

# **Building Report**

## **Kemp Hospice (formerly The Cedars), Mason Road**

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**Historic Kidderminster Project Ref: 283**

### **Introduction**

This work was undertaken as part of the Historic Kidderminster Project. Documents were used from both Kidderminster Library and Worcester Record Office. In addition I consulted the will of John Broom II, located at Family Records Centre in London. This building is of great significance in Kidderminster's history, part of it being a house erected in the 18<sup>th</sup> century by John Broom I, one of the pioneers of the town's carpet industry. It was at first called 'Blakebrook' or 'Blakebrook Cottage'. John Broom I is credited with bringing the secrets of weaving Brussels carpets to Kidderminster. He set up in partnership with John Pearsall c1749. (p215, Gilbert, 1990)

### **History**

The scene can be set by a Broom family memoir. ('Sketch of the Worcestershire Broomes', available in Kidderminster Library.) Written in 1882, the spelling of the family name had by then acquired a letter 'e' at the end. The writer recorded he had been born at the house built in 1732 by his great grandfather, John Broom, who died there. The house had been called 'Blakebrook' and his grandmother also died there.

Various documents establish beyond any doubt that this house was Blakebrook Cottage in Mason Road, later to become The Cedars.

John Broom's will, dated 27<sup>th</sup> May 1779, does not mention the location of his house. (Will available at Worcester RO.) It implies that his daughter Rebecca Pemberton and her two children were living with him. The will of his son, John Broom II, dated 1803, tells us that Rebecca was living in 'a certain messuage at or near the Black Brooke'. This house was bequeathed by the younger Broom to his wife, Elizabeth.

A deed of 1823 confirms that Elizabeth was living at Blakebrook Cottage. (WRO BA 5870/1) She died in 1824 and was the 'grandmother' referred to in the above-mentioned family memoir. The same deed shows that Elizabeth's unmarried daughter, Sarah Broom, was also living at Blakebrook Cottage.

Sarah then married the spinner, Thomas Lea (1771-1858). They are shown in the 1851 Kidderminster Borough census living at Blakebrook. A newspaper article of 1836 refers to their house, in particular the garden. It refers to 'the fanciful decorations of the surrounding gardens, the fountain, the grotto, the temple'. (Ten

Towns Messenger 8.7.1836). These features were later associated with the ownership of the property as the Cedars by the Dalley family.

By 1896 Clement Dalley was in residence at the Cedars. (Kelly's Directory) He was a corn and seed merchant, noted as an enlightened employer, having introduced a profit-sharing scheme for his employees. He was Mayor of Kidderminster 1909-10. His research into the viability of a British sugar beet industry was crucial to the eventual establishment of the industry in Kidderminster. He died in 1934. (Kidderminster Shuttle 24.3.1934)



**The Cedars of Clement Dalley (Photo- Margaret Vaudin)**

Clement's son, John, then carried on the seed merchant business and occupied the Cedars. He had parliamentary ambitions for the Conservative Party fighting and losing at Coventry North in 1948 and at Brierley Hill in 1951. Tragically he committed suicide by shooting himself in December 1951, weighed down by financial worries which were apparently groundless. (Kidderminster Shuttle 14.12.1951)

The Cedars was lately a hotel, before being purchased by Kemp Hospice, which refurbished the property before opening in c2004.

A blue plaque commemorating John Broom and Clement Dalley was unveiled at Kemp Hospice in October 2005.

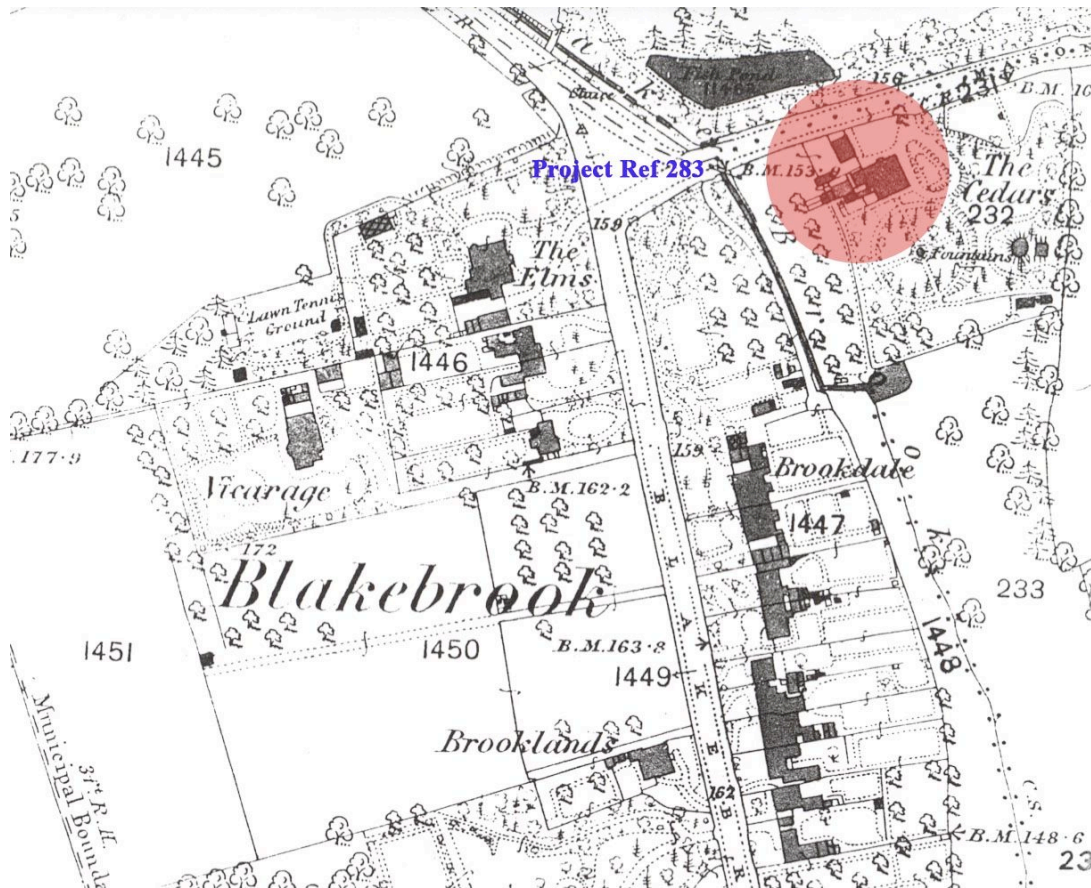
### **Description**

Viewed from Mason Road, the present building appears as two blocks. It is the section to the left which is the original old house. When it was the Cedars, the house faced away from the main road towards its extensive gardens. Today the main entrance to the hospice is from the main road into the original house and a ceiling timber is immediately visible to the visitor. The section to the right was completed

when the building was used as a hotel, replacing the group of outbuildings shown on the OS map.



The Cedars Hotel 2000



The Cedars 1885 - OS Ref: 822769

## **Bibliography**

'Kidderminster's Early Carpet Industry', by Don Gilbert – Vol.12, Transactions of the Worcestershire Archaeological Society, 1990.

'Sketch of the Worcestershire Broomes', by Rev. John Henry Broome. (1882)  
(Available Kidderminster Public Library.)