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Southampton Archaeology Unit

Report 1253

Building Recording at Avondale House, Southampton. SOU 1706

Dr AD Russel BA PhD MCIfA

2016

Client: Aircool Property LLP



SUMMARY SHEET

Site name/address: 33 Carlton Crescent, Southampton, SO15 2EW
SOU site code: 1706
Contractor site code: SOU 1706
HET consultation number: 7853
Planning application numbers: 15/02068/LBC and 15/02013/FUL.
Grid reference of centre of site: SU 42001277
Fieldwork dates 25/2/16- 20/4/16
Type of fieldwork: Building survey
Name of contracting unit: Southampton Archaeology Unit
Report author: Dr AD Russel
Name of client: Aircool Property LLP
Non-technical summary: <p>Recording work was carried out in Avondale House, 33 Carlton Crescent, Southampton during refurbishment. The building is Grade II listed and was built in 1833 for James Hawkins Thring, a successful wine merchant. Later tenants included Mrs Eliza Purvis, widow of Admiral John Child Purvis (1746-1825) a contemporary of Nelson. She subsequently bought it and spent the rest of her life there in some style, with a live-in staff of seven –butler, footman and five female servants. The building had been re-organised and extended in the 1920s, when it was turned into offices. In the 1950s a basement car park was inserted, and it had most recently been a pub. The recording work was confined to the attic area and a fireplace on the first floor. The work in the attic area revealed an original flat roof and lead rainwater system. The flat roof was presumably built to prevent the roof ridge from spoiling the classical lines of the upper part of the building, but it was later replaced with a pitched roof, probably due to water ingress, between the wars when practicality overcame style. The brickwork to the rear of the fireplace suggested that there had been a hob to either side of the fire to allow hot food and drinks to be prepared in the bedroom.</p>

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**Building Structure Recording at
Avondale House, 33 Carlton Crescent,
Southampton
SOU 1706**

By Dr AD Russel BA PhD MIFA

Archaeology Unit report	1253
Site Code	SOU 1706
Ordnance Survey grid reference	442009 112770

1. Summary

Recording work was carried out in Avondale House, 33 Carlton Crescent, Southampton during refurbishment. The building is Grade II listed and was built in 1833 for James Hawkins Thring, a successful wine merchant. Later tenants included Mrs Eliza Purvis, widow of Admiral John Child Purvis (1746-1825) a contemporary of Nelson. She subsequently bought it and spent the rest of her life there in some style, with a live-in staff of seven –butler, footman and five female servants. The building had been re-organised and extended in the 1920s, when it was turned into offices. In the 1950s a basement car park was inserted, and it had most recently been a pub. The recording work was confined to the attic area and a fireplace on the first floor. The work in the attic area revealed an original flat roof and lead rainwater system. The flat roof was presumably built to prevent the roof ridge from spoiling the classical lines of the upper part of the building, but it was later replaced with a pitched roof, probably due to water ingress, between the wars when practicality overcame style. The brickwork to the rear of the fireplace suggested that there had been a hob to either side of the fire to allow hot food and drinks to be prepared in the bedroom.

2. Introduction

2.1 The Archaeology Unit of Southampton City Council carried out a programme of archaeological building recording at Avondale House, 33 Carlton Crescent Southampton SO15 2EW (figure 1) on behalf of Aircool Property LLP. The aim of the work was to make a record of those areas where historic fabric was to be subject to intervention. The survey was made in February, March and April 2016 by Dr AD Russel.

2.2. The building is Grade II listed, and lies within the Carlton Crescent Conservation Area. The listing description is as follows:

Circa 1830. Corner building. Three storeys and basement. Stuccoed with rusticated ground floor. Cornice and plain frieze. South elevation has 2 windows and a door but has a projecting later wing which cuts into the portico originally having 4 Doric stone columns, two and a half of which remain. It is approached by a flight of stone steps. East elevation has a large 3 storey segmental bow with frieze and cornice carried round three windows.

2.3 A watching brief and building recording on the whole property was carried out in 1998 under site code SOU 917.

2.4 Southampton City Council granted permission to Aircool Property LLP for the redevelopment of the site under planning references 15/02068/LBC and 15/02013/FUL. The works included demolition of the single-storey extension to the rear of the building, conversion of existing premises, previously used as a public house, to ten flats including revisions to internal layouts, changes to windows on front elevation and formation of car parking areas (submitted in conjunction with 15/02013/FUL). A number of conditions were placed on the works including:

03. APPROVAL CONDITION - Archaeological structure-recording, within 2 months [Time limited condition]

Within two months of the date of this planning permission a written scheme of investigation with regard to the archaeological structure-recording associated with the building, to include a programme of photographic recording, shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Once agreed the development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details and the photographic record shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority.

Reason:

To ensure that the recording of a significant structure is initiated at an appropriate point in the development programme.

2.5 The extent of the structure recording was further defined by the Local Planning Authority on 20/11/15 as a report and photographic record of any structural changes to the original fabric of the building, defined as

- the area of the third floor roof
- the fireplaces at first and second floor that were hidden
- the south wall at first and second floor where removal of render should reveal original window openings

3. Site location.

3.1. No 33 is located to the north of the city centre of Southampton on the western side of Carlton Crescent on the corner of its junction with Carlton Place, at grid ref 442009 112770 (fig 1). The geology is the Wittering Formation (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

4. Historical Background

4.1 The following is synthesised from an article by A G K Leonard in the *Journal of Southampton Local History Forum*, No.17 Autumn 2010. (<https://southamptonlocalhistorycentre.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/lhf-journal-17-autumn-2010.pdf>), together with other research by Southampton Archaeology.

4.2 Originally named Clarence House, the building was constructed in 1833 for James Hawkins Thring, a successful High Street wine merchant with a property portfolio. It remained empty for nearly two years, until it was leased from 1835 by Mrs Eliza Purvis,

(daughter of Major-General Sir Alexander Dickson. K.C.B (1777-1840), and widow of Admiral John Child Purvis (1746-1825) a contemporary of Nelson. She subsequently bought it and spent the rest of her life there in some style, for the 1851 census recorded her, then 81, with a living-in staff of seven –butler, footman and five female servants.

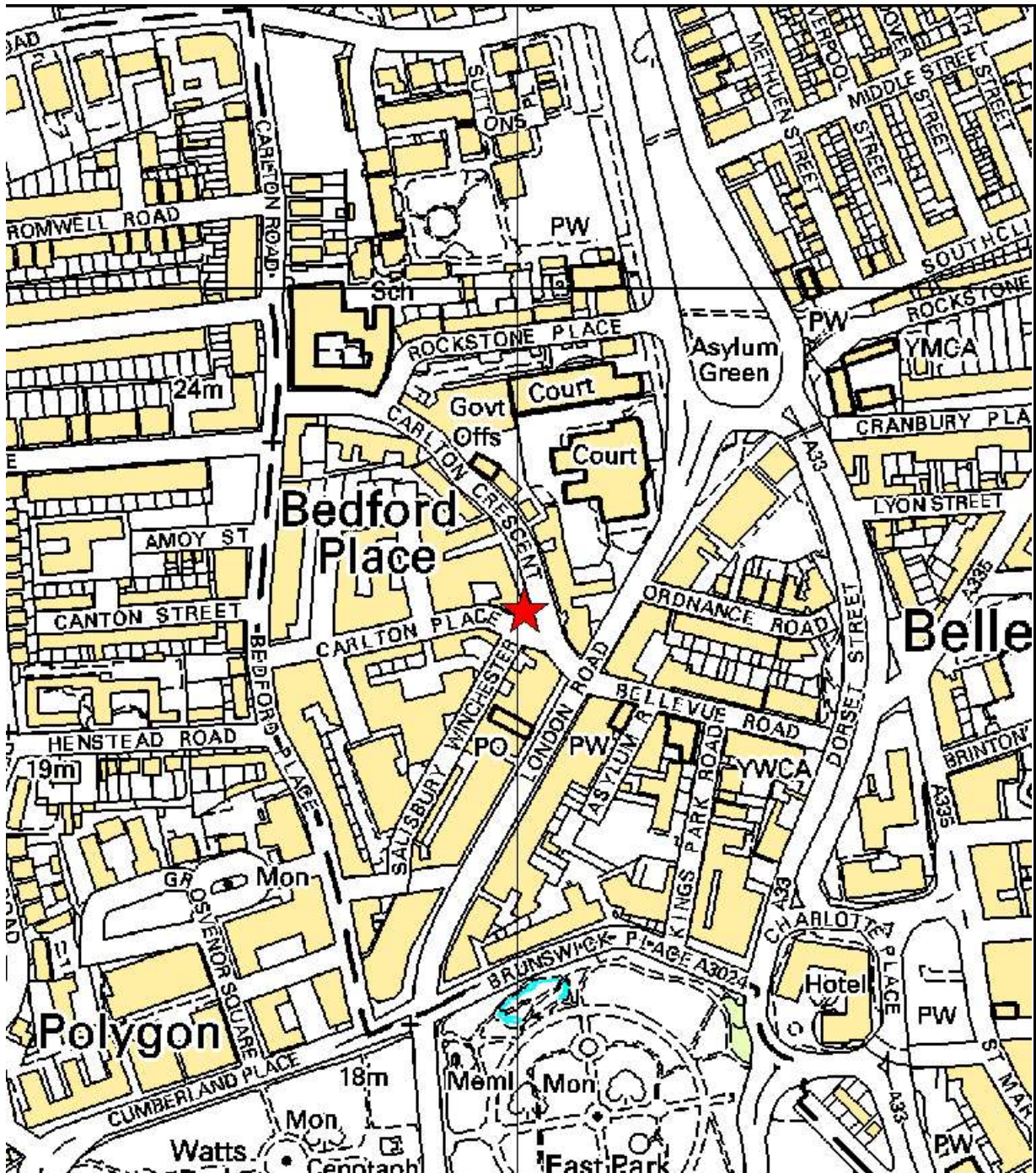


Figure 1. Location of Avondale House, marked by red star at junction of Carlton Crescent and Carlton Place.

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4.3 On her death in 1858, the house passed to her daughter Eliza, wife of Captain Richard Beaumont Burnaby (1793-1871) a 2nd Lieutenant at Waterloo who reached the rank of Lieutenant-General in the Royal Artillery. Twenty years later, she

bequeathed the property jointly to her three sons – Alexander Dickson Burnaby, Richard Briones Burnaby and Eustace Beaumont Burnaby – and her daughter Eularia Elizabeth Burnaby (1836-1925). The last of the men having died in 1916, the surviving Miss Burnaby sold the house in 1918 to the well-known Southampton public figure and estate agent, William Burrough Hill for £1,050.

4.4 Burrough Hill briefly used it as auction rooms and stores, before selling it for £3,000 in 1920 to Brown Bros Ltd, a London-based firm of motor car and cycle factors, who used it as offices.

4.5 In 1933 the building was acquired by the Southampton builders Brazier & Son Ltd. Braziers renamed it Avondale House, taking the name of the Victorian villa in Portswood Road that had been a Brazier family home in 1896. Avondale House was let as offices to Swan National Car Rentals (1956-92) and they were probably responsible for the single storey garage extension on the west side leading to garage space in the basement, thought to date to c.1958 (Heritage Statement with listed building application 15/02068/LBC). The building was later used by the Southern Regional Examinations Board (1974-89).

The building was sold to new owners and was a bar-restaurant by 2010. The bar closed in 2015.

5. Historical maps

5.1 Historic maps show the building from 1846 to 1946 (figs 2 to 7). They suggest the house remained as built until after 1908. By 1932 extensions had been built on the north and south elevations, probably by Brown Bros Ltd.



Figure 2. The Royal Engineers Map 1846, showing Clarence House.

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Figure 3. The 1870 Southampton town map scale 1:500 showing Clarence House.

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Figure 4. The 25 inch to the mile Hampshire and Isle of Wight map sheet LXV.7 revised 1895-1896, published 1897, showing Clarence House.

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Figure 5. The 25 inch to the mile Hampshire and Isle of Wight map sheet LXV.7 revised 1908, published 1910, showing Clarence House.

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Figure 6. The 25 inch to the mile Hampshire and Isle of Wight map, sheet LXV.7 revised 1932, published 1933, showing Clarence House, with extensions, probably added by Brown Bros Ltd.

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Figure 7. The 25 inch to the mile Hampshire and Isle of Wight map, sheet LXV.7 revised 1941 to 1943, published 1946, showing Clarence House, by then renamed Avondale House by its owners Braziers.

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6. Purpose/aims of the survey.

6.1 The purpose of the survey work was to make a record of

- the area of the third floor attic
- the fireplaces exposed at first and second floor that were previously hidden
- the south wall at first and second floor where removal of render should reveal original window openings

6.2 In the event the recording work was carried out on the area of the third floor attic (fig 8) and one fireplace at first floor level (Fig 9), the other locations failed to reveal historic fabric.

7. Survey methodology.

7.1. The Archaeology Unit made a photographic survey of the specified elements using monochrome and colour slide film using 35mm cameras. Digital photographs were taken for inclusion in this report. Metric scale bars were used where practical in each photograph. A written record of the subject of each photograph was maintained, and the positions marked on a plan of the building.

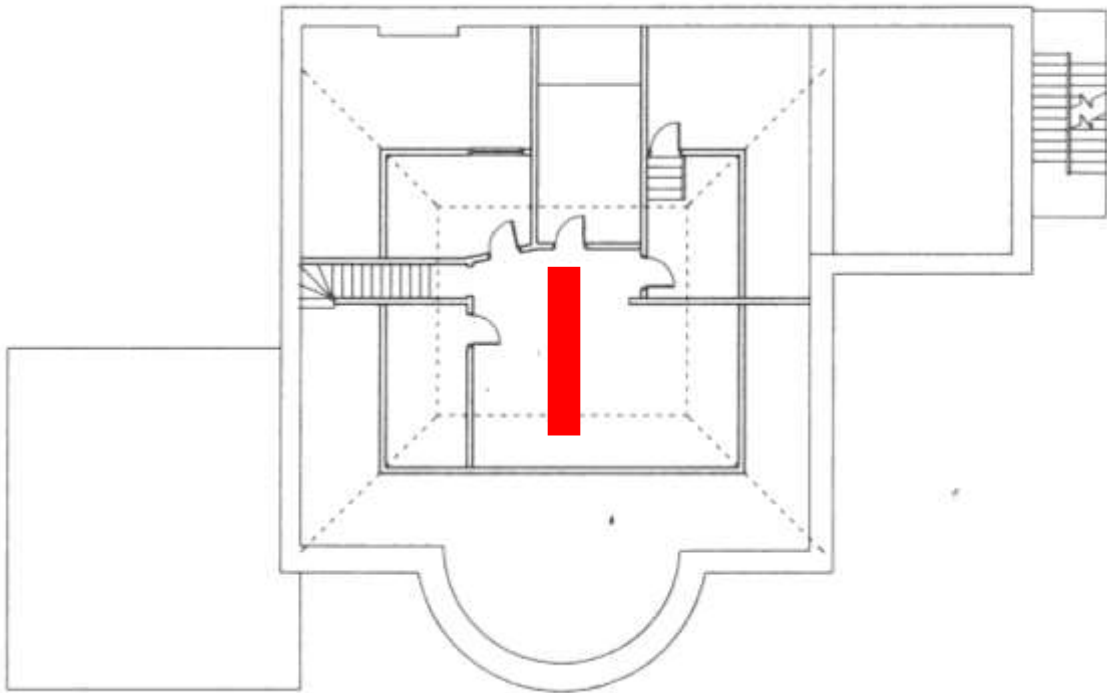


Figure 8. Plan of attic showing area of historic fabric that was removed.

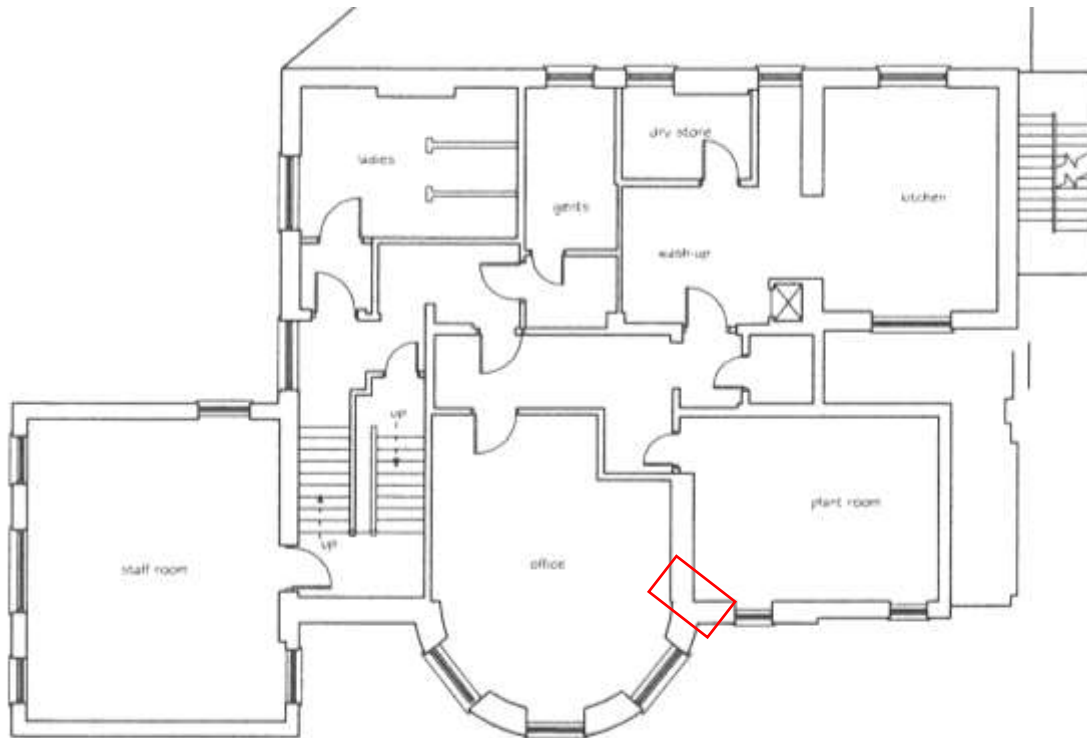


Figure 9. Plan of first floor showing position of fireplace that was recorded.

8. Results

8.1 Third floor attic

8.1.1 The original roof of Clarence House appears to have consisted of a number of pitched roof slopes. If they had met at an apex or ridge, the upper part of the roof would have been visible above the decorative cornice, detracting from the classical lines of the building. In order to prevent this the roof slopes stopped short and a sunken roof area/light well was built just above head height in the attic space. The weight of this was supported on single thickness brick walls that rose above eaves level from the main structure below (fig 13). Rooms were created in the attic by building stud walls lined with lath and plaster between the floor and the sloping underside of the roof (figs 10, 11, and 16).

8.1.2 Plank walls were built around the four sides of the flat roof (fig 12). These probably supported lead sheets. The east wall was pierced by a two small barred windows which lit the attic (fig 13). The flat element of the roof was probably waterproofed with a lead sheet covering, and this drained the rain water into a lead hopper set in the ceiling of the attic, after which it flowed through a lead pipe that ran towards the east elevation, probably emptying into the gutter behind the parapet above the bay window. The lead pipe probably was encapsulated in a studwork and lath and plaster wall. A housing on the main beam probably marks the junction of this wall (fig 14). There might have been signs on the attic floor to confirm this but the floorboards had been removed before the recording work took place.

8.1.3 At a later date, the lower part of the encapsulating wall was removed and three beams in a Y arrangement were used to support the pipe. Perhaps at the same time, the flat roof/light well arrangement was altered, probably in response to water ingress, and the roof slopes were continued up to an east-west ridge that still exists, encapsulating the flat roof/light well to which there is now no access. The date of this work is not clear, but the underside of the Y arrangement did not bear marks of lath and plaster, and instead had traces only of nailed-on fibreboard (fig 15), a common sheet material in between the wars, when the building was owned by Braziers. The revised roof covering can be seen on an RAF air photograph of 20/4/53 (0161 V 82RAF 765).

8.1.4 As part of the 2016 conversion works the lead pipe and its enclosure was removed. This revealed the soldered sheet-lead hopper 200mm (8 inches) square in plan, which sat upon the main north-south roof beam (figs 13 and 14). The hopper was at least 155mm deep; the upper parts were hidden in the revised roof structure. To the east of the main beam two timbers met in a Y-shape to support a timber 127mm by 95mm that itself supported the lead pipe (figs 14 and 15). The pipe was 40mm in diameter and ran for 2.4m before it reached the underneath of the roof slope. It continued another 280mm between the rafters but had been removed beyond that.

8.1.5 Removal of the lathe and plaster ceilings exposed the ceiling joists. These ranged from 33mm to 45mm thick by 80mm deep and they were at approximately 380mm centres. The studs in the lathe and plaster walls in the attic were 30mm by 96mm. The rafters were 55mm by 125mm.



Figure 10. The attic space on first visit. Red arrow points to the boxed-in lead pipe.



Figure 11. View of north part of attic showing typical construction before opening up.



Figure 12. The attic roof structure after removal of ceilings. The original flat roof/light well structure formed from softwood planks can be seen above the joists.



Figure 13. The window openings (with more recent frames and bars) in the east wall of the flat roof/light well, with lead hopper beneath them, after removal of the lead pipe, supporting beam and its enclosure.



Figure 14. The base of the lead hopper, with lead pipe exiting to the right (east). Note housing with protruding nail below the hopper which probably relates to an earlier layout of the attic space.



Figure 15. The Y-shaped arrangement of timbers supporting the lead pipe.



Figure 16. View showing studwork in the attic after removal of lath and plaster.

8.2 Fireplace in Flat 6

8.2.1 A fireplace on the first floor in what was to become flat 6 was opened up. The fireplace formed an angle in the southeast corner of the room (fig 17).

8.2.2 The opening was 620mm wide. The brick fireback was built on slabs of York stone. They had originally protruded further into the room but had been removed at an earlier date. The fireback was built of bricks, 64mm thick, laid in a sandy lime mortar. The form of the fireback suggests that a cast-iron grate that incorporated a small hob on each side was used. The central flue was 240mm wide. The flue exited to the top right hand side where a cast-iron register plate was let into the brickwork. This would have led to a flue in the south wall of the room which lead to the chimney stack above.

8.2.3 At a later date the cast iron fire surround was removed and a cement-mortar shelf was inserted, supported on a mild steel bar set into the brickwork. Above this a sheet of wood with mouldings around the edges was applied. This phase perhaps related to the insertion of a gas fire.

8.2.4 The gas fire was later removed and an electric fire in a purpose made surround was glued into place.

8.2.5 Above the fireplace was an alcove with a moulding around it run in the plaster. At the base of the alcove was a stone shelf. The alcove, moulding and shelf were probably original.



Figure 17. The fireplace in Flat 6 first floor.

9. Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to Jane Wong of Aircool Property LLP for commissioning the work and for assistance on site.

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