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The Public Record Office: A Study of the Creation of the Office and the Construction of Its Fireproof Repository

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THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE:
A STUDY OF THE CREATION OF THE OFFICE
AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF ITS FIREPROOF REPOSITORY

by

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B.A. August 1985, Old Dominion University

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of
Old Dominion University in Partial Fulfillment of the
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MASTERS OF ARTS
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Approved by:

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ABSTRACT

THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE:
A STUDY OF THE CREATION OF THE OFFICE
AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF ITS FIREPROOF REPOSITORY

Kathryn Ann Miller
Old Dominion University, 1987
Director: Dr. Norman H. Pollock

At the beginning of the nineteenth century Britain's public records were scattered among more than fifty depositories which were overcrowded, unorganized, neglected, and ill-suited to record preservation. The British government was not sympathetic to the condition or the importance of the records. How then did the British government become involved in creating the Public Record Office and building its first fireproof repository? This study takes the form of a chronology based extensively on the records of the Public Record Office, the Office of Works, and the British Sessional Papers.

Although the creation of the Public Record Office was part of a larger preservation movement in the nineteenth century, in fact, it was the result of the efforts of a few devoted individuals. The design and construction of Britain's central archive was the result of the efforts of one architect--James Pennethorne.

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Introduction

In London today, spanning the block between Fetter Lane and Chancery Lane, stands a building which holds the paper treasures of Great Britain. It is the Public Record Office and it contains the very soul of Britain's recorded history. It is not uncommon for many of us today to take for granted the skill and scientific knowledge used in the preservation of records. We tend to forget the trials and errors of past generations in preserving these records for our use. But while modern researchers are aware that properly controlled climates, lighting, and restricted handling of records are necessary to ensure the records' preservation, they often overlook the process by which the legislation was obtained which provided for their protection as well as the construction of the structure in which they are housed. How nineteenth-century Britain came to recognize the significance of preserving its historic records, and how a fireproof repository was constructed to preserve and make them available to researchers both government and private is the subject of this essay. The first chapter describes how the government assumed responsibility for gathering, sorting, and preserving

[official] records; while subsequent chapters outline the construction of a suitable building to house them.

The government's concern with its historic record collections is akin to other areas of growing government responsibility in the nineteenth century--provision of poor relief, education, imperial concerns--and like them required the addition of new government buildings to house the records and their caretakers.

The creation and construction of a record repository was the primary concern of a few devoted individuals in nineteenth century England. They were breaking new ground and, as is often the case, their efforts were not fully appreciated by their contemporaries. The Public Record Office was designed and built with two overriding ideas; it must be a fireproof structure and be designed in such a fashion as to enable the systematic organization of the records. From these two factors emerged an architectural style that differed from the classical style which contemporaries perceived as the only one appropriate for public buildings. Although the completion of the first phase of the building was hailed as a great step forward in record preservation, the actual building and its appearance drew a fair amount of criticism.

Chapter One

The care of Britain's records fluctuated between periods of genuine concern and profound neglect, and the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were no exception. During both centuries intermittent periods of zealous activity alternated with long stretches of lethargic passivity in the collection and maintenance of public records. Committees of the House of Lords in the 1720s and the House of Commons in 1732 and 1772 examined the state of the records, and early in his reign George III appointed commissioners to methodize the nation's records.¹ The commissioners' trifling efforts angered and disgusted the House of Commons. On 9 October 1799 Charles Abbot,² MP for Helston, moved to appoint a

¹"The National Records," Edinburgh Review 220 (October 1914): 375.

²R. B. Pugh, "Charles Abbot and the Public Records: the First Phase," Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research 39 (1966): 69. Charles Abbot (later Lord Colchester) was a businessman of mild politics, who became interested in reform through his desire for efficiency and his dislike of confusion and waste. He was the author of the first Census Act and he helped to create the London Docks. During his tenure in the Clerkship of the Rules in the King's Bench, Abbot reorganized the records of his office and established a new system. His interest in official documents (public records) is directly traceable to this period.

select committee to look into the state of the public records. On 18 February 1800 the House adopted Abbot's motion and created the fifteen-member Select Committee on Public Records with Abbot as chairman. Thus began the long process that culminated in the establishment of the Public Record Office and Britain's first fireproof record repository.³

The Committee took the largest possible view of its responsibilities, restricting its inquiries only in that it refused to deal with war or revenue documents and private collections. Carrying out its investigation of the nature and condition of the public records over a four-and-a-half-month period, the Committee took evidence from as many as three to four hundred repositories mainly by questionnaires, although the Committee permitted some individuals to appear in person and give evidence.

For obvious reasons the Committee devoted considerable space in its report to the variety and condition of repositories in use. It found records stored or strewn about in buildings of every quality. Attics, spaces under church pews, cupboards, hallways, basements and even private residences had been used to store records. Depending upon the location the records

³Pugh, "Charles Abbot," 78. See Appendix A for list of members of the Committee.

were exposed to damp, dust, fire, vermin, and theft.⁴

The Committee recommended several changes and improvements in the organization and care of the nation's records. First, the Committee recommended that the government purchase the calendars and indexes of record classes which had been compiled by individual record keepers and which were therefore private property; for the repositories without such reference aids, it recommended that work begin immediately on their creation. While this seemed to be a request easily accomplished, in reality it proved quite the opposite because record keepers demanded large fees for indexes which they regarded as their own, not the government's. Another recommendation, implemented many years later, called for the authority to destroy documents considered to be useless, irreparably damaged or too inconvenient to preserve. One expected recommendation dealt with the idea of a central repository. After receiving evidence for and against a central repository, the Committee debated the issue but was unable to reach an acceptable conclusion and therefore chose to endorse only generally the idea of a central repository. The advantage of gathering all the records into a new, structurally sound, and fireproof

⁴Peter Walne, "The Record Commissions, 1800-1837", Journal of the Society of Archivists 2 (1960): 8-9.

facility was plain. However, no central system of organization existed, few record keepers knew exactly which records were in their charge, and those fortunate enough to know or possess record indexes were reluctant to give up their records and render their indexes and calendars useless. Lastly the Committee recommended the dismissal of the existing commissioners and the creation of a Royal Commission on Records.⁵

Record Commissions, 1800-1837

The first of the six Record Commissions began its work on 19 July 1800. Parliament charged the Commission with three main objectives: to provide physical care for and control of the public records, to create more convenient use of the records by the publication of indexes and calendars, and to superintend the printing of original texts of ancient documents considered to be valuable. Abbot was a member of the Commission and continued to be a motivating force in the Commission's work until 1819 when he embarked on an extended tour abroad.

The first major obstacle the Commission encountered was that the records were stored in sixty or more scattered structures throughout London and

⁵Ibid., 9-11; "The National Records," 375; Pugh, "Charles Abbot," 72-78.

Westminster. Yet of these numerous structures only a very few could loosely be called repositories. The Chancery records, for example were stored in the Tower along side the gunpowder in the main magazine. In an attempt to prevent deterioration and provide proper physical preservation, the Commission transferred records from building to building, a procedure that only exacerbated matters. At one point the Pipe Rolls were stored in the damp cellars of Somerset House. This procedure rendered indexes useless in many instances if care was not taken in the move and reorganization.

These transfers were costly to the nation in several ways. To begin with, the Commission spent more than £28,000 over the years in transfers, an amount more than adequate for building a central repository. As expensive as these moves were, they came nowhere near the cost to the nation through the theft and loss of irreplaceable records. Although a very few repositories benefited from the transfers, on the whole it appears that only the laborers hired to move the records and the glue-makers⁶ who bought the pilfered parchments really gained to any appreciable degree.

All six Commissions suffered from the same

⁶Walne, "The Record Commissions," 12.

problems in varying degrees.⁷ They lacked any legislative power and could not even generate their own funds. Instead they relied upon the generosity of the Treasury. This predicament forced the Commissions to apply makeshift remedies to the preservation and storage of the records rather than institute complete change and reform.⁸ In 1823 Nicholas Vansittart, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, had occasion to encounter the extravagant and wasteful habits of the Commission first hand. The Commission had proposed an enlargement of the record accommodations in the Tower of London. Upon visiting the Tower Vansittart was shocked by "the extreme inconvenience of the present premises, [so] that he would hardly consider whether any addition could be made to them" and asserted his judgement that "it would be a waste of money to attempt to improve them and that a proper building ought to be immediately erected in some more accessible part of the metropolis, capable of uniting and containing all the national records."⁹

⁷See Appendix B for further information regarding the Record Commissions.

⁸Walne, "The Record Commissions," 11-13.

⁹Roger Ellis, "The Building of the Public Record Office," in Essays in Memory of Sir Hillary Jenkinson, ed. Albert E. J. Hollander (Chichester, Sussex: Moore and Tillyer, 1962), p. 9.

Although critics characterized the six Commissions over the years as wasteful of public monies and, even more important, as guilty of letting invaluable opportunities pass by, they did, however accomplish some minor achievements.¹⁰ They managed to publish several indexes and calendars, but unfortunately many were carelessly edited.¹¹ An example of a lost opportunity occurred when Sir John Leach, the Master of the Rolls, wrote to the Treasury in 1831 suggesting the Rolls Estate on Fetter Lane as an appropriate location for the nucleus of a new record establishment. The consolidation of the records at the Rolls Estate would remedy the extreme inconvenience caused by the dispersal of the records. However, the Treasury chose not to act upon Leach's recommendation. In 1832 C. P. Cooper, Secretary of the Commission, submitted to the sixth and last Commission plans which many considered radical--a

¹⁰Great Britain, Parliament, Sessional Papers (Commons), 1836 vol. 38: Estimates and Miscellaneous Services for the year ending 31 March 1837, "Public Record Office." Hereafter referred to by name of report, in BSP, and the appropriate volume number. In 1836 the Treasury allotted the Commission its annual £10,000 for its operations, out of which only £950 were used for repairing, binding, cleaning, making cases for particular ancient records and £50 for purchasing stationary.

¹¹Thomas Duffus Hardy, Memoirs of the Right Honorable Henry Lord Langdale, 2 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1852), 2: 112-13; "The National Records," 375.

General Record Repository. Cooper, with the support of Leach, proposed to build one main repository on the Rolls Estate, at a cost of £20,000, to be funded from the Chancery Suitors' Fund.

On the basis of Cooper's plans the Commission drew up a bill to create a central repository to be administered by the Record Commissioners. John William Ponsonby, MP for Nottingham, took the initial steps to introduce the bill into Parliament, but before it could become law he was translated to the House of Lords as Lord Duncannon. In addition to the bill's unfortunate timing the Accountant-General objected to the use of the Suitors' Fund because it was essentially private money, and the Commission was forced to abandon the bill.¹² Indeed, the very idea of consolidating all the records into a central repository was perceived by many as a blatant infringement on livelihoods and was considered outrageous. Record keepers throughout London and Westminster saw their livelihood threatened and they were less than supportive of the Commission. During the following years several key individuals continued to agitate the public and generate interest in Parliament

¹²Ellis, "Building the Public Record Office," 9-10; Walne, "The Record Commissions," 12; John Cantwell, "The 1838 Public Record Office Act and its Aftermath: A New Perspective," Journal of the Society of Archivists 7 (April 1984): 278.

over the inefficiency of the Commission and the future of the public records.

In 1836 the Commons appointed another Select Committee on Public Records to inquire into the charges of extravagance and inefficiency of the sixth Record Commission of 1831.¹³ The Committee reported that records were still in chaotic conditions and that the practice of "pasting records into volumes, from which they were detached by damping . . . still persisted."¹⁴ The Committee strongly recommended the building of a new central repository and the standardization of search fees. In 1837 to prepare for the execution of the Committee's recommendation of a central repository, Parliament passed an act that placed the Rolls Estate in the hands of the Crown and "empowered the Commissioners of Woods and Forests to appropriate it as a site for such a Repository."¹⁵ The Committee also recommended the termination of the Commission and the appointment of two or three full time Commissioners. However, the death of William IV in 1837 eliminated the need for terminating the Commission as it would automatically

¹³See Appendix C for Committee members.

¹⁴Walne, "The Record Commission," p. 12; John Cantwell, "The Making of the First Deputy Keeper of the Records," Archives 17 (April 1985): 25.

¹⁵Ellis, "Building the Public Record Office," 10.

expire six months after the king's death. The immediate consequence of the Committee's efforts was the Act for Keeping Safely the Public Records of 1838.¹⁶

The Record Act: Intrigue and Arguments

Before considering the provisions of the Public Record Act itself, it is desirable to survey the contributions of the many years' hard work by several individuals devoted to the ideal of modern record-keeping. Six men--Lord Henry Langdale, Sir Francis Palgrave, Sir Henry Cole, Charles Buller, Thomas Duffus Hardy, Sir Nicholas Harris Nicolas, and the Reverend Joseph Hunter were prominent participants in the battle for record reform but not all on the same side. To appreciate fully and understand the significance of the Act, it is helpful to be briefly acquainted with a few of the personalities and the intrigues which helped to promote the Act and without which the Record Act would not have been possible.

Above all others in launching the Public Record Office was Henry Bickersteth, first baron Langdale (1783-1851). At first he was interested in medicine but his interest waned, and he changed to the law. He became King's Counsel in 1827, and in 1836 was made

¹⁶Hardy, Memoirs of Lord Langdale, p. 115.

Master of the Rolls, at which point he was created Baron Langdale. He remained aloof from the intrigues until the end, but he proved to be the force which could reconcile the others.

Sir Francis Palgrave (1788-1861), born Francis Ephraim Cohen, was educated for the bar. He clerked for Loggin and Smith Solicitors until 1822 when he entered King's Bench Walk Temple. In 1823 he was baptized a Christian and took his wife's mother's maiden name, Palgrave, as his surname. In later years both friends and enemies remarked that Palgrave had good breeding and natural dignity and that he was a loving and pious man in his private life but that he was overly greedy for money. Palgrave first turned his attention to the public records in 1821, and by 1822, in his role as sub-commissioner to the Record Commission, he was editing for publication the Parliamentary Writs.¹⁷

Sir Henry Cole (1808-1882), was sent to Christ's Hospital at age eleven to fill one of two scholarship slots endowed by an ancestor who had left his estate to

¹⁷Dictionary of National Biography, s.v. "Palgrave, Sir Francis,"; Elizabeth Bonython, King Cole, (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1982), p. 15; Gwenllian F. Palgrave, Francis Turner Palgrave: His Journals and Memories of his Life (1899; reprint ed., New York: AMS Press, 1971), p. 5.

the school for that purpose.¹⁸ On 9 April 1823 Cole left school and on 10 April he embarked on his long career devoted to the public good. Cole was a Utilitarian and in his youth was close friends with John Stuart Mill, Charles Buller and William Molesworth. Although not a spectacular student, he was familiar with Latin and had very neat handwriting, both of which qualified him for the position as Palgrave's clerk. Cole's job, along with two other part-time clerks Thomas Duffus Hardy and William Hardy, required him to copy out old documents in preparation for publication by the Commission. Although Cole remained with Palgrave for nine years, the Hardy brothers' relationship with Palgrave soured very quickly and ended with a quarrel in 1823.¹⁹

Thomas Duffus Hardy (1804-1878) joined government service at the age of fifteen, through the influence of his uncle Samuel Lysons, Keeper at the Tower. Lysons's successor Henry Petrie, trained Hardy to be an archivist. Despite the quarrelsome relationship between

¹⁸Boynthon, King Cole, p. 14. Christ's Hospital was a charity school established by Edward VI in monastic buildings in London with a writing school added later. Students of the school were easily recognized in their blue and yellow Tudor uniforms.

¹⁹DNB, s.v. "Cole, Sir Henry,"; Boynthon, King Cole, pp. 2, 14; Cantwell, "First Deputy Keeper," 23.

Palgrave and Hardy, the association enhanced Hardy's training greatly because Palgrave had much of value to teach him. In 1823 both Hardy brothers worked full time at the Tower as junior clerks. They supplemented their income by transcribing documents for Palgrave's Parliamentary Writs, and it was over the rate of pay for this work that they quarreled.²⁰

The Reverend Joseph Hunter (1784-1861), entered the field of public records comparatively late in life. In 1833 at the age of fifty he abandoned his clerical life and uprooted his family and embarked upon a new career as a sub-commissioner of the public records. Hunter was the author of several books but he was most recognized for his topographical work South Yorkshire. His meticulous research in many ancient documents provided him with thorough knowledge, which made him recognized as an authority on records.²¹

Another man who in his own way also contributed to the 1838 Act was Sir Nicholas Harris Nicolas (1799-1848). An antiquarian, in 1830 he directed his attention to the Record Commission. He was an

²⁰DNB, s.v. "Hardy, Thomas Duffus,"; Cantwell, "First Deputy Keeper," 23.

²¹David Crook, "The Reverend Joseph Hunter and the Public Records," Archaeological Society Transactions 13 (1983): 1-8.

aggressive and passionate man animated by the best motives. He was one of the Commission's severest critics, objecting particularly to its failure to abolish high search fees in individual record repositories. Nicolas blamed the excesses and inadequacies of the Commission on the fact that it consisted of too many high-ranking persons who did not have sufficient time or concern to devote to it.²² Jobbery, it appears, was the only way to gain employment in government at the time and the Commissioners seemed quite happy to spend the bulk of their annual £10,000 on employing friends. Unfortunately few of the Commissioners were really interested in the actual records.²³

In 1830 Nicolas fired the first salvo in a pamphlet war with Observations on the State of Historical Literature addressed to Lord Melbourne examining, among other things, the Commission's excesses. He pointed out that the Commission had devoted considerable resources to the publication of the Parliamentary Writs, whose value he questioned. Palgrave viewed Nicolas' pamphlet as an assault on his

²²DNB, s.v. "Nicolas, Sir Nicholas Harris,"; Cantwell, "First Deputy Keeper," 22-23. See Appendix A for a list of the sixth Commission.

²³Bonython, King Cole, p. 15.

professional integrity and he responded with Remarks Submitted to Viscount Melbourne. Nicolas was acquainted with Charles Purton Cooper, who had recently been appointed secretary of the sixth and last Record Commission, and Nicolas approached him intending to convince him to remove Palgrave as a sub-commissioner. Cooper was sympathetic to the idea but such harsh treatment of a talented individual was not to be undertaken thoughtlessly. Cooper and Nicolas assumed that the energy and ambitions of Hardy and Cole would unseat Palgrave. Bad feeling already existed between Hardy and Palgrave, so when Palgrave learned that Cooper had appointed Hardy to edit the Close Rolls, which would probably cut across his Parliamentary Writs, and that Cooper had empowered Hardy to offer employment to Cole at a higher rate of pay, Palgrave was outraged. The end came in 1832 in a physical confrontation between Palgrave and Hardy in the Tower, witnessed by Cole, in which Palgrave was said to have received at least one black eye if not two.²⁴

Shortly after, Cole left Palgrave's employment only to turn up at the Augmentation Office through Cooper's benevolence. Meanwhile, Palgrave's bitterness was only mildly eased in 1833 by his appointment as a

²⁴Cantwell, "First Deputy Keeper," 24.

Municipal Corporations Commissioner and as keeper at the Record Office of the Exchequer at Chapter House.

Palgrave had been fortunate as a sub-commissioner to draw £1,000 of the Commission's annual £10,000; as a keeper, he drew £400 from the Treasury and as an editor an additional £600 from the Record Commission thereby returning his total income to his previous £1,000. Thus it appears that while Hardy, Nicolas, and perhaps Cole were able to inflict a great deal of mental anguish on Palgrave through the loss of his sub-commissioner position and the Parliamentary Writs, they were unable to hurt him financially or to rid themselves of him. In fact, Palgrave later proved to be very adept at gaining highly placed support when he needed it.²⁵

Requested in 1830 by Edward Protheroe, MP for Evesham, to comment on the records and the actions of the Commission, Hunter responded with a thorough and detailed report. Later that year Protheroe lost his seat in Parliament and he turned over all his papers concerning the fifth Record Commission to Nicolas. In November Nicolas wrote to Hunter to enlist his support in his campaign against the fifth Commission. Hunter refused and in December Nicolas sent an apology to

²⁵DNB, s.v. "Palgrave,"; Cantwell, "First Deputy Keeper," 23-24; Sir David Evans, "Sir Francis Palgrave, 1788-1861," Archives 5 (1961): 75-77.

Hunter for alluding to his criticisms in Nicolas' publication. When the sixth Commission was appointed in 1831 Protheroe was made a Commissioner believing that the Commission could benefit greatly from Hunter's knowledge. The prospect of working with the Record Commission appealed to Hunter because he continued to disassociate himself from Nicolas and his attacks. Hunter waited patiently and on 24 June 1833 the Commission awarded him the position of sub-commissioner on the recommendation of Bellenden Ker, a Commissioner. This new position carried with it an income of £300, dependent upon his editing two octavo volumes or their equivalent; however he always exceeded the requirement and he earned £450 a year for the period of 1833-36.²⁶

Cooper was extremely inept when it came to the care and management of the records, and on more than one occasion he was heard to remark that he knew nothing about the public records. Indeed his activities bore out how true this statement was. Cooper seems to have had few loyalties, and he encouraged Cole to call himself a sub-commissioner, but when Cole tried to collect the salary of a sub-commissioner he was curtly reminded that he was in fact only a clerk. The relationship between Cole and Cooper subsequently

²⁶Crook, "The Reverend," 7-8.

deteriorated and a quarrel ensued. In 1835 Cole was dismissed from service at the Augmentation Office.²⁷

At this point real agitation for record reform erupted, as the political atmosphere inside and outside the repositories attracted the attention of Parliament. Cole's dismissal from service had freed him from any obligation he may have felt to the Commission or record repositories; as a consequence he was free to lead the record reform movement. Cole, in this effort, was aided by Nicolas and Hardy, both of whom had quarreled with Cooper, and by Charles Buller, MP for Liskeard. Through the support of Cole and his radical and liberal friends, Buller was able to convince the Government to appoint the 1836 Select Committee on Public Records to inquire into the Record Commission and the state of the records. Buller was appointed chairman and the Committee issued its findings and recommendations. The report, seven hundred pages in length, prodded the House of Commons to act and eventuated in the Act of 1838.²⁸

In 1837 Langdale, at the request of Lord Russell,

²⁷Bonython, King Cole, p. 3.

²⁸Cantwell, "First Deputy Keeper," 24; DNB, s.v. "Buller, Charles." Charles Buller (1806-1848) was a liberal politician. He was born in Calcutta and later was tutored by Thomas Carlyle. His speech on the need for record reform was described as "a luminous and brilliant effort." He was the chief Poor Law Commissioner and his life's devotion was "doing good."

assumed temporary custody of the public records; however, he soon realized that little or nothing was being done provide a permanent solution and he gave notice on 17 February 1838 of his intention to resign. Russell misinterpreted the meaning of Langdale's notice and took it to mean that he wanted help. Therefore Russell offered Langdale the services of a clerk from the State Paper Office. Langdale replied that nothing short of a permanent record plan would satisfy him and that if a plan was under consideration, then the clerk from the State Paper Office would indeed serve his needs after 31 March 1838 the end of the fiscal year. He also recommended that Cooper be offered the opportunity to resign voluntarily; this too was mis- understood and Cooper was curtly informed that his services would no longer be required after 31 March.²⁹

While Langdale endeavored to persuade the Government to set up some form of permanent administration, Buller seized the initiative and in 1837 introduced a bill drafted by Cole calling for improved measures in the custody, preservation, and use of the public records. The bill's three main points were a central repository under the direction of a keeper-general, provisions for the destruction of

²⁹Hardy, Memoirs of Lord Langdale, pp. 115-16.

worthless documents, and the abolition of search fees. Unfortunately, Buller's bill died in committee because the government was expected to introduce its own bill.

Palgrave now showed his acute sense of timing; realizing the likelihood of a record bill's passage he determined to participate in the new organization. Until July 1838 he had challenged or countered all proposals that he did not approve of. Immediately after Buller's bill failed, Palgrave obtained Langdale's permission to submit another plan. In addition, he attempted to pave the way for himself. He flattered Langdale by telling him that only he could put an end to the agitation, bickering, and jealousies within the Record Office. Palgrave's bill was remarkably farsighted and broad in its scope. It dealt initially with the major record repositories and the Chancery. It provided for dwellings for resident officers of the new repository, the destruction of useless documents, and the availability of ancillary services (repair, binding, etc.). Unfortunately, Palgrave's bill was lost in the commotion of William IV's death in June 1837.³⁰

Nonetheless, Langdale continued to push for a permanent plan and early in 1838 J. Drinkwater Bethune, Parliamentary Counsel for the Home Office, submitted a

³⁰Cantwell, "Public Record Office Act," 279.

draft to Langdale of yet another bill which the Prime Minister proposed to introduce as a Government bill. Langdale responded to the Treasury with his changes; he requested that the bill separate the publication function from the mission of maintaining and preserving the records. To accomplish this he urged placing the custody of the records under one authority and making the Stationery Office responsible for publication. He further added that if some plan was not forthcoming he would be obliged to resign at the end of the current quarter. Since Langdale had done much to soothe savage tempers and injured egos in the Record Office, the Cabinet was anxious not to lose him.³¹ At the end of May the Prime Minister agreed to Langdale's requests.

After some revisions Bethune's bill was at last introduced into the Commons on 10 July 1838. Throughout the legislative stages of the bill, Langdale was in constant touch with Palgrave, Hardy, Cole, and Hunter regarding various aspects of the bill and the new proposed organization. Langdale must have been truly farsighted and diplomatic to be able to bring Hardy and Cole back into the circle and to work with Palgrave and

³¹Hardy, Memoirs of Lord Langdale, p. 116-19; Cantwell, "Public Record Office Act," 279-80; Cantwell, "First Deputy Keeper," 28. Cole was reinstated by Lord Langdale in 1837. He was placed in superintendence of the records at the Exchequer of Pleas.

Hunter, their chief opponents. Incredibly all four of these men eventually emerged as senior officers in the Public Record Office and co-existed as colleagues with various degrees of warmth and frigidity after the passage of the Bill.

The Record Act

Parliament finally accepted the Bill on 10 August 1838 and it became law on 14 August 1838. The Act created a central organization and placed the records in the hands of a Deputy Keeper under the overall custody of the Master of the Rolls. The day to day administration of the records was to be directed by a Deputy Keeper. The Act could be extended as needed by an Order in Council. Thus, the passage of the Bill provided the first step toward record reform and archival organization, but the greatest step remained--to convince the Government, and in particular the Treasury, to expend funds for the construction of a new fireproof central repository.³²

³²Cantwell, "Public Record Office Act," 280-81; Cantwell, "First Deputy Keeper," 28-29.

Chapter Two

Passage of the Public Record Office Act failed at first to solve all the problems of keeping records. It did provide the authority, power, and the impulse to organize and build the Public Record Office. It did not provide instructions on how to accomplish the task. A central repository, capable of holding the nation's records, would permit the newly created Public Record Office to develop one system of organization for all of the records and thereby serve the public more efficiently.

Despite two select committees and six Record Commission, many individuals in and out of government continued to question the value of preserving the nation's records. The neglect and lack of organization, which was a question of ignorance before the Act, now became a question of value--of money.

It was a turn of good fortune for the record reform movement that Langdale was Master of the Rolls when custody of the nation's records was placed in that office. Langdale proved to be a tireless champion in seeing that the provisions of the Record Act were carried into practice. Although the construction of a

central fireproof repository was the ultimate aim, Langdale first had to establish the officers and staff of the new Public Record Office.

On 17 August 1838 only three days after the royal assent to the Act, Langdale wrote to the Treasury inquiring as to the rate of pay for the new Deputy Keeper. He did not feel justified in offering the position without conveying the amount of compensation. He also suggested the suitability of the Rolls House as the main repository and office temporarily until the Treasury agreed to build the new fireproof repository.

Palgrave desired to be included in the new organization. Upon learning of the hierarchy established for staffing the Public Record Office, he immediately applied for the position of Deputy Keeper, which he thought the only position suitable for a man of his standing and expertise. Although the word "deputy" disturbed him and he rather preferred the title "Keeper", what Palgrave most feared and sought to avoid was employment at the same level as Hardy and Cole, a situation he considered to be an "insufferable degradation."¹

¹Thomas Duffus Hardy, Memoirs of the Right Honorable Lord Langdale, 2 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1852), 2: 120-23; John Cantwell, "The Making of the First Deputy Keeper of the Records," Archives 17 (April 1985): 29-30.

Though not the only man interested in the Deputy Keepership, Palgrave was without a doubt the strongest candidate. Other candidates included Palgrave's antagonist, Hardy, and Langdale received requests from MPs, members of the House of Lords, and nearly everyone else who had need to repay patronage. Oddly enough, one expected candidate was absent from application--Nicolas.

Palgrave was first and foremost an opportunist, and his steady flow of correspondence with Langdale during the past two years paid off on 23 October 1838 when the Treasury informed Langdale that it was meeting Palgrave's conditions. The salary was set at £600 a year for the first five years, £700 for the second five years, and £800 a year for service over ten years. At last Langdale could fill the position, and on 30 October 1838 he wrote to Palgrave explaining the pay scale and expressing his confidence in Palgrave's ability to fulfill the duties of the position. The salary immediately became a source of conflict.² Several letters were exchanged between Palgrave, Langdale, Russell of the Home Department, and the Treasury. This correspondence may have been the origin of Palgrave's

²It should be remembered that Palgrave had a combined income of £1,000 from the Commission and the Chapter House.

reputation as a man consumed by greed. At one point Langdale wrote Palgrave that if the amount of remuneration would interfere with the cheerful performance of his duties, he should decline the position. Apparently the Treasury and Home Department agreed to count Palgrave's service at Chapter House. Consequently, after resigning his bank directorship as required by his new office, Palgrave began his duties as Deputy Keeper at £700 a year.

In keeping with the scheme to retain as many qualified keepers and clerks as he could, Langdale offered Hardy, Cole, and Hunter assistant keeperships in the new organization. Langdale now had his reliable and skilled nucleus to tackle the task of organizing and maintaining the records, but most importantly to work toward the goal of a new fireproof central record repository.³

Remedies and Repository Plans

On 7 January 1839 Langdale wrote a detailed thirty-eight-point letter to Russell in which he addressed various matters concerning the Public Record Office. Above all he stressed the necessity of

³Hardy, Memoirs of Lord Langdale, pp. 123-26, 154; Cantwell, "First Deputy Keeper," 31-34; John Cantwell, "The 1838 Public Record Office Act and its Aftermath: A New Perspective," Journal of the Society of Archivists 7 (April 1984): 282.

constructing a repository pursuant to section seven of the Record Act.⁴

The British lagged behind the continent in their attitude toward record preservation, but in the mid-nineteenth century they were beginning to catch up. Unlike France and other European countries Britain had not had her records and muniments endangered by war and plunder. As a result few Britons were conscious of the true value of their nation's records--it seemed to be a classic example of not appreciating what they had until the record committee's inquiries demonstrated that Britain was threatened with their loss--and therefore did little to advance archival practices. In France, however, a well-defined and organized national archive service had emerged as early as 1794. In 1821 Louis XVIII by founding the École des Chartes expanded this initial effort. Britain may have been slow in this area but they did make some progress. In the 1830s voluntary societies were beginning to form to arouse public interest in records and their preservation. The Surtees Society, founded in 1834, and the Chetham Society in 1843, both worked to raise the public's consciousness to

⁴Hardy, Memoirs of Lord Langdale, p. 128.

maintain and preserve records.⁵

In spite of these societies' endeavors and Langdale's initiative, Parliament was in no mood to vote more public monies for a record repository. In fact, Langdale remarked to Palgrave once that the Treasury heard the word "record" with great aversion. The Treasury was already heavily burdened with expenditures for the new Houses of Parliament and it was not inclined to vote funds for records it considered of questionable value; and so the Public Record Office was forced to continue to make do with mediocre and occasionally questionable remedies.⁶

One such remedy was offered by Charles Barry, the architect of the new Palace of Westminster. Parliament had been criticized for housing itself in a building that had produced a striking visual impact, but which provided considerable unused space, so the Treasury decided in 1839 that the Victoria Tower would be suitable for records, thereby giving practical function to a decorative feature. Barry, upon inspecting the Tower, found it incapable of holding all the records and suggested that only first class records be stored in the

⁵Maurice F. Bond, "Record Offices To-Day: Facts for Historians." Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research 30 (May 1957): 2-3.

⁶Cantwell, "The First Deputy Keeper," 34.

Tower, and that those of lesser significance be housed in the basement beside the Thames.⁷

Langdale and Palgrave both were horrified and both condemned the use of the Victoria Tower and basement to accommodate records. But in 1842 the Treasury again made it clear that it had neither money nor the will to erect a general repository. But Langdale and Palgrave refused to give up a separate record repository, and in 1846 Langdale commented, "I very much regret that so much expense has been and may be incurred in providing imperfect remedies and makeshifts, whilst the great and only effectual security is delayed."⁸

Langdale was indeed correct with regard to remedies and expenses. Because of the Treasury's delay, Langdale was forced to request that the Rolls House be fitted up for records. This entailed repairing the house as well as providing fittings.⁹ On 4 February 1839 the Treasury notified the Commissioner of Woods and Forests that it had approved an estimate for the work at

⁷Hardy, Memoirs of Lord Langdale, pp. 160-71; Roger Ellis, "The Building of Public Record Office", in Essays in Memory of Sir Hillary Jenkinson, ed. Albert E. J. Hollander (Chichester, Sussex: Moore and Tillyer, 1962), p. 10.

⁸Hardy, Memoirs of Lord Langdale, p. 172.

⁹Fittings refer to shelves, racks, storage presses, etc.

the Roll House for £271 10s and that work should commence. In May 1840 Palgrave requested Alexander Milne of the Office of Woods to survey the Pell and Ancient records in the Rolls House to ascertain their bulk and to install new locks in the building. On 6 November 1840 the Treasury again accepted an estimate for another £200 for the fitting up of rooms over the Rolls Court to house an additional 1072 supplemental feet of open racks for rolls.¹⁰

Langdale's experience with Carlton Ride illustrates another dimension of the Treasury's policy of parsimony. In 1835 the Record Commission transferred records previously stored at Charing Cross Mews to Carlton Ride, a large building which had served as a riding school for royal children. The purpose was to consolidate and provide greater convenience, but the result was to make a bad situation worse, as records consolidated in insecure buildings were at greater risk of fire damage. Langdale represented this risk to the Government as an argument in favor of a central repository,¹¹ but the Treasury's stopgap response was to approve funds to hire fire brigades at some of the

¹⁰Great Britain, Public Record Office, Work 12 67/1. Hereafter referred to by the class of document and its number only, i.e. PRO 1/17 or Work 12 64/4.

¹¹Hardy, Memoirs of Lord Langdale, pp. 171-73.

record offices. While the cost of officers and equipment was not great--the average weekly expense per brigade was only £3 or £4--it had to be multiplied by the number of separate offices, and the separate facilities failed to protect records as well as Langdale's modern central fireproof repository would have done.¹²

Out of zeal and overprotectiveness, Palgrave sometimes made suggestions which placed at risk the records he seemed so anxious to protect. On 26 February 1843 for instance, he wrote to Milne requesting that a "horde of wood of such height as to conceal the building from persons standing at the end of the Carlton Terrace" be stacked at Carlton Ride; ". . . at present I am afraid that the exposure might almost tempt depredation." Milne responded on 2 March that the ground floor windows were protected by iron guards, that firemen acted as guards at night, and therefore that Palgrave's suggestion was unnecessary. It is amazing that Palgrave would even consider piling wood near a building that was already at risk from fire.¹³ But perhaps he had recognized a real danger, because on 10 April 1848, Hunter, with several clerks sworn in as

¹²Work 12 68/8.

¹³Ibid.

constables, spent an apprehensive day guarding Carlton Ride from possible attack by marching Chartists.¹⁴

The Record Act of 1838 created some problems of its own. Various branches of government began to solve their record storage problems by dumping their records on the Public Record Office. Furthermore, the Act required the removal of records from existing hazardous storage, which compounded the already intolerable situation. Carlton Ride was designated as one of the main repositories after it was repaired and fitted up properly. Since Carlton Ride was at risk from fire, Langdale, the Treasury, and the Home Department decided that the mews below should be vacated and turned into apartments for assistant keepers and repositories for some records; in this way someone would always be on the premises. Again more money was being spent on imperfect remedies.

In addition, delays plagued the entire project. In February 1843 Palgrave wrote to Milne and told him to postpone transferring some records to Carlton Ride because the Master of the Horse and his department were slow to give up of their space there. In March Palgrave was still complaining to Milne about delays. In May

¹⁴David Crook, "The Reverend Joseph Hunter and the Public Records," Archaeological Society Transactions 13 (1983): 11.

1843 the mews and apartments were finally vacated, but they were very damp. Palgrave again wrote to Milne on 25 May and explained that he thought the dampness was due to earth heaped against the walls and requested its removal in order to improve the atmosphere and the inmates' health. He also pointed out that if the dampness was not stopped, the apartment for Hunter could not be papered properly.¹⁵ In November 1843 in spite of all the repair and money spent on Carlton Ride, its suitability was still in question. Hunter and Cole sent a memo to Palgrave on the 30th informing him that there had been a fire in the chimney in the general wash house of the mews at Carlton Ride, and so the threat of fire still persisted.¹⁶

Although there were many problems at Carlton Ride, they were neither unique nor restricted only to it. Similar problems and expenses occurred at most of the repositories, and they continued until the central fireproof repository was built.

In 1845 Barry was still anxious to find new functions for the unused space in the new Houses of Parliament. He recognized that the Victoria Tower could not hold all of the records and that Langdale and

¹⁵Work 12 68/1.

¹⁶Work 12 68/8.

Palgrave would never approve the use of the damp Thames-side basements; therefore, he proposed using the roof of the Houses of Parliament. He thought that the area among the eaves could be fitted up and provide the space needed for the records. Barry's idea, incredible in the light of all that had passed, illustrates clearly the view that space not useful for anything else was good enough for the records. Not surprisingly, Langdale found the entire proposal unacceptable and he wrote to the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel, to tell him so and to request that the Treasury again reconsider the need for a central fireproof repository.¹⁷

Palgrave, in issuing his sixth report as Deputy Keeper in 1845, again drew attention to the continuing and increasing hazards of fire in the existing record offices. The Treasury, as a result of the report, ordered the Office of Woods to take steps to protect the Rolls House from fire. James Braidwood, superintendent of the London Fire Brigade, conducted several inspections and drew up specifications for a fireproof repository. He advocated the use of iron and brick but pointed out that upon reaching extreme high temperatures iron would melt. Therefore, he recommended using small rooms, 27 by 17 by 15 feet which would reduce the length

¹⁷Hardy, Memoirs of Lord Langdale, pp. 173-81.

of the girder spans as well as reduce the chance that internal temperatures would reach the melting point of iron.¹⁸

In 1847 the Metropolitan Improvement Commissioners issued their sixth report devoted to plans for the record repository on the Rolls Estate which incorporated Braidwood's recommendations.¹⁹ The new plan by the government surveyor, James Pennethorne, called for a new street from Cheapside to Endell Street, with the new Record Office lying on the south side of Carey Street. The Times reported that the repository was to be in

. . . the shape of a reversed 'L', the horizontal arm being next to Carey Street. The building is to be Elizabethan (we hear it with misgivings) built of brick with a long series of bay windows, and to cost £175,000 exclusive of fixtures and fittings which would be £31,500 more.²⁰
(Plates 1,2)

This plan received the sanction of the Record Office, the Board of Woods and Forests, the City, and the

¹⁸Work 12 68/8; Great Britain, Parliament, Sessional Papers (Commons), 1845 vol. 48, "The Sixth Annual Deputy Keeper's Report." Hereafter referred to by name of report, in BSP, and the appropriate volume number.

¹⁹"The Sixth Report of the Metropolitan Improvement Commission," in BSP 1847, vol. 16. More information concerning J. P. Pennethorne is given in Chapter 3.

²⁰"The Proposed New Record Office," The Times (London), 18, 30 October 1847.

Metropolitan Commissioners, but The Times, in November, ran an anonymous letter questioning the "nature and value of documents for which so great an outlay is demanded."²¹

In the next three years much correspondence relating to the necessity, cost, and location of a general repository passed between the Public Record Office and various governmental departments and commissions. Often the logic used to support a suggestion was faulty. The Westminster Improvement Commission provides a good example. The Commission had agreed to a separate structure for the repository but felt that it should be built "in Westminster where it was anxious to raise the tone of the neighborhood: which would be achieved by a fine Gothic frontage to their newly created Victoria Street." This idea was quickly dismissed when Pennethorne pointed out that the Rolls Estate which stood high and on gravel soil was more healthy and desirable than damp and ill-drained Westminster.²²

Palgrave, anxious to erect the repository, gave his approval to the Metropolitan Improvement

²¹"To the Editor of the Times," The Times (London), 3 November 1847.

²²Ellis, "Building the Public Record Office," 13-14.

Commission's plans in 1847 but later wrote to Langdale expressing his reservations about Pennethorne. Palgrave found no fault with Pennethorne's qualifications or ability. It was about Pennethorne's larger vision that Palgrave was concerned: he feared that Pennethorne saw the repository "only as a subordinate element in an extensive plan of a great Metropolitan Improvement. . . . The General Repository is planned by Mr. Pennethorne for the purpose of forming streets." Palgrave's letter continued:

The planner, architect, or designer of the new General Repository must have no ulterior objects. He must apply his mind singly and simply to the one object of erecting the Repository at the smallest possible expense on the before mentioned site, accommodating himself to all circumstances, and employing as far as is practicable any existing buildings, if they can be rendered useful, although by so doing he may contract the opportunity of displaying his skill. The conception of the New Building must be completely disengaged from any extraneous considerations what-ever; the architect must take no thought concerning Metropolitan Improvements, or display of architectural grandeur, and he must turn all his intelligence to the purpose of raising the required building upon the most reasonable terms.²³

By basing his views on function and economy Palgrave was suggesting that the duty of an architect should not be determined by style or fashion, a concept

²³Ibid., 14.

that was far ahead of his time. He advocated the construction of a building that should contain "nothing for display, nothing for the attraction of the public but what is now or may hereafter be absolutely needful for the transaction of business."²⁴ This was a direct blow to Pennethorne's enthusiasm for town-planning. Pennethorne was a "relic of architecture's greater days" and believed "that a building should be designed with some consideration for its surroundings."²⁵ Palgrave was acting with common sense; the building's primary purpose must be the preservation of the records. And if the plan was too grandiose Parliament might never vote the necessary funds for construction, and the records would continue in a dangerous state. The "building must be simply a fireproof Repository . . . its external architecture was its least important feature."²⁶ While Palgrave was correct in recognizing Parliament's reluctance to fund a grandiose building scheme for the records, it was not because Parliament did not appreciate architectural beauty. Parliament's new Palace of Westminster illustrated its appreciation of

²⁴Palgrave, quoted *ibid.*

²⁵*Ibid.*, 12.

²⁶Palgrave, quoted *ibid.*, 15.

London as the capital of a great maritime and industrial nation. Parliament was concerned with the architectural beauty of London, it is just that Parliament hoped to achieve esthetic qualities inexpensively.²⁷

Thus it was with pleasure that Palgrave, in his annual Deputy Keeper's Report in 1850, announced that Langdale had learned that the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury proposed to commence the building of the Repository, the site being the Rolls Estate. By order of the Board of Works, Pennethorne had modified his 1847 plans to a more suitable design in which the primary focus was a structure "lightsome and fireproof, at the smallest expense consistent with strength and security."²⁸ In addition, the new plans reflected the lateral and longitudinal extension of the building expected to be needed in the future; the Rolls Estate was to contain five sections, four to be erected as needed.²⁹

²⁷Ibid., 12-15.

²⁸"The Eleventh Annual Deputy Keeper's Report," 3 April 1850, in BSP 1850, vol. 20.

²⁹"Public Record Office," in BSP 1859, vol.34: Estimates and Civil Services for year ending 31 March 1851.

Chapter Three

James Pennethorne (1801-1871), the architect of the Public Record Office, was born in Worcester, the son of Thomas Pennethorne the cousin of Mary Ann Nash the second wife of John Nash.¹ In 1820 he entered John Nash's² office in London where two years later Nash

¹Pennethorne Hughes, "The Last State Architect," Country Life 3 (February 1952): 500. Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects 1982 ed, s.v. "Pennethorne, Sir James." Pennethorne was rumored to be a Royal Bastard of the Prince Regent and Nash's wife Mary Ann. Contemporaries held that it was notorious that Nash was incapable of having children and when five children were born they were raised by Thomas Pennethorne. Family legend maintains that Thomas Pennethorne's alleged children were kept separate from genuine Pennethorne children and that they had special independent financial support.

²Doreen Yarwood, The Architecture of Britain (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1976), pp. 200-202. John Nash (1752-1835), architect of the Haymarket Theatre in London, was a contemporary of Sir John Soane (known for his exterior work on the Bank of England) but was a direct contrast to him. Nash worked in all styles of the Picturesque and Romantic: Gothic, Italian Renaissance, Palladian, Greek, rustic cottage country houses, castellated mansions, and picturesque villas. He was recognized more for his gift in town planning than for his designs or architectural experiments.

placed him under the guidance of A. W. N. Pugin³ to be trained in Gothic architecture. Pennethorne, to round out his architectural training, traveled to the continent on a Grand Tour. While in Rome, he enhanced his budding career by being elected an honorary member of the Academy of St. Luke. Following his return from the continent he advanced rapidly in Nash's office. By 1826 he held a leading position in the office and was Nash's principal assistant. In this capacity, under Nash's direction, he laid out St. James' Park, the West Strand, and the King William street improvements.⁴

In 1832 the Crown Authorities commissioned Pennethorne to devote his skill and experience in town planning, gained under Nash's tutelage, to the improvements of the Metropolis. He was primarily employed by the Commissioners of Woods in carrying out these improvements. The paring down of his architectural plans for the Public Record Office by

³Roger Dixon and Stefan Muthesius, Victorian Architecture (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 264. Yarwood, Architecture, pp. 221-24. Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin (1812-1852), was an important protagonist of the Gothic Revival and the Ecclesiological Movement. He wrote The True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture and is best remembered for his designs of and work on the interiors of the Palace of Westminster.

⁴Dictionary of National Biography, s.v. "Pennethorne, Sir James,"; Beresford E. Chancellor, "A Neglected Town- Planner," The Builder 148 (June 1935): 1055; Hughes, "State Architect," 500.

cost-conscious bureaucrats was not his first experience with this phenomenon. In 1838, acting as the executive officer of the Royal Commission for the Improvements of the Metropolis, he had submitted plans for Metropolitan Improvements. A Select Committee of the House of Commons approved the plans only after they had been trimmed down to "satisfy the requirements of economy."⁵

In 1840 Pennethorne and Thomas Chawner were appointed joint-surveyors in the Land Revenue department. Pennethorne was acquainted with Chawner from working with him on the 1838 Metropolitan Improvements. Throughout the 1840s the volume of Pennethorne's work grew, especially after 1843 when he became the sole surveyor and architect to the Office of Woods as a result of Chawner's retirement. He traveled to Ireland that same year as a Royal Commissioner to enquire into the construction of Workhouses. By 1845 public demands on his time had increased so much that he

⁵Great Britain, Public Record Office, PRO 8/17, hereafter referred to by the class of document and its number only, i.e. PRO 1/17 or Work 12 64/4; Hughes, "State Architect," 500. This particular improvement created the new streets of New Oxford Street, Endell Street, New Coventry Street, and Commercial Street, Spitalfields.

was compelled to give up his private practice.⁶ The fact that he was willing to give up his prosperous practice to devote his energies to the planned development and improvement of London entitles him to be placed among the other high-minded Victorians concerned with reform, growth, and progress. Many of his plans and schemes were thwarted or modified throughout his career either by confusion which resulted when several governmental departments were involved in a project or by the continual cry for economy.⁷

Early in 1850 Pennethorne submitted the estimates, plans, and drawings for the construction of the Public Record Office based on his revised 1847 plans (Plate 3). The new plans required a budget of £45,320: £30,000 for the building, £11,200 for the fittings and fixtures, and £4,120 for a 10 percent contingency fund. He recommended that the money be voted in the amounts of £30,000 for the year of 1850-51 and £15,320 for the year of 1851-52. He also recommended that completion dates for certain aspects of the construction be set and that payment to the firms be contingent on those dates with a

⁶Ibid; DNB, s.v. "Pennethorne,"; "Sir James Penethorne," The Builder 29 (September 1871): 717. It is not clear if Pennethorne was forced by law to give up his practice as Hughes states or if he did so of his own volition as a result of the Treasury's desire to preclude any possible conflict of interest.

⁷PRO 8/17; Hughes, "State Architect," 500.

possible penalty for noncompliance. He estimated construction time to be two to three years.⁸

Both the design and construction of the building had a single functional objective--a fireproof repository. Palgrave, Langdale, and James Braidwood, Superintendent of the London Fire Engine Establishment and Associate of the Institute of Civil Engineers, were all deeply involved with Pennethorne in the design and modification of the plans for the repository. The revised plans provided for the first portion to contain 52 depositories, officers' rooms, and 18 rooms in the basement, 9 of which could be fitted up with presses to contain records if the need arose. The depositories had the dimensions of 17 by 25 by 15 1/2 feet high. These dimensions were not arbitrarily chosen but reflected structural and fireproofing requirements. Gas lighting was considered to be too great a fire risk and therefore the repository was to be daylit by very large windows. Pennethorne considered 17 feet the safest distance between supporting walls, and the depth of 25 feet was the furthest distance that light would penetrate the presses. The ceilings of 15 1/2 feet could be divided

⁸Works 12 64/14; Great Britain, Parliament, Sessional Papers (Commons), 1850 vol. 34: Estimates and Civil Services for the year ending 31 March 1851, "Public Record Office." Hereafter referred to by name of report, in BSP, and the appropriate volume number.

equally into two levels by an iron gallery or iron grated floor running "in front of the presses so that every record [would] be within arms length." Each depository was to carry 64 tons of weight in addition to its own weight of 26 tons. Since the building was to have three floors, the total weight of all three floors would cast 270 tons on the bearing or party walls. This immense weight required that the depositories be small.⁹

Which style of architecture to use was perhaps the easiest decision Pennethorne had to make. When he considered the requirements of tall lofty windows, fireproofing, and the extreme weight to be borne in the depositories, the decision virtually made itself. Palgrave had desired a classical building to match the Rolls House which although rather plain would be consistent with economy, but Pennethorne explained that classical would not accommodate the number of windows required and still be strong enough. Therefore the only choice was Gothic. Gothic could adopt the numerous and deep buttresses that were required for the support of the exterior walls and it lent itself to the many party walls needed to carry the weight of the depositories. Pennethorne's arguments for Gothic were intelligent and

⁹"Public Record Office," in BSP 1859, vol. 34: Estimates and Civil Services for the year ending 31 March 1851.

architecturally sound, but even he must have admitted, if only to himself, that the arguments were convenient since his 1847 plans reflected his intention to use Gothic from the beginning.¹⁰

Construction Begins

On 28 September 1850 Pennethorne submitted to the Commissioners of Woods the specifications for sundry works related to beginning construction of the Public Record Office on the Rolls Estate. The estate, essentially enclosed, was flanked on two sides by a long row of houses on Fetter Lane and Chancery Lane (Plate 4). The sundry work included remodeling No. 120 Fetter Lane to serve as an office and pulling down No. 121 Fetter Lane and paving over it to provide a gateway into the new building. Further, excavation of part of the Rolls Garden was necessary to lay the new foundation. Two days later Pennethorne advised the Commissioners of Woods that tenders should be requested for the work and he suggested eight firms: James Bugbee, Charles Starke, John Darke, Henry Dodd, Michael and Edmond Reddin, James Sinnott, Stapleton V. Thorne, and Henry Tame.¹¹ He also

¹⁰Roger Ellis, "The Building of the Public Record Office," in Essays in Memory of Sir Hillary Jenkinson, ed. Albert E. J. Hollander (Chichester, Sussex: Moore and Tillyer, 1962), p. 16.

¹¹See Appendix D for more information on these firms.

informed the Commissioners that he estimated the cost of the work, demolition and excavation, to be approximately £1,050. The lowest bid submitted was from the Reddins who tendered their bid at £1,160, contingent on being able to move the excavated ground to the west end of St. James Park near the front of Buckingham Palace.

Pennethorne endorsed Reddins' tender and on 23 October the Commissioners informed Reddins of the acceptance of their tender.¹²

Work continued steadily through the end of the year and into the beginning of the next, but the construction and progress from early 1851 was plagued with delays, changes, and confusion. Early in 1851 Pennethorne informed the Commissioners that tenders from builders for the new repository and from iron-founders for the iron girders should be requested. Eleven builders and six iron-founders were invited to submit tenders on 21 January. On 5 March Charles Robinson was awarded the wrought iron contract on his tender of £2,150. However, later in the month Pennethorne realized that the £30,000 allotted for the building would be exceeded in the combined totals of the iron-founder's and the builder's tender. Therefore, on 25 March he recommended to the Commissioners that

¹²Work 12 64/3.

Robinson's tender be rejected and H. and M. D. Grissells' tender of £1,698 for 289 cast-iron girders be accepted. Originally out of the six iron girder tenders four were for cast-iron and two were for wrought iron. Wrought iron, although a purer material than cast iron, had limitations. It could only be rolled out in relatively short lengths because of the limitations of existing machinery which meant using plates and angle iron¹³ to enable the girders to reach the 17 foot spans in the depositories. The wrought iron material would provide greater security from fire, but because of the joining its strength was the same or less than cast-iron girders. Pennethorne pointed out that it had come to his attention that by dipping hot cast-iron girders into boiling oil and then layering them with a few good coats of paint they would suffice as well as wrought iron girders.¹⁴

The lowest tender submitted from the builders exceeded the total amount allotted for the building by £4,300. Pennethorne informed Messers. Lee and Son that while their tender was the lowest it was still too high and that he wished to go over the list of quantities and costs with them in hopes of reducing the cost. The

¹³This method was used in railway bridges.

¹⁴Work 12 64/14; Work 12 64/5.

result was a final tender of £32,722 which the Commissioners accepted on 29 March.¹⁵

March was a significant month for the Public Record Office; not only had the major tenders been accepted but Langdale retired on 28 March as a result of poor health. The "father of record reform" was never to see the completion of his endeavors; their realization was a privilege reserved for his successor and subordinates. On his last day as Master of the Rolls he visited each of the record offices where he shook hands and said goodbye to each individual. A few days after his departure to Tunbridge Wells, the Assistant Keepers met and agreed to present him with a testimonial.¹⁶ Hunter drew up the testimonial address and it was signed by all of the chief officers except one--Palgrave-- "who declined to place his signature with the rest." Three weeks later, on 18 April 1851, Langdale died at his home in Tunbridge.¹⁷

Although the position of Master of the Rolls was filled by Sir John Romilly, Langdale could not be

¹⁵Work 12 64/4.

¹⁶See Appendix E for the testimonial address to Lord Langdale. No explanations have been offered for Palgrave's refusal, but it probably relates back to the hard feelings between Hardy, Cole, and Palgrave.

¹⁷Thomas Duffus Hardy, Memoirs of the Right Honorable Lord Langdale, 2 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1852), 2: 190.

replaced. Romilly (1802- 1874), a lawyer, had served as Solicitor General from 1848 until 1850 when he became Attorney General. Russell, who had appointed him as Solicitor General, had also recommended him for the appointment as Master of the Rolls. He assumed the position on 28 March and was the last Master of the Rolls to hold his seat in Parliament simultaneously. He lost his seat in 1852 and later the right was revoked.¹⁸

On 3 April 1851 Lee and Son wrote to T. W. Philipps, Secretary and Clerk to the Board of Works and Woods,¹⁹ requesting an extension of time to cover in the building. The original period allotted was sixteen months and they were asking an additional four months. When Lee visited him, Pennethorne made it clear that he was not in favor of changing the timetable. The extension would move the exterior completion date from 31 August 1852 to 31 December 1852. Naturally this would move the other completion dates into the winter

¹⁸Burke's Peerage and Baronetage, 150th ed. (London: Burke's Peerage Limited, 1976), pp. 2286-87; DNB, s.v. "Romilly, Sir John."

¹⁹The Office of Woods and Forests had been combined with the Office of Works after the reform of 1832. The combination in effect made the Office of Works a sub-department of the Office of Woods and Forest. Both departments were under the Board of Woods and Works which was headed by the Commissioners. The Office of Woods and Forest was usually referred to as the Office of Woods. An act passed in October 1851 separated the two offices again and the Office of Works became a ministry.

season. Lee's arguments were persuasive however. On 11 April Pennethorne notified the Commissioners that he had agreed to the delay because he found that instead of 50,000 cubic feet of stone to be worked the figure was greater, perhaps as much as 60,000 cubic feet.

Pennethorne pointed out to the Commissioners that one of his major concerns over the delay had been what would happen to the records projected to be moved from Carlton Ride into the new building. The records had to be removed from Carlton so that the work on Carlton House Terrace could be completed. However, since Pennethorne was also the architect of Carlton House, he recommended that work be postponed so that the extension could be granted to Lee and Son. On the following day the Commissioners informed Lee and Son that the extension for the completion date had been granted but that the covering in date must remain the same.²⁰

On 28 April the Office of Woods requested Palgrave to inform Pennethorne that he was officially authorized to start the construction of the building. On 24 May 1851, as Langdale was being buried at Temple Church, the first stone was laid. Thus began a building project that was not to end until the turn of the century, a fitting monument to mark the end of an invaluable

²⁰Work 12 64/4.

individual without whom the building project begun that day would not have been possible.²¹

In his final detailed plans Pennethorne added a feature which was not included in the original estimate--a private temporary passageway from the Rolls House to the main building for the Master of the Rolls (Plate 5). All additional expenses were supposed to be paid for from the contingency fund. However, as building went forward demands on the fund constantly increased. Not only was the fund expected to cover these extras, but the salary of William Thomas, Clerk of the Works engaged to superintend the work, was also drawn from it. Thomas' salary was not great but he averaged about £38-40 quarterly which amounted, from early 1850 through the first half of 1857, to nearly £900 of the £4,120 contingency.²²

In 1852 the exterior work progressed steadily until the end of the summer. The building was approaching the point at which it was time to accept tenders for stone carving. On 15 June 1852 John Thomas²³ submitted a tender of £250 10s for carving the

²¹Ibid; Ellis, "Building the Public Record Office," 9; DNB, s.v. "Langdale, Lord Henry."

²²Work 12 64/14; Work 12 64/13.

²³Work 12 64/7. John Thomas of 9 Old Church St., Paddington, and 8 New Palace, Westminster.

entrance doorway and the parapet. On 5 August Pennethorne recommended to T. W. Philipps, Chief Commissioner of the Office of Works, that the Commissioners accept Thomas' tender. In December Pennethorne revised Thomas' tender to £438.10.0 and Philipps accepted it. In the meantime the stonework came to a halt. The entire building was being constructed of brick and faced with Kentish ragstone which was a cheap and convenient stone used extensively by Gothic revivalists. Unfortunately it proved not to hold up well in the polluted London air. The ragstone was being used to add texture and a feeling of Gothicism to a building which, when compared to the florid exterior of the new Houses of Parliament, would have looked startlingly bare. Pennethorne intended the contrast of ragstone with Church Anstone sandstone, used for the carvings and ashlar work, to create a finished feeling for the building.²⁴ Lee told Pennethorne that they were having trouble getting the stone from the Anston Stone Quarries and requested a delay. The building foreman, H. Clay, reported that he had visited the Anston Stone Quarries and that only a few stones were on the ship at the dock and that most of the stones were either at the quarry or still uncut. Five days later Pennethorne

²⁴Ellis, "Building the Public Record Office," 17.

wrote to Lee and Son brusquely reminding them that they were past due for covering over the roof (August 31). He added that while he would forward their request to the Board of Works, without his endorsement, he saw no reason why the Board should grant their request. He also reminded Lee that they were subject to a penalty if they were late on the completion of the exterior regardless of the availability of the stone. From September through December the fight raged, Lee requesting extensions and payments, and Pennethorne charging penalties should be applied for missed deadlines. It is easy to understand Pennethorne's frustration: every delay postponed the progress of other aspects of the building as well as the work at Carlton House. Lee seems to have won the battle as the accounting sheets for those years reflect no deductions from installment payments for penalties.²⁵

In November Philipps asked Pennethorne what monies he would need for the Public Record Office, the Inland Revenue department, and the Ordnance department, all under his care as state architect. Pennethorne reminded him that Parliament had already voted the money for the Public Record Office; however he did recommend that the Treasury vote an annual sum of £20,000 toward the

²⁵Work 12 64/4; Work 12 64/13. See Appendix F for a partial listing of an accounting sheet.

construction of the new eastern wing of the record repository, the cost of which he estimated at £60,000.²⁶

The shell of the building continued to progress and finally the time arrived to cover it over, which raised a problem of great complexity. Every aspect of the repository had been planned to be as fireproof as the technology of the 1850s permitted, and in general this goal was achieved except for one major area--the roof. In 1850 when Langdale, Braidwood, Palgrave, and Pennethorne had met to give final form to the plans the composition of the roof was of major concern. Iron rafters, Pennethorne pointed out, could not be used because of the distance to be spanned and because of the great weight which the walls could not carry. Therefore, much to Langdale's disappointment--he had hoped for a totally noncombustible building--wooden rafters were chosen. Pennethorne and Lord Seymour, the First Commissioner of Works, saw no other way. Thus the roof Lee and Son constructed in 1853 was laid on wooden rafters with the sloping sections covered over in galvanized iron and the flat area in the center covered in with thick slate and lead. Not constructed at this time was the tower which Pennethorne included in his original plans (1847) and which he still showed in his

²⁶Work 12 65/17.

revised drawing of 1850. He obviously realized that the tower would never be built as he had planned, because he did not include it in his final 1850 estimate.²⁷

Interior

In February 1853 Palgrave adopted a procedure, often employed by Pennethorne, of circulating questionnaires to the chief officers. Pennethorne used this technique frequently in communicating with the Master of the Rolls, Palgrave, and the Commissioners. After Palgrave had received each officer's answer he recirculated the same questions, with all of the printed answers, among the officers to enable them to comment on each other's remarks and to change their answers if they desired. This practice proved to be very helpful in deciding issues like internal arrangements, ventilation, windows, etc. While all of the questions and the officers' answers are interesting and informative, one example will serve to show how effective this procedure was.²⁸

When Pennethorne met with Palgrave and Seymour to discuss window treatments he soon realized that a

²⁷"Public Record Office," in BSP 1859, vol. 34: Estimates and Civil Services for the year ending 31 March 1851; Ellis, "Building the Public Record Office," 17.

²⁸PRO 1/17.

difference of opinion existed and that he would have to persuade them to his point of view. Seymour, with questionable taste, wanted sheets of plate glass used in the Gothic windows. Palgrave, mainly concerned with security (perhaps remembering the marching Chartists), wanted iron shutters on every window, an idea unthinkable on a Gothic building. Pennethorne deftly convinced the two that by using cast-iron window frames in very small squares and glazed with thick glass the building would be more architecturally correct as well as more secure.²⁹ The matter of window style and security having been resolved, the question became one of the use of polished or dull glass. Palgrave circulated a questionnaire asking:

Question VIII.--Do you, or do you not, approve of the employment of cast or dulled glass for the glazing of the apartments, or do you think that the employment thereof should be avoided wholly or partially in any one or more apartments, and polished glass employed in its stead? Consider this question with reference to the different classes of apartments, and the situation thereof respectively, viz., the Search and Copying Offices, the Assistant Keepers' Rooms, the Record Repository Rooms, the Workshops, and the habitable rooms, and also with reference to their situation in the basement, the ground floor, and the upper

²⁹Ellis, "Building the Public Record Office," 18; "The Twentieth Annual Deputy Keeper's Report," in BSP 1859, vol. 12.

stories?³⁰

The final result was wonderfully Gothic-looking windows with a polished octagon surrounded by thick dull glass squares in each of the four window quadrants (Plates 6, 7, 8).³¹

For the internal arrangement of the building, Pennethorne recommended that all the depositories open into each other in a long series, giving entrance through an office which would have only one key thus securing the records from the possibility of fire and theft. Pennethorne explained that in addition to security, a central corridor "would necessitate another interior wall and openings, and would increase expense without any additional advantage."³² Braidwood responded that a fire once started in one end of the building could easily sweep through to the other. Further, he reminded Pennethorne that the purpose of building in brick was that one depository could be burnt out without endangering the rest of them. Pennethorne

³⁰PRO 1/17.

³¹Ibid. See Appendix G for officers' answers and comments to Palgrave's question on window glass. Plate 8 shows how in recent years some of these windows have been replaced with larger pieces of polished glass to admit more light.

³²"Public Record Office," in BSP 1859, vol. 34: Estimates and Civil Services for year ending 31 March 1851.

was overruled by Palgrave and Braidwood. The connecting doors were bricked up and central corridors were provided. Their floors were built with sections of dull glass bricks to provide light for the corridor below.³³

The floors of the repository were constructed of cast-iron beams and girders which rendered the depositories secure from fire above and below. The space between the beams was filled with brick arches of less than five foot span, thus enabling the weight of the floors and records to be thrown upon the party walls (Plate 9). The corridors and halls were to be paved with Portland stone or brick laid with tile. All of the staircases were to be made of iron except the staircase on the main corridor at the east end which was made of stone. The interior walls were finished with colored brickwork.³⁴

With regard to internal heating, Palgrave recommended that no artificial form of heating (i.e. warm air or warm water) be employed in the repository except for open fire places in each room, each with its own independent flue. He again circulated a

³³Ellis, "Building the Public Record Office," 17.

³⁴"Public Record Office," in BSP 1859, vol. 34: Estimates and Civil Services for year ending 31 March 1851; "The Twentieth Annual Deputy Keeper's Report," in BSP 1859, vol. 12; "The Thirty-Seventh Annual Deputy Keeper's Report," in BSP 1876, vol. 39.

questionnaire among the officers requesting their opinions and comments. In the main they agreed to the proposed arrangement, but a few expressed concern that the building might be occupied before it had dried out properly. Palgrave had asserted as early as 1850 that artificial heating was "needless for the preservation of books, records and paper" and in fact was "detrimental." He pointed out that neither the Tower nor Norwich Cathedral had heating and the records had not suffered. In addition records "exposed to heat in other places had begun to show scorched leaves, dimmed gilding and cracked binding" and would "become ultimately carbonized." Finally, both he and Hardy considered artificial heat to be injurious to workers' health.³⁵

Braidwood supported Palgrave's recommendation by pointing out the impossibility of creating airtight depositories if pipes were run throughout the building. He explained that it was "next to impossible to pass a pipe, which is alternately heated and cooled, through brick or stonework airtight owing to the contraction and expansion of the iron without expansion joints;" and that expansion joints were expensive and required constant care and attention. Pennethorne, a planner at

³⁵"Public Record Office," in BSP 1859, vol. 34: Estimates and Civil Services for year ending 31 March 1851; PRO 1/17; Work 12 64/14.

heart, looked to the future and provided each room with two open fireplaces with additional sealed flues for future use.³⁶

As a result of the lighting of the central corridors and the method of heating the repository, passage along the central corridor became most unpleasant once the building was occupied. The corridors were so dark when the depository and office doors were shut that it was difficult to see one's way. In winter bitter cold drafts whistled down the corridors encouraging occupants to keep doors closed thereby compounding the drafts and darkness.

In the fall of 1853 the discussions of internal arrangements turned to the matter of the presses which would hold the records. Pennethorne, Palgrave, and Philipps all agreed that the presses should be constructed of iron. Pennethorne recommended fitting up one room with model presses and racks for examination by all concerned. Palgrave and Philipps agreed but thought that the models should be made out of wood to save money. On 28 October Pennethorne wrote to Philipps advising against the use of wooden model presses because it would be a waste of money since it would not be a true example. However, an iron model could be used

³⁶Ibid.

after the test as well as provide an accurate test. Further he estimated the cost of the iron model press to be around £300 and suggested Messers. Mare, Wood and Barrett, and Barron and Turner be asked to submit tenders. He also reminded Philipps that it was necessary for Parliament to vote in the next year £10,000 for the racks (fittings). On 19 November Philipps asked Palgrave to inform Pennethorne that authority was granted to him to request tenders for the model presses. Wood and Barrett submitted the lowest tender at £260 and it was accepted. Shortly after, Pennethorne was forced to advise Philipps that there was an increase in the amount because Palgrave wanted the model press be six tiers instead of the five as planned. This change raised the tender to £316 10s which was accepted.³⁷

At the end of 1853 Pennethorne wrote to Philipps to suggest the approximate costs of the Public Record Office for the next few years. He estimated £20,000 for the year 1853-54 because he assumed that, since the first portion was nearing completion, construction would soon begin on the east wing, although nothing officially had been said about it.

³⁷Work 12 64/8. Messers. Mare - Orchard St., Blackwell; Wood & Barrett - 241 Lottenham Court; and Barron & Turner - 38 East St. Manchester Sq.

By the beginning of 1854 two things were evident: the first phase was going to take longer than two to three years to complete, and when completed it would not be able to hold all of the records that had come under the care of the Public Record Office. In January Pennethorne submitted to Philipps five drawings, plans, and elevations of the proposed east wing according to the 1850 General Plan. He suggested using the monies in the Suitors' Fund to finance the construction. He pointed out that the fund was large--rumored to contain £1,241,188--and that it was unlikely to be claimed. Furthermore, Parliament was considering using a portion of the fund to buy a site and build the new law courts; with over a million pounds in the fund surely there was enough money for both projects. The Public Record Office, he added, was expressly built to preserve the records of several courts, including the documents and evidence of the Suitors. Therefore the Public Record Office had a prior and superior claim to the fund than the law courts. Langdale, he continued, had long ago considered the Suitors' Fund as applicable to the construction of the Public Record Office.³⁸

In August Pennethorne requested that an additional £114 14s be paid to J. Thomas for carving independent of

³⁸Work 12 65/17.

his original contract. Philipps agreed to pay the additional amount but he reprimanded Pennethorne for approving the work without prior approval from him. By mid-August the matter of the racks and presses was still in question but the building was ready to receive its iron stairs and doors. Six firms were invited to submit tenders for the work so that the ground floor and the workmen's rooms in the basement could be ready for business by March 1855. Out of the six tenders Wood and Barrett submitted the lowest tender of £2,185 which was accepted on 20 September. Their tender was to supply fixtures without bricklayers' work: double slung iron doors with ventilators, sliding and louvre ventilators, an iron staircase frame, register stoves for the basement and ground floor including a patent descending flue warm air stove, and two ranges, one Deanes Patent with wrought iron boiler for the ground floor to heat the Porters' room, and an ordinary range with boiler for the basement.³⁹

Since 1850 steadily rising material costs and wages had made it nearly impossible for the contractors to honor their tenders. In October 1854 Lee and Son

³⁹Work 12 64/7; Work 12 64/9. The six firms which bid for the ironwork were: Burnett & Corpe--26 Lombard St.; Dewer--16 Old St., St. Lukes; Lawrence--Pitfield St., Hoxton; Stephenson & Peil--61 Gracechurch St.; Wood & Barrett--247 Tottenham Court Rd.; Thomas Turner--38 East St., Manchester Sq.

submitted their final tender for finishing the repository at £1,815, plus another £300 for water closets and fittings for a total of £2,115. Philipps agreed to the increases and authorized Pennethorne to accept the tender, which he did on 15 November. Although Pennethorne had been successful in dealing with Philipps, Palgrave was not so lucky with Sir C. E. Trevelyan of the Treasury. After the Treasury had turned down the request for funds to fit up rooms in the Rolls House, Palgrave reminded Trevelyan that the Rolls House was an integral part of the plan in the new repository and without it there would be no room for the officers. After much correspondence and frustration the Treasury relented and granted from the Civil Contingencies Fund £800 which was to be replaced in the next session.⁴⁰

By 1855 the matter of the racks and presses had been decided. Thomas Turner's tender of approximately £9,000 for iron racks and presses was accepted and all that remained to be settled was the question of what kind of shelving should be used. Pennethorne recommended the use of wooden shelves in the interest of economy. He pointed out that for approximately 170,000 feet of wooden shelving needed, the cost would be £7,500

⁴⁰Work 12 64/6; Work 12 67/1.

compared to £10,350 for iron and £15,000 for slate. Palgrave and Philipps both rejected the use of wood, while the Assistant Keepers recommended against the use of iron. All agreed that the fireproof objective must be maintained and that economy had to be put aside on this issue; therefore slate was the only choice.

In February four firms submitted tenders for the slate shelves, each basing their tenders upon the quality of slate they would supply. The amounts ranged from £3,600 for Machno and Aberllafeni to £6,500 for the best Bangor and Port Madoc slate. In March George E. Magnus, whose original tender was £3,600, submitted a revised tender for £4,100 which was accepted. He informed Pennethorne that he would deliver approximately 20,000 feet of half inch slab slate per month for nine months--a total of 180,230 feet for 34,756 shelves (Plate 10). He asked to be paid in three installments of £1,000 every three months beginning in 1856. The installation of the shelving proceeded smoothly, except that Magnus was paid in at least seven installments.⁴¹

Near the end of the year Lady Langdale presented to the Public Record Office a marble bust of the late Lord Langdale sculpted by Baron Marochetti. Pennethorne, having been reprimanded previously for

⁴¹Work 12 64/12; Work 12 64/13; Ellis, "Building the Public Record Office," 20.

approving extras, sought permission from the Chief Commissioner of Works to spend £15 for a pedestal of Portland stone to display the bust in the entrance hall of the repository.⁴²

In 1856 the building was nearly finished when another crisis arose over the record presses. Palgrave and Romilly noticed, much to their displeasure, that the presses did not have doors, which they deemed essential for security. Accordingly, Turner, who was installing the presses, was instructed to install wire doors, which he did beginning in late spring at an additional cost of about £6,000. When Turner submitted the tender for the wire doors, he proposed to Pennethorne the addition of tops to the presses for an additional £950. Pennethorne forwarded Turner's letter to Palgrave with a reminder that tops had not been ordered and that no provision in the year's allowance had been made for such an expense. He suggested that if the Master of the Rolls deemed it necessary, a number of wire doors could be omitted and the tops substituted for the same price. Palgrave responded that the tops were necessary, that the wire doors could not be omitted, and that Turner should install one top that could be inspected by himself and

⁴²Work 12 65/1; Work 12 64/13. The correspondence does not reflect whether official approval was granted or withheld, so it is safe to assume that it was since the bust stands in the building today.

the Assistant Keepers. He also informed Pennethorne that Romilly wanted locks modified so that a master key could unlock the doors as well as the individual lock's key. Essentially he was requesting an override lock system.

The argument over the tops raged in heated letters for several months; Pennethorne was more than willing to have them installed if Palgrave and Romilly could come up with the funds. At the end of May the Treasury approved £970 for the tops to the presses. A long, acrimonious correspondence ended in comedy: shortly after the doors and tops were installed, the doors were removed because they were considered inconvenient and a hindrance to the staff's work.⁴³

Exterior

Pennethorne was faced with a real challenge in that in creating a Gothic building he was allotted only £200 for decorations. After all of the cost overruns, and knowing Palgrave's attachment to a different style, he was not surprised by the niggardly sum. Pennethorne felt that the combination of the mass of windows and the deep buttresses produced a bold effect and "though totally devoid of ornament, [it] could not fail to be

⁴³Work 12 64/10; Work 12 64/13; Ellis, "Building the Public Record Office," 20.

rich and imposing." Keeping in mind the financial limitation on decoration, the best he could do was to suggest Gothicism and the strong box function of the building. He achieved the first by his stonework, carvings, and round stairwell towers. The building's function as a strong box for the Crown's records was suggested by medallions of Her Majesty, Prince Albert, and the Heir Apparent (Plate 11). In addition Pennethorne denoted the era of the building's construction by using the coat of arms and mottoes of high functionaries and heads of government departments, sprinkling them over the building on roof top turrets, stairwell towers, and along the parapet (Plate 12). His greatest gift to the exterior of the building and perhaps the most effective decorative feature were the gargoyles. They solidified the building's Gothicism, and at the economical cost of 20s apiece they were placed all over the building (Plate 13).⁴⁴

The first portion of the building was completed in 1856 and already it was apparent that the next wing must be begun immediately. The Public Record Office moved into its new premises knowing that it had already

⁴⁴"Public Record Office," in BSP 1859, vol. 34: Estimates and Civil Services for year ending 31 March 1851; Ellis, "Building the Public Record Office," 17-19.

outgrown them and that the battle must began anew.⁴⁵

⁴⁵"The Sixteenth Annual Deputy Keeper's Report," in BSP 1854-5, vol. 15.

Chapter Four

Palgrave died on 6 July 1861 after having served as Deputy Keeper of Her Majesty's Records for 22 years. Through his and Langdale's efforts the first portion of the record repository had been built and begun its service. Thomas Duffus Hardy succeeded him on 8 July 1861. Hardy proved to be as tireless and persistent in his efforts for the construction of the second portion as Palgrave had been.¹

The embarras de richesse with which the Public Record Office found itself was largely due to an Order in Council of 1852 which transferred to the Master of Rolls all government records not then under his control. At that point many government departments began cleaning house and depositing their old records with the Public Record Office. Thus the supposed capacity of 20 to 50 years of future record accumulation was filled in one sweeping act. Romilly and Palgrave repeatedly dunned the Treasury to approve the plans and estimates for the

¹Great Britain, Parliament, Sessional Papers (Commons), 1862 vol. 21, "The Twenty-third Annual Deputy Keeper's Report." Hereafter referred to by name of report, in BSP, and the appropriate volume number.

second phase of building. By 1860 the Treasury responded to their requests by recommending that a committee be appointed to evaluate the value of the records accumulated since 1852. The committee, consisting of one officer of the Treasury, one officer from the Record department, and one from the Department of Papers, submitted its conclusions in December 1861. Romilly in a letter to the Treasury on 6 December 1861, reviewed the committee's findings, emphasizing that it found an "absolute necessity of preserving the greatest portion of the documents" already in the Public Record Office's care.²

By 1862 the need for space had grown so great that not only were eleven houses on Chancery Lane housing records but several on Fetter Lane as well. The houses on Chancery Lane, part of the Rolls Estate belonging to the Crown, had cost £3,719 2s 1d to be repaired and fitted up to store records and documents. Thus within a dozen years of the new building's opening, makeshift and imperfect remedies were returning to threaten the safety of the records. The Times spoke of the great risk of fire to these public documents in Chancery Lane as well

²"The Fourteenth Annual Deputy Keeper's Report," in BSP 1852-3, vol. 15; "The Twenty-first Annual Deputy Keeper's Report," in BSP 1860, vol. 31; "The Twenty-third Annual Deputy Keeper's Report," in BSP 1862, vol. 21.

as the misuse of space valuable for offices or dwellings.³

On 17 July 1862 George A. Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury, passed to the Office of Works Pennethorne's plans for the second portion of the repository as approved by Romilly, and suggested that only half of the portion be constructed for the sake of economy. The Office of Works sought Romilly's opinion and he in turn informed Alfred Austin of the Office of Works that half of the wing would help to alleviate the overcrowding but that in the long run it would cost less to build the whole wing all at once. Pennethorne submitted revised plans for the first section of the second portion of the repository and on 16 October 1862 Romilly forwarded them on to the Treasury. The Treasury approved the plans and early in 1863 Pennethorne submitted his estimate for the erection of the southeastern wing of the repository. He projected a cost of £42,000--£30,000 for the construction of the wing and £12,000 for its fittings.⁴

³"Correspondence between the Master of the Rolls and the Treasury," in BSP 1862, vol. 42; "Public Records," Times (London), 3 June 1862.

⁴Great Britain, Public Record Office, Work 12 65/17, hereafter referred to by the class of document and its number only, i.e. PRO 1/17 or Work 12 64/4; "The Twenty-fourth Annual Deputy Keeper's Report," in BSP 1863, vol. 25.

The process for requesting and receiving tenders was essentially the same as in the 1850s, the only difference being a stipulation that MPs were not eligible to submit tenders or have any dealing related to the repository construction with the contractors. Most of the firms involved in the tender process were the same ones as before with a few additions.⁵ On 18 June 1863 construction of the southeastern wing began and it followed the same pattern as the first portion right down to the delay of the stone.⁶

Fire Precautions and Their Consequences

In November 1863 Robin Warder, Superintendent of the Metropolitan Police, submitted a report on the safety of the Public Record Office from fire. He pointed out that the four fire plugs in front of the building were kept at full pressure at all times and that four lengths of hose were kept in the front hall under the care of Simpson, contractor to the Office of Works. Furthermore, the water company kept a man in the repository to monitor the water mains and ensure that they were not used to supply water for cleaning purposes. However, Warder added that the building was

⁵See Appendix H for a partial list of firms that submitted tenders for excavation and hoarding and for the building construction.

⁶Work 12 65/9; Work 12 65/17.

94 feet high and that the highest that water under full pressure could reach was the second floor, about 40 feet, and that the hoses were also too short. In addition he reported that the water cocks were never tested in the presence of the Public Record Office's officers, which he thought necessary, and that he had found several cocks corroded and inoperable. Nothing seems to have come of this report until 1864.⁷

On 25 April 1864 a small lodge used for storage by the contractors caught fire. The fire burned down several workshops, destroyed many working plans, and damaged a large quantity of stone along with the fronts of some of the nearby houses. The fire reinforced the necessity of having an adequate supply of water at the repository as well as the proper equipment. The fire, coupled with Warder's report, now attracted the attention of the Office of Works. In June, after lengthy discussions on the matter, the Office of Works decided that it would be expedient to complete Pennethorne's original plan of a central tower to house a large cistern to increase water supply and pressure (Plate 14). Romilly quickly supported the plan and pointed out that the tower could also hold rarely used records that were currently stored at great risk in some

⁷PRO 8/10.

of the houses on Chancery Lane (Plate 15). Pennethorne estimated the cost of the tower at £12,320; approval was granted and construction began in 1866. Pennethorne's gratification that his wonderfully Gothic tower was to be completed after all was tempered by wry amusement at its unexpected purpose.⁸

Pennethorne was unable to give up the design of his original tower. The exterior decorations for the tower suffered from the same lack of funding as the first portion. Pennethorne wanted to place a statue of Queen Victoria in a niche on the south side of the tower. In January 1866 he mentioned his idea to Joseph Durham,⁹ who agreed to produce a statue in Portland stone. Durham already had a model of such a statue which was intended to complement his statue of the Prince Consort in the gardens of the Royal Horticultural Society. He could easily and economically reproduce another for £100. On 1 March 1866 the Treasury approved his tender for the statue. On 5 March Pennethorne

⁸"The Twenty-fifth Annual Deputy Keeper's Report," in BSP 1864, vol. 28; "The Twenty-sixth Annual Deputy Keeper's Report," in BSP 1865, vol. 26; "Public Record Office," in BSP 1866, vol. 48: Estimate and Civil Services for the year ending 31 March 1867.

⁹Dictionary of British Sculptors, 1660-1851, rev. ed., s.v. "Durham, Joseph." Joseph Durham (1814-77) was a sculptor who exhibited no less than 128 works at the Royal Academy between 1835-78. He primarily sculpted children but he also did a number of fountains including that at Gloucester Gate, Regents Park.

contracted with Durham for a statue of Portland stone, obtained from Waycraft or Maggot Quarries, to be ready on or before 1 August 1866. Durham was to use the scaffolding of Jackson and Shaw, the builders, or provide his own. Pennethorne was to approve the placement by 28 September 1866.

The statue was to stand in one of four niches in the tower. Having noticed that there were four niches while working on the agreed-on statue, Durham proposed to Lord John Manners, First Commissioner of Works, that three more statues be erected for an additional £300. On 24 August Manners notified the Treasury of a surplus of £330 from the work on the southeast wing, and he proposed that Durham be engaged to provide the three additional statues. He pointed out that it would be cheaper in the long run since the scaffolding was still in place. Parsimony still ruled the Treasury which on 5 September refused approval for the statues. Pennethorne responded through Manners to the Treasury that the statues had been an important part of the design concept, but that they had been omitted in the first place because they were estimated to cost £1,000 each. Now, with such an economical tender from Durham, they should go ahead. Furthermore, since the statues were so high from the ground they required only rough artistic work, and no sculpturing at all on the back side.

Architecturally he thought that the niches must be filled to complete the integrity of the building and by putting Queen Victoria on all four sides rather than four different figures the cost would be kept down. Finally he argued that the building was projected to be completed in five months and once the tops of the niches were set in place the statues could not be placed.

In December the Treasury relented and authorized Pennethorne to accept Durham's newly revised tender to provide three more statues at the cost of £500. But the Treasury thought it improper to use four statues of Queen Victoria, which might appear to lessen her greatness, and required that the four statues must all be different. On 1 January 1867 the selected figures were approved, and by April both Queen Victoria and Queen Elizabeth were installed in their niches on the south and north sides. A month later Empress Matilda and Queen Anne joined them on the east and west sides, and all four, having survived the Blitz, look down from Pennethorne's tower still (Plate 16).¹⁰

By February 1867 the southeastern wing had been

¹⁰Work 12 65/11; Work 12 65/12; "The Record-Office, Fetter Lane," Times (London), 15 April 1867. The Times refers to the statue as Empress Matilda on the east side while the official correspondence refers to it as Empress Maud, in fact, they are one in the same. Dictionary of British Sculptors, s.v. "Durham"; "Public Record Office," in BSP 1866, vol. 48: Estimates and Civil Services for the year ending 31 March 1867.

opened to the public. It contained three lofty halls: a round literary search room 44 feet 9 inches in diameter and 46 feet high, a legal search room 60 by 26 feet, and a copying office 60 by 26 feet as well as offices for the Calendaring Department and several other smaller offices. Work on the tower continued until its completion at the end of August. It contained two tanks provided by Easton Amos and Sons for £700 and fittings for an additional £50.¹¹

The tower was neither as tall nor dramatic as Pennethorne had planned but it did fulfill two very significant functions. It solved the immediate water problem and alleviated the danger of fire, and with its gargoyles, turrets, and stone carvings it achieved Pennethorne's interesting skyline though a less grandiose one than originally planned. Even under the limitations imposed by the Treasury's penury, Pennethorne created a fine representation of Gothic architecture.

Immediately upon completion of this section, Romilly and Hardy began agitating for the erection of the remaining portion of the eastern wing. In 1868 Parliament voted the necessary funds of £24,000, and

¹¹"The Twenty-eighth Annual Deputy Keeper's Report," in BSP 1867, vol. 31; "The Twenty-fifth Annual Deputy Keeper's Report," in BSP 1864, vol. 28.

work began immediately. Pennethorne's plan for the repository was slowly being realized section by section, although he had only lived long enough to see the completion of the east wing. In February 1871 Hardy's 32nd Annual Report announced that the new wing was complete and open to the public. The repository was finally bigger than its collection and now had room for expansion.¹²

Pennethorne

In the summer of 1870 Pennethorne completed his last building--the Senate House at the University of London. At the same time, Acton Smee Ayrton, the First Commissioner of Her Majesty's Works, reorganized the Office of Works. In separating Works and Buildings from Woods and Forests he abolished Pennethorne's position, thus completing a process that had begun back in the 1850s. Pennethorne retired on "a liberal but well-earned pension" and in November the Queen rewarded him further by conferring on him a knighthood. Pennethorne had little time to enjoy his retirement; he

¹²"The Thirtieth Annual Deputy Keeper's Report," in BSP 1869, vol. 26; "The Thirty-second Annual Deputy Keeper's Report," in BSP 1871, vol. 33; "Public Record Office," in BSP 1868/9, vol. 42: Estimates and Civil Services for the year ending 31 March 1869.

died suddenly on 1 September 1871 from heart disease.¹³

Shortly after his death the Royal Institute of British Architects held a memorial meeting where a biographical paper was read in his honor. Three themes emerged in that paper and all other subsequent articles about him. Pennethorne was recognized as an individual devoted to public service, respected for his kindness of manner and straightforward honesty, but constantly frustrated by second thoughts and penny-pinching economy which kept almost all of his building projects from being built as they were planned. He gave selflessly to the improvement and beautification of London, yet his reward was to have his reputation and character questioned by bureaucratic officials with little or no understanding of architecture or building construction.

As far back as 1857 Sir Benjamin Hall had begun an inquiry into all of the works of the department, particularly questioning all works carried out under Pennethorne. Pennethorne responded to this attack by presenting detailed accountings and reports of his building projects to Parliament. Although Parliament fully exonerated Pennethorne, Hall succeeded in abolishing the official position of State Architect, and Pennethorne's sensitive nature never fully recovered

¹³PRO 8/17. This record contains a memorial article by the R.I.B.A.

from the injustice, despite the honor his fellow architects paid him. On 18 May 1857 in honor of the completion of his work on the west wing of Somerset House his fellow architects awarded him a medal in recognition of the "skill and intelligence" which "he habitually brought to bear upon complicated and difficult questions of technical nature."¹⁴ Eight years later he was once more honored by being chosen as the recipient of the Royal Gold Medal for Architecture. However, these awards did nothing to shield him from bureaucratic faultfinders. During the construction of the first portion of the Public Record Office he was reprimanded several times for cost overruns regardless of cause, yet on 6 January 1870 he found himself forced to explain why he was under budget and why he had not spent all of the money appropriated for the new wing of the repository. He was still explaining in October of 1870.¹⁵

Some contemporaries, not appreciating the new

¹⁴"Sir James Pennethorne," The Builder 29 (September 1871): 718.

¹⁵Work 12 65/20; Work 12 65/17; PRO 8/17; Beresford E. Chancellor, "A Neglected Town-Planner," The Builder 148 (June 1935): 1055; Pennethorne Hughes, "The Last State Architect," Country Life 3 (February 1952): 500-501; "Pennethorne," The Builder 29 (September 1871): 717-18; DNB, s.v. "Pennethorne,"; "Pennethorne and Public Improvement.--A Retrospect," Mechanics' Magazine and Journal of Science, Arts, and Manufactures 95 (July-December 1871): 272-73, 285-86.

ground Pennethorne was breaking at the Public Record Office, disliked his work. The Quarterly Review criticized it thus:

Externally, the new building has not much to recommend it on the score of artistic beauty. To which of the recognized styles of architecture it ought to be referred would puzzle Mr. Ruskin himself to determine. Its pinched buttresses, squared and gradiated with the undeviating precisional rule and compass, its quadrangular windows glazed with talc, the absence of all ease and freedom in its meager ornaments and narrow proportions reveal the mechanical graces of official Gothic. Evidently, it is intended to be more solid than beautiful, more useful than elegant . . . story succeeds to story, with imperturbable uniformity, from roof to basement. No thought of beauty or general effect has entered the mind of the architect, or rather, has been permitted to enter it . . . one thought, that of security, has absorbed all other considerations; and except the edifice were shelled by an invading army or stormed in a civil insurrection, it is impossible to conceive what evil accident could ever befall it or its contents.¹⁶

No doubt the new Public Record Office did appear plain and uninteresting compared to the new Houses of Parliament but by today's standards this assessment seems harsh. Its modified Gothicism and meager ornaments were a departure from the accepted idea of the Gothic revival, but the building pioneered the concept of architectural style reflecting its function; in any

¹⁶J. S. Brewer, "New Sources of English History," Quarterly Review 130 (January-April 1871): 374.

case the blame was Parliament's determined parsimony. Pennethorne's accomplishment was to take the limited funds Parliament was willing to provide and create a building that has stood the test of time better than contemporary critics could have imagined.

The 1870s and 1880s

During the 1870s many repairs and alterations were made to the existing structure, the most important being the provision of an external water supply. By 1876 the repository was fully equipped to handle a fire. Water was supplied to the building "by means of fire cocks on several floors affixed to pipes charged from tanks in the main tower" which were served by a pipe taken under the roadway on the south side of the building. The two tanks in the tower had a combined capacity of 4,400 gallons and a dial in the hall near the south entrance indicated the water level in them. The New River Company supplied the water to the street main which supplied the tanks. Even though a fire brigade (No. 254 High Holborn) was only 1,000 yards away in High Holborn a fire engine was kept in the Rolls Yards. In addition, policemen were on duty at the repository 24 hours a day and the Office of Works provided a "resident turncock, part of whose duty [was] is to clean and keep in working order the fire engine, hoses and other appliances,

including the water tanks."¹⁷

Later gas was brought in and an elevator was installed to help in the movement of large records. Many more of the nearby houses and buildings which threatened the repository with fire were torn down. Sir George Jessell, Master of the Rolls until 1883, requested that the necessary funds be voted for the construction of the third¹⁸ and fourth sections of the repository in 1873 and 1879. He pointed out that much money had been wasted on makeshift remedies in the past, that the Public Record Office was now in a position to stay ahead of the record accumulation, and that the opportunity should be seized lest they find themselves in a reactionary position again. But the Treasury failed to appropriate the necessary funds on both occasions.¹⁹

Construction, Destruction, and Preservation

By the 1890s the repository collection was again

¹⁷"The Thirty-seventh Annual Deputy Keepers' Report," in BSP 1876, vol. 39. See Appendix I for internal distribution of fire cocks and equipment.

¹⁸Although the second portion was constructed in two phases it is still only referred to as the second portion.

¹⁹"The Thirty-seventh Annual Deputy Keeper's Report," in BSP 1876, vol. 39; "The Forty-ninth Annual Deputy Keepers' Report," in BSP 1888, vol. 60; PRO 8/48; Work 12 66/11.

outgrowing its facilities. In 1890 John Taylor²⁰ of Her Majesty's Works and Public Buildings was assigned to review Pennethorne's plans with the intent that they be used to build the third and fourth portions (Plate 17).

The actual construction of the third and fourth section followed the same pattern as the first two with only minor changes in materials. What was different is the controversy surrounding the destruction of the last remaining building of the old Rolls Estate--the Rolls Chapel. The issue suggests the dilemma which the two conflicting requirements of the age--the impulse to preserve and the demands of government for more space--presented to decision-makers.

On 7 January 1890 after reviewing Pennethorne's plans, Taylor informed the Office of Works that the Rolls House and Chapel would have to be removed in order to build the third and fourth sections. He remarked that the Rolls Chapel was not of any "significant architectural merit or interest" and that it should not

²⁰Dictionary of National Biography, s.v. "Taylor, Sir John"; Who Was Who, 1897-1916, vol. 1 (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1967): 699. Sir John Taylor (1833-1912) entered H.M. Office of Works in 1859 and in the same year was appointed surveyor of royal palaces, public buildings, and royal parks. He was in charge of the general maintenance and upkeep of these buildings. He was knighted in 1897 and elected a fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1881. He was the architect of the following buildings: New Bankruptcy Courts; New Bow Street Police Court and Station; and additions to Marlborough House, Pall Mall.

be allowed to interfere with the completion of such a "large and national building" as the Public Record Office. Taylor was overruled by the Office of Works and told to revise the plans to incorporate the interior of the Rolls Chapel in the new construction.²¹

The third portion was to be a very large wing facing Chancery Lane with a central archway into the courtyard. The fourth portion was to connect the new wing with the main building built by Pennethorne. Plans for the construction of the third wing progressed well, and the only real hindrance was what to do with the records stored in the remaining houses on Chancery Lane. At first Sir Henry Churchill Maxwell-Lyte, Deputy Keeper, recommended building the wing in two stages, beginning with the southwest portion, so that removal of the records from the record compound could be kept to a minimum. Taylor pointed out that this would unnecessarily delay the completion of the wing and also increase the cost. The Office of Works agreed with Taylor, and it was decided to construct the wing in one phase. Various solutions were considered for housing the records while the construction took place, and ultimately the records were stored in several places throughout the metropolis, among them Greenwich Hospital

²¹Work 12 66/11.

and Somerset House.²²

On 30 August 1892 Thackeray Turner, Secretary of the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings,²³ wrote to the Secretary of the Office of Works inquiring about what measures were being taken to preserve the Rolls Chapel. The Office of Works informed Turner that it

. . . intended to embody in the new Record Office building the structure of the Rolls Chapel so as to preserve the interior where it was of ancient date, together with the monuments which it contains.²⁴

The Society was delighted with this answer although time was to show that it had read more into the letter from the Office of Works than was really there.

The third section, an irregular shaped building 225 by 45 feet at the northern end and 65 feet at the southern end, was completed in the autumn of 1895. The three stories and basement reached a height of 84 feet. The building was set back from the roadway to allow for road improvements expected in the future. Pennethorne's Church Anstone sandstone had decayed so much that it was replaced with Portland oolite, and Taylor also

²²Ibid.

²³The S.P.A.B. was founded in 1877 by William Morris to promote the preservation of ancient buildings and to help direct the preservation movement in Britain.

²⁴Work 12 67/2. See Appendix J for inventory of objects removed from the Rolls Chapel to be preserved.

substituted Babbacombe limestone for the original Kentish ragstone. Taylor made two internal improvements to Pennethorne's plans. He used steel presses with slate shelves instead of iron presses, and he installed electric lighting.

The exterior effect of the building was of the same character as Pennethorne's earlier sections. The short central tower over the archway along with the octagonal turrets on the northwest, southwest, and southeast corners all fit with the Gothic tradition (Plate 18). Taylor's greatest contribution to Pennethorne's plan was the two-storied oriel window directly under the central tower and over the archway. Parliament's appropriation for Taylor's exterior decorations was less restricted than Pennethorne's had been, and this may have been a result of the Office of Works' and the London County Council's combined efforts to improve the appearance and atmosphere of the neighborhood.²⁵ Taylor installed a large panel containing the royal arms on the tower and over the archway on the east side of the new wing he placed statues of two kings who had been associated with the Rolls Estate. In the lower of two niches was a statue of Henry III who founded the original House of Converts,

²⁵An effort had been made to tear down dilapidated buildings and noxious factories.

the Domus Conversorum, an asylum for converted Jews. The upper statue represented Edward III, who in uniting the Keepership of the House of Converts with the Keepership of the Rolls of the Chancery created the new position of Master of the Rolls which carried with it custody of the Rolls Estate (Plates 19, 20).²⁶

Desecration or Progress?

In the fall of 1895 preparations began for the construction of the fourth portion of the repository. The Rolls House was demolished and excavation begun at the site. At first there was little public reaction to its destruction as it had been regarded as ugly or at best a mediocre example of plain Georgian architecture, a style out of favor in the 1890s. It was the second Rolls House to occupy that site, the medieval one having been destroyed in 1717 when Colen Campbell built the new house in the classical style. Upon its completion it had been viewed as elegant and convenient but poorly situated. In the years immediately preceding the remodeling and renovations in the 1850s, it had been allowed to become dilapidated. Legend quotes Sir

²⁶"New Record Office," Architect, 17 January 1896 in Work 12 66/11; "The Fifty-seventh Annual Deputy Keeper's Report," in BSP 1896, vol. 68; "The Fifty-eighth Annual Deputy Keeper's Report," in BSP 1897, vol. 68; "The Fifty-ninth Annual Deputy Keeper's Report," in BSP 1898, vol. 51.

William Grant, Master of the Rolls at the beginning of the century, as saying to his successor:

Here are two or three good rooms. This is my sittingroom; my library and bedroom are beyond; and I am told that there are a few good rooms upstairs, but I was never there.²⁷

Grant was the last Master of the Rolls to live on the premises, although his immediate successor held dinner parties there. The only vestiges of the Rolls House saved from demolition were a couple of carved mantel pieces which were installed in the new building.²⁸

On 27 December 1895 after demolition had begun, C. Y. Sturge, an irate citizen, wrote to The Times questioning on whose authority the Rolls Chapel was being demolished. He pointed out that the public had been given the impression that the Rolls Chapel was to be made into a museum and that upon visiting the record compound he was shocked to see the chapel in what appeared to be a state of demolition. The doors and windows had been removed, a large hole was in the roof, and the brickwork at the top of the walls were being broken up. He urged the public to respond to this

²⁷"Rolls House Demolition," Westminster Gazette, 17 December 1895 in Work 12 67/2.

²⁸Ibid.; Roger Ellis, "The Building of the Public Record Office," in Essays in Memory of Sir Hillary Jenkinson, ed. Albert E. J. Hollander (Chichester, Sussex: Moore and Tillyer, 1962), p. 26.

destruction of an ancient building, adding that there was still time to save it because work had been suspended for the Christmas holidays. A few days later Lord Archibald Campbell used The Times to prompt Sir John Lubbock (later Lord Avebury), the author of Britain's Ancient Monument Protection Act of 1882, and his supporters to turn their attention to the Rolls Chapel.²⁹

Throughout the month of January nearly every serious publication concerned with architecture, the arts, or history carried an article or letter on the subject of the Rolls Chapel. On 2 January 1896 the journal London supported the government's position: The Office of Works intended to preserve the Chapel's ancient interior, but the rubble walls were in such a state of decay that some sections had to be removed. The stained glass windows had been removed to protect them and most of the monuments, where possible, were covered over and left in place. The writer stressed that the Office of Works still planned to incorporate the Rolls Chapel interior in the new wing.³⁰

²⁹"The Rolls Chapel--To The Editor Of The Times," The Times (London), 17, 30 December 1895.

³⁰"The Rolls Chapel--Disappearance of Another Bit of Old London," London, 2 January 1896; see also Architect, 3 January 1896; The Builder, 4 January 1896. All articles in this note were found in Work 12 67/2.

On 3 January Turner wrote to Reginald B. Brett, Secretary of the Office of Works, requesting permission for two or three members of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings to inspect the Rolls Chapel in its current condition. By 8 January Turner had received no reply and he wrote again, this time receiving a positive response on the same day. On 12 January Turner and two other members met with Taylor at the construction site. On 15 January Turner informed the public that regrettably the Society had failed to gain a stay of destruction for the south wall which contained a fourteenth century window with mullions and broken tracery. He added that although careful drawings of the Rolls Chapel had been made they were little compensation "for the irreparable loss of the actual and veritable remains of the building. Indeed, I suppose it is the last unspoilt actual remains of medieval work in the neighborhood."³¹ (Plate 21)

The debate continued through January. On 18 January an article in The Times decried the destruction of the Rolls Chapel merely to "make room for the storage of recent records, the rubbish of Whitehall." Everything had finally come full circle-- the value of

³¹Thackeray Turner, "The Rolls Chapel--To The Editor Of The Times," The Times (London), 15 January 1896.

the records was in question again as it had been at the beginning of the century. Without a doubt the situation presented a real dilemma: by building the new wing to preserve the nation's records a piece of architectural history would be lost.³²

By the beginning of February the remaining portions of the Rolls Chapel had been razed, and construction on the fourth portion proceeded unimpeded, despite continued agitation. The end of the nineteenth century brought the construction of the Public Record Office to an end. The fourth portion was the last to be built despite the demolition of the Judges' Chambers (the projected location for the fifth portion) on the south side of the Rolls compound in 1899 (Plate 17).³³

³²"Discoveries at the Rollet," The Times (London), 18 January 1896.

³³Work 12 67/2.

Conclusion

The task of reforming the preservation of Britain's public records and constructing a fireproof building to house them spanned nearly a century. To erect four of the five portions of the building planned by Pennethorne took nearly half that time. The rest had been consumed by the long, tedious struggle to convince Parliament of the need to preserve and house the records, and to persuade the Treasury to grant the requisite funds. Punch, with in its usual tongue in cheek, commented in 1856:

In England, the growth of buildings, like that of its institutions is exceedingly slow, if sure. Years are taken over a building that on the continent would be run up in almost as many months. A celebrated German statistician sent us the following incredible particulars:

To erect a simple column . . . takes 12 years. Ditto, with lions, 24 years.¹

The creation of the Public Record Office was the achievement of a few devoted individuals. The battle was waged at a time when Parliament was beginning to realize that it had a responsibility to the public and

¹"The Slow Growth of Public Buildings," Punch 31 (July-December 1856): 37.

that this responsibility involved a financial obligation which had to be borne by the Government. It was also a time when the influence of public opinion was developing and its power was becoming apparent, and the proponents of record reform learned to deploy their arguments to persuade public opinion to bring pressure on Parliament. Men like Cole, Hardy, and Buller brought the battle of record reform out into the open and pitched it on a level that touched a great number of people. Had it not been for Langdale, Palgrave, Cole, and Hardy the Public Record Office could not have been realized in the 1850s, but through their efforts its time arrived before it was too late.

Sir James Pennethorne was an architect and town-planner who was not appreciated by his contemporaries. Even today he is little known or appreciated. To drive across London today is to travel along at least one of his improvements--New Oxford Street linking up Oxford Street with Holborn--and had he been allowed to carry out his proposed thoroughfare on the north side of the Public Record Office, travel would be less congested and quicker today. H. H. Statham in the Edinburgh Review in 1891 characterized Pennethorne this way:

The work of Sir James Pennethorne who, if he cannot be called an architect of great genius, had that degree of knowledge and refined taste in the

designing of detail which to some extent supplies the place of genius.²

Today the Public Record Office is recognized as a fine example of Gothic Revival architecture and its neighborhood is dignified by the presence of a distinguished public building. An evidence of Pennethorne's genius is that the Public Record Office has never reported a fire inside its depositories. The building he created lived up to the function that Palgrave and Langdale defined--it must be secure and fireproof. It can be said of Pennethorne's Public Record Office that, as a building still admired in a later age for its architecture, it also fulfilled successfully and admirably the purposes for which it was designed when there was no model on which to base it. Not all architects and their buildings have stood the test of time so well.

Epilogue

As amenity standards rose in British society generally, further alterations were made to the Public Record Office to bring it up to date. In 1902 hot water heating and ventilating were installed, which must have made searcher's lives much more agreeable. On cold days readers engaged in a fierce competition to get seats

²H. H. Statham, "London Architecture in the Nineteenth Century," Edinburgh Review (July 1891): 102.

near the open fires. Before the installation of the central heating temperatures in the winter were commonly recorded at 2° C and once the fires were lit the temperature rose to a brisk 7° C. After the heating system was installed a new discomfort assailed the hapless searchers; the acrid smell of hot dust rose from the dust-covered heating pipes, and made the search rooms almost unbearable.³

The skylight in the round room was leaking at the turn of the century and continued to do so until just recently. The water leaks were so bad that when it rained readers had to move in order to keep themselves and their documents dry, while the staff busily placed buckets around the room to catch the water. During 1985 and 1986 the Public Record Office underwent extensive renovations in preparation for the ninth centenary of the Domesday Book. A special transparent waterproof cover was installed over the round room's skylight and the room was reopened.⁴

In 1987 four record repositories are required to handle the Public Record Office's collection: Chancery

³A. E. Stamp, "The Public Record Office and the Historical Student-A Retrospect," Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 4th ser., vol. 11 (1928): 23-25.

⁴Interview with Assistant Deputy Keeper Evans, Public Record Office, 2 June 1986.

now contains the Chancery records and the archives of a few small modern government departments--the documents, in fact, it was originally designed to hold. It contains three reading rooms and records are still stored in the original depositories, but the slate shelves have been removed and replaced with conventional metal shelving (Plate 10). The internal arrangement of the depositories are much the same, still divided into two levels and still not air-conditioned. The repository's storage capacity is 100,000 linear feet. Fire precautions are still of great importance, and the building is divided into sections by hand operated fire doors; fire hoses are also still employed.

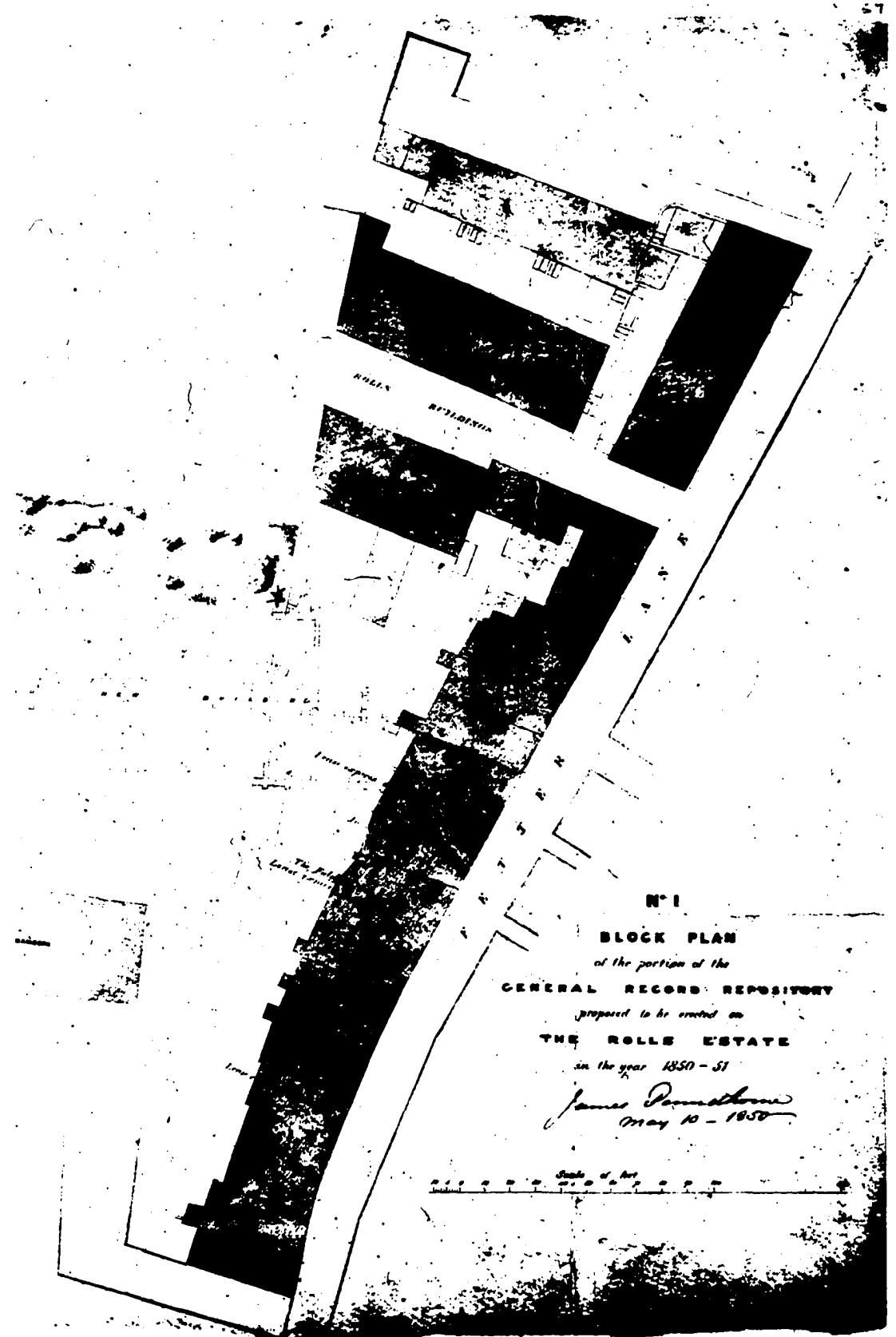
In 1977 the Public Record Office at Kew was completed and it is this building that most people use in 1987. It is a completely modern building in its architecture and internal organization (Plate 22). It has a storage capacity of 360,000 linear feet and mainly contains records dating from 1800 onward. It has a controlled environment at 20° C and the relative humidity is kept at 55 percent. To guard against fire each floor, can be divided into three fire compartments which seal by fusible link doors. The basement is protected by high-expansion foam and the above-ground floors by smoke detectors and water hoses.

In 1987, as in 1851, fireproofing is the dominant

consideration in the design of Britain's record repositories. Techniques have improved but the principles laid down by Langdale and Pennethorne remain the same--depositories, adequate water supplies, and proper equipment.

Plate 1

Plan No. III, Public Improvements as Planned
by James Pennethorne, 25 January 1847



N^o 1
BLOCK PLAN
of the portion of the
GENERAL RECORDS REPOSITORY
proposed to be erected on
THE ROLLS ESTATE
in the year 1850 - 51
James Pennelthorne
May 10 - 1850

Scale of feet
 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Plate 2

Block Plan of General Repository at the Rolls Estate

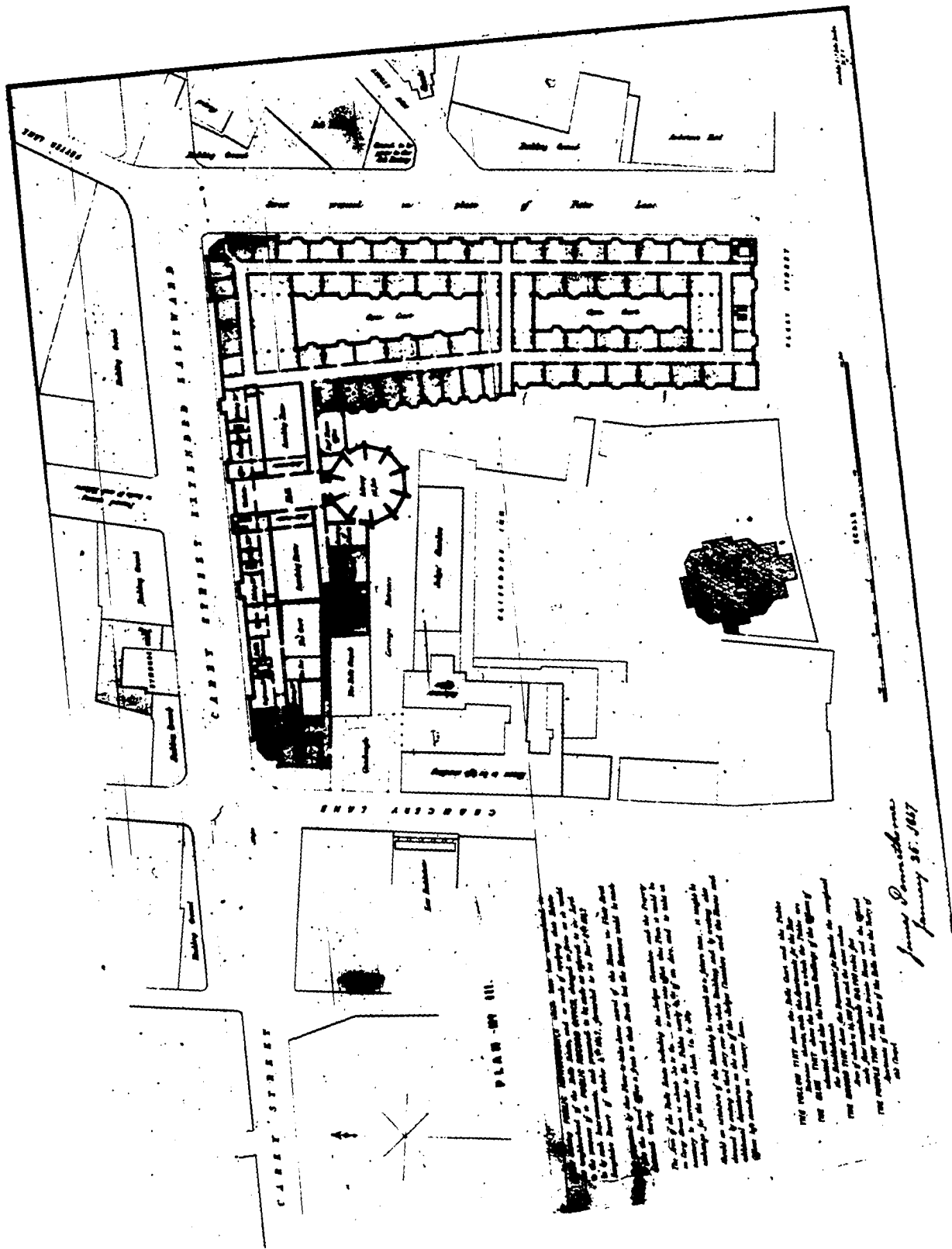


Plate 3

1850 Drawing of General Repository
Reflecting All Five Sections

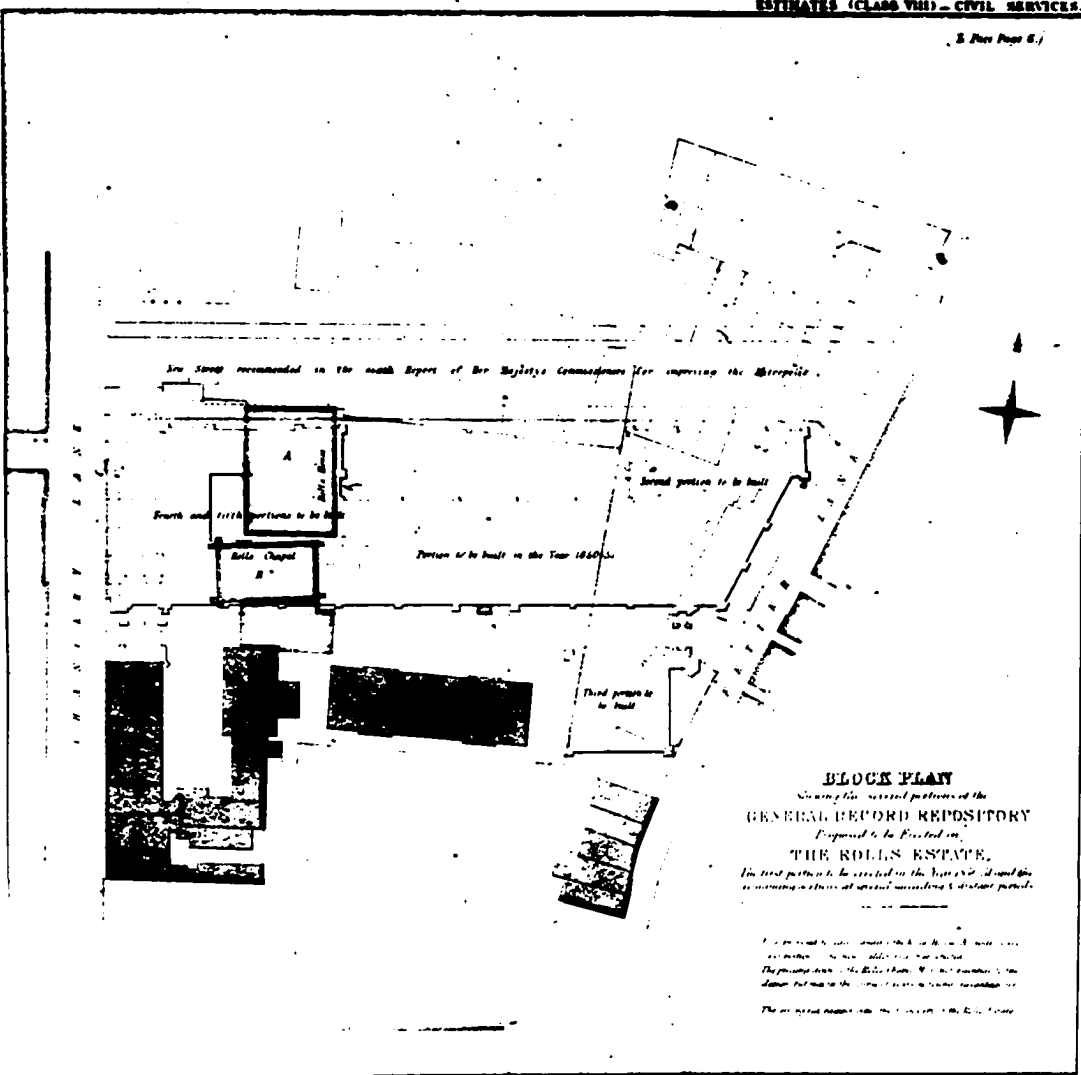


Plate 4

Block Plan No. I of General Repository



Plate 5

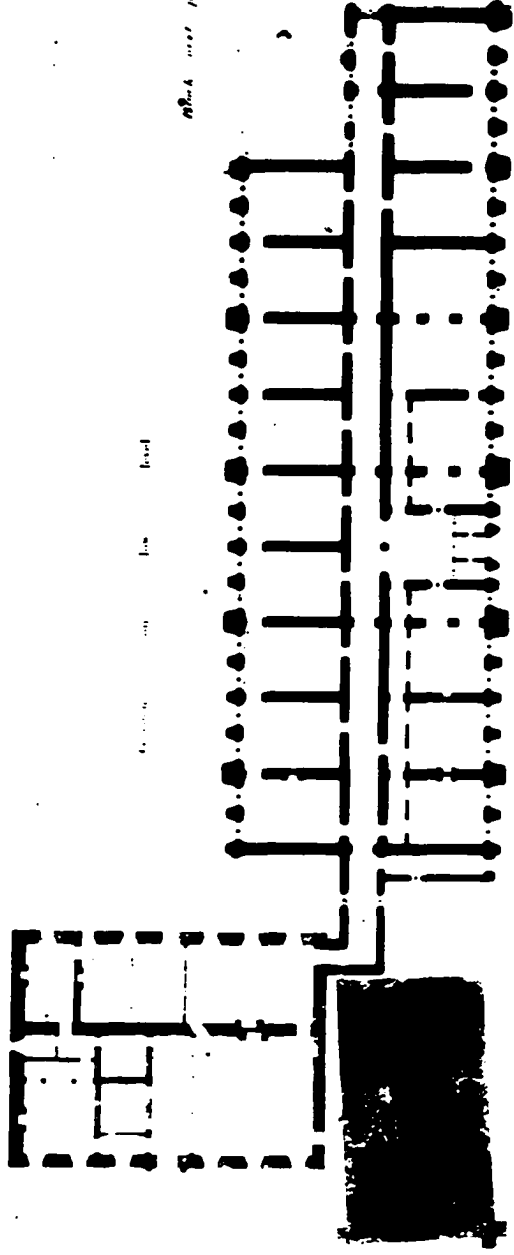
Floor Plan of Record Repository with
Temporary Passageway to Rolls House

Null. Buildings

Black and purple in 4. Null

SECOND PLAN

Level



James O. ...



1000

Plate 6
Detail of Dulled Glass Windows

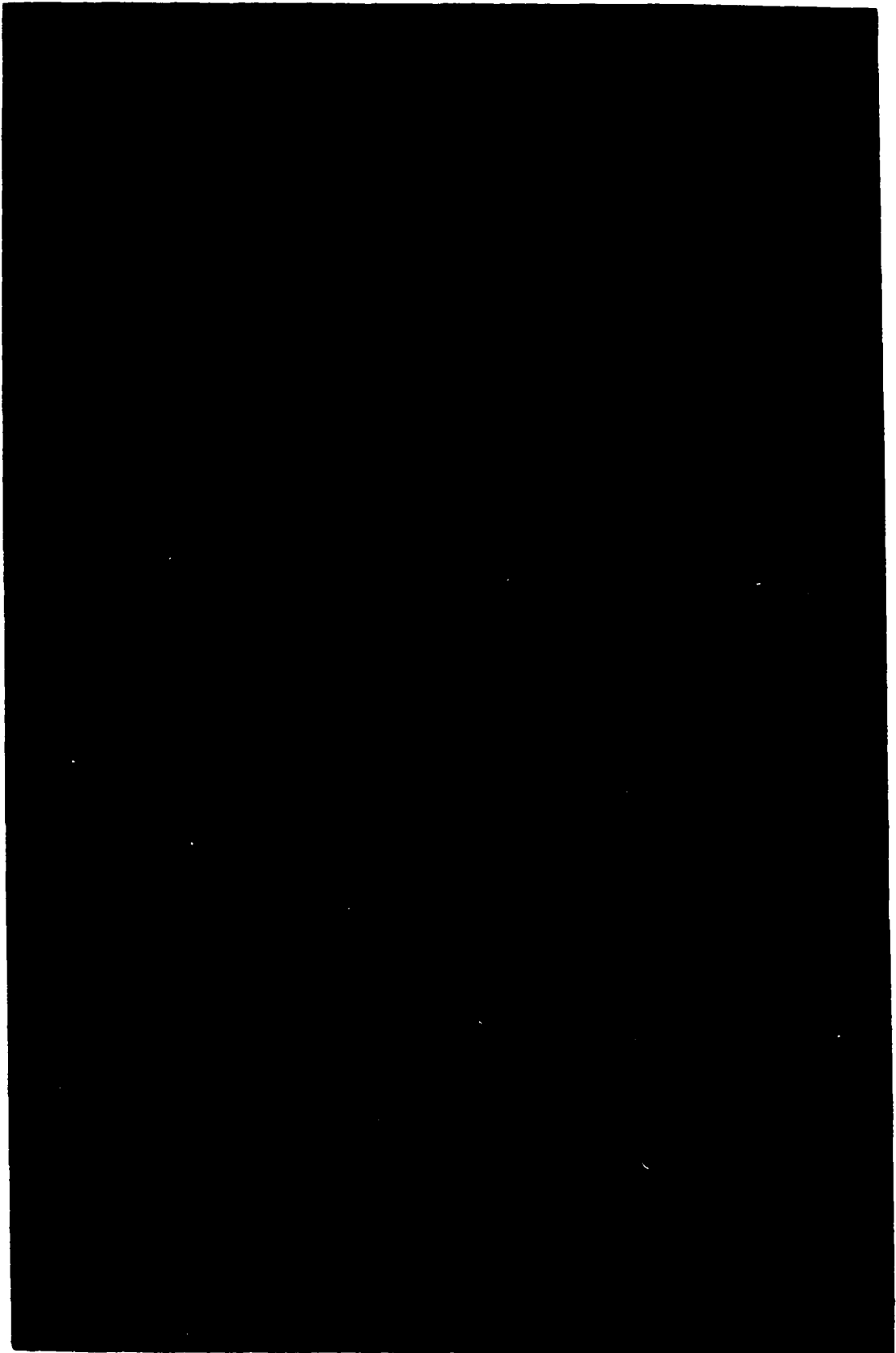


Plate 7

Windows on North Side Reflecting Deep Buttresses

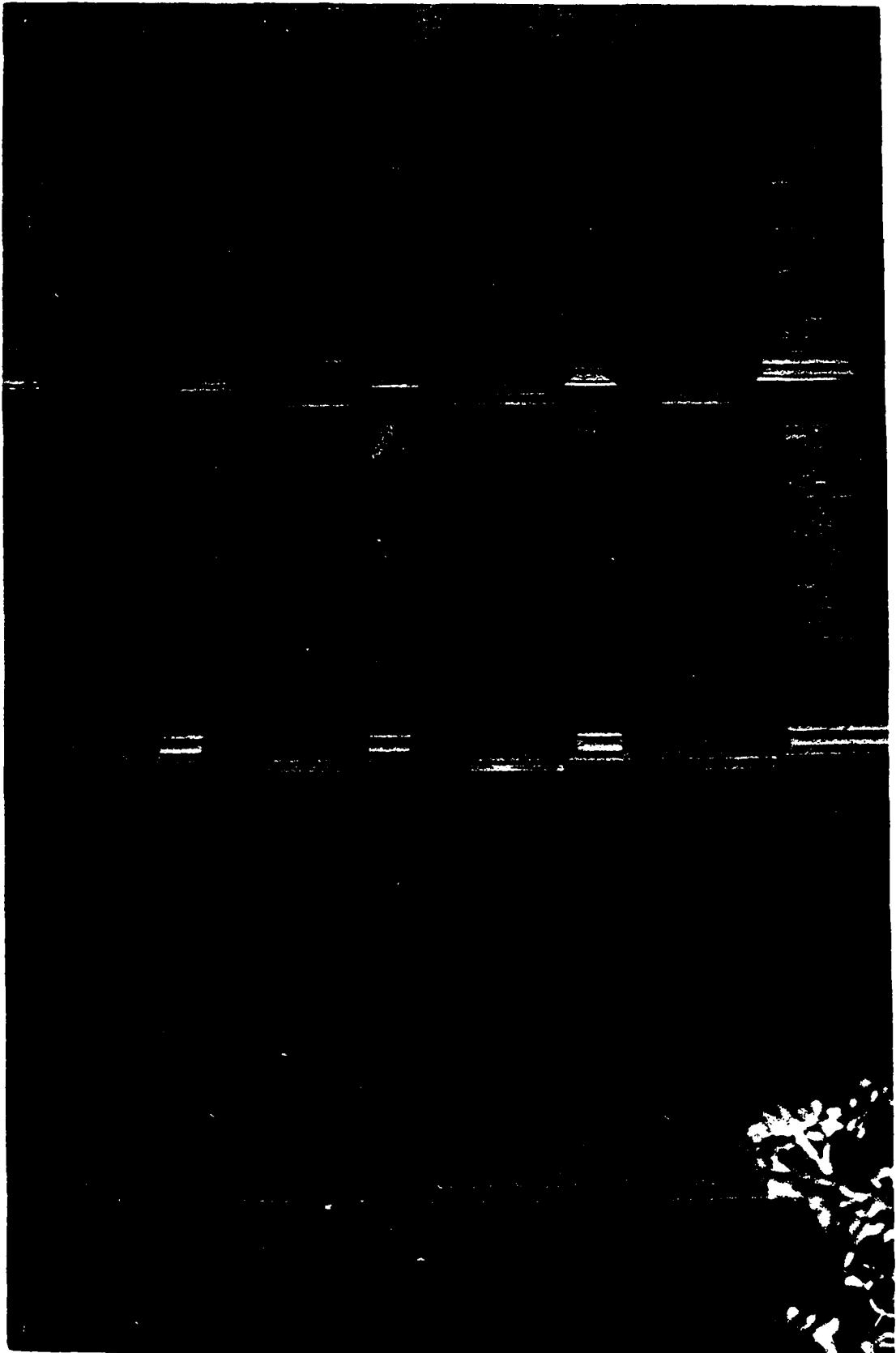


Plate 8

Ground Floor Windows Replaced with Polished Glass

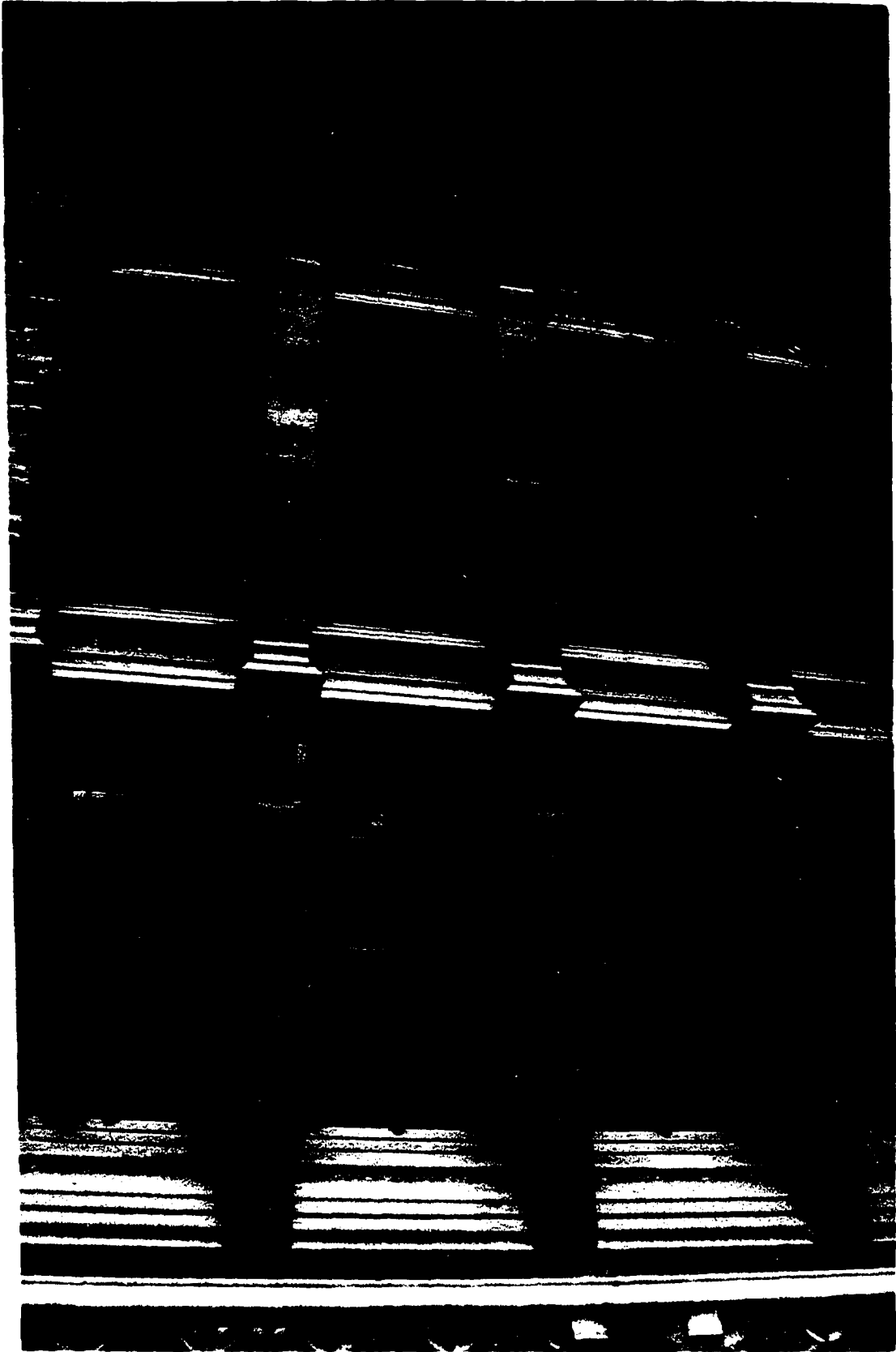
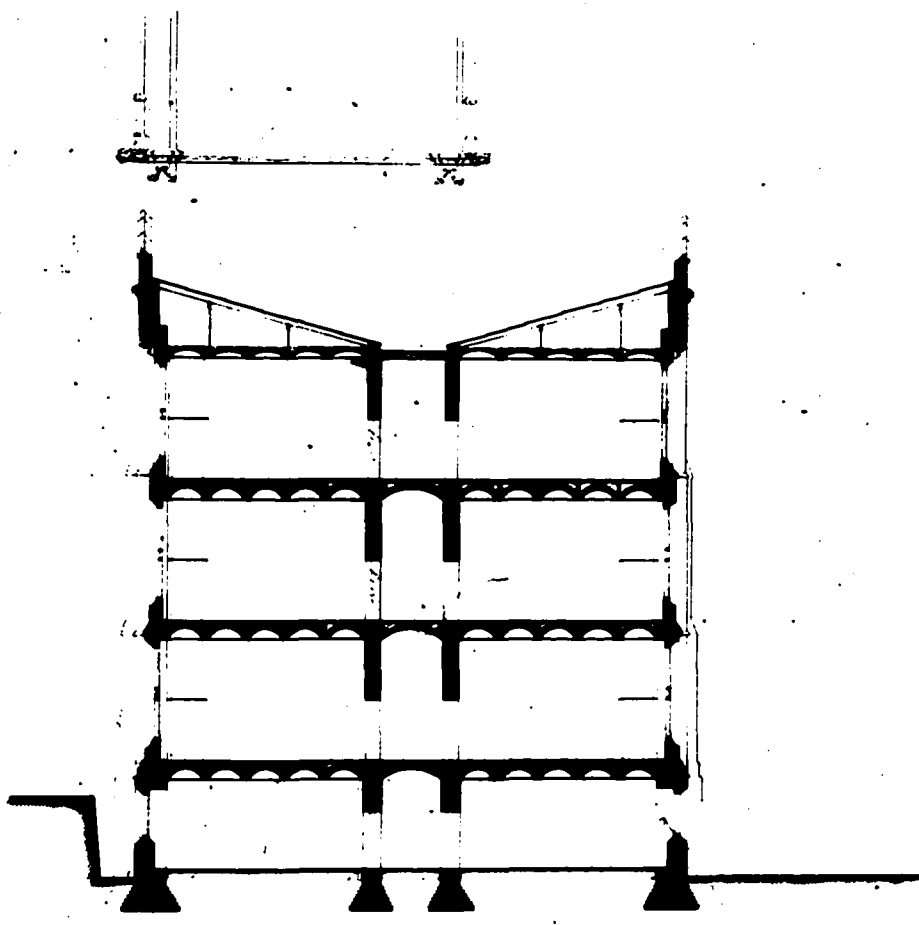


Plate 9

Transverse Section Reflecting Flooring Structure

No. 6 PROPOSED GENERAL RECORD REPOSITORY



TRANSVERSE SECTION

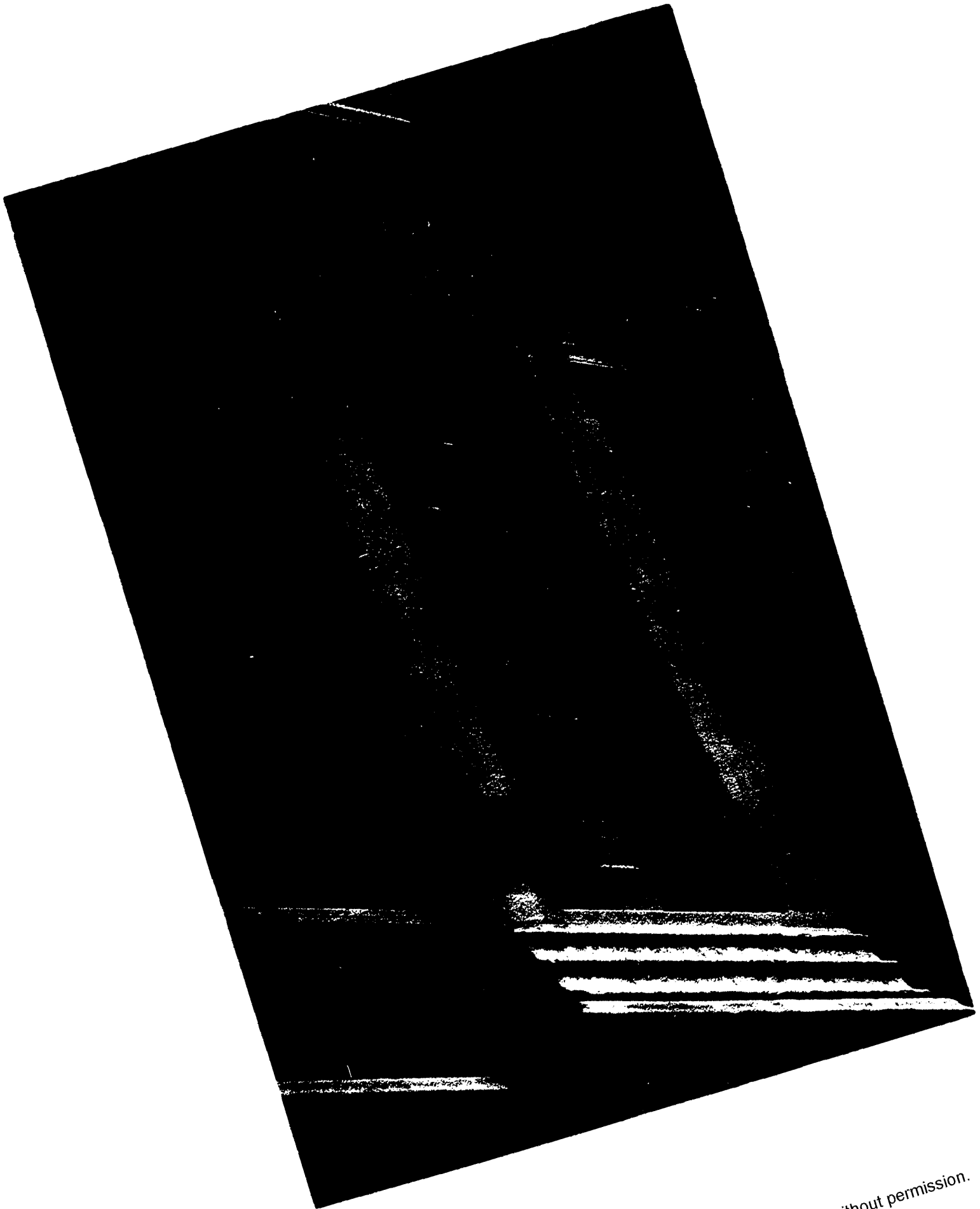
Scale of feet

James Powell
May 10th 1850

Plate 10
Slab Slate Shelving



Plate 11
Decoration Along South Side Entrance

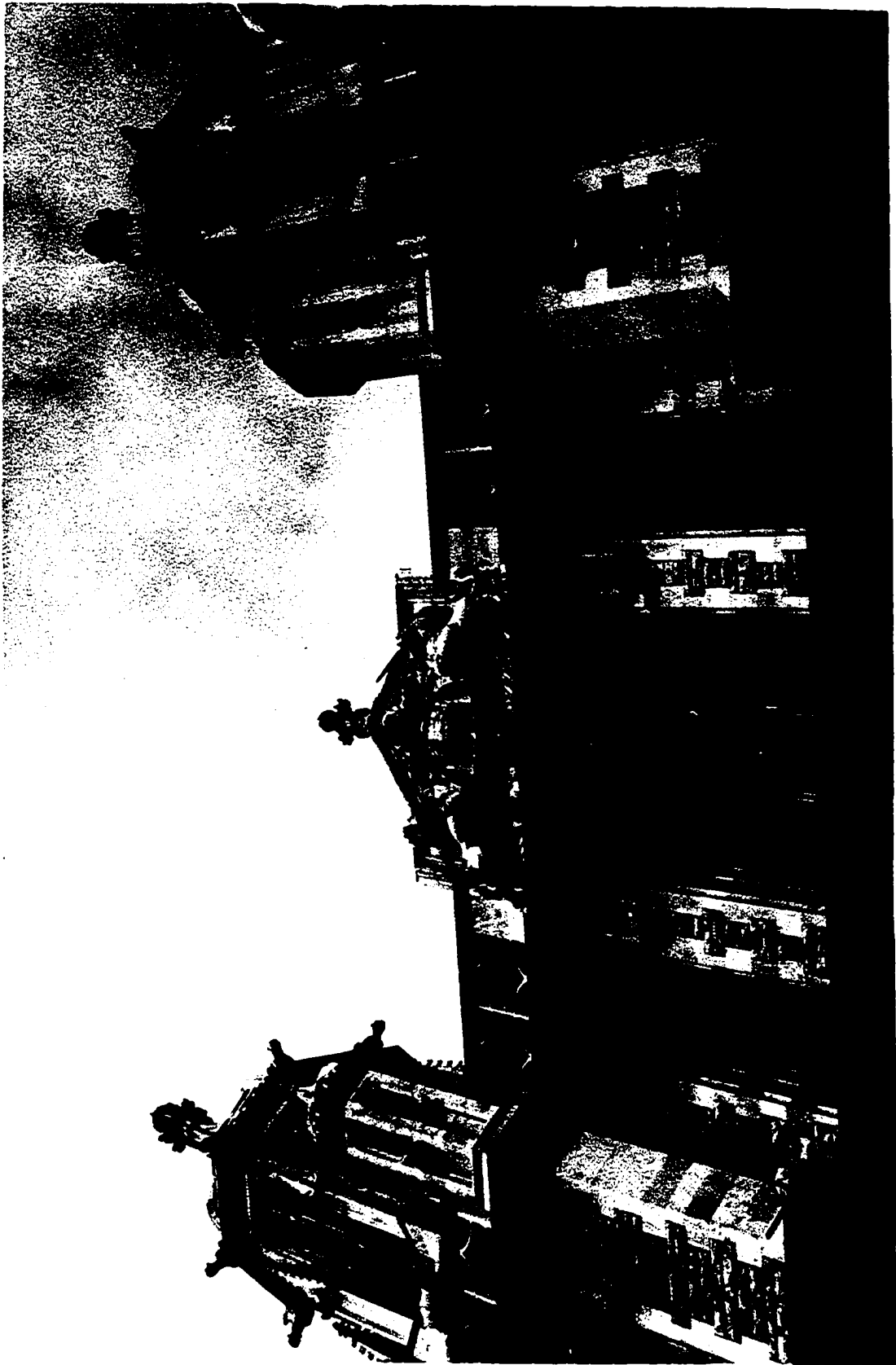


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Plate 12
Decoration, Coat of Arms



Plate 13
Decoration, 20 Shilling Gargoyles



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Plate 14

Drawing of Tower as Originally Planned

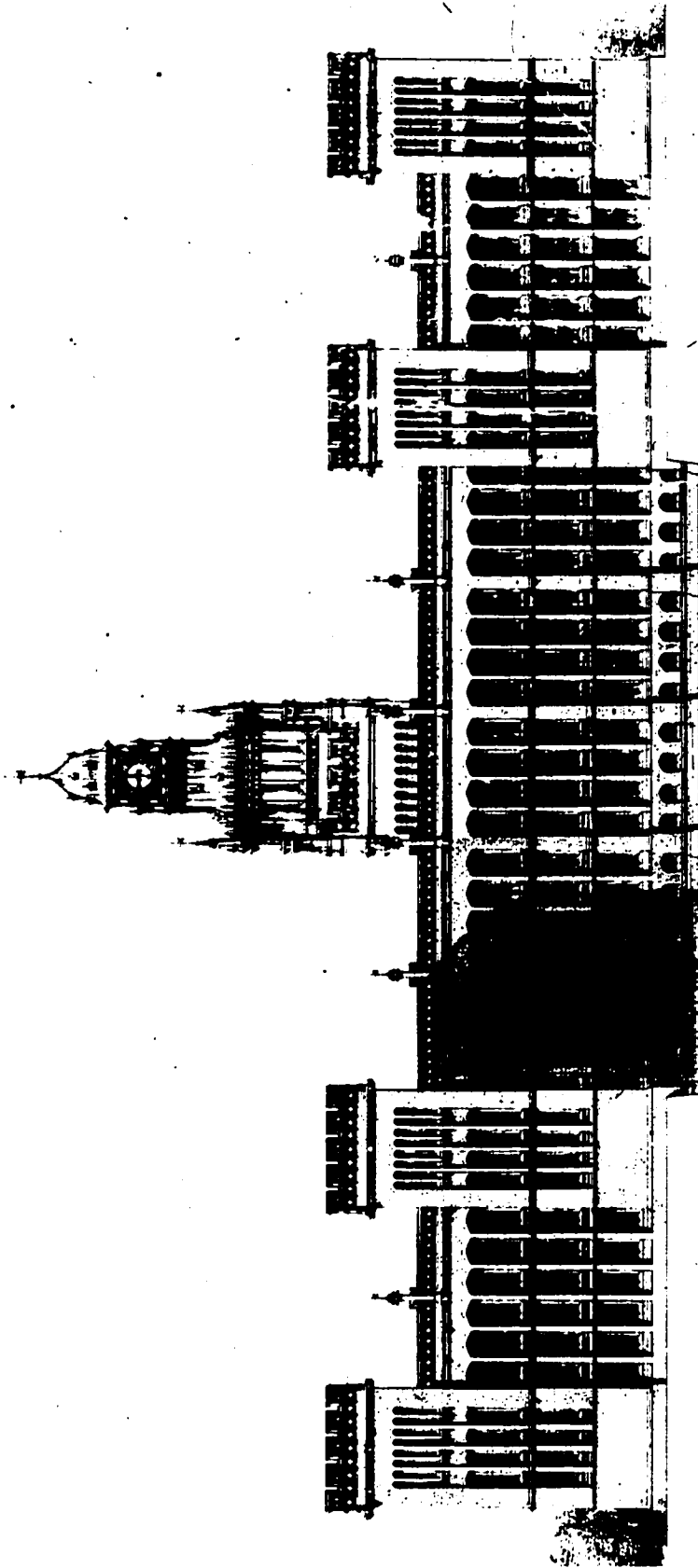


Plate 15

Internal Record Arrangement in Tower

GENERAL RECORD REPOSITORY.
TOWER.

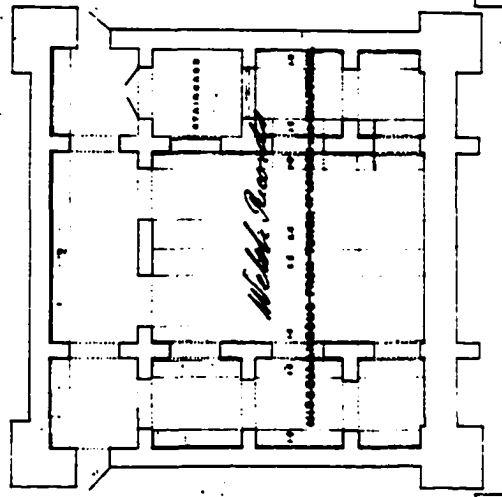


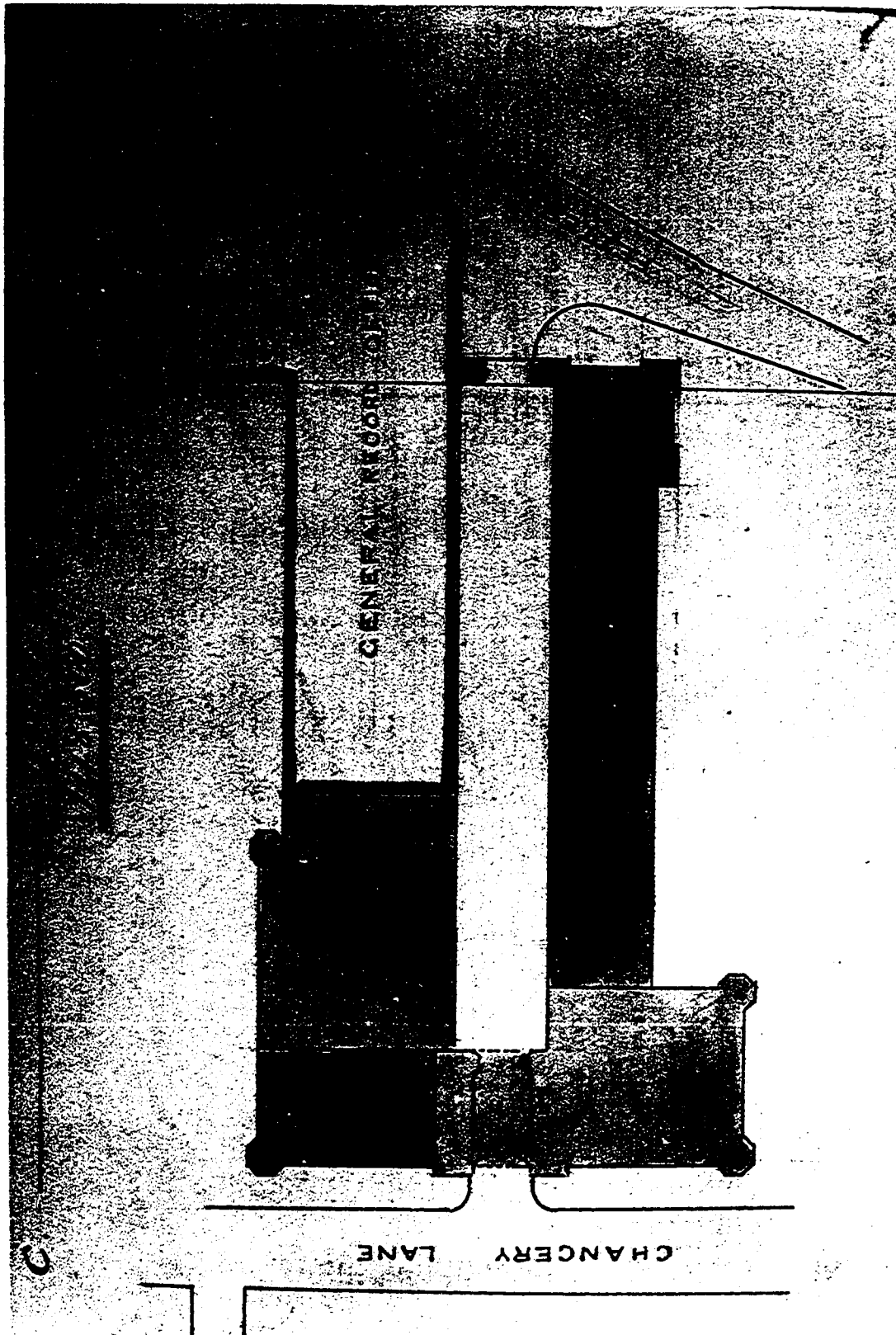
Plate 16

Statue of Queen of Victoria on South Side



Plate 17

Third Phase A' & A", Fourth Phase B, Fifth Phase C



CHANCERY LANE

GENERAL RECORD

9

Plate 18

Short Central Tower, Chancery Lane



Plate 19
Statue of Henry III

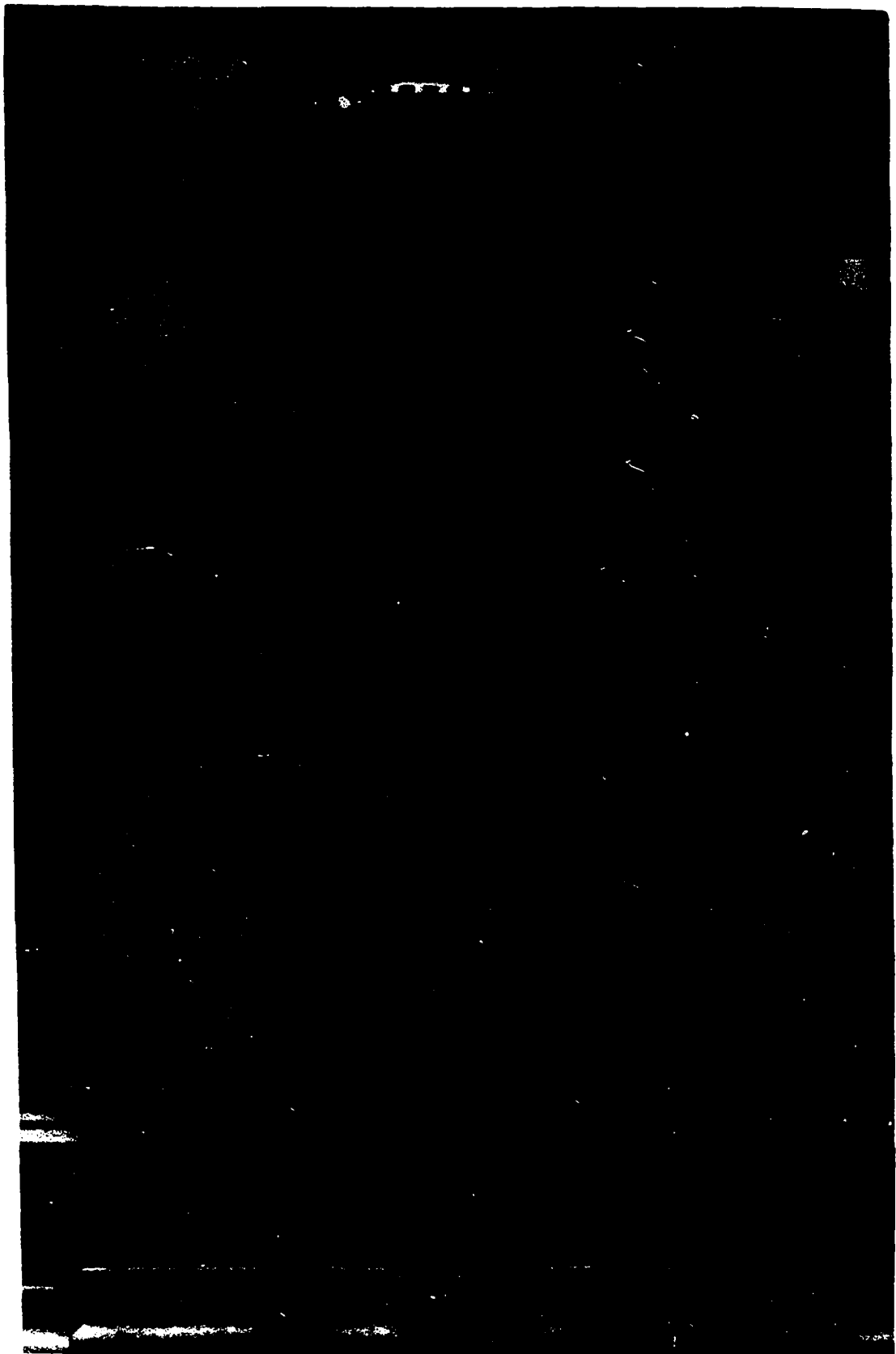


Plate 20
Statue of Edward III

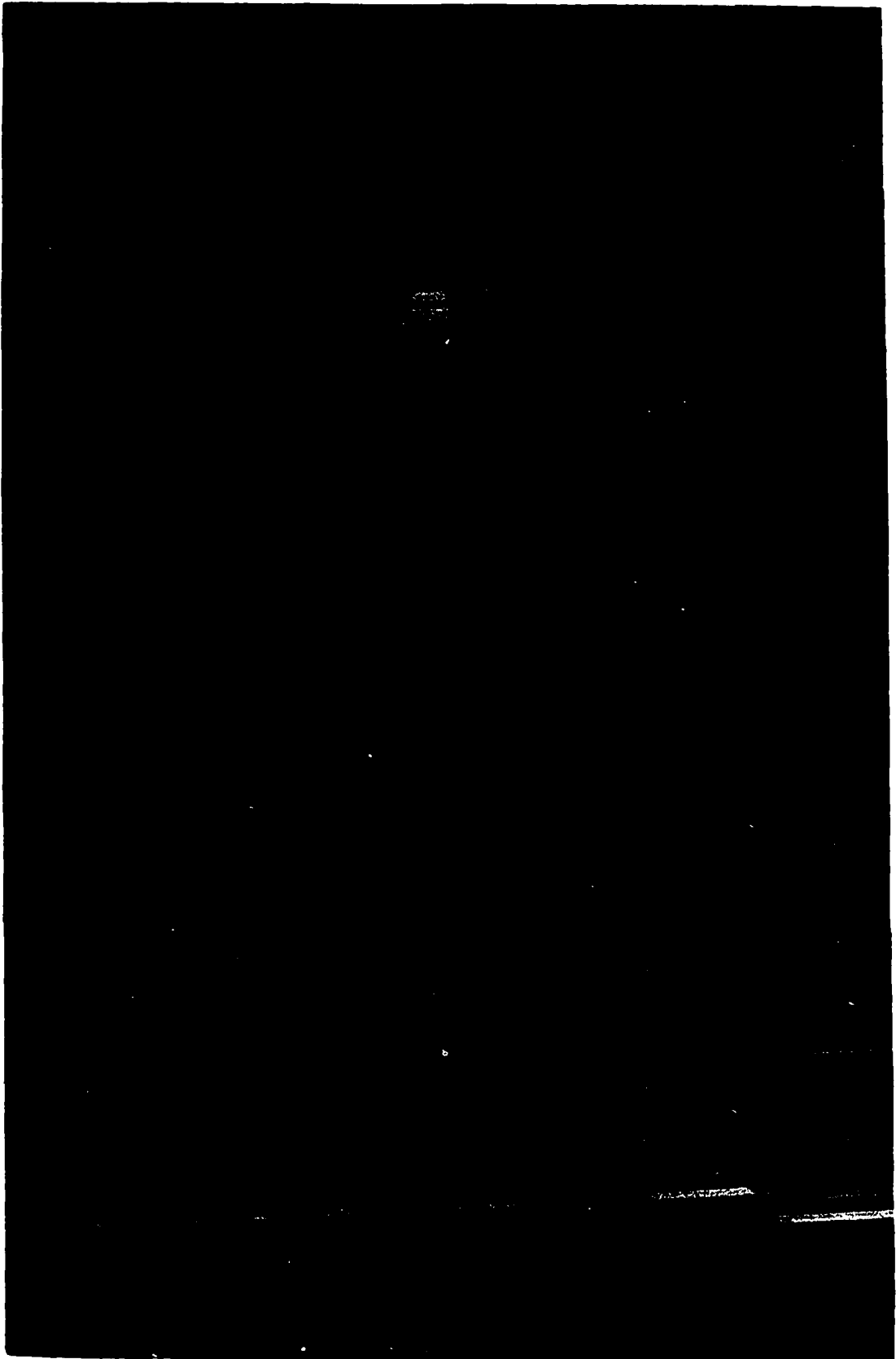
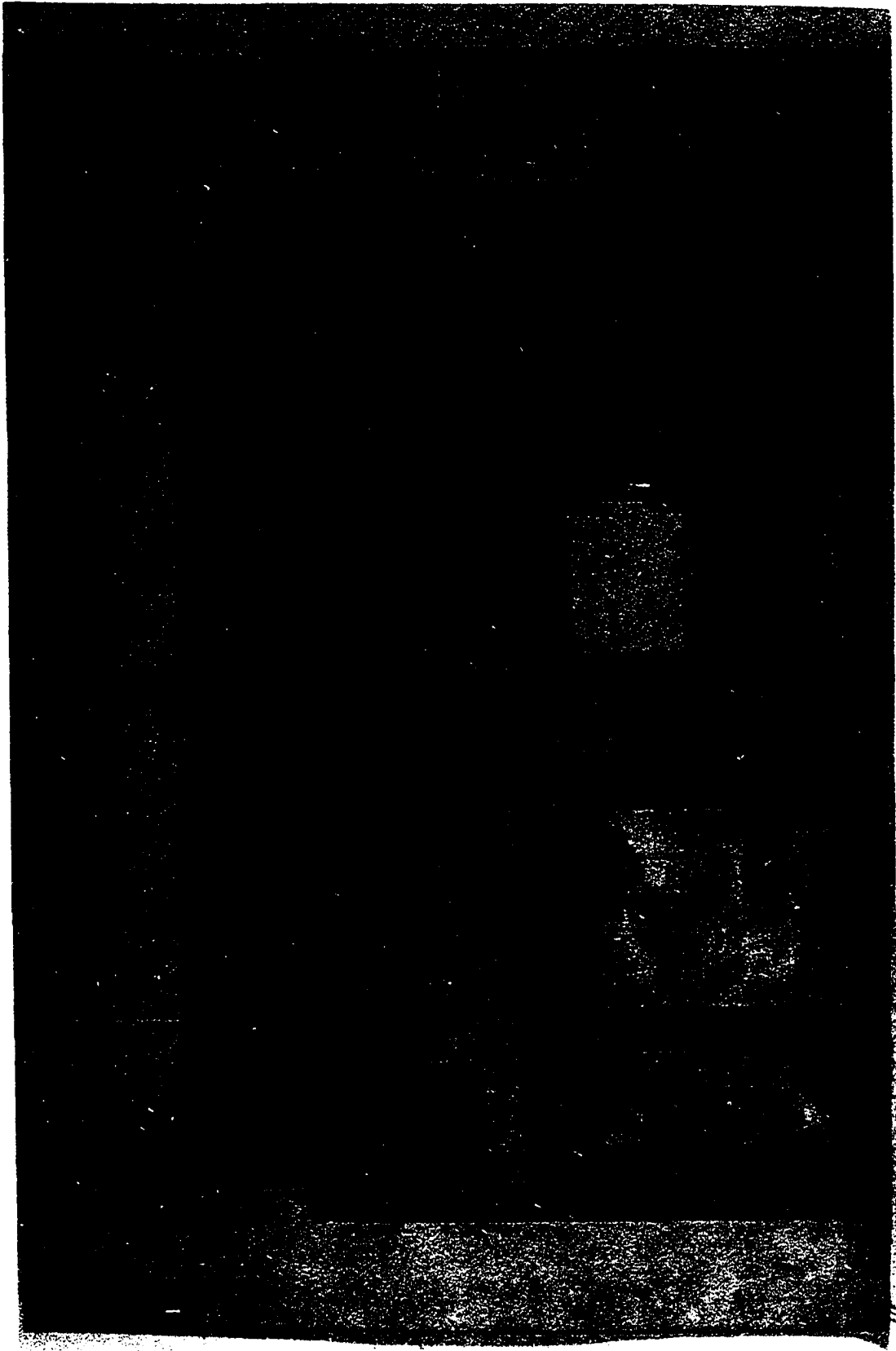


Plate 21

Rolls Chapel, North Elevation



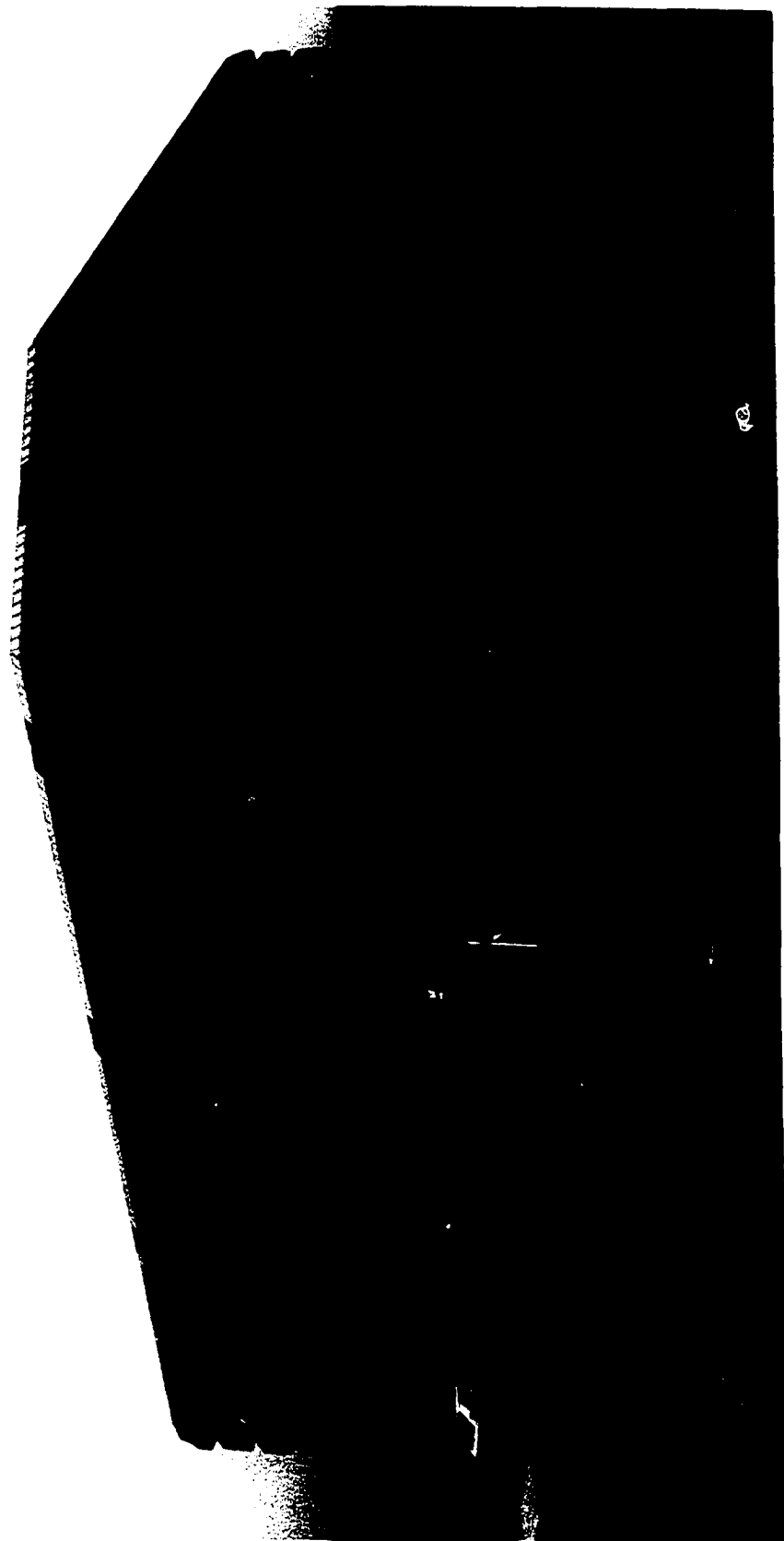


Plate 22
Record Office, Kew

Appendix A

The 1800 Select Committee of Enquiry
into the Public Records

Charles Abbot (later Lord Colchester)
Sir William Grant, Master of the Rolls
the English and Scottish law officers
Sir William Scott (later Lord Stowell)
Lord Hawkesbury (later Lord Liverpool)
Sylvester Douglas (later Lord Glenbervie)
Spencer Perceval
Charles Bragge
Isaac Hawkins Browne
Henry Bankes
Nicholas Vansittart (later Lord Bexley)
Richard Ryder
Charles Philip Yorke
George Rose
William Wynn

R B Pugh "Charles Abbot and the Public Records: the
First Phase," Bulletin of the Institute of Historical
Research 39 (1966): 69-85.

Appendix B

Record Commissions 1800-1837

The tenure of each Record Commission was approximately six years, depending when it was appointed. In addition a new Commission was appointed after the accessions of George IV and William IV. The most significant Commissions out of the six were those that were inadequate, 1800; issued reports, 1812, 1819; or were guilty of great excesses, 1831.

Members of the 1831 Record Commission

Dr. Howley, His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury
 The Rt. Hon. Lord Brougham and Vaux, Lord High Chancellor
 The Rt. Hon. Viscount Melbourne, Sec. of State Home Dept.
 The Rt. Hon. Charles Manners Sutton, Speaker of the House of Commons (later Viscount Canterbury)
 The Rt. Hon. Viscount Althorp, Chancellor of Exchequer
 The Rt. Hon. Sir John Leach, Master of the Rolls
 The Rt. Hon. Earl of Spencer, K.G.
 The Rt. Hon. William Dundas, Lord Clerk Register of Scotland

The Rt. Hon. Earl of Aberdeen, K.T.
 The Rt. Hon. C. Copleston, Lord Bishop of Llandaff
 The Rt. Hon. Thomas Grenville
 The Rt. Hon. Charles William Wynn, M.P.
 The Rt. Hon. Sir James Mackintosh
 The Rt. Hon. Henry Hobhouse, Keeper of H.M.'s State Papers
 The Rt. Hon. Lord Dover
 Sir James Parke, Judge in Court of King's Bench
 Sir John Bernard Bosanquet, Judge in Court of Common Pleas
 Sir Robert Harry Inglis, Bart. M.P.
 Louis Hayes Petit, Esq.
 Henry Bellenden Ker, Esq.
 Henry Hallam, Esq., Commissioner of Stamps
 John Allen, Esq.
 Edward Protheroe, Jun., Esq.
 Edward Vernon Utterson, Esq.
 William Brougham, Esq.

Henry Cole, Fifty Years of Public Work, 2 vols. (London: George Bell & Sons, 1884), 1: 6; Peter Walne, "The Record Commissions, 1800-1837," Journal of the Society of Archivists 2 (1960): 13.

Appendix C

Members of the 1836 Select Committee on Records

Charles Buller, Burgess for Liskeard
Mr. Hawes, Burgess for Lambeth
Sir Robert Peel, Chancellor of the Exchequer
Rt. Hon. T. Spring-Rice, Burgess for Cambridge City
Sir Robert Inglis, Member for University of Oxford
Mr. Charles Wynns, Knight for the Shire of Montgomery
Mr. Charles Villiers, Burgess for Wolverhampton
Mr. Wyse, Burgess for Waterford
Mr. Jervis, Burgess for Chester (later Lord Chief Justice of
the Common Pleas)
Mr. Pusey, Knight of the Shire for Berks
Sir Matthew White Ridley, Burgess for Newcastle-on-Tyne
Sir Charles Lemon, Knight of the Shire for Cornwall
Mr. Serjeant Goulburn, Burgess for Leicester
Sir William Molesworth, Knight of the Shire for Cornwall,
Eastern Division (later secretary for the Colonies)
Sir George Clerk, Knight of the Shire for Edinburgh
Dr. Bowring, Burgess for Renfrew, Editor of the Westminster
Review

Cole, Fifty Years, pp. 10-11.

Appendix D

Firms Submitting Tenders for
Excavation and Pulldown
on Rolls Estate

James Bugbee	34 Artillery Row, Westminster
Charles Starkie	8 Maiden Lane, Kings Cross
John Darke	Wharfs 5 & 6, Paddington
Henry Dodd	City Wharf, Egale Wharf Rd. New North Rd, Hoxton
Michael & Edmond Reddin	3 Castle Yard, Holland St., Blackfriars
James Sinnott	6 King John's Ct., Holywell Ln., Shoreditch
Stapleton V. Thorne	Wharfs 15 & 16, Paddington
Henry Tame	Wharfs 14, 17, 18, Paddington

Work 12 64/3

Appendix E

Testimonial Address to Lord Langdale

Upon his Retirement

"TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD LANGDALE, &c."

"MAY IT PLEASE YOUR LORDSHIP,"

"We, the undersigned, being Officers of the Public Records, who have long enjoyed the benefit of your Lordship's vigilant superintendence, and just and prudent direction of affairs of our department, feel that we should be wanting in respect, and deficient in our duty, if we did not venture to express in a few words the deep regret with which we have received the information that the time has arrived when that superintendence and direction will no longer be continued to us.

We cannot but recall, each of us for himself, instances of your Lordship's kind consideration. We cannot but collectively feel that we have received essential benefit from the firm and temperate manner in which this department of the Public Service has, when need were, been protected by your Lordship, and its reasonable claims supported.

We cannot but regard your Lordship with the deepest respect and veneration, as having been the author of a new system of management of the Public Records of this nation; by which provision is made for their security and more extended usefulness; a system, the value of which will be better understood as time passes on; so that distant generations will feel how much they are indebted to you. Nor can we forbear on this occasion to speak of our concern that it has not been permitted to you to witness the complete development of all that your Lordship has contemplated in respect of the invaluable muniments of which, at so much personal sacrifice, you undertook the charge.

May your Lordship, therefore be pleased to accept this expression of sincere feeling from persons whose situation enabled them to form a just appreciation of your Lordship's eminent services in this department, and their most earnest wishes that, with renovated health, you may enjoy all comforts and happiness in the years which remain of a useful

and honourable life.

We are, with profound deference and respect, your Lordship's most faithful and devoted servants,

F. S. Thomas
 Thomas Palmer
 T. Duffus Hardy
 Joseph Hunter
 Henry Cole
 Fred. Devon
 Henry George Holden
 Charles Roberts
 William Henry Black
 H. J. Sharpe

April 2nd 1851."

Palgrave's signature is conspicuously absent from the testimonial.

Lord Langdale's response sent to F. S. Thomas, Sec.

Roehampton, April 5th, 1851

"My Dear Sir,

I request you to convey to the Record Officers who have favoured me with so kind an address, the high gratification which I have received from this proof of their regard and good opinion.

It will always be a great pleasure to me, to remember that in using my best endeavors to lay the foundation of a system of Record management, which I hope will, in due time, be productive of great benefit, I have for so many years been associated with men of so much learning, ability, and industry.

I remain, my dear Sir,
 Very truly yours,
 Langdale."

Thomas Duffus Hardy, Memoirs of the Right Honorable Henry Lord Langdale, 2 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1852), 2: 191-93.

Appendix F

Payment Sheet

<u>1851/52</u>				<u>£</u>
July	25	Wm Thomas	Salary	38.19.8
Sept	1	Grissell	Advance on Iron	400.00.
"	5	Edmd Reddin	Excavating	660.00.
"	"	"	Shoring up houses	45.31
"	12	Lee and Son	1st installment	5000.00
"	26	Grissell	2nd " Iron girders	350.00.
Oct	18	Wm Thomas	Salary	43.18.4
Nov	14	Grissell	3rd Inst.	700.00
Dec	18	Lee & Son	2nd Inst.	2000.00
<u>1852</u>				
Jan	24	Wm Thomas	Salary	39.40.1
Mar	9	Lee & Son	3rd Inst.	2000.00
<u>1852/53</u>				
Apr	16	Wm Thomas	Salary	43.08.
May	6	Lee & Son	4th Inst.	2000.00.
July	2	Wm Thomas	Salary	41.12.6
"	16	Lee & Son	5th Inst.	2000.00.
"	23	R. Price	Rent on premises on Fetter Lane	5.18.1
Oct	9	Wm Thomas	Salary	44.12.6
Nov	20	Grissell	Bal. of Contract	171.70.0
Dec	18	Lee & Son	6th Inst.	2200.00.
"	27	"	7th Inst.	2000.00.
<u>1853</u>				
Feb	3	Wm Thomas	Salary	42.00.5
Mar	26	Wm Halksworth	Police, for houses on Fetter Lane & Rolls Buildings	28.18.9
"	30	Lee & Son	8th Inst.	2600.00.

1853/54

Apr	23	Wm Thomas	Salary	43.10.
June	18	John Thomas	1st Inst. carving	300.00
July	1	Wm Halksworth	Police rates	54.08.07
"	22	Wm Thomas	Salary	41.18.03
"	30	Lee & Son	9th Inst.	5200.00.
Aug	17	Pennethorne	Advance on professional services	400.00.
Sept	13	R. Price	Tithes due for various premises	6.10.10
Oct	28	Wm Thomas	Salary	46.02.
Dec	10	p. Crawley	On acct. of Law Courts Year 1850/51	50.00.

1854

Jan	6	Lee & Son	10th Inst.	2000.00.
Feb	3	Wm Thomas	Salary	38.18.06
"	24	Pennethorne	On acct. of professional services	100.00.
Mar	31	"	"	600.00.

Work 12 64/13.

Appendix G

Answers to Question VIII

"Mr. Burtt--The employment of cast or dulled glass does not seem to me at all objectionable for the Record Repository Rooms, and (perhaps, for I am diffident upon this point,) for the Workshops; for the Search and Copying Offices, the Assistant Keepers' Rooms, the habitable rooms, and all rooms on the basement story, I consider polished glass should be used; the proper supply of light is an important consideration, it is not probable that in the new building it will ever be in excess; and the nature of the fittings in the rooms of business, and of the documents and books in constant use, will considerably diminish the quantity admitted by the windows.

Mr. Devon--As in my first answer, I do approve of the dulled glass on the south side of the building where the light is strongest, it is much better than the glaring sun or using blinds; in fact, though I did not think so at first, I altered my opinion on inspection, excepting as to the basement, for I hardly know what external light there will be there.

Mr. Hardy--I think it absolutely necessary that every part of the building should be thoroughly lighted, but especially the offices and Workmen's Rooms, and I therefore infinitely prefer the transparent to the dulled glass; indeed, if it be determined to retain the galleries running along the windows, I do not think with the later kind of glass that there would be sufficient light in the rooms for performable services.

Mr. Holden--I am of the opinion that it would be better if cast or dulled glass had been avoided altogether and notwithstanding I am informed that it has been expressly provided, I consider it very expedient that it be avoided wholly in the public Searching Office, likewise in the rooms of the Assistant Keepers, Clerks, and Workmen, and that transparent glass be employed in its stead. A good clear light will be most essential in every room where Records are made use of, and more especially in the Searching Office, and unless the best means be adopted to afford it, the public will complain. In the Repository Rooms the dulled glass might be used wholly. Habitable rooms are alluded to in this question, but as I do not observe any so indicted on the plan, I can give no opinion.

Mr. Hunter--It is most essential to the due carrying on of any process which is likely to go on in this building, that there should be a fair average of light in every apartment; but in apartments where copying or the reading of Records goes on, that there should be more than the ordinary average of light. I have understood that architects have special rules, showing the area of the openings necessary for apartments of any cubic contents, and certainly in no part of the building, (except perhaps that it might be allowed in the basement story, though of this I should be doubtful,) ought less openings to be used than the rule, no doubt well known to Mr. Pennethorne, requires. The dimensions of the window-light has however already been determined, so that your question goes at once to the transparency of the glass; now the architect's rule is framed in reference to the use of ordinary window-glass, so that unless the openings are considerably wider than the rule requires, I should say that the opaque glass with which they are now glazed would not admit a sufficiency of light, at all events for the Searching Rooms and the rooms for the Assistant Keepers and Clerks.

It is, however, a question more for the architect, as it was impossible for persons visiting it, as we did, to form any just conception of what the light would be when the scaffolding, &c., was removed. It will also be borne in mind, that the building is in a close-built part of the town, and that the apartments here spoken of are on the ground floor.

Mr. Roberts--The best light that can be obtained is most necessary, in all the offices and work-rooms, and very essential in the Record rooms. I am, therefore, of the opinion that polished glass would be preferable to the dulled glass at present proposed to be used, at all events, in all the rooms on the ground floor.

Mr. Sharpe--I do not approve of the employment of cast or dulled glass for the glazing of the Search and Copying Offices, nor of the rooms appropriated to the Assistant Keepers, Clerks, and Workmen.

Mr. Thomas--The rooms, when stored with racks and records, will require all the light that we can obtain; therefore, if polished glass will give more light, by all means it should be adopted. The building by its construction is dark; the more light the better in every apartment."

Comments and Remarks from Second Circulation

"Mr. Burtt--The diffidence I have expressed upon the use of dulled glass for the workshops is removed by reading what the other Assistant Keepers have said. I do not therefore approve of the use of dulled glass for the workshops.

Mr. Devon--As I seem to stand nearly alone in approving of the "dulled glass", I must confess that my opinion and prejudice was strongly against it till I saw it, and that too on rather a sombre looking day. My impression was that when the scaffolding is removed, and surrounding buildings pulled down the light would be sufficient, and (even now) better than we have at the Chapter House; besides it seems proof against missiles and will prevent much looking out of the window; for these reasons coupled with what I have before stated, I retain my opinion in favor of the glazing as it now stands.

Mr. Holden--In providing for the admission of light into the Repository rooms due care should be had that parchment Records are not exposed to the rays of the sun as being detrimental to the durable properties of parchment by drying it up and rendering it brittle and contracted. Some Records in the room over the Rolls Chapel have formerly suffered very, materially from this cause; excessive heat from heating apparatus or other means I consider equally injurious.

Mr. Hunter--I see no reason whatever why the semi-transparent glass should have been thought of for a building where the purposes of it necessarily require so much light, and where the windows are so formed that the glazed parts are so small and the light through them somewhat obstructed by the Stone Framework. I should have thought there was no question that polished glass admitted more light than the thick dull and coloured glass though I see Mr. Thomas raises the question.

Mr. Roberts--Notwithstanding what has been urged in favor of the dulled glass on the South side of the Building. I am still of opinion that in a building so constructed and so situated there can never be too much light for a Record Office, and therefore that polished glass will be preferable in all cases. I do not know what are the "habitable rooms" mentioned in the question."

PRO 1/17.

Appendix H

Partial List of Firms that Submitted
Tenders in 1863Excavation and Hoarding

John Darke	5, 6, & 14 Wharfs, Paddington
Henry Dodd	City Wharf, Eagle Wharf Road, Hoxton
Edmund Reddin	Windsor Wharf, 42 Bankside
John Downey	Victoria Landing Wharf, Nine Elms
Samuel Williams	3 Belvedere Road South

Builders

William Cubitt & Co	Calthorpe Place, Grey's Inn Road
George Baker & Son	Palace Road, Lambeth
H. & R. Holland & Hannen	17 Duke Street, Bloomsbury
J.C. D'Anson	4 Cirencester Place
Thomas Jackson	78 Cannon Sheel West
Henry Lee & Son	Crown Wharf, Nine Elms
Lucas Brothers	6, 7, 11 Belvedere Road, Lambeth
George Mansfield & Son	12 Henry Street, Grey's Inn Lane
Piper & Wheeler	173 Bishopsgate Street
Smith & Son, & Taylor	12 South Street, Grosvenor Square
Trollope & Sons	15 Parliament Street

Work 12 65/17.

Appendix I

	Fire Cocks w/Taps for Filer buckets	Fire buckets	40 ft length of Hose pipe	Branch External Supply
Basement, main corridor	2	4	3	2
Basement, staircase, N.E. angle of building	1	2	3	1
Ground Floor, main Corridor and Hall	4	8	10	5
Ground Floor, staircase, N.E. angle of building	1	2	3	1
1st Floor, main Corridor	4	8	8	4
1st Floor, staircase, N.E. angle of building	1	2	3	1
2nd Floor, main Corridor	3	6	6	3
2nd Floor, staircase, N.E. angle of building	1	2	3	1
Total	17	34	39	18

"The Thirty-seventh Deputy Keeper's Report," in BSP
1876, vol. 39.

Appendix J

Inventory of Objects Saved
from
Rolls House and Rolls Chapel

Rolls House

Committee Room	1 wood mantel piece with large wood overmantel all painted, the marble slips, marble hearth slab & the fire grate complete
Room 16	1 carved & painted wood chimney piece with small overmantel, marble slips, & marble hearth slab but not the firegrate
Room 18	1 carved & painted wood chimney piece with open pediment overmantel, marble slips, & marble hearth
The Old Court or Library	marble statue of King George I Portland stone niche used for the statue

Rolls Chapel

Nave	two wainscot fronts & book shelves to choir stalls
Stained Glass generally	the whole of the stained glass from the various windows
Chancel	the wainscot reredos
Monuments	John Young L.L.D.-north side Richard Alington-south side

Edward, Lord Bruce of Kingloss
-north side

Tablets

William Fortescue-south side
Robert, Lord Clifford-north side
Sir Thomas Sewell-north side

selected portions of the old
molded stone from the fragments
now in the chapel to be preserved

any fragments of old molded stone
found in the chapel walls will be
preserved

the old bell from the turret to
be reserved & deposited in a place
appointed on the site

Work 12 67/2.

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