

## Goodrich House, 137 York Road, Montpelier

Goodrich House is a Grade II Listed detached house on the North West side of York Road with its entrance from Richmond Road. At one time this entrance had a decorative gate with wrought ironwork (right).

The listing states:

House. Late C18-early C19. Limestone ashlar with rendered sides and back, gable stacks and a pantile roof. Double-depth plan. Late Georgian style. 3 storeys and attic; 3-window range. Pilaster strips to a cornice and parapet. 3-light square bay to ground floor right. Central porch with clasping pilasters to a cornice. Plain paired windows with simple mullions, triple outer windows on the first floor, with 4/4-pane horned sashes, and 2 dormers. The rear has a tall central first-floor semicircular-arched stair light with 12/12-pane sashes, a raised section of roof above, and left-hand dormer set back from the eaves. Interior not inspected.



## Study by a previous resident, written in 1976

### Short history

I have been able to establish that the house dates back to at least 1762 but this is not its date of origin. It appears that the Bristol Urban and Sanitary Authority kept the deeds, which I was able to trace at the City Archives Department, but these do not include the original deeds.

Prior to 1762 the owners were George Bearpacker and John Bearpacker. Reverend E G Gange, an important local figure and member of the Schools Council, was an owner of the house in 1876. In 1883 Bristol Urban Sanitary Authority owned the house, which they had obtained by compulsory purchase in order to carry out street repairs and alterations.

The grounds belonging to the house were not always limited to the present day garden. It appears that a number of plots of land were attached to the house. The plots of land below Cobourg Road were part of a large area of plots known as a whole and referred to in the deeds as the Chequer Ground, later Hollister's Ashley. This name is referred to in the deeds in 1812 when the property was bought by John Baller. It appears that the area below Cobourg road was sold in 1865 when the property was split up and shared by the three sons of William Barge (Snr) – namely William Barge (Jnr), Frederick Henry Barge and John Baller Barge.

The area of land between York Road and Cobourg Road is referred to in the deeds as the lower garden and this was still part of the property when it was purchased by Edward Thomas, a solicitor, in 1870, because it is referred to in the conveyance and on a plan. At this time the name of the house was changed from Ascension House.

In 1897 the number of the house changed from 129 to 137 York Road. Whether the house belonged to the Mayor (as had been suggested in a newspaper article) or not it was clearly the out-of-town residence of an important person. The bells which were used to summon the servants still hung on the walls of the house until the mid-C20.

## Details of the house



**The cellars** (left) are built on arches and were originally the servants' kitchens. In one room there was an open fire and meat hooks hanging from the ceiling.

There was also a small room fitted with fruit racks for fruit storage. This later became the coal hole, in addition to the coal cellar accessed from the side of the house on Richmond Road.

The part which was the wine cellar included lock-up cupboards and a long passage behind the wine cellar contained hot water pipes for heating the fernery and the potting and propagating house.

**On the ground floor** one of the front rooms later housed the kitchens, with a baker's oven made of pottery (right). For clothes washing there was a pump which brought rainwater collected in the underground tanks of the back garden to the coal-fired boiler. Behind the front room was a china pantry, and outside this the long row of servants' bells.



**The fernery** (left), interconnected with a potting and propagating house, used to be at the side of the main house. After the Second World War the fernery fell into disrepair. A red brick summer house stands at the end of the terrace at the front of the house, and a greenhouse once extended from the summer house to the rear garden wall.

**On the upper floors**, the ceilings are 10 foot high except in the attic. The first floor contained the library, with bookshelves and cupboards, the music room with its grand piano and the conference room with its own pantry. On the staircase to the second floor is a 7 foot high niche for a suit of armour or a statue. On the second floor there were four bedrooms, and a room containing a tap without a basin (right). This was because in the past a charge was made for sinks, but not for taps without sinks, as part of the water rates. The attic was the servants' quarters.



## List of owners, as established from available deeds

- 1762 William Merrick
- 1792 Estcourt Creswell
- 1809 Edward Bearpacker
- 1812 Frances and Ann Bearpacker
- 1819 John Baller
- 1820 Susannah Baller (later Barge)
- 1846 William Barge (Snr)
- 1853 Susannah Barge
- 1854 William Barge (Jnr) and John Baller Barge
- 1859 William Barge (Jnr), Mary Loratt Barge and Frederick Henry Barge
- 1870 William Barge (Jnr) and Mary Loratt Barge
- 1872 Edward Thomas, a solicitor
- 1873 John James Jones
- 1873 Henry Lancaster
- 1876 Reverend E G Gange, a member of the Schools Council
- 1877 Mrs and Miss Lancaster
- 1883 Bristol Sanitary Authority, who obtained the house by compulsory purchase in order to carry out street repairs and alterations.
- 1895 A F Harris
- 1919 A G Jackson
- 1951 E White
- 1974 C E White and A Renshaw

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### Notable event

In the late 1970s DJ David Jacobs visited Goodrich House to open an extension.

By then it had become Springfield Further Education Centre, home to nine girls with learning disabilities.

But he also presented the principal with a minibus for their outings.



*Bristol Evening Post*

Mentions of Goodrich House in the Bristol Mercury newspaper

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Sale notice from a huge auction in 1881 for road improvements by the Bristol Urban Sanitary Authority of 'salvages' including 20 plots and houses in York Road.

**A RATEPAYER.**

St. George, February 7th, 1891.

**A SUGGESTION.**

SIR—I am a hardworking horse, who has constantly to work in the Montpellier neighbourhood, and, as everyone who ever walks or rides round it knows, the corner of York road going round Goodrich house is the most trying place in the neighbourhood. Now I hear that the Grange and surrounding land is sold for building. If this is so, could not the road be lowered and the sharp bend be removed by removing the cottages immediately opposite Goodrich house?

Trusting a better qualified writer will take the matter up,  
I am, yours obliged,  
THE COAL MAN'S HORSE.

Bristol, February 6th, 1891.

Letter from 1891 (the reference to The Grange should probably be The Grove).