

The first St. Hilary's

The first St. Hilary's, a timber building designed by Albert Purchas, was demolished in the 1940s to make way for a new church and tennis courts.

Captain Edward Dumaresq (pronounced Dumarick) purchased Portion 82, an area of 11 acres, in the Government Land Sale of 16 October 1851. The boundaries of Portion 82 were Cotham Road, Burke Road, Sackville Street and Thomas Street. All the streets within this Portion were duly named after his sons: Edward, John, Alfred and Rowland.

St Hellier's was a large home, which he designed and built on the south side of Alfred Street for the family of his younger son Alfred, his wife and seven children. (In 1889, he retained two rooms for himself, and for his manservant.)

Following a life of travel as a captain in the East India Company, and many years spent on his property at Longford, Tasmania, he decided to profit from his earlier land speculation on the mainland, subdividing and selling much of the Kew land. He remained however at St. Hellier's and died there in 1906, at the age of 104 years.

Captain Dumaresq had previously set aside a large block of land, on the corner of John and Rowland Streets, for the erection of a Church of England, to serve the future needs of the area's growing population. The land lay idle for some time, but by 1888, with Edward Dumaresq as one of the committee, a deposit of £50 was paid of an agreed purchase price of £600.

Mr and Mrs John Wilkinson, and Mr and Mrs Albert Purchas, convened the first meeting of the committee at the Wilkinson's home in Cotham Road.

Albert Purchas' plans were approved, and a tender of £784 accepted. Building began at once, and the first church service was held four months later.

In 1905, with the building entirely paid for, the Archbishop was asked to consecrate it but refused to do so on the grounds that it was a wooden building. It was not until 8 May 1943 that a new brick building was completed, free of debt and consecrated by another Archbishop.

The original timber church, facing Rowland Street, was demolished to make way for two tennis courts.



References:

Rogers, Dorothy, *A History of Kew*, 1973.

McCullough, C. Behan & Rodd, N. Gwen; *St Hilary's Anglican Church, Kew 1888-1998*.