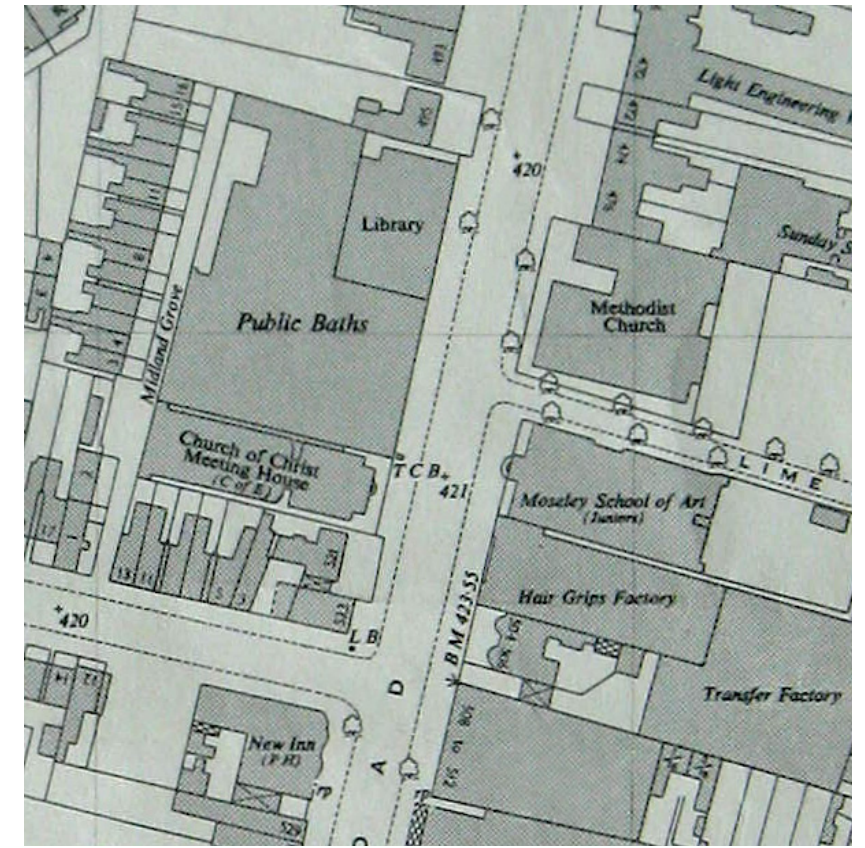


# 1921 - 1944

## Modern roots are formed



### The new Junior School of Arts and Crafts

In 1921 the Junior Art Department, including girls and staff, moved from the Central Art School to Moseley Road. A three year course for 13-16 year old students was established.

Entry was by a special examination with an average 600 pupils competing for 100 places each year. The higher fees charged by Moseley Road indicated its special status amongst Branch Schools in the city.

For the next 21 years the Junior School ran in parallel with the evening Branch Art School, each having its own headmaster and staff. They became a hothouse of vocational learning. Both schools focused on elementary drawing and design: visualisation, objective and memory drawings of animals and plants, and accurately copied geometric drawings. At the Junior School, students were occasionally taken to the Botanical Gardens or Birmingham Art Gallery for drawing lessons.

**Only one third of the curriculum covered academic subjects, the other two thirds focused on drawing, painting and crafts**

A Birmingham Education Committee report praised the school in 1936:

*"The work of some of the younger students appeared to me to be astonishing achievements in good observation and execution... especially the importance of the training given to the visual memory."*

'Executed Design' was taught as the preferred method of design. A project was conceptualised, designed and created by the same person. This made students highly employable even during the Great Depression.

**Discipline was harsh: pupils recall that it was unwise to ask questions because replies could be humiliating or met with physical chastisement**

In 1923, at the age of 40, Ralph Sargisson was appointed Headmaster of the Junior School and slowly older Arts and Craft practitioners were replaced by younger teachers with a more modernist outlook.

In 1944 a progressive young art teacher, Truda Lane, introduced a more personal approach to teaching, allowing creativity to emerge without excessive instruction. Generally during this period, little changed from the school's philosophy, it remained a skill-training vocational course with a slightly expanded general education to satisfy the national curriculum.

