



Denman's Town Hall

Vivien Halls



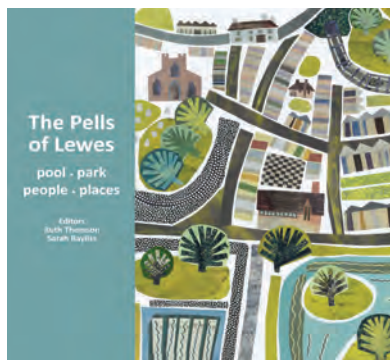
42 Prince Edward's Road

BBM



'Bindons' in The Avenue

David Scott Cowen (2)



A new book on the Pells area



4 Park Road when built in 1961

Markellar Schwerdt



Architect's drawing for 30 The Avenue

East Sussex, Brighton and Hove Record Office

roof and a projecting bay-like feature which includes a garage. BBM, based in Cooksbridge, was founded by Ian McKay and Duncan Baker-Brown in 1993, and specialises in energy-efficient buildings with a low environmental impact.

Continue along Prince Edward's Road and turn right and then left into Gundreda Road. A little way along on the right, past some more recent housing built in part of its garden, is another Rowland Halls house, **1 Gundreda Road** - note the original timber porch. Return to Prince Edward's Road, cross the road opposite the junction and rejoin The Avenue at its other end. As it bears left, **No 32**, designed by Halls for the local builder Harry Milham, has a lych-gate like Rowlands (No 2). Further along, by the junction with Bradford Road, is the final Halls house on this walk, **No 30**, once known as The White Cottage. His family lived here from 1913-14. This house is easier to see from the rear if you walk a little way along Bradford Road.

You can return to the town centre via Bradford Road, with good views of the Wallands across the community space Baxter's Field. When you reach Irelands Lane, you can return to the High Street this way, or continue along Paddock Lane and Castle Lane, taking a circular route around the Castle and returning to the High Street via Castlegate.

This walk takes you past a number of private houses which have interesting or historic architecture. Please remember that they are **not** open to visitors. Please respect residents' privacy, and do not take photographs if this would be intrusive

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Lewes Heritage

Local architects walk



"THE HOUSE WITH THE
LYCH GATE"
THE AVENUE, LEWES
ROWLAND H. HALLS ARCHITECT

GMELLWOOD

This walk looks at the Wallands and Pells areas of Lewes, and the work of two local architects in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, **Samuel Denman** and **Rowland Halls**, as well as some recent houses by local architects.

Start opposite the Tourist Information Centre for a view of the **Town Hall**, once the Star Inn, partly dating from the 14th century. In 1893 Samuel Denman remodelled its late-Georgian front, using red brick and terracotta in the 'Queen Anne' style revived in the late 19th century.

Samuel Denman (1855-1945) was born in Brighton, the son of a builder. After going to Brighton School of Art, he started working as an architect around 1879. His son John Leopold Denman designed many public buildings and church restorations in Brighton and Hove, as well as several Sussex pubs.

Next, turn north along Fisher Street. On the right are **Municipal Offices** (1914) by Rowland Halls. As in many of his buildings, Halls employed local craftspeople, stonemasons, metal-workers and stained glass artists. One was George Bankart, who created the panels of oxen on the facade (as well as a barrel-vaulted ceiling in the committee room featuring signs of the Zodiac). He and Halls are said to have walked many miles over the Downs, photographing oxen, wagons and ploughs.

Rowland Halls was born in 1879 near Horsham. He attended the Lewes School of Science and Art in Albion Street (now the office of architects Mackellar Schwerdt) and in 1906 set up in practice as an architect in Lewes. He designed around 70 buildings in Sussex, mostly around Rottingdean and Seaford. After surviving the Somme in the First World War, he was killed in a motorcycle accident near Lewes in 1919.

Continue along Fisher Street and at the main road (West Street) turn left, continuing into White Hill. Cross the road opposite the Elephant & Castle pub and walk along St John's Terrace. Near St John's Sub Castro church, turn left into Toronto Terrace, stopping at the junction with Talbot Terrace. This is the Pells area, where in the late 1870s a sheep and cattle market was held, after it was moved from the High Street. But there were persistent problems with funding the market, and criticism by veterinary inspectors of poor hygiene and animal welfare. In 1883 it moved to a new site, between Lewes railway station and Garden Street.

By 1879 the committee running the market had sold off part of the land around it to raise money, with the first housing plans laid out by a local surveyor, George Fuller. The first

houses were built in what is now St John's Terrace. In 1883 a Brighton auctioneer, Ebenezer Wells, bought the market site and employed Samuel Denman to lay it out as roads and housing plots.

Turn right along Talbot Terrace - at the end, Pelham Terrace is on your left. Opposite are the Pells Ponds, once linked to a water-powered paper mill at the far (river) end. In 1920, W E Baxter, former first Mayor of Lewes, gave the Ponds to the town as a 'public pleasure resort'. Lewes History Group has published a book about the neighbourhood, *The Pells of Lewes* (£12.50), with contributions from local residents - to buy a copy visit leweshistory.org.uk/pells-of-lewes.

All these streets were part of Denman's plan, and all the houses in them benefited from improved national housing standards imposed from the 1870s onwards, with local authorities given new powers to enforce them (Lewes Borough was established in 1881). These included minimum street widths and window sizes to improve ventilation and natural light, and better drainage and sanitation.

Return along Talbot Terrace and cross Toronto Terrace. Further along on the left is **St John's Church Hall** (Rowland Halls, 1913) which made pioneering use of ferro-concrete (an early name for reinforced concrete) in the floor, pillars, beams and roof. At the end of the road, climb the steps next to the railway tunnel (or, to avoid the steps, retrace your route to the Elephant & Castle pub), back to the main road. In either case, turn right, cross the road, and at the roundabout turn in to The Avenue.

This is the Wallands Estate, which was developed slightly later, between 1890 and 1910, and, unlike the terraced 'artisan' housing of St John's and the Pells, it has a more spacious feel. Many of the larger detached villas and semi-detached houses were influenced by the late 19th century Arts & Crafts movement, which wanted to re-establish the craft skills, varied styles and traditional building materials it saw as threatened by industrialisation. Typical features include red-clay tiles, low-reaching 'catslide' roofs, large timber doors and porches with hand-forged ironmongery, and small-paned casement windows.

The south side of The Avenue has several houses by Halls making good use of the sloping site and fine views. On the left, **No 2**, which he named '**Rowlands**' (1910), was his first house in Lewes. His family lived here from 1910 to 1913. It was, he said, 'in such a lovely position, nothing but tennis

and golf ground between it and the Castle it faces.' The lych-gate is a reconstruction, but the original is shown in the cover illustration by the Arts & Crafts designer George Montague Ellwood. A newspaper report shows that local craftsmen worked on the plasterwork, fireplaces, lamps and other copper, iron, glass and wood fittings, though many original features are believed to have been lost in a recent renovation.

No 8, now called '**Bindons**', was built in 1912 for an Eastbourne cabinet maker, Stanley Bindon. At first it was known as 'Flagged Ways' and later as 'Old Cleeve'. A magazine article at the time noted the fine fireplaces, adding that 'the local postman carved the staircase balusters in his spare time.' It has probably the most remaining original features, inside and out, of all Halls' houses in the road, but today trees and shrubs make it hard to see. **No 10** (1911) was designed for H H Philcox, a long-established firm of local builders, and **No 12 (Hill House)**, in 1912 for Miss Harvey Smith (this was a time when many moderately well-off people could afford to commission their own house). Next is **No 14**, another Halls house, built in 1913 for Miss A L Fanshawe. In contrast, at **Nos 16-18**, are four semi-detached contemporary houses (2013) by the Brighton practice **Morgan Carn**, which has also designed other houses in Lewes in Albion Street and Grange Road.

Cross The Avenue opposite No 14 and walk down Park Road. On the right is **4 Park Road**, a modern single-storey house lying low in the landscape, designed in 1961 for W J Parsons by local practice **John Schwerdt**, lead architect Roger Beasley.

John Schwerdt (1924-89) set up his practice in Lewes in 1954. From 1964, it was based in a simple square building standing on steel pillars in St Andrew's Lane. As well as designing modern houses and schools, the practice did sensitive repairs and conservation work on many historic buildings and churches in Sussex. After merging with a Newcastle practice, it is now Mackellar Schwerdt.

At the end of Park Road, turn left into Prince Edward's Road. Among the large, mostly Edwardian houses is the occasional modern house, which, if carefully designed, can fit comfortably in a street of older houses. One of these is **No 26 (Koru Architects, 2008)**. The windows facing the street are fairly conventional, but the rear (not visible from the road) makes extensive use of timber and glass. Note the assymetrically pitched roof. A little further along is **No 42**, by **BBM Sustainable Design** (2007) with a shallow-pitched