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## ESTATE DEVELOPMENT AND THE BEGINNINGS OF MODERN TUNBRIDGE WELLS, 1800-40

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The modern town of Tunbridge Wells began in the early nineteenth century. In 1835, some local governing powers were given to the town for the first time, under an act for 'lighting, watching, cleansing, regulating and otherwise improving the town;' previously it had been administered as part of the large parish of Tonbridge. Amenities included two waterworks and a gasworks; two churches and four chapels were built, and a separate ecclesiastical district created out of Tonbridge parish. The population grew rapidly. There were probably no more than 1200 inhabitants in 1800; in 1831, there were 5929 and 8302 in 1841. By then, Tunbridge Wells had surpassed in size most of the inland Kentish market towns: Tonbridge (about 3000 people), Dartford, Sevenoaks, Cranbrook, Ashford and Tenterden; only the regional centres of Canterbury and Maidstone were larger.

Its livelihood was, however, gained in a different way, as an inland spa. It had originated in the seventeenth century as a health resort, where water of medicinal value could be drunk, and place of entertainment in a rural setting for summer visitors, principally from London, and these remained important to its economy. The special characteristic of the early nineteenth century was the emergence of a large class of leisured residents. According to the 1841 census, there were 539 heads of households who had no occupation: these were spinsters or widowed gentlewomen, retired soldiers, professional or businessmen, with one or two noblemen. By contrast, in the typical market town of Tonbridge with 3000 people there were only 60 householders of no occupation, mostly old people.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A. Savidge, *Royal Tunbridge Wells*, (Tunbridge Wells, 1975), 116; as Mr Savidge acknowledges, he was drawing on an unpublished long essay on the rise and development of Tunbridge Wells by the present writer; C.W. Chalklin, *Early Victorian Tonbridge*, (Maidstone, 1975), 3.

This influenced the size and types of houses which were built. There was a relatively high proportion of large town-houses. It may be seen by a comparison of the rateable value of the houses in two divisions of Tonbridge parish in the parish rate books of 1834. The division of Tonbridge town comprised the 495 dwellings in the market town; most of Tunbridge Wells lay in Southborough East: nearly all its 1110 houses were in the Wells, the rest being farmhouses and rural cottages. In Southborough East 23 per cent of the dwellings were rated at £20 or more, compared with 13 per cent in the market town. 40 per cent of the houses in Southborough East were cottages rated at under £5, while in the town the figure was 53 per cent. Tunbridge Wells thus had a higher proportion of larger properties rated at £20 or over, and a smaller percentage of cottage properties than Tonbridge town. The latter appears less significant when the number of small houses in the two divisions rated at under £10 is compared: the figure was 67 per cent in Tonbridge and 60 per cent in Southborough East. This was mostly cottage property of four or six rooms worth £100 or less. Contemporary newspapers, title deeds, the tithe maps of 1838-40 and surviving houses provide evidence about the high proportion of larger houses in the Wells.

TABLE<sup>2</sup>*Rateable Value of Houses in 1834 in Tonbridge Parish*

	£50 and over	£30 to £49	£20 to £29	£15 to £19 10s.	£10 to £14 10s.	£5 to £9 10s.	under £5
<i>Tonbridge town</i>							
Total: 495	9	32	26	40	54	80	254
<i>Southborough East</i>							
Total: 1110	26	92	140	64	128	214	446

When new they sold for between about £500 and £1500. They were detached or semi-detached, usually with a frontage of more than 20 ft. to accommodate at least a large room and hall on the ground floor; they had at least two storeys, sometimes three storeys and a basement. They had at least nine or ten rooms, including several large ones, such as a drawing room, dining-room and two or three

<sup>2</sup> Kent Archives Office P371/11/85.

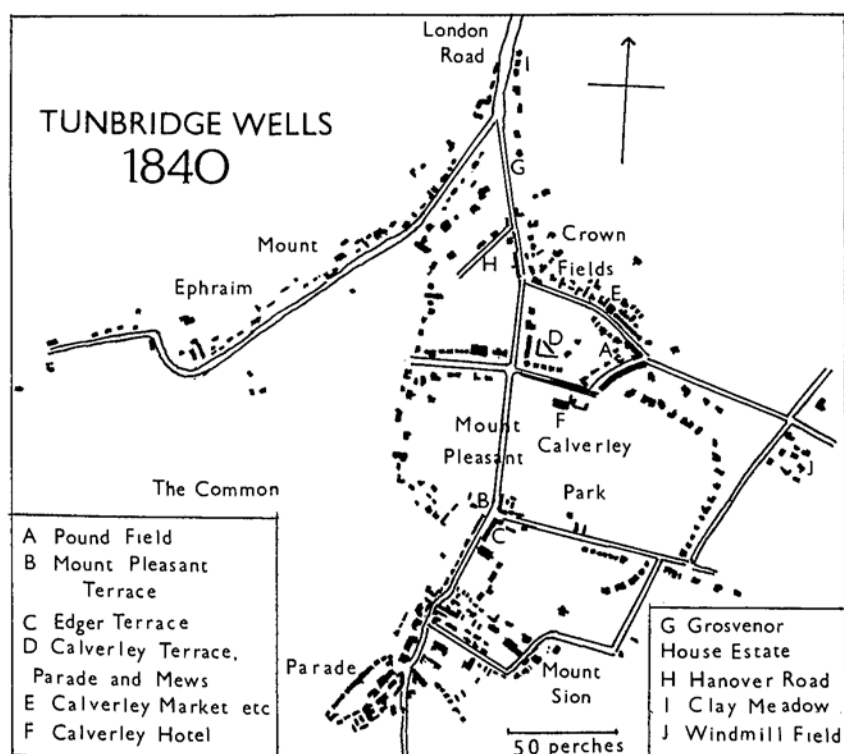


Fig. 1. Tunbridge Wells, 1840.

bedrooms for the family and visitors.<sup>3</sup> The rather smaller terraced houses with a frontage of 13, 14 or 15 ft. and typically seven, eight or nine rooms (one often a shop) in two or three storeys, selling new for between £150 and £300 or £400 were also common in Tunbridge Wells, but probably less numerous than in market towns. This paper deals primarily with the estate development of the town which provided the sites for the new houses in the early nineteenth century. Using principally surviving title deeds, it describes the way in which farmland was converted into building plots, and the extent to which the landowners and developers regulated the types of houses erected. As is so often the case in the study of urban land development,

<sup>3</sup> The newspaper principally consulted was *The Maidstone Journal*, kept in the Maidstone Reference Library; also *The Tunbridge Wells Visitor*, 1833–35, in the Tunbridge Wells Library, and *The Times*. The deeds were mostly in K.A.O. Knocker Collection (U55) T527–33. The references to the tithe maps were K.A.O. CTR 371E, (Tonbridge parish: Tunbridge Wells map) and CTR 344B (Speldhurst parish map).

although the price of the houses is revealed, there are no estate records to provide evidence about the cost of amenities such as new roads and drainage or the sources of capital used for these purposes.

The original settlement had been created in a remote site in forest and heath in the 1680s and 1690s, and there was relatively little growth in the eighteenth century. The face of the town changed little: a few new houses were built and others were improved and enlarged. Basically, the town remained in 1800 as it had been in 1700, namely three or four groups of buildings. The shops were contiguous, in rows along the Parade (now the Pantiles), about 175 yds. long, in a valley below the Common. The lodging houses lay dispersed on Mount Sion, an adjoining sloping site, and on the higher ground of Mount Ephraim, on the north-west edge of the Common, and beside the London road half a mile to the north. Building on the Common had always been forbidden by the freeholders of the manor of Rusthall, which largely accounts for the dispersed character of the little town. There were at least 60 shops and taverns on the Parade, and 86 lodging-houses were listed in Sprange's *Tunbridge Wells Guide* of 1801; cottages for artisans and tradesmen lay among them. The buildings were brick, sometimes weather-boarded and at least occasionally tile-fronted, with tiled roofs. Terraces of substantial houses such as were found at Bath or the rising seaside resorts of Brighton, Margate and Weymouth were not built at Tunbridge Wells before the 1820s. The larger houses were detached, often with garden ground in front and rear.

During the first 40 years of the nineteenth century there was much alteration and improvement to existing houses, shops and taverns, and erection of new buildings in the existing areas of settlement. On the Parade the shops and other buildings mostly built in the 1680s and 1690s left little or no room for expansion. The lower row of shops, taverns and lodging-houses belonged to the Earl of Abergavenny, whose extensive Sussex estate adjoined it on the south side. The shorter line of buildings in the middle and part of the principal upper row of contiguous buildings on the north-west side of the Parade adjoining the Common, comprising a total of about 50 shops and other properties, belonged to the owners of the manor of Rusthall: in the early nineteenth century these were Elizabeth Shorey and then Major Gardner, who were both resident and owned a small amount of other local property. Since 1739, a block of 14 or 15 shops and some public rooms in the middle of the row had belonged to the freeholders of the manor. Between 1800 and 1840, some of the properties were reconstructed on building lease. On the freeholders' estate, Edward Palmer, linen draper, leased a house and shop in 1808 having just spent £300 on them. Abergavenny Buildings, a play-

house, was built by the theatre manager Sarah Baker in 1801–02. In the 1830s, the tenant of the Sussex tavern on Abergavenny property spent £5000 on an additional storey and other alterations, rechristening it the Royal Victoria and Sussex Hotel. In November 1833, the steward of the manor of Rusthall told Major Gardner of the dilapidated state of the buildings at the upper end of the Parade, and remarked that ‘if nothing is done the buildings will take the law in their own hands and tumble down’. He recommended that the houses should be let on building leases. His suggestion was put into effect, and two years later he wrote that ‘the Walks estate has improved considerably and is still improving’; three tenants at least had rebuilt their houses, and three others had made great improvements.<sup>4</sup>

To a lesser extent, the owners spent money on improvements. Miss Shorey erected a two-storey bath-house adjoining the drinking-well between 1801 and 1805. It had two large bathrooms on the ground floor and eight rooms above them for letting to people wishing to try a regular course of bathing. The total cost was over £4000. The baths were first run directly, then after 1813 let for £120 a year. The investment was thus not highly profitable. On the freeholders’ estate large-scale alterations by the owners cost £347 12s. in 1777, and four years later £449 6s. 4d., but it was not until 1832 that there was a similar outlay, when structural repairs cost £455. Maintenance works such as painting were done by the tenants.<sup>5</sup> The rents received fail to reveal any improvement in the value of the properties, particularly when account is taken of the modest inflation of property values in England of perhaps about 40 per cent between 1790 and 1815. The rental on the freeholders’ estate was between £360 and £330 a year between 1770 and 1789; thereafter, it fell to a little over £300 and, in the three decades after 1800, it was generally just under £300. The slight fall in the rental was owing entirely to the decline in the rent of the largest property, the Great Rooms, from £190 in 1770 to £90 in 1821. These were some of the principal public rooms on the Parade. On the estate of the lord of the manor there was a modest rise in the rental, from £750 in 1790 to £970 in 1805, £1133 in 1820 and £1292 in 1835; the two later figures include £120 for the rent of the Baths after 1813. The failure of the property to rise in value was the result of the long pause in the growth of the town before 1800, and then the

<sup>4</sup> Stone, Simpson and Hanson, solicitors, Tunbridge Wells: lease 6 February, 1838, Nevill family to Richard Gellett; *ditto* lease 1 September, 1808, trustees of freehold tenants of manor of Rusthall to Edward Palmer, of Tunbridge Wells, linen draper; Kent Archives Office U746 letters 28 November, 1833, 20 October, 1835.

<sup>5</sup> K.A.O. U746 ‘New Baths – Abstracts of Bills etc’; Stone, Simpson and Hanson: ‘Estate of the freehold tenants of the Manor of Rusthall. . . .’ (1 vol.: 1770–1834).

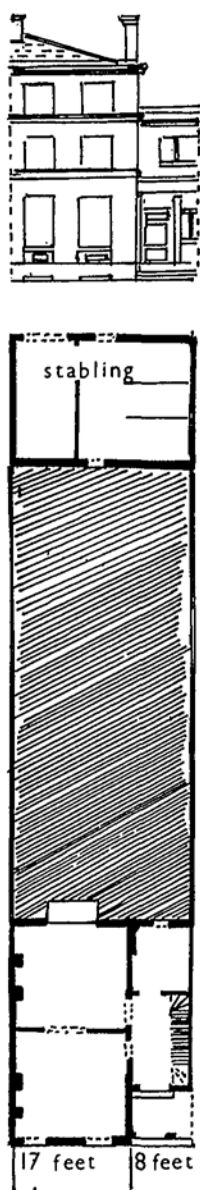


Fig. 2. House in Calverley Parade.

comparative decline in the commercial importance of the Parade as the town expanded northwards. Poor management of the estates, that is, the indifferent maintenance of the shops and other buildings, may also have been a contributory factor. Only the 1830s appears to have witnessed a growth in the value of some of the buildings.<sup>6</sup>

On the neighbouring Mount Sion, the houses became more closely packed and many of the gardens and orchards were converted into building plots. Several short rows of houses and cottages were erected, typically containing up to six dwellings, and a terrace of nine substantial houses (Bedford Row) was built at the bottom of the hill. There were also at least a dozen new detached and semi-detached villas, some with considerable gardens, erected on the edge of the Mount. On 7 December, 1833, three houses were advertised for sale on Mount Sion called Jertingham Place 'to Builders and others'; at the upper end was a private road with a second frontage of about 75 ft. 'admirably adapted for the erection of 5 or 6 small houses, which would produce a rental of about £100 per annum'. There was also some additional build-

<sup>6</sup> Stone, Simpson and Hanson, *ditto*; K.A.O. U749 A15-20; C.W. Chalklin, *The Provincial Towns of Georgian England: A Study of the Building Process, 1740-1820*, (1974), 224.

ing among the scattered houses at the top of the common. In 1830, six cottages were built in the garden of a house called Gilead Cottage by Ann Slatter, the widow of a local carpenter, and, by 1841, Joseph Slatter, carpenter, probably her son, had erected two large houses called Gilead Place on the site of the Cottage.<sup>7</sup>

Despite this modest infilling in the areas of existing settlement most of the new houses and tenements were built in the fields between Mount Sion and the London road half a mile to the north and about half a mile eastwards from the north-east edge of the Common, in which there was just the occasional building adjoining a road. There was one large owner in the middle of this area, a local squire named Thomas Panuwell (*d.* 1824) who had inherited his estate. He held about 60 acres to the east of Mount Pleasant road, part of an estate of about 900 acres of farmland, which stretched eastwards to the village of Pembury. There were at least ten owners of single fields of several acres; some came from families of substantial local trades-people, the others were absentee owners. The conversion of the land for building use, which involved at the least the layout of roads and building plots, was sometimes undertaken by these owners, sometimes by developers who purchased the land for this purpose.

Building was probably at its peak between about 1825 and 1835, when the Calverley Estate development got under way. Between 1800 and 1825, houses were being erected in at least four fields in various locations in the area between Mount Sion and the London Road.

In the 1800s, the Earl of Bristol was selling plots in Pound Field, on the north side of the road from Mount Pleasant to Pembury. On two plots among others Thomas Burrows, Tunbridge Ware manufacturer erected nine cottages before his death in 1810. By 1840, about 60 cottages and houses had been built. The two streets were lined with houses; behind them the cottages lay alongside or near tiny access roads.<sup>8</sup>

The Crown Field, again lying beside an existing road, on the other side of the Calverley Estate land, was bought for development by a local victualler named Henry Maynard. He began to sell building parcels in 1813. On 4 May, William Bridger, labourer, paid £30 for the site of the cottage which he had just built, and next year he sold it to Edward Bassett, another labourer, for £65. In July 1815, Bassett paid £120 for another building plot and an old workshop. During the next two years, he converted it into two dwellings. In the late 1820s,

<sup>7</sup> *The Tunbridge Wells Visitor*, vol. 1, 208; K.A.O. U55 T530.

<sup>8</sup> K.A.O. U55 T530.



his heir, Stephen Bassett, another victualler, pulled the first cottage down and erected four messuages; on the other parcel five more houses were built. On other parts of the Crown Field local speculators and builders erected other houses and cottages in a similar piecemeal fashion. By 1840, there were some 120 to 150 tenements, typically brick or weather-boarded cottages of four rooms, two up and two down, many in rows of up to six or seven dwellings. There was also a small number of larger single houses interspersed among them.<sup>9</sup> They used new roads running northwards from the existing road. Both the Pound Field and Crown Field developments lay at a distance from the existing built-up area, and presumably their advantage was cheap land for the building of cottages. On neither development were the builders regulated by covenants.

In the 1820s, there were two developments involving the building of terraces alongside the main road, partly for shops. These were beside the main road just north of the built-up area at the foot of Mount Sion, and the schemes were thus logically sited. In 1816, John Edger, a Spitalfields silk-weaver, bought four acres called Slaughterhouse Field and four cottages for £1190, and let the land adjoining two roads for building in terraces on building lease. All or most of the houses were built during the following decade. In 1840, there were two terraces of 14 and 8 houses and a public house.<sup>10</sup> On the other side of the road at the foot of Mount Pleasant, George T. Langridge, son of a local wheelwright, began leasing building plots on land (Vault Field) he had inherited from his father. On 11 January, 1826, he leased to George and Samuel Bone, two builders in the Sussex village of Wadhurst, a parcel measuring about 165 ft. by 190 ft. for 75 years at £42 per annum with the houses they had built on it. This undertaking involved the building of a substantial three-storey corner building and a terrace of six three-storey houses facing the main road. Two years later, by which time they had moved to the Wells, they were granted an adjoining parcel for £21 per annum, of which the lease was to fall in at the same time. They were bound to build three rows of houses not exceeding four in each row, and all facing north and south. On the opposite side of the road, Langridge leased a parcel with a frontage of 145 ft. to Luke Long, a local innkeeper, in 1832, for 70 years. Long agreed to erect eight houses in a terrace within four years according to plans approved by Langridge. Eleven months later two had been built; requiring £400 to continue the work, he mortgaged the premises to William Henry Lidbetter, of Uckfield

<sup>9</sup> K.A.O. U55 T529.

<sup>10</sup> K.A.O. U55 T533; Tonbridge parish rate books: P371/11/57,62.

in Sussex, gentleman. But this sum was not sufficient, and by 1837, though he had built three more dwellings, his rent was in arrears and he had defaulted on the mortgage. Lidbetter undertook to complete the work, and by next year the eight houses were at last erected. Altogether, in 1840, there were over 40 houses and cottages on the Langridge land, in terraces of three to eight dwellings. There was also a stonemason's yard and a small brew-house. Both the method and the pace of the building had been carefully dictated by the landlord.<sup>11</sup>

At the end of the 1820s, building became dominated though not monopolised for a few years by the development of the Calverley Estate. The death of Thomas Panuwell in 1824 and its ownership by a number of heirs may have precipitated the sale. In 1826, the whole estate was bought for £24,135 by John Ward, of Devonshire Place, London, and Holwood Park, near Hayes, in north-west Kent. Like innumerable other country gentlemen, Ward was a Justice of the Peace and Deputy Lieutenant for Kent, who was to serve as High Sheriff in 1835. The source of his wealth is not known, but he came from a North Country family and his wife was the daughter of a Yorkshire gentleman. His mansion at Holwood had just been designed by Decimus Burton, and Ward asked the well-known architect to plan his estate at Tunbridge Wells for building.<sup>12</sup>

The existence of a block of land of about 60 acres on the edge of the growing town permitted the layout of houses and parkland in a way which had already been undertaken in Regent's Park. In the

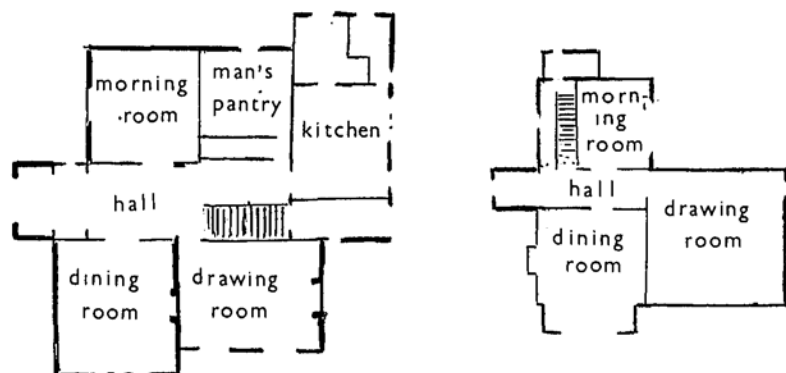


Fig. 3. Villas in Calverley Park.

<sup>11</sup> K.A.O. U55 T531, 533; Photographs in Tunbridge Wells Museum: 'The Railway Bell, 1886, kept by Alfred Drake, now Messrs Weekes'.

<sup>12</sup> K.A.O. U55 T528; J. and J.B. Burke, *Dictionary of the Landed Gentry*, ii, M-Z, (1846), 1516.

southern part of the property to the east of the road on the sloping ground of Mount Pleasant 26 acres of ornamental parkland were laid out. Facing the park at its eastern end a row of detached villas were built in an arc. To the north, facing west beside the main road, were 12 smaller three-storey terraced houses called Calverley Parade, and adjoining them and facing southwards a row of four double villas called Calverley Terrace. A hundred yards to the north-east lay the commercial centre, with a market place, inn and row of shops and houses, with other houses and four and six-roomed cottages in another road laid out by the estate in the rear. On the north side of the Park there was a hotel and to the east a terrace of 17 shops and lodgings of three storeys, known as Calverley Promenade. The elevations and even the internal layout of the houses on the estate were specified. With its park, the whole development was intended to cover 56 acres, and with its shops, market-place, inn, as well as its residential areas was intended to be in fact a new town.

The undertaking began in the autumn of 1828. Much of the land, including the site of the promenade, the inn, market place and neighbouring property, was taken on a building lease by Messrs. Bramah of Pimlico. These four brothers, who described themselves as engineers, had inherited the business of a famous engineer, the 'universal inventor' Joseph Bramah (*d.* 1814). In 1830, a partnership set up two years earlier as 'engineers, millwrights, ironfounders, smiths and plumbers' was computed to be worth nearly £64,000. Capital generated by manufacturing was now going into property development. At almost the same time as the Calverley development they were partly responsible for the St. Mary Abbots Terrace on the Holland Estate in west London. In Tunbridge Wells they set up workshops near the site of the inn and the stone was obtained from a quarry on the estate. The Bramahs assigned some of their holding, and built extensively themselves, including the Promenade and the Camden Inn and villas and lodges in the Park. Some of the houses in Calverley Parade were built by two local builders, named Barrett, who had a yard on the opposite side of the road, Decimus Burton was undertaker for three houses here and William Scantlebury, carpenter and joiner built at least two of the villas in the Park and other houses. First to be erected were the Parade and the Terrace, the mews behind, and the Camden Hotel. By 1832, nine of the villas in Calverley Park had been built, and the row of shops was begun. By 1840, the development was finished except for the market place.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> K.A.O. U47/11 T116, U653 T7; Tunbridge Wells Borough Council: deed bundles K48/1-4; (Ed.) J. Phippen, *Colbran's New Guide for Tunbridge Wells*, (Tunbridge Wells and London, 1840), 30-4; Public Record Office: Chancery Proceedings C13/

The planning and development of the Calverley Estate probably encouraged several neighbouring developments. The Windmill Field undertaking lay beyond the site of the Calverley Park villas, and its development occurred at the same time. In 1824, John Stone, a prominent local lawyer, bought Lower Nags Head Field of five acres for £800. The price of under £200 an acre suggests that it was bought for agricultural purposes. Six years later, after the Calverley development had begun and the need for artisan housing to accompany it had been realised, Stone came to an agreement with Charles Cripps, a local builder, for the sale of the land in building plots. As soon as the hay had been harvested, Cripps was to be given possession of any part and was to use all speed in preparing and selling the parcels for building. The first £1,535 received was to be paid to Stone. According to a plan attached to a conveyance of 1 and 2 November, 1830, Cripps laid out two 20 ft., and one 15 ft., roadway, and divided and sold the land in 18 parcels, varying in size from 247 ft. by 187 ft. down to 187 ft. by 33 ft. and 49 ft. by 80 ft. Eight years later, the estate included the Royal Oak Inn, owned by Cripps, Mount Calverley Lodge, set in its own grounds, which Cripps had built for himself, and two other substantial houses called 1 and 2 Park Place. These all adjoined the main road, and behind lay a gridiron pattern of 109 labourers' cottages in 22 rows, containing up to 11 tenements each.<sup>14</sup> On this largely artisan housing estate, there were no covenants concerning the method of building construction, nor relating to drainage.

On two sites near the London Road, where the houses were to be more substantial, the landlords were very careful about these points. In October 1832, Henry Hopkins, a Maidstone timber merchant, paid £1,500 for two acres on the site of the future Hanover Road as a building speculation. Six weeks later, he sold a parcel to James Damper, a schoolmaster in Mayfield, Sussex, for £117 15s. 0d. By then Hopkins had built a new road, 21 ft. wide, across the land between the main road and the Common, to be called Hanover Road, and another road, 14 ft. wide, running parallel to be called Rock Villa Road. Drains had been made under the roads for the use of the owners of the building plots. Damper was bound by the following covenants:

1. No dwelling house was to be built on any allotment within 80 ft. of Hanover Road of less value than £200.
2. No building was to be erected within 8 ft. of the road.
3. No projection other than bow windows was to extend more than

1837/18; *Survey of London*, XXXVII, *North Kensington*, (1973), 107n.

<sup>14</sup> K.A.O. U55 T530, 532.

12 in., and no cornice over windows or doorways was to project more than 18 in.

4. No wall or fence was to be built in front of the house higher than 3 ft. 6 in.

5. The occupier was to carry on no offensive trade, business or employment.

6. There was to be a cess-pool on each property, with a right to drain into the main drains; these were to be repaired by the owners in proportion to the value of their building plots.

7. Hanover Road was to be kept in repair by Damper and the other owners.<sup>15</sup>

Similar care was taken on the Grosvenor House Estate on the other side of the main road, where the amount of available building land was about 30 acres. In 1835, the owner, James Hockett Fry, a retired butcher in the town, bound several local builders who had agreed to buy plots to make drains from each house under the direction of a surveyor, and to maintain the main drains and estate roads by rates. The collector and surveyor were to be appointed by the tenants at an annual meeting.<sup>16</sup>

Further during the 1830s, there was more building on both sides of the London Road at the north end of the town. An absentee owner of a farm, John Gibbs of Strood, an attorney, sold plots for building in Clay Meadow; no covenants were probably made and various types of property were erected. To the south of the villas in Calverley Park another row of substantial three-storey semi-detached villas were built, which took advantage of rising ground to provide a view over the town to the Common.<sup>17</sup> The demand for houses for the well-to-do was clearly not regarded as running out by the end of the 1830s, as by 1840 both the Earl of Abergavenny and the Marquess Camden had laid out parks for villas to be erected on building lease. In addition, during the decade several single houses or pairs of substantial houses were built by an intending occupier on individual sites.

The development of the Calverley Estate had a profound effect on the physical growth of the town. Calverley Park created an open space between its new and older parts. For a long time, it remained divided; although houses were later built beside the road up Mount Pleasant, the ornamental parkland remains in the centre of the town, and contributes to its spacious effect. A new commercial centre was

<sup>15</sup> K.A.O. U55 T528.

<sup>16</sup> K.A.O. U55 T527.

<sup>17</sup> K.A.O. U55 T527; Tunbridge Wells Borough Council MSS. Miscellaneous; for Gibbs, S. Bagshaw, *History, Gazetteer and Directory of the County of Kent*, (Sheffield, 1847), i, 339.

established half a mile to the north of the Walks, and several of the smaller building estates nearby arose in consequence. The later growth of Tunbridge Wells has been mainly to the north of this point; today the top of Mount Pleasant is the commercial and civic centre, while the Walks have become something of an economic backwater.

The layout of the town also owed much to the fact that it was a resort. If it had been a commercial centre or market town of 8000 people, there would have been only a small demand for villas set in gardens and pleasure grounds, and the principal need would have been for shops and houses built as near as possible to the heart of the town. In particular, the main road to the north from Mount Sion would have been much more intensively lined with houses.

In England generally, detached or semi-detached houses in the suburbs referred to as villas were becoming fashionable in the 1820s and 1830s alongside the previously dominant terrace property. The building of many detached houses in the hills at Tunbridge Wells went back to the last quarter of the seventeenth century. Nevertheless, the rows of villas on the Calverley Estate and Grove Hill and elsewhere reflected also the national trend. Terraces of uniformly-fronted houses were being built for the first time in the town, such as Edger Terrace, Bedford Row on Mount Sion or Calverley Promenade. The organised layout of the little streets and rows of cottages on the Windmill Field show that it was the first planned artisan housing estate in the town. In the house types, as much as in the layout of the estates, the early nineteenth century marks the beginning of modern Tunbridge Wells.

According to A.B. Granville there were about 70 spas in England in 1841. Many were wells attached to villages, and there were relatively few spa towns of which the economy rested principally on a resort function. Tunbridge Wells was not the biggest inland resort in the early nineteenth century. Bath had developed as a residential spa in the eighteenth century and, by 1801, had a population of 34,160. Its inhabitants continued to grow, but its great age of estate development and building was the eighteenth century rather than the early nineteenth century. Cheltenham was a medium-sized market town and a small resort in the eighteenth century, with a population of 3,076 in 1801. It then expanded dramatically as a resort and, by 1826, had 20,000 people. Large-scale estate development was thus earlier and much more extensive than in Tunbridge Wells. Three landowners were between them mainly responsible for planning the new Cheltenham, on whose properties the Promenade and estates of Lansdown, Montpellier and Pittville were laid out, eventually covering more than 1000 acres. The Harvard brothers laid out the Cheltenham Promenade, a long drive nearly half a mile to the Spa,

and the gardens, which have given their name to Imperial Square. The Montpellier and Lansdown areas developed by Pearson Thompson, still 'one of the greater glories of the Cheltenham scene' includes Lansdown Terrace, Place and Crescent, built in the years after 1826. The plan of the Pittville Estate published in 1826 'shows two central gardens, on each side of which was a road with terraces, varied with individual villas; two squares . . . and a noble crescent. Beyond this was a third garden – with artificial lakes – sloping upwards to the eminence on which the Pump Room was erected as the culmination of the vista in a superb example of landscape gardening'. Leamington Spa grew particularly between 1825 and 1837, the population being 2,183 in 1821 and 12,864 in 1841. The estate development here included 369 acres owned by Edward Willes: the plan in 1826 emphasised terrace housing with a number of villas in large gardens: 'the plan with its sweeping curves and large areas of parkland, shows unmistakeable traces of Nash's work in Regent's Park'. In the early 1830s, Matthew Wise started a planned development covering about 99 acres. On the other hand, at two other towns with a long history as a spa, Buxton and Harrogate, planned development was very small in one case and non-existent in the other. At Buxton, a fine crescent was built between 1780 and 1784, and a square laid out for lodging-houses in the early nineteenth century, but the population was only 1,569 in 1841. Harrogate had a 200-acre common which was legally protected as at Tunbridge Wells, but the layout of its houses lacked any form. Its population grew from 1,195 in 1801 to 3,372 in 1841. Tunbridge Wells was outshone in the scale of its estate development by Bath, Cheltenham and Leamington, but its planned expansion with the Calverley undertaking at the centre was still considerable. When its physical growth is compared with that of the other English inland spas, it appears as a modestly splendid achievement.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> (Ed.) R.P. Beckinsale and J.M. Houston, *Urbanization and its Problems* (Oxford, 1968), 54, 62–3, 70; C.W. Chalklin, *Provincial Towns*, 152; G. Hart, *A History of Cheltenham*, (Leicester, 1965), 176–9; T.H. Lloyd, 'Royal Leamington Spa', in (Eds.) M.A. Simpson and T.H. Lloyd, *Middle Class Housing in Britain*, (Newton Abbot, 1977), 136–7; S. Lewis, *A Topographical Dictionary of England*, i, (1840 edn.), 405; B. Jennings, *A History of Harrogate and Knaresborough*, (Huddersfield, 1970), 330.