

Building Report

10 Hamilton Road, Kidderminster

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Date: 3rd March 2008

Historic Kidderminster Project Ref: 769

Introduction

This report was undertaken as part of the Historic Kidderminster Project. This house is of particular interest because it is an example of a council house built for sale. This issue caused much political controversy in the inter-war period. Sometimes whole estates were erected by the Borough of Kidderminster with the intention of selling the houses to private buyers. Much of the report is based upon the deeds held by the present owner, Emma Bishop, but also on deeds held by the owner of 5 Woodward Road, Reg Harris. Resources of Kidderminster Library have also been used.

History

This house is part of a large estate created by the break up of the historic Sutton Farm. Sutton was named in Domesday of 1086. The most likely site of that medieval settlement is where the farm stood until demolition in the 1930s, at the junction of Woodward Rd and Brinton Crescent where they meet Tomkinson Drive.

With Kidderminster expanding outwards and agriculture in the doldrums, Sutton Farm was ripe for sale and redevelopment. In 1881 much of the farmland was purchased by the Worcester Land and Investment Company. However, this company was unable to develop much of the land, and in 1902 its members resolved to wind up the business. In June 1903 the farm, which still operated under yearly tenants, was sold with 52 acres of land to Henry Packwood, a house furnisher of Kidderminster.

The land still had to wait a considerable time for building to take place. Packwood died in 1914, but it was not until May 1925 that his executors sold some of this land to William Johnstone, a Kidderminster accountant. In March 1929 he sold the land shown in the plan below to Kidderminster Borough Council for £1750. This land was to be used to build a large council estate. However, the houses built by the council were all to be sold. This policy was vigorously opposed by the rising Labour Party, who favoured letting the properties. (pp154/155, Gilbert, 2004)

The early history of 10 Hamilton Road suggests that too great an emphasis can be placed on home ownership at the expense of developing a stock of public housing available for renting to the least well off. It is a lesson we still need to learn today.

In October 1929 the Corporation sold the newly built house to Harold Isaac Roberts, a blacksmith of 10 Clensmore St, at the price of £290. A good sized garden of 400 sq yds was included. The corporation had to lend Roberts £280 by way of mortgage at 5% interest so that he could purchase the house, which was thereby conveyed back to



10 Hamilton Rd in 2007



Rear of 10 Hamilton Rd in 2007

the corporation for a term of 3000 years. Roberts did not hold on to his new house for long. In January 1931, when he was occupying 10 Hamilton Road, he sold out to John Leonard Smith of 15 Peel Street for a total of £305 11s 2d. So he made a little profit. The deeds show that the house was then rented out by private landlords until 1944.

Smith was living at 34 Marlpool Lane when he transferred the property to his wife in August 1935. In the following December she sold to Frank Timmis of 92 Greatfield Road, dyehouse labourer, for £395. In December 1944 Timmis, still of Greatfield Rd, sold to Arthur Henry Knowles of 10 Hamilton Road loom tuner for £501, subject to mortgage of £355. Knowles was a loom tuner who was already a tenant of the property at the time of the conveyance to him. He remained in the house until August 1956 when he sold it for £1450.

Bibliography

A History of Kidderminster, Nigel Gilbert, 2004.



Plan of new estate in 1929 highlighting no. 10 Hamilton Road - OS Ref SO820755