

Industrial and Vernacular Architecture 1974

by Richard Hillier

In April 1974 Miss Anne Sandford, who has now moved to Hereford Museum, became involved in recording the floor levels of the early to mid seventeenth-century building at 8a Church Street, Peterborough. Since the building was undergoing alterations, I was asked to record topographically the remaining internal features. In view of the strong rumours of demolition I was also allowed to record both the interior and exterior of Wentworth Methodist Church, built in 1874.

During September 14-15 Long Causeway was recorded and planned. This is a late seventeenth or early eighteenth-century house, occupied from c. 1720 to 1960 by the Beaver family. Five of their business ledgers — covering 1902-1911 — were found and have been preserved. In November a mid eighteenth-century house at 20 Westgate was recorded and planned.

Two surveys were completed in December, that of the former Deacon's School, Deacon Street (1884 and 1910), and the remainder of the Monument Street Brewery which had not been surveyed in 1972.

Demolitions this year include: the London Road Windmill (built 1850-7); the massive Carlton Mills at Fletton (built 1902 and 1914); the north gate-house to Fletton Tower (built 1847); Railway housing at the junction of Grove Street and Tower Street (built in the mid nineteenth century); former telephone exchange at 11 Queen Street (built in the late nineteenth century); and Snowden's Rope and Tarpaulin Works behind 8 Exchange Street (built soon after 1900). The last two were recorded and planned before demolition; the others were simply photographed.

My own recent research has culminated in a brief history of the Cadge and Colman's Flour Mill (built in 1848). Other research in the same field includes that of Mr Ronald Russell, who is writing a history of the River Nene for publication during 1976.

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In January a photographic survey of no.10 Deacon Street, Peterborough, was completed. This is a pre-1721 stone-built malting 39 metres long. It has additions of c.1800, and a kiln of c.1850. The roof is of butt-purlin construction with fourteen bays delineated by massive cambered collar beams.

During March, no.90 Bridge street and its outbuildings were surveyed. The frontage of this property was built symmetrically: the shop is set almost equidistant between its carriage entrance and no.88 (also an integral part of the building), and there was also an unnecessary fifth dormer which lighted no attic room. The two shops (nos.88 & 90), the large granary and the stables behind 90, and the small cottages behind 88, were all built c.1790. Part of the rear of 90 contains the remains of its timber-framed predecessor.

The old workhouse on the west side of Cumbergate was surveyed in June (p. 27). Following this, Mrs Susan Butler, the landlady of the Greyhound, Cathedral Square, kindly allowed me to photograph the exterior, the extensive cellars and parts of the interior of her premises. This building is late eighteenth-century with additions of c.1830 and later. Remarkably, the stables at the rear, once used by the London to Lincoln Coach, still retain their stalls.

No.78 Bridge Street, built of brick with stone courses, was surveyed in December. This is an early eighteenth-century building with a mansard roof. The stairs on the top floor have turned balusters and square newels (like the Royal Hotel, Westgate). No.50, Westgate, a house of late eighteenth-century date, and no.38 Queen Street, a Roman Catholic chapel built in 1856, were also investigated.

Demolitions during 1975 include: the 1834 Workhouse School, Thorpe Road; Deacon's School and no.20 Westgate (see *Durobrivae* 3, 1975, 29); the Park Laundry, Park Road (c.1890); nos.43-47 Queen Street, (c.1880); nos.19-25 Queen Street, (pre-1721 malting, later kiln and c.1860 Drill Hall); nos. 65-89 Westgate with the remaining street frontages to the south (pre-1850 cottages, pre-1821 Independent Chapel, an Elementary School of 1823 and a Confectionery of 1898 surveyed in 1973). In July the outbuildings and yards behind nos.76-90 Bridge Street were demolished and levelled. The demolition behind nos.84 and 90 removed identical cast-iron baking ovens made by two local blacksmiths: Southam (c.1830) and Amies (c.1875), respectively.

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On March 27th 1976 the old General Post Office in Cumbergate, Peterborough, was closed. Four days later a brief photographic survey of the interior was undertaken. The east half was built in 1874, the west half in 1904. The latter contained the extensive sorting and despatching room which was photographed.

No. 8 Exchange St was surveyed and photographed in September. Formerly occupied by Snowdens Ltd from 1880 to 1974, this building probably dates from the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century, but with major alterations of 1890. Part of the main staircase was early eighteenth-century, with square newels and turned balusters, as no. 78 Bridge St, the Old Workhouse, Cumbergate, and the Royal Hotel, Westgate. The cast-iron cooking range of 1890 was by 'Amies & Sons'.

Demolitions in Peterborough have nearly all been for the Queen St (Queensgate) redevelopment. These include: the engineering works formerly of the Perkins Engines Group (started in 1854 as the Queen St Ironworks); no. 36 Queen St, the City's first Roman Catholic School and Chapel (c.1856); a transport depot, formerly the covered market (c.1925); nos. 27-29 Queen St, formerly a part of the Queen St Baptist Chapel (built 1870, destroyed by fire 1905); nos. 31-41 Queen St, shops of 1907; the north and part of the west frontages of King St (all c.1890-1900, including a former smithy); nos. 45-49 Westgate, Trollopes former store (1884). They were all demolished in the first six months of the year. In November work began on the former 'Bedford Coffee House' (c.1881) on the corner of Exchange St and Queen St, on no. 8 Exchange St, on Westgate Motors Garage in Queen St and on the former maltings in Deacon St (*Durobrivae* 4, 1976, 18).

Other demolitions included the former Boroughbury Methodist Chapel (1865); nos. 61-191 Bourges Boulevard (Westwood St), houses built between c.1870 and 1900; the City Council's former Works Depot in St John's St (including old stabling); the western row of the Great Northern Cottages, New England (c.1855-65); the Great North Station (1850).

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The remaining parts of the Queensgate redevelopment area were demolished in 1977. In Cumbergate they included the General Post Office (*Durobrivae* 5, 1977, 30); nos 4-18, with the outbuildings and rear portions of the Bell & Oak and the Greyhound (mainly nineteenth-century); the former Peterborough Advertiser offices (1874); the north block of Miss Pear's Almshouses (1904); nos 23-29, shops (early nineteenth-century); nos 19-17, a former ironmongers offices and works (late nineteenth-century); and the rear parts of the following four properties: the Still (c.1700, malting or granary), the Old Workhouse, the White Horse and a shop, no. 37 (late eighteenth-century). In Exchange St shop no. 9 (seventeenth-century in origin, but mainly early nineteenth-century) was destroyed; in Long Causeway no. 11, shop (1901); nos 12-13, bank (1902); nos 14-15 (*Durobrivae* 3, 1975, 29; 5, 1977, 4); and nos 16-18, shops. In Westgate there was complete demolition of the Elephant & Castle (late Victorian) and the Crown Inn (1904), and removal of the rear of the Royal Hotel and of the Westgate Almshouses. In Milton Street, the former Police Station (built 1822 as an infirmary) was pulled down.

Demolition has revealed some interesting details. Part of the Greyhound proved to have some timber-framing and ashlar stone facing; no 9 Exchange St had a small cellar and a late seventeenth-century fireplace with chamfered bressumer; the White Horse showed early eighteenth-century stonework; and judging by the arrangement of lintels of blocked doors and windows, the front block of the Westgate Almshouses was originally one or two houses which extended further west before the conversion in 1744. By courtesy of Messrs Norman Wright & Hodgkinson, and Mr Stapleton (the owner), no 108-110 Bridge St was briefly investigated. It was reputed to be of some antiquity, but alterations in the late Victorian period and more recently have largely destroyed the evidence. The street frontage is timber-framed at the first-floor level and probably overhung the street. The roof is Victorian, possibly rebuilt before it was re-slatted after a severe gale in 1895. To the rear are vestiges of one or two eighteenth-century cottages, part of a row which ran at right angles to the front building down the building plot.

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In February I inspected 30-31 Long Causeway, two properties acquired for the new branch office of the Provincial Building Society (by courtesy of the manager, Mr Fish). The facade of this three-storey building was early eighteenth-century, and a lead rain-water head (dated 'ISM 1726') survived until demolition when it was acquired for the City Museum. The interior of the front building formed two distinct parts, each with an early eighteenth-century staircase. The back wall, although contemporary with the front, was a little irregular, probably because it was built against older outbuildings which were later removed. The outbuildings behind nos. 30-31 dated from the first half of the nineteenth century. Under the floor of no. 30 and part of its outbuildings was the bottom of an earlier cellar.

During 1976 the generating of electricity ceased at Peterborough Power Station. The complex consists of four successive power stations. The first (built 1898-1901) was altered and extended to make the second (1921-23). The third station was built as a separate building in 1925-29; its boiler house was demolished *c.*1972. Between 1948-51 the last station was built; the boiler house should be dismantled in 1979, but the pump-houses adjacent to the river have already been demolished.

In January the following buildings were demolished: the railway offices and stores in Priestgate (built in 1868); railway offices close to the old Crescent level crossing; the Fletton Infant and Junior School (built 1901) near Fletton Bridge; and Wentworth Street Methodist Church (built 1874). No. 10 Exchange Street was demolished and the shop rebuilt. It was a very narrow building which appeared to date to *c.*1700 and had Victorian alterations. Extensive demolition of the Co-operative Society's property in Westgate — from Tudor House (1846) on the corner of North Street almost to Park Road — took place prior to rebuilding. There were originally four separate buildings, all apparently nineteenth-century. The Victorian and Edwardian buildings of Messrs Crussell (ironmongers) and Messrs Rippon (builders' merchants) at Millfield were also demolished. Lastly, it is worth recording that the remains of the former Cattle Market (off Broadway) were destroyed for the construction of a multi-storey car park. This market was first laid out after an Act of Parliament in 1863.

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The demolition continued of the Power Station at Peterborough. The main part of the 1948-51 station was dismantled, but the old 1898-1901 station has not yet been touched.

Some houses in New Road (nos 49-53), dating from the 1870's, have been demolished as part of the development for Peterborough Motors. And a row of houses in Bright Street dating from the 1880's has been demolished, whilst the opposite row (of the late 1860's or early 1870's) has been renovated. Seventeen houses in two small rows in Bourges Boulevard (nos 12-36) have also been demolished: these dated from 1897 to 1905.

In the city centre, the rear of Browns' former property (nos 8-8a Church St), was pulled down. Although it proved impossible to inspect the two small wings to this property, the evidence is that they ought to have been of at least eighteenth-century origin.

During the year the demolition of the main part of former Trinity Presbyterian Church at the junction of Trinity St and Priestgate took place. This part was built about 1864 behind an existing house (retained for offices) when the church was established.

The local radio station — Hereward Radio — has taken over the former Rose & Crown public house in Bridge St that had been vacant for several years. The buildings, probably dating from the early part of this century, are being altered, and additions are being made to form the studios.

As we have recorded much of the demolition in the Queensgate area in past issues of *Durobrivae*, it is pleasing to follow this by recording progress on the development in that area. The superstructure of the new shopping complex is beginning to make an impact on the pedestrian. The frontages to Long Causeway and Westgate are now stretching skyward, and views of the construction can be had from the Cumbergate-Westgate Arcade link. Indeed, the temporary footbridge which made this link for several months will no doubt be remembered by many for a long time!