

A proposed housing development in Farnhill – 1873

These days it seems that there are housing developments wherever you look, with many of them being contentious. However, none of the developments currently proposed for Farnhill will have anything like the impact that a plan put forward in 1873 would have had on the village had it gone ahead.

The development would have seen the creation of eight new streets, to be built on land owned largely by Mr. William Barrett, located between the Leeds-Liverpool canal and Main Street. These streets were to have been called:

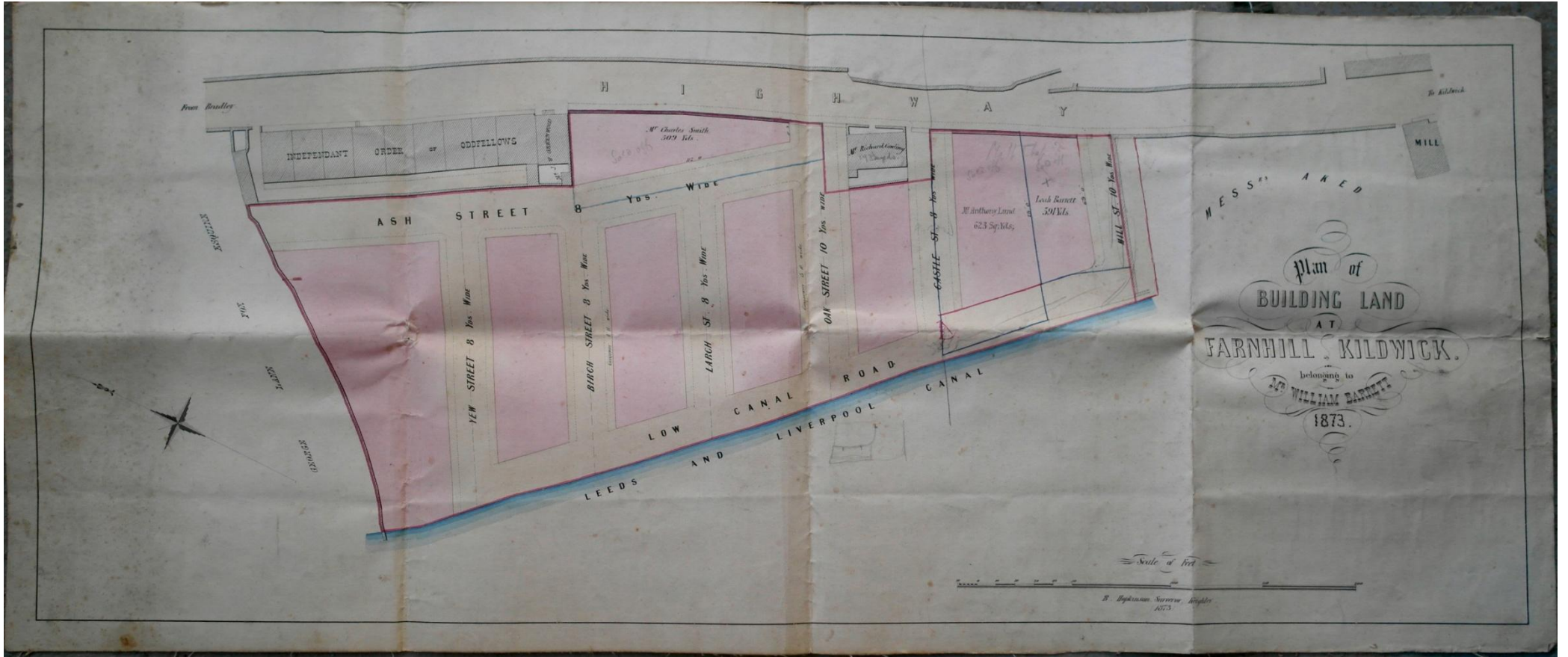
- Ash Street
- Yew Street
- Birch Street
- Larch Street
- Oak Street
- Castle Street
- Mill Street
- Low Canal Road

Ash Street was to run parallel to Main Street beginning just below the junction with Grange Road. It was to be situated behind an existing row of nine cottages on Main Street owned by the Independent Order of Oddfellows (now nos. 71 to 55 Main Street) and another property (now no. 53) owned by Mr. J.W. Greenwood. Once past these cottages, it was to continue across open land before meeting the newly-planned Oak Street coming up from the canal.

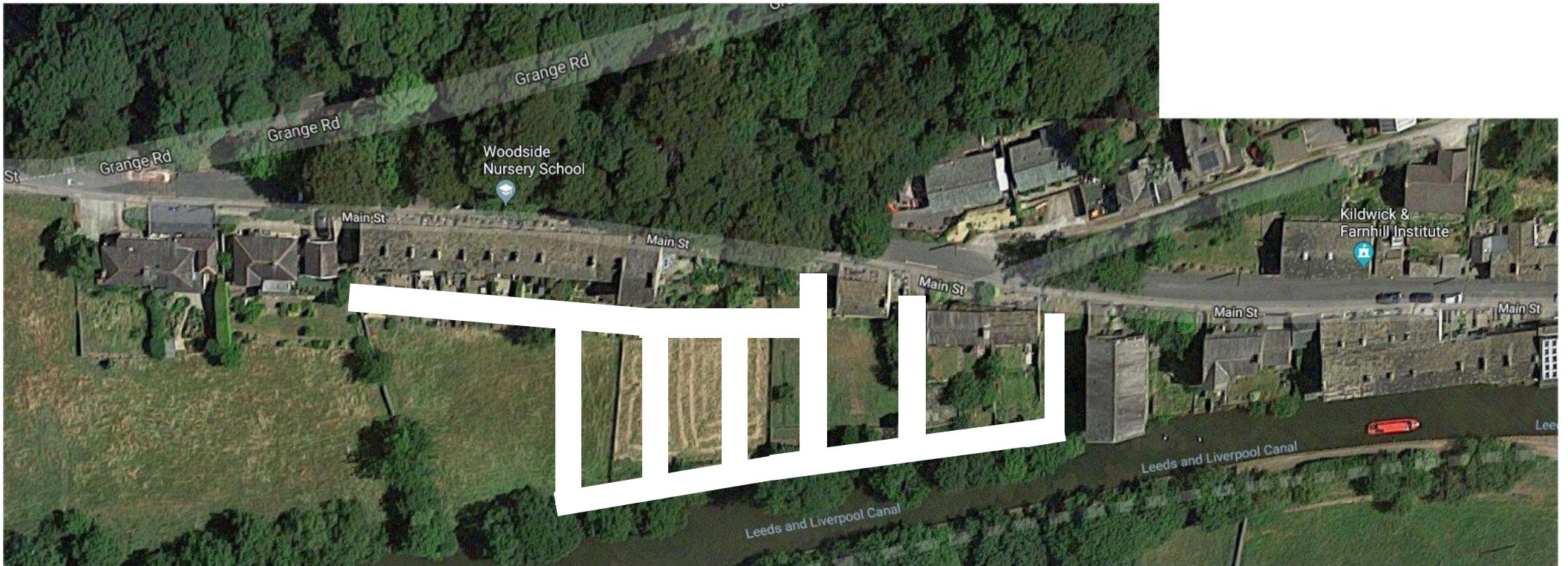
Low Canal Road was to run along the canal bank, with the other streets running up from it.

Yew Street, Birch Street and Larch Street were to run from Low Canal Road to Ash Street. Oak Street, Castle Street and Mill Street would form junctions directly with Main Street.

Oak Street and Castle Street were to meet Main Street either side of Castle House (still standing, no. 45 Main Street), with Mill Street slightly further down.



Plan of the proposed 1873 development – [click for larger image](#)



The layout of the proposed development superimposed on a Google Maps image of Main Street, Farnhill.

The development did not go-ahead, but the surviving plan (see earlier) offers some interesting insights into changes to the village that did happen:

- The far right of the plan shows a mill. This was Aked's mill, on the site of what is now no. 35 Main Street. It closed in the early 1900s and the large warehouse building on the opposite side of the road (also shown) became the Kildwick & Farnhill Institute in 1911.
- There is some text in written in pencil on the two plots of land between the proposed Castle Street and Mill Street. This reads "Meth Chap ? Sold Off". The suggestion that this is the site of the Chapel is difficult to reconcile with the plan which shows the position of these two streets relative to the entrance to The Arbour (on the opposite side of Main Street). It seems far more likely that the land marked as "Sold Off" was actually sold for two domestic properties. If this is the case, then the Chapel itself, built in 1896/7 and closed in 2015, would have been built on land immediately to the south of the proposed development.