

The Britannic Magazines: Moor Green House and Estate and the New Chief Office

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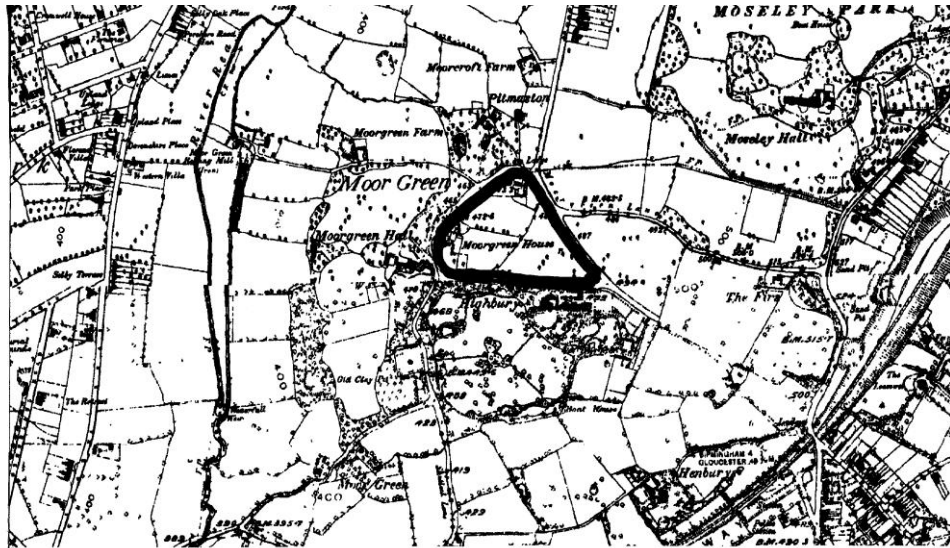
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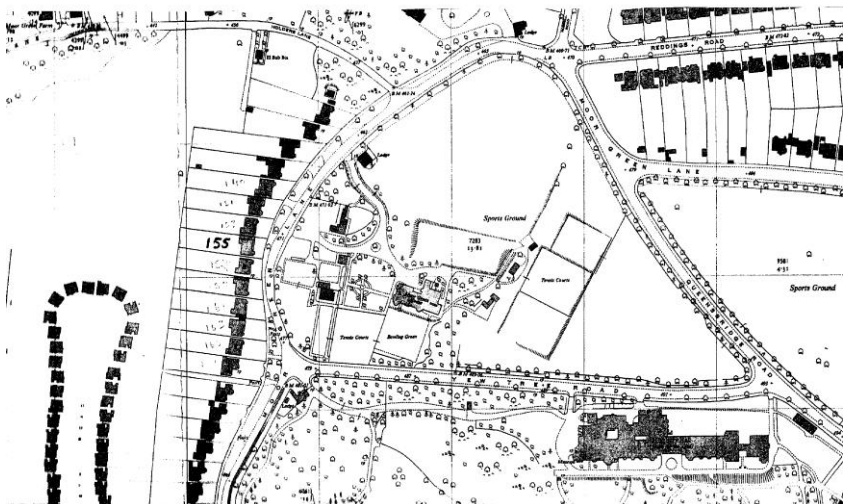
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Maps

Moor Green House and Estate, 1890s.¹



Moor Green House and Estate, 1950s.²



¹Moseley Society History Group Map Collection.

²Moseley Society History Group Map Collection, OSD, 1:2500. 1956 edition.

The Britannic Magazines

The Moseley Society History Group has copies of the Britannic Magazine from 1930- 1997.

We have discovered a number of articles that chart the life of Moor Green House and Estate. They reveal much, not only about the changes to Moor Green House and Estate, but also the times in which it functioned under the auspices of the Britannic Assurance.

The articles from the Britannic Magazine are mostly summarized here. Please contact us to come in to see the full editions.

The New Chief Office at Moor Green: the announcement of building.

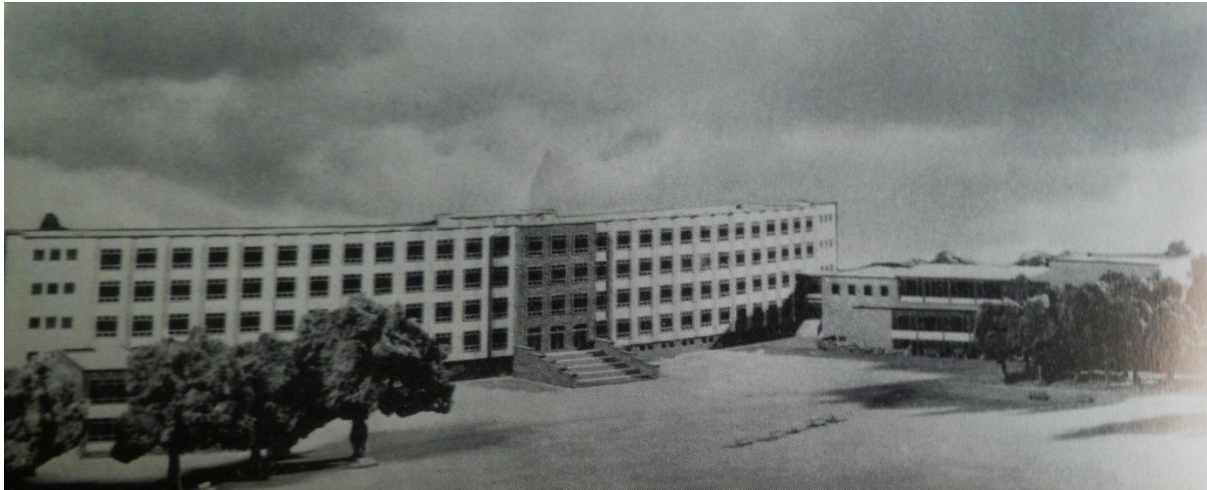
The Britannic Magazine, Vol. 16, No. 10. August 1959, 'New Chief Office to be built at Moor Green, Birmingham,' p. 2 (Vol XVI).

The 'new chief office at the site of the chief office recreation ground at Moor Green' will be 'a modern structure with five floors and two wings' and is 'due to be completed by the end of 1961. It will be possible to add two extra floors at a later date in order to meet the demands of future expansion of business.

The exterior walls will be in cream travertine marble with window frames of Burma teak. The design of the central feature at both the back and the front of the building will be enriched with green Westmorland slate which will be used also in the construction of the base.

All the recreational facilities are being retained including cricket, football and tennis. The surrounding lawns, gardens and well-established trees will provide a pleasing setting which should harmonise with and enhance the architectural beauty of the new building.

The present chief office at Broad Street Corner, Birmingham, which was built in 1904 has long been inadequate and will be closed in the early part of 1962.'

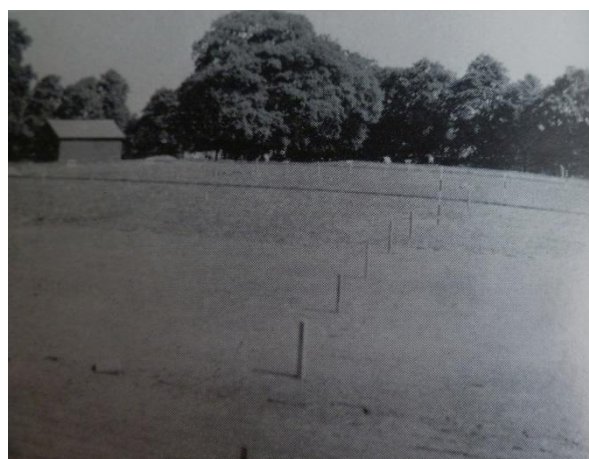


The north-west elevation of the new building reproduced from a photograph of a model

Progress Reports on the building of the New Chief Office at Moor Green: a summary

1. *The Britannic Magazine*, Vol. 16, No. 12. April 1960, 'Building of New Chief Office: Progress Report No.1,' by Mr D. Hamilton Shaw, Assistant Manager, pp.4-5 (Vol XVI).

This report describes 'excellent progress in the building of our new chief office at Moor Green Birmingham' enabled by the wonderful summer in which bad weather held up work for only one day. Work on site started on 1st June 1959 with preliminary work concerned with setting out the foundation lines of the new building, erecting huts for workers, and removing the tennis courts.

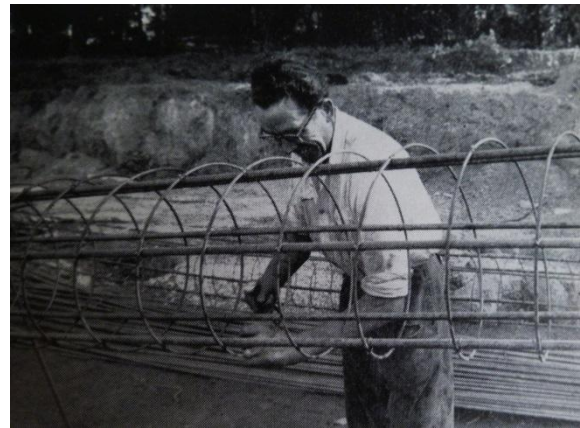


The site marked out

By 1st July 1959 considerable progress had been made in excavating the site and huge quantities of sandy gravel had been carried away. Considerable clearance work was required at the south-west end of the site where the ground rises and a plantation of trees adjoins the bowling-green. The new building rested on 592 reinforced concrete piles driven into the ground some 30 feet and obtaining a hollow which was then filled with concrete. The groups of three to ten piles were eventually capped by a solid concrete platform to make the basis of the frame of the new building. Piling started on the 6th July and finished on 10th December 1959.



The piling machine



Steel reinforcement for piles

Work on drains and other such preliminary site work was going on at the same time. The track for the 167 feet high crane was also made ready. By 13th August 1959 the crane, weighing 46 ½ tons including ballast, was in position and passed its insurance tests the following day. Starting on a small piece of track laid by hand the crane then laid the rest of its own track as required. Concrete was poured straight into foundation beds using an ingenious conveyor. By October 1959 four good months' work had been done.



The start of the foundations



North-east corner

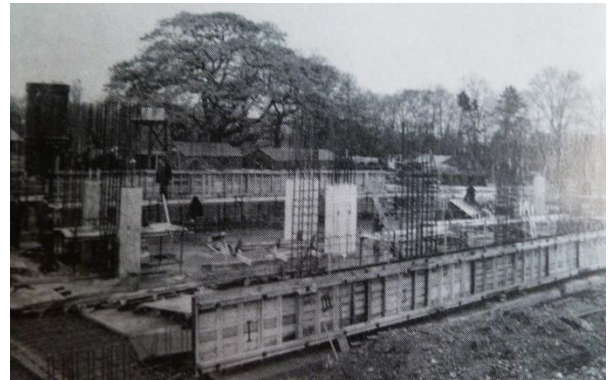
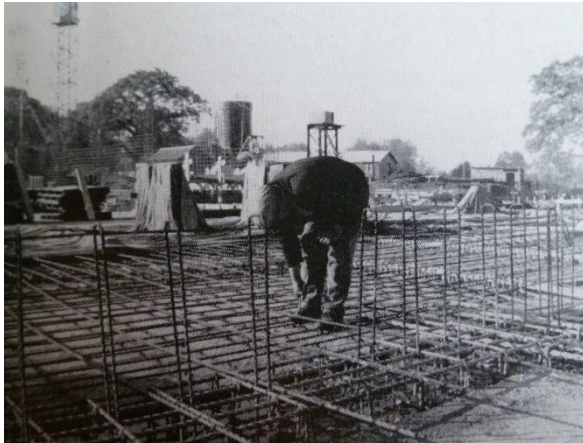
***The Britannic Magazine*, Vol. 16, No. 12. April 1960, 'Building of New Chief Office: Progress Report No.2,' by Mr D. Hamilton Shaw, Assistant Manager, pp.4-5 (Vol XVI).**

Bad weather hindered builders but there was still plenty to show for the four months' work since the October 1959 Report. Excavation of the site was completed during October and the 592 piles were trimmed and capped. A great deal of steel reinforcement was then fixed into position. The walls and central columns were established in November. The first floor on the intermediate section was in position in December despite bad weather and heating pipes were being concreted in.

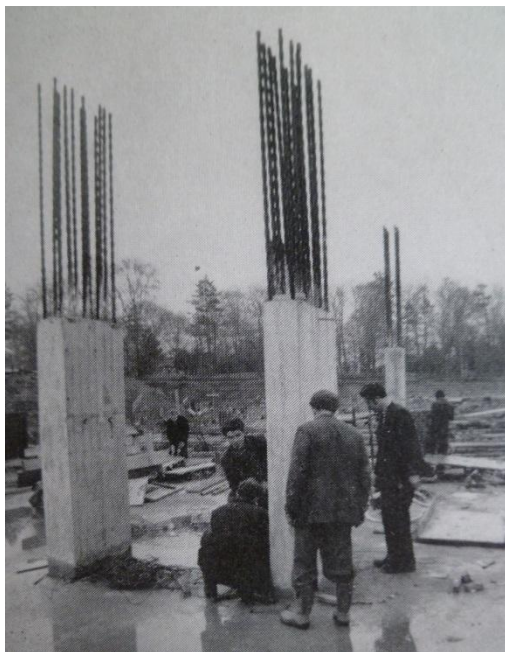
'Moor Green House will be dwarfed by its new neighbour, but will continue to provide a recreation club house as it has done so well for the past 39 years.'



South Wing foundations with the present club house (Moor Green House) in the background.



Steel reinforcement for the ground floor and steel reinforcement and framework for the north intermediate section.

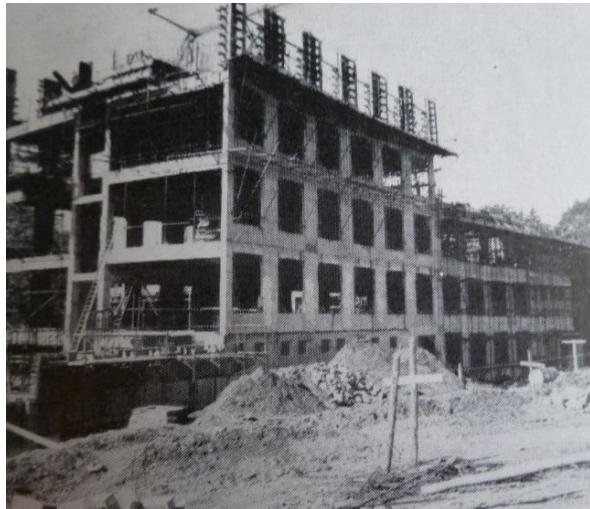


Central columns for the North intermediate section and establishing the first floor of the north intermediate section.

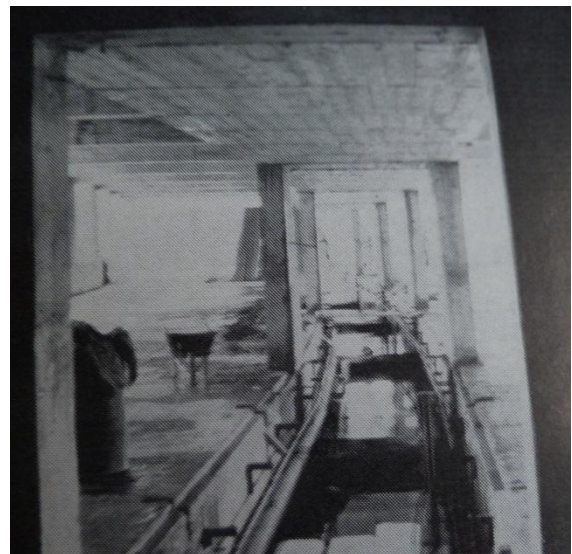
2. *The Britannic Magazine*, Vol. 16, No. 13. August 1960, 'Building of New Chief Office: Progress Report No.3,' by Mr D. Hamilton Shaw, Assistant Manager, pp.4-5 (Vol XVI).

By this time the builders were up to roof level on the north intermediate section, with the central and south sections to follow. A duct ran overhead along the full length of the central corridor on each floor to carry central heating pipes and electricity cables. The windows are large, but not the almost glass curtaining of many new buildings. The frames were teak.

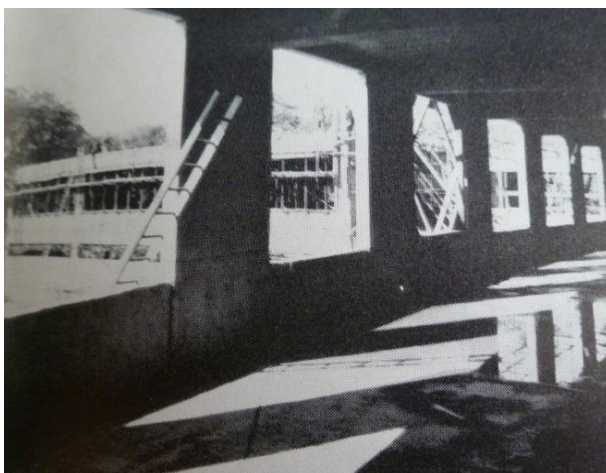
Adequate strong room space was necessary for the many valuable documents including property deeds and was placed below ground at the south end.



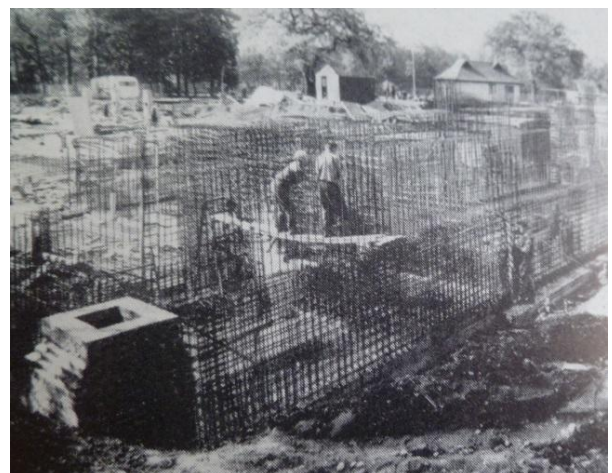
North Intermediate section



Service duct



Interior views of windows



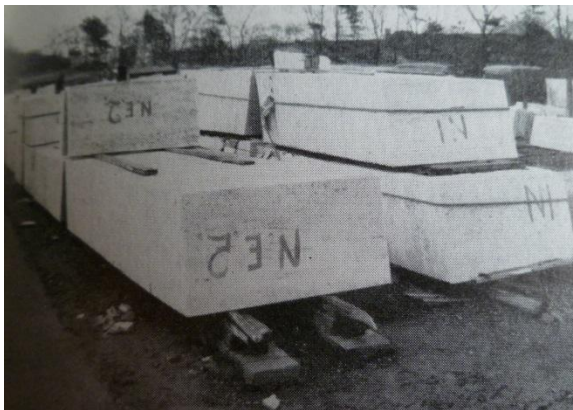
Steel-work for the strong room

3. *The Britannic Magazine*, Vol. 16, No. 14. January 1961, 'Building of New Chief Office: Progress Report No.4,' by Mr D. Hamilton Shaw, Assistant Manager, pp.4-5(Vol XVI).

The Italian travertine facing was well underway in January 1961. The architect visited Italy to select the marble and a cream and a darker cream were selected. The exterior cladding required 33 000 square feet of marble and 10 000 square feet of green Westmorland slate with a further 18 000 square feet of travertine marble for interior finishes.



Marble delivery after a night run from London docks and polishing a marble slab in the workshop



Stacked marble ready for fixing



Marble fixing

4. *The Britannic Magazine*, Vol. 16, No. 15. Spring 1961, 'Building of New Chief Office: Progress Report No.5,' by Mr D. Hamilton Shaw, Assistant Manager, pp.4-5(Vol XVI).

The new Chief office has taken shape with only the top floor of the centre and south end to be finished. The interior floors and plastering were being undertaken.



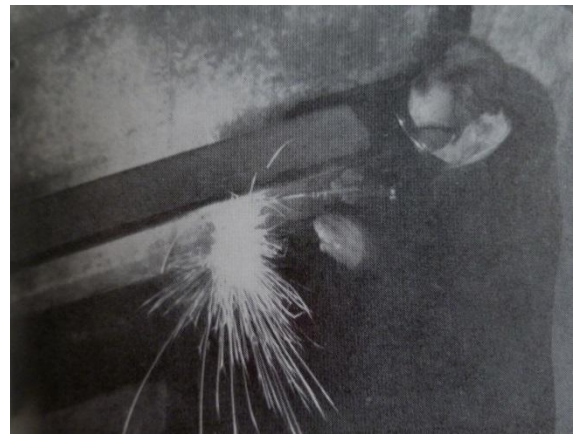
Main entrance



General view of the main block



Floor screeding



Welding in a duct



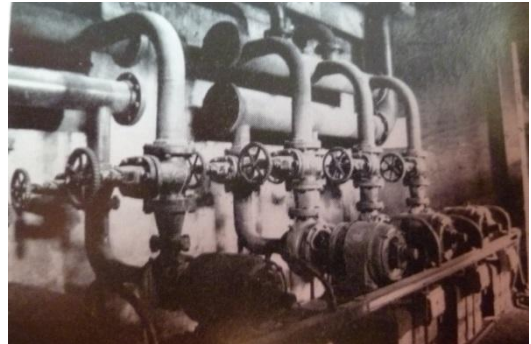
Plastering

5. *The Britannic Magazine*, Vol. 16, No. 16. August 1961, 'Building of New Chief Office: Progress Report No.6,' by Mr D. Hamilton Shaw, Assistant Manager, p.9(Vol XVI).

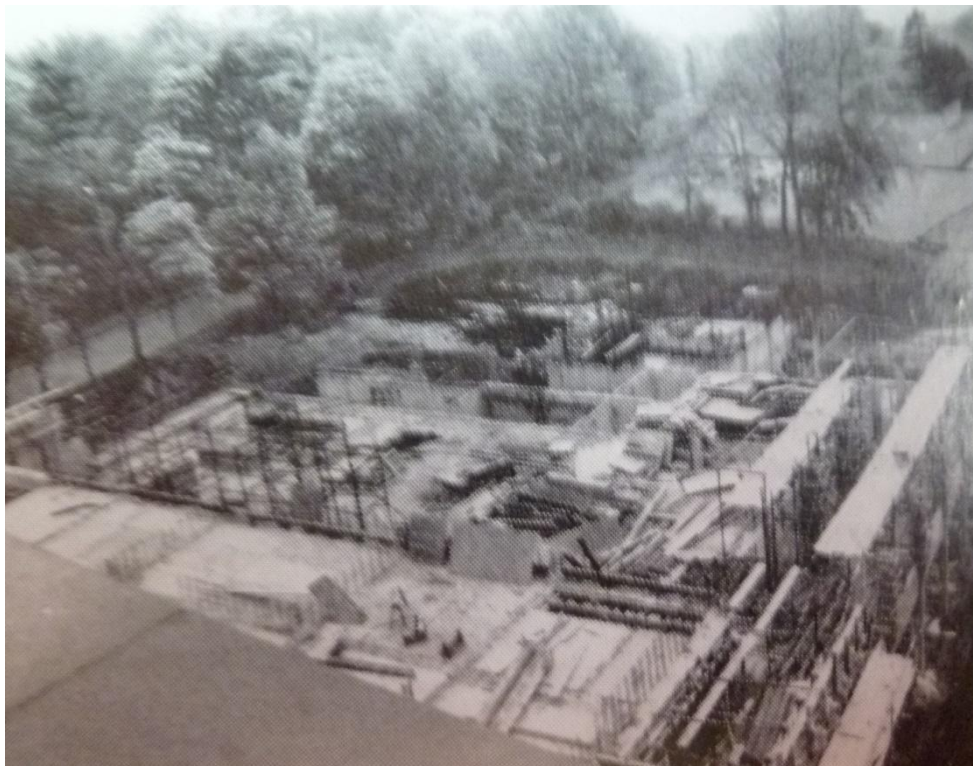
The roof was completed and the interior 'safe from the weather.' Sixteen sub-contractors and nearly 200 men are onsite. The heating installation was expected to be operating from September, but there was much work to be done on the recreation block.



Roof of main building



Water circulation pumps



Recreation block under construction

6. *The Britannic Magazine*, Vol. 16, No. 17. Winter 1961 /62, 'Building of New Chief Office: Progress Report No.7,' by Mr D. Hamilton Shaw, Assistant Manager, p.5(Vol XVI).

The roof over the main part of the recreation block was complete and 'Our old friend the crane will soon be taken away and this familiar feature of the Moseley skyline will be gone.' The heating pipes were being gradually brought up to normal temperature, about half the rubber tiles had been laid, three of the four lifts finished and all the exterior cladding done. The surrounds and approaches to the building were well underway and the interior offices under construction.



Hoisting beams into position



Floor tiling in progress



Approaches to the main entrance

7. *The Britannic Magazine*, Vol. 16, No. 18. April 1962, 'Building of New Chief Office: Progress Report No.8,' by Mr D. Hamilton Shaw, Assistant Manager, p.20(Vol XVI).

Building operations were in their final stages with furniture being installed in April with visits to the site arranged for March and April. The move was impending.



The New Chief Office at Moor Green.³

The New Chief Office officially opened.

***The Britannic Magazine*, Vol. 17, No. 3. August 1963, 'Special 'Gold' Edition,' 'New Head Office opened by the chairman and general manager Mr. John F. Jefferson, pp. 4-5(Vol XVII).**

This was the first edition to be printed from Britannic's new home at Moor Green and contained articles on the official opening, the history of Moseley and a report on a 'Cook's Tour' of the new building.

³The Britannic Magazine, Centenary celebrations 1966, Vol.18, No.4, February 1967, Vol XVIII.

The Official Opening:

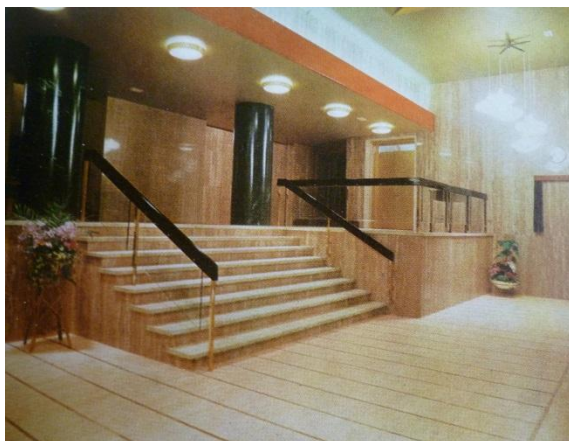
On the 21st March, 1963, the chairman and manager realised a 30 year old dream when he formally opened the new head office at Moor Green in the presence of the Lord Mayor of Birmingham, Alderman E.W. Horton, J.P., and other Birmingham personalities. The late Mr J.A. Jefferson had submitted a memorandum and plan for a new building at Moor Green to the board some 30 years previous. A plaque in the main entrance hall was unveiled, luncheon was served to some 200 guests and a tour of the building followed.

‘Moseley and its History’ by Mr. A.R. Ash, Assistant Secretary, pp.6-9.

This article gives a detailed history of Moseley, Moseley Parish Church, the Greaves family and Moseley Hall and Moor Green.

‘Moor Green Cook’s Tour’ by the Editor, pp.10-29.

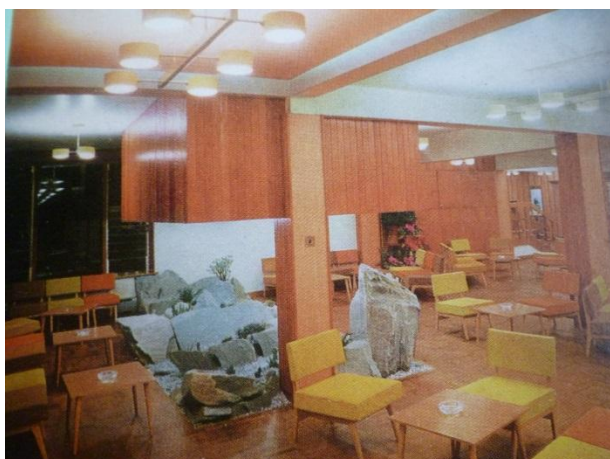
The ‘very select residential area’ of Moor Green in which the new chief office was to be built meant that ‘great care and thought had to be given to the materials, design and construction to ensure that it in no way affected the existing amenities of the district.’ The article goes on to describe in detail every area of the building alongside numerous photographs of the different departments and particular places which we reproduce here.



Central Entrance Hall



Reception



Coffee and Tea Lounge



Main Dining Hall

The Grounds of the New Chief Office at Moor Green

The Britannic Magazine, Vol. 17, No. 4. January 1964, 'The Grounds of the New Chief Office,' pp.20-24 (Vol XVII).

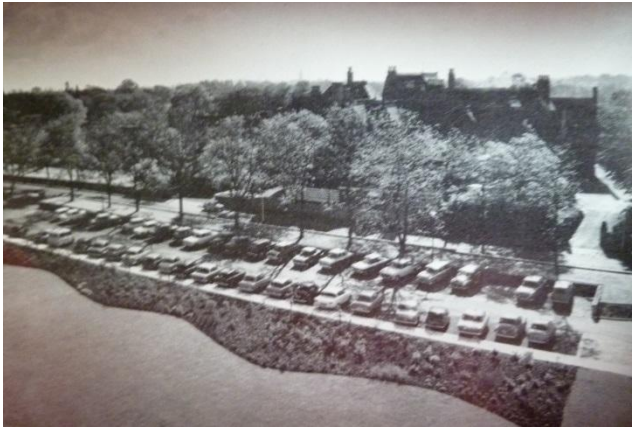
*We have a plan of the grounds with trees and shrubs identified in our 'Collection.'*⁴ *You are very welcome to contact us to come in and see this.*

The grounds extend over 13 acres and included the sports grounds with football and hockey pitches and 'one of the finest cricket squares in the Midlands.' The site was already laid out leaving little to do except repair the ravages of the builders. The article describes in detail, including lists of plants and shrubs, how the grounds were developed. The new build dissected the site leaving two separate areas. On the east side there was scope for landscape gardening, including a rockery, a small bed and a shrubbery. There were about 350 trees edging the site.



The spacious Sports ground and the many fine trees along Moor Green Lane and the Rockery with part of the gentle sloping lawns in front of the building.

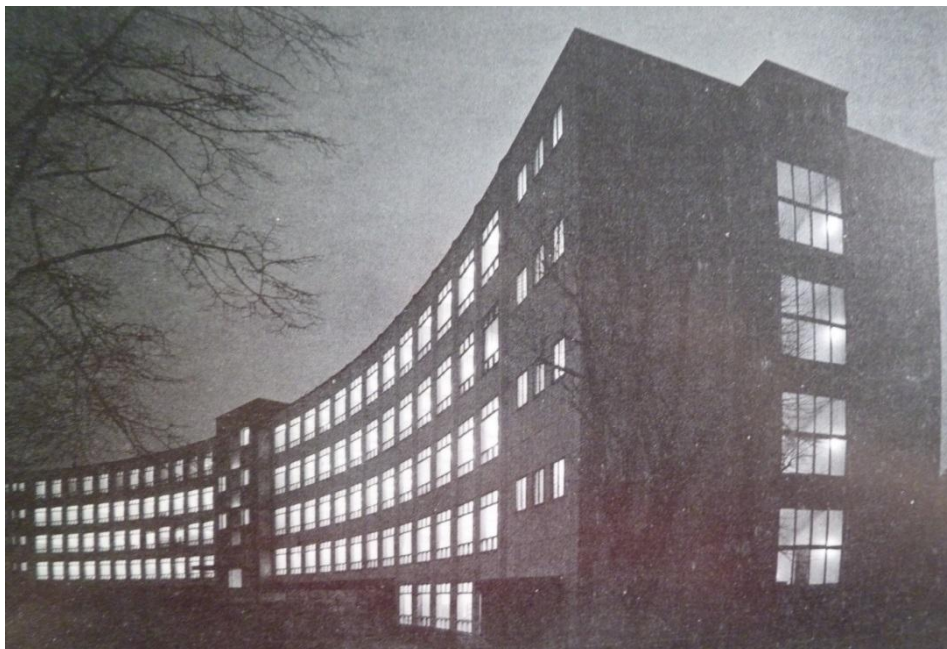
⁴Kindly donated by Mary Stopes-Roe.



The shrubbery showing the spacious car park beyond and the fine stand of Ash trees fronting Queensbridge Road.



The oak trees in front of the printing block.



‘Shades of Evening.’⁵

⁵ Vol XVII, p.48.

‘The Britannic Bus.’



The Britannic Magazine, Vol., 19 No. 1., January 1969, p.17 (Vol XIX).

The first bus carrying the Britannic slogan was driven to Moor Green for the directors' final approval as to colour and layout.



The ‘Britannic Bus’ leaving Moor Green. The new Building is in the background.

Moor Green House demolished

TheBritannic Magazine, Vol. 19, No.6, August 1970, 'A Farewell to Moor Green House' by A.R. Ash, Assistant Secretary, pp.24-26 (Vol XIX).

'During April of this year, Moor Green House, a Moseley landmark for seventy years, slowly disappeared from view at the hands of the demolition contractors. The house, the scene of so much of the company's social activity for many years, is just a memory. Its site was needed for a chief office extension. The new building which has already begun to take shape will house the stationery printing departments and provide new changing rooms and an area for recreational activities.



Moor Green House as it looked immediately before demolition.



Moor Green House before chief office was erected

Moor Green House as we knew it was built by Mr Henry C Holder on land -13 acres, 2 rods, 23 perches thereabouts – which had been given to him by his father, Sir John Holder, in 1899. A house bearing the same name had already stood on this land together with a collection of farm buildings. Mr Holder carried out considerable demolition work and built a new residence for himself at a cost of £8,000.

The new Moor Green House was described as a perfectly appointed family residence approached by a long carriage drive from Moor Green Lane with an ornamental lodge and tastefully laid out grounds and gardens. It had an extensive walled garden, a peach house, several greenhouses, motor houses to accommodate the then ‘new-fangled’ petrol engine vehicles for added measure, 6-tie cow house, fodder store and calf pen.

As a private house it was little used and in a short time stood empty. During the First World War it served as a hospital and then once again became vacant. Mr F. T. Jefferson, the chairman of the company at the time, took an interest in this property and, with his usual far-sightedness, saw its potentialities. It was purchased at an auction sale at the Grand Hotel

on the afternoon of 13th May 1920. Under the guidance of the chairman and his son, Mr J. A. Jefferson, who was at that time general manager, the house and grounds were adapted to serve as a centre for all forms of recreational activity. Bathrooms and changing rooms were incorporated on the first floor for the ladies. An area, on the ground floor, once used as a billiard room, was similarly converted for use by the men. Dozens of lockers salvaged by the late agency manager, Mr J.A. Greaney, from a disused army camp were installed and when taken out recently they seemed to have suffered little from 50 years' wear and tear at the hands of the various sections. Infinite care was taken throughout the remainder of the building to preserve its original character and its country house atmosphere.

The conversion of the grounds, a cattle grazing area for many years, presented a more formidable task. A squad of male volunteers from Broad Street corner toiled Saturday after Saturday under the supervision of Mr Arthur Taylor to provide new levels upon which turf for a cricket square, tennis courts and a bowling green could be laid. Mr Taylor had previously been the Warwickshire groundsman and was a fine cricket player himself. So delighted was the company with his work in getting the grounds into order that they presented him with a cheque for £50 on the opening day.

Unfortunately the chairman did not see the fulfilment of his initial project - he died in November 1920 some six months before the official opening on 25th May 1921. His successor, Mr J. A. Patrick, on the occasion of the opening function wrote:

The formal opening of the Moor Green estate as a staff sports ground marks the consummation of an ideal long cherished by the chairman of the company and in particular the late chairman and managing director, Frederick T Jefferson esq., J.P., to whose initiative we are indebted for securing such an admirably suited site.

The directors believe that anything that promotes the social welfare of the staff and furnishes an opportunity for a 'better understanding' between various members and officials, must promote also the best interests of the company and all concerned in its welfare. They hope therefore that full advantage will be taken of all the facilities provided for recreation such a variety of form, and that the ideals cherished be fully realised.

Mr Edgar Harrington who was the company cashier at the time of his retirement five years ago said in recalling the opening of Moor Green:

It was something never to be forgotten by all those privileged to be present. The weather was perfect, the club house and grounds looked wonderful and the floral decorations in the house were most attractive and greatly admired. Included among the many people present were the directors of the company, many distinguished members of the insurance world and several famous Birmingham Citizens and, of course, all the members of the chief office staff. After the opening ceremony there were sports, which included athletics, obstacle races and exhibition tennis by famous British tennis players. An excellent tea was served in a huge marquee erected in the grounds for the occasion. Musical classics were played by an orphan boys' band from Shenley Fields Home. In the evening there was dancing on the lawn and in the house.

Prizes were presented by Mrs F. T. Jefferson for the various sporting events and I had the good fortune to receive a tennis racquet and consequently started to play tennis, a game which I enjoyed playing for many years.

During the next ten to fifteen years Moor Green was the scene of intense social activity. During those days there was little of the home entertainment such as is found today. In 1921 wireless was still in its infancy, television was merely a scientist's dream and even the cinema was silent. People then had to make much of their own entertainment and Moor Green with its facilities offered the perfect setting. There was also a large influx of younger people into the company's chief office during the 1920s and they, too, added momentum to the social development which had begun.

Cricket, football, hockey, bowls and even croquet were pursued with enthusiasm but the most intensive activity came from the tennis section which was led and inspired by J. A. Jefferson, the section captain. He was a player of no mean ability and a generous host to both home and visiting teams. The tennis section had six grass courts, in their day said to be the best in the Midlands. Several hard courts were added later. It was little thought in those far off days that the area covered by those hallowed tennis courts, would one day be the site of the chief office main building.

Mr R.K. Matthews , our present cashier and the chairman of the chief office sports and social section joined the staff in the mid-1920s. In a reminiscent mood concerning those days, he recently said:

What happy memories! You have only to look at the many senior male staff who have married girls from the office, to recall the major part Moor Green played in bringing those couples together. The old House, especially the dark room, which was always kept locked, could tell many tales. It was an easy matter to persuade the caretaker, Arthur Taylor, that you were interested in photography and required the key, but Mrs Taylor presented a more formidable obstacle. She was suspicious and rightly so, that the dark room was also used for other pastimes.

During the years before WWII, the Britannic produced many fine sportsmen. It would not be wise who was the best all-rounder because this would cause too great a controversy, but the list would include such names as D Hamilton Shaw, R.S. Egerton, L.R. Price, A. W. Bevan (not forgetting R. K. Matthews – Editor) and a couple of pensioners A.H. Pearson and C. Finney.

Many chaps will remember the married versus single football matches. There was the time when one of the single fellows deliberately kicked the married team's goalkeeper and the next moment they were both throwing their fists at each other whilst lying on the ground. Immediately after the match all would be forgiven, but the incident would be talked about for years. There were also the mixed hockey matches always played the afternoon following the annual dinner and dance. They were a menace, especially when the men would break their sticks across someone else's shins.

Happy days! I could go on like this for hours, but whoever has taken part in the sports and pastimes in the 1920s and 1930s can, themselves, recall some vivid memories.

In September 1939 another volunteer squad appeared, this time filling sandbags for the protection of Broad Street Corner. A portion of Valuation department took up residence later but otherwise Moor Green had virtually closed down. After the upheaval the war left in

its wake, the social life of Moor Green was slow getting under way and it never became and perhaps it never could become quite the hive of activity which it had been in the pre-war years. The staff who had contributed so much to its success were now tied to their home comforts and responsibilities. Unfortunately some were no longer with us. The new younger generation upon whom a revival depended had yet to appear. But gradually life returned. The various sports sections were re-established and got into full swing and greater use was made of the facilities of the house after chief office moved to Moor Green in 1963.

As the survivors of the 1920s look back with nostalgia on their beloved tennis courts their contentious games of married versus single football and mixed hockey, so too will we recall memories of Moor Green House and the bowling green which have now moved into the past under the hand of progress.



Moor Green House partly demolished.

One of our members watched the house being demolished in the 1960s.

Other Information on the history of Moor Green House and Estate

The Residents of Moor Green House

The Sneyd Kynnersley Family

In 1868 Moor Green House was occupied by Mr Thomas Clemont Sneyd Kynnersley (b. 1803) who had been appointed as Stipendiary Magistrate in Birmingham. He came from an old Staffordshire banking family and had worked the Oxford Circuit in 1832-55. Sneyd Kynnersley was a lawyer, Stipendiary Magistrate of Birmingham, J.P., for Warwickshire, Deputy Lieutenant for Warwickshire, J.P., for Worcestershire and Staffordshire, Deputy Chairman of Warwickshire Quarter Sessions and Recorder of Newcastle-under-Lyme. Kynnersley was interested in Reformatories, Industrial Schools and Prisoners' Aid Societies.

The 1871 census shows he was a widower aged sixty seven years with three sons aged between sixteen and twenty nine years and two daughters thirteen and twenty seven years old. He had four servants. The 1881 census shows only the two daughters, Anna and Harriett, still at Moor Green House. The daughters were still at home in the 1891 census, now aged thirty three and forty seven years old, along with a grandson aged four years.

The death of T. C. S. Kynnersley at aged eighty eight years was listed in the *Moseley and Kings Heath Journal* in 1892.⁶ His obituary named his home, Moor Green House, gave the reason for his death (following an operation for strangulated hernia) and detailed his family, education, achievements, titles and interests.⁷ The report listed all the important mourners, including his servants.⁸ When he died, according to the London Probate, he left the grand sum of £11,295 4s 10d.

⁶ *Moseley and Kings Heath Journal* No.1, June 1892, Price 4d, Circulating South Birmingham and Warwickshire, JC6/7/1-173, BCLA.

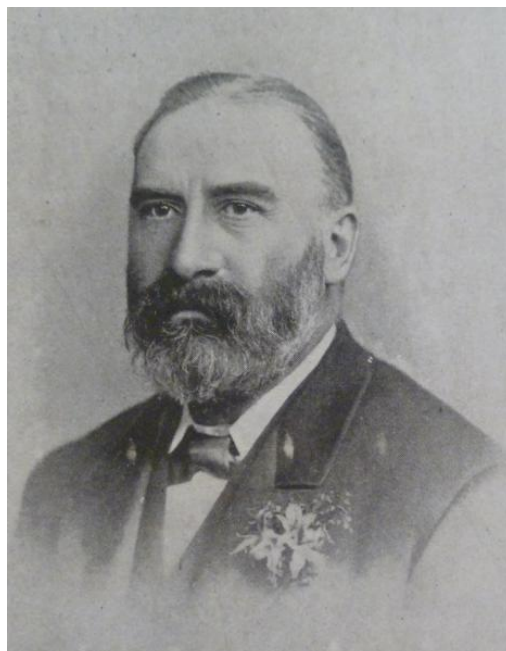
⁷ T.C. Kynnersley lived at *Moor Green House*. He died following an operation for strangulated hernia. He was born in 1803, a member of an old Staffordshire family, Sneyd. He went to Rugby and Cambridge/ and did Law being called to the bar at Middle Temple in June 1828. He worked the Oxford Circuit 1832-55 and was appointed Stipendiary Magistrate Birmingham in 1856. A 'beau-ideal' English country gentleman. He was buried in Moseley churchyard, *Moseley and Kings Heath Journal* No.1, June 1892, Price 4d, Circulating South Birmingham and Warwickshire, JC6/7/1-173, BCLA.

⁸ *Moseley and Kings Heath Journal*, No.1, June 1892, JC6/7/1-173, BCLA.

The Holder Family:

As we have seen, Moor Green House was built by Mr Henry C Holder (1874-1945). He was given the original Moor Green House and land by his father, Sir John Holder, in 1899 and he built himself a new residence pictured below. Henry Holder lived there briefly with his wife Evelynne and their three daughters and one son and eight staff, including a cook, four maids, a nurse and governess.⁹ Sir Henry Holder died on the 3 August 1945. According to Probate he left £55,163 14s 5d to his wife and two children and his solicitor. A further grant was issued on 22 November 1947 to his two brothers, John and Alfred, in the sum of £39,188.

Henry's father, John Charles Holder (1838-1923), was an important member of the Moseley community in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the late nineteenth century John Charles Holder lived at *Pitmaston* not far from Moor Green House. He was a wealthy maltster and brewer who owned The Midland Brewery in Nova Scotia Street, close to Curzon Street station in Birmingham. The firm was taken over by Mitchell & Butler's in 1919 and the brewery closed soon afterwards.



Sir John Charles Holder (c1838-26.4.1923).¹⁰

⁹ Ancestry.co.uk/ Accessed 26 July 2016, the Holder family. 1911 Census.

¹⁰ LB., MS39/1/2/3.

In 1884, John Holder bought the Moor Green Estate following the death of the owner, John Arnold, a solicitor. The 1884 House Auction Plan below shows the freehold residence, garden and grounds and a building estate of 50 acres. The Holders built *Pitmaston House* to replace *Moor Green Cottage* that was on the site and boasted a lake and a cascading stream. John Holder's wife, Geraldine Augusta Baynton Knipe, whom he married in 1872, was a descendant of John Williams, a famous horticulturist who had grown the Pitmaston Duchess Pear and *Pitmaston* was the name of Geraldine's home in Worcester.



Auction Plan of an Estate, Moor Green, 1884.¹¹

The Holders had ten children, six girls, Kathleen, Geraldine, Flora, Edith, Isabella and Gladys and four boys, Alfred, **Henry**, Norman and John, so Henry Holder grew up in a large family on a lovely estate.¹² The Holders were miniature railway enthusiasts fascinated with technology. They built a 10¼ inch gauge railway track around the grounds of the house in

¹¹Library of Birmingham, MS3069/13/2/192.

¹² Ancestry.com., Accessed 25 June 2016, Holder Family

1898 and the then Prince of Wales (Edward VII) rode on the train and burnt his hand by touching the rails. A picture shows some fifteen people sitting on the train with their tennis racquets on the way to the Pitmaston tennis courts.¹³ Holder is quoted in *'The Car'* magazine of 1902:¹⁴

'It is hard to believe that this quiet and delightful retreat is so close to the suburbs of a large manufacturing city like Birmingham.....'Pitmaston' is one of those large estates which have preserved to Moor Green its picturesque aspect... saving them from being devoured by the onward march of the growing city, and its ubiquitous minions of the builder, who swallows up land in the near suburbs by the acre.'

Ironically approximately ten years after his death this was the case with the development of his lands into housing.



¹³*The Model Engineer and Amateur Electrician* magazine, 1902.

¹⁴*The Car* magazine, July 1902, p341





Sir John Charles Holder (1838-1923)

On his death in 1923, Holder's estate was valued at £597,278 16s 5d and this was left to his wife and four sons who survived him.¹⁵ Sir John's widow, Lady Geraldine Holder, went to live near Newbury in Berkshire and she died on the 27th November 1943, aged 98 years, at Bladon House, Newbury, Berkshire leaving £81,302 4s 4d to her son and two daughters and one grand-daughter.¹⁶

For more information on Sir John Holder and 'Pitmaston', please see 'The History of Moor Green Allotments' on our website.

The History of Moor Green House: Up for Auction in 1912.¹⁷

Moor Green House stood on the east side of Moor Green Lane just before its junction with Yew Tree Road. Boundary Drive stands roughly on the site of the original house. *Moor Green House* and Freehold Building Site were put up for auction in December 1912.

The following are some of the particulars prepared for this auction:

¹⁵ Birmingham Probate, 25 July 1923.

¹⁶ Ancestry.com/ Probate Records/ Holder Family.

¹⁷ Birmingham Library Archives, BhamSc/276 Sales Catalogues.



The plan for the auction of Moor Green House in 1912.¹⁸

There were two lots up for sale. Lot 2 is marked out on the plan for building plots, attractive propositions for people moving to Moseley. Note that Sir John Holder owns the section on the corner of Moor Green Lane and Queensbridge Road.

¹⁸Birmingham Library Archives, BhamSc/276 Sales Catalogues.

The Particulars, Lot 1.

MOOR GREEN, MOSELEY.

Moor Green House
AND
Freehold Building Estate

with long Frontages to Yew Tree Road and
Queensbridge Road,

TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION, DECEMBER 12TH, 1912.



The Drive, looking from the House.

Messrs. J. B. CLARKE & CO.,

Solicitors,

40 Waterloo Street, Birmingham.

EDWARDS, SON & BIGWOOD,

Auctioneers and Valuers,

158 Edmund Street, Birmingham,
and 94 High Street, Bromsgrove.

MOOR GREEN, MOSELEY.

The Perfectly Appointed
Freehold Family Residence

KNOWN AS

“MOOR GREEN HOUSE,”

Approached by a long Carriage Drive from Moor Green Lane,
with ORNAMENTAL LODGE at Entrance;
tastefully-laid-out

ORNAMENTAL GARDENS AND GROUNDS;

extensive Walled KITCHEN GARDEN, GREENHOUSES, ample MOTOR
ACCOMMODATION, and nicely Timbered PASTURE LAND,
the whole having an

Area of 5a. 1r. 28p.

ALSO A MOST VALUABLE LEVEL AND ABSOLUTELY RIPE

Freehold Building Estate

adjoining, having Frontages of about 245 yards to YEW TREE ROAD and
270 yards to QUEENSBRIDGE ROAD, and having an

Area of about 6a. 2r. 23p.,

the whole Estate being within $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles of the centre of the City.

EDWARDS, SON & BIGWOOD

are instructed by H. C. HOLDER, Esq., J.P., to SELL THE ABOVE BY AUCTION.

AT THE GRAND HOTEL, COLMORE ROW,

On Thursday, December 12, 1912,

At SEVEN p.m. exactly. Subject to Conditions.

Particulars, with Plans and Photographs, may be had of
Messrs. J. B. CLARKE & CO., Solicitors, 40 Waterloo Street; or with orders to view of the
Auctioneers, 158 Edmund Street, Birmingham, and 94 High Street, Bromsgrove.

General Remarks.

MOOR GREEN HOUSE

occupies a delightful position; it is surrounded by the well-timbered and extensive Grounds of Highbury, Pitmaston, and Moor Green Hall, the residences of the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, M.P., Sir J. C. Holder, Bart., and Arthur Chamberlain, Esquire.

It was built about ten years ago from designs and under the superintendence of Mr. William Henman, and provides ample accommodation and every modern luxury. It has been well maintained, and is in perfect decorative repair.

There is a private Telephone Service from the House to the Lodge and from the House to the Motor Yard.

The House and Buildings are lighted throughout by Electricity.

The Outer Hall, Lounge Hall, Lavatory, Corridors and Landings are heated by Hot Water Radiators.

There is a LIFT running from the Basement to the top of the House.

The House may be Viewed on Tuesdays or Saturdays from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. by cards to be obtained from the Auctioneers.

The purchaser will be required to take certain Fixtures at a Valuation made by the Auctioneers, which may be inspected at their Offices one week before the Sale.

Particulars.

LOT 1.

Moor Green House

is approached from Moor Green Lane by winding Carriage Drive, lighted by Electricity, with an

ORNAMENTAL LODGE at Entrance.

THE ACCOMMODATION comprises:—

On the Ground Floor:

Porch; **Outer or Staircase Hall**, with Cloak Room adjoining; well-fitted Lavatory and w.c.; **Inner Hall, 24 ft. by 16 ft.**, with Enamelled Panelled Walls, handsome Dog Grate in Tiled Alcove, and French Window to Garden. Both Halls have polished Oak Floors.

Study, with door to Verandah, and Photographic Dark Room adjoining, fitted with Washing and Developing Sinks and Water Service.

Drawing Room, 16 ft. by 20 ft., exclusive of large Circular Bay Window and Ingle Nook.

Dining Room, 26 ft. by 18 ft., with Sideboard Recess and Serving Door.

Morning Room, 18 ft. by 16 ft., exclusive of large Circular Bay Window.

The Drawing Room, Hall, Dining Room, and Morning Room all have a south aspect, and are fitted with expensive Wood Chimney Pieces and Well Fires.

Well-fitted Butler's Pantry, with Strong Room, lined with White Glazed Bricks; Housekeeper's Store; Servants' Hall; Kitchen, 17 ft. by 17 ft., with "Eagle" Range, and separate Boiler for heating bath water; Scullery; Pantry; Larder; Knife and Boot House; Servants' w.c.; Coal Place, and Wood House and Perambulator House in enclosed Paved Yard.

On the First Floor:

Approached by an easy, wide, well-lighted Staircase leading from the Outer Hall are **Three Principal Bedrooms**; Two Dressing Rooms; **Day and Night Nursery**; Bath Room fitted with Shower; Lavatory Basin and W.C. The larger Dressing Room is fitted with Bath, Patent Shower and Lavatory Basin.

Four Secondary Bedrooms; Linen Room; Housemaids' Closet; Housemaids' Cupboard with draw-off taps; well-lighted Workshop, 18 ft. by 14 ft.

On the Second Floor:

Four Bedrooms; Large Enamelled Wardrobe Cupboard on Landing; Large Box Room and Cistern Room.

In Basement: Well-fitted Ale and Wine Cellars.

The Entrance Lodge

contains Hall; Sitting Room; Kitchen and Scullery; Pantry; Coalhouse and W.C.; Three Bed Rooms and Bath Room.

The Grounds

are extensive and well laid out, and comprise **FULL-SIZE TENNIS COURT**, several well-shrubbed Ornamental Lawns; Rose Garden; and most productive Walled Kitchen Garden.

In the Garden are **Peach House** with Three Span-Roof **Greenhouses** running off it, and a smaller Greenhouse (by Boulton & Paul); ranges of Four-light Forcing Frames; Cold Frames; Brick-built Potting House and Heating Chamber.

There is a Modern Building, formerly a Generating House for Electric Light, now used as Carpenter's Shop and Store Rooms.

In the **Stable Yard** are **Mess Room** fitted with Lavatory Basin; **Motor House** with concrete floor and pit, and Wood and Glass Extension forming Washing Place; **Old Cottage** adjoining; Range of useful Garden Stores; a detached **Motor House** (by Boulton & Paul), with wood floor and zinc roof; Wood Shed; Dog Kennel and Run; and a third **Motor House** with concrete floor, and Wood and Glass Extension for washing purposes. The three Motor Houses are each fitted with patent Gas Heating Apparatus and Piping.

The Estate has an Area of 5a. 1r. 28p.



The Drive Looking from the House



The North Front



The South Front



A corner of the Inner Hall

Details of the Freehold Building Estate, Lot 2.

A MOST VALUABLE LEVEL AND
ABSOLUTELY RIPE
Freehold Building Estate

charmingly situated at MOOR GREEN,
ADJOINING LOT 1,
with

Frontages of about 245 yards to Yew Tree Road and
270 yards to Queensbridge Road

PLANTED WITH SHRUBS, NOW WELL GROWN, having an

**Area of about 6 a. 2 r. 23 p.,
or 32,156 square yards.**

The Other Buildings in the Fields comprise :—**Six-Tie Cowhouse, Fodder Store, and Calving Pen.**

The whole Estate can be developed without any road-making, and a suggested method is shewn on the Sale Plan.

The only building restriction is the nominal one that private houses of at least £400 cost per house shall be erected, except that no house to cost less than £650 shall be erected on the building plot fronting to Yew Tree Road, immediately adjoining Lot 1, as shewn on the suggested method for development of the Estate.

*This is without doubt the choicest Residential Building Estate
to be found within $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles of the centre of the City.*

The History of Moor Green House: WWI and its aftermath

During the First World War the house was used as a hostel for Belgian refugees. Rev. Father G. Veracx, Moor Green House, Moseley, Birmingham was a Belgian refugee priest resident and working at Moor Green House.¹⁹ Then Moor Green House was a military hospital, as an annexe to Highbury, and became designated the 4th Auxiliary Hospital, Moseley.



Moor Green House and Belgian Refugees.²⁰

The History of Moor Green House: the 21st century

Britannic Assurance Chief Office block was converted into luxury private flats.

If you have any memories of Moor Green House and Estate or Britannic's Chief Office, please contact us.

Janet Berry

¹⁹ The Tablet, Saturday January 30 1915, p.161

²⁰ LB, MS, 2724/2/B/3489, WK/M6/82.