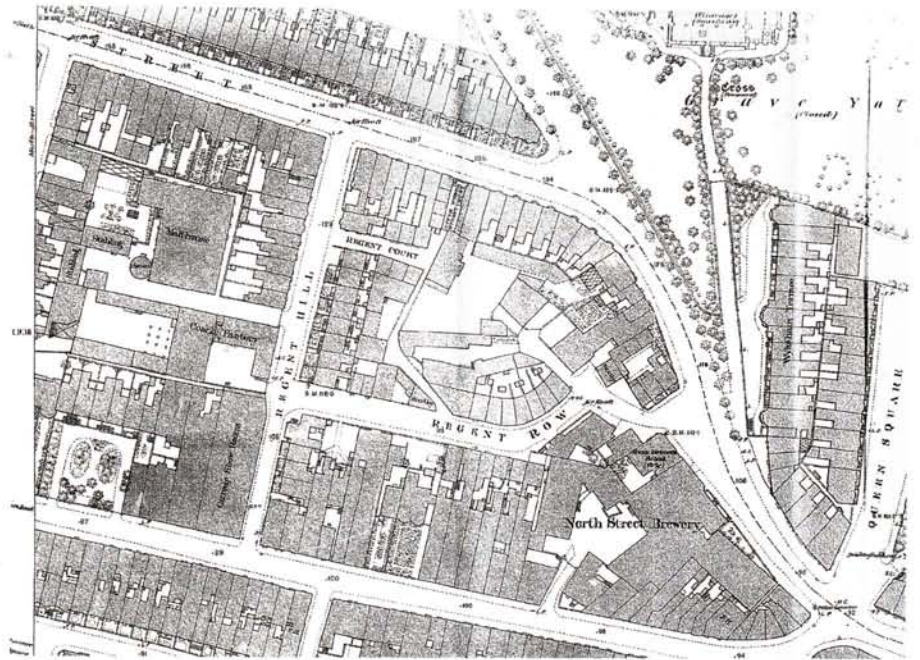


**Alderman H. Smithers,**  
MAYOR OF BRIGHTON, 1861.



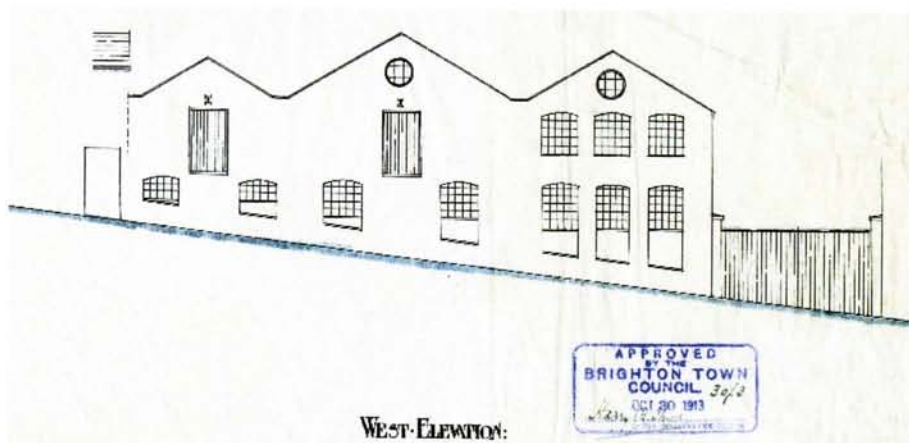
## Victorian Industry in Regent Hill

The Montpelier and Clifton Hill Area today may be almost entirely residential, with shops in Western Road, but in the 1850s when most of this area was developed life would have been very different. A few streets away from the grandest homes were smaller streets with industrial areas.

Residents of the smaller houses in and around Upper North Street often worked from home as tailors, dressmakers, teachers, musicians, painters and decorators. The smells from coal fires, horses, stables and the slaughterhouse would have indicated that this was a working area, along with the smells from Smithers Brewery.

Henry Smithers was born in 1807 and came from a local family of brewers. He joined Thomas Isaacson in 1839 to run an existing brewery on the site that is now Marks & Spencer car park. Smithers & Isaacson brewers and coal merchants, covered an area from Wivelsfield to Southwick, and owned many premises including the Queens Hotel. Henry Smithers ran the business from 1862 at the North Street Brewery in Western Road, known for its tall chimney, adding the Regent Hill site of a slaughterhouse for a bottling store and stables. This site is now Marlborough Mews.

Brighton was linked by rail to London in 1841. Thousands of holiday-makers and day-trippers drank bottled beer with ginger pop for children, and there was a tavern on almost every street corner. In Brighton in 1861 there were 479 pubs and beer-shops, but only 111 bakers, 107 butchers and 135 fruiterers & greengrocers.





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Henry Smithers was a Brighton Commissioner before being elected to the new Corporation from 1855 to 1874. He was the first Chairman of the West Pier Company, a big supporter of charitable institutions, and Mayor in 1861. While Mayor he raised £1,000 for the Mansion House Fund for distressed Lancashire mill workers. Brewery finance may have caused the Smithers Family to move house. Henry Smithers was the first resident of Montpellier Hall, Montpelier Terrace, in 1861, but by 1864 he had moved to 21 Buckingham Place. In 1881 he was 74, had been a widower, married Delia age 56, and was living at 6 Montpelier Villas. He died in 1884, and is buried in St. Nicholas Church west garden.

The Smithers Family Company expanded the business from 1884, building new brewery premises and purchasing more outlets. In 1913 they owned 120 separate properties. They rebuilt the Regent Hill bottling stores with stables, garages for motor vans, and garages for steam lorries. The Smithers Family was also linked by marriage to the Clarke Family of Howlett & Clarke Solicitors, who were directors of the company. The West Street Brewery was taken over by Smithers in 1914. The North Street Brewery closed in 1920 after production had moved to Portslade. Smithers and Son Ltd were taken over by Tamplins in 1928.

The North Street Brewery was swept away in 1931 for the Marks & Spencer store. The Regent Hill site was taken over jointly by Johnson Brothers of Western Road and GEC, later being cleared for the Marlborough Mews housing development.

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OFFICE AND LOADING DOCK. BOTTLING STORE.

