

THE LODGES OF HEADINGLEY

The Gingerbread Genre

“A small stone gatehouse with gingerbread decorations,”
Eveleigh Bradford (page 139) on Lodge **14**

Originally, a ‘lodge’ was just a small dwelling. More specifically, now it can be a seasonal hunting lodge, or a holiday hotel - or (as in Headingley) a small house at the gates of the grounds of a large house, occupied by a gate- or park-keeper. As well as being a lodging, the lodge may guard the grounds or offer a welcome or affirm the aspirations of the big house. Bold numbers below refer to the gallery of lodges.



The Lodges

Headingley is Leeds’ finest suburb, according to the *Pevsner Architectural Guide to Leeds* of 2008: “Headingley has the most important group of large and small villas and mansions in the city” (p245). One corollary is that one of the distinctive characteristics of the neighbourhood is the number of lodges or gate-houses guarding the area’s great houses. Some forty were built in and around Headingley during Queen Victoria’s reign. Some were for existing houses (Kirkstall Grange **26** and Weetwood Hall **31-32** especially), but most accompanied new Victorian villas (while a half-dozen were for amenities, like parks or reservoirs); a few villas even boasted two lodges (Moor House **22-23**, Weetwood Hall **31-32**, Weetwood Grove **39-40**). Three-quarters of the lodges have survived, in some cases even though the main house itself has gone (**07**, **14**, **20**, **21**). One lodge **14** has actually moved location, from North Lane to South Parade.

The Buildings

A dozen lodges were built in the first ten years of Victoria’s reign, a dozen or so more in the 1860s, and another group about the 1880s. They were built encircling Headingley village, and along the great thoroughfares of Headingley Lane, Otley Road and Weetwood Lane, from Woodhouse Moor in the south up to the Ring Road in the north.



The origins of many lodges remain anonymous, but others are known. They were commissioned by manufacturers and merchants, like John Marshall **14*** and Thomas Harding **16** who had factories in Holbeck, and Henry Ludolf **08** (flax merchant), Thomas England **11*** (corn), Samuel Holmes **24** (linen) and James Brown **35*** (worsted). Other patrons were the bankers William Beckett **26***, James Walker Oxley **29*** and George Smith **05**, and also the colourful printers Alf Cooke **31*-32*** and Joseph Pickersgill **33***. The architects of half the lodges are recorded. Bardon Grange **35*** is attributed to Cuthbert Brodrick (of Town Hall fame), and others to the Headingley architects George Corson **29***, **38*** and William Henry Thorp **31*-32***,

34, 37. Other Leeds architects designing the lodges included Thomas Ambler **39-40** and John Child **11*** (who designed the original St Anne's Cathedral), as well as Thomas Winn **33***, James Simpson **36***, John Clark **05** and John Fox **13***. The quality of the lodges is indicated by the fact that nearly half of those surviving are Listed Buildings (shown here with an *asterisk).



As the lodges were being built in Headingley, the gingerbread bakers in Germany began baking gingerbread houses, inspired by the Brothers Grimm's tale of Hansel and Gretel. The model for these houses was the ancient *fachwerk* (timber-frame)

tradition, and centuries later, they in turn served to characterise the lodges in Headingley. The Kirkstall Grange lodge **26** was long known locally as 'the gingerbread house', and Eveleigh Bradford referred to the 'gingerbread decorations' of the Headingley House lodge **14**.

Gables

The original 'gingerbread house' was a "little house ... made of bread and cake," according to the Grimms. So, of course, the lodges are small (as appropriate to their function). Nearly half of those surviving are single-storey (**05, 07**, others have an attic or upper storey within the roof). And the remainder almost all have a small ground-plan (though Quarry Dene Lodge **37** is actually a substantial house!). But their most distinctive features, appropriate to the timber-framed gingerbread model, are their prominent gables. A large gable on a single storey dominates the building, and in



this respect, the archetypal lodges are North Lodge **01** and Kirkstall Grange Lodge **26**. The gables have immediate impact, but even where they are less dominant, few lodges lack one or more prominent gables (a couple have half-hipped gables, **12, 33**). These are often emphasised in two respects. Many have deep eaves, so the gable stands well forward of the wall beneath, often with distinctive brackets (especially Lower Lodge **40**). And several also have elaborate barge boards, with carvings and tracery, as at North Lodge **01** and the lodges of Kirkstall Grange **26**, Moor Grange **25** and Weetwood Mount **30**. Most of these gable-ends are of wood, but some are of stone (as at Buckingham Villas **09-10** and Weetwood Hall **31-32**). Some of these in turn, instead of being triangular, have elaborate Dutch gables, typically with counter-curves and a finial (like Spring Bank Lodge **13** and Weetwood Villa Lodge **36**), making them a prominent feature in their own right. Whatever its form, almost always the gable dominates the building.



Plans

The gables often reflect the steep pitch of the lodges' roofs (Foxhill Cottage **38**, for instance). But often they also stand in front of elaborate roofscapes. These may be due to the intrusion of roofed dormer

windows (13, 14) or roofed porches (01, 26). Frequently they are cross-gabled (27, 28). Sometimes they are embellished with a conical (38) or semi-octagonal (16) roof. The most complex is Spenfield Lodge 29, with cross-gables, parallel gables, a dormer and a porch, and a conical roof, for good measure. The roof in turn reflects the plan of the lodge. Some are simple rectangles (05, 07), but most are more complex, with a main block and one or more truncated wings. They may have an L-shaped plan (like 31-32) or a T-shaped plan (like 25, 26) or a cross plan (like 28, 36). These structures in turn mean that few lodges have simple flat facades (and other walls), instead they have endless corners, recesses and bays, like the Headingley Castle lodges (11-12) or Kirkstall Grange Lodge (26) or the Weetwood Hall lodges (31-32). This complexity is nevertheless contained within a compact footprint.

Doors and Windows

The lodges' facades are enlivened by doorways, their roofs by windows and their sky-lines by chimneys. Many lodges have elaborate porches, with their own gables, out of all scale to the lodge itself, such as North Lodge 01, Longfield Lodge 07, Spring Bank Lodge 13, Headingley House Lodge 14, and Weetwood Mount Lodge 30. Alternatively (or as well), the lodge's walls may be embellished by large bay windows, as at North Lodge 01, the Headingley Castle lodges 11, 12, Tower Lodge 16, Kirkstall Grange Lodge 26, the Weetwood Reservoir lodges 27, 28, again larger than the lodge would seem to warrant. Windows may also intrude into the roof. They may be wall dormers, rising from the façade, as at Spring Bank Lodge 13, Whinfield and Moorfield lodges 20, 21, and Bardon Hill and Bardon Hall lodges 33, 35. Or they may be gable dormers, set into the roof, as at Headingley House Lodge 14, Spenfield Lodge 29, Foxhill Cottage 38 and Lower Lodge 40 (which has hipped dormers).



Chimneys

But perhaps the most striking embellishments of many lodges are their chimneys. Almost all the lodges have striking chimneys (a notable exception is the Filter Beds lodge 28), and in many cases, these are prominent chimney stacks – as at the Weetwood Hall lodges 31, 32, or the Weetwood Villa and Quarry Dene lodges 36, 37. But much more impressive are the tall chimney flues, usually topped with a cornice and crenellations. They may be cylindrical, as at the Headingley Castle and Headingley House lodges 11, 12, 14, the Reservoir Lodge 27, Bardon Hill Lodge 33 and Foxhill Cottage 38. Or they may be square, as at Spring Bank 13, or often octagonal, like North Lodge 01, Tower Lodge 16, Kirkstall Grange Lodge 26 and Spenfield Lodge 29. The Headingley House Lodge even has barley-sugar decoration on its columns.

The Gingerbread Genre

Apart from the last three (03, 04, 33, which use half-timbering and brick), all the lodges are built of stone and slate [not bread and cake!]. Of course, in style, there is great diversity among them, functionally, geographically and historically. The earliest lodges, at the beginning of the Victorian era, perhaps have most of the ‘gingerbread house’ character about them – they are small, with dominating gables, elaborate facades and prominent chimneys. Later lodges become larger and somewhat less obviously ornate - nevertheless they



remain compact and ornamental, still with prominent gables, complex facades and distinctive chimney stacks. (There was a brief fashion for Dutch gables around 1860.) But generally, the lodges seem to have more in common with each other, than they do with the big houses they serve. All are (comparatively) small, yet all boast full-scale features. In fact, an incongruity of scale between the parts and the whole is perhaps the defining characteristic of this distinct form of architecture, the Gingerbread Genre.

Richard Tyler, Headingley Development Trust, Summer 2021

References

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