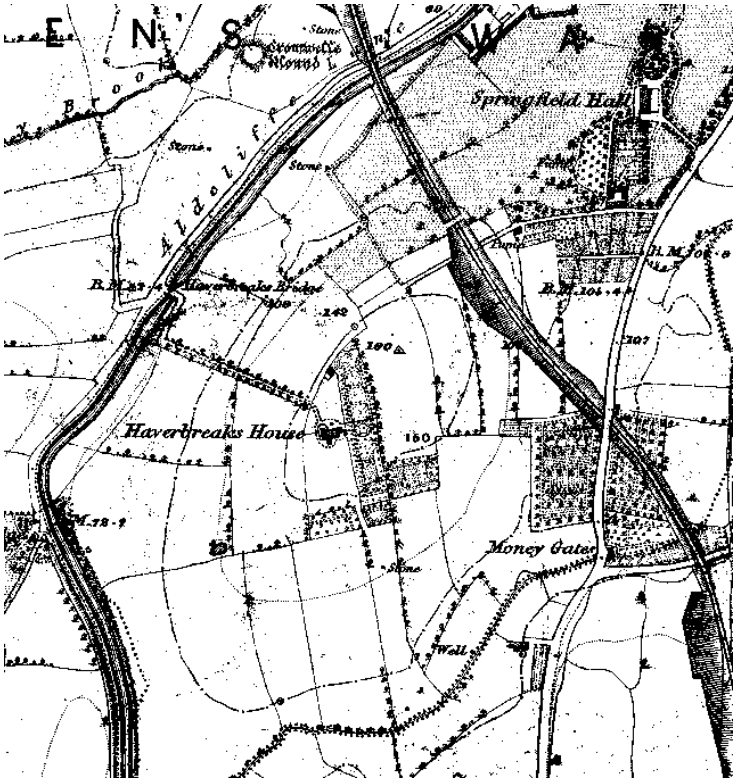
Lancaster Civic Vision

Celebrating our Heritage – Enhancing our Environment – Shaping our Future

THE DEVELOPMENT OF HAVERBREAKS, LANCASTER

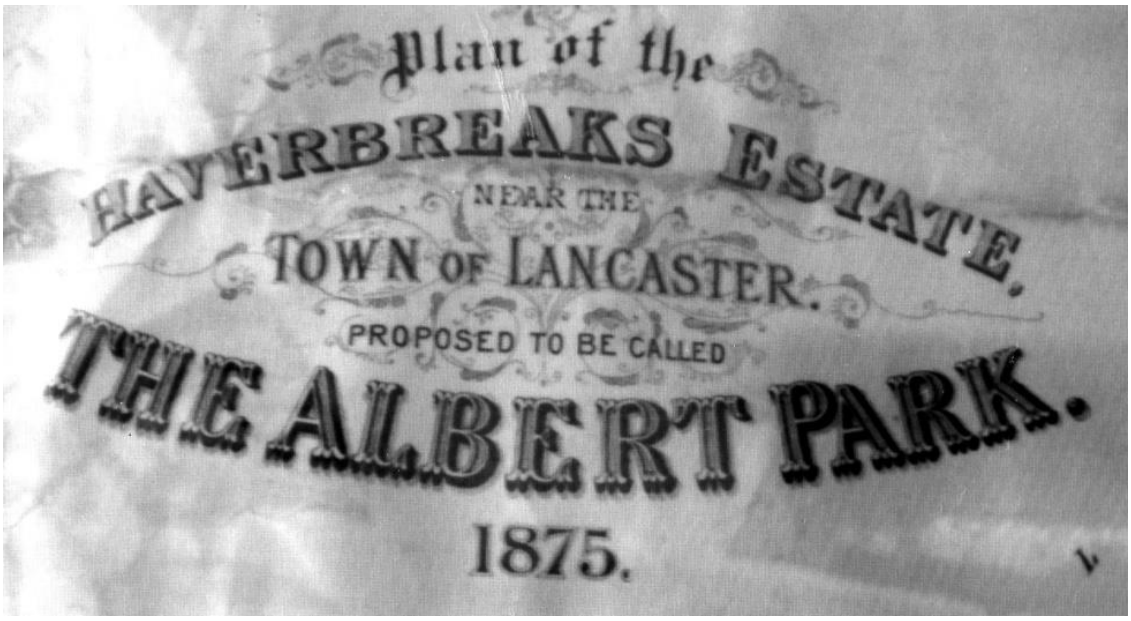
Lancaster Civic Vision Guide 72

The district of Lancaster known as Haverbreaks is distinctive among the housing areas of the city. Its large houses set amid spacious gardens are unparalleled in Lancaster. Until the later nineteenth century the site was just fields – rectangular like most fields around the town after the Enclosure process. Topographically it is a low, oval hill with Haverbreaks house and farm at its centre, accessed by the bridge from Aldcliffe Road (originally Aldcliffe Lane) over Lancaster Canal. The Ordnance Survey map of 1845 shows the details.



The Haverbreaks area c.1845 (Source: Ordnance Survey, 6-inch map, first edition)

In the early 1870s a consortium including William Ford of Ellel Hall and Harrison and Hall (Lancaster surveyors) bought the Haverbreaks site from the Royal Albert Asylum (whose recently completed hospital adjoined Haverbreaks) intending to create a model suburb near the town but away from its pollution, bustle and bye-laws. The title of the plan (below) shows that "The Albert Park" was the initial preferred name for this development.



Title and cartouche of the 1875 Plan for Haverbreaks

The plan itself shows that the aim was clearly up-market – very large building plots allowing for expensive villas and expansive gardens. Restrictive covenants were placed on buyers and owners to retain this style. The architects used for the houses were scrutinised. The expansion of Lancaster's boundaries into parts of Scotforth parish brought the site within the remit of the Corporation in 1880 and we can then trace its development more fully. A road network was built, first around the edges of the estate, now called Haverbreaks Road and Brettargh Drive – Brettargh after the Ford family's property, Brettargh Holt near Kendal. Stanmore Drive was widened and realigned from 'The Lane' in 1933.

Progress with building was slow. The market for such expensive houses was limited in Lancaster and Haverbreaks was a big site. The earliest houses were around the western and northern edges of the estate – among them were Haverbreaks (now redeveloped), Thornbreaks, Elmsfield (with its boat house on the canal), Oatlands (also redeveloped) and Yewgarth. There was also the lodge house by the Canal bridge. Houses were named not numbered. Several were in the fashionable Arts and

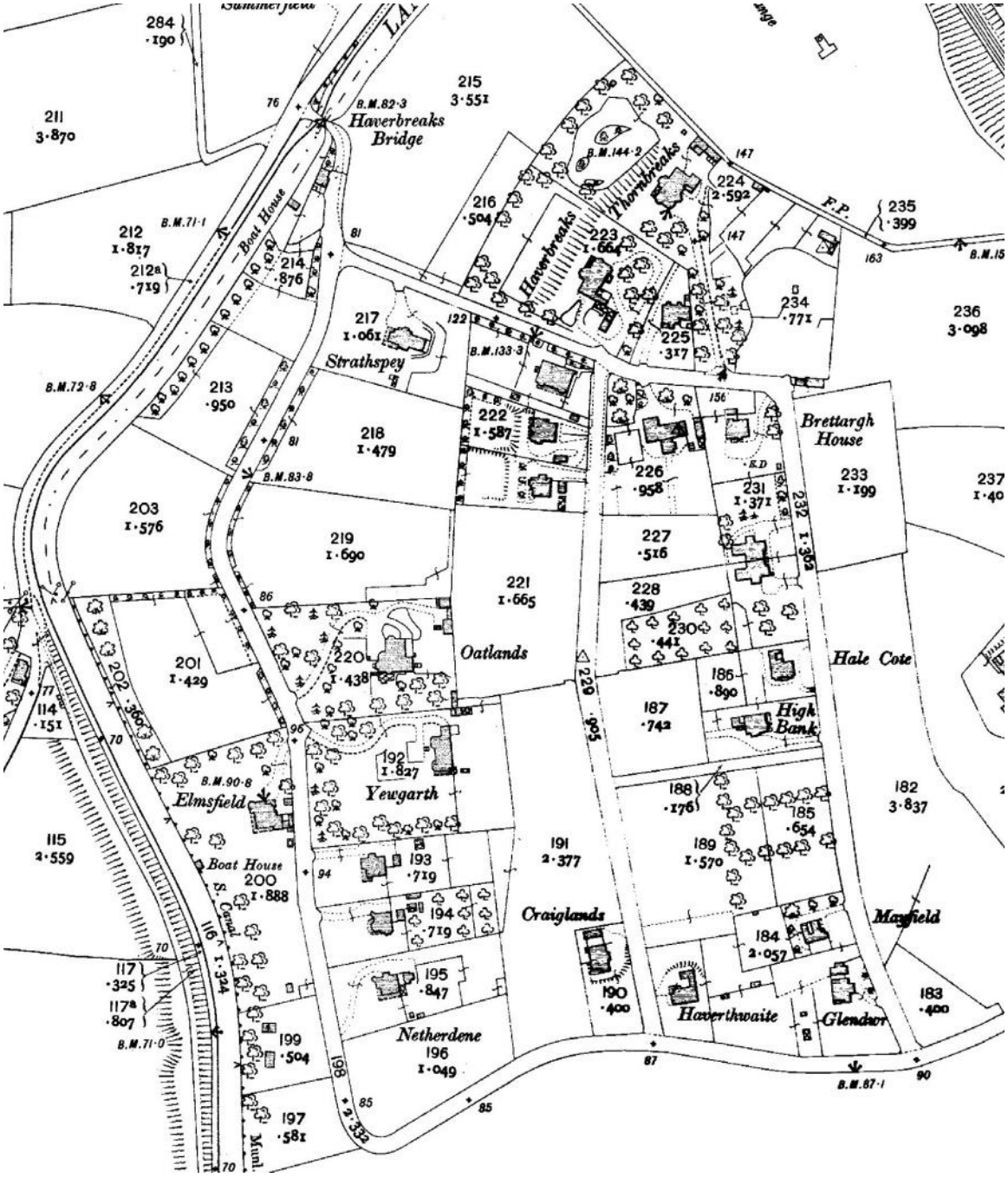
Crafts style. Some had gardens designed by the Mawson firm of landscape architects (see Guide 46).

William Ford died in 1898 and a new plan was then drawn up for the estate (below), this one further dividing some of the plots to allow for smaller, somewhat more affordable properties.



The plan for the auction of Haverbreaks building plots in 1898

The aim of encouraging more building succeeded because by 1913 there were 23 houses on Haverbreaks (see below).



Haverbreaks in 1913 (Source: Ordnance Survey, 1:2500, revised 1910, published 1913)

Ten more houses were built between the world wars. After 1945 more, even smaller houses were built on new roads on the northern and north-eastern sides of the estate. Building has continued slowly in recent years.

Haverbreaks remains a private estate, guided by its Residents Association and favoured now, as in the late nineteenth century, by Lancaster's more successful

business people and senior members of the professions. It has taken around 150 years to build on nearly all the plots (see the satellite image below).



Haverbreaks (and Nazareth House) in 2021 (Source: Google Earth)

More information about the early development of Haverbreaks, on which this leaflet and its images are based, can be found in:

Stansfield C (2016) The development of Haverbreaks, Lancaster, 1875–1913. *Contrebis* 34, 13–23.

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