



## THE BISHOP'S PALACE AT SOUTHWELL.

*From the Nottingham Guardian of 14<sup>th</sup> May 1920*

By the courtesy of the architect, Mr W.D. Caroe we are able to give this morning a finished drawing of the new residence for the Bishop of Southwell, which is now in course of erection on the site of the ancient palace of the Archbishops of York. When the new diocese was carved out of Lincoln and Lichfield, and Dr Ridding was appointed in 1884, men's minds were greatly perturbed about the severance of old ties, and every detail in the organisation of the new diocese, even to its name and its cathedral, afforded scope for difference of opinion. Another such subject was where the bishop should reside, at Southwell, Nottingham, or Derby, and Bishop Ridding very prudently made his arrangements simply for his own episcopate, and left the selection of an official residence to those who came after him. His successor, the present Bishop of Southwell, has therefore had the advantage of looking at the question after a quarter of a century of diocesan experience, and with the aid of his clergy, has arrived at the wise conclusion that the balance of advantage is for the official residence of the bishop to be close to the cathedral. This decision has the attraction of reviving the historical associations of the place, for it brings back to its old use the site of the palace of the Archbishops of York, which was built by Archbishop John Kempe between 1425 and 1452, was completed by his successor, archbishop William Booth, and a favourite residence of Cardinal Wolsey. The very fact that the ruins which remain are extensive and interesting rendered more difficult the architect's task of dealing with them in planning a satisfactory modern residence. Dr Trollope, the last Bishop Suffragan, of Nottingham and an enthusiastic antiquary, looked forward to an actual restoration of the old palace. He therefore purchased the old site, and, at his own expense, in 1882, restored the great chamber or smaller hall on the north side of the great hall. Bishop Ridding, notwithstanding his choice of Thurgarton Priory as a residence, spent large sums with characteristic generosity at the beginning of his episcopate in putting in floors, ceilings, doors, fittings, and drainage, and otherwise completing the adjacent rooms and kitchens, so as to adapt

the hall for diocesan gatherings and hospitalities, for which the hall alone was inadequate. Mr. Caroe in preparing plans for a residence for the Bishop of Southwell which should satisfy the Ecclesiastical Commission, preferred to a costly and debatable attempt at the reconstruction of the vanished work of the fifteenth century, the erection of a picturesque and commodious building in which every available fragment of the old work should be incorporated. The old masonry has stood so well that in many cases it has been possible to use the walls as they stood and roof them over like new work. The old doorways, windows, and mouldings will add enormously to the archaeological interest of the completed building, and so conservative a spirit has been displayed that the Chinese paper of the morning room, built a hundred years ago, and curious as a novelty of the time, is being preserved. The foundation stone was laid on February 2<sup>nd</sup>, and the contract, which is in the hands of Messrs Fish and Son, of Nottingham, will run to about £7,000. Of the success with which Mr. Caroe has accomplished his purpose and the general effect of the building when finished, our readers are now able to judge.

With regard to the name The Bishop of Southwell invariably speaks of his new home as the Bishop's residence, but in previous instances this personal modesty has been overruled when there has been the tradition of a previous bishop's palace in the place, when it has been felt by those whose opinions must carry weight in Church matters, that a bishop is not entitled to make innovations. At Southwell, moreover, the name Palace has been so firmly established by the practice of centuries that no effort is likely to displace it.