

12. TECHNOLOGY

0 introduction

1 construction

2 fireproofing

We have not been much concerned with the infrastructure processes of the building industry, such as the quarrying and felling of materials, transport, hoisting, &c, but it would be wilful to totally ignore the advent of mechanical equipment on site, which begins effectively in the 1850s. It was because of cost, and the relatively small scale building operations, that it did not occur earlier. The cumbersomeness of steam power, compared to modern sources which can be brought to any part of the site and switched on or off as will, discouraged its use on any other than large scale projects. Even in Britain, though James Watt's rotary engines were available from the late eighteenth century to drive machinery, especially winding and hauling gear, they were to be found in engineering works but rarely on building sites.¹

We have dealt above with fire protection, in the form of devices such as sprinklers, but here we are concerned with the basic fireproof forms of construction. However these are treated only fairly cursorily, because much of the detail has inevitably arisen in the earlier consideration of topics such as terra cotta and terra cotta lumber, concrete, and Tregerwellblech iron.

¹ Akira Satoh [ed Ralph Morton], *Building in Britain, the Origins of a Modern Industry* (Aldershot [Hampshire] 1995 [1986]), p 112, quoting S B Hamilton in Singer, *Technology*, IV (1958), p 452.