elements in higher-status suburban architecture. In Darlington, these trends are most evident in the affluent developments on and around the Cleveland Estate on the west side of town, and in the small enclave of Westbrook Villas, off North Road. On the Freeholders' Home estate, with its mixture of middling



Figures 61 (left) Arched passageway entrance at No. 39 Bright Street (P5924035) and 62 (right) original inter-war architectural glass at No. 28 Cobden Street (P5924036)



Figure 63 The recent development at Cobden Court with 'picturesque' detailing (P5924037)

status houses, there is less ornamentation and greater uniformity, as would be expected. The standard arrangement is that of two storeys with symmetrical or regular facades with rectangular window openings and flat-roofed ground-floor bay windows. Dormer windows, front gables, decorated bargeboards, recessed doorways, porches and verandahs are uncommon, as is purposeful asymmetry. However, the treatment of openings has a modest architectural variety, with interest added by occasional arched passage heads (Fig. 61), round-headed windows, more elaborate

stone door surrounds and moulded door and window lintels. Inter-war and post-war developments introduced few new stylistic features beyond architectural glass (Fig. 62), door canopies and decorative tile hanging although the early 21st century development of houses and apartments on Cobden Court was designed in a 'picturesque' style, with decorative ridge tiles and barge boards (Fig. 63).

Despite the limited palette of materials and styles within the estate, the streets have interest and, in places, even a picturesque quality. This is a consequence of the intermittent and varied pattern of development; no street is entirely continuously built up and all intermix houses of different classes. Because the estate is the product of a small-scale development of large plots over time it has differing densities and house positions, notably on the east side of Cobden Street. All houses are set back from the road and even within stretches of continuous development there is variety in house widths, roof heights, chimney positions and further irregularity is introduced through passageways and carriageways (this variety is perhaps best exemplified by Nos 86-120 Eastbourne Road) (Fig. 64). Such openings introduce an element of the partially visible, as do rear gardens glimpsed between semi-detached houses, while the gates and drives indicate the presence of houses that are entirely invisible from the street.



Figure 64 Nos 86-120 Eastbourne Road (DPI43806)

Condition

The historic building stock of the Freeholders' Home estate has suffered some damage and loss, mostly within the last thirty or forty years. The whole range of building types has been affected; commercial premises have often provided the sites for late-20th century redevelopment while residential properties have been subject to piecemeal modernisation. Medium-scale redevelopments have mainly occurred on the periphery of the estate, beginning with the replacement of Nos 134-136 Yarm Road with two three-storey blocks of flats (Regents Court) in the 1970s. An L-shaped two-storey residential building, Eastbourne Care Home, was built at the north end of Cobden Street in the 1990s. While in 2010 a larger care home development, Willow Green and The Lawns (Fig. 65), has been built at the west end of Eastbourne Road. Even though constructed in brick, these blocks have introduced a different scale and massing into the estate, although the Cobden Street building replaced a 1930s cinema rather than 19th century housing. Other late 20th and early 21st century redevelopments of houses and apartments have a more traditional appearance.



Figures 65 (top left) *The Lawns*, Eastbourne Road (DPI43795); 66 (top right) the altered pair at Nos 40-42 Milton Street; the front of No 42 has been rebuilt and both have replaced their windows. (DPI43801); 67 (bottom left) Detail of the door case inscribed with the house name at No. 53 Cobden Street (P5924038); 68 (bottom right) garages on detached rear gardens behind Nos 25-47 Cobden Street (P5924039)



Figure 69 View west along Pease Street in c.1910 (Centre for Local Studies at Darlington Library)

The post-1960s trend for infill and back-land development that began has also had an impact. While single-storey cottages and rear plot residences have long been present in the estate, for example the site of No. 36B Pease Street has contained a residence since at least the 1890s, they were built at a time when the overall development was far less dense. The insertion of bungalows at the side and rear of existing houses in the 1970s and 1980s has particularly affected the east end of Eastbourne Road and the east side of Cobden Street.

The fashion for home improvements in recent decades has led to a considerable amount of piecemeal alteration to properties, not all of it sympathetic to their original character. Whilst indicating a concern for well-maintained properties one unfortunate consequence has been a loss of architectural detail (Fig. 66). The brickwork of some houses has been rendered or painted, a few have been clad in artificial stone, while some roof coverings have been renewed with concrete tiles in place of slates. Original windows and mullions have been widely replaced; only a few wooden sash or metal-framed windows now remain, while architectural glass has sometimes been replaced by modern equivalents. Widespread additions have included porches roofs on ornate brackets. There are earlier precedents for this modernising impulse, for example, No. 43 Bright Street was given a suburban makeover in the inter-war years. But incremental change has now affected all classes of property in the estate and its impact has been greatest on modest terrace houses, notably diminishing their homogeneity.

Other, less overt, changes have also modified the character of the estate. Many of the Victorian and Edwardian detached and semi-detached houses were given individual names; most have disappeared from use but a few have endured through name plaques



Figure 70 View west along Pease Street in 2012 showing, by comparison, the level of alterations to the front gardens (DPI43805)

on the facade, such as Belgrave House, No. 58 Milton Street and Felton Villas, Nos 89-91 Cobden Street, or because they were carved into the door lintel, as happened with Flora House, No. 53 Cobden Street (Fig. 67). The street furniture has been renewed although the carved street sign at No. 29 Bright Street is a notable survival.¹³⁹ And many of the back lanes retain their scoriae brick surfaces.

The growth of car ownership has wrought significant change, particularly to the suburban landscape. While larger properties were able to replace coach houses with garages the impact on the gardens of smaller houses has inevitably been much greater. Some front gardens have been replaced by hard surfaces for parking cars while the detached rear gardens have been used to house garages (Fig. 68). The paving and concreting of front gardens has also occurred for ease of maintenance. While front hedges are still common, small gardens with flowers, shrubs and small trees are less so. Over the past 25 years the pavement widths of some streets have been progressively reduced to accommodate easier traffic.¹⁴⁰ Historic garden buildings and ancillary structures do not appear to have survived well.

Although the estate has a generally well-maintained appearance there are some properties that have fallen into dereliction or are less well-cared for, for example Nos 1-3 Cobden Street, No. 20 Milton Street and the yard at No. 154a Yarm Road

INTEREST AND SIGNIFICANCE



Figure 71 No. 142 Yarm Road, one of the two listed buildings in the estate. (P5924040)

Two houses in the Freeholders' Home estate have been designated as buildings of special architectural or historical interest. Nos 152 and 154 Yarm Road (Figs 24, 71) were listed at grade II in 1977 on their intrinsic merits as early 1850s houses and without reference to their historical context.

However, it is the historical context that gives the estate much of its particular interest. The Freehold Land movement, to which it belongs, aspired to be a great reforming force and made a significant contribution to Victorian urban expansion.¹⁴¹ Its numerous local societies worked to extend the franchise and advocate

the benefits of land and home ownership to the working classes, although in reality they best served the 'labour aristocracy' - skilled artisans and small tradesmen – and lower middle classes. The movement originated in Birmingham in 1847 and a London-based National Freehold Land Society was launched in 1849, but the provincial societies, rooted in a wider tradition of working-class self improvement, were rather different in character to the more commercially orientated metropolitan organisations. By the mid 1850s the enfranchising motive was already in decline and lost further impetus with the Second Reform Act of 1867, which considerably widening the urban electorate. Some societies were still operating in the 1880s and 1890s although by this date they were often overtly commercial, enabling developments of cheap suburban working-class housing or exclusive middle-class estates. Nonetheless, it has been said that the movement contributed to 'a better-ordered environment' and the broader process of housing reform, and was one of the models for subsequent initiatives in housing provision such as co-operative societies and co-partnership schemes.¹⁴² The middle-class estates produced a picturesque townscape that may have been influential on later working-class suburban estates. While some societies became, or were associated with, permanent building societies, thereby contributing to the rise of what has been described as 'the single most effective force in dispersing real property in Britain'.¹⁴³

Although the historical development of the movement and some individual societies have been studied, the nature of its architectural contribution has received relatively little attention.¹⁴⁴ Therefore generalisations about the character of Freehold Land Society developments are problematical and difficulties arise in trying to assess the typicality, or otherwise, of individual estates. But from the existing literature it is possible to identify common trends within the movement and estates that share similar characteristics with Darlington.

The freehold land movement was concerned not only with housing development but also with the provision of land. The roots of the movement lay partly in radical agrarian traditions, informed by the desire amongst the working classes for access to ground for agricultural or horticultural purposes.¹⁴⁵ For some of the smaller societies land provision remained their primary purpose.¹⁴⁶ The decision whether or not to build on a plot was left to individual members. Plots were initially used as allotments, a function that might continue for years, or were developed in such a way as to retain significant areas of garden.¹⁴⁷ Early developments were sometimes of a modest or temporary character, as 'rough plots took the shape of gardens with vegetables and flowers. ... crude huts gave place to detached houses'.¹⁴⁸ At Carr Road, Walkley, Sheffield the first properties were often a 'garden house' (a very simple two-room dwelling) at the rear of the plot.¹⁴⁹ The pattern of development in Darlington of an initial phase of garden buildings and simple cottage architecture, as well as sustained horticultural activity, therefore has wider parallels within the movement.

Because the societies didn't generally construct the housing, the character of development could be quite varied. Indeed, the disparate building styles of some freeholder streets in Sheffield has been said 'to bear witness to a piecemeal approach to building somewhat akin to twentieth-century 'plotland' development'.¹⁵⁰ The level of control imposed by the societies - building lines, heights, materials, numbers of buildings per plot, non-residential uses, etc - has not been closely studied, for the early societies they were probably very limited, or may not have existed at all. In Birmingham some of the initial development were said to have been built 'in an irregular and reckless manner' until this was rectified by the insistence on a building line and minimum value for properties erected.¹⁵¹ Therefore a diversity of buildings was no means unusual for some freehold estates; nor, would it seem, were varied and intermixed patterns of development. For example, in the suburb of Freehold, Lancaster some plots had been subdivided and on others short terraces had been built for rent by speculative builders within a decade of its establishment in 1852.¹⁵² The estates acquired by the societies were sometimes at a distance from the urban periphery. While this kept the cost of the land down it perhaps contributed to a slower pace of development, as seems to have happened at Manningham, Bradford, Darlington and various estates in Coventry.¹⁵³ In Lancaster, the suburb at Freehold was the town's 'earliest and largest building estate with



Figure 72 An example of suburban development by Freehold Land Societies at Walkley, Sheffield (from OS maps of 1892) (© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. English Heritage 1000/19088 2012).

the longest period of activity'.¹⁵⁴ Other factors such as the level of demand for middling-quality housing may have influenced the rate at which estates were built up.



Figure 73 Another example of a suburban development by a freehold land society at Freehold, Lancaster (from an OS map of 1893) (© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. English Heritage 1000/19088 2012).

An interesting aspect of the estate at Eastbourne relates to the association, already noted, between Freehold Land Societies and building societies. The latter emerged in the late 18th century as a way of funding house building for members, but the societies usually terminated once development was complete. Before the mid 19th century there were few permanent building societies but thereafter their numbers significantly increased.¹⁵⁵ Some Freehold Land Societies were established on a continuing basis and the movement seem to have played an influential role in extending the concept of the 'permanent principle', as it was known.¹⁵⁶ Moreover, some freehold land societies subsequently evolved into permanent building societies; the best known example was the National Society, which following a

merger in 1944 became the Abbey National Building Society.¹⁵⁷ But this also occurred with provincial societies; in Leicester the Leicester Permanent Building Society emerged 'in order to meet the needs of the Freehold Land Society members'.¹⁵⁸

Terminating building societies were active in Darlington by the 1830s but the first local permanent building society was the Darlington Working Men's Equitable Permanent Building Society, formed in 1856.¹⁵⁹ This was two years after the Darlington and South Durham Freehold Land Society had expressed a desire to extend its operations 'in connexion with a building society'.¹⁶⁰ The two societies shared the same trustee, John Harris, and George Harker was a committee member of the freehold land society and secretary of the building society. Harker, along with William Snaith (president of the building society) and John Rennison (a director), were also residents of the Freeholders' Home estate and it seems reasonable to assume a connection between these two organisations.¹⁶¹

Although the architectural and developmental impact of the movement awaits better elucidation, a number of freehold land movement developments have received recognition through designation as conservation areas. Some are comparable in date, scale and character to the estate in Darlington. The area at Cottage Grove Conservation Area, Beeston, Nottinghamshire is a notably early development, begun in 1848, and has been described as having a 'piecemeal architectural development'.¹⁶² The conservation

area at Dresden, Stoke on Trent, Staffs encompasses a 'stylistically mixed' estate, begun in 1850 by the Longton Freehold Land Society. Birkendale Conservation Area, Sheffield, was freehold land society scheme that commenced in 1848, although this was a slightly more affluent development of substantial houses.¹⁶³ Fulwood Conservation Area, Preston, Lancashire began as a development by the Preston Freehold Land Society in 1851 and took over 40 years to be built up, described as having a distinctive character influenced by its plot layout.¹⁶⁴ A slightly later example of a freehold society development forms part of the Northfields Conservation Area, Stamford, Lincs. This was begun in 1875 and has a variety in the style and design of houses and some late 20th century infill development.¹⁶⁵

Therefore, it can be said that the Freeholders' Home estate at Darlington is part of a nationally significant movement, and belongs to its more socially and politically engaged early phase. And that its built environment illustrates the nature of the movement and is an example of the varied, perhaps even distinctive, suburban development that it sometimes produced.

In general terms the area can be said to illustrate the growing urbanisation of English society, the rapid suburban growth experienced by towns and cities and the late 19th-century pursuit of decent standards of housing for all. In the context of Darlington, it represents an early development in its eastward expansion. While its buildings have no special claims to singularity in style or status, and are matched elsewhere in the town (Fig. 73), the subtle complexity of



Figure 73 Semi-detached houses on the west side of Milton Street (DPI43802)

its built environment, intermixing of house types and densities, has fewer parallels. Comparison with surrounding development highlights this distinctive character, and it is interesting to note that several of the terrace streets off Neasham Road dating from the 1890s were built by the British Land Company, established as the development arm of the National Freehold Land Society in 1856.¹⁶⁶ Few buildings in the estate are likely to merit consideration for national designation because of current criteria and the erosion of historical fabric through modernisation.¹⁶⁷ But a considerable number of its houses have sufficient townscape value and/or historical associations to make them worthy of inclusion on a local list. Consideration of designation as a conservation area, or other planning measures, could allow recognition of the quality and interest of the estate and its better preservation or enhancement.

SOURCES

Documented research was targeted at published sources and there was not time to explore the full range of available primary and secondary material. Individual buildings have been dated to a year or decade using the catalogue of local authority plans held at the Durham Record Office (Da/NG), the 1910 Finance Act documents held at The National Archives (IR 58), Ordnance Survey maps (County Series Survey 1854; 1:2,500 1881-4 (unrevised from 1854); 1st Revision 1896; 2nd Revision 1913-4; 3rd Revision 1939; National Grid Survey 1953-4), census records, trade directories and newspaper references (*Northern Echo* accessed via Gale Digital Collection, 19th Century British Library Newspapers). Full references are given in the endnotes.

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NOTES

- 1 See guidance section in Sources.
- 2 This falls within Measure 4: Understanding under the Activity area 4A1 Historic Towns and Suburbs. See <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/nhpp-rep-may11mar12/>
- 3 See guidance section in Sources.
- 4 VCH, 6, 29.
- 5 *Ibid*
- 6 Flynn, 40.
- 7 VCH, 6.
- 8 *Ibid*
- 9 Barber, 25; Cookson, 69.
- 10 D. Howlett, notes for a Darlington History Society Walk 'Eastbourne: Railways, Freeholders & the Garden Suburb' 2007, revised 2009 and 2012.
- 11 English Heritage Archives, buildings files 102201, 102203.
- 12 Flynn, 18.
- 13 In the 1940s a factory was opened by Patons and Baldwin producing hand-knitting, industrial and weaving yarns; this subsequently formed part a trading estate established in 1956, where two sites were built by the engine-building firm Cummins in the 1960s. Cookson 145; Darlington: A topographical study, 68.
- 14 Howlett, notes.
- 15 *Ibid*. Under the provisions of the Building Societies Act 1836, under which the society was registered, it was unable to own land.
- 16 DCLS, E810030517.
- 17 Chase, 338.
- 18 DCLS, E810030517, E810028164.
- 19 Howlett, notes.
- 20 *Ibid*; 'A Study..' 7
- 21 They were noted in c.1910 for No. 2 Taylor Street (later No. 122 Eastbourne Road). TNA, IR 58/25338.
- 22 DCLS E810030517.
- 23 VCH, 96.
- 24 The Darlington Corn Mill Company Ltd. operated between 1858 and 1896 and appears to have had a maltings at Bank Top. *Northern Echo* 4th August 1876, 28th March 1888, 1st Nov 1889, 14th Feb 1896.
- 25 DLSC, E810030517.
- 26 Census returns, parish of St John, Darlington Registration district, 1861.
- 27 DCLS, U418a 40; 'Darlington: A Topographical Study', 1.
- 28 D. Howlett, notes for a Darlington History Society Walk 'Eastbourne: Railways, Freeholders & the Garden Suburb' 2007, revised 2009 and 2012.
- 29 Taylor gave a speech to the Darlington society in January 1851. 'A Study...', 16.
- 30 DCLS, E810037715.
- 31 Presumably the plots had all been allocated by this date. OS map, County Series, surveyed 1854.
- 32 DCLS, Plan of the Freeholders Home estate, 1851, E810037715.
- 33 *The Freehold Land Times and Building News* 1st December 1854, 498.
- 34 OS map, County Series, surveyed 1854; DCLS, U418u 40409.
- 35 *The Freehold Land Times and Building News* 1st December 1854, 498; Flynn 102.
- 36 Census, 1861.
- 37 *Post Office Directory of Northumberland & Durham* 1858, 390.
- 38 Richie, 19.
- 39 Plot 90 and 91. DCLS E810037715.
- 40 Abbey subsequently built two cottages on Bright Street in 1870 and sublet part of his ground as a garden. Census, 1861; *Post Office Directory of Northumberland and Durham* 1858, 388; DRO Da/NG 2/302; TNA, IR 58/25414, 25417.
- 41 The Renison family still owned the property in c.1910. TNA, IR 58/25340; OS map, County Series, surveyed 1854.
- 42 The family still lived at No. 150 in c.1910. TNA, IR 58/25340; OS map, County Series, surveyed

- 1854.
- 43 *Northern Echo* 29th February 1888.
 - 44 EHA, buildings file 102201, file on East Haven Hospital.
 - 45 Census, 1891; OS map, 1st revision, 1896.
 - 46 *Northern Echo* 29th April 1873, 14th March 1878; Census 1881.
 - 47 Howlett, notes.
 - 48 TNA, IR 58/25338; census, 1881; *Kelly's Directory of Durham* 1890, 73.
 - 49 DRO, Darlington Council Records, Da/NG
 - 50 DRO Da/NG 2/103, 374, 100. For other architects designed in the estate see Graham Potts, *Biographical Guide to Darlington Architects 1840-1914*, typescript, revised 2011.
 - 51 *Northern Echo* 20th December 1876.
 - 52 Fn 3, VCH, 146; DRO Da/NG 2/131, 166.
 - 53 VCH, 146; *Northern Echo*, 25th Jan 1892.
 - 54 *Northern Echo*, 10th January 1873.
 - 55 Census, 1871, 1881, 1891; *Kelly's Directory of Durham* 1890, 75.
 - 56 *Northern Echo* 18th April 1877, 16th June 1880, 10th March 1884, 25th January 1892.
 - 57 *Northern Echo* 25th March 1878.
 - 58 DRO Da/NG 2/675, 1616.
 - 59 DRO Da/NG 2/683; census 1881.
 - 60 Census, 1881; *Northern Echo* 15th July 1899] Another shop was operating from 36 Pease Street by 1890. *Kelly's Directory of Durham* 1890, 81.
 - 61 Flynn 67; TNA, OS map revision 1912, IR58/3/395.
 - 62 OS map, 2nd revision, 1913-4.
 - 63 OS map, 2nd revision, 1913-4.
 - 64 Howlett, notes.
 - 65 Hornsey, Brian 1994, *90 years of cinema in Darlington*, 14.
 - 66 *Cinema & Theatre Construction*, c.1939, 32.
 - 67 Information from David Howlett.
 - 68 The blocks are not shown on the OS map revision 1967-71.
 - 69 OS map, National Grid survey 1953-4. The premises adjoining No. 39 Harris Street were long occupied by North View Engineering, who subsequently relocated to Albert Hill. Information supplied by David Howlett.
 - 70 Some development around Neasham Road had started in the 1850s but significantly increased after 1890.
 - 71 Census 1861.
 - 72 *Ibid.*
 - 73 In 1854 the society was struggling to find new sites for development, aware that the members preferred sites nearer town for building on. *The Freehold Land Times and Building News* 1st Dec 1854, 498.
 - 74 Flynn, 66.
 - 75 *Ibid*
 - 76 The aspiration to get the roads 'laid to the township' was expressed as early 1854. *The Freehold Land Times and Building News* Dec 1st 1854, 498.
 - 77 The largest plots were on Harris Street, over 14,000 sq ft, while the smallest were on Yarm Road, around 9,000 sq ft. This may have been a consequence of a slight difference in value, as Harris Street was furthest from the main road.
 - 78 TNA, IR 58/25382.
 - 79 OS map, County Series, surveyed 1854.
 - 80 DRO Da/NG 2/241.
 - 81 OS map, revised 1967-71.
 - 82 Barber, 34.
 - 83 The existence of a straight joint between Nos 152 and 154, indicate the latter, which is the earlier house, was originally detached, albeit briefly.
 - 84 DRO Da/NG 2/1718.
 - 85 Map evidence suggests a possible example of this may be No. 33 Harris Street. OS, County Series, surveyed 1854 and 1st edition, surveyed 1896.

- 86 Similarly a garden cottage was still in existence at Nos 53-55 Cobden Street. TNA, IR 58/25339.
- 87 1st edition OS map, surveyed 1856.
- 88 *Ibid.*
- 89 DCLS, E810037715.
- 90 Census 1861, 1871, 1881;TNA, IR 58/25340.
- 91 Census, 1871.
- 92 *Northern Echo* 4th June 1890.
- 93 For No. 156 Eastbourne Road (Vine House) see *Northern Echo* 16th June 1880, 25th Jan 1892; for No. 61 (Crawford Lea) IR 58/25229.
- 94 No. 10 Bright Street (Lingerwood House) *Northern Echo* 13 Feb 1882; No. 9 Milton Street (Yew Villa) *Northern Echo* 10 March 1884.
- 95 TNA, IR58/5825338.
- 96 Datestone on the front of the building; census 1871.
- 97 The Walters family still owned the properties in c.1910. TNA, IR 58/25339.
- 98 TNA, IR 58/5825338.
- 99 This may be a surviving example of a fashion for grained woodwork that was once common in Darlington. Muthesius, S, 1982, *The English Terraced House* New Haven and London: Yale University Press. 221, 229.
- 100 These had front entrances, the rear property was accessed by a passage, and both had rear access. Flynn 91; Cookson, 90.
- 101 *Post Office Directory of Northumberland and Durham*, 1858, 389; census 1871; DRO, Da/NG 2/82,195, 216, 891.
- 102 Census 1861, 1871.
- 103 DRO, Da/NG 2/166, 131.
- 104 'A Darlington Builder's Affairs' *Northern Echo* 16 Jan 1900.
- 105 DRO, Da/NG 2/180.
- 106 DRO, Da/NG 2/744.
- 107 Originally Nos 36-42 Taylor Street. TNA, IR 58/25382.
- 108 The lanes may have been required under local planning bye laws of the 1890s. Strutt, 42; DRO Da/NG 2 2/2002.
- 109 This was a confectioners shop, later patisserie, between the 1950s and 1970s. *Kelly's Directory*, 1959, 180
- 110 DRO, Da/NG 2/1983, Da/NG 2/2118, *Kelly's Directory of Northumberland*,1890. The butcher seems to have moved to No. 146 Yarm Road, now used as dentist. Information supplied by David Howlett.
- 111 *Post Office Directory*, 1858; Frederick Ford was also listed as a beer retailer at No. 29 Bright Street *Northern Echo* 15th July 1899.
- 112 DRO, Da/NG 2/683.
- 113 *Post Office Directory*, 1914. *Kelly's Directory*, 1953, 176.
- 114 DRO, Da/NG 2/ 675.
- 115 DRO, Da/NG 2/ 1616.
- 116 Howlett, notes.
- 117 Hornsey, Brian 1994 *90 years of cinema in Darlington* 14; photographs held by the Cinema Theatres Association; *Cinema & Theatre Construction*, c.1939 32.
- 118 Howlett, notes.
- 119 *Northern Echo* 11th July 1870, January 10th 1873.
- 120 *Northern Echo* 14th February 1873, 10th October 1878; DRO, Da/NG 2/754.
- 121 Census, 1881.
- 122 *Northern Echo* 23rd June 1894.
- 123 In the 1970s it was suggested that the upper floor window of No. 58 Milton Street may have originally had the character of a hayloft opening. Information from David Howlett.
- 124 DCLS, bill for sale of freehold property, U418u 40409.
- 125 Cookson, 134.
- 126 Richardson opened the North of England Horticultural Works at Bank Top in 1872. Cookson, 134. *Northern Echo* 4th May 1876.
- 127 *Northern Echo* 18th April 1877.

- 128 TNA, IR 58/25338, 25339.
- 129 *Ibid.*
- 130 Cookson, 98.
- 131 TNA, IR 58/25338.
- 132 The original gates and piers survived in reasonable order until the early 21st century.
- 133 Cookson 128-30.
- 134 *Ibid.*
- 135 *Northern Echo* 13 Feb 1874; census 1871.
- 136 The house is described as being of rubble construction in c.1910.TNA, IR 58/25340.
- 137 The suggestion of a railway source for the stone blocks is in 'A study of the Freeholders' Estate, Darlington', 1996, a unpublished report by the pupils of St Teresa's R.C. Junior School, DCLS U418a. During building work around the turn of the 21st century it was observed that the frontage appeared to be constructed of stone and brick rubble, although the facade was substantially modified in the inter-war years by the insertion of bay windows. Information from David Howlett.
- 138 Cookson, 130.
- 139 The gas lights, with standards probably dating from the 1920s, were replaced by electric lights in the early 1970s. Information supplied by David Howlett.
- 140 Information supplied by David Howlett.
- 141 See Beggs, Thomas 1853 'Freehold Land Societies' *Journal of the Statistical Society of London* vol 16 no. 4, 338-346; Chapman, S D & Bartlett J N 'The Contribution of Building Clubs and Freehold Land Society to Working-Class Housing in Birmingham' in Chapman S D (ed) *The History of Working-Class Housing* Newton Abbot: David & Charles; Chase, Malcolm 1991 'Out of Radicalism: The Mid-Victorian Freehold Land Movement' *The English Historical Review* vol 106, no 419, 319-345; Dyos, H. J., 1961 *Victorian Suburb* Leicester: Leicester University Press.
- 142 Gaskell, 165.
- 143 Chase, 345.
- 144 See Gaskell S M, 1971 'Yorkshire Estate Development and the Freehold Land Societies in the Nineteenth Century' *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* xliii, 158-66; Lovell, John 1992 'The Northamptonshire Freehold Land Society and the origins of modern Far Cotton' *Northampton Past & Present* vol 8, pt 4. 299-305; White, Andrew & Winstanley, 1996 *Victorian Terraced Houses in Lancaster* Lancaster: Lancaster Centre for North-West Regional Studies/University of Lancaster.
- 145 Chase, 330-1.
- 146 Chase, 328.
- 147 Chase, 331.
- 148 C Hobson 'Walkley', *Town Planning Review*, III (1912) 41.
- 149 Harman & Minnis 2004, 282.
- 150 Chase, 320.
- 151 Chapman, S D & Bartlett J N 'The Contribution of Building Clubs and Freehold Land Society to Working-Class Housing in Birmingham' in Chapman S D (ed) *The History of Working-Class Housing* Newton Abbot: David & Charles. 242.
- 152 White & Winstanley 9.
- 153 Taylor, S & Gibson, K, 2010 *Manningham: Character and Diversity in a Bradford Suburb* Swindon: English Heritage; Holte Bracebridge, C 1863 'Coventry Freehold Land Society' *Journal of the Statistical Society of London* xxvi, 455-7.
- 154 White & Winstanley 8.
- 155 Cleary, E.J. 1965 *The Building Society Movement* London: Elek Books. 49.
- 156 Chase, 339.
- 157 Weston Smith, John 2006 *No Stone Unturned: A History of The British Land Company 1856-2006* London: British Land.
- 158 Malcolm Elliot 1979, *Victorian Leicester* Chichester: Phillimore & Co. Ltd. 116.
- 159 This became the Darlington Equitable Building Society in 1876. VCH, 145.
- 160 *The Freehold Land Times and Building News* Dec 1st 1854, 498.
- 161 DCLS, E810030517, prospectus for the Darlington and South Durham Freehold Land Society; *Northern Echo* 4th August 1876, 11 September 1889.
- 162 http://beestoncivicsociety.org.uk/gallery_cottgrove.html accessed on 6/2/2012.

- 163 <http://webapps.stoke.gov.uk/uploadedfiles/Dresden%20CAA%202008.pdf>
- 164 <http://www.preston.gov.uk/yourservices/planning/conservation-and-heritage/conservation-areas/fulwood-conservation-area/>
- 165 <http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=1205&p=0>.
- 166 DCLS, U418f 30585.
- 167 EH, Listing Selection Guide, Domestic 3: Suburban and Country Houses, web published October 2011.



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