

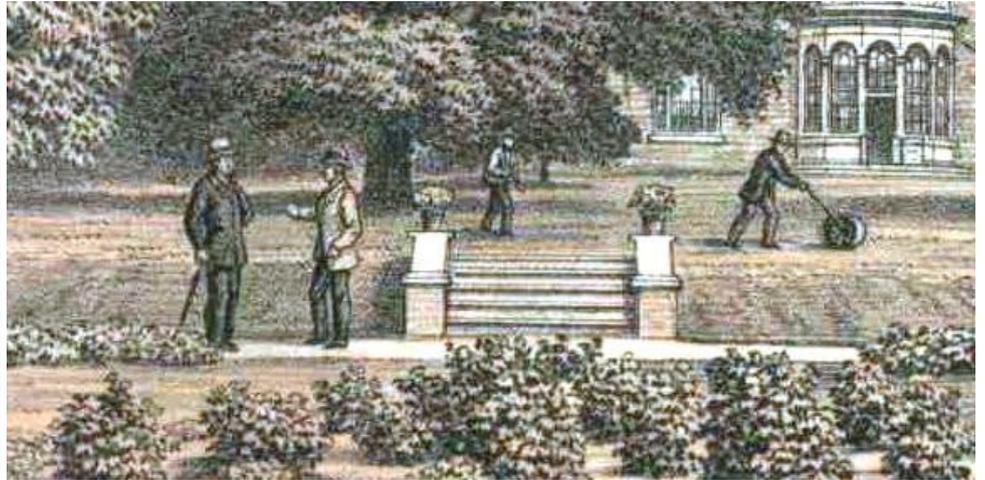
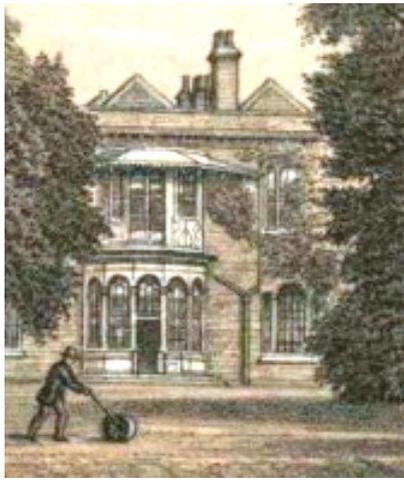
Grey Friars' Garden Room & Terrace over the decades



Grey Friars is a fine example of a Georgian town house at the East Hill end of Colchester's High Street.

The 'garden front', added to the original 1755 house in 1780, comprised a magnificent 'garden room' with an exquisite Adam-style marble fireplace surround, and elegant rooms either side.

The illustrations below come from a pre-photography era engraving of the gardens in the C19th.



Because the large window which previously lit the main staircase had to be removed, a roof dome was fitted in order that the staircase continued to receive natural light.

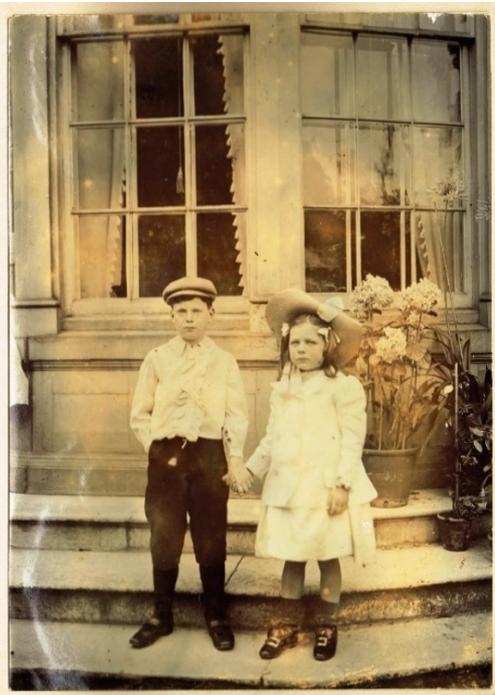


The Adam-style marble carvings of Greek mythological figures, two of them muses of the arts.

The magnificent fireplace and superb Georgian plaster decoration and woodwork provided an impressive room suitable for receiving important guests from Georgian Colchester's society.



The Fenn family, the last to occupy Grey Friars as a family home, used this room to the full in their social lives. In 1896 Dr Edward Liveing Fenn wrote to his son: *"We had our Shakespeare reading ... the bow window in the drawing room a bank of flowers for the stage ... tea in the study ... supper in the dining room ... everyone said it was a brilliant evening..."*



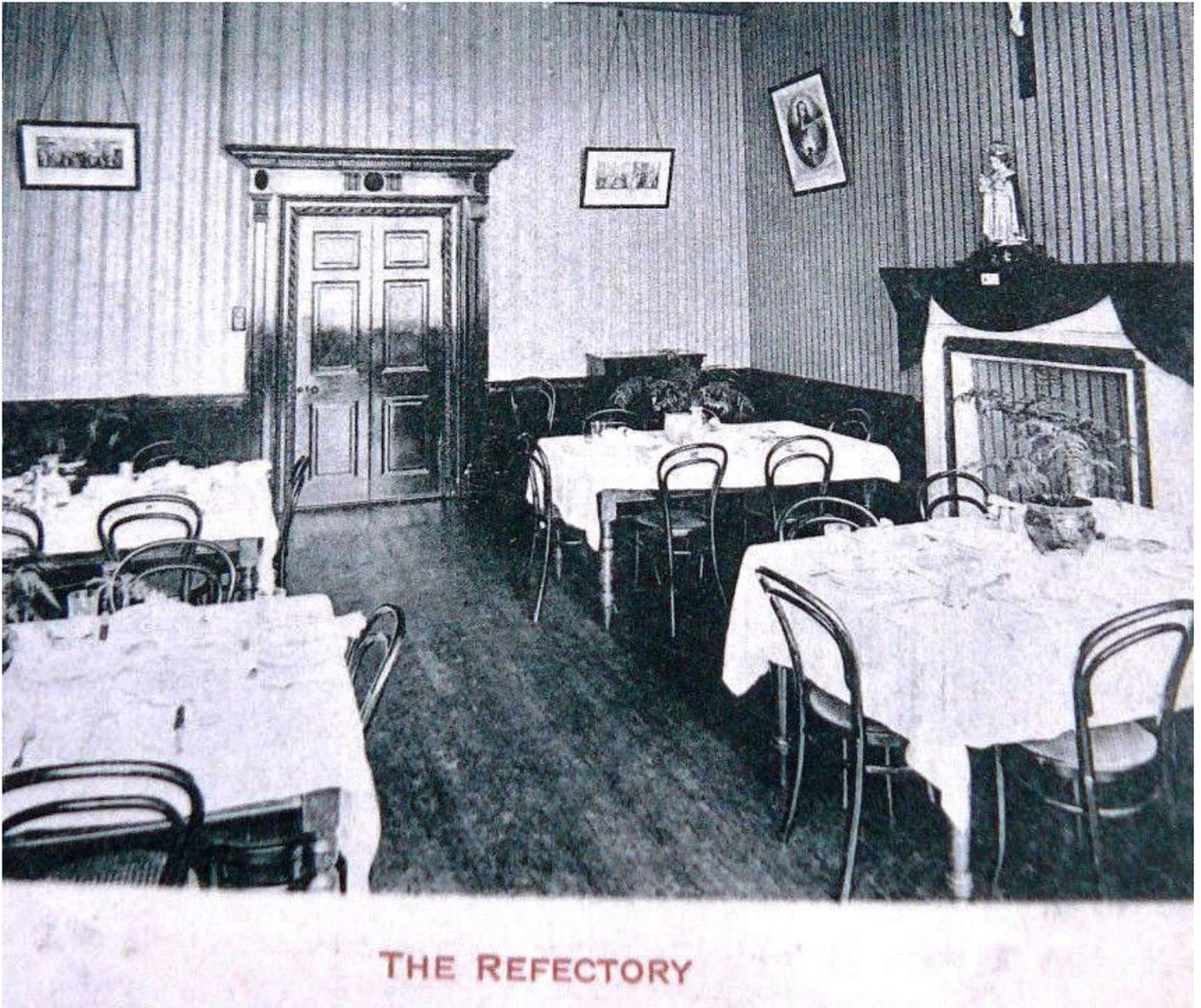
The garden front and terrace, a favourite place for photos.

(left) The last two children to be born at Grey Friars, Edward and Adria Fenn. Tragically, Edward was shot dead by a sniper in Palestine in WW1.

(right) Their elder brother Harold, whose son (also Edward) gave us these photos from the family archives after a visit to the college before it closed.



In 1904, Dr Fenn sold to the Ladies of Nazareth, who converted Grey Friars to a convent school, and by this time the room had taken on a more spartan feel, being used as their dining room, with the classical Greek nude carvings firmly covered over with a heavy thick black cloth.



Thus, from 1904, the educational era, which was to last for just over 100 years, had begun.



(left) Another view of the garden room in use as the convent dining room

(right) Convent school pupils on the garden terrace