

THE HISTORY OF YOUR AREA

The roads which make up Bellevue Village are some of the earliest areas of development in Wandsworth. Houses were built on Althorp and Nottingham Roads as early as 1865, on the 120 acre estate of Wandsworth Lodge, which had been demolished two years earlier.

The land was bought and developed by the British Land Company, an offshoot of the National Freehold Land Society founded in 1849 and later becoming the Abbey National. The development was politically motivated, driven by Liberals in favour of extending the electorate to their advantage. At that time only male landowners were able to vote but a loophole in the 1832 Reform Act enabled political parties to promote home ownership among potential voters – buying land, dividing it up into small freehold plots then selling it on to people they could trust to cast the appropriate vote. Known as ‘gerrymandering’, the British Land Company built small houses for tradesmen and factory workers, turning them into landowners and therefore Liberal voters.

By 1867 the law was changed giving the vote to all male rate payers rendering the British Land Company’s original purpose obsolete as well as those of competing land companies with different political affiliations. British Land became a building firm without political ties and is today one of the largest property development companies in the country.

The area’s future was ensured with the opening of Wandsworth Common Station in 1869 and house building continued well into the next century. The roads take their names from the Spencer family who were major landowners in the area and in particular John, the third Earl Spencer, who was a respected Liberal MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer and staunch advocate of electoral reform. Althorp is the Spencer’s country estate in Northamptonshire and their former London residence, Spencer House, is in St James’s, Westminster. The third Earl married Esther Acklom in 1814 – an only child brought up at Wiseton Hall in Nottingham. She died tragically during childbirth in 1818 and the Earl later retired to Wiseton where he died in 1845.

19 Bellevue Road, London SW17 7EG

Sales

Jason Corbett jcorbett@sullivanthomas.co.uk
020 8767 7711

Lettings

Fiona Bourke fbourke@sullivanthomas.co.uk
020 8682 3121

sullivanthomas.co.uk

Photograph courtesy of Wandsworth Heritage Service



