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CHAPTER 8 – CARDWELL AND WOODHILL AREAS

A scarp on the east side of Frances Street marks a site once referred to as Mount Pleasant. On this commanding height there was a mansion, called Bowater House in the eighteenth century. There were no other buildings around. Mulgrave Pond, now a surprisingly sylvan amenity, was formed in the grounds in the 1750s as a reservoir for the naval dockyard. The southern part of Frances Street began as a drive to the house – Manor Road. Change came at the beginning of the nineteenth century when rapid development was primed by the proximity of the Royal Artillery Barracks, military road building, and the disintegration of the Bowater estate. More barracks were built, and speculative housing gradually filled gaps, much of it aimed at a military market, from hilltop villas for officers to pokey tenements for the ranks. Now, after war damage and military retrenchment, most of what covers the ground is late twentieth-century social housing. The whole district from the Cardwell Estate in the east to Woodhill in the west is, like lower ground to the north, residential in character.

The Board of Ordnance formed Artillery Place and Hillreach in 1804–5, skirting the expanding Royal Artillery Barracks and Royal Military Repository for the first part of a new route between Woolwich and Charlton. A year later John Long, an entrepreneur who had a major impact, opened the King's Arms on the Frances Street corner. By 1808 new barracks for marines had been established east of Frances Street and the road that became Woodhill had been laid out in a combe surrounded by woods and gardens. The 1840s saw the Marine Barracks expansively rebuilt as a progressive model for military accommodation and the picturesque flowering of a military-bourgeois enclave on and around Woodhill, where the best and most varied group of nineteenth-

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century houses in Woolwich can still be appreciated. Ten years on Bowater House was replaced with a naval hospital of pioneering form. Closure of the dockyard in 1869 led to conversions – the Frances Street military facilities became the Cambridge Barracks and the Red Barracks.

From 1850 there was humbler speculative development west of Frances Street where the land falls steeply away on what had become part of the Ogilby estate, and by 1900 infill and replacement took the form of ordinary suburban terraces. Amid this, for a century from the 1850s, the area also housed some small-scale industry, notable sporting-goods factories – Malings, later Slazengers, on Woodrow, where tennis balls and rackets were made, and Gradidges on Artillery Place, renowned for its cricket bats.

Second World War bomb damage was extensive near the barracks. West of Frances Street the London County Council built the Milne Estate in the 1950s, extending it westwards with acquisitions that led in the 1970s to the Peabody Trust's Pellipar Gardens Estate. Shrinking demand for military accommodation in the 1960s opened up barracks sites on Frances Street for redevelopment. Greenwich Council built close to 1,000 houses there; a project for an array of hexagons wound up in the 1980s with a dense neo-vernacular warren. The earliest high-rise phase of this work, the Cardwell Estate of the late 1960s, had so declined and gained such notoriety that it was almost wholly replaced in the 1990s through a multi-pronged council and housing-association partnership for further streets of yellow-brick cottages, more spaciouly laid out.

Bowater House and grounds

The Bowater estate was the parish's principal landholding and had manorial origins. An account of the descent of its ownership forms part

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of this volume's Introduction. It took in all the lands covered in this chapter until large sections were sold off in the early nineteenth century.

The parish church occupied the high ground nearest the riverside settlement. The next and taller headland to the west, now on the east side of Frances Street north of where Red Barracks Road runs, was where an isolated and rather inaccessible capital house once stood. This was not the 'manor' house, Woolwich Hall on the High Street was the principal candidate for that appellation from the sixteenth century up to the 1760s, but it did pertain to the manorial demesne that extended all round.

The origins of this house remain unknown. A sizeable turreted building that was depicted in 1698 might have dated back to the early sixteenth century, when the Woolwich manorial lands were held by the Boughton family. The Bowaters purchased the estate in 1693, probably seeing it as an investment rather than as a place to dwell. But Edward Bowater, who inherited the property in 1733, was, unlike his predecessors, described as 'of Woolwich' and as having improved the estate. He appears to have rebuilt the house in the 1730s, not to be a principal residence but as a retreat from his West End home. The hill, sometimes called Mount Pleasant, appears on John Rocque's map of the 1740s as 'Mount Whoredom', perhaps simply a joke, either on or by Rocque. For the building the name Bowater House is what stuck. It was now seemingly a two-storey villa, three bays wide and five deep, maybe enlarged in the 1740s to form a U on plan, or conceivably always retaining parts of the earlier building. A painted view of Woolwich dockyard from the late 1770s shows thin corner turrets, possibly Gothick embellishments rather than anything earlier. The entrance front faced west, to the east lay about three acres of ornamental gardens (extending to where Sarah

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Turnbull House now stands), and a stable block stood to the south. Beyond this, near what became the corner of Frances Street and Artillery Place, was Bowater Farm (alternatively North, New or Naw Cross), cleared in 1808. Frances Street, so called by 1809, may take its name from the Bowater family, though perhaps not from its most famous Frances, née Duncombe. It more plausibly commemorates Edward's second daughter, who was married in Woolwich in 1782. In the later eighteenth century a canted bay was added to the north or riverward side of Bowater House, and the gardens, which included a pond, were enlarged southwards.¹

Capt. George Bowater (who also had a daughter called Frances, b.1791) leased the 'mansion house' from his impecunious elder brother, John, in 1793, repaired it and took occupation. He then appears to have built himself another substantial house, Bowater Cottage, just south-east of Bowater House.² There were leases of the older house and other property to Henry Rideout in 1802–4. Rideout, a cheesemonger, perhaps grown prosperous through provisioning the military, died in 1806 when John Long began to build up control of the Bowater estate in concert with Sarah Blight, his business partner's widow. Mrs Blight acquired the whole hill-top property when Long auctioned off the Bowater estate in 1812. By this time Capt. George Varlo, RM, Commandant at the new Marine Barracks to the south, was in Bowater Cottage, where he continued to live until 1856. Bowater House also survived that long, though diminished – the 'cottage', to which the ornamental grounds now pertained, had become the principal dwelling. The Kent Water Works Company had purchased 'Bowater Pond', after an Act of 1808 provided for improvements in the town's water supply, and made it a reservoir in 1812. The Admiralty purchased the entire property in 1856 and the site was cleared to make way for the Royal Marine Infirmary.³

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Mulgrave Pond

The approximately triangular two-acre body of water known as Mulgrave Pond is hidden away north of Artillery Place. It was formed in the early 1750s as a reservoir to supply the naval dockyard, a precaution against fire, but also a response to the desire of dockyard officers to have their new houses supplied with spring water. There had been discussions about the dockyard gaining access to water from springs on the Bowater estate's uplands since at least 1743. In October 1750 Edward Bowater set out his terms after an Admiralty delegation's visit. He proposed a two-acre pond of up to 8ft/2.4m depth, to be made by the formation of a brick and earth embankment, with subterranean brick-lined conduits to take the water down the hill. This description fits Mulgrave Pond, the north side of which is an embankment. Bowater offered to build this pond and then to lease it for 110 guineas a year, alternatively to allow the Admiralty to build it and to charge them £20 a year for the water. Complaints from dockyard officers in June 1753 suggest that nothing had then been done and perhaps provided the impetus to action along a middle course. On 1 January 1755 Bowater agreed to supply the dockyard with fresh water for £60 a year. The pond was later adapted to supply the Royal Artillery Barracks, and from 1815 it also fed the Arsenal's steam engines via a pipe under Wellington Street. The name Mulgrave Place Pond seems to have come into use around 1804, when Mulgrave Place (now the south end of Rectory Place) was formed. This name probably honours Constantine John Phipps, Baron Mulgrave, a leading figure in the Admiralty whose son, Lt. Gen. Henry Phipps, later the first Earl of Mulgrave, came into cabinet in Pitt the Younger's government of 1804. The younger Mulgrave was later First Lord of the Admiralty and then Master-General of the Ordnance from 1810 to 1818.

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The Board of Ordnance purchased the freehold of the reservoir in 1805 and quickly fenced it in, to prevent the horses of those who lived on Mulgrave Place from drinking at it. It also built a small engine house to the south, later used as an observatory by Peter Barlow, Professor of Mathematics at the Royal Military Academy. The Kent Water Works Company's 'Bowater Pond' supplemented the water supply. In 1831 five children of artillerymen died when ice on Mulgrave Pond gave way. The perimeter fence was replaced with brick walls in the early 1840s. Cast-iron columnar supports for part of a Victorian system for circulating water to the Arsenal stand near the reservoir's south corner. Mulgrave Pond endures as a well-hidden open space stoutly fringed by mature trees. It is sometimes accessible from Rectory Place, though it was sold into private hands in the 1980s.⁴

Development from 1804

Artillery Place and Hillreach (Hill Street until 1937) were made in 1804–5 when the Board of Ordnance diverted the west end of Love Lane northwards to gain more space for enlargement of the Royal Artillery Barracks. This work would have been overseen by Capt. George Hayter, CRE, the line no doubt approved by Lt. Gen. Robert Morse, Inspector-General of Fortifications. This was the first stage of a wholly new road link between Woolwich and Charlton, ultimately connecting the Royal Arsenal to Greenwich, but further improvements to the east (Wellington Street) and west (Little Heath) were not carried out until 1808–12; the delay prompted complaints about the difficulties of using Ha-Ha Road during artillery practice across its route. The names Artillery Place and Hill Street were in use by 1810.⁵

RUSH GROVE AREA

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In 1804 John Bowater granted Henry Rideout a 99-year building lease of the whole area bounded by Mulgrave Pond to the east, Frances Street to the west, Artillery Place to the south and Bowater House to the north. This included a field called Rush Grove. Soon about seventy mostly modest houses were built on Rideout's land. There was immediate concern from the Board of Ordnance about the fire-risk bakeries here presented to the Royal Horse Artillery's barracks, and opposition to the licensing of public houses.⁶

Rushgrove (Deusi) House

From this development there is just one survival. Rushgrove House was built for John Cook as a two-storey, three-bay building of 1816–17, originally called Regent Cottage, that remains legible from the large garden that overlooks Mulgrave Pond. Cook was, it seems, a meat contractor who supplied the Royal Artillery Barracks from about 1809. He was also the grandfather of the Woolwich architect John Oliver Cook. The house was enlarged with a service wing on the west or street side in 1839, for Joseph Grisbrook, the Powis Street draper. It took its present yet more substantial form in 1855–7 when the Admiralty acquired it to replace Bowater Cottage as a residence for the colonel commandant of the Marine Barracks, close by to the north. Design and building, the responsibility of Col. Godfrey T. Greene, the Admiralty's Director of Engineering and Architectural Works, but doubtless carried forward at lower levels, may have been overseen by Edwin Arthur Bernays, the Admiralty's Resident Engineer in Woolwich. A three-storey north range was added, with a north-west entrance porch and plentiful stone dressings that extend even to the coping of the chimney stacks. Overall uniformity of brickwork suggests that the characteristically thorough engineers' work of the 1850s included a refacing if not rebuilding of the earlier structure.

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In the grounds to the south there is an octagonal summerhouse, slate-roofed and open-sided with trellised timber arches. Adjacent and nearer the street there is a former stable and coach-house block. Both buildings are older than Rushgrove House. The latter was probably built around 1805 with Rush Grove Cottage, which, until 1856, stood to the north of Rushgrove House. It was originally the home of Capt. George Hayter, who died in debt in 1810 – the landholding appears thus to have passed to Cook. From 1836 to 1855 Rush Grove Cottage housed Professor Barlow's son, Peter William Barlow, with his young family. While living here the younger Barlow was the engineer responsible for bringing the railway to Woolwich. The summerhouse is outwardly of early nineteenth-century appearance, but appears, like Rushgrove House, to have undergone rebuilding. It once probably offered open views towards the Thames.

From 1869 the commanding officers of Cambridge Barracks occupied Rushgrove House. It was sold by the Army in 1986 and was renamed Deusi House after its present owners.⁷

Proximity to the Royal Artillery's extensive stabling meant that the other houses built behind Artillery Place under Rideout's lease (soon sold on) were generally of a poor standard. By 1815 there were several mean rows west of Rushgrove Street, on what became Mason Street and Ann Street (later Rush Grove). Hidden away here were the beginnings of organized military bible reading. Sgt. William Rudd, RA, a Methodist lay preacher, collected funds and in 1830 built a small Soldiers' Reading Room and House of Prayer in Ann Street, to give the soldiers of Woolwich a place for spiritual development, a need bare barrack life hardly met, and lack of provision for which, it was felt, induced them to turn to unwholesome

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forms of entertainment. Though it closed in 1857, this was a notable forerunner of soldiers' homes or institutes, philanthropic establishments that later became a feature of Woolwich and other garrisons.⁸

Catherine Square was a cramped court built near the south corner of Mulgrave Pond in 1843. Meanwhile there was comparably poor development east of the pond along what became Back Lane (later Belford Grove), where William James Cann, a Brewer Street builder, added Cann's Buildings in the late 1840s. These courts were occupied almost exclusively by artillerymen, those married 'off the strength' (without permission) and so obliged to find housing outside the barracks, a family to a room, typically with a small lodging allowance and their wives' earnings from work as laundresses, seamstresses or servants. This accommodation was immediately noted as especially unhealthy, but more one-room homes were built and dense occupancy and poverty continued into the 1890s. Charles Booth's investigator then found Catherine Square to be one of the roughest spots in the district, prostitution clinging to the neighbourhood of the barracks ('open spaces are more used than houses'). Rooms were still let to soldiers (married quarters remaining scarce) whose wives led 'wretched lives' taking in other soldiers' washing. Clearances followed as leases came up for renewal around 1903.⁹

MILITARY SITES EAST OF FRANCES STREET

Throughout the nineteenth century and up to the 1970s the east side of Frances Street was dominated by military buildings – barracks and a hospital that were put here for marines as adjuncts to the naval dockyard. Both the Marine (later Cambridge) Barracks of 1842–8 and the Marine Infirmary (later Red Barracks) of 1858–60 were important staging

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posts in the development of their respective building types. Perimeter structures survive, but the principal buildings have been replaced.

Marine or Cambridge Barracks (demolished)

The earlier and southern complex had its beginnings in the growth of the Navy and the intensification of the military presence in Woolwich during the Napoleonic Wars. The Woolwich Royal Marine Division was formed in 1805, as the first addition to three divisions originally established alongside the naval dockyards in Chatham, Plymouth and Portsmouth fifty years earlier. At first the Woolwich marines were housed within the dockyard or on the river. Better accommodation was secured through the acquisition in 1806–8 of eight acres, from the gardens of Bowater House leased to Henry Rideout in 1804. In that interval Whitby's Brewery had been built here, perhaps with a view to supplying the Royal Artillery Barracks. Instead it was simply adapted as barracks for the marines, with the addition of a pair of guard houses on the street and a parade ground between. In 1815 a substantial infirmary was built to designs by Edward Holl; it had eight wards off corridors on two floors and some structural iron in its floors and roof trusses. This was to the rear, on land now on the north side of Gorman Road. There were also piecemeal additions to the barracks around 1830 and unexecuted schemes for enclosing the parade ground with new ranges for officers.¹⁰

Concerted improvement was undertaken after the Admiralty acquired the freehold of the site in 1842, a time when major improvements were under way at the dockyard.¹¹ The Admiralty Works Department had been established in 1837 and staffed by officers of the Royal Engineers, with Capt. William Denison in charge at Woolwich Dockyard. Charged with rebuilding the marine barracks, Denison, an energetic reformer, designed a model complex in 1842–3 to house 960 marines and 200 officers,

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gaining architectural assistance from John Thistlewood Crew, who was living close by on Brewer Street in the later 1840s. This was largely built in 1844–5, with Joseph and Charles Rigby of Millbank as contractors. But some parts, including the entrance buildings, were not up until 1847–8, after Denison had gone to Portsmouth, having swapped posts with Capt. Roger Stewart Beatson.¹²

These were superior barracks, and the consideration Denison gave to the physical and moral well-being of the soldiers was pioneering in its practical application of the reforming ethos introduced by Lord Howick in the late 1830s. The layout was simple, three pavilion-ended stock-brick ranges enclosing a large parade ground, with an imposing entrance gate midway along the fourth side. The north and south ranges were for officers, and conventionally appointed. It was the soldiers' quarters in the east range to which most thought was given. The thirty-one bays between the pavilions were distinguished by a deep and continuous double-height loggia, for maximum light and ventilation, an arrangement with colonial precedents but new to Britain. Inside, the building had twenty-four barrack rooms, each 36ft/11m by 18ft/5.5m for twenty men, on each of its two main storeys, with as many mess kitchens in the basement. There were separate rooms for each of twenty-four sergeants – heretofore it had been common practice for sergeants and their families to be housed in curtained-off portions of barrack rooms with a single common fireplace. Construction by means of brick jack arches on iron beams was progressively fire resistant, and Denison also invented a novel system for circulating air, for both heating and cooling. All this ingenuity was utilitarian enough, to reduce wastage from disease, but justified also, as in the progressive provision of married quarters, in terms of an inseparable moral mission. Here was a significant precursor of post-Crimean War reforms. On the peripheries there were extensive service

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buildings, some, including a school, sited across the northern access road from the infirmary. A recreation room was added in the late 1850s and much open ground was maintained.¹³

Only the entrance arch and associated lodges survive. The arch, for which drawings were signed by Beatson in early 1847, is a fine and imposing structure, redolent of military strength, and rather Hawksmoorian in its generous expanse of tautly rusticated Portland stone. A two-stage clock tower remained unbuilt; instead a boxed clock was perched to face the parade ground. A wrought-iron lamp-holder remains fixed inside the arch. To either side single-storey lodges with inward-facing Doric porticoes originally housed an officers' library, to the south, and a guard room, to the north, both under jack-arched roofs. They were once flanked by open-sided drill sheds with cast-iron arcades and wrought-iron roof trusses.¹⁴

Upon the closure of the dockyard in 1869 the Woolwich division of marines was broken up and dispersed. The War Office took over their premises to form the Cambridge Infantry Barracks, named after the Duke of Cambridge, the Army's Commander-in-Chief. Little changed, though two, two-storey ranges of married quarters, still something of a rarity, were built to the north-east in 1873–4, tucked in behind the gardens of houses in King Street and Rectory Grove. Each had twenty 16ft(4.9m)-square one-room dwellings. These were named Cardwell Cottages, after Edward Cardwell, Gladstone's reforming Secretary of State for War. The name has latterly ramified through the wider area.¹⁵

In 1960 the scaled-down Woolwich Garrison withdrew from the Cambridge Barracks to the rebuilt Royal Artillery Barracks. Sale of the whole site behind Frances Street to Greenwich Council was agreed in

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1967. Cardwell Cottages came down first and the main Cambridge Barracks complex followed in 1970–2. The entrance buildings were listed in 1973 and refurbished by Greenwich Council, first in 1974, then again in 2001, with the lodges converted for various purposes, including a community centre and a police office. Two eighteenth-century cannon are mounted inside the entrance.¹⁶

Marine Infirmary or Red Barracks (demolished)

Along Frances Street to the north of the Cambridge Barracks site are piers at the entrance to the former Red Barracks site. This is a modest gateway, but what stood behind was not lacking in grandeur. The Royal Marine Infirmary was among numerous post-Crimean War initiatives implemented in Woolwich. A big naval hospital, it was important as one of the first two pavilion-plan hospitals to be erected in England. Its hilltop site, that of Bowater House and the Kent Water Works reservoir, was purchased in 1855–6, with John Shaw responsible for valuation and James Pennethorne also advising. These architects, particularly Shaw, may have had some influence on the building that followed, but design was handled by William Scamp, Deputy Director, under Col. Greene, of Engineering and Architectural Works to the Admiralty. The pavilion principle of hospital planning was vigorously promoted from 1856 in the Crimean backwash, aiming to contain the spread of disease through subdivision and cross-ventilation. A Sanitary Commission report at the beginning of 1858 gave it official sanction. Credit for its adoption here was given to Sir John Liddle, Director-General of the Medical Department of the Navy. William Higgs of Lambeth began building in 1858; completion appears to have been in 1860.

Of mixed brick, predominantly red, with Bath-stone dressings, the hilltop hospital had a solid classical façade, but with stylistically dissonant

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turrets at its ends. It was ‘the most conspicuous and striking feature of the town of Woolwich’,¹⁷ visible for many miles. Strung out behind its front administration block, it extended more than 450ft (137m) to the east and had space for 273 beds. Four 60ft(18m)-long ‘pavilion’ ward blocks, with sanitary facilities at their far ends and nurses’ rooms and sick-rooms at their near ends, were arrayed off the north side of a wide corridor, on the roof of which there was a promenade. Other wards were to have been built to the south. The east range echoed that to the west, but housed more wards. It also had a projecting bow for a chapel and operating theatre. Despite its amplitude and progressive layout, the hospital was criticized in *The Builder*, probably by George Godwin, for being insufficiently generous with space.¹⁸

The building passed to the army in 1869 upon closure of the dockyard and the winding up of the marines division. The huge Royal Herbert Hospital had been built for the Woolwich garrison in the early 1860s, so conversion ensued, first as barracks (thus, and with reference to the brick, the Red Barracks) for the Ordnance Store Corps, later the Army Ordnance Corps. From 1888 use as the Artillery College, which became the Military College of Science in 1927, overlapped and followed, and finally, from 1940 to 1967, war damage notwithstanding, the offices of the Inspectorate of Armaments and the Royal Artillery Record Office were housed here.¹⁹ Greenwich Council then acquired the property. In 1972 the front block and perimeter structures were listed, and the rest was demolished. Complete clearance was resisted by the GLC and others through a public inquiry, but no new use for the front block was found and in 1975 a second application for consent to demolish succeeded.²⁰

The perimeter walls of the 1850s have survived, with railings along Frances Street north of the site-entrance piers, where Bath stone, white

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brick and boarded doorways mix with red brick. Continuing past a roofless brick sentry-box, an impressively extensive retaining wall steps down the hill before returning to Borgard Road where a further sharp drop leads to the site's north-west corner. Here another guardhouse, built to protect a back entrance to a path up the steep hill, articulates the battered wall.²¹

WEST OF FRANCES STREET

John Long

John Long was a figure whose early nineteenth-century enterprises touched on much of the ground covered in this chapter, as well as on other parts of Woolwich. He was a partner in the Rotherhithe firm of Blight, Long and Blight, ship-breakers, shipwrights, ship-repairers and sail merchants, along with Thomas Blight and Sarah Blight, the widow of Isaac Blight, also a West India merchant, murdered by the relative of a servant in his house in Rotherhithe in September 1805. Long, who was also a shipowner, settled in Woolwich in 1806 and further diversified into the trans-shipping of aggregates, selling not just sand, gravel and lime, but also coal, bricks and stone. He worked sand and chalk pits that straddled the Charlton–Woolwich parish boundary through the acquisition of a nearby wharf. That same year he spent £1,000 on the freehold of ten and a half acres of uphill Bowater land – the rectangle now bounded by Hillreach, Frances Street, Woodrow and the line of the northern leg of Rideout Street. Always an operator, Long now became a tavern keeper through the establishment of the King's Arms at the south-east corner of this land, diagonally opposite the newly enlarged Royal Artillery Barracks on the new road. He also invested in other local property and at some point before 1811 was appointed messman to the canteen at the barracks, a lucrative and informal contract to cater to more than 3,000 men.²²

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Alongside his diverse business interests, Long was also a financier. In 1809 the much indebted John Bowater had mortgaged his entire Woolwich estate to Long, partly in lieu of repayment of moneys owed from agreements going back to 1802, partly to pay off his creditors. Bowater died in 1810, with Long an executor, and Long auctioned off substantial parts of the estate in 1812 and 1820. In 1819 Long married another Sarah Blight, probably the niece of Thomas Blight.²³

A party to the 1809 assignment was Jabez Kidd, a close associate of Long's since at least 1806. Kidd, who described himself as a messman in 1811, was evidently a partner of Long's at the barracks and the Sgt. Kidd who was the Mess Butler there in 1817. Another associate of Long's was Joseph Meads Madkins, a solicitor prominent in Woolwich affairs in 1806–7; Madkins and Long were among the first Woolwich Town Commissioners and worked together from 1811 to set up the Woolwich Ferry Company. Madkins later bounced back from debtors' prison to profit from aggregate extraction before again becoming insolvent in 1829. Long had died (in 'a state of derangement') in 1828 with a yearly rental of £906 from his estates, but owing more than £10,000. His executors were Kidd and Madkins. Kidd died in 1832, having himself declined into 'complete mental imbecility'.²⁴

From 1806 Long's base in Woolwich was at the corner of Frances Street and Hillreach. His public house there, which profited from the proximity of the barracks, was variously known as the King's Arms, the Artillery Hotel, the Barrack Tavern, Long's Hotel and Jack's Canteen, settling by 1831 to be the King's Arms Tavern and Royal Artillery Hotel. It had two entrances, to exploit the corner site, with south-facing bows; there was a stable yard to the west. By the 1840s it had 'long been the favourite

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resort of officers on joining the garrison'.²⁵ The King's Arms was rebuilt in 1935–6 as a plain brick public house for Watney & Co., with H. Somerford & Son of Clapham as its builders. It remained popular with NCOs and so gained notoriety in November 1974 in the context of Irish Republican attacks in England when a bomb was hurled through a window, killing two.²⁶

The Frances Street frontage immediately north of the public house was first developed through a lease of 1808 to Jabez Kidd. Further north, set back behind where 11–21 Frances Street now stand, was Long's own villa. This, later known as Bowater Lodge then Waverley Cottage, had six acres of gardens extending westwards across what is now the Milne Estate; the lands that later became George Imms's Bowater Nursery (the Pellipar Gardens area) may also have been parts of Long's 'pleasure grounds' from 1809 to 1828. On Frances Street, between where Ogilby Street and Rideout Street were later formed, the frontage had been built up in 1804–5 with a row of three-storey houses that incorporated both shops and, once the Marine Barracks were established across the road, some officers' quarters. Garden Place (later St James's Place and then, from 1912, Rideout Street, after either Henry Rideout or his son Capt. Samuel Rideout, RN) and, running off it to the south, Frances Street Mews (later Back Lane and then, from 1936, Dairy Lane) were formed around 1815. South of Long's villa on Hill Street, John Lacey, a Woolwich victualler, built a small house (now No. 6) around 1807 on a 95-year lease. Much of the adjoining frontage was yet more humbly developed in 1808–10 with houses that incorporated shops. There was a court of eleven tenements until 1842 when the site was redeveloped as three houses (Nos 3–5). Further west, Rose Cottage was a large house of 1805 built for Capt. Ernest Christian Wilford, RA.²⁷

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Robert Ogilby bought Bowater freeholds from John Long at auction in 1812, including all but the eastern parts of Long's ten-acre holding north of Hill Street. From 1830 John Bowater's daughters, Georgiana, with her husband Joseph Harrington, and Charlotte Mercote held on to other lands hereabouts as what continued to be called the Bowater estate.²⁸

Woodhill

Woodhill is an oasis of nineteenth-century houses. Its distinctive character arises from a separate and unusual development history. The road was laid out around 1808 with a spur (Godfrey Hill) that linked it to Bowater Crescent and Unity Place (Samuel Street).²⁹ The descent of the ownership of the land on either side of the road, the roughly rectangular plot bounded by Woodrow to the east and the parish boundary to the west, is not wholly known. The land appears to have been taken from the Bowater estate in several parcels, probably all on 99-year leases, not long before the road was formed, by 1808 and probably not before 1806, during John Bowater's later prison years when John Long and George Henry Harrington were effectively running the estate. Long's sidekick, Jabez Kidd, and Harrington's associate, William Limbery, had most of the property by November 1808, with smaller plots between theirs held by Long himself, on the west side, and by Lt. James Reid, on the east side. Reid had been Quartermaster and Commissary of Stores in the Royal Horse Artillery since 1803, when the barracks were being enlarged.³⁰

With woodland to south and west, the road was initially called Wood Place; it soon became Wood Street, and has been Woodhill since 1938. The first houses were few and scattered. On the west side, a two-storey, three-bay house that survives as the nucleus of No. 98 was built in 1809 on Long's land and first occupied by Kidd until 1815 when the elder (Professor) Peter Barlow moved from Bowater Crescent to spend a decade

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here. There was also a house of 1810 on the site of Nos 114–116, with three small cottages that had gone up in 1808 set back to the rear (where No. 112A now stands), all rented out by Limbery. A semi-detached pair (on the site of Nos 134–136) was added around 1814 on Kidd's southern plot, and, to the extreme north, beside the road's eastward turn and about where Woodhill Nursery School now stands, Vale Cottage, a large house with a big garden, was built around 1815 as a bigger home for Kidd. On the east side of the street there were just three early houses, all on the site now occupied by the terrace at Nos 177–203. The southernmost, on another plot of Limbery's, was of 1808 and first occupied by Lt. James Stevenson, RA, an instructor in the use of military machines in the Repository. A slightly earlier large semi-detached pair to its north, also initially held by Stevenson, was soon occupied by a series of other officers, including James Reid around 1815.³¹

An aspect of building work peculiar to the presence of military officers, and the kind of thing that is rarely documented, is revealed in a letter of 1828 to the Board of Ordnance. William Weiss, a local bricklayer but 'mortely idle', reported that George Clubb, a clerk in the Repository, was illicitly using the Board's artificers and materials to overhaul his own house in Hill Street – 'there are a forman belonging to them but he is either drunk or has the men away with him . . . indeed they seem just to do as they please.' This was 'to the great injury of me and others who have nothing but our labour to Depend on'. The Master-General himself followed this up with a visit to the Repository. Several artificers were dismissed and Clubb was moved.³²

Military officers and the domestication of soldiery are keys to the nature of more intense building activity after 1830. Four of Wood Street's eight houses in 1826 were homes for officers – a captain, a major, a lieutenant

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and a colonel. From about this time comparable occupancy in Samuel Street fell away as adjoining development made that a less desirable address. By 1838 there were seventeen houses on Wood Street of which nine housed officers – two captains, two majors, three lieutenants and two colonels. There were at least sixteen officers in thirty-seven houses in 1845, but by 1850 only about ten in forty-eight houses. A unique interlude had passed with the Royal Artillery reduced in size and militarily quiescent. Indeed it was said that ‘the Regiment showed little signs of vitality during these gloomy years, 1827–46.’³³ In an echo of earlier developments at Woolwich Common, officers settled into comfortable bourgeois domesticity on Wood Street in what almost became, in a piecemeal and uncoordinated way, a suburban park estate in the manner of John Nash’s Park Villages by Regent’s Park. However, this place was an inversion of a park surrounded by villas. It was a street of villas or ‘cottages’ surrounded by parks – Repository Woods to the south, Bowater Nursery to the east, Reynolah Gardens to the north and Hanging Wood to the west. It was up a hill from and out of sight of lower-class housing, with healthier air and a marked absence of public houses.

In other respects, and for once in Woolwich, the development of Woodhill was in synchrony with the wider world. Construction work appears to follow the waves of the general building cycle, at a low in the early 1830s, gradually picking up pace from 1838 to 1846 with an acute dip in 1847–8, an upturn in 1849–53, and then a sharp turn down. Architecturally, the builders of Woodhill, at their most opulent in the first Victorian decade, drew on precedents near by in Blackheath and elsewhere, though not without introducing eccentricities.

After a post-war lull, building recommenced on Jabez Kidd’s north-eastern plot in the late 1820s. The three-bay house at No. 159 that came

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to be called Anchor Cottage was built in 1826, seemingly for Samuel Kidd (c.1770–c.1859), probably a brother who had served as a ship's master from 1810 to 1824, and who may have been Jabez's guardian in his dotage. Members of the Kidd family continued to live here into the 1880s. The wider landholding passed to Henry Kidd (d.1852 aged 71), perhaps another brother, who moved to Sydenham around 1840.³⁴

Across the road No. 98 was sold off by Long's widow Sarah and much enlarged in 1829 for Lt. Henry Poole. Wings were added to either side, that to the north of two storeys. From 1834 to about 1853 No. 98 was lived in and owned by Maj. (later Col.) William Bolden Dundas, a war hero and Inspector of Artillery in the Arsenal from 1839 to 1852. (Dundas had previously and briefly, from about 1830, lived in a house of the late 1820s on the site of 2 Godfrey Hill that came to be known as Hope Cottage, later Godfrey House. He was followed there by Col. Sir Theophilus Pritzler, retired from campaigns in India.) Dundas was succeeded at No. 98, which he called his 'cottage', by Gen. Frederick Campbell, RA (1780–1866), Colonel Commandant in Woolwich in 1852. The south wing was extended forward or rebuilt with a canted bay window in 1892. In the early twentieth century a long-standing occupant of this house, which came to be 'The Limes', was Fred Hoar. The adjoining piece of Long's land to the north (No. 90) was also sold and, in 1831, developed with another good-sized house. This was owned by John Lacey, the local victualler who moved into what had been Jabez Kidd's house (Vale Cottage) further north, and first occupied by a Maj. Coffin, probably Sir Edward Pine Coffin.³⁵

Upon James Reid's death in 1836 his executors (his son, also James Reid, Dr Thomas Hallifax, a Woolwich physician, and Michael Longstaff, whose business partner Reid's daughter may have married) were left to

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sell off his Woolwich estate. They evidently moved quickly and the greater part of the property to the north was leased and in 1838–9 built on with a large and amply set-off semi-detached pair (Nos 173–175). The southern house was first occupied by Lt. W. T. Denison, RE. Given Denison's abilities it may be that he had a hand in designing this well-proportioned pair. But the same could be said of George Hall Graham, the local surveyor who was later engaged with the property, J. T. Crew, with whom Denison worked at the Marine Barracks, or even John Douglas Hopkins, who was 'constantly engaged' in Woolwich in the 1830s. Capt. Arthur Gosset took the northern house in the early 1840s. Other early occupants of the pair were Capt. (later Rear Adm.) John Washington, RN, an eminent hydrographer, promoter of lifeboats and founding member of the Royal Geographical Society who lived at No. 175 in 1849–55, and Lt. Col. George Tempest Rowland, RA, in No. 173 from 1845–58. Both had their already large houses extended to the rear.³⁶

The intensification of development on the Kidd property reveals the changing scale and stylistic pretensions of building on the street. In humble vein a two-storey single-bay cottage at No. 153 had been built around 1830 and first occupied by a Lt. Curtis. The gap between this and Anchor Cottage was filled in 1835–9 with a plain three-storey pair, first occupied by more captains. More gracious was a group of four fully stucco-fronted villas of 1838–9 to the south, at least two of which had Ionic arcading reminiscent of Brighton houses of a decade or more earlier. The first occupants were a colonel, a major and two captains. This quartet was cleared for council housing in 1963. Further north, Nos 143–151 remain as five of six houses of 1843, set well back from the road and embellished rather than completely fronted with stucco. Nos 149–151, a tall three-storey pair, are very like Nos 173–175, though smaller. The other four followed on as a less ambitious symmetrical two-storey

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row with pilasters under two shallow pediments. In 1840–1 an even more substantial semi-detached pair, neo-Tudor and gable-fronted, had been built to the north, where Woolwich Evangelical Church now stands; this and No. 141 were lost to bomb damage. Awkward junctions, changing building lines and general architectural incoherence here demonstrate the absence of any overall controlling hand, even within one landholding. The first occupants of Nos 149–151 were both captains and of Nos 143–147 two more captains and a major. Into the 1850s most householders in this group were officers. From the late 1840s to late 1860s John Goldsmith, a navy paymaster, was the householder at No. 157.³⁷

On the west side of the street, on what was Limbery's land, Nos 100–102, a semi-detached pair of 1835 under a single pedimental gable, are rather like certain contemporary houses in Blackheath, though oddly laid out, with cramped staircases towards the front, twin back rooms and an attic storey less deep than the rest. First occupants were both captains, and No. 102 was held by Maj.-Gen. George Prescott Wingrove, RM, through the 1840s up to his death, aged 70, in 1850. Ambrose Fenn added the canted-bay windows in 1907. At the north end of this landholding, smaller and not set back, Nos 122–124 were built in 1840 as a semi-detached side-entrance pair. Intermediate in size and position, Nos 118–120 (Albion Cottages) followed in 1843, rather more architectural, if again old-fashioned with stucco blank arcading. These houses were more roomily laid out with standard rear-staircase plans. The first occupant of No. 120 was Lt. William Bethel Gardner, another instructor in military exercises at the Repository.³⁸

William Limbery died in 1840, and by 1843 his western plot and Kidd's adjoining had been sold to Matthew Henry Sherwin, a Bermondsey Street slate merchant and slater. Slate imports into London still came by sea

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and up the Thames to wharves in Bermondsey, and slate merchants prospered as building activity increased in the 1830s, especially as slate duty had been abolished in 1831 and slate roofs for houses grew increasingly de rigueur. In 1843–4 Sherwin built Eliza Terrace (Nos 106–110), named after his Woolwich-born wife and presumably a supporting speculation for the big house he intended at the back; the family was living in the northern house by 1846. Sherwin's builder, probably also his architect, was Henry William Rowstone, a local surveyor in his late 20s. The houses in this short terrace, suavely articulated and set off behind elegantly railed areas, look ampler than they are. They did not attract many officers and appear to have been difficult to let into the 1850s, though Lt. James Campbell, RA, lived at No. 106 through the 1850s. They are just one room deep and were built with blind back walls so as not to overlook the grounds to the rear (outshuts have been rebuilt, most substantially at No. 110 in 1933 and No. 108 around 2005). There Sherwin or Bellevue House (No. 112) was built in 1846–7, again with Rowstone in charge. The Sherwins lived here until 1851 when, possibly victims of harder times arising from the building downturn of 1847–8, they moved to No. 110. In 1851 Sherwin, age 58, was employing only two men. From 1852 North Welsh slate could be carried to London by rail, and then the building cycle again turned sharply down. When he died in 1857 Sherwin left just two guineas to his eldest son, Matthew Henry William Sherwin. Born in Bermondsey in 1835 and apprenticed to be a printer, the younger Sherwin was, by 1861, a music teacher with a piano repository. He had lived since 1858 in the older house just south of Eliza Terrace. In the late 1860s and early 1870s he was a musical-instrument maker and had a warehouse at 23 Wellington Street. He had moved to Stratford by 1878 when he described himself as a professor of music and piano tuner.³⁹

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Robert Fitzroy Holderness, a young Blackheath stockbroker, took Sherwin House in 1851. The locality's military occupancy had passed its peak, and the house was perhaps anyway too ostentatious for an officer to flaunt. Looking north to the Thames this tall villa was designed for its prospects, but it is eccentric in a way that suggests Sherwin was obsessive about privacy. It is well fenestrated only on its north side. The east side, where an entrance porch survives, and which faces the blind backs of Eliza Terrace, was originally blind on its upper storeys. A bold bracketed cornice runs round the east and north sides, and the house is, of course, slate-roofed. A two-storey rear wing was probably put up in 1884 for William Dent, a chemist at the Arsenal.

Before his fortunes had turned Sherwin had overseen more development on Wood Street, filling out the south end of its west side. Three semi-detached largely side-entrance pairs, of which only Nos 142–144 survive, were erected in the late 1840s by George Smith, a Holloway builder. Plans for a second-rate house were, in one instance, abandoned for a pair – an indication of ambitions curtailed. Among the first occupants here were Richard Ratcliffe, a naval gunner, and James Blest, a bootmaker.

A major sewer from the Royal Artillery Barracks was open to the north of Wood Street until 1849. The Town Commissioners covered it then, to great local relief, and the last significant Wood Street plots, to the north, were built on in the 1850s. On the east side Rowstone developed Elwes Terrace in 1850. Evidently intended as a seven-house terrace, presumably symmetrical, only the four southern three-storey units were built, of which just two (Nos 129–131) survive, the two southernmost houses being more war losses. The first occupants of Nos 129–131 were a Capt. Turner and a Col. Farquharson. Things seem to have gone from

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bad to worse for Rowstone; his wife committed suicide in 1856 when he was living at No. 131. Filling in across the road in 1851–7 to either side of Woodville Street was generally more modest, presumably reflecting a changing market as military tenancies waned. Nine houses on the street were empty in 1852. Nos 84–86 are a pair of 1853 and Nos 80–82 another of 1856–7. First occupants included Thomas Glennie, a commercial traveller, in No. 86, and George Blanchett, an accountant, in No. 80. In 1852, William Toder squeezed No. 76 in as Eliza Cottage; No. 78 was added in 1856–7.

Woodville Street was formed in 1850 with the idea that it would continue into Charlton, linking up with incipient development along Maryon Road on the Maryon Wilson estate. By 1853 the uneven row of two-storey houses at Nos 1–5 was up, each by a different builder. Maryon Grove was formed around 1854 just across the parish boundary to serve the backs of new houses on Maryon Road. Some Wood Street residents were involved in this speculation, including Gen. Wingrove and George Stevens, a mess master who had lived at 122 Wood Street since the late 1840s.⁴⁰

Further and more dramatic change in the character of Wood Street can be tracked from 1863. At that point the place opened up to the north with a new roadway to link with Kidd Street and that much humbler neighbourhood, shortly to be devastated by the closure of the dockyard. By 1871 No. 143 and its northern neighbour were both lodging houses and a number of nearby houses were empty, as was No. 173. When what is now Woodhill School was built in 1882–3 there were only four retired officers living on the street. But there were others mindful of status and this institutional intrusion was vigorously resisted. By the 1890s, however, there was a home for fallen women near the south end of the

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street. There were also still military residents, such as Capt. William Robson, RA, in No. 108, Sgt.-Maj. Edward Walker, RA, at No. 145, and Maj.-Gen. George Shaw, RA (retired), in No. 173. In 1901 No. 175 was the home of Herbert Oliver Thomas, formerly Surveyor to the Local Board of Health. There was limited infill building in these later Victorian years. Ambrose J. Fenn built No. 104 for himself in 1887. James Stratton, another builder, lived in what had become Belle Vue (now renamed Hangingwood House) when in 1896–7 he redeveloped the plot to its south with a pair of houses (Nos 114–116) and a stable and wash-house building to the rear (No. 112A) that replaced the cottages of 1808. The gardens of Vale Cottage were built on, with houses at the front in 1888 and with John James & Co.'s shirt factory at the back in 1898. This was enlarged and extended north towards the school in a tall three-storey block in 1909–12.⁴¹

The east side of Wood Street came back into the hands of the Bowater Estate when leases expired around 1905. The big houses at Nos 173–175, perhaps too large and costly to let as residences, were then taken into institutional use, knocked together and otherwise converted to form a maternity home, or, more precisely, a Home for Mothers and Babies and Training School for District Midwives, the first establishment of its kind anywhere, brought into being by a partnership of three educated and devoutly Christian nurses, Alice Gregory, the daughter of the Dean of St Paul's, Maud Cashmore, and their matron, Mrs Lelia Parnell. They had met working in a cottage hospital in rural Somerset, where they established the Council for the Promotion of the Higher Training of Midwives and began to look for premises. Opposition from the medical profession made this difficult until they gained help in Woolwich, then in dire need of public hospital accommodation, from the Rev. Charles Escreet, who showed them the Wood Street building. The conversion

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work was supervised by H. O. Thomas and carried out by W. E. Champion. Starting in 1905 with eight beds, the 'Wood Street Home' began to expand into neighbouring houses three years later. The establishment moved to purpose-built premises behind Samuel Street in 1922 as the British Hospital for Mothers and Babies. The openings that had been made in the party wall of the Wood Street building were bricked up in 1933–4 and the premises were subsequently converted to flats as Woodhill Court.⁴²

Much of the once generous grounds of Nos 173–175 were taken by Frank Charles Henesy, a Charlton builder, for the insertion in 1905–6 of standard suburban terraces and pairs of 'villas' at Nos 169–171 and Nos 177–203 as well as others behind at Nos 67–72 and 79–80 Lower Wood Street. Three more houses at 123–127 Wood Street were added as late as 1923–4, by Henry James Stephens and Son, based close by at 55 Hill Street.⁴³

Hill House, 51–52 Hillreach

The extension of Hill Street into Charlton did not happen until 1809–10, but a row of seven small houses was built, probably in 1808–9, on the sites of Nos 53–58, up to the parish boundary and across from the Repository. Land east of this remained open until about 1814–17 when the house that is now No. 51 was built by David Tannahill; Sgt.-Maj. William Tannahill had held the plot from Jabez Kidd for some years previously. By 1818 Maj. Hugh Fraser was in occupation. The house was at first only three bays wide (the eastern part of the present building), with its entrance and staircase to the west, possibly always rising three storeys. Of the first staircase a single basement flight survives.

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Other short-tenure military occupants followed until Lt. Col. (later Gen.) John Rawlins Coryton, RM, who had been at Trafalgar aged about 16, arrived in 1844, newly promoted, and set about improvements. By 1846 Coryton had added a new and wider west entrance bay, slightly set back at the now stuccoed front with a portico (built by J. Goodwin) and, inside, an open-well staircase with shaped tread-ends to its open string. He also built a small full-height rear block, probably for water closets, and a stable building, set back to the west. After a period of command in Plymouth, Coryton returned to his Woolwich house and in 1856–7, now a Lieutenant General, rebuilt the west section to its present height to make the house even larger. Projecting forwards there was once a first-floor conservatory over what were probably coach-house doors.

After Coryton's death in 1867 the property became known as Hill House and was a doctor's residence before further partial rebuilding in 1889 for Dr Francis Stephenson, by Charles Harwood, builder. The western section may then have been reconfigured to include a surgery. The house was converted to flats in 1917–18 by and for H. J. Stephens & Son, builders of 55 Hill Street. At this time, it seems, the front (basement) area was reordered, the conservatory replaced with a canted bay window and a shop inserted. The shopfront was removed for the formation of an additional flat in 1994.⁴⁴

Beresford Terrace, 40–49 Hillreach

This attractive and well-preserved terrace of 1844–6 was a speculation that followed on from the surge in the building of officers' houses on Woodhill that began in the late 1830s. In the first years of the century William Limbery had taken the land on Hillreach between Woodhill and Woodrow on a 99-year Bowater lease. His grandson, Joseph Blakey Spencer, appears to have sold off the remainder of the lease soon after

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Limbery's death in 1840. William Gosling (c.1810–80), Woolwich-born and perhaps descended from an Overseer of Works at the Arsenal of the same name, acquired the Hillreach frontage. Gosling was an ironmonger and builder who later styled himself an architect. He built and presumably designed the terrace, which was named, no doubt, after the former Master-General of the Ordnance, Viscount Beresford, perhaps to flatter the intended market. The houses, bar one, were occupied by 1848, and early ratepayers did include a few officers, for example Capt. Charles Henry Mee in No. 40. But Henry Kidd, the otherwise Sydenham-based local landholder, had No. 45 and among other first householders were William Ranwell (1797–1861), a landscape artist, Royal Academician and military drawing master who was in No. 42 up to his death, and three women, 'widow' Warren, Jane Whitaker and Margaret Maull, in Nos 41, 46 and 47 respectively. The speculation hit the tail end of the military market, the bottom of which seems to have fallen out by 1851 when the census recorded seven of the ten houses as uninhabited, with the others headed by Ranwell, a workhouse clerk and a wheelwright.⁴⁵

Beresford Terrace is an elegant palace-fronted group, with a full 'basement' under 'piano nobile' entrances. This raising up helped deal with the sloping ground, and also made the most of views across Repository Woods, a much tidier place then than now in which the water areas and the Rotunda would have been visible. The houses are not as large as might be supposed, with ten squeezed into the irregular site. This gave rise to layout eccentricities, including tight staircases. Some original marble fireplace surrounds survive, as do staircases, joinery and cornices. The terrace reverted to the Bowater Estate which refurbished it in 1908. In the later twentieth century the houses were sold off for council-tenant occupancy and then again into separate private ownership.⁴⁶

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Other Bowater Estate developments

The south side of Bowater Crescent (now the south end of Samuel Street) also had higher-status early nineteenth-century houses, set back behind front gardens. At the east end of the 'crescent' near Frances Street there was a small early group that included a semi-detached pair of about 1820, later 174–176 Samuel Street. At the west end a single house faced west behind a huge garden with a substantial fountain. This was where George Imms, nurseryman and seedsman, lived in the 1830s and 1840s, with grounds that extended south to Hill Street as Bowater Nursery. It was probably in this house that Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught, lived from 1877 while posted in Woolwich. Of eighteen houses on this side of Bowater Crescent in 1851, eight were headed by military officers, including four captains, a major and a naval commander. As on Woodhill, decline followed and all but five properties came down for Edwardian lease-end replacement by the Bowater Estate. Twenty-two uniform houses replaced thirteen irregular ones, and large gardens were given up for another ten or so small houses behind. Nos 118–128 Samuel Street, three pairs with canted-bay fronts, were built in 1902 by F. C. Hensy, and Nos 130–160, stepping uphill as eight more pairs with square bays, followed in 1907–9 with Charles Henry Clothier of Lewisham as the builder; Nos 148–160 were demolished for Biddulph House.⁴⁷

What has become Godfrey Hill already existed by 1808 as a link to Wood Street. From it, and on lands that the Bowater Estate continued to hold, Godfrey Road (originally Street; the significance of Godfrey is not known) was laid out as a cul-de-sac in the 1830s, and built up on its west side in the 1840s, as was the east side of Woodrow (Lower Wood Street until 1935) at its north end. The Pellipar Road Mission, established for the

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Rectory Place Congregational Church in the 1890s, gained a hall on the east side of Godfrey Street in 1907–8, about where Carew House now stands. Other houses near by were reached from a path that was called Bowater Avenue, a vestige of which survives as a flight of steps opposite the east end of Godfrey Hill. Nos 4–14 Godfrey Hill and 63A Godfrey Street were built in 1906–7, with S. A. Douglass of Plumstead as builder. Godfrey Street and Lower Pellipar Road, which did not align because this was where the Bowater and Ogilby estates met, were merged to be Godfrey Road in 1935.⁴⁸

64–65 Woodrow (former Malings' and Slazengers' factory). For a long time there was little along the upper parts of Woodrow (Lower Wood Street) on its west side save a handful of stables and chaise houses that pertained to houses on Wood Street. One stable on the site of 64 Woodrow was at the bottom of the garden of a house of 1846 that James Jolly built for Henry Bland, a Woolwich Commissioner and clerk to both the Burial Board and the Equitable Gas Company. Hubert Bland, later eminent as a Fabian socialist politician, journalist and Edith Nesbit's straying husband, was born in that house in 1855. It changed hands and in 1856–7 the stable was replaced by Charles Malings' 'British and Oriental Racquet Manufactory'. Malings was the son of a sawyer and Greenwich Hospital pensioner who lived near by on Mason Street. He was himself described as a sawyer when in 1846 he married Louisa, the daughter of Isaac Jefferies, a racket maker – there had been rackets courts at the Royal Military Academy since 1806 and at the Royal Artillery Barracks since the 1830s. By 1851 Jefferies was based on Mulgrave Place as an 'improved tennis, racket & racket ball manufacturer', who also had a 'cricket bat, ball & stump warehouse'.⁴⁹ From 1853 Malings lived in Beresford Terrace (at 48 Hillreach) and was trading as Jefferies and Malings when he took the Lower Wood Street

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property. The factory wrought ash frames and wove catgut to make what were ‘warranted the best Racquets to stand an Indian climate’;⁵⁰ balls were also made. The single-storey workshop of 1856–7 had a neat three-bay elevation with arcaded relieving arches. From around the same time Charles’s brother, Henry, and Thomas Malings, perhaps an uncle, were also making rackets in Woolwich, from smaller premises on Frances Street opposite the Marine Barracks, as was James Wilson, from the south side of Wellington Street. Charles died in 1865 and another brother, James, kept the Lower Wood Street factory going as Malings and Taylor, employing twenty-nine men and eight women in 1871; among whom from about 1869 was Herbert Gradidge. James Malings died in 1878 and another Charles, the son of Charles and Louisa, took charge. This Charles Malings patented a lawn-tennis bat frame in 1885 and success is indicated by additions to the workshop in 1888, when it was extended to the north and raised a storey with eight big iron-framed windows under a hipped roof; Charles Foreman of Plumstead was the builder. By 1890 Malings had emigrated to Chicago.⁵¹

Slazenger and Son took over the racket factory in 1896. Ralph Slazenger (1845–1910) had moved from Manchester to London in 1885, setting up on Cannon Street in the City to manufacture India-rubber sports goods for a middle-class market. In 1890 he married a wealthy widow and his business expanded. At Lower Wood Street machinery was installed and extensive alterations were undertaken up to 1901. An adjoining site to the north, which had been a builder’s yard, was acquired with a sixty-year lease and a seven-bay concrete-floored racket factory was built by Thomas & Edge in 1904–5. Tennis balls as well as rackets came to be made in Woolwich, and another two-storey seven-bay range was built across the back of the site, probably in 1919–20. The Edwardian factory was raised a storey in 1926, with building work again by Thomas &

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Edge. Slazenger had largely shifted his firm from manual to machine production, but long after his death, on a first floor here, women manually fitted covers to glued tennis balls brought up from below. The balls were then taken across the road for 'baking' and testing.⁵²

Slazengers departed in the late 1940s and the factory, renamed 'Textile House', was thereafter adapted for the making of shoulder pads. Other uses ensued from the 1960s into the 1980s when the Edwardian block was converted to offices as the Woodrow Business Centre. Specialist gas-equipment manufacturers continue to operate from the rear range, while the Malings building has been converted to residential use.⁵³

The seven early nineteenth-century houses west of 51–52 Hillreach were replaced in the 1880s. The double-fronted house and single-storey shop at No. 57 was built in 1887 to quaint designs by A. T. H. Stoneham, architect, for J. J. Bothamley, by H. Bridel, a Greenwich builder. The four houses at Nos 53–56 followed for the same proprietor in the same vein in 1889, with an intermediate way through to a yard for their builder, Henry James Stephens. A house of 1846 on the Woodhill corner was replaced in 1932–3 with a confectioner's shop-house for a Miss Lunnon, designed by J. O. Cook and Son, architects, and built by S. E. Paine, a Charlton builder.⁵⁴

Some of the small houses at the north end of Lower Wood Street and Godfrey Street had been cleared already by 1914, and others followed in the 1930s, designated slums. The house and long brick warehouse at 1–3 Woodrow were built in 1930–1 for J. L. G. Wood, a wholesale grocer, with J. E. Evans of Plumstead as builder. To the south Woolwich Borough Council put up six council houses (20–25 Woodrow) in 1939,

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brick cottages designed by H. W. Tee, Borough Engineer, and built by direct labour – a standard inter-war non-parlour council-house type that is otherwise unrepresented in the parish of Woolwich. The northern pair was promptly destroyed in a bombing raid and so rebuilt in 1947–8. To help the Council's overstretched workforce, F. C. Halse and Sons were brought in as builders.⁵⁵

Woolwich Evangelical Church on Woodhill opened as West Woolwich Baptist Church. It was built in 1958–9 to succeed the displaced Queen Street Chapel of 1786, with only 250 seats in lieu of 480. Anticipating that slum-clearance proposals would impose a move the Baptists had bought the Woodhill bombsite in 1946, but a decade passed before comprehensive development arrived at Queen Street and compensation was agreed. Their architect was Donald G. Robertson and the builders Marshall Andrew and Co. Fletton-brick walls enclose a five-bay reinforced-concrete portal frame. Concrete Ltd supplied prestressed concrete slabs for the copper-covered roof. There are two small halls to the south.⁵⁶

Wellesley Estate

The land west of Frances Street that had been John Long's formed the western portion of the Ogilby estate in Woolwich. Prior to 1812 and his acquisition of parts of Woolwich, Robert Ogilby had built himself a mansion called Pellipar House, near Limavady in Northern Ireland, while also holding Dungiven Castle on a lease from the Skinners' Company. He died in 1839 and his Woolwich and Pellipar estates passed to his disabled son, Capt. James Ogilby (d.1885), and his nephew, Robert Leslie Ogilby (d.1872), and then to the latter's eldest son, Maj. Robert Alexander Ogilby (d.1902). After 1872 there was a legal dispute between the Skinners' Company and Ogilby Trustees about the state of Dungiven

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Castle. The Woolwich and other estates were mortgaged through the Skinners' Company in 1882 (and perhaps earlier), and the Skinners sold the Irish land to Maj. Ogilby in 1897.⁵⁷

Ogilby Trustees initiated development of their western Woolwich lands in the late 1840s. Robert Jolly acted as surveyor, succeeded around 1853 by his son, William Thomas Jolly, working with numerous local builder-developers, including George Hall Graham and Thomas Smith, an Upper Market Street timber merchant. What went up was humble housing of a kind typically provided for artisans. Here it was aimed at soldiers married 'off the strength', as the overflow of married soldiers from the overcrowded barracks stimulated speculative development. The area was called the Wellesley Estate, after Arthur Wellesley, the Duke of Wellington, who died in 1852.⁵⁸

Ogilby Street was laid out in about 1848 and lined with two-storey terraces by 1852. It was already crowded in 1851, mainly occupied by artillerymen, mostly gunners and sergeants, two or three families to each house. No. 13 had twenty-four people in six families, headed by two marines, one of them a millwright, two gunners, a corporal and another artilleryman's wife, with three lodgers, two of them also artillerymen's wives. On Robert Street (later the west arm of Rideout Street) a terrace of 1850-1 called Bowater Grove had, by contrast, three shipwrights resident when new. The pockets of poverty here endured.⁵⁹

John Long's Frances Street frontage, which had been allocated to Joseph and Georgiana Harrington in 1830, did come into Ogilby hands later in the century, but perhaps not until 1872 when Joseph Harrington died. In front of Long's villa, Waverley Cottage, and opposite the south end of the newly rebuilt Marine Barracks, a row of six small properties, 11-21

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Frances Street, was built in 1849–51 with the Army and Navy beerhouse on the newly formed Ogilby Street corner. This unusual speculation was undertaken by John Shott of Harden Street, but a Mr Kirkwood took ownership and involved Henry Hunt of Notting Hill in the building work. From the first the row was a mix of shops and lodgings, separately entered, with doors directly onto staircases, the upper storeys aimed at the married soldiers for whom there was no room in the barracks. The census of 1851 records thirteen people and four families at No. 17, James Taylor, a carpenter, and three artillerymen, John Baker, a sergeant, Jacob Little, a bombardier and William King, a gunner, all with wives and children or relatives. The other properties were similarly occupied, the row of six as a whole housing fifty-four people. Nos 9–11 Frances Street were roughly rebuilt in 1985–6 for Right Buy Homes Ltd, to plans by Richard M. Eaton Associates, and No. 15 was rebuilt with an attic in the late 1990s.⁶⁰

To Waverley Cottage, occupied in 1851 by eight families, those of a bricklayer and seven artillerymen, a row of five small houses was added around 1860 to form a court called Waverley Cottages. Woolwich Borough Council carried out repairs here in 1903, an unusual intervention. The group was nevertheless ripe for slum clearance in the 1930s before it was accounted for by bombing. The site saw another surprising local-authority initiative in 2011–12, the erection of three four-bedroom council houses, put up for Greenwich Council by the Breyer Group, with Pellings as architects. Further north, on the Frances Street corner with Rideout Street, an early beerhouse that had been rebuilt as the Admiral public house was replaced in 2007–8 by a raw brick five-storey block of eleven flats for which DRW Architects bear responsibility.⁶¹

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Ogilby Street was extended westwards and Pellipar Road formed in 1858. There followed further construction of plain two-storey houses extending up to the east side of Lower Wood Street. Building continued erratically into the Edwardian period by when it included some maisonette flats or double-tenement houses. On Pellipar Road, Dungiven Terrace, a flat-fronted row of about 1860, faced Dungiven Villas of 1891–2, another terrace but with canted-bay fronts. The estate's later surveyors were Octavius Hansard and, from 1897, H. P. Monckton.⁶²

On what had been the south end of Imms's gardens, facing Hill Street, the Ogilby Estate oversaw the building in 1854–5 of the Wellesley public house, near Lower Wood Street, and then in 1856–7 of Wellesley House, near where Pellipar Road was to come. The frontage between remained open until 1874–6 when a Soldiers' Home and Mission Hall was built to Gothic designs by Thomas Taylor, architect. Col. John Desborough, RA, initiated this project in 1872, and the Earl of Shaftesbury laid the foundation stone. The premises housed a library, reading rooms, refreshment rooms, classrooms and a hall for meetings and worship. This was the first facility of its kind in Woolwich since the much more modest Ann Street home had closed in 1857, and the first to be purpose built. Elsewhere soldiers' homes and institutes had flourished in the aftermath of the Crimean War, arising out of the desire to provide places of shelter free from military discipline and conducive to piety. The building was enlarged to the rear in 1880 and continued to function through the First World War. In 1896 it was noted that

a large room, formerly the gallery of the Hall below, is furnished as a drawing room, carpeted, piano, tables with books of various kinds. Two ladies welcomed the visitors and occasionally one or more of the soldiers sang while now and then one of the soldiers took his place at the piano. At 8 o'clock a gospel meeting was held

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in the Hall . . . About 50 soldiers attended, the front seats being reserved for them, the general public occupying the remainder of the hall and forming the bulk of the audience.⁶³

The building became a part of Slazengers' works around 1921, with additions to the rear in 1924–5. Markson's Pianos were in occupation from the 1950s up to clearance for the Pellipar Gardens development. The Wellesley public house was rebuilt in 1938 and demolished around 2007 when Dean D'Eye, a Bermondsey developer, planned to build a block of six flats, designed by Darren Bland of DB Architects.⁶⁴

The Ogilby Estate had leases fall in around 1898 permitting it to redevelop the Hill Street frontage between Pellipar Road and Frances Street under Monckton's supervision. Sixteen houses at 20–35 Hillreach replaced Rosemount and a scatter of lesser buildings in 1898–1900 in a speculation by George Carter, a builder from Norfolk based in Charlton. When new these ordinary terrace houses all bore names: Sunnydene, Belle Vista, Belle Vue, Hill View, Elmhurst, Rose Villa, Oakleigh, Fernleigh, Norfolk Villa, Branksome Villa, Graf Reinet (for Hauffman Levy), Thistledine, Rosemount, Ivy Villa, Ceylon Cottage, and Hillside Villa; No. 31 is post-war replacement of war-damage loss. No. 13 Hillreach was also put up in 1898–9 as a house and shop, built for himself by William Ernest Champion, a building contractor; sheds in a back yard were lately replaced with a residential block. Nos 9–12A are five houses of 1904 built by F. C. Henesy. A bomb-damage gap at Nos 7–8 was not filled until 2007–9 when a pair of houses that outwardly carefully copy Henesy's of a century earlier were built by Yin-Bis Investment Ltd with Al-Rasheed Dauda as architect. Further east, a beershop built as the Soldier's Rest in 1842, was rebuilt in 1901–2 by Thomas & Edge. As the Village Blacksmith (Nos 4–5) this became an

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early real-ale (CAMRA) pub in 1979, but it closed in the late 1990s. The set-back motor garage with a house at 1–3 Hillreach was formed in the 1960s.⁶⁵

Round the corner, a symmetrical group of three large shop-houses, 3–7 Frances Street, was built by Henesy after another lease reversion in 1904–5. The Ogilby coat of arms, a rampant lion between two crescents, appears in an ornamental tympanum over a central first-floor window. First occupants were a chemist, a hairdresser and a cycle maker. No. 7 housed a military tailor by 1923 and No. 3 another in the 1930s.⁶⁶

ARTILLERY PLACE SINCE 1900

The freehold of the whole area behind the west end of Artillery Place was acquired by the Admiralty in 1842 and passed on to the War Office in 1869. Leases fell in soon after 1900, when there were clearances and the road was widened. No. 1, on the corner with Frances Street, was built in 1903–4 as a shop and workroom for Joseph Daniels and Co., military tailors and outfitters, who had occupied this plum site since the 1850s. Alfred Frampton was the architect and E. A. Roome the builder for what was initially intended to be a rather grander three-storey building. The ground-floor shop space retains fluted cast-iron columns and a panelled ceiling. To the east, with three tall windows to the street, was a long first-floor tailors' workroom. Around 1945 the premises became the Woolwich area office for the Assistance Board (social security). A conversion with an added storey in 2011–12 formed nine flats, in work by Latchworth Ltd to designs by Stephen Bradbury Architects. Adjoining and also of 1903–4 is 4 Frances Street, a shop-house for Craig and Davies, military bootmakers, again to designs by Frampton, with W. E. Champion as builder. No. 6 Frances Street was built in 1907 for Watney, Combe & Reid as beer, wine and spirit stores.⁶⁷

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Along Artillery Place to either side of Rushgrove Street large blocks of married soldiers' quarters were put up around 1910 by the newly formed civilian Barrack Construction Department, directed by Harry Measures, whose Rowton houses (model homes for working men) these two- and three-bedroom quarters resembled. Linear blocks, preferred to a quadrangular layout, permitted large gymnasium sheds to go up to the rear.⁶⁸ The western quarters were replaced with better-appointed accommodation in 1937. Cambridge House provided twenty-four flats and twelve maisonettes for married soldiers in a long five-storey range with access balconies to the rear. Taken from the Ministry of Defence by the Hyde Housing Association in 1990, the building was closed and boarded up in 2010. In 2004–5 the eastern quarters were replaced in a development by Fairview New Homes that also took in a site on the west side of Rushgrove Street. Stark, four-storey, yellow-brick faced blocks, now Centurion Court and Churchill Court, of thirty-six and forty-six flats respectively, were acquired and marketed as Rushgrove Gate by Imagine Homes and Veritas, companies controlled by Grant Bovey, the celebrity developer. In the absence of buy-to-let investors flats were sold to accommodate homeless council tenants. The empty Artillery Place site east of Centurion Court was that of the Queen Victoria Memorial Soldiers' Home of 1908–9, which passed into use by the YMCA in the 1950s. West of Churchill Court is Elizabeth Court (8–10 Frances Street), fourteen one-bedroom flats in a building of 1986–8 designed by the Architectural Research Partnership of Richmond, Surrey, and erected by R. & J. Builders of Roehampton.⁶⁹

The Artillery Place frontage further east had become commercial by the 1870s. The site south of Mulgrave Pond (Nos 36–38) was Gradidge & Son's factory from about 1884. Herbert Gradidge had worked in Malings'

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racket and ball factory on Lower Wood Street, and moved into a house three doors away around 1869. At his own works, even more convenient for the supply of a military market, he specialized in cricket bats and also made a range of other sporting goods, including footballs, tennis rackets and tennis balls. Gradidge took out a patent on a bat-handle design in 1896, expanded and further diversified, making golf clubs from 1935, and his wares achieved eminence (Len Hutton used a Gradidge bat). In 1936 the firm merged with Slazengers. A store and workshop had been built, and, following further road widening, a front shop and offices in 1930. There was extensive rebuilding of the factory a few years later, including the erection of the eastern six bays of the surviving two-storey range at the back of the site, built in 1936–7 by Falkus Bros, builders, with M. E. and O. H. Collins as architects. Gradidge & Sons departed around 1950 and in 1960 the factory range was extended westwards behind a cleared yard to provide offices over a warehouse for Cater Rentals, a catering equipment company. Plans were by R. W. McKenzie for the Brixton Development Co., and John Crisp Ltd were the builders. The building later took the name Renway House and from around 1972 to 2004 the site housed Marksons, the last piano dealer in Woolwich. The London and Quadrant Housing Trust had offices here from 1980 to 2011. The Quadrant Housing Association was founded in Woolwich in 1963 through a dining club of young Oxbridge graduates, led by the Rev. Nicolas Stacey and Gospatric Home, ‘quadrant’ being a reference to local maritime history. Starting from the conversion of smaller properties the association grew rapidly and merged with the London Housing Trust in 1973. Subsequent growth and mergers have made it one of the country’s largest housing associations. In 2009 London and Regional Properties proposed redevelopment of the whole site at 36–38 Artillery Place with two six-storey blocks, for offices below flats, designs prepared by the BPTW partnership.⁷⁰

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The isolated three-storey shop-house at 39 Artillery Place was built in 1904–5 for David Osborne Still, a chemist, by H. B. Sanford & Co., Woolwich builders. The site further east remained largely open, for War Office access to Mulgrave Pond and meat and bread stores, until 1923–4 when William Rufus Herwin built a motor garage. Herwin and his partner Harry Canny had moved around Woolwich since 1901, making vehicles, including (Sir) Frederick Handley Page's first glider. A part of Herwin, Canny and Co.'s workshop, rebuilt in 1955, survives at the rear of the garage which was enlarged in 1960–2. The firm was succeeded here by W. J. King Ltd in 1982–3 when there was further expansion, eastwards to Belford Grove, and Herwin's front range was cleared to open a petrol-station forecourt. Nos 48–50 is a Government tax office of 1936, a three-storey block designed by Andrew Mather, architect, and built by Bessant and Brown Ltd. In 1980 it was taken for Greenwich Council's Woolwich Simba Project as a community centre for people of African and Caribbean descent. The corner building at No. 51, of 1921–2, was built as a shop-house for H. & G. Simonds, brewers, who had a yard at the back, and sold beer, wine and spirits here. H. Groves and Son were their builders. The shop became Tecks' tailors' premises in the 1950s.⁷¹

Post-war housing

MILNE ESTATE AND TO ITS WEST

In the late 1930s the Ogilby Estate tried to persuade the London County Council to allow commercial development on the Wellesley Estate, but circumstances took a different turn. The area, just beyond the Royal Artillery Barracks on the Luftwaffe's flight-paths, was heavily bombed in 1941. About six acres either side of Ogilby Street had been entirely cleared by 1946 when the LCC undertook compulsory purchase for a housing development; a year later Bowater Estate property up to Samuel

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Street was added. The first scheme for this steeply sloping site, by Adie, Button and Partners, the LCC's appointed architects, projected thirty per cent higher density than the County of London Plan's recommended seventy persons per acre. Six reinforced-concrete blocks, three of eight storeys on the hill's crest, and three of four storeys down the hill, were to provide 159 dwellings, the taller blocks following LCC precedents at Woodberry Down and Ocean Street. But it was difficult for the LCC to advance such schemes in the immediate post-war years and work had not begun in 1949 when the intended housing was named the Milne Estate, after George Francis Milne, first Baron Milne (1866–1948), Chief of the Imperial General Staff from 1926 to 1933 and a Royal Artillery Brigadier-General in Woolwich earlier in his career.

In the event eight-storey height, concrete construction, central heating and direct staircase access were all abandoned. Adie, Button and Partners revised the scheme to conform to LCC 'type' plans that were promulgated in 1951. Building work was carried out in 1952–4 by Rush and Tompkins Ltd of Sidcup and eight three-storey and two somewhat taller blocks for 157 flats all told were named after military figures, mostly eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Masters-General of the Board of Ordnance: John Manners, Marquess of Granby (and son of the 3rd Duke of Rutland); George Townshend; John Pitt, 2nd Earl of Chatham; Henry Phipps, 1st Earl of Mulgrave; Sir George Murray; and Sir Henry Hardinge. Another block took its name from Gen. Sir Robert Biddulph, while Rendlebury may be a mis-rendering from James Pendlebury, the last officer to bear the title Master Gunner of Great Britain and England. The grounds, including a playground west of Milne House, were laid out by William Wood & Son in 1954–5.

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The sloping site lends the Milne Estate a degree of picturesque charm, at least when viewed from downhill, and tends to disguise the fact that these were typical and old-fashioned balcony-access blocks of load-bearing brick. The layout makes the most of a south-western aspect for the private balconies. All the blocks have stairs and pitched roofs, except the tallest, Milne House, which, at six storeys (the slope makes it seven to the rear), has three lifts and a flat roof. Without access balconies its elevation to Frances Street is austere, little helped by a gesture of brick diapering. Biddulph House, facing Samuel Street and less severe, has four- and five-storey sections, the latter with a lift. Originally thirty-one flats, it was extended eastwards for ten more in 1960–1, that building work by Charles R. Price of Wembley. The five diagonally set three-storey blocks (Chatham, Mulgrave, Murray, Rendlebury and Townshend houses) each have twelve flats, and the three set square on the south side of Ogilby Street (Rutland, Harding and Granby) each have ten.⁷²

Westward extension of the Milne Estate ensued, taking in Ogilby and Bowater properties north of Ogilby Street as far as Woodrow. The LCC had marked this land for slum clearance since 1950, and its redevelopment was planned from 1957. As had become the norm, the buildings here were designed in the LCC Architect's Department. A scheme for seventy dwellings was approved in 1959 and built in 1962–4 by Kirk & Kirk. Standard for the time, it comprised Carew House (after George Carew, 1st Lord Carew, an early seventeenth-century Master-General), a six-storey point block of twenty-six flats on Godfrey Road; 1–19 Rideout Street and 2–20 Godfrey Road, two terraces of ten two-storey houses; and 1–47 Godfrey Road, twenty-four maisonettes and flats in a two- to four-storey grouping. The lower blocks deploy crosswall construction, which allows the Rideout Street houses to step down the hill as an echelon terrace, providing increased privacy.⁷³

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The Milne Estate passed to Greenwich Council. A corner site on the south side of Ogilby Street, long earmarked for a nursery school but then used for temporary accommodation in the early 1960s, was developed by the Beaver Housing Society in 1994 as 23–26 Ogilby Street, a two-part block of eight flats, with two houses attached.⁷⁴

Pellipar Gardens

In 1967 the GLC declared a clearance area around Pellipar Road, aiming to extend the Milne Estate south-westwards up to the Wellesley public house on the Woodrow–Hillreach corner. This area took in forty-six houses, mostly of the 1890s, and the former Soldiers' Home on Hillreach. There were plans for an estate of about eighty homes and compulsory purchase was upheld after an inquiry in 1969. But, now under Conservative control, the GLC decided to sell this and many other development sites to private builders or housing associations. This property was bought by the Peabody Trust whose Architect's Department worked up designs for a brown-brick estate of sixty-six houses, maisonettes and flats in six attractively varied blocks around a small garden, all built in 1972–3.⁷⁵

Council housing had seeped further west onto Woodhill in the early 1960s. Nos 161–167 are two three-storey crosswall blocks of 1963, designed as a private speculation and bought by the LCC prior to construction to provide twenty-four three-bedroom council flats where there had been four houses with long gardens. No. 90 was built a year later on a similar basis, the LCC agreeing to buy from Wellington Developments Ltd of Blackheath sixteen three-bedroom flats in a four-storey block where there had been a single house. Garages to the rear

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were destroyed through vandalism in 1979.⁷⁶ In the later 1960s a row of six houses at 126–136 Woodhill succeeded three Woolwich Borough Council bombsite prefabs, and a crude block of flats at No. 88 replaced a smaller house. Finally, in 1979–81, Greenwich Council built 57–61 Godfrey Road, three brick bungalows, and 2–2A Godfrey Hill, two now old-fashioned crosswall houses on the site of Hope Cottage; John Shirlow was the job architect.⁷⁷

There have since been several small private infill developments. No. 98A Woodhill was inserted with 125 Maryon Grove to the rear. On the north side of Woodville Street, Rudgwick Court comprises two three-storey yellow-brick blocks of around 1985 that provide twenty-two flats. Further densification on Maryon Grove followed in speculative developments of the 1990s, two pairs of houses at Nos 125–133, three more at 124A–C Woodhill in 1998–9 (replacing an artists' studio of 1979 in what had been a builder's yard), and a pair at 111–113 Maryon Grove around 2000.⁷⁸

RED AND CAMBRIDGE BARRACKS HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS

The withdrawal of the Army from the Red Barracks and Cambridge Barracks sites permitted redevelopment to provide large numbers of homes across about twenty-nine acres, a process that played out across the last four decades of the twentieth century, and followed on from the later stages of work in the St Mary's Comprehensive Development Area where Woolwich Borough Council had built extensively and conservatively through its Direct Labour Organisation. The transfer of land was dependent on the redevelopment of the Royal Artillery Barracks, which freed up the Cambridge Barracks. The Council acquired a north-eastern expanse of open ground in 1964, but the transfer of the rest of the property, the nearly eighteen acres covered by the barracks buildings, was made subject to an agreement of 1967 between Greenwich

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Council and the Ministry of Defence, whereby completion of the sale was conditional on permission to demolish the listed Red Barracks.

The Council's outline plans for the whole twenty-nine acres in 1966 projected housing for around 3,000 in about 900 dwellings. The scheme was planned as a series of thirty-one tall (five- to nine-storey) blocks draped across the whole steeply sloping site and laid out in a series of hexagons 'that flow into and around each other', the higher tier producing 'an irregular shape against the sky which will be accentuated by the angles between the blocks'.⁷⁹ This deliberately high-density urban development scheme, influenced by Sheffield's Park Hill Estate, was put forward by the Housing Committee in the same report as proposals for nearly 1,500 other dwellings in Woolwich and Plumstead, including the Connaught Estate and the first stage of redevelopment at Woolwich Common, together embracing seven system-built tower blocks of twenty-plus storeys. Cottage ideals had long gone, but the Woolwich tradition of building homes in large quantities was alive and well, now part of the late-1960s 'numbers game' in council-house building, as well as an attempt to shift population away from the town centre. But hefty cost reductions loomed.

Cardwell Estate (demolished)

Only the first part of the grand hexagonal vision was realized, and that after a fourteen per cent reduction in the tender figure. Known at first as Red and Cambridge Barracks Stage 1, subsequently as Cardwell Cottages, after the soldiers' married quarters that had stood on the site, and eventually as the Cardwell Estate, this was the upper tier of the bigger project, 268 dwellings (54 one- and two-bedroom flats and 214 two- to four-bedroom maisonettes) to the west of Rectory Place and across a truncated Escreet Grove in nine linked nine-storey deck-access

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blocks, most disposed around a hexagon. This complex was built in 1967–9, with Jim Larkin and Geoff Harrison as the Council's job architects, working under Robert L. Gee and J. M. Moore, not in-house, but with John Laing Construction as contractors, using precast concrete beams supplied by Truscon on load-bearing brick walls. The blocks (Hereford, Maclean, Lloyd, Farrington, Fisher, Drummond, Norton, Tuffield and Edmundson houses) were linked by circulation towers, five of them semi-hexagonal, for lifts, staircases and stores. The main open hexagon was a playground above garages. Adjoining was Hastings House, a 24-storey tower block on the north side of Mulgrave Pond, built in 1967–71 to provide 89 one- and two-bedroom flats, and part of the same system-building contract that embraced Elliston House and Nightingale Heights, which it closely resembles.⁸⁰

Once the Cambridge Barracks were down Stage IIA followed in 1973–7, with David Norris and Elsie Sargent as job architects under Moore, now in sole charge; the work was carried out through direct labour. This stuck in part to the original hexagon scheme, with two similar eight-storey blocks, Katie Rance and Ted Williams houses, extending west from Cardwell Cottages for fifty-eight more maisonettes and two flats. Another fifty-two one-bedroom flats were in three low-rise rows, the southernmost with an extra storey for garages, on the other side of the old access road. This became Gorman Road, after Albert Gorman, the winner of the 1938 by-election that gave Labour control over Woolwich Borough Council, never subsequently lost.⁸¹

Most of the Cardwell Estate, just thirty years old, was demolished in 1998–2000. At the same time, Brodie, Plant and Goddard, architects, oversaw improvements to the low-rise buildings at 1–52 Gorman Road. These gave the ranges hipped roofs that oversail concrete balconies on

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slender columns, creating the impression of verandahs and, curiously, of nineteenth-century barracks. In addition, Hastings House was refaced in a refurbishment overseen by Hunt Thompson Associates that included the addition of a single-storey concierge's building.⁸²

Red and Cambridge Barracks Estate

Resistance from the GLC and others to the demolition of the Red Barracks delayed the rest of the scheme. The way for more house-building was not clear until 1975 when new plans began to be prepared for 260 dwellings as Red and Cambridge Barracks Stages IIB and IIIA–C. Morrison, Rose and Partners, architects, prepared drawings, working for Greenwich under Moore, for whom John Shirlow and Harry Hibben were job architects. The approach of a decade earlier had been discredited; opinion had turned against high-rise, flat roofs and concrete. What emerged for the barracks site was an entirely low-rise scheme, with no design connection to the earlier project. In fact the development was all but wholly physically separated. Built in 1979–83 by direct labour, through what was now called the London Borough of Greenwich Building Department, this was the swansong of a great house-building local authority, more concerned, as it always had been, with output than with architectural fashion. Terraces were densely and neatly packed along a network of new roads – Red Barracks Road, Cambridge Barracks Road, Marine Drive, Whitby Road and Brewhouse Road, all referring back to the earlier history of the site. There are 172 one- to three-storey two- to five-bedroom houses, all with small gardens. Neo-vernacular in appearance, with staggered fronts and pitched roofs, they contrive a mix of red and yellow brick in a decorous ensemble. At either end there are blocks of sheltered housing for the elderly – Sarah Turnbull House, forty-five dwellings in an irregularly massed block to the north that rises up to seven storeys in red brick, and Len Clifton House, forty-three homes in a

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more regular quadrangular complex on the flatter ground to the south, rising to four storeys in yellow brick.⁸³

Cardwell regeneration

By the 1980s the Cardwell Estate had become problematic, high crime and unemployment making it 'moribund' and 'notorious'. Circulation in its link blocks was a particular bugbear. In 1989 partitions were inserted to seal off corners that were convenient for concealment, and soon after that alarms were installed to prevent 'lift surfing'. More crime and accidents led to determined action by Greenwich Council in consultation with tenants. By 1995 substantial outside money (£6m) was available for the estate via the 'Woolwich Revival' bid to the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) Challenge Fund.⁸⁴ Reports were commissioned from Hunt Thompson Associates and from the BPTW Partnership, local architects and surveyors, and in 1996, after the evaluation of nine options, refurbishment was rejected in favour of more radical change and the tenants' preferred course – complete replacement of the maisonette blocks with low-rise terraces. Forty years on from the forced adoption of high rise on the St Mary's Estate, the cottage estate won local revenge. The scheme replaced 328 homes with 151, at a reduced density of 100 habitable rooms per acre, still a higher figure than was normally considered acceptable for family housing. The difficulties of 'decanting' resurfaced. Further, councils, no longer able simply to build houses, were being encouraged to divest themselves of housing stock, and housing associations were preferred as instigators and managers of social housing. Greenwich Council matched the SRB funding and took the lead, but it did not have sufficient funds for the project. It launched a partnership on a grand scale, put together in 1997, and efficiently prosecuted through a thicket of regulatory and financial restrictions. Following competitive bids among housing associations, the Beaver

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Housing Society, south London-based, was the chosen developer, bringing in, along with Laings, £11.7m of private-sector funding for the £26m project. Initial master-planning of the estate was handled by Mitchell McFarlane and Partners, civil engineers, chosen without tendering on the strength of earlier work for the Council; later work was by Stanford Eatwell and Associates. Baily Garner, local architects, took on details of the design. The demolitions and the formation of roads (Willow Lane and Mulgrave Road) were by Alfred McAlpine Construction. The building work was phased through 1998–2001 to allow some rehousing before demolition was complete.⁸⁵

The resultant everyday suburban and wanly neo-Georgian rows of houses, mostly of two storeys, and several three-storey blocks of flats (at 53–74 Gorman Road, 1–49 and 2–62 Mulgrave Road, 47–69 Rectory Place and 1–37 and 2–78 Willow Lane), are faced with yellow and buff bricks, with grey slate-like tiling on shallow hipped roofs, all an echo of earlier housing-association projects in Woolwich. A north-facing crescent opposite Hastings House is set as if a sundial to the tower block's gnomon. Management of the tenancies shifted in 2005 when the Beaver Housing Society became a subsidiary of the London and Quadrant Housing Trust. In an adjacent and contemporary development, a single-storey doctor's surgery off Escreet Grove was built in 2000–1 by the Calford Seaden Partnership for Medical Centre Developments.⁸⁶