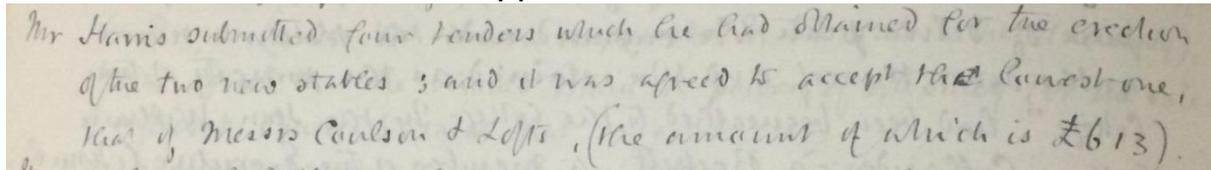


From Edwardian stables to Heong Gallery: a history

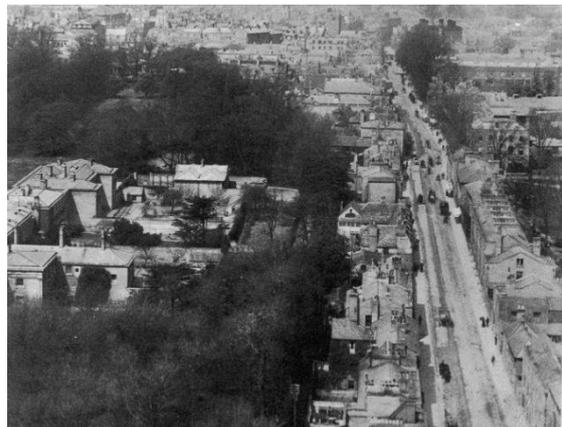
The building housing the new Heong Gallery at Downing was built c.1903, following the decision on 1 November 1902 to replace the College's original Wilkins-designed stable block with a smaller stable building on the East side of College near Regent Street and another, even smaller, one near Tennis Court Road. On 1 December 1902, builders Messrs Coulson & Lofts were appointed to build the new stables.



Mr Harris submitted four tenders which he had obtained for the erection of the two new stables; and it was agreed to accept the lowest one, that of Messrs Coulson & Lofts, (the amount of which is £613).

(*GB Minutes, 1 Dec 1902*).

The College had decided in 1885 to remove the original Wilkins stables, which occupied roughly the site of the Maitland Robinson Library today, and re-use the materials to improve the entrance to the College. However, the prohibitive cost of demolition in 1885 meant that the building's removal was postponed indefinitely. The original Wilkins stable block was not actually demolished until work began on the new stables, c.1903.



(The aerial view of Regent Street above, c.1897, shows the original Wilkins-designed stable block. *Archive ref. DCPH/6/3*).

The new stables appear to have been for the sole use of the Master, as the Fellows subsequently waived their rights to the use of stables, although the Governing Body minutes in the archive sadly contain very little information on the building after its completion. This photograph, taken from the window of R6 looking East towards the back of the College's



Regent Street properties in Lent 1937, is the earliest known photograph of the Edwardian stable block. Sadly, there are no early plans or images in the archive showing the front of the building.

(*Archive ref. DCPH/14/16*).

It is not known exactly when the stable block ceased to be used for its original purpose, although there is evidence that another stable was built for the Master closer to the Master's Lodge soon afterwards.

It is likely that the need for stables decreased early in the twentieth century with developments in other forms of transport. By the late twentieth century, the building had become the home of the College's maintenance staff, with a combination of store rooms below and rooms for staff on the floor above.



When the College began planning the redevelopment of its large commercial premises, Parker's House, on Regent Street several years ago, it was originally intended to include an art gallery within the redeveloped Parker's House building. However, the project's architects, Caruso St John, identified the 'old maintenance shed' in the courtyard behind as a possible alternative – and more publicly accessible - space for the new gallery, as part of a new court to be created near the entrance to the College. Planning permission for the new First Court project was granted in March 2013.

A new maintenance building was built in the courtyard behind Regent Street as part of the First Court project to free up the old stable block for its transformation into the new Heong Gallery, which opened to the public on 6th February 2016.