

# Building on the Beaumonts: An Example of Early 19th-Century Housing Development

By ANSON OSMOND

## SUMMARY

*The first part of this article is mainly a chronological account of the housing development which took place between 1822 and 1836 on two fields of pasture, known as Beaumont Close and the Beaumonts, on the outskirts of Oxford, belonging to St. John's College. It also explains the way in which leasehold tenure operated and describes some of the houses that were built.*

*The second part is concerned with the different categories of people involved in the development: speculators, builders, landlords, lessees, tenants. It also contains a table of first leases, and a table of early inhabitants of the area, according to occupation.*

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## I

The population increase throughout England during the early part of the 19th century, together with diminishing opportunities for gaining a livelihood in rural areas and increasing ones in towns and cities, meant that English people were at this time becoming increasingly town-dwellers. Oxford, though not yet an industrial centre (probably its largest employer was the University Press, which even as late as 1845 only employed 138 men),<sup>1</sup> nevertheless experienced a rate of population increase comparable with the industrial towns of the north. Between 1811 and 1831 its numbers grew by 50 per cent.<sup>2</sup> This of course created a need for new housing and, since little land was available for this purpose in the city centre, the new developments took place mainly in the outlying parishes of St. Ebbe's, St. Thomas's, St. Clement's, St. Mary Magdalen's, and St. Giles's. At the same time money for mortgages became more readily available as the national slump in industrial activity following the end of the Napoleonic wars reduced the demand for cash

NOTE: St. John's College is abbreviated S.J.C. throughout.

<sup>1</sup> Information supplied by Dr. C.J. Bundy.

<sup>2</sup> *V.C.H. Oxon.* iv., 181.



Fig. 1. The Beaumont area of Oxford: part of Robert Hoggar's plan of 1850 (re-drawn), showing the extent of development. Houses for which ground-plans are given in Fig. 2 are cross-hatched.

for industry. It was this money, in the form of mortgage loans to speculators and landlords, which made possible the building boom of the 1820s and early 1830s.<sup>3</sup>

In the first three parishes mentioned above the land available for housing was freehold, but in St. Giles's and the neighbouring parish of St. Mary Magdalen almost all the available land belonged to St. John's College, who retained the freehold, so that development here took place under the leasehold system. The following terms have been used to define the categories of people involved in the provision of housing in this area. The developers were the ground landlords, St. John's and Worcester Colleges, who were responsible for laying out the streets and for overall planning. The speculators divide into two groups: those who bought and sold plots but did not themselves build and were therefore never lessees of the developers; and those who acquired plots, either direct from the developers or through a speculator of the first type, in order to build on them. They were sometimes lessees of the developers, either because they were living in one of their own houses or, more often, because they had failed to sell them and were therefore forced to rent them. The landlords were those whom the development was designed to attract, people who bought ready-built houses for letting; sometimes they lived in one themselves; they were always lessees. All those who actually lived in the houses were occupiers; they were sometimes lessees, sometimes tenants, and sometimes lodgers.

The leasehold tenure of the area gave it at least three advantages over contemporary freehold developments. In areas of freehold land, speculators of the first type defined above bought and sold land, taking profit from a rising market, the same plots often changing hands several times, thus adding greatly to the cost of the final product.<sup>4</sup> Here St. John's College kept a certain amount of control over development by ensuring that at least 'the shell' of a house had been built before a lease was confirmed and written into the lease ledger. In cases where only a shell had been built at the time the lease was granted, there was always a clause in the lease stating the time, usually nine months, within which the building had to be completed, although it is not possible of course to tell whether this stipulation was always fulfilled.

Another advantage of leasehold tenure was that the inhabitants escaped the worst consequences of the piecemeal nature of much freehold development, which was a main factor in inadequate drainage, leading to outbreaks of cholera and other diseases.

A third advantage was the imposition by the ground landlord of a certain unity of design; he was able to exercise control over the type, standard, and subsequent use of the houses built on his land.

As can be seen on Richard Davis's map (published in 1797), the west side of St. Giles's Street was entirely built up, with long, narrow tenements. The western limits of these tenements abutted on a 'close of meadow or pasture'<sup>5</sup> belonging to St. John's College. This close had as its northern boundary the grounds of the New Work House;<sup>6</sup> its western boundary was the wall which divided it from the waste of the Northgate Hundred, close east of what is now Walton Street, which belonged to the city;<sup>7</sup> and its southern boundary was formed by Gloucester Green and what Davis calls 'Friars' Entry. The area of the close was between seven and eight acres (about three hectares). It lay for the most part in the parish of St. Mary Magdalen, where it was 'formerly called the Church Yard and now

<sup>3</sup> R.J. Morris, 'The Friars and Paradise', *Oxoniensia* xxxvi (1971), 91.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 87.

<sup>5</sup> S.J.C. leases.

<sup>6</sup> The New Work House had been built in 1772 on the site of the present Wellington Square (*V.C.H. Oxon.* iv., 190).

<sup>7</sup> W.H. Stevenson and H.E. Salter, *Early History of St. John's College* (O.H.S. n.s., 1939), 439.

called the Beaumonts';<sup>8</sup> the smaller, northern part lay in St. Giles's parish, where it was known as 'Beaumont Close'.<sup>9</sup> This area of comparatively high and well-drained land, close to the city, was obviously ripe for development when the demand for housing arose in the early 1820s.

Before the 19th-century development took place, the only buildings on this close of meadow land were those described on Davis's map as the Old Work House, a scatter of buildings in the south-west of the area. They occupied the site of the former Carmelite Friary, dissolved in 1538, which in turn had started life as a royal residence, built in 1126-9 by Henry I and given to the White Friars in 1318 by Edward II.<sup>10</sup>

The largest single building in the Old Work House complex was in fact a comparatively modern one known as Woodroffe's Folly. This had been built about 1700 to house twenty Greek youths who were to come to Oxford to be trained as preachers and schoolmasters for their own country under Benjamin Woodroffe, at that time Principal of Gloucester Hall. The scheme failed, however, and by 1714, when Gloucester Hall was refounded as Worcester College, the building had apparently never been inhabited.<sup>11</sup> It lay parallel to, and slightly north of, the present line of Beaumont Street, across the site of nos. 25 and 26.<sup>12</sup>

From 1798 onwards Worcester College leased from St. John's College about half an acre of land in front of their college; four years later they increased their holding by leasing approximately another half acre, including Woodroffe's Folly,<sup>13</sup> bringing their total holding to about an acre (approximately half a hectare).

In April 1823 St. John's proposed to Worcester that the two colleges should exchange 'part of the property of the Beaumonts according to the survey and valuation of Mr. Dixon'<sup>14</sup> (the college's surveyor, Henry Dixon). The resulting agreement, which was concluded in April 1825, rationalised the arrangement under which Worcester College had previously leased land from St. John's by drawing a boundary line north-south across the present Beaumont Street. Having surrendered their previous leases, Worcester College acquired the freehold of all the land west of the boundary, the land to the east of the line reverting to St. John's. The boundary line ran close west of where no. 23 Beaumont Street stands today, and between nos. 24 and 25 on the north side of the street.<sup>15</sup> No. 24 has thus always stood on Worcester College land and been the property of that college.

Meanwhile in November 1821 the city Paving Commissioners had agreed to a request from Worcester College 'that an angle in the land on the south of Woodroffe's Folly' might be taken 'into the new road to St. Giles',<sup>16</sup> so that plans for the new, and as yet unnamed, street must have been under way by then. Worcester's interest in having such a street constructed may well have been reinforced by their experiences during the Vice-Chancellorship of their Provost in 1802-6 when the only route between their college and the ceremonial heart of the university lay through Gloucester Green, at that time the site of the pig-market, and along Friars' Entry 'at the risk of being besprinkled by trundled mops . . . of stumbling over buckets, knocking over children, of catching the rincings of basins, and ducking under linen-lines suspended across from opposite houses. . .'<sup>17</sup> As Cox observes,

<sup>8</sup> S.J.C. leases.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> *V.C.H. Oxon.* iv., 10, 367.

<sup>11</sup> E.D. Tappe, 'The Greek College in Oxford, 1699-1705', *Oxoniensia* xix (1954), 92.

<sup>12</sup> S.J.C. archives, plan no. 48, and Worcester College archives.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> S.J.C. Register, viii.

<sup>15</sup> S.J.C. archives, plan no. 48.

<sup>16</sup> Paving Commissioners' reports, hereafter abbreviated P.C.R., 7 Nov. 1821.

<sup>17</sup> G.V. Cox, *Recollections of Oxford* (1868), 189.

this made it difficult for the vice-cancellarial procession to preserve its dignity.

In May 1822 St. John's agreed that their surveyor should meet a surveyor appointed by Worcester 'to mark out the line of a road 60 ft. wide from Worcester College into St. Giles',<sup>18</sup> and the following month the Paving Commissioners, on the application of the Provost of Worcester, made an order to view 'the new street called Beaumont Street, for improving the said street by making gutters to carry off the water . . . as far as the same can at present be done',<sup>19</sup> which means that work on the street had already begun and that it had acquired a name.

By October 1822 work on the street was sufficiently far advanced for St. John's to ask their surveyor to value the land on each side of it, 'that the whole may be lett, as opportunities offer, on building leases',<sup>20</sup> and six months later the first plots were advertised in the local press to be sold 'for a term of 40 years from Lady Day last, subject to small annual ground rents'.<sup>21</sup> The houses were to be built according to certain specifications, plans, and particulars, which could be seen by applying to Mr. John Hudson, builder; anyone wishing to purchase was requested to send proposals, sealed up, stating the sum they were willing to give by way of fine for each lot, to Baker Morrell, Esq., solicitor.<sup>22</sup>

Unfortunately it has not been possible to trace the specifications mentioned in the advertisement; but it seems likely that each of the builders involved designed his own houses, within general guide-lines laid down by the landlord colleges, specifying, for instance, such things as Bath stone frontages.

By June 1823 Robert Farmer, stone mason, had built a house on a piece of freehold land he had acquired by 1814,<sup>23</sup> immediately west of the tenements in Magdalen Street. This house later became no. 4 Beaumont Street and was eventually demolished in October 1949,<sup>24</sup> to make way for an extension to the Randolph Hotel. In June 1823 Worcester College bought from Farmer part of the 'garden ground' of this house, on which ground Thomas Wyatt, as lessee of the college, had already 'partly erected . . . certain tenements'.<sup>25</sup> These must have been nos. 5-7 Beaumont Street and were finished and inhabited before the end of 1825.<sup>26</sup> By October 1823 St. John's were granting their first Beaumont Street leases, for four houses on the south side, next to the Worcester College houses.<sup>27</sup> In the same month the Paving Commissioners made an order for lamps to be put up in Beaumont Street and the street paved.<sup>28</sup> This brought an immediate reaction from Worcester College, two of whose fellows attended the next meeting of the Commissioners in November to object to the putting up of oil lamps and 'claiming to have gas lamps erected instead'.<sup>29</sup> As was to be expected, there ensued a lengthy argument and negotiations about who was to pay for laying the mains; but Worcester College had their way and a year later, in October 1824, the Commissioners ordered gas lamps to be put up in Beaumont Street 'as soon as the Gas Co. shall have laid the mains'.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>18</sup> S.J.C. Register, viii.

<sup>19</sup> P.C.R., 5 June 1822.

<sup>20</sup> S.J.C. Register, viii.

<sup>21</sup> *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, hereafter abbreviated *J.O.J.*, 26 April 1823.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Worcester College archives.

<sup>24</sup> Westgate Library photograph collection.

<sup>25</sup> Worcester College archives.

<sup>26</sup> *J.O.J.*, 10 Dec. 1825.

<sup>27</sup> S.J.C. leases.

<sup>28</sup> P.C.R., 8 Oct. 1823.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* 5 Nov. 1823.

<sup>30</sup> P.C.R., 27 Oct. 1824.

In April 1824 leases for seven more building plots on the south side of the street were granted by St. John's; these spread westward towards Worcester College, two to the east of, and the rest west of, a private road leading to Gloucester Green (now called Gloucester Street). At the same time land along the north side of Gloucester Green, which up to this time had only been built round on its western, southern, and eastern sides, was let to three lessees, each of whom built five small houses.<sup>31</sup> These houses shared a back lane with the Beaumont Street houses; they were completed and inhabited between February 1825 and December 1826,<sup>32</sup> by which time the south side of Beaumont Street was only complete as far as, and including, no. 18. They were three-storey, of brick construction, and survived until the middle of the present century. The two at the east end of the row were still standing, shored up, in August 1957.<sup>33</sup>

Also in April 1824 the college agreed 'that licence be granted of alienation to all those tenants of these lots who do not occupy them themselves'.<sup>34</sup>

Six months later, in October 1824, leases were granted of one more plot on the south side of Beaumont Street and five on the north side, at the east end, together with five plots in 'St. John Street at right angles to Beaumont Street'<sup>35</sup> – the first mention by name of St. John Street; these two rows of plots formed an L-shaped block, and at least one of the houses in the St. John Street arm of the L was inhabited by April 1826.<sup>36</sup> At the same time five plots behind St. John Street 'intended for the building of stables' were also leased.<sup>37</sup> These were at the south end of the east side of what is now Pusey Lane.

In the same month of October 1824 the Paving Commissioners ordered paving to be laid in front of the houses already built in Beaumont Street;<sup>38</sup> and the local press advertised a newly-erected house in Beaumont Street, faced with Bath stone, and including a large shop on the ground floor.<sup>39</sup> This was probably no. 13, on the east corner of Gloucester Street.

Early in 1825 George Kimber, whose tallow chandler business was in Friars' Entry, built 'four tenements and a brewhouse' on land leased from St. John's, in alignment with the buildings on the north side of Friars' Entry, at the west end.<sup>40</sup> They would also have been roughly in alignment with the houses being built on the other side of Gloucester Street, along the north side of Gloucester Green, described above. They adjoined the New College property which extended along the north side of Friars' Entry from Magdalen Street to the Gloucester Arms.<sup>41</sup> The 'brewhouse' was presumably the origin of the Gloucester Arms.

It seems certain that the three houses in the southernmost block on the west side of St. John Street must have been built at about the same time as the block facing them on the east side of the street. For some reason the lease to Joseph Whiteaves for the three houses on the west side was not entered in the College Register, and was not written into the lease ledger until October 1833, the 40 years of the lease dating from October 1824.<sup>42</sup> In October

<sup>31</sup> S.J.C. leases.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Westgate Library photograph collection.

<sup>34</sup> S.J.C. Register, viii.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> *Oxford Herald*, hereafter abbreviated *Her.*, 29 April 1826.

<sup>37</sup> S.J.C. Register, viii.

<sup>38</sup> P.C.R., 27 Oct. 1824.

<sup>39</sup> *J.O.J.*, 4 Sept. 1824.

<sup>40</sup> S.J.C. leases.

<sup>41</sup> H.E. Salter, *Survey of Oxford*, ii (O.H.S. n.s., 1969), 221 and map N.IV.

<sup>42</sup> S.J.C. leases.



1827, however, the occupier of one of these three houses prevailed on the Paving Commissioners to put up an oil lamp in the passage leading from St. Giles's Street towards his house in St. John Street;<sup>43</sup> so they must have been built and inhabited at least by then. This, southernmost, stretch of St. John Street is approximately two metres narrower than the rest of the street, built later.

Meanwhile the governing body of St. John's College had decided to carry on with the development of the rest of the area. In July 1824 the press printed an advertisement informing 'builders, capitalists and others' that an opportunity would shortly present itself 'for the safe investment of capital and the production of ample interest by the construction of a NEW STREET in St. Giles's, Oxford'; the new street was to 'adjoin D. Turner's Esq. passing out on the west from St. Giles's Street, allowed to be the most healthy and genteel part of Oxford'. The site afforded 'abundance of fine wholesome water, is well adapted for the construction of sewers, and standing on a bed of gravel, is desirably dry to admit the formation of basement stories'. The terms of contract were to be exactly similar to those 'so satisfactorily adopted in London and in other large places...'<sup>44</sup> Pigot's Directory for 1842 gives Miss Mary Turner living at no. 57 St. Giles's, site of the present Pusey House chapel, and an entry in the College Register dated 3 February 1829 records a payment of £20 to Miss Turner, in addition to a former payment of £30, 'in consideration of injury done to her property by alterations in Polley's Row'. It is thus apparent that the college were planning access to the northern part of the development area.

It was not, however, until October 1826 that an advertisement appeared in the local press for building materials to be sold by auction on the premises 'of those fifteen dwelling houses in . . . Polley's Row which are to be pulled down to complete the intended improvements in that neighbourhood, together with a summer house, several sheds, stone walls, etc.'<sup>45</sup> The earliest lease in this new street running west from St. Giles's Street was for two plots at the east end, dated July 1828, and was to the college butler of St. John's, who used one plot to build on to the back of an existing house in St. Giles's Street (now the St. Giles's Hotel) and kept the other plot as a garden.<sup>46</sup> By the end of 1829 the last lease in the street referred to it as 'a new street, formerly called Polley's Row, now called Alfred Street'.<sup>47</sup> Today of course it is called Pusey Street. The houses were all built on the north side of the street, and were demolished during the present century, the last in 1966.

In the same month that the former houses in Polley's Row were being demolished, October 1826, the first leases of plots in what is now Beaumont Buildings were being granted;<sup>48</sup> no. 6 has a stone built into the front wall carved with the legend 'ATH 1826' and no. 9 has a number of bricks stamped 'J. Arlidge HQ 1826'. The houses here were all built on the west side of the street, with the exception of no. 1, which faced up the street from the southern end.

Also in October 1826 six plots for a further development of stables and coach-houses in what is now Pusey Lane were leased to Dr. J.A. Ogle, Aldrichian Professor of Medicine in the University,<sup>49</sup> who lived in St. Giles's Street. These plots adjoined the ones already leased here, the northernmost one of which was later transferred to Dr. Ogle.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>43</sup> P.C.R., 24 Oct. 1827.

<sup>44</sup> *J.O.J.*, 3 July 1824.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* 28 Oct. 1826.

<sup>46</sup> S.J.C. leases.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> *Oxford University Calendar*.

<sup>50</sup> S.J.C. Register, viii.

The next plot sold in St. John Street, in April 1827,<sup>51</sup> was the northernmost one on the east side. It was 'bounded on the north side by land belonging to the Guardians of the Poor',<sup>52</sup> i.e. it was next to the House of Industry, or workhouse. Its proximity to this undesirable neighbour no doubt accounted for its relatively low entry fine and ground rent (see table 1), which in turn may have accounted for its being one of the earliest to sell in this street.

Next month, in May 1827, the three houses at the eastern end of the north side of Beaumont Street were advertised in the local press for sale with immediate possession,<sup>53</sup> and a few months later the Paving Commissioners ordered paving to be laid in front of these three houses.<sup>54</sup> Presumably because paving would have been damaged during the building process, it was evidently their custom to pave the footpath in front of each group of houses after they were completed, and to gravel the stretches of footpath where there were no houses. As late as December 1831 the Provost and Fellows of Worcester were complaining to the Commissioners about the extreme inconvenience they experienced in Beaumont Street from this arrangement, and offering to help pay for any expense incurred by 'taking the correct level' in order to have the whole footway paved.<sup>55</sup> Paving was generally of York stone, sometimes of Bristol paving; curbstone was described as Bristol curb.

'A large family residence' in Beaumont Street was for sale or to let in October 1827.<sup>56</sup> This was probably no. 19, adding a sixth house to the five already built on the south side of the street, west of Gloucester Street; and in the same month St. John's granted building leases for the next four plots to the westward, i.e. to the end of the street.<sup>57</sup> More plots in Beaumont Buildings were also granted at this time.<sup>58</sup>

Early in 1828 the last plots of building ground in Beaumont Street came on to the market; they were described in the advertisement<sup>59</sup> for the auction as being the only part of Beaumont Close with frontage on Beaumont Street remaining for sale, and must have consisted mainly of the land on the north side of the street, west of St. John Street. Interestingly, the same advertisement says: 'at the same time will be sold in lots about 100 yards of wall stones, the remains of Beaumont Palace, and the building materials of the House in lots 10 and 11' (Woodroffe's Folly, presumably).<sup>60</sup>

During 1829 the last leases in Beaumont Buildings were written into the lease ledger. These were for nos. 4 and 18 (at each end of the main row), and also for nos. 7 and 8. Since, however, the lease in each case ran from October 1826, it seems probable that they had in fact been built before 1829.

Even more delayed were the lease ledger entries for nos. 1 and 2 Beaumont Buildings. The earliest leases found for these two houses are both dated October 1839 and both refer

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> S.J.C. leases.

<sup>53</sup> *J.O.J.*, 12 May 1827.

<sup>54</sup> P.C.R., 13 Sept. 1827.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. 7 Dec. 1831.

<sup>56</sup> *J.O.J.*, 13 Oct. 1827.

<sup>57</sup> S.J.C. Register, viii.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> *J.O.J.*, 16 Feb. 1828.

<sup>60</sup> Although what became of the rest of the 'remains of Beaumont Palace' is unknown, we do know what happened to the east wall of the small, ruined building which stood just to the east of Woodroffe's Folly. It contained a doorway with a rose window over it and was reconstructed in the grounds of the Summertown house of Mr. George Kimber, one of the speculators involved in this land transaction. In 1967 when Bishop Kirk School was built on the site of Kimber's house, the stones were removed to the Carmelite Friary on Boars Hill, thus returning to the heirs of the original builders (R. Fasnacht, *Summertown since 1820*, 1977).



to leases starting in October 1838. It seems much more likely, however, that these were renewals rather than first leases, in which case the original leases would have run from 1824 and these two houses would in fact have been the first to be built in Beaumont Buildings. Evidence for this theory can be adduced both from the occupiers of the two houses and from the style and position of the houses themselves. The 1839 occupiers (both college servants) had both been listed in the 1834 poll book under Beaumont Buildings, one of them indeed in the 1832 poll book as well, so that, unless they had both moved from other houses in the same street, they must have been living at nos. 1 and 2 well before 1838. The houses are both detached, both two-storey (i.e. different from the rest of the development), and were in alignment with the southernmost block of houses on the west side of St. John Street, the leases of which were also very belatedly written into the ledger, as has already been stated.

Another detached house in Beaumont Buildings, no. 3, had one (the north) wall of rubble stone and stood on the site of a small building clearly visible on Davis's map, from which these stones may perhaps have come. The garden walls here are also of stone.

The first leases of the new development on the north side of Beaumont Street, west of St. John Street, were granted by St. John's College in 1830.<sup>61</sup> Worcester College built a house (no. 24) on their own land at about the same time.<sup>62</sup> A number of leases in St. John Street were also granted by St. John's during this year: on the west side nos. 57-60 and on the east side nos. 7-10.<sup>63</sup> At the north end of the street, the two plots immediately south of the end plots were also let in 1830.<sup>64</sup> This means that twenty of the sixty-one houses in St. John Street, or about one-third of the total, were built, or being built, by the end of 1830.

In June of the same year the Paving Commissioners were viewing Alfred Street to report on the 'propriety of paving and lighting it, and whether any and what drains and watercourses should be made',<sup>65</sup> and in the following January they ordered that the footpaths in St. John Street and Alfred Street should be paved.<sup>66</sup> During 1831 St. John's granted the leases of nine more plots in St. John Street, three on the west and six on the east side,<sup>67</sup> so that, by the end of 1831, approximately half the street was built or under construction.

In May 1831 the Paving Commissioners contributed £50 towards making a public culvert or drain (for carrying away rainwater) in Beaumont Street, 'the proprietors of the houses engaging to pay all the residue of the expence . . . and it is understood no drain be made into the culvert by any person not contributing'.<sup>68</sup>

At the Commissioners' meeting on 7 December 1831 Mr. Thomas Wyatt, the builder, stated 'it was intended to commence the building of a new house at the lower end of the south side of Beaumont Street within a month or two at farthest'. Actually it was two houses (nos. 22 and 23). Mr. Wyatt's lease for these two plots was entered in the lease ledger in September 1832. They had originally been sold to Mr. Hewlett in October 1827.<sup>69</sup> The latest dated leases of all in Beaumont Street (for nos. 30 and 31 on the north side) were entered in August 1833<sup>70</sup> and it seems reasonable to suppose that Beaumont Street was complete by this date.

<sup>61</sup> S.J.C. leases.

<sup>62</sup> Oral information from Worcester College.

<sup>63</sup> S.J.C. leases.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> P.C.R., 2 June 1830.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid. 5 Jan. 1831.

<sup>67</sup> S.J.C. leases.

<sup>68</sup> P.C.R., 18 May 1831.

<sup>69</sup> S.J.C. Register, viii.

<sup>70</sup> S.J.C. leases.

During 1832 and 1833 most of the remaining plots in St. John Street were also leased, including a group of three on the east side immediately south of Alfred Street, the only houses in the area known to have been built by Daniel Evans.<sup>71</sup> They were advertised for sale by auction, with immediate possession, in July 1832 and described as 'one first-rate dwelling house and two second-rate ditto'.<sup>72</sup> The 'first-rate' house (no. 22) sold quickly, possibly partly because it was on a corner, but the other two were being offered for sale again almost a year later, described this time as 'capital dwelling houses'.<sup>73</sup> One wonders whether this could have been partly because local people were not accustomed to London building terms and had reservations about anything described as 'second-rate'!

The reports of the Paving Commissioners seem to be noticeably silent about Beaumont Buildings. It is therefore not surprising that in May 1832 two inhabitants of that street were appealing on behalf of the whole street against their rates on account of 'insufficient lighting and want of paving the footway'.<sup>74</sup> They were told they must pay their rates and the grounds of appeal would be immediately removed.

In February 1834 Worcester College applied to have the pavement on both sides of the west end of Beaumont Street laid down and completed, and a fortnight later, no doubt as a result of this application, the Paving Commissioners ordered that 'the circus' at the west end of Beaumont Street should be paved and pitched.<sup>75</sup>

Almost all the remaining St. John Street leases were granted during 1834, the last houses to be built being nos. 50-52 in the middle of the west side.<sup>76</sup> The Paving Commissioners reported that complaints were being made in the summer of 1834, and again in March 1835, about the stone, bricks and other materials that the builder was keeping in the roadway, both in front of and behind the site on which he was building these three houses, and he was ordered to enclose them 'within a hoard or fence'.<sup>77</sup> Presumably these were the houses that were being offered for sale at different times during 1836,<sup>78</sup> by which time St. John Street was complete. So the entire development was finished by the end of 1836, some months before Queen Victoria ascended the throne.

A slightly puzzling case is no. 49 St. John Street, the earliest lease for which is dated December 1841 and runs from October 1838.<sup>79</sup> There was, however, already a school in this house in July 1835, when it was 'resuming' after the summer holiday.<sup>80</sup> (It is apparent from advertisements in the local press that schools at that time had two terms a year, with breaks at Christmas and midsummer.) So there must have been a school here at least from January 1835. As there is an entry in the College Register for this plot in April 1834 it seems likely that this house was built soon after that date, although the lease was not finalised until October 1838 (when the college took the opportunity of raising the entry fine from the original amount of £41. 5s. to £48).

At first Beaumont Street was the only street in the area to have a public culvert. The Paving Commissioners received several complaints from residents of Beaumont Buildings, especially from those living at the north end where the land level is lowest, about the rainwater 'running down from St. John Street' and flooding their basements.<sup>81</sup> (This is still

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> *J.O.J.*, 28 July 1832.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid. 15 June 1833.

<sup>74</sup> *P.C.R.*, 16 May 1832.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid. 19 Feb. 1834.

<sup>76</sup> *S.J.C.* leases.

<sup>77</sup> *P.C.R.*, 21 May 1834, 4 March 1835.

<sup>78</sup> *J.O.J.*, 16 April 1836, 11 June 1836, 1 Oct. 1836.

<sup>79</sup> *S.J.C.* leases.

<sup>80</sup> *J.O.J.*, 11 July 1835.

<sup>81</sup> *P.C.R.*, 4 Nov. 1835.

a problem today.) In January 1837 it was reported that there were scarcely any subscribers among the inhabitants of St. John Street and Beaumont Buildings to the 'intended culvert' down St. John Street, and the Commissioners decided that instead of a culvert a 'reservoir' should be made, to relieve the houses affected by water;<sup>82</sup> this was built in the following month.<sup>83</sup> In March 1841, however, a culvert was laid in St. John Street,<sup>84</sup> and applications started in that year from householders in that street for permission to make drains into it, for a fee of two guineas.

In Beaumont, St. John and Alfred<sup>85</sup> Streets the houses were stone-fronted with side and rear elevations generally of brick. The houses in Gloucester Green<sup>86</sup> and Beaumont Buildings had brick facades, some plain, some chequered. The houses at the north end of St. John Street were noticeably smaller and poorer in style than those at the south end, reflecting the socially less desirable position they occupied nearer to the workhouse.

All the houses in Beaumont Street and a few in St. John Street had decorative doorways with columns and pediments, or a recessed archway, or, in at least three cases in Beaumont Street, a rusticated ground floor storey. Some also had leaded patterns in the fanlights over their front doors. Elsewhere doorways were plain. All the houses in the area were well lighted by sash windows, generally of three-light panes, sometimes four-light. There is no mention of balconies on any of the houses, so presumably these were added at a later date.

The builders displayed considerable powers of invention when designing the interiors of the houses, the striking variety of styles belying the similarity of the exteriors. The single most varied feature was perhaps the staircase; in St. John Street alone, one staircase went straight up from front to back of the house, the two flights being in continuous alignment; at least one went up at right angles to the entrance hall, between the front and back rooms; at least three were spiral, with a central newel post; most were dog-legged, but rising from different positions on the ground floor.

There was also a considerable variation in size of house, even within each street, except in Gloucester Green. Here a typical house had front sitting room, kitchen, yard with back entrance, and 'other conveniences' on the ground floor; a large bedroom on the first floor, and another one on the second floor; and 'good cellaring'.<sup>87</sup>

One of the largest houses in Beaumont Street had entrance hall, breakfast parlour, library and butler's pantry on the ground floor; front and back drawing rooms, best bedroom and dressing room on the first floor, and five bedrooms and three attics over; with housekeeper's room, kitchen, beer and wine cellars, scullery, larder and coal cellar in the basement; and outside a brew-house, three-stalled stable and coach house, with back entrance and large garden. It also had two staircases.<sup>88</sup> Even the smaller Beaumont Street houses had a parlour, dining room, drawing room, and at least four bedrooms, in addition to kitchens and cellars. A few of the houses in this street were advertised as having 'water and other closets' indoors; no. 19 actually had two water closets.<sup>89</sup> (There were of course no bathrooms at this date.) Whether they were served by indoor water closets or outdoor privies, all the houses in the area were dependent on cesspool drainage, as there was no main drainage system at this time.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid. 4 Jan. 1837.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid. 15 Feb. 1837.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. 3 March 1841.

<sup>85</sup> Westgate Library photograph collection.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> *Her.*, 7 April 1838.

<sup>88</sup> *J.O.J.*, 13 Oct. 1827.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid. 15 Aug. 1840.



Fig. 2. Houses in St. John Street, Beaumont Street and Beaumont Buildings: specimen ground-plans. (Re-drawn, with amendments, from architects' plans provided by Messrs. Cluttons.)

Two of the Beaumont Street houses were purpose-built to contain shops, the only two in the area. These were on the south of the street, on either side of Gloucester Street.<sup>90</sup> A description of the one on the west corner reads: 'substantially built dwelling house . . . with Bath stone front, containing kitchen, pantry, scullery, with pump and good water, wine, beer and coal cellars; large shop with frontage of 22 feet and 31 feet deep, with room adjoining; drawing room 22 feet by 16 feet 6 ins.; large bedroom and dressing room adjoining; three other bedrooms and large garden . . . detached from the house are a coach house, two-stalled stable, brewhouse, laundry, pump, etc.'<sup>91</sup> (This house was demolished during the 1950s.)

In April 1828 Mr. Robert Farmer, advertising his house 'at the south-east corner of Beaumont Street' (no. 4) to be let on long lease, described it as 'premises well adapted either for a private residence or for various kinds of business, as an excellent show shop may be made, and the outlet is considerable'.<sup>92</sup> We learn from the same advertisement that it had a courtyard and garden, with gates leading into them from Beaumont Street.

In St. John Street probably the largest house, on the corner of Alfred Street, contained 'in the basement a lofty front kitchen 24' x 16', a back ditto 17' x 12', fitted up with forcing pump and every convenience; coal, beer and wine cellars; on the ground floor a spacious entrance passage, a lofty dining parlour 18' x 17' divided by folding doors from the breakfast parlour 18' x 12'; on the first floor a noble drawing-room 25' x 17' and bed room adjoining 18' x 12'; three other principal bed chambers and three servants' ditto . . . excellent water closet on the first landing . . .'<sup>93</sup>

One of the smallest mid-terrace houses in the same street contained 'in the basement, kitchen, coal and beer cellars; on the ground floor, passage entrance, front parlour, back kitchen with pump and good water; on the first floor, dining room and bedroom; on the second floor, another bedroom'.<sup>94</sup>

Advertisements for houses in Beaumont Street almost invariably used the adjective 'genteel', either to describe the residence itself or the kind of family for which it was 'calculated'. Houses in St. John Street, on the other hand, were frequently described as 'convenient' or 'commodious' but very seldom as 'genteel'. In the same way, Beaumont Street houses had stables and coach-houses, whereas St. John Street houses had stables and gig-houses.

Variations in house size often resulted from differences in the sizes of sites, these in turn arising from the splitting up and amalgamating of plots. This process was most noticeable in Alfred Street and Beaumont Buildings. In the former street the lessees of plots 81 and 83 divided plot 82 between them, half each; but whereas the holder of plot 81 built one house on his land, the holder of plot 83 built two houses on approximately the same area of land.<sup>95</sup>

In Beaumont Buildings the lessee of plots 50 and 49 also held one-third of plot 48, the other two-thirds of this plot being held by the lessee of plot 47. The latter built two houses on his one and two-thirds plots, while the former built three on his two and one-third plots.<sup>96</sup> Next door, the holder of plot 51 built a house on half of it and kept the other half as a gateway with rooms over it, which were let separately from the house. This may have been because, as a slater and 'plaisterer', he needed access to the yard at the back for storage.<sup>97</sup> A

<sup>90</sup> S.J.C. archives, plan no. 51.

<sup>91</sup> *J.O.J.*, 2 Feb. 1828.

<sup>92</sup> *Her.*, 5 April 1828.

<sup>93</sup> *J.O.J.*, 4 Aug. 1832.

<sup>94</sup> *Her.*, 29 Dec. 1838.

<sup>95</sup> S.J.C. lease ledgers.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> *Her.*, 6 Aug. 1836.

subsequent owner converted the gateway entrance into a room with a window and a front door; one can see the difference between the plain bricks of the lower storey and the chequered brickwork of the two upper storeys. There are thus two houses on one plot here, both very small.

It seems that at least some of the houses in the area were built with completely enclosed basements. The reports of the Paving Commissioners note occasional applications for permission 'to make a cellar window with an iron grating in the pavement'; or 'to make an area' in front of a house. Permission was always granted, which was just as well, as the basements must have been very dark and airless when walled in.

The houses in Beaumont Street and St. John Street had small gardens at the back; in Beaumont Buildings, because the plots were very shallow from front to back, the only way of getting a garden bigger than a small back yard was to keep a plot free from building, in order to make a garden at the side of the house. Thus we find un-built-on plots south of nos. 20 and 4 and north of no. 3.

As there was no main water supply at this time, the houses were dependent on wells, probably usually serviced by pumps. The prevalence of beer cellars suggests that perhaps beer was drunk in preference to water, which may not always have been very pure. Possibly the 'good water' mentioned in many advertisements referred to quantity rather than quality.

## II

Even under the leasehold system opportunities existed for considerable financial gain, and one pair of speculators, George Kimber, tallow chandler, and Crews Dudley, solicitor, who were already active in the St. Ebbe's, St. Clement's, and Summertown areas of Oxford, were also prominently involved in Beaumont Street. It is perhaps significant that Dudley took his profit from his St. Ebbe's holding in May 1823,<sup>98</sup> just after the first plots of building land in Beaumont Street had been advertised, in April 1823.

In April 1824 Kimber acquired two plots on the south side of Beaumont Street,<sup>99</sup> though there is no evidence that Dudley was involved in this transaction. In October of the same year, however, the partnership acquired all five of the plots being offered on the north side of the street, east of St. John Street (on which seven houses were eventually built), and one of the plots round the corner in St. John Street, as well as five plots 'intended for the building of stables' on the east side of what is now Pusey Lane.<sup>100</sup>

Evidently finding investment in this area well worth while, they proceeded to acquire the remaining plots on the north side of Beaumont Street, west of St. John Street, when these became available three years later.<sup>101</sup> In October 1827 the College Register recorded the purchase by them of 'lots 11 and 12 in the Beaumonts' for, respectively, £49. 7s. 6d. and £43. 2s. 6d., 'in addition to lots before granted to them'. An item in the college accounts for 1828<sup>102</sup> recorded the receipt of the balance due from Dudley and Kimber for lots 1-10 and lots 11 and 12 in the Beaumonts. A sketch map dated May 1827 in the college archives shows plots XII and XI at the west end of the north side of Beaumont Street, apparently unsold at this time, with 'Messrs. Dudley and Kimber' written alongside to the east, implying that they had bought, or were negotiating to buy, at least the next plot to the east (no other plots on the north of the street are marked or numbered on this plan). It therefore seems that the advertisement which appeared in the local press in February 1828 was

<sup>98</sup> R.J. Morris, 'The Friars and Paradise', *Oxoniensia* xxxvi (1971), 89.

<sup>99</sup> S.J.C. leases.

<sup>100</sup> S.J.C. Register, viii.

<sup>101</sup> Excluding the plot at the west end, which belonged to Worcester College.

<sup>102</sup> S.J.C. *Computus Annuus*, 1828.



inserted by Dudley and Kimber, who had by this time acquired 'the only part of Beaumont Close with frontage on Beaumont Street that remains for sale'.<sup>103</sup> (In fact 'the Beaumonts' would have been the correct description, rather than 'Beaumont Close', which was the name of the part of the area which lay in St. Giles's parish. St. John's College would not have made this mistake, had they been drafting the advertisement.) The same advertisement also offered for sale no. 14, on the south side of the street, built on one of the two plots previously leased to Kimber by the college; indeed the auction of the building plots was to take place on these premises. All the houses built on the plots auctioned by Dudley and Kimber in February 1828 were leased to other people by the time they reached the lease ledgers in 1830-33, about half of them to builders.

There is no evidence that any other speculators were involved to anything like the same extent as Dudley and Kimber, or of any others who were only financially involved in the development. (Dudley and Kimber as a partnership did not build on their plots, although Kimber operating on his own evidently did.) Among builder speculators, the most widely involved were: Thomas Winterborne with twelve plots, all in St. John Street, George Bennett with nine, also all in St. John Street, John Chaundy with eight plots, two in Beaumont Street and six in St. John Street, and Charles Hannum with seven plots, five in Beaumont Street and two in St. John Street. Indeed Winterborne, Bennett and Chaundy between them built at least half the houses in the later phase of development of the latter street, i.e. after the eight houses at the narrower, southern end, which were built earlier.

Other builders who were speculating in the area included Stephen Hannum, Daniel Evans, Edgar Hewlett, Thomas Hewlett, W. and R. Lait, and Charles Lane. There was also one woman builder, Margaret Wyatt, who probably built at least three of the St. John Street houses. Robert Farmer and Peter Hope, who were stone masons, almost certainly built the houses on their own plots, and the same may be true of W.H. and J. Bliss, who were painters and, later, plumbers. (Edgar Hewlett appeared in earlier lists as a painter.)<sup>104</sup>

One of the earliest builders in St. John Street was Charles Lane, who became bankrupt in 1827; his assignees sold a piece of land 'with the building thereon, situated in St. John Street . . . together with a quantity of Bath stone, in block, and some worked, and other materials'.<sup>105</sup> An entry in the College Register dated 11 October 1826 shows that he had made a bid to buy lots 46-50 in Beaumont Buildings; a marginal note states that this was 'not accepted' - perhaps he was already having cash flow problems? He was one of the builders involved in the development of St. Ebbe's.<sup>106</sup> A later bankruptcy was that of Stephen Hannum, whose assignees sold no. 13 St. John Street in May 1832.<sup>107</sup>

The builder speculators seem to have confined their activities to Beaumont and St. John Streets, with the exception of the Bliss's who had two houses in Alfred Street. Non-builder speculators, on the other hand, were active throughout the area, since the development provided an opportunity of investment for people who were no longer able to obtain a good return on their money by investing in industry or government stocks.

In Gloucester Green Thomas Johnson, wheelright, John Eveness, coachman, and Ann Jackson, widow, each built five small houses, the two latter each occupying one themselves. (John Eveness had also been involved in the development of St. Ebbe's.)<sup>108</sup> It is interesting that Ann Jackson was evidently able to carry through the project even after the death of her

<sup>103</sup> *J.O.J.*, 2 Feb. 1828.

<sup>104</sup> Poll books.

<sup>105</sup> *J.O.J.*, 14 April 1827.

<sup>106</sup> R.J. Morris, *op. cit.* note 98, 88.

<sup>107</sup> *J.O.J.*, 26 May 1832.

<sup>108</sup> R.J. Morris, *op. cit.* note 98, 88.

husband, Mr. J. Jackson (occupation not given), which must have occurred between April 1824, when the sale was recorded in the College Register in his name, and February 1825 when the lease was entered in the lease ledger in hers.

In Beaumont Buildings John Arrow, cordwainer, John Hooper, porter of Oriel College, and William Newman, plasterer, each built two houses, and Jonathan Brown, slater and 'plaisterer', built two houses and 'a gateway with rooms over',<sup>109</sup> while David Morgan, baker, built three, as well as one in St. John Street. There is no evidence that any of them lived in the area, so they all presumably owned property elsewhere; Jonathan Brown certainly owned two houses in Jericho.<sup>110</sup> William Smith, tailor, who built two houses in Beaumont Buildings and lived in one of them, keeping a third plot as a garden, also owned a house in Caroline Street, St. Clement's,<sup>111</sup> and may of course have owned other property as well, as may James Hughes, cooper, who built one house in Beaumont Buildings which he let.

James Howse, yeoman, leased four plots in Beaumont Buildings and two in St. John Street. In Beaumont Buildings he built two small houses back-to-back, the only example of this in the whole development (see Fig. 2), and kept the rest of the land as garden. In St. John Street he built one house, the other plot being described in the lease as 'set out for a Road'.<sup>112</sup> On Robert Hoggar's plan of 1850, however, there appear to be buildings at the back of Howse's St. John Street house; it may have been these that were rated at £10 in the 1839-40 rate book, under Alfred Street, as they would be approached from Alfred Lane (now Pusey Lane). (A James Howes, college servant, was listed under Alfred Street in the 1835 poll book.)

Other speculators who were building houses to let included two victuallers, James Prior with one house in Beaumont Buildings and one in St. John Street, and John Mead with two houses in St. John Street; and a milkman, Thomas Harris of Marston, who built one house in St. John Street. There is no evidence for any of these having lived in the area.

In Beaumont Street the three lessees of the first six plots for sale by St. John's on the south side, between October 1823 and April 1824, each built two houses; Richard Chaundy, baker, of Greenwich,<sup>113</sup> let both his, but Joseph Pinfold, pastrycook, and Charles Brown, wine merchant, each lived himself in one of his houses and let the other. Among Charles Brown's other property in the area, advertised after his death, were livery stables with stalls for nine horses, hay and corn lofts, and saddle rooms; and an ice house. These were all situated 'at the back of Beaumont and St. John Streets'. He also owned three lots of leasehold property in St. Ebbe's and four freehold properties in Summertown.<sup>114</sup>

It is not possible in most cases to tell who were the builders of the houses built for non-builder speculators. The following is a list of houses the builders of which are known:

<sup>109</sup> *Her.*, 6 Aug. 1836.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> *P.C.R.*, 5 Aug. 1835.

<sup>112</sup> *S.J.C.* leases.

<sup>113</sup> Richard Chaundy seems to have been the only person directly involved in the whole development who was not local; as he bore the name Chaundy, however, it seems reasonable to suppose that he had local connections, and had himself perhaps been brought up in Oxford.

<sup>114</sup> *Her.*, 20 Feb. 1836.

## The builders

## St. John Street, east side

- 5, 6 Charles Hannum
- 7 Peter Hope
- 8 Stephen Hannum
- 9 Edgar Hewlett
- 11 Edgar Hewlett
- 13-15 Stephen Hannum
- 16, 17 Thomas Winterborne
- 18, 19 George Bennett
- 20-22 Daniel Evans
- 23, 24 George Bennett
- 25 ?W.H. and J. Bliss
- 26 Thomas Winterborne
- 28 William and Richard Lait
- 29, 30 Thomas Winterborne
- 32 Robert Farmer

## St. John Street, west side

- 34 George Wyatt
- 37-43 Thomas Winterborne
- 47, 48 ?Margaret Wyatt
- 49 Margaret Wyatt
- 50-54 George Bennett
- 55-60 John Chaundy

## Beaumont Street, south side

- \*4 Robert Farmer
- 5-7 Thomas Wyatt
- 17 Thomas Hewlett
- 18-21 Charles Hannum
- 22, 23 Thomas Wyatt

## Beaumont Street, north side

- 25, 26 Charles Hannum
- 30, 31 John Chaundy
- 34-36 Thomas Wyatt
- \*38, \*39 Thomas Wyatt

Note: 23 St. John Street is known today as 5 Pusey Street

\* demolished

The number of landlords in the area (i.e. people who bought ready-built houses for letting) seems to have been small. In Beaumont Street William Dry, a wealthy tailor, bought three houses and lived in one himself; and Thomas Taylor, printseller, and Joseph Vincent, bookseller, each bought two houses for letting. In St. John Street Joseph Whiteaves, butcher, bought three houses and lived in one himself; Joseph Jeffcoat Hemmings, a prominent local sausage maker, bought six houses for letting; and William James Couling, innkeeper, bought two houses for letting. It seems possible that these may have been about the only examples of this category. There were in addition a number of people who bought one plot, had a house built on it, and lived in it themselves. Examples can be found in each street, apart from Gloucester Green.

The parliamentary reformers of 1832 felt that ownership of a £10 rated house was an indication of middle class status.<sup>115</sup> According to this criterion, the owners of every house in the area were of middle class status. The lowest rated house of all was no. 2 Beaumont Buildings, at £10; this house and no. 1 Beaumont Buildings were the only two-storeyed houses, but no. 1 was much bigger than no. 2 and was rated at £16. The Gloucester Green houses were all rated at from £12 to £16.<sup>116</sup>

<sup>115</sup> R.J. Morris, *op. cit.* note 98, 92.

<sup>116</sup> City Rates Book, 1839-40.

It is noticeable that the smaller, cheaper houses, in Gloucester Green and Beaumont Buildings, all seem to have sold quickly. The grander, more expensive ones in Beaumont Street sold moderately quickly, about a fifth remaining on the hands of the builders. In St. John Street the middle-range houses were evidently slower to sell, about one-third remaining with the builders. This was no doubt partly due to the fact that there were more of them (61, as against 37 in Beaumont Street), and partly because they were released on to the market at a rather faster rate.

Everyone who owned a leasehold house, whether as builder, landlord, or owner occupier, held a lease from the ground landlord. St. John's College leases at this time in this area were invariably for forty years. (Later, in 1855, an Act of Parliament was passed which enabled the college to grant longer leases.)<sup>117</sup> The ground rents charged remained the same throughout the life of the lease. They ranged from 12s. a year in Gloucester Green to £5 a year for the largest houses in Beaumont Street. Payment was made 'in the Common Dining Hall of the said College . . . on the two most usual days of Payment of Rent in the year . . . the tenth day of October and the fifth day of April'.<sup>118</sup> Original entry fines ranged from £9 a house in Gloucester Green to £83 in Beaumont Street. Leases had, however, to be renewed every fourteen years, when a new fine was payable, usually different from the original one, though not always higher. The fifteen houses in Gloucester Green went up to amounts varying between £21 and £27 a house, i.e. up to three times the original fine. Beaumont Street fines also went up, sometimes to as much as twice the original, and the same was true of Beaumont Buildings. In Alfred Street fines were increased by comparatively small amounts. But in St. John Street, in about a third of the cases, the fine was decreased; the rule in this street seems to have been that it was decreased when the original fine was more than £40 and increased when it was below that sum, although there was one case of a house originally charged at £33 being reduced to £26.<sup>119</sup>

In considering the amounts paid in ground rents and entry fines, it is possible to assess the impact made on the financial resources of an artisan lessee when we know that, in the early 1830s, 'a mechanic in Oxford will obtain as a mason, carpenter, painter or sawyer £1 per week and will find employment eight or nine months of the year'.<sup>120</sup>

Unfortunately it is difficult to find evidence of what the lessees charged their tenants in rent. There is, however, evidence for one house in Beaumont Street. When the executors of Charles Brown, the wine merchant, were advertising his property in 1836, they described the house he let (next door to the one in which he had formerly lived, and in which his son was then living and carrying on the business) as being let 'at the low rent of £50 p.a.'. <sup>121</sup> (This must have been no. 12 Beaumont Street.)

The following table gives details of the first leases:

<sup>117</sup> *V.C.H. Oxon.* iv., 197.

<sup>118</sup> S.J.C. leases.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*; the earliest renewals occurred in 1838.

<sup>120</sup> Report of Royal Commission on Poor Laws, H.C. 44, 1834, xxxvi.

<sup>121</sup> *Her.*, 20 Feb. 1836.

Table 1. *The first leases*

Street no.	Plot no.	Date of first lease	First lessee	Original entry fine	Annual ground rent
<i>Friars Entry</i> (4 tenements and a brewhouse)		8.2.25	George Kimber, tallow chandler	£70	£4
<i>Gloucester Green</i> (5 tenements)		8.2.25	Ann Jackson, widow	£45	£3
(5 tenements)		22.6.26	John Eveness, coachman	£45	£3
(5 tenements)		1.12.26	Thomas Johnson, wheelwright	£45	£3
<i>Beaumont Street, south side</i>					
8	}	3.6.24	Joseph Pinfold, pastrycook	£128	£5
9		"	"		
10	}	3.6.24	Richard Chaundy of Greenwich, baker	£117	£5
11		"	"		
12	}	8.2.25	Charles Brown, wine merchant	£122	£5
13		"	"		
14	}	22.6.26	George Kimber, tallow chandler	£130	£6. 5s.
15		"	"		
16		22.6.26	William Cock, gent.	£45	£3. 2s. 6d.
17		1.12.26	William Bragge, New College, Esq.	£45	£3. 2s. 6d.
18		30.12.26	John Alder, gent.	£83	£2. 10s.
19		11.3.29	James West Esq.	£75	£5
20	}	22.3.28	Charles Hannum, builder	£109. 2s. 6d.	£6
21		"	"		
22	}	8.9.32	Thomas Wyatt, builder	£103. 10s.	£3
23		"	"		

Street no.	Plot no.	Date of first lease	First lessee	Original entry fine	Annual ground rent
<i>Beaumont Street, north side</i>					
40	I	16.11.27	Mrs. Mary Ann Wyatt, widow	£37. 10s.	£2. 10s.
39 } 38 }	II	16.11.27	Thomas Taylor, printseller	£47. 12s. 6d.	£1. 17s. 6d.
37	III	20.6.27	Robert Speakman, gent.	£80. 12s. 6d.	£3. 15s.
36 } 35 } 34 }	IV V	20.5.28	Thomas Wyatt, builder	£160. 5s. 6d.	£7
33		31.12.31	James Banting, gent.	£65. 18s. 1½d.	£2. 7s. 6d.
32		21.12.31	Walton Muncaster, gent.	£65. 18s. 1½d.	£2. 7s. 6d.
31		31.8.33	John Chaundy, builder	£130. 18s. 9d.	£4. 15s.
30	VI	"	"		
29	to	3.9.32	Martha Cock, spinster	£49. 14s.	£2. 12s.
28	XII	21.6.31	Joseph Vincent, bookseller	£95	£5
27		"	"		
26		10.12.30	Charles Hannum, builder	£93	£3. 16s.
25		"	"		
<i>Beaumont Buildings</i>					
1	—	26.10.39	Thomas Chamberlain, £21 servant at Trinity College		£1. 6s.
2	XIII	26.10.39	Thomas Phipps, servant at Trinity College	£16	£1. 6s.
3	36-39	18.12.29	James Howse, yeoman	£56. 5s. (for 4 plots here and 2 plots in St. John Street)	£4. 6s.
4	40-41	30.6.29	Isaac Wheeler, gardener	£18	£1. 3s. 6d.
5	42	1.12.26	John Arrow, cordwainer	£19. 2s. 6d.	£1. 4s. 6d.
6	43	"	"		



Street no.	Plot no.	Date of first lease	First lessee	Original entry fine	Annual ground rent
7 } 8 } 9	44	27.5.29	John Hooper, porter of Oriel College	£20. 16s. 3d.	£1. 6s. 6d.
	45	"	"		
	46	16.11.27	James Taylor, bed-maker of Exeter College	£10. 17s. 6d.	14s.
10 } 11 } 12 }	47	2.11.28	William Newman, plasterer	£18. 10s.	£1. 3s. 8d.
	"	"	"		
	to	16.11.27	David Morgan, baker		
13 } 14 } 15 }	"	"	"	£32. 6s. 3d.	£2. 1s. 10d.
	50	"	"		
	51	20.10.28	Johnathan Brown, slater and plaisterer	£22. 13s. 9d.	£1. 9s.
16 } 17 }	52	"	"		
18	53	18.12.29	James Prior, victualler	£9. 15s.	13s.
20	54-6	27.5.29	William Smith, tailor	£27	£1. 13s.
21	57	27.5.29	James Hughes, cooper	£9. 18s. 9d.	12s.

*St. John Street, west side*

63 } 62 } 61 }	XIV- XVII	26.10.33	Joseph Whiteaves, butcher	£95	£4. 10s.
60	22				
59	23	10.12.30	J.J. Hemmings, sausage maker	£183	£8
58	24				
57	25				
56	26	26.10.33	John Chaundy, builder	£82. 10s.	£4
55	27				
54	28	22.2.34	George Bennett, builder	£82. 10s.	£4
53	29				
52	30				
51	31	5.8.34	George Bennett, builder	£123. 15s.	£6
50	32				
49	33	2.12.41	William Savours, gent. and Margaret Wyatt, widow	£48	£2

Street no.	Plot no.	Date of first lease	First lessee	Original entry fine	Annual ground rent
48	34	26.10.33	J.J. Hemmings,	£41. 5s.	£2
47	35	21.6.31	sausage maker	£47. 5s.	£2
46	58	19.7.32	James Prior, victualler	£53. 5s.	£2
45	59	19.7.32	John Mead, victualler	£94. 10s.	£4
44	60				
43	61	19.3.33	Richard Gilbert, hall man of Balliol	£47. 5s.	£2
42	62	5.4.32	Elizabeth Hicks, widow	£41. 5s.	£2
41	63	26.10.33	Thomas Winterborne, builder	£82. 10s.	£4
40	64				
39	65	10.10.33	Thomas Winterborne, builder	£59. 12s. 6d.	£4
38	66				
37	67	21.6.31	John Castell, servant at Balliol	£23. 5s.	£1. 10s.
36	68	7.4.31	Thomas Wells, servant at Exeter	£20. 8s. 9d.	£1
35	69	11.11.37	William Painton, college servant	£14. 12s. 6d.	£1
34	70	18.12.29	George Wyatt, builder	£18	£1
<i>St. John Street, east side</i>					
2	XVIII	20.5.28	George Kimber, tallow chandler	£46. 17s. 6d.	£2
3	XIX	1.12.26	John Bayzand, coachman	£46. 17s. 6d.	£2
4	XX	20.4.25	Thomas Harris of Marston, milkman	£46. 17s. 6d.	£2
5	XXI	27.5.29	Charles Hannum, builder	£93. 15s.	£4
6	XXII				
7	1	17.2.30	Peter Hope, mason	£57. 15s.	£2
8	2	17.2.30	Stephen Hannum, builder	£48. 15s.	£2
9	3	21.5.30	Edgar Hewlett, painter	£44. 8s. 9d.	£2
10	4	21.5.30	William Kirtland, gent.	£44. 1s. 3d.	£2
11	5	5.8.34	Edgar Hewlett, painter	£43. 17s. 6d.	£2

	Street no.	Plot no.	Date of first lease	First lessee	Original entry fine	Annual ground rent
13	12	6	13.10.30	Edwin Beckett, cabinet maker	£43. 17s. 6d.	£2
14	13	7	16.3.31	Stephen Hannum, builder	£43. 17s. 6d.	£2
15						
16	14	8	26.10.33	William J. Couling, innkeeper	£87. 15s.	£4
17	15	9				
18	16	10	Nov. 1831	Thomas Winterborne, builder	£87. 3s. 9d.	£4
19	17	11				
20	18	12	30.5.32	George Bennett, builder	£82. 6s. 3d.	£4
21	19	13				
22	20	14		Daniel Evans, builder	£47. 7s. 3d.	£2. 5s.
23	21	15	30.4.32		£47. 7s. 3d.	£2. 5s.
24	22	16			£69. 3s.	£3. 10s.
25	23	71	21.6.31	George Bennett, builder	£73. 2s. 6d.	£4
	24					
	25	72	30.12.37	William H. and James Bliss, painters	£33	£2
26						
27	26	73	19.7.32	Thomas Wyatt, gent.	£28. 17s. 6d.	£2
28	27	74	14.11.31	George Randall, livery stable keeper	£27. 15s.	£2
29	28	75	14.11.31	Thomas Lee of Ducklington, gent.	£26. 12s. 6d.	£2
30						
31	29	76	8.9.32	Thomas Winterborne, builder	£47. 8s. 9d.	£3. 10s.
	30	77				
	31	78	11.10.30	George Martin, common room man at St. John's	£22. 10s.	£1. 13s.
32						
33	32	79	11.10.30	Robert Farmer, yeoman	£19	£1. 10s.
	33	80	18.12.29	James Howse, yeoman	£56. 5s. (for 2 plots here and 4 plots in Beaumont Buildings)	14. 6s.
<i>Alfred Street</i>						
	81 and half of 82 (2 tenements)	18.12.29	William H. and James Bliss, painters	£27. 16s. 3d.	£1. 12s.	
	half of 82 and 83 (1 tenement)	20.10.28	George A. Rowell, cabinet maker	£30. 16s. 3d.	£2	
	84	24.12.28	William Taylor, tailor	£24. 3s. 9d.	£1. 10s.	

Street no.	Plot no.	Date of first lease	First lessee	Original entry fine	Annual ground rent
	85	20.10.28	John Simmons, cordwainer	£25. 17s. 6d.	£1. 12s.
	86	2.7.28	Charles Bridges,	£40. 7s. 6d.	£3. 15s.
	87		butler of St. John's		
(1 tenement)					

Information showing the kind of people who lived in the houses during approximately the first ten years of the development can be gathered from poll books and directories. As might be expected, Beaumont Street had the greatest number of independents and professional people; the inhabitants of St. John Street and Alfred Street were predominantly craftsmen, followed by professional people and tradesmen in roughly equal numbers; Beaumont Buildings and Gloucester Green together contained approximately equal numbers of craftsmen and college servants.

In the table which follows, the independents in Beaumont Street included the widow of Sir Edward Hitchings, a wealthy tailor who had been mayor of Oxford, and James Banting, another former tailor, who was mayor in the early 1830s. Two other wealthy former tailors who had by this time joined the ranks of the gentry and bought houses in this street were William Dry and Robert Speakman. The clergy included Dr. Bulkeley Bandinel, who was Bodley's Librarian; the attorneys included George Cecil, who was coroner for both city and county; the printers included John Collingwood, one of the printers to the University; and the organist was William Marshall, organist of the cathedral and of St. John's College.

In St. John Street the printers of the two rival local newspapers, Charles Haldon of *Jackson's Oxford Journal* and Joseph Munday of the *Herald*, lived side by side (at nos. 24 and 25). William Turner, the Oxford artist, lived at no. 16 from 1833 until his death in 1862.<sup>122</sup> Another early inhabitant of this street was the mayor's serjeant.

College servants were often quite well off financially. Of the eighteen in the table, the colleges of nine are known: three worked at Trinity and two each at Balliol, Exeter and St. John's, the latter including the college butler.

The comparatively large number of coachmen was no doubt due to the proximity of the livery stables in Alfred Lane (now Pusey Lane). Oxford was noted at this time for the number and quality of its livery stables,<sup>123</sup> and coachmen were another category who could be counted among the better off members of the community. There were also stage coachmen living in the area, including John Bayzand, who lived at no. 3 St. John Street and drove the Oxford-Southampton coach for thirty-six years.<sup>124</sup>

The school with the largest premises was that of Mr. John Farbrother, who inserted an advertisement in the local press in July 1834 announcing that he had moved his school to a house in St. John Street 'recently built expressly for the purpose of a school', with a 'spacious, airy school room, and large playground attached'.<sup>125</sup> This was no. 55, which was later divided into two houses (present day nos. 55 and 56).

<sup>122</sup> Luke Herrmann, 'William Turner of Oxford, 1789-1862', *Oxoniensia* xxvi-xxvii (1961-2), 312.

<sup>123</sup> *V.C.H. Oxon.* iv., 212.

<sup>124</sup> W. Bayzand, 'Coaching in and out of Oxford from 1820 to 1840', *Collectanea*, 4th ser. O.H.S., xlvii (1905), 281.

<sup>125</sup> *J.O.J.*, 5 July 1834.

Table 2. *Early inhabitants of the area*

(Categories of residents living in the various streets at some time between 1824 and 1834, not all of them householders)

	<i>Beaumont Street</i>	<i>St. John Street and Alfred Street</i>	<i>Gloucester Green and Beaumont Buildings</i>	<i>Total</i>
Independents	14	5	2	21
Professions	15	9	1	25
	8 clergy	2 clergy	auctioneer	
	3 attorneys	2 attorneys		
	2 apothecaries	2 accountants		
	surveyor	artist		
	organist	surgeon		
		professor		
Craftsmen	4	18	11	33
	2 printers	6 tailors	2 tailors	
	brewer	4 builders	2 coachmakers	
	herald painter	2 printers	painter	
		coachmaker	carpenter	
		milliner	cooper	
		bonnet-maker	baker	
		cordwainer	gardener	
		cabinet-maker	whitesmith	
		painter/glazier	shoemaker	
Tradesmen and shopkeepers	3	9	0	12
	wine merchant	grocer		
	grocer	fruiterer		
	confectioner	perfumer		
		tea dealer		
		butcher		
		coal merchant		
		hatter		
		ironmonger		
		printseller		
College servants	2	7	9	18
Coachmen	0	7	2	9
Schools	1	8	0	9

Sources: Oxford City poll books, 1832, 1834, 1835  
*Oxford University, City and County Directory*, 1835 (Vincent's)  
*Pigot's Trade Directory*, 1830  
 local newspaper advertisements

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