

Moseley Hall and its Former Estate

History

Moseley Hall was rebuilt and extended in 1792-1796 after the previous building (mid 18th century) was burnt out during the Birmingham (Priestley) Riots of 1791. The owner was John Taylor, a manufacturer of 'toys', which were small items of fashion such as buckles, buttons and brooches. He amassed a fortune and became co-founder of Taylors and *Lloyds* Bank (1765).

The Taylors had other properties in Birmingham and elsewhere so the Hall was never their main residence. It was let many times over the years and was leased in 1883 and then bought by Richard Cadbury. After living there for a few years he gave it to Birmingham Council in 1892 as a children's convalescent home and later hospital. During WWI it was temporarily used as a convalescent home for wounded soldiers. Subsequently it became a hospital for the elderly and a rehabilitation centre. Many modern hospital buildings were erected in the 1960s and later. A mental health hospital has been added recently.

The Estate

The Taylor estate at its peak extended all along the west side of Alcester Road from Edgbaston Road in the north, as far south as Moor Green Lane, and westwards almost as far as what is now Cannon Hill Park. Additionally there were several detached portions of land in the Moseley area. In total the Estate extended to 938 acres. During the 19th century land was gradually sold off for new roads with mainly large detached villa residences. Salisbury Road was cut through the Estate in 1896 separating the Hall from the Pool. The drive, which was

previously entered by a gateway opposite the Fighting Cocks inn, was relocated to its present position adjacent to the dovecote.

The Hall

There were earlier buildings on the estate, a half-timbered house lying to the north near the present Victoria Parade, and almost certainly another later building on the site of the present Hall. The central portion of five bays, as viewed today, from the south, was built in the mid 18th century. This was the portion burnt out in the riots of 1791. John Taylor commissioned the architect John Stanbridge of Warwick to design a new Hall which was built between 1792-1796. He added the two pedimented wings of ashlar with rusticated bases noted from this aspect, and on the north side the prominent bow. The main entrance was a portico with two columns, later replaced by the more elaborate portecochere which we see now. To the east of the main building there were servants' quarters and domestic offices. The stables were adjacent.

The Park

At the time of rebuilding the burnt out Hall, Humphry Repton (who was the first person to call himself a landscape gardener) was asked in 1792 to produce a plan for enhancement of the parklands. He delivered one of his 'red books', so called because of the colour of the leather covers. The book, which is now owned by Harvard University (USA), contains drawings in watercolour and hand written text making comments about the land as it was, and offering suggestions about improvements. Unlike his predecessor, Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, Repton did not actually commission and

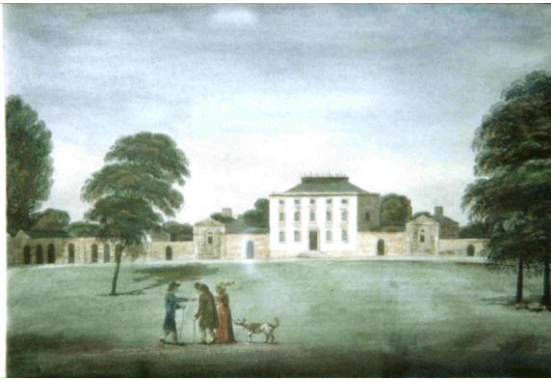
supervise the works but merely advised. Many of his suggestions were adopted over time, notably enlargement of the lake, tree planting and positioning of the entrance drive to give a more imposing approach to the Hall.

When the Estate was sold off and the Park was divided by Salisbury Road, plans were afoot to drain the lake and construct more roads and houses. However, to prevent this happening, several local gentlemen, who owned houses around the lake, took out a lease from the Taylor Estates in 1899 on 14 acres of land including the lake, forming Moseley Park and Pool Co. This company issued shares at £1 and opened the Park to key holders on payment of an annual subscription. The Park was maintained, enhanced and developed with tennis courts and a bowling green (subsequently converted to further tennis courts). A fishing club was established. Over the years the lease was renewed and later the freehold was purchased by the Company which transformed to a charitable trust in 2006.

Other Early Buildings on the Estate

Adjacent to the present entrance drive there is the 18th century octagonal dovecote and the so-called 'cowhouse' which was actually a store at the end of the former actual cowhouse, which has since been demolished.

In the Park there is the icehouse, uphill from the lake, near the tennis courts. Another building, which is now a private house and not accessible, is the former game keeper's cottage which is hidden behind Park Hill, the first road to be cut through the estate in 1865.



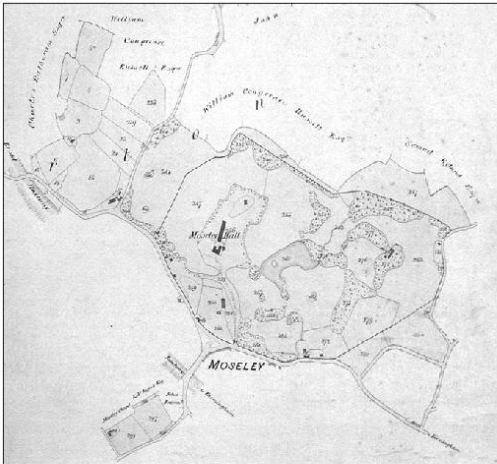
Moseley Hall 1791, after riots



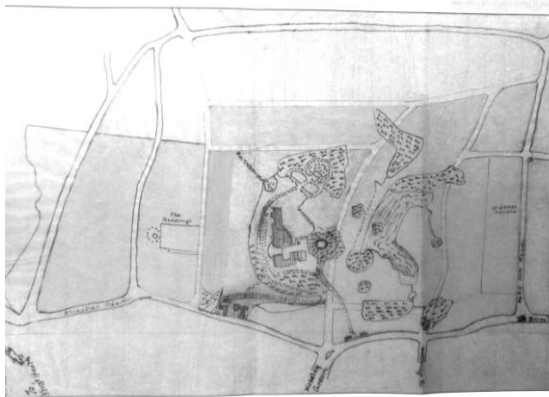
Rebuilt Moseley Hall 1819



Moseley Hall 1983 showing open-air ward over the portico



Moseley Hall (Taylor) Estates 1854



Drawn map of proposed new roads 1886



Map of Taylor Estate in 1886 as new roads cut

Larger versions of these maps will be available to view on the day