

Webb, Philip Speakman 1831 - 1915



Philip Speakman Webb [commonly known as Philip Webb] was born in Oxford, England on 12 January 1831 and was the son of Thomas Webb, a medallist. He was articled to John Billing (1816-1863) in Reading, Berkshire from 1849 to 1852 and remained with him as his assistant until 1854. After leaving Billing, he worked briefly with the Wolverhampton firm Bidlake & Lovatt in Wolverhampton before returning to Oxford where he was employed as chief clerk in the office of George Edmund Street (1824-1881). Here he met William Morris (1834-1896) one of Street's pupils. The pair formed a lasting friendship.

In August 1856 Street relocated his practice to London. Webb and Morris moved with him. In London where they both became closely associated with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and their circle.

In 1859 Morris commissioned Webb to design him a house. Built in Upton, near Bexleyheath, Kent, the Red House (1859), as it came to be known, with its radical and innovative features, established Webb's reputation as an architect. Soon after designing the Red House, Webb left Street and set up his own practice at 7 Ormond Street, London. Over the coming years he had no shortage of clients, receiving several commissions from artist friends. In 1864 Webb moved his practice to Raymond Building, Gray's Inn, London where he remained for the rest of his career as an architect.

In 1861 Webb became a founding partner in Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co., a furnishing and decorating firm with premises at 8 Lion Square in London, England.

Other partners in the enterprise were Morris, Peter Paul Marshall (1830-1900), Charles Faulkner (1832-1892), and the artists Edward Burne-Jones (1833-1898), Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882) and Ford Madox Brown (1821-1893). Webb's role in the firm seems to have been securing clients. He also designed interiors, fireplaces, metalware, wallpaper and embroidery, stained glass and much of the furniture for the company.

Webb shared William Morris's concern for the often irreparable damage being done by the poor restoration of early buildings, particularly churches, by some architects and together they founded the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) in 1877. Consequently through the activities of the Society, Webb is considered to have been a seminal figure in the history of building conservation.

Webb was a member of the Arts & Crafts Exhibition Society and participated in their 1st (1888), 3rd (1890), 4th (1893), 5th (1896), 6th (1899), and (posthumously) 11th (1916) exhibitions in London.

Webb retired in January 1901 and handed over his practice to his chief assistant, George Jack (1855-1931). By then commissions were beginning to dry up and he was suffering from poor health. He moved to Caxton, a sixteenth-century yeoman's cottage in Worth, near Crawley, Sussex where he died on 17 April 1915.

Worked in

UK

Works

In addition to the Red House (1859), it is calculated that Webb designed 35 complete buildings, plus some minor cottages [source: Sheila Kirk, DNB]. These included Sandroyd in Cobham, Surrey (1860-64) for John Rodham Spencer Stanhope (1829-1908); a terrace of dwellings, workshops, and shops, for craftsmen at 91-101 Worship Street, London, 1861-63); 1 Holland Park Road, London (1865) for Valentine Cameron Prinsep (1838-1904); Arisaig House in Arisaig, Highland Scotland (1863); Heathfield Church of England Primary School in Old Heathfield, East Sussex (1864); Red Barns House in Redcar, Yorkshire (1868); 19 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London (1868); 1 Palace Green, London (1868-74); The West House, 35 Glebe Place, Chelsea, London (1869) for George Price Boyce; Joldwynds, Holmbury St Mary, Surrey (1872-75, demolished 1930); Rounton Grange in East Rounton (1873-76, demolished early 1950s); Smeaton Manor in Great Smeaton, Yorkshire (1877-79); St Martin's Church, Brampton, Cumberland (1878); Clouds in East Knoyle, Wiltshire (1881-86, designed 1877-81, partly

demolished in 1938); Coneyhurst in Ewhurst, Surrey (1884–85); Forthampton Court in Forthampton, Gloucestershire (1889–92); Offices for Bell & Co Ltd. in Middlesbrough (1891); and Standen in East Grinstead, West Sussex, (1892–94).

See also:

[British Listed Buildings](#)

[Historic England](#) - contains over 120 entries on Philip Webb

Source of Images

[RIBApix](#)

Bibliography

Armstrong, Barrie and Armstrong, Wendy. The Arts and Crafts movement in the North East of England: a handbook. Wetherby, England: Oblong, 2013

Armstrong, Barrie and Armstrong, Wendy. The Arts and Crafts movement in the North West of England: a handbook. Wetherby,. England: Oblong, 2006

Barman, Christian. 'Philip Webb'. Royal Institute of British Architects Journal vol. 42, 25 May 1935 pp. 832-833 [A review of Philip Webb and His Webb and His Work by W. R. Lethaby (1935)]

Brandon-Jones. 'Letters of Philip Webb and his contemporaries'. Architectural History vol. 8, 1965 pp.52-72

Brandon-Jones, John. 'Notes on the building of Smeaton Manor'. Architectural History vol. 1, 1958 pp.31-60 [Smeaton Manor in Great Smeaton, Yorkshire was designed by Webb and built between 1877 and 1879]

Brandon-Jones, John. 'Philip Webb' in Victorian Architecture, edited by Peter Ferriday. London: Jonathan Cape, 1963 pp. 247-264

Brandon-Jones, John 'The Work of Philip Webb and Norman Shaw'. Architectural Association Journal vol. 71 (1955), pp. 9–21, 40–47

Briggs, Martin S. 'Lethaby, Webb and Morris: exhibition of their work at the RIBA'. The Builder vol. 178, 24 February 1950 pp. 254-255

Burman, Peter. 'A Stern Thinker and Most Able Constructor': Philip Webb, Architect'. Architectural History vol. 42, 1999 pp. 1-23

Burman, Peter 'Defining a body of tradition : Philip Webb' in From William Morris: Building Conservation and the Arts and Crafts Cult of Authenticity, 1877-1939. Edited by Christopher E. Miele. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005 pp. 67-99

Cooper, Nicholas. 'Red House: some architectural histories'. Architectural History vol. 49, 2006 pp.207-221

Coupe, Robert L. M.; Wilson, Martin; and Coupe, Philip MacLeod. 'The building contract for the Red House'. The William Morris Society Newsletter Summer 2012 pp. 9-12

Dakers, Caroline. 'Castles in the Air: Philip Webb's Rejected Commission for the Earl and Countess of Airlie'. Architectural History vol. 43, 2000 pp.271-280

Directory of British Architects 1834-1914. Compiled by Antonia Brodie, et al. Volume 2: L-Z. London; New York: British Architectural Library, Royal Institute of British Architects/Continuum, 2001

Drury, Michael. 'William Morris and Philip Webb'. in From William Morris: Building Conservation and the Arts and Crafts Cult of Authenticity, 1877-1939. Edited by Christopher E. Miele. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005 pp. 159-186

Ellwood, Giles. 'Three tables by Philip Webb'. Furniture History vol. 32, 1996 pp.127-140

Girouard, Mark. 'Standen, Sussex'. Country Life vol. 147, 26 February 1970 pp. 494-497 [Part one of a two part article on Standen, a country house in East Grinstead, East Sussex designed by Webb and built between 1892 and 1894]

Girouard, Mark. 'Standen, Sussex'. Country Life vol. 147, 5 March 1970 pp. 554-557 [Part two of a two part article on Standen, a country house in East Grinstead, East Sussex designed by Webb and built between 1892 and 1894]

Girouard, Mark. 'The Victorian artist at home'. Country Life vol. 152, 16 November 1972 pp. 1278-1281 [Two houses designed by Webb for artists are discussed - 1 Holland Park Road, London (1865) for Valentine Cameron Prinsep; and The West House, 35 Glebe Place, Chelsea, London (1869) for George Price Boyce]

Girouard, Mark. The Victorian Country House. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, revised and enlarged edition, 1979.

Hamilton, Alec. Arts & Crafts Churches. London: Lund Humphries, 2020

Handley-Read, Charles. 'Jubilee Pyramid'. *Architectural Review* vol. 137, March 1965 pp. 234-236 [Discusses proposals by Webb to build a pyramid in Trafalgar Square, London to mark Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887]

Hart, Lillas MacBean. *The Architecture of Philip Webb*. M.A. thesis, Smith College, Northampton, Mass., 1995

Hollamby, Edward. *Red House*. London: Architecture & Design Technology Press, 1991
Jack, George. 'An appreciation of Philip Webb' in *Edwardian Architecture and its Origins*. Edited by Alastair Service.

Jack, George. 'An appreciation of Philip Webb' *Architectural Review* vol. 38, July 1915 pp. 1-6 [Reprinted in *Edwardian Architecture and its Origins*. Edited by Alastair Service. London: The Architectural Press Ltd., 1975 pp. 16-25]

Kirk, Sheila. *Philip Webb: Pioneer of Arts & Crafts*. London: Academy Editions, 2005

Kirk, Sheila. *Philip Webb (1831-1915) : Domestic Architecture*. PhD Thesis, Newcastle University, 1990

Lambourne, Lionel. *Utopian Craftsmen. The Arts and Crafts Movement from the Cotswolds to Chicago*. London: Astragal Books, 1980

Lethaby, W. R. *Philip Webb and His Work*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935

Morris, G. 'On Mr. Philip Webb's town work'. *Architectural Review* vol. 2, 1897 pp. 199-208

'Obituary'. *Architectural Review* vol. 37, June 1915 p. 122

'Obituary'. *The Builder* vol. 108, April 1915 p. 374

'Obituary'. *Country Life* vol. 37, 1915 p. 618

'Obituary'. *Royal Institute of British Architects Journal* vol. 22, 1915 pp. 312, 339-341, 344, 369, 395

Originality and initiative: the Arts and Crafts archives at Cheltenham. Edited by Mary Greensted and Sophie Wilson. Cheltenham, England: Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museums in association with Lund Humphries, 2003

Pite, Beresford. 'A review of the tendencies of the modern school of architecture: the influence of William Butterfield and Mr. Philip Webb'. Royal Institute of British Architects Journal vol. 8, 1900-01 pp. 89-90

Rooke, Noel. 'The work of Lethaby, Webb and Morris'. RIBA Journal vol. 57, March 1950 pp. 167-175

Rudoe, Judy and Coutts, Howard. 'The table glass designs of Philip Webb and T. G. Jackson for James Powell & Sons, Whitefriars Glassworks'. The Journal of the Decorative Arts Society 1850 - the Present no. 16, 1992 pp.24-41

Sander, Benjamin. Die Möbel Philip Speakman Webbs oder Das Verhältnis von Kunst und Arbeit bei Morris & Co. Dissertation, Göttingen Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Göttingen, 2020 [Text in German. Translation of title: The furniture by Philip Speakman Webb or The relationship between art and labour at Morris & Co.]

Smith, Helen. 'Philip Webb's Restoration of Forthampton Court, Gloucestershire '. Architectural nHistory vol. 24, 1981 pp. 92-102, 159

Stamp, Gavin. The English House 1860-1914. Catalogue of an exhibition of photographs and drawings. London: International Architect and the Building Centre Trust, 1980 pp. 10-11

Webb, Philip. The Letters of Philip Webb volume I: 1864-1887. Edited by John Asplin. London: Routledge, 2015

Webb, Philip. The Letters of Philip Webb volume II: 1888-1898. Edited by John Asplin. London: Routledge, 2015

Webb, Philip. The Letters of Philip Webb volume III: 1899-1902. Edited by John Asplin. London: Routledge, 2015

Webb, Philip. The Letters of Philip Webb volume IV: 1888-1898. Edited by John Asplin. London: Routledge, 2015

Wilson, Arnold. 'A Philip Webb cabinet in the William Morris Gallery'. The William Morris Society Newsletter Spring 2005 pp. 6-8

Links

- Historic England - contains over 120 entries on Philip Webb

<https://historicengland.org.uk/sitesearch?searchType=site&search=%22Philip%20Webb%22>

- Sheila Kirk, 'Webb, Philip Speakman (1831-1915)', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004 [Subscription service]

<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36801>

- Sheila Kirk. Philip [Phillippe] (Speakman) Webb. Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online [Subscription service]

<http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T090917?q=webb%20philip>

- Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philip_Webb

- Victoria & Albert Museum, London. Philip Webb: a new vision for domestic space

<https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/philip-webb-a-new-vision-for-domestic-space>

- The Victorian Web <https://victorianweb.org/art/architecture/webb/>

- Museum of Modern Art, New York <https://www.moma.org/artists/25138>

- National Art Library Catalogue <https://nal->

[vam.on.worldcat.org/search?sortKey=LIBRARY&databaseList=&queryString=%22philip%2](http://www.worldcat.org/search?sortKey=LIBRARY&databaseList=&queryString=%22philip%2)

- artnet <http://www.artnet.com/artists/philip-webb/>

- Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. William Morris & Philip Webb

<https://www.spab.org.uk/about-us/william-morris-philip-webb>

- Britannica <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Philip-Speakman-Webb>

- ThoughtCo. <https://www.thoughtco.com/philip-webb-architect-and-designer-177879>

- National Trust. Philip Webb at Red House <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/red-house/features/red-house-architect-philip-webb>

- Jisc Archives Hub <https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/search/archives/fa702053-d97a-3a8a-87be-01952433b451>

- The Victorian Society <https://www.victoriansociety.org.uk/publications/our-membership-magazine-the-victorian/philip-webb-a-centenary-celebration>

- The Metropolitan Museum of Art - the Backgammon Players, 1861. Philip Webb

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/195456>

- V&A Images

<https://www.vandaimages.com/results.asp?cat1=Philip%20Webb%20&X8=2-35>

- Wikimedia Commons https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Philip_Webb

- YouTube. Red House (part one)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dn1PHpfshok>

- YouTube. Red House (part two)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V12bcQlclBU>

- YouTube. GB The Red House - Philip Webb and William Morris

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q5z-pl2GxC0>

- RIBApix

<https://www.ribapix.com/search?adv=false&cid=0&mid=0&vid=0&q=%22Philip%20Webb>

- British Listed Buildings <https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/site-search/?q=Philip%20Webb>

- ART UK <https://artuk.org/discover/artists/webb-philip-18311915>