

# CONSERVATION IN NOTTS

Autumn 1983



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# NOTTINGHAMSHIRE BUILDING PRESERVATION TRUST LIMITED

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Nottingham NG2 6AX  
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## The Work of the Trust

The Trust - as a limited company with charitable status - operates within a legal framework, designed to protect buildings of historical and architectural interest and to maintain the character of towns and villages in Nottinghamshire. The Trust was formed in 1965 and has over the past years built a fine reputation for its assistance both financial and technical in helping preserve the heritage of the County. However in recent years the Trust has lost, because of Government cutbacks, the financial assistance of some of the local councils. The Trust will therefore concentrate on:

- (a) Advising local planning authorities on applications to alter or demolish listed buildings, and on applications affecting conservation areas;
- (b) Presenting evidence on the same issues if and when they come to public inquiry;
- (c) The Trust is anxious to extend its work in two other directions. It is prepared to offer technical advice to owners who, without proposing to alter a building, wish to maintain its essential character and possibly to restore historic features. Such advice calls for professional knowledge and skills. Owners will therefore be expected to pay a modest charge for such advice. This advice is available not only for buildings listed or in conservation areas, but for any building of age;
- (d) The Trust is particularly anxious to resume its policy, carried out successfully in Windles Square, Calverton of acquiring old buildings, restoring them suitably and then selling. The Trust has limited capital funds for this purpose, but hopes to be able to borrow the additional funds from the Civic Trust or from local authorities.

The Trust has accumulated a large collection of photographs and reports, and they are important for reference. Recently the Trust has surveyed a number of farm buildings because the are often now redundant. They differ from one part of the county to another, and it is impossible to advise on, for instance, a proposal to convert a barn into a house unless its historical character is understood. Recently the Trust has extended this by arranging surveying weekends for members. At these members learn the technique of measuring buildings whilst acquiring a valuable record for the Trust of the important buildings in a particular village.

### FINANCE AND ESTABLISHMENT

The Trust depends for its finance on voluntary donations. The largest source of voluntary help is supplied by local authorities. From 1990 and for the foreseeable future, owing to cutbacks in Local Government expenditure, the amount of this help will be much reduced and a greater emphasis on help from private individuals and voluntary organisations will be needed.

The Trust invites subscriptions from those who wish to associate themselves with this work; the rates are as follows:

Individual membership	- £2.00
Corporate membership	- £2.50
Life membership	- £20.00

Much of the work is done by volunteers from the Trust's new headquarters at the Old Bowls Pavilion, West Bridgford, which the Trust is restoring. If you are interested in finding out more about us please contact Janet Blenkinsop at the above telephone number.

## Subscriptions

Our subscription level has stayed the same for many years despite a huge increase in administration costs. The annual subscription barely covers the cost of the newsletter and postage. Our income from local authority grants has been drastically reduced and so we must rely on dramatically increasing our membership to survive. So, please try to enlist a new member this year - leaflets advertising our work are available from the Trust's offices - or why not take out a subscription to the newsletter for a friend who has moved away from the area.

### NEWSLETTER

Additional copies of the newsletter can be provided either singly @ 25p + p+p, or in bulk:-

10 copies	£2.00 post paid
50 or more copies	£1.75 per 10 post paid

or sent to any part of the U.K. for £1.50 a year.

## The Heritage of the County is in Your Hands

## Express Buildings

Express Buildings - now restored to its former glory - is a striking land mark that has helped to form the character of Parliament Street for over 100 years. The former H.Q. of the Daily Express, Nottingham's local paper from 1860, it has been unused and decaying since the last edition rolled off the presses in 1963. But the decline of this magnificent gothic style Watson Fothergill building over recent years hides a sustained effort by the City Council to overcome the difficulties of finding a suitable new use and restoration of the building.

The building is now fully restored under a refurbishment scheme by Grosvenor Estates and is fully let. But the story of attempts to achieve its rehabilitation nearly ended before it had begun. In the 1960's consent was granted for the demolition of the building. But the opportunity to correct this shortsightedness was grasped when the consent was abandoned at the time of Victoria Centre redevelopment and since then the Council have shown consistent intent to preserve the building.

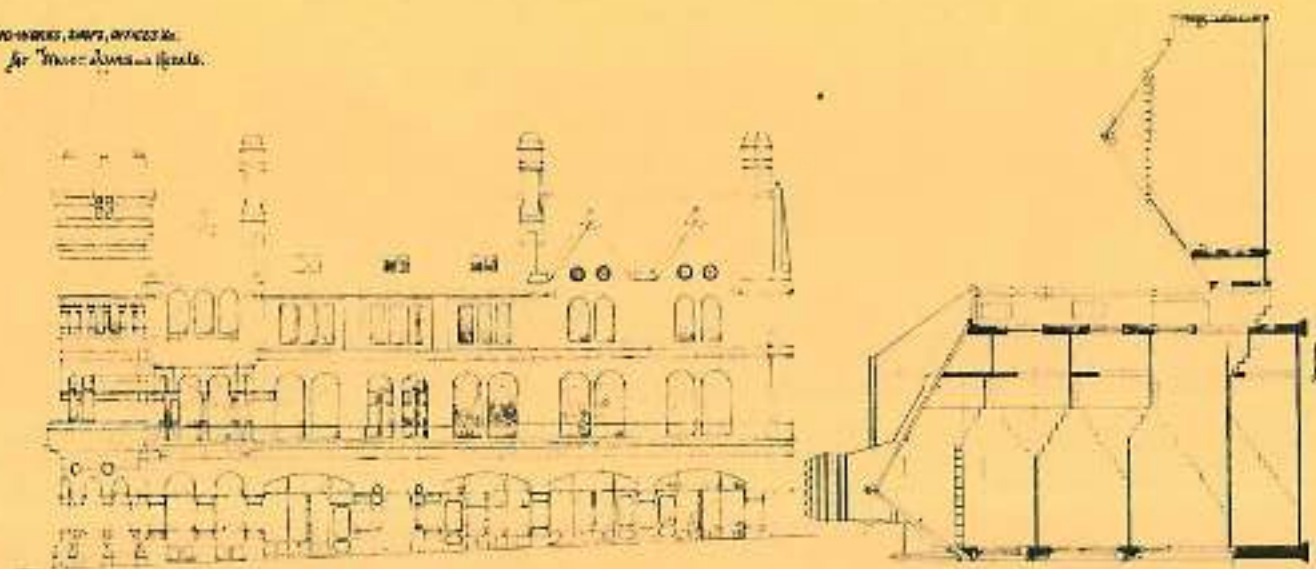
Another threat in the form of an application to redevelop the site in 1972 was turned to advantage when the Council served a Building Preservation Notice and the building was Listed by the Department of the Environment. Whilst this at least ensured some measure of control over the Building's future by the Council, it could not prevent decay and dereliction as various informal schemes to reuse the building foundered on complex covenants, needed to protect the building's character, and modern servicing requirements.

The state of the building became the source of much local concern over the years, and the City Planning Officer discussed the future of the building with the then owners, Waring and Gillow. In 1979 some of the problems seemed to be overcome and the basis of a restoration scheme to convert the building for modern use was agreed in the form of planning approval.

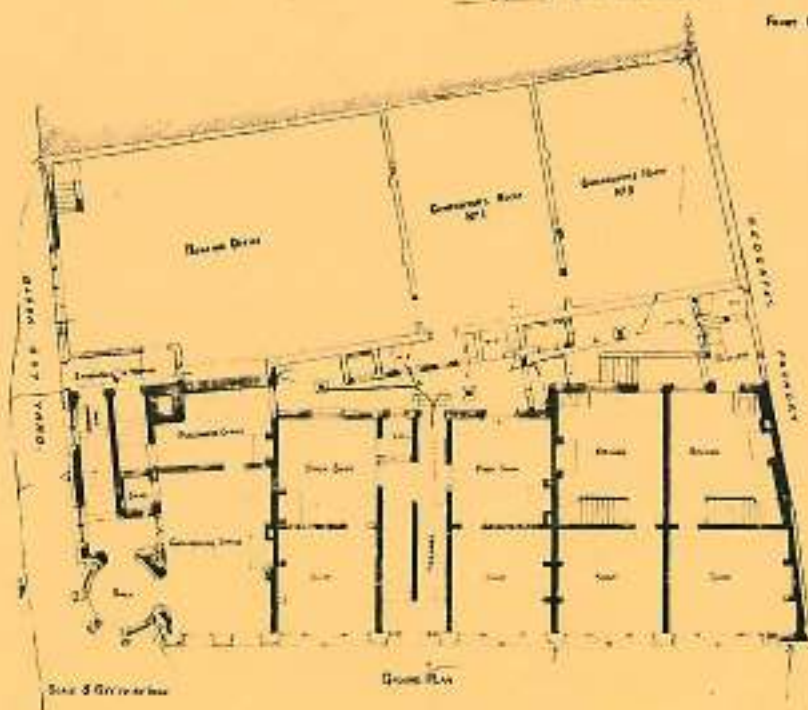
But what is so special about the building and why is such care needed in any scheme to convert it? The story of the building is nearly as curious as its Gothic fantasy style. Watson Fothergill was commissioned to build it in 1876 - when he was only 34 years old. He had only four major commissions to his name and one of these was his own house on Mapperley Road. The Nottingham and Midlands Counties Newspapers (Messrs. Renolds and Jevon) needed the building to produce their increasingly popular Daily Express. Fothergill's approach to the project seems to have been a little unusual as well, inasmuch as the first commission was to draw the foundations and basement of the building. These were before the second set of plans were produced four months later. In the intervening period, Watson Fothergill painted a water colour perspective of the building which was found relatively recently and revealed that the building as built differed in several important details from that for which plans were submitted.

The brief description of the building in the statutory list hardly does justice to its imposing Gothic Architecture and the elements of fantasy conveyed by the full height tower with spire at the eastern end of the building. Nor does it make much of the imaginary creatures that decorate the facade and were later to become Fothergill's trade mark. But it does give the essential details:

"Nottingham Daily Express" OFFICE, PRINTING-PRESS, & WORKS, OFFICES &c.  
*for "Water-Land" & "Hills".*

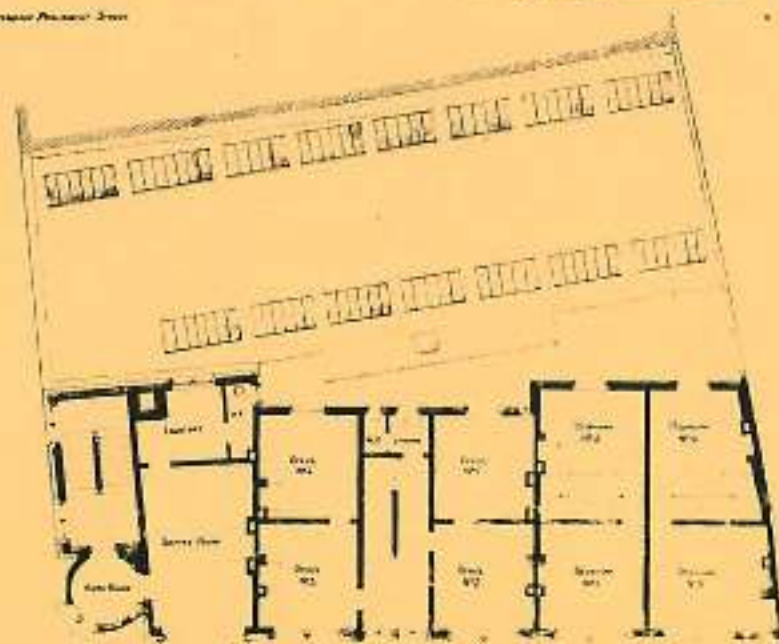


Front Elevation - Water-Land & Hills



Side 3 Elevation

Ground Plan



1st Floor Plan

*100 ft. x 11 ft.  
 100 ft. x 11 ft.*

20<sup>th</sup> August 1875

The building is three storeys with attic floor in the roof. The ground floor shop windows are arched and the first floor has balcony with pierced quatrefoils and segmental window leads separated by shafts with foliated capitals. On the second floor are plain mullion windows and the attics have one or two stoned gables and three large hipped dormers. The whole building is faced in Ashlar stone.

In fact the building that exists now is not quite as originally built. A further storey to accommodate a printing machine completely altered the top of the front elevation in 1898 and in 1924 a four storey extension was built on the rear.

The office space occupied by the Express was comparatively small, amounting to the three floors at the eastern end of the building. The Express also occupied the whole one storey printing works at the buildings rear. The remainder, called "Express Chambers" was divided into lock-up shops with offices above and two dwelling houses with shops at the western end.

The scheme agreed with the owners in 1979 to restore the building paid especial attention to the fine detail of the building and was a comprehensive attempt to put the building back into a state where it could serve a commercial role in the modern environment while retaining its essential character and features which make it one of the best known and most popular buildings in the centre of Nottingham. The Planning Committee therefore had to consider an application to change the use of the ground floor of building to offices, to reduce one chimney and to provide 7,000 sq. ft. of offices on the upper floors, rear elevation to provide parking and modern servicing to the building. The scheme also included cleaning the front elevation.

The building's future was secured when the Grosvenor Estates agreed to buy it, prompted by the City Planning Officer and the encouragement of a City Council/Department of the Environment "Operation Clean-up" grant of some £43,000 for restoration of the frontage. Encouragement was also given by the County Council by relaxing their stringent servicing standards and contributing to a pavement widening scheme, which helps to make the shops more attractive. With an investment of some £500,000 and a detailed restoration scheme drawn up by the John Madin Design Group and Gleeds Quantity Surveyors, the building is now in pristine condition and fully let.

It is hard to believe the condition of the building before restoration was as bad as it was, so thorough is the restoration scheme approved in an application in 1982 by the Architects. The original shopfronts have been revealed with new, mainly glass, shop fronts set back into the arched openings. Small alterations at the end of the front elevation and the reduction of one chimney go almost unnoticed in the overall impression formed.

Now that the building is fully let and its future seems secure, it seems hard to believe it had been lain derelict for nearly sixteen years. The restoration has transformed Parliament Street and is a lesson in perseverance. No longer will the Council be shamed by cries of "When are you going to do something about Express Buildings?".

Hugh Goldring



## A Survey of Nottinghamshire Church Bell Frames

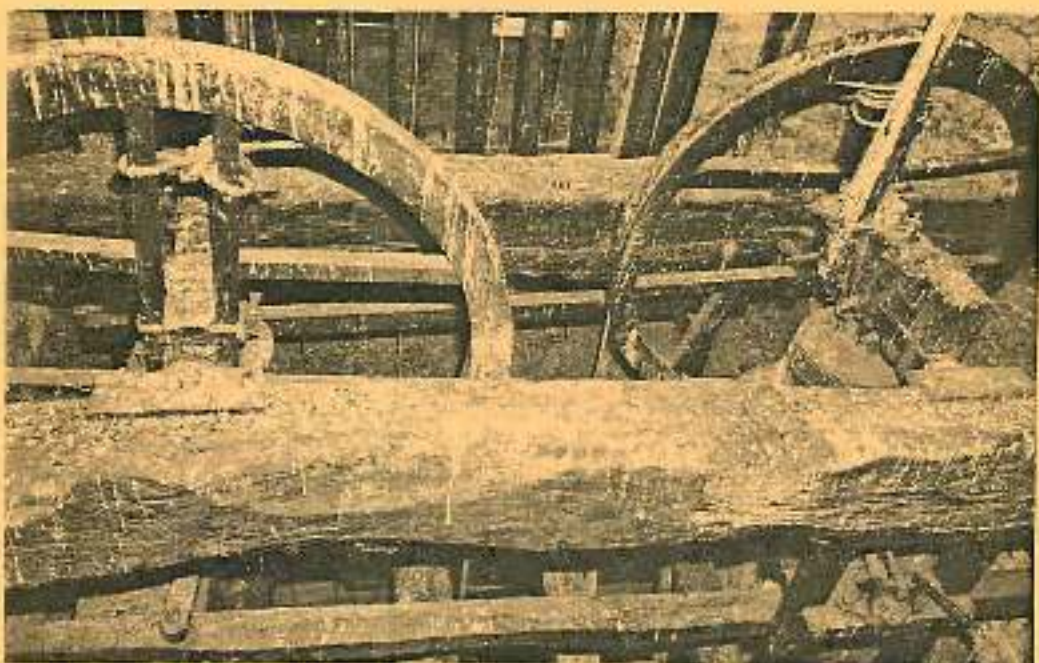
The study of structural timberwork within Churches has only received serious academic attention within the past decade or so and this has been mainly confined to that which is easily visible and accessible. Of the work which has been undertaken in the field of Church carpentry, the study and recording of Bell Frames has received the least attention, the main studies having taken place in Sussex (by G.P. Elphick), South Norfolk (P. Cattermole), South Cambridgeshire and the City of York (R.C.H.M.) These studies have produced broad typologies based on the advances made from the earliest methods of bell hanging up to the modern steel frames and follow the patterns of developing engineering design and construction related to the changes in techniques of bell ringing. The study of these frames is of the greatest importance to the archaeologist seeking to understand the development of timberwork engineering for, unlike roofs and gable framing which were designed for structural stability (and often artistic effect), the bell frame was first and foremost a machine, designed to cope with the stresses and strains of bell movement within the confines of a tower or turret.

The survey results discussed here form part of a wider study of Church Archaeology in Nottinghamshire and West Lincolnshire currently being undertaken by the author. A little over one third of Nottinghamshire bell frames have been surveyed to date and the remainder will be recorded over the next two years. One of the great problems, both in this county and elsewhere in the U.K. is that Bell Frames are being destroyed at an alarming rate; in the area surveyed to date 21 Medieval and two 18th Century frames have been replaced by steel frames since 1910. The Medieval frame at Old Annesley Church was destroyed last year and those at Old Colwick and Haughton Chapel were demolished several years ago. Of all these destroyed frames, the only record made was at Haughton Chapel where several pre-demolition photographs were taken of the western gable frame.

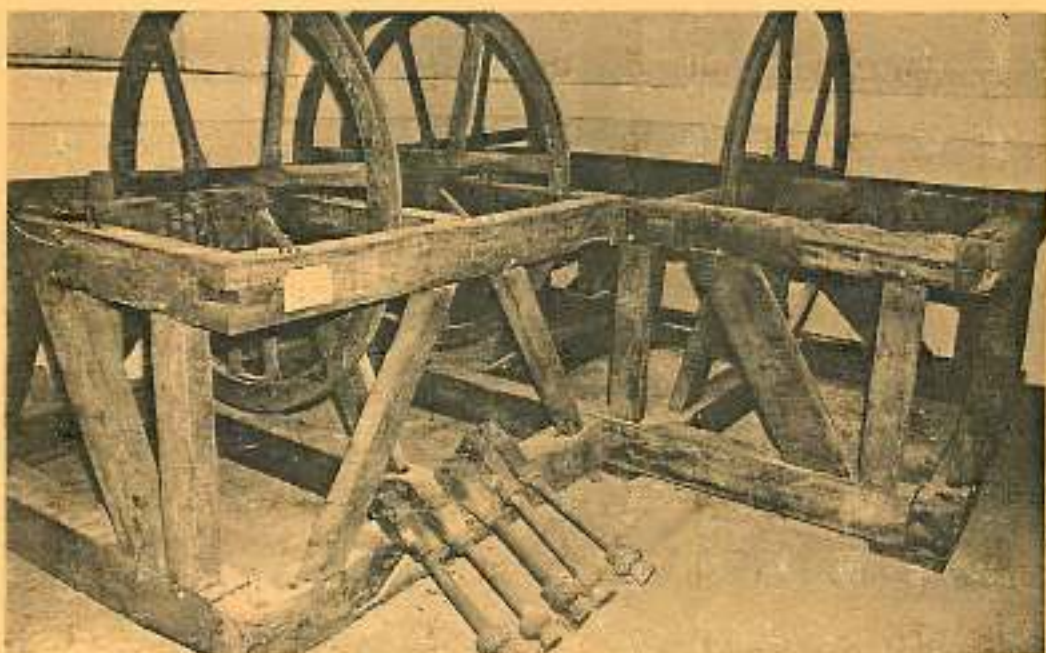
There are constant threats to many surviving frames, the medieval frame at Colston Bassett (St. Mary) is open to the elements and is deteriorating, the frame at Cotham Church has suffered badly through being removed and left out in the open for several years before being moved inside the Church last December. Many other bell frames are likely to be threatened with removal and destruction where new steel frames are envisaged and it is a matter of some urgency to organize the recording of the old ones before they are removed and destroyed.

Frame types are classified according to the system devised by Elphick in his Sussex survey, this consists of a code letter from A to Z and a series of numbers denoting special features of the frame construction (eg. if it is free-standing or if it has separate side bracing and so forth). This system is only chronological in a very broad sense as it illustrates design advances and it sometimes turns out to be the case that later designs appear in modified form at earlier dates. A programme of dendrochronological dating of the most important and problematical frames has begun this year with three sites being sampled, these being Carlton-on-Trent, Bleasby and Lambley; results have not yet been published.

The earliest frames apparently found to date consist of simple beam-gantry (B Frame) systems and occur at Bleasby, Flintham and Halam, dates of around 13th. Century are suspected and implied here. There is also



The two massive North-South timbers of the Bleasby E-Frame. This illustrates the earliest method of hanging bells within the confines of a tower and probably dates from the 13th. Century (contemporary with the tower).



The 'rescued' 18th. Century bell frame (probably from 1771 Church rebuilding at Rempstone) from Rempstone Church. Brought to Milton Mausoleum Church by G.A. Dawson in 1975 when a new steel frame was being installed.

a frame of this type at Thorpe which is somewhat more ornate and has slight carving on one of the supporting posts, it has been assigned a 15th. Century date. A later version of the gantry frame occurs at Kilvington, which was constructed in 1852.

The most common form of frame encountered is the 'V Frame' (head and cill parallel with opposing major and minor diagonal braces). The design of this truss is basically a sound one and it appears to have been in use from the 15th. up to the 19th. Century. Twenty nine have been recorded to date ranging from the unusual and highly problematical structure at Fledborough (with curved rather than straight braces) to the 1860 frame at Laxton.

The next most common form of frame is the 'Z Frame' (Head and cill parallel with opposing major diagonal braces only) and the transition from V to Z is shown in the tiny frame at Ollerton St. Giles which appears to date from the rebuilding of c.1780 and has its minor diagonal bracing made almost redundant by the construction of its major braces.

Unusual frames are rare and designs which appear fairly commonly in the Sussex survey only appear in Nottinghamshire occasionally and nearly always in modified form. There are S-Frames at East Stoke and Colston Bassett (St. Mary) which have similarities to some Lincolnshire frames; there is a highly problematical structure at Boughton which is of a C-Hybrid type. Apart from the Fledborough frame already noted, the three most important frames are found at Carlton-on-Trent, Lambley and Morton and each of them could well be Pre-Reformation in date, that at Morton being all the more remarkable in its survival from the old Church prior to the rebuilding of 1756 whilst the Carlton-on-Trent frame may well have survived two tower rebuildings, one in the 18th. Century and the other in 1851!

A little under two thirds of the Southwell diocese (Nottinghamshire) still remain to be surveyed and it is anticipated that a great deal of further evidence will be found to illustrate the development of the timber bell frame in this part of the country. Many problems remain within the towers which have been surveyed and it is hoped that future dendrochronological work by the East Midlands Tree Ring Dating Group will help to sort out the chronology of bell frames and enable a typology to be established which may be applicable to much of the East Midlands region. The forms of comparative evidence dating which have been employed to date for periodizing frame structures are clearly only of limited use and an absolute chronology is highly desirable.

The greatest problem of all still lies in the threat to bell frames from removal and destruction when modern steel frames are being inserted. The archaeological importance of these structures has simply not been appreciated in the past and great problems in recording and preserving threatened frames still remain. A suitable repository for the storage of redundant frames would be a major step forward and would allow for a more detailed study of individual frames away from the restrictive confines of the Church tower. (The old Rempstone frame is in fact stored thus at the now redundant Milton mausoleum Church at Tuxford).

#### Acknowledgements.

Thanks are due to the Archdeacons of Newark and Nottingham and to the various incumbents of the Churches which have been surveyed for their consent to the work. My thanks also go to Mr. W.L. Exton, Diocesan Consultant on Bells and Belfries, for information on the bells and

on individual 'problem' towers. Dendrochronological work is being carried out by Mr. W.G. Simpson of the East Midlands Tree Dating Group at the University of Nottingham.

Major References.

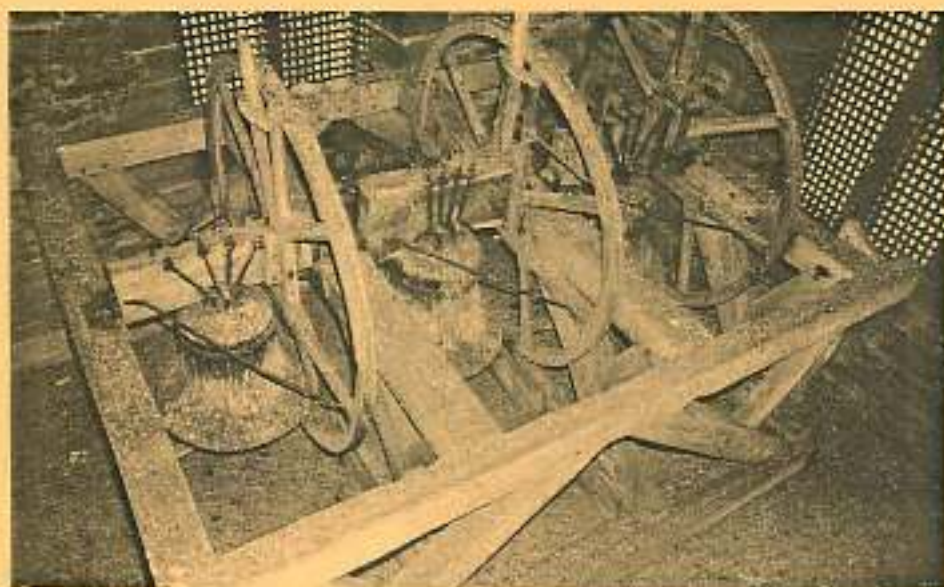
ELPHICK G.P. - 'Sussex Bells and Belfries' (1970)

HEWETT C.A. - 'Church Carpentry: A Study Based on Essex Examples' (1974)

CENTRAL COUNCIL OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS: THE TOWERS AND BELFRIES  
COMMITTEE - 'The Towers and Bells Handbook' (1973) pp. 34 - 39



Discarded bell frame outside Cotham Church probably dating from the rehanging of the new bells in 1733. Removed a few years ago when the bells were taken into safe keeping due to Church redundancy. This frame has now been taken inside the Church to protect it from the elements.



The High-sided V-Frame at Screveton, an early example of its type, probably dating from the 1st 15th. Century.

Christopher J. Brooke, B.Tech.

### Old Hall Farm, Linby.

The West Nottinghamshire village of Linby is regarded by many as one of the County's most picturesque, being a charming group of buildings constructed in local stone and enclosing the village green. Flowing through the centre of the village is a tributary of the River Leen, which at one time flooded the adjacent fields to encourage an early crop; and more locally powered the corn mills which can still be seen at the West end of Main Street.

An Exploration of the village to appreciate the vernacular building could well begin with the aid of the pamphlet titled "Papplewick and Linby Trail",\* but further searching, following the course of the stream, would soon find the visitor arriving at the mill pond and behind, Old Hall Farm, located on the North side of the village.

The farmhouse is especially handsome, being three storeys with a symmetrical design frontage of stone mullioned windows and projecting stair towers at each end. The walls are massive, constructed in coursed rubble stone with ashlar quoins and strings in Magnesian Limestone, a durable stone which was most probably dug from the nearby village quarry, and permits dressing for feature stones, copings and window mouldings. The tall roof has end gables with a steep pitch characteristic of Nottinghamshire, and is finished with plain tiles.

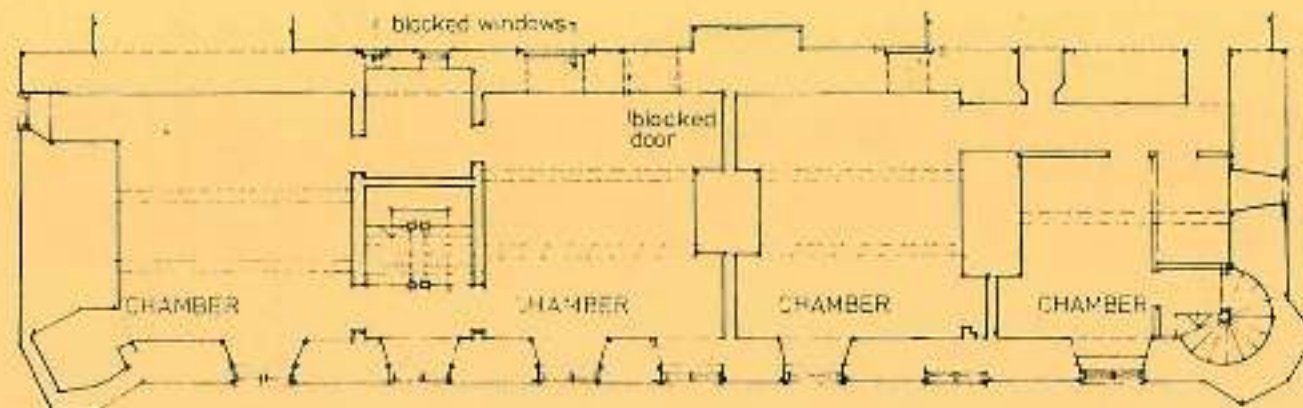
Towards the middle of the C16th., the medieval Great Hall plan became unfashionable as the desire for greater comfort and privacy encouraged a cellular plan of many small rooms, while the new wealthy classes, including Gentleman Farmers, sought the expression of elegance from the new designs of the Renaissance. During the reign of Elizabeth 1st. England achieved a certain stability, free from civil disturbance, while international discovery brought new ideas to the Country, and this led to a new architecture of larger windows, symmetry and decoration of surfaces which at the vernacular level was occasionally recognised by a niche or decorative plaque in the design. This is evident at Linby.

During this time hunting in the great forests of England became a social pleasure, and from the end of the C14th. a new form of building developed to reflect this past-time; the Hunting Lodge. A characteristic of this building type was the tall elevations, often with similar windows through out its height, permitting the less agile members of the family to follow the hunt from the upper-storey windows. The generous accommodation also allowed guests to stay with the house-hold, especially as long-distance travel was so inconvenient.

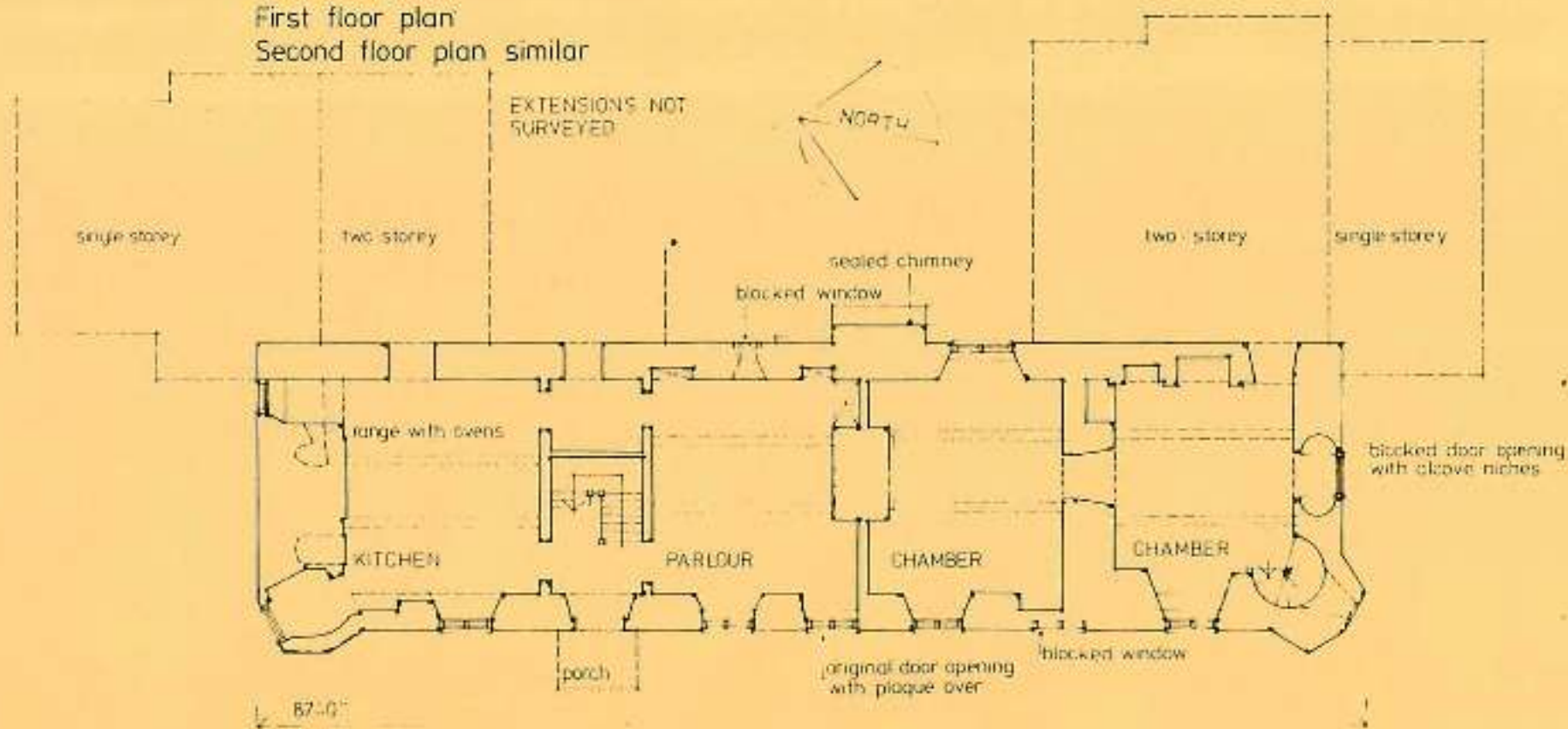
It is now perhaps difficult to imagine the topography around Linby as it was then; but Sherwood Forest once extended as far as Nottingham before land clearance and the consequences of the Enclosure Acts reduced the tree-line as far as Mansfield to the North and woodlands around Newstead. The reduction in wild-life can hardly be conceived, but during the Tudor period offered rich hunting country.

During the Summer of 1982, a small group from the Trust carried out a survey of Old Hall Farm and part of the information obtained is illustrated. An initial appraisal based on the general planning and observation of the building elements suggested that the building was constructed early in the C17th., which recognises the delay before formal architectural ideas seen

\* Papplewick and Linby Trail, published by Notts. County Council, Planning Dept.



First floor plan  
Second floor plan similar



Ground floor plan  
OLD HALL FARM, LINBY, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

in major cities, and ports, were taken up in the more remote areas of central England. This dating is supported by consideration of other influential buildings.

Wollaton Hall built in 1580-88 has a profusion of Renaissance thinking in plan and detail, having Italianesque elements decorating the complex elevations, and built as a hunting lodge for the Willoughby family, has a Prospect room at roof level with views over the surrounding country. In terms of detail ideas and thinking, Wollaton illustrates, where wealth permitted, the fashionable form of building at that time using continental features.

Kneesall has an early brick farmhouse dated before 1540, using terracotta window mouldings; a material introduced from Italy. However, the arched window heads are quite different to those at Linby, being medieval in design and therefore pre-dates Linby substantially. Even Worksop Manor Lodge built before 1590, probably by Robert Smythson, lacks the decoration and formality of Linby despite having the lofty proportions and cellular plan considered appropriate for a Hunting Lodge. In spirit it was still a medieval building.

Perhaps Shireoaks Hall, another building thought to be by Smythson and built about 1600 has the balance of scale, detail and formality by which comparison can be made.

However, from the survey, it was evident from the hidden rear elevation and the increased thickness walling enclosing the southern end, that the building has seen much change and was probably constructed as an extension of an earlier medieval house since demolished. Perhaps this was the "Old Hall". This is supported by the projecting chimney stack at the rear and sealed window openings un-related to the present floor levels. The imposition of a symmetrical elevation compromised the plan such that it was improbable that the ground floor window opening, shown as blocked, was ever open. The survey did not consider the adjoining brew house and dovecote buildings which are located as set-pieces related to the formal frontage and reinforce the design, although they deserve consideration at some future date.

Without doubt, Linby Old Hall Farm is a problematic building of considerable importance to the vernacular architecture of the County, which could justify further examination from documentary sources.

The Trust would like to thank the owners, Mr. and Mrs. Hardstaff, for their hospitality shown to the Measuring Group, as well as to the members who visited during the Annual Coach Tour.

Bryan Cather.

### Report on the 'Buildings at Risk' Register.

One of the Trust's most important functions in recent years has been to compile and regularly revise a comprehensive list of those historic buildings which are empty, neglected, or in need of repair. From this register, the Trust may then select and acquire suitable buildings for its own restoration projects, or else encourage and persuade owners to carry out the repairs themselves, or put the building up for sale on the open market.

Over the past three years, Dr. Mike Pringle has carried out this task, and in giving up a great deal of his own time, has identified some one hundred and twenty buildings considered to be at risk. Unfortunately, Mike is unable to continue this work due to other commitments, and therefore, on behalf of the Trust, I should like to thank him for the excellent work he has done in the past.

The need for early identification of 'buildings at risk' is of paramount importance if the Trust is to succeed in identifying and initiating its own building restoration projects, and making others aware of the scale of the task. It is also hoped that later on, representatives for each District will be appointed to make contact with individual members and Local Bodies, and report to the Technical Panel those buildings they feel to be particularly at risk.

Since taking over the Register, the assistance and co-operation of members and the District Authorities has enabled me to add a further one hundred and ninety five buildings, which I am currently adding to the list.

While the revised register is being prepared for circulation, I have included below a brief summary of progress on buildings 'at risk' in the past, and in which the Trust has taken a keen interest.

#### Alexandra Lodge, Bestwood.



Work is now nearing completion on the restoration and conversion of the Lodge to Warden's living and office accommodation by Nottinghamshire County Council. This delightful gatehouse of 1878 by S.S. Tevlon was listed last year following a long period of vandalism and decay which had reduced the building to a near ruin.



Greasley's Cottages, Norwell.

This row of timber-framed cottages has recently been purchased by a local developer for restoration and modernization. Good progress is now being made on the scheme which also includes the restoration of another adjacent cottage and the erection of a new house well hidden at the rear of the site.

Former Laundry, Carlton.

Built by Watson Fothergill in 1899, this imposing building is to be fully restored and converted for use by the present owner as offices with ancillary accommodation. The building has already been re-roofed with the aid of a grant from Nottinghamshire County Council, to secure the future of the building.



Wilford Toll House

Members may recall the Trust giving grant-aid for some repairs to this attractive Victorian building several years ago. Regrettably, the building deteriorated again mainly due to vandalism; notice the graffiti, boarded up windows, broken orrestings to the ridge tiles and missing slates in the 'before' photograph. Full restoration of the building has now been completed by Nottinghamshire County Council. The building contractors were J. Coleman and Son.

### Annesley Hall

Work is now in progress to convert the Hall to a home for the elderly. This will involve the full restoration of the Hall with the retention of the original roof form and internal layout with minimum sub-division. A new single storey wing is proposed next to the Gatehouse as warden aided accommodation.

### Bankside Cottage, Askham.

The Trust is currently investigating the restoration of this 16th. Century timber framed cottage which has fallen into a serious state of disrepair.

### Barton-in-Fabis-Dovecote

To be repaired following a large grant given by Nottinghamshire County Council, along with support by the Trust, British Gypsum and Rushcliffe Borough Council. A progress report will be included in the next edition of the Newsletter.

R.A. Simpson

### The Revolving Funds "Performance and Potential".

I represented the Trust at the Architectural Heritage Funds National Conference on Revolving Funds held at Buxton from the 17th. - 19th. June. Apart from the fact that the conference was most enjoyable and the weather delightful - too good for a conference really - the weekend was most informative and a lot of hard work was completed to everyone's benefit and satisfaction.

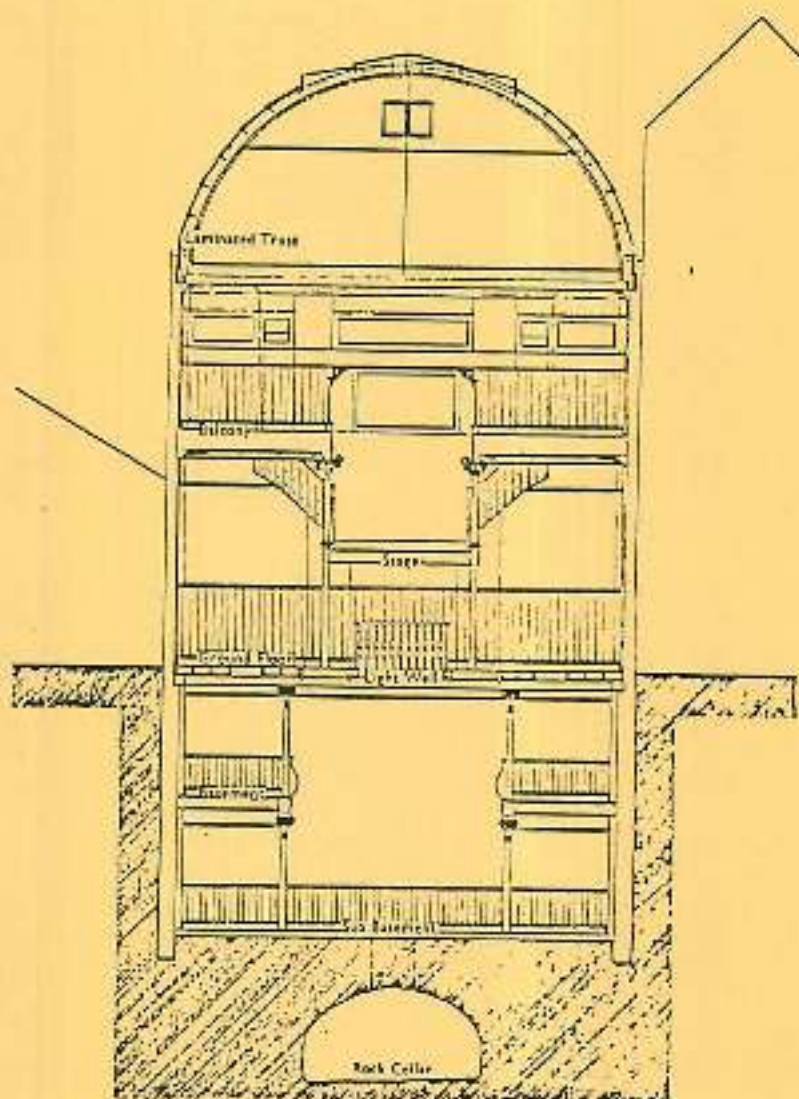
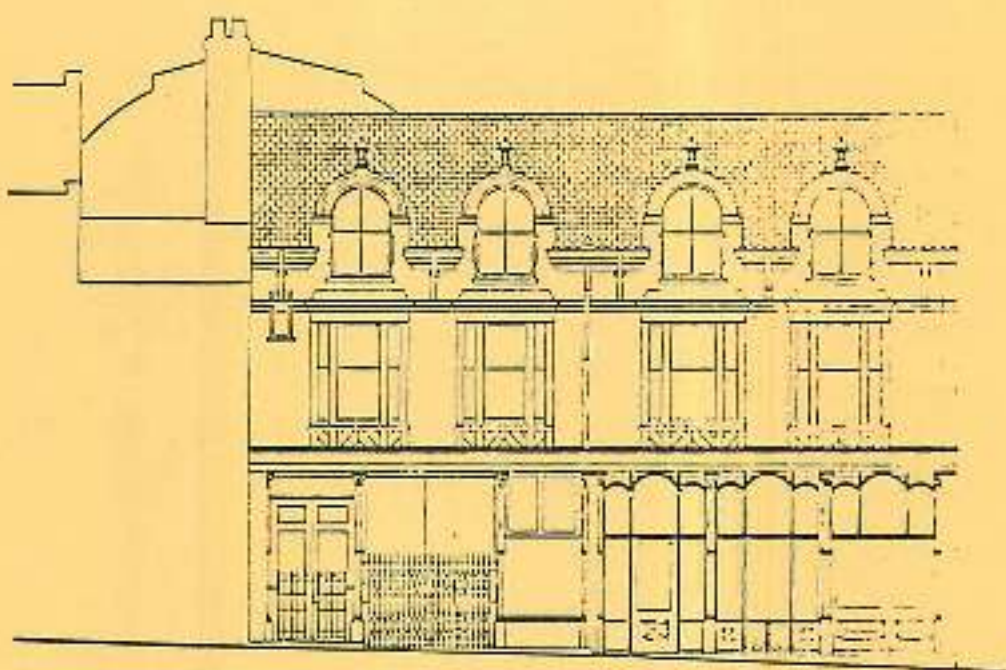
One hundred and sixteen delegates took part, and eighteen members of the Civic Trust were in attendance. The organisation was very good and over thirty affiliated societies mounted an exhibition and display of work. Some schemes were extremely ambitious, others not so, but the cross section of involvement in conservation ranged widely and gave the impression that whatever was tackled was worthwhile and because those taking part believed in what they were doing, all projects seemed to have a successful conclusion.

The main subjects under discussion related to the setting up of a Trust, getting it off the ground and also keeping up the momentum once the revolving fund had commenced. Administration, Fund Raising and Planning Ahead were topics talked about in great detail, and whilst much of the subject matter had been published previously, it was, nevertheless, interesting to hear other views expressed.

Richard Simpson, a fellow Trust member, represented the County Council, and it was useful to have two Nottinghamshire delegates, as we were able to divide our attendance between all the various sessions, so that between us we covered all aspects. Meeting up again at the end of the conference, we both agreed that much useful information could be passed on to help reform our own revolving fund following the modest success of the Linby Lane project.

The Council of Management has since authorised a working party to investigate the setting up of such a fund again, and the members of this group are presently involved in the detailed matters related to it.

J.A. Severn



### The Old Malt Cross, St. James Street, Nottingham.

It seems ambitious to take on the restoration and re-opening of an over one hundred year old former music hall - particularly one which contains a rare architectural feature and had a dubious reputation when it last operated before the first world war. But Messrs. Purdy and Klim largely achieved this on 3rd. October this year - two years after buying the Old Malt Cross in St. James Street. The building will be restored to something like its former glory with the aid of grants, with the ornate 19th. Century facade to St. James Street given a facelift and the elaborate interior of the main hall itself redecorated. The rare and magnificent laminated beam semi-circular glazed roof, which spans the full width of the music hall, has been preserved and restored.

One of the several music halls in Nottingham when it opened, the building has an interesting history. It was built in St. James Street on the site of the Malt Cross Public House by Charles Weldon in 1877 as a speculative enterprise, only to close a few years later in 1880 with the owner in debt. Its subsequent use was not much more successful. A succession of publicans failed to make it a success, and even when a former music hall performer, Thompson Donkersly, took it over in 1902, he could not stem its decline.

The main hall was the former pub, behind an existing frontage of a barbers' shop and brewhouse on St. James Street, remodelled to form the music hall. The work was carried out in a hurry to catch the opening of Goose Fair in early October 1877, and the resulting building did not closely resemble the plans which Weldon and his architect had submitted for approval - something that would not happen today. The owner re-christened it the Old Malt Cross and we have a good idea of the building from an account by M.L. Featherstone and N. Summers in the Transactions of the Thoroton Society in 1962.

### Nottingham's First Laminated Roof

The feature of outstanding architectural interest is the arched and glazed roof which spans the whole width of the main hall, and creates a visual unity of the main floors. The arches are shown as cast iron frames in the original scheme, but were finally constructed in laminated timber.

Each arch is built up of ten, and at the ends twelve, laminations approximately 7/8" thick, constructed in two halves joined at the ridge by iron shoes, and restrained by iron tie rods and king rods. Between the arches, deep purlins carry roof glazing down the length of the Hall, which results in a high standard of natural lighting on both first and ground floors. It can be said that the simplicity and efficiency of the structure is in close sympathy with the early Modern movement.

The basement floor was shown as "Dining Room or Skating Rink", with a beer cellar under the front entrances. Ground and first floors are the public house proper, the first floor being brought through the front of the building, where a large plate glass window overlooking St. James's Street acts as the buildings advertisement. A small well through the first floor admits natural light to the ground floor below, but no stage is allowed for. There are plate glass mirrors on the walls and the whole of the main floor is spanned by the dramatic semi-circular roof. The

external walls are brick, and the floors are timber structures carried on an internal grid of cast iron columns. These columns form a rectangle around the centre of the plan, so that an open well could be formed running through the heart of the building, of varying size on each floor.

The interior design of the public rooms is solidly Victorian with a late nineteenth century classical flavour. The front elevation features are symmetrical with the entrance to the public bars at the right hand portion of the elevation, and the entrance to the Music Hall to the left. Overall, the elevation was originally well balanced and very pleasing.

The building now being restored with such care by the new owners is remarkably similar to the original building. After the Great War it was taken over by a firm of wholesale drapers who did very little work apart from flooring over the open wells at ground and basement levels and adding some false walls.

The current restoration has raised the original floor level some 2'6" to hide air vent ducts from the restaurant in the basement. The roof has had to be reglazed in a special plastic. Other work is mainly redecoration, emphasising original features and cleaning.

Originally, the new owners applied for an Urban Development grant for the venture, but this was turned down. Approval for a grant under Section 10 is likely and the scheme may qualify under the Development of Tourism Act.

Curiously, the building seems dogged by the reputation of most music halls of being slightly seedy. Indeed this one on St. James Street is considered by some historians to have been worse than most and closed down when magistrates refused to renew its license in 1911.

The Old Malt Cross is a good example of licensed premises in which the music hall tradition flourished. After one hundred years the form and use of the building is largely unchanged, with a restaurant in the voluminous basement, shop and store on the St. James Street frontage and music hall behind. If the upper floor of the St. James Street frontage building was in the same ownership, this might have ensured a more comprehensive clean up to the frontage.

The re-introduction of music hall in Nottingham is a welcome addition to the wide range of entertainment, and it deserves to succeed as a reward for the restoration of this charming building.

Yew Tree Farm, Kirton.

This dingy looking building with its unsympathetic concrete tiles hides a charming and historically interesting timber-framed interior. The clues to its late 16th. or 17th. century date are the low eaves, steep roof pitch, narrow plan, and axial chimney stack in line with the entrance door.

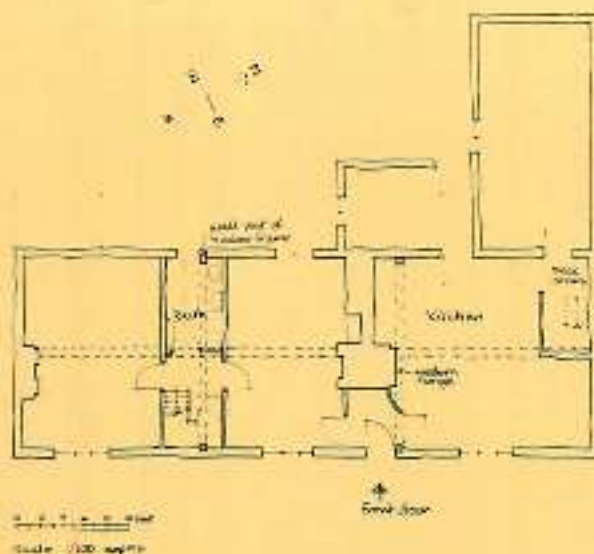
Consent to demolish the building was refused by Newark District Council for the following reasons:-

1. The demolition of the farmhouse, designated as a "Building of Character" in the Kirton Village Plan, would be detrimental to the character of the Conservation Area.
2. The replacement of the existing building on the site by a modern residential unit would be out of character with the adjoining group of buildings and the amenity of the locality.

An appeal was lodged against this decision, but now the Secretary of State for the Environment has ruled that the building is to be preserved. The Trust hopes that the Farmhouse will soon be be inhabited again and its appearance sensitively restored.

G. Beaumont.

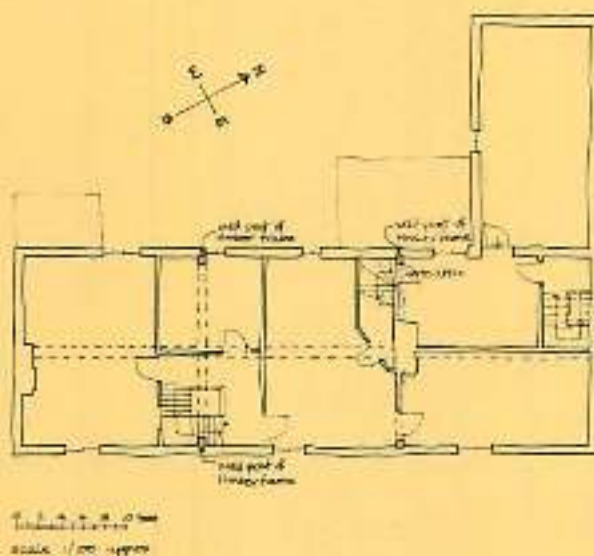




GROUND FLOOR SKETCH SURVEY

YEW TREE FARM, KIRTON.

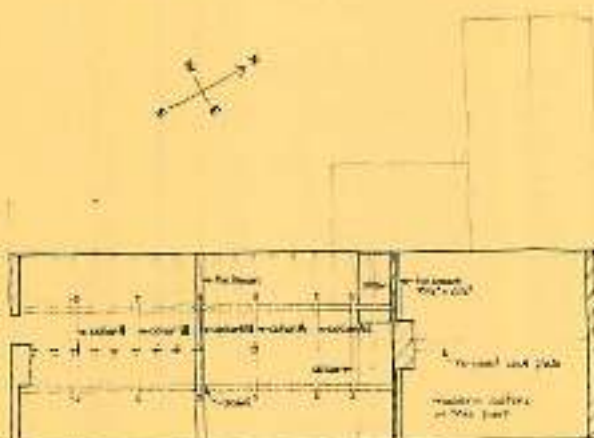
Q.B. 10 Feb 45



FIRST FLOOR SKETCH SURVEY

YEW TREE FARM, KIRTON.

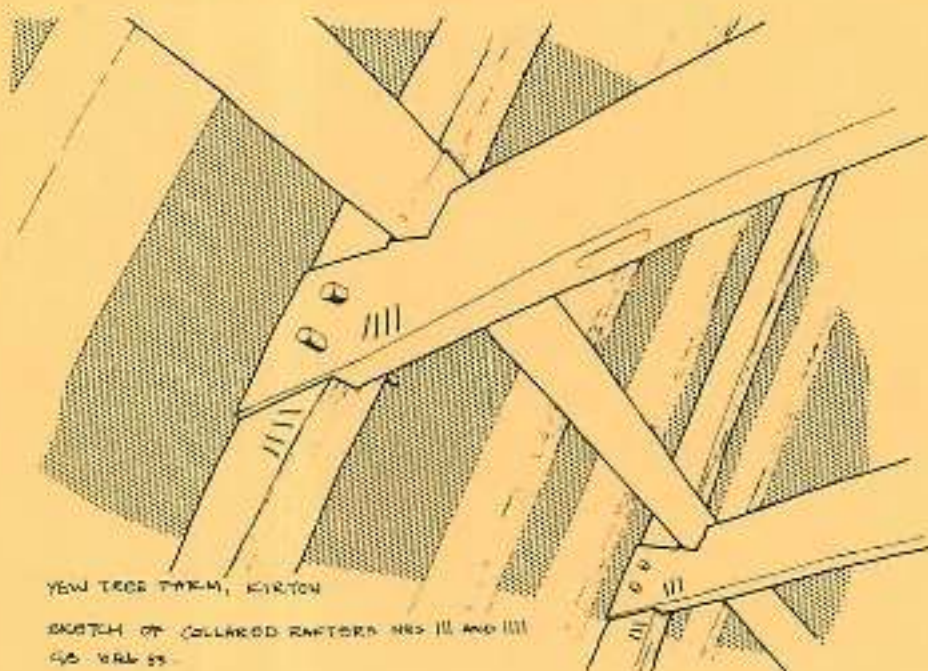
Q.B. 10 Feb 45



PLAN OF ROOF TIMBERS

YEW TREE FARM, KIRTON.

Q.B. 10 Feb 45



## 22, The Square, Retford.

Join a 'working party' to strip a thick layer of disfiguring paint from this beautiful staircase. Anyone interested please contact Graham Beaumont, telephone Nottingham 824824 - Ext. 409.

