

offering 'character' Victorian houses, preferably with bay windows as found in North Street, which, with the cul-de-sac of Centre Street, is particularly favoured.

### **Grimsbury as Typical?**

An initial designation question is whether the Grimsbury Freehold estate is typical of this housing and holding type. Whilst unique in Banbury, is it just another example of a common national phenomenon, or does it have characteristics which mark it as of regional, or even national, importance? How have such areas fared, have they been modified beyond recognition or demolished, and how robust are they as an urban form for modern needs?

This paper only begins an enquiry into such questions, relying on the Web, a scan through standard texts and visits to two Freehold Land Society estates, in Longton (Staffs.) and Stamford (Lincs.)

The initial comment by Barrie Trinder quoted above (page 85) highlights the major features of these estates :

- James Taylor was the key national instigator of the schemes; his speaking programme should reveal a national (but largely Midland?) pattern of initiation.
- His work, in the middle of the nineteenth century, was associated with Liberal (possibly Radical) agitation for the extension of the *franchise* through *freehold* ownership. The names of *Cobden*, *Ricardo* and other Liberal figures appear in the named streets. The agitation for an extended vote was, of course, politically contentious.
- Methodist churches seem to feature in Freehold estates but, paradoxically given strong Temperance support, so do a supply of public houses.
- A very preliminary survey of the occupations of those involved suggests the craftsmen, traders and service suppliers who were to provide the growing urban lower middle class, but with the potential for larger villas for those with servants.<sup>16</sup>

Extensive library and archive research could reveal considerable detail. The Freehold Societies were gradually embraced by Building Societies (for which they have been suggested as forerunners) and web and

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<sup>16</sup> On this, see also Burnett, John: *A Social History of Housing 1815-1970*, London: Methuen, 1978, ch.4.