

HISTORIC BUILDING REPORT

**SUCKLING HOUSE & STUART HALL (CINEMA CITY)
ST ANDREW'S STREET, NORWICH**

TG 2308 NW

GRADE 1 LISTED

APRIL 2004

**PHIL THOMAS MA MIFA
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEYOR & HISTORIC BUILDING CONSULTANT**

HISTORIC BUILDING REPORT ON STUART HALL & SUCKLING HOUSE

Contents

- Introduction
- A summary of the history of Suckling House & Stuart Hall
- A description of both Stuart Hall and Suckling House as they now stand, both internally and externally
- Interpretation of the development of the building
- An introduction to Edward T Boardman architect.
- Impact of new scheme on the historic fabric of the building.
- Photographs & Illustrations
- Bibliography of sources
- Acknowledgements
- Appendix 1 – Famous People associated with Suckling House
- Appendix 2 – Floor plans of buildings

List of Illustrations

(Please note, many more photographs are supplied on the accompanying CD-ROM along with archive drawings and CAD plans).

- Cover The Name plate on the north entrance porch
- 1 Stuart Hall north exterior elevation
- 2 North entrance porch on St Andrew's Street
- 3 Stuart Hall & Suckling House as viewed from NW
- 4 West Georgian range
- 5 West elevation of the courtyard
- 6 East elevation of courtyard
- 7 Detail of foyer block stair windows
- 8 Cinema foyer and box office
- 9 Exit doors from Stuart Hall gallery
- 9a Stuart Hall auditorium set up as cinema
- 9b Stuart Hall auditorium set up as cinema
- 10 North internal elevation of auditorium
- 11 South internal elevation of auditorium
- 12 East internal elevation of auditorium
- 13 West internal elevation of auditorium
- 14 North survey elevation
- 15 South survey elevation
- 16 East survey elevation
- 17 West survey elevation
- 18 Plan of hall (with new detail of revealed stage)
- 19 Feature 'A' cornice mouldings
- 20 Feature 'B' console
- 21 Feature 'C' frieze
- 22 Feature 'D' frieze
- 23 Feature 'E' classical scroll device
- 24 Feature 'F' proscenium mouldings
- 25 Feature 'G' radiator access covers
- 26 Feature 'H' altered stage
- 27 Revealed stage (previously hidden by insulation)
- 28 Revealed paintwork (previously hidden by tiered seating)
- 29 Lantern ceiling (as seen in 1970s before blocked)
- 30 Stuart Hall auditorium in the 1920s
- 31 Roof of lantern
- 32 East gable of 'foyer block' with its 'tumbling-in' brickwork.
- 33 Boardman drawing of Suckling House roof and crown post
- 34 Vaulted bay in the west range
- 35 Blocked service door in Great Hall
- 36 West side of blocked service door in west range
- 37 Plan to show relationship between service doors and western vaults
- 38 Conjectural plan of Suckling House c.1570
- 39 Great hall before restoration
- 40 Great hall during restoration
- 41 City Arms in late 19th century
- 42 St Andrew's Hill c1915 looking north

- 43 St Andrew's Hill c1920s looking south
- 44 Plan of buildings based on 1885 OS map
- 45 North external elevation of Suckling House *during* building work
- 46 North external elevation of Suckling House *before* building work
- 47 Suckling House courtyard looking east
- 48 Suckling House courtyard looking east during restoration
- 49 Boardman's first phase of work; the restoration of Suckling House
- 50 Boardman's plan for the ground floor of Stuart Hall (NRO 86-2-20)
- 51 Boardman's plan for the second floor of Stuart Hall (NRO 86-2-20)
- 52 Boardman's section through the hall (NRO 86-2-22)
- 53 Boardman's elevation for the St Andrew's Street elevation (NRO 86-2-22)

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to collate all published sources on the Hall and House in advance of the redevelopment of Stuart Hall as a multi-screen arts cinema. This work will require the stripping of the interior of the 1920s hall, the removal of the gallery and lantern, and the insertion of a lift for disabled access in the foyer.

There is no requirement (or funds) for researching archives other than material easily available such as the Boardman archive (in the NRO) and old photographs. There is no intention of repeating that already written on the buildings other than in summary, nor will the social history of the building be covered (unless relevant) as this is fully discussed in articles such as that by G Kelly (1997).

The project is focussing on those areas affected by the redevelopment as these are the areas which will be lost or altered. Therefore they have been carefully recorded by drawings and/or photographs. These areas will however be put into context with the historic hall, the architect (Boardman), and the 1920s restoration. In addition, observations will be made about each room or area in the building in order to understand the building as a whole.

This report should be read in conjunction with the surveyed elevations of Stuart Hall auditorium, which were produced as part of this project, and a CD-ROM of record photographs, and archive drawings.

Summary Statement

The buildings on this site appear to date back as far as the fourteenth century. The oldest parts are the open hall of Suckling House and the vaulted bays of the west range. This was built as a merchant's house and has been associated with many of the prominent citizens of Norwich including Robert Suckling after which it is named.

There are signs of many alterations and changes to the buildings even within the earliest work. One example is the awkward relationship between the great hall and the vaulted bays of the west range. This shows that they are not contemporary. There are also clear signs of modernisation in the eighteenth century most obviously the re-facing of much of the western elevation.

Suckling House is known to have been extensively restored in the 1920s by the architect Edward T Boardman. This included the reintroduction of lost features such as the Oriel window in the hall. Boardman is also responsible for the large brick auditorium building which occupies the eastern end of the site. This building was built in 1925 and opened by the Duke of York (later George VI). Both the new hall and Suckling House was given to the city of Norwich on the provision that 'the place should be used for the advancement of education in its widest and most comprehensive sense'. It is named after Laura Elizabeth Stuart, the sister of Ethel and Helen Colman who financed the restoration work and new hall.

Since the late 1970s Stuart Hall has been used as an arts cinema known as 'Cinema City'. The medieval hall is used as a bar and café (Take 5) with kitchens, lavatories, and storage in the vaulted bays. The Georgian west range is used for cinema administration offices and an educational room.

Description of the buildings that make up Cinema City.

Exterior:

General

Cinema City is comprised of three buildings that are either connected now, or have been in the past. These are the Stuart Hall (with associated foyer and offices), Suckling House, and a Georgian west range (also technically Suckling House).

These buildings occupy a corner plot on the junction of St Andrew's Street to the north and St Andrew's Hill to the west. The church of the same name is just to the west of the site, and former monastic site of Blackfriars Hall, is just across the road to the north. The buildings are abutted to the south by Flint House and to the east by a late 20th century office block. As the name of the road suggests the site is on a slope and rises both to the east and south.

The north frontage is 38 metres long and on the west it is 19 ½ metres (or 30 metres including Flint House). The north front is a little set back from the pavement behind metal railings, but the west range is right on the road. Although both frontages are built up, there is a courtyard behind.

Stuart Hall

Stuart Hall occupies the eastern end of the site and is distinct from Suckling House as it is built in red brickwork (fig.1). It is two storeys high and is an irregular façade with a projecting central plain, with a single storied offset at the front occupying a triangular position. On the eastern side of the façade there is a doorway with moulded stone architrave and keystone, topped by a semi-circular pediment.

The main feature of this building are the four circular windows at first floor level, three of which are in the central projection. These are blind, the frames remain but the space where the panes should be is painted black. These windows are formed in brick voussoirs with four white keystones. The only other windows are a small ground level opening to light the exit lobby, a roof light to the triangular projection, and a window to light the Retiring Room (this is hidden behind the parapet over the eastern door).

In addition to the irregular plains of the façade, it is further enlivened by rusticated quoins and a cornice (both of brick). These rusticated quoins have also been stretched horizontally to decorate around the east door and the face of the triangular block. Portland stone has been used for coping and weathering to contrast with the red brick.

The triangular form of the single storied projection gives it a western face which is similarly treated to the north except that it has a modest external door.

The wall connecting Stuart Hall to Suckling House (the right flank) is not just brickwork. Here there is flintwork up to a level as high as the eaves of the older building. This flintwork has clearly been cut back to accommodate the western of the round windows and the upper section is then built in brick.

Suckling House (including main entrance)

Suckling House forms the central section of the north frontage. The walls are constructed in flint with the occasional medieval brick, and further brickwork is used to form features, quoins, and for blocking.

At the eastern end is a large porch which continues one of the earlier buttresses (fig.2). This porch has an external skin of flint with brick quoins; the interior is all brick and can be seen to abut the building. The porch has a timber arch with the arms of St Andrew in each spandrel. There are three steps up to the double entrance doors. This doorway is stone set in the brick surround. It is splayed inwards with a moulded arch over. This has trefoils within the spandrels.

Above the porch is a long timber window of five lights surrounded by brickwork. To the west of the porch is a large window of nine lights. The timber lintel over this suggests that it was once bigger, as does the brick blocking and flint relieving arch.

West of this is another window, this time pointed and set within a moulded brick surround. This window appears to be metal framed. Below is a two centred Gothic doorway with moulded arch and hood. This has brick voussoirs over and there is a six foot band of brickwork from this door back to the porch, with a plinth with brick weathering below. The roof is tall and steeply pitched, covered with clay tiles.

West Range (including Flint House)

This range projects north of the hall range of Suckling House by a bay. The east side of this projection is built of flint and has a sash window on both ground and first floors each with brick surrounds and keystones.

The north elevation is completely brick and is similar to Stuart Hall in that it has rusticated brick quoins and a moulded brick cornice which continues down both the east and west elevations (fig.3). On the ground floor it has two sash windows of eight panes and an oval plaque at first floor level. This plaque is surrounded by brick voussoirs and has white keystones as does the windows of Stuart Hall. This has never been a window however as it is placed below the chimney and must be on the line of the flue. Above the cornice there is a parapet with Portland coping and ornamentation leading into the chimney. The roof itself is hipped and covered in tiles.

The west elevation will be considered in two sections, the first five brick bays and then the final two of flintwork.

The first five bays of the western elevation all lie within rusticated quoins beneath a moulded cornice and parapet (fig.4). The whole façade is Georgian with typical door-case and windows. The face is divided into five bays by vertical rows of buff coloured bricks which contrast with the red brick. These bays are not even as the most southern has to accommodate a large Gothick window which is twice the size of the others. The ground floor brickwork of this bay differs from that around, suggesting that the window is not contemporary. Curiously, there is a vertical bay division just after the quoins on the north side of the building.

This entrance to this range is by a door in the second bay from north. This has a simply moulded surround and a pediment supported by consoles. There is a window in each bay at each of the two floors. Eight of these are sash windows of twelve panes rubbed brick flat arches and central keystone. The most southern bay has a very wide Gothick arched window with intersecting glazing bars. This is set in an area of different brickwork. There is one further window which is squeezed in at first floor level just to the left of the most southern sash window. This appears to be cut in at a later date.

The final two southern bays of this range have more in common with the adjacent Flint House than the Georgian façade to the north. These two bays are faced square knapped flints which have been carefully coursed. This is a technique found on the nearby Bridewell. Brickwork has been used to frame all the doors and windows and make quoins at either end of this stretch. These bricks have the benefit of being easy to cut or mould into reveals and contrast well with the dark flints.

At ground level there are two doorways, the northern of which has rusticated pilasters with a flat hood over. This leads through a vault into the courtyard. The second doorway has a rusticated arch and is now blocked. Both door surrounds are of timber inserted into 19th century brickwork. They are not medieval.

Above the doors is a very long timber window and above that the overhanging eaves of the roof. This tiled roof has the same mix of colours as the Georgian façade so was obviously done at the same time. A brick chimney marks the divide from Flint House.

As viewed from Courtyard - West elevation

The west wall is mainly built out of roughly coursed flint with brick features (fig.5). There are two arches at ground floor, both formed in modern brick cut into the surrounding fabric. Both originally lead into one of the vaulted bays, but the southern one is now blocked with modern timberwork.

South of the southern doorway is a straight joint and a window opening which has since been filled in brick. This fill has itself been cut for a small square opening and subsequently filled.

At first floor level there are two obvious blocked features. The southern one is tall and narrow with a timber lintel and threshold. To the north is a straight joint and brick blocking, but the full extent is not clear due to render. The first floor is built with a mixture of flint and brick, but above these blocked features the wall is just built with brick set in lime-mortar. There are various cuts into the fabric filled with modern cement. The south wall of the courtyard abuts this one.

North elevation of courtyard

This wall has a Gothic door on the west side. This has a splay opening, chamfer stop, moulded arch, and hood. The hood mould is incomplete (to the west) but ends with a male corbel head

on the east. This door is clearly heavily restored as only the west side (up to the first few voussoirs) are original. The wooden door is 20th century.

The north wall itself is flint with areas of brickwork cut in. Between the door and the oriel is a large blocked area where a window had been. This had obviously been cut into the wall, a surround made in brick and the window inserted. Now all that remains is the blocking which is brick and flint near the base and just flint above.

At first floor level there is a form of string course or banding which starts in brick at the west end, then continues in stone above the blocked window. Above this is flint and brick rubble walling, very roughly coursed.

The oriel window projects from the hall as a half octagon. The top is timber and glass, but the base is flint panel with brick quoins and weathering.

East of this is the projecting stair and lavatory block associated with Stuart Hall. This is flint faced with red brick for quoins and features. There are three windows facing west (all above one another), and both the landing and lavatory windows facing south. There is some evidence of alteration above the first floor landing window. At ground level there are two doors giving access to the cellar or foyer.

East elevation of courtyard

There is a small section of Stuart Hall that forms the east wall of the courtyard, and this is also flint faced with red brick features (fig.6). At ground level there is the emergency exit with its round head, but it is the emergency stair and projection box which dominant this wall. These external stairs lead up to the gallery emergency exit and gives access to the projection room. This room hangs over the stair and clearly abuts the lavatory block to the north. The projection room is built to match the existing fabric and has a central window.

South Wall of courtyard

This southern wall of the courtyard is built of brick and flint with two large wooden windows which are clearly designed to be sympathetic to the restored medieval hall, despite being a separate property.

Interior:*The Lobby*

Stuart Hall is entered on the north side through double doors from St Andrew's Plain. This brings one into a hallway or lobby, where there are further doors in every elevation. To the south is a chamfered and pointed arch over the stairs which go both up to the first floor, and down to the Gents lavatory and exit to courtyard. To the east are the double doors into the auditorium, and to the west is an entrance into the open hall of Suckling House.

The most obvious feature in the hallway is the cinema box office which occupies the northeast corner (fig.8). This is a simple kiosk of (3.5 x 1.87 metres) with a hatch to the west and door to the south. This appears to be late twentieth century, most probably built in 1978 when the Cinema City moved in. Within the box office on the east wall can be seen a plaque commemorating the work the Colman sisters did for the Norwich University Extension Society.

In the west wall there is another plaque, this one dedicated to Laura Elizabeth Stuart. It was in memory of this sister that Ethel and Helen Colman named the hall.

Below the plaque is 16th century fireplace. In the spandrels this has the Suckling Arms on one side and the Suckling Arms impaling Cardinal in the other (Colman p8). This is recorded as being found in pieces and was rebuilt during the 1920s restoration work. There is no recess for a fire, no flue, and there is not a chimney at this end of the building. Therefore there is no historical precedent for this feature being here.

Between the fireplace and the door to the open hall, there is evidence of a gas light. Only the gas tap now remains, but there are further signs of gas lights throughout the lobby block and Stuart Hall itself. One good example survives in the west wall of the auditorium.

All the doors off the lobby are good quality. The entrance doors are panelled oak with 'Gothic' leaded glazing framed by moulded timbers, the door to the courtyard is another oak panelled door with a glazed upper panel with square leaded panes, and even the door to the Gents is a good solid oak door. All have latches and are Arts and Crafts in quality.

However the best doors are reserved for the auditorium entrance. Here there are two sets of double doors side by side. These are also oak with panels, but are ornamented with a large

diamond pattern in the top half. This pattern is continued above the door in the fanlight over the door, a black material being used as infill to contrast the colour of the wood. It is the brass fittings which make these doors stand out. They have polished finger plates on one side and handles on the exterior. At the base there are large bolts and polished floor plates, which all contribute to make an impressive entrance.

The final item of note in the foyer is a timber in the ceiling. This beam runs north-south and is chamfered.

Update – At the time of writing the builders are exposing the south wall of the lobby. This has revealed a stone plaque to those occupants of the building who had served the city as mayor or bailiff. A test panel had been made in the plaster to expose the wall core. This shows it to be of medieval flint and lime-mortar. This wall has a western face which has been abutted by the twentieth century wall which forms the west wall of the Gents’.

Stuart Hall (Letters in bold refer to labels on elevations, figures 14-17)

Stuart Hall is a large auditorium measuring 13½ metres long east–west (or 16 metres including the stage) and 13½ to 14½ metres wide north-south. It is approximately square in layout, but with a long recess to the north, and a corner taken out for a northeast lobby. In its most recent incarnation it was set up as an arts cinema with tiered seating facing the screen mounted on the stage to the east (figs. 9a & 9b).

One enters through the pair of double doors from the lobby into a screened passage at the rear of the hall which filters the audience around the back of the tiered seating towards the stage where they can then find their seats. Alternatively, at first floor level there is a single pair of double doors giving access to the large gallery and further raised seating (fig.9).

Due to requirements of a cinema the hall has been painted a dark green but despite this dull colour the hall is still very decorative and attention is immediately drawn to the plasterwork which gives this room character. The most spectacular feature of this hall must be the large lantern over the centre. This gives the room huge volume and makes it appear very grand. Although it remains white, the three large windows which would have lit each face have been blocked. These lantern windows would have made the hall incredibly light, especially as they were otherwise relying on gaslights.

The lantern has fluted pilasters with Ionic capitals between each window, and the ceiling is divided up into 9 panels each with coffered squares (fig.24). Beneath the lantern there are moulded cornices (**A**) leading down to scrolled corbels (**B**) (or consoles) which support the beams (figs. 19 & 20).

Below the cornice and corbels nearly everything is painted green with the exception of the roundels and marble. The four roundels in the north wall are actually blocked round windows, those seen externally. The fill is painted green, but the moulded surround has been left white.

A frieze runs around the front of the gallery and then continues all around the whole room (**C**) (fig. 21). This has also escaped the green paint and is an abstract flower pattern linked by spirals. This is a white motive on a brown background with a gold beading above. The frieze is bordered both above and below by a white plaster moulding.

Acting as a kind of internal stringcourse marking the bottom of the gallery is another frieze (**D**) (fig. 22). This has been painted green but it is apparent that it has similar mouldings and beading to that above. It differs in that the central band consists of an arcading pattern of recessed vertical lozenges.

Large panels cover the majority of the lower section of the walls. These are panels of canvas material, Cellotex, painted dark green and bordered by moulded timbers painted a lighter shade of green.

In each wall, apart from the eastern wall where the stage is located, there are what appear to be elongated fireplaces. These are in fact access covers over the heating system (**G**) (fig.25). Although these panels look like the black marble which surrounds them, closer inspection reveals that they are metal plates painted so that the veins of the adjacent marble continue through them. The fact that they have been cast is confirmed by the intricate border pattern which is similar to the stringcourse above. Above these heating covers the architect has continued to draw attention to this feature by arranging the wall panel landscape. This is topped by another narrow landscape panel with a vent for the warm air to circulate. These panels are flanked by a classical scroll device (**E**) (fig.23).

The marble panels in the hall are only one inch thick and form a cladding around the base of the walls and around the access covers. The marble is black with white and green veins. This is edged with moulded timber which recedes into the main elevation masking the fact it is only a veneer of marble.

The west elevation of the hall is dominated by the large gallery which takes up the entire width of the wall and extends out 3.85 metres. The front of the gallery is 1.16 metres high, which corresponds with the top of the colourful frieze (**C**) and the bottom of the stringcourse (**D**). The gallery is tiered into four levels of seating accessed by a central flat walkway.

The walls of the balcony are plain not panelled, and the back (west wall) is covered in board (sound insulation?) up to the cornice. This cornice is interrupted in two places for long rectangular windows which look in from the projection room. The corners of the gallery are blocked off diagonally by boards containing warm air vents.

There are two pairs of doors in the gallery, a double entrance doorway and the fire exit. The entrance doors are the same good quality oak panelled doors as seen at ground floor. The fire exit is a pair of good solid doors but not as ornate. It does have the same mouldings on the architrave, but no diamond pattern. The 'push-bar' mechanism appears to be early twentieth century.

The ground storey of the west wall has been relegated into a corridor by the insertion of the screen at the back of the raised seating. This is clearly a late twentieth century addition and the lower part of this wall was intended to be clearly seen as it has all the decoration of the other parts of the hall. It has the decorated heating access covers and associated panels and scrolls. The wall is largely dominated by double pair of entrance doors from the foyer. There is also a fire exit in the south end which is similar to that in the gallery save that this one has a boarded up fanlight.

The east wall is obviously the focus of the hall as it has the stage. This stage has recently been extended forward by means of a 7 metre long platform, but the original Proscenium is recessed into the east wall framed by a plasterwork border decorated with swirls and 'egg and dart' ornament (**F**) (fig.24). The stage is 7 metres long and up to 2.45 wide. The original form has only just been revealed in the building work as previously the walls were all insulated and sound

equipment covered the stage. Once stripped the walls were revealed as panelling, similar in style to the rest of the hall but made entirely of oak (fig.27).

The stage splays inward to a rear wall which is only 5 metres wide and has a central recess of 3.12 metres. This recess holds a pull down projector screen. Either side of the stage are doors. That to the north leads to a 'retiring room', that to the south to a vertical heating and ventilation shaft.

The front of the stage has a band of marble along the base (hidden by modern extended platform) under the oak. On close inspection it is clear that both ends of this stage have been altered and two areas that appear to be marble are in fact plywood painted to match the surrounding material. Above it has even been painted to match the oak (H) (fig.26).

The other major feature in the east wall is the exit lobby. This multi-sided lobby is in the form of a quarter hexagon located in the northeast corner of the hall. This has the same ornate double doors as the entrance. Through these doors are steps up to a landing giving access to a fire exit in the north wall and the retiring room to the south.

The retiring room is a small irregularly shaped room giving discreet access to the stage. It is lit from a window high in the north wall.

Evidence that the hall was not always this green colour was seen when the tiered seating was removed. This revealed areas of mustard yellow with a pistachio green underneath (fig.28).

Gents' Lavatory

Off from the lobby in the southeast corner is the Gents' lavatory. This is a small room with one cubicle, urinal and sink. It is lit by windows in the south wall, the western of which is of two lights with a chamfered mullion, the other within the cubicle, is of one light. Both have leaded square panes of frosted glass.

Cellar

Accessed from the courtyard is a cellar or heating room. This is closed off at present due to the presence of asbestos. Looking at the survey plan the overall dimensions are 6.13 metres (north-south) and 4.75 metres (east-west) which are the approximate dimensions of the foyer above and is therefore likely to be contemporary. It consists of four compartments, three are

storerooms and the fourth is the plant room. This latter room gives access to the ducts which run around under the floor of the auditorium.

Stairs & Ladies' Lavatory

The stairs have an oak newel post and turned balusters. They lead upwards in an anti-clockwise dogleg with a landing giving access to the Ladies' Lavatory. The landing is lit by windows both to the south and west. The southern window is of two lights with square leaded glazing and a moulded mullion. The western window is of three lights, again with square leaded glazing, but the mullion has an ovolo moulding, and one light has a vertical metal bar. The underside of the stair to projection room cuts the ceiling.

The Ladies' has the same type of door as the Gents'. Inside there are three cubicles all on the north side. The windows are all in the south wall and match those in the Gents'; single light window on east side, two lights on west side. However, these are not frosted glass.

The stairs continue up northwards to the first floor passing through a pointed doorway with moulded arch.

1st Floor corridor

Once on the first floor landing there is a corridor with doors in every wall. Clockwise from the top of the stairs; stairs up to the projection room; to the west double doors to the 'Juliet' balcony; northwest there is a door and stairs to second floor office; to the north there is a door to an office; and finally to the right (east) there is a passage leading to the double entrance doors to the gallery. The north wall shows evidence for a gas lamp. In the ceiling there are two north-south moulded beams. The western one is just moulded on east side, the other is moulded on both sides.

1st Floor Office (Cosin Room).

This office is entered through a heavily painted panelled door which has been split in the stable door fashion. The room is five metres wide (E-W) and 5.26 metres long (N-S) and so is roughly square with a corner taken out of the SW corner for the stairs to the second floor. This most obvious feature of the room is the panelling. That in the north and east wall appear to be reused post medieval work, but the rest is twentieth century.

The room is lit by a long rectangular window of five lights with ovolo mullions similar to those on the landing outside the Ladies'. The beams seen in the corridor continue through the ceiling of this room.

There is a cupboard in the corner under the stairs and this reveals the treads and risers to be softwood, no doubt twentieth century. This cupboard also gives the opportunity of seeing the fabric of the wall that divides this room from the Suckling House hall. Where the plaster has come away bricks are revealed. These are soft reds of 220 x 60 x ? mm, set in white lime-mortar. This is not enough to say whether they are medieval or later.

There is a curious wooden feature supporting a shelf in the west wall. This appears to be a reused scrolled corbel which has suffered some damage. There is a recess in the wall above this shelf.

Stairs & Landing to Projection Room

From the first floor landing the access to the projection room stairs appears awkward as if an afterthought. These stairs are lit by two windows. That to the south is of two lights and is square leaded glazing, and has a similar hollow mould to that directly beneath, outside the ladies. The western window is the same.

The wall to the left of the projection room door is damaged, showing that it is made of plasterboard.

2nd Floor Office

The access to this office is up stairs constructed within the first floor office. At the top is a door and landing within a boxed off lobby. The room occupies the roof space and is lit by a three light window in the south wall. This has square leaded panes and ornamental catches, but otherwise just square cut timbers with no mouldings.

Dominating the centre of the room are steps leading up to a door in the east wall. This door leads to the roof of the auditorium.

Roof of Stuart Hall

The perimeter of this roof is flat and leaded but in the centre is a large structure one storey high with a tiled pyramidal roof topped with a lead finial in the form of a sphere. This is the top of the lantern, although it is difficult to recognise with the shutters covering the former windows. The metalwork fittings associated with these shutters suggest that they were intended to be easily fitted and removed, and so they are likely to be the original solution for blacking out the hall. If these had been intended to be permanent then they would have been bolted on (fig.31).

The east gable of the foyer block is rather decorative, it is mainly flint but the doorway from the office is constructed in red brick which has been chamfered, and the edge of the gable is composed of many triangles of red brickwork in a technique called 'tumbling-in' (fig.32). It is clearly early twentieth century in date. Above the doorway is a round tie-bar plate. To the south of this is a brick chimney, the upper two thirds of which appears rebuilt, and a long narrow roof heading south. This roof has two dormer windows.

Attic to foyer block (viewed from ladder)

Above the second floor office is an attic space only accessible by a small trap door using a ladder. This space has a tie-bar running E-W tying the east gable of Suckling House hall to the east gable of the foyer block (this is the tie-bar the plate of which was visible from the roof). The eastern wall of Suckling House appeared to be plastered.

2nd Floor Office (continued)

A doorway in the south wall of the second floor office reveals the top half of the projection room and lower half of an attic room. The first attic room is unlit, but the southern one has been given a pair of velux windows on the east side.

At the south end of this range are steps down to a mezzanine level which is actually the ceiling of the fire escape from the auditorium balcony. Access to the projection room is by a short step ladder.

Projection Room

This is long and low room (5.2 metres long and 2.6 metres wide) with two long windows looking into the auditorium. These were obviously the windows through which films were projected, the projectors (now gone) having been placed on the concrete plinths in the floor.

There is a further window in the west wall which serves to light the room. This overlooks the courtyard. It is of two lights each with square panes of leaded glazing in a frame with hollow mouldings. This west wall is clearly made of breeze blocks and so this window is either reused or reproduction.

Also in the west wall, but further north, is a door leading onto a landing (as previously mentioned). High in the north wall is the hatch to the second floor office. To the south is not only access to the mezzanine floor, but an escape hatch to the external fire escape.

This projection room has stubs of walls half way along suggesting that the room has been extended southwards. The survey plans show that these stubs are in line with the south wall of the lavatories.

Hall of Suckling House

The hall is only two bays long but the open roof gives it great volume. The roof is constructed of 21 trusses, 10 each side of the central tie beam. The form of the truss used is a scissor brace where the timbers cross diagonally to secure the rafters. In this particular example a further precaution has been taken as a collar has been included to brace the rafters. This collar is required as there is only a single tie-beam (other than in the end walls).

The division of the two bays of the hall is marked by a tie-beam with a crown post. This post is a moulded ornamental timber column with both base and capital (fig.33). From the top of the crown post spring braces which connect with the collar above. It also connects to the E-W timber above, the crown plate (or collar purlin) to give longitudinal bracing. The roof sits on the wall by means of an ashlar piece, and just below there is a moulded cornice.

The main entrance to the hall is currently from the lobby through double oak doors and down a number of steps. The interior of this door imitates that in the west wall, but it is of a later date and is on a smaller scale. The newel post and banister of the steps has all the same details as that of the main staircase.

The door opposite, in the western wall, is a large round headed Georgian doorway with plaster architrave and wooden base. Above this are cherubs flanking a shield. This doorway appears to be cutting an earlier door as a small section remains to the north. To the right of this is a

complete doorway albeit a blocked recess. This doorway is double chamfered and the base is boxed in timber (fig.35).

At the western end of the north wall is another Gothic doorway set within a shallow arched recess. Opposite in the south wall is a similar doorway, but here the recess is chamfered. These doorways, and indeed the whole hall, are plastered and heavily painted hiding anything but the most obvious features.

The hall is lit by a number of large windows. The north wall has two; the eastern one is of nine lights of square leaded rectangles in a frame with simple hollow moulding. It is six foot up and sits in a recess made for much larger window. There is a chamfer on the east side and above, but not on the western side. The exterior shows that this western side has been blocked and the lintel for a larger window remains. The western window is pointed but is actually a metal frame. It is located over one of the opposing doors and sits in a recess with shallow arch and chamfer (same as door in S wall).

The south wall is largely hidden by a huge pin-board, but has the most elaborate window, an oriel. The oriel consists of a large Perpendicular moulded arch complete with pilasters. This has been heavily plastered and rendered, but exposed areas reveal that is built out of specially cut brickwork. The window itself is a half octagon built of timber with square leaded and heraldic glass celebrating famous residents. The base of the window has a window seat.

The floor of the hall is made of oak planks running E-W, but through a hatch a lower floor can be seen 0.92 metres below. This hatch also exposes the brickwork and a joist in the south wall.

The hall has some interesting fittings in addition to the pendant lights and 1970s bar. There is an historic door inserted into the east wall, and a panel saying 'Thynk & Thank God' above the blocked west door.

Vaulted room (current kitchen)

This is a rectangular room with modern kitchen fittings (fig.34). The west wall has a large 'Gothick' window. The room is entered through the double doors of the Georgian doorway and there is a similar huge door case on the interior. There is a 20th century partition wall with glass panelled door to the south.

The room is vaulted with a heavily painted brick vault, the ribs of which are double chamfered in the manner of the blocked door of the hall. The ribs cross diagonally to form a quadripartite vault with evidence of a simpler E-W transverse rib between each bay.

Vault south of Kitchen

Same type of ribs and vault as to the north, but here the transverse ribs which crosses E-W between this bay and that to the south is more elaborate. This rib has the same profile as the diagonals. This may indicate that these two bays were originally intended to open to one another without partition walls. The bricks of the vault have been exposed in one area.

There is a modern exit to the west (St Andrew's Hill) through double doors, and a modern brick opening to the courtyard to the east.

Most southern vaulted room.

This bay has been subdivided by stud walls to form lavatories and cupboards, but the vault is still visible. There is a blocked opening to the courtyard which is positioned around 0.5 metres proud of the N-S medieval arch. The south wall is not a single flat plain, but the western section steps back. There is no obvious sign of the doorway in the west wall which can be seen on the exterior.

Brick Georgian Building – Ground floor

This separate block is entered from a door in the east elevation, which leads into a narrow hallway. The hall has doors to the north and south and a 12 pane sash window in the east wall. To the right of this, a grand staircase leads up clockwise with a dogleg to the south. The stair has an ornate banister which scrolls around at the base, and decorated balusters. The section against the south wall is also panelled. The banister slightly cuts the east window which could suggest that it is reused.

Ground floor office (most northern room)

This is a small narrow room clearly formed by partitioning off part of the hallway. There is a narrow fireplace in the centre of the north wall with mantle piece. There is some decoration (fireplace largely obscured by plan chest). There are tall narrow windows either side of the chimneybreast. The west wall has a sash window, but the east wall is bare.

Panelled room

This is a square room lit by two sash windows in the west wall. The north and south walls are covered with panelling with dado rail. These both have a fluted pilaster near the western end facing one another.

The east wall has central fireplace which is also framed by panelling. The fire surround is of brick, splayed inwards, with an iron grate. The panelled chimneybreast sits slightly proud of the cupboards which flank it. The north of these cupboards is inaccessible, but the southern one opens to reveal the western side of the blocked doorway seen in the great hall (fig.36). This blocking is plastered and heavily painted, but some brickwork is visible. The doorway itself is also made of brick (medieval), and cemented with lime-mortar (many small stone and chalk inclusions).

The cupboard also retains a stub of the brick vaulting which would have originally covered this bay. This has been cut back so that only a small E-W element remains. The cupboard also gives an opportunity to see behind the panelling of the southern wall where the wall is of brick.

Lower 1st Floor Landing

Landing for access to lobby and first floor office. The steps up to the lobby have a short stretch of banister turning the corner. This is the same form as that below. The chimneybreast from the panelled room is visible in the east wall before it disappears into the ceiling.

Lobby

Small ante-chamber between landing and office. It is separated from the landing by a door with fanlight above, obviously a fire measure. The room has a 12 pane sash window with window seat in the west wall, the south wall has been cut back to accommodate this. The room is taller than the adjacent office so it exposes the stub of a timber in the ceiling. The entrance to the office is in the north wall.

First Floor Office (northern room)

This is a large room lit by three sash windows in the west wall, each 12 pane with a window seat and panelled splays. There is one other window in the north end of the east wall, an eight pane sash. There is a chimneybreast in the centre of the north wall but any opening has now been blocked. The room is missing the southeast corner as this has been taken out to give headroom

to the stair. This must have been done early as the moulded cornice follows the present arrangement.

Upper First floor landing.

Up a further flight of stairs to the south is another, final, landing. This has three doors; an entrance to the education suite, door to attic stair, and the kitchen area.

Kitchen/Lavatories

The kitchen has match boarded walls to the south (incorporating under-stairs cupboard) and east. The north wall has evidence of timber frame and studwork above the sink; this appears to have been truncated horizontally for the stair.

The west wall gives entry to the lavatories. The Gents' is small with a small narrow window. This is the awkward looking window which interrupts the external fenestration of the west elevation. The ladies' is larger and is partially under the stairs to the attic. It has a bigger window too, a 12 pane sash.

Education / Meeting Room

This is a very long room dominated by a long window in the west wall (4 x 1.7 metres). This window has 16 lights of which five are opening casements. There is a large central mullion and transom with smaller mullions between the lights. These have ovolo and hollow mouldings similar to those of the 16th and 17th century. The panes of glass are square and leaded.

The east wall has two interesting blocked features. The first is a splayed blocked opening 2.1m tall and 1.28 m wide with a very shallow arch over. To the south of this a pointed arched recess. The sides are chamfered, but it springs into a more complicated moulding over the arch. It is very similar to the doorway in the foyer block at the top of the stairs on the first floor corridor.

The south wall of this room has a chimneybreast in the centre, but the opening is blocked just having an air vent.

The room does not have a cornice but does have a skirting board. The ceiling has an E-W timber beam (220 mm wide) with chamfer. Curiously, only the western end has a chamfer stop. It shows signs of having been strengthened.

Attic

The attic stairs give access to the attic midway. To the south is the section over the education room. This area of roof is not particularly old, perhaps twentieth century and the far south gable wall and chimneybreast are all modern brickwork.

The northern area of the roof is more interesting. This is divided into a southern storage area with ceiling, and an open attic beyond a modern partition wall. The southern section is lit by a small dormer window to the west. This is hidden from the exterior at ground level as it is tucked behind the parapet. The floor is boarded with north-south timbers.

The northern area gives a clear view of all the roof timbers. There are some older timbers here, but the whole roof has been greatly altered. There are parallel rafters on the eastern side which give the roof both a new pitch and greater height. It is now around a metre taller and a couple of foot more eastern. The roof has also been changed to a hipped form, as hip rafters have been inserted at the northern corners, and all the northern timbers are later.

The brickwork for the chimney and parapet are visible.

The Chronological Development of Suckling House & Stuart Hall

Early Origins of Site

Although the owners of this site have been traced back as far as William de Rollesby in 1285, the standing fabric is not quite that ancient and so it was probably built by either the Fairchild or Parlet family who had the site in the mid to late fourteenth century (Colman p4).

In 1338, 1346, and 1357, John Fairchild is recorded to be paying rent for the privilege of enclosing the Turpis Vicus (formerly the right of way known as Gropecunte Lane). This has been cited as evidence that Fairchild was ordering his adjacent properties to form a single large house, and may relate to the building of the Great Hall itself (Kelly p4).

The mid fourteenth century was a prosperous time for those involved in the wool trade in Norwich. Queen Philippa had established colony of Flemish wool weavers here in 1335, therefore making it an important centre. The economic conditions were right for the building of a large hall. Many of the early owners of Suckling House were certainly described as drapers or mercers.

There were certainly buildings on the site in 1414 when Thomas Parlet split the site. The southern part was bought by John Cambridge who paid £180, a huge amount for the time. This suggests that there must have been grand house on this site, although all the documents describe is a tenement with shops, tenement adjoining, etc. (Kelly p5). Parlet sold separately the northern part of the site said to include 'a tenement with buildings' and 'a vault with arches built of stone and lime under said tenement'. This could be the vaulted bays of the western range. In 1426 Cambridge bought the northern section and reunited the whole site (Beecheno p201-2).

Earliest Standing Fabric

The Great Hall of Suckling House is generally agreed to be 14th Century, although opinions about the precise date vary. One piece of evidence is the northern screens passage door which has moulding profiles characteristic of the late 14th Century (Colman p3-4).

The roof of the hall is another important means for dating. Studies have been made of crown post roofs and three periods of use have been identified. Curiously the category which this

example best fits are those built between 1280-1300. At this time crown posts are long and octagonal with moulded capitals and bases. In the 14th Century the posts become short and it is not until the 15th century that they are long again (Wood p305).

This roof is therefore either late 13th century or 15th century if the research is correct. One possibility is that the crown post is secondary as these were sometimes inserted into earlier roofs to give longitudinal support. The roof itself could then still be 14th century. It is certainly earlier than the 16th century as crown posts die out then in response to the flooring over of open halls, all new buildings were given another storey instead.

The presence of the crown post shows that this was always intended to be an open hall, as this decorated element was intended to be seen from below. Crown posts are found mainly in eastern and southeast lowland England, and when found elsewhere; it is only in high status buildings. This suggests that crown posts associated with ruling or merchant class (Harris p63).

At ground level the hall would have been a very formal space divided up with a formal significance to each area. The original entrance to the hall would have been through one of the two doors which face one another at the western end of the hall, one in the north wall, the other in the south. This would have lead into a screens passage which on the western side lead to service rooms in the vaulted bays (such as the buttery), and to the east, into the open hall. This screen was probably timber and is no trace is left.

On entry to the hall one may well have seen an open hearth in the centre of the room, as fireplaces did not completely replace hearths until the 15th century (Wood p49). The east end of the hall would have been the most formal 'upper' end, and may have been a raised. This is where the high table of the master would have been, lit by the large oriel window to the south.

Behind the high table there was often access to the private quarters of the master and his family, a first floor solar, possibly over a parlour. The area where the cinema foyer is today was originally part of the Little Parlour; fragments of the wall survive in the north and south walls. In the south wall at first floor level a medieval door still exists. This now forms the first floor opening at the head of the stairs, but may represent the original entrance to the Solar from an external stair. It is not a Boardman recreation as it can be seen in a photograph of the building prior to restoration (fig.47).

There is a door with similar arch mouldings at first floor level over the west range (now education room), an area which could have also provided the family with accommodation. This first floor is also thought to have been served by an external stair, in this instance from the northwest corner of the yard with access from the south screens passage doorway. This accounts for one of the two blockings in the east wall of the education room. The other has been interpreted as a blocked window which would have looked over the hall, which is impossible as it is too far south and the exterior is visible from the courtyard (Smith 1997).

The ground floor of the western range would have served as the service wing. Three vaulted bays survive with evidence of another in the 'panelled room'. This latter bay has fragmentary remains of vault webbing (fig.37), and would have been entered by the northern service door (currently blocked). This is thought to have been the buttery, with the larder to the south through the other door. Further south were kitchens.

There is much speculation whether this service wing is earlier or later than the hall. The awkward junction between the original southern doorway and the vaults suggest that it cannot be contemporary. The listing report considers the vaults as earlier as does an article by Smith (1997), which revises his 1983 opinion that the 'service doors are trapped in a wall which predates the 15th Century vaults (Smith & Carter 1983). Yet Smith has also found putlog holes at corresponding heights both in the service range and hall which could suggest that they are contemporary (Smith 1997). Logic would suggest that the vaults are later as it would have been simpler to position doorways into an existing vault than build a vault around existing doors. However, there may have been other factors to consider at the time and it is not uncommon for the service wing and hall to be rebuilt at different times.

The layout of the original hall follows the Norwich format of having the principal living rooms separated from the street by service rooms (Smith 1997). These brick vaulted under-crofts are common in Norwich, as 54 survive. Their main purpose appears to be as a level, fireproof platform for a timber framed building above. They are commonly positioned on steeply-sloping ground and do not usually have entrances or windows in their street frontage walls (the present doors in the west range are not medieval as stated in the conservation document). Many are thought to date from the first half of the 15th Century (Smith & Carter p2-3).

Medieval changes

It is to be expected that the successive owners of the building should wish for changes and alterations. One feature which becomes popular in the 15th Century is the Oriel window. These were great elaborate windows giving the opportunity for displaying heraldic glass. It was usual to have these at the high end of the hall to give the master of view of the courtyard (Wood p61 &105). These typically had great moulded arches and this particular one has been dated to around 1420, so may have been done by Cambridge soon after he bought the place (Colman p5). Only the arch is original, although the window is said to have been rebuilt using evidence from medieval footings.

Post medieval changes

In 1510 the owner of the hall, John Clerk, was mentioned in documents as having a 'tenement of the Commonalty lately devastated and now newly built' (Beecheno p206). This may refer to a large renovation. Clerk certainly seems to have embellished the place as there are numerous mentions of him in the decorative elements. The carved door in the great hall is thought to be his, and Clerk's motto 'Thynk and thank God' appears on a decorative panel in the west wall. The same motto was said to have been on the top panes of the glass of the Great Parlour (Colman p7-8).

Early in the 16th Century a long covered passageway was added to north of hall leading out from screens passage towards the counting house. This had open sides with oak posts and decorated spandrels, one with the Grocers' Arms, another with those of St Andrew's. The latter has been reused in Boardman's north porch (Beecheno p220b).

A wonderful insight into the extent of Suckling House in the late 16th century is given by the 1589 inventory of Robert Suckling. This detailed room-by-room account of his possessions covers 18 rooms including 'great Parlor', 'lytle Parlor', 'cowntinge house Parlor' amongst many others. These rooms must have extended to the north of the present buildings and were probably incorporated into the City Arms pub and adjacent property. This inventory has allowed a conjectural plan of the building to be drawn up (fig.38).

Robert Suckling was a wealthy man and this is reflected in the fabric of the building. Proud of being awarded a coat of arms, this is depicted in an Elizabethan style fireplace, now in the foyer. This is not in situ.

In the 17th century the site begins to be broken up again. In 1608 Christopher Barrett sold the south part of the buildings to Giles Cozen and he kept the northern area himself. A division was made between the two. Apparently Cozen further sub-divided his share of the property (Colman p12-13).

From 1652 to 1697 Isaac Payne lived at Suckling House. He was an attorney but in his will it mentions 'the great press standing in the (Great) Hall', as well as brewing vessels. This link with alcohol is continued as the building passes then passes through two generations of brewers until 1819 when Philip Rose, wine merchant, buys the property. Rose is believed to be responsible for the insertion of a cellar in the Great Hall created by raising the floor (now reversed by Boardman) but accounting for the void beneath the present floorboards (fig.39). Wine merchants continued to use the building until 1914 (Kelly p13-17).

Georgian reworking of west range

The western range undergoes a facelift in the eighteenth century. The Great Gate that once stood just south of the Counting House (City Arms) and lead into the northern courtyard was blocked off and incorporated into a new Georgian house of six bays (the southern five of which survive). Externally this appears Georgian, but is actually just a re-facing. Internally this incorporates one ground floor vaulted bay (the southern one) but destroyed that in the panelled room. The external order of the fenestration caused some problems at first floor, but was achieved.

The 'Gothick' window at the south end of the brickwork is typical of the late 18th century, but it appears that it may have been a later insertion into the elevation as the brickwork around it is different. It could have been inserted soon after, and is definitely pre-restoration as it is seen in a late 19th century photograph.

It may well have been now with the creation of the panelled room that the doorway between the Great Hall and west range was blocked. This was presumably blocked to allow insertion of fireplace and chimneybreast as some similar red brick used in both. This chimneybreast has now itself been cut by the current stairs. Either the stair has been widened by cutting the chimneybreast back against the east wall, or this stair has been completely rebuilt, which would explain the junction between the banister and window in the hallway.

The 1789 Hochstetter map of Norwich shows outline of Suckling House with its courtyard, but does not show any details. At this time St Andrew's street is labelled as Wymer Street and St Andrew's Hill as Blackfriar's Street.

Additional floor put on west range

A 1915 photograph shows that this whole western range once had a second floor (fig.42). The Georgian façade had another five windows above the cornice whereas there is only one dormer in the present roof. The flint bays to the south had a brick second floor with a single window, and Flint House had three dormers or 'lucams'. These lie above tiled weathering which suggests they are post medieval additions.

Nineteenth Century

The 1861 census describes the St Andrew's Hill frontage of Suckling House as an unoccupied 'Counting House', whereas the site of the Little Parlour east of the Great Hall was occupied by a Professor of Languages. His house was later known as 'St Christopher's Abbey' in the mistaken belief that this was the site of the destroyed St Christopher's church (Kelly p17).

In contrast to the earlier map, the 1885 Ordnance Survey map shows the site in much greater detail including the City Arms and the former warehouse building to its east (fig.44). Flint House is labelled as a Tavern. The Stuart Hall site is shown blank, but not as a garden.

Demolition

The City Arms was a four storied building with a jetty beneath the second floor which suggests that it was timber framed beneath (fig.41). Beneath the jetty was a small carved figure described as the Goddess Ceres. Both the City Arms and the building to the east were said to have vaults under. The 'Thynk and Thank God' oak panel and decorated oak door both now in the Great Hall, are thought to have come from the City Arms, as did a Jacobean chimney piece which was sold off (Beecheno p216). This building had been the Counting House of Robert Suckling back in the 16th century.

In 1899 the Tramways Company buy and demolish the City Arms and the building to its east and rebuild the north end of the Georgian building one bay shorter (Beecheno 1917 p198). The north gable wall is c1900 and not Georgian. It has been built to match the west range.

Twentieth Century – Restoration begins

By the beginning of the twentieth century the buildings are in a very bad state of repair, and Flint House is unoccupied.

The death of the site's owner in 1915 marks the end of residential use of the buildings, but creates an opportunity for restoration and it is bought the following year by The Norfolk News Company Ltd. The company start repairs to roof of the great hall (1918-21) but suffer from a lack of funds (Colman p7). The building is still described as a ruin in 1918 when Beecheno published his first article.

Eventually in 1923 the Colman sisters purchase the site. Ethel and Helen Colman were both members of the family responsible for Colman's Mustard and so had the finances to see the restoration through. They appointed the architect Edward Thomas Boardman to oversee the work.

It is unclear whether the original intention was always to build Stuart Hall, or whether the initial objective was just to restore the medieval buildings. It was with the latter that Boardman commenced. He appears to have taken a scholarly approach to the work as there are drawings of the crown post roof and the moulding profiles of the doors and arches (fig.33).

The objective was not simply conservation of existing features, this was restoration and re-medievalization. Not only were the Gothic doors and windows of the great hall opened up and restored, but the oriel window was rebuilt. Apparently this was done using evidence from excavated footings, but it is still conjecture, as is the minstrel gallery. Contemporary photographs show how much Boardman transformed the hall, only glimpses of original features remained, and much of the south wall needed to be rebuilt after the removal of a large post-medieval window (fig.40). Another major undertaking was the lowering of the hall floor which had been raised to create a wine cellar below (fig.39).

Two photographs, one of c1915, and one of the 1920s, show a very different view of the west range (figs. 42 & 43). The earlier photograph shows a second floor storey along the whole range from Flint House to the Georgian block to the north, yet ten years later these are gone. Flint House has a door in this elevation in the earlier shot, but later this is a window. The middle section (the two bays between the brick Georgian block and Flint House), has also undergone

many changes. Initially the northern of these two doors had an arch over it, yet later this has gone. The two windows above later become the single very long Tudor style opening. This is another element of re-medievalization. These two bays have been refaced and the 'old squared flints' reused (Colman p5). Internally this range had been divided into independent tenements, which explains the curious change in levels. It was now opened up again, and the roof rebuilt as an attic rather than a second floor.

To the east of the Great Hall the area of the former Little Parlour was completely reworked. Some of the medieval walls were incorporated and a doorway survives at first floor in the south wall. No other original features survive here; the Tudor style long window in the first floor office (Cosin Room) can be seen being built in one photograph as there were previously two separate windows here (figs. 45 & 46). One early window had survived up to now in the north wall of the parlour, but the opening was enlarged to make the present foyer entrance. This doorway is completely new work, although the porch incorporates 16th century timbers and abuts a medieval buttress on the west side.

Against the south external wall of the former parlour was built a stair and lavatory block. The Gents were on the ground floor with the ladies lavatory above at a mezzanine height, above this was a storeroom. There was a southern gable with 'tumbling-in' brickwork similar to the eastern gable. Access to the lavatories and basement was from the stairs. To the south of this stair block was a tall round headed doorway giving access to a garden on the Stuart Hall site.

At what point the decision was taken to build Stuart Hall is unclear. There are design drawings which show the window arrangement planned for the eastern wall of this foyer block. These windows would be immediately redundant as soon as the hall was built. It would seem that the first phase was to be built allowing provision for the second phase. Windows and doors were situated where they could be easily changed or utilised in phase 2. For instance, the round headed garden doorway became the emergency exit for the hall; the storeroom became the 'Kinemea' room; and the east gable window became the roof access (see drawing BR35-2-86-1-11). The architect was keeping the options open, but in fact the hall appears to have been built either simultaneously or very soon after as it was opened in 1925.

Stuart Hall Auditorium

Stuart Hall was built on waste ground, but does incorporate a small section of medieval flint walling in the north wall. This is part of the Little Parlour and extends to the eaves of Suckling House, although it has been reduced slightly by the insertion of the western circular window. The incorporation of this wall and the shape of the site account for the unusual design of the hall with its northern recess and 'wedge' shaped services room.

The style and material selected for use on the exterior were chosen to be sympathetic to the existing building; it takes many references from the Georgian west range. It has similar red brickwork, and uses rusticated quoins and a cornice. The circular windows have a reference in the oval plaque on the rebuilt north gable, as this also has white keystones.

The auditorium was designed as a lecture theatre seating 450 people. There were facilities for showing films as there was a 'Kinemea' room with projection window into the hall, with a pull-down screen in the stage recess. It could also be a venue for dinners and dances.

The hall appears to have been built according to the design plans. An organ was originally proposed for over the exit lobby but this has been crossed out, and a circular window planned for the ground floor of the north elevation was erased (drawing 86-2-16). The only change from the final drawings is the gallery exit doorway which looks original but does not feature on paper.

The hall would have been very light. It had the large lantern windows for top lighting, and the circular windows in the north wall. There was also glass in the entrance doors and fanlights over. Judging by the early photographs (black & white) the colour scheme was also light. The area of paintwork exposed under the tiered seating shows that it was probably a light pistachio green for the panels (fig. 28).

At some later date changes were made to the stage and the steps which flanked it were blocked over. This was done with great care even painting the blocking timber to match the marble surround.

Changes to West Range

There are a couple of drawings in the Boardman archive which show proposed changes in the west range dating to the mid twentieth century. This includes creating the partitioned office at the north end of the ground floor, and various changes to the first floor lavatories. Presumably this is when the small window was inserted into the Gents. Interestingly, these drawings are labelled 'National Health Insurance office' (drawings 86-2-28, 86-1-1-18). This building must have been rented out as office space at this time.

The Transformation to Arts Cinema

The biggest change to affect these buildings (prior to the current scheme) was in the late 1970s. In 1977 Norwich Corporation let Suckling House and Stuart Hall to Cinema City, Regional Film Theatre (Kelly p19). This necessitated much building work. The designs were produced by Paul Mearing of the City Architect's Department (Pevsner & Wilson p274).

The changes to the auditorium were not structural. The biggest change was to introduce tiered seating at ground level with the partition wall at the rear. Other changes were to completely black out the hall. This meant blocking all windows, and substituting the glazed panes in the doors for board. The lantern windows were permanently blocked, possibly for sound insulation and fire regulations. This blacking out also required a darker colour scheme for the hall, the dark green colour which survives to present.

The pull-down screen was no longer sufficient so a screen was mounted on the stage with speakers, and the rear panels of the stage covered with insulation.

In 1981 a larger projection box was needed so the existing room was extended southwards above the emergency stair. New access was needed so the foyer stair block was extended up another storey. This required changes to the south windows; the existing tall window by the ladies was replaced by a smaller window, and a new one inserted above the stringcourse to light the new stretch of stairs (possibly same window cut in half). This new stair is entered from the first floor landing and explains the awkward angle.

The new projection room required truncating the south gable, and a pitched roof and attic were built over the projection room. The junction between this new room and the existing south wall of the lavatories has a straight joint. A second projection window was made into the hall.

Other changes to the building include placing a box office in the foyer, a bar in the Great Hall, and a kitchen in the bay to the west of the hall. The most southern bay of the vaults was subdivided for a lavatory and store.

This is the way the building largely remained until 2004 and the current scheme for conversion.

Edward Thomas Boardman, Architect.

The first important point to make about the architect responsible for Stuart Hall and the restoration of Suckling House is that he was Edward *Thomas* Boardman. He is not to be confused with his father Edward Boardman, although he continued his father's practice. Boardman senior was responsible for a large number of public buildings in Norwich including the United Reform lecture rooms in nearby Princes Street (1881) and the old Norfolk and Norwich Hospital (1879-83) (Salt p49-53). He established himself as the city's leading architect and was in great demand for commissions for wealthy Norfolk families. This good reputation with the wealthy obviously continued under his son and attracted the Colman sisters to the firm. Edward Boardman died in 1910 so could not have been involved in this building.

E T Boardman was born in 1861 and lived until June 1950 (RIBA Library). Like his father, he was involved in many Norwich projects. He worked with his father on the Royal Hotel on Agricultural Plain (opened 1897), Bethel Hospital in 1899, and contributed to nearby Barclays Bank in the late 1920s (with Brierly & Rutherford of York).

As E T Boardman worked for his father's firm, it is difficult to identify his particular characteristics, and the firm made a point of working in the latest style. The only feature which reappears on a number of buildings is the circular window with contrasting keystones. This can be seen on Princes Street Congregational School (1879), it occurs on a 1902 building on Red Lion Street as a gable window, and there are four on the north wall of Stuart Hall. The first is too early for E T Boardman, but he may have worked on the Red Lion Street building.

It may just be coincidence that the existing plaque on the north gable was similar to a typical Boardman characteristic, or it is possible that Boardman architects rebuilt this gable c1900.

The Boardman architectural firm continued under the third generation of Boardmans until 1966. The building which they occupied in Bank of England Court still bears their name over the door.

Impact of new scheme on the historic fabric of the building.

The greatest change to this building will be to the 1920s auditorium. This will be completely gutted internally and extended both through the roof, and down through the floor. No internal detail, fittings, or features will survive in situ. Externally, the elevations will be kept, but the 'wedge' shaped building on the northern side will be removed.

The three storeys of lavatories in the foyer block will also be gutted and made into a lift shaft. A new northern entrance will be formed at each floor which will cut through the south wall of the medieval Little Parlour. This will inevitably reveal important information about the medieval building.

The Great Hall will not undergo any drastic changes. The most significant change is that the post-medieval blocking will be removed from the doorway connecting to the western range. This is most likely 18th century blocking associated with the creation of the fireplace. Any removal of blocking will also have an impact on the chimney stack, and how this new access may affect the panelling is unclear. The process of opening up this doorway will give an opportunity to observe the relationship between the blocking material and the fireplace. This could help date the blocking and be informative about the changing role of the hall.

The removal of the late twentieth century partitions from within the vaulted bays is a positive step and will allow the vaults to be seen.

Conclusion

In summary, the proposed scheme will have a major impact on the 1920s building. This has however, been thoroughly researched and photographed. The auditorium has been surveyed to produce scale drawings, and the original design drawings for the 1920s work survive in the record office. It is now well documented.

The medieval and post-medieval fabric will remain largely untouched by this conversion, with the exception of that trapped within the 1920s lavatory wall, and the blocked doorway in the hall.

Bibliography

Published

Alcock N W (et al.) (1996) *Recording Timber-Framed Buildings*, Council for British Archaeology

Beecheno F R (1917) 'The Sucklings' House at Norwich' *Norfolk Archaeology* Vol. XIX pp197-220

Beecheno F R (1921) 'The Sucklings' House at Norwich' *Norfolk Archaeology* Vol. XX pp158-178

Clarke R R (1949) 'The Suckling Hall' *Archaeological Journal* Vol. CVI

Colman E M & H C (1961) *Suckling House & Stuart Hall, Norwich*

Harris R (1993) *Discovering Timber Framed Buildings*, Shire Publications

Kelly G (1997) *Take 5 Restaurant, Suckling House, Norwich; a history based upon documentary sources*, Take 5

Nobbs G (2003) *A Prospect Of Norwich*, Prospect Press

Pevsner N & Wilson B (2nd Edition) (1997) *The Buildings of England Series. Norfolk 1: Norwich & North East*. Penguin.

Salt R (1988) *Plans for a Fine City*, The Victorian Society East Anglian Group

Smith R (1997) *Norwich and Norfolk*, Vernacular Architecture Group Spring Conference, University of East Anglia

Smith R & Carter A, (1983) *Norwich Houses before 1700*, Offprint from *Vernacular Architecture* Vol.14

Wood M (1994) *The English Medieval House*, Studio Editions

Unpublished

Conservation Statement on Norwich Cinema City by Burrell Foley Fischer LLP, Architects (April 2003).

Edward Boardman drawing archive at NRO (supplied digitally by architect)

Listing entry of 1954

'Picture Norfolk' (www.norlink.norfolk.gov.uk)

'Pull Focus' website (www.pull-focus.org.uk)

Sites and Monuments Record

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the help received from Janet Vaughan the cinema's artist in residence. Janet was kind enough to point me in the direction of some of the archive photographs and use information from her 'Pull Focus' website.

Clare Agate of Norfolk Museum Service was helpful in allowing me to reproduce images from the 'Picture Norfolk' photographic archive. All photographs from this source are copyright of Norfolk County Council Library and Information Service.

Thanks to David Litchfield (Director of Cinema City) for allowing me to borrow photographs from his office in order to scan them.

Finally, Roy Nicolls of Carters was very accommodating and his help allowed me to complete the survey of the auditorium quickly in advance of their work.

Appendix 1 - Famous people associated with Suckling House

Sir Robert Suckling, Sheriff, Mayor, and MP (1520-1589). Building named after him.

Sir John Suckling, Secretary of State (1569-1627). Inherited the building from his father.

Edmund Suckling, Dean of Norwich 1614-1628. Son of Sir Robert.

John Cosin, Bishop of Durham (1595-1672). Lived in Suckling House as a child.

Horatio Nelson, Admiral. Nelson could well have boarded here as a schoolboy. His great aunt, Mrs Henly, is recorded as living near the chancel end of St Andrew's church. Mrs Henly is said to have lived here at the time of Nelson's schooling in the late eighteenth century, and as the Grammar School did not have a boarding house, he may well have lodged with his great aunt.

Appendix 2 – Floor plans of buildings