

Building Report

59-62 Peel Street, Kidderminster

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Introduction

Peel Street is of great interest, having been part of a development by the Woodfield Estate Land Society, which was formed by 1878. Other streets which were part of the scheme were Woodfield Crescent, Cobden Street, Crescent Road and part of Plimsoll Street. In 1905, for reasons which he did not explain, Ebenezer Guest described the society as 'pretentious'. (KS 9.9.1905) This house illustrates the difficulties land clubs faced in progressing with building. There was a delay of about twenty years before number 59 and neighbouring houses were erected. This report is based upon deeds held by the present owner, Marcus Cousins, and also deeds held by the present owner of 43 Woodfield Crescent, Andrew Briscoe. Resources of Kidderminster Library have also been used.

Woodfield Estate Land Society

The initial purchase for development of this land was by David Corbet and Edward Broadfield on 28th December 1876. They bought the land from Caroline Talbot, widow of Henry Talbot Jnr., who had inherited from his father Henry Snr. much of the land in this area. It formed part of the Caldwell Estate purchased from John Jefferys in 1842. On the next day after their purchase, 29th December, Corbet and Broadfield mortgaged the property for £3000. This may well have been the purchase price for the land, which extended to just over 15 acres. It is likely that Corbet and Broadfield had bought the land on behalf of the society. Dr. David Corbet was appointed on 28th May 1873 as the first Medical Officer of Health for Kidderminster, a post he held until 1911. (p88, Tomkinson and Hall, 1975) Clearly, he would have had an interest in the growth of good housing. Edward Broadfield seems to have enjoyed a number of occupations simultaneously. These included postmaster at Church St. post office, but as accountant and manager of the Kidderminster Permanent Benefit Building Society he too would have had an interest in the growth of housing. (Littlebury's Directory, 1879)

On 15th June 1878 the land was passed to the Society subject to the mortgage of £3000. This was first reference to the Woodfield Estate Land Society in the legal documents. It seemed to lead immediately to the borrowing of more money. On 29th June the land was conveyed by the Society to William Henry Talbot and Edward Broadfield subject to the mortgage of 29th December 1876 by way of mortgage for securing the sum of £3345. Regarding the earlier loan, £500 was still outstanding in November 1884, and it was not fully paid off until March 1885. We do not know when the second loan was repaid, except that it must have been cleared by the time that the Society was wound up on 17th December 1887.

It should not be thought that the Society was dissolved because the streets were fully developed. On the contrary, it is likely that many plots had not been built upon. We know that the property which is the subject of this report had no houses on it for another decade after the winding up of the Society. Also the 1885 OS map, surveyed in 1883, shows perhaps only 26 out of 92 plots with houses on them.



59-62 Peel Street in 2007 with stone 'Myrtle Cottages'

59-62 Peel Street

The plan of the plots for the Woodfield estate shows that the Society went to some trouble to provide a variety of shape and sizes for potential buyers. For example, many of the plots on the east side of Peel street had a frontage of 14 yards, which might be expected to take three houses, whereas most of those on the west side had frontages of 10 yards, which would take only two. Needless to say this did not meet with everybody's requirements. On 10th February 1883 Henry Perrins purchased the complete Lot 83 plus about a fifth of the neighbouring Lot 82. On this land nos. 59-62 would eventually be built.

The land was conveyed to Perrins still charged with the mortgage of 29th December 1876. One of the problems for a society which had borrowed heavily was that they might have to convey plots to their members still subject to a mortgage debt incurred by the society as a whole. This seems to have happened to Perrins. This was not cleared until 11th March 1885. It is probably better to think of the Woodfield Society as a land society, following its title, rather than as a building society, if we understand by that latter term a society which enables its members to build homes. It appears that



Rear of 59-62 Peel Street in 2007

the society was not helping Perrins to build a home. He never built houses on the plot and he was not loaned money by the society to do so. Indeed in November 1885, soon after the society's mortgage on the land was lifted, Perrins mortgaged his plot together with other land to private individuals. As a licensed victualler he seems to have engaged in land dealings for financial reasons entirely unconnected with the need to build a home.

On 17th September 1897 Perrins, for a price of £67 16s, conveyed to Thomas Dell, builder of Sutton Park, all that piece of land fronting Peel Street containing 508 square yards formerly described as Lot 83 and part of Lot 82 of the Woodfield Crescent Building Estate. Dell wasted no time. In April 1898 he was able to sell to Mr James Teague, licensed victualler, four houses in Peel Street for £800. These are now numbered 59 to 62, and were built therefore between the autumn of 1897 and spring of 1898.

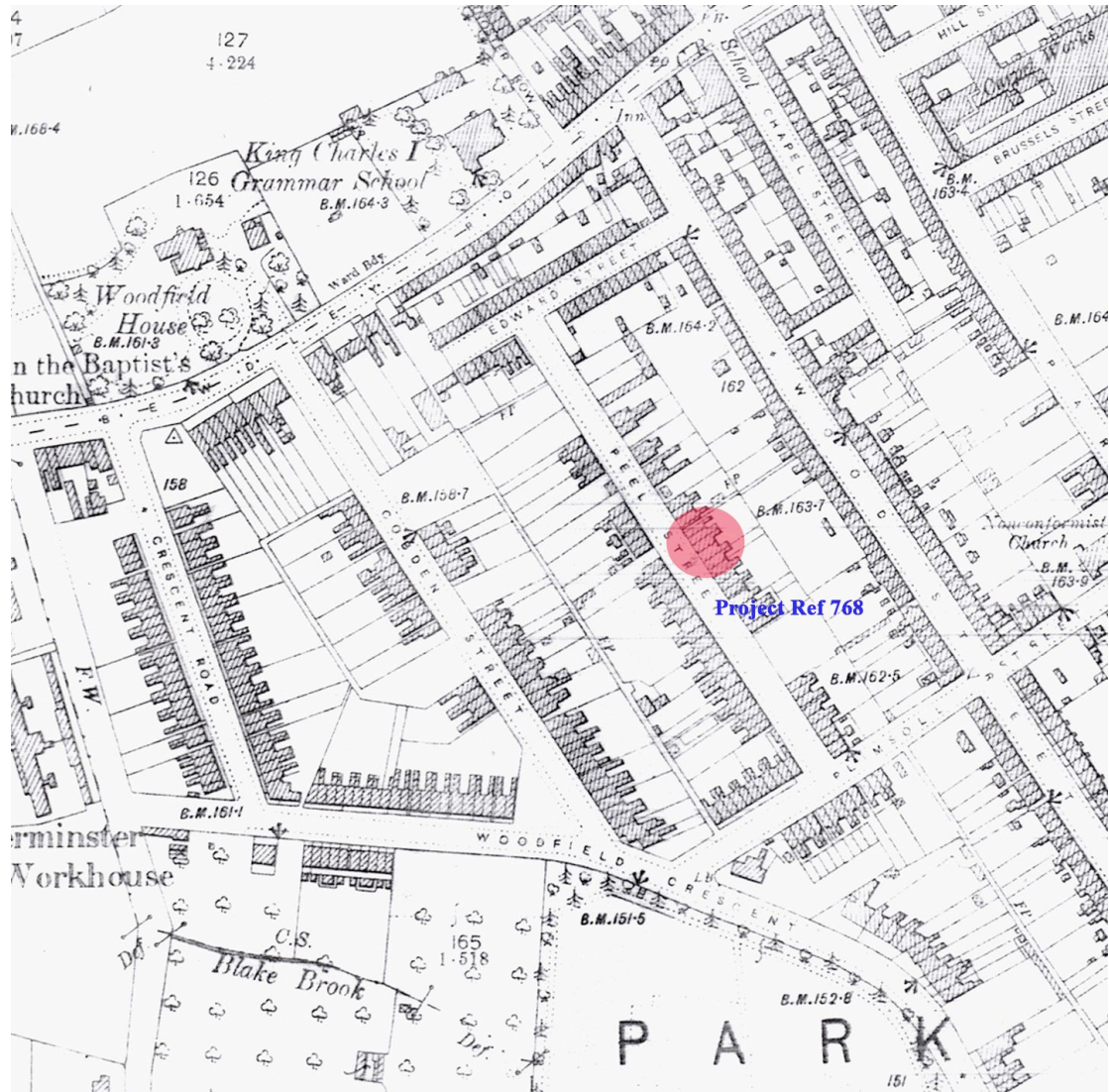
Nos. 59-62 stayed together as a block of rented houses at least until 1944. In 1920 Teague, then an outdoor beerhouse keeper, sold them to Annie Rose Meredith of Hurcott Road for £820, so their value had remained virtually unchanged since 1898. As Mrs Annie Rose Lawrence of Dowles Manor she in turn sold them in November 1944 to William Marshall Green of Shrewsbury licensed victualler for £1085.

During the post-war period the four houses began to be broken up. It appears that by October 1952 no. 62 had been sold separately, because Green was mortgaging the others. In May 1955 he sold no. 61 for £425. On 24th July 1961 he sold no. 59 to Mrs Florence Beatrice Kirkby of Avalon Sutton Park Road for £700. No. 59 was then in the occupation of Mrs N. Haycock. Finally on 31st July 1968 Mrs Kirkby still of

Avalon sold no. 59 on to W. Chmielewski for £1800. It was probably at that point that no. 59 ceased to be a rented property.

Bibliography

Kidderminster since 1800, Ken Tomkinson and George Hall, 1975



59-62 Peel Street in 1902 – OS Ref 826765