

Information on 88 Ock Street

From Fidel's survey of 1835:

Present number	Tenant	Owner	Description	Value in £ s d
84	Thomas Winterbourn	William Mayo	Dwelling hse & gdn	5 0 0
86	W Pottinger	William Mayo	Tenement	2 5 0
88	Thomas Francum	William Mayo	Tenement	2 5 0
90	James Thomas	William Mayo	Tenement	2 5 0
92	John Brown	William Mayo	Tenement	2 5 0

From Read's valuation of 1838:

Present number	Occupier	Description	Estimated rental in £ s d	Rateable value in £ s d
84	Thomas Harper	House, garden & shed	7 15 0	5 0 0
86	William Pottinger	House	3 17 6	2 10 0
88	Thomas Francum	House	3 17 6	2 10 0
90	William Cheer	House	3 17 6	2 10 0
92	John Brown	House	3 17 6	2 10 0

From the 1831 census:

Present number	Head of household	Occupation	males	females
84	Thomas Winterbourne	Miller, mason	2	2
86	William Pottenger	smith	1	4
88	Thomas Frankum	labourer	3	1
90	Benjamin Hartwells	tinman	4	2
92	John Brown	weaver	3	3

Winterbourne and Frankum were named as burgesses after the Corporation Act of 1835, as was William Mayo (British Library, Addl Mss 28666, ff 380-2). In each case, this was in respect of being a householder.

The following is an extract from my paper on Ock Street history in the Files section of the website.

5. 84-96 Ock Street and Brooker's Yard

The previous examples have been of elite properties – a town centre grocery, a major inn, a couple of gentlemen's residences. As we move further west from the Ruddle Cross, we are in the area of workmen's cottages, workshops, and, increasingly towards the end of the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth, of crowded courts and slums.

In 1677, John Stiles, a silkweaver, took a lease on a messuage on the south side of Ock Street a short distance to the west of the Ruddle Cross, as well as a garden adjoining it with the name of Stramger's Land.¹ The plot was a large one going down to the Ock, and had probably formed part of, or else had bordered on, the historic Thistlecroft.² He may have been taking a financial risk. The holding carried a rental of 15s and an entry fine of 20s, but the previous lessees had arrears of rent amounting to 25s that had to be paid off. It seems that finance was obtained from one Richard Clissard, and when the lease was renewed in 1692 there was a Martha Hobbs who ensured that the Corporation knew of her interest. By 1710 Stiles, who must have been an old man by then, was in serious difficulties. The lease would normally have been renewed at fourteen years, but this had not been done, and no rent had been paid for seven years. Stiles was described politely as a 'distracted person', and the Corporation took a remarkably charitable line with him. The holding was divided irregularly into two, taken as of equal value. A plot large enough for a house and garden was marked off at the west of the frontage, and with this went a garden or orchard which occupied the whole of the southern half of the original holding. This was taken by Francis Hyde, linendraper, and his wife Jane, while Stiles and his family retained the eastern half of the frontage together with the full width of the plot as far back as the orchard. The Hydes had probably had to be persuaded into the bargain, since no fines were levied when the new leases were issued 'because of John Stiles's poverty'. Both parties were to pay 7s 6d p.a. as rent. The Stiles family kept Stramger's Land, paying 4s annual rent.

The three tenements passed over time through various hands; fines for Stiles's portion varied around £2 10s, for the Hydes' £3 10s, and for Stramger's £3. In 1801, the Hydes' portion was

¹ Or Stranged's or Swanged's. See Corporation Minutes, Vol 1 fo. 233v.

² Agnes Baker takes the Thistlecroft as having been behind the later nos 80-160 – the present Knight's Yard to some way beyond the Cross Keys – see *Historic Streets of Abingdon* (1957), 15. This was granted to Christ's Hospital in the sixteenth century, but nineteenth century maps show that at some intervening time parts of it had passed to the Corporation.

in the hands of Richard Edgington, sacking manufacturer, who seems also to have held Strangers' Land. Edgington was bankrupt by 1818.³ At this time, what had been Stiles's part of the plot was held by trustees under a former lessee's will. Knowing that the leases would not be renewed, the Corporation seems to have decided to take the lead in a development project.

Six old tenements on a part of Edgington's ground were demolished by 1823, and the materials sold for £46 10s. The various parts of the plot were re-organised. One tenement with garden was separated off to be leased as a unit at a fine of £2 10s and rental 5s.⁴ There was an exchange between the plot and a neighbouring one to straighten the boundary. The lease on a part of the property was then to be auctioned, with a fine set at £9 and bidding on the rent. The successful bidder was to build, within a year, one or more tenements, which were to be of uniform construction, with street frontage, and be brick-built and have sash windows. They were to be at least 21 feet high to the roof plate, and at least 15 feet deep. These would be houses for the more prosperous among the working class, and it was specified that they should not be of worse appearance than 'those lately built by Robert Stiles in the same street'.⁵ The lease went to Thomas Ayriss, described as a kilnman, of Marcham, at a rental of ten guineas. In 1835, William Mayo, victualler, took over both Ayriss's lease and another part of the plot or of a neighbouring one. For the latter, he would pay a moderate rent of 10s per year, but was charged a surprisingly high entry fine of £130, of which 20% was payable immediately. It is rather hard to disentangle the details of what was done and exactly where, but it seems that Mayo was getting a considerable and compact portfolio of rental properties: the new uniform houses with street frontage (which still exist as Nos 84 or 86 to 92), and beyond them a court of six smaller dwelling houses running back from the street which by 1838 would be known as Brooker's Yard. Behind all these was ample land for further building, although it does not seem that this was used at the time. Today it is part of the Meadowside estate. One assumes that Thistlecroft might not have seemed adequately inviting as a name to the developer's marketing department.

³ Corporation minutes Vol 4 p. 168.

⁴ It is possible that this holding was elsewhere. Edgington had held several Corporation leases.

⁵ Corporation minutes Vol 4 p. 260. See below for Robert Stiles's houses.