

DRAFT

CHAPTER 9 – BROOKHILL ROAD AREA

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

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

The architectural highlight of the area is St Peter’s Roman Catholic Church, of 1843 and of especial note for having been designed by A. W. N. Pugin. Up the hill, Engineer House of 1859 is an office building that is a reminder of the importance to Woolwich of the Royal Engineers. It stands close to the site of a shipwrights’ windmill of the 1750s, an early manifestation of co-operative endeavour. Brookhill Road and Sandy Hill

DRAFT

Road retain some of the only coherent Victorian terraces left in the parish of Woolwich, and Government House, a large officer's house of the 1780s, is the last standing of the many late-Georgian houses that once looked across Woolwich Common.

Burrage Estate

The lands covered in this chapter were formerly all part of the Burrage estate, the greater portion of which lay in Plumstead parish, but which extended westwards into Woolwich as far as Green's End, Cholic Lane and Ditchwater (sometimes Dishwater) Lane (now Nightingale Place), another appellation connected to the outflow of springs. The name Burrage derives from Bartholomew Burghersh the elder, the second Lord Burghersh (d.1355), a royal councillor who held this land, and whose name comes from Burwash, Sussex, where he had inherited other estates. Burwash Court, or Burrage House, stood near present-day Burrage Road in Plumstead. The 300-acre estate passed through the hands of other families before Nathaniel Maxey, a London merchant, purchased it in 1702. His daughter married James Pattison (d.1761) and the estate passed to their son, Nathaniel Pattison (d.1784). His brother, Gen. James Pattison (d.1805), was an eminent Woolwich soldier. He commanded the Royal Artillery in Portugal during the Seven Years War and in New York in the American War of Independence. Between wars, he lived in Woolwich Warren, serving as Lieutenant Governor of the Royal Military Academy and then, in 1787–8, as Commandant of the Garrison. Despite this link, Nathaniel had declined in 1772 to sell part of the estate to the Board of Ordnance. But in 1808, after the Board had acquired Woolwich Common, his son, Nathaniel Maxey Pattison, was persuaded to sell it the southern parts of his lands in the parish of Woolwich (the whole of Mill Hill Field, more than twenty-eight acres, nearly everything between the southern part of Woolwich New Road and Brookhill Road). Pattison and the Board split the cost of forming what became Brookhill

DRAFT

Road. His only son was James Pattison (d.1849), a City merchant, Chairman of the East India Company, Governor of the Bank of England, and MP for the City of London. He initiated the speculative development of the estate, which then passed through the hands of his children, Frederick, Charles and Helen Pattison, the last of whom died in 1896 leaving the property to her nephew, Baldomero Hyacinth de Bertodano Lopez, a solicitor who lived in Regent's Park and Malmesbury, and who sold the whole estate off in several hundred small lots in 1904–6.¹

A few cottages on Green's End aside, there were no buildings on the parts of the Burrage estate that lay in Woolwich until the shipwrights' windmill was built in the 1750s. By this time the northernmost fields were being exploited as sandpits, which in 1775 Lt. Col. James Pattison proposed using for military experiments. These pits extended from roughly where Spray Street now runs inland to the site of Walpole Place, behind which there is still a sharp rise.²

The making of the New Road in the 1760s stimulated no more than scattered roadside building on the parts of the estate covered in this chapter. The development of what was called Burrage Town (initially also Plumstead New Town) on the whole of the rest of the estate began in earnest in the early 1840s and was seen through by the 1860s. George Hudson was the Estate's agent by 1843, and Benjamin Davies its surveyor around 1850.³ It was the workforce and prosperity generated by the Arsenal that fuelled this expansion of Woolwich into Plumstead, with the coming of the railway a secondary factor.

Woolwich New Road (east side) and environs

Cholic Lane is a corruption of Quillett Lane, a name in use by the 1530s that referred to a small plot of land about where Beresford Square was later formed. Until the 1760s the lane meandered downhill from

DRAFT

Woolwich Common to Green's End as 'a very narrow hollow Passage'.⁴ It was steep and, with springs near its head, prone to flooding. Yet this was the main way into Woolwich from the London–Dover road at Shooters Hill and, for heavy commercial or military traffic, the main road approach to the town from any direction because the lower road from Greenwich, beside the dockyard, was in such poor condition as to be almost unusable. An Act of Parliament of 1765 included provision for the improvement of Cholic Lane by the New Cross Turnpike Trust, which had been established in 1717 to improve roads elsewhere in north-west Kent. This was the eastern leg of a scheme for a new route from the Dover Road at Greenwich, through Charlton and across Woolwich Common (as what became Ha-Ha Road) to lead to the military establishments on Woolwich Warren. Parliamentary approval was doubtless the result of pressure from the Ordnance and Admiralty boards; it came despite objections from the Trust, which knew it would lose money.⁵ Cholic Lane was thus widened and regularised in 1765–6. The only part of the road that was wholly new was the northern end, from the junction with what later became Thomas Street to the Plumstead Road and the entrance to the Warren. This straight route through Nathaniel Pattison's land, along the edge of his sandpits, cut out the Green's End dogleg.

By 1810 Bull Fields (later Mount Street and then Wilmount Street) had been laid out and ribbon development on the main road extended southwards as far as Waterman's Fields (the northern stretch of Brookhill Road); 61-year leases appear to have been usual which meant reversions and redevelopment in the 1840s and 1850s, when Burrage Town was in the making. A solitary remnant of earlier development survives at 89 Woolwich New Road, a house of the late 1780s. The importance of Woolwich New Road diminished after 1812; newer roads passing north of the Royal Artillery Barracks had been completed.⁶

DRAFT

Land between Woolwich New Road and Waterman's Fields, at the northern point of the more or less triangular field that the Board of Ordnance had acquired from the Burrage Estate in 1808, was given up for Scottish Presbyterian and Roman Catholic churches in the early 1840s. The Anglesea Arms was also built, as established hostelrys jostled for position amid the ecclesiastical influx and the beginnings of Burrage Town to the east. Anglesea Road was formed in the 1850s.

59–89 Woolwich New Road

This frontage was first built up in the late eighteenth century and then generally redeveloped in the 1850s. For the most part, it has been rebuilt again since, in piecemeal manner. The origins of No. 59 are as a shop-house of 1857, initially occupied by a grocer but soon taken by Alfred Gee, a painter. Here from 1909 to 1921 were the Imperial Co-operative Stores, a short-lived Conservative Party attempt to rival the Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society. The building has been much altered and extended, most recently with a range along Wilmount Street. At No. 61 there is a somewhat less altered building of 1904, put up for Samuel Bolton, a confectioner, with Thomas & Edge as builders. Next door, No. 63 was the Pioneer beerhouse when built, probably around 1850; it continued as a public house into the 1970s. At No. 65 there is a recent replacement of premises that were occupied and then rebuilt for Gee & Co., paint and wallpaper merchants, who were based here through most of the twentieth century. The site of Nos 67–69 was taken by the RACS in 1926 and the property, subsequently rebuilt and since much altered, continues to be occupied by the Co-operative. At No. 71 there is a large shop-house of 1891, built for James Glover, a fancy draper, with H. H. Church as architect and H. Coombs of Plumstead as builder. There is then a big step down to No. 73, built in 1935 as a sausage-making shop for William Geller. John Moore, an ironmonger based at 65, was responsible for a terrace of 1854–6 at Nos 75–83, all recently rebuilt. It

DRAFT

displaced a building at No. 83 that had been the Sappers' Arms beerhouse, opposite the Sappers' and Miners' Barracks. Nos 79–83 is now Punjab House, flats over shops, built in 2001–4 in a project overseen by the Downes Planning Partnership. Above a doorway a panel of a pastoral scene, painted by Brian King, depicts the journey from the Punjab to Woolwich. Shops at Nos 85–87, also probably built for Moore around 1856, were first occupied by William Gummo, a tailor, and George Brooks, a saddle and harness maker.⁷

89 Woolwich New Road almost lines up with Nos 85–87, but this corner shop hides something older. Behind the front block is the greater part of a taller house of the late 1780s, the last remnant of Georgian development in this part of Woolwich, then at the town's outer margin. This house appears to have been built by or for William Winkworth, probably in 1786–7. Under a steeply pitched roof, it was set back from the road between a front garden and a large back garden. It was also double-fronted; it lost its south bay in 1857–8 when Anglesea Road was formed. At the north end an original moulded timber chimneypiece survives on the first floor. The house was substantially extended to the rear in 1816, for Walter Mitchell.⁸

Here, in early 1832, Ridley Haim Herschell established a 'Home' for destitute Jews. Born in 1807 a Polish Jew, Herschell came to England and in 1830 converted to Anglicanism. In 1831 he married Helen Skirving Mowbray, a fellow evangelical, and the couple determined to devote themselves to the poor Jewish hawkers of then quiescent Woolwich. Taking this property on the New Road, they set up a lodging house for 'wayfaring Jews'. Their eldest daughter, Ghetal, born during the Woolwich sojourn and later to marry (Sir) John Scott Burdon Sanderson, published memoirs that quote her mother's account of the 'very unpretending dwelling' that was the Woolwich 'Home' – the carpet-

DRAFT

less common dining-room in the rear section of 1816 was ‘an abode of Doric simplicity’; her upstairs private parlour, with carpet, curtains, work table and piano, was, she feared, ‘too smart-looking’.⁹ Theirs was a missionary project, but, to some bemusement, they welcomed all Jews, whether converts or not. Money and health were worries and there was too little work available in Woolwich for their project to succeed. The Herschells departed in late 1833, but the names of those who paid rates on the house in the following two years, Peter Levi and Daniel Friendenburg, suggest that the enterprise endured slightly longer.

From about 1837 to 1857 the house was the home of William Parry Jackson (c.1805–81), printer, founder of the *Kentish Independent* and *Jackson’s Woolwich Journal* and chairman of numerous committees, foremost the Woolwich Local Board of Health. Once Anglesea Road sliced through the house, commercial use ensued. The front block with the shop appears to have been built by John Vaughan in 1858, just after a new lease was given to John Moore. Charles Virgo, a confectioner, took up occupation, with a bake-house in the rear block. In the 1890s the shop was in the hands of E. Fairbrother & Co., bakers and confectioners who had two other establishments in Woolwich and who proudly proclaimed themselves suppliers of the Royal Artillery officers’ mess. Bakery use continued into the 1960s.¹⁰

Side streets

Wilmount Street existed as a path known as and leading to Bull Fields by the early nineteenth century when Halliday’s Buildings were built towards its east end. Around 1860, by when it was fully built up, it became Mount Street, leading to William Street at the parish boundary. These names were merged to make Wilmount Street in 1889, when some of the earlier Victorian buildings had already been replaced. Among these was the Duchess of Kent beerhouse, also used as a soldiers’ home in the

DRAFT

1850s, and rebuilt as the Princess of Wales beerhouse in 1886–7 for John Bull, with H. H. Church as architect. This public house was demolished in 2008 to make way for a block of eight flats with a commercial unit, still unbuilt in early 2012. To the east is Matooke House, an office block of about 1970. To the west are Windrush House, fourteen sheltered-housing flats of 1997, designed by Ankur Architects for Ujima Housing Association, Britain's first and then biggest black housing association, and another block of flats (Nos 10–14), put up in 2001–2 for the Kelsey Housing Association by the Calford Seaden Partnership.¹¹

Anglesea Road takes its name from the public house on the corner. The road, which provided a primary link between Woolwich and burgeoning Burrage Town, was begun with houses on its south side in 1852. First leases for the two-storey shop-houses that run along the north side at Nos 1–25, a much-mutilated and rebuilt terrace, were granted in 1857–61, starting from the west.¹²

Anglesea Avenue was formed around the same time, on ground that in the 1840s had been a market garden. What is now Anglesea Mews followed in 1877–8 when a double-fronted house, Field Cottage, was built between the humbler rows, for William James Robins, who held much property in the vicinity. From 1881 this house pertained to a builder's yard on the adjacent open ground, on which stable and workshop buildings were added by a succession of local firms, first Joseph Palfreman's and then, from around 1900 to 1921, Thomas & Edge (founded in 1895 and run from 1908 by Edwin Thomas alone), and finally J. Scott Fenn.¹³

The South East Hindu Association acquired Field Cottage (5 Anglesea Mews) in 1978. Adaptations launched the premises as the Ram Darbar in

DRAFT

1985. This temple was substantially extended to the east in 1996 to provide a community hall and a first-floor prayer hall, with four additional darbars, or shrines, in a brass 'sinhasan' or aedicule. The cottage was adapted to house a priest and offices over kitchens and washrooms. This project, led by Rajinder Pal Gupta, was designed, built and part funded by Pankhania Brothers who, holding that traditional Hindu architecture was not appropriate in Britain, opted for 'a simple traditional English aspect'.¹⁴ Adjoining at 5A Anglesea Avenue is the gable-fronted Anglesea Medical Centre of 1999–2000, built to designs by Alexander Sedgley. To the temple's west are yet more recent houses at 3–4 Anglesea Mews, with an archway to a private parking yard, a development overseen by the Downes Planning Partnership.¹⁵

Further up Anglesea Road on its north side was the Carmel Chapel of 1856, built for a Strict Baptist congregation led by Henry Hanks. John Vaughan was the builder of this substantial chapel, which seated about 800 in a galleried interior. Hanks's departure in 1880 was followed by decline and from 1908 the building was occupied by Unitarians. It served as an Oddfellows' Club from 1923 and stood into the 1990s.¹⁶ The whole block east of Anglesea Avenue to the parish boundary, save a semi-detached pair at 14–15 Anglesea Avenue that was a small speculation of 1939 by H. G. Cooper Ltd, office fitters, was redeveloped in 1995–7 as an estate of eighteen brick houses with integrated garages, some facing Ashlar Place. These were designed by the Kennedy Woodward Partnership, architects, and built by Lad Construction for the Hyde Housing Association.¹⁷

Just across the parish boundary is a former synagogue on a site that was first occupied in the 1860s by an off-shoot of the New Road Presbyterian congregation. St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, built 1871–2, was taken for use as a synagogue in 1924 by a Jewish congregation

DRAFT

that had moved around Woolwich since 1892. The Woolwich and District Synagogue replaced the former church with an angular Modernist building in 1962–4. This closed in 1998.¹⁸

91–101 Woolwich New Road

The junction at Anglesea Road has existed since the last years of the eighteenth century, when what is now the north end of Brookhill Road was formed as Waterman's Fields, perhaps taking its name from the presence of a small reservoir near the corner. Houses of the 1780s stood along the New Road front as far as where Sandy Hill Road now ends, but none survives. The first Marquis of Anglesea public house was amid these by 1831, on the site later taken by the first Catholic schools, south-west of St Peter's church. It was named after Field Marshal Henry William Paget, the 1st Marquess of Anglesey, a hero of Waterloo and twice Master-General of the Ordnance, who died in 1854. In 1841–2 Stephen Butler moved the establishment, renamed the **Anglesea Arms**, to a new building on its present corner site, with windows and quadrant corners recessed between wide full-height pilasters. It was enlarged with a single-storey wing along Brookhill Road in 1885 and substantially remodelled by Whitbreads in 1906. That work, which probably included the pedimented first-floor architraves, was carried out by T. Glanfield, a Deptford builder.¹⁹

Adjoining there is a more remarkable survival, an early purpose-built cinema. A pair of shops on the site of Nos 93–95 were knocked together for a butcher in the late nineteenth century and then refronted in 1904 for Hart & Williams, military outfitters. In 1912 Thomas Henry Arundell, a Camberwell builder, took the premises through his father's firm, Peter Arundell and Son of New Cross Road, and added the large hall that extends to Brookhill Road to make the **New Cinema**. The hall, only about 58ft/18m by 42ft/13m, accommodated 278 seated and 158 standing. On

DRAFT

the inside of the pedimented Brookhill Road end, the screen, no more than about 15ft(4.6m) wide, was plaster on brickwork. Underneath there was a three-person orchestra enclosure and an organ stood to one side. Generator, projection and winding rooms were placed across the upper storey of the former shop. T. H. Arundell had to close the cinema in 1930 because the LCC insisted he should build two new staircases. He protested that this was officious and unnecessary as there had been no mishap in eighteen years, but to no avail. As John Churchill, who visited as a boy, recalled: ‘There was an old cinema in New Road Woolwich called the “Bug Hutch”, we all waye scratch how selves after being in the, it cost a penny to see 2 films.’²⁰ The buildings were adapted to use as a garage in 1935, and have been much altered since. A scheme for their replacement with a block of nine flats above a shop was put forward by J. Sage (Builders) Ltd in 2005, granted planning permission on appeal, but refused renewal in 2011.²¹

Pubs and churches played musical chairs along this stretch of the New Road in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, and the Gun Tavern appears to have moved twice before arriving at 97 Woolwich New Road. That site had previously accommodated Providence Chapel, used by the Countess of Huntingdon’s Connexion, then by Alexander James Scott, Edward Irving’s assistant, who led Scottish Presbyterians away from Powis Street in 1831, and finally as the first Carmel Chapel from 1849 to 1856. From beginnings further north around 1800 the Gun had moved in 1841 to a new building on the site immediately south of that granted to the Catholics, where the Marquis of Anglesea had been. This came to be wanted for the Catholic schools, so Providence Chapel was obtained and the site redeveloped for the Gun in 1857. This tavern was succeeded by the present building in 1900–1, a big public house that had two billiards rooms, put up for Whitbreads by Pritchard and Renwick of Tooley Street.²² The pair of houses at Nos 99–101 was built in

DRAFT

1893 as a speculation for and by Alexander Martin of 3B Plumstead Road.²³ Everything to the south is on land that was demised from the Burrage Estate to the Board of Ordnance in 1808.

St Peter's Roman Catholic Church and Schools

Woolwich possesses in St Peter's one of only three churches built in London to designs by A. W. N. Pugin. Its nave and aisles date from 1842–3; the Lady Chapel on the north side followed on in 1850. The chancel and south chapel were added by F. A. Walters in 1889, but Pugin's projected tower and spire were never built. North of the church at 103–105 New Road are linked presbytery buildings, the smaller one of 1845 also by Pugin, its larger neighbour added by John Crawley in 1870. On the south side stand the former church schools, commenced to E. W. Pugin's designs in 1858 but altered at both ends. Facing end-on to New Road, these buildings present a parade of gables varying in height, width and frontage, and conveying a breadth and dignity sorely needed in the townscape of this part of central Woolwich.²⁴

From 1793 Catholics in Woolwich, probably for the most part poor Irish families, were served from a mission and chapel at Greenwich. After locals started an unauthorized chapel on Sun Street, Father James Delaney was posted in 1816 as resident priest in Woolwich. Permanent premises were soon found opposite the present Woolwich Arsenal Station in a former Methodist chapel, rededicated in July 1818. A decade later the ministry of Delaney's successor extended to a school. An important part of the priest's duties was attending to the 'hulks' or prison ships, and to the Royal Artillery Hospital.²⁵

In 1838 Cornelius Coles, then about twenty-five, was appointed priest. London-born but probably of Irish origin like most of his congregation, he had hitherto served at Holy Trinity, Dockhead, Bermondsey, where

DRAFT

there was a recent Gothic Revival church (by J. J. Scoles), and a convent beside it, an early work of A. W. N. Pugin. The ‘delapidated’ state of Coles’s chapel, which could accommodate only 400, plus a growing Catholic presence in Woolwich, estimated in 1841 at 3,000, no doubt stimulated his ambition to build. When at the start of that year he opened a subscription list for a new church, his plans must have been well advanced, for in February the Board of Ordnance made over to him without charge a site on the west side of New Road, north of the plot then taken by the Gun public house.²⁶

An announcement that Pugin would design the church came that September. He was already famed for his fervent Gothic propaganda, and had won the competition for the grandest Catholic church in South London, the future St George’s Cathedral, Southwark, on which work had recently begun. A notebook dates completion of his drawings to April 1842. George Myers began work on the nave and aisles in September; the foundation stone was laid on 26 October 1842 and the church opened a year later to the day. The cost of about £4,000 was defrayed partly by a £1,000 grant from the vicar apostolic of the London district, Thomas Griffiths, and partly by subscription; illustrations of the church design inside and out were displayed at Catholic booksellers to incite donations.²⁷

Perspectives of the church as proposed, inside and out, were illustrated in the *Orthodox Journal* early in 1843. Another view of the exterior, showing the west end dominated by a weighty south-west tower and steeple, occurs in the famous frontispiece of Pugin’s *Apology for the Revival of Christian Architecture* (1843), where St Peter’s stands in the foreground to the right of the Southwark design, confirming that this was one of his major town churches to date. Yet the Woolwich design was

DRAFT

geared to economy, as Pugin's recourse to lean-to aisles without a clerestory betrays. Indeed only the nave and aisles could be built in 1842–3, leaving a stump for the tower over the south porch. The materials were yellow stock bricks, with sparing Bath-stone dressings and slate roofs. External enrichment was confined to the surrounds of the south and west entrances, where copious ballflower and crocketing crept in.

The style of the church was naturally Decorated or, as Pugin preferred it, that of the reign of Edward I.²⁸ The nave is of six bays, with the acutely pointed profiles to roofs and arches he favoured in the early 1840s. The internal timberwork of the roofs is lean but effective, with high scissor-bracing across the main nave space. The arcades themselves are strictly regular, but the two-light windows along the aisles all differ slightly, while the final window on the north side breaks into three lights, perhaps anticipating the Lady Chapel, not yet built in 1843. The generous seven-light west window did most of the work in lighting the unclerestoried nave. But the present five-light east window was also executed as part of the contract, inserted in temporary brickwork within the chancel arch.²⁹ The high altar too is original; the five angels in relief under straight-sided canopies along its front resemble those on the altar in the side chapel at St Giles's, Cheadle, of similar date. An octagonal font, now at the end of the south aisle, was probably also there from the start.

The next phase was the presbytery, erected in 1845–6 and discussed separately below. It was succeeded in 1850 by the Lady Chapel at the end of the north aisle, built by Myers in an abbreviated version of what Pugin had first hoped for, and connected via a doorway to the original sacristy. It contains the best-preserved decorative ensemble in the church, consisting of altar, reredos and Hardman stained glass in the three-light window above. The altar front depicts angels left and right of

DRAFT

the Virgin and Child enthroned, while above are Annunciation and Adoration reliefs. Virgin and Child recur in the central light of the glass under a canopy, flanked by four angels in the sidelights. Minton tiles on the footpace complete the composition.

Father Coles hoped to add the chancel in 1856. As Pugin was dead, he consulted his son Edward about the matter ('Pugin is doing all he can for us'), but nothing came of it.³⁰ Under the regime of his successor, Jeremiah Cotter, schools and other parochial activities came before completing the church, though Cotter's architect John Crawley did produce detailed designs and a specification for the tower.³¹ Not until Father Seraph Fieu, a Belgian, took over in 1887 did the fabric take serious priority anew. The reliable Catholic architect Frederick A. Walters was now called in about a chancel; according to Fieu, he advised that if the parish wished 'to follow the plans of old Pugean and to have only a small chapel at St Joseph's side . . . the whole would probably cost about £800'.³² This advice was taken, so that the chancel built by Goddard & Sons to Walters' design in 1889 was accompanied only by a very short termination to the south aisle. But Walters took care to build in a relieving arch on this side of the chancel, corresponding to his new opening to the Lady Chapel on the north, in case the south side should ever be lengthened. In other respects Walters followed Pugin's plans for a chancel faithfully, using plain stock brickwork for the exterior and reinstating the east window in its destined position. The panelled chancel roof with carved bosses is also in Pugin's spirit. But the first reredos erected in 1890 was in a later taste.³³

As its tower was never built, St Peter's was now structurally as complete as it would ever be, but embellishments were still to come. In 1892 the Belgian firm of Jans put in altar rails, and a sounding board was added to the large stone pulpit, which had been attached to a pier on the south

DRAFT

side of the nave at an unknown date. A new St Joseph's altar arrived at the end of the south aisle in 1905, in honour of Fieu and his successor Joseph Reeks; again Walters was the designer. The stained glass above it is probably by Lavers & Westlake, who added the main east window in 1909. The present plain bench seating has been in the church for about a hundred years. Much was done in the early years of Canon William Monk, rector from 1934 to 1968. St Peter's had never been consecrated, and in order to ready the church for that event in 1944, Monk set about improving the altars and shrines. The present screen-reredos behind the high altar, perhaps incorporating portions of its more elaborate predecessor, was designed by Edward Walters, son of F. A. Walters, and executed in Maltese stone by local craftsmen in about 1943, an unusual date for such work.³⁴

The current appearance of the interior dates mainly from the 1970s and 1980s, when major rearrangements took place. Structurally the most significant was the insertion of timber-and-glass partitioning screening off the west end of the nave and creating a gallery space above. In the same years a forward altar was created and the pulpit and altar rails were removed (the lectern, the sounding board and half the rails went to St Joseph's, Shooters Hill). Later the whole of the architecture was painted to lighten the space, and an ocean of shiny oak parquet flooring was laid.³⁵ This gives the interior a cheerful, spick-and-span look, alien to Pugin's aesthetic. The Pugin fittings of altar front, Lady Chapel and font have also been given licks of gaudy paint.

Presbytery and sacristy. Pugin's external perspective of St Peter's shows no presbytery, nor was one mentioned when the nave and aisles were built in 1842-3. But one must always have been intended, as a narrow strip of land some 23ft(7m) wide north of the church appears to have been left for that purpose from the grant of 1841. Sketches in the Myers

DRAFT

collection of Pugin drawings show designs for the house. A set of plans and elevation perhaps requiring greater breadth than the site allowed and including a small oratory attached at the back may date from 1842. Two further sheets, smaller in scale, have sketch plans, elevations and sections of the house very much as built by George Myers late in 1845. In early 1846 Myers added the single-storey passage at the back and the sacristy to which it led. The sacristy, therefore, was built before the Lady Chapel.³⁶

This original presbytery is set back between the church on one side and the presbytery addition of 1870 on the other, to the extent of being almost swallowed up by them. The position was worse before 1870, when the building on the next site northwards actually overlapped the presbytery plot slightly at the front. Despite these drawbacks, the house is one of Pugin's best small brick secular buildings, plain but fetchingly proportioned.³⁷ The front has bay windows running through three storeys, with stonework (now painted) stretching randomly into the brickwork. There are touches of simple ornament in the spandrels over the front door bearing the initials of Thomas Griffiths, as sketched in the Myers album. A panel with a bishop's mitre between the main storeys carries the same letters intertwined. The back elevation is similar but lacks bays or ornament. In plan the narrow house conforms to a London type, with the timber staircase (of wood, with stout rail and simply chamfered balusters) placed crosswise between front and back rooms. A few fireplaces and ceilings survive. The porch, outside the main body of the building, leads via steps down behind to the narrow passage leading to the sacristy. Jammed up against the north aisle of the church, this passage is typical of Pugin in having its own miniscule pitched roof and two-light north-facing windows. It arrives at a square-ish room with a roof pitched in the other direction, and two-light windows facing north and south. That was the extent of the original sacristy.

DRAFT

The main portion of the present presbytery, including the entrance, adjoins to the north and dates from 1870, as a plaque over the door attests. This blundering brick house is bigger in every way than Pugin's, and stands well forward of it, like the building which it replaced. Though often attributed to E. W. Pugin, it was built for Jeremiah Cotter, the autocratic priest who succeeded Cornelius Coles, to the designs of a minor Catholic architect, John Crawley. Cotter had inherited money, which he used to buy the next plot to the north and build this much larger house, annexing the older presbytery in the process. Crawley indented Cotter for a charge of five per cent 'on new house and music room Woolwich' in 1872.³⁸ It is likely that the large two-storey extension to the sacristy facing Brookhill Road at the back was originally this music room, as maps suggest that it was not attached to the old sacristy until later.

Schools (St Peter's Centre). The core of the two-storey school to the south of the church, now St Peter's Centre, was built to the designs of E. W. Pugin in 1858. It has been much altered, notably at the front towards New Road, where F. A. Walters added classrooms in 1893–4. The separate building at the back, empty at the time of writing, was an infant school built in two stages, 1871 and perhaps 1891–2.

The genesis of the original schools is better documented than the other buildings of the St Peter's ensemble and worth describing in some detail, as it shows how fraught and hand-to-mouth such enterprises could be. The main source is a series of letters to Bishop Thomas Grant of Southwark, mostly from Father Cornelius Coles.³⁹ By 1855 Coles was ready to build schools. Not only was there an existing Catholic school to house properly, but he had been much concerned, he told the Bishop, by

DRAFT

the ‘persecution’ in the barrack schools of ‘our children’, who had sometimes been forced to kneel down and read the Protestant bible.

A successful negotiation took place that year with the Board of Ordnance and the Treasury for the site immediately south of the church, then occupied by the Gun public house. There was some delay over finding new premises for the Gun, but in due course the site was conveyed to the Catholics, probably without charge, in June 1857. Meanwhile in November 1855 Coles received plans and specifications from the 21-year-old E. W. Pugin, taking the place of his dead father. At £2,300 the design was too expensive despite a government grant, and Coles spent much time trying to whittle the cost down. This was difficult while Pugin junior was living in Birmingham, but by early 1857 he had moved to London. In the summer his revised plans went to tender. George Myers estimated £2,200 still, but William Gascoyne of Leamington’s figure was £1,736. Tension must have already been in the air, for Pugin wrote to Bishop Grant: ‘I sincerely trust that this extraordinary job will at last be called into actual existence.’

With work about to start in February 1858, Myers got wind of the fact that Gascoyne had been allowed to add to his tender, and wrote off in fury to the bishop. He was allowed to submit a revised estimate, for £1,890, but so too was Gascoyne. In the end the job stayed with the latter despite further pressure from the Myers firm. But as work got under way, there came signs that Coles’ nerves were fraying after twenty years in Woolwich. Dealing with the callow Edward Pugin was bad enough (‘Writing is useless. Calling in London, is the same.’), but Coles also became convinced that Gascoyne was cheating the mission, and building walls and roofs too thin. ‘Revd R. North [rector of Greenwich] says that instead of the “bold Gothic, it will be in the factory style, with consumptive piers”’, he wrote. As to the roof, ‘Our school is wider than

DRAFT

the church nave; the roof is heavier and needs reinforcement . . . Mr Pugin (the father) was fearful of the roof of the nave of our church – the roof of the school is 24 ft wider, with less side support.’ By September 1858 Bishop Grant was hinting that the priest should retire or at least take a holiday, but Coles was reluctant to do so, on the grounds that separation from ‘my child’ (meaning the church, not the school) would make him iller. North went to investigate. He reported back that Coles ‘bore the image of a dying man . . . Woolwich has not been *improved* it has been *created* by him, in all its departments.’

By this time Gascoyne had almost finished the building work. The Bishop was now harassed with his urgent requests for payment, at just the time he felt compelled to replace Coles, whose conduct had become erratic and paranoid. It was his replacement, Jeremiah Cotter, who sorted out the muddle with North. As the latter told Grant, he had remarked to Pugin junior before a brick was laid that the school could not be built for the sum stated: ‘he coughed at my simplicity and I was right. But it is a fine building with all its faults and I think well worth the money.’ For Coles the tale ended sadly; he was dead by the end of 1849, aged only forty-six.

The outcome of all this trouble was indeed a striking building, more original for its date than the church next door. The alterations which it has suffered make its qualities hard to read. As the plot was tight, E. W. Pugin (or the firm of Pugin & Murray, as named in the perspective drawing) designed a two-storey school and set it parallel with the church.⁴⁰ Girls came above and boys below, each (in conformity with government regulations) having a large schoolroom and a small square classroom at the back. The internal breadth which worried Coles was about thirty feet, spanned over the boys’ classroom by a hammerbeam roof with queen-post trusses at the top (now hidden). The boys’ floor was

DRAFT

stiffened by four iron columns that ran down the centre of the girls' classroom below. Externally the architecture ventured into the High Victorian Gothic idiom, advanced for 1858. The main show was on the short end towards Woolwich New Road, where the centre was marked by a lean-to porch flanked by buttresses enclosing a three-light window to the boys' schoolroom; so as to avoid absolute symmetry, one of the buttresses carried up into a chimney. Along the flanks, the upper walls were cut back in thickness where buttressing was not needed for the roof trusses, so as to create two planes. At the back, the classrooms and boys' stairs were expressed as a separate block, roofed in the other direction and equipped with a thin bellcote. This end has suffered from a series of alterations. The New Road front was extended by two classrooms in 1893–4 by Alfred How to the designs of F. A. Walters.⁴¹ Though stylistically in keeping, this addition concealed or destroyed E. W. Pugin's front and substituted the staid Gothic of the 1890s for the vigour of the 1850s. The building is now used as a parish centre, the school having moved away to the south-east, just outside the parish, in the 1950s.

It remains to mention the infants' school building at the back. The western half of this building, nearer the E. W. Pugin school, was built to the design of John Crawley by James Sonner in 1871. It was later doubled in size to the east, perhaps in 1891–2. It is a plain brick building with some vestigial Gothic touches.⁴²

Scottish Presbyterian Church and Schools (demolished)

A block of flats called Central Court (111 Woolwich New Road) stands where there was another church, this one Presbyterian. The progress of this congregation, with both its church and schools, was for long a spur to the neighbouring Catholics.

DRAFT

The 'Scotch' National church was built in 1841–2 to neo-Romanesque designs by Thomas Leverton Donaldson. The juxtaposition with Pugin's building, and the fortuitous screen of a public house, might have amused some, if not Pugin. The Presbyterian minister, William Martin Thompson, had arrived from Scotland in 1838 to serve a congregation based on Powis Street that, though recently schismatic, claimed a continuous presence in Woolwich since 1662. Thompson also became chaplain to all the Woolwich garrison's Nonconformist soldiers. His success was such that a bigger building was soon felt necessary. In 1840 he obtained the New Road site from the Board of Ordnance, which is said also to have given a grant towards the building; Lt. Col. William Bolden Dundas, RA, laid the foundation stone. These churches on the garrison's margins were semi-military facilities, underwritten to provide for the rapidly growing number of soldiers in Woolwich. As Charles Booth later put it, 'Soldiers are allowed to choose, but every man must have some religion.'⁴³ The Presbyterian church was somewhat smaller yet slightly more capacious than Pugin's, with a galleried interior that seated 1,100, nearly half the places reserved for soldiers. The front was altered in 1876 and a lecture hall added to the rear in 1899.⁴⁴ After a reunion with the Anglesea Road breakaway group in 1924 the church was known as St Andrew's. It closed in 1965 and was demolished in 1970. In a radically ecumenical move, the congregation went to share the Anglican parish church.⁴⁵

The road frontage south-west of the Presbyterian church had several early houses that were cleared in 1858 for the making of what came to be called Walpole Road, now the western stretch of Sandy Hill Road. This took its name from Col. John Walpole, Commanding Royal Engineer at Woolwich in 1850–1 and 1856–60, who lived just up the hill. Behind the houses and along the north side of the intended road, the Presbyterians had built a 'Scotch' school for 400 children in 1856–7, in competitive advance of the Catholics. Possibly designed by David Murray, this long

DRAFT

single-storey school was built by Fox Henderson and Company, presumably drawing on connections in the Arsenal. The War Office granted the site and nearly half the building costs came from the Education Department. At the back of the site, facing Waterman's Fields, the project included a pair of houses, for the schoolmaster and mistress. The school's teaching was highly regarded, and it was here in 1878 that Surgeon-Major Peter Shepherd and Col. Francis Duncan joined with the newly formed St John Ambulance Association to teach first-aid skills to civilians for the first time anywhere. The London School Board ran the school from that same year to 1894, then, after a period of closure, it was adapted in 1906–7 as an infant school for the Woolwich garrison. That closed in 1929 and demolition followed. The two houses survived, much altered, until 2008.⁴⁶

Later history of the site. Redevelopments of the Presbyterian site speak of the changing dynamics of ethnicity and housing. In 1964 International House, a hostel for overseas students, principally from Africa and Asia, was built on the school's plot. This arose from the Evangelical Alliance in Woolwich, a cross-denominational group founded in 1961 and led by James Ross that set out to foster international harmony by providing housing for overseas students. Funds were obtained from the British Council and Woolwich Borough Council, and Andrews Sherlock & Partners, architects, designed the building, a long range of irregularly composed brown-brick stacks, with a square communal block to the rear. Run by what became the International Students' Housing Society, the hostel accommodated eighty students, many studying at Woolwich Polytechnic, others elsewhere. By 1967 there were ambitious plans for enlargement across the site of the Presbyterian church to accommodate another 170 students, but, hit by inflation, these had to be scaled back. A single seven-storey tower was added in 1972–3, to designs by John Harris. Fewer students needed accommodation than had been

DRAFT

anticipated and in 1975 the Society put forward a new scheme for the New Road frontage of the church site. This was for a five-storey block of sheltered housing for the elderly, designed by John Gill Associates. It was denied planning permission because of its scale in relation to the listed Catholic church, and because, with twenty-eight flats, its density was thought too high, even though there were already large hostels to the south and east. Further schemes were essayed until 1982 when plans by the same parties for a three-storey block of twenty-four flats were approved on appeal by the Department of the Environment. These were not built, but the Baptist Housing Association, with Derek Bingham as architect, gained approval for a closely analogous scheme, built by Whyatt Ltd of Streatham in 1985–6 and latterly known as Central Court.⁴⁷

Demand for student housing in Woolwich fell away after 2000 and the International House complex was demolished to make way for another housing project in 2008–10. For this, ASRA Greater London Housing Association, founded in 1984 as one of Britain's earliest black and minority ethnic housing associations, worked through Turnhold Properties, Alan Camp Architects, and Mulalley and Co., contractors, to provide 119 apartments (forty-three of them 'affordable') in two blocks clad in brick and pre-patinated zinc. Clifton Lodge is a four-storey range facing Sandy Hill Road at its Woolwich New Road end, and Canada Court is a ten-storey block near Brookhill Road. Balconies and other salients are highlighted with coloured aluminium panels.⁴⁸

Brookhill Road and environs

The land between the northern stretch of Brookhill Road (Waterman's Fields until the 1890s) and the south side of Anglesea Road is a hillside hollow that in the eighteenth century was the south end of the Pattisons' sandpit. By 1800 houses were strung along Waterman's Fields. Once

DRAFT

Anglesea Road had been made in the 1850s, a road called Walpole Place (see above for the derivation of the name) was laid out to run across the triangle. It was a narrow road with opposed terraces of two-storey cottages, about twelve on each side, built in 1862–8. Edward Proctor's builder's yard was tucked away on the south side. There was also piecemeal rebuilding along Waterman's Fields, behind which stood Hayman's Cottages, two one-room dwellings.⁴⁹

Walpole Place

By 1900, Walpole Place had a bad reputation. After representations from the LCC's Medical Officer of Health, it was declared a slum-clearance area in 1955 and about a hundred families were displaced from an extended (almost four-acre) site. The LCC prepared plans for new housing, with Andrew Boyd and A. H. Gear the architects responsible for a scheme published in 1961 and built through direct labour in 1965–6. One seven- and two nine-storey slabs were placed end to end, meeting at canted angles, where staircases rise, so as to bracket the wooded slope to the east. Given the setting, this block seems, from the outside, a missed architectural opportunity, especially coming after the LCC's triumphs of landscaping at Alton West, Roehampton. It was, however, sited to ensure that every dwelling's private side overlooks the landscaped grounds. There are seventy-two maisonettes with fifteen flats above and below. The maisonettes were laid out with through living-rooms and kitchens facing the gardens, a then new LCC type. In the mid-1990s Greenwich Council, with Hazle McCormack Young, architects, gave Walpole Place a curved-profile add-on roof, staircase enclosures and new windows.⁵⁰

Near the Sandy Hill Road corner, **Fountain Close** is a recent revival of an earlier name. The former public house at 83 Brookhill Road was a successor to the Fountain Tavern, probably built around 1843. This had a large back garden, and in 1849 gained a concert room to its south. The

DRAFT

present building succeeded in 1857–8, a single-storey billiard-room replacing the concert room. It was probably built by C. G. Dyson for Charringtons, and was renamed the Walpole Arms, after Col. Walpole and the new road it faced; Charringtons sign showing Robert Walpole is misleading.⁵¹ The pub was converted in 2005–6 to be New Walpole House, five flats with a shop in the former front bar. This was part of a shared-ownership scheme carried out for ASRA Greater London Housing Association. DRW Architects designed the conversion, and an adjacent block, Fountain House, for five more flats.⁵²

Sandy Hill Road

Steep hillside streets lined with terraces for workers are, like other aspects of Woolwich, less characteristic of London than of a provincial town. Nowhere is this more strongly felt than here. Sandy Hill Road was laid out along the line of a footpath that rose diagonally through what had been called Hilly Field. This was an important part of the development of Burrage Town, a connecting route to hilltop streets in Plumstead. Benjamin Davies was the surveyor who oversaw the building of more than 100 fourth-rate houses along this road in 1847–52. Numerous local speculators and builders took parcels, generally with 61-year leases. The parish boundary at the top of the hill means that little of this was in Woolwich, just two terraces that stepped neatly up to a public house, the Fort Tavern.

At the top of the hill on the south-west side of the road the former Fort Tavern (No. 26) was built in 1844–5 for Charles and Henry White, with a garden to the north in which there were several summer houses, and a skittle alley behind. The pub was converted to two flats and a maisonette in the late 1990s. Further north, the twelve houses at Nos 2–24 were built as Fort Place in 1849–51, by George Barnes and James Farnsworth, local builders who were active in the earlier 1840s in the area that is now

DRAFT

the Morris Walk Estate. The uppermost house in the row had a shop, first run by Jane Bradley, the wife of William Bradley, a shipwright. Also resident were their three sons, a servant girl and two lodgers, an artillery gunner, Evan Ridge, and his wife. Across the road, Hope Place (Nos 9–33) followed in 1851–2. This relatively little-altered row of thirteen houses was built for Francis Sales by William Williams of Beresford Street. With frontages of just 15ft(4.6m) the houses are laid out with their staircases between the front and back rooms, to avoid compromising room widths. A number of early occupants here were employed at the Arsenal. Between this terrace and the former Walpole Arms a three-storey pair (Nos 5–7), set well back and in line with Brookhill Road, had gone up in 1846–7, before other houses were underway. Built as Southampton Place for W. S. Andrews, probably by Hudson and Burgess, these houses were originally entered from their sides. Nos 1 and 3 followed around 1860 as infill.⁵³

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

Brookhill Road (east side)

The east side of Brookhill Road has one of the last substantial groups of Victorian houses in the parish of Woolwich. The road itself had been made in 1808–9, its formation along the line of the brook being a condition of Nathaniel Pattison's sale of adjacent land to the Board of Ordnance, but the building of what was the western flank of Burrage Town began only modestly at its north end in 1843, opposite a military mortuary. Work gained some impetus with Dundas Terrace of 1843–6, a solid speculation facing meadowland, aimed at a middle- and officer-class market, but faltered thereafter. The Burrage Estate had sold off

DRAFT

other plots as building ground, offering 61- to 71-year leases, but, directly abutting the military estate on low ground, houses here may have been slow to sell. After desultory progress up to 1851 and the final suppression of the stream that gave the road its name, the next main building episode of 1859–62 was at the south end of the road – the Lord Clyde public house, three semi-detached pairs and Campbell Terrace; there was also infill north of Dundas Terrace. The last open frontages, where there had been a gravel pit, were only built up in 1878–85, along with houses on the hillside behind, on what is now Elmdene Road. By this time there was a large stabling complex opposite where there had been meadow and there were no more officers living on Brookhill Road. The houses were still, by and large, family homes, many dependent, as in most of Burrage Town, on incomes from the Arsenal. Subdivision ensued in the twentieth century and many of the houses remain split as flats or bedsits. The whole of this side of Brookhill Road was put forward as a clearance area in 1969. Only a small amount of redevelopment actually occurred. Even so, most of the nineteenth-century houses have been extensively altered.

At the north end of this run the plots are of pinched depth because of the proximity of Sandy Hill Road, The principal lessee here in the 1840s was William Henry Fludger, a bricklayer and builder, who took two of the new houses for himself and his family, No. 79 from 1847, and then No. 59 from 1860. At the triangular top corner, No. 82, built in 1843–4, has always incorporated a shop, originally a baker's, later a grocer's. The building was clad and raised around 2005. Nos 80 and 81, part of the same first development, were also recently rebuilt, but on the same scale as the original one-room deep houses. Fludger's small home of 1846–7 at No. 79 survives, as do Nos 75–78 of 1848–9, all much altered. In rather better shape are Nos 71–74, all of 1849–51 and a bit taller with two upper storeys above a rusticated ground floor. Elevational unity

DRAFT

disguises the fact that Nos 73–74 are two rooms deep and Nos 71–72 only one room deep with outshuts. Lower again are Nos 67–70, also of 1849–51; James Buxton and George Hall were the builders. First occupants of this whole group included corporals and sergeants, both sappers and gunners, but by the 1870s such had gone and there were instead many labourers from the Arsenal and some privates and corporals from the Army Service Corps, now established across the road. Nos 60–66 had followed in 1860–1 as a stepped and once fairly uniform group; No. 62 is the least altered. Across Fort Passage, Nos 54–59 are larger three-storey houses, also of 1860–1; Nos 57–59 were built by Fludger, and No. 56, built alone, was first occupied by John Towl, a metal turner at the Arsenal.

Dundas Terrace (Nos 43–50) was built in 1843–6 and probably took its name from the local MP at the time, Rear-Admiral Sir James Witley Deans Dundas. This locally ambitious development, a symmetrical handed terrace of eight houses, was a speculation by David and George Grieff (sometimes Grieff or Grief), father and son, Woolwich bricklayers and plasterers (also butchers) who had moved from King(sman) Street to No. 21 Wellington Street before taking on this project. Set back behind forecourts that were once planted, and with raised ground floors, mansard attics and long rear gardens, these houses were a cut above anything else built hereabouts. First occupants in the late 1840s included several captains, both Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers, and a major. William Rickwood, the local architect, lived at No. 45 in the mid-1850s, though not for long, and, in the nature of their careers, the army officers also had short tenures. By the mid-1860s there were no officers resident as a clerical class of householder gained ascendancy. The pair of houses at Nos 51–52 had been added in 1848–9 by George Grieff. His father took up residence in No. 52 and then moved to No. 53 which they added in 1857–8, along with an awkward intervening infill strip.

DRAFT

In 1878 Edward Brady, an Irish builder approaching sixty and based at Walpole Place, undertook to build eighteen houses immediately south of Dundas Terrace, that is as far as Willenhall Road, then newly formed. Only four were up by 1880 and Brady appears to have enlisted help from W. Dunger, a Plumstead builder, to complete the first group (Nos 35–42) by 1881. These are modest two-storey houses with single-storey canted bay windows. Another foot passage provided access up the hill to Hanover Terrace (renamed Elmdene Road in 1920) where Dunger had built a row of nine houses in 1879–80. Woolwich Borough Council replaced this with a block of eight flats in 1951–3 following clearance after bomb damage.

Brady continued building on Brookhill Road in the early 1880s, erecting Nos 25–34, which he called Greenfield Villas. He included a shop in the corner property and took No. 34 for his own family when he completed the row in 1885. With an additional storey and two-storey bay windows in narrow (15ft/4.6m) frontages, these houses have oddly proportioned façades. Despite the narrow plots, they adopted the rear-staircase plan that appears to have been the norm on Brookhill Road. Again many of the first householders here, engine fitters and the like, held jobs at the Arsenal. Brady was also responsible for Nos 19–24, six houses of the late 1870s, replaced around 1979–80 by five houses of a similar scale. On the south side of Hanover Terrace, behind his own home, Brady built two more houses (67–69 Elmdene Road) in 1885. He intended a third, but this, Landscape Villa (No. 71), was not built until 1893. It was for Brady's spinster daughter, Elizabeth, then in her early forties, who had been living with her parents at 34 Brookhill Road. As the name suggests, this is a big house, well placed for views.

DRAFT

The southern stretch of Brookhill Road's east side had been built up in 1859–62 as Campbell Terrace, after Field Marshal Colin Campbell, 1st Baron Clyde, commander at the battle of Balaclava and in the relief of Lucknow, who returned to Britain a hero in 1859. The corner was anchored by the Lord Clyde public house, run from 1859 by William Thunder. Adjacent are three broad-fronted semi-detached pairs of 1860–1, once stucco-dressed with rusticated door surrounds, now much altered. These may have been built by W. H. Fludger – Henry John Fludger was the first householder at No. 3. Further north, eight flat-fronted houses form a terrace of the same date; first occupants included a colonel and two captains. Finally, there were three bay-windowed houses (Nos 16–18) of 1861–2. Only the middle one remains; No. 18 was wholly rebuilt with Nos 19–23. The road junction at the south end of Brookhill Road was blocked in the late 1970s, a tunnel giving pedestrian access to the Woolwich Common Estate.⁵⁴

West of Brookhill Road

The Board of Ordnance acquired all the land west of the line of Brookhill Road in 1808, in part to maintain an open cordon sanitaire east of the Royal Ordnance Hospital, across Cholic Lane. Accordingly, one section, a large and squarish plot of garden ground was made use of by that institution as a 'walking ground for Convalescents'.⁵⁵ By 1810 there were mortuary and other outbuildings along the plot's east (Brookhill Road) side. The site passed through use as a drill or parade ground for the Royal Sappers and Miners around 1850, and after reforms in 1856 a handful of huts were built here to accommodate some Royal Engineers. Around 1865 the hospital was converted as the Connaught Barracks, for the Military Train, which was responsible for army transport (reformed as part of the Army Service Corps in 1870). The eastern lands became the Train's stable yard, and in 1865–8 were largely built over with large single-storey stable ranges for 240 horses.⁵⁶ A section to the north,

DRAFT

previously open, had been built up in 1863–5 with eight two-storey ranges of married quarters for artillerymen. These ‘model lodgings’ arose from reforms instituted in the wake of the Army Sanitary Commission, to deal with overcrowding and poor provision for married soldiers. The first six rows had ten one-room dwellings on each of two storeys, with colonnaded iron verandahs. Another two rows were added in 1875, these providing quarters for twenty families, each with two rooms of 12ft/3.7m by 15ft/4.6m and a scullery. The group was known as the Cambridge Cottages, after Prince George, Duke of Cambridge, Commander-in-Chief of the British Army from 1856.⁵⁷ Differences in the nature of the boundary wall that survives along the Woolwich New Road reflect the late nineteenth-century divisions of the site.

Connaught Estate. In the late 1950s the cottages were cleared and Woolwich Borough Council acquired their site, using it from 1960 as a car park. However, the LCC insisted, in view of the proximity of its Walpole Place, that the land should be used for housing within five years. By 1966 the adjoining land to the south, where the stables had given way to ‘Motor Transport Lines’, had been vacated by the Army, freeing up more than nine acres for housing. Greenwich Council’s architects, assisted by Jenkins and Potter, consultant engineers, prepared a scheme for 330 dwellings – 108 one-bedroom flats and 222 two- to four-bedroom maisonettes. Inflation and the Ministry of Housing and Local Government’s cost controls (‘yardsticks’) meant that the tender figure had to be reduced by about fifteen per cent before the project could begin in 1967. Simms, Sons and Cooke, contractors, completed what became the Connaught Estate in 1970. Five-storey blocks, open at ground level, form a north–south spine off which range eight-storey blocks with basement garages, all punctuated by lift towers and stepping up the hill in a fish-skeleton layout (an echo, if unconscious, of a military hospital pavilion plan).⁵⁸ Around 1990 the box-frame blocks were given pitched

DRAFT

roofs, but from 2006 Greenwich Council, through the Woolwich Estates Renewal project, set about planning redevelopment of the unpopular estate, a very different address to that of Connaught Mews, the former hospital across the road, which had become a private gated estate. Demolition notice was served in 2011.

The Sandy Hill Road corner was left open for the **Woolwich Central Baptist Church**. This replaced the Woolwich Tabernacle on Beresford Street and another church in Plumstead. It was built in 1970 to designs by K. C. White and Partners, architects, with Colin Mann as job architect, and W. E. Caller (Contractors) Ltd, of Sydenham, as builders. Square on plan, the church was laid out to seat 200. Its upper storey is faced with 'Granilux' aggregate panels, and has a reinforced-concrete ring beam to the roof, once copper-clad, with a fibreglass spire. The hall and other perimeter buildings are brick faced.⁵⁹

At the opposite corner of the Connaught Estate a part of the Army Service Corps site that was briefly occupied by the Brookhill Meeting Rooms, a community centre. This was replaced by the **Brookhill Children's and Community Centre (130 Brookhill Road)**, a Sure Start initiative, built by Greenwich Council in 2006–7. This was designed by Architype Ltd, architects (John Moakes, job architect), specialists in this new building type, and built by Bryen and Langley, contractors. It is constructed from prefabricated timber-cassette panels with a yellow acrylic rendered north wall, part of a range of bright colours, well distributed. There is also larch cladding and a sedum roof. Laid out in an L-plan, a 52-place nursery and a crèche occupy the ground floor, under meeting and consulting rooms that are also open to community use. Wall-mounted 'eco-mosaics' were made by Roger Mortimer with children in 2008.⁶⁰

DRAFT

The site south of this remained open ground until the early 1950s when the Army built four semi-detached pairs of houses for soldiers' quarters. After the privatization of the military housing estate these were replaced in 1995–6 with **Brookhill Mews (131–155 Brookhill Road)**, a development by Wilcon Homes, then a major housebuilder. Three neo-vernacular brick ranges supply twenty-five two-bedroom houses.⁶¹

Mill Lane to Nightingale Place

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

Shipwrights' windmill (demolished)

Shipwrights in the Thames-side naval dockyards in the eighteenth century were enterprising mutualists. Shipbuilding was an unusually co-operative trade and dockyard employment fostered strong collective values. Faced with chronic arrears of pay, dockyard shipwrights came together in the 1750s to form a retail society, to gain some control over the supply and price of basic food. Open to all employed within the yards, this was, it has been claimed, the first co-operative productive society in England.⁶²

The shipwrights' society built a windmill and a bakehouse in 1758 on the high ground east of Cholic Lane, just south of the site now occupied by Engineer House. There had probably been earlier windmills near by, even by the fifteenth century. From the seventeenth century an acre here was held by the Board of Ordnance, housing a conduit used to supply water to the Warren. The society gained leave (though no lease) to build on this 'Conduit Field' for a nominal annual rent of a shilling, provided that

DRAFT

artillery officers and Board employees could subscribe, as well as that bread might be supplied to the Warren's barracks. How the building project was financed remains obscure. In March 1760 the shipwrights' mill burnt down. Fingers pointed at local bakers, who denied responsibility. The rebuilt mill was later depicted as an octagonal timber smock-mill.⁶³

It appears to have settled into productivity – at any rate, a public house just across Cholic Lane came to be known as the Jolly Shipwrights, acquired and closed by the Board of Ordnance in 1773. Two years later jollity was doubtless further strained when troops went into the dockyard to break up a strike. What must have been an uneasy relationship persisted, the shipwrights obliged to grant soldiers a right of way across the mill site. In 1782, when trade was slack, the shipwrights approached the Board offering to supply the newly built Royal Artillery Barracks with bread. It is not clear that the offer was taken up.⁶⁴

What had become the Shipwrights' Mill Company may have found new prosperity in wartime, but the autonomy of dockyard labour was being undermined. By the 1830s, militant independence had been eradicated and the Company appears then to have let the mill to a private concern. It was empty and disused by the 1840s and had been demolished by the 1850s, when adjacent leases reverted to the Board of Ordnance, which had acquired the freehold of the entire Mill Hill area in 1808.⁶⁵

Early houses south of the windmill

From 1781, after the improvement of Cholic Lane and the building of the Royal Artillery Barracks, the road frontage south of the windmill and facing Barrack Field was taken for housing, privately built on Burrage Estate leases, but closely dependent on the military presence. Barrack Court was two opposed three-storey brick ranges of 1781–3, for twenty-

DRAFT

eight three-room tenements occupied by staff pertaining to the barracks – clerks, foremen, storekeepers and labourers. It was demolished in 1853. On the Cholic Lane bank to its north, Thomas Sawyer built a row of six larger houses, Rose Mount, in the 1790s. To its south stood two large houses, both built for Capt. Agar Weetman. The first of these has become Government House; the second, of the late 1780s and further north, was first occupied by a Capt. Houghton, next by the Rev. Lewis Evans, a professor of mathematics at the Royal Military Academy, then, in the 1830s and 1840s, by the Rev. Capel Molyneux, the charismatic minister at Holy Trinity, and subsequently by Royal Artillery chaplains. It came to be called St George’s House, after the garrison church, and survived until the late 1970s. Behind, near the present-day south end of Gunner Lane, there was, from about 1805, another mill, owned by Fraser Lewis Tappy and possibly a wind pump to raise water to supply the barracks. By the 1820s Cholic Lane was generally known as Mill Lane up to the hilltop where it met the Common and Ditchwater Lane (Nightingale Place).⁶⁶

Government House. This former officer’s residence at the Woolwich New Road and Nightingale Place junction is not only the last remnant of the indirectly military development of this precinct in the late eighteenth century, but also the last of the once numerous large late-Georgian houses that faced Woolwich Common from the east. Originally somewhat humbler than it later became, it was privately built in 1781–4 for Capt. Agar Weetman who had returned from leading a bomb detachment in North America only to be removed to the Royal Artillery’s Invalid Battalion in March 1782 after an accident sinking a well. He had a long lease from Nathaniel Pattison of a large plot with a 250ft (76m) west-facing frontage.

DRAFT

Weetman soon gave up a northern strip of his land for what became St George's House; Charnock's view of about 1792 seems to transpose the two buildings. It was at this time, in 1787, in the aftermath of the building of the Royal Artillery Barracks when officers' housing in the Warren was being rebuilt, that senior field officers were first permitted to use 20s per week rent allowances in lieu of quarters, to obtain separation and open space for themselves by taking up residence in privately owned houses in and around Woolwich. Weetman's corner house was, a leap in rateable value indicates, substantially enlarged and enhanced in 1791–2 when it was taken by Maj. (later Lt. Gen. Sir) John Macleod, who had been the Royal Artillery's first Brigade-Major since 1783. Restyled Deputy Adjutant-General in 1795, Macleod had responsibilities for the whole regiment and communicated directly with the Master-General. When the Board of Ordnance became the freeholder in 1808 it saw to further alterations.⁶⁷

Macleod was resident until 1827, his long tenure interrupted by postings abroad; he was the Commander of Artillery on the disastrous Walcheren expedition of 1809. His successor as Deputy Adjutant-General, (Maj.-Gen. Sir) Alexander Dickson, occupied the house, but for just two years. Weetman's lease passed to Col. John Boteler Parker, who had the house enhanced in 1840 by John Douglas Hopkins, architect. The Board then bought the lease, because, it has been said, Lady Bloomfield (the wife of Lt. Gen. Benjamin Bloomfield, the Garrison Commandant) refused to live in the Arsenal. But if Lord Bloomfield did move in it was not for long. By the time of the census of 1841 the building housed (Gen. Sir) Hew Dalrymple Ross, Deputy Adjutant-General, who was to be the last man in charge of the Board of Ordnance prior to its demise in 1855. After that reform the house did become and long remain the Quarters of the Garrison Commandant. Sometimes known as Governor's House, it was

DRAFT

Government House by the 1920s and was converted for office use in 1937.⁶⁸

Government House has a prominent hilltop site, with fine views across the Common and north to the Thames, and a one-acre garden. Its shallow double-fronted main range originally rose just two storeys above a basement, with an almost symmetrical five-bay façade. There was a big north-end bow window. This has gone, but an ornamental fanlight over the main entrance appears to survive from the 1780s. Macleod, presumably acting privately in 1791–2, saw the house raised, and refaced with irregularly bonded brown stock bricks to disguise the change. Inside, an elegant full-height central staircase with an oval open well and an open string is probably another part of Macleod's improvements. He also evidently added a long two-storey service wing, extending east from the south end. Of this just the front part survives. Hopkins' work of 1840 might have included a small bay behind the staircase with margin-glazed fenestration, possibly also the rusticated stucco front porch, though that may have followed in the mid-1850s. The house was further extended to the north in the late nineteenth century, with canted bays to the garden, that to the north full-height. It had grown to hold fourteen bedrooms.

As offices Government House was the Headquarters of the Woolwich Garrison; an IRA bomb exploded at the front gateway in 1981. The military vacated the building in 1995 and sold it on the open market. It stood empty and fell into dereliction. In 2011 Paul and Tomiko Ravn put forward a refurbishment scheme that included conversion to eight flats, restoration of the vandalized staircase and enabling development of the grounds with two rows of three-storey houses to the north and east, all to designs by Paul Latham of the Regeneration Practice. The site was for sale in early 2012.⁶⁹

DRAFT

Later development around Mill Hill Field

Further north and well to the east of the road, John King, a master founder on the Warren, built another large house in the 1790s. This had thirteen acres of grounds known as Mill Hill Field that extended back to present-day Brookhill Road and Nightingale Place. The Board of Ordnance acquired the property and, in 1814–15, altered the house to plans by William Atkinson. It then considerably enlarged what was misleadingly called Mill Cottage in 1824 for Lt. Col. Sir John Thomas Jones, CRE, who said that his ‘peculiar liability to attacks of the chest’ meant that he could not live in the Arsenal.⁷⁰ As Mill Hill House this continued as a residence for commanding engineers and then for other officers. It was demolished in the 1970s.⁷¹ Among those who lived here was Col. William Driscoll Gosset (1822–99), who trained at the Royal Military Academy, and who, as a captain based with the Ordnance Survey in Southampton in 1853, oversaw the Ten Feet Plan (1:528) survey of Woolwich. As the Commanding Royal Engineer in Woolwich from 1867 to 1873 he proposed, without success, a footbridge across Mill Lane, presumably to improve the connection between his house and office, and the barracks and St George’s Church.⁷²

Post-Crimean War upheavals in military organization in 1856 and pressures on space in the Arsenal generated new uses for Mill Hill Field. Much of the land to either side of a reduced garden (which now pertained to Col. Walpole, CRE) was allocated to the Royal Military Academy for cadets’ fieldwork practice. This included the training of future engineers in the arts of sapping and mining. The Royal Sappers and Miners in Woolwich had moved to Chatham, their barracks and associated spaces given up, as were the Royal Engineers’ workshops in the Arsenal. In a reconstituted detachment ten or more Royal Engineers’ officers were stationed in Woolwich, some attached to the Academy. **Engineer House**

DRAFT

(11 Mill Lane) was built in 1858–9 to provide a new base. Plans for this office building were drawn up internally under Walpole by Nelson Walker, surveyor and draughtsman. Tellingly, given the new dispensations, the builders were private contractors, D. Nicholson and Sons of Wandsworth. Ample provision for administration reflected continuing responsibilities for the organization of major building projects and for training in Woolwich, and was perhaps also in part a response to intense public criticism of the work and education of the Royal Engineers, including profligacy in the Arsenal in 1855–7. Engineer House's unembellished round-headed windows and door fanlight look late Georgian, but this is a typical mid-nineteenth century Royal Engineers' building, robust, no-nonsense and stylistically conservative – the red-brick dentil courses give the building's date away. There is, overall, a Greek Cross plan, with offices arrayed around an Imperial staircase in a large central hall. The first-floor front room was a drawing office, off which there was from the outset a closet photographic darkroom. The lower arm of the cross to the rear quartered a messenger on the ground floor. Alongside the offices to the south there was a works yard with an iron shed, where the mill cottages had stood.

Further south, on the site of Barrack Court, there was a new **Garrison Dispensary**, a brick range adapted by the 1880s to hospital use. The Dispensary's low iron railings survive along Woolwich New Road south of the entrance to Gunner Lane. Disparate sections of boundary wall further north appear also to be remnants of the mid-nineteenth century and earlier; a short stretch of red-brick wall just south of the Connaught Estate might be all that is left from the brick-lined widening of Cholic Lane in the 1760s.⁷³

East of the Dispensary, the **Female Hospital** of 1862–5 was an adjunct to the Royal Herbert Hospital that was built in the same years for the

DRAFT

Woolwich Garrison on the south side of the Common (outside the parish) to the designs of Capt. Douglas Galton, RE. The facility for the women of the regiment was one single-storey cross-ventilated range with two wards and twenty-five beds, a reduced version of one of the main hospital's innovative pavilions.⁷⁴ It became a Military Maternity Hospital and then a Military Families Hospital, with road access from what, from 1934, was called Gunner Lane. It was demolished in the 1970s.

Gunner Lane and Brookhill Close area

Along the north side of Nightingale Place there stood a short row of late eighteenth-century houses, quarters for three Field Officers, laid out with front-staircase plans. Nightingale Place was widened in the 1850s and a gateway in the resultant boundary wall that gave onto the Academy's practice ground survives, just west of 58–59 Nightingale Place, a semi-detached pair of officers' married quarters of 1913. The eighteenth-century group was replaced with another pair (Nos 56–57) in the early 1950s. Lord Roberts' Terrace, named after Field Marshal Frederick Roberts, 1st Earl Roberts, was formed in 1930 and more officers' married quarters, four semi-detached double-fronted pairs, were put up on its west side. Humbler housing had been built further east in 1892–4. Near the Brookhill Road corner there were two blocks to either side of a drill hall and canteen providing quarters for twelve warrant officers, and there were three longer ranges of married quarters further north, two of thirty-six units, one for staff sergeants, and one of eighty-eight units. Again, only railings survive, running along Brookhill Road.⁷⁵

Redevelopment of much of the garrison estate was under consideration by 1954 when all these quarters were deemed not worth retaining. An outline scheme of 1966, by Johns, Slater & Haward, architects, envisaged clearance behind Woolwich New Road, leaving only Engineer House and the former Commanding Royal Engineers' House in place,

DRAFT

with new officers' married quarters to the west and open ground back to Brookhill Road for later development for soldiers' married quarters. Plans changed as defence priorities shifted and other barracks complexes in Woolwich were given up and demolished. The east side of the former field, still largely open, was developed first in 1973–4 as the Brook Hill Estate (9–13 Lord Roberts' Terrace and 1–107 Brookhill Close), 112 houses for married soldiers in simple linear terraces that step up and down on a sloping site, with deliberately limited vehicle access, each house with its own garden. This was output-driven housing, built by Wimpey and overseen by the then newly formed Property Services Agency through its Directorate of Defence Services 2 (Married Quarters branch), under A. P. Josephides, superintending architect. To get away from 'ready-made' houses, which it found unsuitable, the PSA adopted a 'develop and construct' contract procedure, in effect design-build, whereby contractors were free to develop their own designs from the PSA's brief using any of a number of accepted systems. In this case, the adopted system was Wimpey's 'no fines' concrete panels cast *in situ* in reusable shuttering. These married soldiers' quarters, significantly humbler than contemporary officers' houses on Prince Imperial Road and Woolwich Common, were nonetheless an object of pride. The occupation of the first home in 1974 was ceremonially marked by Reg Freeson, then Minister for Housing and Construction.⁷⁶

The next phase was another ninety-six dwellings, to the west on Gunner Lane and Mill Lane, built in 1978–80. Largely houses, with a few small blocks of flats, these are all brick built and more irregularly grouped, reflecting changing architectural fashions, and a shift in the PSA that on one hand attempted to acknowledge the preferences of the intended inhabitants and on the other recognized the need to adapt to the possibility of marketing the buildings through the private sector. Again the terrain provides natural variety, and, as in the earlier group, a few

DRAFT

nineteenth-century walls have been left standing, further breaking up monotony. An area of woodland still separates these developments.⁷⁷

In 1996 the Ministry of Defence's Married Quarters Estate was privatized, sold in its entirety to Annington Homes Ltd and leased back as necessary. Since then the armed forces have vacated Brookhill Close and the southern end of Gunner Lane, where houses are privately occupied. In 2008 Headroom Properties Ltd secured planning permission to redevelop the outer parts of Brookhill Close. Replacement of twenty-four houses with frontages to Brookhill Road and Nightingale Place with twenty-six houses in one long and two short rows, and thirty-nine flats in four blocks, one to the north, and three to the south-west, began in late 2011 in a phased project for the Hyde Housing Association, to designs by Alan Camp Architects with Geoffrey Osborne Ltd as builders.⁷⁸