



Housing remained important to Rowse throughout his life. His early student designs, whilst at the Liverpool School of Architecture, included proposals for Port Sunlight, and at the end of his career he also set out the award-winning plan and cottage designs for Woodchurch housing estate after World War Two.



He subsequently received further commissions in the town and environs, including alternations to *West Hey* on Dawstone Road, and *Rocklands* in Thornton Hough. Whilst preferring to work in brick, at *Garthlands* on Gayton Lane, Heswall, he took an experimental approach working entirely in concrete whilst still retaining classical undertones and proportions. Rowse was a member at Heswall Golf Club, and following a fire that destroyed the clubhouse in 1924, Rowse's competition design was selected for the rebuilding. The west-facing loggia overlooked the course and River Dee beyond, and its vaulted ceiling (now much altered) probably informed his later work at Martins Bank. Following Rowse's success and large commissions, he left Heswall for the more salubrious quarters of *Chapel House*, a substantial residence in Puddington, Wirral, which amply housed his growing art and furniture collections. Despite his increasingly large commissions he kept his practice compact operating out of two offices in Martins Bank, delivering personal oversight to all of his projects and relying on a tight-knit team of trusted collaborators.



Like most architects, his first commissions were from family and friends, including *Millmead*, a house for his mother in Willaston. Rowse incorporated labour-saving gadgets such as an integrated vacuuming device concealed in the skirting boards. In Heswall, his wife's uncle commissioned *Allandale*, a large family residence on Farr Hall Road (now being used as care home accommodation). Its relaxed Neo-Georgian style was carefully detailed and set the standard for many other villas commissioned at this time in Heswall and Gayton. Rowse's practice was in Liverpool but after he got married (to Dorothy Parry) they moved to Heswall, residing at *Arrochar* on Rocky Lane. It was at *Arrochar* that he produced the winning drawings for India Buildings and Martins Bank competitions.



Although Rowse continued to practice his interests gradually diverted away active involvement in the business and he began to spend increasing amounts of time in Anglesey (where he also served as Sheriff from 1942 to 1943). In 1951 he sold *Cae Llyn* in Rhoscolyn and purchased *Pentre Gwyddel*, a Grade II listed building now surrounded by holiday lets that sit on its much-reduced estate.

Rowse produced an outstanding body of work sharing the common threads of technological innovation, careful composition and an insistence on quality. It was these three elements, coupled with a desire to collaborate with artists, create lavish interiors and never overlook the civic duty of architecture that fundamentally steered Rowse's approach. Liverpool is surely indebted to his architecture, sculpture and landscaping, but without the smaller commissions and opportunities he initially took on Wirral and especially in Heswall, perhaps the city would look very different, and surely not as good as it does today.

¹ *Liverpool Magazine*, 1(1) May 1932, 16-17.

Iain Jackson, together with Simon Pepper and Peter Richmond, have just written the first monograph on Rowse, published by Historic England, <https://retail.historicenglandservices.org.uk/herbert-rowse.html> ISBN: 9781848025493

