

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 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

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Links

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- 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>
- Great Buildings Online http://www.greatbuildings.com/architects/philip_webb.html
- 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>
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- Country Life Picture Library <https://www.futurecontenthub.com/search/keyword:%22Philip%20Webb%22>
- RIBApix <https://www.ribapix.com/search?adv=false&cid=0&mid=0&vid=0&q=%22Philip%20Webb>
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- ART UK <https://artuk.org/discover/artists/webb-philip-18311915>