U DFJR Records Relating to Francis Frederick Johnson, 1926-1931 Architect (1911-1995)

Accession number: 2014/17; 2014/24

Biographical Background:

Francis Frederick Johnson was born 18 April 1911 to James Frederick B. Johnson (1880-1938) and Ethel daughter of Francis S. Smith. His father's family were well established corn merchants, whilst his mother's father had been a senior traveller for the Hull paint manufacturers Blundell Spence & Co. His parents married in Bridlington in 1909 but Ethel tragically died just a few days after Francis was born.

His father had lived in Wellington Road, Bridlington, but upon his marriage he moved to 6 (now 8) Swanland Avenue, Bridlington, and it was there that Francis was born. Ten months after his birth Francis' father remarried Mabel, a daughter of John Easton, and had five children by her. In 1914 his father had 'Kernside', 154 Cardigan Road, built and the family lived there for a few months before WWI. During WWI the family lived in Harrogate and then Sharrow Lane in Sheffield. On moving back to Bridlington at the end of the war Francis' father purchased Medina House, Quay Road, where the family remained for ten years. In 1929, with some persuasion from Francis, his father purchased 'The Toft', 43 High Street.

Francis began his schooling at a small private day school in Bridlington before being sent as a full boarder to Marton Hall Preparatory School for two years. He fell ill whilst attending this school and was removed to Bridlington Grammar where he spent the remainder of his school years. In 1927 he started attending the School of Architecture at Leeds, then part of the College of Art. Whilst studying for his exams in 1929 Francis took lodgings in Leeds where he shared a room in a YMCA hostel in Clarendon Road known as Woodsley House. In 1926 and 1929 he undertook visits to France with acquaintances from Bridlington Grammar School. He won two Royal Society of Art prizes for design in 1930 and 1931. In 1931 he received a travelling scholarship from Leeds School of Architecture which allowed him to undertake a tour of the continent. During these visits, Francis developed his architectural interests and skills. He kept detailed illustrated journals documenting the places he visited and the buildings he saw. In 1932 he finished at Leeds and he returned to Bridlington.

After a few months of unemployment, his father's friend Colonel C. Donald Allderidge gave Francis employment in his own practice of Allderidge & Clark, Architects, Hull. During the first eighteen months he travelled from Bridlington to Hull every day and proved himself to be very competent. He was made a partner in 1934 and put in charge of an office above a shop in Manor Street, Bridlington. In 1937 he moved to lodgings at 26 Market Place and, following the break-up of the partnership of Alldridge & Clarke, established his own practice. He retained his Manor Street office in Bridlington and continued to build a name for himself. A legacy from his aunt Lucy Smith had enabled Francis to purchase Craven house, 16 High Street, Bridlington, in 1935. In 1938 he and his partner Edward Ingram moved into Craven House. He spent the late 1930s and early 1940s restoring the property to its original Georgian character.

After the destruction of the Manor Street office during an air raid in August 1940 Craven House also became Francis' office. Over the next few years Francis continued to build his practice and it soon became impractical to maintain his office and home in one building. In November 1952 Francis and Edward moved from Craven House to former village school Leys House at Sewerby. Francis had purchased the house in 1951 when it needed much restoration which he carried out. They remained at Leys House for fifteen years. However, as Sewerby became a tourist destination, Francis desired a more secluded residence and so purchased Reighton Hall near

Filey in July 1966. He had the place restored and in November 1966 both he and Edward moved in. They were to remain at Reighton Hall for the rest of their lives, along with Edward's sister Dorothy (d.1988).

Francis was prominent in the realm of civic life in Bridlington. He was a staunch Tory throughout his life and became involved in politics through his campaigning to preserve the character of Bridlington's 'Old Town'. He served as an independent town councillor for fourteen years (1936-1950). He was elected one of the Lords Feoffees of the Manor of Bridlington for life in 1940 and served as Chief Lord on five occasions. He was appointed a Justice of the Peace in 1952 and served in this capacity for twenty nine years until 1981, after which he remained on the supplementary list.

Francis was a member of various local societies in Bridlington, including the Literary and Philosophical Society, the Madrigal Society and the Augustinian Society. It was through attendance at meetings of the latter society in December 1936 that Francis met his life-long partner Edward Ingram, a teacher in Bridlington who was originally from Hull and who had studied at the University College of Hull in its early years. From the late 1930s both Francis and Edward (aka Jim and Ted) became very much involved in campaigns to protect Bridlington's 'Old Town'. Through this work Francis came to the notice of Rupert Alec-Smith, founder of the Georgian Society for East Yorkshire. He was invited to become part of the Georgian Society and this started a life-long association with both Alec-Smith and the Georgian Society.

Through connections formed as a result of his professional and civic life he was invited to be a member of the York Civic Trust and served in various positions on its Board of Trustees. He was admitted a member of the York Merchant Adventurers Company in 1961 and the Merchant Taylors Company in 1970. A friendship with Dean of York Eric Milner-White led to his appointment as consultant architect to the York Diocese, his membership of the York Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (1956-1983), and his appointment to the Central Council for the Care of Churches (1964-1972).

Because of his occupation, Francis spent WWII as a draughtsman. In May 1940 he took a civilian post as a draughtsman with the Royal Engineers in South Wales based mostly at Pen-clawdd on the Gower Peninsula. He was only in post for a few months before returning to Bridlington after being dismissed. He resumed his council business and became chairman of the Bridlington Air Raid Precaution Committee. He became a member of the Home Guard in 1942 and was responsible for scheduling iron gates and railings to be requisitioned for the war effort. He was finally called up in June 1943 and was sent to Fulwood Barracks, Preston, before being sent to Aldershot. He was then sent to Orkney in March 1944 as Lance Corporal Johnson, and after four months was moved to Titchfield, Hampshire. Here he was attached to the Lands Branch of the War Department and was charged with assessing compensation for damage done to War Office property.

He was released in June 1946 and resumed his practice in the hard financial times of the late 1940s. Off the back of his War Office work, he was asked to compile the first Ministry of Local Government lists of buildings of special architectural or historical interest for Beverley and Hull. He completed the Beverley lists August 1946-January 1947, and the Hull lists were finished by July 1947.

Throughout his life, Francis' work won him various accolades and awards including one presented by the Civic Trust and Goldsmiths' Company for the long gallery restoration at Burton Agnes Hall during European Architectural Heritage Year 1972. It also led to him receiving a number of honours. These honours included being made a Fellow of the Society of Antiquities (1955), the

receipt of an Honorary Doctorate of Letters from the University of Hull (1983) and being awarded the CBE (1991).

In 2001 Francis Johnson was the subject of a major exhibition at the RIBA and a substantial architectural biography entitled 'Francis Johnson Architect: A Classical Statement' by John Martin Robinson and David Neave. He died in hospital at Leeds on the 29 September 1995. Highly respected in his field, he was renowned for his traditional and classical work. Many of his clients had become life-long friends because of his genuine nature and respected advice. His packed funeral was held at Bridlington's Priory Church on 5 October 1995 and he was then buried in Reighton Churchyard. Edward survived him by two years but died in a nursing home on 19 December 1997. They have a joint gravestone which simply reads 'Francis Frederick Johnson Architect' and below 'Mallard Edward Ingram Historian'.

Custodial history:

Various depositors. Please see individual items for further details.

Description:

Artificially created collection containing records relating to Bridlington born and based architect Francis Frederick Johnson. The items in this collection were deposited as a result of publicity surrounding the Francis Johnson & Partners, Architects Cataloguing Project 2014/2015. These records do not form part of the official business papers of Francis Johnson & Partners but were deposited by various persons connected to Francis Johnson and relate to him personally. Records include:

Volumes of notes, journal entries and sketches made by Francis Johnson during his formative years, 1926-1931 [U DFJR/1]; Oral History Recordings: Francis Johnson & Partners Staff and Associates, 2014-2015 [U DFJR/2].

Extent: 4 items

Related material:

Records of Francis Johnson & Partners, Architects, 1939-2010 [U DFJ]
Records of the Georgian Society for East Yorkshire, 1907-1997 [U DGS, formerly U DX99]
Letters from Francis Johnson to Neil Hynd, Regional Director of Historic Scotland, 1982-1993 [U DX325]

Access conditions:

Access will be granted to any accredited reader. Please note that items in U DFJR/2 are currently unavailable. If you have further enquires please contact archives@hull.ac.uk clearly outlining your interest and timescales.

Copyright: Please see individual items for details of copyright ownership

Language: English

U DFJR/1

Personal Papers Relating to Francis Frederick Johnson, Architect (1911-1995)

Contains records created by Bridlington born architect Francis Frederick Johnson during his formative years before beginning professional employment.

Records include:

Digital copy of an illustrated journal recording a Grand Tour made by Francis Johnson, 1931 [U DFJR/1/1]; sketch book of various East Riding buildings and architectural details made by Francis Johnson, 1926-1927 [U DFJR/1/2]; diary of a trip to France in 1929 made by Francis Johnson, contains some sketches at the beginning and end of the volume, 1928-1929 [U DFJR/1/3].

3 items

U DFJR/1/1

Volume. Diary of My Journey with the Leeds Travelling Scholarship for Architecture 1931 by Francis Frederick Johnson

2 Jul-3 Sep 1931

1926-1931

Journal recording a 'Grand Tour' of Europe undertaken by Bridlington born architect Francis Johnson. Contains entries recording places visited, thoughts on sites, and coloured and rendered detail sketches of architecture and architectural elements observed by Johnson. The first section of the journal was written soon after he returned from the tour. He then decided to re-write twice more. and the final journal as it appears now was completed in 1976. The journal records that the tour was funded by a £60 scholarship from Leeds School of Architecture, and that Johnson overspent on the scholarship by £2. The journal also records that he left Leeds on 2 Jul 1931 for London and Paris, that he then visited Milan, Como, Rome, Astia, Tivoli, Siena, San Gimignano, Florence, Pisa, Genoa, Venice, Prague, Wurzburg, Cologne, Dusseldorf, Bonn, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and returned to Bridlington via Hull on 3 Sep 1931.

Note: This is a digitised copy available on CD. Original retained by depositor. Original is a foolscap sized hardbound paper volume, pages bound into the volume by a Mr Symington of York.

1 volume

U DFJR/1/2

Volume. Sketch Book by Francis Frederick Johnson, Architect (1911-1995)

1926-1927

Contains sketches by Francis Johnson of of various architectural details and buildings in the East Riding of Yorkshire. Contains sketches of the following: Victoria

House, 8 North Cliff, Bridlington; Manor House,

Bridlington; The Avenue, Burlington; Woolworths, Prince

Street, [Bridlington]; Lodge Hall, Boynton; Barn at

Boynton Vicarage; House at Kilham; East Ayton Church.

1 volume

U DFJR/1/3

Volume. Travel Diary of Francis Frederick Johnson, Architect (1911-1995)

1928-1929

Diary of a trip made by Francis Johnson to France during which trip he celebrated his 18th birthday. The diary records that he set out on 9 Apr 1929, that he was accompanied by Messrs Baxter, Beal, Needler, Kaye, Field and Stather, and that they spent some time in London before continuing to France. Entries record places visited, architectural details and buildings observed during the trip. Also contains some sketches at the beginning and end of the volume, and a note at the beginning of the volume which suggests the volume was originally intended to make revision notes for a history exam.

1 volume

U DFJR/2

Oral History Recordings with Persons Connected with Francis Johnson, Architect (1911-1995)
Recordings with accompanying transcriptions made during a project to catalogue the project files of Francis Johnson and Partners, Architects [U DFJ]. Recordings of interviews with various persons associated with Francis Johnson. Interviewees were asked to recall their memories of Johnson in both personal and professional contexts. Includes recordings with the following persons: Clive Barnby (Architect), Roger Goldthorpe and Another [U DFJR/2/1].

Due to the digital format of these records, access cannot be provided to the recordings at present. If you have any enquiries please contact archives@hull.ac.uk clearly outlining your interest and timescales.

U DFJR/2/1

Oral History Recording. Clive Barnby (Architect), Roger Goldthorpe and Another Recording made at the Driffield home of Clive Barnby with former employees at the firm of Francis Johnson & Partners, Architects. Includes transcript of the recording. 1 item

Due to the digital format of this record, access cannot be provided to the recording at present. If you have any enquiries please contact archives@hull.ac.uk clearly outlining your interest and timescales.

2014

2014