

ARTHUR MARSHALL 1858-1915

This article by Pauline F Heathcote was first published in Newsletter 66 (January 1985)

In a previous Newsletter (No. 63 of January 1984), it was observed that there were a number of very competent architects who flourished in Nottingham during the second half of the nineteenth century, and that to a large extent, their professional achievements have been somewhat overshadowed by the attention which has been paid to the work of both Thomas Chambers Hine and Watson Fothergill. One man who most certainly deserves to be rescued from such obscurity is Arthur Marshall, and it is hoped that this brief account outlining some of his major achievements will stimulate interest in this creative and versatile architect.

He was born at Goldsmith Street, Nottingham on 23 December 1858, the third son of James Matthew Marshall and his wife Mary (nee Marsh). His father, a decorator, carver and gilder, was head of a firm established since 1793; he was regarded locally as a highly respected tradesman and was also well-known as a prominent Nonconformist, being a Trustee of the Halifax Place Wesleyan Chapel.

Arthur Marshall received his basic education at a small private school at Hammersmith, and on his return to Nottingham became articled to the architect and surveyor Samuel Dutton Walker. Some years previously, Walker's office had been situated next to the Marshall residence and business premises in Toll Street. It is possible that Walker acted in the capacity of family adviser and influenced his pupil's choice of career, particularly as James Matthew Marshall had died when his son was only twelve. Marshall was indeed fortunate that he was accepted into Walker's practice, for not only did he receive a sound professional training, but he also benefited from his employer's extensive historical and antiquarian knowledge.

By mid-summer 1881, at the age of 22, he had started his own practice - initially working from his home at Southey Lodge, Southey Street. One of his first domestic commissions, Forest Lodge on Pelham Road (now demolished), was received from the dyer Thomas Spray. Other villa residences completed about this time were in Mansfield and West Bridgford (1 Fox Road). He received an early boost to his professional self-confidence when some of his work was featured in the journal *The British Architect* in 1883.

After qualifying as an Associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1882, Marshall opened an office in Cauldon Place, Long Row. Early that year, he was one of several architects who were invited to submit designs for a Congregational Church in Addison Street. His plans, together with those of Henry Sulley and Abraham Goodall, were selected for final consideration, although eventually Sulley's plans were accepted. Marshall was, however, successful in obtaining the commission for a Wesleyan Chapel at New Lenton, which was built in 1883 (now demolished), and a Wesleyan Chapel for the Scotholme Mission at Fisher Street, New Basford, which was erected in 1884 for the sum of £11,500 (now used as a meeting place by Hyson Green Assembly of God.)



Figure 1: Brightlands

photographic room on the ground floor, but the most notable feature of the property was a large artist's studio situated under the two north gables. (*Editor's note 1*)

On 14 February 1884, Marshall married Lillie Oliver, daughter of Thomas Oliver, a lace manufacturer, at the fashionable Tennyson Street Wesleyan Chapel. He was incidentally responsible for later (1895) extensions to this place of worship, now demolished. Soon after his marriage, he was asked by his friend and mentor Samuel Bourne, a prosperous cotton doubler, amateur artist and photographer, to plan him a new house on a site at Clumber Road East in the Park Estate. Bourne's trust in the young architect was well founded, for the property, Brightlands, built by Henry Vickers in 1885 at a cost of approximately £3,900, was a prestigious residence consisting of a large hall, three reception rooms, eleven bedrooms etc. and incorporating a number of characteristic Marshall-type external features such as fancy gables and ornamentation. In order to meet the specialist requirements of the owner, there was also a

For a number of years Arthur Marshall had spent a great deal of his spare time making a detailed study of antique furniture and wood carvings; this was an interest in which initially he had received much encouragement from Samuel Dutton Walker. His enthusiasm for the subject resulted in the publication of a book *Specimens of Antique Carved Furniture and Woodwork* (1888). This volume rapidly achieved the status of a definitive work, for it contained invaluable illustrations of specimens dating from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries; many of the items depicted were owned by private collectors and all of them had been measured and drawn by Marshall himself. In the same year that this book was published, he was asked by the Nottingham Corporation to design a casket and prepare an illuminated address of congratulation to the Prince and Princess of Wales on the occasion of their Silver Wedding. The casket was made out of a piece of oak, which had originally formed part of the foundations of the old Trent Bridge, and the carving was executed by a member of the local Recreative Evening Class - an institution in which Marshall showed a keen personal interest.



Figure 2: Russell Chambers showing turret detail

Some time in 1891 Marshall entered into partnership with one of his assistants, George Turner - an arrangement which lasted approximately eight years, although contemporary evidence suggests that Turner's role in the practice was very much that of a junior partner. In 1895 the firm received a commission from Herbert Butler, a boot dealer, to design a block of shops and offices on the corner of Long Row and King Street. It will be recalled that King Street (and Queen Street) had been

recently created following the demolition of a large area of dilapidated and insanitary property between Parliament Street and Long Row. Butler's site, consisting of 142 square yards for which he paid the sum of £20 per yard, was in a prime position. The building, known as Russell Chambers, was completed in 1896, when Marshall & Turner, clearly motivated by feelings of pride and confidence, transferred their own office there. In a critique of the property in *The Builder* a reviewer remarked that 'from the character of the detail we recognise it as being designed by Mr Arthur Marshall.' He went on to describe it as 'an excellent example of modern work based upon French detail of the Flamboyant and François Premier period.' It is unfortunate and indeed surprising that Russell Chambers has not been included in the 1979 revised edition of Pevsner's *Buildings of England*. To an observant passer-by there is a lingering reminder of Marshall's personal association with the building. If one looks at the second-floor window furthest away from the Market Square and facing King Street, i.e. the window of Marshall's old office, it is possible to make out the impression of his name on the glass; this has remained even though the original appliqué lettering has long since been removed. (Note 2)

In 1893 the Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway Company obtained approval to build its London Extension southwards through Nottingham. This proposal, which led to the



Figure 3: City Hospital Administration Block

erection of Victoria Station, precipitated the Nottingham Board of Guardians into finding another site for their workhouse in York Street. The Board accordingly negotiated with Nottingham Corporation for the purchase of a piece of land of approximately 65 acres adjacent to the Hucknall Road at Bagthorpe (now recognised as the City Hospital complex.) A competition was subsequently arranged for designs for a workhouse together with an infirmary and a multitude of associated buildings. The Board appointed W H Ward of Birmingham to be the Assessor for the nine sets of plans submitted by A W Brewill and B E Baily; A N Bromley and S Snell; W Fothergill; A H Goodall and S Stevenson; W A and A E Heazell; J Howitt;

A Marshall and G Turner; W Slater; and R C and E R Sutton.

In November 1896 the results of the competition were announced: Marshall & Turner had been awarded first place, the Suttons and Brewill & Baily second and third place respectively. By the end of January 1897, however, rumours were circulating which intimated that the competition had been unfairly conducted and that there had been collusion between Ward (the Assessor) and the successful firm of architects. The incident then became public knowledge after being discussed at a committee meeting of the Board of Guardians. Ward was contacted and immediately denied the allegations, threatening legal action against the originator(s) of the rumours. After an interval of almost ninety years it is difficult to comment on this controversial affair, but it is evident from a study of contemporary documents that the 'cowardly slanders', as they were called, were the result of professional jealousy on the part

of one or two architects in the town because such a young and comparatively unknown firm had attained the premier award.

Viewed retrospectively, it is not difficult to understand why there should have been initial feelings of resentment and disappointment, for it was an ambitious scheme by a major Union. The project, which took six years to complete and cost almost £250,000, was officially opened on 18 March 1903. Thirteen and a half million bricks and seven acres of roofing tiles were used in the construction of the site which was designed to accommodate about 1700 people. There was an extensive range of infirmary and workhouse buildings, together with a nurses' home, a chapel with seating for about 500, wards for the mentally ill, administrative areas including kitchens, laundries and offices. In addition there were vagrant wards 'together with cells for oakum picking and yards for stone-breaking, the indispensable conditions of a casual's admission.' The designs were widely praised; in fact, interest in them was aroused in a most unexpected quarter, for it was reported that a copy of the plans were sent to the Empress of Russia, who regarded the scheme as being a model of its type, i.e. 'plain blocks of buildings, without any architectural embellishments which would prove costly without a corresponding return in usefulness.' Following this success, Marshall became professional adviser to Boards of Guardians in different parts of the country, and was architect for several other workhouses including those at Wolverhampton, Dudley and Stourbridge. He also designed the Newark Union Infirmary (now Hawtonville Hospital), which was opened on 31 January 1905, and additional buildings which were erected on the Bagthorpe site up to 1910.

Apart from this institutional building work, which made heavy demands upon his office, Marshall continued to accept a wide variety of commissions, two of which were received from the influential Player family. Firstly, a house for William Goodacre Player: Lenton Hurst, on Derby Road, Lenton Park (1896-7). This was an imposing residence built by Thomas Fish & Son, consisting principally of morning, dining and drawing rooms, a large billiard room and nine bedrooms, plus stabling and a coach house. The garden of Lenton Hurst is reputed to have been created by Gertrude Jekyll. The house (now situated within the Nottingham University campus) was occupied by W G Player until c 1930. John Dane Player also asked Marshall to make extensive alterations and additions to a villa residence, Fernleigh, on Woodborough Road, Alexandra Park (now the Nottinghamshire Hospice); these works were also undertaken in 1896-7.

It was during this period that he built himself a new home at Chilwell. A photograph of the property, Woodside, appeared in J Potter Briscoe's *Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire at the Opening of the Twentieth Century* (1901). The inclusion of his own residence in this prestigious volume must have given Marshall great pleasure. He lived at Woodside for a number of years; the house is now within the area occupied by the Ministry of Defence Chilwell Garrison

Some time during the mid-1890s, Marshall prepared plans for a Roman Catholic Church on Woodborough Road which was intended to replace the Iron Church of St Augustine erected in

1879, but the rebuilding programme was deferred and his drawings were never used. He did however achieve a remarkable success with a new Wesleyan Church at Darlington Street, Wolverhampton (opened 29 October 1901). The building attracted considerable publicity, being described as a 'Temple of Methodism' in the Late English Georgian Renaissance style. It was regarded as an important place of Nonconformist worship in the West Midlands and had accommodation for a congregation of between 1400 and 1500.

Early in 1903 Charles Imre Kiralfy, the well-known creator and Commissioner-General of International Exhibitions, asked Marshall to draw up plans for the structural work for exhibition buildings to be erected on land at Trent Side acquired on a short-term lease from Nottingham Corporation. The Midlands Exhibition, as it was generally known, was opened on 28 May 1903 and was on the site now occupied by Rushcliffe Borough Council Civic Centre and the Sportsman Inn. The complex consisted of an exhibition pavilion primarily intended for the display of manufactured goods from overseas, and an adjacent area with a variety of sideshows, miniature railway, a maze, concert hall, ornamental gardens, tea rooms etc. The following year, on 2 July, a spectacular fire destroyed the Canadian chute, a portion of the toboggan and a number of other sideshows. Contrary to popular belief, the main exhibition buildings were actually saved by the prompt action of the fire brigade, although they were unable to prevent the flames spreading to the Nottingham Forest Football Club, where the main stands were destroyed. The painted scenery woodwork was of course highly inflammable, and it was fortunate that other property nearby was unaffected by the fire, including incidentally the premises belonging to the Nottingham Boat Club which had been designed by Marshall in 1897. (*Note 3*)

In sharp contrast to the ornate and vigorous Eastern style of the Midlands Exhibition pavilion (the name is perpetuated in the present-day Pavilion Road), Marshall's drawing for the South African War Memorial at Beeston was appropriately restrained and reverential. This statue depicted a classical female figure on a raised pedestal with one hand holding a laurel wreath to her bosom, whilst her right hand rested on a sacrificial altar; carved in Portland stone, it was unveiled on 13 February 1904.



Figure 4: Nottingham & Midland Eye Infirmary

The last public building Marshall was associated with was the Nottingham & Midland Eye Infirmary on the Ropewalk. A plain, functional building enhanced by handmade facing bricks from Tucker's of Loughborough, it was opened by the Duchess of Portland on 13 March 1912. An example of what was very probably one of his last minor undertakings still remains at 32 Upper Parliament Street, Nottingham. Originally built for the Nottingham Electro-Plating Company in 1914, it has undergone a number of external alterations in recent years, and is now occupied by Guise, men's outfitters. (*Note 4*)

Marshall always played an active role in the management of his local professional association (at that time known as the Nottingham Architectural Society), serving on Council for a number of years and in 1901-3 he occupied the presidential chair. He was a man of apparently boundless energy, who combined an exacting professional career with an equally successful and active private life. He was a fine water-colourist, and a frequent contributor to the annual exhibitions of the Nottingham Society of Artists. But it was as an amateur photographer that he became especially famous, and at one time he was the President of the Nottingham Mechanics Institute Camera Club. During the Edwardian period he was well-known as a prominent exhibitor in both national and international events, and gained an especial reputation for his photographic interpretation of 'Dutch Places and People.' Towards the end of the summer of 1914 whilst he was living at Lockington, Leicestershire, he became ill with pernicious anaemia and died six months later aged fifty-six. He was buried in the village churchyard at Lockington where his memorial - a plain granite cross - marks his passing with the simple, unostentatious wording 'Arthur Marshall, died 25th February, 1915'

Editor's notes

1. *Elain Harwood in the 'Nottingham Pevsner' (2008) refers to Brightlands by the name it later acquired: Adam House.*

2. *This trace of Marshall's occupation of Russell Chambers is now gone. The building, which now goes by the name of Two King Street, belongs to a firm which specialises in converting historic properties into serviced office accommodation. The firm takes its name from another property in their portfolio: Foxhall Lodge, on Gregory Boulevard, the house designed by Gilbert Smith Doughty for his father Edwin.*

The building was listed Grade II in November 1995. The listing text, which describes the style as Renaissance Revival, may be viewed on the Historic England website under the address 22 Long Row, 2, 4 & 6 King Street.

The ground floor is still (again?) occupied by a shoe retailer.

3. *Rushcliffe Civic Centre was created out of a building which started life as a hotel. The Council sold the building when it found a new home at Rushcliffe Arena. Conversion of the block into luxury apartments was still under way when this article was added to the archive in November 2018.*

4. *Elain Harwood describes this late work as of the Queen Anne style, 'now flats with ponderous penthouses of 2006.'*

Guise has gone, but the building survives, its upper floors ('rendered with a timber gable and oriel') partly housing the Petit Paris restaurant.

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