

Extracted from

A History of St John's Church Roundhay by J Dickinson and G.D. Webster

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The committee formed to secure a site for a new Parochial Hall continued their search and offers were received from Mr. Nettleton of one in Oakwood Avenue, and from Mr. Penrose Green of one fronting on to Oakwood Lane and Oakwood Grove. These had to be abandoned because of objections from the residents. Another site at the junction of North Lane and Wetherby Road was considered, but because of the prohibitive cost, this, too, was abandoned. The choice then lay between one offered by Mr. Carby Hall (below Old Park Gates) and one at Oakwood known as the "Woodlands." Whilst the former would be slightly cheaper at 5/6d. per yard (compared with 6/- for the "Woodlands"), the latter, although situated on the boundary of the Parish, was in the centre of the most populated part and in a convenient position for transport for most of the Parishioners. At an adjourned Meeting held on Monday February 23rd 1925, the Church Council recommended the Purchase of the Woodlands Estate site for the purpose of a Parochial Hall, subject to the approval of a Parish Meeting. In due course the site was acquired for the sum of £1,000.

In April 1925 a meeting of all subscribers to the War Memorial Fund was called and it was resolved that "this meeting of the Subscribers to the St. John's War Memorial Fund authorise the Church Council to apply the balance of the fund amounting to £304.16s. 10d. towards the building of the new Parochial Hall." A public meeting of all Parishioners of St. John's called in November of the same year decided that one-third of the balance of the proceeds of the sale of "Belmont" (until lately the new vicarage) amounting to some £650, should be allocated to the cost of building the new hall. In the meantime, steps were taken to prepare plans for its erection. Various parochial halls recently built were visited by the sub-committee, and it was decided that plans be invited in competition from three architects, Messrs. Chorley Gribbon & Foggitt, Mr. W. Dawson and Mr. Carby Hall. In April 1926, it was announced that Mr. Dawson's plans had been placed first by the assessor, the cost of the building being estimated at £5,000.

Much concern was expressed about the difficulty of raising so large a sum. However, at a public meeting, reception and conversazione, held at the Mansion Hotel on Monday, April 12th 1926, to celebrate the Centenary of the Church, promises of £800 towards the fund were made by those present, a generous and appropriate gesture to mark the 100th birthday of the Church. By May 1926, the tender of Messrs. Banks Mawson had been accepted with the proviso, that G. W. Nettleton and Sons should carry out the brick and stonework. The foundation stone was laid on Thursday, August 18th 1927 by Colonel Sir Edward Allen Brotherton Bart., who, in performing the ceremony, noted that its management

was to be non-political, and non-sectarian, a public meeting place for the community. The Lord Mayor of Leeds (Alderman Hugh Lupton) accompanied by the Lady Mayoress, (a member of the Church Council) presided.

Although some £3,000 had been raised by subscription and money-raising efforts, the Hall had to be mortgaged in order to obtain money for its completion. It was dogged by financial difficulties for almost thirty years before being put on a sound footing.¹

Footnote

¹In March 1939 Miss Dora Netherwood donated £500 to Roundhay Parochial Hall in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Scott Stanley. A plaque to mark the gift can be seen in the Hall.

PROPOSED ROUNDHAY PAROCHIAL HALL.

Roundhay's chief point against the Leeds extension scheme is that the district is self-contained and well able to manage its own affairs satisfactorily and at less cost than if it became part of the city. One disadvantage at present, however, is that the large population on the Wetherby Road side of the township has no public hall or adequate meeting place, and this has recently been demonstrated at the over-crowded ratepayers' meetings held in the old National School. The need for such a provision was reinforced last night at a most successful parochial gathering in connection with St. John's Church. This the first of its kind held in the National School, was attended by a large and representative number of parishioners.

The meeting had a two-fold object, as stated by the Vicar (the Rev. T. Liddesdale Palmer)—first to create a spirit of friendship and greater unity amongst Church-people in the parish, and secondly, to arouse interest in a scheme for the building of a suitable parochial hall in which all branches of Church work might be concentrated. The proceedings were most enjoyable. The Ladies' Committee had very prettily decorated the room, and they also served light refreshments to those who attended. The almost uncomfortably crowded state of the room accentuated the need for more extensive premises.

A pleasing musical programme was given by Miss M. Findlay, Miss M. Ostler, Mrs. Grime, Miss J. Ellershaw, Mr. H. Silcock, and Mr. Trotter, with a charming recitation by Miss Penrose-Green, and a reading by Mr. Davis. The St. John's choir sang glees, and, in addition to an address by the Vicar, the People's Warden, Mr. W. S. Sykes, gave an interesting review of the history of the church. Alderman W. Penrose-Green, a former Warden, sent regrets for unavoidable absence, and intimated a desire to support the movement for a more suitable hall for the district.

A PARISH HALL FOR OAKWOOD.

Recent building developments in the Oakwood (Roundhay) district of Leeds have emphasised the need of a parochial hall, and one is to be built in Fitzroy Drive, off Gledhow Lane, a minute's walk from the clock tower.

Sir Edward Brotherton is to lay the foundation stone on Thursday afternoon.

Although the hall is to be erected under the auspices of St. John's Church, it will be available to all denominations, who will be represented on the committee of management.

It is hoped that the building will be sufficiently advanced by November to permit of a bazaar being held in it.

Yorkshire Evening Post - 16 August 1927

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