

THE LUTYENS TRUST

To protect and promote the spirit and substance of the work of Sir Edwin Lutyens O.M.

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2020

CAPITAL LOSS

An article by Martin Lutyens from *India Today*, published on 23 March, 2020

New Delhi ranks among the world's greatest and most beautiful capitals. It is, therefore, no surprise that the Indian government's plans to revamp its Central Vista have received a mixed response.

It is obvious that the government cannot manage with its existing buildings and that change is needed to accommodate increased numbers of legislators, civil servants and a constantly changing technology. The Lutyens Trust understands these pressures, but feels, like many conservation bodies, architects and urban designers in India, that the timescale for implementing these changes is too short and the process lacked both proper public consultation and study of the environmental impact. These questions are for the Indian government and other interested parties in India to settle. New Delhi, however, represents a vital part of Sir Edwin Lutyens's heritage and The Lutyens Trust feels justified in respectfully contributing its views.

First, a word about Sir Edwin: commentators in India complain that he criticised Indian architecture. He was indeed critical but this needs context. Lutyens criticised all other architects and architectural styles and Indian architecture was no exception. He was under pressure to build New Delhi in a style – a strange Anglo-Mughal hybrid known as Tropical Gothic – whose pseudo-oriental borrowings he abhorred.



Illustration © Tanmoy
Chakraborty
and
India Today

Although initially prejudiced against this and other forms of mock-Indian style (for example, the Indo-Saracenic then prevalent in Bombay and Calcutta), he soon came to appreciate the beauty and climatic value of many Indian architectural features and incorporated them into buildings, which nevertheless obeyed the rules of Classical European architecture. Thus Rashtrapati Bhavan incorporates *chhajjas*, *chhatris*, stone lattices, courtyards, fountains and water runnels, stone elephants (he was very fond of elephants) and the fine Buddhist dome.

This fusion of European Classical, Islamic and Buddhist ideas in a wholly original way is something that a person with a fundamental dislike of Indian architecture could never have achieved: and all this laid out in the grand manner on an axial vista, influenced by the National Mall in Washington DC and reflecting his belief that the principles of geometry were eternal and could be applied anywhere.

Secondly, images on the internet of the plans for the Central Vista include two rows of vast buildings flanking the Rajpath, Lutyens's National Archives of India building surviving among them. The buildings are hollow squares, the exterior walls of red sandstone and interior walls of steel and glass. Official commentary claims that Lutyens "planned for structures along the Rajpath, so nothing new here". Not so: Lutyens planned only four buildings, where the Rajpath and Janpath intersect, of which only the National Archives of India was built.

The new buildings do, however, have a respectful symmetry to them. It is also good that they are planned not to exceed the India Gate's 139ft. Lutyens carefully scaled his buildings in relation to the tree-planting in the city and it would be wonderful if the new buildings followed his approach. But at even considerably less than 139ft, these buildings will dwarf tall trees, making the Rajpath more an urban canyon than a grand processional way. It is unclear how this will "reinforce the character that Lutyens imagined" as claimed for the scheme. Lutyens would surely have gone for lower buildings, set further back, including features – *cchajjas*, columns or other regular vertical accents and judiciously placed pavilions – to relieve these straight, monotonous rooflines.

Thirdly, it is good to see that some of the trees in the computer rendering are newly planted. But many trees in Delhi are nearing the end of their lives and will need replacing soon; one hopes in an orderly not piecemeal fashion. Though less spectacular than the Central Vista revamp, trees are critical to providing shade and lowering Delhi's pervasive pollution. Sadly, in its haste, the government seems unlikely to pause for a proper assessment of the project's heritage impact or change the direction of its plans. But a proper environmental impact assessment and strategy for replacing the original trees to secure shelter from the sun and lower pollution for future generations should surely not be controversial.

CORONAVIRUS AND THE EVENTS PROGRAMME: VIRTUAL TOURS AND WEBINARS TO FILL THE VOID

Coronavirus has impacted on the Trust's activities and forced us to suspend the Events Programme. This is frustrating for the Trust and for our members alike, and the Events Committee, together with our colleagues at The Lutyens Trust America, are doing their best to fill the gap with a series of "virtual tours" webinars.

The virtual tours, devised and chosen by the Events Committee, take reports of visits to Lutyens houses from past newsletters and circulate them to members by email, along with additional illustrations, to revive memories of past events in happier times.

The first in the series covered Castle Drogo and other Devon houses; the second, a visit to Sullingstead, an 1897 Lutyens house in Godalming, Surrey, and the third Lambay Castle and grounds off the coast of Dublin. The Red House, Fisher's Hill and Cedar House, all in Surrey, will follow. Then, as a precursor to a visit we are hoping to organise for next year to Marchmont House in Scotland, which was considerably altered by architect Robert Lorimer, we will be reviving an earlier tour of the work of Lorimer in Scotland. We are also hoping to include Arts and Crafts houses in the Cotswolds and Lutyens's work for the Imperial (now Commonwealth) War Graves Commission in France and Belgium. Details about these will be circulated to members every two to three weeks.

The Trust is also collaborating on a series of webinars on Lutyens sponsored by The LTAmerica, some of which have taken place already. The first of these, "Edwin Lutyens: Arts and Crafts Beginnings – The Story of Goddards", featured Tom Kligerman and Michael Imber, both architects and directors of the LTAmerica, with Martin Lutyens as host. Tom and Michael stayed at Goddards as part of the LTAmerica autumn tour last year and wanted to share their enthusiasm for and appreciation of the house. The second, "The Life and Legacy of Sir Edwin Lutyens", aimed at providing an introductory overview of Lutyens's body of work given by panellists Robin Prater and Jane Ridley. The third, entitled "3D Modelling of Lutyens's Proposed Liverpool Cathedral: The Greatest Building Never Built", used physical and digital models to discuss its design. Its panellists were Dr Nicholas Webb and Jeff Speakman, with Robin as host.

This was followed by “Lutyens and Jekyll: Architecture and Landscape” (with Virginia Burt, Sarah Dickinson, Janice Parker and Judith Tankard) on 4 June. The programme will continue with “The British School at Rome” (Hugh Petter and Stephen Milner) on 18 June, “The Furniture Designs of Sir Edwin Lutyens” (Candia Lutyens) and “An Overview of Lutyens’s Work Outside the UK” (Ankie Barnes is one panellist, with others to be confirmed soon). The webinars are broadcast live via Zoom, then a large part of each is posted on the LTAmerica’s YouTube channel. The response to the webinars has been promising – each one attracting over 250 attendees from many countries – and indicating that this may be another way to involve a wide audience in learning more about the heritage of Edwin Lutyens.

Both Trusts are grateful to the new members who joined them after attending the webinars and also to all those who kindly donated to help us during these difficult times, and to those behind the scenes who organised and made the technology work.

NEW BOOK *THE EDWARDIANS AND THEIR HOUSES*

BY TIMOTHY BRITAIN – CATLIN

Reviewed by Janet Allen

The Edwardians and Their Houses: The New Life of Old England (Lund Humphries, £45) is a very significant study of domestic architecture of the period when Edwin Lutyens was at the height of his career, and serious students of his work should read it. In recent years, there have been distinguished monographs of the most famous late 19th and early 20th-century architects, such as Lutyens, Richard Norman Shaw, Philip Webb and Ernest George. But with this book, Dr Timothy Britain-Catlin, an architect and Reader in Architecture at Kent School of Architecture and Planning, has embarked on a sociopolitical investigation of the influence of a political class on architecture, which resulted in highly desirable housing.

The popular image of the Edwardian era is of social stability before the First World War. But in reality it was a period of radical political and socioeconomic change, driven largely by the Liberal Party, which was in power for much of the time from 1880 until the outbreak of war in 1914. Britain-Catlin has a distinguished heritage – he is a scion of a great radical family, grandson of writer and nurse Vera Britain and nephew of politician Shirley Williams, so he is steeped in the early traditions of the party and brings to his subject his professional training as an architect. He has delved into the archives of two significant political families, the Lubbocks and the Caringtons, in addition to those of the wider Westminster class, for instance David Lloyd George, the Tennants and Lytteltons, powerful press barons, industrialists and department-store owners. The period saw the emergence of municipal authorities as major providers of decent housing and of garden towns and suburbs. As architects’ clients, they were not only concerned with style and planning, which embraced modern convenience and the integration of old and new fabric, but also the wider issues of land tenure, rural poverty and city slums. The Liberals invested an immense amount of time, money and thought into housing for the whole population – rich, middle-class and poor – and this book provides the detailed background to Jane Brown’s more personal investigation of Edwin Lutyens’s relations with his clients.

The book is beautifully produced with specially commissioned photography by Robin Forster, which complements contemporary black and white photography from the *Country Life* archive, other publications and family snaps. The immediate impression is of “desirable properties” – in estate agent jargon – but sadly the names of most of the architects are less familiar to the general public. One example is WH Romaine-Walker, who was very successful and transformed Kingsgate Castle on the Kent coast for banker John Lubbock, 1st Baron Avebury. Similarly, Charles Wynn-Carrington, 1st Earl Carrington from 1895, later Marquis of Lincolnshire employed William Hewson Lees to extend the farmhouse in Daws Hill, High Wycombe to house his family after he sold Wycombe Abbey.

Both houses are fine examples of blending the old and new, resulting in comfortable homes; at Kingsgate there was the new amenity of a motor house. Another innovation was the weekend “dormy” house – a building providing accommodation near golf courses, which spawned the estates of medium-sized houses like those near Tadworth, Surrey, for example Clifftown (now Pinfold Manor) at Walton-on-the-Hill, built by newspaper publisher George Allardice Riddell for David Lloyd George. Nearby was Chussex, which was designed by Lutyens.



Pinfold Manor, formerly Clifftown. © Robin Forster, www.robinforster.co.uk



Kingsgate Castle and its restored entrance towers on the southwestern side. © Robin Forster, www.robinforster.co.uk

The Liberal government passed much land reform and town-planning legislation, which resulted in the clearing of slums and redevelopment of areas like Millbank, Westminster, where architect-designed housing and office accommodation were centred on Smith Square.



Houses on Reed Pond Walk, Gidea Park, designed by (left to right) Edwin Gunn, Reginald T Longden, Cecil A Sharp and CM Crickmer. The planners intended the houses to look like an idealised “Tudor” village. © Robin Forster, www.robinforster.co.uk

In the area of Gidea Park in Romford, Essex are fine examples of Edwardian domestic architecture where houses costing from £375 to £500 were marketed. The driving force behind this was two Liberal politicians – Lord Carrington and Herbert Raphael, a barrister – who both served on the London County Council.

This book does not just discuss style but explains why there was such a flowering of domestic housing in the early 20th century.

The Lutyens Trust members are entitled to a 20 per cent discount (plus free UK postage) off *The Edwardians and their Houses: The New Life of Old England* by Timothy Brittain-Catlin.

Visit www.lundhumphries.com and use code EDWARDIANS20 at checkout to apply the discount. Offer valid until 1 September, 2020.

TRACING THE HISTORY OF YOUR HOUSE – LEARNING FROM OUR RESEARCH INTO GODDARDS

By Rebecca Lilley



The library at Goddards. © Rebecca Lilley

Any of our readers who own an old property will be familiar with the pang of wanting to know more about the history of their home and its inhabitants. Luckily, The Lutyens Trust knows a great deal about the history of our headquarters – Goddards, designed by Edwin Lutyens between 1898 and 1900.

Most of this information, however, relates to its conception and to its time under our custodianship since 1991. Naturally, we have some information on its history under its successive ownership by the families of Frederick Mirrielees, Mr and Mrs Gibbs and, most of all, by Bill Hall and his wife Noeline. However, many details have got lost over time – not that all is lost. Should this happen to others wishing to trace the history of a house, I thoroughly recommend they visit their local archives for more information about it.

Recently, while indexing some donated papers in our archive, I came across a close-up photograph of Goddards showing a Building of Historic Interest plaque on one of its lime-washed walls. This was gifted by Surrey County Council and gave Goddards the building number 203. Sadly, no evidence of the plaque nor its position on the house remain. So, unable to resist solving this mystery, I contacted the Surrey History Centre in Woking and asked if I could view its file on Goddards. I was simply asked to submit a form to the Historic Environment Planning Department, requesting access to the file, and soon after my colleague Claire Hill and I were booked in for a visit.

The first documents in the file all pertained to The Lutyens Trust and to the work it undertook to the house's interior, dating from 1910, when Lutyens extended the building. Of particular interest to me was a letter dated 1993 from Patrick Helme -- very probably a specialist in historic paints -- reporting his findings on the original decorative schemes. Today the walls are a creamy buff colour yet Helme's letter revealed that the original colour was closer to white. For the library walls, he recommended the mid-tone, off-white colour No3 from Farrow & Ball's National Trust collection. Most importantly Helme added that the external limewash had never been overpainted with synthetic paints as these would prevent the exterior of the house from ever being lime-washed -- the appropriate finish for this type of building -- without first stripping the entire house back to bare bricks. Quite the unenviable task!

Further into our research we saw correspondence between Bill Hall, who bought the house with Noeline in 1953, and various bodies, including English Heritage, Surrey County Council and Mole Valley District Council, which oversees this part of Surrey. In July 1970, Hall wrote to the chairman of the Records, Historic Buildings and Antiquities Committee at Surrey County Council (SCC). His letter highlighted Goddards' historical importance and work he had already undertaken in rebuilding two chimneys and reroofing the nearby cottage. He then asked the council if it would provide a grant from its department, Historic Buildings Council, to repair the garage roof.

Space doesn't allow for a full rundown of the correspondence thereafter. However, I can summarise that Bill Hall must have been very canny for he followed this letter with a request to have an "identification plaque" mounted on Goddards. Once approved and attached to the house, this would demonstrate the house's importance and make it more likely that any further requests for grants for repairs and restoration would be approved. The plaque was indeed given the go-ahead for installation in October, 1970. Earlier in the year, in August, Hall had sought to have Goddards regraded from Grade III to Grade II and this too was approved in November. (Later correspondence suggests the building was Grade II*-listed soon after, too.) As a consequence of this, the council offered a grant of £35 in April, 1971 towards the costs of re-roofing the adjoining garage.

In 1985, Hall sought grants towards the costs of re-roofing Goddards itself -- excluding the skittle-alley roof, which had been recently restored -- with hand-made clay peg Swallow tiles. In his application letter, he wrote: "My wife and I are in our 70s and the cost to us is meteoric! But we wish Goddards to be preserved far beyond our time."

This emotional plea obviously worked as the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission (HBMC) awarded Goddards a grant of 40 per cent of an estimated £60,000 (for works undertaken over two to three years in four phases). Moreover, the Historic Buildings Section of SCC and Mole Valley District Council each awarded grants of £500 towards the first phase of the work.

One council member noted: "Mr and Mrs Hall have made the preservation of this Lutyens house something of a life work and have not been to us... for a grant before. The retiling and stone-slating of the roof will be for the benefit of posterity... and I feel we should offer a grant as well as HBMC."

By May, 1985 the work was underway. However, Hall noted that one chimney that rises 45ft above ground required a complete rebuild owing to brick erosion and lightning damage. He paid for this work with money from his home insurance. By September, the first phase of re-roofing was completed, and Hall wrote to the Historic Building Inspector at SCC seeking assistance in again upgrading the listing status of the house, this time from Grade II* to I. This, he hoped, would help to give his application to The Treasury to set up a maintenance fund -- "to support repairs and restoration of Goddards in future years" -- more gravitas. What came of this isn't known, but Goddards was never upgraded to Grade I and presumably work to the roof was completed as planned.

However, by August 1986 Hall was again looking for grants towards maintenance and this time he approached English Heritage (now Historic England). The grant subsequently awarded was breathtaking at £35,939. Among the largely standard grant terms was one that stated that Bill and Noeline would need to open Goddards for public viewing for at least 28 days in the summer, without the need for a prior appointment, and that this would need to be advertised on the roadside nearby using an English Heritage sign. This might have seemed an imposition but the terms were accepted.

The final entry in the file, prior to Goddards being gifted to The Lutyens Trust, is a copy of the planning permission application to install a wheelchair lift in the original kitchen (then a reception room) and bedroom above for use by Noeline, who by now was approximately 80. This must have been approved as the lift was still in place when Goddards was gifted to the Trust. The rest, as they say, is history.

ATRIBUTETO GILES WEAVER

(1946-2020)

By Philip Godsall

The Trustees are sad to report the death of Giles Weaver, who had been one of our number since the early days of the Trust. His wise and often humorous words are much missed. Our thoughts are with his widow, Ros, and family and we are grateful to his friend, Philip, for the following tribute to him.

Greywalls was bought by Giles Weaver's grandfather, Sir James Horlick 4th Baronet, son of the co-inventor, with his brother William Horlick, of malted milk Horlicks, in 1924. Later, James bought the Isle of Gigha, off the west coast of Kintyre, and, in 1944, handed Greywalls, designed by Edwin Lutyens for Alfred Lyttelton and built in 1901, to his daughter Ursula, Giles's mother. She and her husband, Colonel John Weaver, converted the house into a hotel in 1948 when Giles was two. Thus began the latter's lifelong love of the place and abiding interest in the architecture of Lutyens and garden designs of Gertrude Jekyll. Giles made it his mission to visit as many Lutyens buildings as he could; indeed, to celebrate his 70th birthday, he and his children and grandchildren made the pilgrimage to Lindisfarne Castle on Holy Island following the 62-mile St Cuthbert's Way.



Giles Weaver. Courtesy of Ros Weaver

Giles and his wife, Ros, took over Greywalls in 1977. Meanwhile, he continued his successful job with fund manager Ivory and Sime in Edinburgh, later commuting to London, where he was Managing Director Pensions Development at The Pru, then to Glasgow as chairman of fund manager Murray Johnstone, before becoming a director of Aberdeen Asset Management. Every Saturday morning he did the hotel books before escaping with a sigh of relief to Muirfield golf course adjacent to Greywalls. Ros ran the hotel day to day and, with Giles, they greatly enhanced its reputation for comfort, good food and conviviality.

Giles was acutely aware of the responsibility of maintaining such an important property. The Lutyens design has an addition by renowned Scottish architect Sir Robert Lorimer, possibly making it unique in Scotland by featuring work by these two leading architects of the day. Ros has managed the gardens with great skill and sensitivity as they have evolved over the years.

Giles was a very effective chairman of The Historic Houses Association of Scotland. As his successor commented, “He turned things around just as the Scottish Parliament was coming in to being”. He was deputy chairman of National Galleries of Scotland. Its Director-General writes, “He was a brilliant trustee and a friend and loyal supporter”. Giles also served as a trustee of the Fleming-Wyfold Art Foundation. He was also a chairman of Edinburgh’s private members’ club The New Club and of property firm Helical Bar.

Giles and Ros moved out of Greywalls in January 2013 to a lovely house a couple of miles away -- which they completely refurbished – with wonderful views across to Greywalls and over the Firth of Forth to Fife. Much to their great pleasure, their daughter Johanna, her husband Dominic Hoar and their two children recently moved to Greywalls.

Vice-regal Visions by Giles Weaver (also known as *Father Luminus*)

They have very much in common
Do New Delhi and our home:
Greywalls with the Lutyens skylight,
Delhi with its dome!
And then we have our driveway,
About two hundred metres,
Which entices you towards the house
That’s waiting there to greet us.
New Delhi has the Rajpath,
Two miles in Lutyens’s plan,
Where up the slope he draws you
To Rashtrapati Bhavan (pronounced “Ban”).
The Banquet Hall in Delhi
Has two fireplaces in it.
He lifted them from ours at Greywalls,
Isn’t that the limit!
A Vice-regal road of wooden parquet
Flooring’s in the house,
We’ve got that in our tearoom here,
He copied it – the louse!
And then the geometric layout,
Mughal Gardens grand –
Just take a look round Greywalls’ garden,
Then you’ll understand!
You, no doubt, think I live in
But a Lutyens little toy,
In fact, I feel in all respects
Just like the great Viceroy!

GARDENS OF FLORENCE TOUR – FROM THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE TO THE EDWARDIAN ERA

Monday, 21 October to Sunday, 27 October, 2019

By Carolyn Smith

Over four days in October 2019, we visited 15 inspirational gardens in and around Florence. The earliest one we visited, Villa Medici in Fiesole, was built by banker and patron of the arts, Giovanni de' Medici, son of Cosimo de' Medici, between 1451 and 1457. It was considered the first example of a Renaissance villa -- "a villa suburbana" located on the outskirts of cities. Its terraces with their wonderful Tuscan views, parterres enclosed by box and lemon trees in terracotta pots and fountains were to be recurring themes in our tour of Florentine villas. A long pergola led to the *giardino segreto* with its pond and magnolia trees.

This villa contrasted with Villa di Poggio a Caiano, commissioned by Lorenzo the Magnificent in 1480, and his favourite home. The avenues and vistas have been replaced by serpentine walks through woodland, following the 18th-century craze for the English natural garden.

When Cosimo I de' Medici, great-grandson of Lorenzo the Magnificent, became Grand Duke of Tuscany in 1537 he employed Niccolò Tribolo to redesign the gardens of his childhood home of Villa Di Castello. He created a sequence of terraces with sculptural fountains. The first terrace has 16 parterres, the second a large citrus garden full of enormous terracotta pots. During our visit, the gardeners were moving them with forklift trucks to the *limonaia* (a room used for overwintering lemon plants). The grotto containing The Cave of Animals depicts in *tufa* (a limestone) many animals symbolic of hunting.

These gardens' symmetry reminded me strongly of the Great Plat, a formal garden at Hestercombe House in Somerset, originally built in the 16th century. The terraces around it were designed by Edwin Lutyens with planting devised by Gertrude Jekyll from 1904 to 1907. The parterres are edged with bergenias – a favourite of Jekyll's – rather than the box found at Villa Di Castello.

Cosimo went on to create grander schemes, such as the Boboli Gardens behind the Renaissance Pitti Palace in Florence. The gardens boast a huge amphitheatre excavated in the hillside, currently adorned with a bright red modernist sculpture!

We later saw Villa Schifanoia and Villa Salviati, both in Fiesole, with their predominantly green gardens, also a feature of Villa La Pietra bought by Arthur Acton and his American wife, Hortense Mitchell, in 1907. Soon after the couple joined the Florentine community of "culturally passionate expatriates".

Villa Gamberaia in the hills of Settignano, just three acres in total, consists of a series of "garden rooms". A 225-m bowling green leads from a spot with a view of the river Arno at one end to a monumental fountain at the other.



Villa Gamberaia. © Carolyn Smith

Adjacent to this is a parterre garden. Princess Jeanne Ghyka, sister of Queen Natalie of Serbia, bought the villa in 1895 and restored it, filling the parterres with water in 1896. She was rumoured to swim in them at dawn. Box, yew hedging and topiary have replaced her original flowers. Steps from a “rustic cabinet” – a narrow outdoor room with ornate stone walls – leads up to the higher level and the *limonaia*.

Another highlight of the tour was the legendary Villa I Tatti. In 1908, American art connoisseur Bernard Berenson engaged Geoffrey Scott and Cecil Pinsent to design a garden at his home in the spirit of the Italian Renaissance. Its steps descending the steep slope have beautiful pebble mosaics. The garden is also very green with its many yew and box hedges.

Scott and Pinsent’s next commission was for Charles Strong at Villa Le Balze in Fiesole in 1913. The long house has a narrow terrace, formal gardens and an elaborate grotto.



Villa I Tatti. © Stephen Williams



Villa Le Balze. © Carolyn Smith

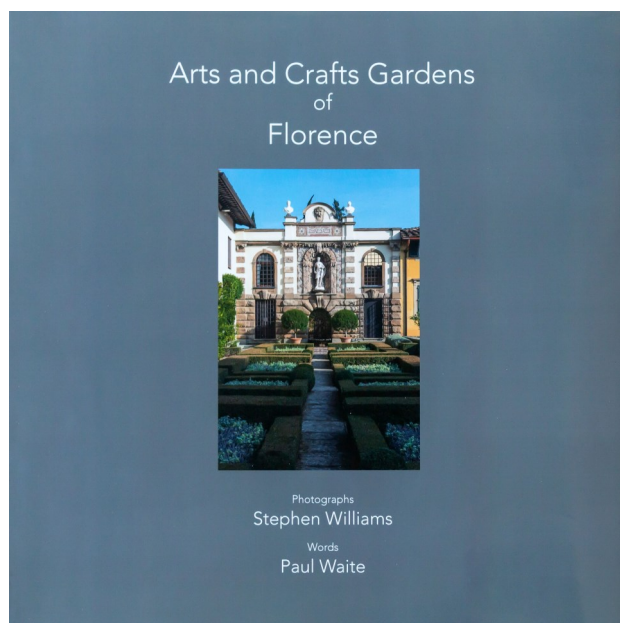
Photographs by Stephen Williams and descriptions by Paul Waite. 204 pages: 12x12inch (30x30cm) format: hardback with dust jacket: printed on premium quality matt paper. Price £110, plus postage.

The book includes lavish photographs of each of 14 gardens and villas, illustrating their captivating atmosphere. It can be purchased direct from Blurb Publishing, from whom discounts are sometimes available: Website https://www.blurb.co.uk/search/site_search or more directly from <https://www.blurb.co.uk/b/10075472-arts-and-crafts-gardens-of-florence>.

On our only wet day, we visited the largest private city garden in Europe, Giardino Torregiani, which contrasted with all the other gardens on the tour as it was in the style of an English “romantic park”. Otherwise, we enjoyed fantastic weather – complete with voracious mosquitoes! The tour ended with an enjoyable free day in Florence.

NEW BOOK: *ARTS AND CRAFTS GARDENS OF FLORENCE*

Enthusiasts of the Arts and Crafts movement will be interested in this fine new book *Arts and Crafts Gardens of Florence*, which describes and illustrates important gardens in and around Florence, which were influenced by or developed during the Arts and Crafts movement.



LUTYENS HOUSES ON THE MARKET

Richard Page's regular property column

Following the recent total lockdown, the Government has allowed the housing market to reopen. Estate agents are returning to their offices and putting in place social-distancing measures, including more use of video for initial viewings and wearing of gloves and masks when meeting clients at properties (in compliance with Government guidelines).

This report was accurate at the time of going to press. For the latest update on any individual property mentioned here, please speak directly with the agent.

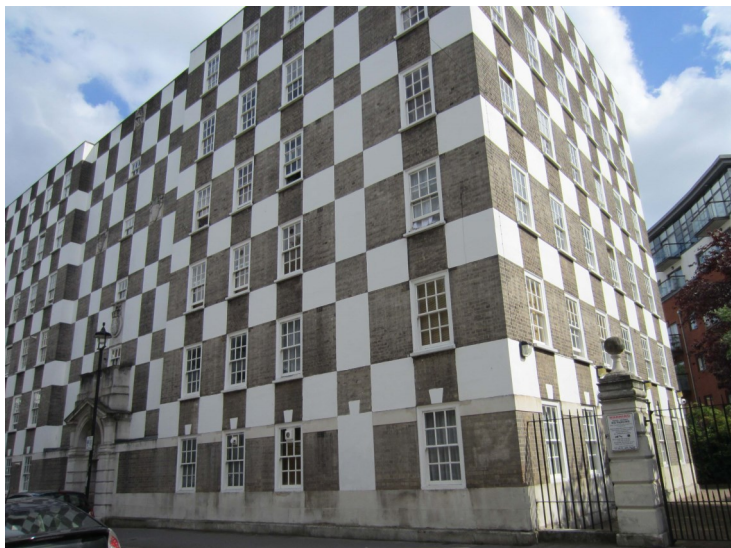
Edwin Lutyens-designed properties in the Grosvenor Estate, London W1

While studying architecture at the South Kensington School of Art from 1885 to 1887, Edwin Lutyens met architect Detmar Blow. Both admired the ideals of William Morris and architect Philip Webb, Blow having recently travelled in Italy with John Ruskin. Committed to the Arts and Crafts movement, Lutyens and Blow believed in using local materials, scholarly design in the traditional manner and the highest standards of craftsmanship. Based on these shared ideals, a lasting friendship developed between them, which would prove fruitful for Lutyens later in his career.

Blow went on to have a successful practice with French architect Fernand Billerey. In 1916, Hugh “Bendor” Grosvenor, the 2nd Duke of Westminster, appointed Blow to his personal staff. Blow later became the Grosvenor estate's surveyor and agent, a role Lutyens wittily described as “bailiff and maître d’hôtel”. Blow had already built on the estate – at 28 South Street, 44-50 Park Street and 37-38 Upper Grosvenor Street — and ran it successfully during a time of immense change after the First World War when many of Mayfair's great houses were being turned into flats or commercial premises.

In 1923, the Grosvenor House site on Park Lane was to be redeveloped, and Blow called in Lutyens as a consultant. His role was to “consider and approve” designs for new apartments and a hotel in the building designed by the architects Wimperis, Simpson & Guthrie. Not satisfied with what he saw, Lutyens redrew the elevations and incorporated four rooftop pavilions and Classical colonnades at street level. The Duke approved these altered designs, built between 1926 and 1930. This was followed by Lutyens's contribution to the elevations of more new buildings on the estate, including Terminal House, Grosvenor Gardens and Audley House on North Audley Street in 1927; Hereford House, Park Street in 1929; Aldford House, Park Lane in 1930, and Brook House, Park Lane in 1932 (the latter has since been demolished). He also designed the frontage of a charming house at 8 Upper Grosvenor Street in 1927 (just behind the former American Embassy on Grosvenor Square). Its restrained Classical elevation, made of Portland stone, has elegantly recessed sash windows and a Tuscan Doric-inspired porch.

The most significant contribution by Lutyens then was to the housing scheme for Westminster Council - on land leased at a peppercorn rent from the Grosvenor estate (and built between 1928 and 1932) - in particular the extraordinary flats on Page Street. Each U-shaped, six-storey block contains 35 flats, designed so that all have at least one window facing south and a kitchen facing north. This efficiently distilled the essentials of minimal housing in large blocks, but the buildings were enlivened by the materials used – light grey bricks, Portland stone and Portland cement were combined in a chequerboard pattern, while at street level there were Classical shop pavilions and gate piers.



*Page Street flats, Westminster, London.
Photo by Robert AM Stern*

Although the building was striking, not everyone was a fan of it. In 1981, Roderick Gradidge wrote: “An attempt to give life to an ordinary neo-Georgian housing estate by alternating brick and stucco panels between sash windows, which although clever, does nothing to humanise these slab blocks. As well as this, the internal courts, with their horizontal strip balconies, are as bad as anything being produced at this time by ‘international modern’ architects.”

ASG Butler in his volumes, *Lutyens Memorial: The Architecture of Sir Edwin Lutyens*, was more enthusiastic: “Nobody else would have had the imagination or courage to do anything so odd yet so successful”. The listing of the Grade-II buildings describes “an imaginative Lutyens treatment of a standard London County Council type of housing block”.

A two-bedroom flat in Rogers House, Page Street is for sale for £565,000 through Bensons. In Aldford House, a two-bed flat is for sale for £3,450,000 through Clifton Property Partners. Located on the first floor and extending to 1,473 sq ft, this has views over Hyde Park. In Hereford House (pictured below), a two-bed flat is for sale for £3m through Chase Apartments. On the second floor of this portered building the flat extends to 1,342 sq ft and has a south-facing reception room.

In Grosvenor House, apartments are available to let on a short-term basis and come with all the benefits of the hotel, including daily room-cleaning and a 24-hour concierge. A two-bedroom, two-bathroom apartment is available through Carter Jonas at £14,000 per week. A sale has just been agreed on a two-bedroom flat in Bennett House on Page Street through Garton Jones.



The Salutation, Sandwich, Kent

Turning to the country-house market, *The Daily Telegraph* recently reported that The Salutation, Sandwich, Kent - perhaps Lutyens’s most perfect “Wrenaissance” house – is coming to the market.

Having been run as a country-house hotel since 2016, it is reported that the operators, who had a lease, have gone into liquidation and the owners, while “open to the possibility of further leasing arrangements with interested parties”, are putting the 17-bed hotel and restaurant, plus its 3.7 acres, on the market for £5m. A full report will follow in the next Newsletter.

Websites:

Bensons: 020 7222 7020; www.bensons.london

Carter Jonas: 020 7518 3200; www.carterjonas.co.uk

Chase Apartments: 020 7722 5022; www.chaseapartments.com

Clifton Property Partners: 020 7409 5087; www.cliftonpropertypartners.com

Richard Page is Group Marketing Director of estate agent Dexters. During his 35-year property career, he has advised on the sale of many Edwin Lutyens houses. Do please contact him with any Lutyens-related property news at landseer75@hotmail.com.

Owing to current restrictions, we are not including the usual list of houses and gardens open for visits.
The lists will be reintroduced as soon as restrictions are lifted.

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