Building Report
on
The Mineral Water Hospital
Upper Borough Walls
Bath

March 2006

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Acknowledgements

A book ‘Hospital of the Nation’ about the history of the Mineral Water Hospital was written by Roger Rolls (1988) which covers the Hospital’s history extensively. This report concentrates on the building of the Hospital and the alterations made to it as well as the topography and archaeology of the site. None the less I am indebted to Roger Rolls for his knowledgeable book and some of the references which have proved very useful in my research. Another book, ‘The Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases Bath 1742-1965’ written by Dr George Kersley and John Cosh, gave an invaluable account of the pre-war plans for a new Hospital and subsequent 1960s rebuilding of the bombed Hospital.

My thanks to Lucy Powell and Colin Johnston at Bath Archives (BRO), Margaret Bailey of Bath Library (BRL), Richard Sermon, Archaeological Officer for Bath & North East Somerset Council, Clive Quinnell and above all the extremely friendly and helpful Hospital staff for whom I have even greater admiration following my visits to the Hospital whilst writing this report.

Most of the reference material has been obtained from the Hospital Archives which are now at Bath Records Office (BRO). Additional material was obtained from Bath Reference Library, in particular the 19th century Hunt and Boodle Collections, and from the NMR collection in Swindon (Mowbray Green photographs). A large number of architect’s plans (1958-1998) for the Hospital, referred to in the report, are stored in the Building Control records at Bath Records Office. Due to copyright they cannot be reproduced, but they are available for inspection. Every care has been taken to reproduce images from the Hospital’s own archives and other archive sources that do not infringe copyright. All photographs in the report, unless referenced, were taken by K Ross March 2006.

Introduction

This historical report on the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases in Upper Borough Walls, Bath was commissioned by the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases Foundation NHS Trust and carried out by Kay Ross of The House Historians.

The Hospital was built by John Wood between 1738-42 as The General Hospital, becoming The Royal Mineral Water Hospital in 1887 when Queen Victoria gave her Royal assent. In 1935 the name was changed to its present title, The Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases.

Throughout this report, unless relevant, the Hospital will be referred to as the Mineral Water Hospital (MWH). All references appearing simply as dates refer to the corresponding Hospital Minute Book for that year (see Bibliography).

All references to existing rooms in brackets e.g. (1E.20) refer to the 2006 architects plans drawn up by Tektus (Plates 7-12).
The Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases

The General Hospital was built by John Wood between 1738-42 on the site of the Old Theatre in Upper Borough Walls, between Parsonage Lane and the Bear Inn (Fig. 3). To the north was a remaining section of the mediaeval City walls and the area immediately beyond the walls was used as a burial ground by the Hospital until 1849. To the east were gardens belonging to the Rector of Bath, upon which a Rectory was built in the late 18th century. To the west was the yard of the Bear Inn, later demolished to make way for Union Street (1805-10).

An attic level was added to the Hospital in 1793 by John Palmer and in 1831 mineral water baths were installed in the Hospital, the water being pumped from the King’s Bath and Hot Baths to the south. A new ‘west wing’ was added in 1861 by architects Manners & Gill on the site of the old Rectory. It was linked with the old Hospital (east wing) by a first storey arch across Parsonage Lane and by a tunnel at basement level. In 1913 a further tunnel linked the basement with the relocated nurses’ home at no. 9 Trim Street, now Hospital offices.

The Hospital, which now stretched from Union Street to Bridewell Lane, became known as The Royal Mineral Water Hospital in 1887. To the rear of the east wing was an ‘airing ground’ and beyond this the ‘Sedan Chair’ public house, purchased in 1883 for the nurses home. In 1914 when the nurses’ home moved, it was fitted out as pathology laboratories with a morgue in the basement. It has since become administration offices.

In 1932 plans were drawn up to build a new Hospital to the south of the City, but these were interrupted by the outbreak of war. In April 1942 the west wing received a direct hit during the ‘Baedeker’ air raids and much of it was destroyed. Following the war, and with the introduction of the National Health Service, plans to rebuild the Hospital were once more deferred. In 1962 the west wing was finally rebuilt and the entire Hospital modernised. A further modernisation was carried out in the 1990s with a third floor being added to the west wing and a new stair tower to the rear.
The Archaeological Context of the Hospital

The site of the Hospital, just inside the mediaeval City walls, has produced a number of interesting finds, principally Roman. In the west wing basement is the section of pavement unearthed when foundations for the new Hospital were being dug in 1861. In 1911 the tessellated floor was relocated to a recess in the basement and today is on view at the base of the stairs from the main lobby.

The extension has a fragment of a mosaic measuring 2 ft 2 in. by 6 ft 10 in. (2.8 metres by 2.1 metres) and 13 ft (4 metres) below street level. The scale of its blue and white swastika-meander design suggests that it formed part of a much larger pavement, perhaps a corridor, in a C4 dwelling close to the assumed line of the N wall (Forsyth:122-3)

SMR Number BN1876 - MBN1876 Roman mosaic and other remains 43 AD to 409 AD at Mineral Water Hospital

Description
Mosaic found in 1859-ST74946487--and preserved still in situ [has been relocated] {1}{2}{3}One mosaic still in situ at the Mineral Water Hospital and two others relaid in the Roman Baths Museum, {3} In 1914 a subway was built running beneath Upper Borough Walls linking the west wing of the Hospital to a nurse's home at 10 Trim Street. During this work Roman material recovered and a well explored. The well appears to pre-date the Roman rampart which overlies it. The well seems to be at the same level as features uncovered beneath the Hospital in 1859. {4}{5}1912-excavation for a new boiler in the Hospital produced 3rd-4th Century pottery and coins.1963-Hospital extended to the south, more pottery recovered {6}

"The remains of an R-B building were discovered in 1859 when the W wing was being added to the Hospital. No plans of the structure were made, but mention is made of a number of concrete floors, walls, remains of a furnace and ash pits. A mosaic, preserved in situ, was also found, having a labyrinthine fret design composed of large tesserae of Winterbourne stone and white and blue lias. It is probably part of a corridor. Building debris, including wall plaster, roofing tiles, bricks and tesserae were also found, along with a fragment of a marble commemorative slab to Tiberius Claudius Sollemnis. A number of artefacts were also found.”[6]

Sources
(1) Museum Record: Bath City Museum. SMR B64 B66.
(3) Cartographic materials: OS. 1885.
(5) Ordnance Survey Archaeological Record: Pitcher G. 1966. ST76SE32.
(7) Serial: Bath & Cheltenham Gazette. 1859. 11-May.
(8) Article in serial: Scarth, H M,PSANHS. 1863. pg 187-193
(9) Bibliographic reference: Scarth, H M. 1864. Aquae Solis. pg 77, 89
A further section of pavement was discovered beneath Bridewell Lane (right) during the 1861 building works. A section is now preserved on the wall of the former laboratories to the rear of the west wing gardens. To the west of the site, beyond Bridewell Lane, a further mosaic floor was discovered. It depicted dolphins and was discovered on the site of the Bluecoat School.

Earlier, in 1738, a hypocaust, altar and two mosaics were found by Wood’s workmen, as well as a tessellated passage and room beyond. It lay 6 feet below the 18th century surface level and were subsequently dated to between 43 and 409 AD. Wood recorded the find in his ‘Description of Bath’ (1749, 270). The 1886 OS map (Fig. 13) shows the site of the various Roman finds.

(BRL: R5.552 n.d. Roman pavement in Bridewell Lane)

SMR Number BN1873 - MBN1873 - Roman building 43 AD to 409 AD

National Grid Reference
ST 749 648 ST76SW

Description

Hypocaust, altar and two mosaics found in 1738 at ST74996487 {1}{2}Parts of a Roman building recovered. Exposed remains consisted of several rooms-one with pillared hypocaust with vents in east wall presumably leading hot air into heated room next door. Further east, two mosaics were recovered-one 1.83m wide (probable corridor) and another 5.5m across. North wall of this room was found to contain a wide doorway with two steps leading up to the flagged floor of the adjacent room-0.3m above the mosaic. Mosaic floor was 1.83m below ground level and 0.91m above natural. (3)(4)

*The remains of the building were discovered in 1738 by workmen employed by John Wood during the digging of the foundations for the Mineral Water Hospital, lying 6ft below the 18th century surface level.

No attempt was made to uncover the full extent of the building, but Wood recorded a probable furnace with ash pit to the NW, with a section of hypocaust. To the E of this was a room c.18ft N-S, “paved with common stone”. This room connected to one to the S two steps down, and also c.18ft N-S, which had a mosaic floor consisting of interlacing circles. To the S again lay a second mosaic pavement, 6ft wide and apparently a corridor, of unrecorded design. The walls on both its sides had been completely robbed. Wood thought he had found the Praetorium of the Roman camp and described the hypocaust area as “The Foundation of the Alter, which was placed near the General’s Tent; & in all probability, served also for the Hypocauustum”.[5]

Sources
(2) Cartographic materials: O.S. 1885. ST76SE32.

Urban Archaeological Database - MRN6
The 1861 Hospital was built on the former Rectory Garden site (B&NES SMR BN11584 (Medieval to Post Medieval - 1500 AD to 1610 AD). The large formal garden belonged to the Parsonage of St. Peter and Paul parish and in the Middle Ages had belonged to the vicarage of St Mary of Stalls. It is first shown on this site in 1610 on John Speed’s map (Fig. 1) occupying the site between Parsonage Lane and Bridewell Lane, facing onto Upper Borough Walls. In the late 18th century the rectory house was rebuilt in the centre of the garden and it later served as the Bath Literary and Commercial Institution in the first half of the 19th century. In 1858 the site was acquired by the Hospital for the present west wing. The area behind this part of the Hospital still serves as a garden.

**The General Hospital 1742-1861**

The General Hospital in Upper Borough Walls was built by John Wood between 1738-42 on the site of the Old Theatre between Parsonage Lane and the yard of the Bear Inn (Fig. 3). The idea of founding the Charity of the General Hospital or Infirmary, to establish a charity Hospital for the poor who came to Bath seeking a cure, was first mooted in 1716 by Lady Elizabeth Hastings and Henry Hoare (left), Beau Nash’s London banker. He was also one of the founders of the Westminster Hospital (1715) in London. The pair tried to enlist public support for the scheme but it initially met with little enthusiasm. In 1723, however, when Sir Joseph Jekyll opened a subscription for the same cause, it met with more support. Sir Joseph seems to have had more powers of persuasion, certainly enough to take the step of forming a committee of Trustees with a number of the subscribers to administer the charity.

This Committee of thirteen men included some of Bath’s most renowned public figures; Richard (Beau) Nash, Henry Hoare, Archdeacon Hunt and local Doctors Francis Ave, John Bestow, Richard Bettenson, George Cheyne and John Quinton as well as the surgeon Jeremiah (Jerry) Pierce. Humphrey Thayer, a wealthy local apothecary, was chosen to act as secretary and it was he who brought John Wood into the scheme in 1727. The Committee had yet to find a site for the new Hospital, and it was Wood who identified a prime piece of land south of the City called the Ambry, belonging to a client, surgeon Robert Gay. Wood was particularly interested in its proximity to the Hot Bath, whose spring he proposed using to feed a bath incorporated in the Hospital building.

Robert Gay was at last persuaded to bequeath the land in his will for the new building and Wood drew up the designs for a small, circular Hospital 70 ft. in diameter, with the bath in the centre (Fig. 5). Jekyll thought the Hospital too small and, prudently, insisted that the building should allow for future expansion when funds allowed. The Trustees wrote to Gay suggesting that he give them more land, but he did not reply, and the opportunity to acquire the land was finally lost.

Bust of Jerry Pierce (BRL: Hunt Vol. 282 18.404)
Eleven years elapsed during which plans for various sites were submitted and rejected. By this time some of the original charity trustees had died and been replaced by others, the most well-known being Dr. William Oliver. He offered to give some of his own land for the new building, an offer at first eagerly accepted but later abandoned in favour of the more practical old theatre site on the old Borough Walls. This had been Bath’s first theatre, built by George Trim in 1705. It was a small, cramped building which had made little profit in its short existence (Fig. 3).

In 1734 an Act of Parliament granted the future Hospital the use of the old Hot Baths and the pump for their patients. Wood drew up designs for a Hospital on the site and during January 1738 the trustees again appealed to the public for subscriptions.

A plan and elevation (below) of Wood’s proposed building (NMR: 14.11 M Green 1945) with an accompanying description of the facilities was published and circulated to prospective subscribers. The appeal resulted in some £2,000 being subscribed. Wood relates a detailed account of the campaign in his Essay (1747).

Wood altered his plan accordingly, but revealed in his description of Bath (1765) that his printed plan, distributed widely, was never intended to be carried out.

The printed Plan of the Hospital was, for the sake of ornament, and to gain a point in the purchase of the land, made different to that which was intended for execution, but when the last bargain was completed for a stable belonging to Mr. William Boyes, at the south-west corner of the land purchased of Mrs. Came, I produced the real plan to the trustees, who approving of it on the 25th of August, 1738, ordered it to be carried into execution instead of that which was printed. And thus, after more than eleven years spent in
fruitless attempts, the work was put upon such a footing as to be carried on without the least impediment (Wood:1765,290).

On the opening page of the Hospital’s first minute book is Ralph Allen’s signature, agreeing to provide free from his wharf at the Dolmeads

All wrought free stones, Paving Stones, Wall stones and lime; to build and compleat ye new General Hospital intended to be erected in the City on the Ground lately purchased of Mrs Caime commonly called the old Play House (23 Feb 1737,23)

Allen (left) also gave considerable sums of money towards the Charity. Other local businessmen were involved in the building.

The lawyer Mr Collibee drew up conveyances for land from which lime could be obtained in plentiful supply for the mortar to build the Hospital (20 April 1738,62). The theatre was demolished on Tuesday 30th May a fortnight after its tenant Mr Dillon had surrendered the remaining term of his lease on the play house’ (18 May 1738,66). Some of the buildings surrounding the play house were also to be demolished, principally Mr Boyce’s stables to the rear. These were accessed from Parsonage (or Vicarage) Lane which today still runs between the east and west wing. In March 1738 both Mr Boyce and John Wood, on behalf of the Trustees, were tasked with carrying out separate evaluations of the property so that a purchase price could be agreed upon (30 March 1738,59). Mr Boyce was paid £1 10s. in consideration of his surrender of the stable and was ‘at liberty to take away Rack manger and bale post’. He signed an affidavit to this effect in the minutes book (1 June 1738,68). In August, however, Boyce was paid the astonishing sum of £140 for his stables (3 August 1738). Presumably the evaluations had been agreed some time after the stables had been demolished.

On July 6th the foundation stone was laid at the north-east corner of the new Hospital by William Pulteney, later Earl of Bath. The stone, no longer visible, had the following inscription:

**THIS STONE IS THE FIRST WHICH WAS LAID IN THE FOUNDATION OF THE GENERAL HOSPITAL**

**JULY THE SIXTH A.D. 1738**

**GOD PROSPER THE CHARITABLE UNDERTAKING**

A further house in Vicarage Lane, called the White House, was also to be demolished. One sixth of the cost was to be paid by Mrs Came, former owner of the old theatre, for her ‘little tenement in Stall Street now in the possession of Mr Newman, pastry cook. The other five sixths were to be paid by the Trustees. Presumably, Mrs Came was to retain a share of the land for her premises (20 April 1738,62). In December leave was sought from a Mr Coutch [sic] to pull down his end wall and rebuild it at the charge of the Trustees (7 Dec 1738,91).

Even before the building work had begun it was realised that the wards were not going to be big enough and that ‘larger wards will be more conducive to the Health of the Patients’. It was resolved that the wards

be enlarged and other alterations from the plan be made according to the new plan brought this day by John Wood (25 Aug 1738,70).
The list of building materials used in the construction of the Hospital is documented in the minutes. In August 1738 40 oak beams were ordered ‘20 feet by 14 inches square when sawn - free from all defects’. In addition ‘Common timber’ was to be delivered by the suppliers in Bristol (18 Aug 1738). John Wood himself requested ‘300 [of] green 10 feet 2 ½ inches Red Deals for £10 per hundred (9 Nov 1738,86). The floorboards and sash windows were all oak (3 Jan 1739, 138) and a variety of timber was ordered for the building project. Oak boards 1 ½ inches thick were purchased at £1 8 s. the hundred, quarters (regular timbers) ‘3 by 4 to hold when saw’d’ at 12s. per hundred and heart oak laths 4 feet long at 15s. the thousand. Newcastle glass was to be used throughout the Hospital and a Mr Orchard was contracted as plasterer for the Hospital (1 May 1739,151).

In January 1739 Mr Vincent Mathysens (Mathisons) was ‘employed in Cutting the Historical Work of the Good Samaritan for the new General Hospital in Free Stone’ for a fee of 25 guineas (3 Jan 1739, 138).

By September 1739 the Hospital was well under way and ‘Boards, Poles, ropes and needles bought for scaffolding’. An agreement was outlined as to what percentage various workmen were to be paid for their work. Once workmen had finished laying the naked floor, it would be measured and two thirds paid. The same percentage would be paid on the completion and measuring of both floors and upon fitting up the frames and sashes. The remaining third for the windows would be paid once they had been hung. Full payment would be made when the roofs and stairs were finished and the ‘inside work of doors, partitions and window boards’ would be measured and paid as each storey was completed. A sufficient quantity of ‘Mild Lead’ was to be purchased for the Hospital, presumably for pipes and gutters. Mr Eames was to be paid two thirds on measuring every storey and the remainder upon completion (27 Sep 1739).

Once the Hospital was nearing completion, the Trustees turned their minds to the fittings and fixtures required. Fifty bedsteads were ordered at £1 8 s. each and more ‘of a sufficient quantity to furnish the Great Ward on the first floor’ at £1 13s. each. Bedding for 76 beds in all was ordered at £2 7s. each, which presumably included mattresses and pillows, though not linen (12 Nov 1741,166). The newly appointed matron, Mrs Whitlock, ordered separately 2 dozen pairs of linen sheets and 3 dozen towels. Samples of linen ‘like that most commonly used by Hospitals in London and Bristol’ were requested before she placed a firm order (21 Jan 1741). Mr Howse of Bath offered all his linen at cost price; 130 pairs of flaxen sheets, 160 pillowcases ‘1 yard and 3 nails each’, 200 towels, 36 hemp kitchen towels each 3 yards long and 6 tablecloths each 10 yards long. The size of the tablecloths gives some idea of the size of the dining tables used in the wards (11 March 1741,177).

The service rooms were also being fitted out, and the minutes give an idea of what services were provided for, primarily in the basement of the Hospital. Kitchen furniture sufficient for 70 people was ordered, together with 12 dozen elm bowls, 1 dozen large dishes and a dozen wooden ladles. A number of vacancies were tendered for, including a brewer and baker, a laundry maid and cook (18 March 1741,179).

By March 1741 the plastering had been completed and fires were ordered to be ‘kept constantly in every ward’ for the entire month in order to dry out the plaster. Sarah Stockwell was charged with maintaining the fires and cleaning the rooms (1 March 1741,174).
John Wood signed an affidavit in the minute book at the March meeting, generously agreeing to give all his care labour and expenses for Surveying and Directing the Building of the Hospital as a free gift and Benefaction.

In April 1742 Mr Vincent Mathysens (Mathisons) senior was contracted to produce a model and several drawings of the ‘History of the Good Samaritan’ at a fee of 5 guineas. (3 April 1742). Having previously been paid 25 guineas in 1738 to carry out the sculpture, it appears that it was unsatisfactory and that a second one was required. In the event, it was never completed and the sculpture placed on top of Manner’s & Gill’s later west wing in 1856 was carried out at that time by H. Ezard Junior.

A dial was to be ‘erected in the most commodious place in the house’ (1 July 1742, 205). The Hospital would be run with precision and both staff and patients would have needed some way of knowing the time. William Barwell was chosen to build and install the dial for a fee of 5 guineas, which included keeping it repaired for the next 2 years (8 July 1742, 206).

The General Hospital 1785 (BRL: Broadsides & Posters No. 93)

John Wood’s subsequent plan with the revisions he made has not survived, but he does give a very accurate description on his Description (1765).

The Hospital, as it was finally fixed, upon August 25th, 1738, became a magnificent pile of building, of the Ionic order, consisting of a ground, principal, and chamber-story, and extending 99 ft. in front to the north, 84 ft. to the west, and 97 ft. to the east. The east and west sides are parallel, but they are not at right-angles with the north front, which contains five windows on each side of the door, and the central part of it makes a tetrastyle frontispiece, of almost whole columns, elevated upon a large plinth, and finished with a pediment, whose tympanum was proposed to be adorned with a bas-relief representing the Good Samaritan.

The west front of this structure contains nine windows in its whole length, and this being divided into three parts, the middle part advances forward, and was intended to have been finished with a pediment, in the tympanum of which there was to have been a has-relief representing the Pool of Bethesda. A principal and half-story appears between the plinth and crowning in this and the north front, and the quick descent of the ground, from north to south, increases the basement of the building so much to the west, that the plinth appears as a face to a three-quarter-story.
The entrance into the building being in the north front, we first come into a vestibule, which has on the left side a room for the apothecary, another for the doctors; and on the right side there is the matron’s parlour and bed chamber, with a room for the surgeons. To the south of this room, and in the west front of the building, there is a Committee room, a secretary’s office, and a room for the steward; parallel to which is the first ward for men, with a passage between that ward and the front rooms. In the east front of the Hospital there is a spacious room adapted for a ward for women, and almost facing the vestibule the chief staircase is placed, a passage tying between it and the back part of the rooms in the north front, and extending from the women’s ward to the west front wall of the building.

The chamber-story of the Hospital is divided into five wards, and the ground- (basement) story is appropriated for offices and lodgings for some of the servants of the house. The seven wards are capable of holding one hundred and eight beds, exclusive of those for the nurses, and the building may be enlarged to the south to receive any reasonable number of patients, since the land is in possession of such persons as have expressed an inclination to sell it to the governors of the charity (Wood:1765,291-2).

Almost before the Hospital was up and running, alterations were being made. The porter’s lodge was to be provided with a bed for the house-visitor, who monitored the running of the Hospital, and a new window inserted. The bedsteads were still being made up by the carpenters and more were required, when it was decided that the main ward was not big enough (21 Oct 1742,226). The well that had been sunk in the basement was also found to be too shallow and instructions were given to make it deeper (10 Feb 1742, 252). The c1855 Ground Floor Plan (Plate 1) gives some idea of what Wood’s layout finally looked like.

The Committee had been formed following an Act of Parliament in 1739 where a body of 90 trustees were officially named as ‘The President and Governors of the General Hospital or Infirmary of Bath’. They were empowered to purchase property up to £1,000 a year to fund the Hospital and between them a president, 3 treasurers and a Committee of 32 were elected annually on the 1 or 2 May. The Governors should always consist of at least 55 members, new members being elected immediately upon the death of old ones. There was also to be a weekly meeting which had to be minuted.
Painting of Doctors Oliver (left) and Pierce examining patients with Wood’s plan and elevation behind them by William Hoare 1742 (RNHRD)

The Act decreed that those admitted to the Hospital should be supplied by their sponsor with £3 travel or ‘Caution’ money for England and Wales and £5 for Scotland or Ireland, deposited with the Hospital in order to defer the costs of returning them to their respective parish. These people could not subsequently gain a settlement in any Bath parish, and conversely no-one from a Bath parish was admitted, on the principle that they could remain at home and take the benefit from the baths for a paltry sum. The patients had the use of the old Hot Bath and all officers and servants had to wear a badge, as well as the inmates, to identify themselves (Warner:1801,290).

On Christmas Eve 1741 Mrs Whitlock was appointed as matron. A scheme of rules made for the Hospital was to be hung in every ward and publicly read by the apothecary every Tuesday morning. Ward rounds were to be carried out by the physicians and surgeons at noon every Monday and Friday, and the apothecary’s stock examined by them on the first Monday of every month. (Warner:1801,292)

It was a strict regime, with the sexes rigorously separated. No patients or live-in servants were allowed to sleep outside the Hospital for any reason whatsoever and no-one below the level of Matron was allowed to leave the Hospital without permission. No tea was to be taken by the patients or provisions purchased without leave. No swearing, drinking, fraternisation or games of any kind were to be allowed, and those able enough were to help with the laundry and cleaning. (Warner:1801, 293)

Two Bath Guides were taken on; Mary Cole for the women and Abraham Beed for the men (10 June 1742). The matron ordered 12 canvas bathing shirts for the men and 12 flannel shifts for the women. The large amount of linen meant that ironing facilities were required, something that appears to have been overlooked. Four box irons were hastily ordered whilst a stove was belatedly erected in the laundry for heating them (15 April 1742,183).

In May tenders were put out for suppliers of food and other general supplies. Candles, coal, flour and meat were amongst the provisions tendered for (13 May 1742). Two bath chairs, similar to those on display in the Hospital, were ordered ‘for the use of the Hospital’ in order to transport the infirm to the Hot Bath (18 May 1742, 193) and a ‘Close Stool [commode] and lamps’ provided in Dukes Ward (3 Aug 1743, 292).
The problem of burying patients who had died at the Hospital was now considered and it was decided that the ground immediately beyond the section of City wall outside the Hospital would be perfect. Mr Eames was directed to make a Passage thro the Town Wall and a Stare Case down to ye Burying Ground (17 Aug 1743).

In the event, the City Council did not grant the Hospital the use of the Burial Ground until 1767, and it was only then that the Bishop of Bath and Wells consecrated the ground (Rolls:1988,59).

The annual report in May 1791 reported that the sanitary conditions of the Hospital were proving excellent.

no putrid or contagious distempers… The soil on which it stands are dry and gravelly and its situation in every respect convenient…patients may be easily carried into the fields for the benefit of the Air.

In the years up to 4 May 1791 12,029 patients had been admitted. Of those 9,353 had been cured and only 290 had died. This does suggest, however, that the burying ground was becoming over stretched by this time.

The patients were still taken to the old Hot Bath, the infirm carried in bath chairs. The subject of having mineral baths within the Hospital was raised, but the majority of Trustees were Against having a bath in the same building – We are inclined to doubt if it would be desirable were it practicable to have a Bath in the same Building, with that inhabited by Patients.

The trustees were of the opinion that the baths ‘might make the air damp and communicate the same to linen and furniture’. Even worse, ‘Moisture of the Air is thought to tend to spread infection of every kind’. The benefits of being out in the fresh air outweighed the convenience of baths ‘in situ’. They pointed out that most patients had to be carried from their beds to the Bath and Pump and back again and an equal number required the ‘refreshment and comfort of being carried out to enjoy the Fresh Air, an advantage too necessary to be dispensed with’.

In January 1792 an offer was made of land to extend the Hospital and also rename it. This, however, would involve the removal of the Hospital to a site nearer the Baths (25 Jan 1792, 211). A month later, after due consideration, the trustees resolved that there was ‘no benefit by removal as yet’ (1 Feb 1792, 212). The Hospital was now showing signs of age, and the sheer volume of patients brought about a number of problems in the infrastructure, including, inevitably, the sewage system. In February the minutes reported ‘offensive smells arising from the privies, Edward Mullins ordered to make Stop Troughs’ (29 Feb 1792).

In March a General Court of the Governors met to discuss rebuilding the Hospital on a larger scale. (BC: 8 Mar 1792). The Bath Chronicle published a letter from ‘A Friend of the Hospital’ regarding the proposal of a move to a larger building which had been needed for several years. There were between 50 and 60 people who had been waiting many months for admissions. The present site was two thirds of that proposed and the costs generated by the present site were more than those for the proposed one. (BC:475/15 Mar 1792).
A letter to the Bath Chronicle dated 12 March 1792 mentions the proposed enlargement of the Hospital and its attendant problems, as opposed to the new site.

The south side of the present Hospital will be blocked up and deprived of the benefit of the sun, by Mr Philpott’s new hotel being built close to it on the most open part of the Bear Yard; and the east side, where two of the largest wards receive their principal light and air, will be considerably darkened by the opposite side of Union Street, for which some small emend will be made by the north front being laid more open to Bond Street. The ground on which the present Hospital stands is about two-thirds of that on which it is proposed to erect a new one. The new building will have a good front to the south, very near the spacious area at the upper end of St James Parade; it will be detached from other buildings on the east and west sides by public streets and thoroughfares, and the north side will be open to the baths and a large area at the end of Bath Street, in a conspicuous point of public view.

He went on to say that the proximity of the baths more than compensated for the fact the Hospital would be several feet lower than the old one, and that the sale of such a prime site upon which the General Hospital stood would generate substantial funds for the building of the new one (Hunt I 282-4).

For many the running costs of the Hospital far outweighed any more practical issues. The following month a long letter was published from another ‘friend of the Hospital’, this time questioning the costs involved in building the new Hospital for 150 patients. He wrote that the last year's expenses had been £1,413 11s 10½d for keeping 112 patients and 25 domestics, etc. (BC:516/26 Apr 1792). Another letter published the same day opined that ‘some gentlemen of the faculty still consider there to be no medical reason to move the Hospital’. (BC:829/26 Apr 1792).

On 8 December the Committee delivered their report to the Board of Governors on the urgent need to provide accommodation for 30 additional patients. (BC:935/ 18 Oct 1792). The trustees made the decision to raise another storey above the first floor rather than move. In March architect John Palmer was contracted ‘for raising an Attic storey on the north front of the Hospital’ (6 March 1793, 289). Palmer was to be paid £900 in 3 instalments of £300(1 May 1793, 308).

The East Wing c1904 showing Palmer’s 1793 second storey (BRL: F2.633 M Green)

By May it was under way, the local paper announcing that the roof is being raised to provide an additional suite of apartments to admit more patients. (BC:848/9 May 1793)
Between 1805 and 1810 Union Street was built by the City architect Baldwin directly to the east of the Hospital, demolishing the yard of the Bear Inn and opening up a route between the City centre and fashionable Milsom Street.

In January 1829 the long discussed subject of introducing warm and cold air for warming and ventilating the Hospital, especially the wards, with gas light replacing candle light (1 Jan 1829,56) was finally implemented. The improvements were completed in mid 1829, and included raising the ceiling of the second floor passages, the removal of the passage pavements of the kitchen, bakehouse, brewhouse etc. and providing sleeping rooms for the nurses. Additional beds and other furniture were completed and the sculleries in many of the wards removed from sight. (1 May 1829).

Gas light was installed in the passages and in Nash Ward. The Registers Office and Committee Room were relocated on the north side of Hospital with a view to the use of the new Committee Room as a chapel instead of one of the female wards, as happened at present. Having the Registers Office ‘contiguous to the entrance’ was more practical. The Hospital was to be painted throughout, but when work commenced it was discovered that the ‘dilapidations’ were far worse than realised ‘rendering some parts of the building insecure’ (1 May 1830,191-2).

The question of having mineral baths at the Hospital was again raised. The Hospital apothecary, Mr Bush, suggesting the ‘erection of Baths making it unnecessary to carry them [the patients] to the hot baths’ (1 Jan 1829, 56). This time the question was considered more carefully, but still not acted upon. In May of the following year the Committee reported that all the repairs had been completed ‘very successfully’ at a cost of £2864 5s., but the ‘terrible weather’ had seriously interrupted the patients’ bathing and it was mooted that baths be set up within the Hospital.
As a result Mr Charles Copper of Birmingham was called in as consulting engineer. The practicalities of bringing the water from the spring to the Hospital were investigated and it was realised that an Act of Parliament was needed in order to proceed (1 May 1830, 276). The necessary Act was given Royal assent on 2 June 1830, obtaining consent from the Corporation to draw waters from the mineral spring and lay pipes through the public streets from the Kings Bath spring to the Hospital. The baths were to be installed by 25 Jan 1831 and the mineral water supplied from the Kings Bath, Hot and Cross Baths, laying pipes without interfering with any other public pipes or sewers, especially gas pipes. A steam engine was also required ‘to consume and regulate its own smoke’ (BRO: 0386/7/3 Act of Parliament, 2 June 1830).

Both a male and female bath were installed, solving the problem of alternate days for bathing for either sex. They were lined with slabs of slate, and raised above the floor level. In November 1830 iron railings had been erected in front of the Hospital by Mr Stothert, with stonework by Mr Lamborn (25 Nov 1830). An engraving (left) shows the Hospital shortly before the railings were installed (BRL: Hunt I, 282 18.401) and below a photograph c1890 showing the railings and Hospital plaque on Union Street (BRL: F2.634 M Green coll.)

By the 1840s the Hospital was again showing signs of age. It no longer overlooked quiet fields; they had been replaced in 1761 by the fashionable Milsom Street. It was now in the centre of a teeming City, with numerous carriages, horses and pedestrians passing along the Upper Borough Walls and down Union Street.

The noise of the traffic was not conducive to the patient’s wellbeing and in June 1842 Captain Pickwick ‘communicated with the proprietors of the house facing the front of the Hospital on the subject of laying down wooden paving’. The Hospital presumably was to pay for the majority of it in order to quieten the traffic noise (23 June 1842).

Advances in science and technology meant that the trustees began to consider more efficient methods of heating and ventilating the Hospital. The use of gas light had been extended and in 1844 there were discussions with the Secretary of the Gas
Company respecting the use of a meter (4 July 1844). In the following year the flow of water to the mineral baths was reviewed. In March repairs were carried out to the lower baths [the womens' bath on the ground floor] (13 March 1845) and in May it was considered whether condensed water from steam apparatus could be made available for use in the boiler if a reservoir was constructed. It seems that it could, because hot water was introduced into Hospital in 1846.

Ventilation and a more efficient sewage disposal system were desperately needed. In May a solution was required to remedy the smell from the water closets adjacent to the wards (22 May 1845). There were also complaints of the nuisance caused by the pipe factory in nearby Bridewell Lane (5 Mar 1846, 283).

The problem of space was again an issue, especially with the increase in female patients being admitted. The Committee examined plans prepared by architect Mr Manners for 9 additional beds ‘making wards more cheerful and airy but with loss of 2 beds in male wards’ (18 June 1846, 308). The problem was solved when Dukes Ward was appropriated for female patients by constructing a staircase connecting it with the small Queen’s Ward and forming a water closet. The ‘Flock Room’ was also fitted up as an occasional ward with 4 beds (25 June 1846, 309).

There was accommodation available for 133 patients but with the decision to provide beds in proportion to the male and female patients requiring them and allowing for greater space in the Queen’s Ward, beds were reduced to 127. The purchase of the adjoining Rectory House with its garden and buildings to the rear, first raised in 1840, was again mooted but was initially considered ‘not a matter of immediate interest’. After further discussion, however, it was agreed that purchase was essential both for the benefits to patients and ‘the prevention of those evil consequences which might follow from the property falling into other hands’. More space would alleviate the present practice of eating in the Bed Rooms because of lack of space and give the opportunity to take exercise in bad weather without going outside. Additionally

a commodious and fitting place of worship might also be formed, as a substitute for the present committee room, which is confessedly inadequate for the reception of 100 worshippers, upon the health of some of whom it sets unfavourably.

The Committee were worried that the property might become industrial premises, affecting the health of the patients, and that the surrounding walls may be raised to a height that would seriously affect the light into the Hospital. Once it ceased to be church property the chance may never again arise for the Hospital to buy it (1 May 1847, 370-1).

In February 1849 the porters lodge was enlarged, forming a bedroom for the nurse of Princess’s Ward. By ‘this alteration a dark part of the Princess’ Ward has been taken away and the appearance of the ward much improved’ (1 Feb 1849, 480). In June the burial ground was declared to be ‘in an unfit state for other interments’ and no more burials were allowed. A coating of lime was to be applied to the entire surface (7 June 1849, 505). In August 1849 painting began on the bath belonging to the female wards and new flooring was laid in the Queen’s Ward on the ground floor (16 Aug 1849, 513). The subject of a patients’ day room was raised and the Committee was

decidedly and unanimously of the opinion that did the Hospital contain the means of placing the patients through many hours of the day in a well ventilated room where they
might be provided with cheerful occupation such as a well chosen library – they would derive far greater benefit than that obtained by a general permission to leave the Hospital, which the closeness of the rooms they now occupy renders absolutely necessary (31 Jan 1850, 547-8)

Other changes were taking place in the Hospital. With the advances in modern pharmacy, the dispensary department was now supplied by medicines from outside, rendering an apothecary’s assistant unnecessary (4 Apr 1850).

For two years the purchase of the Rectory had lain dormant, but in December 1849 the Committee had entered into negotiations with the Rector of Bath (6 Dec 1849). The Rector had responded that he ‘could not treat this as a sale of private property’ and after due consideration (he had to consider the next incumbent) he felt £3,700 was the lowest price he could accept. The Committee considered it a fair price and moved that the purchase should be done quickly, only two members dissenting (4 Jan 1850, 539).

Difficulties regarding tenure of the Rectory as a non-ecclesiastical property then arose, holding up the purchase indefinitely (29 Apr 1850). It would be almost another six years before the Rectory was finally purchased by the Hospital.

Alternative sites were considered in the mean time. The Hospital was offered a house in Westgate Buildings, but it couldn’t accommodate more than 25 patients and they all had to be of same sex. In addition, the ‘offices’ (water closets) were out of doors (4 Dec 1851, 122). The Committee began to wonder if they could build onto the existing Hospital by adding an upper storey above Allen’s and Prince’s Ward on Palmer’s top floor. Manners drew up plans, estimating a cost of £816, while the cost of extending the present system of ventilation and warming to the new apartments would not exceed an additional £50. The Committee resolved to continue pressing for a new building, but if the extension went ahead, stipulated that the existing beds should be distributed on the new floor to alleviate overcrowding.

Resiting the Hospital at Sydney Gardens was suggested in 1852 at a cost of £1540 (5 Feb 1852, 137). In the same year they were offered a site on the west side of Manvers Street, then another in Victoria Park. Finally in 1856 negotiations for the sale of the Rectory were concluded, though interim plans to merge the General Hospital with Bellot’s nearby did not go ahead (15 May 1856, 460). In June the various tenants on the Rectory land were given notice to quit (19 June 56, 468). The Committee also received an offer from Mr Dill to sell the Chapel and adjacent premises in Bridewell Lane adjoining the Rectory premises to the south for £350 (26 June 1856, 469).

The Hospital decided to let the Rectory properties on short leases until building work commenced, to add to the Hospital’s finances. The various annual rents from the Rectory property (Plate 1) came to total of £145 10s. The income was less than it would have been if let for a fixed term, but it meant that the Hospital could give notice to quit when building was imminent. The Rectory itself was used by the Commercial and Literary Institution, the annual rent £40 instead of £50 because the tenants were carrying out repairs to the building themselves. Mr Luce occupied the coach house and renting office for £45, whilst carrying out repairs and pitching and paving. Thomas Hobbs had the yard to the rear of the house, paying £24 annually. His 21 year lease did not run out until 1870, though he had an agreement to leave the buildings by 1863. Thomas Price had the stables and yard, paying £12 10s. whilst carrying out repairs and pitching and paving. G.R. Packer had the shop over the stables in Borough Walls, paying £12 for a self repair lease. Finally John White
had the cooperage and yard at the same rent and conditions, though not for pitching and paving.

Whilst the negotiations drew to a close, the Hospital received a new and unexpected allocation of patients. Thirty three invalided Crimean soldiers were allocated the Kings Ward with its adjoining bath, whilst the former patients were distributed in Dukes Ward, Little Dukes and the Sick Ward. Mr Mann the builder was requested to remove the partitions separating the three wards to ‘throw them together’ to form a ward of the same dimensions as the Dukes Ward. Even the Linen Room was to be commandeered if necessary in, and the linen contents transferred to store room on Basement floor. Dukes Ward had up until then been used as a female ward (6 & 13 Nov 1856, 496-7).

At this time, the man and women still bathed on alternate days, despite having separate baths. It was resolved that the soldiers could use the mens’ bath on the day the male patients were not using it. This would entail both baths being filled so Mr Mann was asked to ascertain if there would be any danger to the building from the additional weight. Trials were carried out and all appeared to be fine (20 Nov 1856, 500). Later it was agreed to filling a bath in the evening as well as the daytime, but if it was found to interfere with the supply to the Kings and Queen’s Bath, it would be discontinued (23 Apr 1857, 9).

The following year the ‘experiment’ by the Army Medical Department came to an end. Of the thirty three soldiers admitted, 18 had been discharged cured and 6 more ‘much relieved’. As most of the soldiers were, however, unfit to resume active service, the Secretary of War ‘did not consider it desirable’ to send any more wounded soldiers and the experiment ended (1 May 1857).

The Hospital received the offer of a site on Trim Street ‘in the eventuality of a building being erected there’ for the Hospital to use. The Governors, however, would not allow access to it from the Borough Walls via the old disused burial ground. It appeared that a part of the old walls would have to be removed for access and so consent could not be given as it would be a desecration of the portion of the old city wall which enclosed it, ‘now an object of interest to the Antiquary’. 

The Bluecoat School and the General Hospital with the Rectory House garden in between c.1840s (BRL: Hunt I 282 18.402)
The Manners & Gill Hospital 1861-1900

In January 1857 plans for the new Hospital and alterations to the existing buildings were discussed. It was agreed to purchase the Wesleyan chapel and dwelling house in Bridewell Lane (22 Jan 1857), and, unlike the protracted negotiations for the Rectory, the transaction went through a month later (19 Feb 1857, 523). The chapel and dwelling house belonged to Mr Dill and Messrs Triggs & Wheeler respectively, and included sale of the reversion of the land which had 75 years outstanding. They were purchased ‘in order to make a more perfect boundary as well as to secure premises which might otherwise become great nuisances’. The Hospital paid £330 to the Corporation for the enfranchisement of the two buildings, but any plans to use the chapel for the Hospital appear to have been dropped early on in favour of a chapel integrated into the Hospital. Ironically, given the lengths the Hospital had gone to in the past to prevent patients frequenting local inns, the adjoining property to the south of the chapel was the Sedan Chair Public House, which would border the exercise yard to the rear of the new Hospital.

Plans for the enlargement of the Hospital were now drawn up

  embodying the principle of having a new Hospital for female patients complete in itself, a Chapel, rooms for the Officers and an exercising ground for both sexes; while at the same time they preserve to the governors the power of improving or rebuilding the present Hospital at any future period (26 Feb 1857, 524)

Two 1850s plans of the General Hospital exist. In 1857 a survey of all the purchased properties (Plate 1 and below) was carried out by William Tite MP and Mr Bellamy of Kings College Hospital, together with Gill. It shows the ground floor of the Hospital with the adjacent Rectory property and the numerous buildings that comprised it. The ground floor plan of the east wing shows the women’s mineral bath to the rear with a w.c. on either side comprising a wooden seat with a pair of holes. These three rooms overlook the central courtyard, and a bow window opposite housing the staircase.

To either side of the yard are the Queen’s Ward (east), partitioned into two wards, and the Princess’s Ward (west), foreshortened by the Porter’s Lodge and adjacent nurse’s bedroom. The Dispensary, Apothecary’s chamber, Matron’s chamber and parlour run along the west wall, separated from the Princess’ Ward by a corridor. A passage runs across the building, in front of which is the main lobby with the Apothecary’s room to one side and the Committee Room and ante-chamber to the other. A small scullery and nurses’ room leads off the main Queen’s Ward.
Plan of the Ground Floor of the General Hospital 1857 (BRO: L3[detail])

Plan of the First Floor of the General Hospital 1858 (BRL: Hunt Vol.I 18.374 p.266 [detail])
Six plans for the new Hospital (A–F) were drawn in 1858 up by Manners & Gill. It seems probable that the plan above (Plate 2) is one of them, but not the one which met with the Committee’s final approval. It shows the proposed alterations to the first floor of the existing Hospital overlaid in red, including lavatories, partition walls and allocation of beds. The mens’ bath, directly above the female counterpart, was probably ‘in situ’ but the long day room down the east wall was a proposal, replacing the existing ward. Additional wards drawn along the north and west sides were also extant.

Meanwhile, neighbours drew the Committee’s attention to the neglected and dirty state of the unoccupied shop at one corner of the Rectory which has become a nuisance (14 May 1857, 23). It was then discovered that Mr Dill had removed the pews and other fittings from the chapel and he was requested to restore them. This suggests the Committee were either originally hoping to use the building as the Hospital chapel, or the pews for the new chapel (1 October 1857, 523).

The annual rent, after deducting the ground rent and land tax, was now reduced to £127 15s. but the Committee regarded the rent as an investment whilst the new Hospital remained unbuilt. The Commercial and Literary Institution still paid £40 rent but the workshops and timber yards were now let to Messrs Hulbert and Hancock until March 1859 for £33. The coach house with Woods Printing Office over was let to M Hulbert for the same period for £40. The other coach house and stable was let to Mr McAuliffe by the week for 2s. 6d. The two corner shops facing Upper Borough Walls remained unlet. The chapel in Bridewell Lane was let to William Balham until March 1859 with a £5 5s. ground rent as well as £10 rent. The adjacent house in Bridewell Lane was let to George Wheeler until September 1858 for £12, thereafter on a quarterly lease. George Wheeler was the Hospital engineer, and he was later allotted two rooms for him and his wife in the basement of the Hospital (1 May 1858, 107).

In March 1858 the Hospital’s entire hot water system was modernised. The new steam boilers supplied by Mr Stothert provided ‘for all requirements of the intended new buildings’. With regard, however, to the new cisterns proposed for the ‘condensing water’, the Committee wanted to see if there was another way of providing it that was cheaper and less work for the engine. Stothert’s recommendations were for ‘the low pressure principle on account of its greater security’. The alterations would remedy defects in the engine and ‘render it equal to a greater mount of work’.

To have two Boilers of as large a size as the space will permit so they may be adequate to supply all the steam requirements of the new buildings as well as the present Hospital and prevent any suspension of the steam apparatus when either may require repair, with all proper fittings etc...

Stothert’s report also stated that when ‘increased work should be put on the Engine’, it would be necessary to have a larger supply of condensing water inches which is even now greatly deficient’ and he ‘proposed a large shallow Cistern on the roof over the Staircase’.
The overall cost would be

2 new boilers @ £85 each       £170
Alterations to engine        £17 15s.
Cistern          £64
Pipes for ditto         £18
Alterations to the present pipes and connected with the boilers £10

£279 15s.

The alterations to Engine do not include adapting it to work a wringing machine, and the cost of the Mason’s work for setting the boilers would probably be £50.

The Committee approved the request (11 March 1858, 92-3) and it recommended that the improvements to the Steam Engine were effected at the same time as the new boilers were erected, with a wringing machine for the laundry worked by the Engine (18 Mar 1858 94). The existing steam engine clearly could not cope, and the following month the minutes mention an escape of steam from the cooking steam apparatus (22 April 1858).

In September it was decided to place only one of the new boilers under the bath and the other at the side, providing a more economical use of fuel ‘by the arrangement of the flues’. It would also allow them to operate a single boiler whilst the other was being repaired and meant less structural alterations to the walls. It meant the basement store room would be darkened, but there would be plenty of other storage space in the new building (16 Sep 1858).

In July a number of plans (A-F) had been submitted for the Committee’s consideration. Some of them were designed to separate the patients by sex, the female patients occupying the new building and the men the extant building. The lowest estimate for this scheme was £11,850. A much favoured design had the existing building used as a dormitory whilst the new buildings were used as daytime accommodation with Day Rooms, a Chapel, Board Room and Officer’s apartments. This was later rejected when it was found that a similar design could be carried out for £7750, about £4,000 less than the first plan (29 July 1858, 125-7).

The design for the bridge spanning the two buildings at first floor level was not initially favoured. When neighbours asked the Hospital to block off the top of Parsonage Lane to put an ‘entire stop to the disgusting nuisances that has long existed at the upper part of the lane’ the Hospital indicated their intention to do it ‘so that communications could be on every floor between 2 buildings rather than ‘the intended archway over the lane’ (30 Sep 1858, 138).

The minutes describe the current Hospital arrangements and the proposed Plan F they all favoured.

The whole of the present buildings (except the basement) including the space now occupied by the Apothecaries Sitting Room, Committee Room, Registrar’s Office, Matron’s Sitting room and Bedroom, Apothecary’s Bed Room and Dispensary be devoted to Dormitories for patients of both sexes’ [90 men and 52 women, four more of each sex than at present].
The New Building will consist of two stories above the Basement, the upper to be occupied by the two Day rooms (the mens’ 70 feet by 43 feet and the womens’ 80 feet by 30 feet, both 22 feet high and on a level with the present building) with which it will be connected by a bridgeway over Parsonage Lane.

The ground floor of the building would be 4 feet lower than that of the old building and consequently add additional height to the rooms. It contained

Entrance Hall & Vestibule, Porter’s Room, Registrar’s Office, the Apothecary’s apartments on the one side and the Matron’s on the other. At the back, separated from these by a wide passage or Corridor extending the whole length of the building, will be the Board room and Waiting room, the Matron’s Work and Store Rooms and the Dispensary; and, shut off from the other apartments, two sick or Separate wards providing 5 additional beds.

In the centre of the building will be a handsome and spacious staircase lit from the roof. In the rear of the Building there will be an Airing Ground, surrounded by Cloisters for shade or shelter and over them it is proposed to erect, light enclosed corridor nearly on a level with the Day Rooms, in which the patients may take air and exercise in bad weather. A chapel is also proposed to be built on the south side of the Airing ground, easily accessible from the Corridor.

The Day Rooms were ‘lofty, light and airy’ and the building was intersected on all sides with wide corridors ‘and from the ground floor to the roof with ‘a fine open well staircase’. The basements would be connected by a passage underneath Parsonage Lane and ‘easy access from floor to floor will be provided by ‘lifts’.’ The Committee voted to adopt Plan G ‘but without pledging the Governors to the whole of the details’ and the Committee be authorized to take steps to go ahead and ‘mature’ the plans for final adoption. Requisite notices to quit were to be given to the Rectory ground tenants so that work could begin in the Spring of next year (28 October 1858, 143-4)

The Committee were then asked to look at the plans and suggests any changes. In December they reconvened to discuss their findings. They had re-arranged the wards to increase the present 86 male beds to 95 and the 48 womens’ beds to 59, an increase of 20 beds rather than the proposed 8. They had been able to place each bed at an interval of 3 feet by screening the lower part of some windows, allowing every patient from 804 to 1060 cubic feet of air ‘without any curtailment of …accommodation for closets, sculleries etc.’

By re-arranging the wards and heightening the ceilings of Nash and Colston wards as well as incorporating the passage adjoining Nash Ward, greater air and space was available to the upper storey. The location of the Chapel had been pondered and it was decided that the airing ground should be left free of buildings and the Chapel incorporated somehow into the main Hospital. This could be done by removing the Sick Wards from the new building to the top of the old building (Palmer’s addition) ‘upon which, and at right angles with Colston’s Ward, two rooms of sufficient size , can be easily constructed ‘. This also made it quieter for the sick patients, away from the day room, and meant the patients were all together in one building during the night.

Apart from these amendments the Committee were happy with the plans and recommended that they were implemented as soon as possible.
The estimates for the revised plan G were £2,550 less than plan F.

New Building £7500
Fitting up the chapel £200
Sick Wards over end of king’s Ward £200
Preparing the Exercise Ground 3100
Boundary Walls, Railings. £350
Colonnade in exercise Ground £150
Additions and alterations in present Hospital £750

A total of £9250, as opposed to £11800 for Plan F, 28 Dec 1858

On the ground floor the Chapel, now fronting Parsonage Lane, would be 55 feet long by 26 feet wide. The other rooms included the Board Room, Registrars and Dispenser’s offices, the Matron’s and Apothecary’s rooms and the Porter’s room. On the First Floor were the 2 Day Rooms; the mens’ 70 feet by 43 feet 2 inches, the womens’ 78 feet 2 inches by 26 feet, and both 23 feet high. The rooms had adjoining lavatories. The exercise or ‘airing’ ground to the rear of the building was 130 feet by 67 feet wide with a colonnade on its eastern side. The rooms vacated in the old Hospital would be fitted up as additional wards with an estimated turn around of 4 people per bed in one year. The new sick wards would contain another 3 beds (29 Dec 1858).

In May 1859 the new plans had been lithographed and widely distributed (2 May 1859, 186-7). The Hospital still had a shortfall in funds and a direct appeal for more money was made ‘to almost every gentleman in Somerset and Wiltshire’. Disgust was expressed at the gentlemen of Gloucestershire who, despite sending a large contingency of patients to the Hospital, could not be prevailed upon to donate any money. James Brymer, a benefactor and friend of the Hospital, donated £500 to the ‘fitting up of chapel’.
On 4 June 1859 the foundation stone for the new building was laid with great ceremony. The event was photographed, one of the earliest recorded public functions in Bath.
In May 1860 the Committee reported that the concrete foundations begun in April 1859 were now completed. The contractor was George Mann had had supplied masons, carpenters and joiners, plumbers, slaters, plasterers, smiths, bellhangers, glaziers, painters, paper-hangers and gas fitters at a sum of £8,354. The carpenters were Messrs Morgan & Lovell, the plasterer Mr Cooke, the plumber Mr Kerslake and the painter and glazier Mr Parker. The contract for warming and ventilation was awarded to Messrs Haden & Son of Trowbridge who were to construct the apparatus for warming the day rooms and chapel and provide boilers for supplying hot water for the lavatories. The timber roof was fixed but the slates were held up for some weeks because the severe weather had hampered work. The revised cost of the building work was £11,969 plus £950 for the alterations to the existing Hospital and the erection of a new Sick Ward. (1 May 1860 Report of Buildings Committee, 274-6).

George Mann was given permission to deposit the soil and builder’s debris from the new building in the former burial ground opposite ‘so as to raise it to a level with the pavement in the street...provided Mr Mann will engage to form areas in front of the houses’ (19 July 1860, 293).

The Medical Board Report had advised increased facilities for the mineral bath, requesting that the basement store room to be made into a Bath room (3 Mar 1859, 169). In November it had been agreed that the room formerly used as a sulphur bath be converted to a w.c. and scullery for Dukes Ward in accordance with architects plans (24 Nov 1859, 237). In 1860 the large lead cistern over the baths was leaking and ‘in a dilapidated state’. It was decided that although cast iron was more expensive, ‘judging from those already in use’ it would be more durable and would not require repairing. The Committee duly ordered a larger cistern made of cast iron which Stothert & Pitt fitted with supporting iron girders at a cost of £63 (22 March 1860, 260).

The improvements to the Hospital included the introduction of vapour baths, the extension of the existing baths and a corresponding increase in the water supply to cope with the additional facilities. It was agreed that it was ‘desirable for both sexes to bathe daily...water exercise and the effects of more frequent bathing being beneficial’. Vapour baths, similar to Turkish Baths, should be provided for additional treatment ‘especially in cutaneous complaints’ and there needed to be a means of increasing the force of the douches.

Alternatively the new baths could be made sufficiently large to allow a second patient simultaneous use. There would, however, be no need to enlarge the current baths or their number if the first set of proposals were carried out. The quantity of water currently required for the Hot and Tepid Baths, dry and wet douching, filling the two cooling reservoirs and for drinking amounted to 120 hogsheads. The pump at the City Baths was worked from 6.30-7.30 and then from 9-11 a.m. daily and it was estimated that it raised 40 hogsheads per hour, a total of 120 hogsheads in 3 hours. If both sexes were using the baths for a total of 6 hours in it would need 240 hogsheads per day. The Baths & Pump Room Committee allowed pumping from 5-9a.m. but not after 11 a.m., so it was suggested that patients bathe at an earlier hour in summer, perhaps 6.30 or 7 a.m. Currently patients bathed between 9 and11a.m., returning to their beds for 15-20 minutes afterwards before the doctor’s rounds at 12 noon (12 March 1860, 265-7). A lengthy contemporary poem [Appendix I] written by a female patient describes the regime and some of the principal staff, including the matron, Miss Brooke (BRL: Boodle Vol. 9b, 452)
In December the ‘Cold Water Committee of Bath Corporation’ agreed to supply the Hospital with free water from their springs on Charmy Down, which were currently going to waste. The water would be conveyed into the reservoirs of the Bath Corporation (20 Dec 1860).

The Hospital engineer was George Wheeler, probably the former tenant of the house in Bridewell Lane. It was agreed that as his workload would increase with the two buildings to look after, he should have the residential use of the two rooms beneath the New Committee Room, together with his wife. He would be allowed coal, gas and water together ‘with liberty to wash his Linen in the Wash house of the Hospital once a week at such time as will not interfere with the House arrangements: in all other respects the family to be restricted to their own apartment ‘. He was docked 3s. for accommodation from his weekly wage of 30s. (20 Sep 1860, 303-4).

A certificate (left) belonging to George Wheeler was discovered beneath the floorboards of the original Hospital in 1849 (BRO: 0386/7/33).

Building work had been delayed due to exceptionally wet weather, and the Chapel was way behind schedule. The new opening date was set back to the first two weeks of July ( May 1861, 352). Meanwhile the Hospital was the recipient of a number of religious texts to be displayed in the new Hospital, sent by well meaning, female well-wishers for the moral improvement of the inmates. Mr Yapp of London sent 60 tablets with texts of scriptures as the gift of ‘a Lady’ who requested they be hung up in the wards. The ‘majority’ resolved ‘they be returned with the respectful thanks of the Committee’. They later relented and asked the Chaplain to select a few suitable texts from the tablets (4 April 1861, 341)

On 11 July 1861 the new Hospital was officially opened. Pamphlets describing the ceremony and the new building itself (right) were printed.
The elevation 'presents a classic façade of noble proportions' with a bridgeway 'supported by massive pillars' and a central hall with Board Room to the right (32 feet by 26 feet) with paintings, including that now on stairs of Doctors Oliver and Pierce examining patients.

A c1861 engraving of the newly built Hospital taken from a painting by George Manners which hangs in the Hospital lobby (BRL: Mineral Water Hospital Clippings File)

The womens' day rooms were 78 feet by 26 feet and the mens' 70 feet by 48 feet and both 22 feet high. They had fireplaces to keep them warm in winter and on the south side of each is a spacious balcony for the use of patients in fine weather, lights at night by 'sunlights' in the centre of the ceilings...A warm air apparatus, as an auxiliary for heating in severe weather, is laid down, and every care has been taken to ensure proper ventilation.

The Roman pavement some three or four feet below the level of the basement floor 'has been railed round and preserved, and will prove an attraction to every lover of antiquities who visits the building.

The Roman pavement was left on display in the basement, but the other remains found on the site, including pottery, were handed over to the Corporation to be kept with the other Roman Antiquities in the Literary and Scientific Institution 'with the understanding that a separate case be provided for them and a catalogue made to identify the locality in which they were found' (12 June 1862, 460).

In the old City several tessellated pavements and other memorials of the occupation of the City have been exposed...One now remains undisturbed in the Water Hospital and a smaller one in the adjoining garden. One was found near these where the Blue Coat School now stands and at the United Hospital (Reminiscences of an Old Boy, 28-9)
The Chapel

The new chapel had a semi-circular ante-chapel and it was agreed that stained glass windows were a very appropriate method of ‘commemorating the munificent liberality of Mr Brymer in connexion with the New Building’. James Brymer was the generous benefactor and Friend of the Hospital who had donated £500 towards the decoration of the chapel. The windows were executed by Mr Wailes of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne. In a slight deviation to the plan, the chapel apses were covered with a sloping roof rather than a flat one. The additional money was spent on the marble shafts for the windows and marble steps for the Apsis, the carving of the caps of the columns, corbel, arch etc and defraying the cost of oak benches instead of deal.

There was a memorial window to James Brymer in the ante-chapel, divided horizontally into three compartments and representing the Good Samaritan. In the lower window the Good Samaritan pours oil into the traveller’s wounds, the central window depicts him leading the injured man to safety, upon a donkey. The top section shows the traveller ‘reposing comfortably in the inn, the Samaritan paying the innkeeper for his keep. Above was written ‘Whatsoever thou spendest, more I will repay thee’. A ‘handsome border’ surrounded the windows, with a stained glass inscription at the bottom reading ‘To the Glory of God, and in memory of James S. Brymer’.
There was a brass commemoration plaque to James Brymer on the left hand side of the entrance and opposite a stained glass window, with the text

I was glad when they said unto me. Let us go into the House of the Lord!

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean, -wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.'

Polished Devonshire marble columns to either side were capped with Bath stone and carved with ivy and oak. Three arches divided the chapel from the ante-chapel, their caps carved with different images from nature; a phoenix and pelican, a water buttercup, a wild poppy, three fish, fig tree, two birds drinking from a cup and a pomegranate. There were five two-light stained glass windows in the south wall with a different coat of arms traced above each; those of the Brymer Family and the See of Bath and Wells and the Bath arms, the Royal arms and the Prince of Wales arms. The caps of the central shafts and the Devonshire marble columns on the sides of these windows were carved with the serpent and the apple, thorns and thistles, vine and illy, passion flower, palm and crown, pomegranate and trefoil.

The apse was lit by 7 circular-headed windows, which all depicted scriptural incidents connected with water; the baptism of Jesus, Christ at the Pool of Siloam healing the sick; Christ washing the feet of his disciples; Baptism of the eunuch by St Philip; Christ and the Samarian woman at the well; Naaman the Syrian in Jordan and Moses striking the rock

The colouring, the grouping and the drawing of various figures bespeak the taste and skill of a true artist.

The caps of the surrounding marble columns depicted carved emblems of the Passion; the chalice, crown of thorns, hyssop, the scourge, hammer and pincers,
and the nails. The coloured crown of the apsis had rays of glory carved in the stone. The arch was supported by 4 columns of marble; the caps carved symbols of the four Evangelists, the lamb and the dove. The soffet was enriched with panels, the arch 'especially finely carved with passion flowers in bold relief'.

The pulpit was of white lias from Clandown and the pulpit corbel formed of two storks surrounded by bulrushes. The pulpit's three carved panels depicted an HIS monogram, a Maltese Cross and the Trinity emblem, the caps of the columns finely carved with the rose and lily. The reading desk was an oak carved eagle and over the Chapel door was a Maltese Cross with the Four Gospels. The panelled ceiling was enriched with white lilies and the four beams carved with olives. Around the walls of the chapel was a selection from the Te Deum in red letters on the stone. The corbels supporting the four beams depicted St Stephen, John the Baptists, Moses and three archangels. The carving was executed by H. Ezard Jun., 'a clever artist, and native of Bath' under Gill's direction.

The floor of the ante-chapel and part of the chapel was covered with red and black encaustic tiles and the chapel had open oak benches for a congregation of up to 150. (Proceedings of the Official July 11 1861 opening pp.7-8, 18 July 1861, 376-7)
By August 1861 some buildings on the Rectory site were still tenanted and the alterations to east wing had not yet been carried out. Two thousand pounds was still required to complete the new building (1 Aug 1861, 382-3). In October the erection of a shed in the ‘Airing Ground’ was sanctioned for skittles ‘under certain restrictions’ (24 Oct 1861, 398). The rear garden was described as a large exercising ground with broad gravel walks, grass-plats and borders of shrubs.

In July 1862 the design of the new baths was called into question, namely ‘the great inconvenience of the steps leading from the wards to the bath rooms on each floor’. The architects were asked to look at the practicality and cost of removing them (24 July 1862, 469). Messrs Morgan & Lovell estimated a cost of £16 to lower the floor of the upper bath room and were promptly engaged to carry out the alterations. The architect, however, reported that lowering the floor of the women’s bath room, though practicable, would be more difficult. The desirability of a second lift in the new building, communicating with both Day Rooms, was also urged by the Hospital Visitor and the architect was requested to consider it (31 July 1862, 471).
The Committee later decided ‘not to construct a second lift but to use an improved carrying chair for the cripples’ (16 Oct 1862, 485). By October alterations to the old building were nearing completion (30 Oct 1862, 488). Permission was given for some of old sashes to be used in constructing a cold frame in the airing ground for the ‘preservation of plants in the Winter’ (23 Oct 1862, 487). The new day rooms proved a success, patients playing draughts and dominoes and eating their meals there. One member of staff’s duty included ensuring the gas was lit in the day rooms, landings and passages on the first and second floors and that the water closets and urinals kept clean. In the Chapel, the new organ was in process of being erected at a cost of £132 10s. by Mr Sweetland the builder (20 Nov 1862, 494).

Photographs of the Wards and Day rooms c1890s – 1920s

Queens (?) Ward (BRO 386/8/1)
The King's Ward c1900 East wing (BRO 386/8/15) now Day Room (second floor)

The King's Ward c1915 (BC: 27 Jan 1996, BRL Clippings File)
Mens Day Ward [1W.01] (Turner:1921, Pl.2)

Womens Day Ward [1W.18 to 1W.32] (Turner:1921, Pl.1)
By the turn of the century (Left c1900 (BRO: 386/8/15) the Hospital was again in need of extra space and improved facilities. In 1890 massage baths had been provided at a cost of £680 and in 1904 new iron and concrete floors covered with asphalt were installed in the patients’ bath rooms and the Hospital servants were provided with bedrooms on the upper floor rather than the basement. The Committee appealed for funds for the costs of a new building and the cost of the site, together with the improvement of the old building. The work they had already carried out amounted to £20,913.

In 1900 the average stay of a patient was about 40 days with about an 85% success rate.

The baths are taken in special bath-rooms adjoining the wards, which contain deep baths, reclining baths, douches, and vapour baths; wet and dry massage is also given, as well as medical treatment and nursing…For these baths about 20000 gallons of water are pumped up daily from the King’s Bath at a temperature of about 108°. (BRL: Boodle 9b p.451 Pamphlet : Our Hospitals and charities , ‘The Mineral water Hospital, Bath’ p. 21-2)

In 1912 the Hospital’s school of massage was opened and in 1915 extensive alterations were carried out to the bath rooms. The deep bath installed in 1831 required renewal and instead of 4 small bath rooms, two each for men and women, a single suite of bathrooms was installed on the ground floor of the east wing with a deep bath, Aix and Vichy douches, Scotch and Needle douches, reclining and vapour baths, radiant heat baths and various electrical treatment appliances. An electric lift was installed to bring patients on the upper floors down to the baths and the total cost came to just over £3,000.

A variety of other treatments were offered; Sulphur baths of potassium sulphide and mineral water and Vapour Baths, similar to a Turkish Bath, had been installed by Stothert and Pitt in 1863 (Rolls:1988,72-3). A Vichy massage required the patient to stand on a rubber covered slab whilst showered with jets of hot mineral water. The needle bath was a circular shower with an array of horizontal perforated pipes which sprayed fine jets of water (Rolls:1988,120).

During 1917 a whirlpool bath was installed for treating arms and legs at a cost of £171. This greatly enhanced the treatment of servicemen injured in France.
The electrical room and massage room were enlarged at a cost of £171 shortly after the end of the war (Turner:1921, 10). The Hospital had used the electrical treatment called galvanism, the application of currents from a battery, since 1821 when it had purchased a machine for £5. In 1850 a more powerful model had been installed and in 1913 an Electrical Department had been officially recognised by the Hospital Governors (Rolls:1988,129). In 1932 plans (BRO: 0323/20/2,1932) show a bath in the south-east corner of the east wing ground floor, with a smaller deep bath with steps down into it off the adjacent rear corridor. There is also the Vichy, Aix and Needle douche, the Electrical Department and adjacent Battery Room (Plate 4).

Photographs of the Treatment Rooms c1890s – 1920s

Electrical Room c1920 (Turner:1921, Pl.5), rear part of today’s Physio treatment room [0E.22]
Exercise Room[pat of [ 0E.21]  c1920 (Turner:1921, Pl.6)

The Massage Bath c1910  (BRL: Boodle Vol. 9b 451)

The ‘Deep Bath’ or Hydrotherapy Bath c1920 (Turner:1921, Pl.3), Now part of therapy room and 0E.21
In October 1908 Cambridge University fitted up a laboratory in the west wing basement next to the mortuary, though it is not clear where this was (Rolls:1988,105). In 1911 King George V became Patron of the Hospital and the first X-ray plant was installed. During 1913 no. 9 Trim Street was purchased as a nurses’ home at a cost of £1,252, and connected to the Hospital by a subway beneath the road. The nurses’ home in the rear garden had formerly been ‘The Sedan Chair’ public house. The 1812 Bath Directory lists the landlord of the Sedan Chair as Clifford, and in 1830 the landlord was Within Sheppard. In 1883 the Hospital had made an offer for the building, which belonged to St John’s Hospital, and purchased it for £350.

The pub was rebuilt as a nurses’ home. Until 1829 when the nurses had been provided with their own bedrooms, they had slept on the wards with the patients (Rolls:1988,72). In 1913 when the new home was opened across the road from the...
Hospital, the building was converted into a pathology laboratory with a morgue in the basement. There was also a small medical museum and library (Rolls:1988,107).

The new laboratory was opened on 4 June 1914 by Sir William Osier, who also urged the foundation of a medical library. This resulted in donations of more than 500 volumes within the first 6 months (Turner:1921, 9). The laboratory was wrecked by the 1942 bomb blast which demolished the west wing. After the war, the laboratory was refurbished and renamed the Sidney Robinson Laboratory (Rolls:1988,120). In 1975 the Hospital's regular pathological service was transferred to the Central Laboratory, and the laboratory given over to immunological research (Rolls:1988, 111). The new storey added to the west wing in the 1960s provided new accommodation for a research laboratory. It was named The Princess Marina Research Laboratory after the Hospital's patron (Rolls:1988,111). Later, the garden laboratory was disbanded and became offices for the Hospital's administration, as it is today.

The 1930s

By 1930 space was at a premium and plans for a new Hospital were drawn up in 1932 (Plates 3-6) by local architect Alfred Taylor, father of Molly Gerard, who carried out the 1960s rebuilding. In 1934 an appeal for a new Hospital was launched. Mr Sidney Robinson and his daughter, Mrs Prince, gave over £80,000 towards the new 200 bed Hospital with an orthopaedic department, theatre and nurses’ home. The City offered a large site by the river (now Bath College) ironically where Wood had originally intended to build his circular Hospital.

In 1937 an Act of Parliament authorised the exchange of the old building for the new site. The foundations were begun, and H.R.H The Duchess of Kent visited the Hospital, receiving ‘purses of gold’ to aid the appeal. A ceremony to mark the laying of the foundation stone was scheduled for 11 September 1939 by the Queen, but was cancelled due to the outbreak of World War II eight days earlier. Patients were
sent home on 3 September until gas-proof shelters could be built in the basement. Three months later the Hospital re-opened, enabling many service men and women to be treated during the hostilities.

South front of proposed new Hospital (BRO: 0386/7/32 )

The Blitz, April 1942

The Baedeker blitz of April 1942 saw the destruction of many of Bath’s Georgian buildings. During the night of the 26-27 April 1942 a direct hit on the Mineral Water Hospital demolished most of the 19th century west wing. Amazingly no-one was killed, the shelters in the basement having proved very efficient. The bomb struck the upper part of the building and virtually the whole eastern half of the building, an area about 50 feet square, was demolished.

The Board Room c1915 (BRO: 386/8/15)
The day room on the first floor was destroyed and the Board Room in the south-west corner. Just before the war it had been newly restored and decorated, and the paintings had been placed in storage for the duration. The William and Mary table and the beech chairs shown in the photograph (above) were completely destroyed. The 1957 Goad map (Error! Reference source not found.) shows the area around the Board Room as having been demolished.

Though the Chapel remained intact the stained glass windows were completely destroyed. The east wing remained undamaged, but the west wing was to remain unrepaired for twenty years. Apart from the Occupational Therapy Department which operated in the largely undamaged Chapel, little else was functional above the basement area. The delicate 1860 cast iron balcony, which led from the Day Room above the Chapel, had remained intact. It was replaced with a modern balcony during the restoration work. A photograph taken in 1942 from the rear of the west wing shows the extent of the damage (below). The east wing of the Hospital, however, was functioning again within two months with 123 beds available.
The Post War Years

Following the end of the war, all major building projects were put on hold whilst rebuilding and re-housing the bombed out were dealt with. In 1946 the Hospital was taken over by The National Health Trust and its accumulated funds from donations and bequests relegated to a central 'pool'. In the same year the Bath School of Hydrotherapy was opened in the Hospital, with Miss Rudland-Hills as Principal. In 1948 a research unit was established for rheumatic diseases and three years later the Hospital opened its own Out-Patients department, previously at the RUH.

The removal of the existing landing gates for the electric bed lift and replacement with 6 multi-leaf sliding doors were recommended by the Hospital's insurance company. The Committee discussed installing a new lift which served all floors instead of the present three floors (12 Aug 1948,6-7). Eventually a new bed lift had to be installed when the old one caught fire (23 Feb 1950 ,63).

A new mineral water pump (portable Treble Ram pump) was installed, which entailed enlarging the shaft and installing a new electricity supply into the Hospital. A new copper pipe replaced the lead pipe for the pump. The rebuilding of the basement kitchen took place at around the same time (2 Sep 1948,9-10).

In March 1949 a new plaster room and an X-Ray department was set up in the basement, the old one now used only for emergencies (8 Mar 1949,23). Following the 1942 air raid, the Chapel was still being used as an Occupational Therapy Unit, (26 Jan 1950) and in 1950 the oak pews were given to the newly rebuilt St Bartholomew’s for £25 as there was no longer room for them (25 May 1950).

There are a number of references to an ‘Animal House’ in the courtyard. In November 1950 the porter announced that he was unable to give the animals proper attention (23 Nov 1950,87) and the following April a schoolboy, P Watts, was employed as animal boy (26 April 1951, 102). They were presumably the animals used in the laboratories.

In 1951 the large archway in the entrance hall of the west wing that led to the garden was blocked up with a half-glass partition and door (22 Feb 1951,96). In 1953 it was decided to re-open the Chapel on Sundays for a service. The windows had been blocked up, and were now re-glazed (23 Apr 1953). Later in the year a Handicapped Patient’s Demonstration kitchen was installed in the Occupational Therapy Unit in the Chapel (29 Sep 1953,164).

In 1955 the site of the proposed new Hospital was suddenly relinquished by the Department of Health. A delegation led by Sir James Pitman, MP for Bath, met the Minister of Health, who referred them to the South-West Regional Board, whose responsibility the Hospital was. The board did not have the finances to rebuild, and the Hospital negotiated with the two departments for a further two years. In 1957 Dr Kersley called a press conference at the Royal College of Surgeons, which attracted huge support. He then spoke to The House of Lords, which resulted in an all-party deputation who assured the Hospital of results. In 1960 the Ministry of Health finally authorised the ‘reconditioning’ of the Hospital (Kersley:17-18)

Discussions resumed about rebuilding the Hospital, and estimates for 1955-6 amounted to £80,000. In January 1955 the Hospital were offered a second hand metal vapour bath from the Hot Baths for £25 (27/1/55,194) and despite the cost of removal being £155, the Committee still considered it worthwhile (23 Jun 1955,205). In 1955 the hydraulic lift was replaced with a larger electric lift serving four floors instead of two (28 Apr 1955,201).
There had been a continuing delay in the rebuilding programme, and matters came to a head when the Sunday Graphic on the 18 September described the Hospital as a ‘slum’ (22 Sep 1955, 212). Stung into action, eight weeks later the Regional Board agreed to the rebuilding of the damaged wing and to carrying out a scheme of reconstruction on its present site. The Hospital architects, Gerrard, Taylor & Partners, were asked to draw up plans and after years of indecision and prevarication the new Hospital was in sight (24 Nov 55,218).

In June a new X-Ray Department was set up in the old Dispensary as a temporary measure until the new wing was ready (27 Jun 1957). A year later a bed lift was installed in the east wing from the basement to the top floor by Gerrard, Taylor & Partners (BRO: BC/11879 19.8.58) as a preliminary to the new building work. The portrait of Doctors Oliver and Pierce was sent to be restored and cleaned (27 Apr 1961). In January 1962 the plans were finally approved and 12 contractors invited to tender. The job of transferring patients to Manor Hospital had to start by mid April if the Hospital was to be closed by mid June and no-one was to be admitted after mid April (25 Jan 1962). The Occupational Therapy Department still operated from the chapel, but was moved out when work began.

Work began in 1962. The architect Molly Gerrard was closely involved, as senior partner of Gerrard, Taylor & Partners (BRO: BC/14048 19.6.62). Most of the west wing had remained closed and un repaired since 1942 and was almost entirely rebuilt. The general reconstruction and the addition of a new storey above the west wing were carried out by FG Minter Ltd, 4 Buckingham Gate, London.
Gerrard, Taylor & Partners’ plans (BRO: BC/13604) show the extent of the reconstruction and building work carried out on the Hospital, in particular on the shell of the west wing. The new walls were all constructed of Bath stone and the elevations show the real extent of the rebuilding carried out. The bracketed reference numbers refer to the 2006 Tektus plans supplied by the Hospital (Plates 7-11).

**Basement - West Wing**

A staff dining and recreation room (BW.01) were added beneath the chapel, with new doors and windows in the south wall, all at a lower level. There was an adjacent servery (BW.12) and store room (BW.13-4) with the bed lift (BW.25) and central linen store (BW.22-3) north of the corridor. Outside the south wall a new retaining wall was built.

The laboratory was built in the south-west corner (BW.05-7) with consulting and waiting rooms (BW.08-11) and various staff rest and locker rooms in all the remaining western section. New concrete stairs led down to a central lobby (BW.15) with the Roman pavement on display beneath the stair well.

**Basement - East Wing**

This wing, linked by the tunnel (BW.18) had a central main kitchen (BE.14) with food stores and preparation rooms (BE.32-5 and half of BE.26) to the north and boiler and service rooms to the east (BE.01, BE.10 & BE.16) and north (BE.02-4, BE.09). There was also access to the open area in the middle of the building, and a mud mixing room beside the east stairs (the other half of BE.26).

**Ground Floor- West Wing**

The Chapel (GW.43) doubled as a lecture room and Board Room, with a removable pulpit. A new entrance lobby was created across the chapel columns with a removable screen to create a new lobby (GW.39A, GW.41 & GW.45) with a balcony in the south wall and a new mezzanine floor above.

A door led through into the central lobby (GW.17), largely unaltered and retaining its original staircase. Beyond was a smaller entrance lobby (GW. 01) and Out Patients reception (GW.18). In the west section was the X-Ray Department (GW.20, GW.27-38) waiting rooms and cloakrooms, and the old Board Room (GW.21-26) had been partitioned into examination rooms.

The eastern section had a central passage and toilets with the Dispensary store (GW.134-15) and the Committee Room/Board and Dining Room (GW.13) beyond, both adjacent to the Chapel. On the other side of the passage were the administration offices, Porters lodge and bed lift.

**Ground Floor- East Wing**

The east wing had a corridor (GE.05-6) running the width of the building with a large Physiotherapy room in its current position (GE.22). Here the columns had been removed together with the fireplace in the south wall. The pool room (GE.18) on the east side of the building had a re-inforced concrete pool installed by specialists. There was a Hubbard Tank, aeration bath, cleansing spray, vapour bath and on the south wall a needle spray and spray massage. Around the central area were grouped various staff rooms and w.c.s. Along the north front of the building was the Occupational Therapy room (GE-08) an office and a demonstration kitchen where
the main door had been (GE.08) with the mud and wax room to the west (GE-04). A new concrete and metal staircase was installed at the east end of the corridor.

First Floor- West Wing

The entire first floor of the west wing was rebuilt. Nothing remains of the 19th century fittings or mouldings, all windows and doors were destroyed in 1942 along with floors, walls and ceilings. The central staircase was extended up to the second floor by Mannings, a local Bath joinery firm. It was modelled on the existing 1861 staircase which survived the bombing.

The womens’ day room occupied the present day room (1W.01, 1W.28-9, 1W.39 & 1W.41). The layout is similar to today, except that the flat (1W.38) was a 4 bed ward and the Matron had a small suite of rooms (1W.34-6).

The old link bridge was rebuilt as a two-storey link comprising the first and second floors. Only the columns remain from the Manners & Gill bridge. The link had contained a double corridor leading all the way from the Day rooms to the wards, one side for men, the other for women. The bridge’s northern corridor became offices, whilst the east wing northern corridor became an extension of the existing rooms and wards. To the rear was a fire escape bridge with iron stairs.

First Floor- East Wing

The remodelled partitions are very similar to those today. Uses have changed but the general layout is the same. There had been three large wards running north-south, Violet, Prince’s and Allen’s. Prince’s Ward was partitioned into a corridor and smaller rooms. The two remaining wards have been partitioned into smaller wards and rooms.

Second Floor- West Wing

Before 1962 there was no second floor in the west wing, the 22 feet high day rooms taking up the space. There was, however, a small Sister’s bedroom along the north wall reached by a narrow flight of stairs which led onto a fire escape platform linked to the flat roof above the link bridge. A second floor was inserted above the upper part of the womens’ day room to the west, and a number of single bed wards added around the three sides of the west wing, with a seven bed ward (2W.47) in the northwest corner. A flat was added to the north of the larger day room (2W.24-5, 2W.28 & Soc. Wrks). There was a kitchen and duty office (2W.31) overlooking an asphalt flat roof (Bedroom 1 & Play Area, 2W.33, 2W.35) to the south of the central staircase.

Second Floor- East Wing

The rear south and west corner of the main Cambridge Ward (2E.12-13 [s]) was rebuilt in 1962, with the smaller Jervois Ward to the north (2E.13 [n]). New windows were inserted in line with the existing ones. A mens’ day room and dining room ran the length of the east wall north of the staircase (QTS, Day Room, Office & Treatment) and the wards along the north wall are similar to the layout today. The patients’ lavatories and bathrooms to the rear of the central area are now store rooms.