

Harper, James Alfred Henry 1866 - 1952

James Alfred Henry Harper [commonly known as J. Alfred Harper and as J. Alfd Harper] was born in Aston, Warwickshire, England on 11 January 1866. He trained as an architect in the practice of his brother Ewen Harper (1853-1920) in Birmingham. He also attended Birmingham School of Art where he won a number of prizes.

In 1897 he formed a partnership with his brother, [Ewen Harper](#) (1853-1920) as [Ewen & J. Alfred Harper](#) [also known as Ewen Harper, Brother & Co.] in Birmingham.

The Harper brothers were fervent Methodists and in addition to designing a wide range of commercial, industrial, public and domestic buildings, were responsible for designing a large number of non-conformist churches. Most of the practice's work was in the Birmingham area. Notable among their projects was the Methodist Central Hall in Birmingham in 1900-03.

Ewen Harper died in 1920. The year before, he had retired and his son, Leonard Ewen Harper (1886-1954) had joined the practice which continued as Ewen Harper, Brother & Co.

The dissolution of the partnership was announced in The London Gazette, 5 October 1937 p.6177 and it was stated that "Leonard Ewen Harper F.R.I.B.A. will continue to practise for commercial and other work under the old firm name of 'Ewen Harper Brother & Co.' at Ruskin Chambers 191 Corporation Street Birmingham as heretofore, who will shortly take into partnership his Sons Bernard Ivan Harper and Dennis Rosslyn Harper. James Alfred Henry Harper (the Senior Partner in the old firm) and his Son Walter Geoffrey Harper will continue to practice from the 30th September at Union Chambers, Temple Row, Birmingham under the style of 'J. Alfred Harper & Son.'"

James Alfred Henry Harper died in Birmingham on 24 December 1952.

Worked in
UK
Works

Works by Ewen & J. Alfred Harper: 32 houses in Cuckoo Road, Aston, Birmingham for Mr. Birkenhead (1875); 32 houses and retail shop, Ickenfield Street and

Tindale Street, Birmingham for Mr. Taylor (1875); Variety Works, Frederick Street, Birmingham 1881);

School in Carlyle Road, Edgbaston for Wesleyan Church (1884); 22 houses in Coventry Road, Birmingham (1887); Factory, Rupert Street, Birmingham for Joseph Stevens (1887); Rolling mill, Montgomery Street, Sparkhill, Birmingham for W. & G. Johnson & Co. (1887); Nurse's house and extension for Queen's Hospital, Birmingham (1888); Wesleyan Chapel, Willenhall (1889); Shop and warehouse, Great King Street for Joseph & Son Ltd. (1889); Hart Memorial United Methodist Chapel, Gravelly Hill, Birmingham (1890); 26 houses in Reservoir Road, Edgbaston (1890); Extension to Assay Office, Newhall Street, Birmingham (1890); Wesleyan Chapel, Pershore Road, King's Norton (1891); 36 houses in Brunswick Road, Birmingham (1892); Extensions to St. Agnes Church, St. Agnes Road, Moseley, Birmingham (1893); Offices, sheds, engine house and chimney stack, Dale End, Birmingham for The Electric Supply Co. (1894); Baptist Church, The Green, Stafford, Staffordshire (1895); Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Waterloo Road, Smethwick (1896); Factory at Great King Street and Burbury Street, Birmingham for Joseph Lucas & Son (1896); Offices and warehouses, Newhall Street, Water Street and Parker Street, Birmingham for the Electric Supply Co. (1896); Headless Cross Wesleyan Methodist Church, Redditch, Worcestershire (1887); Sunday School, Buck Street, Birmingham for the Trustees of the Wesleyan Central Mission (1897); Mission Hall for Adult Schools, Farm Street, Hockley (1897); Friend's Institute, Moseley Road, Balsall Heath for Richard Cadbury (1897); Birmingham Town Mission, Tindal Street, Birmingham, Birmingham (1897); Bournville Almshouses, Mary Vale Road for Richard Cadbury (1897); Ruskin Buildings, Corporation Street, Birmingham for Ewen Harper & Brothers (1899); King Edward's Building, Corporation Street, Birmingham for John Hawkins & Sons (1901); Premises for Wesleyan Assurance Co., Steelhouse Lane, Birmingham (1901); Generating Station, Summer Lane, Birmingham for the Electric Supply Co. (1902); Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Llandrindod Wells, Wales (1903); Methodist New Connection Church, Blackheath, Rowley Regis, Staffordshire (1904); New premises in Warstone Lane, Birmingham for Joseph Walker (1904); Business premises, Moor Street, Birmingham for Halford Cycles (1904); Workshops for the Bromsgrove Guild, Station Street, Bromsgrove (1904-08); Factory, Brook Street and Newhall Street, Birmingham for Baker & Finnemore (1911); Premises, Bagot Street, Birmingham for Austin Motors (1914); ; Premises, Camden Street, Birmingham for Hudson Cycle Co. (1915); Premises, Aston Church Road, Aston, Birmingham for Electricity Supply Co. (1915); and Aeroplane factory, Ryder Street, Birmingham for Harris & Sheldon.

Bibliography

Harper, Michael and Shackley, Barbara. 'Ewen and J. Alfred Harper' in Birmingham's Victorian and Edwardian Architects, edited by Phillada Ballard. Wetherby, Yorkshire: Oblong Creative for the Birmingham and West Midlands Group of the Victorian Society, 2009 pp. 323-338

Links

- The Victorian Web <https://victorianweb.org/art/architecture/birmingham/3.html>
- Historic England - 46 Frederick Street, Birmingham
<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1391272>
- Historic England - Derwent House, Birmingham
<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1391311>
- Historic England Assay House, Birmingham
<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1392798>
- RIBA https://www.ribapix.com/former-methodist-central-hall-birmingham_riba47288