



FR. GOLDEN, DEL. FROM DRAWING BY THE ARCHITECTS.

MANCHESTER NEW FIRE BRIGADE STATION.

The great pile of buildings facing London Road, Fairfield-street, and Whitworth-street, which are to be the home of the Manchester Fire Brigade and certain other municipal institutions, will soon be ready for occupation. The builders hope to have their work completed by the end of July. So far as the Fire Brigade is concerned the change is one which is much needed. The old premises in Jackson's Row have been out of date for a long time. Fifteen years ago, when Mr. Tozer was superintendent, their inadequacy was commented upon, and the time that has elapsed since then has of course not improved matters. At present the firemen are cramped for room. When summoned to a fire in the day-time the odds are that there will be some delay at starting out with the engines. Often one side of the narrow roadway off Albert Square is occupied with luries loading or unloading, and if a cart or lurry happens to be entering the street at the top end as the fire brigade is leaving the station gates there is a block for a few of those moments which it is so important to save at the beginning of a fire. Again, the yard itself is too small. It does not allow for the proper training and drill of the men. At the new station ample provision has been made for this essential training and for the practice of all that pertains to a fireman's duty. There are in the city eight fire brigade sub-stations, and it is the custom for the men at these stations to go up to the chief station once a week or so for drill and instruction. It so happens that at present the chief

station is below two of the sub-stations in point of equipment. The sub-station at Mill-street, Bradford, and the sub-station at Moss Side, which was taken over from the late Urban District Council, are more efficient than the station in Jackson's Row. Having decided that larger premises than those in Jackson's Row were needed, the Fire Brigade Committee arranged with the Improvement Committee of the Corporation for the purchase of the site abutting on London Road between Whitworth-street and Fairfield-street. This land was in the possession of the Corporation. It had been acquired compulsorily for street purposes, and in the Committee's opinion the site was sufficiently central and large enough to meet the requirements for a long time. The Committee, however, did not want all the space that was available, so it was arranged that the new buildings should comprise a police station (with accommodation for two horse ambulances), a gas-meter testing-house, a coroner's court, and a building which would serve to be let off as a bank. These additions have, of course, added to the cost of the undertaking, but they should not be debited to the Fire Brigade's account. They are all useful and necessary institutions, and no one questions the wisdom of having them located in this particular place; but the Fire Brigade Committee (of which Councillor Fildes is chairman) think it is a little unfortunate that so many people have assumed the whole building was meant for Fire Brigade purposes only. How much of the area will be occupied

by the fire department and how much is devoted to other purposes will be seen by the following figures:—

	Square yards.
Fire Department	1,438
Bank	133
Coroner's Court	288
Gas-meter Testing Department	937
Police Department	617
Courtyard in centre of buildings for drill purposes, &c.	2,050
Total	5,463

The Committee will of course receive a rental from Williams Deacon's Bank, Limited, which occupy a considerable portion of the ground-floor on the front facing London Road; also from the police department, the gas-meter testing department, and the coroner's court. The need for a coroner's court has often been pointed out. In the new premises the coroner and jurymen, witnesses, and others whom necessity and not their own will compels to attend will find accommodation which has hitherto been denied them. The gas-meter testing department also fulfils a useful purpose, and must have lofty and wide rooms wherein to do its work. The police station and the horse ambulances the city cannot dispense with. It therefore seems to come to this—that while the larger portion is assigned to the Fire Brigade, the needs of other departments of municipal work have been considered.

The Fire Brigade will occupy the whole of the building on the Fairfield-street side. There is accommodation for seven engines and twelve horses in the engine-house. There are seven bays for the seven engines. Each engine,

when not in use, will stand facing the street, a gateway being provided for each. The men's quarters are above the engine-house, so that when the alarm is sounded in the night season this is what will happen:—An electric bell rings in the bedroom, which at the same time will be flooded with light. The man thus roused goes to the corner of his bedroom and slides down a pillar to the engine-house. The horses, which stand ready harnessed, take their places in front of the engines, and immediately the doors are flung open and the horses, engines, and men are off at topmost speed to the scene of the fire.

The Committee are not insensible to the progress of the motor industry nor to the fact that before long horses must give place to the new motive power. They will make a tentative use of motors, and when the time comes for adopting them altogether they will have no difficulty in removing the stable fittings. For the present they are keeping places for two motors and twelve horses.

The men's living and sleeping rooms are, as already indicated, above the engine-house. Over it also are the electrical operator's room, the office and living apartments of the chief officer (Mr. Bayliss), and the hose tower. The hose tower is a prominent feature of the building, and is an essential part of a well-equipped fire station. It is used for the quick and economical drying of the hose after its use at a fire. Besides the room for the men, called the duty-room, there is, on the Whitworth-street side, a recreation-room. The basement affords

the needful accommodation for the heating apparatus and a salvage store. On the Whitworth-street side are the mechanics' shop, smithy, paint shop, and a spare stable. Experience has shown the wisdom of having men of all trades in the fire brigade. Their knowledge is often useful in getting at fires, and in the hours when fires cease from troubling the men can fill up their time. The bank will be at the corner of Fairfield-street and London Road. The entrance to the coroner's court will be from London Road. The gas-meter testing department is at the corner of London Road and Whitworth-street. It occupies more than 900 square yards of the ground area, with basement and two floors above. The police station is at the angle of Whitworth-street and Minshull-street, and has offices, seven cells, stabling for four horses, an ambulance-house, and six dwellings for police officers. The upper floors over the bank, coroner's court, and gas-meter testing offices are to be used as dwellings for the firemen, accoutrement stores, gymnasium, laundry, hay and straw stores, and children's playground. Besides the chief, second, and third officers' houses, there are 36 dwellings for the firemen.

The buildings have a substantial and dignified appearance. Brick has been used throughout, with terra-cotta facings. The architects are Messrs. Woodhouse, Willoughby, and Langham, of Manchester. The cost of the land is set down at £25,000, the contract for the foundations at £7,720, and of the superstructure £75,000.