

The Strutt industrial settlement in Belper

Modern Belper represents at least four phases of development: the original medieval rural settlement of Beaurepaire that centres on the chapel of St John; the later growth lower down the hill which, by the middle years of the 18th century included a market place on a lower level than the present one; the industrial community established by Jedediah Strutt in the late 18th century on the northern edge of the existing settlement and around Belper Bridge Foot and up Belper Lane; and the 19th century expansion of the commercial centre along King Street and Bridge Street.

The most prominent of the Strutt industrial housing stands on land to the south of the mill complex and to the east of the Derby-Matlock road. The land was acquired largely through numerous individual purchases, with its end use for workers' housing clearly in mind. The houses were all of a high standard with gardens and, in certain areas, allotments for the residents. The housing, constructed from Derbyshire gritstone or locally made brick, and roofed with Staffordshire blue clay tiles or Welsh slate, was largely placed in an east-west alignment connected by narrow passages giving an almost grid-iron character to the layout. Construction of housing by the Strutt estate continued into the 20th century.

The houses vary in form from row to row as the Strutts experimented with different designs. The result is a visually cohesive, attractive and unique mix of workers' housing.

As well as the land on the slopes to the east of the mills, the Strutts had also by the 1790s acquired land and property and started to build housing on the south facing slope to the north-west, adjoining their Bridge Hill estate. Here, by 1840, they had built or acquired up to 100 houses which were rented to their workforce. The housing in this area was developed plot by plot as land became available. Most of it was built in short terraces of three or four houses, mainly in gritstone, though some are in brick, on levels up the hillside formed by earlier quarrying or along Belper Lane and Wyver Lane. Good examples can be seen in the terraces in the Scotches: in the stepped terraces on the northern side of Belper Lane, culminating in the cluster block which housed the original Belper Parish Workhouse; and in the small groups of houses such as Pump Yard, set back from Belper Lane.

Also of interest is the brick terrace on the southern side of Belper Lane which still retains the arch which was a former entrance to Bridge Hill house. These houses have the appearance of being built for estate rather than for mill workers.

Belper Lane, nos. 54-92 (formerly Mount Pleasant) c.1790 - Listed Grade II nos. 54-56, 58-62, 64-66, 82-84, 86-92

A series of stepped terraces built in stone, some doublefronted and some single, roofed in slate. These houses have large gardens and cellars.



**Mount Pleasant Old Workhouse, nos. 94-100, Belper Lane
1803 - Unlisted**

Back-to-back cluster type houses, stone-built, with a central chimney and three-storey. This was the parish workhouse until replaced by the Union Workhouse, now the Babington Hospital, when it was sold and put to domestic residential use.



**Pump Yard Belper Lane, nos. 74-80
By 1818 - Unlisted**

North side brick stepped terrace in the ownership of the Strutts by 1818.



**Pump Yard Belper Lane, nos. 68-70
By 1818 - Unlisted**

South side. Stone terrace of two, in the ownership of the Strutts by 1818.



**Belper Lane, nos. 25-33
By 1818 - Unlisted**

Five houses in a terrace which was in the ownership of the Strutts by 1818; brick with stone slate roof, of two-storeys and with an archway over the central section, thought to be part of the carriage-way to Bridge Hill House. This feature was restored in 1818-19.



**The Scotches, west side Belper Lane, nos. 5-8
c.1819 - Listed Grade II**

Four three-storey stone-built houses in a terrace, with a house of two storeys at the western end. By 1844 these houses had associated nailers' workshops.



**Wyver Lane, nos. 3, 5 and 7
By 1818 - Listed Grade II**

Three (formerly four) terraced houses which were in the ownership of the Strutts by 1818. Of three storeys and stone-built with slate roofs and brick chimneys. Each has an allotment bounded by dry stone walls on the other side of the lane.



Derwent Terrace, nos. 6, 7 and 8; also 9 and 10
By 1818 - Unlisted

Stone-built in rubble and coursed stone; purchased by the Strutts sometime after 1818.



Back Wyver Lane
By 1818 - Unlisted

A terrace of four two-storey houses, originally with adjacent nailshops. It was acquired by the Strutts sometime after 1818.



Wyver Lane 'Weir Lodge Houses', 39 Wyver Lane
By 1818 - Unlisted

Formerly two, in a stone-built terrace of two storeys and with a large brick chimney stack. In Strutt ownership by 1818.



Short Rows, nos. 46 and 47

c.1788 - Listed Grade II nos. 26-36, 38-47

One of the first groups of houses to be constructed by the Strutts in Belper adjacent to the chapel of 1788. The Short Rows originally comprised four separate rows of largely one-up, one-down cottages containing 47 houses in all. The houses are built in red-brick with slate roofs and brick chimneys.



Mill Street, nos. 18-20

c.1788 - Listed Grade II nos. 2-20

Two rows originally containing 25 houses of two-storey red-brick houses, which originally formed part of the Short Rows (see above).



Former Police Station, Matlock Road

c. 1848 - Listed Grade II

Located in a prominent position opposite the Strutt Mills, the Police Station was the first of its kind in Derbyshire. The building is constructed in ashlar with a slate-clad hipped roof.



Bridge Foot, nos. 18 and 20

c.1800 - Listed Grade II

Built as three cottages which were later used as a cottage hospital run by the Strutt family. A long red-brick building with a slate roof.



The Chapel and Chapel Cottage, Field Row

1788 - Listed Grade II*

The Chapel was built by Jedediah Strutt and, apart from the mills, is believed to have been one of the first buildings which he constructed in Belper. Sometime after his arrival in Belper Jedediah adopted the Unitarian faith. The building is a striking example of austere nonconformist architecture built in ashlar with a hipped slate roof. The Chapel was extended on each side early in the 19th century so that in its present form it is three times its original size. The facade to Field Row has a round-arched entrance with a keystone. An external cantilevered stone staircase gives access at first floor



level to the gallery. A marble plaque commemorates the life of Jedediah Strutt. The catacomb below the chapel contains the remains of a number of members of the Strutt family including, it is thought, Jedediah himself.



The Chapel cottage which adjoins is thought to have been built soon after the Chapel itself, though the kitchen extension, which is housed in a vaulted space beneath the Chapel, cannot have been constructed until the Chapel was extended early in the 19th century.

Long Row

1792-97 - Listed Grade II

This is industrial housing of a high quality. There were originally 77 houses in the Long Row. It was built in the form of three terraces, two of which were continuous until broken by the North Midland Railway in 1840. The 35 three-storey houses are constructed predominantly in sandstone with a continuous sloping eaves line. They are designed with interlocking plans formed around the staircase.



The southern two-storey terrace is constructed primarily in brick and ascends the rising ground in stepped pairs. Each house has its own garden with allotments behind. There are 62 dwellings in all.

Joseph Street, nos. 5 and 6 The Clusters 1805 - Listed Grade II

A plan of August 1805 by James Hicking indicates that it was the intention to build 32 cluster houses in eight blocks of four houses each. In the event only five blocks were built and with some significant variations from the original plan. The plan does not indicate the provision of privies or pigsties, nor is it clear that each block is to have a lean-to **outshut** at each end.



The houses are designed on the innovative plan first implemented in Darley Abbey of one block divided north-south and east-west to form four back to back houses. Each block is sited in the centre of a large plot and, as they were built, each house has a building in the garden incorporating a privy and a pigsty.

At 7 Joseph Street the privy and **pigcote** have survived in a building constructed in coursed stone.

The term 'Clusters' was in use by 1820 and the buildings may have borne this name from the outset though this is not clear from Hicking's plan on which the words have been added by a later hand.

Nailshop Joseph Street, no. 8 Early 19th century - Listed Grade II

The nail maker's workshop, a rare survival, is constructed of coursed stone with a tile roof, brick chimney and cast iron windows. This is a single nailshop; far more typical in Belper were the rows of nailshops, perhaps five or six under a single roof, but no more than two or three of these have survived, all of them altered drastically.



As early as 1790 Strutt had built a nailshop next to one of his cottages. His interest in nailing was solely to provide work for the male members of the families inhabiting his cottages. There is also evidence he invested in framework knitting workshops to achieve the same purpose.

Crown Terrace, nos. 4-13 (formerly Smith's Court) 1794-95 - Listed Grade II

A terrace of three-storey stone houses built by the Strutts for their mill workers. The houses are constructed in pairs on an interlocking pattern in a similar style to the three-storey houses in Long Row. In 1890 the Strutt estate extended the properties to the rear except the two houses nearest to the A6 road.



Field Row, no. 6
c.1788 - Unlisted

Two terraces, 1-7 and 8-13 three red-brick houses standing adjacent to the Strutt Chapel and in marked contrast to the nearby houses in the Short Rows. On the basis of the rent paid these were among the more expensive Strutt properties.



Chevin View, nos. 1-10 (formerly Berkin's Court)
1790 - Listed Grade II

The shells of 10 of these houses had been completed by March 1790. These are an early example of back-to-back housing, a building form of which the Strutts made very limited use. They are of three storeys and built of coursed sandstone with slate and blue tiled roofs. Only nos. 9 and 10 have retained their original form. At one time Chevin View contained 18 houses.



George Street, nos. 1-12
1840-42 - Unlisted

These two-storey stone and brick-built houses built between 1840 and 1842 were constructed in a single terrace with a roof line and eaves which follow the slope of the ground. They were built on the ground which had previously been set aside for the cluster houses and until George Street acquired its present name in 1899 were known as New Houses, Cluster Buildings. The present stone extensions were added probably in the 1890s.



George Street, nos. 13-24
1898 - Unlisted

Some of the later Strutt housing built in Belper. These two-storey brick houses with bay windows and verandas were built on the former Potato Lots (allotments).



Wyver Farm
By 1809 - Listed Grade II

Situated north of the town of Belper, the farmstead was built by the Strutt Estate. The farm was in Strutt ownership by 1818, but it is not known when the present buildings were erected.



It demonstrates many of the features for which the Strutt farms are famous: the stone fire-proof construction of the ceilings and floors; the careful arrangement of feed storage for ease of delivery; and the use of natural ingredients allowing feed such as wet grains, cereals or hay to be tipped into pits or carted into stores that open into the first floor mixing room above the cow byres. The cow byres are well ventilated - another Strutt design feature.

The main part of the farm complex comprises an L-shaped group built into the hillside and enclosing a north-west facing yard. The group is constructed of stone with slate roofs. The east and south ranges consist of cow byres with loading bay and hatches opening into the yard and rows of ventilators with iron grilles opening into the cow byres just below the first floor level. Both ranges have arched stone ceilings supporting the stone floor lofts above. Eight feed drops in the south wall serve the cow byres below. At the west end of the range, to the rear, three brick-lined wet grain pits are dug into the slope with doors into the loft where the food was mixed. The western range comprises a stable block with a stone floor and separate feed storage areas.



An east-west range of buildings comprises a wagon lodge, stable and barn. This also is constructed of coursed stone and has a slate roof. The four-bay cart shed has been added to the main range and has a lower roof level supported on four cast iron pillars which have been inserted on massive stone bases.

Other subsidiary buildings include a small stable, free-standing cow-house, hen houses and piggeries.

Crossroads Farm

Post 1818 - Listed Grade II*Farmhouse Grade II Farm buildings

Crossroads Farm is located on the outskirts of Belper, to the west. It is not shown on a map of 1818 and the land was not in Strutt ownership at this date. The design and construction of the farm buildings benefited from the techniques pioneered by William Strutt using cast iron components to achieve a fire-proof structure.

Externally, massive stone outbuildings flank the handsome ashlar farmhouse. The interior has evidence of ironwork within its construction, notably within the kitchen ceiling which is formed of stone slabs fitted into iron beams. The roof of the hay barn incorporates iron trusses and the farm buildings utilise cast iron columns and brick-arched floors.



Dalley Farm

Post 1819 - Listed Grade II* North wing of house and farm buildings

The farmstead lies close to Crossroads and though it was constructed predominately early in the 19th century it was created from an existing 17th century building. The farm was not in Strutt ownership in 1819. The farm contains numerous features of design and construction which are characteristic of the Strutt model farms: the stone vaulted ceilings and flag floors for fire protection; the systems for moving feed stores to feed mixing; the iron roof supports and the unique range for housing wet grain.

The building complex planned around two yards with an L-shaped group to the north east is for the most part constructed of stone with slate roofs. The L-shaped group consists of a four-bay shelter shed with a flagged floor opening onto a yard. Stone pillars with cushion capitals support the roof. One central pillar supports the ridge. The west-facing range comprises a hay house open to the west and a four-bay hay barn with an open front supported on a pierced shallow-arched iron beam with iron posts dating from 1876.

The north-south range comprises a threshing barn with a wooden threshing floor and straw barn above, a wet grain store with some brick construction and a cow byre with six feeding hatches into the feeding passage. To the north there is a three-storey block under east-west facing gables, containing mixing rooms below and a feed store above.

The ceiling is stone vaulted and the ground and first floors are flagged. Round holes in the floor with metal trap doors allow feed to be dropped through to the mixing room. One of these holes is over a stone mixing trough in the angle between the east-west range of cow-sheds dividing the yard. The roof is supported on semi-circular arches by cruciform-section iron pillars.

The later brick-built wet grain store contains nine feed bins for the storage of wet grains for cattle feed with nine stone-framed pitching holes to the east and west allowing for the delivery of grain and wide, iron-framed, openings onto a passage allowing for shovelling out.

The northern cow-house has stone gables and brick south wall and features a mixture of small original metal windows and later larger ones which cut through the rows of ventilation slits. Iron cruciform-section pillars support the roof of the hay house.

Another cow-house divides the north and south yard and abuts the ashlar carriage entry that links the house to the farm buildings. This carriage entry is of a buff-coloured stone rather than the original pink stone and is a later insertion to increase the status of the building. A



further cow-house which forms the east side of the northern yard is built of brick with a walkway supported on brick and stone columns.

Transport Features in Belper

The North Midland Railway, which opened in 1840 on a route between Derby and Leeds surveyed by George and Robert Stephenson, the pioneer railway engineers, passes through the nominated World Heritage Site between Derby and Ambergate. It contains numerous engineering structures of the highest quality which were the work of the Stephensons and their supervising engineer, Frederick Swanwick.

Railway cutting walls

1840 - Listed Grade II (in part)

The route of the railway through Belper was the subject of lengthy negotiation between the Strutts and the North Midland Railway company. The details are obscure, but it would appear that the company's first proposals were unacceptable to the Strutts and had to be modified. The line was to have been driven through Belper to the west of Bridge Street, crossing under Bridge Street near Crown Terrace and finally leaving Belper



close to the school buildings on Long Row. Such a line would have been clearly visible from Bridge Hill House and it may have been this which forced the Stephensons to reconsider their proposals. In the end a line was chosen which kept the railway well to the east of Bridge Street and in a cutting throughout all of its length through the town.

An agreement with the Strutts compelled the company to design each of the bridges carrying the streets severed by the line in such a way as would not alter the existing slope of the street. The result is an impressive man-made "gorge" with sides of rusticated stonework with a stone band carried round from bridges and internal buttresses. Most of the original bridges have survived.

Railway bridges

1840 - Listed Grade II

Spanning the railway along the cutting are a number of fine original bridges. Road bridges span the railway at Field Lane, where the north parapet has been replaced by a metal guard, George Street, Gibfield Lane, Joseph Street, Long Row and William Street. A footbridge spans the railway at Pingle Lane. The construction of the bridges generally comprises an elliptical arch in rusticated rock-faced stone with ashlar copings, impost bands, **quoins** and voussoirs.

