

THE ROYAL BELL

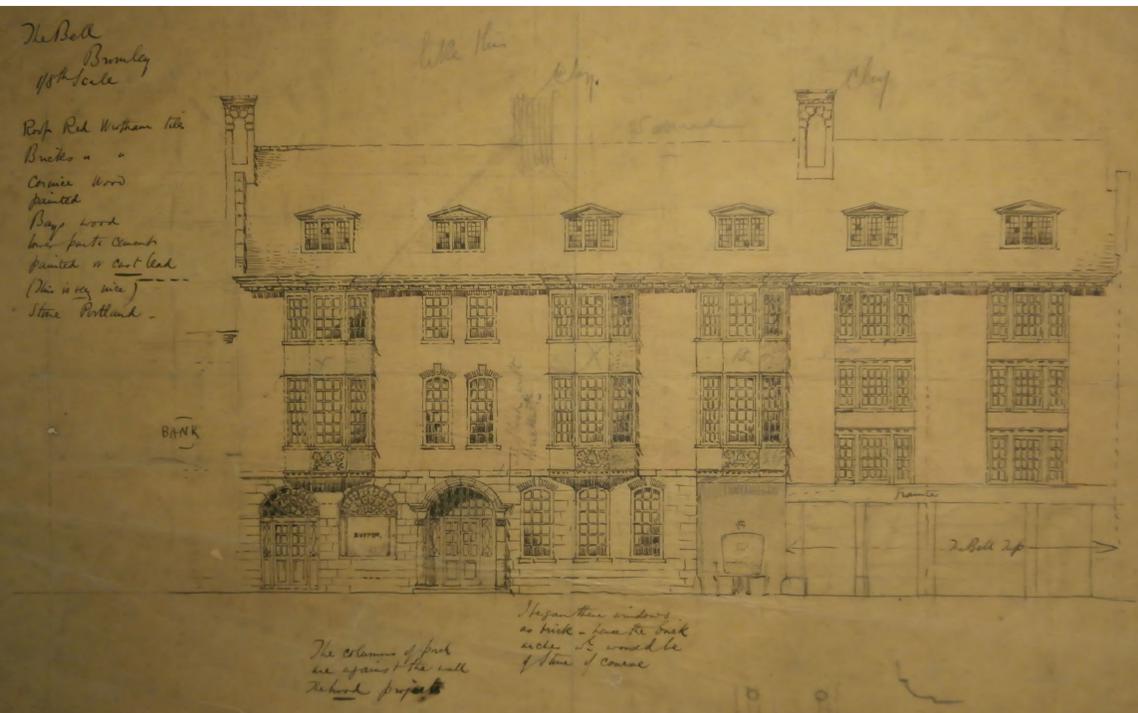


Ernest Newton and the Royal Bell, Bromley - drawings & research from the V&A/RIBA drawings collection



A photograph of Ernest Newton RA FRIBA, 1856-1922.

(Right) This drawing shows the original design for the Royal Bell, published in the contemporary architectural press. It was drawn by Thomas Raffles Davison who was one of the leading architectural draughtsmen of this period. The design is very similar, but different in several details from the built Royal Bell. Davison's 'black and white' pen and ink style was suited to the new reproduction techniques in architecture journals of this period.



(Above) This is one of the drawings in which Ernest Newton worked out the design for the Royal Bell. The notes on the drawings call out the materials that Newton was thinking about, particularly the fine, locally made 'Wrotham Red' brick and tiles. The masonry base was originally to be in Portland stone this changed to granite in the final build.



This beautiful pencil perspective from Newton's office shows the design development of the Royal Bell. Note the superb draftsmanship, typical of architects in the circle of Norman Shaw. Each of these drawings shows a slightly different treatment of the dormers in the roof.



(Above left) This watercolour shows Martin's Bank, also designed by Newton, next door to the Royal Bell. While the Royal Bell takes its inspiration from English Renaissance architecture, this part of the Newton's ensemble of buildings on Bromley High Street shows the architect's facility with the new Art & Crafts 'Free Style'. London's Avant Garde architects like C.R Ashbee, William Lethaby, Newton and C.F.A. Voysey were experimenting with bold forms and shapes to create a new modern architectural language that grew organically out of the materials and styles of Britain's historic architecture. We are using this Arts and Crafts 'Free Style' as a starting point for the design of our proposed hotel extension.



One of Ernest Newton's most important commissions in the Bromley area is his work on the house Bullers Wood. Newton worked with the famous Arts & Crafts decorators William Morris and company for the house's interiors. We think this house gives important clues about the original interior design of the Royal Bell - Morris papers, and light toned timber panelled walls.



In the years around 1900 Newton began collaborating again with his former mentor Norman Shaw RA. This picture shows their Alliance Assurance on St James Street in the West End.



One of Ernest Newton's final buildings is his best known - the County Fire Office at Piccadilly Circus. The design for the Royal Bell marks the beginning of Newton's passionate engagement with English Renaissance architecture, which reaches its culmination in these popular and significant London landmarks. Norman Shaw and his followers designed many of the buildings around Piccadilly Circus and the Quadrant.