

Rhodes Town

**How Lamb Farm became Hackney
suburbia**



**Dissertation
MA, Historical Research**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

HAD	Hackney Archives Department
IHR	Institute of Historical Research
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
MDR	Middlesex Deeds Registry in the LMA
RH	Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies at Rhodes House
VCH	Victoria County History

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I must also acknowledge those residents who, forty years ago, formed Mapledene Residents Association to resist local council initiatives to redevelop the streets which are a focus of this study.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This work stems from questioning how the area where I live, in Hackney, came to be built. For twenty years as I have walked through the area, getting to work, taking my children to school, questions came to mind. Who developed the area for housing: when and why? What was here before? Why do the houses look so similar, yet on closer inspection, are different? Why are some built in pairs or as small terraces? How were they built? Why do the streets and houses bear the names they have? What sort of people first lived in them?

This dissertation attempts to answer these questions. Using Rhodes family papers at Hackney Archives, Rhodes House and a sample of the MDR, it will investigate how and why, from the early 1800s, open fields owned by the Rhodes family were transformed into a suburb of London in south-west Hackney. After looking at the wider context of suburban house-building in London, why there was a growth of suburbs and the process for building them, it will examine the nature of the development of this part of Hackney, identifying some of the individuals involved in the speculative building process: the developers, builders, architects and financiers. Focussing on a network of streets, which are still lined with the houses built at that time, this study will consider the form and appearance of the houses erected and the type of people who first came to live in them.

1.1 Literature review

In his opening words at the IHR's 2013 Conference on 'Mobilising London's Housing Histories', Andrew Saint observed that the topic of housing history was almost unfashionable. So little had been written on it in recent years. Whilst preparing for his address, he had had to fall back on studies published decades earlier. Where there has been work published more recently, it has concentrated on post-war social housing, and not the previous century's domestic building.¹

The definitive work on the history of London's suburban development remains sited in south London: Jim Dyos's 1966 work '*Victorian Suburb: a Study of the Growth of Camberwell*'. 2013's publication by 'The Survey of London' of its work on Battersea has been an exception to the recent shortage of literature in this type of history. A similar dearth of literature applies to the history of Hackney and its housing. Apart from general histories, little has been published in the last few years, with the exception of Elizabeth Robinson's '*Twentieth Century Buildings in Hackney*' (1999) and the Hackney Society's 2009 publication of '*Hackney Modern, Restored, Forgotten, Ignored*', a series of articles on post-1960 and historic buildings, which contains only one entry on nineteenth-century domestic development.² Otherwise HAD's annual '*Hackney History*' has included articles by Peter Guillery (2000) and Isobel Watson (1997) on house building in Kingsland and Haggerston. Isobel Watson's 1989 book on the

¹ A. Saint, 'What can we learn from housing history', *Mobilising London's housing histories: the provision of homes since 1850*, (IHR Conference, 2013) (<http://www.history.ac.uk/podcasts/mobilising-londons-housing-histories-provision-homes-1850/what-can-we-learn-londons-housing>, accessed 26/07/14)

² A. Robey, 'Nichols Square', in L. Rigg, *Hackney, Modern, Restored, Forgotten, Ignored*, (London, 2009), pp. 106-109

development of South Hackney, '*Gentlemen in the Building Line*,' remains the only study of nineteenth-century speculative building in the area.

2. THE LURE OF THE SUBURB

2.1 *The stimuli for development*

Five principal factors lay behind the development of London's suburbs: an increasing population, people's quest for privacy, improved transportation, enough land on which to build and the availability of capital.³ London had to grow to accommodate a rapidly increasing population. The pace of London's population growth had accelerated in the second half of the eighteenth century. Increasing to almost a million in 1801, averaging a 9.5% increase per decade since 1750, London's population over the following years grew to almost two million in 1841, reflecting a 26% growth every ten years.⁴ This rapid increase was mainly due to migration into London. At the heart of an industrialising nation, the metropolis was attracting people to take up jobs in commerce, industry, finance, and administration.⁵

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the number of houses had barely kept pace with the growing urban population, through the subdivision of existing housing and the packing of more accommodation into alleys and courtyards.⁶ Struggling to cope, London was clogging up: in the streets with traffic restricted by toll-gates and narrow streets; in the disposal of waste; in the provision of clean water; in the lack of space in overcrowded graveyards to bury the dead. This restriction in circulation, both physical and economical, was

³ H.J. Dyos, *Victorian Suburb, A study of the growth of Camberwell*, (Leicester, 1966), p. 53

⁴

<http://www.cch.kcl.ac.uk/legacy/teaching/av1000/numerical/problems/london/london-pop-table.html> (accessed 07/07/14)

⁵ C. Thom, *Researching London's Houses*, (London, 2005), p. 21

⁶ M. Daunt, 'Introduction', in M. Daunt, (ed.), *The Cambridge urban history of Britain, Vol. 3*, (Cambridge, 2000), p. 3

seen to affect the capital's morality as well. 'The health and care of the city was at one with the health and care of the body.'⁷ These were issues which could threaten social order as well as social welfare.

Middle and lower middle-class Londoners, who were less dependent on living close to their places of work, could afford to break free of the metropolitan overcrowding to make their homes in the emerging suburbs. A move to the suburb was seen as moving closer to the seclusion and healthy air of the countryside and the life-style of the country gentleman.⁸ Not only a move to a different physical environment, it was a conscious and positive migration to a place with a different set of social values.⁹

The Victorian middle-class 'was the most family conscious and home-centred generation to have emerged in English history',¹⁰ with the family home occupying 'a central place in any Victorian system of values'.¹¹ The new suburb was seen as offering seclusion and security for the family, away from the temptations of metropolitan living, where there would be 'no competition to the gentle pleasures of the fireside'.¹² By removing the family from the urban centre, the suburb allowed home life to be carried out privately in a distinct, distant place from work, away from traffic, noise and dirt.

Returning to the suburb from working in the urban centre, the husband and father was thrown back on the resources of his own home, in an area which

⁷ Ibid, p. 7

⁸ J. Burnett, *A Social History of Housing*, (Newton Abbot, 1978), p. 100

⁹ Ibid, p. 101

¹⁰ Ibid, p.95

¹¹ D. Olsen, *The Growth of Victorian London*, (London, 1976), p. 212

¹² Ibid, p.24

offered little competition to the hearth, surrounded by other similar homes. Suburban living allowed for a new type of social life, separating the sexes. The home became the woman's centre for her life. Social interaction for her and her children, particularly her daughters, could be more easily controlled, with less risk of chance encounters, especially with a different class of person. The suburb served the aspiring Victorian's desire for a single family dwelling, privacy and social exclusiveness. Privacy was, to the Victorians, the chief attraction of suburbia, repudiating 'earlier patterns of urbanity'.¹³

Another stimulus for the development of the suburb was cheaper transport. Before the arrival of the railway, the introduction of a regular horse-drawn bus service, with George Shillibeer's first London omnibus in 1829, began a commuter revolution.¹⁴ Previously, wealthier residents had travelled to work in the City in their own private carriages or on scheduled public short-stage coaches. These facilities were inadequate for the size of the local populations they served,¹⁵ leaving the less prosperous of the middle-classes to walk to work. The introduction of the omnibus, carrying more and charging less than the stagecoach, enabled more people to live further away, up to three or five miles from their place of work. 'The existence of the omnibus connections with the City and the West End was an essential pre-requisite to the success of any suburban development.'¹⁶ By 1858, 20,000 Londoners were commuting to London by bus.¹⁷

¹³ Ibid, p. 214, p. 13

¹⁴ R. Porter, *London, a Social History*, (London, 1994), p. 225.

¹⁵ Dyos, *Victorian suburb*, p. 63

¹⁶ Olsen, *The Growth*, p. 319

¹⁷ . Burnett, *A Social History*, p 13 (quoting T. C . Parker and M. Robbins, *History of London Transport Vol 1*, (London,1963), p. 578)

London's suburban development took place on the estates of land owners and institutions bordering the metropolis. Previously, this land had earned its owners an income through farming, market gardening and brickmaking. Now landowners appreciated that house building offered a more lucrative enterprise for getting the most out of their land and they were willing to make their acres available for suburban development. Though not always consistently available, and often diverted by other enterprises home and overseas, capital was also made available to fund this development.

2.2 The New Suburbs

Attitudes towards suburban living were changing. London's suburbs had not always been viewed as attractive places to move to. The first suburbs of London, settlements beyond the City's limits such as Southwark and Shoreditch, had been seen since the Middle Ages as 'all that was the most disreputable' in urban society¹⁸, an extension of, and not an escape from, the depravity of city life.

London by the 1830s, was on the cusp of a new age. A rise in real incomes, shorter working hours, as well as greater regularity and security of employment, were becoming general for an increasing number of people.¹⁹ Gas lighting, introduced around 1816, was in use to light the streets and made people feel safer. The London-wide Metropolitan Police had been established in 1829. The Great Reform Act had extended the suffrage to more of the growing middle-class. There was also a move to change government at a local level, with the democratising of the 'closed vestries' that had dominated local

¹⁸ H. J. Dyos, *Urbanity and suburbanity : an inaugural lecture delivered in the University of Leicester, 1 May 1973*, (Leicester, 1973), p.15

¹⁹ Dyos, *Victorian suburb*, p. 61

administration. Symbolically, the Houses of Parliament were rebuilt, after burning down in 1834 and there was a 'general softening of manners'.²⁰ The middle classes felt more secure and confident in making a move to the suburbs, where employment could also be found in the factories, transport systems and shops serving the new communities.

John Summerson describes four types of early suburban development in London by the early nineteenth-century. The 'village development' suburb took place, not as an outgrowth from the metropolis, but as separate expansions of villages, some miles from London, such as Hackney. This new housing was built for merchants and the emerging professional classes. Ribbon development was a second form of suburban development, so called because it took place along the borderlands of main roads leading out of London. This type of development had been encouraged by road improvements, brought about by the previous century's turnpike trusts and Macadam surfacing after 1815. Summerson also mentions villa country building: mansions set in substantial grounds, dotted about the open countryside surrounding London.²¹

Summerson's fourth example of suburban building was estate development. The ideal prototype for the development of the nineteenth-century London suburb was in St John's Wood, on land purchased by Henry Eyre. Other London examples of this type, usually planned by large speculative builders, were Somers Town and Camden Town, with their network of streets filling in land between main roads. The Eyre estate was developed in the 1820s, with its pretty Italianate villas, suggesting scenes from Lake Como, set within high

²⁰ Olsen, *The Growth*, p. 186

²¹ G. Summerson, *Georgian London*, (London, 1962), p. 270; Burnett, *A Social History*, p. 105

garden walls, located towards the clean air and the open spaces of the countryside. Villas were detached or, as introduced by the estate's chief architect John Shaw, semi-detached, along wide streets.²² Built in their own grounds, with low-pitched roofs and eaves overhanging, resting on brackets, they broke away from the terrace-dominated, Georgian urban-scap.²³ Providing lower-density housing, villas represented a 'conscious decision of their builders to create an environment as different as possible from the metropolis.' They 'preached the gospel of individuality',²⁴ sought by the aspiring Victorian family in its quest for privacy.

From the 1840s, more humdrum villas were being built in the inner-London suburbs, offering a diluted form of the suburban ideal found in places like St John's Wood. Escape from work and the dubious pleasures of city living, privacy within one's own home, the surroundings of nature in a man-made garden and social exclusiveness could be made available to those further down the social scale.

By the early Victorian period, emulating what Eyre had built in St John's Wood, London suburbs were developing to alleviate a housing shortage for a growing population and meet the middle-class aspirations for a more exclusive family life. These requirements were facilitated by the introduction of cheaper public transport and met by the provision of land and capital.

2.3 Speculative Building

The building of these new suburbs was achieved through speculative building carried out by a chain of often many interests, 'simply building houses in

²² Olsen, *The Growth*, p. 215

²³ Thom, *Researching*, p.32

²⁴ Olsen, *The Growth*, p. 36, p. 222

anticipation of the demand for them'.²⁵ Each of these interests benefited from this way of building. By leasing his land to the developer, the landlord, without making the financial outlay, saw new houses increase the value of his estate, securing for him and his heirs a steady stream of income from ground rents. The developer, without having to find the capital to acquire land, could undertake large-scale development and make a profit, from sub-letting at increased ground rents or selling leases to the builders who put up the houses. Given the opportunity to work together, small builders could profit from an enterprise which they could not have afforded to undertake alone.²⁶

This process of building the suburb was largely an unconscious, unplanned one,²⁷ which led typically to episodic, unplanned development of London's Victorian suburbs.²⁸ Many houses were built 'even without drawings', let alone with the input of trained architects. They tended to be erected by the builder using the 'assistance of one of his own order'²⁹ and the use of various pattern books, some of which were inherited from the builders' Georgian antecedents, such as S.H. Brooks's reworking of William Pain's earlier manual in *The Practical House Carpenter*.³⁰ Design was about re-using, adapting and collating.³¹ In some cases an individual middle-class house might be designed by an architect to the client's order. Otherwise architectural style meant little

²⁵ Dyos, *Victorian suburb*, p. 122

²⁶ Thom, *Researching*, p.14

²⁷ Dyos, *Victorian suburb*, p. 85

²⁸ Thom, *Researching*, p. 14

²⁹ The Builder Vol. XVI, 1858, p. 630

³⁰ M. Hunter, *The Victorian Villas of Hackney*, (London, 1981), p. 36

³¹ D. Kroll, 'Other architects who made London: planning and design of speculative housing 1870-1939', *Mobilising London's housing histories: the provision of homes since 1850*, (IHR Conference, 2013, podcast) (<http://www.history.ac.uk/podcasts/mobilising-londons-housing-histories-provision-homes-1850/other-architects-who-made-london>), accessed 27/07/14)

more than the different shape of a window or a change in decorative features, chosen by the builder.

Most of what was built reflected the taste of the builder and his judgment as to what would sell.³² The prospective suburbanites wanted their new home to resemble those of their social superiors. Towards the middle of the century, these came to reflect the 'Italianate' style, introduced, most notably, by Sir Charles Barry, through his Pall Mall clubs. This style, derived from Italy's Renaissance palaces, added bolder shapes and details to the columns, arches and pediments of the classical style, favoured by the Georgians.³³ Architectural tastes, like manners, permeate downwards; the suburban dweller expected his home to at least 'have some resemblanceto the façade and layout of more exclusive properties'.³⁴ Any innovation to the perceived norm was a risk for the speculative builder. The building trade was 'a conservative industry' which catered for 'a largely conservative market'.³⁵

While John Burnet argued that architects were 'not a principal determinant of the middle-class house form' at this time,³⁶ David Kroll has suggested that architects were more involved in speculative building than previously thought.³⁷ His study, though, deals with the later Victorian period after 1886. In the earlier period, when the boundaries between occupations were less clearly defined, a builder could have called himself an architect, an occupation

³² Olsen, *The Growth*, p. 158.

³³ Hunter, *The Victorian Villas*, p. 41

³⁴ Dyos, *Victorian suburb*, p. 83

³⁵ Burnett, *A Social History*, p. 198

³⁶ Burnett, *A Social History*, p 111

³⁷ Kroll, 'Other architects', podcast

not yet professionally defined and legally protected.³⁸ Individuals might have employed architectural expertise in the design of the house to be built for them, but, as Kroll admits, small speculative builders would have been less likely to engage architects to design the houses they were to put up.³⁹

It was through speculation on the part of the different interests involved that the fields surrounding London were successfully developed into new suburbs. With a fair amount of risk, dictated by cycles in the wider economy, each of the concerned parties was able to gain from the process. Together they built up, however uncoordinated, sweeps of a new style of housing, meeting the aspirations of their first Victorian occupants.

³⁸ Ibid

³⁹ Ibid

3. HACKNEY

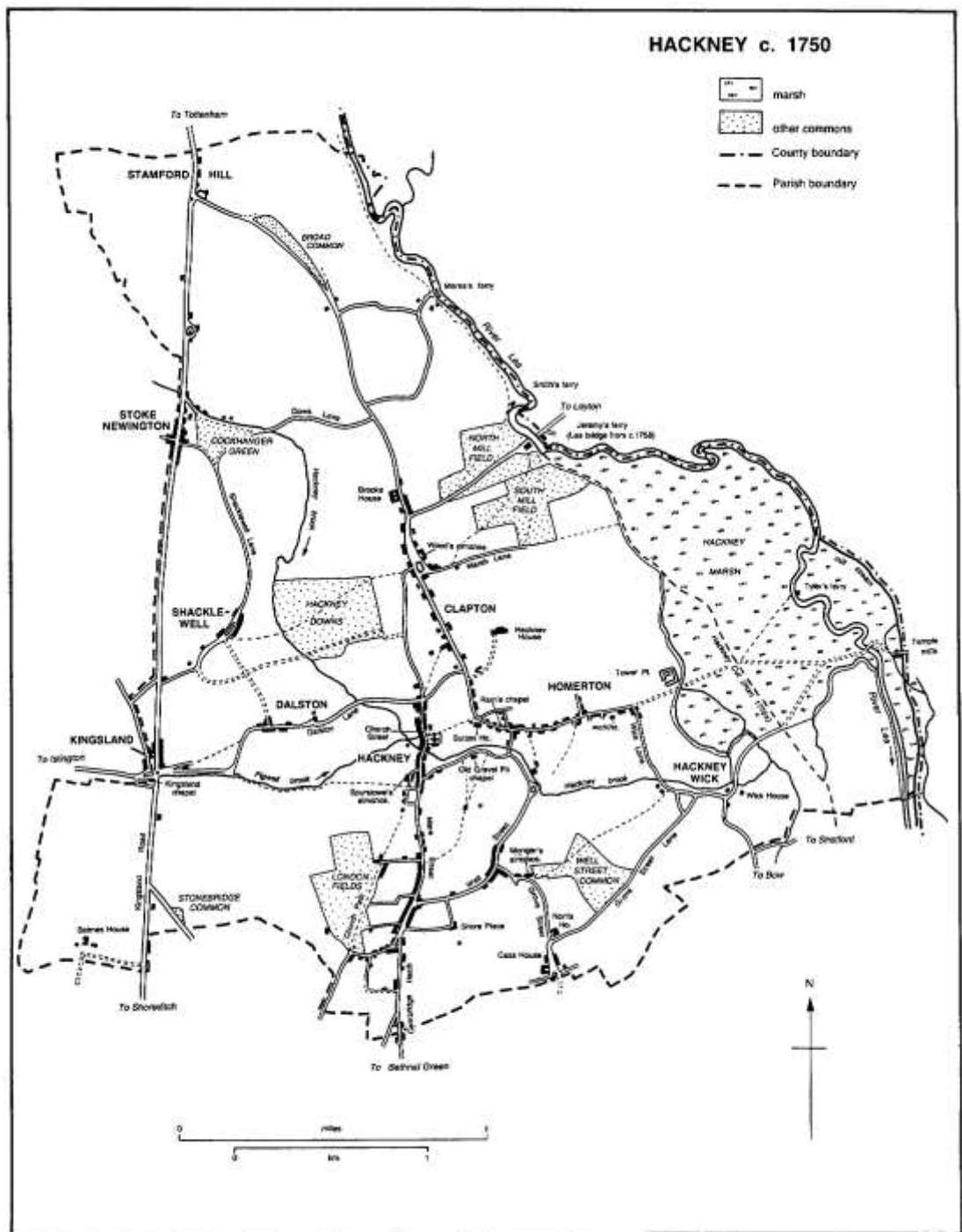


Fig 3.1 1750 map showing different areas of Hackney
 (Source: *The Victoria History of the County of Middlesex*, vol. 10, p. 14)

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Hackney remained little more than a village about three miles north-east of the city of London. It was a large parish of 3,300 acres, stretching from Tottenham in the north to Shoreditch in the

south and from Kingsland Road in the west as far as the River Lea.⁴⁰ Within the parish were a number of settlements in addition to the village centre around the church: Kingsland, Dalston, South Hackney (Well and Grove Streets), Homerton, Hackney Wick, Clapton, Shacklewell and Stamford Hill (Fig. 3.1). By 1801 Hackney had a population of almost 13,000 living in 2050 houses, spread among the different settlements, still separated from each other by open land.⁴¹

On two counts of Summerson's definition, Hackney was already a suburb through village and ribbon development. In the sixteenth century, Hackney's rural surroundings had attracted wealthy Londoners, firstly courtiers and then merchants, to build second, or retirement, country homes in different parts of the parish not too far from the capital. This practice continued into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

By the Georgian period isolated, speculative terrace-building was occurring in different parts of Hackney, for instance Clapton Terrace in Upper Clapton in 1774, Hackney Terrace in South Hackney in 1796 and Clapton Square in 1816. Most of this was ribbon development, alongside existing roadways. In the same period, a number of large mansions had been built along the roadway which ran into Hackney from Shoreditch, up Mare Street and Church Street, past the village centre, and on via Clapton to Stamford Hill. Some of them were already changing to institutional use as orphanages, schools or refuges for the mentally ill or destitute.

⁴⁰ D. Mander, *Strength in the Tower*, (Stroud, 1998), p. 1

⁴¹ T.F.T. Baker, (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Middlesex, vol. 10*, (Oxford, 1995), p. 14

On the western side of the borough ran the old Roman road, the Great North Road, connecting Hackney, via Shoreditch, to the City and continuing north through Stamford Hill to Tottenham and beyond. This route, since 1713, had been subject to the Stamford Hill turnpike trust with a regular coach service linking Hackney to the City from 1740.⁴² There had been virtually no buildings along this road between Shoreditch and Kingsland, until the 1750s, when the stretch towards Kingsland started to be developed.⁴³

Hackney's meadows provided hay for London's horses and were grazed by cows whose milk went to the city; its fertile earth was excellent for growing root crops and Hackney's turnips were renowned in London's markets.⁴⁴ Not only had some members of the city's political and financial establishment made Hackney their home, others sent their children to be educated amidst its cleaner air, while ordinary Londoners would make a Hackney tavern their destination for a Sunday outing.

According to Jim Dyos, a suburb is 'in essence.....a decentralized part of a city with which it is inseparably linked by certain economic and social ties.'⁴⁵ By this definition, Hackney had always been a suburb of London. Its economic ties were strengthened in 1820 with the completion through Hackney of the Regent's Canal, running along its southern boundary with Shoreditch. Its construction 'stimulated the spread of building from London's east end,'⁴⁶ Within a few miles walk or coach ride from London, land in Hackney, in the

⁴² Ibid, p. 8

⁴³ P. Guillery, 'Waste and Place: late 18th-century development on Kingsland Road', *Hackney History*, 6, (2000), p. 20

⁴⁴ M. Willes, *The Making of the English Gardner*, (London, 2011), p. 67

⁴⁵ Dyos, *Victorian suburb*, p. 22

⁴⁶ Baker, *VCH*, p. 14

hands of an enterprising landlord, was ripe for developing from open fields to houses.

4. THE RHODES DEVELOPMENT

4.1 The Rhodes and Hackney

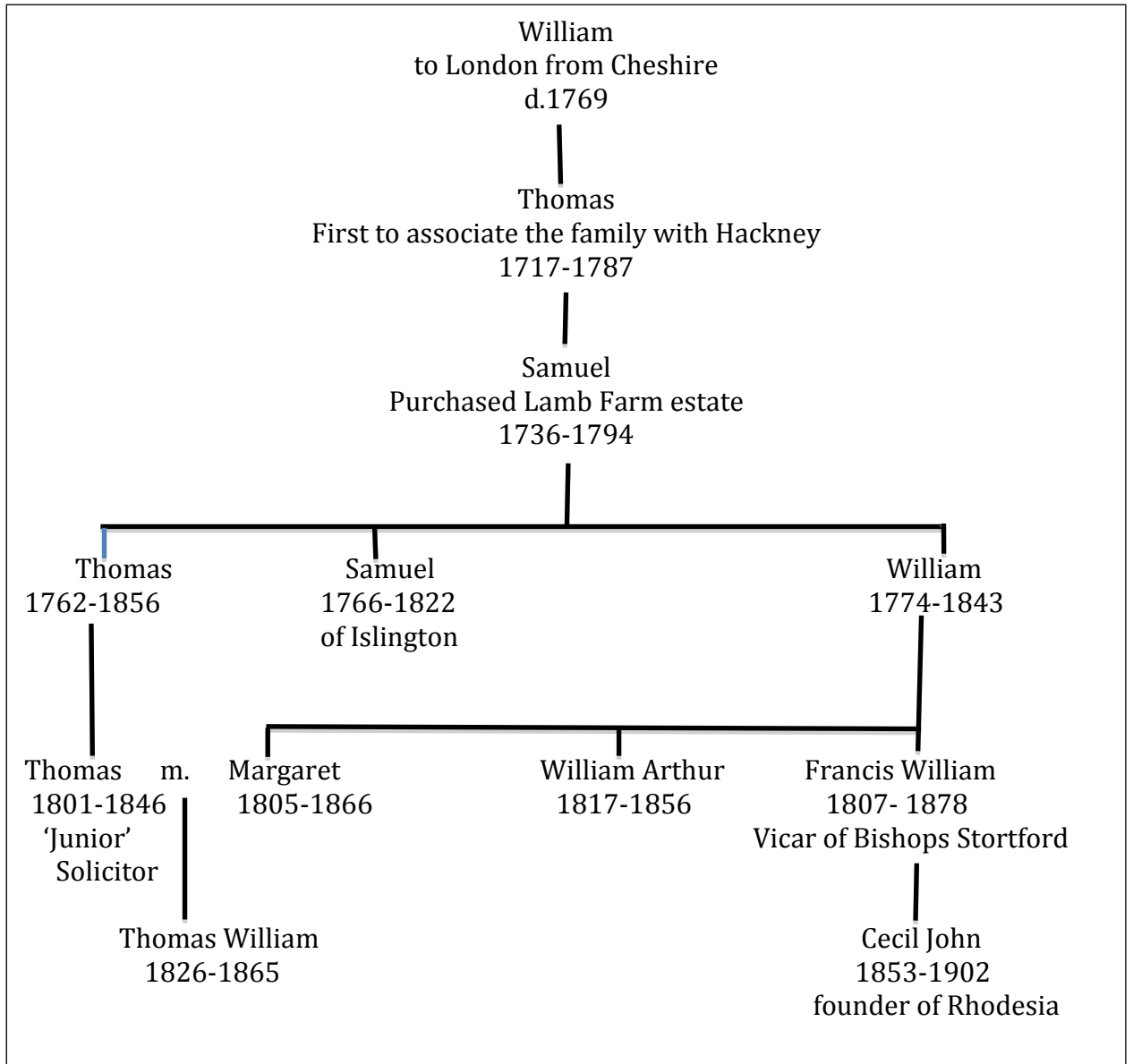


Fig 4.1 Rhodes Family Tree
(source: 'Certificate Book', RH MSS Aft. S. 1647 Vol. 2)

Systematic building development in Hackney was pioneered by the Rhodes family.⁴⁷ Samuel Rhodes, farmer and brick maker, bought 140 acres, known as Lamb Farm, in Hackney in 1789. It was sold to him by the Tyssens, who had

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 14

been Hackney's largest landowners, since purchasing all of Hackney's three manors by the end of the seventeenth century.

The first of the Rhodes family, William, came to London from Cheshire around 1720, farming land in the Gray's Inn and Regent's Park areas.⁴⁸ In his will of 1767, William referred to himself as a farmer of St. Pancras. His son, Thomas, left an inheritance when he died in 1787 of land and interests in Charlotte Street, New Battle Bridge, Jermyn Street and Wimpole Street as well as in St Pancras.⁴⁹ Thomas left all this property to his son Samuel, as well as £3,000, equivalent to over £168,000 today.⁵⁰

It was Thomas Rhodes who first associated the family with Hackney. By 1773, he occupied most of Balmes House farm, north of Hoxton in the south-west corner of Hackney parish, owned by the de Beauvoir family. His son, Samuel, was later granted by Revd. Peter de Beauvoir a lease of the farmhouse, which he already occupied, along with 40 acres.⁵¹ Samuel was residing at this farm in Hoxton when he wrote his will.

Farmer Samuel had substantiated the family's presence in Hackney in 1775 by leasing a further 97 acres of arable, pasture and meadow-land on the other side of the parish, towards Homerton.⁵² Samuel also diversified into brickmaking. In

⁴⁸ <http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/dept/scwmss/wmss/online/blcas/rhodes-fam.html> (accessed 10/08/14)

⁴⁹ Thomas Rhodes's Will, RH MSS.Afr.s.1647 Vol. 2

⁵⁰ <http://apps.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency/results.asp#mid> (accessed 22/08/14).

⁵¹ Baker, *VCH*, p. 88

⁵² Mander, *Strength*, p. 23, HAD V31

1785 Revd. Peter de Beauvoir, leased him a further 10 acres of Balmes Farm with the power to dig for brick earth.⁵³

Samuel died a wealthy man. He left for each of his two daughters £10,000 in 3% reduced bank annuities. As well as all his freehold and copyhold land, he left to his three sons a further £10,000,⁵⁴ which, according to the National Archives currency convertor, would be equivalent today to more than £560,000.⁵⁵

The purchase of Lamb Farm, though, was Samuel's largest land acquisition. There are two surviving indentures which cover this sale: one in November 1788 and the other in November 1789.⁵⁶ He paid £5250 for the land. It was this Lamb Farm Estate, as well as land in St Pancras, Battle Bridge, Plaistow, Wimpole Street and Shoreditch, which his three sons inherited on his death in 1794.⁵⁷

4.2 Lamb Farm

Lamb Farm, referred to by later generations of the Rhodes family as their Dalston estate, was a large, compact parcel of flat land, lying on brick earth loam with Taplow Gravel beneath, which afforded good drainage. Apart from a stream running along its north side, there was no other water running through it. It was separated on its western side from Kingsland Road by land belonging to St Bartholomew's Hospital and the Rector of Stoke Newington. To its east was charity land, endowing Spurstowe's almshouses, and the common land of London Field. To the south, mostly in the parish of Shoreditch, lay land which

⁵³ Baker, *VCH*, p. 88

⁵⁴ Samuel Rhodes's Will, RH/MSS.Afr.s.1647 Vol. 2

⁵⁵ <http://apps.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency/results.asp#mid> accessed 22/08/14).

⁵⁶ LMA MDR/1789/3/361, 1790/1/57

⁵⁷ HAD D/F/RHO/1

had been inherited, since the sixteenth century, from the Lee family, via the Actons, by the Middletons To the north, the estate was bordered by Dalston Road, which, leading through the hamlet of Dalston, was the only road heading westwards out of Hackney. As this road bore north, the northern side of the estate ran along the Pigwell stream, the other side of which lay land owned by the Grahams since 1753.

A map of the Tyssen estate of 1785 shows the Lamb Farm estate at the southern end of their Hackney holdings, made up of three fields (Fig 4.2). The largest field, of 101 acres, was 'brick-earth dug and undivided' (marked 1 on Fig. 4.2), typically part of the ring of brickfields around London at that time.⁵⁸ The few buildings the estate included were, on its western side, the former Lamb Public House with garden and adjoining five houses, stables, yards and garden (2 on Fig. 4.2), all approached along a track leading east from Kingsland Road. The only other houses noted on this land were in the south-east corner, adjoining London Field, in a field of seven acres with five houses, cowlayer, barn and garden. This must have been what later deeds of sale referred to as London Field Farm (3 on Fig. 4.2). The indentures documenting the sale to Samuel Rhodes three years later refer to earlier deeds which describe a different, smaller field pattern, reflecting how the land was cultivated before it was mostly made over for brickmaking by the Tyssens. Thomas Milne's map of 1800 reflects this earlier agricultural use of the land: meadow, arable and market gardens.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ London Topographical Society, *Thomas Milne's Land Use Map of London and its Environs in 1800*, Publication No. 118-119, (London 1975-6)

⁵⁹ Ibid

Unlike the Tyssens, and other landowners of London suburban developments, the Rhodeses were not established London landowners but 'enterprising lessees',⁶⁰ 'a family of London brick makers and speculators.'⁶¹ The family moved with the times, expanding from farming into brickmaking. Lamb Farm was a substantial addition to their portfolio of land-held interests. Having passed from agricultural use to brick production, the land was suitable to reap for the Rhodeses a lucrative crop of bricks.

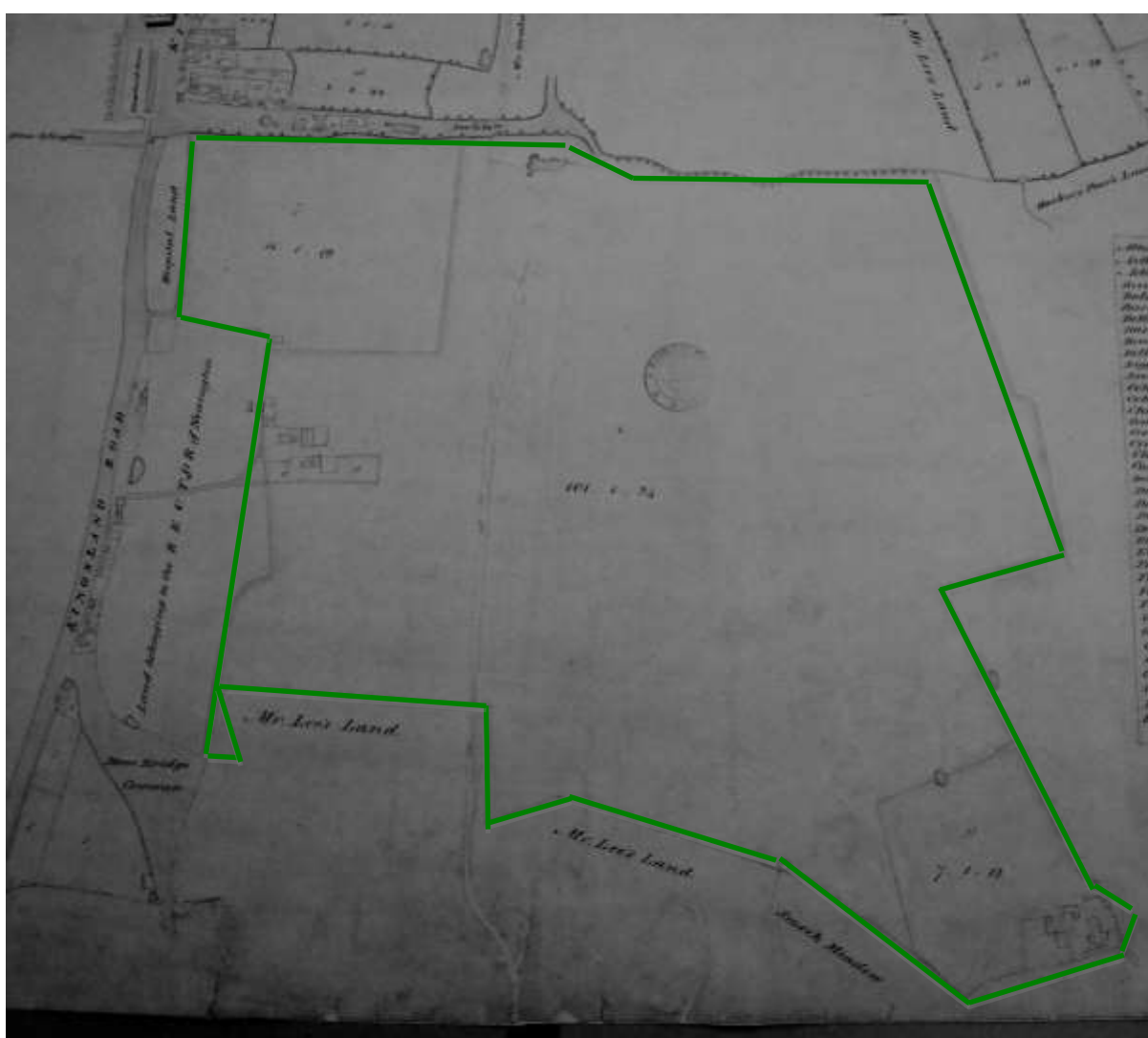


Fig 4.2 Tyssen estate in 1785 with Lamb Farm marked
(Source: HAD/D/F/TYS/66)

⁶⁰ Baker, *VCH*, p. 14

⁶¹ B. Cherry, and N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England, London 4: North*, (London, 1998) p. 507

Aspirations by the Rhodeses to develop the area for building would have been held back by war with France, which had been continuing since 1793. Instead the estate was returned to cultivation. Three years after inheriting the property, the Rhodes brothers commissioned a plan to be made of their 'farm situate near Kingsland' (Fig 4.3).

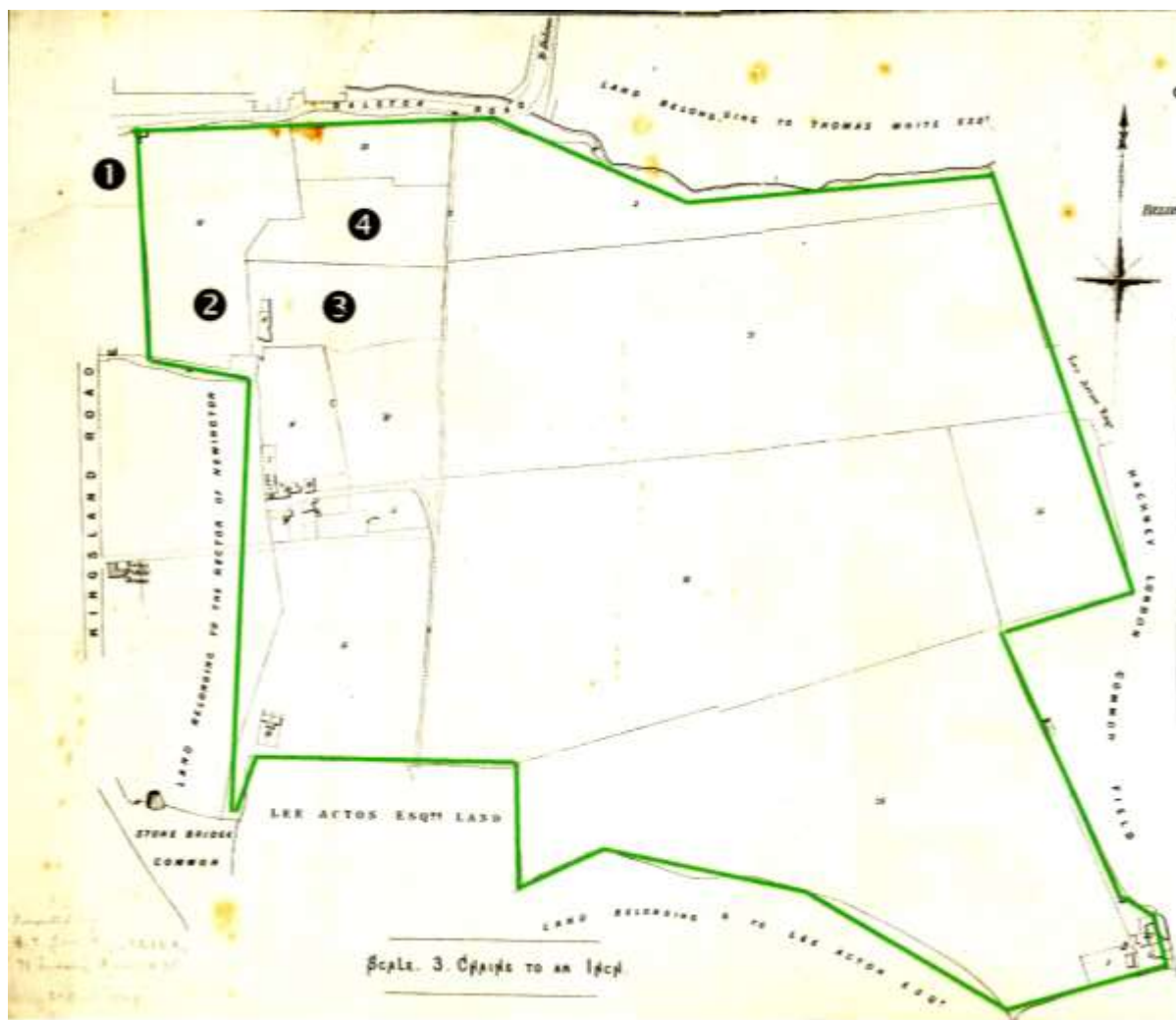


Fig. 4.3 Lamp Farm 1797
(source: HAD V70)

The plan shows the estate divided into thirteen fields, most of which had been enclosed from the large field of 'brick-earth dug and undivided' referred to on the Tyssen map twelve years earlier. Two fields bordering the Pigwell stream bore the name 'Ozier', reflecting their waterside location.

The thirty-two acres of 'Great Field' were leased in 1806 to James Grange, a fruiterer of Piccadilly and Covent Garden. Here Grange established a market garden, which continued to be cultivated into the 1840s. The house he built developed into Richmond Lodge, remembered by Benjamin Clarke from his youth in the 1830s, as 'a most retired mansion, situated in its own grounds, walled around'.⁶²

Another house, built at this time amidst the rural setting of Lamb Farm, was the fifteen-roomed 'capital messuage' known as 'The Grange', not to be confused with Mr. Grange's house a few fields north. Set in its own one and three-quarter acres of grounds it was substantial, having a library, dining, breakfast and drawing rooms, a 'china room', kitchen, larder, scullery, wine cellar and brew house, with a cistern in the garden to supply the WC.⁶³

The only other turning over of fields to house building, at this time, was the leasing of land in 1806 to William Wilman on the eastern fringes of Lamb Farm. This was for an isolated development overlooking the common land of London Field, to be built on a road to be called London Terrace. This remote urban-scape of a terrace, set amidst fields, was not unique. John Dawes's Highbury Terrace had stood isolated at the top of Highbury Fields since 1789.⁶⁴ It was an inkling of what was to come.

4.3 From Fields to Streets

A family tree amongst the Rhodes papers annotates the three brothers, Thomas, Samuel and William, as 'High Rhodes', 'Cross Rhodes' and 'Bye

⁶² Clarke, *Glimpses*, p 240

⁶³ http://users.bathspa.ac.uk/greenwood/map_a8m.html (accessed 02/08/14), HAD St.-John-at-at Hackney Tithe Map 1843, HAD M1048

⁶⁴ M. Cosh, *The Squares of Islington, Part 1* (London 1990), p. 2

Rhodes.⁶⁵ Maybe the middle brother's moniker alluded to characteristics which made him less than easy to get along with. Within ten years of their father's death 'Cross-Rhodes' Samuel sold to each of his brothers one half of his third of Lamb Farm, in 1803.⁶⁶ It was when the estate was in the joint hands of Thomas and William Rhodes, held in undivided moieties, that building development started.

Set amongst agricultural land, the estate was away from main roads, apart from on its north-west border, which ran along Dalston Road. It was here, along this route, that building development began, a classic example of ribbon development. From 1807 Robert Sheldrick was building there, completing Dalston Terrace.⁶⁷ Sheldrick had been 'active in numerous local speculations'. He had been involved in the development of the east side of Kingsland Road between 1802 and 1808, not too far from the western edge of Lamb Farm.⁶⁸ This development was a continuation of the building which had been creeping up Kingsland Road for the previous fifty years. Sheldrick's completion of fifteen houses along Dalston Road by 1812, further extended this ribbon development towards Hackney.⁶⁹

The move from ribbon to estate development by the Rhodeses occurred when the first streets were laid out, from 1821, encroaching into the open land of the estate. The Rhodeses were the first landowners to introduce this type of

⁶⁵ 'Certificate Book', RH MSS.Afr.s.1647 Vol. 2

⁶⁶ HAD D/F/RHO/2/3, D/F/RHO/2/4 Samuel went on to buy land in Islington for extensive farm stock and brickmaking, T. F. T. Baker, C. R. Elrington (eds.), *The Victoria History of the County of Middlesex, vol. 8*, (Oxford, 1985)

⁶⁷ Mander, *Strength*, p. 45

⁶⁸ P. Guillery, 'Waste and Place: late 18th-century development on Kingsland Road', *Hackney History*, (6) (2000), p. 34

⁶⁹ HAD V191

development into this part of Hackney. Their Middleton neighbours started granting leases in 1813, but they were for ribbon development along Kingsland Road.⁷⁰ It was not until 1840 that Sir William Middleton started to lay out his estate for building.

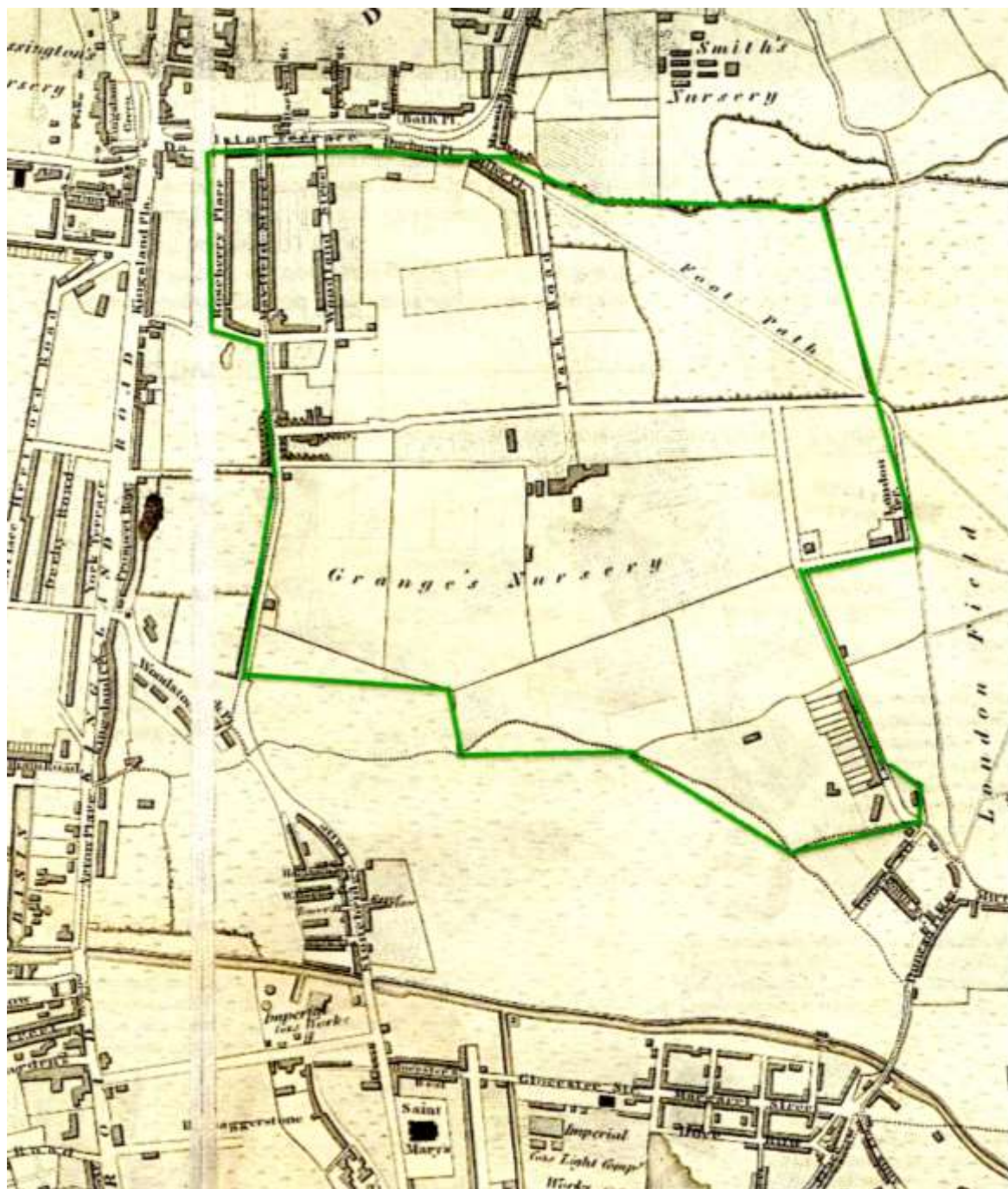


Fig 4.4 Greenwood's 1827 London Map showing Lamb Farm
(Source: http://users.bathspa.ac.uk/greenwood/map_a8h.html - accessed 24/09/14)

⁷⁰ Watson, I, 'The Last Harvest on Haggerston Farm', *Hackney History*, 3 (1997), p. 26

As can be seen in Greenwood's 1827 map of London the Rhodes's first streets were Roseberry Place⁷¹, Mayfield and Woodland Streets, running south from Dalston Road (Fig 4.4). Further east, running south from Dalston Road, where Dalston Road turned north towards Hackney, Park Road, running south-east, was being built on in 1823. By 1828, Forest Row, the beginning of later Forest Road, was also being built up, crossing Roseberry Place, Mayfield and Woodland Streets as it led eastwards from Kingsland Road into the estate. The fact that this development was focused in one area and was not piece-meal, reflects careful planning and co-ordination by the Rhodes brothers.

Richmond Road, on the line of an old footpath, was the first street to cross the whole estate, running directly across it from west to east, suggesting plans for future development. The only housing along it, as seen in Greenwood's map, was at its western end, the old Lamb Pub buildings. Other buildings shown on the estate were the earlier London Terrace and the buildings around Mr Grange's house, amidst his nursery, with the cartway leading to it from the west starting to be built up as Grange Road. Just to the north of where the building of London Field farm had been, in the south-east of the estate, the terrace of Lansdowne Place had been built. Like London Terrace, on the eastern edge of the estate, it took up what would be an advantageous position when all around it was built-up streets, overlooking the open space of London Field.

Typically for suburban London estates on farmland, these streets reflected the former field boundaries, shown on the 1797 map (Fig 4.3). Roseberry Place ran along the estate's north-east boundary (marked ❶ on Fig. 4.3), Mayfield ran

⁷¹ When discussing streets of the period, they will be referred to by the names they were originally called and not by the names they bear today.

along the divide between Mr Richard's seven acres of Nursery Ground (② on Fig. 4.3) and Mr Hindle's three acre field (③ on Fig. 4.3). Woodland Street was along the boundary of Mr Richard's ground (② on Fig. 4.3) with Mr Wood's three acre Ozier ground (④ on Fig. 4.3) and Forest Row ran along the southern boundary of what had been Mr Hindle's field (③ on Fig 4.3). Park Road followed the beginning of a footpath running south-west towards London Field.

Development of the estate continued in this block format in the 1830s, spreading out southwards and eastwards from the north-western corner. Forest Road and Grange Road were taken further east and Holly Street, heading south, following an old cartway, was being built on by 1835. In 1839, a new road was laid out running due north to give access from the Regent's Canal to the Middleton land and up through the Rhodes land to Dalston Road. In anticipation of this, the Rhodeses were granting leases along its route in 1838.

The 1843 parish tithe maps show the north-west of the estate completely built up between Dalston Road and Richmond Road. Only four years after being laid out, Queen's Road had houses built on both sides from Shrubland Grove north to Dalston Road. Holly Street, on the west side of, and parallel to, Queen's Road, had been extended south, right through the estate, from Dalston Road on into Middleton land.

The tithe map shows that the eastern part of the estate remained largely market gardens with some meadowland, orchard and grass fields. There had been a small amount of additional housing put up in this area, north of Lansdowne Place, at the southern end of Lansdowne Road. Otherwise, with no

trace of future roads, there stood three isolated houses. One, at the north-east corner of the Rhodes's land, was noted as a beer shop. On the north side of Richmond Road, later at the corner of Lansdowne Drive, there was a cottage, the 'Swiss Chalet' referred to by Benjamin Clarke, when reminiscing about his Hackney childhood: 'very pretty and picturesque.... one of our landmarks.'⁷² On the south side of Richmond Road, stood Edward Wood's house adjoining the eight acres of market garden he leased from the Rhodeses.

Into the 1850s, the land was betwixt open fields and street. In 1848, following the death of William Rhodes, a valuation of the Lamb Farm estate was carried out.⁷³ It noted that 742 houses had been built on sixty per cent of the land. The other forty per cent of the estate remained as sixty acres of 'garden ground', still to be built on. In 1841 nurseryman William Dulley was leasing the market garden land, once worked by Mr. Grange, where he was employing four female agricultural labourers.⁷⁴ Holly Street in 1843 still had arable fields at its northern and southern ends, as well as land set aside for building.⁷⁵ In 1858 Mr Edward Wood still occupied Lamb Farm Cottage, Richmond Road, cultivating 24 acres of market garden, where he employed four men in agricultural work.⁷⁶

What remained of open space was soon to disappear. From the early 1850s, the south-eastern part of the estate began to be built upon, adjoining the Middleton development to the south. Ten years later the development of Lamb Farm

⁷² Clarke, B., *Glimpses of Ancient Hackney and Stoke Newington*, (London, 1986), p. 240

⁷³ HAD D/F/RHO/5/7

⁷⁴ HAD D/J/P; 1841 census, ancestry.co.uk (accessed 10/08/14)

⁷⁵ HAD St-John-at-Hackney 1843 Tith Map

⁷⁶ 1851 census, ancestry.co.uk (accessed 06/08/14); 1858 Post Office Directory

spread north of Richmond Road to build up the area in the north-east of the estate. By the mid 1870s, the estate had been completely covered with a network of house-lined streets. The change from fields to streets, after a faltering start, had taken almost seven decades to complete.



Fig 4.5 Rhodes's Estate 1870
(Source: The Godfrey Edition, London Sheet 40)

4.4 The Building Process

Once the roads had been laid out, builders would rent street frontages per year at a given rate per foot. The Rhodeses charged different amounts depending on

the street,⁷⁷ ranging from three shillings and four pence to five shillings per foot. The higher rate was charged for Richmond Road, the widest street, and the streets running north-south, Malvern, Park and Lansdowne Roads. Possibly this premium was because, before the days of electric lighting, houses would be more valuable if built with an east-west outlook to catch the morning and afternoon light.

Typical of speculative landlords, the Rhodeses controlled the development of their land by entering into an agreement with the developer. Building was to be in accordance with the building acts and completed 'under the direction and to the satisfaction of Thomas Rhodes and William Rhodes or their surveyor.' All plans, elevations and sections were to be approved by the surveyor prior to the work beginning, with no addition nor alteration to be made without the license in writing of the Rhodes lessors. The developer was obliged to share with fellow lessees responsibility in making drains and sewers.

The agreement specified the number and type of houses to be erected, as defined by a series of building acts passed in the previous century. The estate's control laid down the type of bricks to be used in constructing the houses. In his 1842 agreement with the Rhodeses, William Darbey was instructed to build 'two good and substantial messuages or dwelling houses' in Holly Street with 'sound malm bricks'. Malm bricks were the best type of London stock, made from the purest brickearth.⁷⁸ The developer had to comply to a timeframe laying down when the houses should be 'carcassed', being just the outer shell,

⁷⁷ HAD D/F/RHO/6

⁷⁸ Cox, 'Bricks to Build', p. 3

floors and roof. This was, typically, within three months. The houses were to be completely fit for habitation six months later.⁷⁹

Once the houses were completed, under their agreement with the developer, the Rhodeses would give one or more leases, prepared by the Rhodes's solicitor but at the developer's expense. The Rhodeses chose to lease out their land in small plots of land with one or two houses to be constructed on each plot. Otherwise some leases were for four, five or six houses together; the largest grouping was for nine, Norfolk Terrace, on the north side of Grange Road.⁸⁰ This approach meant that the Rhodeses could closely control development and it reflected an intention to develop the land gradually, street by street, rather than in a few large blocks at a time.

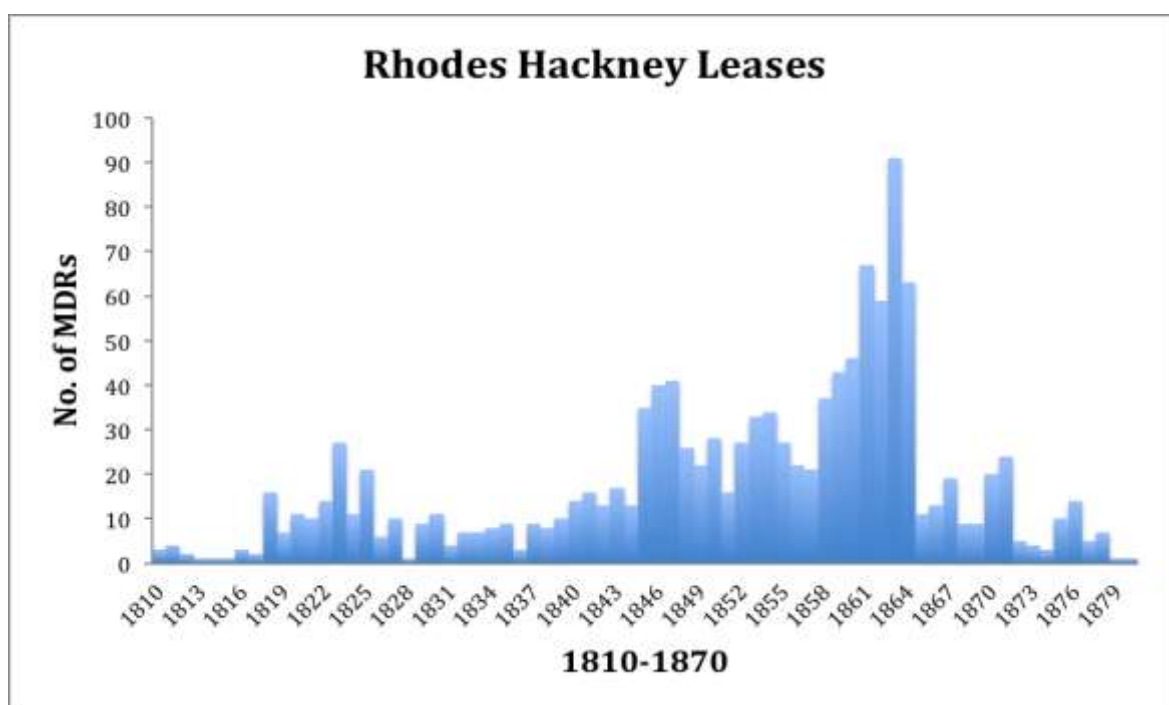


Fig 4.6 Rhodes Hackney Leases
(Source: LMA MDR)

⁷⁹ This and preceding paragraph based on HAD D/F/RHO/4/4

⁸⁰ LMA MDR/1850/3/227

A study of the leases granted by the Rhodeses on their land in Hackney, as recorded in the MDR, reflects that the development of the estate was not rapid (Fig 4.6). There are four peaks: in 1825, when the initial construction in the north-west corner of the estate was gathering pace; in the mid 1840s, when development had spread south and along Queen's Road; in 1854 when building had begun to take place east of Queen's Road and in 1864 when leases were being granted for the building up of the remaining area of the estate in the north-west, as well as in-fill and rebuild in other parts. For the whole period between 1810 and 1870, there was an average of twenty-two leases per year, less than two per month. At two houses per leased plot, that accounts for less than four houses on average per month: a gradual development.

Towards the beginning of the period, the leases were mostly for 75 years or less; by the 1850s the length of lease had extended to 90 years. The leases contained obligations on the lessees, typical of other estate developments, to be responsible for paying the local rates, repairing and maintaining the drainage and paving, redecorating, and securing adequate fire insurance. For the first year, the Rhodeses, as in other developments, charged a nominal rent of a peppercorn, allowing the builder time to complete the building before paying the full cash ground rent.

Lessees usually sub-let their houses, either in a separate lease or through the same lease, requesting the Rhodeses to 'demise' the property to a third party. On 15 January 1839 the Rhodes brothers agreed to lease to Louis England, an Islington timber merchant, land on the east side of Queen's Road, north of Grange Road. This was a 90-year lease from Christmas Day 1838 for the building of a row of six houses. The rent was set at a peppercorn rent for the

first two years, rising to £1 per house.⁸¹ Within the month, England had started to sublet this same property, divided into six discrete plots as 1-6 Richmond Terrace. The new lessees, taking a single house or two together, were mostly small-scale investors rather than occupiers, who would use their investments to earn income by renting out the property. In this case they included a pocketbook maker from Clerkenwell and a widow from Kent Road.⁸² These leases were on the same 90 year term, but the ground rent was raised to £8, allowing England to make a profit. Later that year in June 1839, the Rhodeses leased more land to England to extend Richmond Terrace down Queen's Road, on the other side of Grange Road, for the same 90 year lease from Christmas 1838.⁸³ These properties too were sub-leased: to a carpenter, a cement manufacturer and a feather merchant.⁸⁴

On the strength of leases issued, lessees would use their property to secure mortgages to raise capital to complete the building or embark on other developments. In April 1839, England secured a mortgage on 1-6 Richmond Terrace from Arthur Waller of Middleton Square for £600, which he was to pay back by June 1841 at 5% annual interest.⁸⁵ On the security of 7-10 Richmond Terrace, England secured a further £400 from Thomas Spencer, also of Middleton Square, at the same interest rate to be paid back by June 1841.⁸⁶

Builder Richard Liscombe secured a mortgage on his lease from the Rhodeses of 1, Lavender Grove, obtaining £400 in August 1853 from David Wilson. A

⁸¹ LMA MDR/1839/5/732

⁸² LMA MDR/1839/5/728-731

⁸³ LMA MDR/1839/8/585

⁸⁴ LMA MDR/1839/5/586-587, 591

⁸⁵ LMA MDR/1839/5/727

⁸⁶ LMA MDR/1839/5/588

mortgager of his earlier in his career had been George Emmett of Hornsey Road who, on the security of lease of land and building to be a pub, granted Liscombe £500 in June 1839.⁸⁷ Emmett granted him an additional £500, three months later, on the security of land Liscombe leased further along Forest Road for the building of five messuages.⁸⁸ At the end of the year Emmett increased these mortgages for Liscombe by a further £1000.⁸⁹ This was the manner in which Liscombe, one of the most prolific builders of Lamb Farm, financed his business.

Sub-lessees might also mortgage their leased property. In May 1839, the Rhodeses, at the request of Louis England, leased to Thomas Keen, mason and neighbour of England, a property on the north side of Richmond Road.⁹⁰ Keen was able secure a £100 mortgage on this five months later.⁹¹ Thomas Layland secured a £460 mortgage on his sub-lease of Layland Cottages in Lavender Grove.

4.5 The Builders

The Rhodeses may have employed a procedure to engage builders similar to developer William Nene's, in the neighbouring Middleton estate. Nene, who had bought vacant building plots from the Middletons in 1858, set down that all builders applying for ground to develop should give references of their brick maker, timber merchant, ironmonger, district surveyor and where last built.⁹²

⁸⁷ LMA MDR/1839/5/327

⁸⁸ LMA MDR/1839/7/642

⁸⁹ LMA MDR/1839/8/316-7

⁹⁰ LMA MDR/1839/8/314

⁹¹ LMA MDR/1839/8/315

⁹² HAD M3967

Forty-seven different builders were the lessees of the leases sampled for this study. London's speculative builders ranged from individual master craftsmen to master builders. The master craftsmen, a carpenter or a bricklayer for example, would employ labour from their own trade and contract other types of craftsmen for their particular skills to complete construction. The master builder would employ a permanent workforce, encompassing all the crafts of the building trade needed to build a house.⁹³ The developer, though, was not necessarily a master craftsman. He could be an architect or from outside the building trade, investing his money in contract with a master craftsman. Most of those leasing from the Rhodeses were recorded as builders, but they also included a carpenter, plumber, excavator, bricklayer and labourer, as well as timber and leather merchants, a victualler, paper stainer and draper. Only one, John Humphrey Jones, building on the estate in the 1850s in Malvern Road, was referred to in leases as an architect.

By and large most of the builders on the Lamb Farm estate were local men, as was the case in the development of other parts of suburban London, such as Camberwell.⁹⁴ The majority of them, seventy-seven per cent, gave their addresses as streets on the estate. A few of them changed their addresses within the estate a number of times. This reflected the fact that they were living where they were building and moved to live at the next site where they were working. Twenty-one per cent of the builders were living elsewhere in Hackney or not far away in neighbouring Islington or Shoreditch. The furthest away were the builders, J. Burford and Sons of St. Neot's, Huntingdonshire. They were

⁹³ Burnett, *A Social History*, pp. 19-20

⁹⁴ Dyos, *Victorian suburb*, p. 122

building in 1852 three fourth-rate houses in Malvern Road.⁹⁵

Speculative building was a precarious business. Progress in development was dependent not on increasing population, but the flow of economic cycles. The Rhodeses took steps to protect themselves against defaulting builders by obliging them to put their buildings up as security for any money due to the Rhodeses for bricks sold or money lent. Should the builder become bankrupt, or not complete the work, his agreement with the Rhodeses would be void.⁹⁶ Builder William Honeysett of Dalston, who had leased land from the Rhodeses in Woodland Street and the east side of Park Road, went bankrupt in 1824.⁹⁷ It was agreed that he complete the house he had started to build but he had to surrender part of his leased land back to the Rhodeses. John Hendre, a plumber, ran into financial difficulties in 1843.⁹⁸ In 1859 the 'plant and stock in trade' of builder Mr. I. T. Vialon, an employer of sixteen, was auctioned off on-site in Richmond Road.⁹⁹

One study of the number of deeds registered in the MDR took the long cycles in deed registration to have direct correspondence to building cycles. It established that between 1800 and 1880 the average 18 year cycles had major troughs in 1816, 1836, 1857 and 1871, with peaks in 1810, 1825, 1853 and 1867.¹⁰⁰ The volume of just 1242 Rhodes Hackney leases over sixty-one years, as charted in Fig 4.6 above, with only a couple of indentures in some years, is not a large enough sample to lay down a meaningful definition of peaks and

⁹⁵ LMA MBO/DS/01/H

⁹⁶ HAD D/F/RHO/4/4

⁹⁷ LMA MDR/1825/10/256, 373, 606

⁹⁸ Watson, 'The Last Harvest', p. 30

⁹⁹ *The Builder*, Vol XVI, No 784, p. 116

¹⁰⁰ V. Belcher, P. Cottrell, and F. Sheppard, 'The Middlesex and Yorkshire deeds registries and the study of building fluctuations', *The London Journal*, 2, (1979) p. 179

troughs in a building cycle. However, it is interesting to note in Fig 4.7 how the Rhodes development has a degree of correlation with, if not an exact replication of, the MDR results. Reflecting the Middlesex cycles, both Honeysett in 1823 and Hendre in 1843 were having financial problems on the way out of downturns and Vialon in 1859 went bankrupt just after the depression of 1857.

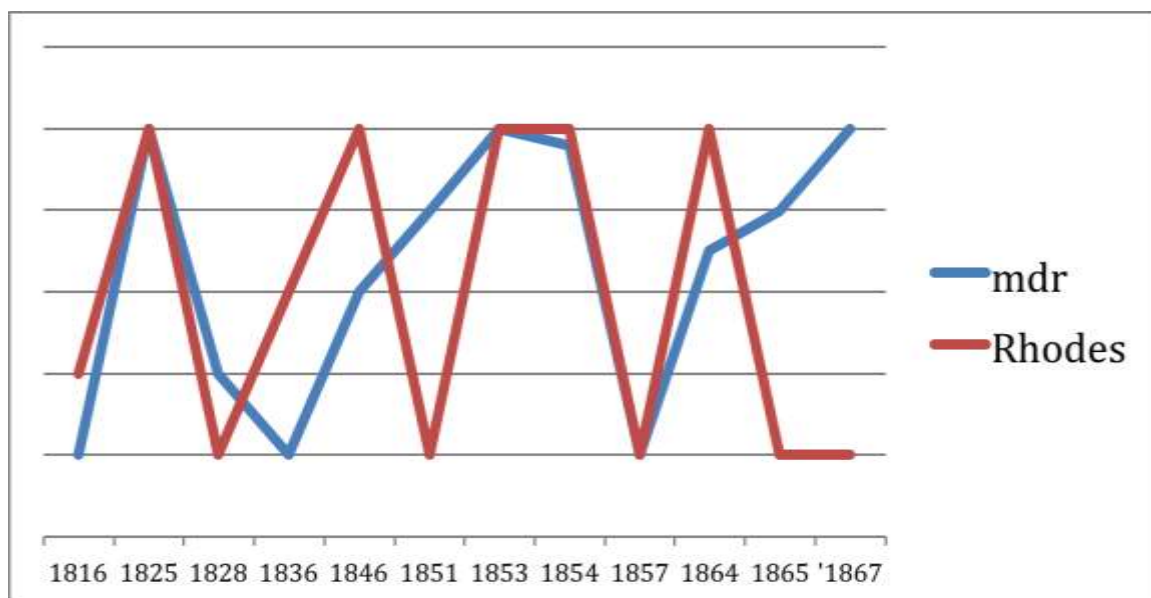


Fig 4.7 Cycle comparison between MDR and Rhodes leases 1810-1870

(Source: V. Belcher, P. Cottrell, and F. Sheppard, 'The Middlesex and Yorkshire deeds registries and the study of building fluctuations', and MDR)

Some of the builders were also involved in the development of other parts of today's Hackney. John Hendre was building on Middleton land. William Barlow, who took over Hendre's Middleton land, was leasing from the Rhodes brothers in 1850 and 1851. Edward Paget Nunn was building, and living, on the Lamb Farm estate in the 1850s and 1860s, before moving on to build in north Stoke Newington.¹⁰¹ Islip Odell leased the small area of the Rhodes estate adjoining Albion Square, which he had developed for the Middletons. These builders were part of a network which stretched beyond the confines of Rhodes land, allowing them exchange of styles, labour and assistance.

¹⁰¹ Baker, Elrington, *VCH*, p. 151

4.6 Estate Management

There is no evidence that any of the Rhodes family lived on Lamb Farm, though in the earlier years they had lived elsewhere in Hackney. Thomas's address was given from 1816 as Hoxton, until the early 1830s by which time he had moved to Tottenham Wood where he had acquired further property. William had married in 1802 at Hackney's new parish church, where he had his children baptised. His family were living in Hoxton until they moved to Leyton Grange in Essex in 1829.

From the early 1800s leases were made in the name of the two brothers. William died in 1843, leaving two surviving sons, William Arthur and Francis William. William Arthur, inheriting one half of his father's share of the estate, a quarter of Lamb Farm, continued to run his father's business.¹⁰² In 1855 William Arthur died childless. His sister Margaret had married their cousin, also called Thomas, who predeceased his father, leaving a son, Thomas William. It was to this nephew that William Arthur left his part of the estate, making Thomas William the owner of three-quarters of the Lamb Farm property. It is Thomas William's name that appears as the lessor on subsequent indentures. From 1859 he is noted as being of Malvern Road where the estate office was located.

The estate continued to be one part of the family's growing business interests. As well as starting to develop the Lamb Farm estate, Thomas and William had continued their joint enterprises elsewhere in brickmaking and construction. They had interests in Haggerston, north Shoreditch, the other side of the canal

¹⁰²Notebook, RH MSS.Afr.s.1647 Vol. 2

from the Lamb Farm land; just north of the Hackney Road; in south Stoke Newington and in Balls Pond, just west of Kingsland in Islington.¹⁰³ By far the largest, and most valuable, of the Rhodes's holdings remained Lamb Farm.

In 1815 the brothers, referred to as brick makers of Hoxton, leased 29¼ acres in Shacklewell, north Hackney, from William Tyssen to dig brick earth to a depth of nine feet to make bricks. William was also an inventor: in 1824 he took out patents for improvements in brick manufacturing.¹⁰⁴ There is no evidence of the Rhodeses having manufactured bricks on their Lamb Farm land. Possibly the land was considered to have been exhausted of brick producing potential, 101 acres of it having been 'brick-earth dug and undivided', before Tyssen sold it to Samuel Rhodes. William Rhodes did produce bricks just south of Lamb Farm. He leased two fields, thirty-three acres in total, from his Middleton neighbour in 1839 and 1843, bordering the canal, to make four to seven million bricks annually.¹⁰⁵

In 1821, William Rhodes ambitiously secured a building lease from Revd. Peter de Beauvoir on his land north of the newly completed Regent's Canal. At 150 acres, it was said to be the largest amount of land conveyed to a speculative developer. Elaborate plans were made for building on a grid of four interconnected squares linked to a large central octagon. But on the death of the elderly cleric later that year, his heir brought out an injunction to stop Rhodes's development and, after twelve years of litigation, wrested back control of the estate,¹⁰⁶ to the detriment of William's finances and reputation.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ HAD RHO/5/1; LMA MDR/1805/5/124

¹⁰⁴ Notebook, RH MSS.Afr.s.1647 Vol. 2

¹⁰⁵ HAD M721, M724

¹⁰⁶ Mander, *Strength*, p. 43

Rhodes, though, was able to continue the construction of Kingsland Basin on the canal, which became a useful depot for local building with its wharves for cement, tiles, brick and stone.

Despite their other business concerns, the Rhodeses maintained a close supervision over the development of Lamb Farm. Only two occurrences of sub-standard work have come to light. A lease in 1860 of two houses in Shrubland Grove East refers to a house which, presumably falling foul of the estate's procedures, was 'commanded' to be built.¹⁰⁸ In 1859 two men were killed when the front wall of a house in Lansdowne Road, 'one of several in course of erection by Mr Liscombe', collapsed. The cause of the accident was a flawed arch support and it was found to be due to an error of judgment, not negligence. The inquest jury returned a verdict of accidental death.¹⁰⁹ This little evidence of poor building implies a good level of estate management.

There is no mention in any documentation of a person with the title of surveyor to oversee the Lamb Farm development on the Rhodes's behalf. There is no evidence of a an architect or surveyor employed by the Rhodes, as there was for the neighbouring Middleton development¹¹⁰ or other London estates, such as Dulwich College's¹¹¹ or more locally on the Nichols estate in Shoreditch.¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ T. R. Rotberg, *The Founder – Cecil Rhodes and the Pursuit of Power*, (New York, 1988), p. 19

¹⁰⁸ LMA MDR/1860/6/920

¹⁰⁹ *The Builder*, Vol XXVII, No. 836, p.119

¹¹⁰ George Pownall, Watson, 'The Last Harvest', p. 26

¹¹¹ Dyos, *Victorian suburb*, p. 91

¹¹² Nichols Square was built to designs of architect John Henry Taylor in 1841, Robey, 'Nichol's Square', p. 107

Being a compact tract of land, the estate would have been easier to manage. There were some small exchanges of land negotiated in the 1840s at the fringes of their estate with the Middleton neighbours, in Queen's Road¹¹³ and north and south of Albion Road.¹¹⁴ It was only Queen's and Middleton Roads which emanated from the Middleton estate into Lamb Farm. Most of the streets were laid down within the estate, not requiring negotiated access crossing neighbours' adjacent properties, thereby possibly incurring costs and litigation. Otherwise the other roads formed the borders of the estate, on which the Rhodeses built up their sides of the streets.

As absentee landlords, though, and with other businesses to run, the Rhodes would have needed an office with agents on the ground to manage the estate. By 1850, there was an estate office just off Malvern Road,¹¹⁵ at the end of Grange Road, situated in the house Mr. Grange had leased in 1806. A number of the early leases had James Kebble, builder of Mayfield Street, witnessing the signatures of the Rhodes brothers, which would suggest he had a significance for the Rhodes's business. Later leases mentioned a Peter Hadrill of the estate office in Malvern Road. If not a surveyor by trade or title, he had a responsibility for managing the estate. In the 1851 census he is listed as a 'brickmaker's managing clerk' and twenty years later the census refers to him as a 'steward or agent.'¹¹⁶

It took almost twenty years before the farmer-come-brickmaker Rhodeses started to exploit their Lamb Farm estate for building. The development had all

¹¹³ Watson, 'The Last Harvest', p. 27

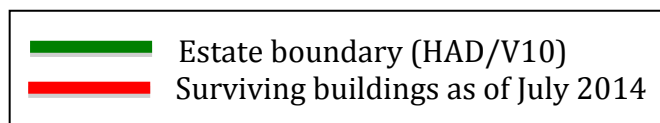
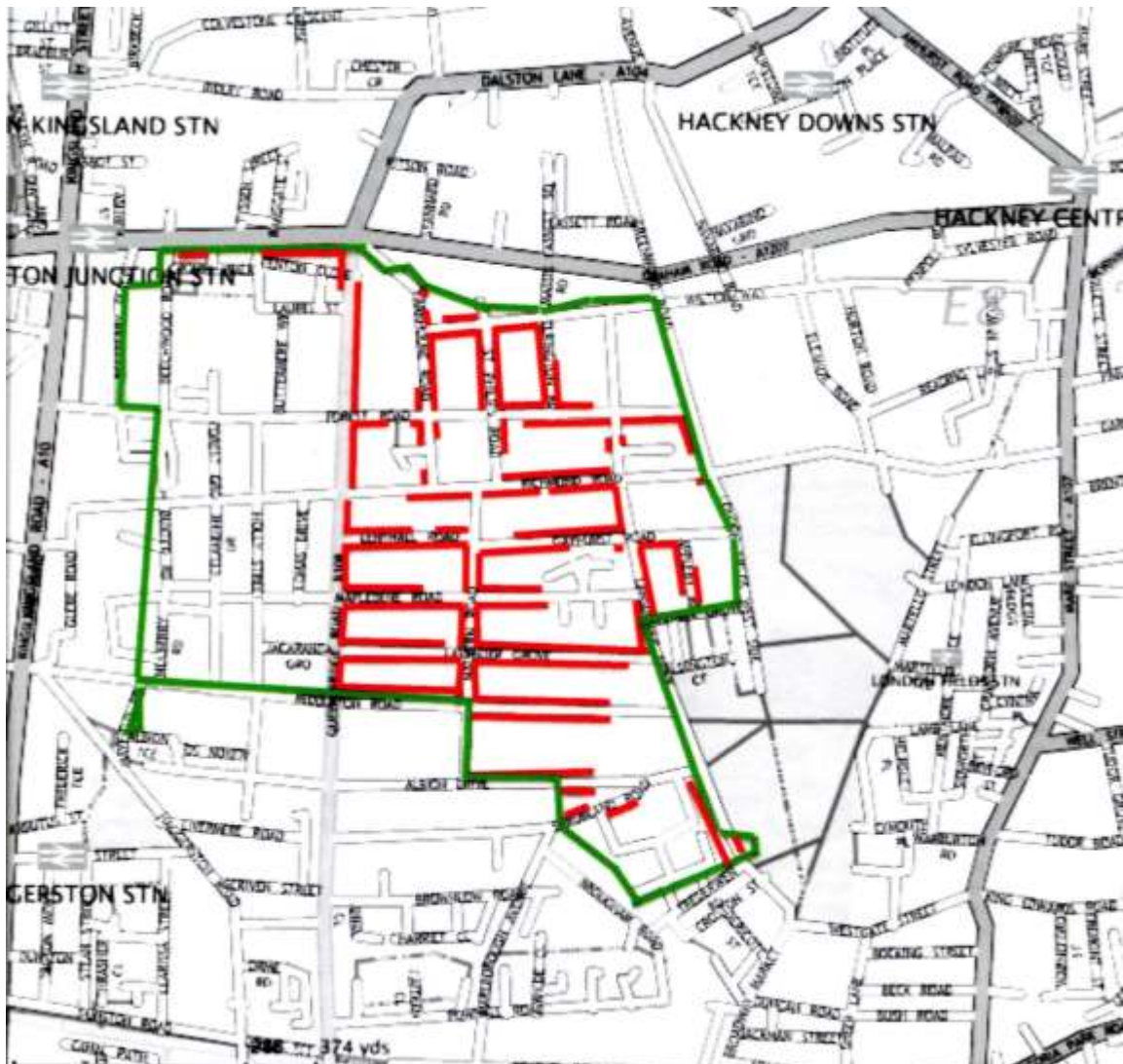
¹¹⁴ HAD D/F/RHO/2/5

¹¹⁵ LMA LCC/AR/BA/05/86 – plan 153

¹¹⁶ 1851 and 1871 censuses (ancestry.co.uk accessed 24 August 2014)

the hallmarks of speculative building: a web of inter-dependent leases, sub-leases and mortgage agreements; the construction of one or a few houses at a time, erected by local builders, of different crafts, some of whom fell foul of the financial risks. Under three generations of the family's management, the development gradually, over fifty years, fully transformed Lamb Farm into a network of house-lined streets.

5. THE SURVIVING STOCK



(Source: map produced with walkit.com)

The buildings which survive from the Rhodes development are on the east side of today's Queensbridge, formerly Queen's, Road (Fig 5.1). Apart from Sheldick's terraced ribbon development along Dalston Lane, the nineteenth-century housing on the west side no longer exists. The southern part of this area, between Middleton and Forest Roads, which came to be known as the 'Holly Street Estate,' was pulled down and rebuilt in 1966-71 as council

housing. The area was redeveloped at the turn of the century, a project celebrated by the New Labour government of the time. Tony Blair, who had lived just across Queensbridge Road in Mapledene Road (formerly Shrubland Grove) in the 1980s, returned to Holly Street to launch Labour's New Deal for Communities. Between Forest Road and Dalston Lane, the northern part of this area, now known as the Rhodes Estate, was also pulled down and rebuilt in the 1970s for council housing. Had it not been for the resistance of local residents, who fought off four compulsory purchase orders proposed by the London Borough of Hackney in 1971, the area on the eastern side of Queensbridge Road would also have gone the way of redevelopment.¹¹⁷

The area of surviving Victorian housing is bounded by today's Wilton Way, Greenwood Road, Lansdowne Drive, Albion Drive and Queensbridge Road. Any twentieth-century housing is mostly due to WWII bombing: the eastern end of Middleton and Albion Roads; the eastern end of Mapledene Road; the site of St Philip's Church, between Parkholme and St Philip's Roads, and in the north-east area where a V-1 flying bomb landed, in the block formed by Lansdowne Drive, Wilton Way, Greenwood and Forest Roads.¹¹⁸ Otherwise the absence of Victorian housing in places either side of Richmond Road is due to 1970s redevelopment.

Elizabeth House, in Forest Road, named after his wife by surgical instrument maker Henry Williams, who took out a lease¹¹⁹ in June 1834, is one of the earliest surviving houses (Fig. 5.10). It is also one of the estate's few examples

¹¹⁷ Mapledene Residents' Association, *Redevelopment or Improvement*, (Porthcawl, 1972)

¹¹⁸ LMA LCC/AR/TP/13

¹¹⁹ LMA MDR/1842/5/67

of a detached suburban villa. Opposite and beside Elizabeth House remain a few other larger villas. Together they formed an attempt to give the estate a more socially exclusive centre, located beside St. Philip's Church, which faced the end of a driveway leading to the largest house on the estate: Mr. Grange's home of 1806, later the estate office which came to be known as Richmond Lodge.

Overall, though, the surviving stock is an assortment of longer terraces, forming uninterrupted blocks between roads, short detached terraces of four to ten houses, semi-detached villas with only a few detached, double-fronted houses, erected at the end of roads, where spare space would allow for a wider frontage. They are a mixture of two-storey, three-storey, some with basement or semi-basement, and a few four-storey houses, with semi-basement. No second- or first-rate houses were built on the estate: most are fourth-rate, with a few third-rate. The typical frontage is twenty feet, more or less, set back from the road, all with a front garden. The depth of each plot was seldom less than 100 feet, allowing for large back gardens. Constructing houses of this type, the developers were not aiming to attract those with the higher social aspirations, which would have been met by the larger houses of Bayswater or Kensington.

5.1 1820s-1840s

Built over four decades, the houses reflect gradually changing architectural styles, moving from the late Georgian period into the Victorian age. Victorian

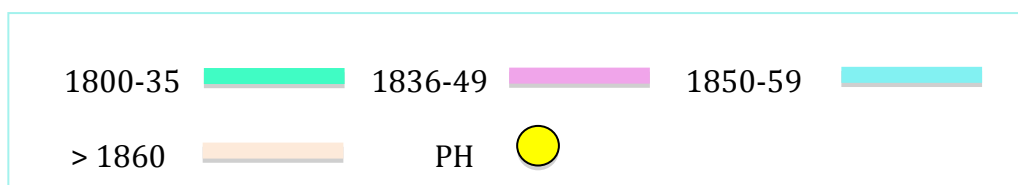
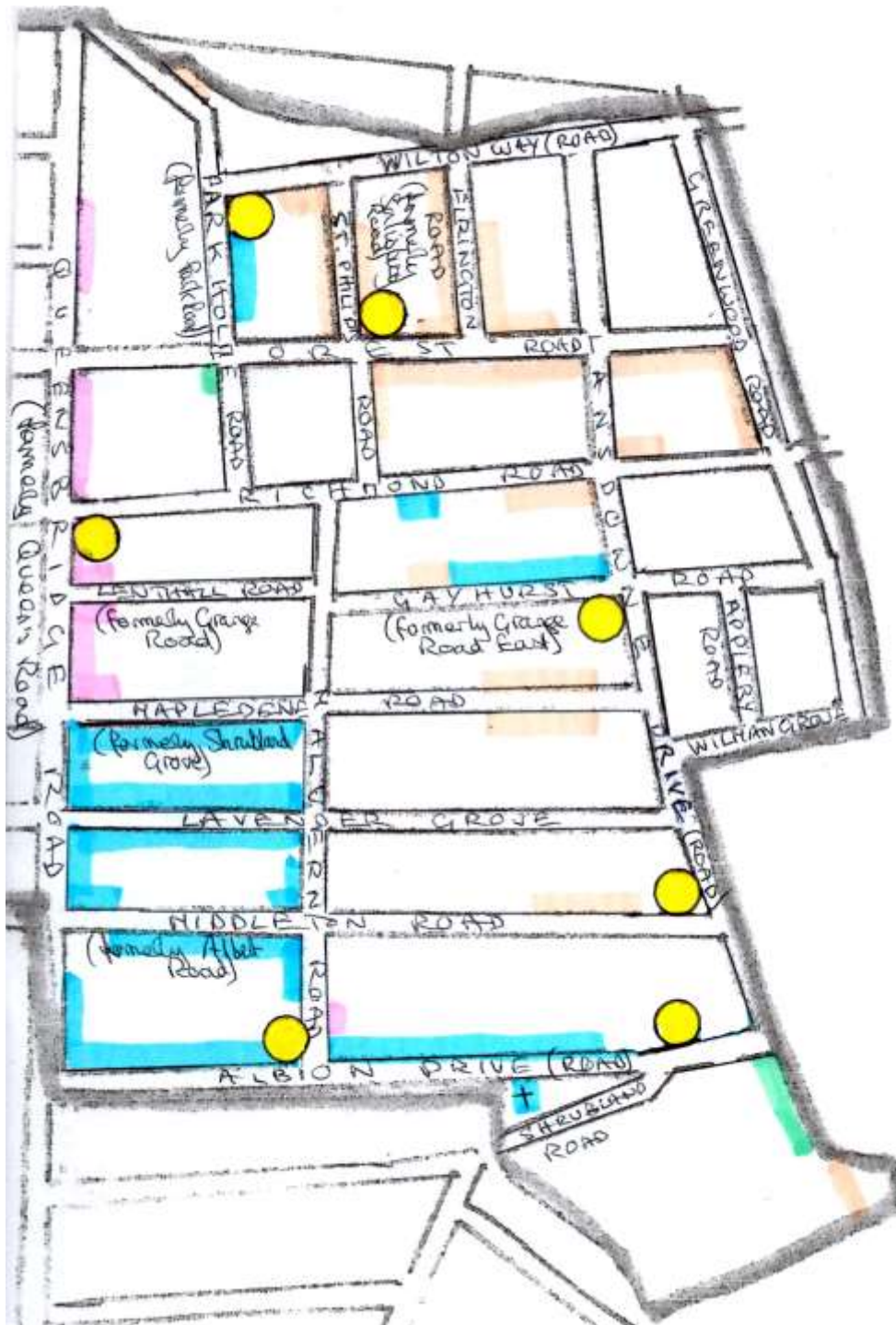


Fig 5.2 Chronology of surviving buildings

middle-class suburban houses shared much in common structurally with their

Georgian predecessors. There was a continuation of classical traditions into the early Victorian years, but differences were appearing on the facades.¹²⁰ The suburb, with its greater availability of space, offered the opportunity to move away from the Georgian horizontal uniformity, imposed by continuous ‘palace fronts’ of ten to twenty terraced houses treated as one unit beneath a central pediment.¹²¹

Lansdowne Place, built in the south-east corner of the estate by 1827,¹²² is an example of a Georgian terrace, with its stuccoed basements, regular elevation, roof-concealing parapet, arched windows, eight lights per sash, and horizontal uniformity, emphasized by the string course running along the whole terrace (Fig. 5.3).



Fig. 5.3 Lansdowne Place

Louis England started building on the east side of Queen’s Road in 1838. South



Fig. 5.4 Richmond Terrace

from Richmond Road, his Richmond Terrace formed continuous three storey, basement-less terraces lining Queen’s Road between its junctions with side streets (Fig. 5.4). They reflected the Georgian terrace tradition of a stuccoed ground floor, a strict rhythm of two bays,

with the first floor windows symmetrically positioned over door and window below. Starting to break away from Georgian uniformity, an emphasis was

¹²⁰ Thom, *Researching*, p. 29

¹²¹ Olsen, *The Growth*, p. 222

¹²² http://users.bathspa.ac.uk/greenwood/map_a8m.html (accessed 06/08/14)

given to the vertical to distinguish the individuality of each house, through larger floor-to-ceiling first floor windows with balconettes.

5.2 1850s Onwards

The Victorian suburban ideal was the detached house, with the semi-detached as a compromise.¹²³ By 1850, further down Queen's Road, Richard Liscombe's



building broke the terraced pattern with four-storeyed semi-detached houses with basements (Fig. 5.5). The shared, pedimented roof retained a Georgian uniformity, with the windows of each house symmetrically set out to match the other, but the porched door stressed the

individuality of each house. The Italianate influence had percolated its way to this suburban building through the added decoration of stuccoed first- and second-floor window-surrounds, echoing details found on the facade of Sir Charles Barry's Travellers Club in Pall Mall.

The influence of the Italianate style gradually added more decorative features, breaking up the uniformity and further stressing each house's individuality. Roofs were fully revealed with cornices and decorated brackets under the eaves. Builders came up with their own varying



interpretations of ornamental devices around doors and windows.

¹²³ Burnett, *A Social History*, p. 102

The more ornate villas in Fig. 5.6 have the additional feature of a tympanum in the roofs to emphasise the vertical, keystones above the bottom windows and porticos with foliate capitals to its columns, as well as brackets below the upper windows. The most Italianate building is four-storeyed Fairford Villas in Richmond Road built by 1861 (see title page). Their attic windows dominate the building: pedimented, they are highlighted by elaborate brackets rising from a string-course.

Another feature, which differentiated the style of Victorian housing from its Georgian antecedents, was the bay window. It first appeared in the area in the early 1850s on the ground floor, in terraced and semi-detached houses. By the 1860s it was rising up from the semi-basement



**Fig. 5.7 Evensfield Terrace,
Forest Road**

to the ground floor, as in Evensfield Terrace (Fig. 5.7). Reflecting the house's internal layout in its external facade, the bay window was a clear break with Georgian uniformity.¹²⁴

Longer eight- or nine-house terraces, which formed the earlier building in Lavender and Shrubland Groves in the early 1850s, gave way to semi-detached villas of two or three storeys. The streets lined with these detached villas



Fig. 5.8 Malvern Road

are perhaps the most attractive in the area, along the western end of Albert Road and on the west side of Malvern Roads (Fig. 5.8). On streets running

¹²⁴ Hunter, *The Victorian Villas*, p. 33

north-south, the three storey houses tended to be on the eastern side of the street. Taller than the buildings opposite, they could attract the afternoon sun from the west. It is only along wider Richmond Road that the taller four-storey, semi-detached third-rate houses were to be built, with larger front gardens.

The semi-detached, though, did not become the most common format of house building on the estate. Into the late 1850s and beyond, when most of the surviving stock was built, the houses were more usually set out in small terraces of four houses, making greater use of the building space. It is this format which now typifies the area (Fig. 5.9).



Fig. 5.9 Four-house terrace, Acacia Villas, Gayhurst Road (formerly Grange Road East)

5.3 Architectural Styles

Though built in the mid-1830s, the simple, box-like three stories of Elizabeth House suggests a date thirty years earlier, with its stuccoed semi-basement, parapet roof and wide door with fan-light, bereft of any decoration save the



Fig. 5.10 Elizabeth House

string-course breaking up the building's brick frontage (Fig. 5.10). It is an example of how contemporary tastes took time to trickle down and gain acceptance amongst suburb builders, putting up houses for a conservative clientele.

As the housing on Lamb Farm moved into the mid-nineteenth-century, the builders gradually adopted the fashionably acceptable Italianate style, but nothing more. Although the style had already been used to build Hackney's de Beauvoir Square and Haggerston's Nichols



Fig. 5.11 Gothic Style

Square, a mile to the south, in the 1840s, there is only one instance surviving of a Gothic design on Rhodes land. On the corner of Park and Wilton Roads, four houses stand distinct, reminiscent of de Beauvoir Square with their castellated bays (Fig. 5.11).

Whatever the date, type and style of the houses built on the Lamb Farm estate, most had a similar floor plan being one room wide and two rooms deep, with a passage-way down one side containing the entrance and stairs and, if a basement, utility areas. The ground floor would have a room, the width of the house which might be opened up, with shutters, to the room behind. On the first floor, the front room, depending on the size of the house, would serve as a bedroom or as a sitting room. The top floor might be divided into three bedrooms. The houses without a basement would be built out slightly to the back to contain a scullery and a toilet. The effect was to keep the houses straight-backed and box-like.

5.4 Street Naming

Most of the names chosen for the streets laid out across the Lamb Farm estate conjure up a rustic ideal, and as such are entirely typical of early to mid Victorian suburban developments of this class and type. None, though, bore any connection to the area's own agricultural past. There are no Willow Cottages or

Osier Villas to remember the stream that once bordered the land. The only exception is Richmond Road's Lamb Farm Villas, built in 1910, on the site Edward Wood's cottage, beside the market garden he had worked in the 1840s and '50s.

John Summerson classified suburban street naming into a number of categories. The patriotic Albion and Queen's Roads were not the Rhodes's idea but taken up for streets initiated by the neighbouring Middletons. It was down to the builders to give such names to the pubs and houses they erected: Arthur, Albert, Havelock. Unlike the Middletons, the Rhodeses never named a street after themselves or a family association.¹²⁵ They did not build any squares, crescents or circuses. Nor did they celebrate great victories: there was no Trafalgar Terrace along Dalston Road. Personalisation, which occurred fairly low in the social scale, where the practice would not give offence to potential occupiers,¹²⁶ was left to the builders to name clusters of houses after their wives and daughters or themselves. The Rhodes family, though, did not continue Middleton Road into their land with their neighbour's name, but changed it, as it crossed Queen's Road, to Albert Road: the Rhodeses only doffing to royalty. One other category they did use was the names of public men: Lansdowne and Salisbury. Holly, Roseberry, Park, Forest, Shrubland, Grove, Lavender and other rural associations they adopted were appropriate for suburban aspirations.

¹²⁵ Commemorating the Middleton's Suffolk estate with 'Shrubland' Road caused confusion, leading to the Rhodes's Shrubland Grove, four streets north, being later renamed Mapledene Road.

¹²⁶ Summerson, *Georgian London*, p. 284

5.5 Builder Profiles: Liscombe and Nunn

It is possible to identify the builders who erected these surviving houses. Some builders concentrated in streets in a particular part of the estate, such as John Toombs in the north or Joseph Godrey in the north-east. Others, like Richard Liscombe, put up houses in different parts of the estate, reflecting his lengthy involvement with Lamb Farm.

Liscombe, who was building on Lamb Farm for over three decades, was one of the estate's most prolific builders. Not a Londoner, he had been born in Oxfordshire in about 1792, the son of a farmer. His first involvement with Lamb Farm was in 1838, when land was leased to him as a site for a pub on the west side of the road to be laid out as Queen's Road.¹²⁷ It was usual for a pub to be amongst the first buildings a builder would construct, not only as a place of refreshment for those working on his sites, but also as a 'counting house', where he could pay his labourers and do business.¹²⁸ Liscombe was later associated with two other pubs on the estate: 'The Marion Arms' in Lansdowne Road and 'The Havelock Arms' in Albion Road, reflecting his continuing association with different parts of the estate.¹²⁹

By 1841 Liscombe was living not far from the estate in Shoreditch, with his wife and a 15 year old lad, a carpenter, who was perhaps an apprentice. During the 1840s Liscombe was continuing to build on the west side of Queen's Road, in Middleton and Forest Roads, before building on the east side in 1849. He

¹²⁷ LMA MDR/1839/5/326

¹²⁸ Dyos, *Victorian suburb*, p 154

¹²⁹ <http://pubshistory.com/LondonPubs/Hackney/HavelockTavern.shtml> (accessed 12/09/14).

named some of the houses he built after himself: Liscombe's Cottages in Queen's Road, Richard's Villas in Lavender Grove, behind Liscombe's Villas in Shrubland Grove. He did not build in one style, but built longer terraces (Fig. 5.12), semi-detached (Fig. 5.5), and shorter rows (Fig. 5.13) with features which reflected changing tastes.



Fig. 5.12 Richard Villas, 1853, Mapledene Road (formerly Shrubland Grove)



Fig. 5.13 Kent Villas, 1860, Gayhurst Road (formerly Grange Road East)

Liscombe was a master builder on a small scale. By 1851, he was employing twelve people. A widower, he was living on Rhodes land in Holly Street, where he had also been building. In his sixties, he re-married locally a young widow of twenty-four. By that time he had moved to Albert Road, where he had been leasing land to build Albert Cottages. He was living there in 1861, where his young wife was assisted by two servants, which Liscombe's success allowed him to afford. Liscombe died in 1866, aged seventy-four. His funeral took place in Hackney and he was buried in the near-by Victoria Park non-conformist cemetery in Bethnall Green.¹³⁰

Edward Nunn was of a younger generation. Unlike Liscombe, he was a Londoner, born in Cripplegate in about 1828. As a thirteen year-old, he was

¹³⁰ 1851-71 censuses, England and Wales Non-Conformist and non-parochial Registers 1567-1970, ancestry.co.uk (accessed 08/09/14)

living with his family in Hertford Road, the other side of Kingsland Road on de Beauvoir land. His father was a carpenter, as was twenty-three year old Edward still living with his family at the same address in 1851. By 1859 he was involved with Lamb Farm when he took out a lease in Grange Road East. At that time he was living on the estate in Lansdowne Road, in Arthur Villas, but he went on to live in the Acacia Villas he was building in Grange Road East. The previous year he had married at St John-at-Hackney the daughter of a Shoreditch ironmonger. Her name was Selima, after whom he named some of the houses he put up in St. Philip's Road. By 1871 Nunn had moved to Grange Road and he was employing eight people.¹³¹ As noted above, he moved his operations north to build in Stoke Newington, where he later lived and became involved in local politics. The 1881 census records him as a Master Builder employing fourteen men. He died in 1906.

Both Nunn and Liscombe were self-made men, who benefited from speculative development and, managing to avoid its financial pitfalls, successfully built up their own businesses to provide a comfortable living for their families.

5.6 The First Residents

When the Rhodes's neighbouring landlords, the Middletons, advertised their estate to the south of the Lamb Farm development for building 'private residential places', they promoted the area as being only two miles from the Bank of England and accessible from all parts of London by omnibuses travelling along nearby Queen's, Hackney and Kingsland Roads. The salubrity of the area was highlighted by its proximity to the open spaces of Victoria Park, London Fields, Hackney Common and Hackney Downs. All in

¹³¹ 1841-71 censuses, ancestry.co.uk (accessed 10/09/14)

all, the area offered 'advantages unequalled in any other suburb of London as a heartfelt retreat'.¹³²

As already pointed out, among the first occupants of the houses that survive today were the builders themselves. As examples of other first occupants of the surviving houses, a study has been made of a sample of the census returns for Richmond Terrace in Queen's Road from 1841, Shrubland Grove from 1861, and Salisbury Road, which, being one of the last streets to be laid out on the estate, had its first census in 1871.

The first residents of Richmond Terrace included a newspaper editor, a bricklayer, a warehouseman, a governess, four merchants and a 'Gentleman Chorister' of St James's Chapel Royal, all of whom would have been renting their homes from those who had sub-leased the houses from the developer, Louis England. Most of these first families, but by no means all, were sufficiently well-off to employ at least one servant; a very few could afford two. Even if they could not engage domestic help, none of the wives were recorded as working. Female heads of household, if not widows, tended to be teachers. These residents set what was to remain the social tone of the area: never more than lower middle-class and aspiring lower-class.

Prior to the emergence of building societies as major agents of home ownership, the housing market was based on leasehold tenure.¹³³ At a time of unfavourable mortgage rates, and when 'home ownership was not yet a status

¹³² HAD M3967

¹³³ Burnett, *A Social History*, p. 96

symbol',¹³⁴ the middle-class Londoner tended to rent a home for two to five years at a stretch, rather than buy. Of Richmond Terrace's families, listed in the 1841 census, only three of the families were still living there two years later and only one eight years later. None were still there in 1851.¹³⁵ But there is some evidence of a longer stability of tenure. These exceptions to the norm were a few families who remained in the same house for over ten years. One, the Noyes, was still living in No. 18, Richmond Terrace in 1871 after 20 years.

About half the heads of household were born outside London, evidence that London's growing population was fuelled by immigration. The majority of these were British born, apart from a number of Germans, reflecting the attraction of this part of London to German settlers, served by Hackney's German Hospital.

The size of the household ranged from three to twelve, but the average was about six. By 1871, a quarter of the houses sampled in Richmond Terrace were in multiple occupancy. This did not mean that they had become overcrowded. The sharing households were small and the total number of occupants per house did not exceed the maximums of single occupancy. The multiple occupancy, though, did reflect a slight downturn in the social mix of the terrace, with more manual-worker residents.

The same social decline occurred between the first and later occupants of Lavender Grove. The populating of newly-built Salisbury Road, north of Richmond Road, offered the opportunity to once more attract to the area a

¹³⁴ Thom, *Researching*, p.30

¹³⁵ 1851 census, ancestry.co.uk (accessed 08/09/14); *The Hackney Almanac and Directory for 1843*, (Hackney 1843); (*Turner's Directory for 1845*, (Hackney 1845))

slightly better social type than their neighbours in Queen's Road and Lavender Grove. By 1871 the street was filled with families who were predominantly headed by clerks, with two-thirds employing domestics. This social distinction was still to be found in the area when Charles Booth carried out his survey in 1898-9, with the streets north of Richmond Road being noted as 'middle-class, well-to-do' and those to the south, such as Lavender Grove, slightly socially inferior, populated by 'fairly comfortable with good ordinary earnings'.¹³⁶

5.7 Life in the suburb

There were only a few non-domestic buildings erected on the Lamb Farm estate. No factories or other places of work were built. Local work had to be found in other parts of Hackney: on the wharves of the canal, in the gas works, timber yards, distilleries and boot manufactures to be found close by the canal or in the shops in Dalston and central Hackney.

In response to Hackney's growing population, the parish of St John-at-Hackney had been divided into three in 1825. The eastern part of the Lamb Farm estate remained in St John's, but the church was over half a mile away. More convenient to attend was the small medieval chapel of the leper hospital at the corner of Kingsland Road and Balls Pond Road, which had remained open for worship after the hospital closed in 1760.¹³⁷ Local people were given their own church when the Rhodes family donated land on Richmond Road, north-east of its junction with Park Road. The church, which can be seen as the only building on the tithe map on the east side of Park Road, set amongst market gardens, was constructed in 1841 by Henry Duesbury to seat 1000. It became a separate

¹³⁶ <http://booth.lse.ac.uk> (accessed 18/09/14)

¹³⁷ Baker, *VCH*, p. 123

parish in 1848.¹³⁸

The Rhodeses, unlike the fellow-Anglican Middletons were willing to accommodate non-conformist churches on their land. There still stands on the south side of Shrubland Road, just inside the Rhodes estate, an iron church, which was built there in 1858 by a Presbyterian congregation.¹³⁹ Eleven years earlier Congregationalists had moved to the north side of Middleton Road to build a church seating 1,000.¹⁴⁰

As well as a church, another indispensable amenity for any respectable housing estate was a pub. (Olsen 250) The Rhodes were generous with their supply of pubs. Public houses, which were ‘after all local focal points for social life’,¹⁴¹ were built as more substantial buildings. This was achieved by erecting them as distinct, usually corner buildings, larger than the other houses in the street. ‘The Albion’, in Albion Road, is not only



Fig. 5.14 ‘The Albion’

detached with taller storeys, but it is distinguished by quoins outlining the corners of the building and more elaborate decorative details, including an ornate porch (Fig. 5.14). When plotted on a map, as in Fig. 5.2, the pubs can be seen towards the periphery, built at the end of the roads which crossed the central area of this eastern part of the estate. Though they might be essential, pubs could not to be perceived as threatening suburban domesticity.

¹³⁸ Bombed in 1940, it had been demolished by 1952, to be replaced by council flats.

¹³⁹ Ibid, p. 127

¹³⁹ Ibid, p. 142

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 135

¹⁴¹ Hunter, *The Victorian Villas*, p. 56

Donald Olsen, quoting builders of the Chalcots estate in Primrose Hill, noted their concern that in the development of an area for suburban living, the inclusion of a school might 'injuriously affect their houses.'¹⁴² George Pownall, the Chalcot's surveyor who had also been the neighbouring Middleton's surveyor, commented that a school, providing for working class children of an area, would be 'damaging to the property in its present state,'¹⁴³ threatening the suburb's social segregation. The only school the Rhodes family involved themselves with was in the north-east corner of the estate in Woodland Street, where Thomas and William Arthur Rhodes leased land in 1851 for 100 boys and girls of the Holy Trinity Church of England School.¹⁴⁴ Otherwise, local children could be schooled in establishments set up by residents in private houses on the estate, such as the Misses Mackenzie's 'Ladies' School' at 8 Richmond Terrace, Queen's Road.¹⁴⁵

The only other non-domestic building on the estate was a militia barracks for the 1st Royal Tower Hamlets, along with an armoury and staff sergeant quarters.¹⁴⁶ Built in the south-east corner of the estate, just off Shrubland Road behind Lansdowne Road, the barracks would have been less intrusive on the suburban surroundings.

No theatres or other facilities were built on Lamb Farm to fill the leisure time of its new occupants. Amateur dramatic clubs were available close by: 'The Blackstone', at Luxembourg Hall, the other side of Dalston Road, in 1869, and

¹⁴² Olsen, *The Growth*, p. 242

¹⁴³ Olsen, *The Growth*, p. 243

¹⁴⁴ Baker, *VCH*, p. 153

¹⁴⁵ 1858 *Post Office London Directory*, (London, 1858)

¹⁴⁶ Old Ordnance survey map, Dalston 1870, London Sheet 40, The Godfrey Edition

'The Dalston', at Albion Hall in 1860 and 1870.¹⁴⁷ Albion Hall had been built by the Middletons on the west side of their Albion Square, just south of Rhodes land, the other side of Middleton Road. At one point it had also accommodated the 'Kingsland, Dalston and De Beauvoir Town Literary and Scientific Institutions'. A bus ride away, down Kingsland Road, were the Standard and City Theatres,¹⁴⁸ the latter managed by Nelson Lee, a resident of Shrubland Road from 1851.

The only local open space was the common land of London Field. Muddy in wet weather and dusty in a dry summer, the land was not laid out as a park until, along with Hackney's other common land, it came into public ownership in 1872. Further away was the recently set out Victoria Park, open to the public from 1843. And with the coming of Hackney's first railway in 1850, a local family could take an outing further afield to Hampstead Heath.

Nor were any shops built locally for the residents. In 1855, a pastry cook, corn chandler, fishmonger, shoemakers, cabinet maker, and a hatter were available a fifteen minute walk away in the centre of Hackney in Church Street. The draper, Matthew Rose, was also doing business there. In time he expanded his business into a department store to sell furniture, carpets, china and glass, ironmongery, and even offered house removals for newly arriving residents.¹⁴⁹

The Rhodeses were not known for any philanthropy. Apart from giving land for a church, they did not appear to be fired by a religious zeal to improve their

¹⁴⁷ Baker, *VCH*, p. 163

¹⁴⁸ Mander D., *More Light, More Power*, (Stroud, 1996), pp 95-8

¹⁴⁹ Taken from notes prepared by Margaret Willes for her talk on 'The Narrowway', 26 July 2014

fellow humans. They were not in the business of building a model township with institutions filling the leisure time of its occupants to better them in mind or body. As a family, the Rhodeses 'took diligent advantage of the available and commercial opportunities of their eras.'¹⁵⁰ To them Lamb Farm was no more than one of their more important business undertakings, which, managed successfully, would provide their family, and their partners speculating in its development, with a profitable return.

¹⁵⁰ Rotberg, *The Founder*, p. 17

6. CONCLUSION

This study set out to answer questions about how one area of Hackney came to be built. Similar to the constructing of London's other earlier Victorian suburbs, its development transformed open land, which had been cultivated for generations, using a process of speculative building, involving local builders. Given names to reflect rural aspirations or commemorate the men who built them, the houses witnessed the period's architectural move from Georgian uniformity to Victorian individuality, satisfying conservative tastes the builders knew how to please. The area never attracted more than the lower middle-class and aspiring lower-class. Its houses gave them what the smarter suburbs gave their social superiors: a maximum of privacy and a minimum of outside distraction.¹⁵¹

It was the control of the Rhodes family which gave form to the development of this suburb of London. Their business acumen led them to expand their business interests by purchasing a large tract of land most suitable for building. The gradual build-up of their land at Lamb Farm pioneered estate development in Hackney, leading the way for the established Hackney landowners, the Middletons and the Tyssens, to follow. To the family, the development of Lamb Farm was no more than a financial enterprise. They did not choose to bequeath the area schools, institutions or streets to remember them by. But 'Rhodes Town' is their legacy: long, wide streets, lined with good looking houses, pleasing in their overall conformity of style, yet still distinct in their variety of detail: an area which has become amongst the most sought-after by London's aspiring middle-classes of today.

¹⁵¹ Olsen, *The Growth*, p. 214, p. 13

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D/F/RHO/1	SCHEDULE of properties and mortgages: 'Estates of my father'. Division between Thomas, Samuel and William Rhodes. 1795
D/F/RHO/2 1-2	LEASE AND RELEASE; 26-27 Nov 1789
D/F/RHO/2/3	CONVEYANCE. Samuel Rhodes and Thomas Rhodes 25 Dec 1803
D/F/RHO/2/4	CONVEYANCE. Samuel Rhodes and William Rhodes 25 Dec 1803
D/F/RHO/2/5	CONVEYANCE Middleton/Rhodes 16 Oct 1843
D/F/RHO/2/6	CONVEYANCE Bull/Rhodes 27 July 1852
D/F/RHO/2/7	APPOINTMENT OF TRUSTEES 21 Mar 1871
D/F/RHO/3/3	LEASE Tyssen/Rhodes for land for brickmaking 28 Feb 1815
D/F/RHO/4/1	LEASE Rhodes/England 17 Jun 1841
D/F/RHO/4/2	LEASE. Rhodes/Wood/Barlow Feb 1847
D/F/RHO/4/3	LEASE Rhodes/Rowe/Hayter 30 Apr 1842
D/F/RHO/4/4	LEASE Rhodes/Sperati 14 Dec 1842
D/F/RHO/4/8	LEASE Rhodes/Rowe 23 Mar 1843
D/F/RHO/4/9	LEASE Rhodes /Rowe/Truscott 31 Aug 1844
D/F/RHO/4/10	LEASE Thomas /Rowe/Sewell 31 Aug 1844
D/F/RHO/4/11	LEASE Rhodes/Rowe/Richard Hiron 29 Nov 1845
D/F/RHO/4/12	LEASE Rhodes/Rowe/Gooch 28 May 1846
D/F/RHO/4/13	LEASE Rhodes/Rowe/Charles Anderson 10 Aug 1846
D/F/RHO/4/14	LEASE Rhodes/Rowe/Hodgson 29 Sep 1846
D/F/RHO/4/15	LEASE Rhodes/Rowe 17 May 1848

D/F/RHO/5/1	SALE PARTICULARS Hackney and Shoreditch 21 Sept 1838
D/F/RHO/5/2	RENTAL on non-Lamb Farm properties 1849
D/F/RHO/5/3	NOTEBOOK CONCERNING RENTS
D/F/RHO/5/6	LOOSE PAPERS n.d.
D/F/RHO/5/7	NOTEBOOK CONTAINING; Valuation of the estates 1 Jan 1848
D/F/RHO/5/8	DEEDS OF PARTITION, COPY CONVEYANCE 1874 – 1875
D/F/RHO/6	LEASE 16 Mar 1843
D/F/RHO/9	COPY WILL, CODICIL AND PROBATE of Rev. Francis William Rhodes; Probate 26 Mar 1878
D/F/RHO/25/31	HALF-YEARLY ACCOUNTS of the estate of Cecil J. Rhodes 1915
D/F/RHO/27/1	LIST OF LEASES on the estate of Cecil J. Rhodes 1912
D/F/RHO/27/2	PLAN of Lamb Farm estate as in 1875
D/F/RHO/27/4	PLAN of the estate of Rev. F. W. Rhodes
D/F/RHO/28	PLAN; portion allotted to the heirs of Thomas Rhodes 1926
D/F/RHO/40	PLAN of the Dalston Estate, showing war damage.
D/F/TYS/66	Map of Tyssen Properties, Kingsland to Stamford Hill c. 1785
M 721	Lease Middleton/Rhodes 1839
M 724	Lease Middleton/Rhodes 1843
M 1048	Lease Rhodes/Frazer 1840
M 3417	Assignment of Lease, Richmond Road 1844
M 3906	Deeds – Lansdowne Drive
M 3907	Deeds – Gayhurst Road
M 3967	Estate Building Lease Agreement (Nene)
M 4091	Estate Papers, Jules Moillaume, Malvern Road

M 4494	Deeds – Lenthall Road
M 4493	Deeds - Lavender Grove
M 4496	Deeds - Lavender Grove
M 4498	Deeds - Lavender Grove
M 4499	Deeds - Shrubland Grove
P/J/P/70	Copy of Report of surveyors of the parishes of St John's Hackney and St Leonard's Shoreditch 1843
P/J/P	Poor Rates
V10	Map of sewers in Hackney Parish 1825
V15	Proposed new streets c.1825
V31	Plan of estate of John Hopkins 1775
V70	Plan of Lamb Farm, surveyed 1797
V 191	Plan for court case of a roadway in Dalston 1812
V260	Plan of intended road from north end of Great Cambridge Road c. 1820
Map Cabinet 1	James Merrington's Map of Hackney, sheet 7, 1823
Map Cabinet 1	St. John-at-Hackney Tithe Map 1843
210.01 OS/AS	Hackney Rectory Tithe Awards 1842
Map Cabinet 1	West Hackney Tithe Map 1843
210.01 OS/AS	Tithe Apportionments West Hackney 1843

London Metropolitan Archives

LCC/AR/BA/05	Register of alterations to names and streets and numbering of houses
LCC/AR/TP/13	WWII bomb damage maps
MDR	Middlesex Deeds Register 1708-1938
MBO/DS/001/A-H	District Surveyor's Reports, Eastern Division Returns, 1845-1852

Rhodes House

MSS. Afr. s. 1647 Vol.2	Rhodes family wills and documents
Rhodes Family Estate papers Boxes 4/1, 4/2	c.1850-1930 title deeds and accounts for payments for duties for Dalston and other estates
Rhodes Family Estate papers Box 5/1, 5/2	c.1810-1922 title deeds relating mostly to the Dalston Estate
Rhodes Family Estate papers Box 6/1, 6/2	c.1808-1910 title deeds relating to Dalston and other estates

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 - POPULATION OF LONDON

YEAR	POPULATION (Inner London)	% increase
1700	575,000-600,000	
1750	650,000	1.7%-2.6% per decade since 1700
1801	959,310	9.5% in previous 10 years
1811	1,139,355	18.8% in previous 10 years
1821	1,379,543	21.1% in previous 10 years
1831	1,655,582	20.0% in previous 10 years
1841	1,949,277	25.8% per decade since 1801

Source :

<http://www.cch.kcl.ac.uk/legacy/teaching/av1000/numerical/problems/london/london-pop-table.html> (accessed 07/0/14)

APPENDIX 2 - POPULATION OF HACKNEY

YEAR	POPULATION	increase
1801	12,730	
1821	16,771	32%
1831	22,494	34%
1841	31,047	38%
1851	53,589	73%
1861	76,687	43%
1871	115,110	50%

Source : The Victorian Villas of Hackney, Michael Hunter, p8

APPENDIX 3 - 1848 VALUATION OF WILLIAM RHODES'S FREEHOLD ESTATE FOLLOWING HIS DEATH

Land	Value (£..sh..p)
Lamb Farm Estate Moiety	65,805..00..10
Tile Kilns (Shoreditch)	6,858..10..00
Cole Harbour (Shoreditch)	11,876..00..00
Balls Pond (Islington)	4,603..00..00
Freeholds at Hoxton	2,647..13..06
Arundel Estate (Hackney)	5,388..00..00
Copyhold held of the Manor of Newington (Stoke Newington)	120..00..00

(Source: HAD D/F/RHO/5/7)

**APPENDIX 4 – BUILDERS OF AREA EAST OF QUEENSBRIDGE ROAD
(formerly Queen’s Road)**

Builder	Streets built on
William Arbery	Grange East, Park, Wilton
William Barlow	Malvern, Albion, Queen’s, Lansdowne, Lansdowne, Queen’s
Robert Bentley	St Philip’s
James Billin	Wilton
James and Mark Brannan	Shrubland Grove East
Burford and Sons	Malvern
James Bungary and Henry Glover	Forest
Solomon Deacon	Albert East
Robert Debenham	Queen’s, Richmond
Louis England	Queen’s, Grange, Richmond, Shrubland Grove
Edmund Evans	Grange, Queen’s, St Philip’s
Joseph Godfrey	St Philip’s, Richmond, Lansdowne
Edward Goldsmith	Wilton
John Hendre	Queen’s, Richmond
William Hill	Richmond
William Honeysett	Park
George Hudson	Albert East, Albion, Lansdowne
James Jarvis	Forest, Albert East, Greenwood, Lansdowne
John Jones	Malvern, Lavender Grove
James Kebble Sr and James Kebble Jr	Queen’s, Malvern, Richmond, Lavender Grove
Richard Liscombe	Queen’s, Shrubland Grove, Lavender, Grange East, Lansdowne, Albert
William Lye	Forest
Stephen Martin	Wilton, Greenwood
Edward Nunn	Salisbury, Grange East, Forest, St Philip’s, Lansdowne, Malvern
James Pegram	Shrubland, Grange
Joseph Rogers	Albion
James Stanborough	Forest, Albert, Malvern, Salisbury
James Tebbitt	Lavender Grove East, Grange East, Malvern
John Tombs	Greenwood, Salisbury, Albert East, Wilton, Lansdowne
Stephen Stiles	Richmond, Albert, Park
William Townshend	Albert East,

(Source: MDR)

APPENDIX 5 - PUBS SERVING THE AREA EAST OF QUEEN'S ROAD

Name of Pub (still a pub ; <i>demolished</i>)	Street
Prince George	Parkholme (formerly Park)
Prince Arthur	Forest Road
Duke of Richmond	Richmond Road
Maid Marion	Lansdowne Drive (formerly Road)
<i>Paget Arms</i>	Middleton Road (formerly Albert Road East)
<i>Havelock</i>	Albion Drive (formerly Road)
The Albion	Albion Drive (formerly Road)