



# *Sheetlines*

The journal of  
THE CHARLES CLOSE SOCIETY  
for the Study of Ordnance Survey Maps

“ARP revision 1938 ”

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*Sheetlines*, 100 (August 2014), pp33-36

Stable URL:

<http://www.charlesclosesociety.org/files/Issue100page33.pdf>

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Published by  
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for the Study of Ordnance Survey Maps  
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The Charles Close Society was founded in 1980 to bring together all those with an interest in the maps and history of the Ordnance Survey of Great Britain and its counterparts in the island of Ireland. The Society takes its name from Colonel Sir Charles Arden-Close, OS Director General from 1911 to 1922, and initiator of many of the maps now sought after by collectors.

The Society publishes a wide range of books and booklets on historic OS map series and its journal, *Sheetlines*, is recognised internationally for its specialist articles on Ordnance Survey-related topics.

## ***ARP revision, 1938***

***Rob Wheeler***

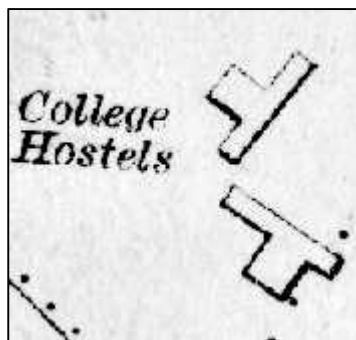
In 1938-9, at the behest of those responsible for Air Raid Precaution (ARP) measures, at least 3058 six-inch sheets were issued in a Special Emergency Edition (SEE), incorporating information from one-inch revision, recent 1:2500 revision, and special surveys. Quality of survey (for these *ad hoc* surveys) and of drawing was sacrificed for speed.<sup>1</sup> SEEs were not put on sale or deposited in copyright libraries. However, sheets covering towns were issued from 1944<sup>2</sup> in the National Grid Provisional series. Often these sheets had a short life, being superseded by later editions which incorporated information from aerial photography of 1946-9. Based on a very small sample, these early National Grid Provisionals were not redrawn, but merely had 1km grid lines added.<sup>3</sup> Such sheets can be recognised by the heading 'Revision of 19\*\* with additions in 1938'.

Thus what I write about the interpretation of ARP revision data applies both to SEEs and to National Grid Provisional sheets derived from them, although it is based largely on the latter.

The new material on SEEs relates only to buildings and roads. The buildings added stand out because they are drawn without fill, albeit shaded – lines to E and S are thicker. They fall into three categories:

1) *Small, isolated.* Typically these are the size of a large house and are always shown as rectangles.

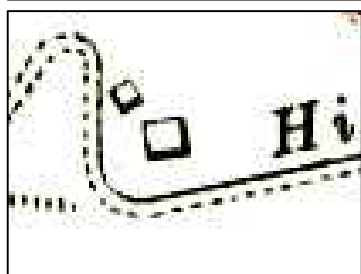
(2) *Small, in a line.* Typically these are suburban houses and are drawn



without gaps between them as a continuous line, which may follow the bends of a road. Figure 1 (*far left*) shows an example from SEE sheet Leics 17NE.

(3) *Large.* Typically these are factories, but figure 2 (*left*) shows student accommodation

at what is now Loughborough University from the same map. They are large enough to be shown with more complex shapes.



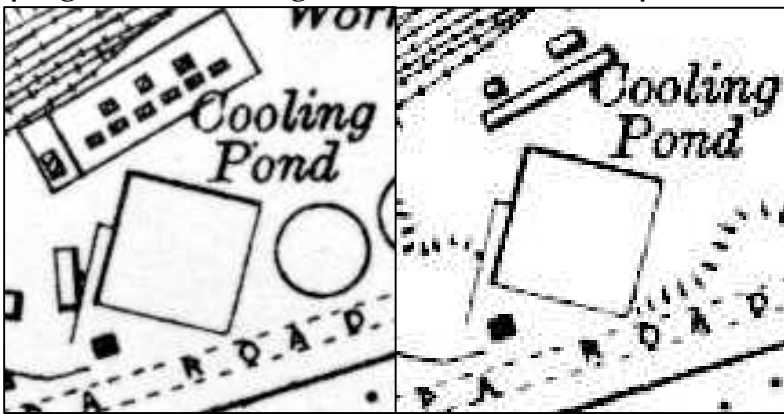
Interpretation is not always straightforward. Taking category (1), figure 3 (*left*) shows part of Highview Road, Lightwater, from Surrey sheet 16NW. The two buildings appear in a similar relationship on the OS six-inch of

<sup>1</sup> Richard Oliver, *Ordnance Survey maps: a concise guide for historians*, (London: Charles Close Society, 2005), 42.

<sup>2</sup> Some sheets were issued from 1943 without the grid, and until mid-1945 there were no marginal figures.

<sup>3</sup> Minor changes include the addition of MOT road numbers from c1945 and the deletion of administrative boundaries where they overlay new detail.

1961, where they have been drawn more accurately, and on the 1:2500 of 1971. From these later maps it appears that the larger house lies ESE by E of the smaller, and a property boundary following approximately a north-south line passes between them. The surveyor must have estimated their positions and dimensions without leaving the road. That such inaccuracy was by no means isolated is shown by the note on Surrey 25SE that administrative boundaries had been deleted where they passed through areas of new detail because relative positions could not be relied upon: the map might appear to show a house as lying on the wrong side of the boundary.



Category (2) can also cause problems. Figure 4 (*far left*) shows part of the municipal electricity generating station at Lincoln, taken from the 'B' edition of the National Grid Provisional, Lincs 70NE. This is derived from a 1938 full revision. One can see a square cooling pond, with cooling towers to the east of it and, to the north, a compound which perhaps contains switchgear; at any rate, we can be confident that the small rectangular buildings inside it are not houses. Just west of the cooling pond is an unfilled building which must be derived from RAF Air photography. Contrast this with figure 5 (*above right*) from the 'A' edition based on the revision of 1930 with additions in 1938. There are no cooling towers yet. But the point to note is that the row of six buildings shown in figure 4 has been simplified into a single elongated building. Making sense of this on the basis of figure 5 alone would be a real challenge.

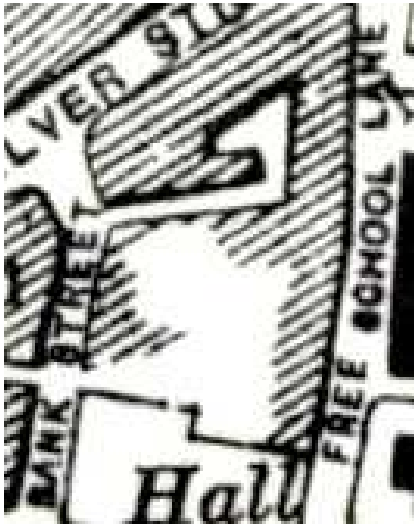
There is another category which could be added to the list:

(4) Changes to large buildings. This might, for example, take the form of extension of a factory: the old external wall that is no longer external would be cleaned off the drawing and the new external wall added. Thus the diagonal hatching will remain for the old building, whilst the extension will be unfilled.



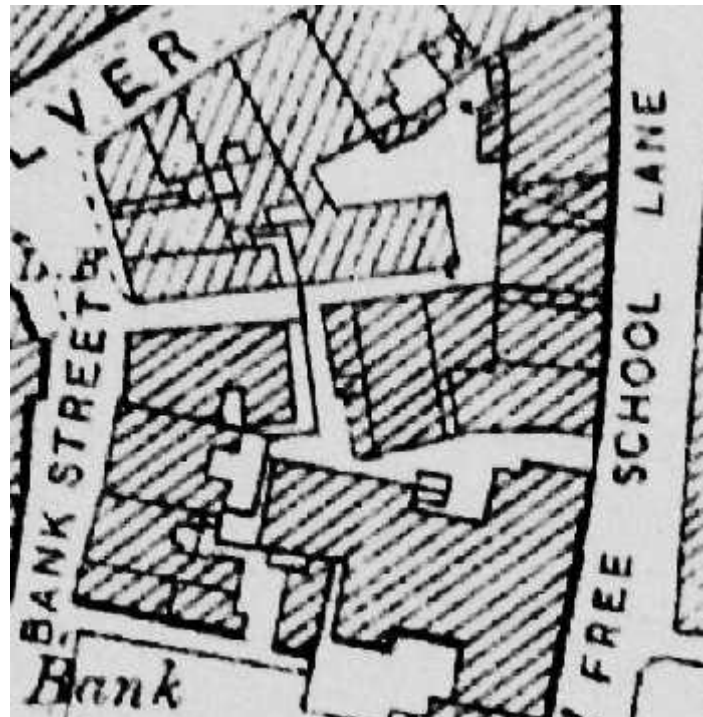
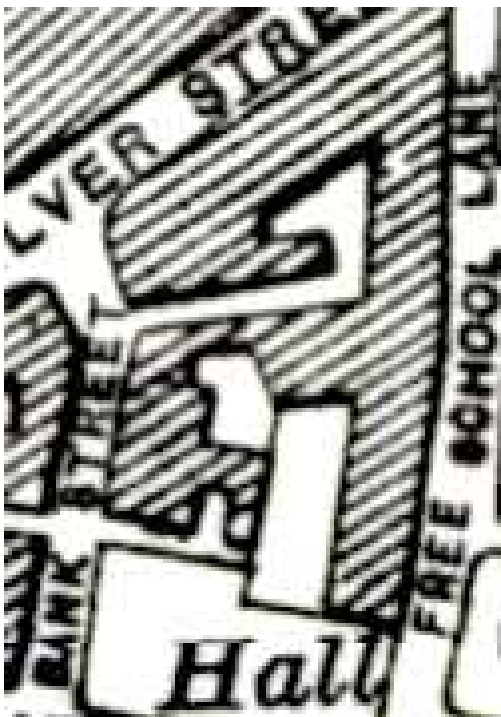
Figure 6 (*left*) gives an example from the same map as figure 4: the rectangular area with diagonal hatching on the north side of Vere Street had been shown as an isolated rectangular building on previous editions of the six-inch; now it has been extended east and west along Vere Street. The odd proportions should make one a little suspicious. Inspection of modern satellite imagery shows that the 'rectangular building' is actually a block of terraced housing; the 'extension' to the west is actually three pairs of semi-detached houses, that to the east is a detached block of four houses. The terraced houses appear deeper than the later houses because they have rear wings. The 'extension' south of Lark Lane turns

out to be of the same nature. Given the increased degree of generalisation allowed, one cannot fault the depiction here. And, as it happens, this is not ARP revision: the changes occur on the 'B' edition, not on the 'A' edition.



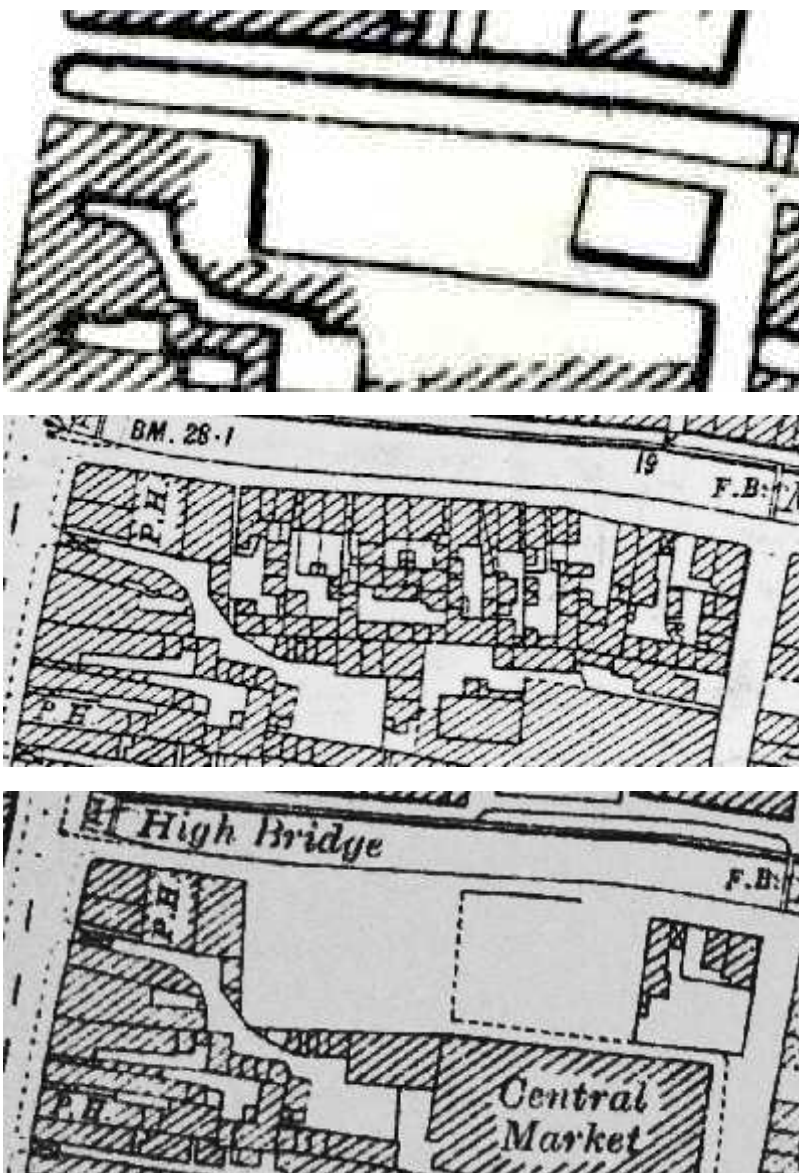
An example which does represent ARP revision is shown in figure 7 (*left*), from the same map as figure 5. What is one to make of the piebald diagonal hatching on the block between Bank Street and Free School Lane? An answer is suggested by the previous edition of the six-inch, based on revision of 1930, shown at figure 8 (*lower left*). One might presume that the block has been redeveloped, filling the yards at the back. And undoubtedly there are cases where such a presumption would be correct. In this case we can view the 1938 revision of the 1:2500 (Sheet 70.7) to see what the ARP revisers were faced with (figure 9, *lower right*). What had actually happened is that the

building on Free School Lane (Lincoln Co-op) had extended back, taking up some but not all of the yards. Undoubtedly figure 7 is a better depiction than simply leaving the map in the form of figure 8. But it seems surprising, given the pressures to which surveyors and draughtsmen were working, that this alteration was thought worth making.



The final example, also from the 'A' edition of Lincs 70NE, is the one which stimulated this investigation. Figure 10 (*next page, top*) shows the area in Lincoln now called City Square. Along the northern edge runs the River Witham, from the medieval High Bridge, just visible at the left-hand edge, to a footbridge at the eastern boundary of the extract. The questions I had posed were, firstly, what is





the ‘new’ building just SW of the footbridge – nothing is there now – and what is going on to its south, where a new frontage appears to be shown which is not parallel to what was there before. One of the reasons for making so much use of Lincoln in these examples is that there were 1:2500 revisions in 1930 and 1938 to provide a measure of ground truth. Figure 11 (*centre left*) shows the area in 1930: all along the south bank of the river is a jumble of small houses and courts (probably of great historical interest) concerning which the City council was about to make a slum clearance order. Figure 12 (*lower left*) shows the same area in 1938. Most of the property fronting the river has been demolished, but a small group remains at the eastern end next to the footbridge.<sup>4</sup> To the south, a new covered market has been built:

according to a plaque, it opened in May 1938.

So in this case, what appeared on inspection of the ARP revision to be a new building turns out to be old; whereas the building to the south, which seemed to be merely altered, was actually wholly new. One can see how it came about: it must have been easier to delete all the buildings fronting the river and redraw what remained; likewise the southern part of the new market hall replaced existing buildings, so there was no need to remove the diagonal hatching. The rule of thumb works most of the time but not always.

*Figures 3, 5 and 7 are reproduced by permission of the National Library of Scotland. A provisional cartobibliography of Special Emergency Edition sheets is at [www.charlesclosesociety.org/SEE](http://www.charlesclosesociety.org/SEE)*

<sup>4</sup> The end building was the *New Bridge Inn*, which closed in 1939 but became a Salvation Army-run club and then the Markets Office until 1974 – see L Elvin, *Lincoln in the 1950s and 60s*, 1987, view 19.