VOL 9 No. 2 SUMMER 1987

CONSERVATION in Nottinghamshire

The Newsletter of the Nottinghamshire Building Preservation Trust Limited

A PERSONAL NOTE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

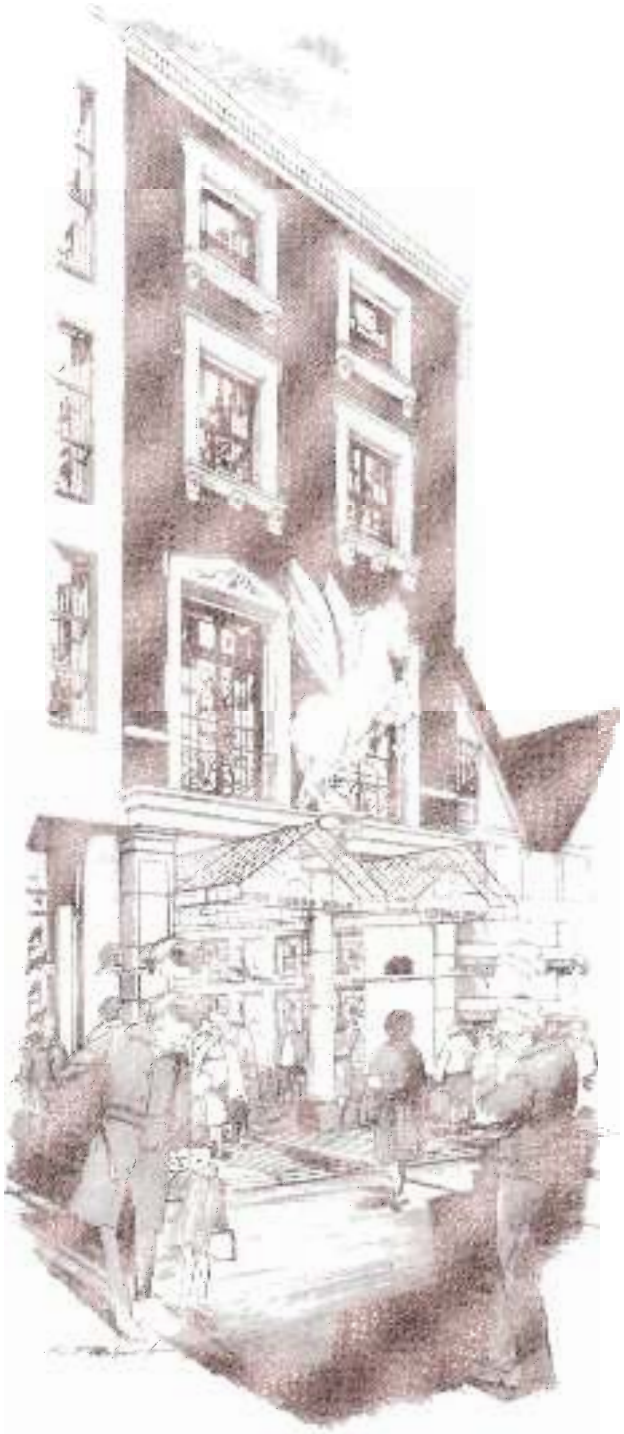
There is a well known aphorism, which says that the price of liberty is eternal vigilance. We who support the Trust could think of another version of it: the price of conservation is eternal vigilance. We need to be sure that we learn what is happening to the buildings which give Nottinghamshire towns and villages their distinctive character.

We now have in the green books (the pamphlets containing the details and descriptions of listed buildings now protected by planning laws) up to date information about all the buildings thought worth protecting. That is the point at which we must begin to be vigilant. We must make sure that we notice when they change hands, when they show signs of lack of maintenance, what changes are given planning approval.

To show the variety of problems which arise I want to refer to a few buildings which have given us cause for concern. First of all, we want to make sure that the historical and environmental character of a building has been accurately assessed, so that the impact of change can be properly gauged. In the case of the Flying Horse, in The Pavilion, Nottingham, which has exchanged names and is being redeveloped, everyone knows that the frontage with its gables and plaster decorations, is strictly a fake of 1936. Fortunately, the City Planning Department is alive to its responsibility and has commissioned a proper survey, so that we know how much of the timber framing is genuine. The front range has been much altered at various times, but the range on Peck Lane consists of two properties, with brick walling and original ceiling beams and roofs of the 17th century. The original elements in this complex will be retained in the redevelopment.

Another timber framed building, much better preserved, is the Old Governor's House at the corner of Newark Market Place. I think it is the best preserved timber framed town house in England. It has changed hands recently, the interior has not been touched and modern cabinets inside, when it was shops, have mostly been removed. The District Council Conservation Officer has been vigilant and reports have been on the whole discreet. There is now a planning application for its use as a baker's shop and restaurant, whether this application should be granted or not is a small detail and one whether the proposed use will not do any harm to special features such as the painted decoration. Nowark Council has referred this application to the Secretary of State. As with the Flying Horse, the Trust need not be alarmed or disappointed at what is happening.

Continued on page 2



THE PAVILION, NOTTINGHAM, AND THE FLYING HORSE
The timber-framed range runs to the right.

ISSN 0952-2972

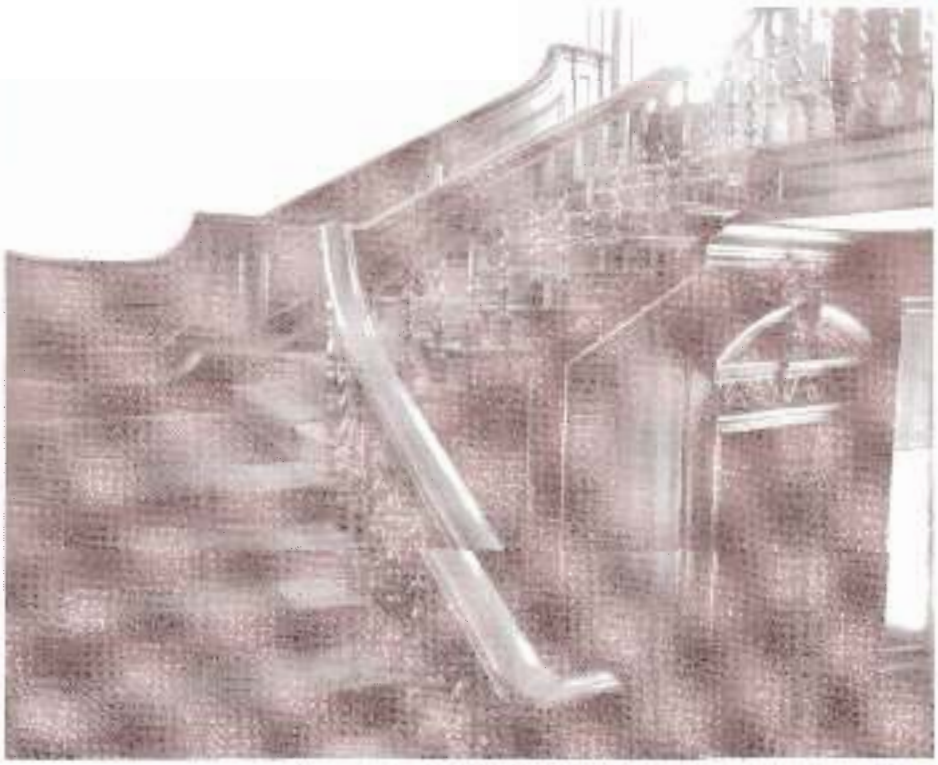
Continued from page 1

By contrast, the Manor House at Mansfield Woodhouse is an example of what ought NOT to happen. It was bought by a speculative developer, who was given consent, by the District Council, to remove historic features, especially a grand staircase. The whole affair has been as unsatisfactory as possible and the Mansfield District Council (that is, its planning officers and committee) come out of it very badly. So does the Department of the Environment. Its regional office gave bad advice and London refused to intervene. So does the developer's architect, who decided that the staircase should be removed in order to get in one more flat. The developer himself, when he learned that the planning consent might be questioned, hastened to remove the staircase. A specialist, who has not been named, is quoted as advising that the staircase should be removed because of serious structural damage caused by woodworm. As this staircase has since been burned, this opinion cannot be questioned. It is worthwhile to mention that the grand staircase, at Holme Pierrepont Hall, was also seriously damaged by woodworm. In that case, a reputable firm was called in to advise on how it could be saved and it has been repaired.

In the Mansfield case, the vigilance of a member of the Trust was too late to save the staircase. In the other case to be mentioned, the vigilance of the Trust has so far had no effect. Wiverton Hall has long been empty and the owner has failed to maintain it. This house has a fine medieval gatehouse – the only one in the county, except for Nottingham Castle. The gatehouse was incorporated in a larger house of Gothic design in 1814. Attempts to find a purchaser have failed. Planning legislation gives local authorities the power to carry out repairs and to charge the owner but there have been difficulties in the way of Rushcliffe Borough Council's using its powers because part of the house is occupied and, since April 1967, a new circular says does that work may be carried out on those parts not in use. It is to be hoped that the Council will decide to use that power.

I have picked out these examples of buildings at risk to show that, however vigilant the Trust may be, with large and important buildings what matters most is how anxious a local authority is to conserve its heritage of buildings.

M. W. Barley ■



Mansfield Woodhouse Manor House Staircase

WORKSOP MANOR LODGE

Some thoughts by David Durant

Worksop Manor Lodge an extraordinary and puzzling building, the repair and conservation of which has for many years been of concern to the N.A.P.T. was perhaps not, as suggested by Mark Girouard, by Robert Smythson 'Architect and Surveyor unto the most worthy Howard of Wollaton' with divers others of great account, as he is described on his monument in Wollaton Church.

A recently published letter (Lord Arundel and His Circle by David Howarth Yale) gives the impression that the Lodge is by Roger Pertington, who had travelled in Italy and who was a friend of Lord Arundel. However, it is more likely that Pertington employed Smythson to do less than undertaking the whole work himself, as suggested by Howard. What is particularly important is that the towering pedestal is shown to have been modelled on the Medici villa at Poggio near Florence built in 1480 for Lorenzo I and demolished in the nineteenth century.

It is difficult to imagine that the Lodge, in its present mutilated state, had had a distinguished origin but a paragraph in a letter from Thomas Coke dated 30th October 1609 from Florence addressed to the Countess of Shrewsbury makes the very clear. I saw also the Duke's house at Pratolino 6 miles from this town so famous for singularities. The terrace will show much what about the shape of R Pertinglens Lodge in Worksop Park, and the chambers in it very like to those. They enter into it by a double stair like a half moon ...".

The Lodge probably had c.1592, when Pertington was buying land in the area, was originally entered by a semi-circular flight of steps leading into a first floor hall, the plan, an elongated cross and the orientation, is identical to that of the Medici villa. If the rusticated cross and the orientation, is identical to that of the Medici villa. If the entrance to the Lodge was by a semi-circular flight of steps similar to the entrance of the Medici building, then it would have presented a splendid facade and must have been one of the most exciting renaissance buildings in England. The villa at Pratolino was famous not for its fine but its gardens. Coke describes them immediately around the villa as having two terraces and descending from one to the other 'about 12 feet one enclosed. Yet another terrace of like fashion, where appeareth a goodly great (grete) room all painted. The last terrace full of curious waterworks ...". It is likely that the Lodge was also surrounded by a garden that would have consisted of parterres rather than a 'great' with waterworks.

These few lines addressed to the Countess of Shrewsbury show that the Lodge must have been a unique renaissance jewel of a building in its time so making it today one of the most important in Britain.

SOME NOTES FROM THE SECRETARY

The Chairman of the Trust, Professor M. W. Barley, was recently honoured by being made an honorary Fellow of the R.I.B.A.

I am sure that all members of the Trust will join in congratulating him on this well-deserved award.

The monthly slide evenings have been slightly re-arranged so that they now alternate between Sherwood Hall and Worksop Manor Lodge.

Friday, 7th August, 8.00 p.m. at Shireoaks Hall, talk by Bob Cullen on the work of Sir John Soane.

Friday, 4th September, 8.00 p.m. at Worksop Manor Lodge, talk by Professor M. W. Barley on houses of the fifties.

Friday, 2nd October, 8.00 p.m. at Shireoaks Hall.

The Annual Coach Trip will be a Victorian Visit, visiting Hardwick, Manor and Chatsworth Hall among others. Book the date now: Saturday 9th September – more details will be sent out later.

The telephone and answering machine at the new Trust Offices, 28 Bridgford Road, are at last working. The telephone number remains the same, Nottingham 819628.

Geoff Glover ■

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE RESURVEY: I

HOUSE AT CHILWELL

Impact of R. J. Worsley
The Modern House in England 1939

This unusual house is one of the very few built by the eccentric architect – and inventor-cum-mentalist – R. Myerscough Walker. It sits uncompromisingly on a Chilwell hilltop, indifferent and literally superior to the waves of conventional houses that have lapped around it since 1937. When new, it featured in F. R. S. Yorke's *The Modern House in England*. It has now been listed as part of the resurvey of Nottinghamshire, completed in February. It has now been listed as part of the resurvey of Nottinghamshire, completed in February 1987 by Guy & John Taylor Associates of Newark.

Myerscough Walker aimed to achieve a high standard of living combined with aesthetic appeal. He showed inspiring confidence in his own judgement and faith in human rationality in a decade when rationality and humane values were discounted. The house makes no attempt to harmonise with its forerunners. Instead, it is a statement of faith in the virtues of its own time, confident that the present is better than the past.

In spite of its appearance, the house has conventional brick cavity walls, rendered to blend with the concrete roof canopies. Standard metal framed glazing and hollow block partitions are used. The originality shows itself in the thought which has gone into the plan and design.

An eminently logical two-storey rectangular flat roofed block is fronted by a semicircular bay window with an enhanced terrace. A semi-circular sunrise sun room is linked to the two storey porch by a curving canopy. The house embodies the desire for fresh air, sunshine and health so much sought for in the 1930s. Large windows like functional rather than decorative feature. The curves of bay windows, sun room and canopy soften the shape in a typical 1930s style and unite the house inwards and friendly. The contemporary desire into building by contrast is uncompromisingly angular, impressive, demanding, but not approachable.

Inside, the blend of rational and aesthetic continues. A spiral stair winds around a central shaft. Internally the pleasing interplay of curves with straight lines is the interest. The main 'Living Space' is a circular room with a complete glazed wall. Angled partitions and folding doors separate the other ground floor rooms, which are related as portions of a unified space. In the private first floor areas, there are normal flush doors with right angle divisions. The principal rooms open onto the canopied terrace by sliding glass walls. Air and sunlight are always accessible in the main rooms and on roof terraces. There is an unpredictable optimism about English weekend cottages, whose shortcomings are recognised only by a centralised, inhibiting, over-emphasis.

The well integrated design is pleasing and easy to appreciate both inside and out. Concrete, tubular steel and unusually for the thirties the garage are integrated into the structure. Fitted furniture in the main rooms leaves the interior similarly uncluttered. Mantelpieces and pale colours are cool and rational – probably too cool and rational for the majority. Because it was original and bore no relationship to the contemporary conventional house, this rational aesthetic design found few imitators. A fully developed work of art, it would be difficult to alter or extend without harm. All the more reason for us to appreciate and preserve it.

Matthew Hirst ■

THE FLYIN NOTTIN

In his role as Conser City Planning Depar writes about the l surrounding this fa cherished

NEW BUILDING ON ST PETER'S GATE
Entrance to Peck Lane is on the left

One of Nottingham's best known landmarks the Flying Horse on Poultry – has been the subject of intense local concern over recent months. Word spread that it was being demolished and that the City Council was standing by, apparently unconcerned. Memories were revived of losing the Black Boy and other heritage buildings, in the Sixties and Seventies, as people assessed the evidence and were horrified: Bernard Inns had abandoned the Flying Horse, men and bulldozers were pulling the back parts down, the old building was scaffolded, the ancient Peck lane was closed off, plans for a new shopping development had been given planning consent and both the Evening Post and Nottingham Topic had published articles confirming the worst. People had come to think that the days of senseless destruction might be over, having seen the extensive works of conversion prompted by the City Council in recent years, and were doubly amazed.

Fortunately, the signs were being misread. The old parts of the Flying Horse are not being demolished but are to get a new lease of life as the centrepiece of a new shopping arcade, which will connect Poultry with St. Peter's Gate. Part of the old building will become shops but a public house or wine bar will remain at the corner of Peck Lane. Whether the completed scheme will find general favour remains to be seen, but the developers (London and Cleveland, jointly with Bredero) and their architects (Stanley Bragg of Colchester) have approached the task sensitively and with enthusiasm. They are working closely with the City Council to produce a sympathetic scheme of renewal. The developers' team is led by Norman Fearn, whose schooldays in Nottingham gave him an affection for the city. The team already has the refurbishment of Exchange Arcade, under the Council House, to its considerable credit. The Flying Horse scheme retains and displays all the historic features of the old building it removes only the parts of the old Bernard Inn without architectural or historic value (which were considerable, as we shall see) and it strives to make the new parts worthy additions.

The Flying Horse has been transformed before in its long history. The timber-framed buildings seem to have been erected, as two or three houses, in the late 16th or early 17th century. They replaced an earlier house of the Plumtre family, which occupied part of the site. Adrian Henstock wrote[1] of his search through County Records, which revealed the date 1740 as the earliest reference to an inn called the Flying Horse on the site and it appears to have been a small local affair, occupying only one of the houses. It may have been an inn before this date, of course, but the 1663 date, displayed on the front of the building, does not tally well with either the existing timber-framed buildings or the documentary evidence. Records show that the buildings fell into disrepair in the 18th and 19th centuries and, subsequently, underwent extensive repairs and rebuilding, which removed large sections of the old timber frame and studwork. During this period, the inn expanded to take over the adjoining houses. It became a coaching inn in the late 18th century and the Poultry frontage was extended in 1785, by building over the yard entrance. By the late 19th century, the Flying Horse had become a venue for major local celebrations and its principal rooms were made fashionable with typical Victorian opulence.

In 1936, Trust Houses owned the inn and it underwent another major refurbishment which transformed it into the building we have known and which closed at the start of 1987. All Georgian and Victorian work in the timber-framed section was either removed or covered up and a mock Tudor theme substituted. The original 16th/17th century elevations to Poultry and Peck Lane were re-established and the Poultry facade was further embellished with East Anglian style pargetting, based on the Rose and Crown at Saffron Walden. Several old timbers were brought in to recreate an 'olde worlde' interior and Tudor style chimneys were added for good measure. A large bedroom wing was built across the middle of the yard, but in a very ordinary 1930s style for it was hardly visible from the outside. During the 20th century, part of the yard became an underground garage and a number of makeshift corridors and extensions were added.

What then was the historic inventory at closing time and how does it fare in the new scheme? Firstly, there were the timber-framed buildings along Poultry and Peck Lane – the part that comes to mind when we think of the Flying Horse. This is intact and has been refurbished externally and will become two shops and a pub. Then there was the 1785 building over the yard entrance on Poultry which formed the main entrance to the Bernard Inn. This also has been refurbished externally and its internal partitions on the first floor will be removed

IG HORSE, NGHAM

vation Officer for the ment, Bob Harrison atest controversy miliar and deeply building

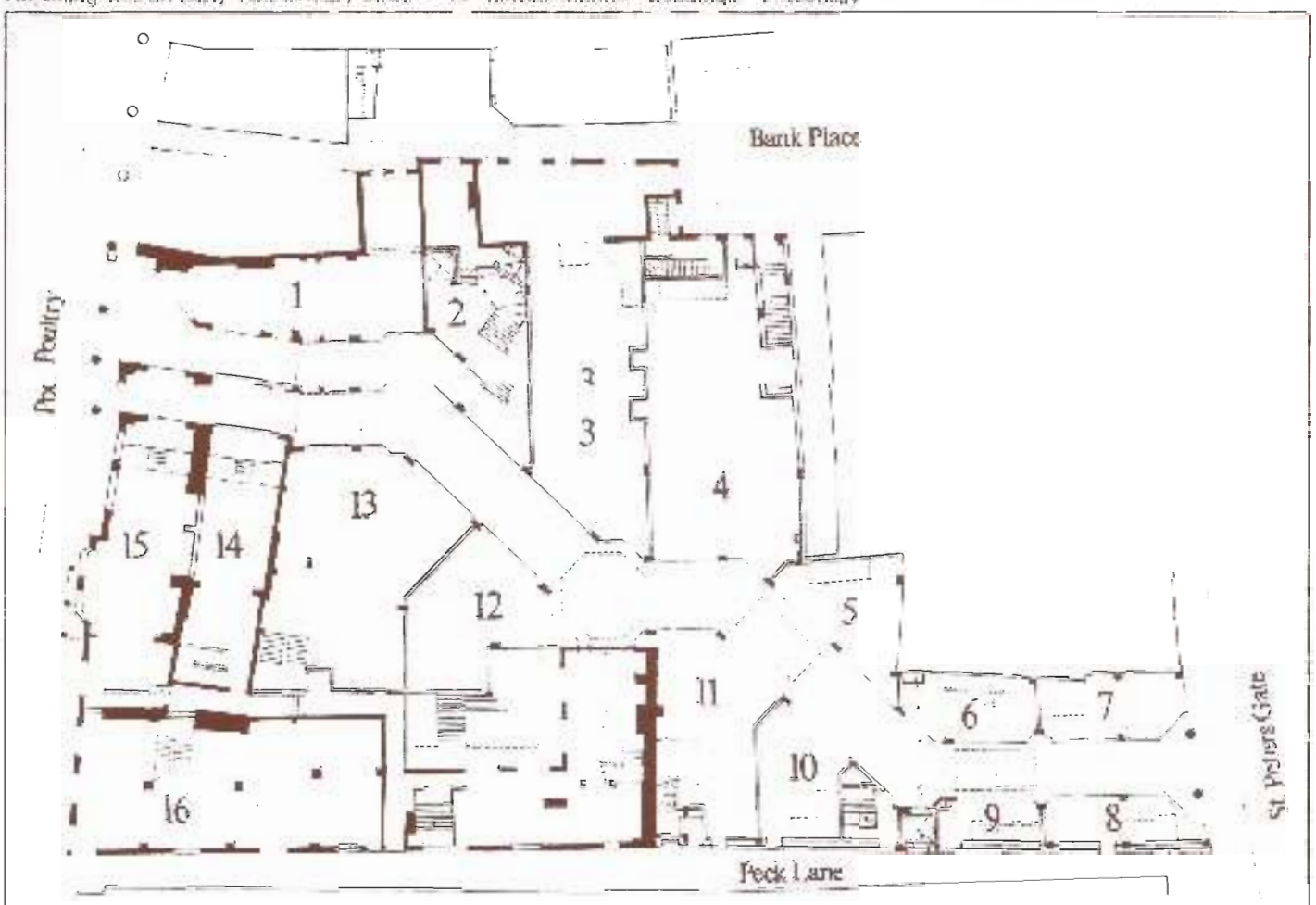
to reveal a grand Victorian room, that will become a family refreshment operation.

Along Bank Place, a grand Victorian building housed a fine room - oddly, in the basement - but it was derelict and long unused by the public. This has been demolished, except for its short facade on Bank Place, which will be restored in the new scheme. On Peck Lane, there was an L-shaped brick gabled building, of circa 1720, which was largely used for kitchens and staff rooms in the Edwardian. This will be refurbished and its gables and oak beams will be displayed as a focal point in the new scheme. There was the covered yard, entered from Poultry, a largely 1930s creation. This has been demolished but does as the springing point of the new arcade. Adjoining was an early 18th century three-storey extension of no architectural pretensions and this has been demolished. On the St. Peter's Gate frontage, a three-storey early, but plain, Victorian building (with older 17th century brick fragments at the rear) has been demolished. Final extensive settlement, caused probably by the removal of the whole of the ground floor to create the garage entrance. It had to be rebuilt and the decision was taken to replace it, not by a replica, but by a suitably shaped new building, retaining a brick pediment, an oriel window and Doric colonnade, framing an entrance to the shopping arcade. Another altogether grander, Victorian building on St. Peter's Gate will remain intact. Finally, there was the mid-yard garage, the 1930s bedroom wing and the later extensions. These have all been demolished.

One has to say that very little of real merit of architectural value has been lost as a result of the recent demolition, despite the huge cleared area which now appears on the site. This does not seem odd in view of the documentary evidence outlined above which throws considerable doubt on the popular view that the inn was extensive and goes back to Tudor times. It does come as a shock to realise that the fanciful creation of the 1930s was - to be blunt - misleading. Although the work was based on the outlines of the old buildings these were elevated to a status which they never had in entirety. Even so, it has to be said that a great deal of the historic value of the Flying Horse is being buried with the closure of the inn. Whilst the building may not be so outstanding nationally as we might have hoped, in the context of Nottingham it is still of great importance. Where so little remains of timber-framed buildings. Personally I find the account of its changing fortunes just as fascinating and the new development adds another chapter to the story. The present events have given fresh impetus to researching the Flying Horse's history. Adrian Henstock has gone back to his archives to try and discover more. Alan McCormack, of the City Council's Arc Department, is investigating the extensive caves below the buildings and, financed by the developer, Steve Douglas of the University's Archaeology Department is examining the structure of the buildings for further clues about their development.

At times like this it does no harm to remind ourselves of the principles of conservation. Primarily, we want to keep the old parts of our towns and villages that we judge to be worthy of retention, in display them to best advantage and to keep them lastingly employed – even if this means a sympathetic change of use from time to time. Conservation also recognises that the settlements will need to evolve to meet new demands and new ways of life – as they always have done. So we must be prepared to be selective and remove the dross to make way for some new buildings – new buildings that are symbiotic, i.e. designed to produce a balanced and unified whole/ness in the environment locally and buildings should not continue to fossilise of their own by their design, to pass on to future generations, as part of our built environment heritage. Events at the Flying Horse have aroused our passions, we must soon be reminding to assess whether conservation has been achieved or whether it has been thwarted.

Adrian Henstock: 'Tracing the History of Your House' – a NUDT Newsletter (Dec 1989)



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

Nos. 1 & 2 is the part of the Flying Horse converted to shops. Unit no. 6 the pub/restaurant at the corner of Peck Lane. The shopping arcade breaks up very attractively through the site.

Some of our older members may remember Aspley Hall, which until 1958 stood on the south side of Aspley Lane in large grounds. It had belonged to the Middleton estate, and in 1925 was included in the sale of Middleton property north-west of Nottingham. The photograph at right was taken from the sale catalogue. Wollaton Hall was at the same time auctioned by the city. In 1961 the Hall was sold and demolished for housing sites. It was not listed. Little was recorded. A large 17th century barn was demolished at the same time.

Mr. F. A. Barnes of the University Geography Department has been engaged on research into the history of the campus. In the course of this work, he has found in the Public Record Office a survey, dated about 1537, of the Middleton estate. This, which like other monasteries had been dissolved a quarter of a century earlier. This survey includes a description of Aspley Hall, which had belonged to the Prior — a fact hitherto unknown. It is said that he used it when there was a plague in Nottingham. Parts pointed out that these heads of wealthy monasteries had what can only be called a holiday home. I have mentioned some of them in *Portraits in History*. Now we can add another one to the list.

The survey describes the building in some detail. There was a hall with a kitchen and chambers. It goes on to say that there was a three storey tower of brick, with a lead roof. The prior may have had his private bedchamber or solar in the tower.

It is now clear that the tower survived until 1958. It can be seen in the photograph at the left-hand side, the taller feature. Contrary to my, the projecting newel staircase in the sale catalogue, the room on the top floor is called "the tower sitting room". Mr. Alan McCormack, of the Castle Museum, visited the Hall while demolition was going on and was able to make a plan of the top floor. Whether any other part of the medieval building survived until 1958 we shall never know, but we have a record of part of one of Nottingham's few medieval buildings.

M. W. Barley ■

NONCONFORMIST CHAPELS IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Members should look out for a new publication on this subject by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England. The Commission decided, about twenty years ago, that one member of its staff, Dr Christopher Stell, should be allowed to survey all the chapels and meeting-houses in England. No one has guessed how long it would take him. In fact, he has looked personally at every one, photographed them, done a remarkable survey of the more important and established their history. Such a mammoth task creates a problem of publication, which rising costs have made almost insoluble.

We in Nottinghamshire, who are lucky in that one volume of a projected three has now appeared, covering the Midland Counties (including ours). The full title is *NONCONFORMIST CHAPELS AND MEETING HOUSES in CENTRAL ENGLAND* (London: HM Stationery Office, £42.00). The County Library will, no doubt, purchase a copy. I am told that it is intended to publish a set of prints of each county and that is something to look out for.

The Nottinghamshire section has a brief introduction, drawing attention to the oldest and most interesting chapels. The inventory then follows with a brief account of 62 buildings with their purpose (Wesleyan, Baptist) date, architectural description and reference to other printed sources etc. Where photographs are for some reason unavailable, Dr. Stell has done small and very attractive pen drawings.

Members will be saddened by reading the inventory which they notice how many chapels we've gone (for instance the Baptist Chapel at North Collingham, which I photographed shortly before its demolition in 1965) and how many, in the City have been disastrously converted to other uses. The worst are the Co-operative Arts Theatre in George Street and the Wesleyan Chapel in Broad Street. You don't have to go to Corn Stalk before and after photographs!

It has to be said that the inventory omits some buildings originally Nonconformist, for example the Synagogue in Shakespeare Street, which was built as a Wesleyan Reform Chapel in 1854 according to Elizabeth Williamson's *Victorian Public Buildings*. Members will, no doubt, be able to think of others. Perhaps we should consider compiling a supplementary list.

M. W. Barley ■

PUBLICATIONS

A HISTORY OF ENGLISH ARCHITECTURE
by Sir Banister Fletcher

This famous book which has long been out of print, yet remains acknowledged as perhaps the definitive publication on the history of architecture, has been finally re-published after updating by authors wishing to retain the distinctive layout and style of illustration.

First appearing in 1896 the book is now re-printed in the 19th edition, and is updated with chapters totally re-written on Roman, Byzantine, Islamic, Gothic and the whole of the Renaissance periods. New chapters are published on Prehistoric architecture, China and Japan, African and early Russian building, while all work on 20th century architecture is totally revised.

The new illustrations have kept fully with the original, and have been drawn by Dr. Mark Crinson of the Bartlett School of Architecture in London. Unlike modern drawing techniques, the style imparted perspectives to give a pictorial effect, rendered trees and random patches of texture sometimes obscuring the building lines and broken lines in a typical Edwardian manner. Building surfaces are expressed rather than edges, and the quality of light is perceived by the reader.

A once-only purchase

Published by Butterworths at £65.00

ILLUSTRATED HANDBOOK OF VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE
ILLUSTRATED HANDBOOK OF VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE
by Dr. R. W. Brunskill

Most people who study vernacular architecture purchase the invaluable book which has just been published for the third time. It presents Typologies in a clear and concise presentation with supplementary sketches, notes and photographs, plans and ornament as well as the traditional plan form and local materials.

It has been said that the term "vernacular architecture" is a helpful catch-all term derived in hind-sight and is sometimes used rather arbitrarily. In this instance the book looks at those buildings which belong to the polite threshold and less so on the rather more ruder dwelling belonging to the peasant. This approach is not unusual, as it is evident that architectural theory must use buildings which can be recorded now and not those which have been lost due to their crude construction destroyed by time.

As a field manual, this book cannot be bettered!

Published by Phillimore and Co. at £7.50 per paperback edition.

THE GATEHOUSE, THE GATEHOUSE, WORKSOP PRIORY

This early 14th century Gatehouse to the Augustinian Priory is described by Pevsner as follows:

"Broad and stately, early C14 in its structure, and C14 in the addition of the precious porch (which gave access to a chapel in the SE angle) with curvilinear tracery, miniature diagonal buttresses and a relief panel of the Adoration of the Magi. Inside, a rich lierne-vault, canopied niche and enriched doorway to the chapel. Three statues left in the three niches of the S side, only Gabriel from an Annunciation group on the N. The gateway itself still E.E., in its jambs and arches. The arch-braced ceiling, framing with carved stone ribs, are original. The main window above the entrance, Perp of seven lights, is to a hall with a fine untouched fireplace."

It was visited by the Trust in 1973, when it was still being used as a school. It then became Canon Ronilton's office (the Vicar of Worksop Priory Church) and, later, the offices of the Cornwall Voluntary Services. After a short period of disuse, it has now become the Bassetlaw Heritage Project Centre, with an archaeologist manager, Dr. Roger Jenkinson and should create jobs for 12 people.

The Gatehouse is owned by 4 trustees and managed by the Vicar and Church Wardens of the Priory Church.

Graham Beaumont ■

GENERAL BAPTIST CHURCH, NORMANTON-ON-SOAR

Standing next to the Castle II Holme Lodge Farm and making a significant contribution to the street scene of Normanton-on-Soar, is this unlisted General Baptist Chapel, built in 1889. Our research shows, in fact, is the unlisted "General" Baptist Chapel built in 1889. Our research shows, however, that this is not the first place in Baptist meetings in the village Normanton has its own long tradition of dissent, which can be traced to 1689 and in turn it takes a significant contribution to the "important plan-unit of Nonconformity" which Nottinghamshire holds, *Gospel Communion on the Historical Monuments of England*.

English Baptist history began in 1612 when Thomas Helwys, a returned exile, held religious meetings at Spitalfields which mirrored the English Baptist church. Particularly of interest to us is the fact that Mr Helwys was originally from Broxtowe Hall in Nottinghamshire. Helwys later died in what is known as a General Baptist belief. In one Arminian view that everyone who believed would receive salvation. An opposite view to those of the later Particular Baptists whose Calvinistic view was of predestination, that only the chosen elect would be saved.

The General Baptist tradition began by Helwys and reached Nottinghamshire by 1660 when a church was built at Chilwell. Normanton was not slow in following. The first records of Normanton Nonconformity concern one Elias Sprot, leader of a group of 20-30 Anabaptists in 1689 who met "once every week or fortnight at the house of [illegible] Anabaptists" who met "once every week or fortnight at the house of George Peak" (G. Lyon Turner - *Original Records of Early Nonconformity* under *Persecution and Indulgence*).

Throughout the eighteenth century the records show Baptist families living and worshipping in Normanton. By the end of the century, the number of Baptist churches in Nottinghamshire and the number of worshippers in Normanton had both undergone considerable increase. This was in the main, due to a movement known as the Independents, which was set up in the 1740's by David Taylor, a servant at Coningsby Hall, who became a full-time preacher of the New Connexion of General Baptists, travelling around the villages of Leicestershire and South Nottinghamshire. The New Connexion, a very important local branch of the Baptists, was extremely strong in the Normanton area.

The 1829 returns of Non-Anglican Places of Worship, made to the Chief Constable in accordance with the Registration of Parishioners Act (July 1812) as a result of the Corporation and Test Acts, records that there was a purpose-built General Baptist meeting house, probably the predecessor of that in existence today.

Further documentary evidence, throughout the nineteenth century, shows the "routine" documentary evidence, "through" out the nineteenth century, shows the church in Normanton as a thriving community holding two services each Sunday. However in recent years we see the falling attendance numbers at the Chapel, from eleven in 1908 (seven in 1909), six in 1973 to only four in 1974. Although the Chapel closed down ten years ago it still retains many of its original interior fittings, including a lectern and Bible, lighting appliances and monuments. The exterior has a particularly fine decorated bargeboard over the porch. Several of the porch bricks carry marks, while to the left and the denomination of "General Baptist Chapel" are also shown over the door.

The present Chapel owner has recently applied to demolish the property and redevelop the land, despite the local objection in the village and the charming original character of the building. Appropriate information has been sent to English Heritage for potential listing and we await their decision.

Chris Kerr ■