

Trumpeters' House - Old Palace Yard, Richmond



Trumpeters' House stands between the River Thames and The Green on part of the site formerly occupied by Richmond Palace. The name comes from the 2 statues of trumpeting figures that had adorned the Middle Gate of the old palace and were erected on the new house. It is described in the **List of Buildings of Architectural and Historical Interest** as :-

"Grade I. On the site of Palace Middle Gate. Very important early 18c. house. The back is on Old Palace Yard... The main front is on the garden looking towards Cholmondely Walk and the river. It is 2 storey, 11 window, brick with medallion cornice, and a fine full height portico of 4 Roman Doric Columns supporting an entablature with triglyph frieze, and with pediment with red tympanum and oval window in centre. Under the portico in the centre is a door with Doric half-columns and enriched window above."

Richmond Palace, built after its predecessor was destroyed by fire in 1499, was constructed around a series of courtyards. The smaller court (Old Palace Yard on the Wardrobe Court) was reached, as it is today, through the gateway on The Green. The larger court with the chapel to the left and the Great Hall to the right was entered by way of the Middle or Garden Gate which stood opposite the surviving gateway. This is clearly visible on Moses Glover's **Map of the Hundred of Isleworth**, made in 1635. The palace suffered considerably during the Commonwealth, the greater part of the structure being torn down. In 1688 James II had parts of the surviving buildings renovated by the Office of Works for use as a royal nursery. The improvements included the "cutting of two chimneys and two door cases in the Trumpeting House, and setting the battlements over the great gate." Neither William III nor Queen Anne were interested in the old buildings and at the beginning of the 18th century it was disposed of to private residents under a series of building leases.

The Trumpeting House or Garden Gate House was acquired by the Hon. Richard Hill of Hawkstone, Shropshire. Hill was born on 23rd March 1655. He graduated from St. John's College, Cambridge, in 1675 and obtained the post of tutor, first to the children of Richard Boyle, first Earl of Burlington, then to the children of Lawrence Hyde, Earl of Rochester. The latter appointment brought Hill to the Richmond area, for the Hyde family were resident at Petersham Lodge. Lawrence Hyde was a friend of the Earl of Ranelagh who was to act as arbitrator when Matthew Bankes, the master carpenter in the Office of Works, rebuilt Petersham Lodge in 1692-3. It was Ranelagh who gave Richard Hill the lucrative post of Deputy Paymaster to the Army in Flanders – a position he held from 1688 to 1696. He then became an envoy in Bavaria and Ambassador to The Hague. Hill returned to England in 1700 to become a Lord of the Treasury Hill and in 1702 was Counsellor to George of Denmark – the Prince Consort of Queen Anne. He retired in 1710 due to ill-health and took holy orders. In 1700 he had applied for and was granted a 31-year lease of the Middle Gate House and an adjoining lodging that had been used to house a gardener. Also included was the long garden – now occupying the sites of the former chapel, Fountain Court and royal apartments.

John Latten, the Steward of the Manor of Richmond reported that –

"Mr Hill desires to lease Garden Gate House, called the Trumpeting House, and the garden belonging to it, and a kitchen garden between that and the Privy Garden, and a piece of void ground belonging and next adjoining on the East to Trumpeting House, containing 42 feet in the front, 100 in depth {the site of the palace chapel}, and at the end of which stands an old stable, together with the stable and a narrow slip behind it, for 22 years at £15. Mr Hill is to repair the house and make additional buildings thereto and a new coachhouse and stable. The premises are now out of repair and a great charge to His Majesty."

The architect he employed to convert the gatehouse is a matter of conjecture, but it was probably John Yeomans, a master bricklayer from Hampton, who would incorporate some of the old structure into the new building. Yeomans had already worked on the Earl of Rochester's house at Petersham and – perhaps with Christopher Wren – on Winslow House in Buckinghamshire. In 1711 Hill exchanged some of his land with George Cholmondeley, receiving the old 'Great Orchard' of the palace in return for giving Cholmondeley land nearer his house including a path 45 ft. wide connecting his house by the Green with the riverside.

Hill died at Richmond on 11th June 1727. He had never married, so bequeathed his property to his nephews Samuel Barbour and Thomas Harwood, who both took the name of Hill. They do not appear to have resided at Richmond and the rate book of 1729 lists the Duchess of Marlborough at Trumpeters' House. Henrietta, Duchess of Marlborough and daughter of the 1st Duke, was married to the 2nd Earl of Godolphin who held an appointment in George II's household.

In the 1730 rate book, the name of Lewis Way is listed. He was a barrister of the Inner Temple, Director of the South Sea Company and President of Guy's Hospital. Way obtained new leases twice – in 1738 and 1756. Each lease had a plan attached to it and showed that Way had added side wings and the great portico to the house between the two dates. Way died on 24th January 1771 aged 73 and in 1781 a further extension of the lease was obtained by his 4th wife, Sarah, who lived there with her sister Frances, the Dowager

Duchess of Northampton. Way's 3rd wife had been Abigail Lockey, daughter of Edward Lockey and Abigail Hill. This Abigail was not related to either Richard Hill or to her namesake Mrs. Masham – the confidante of Queen Anne - who is frequently and erroneously named as the sister of Mr. Hill of Trumpeters' House. Sarah is listed in the rate books for the last time in 1790 and died on 17th April 1800 at Abbots Langley. Frances remained at the house where she died at Christmas in the same year. The Duke of Queensberry acquired the lease in 1801 followed by the Earl and Countess of Yarmouth and then, in 1820, by Lady Sullivan. In 1834, James Alexander MacKenzie, a former Governor of Ceylon, took the house. Gilbert Mattison came next in 1847 for only 1 year, then Prince von Metternich resided here whilst in exile in 1848-9. Disraeli visited him in 1849 and wrote to his sister "I have been to see Metternich. He lives on Richmond Green in the most charming house in the world."

Later residents were:

1855	Col. Jasper Taylor Hall
1855-75	Charles Benjamin Lee (afterwards Lee-Mainwaring)
1876	Col. Thomas Wilbraham
1884	his widow
1894	John Taylor
1898	Rev. Arthur Welsh Owen
1911	Chevalier Marconi (1 year)
1916	Joseph Reixach – came to Bradford in 1868 to introduce the power loom for weaving velvet. Retired in 1916 and bought Trumpeters' House
1918-1942	Reginald Reixach - son of the above
1943	American Red Cross Day Club

The last had to move out in August 1944 after the house suffered bomb damage. The house was used by the Inland Revenue for a time after the war, then in 1951 it was converted into 4 apartments and a small house by C. Bernard Brown who also restored The Paragon at Blackheath. Brown kept the small house (Trumpeters' Lodge) and the flower garden for himself.

The garden was replanted with plants from Elizabethan times by Mrs. Pamela Franklyn, who lives in Trumpeters' Lodge, and her daughter, Sarah, who lived in one of the apartments.

Further Reading

- Cloake, John "The Building of Trumpeters' House" in **Richmond History** no. 9, May 1988, pp. 31-39
- Cloake, John **Palaces and parks of Richmond and Kew. Volume II: Richmond Lodge and the Kew palaces.** 1996
Local History Notes: Asgill House, Richmond
Local History Notes: Cholmondeley Walk, Richmond
- Wilson, C.J. "Old Palace Yard 60 years ago" in **Richmond History** no. 8, May 1987, pp. 58-60

More information on Trumpeters' House is available from the Local Studies Collection.