The History Of Pollock Halls of Residence

The first house on the Pollock Halls site was Salisbury Green, originally a three-story mansion built in the latter half of the 18th century by Alexander Scott, an Edinburgh merchant. At the time it was built Salisbury Green was in a rustic & remote place with the main road to Peffermill passing close by.

In 1770, Salisbury Green was purchased by the Dick’s of Prestonfield and later by Miss Agnes Stark of Hall Tassess who then sold it to William Nelson, in 1860. At that time it was a plain, old-fashioned house but the Nelson family carried out various structural alterations so that it assumed the appearance of a 16th century building.

In 1869 Thomas Nelson, brother of William, built the adjacent property of St Leonard’s Hall. The combined estate of the two mansions occupied the area presently used by Pollock Halls the Royal Commonwealth Pool and Parkside Bowling Club.

During the 1914 – 1918 war St Leonard’s Hall was a Red Cross hospital. Later it became a girl’s school named St Trinneans. Ronald Searle, the cartoonist, had a niece who attended the school and it is said that visits to see her gave him the inspiration for his St Trinians cartoons.

Some time between the two wars, Sir Donald Pollock bought the estate from the Nelson family. Sir Donald later gave it to the University for development as student residential accommodation.

Shortly after the start of the 1939 – 1945 hostilities St Trinneans School evacuated to Selkirkshire & St Leonard’s Hall was used for various wartime purposes. Following the war St Leonard’s Hall & Salisbury Green became respectively female & male halls of residence.

In 1960 the first phase of the present student residential complex was complete, namely Holland House. Phase 2, Fraser Court, was completed in 1963. Phase 3 & 4 comprising 6 residential blocks were completed in 1966 & 1967. It was at this time that a continuing landscape plan for the whole site was formulated. Phase 5, comprising a kitchen & refectory was completed in 1970 in time for the Commonwealth Games when the whole complex was used as the “Games Village”. In 1974, the sixth phase of development was completed bringing accommodating up to 1850 places on this 22.5-acre site.

2002 saw the opening of the first phase of a new accommodation block known as Chancellors Court. Work began on this site in July 2001 and it is the largest accommodation structure to be built by the University in nearly 40 years. Completed in October 2003 it added an additional 526 en-suite bed spaces to the campus.