

105 Westgate



Shirley Levon
Westgate Research Group
Wakefield Historical Society

Wakefield Historical Society welcomes all those interested and curious about the remarkable history of Wakefield and beyond. We encourage research, provide talks, publish books, and are happy to respond to historical enquiries.

Website: www.wakefieldhistoricalsociety.org.uk

The Upper Westgate Heritage Action Zone (HAZ).

Wakefield Council and Historic England are investing nearly £4 million pounds in 2020-2024 to regenerate historic buildings in the Upper Westgate Conservation Area to bring new life and make it flourish again. As their contribution to the project, members of Wakefield Historical Society are researching the buildings and yards and publishing their stories.

105 Westgate



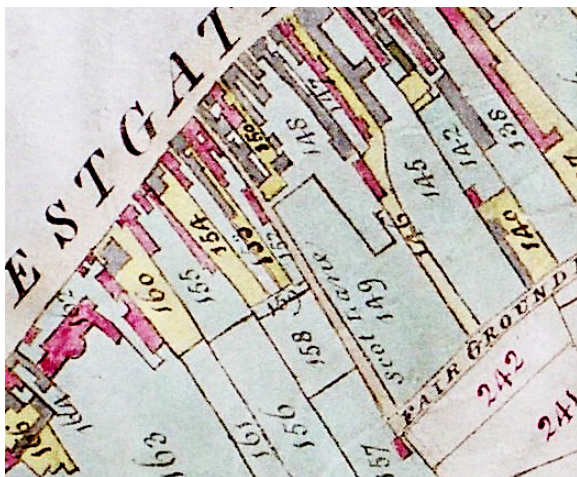
The rear of 105, showing the substantial three storey building in the yard

The three-storey Regency style building that is 105 Westgate stands out from its neighbours; to the west is the early 20th century frontage of the Elephant and Castle public house, and to the east the modest buildings that are 101 and 103 Westgate. In the British Listed Buildings record, 105 Westgate is described as '*a 3-storey Regency house with three windows in flush box frames on 2nd floor, one below to left of a canted bay with attached columns, muted frieze and dentil*

*cornice. Later wrought iron balcony rail above the blocking course. 2nd floor left window has original sashes with glazing bars, as has the bay; others are modern casements. Stucco with incised lines. Stone modillion eaves cornice to low pitched roof of stone slates with central brick chimney. Wide carriage entrance at left and modern shop front at right. Original windows on return. Rear elevations show C18 origin.*¹

When enclosure occurred at the end of the 18th century the building and the yard behind them were the property of Thomas Lumb, who owned plot 153 which also included the present 101 and 103 to the east.

¹ online: <https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101258988-105-westgate-wakefield-north-ward#.Yl2EGS8w1pR>



Excerpt from the Enclosure Map of 1790s
 By kind permission of West Yorkshire Archives,
 ref: QD5/3/Vol 4/28
 Photograph LesleyTaylor

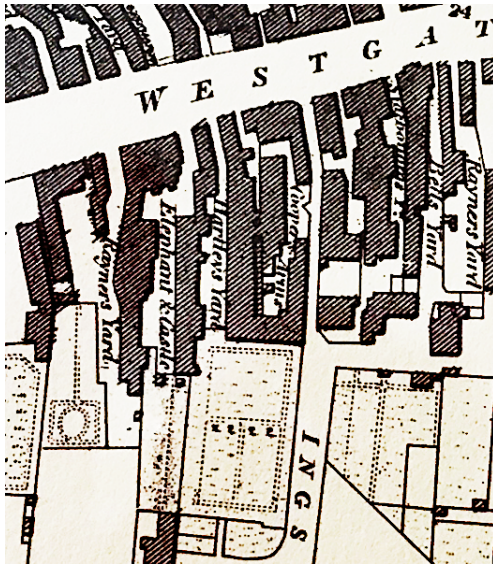
The entry recorded him as owning several houses, yard and garden, amounting to 1 rood and 13 perches, about one third of an acre. To the east was Ann Scott who owned one house, yard and garden, and to the west of 105 was James Orwin the owner of the Elephant and Castle Inn and yard.

He insured his property with the Sun Insurance Company in 1792² as a house, kitchen & stable in the tenure of Spicer & Co. maltsters for £150; this was 105. Also included was a malthouse for £240; a house in the tenure of John Wood hair dresser for £60; a house in the tenure of John Pickering bricklayer for £50; all brick and slated. The two houses in the tenure of Wood and Pickering were the present day 101 and 103 Westgate. It is notable that the malthouse had the greatest value. William Spicer was a cornfactor, and deeds show that at the beginning of the 19th century he owned other property on Wakefield waterfront and at Silkstone; he was a substantial citizen, acting as Chief Constable in 1815.

In 1805 a memorial in the Registry of Deeds reveals that Spicer conveyed the property to Thomas Hartley, *'Concerning those several messuages in Westgate, together with the maltkiln, warehouse,*

² London Metropolitan Archives, Sun Insurance records, Entry 598136, 27 Mar 1792,

*stables and buildings in the yard. Also all that garden at the bottom of the yard and immediately adjoining and now or late divided into two gardens.'*³



J. Walker's 1823 map showing Hartley's Yard east of the Elephant and Castle.

Thomas Hartley was a grocer, the first of several on the plot. By 1821 he had moved out of Wakefield to Ossett Streetside,⁴ but on J. Walkers plan of Wakefield in 1823 the yard is still named as Hartley's Yard. It seems that the ownership of the property changed hands several times in the first half of the 19th century, to Jane, George and William Briggs in 1824⁵, then to Robert Holdsworth, maltster, in 1833⁶, followed by Thomas Serle, a draper, in

1837⁷. It is not always clear whether these owners occupied the premises, and other occupiers in the properties in the yard are included. The size of the property is consistently described in these documents as being 1075 square yards.

In 1840 the property was released to Joshua Haigh, another grocer.⁸ Joshua Haigh not only owned the property, but also occupied it,

³ Registry of Deeds: 1806: Volume EU, Page 370, Entry 475

⁴ Registry of Deeds: 1821, Volume HF, Page 642, Entry 710

⁵ Registry of Deeds: 1824, Volume HY, Page 487, Entry 492

⁶ Registry of Deeds: 1833, Volume LO, Page 284, Entry 278

⁷ Registry of Deeds: 1837, Volume MR, Page 26, Entry 19

⁸ Registry of Deeds: 1840, Volume NL, Page 653, Entry 608

appearing in the 1841 census with his wife Elisabeth and their two children, Sarah Barras a domestic servant, and John Hill and George Harpin, both grocer's apprentices. To be successful, grocers needed to provide a welcoming shop, exceptional service and to know their customers well; these might be the mistress or master of the house or a servant. They stocked a wide range of goods, from exotic spices to staples like butter and cheese, all served in the amounts that their customers required; tobacco and alcohol might also be sold. Payment was usually on account so there needed to be trust between the grocer and his customers.⁹

Joshua Haigh died just five years later and was buried at Zion Congregational Church on George Street on the 19th May 1846. The property appeared for auction in the Wakefield Journal of 7th September 1849: *'All that dwelling house shop warehouse stable candlehouse outbuildings and garden where the late Mr Joshua Haigh for many years up to his death carried on the business of grocer and tallow chandler... the warehouse and candle house with cellars underneath were recently built purposely for the trade.....'*

Another grocer, Henry Colier Awmack, aged 27, was the resident in the 1851 census, with his wife, two children, three apprentices, a housekeeper, a nurse and a house servant. He was the son of Joseph Awmack, a grocer in York, and as he married in the Friends Meeting House in Wakefield he may have been a Quaker. It seems maintaining this large household was ambitious and an assignment in 1851 showed that he was obliged to hand over his business to his creditors, and in July 1851 there was an auction of his furniture and stock.¹⁰

Memorials of deeds in the Registry of Deeds show that the property was then occupied by John Hampshire 'broker'¹¹ and the 1861 census reveals him as a 59 year old widower living with his sister Elizabeth, a niece and a domestic servant. He described himself as a cabinet

⁹ Jon Stobart, 'Sugar and Spice', 2013

¹⁰ Leeds Intelligencer, 5th July 1851

¹¹ Registry of Deeds: 1852, Volume RG, Page 536, entry 623

maker, employing one man. He was listed in the Post Office Directory of that year as a furniture broker. The business was presumably successful, as he was still there in the 1871 census with a wife Ann, who was thirty three years his junior, two infant daughters, a boarder and a domestic servant. He died five years later on 20th December 1876, leaving his land and house to his wife and her brother John Chappel, and the modest sum of £200 in effects, for his children. Ann Hampshire continued to lease out the property until her death in 1908, when her daughter, Mrs Mary Smith, the wife of a Harrogate stockbroker inherited it.¹²

Following John Hampshire's death, Robert Dodgson moved into the property from his previous business in Kirkgate.¹³ In the Herald of 6 January 1877 he advertised as a *'cabinet-maker, upholsterer, paper-hanger, dealer in China, glass, & earthenware, furnishing ironmonger, and undertaker of funerals etc.'* But the business did not last long, by December of the year following, his stock was being sold off,¹⁴ and the shop reverted to being occupied by a grocer, David Taylor.¹⁵ He appeared in the 1881 census as a *'grocer and provision dealer'* age 28 with Ann his wife who was 8 years older than him, and one assistant, Robert Womersley. He was born in Lightcliffe, and the previous 1871 census shows him in Lightcliffe as a carpet weaver, but he was living with his widowed mother who was a grocer, so he presumably felt he knew the business. But it seems that he was unable to make a success of it, and he was probably the David Taylor who appeared in the 1891 census in Dewsbury as a blanket raiser.

In the late 1880s properties were renumbered, and what had previously been number 120 became 105 Westgate. By 1887 the property was back in the hands of a furniture dealer, John Weldon Baker. He advertised in the Wakefield and West Riding Herald of 17 December 1887: *'Ye Olde Curiosity Shoppe...if you want old oak or*

¹² Original leases in ownership of the Baker family, and the 1910 Valuation

¹³ Wakefield Herald, 6th January 1877; Post Office Directory 1877, 120 Westgate

¹⁴ Leeds Mercury, 18 December 1878

¹⁵ Burgess Roll 1880-81, Wakefield Local Studies Library

mahogany furniture, old china, old paintings and curiosities go to John Baker's Establishment'. He was also buying and selling old clothing, and offering to warehouse goods 'on moderate terms'.



Catalogue from 1910, it lists 149 items of furniture alone, apart from glass and other items.

Photograph by kind permission of the Baker Family

In the 1891 census John Weldon Baker was described as a '*broker and general dealer*', age 49, with his wife Sarah, a son Thomas, age 24, who was an assistant in the shop, two other sons Weldon and Holderness aged 12, and 7, and one daughter Hetty aged 13. John Baker had been established in Wakefield for at least 20 years. He was born in Weldon Northamptonshire, but his family later settled in Horncastle Lincolnshire which was where his eldest son was born about 1865. He had settled in Wakefield by the time of the 1871 census in Sidebottom's

Yard, a little further up Westgate, described as a joiner and builder employing 5 men and a boy, and also a Methodist local preacher. He was with a previous wife, Caroline, two sons and a daughter, and John Barnsley, a joiner, who was lodging with them. Ten years later, the 1881 census showed him still in Sidebottom's Yard, as a joiner employing 3 men; he and Caroline now had 7 children. Caroline died in the autumn of 1884, and by the summer of the following year he was remarried to a widow, Sarah Ann Cooling.

John Weldon Baker continued to lease the property, and a lease of 1893 recorded the property as a '*dwelling house and shop numbers 105 and 107 Westgate with the two warehouses and stable thereto*'. The lease was £75 per annum, and the lessee was to keep it in repair including the doors to the gateway, to paint all the inside, and the outside in 1897, not keep dangerous substances on the premises, and not to sublet. Further leases in 1897, 1902 and 1909 are similar, although the rent increased.¹⁶

No death record for Sarah Ann has been found, but the 1901 census recorded John Weldon Baker as a furniture broker with a third wife



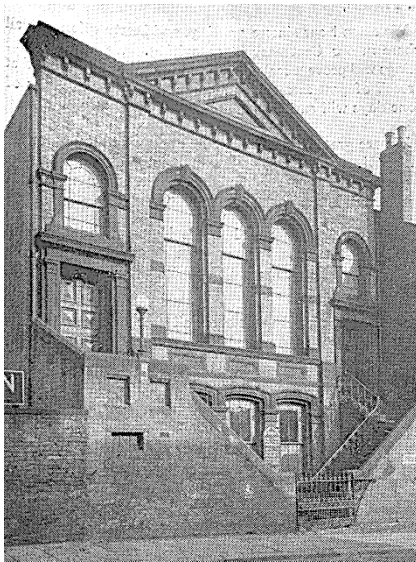
105 Westgate, about the beginning of the 20th century, with the Baker family.
Note that the entry to the yard from Westgate has now been used as extra
storage space for the business.

Photograph by kind permission of the Baker Family

¹⁶ Baker family papers

whom he married in 1899, Clara Novello Mackwood, and they had a 10 month old daughter, Doris. Henrietta (Hetty), Weldon and Holderness, were still living with the family. The business was now well-established and the carriage entry into the yard had been enclosed to be used for further storage.

The 1911 census at 105 and 107 Westgate showed that there were 9 rooms in the house, and Holderness age 27, was with his wife Hannah age 28, and a three year old son. With them was Holderness's brother Weldon age 32, and his sisters Henrietta age 34, and Doris age 10. Holderness and Weldon are described as furniture dealers, and Henrietta a bookseller; all of them working at home.



Ebenezer Primitive Methodist Chapel,
Image from Centenary booklet in 1838.
West Yorkshire Archives, Ref: C/13/36/8/2/1

As already stated, the 1871 census showed that John Weldon Baker was a Methodist preacher. The family worshipped at the Primitive Methodist Chapel on Market Street (also known as Ebenezer Chapel). Established in 1838, the centenary booklet in 1938 makes particular mention of Holderness Baker, describing him as '*a leading personality*'. Father and son had been preachers and trustees of the chapel, preaching the Stanley Lane End School sermons for 66 years consecutively.

After 1911 it seems that the family moved out of 105, and in the Burgess Rolls of 1914, it was listed as a shop but not a residence. It appears that it became a lock-up shop, with no one living on the premises from this period onward. The Bakers' business moved to 61a Northgate, and later to where it exists today, in Gill's yard, Northgate.

The Electoral Roll of 1918 shows Florence Morley and Mary Amelia Charlesworth occupying the shop, but their '*abode*' was on Margaret Street. In the 1927 Kelly's Directory Miss Florence Morley, milliner, was listed at 105. Before 1939 Florence married Henry Towey, and in the 1939 register the couple were at Milnes Avenue Lupset; Henry was described as a '*loco examining fitter*' and Florence as a '*shopkeeper, millinery and fancy draper*'.

Much of what happened to the property thereafter has yet to be discovered, the 1950 electoral register showing only a long list of people in the yard. A 1970's image shows the shop as 'Modern Fireplaces', which was probably the business of Joe Facchini who appears in the 1939 register as a '*fire and wall tiler*' living in Leeds.¹⁷ By 1996 numbers 97-105 were owned by Chantry Housing Association and in 2013 they submitted plans to develop and renovate the properties. A sales brochure in 2012 describes it as '*a superb retail unit*' with a sales area of 550 sq ft, which for many years had been occupied by a jeweller, (Neil Stuart). In 2013, 105 was a barber's, more recently a bridal boutique and following that a 'Raw Food' shop.

In the 19th and early 20th century grocers and cabinet-makers/furniture dealers predominated as the occupiers of 105/107 Westgate. These were not prestigious businesses, but their presence over many years shows they were successful and important to the retail offer on Westgate. The building itself provided sufficient space for stock, a good dwelling-house, and in the early years included a warehouse, candle-house and stables as part of the business. In the

¹⁷ information from Wakefield Historical Appreciation Site Facebook page.

21st century, it is to be hoped that the independent businesses that now occupy this part of Westgate will be successful and thrive.

With thanks to Stephen Baker for sharing information, documents and photographs about his family and for his kind permission to use the images of the family outside the shop, and the 1910 catalogue.

©Shirley Levon 2022

**This series of booklets about
Westgate buildings has been written
and designed by members of
Wakefield Historical Society as a
result of research for the Westgate
Heritage Action Zone project
2020-2024.**

We are grateful to Historic England and
Wakefield Council for their help in funding
the printing.



Historic England



WAKEFIELD
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

wakefieldcouncil