

# Ranmoor Society News

September 2012

## New Buildings Proposed

This year has seen some significant building developments in Ranmoor, and more are proposed. Work has begun both below Ranmoor Hall in Storth Lane (8 houses) and on the Ballard Hall site (24 houses).

An application (12/02173/FUL) has also been submitted for 11 houses on the site of what was the Oakbrook View hostel, just below the Ballard Hall site and next to St John's Church.

An application (12/02126/FUL) has also been submitted for 5 houses above the underground reservoir on Carsick Hill Road. Public response to the

Oakbrook View application has been almost non-existent, but there have been many complaints about the Carsick Road plan. No decision has been made on either of these applications at the time of writing.

Ranmoor is designated as a Conservation Area in order to try and preserve its unique character. However, the definition of what is "in character" is still largely a subjective one. Most people feel that Ranmoor's appeal is determined by the relatively low density of its housing and the presence of large mature gardens and green spaces.

The area is under constant threat from developers and local government. Developers seek commercial gain, and the local authority needs to meet housing targets. Opposition in terms of high density can be reasonably objective. More subjective is the style of any proposed development and how the new buildings should relate to the surrounding and generally older buildings.

The recent proposal to replace a 1960's house on Ranmoor Road with a property of contemporary design, now approved, produced both critical and supportive comments. Housing

density was not compromised in this case.

You can view the proposed developments on the Planning Department website by following the links to it on the Ranmoor Society website. You can comment online (though you are limited to 1000 characters!) or, if you prefer, by letter to the planning department.

Although the formal response period is fairly short, comments are in fact accepted right up to the decision date. Notices are also posted on lampposts. It is up to us to read them. Having a large number of objections is still the most effective way of influencing the planning decision.

## Next Meetings

Our first meeting after the summer break on September 18<sup>th</sup> will look at the way in which Sheffield's children used to be educated. Fifty-one "Board Schools" were set up in the city as a result of the 1870 Education Act and these had a great influence on both pupils and teachers. Their methods were to a large extent continued by "Council Schools" when responsibilities were transferred to the municipal authorities in 1902.

Nether Green School on Fulwood Road began its life as an early Council School in 1904. It had briefly been a Temporary Board School in Ranmoor Road – using buildings from what had been the Ranmoor Wesleyan School.

On September 18<sup>th</sup> Valerie Bayliss of the Victorian Society's Sheffield group will tell us about these developments and buildings. They have been reviewed in the Society's just-published book: "*Building Schools for Sheffield 1870-1914*".

**Later meetings:** October 16<sup>th</sup> *Sheffield During the Great War*, with Peter Warr

November 20<sup>th</sup> *Sheffield's Heritage of Steel*, with Geoff Marston

## Endcliffe Hall

Our "Summer Walk" this year took the form of a visit to Endcliffe Hall. On a fine, warm May evening, we were kindly hosted by Major Bob Bone of the 212 (Yorkshire) Field Hospital. In return, members were invited to contribute to the Army Benevolent Fund as a "thank-you". We have since received a formal letter of thanks from the regional director of *ABF the Soldiers' Charity* for our donation of £107.00.

We were informed that the Army will be vacating the Endcliffe Hall site later this year so we may expect "For Sale" notices to appear shortly. Watch this space!

Endcliffe Hall was built by John Brown in 1865. After his death in 1896 and many years of uncertainty, it was acquired by the War Office in 1914. The intention then was that it should become the headquarters of the Sheffield Hallamshires. The precursor Hallamshire Rifles had been raised in Sheffield in 1859 after the country anticipated an invasion by Napoleon III and was originally based in Eyre Street. The Hall has remained the home of the local Volunteers (later the Territorial Army) ever since.

During the First World War two Hallamshire Territorial battalions served in France and Flanders. Only after they returned to Sheffield in November 1919 did they occupy their new headquarters. The building had been serving as an annex to the Third Northern Hospital for military casualties, as was Oakbrook next door. It was divided into 8 wards accommodating 120 patients and run by a sister, three trained nurses, an assistant nurse and two voluntary nurse assistants. The Grand Conservatory (160 feet long and 35 feet high) in which John Brown had once raised his tropical palms and plants had all its glass removed to convert it into an open air ward for the wounded soldiers. The glass was never replaced and at some point during the inter-war years the Conservatory was demolished altogether.

The house has undoubtedly suffered in many ways since it ceased to be a private residence, and it was subjected to different use patterns by its changing military occupants. The Italian

Garden with its central pond and an ornamental lake and fountains fed by a dedicated reservoir in the grounds, has been obliterated and now lies beneath a huge tarmac parade ground and soldiers' recreation room. The stables and farmery were roofed over and converted to a drill hall with associated stores and offices. The tower of the main house, originally intended for use as a billiard room and observatory, has been substantially shortened, and a large part of the original estate of 40 acres had been sold off by 1895 to the Endcliffe Estates Company, who created Endcliffe Grove, Hall and Park Avenues.

And yet many of the Hall's original features remain visible and impressive. The grand staircase and gallery, with its wrought iron balusters, mahogany handrail and gas light holders, enjoy natural illumination from a huge lantern light in the ceiling. The 60 foot long ballroom or saloon was also lit by natural light from the coved ceiling, and was clearly designed for entertaining on a grand scale. Admittedly it no longer contains the James Brindley organ which was originally powered by water piped from a tank at the top of Endcliffe Vale Road. The carriage porch remains. This was the main entrance along the drive from the entrance lodge in Endcliffe Vale Road – lit by ornamental gas lights.



### Ranmoor Society Committee

[www.ranmoorsociety.org](http://www.ranmoorsociety.org)

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