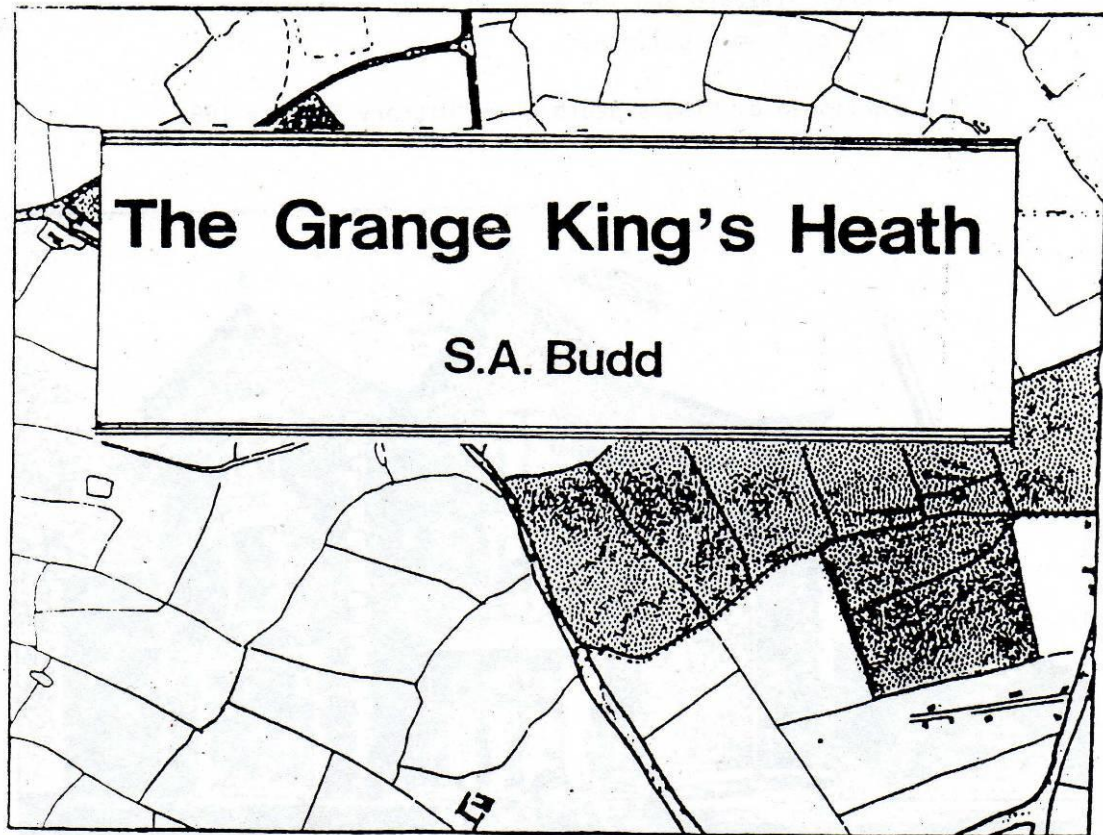


# King's Heath Local History Society



## Occasional Paper No 1



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# **The Grange, King's Heath**

## **By**

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*The Grange, King's Heath 1876, Isaac Bate and his family.*

## The Grange – King’s Heath

The Grange was a large mansion built towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, shortly after the construction of the Digbeth to Spernal Ash Turnpike Road. (1) The house was situated about two hundred yards west of the Alcester Road that we know today and about four hundred and fifty yards north of Bleak Lane. (2)

In its heyday the estate, shown in the plan on page 3, covered about 350 acres. The house was approached via a carriage drive from the Turnpike Road; there was also access to and from Dads Lane. (3) This latter approach was part of a public right of way which passed through the Grange Estate.

In the period between 1837 and 1840 the estate was split into two sections after the acquisition of part of the Grange Estate by the Birmingham and Gloucester Railway Company, who constructed railway tracks. (4) The plan on page 4, based on the Moseley Yield of the King’s Norton Tithe Map 1843, (5) shows the position of the estate; the shaded areas represent land usage at the time.

The development of the area surrounding the Grange is shown on the plan on Page 5, based on the first edition Ordnance Survey 1/2500 (25” to one mile) map of 1883. By this date King’s Heath Brewery had been developed and was served by a short approach road. This new road joined the previously mentioned right of way which also served the carriage drive approach to the Grange.

- 1 *There were acts of Parliament creating the Digbeth to Spernal Ash Turnpike Road in 1766-7, 1770-1, 1808 and 1828. This is now known as the Alcester Road.*
- 2 *With the building of All Saints’ Church Vicarage in 1869-70, Bleak Lane became Vicarage Road in 1871.*
- 3 *Part of Dads Lane had its name changed to Avenue Road in 1871, after Mr Cartland created his ‘avenue’ of trees.*
- 4 *c f. The Burial Registers of St. Mary’s Church Moseley for the year 1840. References can be found to accidents during the construction of the railway in the district.*
- 5 *A copy of this map is in the Local Studies Department, Central Library, Birmingham.*

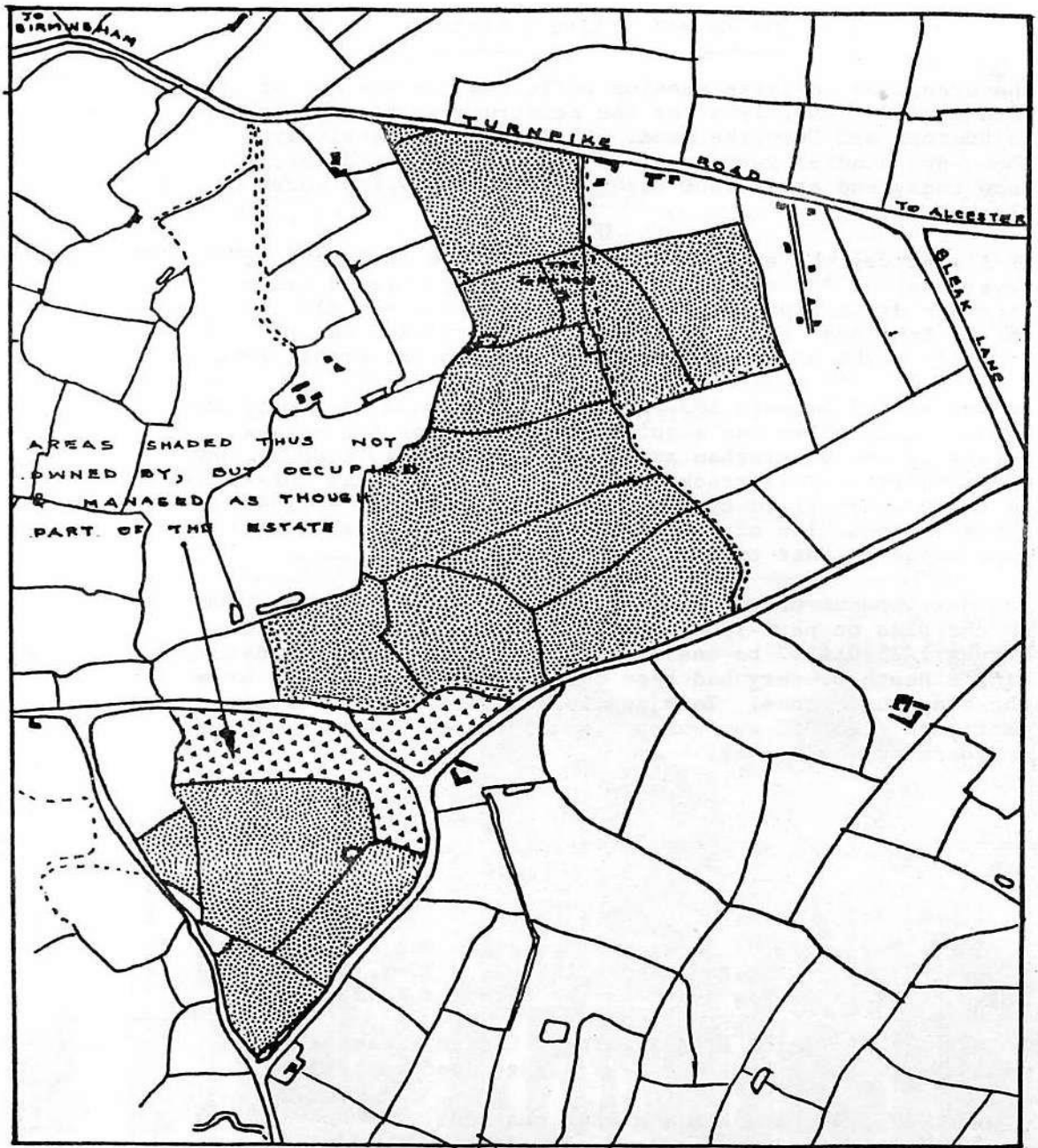
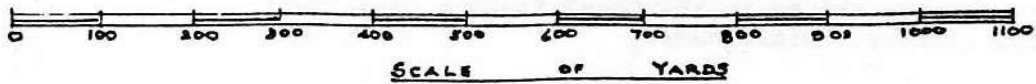


Fig.1.



**The Grange Estate c.1830**

# The Grange Estate – Land Usage 1843

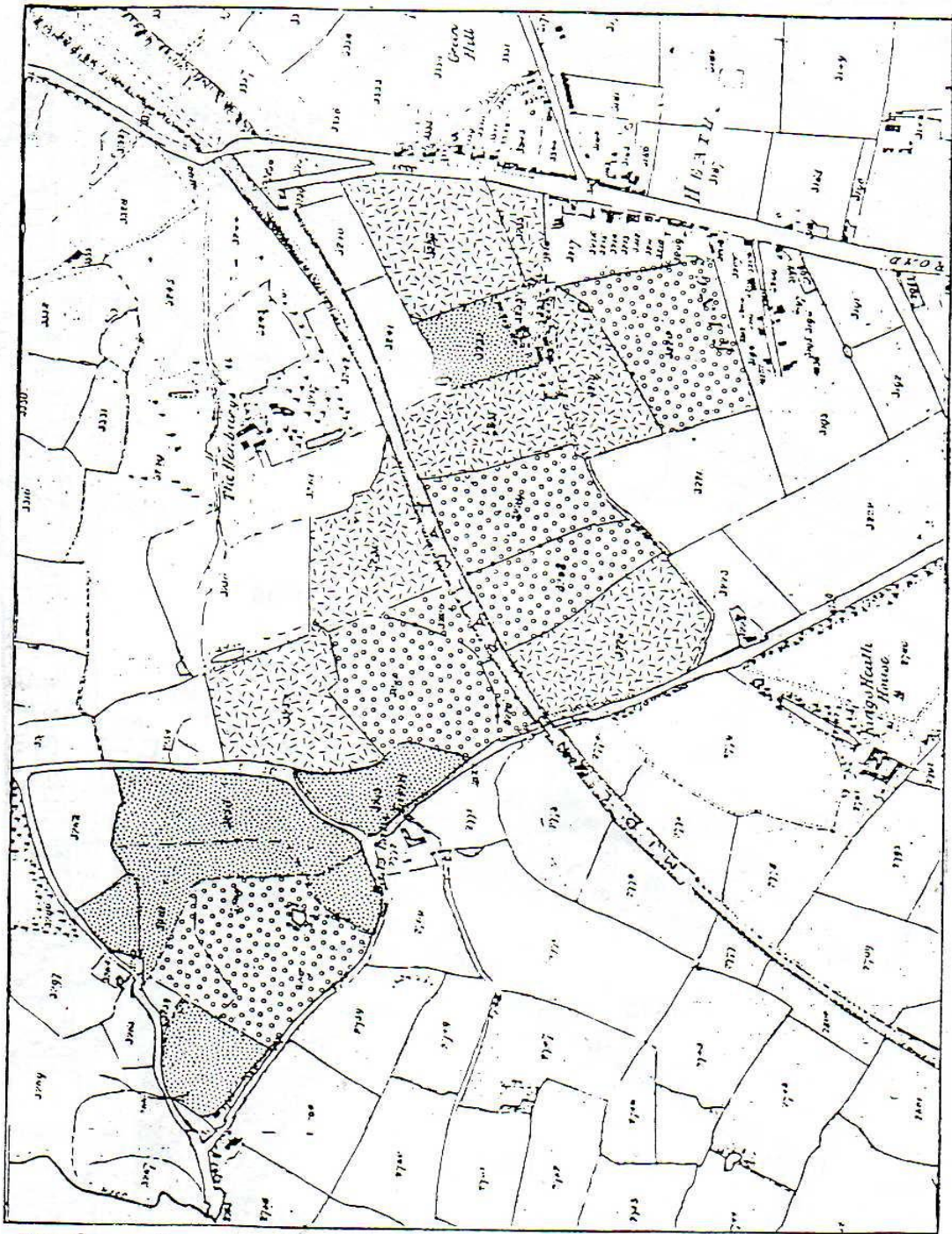
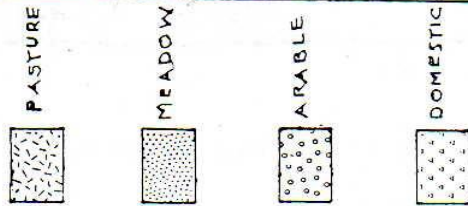


Fig. 2.



# The Grange (house) and Surrounding Area 1883

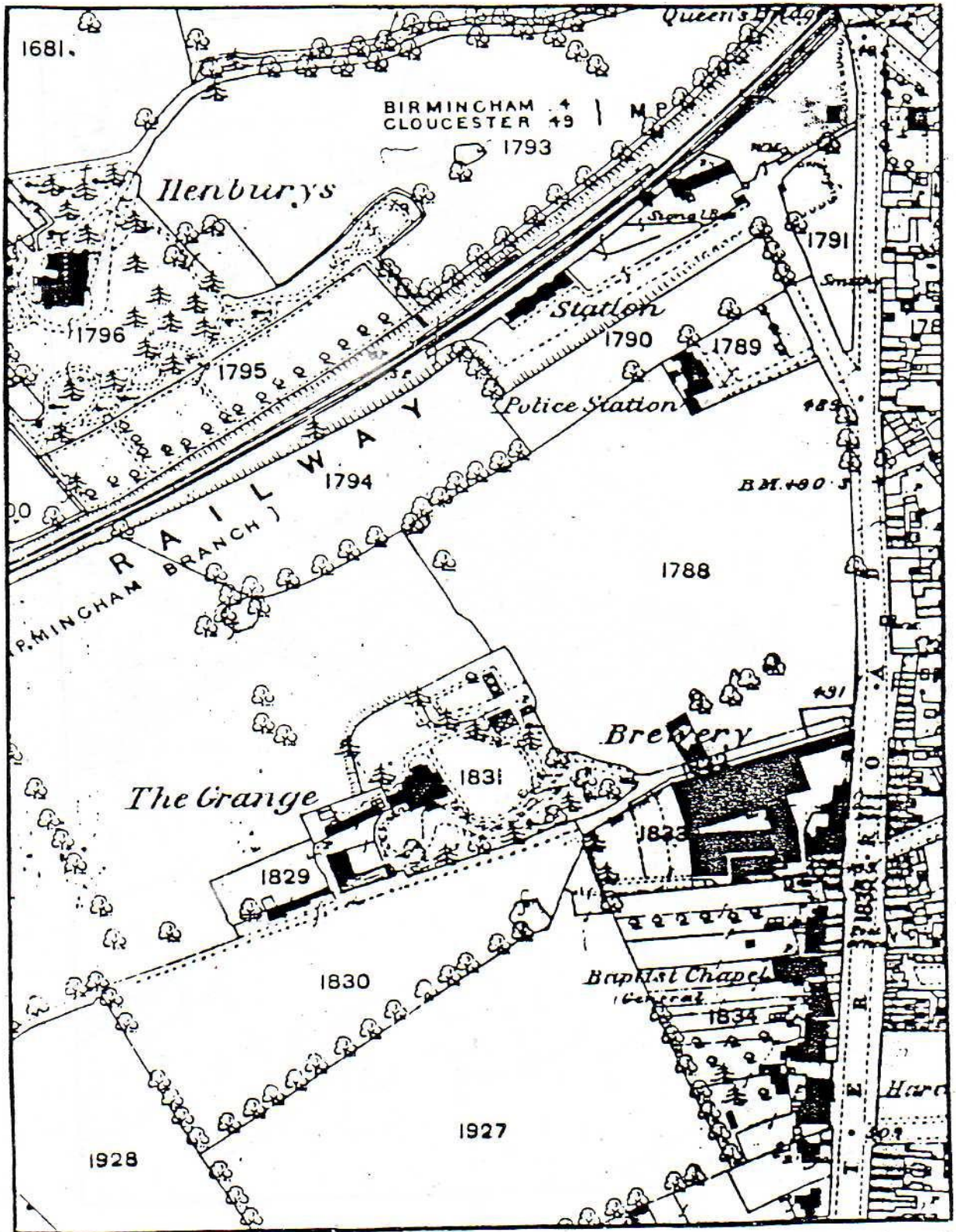


Figure 3

In 1825 the house was inhabited by William Hamper Esq., Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London and Justice of the Peace for Warwick and Worcester. (6) William was the son of Thomas Hamper, a Birmingham brassfounder; he is best known for editing 'The Diary and Correspondence of Sir William Dugdale', published in 1827. William entered his father's business and travelled widely for the Company, at the same time pursuing his antiquarian interests. He married Jane Sharpe, youngest daughter of William Sharpe of Newport on the Isle of Wight, who it is believed bore him four daughters. The estate passed to his daughters, Eliza Hamper, Sarah Sharpe, Mary Jane Hamper and Lydie Anne Hamper, after his death at Highgate, Birmingham, in 1831. (7) It appears that one of his daughters married into the Sharpe family. The King's Norton Tithe Apportionment of 1843 records the ownership of the estate to be with the Miss Hampers, but the house and lands to be occupied by Thomas Sharpe. He is believed to be the husband of Sarah.

Some years later the mansion passed into the hands of Isaac Bate, who kept the Cross Guns Inn on the High Street. In August 1869 he let the house to Charles William Reynolds who lived there from 1869-1880. The photograph on page 1 shows Isaac Bate and his family in the garden in 1876.

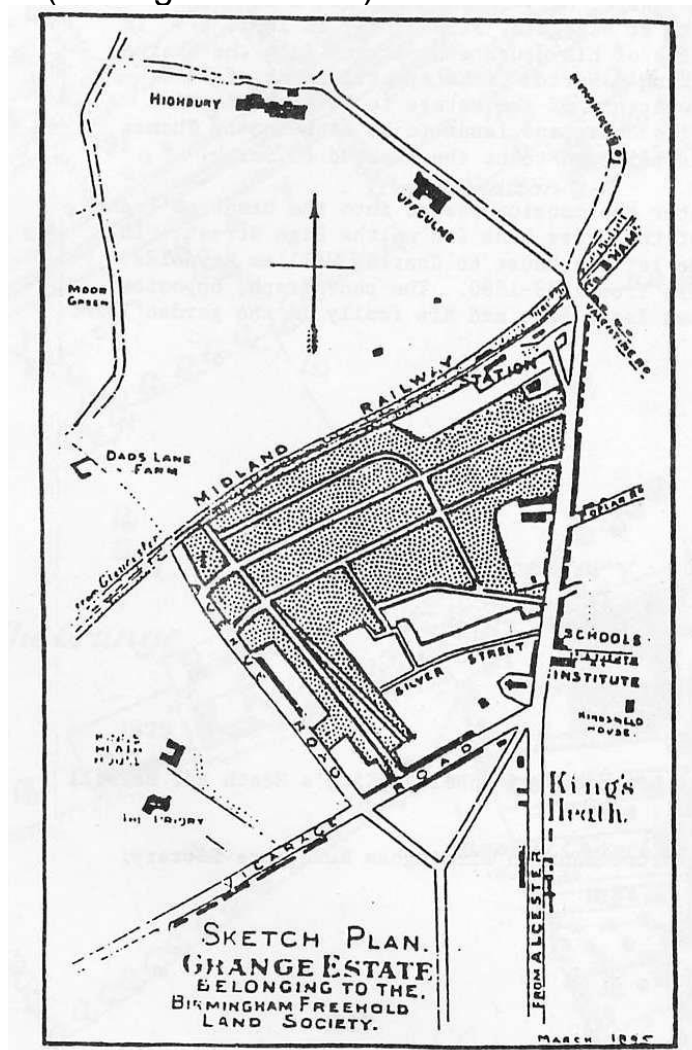


*The Cross Guns Inn/Hotel, the Brewery can be seen behind it.*

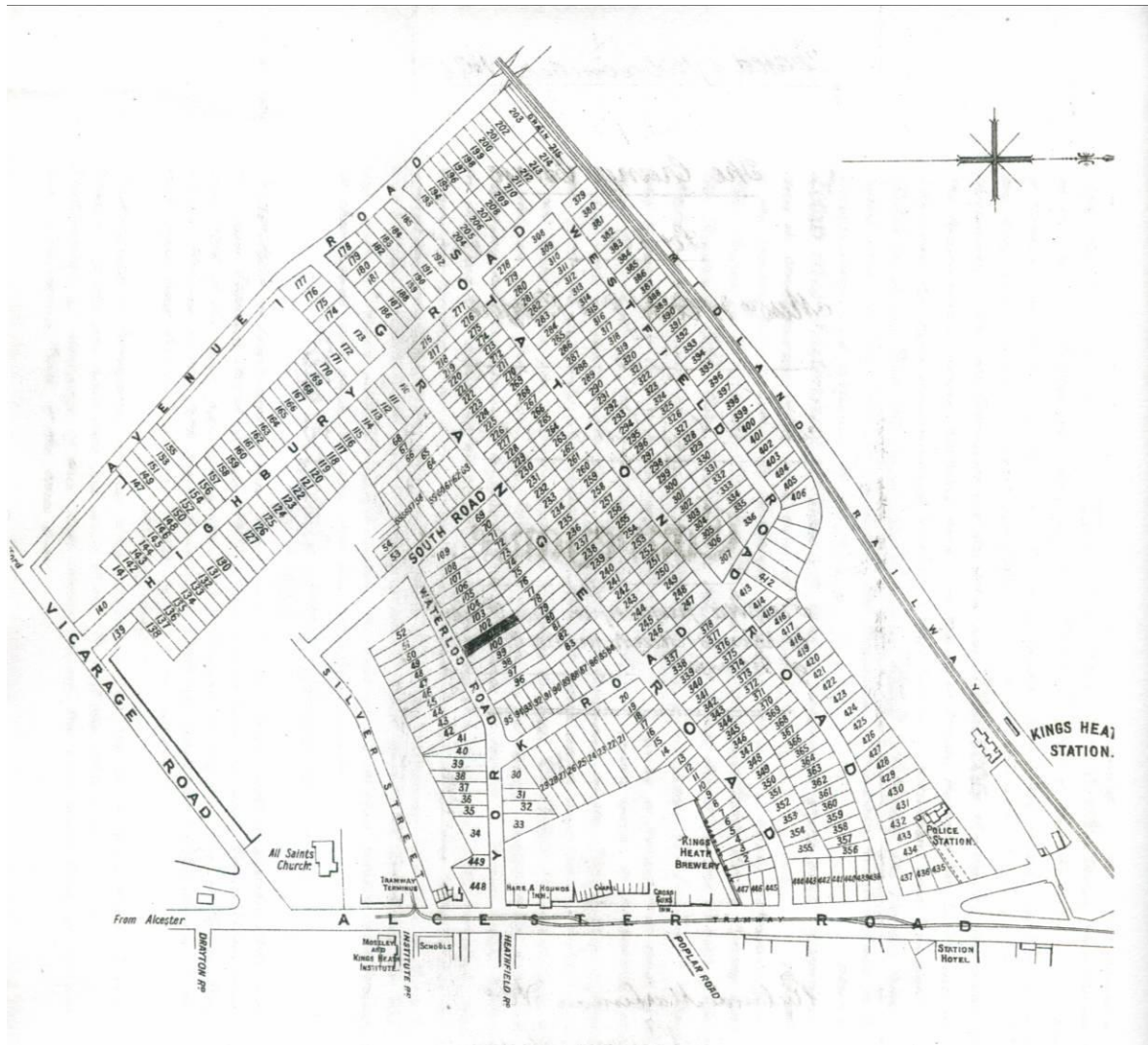
6 *Everson's Directory of Moseley, King's Heath and Balsall Heath* 1901, page 171.

7 *Tithe Apportionment in Birmingham Reference Library.*

Early in 1895 the Directors of Birmingham Freehold Land Society, of 44 Waterloo Street, Birmingham purchased the house and accompanying estate of 55 acres south of the railway line, from the estate of the late Isaac Bate, for about £40,000. They took possession in March 1895 and promptly had the area carefully surveyed. A layout plan was produced showing the proposed roads, together with building plots which were to be offered for sale. Prospective purchasers were invited to take part in a ballot for building plots, upon payment of a 4/6d subscription fee. The Grange Estate was advertised in March 1895 in the Moseley and King's Heath Journal. (See figure 4 and 5)



*Figure 4. Plan of "The Grange Estate", showing the areas offered for sale to the public, in the March 1895 issue of the Moseley and King's Heath Journal.*



*Figure 5. Plan of "The Grange Estate" showing roads and road names and plot numbers - most plots would have two houses built on them.*

The Grange was duly demolished and the estate generally levelled. The gravelly subsoil was removed and used in the foundations of the planned roadways. Existing trees on the site were left as far as was practicable, but those fronting the main road were felled and hedges between them uprooted. An iron fence was substituted along the main road boundary.

Seven roads were planned in all; Station Road and Grange Road cut right through the area, more or less parallel with the railway; Waterloo, Westfield, Highbury, York and South Roads dividing the area in the other directions. The roadways were all planned as 42

feet in width and their overall combined length totalled 2 miles. It was proposed that Grange Road should have trees planted on the footpaths.

More than four hundred building plots were planned, each containing two houses. The Turnpike Road frontage was to include shops, from the railway to the brewery, bringing the total number of building plots to about one thousand.

The price per square yard, for these plots, varied between 1/6d and 12/6d, depending on their position. The most expensive were those for shops on the main road frontage. Certain conditions were laid down as far as the various houses were concerned. There were three main groupings.

The first series cost about £250 per pair, with a rental of about 5 shillings per week. These had a 30 foot frontage and a depth of between 150-180 feet, giving areas of between 500 and 600 square yards. Entries common to each pair of houses were included in the design.

The second group cost about £300 per pair, with a rental of about 6/6d per week. These had a 33 foot frontage and depths between 120 and 150 feet, thus providing approximately 400-500 square yards.

The final group fronted onto the railway and overlooked the residence of Richard Cadbury at Uffculme and Joseph Chamberlain at Highbury. These houses cost about £450 per pair, with a rental close to 10/-d per week. These had a 36 foot frontage and area of about 500 square yards.

No back houses were permitted at all, neither were public houses.

In planning the roadways the Freehold Land Society had the embarrassment of closing the public right of way which extended from the main road and skirted the estate through to Avenue Road. They applied to both King's Norton District Council and King's Norton Parish Council for permission to alter the long standing pathway and offered a "replacement" by constructing a proper roadway. (8)

On 26<sup>th</sup> June 1895 the Parochial Church Council gave its permission and blessing for the closure of the pathway, which was to become effective towards the end of August 1895. Some planning or other delays occurred so it was not until the latter part of December that year that application was made to the magistrates, at King's Heath Police Court, for the final closure to be effected. The legalities continued delaying the final order for closure until April 1896, at the Worcester Quarter Sessions. The right of way was replaced by Grange Road.

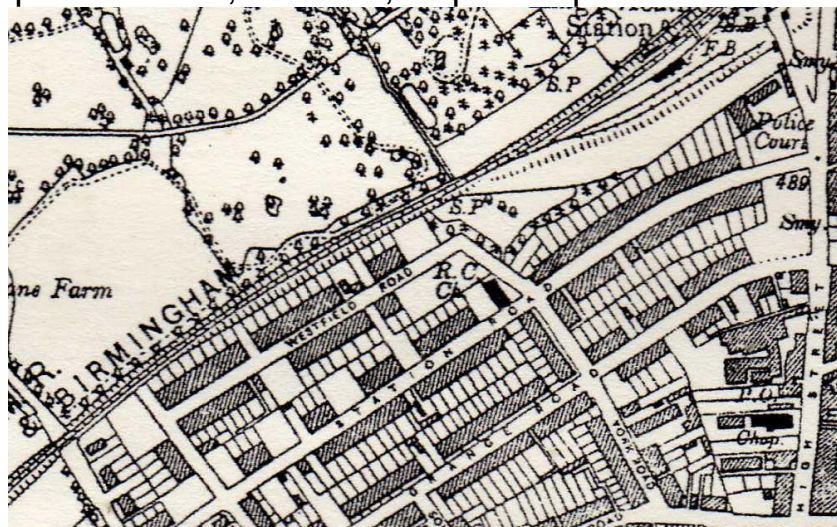
There were no fewer than 2400 applications for the 449 lots of building land on offer, which suggests that the King's Heath of 1895 was a desirable area in which to reside. The ballot and formal allocation of plots, which proved to be necessary due to the large number of applications for property, took place on 7<sup>th</sup> November 1895. Many of the successful applicants took immediate possession and, where possible, commenced their building forthwith. The first applications for planning permission were submitted to the Rural District Council's representative, for approval, in December 1895. Other applicants took longer periods to start their buildings and it was recorded, some six years later, in 1901 that "----- and a large number of houses have since been erected." (9) Applications for building permission continued to be submitted, to the Local Authority for at least until the end of 1907. The actual building operation must have still been in progress at the time when Birmingham Corporation took over the district in 1911.

8 Everson's Directory of Moseley and King's Heath 1901, p. 173

9 Ibid, p.173

Whilst every planning application is important and special in its own right, two particular examples are especially relevant. The first involved the successful application from the Roman Catholic Church for securing a plot of land to enable the building of their first church, on the corner of Station Road and Westfield Road. (10) The other application concerned King's Norton District Council who acquired land onto which King's Heath Police Station was erected. The Council's land did, however, extend right up to what is now Station Road. (11) They wanted the land for an administration building and also for a police court. The necessary monies, to purchase this 2287 yards of land, was borrowed, but they changed their plans and sold it at public auction on 21<sup>st</sup> March 1901.

Later, the Carnegie Library and three shops were built on this particular piece of land; later still, Hope Chapel was built.



*Figure 6 showing King's Heath Railway and Police Stations and Westfield, Station and Grange Roads*

10 The Catholic Church opened on 19<sup>th</sup> December 1896.

11 See Figure 6. Station Road took its name from the nearby Moseley Railway Station, later renamed King's Heath Station.

Retyped and new material added by Bob Blackham 2013.