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Redland Hill House and Redland Chapel, Bristol

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on the state of the existing wall paintings and options for their conservation and care. Dr. John Paddock, Keeper of Archaeology at the Corinium Museum in Cirencester, provided parallels and other local evidence. Linda Viner searched the parish records (held in Gloucestershire Record Office) for information on the 1870–1 church restoration. The former National Monuments Record of RCHM (now English Heritage) kindly gave permission for the reproduction of Fig. 1, from its collections, and Paddy Thomson of Ampney Crucis similarly for Fig. 2, from the original in his possession. Cotswold District Council, through its Cotswold Museums & Arts Service, supported the preparation of this note, and Dr. Steven Blake of Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum kindly commented on a preliminary draft.

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DAVID VINER

REDLAND HILL HOUSE AND REDLAND CHAPEL, BRISTOL

Introduction

Redland Hill House in Bristol is the survivor of a semi-detached symmetrical pair in mid Georgian style (Figs. 1–2). At the front it has three storeys, with a semi-basement storey at the rear over arched cellars. The easternmost bays, front and rear, are canted with three windows through all storeys. The walls are rendered with limestone dressings, a first-floor sill band, a bracketed



Fig. 1. A view *c.* 1920 of the rear (southern) elevation of Redland Hill House before demolition of the western half (Bristol Central Reference Library B21205: reproduced by kind permission of the library).

cornice and a parapet. The front door, next to the canted bay, is in serlian style, with curved glazing bars crossing in the semicircular head, giving a hint of gothic to what is otherwise diluted neo-classical. On the rear elevation, one window, the only one with a round head, has similar glazing bars. Similar heads are in windows or doors in Orchard Street (1718–22), Cumberland Street, St Paul's (1766), Somerset Street, Kingsdown (1787), and elsewhere. The window architraves, on the façade single ogee with fillets, have keystones; those at the rear have Gibbs surrounds and three-stepped voussoirs. Indoors, the principal ground- and first-floor rooms have bracketed cornices with triglyphs on the faces of the brackets; some have egg-and-dart moulding.

The building has been described as 'sociologically interesting',¹ presumably as the surviving half of Bristol's earliest known fashionable semi-detached villa. One of the pair was sold in 1933 and demolished. What survives was purchased by Bristol City Council in 1964 as further accommodation for its Redland (teacher training) College, later incorporated into Bristol Polytechnic and thence part of the University of the West of England.

It has been suggested that Redland Hill House was one of the pair of houses designed by James Bridges and commissioned by John Cossins of Redland Court to produce rents to support his endowment of Redland Chapel, which he had built on Redland Green between 1740 and



Fig. 2. A view *c.* 1920 of the front (northern) elevation of Redland Hill House before demolition of the western half (Bristol Central Reference Library B21205: reproduced by kind permission of the library).

1743. There are three issues: was Redland Hill House in fact part of the endowment of Redland Chapel?; who designed Redland Hill House and when?; and when was it built?

The evidence

The settlement by which John Cossins endowed his chapel is an indenture dated 10 June 1749.² The lands designated to maintain the chapel and pay the minister's stipend were listed and included 'the Orchard and piece of void ground on which a mansion house formerly stood'. The 1749 indenture had no plan, but both the chapel church book for 1740 to 1755³ and the chapel trustees' minute book for 1757 to 1776⁴ contain almost identical plans which identify the lands the subject of the 1749 trust. They were immediately north-west of Redland Green. None of the lands settled by the 1749 deed was west of Redland Road, let alone off Redland Hill. It follows that Redland Hill House could not have been part of the endowment of Redland chapel.

John Cossins nominated William Ray, vicar of Westbury-on-Trym, as minister of the chapel and commissioned the building of a house for him. The church book and the trustees' minutes show that it was finished and the minister moved in on 20 December in either 1750 or 1751. The house was built on the southernmost part of the Old Orchard. Known for many years as

the Parsonage, and later as 157 Redland Road, it ceased to be the minister's house in 1957, when it was converted to offices.

On 3 November 1757 the trustees agreed that the rest of 'the Old Orchard between the minister's house and Mr Noble's be let out for building subject to chief rents'. On 4 March 1758

the Old Orchard was this day measured and planned out by Mr James Bridges of Bristol, Architect for building 2 houses with offices etc by order of John Cossins Esq as a further augmentation of the income of the chapel and the agreement was this day signed between Mr Cossins and the two undertakers Joseph Llewellyn and John Harris of Bristol carpenters.⁵

Clearly, the building site was immediately north of the minister's house on Redland Road, not off Redland Hill. The contract for the erection of the two houses was contained in articles of agreement dated 4 March 1758.⁶ Harris and Llewellyn, described as house carpenters, agreed with Cossins to build one building 40 feet by 53 feet, in accordance with James Bridges's plans.

Quite apart from the evidence of the chapel books, the 1758 contract could not have related to Redland Hill House. A plan annexed to a 1923 conveyance of Redland Hill House (Fig. 3) and a dimensioned plan of the western half of the pair in 1933 show that in its original state it must have been much longer than 53 feet.⁷ The 1758 building contract implies a rectangular plan without protruding bays. Redland Hill House has one more storey than the contract specified. Ceiling heights and wall thicknesses at Redland Hill House differ from those specified in the contract.

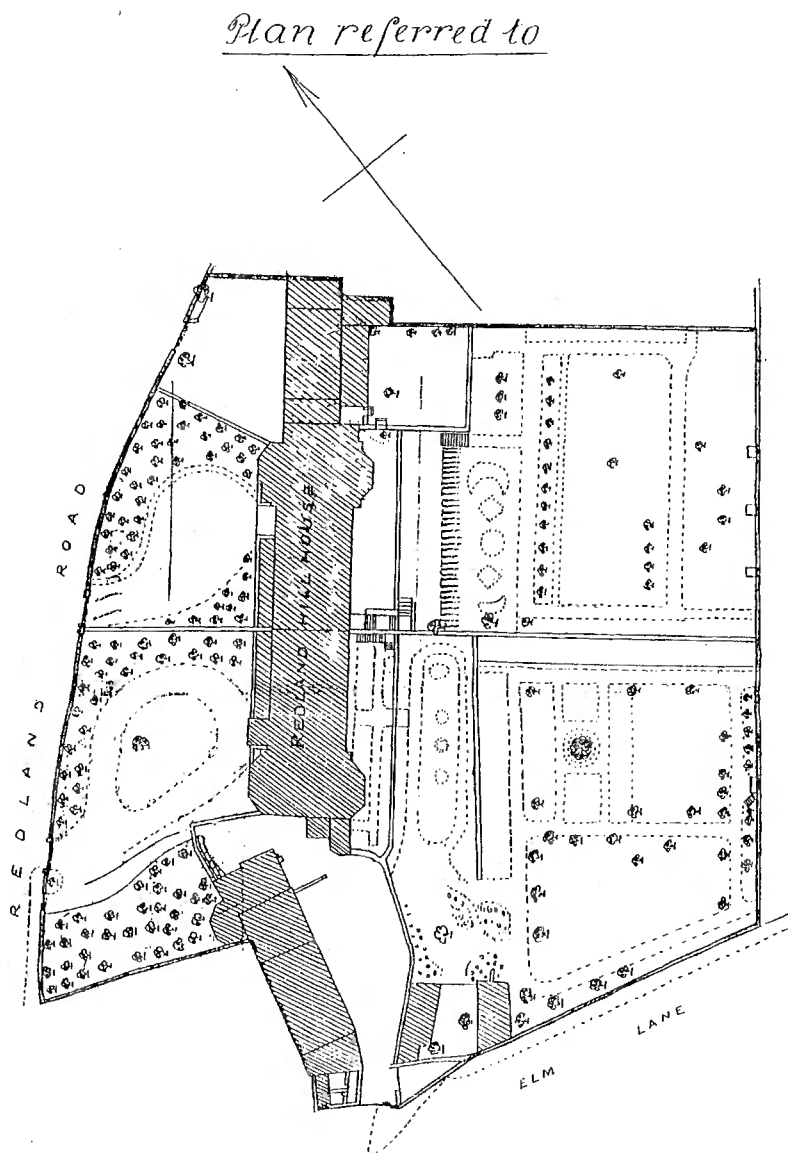
The four corner stones of the two houses the subject of the 1758 building contract were laid on 25 April 1758. The pair was practically complete on 2 December.⁸ On 4 January 1759 John Cossins formally conveyed it to the chapel trustees.⁹ On 30 August the trustees inspected the site to see if the houses had been finished according to the contract, and conferred without coming to any decision.¹⁰ James Bridges issued his final certificate on 9 October 1759.¹¹ On 23 February 1760 the trustees agreed to grant leases to two local people. The trustees' account show the houses produced £40 a year each for many years.¹² They are shown, with their garden walls, on one of the plans in the church book. Known as Redland Parade Villas, they were demolished towards the end of the 19th century.

The history of the ownership of Redland Hill House after John Cossins' death was different from that of the chapel trust lands. The title deeds of the house make no reference to the trust deed of 10 June 1749. The site of Redland Hill House was owned by John Cossins.¹³ He and Martha Cossins had no children. He left all his Redland property to her. Martha died in 1762, and under her will Redland Court and the bulk of her estate passed in turn to her brothers Jeremy and in 1764, John Innys; some of her land at Redland passed directly to John Innys.

On 22 December 1767 John Innys sold 5 acres of land called the Mine Ground. It was bounded by Redland Hill, Holloway Lane (later Elm Lane) and the church path. The purchaser was Philip West of Bristol, mason. Philip West, whom it is tempting to identify with the mason surnamed West who later advised on the restoration of St. Thomas's church in Bristol¹⁴ and with either Philip West of 23 St. James's Street¹⁵ or half of Daniel & West, masons of 68 St. Michael's Hill,¹⁶ covenanted that he would

within the space of 5 years next ensuing the date hereof erect and build and completely finish in a regular uniform and workmanlike manner in and on the said premises hereby granted three or more good and substantial messuages tenements or dwellinghouses of the yearly value of £30 each at the least when finished.

at a cost of at least £800 each.



ORDNANCE SCALE - $\frac{1}{300}$

Fig. 3. A plan from a 1923 conveyance showing the original extent of Redland Hill House and its garden (University of the West of England, deed RF 314: reproduced by kind permission of the university).

Philip West must have lacked finance. On 11 February 1769 he borrowed £400 from William and Hannah Hart of Stapleton through a trustee of their marriage settlement Samuel Worrall, who secured the loan by taking a mortgage of the Mine Ground 'and all those two messuages or tenements then erecting on the said ground'. On 24 June West gave Worrall a bond for £800 as additional security for the loan. On 8 July he borrowed another £50 from Worrall, on 22 July another £100, and on 15 August another £50. On January 1770 Philip West was declared bankrupt.

West's trustees in bankruptcy put his unfinished building site up for auction several times, but there was no bidder. On 11 May 1771, by which time over £1,095 was owing, West's trustees decided to accept an offer of £21 from the trustees of the Harts' marriage settlement, who would fund the cost of making the two houses habitable and sell them for the best price they could get. This is what happened. Isaac Taylor's map of Gloucestershire published in 1777 shows and names the Parsonage, and a house in the general area of Redland Hill marked *New Built*. As Taylor marked many other houses with the name of owner or occupier, his map suggests that Redland Hill House was standing in 1777 but not yet let.

William and Hannah Hart were survived by their daughter Frances, who married Francis Milman, a doctor who lived in London. Worrall conveyed to them the completed buildings, comprising two houses, two stables and two sets of outbuildings, on 15 January 1799. In 1802 the Milmans (by then Sir Francis and Lady Milman) sold the pair of houses to the tenant of the eastern one, the Revd. Thomas Jones, D.D. He sold the western one to its tenant, George Daubeny. The contract describes Daubeny as having been occupier for several years, perhaps from 1781 when he became one of Bristol's M.P.s and needed a better residence than 3 St. James's Square? In 1826 the pair was known as York Place: the duke of York, his popularity undiminished by his military misadventures, did not die until January 1827.

Thomas Jones, absentee parson of Kingsteignton in Devon and chaplain to the duke of Kent, ran a classical academy for young gentlemen in his part of the house.¹⁷ 'He experienced the difficulty of emerging from obscurity and comparative indigence to destructive incompetence.' As in life, so in death: the settlement created by Jones's will ended with his children litigating in Chancery: to realise his daughter's entitlement the court ordered the sale of Jones's part of Redland Hill House, which was brought by Philip Henry Vaughan for Alderman Thomas Daniel. In the 1840s it housed a school run by the vicar of Westbury-on-Trym.¹⁸ The freehold then passed through Daniel's son to Philip Vaughan. In 1870 another school was begun there, which staggered through chronic insolvency from one crisis to another. The western house (Fig. 3) was sold in 1933 and demolished.

Conclusions

Redland Hill House was not one of the two dwellings commissioned by John Cossins for the endowment of Redland chapel. The attribution of Redland Hill House to James Bridges assumes that Redland Hill House was the subject of the 1758 building contract, which is not the case. Nothing in the Redland Hill House title deeds say who designed it. If, as is said, James Bridges shook the dust of Bristol off his feet in 1763, he is not likely to have designed a building started in late 1767 or 1768. West is not likely to have used plans drawn by Bridges: West contracted to build to a minimum cost to produce a minimum rent, and he did not covenant to use or follow any plans. What documentary evidence there is suggests that Redland Hill House may be the work of Philip West, a Bristol mason and perhaps the 'Mr West the mason' who advised in 1788 and 1789 on the restoration of St. Thomas's church.

Redland Hill House was not built in 1758 or 1761. It was started at the end of 1767 at the earliest and was not completed until after May 1771, probably by 1777 but possibly not until 1799.

Acknowledgements

The Board of Governors of the University of the West of England kindly allowed me to see the deeds of Redland Hill House and to quote from them. I am also grateful for the use of public facilities at Bristol Record Office (including the Bristol Diocesan Record Office), the National Monuments Record of the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, Bristol Central Reference Library, Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery, and the libraries of the University of Bristol and the University of the West of England.

Notes

1. M. Jenner, A. Gomme, and B. Little, *Bristol: An Architectural History* (1979), 264.
2. Bristol Record Office (B.R.O.), EP/A/2812(1).
3. Ibid. P/RG/T/1.
4. Ibid. P/RG/T/2.
5. Llewelin had premises at 4 Christmas Street: James Sketchley, *Bristol Directory 1775*, 58.
6. B.R.O., P/HTW/RC/4f.
7. Conveyance 23 September 1923, University of the West of England, Bristol, deed number RF 314; plan of W. half of Redland Hill House 12 June 1933, B.R.O., Info box 14/15.
8. B.R.O., P/RG/T/2, 7.
9. Ibid. P/RG/T/2, 9.
10. Ibid. P/RG/T/2, 11.
11. Ibid. P/RG/T/2, 11.
12. Ibid. P/RG/T3.
13. What follows draws largely on the title deeds of Redland Hill House.
14. W. Ison, *The Georgian Buildings of Bristol* (1952), 84.
15. Sketchley, *Bristol Directory*, 104.
16. Ibid. 23.
17. J. A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigenses 1752–1900*, vol. iii (1947), 608; obituary in *Gentleman's Magazine* (January 1812), 192.
18. 1841 census: Public Record Office, HO 107/359.

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