

*Presented at Central  
Committee on 27/10/61*

BLOOMSBURY CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH

At the request of the Acting Secretary of the Central Committee, I have made a detailed inspection of the church premises and made certain recommendations for alterations to the building. To illustrate my recommendations I have prepared the following information:-

1. Survey Drawings of the building as existing.  
(Drawings Nos. 612/7/1, 2 and 3).
2. Alternative sketch proposals for the rearrangement of the Institute, incorporating a Caretaker's Flat.  
(Drawing No. 601/L/19/10).
3. Alternative sketch proposals for the modernization of the Basement including various Lounges and Kitchen Service Area.  
(Drawing No. 601/L/19/11).

The above drawings are in addition to my earlier drawings Nos. 2c, 4 and 6 which showed sketch proposals for the Church only.

4. An approximate itemized estimate of costs for the complete proposals.
5. A general report giving observations and suggestions under the following headings:-

A. THE EXTERIOR

- i) Cleaning and Renovating
- ii) Structural Alterations
- iii) General
- iv) Complete Rebuilding of Front Elevation

B. THE INTERIOR

- i) General
- ii) The Institute
  - (a) The Caretaker's Flat
  - (b) The remainder
- iii) The Church
  - (a) Previous suggestions
  - (b) Further suggestions not contained in (a)
  - (c) The Entrance Vestibule
- iv) The Basement
  - (a) The Lounges and Central Area
  - (b) The Service Area. (Including equipment)
  - (c) Cloakrooms and Toilets
  - (d) Furniture, Furnishings, Crockery, Cutlery, etc.
  - (e) Temporary Adaptation of Basement for use as Church
  - (f) Surrounding Vaults
- v) The Sub-Basement
- vi) General Circulation Areas
  - (a) The Church Tower staircases
  - (b) The Institute Staircase to Shaftesbury Avenue
  - (c) The Institute Staircase to Dyott Street
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- vii) Heating and Ventilating
- viii) Lighting and Electrical



GENERAL REPORT ON THE PROPOSED ALTERATIONS AND  
REDECORATIONS OF THE WHOLE BUILDING

A. THE EXTERIOR

1) Cleaning and Renovating

I have approached the London Stone Cleaning & Restoration Co. Limited for a report and approximate estimate for cleaning and restoring the external elevations of the Church. A copy of their reply to me together with an approximate estimate for the work is enclosed with this report.

ii) Structural Alterations

(a) Front Elevation

In addition to cleaning and renovating the exterior it is felt that certain changes in shape and size to some of the windows together with new timber frames and glazing to all of the windows would improve the external appearance.

It is suggested that the cill height of the left hand ground floor tower window be raised and a new window of a similar proportion be incorporated in the right hand tower at ground floor level. This of course assumes that the existing notice boards of various shapes and sizes be replaced by two new horizontal boards (one each side) of sufficient size to contain all the required posters and notices. It is also suggested that the four tower windows (two at Church Gallery level and two at Institute level) be made of the same proportions, similar in size to the present window to the Choirmaster's Room but without a central column support and without arched recesses to the brick-work over. The new windows would be in wood with simple flat stone dressed lintols over. The windows to the Church should be of suitable character and design and I suggest that they should have double glazing to reduce the transmission of sound from outside. Proposals for the three main entrance doors will be described later under the heading of the "Entrance Vestibule". Another improvement to the front elevation both from a visual and practical point of view would be the rebuilding of that part of the elevation at Institute floor level between the main towers. From the purely aesthetic point of view, the rebuilding may not be justified against the cost of such an operation but if Scheme 3 is adopted for the Caretaker's Flat and as a result the Church Parlour or Committee Room moved to the front of the building then a window treatment as shown on Scheme 3 (Drawing No.10) would be justified, with a lower cill height giving a view towards the trees in the Square outside. (The present cill height is approx. 6'0").

(b) Side Elevation

It is suggested that the cill of the ground floor tower window be raised to match the windows in a similar position on the front elevation and also that the other tower windows above should be reconstructed in a similar manner to those described for the front elevation.

As already mentioned, the church windows should be of a suitable character and design and have double glazing to reduce traffic noise from the main road. The proposals for Basement windows are described later.



New casement opening lights glazed in one square and fitted into the existing frames are suggested for the Institute windows except where new windows of increased width and reduced height are shown for the Caretaker's Flat in which case the roof construction will need to be altered with complete new windows.

The removal of the existing rusty wire guards to the side windows has been allowed for and provision made for new guards to be fitted, although I am not sure that new guards are really necessary.

The only really major structural alteration to the side elevation is the provision of an entrance giving direct access to the Basement Lounges from the top of Bucknall Street. At first an effort was made to make this entrance at the foot of the tower with new stairs down but the arrangement and construction of the existing circular stone staircase made this impracticable. It is suggested therefore that the left hand ground floor church window be carried down to form a new entrance, with lobby behind, using the existing circular staircase, renovated and re-lit as the way down to the new Lounges. (See part ground floor plan drawing No.11).

#### (c) Rear Elevation

The first major point to note on the rear elevation is the unsatisfactory arrangement of the lean-to escape staircase at the junction of Dyott Street and Bucknall Street. Its structural stability cannot be very sound since at some time in the past it was found necessary to tie the structure back to the main walls of the church with metal tie rods. (These show on the surface of the wall with a large letter 'S'). Furthermore the present locked wire door at ground level makes it useless as an escape stair.

As the escape exit from the church gallery will need to be repositioned in any case and a new landing with new escape doors provided at street level, it would, at the same time, be possible to couple this with a new escape stair from the kitchen service area in the basement. It is suggested therefore that the whole staircase be demolished and rebuilt to incorporate the above proposals.

Window frames generally to the rear elevation are sound and it is proposed only to renew opening casements, glazed in one square, to the Institute, Institute staircase and Minister's Lavatory windows.

The windows to the Minister's Vestry should be renewed complete whilst the four stained glass windows to the Church ought to remain unaltered. The windows to the new baptismal changing rooms were described in my earlier proposals for the Church itself.

Alterations to Basement windows are described later.

One other important point to note concerning the rear elevation is a bulge of approx. 6" in the centre of the rear wall. (The wall bowing from top to bottom). It has not yet been ascertained whether or not this is serious but it should be noted that the cracks in the Lounge walls adjoining this wall at right angles may be directly related. Information concerning the length of time which the uncracked glass "Telltale" has been in position in the Lounge wall may throw further light on this matter. A provisional sum of money has been allowed for investigating this further.



(d) Internal Elevations to Open Area

There are two cracked lintols in the internal area over windows to the front Institute staircase, which should be replaced. The proposals for the Church windows have already been described. Although the Institute windows look in very poor condition with bare wood showing through in many places, it appears only necessary to provide new opening casements into the existing frames. New opening casements, glazed in one square, are also proposed for the staircase windows but this is purely for aesthetic reasons.

(e) The Roof

Messrs. Turnerized Roofing Co. (Gt. Britain) Ltd. with whom you have a contract for periodically renovating the roof, have been approached as to its present condition. They stated the roof to be covered at the moment with asphalt and saw no immediate need for relaying it.

It was also noticed that there are five glazed lay lights to the Institute corridor which used to provide natural lighting from roof lights above. These have long since been asphalted over but might possibly be restored or renewed if desired to give, once again, natural light in this position.

The timber rail along part of the roof to Bucknall Street gives little protection at the moment and if it is felt that a safe railing is required around the roof then a new tubular steel rail both to Bucknall Street and Dyott Street could be constructed.

iii) General

In addition to the above I have allowed for preparing and painting all new and existing windows and doors and all cast iron and metal work to all external elevations and the roof.

In an effort to improve the natural lighting through the Basement windows on all sides it is suggested that new thin reinforced concrete/glass brick pavement lights be provided throughout the length of the building at the front and side and where necessary at the rear. The width of the Basement area could be increased beneath the pavement in Shaftesbury Avenue, if so desired, to give even more light. (See survey section drawing No.3 and part ground floor plan drawing No.11). The lights would need to carry through to a corresponding transome on the basement windows to prevent the ingress of dirt into the areas below.

It is felt that the neon lettering to the front elevation could be considerably improved. Also a Greek Cross might be designed over the Rose window, lit from behind, and a provisional sum has been allowed for improvements of this kind.

iv) Complete Rebuilding of the Front Elevation

It has been suggested that consideration should be given to the rebuilding of the main elevation. It should be realised that elevations of a building are the natural development of the plan and that in the present case the main features are the twin towers, the entrance floor, the church gallery walls and the institute windows. If it were decided to reconstruct this elevation all these features would again have to be expressed in similar proportions. The operation would be feasible however and a sketch showing a possible design is enclosed with this report.

*(To follow if requested)*



## B. THE INTERIOR

### 1) General

In addition to the new structural alterations proposed I have allowed for clearing out old store rooms etc., and for cleaning and redecorating throughout the whole interior.

### ii) The Institute

#### (a) Caretaker's Flat. (See drawing No.10)

Generally the alternative proposals for the Caretaker's Flat are self-explanatory from the drawings but there are one or two points which may need further explanation.

Scheme 1. If the Living Room is incorporated in part of the John Clifford Room, which has an existing ceiling height of 12'0" and cill height to existing windows of 6'0", then it is almost impossible to put in a suspended ceiling and almost essential to raise the floor level. This would give a reasonable room height and a more suitable cill height to the windows - hence the necessity for the steps up from the entrance hall. Scheme 2 is an adaptation of Scheme 1 should the Choirmaster's Room be required for the upper part of an organ chamber. Scheme 2 also shows an alternative arrangement for the kitchen and bathroom. The Living Room here has been shown without a raised floor but this is not entirely satisfactory. One of the main drawbacks with Scheme 1 or 2 is the length of waste corridor space which is required to by-pass the flat giving access only to one or two rooms. Scheme 3 is a more practical solution as it reduces to a minimum the waste corridor space but, if as a result the Church Parlour were moved to the front of the building, Scheme 3 would be more expensive. (See estimate).

#### (b) The Remainder

The only other room at Institute floor level which requires further explanation from drawing No.10 and the estimate, is the male lavatory. It was felt that the state of this lavatory, its plan and window arrangement, was particularly poor and suggest therefore that it be replanned with new fittings and decoration.

The question of sound insulating the complete floor between Institute and church was considered and it would appear to be an expensive item. Although a sum of money has been allowed for this it would not seem to be worth the expense unless sound transmission between church and institute is particularly bad.

### iii) The Church

#### (a) Previous Suggestions

The present drawings and report do not repeat any suggestions which were made earlier for the Church. There are however one or two points of note:-

- 1) An extra sum of money should now be allowed for increased costs of labour and materials arising since my last estimate.
- ii) An extra sum of money has been allowed for work in connection with the repositioning of the organ, as it is now considered better to have the organ pipes in two sections on either side of the Rose window rather than in one section on a side gallery.



(b) Further suggestions not contained in my previous report

A major additional item to the Church itself is the provision of new double glazed windows and frames (excluding stained glass windows) described earlier.

It is also possible to construct two new ways through from the lift to the church, one at church gallery level and one at ground floor level. It is possible at gallery level to make this way through into the tower staircase adjoining tread No.53, although two steps will be required to accommodate the difference in level. At ground level, however, it is impossible to make a way through into the tower staircase without expensive alterations to the stairs. It is therefore suggested that the way through should be made direct into the church (as shown on drawing No.11) with a small lobby similar to the one proposed at the other side of the Church near the the new entrance to the Basement Lounges. This lobby might then be used as a small cloakroom since there does not appear to be any provision for coats in the entrance vestibule. These lobbies could well be double glazed to reduce sound transmission.

Other items connected with the Church which would definitely improve the overall scheme but which may or may not be considered essential are as follows:- (a) new floor coverings to Church aisles at ground floor and gallery level; (b) new doors and entrance lobby screen at gallery level; (c) new screen to pew backs adjacent to gallery entrances and (d) further renovations for completely remodernizing the two vestries. (See details in estimate).

The acoustics in the Church have not yet been investigated in detail but a sum of money has been allotted for acoustical correction should this be found necessary.

(c) The Entrance Vestibule

It is felt that the existing tall, solid doors to the main entrances are out of scale with modern ideas. Smaller entrance doors in hardwood, glazed in a decorative manner and set in a glass screen would do much to improve the lighting in the vestibule and improve the character of the elevation. Since the size of the vestibule cannot be increased due to surrounding load-bearing structural walls, the creation of a greater sense of space could best be achieved by careful choice of colours in the decoration aided by the removal of the solid internal screens at present subdividing the vestibule. The provision of a new floor finish and suspended ceiling is also allowed for and it is proposed to put in new sound insulated doors between the vestibule and church as the main barrier to traffic noise from outside.

iv) The Basement

(a) The Lounges and Central Area

The main objective for my replanning the large existing basement hall was to find a way of subdividing it into smaller Lounges so that when only about half a dozen people were present they would feel at home and not lost in a large hall. At the same time, however, the lounges and hall should be able to accommodate several hundred people without breaking the gathering down into small independant groups.

In view of this it was felt that the best way of subdividing the hall was by changes in floor level, changes in ceiling level,



different types of lighting and open or moveable screen units rather than by partitions or even folding sliding screens. Drawing No.11 shows two possible ways of achieving this.

In both schemes it is proposed to raise the floor level of the surrounding lounges by providing two steps up from the central area. Not only does this provide a division between the lounges and the central hall but it brings the floor level up to the existing level of the staircase towers, cloakrooms, lavatories and surrounding stores and does away with the necessity of steps up into all these surrounding rooms.

Secondly, it is proposed to provide a suspended ceiling over the whole of the central area. This again has several advantages. It provides another link in the visual breakdown of the hall into smaller areas and at the same time hides the maze of existing beams and pipes. It also provides a space for recessed lighting fittings and heating and ventilating ducts.

Both the above schemes suggested on drawing No.11 have been designed around the existing column supports since it seems almost impossible to try to alter these in any way.

The surrounding lounges have been divided into three main types:-

(a) A general lounge with easy chairs and low tables. A certain amount of carpeting and curtaining could also be provided,

(b) A Reading and Exhibition Lounge with fixed seating and low tables. It is suggested that in addition to several bookshelves, there should also be available daily newspapers, periodicals, magazines, etc.,

and (c) A Coffee Lounge and Restaurant. This has been set out in a formal manner so that a limited number of midday meals could be provided if so desired as well as snacks and coffee throughout the day.

(b) The Service Area

The detailing of this area can be carried out if the scheme is approved in outline. It will include stores, a food preparation area, cooking area, servery wash-ups, staff cloaks and lavatories etc. etc. The exact size and extent will of course depend upon the frequency, type and number of meals to be provided.

(c) Cloakrooms and Lavatories

The existing cloakroom and lavatory accommodation in the basement would be completely out of keeping with the proposals for the remainder of the basement. In addition therefore to providing new fittings it is proposed to redesign the layout as shown on drawing No.11 with access from the Lounge Area.

(d) Furniture, Furnishings, Crockery, Cutlery etc.

I have allowed a sum of money under this heading but I would stress that it is almost impossible to do more than guess at the amount without considerably more research. Such items as coffee machines, refrigerators, kitchen and cooking equipment, cutlery, linen etc., all have to be taken into account.



(e) Temporary adaptation of Basement for use as Church

If the work to the basement is almost completed before work is begun in the Church then there is no reason why services cannot be held there temporarily. The following points should be considered and allowed for in the estimate:-

- a) The balustrade or screen units around the central hall would go in after the work to the Church is completed. This would leave a large open area for use during church services which could probably be laid out to seat 400/500. The Institute lounge could be utilized as an overflow hall if required connected to Basement by Public Address System.
- b) Provision of a temporary pulpit.
- c) Provision of public address system.
- d) Temporary acoustic treatment.
- e) Adaptation of one or two rooms as vestries.
- (f) Surrounding Vaults

Allowance has been made for cleaning out, adapting and waterproofing the vaults under Dyott Street for use as stores in connection with the service area. For cleaning out, waterproofing and painting white the areas to Bucknall Street in an effort to increase natural light reflection through the Basement windows, and for cleaning out and tidying up the vaults under the pavement to Shaftesbury Avenue.

v) The Sub-Basement

The extent of the increase in size of the sub-basement for use as a boiler house/fuel store will depend on the type of heating scheme installed and whether or not it is necessary to remove the present oil fuel tank from the basement over. It may also be necessary to reconsider the means of escape precautions.

vi) General Circulation Areas

(a) The Church Tower Staircases

These circular staircases are constructed of stone steps cantilevered from the perimeter walls. Any alterations, therefore, to the construction would be difficult and costly. Although the steps are not unduly worn I suggest that they might be resurfaced and the old wrought iron balustrade replaced with one of a more modern design.

The staircase at the top of each tower leading to the high level gallery will no longer be required and should be removed when the gallery is taken down.

The headroom in the towers at the moment from the gallery landing level is approx. 18'0". If it is a feasible proposition to house the organ pipes in these towers, with large grilles through to the Church, then a new floor could be constructed to give approx. 9'0" headroom below with the organ pipes above. One of the towers may need to take in the space above at Institute floor level since the base pipes of an organ are of considerable height. This has been allowed for in one of the schemes for the Institute (see drawing No.10.). If the above suggestion for the organ pipes is not a good one from the musical angle, then they



could be housed at the back of the gallery, adjacent to the towers and on either side of the existing Rose window.

(b) The Institute Staircase to Shaftesbury Avenue

Generally the condition of this staircase is quite good and the only major suggestion is for an alternative way down to the Basement Lounges to be provided from ground floor level. The staircase could be developed as the main entrance to the Basement for passers-by or be used as an equally important alternative to the suggested entrance in Bucknall Street.

(c) The Institute Staircase to Dyott Street

No major alterations are suggested for this staircase. Allowance has been made, in addition to redecoration, only for new doors at ground level and for windows to have new opening lights glazed in one square.

(d) The Lift and its surroundings

I have noted that the lift has recently been renovated mechanically when the electricity supply to the building was changed over from D.C. to A.C. and consultation with the Express Lift Company has confirmed that it will not be difficult to arrange for the lift to stop at Church gallery level.

It was felt, however, that the lift car and surroundings to the lift shaft at each floor level could be greatly improved and a provisional sum for this work has been allowed.

vii) Heating and Ventilating

To help me with my estimate for heating and ventilating the building I have approached Messrs. W. Richardson & Co. Ltd., a reputable firm of Heating Engineers with whom I have dealt satisfactorily on several previous jobs. They have prepared reports and a preliminary estimate for their suggestions.

viii) Lighting and Electrical

At your request I have approached Messrs. Gooding Electrical for a report and provisional estimate for lighting and electrical work, copies of which are enclosed.

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OCTOBER 1961.