CHAPTER 9

Brookhill Road Area

Much of the eastern boundary of the parish of Woolwich is formed by a hidden watercourse. This brook ran downhill beside fields, where Brookhill Road was laid out in the nineteenth century, and continued through Thanet sand beds into the marshes of the Warren. Parallel to its west was Cholic Lane, leading down from the common to the Warren along the line that is now the southern part of Woolwich New Road (Ill. 2). This road is, in fact, one of the oldest in Woolwich. The realignment of its northern part in 1765–6 earned that stretch the label ‘new’, later extended to the rest.

This chapter covers this eastern flank of Woolwich (Ill. 409). The treatment runs from north to south, against the downhill flow, this being the direction that the town grew, away from the Thames and up the hill. After an account of the Burrage estate, of which these lands were a part, it starts with a mixed-use section of Woolwich New Road and Anglesea Road. It then branches off onto residential streets, Brookhill Road and Sandy Hill Road. Finally, it takes in a large wedge of upland, once known as Mill Hill, that lies between the southern stretch of Woolwich New Road (formerly Mill Lane after it was Cholic Lane) and Brookhill Road, extending as far south as Nightingale Place. This ground, which holds a council estate of the 1960s and soldiers’ housing of the 1970s, had been in miscellaneous military use and largely open until recently (Ill. 408).

The architectural highlight of the area is St Peter’s Roman Catholic Church, of 1843 and of especial note for having been designed by A. W. N. Pugin. Up the hill Engineer House, of 1859, is an office building that is a reminder of the importance to Woolwich of the Royal Engineers. It stands close to the site of a shipwrights’ windmill of the 1750s, an early manifestation of cooperative endeavour. Brookhill Road and Sandy Hill Road retain some of the only coherent Victorian terraces left in the parish of Woolwich, and Government House, a large officer’s house of the 1870s, is the last standing of the many late-Georgian houses that once looked across Woolwich Common.

Burrage estate

The lands covered in this chapter were formerly all part of the Burrage estate, the greater portion of which lay in Plumstead parish, but which extended westwards into Woolwich as far as Green’s End, Cholic Lane and Ditchwater (sometimes Dishwater) Lane (now Nightingale Place), another appellation connected to the outflow of springs. The name Burrage derives from Bartholomew Burghersh the elder, 2nd Lord Burghersh (d.1355), a royal councillor who held this land and whose name comes from Burwash, Sussex, where he had inherited other estates. Burwash Court, or Burridge House, stood near present-day Burrage Road in Plumstead. The 300-acre estate passed through the hands of other families before Nathaniel Maxey, a London merchant, acquired it through marriage in 1702. His daughter married James Pattison (d.1761) and the estate passed to their son, Nathaniel Pattison (d.1784). His brother, Gen. James Pattison (d.1805), was an eminent Woolwich soldier. He commanded the Royal Artillery in Portugal during the Seven Years War and in New York in the American War of Independence. Between wars he lived in Woolwich Warren, serving as Lieutenant Governor of the Royal Military Academy and then, in 1787–8, as Commandant of the Garrison. Despite this link, Nathaniel had declined in 1772 to sell part of the estate to the Board of Ordnance. But in 1808, after the Board had acquired Woolwich Common, his son, Nathaniel Maxey Pattison, was persuaded to sell it the southern parts of his lands in the parish of Woolwich (the whole of Mill Hill Field, more than twenty-eight acres, nearly everything between the southern part of Woolwich New Road and Brookhill Road). Pattison and the Board split the cost of forming what became Brookhill Road. His only son was James Pattison (d.1849), a City merchant, Governor of the Bank of England and MP for the City of London. He initiated the speculative development of the estate, which then passed through the hands of his children, Frederick, Charles and Helen Pattison, the last of whom died in 1896 leaving the property to her nephew, Baldomero Hyacinth de Bertodano Lopez, a solicitor who lived in Regent’s Park and Malmesbury, and who sold the whole estate off in several hundred small lots in 1904–6.

A few cottages on Green’s End aside, there were no buildings on the parts of the Burrage estate that lay in Woolwich until the shipwrights’ windmill was built in the 1750s (Ills 7, 8). By this time the northernmost fields were being exploited as sandpits, which in 1775 Lt. Col. James Pattison proposed using for military experiments. These pits extended from roughly where Spray Street now runs inland to the site of Walpole Place, behind which there is still a sharp rise. The making of the New Road in the 1760s stimulated no more than scattered roadside building on the parts of the estate covered in this chapter. The development of what was called Burrage Town (initially also Plumstead New Town) on the whole of the rest of the estate began...
CHAPTER NINE

BROOKHILL ROAD AREA

408. Brookhill Road area, 1893-4

409. Brookhill Road area, 2007
in the early in the 1840s and was seen through by the railway a secondary factor.

**Woolwich New Road (east side) and environs**

Cholico Lane is a corruption of Quilliet Lane, a name in use by the 1530s that referred to a small plot of land about where Beresford Square was later formed. Until the 1760s the lane meandered downhill from Woolwich Common to Green's End as ‘a very narrow hollow Passage’. It was steep and, with springs near its head, prone to flooding. Yet this was the main access into Woolwich from the London–Dover road at Shooters Hill and, for heavy commercial or military traffic, the main road approach to the town from any direction because the lower road from Greenwich, beside the dockyard, was in such poor condition as to be almost unusable. An Act of Parliament of 1756 included provision for the improvement of Cholico Lane by the New Cross Turnpike Trust, which had been established in 1751 to improve roads elsewhere in north-west Kent. This was the eastern leg of a scheme for a new route from the Dover Road at Greenwich, through Charlton and across Woolwich Common (as what became Ha-Ha Road) to lead to the military establishments on Woolwich Warren. Parliamentary approval was doubtless the result of pressure from the Ordnance and Admiralty boards; it came despite objections from the Trust, which knew it would lose money. Cholico Lane was thus widened and regularized in 1756–6. The only part of the road that was wholly new was the northern end, from the junction with what later became Thomas Street to the Plumstead Road and the entrance to the Warren. This straight route through Nathaniel Patterson’s land, along the edge of his sandpit, cut out the Green’s End dogleg (see page 224).

By 1810 Bull Fields (later Mount Street and then Wilmot Street) had been laid out and ribbon development on the main road extended southwards as far as Waterman’s Fields (the northern stretch of Brookhill Road), to be seen again as a series of small houses that appeared to have been unusual which meant reversions and redevelopment in the 1840s and 1850s, when Burring Town was in the making. A solitary remnant of earlier development survives at 89 Woolwich New Road, a house of the late 1780s. The importance of Woolwich New Road diminished after 1812; never roads passing north of the Royal Artillery Barracks had been completed.

Land between Woolwich New Road and Waterman’s Fields, at the northern point of the more or less triangular expanse that the Woolwich Ordnance had acquired for the Burrage Estate in 1828, was given up for Scottish Presbyterian and Roman Catholic churches in the early 1840s. The Anglesea Arms was also built, as established hostelrys jostled for position amid the ecclesiastical influx and the beginnings of Burrae Town to the east. Anglesea Road was formed in the 1840s.

**59–89 Woolwich New Road**

This frontage was first built up in the late eighteenth century and then generally redeveloped in the 1830s (II. 241). For the most part, it has been rebuilt again since, in piece-meal manner. The origins of Nos. 59 are as a shop-house of 1857, initially occupied by a grocer but soon taken by Alfred Gee, a painter. Here from 1902 to 1921 were the Imperial Co-operative Stores, a short-lived Conservative Party attempt to rival the Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society. The building has been much altered and extended, most recently with a range along Wilmot Street. At No. 66 there is a somewhat less altered building of 1909, put up for Samuel Bolton, a confectioner, with Thomas & Edge as builders. Next door, No. 67 was the Pioneer beerhouse when built, probably around 1850, it continued as a public house into the 1970s. At No. 68 there is a recent replacement of premises that were occupied and then rebuilt for Gee & Co., paint and wallpaper merchants, who were based here through most of the twentieth century. The site of Nos 67–69 was taken by the RACS in 1946 and the property, subsequently rebuilt and since much altered, continues to be occupied by the Co-operative. At No 71 there is a large shop-house of 1834, built for James Glover, a fancy draper, with H. H. Church as architect and H. Coombs of Bermondsey as builder. It is a wide design, a step down to No. 73, built in 1835 as a sausage-making shop for William Geller. John Moore, an ironmonger who lived here, was a fellow evangelical, and the couple determined to devote themselves to the poor Jewish hawkers of their quiescent Woolwich. Taking this property on the New Road, they set up a lodging house for ‘wayfaring Jews’. Their eldest daughter, Ghetel, born during the Woolwich quarry and later to marry (Sir) John Scott Burdon Sanderson, published memoirs that quote her mother’s account of the very ‘unpretending dwelling’ that was the Woolwich ‘Home’ – the carpet-less common dining-room in the rear section of 1856 ‘an abode of Doric simplicity’, her upstairs private parlour, with carpet, curtains, work table and piano, was, she feared, ‘too smart-looking’. Theirs was a missionary project, but, to some amusement, they welcomed all Jews, whether converts or not. Money and health were worries and there was too little work available in Woolwich for their project to succeed. The Herschells departed in late 1833, but the names of those who paid rates on the house in the following two years, Peter Levi and Daniel Friedenburg, suggest that the enterprise endured slightly longer.

From about 1835 to 1837 the house was the home of William PARRY Jackson (1.805–87), printer, founder of the Kentish Independent and Jackson’s Woolwich Journal and chairman of numerous committees, foremost the Woolwich Local Board of Health (see page 23). Once Anglesea Road sliced through the house, commercial use ensued. The front block with the shop appears to have been built by John Vaughan in 1858, just after a new lease was given to John Moore. Charles Virgo, a confectioner, took up occupation, with a bakehouse in the rear block. In the 1890s the shop was in the hands of E. Fairbrother & Co., bakers and confectioners who had two other establishments in Woolwich and who proudly proclaimed themselves suppliers of the Royal Artillery officers’ mess. Bakery use continued into the 1960s.**

**Sidest streets**

Wilmot Street existed as a path known as and leading to Bull Fields by the early nineteenth century when Halliday’s Buildings were built towards its east end. Around 1860, when it was fully built up, it became Mount Street, leading to William Street at the parish boundary. These names were merged to make Wilmot Street in 1859, when some of the earlier Victorian buildings had already been replaced. Among these was the Duchess of Kent beerhouse, also used as a soldiers’ home in the 1870s and rebuilt as the Princess of Wales beerhouse in 1886–7 for John Bull, with H. H. Church as architect. This public house was demolished in 2004 to make way for a block of eight flats with a commercial unit, still un-built in 2014. To the east is Mattoke House, an office block of about 1970. To the west are Windrush House, fourteen sheltered-housing flats of 1957 designed by Ankur Architects for Ujima Housing Association, Britain’s first and then biggest black housing association, and another block of flats (Nos 10–14) put up in 2001–2 for the Kelsey Housing Association by the Cadford Seaden Partnership.**
CHAPTER NINE

412. Ram Darbar, Anglesea Mews Prayer hall of 1906, from the north in 2003

and run from 1908 by Edwin Thomas alone and finally J. Scott Fenn. 81

The South East Hindu Association acquired Field Cottage (5 Anglesea Mews) in 1978. Adaptations launched the premises as the Ram Darbar in 1983. This temple was substantially extended to the east in 1990 to provide a community hall and a first-floor prayer hall, with four additional altars, or shrines, in a brass niche, or aedicule (III. 413). The cottage was adapted to house a priest and offices over kitchens and washrooms. This project, led by Raimond Pöl Gugga, was designed, built and partly funded by Pankhania Brothers who, holding that traditional Hindu architecture was not appropriate in Britain, opted for ‘a simple traditional English aspect’. 82 Adjoining on the S Anglesea Avenue is the gable-fronted Anglesea Medical Centre of 1999-2000, built to designs by Alexander Sedgley. To the temple’s west are yet more recent houses at 3-4 Anglesea Mews, with an archway to a private parking yard, a development overseen by the Downes Planning Partnership. 83

Further up Anglesea Road on its north side was the Carmel Chapel of 1856, built for a Strict Baptist congregation led by Henry Hanks (III. 413). John Vaughan was the builder of this substantial chapel, which seated about 600 in a galleried interior. Hanks’s departure in 1880 was followed by decline and from 1906 the building was occupied by Unitarians. It served as an Oddfellows’ Club from 1923 and stood into the 1990s. 84 The whole block east of Anglesea Avenue to the parish boundary, save a semi-detached pair at 14–15 Anglesea Avenue that was a small speculation of 1939 by H. G. Cooper Ltd, office fittings, was redeveloped in 1992-3 as an estate of eight brick houses with integrated garages, some facing Ashlar Place. These were designed by the Kennedy Woodward Partnership, architects, and built by LAU Construction for the Hyde Housing Association. 85

Just across the parish boundary is a former synagogue on a site that was first occupied in the 1860s by an offshoot of the New Road Presbyterian congregation (see below). St Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, built 1871-2, was taken for use as a synagogue in 1924 by a Jewish congregation that had moved around Woolwich since 1842. The Woolwich and District Synagogue replaced the former church with an angular modernist building in 1962-4. This closed in 1998. 86

91-101 Woolwich New Road

The junction at Anglesea Road has existed since the last years of the eighteenth century, when what is now the north end of Brookhill Road was formed as Waterman’s Fields, perhaps taking its name from the presence of a small reservoir near the corner. Houses of the 1780s stood along the New Road front as far as where Sandly Hill Road now ends, but none survives. The first Marquis of Anglesey, a hero of Waterloo and twice Master-General of the Ordnance, who died in 1834. In 1841-2 Stephen Butler moved the establishment, renamed the Anglesea Arms, to a new building on its present corner site, with windows and quadrant corners recessed between wide full-height pilasters (III. 414). It was enlarged with a single-storey wing along Brookhill Road in 1894 and substantially remodelled by Whitbreads in 1906. That work, which probably included the pedimented first-floor architraves, was carried out by T. Glanfield, a Deptford builder. 87

Adjoining, there is a more remarkable survival, an early purpose-built cinema. A pair of shops on the site of Nos 91-93 were knocked together for a butcher in the late nineteenth century and then refronted in 1904 for Hart & Williams, military outfitters. In 1912 Thomas Henry Arundell, a Camberwell builder, took the premises through his father’s firm, Peter Arundell and Son of New Cross. Arundell, a Camberwell builder, took the premises through his father’s firm, Peter Arundell and Son of New Cross, and added the large hall that extends to Brookhill Road to make the New Cinema (III. 415). The hall, only about 50ft by 42ft (15m by 13m), accommodated 278 seats and 158 standing. On the inside of the pedimented Brookhill Road end, the screen, no more than about 15ft (4.6m) wide, was plaster on brickwork. Underneath, there was a three-person orchestra enclosure and an organ stood to one side. Generator, projection and winding rooms were placed across the upper storey of the former shop. T. H. Arundell had to close the cinema in 1921 because the

413. Carmel Chapel, Anglesea Road, 1856, from the south, c.1900 Demolished

414. 91-95 Woolwich New Road in 2009 showing (left to right): Anglesea Arms public house, 1841-2, enlarged and remodelled in 1894 and 1906, former premises of the New Cinema, with rear hall of 1912, the former Gun public house, 1920-1

415. New Cinema, 93-95 Woolwich New Road, ground-floor layout, 1912
LCC insisted he should build two new staircases. He protested that this was officious and unnecessary as there had been no mishap in eighteen years, but to no avail. As John Churchill, who visited as a boy, recalled: ‘There was an old cinema in New Road Woolwich called the “Bug Hutch”, we all ways scratch bow selves after being in the, it cost a penny to see 2 films.’

The buildings were adapted to use as a garage in 1935 and have been much altered since. A scheme for their replacement with a block of nine flats above a shop was put forward by J. Sage (Builders) Ltd in 2005, granted planning permission on appeal, but refused renewal in 2011.

Pubs and churches played musical chairs along this stretch of the New Road in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, and the Gun Tavern appears to have moved twice before arriving at 97 Woolwich New Road. That site had previously accommodated Providence Chapel, used by the Countess of Huntington’s Connexion, then by Alexander James Scott, Edward Irving’s assistant, who led Scottish Presbyterians away from Powis Street in 1831, and finally as the first Carmel Chapel from 1849 to 1856. From beginnings further north around 1800 the Gun had moved in 1841 to a new building on the site immediately south of that granted to the Catholics, where the Marquis of Anglesea had been (Ill. 241). This came to be wanted for the Catholic schools, so Providence Chapel was obtained and the site redeveloped for the Gun in 1857. This tavern was succeeded by the present building in 1900–1, a big public house that had two billiard rooms and was put up for Whitbreads by Pritchard and Renwick of Tooley Street. The pair of houses at Nos 99–101 was built in 1863 as a speculation for and by Alexander Martin of 31 Plumstead Road. Everything to the south is on land that was demised from the Baridge Estate to the Board of Ordnance in 1868.

The pair of houses at Nos 99–101 was built in 1893 as a speculation for and by Alexander Martin of 3 Plumstead Road.
From 1793 Catholics in Woolwich, probably for the most part poor Irish families, were served from a mission and chapel at Greenwich. After locals started an unauthorized chapel on Sun Street, Father James Delaney was posted in 1816 as resident priest in Woolwich. Permanent premises were soon found opposite the present Woolwich Arsenal Station in a former Methodist chapel redeveloped in July 1808 (Ill. 211). A decade later the ministry of Delaney’s successor extended to a school. An important part of the priest’s duties was attending to the ‘hulks’ or prison ships, as resident priest in Woolwich. Permanent premises and chapel at Greenwich. After locals started an unauthorized subscription list for a new church, his plans had been hitherto served in gin like most of his congregation, he had hitherto served St Peter’s, engraved exterior perspective

by A. W. N. Pugin, architect, 1842

\[ Image \]

In 1826 Cotter, schools and other parochial activities came before and west entrances, where copious ballflower and crocket-ting crept in. The style of the church was naturally Decorated or, as Pugin preferred it, that of the reigns of Edward I (Ill. 420). Another view of the exterior, showing the east window on the north side breaks into three lights, perhaps anticipating the Lady Chapel, not yet built in 1843. The present five-light east window was also executed as part of the contract, inserted in temporary brickwork within the chancel arch. The high altar too is original (Ill. 421). The five angels in relief under straight-sided canopies along its front resemble those on the altar in the side chapel at St Giles’s, Cheadle, of similar date. An octagonal font, now at the end of the south aisle, was probably also there from the start. The next phase was the presbytery, erected in 1845-6 and discussed separately below. It was succeeded in 1850 by the Lady Chapel at the end of the north aisle, built by Myers in an abbreviated version of what Pugin had first hoped for, and connected via a doorway to the original sac-

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ary. It contains the best-preserved decorative ensemble in the church, consisting of altar, reredos and Hardman stained glass in the three-light window above. The altar front depicts angels left and right of the Virgin and Child enthroned, while above are Annunciation and Adoration reliefs (Ill. 422). Virgin and Child recur in the central light of the glass under a canopy, flanked by four angels in the sidelights. Minor tiles on the facade complete the composition. Father Coles hoped to add the chancel in 1836. As Pugin was dead he consulted his son Edward about the matter (‘Pugin is doing all he can for us’), but nothing came of it.\(^6\) Under the regime of his successor, Jeremiah Cotter, schools and other parochial activities came before completing the church, though Cotter’s architect John Crawley did produce detailed designs and a specification for the tower.\(^7\) Not until Father Seraph Fieu, a Belgian, took over in 1889 did the parish wish ‘to follow the plans of old Pugin and to have only a small chapel at St Joseph’s side’. The whole would probably cost about £500.\(^8\) This advice was taken, so that the chancel built by Goddard & Sons in Walters’ design in 1889 was accompanied only by a very short termination to the south aisle. But Walters took care to build in a relieving arch on this side of the chancel, corresponding to his new opening to the Lady Chapel on the north, in case the south side should ever be length-

\[ Image \]

ened. In other respects Walters followed Pugin’s plans for a chancel faithfully, using plain stock brickwork for the exterior and reinstating the east window in its destined position. The panelled chancel roof with carved bosses is also in Pugin’s spirit. But the first reredos erected in 1840 was in a later taste.\(^9\) As its tower was never built, St Peter’s was now struc-

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turally as complete as it would ever be, but embellishments were still to come. In 1892 the Belgian firm of Janss put in altar rails, and a sounding board was added to the large stone pulpit, which had been attached to a pier on the south side of the nave at an unknown date. A new St Joseph’s altar arrived at the end of the south aisle in 1905, in hon-

\[ Image \]

our of Fieu and his successor Joseph Reeks; again Walters

\[ Image \]

stands in the foreground to the right of the Southwark design, confirming that this was one of his major town churches to date. Yet the Woolwich design was geared to economy, as Pugin’s recourse to lean-to aisles without a clerestory betrays. Indeed only the nave and aisles could be built in 1842-3, leaving a stump for the tower over the south porch. The materials were yellow stock bricks, with sparing Bath stone dressings and slate roofs. External enrichment was confined to the surrounds of the south and west entrances, where copious ballflower and crocket-

\[ Image \]

ting crept in. The style of the church was naturally Decorated or, as Pugin preferred it, that of the reigns of Edward I (Ill. 420).\(^7\) The nave is of six bays, with the acutely pointed profiles to roofs and arches he favoured in the early 1840s. The internal timberwork of the roofs is lean but effective, with high scissor-bracing across the main nave space. The arcades themselves are strictly regular, but the two-light windows along the aisles all differ slightly; while the final window on the north side breaks into three lights, perhaps anticipating the Lady Chapel, not yet built in 1843. The generous seven-light west window did most of the work in lighting the unclerestoried nave. But the presenteight east window was also executed as part of the contract, inserted in temporary brickwork within the chancel arch.\(^6\) The high altar too is original (Ill. 421). The five angels in relief under straight-sided canopies along its front resemble those on the altar in the side chapel at St Giles’s, Cheadle, of similar date. An octagonal font, now at the end of the south aisle, was probably also there from the start. The next phase was the presbytery, erected in 1845-6 and discussed separately below. It was succeeded in 1850 by the Lady Chapel at the end of the north aisle, built by Myers in an abbreviated version of what Pugin had first hoped for, and connected via a doorway to the original sac-

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our of Fieu and his successor Joseph Reeks; again Walters
was the designer. The stained glass above it is probably by Lavers & Westlake, who added the main east window in 1949. The present plain bench seating has been in the church for about a hundred years. Much was done in the early years of Canon William Monk, rector from 1934 to 1956. St Peter’s had never been consecrated, and in order to ready the church for that event in 1944, Monk set about improving the altars and shrines. The present screen-reredos behind the high altar, perhaps incorporating portions of its more elaborate predecessor, was designed by Edward Walters, son of F. A. Walters, and executed in Maltese stone by local craftsmen in about 1944. Photographed in 2009.

Later the whole of the architecture was painted to lighten the space, and an ocean of shiny oak parquet flooring was laid. This gives the interior a cheerful, spick-and-span look, alien to Pugin’s aesthetic. The Pugin fittings of altar front, Lady Chapel and font have also been given licks of gaudy paint.

Presbytery and sacristy. Pugin’s external perspective of St Peter’s shows no presbytery, nor was one mentioned when the nave and aisles were built in 1843–4. But one must always have been intended, as a narrow strip of land some 230(7m) wide north of the church appears to have been left for that purpose from the grant of 1841. Sketches in the Pugin collection of Pugin drawings show designs for the house. A set of plans and elevations perhaps requiring greater breadth than the site allowed and including a small oratory attached at the back may date from 1844. Two further sheets, smaller in scale, have sketch plans, elevations and sections of the house very much as built by George Myers late in 1844. In early 1846 Myers added the single-storey passage at the back and the sacristy to which it led. The sacristy, therefore, was built before the Lady Chapel.

This original presbytery is set back between the church on one side and the presbytery addition of 1870 on the other, to the extent of being almost swallowed up by them (Ill. 423). The position was worse before 1870, when the building on the next site northwards actually overlapped the presbytery plot slightly at the front. Despite these drawbacks, the house is one of Pugin’s best small brick secular buildings, plain but fittingly proportioned. The front has bay windows running through three storeys, with stonework (now painted) stretching randomly into the brickwork. There are touches of simple ornament in the spandrels over the front door bearing the initials of Thomas Griffiths, as sketched in the Myers album. A panel with a bishop’s mitre between the main storeys carries the same letters intertwined. The back elevation is similar but lacks bays or ornament. In plan the narrow house conforms to a London type, with the timber staircase (of wood, with stout rail and simply chamfered balusters) placed crosswise between front and back rooms. A few fireplaces and ceilings survive. The porch, outside the main body of the building, leads via steps down behind to the narthex leading to the sacristy. Jammed up against the north aisle of the church, this passage is typical of Pugin in having its own minuscule pitched roof and two-light north-facing windows. It arrives at a square-ish room with a roof pitched in the other direction, and two-light windows facing north and south. That was the extent of the original sacristy.

The main portion of the present presbytery, including the entrance, almonds to the north and dates from 1870, as a plaque over the door attests. This blundering brick house is bigger in every way than Pugin’s and stands well forward of it, like the building that it replaced. Though often attributed to E. W. Pugin, it was built for Jeremiah Cotter, the autocratic priest who succeeded Cornelius Coles, to the designs of a minor Catholic architect, John Crawley. Cotter had inherited money, which he used to buy the next plot to the north and build this much larger house, annexing the old presbytery in the process. Crawley intended Cotter for a healthier alternative to ‘on new house and music room Woolwich’ in 1872. It is likely that the large two-storey extension to the sacristy facing Bromley Road at the back was originally this music room, as maps suggest that it was not attached to the old sacristy until later.

Schools (St Peter’s Centre). The core of the two-storey school to the south of the church, now St Peter’s Centre, was built to the designs of E. W. Pugin in 1858 (Ill. 424). It has been much altered, notably at the front towards New Road, where F. A. Walters added classrooms in 1876. The separate building at the back, empty at the time of writing, was an infant school built in two stages, 1871 and perhaps 1841–2.

The accommodation of the original schools is better documented than the other buildings of the St Peter’s ensemble and worth describing in some detail, as it shows how fraught and hand-to-mouth such enterprises could be. The main source is a series of letters to Bishop Thomas Grant of Southwark, mostly from Father Cornelius Coles. By 1854 Coles was ready to build schools. Not only was there an existing Catholic school to house properly, but he had been much concerned, he told the Bishop, by the ‘persecution’ in the barrack schools of ‘our children’, who had sometimes been forced to kneel down and read the Protestant bible.

A successful negotiation took place that year with the Board of Ordnance and the Treasury for the site immediately south of the church, then occupied by the Gun public house. There was some delay over finding new premises for the Gun, but in due course the site was conveyed to the Catholics, probably without charge, in June 1855. Meanwhile in November 1855 Coles received plans and specifications from the 21-year-old E. W. Pugin, taking the place of his dead father. At £2,400 the design was too expensive despite a government grant, and Coles spent much time trying to whittle the cost down. This was difficult while Pugin junior was living in Birmingham, but by early 1856 he had moved to London. In the summer he revised plans went to tender. George Myers estimated £3,400 still, but William Guysoyne of Lambington’s figure...
Calling in London, is the same.’) but Coles also became fraying after twenty years in Woolwich. Dealing with the got under way, there came signs that Coles’ nerves were extraordinary job will at last be called into actual existence.” Pugin wrote to Bishop Grant: ‘I sincerely trust that this allowed to submit a revised estimate, for £890, but so too was Gасoisey. In the end the job stayed with the latter despite further pressure from the Myers firm. But as work got under way, there came signs that Coles’ nerves were fraying; twenty years in Woolwich. Dealing with the got under way, there came signs that Coles’ nerves were extraordinary job will at last be called into actual existence.’ Pugin wrote to Bishop Grant: ‘I sincerely trust that this allowed to submit a revised estimate, for £890, but so too was Gасoisey. In the end the job stayed with the latter despite further pressure from the Myers firm. But as work got under way, there came signs that Coles’ nerves were extraordinary job will at last be called into actual existence.’

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By this time the garrison had almost finished the building work. The Bishop was now harassed with his urgent requests for payment, and the bill that the felt compelled to replace Coles, whose conduct had become erratic and paranoid. It was his replacement, Jeremiah Cotter, who sorted out the muddle with North. As the latter told Grant, he had remarked to Pugin junior before a brick was laid that the school could not be built for the sum stated: ‘the country is in my own opinion and I was right. It is a fine building with all its faults and I think well worth the money.’ Cotter’s comments met with no response, and he was dead by the end of 1839, aged only forty-six.

The outcome of all this trouble was indeed a striking building, more original for its date than the church next door. The alterations that it has suffered makes its quali- ties hard to read. As the plot was tight, E. W. Pugin (or Pugin (the father) was fearful of the roof of the nave of the church – the roof of the school is 24 ft. higher, with less side support.’ By September 1838 Pugin was hinting that the priest should retire or at least take a holiday, but Coles was reluctant to do so, on the grounds that separation from ‘my child’ (meaning the church, not the school) would make him ill. North went to investigate. He reported back that Coles ‘bore the image of a dying man… Woobich has not been impressed or it has been created by him, in all its departments.’

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CHAPTER NINE

BROOKHILL ROAD AREA

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Demand for student housing in Woolwich fell away after 2000 and the International House complex was demolished to make way for another housing project in 2008-10. For this, ASRA Greater London Housing Association, founded in 1984 as one of Britain’s earliest mixed and minority ethn housing associations, worked through Turnhold Properties, Alan Camp Architects, and Mulalley and Co., contractors, to provide 219 apartments (forty-three of them ‘affordable’) in two blocks clad in brick and pre-patinated zinc. Clifton Lodge is a four-storey range facing Sandy Hill Road at its Woolwich New Road end, and Canada Court is a ten-storey block near Brookhill Road. Balconies and other salients are highlighted with coloured aluminium panels.

Brookhill Road and environs

The land between the northern stretch of Brookhill Road (Waterman’s Fields until the 1840s) and the south side of Anglesea Road is a hillside hollow that in the eighteenth century was the south end of the Pattisons’ sandpit. By 1800 the south end of the Pattisons’ sandpit. By 1800 – 813 – 1844 there were four-acre (1.6 hectares) site. The LCC prepared plans for new housing, more than a hundred families were displaced from an extended (almost four-acre) site. The LCC prepared plans for new housing, with opposed terraces of two-storey cottages, about 1200 houses were strung along Waterman’s Fields. Once Nathaniel Pattison’s sale of adjacent land to the Board of Ordnance, but the building of what was the western flank of Burrage Town began only modestly at its north end in 1843 opposite a military mortuary. Work gained some impetus with Dandans Terrace of 1843-6, a solid speculation, from the north, facing the Charringtons sign showing Robert Walpole is misleading. The pub was converted in 2005-6 to be the New Walpole Place, five flats with a shop in the former front bar. This was part of a shared-ownership scheme carried out for ASRA Greater London Housing Association. THW Architects designed the conversion, and an adjacent block, Fountain House, for five more flats.

Sandy Hill Road

Steep hillside streets lined with terraces for workers are, like other aspects of Woolwich, less characteristic of London than of a provincial town. Nowhere is this more strongly felt than here (Ill. 445). Sandy Hill Road was laid out along the line of a footpath that rose diagonally through what had been called Hilly Field. This was an important part of the development of Burrage Town, a connecting route to hilltop streets in Plumstead. Benjamin Davers was the surveyor who surveyed the building of more than 100 fourth-rate houses along this road in 1842-4. Numerous local speculators and builders took part, generally with 81-year leases. The parish boundary at the top of the hill means that little of this was in Woolwich, just two terraces that stepped neatly up to a public house, the Fort Tavern.

At the top of the hill on the south-west side of the road the former Fort Tavern (No. 26) was built in 1844-5 for Charles and Henry White with a garden to the north, in which there were several summer houses, and a skittle alley behind (Ill. 446). The pub was converted to two flats and a maisonette in the late 1940s. Further north, the twelve houses at Nos 24-28 were built as Fort Place in 1849-51 by George Barnes and James Farnsworth, local builders who were active in the earlier 1840s in the area that is now the Moorhill Estate. The uppermost house in the row had a shop, first run by Jane Bradley, the wife of William Bradley, a shipwright. Also resident were their three sons, a servant and two lodgers, an artillery gunner, Evan Rudge, and his wife. Across the road, Hope Place (Nos 9-33) followed in 1851-2. This relatively little-altered row of thirteen houses was built for Francis Nathaniel William of Bersford Street. With frontages of just 18ft (4.6m) the houses are laid out with their staircases between the front and back rooms, to avoid compromising room widths (Ill. 13). A number of early occupancies here were employed at the Arsenal. Between this terrace and the former Walpole Arms a three-storey pair (Nos 5-7), set well back and in line with Brookhill Road, had gone up in 1849-50, before other houses were under way. Built as Southampton Place for W. Andrews, probably by Hudson and Burgess, these houses were originally entered from their sides. Nos 1 and 3 followed around 1860 as infills.

The former garden of the Fort was developed as Dale View House (No. 245), six flats built by Payne-Isley Construction in 2007-8. Between this and No. 24a path, Fort Passage, there by the 1850s, steps steeply down to Brookhill Road.

Brookhill Road (east side)

The east side of Brookhill Road has one of the last substantial groups of Victorian houses in the parish of Woolwich. The road itself had been made in 1808-9, its formation along the line of the brook being a condition of Nathaniel Pattison’s sale of adjacent land to the Board of Ordnance, but the building of what was the western flank of Burrage Town began only modestly at its north end in 1843 opposite a military mortuary. Work gained some impetus with Dandans Terrace of 1843-6, a solid speculation, from the north, facing the Charringtons sign showing Robert Walpole is misleading. The pub was converted in 2005-6 to be the New Walpole Place, five flats with a shop in the former front bar. This was part of a shared-ownership scheme carried out for ASRA Greater London Housing Association. THW Architects designed the conversion, and an adjacent block, Fountain House, for five more flats.

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CHAPTER NINE

BROOKHILL ROAD AREA

The Board of Ordnance acquired all the land west of the line of Brookhill Road in 1808, in part to maintain an open cordon sanitaria east of the Royal Ordnance Hospital across Cholme Lane. Accordingly, one section, a large and squarish plot of garden ground was made use of by that institution as a ‘walking ground for Convalescents’. By 1810 there were mortuary and other outbuildings along the plot’s east (Brookhill Road) side. The site passed through use as a drill or parade ground for the Royal Sappers and Miners around 1830, and after reforms in 1836 a handful of huts were built here to accommodate some Royal Engineers. Around 1865 the hospital was converted as the Connaught Barracks for the Military Train, which was responsible for army transport (reformed as part of the Army Service Corps in 1870). The eastern lands became the Train’s stable yard, and in 1865–6 were largely built over with large single-storey stable ranges for 240 horses (Ill. 408). A section to the north, previously open, had been built up in 1869–70 with eight two-storey ranges of married quarters for artillerymen. These ‘model lodgings’ arose from reforms instituted in the wake of the Army Sanitary Commission, to deal with overcrowd-

ing and poor provision for married soldiers. The first six rows had ten one-room dwellings each of two stores with colonnaded iron verandahs (Ills 16, 429). Another two rows were added in 1873; these providing quarters for twenty families, each with two rooms of 12½ ft (3.7 m) by 4½ dm) and a scullery. The group was known as the Cambridge Cottages, after Prince George, Duke of Cambridge, Commander-in-Chief of the British Army from 1826. Differences in the nature of the boundary

blocks with basement garages, all punctuated by lift towers and stepping up the hill in a fish-skeleton layout (an echo, if unconscious, of a military hospital pavilion plan).

Around 1990 the box-frame blocks were given pitched roofs, but from 2006 Greenwich Council, through the Woolwich Estates Renewal project, set about planning redevelopment of the unpopular estate, a very different address to that of Connaught Mews, the former hospital across the road, which had become a private gated estate. Demolition notice was served in 2012.

The Sandy Hill Road corner was left open for the Woolwich Central Baptist Church. This replaced the Woolwich Tabernacle on Bredenford Street (see page 81) and another church in Plumstead. It was built in 1970 to designs by K. C. White and Partners, architects, with Colin Mann as job architect and W. E. Callier (Contractors) Ltd, of Sidcup, as builders. Square on plan, the church was laid out to seat 300. Its upper storey is faced with ‘Granilux’ aggregate panels and has a reinforced-concrete ring beam to the roof, once copper-clad, with a fibreglass spire. The hall and other perimeter buildings are brick faced.

At the opposite corner of the Connaught Estate a part of the Army Service Corps site was briefly occupied by the Brookhill Meeting Rooms, a community centre. This was replaced by the Brookhill Children’s and Community Centre (430 Brookhill Road), a Sure Start initiative, by Wilcon Homes, then a major housebuilder. Three neo-vernacular brick ranges supply twenty-five two-bedroom houses.

Mill Lane to Nightingale Place

Land now bounded by the Connaught Estate, Woolwich New Road, Nightingale Place and Brookhill Road has been loosely known as Mill Hill after early windmills here. From the late eighteenth century it was partly developed with private housing for military occupants. It later came largely to be covered with soldiers’ married quarters.

Shipwrights’ windmill (demolished)

Shipwrights in the Thames-side naval dockyards in the eighteenth century were enterprising mutualists. Shipbuilding was an unusually co-operative trade and dockyard employment fostered strong collective values (see pages 10 and 93–6). Faced with chronic arrears of pay, dockyard shipwrights came together in the 1750s to...
form a retail society, to gain some control over the supply and price of basic food. Open to all employed within the yard, this, it has been claimed, was the first co-operative form a retail society, to gain some control over the supply further strained when troops went into the dockyard to . Two years later jollity was doubtless as the Jolly Shipwrights, acquired and closed by the Board a public house just across Cholic Lane came to be known a right of way across the mill site. In ship persisted, the shipwrights obliged to grant soldiers bread. It is not clear whether the offer was taken up. to supply the newly built Royal Artillery Barracks with was slack, the shipwrights approached the Board offering a smock-mill (Ills 438, 432, Drawing of 1845 by W. Clifton). There had probably been earlier windmills near by, even 1758. It appears to have settled into productivity – at any rate, What had become the Shipwrights’ Mill Company may have found new prosperity in wartime, but the auton- 

There was a big north-end bow window. This has gone, but an ornamental fanlight over the main entrance appears to survive from the 1840s. Macleod, presum-

When trade fell into dereliction. In 1855 Government House, the building housed (Gen. Sir) Hew Dalrymple Ross, Deputy Adjutant-General, who was to be the last man in charge of the Board of Ordnance prior to its demise in 1855. After that reform the house did become and long remained the Quarters of the Garrison Commandant. Sometimes known as Governor’s House, it was Government House by the 1940s and was converted for office use in 1947.

The company appears then to have let the mill to a private con- 
military independence had been eradicated and the company and extended in the late nineteenth century. Front elevation (original building shaded) and ground-floor plan (indicating line of original north-end bow window) in 2010. for themselves by taking up residence in privately owned houses in and around Woolwich. Westman’s corner house was substantially enlarged and enhanced in 1791–2 when it was taken over by Mrs [later Lt. Gen. Sir] John Macleod, who had been the Royal Artillery’s first Brigade-Major since 1787. Royal Artillery Deputy Adjutant-General in 1785, Macleod had responsibilities for the whole regiment and communicated directly with the Master-General. When the Board of Ordnance became the freeholder in 1820 it saw to further alterations. Macleod was resident until 1827, his long tenure interrupted by postings abroad, he was the Commander of Artillery on the disastrous Walcheren expedition of 1809. His successor as Deputy Adjutant-General, (Maj.-Gen. Sir) Alexander Dickson, occupied the house, but for just two years. Westman’s lease passed to Col. John Border Parker, who had the house enhanced in 1840 by John Douglas Hopkins, architect. The Board then bought the lease, because, it has been said, Lady Blofield (the wife of Lt. Gen. Benjamin Blofield, the Garrison Commandant) refused to live in the Arsenal. But if Lord Blofield did move in, it was not for long. By the time of the census of 1841 the building housed (Gen. Sir) Hew Dalrymple Ross, Deputy Adjutant-General, who was to be the last man in charge of the Board of Ordnance prior to its demise in 1855. After that reform the house did become and long remained the Quarters of the Garrison Commandant. Sometimes known as Governor’s House, it was Government House by the 1940s and was converted for office use in 1947.

Government House has a prominent hilltop site, with fine views across the common and north to the Thames, and a one-acre garden. Its shallow double-fronted main range originally rose just two storeys above a base- 

This former officer’s residence at the Woolwich New Road and Seekin Lane jun-

It appears to have settled into productivity – at any rate, a public house just across Cholic Lane came to be known as the Jolly Shipwrights, acquired and closed by the Board of Ordnance in 1773. Two years later jollity was doubtless further strained when troops went into the dockyard to break up a strike. What must have been an uneasy relation- 
ship persisted, the shipwrights obliged to grant soldiers a right of way across the mill site. In 1784, when trade was slack, the shipwrights approached the Board offering to supply the newly built Royal Artillery Barracks with bread. It is not clear whether the offer was taken up. What had become the Shipwrights’ Mill Company may have found new prosperity in wartime, but the auton- 

forwards a refurbishment scheme that included conversion to eight flats, restoration of the vandalized staircase and development of the grounds with two rows of three-storey houses to the north and east, all designed by Paul and Tomiko Ravn of the Regeneration Practice. With permission for this development the site was for sale in 2012.
CHAPTER NINE

BROOKHILL ROAD AREA

Later development around Mill Hill Field

Further north and well to the east of the road, John King, foreman then Master Founder at the Royal Brass Foundry, built another large house in the 1790s. This had thirteen acres of grounds known as Mill Hill Field that extended back to present-day Brookhill Road and Nightingale Place. The Board of Ordnance acquired the property and, in 1814–15, altered the house to plans by William Atkinson. It then considerably enlarged what was misleadingly called Mill Cottage in 1824 for Lt. Col. Sir John Thomas Jones, CRE, who said that his ‘peculiar liability to attacks of the chest’ meant that he could not live in the Arsenal. As Mill Hill House, this continued as a residence for command ing engineers and then for other officers (Ill. 408). It was demolished in the 1970s. Among those who lived here was Col. William Draycot Coeur (1824–90), who trained at the Royal Military Academy and who, as a captain based with the Ordnance Survey in Southampton in 1813, over saw the Ten Feet Plan (Ill. 248) survey of Woolwich (Ills 33, 217, 241, 203, 205, 382). As the Commanding Royal Engineer in Woolwich from 1867 to 1873, he proposed, without success, a footbridge across Mill Lane, presum ably to improve the connection between his house and the barracks—Post-Crimin War upheavals in military organization in 1859 and pressures on space in the Arsenal generated new uses for Mill Hill Field. Much of the land to either side of a reduced garden (which now pertained to Col. Walpole, CRE) was allocated to the Royal Military Academy for cadets’ fieldwork practice. This included the training of future engineers in the arts of sapping and mining. The Royal Sappers and Miners in Woolwich had moved to Chatham, their barracks and associated spaces given up, as were the Royal Engineers’ workshops in the Arsenal. In a reconstituted detachment ten or more Royal Engineers’ officers were stationed in Woolwich, some attached to the Academy. Engineer House (11 Mill Lane) was built in 1838–9 to provide a new base (Ill. 434). Plans for this office building were drawn up internally under Walpole by Nelson Walker, surveyor and draughtsman. Tellingly, given the new dispensations, the builders were private contractors, D. Nicholson and Sons of Wandsworth. Ample provision for administration reflected continuing responsibilities for the organization of major building projects and for training in Woolwich, and was perhaps also in part a response to intense public criticism of the work and education of the Royal Engineers, including profligacy in the Arsenal in 1855—Engineer House’s unembellished round-headed windows and door fanlight look late Georgian, but this is a typical mid-nineteenth century Royal Engineers’ building, robust, non-nonsense and stylistically conservative—the red-brick dentil courses give the building’s date away. There is, overall, a Greek Cross plan, with offices arrayed around an imper ial staircase in a large central hall. The first-floor front room was a drawing office, off which was from the outset a closet darkroom, an early instance of a purpose built photographic studio. The lower arm of the cross to the rear quartered a messenger on the ground floor. Alongside the offices to the south there was a works yard with an iron shed, where the mill cottages had stood.

Further south, on the site of Barrack Court, there was a new Garrison Dispensary, a brick range adapted by the 1880s to hospital use. The Dispensary’s low iron railings survive along Woolwich New Road south of the entrance to Gunner Lane. Disparate sections of boundary wall further north appear also to be remnants of the mid nineteenth century and earlier, a short stretch of red-brick wall just south of the Connaught Estate might be all that is left from the brick-lined widening of Cholic Lane in the 1780s.

East of the Dispensary, the Female Hospital of 1862–5 was an adjutant to the Royal Horteb Road that was built in the same years for the Woolwich garrison on the side of the south common (outside the parish) to the designs of Capt. Douglas Galton, RE. The faculty for the women of the regiment was one single-storey crossventilated range with two wards and twenty-five beds, a reduced version of one of the main hospital’s innovative pavilions. It became a Military Maternity Hospital and then a Military Families Hospital, with road access from what, from 1944, was called Gunner Lane. It was demol ished in the 1970s. Gunner Lane and Brookhill Close area

Along the north side of Nightingale Place there stood a short row of late eighteenth-century houses, quarters for three field officers, laid out with front-staircase plans. Nightingale Place was widened in the 1830s and a gateway in the resultant boundary wall that gave onto the Academy’s practice ground survives, just west of 58–59 Nightingale Place, a semi-detached pair of officers’ married quarters of 1913. The eighteenth-century group was replaced with another pair (Nos 60–62) in the early 1950s, Lord Roberts’ Terrace, named after Field Marshal Frederick Roberts, 1st Earl Roberts, was formed in 1930 and more officers’ mar ried quarters, four semi-detached double-fronted pairs, were put up on its west side. Humble housing had been built further east in 1892–4. Near the Brookhill Road Cor ner there were two blocks to either side of a drill hall and canteen providing quarters for twelve warrant officers, and then a wider range of married quarters further north, two of thirty-six units, one for staff sergeants, and one of eighty-eight units (Ill. 16). Again, only railings survive, running along Brookhill Road.

Redevelopment of much of the garrison estate was under consideration by 1953 when all these quarters were deemed not worth retaining. An outline scheme of 1956 by Johns, Natter & Haward, architects, envisaged clearance behind Woolwich New Road, leaving only Engineer House and the former Commanding Royal Engineers’ House in place, with new officers’ married quarters to the west and open ground back to Brookhill Road for later develop ment for soldiers’ married quarters. Plans changed as defence priorities shifted and other barracks complexes in Woolwich were given up and demolished. The east side of the former field, still largely open, was developed first in 1977–8 as the Brook Hill Estate (4–15 Lord Roberts’ Terrace and 1–107 Brookhill Close), 112 houses for mar ried soldiers in simple linear terraces that step up and down a sloping site, with deliberately limited vehicle access, each house with its own garden (Ill. 435). This was succeeded, in 1978, by its eastward neighbour of 112 houses built by Wimpey and overseen by the then newly formed Property Services Agency (PSA) through the Defence Services of Defence Services 2 (Mar ried Quarters branch) under A. P. Jospehides, superintending architect. To get away from ‘ready-made’ houses, which it found unattractive, the PSA adopted a ‘develop and con struct’ contract procedure, in effect design-build, whereby contractors were free to develop their own designs from the PSA’s brief using any of a number of accepted sys tems. In this case, the adopted system was Wimpey’s ‘no fines’ concrete-panel housing for married soldiers. From the south in 1956 the next phase was another ninety-six dwellings, to the west on Gunner Lane and Mill Lane, built in 1974–81. Largely houses, with a few small blocks of flats, these are all brick built and more irregularly grouped, reflect ing changing architectural fashion and a shift in the PSA that on one hand attempted to acknowledge the prefer ences of the intended inhabitants and on the other rec ognized the need to adapt to the possibilities of marketing the buildings through the private sector. Again the terrain provides natural variety, and, as in the earlier group, a few nineteenth-century walls have been left standing, further breaking up monotony. An area of woodland still separates these developments.

In 1956 the Ministry of Defence’s Married Quarters Estate was privatized, sold in its entirety to Amington Homes Ltd and leased back as necessary. Since then the armed forces have vacated Brookhill Close and the southern end of Gunner Lane, where houses are pri vately occupied. In 2008 Headroom Properties Ltd secured planning permission to redevelop the outer parts of Brookhill Close. Replacement of twenty built by Wimpey and overseen by the PSA for twenty-six houses in one long and two short rows, and thirty-nine flats in four blocks, one to the north and three to the south-west, began in late 2011 in a phased project for the Hyde Housing Association to design by Alan Camp Architects with Geoffrey Osborne Ltd as builders.