

CAVERSHAM PLACE

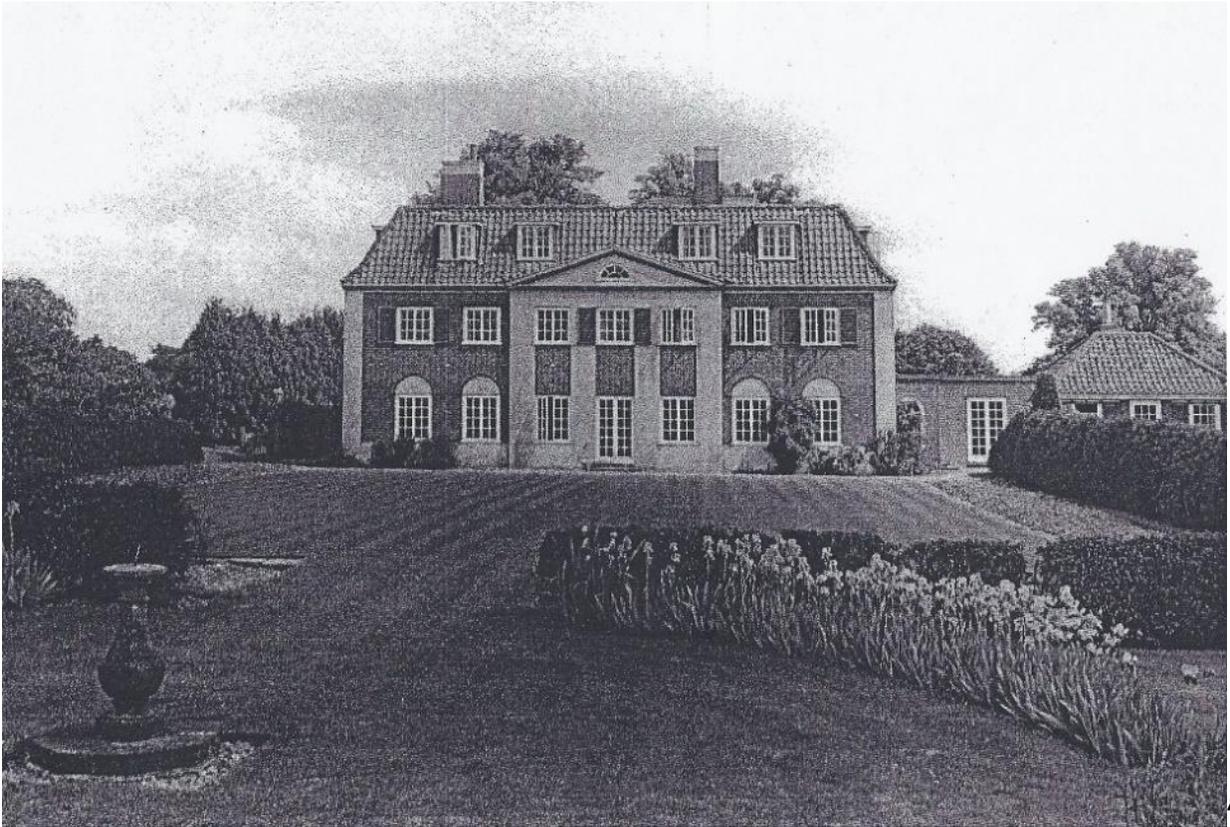
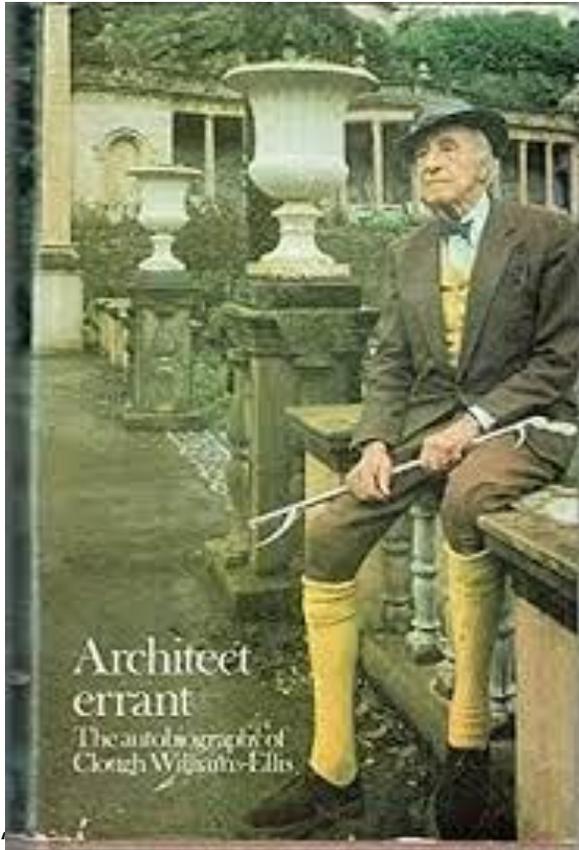
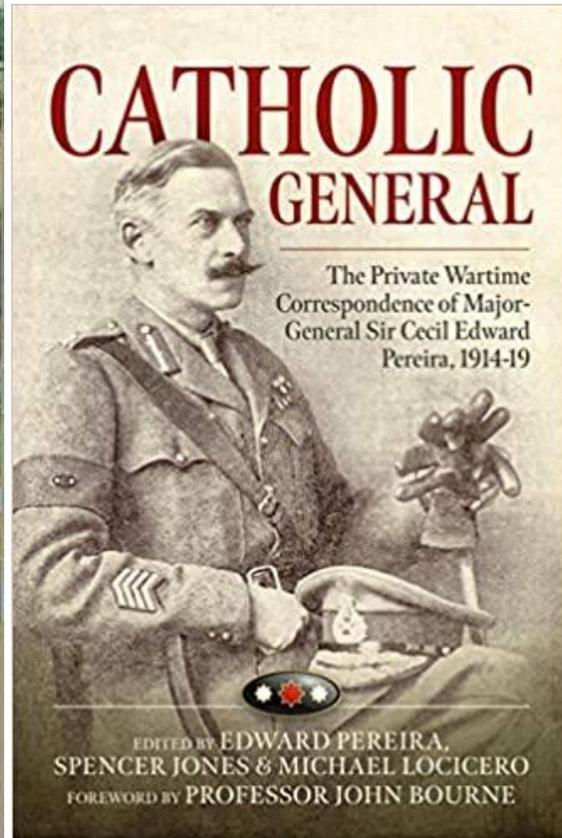


Photo taken in 1935 - The wing (shown on right of the house) was added after the original building to provide a smoking room which in time became a playroom.

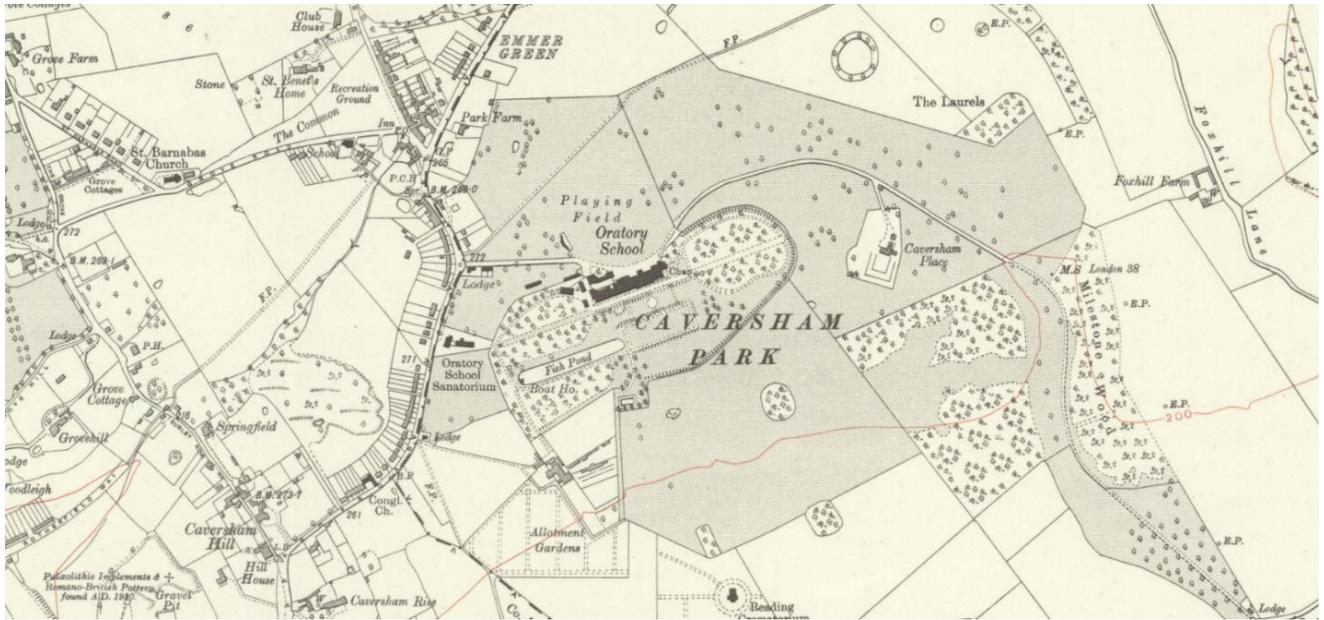
In **1924** Major-General Sir Cecil Pereira (1869-1942), a British Army officer who commanded the 2nd Division during World War One, acquired 21 acres of land in what was then part of Caversham Park. He commissioned the architect **Clough Williams-Ellis** (1883-1978) (of Portmeirion fame, and who had been Pereira's aide-de-camp) to design a country house for his large family. Sir Cecil was one of the brothers of Father Edward Pereira who until 1929 was the headmaster of The Oratory School based in Caversham Park. Cecil himself had been a pupil there.



'Architect Errant: The Autobiography of Clough Williams-Ellis' (1971)



'Catholic General: The private Wartime Correspondence of Major General Cecil Edward Pereira 1914-1919' (2020)



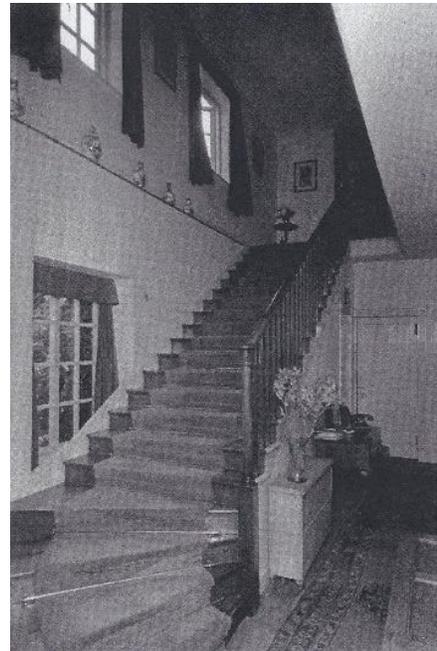
Ordnance Survey map 1930s – Caversham Place shown to right of CAVERSHAM PARK



Original drawings by Clough Williams-Ellis (courtesy of RIBA Drawings & Archives Collections)

As his family grew up and moved away, the house became too large for Sir Cecil who moved to London where he died in 1942. The house was let until **1948** when Sir Cecil's son, George moved into the house with his family. However it became too much for him also and in **1954**, he sold Caversham Place to Lady Katherine Mary Laycock for £14,000. Her son Robert Laycock was then Governor of Malta. She died on 2 February **1959**.

After her death the developers Davis Estates Ltd bought up Caversham Park Estates Ltd and Lady Lacock's land for the eventual development of Caversham Park Village.



There were plans to turn Caversham Place into a community centre to serve the new estate but the plan was eventually rejected as the building was unsuited to the purpose and the house was demolished to make way for more houses at the bottom of Ulster Close (Nos 6-11) in 1973/74. There are reports from descendants of the architect who say that Clough Williams-Ellis fought against demolition. The Milestone Centre was purpose built in 1978.



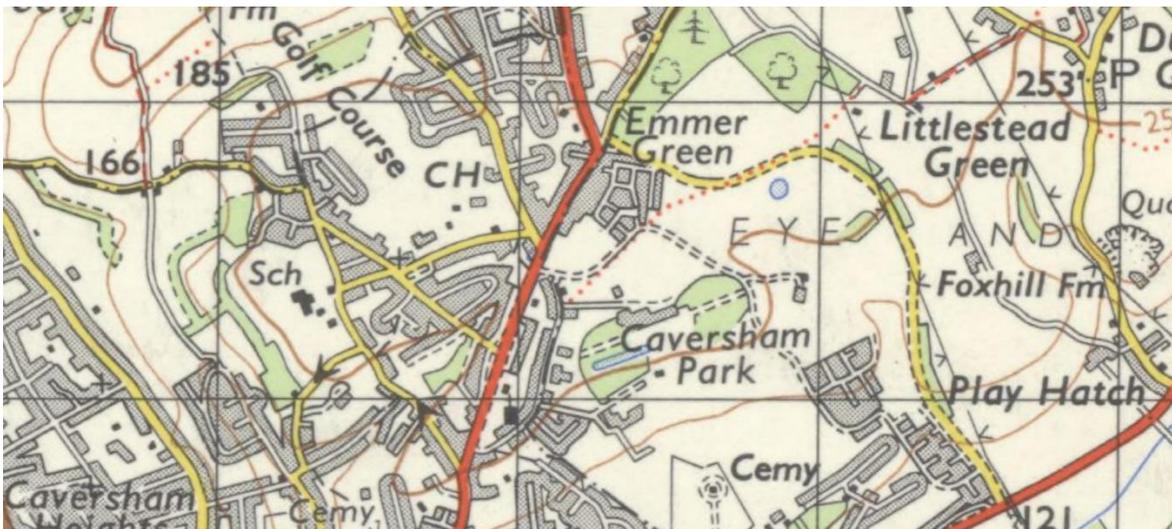
The bulldozers work around Caversham Place in 1968 (Evening Post)



On the left of Caversham Place are 3-5 Ulster Close, behind is Galsworthy Drive.



A wider view of the location of Caversham Place



Caversham Place still showing, just below EYE

The story of Caversham Place lasted less than 50 years and has left no trace.

Antony Gordon. January 2022