

Building Report

38 York Street, Kidderminster

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Introduction

This report was undertaken as part of the Historic Kidderminster Project. The house is of great interest as one of the relatively few terraced cottages surviving in the town from the first half of the nineteenth century. Other houses from the period survive in York Street, and the history of this house assists us to understand how this street was developed. In this instance the formation of the street seems to have been the enterprise of one man, John Simpson. Resources of both Kidderminster Library and Worcester Record Office have been used. We have also benefited by access to deeds of the property given by the present owner, Joanna Holloway.

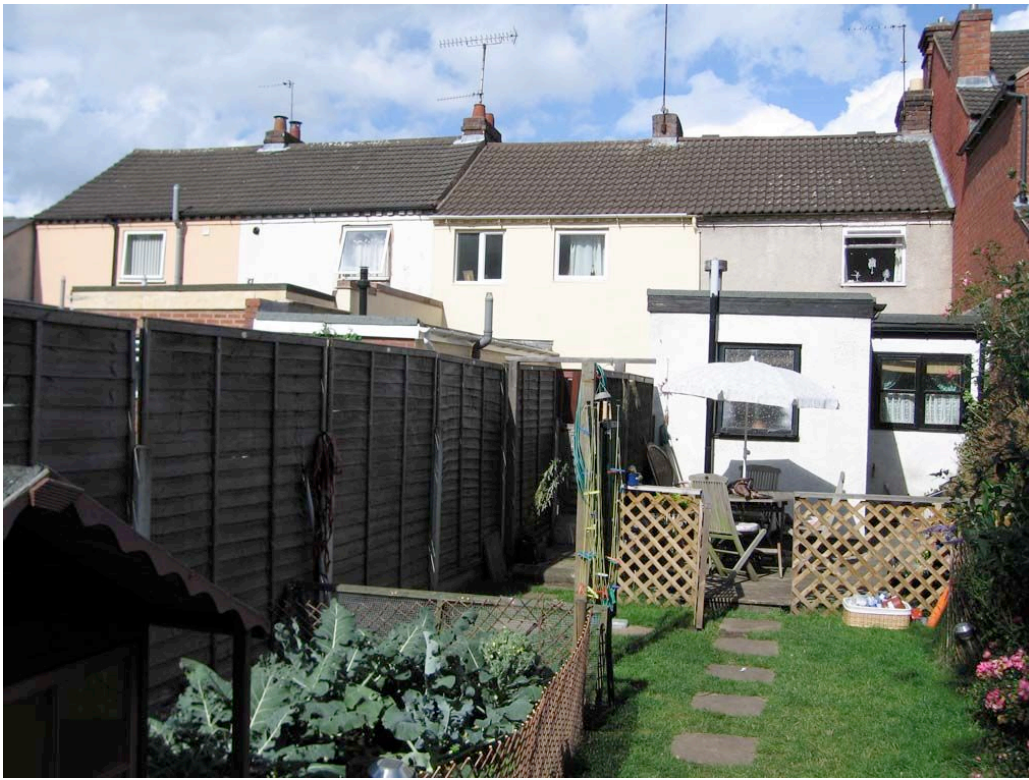


36 and 38 York Street built by George Hughes

History

The manner in which York Street grew is referred to in a newspaper article of 1849. It is listed among other streets where 'enterprising individuals have bought a piece of ground suitable for building purposes, and retailed it to others at a profit averaging 1s a yard.' (Worcestershire Chronicle 26.12.1849)

We know little of John Simpson, who is described as a coal merchant in the house deeds. The poor rate lists from 1846 and the 1851 census suggest that he lived in a large house at the top of Rackfields owned by the Canal Company. (See for example WRO BA 10470/183 and 185) The census has him as a timber merchant. The poor rate lists reveal that he did more than simply retail vacant building plots at a profit. In fact he built all of the early houses himself. The lists from 1846 to 1851 covering York Street have him owning seven houses valued at £6, a beerhouse and premises valued at £20, a bakehouse valued at £4, a house valued at £7 and finally four more houses valued at £6. Finally, in November 1850 are two houses owned by George Hughes and two owned by Richard Hughes. These are the houses which concern us here, including number 38.



**Rear of four houses built by Richard and George Hughes
taken from back garden of no. 38**

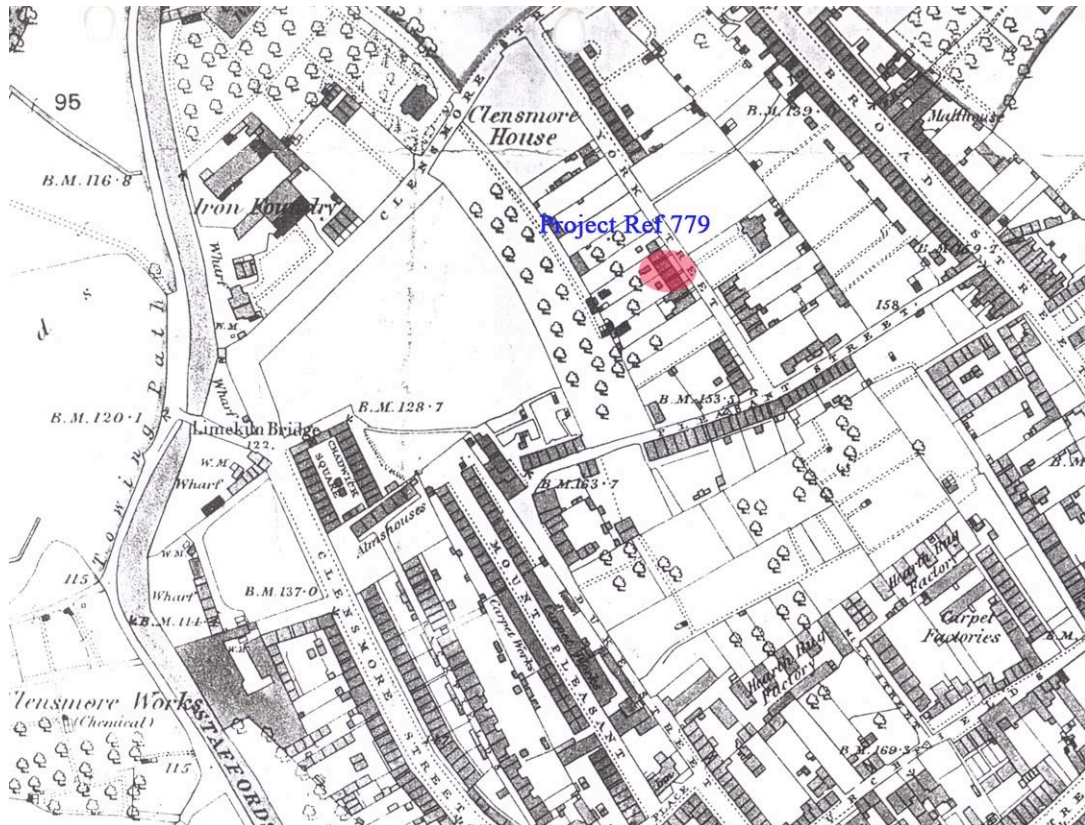
On 21st April 1846 John Simpson sold a plot of land containing 445 square yards to George Hughes, bricklayer, for £22 3s. The conveyance revealed that this had a frontage of 10 yards to ‘a street called New Street lately laid out by John Simpson’. On its north side it was bounded by land of Richard Hughes and on its south side by land of Charles Starr.

George Hughes built two houses on the plot. In his will of 1877 he devised one each to his two sons. The two houses were numbered 7 and 8 at this time. He gave no. 7 to William, who was occupying the house at the time. No. 8 went to his other son, George. The elder George died in July 1881. About 1883 William agreed to sell his house to the younger George for £125, which was paid but no conveyance was issued. This was remedied on 13th April 1908, when a conveyance was issued in which both brothers are described as builders.

A few weeks later, on 1st June, George Hughes sold both houses to Dinah Evans, wife of a milk seller Henry Evans of Pleasant St, at a price of £225. The houses were then numbered 13 and 14. She continued to own them until her death in March 1950.

Description

This was originally a two up two down house. The cellar was built with a coal chute at the back, which is now built over by an extension containing the kitchen. It is one of a pair with number 36 on its north side, and between them is an entry. A similar pair built by Richard Hughes still survive next to them and are numbered 32 and 34.



32-38 are highlighted on 1885 map - OS Ref SO 831773