

2.0 ROYAL STANDARD: The property comprises a conversion of what was originally nurses accommodation for the local hospital.

It has basement accommodation followed by three upper floors and then capping that a balconied mansard floor making five floors in all.

There is a central and then communal entrances at either side to the various shared lobby areas and basement apartments.

The roof is of slate laid to a simple mansard layout with hipped ends. Flashings, hips and eaves dressings are all in copper as are external dressings to the mansard windows.

The elevations are of brick construction laid to an English Bond with stone dressings above the second and third floor window heads and a stone dressed feature entrance.

The site slopes away to either side giving access via railings and steps down to the basement and shared areas.

There are stone dressings to the external angles and also to the ground floor central section.

At either end is a gable and to the rear the ground slopes and steps away significantly with a central stone facade having private seating area for the central apartments.

To the right hand side steps lead down to the gymnasium.

2.1 EXTERNAL

Front Elevation



Roof Coverings: The roof is covered with slates having a copper ridge and what I believe replacement copper hips.

Along the pitch there are a number of replacement slates, possible ventilating slates and several roof lights.

To the right hand ridge there is one patch repaired section and a further more substantial length at the abutment to the hip. The roof slope is generally covered with algae and staining, particularly to the main areas and the left hand side.

The roof steps forward to the central section and there are a number of displaced slates at eaves level in this location.

There is a sparge pipe exiting rainwater from the central entrance and some mould staining immediately beneath on the stonework.

To the bottom section (where there is a store door,) this is extremely wet.



Rainwater Goods: These are believed concealed in copper behind the various parapets above the upper floor windows.

There are then rainwater outlets in six locations via shutes off the upper floor balconies, discharging into rainwater pipes dropping vertically.

The overall appearance of the copper parapet gutters gives indications of the likelihood of leakage.

There were signs of moss and algae growth to the heads of the hoppers, again indicative of leakage or backing up of the rainwater system.

I noticed some moss growth at various joints indicating possible backing up of the rainwater pipes themselves.

To the extreme right hand side a replacement section of UPVC pipework has been installed, connecting between the original cast iron both above and beneath and with a hopper head.

All around here there are signs of extensive weather penetration to the roof with damp stained timbers and the potential for overflowing.

The routing of external cables in the vicinity of the hopper head is not to be recommended either.



Most rainwater pipes (but in particular the left hand one) show signs of corrosion grinning through and the bottom pipe is displaced out of vertical alignment. This routes through and within the left hand bottom stone enclosure.

Chimneys: Stacks remain to the front and rear slopes, it being believed that one has already been reduced to the left hand side of the forward projection.

These are of brickwork with stone cappings.

Selective repointing has been undertaken in the past but there is some erosion of mortar joints in various locations.

Flashings: To the perimeter of the two right hand stacks (where penetrating the roof), there are copper flashings although the back gutters appear to have been replaced in lead.

The left hand stack has more recent flashings with a different profile and set than the rest.

External Walls: The vertical slate hanging to the mansard has a number of detached, cracked or slipping slates and in isolated locations some slates appear to have been tagged to prevent further movement.

Ordinarily this is indicative of a commencement of nail fatigue.

The various brick bands then descend progressively from upper floor balcony to third floor, and then deeper encompassing the basement, ground and first floor areas.

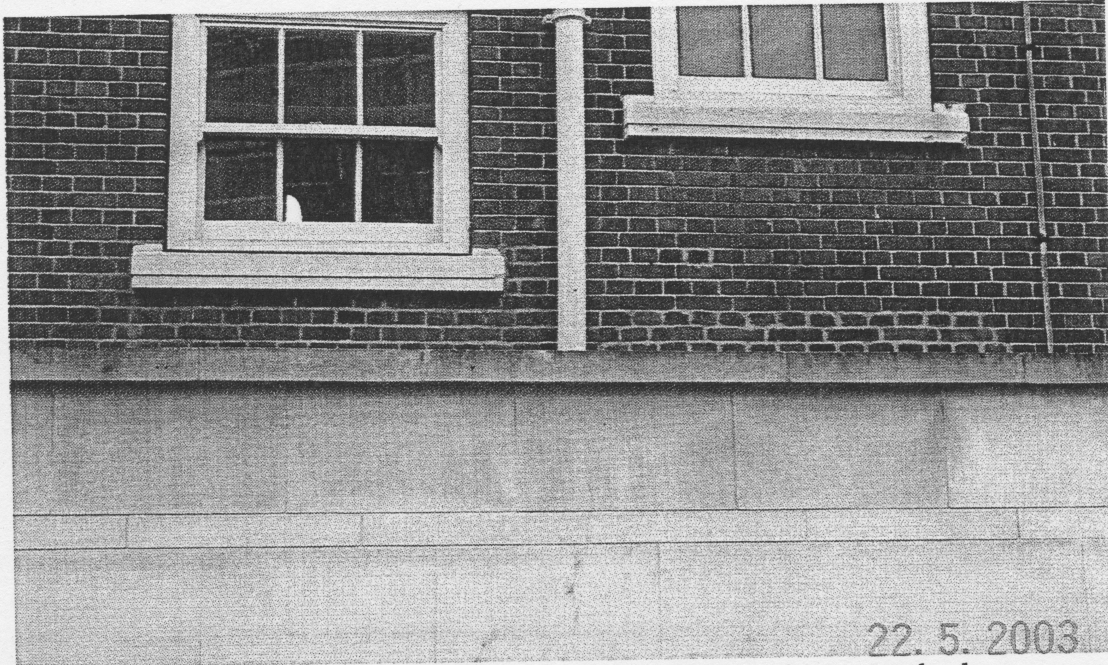
There is a stone capping to the balcony parapet with fairly extensive dirt staining and mould growth. Isolated joints appear to have been repointed but others are open.

Within the brickwork, particularly to the right hand side, there are sections of isolated bricks which have been replaced above both the first and second floor window head areas.

The window heads themselves are formed of tapered, gauged arches.

Brickwork is laid to an English Bond with tight mortar joints which have not been matched when repointing has been undertaken and there are stone cills beneath the various windows.

In various areas these have cracked and have been patch repaired and repointed.



The above photograph is an illustration of none matching patched brickwork.

The central portico entrance has a lead cap off two columns and there is some evidence of weather penetration and damp staining to the sloping soffit.

To either end there are then stone enclosed surrounds and various stone structures within the basement sections.

A closer examination of the brickwork revealed various areas where bricks have been replaced in the past, again in a none matching mortar and undersized bricks.

External angles to the windows and door entrances are framed with blue bricks to the contrast to the multi purples.



The above photograph illustrates none matching brickwork where isolated patch repairs undertaken.

At third floor level to the left hand side narrow brick piers between windows appear to show signs of weather staining.

To stonework to the left hand side of the central entrance a crack has been recorded.

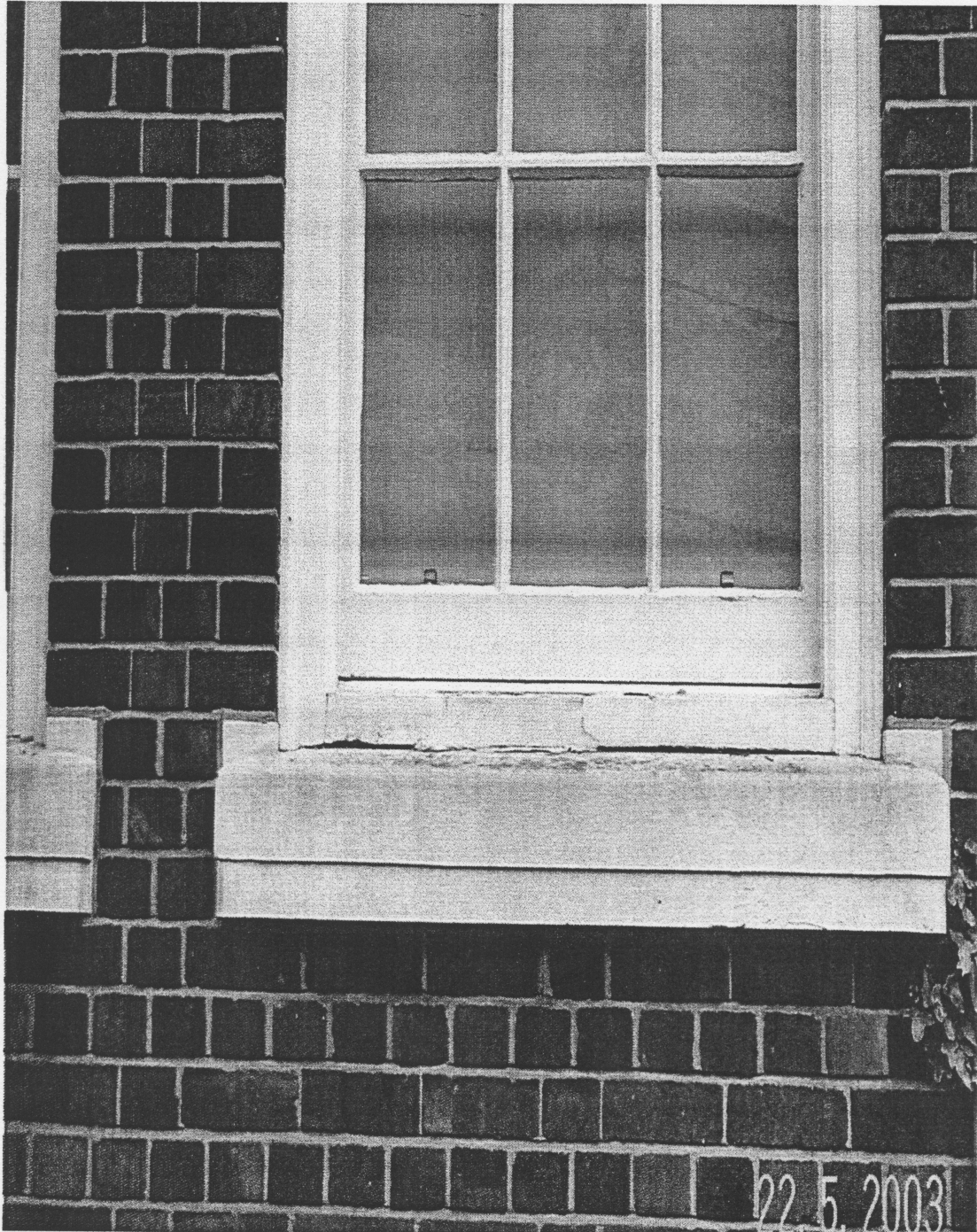
One is to the base of the square column with a base stone cracked and two courses of stonework beneath that to the front a stone block has cracked.

These have been carefully filled with stone dust only.

Some repointing to the stone joints have been carried out beneath.

External Joinery: These are sash windows probably original to the property and a programme for external decorative repair has been put into place.

Isolated cills appear to require attention where wet rot has commenced. This was noticeable to the second window to the right of the central entrance.



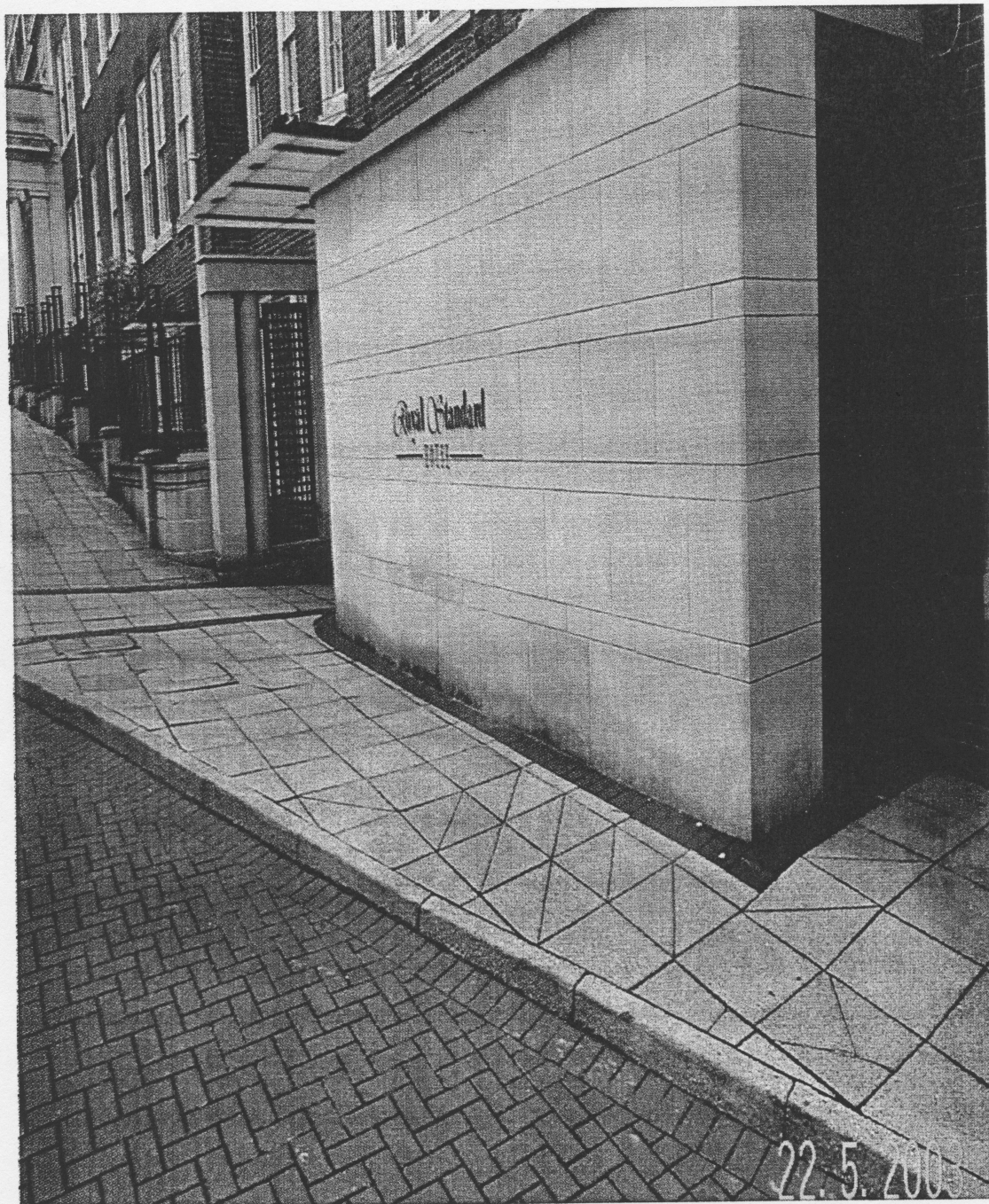


The various basements although having gullies to collect surface water, all appeared quite wet following recent rainfall and this had manifested itself in green mould growth traversing up the bottom courses of brickwork and also the stone work in the vicinity of the central entrance.

There is a stone retaining wall with rendered inner face separating the basement accesses from the front footpath area.

Capping this is metal balustrading to a decorative style.

There is evidence throughout of mould and algae staining to the stonework, particularly where abutting the front footpath and isolated previous repairs to the stone blocks themselves.



Each extremity of stone surround to stores either end again has rising damp staining to the bottom courses of stonework.

Right Hand Gable:



There was limited access to inspect this due to the topography of the site.

The copper clad fascia detail continues around as indeed does the vertical slate hanging.

Brickwork to the left hand side of the third floor windows appears heavily weathered and will require some repointing.

There is some erosion to the cill of the ground floor pair of french doors.

Left Hand Gable End: Inspection of this was extremely difficult due to the close proximity of adjacent boundaries.



There is a single storey flat roof structure, above which the resident has now constructed a roof garden.

Brickwork is displaced particularly above the head of the front window and there is general deterioration to the elevation as a whole, particularly at low level and above the stringcourse over the head of the windows.



The roof is drained via two hoppers into cast iron rainwater pipes each in poor condition but that to the rear being displaced, with weeds growing out of the top and a broken pipe.

Access was gained to the store and lift motor room beneath the terrace of apartment 9.

Paint is flaking off walls and ceilings, there is evidence of damp penetration through the front wall and the overall condition is poor to say the least. (Note previous comments regarding displacement of brickwork above). There are cracks at the abutment of the lintels and also in a line across the width of the ceiling.

Within the lift motor room, paint is flaking off the ceiling again and there is some displacement and cracking to the ceiling.

To the rear is the electric switch gear room with again two cracks across the full width of the ceiling and generally paint flaking off walls.

In this location there is evidence of drilling of brickwork either for the injection of a damp course, although there are no caps fitted, or irrigation generally. These holes did not extend through to the outside.

Rear Elevation: Access is via steps leading down either side to a paved terrace.

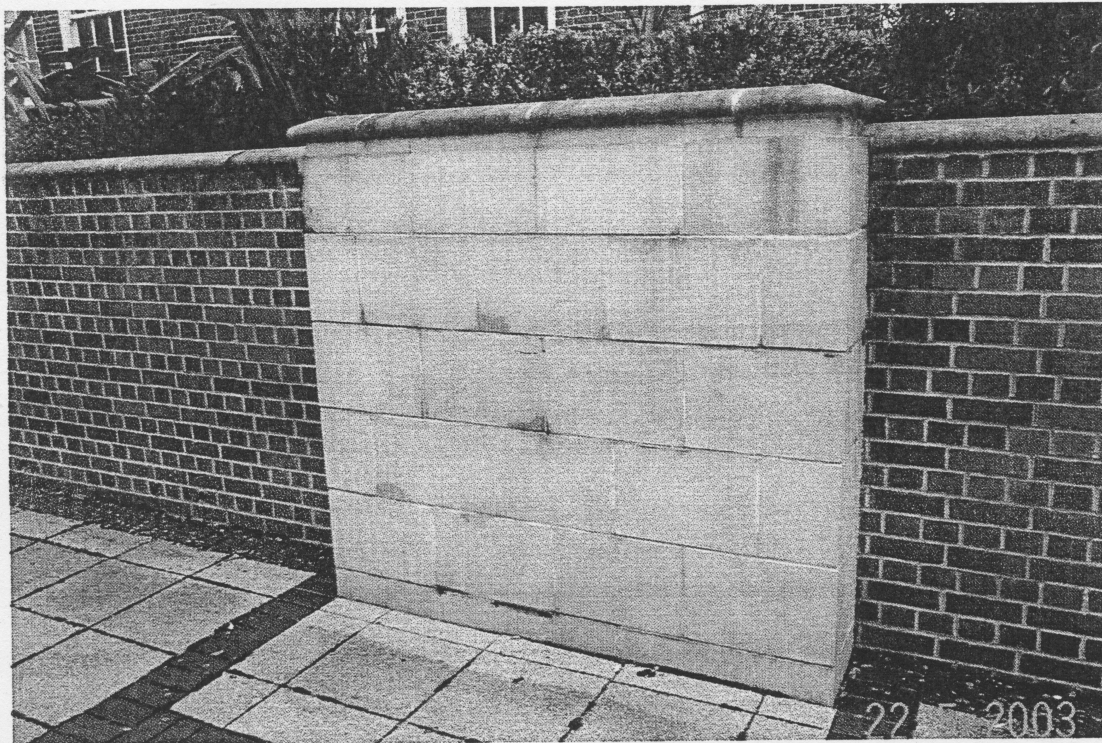
Stone steps are somewhat worn and there are open joints in the treads and risers.

The elevation is illustrated by the photograph below and construction is similar to the front albeit the decorative treatment to the central portico is somewhat grander.



There is a raised garden with brick retaining wall of new construction.

Moss has grown out of the joints of bricks immediately beneath the stone coping notwithstanding that there is a throating and there are weep holes to the bottom courses of brickwork to relieve to the build up of ground water pressure.



However, in the stone clad sections moisture is leaking through the various joints. Some cracking has already occurred and minor displacement, this will become progressively worse over a period of time.

The heads of the windows although formed with gauge brickwork have key stones in place to this elevation.

It is believed that the exposure to weather is somewhat less than the front due to the close proximity of the trees to the rear and castle as well as the topography of the site.

2.3 EXTERNAL AREAS

On my second visit I was asked to comment on the external areas and in particular the condition of external walls, balustrading fencing and the like.

Some walls are original with staining beneath various copings others are of more modern construction as part of the conversion.

To the rear I have commented separately regarding moisture penetration through the stone clad areas. There is a dwarf retaining wall of engineering bricks to the rear left hand side which is completely out of character with the rest of the property and there is no provision here for relief of ground water pressure through this 1½” brick thick wall.

The rear patio is slabbed, divided with brick pavings and contoured with falls and cross falls for the shedding of rainwater to be collected by various intermediate plastic gullies.

There is then a gravelled margin up to the original stone perimeter wall. This stone walling is in fairly reasonable condition for its age but inevitably showing signs of erosion.

Capping the stone wall is a substantial steel balustrading.

Steps lead up either side to the private paved garden area from the lower apartment.

On the left hand side pavings match the rear behind a curved 1½” brick wall with angled capping.

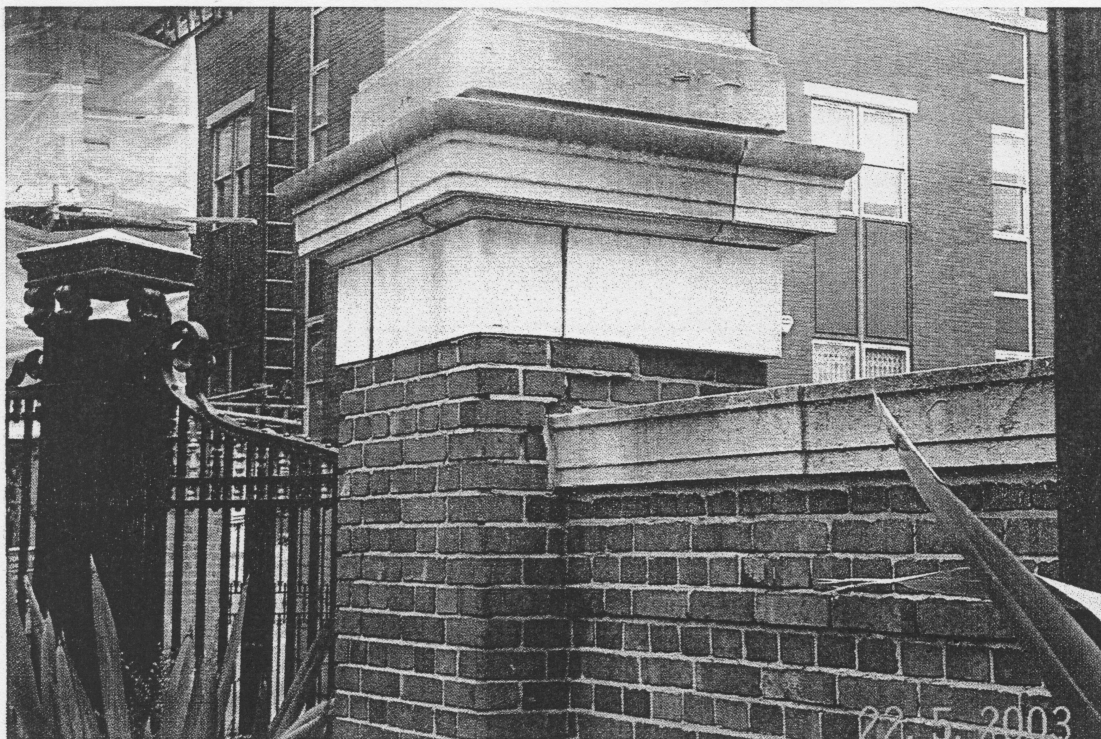
There is general erosion of brick faces and damp staining in various locations and in the approximate mid position a crack has developed with opening of joints.



Further along it would appear that some of the brickwork has been rebuilt with bricks toothed in to a Flemish Bond but again cracks have developed with opening of joints.

N.B. Reference curved wall to left hand side, I noticed that the weep holes were actually immediately beneath paving level and underneath that on the outside there is extensive damp staining showing that there is no provision for the collection and discharge of surface water or ground water behind from the terraced area.

The remaining perimeter of brickwork is original with stone capping to match the elevation. To the extreme left hand side the corner cap is displaced from one of the pillars.



There are different styles of block paving and some tarmac parking areas to the whole of the front area, there being gravelled margin behind the front perimeter brick wall which is again of newer construction with tall metal balustrading.

To the front brickwork some physical damage has been occasioned by the adjacent Contractor to the bricks and also balustrading, particularly to the right hand side of the main entrance gates.

Some protective sheeting has been applied to this but there is evidence elsewhere of physical damage.

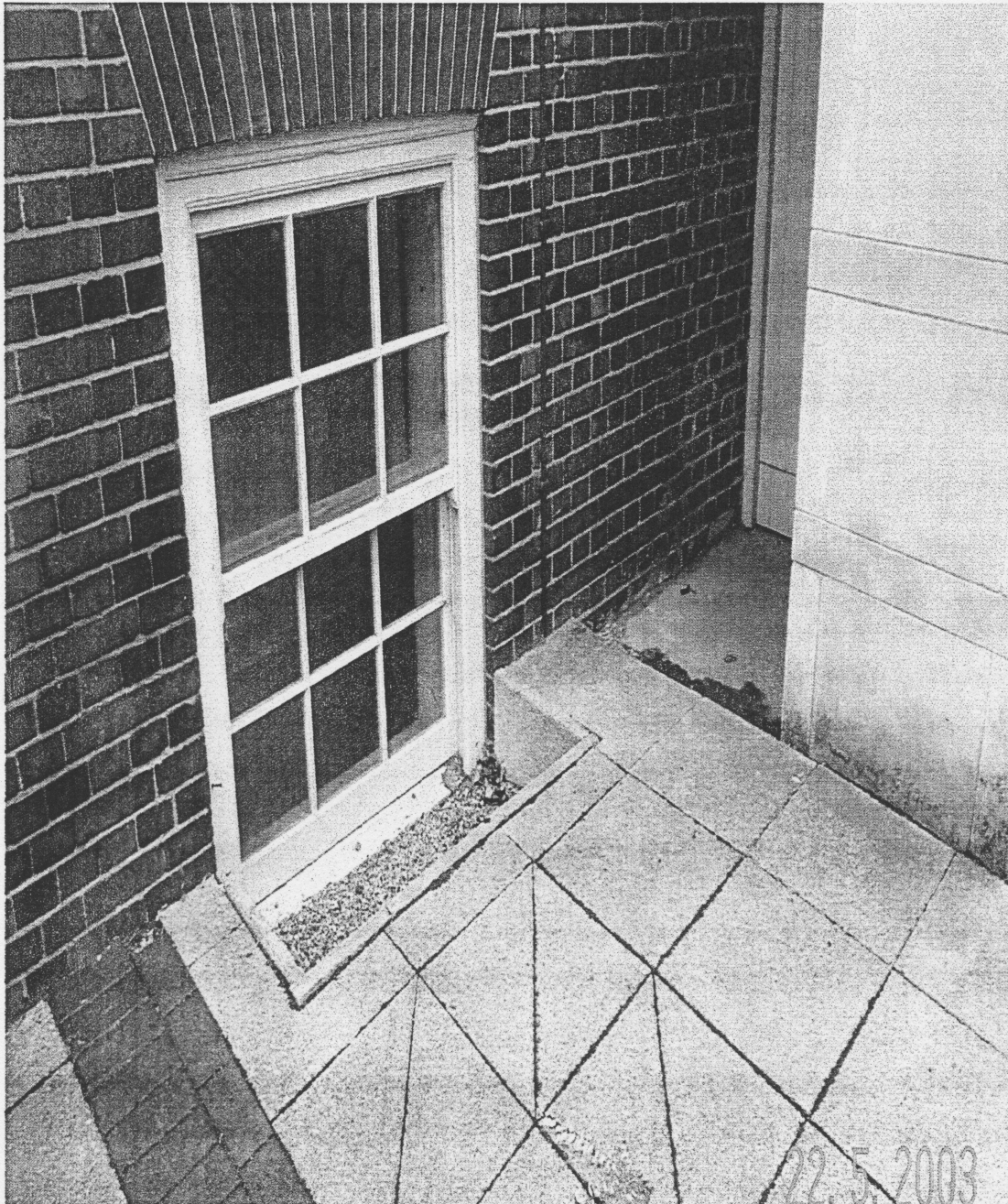
N.B. Ownership of stone wall to the rear fronting down onto the access road. ?

There is some general sinkage of block pavings and localised settlement as a result of which surface water is ponding.

External Bin Stores: There is a damaged jamb to the door where the lock has been forced. There is no ceiling here just timber framing as a result of which it is open to the elements and rainwater is collecting. In addition there is general sludge on the floor.

The Left Hand Unit Stores: There is evidence of damp staining immediately beneath the threshold with the floor being laid lower than that of the adjacent pavings and no provision for collection or disposal of rainwater.

The window immediately alongside has a cill level with a dropped paved area covered in gravel.



Left Hand Communal Entrance: There is an Aco drain here across the threshold with main access to units 1, 9, 15, 21 and 27.



Mould growth and damp staining to stone pier.

Basement Access to Apartment 2: The stone steps leading down are saturated as indeed are the pavings adjacent to the meter cupboard and stores.



There were signs of extensive weather penetration and damp staining. Ventilation grills have been fitted to some doors but without proper effect.

Basement Access Apartment 3: This is somewhat dryer although steps are still wet and there is an area of pavings to the front where although there is a surface water drain, water is still ponding.

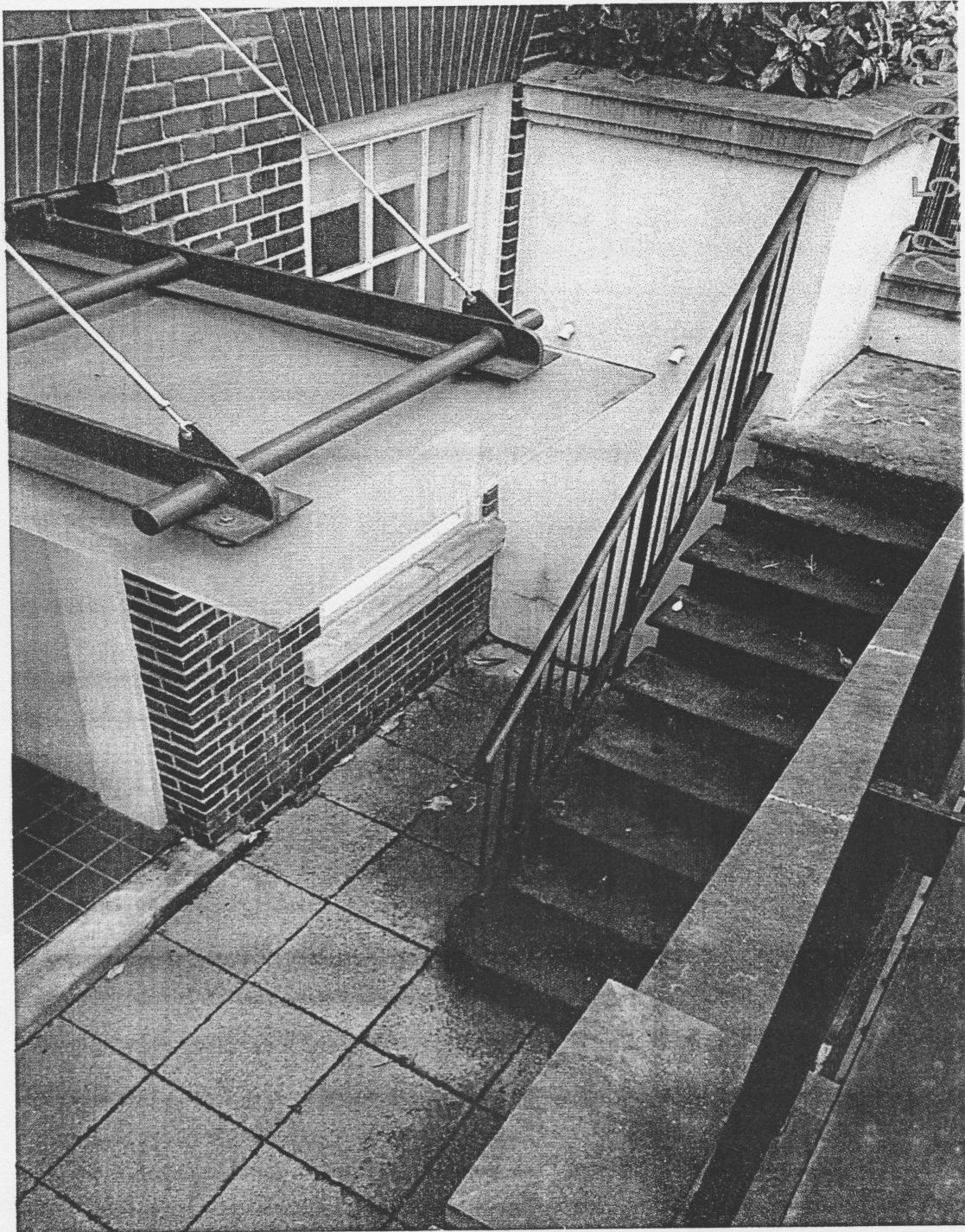
NB. Query whether planters have been relined.

Basement Access Stores to the Right of Central Entrance: Again this is saturated with a partially blocked surface water gully.

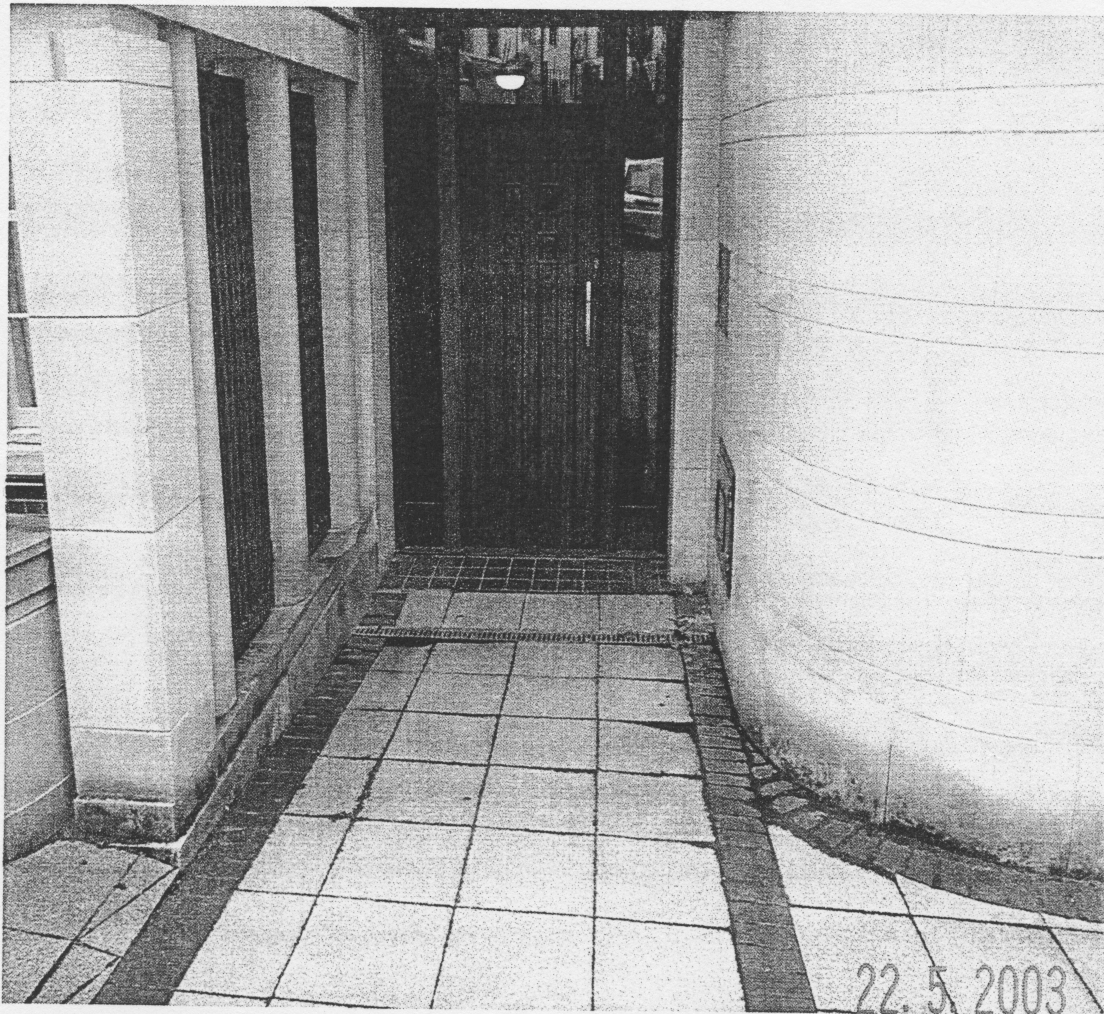


Basement Access to Apartment 5: Saturated stone steps and also pavings to the right hand side of the entrance together with mould growth and stain to the step threshold.

Also damp staining and saturation of pavings away from the wall.



Communal Entrance to Apartments 7,8,13,14,19,20,25,26&30 to the Right Hand Side: There is an Aco drain across here with a more distinct fall to the pavings from the carpark and driveway. There is still some ponding and general accumulation of slurry and staining.



Right Hand Extreme Access to Stores: See previous comments regarding rainwater pipe etc and illustration.

Side screens to some of the entrances are fixed with metal brackets and corrosion is occurring.

One additional aluminium bracket has been fitted to the right hand section.