

## **BRICK NOT STUCCO IN LEAMINGTON SPA**

### **BUILDINGS NOTES**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

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Douglas Hickman wrote that Leamington is 'an elegant Regency watering place with tall stucco terraces' but the stucco frontages hide buildings which were constructed of red brick, and most of them have red brick or common brick visible on the gables and the side and back walls.

The town was a mere village on the south bank of the River Leam in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: the hearth tax in 1663 recorded 46 houses (29 payers, 17 exempt); in 1730 there were 45 families and even in the 1801 census 67 houses with 315 inhabitants. With the development of the natural spring after 1815, the population had reached 12,841 in 1841 and was 22,979 in 1881, a figure around which it remained until after the Great War. In the late 1940s, the population was 45,000 people, remaining the same until the mid-1960s.

The formal name of the town became Royal Leamington Spa in 1838; granted by Queen Victoria: as Princess Victoria, the new queen had visited in 1830 and she would come again in 1858. Her uncle, the Prince Regent (later King George IV) had visited in September 1819, staying at the newly-built Williams Hotel, renamed with his permission 'The Regent Hotel': it retains his arms above the doorway on Livesey Place, north of the Town Hall.

Leamington is laid out as a grid, virtually north-south and east-west. The Parade, the main shopping street from the Victoria Bridge runs almost due north. The north side of the river and part of the south side is given over to attractive gardens: Jephson Gardens to the east, Pump Room Gardens to the west, facing Dormer Place.

#### **CHURCHES**

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*Note:* These notes include buildings associated with a particular church site such as vicarages (or equivalent) and schoolrooms. They are given in approximate order of viewing.

- 1. *Congregational Chapel, Spencer Street*                      1836                      John Russell**
  - Stucco front is very grand; pediment above four unfluted Ionic columns, with two unfluted Ionic columns behind; the latter in front of pilasters and sharing the same cemented base. Front has rounded-headed windows either side of the portico.
  - Orange-brown brick in Flemish Bond to side walls. Series of six recessed areas enclosing recessed, round-headed, sash windows. Extensive basement used as a day school from 1840 onwards. Rear wall with four (now blank) window arches.
  - Small low schoolroom of six bays behind chapel.
  - Two further buildings in Spencer's Yard behind. To west, single storey building of eight bays with high level windows; common brick in English Bond. To north, a two storey building, now used as offices; common brick in English Bond. Five broad bays, centre one wider than the others. Modern entry to west.
  
- 2. *St Peter, (R.C.), Dormer Place*                      1861-65                      Henry Clutton**
  - The Roman Catholics originally had premises on Clement Street, moving in 1826 to a chapel on George Street, in 1965 in use as Leamington Youth Mission. The church

obtained a large plot on the north side of Pump Room Gardens before 1828, when a new church designed by John Russell was built; in the 1860s the church commissioned a new building from Henry Clutton.

- South-west porch tower, nave with low aisles and prominent clerestory; transepts, sanctuary in broad apse. Early English style; single lancet windows; rose window in both transepts and at west end; apse has five tall windows, each of two lancets under a circular one. Much stone used for all window surrounds.
- Tower of five stages, lowest three plain, arched decoration on fourth stage; belfry louvres on fifth stage. Square spire on tower now taken down.
- Red brick, in English Bond in the tower; Flemish Bond in the body of the church.
- Adjacent presbytery: two-storeys, red brick in Flemish Bond. Double windows on first floor divided by pillar. Four bays, single window above the doorway.

### **3. *Former Chapel, 18 Augusta Place***

- Now in commercial use. Stucco front; side wall, red brick in English Garden Wall Bond: three rows of stretchers to each row of headers. Six bays, of paired lancets at first floor level above tall paired windows. Prominent buttresses.
- Former minister's house next door, brick, stucco now whitewashed, with shop in front of it.

### **4. *St Mark, Rugby Road*                      1879                      George Gilbert Scott the younger**

- A big church; built for new parish at New Milverton on north side of existing town.
- West tower; five bay nave with aisles and tall clerestory; south transept; north transeptal chapel overlaps final bay of nave and first bay of chancel; 3-bay chancel slightly higher than the nave.
- Details derived from Decorated precedents.
- Goodhart-Rendel thought this was the best of the younger Scott's few works. It was designed before the architect converted to the Roman Catholic faith.
- Good interior: arches fade into lozenge-shaped piers; good roofs.
- Red brick in English Bond.
- Much stone; banding in the tower and main body of the church. Tower has two sets of pinnacles. Top of tower is virtually all stone for belfry stage and above.
- Associated vicarage, of similar date, also by Scott, now flats and grounds given over to mews houses; vicar lives in modern house between church and old vicarage. Old Vicarage is double pile house, main doors to south and west; service wing to north.

### **6. *St Paul, Leicester Street*                      1873-84                      John Cundall**

- From the west, integrated complex of vicarage, church rooms, modern entrance, and church line the south side of Leicester Street.
- Church is nave with aisles and clerestory; transepts; short chancel; big porch tower with stone steeple on north side; also curious north-east porch tower with circular spike supported on band of columns forming an octagon on acircular drum of brick above a square entry. Much use of buttresses.
- Red brick in English Bond. Bands of black brick.
- Transepts have round windows of stone above three lancets. Five-light Decorated window at east end. Clerestory has paired windows.
- Church rooms and vicarage have linked porch.

### **7. *Baptist Church, Chandos Street/Guy Place***

- Large multi-purpose building in pinky-brown rustic bricks in Stretcher Bond.

### **8. Former Congregational Chapel, Holly Walk 1847-50**

- Foundation stone 18 April 1847; building commenced March 1850 when Rev Henry Bachelor was pastor.
- In use a Congregational chapel for a generation, then became St Luke's church for the Church of England. Now converted to office use; given award for conversion 1991.
- Red brick with all-over diaper in black headers. Flemish Bond, modified for the diaper.
- Large school room at back of trapezoidal site.

## **EDUCATIONAL BUILDINGS**

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*Note:* Includes structures built for educational purposes, now in other uses.  
Again in approximate order of viewing.

### **1. St Peter's Roman Catholic Schools 1879**

- On cramped site. Now includes house to south.
- School building with prominent gable with broad traceried window; red brick in English Bond but with black brick used as consecration crosses. Diaper is painted on, possibly replacing original black headers.
- House, early C19, red brick in Flemish Bond.

### **2. Milverton County Primary School 1892 and 1897**

- Arts and Crafts influenced building (Westgate Primary School, Warwick, is similar)
- Earlier building, 1892, for over sevens entry at either end for each gender (School leaving age was then eleven; raised to twelve in that year).
- Later building, 1897, master's house with infants school attached.
- Tall windows to main halls; cupolas originally with equipment to control air flow.
- Both buildings, red brick in English Bond.

### **3. Former Leamington College, Binswood Avenue 1847-48 Douglas Goodman Squirhill**

- In 2013 being converted in Luxury retirement complex, using Northcot brick.
- As a school building has complex history:
- 1848-1902 functioned as private school, Leamington College; alumni include the author Lytton Stratchey.
- 1903-1916 Convent of the Society of the Sacred Heart.
- 1916-1921 used by Dover College (independent boys' school) when evacuated.
- 1922-1977 Leamington College for Boys (state grammar school); alumni include Frank Whittle, inventor of the jet engine, who was a pupil first at the Avenue Road site and then here from 1918 to 1923.
- 1977-c.2010 Sixth Form Centre of North Leamington School
- Original building has turrets at the ends with row of 5 large windows in Perpendicular style and a blank bay at either end. This was the school hall.
- Red brick with all over diaper. Buttresses edged with stone blocks.
- Later buildings on site behind.
- (see also former Public Library)

### **4. Kingsley School for Girls, Beauchamp Avenue**

- Utilises existing houses on north side for the preparatory school and the sixth-form centre; main school on south side has purpose-built structures, mainly of stone.
- Houses in Arts-and-Crafts style.

**5. Former Municipal Technical School, Leicester Street 1894**

(in hollow beyond St Paul's church)

- Red brick. Broad windows with stone lintels.
- Surrounding walls to Leicester Street have several courses and toppings of black bricks.
- Building now in other use.

**6. Former St Paul's Schools, Holly Walk**

- Two storeys to street front; single-storey to rear. Front portion six bays of single windows on ground floor, tall paired windows on first floor. Entry in westernmost bay.
- Red brick. Big window at north end of gabled wing.

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**BUILDINGS FOR LEISURE ACTIVITIES**

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**1. The Baths Assembly Hall, Spencer Street 1926**

- Tall centre, originally with later lower wings; east wing rebuilt; straight joint between main structure and west wing.
- Bright red brick, Flemish Bond.
- Much stone in frontage, At apex of gable stone figure holding golden ball/globe/sun.
- Fenestration original, Art Deco influenced, vaguely Jazz Moderne.
- Gables to centre and west wing both in brown brick. West wing gable has decoration of diamond pattern in raised headers.
- West wing has canopy of brightly coloured glass.

**2. Former Cinema, now Evolve night club and Bizz fitness centre, Spencer Street circa 1930**

- Frontage of dark brown brick in Flemish Bond with three stretchers to every header. Rusticated corners and to centre feature of three recessed windows, with arched tops.
- Side walls of common brick in same Flemish Bond. Good quality brown brick used to define two panels on side wall and a window flanked by two bricked -up outlets for air conditioning.

**3. Manor House, Spencer Street**

- Lawn Tennis was first played in the grounds of the building in 1872; the players were Major Thomas Henry Gem of Leamington Spa and Senhor Batista Periera, a merchant from Spain.
- Building incorporates older house, to rear of main block facing the street. Older house had pretensions to be the Manor House for Old Leamington.
- It was an hotel from 1847 to circa 2006, except for a period in the nineteenth century when it was occupied by a school.
- Building is 'High Victorian Gothic' to quote Nikolaus Pevsner. Asymmetric façade of six bays.
- Red brick in Flemish Bond.

**4. Apollo Cinema, Portland Place East and Dormer Place**

- Portland Place East has an auditorium with cemented tripartite front to street, built as the 'Regal' in 1931 but from external appearance very much in the style used for cinemas before 1914. However, old photographs show Jazz Moderne fenestration in the doorways to Portland Place East. These are now blocked. Entry at Portland Place

was level with the balcony; site slopes and stalls were below on level of Dormer Place.

- Entry now faces street corner.
- Long frontage in tile to Augusta Place with pillar bearing name flanked by curved work in square-shaped glass bricks.
- Dormer Place has half-hexagonal extension in red brick in English Bond.

#### **5. *Real Tennis Court, Bedford Street***

- Visible from car park; characteristic tall windows of a real tennis court; club premises face Bedford Street.
- Common brick in English Bond to gable wall.

#### **6. *Royal Spa Centre***

- Modern complex of cinema auditoria, restaurant, swimming pool. Opened in 1972.

### **SHOPS**

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#### **1. *Denby Buildings, Regent Grove* 1885                      ?John Cundall**

- Purpose-built group of twelve shops with two floors of 24 self-contained flats above.
- Ground floor a series of shop windows in grey stone.
- Red brick used for first floor but with stone used for mullions and transoms of windows.
- End bays have circular tower with conical top. Here the bricks below first floor windows have rising spiral decoration; the specials have 45 degree ridge rising from left bottom corner to centre of top. Above upper window is portion with bricks with pyramidal extrusion.
- Mansard rooms, with lower front portion tile hung; windows here are within stone gables.
- Rear elevation is three floors all of brick.
- Extension northward done in 2000s.

### **CIVIC BUILDINGS**

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#### **1. *Former Public Library, Avenue Road* 1902    J. Mitchell Bottomley of Leeds**

- Built as the 'Municipal Schools and Public Library'.
- Cost £16,000. Builder was Richard Bowen of Leamington Spa.
- Front two-thirds, basically two storeys to Avenue Road, was the public library on the ground floor and a School of Art on the first floor; rear third was the Secondary Schools (= state grammar schools) and the Technical School. Architect's drawing shows solid wall between library and classrooms. The two schools shared staff and after 1902 the headmaster of the Technical School, Mr Mellows, was in charge of both the grammar school and technical instruction (common in new state grammar schools). Progressively the schools moved out:
  - 1922 Boys grammar school to Leamington College premises on Binswood Avenue.
  - 1959 Girls grammar school to new premises, Leamington College for Girls on Cloister Way., now part of North Leamington School.
    - The Technical School and the School of Art became Mid-Warwickshire College, now Warwickshire College.
- Building is described by Nikolaus Pevsner as 'nothing special'.
- Closed as Library, Museum and Art Gallery in 1999 after refurbishment of Pump Rooms.

- In 2000s., used as annex by Warwickshire College (FE); in March 2013 being re-roofed, so covered in scaffolding.
- Red brick, probably Accrington or Ruabon, and much red terracotta, both plain and decorative; main entrance with large-scale terracotta hood. Red brick is in English Bond
- Front of library has central gable triangular, with half-round gables either side. Each with much terracotta ornament. Rear elevation has central pair of triangular gables flanked by curved gables; octagonal turrets at either end. From fenestration, rear first floor shows balance and symmetry. Much terracotta employed on ground and first floors. Extensive basement floor with plain fenestration. Extension to east for Art Gallery. 1928, cruciform and top-lighted. Art Gallery in lighter brick, in Flemish Bond.

## 2. *St Peter's Multi-storey Car Park, Augusta Place (entrance)*

- Four floors, walls are red brick in Stretcher Bond. First floor is marked by pair of soldier courses.
- Openings paired grills and round arches; bricks edging these are chamfered.
- False front: two arches within wall three bricks thick; arches have keystones.

## 3. *Town Hall, Parade*

**1883-84**

**James Cundall**

- Leamington Spa became a municipal borough in 1875, having had a Board of Health since 1852, succeeding the Paving, Lighting and Improvement Commissioners, in place from 1825.
- Borough extended to include Lillington and Milverton, both to north of town, in 1890.
- Grand building, designed to overawe the populace.
- West front symmetrical with bold porch; to rear on Regent Grove is large tower with domed top, vaguely Baroque in inspiration.
- Red brick in Flemish Bond and much grey-brown stone for porch, as window surrounds, as gables on west front. Standard of bricklaying is high throughout, even on rear where common brick is used.
- North side of seven bays with plain bay at either end. Five central bays have large curved windows on first floor. These light first-floor assembly room; latter was refurbished in 1934.
- West front gables are asymmetric: six pillars in north gable, five in south one. North window three arched windows; south window has central semi-circular section.
- Much stained glass used throughout.
- Balcony used for declaration of elections and civic events; Randolph Turpin (1928-1966) appeared on the balcony in 1951 following the civic reception given to him after he became World Middleweight Boxing Champion, defeating the American Sugar Ray Robinson.

## **TRANSPORT**

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- The River Leam was not canalised and indeed has several weirs.
- In the 1830s, Leamington was a major coaching centre on the London to Birmingham, Liverpool and Manchester routes. There were also coaches to/from Oxford, Bath, Cheltenham, Coventry, and Leicester.
- The Warwick and Napton Canal (later part of the Grand Union Canal) arrived in 1818.
- Bridges over the canal on Tachbrook Road and Warwick Old Road are in blue engineering brick.

- First railway in 1839, the Leamington to Coventry line built by the London and Birmingham Railway; originally stopped at Milverton Street, on edge of town. Extended to modern station site to link with the London & North Western Railway's line from Rugby to Leamington, providing an alternative route from Rugby to Coventry. (Rugby to Leamington closed; Leamington to Coventry open but Cross-Country trains only, no local services.)
- Great Western Railway arrived in 1852 with its line from Oxford to Birmingham.
- Whole complex is raised on viaducts across Old Town. LNWR viaducts are stone-faced. GWR viaducts were built in red brick.
- Leamington Station rebuilt 1938 in Art Deco style by the GWR; try-out for projected rebuilding of Birmingham Snow Hill in 1939 (project abandoned because of World War II).

## HOUSES

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*Note:* A selection only.

### *Early Years of Town Expansion Northwards*

1767	Enclosure of 990 acres south and west of River Leam
1783	Village confined south of river mostly around All Saints church.
By 1818	Bath Street, Clemens Street, High Street (all south of river) built up. New town north of river laid out
1818	Williams Hotel (later Regent Hotel) built.
By 1822	New town had reached as far north as Warwick Street
1825	Clarendon Square laid out
1833	Assembly Rooms on Cross Street (now Regent Street)
By 1834	New town had reached as far north as Lillington Avenue, Clarendon Avenue, Beauchamp Avenue, Binswood Avenue.
1834	Regent Grove, Hamilton Terrace, Holly Walk laid out but not yet built.
1835-38	Lansdowne Crescent, Lansdowne Circus.

### **1. Victoria Terrace                      1836-37                      William Thomas**

- Always fronted in stucco.
- Northernmost house was Victoria Pump Room and Baths.
- Ground floors converted into shops before end of nineteenth century.

### **2. Warwick Street, Grove Street, Victoria Terrace, Beauchamp Hill**

- Variety of bay-fronted brick houses;
- Interesting use of specials and dentil courses.

### **3. Lansdowne Crescent                      1835-38                      William Thomas**

#### ***Lansdowne Circus***

- Laid out by William Thomas with unified façade and most of the houses designed by him. The Crescent is a long terrace with a curving façade; the Circus an ellipse with semi-detached villas.
- Crescent has unified façade outer pairs of houses with plain Tuscan pilasters; centre pair of houses with fluted Corinthian pilasters. These six houses have no pediments above first floor windows; other houses have first floor windows with pediments.
- Houses are three or four storeys with basements and attics. Internal arrangements vary; rear, visible from Thomas Street, shows how different houses were laid out.
- Circus has eight pairs of semi-detached houses and two single houses (nos 1 and 18). All retain original fenestration. Nathaniel Hawthorne, later a major American author,

lived at no 10.

- No 18 is Gothick in its fenestration. Front has patch where cement has been removed shows the use of common brick in Flemish Bond.

#### **4. Elizabethan Terrace, .81-83 Upper Holly Walk 1836 William Thomas**

- Number 83, the smaller portion, was William Thomas' own house for the last five years of his time in Leamington Spa. In 1835 Thomas had remodelled the front of Radford Hall, Radford Semele, for Henry Greswold. (Redford Semele is the first village east of Leamington Spa in the direction of Southam and Rugby)
- Building on Upper Holly Walk has date in the top of the centre bay, in style of initials on Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire (in stone) or Latin motto on the front of Felbrigg Hall (in brick).
- William Thomas (1799-1860) moved to Leamington Spa in 1831 and practised there for twelve years. His work in Leamington was primarily in the design of houses although he also designed the Baptist Chapel on Warwick Street and did an extension to the Pump Room. William was the elder brother of John Thomas (1813-1862), the sculptor who also dabbled in architecture, designing Somerleyton Hall, Suffolk, for Samuel Morton Peto in 1844. The Thomas brothers came from Chalford, near Stroud, Glos., William was a pupil and later briefly the partner of Richard Tutin (*fl.*1820-1840) of Birmingham. In 1826 William married Martha Tutin. When the Leamington Bank failed in 1837, William Thomas was declared bankrupt. In 1843, he moved to Canada with his family. In Ontario, he had a highly successful culminating in designing the Anglican Cathedral in London and the Roman Catholic one in Toronto.

#### **5. West Side of Lower Parade**

- Many houses here show red brick in Flemish Bond, all with shop fronts on ground floor.
- These houses were built of local bricks from a brickworks north of the town centre.
- The clay is Mercia Mudstones.

## **ROYAL PUMP ROOMS**

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### **1. Royal Pump Rooms**

1813-14	Charles Samuel Smith
1837	William Thomas
1860-63	John Cundall
1890	William de Normanville (Borough Engineer)
1950	Leamington Borough Architect
1997-99	Warwick District Council architects

#### Ownership:

1814-1859	Private Company
1860-1875	Board of Heath
1875-1974	Borough of Royal Leamington Spa
1974-date	Warwick District Council

#### Complex building history

1813-14	Stone Tuscan colonnade to Victoria Parade by Smith Assembly rooms behind colonnade, with kitchen provision. Baths area behind assembly with rooms for treatment and drinking the waters.
July 1814	Opened as 'The Royal Baths and Pump Room'; cost £25,000.
1837	Refurbishment by Thomas
1860-63	Turkish Baths built to west of original building with swimming pool west of this. External appearance changed; new roof, with central pediment and water

- tower at north end.
- 1890 Swimming pool, for men only, built north-west of Turkish baths and existing swimming pool. Existing pool became “the ladies’ pool” from 1890 to about 1950 and then used as a physiotherapy centre.
- 1950 Front remodelled; pediment and water tower demolished.  
Ladies pool became hydrotherapy pool.
- 1997-99 Complex was remodelled for use as library, museum and art gallery.  
Library in men’s swimming pool.  
Art Gallery in former ladies’ pool area.  
Museum in three of four rooms of the Turkish Bath.  
New entry and tourist information office built on north side of eastern part.

External appearance of various building phases.

- 1813-14 stone, Tuscan columns.
- 1860 purplish-red brick, visible above modern entry.
- 1890 stucco over common brick, with arched design.

Turkish Bath survives from original complex; it has splendid polychrome brickwork.

- Originally four rooms to bath suite, plus separate changing rooms and waiting rooms for men and women.
- Hammam survives. This was the final room, the relaxation room where massage was applied.
- Square centre with transepts to north and south and entry to west. Below dado, painted wooden panels affixed to cemented wall. Above this, Flemish Bond used for four courses of red brick and fifteen courses of white brick, followed by five courses of red brick. The upper group of red brick courses are the start of horseshoe-shaped arches in red brick. Also the corners are cut to make upper part of room octagonal.
- Below dado, affixed to cemented walls was wooden panels with painted boards; earlier scheme is blue; later scheme of 1880s is red and black design (one panel of this has been restored, another left in state in which it was found).

***Useful Works to Consult***

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