

Little Woodhouse – A Brief History

Little Woodhouse covers the area between Woodhouse Moor to the north, down to Kirkstall Road and the river, and from the University of Leeds across to Hyde Park Road, the old boundary between the parishes of Leeds and Burley.

Originally part of ‘the Lord’s waste’ (rough scrub and pasture), the lands were used for grazing animals and drying cloth (tenting). Little Woodhouse was described in 1715 by the Leeds historian Ralph Thoresby as “one of the pleasantest Hamlets in the Parish” and its main street only demolished in the 1970s to make way for the Clarendon wing of the Leeds General Infirmary.

John Kendal (who gave his name to Kendal Lane) bought the Little Woodhouse lands in 1583. John Harrison, a rich Leeds merchant, in 1618 purchased the “pleasant seat” at Little Woodhouse (in the present site of Claremont) and its lands and left them in trust to maintain St John’s Church (off Upper Briggate), which he had founded. The fields remained in use until the mid-19th century.

The 18th century saw the building of large villas overlooking the Aire valley for rich merchants to enjoy the fresh air and the river views and several still exist: Little Woodhouse Hall, Claremont, Denison Hall, Belle Vue House and Springfield House were all built before 1820. The Georgian Hanover and Woodhouse Squares were first laid out in the 1820s but the houses developed slowly over the 19th century. (The Swarthmore Education Centre occupies six of the original Georgian terraced houses in Woodhouse Square).

Woodsley House (now Fairbairn House) on Clarendon Road was built by the textile engineer Peter Fairbairn, (statue on Woodhouse Square) who as Mayor welcomed Queen Victoria when she opened the Leeds Town Hall in 1858. The Leeds Grammar School moved to its site on Moorland Road in 1857 (now the Leeds Business School).

The fields sloping down to Burley and Kirkstall Roads were developed from the mid-19th century onwards with large houses along Clarendon Road, the Moorlands, Kelso Road, Belle Vue Road, Victoria and Consort Terraces and later in the century by streets of smaller terraced houses.

Schools followed: Belle Vue in 1883, St Anne’s 1905 and St Michaels (designed by Benedict Williamson) 1908, and Rosebank Primary School, opened in 1875, is the only one which survives. The Hostel of the Resurrection on Springfield Mount was designed by Temple Moor (1905-8) as a seminary training priests and at one time housed the University Adult Education services (now student housing). From the 1850s the University of Leeds spread westwards to take in streets of large terraces, some incorporated into the campus and others around Clarendon Road which are now returning to residential use.

The Kelso Gardens estate was developed in the 1930s on the site of allotments. In the 1960s the Marlboroughs tower block and maisonettes were built. The 1960s and 70s also saw the demolition of some terraces and replacement by small council housing estates: the Rillbanks, Rosebanks, Consorts, Kendals and Willows. Terraced housing between Belle Vue Road and Westfield Road was

replaced in the early 2000s by small apartment blocks and modern houses built by Leeds Federated Housing Association.

Since the 1990s many of the larger Victorian terraces have been converted for multiple occupation. Blocks of apartments have replaced some large houses and former school buildings in Belle Vue Road, Clarendon Road, Westfield Road and notably, Hanover Square (with a façade replicating the original Victorian housing).

The largest green spaces are the Hanover and Woodhouse Squares, and the Rosebank Millennium Green founded 2000 and run by a voluntary Trust.

In the 21st century large blocks of Purpose Built Student Accommodation have been built in the Burley and Kirkstall Road area, totalling thousands of rooms. Student and private apartments (up to 1000 units) have been constructed on the former St Michaels’s College site, retaining the façade of the old college building. Recently student blocks each of over 100 rooms have been completed in Woodhouse Square and Oak House on Park Lane.

Many people who have lived in Little Woodhouse influenced the development of Leeds as a prosperous city and as a centre of learning and intellectual life. Some examples: industrialists Francis Chorley and Sir John Barran MP, Dr John Heaton who helped establish the University, his sister Ellen Heaton arts patron and early feminist, Edward Baines Liberal editor and MP, Leonora Cohen the suffragette, Don Robins founder of St George’s Crypt, artist Jacob Kramer and Maurice Beresford the social and university historian.

Little Woodhouse Community Association

Working to improve our neighbourhood for all who live, work or study here for the benefit of all its users

We cover: Burley Road, Hyde Park Road
The Marlboroughs, Moorlands, St John's and
Hyde Park Closes, Rosebanks, Rillbanks, Belle
Vue Road, Kelsos, Consorts, Kendals, Victoria
and Consort Terraces, Claremonts, Clarendon
Road, Mount Preston Street, Hyde Terrace,
Hanover and Woodhouse Squares, Woodsley
Road, Westfield Road, Kirkstall Road (north
side), The Willows, Willow Road.

***Join us if you live, work, volunteer or
study or run a business, in Little
Woodhouse***

Contact us:

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Sue Thomas (membership)

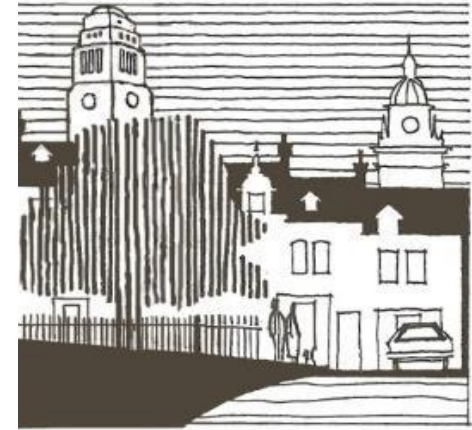
sueltoft@yahoo.co.uk

www.littlewoodhouseonline.com

What we do

- ***Regular quarterly community forum meetings*** to raise local issues such as waste collection, housing and planning, crime etc with councillors, council officers, police and more
- ***Keep in touch with local bodies*** such as the Universities, Unipol, our local Ward Councillors and other parts of Inner North West Community Committee area
- ***Keep you informed about planning applications*** in the local area. We are also supporting the ***Little Woodhouse Neighbourhood Planning Forum*** to draw up a Neighbourhood Plan for the area – it's free to join
- ***Send you information about local events and local organisations*** likely to be of interest to residents
- ***Run events in partnership with other groups*** such as Heritage Walks, action and fun days on the Rosebank
- ***We hold regular open meetings to discuss issues, arrange actions and projects and find the money to support our activities – come along and see us in action***

To join us or find out more, fill in the enclosed form so we can get in touch



LITTLE WOODHOUSE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

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neighbourhood for all who
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