

Who Built Chorlton?

The Development of a Late Victorian Suburb

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The evolution of a suburb is a major part of the urbanising process that has created the modern city. Modern suburbs may develop as tightly planned entities: Victorian suburbs grew in a much more piecemeal and adventitious way. Like any part of the city, they were created by investment, for profit and as a speculation, since owner-occupation was so relatively rare in the 19th century city. Who were the entrepreneurs? There were many participants in the process, from large scale landowners down to investors of modest means who built perhaps a row or two of houses. The 'actors' played varying roles. Landowners might act virtually as planners by setting a framework for development and by controlling the social status of the evolving community. Powerful external influences like railway companies gave a major stimulus. An infant apparatus of institutional control (the Local Boards) helped to shaped the process, not least by providing drainage and sewage facilities. Within this framework a myriad of individual investment decisions put bricks and mortar on the land. The purpose of this paper is to trace these processes as they shaped a typical Manchester suburb of Victorian origin, prefaced by an introduction that reviews the mechanisms of urban growth in a more general sense.

The village and Township of Chorlton-cum-Hardy lay in open country to the south of Manchester in 1850. By 1900 it had become part of the suburban fabric of South Manchester with the bulk of an enormously increased population commuting to work in the city. It is characteristic of many rural communities that found a similar destiny as the Victorian city expanded.

Actors in the Suburbanising Process

The process of suburbanisation in the 19th century city is often conceived as the result of 'push' factors (forcing residents away from the central area) and 'pull' factors (attracting them into the surrounding countryside). The great overcrowding of the central areas was relieved by the demolition of dwelling houses (for many reasons, including the arrival of new railways and their termini), and the rapid development of shops, offices and commercial premises. The poorer groups could only remain close to work in the central area by multiple-occupation of property and by accepting gross levels of congestion. In the face of working-class pressure on land and serious environmental hazards the middle classes rapidly deserted the city centre and its environs. The 'flight to the suburbs', on this view, was something thrust upon the burgeoning middle-classes. The demand for new houses and the availability of undeveloped land at lower costs than central sites enabled speculative builders to provide a range of house-types, of all kinds, to suit differing family needs and income, and in a clean, disease-free setting.

For the wealthy groups in society the flight to the semi-rural suburbs had begun long before the age of mass public transportation. Horse-drawn omnibuses or private carriages provided the necessary transport. By the 1850's the rich could live anywhere, regardless of the availability of public transport, and may have preferred

remote places which were likely to remain exclusive. Public transport almost always followed after some considerable population growth and urban development, and only preceded these in rare instances, chiefly along the railways. The middle-classes often went to live where there were poor or no services in the expectation that a new bus route would open when there were enough people to make it profitable. The horse-drawn omnibus was the first real public transport system, well-developed by 1850, making possible daily journeys to work, at times of day, journey speeds and fares which were convenient to a growing and affluent middle-class. These new arrivals attached themselves around the edges of the elite areas, often infilling between an original village and the continuous built-up area.

The development of suburban railway services followed the suburbs by periods of at least a decade or two in each of the larger cities (Kellett, 1969). When the railways did arrive they helped the middle-class suburban dweller, but they also attracted large numbers of poorer clerks and workmen, especially with cheap 'Workmen's Tickets'. By about 1895 the tram was most important, but with the railway being heavily used. Many middle class suburbs were later invaded and surrounded by smaller, cheaper property for this poorer social class. This process of social change took place at different rates and with different results around most large towns and cities. The model shown below gives an idea of some of the possible movers in the local development process and their roles in the investment that created the new suburbs.

THE MODEL FOR THE LOCAL RESIDENTIAL PROCESS (Treen, 1982)

Category	Sub-Category
A. Pre-development	a1 Agricultural Estate landowner a2 Land Speculator
B. Developer	b1 Agric. Estate landowner b2 Builders b3 Associated Professions (lawyers, surveyors, estate agents) b4 Entrepreneur
C. Builder	c1 Speculative builder c2 Contractor
D. Building owner	d1 Landlord d2 Owner occupier
E. Resident	e1 Tenant e2 Owner occupier

The most important decision for the landowner or developer was: which social group should the housing be aimed at in this new suburb? The provision of better-class housing had major benefits for the landowner. If the sites were let on 'short' leases (40-120 years), the estate would benefit from the higher reversionary value of larger houses. These houses were generally better-built than artisan dwellings and could be handed over in suitable condition for renting when the ground leases expired. The main attraction was the higher ground rent or sale prices obtainable, especially through building covenants.

The disadvantages of middle class housing for the landowner/developer were that more land had to be left for streets and open spaces. The demand was always small in provincial towns and fluctuated according to the level of local prosperity. Thus the market tended to be over-supplied because of the potentially higher profits of this type of product.

The original field-boundaries and rights of way often affected the layout and alignment of streets and size and shape of plots in the new suburbs and so did patterns of ownership. The boundaries of properties tended to remain unchanged for long periods of time, even when their ownership did not. Over 75% of the building development in Bradford in the years 1850-1951 was affected by the pattern of property boundaries (Mortimore, 1969). The many small-holdings in south Leeds were suitable for builders of working-class homes, while larger estates were favoured for low density middle class development. (Ward, 1962; Olsen 1964).

According to H.J. Dyos' (1961) work in Camberwell the landowner could play a number of possible roles in the formation of building estates. He might:

1. turn builder himself.
2. employ a builder under contract.
3. lease his land to an individual, a firm or a building association - based on a building agreement between landowner and contractor for the granting of leases for completed houses at a certain house rent or overall ground rent.
4. sell his land freehold for a perpetual ground rent charge.
5. sell to an estate development company which would lay roads, install drainage, and build the houses.
6. sell directly to individual builders, either piecemeal or in a lot.
7. in any of these modes he might still impose restrictive covenants, to secure uniformity or for other reasons.

The form of tenure had a crucial role in the development process. The leasehold system was used by the large estates in Camberwell to produce a gradual and controlled transformation of their properties into middle-class residential districts. The leasehold was favoured among builders because only a ground rent was payable instead of a purchase price (Treen, 1982). For the aristocratic landowners the long term value of their estates and the maximization of prestige were very important considerations (Cannadine, 1980). However, a town's spatial pattern may have owed more to forces like topography, fashion, the desire of the upper classes to get out of the city, and the wish of the middle-classes to emulate them, than to any master plan imposed from above by aristocratic landowners (Cannadine, 1980).

The landowners could encourage well-built and substantial properties and so determine the social status of an area through the use and enforcement of restrictive covenants. For example, the 'feu contract' in Scotland prohibited certain types of building and stipulated the quality or type of materials to be employed. (Rodger, 1982). The most wide-ranging covenants restricted land use to residential buildings (Springett, 1986). The enforcement of restrictive covenants in building agreements depended on the skill with which they were drawn up and the perseverance and willingness of the landlord to enforce them. If the conditions placed on either design or construction were too strict the speculators might avoid the estate.

Generally, the original owner of the land was not the builder. He may have been the developer (surveying and levelling the ground, marking out plots and streets and sometimes providing sewers and paving). He may have used a middleman or developer. The owner's profit was gained from the conversion of the land from agriculture to building use (Chalkin, 1974). Surveyors, attorneys, solicitors and other professionals were strongly involved in the building process (Treen, 1982; Chalkin, 1974; Springett, 1986).

Construction itself was largely in the hands of two groups of building undertakers. These were craftsmen-builders (bricklayers, carpenters) who acquired the site, performed part of the building themselves, and contracted the rest of the work to other craftsmen. There were also entrepreneurs outside the trade who had to contract with craftsmen for the whole of the construction work. In Camberwell a great variety of folk were involved in speculative building. Easy credit and the convention of sub-contracting, improved technical literature and house designs all helped. There was a high bankruptcy rate. Most builders built few houses, but the biggest developers were very large indeed. Most were 'local'. Most streets were developed by several builders (Dyos, 1961).

Most houses were held on lease and there was frequent change of occupancy each year in an unstable population. The effective demand for freehold purchase was so slight, even amongst the tradesmen and better-paid artisans, that the rapid extension of towns may have been impossible if the whole capital for purchase and building had had to be advanced by the occupiers (Kellett, 1969). In cities prior to World War One less than 10% of householders were owner occupiers - a few rented from a council or philanthropic landlord. About 90% were tenants of private landlords (Dennis, 1984).

The Manchester Setting and Rural Chorlton

"In the centre of Manchester there is a fairly large commercial district, about half a mile broad, almost entirely given over to offices and warehouses",

"Around the commercial quarter there is a belt of built up areas on the average one and half miles in width, which is occupied entirely by working class dwellings. This area includes all of Manchester proper, except the centre, all of Salford and Hulme, an important part of Pendleton and Chorlton[on-Medlock], two-thirds of Ardwick and certain small areas of Cheetham Hill and Broughton). Beyond this belt of working-class houses or dwellings lie the districts inhabited by the middle-classes and the upper-classes".

"The villas of the upper-classes are surrounded by gardens and lie in the higher and remoter parts of Chorlton[on-Medlock] and Ardwick or on the breezy heights of Cheetham Hill, Broughton and Pendleton. They enjoy healthy country air and live in luxurious and comfortable dwellings which are linked to the centre of Manchester by omnibuses with run every fifteen or thirty minutes".
(F. Engels, The Condition of the Working Classes in England in 1845)

This description of Manchester in the 1840's summarises the common picture of the physical and social structure of the emerging industrial city. During the 1820's a considerable number of Manchester merchants had moved out to places as far distant as Pendleton, travelling to work on horseback or by carriage. By the early and middle 1830's, new villas and terraces had appeared in the area between Greenheys and

Chorlton-on-Medlock, the northern parts of Rusholme (Victoria Park), Whalley Range, Plymouth Grove and parts of Longsight and Ardwick.

The pattern emerging in Manchester in 1840 was strikingly that of a modern city, with separation both of one function from another and of one social class from all others. There was a general rise in social status with distance from the city centre. The flat terrain of South Manchester offered sites with easy access to the city centre. Large terraces and villas lined the frontage of Oxford Road, extending as ribbon development to Fallowfield, with Withington and Didsbury becoming dormitory settlements for the wealthy. (Rodgers, 1961). Early railway development allowed prosperous Mancunians to travel quite long distances from their country retreats in Cheshire. The Manchester-Altrincham and Manchester-Wilmslow lines were the most important in this regard. Both Sale and Stretford shared in the southward expansion along the Altrincham line which opened in 1849 (Dore, 1983; Massey, 1976).



Figure 1: Rural Chorlton (O.S. 1:10,560 1846)

The 1848 Six Inch to One Mile (First Series) extract for Stretford and Chorlton-cum-Hardy [Figure 1] shows some clustering of houses at the junction of Chester Road and Edge Lane in Stretford, confirming the suggestion that the growth of villadom was usually confined to the better turnpike roads which could offer a good public transport service or good access for private carriages. In the following year (1849) the passenger railway station at Stretford was opened, serving the existing

houses and creating the conditions for further expansion in the area. The most favoured site in this area for the merchant class was one with close proximity to the railway station and an elevated and airy position along Edge Lane, on the terrace above the Mersey floodplain and towards Chorlton. This comfortable remoteness from the city was the ideal.

The Township of Chorlton-cum-Hardy was only 4 miles south-south-west from Manchester, and a mile and a half from Stretford station. It was sufficiently remote in the 1840's to be almost untouched by the kind of suburban extension which was affecting other villages and hamlets with more favourable communications. It was, however, being influenced by its large neighbour in other ways. The remaining farmers in the 'urban fringe' had to specialise on commodities like market-garden and dairy produce which could give them the highest return. (Naylor, 1968).

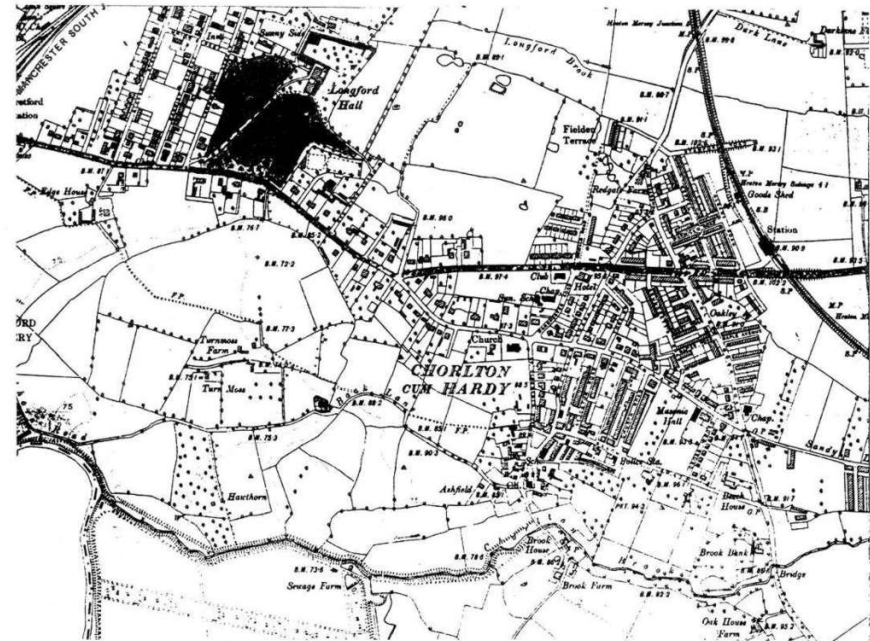


Figure 2: Chorlton in the 1880s (O.S. 1:10, 560)

The 1845 Tithe Map and Reference Book for Chorlton-cum-Hardy reveal the extent to which the township was an agricultural community. The total area of the Township was 1,280 acres. Wilbraham Egerton (of Tatton Park) owned 888 acres and George Lloyd 231 acres. The remainder was divided between 21 owners, of whom James Holt (of Beech House) and Charles Walker (of Longford Hall) held the most. The land-use is shown as 490 acres arable, 680 acres of meadow and pasture and 10 acres of woodland. The many 'gardens' were smallholdings or orchards attached to the existing crofts.

The settlement pattern within the Township in the late 1840's consisted of:

1. a cluster of farms and cottages around the village green.
2. an extension of this area along Beech Road (Chorlton Row).
3. small groups of buildings at Lane End and along Barlow Moor Road from Lane End to Martledge.
4. scattered farmsteads, halls and larger houses.

The decade 1851-1861 showed a slight decrease in population from 761 to 734 with the addition of only one house from 146 to 147. The 1860's, however, was a decade of considerable change. The Stretford Gas Co. extended its main along Edge Lane in 1862 and John Greenwood's bus from Flixton to Stretford Station was occasionally extended through to Chorlton. There was a regular service to Manchester along Upper Chorlton Road from 24 May 1864 (Lloyd, 1972). The improved transport and public services increased the attractiveness of the village and accelerated at the expansion which continued into the next century.

Although there are clearly many factors which determine the social ranking of individuals in society, the information about occupation in the Census Enumerator's returns is the only variable which has direct relevance to social class. A widely used scheme of social classification used five social [occupation] classes:

Class I	Professional
Class II	Intermediate
Class III	Skilled
Class IV	Partly-skilled
Class V	Unskilled

This scheme [using the Registrar General's 1951 social classification] always produced a swollen Class III, which included self-employed shopkeepers and workers, as well as traditional craftsmen, skilled employees in the new industries of the Industrial revolution, and workers in transport, building and services. Several attempts have been made to devise a method which could divide the 1951 Class III category (Royle, 1977; Cowlard, 1979).

Both occupation and rateable value of property (a surrogate measure of social status) help to distinguish the housing status areas and social evolution of Chorlton-cum-Hardy between 1851-1891. The application of the 1951 Registrar General's categories [after Armstrong (1966) to the four censuses in Chorlton-cum-Hardy produced the following results which clearly define the social flavour of this emerging suburb.

The 1851 Census for Chorlton-cum-Hardy described a population whose major occupations were directly or indirectly agricultural. Class III contained the smaller market gardeners (less than 10 acres) and most of the skilled occupations. Class IV was made up of agricultural labourers or 'gardeners'. The non-farming residents recorded in the 1851 Census included Mr William Cunliffe Brooks of Barlow Hall, a barrister landowner (and later the developer of Brooklands), a retired engraver to a calico printer, a wine merchant, two annuitants and a banker's clerk. There were two clerks, a mechanic, a warehouseman and another engraver to a calico printer who were almost certainly working outside the village. Clearly Chorlton was pre-suburban.

TABLE 1.

SUMMARY OF OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES FOR HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD.

	CENSUS YEAR			
	1851 No (%)	1861 No (%)	1871 No (%)	1881 No (%)
CLASS I:	1 (0.7)	2 (1.3)	17 (6.1)	28 (6.3)
CLASS II:	27 (18.6)	25 (16.1)	62 (22.2)	110 (24.7)
CLASS III:	51 (35.2)	45 (29.0)	97 (34.8)	178 (40.1)
CLASS IV:	58 (40.0)	61 (39.4)	69 (24.7)	89 (20.0)
CLASS V:	6 (4.1)	9 (5.8)	20 (7.2)	11 (2.5)
CLASS X:	2 (1.4)	13 (8.4)	14 (5.0)	28 (6.3)
Totals	145 (100)	155 (100)	279 (100)	444 (99.9)

There was little change in social composition from 1851-1861. The large Class IV included 25 agricultural labourers and 16 'gardeners'. However, the decade 1861-1871 saw a rapid influx of residents involved in the professions and retailing, as well others who worked in the service industries and warehouses of Manchester. This was the decade which marked the turning point in the social and physical evolution of the Township. The population rose rapidly but most significant was the rise in the numbers of those residents in Classes I, II and III. Most of those in Classes I and II lived in comfortable villas of high rateable value along Edge Lane and Whitelaw Road (north of High Lane). The elevated position above the Mersey floodplain, good communications to the city and perhaps proximity to St. Clement's Church (at the corner of Edge Lane/St. Clement's Road) made Chorlton popular with this growing class.

The decade of 1871-1881 witnessed a rise in population from 1653 to 2332, an increase of 41%. The number of the heads of household in Classes I, II or III had risen again. The greatest increase occurred in Class III, which contained 40% of the total number of heads of household. Conversely the percentage in Class IV and V declined rapidly, reflecting a probable decrease in the land-based population and an absence of low-income families among the newcomers from the city. Thus Chorlton was developing its distinctive social mix - not a suburb of the very wealthy (except for small numbers of families) but one dominated by the solid middle class created as a new element as Manchester expanded. Thus the Township became increasingly a community of professionals (middle-class) and better-off artisans and clerks, at the expense of the traditional agricultural labourers. There was some incipient social patterning within the area. High status residents continued to concentrate in the Edge Lane-High lane area (in the west of Figure 2) while Class III families occupied more modest housing to the east and south along Beech, Church and Cross roads.

The use of Rateable Value of property in the study of social change is an alternative to an occupational classification. It assumes that each household tried to obtain the best property it could afford. Housing Quality, as measured by the Rateable Value of the property, is a surrogate indicator of social class and was investigated. A graph

of the social classes (occupations) from the 1861 census plotted against Rateable Value [from the 1860 Rate-Book] shows considerable overlap in the Classes III, IV and V, in the region with Rateable Values less than £10 per annum. It would appear that the reduction of social class to occupation is not a very successful way of predicting the access of individuals to different types and qualities of housing. The distinction between professionals and 'middle-class' is clearest. A larger sample is needed for a proper test of the value of this method of separating social class groups.

Urban Morphology

A great variety of information sources exists to help reconstruct the detailed growth of the village. Ordnance Survey and other maps help supply information about the location and scale of change in the physical development of an area at fixed dates. The precise timing of development of individual streets or areas cannot be determined, nor is it possible to infer social patterns from the arrangement of physical space. The Ordnance Survey coverage for South-East Lancashire consists of 6 inch to 1 mile maps in 1848 and 1896. The first large-scale, 25 inch to 1 mile map, appeared in 1893 when the great transformation of Chorlton-cum-Hardy had already occurred.

The 1845 Tithe map and Reference Book, along with the 1848 Ordnance Survey 6" - 1 mile maps, were the basis for the study of the morphology of the village. Private estate maps of the Egerton family exist for 1862 and 1870, but they are chiefly concerned with land sales in this period. However, the detailed plans for the drainage of the district drawn for the local authority about 1875 by surveyors for the civil engineers are most useful for the study or urban morphology. Additionally, details about property in the Township can be extracted from the Parish Ratebooks (covering the period 1844-1911). This information includes: Owner, occupier (if different), location and type of building and Gross Estimated Rental (a surrogate of value or building quality and an approximate indicator of social pattern).

The use of Ratebook information at 5 yearly intervals before 1870 is straight forward, but the later expansion of building and the increase in population creates problems of recognising what is new and what is there before. Most new properties during the year were put in a supplementary list at the end of the ratebook. The proposed building plans received by Withington Local Board after 1876 and the date given in the Census Enumerator's Returns 1851-1881 are the final sources in the study of the growth of Chorlton, but there are other rich sources for small localities. The Egerton 'Memoranda of Agreements for Sale' give a detailed picture of the sale of building plots around the Railway Station and the junction of Barlow Moor and Wilbraham Roads. The information can be mapped to show the piecemeal way in which the area was sold to developers. It can then be linked to the building plan records to show something of the local building cycle and the developers who made it all possible.

The main focus of development in the early 1860's was the substantial housing along Edge Lane and High Lane. Most were owner-occupied houses, although a few had been bought for investment. The years 1864-65 showed slow progress of this ribbon development along Edge Lane/High Lane. The advance of the villas on the west and, to a lesser extent, the north of the Township began to quicken during the

years 1866-1870. Acres Road was built piecemeal, with several individuals owning blocks of property. Another of the old 'Row Acres' was built upon to produce Church [now Chequers] Road. From 1871-1876 there was continued growth along Edge Lane/High Lane and further infilling on existing smaller roads, with new, large semi-detached houses on Cross Road and on Barlow Moor Road [near its junction with High Lane, called Barlow Range]. There were a few additions for the poorer part of the population, particularly labourers' cottages built by Lord Egerton at Hardy Lane.

The years 1876-1891 are clearly documented in the planning applications provided for the newly formed Withington Local Board of Health. These approved plans may not all have been built. The yearly totals are given below.

TABLE 2 HOUSING APPROVED BY WITHINGTON LOCAL BOARD
1877-1891

YEAR	HOUSING TOTAL
1877	22
1878	36
1879	2
1880	31
1881	21
1882	39
1883	75
1884	87
1885	95
1886	48
1887	33
1888	47
1889	210
1890	52
1891	33

Clearly, progress was cyclical rather than constant. The years after 1876 show considerable variation in the level of new building activity in the Township, with what amounts to a local recession in the years before 1882. The Ratebook additions for these years (especially 1877 and 1878) show that small cottages were being built for the poorer part of the population at Stanley Grove, Richmond Grove and Salisbury Terrace. There then came an upswing. The development of Stockton and Church (now Chequers) Roads was proceeding rapidly in 1880-1881. From 1882 the large area round the Railway Station and at the junction of Barlow Moor and Wilbraham Roads was being heavily built upon. There was a strong emphasis on housing suitable for the modest middle-class who found it easy and convenient to use the village as a dormitory settlement. There were still houses of quality being built on the major thoroughfares where there was space available, but they were scarcer than in the previous two decades.

The process of residential expansion by economic and social forces originating outside the village must be set alongside the interests and objectives of the local land-owners, developers and builders. The strength of the Egerton interests in the Manchester and South District Railway shows how important the influence of local

landowners could be in creating the correct conditions for residential expansion. The growth of the new village around the railway station was engineered by the Egerton's.

Railways and Urban Speculation

The Manchester and South District Railway was proposed by the Cheshire Lines Committee in 1873 to link their line at Cornbrook to Didsbury and thence to Chorley [Alderley Edge]. A connection with the Birmingham - Manchester line at Fulshaw [Wilmslow] would allow main line traffic to run across South Manchester into the new Central station. The proposed line for the South District railway would cut right across the fast developing lands of the Egerton family in South Manchester and nearby North Cheshire. The family owned 10,746 acres in these two counties in 1883, despite many years of land sales (Bateman, 1883). The Honorable Wilbraham Egerton was a sponsor and director of the proposed company. The tremendous advantages to the existing Egerton projects (e.g. the residential development of Alexandra Park) and to those villages with development potential which lay beyond the fringe of the built-up area of Manchester were clearly in his mind.

In the following year (1874) the company was authorised to abandon some portions of their proposed undertaking, to construct new railways and raise more money. The Egerton interests drove a hard bargain. The Articles of Agreement (12.1.1874) agreed £800 per acre for the freehold land, with an additional £200 per acre for land effected by railway development. A new passenger and goods railway station was to be built at Chorlton-cum-Hardy at the point where the railway would cross Wilbraham Road. This made possible the full exploitation of the Egerton lands in the Township and threatened to shift the focus from the old village green to the Barlow Moor Road/Wilbraham Road area.

The Midland Railway (Further Powers) Act 1876 transferred the powers of the Manchester and South District Railway to the Sheffield and Midland Joint Committee. The Withington to Alderley link was abandoned. The South District line would allow the Midland Railway Company to put their traffic into Central station instead of London Road (Piccadilly) Station and place Stockport on the Midland main line from London.

A new agreement (1.8.1877) was drawn up between the Egerton interests and the Midland Railway Company. The railway was strongly opposed by the Withington Local Board who were greatly worried by its impact on the existing roads, sewers, bridges etc. in the area. A £3000 settlement with the Midland Railway Co. removed many of their worries. The railway was built and the station at Chorlton opened on 1.1.1880.

There was an interval of two years between the opening of the station and the sale and development of the adjoining land. The Withington Local board approved only 2 properties in 1879 and 31 in 1880 and none of these was in the immediate vicinity of the station. The lack of interest in building may have been due, says an observer writing in 1881, to "a general depression in trade, wages and values ... which have obtained more or less since 1876". In 1884 there was a slight temporary improvement, and one much more marked during the years 1886-1887. (Sington, 1889). The opening of the railway station did not immediately stimulate the sale and

development of building plots. The local depression could not have been foreseen, but the delay in the layout and sale of suitable building land may have been due to the legal delays arising from the complexity of the wills and trusts which covered the property of the Egerton family. The initial local service through Chorlton consisted of about 13 trains in each direction between Stockport and Manchester Central. On March 22 1880 the fares between Manchester, Withington and Didsbury were reduced, and five additional trains in each direction were run on weekdays, and one on Sundays.

The Memorandum of Agreement sold the land on a fee simple (freehold) basis with a perpetual chief or ground rent charge which varied according to the size of the plot. There were strict covenants regarding the type and quality of houses, as well as their layout. The level of maintenance and provision of services were guaranteed. There were to be no factories or other premises which might lower the letting value of the area. There was a time limit set on the completion of the houses. The decision to sell the Egerton lands freehold with perpetual ground rents or chief rents had vital implications for later building development. The chief rent was defined as a perpetual annuity secured on a piece of freehold land. It could be transferred in the same way as land, but the owner of the chief rent had no right whatsoever to the soil. The chief rent system allowed the landowner to achieve a fixed but perpetual income from his land in addition to the reduced capital value of the freehold sale. The owner of the chief rent did not benefit from any improvement in the property: there was no reversionary value.

The chief rent system had very great advantages for the speculative builder. He was usually a man whose limited capital was required for bricks, mortar and labour, and did not want to pay cash for the land, knowing that the landowner would be content to take a chief rent in part-payment. The chief rent was equivalent to the payment of the annual interest on what would have been the purchase price of land. The effect was exactly the same as if the purchaser had borrowed the money with which to make the purchase. But the agreement for sale states that the builder should, in a given time, erect suitable buildings to a certain annual value. The builder will have been able to economise his capital. He will then probably sell his property when built with the money and take another plot, repeating the process until the demand requirements are satisfied, or the plots are all exhausted. (Harrison, 1904; Bland, 1904).

The person named in the land sales agreements may have been an agent rather than the actual owner of the land. The original purchaser may have resold the plot wholesale or in parts to smaller speculators or builders. There is little evidence to indicate when building commenced, but the appropriate Ratebook may indicate the date of occupation of the completed house.

The original purchasers of land around the railway station (1882-1890) shows the diverse sources from which investment in urban growth came, in the form of entrepreneurs with very varied backgrounds. These were the real builders of the new suburbs.

NAME	OCCUPATION	ADDRESS
BAILEY. J.	Builder	Chorlton
BIRD. E.	Contractor	Chorlton
BLOMERLEY. J.	Builder	Church Rd, Chorlton
DAVIES. W.H.	Agent	King St, Manchester
DEAKIN. F.	Nurseryman	Brookfield, Chorlton
GIBSON. C.	Builder	Withington
HOWARD. H.	Architect	York Chambers, Brazenose St., Manchester.
MEE. W.	Farmer	Hobson Hall, Chorlton
MOORE. J.	Builder	Alan Rd, Withington
NAPIER. G.	Agent	51 King St., Manchester
PILLING. A.E.F.	Cotton Salesman	11, Gt. Cheetham St, Higher Broughton
SHAW. W.	Builder	Fernleaf St, Greenheys

Most land near the Railway Station was sold during the years 1882-1885. It was obvious that this was a prime residential building area. The piecemeal sale of building land on Keppell, Warwick, Stamford, Selborne and Albany Roads and the great interest in land at the junction of Wilbraham and Barlow Moor Roads shifted the focus of interest away from the 'old village' to a new commercial and residential centre with first-class connections with the city. The 'new' village near the junction of Barlow Moor and Wilbraham Roads could attract residents with the promise of good quality homes (mostly four bedroomed terraces with additional space for the servant in the attic), excellent transport facilities (with railway and horse tram services), expanding retail and service activities, healthy air and access to open countryside, all within three miles of the centre of Manchester.

The Role of Local Government

Perhaps the greatest factor in the decision of the wealthy or reasonably prosperous to escape from the City of Manchester was fear of premature death for themselves or their children. Infant mortality represented 50% of all deaths each year. Deaths from smallpox, scarlet-fever, diphtheria, measles and whooping-cough were nearly one-sixth of all deaths in the city. (Ransome, 1870)

In 1868 the new Medical Officer of Health, Dr Leigh, was confronted with a serious epidemic of diarrhoea in the city, probably caused by defective sanitation. A special Health Committee was appointed (April 1868) to co-ordinate policy and action in the matter of public health and housing. Yet in Manchester in 1871 only 10,000 of the 70,000 houses had W.C.'s. Almost four times that number still used midden-privies (Wohl, 1983). In 1874 every drain in Manchester still discharged into the rivers: the Irk, Irwell and Medlock had long been "common sewers". The Public Health Acts of 1872 and 1875 and the 1876 Rivers Pollution Act forced the City Council and the surrounding Townships:

1. to improve their efficiency to make large-scale undertakings possible with least expenditure of time and money.
2. to adjust their relations with other administrative authorities whose help and co-operation would be required.

The first comprehensive scheme for the drainage and sewerage of Manchester was submitted to the City Council in 1877. The threat from the nearby Withington Local Board to institute proceedings to prevent the discharge of untreated sewage into their area may have finally spurred them into action. The final decision for the Main Drainage was not made until 1885, with completion in 1889. Between 1881 and 1889 Manchester had avoided co-operation with neighbouring authorities in sewerage operations and had made amalgamation with the City an essential preliminary condition to participation in the Manchester Main Drainage Scheme.

The Withington Local Board (which included Chorlton-cum-Hardy) had been formed in 1876 and immediately appointed a Special Drainage Committee to examine the best ways to provide an adequate system of Main Drainage for the District (21 Nov. 1876). The Manchester scheme was at an early stage, but the Withington Board decided to press ahead with their own scheme while watching their larger neighbour. The earlier Chorlton Rural Sanitary Authority had considered a range of possible schemes for the drainage of the district. But for various reasons no action was taken. The new Withington Local Board had inherited several sewers which had their outfall in the River Mersey. Several private sewers also existed. For example, Lord Egerton's sewer from Alexandra Park discharged into the Chorlton Brook near Chorlton Green. The lack of an adequate outlet for the sewage of the district could easily hold up the construction of new houses and prevent an increase in the rateable value of the constituent townships. This was a serious matter for the Board to resolve.

The drainage engineers who considered the problem after 1876 recommended the construction of a new sewage farm, at Chorlton Ees, on the floodplain of the Mersey, to take the outflow of the whole area covered by the Withington Local board. Despite the complaint that "... the situation, character and general adaption of the land [at Chorlton Ees] make it unsuitable" for the drainage of the district the scheme was confirmed (16 Dec. 1878). The Withington Board tried to interest other local boards in the possibility of using the facilities at Chorlton Ees to help offset some of the costs. Despite a number of abortive schemes with other local authority Board's and opposition from a Withington ratepayers group the sewage farm eventually opened in 1884.

The delays in finishing the new sewage farm may have had an effect on house building within the Township. The expansion of building actively in 1884 and 1885 could well be associated with the completion of facilities which could cope with the W.C.'s now being installed in houses within the Township. But Chorlton - almost from the first stages of substantial development - had the enormous advantage, in terms of health and amenity, of modern main drainage.

The Chorlton that had emerged by about 1900 (Figure 3) was the product of a variety of influences, mostly working to make a profit from the process of urban expansion. The Egerton's were clearly concerned to turn their substantial rural land-



Figure 3: Edwardian Chorlton (O.S. 1:10 560 1908)

holdings into an asset of greater value by taking a capital profit from the sale of freeholds, but also an income from chief rents. They used covenants to assure a middle-class social flavour of the areas they controlled; and were strong enough to deal on equal terms with the railway interests. The use of chief rents minimised the

capital required of builders (mostly small entrepreneurs) and so stimulated the pace of construction. Region-wide depression slowed development and gave it a cyclical uncertainty. The provision of drainage, too, was in effect a control of progress. But away from the Egerton estate much more piecemeal and opportunist patterns of development prevailed. All these factors helped to shape a social mosaic, with a late 19th century infill of much smaller houses in parts of the area, as the spread of cheap transport brought a poorer element into the evolving suburb. The interest of Chorlton is not that it was in any way special or unusual. These same processes - with much the same actors at work - produced that intricate web of residential growth that had given the Manchester of about 1900 that diversity of suburban structure that was the key to its evolving urban morphology as a metropolitan city.

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APPENDIX

Plans submitted to Withington Local Board for houses to be built in Albany, Keppel and Warwick Roads near Chorlton-cum-Hardy Railway Station.

Name of Road	Building Plan Applicant	Date Plan Accepted
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ALBANY ROAD

8 Houses	A. FARNINGTON	Jan. 2 1885
12 Houses	W. SHAW	Mar. 5 1885
8 Houses	J. BLOMERLEY	Nov. 27 1885
4 Houses	DAVIES & ELLIS	Aug. 12 1886

KEPPEL ROAD

6 Houses	C. CHANDLEY	Jun. 7 1883
9 Houses	C. GIBSON	Jun. 7 1883
3 Houses ?	J. BLOMERLEY	Aug. 2 1883
3 Houses	C. CHANDLEY	Nov. 1 1883
3 Houses ?	J. DAVIDSON	Dec. 6 1883
8 Houses	W. SHAW	Arp. 3 1884
8 Houses	W. H. DAVIES	Apr. 3 1884
6 Houses	J. BAILEY	Nov. 7 1884
9 Houses	A. HUSBAND	Jan. 2 1885
4 Houses.	J. BLOMERLEY	Feb. 5 1885
2 Houses	DAVIES & ELLIS	May 14 1885
3 Houses	J. BAILEY	Jul. 1885
3 Houses	J. BAILEY	Jul. 9 1885
2 Houses	DAVIES & ELLIS	Nov. 12 1885
2 Houses	W. E. HARWOOD	Feb. 12 1889

WARWICK ROAD

8 Houses	E. BIRD	Oct. 5 1882
2 Houses ?	J. BLOMERLEY	Aug. 2 1883
2 Houses	J. DAVIDSON	Dec. 6 1883
5 Houses	C. GIBSON	Jul. 3 1884
2 Houses	J. BAILEY	Aug. 7 1884
5 Houses	C. CHANDLEY	Dec. 5 1884
4 Houses	MR. HARRISON	Feb. 5 1885
4 Houses	W. SHAW	Jul. 9 1885
2 Houses	A. HUSBAND	Sep. 3 1885
5 Houses	W. WHITE	May 17 1887