

Cory's Building and Merchant Place, Cardiff

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

**produced by Ashley Davies Architects Limited
for Dukes Education / Cardiff Sixth Form College
in support of Planning & Listed Building Consent applications
for a scheme submitted by Expedite and DWD**

July 2022 - rev B



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1.0 INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES OF REPORT

1.1 Introduction and Purpose

This Heritage Assessment is written by Ashley Davies Architects on behalf of Dukes Education / Cardiff Sixth Form College to inform, and subsequently in justification of, proposals for Planning and Listed Building Consent applications submitted by Expedite Architects, Engineers and Project Managers and DWD Planning Consultants.

The proposed 'development site' is the existing Cory's Building, on Bute Street and Bute Place, and the adjoining Merchants Place, on Bute Place, in Cardiff, along with the open site to the rear of the two.

The Statement seeks to establish the historical development and heritage significance of the proposed development site, in order to inform the development of an appropriate heritage-led scheme for the site. It considers the proposals and evaluates the heritage impact that the proposals would have on the heritage and, where appropriate, identifies potential mitigation.

1.2 Authorship

This document has been produced by Ashley Davies, an RIBA-accredited Specialist Conservation Architect, a Supporter of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation, a member of the RIBA Conservation Register Steering Group and a Visiting Lecturer in Conservation Principles, following a visit to, and appraisal of, the site in 2022.

Ashley is also a Chartered Architect and has undertaken Building Conservation courses at SPAB, the RIBA, the RSAW and the CEW as well as hand-on practical courses at Ty Mawr Lime and SPAB. He has delivered dozens of heritage-led projects over his career involving the repair, restoration and adaptation of many grade I, II* and II listed buildings.

In the last ten years, Ashley has researched and written 115no. Historic Building Reports for 73no. historic buildings/sites, involving 54no. Heritage Assessments.

1.3 Policy Context

This Heritage Impact Statement has been prepared in the context of the Cardiff Council's Listed Building policy. The policy context against which the Planning and Listed Building Consent applications must be determined, insofar as the heritage context is concerned, is as follows:

- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 [Paragraph 16(2) indicates that, in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.]
- The Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016
- Planning Policy Wales – 9th Edition – November 2016
- Planning Policy Wales 'Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment', dated May 2017 [Note: Previously important Welsh Office Circulars '60/96 Planning and the Historic Environment: Archaeology'; '61/96 Planning and the Historic Environment: Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas'; and '1/98 Planning and the Historic Environment: Directions by the Secretary of State for Wales' have all been superseded by TAN 24].
- Planning Policy Wales 'Technical Advice Note 12: Design', dated March 2016.
- Cardiff Council's Adopted Local Development Plan (LDP), which was adopted on the 28th January 2016.

1.4 The Objectives of this Heritage Impact Statement

A Heritage Impact Statement must be submitted with any Listed Building Consent application and any Conservation Area Consent application.

The objective of the Heritage Impact Statement is to establish the historic development of the site and its setting, and provide an evaluation of the significance of the building and its context, to inform the development of an appropriate heritage-led scheme for the site. Planning Policy Wales 'Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment', dated May 2017, states:

"5.12 Applicants for listed building consent are required to provide a heritage impact statement. This presents the results of a heritage impact assessment, which is a process designed to ensure that the significance of the building is taken into account in the development and design of proposals for change. Heritage impact assessments should be proportionate both to the significance of the listed building, and to the degree of change proposed, and the statement should provide enough information to allow the local planning authority to judge significance and impact when considering applications for listed building consent."

The Welsh Government's 'Heritage Impact Assessment in Wales' document has been used as a guide to preparing the Statement. This sets out the general principles to consider when planning changes to historic assets and applying for listed building, and states:

"Your heritage impact assessment should take into account sufficient information to enable both the significance of the asset and the impact of change to be understood."

"The basic stages of heritage impact assessment, whatever the size and scope of the project, are:

1. explaining your objective and why changes are desirable or necessary;
2. understanding the significance of your historic asset;
3. identifying your proposed changes;
4. assessing the impact of your proposals;
5. setting out the reasoning behind your preferred option, including your design concepts and principles, in the light of the assessment process.

Once you are clear about stages 1 and 2, stages 3, 4 and 5 may be repeated until you find the best proposal that meets your objective and has the maximum benefit for your historic asset."

1.5 The Structure of the Heritage Impact Statement

In line with the previously-mentioned guidance, this Heritage Impact Statement has been set out in six main sections with an Executive Summary.

Section 1 explains the objective of the project and why changes are desirable or necessary.

Section 2 - 'Understanding the Heritage' - seeks to summarise the key information known about the study location – its historical development and principal phases – through historical and architectural research.

Section 3 – 'Understanding the Significance of the Historic Asset' - takes the form of a Statement of Significance, which involves appraisals based on the Evidential, Historical, Aesthetic and Communal Value of the heritage asset, drawn from what the 'Understanding the Heritage' research reveals.

Section 4 identifies and explains the proposed changes to the heritage asset and its context.

Section 5 assesses the impact of the proposals against the respective Values and Significances already established.

Section 6 sets out the reasoning / justification behind the preferred option, including the design concepts and principles, in the light of the assessment process.

2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Both Cory's Building and Merchant Place possess considerable significance, historically and architecturally, located within a setting also of considerable heritage significance. Both buildings were designed in the Italian Renaissance style of Architecture much-loved at the time. Merchant Place is a high quality essay in pure restrained and ordered Italian Renaissance architecture, whilst Cory's Building presents the more dynamic, ornate and showy Mannerist style.

Both buildings are protected by a grade II listing; and are identified as 'Landmark Buildings' within the Mount Stuart Square Conservation Area; an area little changed since its late Victorian hey-day, when Cardiff and the Docks were an economic power house.

Cardiff owes much of its history to the Industrial Revolution of the 1790s, which stimulated mining in the valleys of South Wales. In order to satisfy the need for an export outlet for the ever-increasing supplies first of iron, and then of coal, coming down from the Valleys, the docks at Cardiff were developed and the town changed completely.

A small town of 1,870 people in 1801, less than a third the size of neighbouring Swansea (with its growing copperworks) and less than a quarter the size of Merthyr Tydfil (the centre of the valleys' coal and iron works), Cardiff's population had increased considerably by 1901 to 164,000, making it Wales' largest conurbation. In this time, it had become a major exporter of coal and iron with the construction of its docks by the second and third Marquesses of Bute, from 1798, linked to the industrial and mining hinterland by the Glamorganshire Canal, from 1794, and subsequently the Taff Vale Railway Company, from 1840. By 1901, Cardiff's docks were handling more coal than any other port in the world.

In between the development of the canal and the railways, in the 1820s, the second Marquess of Bute initiated a development plan which included the construction of Bute Street as a main road in and out of the docks area. The construction of Bute Street was completed in 1830. In the 1830s, 40s and 50s, a series of commercial buildings, with some residential buildings, were built at the bottom end of Bute Street, opposite the Bute West Dock Basin, and on the west side of the next section of Bute Street, opposite the Bute West Dock itself.

It was not until approximately 1860 that buildings were constructed on the east side of this section of Bute Street, the first building being Dock Chambers, a little to the north of Cory's Building.

The site on which both buildings reside was, before 1881, set aside as an area of open parkland within a part of the city which was otherwise densely built up to the west and open to a network of water basins and locks and railway lines to the east. The site was, along with Mount Stuart Square further to the west, one of two 'green lungs' within an otherwise very busy urban setting - commercial to the west and south; industrial to the east and north. The buildings were, in effect, both late arrivals to the party.

Merchant Place was the first of the two buildings to be built - in 1881. Designed by architect E. G. Rivers as two separate buildings behind one consistent façade, it was originally occupied by the Mercantile Marine Department of the Board of Trade (in no.1 Bute Place to the east) and the Docks Telegraph and Post Office (in no.3 to the west). Cadw state that its reasons for listing are for group value and as an "excellent C19 commercial building with fine Italianate design and strong use of contrasting building materials".

Cory's Building was built in 1889, for Cory Brothers Ltd; designed by architects Bruton and Williams. The Cory's -brothers John Cory (1828–1910) and Richard Cory (1830–1914), whose family came from Devon - were an important Cardiff family business, which included ship's chandlery, brokerage and the sale and export of coal. They also owned several collieries in Wales and, apparently, became the largest private wagon-owners in the United Kingdom, with more than 5,000 wagons. Cadw state that its reasons for listing are for group value and as a "prominently sited elaborate commercial building for important Cardiff family business".

Both buildings very much retain their respective external aesthetics and notable presence within their setting, albeit with the one significant change to Cory's Building referred to below.

Historic images suggest that the frontage of Merchant Place, on Bute Place, looks now very much as it did when it was built in 1881. Made up of 3no. distinct storeys, its front facade presents a strong horizontal emphasis; and, with its 10no. regular bays, a strong and ordered vertical rhythm which overlays that horizontality. The stability, poise and clarity of proportion which this exhibits, combined with the ancient Roman standards and motifs, makes this elevation an excellent example of Classical design – possible the best in the area.

The choice of red materials - the red brick with the perfectly sourced Cumberland red sandstone - with the grey Penrhyn granite colonnade standing forward and its hipped grey slate roofs, provides a real richness.

The taller Cory's Building, also taking up the prominent corner, is a 5no. storey building, also in the Italianate Classical style; however, its style is more playful, ornate and three-dimensional. Whilst Merchant Place is more horizontal in its emphasis, Cory's Building, with its 13no. bays, accentuates the vertical, with its first and second floor columns (heavily carved at their base, including several heads) within recessed bays, with its articulated limestone ashlar stonework, granite plinth and flat roof behind a solid parapet.

However, it appears as though Cory's Building was originally built as a 3no. storey building, with 3no. pavilion roofs, at centre and ends; and the top 2no. storeys are not original. They were built onto of the original 3no. storeys some time between 1907 and 1929. When it was built, therefore, both Merchant Place and Cory's Building were of the same height. The architects' - Bruton and Williams' – vision was clearly for a roofline which was no less ornate and eye-catching than the façade, indeed moreso. The roof comprised 3no. pavilion roofs and a multitude of tall finials.

Both buildings are of Classical Italianate design, however, with different materials and treatments, they are very different in appearance and impact – the younger Cory's Building probably the more prominent for its height and ornateness, whilst the older Merchant Place is a little calmer.

Both buildings appear to be structurally sound with fabric generally in a reasonable condition; and, therefore, suitable for repair and restoration.

The portion of the site behind both buildings, adjoining Docks Lane, was, until 2008, always built upon, as the original rear ranges of Merchant Place. The elevations which have been exposed by the demolition are clearly elevations which were never meant to be exposed – plain, utilitarian and unfenestrated. It is felt that re-building on this part of the site is sensible. However, what remains on the site appears to be original to 1881.

There is, however, some uncertainty about the open-fronted iron colonnade lean-to structure to the west of the site. It was there in 1899, but original plans suggest that it might not have been built in 1881.

Internally, much has been lost within both buildings, following the 2008 strip out; although both still retain some fabric deemed to be significant - moreso to Cory's Building than Merchant House; and, where not remaining, the 'scars' of the lost internal fabric allow for much of the layout and detailing to be understood.

Aspects still insitu of most interest inside Merchant House include:

- The 2no. decorative cast iron balustrading and hardwood handrails to the lower flights of the staircases, albeit some runs have lost a number of the infill balustrade panels, which continues all the way up the Telegraph Offices three storeys;
- The less ornate, more utilitarian timber balustrading to the upper flight of these staircase;
- The top-lit top room to the Telegraph Offices, with its patent glazed rooflight, intricate lightweight iron trusses and diagonal timber sarking boards;
- The mosaic tile flooring to the front room of the Post Office, with its Victorian mix of russet, black, cream and white colours;
- Some fireplace surrounds;
- The brickwork internal walls and filler joist floors with arched soffits to the basement;
- Some iron ceiling roses, such as the one to the Mercantile Offices rear range;
- Some lath and plaster ceilings, cornices and covings;
- Some timber window frames, with their wrought iron internal railings;
- The cast glass pavement lights;
- The beautifully constructed smooth brick coal chute in the basement and
- The boiler in the basement.

Other aspects have been collected up and carefully set aside, however, are no longer in situ, including:

- The cast iron radiators;
- Some of the timber trims, especially the fluted pilaster fronts.

Aspects still insitu of most interest inside Cory's Building include:

- The decorative cast iron balustrading and newel posts, ornate hardwood handrail and stone steps to the lower flights of the staircases, with particular focus on the highly decorative and high significant flight directly in front of the main entrance;
- The plastered composite twinned columns both sides of the staircase, albeit damaged;
- The polished stone tile flooring to the main entrance, with scars where a lobby once lived;
- The large sliding timber doors to this main entrance, along with the segmental arched overlight above the doors;
- The plaster cornices to the ground floor lath & plaster ceiling and downstand beams;
- The plaster mouldings to the ceiling above the entrance which identifies where a lobby once was;
- The plaster cornices to the upper floor lath & plaster ceilings and downstand beams. Whilst most of the internal partitions have been lost, these cornices show where partitions used to be, and explain the previous/original layouts;
- Some of the ornate timber door surrounds;
- Some of the timber skirtings and dado rails;
- The mechanism at the head of the hoist shaft;
- The iron vents in the cills of many tall windows, along with the moulded panels alongside;
- The timber windows and the timber panelled reveals, surrounds and walling below the cills, along with some with ornate panelling above the window;
- The upper floor timber board and wood block parquet flooring;
- Some of the fireplaces, albeit the surrounds all appear to have been lost;
- The small Georgian-wired glazed lanterns patent-glazed lighting the top floor;
- To a number of the floors, the rooms at the two ends remain quite well decorated, with timber panelling and plaster ornamentation;
- The bunds to the basement door thresholds.

Both Cory's Building and Merchant Place are historical assets which can very well illustrate commercial life in late Victorian and Edwardian Cardiff at a time of great success and growth, and immense wealth, in the Docks area. The two buildings, along with many of their neighbours, illustrate the dramatic development of Cardiff, through its docks, and their connection with South Wales hinterlands; and the influx of businesses taking commercial advantage of the trade opportunities, not least the coal and shipping agents and the bankers. They illustrate the value to Cardiff of these personalities who commissioned them through the architectural statements of the buildings built for and by them; and they can tell us a lot about working practices during the Victorian and Edwardian eras, and how buildings of that period were constructed, articulated, finished and fitted out.

This historical value is considerable, not least because the two buildings retain much of their original form and external appearance within a relatively unchanged setting, at least to the front on Bute Street and Bute Place, if not so much to the rear, on Lloyd George Avenue.

Cory's Building retains the same plan form, elevational treatment and architectural detail now as it did 133 years ago. Merchant Place also retains the same plan form, elevational treatment and architectural detail as it did 141 years ago, insofar as its principal front range is concerned; however, its rear ranges were demolished around 14 years ago. Historic photos from their early years, show very little change indeed to their principal elevations onto Bute Street and Bute Place.

Loss of much of the internal fabric of both buildings does slightly reduce their historical and evidential values, as that impacts upon one's ability to 'read' the interiors and life within; however, enough of the important fabric – floors, primary internal walls and staircases – remains, and what doesn't remain – internal partitions, fixtures and fittings – can either be 'read' from the 'scars' on the ceilings, floors and walls; or appreciated from plans produced before the internal strip of 2008, or soon thereafter.

Both buildings are of distinctly Classical Italianate design, with their frontages providing a very strong presence onto the streetscape and the wider setting, being significant elements of a number of important views within and towards the area. However, built 8 years apart, the two buildings are quite different; the older Merchant Place is shorter, of horizontal emphasis with repetitive bays, with a pitched roof and principally of red brick, with red sandstone dressing and a grey granite column colonnade; whilst Cory's Building is taller, of vertical emphasis with varying bays, with a flat roof, completely faced in limestone ashlar stonework, and more ornate and playful. Individually both possess considerable aesthetic value, with their unapologetically Classical design styles, their adherence to tradition, their richness, and their use of high quality materials.

Cory's Building and Merchant House are deemed to be of local, and arguably regional, importance; for:

- Their illustration of Cardiff's dramatic growth in its affluent and influential late Victorian and Edwardian eras, due to the docks and their connection with South Wales' industrial heartland;
- What they can tell us about commercial life from this busy period, and the manner in which people worked and interacted;
- What they can tell us about how buildings of the time were constructed, decorated and fitted out;
- The retention of much of the buildings' original form and external appearance within a relatively unchanged setting, albeit acknowledging the loss of the rear ranges to Merchant Place;
- The retention of some of their most interesting internal features, albeit weighed against the loss of a considerable amount of internal fabric;
- Their much-loved Classical Italianate designs, with their frontages providing a very strong presence onto the streetscape and the wider setting;
- The articulation of those designs, their detailing (some being rather playful) and the quality of materials used.

Cory's Building and Merchant House make a moderate to strong contribution to the significance of their place, forming a key piece of its history and cultural value. Together, and apart, they are both deemed to possess Medium to High Heritage Value.

Efforts should therefore be made to protect and enhance the assets and preserve their heritage value; focusing on conservation in the main; though a degree of flexibility would be acceptable in the way they may be altered, adapted and built upon; particularly where such adaptation would not have a notably detrimental bearing on those aspects of most significance – the two front (and two side) facades; the forms of the front ranges; and the layouts and retained fixtures and finishes to these two front ranges.

The approach is to retain and repair much of the historic internal fabric which remains, celebrating it for its quality and character. In the case of both buildings, what is great is that this can be done without compromising the new uses.

For example, both buildings still have stone staircases with ornate cast iron balustrading and hardwood handrails in relatively good condition. In the case of Cory's Building, there is a stunning decorative iron balustrade and newel post to the ground floor. There is no reason not to use these staircases – they are in the locations we would want them in - and so they will be repaired and used.

Either side of this stair are plastered composite twinned columns of significance; and, in front, there is a polished stone tile floor to the main entrance, with scars where a lobby once lived; and large sliding timber entrance doors. These will be repaired and retained, and this once special entrance lobby restored.

Both buildings, however, more so Cory's Building, retain some good examples of lath and lime plasterwork, timber panelling and ornate timber surrounds to openings, which will be retained and repaired.

Both buildings also retain areas of mosaic tile, timber boarding and wood block parquet flooring, which should be retained.

The original partitioning, in the main removed in 2008, is still legible on the floors and ceilings, with scars and retained cornicing. It may be the case that any new cellularisation of the open floor plans reverts to these lines; or it may be that the open spaces remain open; in which case we may seek to make the original sub-division legible.

One of Merchant Place's upper rooms is top-lit with a large patent glazed rooflight with intricate lightweight iron trusses and diagonal timber sarking boards. This room will be restored. As will the cast iron pavement lights over the basement.

In essence, we believe that these two buildings are well-suited to bringing into the new use they are being assigned to, without losing any of their heritage significance. Indeed, we see opportunity to restore the most important aspects of their building fabric and character, whilst also ensuring the buildings meet the demands of their next iteration.

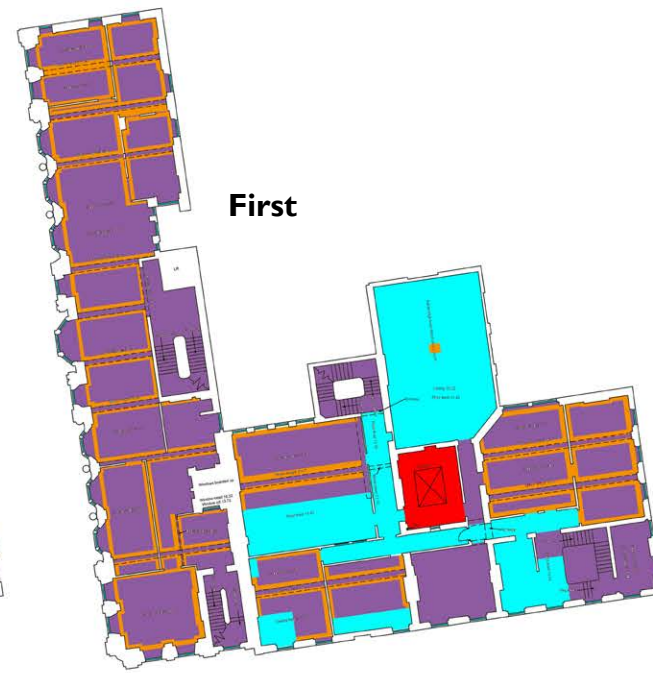
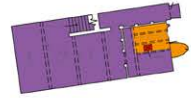
2.1 SIGNIFICANCE PLANS

Legend

- Highest Significance
- Considerable Significance
- Some Significance
- No Significance
- Detracts from Significance

Basement

CEILINGS

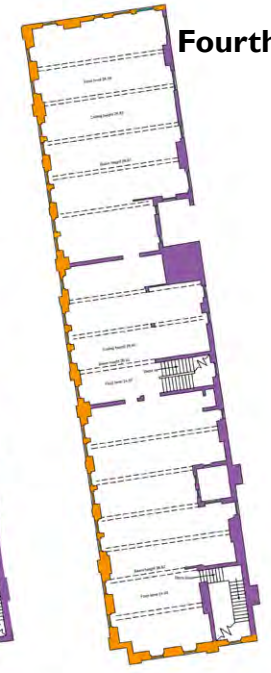
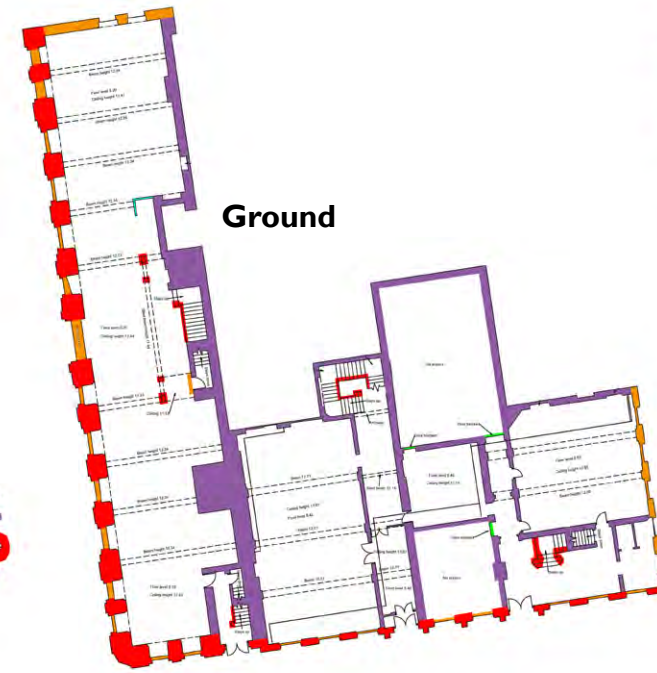


Legend

- Highest Significance
- Considerable Significance
- Some Significance
- No Significance
- Detracts from Significance

Basement

WALLS

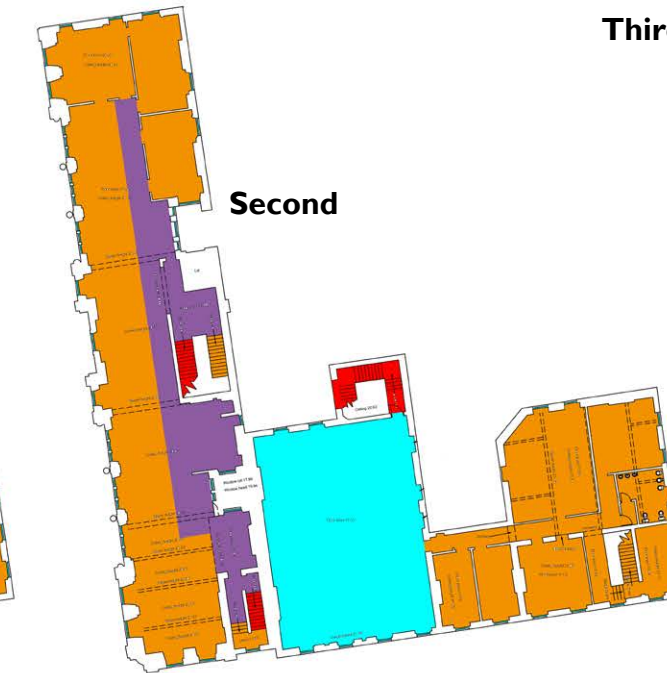
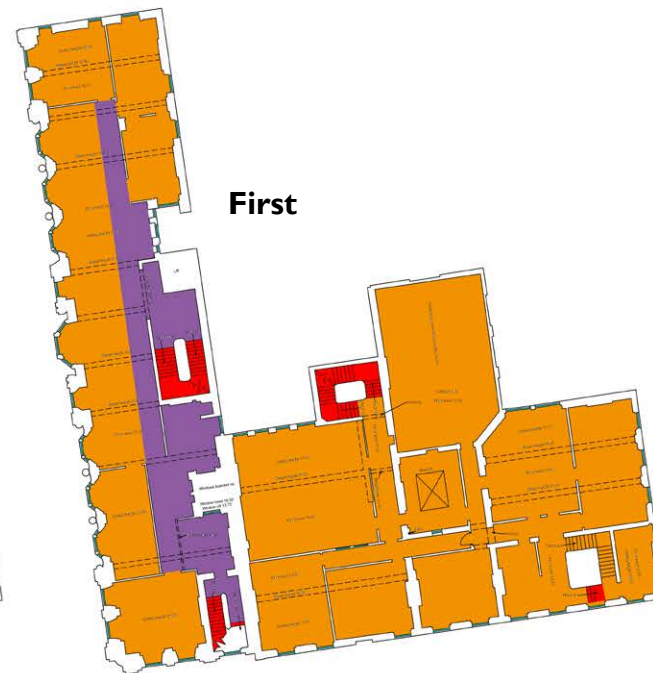
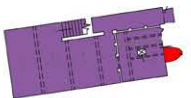


Legend

- Highest Significance
- Considerable Significance
- Some Significance
- No Significance
- Detracts from Significance

Basement

FLOORS



3.0 SECTION I - A STATEMENT THAT EXPLAINS THE OBJECTIVES FOR THE PROJECT AND WHY CHANGES ARE DESIRABLE OR NECESSARY

Both Merchant Place and Cory's Building have been unused and left to dereliction for a long time. They have, subsequently, been on the market for a long time, with no commitment, to date, to bringing them back into use.

Whilst their condition is still reasonable; with repair, restoration and adaptation very much a viable option, they are showing signs of degradation and dilapidation; signs which might suggest that their condition will worsen more quickly in the future if not addressed soon. Such an example is the ingress of water into Merchant Place, which is starting to impact on the fabric.

Dukes Education / Cardiff Sixth Form College have made a significant commitment to repair and restore these historic buildings and bring them back into use. The primary use will be education and teaching.

Whilst this is, in itself, significant progress, the use to which they wish to put the buildings is a very positive one from a community and a heritage perspective.

For the community, this will provide, once again, life to these buildings - which form a very important part of the Cardiff Bay environment and to the context in which some of the city's most important social, cultural, governmental and retail institutions.

For the buildings' heritage, the use to which it would be put is one which is able to 'work with the buildings, not against them'. Rather than try to force residential units into a series of spaces not designed for that purpose, this education use can knit the needs of the building and the needs of the users together with much more sympathy and flexibility.

As for the empty site behind the two building front ranges, this is a derelict and unattractive part of the wider site, and an area which will benefit from housing buildings, as it did between 1881 and 2008.

Some degree of adaptation is, of course, required, in order to ensure a successful project; and this Assessment will summarise that efforts should be made to protect and enhance the assets and preserve their heritage value; focusing on conservation in the main; though a degree of flexibility would be acceptable in the way they may be altered, adapted and built upon; particularly where such adaptation would not have a notably detrimental bearing on those aspects of most significance - the two front (and two side) facades; the forms of the front ranges; and the layouts and retained fixtures and finishes to these two front ranges.



4.0 SECTION 2 – UNDERSTANDING THE HERITAGE

4.1 Location & Setting

The development site's addresses are:

Merchant Place
1 & 3 Bute Place
Merchant Place
Butetown
Cardiff
CF10 5AL

and

Cory's Buildings
Corner of Bute Place and Bute Street
Butetown
Cardiff
CF10 5AL

The development site comprises two listed buildings within the historic centre of Cardiff Bay, bounded by Bute Place to the south, Bute Street to the west and Lloyd George Avenue to the east

Merchant Place, 1 Bute Place:

Its 'front' entrance elevation onto Bute Place faces south, its side elevation onto Dock Lane and Lloyd George Avenue beyond faces east and its 'rear' elevation onto a void and Custom House beyond faces north.

Its OS Eastings is 319145; its OS Northings is 174641 and its OS Grid reference is ST191746.

Merchant Place, 3 Bute Place:

Its 'front' entrance elevation onto Bute Place faces south and its 'rear' elevation onto a void and Custom House beyond faces north.

Its OS Eastings is 319131; its OS Northings is 174640 and its OS Grid reference is ST191746.

Cory's Building:

Its 'front' entrance elevation onto Bute Street faces west, its side elevation onto Bute Place faces south, its 'rear' elevation onto a void, with Dock Lane and The Flourish beyond faces east and its side elevation onto a small void and Customs House beyond faces north.

Its OS Eastings is 319118; its OS Northings is 174651 and its OS Grid reference is ST191746.



GoogleEarth aerial photograph of the Cardiff Bay area with Cory's Building & Merchants Place highlighted in red

4.2 Use

Merchant Place was built in 1881 and was originally occupied by the Mercantile Marine Department of the Board of Trade and the Docks Telegraph and Post Office.

In the early 1990s the offices were used by Aspro Holidays.

Cory's Building was built in 1889, for Cory Brothers Ltd. The brothers were John Cory (1828–1910) and Richard Cory (1830–1914). Their business included ship's chandlery, brokerage and the sale and export of coal. They also owned several collieries in Wales and, apparently, became the largest private wagon-owners in the United Kingdom, with more than 5,000 wagons.

In 1998, the Cory's Building's ground floor became the temporary home of Makers Guild in Wales (Craft in The Bay) while it worked to establish a permanent home in Cardiff Bay.

Both buildings are currently vacant and not in use.

4.3 Age

Merchant Place was built in 1881.

The foundation stone was laid in September 1880.
The Mercantile Marine Office opened on Thursday, 1st September 1881.
The Telegraph and Post Office opened on Monday, 10th October 1881.

In 2008, or soon thereafter, the rear ranges of Merchant Place were demolished, along with some of the internal partitioning, fixtures & finishes.

Cory's Building was built in 1889, however, only the bottom 3no. storeys.

Some time between 1907 & 1929, 2no. additional floors were built on top.

In 2008, or soon thereafter, much of the internal partitioning, fixtures & finishes were removed.



Merchant Place



Cory's Building

4.4 Statutory Designations

4.4.1 Listings

Nos. 1 and 3 Bute Place, which together form what we know as Merchant Place, are separately listed, however, share exactly the same listing descriptions.

1 Bute Place

1 Bute Place (part of Merchant Place) is protected by a Grade II listing, which was designated on 19 May 1975 and last amended on 21 August 1998 and has a Cadw ID no. of 13960.

3 Bute Place

3 Bute Place (part of Merchant Place) is protected by a Grade II listing, which was designated on 19 May 1975 and last amended on 21 August 1998 and has a Cadw ID no. of 139601.

The listings both state:

History

Built 1881. By E G Rivers, architect; builders were Kirk Randall. Originally occupied by Mercantile Marine Department of the Board of Trade, and also by the Docks Telegraph Office.

Exterior

Italian Renaissance style, three storeys and 10 window bays to main (S) elevation. Red brick with red sandstone dressings (sandstone from Shawk quarries, Cumberland), grey Penrhyn granite columns. Hipped slate roof with red sandstone chimneys. Cornice in sandstone with balustrade and central aedicule. Second floor has segmental-headed windows with sandstone architraves with keystones. Sandstone cornice at sill level. First floor windows with sandstone architraves and bracketed triangular pediments above. Ground floor faced in red sandstone. Fourth and seventh bays are round-headed doorways with panelled double doors and semi-circular fanlights over. Remaining bays are round-headed windows with keystones over and panelled aprons below. Ground floor is articulated by grey granite columns in Roman Doric style, doubled at ends of facade. Entablature supports balustraded parapet, rising to first floor sill level, of which central four bays break forward to form porch. Wall behind porch has granite pilasters. Centre two bays of porch project with doubled columns at ends. East return of five bays in same style but first floor windows have flat cornices rather than triangular pediments, and no balustrading below sills. Doubled granite pilasters at S end of elevation. To rear, elevation in red brick with camber-headed windows, and two storey wing with similar treatment. Facing Dock Lane (E), yard surrounded by brick wall with sandstone coping. Tall sandstone gatepiers. To N of gates, outbuilding with shaped gable and tall brick chimney.

Interior

In entrance hall to R of Portico is impressive staircase with cast iron banisters in Grecian style. Similar staircase visible through doors at entrance to L of portico.

Reasons for Listing

Numbers 1 and 3 Bute Place form excellent C19 commercial building with fine Italianate design and strong use of contrasting building materials. Group value.

Cory's Building

Cory's Building is protected by a Grade II listing, which was designated on 20 August 1992 and last amended on 21 August 1998.

The listing (with a Cadw ID No. of 13972) states:

History

Opened in 1889; built to designs of Bruton and Williams, architects of Cardiff, for Cory Brothers Ltd. Adjoins Customs and Immigration building to left and the former Board of Trade building on Bute Place to right.

Exterior

Free Italianate Classical style with some Mannerist derived detail. 5-storey with asymmetrical 13-window ashlar front and channelled ground floor with granite plinth. Central section emphasised by giant order, part fluted, pilaster strips and stepped up parapet incorporating segmental pediment; similar pilasters to end bays. Ground, 2nd, 3rd & 4th storeys delineated by cornices (dentil to 2nd floor). Horned sash glazing; some with bracket cornices and volutes. Either side of central columns with elaborately foliated bulbous bases; these floors are then linked to central bay by coffered giant arch, with foliated spandrels, carried on paired pilasters and flanking a splayed bay window with open pediment. Similar splayed oriels to 1st floor of flanking sections; paired segmental headed windows to end bays and camber headed windows in squared recesses to ground floor. Central entrance with Grecian brackets to stout balustrade, urn finials and inscribed entablature; recessed doorway. Left hand is red brick with stone banding. The corner to right is set back to top 2 floors, rounded below and dated 1889 to 2nd floor. 2 1-window right hand side adjoining the former Board of Trade building; the right hand bay is slightly stepped back. Similar window treatment; round arched recess to 1st floor containing aedicule and oculus; swags over semicircular-headed entrance with panelled double doors.

Interior

Retains openwell stairs with arabesque ornamented iron balustrade; moulded handrail, scrolled to base. Some windows have small-pane glazed shutters (secondary casement glazing).

Reasons for Listing

Prominently sited elaborate commercial building for important Cardiff family business. Group value.

4.4.2 Conservation Area

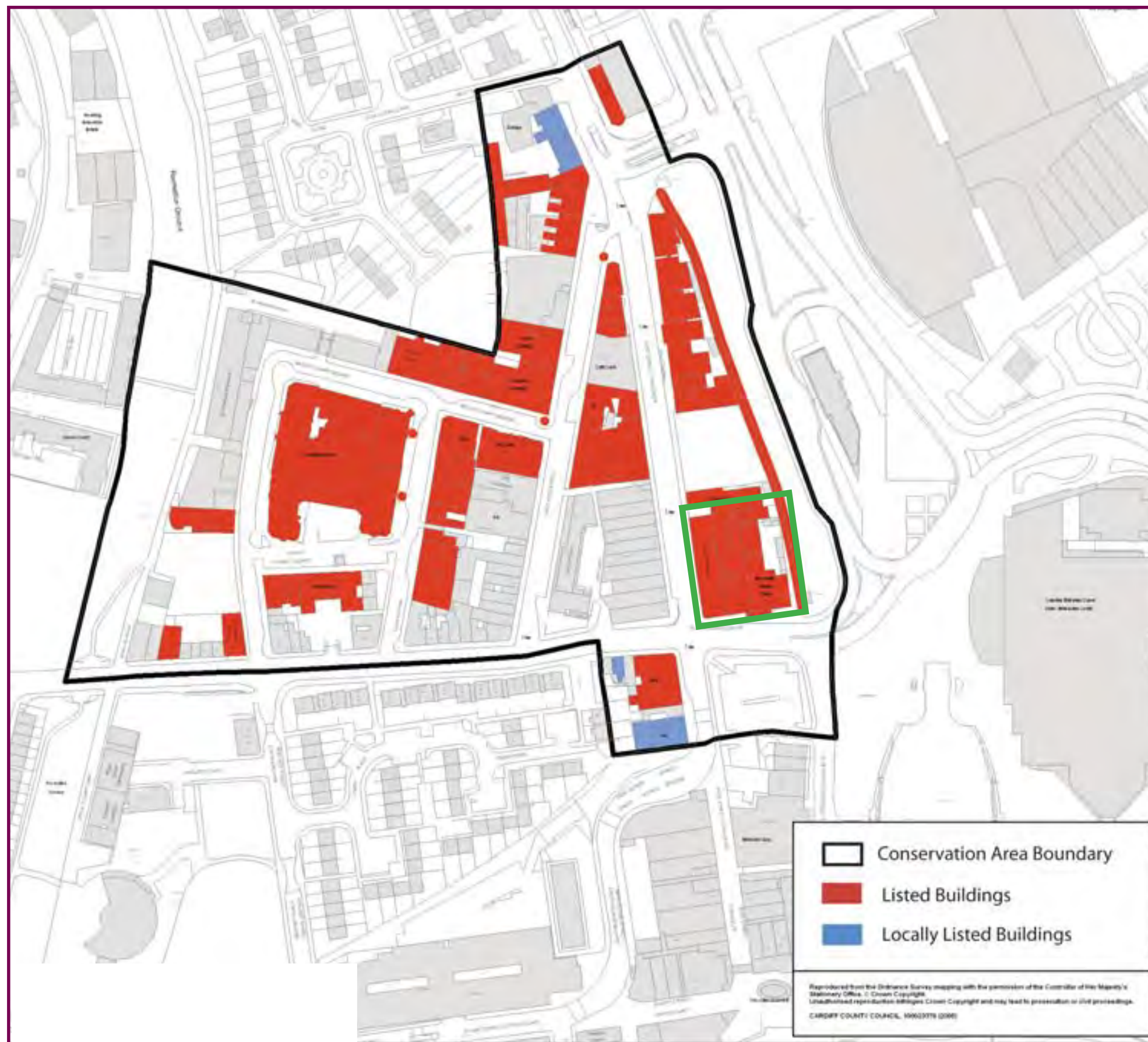
The legal definition of a Conservation Area is set out in Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as being: "An area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance".

Conservation Areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest. A decision to designate a Conservation Area is made after an appraisal of the area and an assessment of its character. Designation gives special protection to this character and to achieve this, the Council has extra controls over demolition, minor developments and the protection of trees.

Cory's Building and Merchant Place are situated within the Mount Stuart Square Conservation Area, which was adopted in 2009.

To the right is a map of the showing all the Mount Stuart Square Conservation Area with all the Nationally Listed Buildings within the area in red and the Locally Listed Buildings in blue and with Cory's Building and Merchant Place identified within the green box.

The Conservation Area Appraisal document states that the "Mount Stuart Square area was designated as a Conservation Area in July 1980 in recognition that the Square and surrounding area has special interest in the context of the history of the commercial growth of Cardiff and because of the unique character of scale and detailing in many of its buildings."



Mount Stuart Square Conservation Area Boundary identified with thick black line with nationally listed buildings in red, locally listed building in blue and Cory's Building and Merchant Place identified within a green box.

4.5 Historic Map Appraisal

The site on which both buildings reside was, before 1881, set aside as an area of open parkland within a part of the city which was otherwise densely built up to the west and open to a network of water basins and locks and railway lines to the east. The site was, along with Mount Stuart Square further to the west, one of two 'green lungs' within an otherwise very busy urban setting - commercial to the west and south; industrial to the east and north. It is notable, from the 1879 maps, to the right, that all the other plots along Bute Street, Lower Bute Street and James Street were built upon by 1879, as were those along Bute Crescent, West Bute Street etc. An appraisal of those building which remain, confirms that most were built between 1839 and 1875. Indeed, many of those original buildings from the mid-1800s still remain, making this an area of considerable architectural significance. It is also interesting to note that the open site just to the north of Custom House, once the north end of this 'green space' appears never to have been developed.

With the 'Coal and Shipping Exchange' building being constructed in 1884-8 on the Mount Stuart Square site; and Merchant Place, in 1881, and Cory's Building, in 1889, on the other open site; the 1899 map to the right, second row down, now shows these two plots built upon, and presents an urban and industrial grain which will barely change over the next century.

To the rear of both Merchant Place and Cory's Building, adjoining Docks Lane, is an open area with no buildings now on it. There were removed in the late 2000s. However, as far back as 1899, maps show that this area was significantly built-up, suggesting that, originally, the site was almost full. This being said, there appears to have been a slender zone to the east which was left open with a slender structure further to the east, just west of Docks Lane. This structure is drawn, in the 1915 map, as probably open-fronted. It is believed that this structure is the iron loggia lean-to structure which still exists, albeit with the roof covering lost. Maps therefore suggest that this structure was original to the 1881 construction of Merchant Place; if not at least to pre-1899, as were all the other structures at the rear which are now lost.

The more detailed 1901 and 1915 historic maps suggest that the rear of the site comprised structures affiliated to Merchant House, rather than Cory's Building; suggesting that Cory's Building retains the plan form it always was; however, the plan form of Merchant House has been reduced at the rear. Maps also suggest that Merchant House was indeed divided into two units – nos. 1 and 3 Bute Place, with both extending back into the site. Currently, the form which extends most into the site forms part of no.1 (to the right / east), and appears to be original; whilst the smaller form just to its west, which extends a little, but less, into the site, forms part of no.3 (to the left / west), and also appears to be original. A review of the historic maps therefore suggests that, whilst Merchant House used to be larger in plan than it is now, all of the structures currently on site are original. The structures which no longer exist, and were behind the Merchant House front range, were demolished around 2008, following consent so to do, issued in 2008. The 1901 and 1915 maps suggests significant sub-division to the elements of the buildings to the rear, along with some small lightwell open spaces.



OS Map of area, dated 1879, with Cory's & Merchant shown in red box



Close up of OS Map, dated 1879, with Cory's & Merchant shown in red box



OS Map of area, dated 1899, with Cory's & Merchant shown in red box



Close up of OS Map, dated 1899, with Cory's & Merchant shown in red box



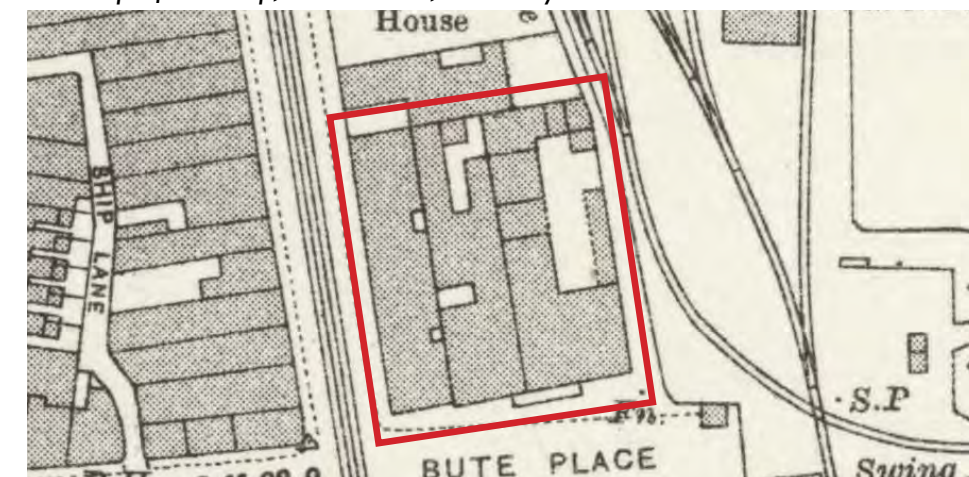
OS Map of area, dated 1901, with Cory's & Merchant shown in red box



Close up of OS Map, dated 1901, with Cory's & Merchant shown in red box



OS Map of area, dated 1915, with Cory's & Merchant shown in red box



Close up of OS Map, dated 1915, with Cory's & Merchant shown in red box

4.5 Historic Map Appraisal

Maps from 1938 and 1947 show barely any change to the Cardiff Docks area from the 1915 map, and no change at all to either Cory's Building or Merchant Place.

By 2001, there had, however, been considerable change to the industrial area to the east, with the loss / overlaying of many of the basins, locks and railways, and the development of Lloyd George Avenue along the route of the old railways lines with the Flourish at the end, where the Avenue and Bute Basin meet.

However, the built-up western half of the Docks area had not changed significantly in that half century. Much, albeit not all, of Lower Bute Street and Bute Crescent had been lost to new developments, as was the western edge of Mount Stuart Square; but the built forms to the main length of Bute Street, Bute Place and James Street, along with the buildings to the centre and east of Mount Stuart Square, had hardly changed over that period.

The Cory's Building and Merchant Place site, in 2001, appears to have retained the same layout and form that it was in 1901 and 1915, and presumably when both buildings were built; however, the small spaces in between the buildings were showing signs of vegetation growth. This further developed over the next few years, such that the vegetation was beginning to run riot in 2006.

With the demolition, around 2008, of the buildings behind Merchant Place, the 2021 map, to the bottom right, shows this area now open; whilst the Merchant Place front range and the whole of Cory's Building appear, in plan and form, as they originally were.

By 2021, of course, the area to the east and south of Cory's Building and Merchant Place had been completely changed, including the boarding over of the Bute West Dock Basin and the construction of the Wales Millennium Centre and the Senedd. However, again, Bute Street remains, in 2021, not that dissimilar to what it was 133 years ago.



OS Map of area, dated 1938, with Cory's & Merchant shown in red box



Close up of OS Map, dated 1938, with Cory's & Merchant shown in red box



OS Map of area, dated 1947, with Cory's & Merchant shown in red box



Close up of OS Map, dated 1947, with Cory's & Merchant shown in red box



GoogleEarth image, dated 2001, with Cory's & Merchant shown in red box



GoogleEarth image, dated 2001, with Cory's & Merchant shown in red box



GoogleEarth image, dated 2021, with Cory's & Merchant shown in red box



GoogleEarth image, dated 2021, with Cory's & Merchant shown in red box

4.6.1 Historic Images of Merchant Place



1880 illustrative sketch of Merchant Place (source: 'archiseek.com')



Undated illustrative sketch of Merchant Place (source: 'messybeast.com')



1898 at corner of Merchant Place during coal strike (source 'walesonline.co.uk')



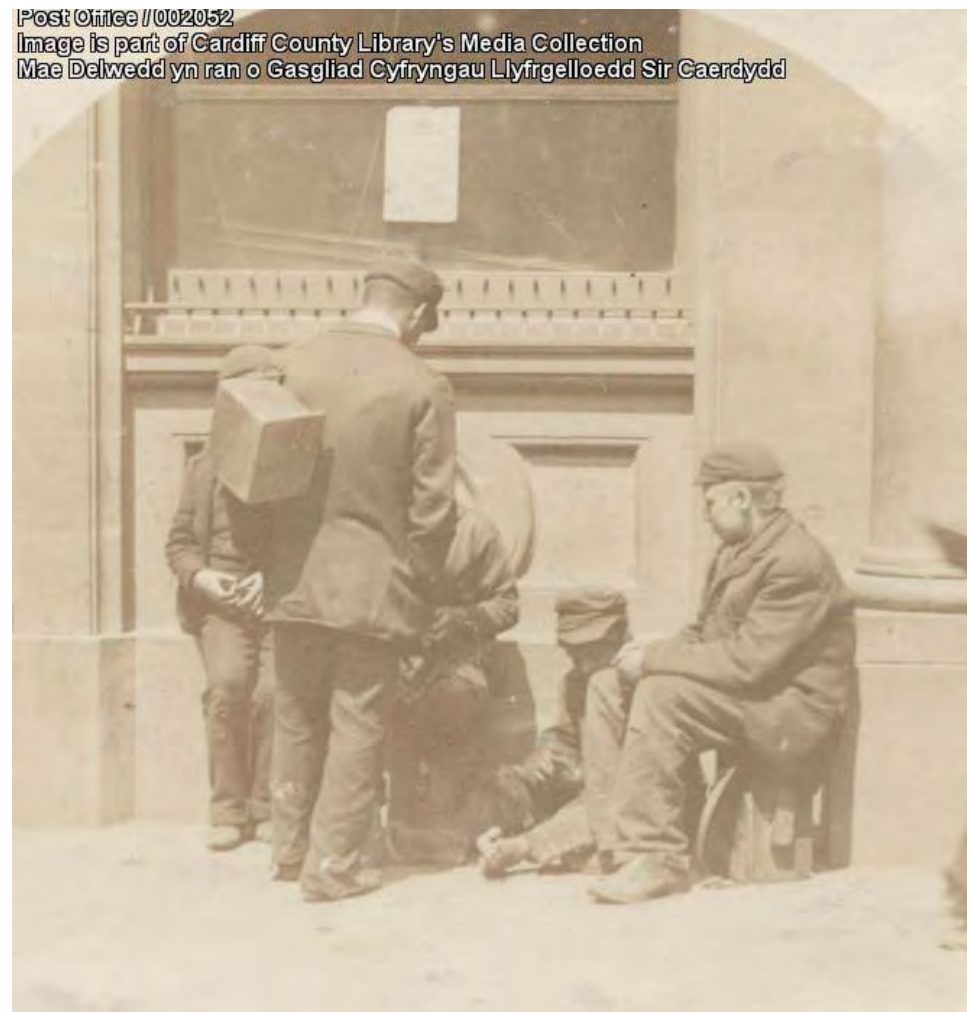
1907 (sent) postcard of Merchant Place (source: 'thingspostal.org.uk')



Post Office / 002052A
Image is part of Cardiff County Library's Media Collection
Mae Delwedd yn ran o Gasgliad Cyfryngau Llyfrgelloedd Sir Caerdydd



1880 Ground Floor Plan of Merchant Place (low res) (source: 'archiseek.com')



1890s (above & right) (source: Cardiff Library Media Collection)
Note the taller column bases than now, showing much lower pavement level

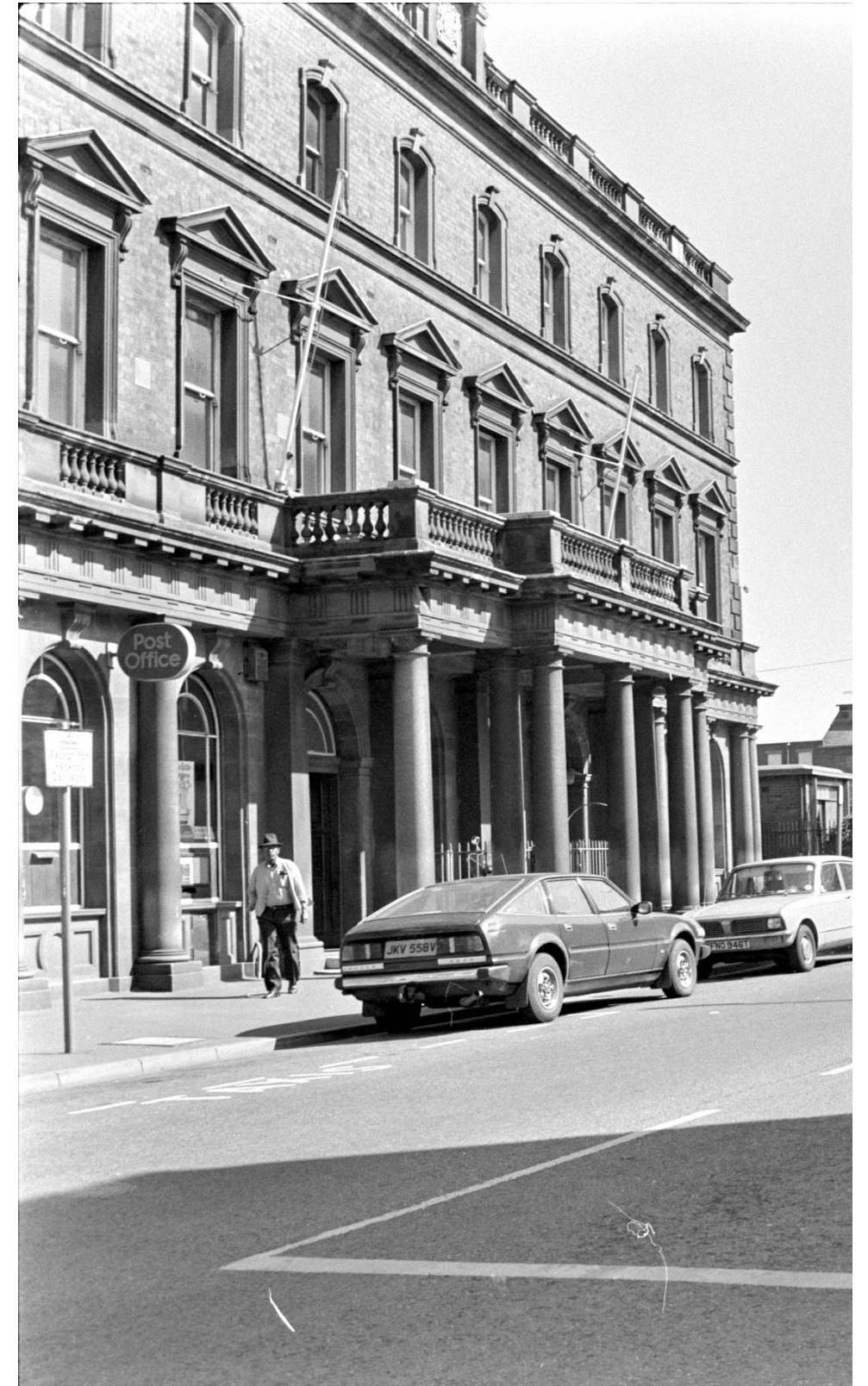
4.6.1 Historic Images of Merchant Place



1929 Aerial photo of rear of Merchant Place (source: RCHAMW)



1954 Aerial photo of front of Merchant Place (source: 'museum.wales')

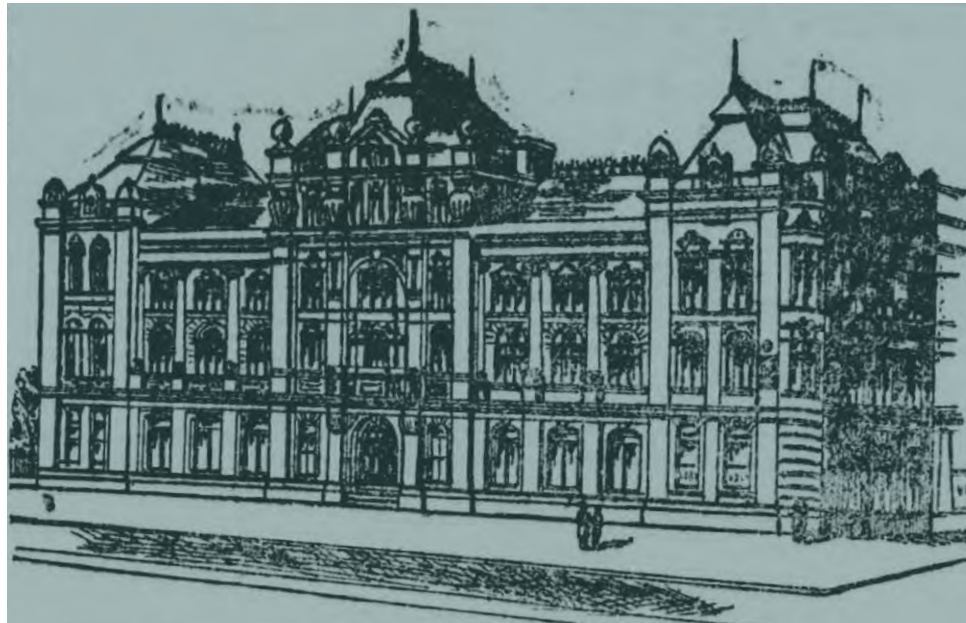


1982 View of front of Merchant Place along Bute Place (source: 'museum.wales')

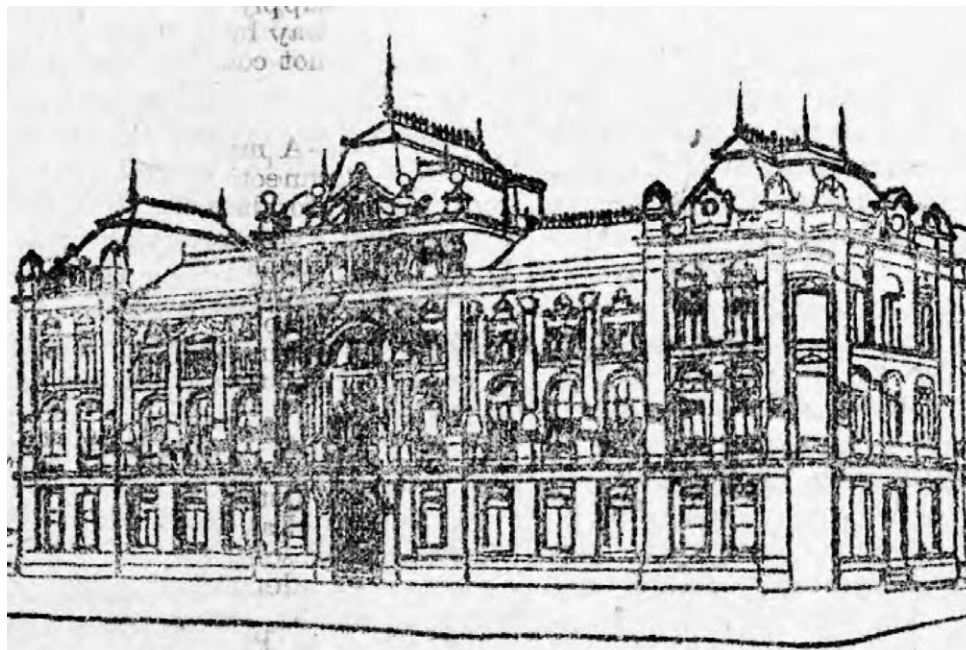


1979 Merchant Place with Cory's Building to left (source: 'museum.wales')

4.6.2 Historic Images of Cory's Building



1889 Drawing of Cory's Building, as designed (source: 'newspapers.library.wales')



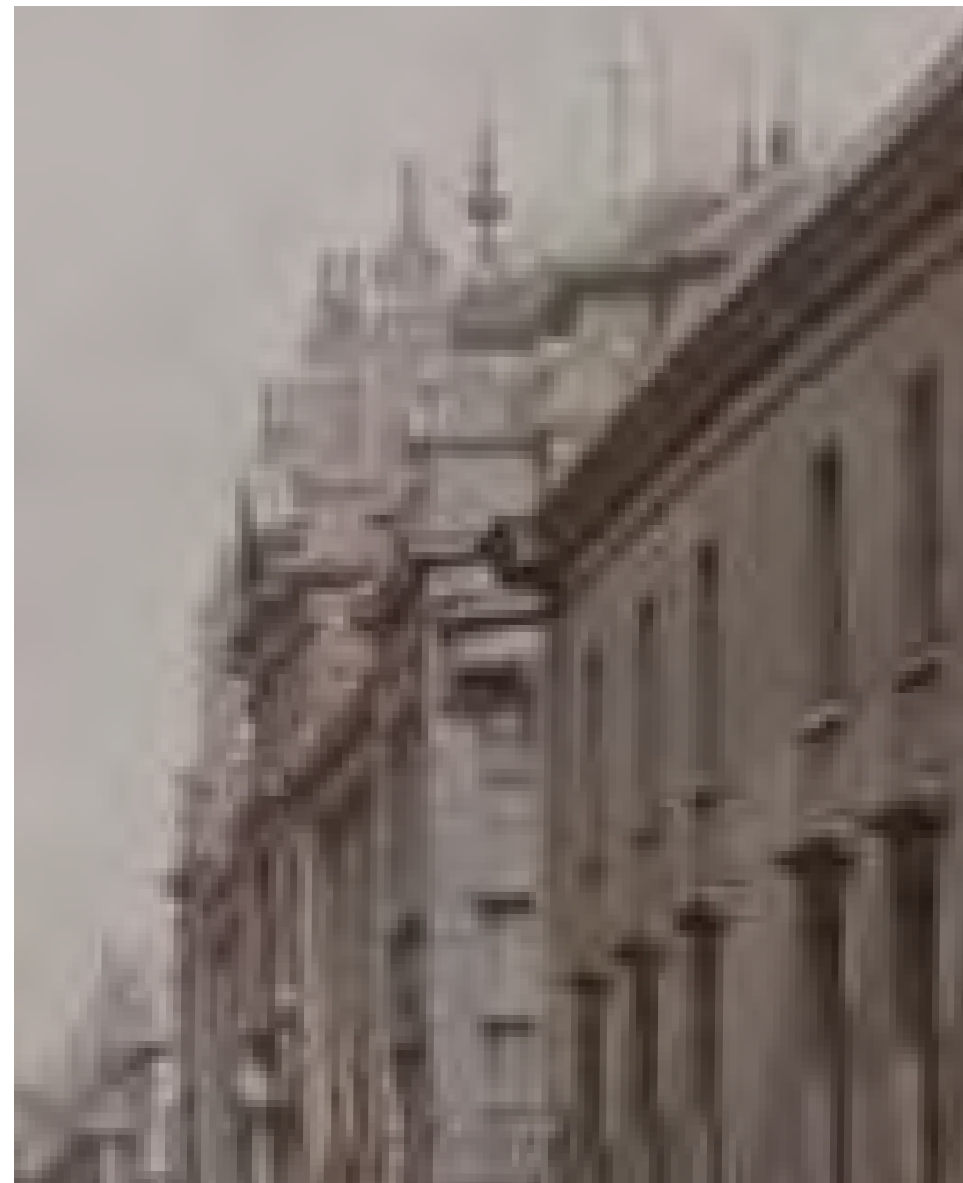
1890 Drawing of Cory's Building, as built (source: 'newspapers.library.wales')



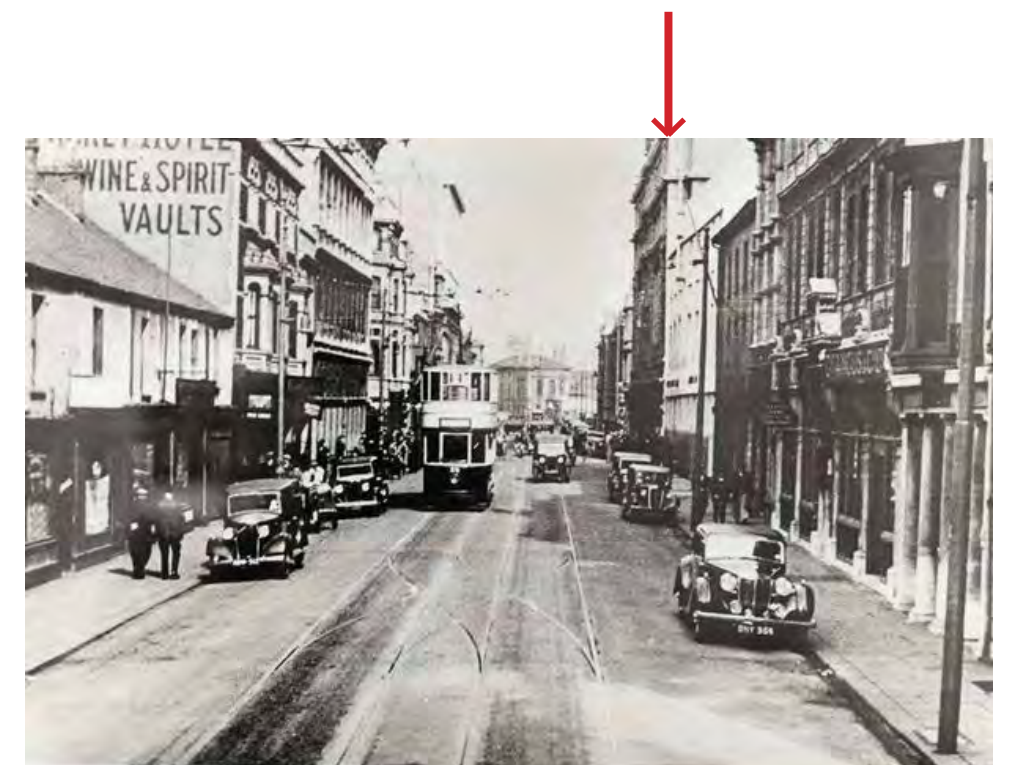
1900s early Bute Street with Cory's Building immediately to the right (source: 'bing.com' website; credit: Ernest T. Bush)



1900s early Bute Street with Cory's Building to right (identified by red arrow) (source: 'i.pinimg.com' website; credit: Ernest T. Bush)
Note the pavilion roofs & finials on top, before the upper floors were added - see zoomed-in extract of above image below.



1929 Aerial photo of 'extended' top of Cory's Building (source: RCHAMW)



1937 Lower Bute Street with Cory's Building to right (identified by red arrow) (source: 'walesonline.co.uk' website)

4.6.3 Historic Images of Cory's Building



1950s Cory's Building with National Union of Seaman (source: 'hcearchive.org.uk')



1954 Aerial photo of south side & roof of Cory's Building (source: 'museum.wales')



1979 Cory's Building with Merchant Place to right (source: 'museum.wales')



1957 Cory's Building with striking dockers outside (source: 'hcearchive.org.uk')



1978 base of Cory's Buildings (source: 'cardiffians.co.uk')



2014 Cory's Building (source 'britishlistedbuildings.co.uk')

4.7 Character, Architectural Design and Materials of Merchant Place

Historic images suggest that the frontage of Merchant Place, on Bute Place, looks now very much as it did when it was built in 1881. Made up of 3no. distinct storeys and a roof parapet, separated by a balustrade course, a deep string course and a cornice, the front facade presents a strong horizontal emphasis; and, with its 10no. regular bays, a strong and ordered vertical rhythm which overlays that horizontality. The stability, poise and clarity of proportion which this exhibits, combined with the ancient Roman standards and motifs - of the Roman Doric columns and entablature (Roman because of the bases), the colonnade, the arched openings, the keystones, the pediments, the balustraded parapet and central aedicule - makes this elevation an excellent example of the Italian Renaissance style of Architecture much-loved at the time.

Indeed, in his book 'The Buildings of Wales – Glamorgan (Pevsner Architectural Guides – 1995)', John Newman refers to "nos. 1 and 3 Bute Place" as "the most purely satisfying essay in classical design in Butetown."

Newman describes the frontage as "three storeys, ten bays, treated like a continuous terrace, though built as two offices, for the Telegraphs and Mercantile Marine departments of the Board of Trade. The architect's problem was to resolve this dualism and provide a central point of stress. This he did by carrying a Doric colonnade across the ground storey, attached in bays 1-3 and 8-10, stepped forward where the doorways occur in bays 4 and 7, and forward again in the centre two bays. Note the management of the balustrade. Round-headed ground-floor windows, triangular pediments to those on the piano nobile. The building is not just a cool design exercise, but an extraordinary colour symphony as well. Deep brownish-red sandstone ashlar for the ground storey and for the dressings above, where the walls are faced with orange-red brick. Against this warm background the Penrhyn granite colonnade stands out pale grey."

This choice of red materials - the red brick with the perfectly sourced Cumberland Shawk red sandstone - with the grey Penrhyn granite colonnade standing forward and its hipped grey slate roofs, provides a richness, which simply glows in the sun.

As stated above, designed originally as two separate buildings behind one consistent facade, the central ground floor projection provides statement and protection to both buildings, whilst augmenting the fact that the frontage was to appear as one building. Both ends are then suitably, and firmly, terminated with a twinned column.

Whilst the exposed east side elevation shares the materials, proportions, rhythm and lines of the south front elevation it varies in some respects - no ground floor colonnade and entablature, and no first floor balustrade and pediments.



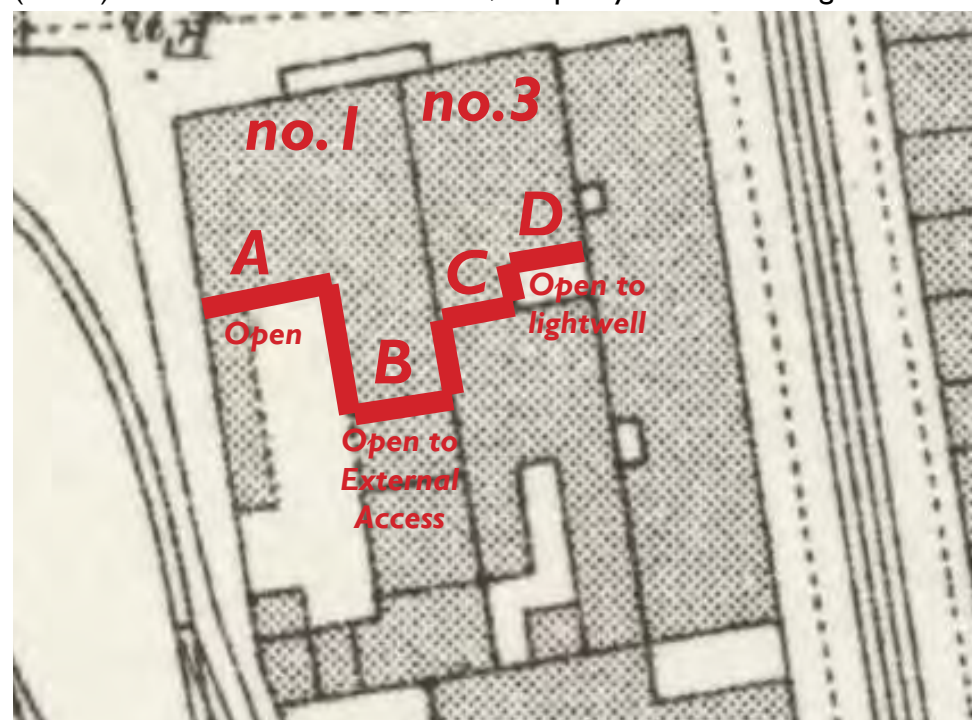
The north, rear, elevation of Merchant Place - as we see it now - is what was left after the demolition of the rear structures in around 2008. As a result, they are unadorned and, in some cases, used to be internal walls, so are unfenestrated. However, this being the case, the demolition 'cut' was taken along the line where the building's front range was most separated from its rear ranges, such that there are still a good number of windows - to all but one of the faces (i.e. A, B & D) - which would have been open to the elements; and even that one face with no windows (C) has a round-arch-headed opening where a corridor ran the full length of the site.

Merchant House was divided into two units - nos. 1 & 3 Bute Place, with both extending back into the site. Currently, the form which extends most into the site forms part of no.1, (B to the left) - this is 2-storey, 1 storey lower than the other structures; whilst the smaller form just to its west, which extends into the site less, forms part of no.3, (C to the right).

Based upon historical research, all reports and imagery suggest that the structures behind the front facade were constructed at the same time - 1881. However, whilst both sides share the same brickwork pattern - Flemish bond - the bricks themselves appear quite different in colour, or maybe simply ageing. Is this due to their relative exposure to the elements over 141 years, or is this because the two halves were built at slightly different times, and/or by different Contractors?

The left side (elevation A, with its return elevation) was always open to the one undeveloped part of the site, which was an open yard. It appears as though the low, open-fronted lean-to iron structure to the left existed in 1899, whilst it may possibly not have been built with Merchant Place, but soon after, if the 1880 plan was indeed the one which was built out.

As is apparent from the photos, those elements of retained brickwork walling to the right (elevations C, D and the return elevation between the two) have been whitewashed to the lower parts, whilst those to the left (A & B) have not been white-washed, but partly adorned with graffiti.



Extract of 1915 OS map with rear elevations of Merchant Place which remain shown as red lines, showing 3no. faces which were 'open'.

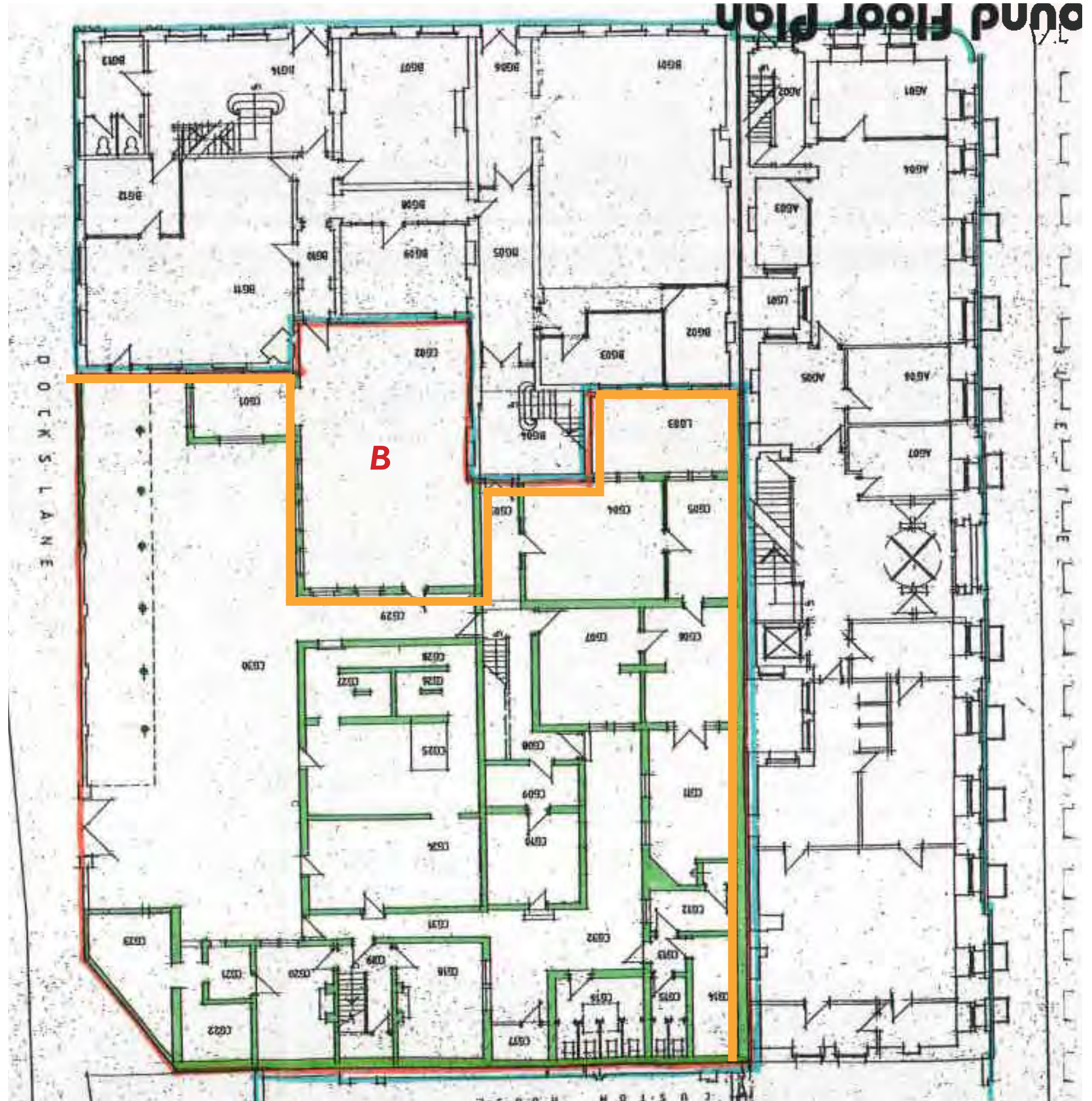


To the right is the drawing from August 2007, produced by Wigley Fox, identifying, in green, the structures which were consented to be demolished from the rear of Merchant Place. All were indeed demolished, in 2008 or very soon thereafter, apart from the two-storey range at the rear of no. 1, identified on the plan as 'B'.

It is believed, based upon the plan below, dated 1880 (i.e. before the initial construction works completed) that there might have been some internal re-planning of these rear ranges over the next 127 years, or that the internal walls constructed were not quite as designed, but it is clear that the planform of the rear ranges remained much as they originally were.



Original Proposed Ground Floor Plan, 1880 (source: 'archiseek.com')



Demolition Ground Floor Plan, 2007, by Wigley Fox

The roof is hipped and covered in natural slate, with some lead on the flat areas.

There is also a lantern rooflight to the west (no.3), as well as a pitched element of patent glazing in the centre.

The cornice, balustrade and central aedicule are of red sandstone, as are the 2no. front chimneys; whilst the 3no. central and rear chimneys are of red brick.



View of Roof from the Front / South



View of Roof from the Side / East



View of Roof from the Rear / North East



View of Roof from the Rear / North West

Between the open site and Dock Lane, the area is surrounded by a high red brick wall with sandstone coping.

There were gates in the centre of the wall, but these not longer exist, and the wall in that area has been part demolished.

To the north of where the gates were, there was an outbuilding with a shaped gable and a tall brick chimney. Part of that remains.

To the south east corner of the open site, there is an open-faced lean-to structure with a colonnade of iron columns and arched heads. The roof covering no longer exists, but the timber rafters remain.

This structure may be original; however, it may also not be original. Either way, it did exist by 1899.



4.7.1 Merchant Place Interior - Ground Floor

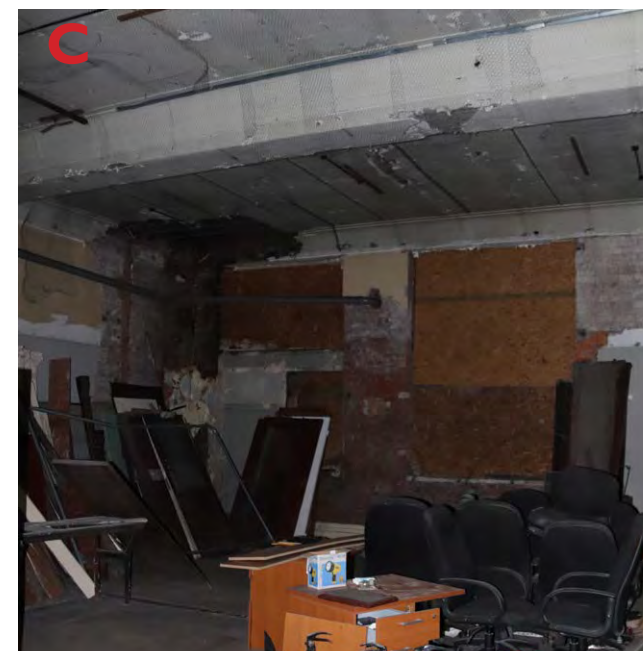
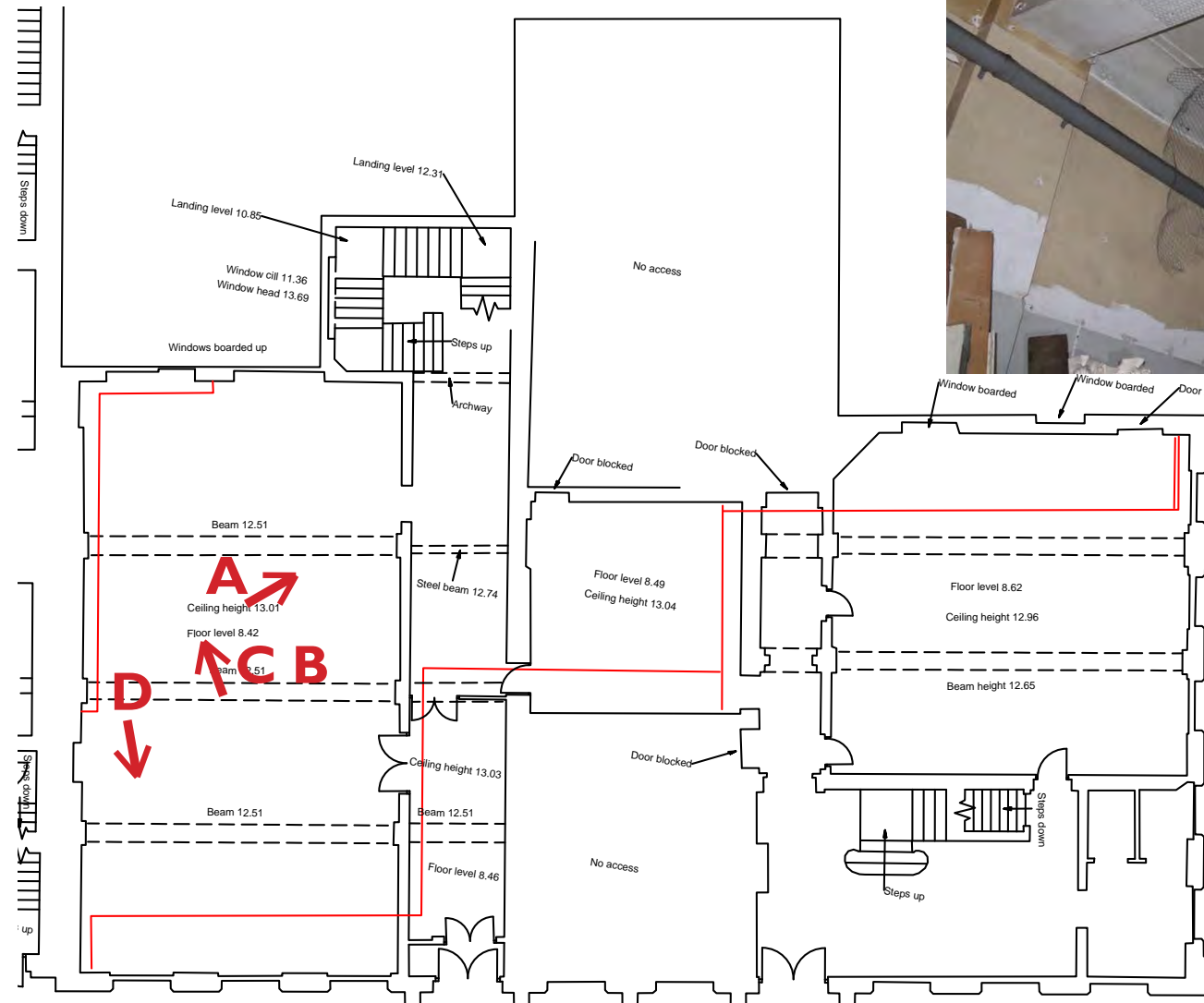
This large room to the south west of the ground floor would have been the main Post Office Hall. At the rear, there were a set of smaller cellular spaces which no longer exist.

As it is now, the room retains those important 3no. round-arched windows at the front.

The floor is finished in small mosaic tiling. The colours - black, white, red and yellow - are the most common Victorian colours in such floors. It was difficult to assess the condition of the tiling, as there were items sitting on the floor and there was no light; however, the condition appears to be generally reasonable. We see this floor as a significant element of the fabric, which ideally should be retained and repaired.

Part of the ceiling has collapse; however, most of it remains, with its fairly simple coving to perimeter and downstands.

Stored within this room are a series of cast iron radiators from the building, and a number of timber profiled trims and surrounds.



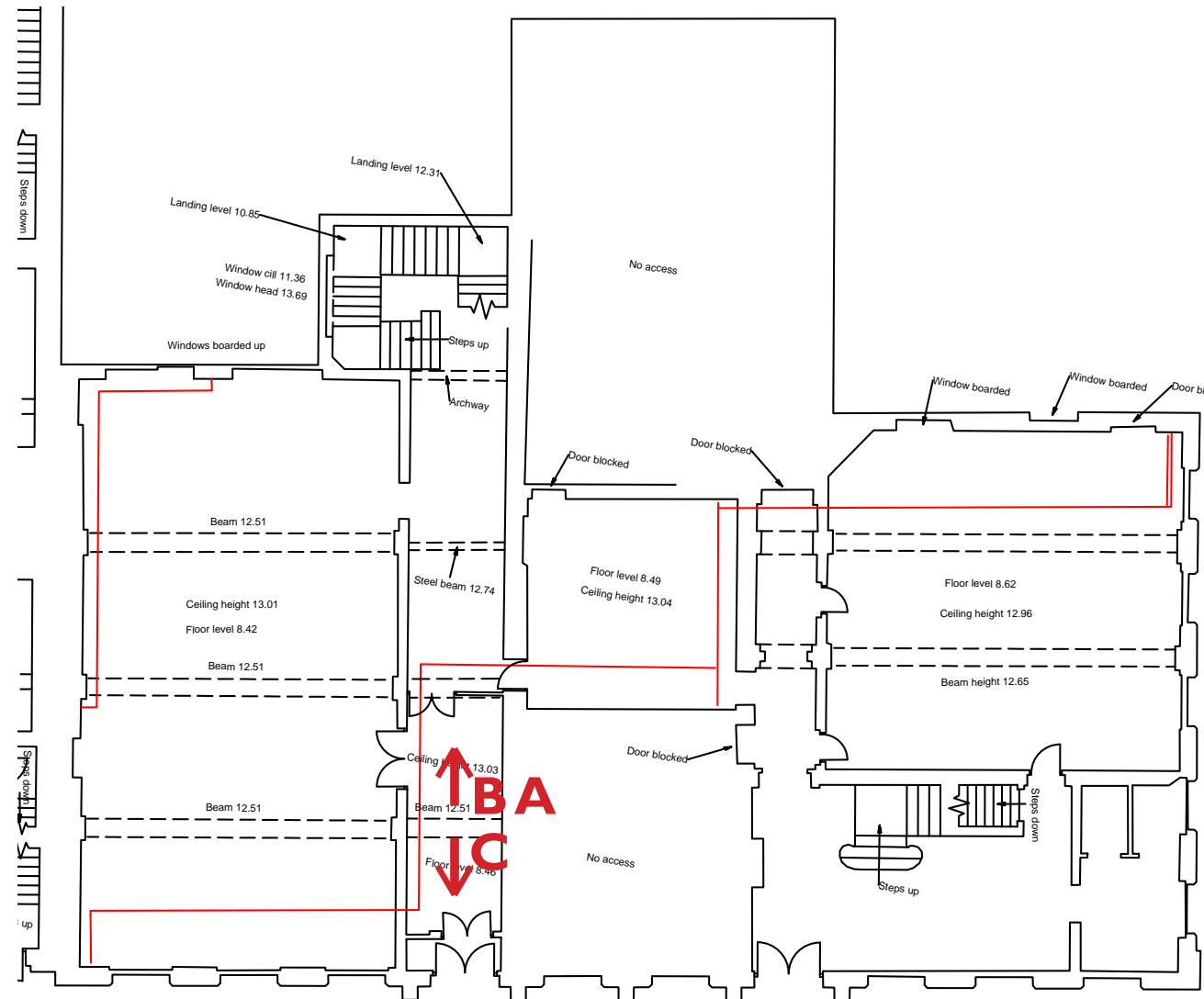
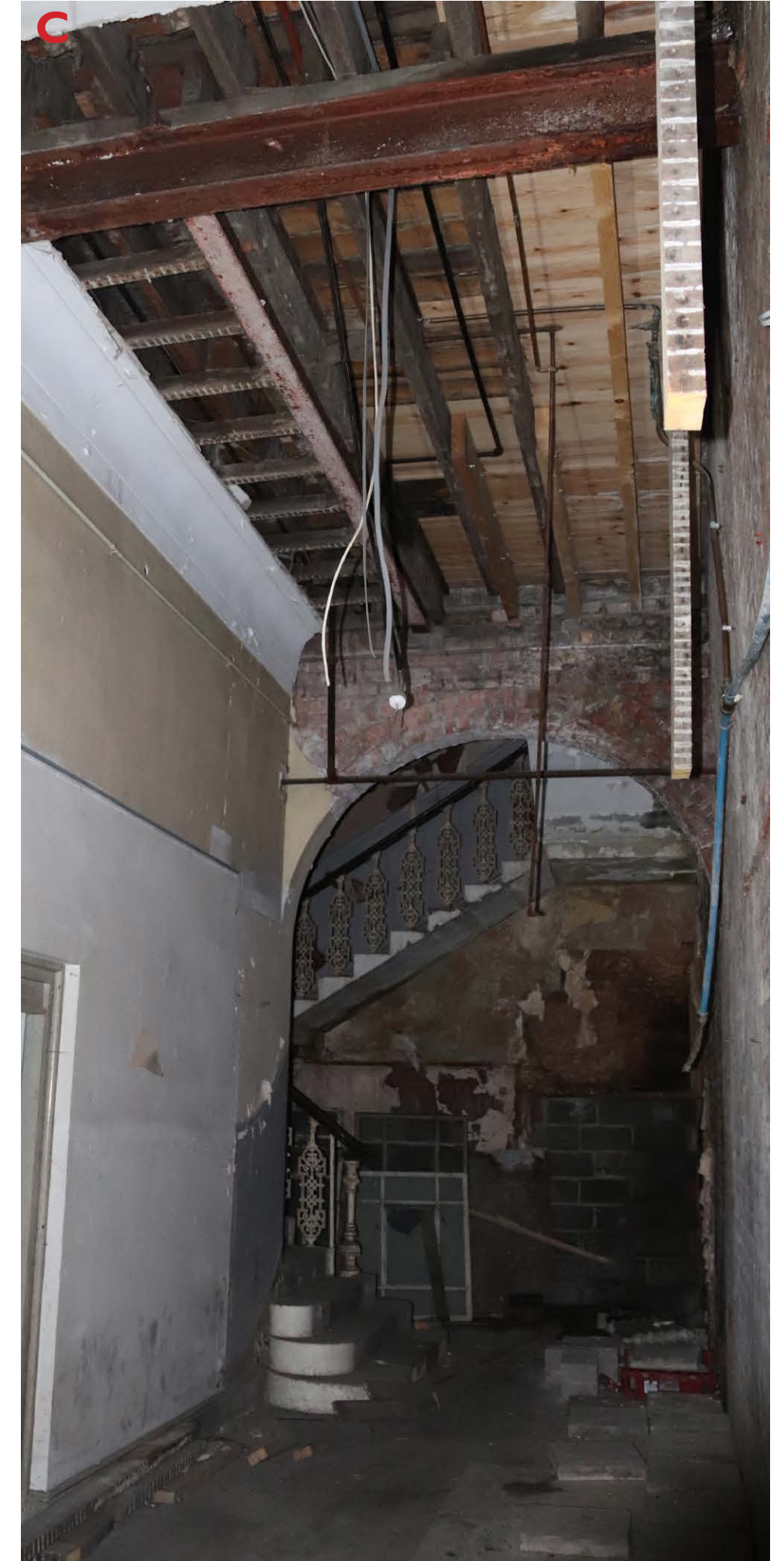
4.7.1 Merchant Place Interior - Ground Floor

The same black, white, red and yellow Victorian mosaic tile flooring also remains in the corridor. Again, this flooring is deemed to be very significant and ideally should be retained and repaired.

This corridor was part of the original layout of the Post Office.

A large part of the ceiling has collapsed, whilst some of the floor above appears to be fairly new.

At the end of the entrance corridor / lobby is the staircase to the Post Office and Telegraph Department, with its stone treads, ornate cast iron banisters in a Grecian style, and hardwood handrail. It is a significant part of the building fabric which should, ideally, be retained and repaired.

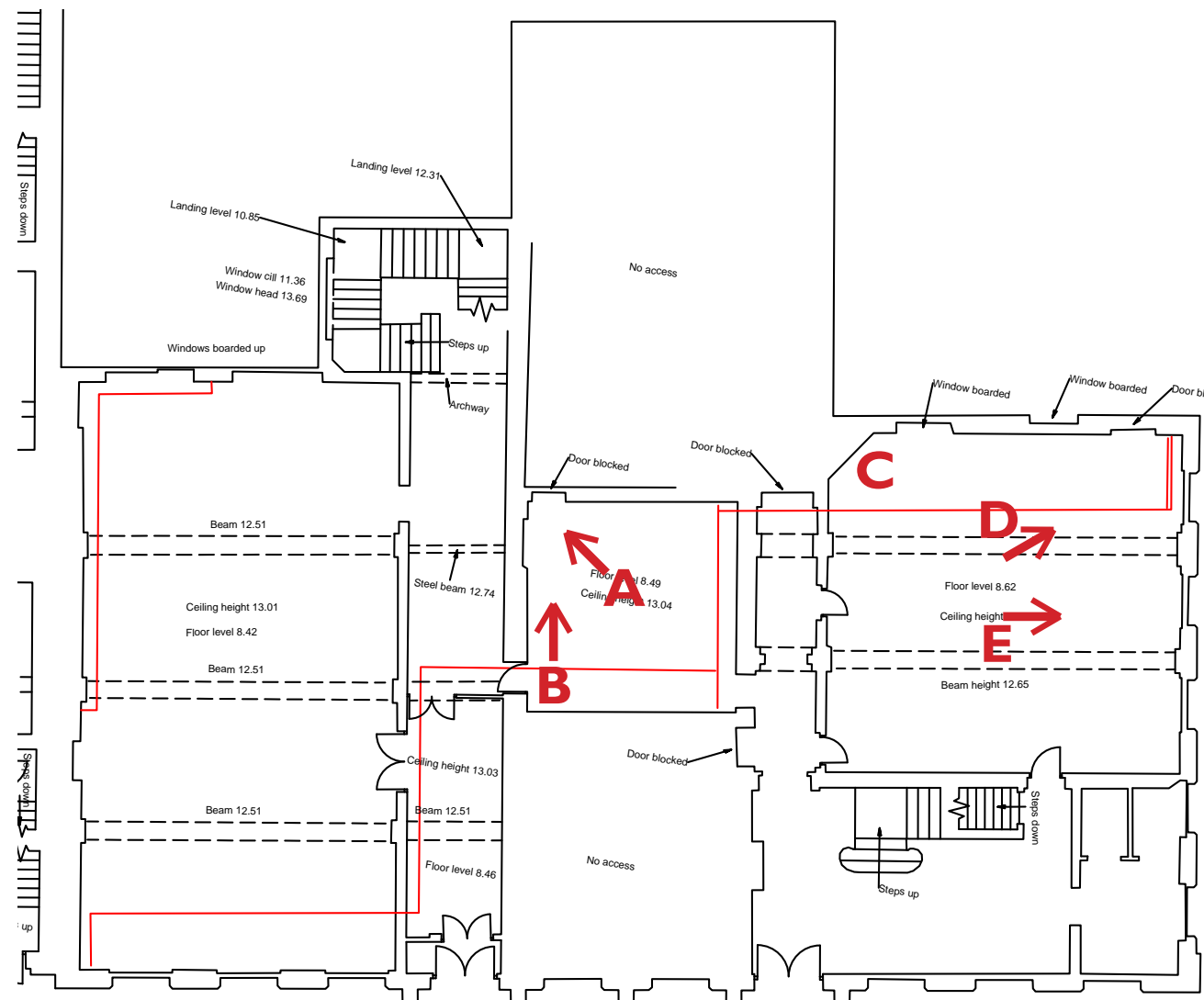
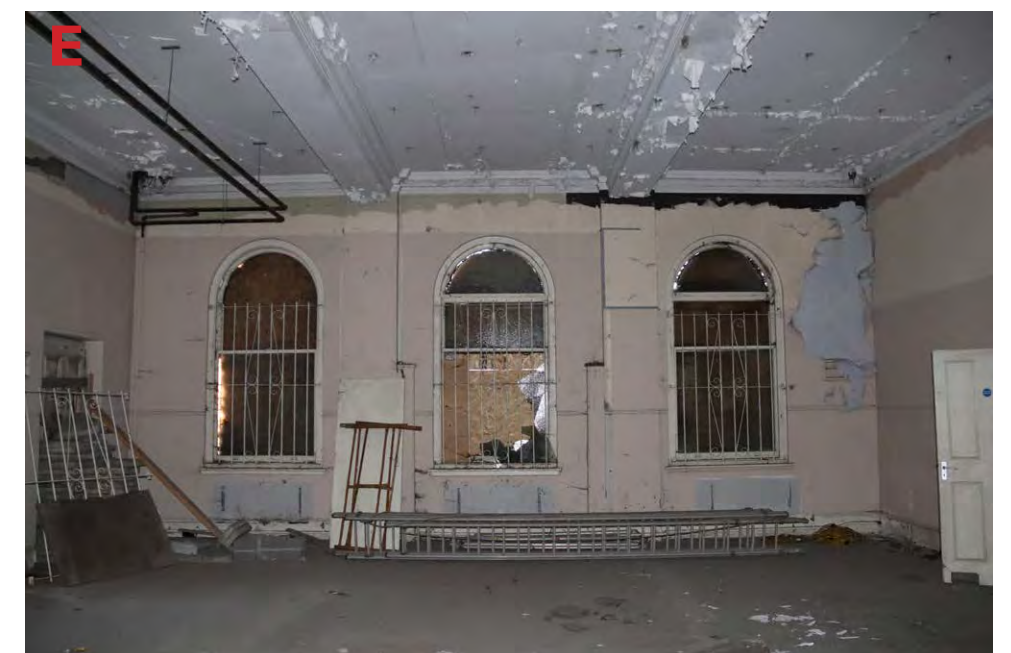


4.7.1 Merchant Place Interior - Ground Floor

Photos D & E show the main rear room to the ground floor of the Mercantile Marine Department Offices, with large round-arched windows to both east and north elevations. There is a fireplace in the north west corner. It retains most of its plastered ceiling, with coving to perimeter and downstands.

Photos A & B are of the central room, with no windows. Much of the ceiling has gone, and repairs have clearly been undertaken. Also, much of the plasterwork to the walls has gone. There is currently a lot of water coming down the west wall from above.

Both of these rooms were sub-divided before the 2008 demolitions; however, it is not thought that either were originally sub-divided.



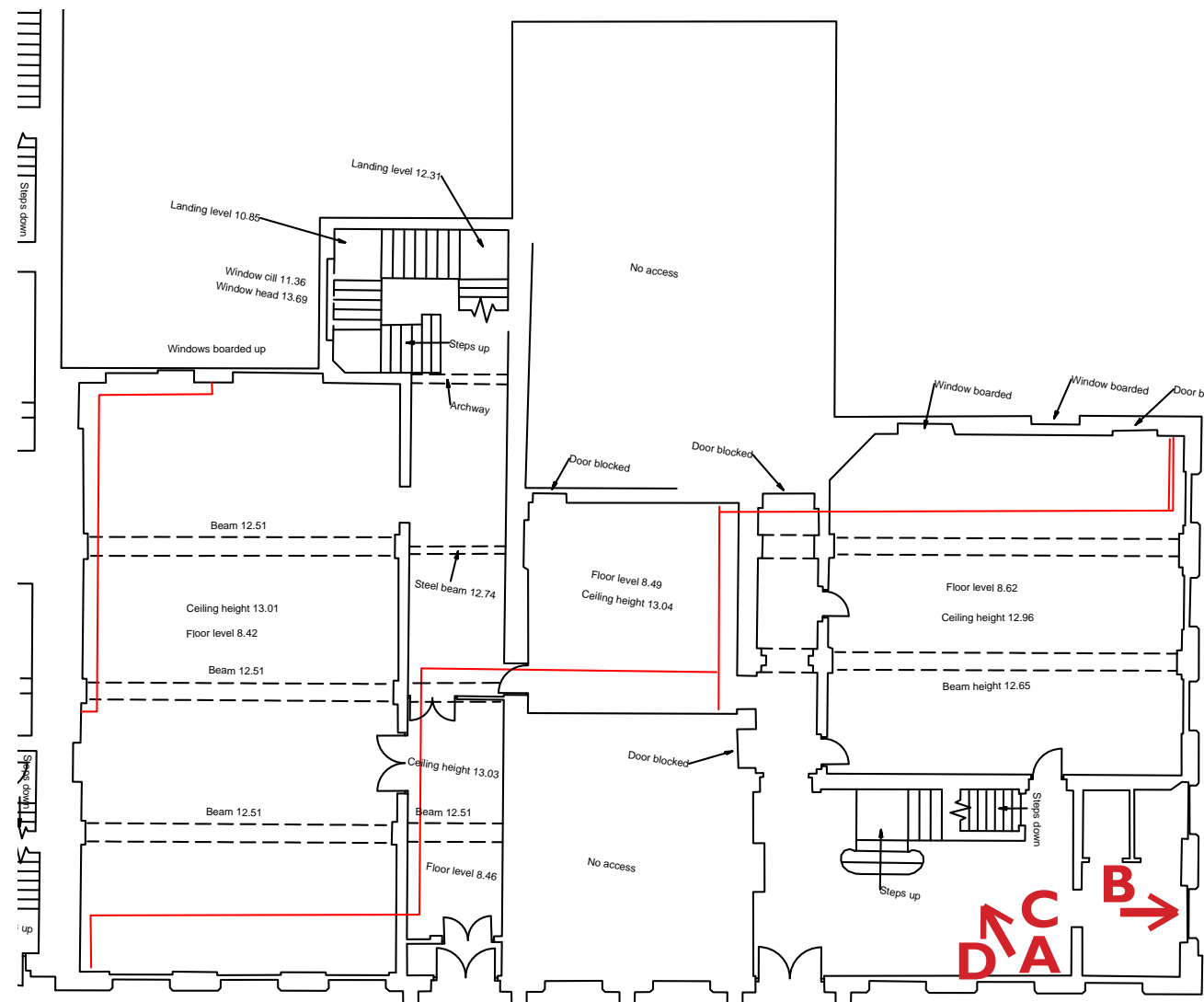
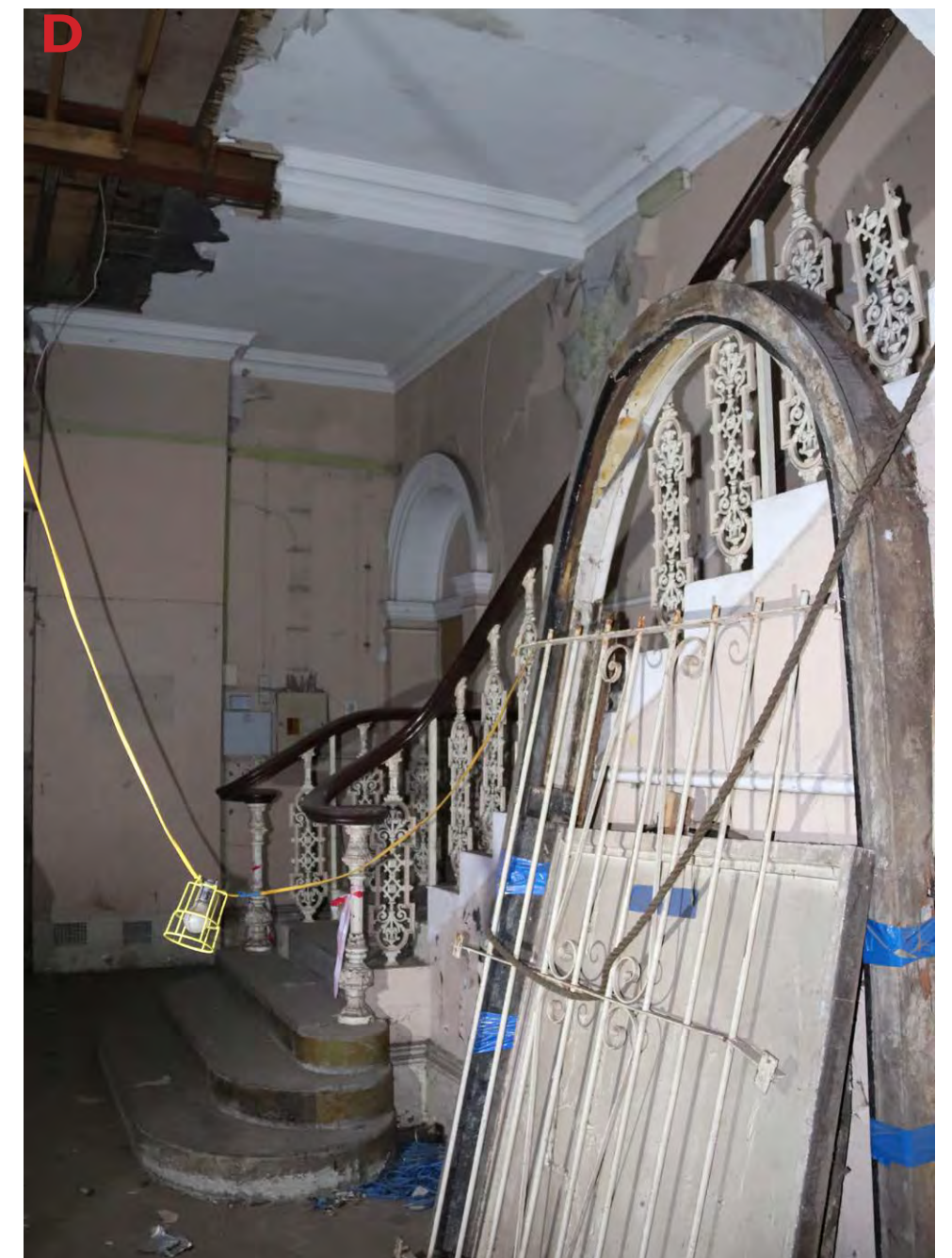
4.7.1 Merchant Place Interior - Ground Floor

The staircase to the Mercantile Marine Department Offices is at the front of the building and is quite grand, within a fairly sizeable open space.

The staircase itself, of stone treads, is balustraded with a series of ornate cast iron banisters in a Grecian style, with a hardwood handrail. It is a significant part of the building fabric which should, ideally, be retained and repaired.

A good proportion of the plaster ceiling has gone, however, still some remains, with its profiled cornice at perimeter and downstands.

In the corner south east space, there used to be toilets within each of the two cubicles and basins on the outer east wall.



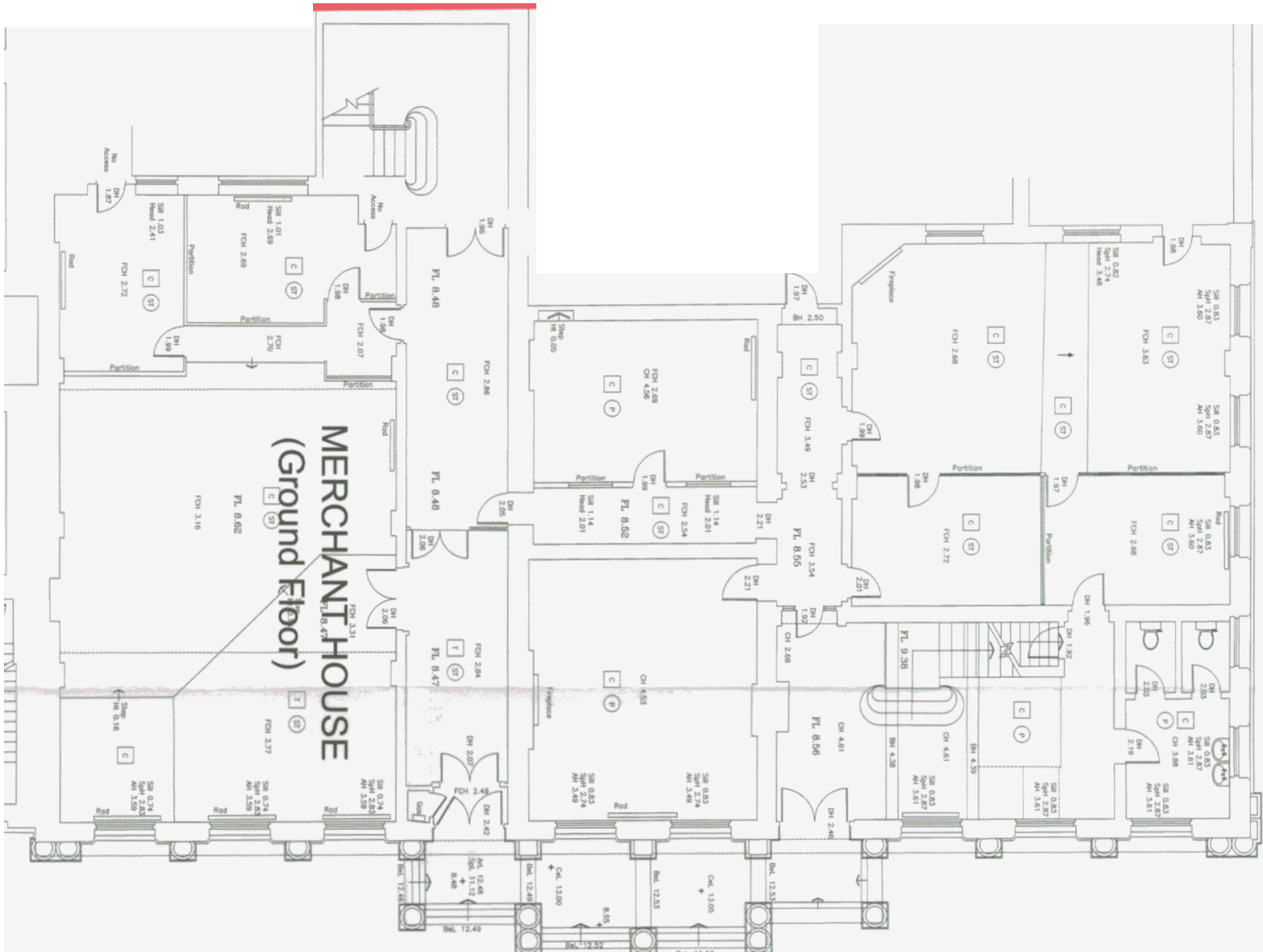
4.7.1 Merchant Place Interior - Ground Floor

The left hand plan, produced by/for Wigley Fox Partnership shows the layout of Merchant Place before the internal demolition work in 2008.

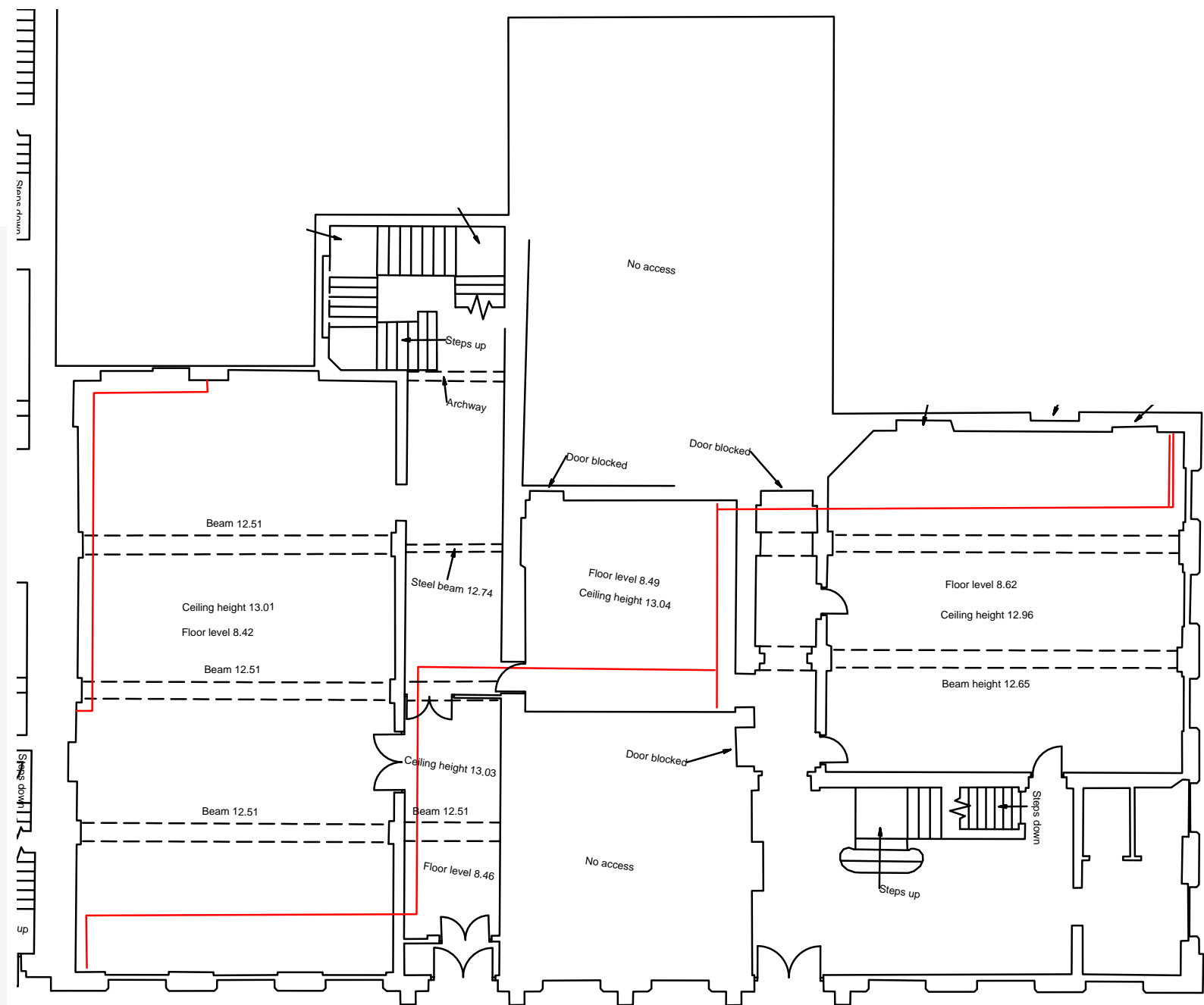
The right hand plan, produced by Hywel John Surveys, in 2022, is the current layout of Merchant Place.

The difference identifies what was removed. It is not clear how much, if any, of what was removed was original to 1889, but it is possible that sum of it was.

The 'scars' of that removal is, in many cases, apparent in the plaster on the ceiling and marks on the floor.



Ground Floor Plan from 2007, produced by/for Wigley Fox Partnership, showing the layout of Merchant Place before the internal demolition work in 2008



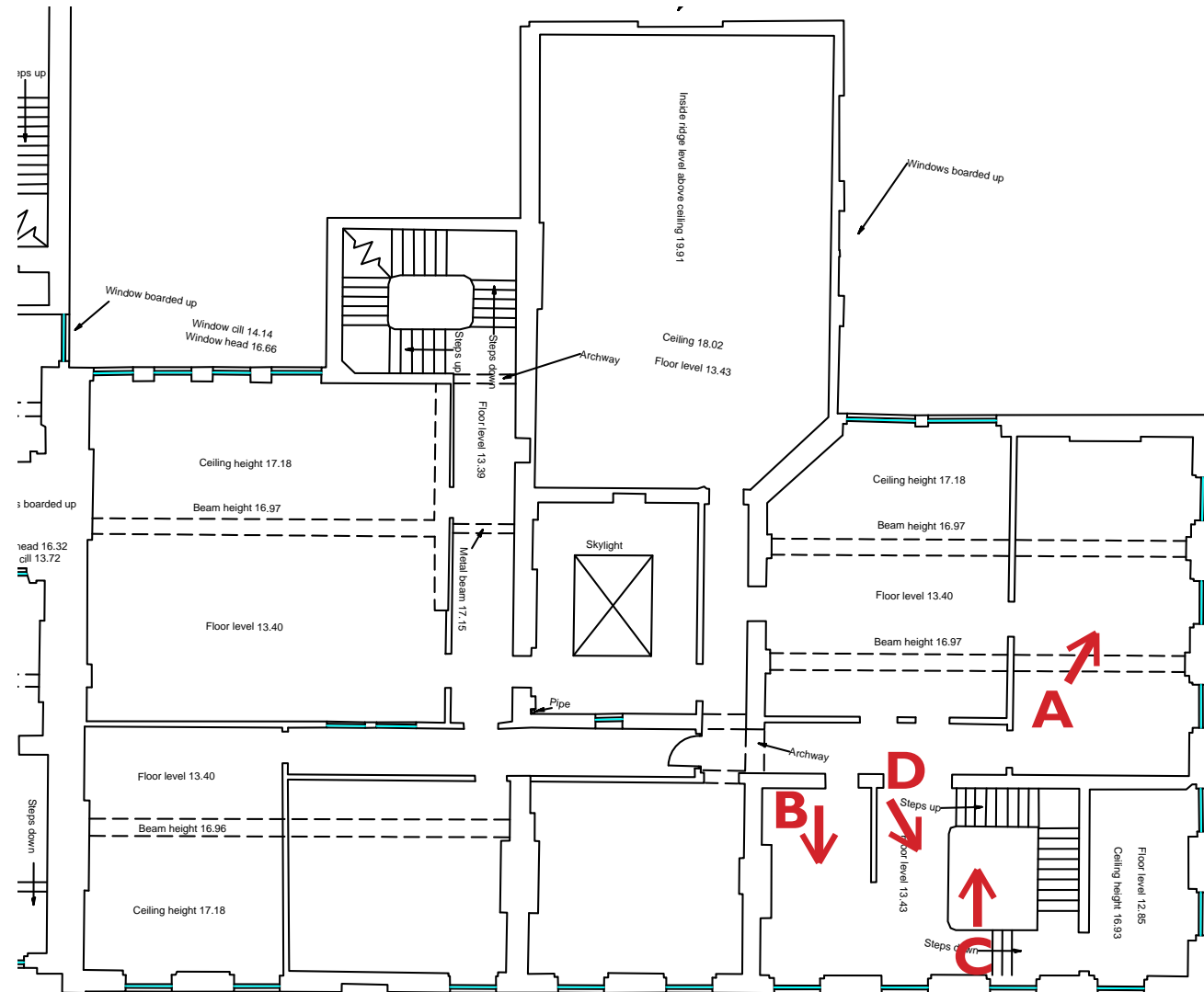
Ground Floor Plan from 2022, produced by Hywel John Surveys, showing the current layout of Merchant Place

4.7.2 Merchant Place Interior - First Floor

From first floor upwards, the staircase to the Mercantile Marine Department Offices becomes a much simpler timber staircase, with simple square timber balusters, some of which have been lost.

To the west of the staircase is a small, one-window, room - partitioning off from the stairs with a lath and plaster partition, which has lost most of its ceiling and wall plaster.

The larger north east room still possesses its wall plaster and its ceiling, with cornice to perimeter and downstands, along with a fireplace at the north end and the timber window surrounds.

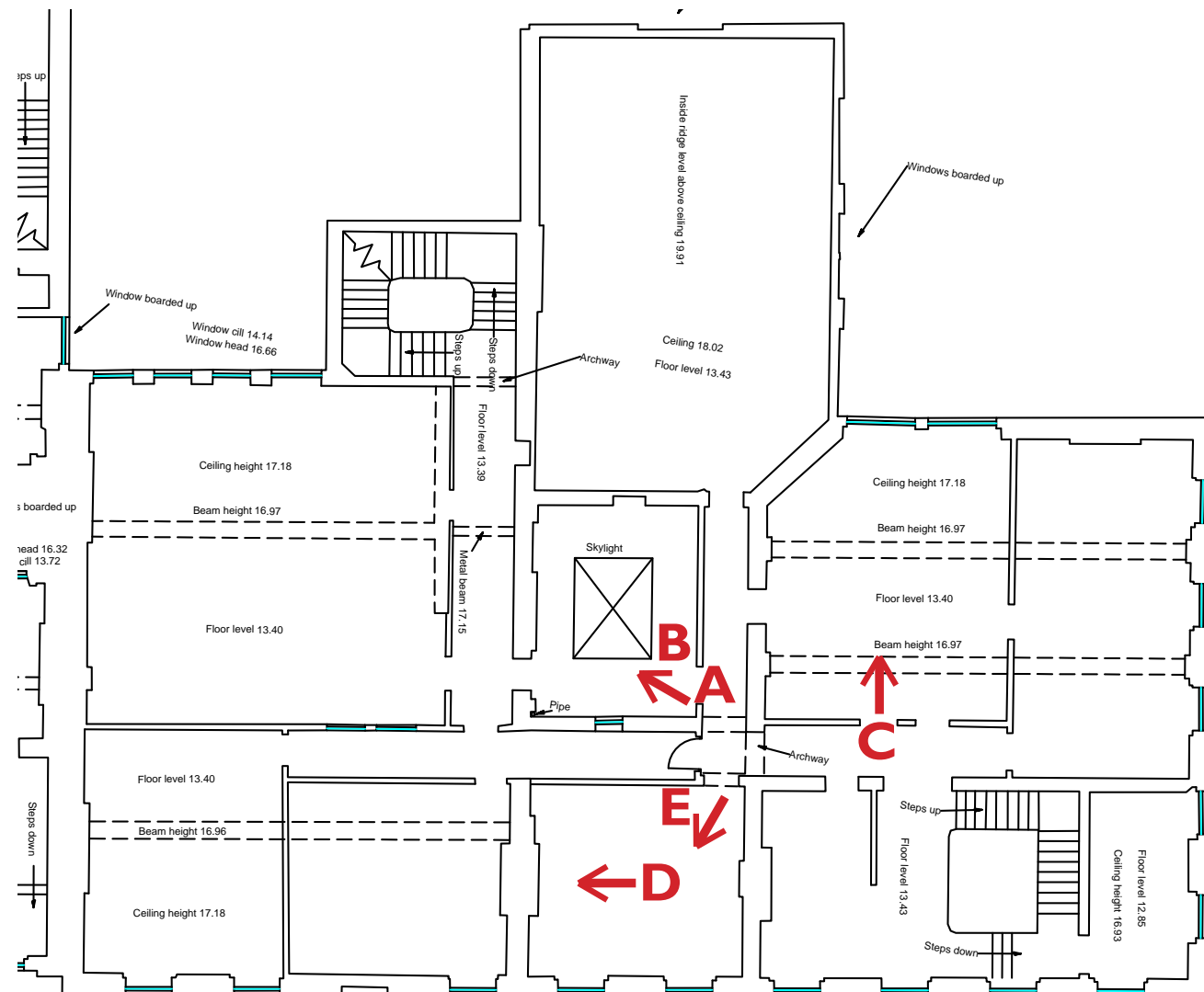


4.7.2 Merchant Place Interior - First Floor

The single-pitched timber-framed rooflight to the central space is a rather fantastic element, albeit it has been altered in the past to insert a fan. The ceiling around it would have been covered lath and plaster through, with some of the plaster remaining, but most of the ceiling just the remaining timber joists which formed the shape. Much of the plaster has been lost from the brick walls.

This central top-lit space is deemed to be a particularly significant part of the fabric.

The lower three photos show some of the other rooms on this floor, with some lost of plaster ceilings and off walls, however, much still remaining, with cornicing to the ceiling perimeters and downstands. Each of these rooms also possess a fireplace.

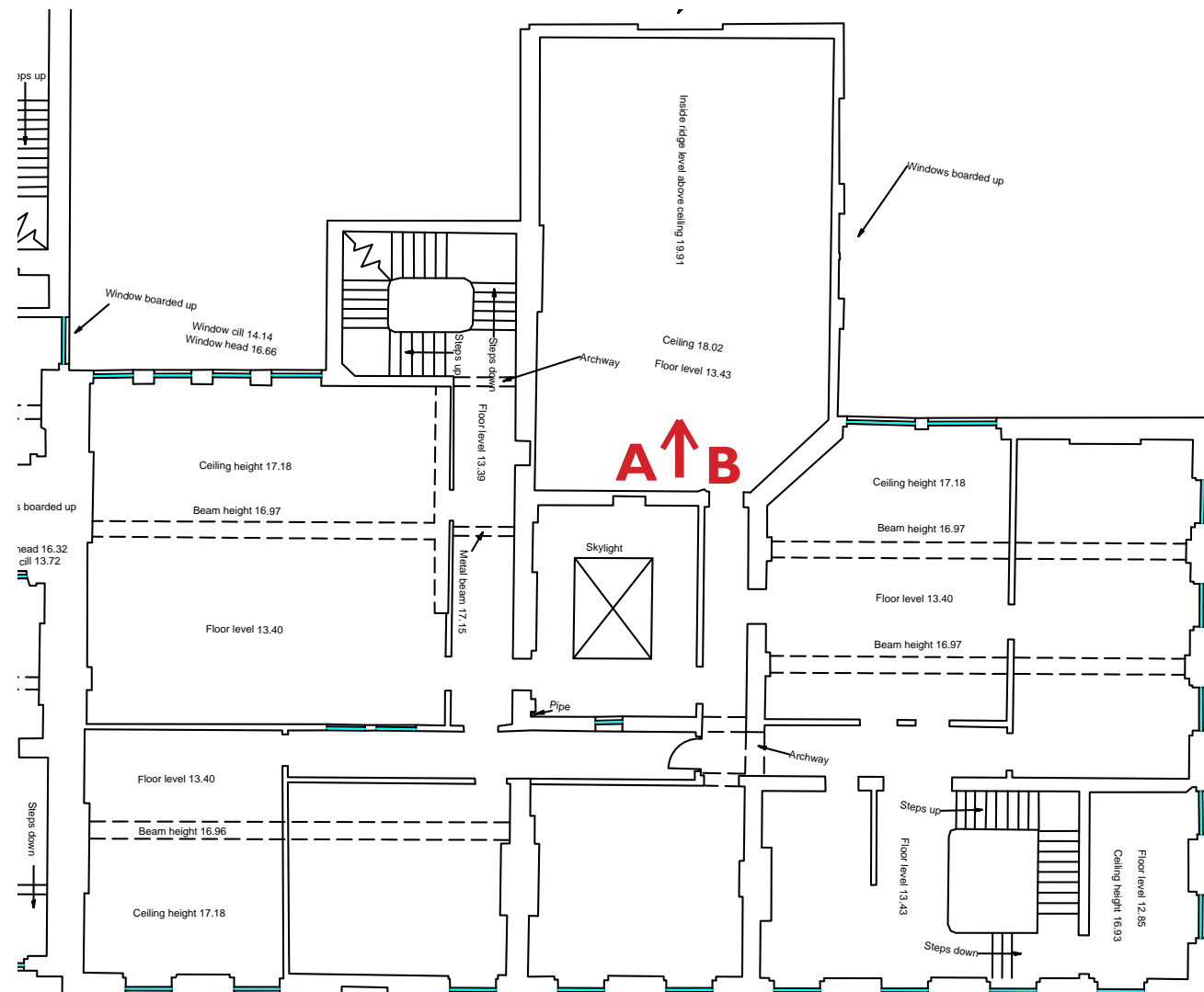


4.7.2 Merchant Place Interior - First Floor

At the far northern end of the Mercantile Marine Department Offices, beyond which all other structures have been demolished, is a large, open space.

It has completely lost its lath and plaster ceiling, although some of the cornice still remains at the top of the plasterwork to the walls. The ceiling joists remain, in the main, and the king-post trussed roof is visible above with its purlins, rafters and sarking boards. The king post of the truss is chamfered, as are other members, suggesting that the roof might originally have been open, with no ceiling. This, however, is supposition with no proof. There is a lightweight steel ornate rose to the centre of the ceiling, which remains.

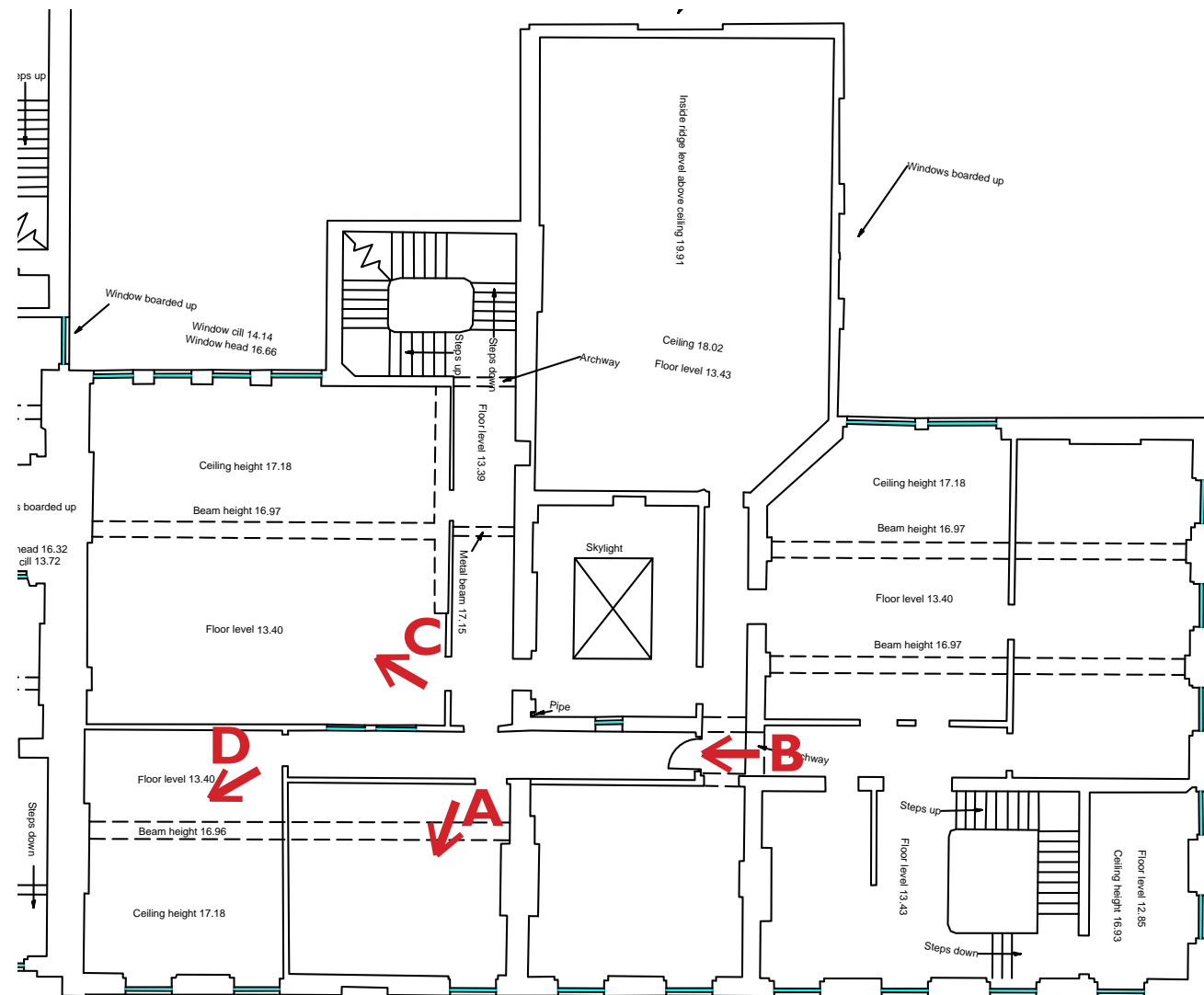
There are a number of windows to this space, which are boarded up.



4.7.2 Merchant Place Interior - First Floor

On this page are views of the other rooms and corridors to the first floor of the Mercantile Marine Department Offices.

All these spaces have been subject to some loss of finishes, with evidence of repair to the joists within the corridor.



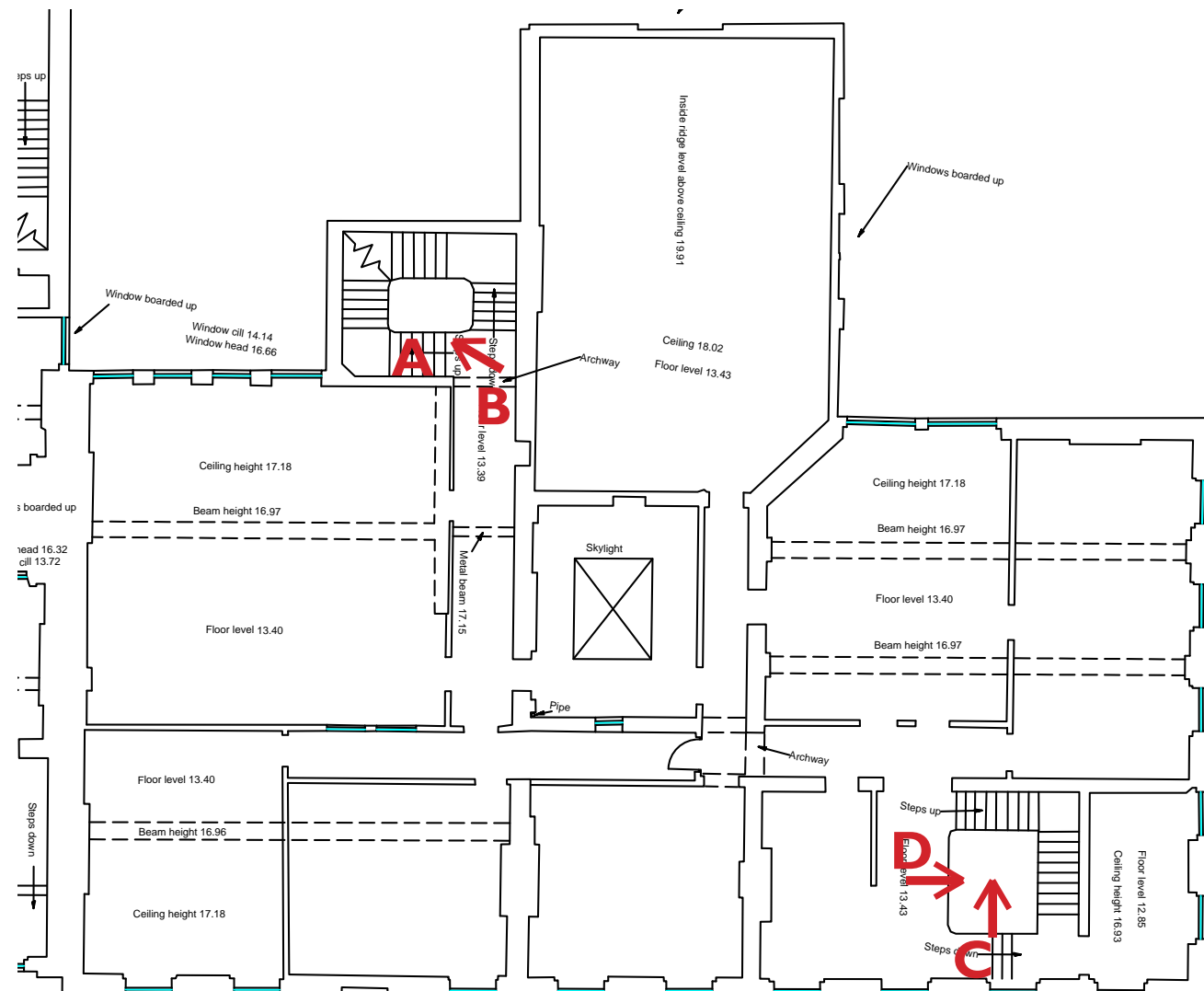
4.7.2 Merchant Place Interior - First Floor

On this page is the upper floors off the staircase to the Post Office and Telegraph Department (photos A & B) and also to the Mercantile Marine Department Offices (photos C & D).

It is very interesting to see that the Post Office and Telegraph Department staircase continues upwards, from ground to first to second floors, in the same high quality construction - of stone treads, ornate cast iron banisters in a Grecian style, and hardwood handrail.

However, after the ground to first floor run, the Mercantile Marine Department Offices staircase continues from first to second floor with a much simpler timber stair construction with simple square timber balusters and hardwood handrail.

Both are significant parts of the building fabric which should, ideally, be retained and repaired; however, the stone and cast iron staircase to the Post Office and Telegraph Department is clearly the more significant of the two.



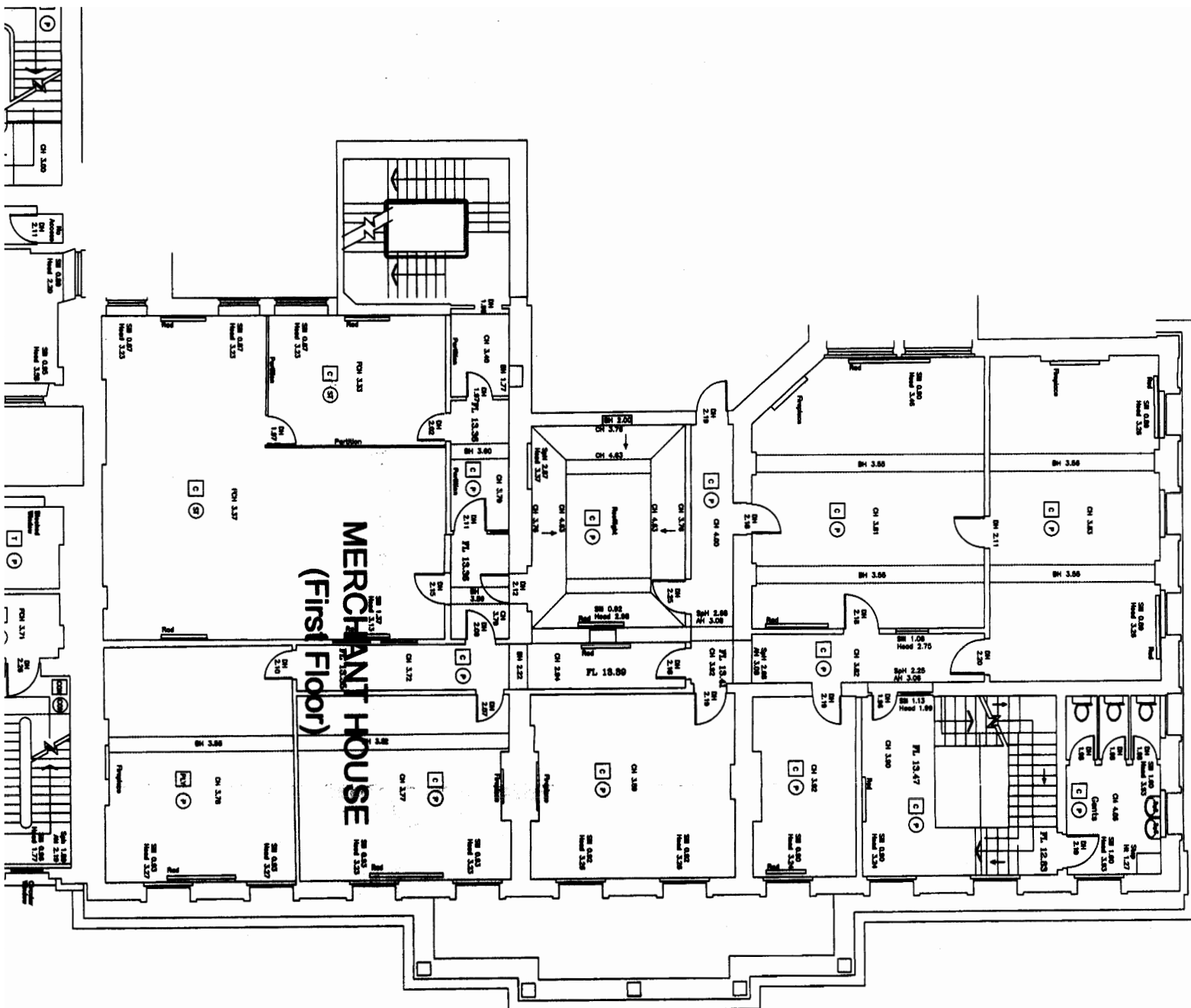
4.7.2 Merchant Place Interior - First Floor

The left hand plan, produced by/for Wigley Fox Partnership shows the layout of Merchant Place before the internal demolition work in 2008.

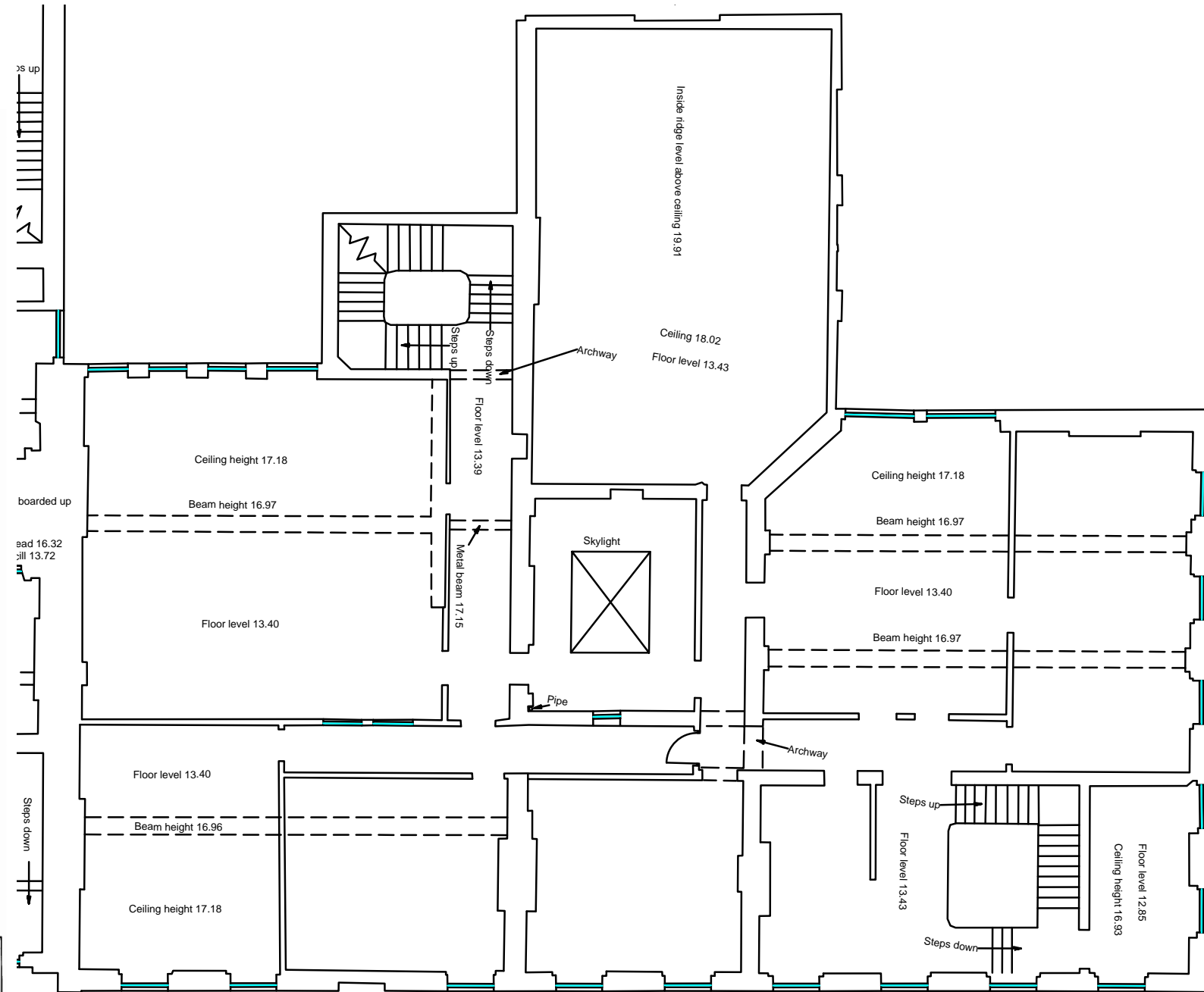
The right hand plan, produced by Hywel John Surveys, in 2022, is the current layout of Merchant Place.

The difference identifies what was removed. It is not clear how much, if any, of what was removed was original to 1889, but it is possible that sum of it was.

The 'scars' of that removal is, in many cases, apparent in the plaster on the ceiling and marks on the floor.



First Floor Plan from 2007, produced by/for Wigley Fox Partnership, showing the layout of Merchant Place before the internal demolition work in 2008



First Floor Plan from 2022, produced by Hywel John Surveys, showing the current layout of Merchant Place

4.7.3 Merchant Place Interior - Second Floor

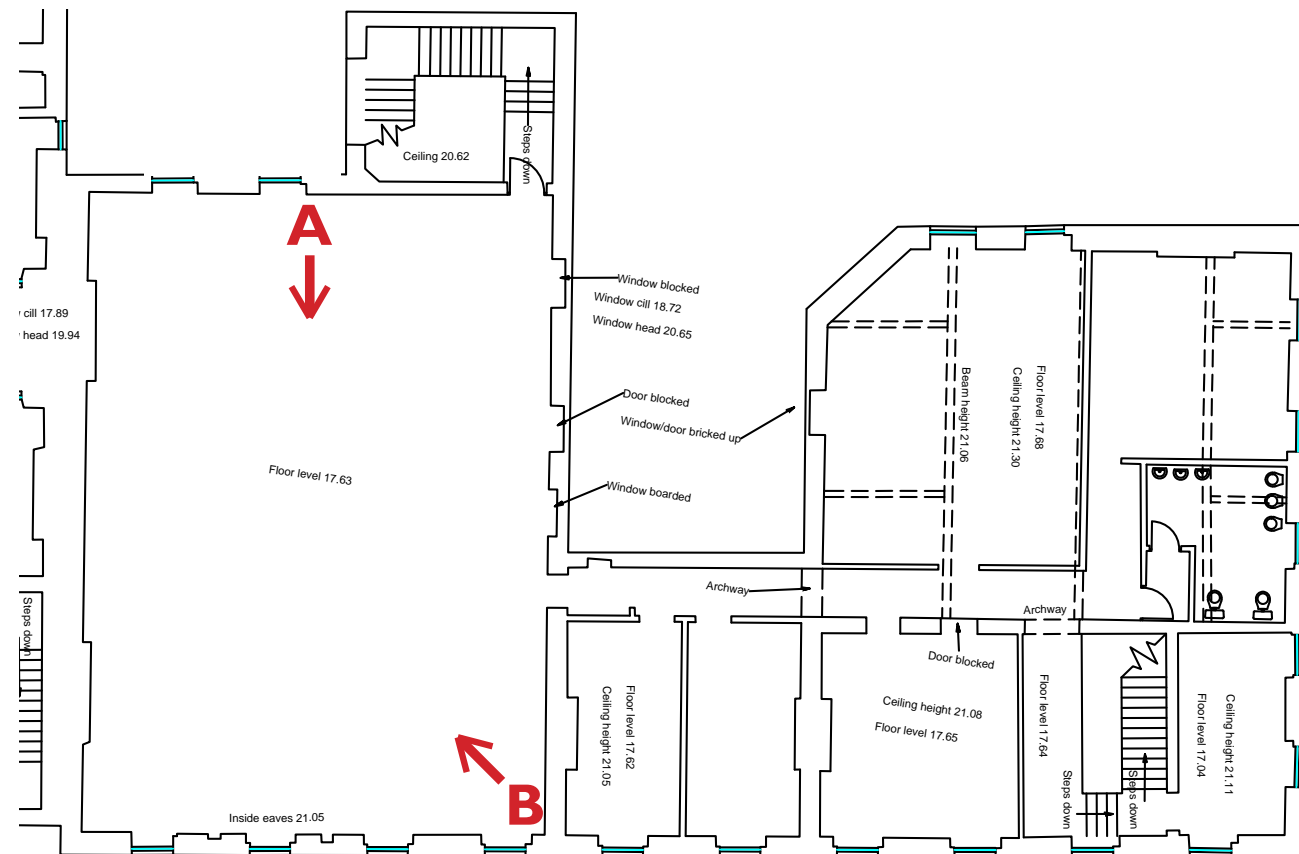
This top-lit top room to the Telegraph Offices, with its patent glazed rooflight, intricate lightweight iron trusses and diagonal timber sarking boards is not only of historical significance, but is also a very beautiful space with the most amazing lighting. The lightweight nature of the roof structure makes the roof appear to float over the space.

This is a space, with its roof structure and finishes, deemed to be of high significance.

The brickwork walls have, however, lost much of their plaster and the floor appears to be been overlaid recently.

There are signs of water ingress from above at a few points, suggesting that repair of the roof is important. Indeed, it looks like this is the source of the water ingress to the ground floor room below.

A



B

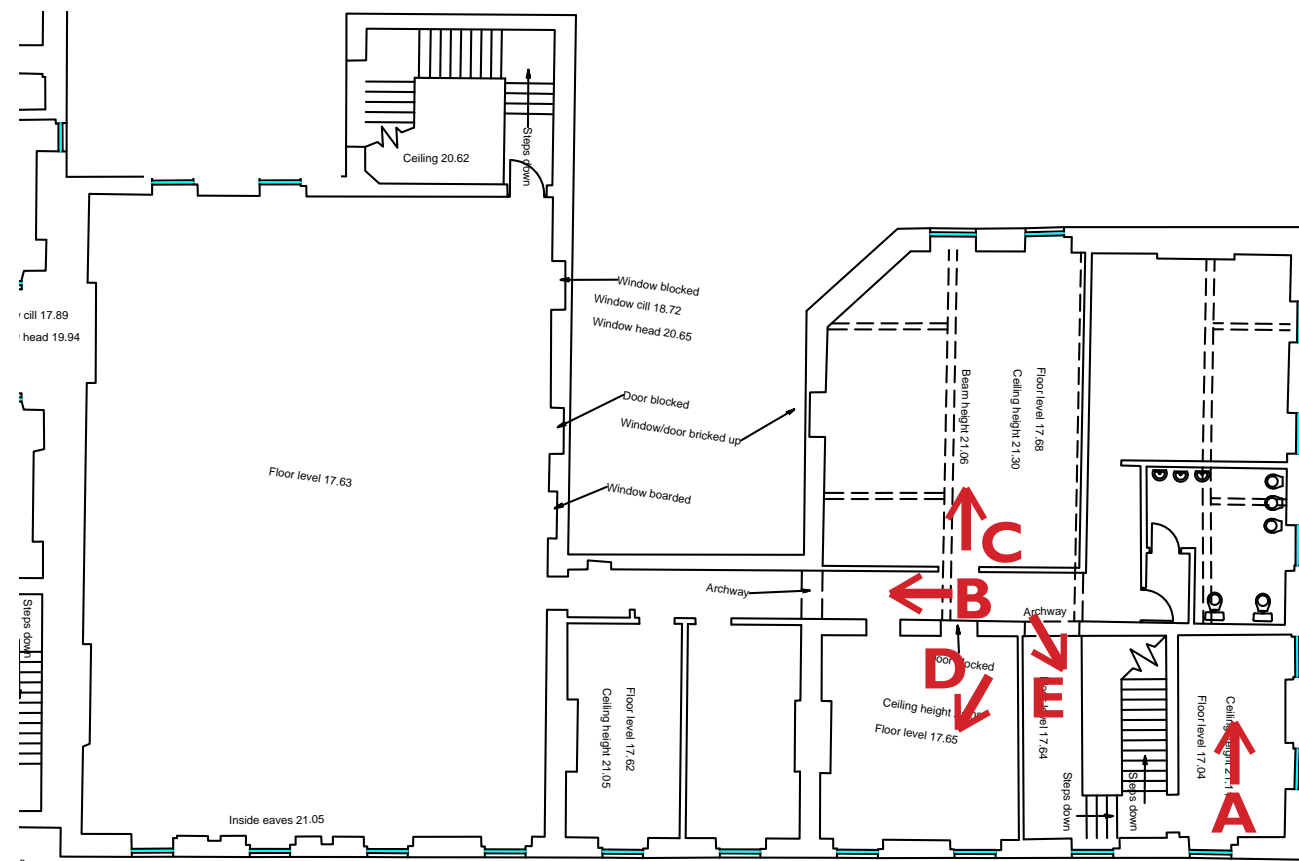
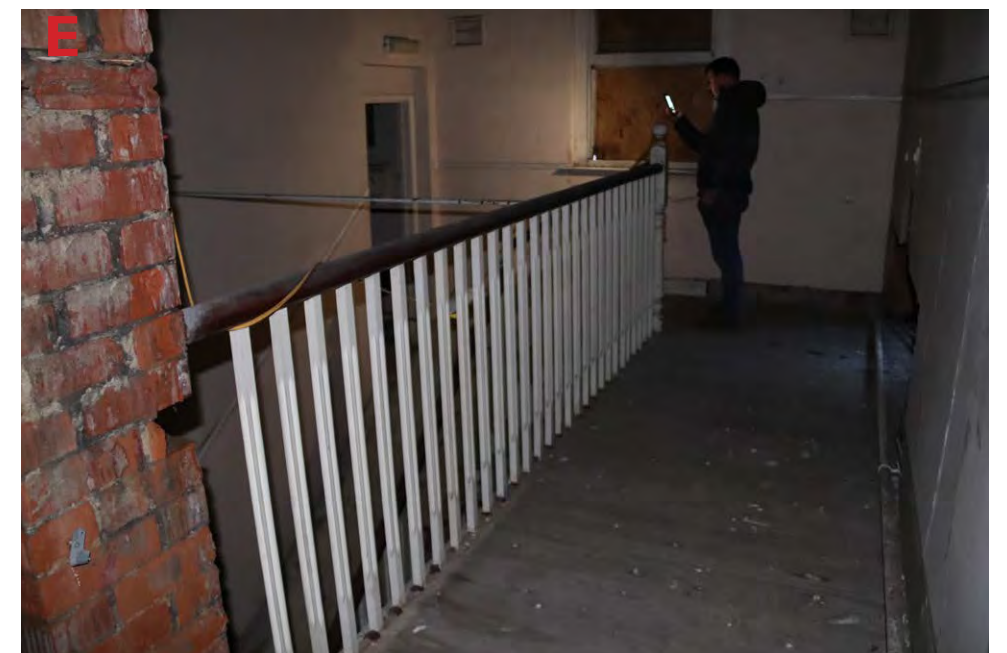


4.7.3 Merchant Place Interior - Second Floor

Whilst most of the other top floor room are fairly utilitarian in finish, with much of those finishes lost, there are a couple of point of note.

Photo A show the attractive chamfered king-post trusses above.

Photo C shows an unusually ornate (for the top floor) stone corbel supporting each of the stop-end chamfered timber beams.



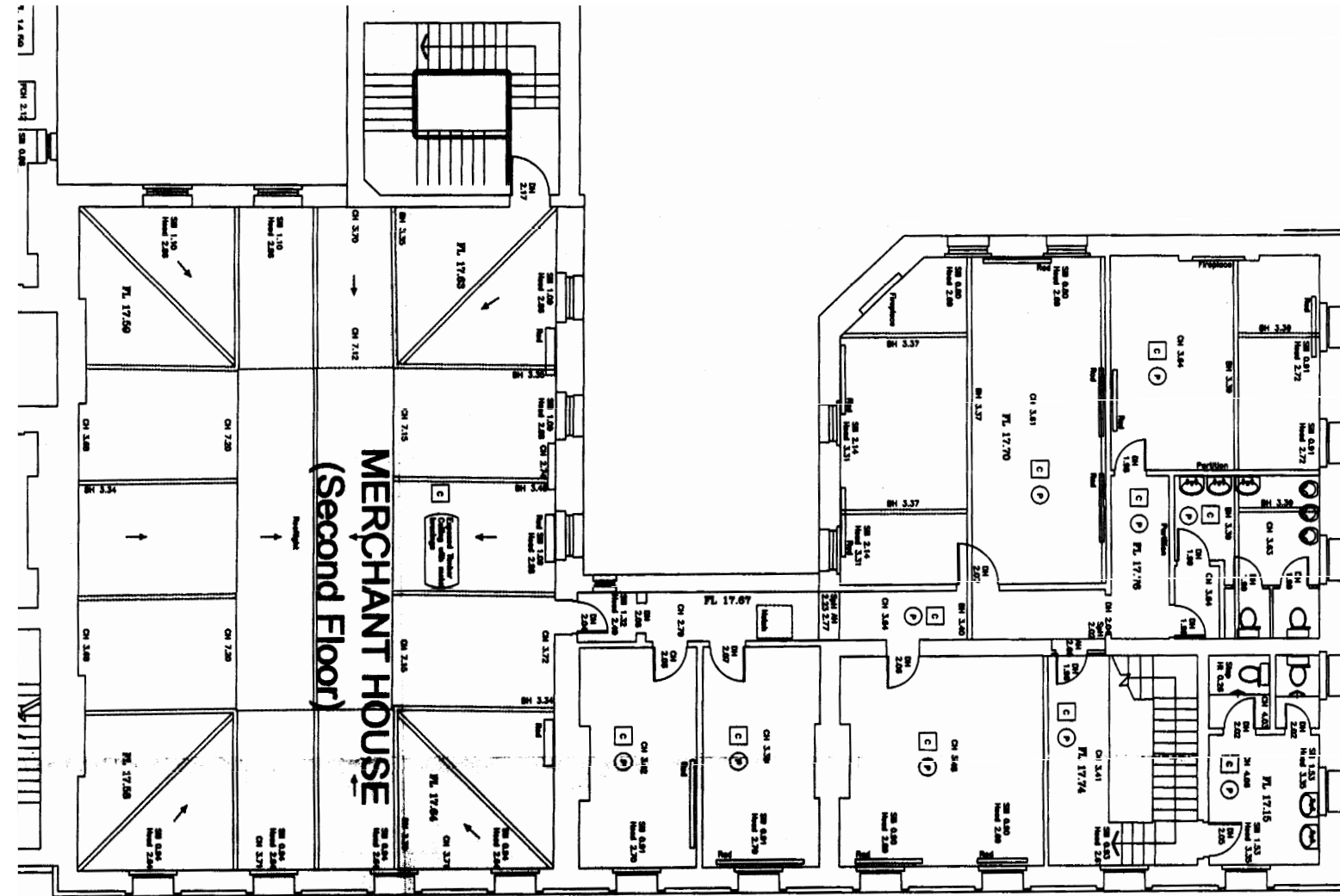
4.7.3 Merchant Place Interior - Second Floor

The left hand plan, produced by/for Wigley Fox Partnership shows the layout of Merchant Place before the internal demolition work in 2008.

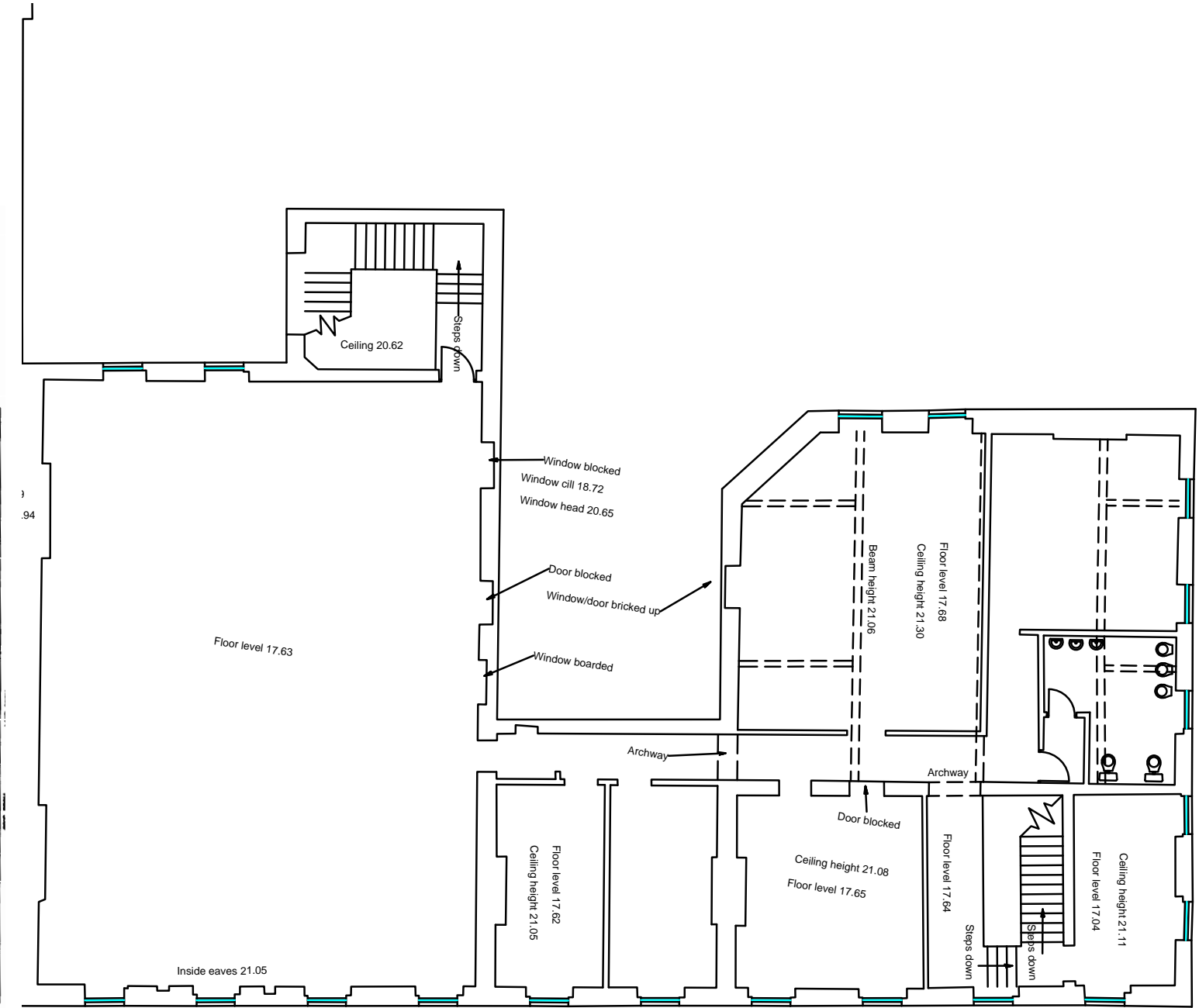
The right hand plan, produced by Hywel John Surveys, in 2022, is the current layout of Merchant Place.

The difference identifies what was removed. It is not clear how much, if any, of what was removed was original to 1889, but it is possible that sum of it was.

The 'scars' of that removal is, in many cases, apparent in the plaster on the ceiling and marks on the floor.



Second Floor Plan from 2007, produced by/for Wigley Fox Partnership, showing the layout of Merchant Place before the internal demolition work in 2008



Second Floor Plan from 2022, produced by Hywel John Surveys, showing the current layout of Merchant Place

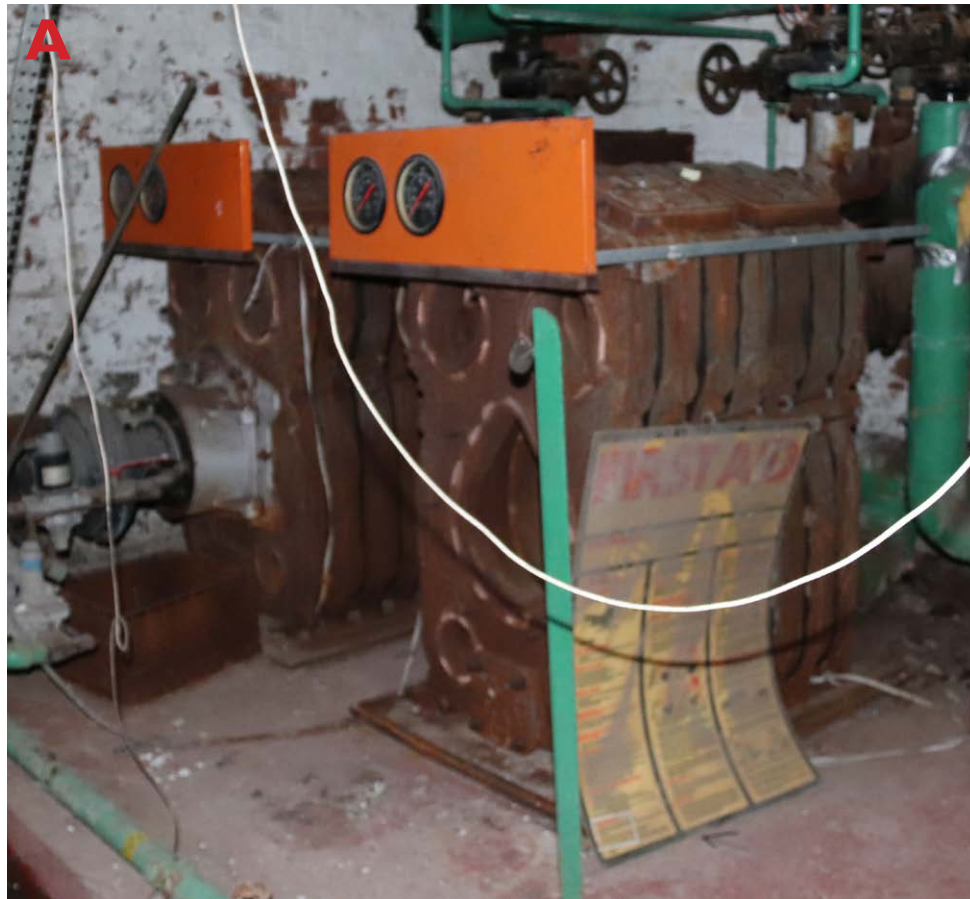
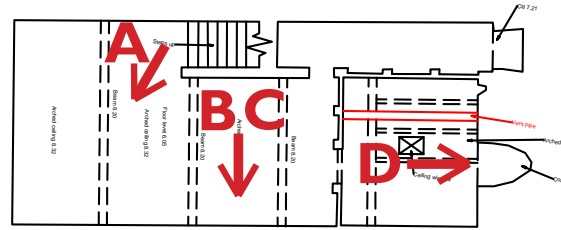
4.7.4 Merchant Place Interior - Basement Floor

Whilst a utilitarian series of spaces, the basement to the Mercantile Marine Department Offices is a rather interesting space.

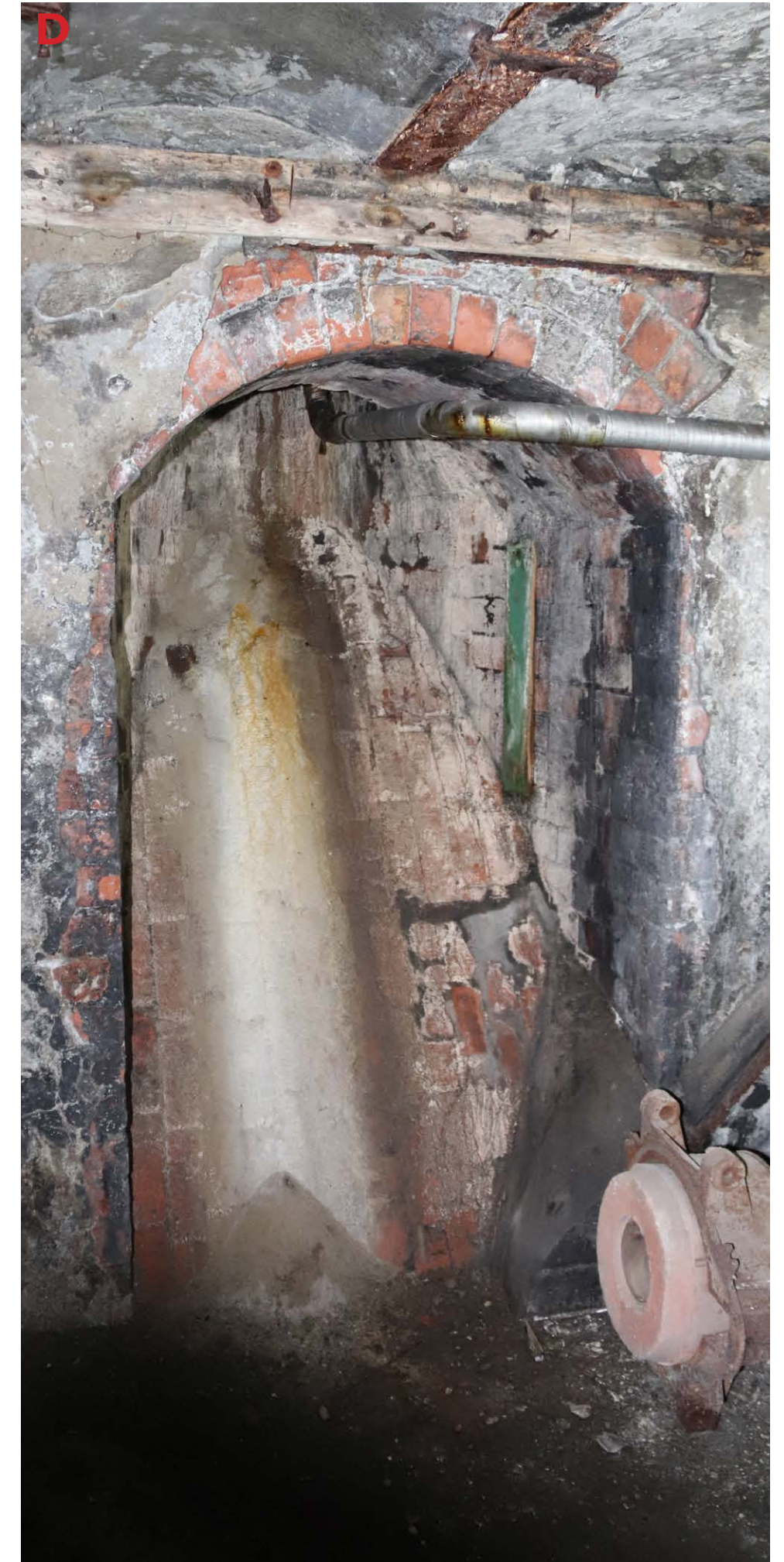
The soffit above is a filler joist floor with curved barrelled units and a great cast iron and glass pavement light - see photos B & C.

To the east side is a beautifully constructed smooth brick coal chute - see photo D.

Even the old boiler is rather fantastic - see photo A.



Above is the only pavement light still visible from above. All others have been covered over by the raised pavement at the front.



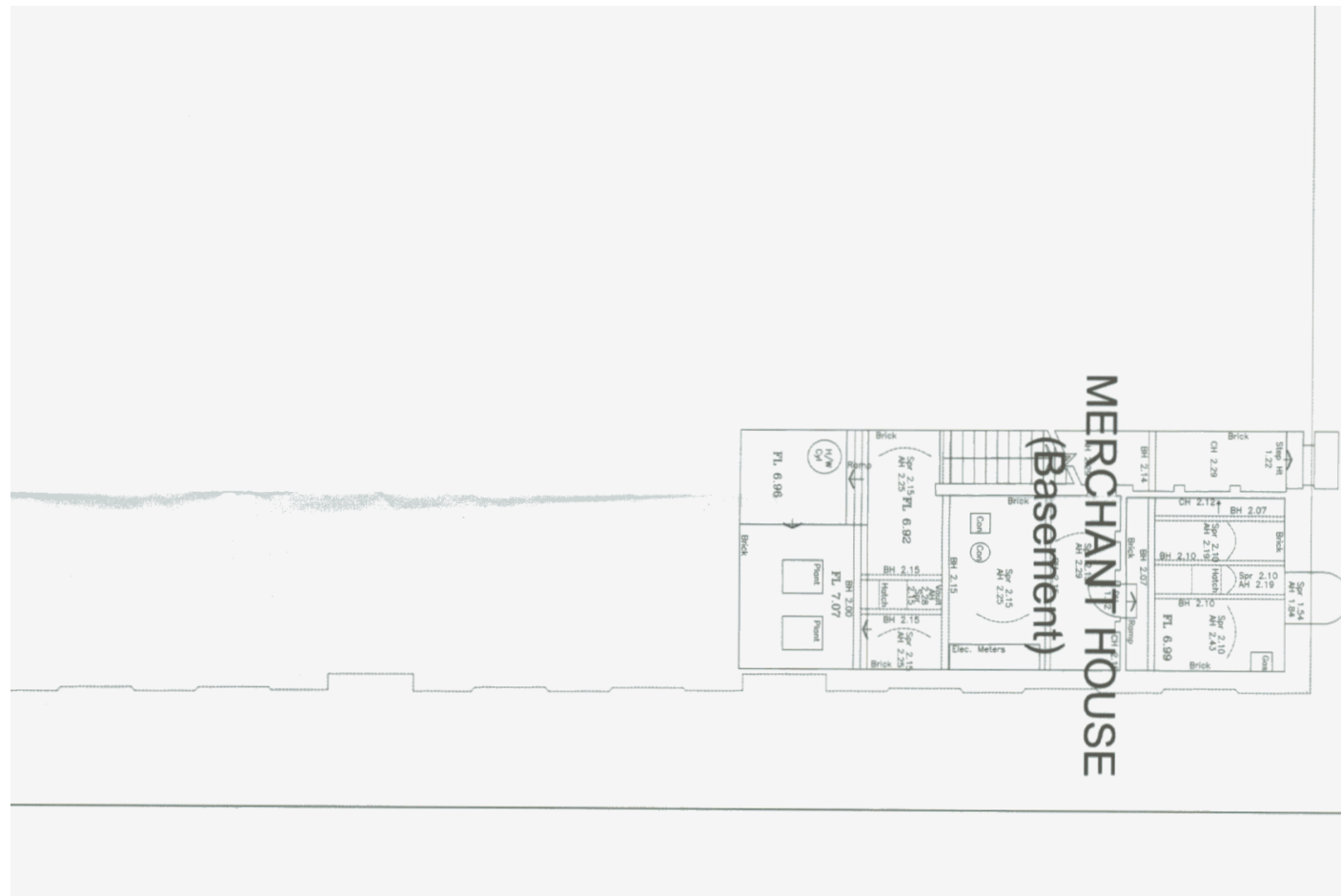
4.7.4 Merchant Place Interior - Basement Floor

The left hand plan, produced by/for Wigley Fox Partnership shows the layout of Merchant Place before the internal demolition work in 2008.

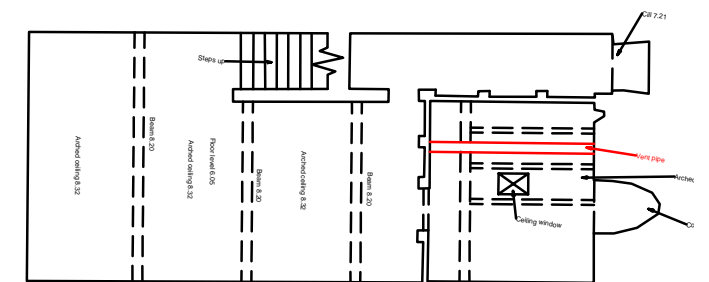
The right hand plan, produced by Hywel John Surveys, in 2022, is the current layout of Merchant Place.

The difference identifies what was removed. It is not clear how much, if any, of what was removed was original to 1889, but it is possible that sum of it was.

The 'scars' of that removal is, in many cases, apparent in the plaster on the ceiling and marks on the floor.



Basement Floor Plan from 2007, produced by/for Wigley Fox Partnership, showing the layout of Merchant Place before the internal demolition work in 2008



Basement Floor Plan from 2022, produced by Hywel John Surveys, showing the current layout of Merchant Place

4.8 Character, Architectural Design and Materials of Cory's Building

Cory's Building is a 5no. storey building, also in the Italianate Classical style; however, its style is not as poised, strict and ordered as that of Merchant Place, but more playful, ornate and three-dimensional. Indeed, the facade borrows from the Mannerist style of architecture, playing with solid and void, variation and decoration.

Whilst Merchant Place is more horizontal in its emphasis, Cory's Building, with its 13no. bays, accentuates the vertical, especially with its first and second floor columns (heavily carved at their base, including several heads) within recessed bays; and, whilst Merchant Place is more regular with its rhythm, Cory's Building is more varied.

Faced in Bath limestone, with a two-course granite plinth, the primary front (west) elevation onto Bute Street comprises the main entrance in the centre with 6no. bays equally to each side.

The shorter side elevation on its south end, also of Bath limestone, which includes a secondary door / emergency escape, is a match for the end bays of the front elevation.

The other shorter side elevation, on its north side, does not face a street, but faces the side of Custom House. This is a much more utilitarian-looking facade, with red brick, bands of Bath stone and simple windows.

In his book 'The Buildings of Wales – Glamorgan (Pevsner Architectural Guides – 1995)', John Newman talks about Bute Street and says:

"The street ends with the massive bulk of Cory's Buildings, dated 1889 and designed by the local firm of Bruton & Williams. Thirteen bays, five storeys, faced with Bath stone, and barely keeping its classical paraphernalia under control. The feature which is meant to dominate is the order of Corinthian columns with decorated leggings recessed four and four into the upper part of the façade."



The two main elevations are made up of a two-course granite plinth, above which is a channelled ashlar Bath stone ground floor, above which is 4no. storeys of ashlar Bath stonework, with a flat roof surrounded by a parapet, stepped up in the centre into a segmental pediment, with chimneys around the edge.

The first and second floor elevations form a significant rich and deep part of the facade, particularly on the inside 9no. bays, with its giant composite order round pilasters, channelled pilaster strips, pedimented windows, tripartite windows, canted projected splayed bays with open pediments, and a central round-arched recess with a coffered giant arch with foliated spandrels carried on paired pilasters. The giant pilaster bases are adorned with elaborate foliated decoration, depicting heads within.

The windows are horned timber sash; some with bracket cornices and volutes. Whilst the ground floor window openings are camber-headed within squared recesses, with cills above the granite plinth; there is a variety of window treatments to the first and second floors; the third floor are capped with bracket cornices and volutes; and the fourth floor are oversailed with the base course of the entablature above.

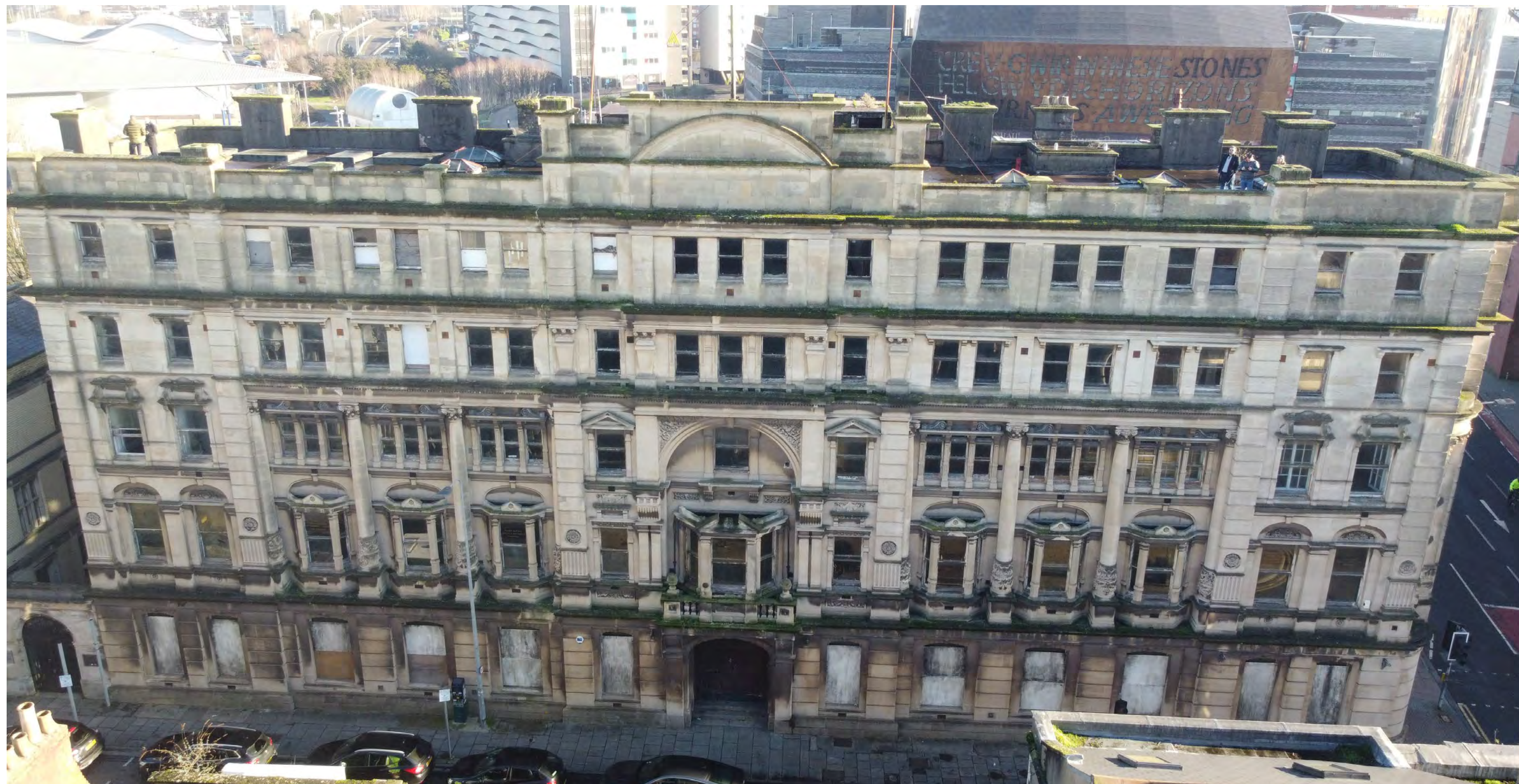
The 2no. ends of main elevation are made up of 2no. more simple bays with channelled pilaster strips.

The ground, second, third and fourth storeys are each delineated by cornices, that to the second floor being dentilled.

However, only the ground, first and second storeys are original to 1889. These lower 3no. storeys used to be topped with 3no. pavilion roofs (in the centre and to each end) and the building was the same height as Merchant Place around the corner.

The top 2no. storeys are clearly lower in height than the bottom 3no. storeys; a fact which is apparent both within the elevation and also within the internal ceiling heights.

The top 2no. storeys, and the flat balustraded roof, are a later addition, added some time before 1929, and probably some time after 1907. It is clear that they are less ornate in decoration, however, do follow the same rhythm and general aesthetic as the lower storeys.



Top right, on this page, is a drawing, produced for the South Wales Daily News, depicting Cory's Building as it was built. The article dates to 31st December 1890, the day before the formal opening of the building.

Bottom right, on this page, is a photograph of the building now, from a similar viewpoint (if not quite the same), with the top 2no. storeys not there originally clearly apparent.

These top 2no. storeys, and the flat balustraded roof, were added some time before 1929, and some time after 1907. We know this to be the case because the bottom left aerial photograph, dated 1929, shows the taller flat roof of Cory's Building to the right of the lower Merchant Place; whilst the top left photograph is from a postcard sent in 1907, which shows Cory's Building without its top 2no. storeys. As the postcard was 'sent' in 1907, it is possible that it dated to earlier than 1907, but it is fair to assume around 1907.

Drawing of Messrs Cory's New Offices, South Wales Daily News, 31st December 1890 (source: 'newspapers.library.wales')



View of 'lower' Cory's Building from postcard sent in 1907 (source: 'thingspostal.org.uk')



Similar view in 2022 (source: own)



Aerial photograph, dated 1929, with 'taller' Cory's Building (source: RCHAMW)



On this page are photographs of some of the heads set within elaborate foliated decoration to the base of the giant pilasters to the first and second floors.

The bottom 3no. detailed photographs are sourced from the 'squirrelbasket.wordpress.com' website.



The right hand photograph on this page shows the shorter side elevation on the south end, facing Bute Place, which is treated similarly to the ends of the main west elevation, with its ashlar Bath limestone and its variant 5 storey treatment.

To the right, this elevation adjoins that of its predecessor Merchant Place, slightly stepped back from the rest of the face. The treatment of the windows is a little different to this last bay; and, on ground floor, there is a secondary door / emergency escape.

The corner itself is set back over the top 2no. storeys. It is rounded on the lower 3no. storeys (those which are original) with a '1889' date inscribed on the 2nd floor; and an inverted right angle on the 2no. later upper storeys.

The left hand photograph on this page shows the other shorter side elevation, on its north side.

This does not face a street, but faces the side of Custom House; and is a much more utilitarian-looking facade, with red brick, bands of Bath stone and simple windows.

Clearly, there has been an intermediate approach to this elevation. It is nowhere near as plain and utilitarian as the rear elevation is, which was always, until 2008, covered by Merchant Place; but it is far plainer than the main two elevations.

When Cory's Building was built, the site to its north was undeveloped and open all the way up to Dock Chambers. It was not for another 9no. years (1898) that Custom House was built. It is assumed that the site of Custom House was always going to be built upon, and so less focus and money was spent on Cory's Building's north elevation. However, it was an open elevation at the time, and so windows were inserted - less ornately decorated than those to the main elevations, however. When Custom House was built, these windows existed, and so, it could be assumed that this is the reason why Custom House does not abut Cory's Building, but rather that there is a gap in between the two sides.

Then, when the top 2no. storeys were built (between 1907 and 1929), further windows were incorporated, as the gap to Custom House already existed.

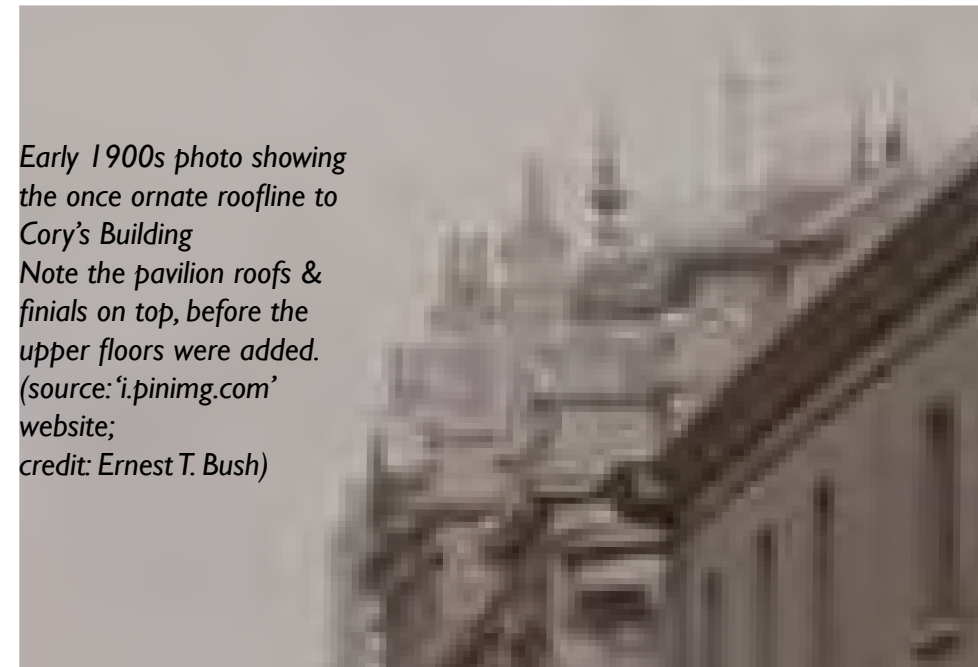
The variation in window treatment between the lower storeys and the later upper storeys is, however, notable - the lower (original) windows are taller (of course, as the storeys are taller), and they are also topped with segmental brick arches. The upper (newer) windows are flat-headed with Bath stone lintols.



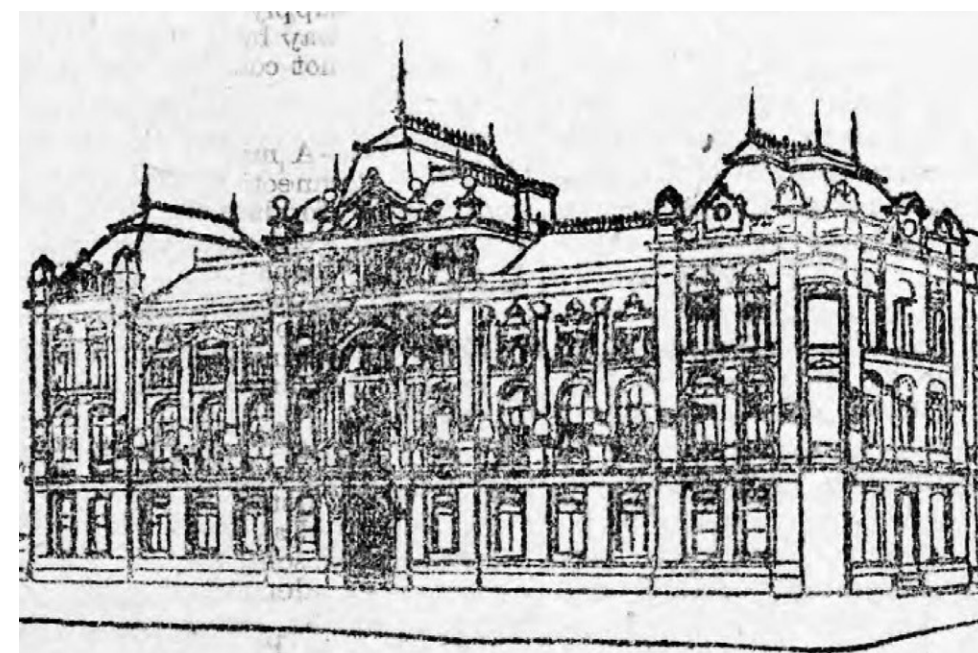
The flat roof, which is not original, but dated to between 1907 and 1929, is finished in a bitumen felt built-up covering, which is in a poor condition. The roof incorporates 7no. pyramidal steel, lead and georgian-wired glass patent glazed lantern rooflights; 3no. rendered structures of a little more than 2m high, 2no. containing plant and 1no. providing access from the central staircase; 5no. raised slabs, which might once have supported plant; and 1no. chimney stack, with a further 12no. chimney stacks around the perimeter of the roof, forming part of the parapet.

The rainwater drainage is all internal from this roof, with no externally visible rainwater downpipes. There is quite a lot of ponding on this roof.

The bottom left image shows what the roof looked like when the building was built in 1889. Clearly this flat roof is nothing like what was envisaged by the architects, Bruton and Williams, who had included 3no. ornate mansard pavilion roofs on the original building, with ridge decoration (possibly iron or terracotta) and some significant tall finials.



Early 1900s photo showing the once ornate roofline to Cory's Building. Note the pavilion roofs & finials on top, before the upper floors were added. (source: 'i.pinimg.com' website; credit: Ernest T. Bush)



Drawing of Messrs Cory's New Offices, South Wales Daily News, 31st December 1890 (source: 'newspapers.library.wales')



The images on this page show details on the roof as it is now.



The rear (east) elevation of Cory's Building was clearly designed to not be seen. The original bottom 3no. storeys are of red brick (English bond, rather than the more decorative Flemish bond), with very few window penetrating the elevation. The lower half has been painted or limewashed, whilst the top half has not. This is the elevation which abutted Merchant Place and was built after Merchant Place, so had no need for decoration.

The top storeys are rendered brick. This was the part of the elevation which was added on between 1907 and 1929. This element would have oversailed the eaves, if not necessary the roofs, of Merchant Place, and hence there are a number of windows.

The top of the elevation is the parapet, which rises and falls at each of a number of chimney stacks and other structures.

In the centre is a recess, which was a lightwell into which a number of windows looked at each floor level.

The windows are all unadorned and all brick segmental-headed.

One interesting element of the lower levels is the ability to 'read' the line of the original Merchant Place building, where horizontal and gabled structures abutted Cory's Building.



4.8.1 Cory's Building Interior - Ground Floor

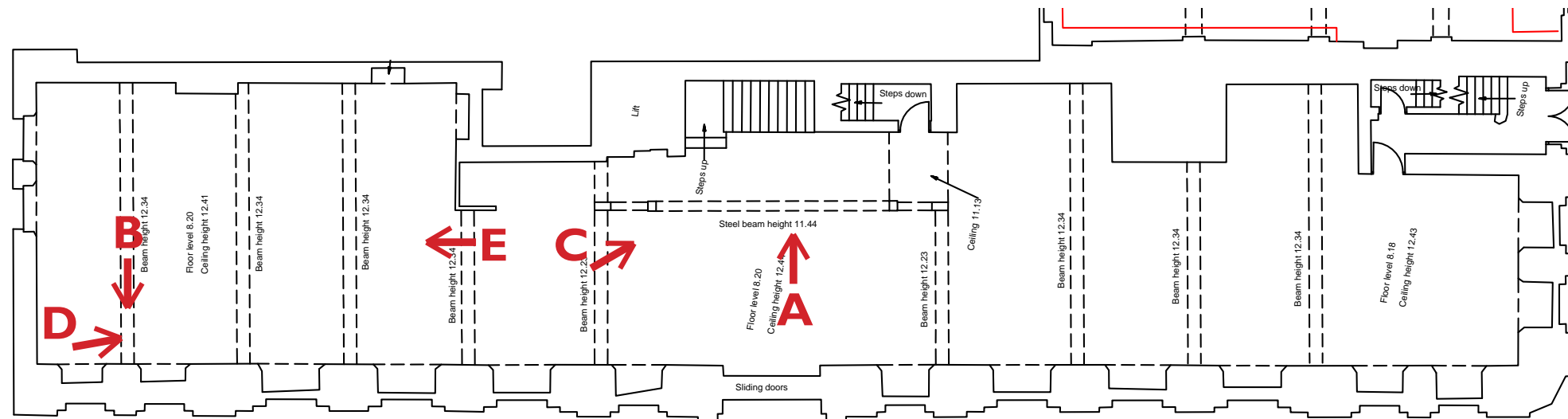
Much of the previous sub-division to Cory's Building has been removed, providing a series of rather fantastic long gallery-type spaces; albeit this would not originally have been the case.

On this page is a series of photos of the ground floor, opened up. In the centre of the space is a staircase, with the bottom flight visible.

In front of it is a riveted iron or steel beam and post frame with plastered composite twinned columns at both sides.

Most of the lath and plaster ceiling remains, albeit with a lot of damage, with downstands at each bay and corncing to perimeters and downstands.

The floor is exposed concrete through most of the ground floor; however, to the main entrance, where the lobby used to be, is a section of polished stone tile floor.

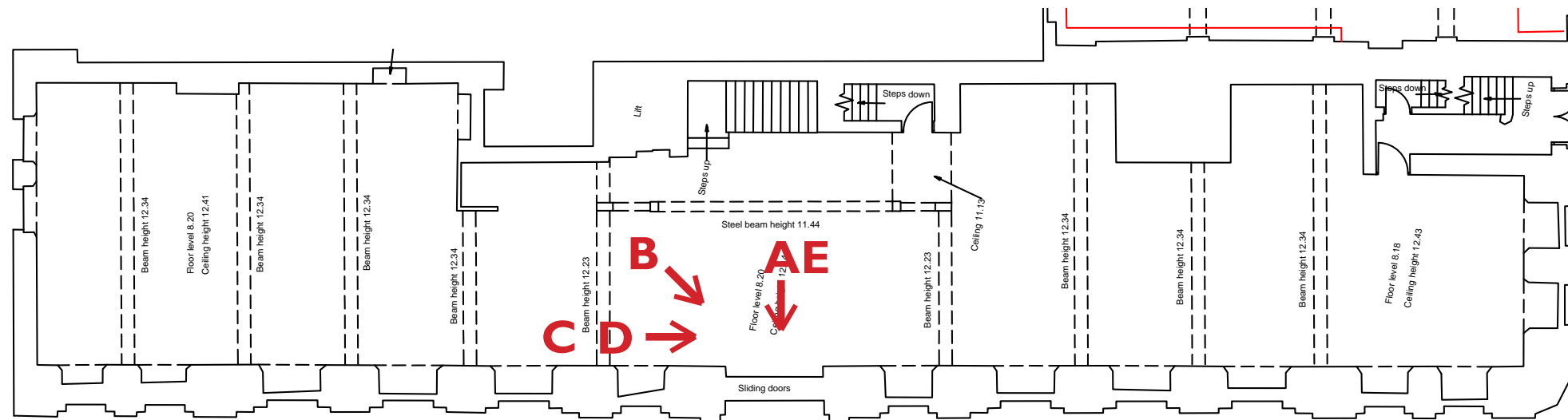


4.8.1 Cory's Building Interior - Ground Floor

On this page are photos of the section of polished stone tile floor to the entrance lobby area.

Above the floor, it is possible to see, on the ceiling, the scars from previous partitioning and plaster corncicing.

The entrance doors are particularly wide boarded-and-ledge sliding doors with a segmented arch above with glazed overlight. Either side of the doors is a frame into which the doors safely slide.



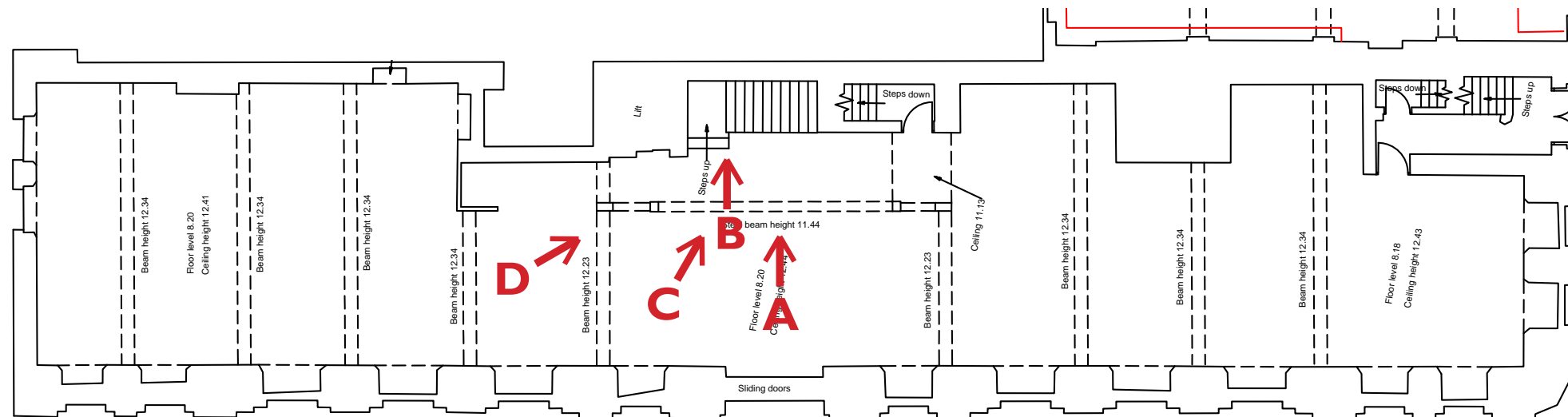
4.8.1 Cory's Building Interior - Ground Floor

Arguably one of the most beautiful and significant features of Cory's Building is the main staircase, which one sees immediately in front of one, on entry.

Only the lower flight of this York stone staircase is immediately seen, with the bottom two risers facing the door, leading to a quarter landing before the main flight; but what immediately takes one eye is the decorative wrought iron balustrading and its newel post - light, delicate and arabesque in design - with its rhythmic linear patterns of scrolling and interlacing foliage and tendrils.

Atop the balustrading is an ornate oak hardwood handrail, which wraps around itself when it caps the newel post.

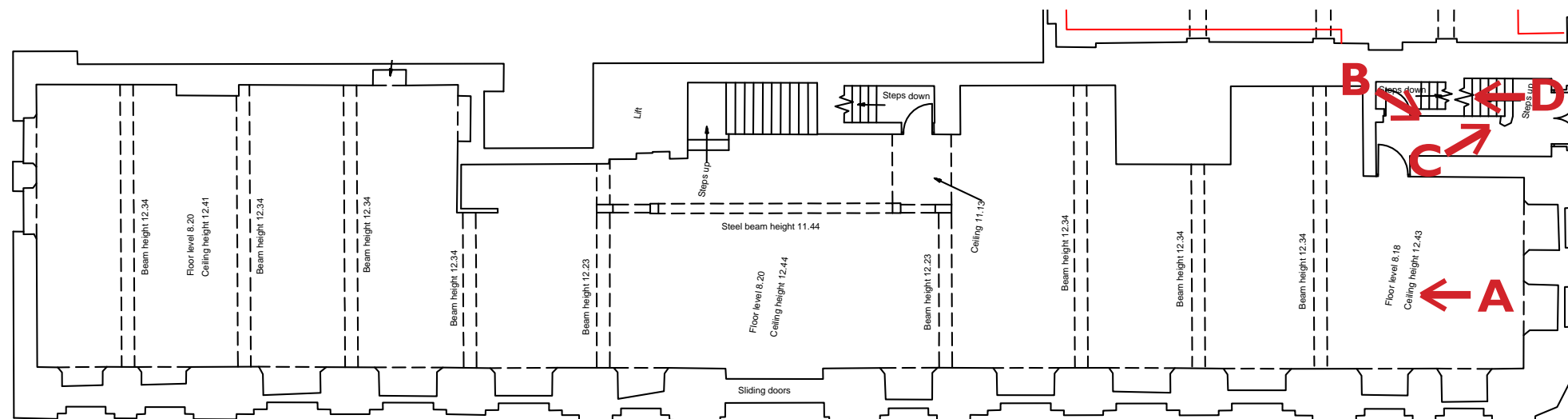
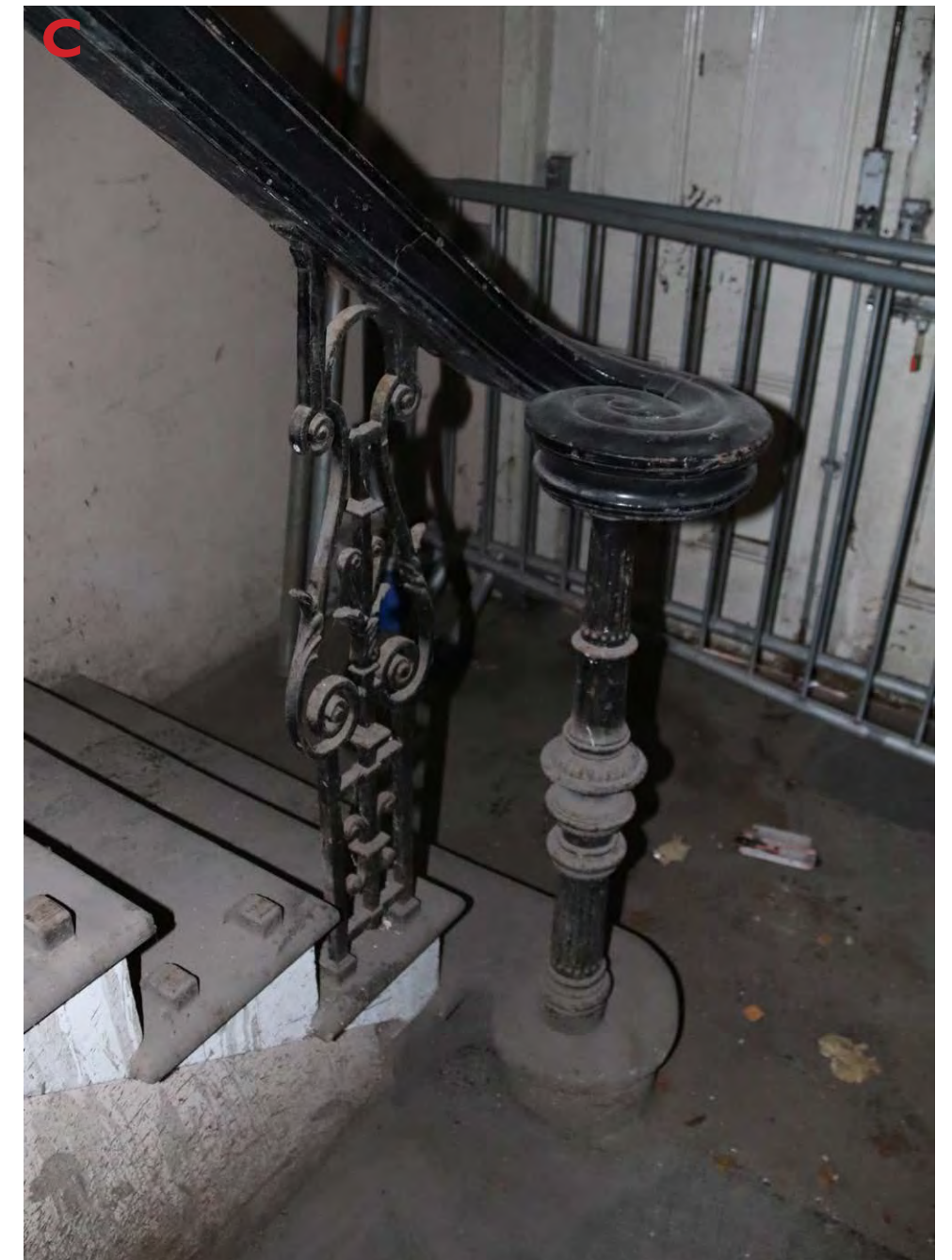
The plastered composite twinned columns at both sides of the framing of the staircase is an interesting, and similarly ornate, expression of Classical design. Whilst damaged, these are repairable.



4.8.1 Cory's Building Interior - Ground Floor

To the south east corner of the floor plate of Cory's Building is a second staircase. Also of stone, with ornate iron (this time cast, presumably, not wrought) baluster panels and a similarly ornate profile handrail, this time painted black; this staircase is heavier in appearance to the central staircase, yet still very significant.

To the lower flight of this ground floor, many of the baluster panels have been lost, their support feet still evident.



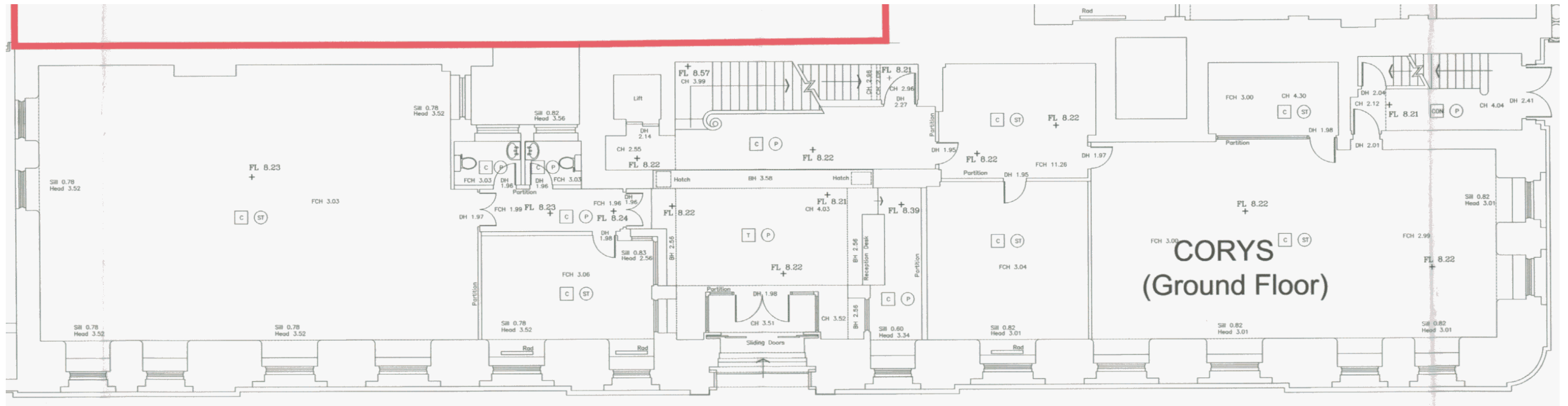
4.8.1 Cory's Building Interior - Ground Floor

The top plan, produced by/for Wigley Fox Partnership shows the layout of Cory's Building before the internal demolition work in 2008.

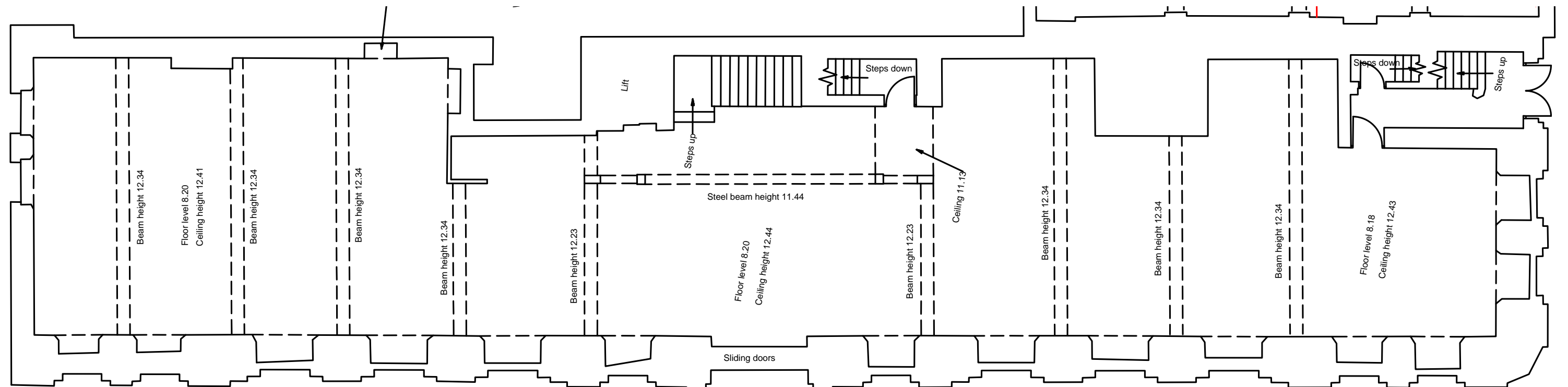
The difference identifies what was removed. It is not clear how much, if any, of what was removed was original to 1889, but it is possible that sum of it was.

The bottom plan, produced by Hywel John Surveys, in 2022, is the current layout of Cory's Building.

The 'scars' of that removal is, in many cases, apparent in the plaster on the ceiling and marks on the floor.



Ground Floor Plan from 2007, produced by/for Wigley Fox Partnership, showing the layout of Cory's Building before the internal demolition work in 2008



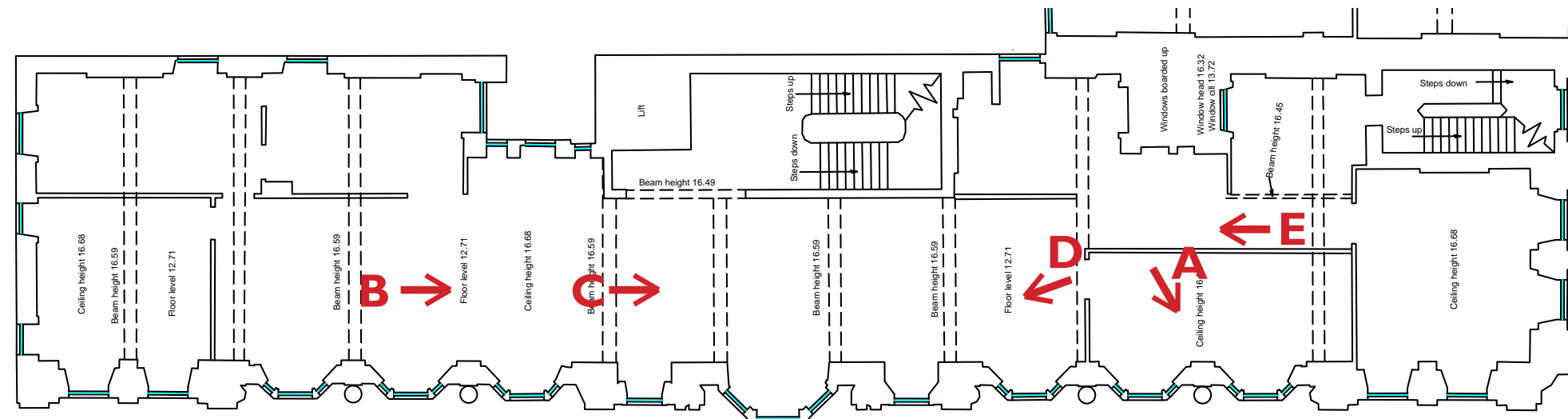
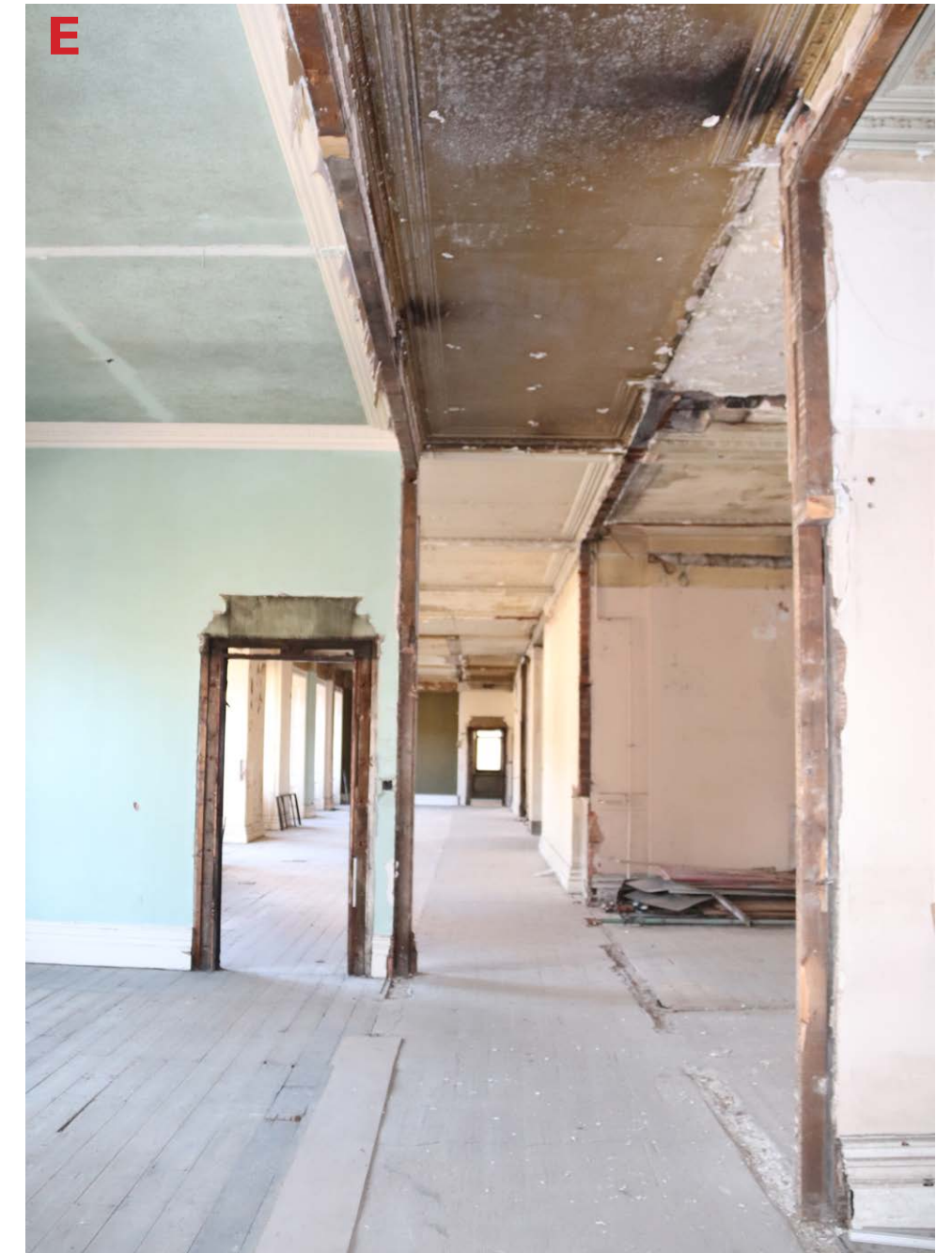
Ground Floor Plan from 2022, produced by Hywel John Surveys, showing the current layout of Cory's Building

4.8.2 Cory's Building Interior - First Floor

Once sub-divided into cellular offices, with a corridor down the middle, the first floor truly now has the feel of a long gallery, with its run of large bay windows down the west side. These windows - of timber sashes - still have their timber raised-and-fielded panelling around the sides, cills and heads of their recesses. This panelling is a significant aspect worthy of retention.

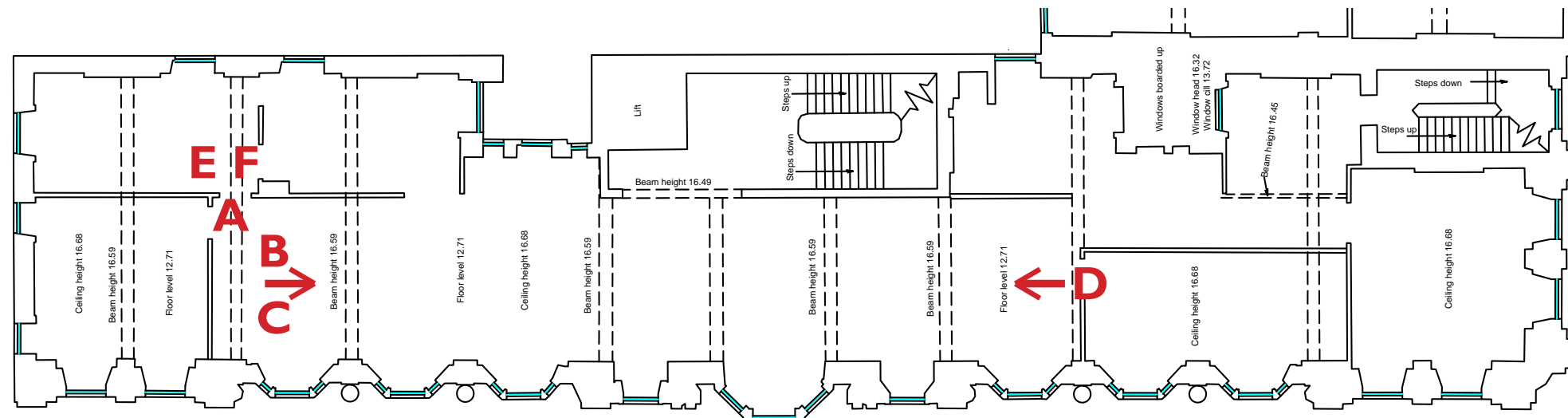
The scars and lines of corncicing on the lath and plaster ceiling allow one to 'read' the layout of the partitioning, as was. Much of the ceiling to this floor remains intact, albeit its context has been changed by the removal of the partitions.

The central part of the floor - once the corridor - is now of exposed concrete, whilst the rest of the floor is timber boarded.



4.8.2 Cory's Building Interior - First Floor

On this floor is a series of photographs of the lath and plaster ceiling, with its many runs of plaster corning; as well as a detail of the floor, where it changes from concrete to timber boarding.

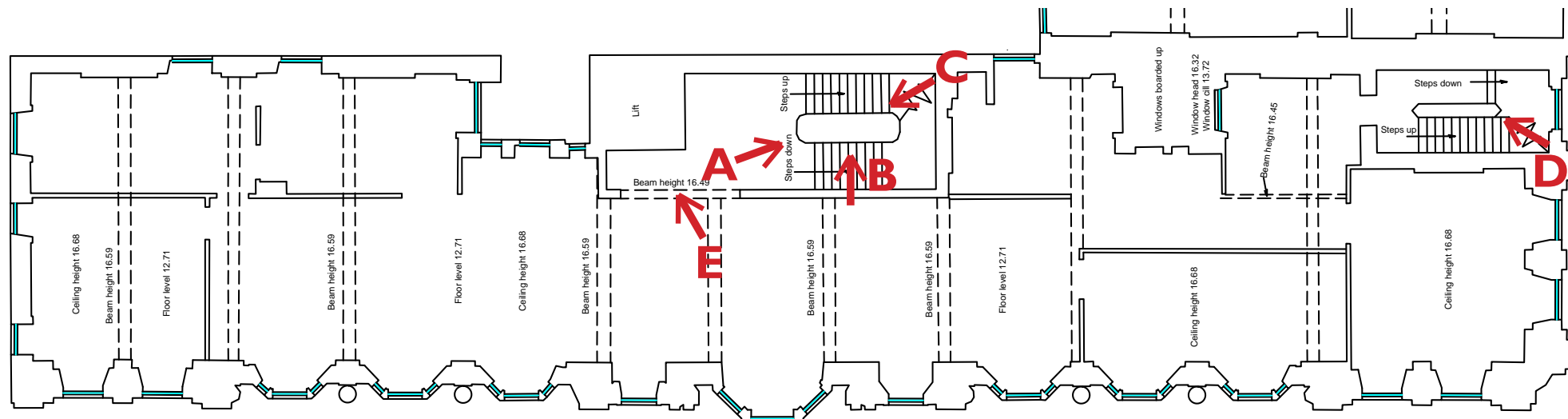
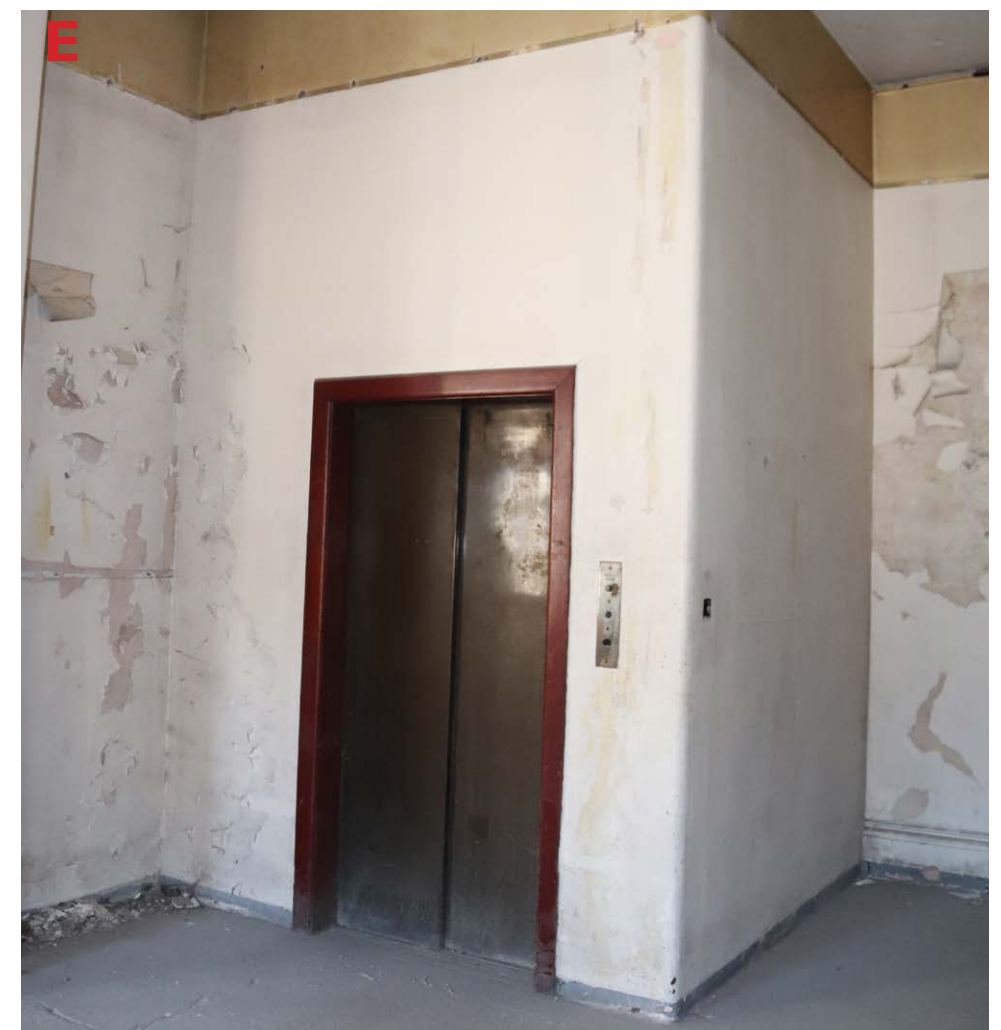


4.8.2 Cory's Building Interior - First Floor

Photos A, B and C, on this page, show the continuation of the delightful arabesque wrought iron balustrading and heavy ornate oak handrail as it winds further up the staircase.

Photo D shows the continuation of the corner stair balustrading up to the first floor.

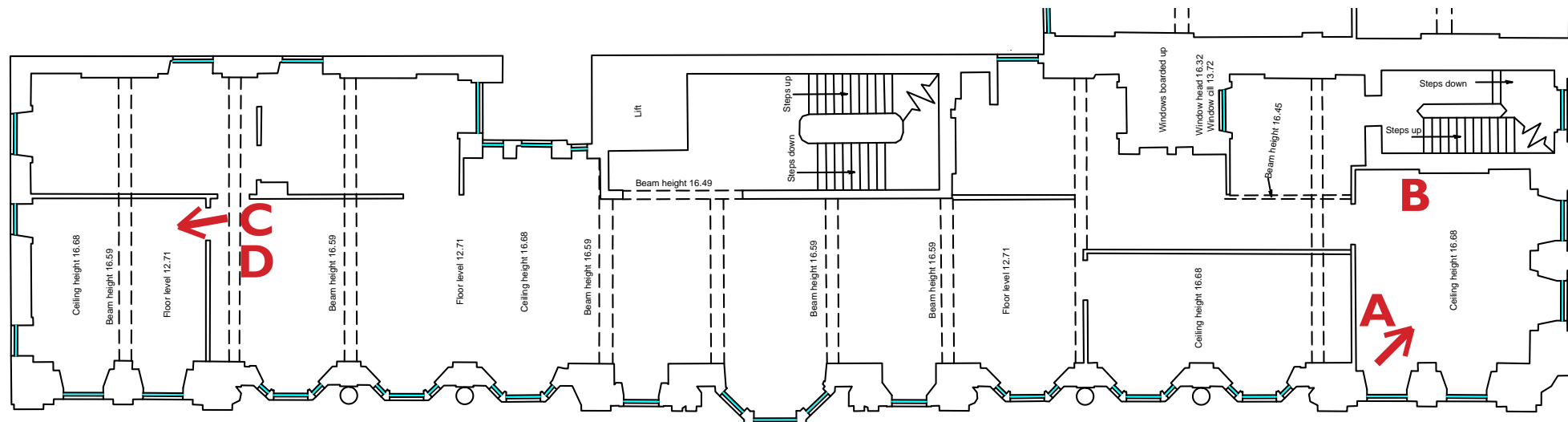
Photo E shows the lift installation. It is not known when this was incorporated.



4.8.2 Cory's Building Interior - First Floor

Painted in dark greys and browns, with cream cornicing and white ceilings, and fireplaces and hearths, the first floor still retains its very important two end cellular offices. The timber sash windows are again surrounded with painted timber panelled reveals, heads and cills.

These are significant spaces, likely to have been offices for some very important people over time, which would ideally be retained and used in their existing form.



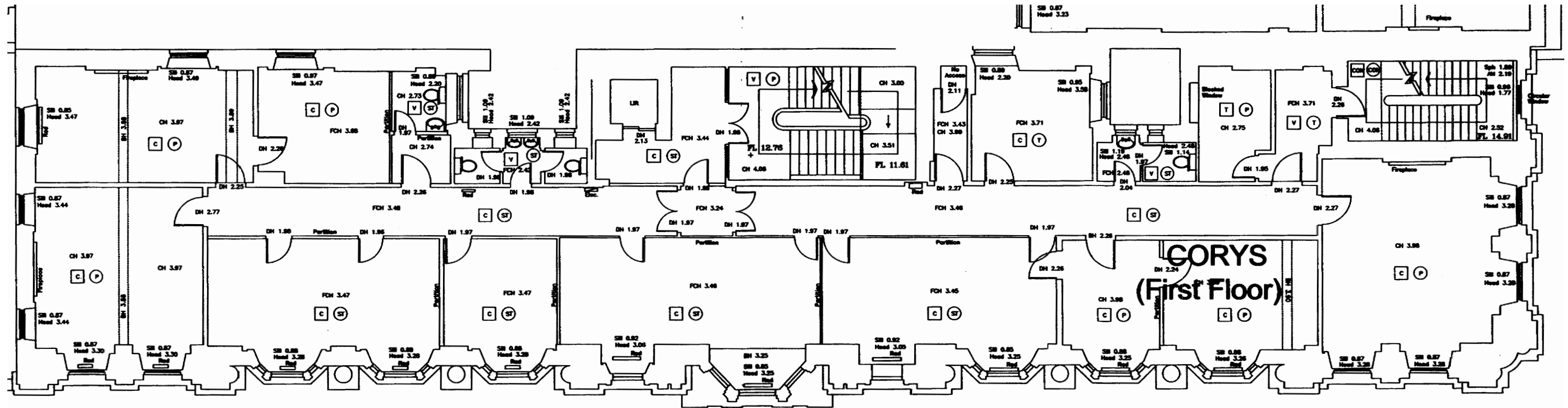
4.8.2 Cory's Building Interior - First Floor

The top plan, produced by/for Wigley Fox Partnership shows the layout of Cory's Building before the internal demolition work in 2008.

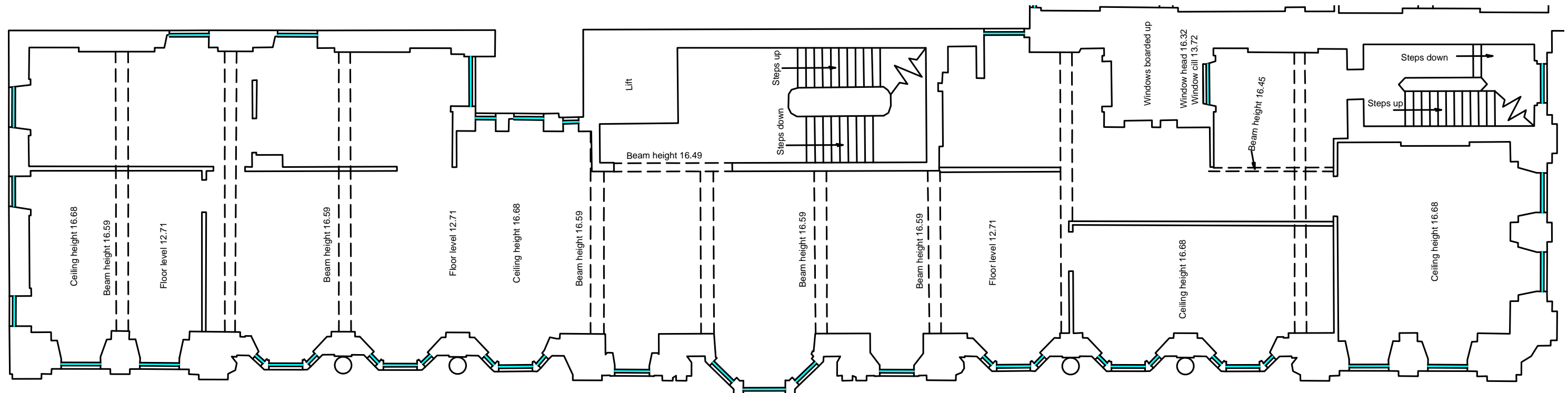
The difference identifies what was removed. It is not clear how much, if any, of what was removed was original to 1889, but it is possible that sum of it was.

The bottom plan, produced by Hywel John Surveys, in 2022, is the current layout of Cory's Building.

The 'scars' of that removal is, in many cases, apparent in the plaster on the ceiling and marks on the floor.



First Floor Plan from 2007, produced by/for Wigley Fox Partnership, showing the layout of Cory's Building before the internal demolition work in 2008



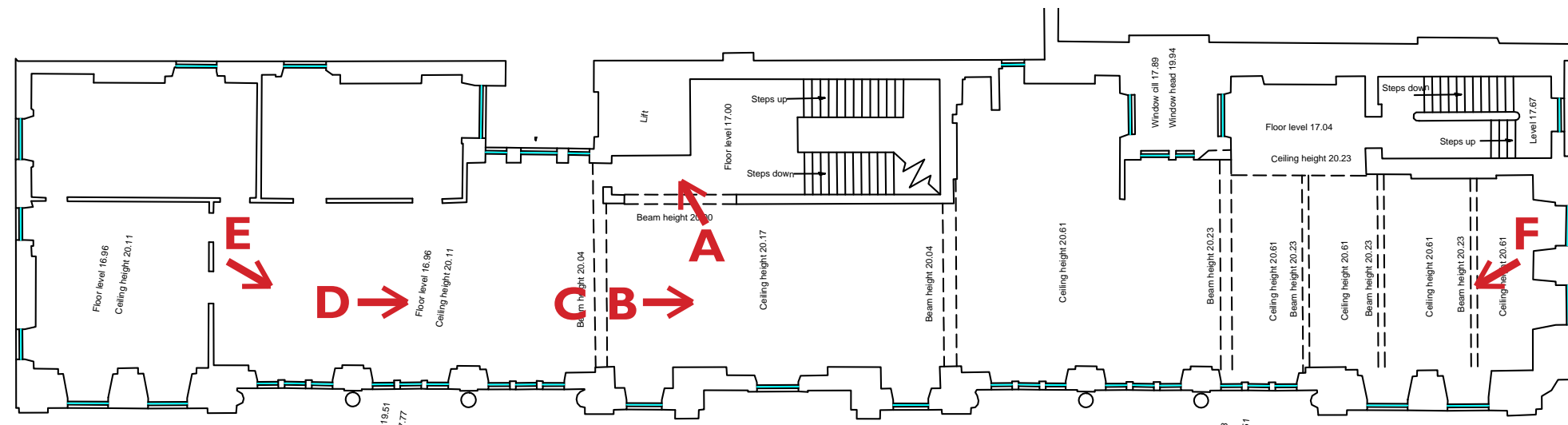
First Floor Plan from 2022, produced by Hywel John Surveys, showing the current layout of Cory's Building

4.8.3 Cory's Building Interior - Second Floor

Just as the first floor, the second floor was also sub-divided into cellular offices, with a corridor down the middle. It also now has the feel of a long gallery, with its run of large bay windows down the west side. These windows - again timber sashes - still have their timber raised-and-fielded panelling around the sides, cills and heads of their recesses. This panelling is a significant aspect worthy of retention.

The scars and lines of corning on the lath and plaster ceiling allow one to 'read' the layout of the partitioning, as was. Much of the ceiling to this floor remains intact, albeit its context has been changed by the removal of the partitions.

The central part of the floor - once the corridor - is now of exposed concrete, whilst the rest of the floor is timber boarded.



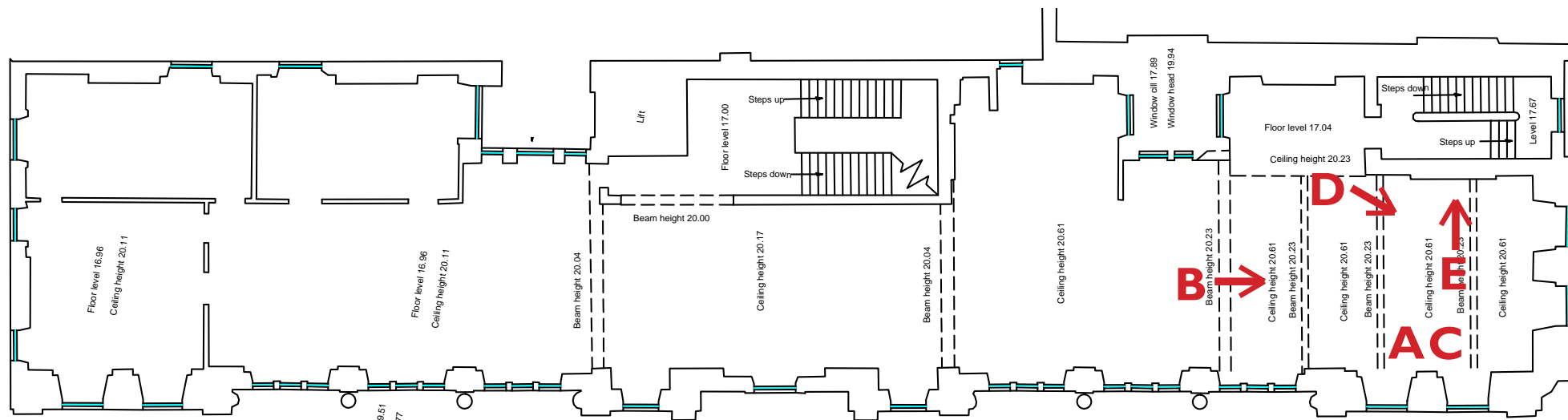
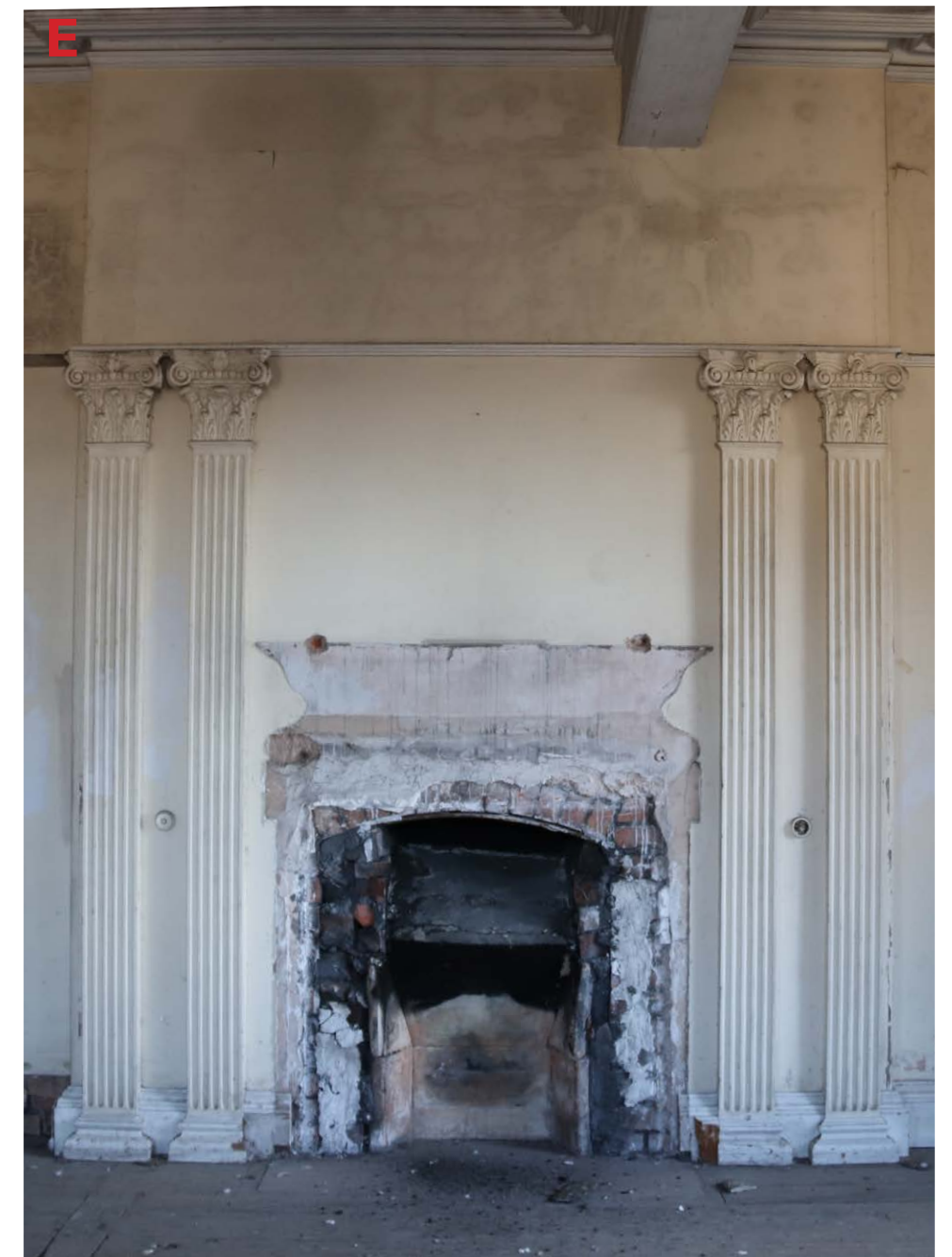
4.8.3 Cory's Building Interior - Second Floor

To the south end of the second floor was a corner room, in the way there was on the north end and to both ends on the first floor; however, this room was larger and even more ornate. One assumes it was the Conference / Board Room.

With a fireplace flanked by twinned Corinthian pilasters and windows flanked by pilasters and swagged surrounds overhead, this room was decorated to a level not seen elsewhere in the building.

Photos A and C show the nature of the timber boarded floor laid over the filler joist slab.

Once again, this is a significant space which would ideally be retained and used in its existing form.

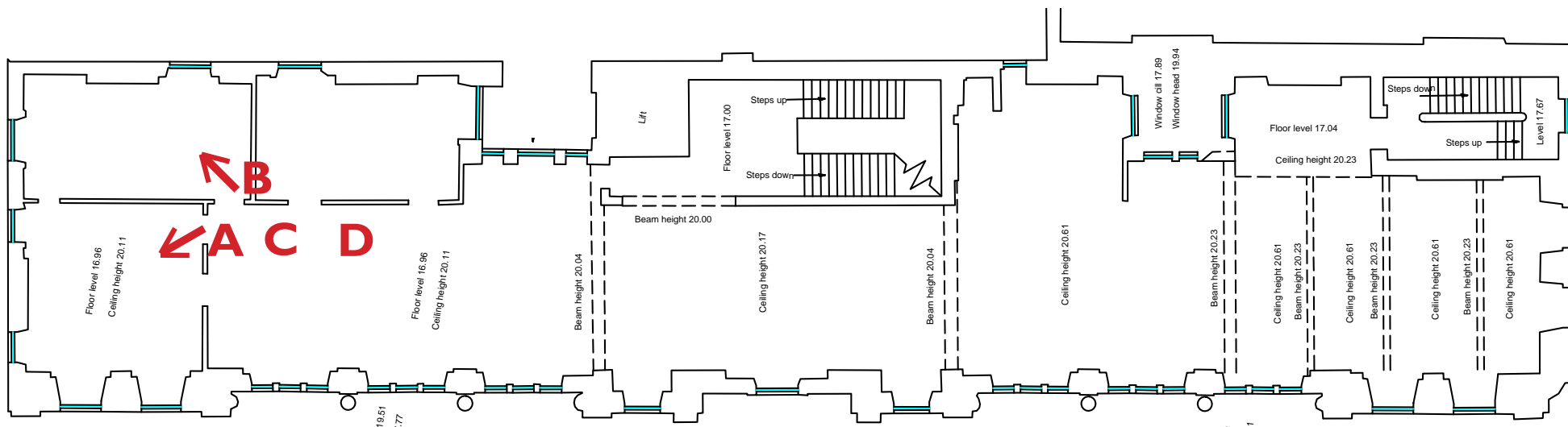


4.8.3 Cory's Building Interior - Second Floor

Painted in lighter colours than the first floor, the second floor also retains its important end cellular offices - see photo A. The timber sash windows are again surrounded with painted timber panelled reveals, heads and cills.

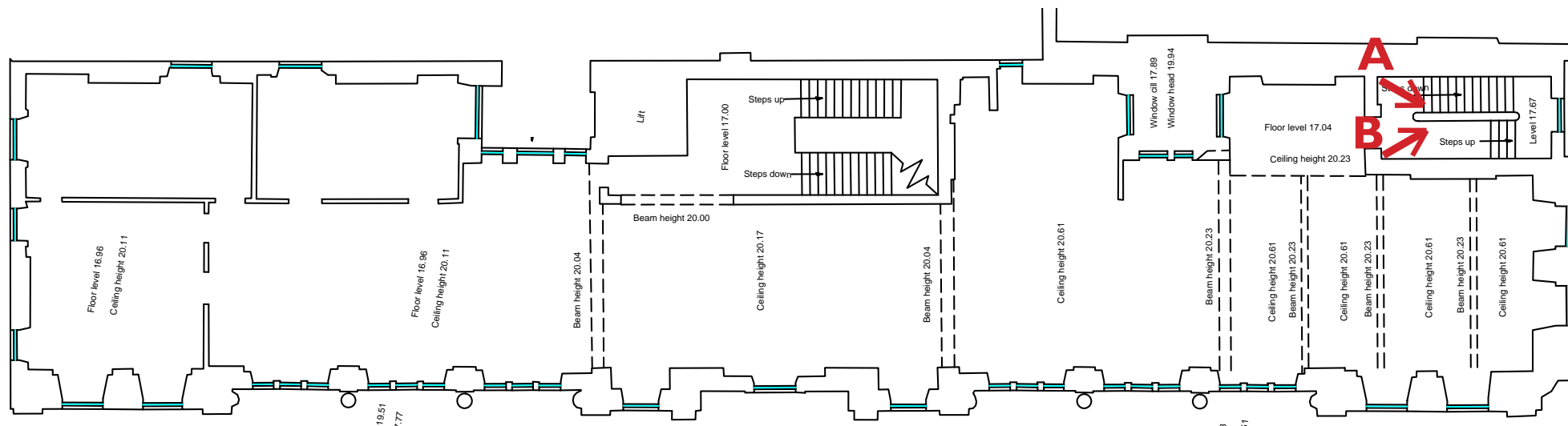
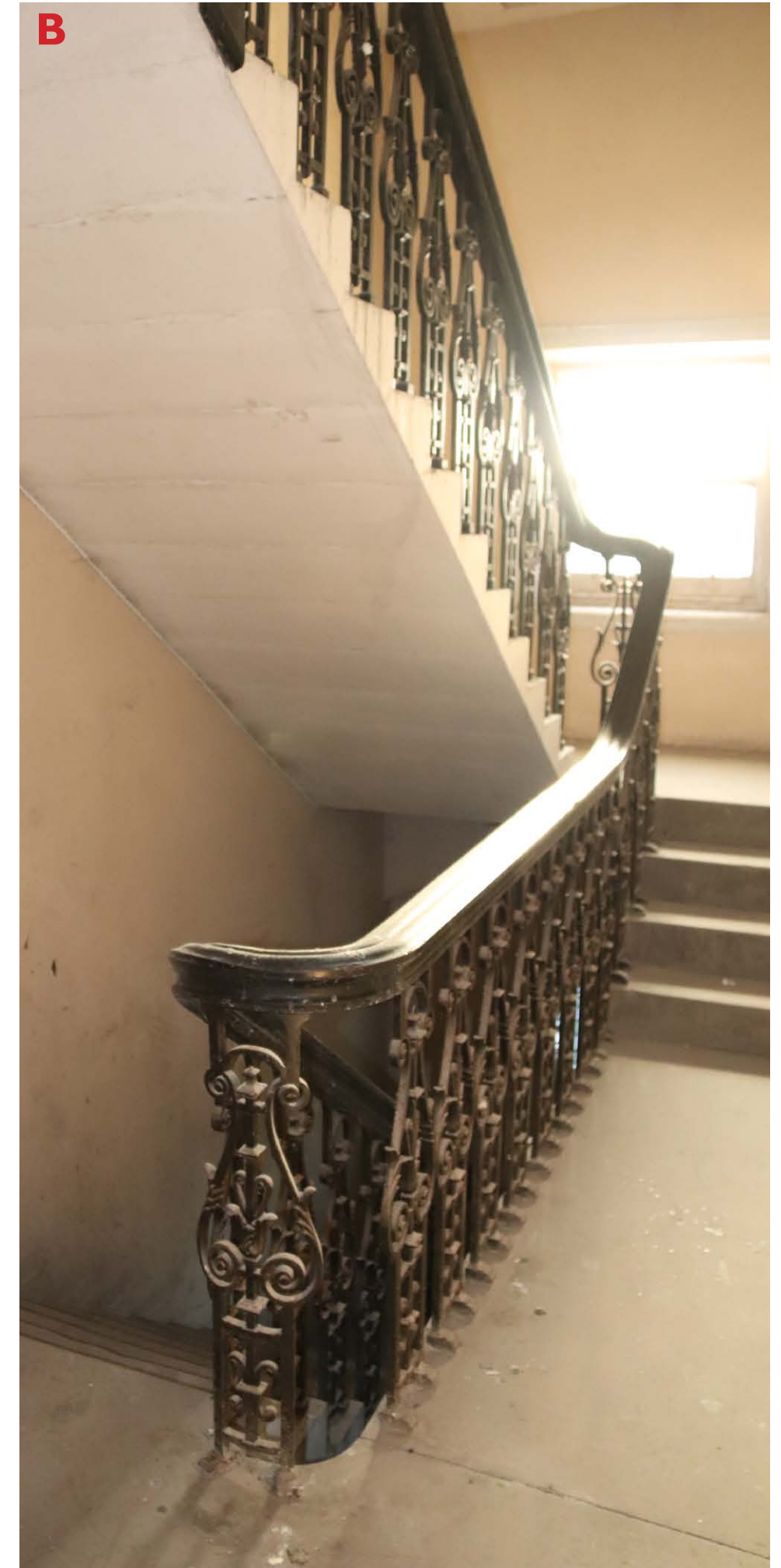
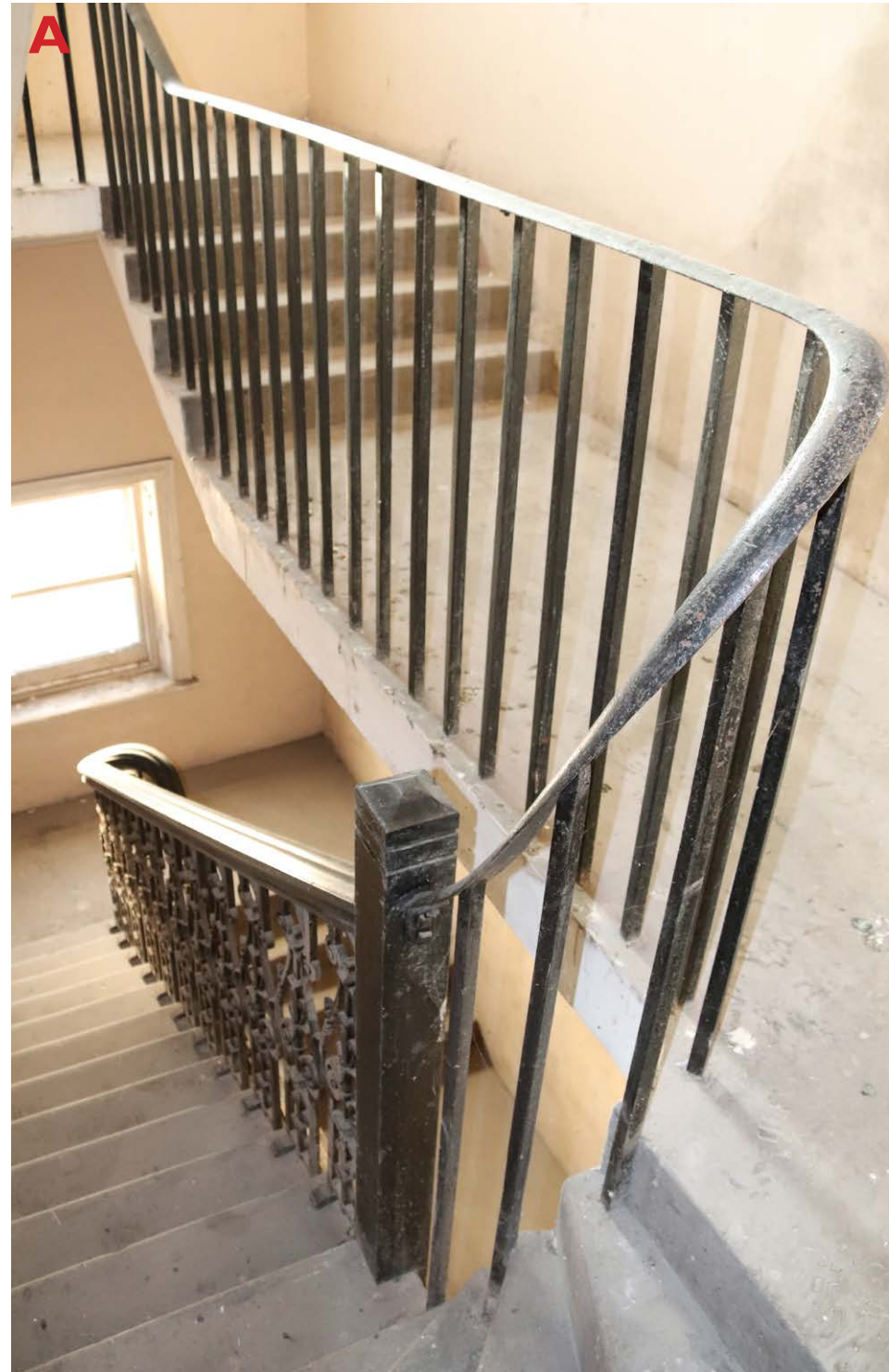
This is again a significant space, likely to have been an office for some very important people over time, which would ideally be retained and used in their existing form.

The north east room - see photo B - also retain their partitioning, whilst much was lost in the 2008 demolition.



4.8.3 Cory's Building Interior - Second Floor

The corner south east staircase continues as an ornate cast iron balustrade with oak handrail from first floor to second floor (see photo B). However, after the second floor, as it leads up to the third floor, it switches to a more utilitarian simple square post steel balustraded unit with a simple steel flat handrail with a rounded top (see photo A)



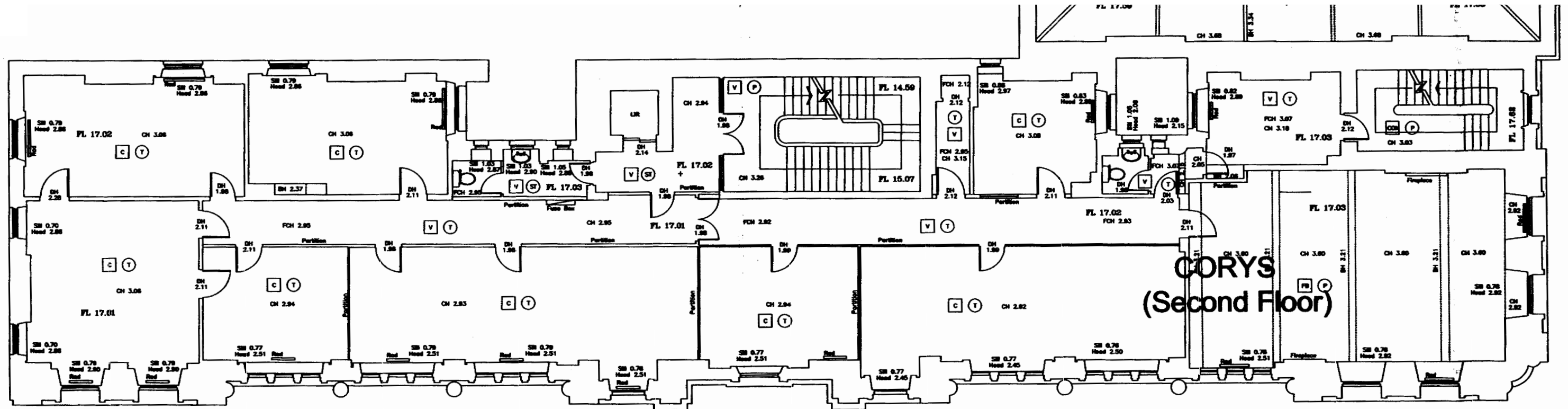
4.8.3 Cory's Building Interior - Second Floor

The top plan, produced by/for Wigley Fox Partnership shows the layout of Cory's Building before the internal demolition work in 2008.

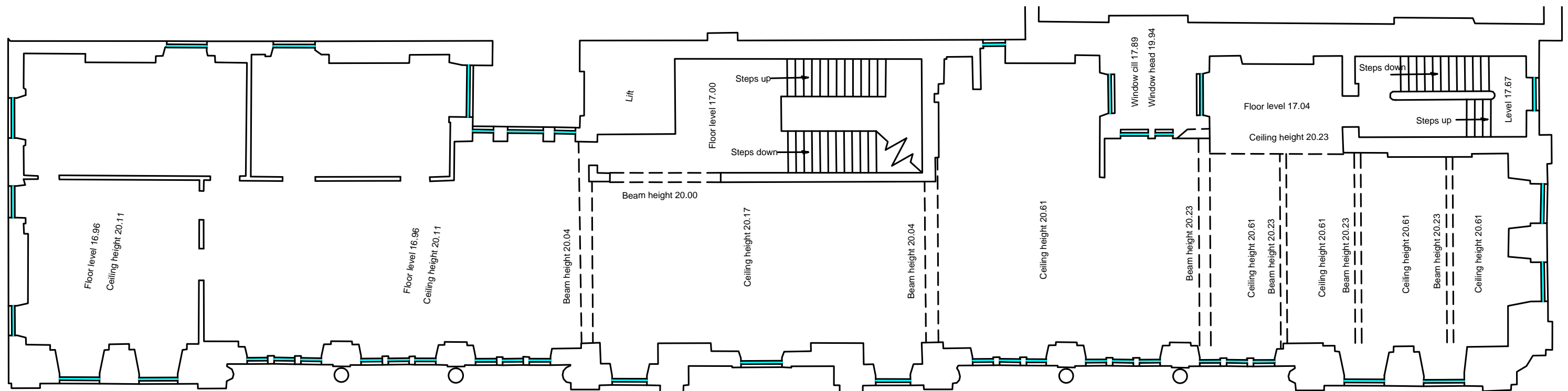
The difference identifies what was removed. It is not clear how much, if any, of what was removed was original to 1889, but it is possible that sum of it was.

The bottom plan, produced by Hywel John Surveys, in 2022, is the current layout of Cory's Building.

The 'scars' of that removal is, in many cases, apparent in the plaster on the ceiling and marks on the floor.



Second Floor Plan from 2007, produced by/for Wigley Fox Partnership, showing the layout of Cory's Building before the internal demolition work in 2008

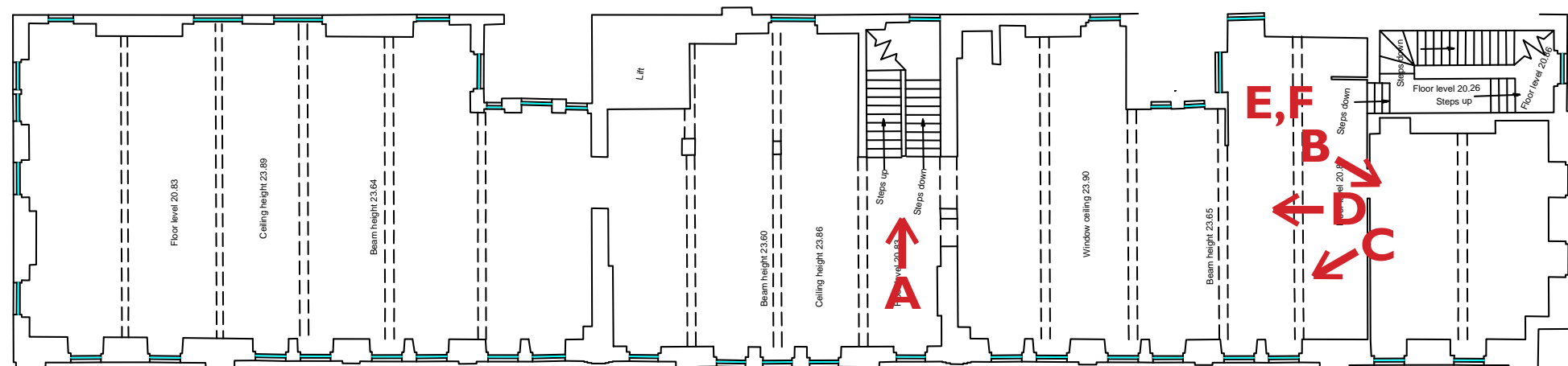
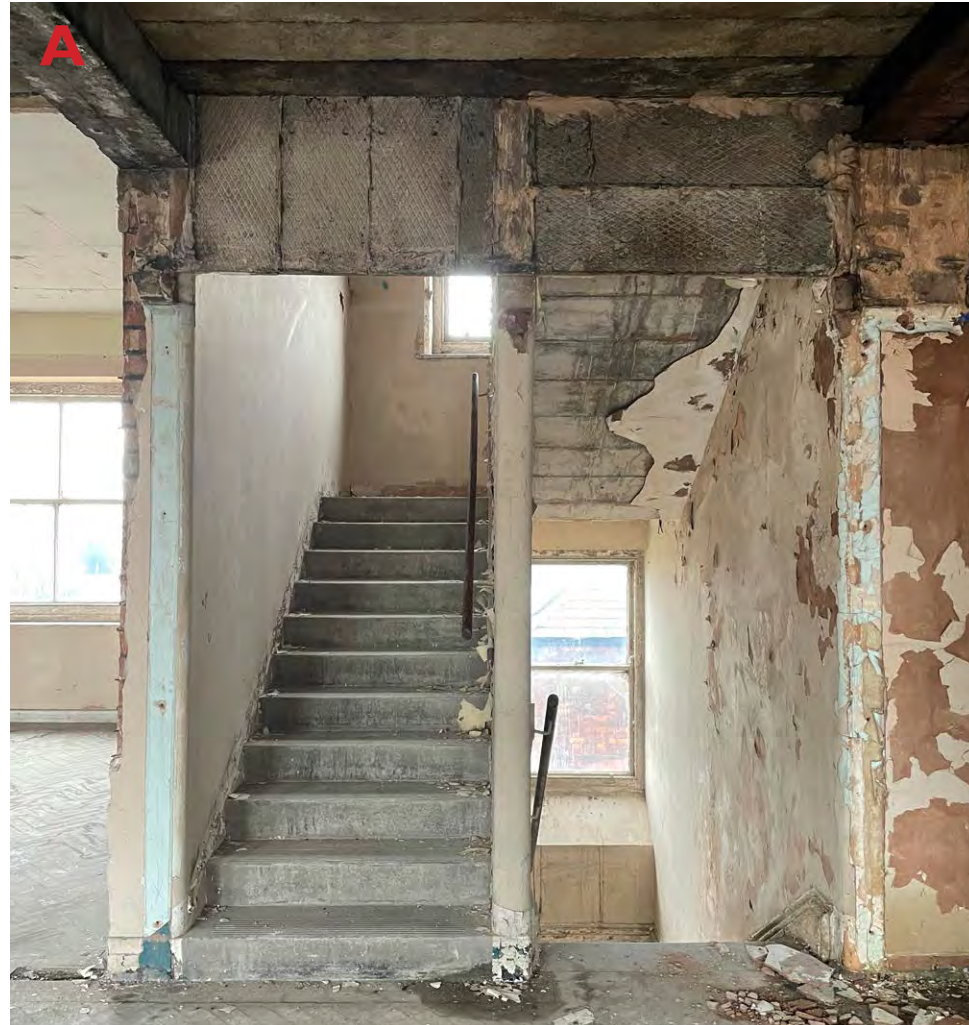


Second Floor Plan from 2022, produced by Hywel John Surveys, showing the current layout of Cory's Building

4.8.4 Cory's Building Interior - Third Floor

Again, once sub-divided, the third floor of Cory's Building retains little, albeit some, of its internal partitioning. Its timber sash windows are much less ornate than those below; its ceiling, partly lost, is also more simple with no cornicing. The floor, however, is finished in parquet timber block.

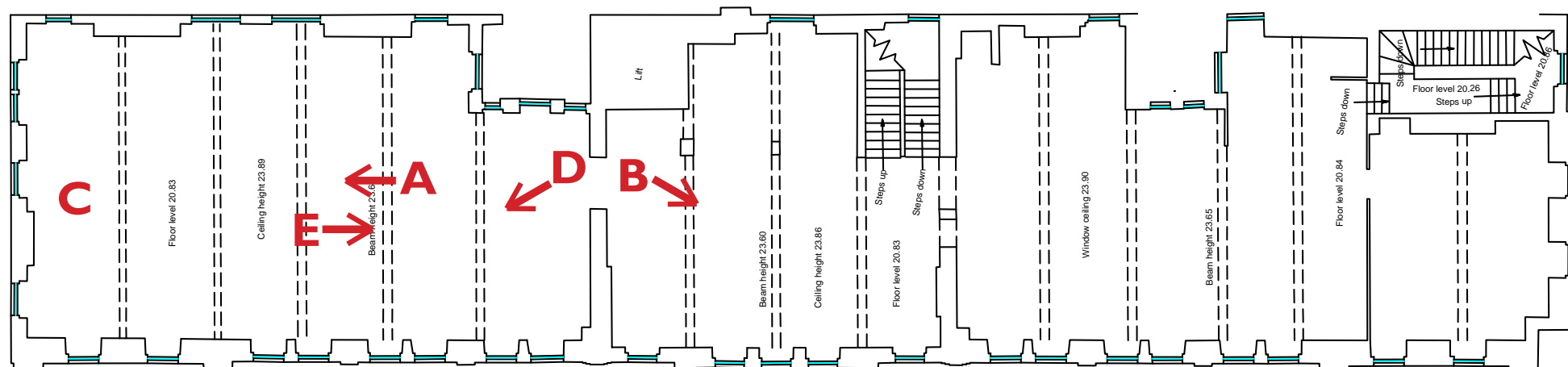
This floor is the first of the two added floors dating to between 1907 and 1929 and this, along with its position further up the building, shows both in the very different character - more utilitarian and less ornate - and in the lower ceiling height.



4.8.4 Cory's Building Interior - Third Floor

On this page are a few more photos of the open third floor plan, with its long array of rectangular windows and its parquet timber block flooring.

The lines of the original partitions are apparent at some of the flooring scars and the line of the previous corridor, down the middle, is apparent from the loss of its ceiling.



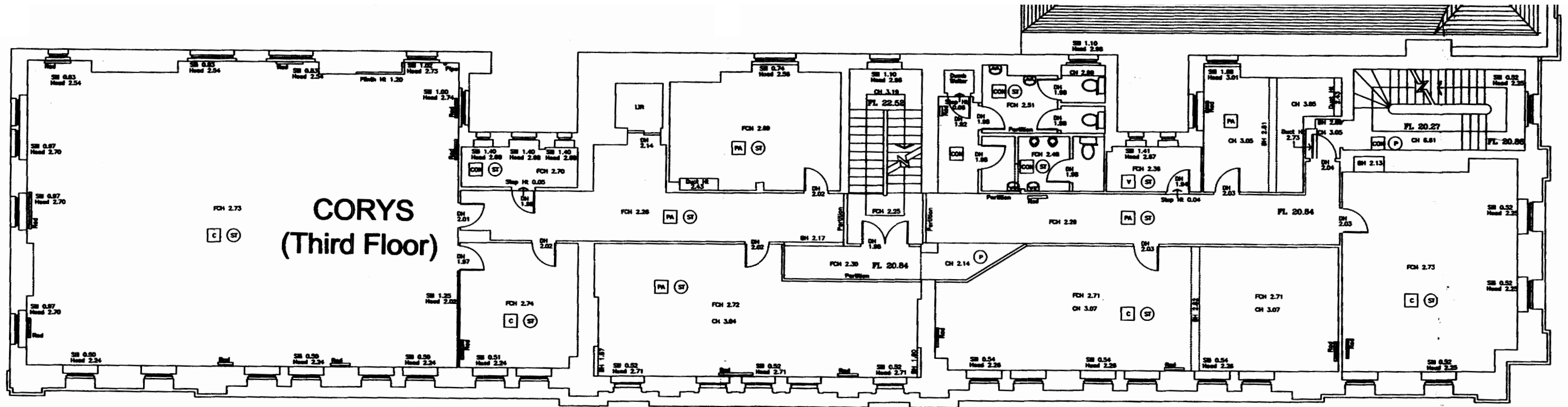
4.8.4 Cory's Building Interior - Third Floor

The top plan, produced by/for Wigley Fox Partnership shows the layout of Cory's Building before the internal demolition work in 2008.

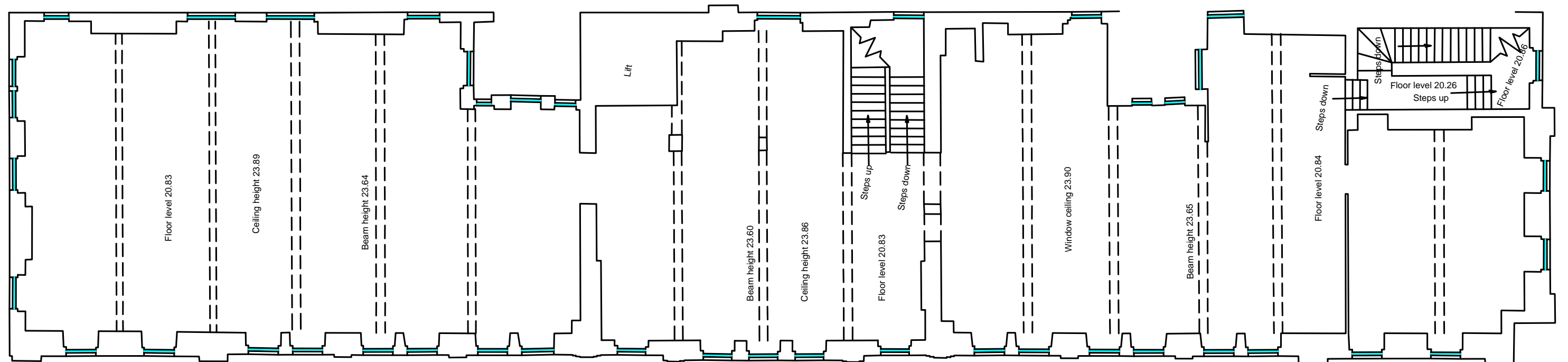
The difference identifies what was removed. It is not clear how much, if any, of what was removed was original to 1889, but it is possible that sum of it was.

The bottom plan, produced by Hywel John Surveys, in 2022, is the current layout of Cory's Building.

The 'scars' of that removal is, in many cases, apparent in the plaster on the ceiling and marks on the floor.



Third Floor Plan from 2007, produced by/for Wigley Fox Partnership, showing the layout of Cory's Building before the internal demolition work in 2008

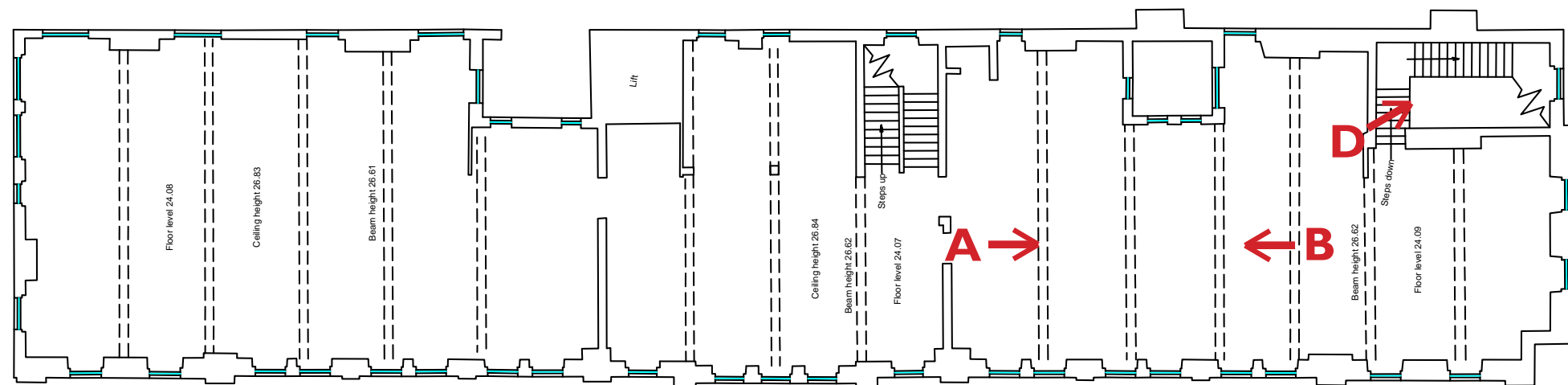
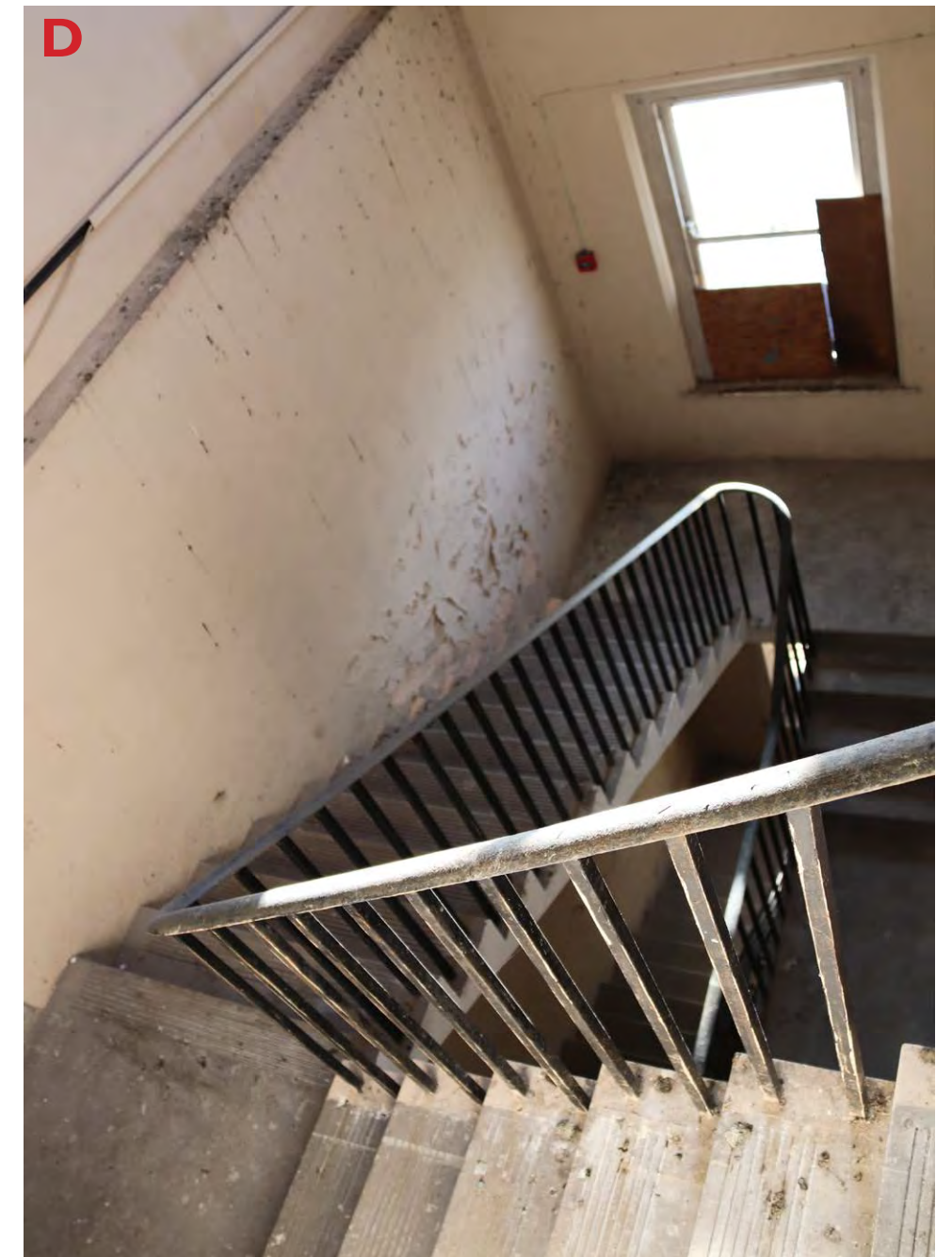


Third Floor Plan from 2022, produced by Hywel John Surveys, showing the current layout of Cory's Building

4.8.5 Cory's Building Interior - Fourth Floor

The fourth floor of Cory's Building was also sub-divided and also retains little, albeit some, of its internal partitioning. Its timber sash windows are also much less ornate than those to the bottom three floors; its ceiling, partly lost, is also more simple with no cornicing. However, it does include 7no. pyramidal steel, lead and georgian-wired glass patent glazed lantern rooflights, of which photo C shows one example.

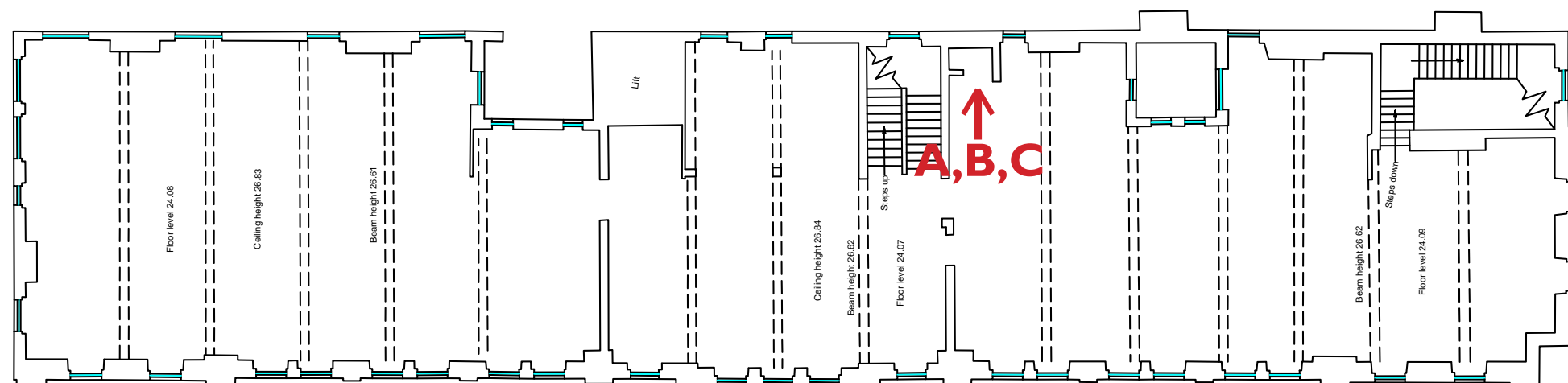
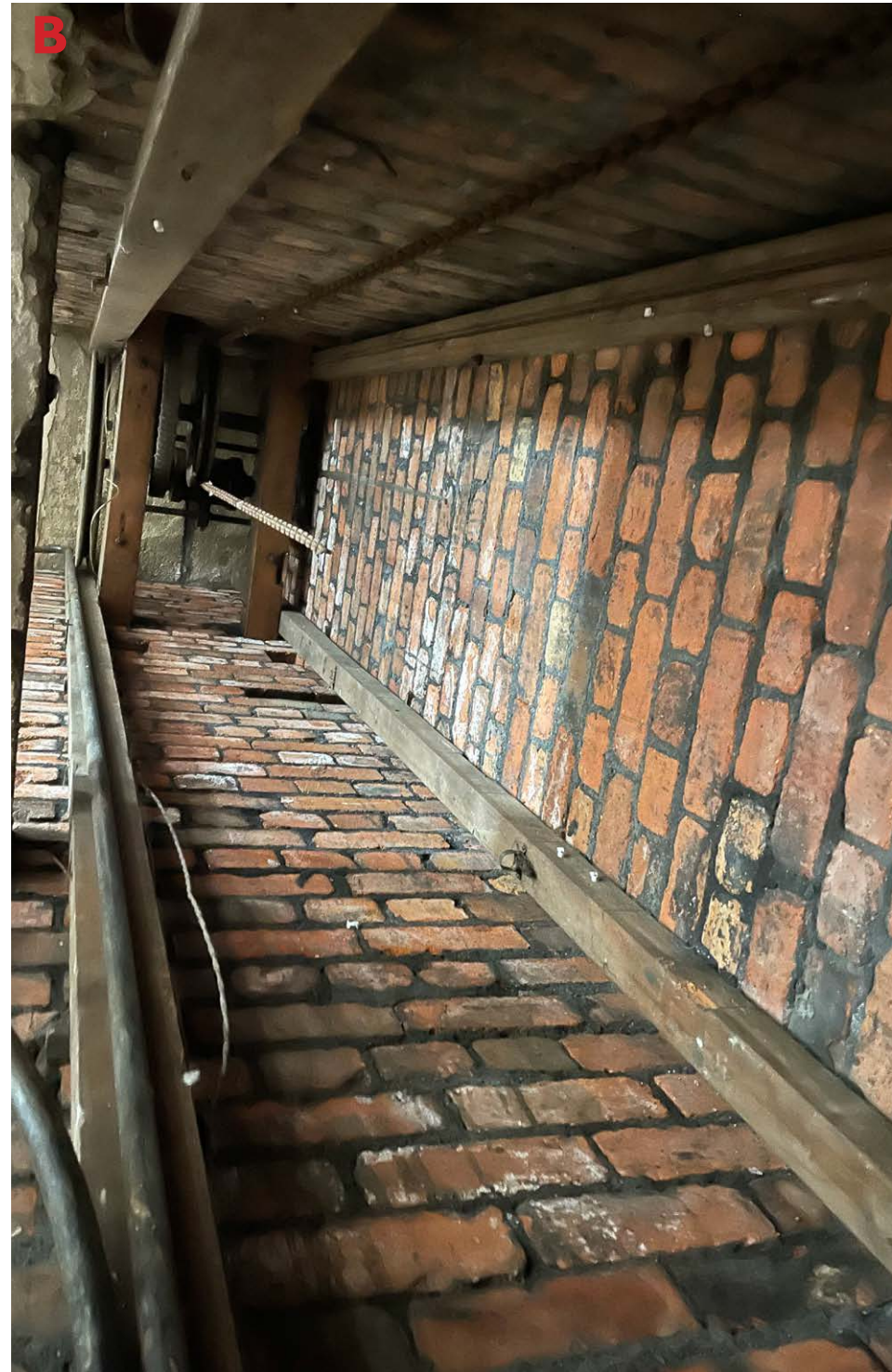
This floor is the second of the two added floors dating to between 1907 and 1929 and this, along with its position further up the building, shows both in the very different character - more utilitarian and less ornate - and in the lower ceiling height.



4.8.5 Cory's Building Interior - Fourth Floor

Running vertically up the building, on the rear wall, is a brick shaft. At the top of the shaft, there is a mechanism from which part of a chain is dangling. This appears to have been a hoist running almost the full height of the building. Given that it rises from the ground floor up to the fourth floor, the shaft, and hoist, dates to at least the second phase of building (i.e. some time between 1907 and 1929) or thereafter, unless the shaft was extended in that period and the hoist raised.

That being said, the mechanism for the hoist appears to be in a good condition and might even be restorable.



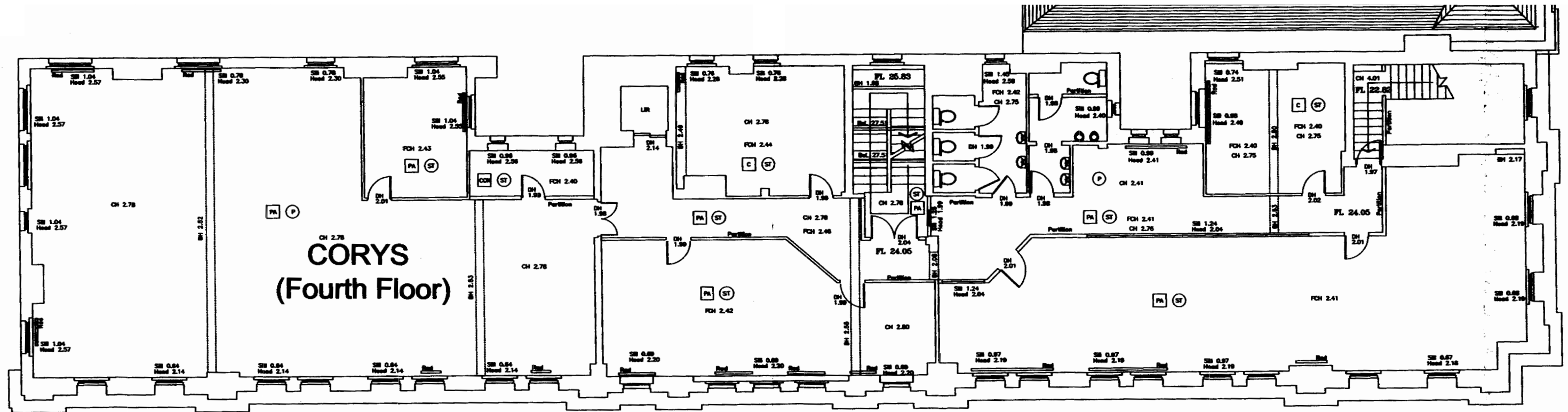
4.8.5 Cory's Building Interior - Fourth Floor

The top plan, produced by/for Wigley Fox Partnership shows the layout of Cory's Building before the internal demolition work in 2008.

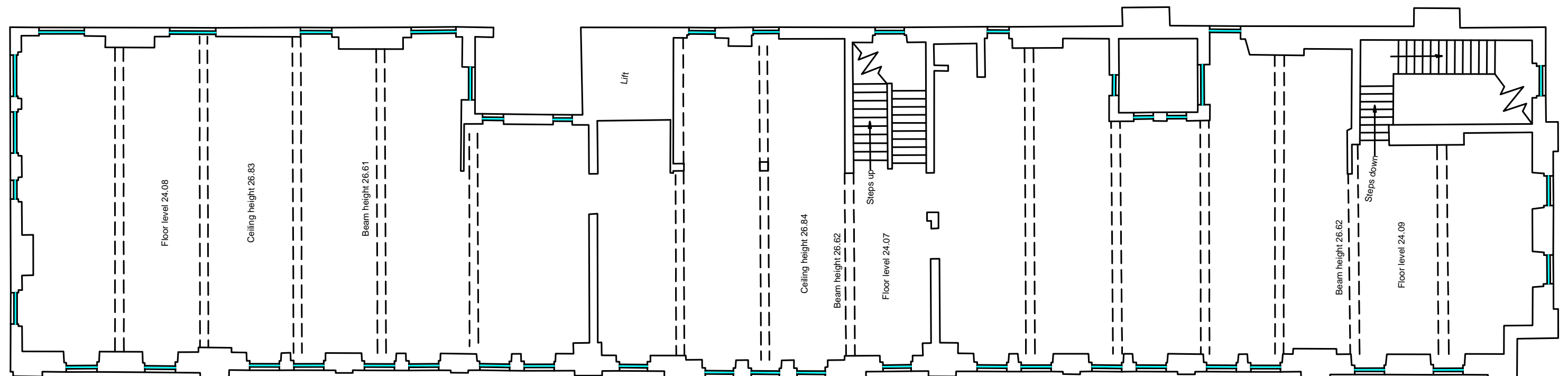
The difference identifies what was removed. It is not clear how much, if any, of what was removed was original to 1889, but it is possible that sum of it was.

The bottom plan, produced by Hywel John Surveys, in 2022, is the current layout of Cory's Building.

The 'scars' of that removal is, in many cases, apparent in the plaster on the ceiling and marks on the floor.



Fourth Floor Plan from 2007, produced by/for Wigley Fox Partnership, showing the layout of Cory's Building before the internal demolition work in 2008

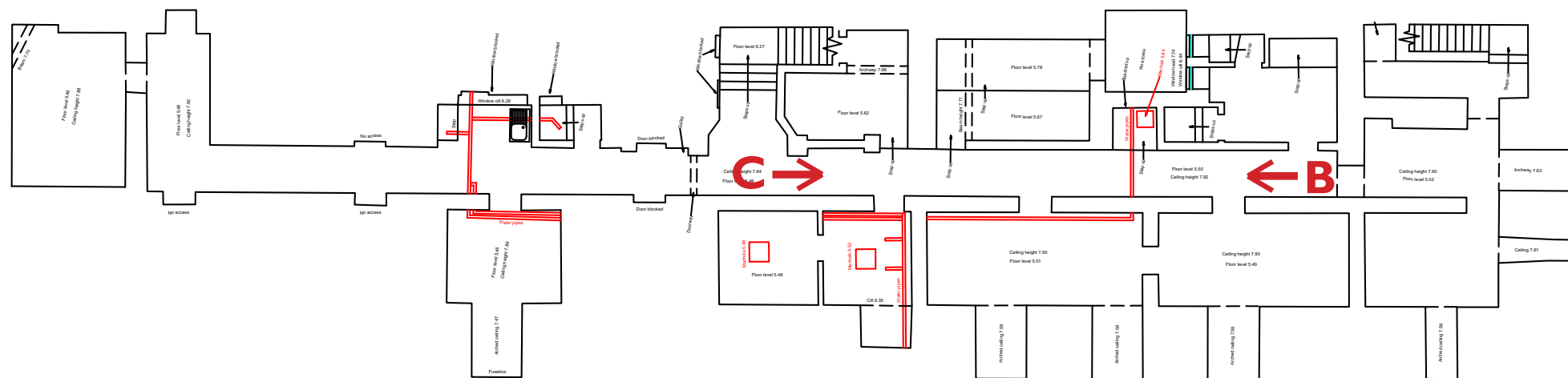


Fourth Floor Plan from 2022, produced by Hywel John Surveys, showing the current layout of Cory's Building

4.8.6 Cory's Building Interior -Basement Floor

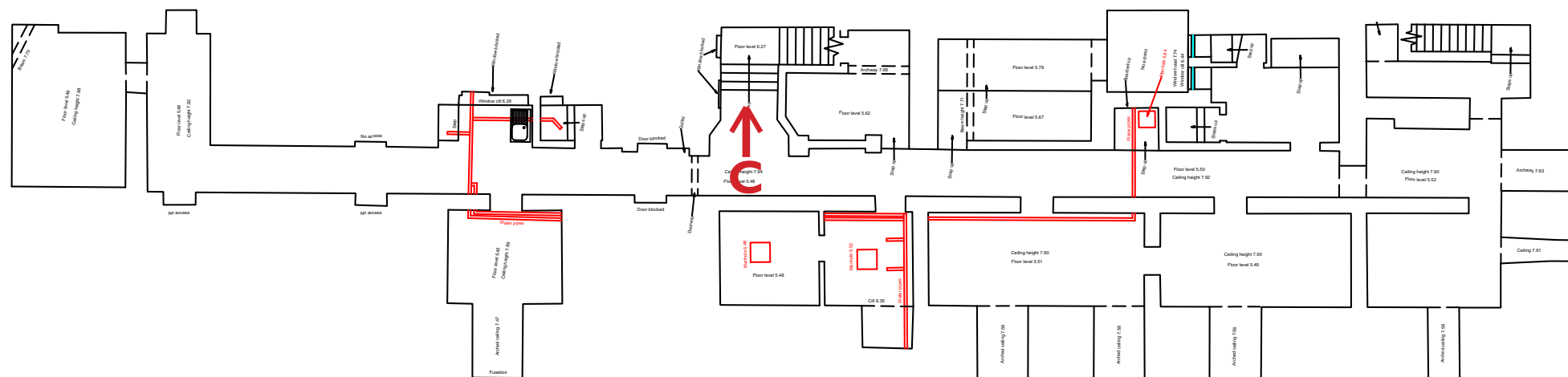
The basement underneath Cory's Building runs the full length of the building above. It is basic - plastered to walls and soffits, but with no decoration.

Currently, it is collecting quite a lot of water, as seen in the photos below.



4.8.6 Cory's Building Interior -Basement Floor

There are areas of stone flagged flooring and, of some interest, as the bunds formed at internal door thresholds, such as that show in photo E.



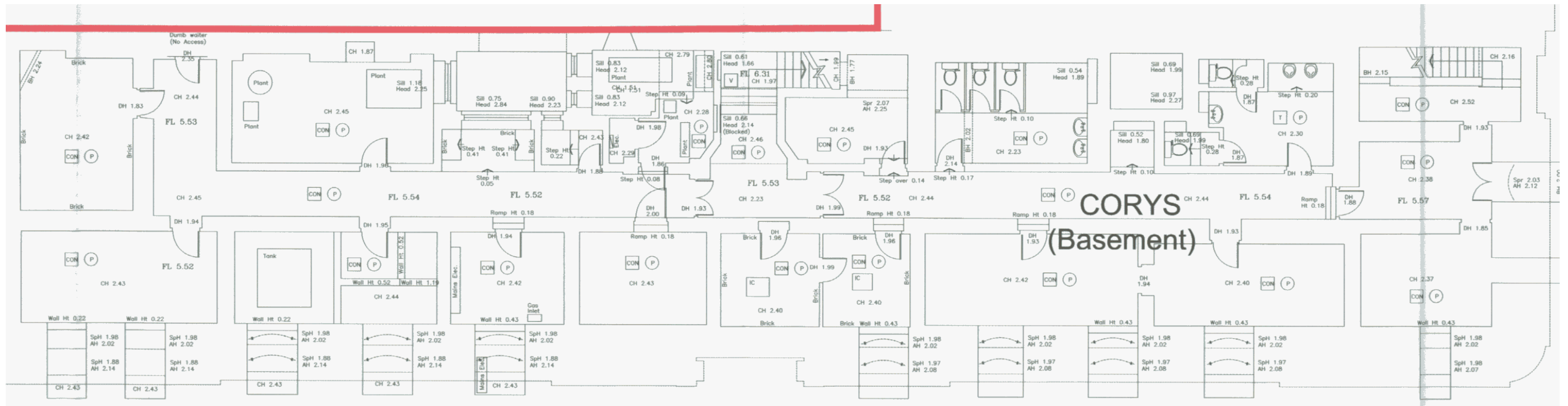
4.8.6 Cory's Building Interior - Basement Floor

The top plan, produced by/for Wigley Fox Partnership shows the layout of Cory's Building before the internal demolition work in 2008.

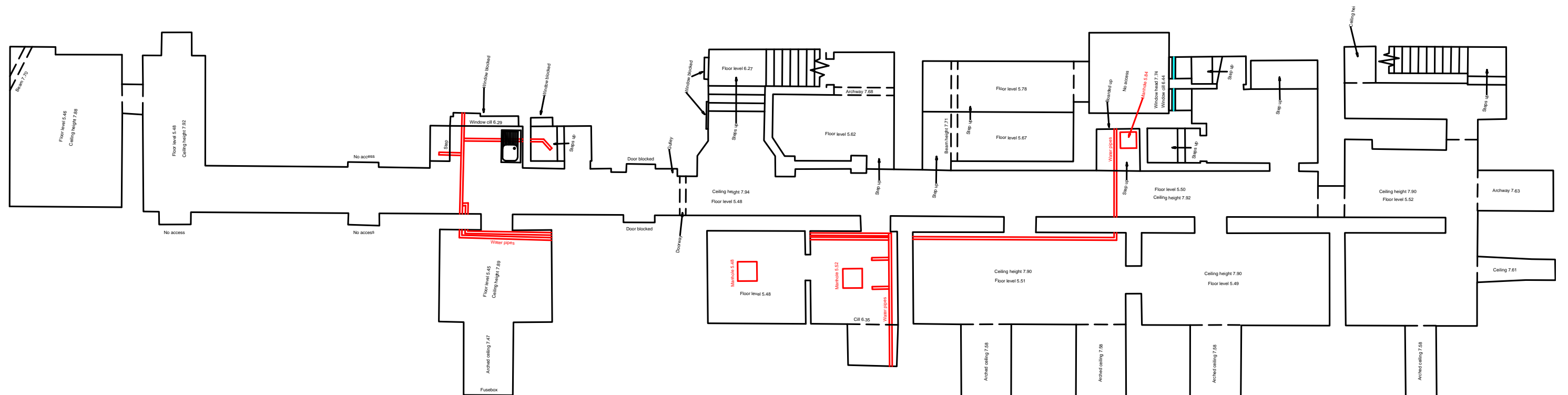
The difference identifies what was removed. It is not clear how much, if any, of what was removed was original to 1889, but it is possible that sum of it was.

The bottom plan, produced by Hywel John Surveys, in 2022, is the current layout of Cory's Building.

The 'scars' of that removal is, in many cases, apparent in the plaster on the ceiling and marks on the floor.



Basement Floor Plan from 2007, produced by/for Wigley Fox Partnership, showing the layout of Cory's Building before the internal demolition work in 2008



Basement Floor Plan from 2022, produced by Hywel John Surveys, showing the current layout of Cory's Building

4.9 Outline History & Heritage of Cardiff Docks & Butetown

Much of the information within this section has been established thanks to various sources, particularly:

- 'archiseek.com' website;
- 'bbc.co.uk' website;
- 'biography.wales' website;
- 'britishlistedbuildings.co.uk' website;
- 'britishpostofficearchitects.weebly.com' website;
- 'cardiffbay.co.uk' website;
- 'cardiffcapers.blogspot.com' website;
- 'cardiffians.co.uk' website;
- 'coflein.gov.uk' website;
- 'corybrothers.com' website;
- 'cynonculture.co.uk' website;
- Directory of British Architects 1834-1914;
- 'gracesguide.co.uk' website;
- 'genuki.org.uk' website;
- 'historynet.com' website;
- 'historypoints.org' website;
- John Newman - The Buildings of Wales – Glamorgan (Pevsner Architectural Guides – 1995);
- 'julianorbach.weebly.com' website;
- Mount Stuart Square Conservation Area Appraisal document 2009 by Cardiff City Council;
- 'stsepulchres.org.uk' website;
- 'walesonline.co.uk' website;
- 'wearecardiff.co.uk' website;
- 'whgt.wales' website;
- 'wikipedia.org' website.

Many of the photographs within this section are also included courtesy of these websites.

Top:
Bute Street in early 1900s with Cory's Building directly on the right (source: 'bing.com' website; credit: Ernest T. Bush)

Bottom:
Similar view now



4.9.1 Industrial Revolution & Cardiff Docks

Cardiff owes much of its history to the Industrial Revolution of the 1790s, which stimulated mining in the valleys of South Wales. This gave rise to the building of the Glamorganshire Canal which opened in 1794 and ran for 25 miles with 50 locks between Merthyr Tydfil and Cardiff, bringing iron and coal down from the valleys to Cardiff. An extension of half a mile in 1796-98 provided a sea-lock at Cardiff.

In 1801, the first official census was carried out and Cardiff's population was recorded as only 1,870, which was considerably less than other nearby towns at the time, like Merthyr Tydfil, with a population of 7,700 and Swansea with 6,000.

The rapidly increasing iron and coal trade was the catalyst for the construction of the docks in Cardiff. The roughly 2 mile (3.2 kilometre)-square peninsular of flat marshland lying to the north-east of Cardiff Bay provided the perfect site for the great development of docks by the second and third Marquesses of Bute. The function of these docks being to satisfy the need for an export outlet for the ever-increasing supplies first of iron, and then of coal, coming down from the Valleys.

In 1827 the second Marquis commissioned a report from canal engineer, James Green. In 1834-9 the new dock which he recommended was formed under the supervision of William Cubitt. This Bute West Dock, 4,000 feet (1,219 metres) long and 200 feet (61 metres) wide, lay parallel to the east of the final, sea-lock stretch of the Glamorganshire Canal with its seaward entrance known as the Oval Basin.



Glamorganshire Canal in the 1890s at the town end of North Road, near Cardiff Castle (source: 'walesonline.co.uk' website)

The parallel Bute East Dock, 4,300 feet (1,309 metres) long and up to 500 feet (152 metres) wide, was opened in stages between 1855-9, and enabled a huge expansion of activity. Roath Basin, to the south-east, at right-angles to the earlier docks, was constructed between 1868-74. In the 1880s work began on further expansion, in the face of the threat from the proposed docks at Barry. Roath Dock, east of Roath Basin, designed by James McConnochie, opened in 1887, and finally in 1907, Queen Alexandra Dock, alongside Roath Basin to the south.

As this industry expanded in the early 1800s, it became clear that the Glamorganshire Canal was unable to cope with the demand put upon it. It became obvious that a more efficient form of transport was required and in 1840 the Merthyr ironmasters formed the Taff Vale Railway Company and constructed a railway from Merthyr Tydfil to the docks in Cardiff.

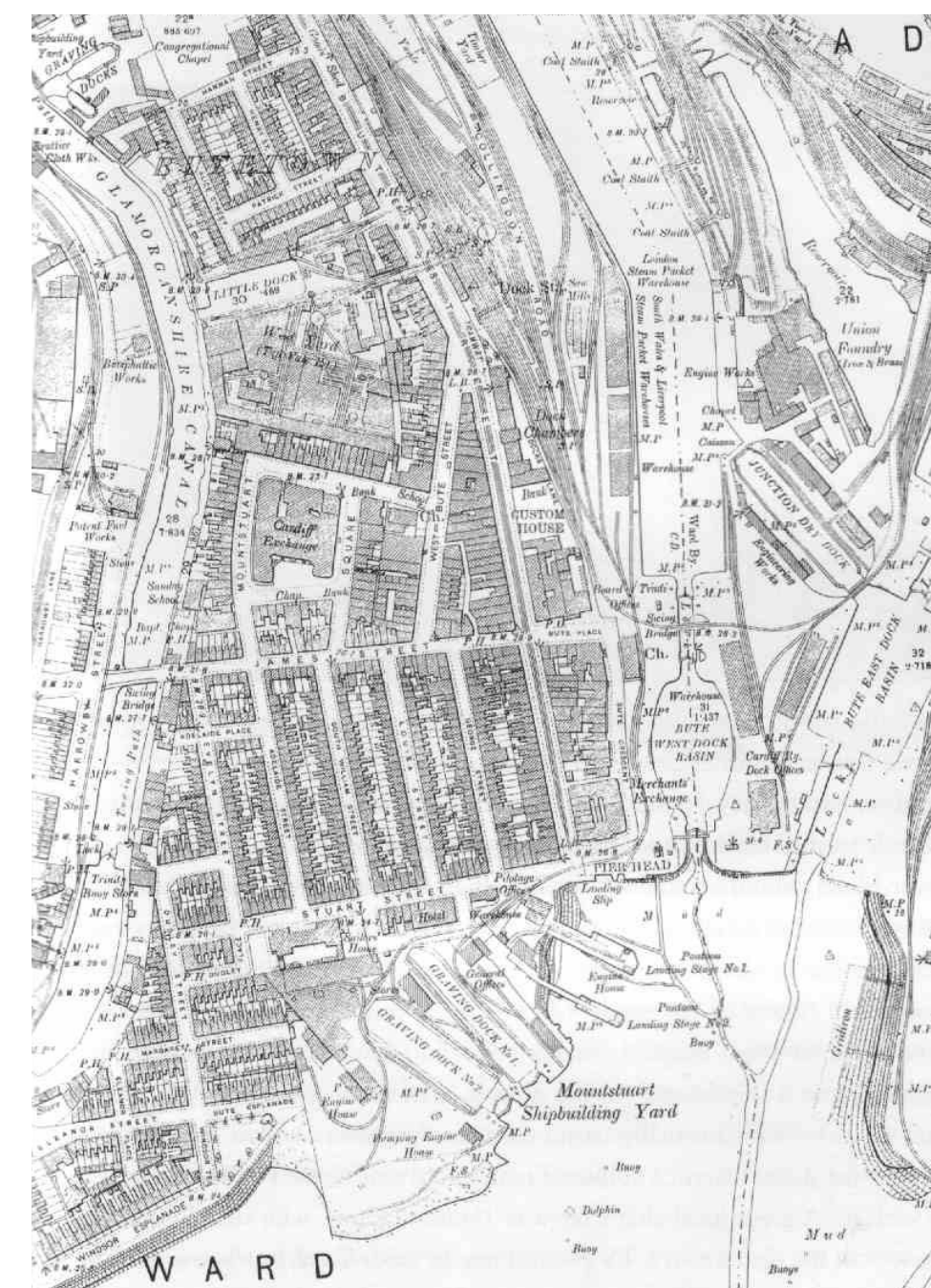


The Taff Vale railway brought coal from the Welsh Valleys to the ships (source: 'norwegianchurchcardiff.com' website)



Coal wagons at Cardiff docks in 1927 (source: 'walesonline.co.uk' website)

By the 1880s, Cardiff had transformed from one of the smallest towns in Wales to the largest. In 1901, Cardiff's population had risen to 164,333, due to Welsh coal and the docklands that took this coal to the world. At the turn of the century, Cardiff's docks were handling more coal than any other port in the world. On the eve of the First World War in 1913, coal exports peaked at over 13 million tonnes. At this time, the international price of coal was struck in the Coal Exchange building where the world's first £1 million pound deal was signed.



Map of Butetown - 1901 (source: 'cardiffians.co.uk' website)

The dockland area (Butetown and around) became a cosmopolitan community as seafarers from around the globe arrived in Cardiff and made it their home. This area, which became known as Tiger Bay, was home to over 50 nationalities. This kaleidoscope of settlers helped to build the docks, worked aboard the ships and helped to service this industrial and maritime city. The area was said to be named after the fast swirling waters in the Bristol Channel which sailors said reminded them of 'raging tigers'.

'Tiger Bay' was the title used for a 1959 film about a Polish seaman in Cardiff who kills his faithless girlfriend and kidnaps a child, who proves more than a match for him. The child was played by a twelve year old Hayley Mills, who won the BAFTA Film Award for 'Most Promising Newcomer to Film' in 1960 for her role. The film also starred her father John Mills.

Unfortunately, during the decline of coal exports in the late 1930s, Butetown (which now had an unsustainable population) began to suffer from the effects of mass unemployment. By 1932 the city was in the depths of depression and coal exports had fallen to below 5 million tonnes.

After the Second World War, demand for coal slumped further and international markets were lost as other countries developed their own steel industries. Trade was increasingly lost to container ports and by the 1960s coal exports had virtually ceased, resulting in the commercial closure of all but two of Cardiff's docks.



Coal ships tied up at Cardiff Docks - c.1910 (source: commons.wikimedia.org)



Tiger Bay 1959 film poster (source: 'movieposter.com' website)



Aerial view of the docks, with the Pierhead Building visible (source: 'walesonline.co.uk' website)



The Docks, Cardiff - early 1900s (source: 'empirehousecardiff.co.uk' website)



A young Shirley Bassey (source: 'dailymail.co.uk' website)



Cardiff Docks (source: 'i.pinimg.com')

4.9.2 Bute Street & Mount Stuart Square

In his book 'The Buildings of Wales – Glamorgan (Pevsner Architectural Guides – 1995)', John Newman states:

“The major urban development by the second Marquess of Bute was the construction of Bute Street, a wide, straight thoroughfare over a mile long southwards from the centre of Cardiff town and parallel with the new dock, leading to a new square, Mount Stuart Square, at its south end and a grid of streets to the west.”

The second Marquess of Bute realised in the 1820s that the Glamorganshire Canal was not sufficient to cope with the demands of the iron trade and initiated a development plan. This plan included the construction of Bute Street as a main road in and out of the docks area and it was completed in 1830.



Cardiff Docks looking up Bute Street (source: 'bing.com' website)



Bottom of Bute Street as seen from the Paddle Steamer berth (source: 'walesonline.co.uk' website)

Bute Street used to be part of the A470 road, up until Lloyd George Avenue was opened 4 October 2000, it is now an unclassified road.



Bute Street looking north, taken from north of the site, probably early 1900s (source: 'wales247.co.uk' website)



Corner of north end of Bute Street with Crichton Street 1890s (source: 'walesonline.co.uk' website)



Bute Street in early 1900s with Cory's Building to right (identified by red arrow) (source: 'i.pinimg.com' website; credit: Ernest T. Bush)



Bute Street in early 1900s with Cory's Building immediately to the right (identified by red arrow) (source: 'bing.com' website; credit: Ernest T. Bush)



Lower Bute Street in September 1937 with Cory's Building to right (identified by red arrow) (source: 'walesonline.co.uk' website)

Newman went on to write that:

“The finest late Victorian and Edwardian Commercial Architecture is concentrated in and around Mount Stuart Square, Butetown, where the coal companies had their headquarters, cheek by jowl with one another on all four sides of Seward's Exchange Building.”

In its original form, Mount Stuart Square was a residential square with a central garden. It was constructed in 1855 as a select residential enclave around ornamental gardens for merchants and sea captains, and originally consisted of 45 stuccoed three-storey town houses.

Named after Lord Mountstuart, the area was the vision of John Crichton-Stuart, 2nd Marquess of Bute, who wanted to create a grand Georgian space to rival Berkeley Square in London. The development of the square was part of his vision to transform Cardiff into a major port, improve the value of his lands in Cardiff itself and increase the value of the royalties he could charge on his coal fields. As the docks rose in prominence, wealthy residents moved out and it became a commercial centre.

As well as new docks, a grid pattern residential suburb for port-related workers was built, though much of the best housing was soon converted or demolished for business premises, particularly in Mount Stuart Square which became the area's commercial centre. This fundamentally altered the Square's appearance, particularly with the Coal Exchange constructed on its grassed central square. The buildings surrounding the Coal Exchange housed coal companies, banks and agents. Most of Cardiff's notable architects of the period are represented including Alexander Roos, architect to the Bute Estate, Edwin Seward, E W M Corbett, W D Blessley, Teather and Wilson, Ivor Jones and Percy Thomas, and Henry Budgen.

In Mount Stuart Square and the surrounding streets, many of the historic buildings have been retained due to their protection through statutory listing, with Butetown being home to 118 Listed Buildings. They provide a visual reminder of the former commercial heart of Cardiff Docks and its residential suburb.

In the 1960's and 70's the majority of port-workers' houses were demolished under slum clearance and replaced by Council housing. Several commercial buildings were also demolished with many others left vacant.

By the early 1980's Cardiff Bay was run down physically and economically with the area mainly disused and largely derelict, so that in April 1987 Cardiff Bay Development Corporation was set up to regenerate the old docklands. This included the construction of a Barrage to create a 200-hectare fresh-water lake as well as the construction of new homes, new offices, and commercial and leisure facilities.



Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff - Aerial View from 1920, looking northeast. Cory's Building would be to the right, off the page (source: 'wikipedia.com' website)

4.9.3 Cardiff Coal Exchange Building (Grade II* Listed Building)

In his book 'The Buildings of Wales – Glamorgan (Pevsner Architectural Guides – 1995)', John Newman describes the building as follows:

“And so to Mount Stuart Square itself, built as a spacious residential square in the mid-1850s by the Bute Estate. First one has to take in the fact that the space in the centre of the square has been completely occupied by a single huge building. This is the Coal and Shipping Exchange, 1884-8 by Edwin Seward of Seward & Thomas, built at a reputed cost of £60,000. Bath stone. U-plan open to the south, the side wings with complex canted projections. Three storeys over a basement, and attics in the pavilion roof. Composed façade to each point of the compass. The interior was sumptuously reworked by Edwin Seward in 1911-12, with sculpture by Tom A. Jones. Broad, low south vestibule, its plaster ceiling massively beamed and enriched. Here two mighty lions, bearing clocks which indicate the times of high water a.m. and p.m., respectively, guard the doorway into the central hall.”

The Coal Exchange was where the leading businessmen of the South Wales area - ship owners, shipping agents and mine owners - met to fix deals, to buy and sell coal and, of course, to make themselves fortunes. In the closing years of the 19th century it was where every businessman with pretensions of grandeur and success needed to be seen.

The Coal Exchange was also the place where, in 1901, the first ever £1 million deal was struck.

In the early years of Cardiff's prosperity, there was no central point where all of these various negotiations could take place. Merchants simply chalked up the price they were offering or willing to pay on boards outside their offices and businessmen met in the quiet corners of public houses and taverns to fix prices and buy and sell the coal that was rapidly making Cardiff the greatest trading port ever seen. It was a situation that could not last.

In order to provide a formal centre for the coal trade, Cardiff Coal Exchange was designed and built between 1884 and 1886. It was situated in Mount Stuart Square, within walking distance of Bute Docks, in what had previously been a quiet residential square, complete with a central garden. The design was by the architects Seward & Thomas and the building was formally opened on 1 February 1886.

Now, at last, Cardiff businessmen had a place to go each day. It was estimated that as many as eight or nine thousand people passed through the Coal Exchange each day with the hour between noon and 1pm being the busiest trading period.

Cardiff Coal Exchange quickly became the economic capital of Cardiff and, with the price of the world's coal being decided within its looming portals, it could truly be said that this was as important an economic centre as the Stock Exchange or the Bank of England.

The building is protected by a grade II* listing “as one of most important commercial buildings in Wales, illustrating the region's immense commercial power in the late 19th and 20th century. Plus group value.”

The Coal Exchange finally closed in 1958 and coal exports from Cardiff ended just six years later, in 1964.



Coal Exchange trading floor - 1912 (source: 'bcd-urbex.com' website)



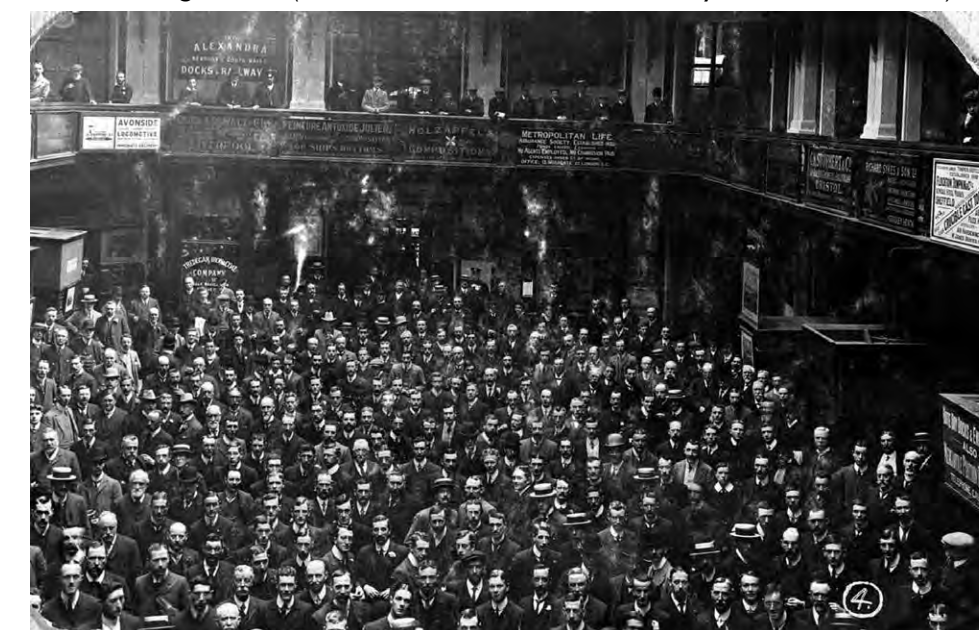
Coal Exchange 1891 (source: 'walesonline.co.uk'; courtesy of Cardiff Libraries)



Coal Exchange, Mount Stuart Square (source 'walesonline.co.uk' website; picture courtesy of Cardiff Libraries)



The Lions and the Clocks inside the Coal Exchange (source: 'walesonline.co.uk' website)



Businessmen inside the Coal Exchange circa 1900 (source: 'walesonline.co.uk' website)

4.9.4 Pier Head Building (Grade I Listed Building)

In his book 'The Buildings of Wales – Glamorgan (Pevsner Architectural Guides – 1995)', John Newman describes the building as follows: "Proudly isolated at the water's edge, facing across Cardiff Bay to survey the bustling activities managed by the Bute Docks Company, whose offices it was built to house. The trustees of the third Marquess of Bute in 1887 formed a public limited company, and the Pierhead Building was constructed a decade later, in 1896-7, to the design of William Frame. Frame had been assistant to William Burges at Cardiff Castle and Castell Coch, and Burges's influence is powerful here. The architect may even have intended it as his Castell Coch, his Red Castle. The materials are hot red brick and hot red terracotta exactly matched. Boldly overscaled tower over a porch with early French Renaissance detail, rising via an oriel window to a clock stage decked with armorial shields and crowned with arcading and deep battlements. Steep pavilion roof. Steeply pitched roofs everywhere else, defining the mass of the two-storey building, and an array of heavily modelled chimneystacks. Short, symmetrical entrance front, with mullion-and-transom windows, their top lights arched. Its symmetry is broken by a polygonal bay at the south west angle, with its own candle-snuffer roof. Round the corner more heraldic decoration, and a triple chimneystack of special elaboration, all denoting the fact that the upper room in this corner was the manager's office. Otherwise the long sides are quieter, the large windows in the central section lighting a hall, the rear range accommodating offices for the company."



Historic photo of Pierhead Building (source: 'i.pinimg.com' website)



Pierhead Building - circa 1900 (source: 'twitter.com' website)

The stylistic eclecticism observable outside continues within, but here the influence of Waterhouse, the doyen of late Victorian public architecture, becomes more apparent. This is true of the glazed majolica tiling of the vestibule and staircase, and even more of the central hall, aisled in three bays with round-headed arches on square, panelled piers, the central aisle top-lit. The manager's office, however, reasserts romantic medievalism, with its vaulted look-out window and its splendid hooded chimneypiece, on coupled side shafts with fishy capitals and turreted like a toy fort in Burges's favourite way."

The building is protected by a grade I listing "as a central and especially important building to the historical and visual dockscape of Cardiff; it is furthermore an exceptional Victorian building reflecting the confidence of the period in its flamboyant architectural detail, particularly in its use of terracotta".

The great period of Cardiff's suburban growth began in the mid-1870s and continued in full flow until shortly after the turn of the century. The Bute Estate still took the lead, followed by other landowners, of which the largest and most active were the Tredegar and Windsor estates. All three pursued a policy of granting 99-year leases and retained estate architects to supply house designs to developers. Thus, homogeneity and high structural standards were ensured. Pennant sandstone was the normal walling material, with Bath stone for dressings, but red brick and various local sandstones were also called into play.



Pierhead Building at front of Cardiff Docks (source: 'pinterest.co.uk' website)



Pierhead Building as now (source: 'donaldinsallassociates.co.uk' website)



Interior of Pierhead Building now (source: 'donaldinsallassociates.co.uk' website)

The full listing for the **Pierhead Building** can be found below.

The Pier Head Building is protected by a Grade I listing, which was designated on 19 May 1975 and last amended on 21 August 1998.

The listing (with a Cadw ID No. of I4055) states:

History

Built in 1896 by William Frame, assistant to William Burges as offices for the Cardiff Railway Company, successor to the Bute Dock Company. Medievalist style with strong influence of Burges (in contrast to the Classical dock offices at Barry) combining muscular Gothic and French Renaissance elements. 2-storeys; brightly constructed throughout in glazed terracotta, representing a fine example of the use of this material; abundant sculptural ornament and banding. Slate roofs; small-pane glazing, round headed to 1st floor and square headed below.

Exterior

Design dominated by 2-stage clock tower at S end over main entrance; pyramidal roof and crenellated parapet with gargoyles. Clock faces recessed beneath semi-circular arches with fleuron panelled balconies; flanking lions heads and coats of arms. Splayed oriel over main entrance including crenellated transom and machicolated bracket base. Squat round arched entrance with deeply rounded jambs; battered bases to flanking octagonal and domed turrets. Panelled doors, half-glazed tympanum and swirling bands of foliage. Larger, Low Countries style, polygonal corner towers beyond, incorporated into main rooms and glazed to each face; pyramidal roof, gargoyles, colonnettes and foliage band between floors. 7-bay left hand side, the southernmost of which is taken up with exceptional chimney breast, heavily enriched with terracotta ornament including steam train and ship over the company's motto 'Wrth ddwr a than'; the whole set in a tiered frontispiece-like frame and topped by 3-linked chimney stacks; bronze commemorative plaque to base. Central 3-bays are divided by buttresses with polygonal faces and domed caps. Steep-hipped roof tower beyond over entrance inscribed Bute Docks Co.; round arched with panelled surround; chimney stack and band of narrow round arched panels to top. Northernmost bay has bracketed gable-oriel with 3-light transomed window; gable has blind oculus and finials. Simpler right hand side with central 3-bays divided off as before; 2-windows near southern end are set in foliage surround. Plain N end.

Interior

Entrance is onto square lobby, decoratively tiled and with panelled ceiling; round arched recesses to both sides with labels and nook shafts. This leads through to tall and grand hall; includes terrazzo floor, with central roundel repeating the company's motto and panelled ceiling. Church-like, double-arcaded hall of offices to rear through full height, moulded arch with foliage spandrels; terracotta detail includes twin pilasters between each arch, rising to carry the glazed clerestory roof along the central nave. The main stairwell leads off the front right hand corner of the entrance hall. The staircase is enriched by varied and colourful materials including granite treads, terracotta (stellar-section) balusters including enormous newels and green-glazed tile handrail; gilded Minton style tilework to dado (ca 1.8m high) - includes swagged band to top. The single-best room is the Port Manager's office on 1st floor with castellated and canopied 'medieval' chimneypiece with heavily foliated columns and herringbone tiled fireback; panelled ceiling with pendant to octagonal centrepiece. Round arch into corner tower bay in this office and that below. Crenellated and half-glazed partitions to 1st floor office corridors; panelled doors. Original ironwork spiral stairs inside clock-tower manufactured by St Pancras Ironwork Co, London; curved braces to treads.

Reasons for Listing

Listed Grade I as a central and especially important building to the historical and visual dockscape of Cardiff; it is furthermore an exceptional Victorian building reflecting the confidence of the period in its flamboyant architectural detail, particularly in its use of terracotta.



Pierhead Building (source: own)



Pierhead Building (source: 'britishlistedbuildings.co.uk')

4.10 History & Heritage of Merchant Place

In his book 'The Buildings of Wales – Glamorgan (Pevsner Architectural Guides – 1995)', John Newman talks about Bute Street and states:

“Nos. 1 and 3 Bute Place, the most purely satisfying essay in classical design in Butetown. 1880-1 by E. G. Rivers of the Office of Works. Three Storeys, ten bays, treated like a continuous terrace, though built as two offices, for the Telegraphs and Mercantile Marine departments of the Board of Trade. The architect's problem was to resolve this dualism and provide a central point of stress. This he did by carrying a Doric colonnade across the ground storey, attached in bays 1-3 and 8-10, stepped forward where the doorways occur in bays 4 and 7, and forward again in the centre two bays. Note the management of the balustrade. Round-headed ground-floor windows, triangular pediments to those on the piano nobile. The building is not just a cool design exercise, but an extraordinary colour symphony as well. Deep brownish-red sandstone ashlar for the ground storey and for the dressings above, where the walls are faced with orange-red brick. Against this warm background the Penrhyn granite colonnade stands out pale grey.”

The 19th century was the heyday of sail-powered merchant shipping which was very labour intensive; however, it was also the heyday of the “crimp”, who supplied captains with fresh crew members, often unwilling ones. In other words, the sailors were shanghaied.

Crimping, or shanghaiing, referred to the common practice at that time of kidnapping people to serve as sailors by coercive techniques such as trickery, intimidation, or violence. Those engaged in this form of kidnapping were known as crimps. Sailors looking for cheap housing, cheap booze and cheap sex were easy targets for these ruthless individuals. Many of the most successful crimps owned boarding-houses, providing them with a ready supply of potential clients.

Crimping took place in all the major ports around the world, however, up to the year 1866, Cardiff was notorious in the maritime world for the extent to which “crimping” was carried on there. Crimping in Cardiff was the subject of many meetings, and the newspapers were full of reports and articles about it. The Chamber of Commerce solicited the Board of Trade to intervene. An inspector was sent down to Cardiff to investigate; and the result was the appointment of a small police force at the Mercantile Marine Office in Cardiff. This additional force managed to significantly reduce the practice of crimping at Cardiff Docks.

As a result, Mercantile Marine Offices were set up to facilitate the engagement and shipment of crews, and to protect sailors and ship owners from crimping. Such offices were first established in 1850 by the Mercantile Marine Act and were originally called ‘Shipping Offices’.

The port of Cardiff experienced a period of significant growth between 1851 when its first Shipping Office was set up, and 1881 when the new Mercantile Marine Office opened on Bute Place. The number of seamen being shipped and discharged at Cardiff increased from 2,581 in 1851 to 7,942 in 1861, 18,657 in 1871 and 58,468 by 1881.

For many years, the Mercantile Marine Office for Cardiff was based in the Old Custom House located on the corner of East Canal Wharf and Customhouse Street. The Old Custom House was built in 1845 on the wharf of the Glamorganshire Canal so that Customs and Excise officers could keep an eye on boats passing along the canal. The main entrance to the building was at the western end, facing the East Wharf.

The canal wharves became eclipsed by Cardiff Docks, which had developed rapidly since the first dock opened in 1839. The Old Custom House was finally replaced in 1898 by a new building at Cardiff Docks, which by then were handling far more cargo than the canal. The new Custom House was built on Bute Street, to the left of Cory's Building, and close to the Mercantile Marine Offices on Bute Place which had been built in 1881.

The Old Custom House is now protected by a Grade II listing due to its “importance in commercial history of Cardiff” and the ornate front doorway, with the words ‘Custom House’ above, still survives today.

The new, purpose-built Mercantile Marine Offices on Bute Place opened for business on Thursday, 1st September 1881, without any formal ceremony. The need for new offices, conveniently located in the Docks area had been talked about for the previous twelve years. However, the suggestion that both the Mercantile Marine Office and the Custom House both relocate to the Docks had delayed progress, as there was so much opposition to this idea from the bonded stores merchants based near the existing Custom House. Finally, the authorities decided that just the Mercantile Marine Office would move down to the Docks and that the new premises to be built would also accommodate the post-office and telegraph departments.

The post-office and telegraph departments did not open until just over a month later, on Monday, 10th October 1881.

The site chosen for these new offices was considered to be “one of the best and most convenient sites in the port”, on the side of Bute Street, close to the East Bute Dock and opposite the Mount Stuart Hotel (now demolished). The plans for the building were drawn by Mr. E. G. Rivers, the chief surveyor to the Board of Works. These new government offices were to be built on land leased from the Bute Estate. The building was “estimated to cost £15,000 or £16,000, or, site included, about £20,000”.

The portion of the building facing Bute Street was to be home to the Post office and Telegraph departments and the part nearer the docks, was for the Mercantile Marine department, with the Board of Trade surveyor's offices above. At the rear was an enclosed yard where seamen could congregate for selection by the shipmasters. The accommodation provided was considered “very superior to that of the old offices”.

Newspaper articles from the 1870s and 1880s provide further insight into the reasons why these new public offices were required, the difficulties overcome in the process and how the finished building “gave rise to the expression of much satisfaction at the Docks” as it was both beautiful to look at and practical.

The new Post-office and telegraph office in Cardiff Docks on Bute Place opened on Monday, 10th October 1881.

These new premises, as newspaper articles of the time said, had been “promised so long” and were “so much required”. Prior to this, the postal and telegraph services were based in a building that was considered “old and in every way unsuitable” for its purpose, with “employees, who are at present cooped up in a house that is entirely insufficient”.

The continuing expansion of the docks meant that the amount of business at the post-office and telegraph offices just kept increasing. Various improvements to the postal provisions in the Docks had been made over the years, such as: the introduction of two letter carriers in 1856 “to deliver letters to the shipping in the Docks, addressed to parties on board ships in the port”; and the opening in 1874 of a sub-post office in the Docks “under the arches at the top of the east dock” which proved to be a dangerous location, too close to railway lines resulting in the tragic death of a fourteen year old telegraph boy in 1876 who was hit by a train.

In 1879, an amount of £4,600 had been scheduled for the new post-office at the Docks, made up of two items, namely:— Post-office, £767; telegraphs, £3,833. By 1880, Civil Service estimates show the scheduled sum increased to £5,200.

At the laying of the foundation stone for the new the new Post-office and Mercantile Marine Office at the Docks in September 1880, Sir E. J. Reed M.P. said “the growth of this place is so rapid as to render a very large extension of the telegraphic facilities absolutely necessary”. Following the opening of the new premises, an article in the ‘Western Mail’ said “The removal of the staff from the old building to the present spacious structure is a congratulatory matter, and the public will not fail to appreciate the improved facilities which the new establishment offers for the prosecution of the postal and telegraph work incidental to the daily business of the docks.”

Much of the information on this page has been gleaned from old newspaper articles. Extracts from those articles are included on the following pages.

4.10.1 Crimping

The 19th century was the heyday of sail-powered merchant shipping which was very labour intensive; however, it was also the heyday of the “crimp”, who supplied captains with fresh crew members, often unwilling ones. In other words, the sailors were shanghaied.

Crimping or shanghaiing referred to the common practice at that time of kidnapping people to serve as sailors by coercive techniques such as trickery, intimidation, or violence. Those engaged in this form of kidnapping were known as crimps. Sailors looking for cheap housing, cheap booze and cheap sex were easy targets for these ruthless individuals. Many of the most successful crimps owned boarding-houses, providing them with a ready supply of potential clients.

Crimping took place in all the major ports around the world, however, up to the year 1866, Cardiff was notorious in the maritime world for the extent to which “crimping” was carried on there. Crimping in Cardiff was the subject of many meetings, and the newspapers were full of reports and articles about it. The Chamber of Commerce solicited the Board of Trade to interfere. An inspector was sent down to Cardiff to investigate; and the result was the appointment of a small police force at the Mercantile Marine Office in Cardiff. This additional force managed to significantly reduce the practice of crimping at Cardiff Docks.

Below are several newspaper articles from ‘The Cardiff Times’ during 1866, illustrating the problem of crimping in Cardiff and the concerns it caused, one being that “shipowners will send their tonnage to load elsewhere”.

An extract from ‘The Cardiff Times, 26th January 1866’ states:

“CAUTION TO CRIMPS. – Efforts have been made before the Cardiff magistrates, as yet unsuccessfully, for the conviction of parties enticing sailors to desert, or for harbouring sailors, knowing them to have deserted. It is difficult, usually, to obtain legal proof of the offence, but in Swansea it has been done, latterly. Last week, a female boarding-house keeper was fined £10 for harbouring two sailors, and on Saturday last John Peterson, boarding-house keeper, and Charles Nelson, sailor, were brought before Mr. N. P. Cameron and Major Francis, charged with inducing four Russian sailors to desert their ships. Both men pleaded guilty, and Peterson was fined £20, which he paid; and Nelson was fined £5, or, in default of payment, two months’ imprisonment. The money was not paid, and he was removed to prison.”

An article in ‘The Cardiff Times, 2nd February 1866’ states:

“THE CRIMPING SYSTEM AND ITS REMEDY

“The prompt and decisive manner in which the Swansea magistrates recently adjudicated upon a case of harbouring foreign deserters at that port, has called forth an article upon the crimping system by the London Shipping Gazette, and as the evil is nowhere more rampant than at Cardiff, we give the portion of the article which refers to the legal remedy: The action of the Swansea Bench in this matter calls for marked approbation. It is only by prompt and decisive measures that a nuisance like crimping can be effectually dealt with. The provisions of the 237th and 238th clauses of the Merchant Shipping Act have had a most salutary effect, and, together with the establishment of the Shipping Offices and Sailors’ Homes, have rendered the vocation of the crimp hardly worth following. Unauthorised persons going on board a ship before her arrival at her place of discharge, may be taken into custody and dealt with summarily by a magistrate; and persons soliciting seamen to lodge with them within twenty-four hours of the arrival of the ship in any port of the United Kingdom, and removing from such ship the effects of any seaman, “except under his personal direction, and with the permission of the master,” are liable for every such offence to a penalty of five pounds. Now, although the material words employed in the sections containing these stringent provisions are ‘any ship at any port in the United Kingdom,’ it may have been thought that the local magistrates have no authority where the ship is foreign, and the crew are foreigners. In such a case, however, it would still be competent for the consul of the state to which the ship belongs to put the law in motion against the offenders, to call upon the magistrates to act. The offence is committed within the jurisdiction, and the wording of the statute is sufficiently comprehensive to include foreign ships and foreign sailors, as entitled to protection from imposition, and to render crimps and lodging-house keepers, who violated the law in regard to them, amenable to punishment. There is, however, besides, the “Foreign Deserters’ Act” above referred to, under which deserters from a foreign ship may be apprehended, and persons harbouring them are liable to a heavy penalty. It would be well, therefore, that crimps, touters and lodging-house keepers wherever they may ply their vile trades, should understand, once for all, that, whether they exercise their arts upon British or foreign seamen, they are within the grasp of the law, and the punishment, as the law stands, is rather more severe for enticing foreign seamen from their ships, and for harbouring them, than for enticing and harbouring British seamen.”

An extract from ‘The Cardiff Times, 9th March 1866’ following a meeting of the Cardiff Watch Committee, attended by the Mayor and councillors, states:

“Mr. J. BIRD called attention to an evil existing in this port, which he remarked existed to an extent almost incredible; which had become organised and had such extensive ramifications, that no existing agency in the town would provide an adequate remedy for it. He alluded to persons who kept lodging-houses for sailors – crimps – a class of persons engaged in decoying sailors away from their ships, and keeping them away, treating them badly, and treating the owners and masters of the vessels still worse. They might have thought that the police force would suffice to cope with this evil; but it was not. He had before him well authenticated statements, showing how bad the state of things was at Cardiff, and that it was even worse at Penarth, where they had not the protection of such a police force as we had here. When he (Mr. Bird) sat on the Bench his attention was drawn to this subject, and in connection with Mr. Stockdale he inquired into it and made some startling discoveries. There were a class of persons whose trade and means of living was the stealing of sailors from vessels; and these persons actually went to the length of forming branch establishments outside of the limits of the borough, so that the local authorities should not have jurisdiction over them. They discovered establishments in Canton, branches of others in Cardiff to which the victims were taken by force, and detained until it was the pleasure of the parties who carried on the horrid traffic, to produce them. From the extent to which this system had grown, some effective plan would have to be devised for dealing with it. He referred to a statement made by the captain of a vessel called the Marquis of Bute, and which was fully corroborated by the owners. Yet it was scarcely credible. His men had been taken away from the vessel; and having engaged fresh hands, to be shipped three days before the vessel sailed, they were not brought on board until the moment before the vessel left the pier-head. Those which had been engaged were all able-bodied sailors; but those who were brought on board were thrust by the boarding masters at once into their berths, and told to feign drunkenness, in order that their state should not be at once discovered. When they were mustered on deck in the roads the crew were, almost to a man, found to be so prostrated by disease as to be unable to perform almost every function of seamanship. ...”

An extract from ‘The Cardiff Times, 17th August 1866’ within the section entitled “Cardiff Shipping Intelligence”, states:

“THE DESERTION OF SEAMEN AND CRIMPING

“This port has long since obtained an unenviable notoriety amongst all classes connected with maritime affairs in connexion with the above-mentioned evils, and unless they are speedily attended to, the trade of the port will be seriously affected, and shipowners will send their tonnage to load elsewhere. ...”

An extract from 'The Cardiff Times, 5th October 1866' within the section entitled "Cardiff Shipping Intelligence", states:

"I am glad to find that the magistrates of the port are at last moving in the matter of the sailors desertion and refusing to proceed to sea. Such evils can only be dealt with by prompt and decisive action, which I am glad to see is being taken. I think, however, that the sailors are not the root of the evil, it rests with the crimps and such like persons, who so infest the docks, and the case would receive greater justice if some of these fellows could be caught and severely punished. Such a course would be a good example and prove very beneficial in correcting the present abuses, and when it is considered how much our poor tars suffer through the pernicious influences exercised upon them by these scoundrels, it will be readily admitted that every effort ought to be put forward by those in authority to check the evil that has been so long fostered at the port of Cardiff. Much can be done to ameliorate the present condition of affairs by our business men at the Docks, and I hope that all will join in such a good cause with willing hearts."

An extract from an article entitled "Report of The Inspector. Cardiff – Licensed Agents, Crimping, &c. The Secretary, Board of Trade." in 'The Cardiff Times, 7th December 1866' states:

"THE STAFF OF OFFICERS

"The deputy superintendent, clerk, policeman, and runners, who have been selected by the Customs for the service of the Board of Trade in the mercantile marine offices, are likely to prove efficient. As I have before stated, I have spent much time in arranging the business, and in instructing the officers in their respective duties.

"The policeman, James Evans, was selected from the force by the superintendent of police of the borough; he will prove of great assistance in suppressing desertion and crimping.

"The uniform of the policeman is similar to that of the officers of the force: and the runners to that worn by the runners employed at the mercantile marine offices in London.

"I have only further to observe that the new arrangements are likely to prove satisfactory in all the objects contemplated by the Board of Trade. There is now at Cardiff a staff of officers adequate to the present amount of business of the port, who have been made acquainted with the duties required of them. The licensed shipping agents have been cautioned that desertion and crimping must be detected and punished, and that their active assistance will be required to enable the officers to bring to justice those who transgress the law. The magistrates and police are cognizant of the magnitude of these offences, and the shipbrokers and agents appear to be more willing to assist in their suppression. I am, therefore, enabled to report that grievances which have hitherto been so loudly complained of at this port, are now to all appearance remedied.

I am, &c.,
(Signed) J. HUGHES,
Inspector."

4.6.3 History of Mercantile Marine Offices

Mercantile Marine Offices were set up to facilitate the engagement and shipment of crews, and to protect sailors and ship owners from crimping. Such offices were first established in 1850 by the Mercantile Marine Act and were originally called 'Shipping Offices'. The port of Cardiff experienced a period of significant growth between 1851 when its first Shipping Office was set up, and 1881 when the new Mercantile Marine Office opened on Bute Place. The number of seamen being shipped and discharged at Cardiff increased from 2,581 in 1851 to 7,942 in 1861, 18,657 in 1871 and 58,468 by 1881.

The superintendent of the Mercantile Marine Department in Cardiff, Mr William Turner, wrote a very informative article on this subject in the 'South Wales Daily News, 6th February 1882' an extract of which states:

"MERCANTILE MARINE OFFICES

"Mr William Turner, superintendent of the Mercantile Marine Department at Cardiff, has an article in this month's 'Nautical Magazine' on 'Mercantile Marine Offices,' in which many particulars respecting Cardiff are given. He says: - The establishment of these offices dates from the 1st January, 1851. They were first termed 'Shipping offices;' and were brought into existence by the Mercantile Marine Act, of 1850. Their change of name was effected by the Merchant Shipping Act, 1862. The reason of their original formation may be traced, proximately, to the spread of 'crimping'. Remotely, no doubt, they were the natural growth of the extension of our mercantile marine generally. The complaining tone of the ship owning interest caused the Government to make enquiry. It was found that, to protect herself, the great port of Liverpool had established a central office, with the object of facilitating the engagement and shipment of crews. This scheme worked so well that with the consent of the shipowners the system was extended to the United Kingdom; and in order to ensure local influence and control at each 'great port', a local marine board was established, with power to regulate the operations of such offices. Sixteen were at first formed. At other ports the Custom-houses did the work. The latter were then considered 'minor' ports, and were so classed in the annual account of the mercantile marine fund. Since that date, however, some of those ports have shot ahead even of the 'great ports' of the olden time, notably Cardiff, which has now become the third office in the kingdom for the extent of its operations, being only exceeded by those of Liverpool and Tower Hill, London. But the most remarkable of all is Cardiff; and in order to show the extent to which the system, has grown with the rise and prosperity of our shipping business, we have obtained some interesting figures from that port. In the first year of the establishment of shipping offices (1851) there were shipped and discharged at Cardiff, 2,581 seamen. In 1861, 7,942, or 213 per cent increase upon 1851. In 1871 there were 18,657, or 135 per cent more in ten years; and in 1881, 58,468, or 186 per cent added in the decade. These are rather startling figures, and probably there is no counterpart for such rapid progress in the annals of any other port.

"There is another phase of the question worthy of notice. About half way through the period since the introduction of the system, Cardiff has become sorely afflicted with the maritime disease which has called the shipping office into existence. In 1865, it is true, 13,290 seamen had been engaged and discharged in the office; but amidst these thousands the crimps has been very busy - so busy that even respectable shipmasters has been compelled to seek their aid, out of sheer self-defence, in order to obtain crews and get their vessels to sea. To cope with the evil the Board of Trade appointed a separate staff under their own immediate direction, with the collector of customs, as a link connecting them legally - for no statutory power existed till 1873 to form an entire separation. The Merchant Shipping Act - so far as the disciplinary clauses were concerned - had been, as it were, a dead letter. Instructions were then issued to put its power into operation. Those, especially, of the 243rd section, Act 1854, against neglecting to join ship at sailing, and the 257th section for the suppression of crimping. The scheme commenced in October, 1866. ..."

4.10.2 New Mercantile Marine Office in Cardiff

For many years, the Mercantile Marine Office for Cardiff was based in the Old Custom House located on the corner of East Canal Wharf and Customhouse Street. The Old Custom House was built in 1845 on the wharf of the Glamorganshire Canal so that Customs and Excise officers could keep an eye on boats passing along the canal. The main entrance to the building was at the western end, facing the East Wharf.

The canal wharves became eclipsed by Cardiff Docks, which had developed rapidly since the first dock opened in 1839. The Old Custom House was finally replaced in 1898 by a new building at Cardiff Docks, which by then were handling far more cargo than the canal. The new Custom House was built on Bute Street, to the left of Cory's Building, and close to the Mercantile Marine Offices on Bute Place which had been built in 1881.

The Old Custom House is now protected by a Grade II listing due to its "importance in commercial history of Cardiff" and the ornate front doorway, with the words 'Custom House' above, still survives today.



Old Custom House, Custom House Street, c. 1890 (source: 'historypoints.org')



Old Custom House (source: own)

The new, purpose-built Mercantile Marine Offices on Bute Place opened for business on Thursday, 1st September 1881 without any formal ceremony. The need for new offices, conveniently located in the Docks area had been talked about for the previous twelve years. However, the suggestion that both the Mercantile Marine Office and the Custom House both relocate to the Docks had delayed progress, as there was so much opposition to this idea from the bonded stores merchants based near the existing Custom House. Finally, the authorities decided that just the Mercantile Marine Office would move down to the Docks and that the new premises to be built would also accommodate the post-office and telegraph departments.

The post-office and telegraph departments did not open until just over a month later, on Monday, 10th October 1881.

The site chosen for these new offices was considered to be "one of the best and most convenient sites in the port", on the side of Bute Street, close to the East Bute Dock and opposite the Mount Stuart Hotel (now demolished). The plans for the building were drawn by Mr. E. G. Rivers, the chief surveyor to the Board of Works. These new government offices were to be built on land leased from the Bute Estate. The building was "estimated to cost £15,000 or £16,000, or, site included, about £20,000".

The portion of the building facing Bute Street was to be home to the Post office and Telegraph departments and the part nearer the docks, was for the Mercantile Marine department, with the Board of Trade surveyor's offices above. At the rear was an enclosed yard where seamen could congregate for selection by the shipmasters. The accommodation provided was considered "very superior to that of the old offices".



Low res Plan of original building (source: 'archiseek.com')

An article in 'The Building News, November 26th, 1880' provides a detailed description of these new offices and the facilities provided and includes the images below. The article states:

"NEW OFFICES FOR THE TELEGRAPHS AND MERCANTILE MARINE (BOARD OF TRADE), CARDIFF"

"The offices illustrated this week are to be devoted to the use of the Postal Telegraph Service, and the Mercantile Marine Department of the Board of Trade, and are situated near the Bute Docks, Cardiff. The accommodation is as follows: - Telegraph Office: On the ground-floor, to the front, is the public office, 37ft. 6in. by 28ft. Towards the rear are the messengers' room, battery and lineman's room, store-rooms, and sanitary offices; on the first floor are the engineer's office, and retiring-rooms for the staff of female clerks; on the second floor is the instrument-room, 52ft. by 38ft. Mercantile Marine Office: On the ground floor are the discharge office, 31ft. by 30ft.; engagement office, 40ft. by 26ft.; together with superintendent's and clerks' rooms, and waiting-rooms for seamen and officers of the out-door staff. On the first-floor are two large examination-rooms, general office, and tonnage office, together with effects, and store-rooms in the rear. The second-floor will be devoted to the use of the care-taker, and for storage purposes. Provision has been made in the discharge office for the wives of seamen attending to cash pay-notes. The building materials are as follows: - For the walling, local red bricks have been used; for the dressings, cornices, &c., shalk stone (a deep red sandstone), from near Carlisle; and for the columns and pilasters, Penrhyn granite. The roofs are covered with Welsh slates. The contractors are Messrs. Kirk and Randall, of Woolwich, by whom the work is being executed in a highly-expeditious and satisfactory manner. The architect is Mr. E. G. Rivers, C. E., of H. M. Office of Works, Whitehall-place, S.W. The work is being carried out under the immediate superintendence of Mr. M. G. Nasmyth."



Mercantile Marine Offices, illustrative sketch 1880 (source: 'archiseek.com')

In 1987, several buildings in the area of Bute Street, Bute Place, and Bute Crescent were demolished as part of the development of the Cardiff Bay Link Road. These included the Grade II listed Mount Stuart Hotel, the 1890s Seamen's Institute and All Souls Church, the National Union of Seamen's Maritime Hall and numbers 63-68 Bute Street.



Aerial view of Cardiff Docks, 1932 (source: 'walesonline.co.uk')



Mission to Seamen's Institute & Church, opened 1891 & demolished 1987 (source: 'hcearchive.org.uk')



View of Merchant Place and Minton Treharne Building, Bute Place, with Mission to Seamen's Institute & Church at rear, 1982 (source: 'museum.wales')



Aerial view of lower Butetown commercial area, 1954 (source: 'museum.wales')



Mission to Seamen's Institute & Church, opened 1891 & demolished 1987, photo 1979 (source: 'hcearchive.org.uk')



Mount Stuart Public House, c.1987 previously Mount Stuart Hotel - now demolished (source: 'coflein.gov.uk')

Newspaper articles from the 1870s and 1880s provide further insight into the reasons why these new public offices were required, the difficulties overcome in the process and how the finished building “gave rise to the expression of much satisfaction at the Docks” as it was both beautiful to look at and practical.

An article in ‘The Western Mail, 27th October 1877’ provides some background as to the reasons for the delay in building these new offices. The article states:

“THE NEW SHIPPING OFFICES AT CARDIFF

“On Thursday some subordinate officers connected with the Board of Trade and the Board of Works, being in Cardiff, took occasion to go over the piece of land reserved at the docks by the Bute Trustees for the erection of the proposed new Board of Trade, Custom-house, and Postal Telegraph Offices. As may be recollected, the idea of erecting a spacious block of buildings upon the piece of land between the Bute Dock Chambers and the present Docks Post-office has for some time been mooted, but has never yet been brought to completion, one reason for this being stated to be the opposition of the authorities of the Custom-house, and their refusal to remove from their present quarters at the corner of Custom-house-street to the vicinity of the docks. The piece of land in question has been purposely reserved, and will be of a sufficient area whereon to erect in one building a commodious suite of offices for each of the three departments named. The Board of Trade and the postal authorities are favourable to the project, but for some reason or other those at the Customs are not only unfavourable, but refuse to join in the scheme. There are many reasons why the removal of the three offices to one building near the docks would be a good measure. They are all connected with the shipping, and would be most convenient for everyone connected with the mercantile trade of the port. To the inhabitants of the town and many others the removal of the present Custom-house to the docks would be a great boon, as the crowd of seamen who habitually congregate around it, as they necessarily must do in the transaction of their business, would be removed from the centre of the town, and from a great deal of the temptation which is unfortunately thrown in their way by the miserable and nefarious haunts of Custom-house-street. It is to be hoped that the Custom-house authorities will remove their objection, whatever it may be (and at present it is apparently somewhat of a mystery), and join with the Board of Trade and Post-office in building upon the piece of land reserved for them at the docks. At any rate, it appears that as soon as the plans are agreed upon the new Post-office and Board of Trade Offices will be commenced, and one-third of the piece of land reserved for the Custom-house. As each of the Bute Trustees were, on Thursday, away from Cardiff, they could not be seen by the officials from London, who were, however, informed by Mr. M’Connochie that immediately the plans were prepared and sent down they would be considered by the trustees, and, as soon as approved of, the proposed buildings would be proceeded with.”

An article in ‘The Cardiff Times, 3rd November 1877’ provides further information. The article states:

“NEW GOVERNMENT OFFICES FOR CARDIFF

“By a paragraph in our issue of the 27th instant, it will have been seen that the long contemplated erection of a new shipping office, and postal and telegraph offices for Cardiff is shortly to be accomplished. “It is a long lane that has no turning,” is a trite, but true aphorism and the very lengthened agitation which has prevailed regarding the site and completion of these particular buildings, we are glad to say, will now cease. The maritime public may congratulate themselves upon the removal of the Mercantile Marine Office, destructive alike to the morale of the seamen, owing to its present position, and the convenience of the shipmasters, to one of the best and most convenient sites in the port. The general public, and the officials especially, will hail with satisfaction the new building for the post and telegraph service, as the one now in use is, and has long been, quite inadequate to the accommodation of former, and the health and comfort of the latter. We have taken our share in advocating from time to time the desirability, and even the necessity, for the change. It is now five years ago that Messrs Gray and Hamilton, of the Board of Trade, at a meeting in the Chamber of Commerce, promised the shipowners to endeavour to get the shipping office removed from the notorious “Whitmore-lane” to a place near the dock-head. Frequent negotiations have taken place since as to the site; but the real “lion in the path” was the removal of the Custom House along with it. Had the merchants and Bute trustees simply joined hands with the Board of Trade for the removal of the shipping office, doubtless it would have been accomplished long ere this. They, however, clung to the hope of getting the Customs removed as well, for obvious reasons. They returned again and again to the “charge” made upon the commissioners in London; and only considered themselves finally beaten off some few months ago. Then the reluctant consent was given that the seamen’s office should be allowed to be built on the only proper piece of ground available – the “piano piece” – opposite to the Mount Stuart Hotel. Since then, it is only just to say, every one concerned has laboured to carry the matter to a successful issue. Plans were prepared at the office of the Metropolitan Board of Works, and the surveyor for that department, Mr Rivers, and the assistant secretary to the Marine Department Board of Trade, Mr Swanston, met here, on Thursday week, to arrange for the land, and settle the question of suitability of the designs. It is due to Mr M’Connochie, representing the Bute Estate, that, we understand, he met them, and gave them every encouragement and facility. We hear that most liberal terms have been arranged for the leasing of the ground. It is also due to the Mayor to say that he personally used all the influence which his private and official character could throw into the scale to further the scheme, in which course he was ably seconded by Mr Raggett, the Collector of Customs, and Mr Neate, principal officer of the Board of Trade in the South Wales district.

“To make the question more plain, we believe that a very handsome block of buildings will be erected on the piece of ground between the cabstand at Powell’s-place and the lower part of the West Dock. It will have a frontage of something over 100 feet, and a depth of about 150 feet. The Board of Trade offices will be on the side nearest the dock, and the telegraph and postal offices will adjoin. The basement of the former will contain ample room for the engagement and discharge of seamen having also a large courtyard where they can assemble, away from any interference of crimps or other “harpies,” who usually make them their special prey. Above the mercantile marine offices the Board of Trade surveyors will be located, and their rooms will also contain ample space for the examination of candidates as engineers, masters, and mates for the sea service. So that one more step will thus be made at once in the official status of the port. The present port for those examinations is chiefly Bristol. They were lately commenced at Swansea, but have not been availed of there to a large extent. It is a well-known fact that two-thirds or three-fourths of the candidates for those honours – especially amongst engineers – appearing at the Bristol office, would go through the ordeal at Cardiff. With regard to the postal and telegraph office, ample space will be provided for a very large staff, so that an impetus in the business will be given. It is well known that Cardiff is a central office for South Wales. All, or nearly all, messages from Merthyr, Aberdare, and other places in the district, have to be sent here for re-transmission. The pressure consequent upon such a concentration of business has oftentimes been almost beyond the powers of the staff – “cribbed, cabined, and confined” as they are in such a small building as the present one – to overtake. Nervous people have many times anticipated that the force – not the electric current, but the mere weight of the numerous wires – would drag the front of the building out, and thus cause a catastrophe. Whether such a contingency is possible or not we do not know, but we certainly think that the mere apprehension of it shows there is “something rotten in the state of Denmark,” so far as the Docks Telegraph-office is concerned. The contemplation of such a contretemps is simply horrible, for, not only would a vast amount of business be stopped, but in all likelihood human life would be sacrificed as well. As Bulwer Lytton says, in the “Lady of Lyons,” “Dost thou like the picture?” We wot not.

“It is more agreeable, therefore, to think that in the course of twelve months the new offices will be completed, and we hope that now the enterprise will be prosecuted with the utmost alacrity. It would, however, be well if our public men keep an eye on the progress made, and assist in urging the matter along. “There is many a slip between the cup and the lip.” By that we do not mean to insinuate the contingency of the “event going off;” but there is a certain amount of barnacle still clinging to every circumlocution office, and no harm can be done by a simple enquiry as to the advance being made.

“In the meantime the commercial public are to be congratulated on the progress made. We hope that not only will the proposed buildings be useful to them, and a real protection to the sailors, but that the elevation will be of such a character as to be an architectural ornament to the town. Public structures of a high class appearance are, it must be confessed, rather rare in Cardiff. Anything of this kind, therefore, that will add to the beauty of our street architecture will be welcomed by the whole community, and, in an aesthetic sense, will have an educational tendency.

“Before leaving the subject we can only express our regret that the Custom House is not to form a feature in the group. We have on former occasions strongly argued for the change to be made. The advantages are obvious. The arguments in favour of it are unanswerable. It is true that a small section of the community have petitioned for it to remain; but that section, in its persona and pecuniary interests, is only as a “drop in the bucket” compared to those of others who are interested in its removal; and the force of truth and right must ultimately prevail. Time is in favour of the scheme. The port is fast rising into the first-class position of ports, and will demand a convenient and commodious building to do its Customs’ business at. It is commonly reported that part of the ground next to the proposed Telegraph Office will be reserved for the Custom House. If so, we would urge the Chamber of Commerce to take up the case again. The more they try, the stronger will be their claim; and they are bound to succeed. Our opinion is that if a united effort were made, success would ensue. The great points to consider, in proceeding, are – first, to disarm the opposition of the up-town merchants; and, secondly, to arrange to take the old building off the hands of the Government. With the improved value of the site consequent on the Public Improvement Act, and its operatives, such a course is more likely than otherwise to be a profitable speculation. A company might surely be formed for the purpose. Regarding the “first points” we would strenuously urge upon the gentlemen forming the “opposition,” notably those of the Chamber of Trade, that it is of no use fighting against fate. They must yield to the inevitable, for, if another failure should ensue in getting the building removed, the lapse of a very few years will show the imperative necessity of it. The mere fact of the Mercantile Marine office being at such a distance will cause so much inconvenience to one section of shipmasters that, in this growing port, the severance will become intolerable. It will rouse the British lion still more, and, as Gerald Massey reminded the Russians at the time of the Crimean war, he is a dangerous animal “when he wags his tail.” However, we trust that the scheme of having the whole of these collateral public offices built together will very soon be effected, and that amicably.”

In the ‘South Wales Daily News, 15th April 1880’ in a column dedicated to ‘District Intelligence’, an extract states:

“THE PROPOSED MERCANTILE MARINE OFFICE AND POST OFFICE AT THE DOCKS

“Another step has been taken in furtherance of this scheme. The advertisement for tenders has appeared in the Times. It is assumed that all difficulties regarding the site, &c., have been removed and that it is now merely a question of the length of time which will be required to erect the building. ...”

In the ‘South Wales Daily News, 22nd April 1880’ in a column dedicated to the business of the Cardiff Chamber of Commerce, an extract states:

“THE NEW MERCANTILE MARINE OFFICES

“The following letter from the Board of Trade read :- In reply to your letter of the 24th ult., relative to the erection of the proposed new Mercantile Marine offices at Cardiff, I am directed by the Board of Trade to inform you that unexpected difficulties have arisen in connection with the conveyance of the site. The Board understands, however, that these difficulties have now been overcome, and that the plans are all prepared. They are informed that the work will probably be commenced this spring and proceeded with as rapidly as possible. This was considered to be satisfactory.”

The history behind the requirement for new offices and the excellent accommodation these new offices would provide can be found in the following article from the ‘Weekly Mail, 4th September 1880’ which states:

“NEW PUBLIC OFFICES AT CARDIFF DOCKS

“As far back as eleven or twelve years ago it was felt that there was in Cardiff a lack of accommodation in the public offices, and that the buildings connected with the shipping trade of the port ought to be somewhere in the neighbourhood of the docks. The chamber of commerce took the matter up and petitioned for the removal of the Custom house offices, Mercantile Marine offices, &c., to the lower end of the town; but a counter petition was got up by bonded stores merchants and others interested, and the object was defeated, the matter for a time falling to the ground. However, about eight years ago the subject again cropped up, earnest representations being made to the authorities in London of the difficulties which the local officers have to put up with, more especially in the Mercantile Marine department. An inquiry was made into the matter, and negotiations were carried on for a considerable time with a view to having the Custom house and other departments removed as had previously been suggested. Difficulties arose, and ultimately the project of wholesale emigration was abandoned, and it was resolved to remove only the offices of the Mercantile Marine department; but on its being understood that it was necessary to have a larger and more commodious suite of offices for the post-office and telegraph departments at the Docks, the authorities decided to amalgamate the two.

Arrangements were made with the Bute Trustees for the purchase of a site, the spot chosen being an exceedingly convenient one on the side of Bute street, and close to the East Bute Dock. Plans and estimates were prepared, and the project took a more definite shape, the whole resulting at last in the preparation of a splendid design by Mr Rivers, architect to the Board of Works. The building is, we believe, estimated to cost £15,000 or £16,000, or, site included, about £20,000. The work has been commenced, and the fabric promises to be both imposing and commodious, and one that will add to the attractions of the town. On the Bute street side there will be a frontage of 160ft. or thereabouts, the height being about 50ft. This front elevation will consist of three storeys, built of Carlisle red stone up to the first storey, and above that red bricks with redstone tracings, giving it a decidedly ornamental appearance, while granite columns with carved copings will embellish some portion of the building. The other frontage, about 100ft., will face the Mount Stuart Hotel, and will be similarly treated. The place is divided into two departments, having each two sub-divisions. In the portion facing Bute street will be the Post office and Telegraph departments; and in the other, so as to be near the docks, the Mercantile Marine department, with the Board of Trade surveyor’s offices above. The post offices will be a considerable building, as during the principal portion of the day telegraphic business is now carried on at the Docks office, and, with the increase of business continually going on, it was felt that a suite of some dimensions would be necessary. The other portion will consist of, as we have stated, surveyor’s offices, an examination room for captains, mates, engineers, and others – who have now to go to Bristol to “pass;” offices for the principal officer of the Board of Trade and the other surveyors. There will be two large front entrances, with porticoes over them, one for the Board of Trade, and the other for the Post office, and in the front part offices for the superintendent of the Mercantile Marine and the cashier, while a wide staircase from the hall will lead to the other departments. On the docks side there will be a large gate or entrance for shipping the sailors, with engagement and discharge rooms and waiting rooms near at hand for sailors and ships’ officers and the out-door staff of the department. There will also be access from this yard to the rear of the post office buildings. The whole will be fitted with heating apparatus of the most approved description. We are unable to give a more detailed description of the building owing to the want of courtesy displayed by the representative of the contractors, who peremptorily refused to give our reporter any information on the subject. With regard to the dimensions of the whole we can only remark that we hope care has been taken not to “cramp” new offices of this description, for since negotiations were commenced in 1872 the business of the Mercantile Marine offices, and, we believe, the Postal Telegraph office, has doubled. Of the policy of separating the Mercantile Marine offices for the Customs we can say nothing, except that it certainly does seem very desirable that two departments so closely connected should be near each other. The ceremony of laying the foundation stone of the new erection is to take place on Wednesday next, the duty being, we understand, undertaken by the member for Cardiff, Sir E. J. Reed, who has been invited to do so by the President of the Board of Works.”

The pomp and ceremony surrounding the laying of the foundation stone for the new Post-office and Mercantile Marine Office in the Docks was covered in the 'South Wales Daily News, 9th September 1880' extracts state:

“SIR E. J. REED, M.P., AT CARDIFF

“NEW GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS AT THE DOCKS

“THE COMMERCIAL PROGRESS OF THE TOWN

“The foundation stone of the new Government offices, to be erected at the entrance to the Docks opposite Rothsay-terrace, was laid, on Wednesday, by Sir E. J. Reed, K.C.B., M.P. The hoarding, poles, and the portions of building already erected were gaily decorated with flags, and streamers stretching across the street, while the fronts of the old post-office, and those of business premises of the residents adjoining the Mount Stuart Hotel were also similarly adorned. Invitations had been sent by the Chairman of the Board of Works to about 70 of the leading commercial residents of the town, many of whom were, however, unfortunately absent from home, but the number of spectators was very large. The contractors, Messrs Kirk and Randall, Woolwich, had constructed a large platform adjacent to the spot where the foundation stone would be laid, and while this was filled with a number of ladies and gentlemen residing in the town, the open space in front was filled with the working classes engaged at the docks, and who appeared to take a great interest in the proceedings. ...

“Sir E. J. Reed was accompanied by Mr Rivers, the architect for the Board of Works, Mr Randall, of the firm of Kirk and Randall, the contractors, and Mr C. Randall, manager, now engaged in constructing the new dry dock between the East and West Docks, and the County Record Offices, Westgate-street. Mr Randall placed for public inspection an excellent drawing of the building as it would appear when erected. On entering the enclosure the member for Cardiff was loudly cheered. He was at once conducted to the stone about to be laid, and which will form the south-east corner stone of the building. The stone bears the following inscription:—“This stone was laid by Sir E. J. Reed, K.C.B., M.P., Sept. 8th, 1880.” Sir Edward was assisted by the architect and the contractors, Mr Randall presenting him with a handsome silver trowel, on which also was a suitable inscription. The mortar was spread, the stone lowered to its resting place, and amid loud cheers Sir Edward Reed declared the stone duly and truly laid, after he had struck it with the mallet and tested it with the level. ...”

“With regard to the mercantile marine portion of the building, it was under the same roof, as he had said before, and separated entirely from the telegraph part. On the ground floor would be a grand entrance hall, one large room for an engagement and discharge office for sailors, and he was glad to say that, owing to the care and judgment of the Board of Works Department, there would be with this division a portion separated off for the convenience of the wives of seamen who came to present the remitted pay notes of their husbands. It must have struck many that the wives of seamen were sometimes very inconveniently placed in seeking to obtain the payments of those notes, and it was a very satisfactory arrangement in this building that there would be ample and careful provision for the women apart from the men. He thought that marked a feature in the progress of our civilisation and social arrangement, because they all knew that in seaport towns and dock districts there had been a great want of attention to the proprieties and convenience of sex. In addition to this, accommodation for seamen who might have to wait had been prepared, and the architect had recognised the fact that there were two classes of seamen – some who liked to be on deck and some who preferred being below – (laughter) – and he had given an open court to the seamen who chose to be on deck, and a waiting room for those who liked to be ‘tween decks – so that the accommodation for seamen was very satisfactory. On the same level, and in a detached building, there would be accommodation for the out-door staff of the marine offices of the Government. On the first floor of this building there would be offices for the principal officer of the Board of Trade, spacious examination rooms, and the latter led him to observe that there was in this occasion a very important proof of the growth and greatness of Cardiff, necessitating as it did the transfer from Bristol to this port the examination of people for the marine service. In this building there would be splendid examination rooms. Also ample accommodation in the form of sanitary offices for all those who resort to them. There would also be another feature in this building. They were well aware, many of them, that the effects of seamen who died had to be sent home, and were often stowed away in an unsatisfactory manner. Here there would be provision for disinfecting those effects and for storing them in dry ventilating compartments, so that everything would be done that would be done on behalf of the property of any gentleman in the country whose effects had to be stored. On the second floor the only accommodation would be rooms for the caretaker. After referring to the excellent arrangements for ventilating and heating the new building, Sir Edward Reed said it was very gratifying to find that the free and unfettered commerce of the country was furthered and facilitated by the action of the Government Departments.”

The opening of these new offices on Thursday, 1st September 1881 was covered by an article in 'The Western Mail, 2nd September 1881' which states:

“OPENING OF THE NEW BOARD OF TRADE OFFICES AT CARDIFF

“On Thursday morning the Board of Trade flag was hoisted over the new Government buildings at the Bute Docks, Cardiff, and at ten o'clock the Board of Trade Offices were opened, without any formal ceremony, for the transaction of business which has hitherto been carried on in the old premises in Custom House-street. During the day the shipment of seamen proceeded satisfactorily, and it became palpable that the accommodation afforded in all departments at the new was very superior to that of the old offices. The Board of Trade departments comprise one half of the entire block, the other half being intended for postal and telegraph purposes. The latter is also nearly ready for opening, and in the course of a short time it may be expected that the whole of the capacious structure will be thrown open. The plans of the buildings were drawn by Mr. Rivers, the chief surveyor to the Board of Works. The contractors were Messrs. Kirk and Randall, and the cost of the whole structure has been about £14,000, to which the price of the ground, viz., £5,000, must be added, making in all £19,000. At the old offices the shipping and discharging of seamen was carried on on the first floor, and the waiting-rooms which were comparatively small, were on the ground floor. This was a very inconvenient arrangement, and in the new building there is an improvement in this respect, for the mercantile marine work is now done on the ground floor where are located the engaging and discharging-rooms, the cashier's office, the office of the Superintendent of Mercantile Marine (Mr. Turner), and at the rear is an enclosed yard where the seamen congregate and are selected by the shipmasters. The yard itself is a great convenience, as it will obviate any necessity of the seamen standing about in the streets. It is also approached by a large side entrance. Adjoining it are the rooms for engaging crews, two excellent waiting-rooms, and there are also rooms set apart for chief officers. There is ample accommodation for the out-door staff, a porter's lodge and other conveniences. The whole of the arrangements in the shipping department are of a compact character, and tend greatly to the facilitation of business. On the first floor are situated the office of the surveyor (Mr. Neate, the principal officer of the district), the emigration department, and a room for the examination of masters, mates, and engineers. The latter-named department will be taken charge of by Captain Brook, of Bristol, who will attend on the 6th inst. and on the first Tuesdays of ensuing months. Hitherto Cardiff people requiring to undergo these examinations have had to attend at Bristol. On the second floor there are rooms for the caretakers, store-rooms, &c. The old building, where the seamen were shipped until Wednesday, is now closed, but a part of it, viz., that known as the discharging office, has been taken over by the Customs officials, whose premises adjoin, and to which it does, in reality, belong. The remaining portion will probably be to let. The office hours are from ten o'clock in the morning until four p.m.; Saturday's, ten o'clock until two p.m. The opening of the new offices gave rise to the expression of much satisfaction at the Docks, and it is generally considered that Government has more adequately recognised the requirements of the port in providing it with an establishment of this description.”

4.10.3 History of Cardiff Docks Postal Arrangement

The new Post-office and telegraph office in Cardiff Docks on Bute Place opened on Monday, 10th October 1881.

These new premises, as newspaper articles of the time said, had been "promised so long" and were "so much required". Prior to this, the postal and telegraph services were based in a building that was considered "old and in every way unsuitable" for its purpose, with "employees, who are at present cooped up in a house that is entirely insufficient".

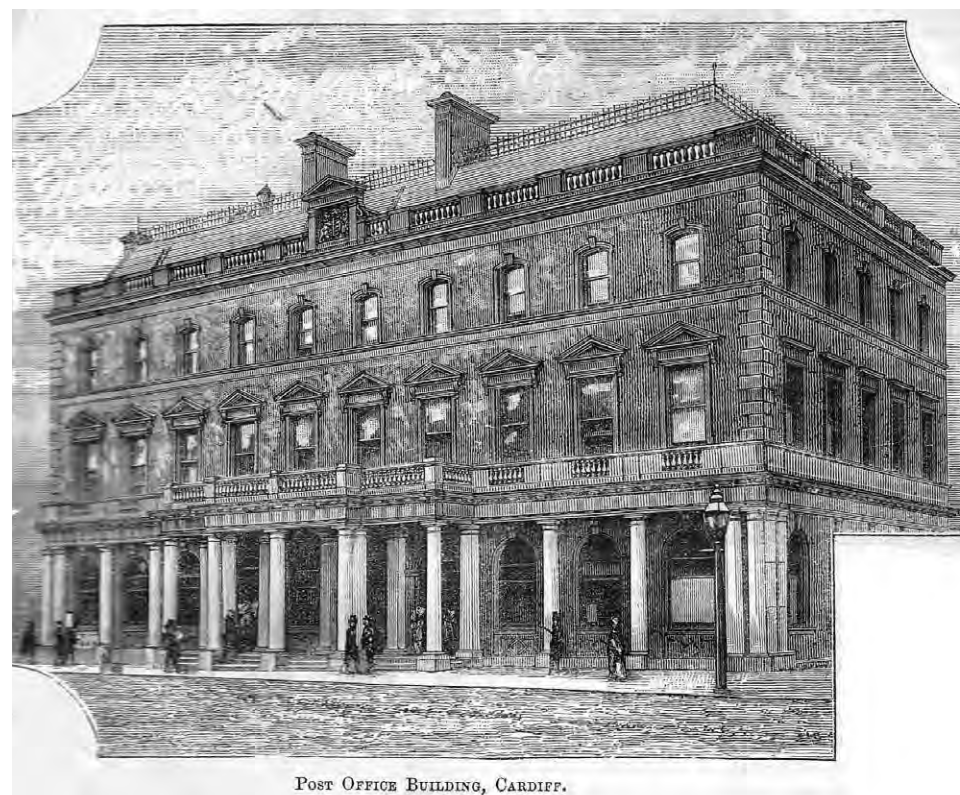
The continuing expansion of the docks meant that the amount of business at the post-office and telegraph offices just kept increasing. Various improvements to the postal provisions in the Docks had been made over the years, such as; the introduction of two letter carriers in 1856 "to deliver letters to the shipping in the Docks, addressed to parties on board ships in the port"; and the opening in 1874 of a sub-post office in the Docks "under the arches at the top of the east dock" which proved to be a dangerous location, too close to railway lines resulting in the tragic death of a fourteen year old telegraph boy in 1876 who was hit by a train.

In 1879, an amount of £4,600 had been scheduled for the new post-office at the Docks, made up of two items, namely:— Post-office, £767; telegraphs, £3,833. By 1880, Civil Service estimates show the scheduled sum increased to £5,200.

At the laying of the foundation stone for the new the new Post-office and Mercantile Marine Office at the Docks in September 1880, Sir E. J. Reed M.P. said "the growth of this place is so rapid as to render a very large extension of the telegraphic facilities absolutely necessary". Following the opening of the new premises, an article in the 'Western Mail' said "The removal of the staff from the old building to the present spacious structure is a congratulatory matter, and the public will not fail to appreciate the improved facilities which the new establishment offers for the prosecution of the postal and telegraph work incidental to the daily business of the docks."



1877 Cardiff Bute Docks Post Mark, Post card to Liverpool
(source: 'stampsoftheworld.co.uk')



Post Office Building, Cardiff - old sketch (undated) (source: 'messybeast.com')



Post Office, Bute Docks - old postcard 1907 (source: 'thingspostal.org.uk')

An extract from 'The Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian, 5th April 1856' states:

"GREAT POSTAL ACCOMMODATION FOR THE SHIPPING — Yesterday (Friday) two letter carriers were appointed to deliver letters to the shipping in the Docks, addressed to parties on board ships in the port. For the present they work from the Bute-dock post-office, but will in a few weeks proceed from the head office in St. Mary's- street, when the Bute-dock office will be reduced from a delivery office to a mere receiving office. Hitherto masters of vessels and others expecting letters have been obliged to enquire if there were any letters for them."

An extract from an article in 'The Cardiff Times, 4th April 1868' states:

"The Postmaster General declined opening a Branch Post Office instead of the present receiving office at the Bute Docks. The want of this is much felt."

'South Wales Daily News, 16th April 1874' states:

"A NEW SUB-POST OFFICE — Arrangements are, we understand, in progress for the opening of a sub-post office in the neighbourhood of the Docks. Application, we believe, had been made for the supply of such a desideratum both for the east and west docks. The site chosen for the office is connected with the wharfinger's office, under the arches at the top of the east dock. An opinion prevails among those most interested that greater wisdom might have been displayed in the selection, and that the necessary outlay might have been more judiciously applied. According to the arrangement at present (and which, moreover, must be taken to be permanent), the captains and others at the West Docks are but slightly benefitted: while had the branch office been established either in Tyndall-street or Herbert-street, not only the gentlemen connected with the shipping, but the inhabitants generally of the district would have found their postal arrangements greatly facilitated. However, the selected site is not void of danger, inasmuch as a line of railway runs within four feet of the Post-office door. Is the new sub-Post-office intended as an illustration of "How not to do it?"

A letter in the 'South Wales Daily News, 12th January 1875' states:

“THE CARDIFF DOCKS POSTAL ARRANGEMENT

“To the Editor of the SOUTH WALES DAILY NEWS

“Sir, - Kindly allow me through the medium of your invaluable paper to point out a defect in connection with the Post-office at the Bute Docks. At the general office in town there is one clerk for the telegraph department, one stamp distributor, and two money-order clerks; but at the Docks' office (where there is equally as much, if not more business executed) there is one telegraph clerk, and but one to manage the money order and stamp departments combined. If the Post-office authorities would only make an addition of one to the clerks behind the counter of the Bute Docks' office, the excessive crowding which now prevails (especially about 4 30 p.m., previous to the dispatch of the North Mail) would cease. Hoping this matter will not be allowed to fall through without any alteration, I am, &c.,
Cowbridge Road, Cardiff, Jan. 8, 1875.”

An article in 'The Cardiff Times, 23rd December 1876' states:

“SHOCKING DEATH OF A TELEGRAPH BOY

“Some time since, for the convenience of captains of vessels, the Post Office opened a branch telegraph and money-order office in a small building under one of the railway arches on the west side of the East Dock. About three o'clock on Saturday afternoon Patrick Maloney, a telegraph boy, 14 years of age, was on duty at the office, and received instructions to proceed to the dock post-office. A line of rails passes within a foot of the entrance to the branch telegraph office, and Maloney in his hurry did not observe an engine with a train of ballast waggons approaching, which on the instant he left the door came up. The buffer of the engine knocked him down, with his head on the rails, and the wheels of the engine and several tracks passed over it before it could be stopped. When picked up he was quite dead, the head being nearly severed from the body.”

An article in the 'South Wales Daily News, 22nd July 1878' states:

“CARDIFF NEW POST-OFFICE AND SHIPPING OFFICES

“Several months since it was confidently stated that arrangements had been concluded between the Post-office authorities, the Board of Trade officials, and Lord Bute, for the leasing of a piece of ground in the garden opposite Rothsay-terrace, on which it was proposed to erect a Post-office and Telegraph-office, and also a Shipping-office, for the transaction of all business connected with the shipment and discharge of crews belonging to merchant vessels. This anticipation received a somewhat rude shock last week by the rumour, which was currently accepted at the Docks, that the whole scheme had been abandoned, that the grant for the erection of the buildings had lapsed, and the whole matter had fallen through, or must at some future time be begun de novo. To confirm, to a certain extent, the rumour, the old and in every way unsuitable building now used as a postal and telegraph station was then undergoing externally and internally a thorough repair. On Saturday, the surveyor for the General Post-office arrived at Cardiff, and one of the objects of his visit had reference to the new Post-office at the Docks. The plans of the new building had been approved by him and the surveyor to the Board of Trade; and the site was considered one admirably adapted for the purposes required. The money has been voted, as there has never been any intention to depart from the agreement entered into by the Government with Lord Bute, and the Surveyor expressed a hope on Saturday to see the foundation of the new building laid shortly. The alterations and improvements of the existing building were merely necessary for sanitary purposes.”

An extract from an article in 'The Cardiff Times, 3rd May 1879' states:

“Under the heading of “Post-office Buildings,” Class I. of the vote, I find that a sum has at length been scheduled for the new post-office at the Cardiff Docks. The amount is £4,600, and is made up of two items, namely:— Post-office, £767; telegraphs, £3,833. Doubtless, as the money has already been voted, the next step will be an advertisement for tenders to erect the buildings. The erection of the up-town buildings took seven months to complete, if I am rightly informed, so that in about 12 months hence we may see another additional ornament added to the architectural features at the Docks. A great boon will thus be added to the public convenience, and to the health and comfort of the employees, who are at present cooped up in a house that is entirely insufficient; and it is simply a marvel that the active sanitary inspector does not summon the authorities for overcrowding.”

An article from the 'South Wales Daily News, 13th February 1880' states:

“NEW POST-OFFICE AT THE DOCKS. — We have received the Civil Service estimates and find that a sum of £5,200 has been charged this year for the new post-office at the Docks, promised so long, and which is so much required. The sum voted last year was £4,400. It is re-voted again, hence only £800 additional is charged. As the former sum was supposed to be the purchase money of the ground it cannot be inferred that the latter amount can be the expense of the new building, especially when it is known that the Mercantile Marine Office and Board of Trade Surveyor's offices are to be included. The simple inference, therefore, is that these important offices are again to be shelved – so far as their immediate building is concerned – for another year. This, including the time of erection, means a much longer period. The public of Cardiff ought really to see to this, as the inconvenience attached to inadequate offices for public buildings such as these is becoming intolerable. No banker would dare to treat the public in this way. Since they were first proposed – eight years ago – the business is doubled, and is continuing to increase.”

The pomp and ceremony surrounding the laying of the foundation stone for the new Post-office and Mercantile Marine Office in the Docks was covered in the 'South Wales Daily News, 9th September 1880' extracts state:

“SIR E. J. REED, M.P., AT CARDIFF
 “NEW GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS AT THE DOCKS
 “THE COMMERCIAL PROGRESS OF THE TOWN

“The foundation stone of the new Government offices, to be erected at the entrance to the Docks opposite Rothsay-terrace, was laid, on Wednesday, by Sir E. J. Reed, K.C.B., M.P. The hoarding, poles, and the portions of building already erected were gaily decorated with flags, and streamers stretching across the street, while the fronts of the old post-office, and those of business premises of the residents adjoining the Mount Stuart Hotel were also similarly adorned. Invitations had been sent by the Chairman of the Board of Works to about 70 of the leading commercial residents of the town, many of whom were, however, unfortunately absent from home, but the number of spectators was very large. The contractors, Messrs Kirk and Randall, Woolwich, had constructed a large platform adjacent to the spot where the foundation stone would be laid, and while this was filled with a number of ladies and gentlemen residing in the town, the open space in front was filled with the working classes engaged at the docks, and who appeared to take a great interest in the proceedings. ...

“Sir E. J. Reed was accompanied by Mr Rivers, the architect for the Board of Works, Mr Randall, of the firm of Kirk and Randall, the contractors, and Mr C. Randall, manager, now engaged in constructing the new dry dock between the East and West Docks, and the County Record Offices, Westgate-street. Mr Randall placed for public inspection an excellent drawing of the building as it would appear when erected. On entering the enclosure the member for Cardiff was loudly cheered. He was at once conducted to the stone about to be laid, and which will form the south-east corner stone of the building. The stone bears the following inscription:—“This stone was laid by Sir E. J. Reed, K.C.B., M.P., Sept. 8th, 1880.” Sir Edward was assisted by the architect and the contractors, Mr Randall presenting him with a handsome silver trowel, on which also was a suitable inscription. The mortar was spread, the stone lowered to its resting place, and amid loud cheers Sir Edward Reed declared the stone duly and truly laid, after he had struck it with the mallet and tested it with the level.

“Sir E. J. REED, M.P., who was loudly cheered, then spoke as follows:— Ladies and gentlemen, — It is desired that I should say a few words by way of explaining the occasion of this ceremony and the objects of the building, the foundation-stone of which we have just laid. I am very glad indeed to be able to say that the necessity for this great construction arises out of the growth, the very rapid growth, of the town and trade of Cardiff — (applause) — and more particularly of Cardiff Docks and the maritime commerce which resorts to those docks. The growth of this business has rendered necessary the increase to a much larger scale of two existing public establishments under the Government, namely, a large new Marine Department and Board of Trade, and a large addition to the telegraphic facilities of the port. With regard to the telegraphic system, it is a curious fact that although the facilities for telegraphing have been doubled quite recently by virtue of improvements in the telegraphic apparatus, at the same time the growth of this place is so rapid as to render a very large extension of the telegraphic facilities absolutely necessary. This building, this fine building as all those who have looked on the design under the shed close by will know it to be, is intended to accommodate both these divisions of the public service, the telegraphs and the merchant shipping department of the Board of Trade at this port. The two buildings will be under one roof, but they have been skilfully designed so as to be quite separate in regard to working operations when completed. Before I describe the accommodation which will be afforded, I think it is only right and proper to say that this town — and the commercial members of it especially — are very much indebted to the Marquis of Bute for having granted on very moderate terms indeed, at a price much below its value, the site upon which these buildings have been erected. Those of you who know the town well must be aware that it was very difficult to obtain a site in the immediate vicinity of the docks suitable for this purpose and on a sufficiently large scale. Unless the noble marquis had exhibited the consideration he has, it would not have been possible to give the trade of the port the accommodation they will receive when these buildings are completed. (Loud applause.) I will now describe to you the accommodation which will be provided for the telegraphic branch, and you must excuse me if I am a little technical, because that is inevitable under the circumstances. The ground floor of the telegraphic portion of the building will contain spacious public offices for those who have to send telegrams away; in the second place, accommodation for the messenger boys; and in the third place, large store-rooms with sanitary offices. On the first floor there will be offices for the divisional telegraph engineer and his clerks, this being a central station of the Telegraph Department, together with retiring-rooms and sanitary offices for that very interesting branch of the post-office staff, namely, the young ladies who are engaged there. (Laughter.) The second floor of the building will consist of one large room, throughout which will be distributed the telegraphic instruments for carrying on the business of the department. This room will be 52 feet by 38 feet. These figures will suffice to show you that we are to-day commencing a very important development of the telegraphic system in this town. ... I hope that my friend Mr Rivers, the architect and surveyor of the Board of Works, will forgive me for saying that I believe his plans to be most eminently deserving of praise and confidence.

The ventilation and other sanitary arrangements of this building will be, in my humble judgment, of a very superior kind, and I could only wish that the heating and ventilating apparatus which I lately, at considerable expense, had fitted up in my own house, were half as successful as I believe the apparatus will be in this building. (A laugh.)”

Within the 'District Intelligence' column of the 'South Wales Daily News, 10th October 1881' we learn that the post-office and telegraph department opened for business on Monday, 10th October 1881. The column states:

“THE NEW POST-OFFICE AT THE DOCKS – This new building, which was partially opened on the 1st of September, for all the purposes connected with the Board of Trade, will be opened to-day as a post and telegraph office. The necessary arrangements were made on Saturday for the transfer of business from the old post-office. The telegraph wires were disconnected from the old and attached to the new building late on Saturday night, and all the necessary arrangements carried out. The accommodation in the new building is considerably greater than in the old one, and the postal and telegraph departments are kept quite distinct.”

Within the 'District News' column of the 'The Western Mail, 11th October 1881' there is a brief paragraph on the opening of the new Docks post-office and telegraph department. The column states:

“THE NEW POST-OFFICE AT THE DOCKS – On Monday the new Post-office, which forms part of the new Government offices at the Bute Docks, was opened for the transaction of postal and telegraph business. The removal of the staff from the old building to the present spacious structure is a congratulatory matter, and the public will not fail to appreciate the improved facilities which the new establishment offers for the prosecution of the postal and telegraph work incidental to the daily business of the docks. A detailed description of the premises has already appeared in these columns. The contractors were Messrs. Kirk and Randall, and the total cost of the Post-office and the Mercantile Marine office, which constitute the block, has been about £20,000.”

4.11 History & Heritage of Cory's Building

In his book 'The Buildings of Wales – Glamorgan (Pevsner Architectural Guides – 1995)', John Newman talks about Bute Street and says:

“The street ends with the massive bulk of Cory's Buildings, dated 1889 and designed by the local firm of Bruton & Williams. Thirteen bays, five storeys, faced with Bath stone, and barely keeping its classical paraphernalia under control. The feature which is meant to dominate is the order of Corinthian columns with decorated leggings recessed four and four into the upper part of the façade.

The building was built for the Cory family.

Richard Cory I (the elder) (1799-1882) was a mariner based at Bideford, North Devon who owned a small vessel and sailed regularly between Bideford, Cardiff, Bristol and Ireland. In the early 1830s, when the iron industry was booming in South Wales, Richard Cory decided to move his family to Cardiff. Around 1838, he opened a ship-chandler's store near the Custom House in Cardiff and also traded as a provision merchant.

When he set up his business at Cardiff Docks, it was known as Richard Cory & Sons and was based at 106 Bute Street for many years, and operated as shipbrokers and coal exporters.

Richard I (the elder) retired in 1859 and his two oldest sons, John and Richard II (the younger) took over, subsequently renaming the business Cory Brothers & Co. In April 1888, the business was registered as a private limited company, and became known as Cory Brothers & Co., Limited.

John Cory (1828 - 1910) is remembered as a ship-owner, coal-owner, and philanthropist. He was a Methodist, and like his father, backed the Temperance Movement. John's charitable donations were believed to amount to nearly £50,000 annually, in the years before his death.

Richard Cory II (1830 - 1914) was a Baptist and a generous benefactor; particularly to Baptist chapels, colleges, and missions, the Salvation Army, the temperance movement, the Y.M.C.A., and Cardiff University College.

The Cory brothers became very wealthy; however, they used much of their wealth for philanthropic purposes. They contributed to many causes which helped in the social, educational, and moral progress of the people, especially of Cardiff.

Under John and Richard's management, their shipping and coal-exporting activities continued to grow. The high demand for South Wales steam coal for shipping, in all parts of the world, and especially after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, led to the firm establishing coal depots, offices, and agencies along all the great trade routes of the world. In 1868, Cory Brothers & Company also became colliery owners.

Early in 1875, the business moved to new premises on the corner of James Street and Bute Street which became known as “Cory's Corner”. Built especially for Cory Brothers and designed by the architect F. Cutlan, the building was considered “in advance of anything similar in character in the Principality” and “by far the most imposing building erected here.” This building is the former Midland Bank building, on the opposite corner to the (now) Cory's Building.

After only fifteen years in this new building, the business of Cory Brothers Co., Ltd had again grown so significantly that larger premises were required. Cory Brothers commissioned another splendid new building, this time on the corner of Bute Place and Bute Street, enabling “Cory's Corner” to continue.

In 1898, the Bristol and West of England Bank took over the Cory Brothers premises on the corner of James Street and Bute Street, with alterations made to the ground floor windows and doors. The bank later became the Midland Bank. Extensions were added, in a similar style, in 1902-2 and 1914-15. This building still exists today and is protected by a by a Grade II listing, which was designated on 19 May 1975 and last amended on 21 August 1998. The reasons for listing being “Impressive example of High Victorian Commercial architecture on prominent site. Group value.”

The design for Cory Brothers new offices (for Cory's Building) was determined by an architectural competition, a premium of £50 being paid to the winner, with the judge being of John Cory, Chairman of the Company. Over fifty architects submitted entries, with “the successful competitor being Mr Edward H. Bruton, A.R.I.B.A., of 15, Queen-street, Cardiff.”

Tenders for the erection of the new offices were requested at the end of May 1889, to be received mid-June. The tenders came in much higher than expected, ranging from £13,499 to £16,700 so an amended tender was prepared which resulted in reduced costs ranging from £10,219 to £11,500. The tender selected was that of Messrs Charles Shepherd and Son at £10,285 which wasn't the cheapest but did ensure that a local Cardiff firm was used.

A sketch of the new offices, copied from the plans of the winning architect, was printed in the 'Western Mail, 10th April 1889'. The sketch showed that when first built, Cory's Building would have been only three-storeys high with ornate pavilion-style roofs with tall finials.

Much of the information on this page has been gleaned from old newspaper articles. Extracts from those articles are included on the following pages.

4.11.1 History of the Cory Family

The family of Richard Cory I (1799-1882), the founder of the business that became Cory Brothers Ltd, for whom Cory's Building was erected in 1889, is not to be confused with the family of John Cory (1822-1891) who founded John Cory and Sons, Ltd. Another successful family in the Cardiff area.

Richard Cory I (1799-1882)

Richard Cory was a mariner based at Bideford, North Devon who owned a small vessel and sailed regularly between Bideford, Cardiff, Bristol and Ireland. In the early 1830s, when the iron industry was booming in South Wales, Richard Cory decided to move his family here, so in the late 1830s his wife and three young sons, JOHN, aged 10, RICHARD, aged 8, and THOMAS, aged 5, all moved to Cardiff. Around 1838, he opened a ship-chandler's store near the Custom House in Cardiff and also traded as a provision merchant.

In 1842, Richard Cory (the elder) expanded his commercial interests and started a business at Cardiff Docks, called Richard Cory & Sons, operating as shipbrokers and coal exporters. In due course, his two eldest sons, John and Richard II joined the business. In 1856, Richard Cory (the elder) disposed of his provision business, and the family concentrated on their activities as ship-brokers, ship-owners, coal-merchants and exporters, and colliery agents. In 1859, Richard Cory (the elder) retired, and the management of the business passed to his sons, John and Richard II, who renamed the business Cory Brothers and Co.

Richard Cory (the elder) had been married twice. He married his first wife, Sarah Woollacott of Bideford in 1829, who died in October 1868. He married for the second time in 1872 to Jane Daniell, of Cambourne, Cornwall.

Having been a churchman, and for a time a churchwarden, Richard Cory (the elder) left the established church to become a Wesleyan Methodist and then joined the United Methodist Free Church. He was known as a staunch advocate of teetotal principles.

Richard Cory (the elder) died on 5th May 1882 from bronchitis. An article on his death featured in 'The Western Mail, 6th May 1882' which states:

"DEATH OF MR. RICHARD CORY, AT CARDIFF

"Another of the oldest and best-known inhabitants of Cardiff has passed away. We refer to the late Mr. Richard Cory, who died on Friday morning at his residence, No. 12, Edwards-terrace. The past illness of the deceased gentleman was of only a few days' duration, and the cause of death was bronchitis. It was but recently that he was seen in the public streets, and the mournful event which we announce to-day will occasion a general feeling of surprise and regret among a very large circle of friends. The venerable form of the deceased gentleman will long be recollected in the locality where he lived and was so highly respected for many years. Mr. Cory was born on the 21st of November, 1799, at the Old King's Arms, Hartland, Devonshire, and when a young man he went to sea with a small trading vessel, of which he was captain and owner. It was his custom to make voyages between Cardiff and the Irish ports. He became acquainted with Mr. M'Cormack, merchant, who was a relative of Mr. Jonas Watson's father, and it was through the instrumentality of that gentleman that he took up his residence in the port where he afterwards achieved such success. In 1838 he acquired the provision business carried on near the Custom-house by Mr. James Kidman, and he subsequently founded the important shipbroking and coal-exporting undertaking now conducted by two of his sons, Messrs John and Richard Cory. In 1855 he disposed of the provision business to Mr. E.W. Rees, and in the course of a few years he also relinquished his connection with the shipbroking firm which he had established. The deceased gentleman afterwards lived in retirement. At one time he was a churchwarden of St. Mary's Church, under the Rev. Canon Morgan; he subsequently joined the Wesleyan body, but afterwards became a member of the United Methodist Free Church, the services of which were originally carried on in a building which he erected in Charles-street, and which is now known as a Friends' Meeting-room. He assisted to establish the Guildford-street Chapel, and with this place of worship he continued to be connected during the remainder of his life. He was known as a staunch advocate of teetotal principles, and had been a member of the town council and the board of guardians. Mr. Cory was twice married. His first wife was Miss Woollacott, of Bideford, whom he espoused in 1829, and his second wife Miss Daniel, of Bideford, to whom he was married in 1872, and who now survives him. His children are :- Mr. J. Cory, Cardiff; Mr. R. Cory, Cardiff; Mr. Thomas Cory, Swansea; Mr. Ebenezer Cory, West Hartlepool; Mr. W. H. Cory, Cardiff; and the following daughters :- Mrs. Mary Davies, the late Mrs. S. P. Kernick; Mrs. Sarah Yeo, Swansea; and Mrs. Maggie Mathew, Sunderland."

The funeral of Richard Cory was featured in the 'South Wales Daily News, 11th May 1882' which states:

"FUNERAL OF THE LATE MR R. CORY, SEN., OF CARDIFF

"The long residence of Mr Richard Cory, sen., at Cardiff, and the great esteem in which he was held by many residents, drew a large number of persons not only to attend his funeral on Wednesday, but as a mark of respect to one who had for a long time taken considerable interest in many public movements in the town. A short service, conducted by the Rev. Mr Hargreaves, the pastor of the United Methodist Free Church, Guildford-street, was held at the residence of the deceased, Edward-terrace. There were present Messrs Cory, Swansea; Mr John, Richard and W. H. Cory, sons of the deceased; Mr Herbert, Mr Campbell, Mr Clifford, Mr Graham Cory, Mr Ralph Davies, Mr R. P. Kernick, grandsons; Mr John Hibbert, Mr Alderman Elliott, Mr George Matthews, Mr Charles Bird, Mr Robert Bird, Mr George Brain, Mr Oliver Walker, Mr James Rutherford, Mr Baker, and a number of friends. The coffin of the deceased was surmounted by a number of beautiful wreaths of flowers. The funeral cortege moved on to the United Free Methodist church, which was crowded with visitors, the platform and pulpit being draped in black. Here the service was resumed. After the service, the Rev. N. Thomas delivered an address. He dwelt at considerable length on the many virtues of the deceased. His strong determination of character enabled him to struggle against the evils of intemperance, and while he was ever ready to assist to the utmost of his ability the deserving poor, he was firm against the appeals of those who spent their gains in drunkenness and debauchery. He considered that Cardiff had sustained a severe loss in the death of Mr Cory, as there were few men who united that uprightness of character, with the persistent determination to do what he considered right, help only the good, assist the worthy, and persistently check the evils of intemperance and crime. At the conclusion of the address, the Blue Ribbon Choir, who were stationed in the gallery, sang with a good deal of feeling "Vital Spark." The immense crowd then slowly left the sacred building. Among those present were Messrs Councillors Henry Jones, E. Beavan, Mr W. Price, Mr Price, junr., Capt. Short, Mr Jonas Watson, Mr S. D. Jenkins, Dr. Scholfield, Mr G. Roberts, Mr R. Davies, Rev., Mr Bellingham, Rev. G. Kennedy, Rev. A. Tilly, Rev. N. Thomas, and a number of others. These formed a long procession, which preceded the hearse on its way to the old cemetery. The family and relatives followed in five mourning coaches, and the procession was closed with several gentlemen's carriages, with closed blinds. At the old cemetery the service was conducted by the Revs. Mr Hargreaves and A. Tilly, the Blue Ribbon Choir singing a funeral anthem over the grave. There was an immense concourse of spectators at the cemetery. The funeral arrangements were most efficiently carried out by Mr G.A. Stone."

John Cory (1828 - 1910)

John Cory is remembered as a ship-owner, coal-owner, and philanthropist. He was born in Bideford, Devon in 1828, the eldest son of Richard Cory I. Around 1844, John joined his father in the family business of Richard Cory & Sons, along with his brother Richard.

John married Anna Maria Beynon on 19th September 1854, the daughter of John Beynon a colliery proprietor from Newport, Monmouth.

In its column on 'Marriages' the 'Monmouthshire Merlin, 22nd September 1854' states:

"On the 19th instant, at St. Paul's church, Newport, by the Rev. Mr. Winslow, Mr. John Cory, merchant, Cardiff, to Anna Maria, second daughter of John Beynon, Esq., of this town."

John and Anna Maria had three sons – Herbert Cory (c.1856-1926), Sir Clifford Cory, 1st Baronet of Llantarnam Abbey (1859-1941) and Reginald Cory (1871- 1934) and one daughter, Florence Cory.

When Richard Cory (the elder) retired in 1859, the two brothers took over the running of his business and subsequently renamed it Cory Brothers & Company, becoming a limited liability company in 1888. Under John and Richard's management, their shipping and coal-exporting activities continued to grow. The high demand for South Wales steam coal for shipping, in all parts of the world, and especially after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, led to the firm establishing coal depots, offices, and agencies along all the great trade routes of the world.

In 1868, Cory Brothers & Company also became colliery owners, they acquired the Pentre colliery in the Rhondda, and later, the Gelli, Tynybedw, and Tydraw collieries in the same valley, Aber colliery in the Ogmore valley, Rheola and Glyncastle in the Neath valley, and the Penrikyber [sic] colliery in the Aberdare valley. They also became the largest private wagon-owners in the United Kingdom. In addition, they built coke-ovens and washeries at the Gelli colliery.

John Cory was a founder and vice-chairman of the Barry Docks and Railway. During the 1880s, David Davies and other leading industrialists selected Barry to be developed as a coal port, to relieve the pressure on Cardiff Docks. A group of colliery owners formed the Barry Railway Company and chose to connect the South Wales Valley coalfields with Barry Docks, thus developing an industrial scale port. Development of Barry Docks began in 1884 and it was opened to traffic in 1889. By 1913, Barry was the largest coal export port in the world.

The Cory brothers became very wealthy; however, they used much of their wealth for philanthropic purposes. They contributed to many causes which helped in the social, educational, and moral progress of the people, especially of Cardiff. John Cory was a Methodist, and like his father, backed the Temperance Movement. John's charitable donations were believed to amount to nearly £50,000 annually, in the years before his death.

A bronze statue of John Cory by Welsh sculptor Sir William Goscombe John was unveiled in Cardiff in 1906, whilst John Cory was alive. The statue still stands in Gorsedd Gardens today, near City Hall and the National Museum, although the location was known as Cathays Park at the time of its unveiling.

The unveiling ceremony for this statue was covered by the 'Evening Express, 22nd June 1906' in article which states:

"JOHN CORY STATUE - UNVEILED AT CATHAYS PARK

"The statue of Mr. John Cory, Cardiff's merchant prince and philanthropist, was unveiled on Thursday in Cathays Park by Sir William Thomas Lewis, Bart., in the presence of a large attendance of members of the corporation, commercial gentlemen, and Young Men's Christian Association delegates, including Lord Kinnaird, Sir John, Gunn, Sir Algernon Coote, Sir William Godson, the Deputy-Lord Mayor (Councillor W. L. Yorath), the Town-clerk (Mr. J. L. Wheatley), Mr. J. A. Jones (president of the Cardiff Chamber of Commerce), Mr. Herbert Cory, Mr. Campbell Cory, and others.

"Sir William Thomas Lewis expressed his unveil the statue, which was the production of Mr. Goscombe John, an old Cardiff boy, and a work of art. (Applause.) The subject thanks for the honour of being asked to of the erection of a statue was initiated by merchants at the docks, many of whom were the keenest rivals of Mr. Cory in their daily business, and subscriptions were soon obtained from all quarters, irrespective of creed, politics or party, and arrangements were made which culminated in those proceedings. Sir William referred to Mr. Cory as a philanthropist, and said that, however numerous his charities that were publicly known, his private charities had been greater, and they were only known to Mr. Cory himself and the lucky recipients. Mr. Cory had well earned the esteem and goodwill of his countrymen. From small beginnings he had created a world-wide business, and to him was partly due the credit of converting a small village into a city of nearly 200,000 inhabitants. (Applause.) Mr. Cory's large-heartedness and readiness to contribute towards all objects for the betterment of his fellow-creatures was well known, and Sir William mentioned the support Mr. Cory had given to the Cardiff Infirmary, the Porthcawl Rest, the Sailors' and Soldiers' Rest, homes for orphans, convalescent homes, home and foreign missions, the Salvation Army, and the Young Men's Christian Association. (Applause.) Having had something to do with obtaining the Cathays Park property, he (Sir William) regarded it as a special compliment to be selected to unveil the statue in that place. (Applause.)

"Sir William then unveiled the statue, amidst cheers.

"Mr. W. L. Yorath, the Lord Mayor's deputy, apologised for the absence of the Lord Mayor through illness, and accepted the custody and care of the statue.

"Lord Kinnaird, on behalf of the Young Mens' Christian Association, expressed his thanks for having been invited to take part in that memorable function. Mr. John Cory, his lordship said, had set the example of teaching people the luxury of giving during their lifetime. (Applause.)

"Mr. T. R. Thompson, chairman of the committee promoting the movement, expressed the thanks of the committee to the subscribers, and Sir William, for unveiling the statue.

"The proceedings then concluded.

"THE MONUMENT

"The statue is of bronze, with a base of Portland stone. It stands 20ft. high. The base of the statue bears the inscription:-
"JOHN CORY - COAL OWNER - PHILANTHROPIST

This statue is erected by his friends and fellow citizens as a token of their appreciation of his world wide sympathies
1906"



Statue of John Cory, with a bible in his hands, situated in the Gorsedd Gardens near Cardiff City Hall (source: 'geograph.org.uk')

John Cory and his family lived for many years at Vaendre Hall (also known as Faendre Hall), in St Mellons. This Victorian Manor House, set in 4 acres of grounds and built in 1850, is protected by a Grade II listing which was designated in 1977.

John Cory purchased the Dyffryn estate, St. Nicholas, near Cowbridge in 1891. Although there was an Elizabethan house on the site, John Cory had the house remodelled and extended between 1891-3 believed to be designed by Habershon and Fawckner of Newport. The new house was an eclectic design of French Renaissance and English Baroque styles, with lavish interiors. You can still see evidence of the family's vast wealth today – from the 16th century fireplaces to the commissioned stained-glass window. Dyffryn House is now protected by a Grade II* listing which was designated in 1992.

John Cory lived at Dyffryn House with his wife and two of his four children, Florence and Reginald until his death in 1910 when he was buried at S. Nicholas church. Dyffryn House is most renowned for its gardens, which were commissioned by his son Reginald in 1904-5, who was a passionate horticulturalist and collaborated on the garden design with Thomas Mawson.



Vaendre Hall, St Mellons (source: 'walesonline.co.uk')



Dyffryn House (source: 'cardiffcapers.blogspot.com')

Richard Cory II (1830 - 1914)

Richard Cory II was the second son of Richard Cory (the elder) and brother to John Cory. He was a partner in, and co-director of, Cory Brothers & Company with his brother John. Richard Cory II was a Baptist and a generous benefactor; particularly to Baptist chapels, colleges, and missions, the Salvation Army, the temperance movement, the Y.M.C.A., and Cardiff University College.

In 1854, Richard II married Emily, the daughter of Joseph Vivian of Roseworthy, Cornwall. The 'Marriages' column of 'The Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian, 11th August 1854' states:

"Aug. 5, Mr. Richard Cory, jun., to Emily, third daughter of J. Vivian, Esq., Roseworthy, near Truro, Cornwall."

Richard II and Emily lived for many years at Oscar House, Newport Road, Cardiff and had two sons, and five daughters. Richard died 20 September 1914 aged 84 years and was buried at Cathays Cemetery, Cardiff. Following his death, an article in 'The Cambria Daily Leader, 21st September 1914' states:

"LATE MR. RICHARD CORY
"DEATH OF WELL-KNOWN SOUTH WALES COAL SHIPPER AND
PHILANTHROPIST

"The death took place in the presence of his family, at the Wells Hotel, Llandrindod, on Sunday morning of Mr. Richard Cory, J.P., of Cardiff, at the age of 84.

"He was a principal of the firm of Cory Brothers, Limited, the largest coal shipping firm in South Wales, and probably in the world, and was a great philanthropist. In the four quarters of the globe the firm has depots serving the British mercantile marine.

"Nearly all his relatives were present at the end, including Mrs. Richard Cory, Mr. Theodore Cory, Mr. Robert W. Cory, Mrs. F. Lynch Blossie, Mrs. Fred Smith, Mrs. Trevor Cory, Miss Cory, and Miss Hilda Cory.

"Mr. Richard Cory was born at Penzance in 1833. His father, who bore the same name, was the owner and master of a small vessel trading between Cardiff and the historic old Cornish town, and the founder of the great coal-exporting firm of Cory Bros. and Co. (Limited). In those days the shipping trade of Cardiff was in its infancy, and mostly confined to the Glamorganshire Canal. During the election of 1895 he was a strong advocate of the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church, but in 1913 and 1914 he was a strong opponent of the Liberal party on the Home Rule question, and in the latter year was a member of the committee which organised the Nonconformist protest against the Welsh Church Bill.

"Originally the Cory family were Wesleyan Methodists, but Mr. Richard Cory joined the Baptist communion and contributed generally to the funds of the denomination. He gave large sums towards the University College of South Wales and Monmouthshire, the Salvation Army, and the Y.M.C.A."

There would appear to be an error in this article, suggesting he was born in 1833. However, all other sources suggest he was born in 1830, which is supported by the fact he was 84 years at the time of his death..

4.11.2 Cory Brothers & Co. Offices prior to 1891

When Richard Cory (the elder) set up his business at Cardiff Docks, it was known as Richard Cory & Sons and was based at 106 Bute Street for many years. Richard (the elder) retired in 1859 and his two oldest sons, John and Richard II took over, subsequently renaming the business Cory Brothers & Co. In April 1888, the business was registered as a private limited company, and became known as Cory Brothers & Co., Limited.

Early in 1875, the business moved to new premises on the corner of James Street and Bute Street which became known as "Cory's Corner". Built especially for Cory Brothers and designed by the architect F. Cutlan, the building was considered "in advance of anything similar in character in the Principality" and "by far the most imposing building erected here."

Extracts from an article in the 'South Wales Daily News, 26th February 1875' describes the Cory Brothers new building as follows:

"STREET IMPROVEMENTS AT CARDIFF

"The change in the appearance of our streets, like the growth of our town, is rapid, and unlike the gradual development that alters the character of many of our commercial centres. The business premises of our coal merchants of modest exterior and moderate proportions, which a few years since were looked upon as buildings far in advance of the age, now give place to others whose capacities are ten times greater, and whose external aspect forms a study for the artist and a work of beauty for the admiration of the bystanders. ..."

"The New Dock Chambers were built only recently, and were a great improvement in size and appearance on the original offices in the Dock Crescent, but these are too small and too insignificant in appearance for some of the larger coal firms. The Powell Dyffryn Company recently built and opened a magnificent premises, far in advance of any that had preceded it, and these, again, are being surpassed by the new offices of Messrs. Cory Brothers, at the corner of James-street. As the one surpassed any previous building of the kind in the town, so the other is in advance of anything similar in character in the Principality.

"Messrs. Cory's offices form a fine building, four storeys high, exclusive of basement, – the principal elevation in James-street being 68 feet wide, and that in Bute-street 20 feet wide. The elevation is of a classic character, arcades running along the front of each floor, and here the skill of the architect is apparent in varying the character of the arches, and, at the same time, preserving the unity of the design. Both elevations are formed with Bath stone dressings, elaborately carved, filled in with white or yellow brick, the shafts of the columns being formed with polished Aberdeen granite, relieving the uniformity of tint of the Bath-stone and yellow brick. The large number of pillars, the rich carving of the Bath-stone capitals and courses, give an elegant and costly appearance to the design which is by far the most imposing building erected here. The principal entrance is by the large folding doors in James-street, the ground floor being reached by a short flight of polished radyr stone steps. This floor is occupied entirely by the large shipping office, the front of which is divided externally into nine arches, also forming spaces for windows which consist of one pane of plate glass, ten feet high and six feet wide. The first floor is reached by a flight of polished stone steps. This floor is divided into offices for the cashier, clerks, etc., for the several departments connected not only with the colliery operations, but with the shipping of coal, the chartering of vessels, all of which require district clerks and officers and yet all so arranged that each department communicates directly with the private offices of the proprietors. The second floor is again divided into offices smaller than those below, and the next storey higher up is divided into offices until it would seem that accommodation has been provided for an army of clerks, and the transactions must be immense which require so many offices and such careful sub-division. The basement floor is fitted up with lavatories, &c., for the ground floor, all the other floors having lavatories on them and places for the heating apparatus, it being proposed to warm the building with hot air, for which purpose iron gratings will be let in the floor, through which the hot air will pass into each room, and ventilators will be placed in the ceiling for carrying off the vitiated atmosphere. The design was drawn by Mr Cutlan, architect, who has exhibited much judgment in availing himself to the utmost of the small spot of ground on which to build such a magnificent premises; and his design has been very carefully and well carried out by Mr Biggs, builder, of Roath, who seems to have availed himself of the very best workmen in completing such a costly piece of architecture. Should the weather continue fine the new building will be opened in a few weeks. ..."

After only fifteen years in this new building, the business of Cory Brothers Co., Ltd had again grown so significantly that larger premises were required. Cory Brothers commissioned another splendid new building, this time on the corner of Bute Place and Bute Street, enabling "Cory's Corner" to continue.

In 1898, the Bristol & West of England Bank took over the Cory Brothers premises on the corner of James-street and Bute-street, with alterations made to the ground floor windows and doors. The bank later became the Midland Bank. Extensions were added, in a similar style, in 1902-2 and 1914-15. This building still exists today and is protected by a Grade II listing, which was designated on 19 May 1975 and last amended on 21 August 1998. The reasons for listing being "Impressive example of High Victorian Commercial architecture on prominent site. Group value."



Former Cory Offices & then Midland Bank, corner of Bute Street & James Street, Original Plans (source: 'walesonline.co.uk')



Former Cory Offices & then Midland Bank (source: own)

4.11.3 Cory's Building - 1891

Cory Brothers moved into their new larger premises, today known as Cory's Building, on 1st January 1891. This move was made necessary by the rapid expansion of their business. The site of their new building was "immediately opposite the old buildings" at the corner junction of Bute-street and James-street, and had previously "been kept as an open space by Lord Bute". However, due to the expanding business of the Docks, it was decided that "a portion of that space should be utilised for more practical purposes than an al fresco lounge."

The design for Cory Brothers new offices was determined by an architectural competition, a premium of £50 being paid to the winner, with the judge being of Mr John Cory, Chairman of the Company. Over fifty architects submitted entries, with "the successful competitor being Mr Edward H. Bruton, A.R.I.B.A., of 15, Queen-street, Cardiff."

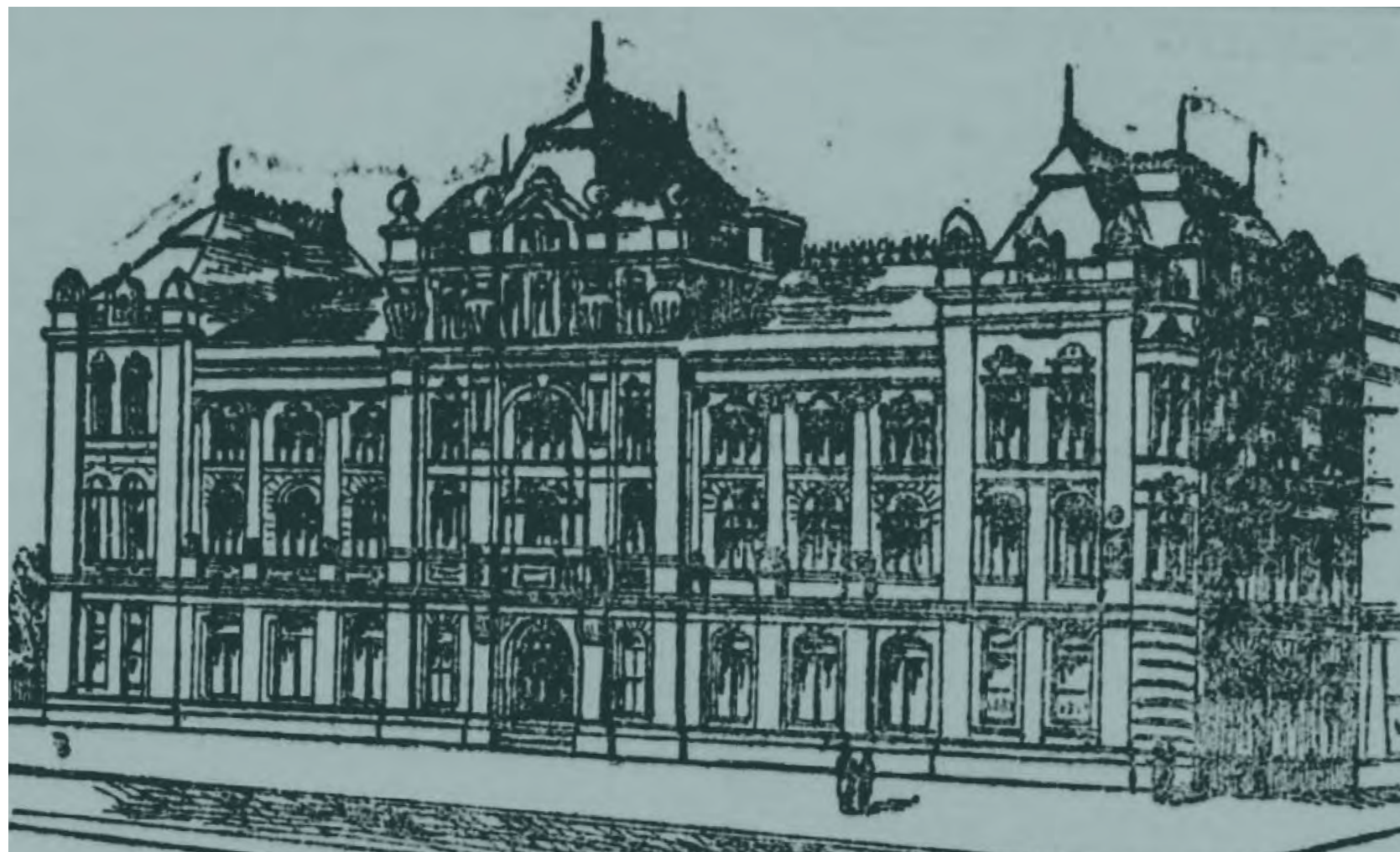
A sketch of the new offices, copied from the plans of the winning architect, was printed in the 'Western Mail, 10th April 1889'. The sketch showed that when first built, Cory's Building would have been only three-storeys high with ornate pavilion-style roofs with tall finials.

The article accompanying the sketch described the intended exterior of the building as follows "The base course of the front elevation will be of granite. Then to the first storey Ham-hill stone will be used, the upper portions being of Bath stone, with large polished granite columns resting upon bases of Mansfield stone, a combination which cannot fail in imposing effect." The principal floors were to be panelled with solid oak, the windows to be double layers of plate glass to deaden the noise and every floor to be fireproof. At that time, the build cost was estimated to be £8,000 to £9,000. Messrs. Cory intended to sub-let the second floor.

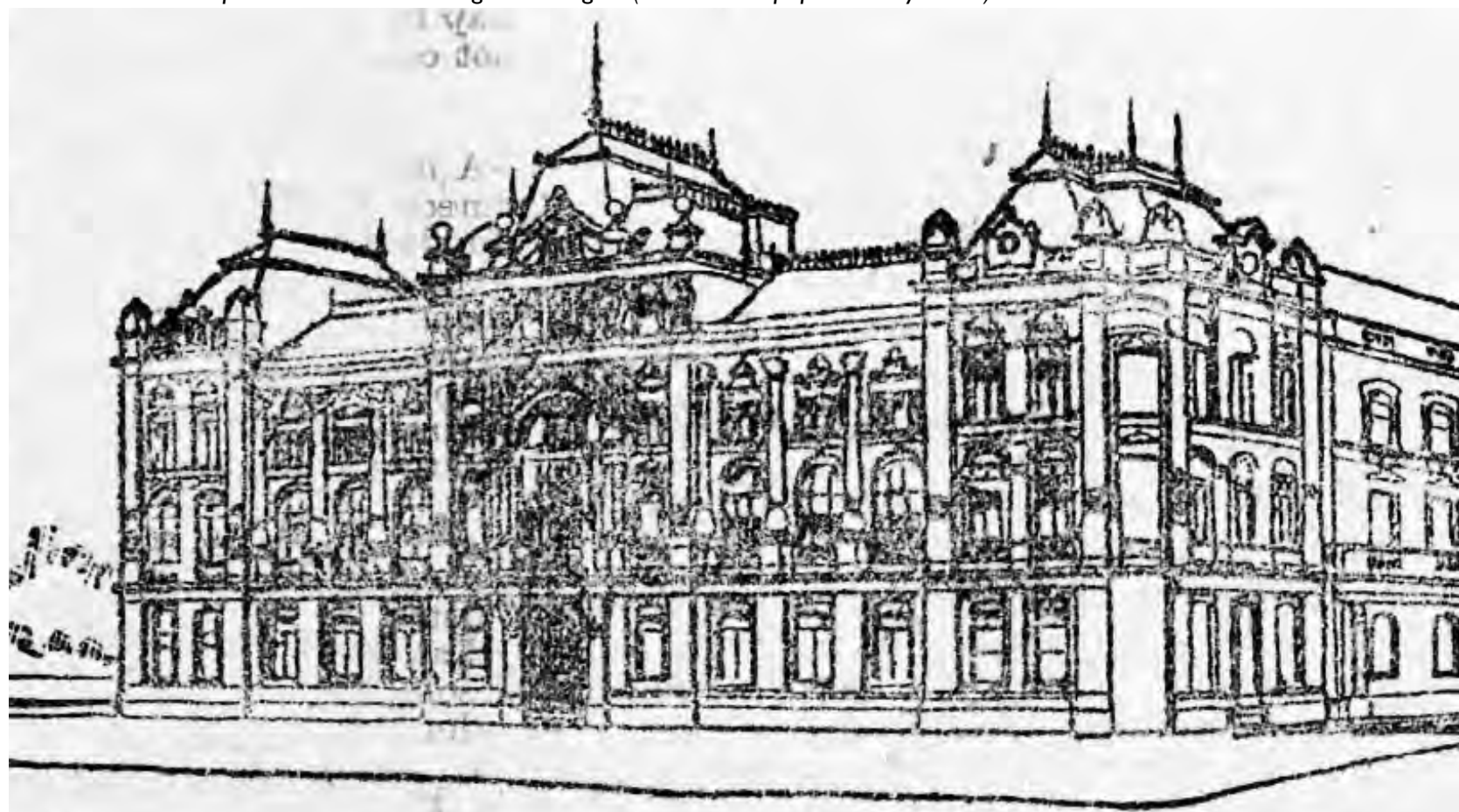
Tenders for the erection of the new offices were requested at the end of May 1889, to be received mid-June. The tenders came in much higher than expected, ranging from £13,499 to £16,700 so an amended tender was prepared which resulted in reduced costs ranging from £10,219 to £11,500. The tender selected was that of Messrs Charles Shepherd and Son at £10,285 which wasn't the cheapest but did ensure that a local Cardiff firm was used.

The 'South Wales Daily News, 31st December 1890' featured an article with a drawing of the completed offices for Cory Brothers, which were to be occupied from 1st January 1891. The article tells us that the final building was only three storeys high, and that "the whole of the front is entirely faced with Corsham stone from the Bath stone Firms, Limited, standing on a base course of grey granite" this differs from the initial plan which had different stone on different storeys, presumably one of the ways that costs were reduced.

Once inside the building, it would have been very splendid. The article tells us that "On passing through the front entrance the visitor gains a handsome oak lobby, with massive swing doors" and that "The staircase is of York stone, with wrought iron ornamental balustrading, and polished oak handrail". The walls were decorated in "a material called anaglypta ... giving it a very nice effect". "Each department is kept in touch with the others and with the directors by speaking tubes and electric bells". In fact, the building was so spacious that it provided "abundant room for expansion" so much so that the second floor was to be sub-let.



Sketch copied from accepted plan by Mr E. H. Bruton for Messrs Cory's New Offices Western Mail, 10th April 1889, which needed to be pared down due to being over budget. (source: 'newspapers.library.wales')



Drawing of Messrs Cory's New Offices, South Wales Daily News, 31st December 1890, of the building as built, once costs had been reduced (source: 'newspapers.library.wales')

Below is a selection of newspaper articles from the period September 1888 to December 1890, during which time the new offices for Cory Brothers were being built.

Details of the architectural competition appeared in the 'South Wales Daily News, 7th September 1888' which states:

"Tenders and Contracts

"CORY BROTHERS & CO., LIMITED, of CARDIFF, &c., invite DESIGNS and PLANS for NEW OFFICES, &c., at BUTE DOCKS, CARDIFF, and offer a PREMIUM of FIFTY POUNDS for the BEST, and of £25 for the NEXT BEST set of designs and plans, according to the judgment of Mr John Cory, the Chairman of the Company. If the same be approved by him, such selected plan to become the property of Cory Brothers and Co., Limited. No premium will be paid in respect of plans not approved by the Chairman.

Designs and plans not approved of will be returned.

Architects desirous of competing may obtain particulars by writing to Cory Brothers and Co., Limited, Cardiff."

The 'District Intelligence' column within the 'South Wales Echo, 17th November 1888' contained details of the winning architect, which states:

"NEW OFFICES AT THE DOCKS – During last month local architects were very busy with the preparation of designs in competition for a large block of new offices to be erected at the Docks for Messrs Cory Brothers & Co., Limited. Over fifty architects from all parts of the country competed; it is therefore gratifying to learn that the first premium of £50 has been awarded to a local architect, the successful competitor being Mr Edward H. Bruton, A.R.I.B.A., of 15, Queen-street, Cardiff."

A sketch copied from the accepted plan of Mr. E. H. Bruton accompanied this article in 'The Western Mail, 10th April 1889' giving the readers an idea of how Cory Bros. new

"MESSRS. CORY BROS'. NEW OFFICES AT CARDIFF

"One of the oldest, as well as the largest, firms at the Cardiff Docks is that of Messrs. Cory Bros., a name that wherever Welsh coal finds its way is as familiar as household words. The ramifications of this extensive business extend throughout the known world. North, south, east, and west, to whatever point of the compass ships may sail, there the Messrs. Cory have established themselves and there are to be found their depots for coal distribution. The heart of this immense system, the centre whence the life of the whole is derived is at Cardiff, in whose commercial economy it forms so important a factor that for years the very shadow of Messrs. Cory's offices have been a rendezvous for men of business. Until the opening of a recognised Merchants' Exchange "Cory's Corner" was in truth the Cardiff Exchange. The idlest dreamer could scarce conjure an imagining of the sum total of the wealth that has changed hands within a radius of 50 yards of the fine pile of buildings forming the Cardiff offices of Messrs. Cory Bros. Spacious, however, as these offices are, they have proved too small, and arrangements have now been completed for the erection of a new suite of offices, which will occupy a site immediately opposite the old buildings, and form another "corner" at the junction of Bute-street and James-street, adjoining in the latter thoroughfare the Post and the Board of Trade Offices. This site has hitherto been kept as an open space by Lord Bute, who a few years ago threw it open to the public. The exigencies of business, however, demanded that a portion of that space should be utilised for more practical purposes than an al fresco lounge. Thus a part of it has been handed over to the Messrs. Cory, and here their new offices are to be erected.

Of what an added architectural feature to the prosaic district generally known as "the Docks" this pile will be, a good idea may be formed from the above sketch, which is copied from the accepted plan of Mr. E. H. Bruton, A.R.I.B.A., the successful architect. One view will suffice the character of the building. The style of architecture is Jacobean, and carving of the conventional type will be freely used to beautify the facade. Still, the whole structure will be of a most substantial kind. The base course of the front elevation will be of granite. Then to the first storey Ham-hill stone will be used, the upper portions being of Bath stone, with large polished granite columns resting upon bases of Mansfield stone, a combination which cannot fail in imposing effect. The whole of the basement will be excavated for muniment-rooms, strong rooms, and cellars, the ground floor being occupied by one large office, 150ft. long by 36ft. wide, access to which is given by a wide doorway from the centre of the building. From this large office a granite staircase will lead to the first floor, which will be divided into suites of rooms. The second floor, the entrance to which will be from James-street, it is intended by the Messrs. Cory to sub-let, and above this again, in the loftier portion over the main entrance, will be placed the caretaker's apartments. The internal fittings are to be in keeping, the principal floors being panelled with solid oak, while from the basement to the top storeys will be a lift for general convenience. Every floor, too, will be fireproof. Areas are also provided at the rear for light-giving purposes, and these will be lined with white glazed brick, the cellars being lighted by means of prismatic lights, while, in order to deaden sound, all the windows are to double and of plateglass. The cost is estimated at some £8,000 or £9,000, but the contract has not yet been placed. The excavations, however, are in a forward state, and, in order to ensure good foundation, some four feet of concrete has been laid. When completed the building will undoubtedly be one of the handsomest in Cardiff."

An invitation for tenders for the erection of the new offices appeared in the 'South Wales Daily News, 30th May 1889' which states:

"Tenders and Contracts

"TENDERS are invited for the ERECTION of NEW OFFICES in BUTE-ROAD, CARDIFF, for Messrs Cory Bros. and Co., Limited. Drawings and specifications may now be seen, and bills of quantities obtained, on or after Saturday, June 1st, on payment of £5 5s, which will be returned on receipt of bona-fide tender.

"Tenders to be sent in to the undersigned (endorsed "Tender for Offices"), on or before 9 a.m. on Saturday, June 8th.

"The proprietors do not bind themselves to accept the lowest or any tender.
EDWARD H. BRUTON, A.R.I.B.A., Architect, 15, Queen-street, Cardiff."

An extension of time for this tender process appeared in the 'The Western Mail, 10th June 1889' which states:

"Tenders and Contracts

"TO CONTRACTORS
"NEW OFFICES, BUTE-ROAD, CARDIFF, MESSRS. CORY BROS. and CO. (LIMITED)
"EXTENSION OF TIME

"TENDERS to be sent in to the undersigned by Nine a.m. on THURSDAY, June 13th.
BRUTON and WILLIAMS, Architects, 15, Queen-street, Cardiff."

An announcement of the winning tender for the erection of the new offices appeared in the 'South Wales Echo, 24th June 1889' which states:

"MESSRS CORY BROTHERS' OFFICES AT CARDIFF

"This morning, at a meeting of the directors of Messrs Cory Brothers and Company, Limited, Cardiff, tenders for the erection of the new offices of that firm, situated at the corner of Bute-street and James-street, were opened from the following firms:— Messrs Jones Brothers, Cardiff, £11,500; W. Symonds, Cardiff, £11,000; Charles Shepherd and Son, Cardiff, £10,285; Stephens, Bastow, and Company, Bristol, £10,249. It is satisfactory to find that the contract has not gone out of Cardiff, as the tender of Messrs Charles Shepherd and Son was accepted. Mr E. H. Bruton, A.R.I.B.A., is the architect."

More details on the tender process and winning tender for the erection of the new offices also appeared in the 'The Western Mail, 25th June 1889' which states:

"THE NEW OFFICES FOR MESSRS. CORY BROS., CARDIFF
"A LOCAL FIRM SECURES THE CONTRACT

"A short time ago we published a sketch of the design selected by Messrs. Cory Bros., Cardiff for their new offices at the Docks. The tenders were sent in on the 14th inst., as under :—

W. Sawle, Worthing	£16,700
H. Wilcock, Wolverhampton	£15,250
Jones Bros., Cardiff	£14,500
W. Symonds, Cardiff	£14,050
Shepton and Son, Cardiff	£13,970
Chas. Shepherd and Son, Cardiff	£13,774
Stephens, Barstow and Co., Bristol.....	£13,499

These being considered by the directorate to be too high for acceptance, instructions were given for amended tenders to be sent in. These were opened on Monday morning, as follows :—

Jones Bros., Cardiff	£11,500
William Symonds	£11,000
Chas. Shepherd and Son, Cardiff	£10,285
Stephens, Barstow and Co., Bristol	£10,219

It will be seen that a Bristol firm was the lowest, but we are glad to find that Messrs. Cory Bros. have accepted the tender of Messrs. Charles Shepherd and Son, who have been instructed to commence the work at once. The elevation of the offices is similar to that shown in our sketch, but internal arrangements have been considerably improved upon, and, apart from their bold and imposing exterior, the offices will certainly be the finest in the district when completed. The architect is Mr. E. H. Bruton, A.R.I.B.A., Queen-street, Cardiff."

An invitation for tenders for the erection of the furnishing of the new offices appeared in the 'South Wales Echo, 28th June 1890' which states:

"MESSRS CORY'S NEW OFFICES

"The following tenders have been received for the furnishing of the splendid new offices of Messrs Cory Brothers and Co., at the Bute Docks, Cardiff, which are now nearing completion :— Bartlett and Son, Bristol, £840; Trapnell and Gane, Cardiff, £885; Parnell and Sons, Bristol, £945; Lewis and Lewis, Cardiff, £959; Smith and Son, Bristol, £1,075. The lowest tender, that of Messrs Trapnell and Gane, Cardiff, was accepted."

An extract from an article in the 'South Wales Daily News, 13th November 1890' states:

"The new offices of Messrs Cory Bros. present a very fine appearance, but had some of the pilasters been of Scotch granite, there can be no question that the bareness and severity, which are undoubtedly now the prevailing characteristics, would have been toned down."

Following completion of the new offices for Cory Brothers, the following article appeared in the 'South Wales Daily News, 31st December 1890' with an accompanying sketch. The article states:

"MESSRS CORY'S NEW OFFICES

"Now that the new offices for Messrs Cory Brothers and Co., Limited, have been completed, the accompanying picture and description of what must be admitted to be an important architectural addition to Cardiff's business quarter – "the Docks" – will prove interesting. The imposing new building is in itself an evidence of that remarkable progress of the coal trade, as well as of the great extension of the business of the firm which will occupy it; and it is most satisfactory to observe indications in all directions of still further advance in the staple industry of the district. In such an advance Messrs Cory and Co. must share to the fullest extent; and in their new offices they will find abundant room for expansion. Any visitor to the old offices is made painfully aware of the inconvenient crowding which rapidly-increasing business has occasioned, notwithstanding that it is only 15 years since they were built specially for the use of the firm; and there are departments which have been quite crowded out, and have had to find accommodation in neighbouring premises. Continuous extension has been the record of successive years, until the total shipments of the firm during the twelvemonth just ending have reached a total of nearly 1¾ millions of tons.

"The original firm was established in 1844, under the name of Richard Cory and Sons, and consisted of the late Mr R. Cory and his two sons – Aldermen J. and R. Cory. The business was then confined to ship-broking, but later on the firm became agents for Messrs Wayne and Co., colliery proprietors. Afterwards the agency was terminated, Messrs Cory becoming coal shippers on their own account. The late Mr R. Cory retired from the firm at the end of 1859, when the business was continued under the title of Cory Brothers and Co. till early in 1888 when it became Cory Brothers and Co., Limited. The members of the firm are – Alderman J. Cory, J.P., Alderman R. Cory, J.P., Messrs S. C. Cory, H. B. Cory, C. J. Cory, and E. R. Moxey, J.P. Until 1857, the business was carried on at 106, Bute-street, but in that year removal was made to a building on the site of that now occupied, which edifice was razed and the (now) old office built in 1875. The name of "Cory's Corner" has for more than thirty years past been borne by the locality adjacent, and it is not unworthy of note that the removal to take place will not cause abandonment of this association.

"The operations of the firm have become most widely extended since their establishment of depots in different parts of the world, a branch of business commenced on the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, and which has proved entirely satisfactory.

“The splendid new offices which adjoins the Docks Post Office, and are situate opposite the old home of the firm, are designed in the free classic renaissance, and built upon a solid bed of concrete over the whole surface, which, with a cement floating form the floor level of the extensive cellars and strong rooms in the basement. The whole of the front is entirely faced with Corsham stone from the Bath stone Firms, Limited, standing on a base course of grey granite. All the windows on the ground and first floor are double-glazed with plate-glass to keep out the sound of passing vehicles. The contract was let to Messrs Charles Shepherd and Son, who have ably carried out the building under the superintendence of Mr Ed. H. Bruton, F.R.I.B.A., senior partner of the firm of Messrs Bruton and Williams, Mr John Evans acting as clerk of the works.

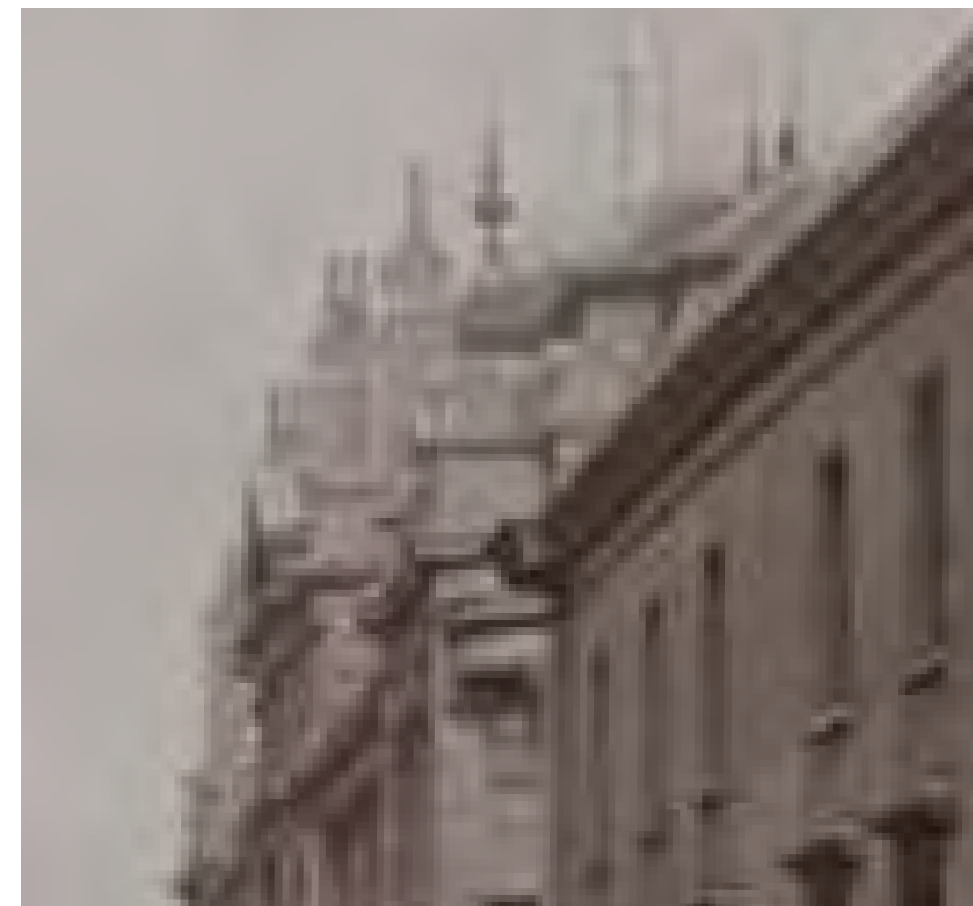
“On passing through the front entrance the visitor gains a handsome oak lobby, with massive swing doors. The ground floor is one large office, having a wide spacious staircase in the centre, and a polished counter on each side dividing off the accounts department from the coal offices. All floors are of fireproof construction, made of iron joists and concrete, by Mr A. D. Dawnay, of London. The staircase is of York stone, with wrought iron ornamental balustrading, and polished oak handrail, the first flight being flanked on each side with four Scagliola columns on pedestals in similar material, and carton pierra caps, supplied by Messrs G. and A. Brown, of London, the whole carrying an elliptic arch and cornice supporting the stairs above leading to the first and second floors.

“The first floor contains one large central clerks’ office, leading at each end to the directors’ private offices and board-room. The second floor has a long corridor, which gives access to a large number of rooms not yet apportioned, with the exception of those for Miller’s and Cory’s Cape de Verde Islands, Limited.

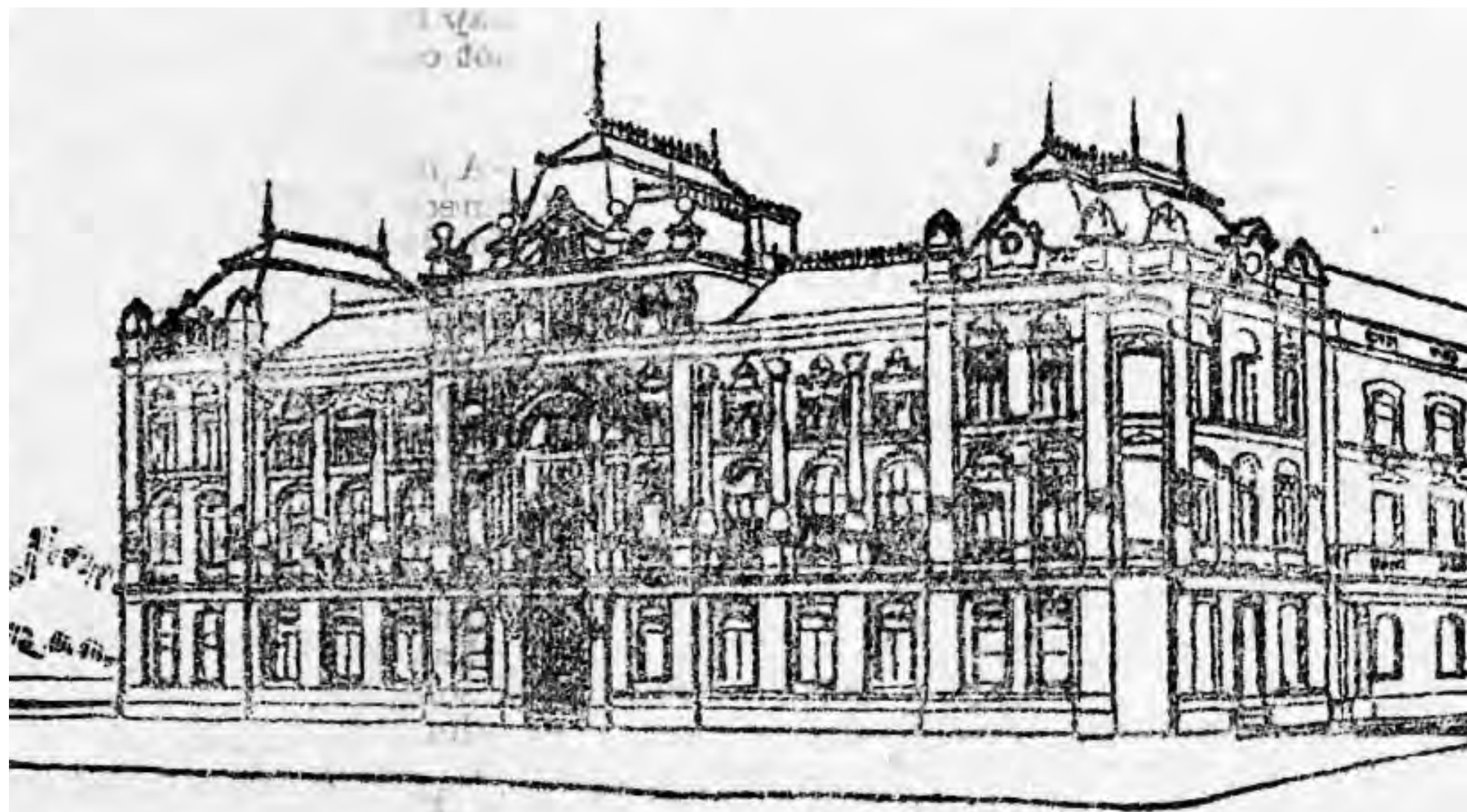
“The third floor is given up entirely to store-rooms and five apartments for the caretaker. A spacious tank-room is provided on the floor above, and each floor has its separate lavatories and conveniences, hot water being laid on and a coal lift from the cellar to each floor. A smaller lift is also provided from the strong room for books. These were supplied by Messrs T. Thomas and Sons, of St. Mary-street. Each department is kept in touch with the others and with the directors by speaking tubes and electric bells supplied, together with the sanitary appliances, by Mr J. G. Proger, of Trinity-street. The whole of the desk fittings are new, of oak mahogany, and pitch pine, excellently made by Messrs Bartlett and Son, of Bristol. The walls and ceilings have been painted and decorated by Messrs W. Davis and Son, of Queen-street, a material called anaglypta being used for the former, giving it a very nice effect. A side entrance and staircase from Bute-place is to give access to the different floors after office hours. The total cost of the new premises will be about £13,000, and they will be occupied on Jan. 1st.”

The value of land in the Docks area is referenced in an article in the ‘South Wales Echo, 20th February 1891’ which states:

“Some idea of the enormous value of property at the Docks may be got from the fact that Messrs Cory and Bros. sold their old offices for a sum which actually covered the cost of erecting their new ones! It might be added, as a corollary, that the narrow strip of ground which stretches between the new offices and the Post-office Chambers, and has lately been taken into the pavement – a few feet deep – was bought by the Corporation for £1,000!”



Early 1900s photo showing the once ornate roofline to Cory's Building
Note the pavilion roofs & finials on top, before the upper floors were added.
(source: 'i.pinimg.com' website; credit: Ernest T. Bush)



Drawing of the new building, South Wales Daily News, 31st December 1890, of the building as built, once costs had been reduced (source: 'newspapers.library.wales')

4.12 The Architects

4.12.1 Edward George Rivers ISO MICE (d. 1918) – Architect for Merchant Place (1 & 3 Bute Place)

A very interesting website dedicated to 'British Post Office Buildings and Their Architects: An Illustrated Guide' provided details of many projects that Edward George Rivers, often referred to as Mr. E. G. Rivers, was involved with in his capacity as architect and surveyor for the Office of Public Works.

Rivers was also a Member of the Institution of Civil Engineers (MICE) and wrote an article for 'The Journal of Preventive Medicine Vol. 14, No. 5 (May 1906)' entitled 'Ventilating and Heating by Edward George Rivers M.Inst.C.E., Chief Engineer H. M. Office of Works' regarding ventilating and heating arrangements in "buildings of considerable occupation" and how these arrangements should be part of the initial design process "when sketch plans are being prepared" and not an afterthought. In the descriptions of buildings that Rivers was involved in, we see frequent references to the heating and ventilation systems to be employed.

Edward George Rivers did much work for the General Post Office, examples of the many post-offices he designed in addition to the new post and telegraph office in Bute Place, Cardiff can be seen below.

Other Projects

Oxford Post Office, 102-104 St. Aldate's, Oxford – 1880

Oxford's General Post Office at 102-104 St Aldate's was opened in 1880, at a cost of about £10,000. The architect was Mr. E. J. Rivers of Her Majesty's Office of Works. This is confirmed by an article in the 'Building News, 22nd August 1879, p.216' which states:

“OXFORD POST OFFICE

“The design we publish emanates from Her Majesty's Office of Works, the architect being Mr. E. G. Rivers, surveyor to the board, under whose superintendence the work is now being carried out. The builders are Messrs. J. R. Symm and Co., of Oxford, and the clerk of the works is Mr. Henry Luff. On the ground floor, to the front, is the public office, a spacious apartment, 14ft. in height, and to the rear are the postmaster's room, sorting office, lavatories, &c., &c. The sorting office is 60' 0" long, 38' 0" wide, and 15ft. high to the eaves, having an open roof, with iron trusses surmounted by a lantern. On the basement are the clerks' retiring room, kitchen, heating apparatus, and battery rooms. The first floor will be occupied by the telegraph department, the instrument room being directly over the public office. The second floor will be devoted to the use of the caretaker and store-rooms. The materials employed are, for the walling, white bricks of Weal manufacture, and Chilmark stone for the facework of the principal portion of the building. The columns to the front entrance are of Ross of Mull granite. The fittings of the public office, also the dado and doors will be of pitch pine. The public office and entrance lobby will have enriched ceilings in plaster.

Ventilation is effected by means of flues in the walls, which admit air from the outside at about the floor level and discharge it into the rooms at a height of about 7ft. from the floor. Vitiated air is drawn off from the public office and rooms above by means of separate flues which communicate with a ventilating turret fixed in the roof space, in which three circular rows of gas burners will be fixed, thus affording ample means of extracting the foul air during damp cold weather. The public office, sorting office, and instrument room will be heated by means of hot water pipes and coils. The public office and postmaster's room will have a fireproof floor of Dennett's construction.”

The arch over the doorway is supported on each side by a cluster of polished Mull granite columns, and in the arch there is “a beautifully carved coat of arms”.

Still in use today as a post office, and sympathetically extended in c.1904 by architect William Oldrieve, the original building as designed is still visible. During the extension, the projecting part of the façade over the main entrance was extended upwards into a small tower. This has since been shortened.



Oxford Post Office, St. Aldate's, Oxford c.1905 by E. G. Rivers 1880
(source: 'oxfordhistory.org.uk')

Hereford Post Office, 20 Broad Street – 1881

Hereford Post Office opened in 1882, designed by the architect Mr. E. G. Rivers. This is confirmed by an article in the 'Building News, 24th November 1882, p. 645' which states:

“HEREFORD – A new Post-office has been completed at Hereford, from designs of Mr. E. G. Rivers, of H. M. Office of Works. Mr. William Bowers, of Bath-street, Hereford, was the contractor. The foreman of the works was Mr. Daniells. The style of the building is Jacobean. The external portion of it is a light-coloured Portland stone, and the carving of the façade is exceedingly rich. It has a frontage to the street of 45 ft., and is built in three stories. A broad flight of steps forms the entrance, and this leads us to a spacious lobby. The four gables are finished with ornamental finials, and the building is surmounted with a ventilation shaft. The side elevation is carried out in the same style of work as the front, and is in character with the rest of the building.”

A correction to this article was given in the 'Building News, 8th December 1882, p. 706' which states:

“HEREFORD – In the account which appeared in our columns recently of the new post-office at Hereford, we should have stated that the building contract was carried out by Messrs. W. Bowers and Co., of Bath-street, under the management of Mr. W. Mansfield, of the firm. Their foreman is Mr. W. Lewis.”

The Post Office was altered and added to in 1903 by the architect William Oldrieve. After closing as a Post Office, the building has been home to a Pizza Express restaurant.

The former Post Office and Attached Railings are now protected by a Grade II listing, which was designated on 27 July 1994 and has not been amended since. The listing details do not provide a reason for its listing.



Hereford Post Office, Broad Street 2011
(source: 'flickr.com')

Plymouth Post Office, Westwell Street, Plymouth, Devon – 1884

Plymouth Post Office opened in 1884, designed by the architect Mr. E. G. Rivers. The architect is confirmed by an article in the 'Building News, 24th November 1882, p. 645' regarding the laying of the foundation stone. The article states:

“PLYMOUTH – The foundation-stone of the new Plymouth Post-office was laid last week. The building is to be erected close to the handsome Guildhall and municipal offices, which were built about nine years ago, and illustrated in this journal at the time, and it will be of a character to harmonise with those buildings. The new post-office will afford just double the accommodation that is provided in the present building. The architect of the new building is Mr. E. G. Rivers, Her Majesty's Office of Works. Mr. Rivers has recently been engaged in similar works at Oxford and Hereford, and plans are now in preparation for a sister-building in Exeter. The estimated cost of the new post-office is about £11,000, to which must be added another £5,000, the cost of that part of the site which has already been secured. Mr. H. Luff, who has acted in a similar capacity at Oxford and Hereford, is clerk of the works, and Messrs. Laphorne and Good, of Plymouth, are the contractors.”

The building was extended in 1904 by the architect William Oldrieve, adding an extra 7,000 square feet and a tower was added over the public entrance. In 1933, the interior was remodelled by the architect Henry Seccombe. It had an inlaid floor depicting Drake's ships and the 'Mayflower' and an extract from an article in the 'Western Morning News, 17th May 1933, p.5' at the time of the interior remodelling tells us about a prominent coloured map illustrating air mail routes that had been included. The article states:

“The new Post Office Westwell Street, Plymouth, is furnished and decorated in Gothic style, order to harmonize with the atmosphere of Guildhall-square, but it exemplifies, nevertheless, the most up-to-date Post Office practice. One of its most prominent features is a coloured map illustrating air mail routes all parts the world.”

The Post Office was destroyed by bombing in March 1941, during the Second World War.



Plymouth Post Office - postcard (source: 'britishpostofficearchitects.weebly.com')

London West Central District Post Office, WC1 – 1884

London West Central District Post Office opened in 1884, designed by James Williams, with initial designs by Mr. E. G. Rivers. The 'British Post Office Buildings and Their Architects: An Illustrated Guide' website tells us that Mr E. G. Rivers was responsible for the initial designs, however, an article in the 'Building News, 9th November 1883, p. 745' reference only to Mr. Williams. The article states:

“COVENT GARDEN – The West-end District Post and Telegraph Office at Charing-cross is about to be supplemented by the erection of a spacious building of a similar character which the Post-office authorities are providing in the neighbourhood of Covent-garden. The new structure, which will shortly be opened for post and telegraph purposes, is situated in Bedford-street, and has a bold and commanding appearance. It has a frontage to Bedford-street 70ft. in length, and is 140ft. in depth, extending to the rear of the artisans' dwellings recently erected by the Peabody Trustees. The building contains a deep basement and three lofty floors. The whole of the front portion of the ground floor is intended to be devoted to general post-office business, whilst to the rear is the sorting office, a spacious apartment 80ft. in depth and about 40 ft. in width. The telegraph department will also be on a portion of this floor. The first floor will contain the post-office surveyor's offices, whilst the basement, among other apartments, will contain the battery room, and the clerks', letter carriers', sorters', and boy messengers' retiring rooms. The building was designed by Mr. Williams, of the Office of Works, Messrs. Higgs and Hill being the contractors. It is estimated to cost £30,000.”

The Post Office closed in 1963 and the building is now used as offices.

17-19 Bedford Street is now protected by a Grade II listing, which was designated on 15 January 1973 and has not been amended since. The listing details do not provide a reason for its listing.

London West Central District Post Office, 17-19 Bedford Street c.2013 (source: 'geograph.org.uk')

**Exeter Post Office, High Street – 1885**

Exeter Post Office opened in 1885, designed by the architect Mr. E. G. Rivers. This is confirmed by an article in the 'Building News, 13th June 1884, p. 931' which states:

“EXETER – The new Post Office for Exeter, which the government are erecting in High-street is making rapid progress. The building, a Gothic one, is being erected by Mr. Seth Bevan of Plymouth, on plans prepared by Mr. E. G. Rivers, architect, of Bristol. The original contract was between £11,000 and £12,000. The Post Office will consist of a basement, ground floor and two stories, and the height from foundation to roof will be 85ft. The materials used are Portland stone and brick, the front and the east side of the building being entirely of Portland, relieved at the entrance and in the window spaces by columns of Aberdeen granite. In the sanitary work the latest improvements of Jennings are being adopted, and in ventilation Boyle's system. Mr. J. C. Evans is the Clerk of the Works.”

The Post Office was enlarged in 1932 by architect Henry Seccombe. Unfortunately, the building was destroyed in May 1942, during the Second World War, when two thirds of the High Street in Exeter was badly destroyed by bombing.



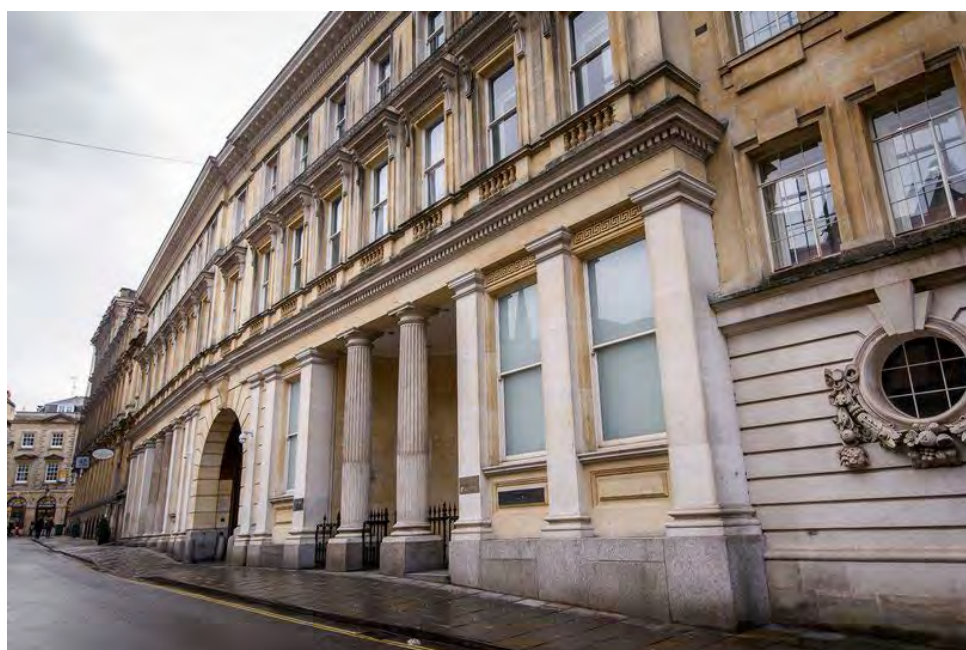
Exeter High Street c.1910
Gothic Revival facade of
main Post Office on the left
(source: 'demolition-exeter.
blogspot.com')

Bristol Post Office, Small Street – enlargement 1889

The original Post Office building in Small Street opened in 1868 and was designed by James Williams. According to the 'British Post Office Buildings and Their Architects: An Illustrated Guide' website, the architect Edward Rivers was responsible for the 1889 extension. The building was further extended in 1909 by John Rutherford.

The building operated as a Post Office from 1868 until the 1980s. In December 1893, the Bristol Crown Court opened on the site of Bristol's former main Post Office, retaining the overall style of the Post Office building. Currently it has ten courtrooms.

Bristol Post Office, Small Street - sketch from 'The Building News, Jan 31 1890' showing extension (source 'wikimedia.org')



Bristol Crown Court, Small Street (source: 'bristolpost.co.uk')

**Bath Sorting Office, Manvers Street – 1894
(now known as Bayntun's Bookshop)**

This former Post Office sorting office is now a bookshop and bookbindery, with reading room, and attached workshop and store. It ceased use as a sorting office c.1936.

Rivers is confirmed as the architect for this building in an article from the 'Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette, 12th July 1894' where extracts state:

"By the 17th inst. the contractor's men will have given up possession of the new sorting offices which have been built for the local postal authorities in Manvers-street. The fixtures will then have to be placed in position, and it is thought that about six weeks or two months will elapse before the new building will be tenanted by the sorters. The arrangement of the offices is very simple but ample room has been provided for the performance of duties which have to be executed at high pressure speed and which often are exceptionally heavy."

"Mr. Rivers of the Office of Public Works, was the architect for the new offices and Mr Elliot of the same Department, superintended their construction by Messrs. J. Long and Sons, of Bath, the contractors who have carried out the work in their usual excellent style. The cost of the building has been about £5,000."

Bayntun's Bookshop is now protected by a Grade II listing, which was designated on 5 August 1975 and last amended on 15 October 2010. The listing says, "This Cotswold-influenced front forms a bold statement of Edwardian retail confidence, and is among the least altered shop fronts left in the city."



Bath Sorting Office, Manvers Street (source: 'britishlistedbuildings.co.uk')

Bournemouth Post Office, 12 Post Office Road – 1896

This former Post Office and Savings Bank opened in 1896 and closed in 2008 when staff moved to WH Smith. Subsequently, the building has housed a Pizza Express restaurant.

The 'British Post Office Buildings and Their Architects: An Illustrated Guide' website cites Edward Rivers as the architect. The façade only of this former Post Office and Savings Bank is now protected by a Grade II listing, which was designated on 12 February 1970 and has not been amended since. The listing details do not provide a reason for its listing.



Plymouth Post Office - postcard (source: 'britishpostofficearchitects.weebly.com')

4.12.2 Bruton & Williams – Architects for Cory's Building

The partnership of Bruton & Williams, Architects of Cardiff was in business from around 1890 to 1910. A lot of their work seems to have been ecclesiastical in nature, being the design or restoration of many churches. However, many references have also been found to other types of work, such as the design of a house in Caerphilly in 1892-3 and design competition victories for Wilts & Dorset Bank, Newport Rd, Cardiff; Gwern y Milwr Hotel, Senghenydd; and the restoration of Hensol Castle to name just a few.

However, winning the design competition for the new offices of Cory Brothers & Co. was quite an achievement as over fifty architects from all parts of the country had submitted designs.

Edward Henry Bruton (1854-1926)

Edward Henry Bruton was born in Oxford in 1854, the eldest son of Edward George Bruton, architect of Oxford. In 1882, Edward Henry Bruton married his landlady, Mrs Mary Price (nee Morgan) who was ten years older than him. They do not appear to have had any children together.

In 1881 he was living at Gwenfil House, Richmond Crescent, Cardiff. In 1891, the census recorded him as an architect living at 181 Richmond Road, Cardiff with Mary Ann and two of his stepsons, plus a servant. In 1901 Edward (45) was living at 160 Newport Road, Cardiff with Mary Ann (56) and three of his stepchildren, plus a servant. By 1911 Edward (56) was retired and was living in Somerset with his wife plus their 14-year-old servant girl at Kildare, Berrow, near Burnham.

During his retirement, he appears to have been living at 3 Charleville Mansions, West Kensington, London (1923) and St David's, Canford Cliffs, Bournemouth, Dorset (1926). He died in June 1926 whilst living in Bournemouth, Dorset.

Edward Henry Bruton was articled to his architect father, Edward George Bruton, in 1870 for 3 years, assistant to Walter Hanstock of Batley from 1874-6 and chief assistant to Peter Price of Cardiff from 1876-81. He gained his ARIBA in 1881 and FRIBA in 1890. He commenced in independent practice in 1881 and then in partnership with Edward Jenkin Williams soon after. Williams died in 1910 and Edward Henry Bruton appears to have retired soon after the death of his business partner and moved to Somerset.

Newspaper adverts inviting the submission of tenders show Bruton & Williams Architects in business throughout the 1890s, with offices in both Cardiff and Barry Dock Chambers, see extracts below which state:

'South Wales Daily News, 9th January 1890' – "BUILDERS are Invited to TENDER for the ERECTION of a NEW METHODIST CHAPEL, to be erected in Penarth Road." "BRUTON & WILLIAMS, Architects, Queen-street, Cardiff"

'South Wales Daily News, 10th April 1891' – "TENDERS are invited for the ERECTION of NEW HOTEL at PALMERSTON, near CADOXTON-JUXTA-BARRY." "BRUTON & WILLIAMS, Architects, 15, Queen-street, Cardiff"

'Barry Dock News, 13th November 1891' – "WANTED, in an ARCHITECTS' OFFICE, an ARTICLED PUPIL. – Apply BRUTON & WILLIAMS, Barry Dock Chambers, Vere-street, Cadoxton-Barry."

'Barry Dock News, 29th July 1892' – "BURIAL BOARD MEETING AT CADOXTON-BARRY. A special meeting of the Barry, Cadoxton, and Merthyr Dovan Burial Board was held on Tuesday afternoon last, at Cadoxton, Rev J. Price presiding. The other members present ... with Mr Bruton (Messrs Bruton & Williams, architects) ... THE CEMETARY CHAPEL CONTRACT. The first business was to receive tenders for the erection of a chapel at the cemetery ..."

'South Wales Daily News, 6th December 1892' – "TENDERS are required for BUILDING A HOUSE at CAERPHILLY." "BRUTON & WILLIAMS, Architects"

'South Wales Daily News, 26th January 1893' – "TENDERS are required for SINKING A WELL at St. Lythan's, near Cardiff." "BRUTON & WILLIAMS, Architects. 15, Queen-street, Cardiff"

'South Wales Daily News, 11th July 1893' – "TENDERS are required for ADDITIONS to 95, NEWPORT-ROAD, for Dr. Campbell." "BRUTON & WILLIAMS, Architects. 15, Queen-street, Cardiff"

Edward Jenkin Williams (1864-1910)

Very little information can be found regarding Edward Jenkin Williams. He was articled to James, Seward & Thomas, architects of Cardiff, who designed some of Cardiff's most notable buildings in the late 19th century, such as Cardiff Free Library in The Hayes (1880-82) and Coal Exchange (1884-88) in Mount Stuart Square. Williams became a Member Society of Architects (MSA) in 1890 and gained his FRIBA in 1903.

An 'Index of Architects, Engineers, Surveyors, Builders working in Wales' refers to a partnership 'Williams & Morgan', however, no details of any projects have yet been found. Edward Jenkin Williams entered into partnership with Edward Henry Bruton around 1890 where he stayed until his death in 1910.

Examples of their work follows:

Tredegarville Unitarian Chapel, West Grove, Cardiff – designed 1886 by E. H. Bruton

Built as the Unitarian Free Christian Church at a cost of £3,000 on land given by H. Wodcott Thompson. The design was chosen by way of a limited competition won by E. H. Bruton, of Cardiff.

The Unitarian Church is now protected by a Grade II listing, which was designated on 31 May 1999 and last amended on 24 May 2002. The building is "Listed for its robust but unusual exterior appearance and for its fine, almost Byzantine interior complete with raised clerestorey and original fittings." Its listing describes the building as "Gabled building in simplified Queen Anne style with two-storey flat-roofed vestibule in front and Italianate bell-tower at NE corner."

In his book 'The Buildings of Wales – Glamorgan (Pevsner Architectural Guides – 1995)' John Newman describes the church as follows:

"the small but galumphing Unitarian chapel of 1886 in Cardiff by E. H. Bruton" (p. 87) and also;

"Dated 1886, the year the building was designed. Erected in 1890. The architect was E. H. Bruton. This is not Gothic, but it is hard to know what to call it. The two most prominent features are a shaped and pedimented gable and the oddly shapeless belfry. Red brick and eroded Ham Hill stone." (p.304)



Unitarian Chapel, West Grove (source: 'britishlistedbuildings.co.uk')

**Penrhiwceiber Workmen's Institute and Public Hall,
Penrhiwceiber Road, Mountain Ash – 1888 by E. H. Bruton.**

Built in 1888, it was the Penrhiwceiber Miners' Institute until 1993 when it was refurbished. This building has a link with the Cory family as it was originally owned by Penrhiwceiber Colliery which belonged to Messrs Cory, Glasbrook and Yeo, with the dedication stone laid by Richard Cory.

The building was enlarged in 1900 by Morgan & Elford. In 1908 a projection box was built on the front of the façade and it began screening films. Around 1930 it was equipped with an RCA sound system. The Workmen's-Hall Cinema closed in the 1980's and continued as a community centre. It was refurbished in 1993.

The Penrhiwceiber Institute and Community Hall is now protected by a Grade II listing, which was designated on 10 March 2003 and has not been amended since. The building is "Listed as a historically interesting local entertainment hall built for miners and their families and still in community use, which retains most of its original fabric and an interesting early projection booth."



Workmen's Institute & Community Hall (source: 'britishlistedbuildings.co.uk')

**St. James Church, Church Place, Blaengarw
– 1890 by Bruton & Williams**

St. James Church was built and opened in 1890. The building was closed for worship in 2004 and is now in residential use.

A newspaper article from 'Barry Dock News, 12th December 1890' describes the building as "plain early English" in style. Extracts from this article state:

"ST. JAMES' CHURCH, BLAENGARW

"The above church which was opened on Monday last, is erected upon a site generously given by the Earl of Dunraven, and is designed on a cruciform plan, the nave being 61 feet long by 25 feet, wide. The chancel is 23 feet by 19 feet 6in., flanked on each side by a vestry and organ chamber. The accommodation provides for a congregation of 500, space being left on the north side of the site for additional accommodation in the future. The style of architecture is plain early English, the architects relying more upon the effect produced by well-proportioned details than any elaborate tracery or ornamentation. ... The whole of the work has been ably carried out by Mr John Rees, of Blaengarw, from the designs and superintendence of Messrs Bruton and Williams, architects, of Cardiff and Cadoxton-Barry. The total cost, when completed, will be about £1,400."

In his book 'The Buildings of Wales – Glamorgan (Pevsner Architectural Guides – 1995)' John Newman describes the church as follows: "1890 by Bruton & Williams of Cardiff, who, for £1,085, found it 'impossible to introduce much architectural design'." (p.155)



St James Church (source: 'geograph.org.uk')

**Chapel, Merthyr Dovan Cemetery
– 1891-3 by Bruton & Williams**

The chapel at Merthyr Dovan Cemetery, Barry opened in 1893, built to the winning design of Bruton & Williams following a design competition.

A newspaper article from the 'Barry Dock News, 27th November 1891' announces "Messrs Bruton and Williams, of Cardiff, and Barry Dock Chambers, Cadoxton" as the architects of the winning design for the proposed chapel at Merthyr Dovan Cemetery.

Tenders for the chapel were requested in 1892 and the build commenced. An article from the 'Barry Dock News, 24th February 1893' states: "Mr Williams, architect, informed the Board that the building of the new cemetery chapel at Merthyr Dovan was proceeding satisfactorily, but the bad weather had impeded the work very much. The roof was now being proceeded with, and the chapel would be finished in the course of a month, probably by Palm Sunday."

The opening ceremony of the chapel featured in the 'Barry Dock News, 28th April 1893' an extract states:

**"THE NEW CEMETERY CHAPEL AT MERTHYR DOVAN
"OPENING CEREMONY**

"On Sunday afternoon last a dedication service was held at Merthyr Dovan, the occasion being the ceremony of opening for burial services the new cemetery chapel. ..."

The chapel is still in use today and is listed in the 'Vale of Glamorgan County Treasures' prepared by the Vale of Glamorgan Council. This document describes Merthyr Dyfan Cemetery Chapel as: "Small Victorian chapel associated with the cemetery. Of local stone with ashlar dressings under a slate roof; lancet windows."



Merthyr Dyfan Chapel, Barry Cemetery (source: 'lapider.co.uk')

Church of the Holy Cross, Cowbridge – 1893 restoration by Bruton & Williams

The parish church of Cowbridge is dedicated to the Holy Cross on which Our Saviour died and has often been referred to as the 'Cathedral of the Vale'. The church was originally built sometime in the 13th century and has undergone restoration work on several occasions; in 1722 the tower was repaired, in 1766 the roof of the north aisle was renewed, in 1777 two windows in the south chancel and east window were blocked up, in 1848 the tracery of windows which had previously been blocked up were restored, in 1850-2 the church was restored by the diocesan architect John Prichard, and in 1859 the north porch was rebuilt.

In 1893, the church underwent a further restoration under the supervision of Cardiff architects, Messrs. Bruton and Williams. The work included the renovation of the tower and rehangng of the bells, the replastering of the interior, the removal of the gallery at the west end of the nave, the erection of a new organ in the south aisle and the erection of a new pulpit. Details of this renovation work are discussed in the 'Evening Express, 21st October 1893' which states:

"Renovation of Cowbridge Church - Cowbridge Parish Church has been renovated at a cost of about £800, and services were resumed for the first time on Friday, the event being marked by the presence of the Lord Bishop of the Diocese. The fabric has been materially improved, the chief points of improvement being the restoration of the tower and walls, the re-plastering of the interior, and the erection of a new organ and stone pulpit. This work has been efficiently carried out by Messrs. Hatherley and Carr, contractors, of Bristol, under the supervision of Messrs. Bruton and Williams, architects, Cardiff."

There was further restoration work in the 1920s to early 1930s, especially to roofs, and again later in the 20th century by George Pace.

The Church of the Holy Cross is now protected by a Grade I listing, which was designated on 5 December 1963 and last amended on 16 September 1999. The reasons for listing are "Graded I as medieval church on key site in historic town centre. Group value with surrounding listed buildings."



Church of the Holy Cross, Cowbridge (source: 'cowbridgeparish.com')

St Cadoc Church, Pendoylan – 1893 restoration by Bruton & Williams

The church is dedicated to St. Cadoc, the 6th century Celtic Saint. The main structure of the church dates from the 14th century, however, substantially rebuilt in 1855, funded by Roland Fothergill of Hensol Castle, who inserted the Hensol vault beneath the chancel at this time.

In 1893, extensive restoration work was undertaken to the interior and the tower was reconstructed. The work was carried out by Messrs. J.R. Haines, builders of Canton, under the supervision of Bruton and Williams, architects of Cardiff. The 'Barry Dock News, 29th April 1892' includes a brief article which states:

"PENDOYLAN. CHURCH RESTORATION. — The restoration of Pendoylan Church, near Peterstone-super-Ely, will shortly be taken in hand. Messrs Bruton and Williams, of Cardiff, are the architects."

Despite the alterations and renovations, the Church of St Cadoc retains many elements of its Norman and mediaeval history. The large, embattled tower contains a ring of six bells.

In his book 'The Buildings of Wales – Glamorgan (Pevsner Architectural Guides – 1995)' John Newman describes the church as follows: "Big unbuttressed w. tower, apparently of c. 1500, reconstructed in 1893 by Bruton & Williams." (p.500)

The Church of St Cadoc is now protected by a Grade II* listing, which was designated on 28 January 1963 and last amended on 18 May 1995. The church is "Listed at grade II* for its medieval origins and special historic significance to the parish of Pendoylan."

The church is still in use today and is listed in the 'Vale of Glamorgan County Treasures – Pendoylan' prepared by the Vale of Glamorgan Council.



St Cadoc Church, Pendoylan (source: 'eastvalechurches.org.uk')

Stacey Road Board School, Roath, Cardiff – 1893-4 extension by Bruton & Williams

Stacey Road Board School opened in July 1892 and was enlarged in 1893-4 by the architects Bruton & Williams. The 'Evening Express, 2nd December 1892' talking about the extension says that "at Stacey-road 120 more children will be received after the work has been completed".

The 'South Wales Daily News, 23rd March 1893' includes an advert for tenders "STACEY-ROAD SCHOOL EXTENSION. The Cardiff School Board are prepared to receive TENDERS for the ERECTION of CERTAIN ADDITIONS to the Stacey-road Board Schools. Plans and Specifications may be seen and Bills of Quantities obtained at the offices of Messrs Bruton and Williams, 15 Queen-street, Cardiff"

The 'Western Mail, 5th May 1893' tells us that "Seven tenders were received for the Stacey-road Board School extension, that of Mr. H. Davies, Wells-street, Cardiff, at £2,237 9s. 7d. being accepted."

Stacey Road Board School, now Stacey Primary School is still going strong today, 130 years after it first opened. The school extension has been described in one source as the "splendid, lofty neo-Gothic work-out by Edward Bruton is a visual feast that always repays an excursion to the indeterminate Adamsdown/Roath zone south of Newport Road".



Stacey Road Board School, Roath (source: 'flickr.com')

**Church of All Saints, Gwynfe, Llangadog, Carmarthenshire
– 1898-9 by E. H. Bruton**

A small chapel has existed on this site since the 16th century, to the immediate south of the present building. The present building replaced one, in the same footprint, built c.1710 which is now the church hall. The present church is the work of the architect E. H. Bruton, whose work is described in the book 'The Buildings of Wales' as a "ham fisted essay in free late Gothic."

All Saints was built in 1898-9, with building works carried out by Daniel Price of Llangadog at a cost of £1,955.

The building, is in Free Perpendicular Gothic style, constructed of local red sandstone (Sawdde sandstone) with grey Forest of Dean stone dressings. It consists of nave and chancel under single sale roof, a south-west porch-tower and north-east vestry. There are coped gables with cross finials.

The Church of All Saints is now protected by a Grade II listing, which was designated on 19 July 1999 and has not been amended since. The church is "Included as an ornate late C19 church with unusual interior detail, notably the fine tiled reredos."



All Saints Church, Gwynfe, Carmarthenshire (source: 'explorechurches.org')

**St Michael's Church, Llanmihangel
– 1909 staircase turret by E. J. Williams**

The church has its origins in the 11th century, although the present structure was built mainly in the 13th century and dedicated the St Michael and All Angels. The tower dates from the 15th century. The church was restored in Perpendicular manner c.1888-89 by John Morgan of Pontyclun to plans by F.R. Kempson diocesan architect.

In 1909 a staircase turret was designed by E. Jenkin Williams of Cardiff, added in 1910, before which the tower was accessed by an external ladder. The turret has an octagonal shafted chimney, lit by an arrow loop above a trefoil window to the north.

The parish church of St Michael and All Angels is now protected by a Grade II* listing, which was designated on 22 February 1963 and last amended 26 October 1995. The church is "Listed grade II* for its medieval origins and the special interest of its historic context with the Grade I Llanmihangel Place."



St Michael's Church, Llanmihangel (source: 'coflein.gov.uk')

**St Mary's Church, Pontyrhyl, Glamorgan
– 1891-2 by Bruton & Williams**

St Mary's Church was built in 1891-2 to the designs of architects E. H. Bruton and E. J. Williams of Cardiff, in the English Gothic style, as a chapel of ease to St Theodore, Pontycymmer.

The building consisted of nave and continuous chancel divided internally by a timber screen which was continuous on (liturgical) north and south of the chancel, behind choir stalls, to form a vestry and organ chamber. The sanctuary was marked off from the rest of the chancel by a lofty arch on the same line as the altar rail. The porch was on the (liturgical) south side. When first built, there was a small 'Mission Room' nearby at SS90498954 portrayed on the Ordnance Survey second-edition map of 1899. It had gone by the third edition of 1918.

The church closed in 1986 though the building is still extant.

**St Theodore's Church, Bryncethin, St Bride's Minor, Bridgend
– 1891-6 by Bruton & Williams**

St Theodore's was built in the village of Bryncethin, in a rectangular churchyard at the junction of what were then the roads from Blackmill and Abergarw. It was built in the period 1891-6 to designs of Bruton & Williams, architects, of Cardiff. The original plans suggest a simple lay out of nave and chancel, aisled on the north and with a porch on the south. It ceased to be a place of worship at the end of 1992 and was subsequently sold. The church was later demolished and the area is now entirely redeveloped as residential buildings ('Y Bracty').

4.13 Setting & Context of Cory's Building & Merchant Place

The development site is bounded by Bute Place to the south, Bute Street to the west and Lloyd George Avenue to the east.

Merchant Place (identified on the plan in red) has its 'front' entrance elevation onto Bute Place, facing south; its side elevation onto Dock Lane and Lloyd George Avenue with The Flourish beyond, facing east; and its 'rear' elevation onto a void and Custom House beyond, facing north.

Cory's Building (identified on the plan in purple) has its 'front' entrance elevation onto Bute Street, facing west; its open side elevation onto Bute Place, facing south; its closed side elevation facing Custom House, to the north, after a small void; and its 'rear' elevation onto a void, with Dock Lane, Lloyd George Avenue and The Flourish beyond, facing east.

The two buildings, and the open area behind (identified on the plan to the right in yellow), form, along with Custom House to the north an island site with roads to west and south, an at grade car park to the north, and a line of trees to the east before grass and then road.

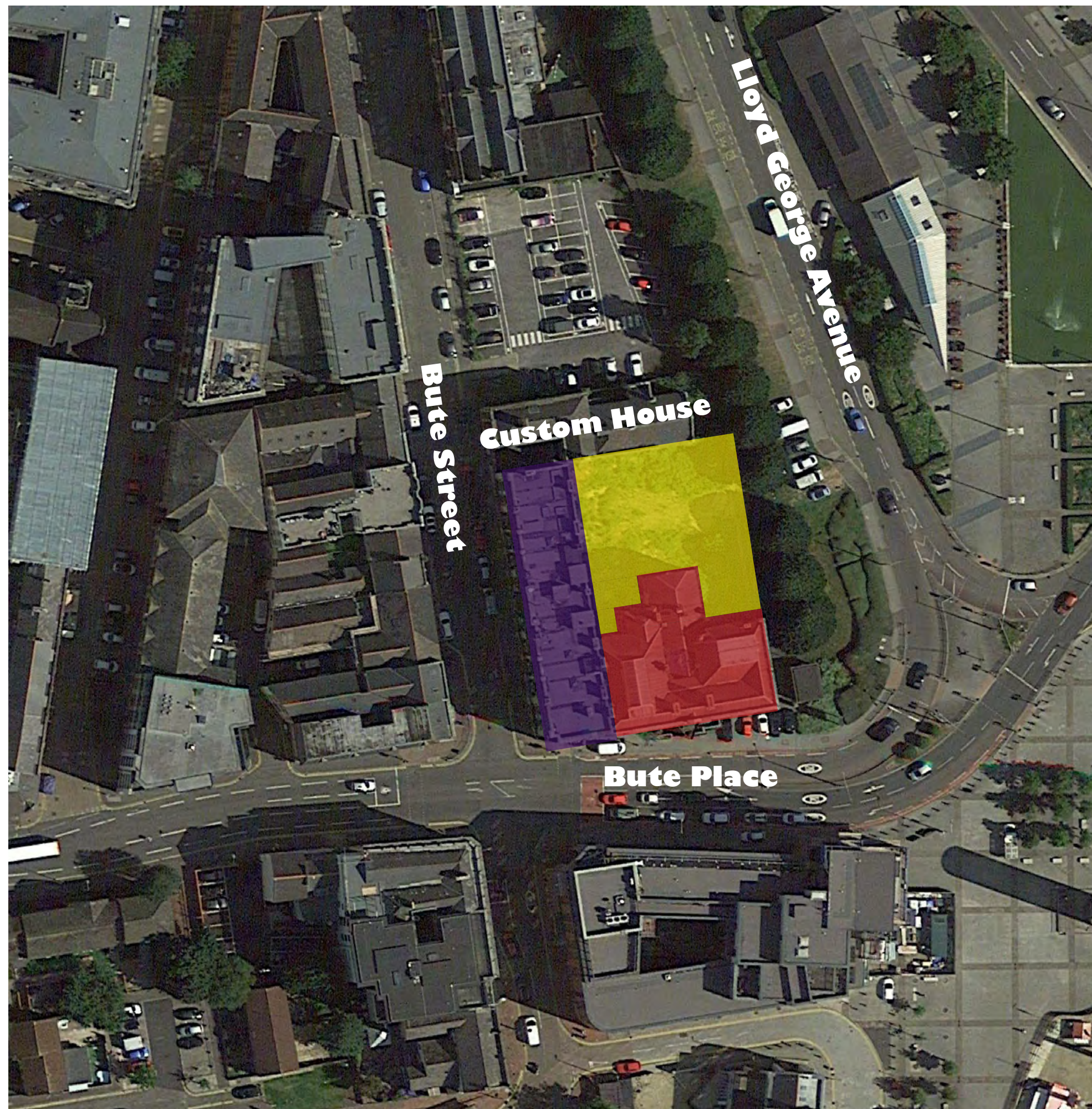
Both Cory's Building and Merchant Place are identified as 'Landmark Buildings' within the Mount Stuart Square Conservation Area; an area little changed since its late Victorian hey-day, when Cardiff and the Docks were an economic power house. The character of the Conservation Area is felt all around the site, but particularly to the west, north and south west, with the area's significant number of note-worthy Victorian buildings, displaying the wealth which was behind its development.

It is notable, from the 1879 maps, that all the other plots along Bute Street, Lower Bute Street and James Street were built upon by 1879, as were those along Bute Crescent, West Bute Street etc. An appraisal of those building which remain, confirms that most were built between 1839 and 1875. Indeed, many of those original buildings from the mid-1800s still remain, making this an area of considerable architectural significance. It is also interesting to note that the open site just to the north of Custom House, once the north end of this 'green space' appears never to have been developed.

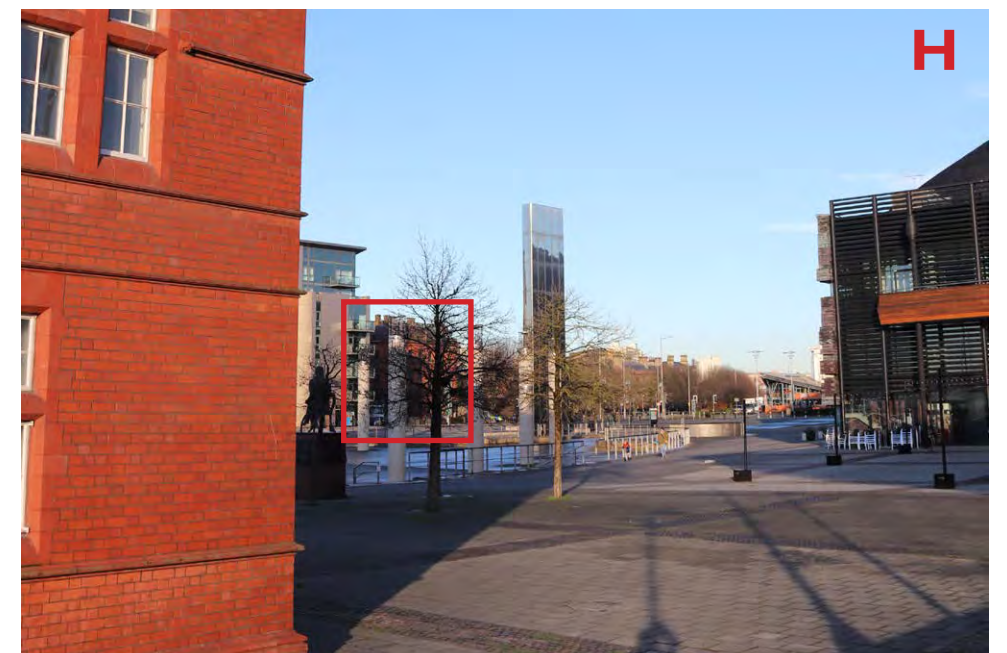
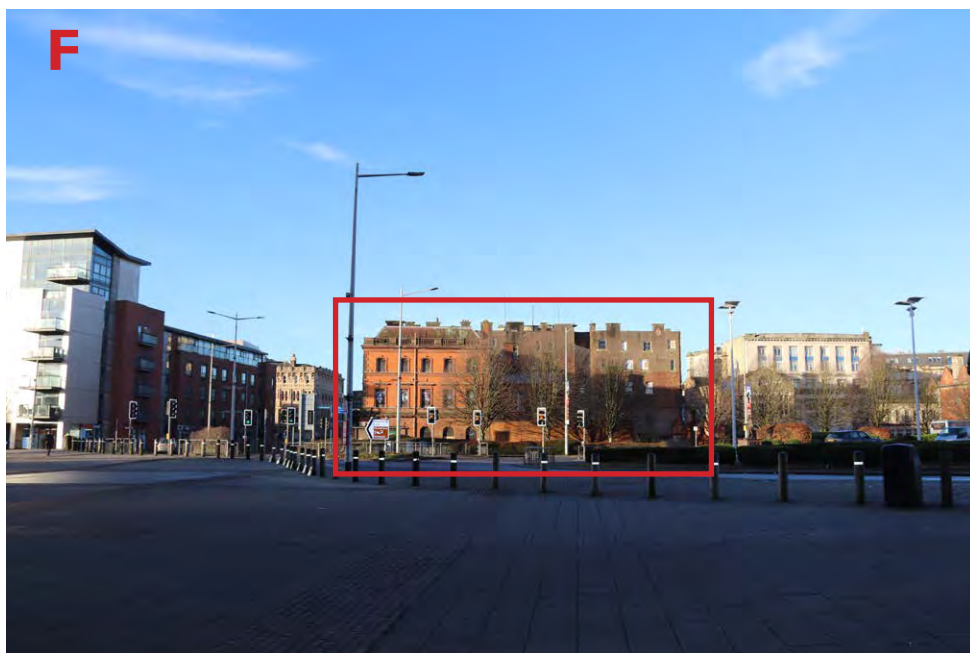
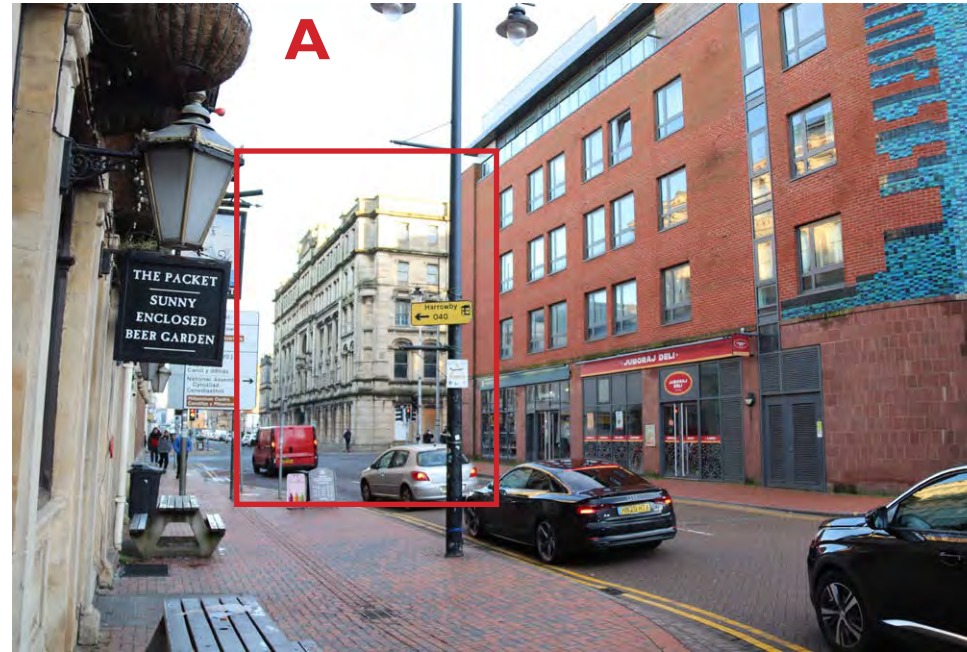
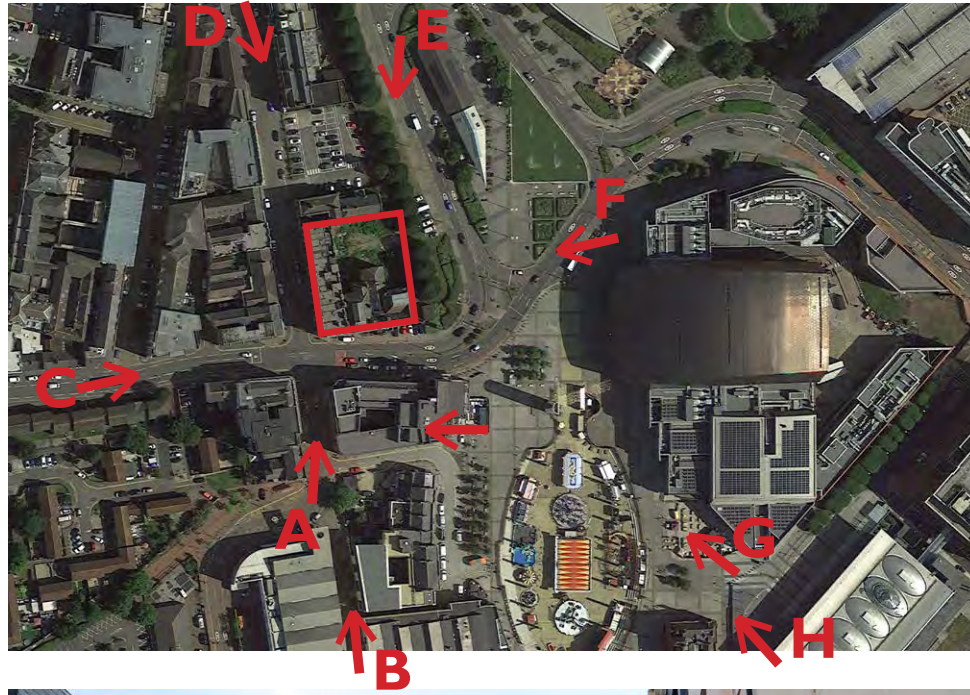
With the 'Coal and Shipping Exchange' building being constructed in 1884-8 on the Mount Stuart Square site; and Merchant Place, in 1881, and Cory's Building, in 1889, on the other open site; the 1899 maps show these two plots built upon, and present an urban and industrial grain which will barely change over the next century.

However, the character of the area has significantly changed to the east and south in more recent years, with the Wales Millennium Centre, the Senedd, the Red Dragon Centre, Mermaid Quay, Roald Dahl Plass etc forming a new, lively social setting. Both buildings, in particular Merchant Place, are still very much an integral part of this vibrant social scene.

The site is visible from all directions and all parts of Cardiff Bay. It is even visible from the side of the Pierhead Building. On the next page are photos of the important views into the site.



GoogleEarth aerial photo of the Cardiff Bay area with Cory's Building highlighted in purple, Merchants Place highlighted in red & the empty site highlighted in yellow



4.13.2 Extracts from the 'Mount Stuart Square Conservation Area Appraisal'

The 'Mount Stuart Square Conservation Area Appraisal' document talks about **high quality or unusual materials** used in the area. Extracts of this document are shown below, which show how both Merchant Place and Cory's Building are very much part of the rich tapestry of the area's architectural language.

"Stone is found on a number of the commercial buildings with Portland, Bath, or Pennant the main types of stone used as the principal facing material. Individual buildings frequently utilise a combination of materials that contrast or complement with the main walling material. Bath stone is typically used for dressings and it is combined with Pennant stone or red brick and may be elaborately carved."

"Red brick is used on a number of the commercial buildings and it is often partnered by Bath stone dressings with the two materials both complementing and contrasting with one another."

"The commercial buildings typically have impressive facades utilising high quality facing materials and architectural detailing on the main street frontages. The less public face of a building is usually plainer and tends to use lower grade materials. **Cory's Buildings** are a classic example of this approach with its ornately decorated limestone frontage to Bute Street and Bute Place, while buff brick is used on the side elevations."

"Slate is typically used for roof coverings. The roof slope can be a particularly strong feature on some of the buildings and the slate covering adds to the visual interest."

"Many of the buildings have timber frame sash windows although there are some examples of metal frame windows on the later buildings."

"To the east of the Conservation Area is a long run of cast iron railings bordering Dock Lane. These railings comprise a Grade II listed structure and were formerly the boundary to the docks area."

The 'Mount Stuart Square Conservation Area Appraisal' document talks about **high quality architectural detailing** in the area. Extracts of this document are shown below:

"The grandeur of the architecture and the opulence of the detailing on the later commercial buildings is a reflection of the role of Butetown and the docks at the height of Cardiff's commercial power, and the prosperity of the individual businesses that commissioned their construction. Their design was influenced by different elements of revival architecture including Gothic, French Renaissance, Italianate, and the Baroque style. As a result, each building displays individuality and there is no standard style."

"Vertical architectural elements are found on many of the buildings and prolific use is made of columns and pilasters, giving those buildings a strong vertical emphasis. The use of giant order pilasters and columns on some of the larger scale commercial buildings emphasises their powerful appearance. Horizontal architectural details are also a strong feature and include stringcourses, cornices, and parapets."

"On many of the later buildings there is as much attention to detail at the upper storey levels as there is at ground level. Architectural features at roof level can also add considerable interest Chimney stacks contribute to the interest of the roofscape and the substantial Bath stone chimney stacks on the Dock Chambers building together with those on Pascoe House and the 6 tall stucco rendered stacks on Bute Street Station to the north, form a particularly impressive row."

"The purpose-built commercial buildings tend to feature fairly grand and imposing entrances. The entrance is typically accessed via steps from the street and secured by substantial wood panelled double doors, sometimes with fanlights above. Architectural detailing around the doorways can be quite lavish and embellished with elaborate carvings and mouldings."

"In addition to the main windows, some buildings also include smaller round and oval window openings, adding to the decorative interest. Windows with semicircular heads feature and also windows in a tripartite form with a central window flanked by two narrower sidelights."

The 'Mount Stuart Square Conservation Area Appraisal' document talks about the **grouping of buildings/layout** in the area. Extracts of this document are shown below:

"The area is characterised by dense development with buildings forming a largely continuous frontage along the street, creating a strong feeling of enclosure. Plots are normally intensively developed with the converted houses and the purpose-built commercial buildings making full use of the available land."

"The buildings on Bute Street and West Bute Street are arranged in a linear form with the two streets converging to form an acute junction at the northern end of the Conservation Area. The proximity of the two streets close to where they converge, has led to fairly shallow plots, resulting in buildings which have their main frontage to Bute Street and a secondary frontage on West Bute Street. The National Westminster Bank building has made the most of its plot by having an imposing entrance onto both streets. The prominent and acute junctions formed at the fork of Bute Street and West Bute Street, and also Bute Street and Dock Lane allows the buildings on these plots a strong presence in the street, defining the gateway into the northern end of the Conservation Area."

"The architectural form of the buildings and their relationship with the street has created strong frontages throughout the area. Some individual buildings and groups stand out because of their position in the street or their group value as an architectural set piece. For example, **1-3 Bute Place (Merchant Place) and Corys Buildings** on the corner of Bute Street provide a strong frontage which helps to define the gateway into the southern end of the Conservation Area."

The 'Mount Stuart Square Conservation Area Appraisal' document talks about the **rhythm of buildings** in the area. Extracts of this document are shown below:

"The overall massing of the large commercial buildings is visually reduced by the incorporation of vertical architectural elements including pilasters, columns and window arrangements. This breaks up the facade into sections, creating a rhythm that integrates them into the pattern of older, smaller scale buildings."

4.13.3 The Mount Stuart Square Conservation Area Appraisal – Presence of Landmark Buildings

As stated earlier, Cory's Building and Merchant Place are situated within the Mount Stuart Square Conservation Area, which was adopted in 2009.

This Conservation Area Appraisal says "1-3 Bute Place and Cory's Buildings on the corner of Bute Street provide a strong frontage which helps to define the gateway into the southern end of the Conservation Area."

The Conservation Area Appraisal states:

"For the purpose of this appraisal, a landmark building is one which has significant social and historic links with the development of the area, which is unique within its setting, and which contributes positively to the character of the area.

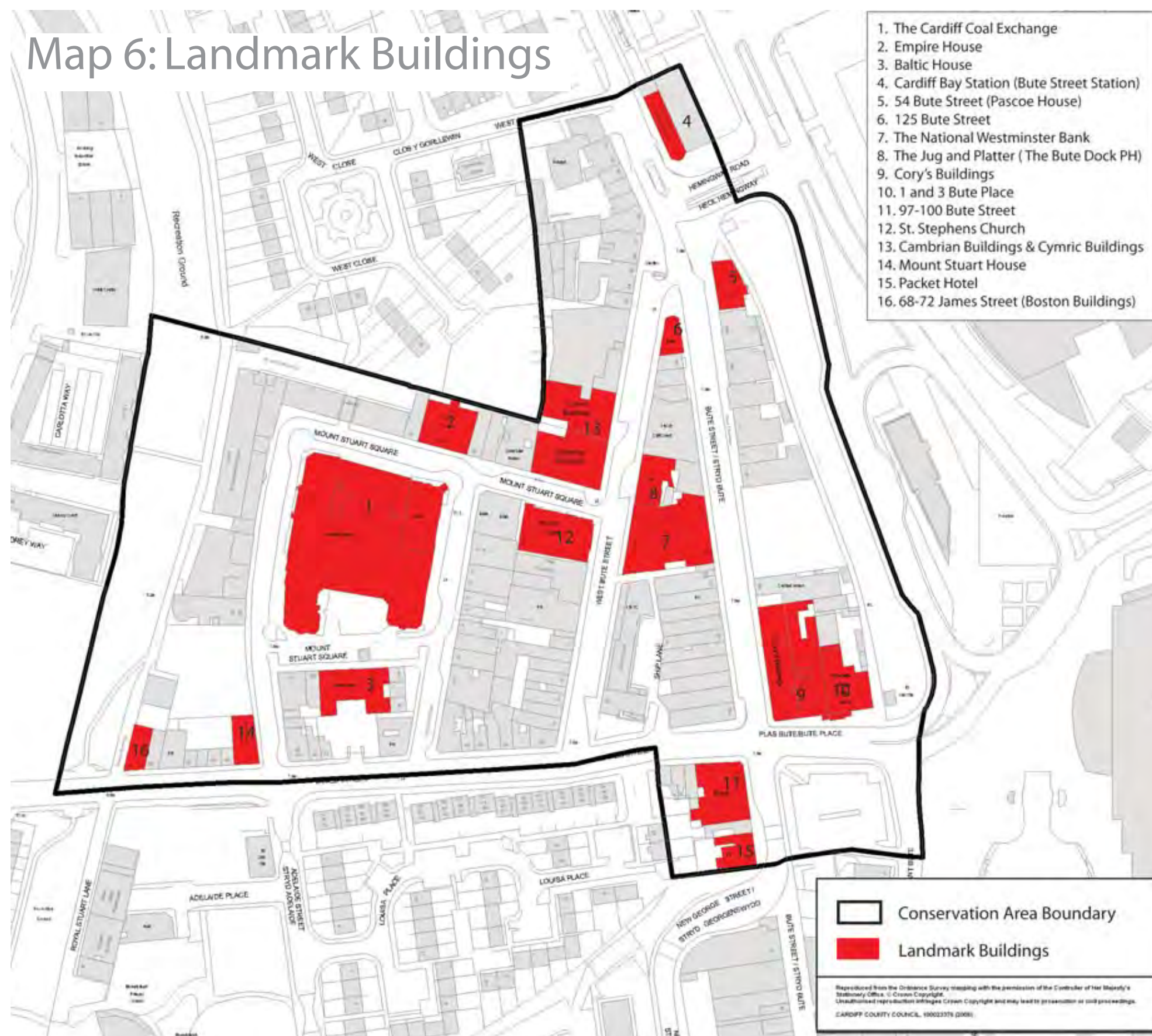
"There are numerous buildings within the Mount Stuart Conservation Area that have these qualities to some degree; however, there are certain buildings that stand out and exhibit these qualities to a greater degree than others.

"Some buildings such as the National Westminster Bank building stand out because of their sheer scale although the smaller buildings can be equally prominent because of the differences in their height. Corner sites were prime locations for commercial buildings because of the benefit of two street frontages and usually these buildings have a strong street presence. The buildings that have been identified as Landmark Buildings are shown on the map opposite".

The following buildings within the 'Mount Stuart Square Conservation Area' were identified as Landmark Buildings:

- The Cardiff Coal Exchange, Mount Stuart Square
- Empire House, Mount Stuart Square
- Baltic House, Mount Stuart Square
- Cardiff Bay Station (Bute Street Station)
- 54 Bute Street (Pascoe House)
- 125 Bute Street
- National Westminster Bank (113-116 Bute Street)
- The Bute Dock Public House, West Bute Street
- Cory's Buildings (57 Bute Street)
- 1 and 3 Bute Place
- 97-100 Bute Street (corner of James Street)
- St Stephens Church
- Cambrian Buildings and Cymric Buildings
- Mount Stuart House, James Street
- The Packet Hotel
- 68-72 James Street (Boston Buildings)

Those which are along Bute Street are briefly described in the next series of pages.



Map of 'Landmark Buildings', extracted from Cardiff Council's 'Mount Stuart Square Conservation Area Appraisal'

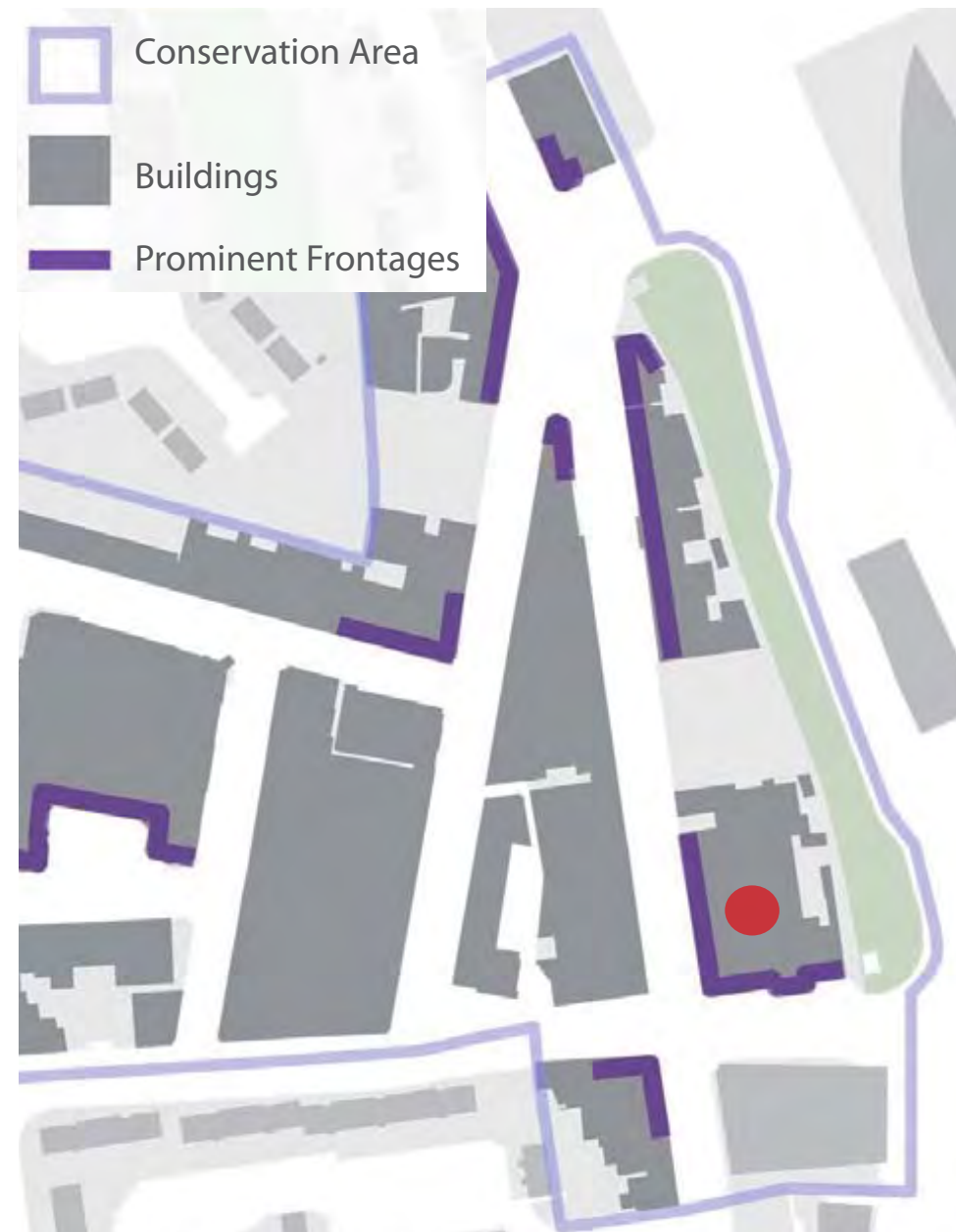
4.13.4 The Mount Stuart Square Conservation Area Appraisal – Presence of Landmark Buildings

On this page are 4 no. diagrams extracted from the Conservation Area Appraisal, showing how important Cory's Building and Merchant Place are to the area.

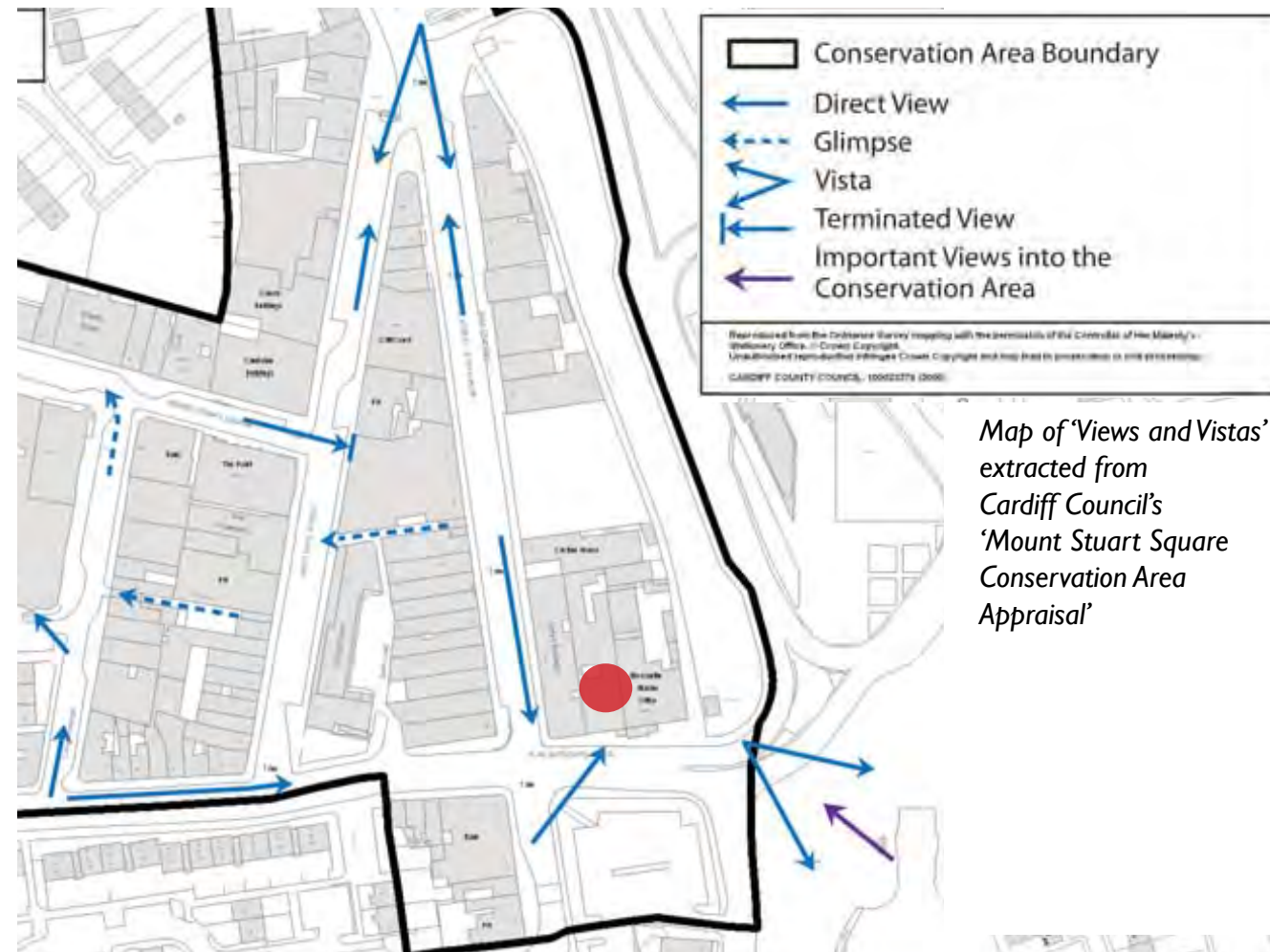
They relate to:

- Grouping of Buildings and Prominent Frontages;
 - Cory's Building, Merchant Place & Custom House as a Grouping with Prominent Frontages to Cory's Building & Merchant Place.
- Views and Vistas;
 - a number to & from Cory's Building & Merchant Place.
- Key Opportunities for Enhancement;
 - one at the corner of Cory's Building.
- Movement.

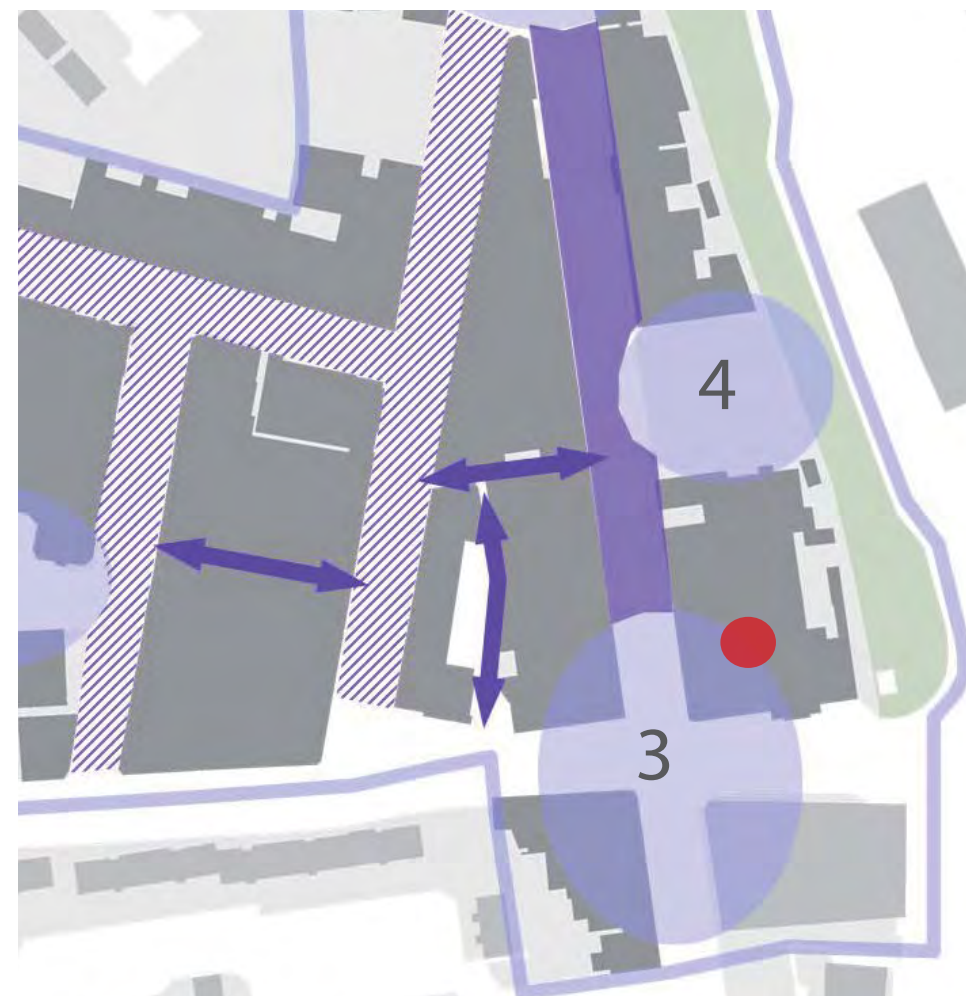
In all cases, the site with Cory's Building and Merchant Place is identified with a red dot.



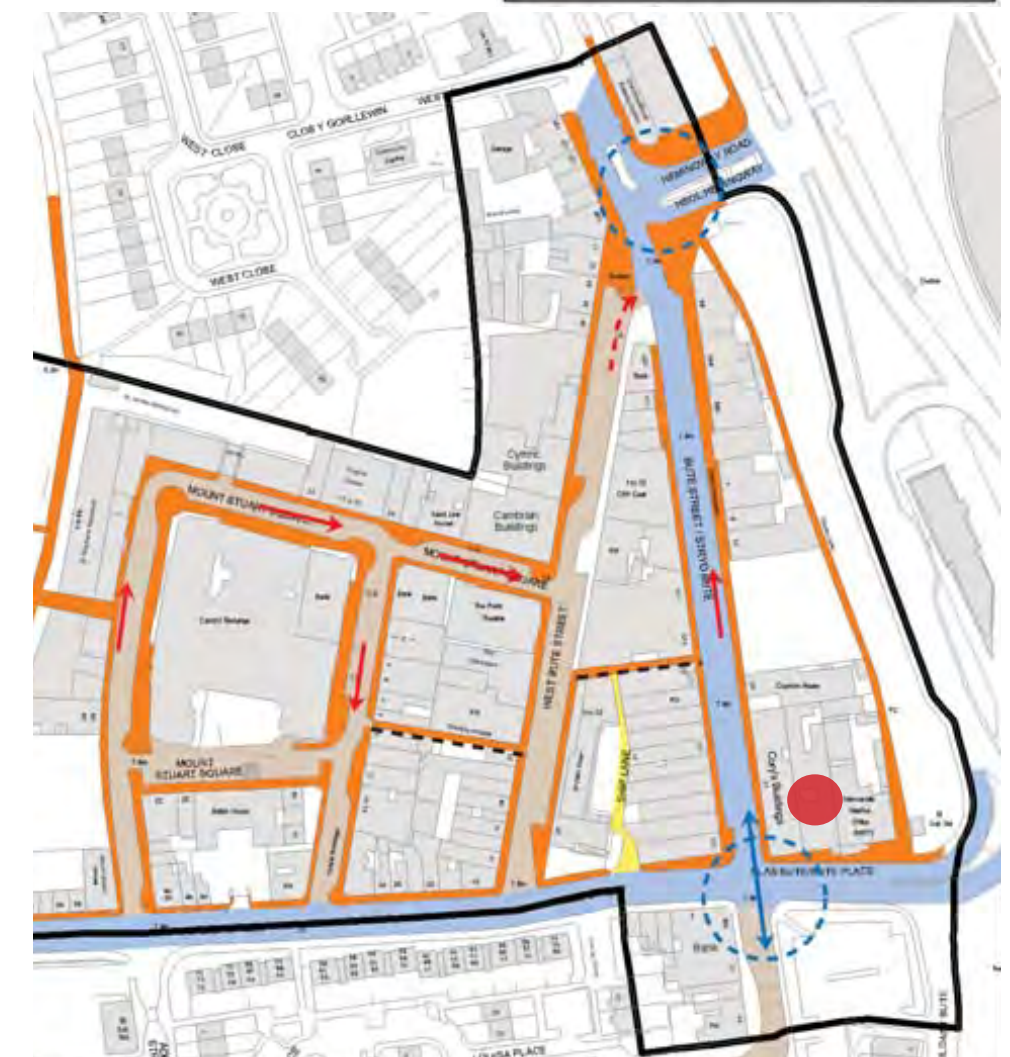
Map of 'Grouping of Buildings', extracted from Cardiff Council's 'Mount Stuart Square Conservation Area Appraisal'



Map of 'Views and Vistas' extracted from Cardiff Council's 'Mount Stuart Square Conservation Area Appraisal'



Map of 'Key Opportunities for Enhancement', extracted from Cardiff Council's 'Mount Stuart Square Conservation Area Appraisal'



Map of 'Movement', extracted from Cardiff Council's 'Mount Stuart Square Conservation Area Appraisal'

4.13.5 Historical Significance of Bute Street & Bute Place

The historical significance of Bute Street can be demonstrated, not least, by the number of Listed Buildings to be found along its route.

Details of these buildings can be found on the next series of pages.





Cardiff Bay Railway Station (Grade II* listed)

Location: On exposed corner site with long side parallel to Bute Street.

In his book 'The Buildings of Wales – Glamorgan (Pevsner Architectural Guides – 1995)', John Newman describes the building as "one of the earliest locomotive railway buildings still standing. Three-storeyed, stuccoed, built c. 1843 as offices for the Taff Vale railway. Extended to the south in the 1860s, two-storeyed with a canted full-height bay at the end, presumably to light the boardroom. Moulded surrounds to the windows of this part indicate the later date."

It was from near this site that the very first train in South Wales ran in October 1840, when the TVR opened the line to Abercynon. Around 1870, the TVR set up its Bute Road headquarters. The station was central to the coal export trade. In 1920, Bute Docks, the TVR and the Cardiff Railway were sold to the Great Western Railway, and for a short time made it the busiest and most important rail system in the world.



Cardiff Bay Railway Station, circa 1920 (source: 'museum.wales' website)



Cardiff Bay Railway Station recently adapted for offices & retail (source: author)

Listing

Cardiff Bay Station is protected by a Grade II* listing, which was designated on 19 May 1975 and last amended on 21 August 1998.

The listing (with a Cadw ID No. of 13963) states:

History

Built as offices for the Taff Vale Railway, and first used in 1843, but southern section apparently an addition of 1860's. Following construction of new offices at Queen St in 1862, the building was let as consulates (and known as 'Consulate Chambers'), but with waiting room and ticket office in southern section. Adapted as station in early C20, following closure of old Cardiff Docks Station, formerly on the E side of the tracks.

Exterior

Stuccoed walls. Hipped slate roof with deeply overhanging eaves. Tall stuccoed chimneys with classicising cornices, northernmost 2 chimneys at right angles to road, others parallel. Bute Street facade in two sections, northern of 3 storeys and 4 bays, articulated by banding and pilaster strips. Second floor has 4 almost square windows set close to eaves, central pair are grouped closer. First floor windows are set deeply with panelled aprons below. Band course at this level continues round building. On ground floor, windows follow line of those above, and have stone sills but northernmost is round headed. To left (N) of this window is round headed doorway with architrave and keystone. Southern section of storey has group of three large tall windows (small pane sashes) with moulded architrave supported on brackets and bracketed cornice above. On ground floor 3 windows grouped together, central window blocked, R window without architrave (apparently blocked doorway). To L of windows, round-headed doorway similar to that at N end of facade. Elevation facing S has two storey semi-hexagonal bay with pierced parapet above. Each face of bay has window on each floor, each surrounded by moulded architrave on small brackets.

To W, elevation somewhat altered and obscured by station canopy (modern) but follows pattern of E facade, omitting large boardroom windows. Station platform with free standing cast iron columns in Italian Renaissance style probably relocated. To N, elevation has doubled pilaster strips at ends, but door and window openings altered for fire escape.

Interior

Ground floor altered for use as Railway Museum.

Reasons for Listing

Graded II* as an exceptionally early surviving example of purpose built railway architecture in Wales.

126 Bute Street (known as Britannia Buildings) (Grade II listed)

Location: Splayed building at junction of Bute Street and West Bute Street.

Part of a development which includes Nos 33-37 West Bute Street dating from 1850-1851, and once known as Britannia Buildings. Contractors were Hemingway and Pearson, involved in building Britannia Bridge over Menai Strait, and Bute East Dock.

Listing

126 Bute Street is protected by a Grade II listing, which was designated on 20 August 1992 and last amended on 21 August 1998.

The listing (with a Cadw ID No. of I3980) states:

History

Part of a development which includes Nos 33-37 West Bute Street dating from 1850-1851, and once known as Britannia Buildings. Contractors were Hemingway and Pearson, involved in building Britannia Bridge over Menai Strait, and Bute East Dock. Until c.1980, ships chandlers', currently (March 1991) part of Industrial and Maritime Museum.

Exterior

Splayed stucco front, three storeys, four window bays. Projecting cornice. Second floor almost square window with large pane horned sashes and stone sills, but second window from L replaced by large clock. First floor windows with horned large pane sashes, and architraves with cornices over. Blocking course at sill level. On ground floor, to R, window converted from former doorway with bracketed cornice and to L, early Victorian Style shopfront with central recessed doorway flanked by small pane shop windows. Classically inspired pilasters to ends and entablature over with architrave. At rear, large later C19 T-shaped range of connecting warehouses in grey rubble with red brick dressings. Three storeys, camber-headed windows with small pane glazing; tall loading bays; modern corrugated roof covering and modern red brick gable ends. Smaller 2-storey range to E of and parallel with south arm of 'T'. Adapted as stores and galleries of Industrial and Maritime Museum.

Reasons for Listing

Included as part of a well-preserved group of buildings from early development of Butetown, which includes Nos 33-37 West Bute Street. Group value.

54 Bute Street, formerly Pascoe House (Grade II listed)

Location: Opposite the junction of Bute Street and West Bute Street and on the opposite corner of the new road from Cardiff Bay Railway Station; Dock Chambers to right and Dock Lane to left.

In his book 'The Buildings of Wales – Glamorgan (Pevsner Architectural Guides – 1995)', John Newman describes the building as "the first of the showpiece redevelopments whereby coal and shipping companies, banks and the other financial institutions on which the prosperity of the Docks depended competed with one another to present an image of dynamism and success. Pascoe House is an early example, built in 1875 by W.D. Blessley, as offices for the Powell Duffryn Coal Company. Symmetrical, three-storey front extended to the north in the same style in 1907 by E.W.M. Corbett. In a High Victorian semi-Gothic style thought suitable for commercial buildings at that date. Massive Burgesian doorway, arcaded ground storey, segmental and straight-headed windows above, the top cornice a thick tangle of stiff-leaf. Polychromy of dark Pennant sandstone walls, with buff Bath and pink Radyr stone dressings."



54 Bute Street (Pascoe House) (source: 'c1.staticflickr.com' website)



126 Bute Street (Britannia Buildings) (source: 'flickr.com' website)

Listing

Pascoe House is protected by a Grade II listing, which was designated on 19 May 1975 and last amended on 21 August 1998.

The listing (with a Cadw ID No. of I3964) states:

History

Built in 1875 by W D Blessley, architect of Cardiff, as offices of Powell Duffryn Coal Co.; extended to N in 1906 by E W M Corbett, architect of Cardiff, closely matching the style of the original building. Confusingly the 1880s OS map shows this building as a branch bank.

Exterior

Eclectic, High Victorian building including strong Gothic and Italian Renaissance elements. 3-storeys and attic; coursed dark rubble with Bath stone dressings and Radyr stone plinth band and polychromy to ground floor arcading. Hipped slate roof with fine stone chimney stacks grouped together by wrapround stone band; the left hand chimneys mark the end of the original building. Exuberant eaves treatment with pierced parapet over deep acanthus derived cornice. Horned sash windows; modern dormers to front. Building began symmetrically with 2 1 2 front with advanced central entrance bay and end pilaster strips; then extended by 3-bays to left with further end pilaster strip. 2nd floor has impost band, rope moulded sill band and nook shafts; 1st floor has lower band course linking segmental headed windows with heavily ornamented architraves. Arcaded ground floor windows with polychrome voussoirs and bosses to tympani; foliated impost band, ballflowers to bases of nook shafts and swept band below sill. Pointed truncated granite columns, tapered to base; panelled double doors to shouldered doorway. Cellar openings to earlier part. Similar treatment to 1-window left hand end and 5 4 -window rear with a skewed angle to the 3-window extension. Varied dormers including 2 pyramidal roof dormers to left, modern to middle and gabled to right. The original part has central 2-storey projection. To L, at junction with Dock Lane, triangular enclosure defined by iron railings with floral finials, square iron gatepiers with finials, gates in matching style.

Interior

The main rooms have guilloche pattern cornices and panelled doors.

Reasons for Listing

A strong High Victorian commercial building with eclectic use of styles and polychrome materials. Group value.

122-126 Bute Street

In his book 'The Buildings of Wales – Glamorgan (Pevsner Architectural Guides – 1995)', John Newman describes the buildings as "parts of stuccoed three-storey terraces of c.1847 and 1850-1, giving a good sense of the original development of the area".

122, 123, 124 Bute Street (Grade II listed building)

Location: Opposite Dock Chambers

Built c. 1847 and part of a terrace known as Powell Place which included six houses later numbered 120-125 Bute Street.

Listing

122-124 Bute Street are protected by a Grade II listing, which was designated on 20 May 1974 and last amended on 21 August 1998.

The listings (122 Bute Street with a Cadw ID No. of 13976, 123 Bute Street with a Cadw ID No. of 13977 and 124 Bute Street with a Cadw ID No. of 13978) state:

History

Built c. 1847 part of terrace known as Powell Place which included six houses later numbered 120-125 Bute Street.

Exterior

Three houses each of two storeys over basement, and two window bays. Painted stucco, slate roofs with classicizing stucco chimneys. Deep dentil cornice. First floor sash windows with architraves and cornices. Band course at sill level. On ground floor, No 122 has doorway with bracketed cornice and to L, modern bay window. No 123 has similar doorway and tripartite wide window under bracketed cornice. No 124 also has similar doorway and semi-hexagonal bay with Doric pillars and heavy brackets under sills. Nos 122 and 124 retain iron railings to basement areas. All have six-panelled doors with rectangular overlights, those to Nos 122 & 123 retaining original glazing.

Reasons for Listing

Included as part of a group of buildings from early development of Butetown. Group value.

125 Bute Street, Royal Bank of Scotland (Grade II listed building)

Location: On triangular corner site at junction of Bute Street and West Bute Street.

Built c. 1847 and part of a terrace known as Powell Place which included six houses later numbered 120-125 Bute Street. Offices for Powell Duffryn Co. until they moved to Pascoe House, 54 Bute Street on the opposite side of Bute Street in 1875.

Listing

The former Royal Bank of Scotland is protected by a Grade II listing, which was designated on 20 May 1974 and last amended on 21 August 1998.

The listing (with a Cadw ID No. of 13979) states:

History

Built c. 1847 part of terrace known as Powell Place which included six houses later numbered 120-125 Bute Street. Offices of Powell Duffryn Co. until they moved to Pascoe House on opposite side of Bute Street, in 1875. Top storeys added 1884, ground floor extension added 1887, to designs of J P Jones.

Exterior

Three storeys with 3 bays facing Bute Street (and backing onto West Bute Street), and semi-hexagonal N-facing return. Painted stucco with dentil cornice, quoins and rusticated plinth. String courses at sill level on each floor. Slate roof and stucco chimneys with classical detailing. Facing West Bute Street, plain window openings. Other second floor windows with shouldered architraves. First floor windows with cornice and small brackets under sill string course (as 122-124 Bute Street). Ground floor windows facing Bute St similar, but with larger brackets beneath sill level string course. On ground floor, facing N, single storey extension to banking hall in matching style. Windows and doorway architraves as 2nd floor, but windows have brackets below string course. Balustrade above.

Interior

Banking hall with hall panelling and panelled counter. Corinthian columns. Simple moulded cornice to ceiling.

Reasons for Listing

Included as part of a group of buildings from early development of Butetown, on prominent corner site at junction of Bute Street and West Bute Street. Group value.



122-125 Bute Street (source: own)



125 Bute Street (source: 'wikimedia.org' website)

Dock Chambers, 54-55 Bute Street (Grade II listed building)

Location: Long range to right of Pascoe House; formerly gardens to South Dock Lane to east.

In his book 'The Buildings of Wales – Glamorgan (Pevsner Architectural Guides – 1995)', John Newman describes the building as "a three-storey, five-part terrace with a pavilion-roofed central section and pairs of shaped gables to left and right. Red brick with Jacobean stucco trimmings. This was built as offices c. 1860, so it seems, for the Bute Estate (estate architect Alexander Roos), before the individual companies began to build for themselves."

As described by John Newman above, Dock Chambers is made up of five terraces, each of which is listed:

- 54a Bute Street, Meandros House (Grade II listing – Source ID 13965)
- 54b Bute Street (Grade II listing – Source ID 13966)
- 54c Bute Street (Grade II listing – Source ID 13967)
- 4 Dock Chambers, Emlyn House (Grade II listing – Source ID 13968)
- 5 Dock Chambers, Emlyn House (Grade II listing – Source ID 13969)
- 55 Bute Street, Seaway House (Grade II listing – Source ID 13970)

From 1874, the Cardiff Docks branch of the National Provincial Bank of England had been in Dock Chambers until it moved across the road to 113-116 Bute Street, with its main entrance on West Bute Street.

Listing

Dock Chambers, 54-55 Bute Street are protected by a Grade II listing, which was designated on 20 August 1992 and last amended on 21 August 1998.

The listings for all 6no. units state:

History

Probably built ca 1860; erected by Bute estate and therefore may be by Alexander Roos, estate architect. Said to have been the first purpose built group of offices in Butetown. 1874 to 1927 - southern part was Cardiff Docks Branch of National Provincial Bank of England. In 1901 E W M Corbett designed alterations to No 3. Later (perhaps inter-war) and modern alterations.

Exterior

3-storey block of varied design including Free Classical and French Renaissance influences, with Dutch gables. Red brick with Bath stone ground floor facing and dressings including channelled pilaster strips and gable parapets; ground floor given thin cement stacks with cornices to front and rear. Gently stepped facade composed of 5 5 bay sections repeated either side of advanced central bay which is crowned by enormous, and steep, French style roof including elaborate dormer; each section is defined by channelled pilaster strips.

Otherwise distinctive for its use of shaped gables to centre of each group of 5 bays; these are flanked by a pierced parapet which to left, retains urn finials; pendants (finials missing) and circular attic windows. Mostly 4-pane sash glazing; tripartite to central block including pedimented cornice to 1st floor and flanking C17 style blind ovals with draped festoons. 2nd floor has bracket sills set into stone band course; stringcourse and vermiculated voussoirs to 1st floor and deep frieze band to ground floor. Central window and entrance of each 5-bay section has enriched ornament over cornices; round-arched doorways with keystones, pilasters and panelled double doors. Original ground floor windows are segmental except to central block where they are semicircular. Alterations to right hand end with addition of grander bank frontage, extended 1-bay beyond corner, single storey, and including pedimented Tuscan Doric entrance; channelled and with pilasters, modillion cornice and high granite plinth. Left hand half has been more significantly altered with garage door entry piercing extreme left end; scrolled ornament removed to windows. However the inner 5-bay section on this side has been given Grecian Classical treatment and includes surrounds to one large shop-window, a vehicular entrance and the central entrance with anthemion finial, egg and dart and fretwork ornament etc; panelled doors with latticed overlight. Similar but simpler detail to rear with 4 5-window sections flanking the central projection. Twin-gabled right hand end with central chimney; flat roof open-plan extension behind which internally has iron Doric columns.

Interior

Dock Chambers has openwell staircases with ironwork balustrades, bulbous newels and scrolled handrails. Panelled doors and reveals and round-arched and segmental architraves. Ground floor front room to No 4 has plaster frieze and fluted columns to chimneypiece; panelled shutters.

Reasons for Listing

Listed as part of impressive group of Victorian commercial buildings. Group value.



117 Bute Street (previously the Docks Non-Political Club and the Baltimore Hotel) (Grade II listed building)

Location: Stepped down to the right of the National Westminster Bank.

The Bute Dock Hotel was licensed in 1839; extended towards Bute Street in 1851 and with grander frontage added in the late 19th century.

Listing

The former Baltimore Hotel, previously the Docks Non-Political Club and originally the Bute Dock Hotel, is protected by a Grade II listing, which was designated on 19 May 1975 and last amended on 21 August 1998.

The listing (with a Cadw ID No. of 13975) states:

History

The Bute Dock Hotel was licensed in 1839; extended towards Bute Street in 1851 and with grander frontage added in later C19. Later became Docks Non-Political Club, before 1990s reconversion to Public House.

Exterior

Classical Bath stone front; 2-storeys, 7-bay front with distinctive balustraded aprons to 1st floor and pierced lettering to parapet. Slate roof and brick chimney stack. Cornice has paired end brackets over raised quoins. 1st floor architraves include panels over lintels; aprons have bulbous balusters and panelled piers with foliated caps between each bay. Later casement window added to centre. Ground floor punctuated by egg and dart capitalised pilasters together with stepped frieze and cornice; wreath ornament to central bays. Tall windows with high transoms and rounded shoulders and unusual pendant-like festoons; also over double door entrances to either end; plinth band.

Reasons for Listing

Included for its pleasing late C19 frontage, and for group value with adjacent buildings.



(source: own)

Pillar Box Outside Royal Bank of Scotland

Location: Outside Royal Bank of Scotland

Listing

The Pillar Box outside the former Royal Bank of Scotland is protected by a Grade II listing, which was designated on 20 August 1992 and last amended on 21 August 1998.

The listing (with a Cadw ID No. of 14024) states:

Exterior

Cylindrical cast iron pillar box of standard design. Fluted rim to shallow domed cap. Door with monogram "E II R". This example manufactured by Carron Co, Stirlingshire.

Reasons for Listing

Included for group value with surrounding listed buildings in the Mount Stuart Square Conservation Area.



(source: 'britishlistedbuildings.co.uk')

**113–116 Bute Street (former National Westminster Bank building)
(Grade II* listed building)**

Location: Prominent bank building midway along the street with west elevation opposite the entrance to Mount Stuart Square on West Bute Street. West Bute Street runs parallel to Bute Street which contains the east elevation.

In his book 'The Buildings of Wales – Glamorgan (Pevsner Architectural Guides – 1995)', John Newman talks about the Bute Street elevation as follows "The stately Ionic frontage of the Janus-faced National Westminster Bank, ... is best passed without discussion for the time being, as the main entrance is in the identical front towards West Bute Street." Moving into West Bute Street he continues "Here we can absorb the extraordinary magniloquence of the National Westminster Bank. Designed by the bank's in-house architects, F.C.R. Palmer and W.F.C. Holden, and built in 1926-27, it was clearly intended as a chef-d'oeuvre. Seven bays wide, five storeys high, the lower two treated as the bank proper with a row of giant fluted Ionic columns carried across on a high plinth and paired at the end. Exquisite detailing, the column bases, for example, of the rarely used form described by Vitruvius. The upper part of the façade is treated with abrupt simplicity. The entrance doorway in the left bay, surmounted by a bronze statue of Equity by J.A. Stevenson".

One of the reasons Cadw has stated for listing this building is because it is a "Magniloquent commercial building amongst the finest of its style in Wales."



Historic photograph (source: 'portlandhousecardiff.com' website)

Listing

The former National Westminster Bank is protected by a Grade II* listing, which was designated on 25 January 1966 and last amended on 21 August 1998.

The listing (with a Cadw ID No. of 13974) states:

History

Built 1926-7 by F C R Palmer and W F C Holden, National Provincial Bank of England architects; E Turner & Sons, Contractors. Last major commercial development in Butetown. Since 1874 the bank's Cardiff Docks branch had been in Dock Chambers.

Exterior

Exceptional bank building in Grecian Classical style with Portland stone facings throughout. Steel-framed with reinforced concrete base. 5-storeys and basement with 7-bay elevations to Bute Street and West Bute Street. Banking Hall and 1st floor framed by giant order, fluted, Ionic columns with ribbed bases on high pedestal; additional stylised acanthus and anthemion ornament to capitals and dentil cornice set behind the columns. Columns are paired at ends and carry overall frieze with modern lettering but original cornice with lions heads over each column. Fretted metal frame windows including panelled lintel band; horizontal and marginal glazing bars; barred basement windows, some blocked up. Band course over 2nd floor which has bolection moulded architraves to Bute Street front and bracket and dentil cornices to West Bute Street front. 3rd and 4th floors are linked in the design, by the windows being set in tall recesses including painted metal panels with roundels between floors and panelled aprons below. Modillion cornice at top with slightly ramped low parapet. Main entrance is to extreme N end (right and left hand bays respectively) opening onto lobby and corridor that runs between the two streets. Volute bracketed cornice surmounted by bronze statue of Equity by J A Stevenson; fleuron bosses to architrave; panelled reveals and doors with brass fittings. Skewed angle to side elevations because of shape of site.

Interior

Grand, open-plan, Banking Hall of basilica type plan; brightly painted Classical detail and finely finished Echallion marble walls; 24m long and 6.3m high. Semicircular end to W with panelled and gilded ceiling; the central area behind the counters is top lit by segmental shaped high roof with panelled ribs and bosses. The whole is carried on fluted marble columns with square abaci and matching pilasters on outer walls; full Doric frieze including plaster roundels based upon Greek coins in the British Museum from where other Classical material in the Banking Hall is derived. Outer walls have guilloche pattern bands over high marble facings; bracket cornice to doors. Some original furnishings retained, in particular the mahogany counters with guilloche banding; modern security screens. Offices planned around Banking Hall.

Fine staircase to centre of the similarly Echallion marble finished corridor; painted iron balustrade with banding. 'NP' monogram and brass handrail, scrolled at end with newel tapered to base. At the Bute Street end the corridor has semicircular projection with coffered ceiling and original doors; at the West Bute Street end it steps down into domical lobby with cornice and panelled drum. The interior detail is simplified to upper floors but is said to retain panelled room at top.

Reasons for Listing

Magniloquent commercial building amongst the finest of its style in Wales. Group value with adjacent buildings.



(source: own)

Custom House (former H.M. Immigration Office), 56 Bute Street (Grade II listed building)

In his book 'The Buildings of Wales – Glamorgan (Pevsner Architectural Guides – 1995)', John Newman describes the building as "built as the Custom House and dated 1898, was designed by Henry Tanner, chief architect to the Office of Works. Unusually handled three-bay façade of Portland stone with a separate entrance arch to the right. Three storeys under a parapet with urns and swags. In the upper two, richly detailed orders, Ionic over Doric, combined with mullion-and-transom windows. Carving by William Clarke of Llandaff."



Custom House with Cory's Building to the right (source: own)

Location: Stepped down to left of Cory's Building; detached to left. Includes attached screen wall to right.

Custom House is the building immediately adjoining Cory's Building, to its north.

Listing

The former H.M. Immigration Office is protected by a Grade II listing, which was designated on 20 August 1992 and last amended on 21 August 1998.

The listing (with a Cadw ID No. of I3971) states:

History

Dated 1898, by Henry Tanner (later knighted), the Chief Architect to the Office of Works. On site of former gardens to S of Dock Chambers. L-plan.

Exterior

Fine Portland stone Classical façade to brick structure. 3-storeys, 3-bays with C16 and C17 influences; stone chimney stacks. Parapet at top with urns and panelled swagged ornament. Cornices to each floor, dentil to 2nd floor with Ionic pilasters and modillion to 1st floor with full Classical frieze and Doric pilasters. Recessed mullion and transom windows, 2-light to outer bays, 4-light to centre; sill bands. Dated 1898 to ground floor with Crown over keystone to shallow round arched central window with architrave; flanking windows have pulvinated friezes and egg and dart cornices. Ground floor cornice continues to right over attached Portland stone screen wall with similar round arch to decorative-iron gated entrance leading into small courtyard. Glazed stock brick side elevation with similar but simpler windows. Stone surround to main entrance.

Interior

Entrance hall with, to L, paired arches supported by pink granite Doric column and pilasters. To R, large office facing street. At far end, stairs with wrought-iron banisters lead up to landing off which is large enquiry room with panelled wood counter and screens; high ceiling with sunk panels, some with glazing; simple moulded beams; blind arcading to N wall. Smaller offices in similar style, than that over entrance with black marble fireplace.

Reasons for Listing

Well-proportioned classical building by important public architect, also responsible for former Post Office in Westgate Street. Group value.



Rear of Custom House from 'the site' with Cory's Building to the left (source: own)



Custom House with Cory's Building to the right (source: own)

97-100 Bute Street (former Midland Bank) (Grade II listed building)

Location: Large commercial building on corner of Bute Street and James Street.

In his book 'The Buildings of Wales – Glamorgan (Pevsner Architectural Guides – 1995)', John Newman describes the building as "one is confronted on the left by another massive piece of debased classicism. Built in 1874 by F. Cutlan for Cory Brothers, and extended in an identical style for the bank in 1902-3 and 1914-15 by Henry Budgen. Like an overblown Venetian palazzo, the details a melange such as only High Victorians could conceive.

One of the reasons CADW has stated for listing this building is because it is an "Impressive example of High Victorian Commercial architecture on prominent site."



Former Midland Bank (source: own)

Listing

The former Midland Bank is protected by a Grade II listing, which was designated on 19 May 1975 and last amended on 21 August 1998.

The listing (with a Cadw ID No. of 13973) states:

History

Built in 1874 for Cory Bros, coalowners and exporters, who moved to opposite corner of Bute Street in 1889. Architect, F. Cutlan. In 1898, Midland Bank's architect T B Whinney, made alterations to ground floor windows and doors. In 1902-3 and 1914-15, extensions in similar style by Henry Budgen, architect.

Exterior

Four storeys with 10 bays facing Bute Street, 7 facing James Street and a narrow corner bay. Bathstone and yellow brick with columns in red and grey granite, some terracotta panels. Heavy cornice has paired brackets with swags. Third floor windows with square-headed architraves, but round-headed openings with sashes (but the five S bays in Bute Street have square-headed openings); surrounds in yellow brick with narrow round-headed decoration between openings with bathstone surrounds and terracotta panels. Below sill level, decorated band in yellow brick, bathstone and terracotta. Second floor has paired round-headed sash windows to each bay and columns with granite shafts and foliated capital, but five S bays in Bute Street have single arches; arched single sash windows to each bay with floral decoration in spandrels and granite columns. Ground floor articulated columns with pink granite shafts on grey granite bases and with floral capitals. Round-headed arched with relief decoration on keystones and in spandrels. Shouldered sash windows. Entrance doorways at S bay in Bute St, and E and W bays in James St. Treatment of corner bay follows that of main bays.

Interior

Main entrance doorway leads to polygonal wooden panelled lobby to banking hall which has wooden panelled counters and partitions with frosted glass. Ceiling beams decorated in classicizing style. Black and white Carrara marble floor tiles. Doorway to Bute St leads to lobby with marble tiled floor, red glazed brick dado, and simple ceiling cornice; corridor continues in same style.

Reasons for Listing

Impressive example of High Victorian Commercial architecture on prominent site. Group value.

The Packet Hotel, 95 Bute Street (Locally Listed)

Location: On the corner of Bute Street and New George Street.

Although not a nationally listed building, The Packet Hotel is classified as a Landmark Building in the Mount Stuart Square Conservation Area Appraisal due to "The prominent position of this building on the corner of the street and its use as a public house make it a landmark on the southern approach from Mermaid Quay." It is a Locally Listed Building.

This public house dates from early in the second half of the nineteenth century. The pub is named after the packet ships that carried mail to and from British outposts.

The building is three stories, the second and third stories of coursed rubble. The ground floor has large windows with insets of blue coloured glass which display names of the brewery 'Brains' and of the public house 'Packet Hotel'. The entrance to the bar is a single doorway under an arched light to the right of centre, reached by two steps. To the right of it is a large, curved corner window of clear and blue glass to the right of which is another door, reached by five steps. The second storey has three canted oriel windows above which are three third-storey double windows with stone pilaster mullions. The building is topped with a frieze decorated with quatrefoils above which are four evenly spaced crocketed finials. The pub sign displays a three-mast sailing ship on a blue sea and names the establishment as 'THE PACKET'.



The Packet Hotel, 95 Bute Street (source: 'walesonline.co.uk')

Listed Buildings & Structures on Bute Place

On Bute Place, there is Merchant House (1 and 3 Bute Place) and Cory's Building (on the corner of Bute Place and Bute Street) which are the subject of this report. Other listed buildings and structures on, or near, Bute Place include:

Cast Iron Posts and Railings to E of Dock Lane

Location: Dock Lane is to the E of Bute Street, and runs from Pascoe House to the former Mercantile Marine Office.

Listing

The cast iron posts and railings to the East of Dock Lane are protected by a Grade II listing, which was designated on 20 August 1992 and last amended on 21 August 1998.

The listing (with a Cadw ID No. of I3985) states:

Exterior

Cast iron posts and railings which were formerly the boundary to Docks area. Length of this section of railings approximately 220 metres.

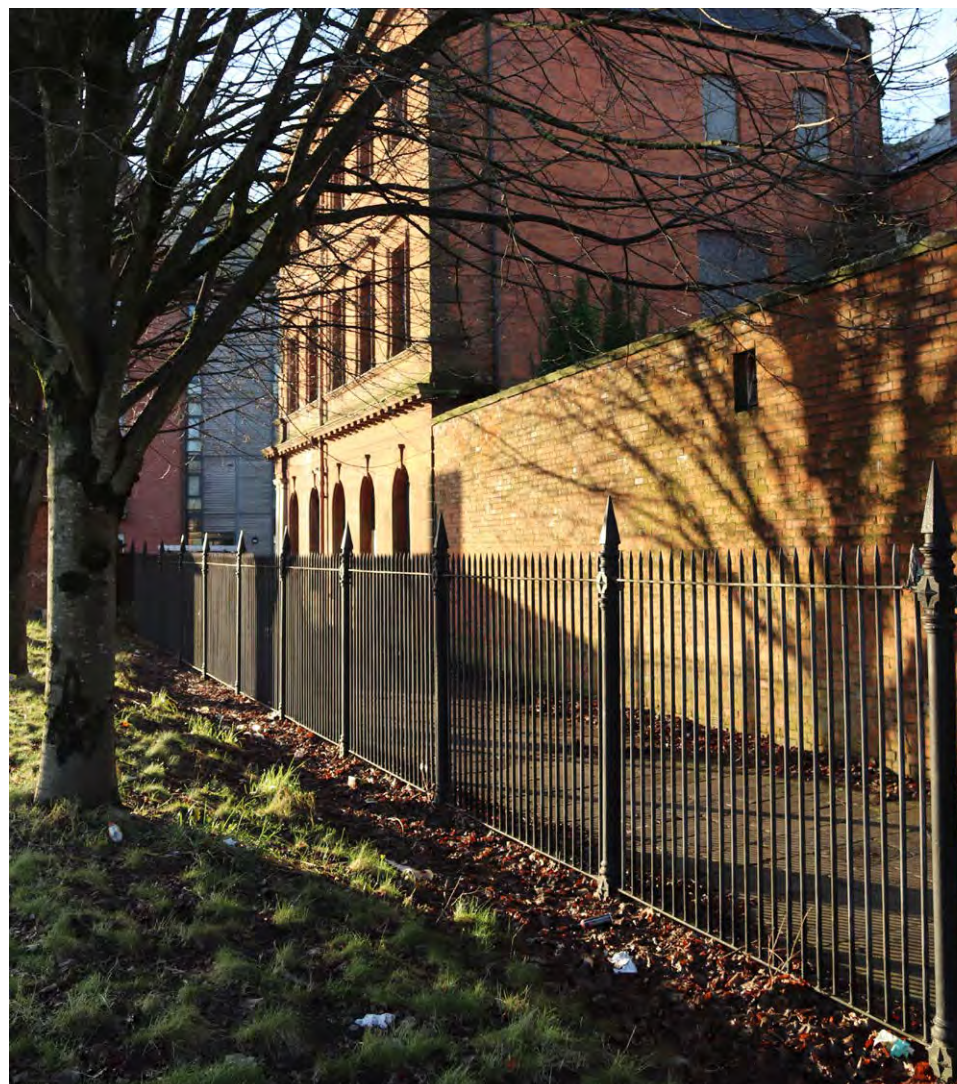
Seventy-four posts circa 2 metres high, round shafts with bases, cubiform plinths with 4-pointed star decoration to faces, design of plinths repeated above capitals, and hexagonal pinnacles. Two modern brick piers associated with electricity supply.

Posts have inscription in raised lettering, 'Bayliss & Co, Wolverhampton'.

Between posts, simple iron railings.

Reasons for Listing

Listed for group value with other listed buildings in Bute Street.



Cast Iron Posts & Railings adjacent Merchant Place (source: own)



The Former Warehouse (The 'D' Shed), Craft In The Bay (source: 'makersguildinwales.org.uk')

Former Warehouse (The "D" Shed), The Flourish, Lloyds George Avenue

Location: About 10m north of junction with Bute Place.

Listing

The Former Warehouse (The 'D' Shed) is protected by a Grade II listing, which was designated on 20 August 1992 and last amended on 14 March 2003.

The listing (with a Cadw ID No. of I4057) states:

History

The building marked on First Edition Ordnance Survey map (surveyed 1870's) as warehouse beside Bute East Dock Basin. Known as "D" Shed, it was dismantled in the 1990s, and re-assembled on its present site in 2002.

Exterior

Northern section is mid C19 warehouse/transit shed. Slate roof. Gables in vertical boarding with blocked tripartite window. Iron frame construction of 5 bays by 2, with cruciform-sectioned Tuscan-style columns supporting I-beam entablature. Walling on west side in wooden boarding imitating the original structure of boarding with sliding doors; other sides glazed. Roof of iron construction with closely-spaced trusses; system of narrow tie bars with v-shaped cast-iron stays bolted to rafters.

Early C21 extension at S end, of triangular plan, in metal and glass, reflecting the materials of the original.

Reasons for Listing

Listed for special interest of C19 section of building, a rare example in Wales of a mid C19 iron framed dock warehouse/transit shed.

5.0 SECTION THREE - UNDERSTANDING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HISTORIC ASSET – 'STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE'

5.1 An Assessment of Significance

One of the real strengths of any historic building assessment is that it focuses attentions on what is of high importance about a cultural or national asset, whilst similarly defining aspects which are of little or no importance. Thus, in planning what or how to conserve, or develop, areas around it, it is possible to make decisions based on the best possible analytical process rather than on individual preference, or some other arbitrary method.

This section of the report seeks to set out, albeit briefly, what makes the heritage assets, Merchant Place & Cory's Building, of value and should therefore be protected.

The assessment of significance has been provided to give an initial guidance on the proposals for the development.

Significance can be defined as the sum of the cultural, social and/or natural heritage values that make a building or place important to this and future generations. The aim of conservation is to sensitively manage change to a place to ensure that its significance is not only protected, but also revealed, reinforced and enhanced at every possible opportunity. It should also ensure that decisions regarding both day-to-day and long term use and management of the site take into account all of the values that contribute to a place's significance.

The purpose of a Statement of Significance is to identify the areas and aspects of Merchant Place & Cory's Building which have cultural significance. Cultural significance is a concept which helps us in estimating the value of a place and which:

- Helps us understand the past;
- Enrich our present lives;
- Will be of value to future generations.

Most historic sites or buildings are significant for a range of reasons, and it is important to understand all of its values in order that informed, balanced decisions can be made.

Many heritage values are recognised by the statutory designation and regulation of significant places. In statutory terms, the significance of Merchant Place & Cory's Building is formally recognised by their Listings. As Grade II Listed Buildings, they are buildings 'of special interest, warranting every effort to preserve' it, as appraised by Cadw.

However, while these designations provide baseline guidance to the significance of Merchant Place & Cory's Building, it is useful to go beyond this view to arrive at a deeper understanding of their values and significance.

Cadw's '*Conservation Principles for the sustainable management of the historic environment in Wales*' (March 2011), expands on how one can analyse the public's interest in heritage assets by sub-dividing it into evidential, historic, aesthetic and communal values. These values can be used to inform the structured and consistent assessment of buildings.

Evidential Value is deemed to derive from those elements of a historic asset that can provide evidence about past human activity, and especially its historic fabric, supported in some cases by documentation. These may be visible and relatively easy to assess, or they may be buried below ground, under water or be hidden by later fabric. These remains provide the primary evidence for when and how an historic asset was made or built, what it was used for and how it has changed over time. The unrecorded loss of historic fabric represents the destruction of the primary evidence. Additional evidential values can be gained from documentary sources, pictorial records and archaeological archives or museum collections.

All buildings — domestic, commercial, religious, industrial etc — have the capacity to provide evidence of specific past human activity from one or perhaps several periods. The extent to which they do so depends on coherence and integrity, or an intelligible development sequence. The extent of survival of original or clearly phased fabric and layout, or of detail relating to use (including internal detail) are particularly important.

Context may also be relevant: the evidential value of a single industrial or agricultural building for example will be diminished if other associated buildings have already been lost or damaged.

Historical Value is deemed to be the associative or illustrative ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present.

An historic asset might illustrate a particular aspect of past life or it might be associated with a notable family, person, event or movement. These illustrative or associative values of an historic asset may be less tangible than its evidential value but will often connect past people, events and aspects of life with the present. Of course the functions of an historic asset are likely to change over time and so the full range of changing historical values might not become clear until all the evidential values have been gathered together. Historical values are not so easily diminished by change as evidential values and are harmed only to the extent that adaptation has obliterated them or concealed them.

In practice, much of the historical value of an asset is inseparable from its evidential value — a well-preserved building can illustrate an aspect of past life much better than can a damaged or heavily altered building. But historical value may also reside in the less tangible — in associations with notable people events or movements of proven regional or national significance. As in the criteria for listing, however, these associations will be more powerful if the building as it survives directly confirms the association (i.e. is recognisably the building with which connection is claimed).

The difference between evidential value and illustrative historical value may seem difficult to define, but in general, evidential value relates to the material evidence about how a particular building or site functioned, and historical value to the capacity of that site to illustrate broader historical themes — its contribution to our understanding of aspects of past life, be they for example the organisation of society, developments in agriculture or industry, or in religious observance.

Understanding historical value therefore requires a broader understanding of the asset in context, whereas a good understanding of evidential value can be reached by close physical analysis on site.

Aesthetic Value relates to the external appearance and form of an asset and its relationship to its context and setting, be it a designed landscape, a working agricultural or industrial landscape, or a townscape. Aesthetic Value derives from the way in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from an historic asset. It may relate to conscious design or style or it may be a seemingly fortuitous outcome of the way in which an historic asset has evolved and been used over time, or a combination of both. It may relate to adherence to tradition, to quality of craftsmanship or technology of construction, or it may reflect the results of development over time.

High-quality conscious design — so-called 'polite architecture' often associated with named architects — and vernacular building according to clear regional traditions (and perhaps unconscious design), have their own aesthetic codes. But for both, composition, plan, method of construction, materials, finish and detail — including interior detail — are the essential elements of design.

The form of an asset normally changes over time. Sometimes earlier pictorial records and written descriptions will be more powerful in many people's minds than what survives today. Some important viewpoints may be lost or screened, or access to them may be temporarily denied. To assess this aspect of an asset, again the evidence of the present and past form must be gathered systematically. This needs to be complemented by a thorough appreciation on site of the external appearance of an asset in its setting. Inevitably understanding the aesthetic value of an historic asset will be more subjective than the study of its evidential and historical values. Much of it will involve trying to express the aesthetic qualities or the relative value of different parts of its form or design.

Communal Value derives from the meanings that an asset has for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory. It includes social and economic value, as well as commemorative, spiritual or symbolic value.

It is closely linked to historical and aesthetic values but tends to have additional or specific aspects. Communal value might be commemorative or symbolic. For example, people might draw part of their identity or collective memory from an historic asset, or have emotional links to it. Such values often change over time and they may be important for remembering both positive and uncomfortable events, attitudes or periods in Wales' history. Historic assets can also have social value, acting as a source of social interaction, distinctiveness or coherence; economic value, providing a valuable source of income or employment; or they may have spiritual value, emanating from religious beliefs or modern perceptions of the spirit of a place.

Each of these elements will be dealt with below.

The significance of a place is the sum of these values, brought together and expressed in a statement of significance. This statement forms the foundation upon which any proposals for change and enhancement of a place can be considered and carried forward.

In order to identify the relative contributions that these values make to the significance of a place and therefore the capacity for these values to be revealed and/or enhanced, a range of classifications are used.

For the purpose of this study we have adopted a fairly standard classification using five levels of significance, which are sufficient to measure each aspect of significance and to compare it to others consistently.

High: An aspect of value that strongly contributes to the significance of a place, forming a key piece of its history and cultural value which may be of national or international importance. In material terms, these aspects will best contribute towards the heritage values. Conservation will be a priority, and alteration is likely to be resisted unless it is demonstrated that significance will be greatly enhanced, reinforced or revealed as a result.

Medium: An aspect of value that will have some cultural importance (perhaps on a regional scale) and will make a moderate contribution to the significance of a place. In material terms they will play an important role in conveying the heritage values. Efforts should be made to protect and enhance these aspects, though a greater degree of flexibility is possible than with aspects of high value.

Low: An aspect of value that will make a slight (yet still noteworthy) contribution to the significance of a place, but perhaps only on a local scale. In material terms it will still add something to the heritage values (such as helping to maintain plan form and historic character), although this contribution may have been compromised by loss or uninformed intervention. A greater capacity for enhancement exists than for items of medium or high value, although a low designation does not necessarily mean that the feature is expendable.

Neutral: An aspect that has no discernible value that neither adds to nor detracts from the significance of the place. Informed change will be acceptable.

Detrimental: An aspect of the place that detracts from its values and therefore its significance. In material terms, removal or reversal of these aspects should be strongly encouraged.

5.2 Historical Value

Cardiff owes much of its history to the Industrial Revolution of the 1790s, which stimulated mining in the valleys of South Wales. In order to satisfy the need for an export outlet for the ever-increasing supplies first of iron, and then of coal, coming down from the Valleys, the docks at Cardiff were developed and the town changed completely.

A small town of 1,870 people in 1801, less than a third the size of neighbouring Swansea (with its growing copperworks) and less than a quarter the size of Merthyr Tydfil (the centre of the valleys' coal and iron works), Cardiff's population had increased considerably by 1901 to 164,000, making it Wales' largest conurbation. In this time, it had become a major exporter of coal and iron with the construction of its docks by the second and third Marquesses of Bute, from 1798, linked to the industrial and mining hinterland by the Glamorganshire Canal, from 1794, and subsequently the Taff Vale Railway Company, from 1840. By 1901, Cardiff's docks were handling more coal than any other port in the world.

In between the development of the canal and the railways, in the 1820s, the second Marquess of Bute initiated a development plan which included the construction of Bute Street as a main road in and out of the docks area. The construction of Bute Street was completed in 1830. In the 1830s, 40s and 50s, a series of commercial buildings, with some residential buildings, were built at the bottom end of Bute Street, opposite the Bute West Dock Basin, and on the west side of the next section of Bute Street, opposite the Bute West Dock itself.

It was not until approximately 1860 that buildings were constructed on the east side of this section of Bute Street, and the first building constructed was Dock Chambers, a little to the north of Cory's Building. Dock Chambers were said to have been the first purpose-built group of offices in Butetown providing a base for coal and shipping agents who were now setting up business in Cardiff Docks to take advantage of the huge trade opportunities.

In 1875 Pascoe House had been built on its north end and, by 1899, Seaway House had been built onto its south end. South of these buildings, Merchant Place was built in 1881, and was originally occupied by the Mercantile Marine Department of the Board of Trade and the Docks Telegraph Office; and Cory's Building was built in 1889, for Cory Brothers Ltd. A pedestrian route was formed just to the east of all of these buildings, known as Docks Lane, providing docksmen and sailors with access to the head of the West Bute dock; and on the other side of Docks Lane was a series of railway lines and then Bute West Dock itself.

Both Merchant Place and Cory's Building are protected by a grade II listing; and are identified as 'Landmark Buildings' within the Mount Stuart Square Conservation Area; an area little changed since its late Victorian hey-day, when Cardiff and the Docks were an economic power house.

The site on which both buildings reside was, before 1881, set aside as an area of open parkland within a part of the city which was otherwise densely built up to the west and open to a network of water basins and locks and railway lines to the east. The site was, along with Mount Stuart Square further to the west, one of two 'green lungs' within an otherwise very busy urban setting - commercial to the west and south; industrial to the east and north. The buildings were, in effect, both late arrivals to the party.

Merchant Place was the first of the two buildings to be built - in 1881. Designed by architect E. G. Rivers as two separate buildings behind one consistent façade, it was originally occupied by the Mercantile Marine Department of the Board of Trade (in no.1 Bute Place to the east) and the Docks Telegraph and Post Office (in no.3 to the west).

Cory's Building was built in 1889, for Cory Brothers Ltd; designed by architects Bruton and Williams. The Cory's were an important Cardiff family business, which included ship's chandlery, brokerage and the sale and export of coal.

Both Cory's Building and Merchant Place are protected by a grade II listing; Merchant Building being the first to be designated - in 1975; with Cory's Building designated later, in 1992. Both buildings are also situated within the Mount Stuart Square Conservation Area, which was adopted in 2009.

The site on which both buildings reside was, before 1881, set aside as an area of open parkland within a part of the city which was otherwise densely built up to the west and open to a network of water basins and locks and railway lines to the east. The site was, along with Mount Stuart Square further to the west, one of two 'green lungs' within an otherwise very busy urban setting - commercial to the west and south; industrial to the east and north.

Merchant Place was the first of the two buildings to be built - in 1881, and was originally occupied by the Mercantile Marine Department of the Board of Trade (in no. 3 to the east) and the Docks Telegraph Office. It was also, for some time, the Post Office on the ground floor with offices above. It is otherwise known as nos. 1 and 3 Bute Place. Designed by architect E. G. Rivers, Cadw state that its reasons for listing are for group value and as an "excellent C19 commercial building with fine Italianate design and strong use of contrasting building materials".

Cory's Building was built in 1889, for Cory Brothers Ltd. Designed by architects Bruton and Williams, Cadw state that its reasons for listing are for group value and as a "prominently sited elaborate commercial building for important Cardiff family business". The brothers were John Cory (1828-1910) and Richard Cory (1830-1914), whose family came from Devon. Their business included ship's chandlery, brokerage and the sale and export of coal. They also owned several collieries in Wales and, apparently, became the largest private wagon-owners in the United Kingdom, with more than 5,000 wagons.



1880 illustrative sketch of Merchant Place (source: 'archiseek.com')



1898 at corner of Merchant Place during coal strike (source 'walesonline.co.uk')



1907 (sent) postcard of Merchant Place (source: 'thingspostal.org.uk')

Historical Value is deemed to be the associative or illustrative ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present.

Both Cory's Building and Merchant Place are historical assets which can very well illustrate commercial life in late Victorian and Edwardian Cardiff at a time of great success and growth, and immense wealth, in the Docks area. The two buildings, along with many of their neighbours, illustrate the dramatic development of Cardiff, through its docks, and their connection with South Wales hinterlands; and the influx of businesses taking commercial advantage of the trade opportunities, not least the coal and shipping agents and the bankers. They illustrate the value to Cardiff of these personalities who commissioned them through the architectural statements of the buildings built for and by them; and they can tell us a lot about working practices during the Victorian and Edwardian eras, and how buildings of that period were constructed, articulated, finished and fitted out.

An historic asset might illustrate a particular aspect of past life or it might be associated with a notable family, person, event or movement. Cory's Building is ostentatiously associated with the notable Cory family of Cardiff. Both Cory's Building and Merchant Place are associated with the significant influx of money into Cardiff and the Docks during a time of enormous wealth and change.

The portion of the site behind both buildings, adjoining Docks Lane, was, until 2008, always built upon, as the original rear ranges of Merchant Place, split into two, as was the front range. The elevations which have been exposed by the demolition are clearly elevations which were never meant to be exposed – plain, utilitarian and unfenestrated. It is felt that re-building on this part of the site is sensible. However, what remains on the site appears to be original to 1881.

There is, however, some uncertainty about the open-fronted iron colonnade lean-to structure to the west of the site. It was there in 1899, but original plans suggest that it might not have been built in 1881.

A well-preserved building can illustrate an aspect of past life much better than can a damaged or heavily altered building. Historical values are not so easily diminished by change as evidential values and are harmed only to the extent that adaptation has obliterated them or concealed them. In this respect, both buildings appear to be structurally sound with fabric generally in a reasonable condition; and, therefore, their historical value remains unimpacted by condition.

This historical value is considerable, not least because the two buildings retain much of their original form and external appearance within a relatively unchanged setting, at least to the front on Bute Street and Bute Place, if not so much to the rear, on Lloyd George Avenue. Cory's Building retains the same plan form, elevational treatment and architectural detail now as it did 133 years ago; subject, of course, to the addition of the two top storeys some 100 years ago (some time between 1907 and 1929). Merchant Place also retains the same plan form, elevational treatment and architectural detail as it did 141 years ago, insofar as its principal front range is concerned; however, its rear ranges were demolished around 14 years ago. Historic photos from their early years, show very little change indeed to their principal elevations onto Bute Street and Bute Place.

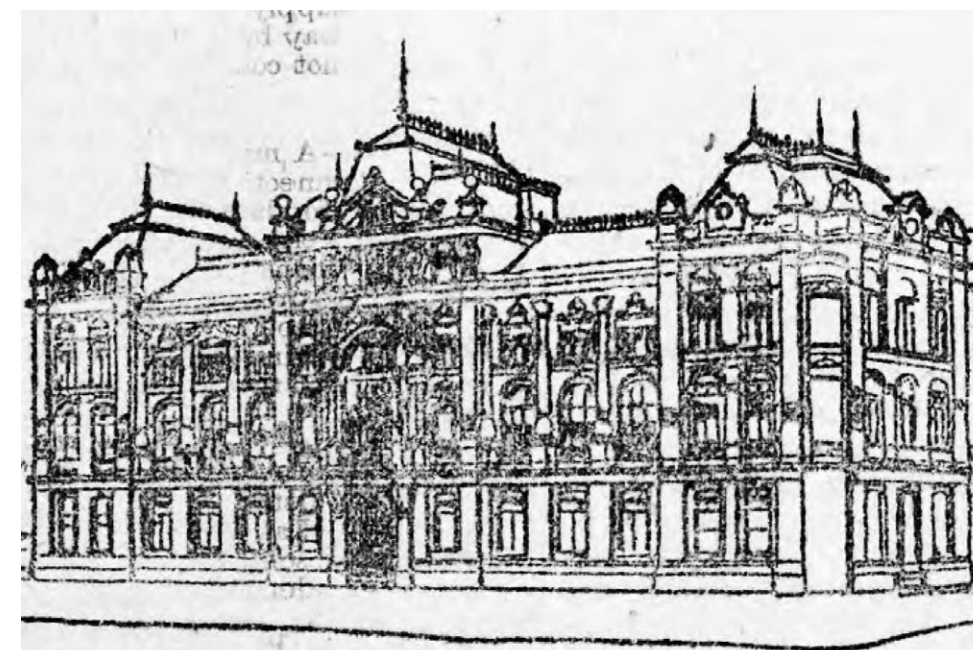
Slightly strangely, however, historical photos show a much taller base to the columns at the front of Merchant Place than now, along with a set of diminished steps. This reduction has been caused by the significant raising of the pavement into front of the building.

Cory's Building and Merchant House are deemed to be of local, and arguably regional, historical importance; for:

- Their illustration of Cardiff's dramatic growth in its affluent and influential late Victorian and Edwardian eras, due to the docks and their connection with South Wales' industrial heartland;
- What they can tell us about commercial life from this busy period, and the manner in which people worked and interacted;
- What they can tell us about how buildings of the time were constructed, decorated and fitted out;
- The retention of much of the buildings' original form and external appearance within a relatively unchanged setting, albeit acknowledging the loss of the rear ranges to Merchant Place;
- The retention of some of their most interesting internal features, albeit weighed against the loss of a considerable amount of internal fabric;
- Their much-loved Classical Italianate designs, with their frontages providing a very strong presence onto the streetscape and the wider setting;
- The articulation of those designs, their detailing (some being rather playful) and the quality of materials used.

Cory's Building and Merchant House make a moderate to strong contribution to the significance of their place, forming a key piece of its history and cultural value. Together, and apart, they are both deemed to possess **Medium to High Historical Value**.

Efforts should therefore be made to protect and enhance the assets and preserve their heritage value; focusing on conservation in the main; though a degree of flexibility would be acceptable in the way they may be altered, adapted and built upon; particularly where such adaptation would not have a notably detrimental bearing on those aspects of most significance – the two front (and two side) facades; the forms of the front ranges; and the layouts and retained fixtures and finishes to these two front ranges.



1890 Drawing of Cory's Building, as built (source: 'newspapers.library.wales')



1900s early Bute Street with Cory's Building to right (source: 'i.pinimg.com' website; credit: Ernest T. Bush)



1950s Cory's Building with National Union of Seaman (source: 'hcearchive.org.uk')

5.3 Evidential Value

Insofar as Evidential Value is deemed to derive from those elements of a historic asset that can provide evidence about past human activity, and especially its historic fabric, Merchant Place and Cory's Building possess considerable evidential value; as they retain much of their original form and external appearance within a relatively unchanged setting, at least to the front on Bute Street and Bute Place, if not so much to the rear, on Lloyd George Avenue. Cory's Building retains the same plan form, elevational treatment and architectural detail now as it did 133 years ago, in the main.

However, Cory's Building was originally built as a 3no. storey building, with 3no. pavilion roofs, at centre and ends; and the top 2no. storeys are not original – they were added some 100 years ago (some time between 1907 and 1929). When it was built, therefore, both Merchant Place and Cory's Building were of the same height. However, also lost with this addition, were the 3no. ornate pavilion roofs, which were replaced with a simple parapeted flat roof.

Merchant Place also retains the same plan form, elevational treatment and architectural detail as it did 141 years ago, insofar as its principal front range is concerned; however, its rear ranges were demolished around 14 years ago. Slightly strangely, however, historical photos show a much taller base to the columns at the front of Merchant Place than now, along with a set of diminished steps. This reduction has been caused by the significant raising of the pavement into front of the building.

Loss of much of the internal fabric of both buildings does, of course, reduce their evidential value, as that impacts upon one's ability to 'read' the interiors and life within; however, enough of the important fabric – floors, primary internal walls and staircases – remains, and what doesn't remain – internal partitions, fixtures and fittings – can either be 'read' from the 'scars' on the ceilings, floors and walls; or appreciated from plans produced before the internal strip of 2008, or soon thereafter.

To the rear of both the buildings, adjoining Docks Lane, is an open area with no buildings on it. However, until 2008, this area was always built upon and almost full, as the original rear ranges of Merchant Place, split into two, as was the front range. The elevations which have been exposed by the demolition are clearly elevations which were never meant to be exposed – plain, utilitarian and unfenestrated. It is felt that re-building on this part of the site is sensible. However, what remains on the site appears to be original to 1881.

There is, however, some uncertainty about the open-fronted iron colonnade lean-to structure to the west of the site, which appears on historic maps as early as 1899, but original plans suggest that it might not have been built in 1881.

Both buildings appear to be structurally sound with fabric generally in a reasonable condition; and, therefore, much of that evidential value which does remain is in a condition which allows it to be legible and appreciated.

Internally, much has been lost within both buildings, following the 2008 strip out; although both still retain some fabric deemed to be significant - more so to Cory's Building than Merchant House; and, where not remaining, the 'scars' of the lost internal fabric allow for much of the layout and detailing to be understood.

Aspects still insitu of most interest inside Merchant House include:

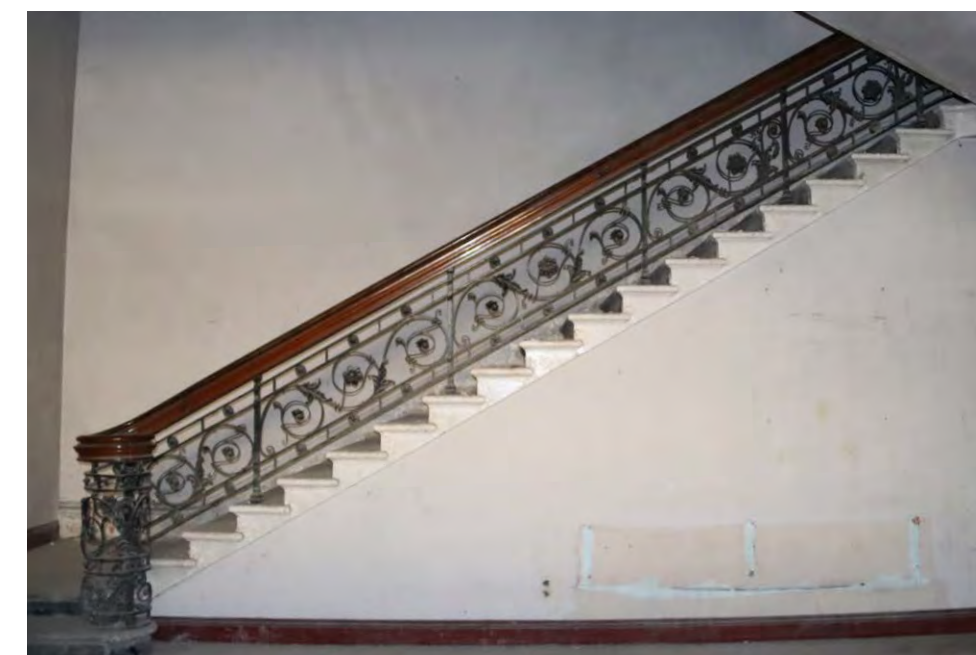
- The 2no. decorative cast iron balustrading and hardwood handrails to the lower flights of the staircases, albeit some runs have lost a number of the infill balustrade panels;
- The less ornate, more utilitarian timber balustrading to the upper flight of these staircase;
- The top-lit top room to no.1, with its patent glazed rooflight, intricate lightweight iron trusses & diagonal timber sarking boards; (see below)
- The mosaic tile flooring to the front room on no.1, with its Victorian mix of russet, black, cream and white colours;
- Some fireplace surrounds;
- The brickwork internal walls and filler joist floors with arched soffits to the basement;
- Some iron ceiling roses, such as the one to the no.1 rear range;
- Some lath and plaster ceilings, cornices and covings;
- Some timber window frames, with their wrought iron internal railings;
- The cast glass pavement lights;
- The coal chute in the basement and
- The boiler in the basement.

Other aspects have been collected up and carefully set aside, however, are no longer in situ, including:

- The cast iron radiators;
- Some of the timber trims, especially the fluted pilaster fronts.

Aspects still insitu of most interest inside Cory's Building include:

- The decorative cast iron balustrading and new posts, ornate hardwood handrail and stone steps to the lower flights of the staircases, with particular focus on the highly decorative and high significant flight directly in front of the main entrance; (see below)
- The plastered composite twinned columns both sides of the staircase, albeit damaged;
- The polished stone tile flooring to the main entrance, with scars where a lobby once lived;
- The large sliding timber doors to this main entrance, along with the segmental arched overlight above the doors;
- The plaster cornices to the ground floor lath & plaster ceiling and downstand beams;
- The plaster mouldings to the ceiling above the entrance which identifies where a lobby once was;
- The plaster cornices to the upper floor lath & plaster ceilings and downstand beams. Whilst most of the internal partitions have been lost, these cornices show where partitions used to be, and explain the previous/original layouts;
- Some of the ornate timber door surrounds;
- Some of the timber skirtings and dado rails;
- The iron vents in the cills of many tall windows, along with the moulded panels alongside;
- The timber windows and the timber panelled reveals, surrounds and walling below the cills, along with some with ornate panelling above the window;
- The upper floor timber board and wood block parquet flooring;
- Some of the fireplaces, albeit the surrounds all appear to have been lost;
- The small Georgian-wired glazed lanterns patent-glazed lighting the top floor;
- To a number of the floors, the rooms at the two ends remain quite well decorated, with timber panelling and plaster ornamentation;
- The bunds to the basement door thresholds.



Insofar as context may also be relevant - the evidential value of a single industrial or agricultural building for example will be diminished if other associated buildings have already been lost or damaged – context is relevant here. Whilst the wider setting has considerably changed, the immediate streetscape and setting of Merchant Place and Cory's Building remains little changed since its late Victorian hey-day, when Cardiff and the Docks were an economic power house.

It is notable, from the 1879 maps, that all the other plots along Bute Street, Lower Bute Street and James Street were built upon by 1879, as were those along Bute Crescent, West Bute Street etc. An appraisal of those building which remain, confirms that most were built between 1839 and 1875. Indeed, many of those original buildings from the mid-1800s still remain, making this an area of considerable architectural significance. It is also interesting to note that the open site just to the north of Custom House, once the north end of this 'green space' appears never to have been developed.

With the 'Coal and Shipping Exchange' building being constructed in 1884-8 on the Mount Stuart Square site; and Merchant Place, in 1881, and Cory's Building, in 1889, on the other open site; the 1899 maps show these two plots built upon, and present an urban and industrial grain which will barely change over the next century.

Insofar as evidential value may be buried below ground, under water or be hidden by later fabric, it is uncertain what might be hidden below ground. It is believed that the site was not built upon before the construction of Merchant Place and Cory's Building; however, of course the open site to the rear was indeed built upon from 1881 to 2008, with the original rear ranges of Merchant Place. The layout of these buildings / structures is known to us, through plans dated to 2007; however, what lies in the ground does possess evidential value.

Where additional evidential values can be gained from documentary sources, pictorial records and archaeological archives or museum collections, the initial web-based search undertaken exposed a fair amount from various sources; however, further searching may indeed throw up even more interesting information.

The permanent loss of much original evidential value internally is countered by the retention of so much, particularly on the external envelope; and the relatively unchanged context and setting for over 100 years. Cory's Building and Merchant House are therefore deemed to possess **Medium to High Evidential Value**.

Efforts should therefore be made to protect and enhance the assets and preserve their heritage value; focusing on conservation in the main; though a degree of flexibility would be acceptable in the way they may be altered, adapted and built upon; particularly where such adaptation would not have a notably detrimental bearing on those aspects of most significance – the two front (and two side) facades; the forms of the front ranges; and the layouts and retained fixtures and finishes to these two front ranges.

The approach is to retain and repair much of the historic internal fabric which remains, celebrating it for its quality and character. In the case of both buildings, what is great is that this can be done without compromising the new uses.

For example, both buildings still have stone staircases with ornate cast iron balustrading and hardwood handrails in relatively good condition. In the case of Cory's Building, there is a stunning decorative iron balustrade and newel post to the ground floor. There is no reason not to use these staircases – they are in the locations we would want them in - and so they would want to be repaired and used.

Either side of this stair are plastered composite twinned columns of significance; and, in front, there is a polished stone tile floor to the main entrance, with scars where a lobby once lived; and large sliding timber entrance doors. These could be repaired and retained, and this once special entrance lobby restored.

Both buildings, however, more so Cory's Building, retain some good examples of lath and lime plasterwork, timber panelling and ornate timber surrounds to openings, which could be retained and repaired.

Both buildings also retain areas of mosaic tile, timber boarding and wood block parquet flooring, which could be retained.

The original partitioning, in the main removed in 2008, is still legible on the floors and ceilings, with scars and retained corncicing. It may be the case that any new cellularisation of the open floor plans reverts to these lines; or it may be that the open spaces remain open; in which case we may seek to make the original sub-division legible.

One of Merchant Place's upper rooms is top-lit with a large patent glazed rooflight with intricate lightweight iron trusses and diagonal timber sarking boards. This room could be restored.

As could the cast iron pavement lights over the basement.



5.4 Aesthetic Value

Aesthetic Value relates to the external appearance and form of an asset and its relationship to its context and setting. Aesthetic Value derives from the way in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from an historic asset.

In this regard, both Cory's Building and Merchant Place possess considerable architectural significance and aesthetic value, located within a setting also of considerable architectural significance and aesthetic value. Both buildings were designed in the Italian Renaissance style of Architecture much-loved at the time. Merchant Place is a high quality essay in pure restrained and ordered Italian Renaissance architecture, whilst Cory's Building presents the more dynamic, ornate and showy Mannerist style.

Both buildings are protected by a grade II listing; and are identified as 'Landmark Buildings' within the Mount Stuart Square Conservation Area.

Both buildings are of distinctly Classical Italianate design, with their frontages providing a very strong presence onto the streetscape and the wider setting, being significant elements of a number of important views within and towards the area. However, built 8 years apart, the two buildings are quite different; the older Merchant Place is shorter, of horizontal emphasis with repetitive bays, with a pitched roof and principally of red brick, with red sandstone dressing and a grey granite column colonnade; whilst Cory's Building is taller, of vertical emphasis with varying bays, with a flat roof, completely faced in limestone ashlar stonework, and more ornate and playful. Individually both possess considerable aesthetic value, with their unapologetically Classical design styles, their adherence to tradition, their richness, and their use of high quality materials.

Both buildings very much retain their respective external aesthetics and notable presence within their setting. The shorter 3-storey Merchant Place - onto Bute Place - shows off the Italian Renaissance style, with its red brick facades with red sandstone dressings, grey Penrhyn granite columns and hipped slate roofs behind an open balustraded parapet; with its repetitive 10no. bays forming a definite horizontal emphasis. The taller 5-storey Cory's Building - onto Bute Street - however also taking up the prominent corner, shows off the Italianate Classical style with Mannerist detailing and a very definite vertical rhythm, accentuated by its first and second floor columns (heavily carved at their base, including several heads) within recessed bays, with its articulated limestone ashlar stonework, granite plinth and flat roof behind a solid parapet. Both are of Classical Italianate design, however, with different materials and treatments, they are very different in appearance and impact – the younger Cory's Building probably the more prominent for its height and ornateness, whilst the older Merchant Place is a little calmer.

Historic images suggest that the frontage of Merchant Place, on Bute Place, looks now very much as it did when it was built in 1881. Made up of 3no. distinct storeys, its front facade presents a strong horizontal emphasis; and, with its 10no. regular bays, a strong and ordered vertical rhythm which overlays that horizontality. The stability, poise and clarity of proportion which this exhibits, combined with the ancient Roman standards and motifs - of the Roman Doric columns and entablature (Roman because of the bases), the colonnade, the arched openings, the keystones, the pediments, the balustraded parapet and central aedicule - makes this elevation an excellent example of Classical design – possible the best in the area.

Indeed, in his book 'The Buildings of Wales – Glamorgan (Pevsner Architectural Guides – 1995)', John Newman refers to "nos. 1 and 3 Bute Place" as "the most purely satisfying essay in classical design in Butetown."

The choice of red materials - the red brick with the perfectly sourced Cumberland Shawk red sandstone - with the grey Penrhyn granite colonnade standing forward and its hipped grey slate roofs, provides a richness, which simply glows in the sun.

Whilst the exposed east side elevation shares the materials, proportions, rhythm and lines of the south front elevation it varies in some respects - no ground floor colonnade and entablature, and no first floor balustrade and pediments.

The north, rear, elevation of Merchant Place - as we see it now - is what was left after the demolition of the rear structures in around 2008. As a result, they are unadorned and, in some cases, used to be internal walls, so are unfenestrated.



Cory's Building is a 5no. storey building, also in the Italianate Classical style; however, its style is not as poised, strict and ordered as that of Merchant Place, but more playful, ornate and three-dimensional. Indeed, the facade borrows from the Mannerist style of architecture, playing with solid and void, variation and decoration.

Whilst Merchant Place is more horizontal in its emphasis, Cory's Building, with its 13no. bays, accentuates the vertical, especially with its first and second floor columns (heavily carved at their base, including several heads) within recessed bays; and, whilst Merchant Place is more regular with its rhythm, Cory's Building is more varied.

The two main elevations are made up of a two-course granite plinth, above which is a channelled ashlar Bath stone ground floor, above which is 4no. storeys of ashlar Bath stonework, with a flat roof surrounded by a parapet, stepped up in the centre into a segmental pediment, with chimneys around the edge.

The first and second floor elevations form a significant rich and deep part of the facade, particularly on the inside 9no. bays, with its giant composite order round pilasters, channelled pilaster strips, pedimented windows, tripartite windows, canted projected splayed bays with open pediments, and a central round-arched recess with a coffered giant arch with foliated spandrels carried on paired pilasters. The giant pilaster bases are adorned with elaborate foliated decoration, depicting heads within.

The windows are horned timber sash; some with bracket cornices and volutes. Whilst the ground floor window openings are camber-headed within squared recesses, with cills above the granite plinth; there is a variety of window treatments to the first and second floors; the third floor are capped with bracket cornices and volutes; and the fourth floor are oversailed with the base course of the entablature above.

The shorter side elevation on its south end, also of Bath limestone, which includes a secondary door / emergency escape, is a match for the end bays of the front elevation.

The other shorter side elevation, on its north side, does not face a street, but faces the side of Custom House. This is a much more utilitarian-looking facade, with red brick, bands of Bath stone and simple windows.

In his book 'The Buildings of Wales – Glamorgan (Pevsner Architectural Guides – 1995)', John Newman talks about Bute Street and says:

“The street ends with the massive bulk of Cory's Buildings, dated 1889 and designed by the local firm of Bruton & Williams. Thirteen bays, five storeys, faced with Bath stone, and barely keeping its classical paraphernalia under control. The feature which is meant to dominate is the order of Corinthian columns with decorated leggings recessed four and four into the upper part of the facade.”

However, Cory's Building was originally built as a 3no. storey building, with 3no. pavilion roofs, at centre and ends; and the top 2no. storeys are not original – they were added some 100 years ago (some time between 1907 and 1929). It is clear that they are less ornate in decoration, however, do follow the same rhythm and general aesthetic as the lower storeys. However, also lost with this addition, were the 3no. ornate pavilion roofs, which were replaced with a simple parapeted flat roof. The architects' - Bruton and Williams' – vision was clearly for a roofline which was no less ornate and eye-catching as the facade.

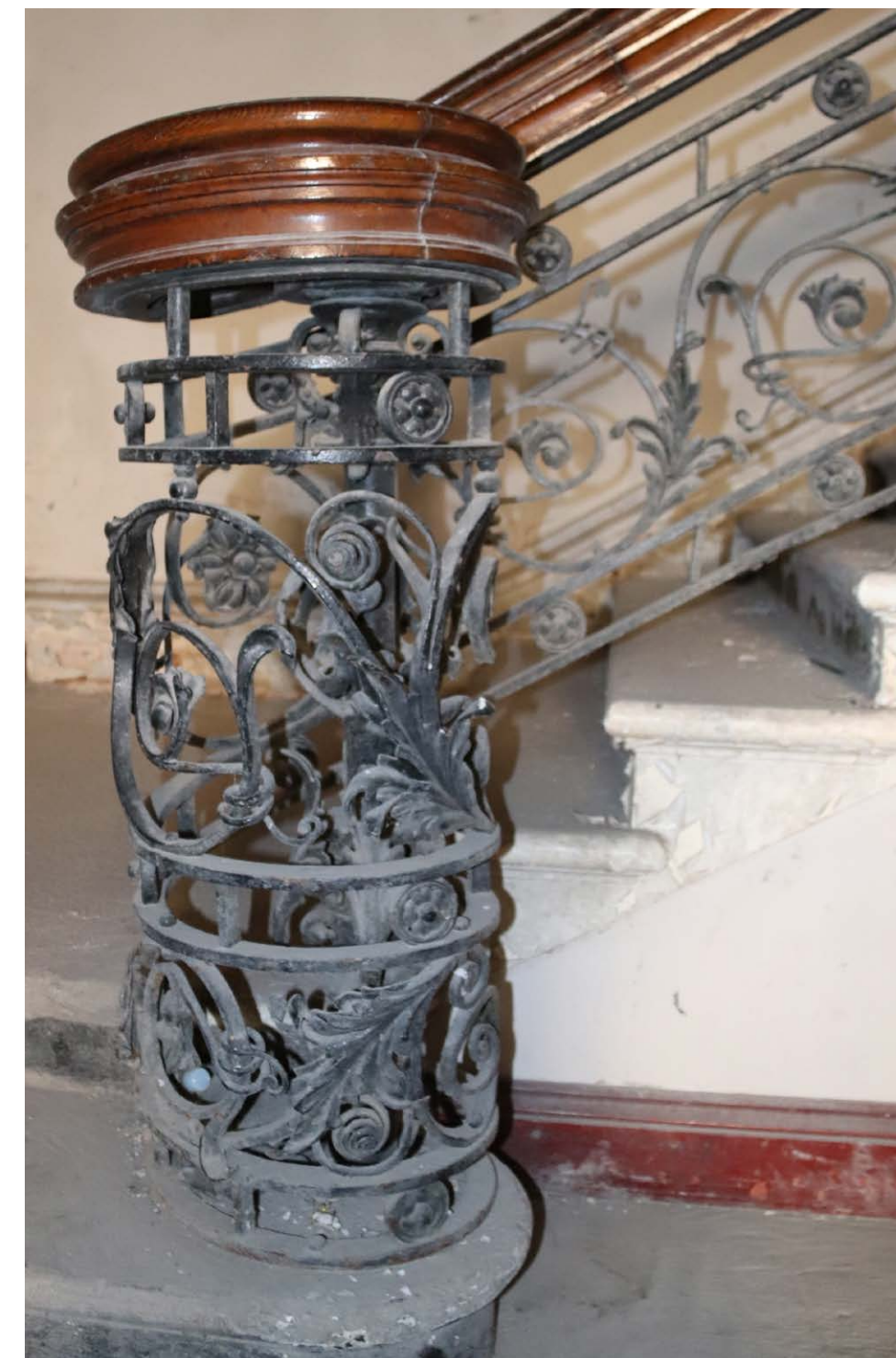
When it was built, therefore, both Merchant Place and Cory's Building were of the same height.

Having been built after Merchant House, the east (rear) elevation of Cory's Building – of brick principally, but render to the top, and with some windows, particularly in the top part – is a very utilitarian facade (significantly so, given the drama on the frontage). Obviously, the lower two thirds of this facade was always unseen from anywhere but the abutting Merchant House buildings, and the top third (which was rendered) would have been partially visible from afar, not at all from near.



Cory's Building and Merchant House make a strong contribution to the significance of their place, forming a key piece of its aesthetic value. Together, and apart, they are both deemed to possess **High Aesthetic Value**.

Efforts should therefore be made to protect and enhance the assets and preserve their heritage value; focusing on conservation in the main; though a degree of flexibility would be acceptable in the way they may be altered, adapted and built upon; particularly where such adaptation would not have a notably detrimental bearing on those aspects of most significance – the two front (and two side) facades (the strongest identifier of this high aesthetic value); the forms of the front ranges; and the layouts and retained fixtures and finishes to these two front ranges.



5.5 Communal Value

Communal Value derives from the meanings that an asset has for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory. It includes social and economic value, as well as commemorative, spiritual or symbolic value. Communal Value is closely linked to historical value, in the way that it acts as a source of social interaction.

Both Merchant Place and Cory's Building possess considerable economic value embedded within their history. They were both at the forefront of Cardiff's late Victorian and Edwardian success - through the export of coal, iron and steel - and its expansion and growth. Located where they are, they were both central to the very busy life in the docks and were very visible statements to the success of Cardiff, and of the building's owners, not least the Cory Brothers. By 1901, Cardiff's docks were handling more coal than any other port in the world; and much of the money resulting from that was passing through the hands of the occupants within these two buildings. They remain, particularly Cory's Building, very visible reminders of that affluent period in Cardiff's history.

Whilst arguably the economic value of these buildings at the time was enjoyed more by the wealthy, these buildings gave work and earnings to many over the years. However, they also provided other services which were more focussed on the larger majority of the workers in and around the docks - they were the post and telegraph offices for the area. Thousands of people - from those working day-to-day in the docks to those off the ships for a short space of time - will have communicated with family and friends via no.3 Bute Place (the western half of Merchant Place).

In more recent years, since they closed, Merchant Place and Cory's Building have not been providing any economic benefit to society, nor communal or social benefit; however, they have, for as long as any of us have spent time in Cardiff Bay, been iconic landmarks in the centre of the area, an area much changed to the east and south, with the Wales Millennium Centre, the Senedd, the Red Dragon Centre, Mermaid Quay, Roald Dahl Plass etc forming a new, lively social setting. Both buildings, in particular Merchant Place, are still very much an integral part of this vibrant social scene. Indeed, communal value is closely linked to aesthetic value and the way in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from it; and people do very much from these two buildings, despite their lack of use and tired appearance. It is extremely important that they are brought back into use to ensure they are a positive element within the new Cardiff Bay.

Cory's Building and Merchant House make a moderate to strong contribution to the significance of their place, forming a key piece of its history and cultural value. Together, and apart, they are both deemed to possess **Medium Communal Value**.

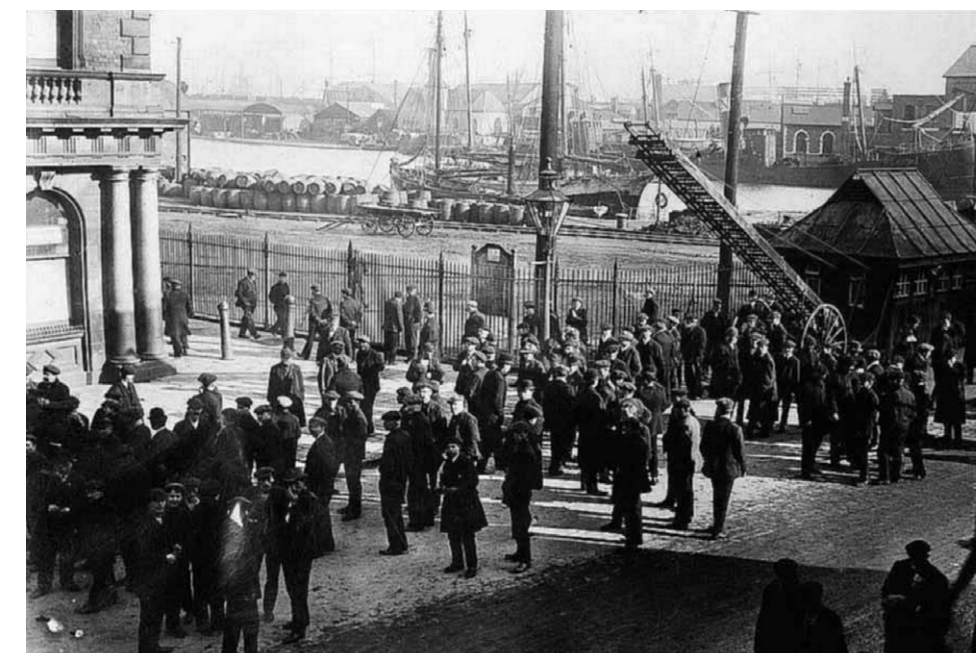
Efforts should therefore be made to protect and enhance the assets and preserve their heritage value; focusing on conservation in the main; though a degree of flexibility would be acceptable in the way they may be altered, adapted and built upon; particularly where such adaptation would not have a notably detrimental bearing on those aspects of most significance - the two front (and two side) facades; the forms of the front ranges; and the layouts and retained fixtures and finishes to these two front ranges.



1890s (above & below) (source: Cardiff Library Media Collection)

Note the taller column bases than now, showing much lower pavement level

Post Office / 002052A
Image is part of Cardiff County Library's Media Collection
Mae Delwedd yn ran o Gasgliad Cyfryngau Llyfrgelloedd Sir Caerdydd



1898 at corner of Merchant Place during coal strike (source 'walesonline.co.uk')



1907 (sent) postcard of Merchant Place (source: 'thingspostal.org.uk')



1957 Cory's Building with striking dockers outside (source: 'hcearchive.org.uk')

5.6.1 SIGNIFICANCE PLANS - GROUND FLOOR

Legend

- Highest Significance
- Considerable Significance
- Some Significance
- No Significance
- Detracts from Significance

FLOORS



WALLS



CEILINGS



5.6.2 SIGNIFICANCE PLANS - FIRST FLOOR

Legend

- Highest Significance**
- Considerable Significance**
- Some Significance**
- No Significance**
- Detracts from Significance**

FLOORS



WALLS



CEILINGS



5.6.3 SIGNIFICANCE PLANS - SECOND FLOOR

Legend

- Highest Significance**
- Considerable Significance**
- Some Significance**
- No Significance**
- Detracts from Significance**

FLOORS



WALLS



CEILINGS



5.6.4 SIGNIFICANCE PLANS - THIRD & FOURTH FLOORS

Legend

-  Highest Significance
-  Considerable Significance
-  Some Significance
-  No Significance
-  Detracts from Significance

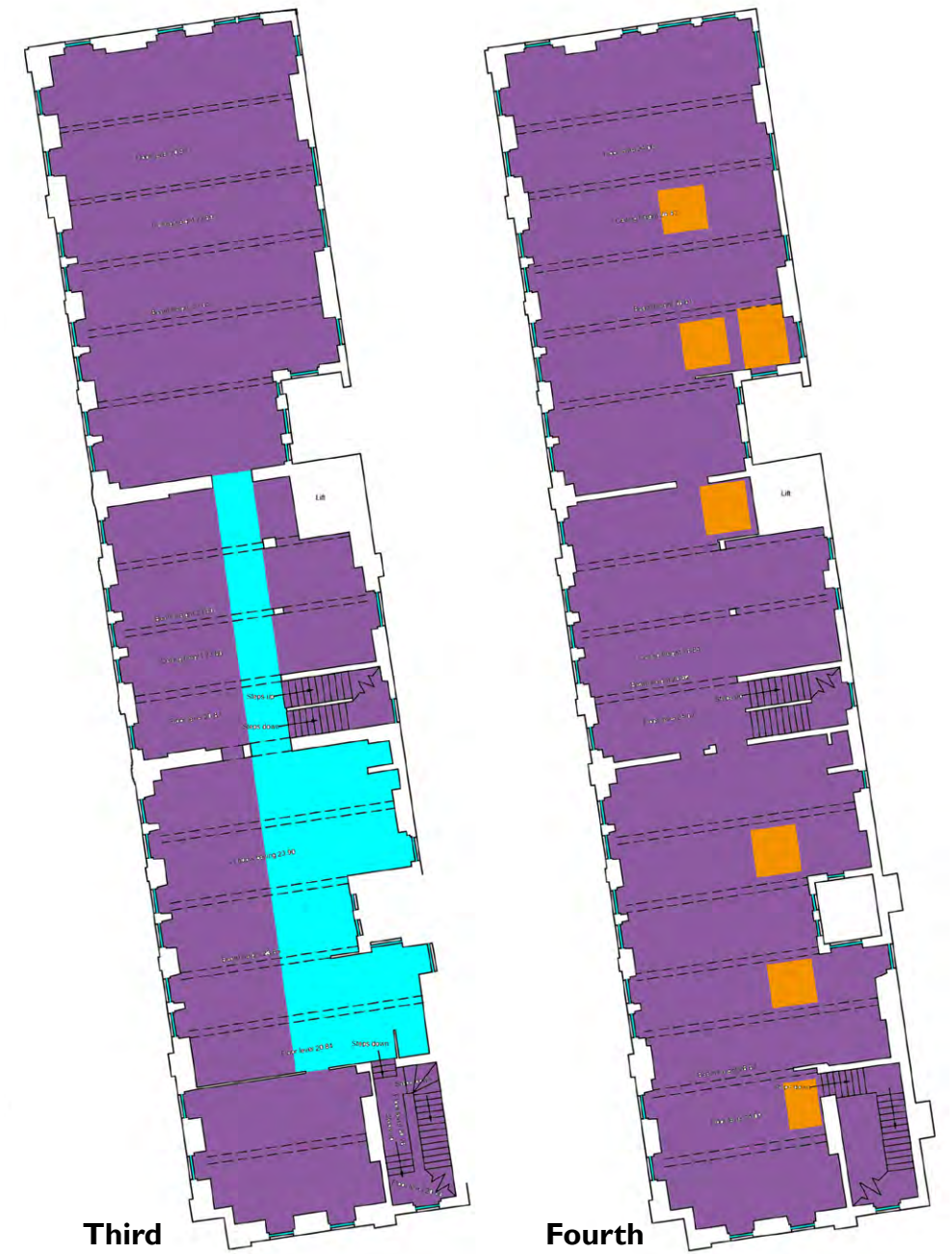
FLOORS



WALLS



CEILINGS

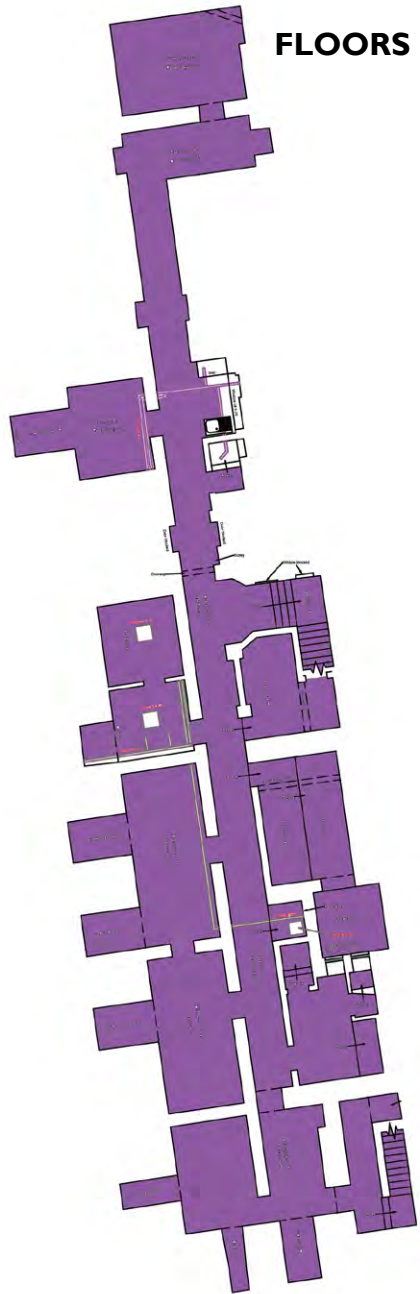


5.6.5 SIGNIFICANCE PLANS - BASEMENT FLOOR

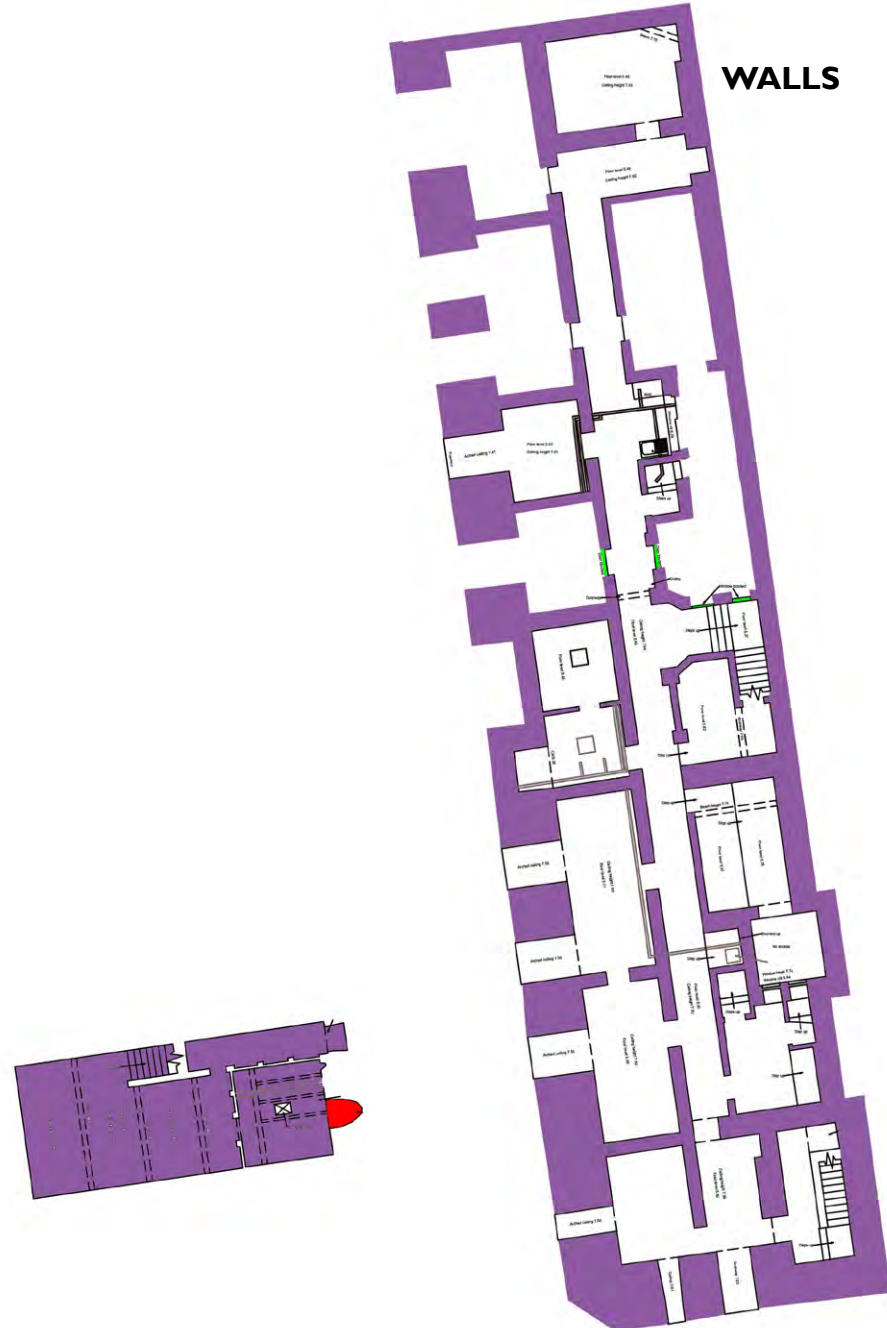
Legend

-  Highest Significance
-  Considerable Significance
-  Some Significance
-  No Significance
-  Detracts from Significance

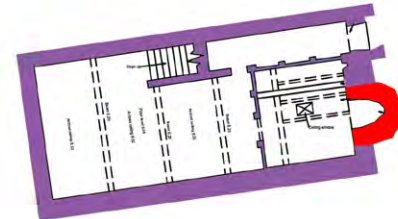
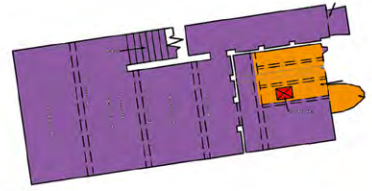
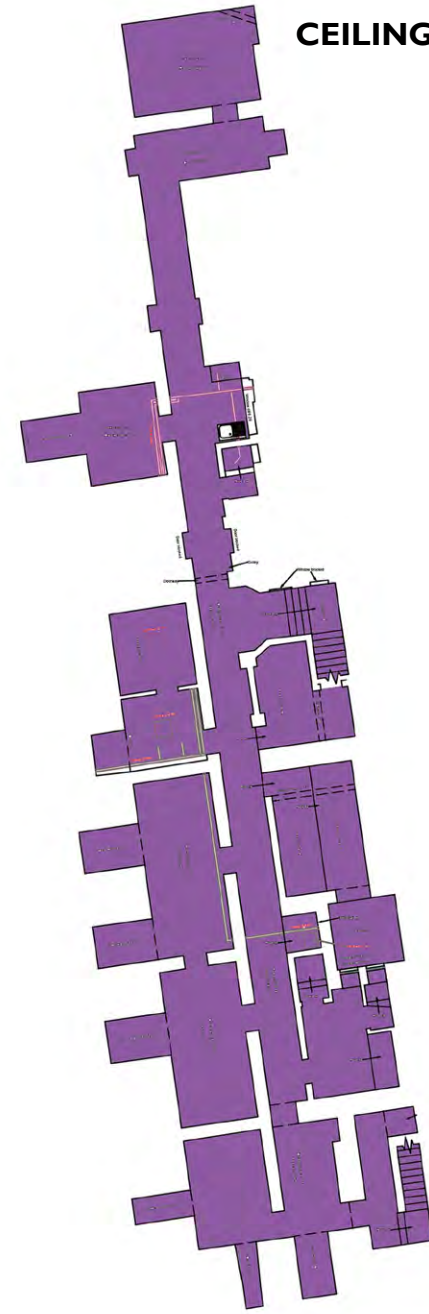
FLOORS



WALLS



CEILINGS



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- 'whgt.wales' website;
- 'wikipedia.org' website.

