

*Ground Floor :—*

- (a) An opening to the right-of-way at the south of Block 1 (no door).
- (b) An opening approximately 7 ft. wide to the rear of Block 2 fitted with a sliding door on one side of wall. This door is one of the doors that will be referred to as fireproof doors in evidence.
- (c) An opening approximately 9 ft. wide at the rear of the art department in Block 4 to the rear of Block 2 (adjacent to the last opening mentioned). Fitted with a pair of sliding doors on one side only. This pair of doors is also referred to as fireproof doors in evidence.
- (d) An opening approximately 12 ft. wide to Block 3: unprotected.

*First Floor :—*

- (a) Two windows overlooking light area on the ground floor of which the appro office was built, one fitted with metal-clad fire-resisting shutter which was open at the time of the fire; therefore both openings unprotected.
- (b) Two door openings at rear of Block 1, fire-door on one; other filled in with wood partition.
- (c) One doorway 6 ft. 3 in. by 3 ft. to rear of Block 2; fitted with fire-resisting door.
- (d) One door opening 7 ft. by 3 ft. between display area in Block 4 and cloak-room in Block 3; no door.
- (e) One opening 10 ft. by 14 ft. wide between display area (over art department) and Block 2 unprotected.
- (f) One doorway; unprotected.

*Second Floor.*—One door communicating with Block 3 and provided with a sliding fire-resisting door one side only, in addition to ordinary wooden door. Fire-resisting door was apparently not closed during fire.

*Construction*

*Walls.*—Walls were concrete in basement, brickwork elsewhere. Facade to street, stone. The north and south walls of the three-story portion were carried on rolled-steel beams and cast-iron columns, leaving practically the full width of the block clear on the ground floor.

Inside walls were strapped and lined with matchlining covered with Beaver, Pinex, or Gibraltar board. Both outer and inner lounges on the first floor were panelled in polished blackwood to a height of 7 ft. Walls of the second floor were lined with matchlining.

*Columns.*—Cast iron.

*Floors.*—Wood on timber joists carried on timber beams on upper floors.

*Roof.*—Timber-framed, covered with corrugated iron. The first floor of the two-story portion was lighted by continuous skylights on either side of the ridges of the roof.

*Partitions.*—Timber-framed, covered with Beaver board or plaster board approximately 7 ft. high. Partitions separating small rooms to the south of the main stair on the first floor were 7 ft. high, covered with Beaver board.

*Ceilings.*—Matchlining and Celotex on timber framing, but ceiling of first floor of two-story portion consisted largely of roof lights.

*Stairs.*—The main stair was situated in this block and was of timber in an open wall, unprotected.

*Fire-escapes.*—A hanging ladder giving access to the roof over tailoring workroom.

*Lifts.*—Nil.

The whole of Mr. Cornish's report is attached as Appendix B.

19. Plans showing the layout of the several floors are attached hereto as Appendix C.

Particular attention must be paid to what has been called the "right-of-way" at the south side of Congreve's building, and the alleyway 3 ft. 3 in. wide between Goodman's buildings, into which ran a fire-escape from Goodman's and Pratt's buildings. The right-of-way at the south side of Congreve's provided the most direct access to the cellar through a door in Congreve's building leading to it, and it was there the brigade made its first attempt to enter the cellar. The door referred to opened almost directly to a stairway leading to the cellar. This right-of-way is 8 ft. wide, and its total length is 89 ft. Double wooden doors crossed it 39 ft. from the Colombo Street footpath. The door leading to the stairway to the cellar, where the fire started, was 64 ft. from the footpath, or 25 ft. from the double doors.