

**THE VESTRY HALL, EUGENE STREET,
ST. PAUL'S, BRISTOL.**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL STANDING BUILDING SURVEY

BUAD 4428
BRSMG 2007/101

**for:
Urbis (Vestry Hall) Limited**

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ABSTRACT

Avon Archaeological Unit Limited was commissioned by Urbis (Vestry Hall) Limited to undertake a Standing Building Survey of the Vestry Hall at Eugene Street, St. Paul's (NGR ST 5994 7359).

This project was generated in response to a request for a Standing Building Survey from the office of the City Archaeologist. It was carried out according to a brief and specification prepared by Avon Archaeological Unit Limited and agreed with Mr Peter Insole, Archaeological Officer, Bristol City Council, and in accordance with the relevant guidelines of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, English Heritage's Management of Archaeological Projects (2) and the standard procedures of Avon Archaeological Unit Limited.

The Study Area, a parcel of land c. 1,032 m², fronts the West side of Pennywell Road, St. Paul's, Bristol. At the commencement of the survey the buildings comprised a central late 19th century two storey structure known to have been built originally as a meeting hall and later converted into a cinema in the early 20th century, together with a contemporary frontage structure on Pennywell Road interpreted as a foyer. Two smaller buildings adjoining on the West of the main hall were thought to pre-date it, and may contain elements from earlier 19th century buildings that may have stood in the Study Area. A small cellar associated with the northernmost of these buildings may also date from the earlier 19th century.

The Standing Building Survey was undertaken prior to partial demolition and redevelopment of the Study Area. Notes and digital colour photographs were made of all accessible external areas of the buildings within the Study Area. Selected views of the interior were also recorded. The position of the photographer and the angle of view for each photograph were recorded on scale plans supplied by the developer.

Recording of late 20th century features was intended to characterize rather than create a detailed record. Detailed photographic recording was undertaken on the exterior and interior of the 19th century structures. Particular attention was paid to the original ceiling of the Hall, where visible. This ceiling was characterised by a geometric design in high relief executed in sawn timber on a lath and plaster base.

During conversion of the Study Area the internal partitions and the first floor of the Hall were removed. It was found the external walls of the Hall had been constructed with load bearing round arches, which were then filled in with either non-load bearing masonry or windows.

This exercise has created a permanent record of the Vestry Hall and associated structures prior to and during conversion of the main Hall into residential flats.

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NOTES

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ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
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| aOD | Above Ordnance Datum |
| BRSMG | Bristol Museums and Art Galleries Accession Number |
| BUAD | Bristol Urban Archaeological Database |
| OS | Ordnance Survey |

1. INTRODUCTION (see Figures 1, 2, and 3)

An area of land (c. 1,032 m²) fronting the West side of Pennywell Road, St. Paul's, Bristol (NGR ST 5994 7359) had been earmarked for residential development.

Avon Archaeological Unit Limited was commissioned to undertake an archaeological Standing Building Survey of the Study Area on behalf of Urbis (Vestry Hall) Limited.

The Study Area had most recently been used as an engineering workshop. At the time of the survey it was vacant. Subsequently the ceiling, roof, and all internal levels and partitions were removed to facilitate the construction of residential flats within the building.

2. METHODOLOGY

The author carried out the bulk of the standing building survey on the 17th and the 18th December 2007. The Study Area was visited by Donna Young on the 7th April 2008 to observe the upper floor ceiling after removal of the internal partitions. The author visited again on the 8th September 2008 immediately prior to the removal of the roof and ceiling. During these visits digital photographs and hand written notes were made.

The project was carried out in accordance with a brief specified by Mr R. H. Jones, Archaeological Officer, Bristol City Council, to a Scheme of Works drawn up by Avon Archaeological Unit Limited and agreed with him.

All safely accessible parts of the site and buildings were viewed. Photographs were taken with the intention of characterizing the site rather than duplicating the recording of similar features. The location from which each shot was taken, and the angle of view, was recorded on plans of the site printed on A3 paper at various scales, created in 2007 by Open Arch Limited and supplied by Urbis (Vestry Hall) Limited. Most levels on these plans were not tied into the Ordnance Datum and the survey grid used did not relate to the OS grid. For the purpose of publication the survey plans have been rectified to the OS grid. A reduced level on survey station T1 gives a factor of 87.64 m to subtract from the artificial datum to obtain the correct height above Ordnance Datum rounded to the nearest 10 mm.

The internal element of the standing building survey was broadly undertaken from the first floor down, with variations as individual areas became available to view, or to allow for lighting conditions.

Two formats were used for photographic recording during the standing building survey, digital colour SLR and medium format 120 colour print film. The digital photographs from the survey were numbered 001 to 283, without any break in the numbering. This reflects the high number of rooms and the volume of detail. In total one medium format colour negative films (CN 1) was used during the standing building survey. The project archive will be deposited with the City of Bristol Museum and Art Gallery under the Accession Number BRSMG 2007/101.

3. GEOLOGY, TOPOGRAPHY AND CURRENT LAND USE (see Figures 1, 2 and 3)

The Study Area is located in the former district of St. Jude's, now part of St. Paul's, Bristol, which lies between Easton, to the North East, and the Centre, to the South West. The Study Area fronts the West side of Pennywell Road and the East side of a spur off Eugene Street.

The underlying geology of the Study Area comprises rock of the Redcliff Sandstone Formation, part of the Mercia Mudstone Group, from the Carboniferous era (British Geological Survey 2004).

The Study Area lies in the lower Frome valley on land rising from c. 11 m aOD in the North East to c. 13 m aOD in the South West. At the time of this survey the majority of the Study Area was occupied by redundant buildings last used as an engineering workshop. A major part of the Study Area comprised a large two storey building named as the Vestry Hall, built in 1880 and used for the first half of the 20th century as a cinema. Access to the Study Area was via a vehicle and pedestrian entrance at the end of a spur off Eugene Street. Most of the surrounding properties represent a mix of domestic and educational buildings, but the area is dominated by light engineering works. The original hall building is now largely out of context.

4. THE BUILDING RECORD

4.1. Introduction

Recording of the Study Area commenced on the 17th December 2007. Vehicular access to the Study Area was gained through the roller shutter entrance at the end of the spur off Eugene Street (see **Figure 3**, 48 and 54, and **Figure 4**, 50 and 52). Pedestrian access was gained via the adjacent doorway. The Study Area was entirely vacant and unoccupied.

Previous research has not elucidated the original function of the building, though it is likely to have been a meeting hall or entertainment venue.

4.2. The External Recording and the Topographic Survey (see Figures 3, 4, 5 and Plates)

Vestry Hall fronts the West side of Pennywell Road and dominates the local skyline (see **Figure 3**, 1). The building was clearly intended to front Pennywell Road, as the date 1880, and the name, Vestry Hall, are outlined in relief stonework above the central East window (see **Figure 3**, 16 and 19).

The Main Hall

The main building was executed in the style of a Classical Greco-Roman temple with strong hints towards the Egyptian. Despite the appellation it was however, completely devoid of religious iconography, and indeed of any floral, zoomorphic or anthropomorphic decoration whatsoever. Previous research has not identified the name of the architect and it may be possible to ascertain the identity by comparison with other buildings in Bristol of a similar age and style.

Aligned North East to South West, parallel to Pennywell Road, the main core of the building measured approximately 24 m by 17 m, with the roof height at 13.14 m above survey datum (see **Figure 5**).

To North, South and East the roof was obscured from view by a parapet. Partial observations of the roof from ground level indicated the roof was hipped, and covered with ceramic tiles. Later observations in September 2008 confirmed the hipped roof with ceramic tiles and indicated a queen-post timber construction (see **Plates**, 278). A chimney in Bath stone ashlar was located near the North East corner. A possible brick chimney was also noted in the western half of the southern elevation. The roof was removed in September 2008.

External walls of the main building are executed in fair-faced blocks and slabs of pennant sandstone laid randomly in irregular and uneven courses, with stressed quoins. The North and East corners of the building are in red brick, while the archway piers, as exposed, are in sandstone. Round cast iron plates for cross ties are evident at roof level in both the North and South elevations. A brick wall with whitewash c. 5.2 m tall abuts the North face of the main hall. This probably represents the otherwise demolished remains of an adjoining building. This wall seals a wide rectangular buttress of stonework that runs up the North elevation, and appears to be an integral feature of the building. Internally this feature is represented by a recession of the wall at this location.

No parapet was indicated on the East elevation, but a cornice in eroding moulded Bath stone could be glimpsed below the guttering (see **Figure 4**, 57).

The Pennywell Road frontage is executed in ashlar of Bath stone or similar, from the level of the first storey floor and up, and these formed the quoins for the East and South corners at that level (see **Figure 3**, 7 and 16). Decorative stonework was largely limited to this façade of the main building. Beneath the parapet runs an entablature, the cornice of which projects some way out from the main building (see **Figure 3**, 16 and 19). The date '1880' has been carved in low relief serif in a recessed panel on the parapet. Below this on the frieze appears the name 'Vestry Hall' in high relief sans-serif capitals out of four massive blocks of Bath stone or similar material. The possibility these blocks were in reconstituted stone cannot be ruled out.

A roll-moulded stringcourse defines the base of the entablature.

Below the entablature four evenly spaced rectangular buttresses in Bath stone ashlar divided the façade. Each buttress is capped with a seemingly massive ashlar with pointed cap and large round arched recessed panel filled with polychrome brickwork. The lighter hue, together with the unusual size and shape of these ashlars, strongly suggest they are of moulded reconstituted Bath stone. In each recess there are 18 courses of stretcher bond polychrome brickwork. The brick colours appear to have been chosen randomly, yellows and light greens predominate, with occasional use of reds and blues. The upper bricks have been roughly shaped to fit the arch of the recess.

Below the level of the first floor it appears the walling on this face of the main building had been constructed in rough-hewn fair-faced pennant sandstone, as were the other walls. The buttresses were constructed in this manner also, but with quoins in red brick.

A total of five round arched windows lit the upper floor of the main hall building (see **Figure 3**, 16, 19, 21, 42, and **Figure 5**). Three are located on the East elevation (one each between the four buttresses), one centrally on the West elevation and one centrally on the South elevation. Each window follows a similar design, although later modifications were apparent at the time of recording. The principal elements are in moulded Bath stone. Each arch is constructed of long voussoirs, with a corbel like projecting keystone. The remains of a role moulded hood around the western and southern arches is evident, but these have been completely removed from the three eastern windows. The sills of these three were not evident from external observation, but the sills of the remaining two were in moulded ashlar.

Each window was divided into three by two pillars of moulded stone. Each of these windows was framed in wood with a design incorporating rectangular and round arched panels of glass. The central panels of both the South and West windows had been replaced with a pivoted opening panel comprising a single square pane of glass. These replacement panels are not evident in the three eastern windows (contrary to the surveyed illustration), where the original design survives intact. Doors for fire escapes, inserted into the stonework, have replaced the lower central panels of the two flanking eastern windows. These doors were presumably added at the same time as the first floor, or some time thereafter.

There were no windows in the main North elevation, and no external evidence for any windows in the building at ground floor level. This raises issues of use, as it would have been impossible for anyone inside the building to observe anything at ground level outside the building, and vice versa, no one outside the building could observe what was going on inside. As such the building would naturally have lent itself to use as a cinema, with the addition of a few blackout drapes over the windows. In terms of natural lighting the majority of light would have entered from the East, so the building would have been lit best in the mornings.

The Foyer

There remain a small number of subsidiary buildings to describe, of which the principal is a single storey foyer area fronting Pennywell Road (see **Figure 3**, 13, 16, and 21). This building obscured much of the lower eastern face of the main hall. The frontage wall of the foyer was executed in squared pennant sandstone blocks laid in regular courses, with a plinth course in moulded pennant set at ground level on the southern end of the frontage.

There are two entrances into the foyer from the street, of which the principal was a double doorway placed centrally. The truncated round arch over this is executed in a similar style and materials to the window arches in the main building. The lintels, doorposts and quoins supporting the arch are in moulded Bath stone. Each doorway was filled with two wooden double doors. The whole arrangement is stepped up from street level and supported by moulded pennant blocks, with a single step up from street level in two courses of red brick, paved with pennant flagstones. A red brick wall that appears to be a later insertion occupies the space between the arms of the arch, the lintel and the top of the parapet. The upper surviving voussoirs of the arch appear to have been crudely cut off at the top, strongly suggesting the arch was originally complete and the frontage wall was at least as high as the arch would have been.

The second entrance is a single rectangular doorway at the northern end of the foyer, with lintel and quoins in moulded Bath stone, accessed from street level by two pennant steps.

On either side of the main doorway are a group of three rectangular windows in moulded Bath stone. There is a single rectangular porthole in Bath stone located near the southern end of the wall.

There are two vertical rectangular channels cut into the stone of this wall, one located towards the southern end, the other located North of the main door and adjacent to a window. The purpose of these channels was not identified during this survey.

Overall the style of the decorative masonry employed in the foyer frontage suggests it is contemporary with the construction of the main hall.

Other Structures

A second subsidiary building adjoined the western side of the main hall, fronting the eastern side of the spur off Eugene Street (see **Figure 3, 40**). The west wall is principally constructed of mortared rough-hewn fair-faced pennant sandstone blocks and slabs, laid in uneven courses. The southernmost doorway and window (in brick and breeze block) appear to be later inserts, as does the grilled vent and the round porthole at the northern end of the wall. The small central double doorway appears to be contemporary with the construction of this wall.

The northern wall of this building appears to have been completely rebuilt and replaced with a 20th century brick wall, a roller shutter entrance and corrugated steel cladding. The southern wall of this building had been rendered, but enough had fallen off to show it had been constructed in a similar style and materials to the western wall. The presence of a brick chimneybreast and fireplace at first floor level, suggest this wall had originally formed the North wall of a tenement house.

An enclosed staircase, external to the main hall, leads from the first floor level of the hall to the ground floor of the present building (see **Figure 3, 44**).

Putting aside the later 20th century modifications, the style of this building suggests it was earlier than the construction of the Vestry Hall, possibly representing parts of several structures that formerly stood at and adjoining this location.

Other structures within the Study Area included a c. 7 m high 20th century brick wall with a large electric roller shutter door and a steel side door, enclosing the courtyard from the Eugene Street spur (see **Figure 3, 48** and **Figure 4, 52**). There was a breeze block lean-to ground floor extension with a corrugated clear plastic roof against the North face of the hall (see **Figure 3, 54**), a temporary steel framed storage area inside the Pennywell Road frontage wall (see **Figure 4, 58** and **60**), and a rendered steel and concrete extension with double doors to the North wall of the foyer (see **Figure 4, 60**). The northern door in the foyer frontage opened onto this northern extension, where pennant flagstone flooring was visible beneath the litter (see **Figure 4, 66**).

The Courtyard (see Figures 3, 54 and Figure 4, 61 and 62)

The small courtyard area around the northern end of the buildings had been surfaced with a concrete hard standing. Surrounding buildings are of late 20th century design and construction. A small overgrown area was bounded from the Study Area by a chain mesh fence.

The principal element of interest is the short frontage wall along Pennywell Road (see Figure 4, 58). This wall constructed mostly of mortared rough hewn and fair faced pennant blocks and slabs, seemed to incorporate elements of several earlier structures, and had indeed been partly incorporated into the main West wall of the foyer. The stratigraphic evidence preserved in this wall suggest it represents the presence of one or more structures that formerly stood on the site of the present Vestry Hall.

4.3. The Cellar (see Figure 6)

Recording of the cellar was hampered by a lack of fixed artificial lighting with a working electricity supply.

The cellar is a relatively modest affair. The entrance is located out-with the main footprint of the Vestry Hall, in the building adjoining the Hall on the West side (see Figure 7). The cellar itself lies under the North West corner of the Hall. A large rectangular hinged wooden panel sealed the cellar entrance at ground floor level (see Figure 6, 176). A straight flight of 10 steps leads from the ground floor down to an entrance foyer to the cellar, which includes a short blind passage opposite the steps (see Figure 6, 178 and 179). Each step is constructed of a single course of mortared squared pennant blocks, capped with pennant flagstone. The stair and foyer area walls are in rough-hewn and fair-faced pennant blocks and slabs, mortared in uneven courses. The stressed quoins of the doorway to the cellar are in brick, while door and doorframe are in wood.

There is a short internal entrance passageway that curves from South East to North East (see Figure 6, 182).

The cellar itself is aligned North East to South West and measures xxx m long by xxx m wide. The vaulted roof of the cellar is approximately 1.96 m above the floor level. The floor of the cellar slopes down from South East to North West. This was particularly noticeable against the North wall (see Figure 6, 180). Other than for drainage purposes the reason for this slope could not be discerned. The vaulted roof of the cellar is constructed of lime mortared hand-made bricks laid in a stretcher bond, while the walls are constructed of lime mortared rough hewn and fair faced pennant sandstone blocks and slabs laid in uneven courses. The floor was of pennant flagstones.

Wall mounted electrical equipment and cabling, together with a length of air hose, suggest the cellar had been used most recently for air heating or filtering equipment. The purpose and date of a small alcove in the West wall of the cellar could not be identified (see Figure 6, 183).

The general construction of the cellar is similar to others in Bristol that date from the late 18th century or early 19th century, though a later or earlier date is always possible. The cellar most likely predates the construction of the Vestry Hall above it and probably relates to one of the earlier buildings that formerly occupied this part of the Study Area.

4.4. The Ground Floor Interior (see Figure 7)

There are three main areas to the ground floor of the Study Area: the main hall building, the adjoining foyer on the East side, and the adjoining buildings on the West side. Access to all three was gained via a modern pedestrian doorway on the North side of the building. This door opened onto a small corridor area in the body of the main hall, with doorways opening onto the remainder of the hall building and a flight of wooden stairs up to the first floor (See Figure 7, 140).

The Main Hall Area

As indicated in **Figure 7**, at the time of the survey in December 2007 the ground floor of the hall was subdivided into several workshops by the addition of a number of partitions. By September 2008 these had been completely removed. The partitions were of late 20th century origin and no further record of them was made. Artificial lighting was available for the recording of the main hall, for which there was little means by which natural lighting could ingress.

Also as indicated in **Figure 7**, the ceiling and first floor were supported on a regular sequence of reinforced steel joists on rectangular steel columns (see **Figure 7**, 141 and 153). All these appeared to be of later 20th century origin, and had been removed, along with the first floor and partitions, by September 2008. The flooring was of pine floorboards throughout.

There were a few features of note. Although most of the walls and internal features had been painted a standard cream colour, it was observed that all main walls except the face of the southern wall had been tiled to a height of 2.76 m above floor level, with uniform square glazed ceramic wall tiles in burgundy. The location where these tiles could be observed has been indicated on **Figure 7**. By September 2008 almost all tiles had been removed from these walls, which had been largely stripped of all rendering down to the pennant masonry (see **Plates**, 273).

Along the central section of the southern wall was a stepped recession (see **Figure 7**, 153), which continued up beyond the level of the first floor and terminated in a recessed blind round arch, punctuated by the single South facing window (see **Figure 8**, 77). A similar recession, but with no evidence of stepping at ground floor level, ran from the base of the ground floor up past the level of the first floor, again ending in a recessed blind arch (see **Figure 8**, 184).

The Western Buildings

In the southern building were located the toilet blocks and rear stairwell. This area had been entirely modernised throughout and there were no features of note. All lighting in this area was artificial.

There was a central section which at the time of this survey was completely inaccessible. Views from the first floor indicated this area was unroofed and formed a small enclosed courtyard passageway.

Heavy rendering of the walls and a concrete floor meant there were few features of note in the northern building. There was some natural lighting through the clear plastic corrugated roof. The steps down to the cellar have been described in the section above, so the only other feature of note was an interior view of the blocked porthole (see **Figure 7**, 151).

The Foyer (see **Figure 7**, 163 to 173)

There was no artificial lighting available in this area of the building at the time of recording, and no ingress of natural light. All recording was undertaken by flashlight. The décor in this area was in a general state of dilapidation.

As indicated earlier, the roof of the foyer was a completely modern replacement of timber joists and galvanized corrugated steel sheets. The floor of concrete sloped down on either side towards an off centre gutter that ran along most of the length of the building.

In the eastern wall the blocked wooden sash windows could be observed, but the main doorway in the same wall had been completely boarded over. The wooden double doors at the northern end of the building were visible, but there were no associated masonry features.

The principal feature of note was therefore the central entrance into the main hall, which managed to retain the air of a cinema foyer. A blocked window on the southern side of the entrance was reminiscent of a box office window, though there was no direct evidence to indicate this feature dated from the use of the hall as a cinema (see also **Plates**, 171). The wooden frames of the rectangular window and doorway were contemporary in construction. An interior view of the entrance revealed the round arched wooden doorframe lit by windows in the arch space that opened above the present foyer roof line (see Figure 7, 160).

On the northern side of the foyer entrance pier a small area of plaster had fallen off, to reveal mortared Bath stone ashlar masonry that had obviously been intended for display.

No evidence could be observed for the nature of the original roof over the foyer, but it was clear this space played an important part in the circulation of people into and out of the main hall during its lifetime as a meeting hall and cinema.

4.5. The First Floor Interior (see Figure 8)

At the time of the initial survey in 2008, this area had been partially divided by the addition of partitioned office space with false ceilings, located along the North and West walls. These partitions had been removed by April 2008. During daylight hours this floor of the hall was the most well lit, with, as previously described, three large windows in the East wall, together with one large window in the South wall and an equivalent in the West wall.

The first floor was accessed from the ground floor via two stairways, one an external covered staircase located against the West face of the building, which led down to the southernmost of the two western buildings. The other stairway was internal, set along the side of the North wall towards the western corner. There were also two blocked doorways in the East wall, one located in the northern window of the three, and the other in the southern window. These appeared to have been later inserts that presumably opened onto fire escapes no longer extant at the time of recording.

There was a short appendage to the main hall, a modern office unit built over the northernmost of the western buildings, accessed through two parallel single doorways in the northern end of the eastern wall. There were no features of note in this unit, which did however provide useful views to the South.

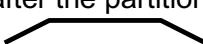
The floor of the main hall area was surfaced with what appeared to be an early form of modern laminate flooring, in the style of a dance floor pattern. As this style seems incompatible with the last known use as an engineering workshop, it is possible the floor was originally intended for use by indoor sports, dance, and exercise classes. A noted above the floor was of late 20th century construction, and probably post dates the demise of the cinema in 1954 (BaRAS 2004, 6).

The windows have already been described above, as have the northern and southern arched recesses. A further two arched recesses were observed in the western wall, one either side of the central window (see **Figure 8**, 124 and 184). There was no external evidence there had ever been a window at either of these two locations.

During the site visit undertaken in September 2008, the purpose of these arches became clear. By this time the infilling material had been removed (see **Plates**, 271). The arches operated as the main load bearing mechanism within the walls of the hall, relieving the general loading on the walls. The infilling and blocking material could therefore be thinner as it was not load bearing. Where windows were not required the arches were disguised by external cladding.

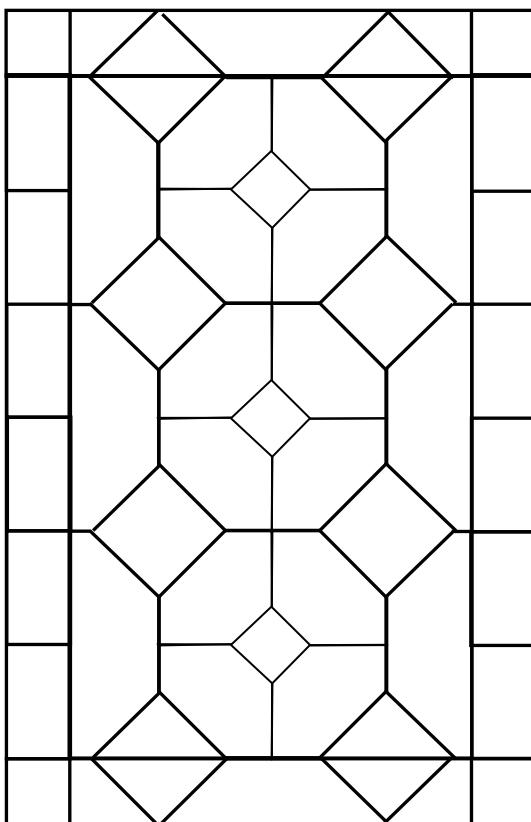
The Hall Ceiling

Because part of the ceiling was obscured by the internal partitions, the recording was divided between December 2007, and April 2008 after the partitions had been removed. In profile the ceiling was shaped like this.



The ceiling itself was of suspended lath and plaster construction (see **Figure 8**, 279), with the decorative details in high relief executed in painted timber. The whole of the hall ceiling was enclosed and incorporated into a simple and repetitive geometric design (see below and **Figure 8**). The main centre section design was composed of three octagons arranged down the centre line of the ceiling, with adjoining half octagons on either side, leaving squares in the space between.

Schematic Representation of the Ceiling Design



Within the three central octagons, in lower relief than the main pattern, was a smaller pattern based on four equal lozenges aligned around the inside edge of each octagon. This resulted in a square area in the centre of each octagon.

The sloping long sides of the ceiling were divided, in similar style, into equally spaced rectangular panels. Along the long sides, where the ceiling and the wall intersected there was a regular sequence of moulded corbels.

Four cast iron fittings were spaced equally within each of the three central squares (see **Figure 8**, 107). These are presumed to be early lamp fittings, possibly for the gas lamps, which must have formed the original artificial light source for the hall in 1880.

The paint scheme, as recorded, was not thought to be original, and a closer inspection of the ceiling could not be undertaken to ascertain if there were earlier traces of paint.

5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A programme of Standing Building Recording has been undertaken to provide a permanent record of structures located within the Study Area, a parcel of land located in the angle between Eugene Street and the west side of Pennywell Road, St. Paul's, Bristol.

There were essentially four main structures within the Study Area: a large late 19th century meeting hall named as Vestry Hall and dated 1880; a single storey foyer fronted Pennywell Road and adjoined the hall on the East; adjoining on the West were two small buildings, one at the southern end and one at the northern end.

The main Vestry Hall building is known to have been constructed by 1880. It was in use as a meeting hall until the early 20th century, when it was converted to use as a cinema, in which use it continued until 1954. The final use of the hall and ancillary buildings was as an engineering workshop with partition offices. Probably at some point after the hall ceased to be used as a cinema, a concrete and laminate floor on reinforced steel joists and piers was inserted, to divide the hall into two floors.

The foyer area appears in style and construction to be contemporary to the main hall. During the recording exercise some evidence was obtained to indicate how the foyer was used to direct the ingress of people into the hall during its use as a meeting hall/cinema. The original roof of the foyer was completely missing and had been replaced with a temporary structure.

The two adjoining western buildings appear from their construction to contain at least elements of structures that formerly adjoined the hall, and possibly predated it. A small vaulted cellar accessed through the northern building, but located beneath the footprint of the hall, may also predate the construction of the hall.

During clearance work on the first floor, the decorative geometric relief design on the hall ceiling was recorded. This is thought to be an original feature of the hall. The ceiling was in lath and plaster, with the relief work in sawn timbers.

In September 2008, during alterations to the main fabric of the building, it was revealed that several relieving arches had been built into the main walls of the hall and either filled with masonry or windows as required. It was also possible at that time to examine some details of the roof construction.

No further evidence was found for the original purpose of the hall, other than as a general meeting place. There was no surviving evidence for a stage. The surviving décor was entirely geometric and apparently devoid of symbolism.

All pertinent features of the Study Area have now been recorded prior to conversion of the main hall into flats.

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

6.1. Published Works

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- British Geological Survey 2004 *Bristol.* England and Wales Sheet 264, 1:50,000. Nottingham.
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