

**HISTORIC BUILDING RECORD
AT
THE SALVATION ARMY HALL
ACACIA WALK
BEESTON, NOTTINGHAM**

SUMMARY

A Historic Building Record was made of an abandoned Salvation Army Hall in Acacia Walk, Beeston, Nottingham. The building was derelict, but nonetheless was found to be a typical example of the simple functional buildings occupied by various Christian denominations in the early 20th century. Immediately prior to recording, the Hall had been used by heroin addicts.

1 INTRODUCTION

Site Location ([Figures 1](#) and [2](#))

- 1.2 The site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) SK 5296 3692, and is situated in the centre of Beeston, south of Nottingham. The site is a plot of land on the northeastern side of Acacia Walk, and covers a total area of approximately 0.1838 hectares (1838 square metres).

Development Proposals

- 1.2 The proposed development is for new Employment Services buildings. It is proposed that the new Employment Services building will incorporate most of the site and will also include space for a small car park.

Planning Background

- 1.3 In accordance with *Planning Policy Guidance: Archaeology and Planning* (PPG 15) issued by the Department of the Environment in 1990 (DoE, 1990) and the recommendations of Broxtowe Borough Council, a programme of Historic Building recording was carried out on the Salvation Army hall, in advance of demolition. This was carried out as a condition of the planning permission (Application No.: 05/00550/FUL). The building had no local or national listing.
- 1.4 The first stage of the programme of archaeological work was the production of an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (AOC 2005). Thereafter, a Written Scheme of Investigation for the site was produced that included the methodology for the Building Recording.

2 METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 The Salvation Army Hall was recorded to Level 1 as defined by English Heritage Guidelines (English Heritage 2006). These define the following methodology:

- The report will include the precise location of the building by name or street number, civil parish, town and county. National Grid reference to a minimum 8 figure reference will be included along with details of any listing or scheduling.
- The report includes the date and name of the recorder.
- A summary statement, including a description of the building's type or purpose, the materials used in its construction and, if possible, any dating apparent from a superficial inspection.
- A sketch plan was completed, incorporating approximate dimensions. Basic structural details (such as timber elements) were also noted on any drawing.
- On completion of the works arrangements will be made for the long-term storage of the whole archive with the appropriate museum.

These are guidelines only. This report includes a slightly longer text than necessary to reflect the quantity of detail observed.

- 2.2 The recording was carried out on 20th September, 2006. The hall still contained evidence of its most recent use by heroin users such as needles and faeces.
- 2.3 The results are presented in the light of the regular form of the building, and its relationship to similar Salvation Army Halls around the country.

3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The best sources for the site of the Salvation Army Hall are the cartographic evidence. The 1809 Tithe map provides the first clear detail of the site. It demonstrates the long narrow strips of land which ran back from Middle and High Road, and south from Middle Road to Nether Road. The site on Acacia Walk is illustrated as a long linear plot running south from High Road, bordered by a road. No buildings are drawn onto the plot.
- 3.2 The earliest Ordnance Survey map is the 1885 map which shows that the site was vacant park land associated with Yew Cottages to the northwest.
- 3.3 There had been some development of the locale between 1885 and 1901 which is illustrated on the 1901 Ordnance Survey map. The area has been subdivided into two blocks with the southern block comprising the site. Two very small buildings were built on the eastern boundary of the site. The 1914 Ordnance Survey Map, shows the site, but with these two buildings missing (figure 3).

- 3.4 The 1938 Ordnance Survey map shows a building of identical footprint to the Salvation Army building has been constructed on the site, suggesting a date of construction to the 1930s. The rest of the land remained vacant (figure 4).
- 3.5 No change is shown on the 1955 Ordnance Survey map. The building on the site is named as 'Hall'. Acacia House to the south is still well marked, having become the Beeston Adult School.
- 3.6 The 1961 Ordnance Survey map titles the building the 'S.A. Hall' indicating that it is claimed by the Salvation Army. A building has been built to the immediate south on the adjacent block within the application site. This building was a single storey house and was recently fired. This 1960s building was not subject to a Historic Building Record.

4 RESULTS (Figures 5 and 6)

General

- 4.1 The Salvation Army Hall was a brick building with a three-bay frontage and seven-bay sides, measuring approximately 18m by 7.5m. The front door had a plain stone surround and the title 'Salvation Army' inscribed above the door. The roof was pitched with gable ends and was made of slate over boards with a ridge of tile. Internally, there was a large hall space, an office and kitchen to the rear, and two toilet areas. At the rear of the hall was a small extension that once contained a boiler or similar heating supply. For ease of description, the Hall is assumed to be oriented east-west, with the front entrance facing west.

Exterior

Street Front (Plate 1)

- 4.2 The front of the Salvation Army Hall had a central doorway flanked by two tall narrow windows. There were two panelled doors set within a plain stone surround of functional design topped by an inscribed frieze bearing the words 'Salvation Army', coloured pale red. The doorway was lit by a pair of nine-light windows directly above, and there was a semi-circular window in the gable end. The brickwork on the front face of the Hall was English bond, and the bricks had a regular wavy-lined surface consistent with a 1930s date for the structure. The doors were approached up two steps what appeared to be made of concrete, but are assumed to have been brick with a stone render.
- 4.3 The two windows flanking the doorway were both narrow and tall six-light fixed windows with wooden frames. The reveals were straight, and the lintels were both flat arched brick lintels. The sills were constructed of two layers of red tile stamped with the word METAL. However, these tiles were ceramic.
- 4.4 The gable end had two steps and a rounded stone cornice. The roof was set below cornice level.

Side elevations (Plate 2)

- 4.5 The two side elevations of the Salvation Army Hall were virtually identical, with regularly spaced openings for six windows and one door on the northern side and five windows and two doors on the southern side. In comparison to the front elevation, these walls were built using stretcher bond. The windows that lit the main hall were typically 1.50m wide, with twelve lights: three rows of four. The top row opened inwards for ventilation, and rested in angled brackets. The rear two windows were also of twelve lights, but narrower, being only 1.20m wide. As on the front elevation, the window reveals were straight, the lintels a flat arch of brick and the sills tiled.

Rear Extension

- 4.6 At the rear, eastern end of the building was a partial extension with a lean-to roof housing the remains of a heating system, most likely a boiler. It was accessed by a door in the end wall and lit by a small three-light window. Two steps led down to the floor, which was sunk 0.40m lower than the floor of the hall. This extension was only on the southern side of the hall, and may be something of an afterthought: the bricks were the same as those used in the rest of the hall, but the lean-to roof projected above the roofline. This may have been added during building: the regular shape of the hall being pre-planned to a set pattern, but no heating originally considered.

Interior

Hall (Plate 3)

- 4.7 The main body of the Hall was a single large space: the Hall. It measured 13.5m by 7m internally, and was principally accessed through the doors at the street front. To the rear of the room was a wooden platform with a lectern, bench, and edifying phrases were also present at the eastern end.
- 4.8 The front doors led to an internal porch area separated from the body of the hall by a wooden partition glazed in its upper levels. This partition had a pair of doors, one leading left, one leading right. There was no evidence to show circulation: one door may have been used for access, the other egress, or possibly even segregation of the sexes. The porch area was not studied in detail due to the presence of recent human excreta.
- 4.9 The walls of the hall had simple decoration of dark-stained panelling to a height of 1.16m, topped by a dado rail. The upper reaches of the walls were plain, with another dado rail at 3.2m height. No other decorative element was present. The floor was carpeted, and around the edge of the room was a metal gully. This had once held iron fretwork plates, one example of which was still present (Plate 4). The walls of the hall were generally 0.31m thick, but between each window was a pier of extra 0.13m width, which supported the walls and housed the proximal ends of each principal rafter of the roof-trusses.

Platform (Plate 5)

- 4.10 The platform at the rear of the hall was of wooden construction, with a short flight of three stairs on each side, and a further raised area behind. The platform had a simple rail along the front with a central lectern. Below the lectern was a pew with the phrase 'Jesus Saves' painted in gold lettering. On the wall behind, a second edifying phrase, 'Worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness': gold lettering upon a wooden plaque.

Roof (Plate 7)

- 4.11 The underside of the roof was clearly visible in the hall, and showed simple construction of principal rafters rising from brick piers, with a collar-beam between. Extra support was provided by three connecting iron rods, one between the ridge and the collar beam, and one from each principal rafter to the first rod.
- 4.12 Atop the principal rafters, on both sides of the roof were five horizontal beams running the length of the building. These may be considered purlins, but attached to these, rather than common rafters, were close panelled wooden boards. The slate roof above is presumed to have been fixed to battens atop the panelling.

Rear Rooms

- 4.13 At the rear of the Hall were two internal doors, each leading to rooms behind. That to the north led to a kitchen, and that to the south led to an office, with 'Private' painted on the door. Both of these rooms had wooden panelling and a dado rail on the lower parts of the wall. No other decoration was apparent. Both of these rooms also had a door leading westwards to toilet areas with a washbasin and pedestal toilet. These welfare facilities were considered original to the building, and were lit by small four-light windows. These two suites of rear rooms were identically laid out. There were also doors leading outside from the office and the kitchen.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The building recorded at Acacia Road was immediately recognisable as a Salvation Army Hall typical of such buildings of 1930s date: simple and utilitarian with few architectural embellishments. Buildings of similar internal layout and aspect survive elsewhere in Britain and abroad. Similar examples to this building at Beeston can be found at Wolverhampton; Maldon in Essex and Stowmarket in Suffolk, as well as further afield at St. Kilda and Victoria in Australia, and Devonport, New Zealand.
- 5.2 The Salvation Army was founded by William Booth in 1865 in the East End of London. Many of its buildings were described as Citadels. The Salvation Army follows Christian belief, emphasising salvation through the Christian God. Its objects are the promotion of Christian religion, education and relief of poverty.

The late date of this building, the 1930s, may suggest that Beeston was not in need of immediate relief from poverty and intemperance in the late 19th century.

- 5.3 The layout of the hall showed that its primary function was evangelism and preaching, as shown by the large space suitable for a congregation and the raised platform to the rear with its central lectern for preaching. The only vestiges of the Salvation Army were the two phrases 'Jesus Saves' and 'Worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness'. There were remnant hymnbooks and musical scores within the building, but given the most recent use of the building, and the existence of such documents at other, extant, Salvation Army halls, these were not retained.
- 5.4 The pair of toilets and washbasins at the back end of the hall are both thought to have been original to the building. One led from the office, one from the kitchen. It is possible that each toilet was single sex, but there were no titles on the doors to prove this. The presence of a kitchen may have enabled feeding of the impoverished and needy during the working life of the hall.

6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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