

HOMES FOR HEROES

Following the First World War, the British Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, pledged 'Habitations fit for the heroes who have won the war'. The 1919 Addison Act enabled local authorities to build council housing on an unprecedented scale. The experience of war highlighted chronic health problems and the potential for civil disobedience among dissatisfied returning servicemen. A poor supply of housing was to blame and archaic slums persisted throughout Britain.

The streets of Nottingham provide an excellent example of this history and continue show the enduring appeal of council housing in tackling housing need and homelessness.

1. THE OLD PROBLEM 1787-1914

By the late eighteenth century, the old medieval streets were struggling to contain a growing town. Fine middle class housing on High Pavement (1) overlooked the slum district of Narrow Marsh. Here, overcrowding was rife, piped water was a shared resource and toilets were wooden buckets. Little survives from this period except the caves, former Loggerheads pub and a warehouse on Cliff Road (2). More acceptable working class housing could be found on Broad Street (3) or the suburbs of New Radford (4), New Lenton, New Sneinton and Hyson Green.

The 1845 Enclosure Act enabled the development of St Ann's, the Arboretum and the Meadows. Robin Hood Terrace and Campbell Grove (5) provide the best example of working class housing built in the 1850s. Nearby, is one of the earliest examples of housing built by the local authority: Victoria Buildings (6) was built in 1878 though it would take another forty years until the idea was re-considered.

2. INTER-WAR SUCCESS 1919-1939

During the inter-war period, Nottingham built 17,000 council houses. The earliest schemes were often quite modest such as 5-11 Woodville Drive in Sherwood (7). The first large estate was built on Stockhill Lane, (8) consisting of 350 houses, each with scullery, larder and water closet.

The driving force was Councillor William Crane, chair of the Housing Committee from 1919 to 1957. Under his direction he employed the skills of T. C. Howitt as City Architect to deliver Garden City style estates such as can be seen at Aspley (9). At Wollaton Park Estate (10) they had to innovate with steel and concrete when bricks were in short supply. The contrast with the slums could not have been starker. By the 1930s, Narrow Marsh was demolished and replaced with spacious council housing (11).

3. POST-WAR REBUILDING 1945-1959

With the demand for housing still great, the years following the Second World War continued the trend for building large suburban estates, but with some modern adjustments. The Bilborough Estate (2,676 houses) was constructed with a variety of techniques to combat a short supply of materials and labour: steel 'BISF' houses (12) and pre-fabricated bungalows on Wigman Road (13), concrete panel houses on Cockington Road (14), and poured concrete Wimpey houses on Birchover Road (15).

At 6,828 houses, Clifton Estate was the largest single estate built by the city. The sheer scale was enhanced by neighbourhood schools, a central thoroughfare (16) and north-south green route from Glapton Lane to Central Park (17). A green belt with playing fields and allotments was designed to preserve rural character.

4. HIGH RISE 1960-1969

By the 1960s the old pre-1845 suburbs were earmarked for slum clearance, and government subsidies encouraged new high rise developments. These often included a mix of system-built low rise housing and maisonettes, such as those at New Sneinton (18). Braidwood Court in Hyson Green originally formed part of large deck-access complex, though only the tower and shopping precinct survive (19).

Unfortunately many similar schemes were poorly built and have since been demolished, such as those at Hyson Green, Balloon Woods and Old Basford. Many, however, have been successfully retained, like the refurbished flats of Sneinton, Radford and Victoria Centre (20).

5. LOW RISE 1970-1979

Problems with high rise necessitated a low rise approach during the 1970s. Demolition schemes turned to the post-1845 districts and neighbourhoods were re-planned following 'Radburn' principles - creating a clear distinction between pedestrians and traffic in a way that tried to replicate the closeness of community associated with traditional terraced houses.

The challenge in St Ann's was impressive: demolish 10,000 houses, re-house 30,000 people and build 3,000 new homes in less than a decade. This wholesale approach proved controversial and parts of the estate, such as Robin Hood Chase (21), were criticised as regimented. Consequently, the redevelopment of the Meadows was conducted more gradually. It was here in 1976, at Kirkewhite Court (22), where the 50,000th Nottingham council house was built.

6. RIGHT TO BUY 1980-2004

By 1980 around half of the city's population lived in council houses, but the role of local authorities was under scrutiny. Government subsidies for new housing were cut back while the Right to Buy discount made it easier for council tenants to own their home. By 2005, 40% of council houses in Nottingham had been sold.

For the Council this was a period of retrenchment and undoing the mistakes of the past. The problematic deck access estates were either demolished or converted into maisonettes, for example Crabtree Farm (23), while the popular prefabs of the 1940s were rebuilt in brick, such as the bungalows at Beechdale (24). Most impressive were the Estate Action improvements made to high rise blocks at Radford (25), which were renamed The Woodlands.

7. TO BUILD AGAIN 2005-2019

Decades of minimal council house building had created an inadequate supply of new housing. Consequently, government has slowly reduced its restrictions on local authorities. In 2005 Nottingham City Homes was established as a management organisation that took over from the Council's housing department. This allowed the city to secure new funds.

Since then, tens of thousands of homes have been upgraded to the Decent Homes Standard, and 500 new council houses have been built. Many are on small sites such as Geraldine Close in Bestwood (26), on the site of a group of unused garages. But the largest schemes are those at Lenton (27) and Radford (28), both of which replaced former high rise and deck access estates of the 1960s.



HOMES & PLACES

Celebrating 100 Years of Council Housing

Historical Map

Nottingham's Council Houses

1919-2019
HOMES FIT FOR HEROES
100 YEARS OF COUNCIL HOUSING



The trauma of the First World War had highlighted a chronic problem with housing in Britain. The government pledged 'Homes for Heroes', and the 1919 Housing & Town Planning Act enabled local authorities to build council housing on an unprecedented scale.

This guide shows how the streets of Nottingham provide an excellent example of this history, from slums that originated in the eighteenth century, to the pioneering estates of the 1920s and the Decent Homes Standard of the present era.

Council housing in Nottingham houses a fifth of the city's population and provides secure, good quality homes across the city.

Created on the occasion of the centenary of the 1919 Addison Act, a Nottingham City Homes project. Written and designed by Chris Matthews.

Images courtesy Picture Nottingham, Nottingham City Council, Nottingham City Homes, Chris Matthews and T. C. Howitt, *A Review of the Progress of the Housing Schemes in Nottingham* (1928).



LOCATIONS



The Old Problem 1787–1914

- 1 High Pavement
- 2 Former Loggerheads pub, caves & warehouse, 59–87 Cliff Road
- 3 Framework Knitter's house, 26–30 Broad Street
- 4 New Radford, 1–9 Ilkeston Road
- 5 Robin Hood Terrace & Campbell Grove
- 6 Victoria Buildings, now Victoria Park View, Bath Street, Sneinton



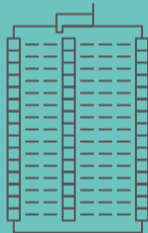
Inter-war Success 1919–1939

- 7 5–11 Woodville Drive, Sherwood
- 8 Stockhill Lane, Basford
- 9 Aspley Estate, Aspley Lane
- 10 Wollaton Park Estate, Middleton Boulevard, Wollaton
- 11 Cliff Road Estate, Cliff Road



Post-war Rebuilding 1945–1959

- 12 BISF houses, 195–267 Wigman Road, Bilborough
- 13 Former prefab Bungalows, 127–193 Wigman Road, Bilborough
- 14 Tarran Newland houses, 10–84 Cockington Road, Bilborough
- 15 Wimpey houses, 1–73 Birchover Road, Bilborough
- 16 150–274 Southchurch Drive, Clifton
- 17 Glapton Lane – Central Park, Clifton



High Rise 1960–1969

- 18 Manvers, Bentinck & Kingston Courts, Sneinton Road
- 19 Braidwood Court, now High Point, Noel Street, Hyson Green
- 20 Victoria Centre, Milton Street



Low Rise 1970–1979

- 21 Robin Hood Chase, St Ann's Well Road–Woodborough Rd, St Ann's
- 22 Kirkewhite Court, Eugene Gardens, the Meadows



Right to Buy 1980–2004

- 23 Springhead Court, Hoefield Crescent, Crabtree Farm, Cinderhill
- 24 34–72 Hollington Road, Beechdale
- 25 The Woodlands, Norton Street, Radford



To Build Again 2005–2019

- 26 Geraldine Close, Bestwood
- 27 Park Street–Godfrey Lane, Lenton
- 28 17–39 Clifford Steet, New Radford

