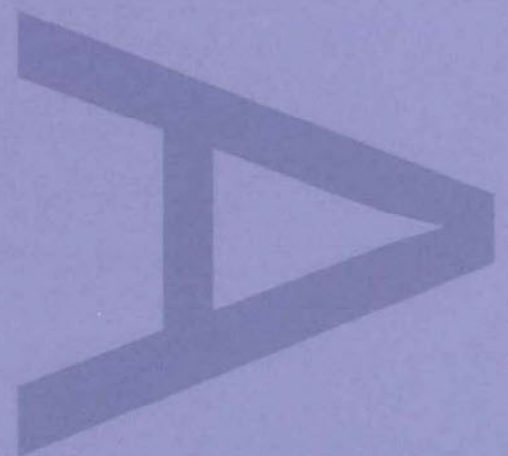
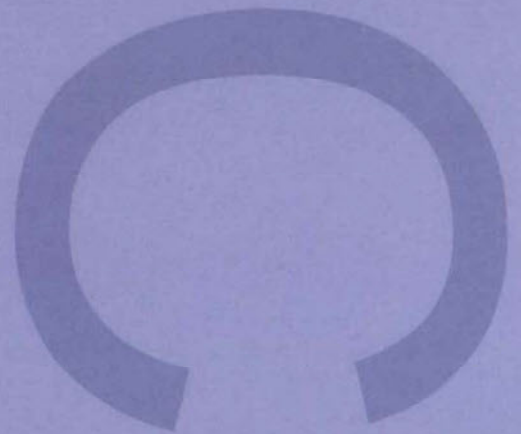
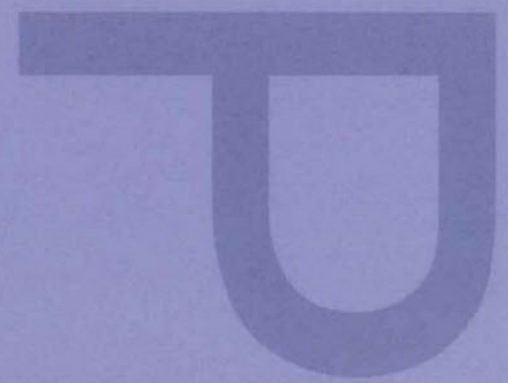


**BUILDING RECORDING OF  
THE CULROSS BUILDINGS  
KING'S CROSS CENTRAL  
LONDON BOROUGH OF  
CAMDEN**

**SITE CODE: KXG08**

**JANUARY 2010**



PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

**DOCUMENT VERIFICATION**

**Site Name**

Culross Buildings, King's Cross Central,  
London Borough of Camden

**Type of project**

Building Recording

Quality Control

Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited Project Code			K1583
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The Culross Buildings

**Historic Building Recording of the Culross Buildings, King's Cross Central, London Borough of Camden**

**Central National Grid Reference: TQ 3014 8326**

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## 1 NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

- 1.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited was commissioned by King's Cross Central General Partner Limited (representing the original applicants for the King's Cross Central scheme) to undertake building recording of the Culross Buildings, Battle Bridge Road, London, centred on OS NGR TQ 3014 8326. The buildings comprised the Culross Building (Flats 1-40), the adjoining Culross Hall and No. 41 Battle Bridge Road. They were located within the King's Cross Conservation Area, although they were not Listed Buildings.
- 1.2 The buildings were constructed in 1891 and 1892 by the Great Northern Railway (GNR). Culross Building was built as rented accommodation for GNR workers and others displaced by the enlargement of King's Cross Station. The two-storey Culross Hall at the north-eastern end served as a Mission Hall, while the two-storey No. 41 Battle Bridge Road at the south-west end originally provided a canteen for railway workers. The basement storey housed workshops under the Culross Building and a boiler room under Culross Hall.
- 1.3 The Culross Buildings were part of a number of historic buildings located in the vicinity of King's Cross and St Pancras Stations and the former King's Cross Goods Yard. A major regeneration development scheme has been proposed for this area, which is referred to in the planning applications as 'King's Cross Central'. Outline Planning Permission (2004/2307/P) for the scheme was granted in December 2006, subject to certain conditions. Condition 55 of the Planning Permission requires a programme of 'Building Recording and Analysis'. As part of the suite of permissions for the King's Cross Central scheme granted by the London Borough of Camden, Conservation Area Consent was granted for demolition of the Culross Buildings in order to enable the establishment of the new route between Station Square and Granary Square.
- 1.4 Building recording was carried out in advance of and during the demolition of the buildings in 2008, in accordance with Level 4 of English Heritage 2006 *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice*. It forms part of a wider programme of archaeological and building recording, which is being carried out in connection with the 'King's Cross Central' redevelopment scheme.
- 1.5 Building recording of the Culross Buildings showed that their building fabric survived largely intact, although internal finishes and services had been the subject of alteration. Few changes had been made to the buildings' external appearance, basic footprint and main layout in over 100 years. The plan of the Culross Building, as designed by Richard Johnson (GNR Chief Engineer), with its five sections, each arranged around a central open stairwell, providing six larger flats at the north-east end of the building and four smaller flats at the south-west end, still survived on all four floors of the tenement block.
- 1.6 Documentary research and building recording established that the main alteration to the flats occurred in 1984 when the flats were modernised and each flat was provided with a new kitchen and bathroom. Alterations included the addition of new partitions and the blocking of some windows. Many original features survived including sash windows, skirting boards, architraves, stair balusters, cast iron covers to ash chutes, wrought iron railings to the parapets and open stairwells and a few fireplaces. All the original ranges in the living rooms and coppers in the sculleries had been removed.
- 1.7 The buildings were constructed with brick external and dividing walls with floors of filler joist construction. Clay hollow pots as part of a patent floor system had been laid between concrete in the floors and flat roof of No. 41 Battle Bridge Road. Building materials included London stock bricks for the walls, Staffordshire Blue bricks for the plinth, York stone for the steps in the Culross Building stairwells, and glazed bricks from Leeds for the toilet and stairwell walls. King's Cross's excellent and direct railway links at the end of the 19th century would have facilitated the transport of the construction materials to the site.

## 2 INTRODUCTION AND PLANNING BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited was commissioned by King's Cross Central General Partner Limited (representing the original applicants for the King's Cross Central scheme) to undertake building recording of the Culross Buildings, Battle Bridge Road, London, NW1, centred on Ordnance Survey NGR TQ 3014 8326 (**Figures 1 and 2**). The buildings comprised the Culross Building (Flats 1-40 Battle Bridge Road), the adjoining Culross Hall at its north-eastern end and No. 41 Battle Bridge Road at its south-western end. They were located within the King's Cross Conservation Area, although they were not Listed Buildings.
- 2.2 The buildings were constructed in 1891 and 1892 by the Great Northern Railway (GNR). The Culross Building was built as rented accommodation for GNR workers and others displaced by the enlargement of King's Cross Station into the Milk Dock area immediately to the south. The two-storey Culross Hall served as a Mission Hall. No. 41 Battle Bridge Road on the corner of Battle Bridge Road and Cheney Road originally provide a canteen for railway workers, but at one time was also used as a Mission Hall. The basement storey housed workshops under the Culross Building and a boiler room under Culross Hall.
- 2.3 The Culross Buildings were part of a number of historic buildings located in the vicinity of King's Cross and St Pancras Stations and the former King's Cross Goods Yard. A major regeneration development scheme has been proposed for this area, which is referred to in the planning applications as 'King's Cross Central'. Outline Planning Permission (2004/2307/P) for the scheme was granted in December 2006, subject to certain conditions.
- 2.4 Condition 55 of the Planning Permission requires a programme of 'Building Recording and Analysis' and states:
- "No works shall take place in relation to each phase of the Development... until the applicant, their agent or successors in title has secured the implementation of a programme [of] assessment, recording and historical analysis, which considers building structure, architectural detail and archaeological evidence. This shall be undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation submitted by the applicant and approved by the local planning authority."
- 2.5 In this case, the relevant "phase of the Development" is Enabling Works 9f) 'the establishment of the new north-south route between Station Square and Granary Square as indicated on Parameter Plan KXC007'.
- 2.6 Condition 3 of the Conservation Area Consent for the demolition of Culross Buildings (2004/2317/C) includes essentially the same requirement as Condition 55 of the Outline Planning Permission, namely:
- "No works authorised by this consent shall take place until the applicant has implemented a programme of building recording and analysis by a person or body approved by the local planning authority. This programme shall be in accordance with a written scheme which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the Council as local planning authority."
- 2.7 Building recording was carried out in advance of the demolition of the buildings in January and February 2008 and a building recording watching brief was carried out during their demolition in July and August 2008. It was undertaken in accordance with a Specification compiled by International Heritage Conservation and Management (IHCM 2007) and a Written Scheme of Investigation (Rose-Deacon 2007). IHCM is the Historic Buildings Consultant to the Employer for this work, Argent (King's Cross) Limited. Both documents were approved in advance of the work by the London Borough of Camden. The building recording was carried out in accordance with that defined by Level 4 of English Heritage 2006 *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice*. It forms part of a wider programme of archaeological and building recording, which is being carried out in connection with the 'King's Cross Central' redevelopment scheme.

### **3 METHODS**

#### **3.1 Objectives**

3.1.1 The objectives of the building recording, as set out in the Specification (IHCM 2007), were:

- To meet the requirements of Condition 55 of the Outline Planning Permission (2004/2307/P) in relation to the demolition of Culross Buildings.
- To meet the requirements of Condition 3 of the Conservation Area Consent (2004/2317/C) in relation to the demolition of Culross Buildings.
- To carry out initial recording and analysis of all parts of Culross Buildings in advance of their demolition.
- In addition, to carry out further recording and analysis in one or more watching briefs as demolition works proceeds.
- A general heritage-driven survey and documentation of the buildings, with drawings, photographs and written accounts. This undertaking will provide 'factual' baseline data and also record the 'as-found' character.
- Identification of original elements and features, related to the functioning of the buildings as dwellings, workshops, mission hall and meeting place.
- Identification of modifications that may have affected their authenticity.
- Documentation of the condition of heritage elements.
- Documentation to assist in the identification of elements and artefacts to be salvaged.
- Provision of information supporting and defining objectives for any necessary future documentation.

#### **3.2 Documentary Research**

3.2.1 Archival research was carried out at Camden Local Studies Library and Archive Centre, the British Library, The National Archives (TNA) at Kew and English Heritage National Monuments Record Centre in Swindon. Historic maps and documents, contemporary accounts, bulletins, newspapers and magazines were consulted. The results of this research are presented in the following report. Additional research material was also provided by IHCM.

#### **3.3 On-Site Recording**

3.3.1 The building recording of the Culross Buildings was undertaken at English Heritage Level 4, as outlined in *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (English Heritage 2006), and comprised written description of all internal spaces and external elevations; manual scaled drawings including plans of all floors and the roof, external elevations, four cross-sectional elevations, architectural details; photographic survey; and fabric analysis. Building recording was carried out in advance of the demolition of the buildings in January and February 2008 and a building recording watching brief was carried out during their demolition in July and August 2008. Due to Health and Safety considerations the watching brief during demolition was undertaken at a safe distance from the buildings and recording was mainly photographic, although some architectural details were measured and drawn to scale on site and examples of construction materials such as brick, stone and concrete were collected on site for identification.

#### **3.4 Measured Survey**

3.4.1 Hand measured plans of all floors and the roof of the Culross Buildings were produced (**Figures 13 to 23**), as were four cross-sectional elevations through the buildings (**Figures 24 to 27**). Electronically measured drawings were produced of the

front (north-west), rear (south-east) and side (south-west and north-east) elevations of the buildings (**Figures 9 to 12**). The location of the cross-sectional elevations (**Figures 24 to 27**) and elevations (**Figures 9 to 12**) is shown on the plans of the floors and the roof (**Figures 13 to 18**). All important architectural details, as listed in the Specification (IHCM, 2007), were manually drawn (**Figures 28 to 43**).

- 3.4.2 An alphanumeric reference was assigned to each room in the Culross Buildings. Those used for the rooms in the main Culross Building refer to the building name, flat number and room (**Figures 14 to 17**, e.g. Room CB8B refers to the main Culross Building, Flat 8, Room B). The basement extends under all three buildings and was labelled CBB (**Figure 13**). The room references for Culross Hall refer to the building name, floor and room (**Figures 14 and 15**, e.g. Room CHGA refers to Culross Hall, ground floor, Room A and Room CH1F refers to Culross Hall, first floor, Room F). The room references for No. 41 Battle Bridge Road refer to the building name and room (**Figures 14 and 15**, e.g. Room CB41A refers to Culross Building, No. 41 Battle Bridge Road, Room A).
- 3.4.3 Descriptions of each room were entered into pro-forma tables on an Access database, and form part of the digital archive. Room numbers are shown on the floor plans and cross-sectional elevations (**Figures 13 to 17 and 24 to 27**).

### **3.5 Photographic Survey**

- 3.5.1 A comprehensive photographic survey of the buildings was undertaken before the buildings were demolished. It included the setting of the buildings, the exterior, the interior (most rooms) and important architectural details. A total of 1,513 colour slides (35mm), 827 black and white photographs (35mm) and 328 high quality digital images were taken. A further 183 digital images were taken during the demolition of the buildings.
- 3.5.2 A selection of photographs is presented within this report (**Plates 1 to 74**). Archival stable prints form part of the archive. A register of all photographs taken on site is included in the archive. Site north (i.e. north-west) was used to orientate the views in the photographic register.

### **3.6 Fabric Analysis**

- 3.6.1 Samples of typical brick types (32 examples), concrete (2 examples) and stone (1 example) were taken during the watching brief on the demolition of the buildings. Fabric analysis was carried out and the results are included in **Section 6**. The bricks were analysed using the system of ceramic building material classification used in archaeological work in Greater London. Each fabric number (e.g. fabric 3033 and 3035) specifies the composition, form, approximate method of manufacture and date range of the material. Examples of the brick fabrics can be found in the archives of the Museum of London and Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited.
- 3.6.2 The material was assessed in order to identify in hand specimen and sample (under binocular microscope) the types of brick, concrete and stone used in the construction of the buildings and to identify (where possible) the name of manufacturer from any brick stamps. A small fresh fabric surface was exposed by making a fresh break in each example using a 1kg mason's hammer and sharp chisel. The fabric was examined at x20 magnification using a long arm stereomicroscope or hand lens (Gowland x10).

### **3.7 Project Archive**

- 3.7.1 The archive, which includes the report, drawings and photographs produced during the building recording, will be lodged with the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre (LAARC) in due course. Copies of the report will be lodged with the English Heritage National Monuments Record at Swindon and with the London Borough of Camden Planning Department.

### **3.8 Guidance**

- 3.8.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with standards set out in:

- Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers: *Analysis and Recording for the Conservation and Control of Works to Historic Buildings* (1997)
- British Archaeologists and Developers Liaison Group: *Code of Practice* (1986)
- British Standards Institution: *Guide to the Principles of the Conservation of Historic Buildings (BS 7913)* (1998)
- English Heritage: *Guidance Paper 98: GLAAS: Guidance Paper 3-Standards and Practices in Archaeological Fieldwork in London*
- English Heritage (Clark K): *Informed Conservation* (2001)
- English Heritage: *The Presentation of Historic Building Survey in CAD* (2000)
- IFA: *Standards and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures* (1999)
- English Heritage *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice* (2006)

## 4 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 The historical background of the site draws upon historical documents and photographs, Ordnance Survey maps and recent publications.

### 4.2 The Development of King's Cross

- 4.2.1 The King's Cross area straddles the border of the old boroughs of St Pancras and Islington, centred upon Battle Bridge. John Rocque's map of 1746 (not illustrated here) showed the small hamlet of Battle Bridge, which had built up around an ancient crossing of the River Fleet. The site later occupied by the Culross Buildings was shown on this map as an open field. The area was known as Battle Bridge until 1830, when a monument to George IV known as 'King's Cross' was built on the crossroads. Though the monument was demolished by the Vestry of St Pancras as a public nuisance in 1845, the name 'King's Cross' survived, in part a consequence of the unsavoury reputation of Battle Bridge.
- 4.2.2 Two local manorial estates (Rugmere and St Pancras) were mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086. The area was wooded and farmed with both arable and pasture land. By the mid-13th century there were thirty-six houses in the Parish of St Pancras. Extensive flooding of the River Fleet in the early 14th century led to the abandonment of the village, and by the second half of the 16th century, when Ralph Agas mapped the area, the Church of St Pancras stood alone in open fields (not illustrated here).
- 4.2.3 Old St Pancras church was first mentioned in 1183 (Walford, 1878). The "ancient and diminutive" church appears to have undergone rebuilding in the mid-14th century, although it is likely that the building described in 1183 and in 1251 had pre-Conquest origins. The structure was radically 'restored' and enlarged in the 1840s to such an extent that little of its medieval fabric survived. The church stood at the centre of the manor, which was sparsely populated in the mid-13th century (*ibid*). The manor passed through several sets of hands during the Middle Ages, before entering the possession of the Carthusian Monks of the Holy Salutation in 1381. After the Dissolution, the manor became the property of the Somers family, in whose hands it remained at the end of the 19th century (*ibid*).
- 4.2.4 In 1593 John Norden described the church as "all alone, utterly forsaken, old and weather-beaten" and the area as a notorious haunt of thieves, a reputation for criminality that persisted into the 19th century (Stamp, 1990: 19). There were as few as two or three houses in the vicinity of the church in 1745, and the population of the parish remained below 600 in the 1760s. As late as 1777, the locality was described as being almost entirely rural, and the church commanded views of the countryside from Tottenham Court Road to Highgate (Walford, 1878).
- 4.2.5 The earliest shoots of urbanisation in the area began with the opening in 1756 of the New Road between Paddington and Islington (Stamp, 1990: 13). The north side of the stretch now known as the Euston Road between Tottenham Court Road and Battle Bridge was mainly lined with residential properties, and the area later known as Somers Town was developed by Jacob Leroux on land belonging to the eponymous Baron Somers in the 1780s (*ibid*: 14). By the early 19th century, the value of property in the recently developed area had fallen considerably, and although construction of new terraces and squares continued, areas of Somers Town were soon exhibiting slum-like characteristics (*ibid*: 16).
- 4.2.6 In 1767, the Smallpox Hospital moved from its original site in Tottenham Court Road to an area of gardens north of Battle Bridge, later the site of the Great Northern Hotel and King's Cross Station. It was rebuilt in 1793-94 with a cupola, and in 1802 a separate Fever Hospital was constructed (*ibid*: 13). Thompson's map of the Parish of St Pancras (not illustrated) showed that by 1801, terraced houses had been built to the north-west of the Smallpox Hospital (in the area of Clarence Passage and Red Lion Passage on **Figure 3**), a large brick field with a tile kiln lay to the west and a large field called 'Walls Field' lay to the east (in the area of Suffolk Street (later built on by the Culross Buildings) and Norfolk Street on **Figure 3**).

- 4.2.7 At the turn of the 19th century the already unsavoury reputation of the Battle Bridge area intensified with the growth of overcrowded low-quality housing and the expansion of noxious industrial processes. Local landowners let large areas of land in the vicinity to building contractors such as Thomas Cubitt for brick making, and brickfields and ancillary works became a distinctive feature of the landscape (Victoria County History, 1985: 24, 30-31). A short distance to the south-east of the Smallpox Hospital stood Smith's 'Dust Ground' at the junction of the Euston Road and Gray's Inn Road, the location of vast heaps of ash that was mixed with the local brickearth to make the bricks necessary for urban development. The heap was finally removed in 1826 and the site developed for housing, which comprised the final stage of a tide of development, which had been advancing north-east from Bloomsbury since the end of the 18th century (Stamp, 1990: 17).
- 4.2.8 Residential development in the St Pancras area was further blighted by the repeated flooding of the River Fleet that occurred during the first half of the 19th century. During one inundation in January 1809 the entire area between Pancras Church, Somers Town and the bottom of the hill at Pentonville "was quickly covered with sewage-laden water to a depth of three feet" (Walford, 1878). The flooding recurred in 1818, when the Fleet overflowed again at Battle Bridge. On this occasion it flooded "the lower apartments of every house from the Northumberland Arms tea-gardens to the Small-pox hospital, Somers Town, being a distance of about a mile", causing several thousand pounds worth of damage (*ibid*).
- 4.2.9 The opening of the Regent's Canal in 1820 further contributed to the increasingly industrial character of the area. The canal lay to the north of the Smallpox Hospital, and brought with it ever-more noxious industrial development, beginning with the Imperial Gas Company's works which opened in 1824 (shown on **Figure 3**). The gasworks occupied an area on the south bank of the canal. The construction of the canal and gasworks impacted on the area north of the Smallpox Hospital, and when the Great Northern Railway (GNR) sought assent for a Parliamentary Act for the building of its new London Goods and Passenger Termini in 1846, permission was granted for the demolition of the Smallpox Hospital and the slums, "the awful rookery", to the north-west (Weale 1851, cited in Stamp, 1990: 23).
- 4.3 Suffolk Street, c.1806 – c.1873 (later built on by the Culross Buildings)**
- 4.3.1 In 1806 a 99-year lease was granted on the Drakefield Estate, a residential neighbourhood of St Pancras that developed around Suffolk Street, Cheney Street, Ashby Street, Northampton Street, Norfolk Street and Upper Edmund Street (TNA RAIL 1189/5: 9; shown on **Figure 3**). The Freemasons' Arms Public House in Suffolk Street West was one of a number of individual properties within the Estate also granted 99-year leases that year (TNA RAIL 1189/5: 1), and the area was already densely built-up when it was first mapped in the mid-1830s (B.R. Davies 1834 *Topographical Survey of the Borough of St Marylebone*; not illustrated).
- 4.3.2 In 1850 the GNR purchased the freehold of the Estate from James Pope, though the Company was initially slow to acquire individual leases (TNA RAIL 236/171: 11). By this date the area was already densely populated, with more than 300 people living in Suffolk Street alone, of whom just over 180 individuals were adults aged 16 or over, divided approximately evenly between males and females (TNA HO 107/1497). Inhabitants worked in a wide variety of trades and occupations, while the largest employers of adult males were the newly-established Railway Company (8.6%) and the St Pancras Gasworks (6.45%). Within a few years however, the construction of the Hotel Curve (1861-2; railway track labelled on **Figure 3** as 'GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY') inflicted structural damage upon a number of properties in the district, which obliged the Company to buy up those houses worst affected by the works (TNA RAIL 236/88: 201, 397).
- 4.3.3 Plans for the partial redevelopment of the Estate were conceived by the GNR during the mid-1860s, when it was decided to improve the rail connection between the Hotel Curve and the Departure Platform of the Passenger Terminus (TNA RAIL 236/171: 11). This led to the construction of the additional platforms for suburban traffic (later known as the Suburban Station) in 1875, which replaced much of the Estate between

Suffolk Street and the newly realigned Cheney Street (compare **Figures 3 and 4**). To enable these works to take place, the Additional Powers Act of 1866 permitted the Company to purchase the remaining leases, several of which would not otherwise have expired until Christmas 1905 (*ibid*). Though the Imperial Gas Light Company expressed an interest in acquiring the properties on the north side of Suffolk Street (adjacent to the St Pancras Gasworks), the GNR decided in May 1869 to buy up all of the outstanding leases, a process that was largely complete by March of the following year (TNA RAIL 236/171: 73). Under the terms of the Act the Company agreed to establish a road connection between Suffolk Street and Congreve Street (later Battle Bridge Road) on behalf of the Vestry of St Pancras. The Company decided to build the new road a short distance to the north of the existing Suffolk Street, necessitating the demolition of the properties that stood on the north side of the existing roadway (*ibid*: 15-16). Notice was given on a number of these properties in May 1869, and others in the immediate vicinity were purchased in March 1872 (*ibid*: 241, 258). Tenders for the construction of the new Battle Bridge Road and bridge were opened in June 1872, and construction of the roadway and viaduct were complete by February of the following year (*ibid*: 227, 292 & 324).

- 4.3.4 Though the demolition of properties on Suffolk Street was not to commence until the following year, returns from the 1871 census suggest that the area was already in a state of decline. The adult population had grown to almost 240, of whom just over 44% were male. Of the latter, nearly 20% worked on the railways, while a further 9.6% worked at the gasworks. The returns indicate a greater incidence of deprivation amongst those who lived in the condemned properties, with as many as 6.7% of adult males described as unemployed. Demolitions began during the first half of the 1870s, and it was stated that by 1876 the Company “had pulled pretty nearly all the neighbourhood down” (TNA RAIL 1189/5: 44). By the early 1880s all of the houses on the south side of Suffolk Street had been demolished, while a valuation of the former Freemasons’ Arms Public House, which still stood on the north side of Suffolk Street West as late as 1885, observed that no more than eight houses still stood along the former street (*ibid*: 53).

#### **4.4 The Culross Buildings c.1891 – c.1948**

- 4.4.1 Owing to the continuing demand for additional passenger accommodation at King’s Cross, the Board of the GNR discussed new proposals to enlarge the King’s Cross Passenger Terminus in May 1889 (TNA RAIL 236/52: 29). It was subsequently decided to rebuild the northern end of the departures platform, to establish a subway connection between this and the Suburban Station, and to build new goods sidings for milk traffic to the west of the latter, necessitating the absorption of the adjacent roads into the perimeter of the enlarged terminus.
- 4.4.2 Since the Company was obliged by recent legislation to provide permanent accommodation for those displaced by the planned demolitions, at the end of 1890 Richard Johnson (GNR Chief Engineer) visited a number of modern “model lodging houses” in London in order to better understand the principles of contemporary tenement design (TNA RAIL 236/364/3, 06/09/1891). Johnson inspected recently completed tenement blocks at York Road, Gray’s Inn Road and Fieldgate Street, Whitechapel, the latter built by the Great Eastern Railway Company (GER) in order to accommodate railway workers displaced by the widening of Liverpool Street Station (*ibid*). Having considered the design of these buildings, Johnson submitted a set of sketch plans of the proposed new development to the Way and Works Committee in early January (*ibid*). Johnson proposed to build 40 new tenements (replacing the 24 houses that still stood in the former Drakefield Estate), of which 24 would contain four rooms and the remaining 16 would have two. Johnson designed the blocks with a view to maximise the privacy of residents by minimising the number of shared facilities. To this end he proposed that the occupants of each tenement would have their own scullery, pantry, coal store and WC, while communal facilities would be limited to a shaft for dust and cinders on each landing and a flat roof for drying laundry. The design was also influenced by safety considerations; the block was to be built with five staircases ‘so as to provide good exits in case of accident’ (*ibid*). The Way and Works Committee recommended that Johnson’s proposals be approved,



shortly after which the Board sanctioned expenditure of £11,000 to build the new blocks (TNA RAIL 236/53: 9).

- 4.4.3 The Contract for the construction of the new dwellings was awarded to William Upton Atherton and John Dolman (trading as Atherton & Latta) of Crisp Street, Poplar in February 1891 for £12,440 (TNA RAIL 236/519, Contract 23/02/1891; Estimate: 53). Work was due to be completed within six months of commencement (TNA RAIL 236/519, Specification, Bills of Quantities & Tender: 12). Though the set of seven drawings (which included all floor plans, elevations and sections and detail drawings of staircases, floors and scullery fittings) that originally accompanied the Specification have not been located during the course of this research, the latter document provides a detailed account of the method of construction and an inventory of materials to be used.
- 4.4.4 Before construction was to commence, the building contractors were instructed to grub up and clear away the foundations of the former Suffolk Street houses, to remove any drains and cesspits and to “cut out any soft places on site and fill the same with concrete” (*ibid*: 25). Owing to the pressing need to accommodate displaced residents, construction of the new building was to take place in two phases: the first portion of which was to be built before “the old dwelling at [the] back” (which was still inhabited) could be taken down, following which construction of the second phase could begin (TNA RAIL 236/519, Estimate: 8).
- 4.4.5 The basement of the new building was to be dug to a depth of 10' 3" (*ibid*, Estimate: 12), while foundations were to be of concrete, consisting of one part Portland cement to six parts Thames Ballast or four parts broken stone and two of clean sharp sand (*ibid*: 21). Concrete floors were to be made up from six parts coke breeze to one part Portland cement. All brickwork was to be laid in English bond, using “good hard well-burnt stocks”, while the “blue brick facing to [the] plinth next Road” (i.e. at ground level) was to be constructed of best quality Staffordshire Blue Bricks (*ibid*: 21). It was also intended to pave the basement floor with Staffordshire Blue Bricks, laid on edge on 6" of concrete, though the latter arrangement was provisional (*ibid*: 33).
- 4.4.6 Central to the design of the new building were the open-fronted staircases to each section, which were to be formed in concrete, laid with 2" thick Wilkes Patent granite paving (*ibid*: 32). The stone steps leading to the staircases were to be fashioned from ‘Silex Brand’ York stone obtained from Messrs Joseph Brooke & Sons of Halifax (*ibid*: 23), while the staircases themselves were to be faced with best quality white glazed bricks (*ibid*: 30), which were to be obtained from Messrs Joseph Cliff & Son of Wortley near Leeds (*ibid*: 21). Scullery walls were also faced with the same white glazed bricks (*ibid*: 30).
- 4.4.7 Timber was to be “the best Crown Memel, Christiania, Archangel or St Petersburg” or English Oak (*ibid*: 24). Timber sash windows were to be fitted throughout (*ibid*: 36). Entrance doors to each tenement were to be 2" thick, as were the doors to the Dust Cellars, the inside face of which was covered with 1/8" galvanised sheet iron, while internal doors were to be 1 3/4" thick (*ibid*: 5-36). The coal bunker was also to be formed of timber, lined with 1/8" sheet iron (*ibid*: 37).
- 4.4.8 York stone was to be used for the chimney pieces in living rooms (*ibid*: 30). Hard Derbyshire or York stone was to be used for coping and cornices (*ibid*: 22), including the stone cornice at roof level which was to be surmounted by a continuous rail constructed of 2 1/2" x 1/2" wrought iron bars secured by 36 hold-down bolts (*ibid*: 40). In order that residents could make use of the flat roofs of the new buildings to dry laundry, the Specification also prescribed that the iron railing would “have stays down the back of wall about 6' apart... to take clothes lines... with rings riveted to same” (*ibid*).
- 4.4.9 Further ironwork included the wrought iron balustrades to the external half-landings and cast-iron covers for the dust shoots (ash-disposal chutes) that served each landing (*ibid*). Messrs Steel and Garland of the Wharnccliffe Works, Sheffield supplied both the cast iron mantel registers fitted to the bedroom fireplaces and the ranges in each living room (*ibid*: 42).

- 4.4.10 The flat roof of the building was to be covered “in Seyssel asphalte, 1” thick bedded in bratticed cloth or felt, with falls to channels” (*ibid*: 32). The contractors were instructed to take particular care that the asphalt “was left perfectly watertight” (*ibid*). Equal care to ensure a watertight fit was required of the zinc worker, who was instructed to cover the flat roofs over the staircases with “No. 16 gauge Vielle Montagne Company’s zinc, to be procured from Messrs Braby & Co. of Euston Road” (*ibid*: 43).
- 4.4.11 Though work on the new buildings was scheduled to commence shortly after the contract was awarded in February, the construction process was hindered by a series of disputes and delays. Johnson’s proposal that the blocks were to be built to a height of 45’ was opposed by the LCC (London County Council) Architect, who recommended that the completed buildings should be no more than 40’ high. Johnson was determined that they be built to his original specification, and the resulting impasse does not appear to have been resolved until the beginning of May (TNA RAIL 236/53: 114). The contractors commenced work the same month, regaining some of the momentum that had been lost by the earlier postponement. At the end of June Johnson reported that good progress had been made at the east end of the block, which was being built first in order to accommodate the remaining residents of the Drakefield Estate, whose houses were to be pulled down in order to clear the site of the proposed new engine shed for the Passenger Terminus (TNA RAIL 236/370/9, 30/06/1891). Despite the promising start, construction was interrupted that summer by the Carpenters’ Strike, which had begun in London that May (Shepherd, 1975: 220-227). At the end of September Johnson reported that the strike had caused the contractors “a good deal of difficulty”, but that arrangements were in place to accelerate the construction process (TNA RAIL 236/370/9, 25/09/1891). Though the strike ended the following month, heavy rainfall during October added to the contractors’ woes (*ibid*, 30/10/1891). Johnson aimed to have the eastern end of the buildings ready for occupation by early December, though this target was subsequently pushed back to the end of the year (*ibid*, 28/11/1891). The pace of construction appears to have accelerated during the winter months, such that Johnson was able to report that the entire development was “rapidly nearing completion” at the end of January (TNA RAIL 236/364/3, 26/01/1892). By the latter date the two easternmost blocks were already occupied, while the western block was scheduled for completion early the following month. Work was also under way on the basement at the end of January, which was being fitted out as workshops for the company’s gas and signal fitters (*ibid*).
- 4.4.12 It was intended that the new flats were to be occupied mainly by GNR staff, and it was proposed to charge tenants rents between 7s/6d (37½p) and 8s/6d (42½p) per week for the larger dwellings, which were to be allocated “according to position”, while smaller units were to be let for weekly rents of between 4s/0d (20p) and 5s/0d (25p) (TNA RAIL 236/53: 322). It was also decided to appoint a resident Caretaker, who would live in one of the smaller apartments, rent-free (*ibid*). In order to give the new dwellings a distinctive postal address, the Board of Directors resolved to name them ‘Culross Buildings’, in honour of Lord Colville of Culross, then Chairman of the Board.
- 4.4.13 Returns from the 1901 census suggest that the new dwellings were a considerable improvement upon those that had preceded them (TNA RG 13/148 Folio 86-89). The population density had fallen considerably since 1871, when a total of 304 people had occupied the 24 houses in Suffolk Street West. The 40 flats at the Culross Buildings provided accommodation for 174 residents, of whom 106 were adults of 16 or over. Of these, nearly 60% were male, 67% of who worked for the Company (including the Caretaker, who lived at Flat 25). Nearly 7% of the adult female occupants were also employed by the GNR.
- 4.4.14 The surviving Specification, Bills of Quantities and Tender for the erection of the Culross Buildings do not include separate details of the construction of the adjacent Culross Hall, which stood at the north-east end of the main range. In 1897 this latter building became home to the Culross Mission, which was established in order to offer spiritual and practical assistance to GNR employees and their families. A London and North Eastern Railway (LNER) Magazine article of 1929 described the services

provided by the Mission, which included financial assistance and support for widows and orphans of Company employees, hospital visits and mess room meetings, in addition to pastoral care and the distribution of religious tracts and pamphlets (TNA ZPER 17/4 *LNER Magazine* Vol. IXX-XX: 664). A Goad Insurance plan of 1921 (**Figure 6**) indicated that the Mission appears to have taken possession of the somewhat unprepossessing building (No. 41 Battle Bridge Road) at the south-western end of the range at some point before that date. However by 1942 at least part of the original Culross Hall had been requisitioned for railway stores use, most likely as a consequence of the Second World War (1942 Goad Insurance plan; **Figure 7**).

#### **4.5 The Culross Buildings c.1948 – 2008**

- 4.5.1 Following nationalisation of the 'Big Four' railway companies in 1948 the newly-founded British Railways Board inherited the Culross Buildings. Though British Railways retained ownership throughout the decades that followed, management of the block and allocation of the flats within subsequently became the responsibility of Camden Council. By the early 1970s the buildings were described by tenants as 'an eyesore', in which water leaked into the top floor via the flat roof (Halle, 1973: 20).
- 4.5.2 While a number of the flats were still occupied by council tenants in 1981 (Anon, 1981: 1), the following year a residents' organisation known as Short-Life Community Housing (SCH) entered into negotiations with British Rail and Camden Council with a view to acquiring a short-term lease on the block (Anon, 1984: 3). The lease duly acquired, contractors set to work modernising the flats in August 1984, while the Culross Mission relocated permanently to the West Side Offices of King's Cross Passenger Terminus (*ibid*). Each flat was provided with a self-contained kitchen and bathroom, and the entire building was rewired. The flats continued to provide short-life accommodation until May 2001, when the last of the residents were rehoused in advance of the redevelopment of the area (Hill, 2001: 8). A small single-storey building on the north-east side of Culross Hall, which had been labelled as "boiler house" and "mess" on the 1921 and 1942 Goad Insurance Plans (**Figures 6 and 7**) respectively, was demolished in 2001. The Culross Buildings were demolished in July and August 2008.

## **5 BUILDING DESCRIPTION**

### **5.1 General**

- 5.1.1 Before demolition, the Culross Buildings (**Plate 1**) were situated within a plot of land which was bounded to the north-west by Battle Bridge Road, to the north-east by railway lines and embankments, to the south-east by the King's Cross Underground Station Redevelopment construction site and to the south-west by Cheney Road (**Figures 1 and 2**).
- 5.1.2 The main Culross Building originally functioned as a block of affordable housing flats accommodating railway workers and their families (**Plate 2**). It was a flat-roofed block with its front (north-west) elevation facing Battle Bridge Road (**Figure 9**). It comprised a long range of four storeys over a non-residential basement. The 40 dwellings were in five sections, each with a walk-up open fronted central staircase accessed from the front (north-west) elevation.
- 5.1.3 Culross Hall (**Plate 3**) was attached to the north-east end of the main Culross Building and originally functioned as a Mission Hall dedicated to the railway workers and their families. It had two storeys over a basement and a pitched slated roof. Its floors were not at the same levels as those of the main Culross Building.
- 5.1.4 No. 41 Battle Bridge Road (**Plate 4**), originally a canteen for railway staff, was attached to the south-west end of the main Culross Building. This smaller two-storey block had a flat roof and at one time was also used as a Mission Hall (see **Figures 6 and 7**). Its north-west elevation was curved in line with the Battle Bridge Road-Cheney Road corner.
- 5.1.5 The basement under the entire building was only accessible from the rear (south-east) side of the building through a series of arched doorways (**Plate 5**). It housed workshops under the main Culross Building and No. 41 Battle Bridge Road, and a boiler room under Culross Hall. The basement was not visible on the front (north-west) elevation because the ground level was considerably higher on this side of the building than on the rear (south-east) side.

### **5.2 Culross Building**

- 5.2.1 The main Culross Building was rectangular in plan and was built in yellow stock brick in English Bond with red stock brick embellishments. Access between the five sections of the building was only possible through the doorways in the front (north-west) elevation or across the flat roof. The building stepped up a very gentle slope north-eastwards. The north-eastern sections were longer, reflecting the larger flats at that end. The flats were designed in two sizes, with two on each floor of each section. Flats in the three north-eastern sections (nos. 1 to 24) each had five rooms and a WC, while those in the south-western sections (nos. 25 to 40) were smaller, each with three rooms and a WC. This variation in dwelling size was reflected in the front (north-west) and rear (south-east) elevations, the larger flats having an extra window bay.
- 5.2.2 The watching brief during the demolition of the building showed that hoop iron had been used to reinforce the brickwork of the external and dividing walls of the building. Pairs of hoop irons, long bands of wrought iron about 40 mm wide by 1 mm thick, had been laid horizontally in some of the brickwork mortar joints (**Plate 6**).
- Front (north-west) elevation (Figure 9)**
- 5.2.3 The three north-eastern sections with larger flats had two windows on each side of the central stair (**Plate 2**), while the two smaller south-western sections had only one window on each side of the stair (**Plate 7**).
- 5.2.4 At ground floor level, the brickwork had been cleaned to reveal its original yellow colour, while above the wall was covered with soot and grime. A dark blue engineering brick plinth at the base of the wall had a chamfered top formed of two courses of brickwork (**Plate 8**). The number of courses in the plinth varied from south-west to north-east to allow for the gentle slope up towards the north-east. The height of the plinth stepped up three times along its length to compensate for the slope, in line with the three steps at the top of the wall.

- 5.2.5 Three decorative red brick bands, each formed of three courses marked the level of the first, second and third floors. These stepped up in line with the three steps at the top of the wall and the plinth. Two stucco name plaques with “*CULROSS BUILDINGS*” impressed in them had been placed at the level of the first floor red brick band; one was at the south-west end (**Plate 7**) while the other was near the centre of this elevation (**Plate 2**). The corners and the party walls between sections were marked by red brick pilaster strips. A protruding moulded red brick string course just above the third floor windows with a sandstone cornice above ran the entire length of the building with breaks for the staircase bays. Above, the parapet wall was capped with original sandstone and replacement concrete coping slabs.
- 5.2.6 The five vertical open stairwells were flanked by red brick decorative pilaster strips (**Plates 2 and 7**), which terminated in a red brick arch and a raised section of parapet. Each arch had a sandstone keystone (**Figure 28**) and was formed of alternating soldier bricks and two bricks set ‘brick on edge’, with a course of red header bricks immediately above. A protruding moulded red brick string course level with the top of the keystone ran the width of the staircase bay in line with the coping slabs on the parapet wall of the rest of the building. Above a sandstone cornice also ran the width of the staircase bay.
- 5.2.7 The front (north-west) elevation had sixteen windows at each floor level. Each had a sandstone sill painted white and a red brick segmental arch formed of soldier bricks. The timber sash windows were single-glazed with six panes in the upper and lower sash set three by two (**Figures 9 and 29**: type 4). Most of the uppermost central panes had a circular vent for airflow. All of the ground floor windows had been blocked with yellow stock brick set flush with the opening. The seven first floor window openings at the south-western end of the elevation were boarded with vertical timber planks. The watching brief on the demolition of the building showed that the windows had a higher inner brick relieving arch (**Plate 9**).
- 5.2.8 The five open-fronted stairwells ran the entire height of the elevation. Each stairwell bay had a pair of doors at ground floor level with an entrance doorway on the south-west side and a service doorway on the north-east side. The former gave access to the stairwell and flats, while the latter led straight down to a ‘Dust Cellar’ (see Section 4.4.7) where the dust and ashes were collected from the flats. At the time of recording, these doorways had been infilled with concrete blocks apart from one towards the south-west end of the elevation which had been fitted with a steel gate (**Plates 7 and 10**). In addition, the open stairwell above the doorways had been boarded up to the level of the first floor half-landing. A white painted chamfered sandstone lintel above the doorways ran the width of the staircase bay. Above each entrance door (south-west side of the two doors), this was carved with the flat numbers for that stairwell (**Plate 10**). Above the doorways each stairwell was open with four concrete chamfered half-landings protected by wrought iron railings, which had been painted green (**Plate 11; Figure 28**).

**Side (south-west) elevation (Figure 10)**

- 5.2.9 The lower half of this elevation was obscured by No. 41 Battle Bridge Road (**Plate 1**). The brickwork of the upper part had been rendered and painted, apart from a red brick pilaster strip at the north-west end of the wall. A white painted rectangle on the render dated from 1992 when the residents of the buildings painted ‘150 PEOPLE LIVE HERE’ on the panel because they were uncertain about the future of the buildings (Aston and Marshall, 2006: 55). The protruding moulded red brick string course just above the third floor windows and the sandstone string course of the front (north-west) elevation continued along the entire length of this elevation. Above, the parapet wall was capped with concrete.

**Rear (south-east) elevation (Figure 11)**

- 5.2.10 Above the basement the rear (south-east) elevation had four storeys (**Plate 12**). The five sections of the rear (south-east) elevation varied in size depending on the size of the dwellings. The larger flats in the three north-eastern sections each had two large windows, one medium sized window and one small WC window, while the smaller

flats in the two south-western sections each had one large, one medium sized and one smaller WC window.

- 5.2.11 Each floor originally had 36 windows with red brick arches formed of soldier bricks. All the smaller WC windows had been infilled with brick and a modern air vent, and their sills had been removed. The rest of the windows had sandstone sills. The large and medium sized windows had timber sashes with six and two panes, respectively, in the upper and lower sashes (**Figures 11 and 29**: types 1 and 2). Below, the basement was faced with dark blue engineering brick projecting plinth with a chamfered top, in contrast to the yellow stock brick of the elevation above.
- 5.2.12 The watching brief on the demolition of the building showed that the windows had an iron lintel behind their red brick arches and that the brickwork was not bonded through the wall in the area of the window arches (**Plates 13 and 14**).
- 5.2.13 The rear (south-east) elevation had four horizontal red brick bands; the lower three marked the first, second and third floor as on the front (north-west) elevation, while the upper band at roof level was in place of the stone cornice. The bands, the top of the parapet and the top of the engineering brick of the basement stepped up three times from north-west to south-east to allow for the slope up to the south-east in the ground level. The stone cornice from the front and side elevations was visible at the very north-west and south-east ends of the elevation (**Figure 11**).
- 5.2.14 The doorway and window openings at basement level were spanned by broad, semi-circular brick arches formed of three courses of brickwork in 'brick on edge' position (**Plate 15**). The sides of the openings were constructed of bullnose bricks. Most of the openings were partially covered with timber boards at the time of recording. The upper fanlight windows were visible in most of the openings. The lower part of many of the openings had been infilled with dark blue engineering bricks. The opening contained a variety of window and door openings (**Figures 24, 30 and 31**).
- 5.2.15 Down-pipes on the rear (south-east) elevation drained the flat roof and took foul waste. Widespread staining around these pipes indicated leakage. The down-pipes connected into a large horizontal cast-iron pipe which ran the entire length of the elevation just above the basement arches. A number of 'U-shaped' gullies along the length of this pipe prevented upstairs sewage flowing back into the ground floor toilets (**Plate 15**).
- 5.2.16 A small plaque or rail level marker was removed from the rear wall of the Culross Building in April 2008 by Charles Brooking, assisted by Michael Bussell of IHCM, and taken into Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd's project archive (see **Figure 11** for location). 'NEAREST RAIL LEVEL' had been imprinted in capital letters on the marker, which had been glued to the brickwork.

#### **Side (north-east) elevation (Figure 12)**

- 5.2.17 The lower part of this elevation was obscured by Culross Hall, although during the demolition of the Hall the elevation was visible for a short time (**Plate 43**). The elevation was built in yellow stock brick in English bond with a red brick pilaster strip at the north-west end of the wall. The red brick band at third floor level, the protruding moulded red brick string course just above the third floor windows and the sandstone string course of the front (north-west) elevation continued across this side elevation. Above, the parapet wall was capped with concrete slabs. Two chimney stacks had been incorporated into the parapet wall; the north-western stack had four terracotta pots, while the south-eastern had five.

#### **Roof (Figure 18)**

- 5.2.18 The flat roof of the Culross Building (**Plate 16**) was designed as an area to hang washing and for children to play. It was of filler joist construction that is unreinforced concrete spanning between RSJs (rolled steel joists). It had been covered with asphalt. The watching brief on the demolition of the building showed that the concrete had first been covered with a thin screed (**Plate 17**). The roof was enclosed on all sides by a parapet wall, which was built of eight courses of brickwork and capped with a mixture of original sandstone coping stones and replacement concrete slabs.

Inserted into the coping were wrought iron railings that ran around the perimeter of the roof and along some of the dividing walls (**Plate 16**). The fastenings for the railings were revealed during the demolition of the building (**Plates 18 and 19**). They had been anchored into the brick walls (**Figure 32**). Along the front (north-west) and rear (south-east) elevations the parapet wall stepped up three times from south-west to north-east, by two courses, then one course and finally by two courses, to take account of the gentle slope of the ground.

- 5.2.19 The roof was divided into five sections by low brick walls; the three north-eastern sections were longer reflecting the larger flats at that end (**Figure 18**). The watching brief on the demolition of the building showed that the concrete roof had been laid in sections in between the dividing walls (**Plate 20**).
- 5.2.20 Each section was accessed by a staircase covered by a small brick housing, with sloping roofs over the staircases and a flat roof over the landing (**Plate 21; Figure 25**). Each staircase had two attached chimney stacks; one on the south-west side and the other on the north-east side (**Plate 22**). Each had four modern terracotta chimney pots. Three types of modern terracotta chimney pots were identified (**Figures 18 and 33; Plate 23**). A vent for the ash chute was also attached to the south-east corner of the stair housing (**Plate 22**). Drainage holes in the base of the parapet walls and dividing walls allowed water to flow off the roof (**Plate 24**).
- 5.2.21 The north-east end wall and the three dividing walls surrounding the three larger sections each had two chimney stacks with five terracotta chimney pots on the south-east side serving the larger flats and four chimney pots on the north-west side serving the larger flats. The south-west end wall and the dividing wall for the smaller flats did not have chimney stacks. However, each section had two chimney stacks on the south-east side which had had their chimney pots removed and been capped off with concrete.
- 5.2.22 At the time of recording the roof was generally in a poor state of repair, with vegetation growing along the edges of the asphalt.

#### **Interior**

- 5.2.23 The five open-fronted stairwells each had two straight half-flights of stairs with stone treads and external half-landings of filler joist construction (**Figures 14 to 17; 19**). The handrails to the half-landings were of plain wrought iron bars with curved ends. Brown glazed bricks faced the walls of the staircases to handrail height with white glazed bricks above. During the demolition of the building the recesses for the stone steps in the glazed brick walls of the stairwell were revealed (**Plate 25**). The landings with access to the flats, each had a cast iron cover (**Plate 26; Figure 34**) over a chute into which ash and dust could be dropped down to the 'Dust Cellar' (see Section 4.4.7), which was situated beneath the stairs and below ground floor level (**Plate 27; Figure 13**). Access down to the 'Dust Cellar' was via the north-east of each of the pair of doors in the five stairwell bays in the front (north-west) elevation. The chute was later used for modern cables. During the demolition of the building, a void was found in one of the blocks of flats to the south-west of the 'Dust Cellar' below ground floor level and within the stairwell bay (**Plate 28**).
- 5.2.24 The watching brief on the demolition of the Culross Building showed that its floors were of filler joist construction, with RSJs spanning front to back (north-west to south-east) with unreinforced concrete laid in between (**Plate 29**). The RSJs were 3" (7.5cm) wide, 5" (13cm) deep and were set 2'9" (85.5cm) apart.

#### **The larger flats**

- 5.2.25 The original layout of the larger flats (nos. 1 to 24) at the north-east end of the building has been reconstructed (**Figure 20**) using plans showing proposed alterations (Anon 1984: 4). Each flat originally had five rooms: a living room, three bedrooms and another room divided by timber partitions into a scullery/pantry and toilet. None of the flats had a bath. The scullery area contained a sink and a 'copper' for boiling water and was used for washing up, laundering clothes and boiling water

for cooking or bathing, while the pantry area was used for storing food, provisions and dishes. Cooking was done on the range in the living room.

- 5.2.26 These flats were modernised in 1984 (see Section 4.5.2) with the creation of a small internal hall, a lobby (Room CB4A on **Figure 21**), a bathroom (Room CB4B on **Figure 21**; **Plate 30**) in place of the scullery and toilet, a kitchen (Room CB4C on **Figure 21**; **Plates 31** and **32**) in place of the smallest bedroom, new doorways between the new lobby and new kitchen (Rooms CB4A and CB4C on **Figure 21**) and between the new kitchen and second bedroom (Rooms CB4C and CB4F on **Figure 21**), the blocking of the doorway between the two main front rooms, the blocking of the toilet and stairwell windows (**Plates 26** and **30**), and partitioning to create more privacy between the bedrooms. The blocking of the toilet window enabled the housing of a modern water heater in this area. Although the flats were modernised in 1984 they were not provided with central heating.
- 5.2.27 A corridor was created between the new lobby and second bedroom (see Room CB20C on **Figure 15**). In many flats this partition was removed to create a bigger kitchen as in Flat 4 (see **Figure 21**). In Flat 8, the partition between the lobby and the bathroom had been removed in order to create a bigger bathroom (see Room CB8B on **Figure 17**; **Plate 33**). The lower part of the walls of the scullery/pantry and toilet were originally built of brown glazed brick with white glazed brick forming the upper part of the walls; this scheme still survived in many of the flats (**Plate 33**).
- 5.2.28 The flats had timber floor boards set on timber bearers on top of the concrete, which were mostly covered with linoleum or carpet. The original doorways retained their original architraves. Original skirting boards survived in all rooms apart from the bathrooms which presumably did not have any originally. Some original fireplaces survived (**Figures 35** and **36**), particularly in the second bedroom (**Plate 34**), although many had been blocked (**Plate 35**). None of the ranges survived in the front room (**Plate 36**); in Flats 4 and 7 the range had been replaced with a 1930s or 1950s tiled fire surround (**Figure 37**) and a bedroom fireplace (**Figure 38**) respectively, and in Flat 19 only the back of a small fireplace remained (**Figure 39**).

#### ***The smaller flats***

- 5.2.29 The original layout of the smaller flats (nos. 25 to 40) at the south-west end of the building has been reconstructed (**Figure 22**) using plans showing proposed alterations (Anon 1984: 4). Each flat originally had three rooms: a living room, a bedroom and another room divided by timber partitions into a scullery/pantry and toilet. None of the flats had a bath. The scullery area contained a sink and 'copper'.
- 5.2.30 These flats were modernised in 1984 with the creation of a small internal hall in most of the flats (**Figures 14** to **17**), although this was not the case in Flats 35 and 38 (**Figures 15**, **16** and **23**). In some of the flats the doorway between the two main rooms (former living room and bedroom) was blocked (**Figures 14** to **17**). In all the smaller flats the timber partitions in the scullery/pantry and toilet (**Figure 22**) were removed and replaced with an east-west partition to create a bathroom (Room CB38B on **Figure 23**) in place of the scullery and toilet and a lobby or a kitchen (Room CB38A on **Figure 23**) in place of the former pantry area. In the flats with a new lobby a kitchen was created in the former bedroom, and the former living room was used as a living room and a bedroom; this was the case in Flats 30 and 35. A new doorway was created between the new lobby or new kitchen (former pantry area; Room CB38A on **Figure 23**) and the new kitchen or retained bedroom (former bedroom; Room CB38C on **Figure 23**). All of the former toilet windows and some of the former pantry to stairwell windows were blocked. The blocking of the toilet window enabled the housing of a modern water heater in this area.
- 5.2.31 The lower part of the walls of the scullery/pantry and toilet were originally built of brown glazed brick with white glazed brick forming the upper part of the walls; this scheme still survived in many of the flats.
- 5.2.32 Like the larger flats, the smaller flats too had timber floor boards, which were mostly covered with linoleum or carpet. The original doorways retained their original architraves (**Plate 37**). Original skirting boards survived in most rooms apart from the



bathrooms which presumably did not have any originally. Some original fireplaces survived, particularly in the second bedroom, although many had been blocked. None of the ranges survived in the front room.

### **Basement**

- 5.2.33 The rear (north-west) wall of the basement was a sloping mass concrete retaining wall, which upheld the Battle Bridge Road at higher level (**Figure 13**; **Plate 38**). A typical section through the wall is shown on **Figure 26**. The basement comprised two rows of rooms aligned north-east to south-west (**Figure 13**). All the rooms were connected by brick arched openings (**Plate 39**). The arched openings in the front (south-east) wall of the basement contained a remarkable number of different types of doors and windows (**Figures 30 and 31**; types 2A to 10A, 12A to 14A, 18A and 19A). Some of the basement rooms were originally heated (**Plate 40**); a brick fireplace surround had been built in front of the original fireplace opening in Room CBB13 (**Plate 41**; **Figure 40**). Although the physical evidence is scant, timber shelves, partitioning and workbenches survived in some of the rooms, confirming the documentary evidence that they had been used as workshops and stores (**Plate 42 and Figure 13**).

### **5.3 Culross Hall**

- 5.3.1 Culross Hall and the Culross Building appear to have been built at the same time. Although there was a straight joint in the brickwork between the two buildings on the rear (south-east) side (**Plate 43**), the brickwork between the two buildings was bonded on the front (north-west) side (**Plate 44**). Two projecting brick corbels in the side (south-west) wall of the Culross Building had been built to support the roof of Culross Hall roughly at purlin height. The horizontal red brick band at third floor level on the Culross Building was not continued behind the attic space of Culross Hall (**Plate 43**). In addition, the red brick pilaster strip at the north-west end of the side (north-east) wall of the Culross Building did not continue down behind Culross Hall (**Plate 44**).
- 5.3.2 Culross Hall (**Plate 3**) was built in yellow stock brick in English bond with a slate pitched roof (**Plate 45**) with five timber king-post trusses (**Plate 46**; **Figures 24 and 26**). It had three chimney stacks, one at the centre of the gable at the north-east end of the building, one on the front (north-west) elevation and one on the rear (south-east) elevation. The former had three terracotta chimney pots, while the other two originally had two each.

#### **Front (north-west) elevation (Figure 9)**

- 5.3.3 The front (north-west) elevation had six bays with a central brick pilaster and a plain string course just below eaves level. The three north-eastern ground floor bays housed door openings. The north-easternmost doorway had been infilled with concrete blocks, while the other two had been covered with timber boarding and their fanlights had been infilled with concrete blocks. The central doorway had a concrete door step, while the flanking doors had sandstone door steps. A stucco name plaque had been placed above the central doorway (**Plate 47**). The letters "CULROSS HALL" had been impressed in it and then painted black.
- 5.3.4 The three remaining ground floor bays housed window openings which had been infilled with modern yellow stock bricks in stretcher bond. The five timber sash windows at first floor level were single-glazed with six panes in the upper and lower sash, set three by two. The window openings all had sandstone sills and all the door and window openings had a segmental red brick arch formed of three courses of brickwork in 'brick on edge' position with a soldier brick at each side. The dark blue engineering brick plinth with chamfered top formed of two courses of brickwork at the base of the wall of the Culross Building continued across the base of the wall of Culross Hall.

#### **Side (north-east) elevation (Figure 12)**

- 5.3.5 The side (north-east) elevation was constructed of yellow stock bricks in English bond. Two ground floor window openings with red brick segmental arches on each

side of the central chimney stack had been infilled. A basement doorway on the south-east side of the chimney had been blocked. There were no window openings at basement and first floor level.

- 5.3.6 The white painted scar of a single-storey building at basement level was visible just below the north-west ground floor windows. This building is shown on the 1894, 1914-16 and 1983 Ordnance Survey maps (**Figures 4, 5 and 8**). It is labelled as “boiler house” on the 1921 Goad Insurance map (**Figure 6**) and as “mess” (i.e. dining room) on the 1942 Goad Insurance map (**Figure 7**). An inventory for English Heritage (Duckworth and Jones 1988) describes it as a 'blacksmith's forge' and that it 'has a clerestory roof and contains various BR platelayers' equipment. On Goad's insurance plan, updated 1939, it is marked as an electrical accumulator room. There is a cast iron forge hearth, lettered 'Gold Medal. Sydney. No A78'. The hearth had gone by the time of an inspection in the late 1990s, and the building was demolished by January 2001 (Michael Bussell pers. comm.). An undated and uncredited photograph (not illustrated) found by Michael Bussell in an article describing the beginnings of a scale model of the King's Cross terminus shows the single-storey gabled building with at least one window in its end (north-east) wall. The photograph is thought to have been taken between 1948 and the mid-1950s.

#### **Rear (south-east) elevation (Figure 11)**

- 5.3.7 Above the basement the rear (south-east) elevation had two storeys (**Plate 48**) and was built of yellow stock bricks in English bond. The wall at its base had a lower plinth than that at the base of the Culross Building, comprising eight courses of dark blue engineering bricks including an upper course of chamfered bricks.
- 5.3.8 The six basement doorway and window openings were spanned by broad, semi-circular brick arches formed of three courses of yellow stock brickwork in 'brick on edge' position. Most of the openings were partially covered with timber boards at the time of recording. The upper fanlight windows were visible in most of the openings. One opening and the lower part of another (**Figure 30**; type 1A) had been infilled with brick. Three of the openings had matching timber double leaf doors with six glass panes in their upper half (**Figure 24**), also matching that in Room CBB18 below Culross Building (**Figure 30**; type 2A).
- 5.3.9 The six ground floor window openings (one with a door) were spanned by broad, segmental brick arches formed of three courses of yellow stock brickwork in 'brick on edge' position with a soldier brick at each side. An external timber staircase led from the basement up to the ground floor door (**Plate 49**).
- 5.3.10 The seven first floor window openings were spanned by broad, segmental brick arches formed of three courses of yellow stock brickwork in 'brick on edge' position with a soldier brick at each side. Four of these sash windows were larger and were single-glazed with six panes in the upper and lower sash set three by two (**Figure 41**; type 4x). Two of the three smaller sash windows were single-glazed with three panes in the upper and lower sash set three by one (**Figure 41**; type 5). The ground and first floor window openings all had sandstone sills.

#### **Interior**

##### ***Basement***

- 5.3.11 The rear (north-west) wall of the basement was a sloping mass concrete retaining wall, which upheld the Battle Bridge Road at higher level (**Plates 50 and 51**) as under the Culross Building (see Section 5.2.33 and **Figure 26**). The basement under Culross Hall comprised a single room (Room CBB1; **Plates 50 and 51**).

##### ***Ground Floor***

- 5.3.12 The ground floor was supported by five north-west to south-east RSJs (**Figure 24**). These were 6½” (16.5cm) wide and 1' 3¾” (40cm) deep.
- 5.3.13 Three doorways in the front (north-west) elevation and one doorway in the rear (south-east) elevation led into the building at ground floor level. The central of the three doorways in the front elevation led into a small lobby (Room CH1A; **Figure 14**).

with a timber staircase (**Plate 52; Figure 42**) leading up to the first floor Mission Hall (Room CH1F; **Figure 15**).

- 5.3.14 A timber partition with 24 panes of glass and a small hatch in one of the panes divided Rooms CHGA and CHGH (**Figures 14 and 41**: type 9). A trap door with a hook above in the corner of the ceiling of Room CHGD (**Plate 53**) allowed goods to be transferred to the basement (**Figures 13 and 14**).

#### ***First Floor***

- 5.3.15 Five front to back (north-west to south-east) RSJs (**Figure 24; Plate 54**) supported the first floor, which the watching brief showed was of filler joist construction with unreinforced concrete spanning between smaller RSJs, running north-east to south-west (**Plate 55**). These smaller joists had been inserted into the side (south-west and north-east) walls of the building.
- 5.3.16 The timber dog-leg staircase from the ground (Room CH1A; **Figure 14**) to the first floor of Culross Hall had two half-landings (**Plate 52**). The Mission Hall (Room CH1F; **Figure 15**) at the top of the stairs had retained its original timber parquet floor, skirting boards, dado rail and coving (**Plate 56**). The Hall had a low timber stage against its south-west wall. It had two fireplaces, one on the north-west wall and the other on the south-east wall (**Plates 57 and 58; Figure 43**), and a number of rectangular hollow sheet metal central heating vents around the walls of the room (**Plate 59**), which could be opened and closed by a metal rod with an ornamental handle in the shape of a fist. The remaining first floor rooms included Kitchen CH1C (**Plate 60**), Lounge CH1B and Toilets CH1D and CH1E. The toilets had small high windows and the lower parts of the walls were built of brown glazed bricks with white glazed bricks above (**Plates 61 and 62**). A modern mezzanine floor had been inserted above Lounge CH1B. It was accessed via modern timber stairs in the north corner of the room (**Plate 63**) and provided a small sleeping area. A further set of timber stairs led to an attic (**Plate 64**), which could also be accessed via a trapdoor in the ceiling above the landing of the main staircase (Room CH1A; **Plate 65**).

#### **5.4 No. 41 Battle Bridge Road**

- 5.4.1 No. 41 Battle Bridge Road had an irregular shaped footprint. Its front (south-west and north-west) elevation formed one continuous curve (**Plate 1**) following the corner of Cheney Road and Battle Bridge Road. The building was constructed in yellow stock brick in English bond. Its front elevation comprised two storeys (ground and first floor), while its rear elevation comprised three storeys (basement, ground and first floor).
- 5.4.2 The building had an asphalted flat roof surrounded by a parapet wall capped with concrete slabs (**Figure 18**). The floors and roof were supported by south-west to north-east RSJs and the demolition of the building showed that they were of hollow clay pot or 'Fawcett System' construction, a type of patent floor. Red clay tubes with a flat base had been laid side by side and resting upon the lower flanges of smaller RSJs. The spaces between and above them had been filled with concrete and their upper sides were grooved as a key for the concrete (**Plate 66**).
- 5.4.3 It has been suggested that the roof may originally have been pitched because of its minimal parapet, the repointing of the brickwork at roof level and the rendering of the adjacent side (south-west) wall of the Culross Building possibly to cover the roof scar. However, the construction of the roof with hollow clay pots suggests that it was constructed at the same time as the rest of the building since the floors of the building had the same construction as revealed during demolition. The render on the south-west elevation of the Culross Building was probably to deal with the driving rain.

#### **Front (north-west and south-west) elevation (Figures 9 and 10)**

- 5.4.4 The front (north-west and south-west) elevation had six bays with a red brick dentil course at eaves level, a central yellow stock brick pilaster and another at the south end of the elevation. The window and door openings had segmental arches formed of three courses of red brick set in 'brick on edge' position with a soldier brick at each side. The arches and sides of the window openings had been painted white. All the

ground floor window openings had been infilled with modern yellow brick in stretcher bond. The six timber sash windows at first floor level were single-glazed with two panes in the upper and lower sashes. The window openings had bullnose brick sills apart from the first floor windows in the second, third and sixth bays from the south corner of the building which had sandstone sills. The door at the north-east end of the elevation had a concrete step and its surround had not been painted white unlike the window openings in this elevation.

- 5.4.5 The dark blue engineering brick plinth with chamfered top formed of two courses of brickwork at the base of the wall of the Culross Building continued across the base of the wall of No. 41 Battle Bridge Road. A number of cast iron air vents of various sizes were recorded along the elevation and are shown on **Figures 9** and **10**. The parapet was capped with concrete slabs. The top eight courses of the wall had been repointed with a lighter coloured mortar.
- 5.4.6 The remains of a demolished wall to the south-east of No. 41 Battle Bridge Road were still extant at the time of recording (**Figure 10**; **Plates 4** and **67**). It was built of yellow stock bricks in English bond. It had a dark blue engineering brick plinth and a doorway with a segmental arch formed of two courses of red brick set in 'brick on edge' position. The wall used to run south all the way to the King's Cross Suburban Trainshed, forming the railway's boundary.

#### **Rear (south-east and east) elevation (Figure 11)**

- 5.4.7 The rear (south-east and east) elevation was built of yellow stock bricks in English bond and was cranked in plan (**Figures 13** to **15**; **Plate 67**). The south-east elevation had three basement window openings which had been covered with timber boards. The east elevation had two basement door openings: a double leaf south door (**Figure 31**; type 16A) and a single north door. Both doors had a glazed fanlight over (**Figure 11**) and had been covered with timber boards. The east elevation also had two timber sash windows at ground and first floor level, which were single-glazed with two panes in both the upper and lower sashes. Most of the windows had chamfered engineering brick sills, although the north first floor window had a sandstone sill. The basement and ground floor window and door openings had segmental arches formed of three courses of yellow stock brick set in 'brick on edge' position with a soldier brick at each side. The first floor windows had segmental arches formed of two courses of yellow stock brick set in 'brick on edge' position with a soldier brick at each side. A decorative red brick course of headers was visible between the basement and ground floor level on the east elevation. A projecting dark blue engineering brick plinth, seven courses high including a chamfered upper course, ran along the elevation.

#### **Interior**

##### ***Basement***

- 5.4.8 The rear (north-west) wall of the basement was a sloping mass concrete retaining wall, which upheld the Battle Bridge Road at higher level (**Plate 68**) as under the Culross Building and Culross Hall (see Section 5.2.33 and 5.3.11; **Figure 27**). The basement under No. 41 Battle Bridge Road comprised two rooms (Rooms CBB23 and CBB24; **Figure 13**). Two north-east to south-west RSJs were visible supporting the floor above in Room CBB24. Paint and joist holes in the walls of Room CBB23 indicated that it originally had a staircase which led from the basement to the ground floor (**Plate 69**).

##### ***Ground Floor***

- 5.4.9 The ground floor of No. 41 Battle Bridge Road was divided into five rooms (**Figure 14**). The doorway in the front (north-west) elevation led into Hallway CB41A (**Plate 70**) with Staircase CB41B up to the first floor beyond (**Plate 71**). Before it was removed, the former staircase from the basement (in Room CBB23; **Plate 68**) was situated directly below Staircase CB41B. Most of the ground floor was occupied by large Meeting Room CB41D. Four boxed in north-east to south-west RSJs were visible supporting the floor above (**Plate 72**; **Figures 14** and **27**). A toilet (Room

CB41E) and a small room with a sink (Room CB41C) could be accessed from the large meeting room.

***First Floor***

- 5.4.10 Most of this first floor was occupied by large Meeting Room CB41L (**Plate 73**), which had been divided into five rooms by modern partitioning (**Figure 15**). There was a sixth room (Room CB41I) behind (south-east of) the staircase, which was triangular in plan like Room CB41C on the ground floor (**Plate 74**). Two boxed-in north-east to south-west RSJs were visible supporting the floor above (**Plate 73**).

## 6 FABRIC ANALYSIS

### 6.1 Bricks

6.1.1 Examples of bricks were taken by the demolition contractors from the main walls, stairwells, bathrooms, the plinth, a fireplace and a chimney during the demolition of Culross Hall, Culross Building and No. 41 Battle Bridge Road and given to the on-site archaeologist who was carrying out the building recording watching brief. It was not always possible to be precise about detailed location. All of the bricks retained were machine-pressed and therefore post-date 1850.

#### **Wall and Construction Bricks**

6.1.2 The wall and construction bricks were in fabrics 3033; 3035 and 3038. They were low density and were in standard brick sizes (typically 220x105x65mm).

#### ***Fabric 3033 (1850+)***

6.1.3 Four examples of this scarlet red unfrogged machined brick were collected from the front (north-west) elevation of the Culross Building from a decorative red brick band [Example 11], two red brick window arches [Examples 12 and 13] and a red brick pilaster strip [Example 15]. Their standard sizes and sharp arises suggest that they were manufactured after 1850 and are most likely late 19th or early 20th century in date, which fits with the 1891/2 date for the construction of the building. This red brick fabric was produced from local brickearths and first appeared in the medieval period. There was a resurgence in the use of these bricks during the 19th century, particularly for buildings designed in the Gothic Revival architectural style.

#### ***Fabric 3035 (1850-1940)***

6.1.4 Five examples of this yellow London stock (machine-pressed) construction brick were collected from the Culross Building from external [Examples 2, 10 and 14] and internal walls [Example 16] and from the external wall of No. 41 Battle Bridge Road [Example 36]. Some had makers stamps such as 'HC' [Example 2], '4' [Example 14] and 'BFM' [Example 36]. Yellow London stock bricks are hard and have many inclusions. They were manufactured in north Kent. Although first appearing in Kent in the 1720s, this fabric came into widespread use in greater London in the 19th century. The 1891 Specification stated that "good hard well-burnt stocks" were to be used (see Section 4.4.5).

#### ***Fabric 3038 (1900+)***

6.1.5 Two examples of this maroon-coloured brick were collected from Culross Hall. The fabrics of the two were slightly different:

- A deeply frogged brick stamped 'LBC' (London Brick Company) was collected from one of the chimneys [Example 1]. This brick was in a finer fabric than the other Fabric 3038 example and contained porphyries. The London Brick Company, which came to dominate British brick production for much of the 20th century, was founded in 1889 in Fletton, Huntingdonshire. Throughout production the company maintained interests in the Peterborough and Bedford areas, which had the same Oxford Clay natural resource used in the production of the bricks. It is probable that this brick came from the rebuilt upper part of one of the chimneys, which would explain its difference in colour and departure from the 1891 Specification.
- An unfrogged, unstamped, white glazed brick was collected from a toilet [Example 3]. This coarser version of Fabric 3038 is comparable to a London Brick Company Fletton brick and probably came from a similar source, such as the Peterborough area utilising the Oxford Clay. Alternatively, it may have been produced by one of London Brick Company competitors, such as the Marston Valley Brick Company, which was set up in the early/middle part of 20th century. These brickworks were within easy reach of King's Cross because of the railway connections to this part of Eastern England.

### **Vent Bricks**

- 6.1.6 Two unstamped, highly decorative, green painted bricks for venting the upper (i.e. first) floor of No. 41 Battle Bridge Road were collected [Examples 29 and 30]. They were made from a Fletton type fabric (Fabric 3038; 1900+) and each had a highly ornate set of three crosses enclosed within its frog. The bricks were 227mm long, 77mm wide and 72mm high.

### **Kiln Bricks (1850+)**

- 6.1.7 Nine examples of glazed brown/red and white machined kiln bricks were collected from the Culross Building and Culross Hall. These included Examples 18, 20, 22, 34 and 35 from the stairwells, Example 19 from a bathroom and Example 23 from a front entrance of the Culross Building; and Example 4 from a toilet and Example 5 from a fireplace of Culross Hall. In addition, an unglazed air brick used in the external wall [Example 9] of Culross Hall was also collected.
- 6.1.8 Kiln bricks use high alumina clays from the Carboniferous clays found in association with Coal Measure deposits in Scotland, Yorkshire, Newcastle, South Wales and other areas. They are normally used in the flues of industrial kilns because the high alumina clay is resistant to high temperature, but here they were used for decoration and easy cleaning.
- 6.1.9 All stamped bricks were from Leeds which was easily accessible by train from Kings Cross in the 19th century and it is likely that the unstamped bricks in similar fabrics were also from Leeds.
- Two brick brown/red glazed and frogged brick were collected from a stairwell [Examples 34 and 35]. They were both stamped 'Wortley Fire Clay – Elland Road, Leeds' and measured 225x115x80mm. Example 35 had a hole through it. Wortley is a district of Leeds where fire clay bricks were manufactured at the turn of the 20th century.
  - Two other unstamped bricks [Examples 20 and 22] from a stairwell with the same brown glaze and a similar design were probably also manufactured in Leeds.
  - A red glazed and frogged brick (230x111x70mm) collected from a fireplace [Example 5] was stamped 'Leeds Fireclay Company'. In 1889 a number of potteries consolidated to become the Leeds Fireclay Company. This included the Burmantofts Company, William Ingram & Sons potteries of Wortley, Joseph Cliff & Sons of Wortley, The Wortley Fireclay Company, Joseph Brooke & Sons of Halifax and Edward Brooke & Sons of Huddersfield. The brick was therefore probably from the same manufacturer as Examples 20, 22, 34 and 35.
  - A white glazed single curved frogged kiln brick from a bathroom [Example 19] was stamped 'Hillerholme (?) Works England' on one side and 'Joseph .. Leeds Fireclay Company' on the other. A white glazed double curved frogged kiln brick was also collected from a stairwell [Example 18].
- 6.1.10 The 1891 Specification appears to have been complied with since it stated that the staircase and scullery walls were to be faced with best quality white glazed bricks, which were to be obtained from Messrs Joseph Cliff & Son of Wortley near Leeds (see Section 4.4.6).

### **Engineering Bricks**

- 6.1.11 Five dark blue, frogged and unfrogged heavy, engineering bricks were collected from the plinth of Culross Hall [Examples 7 and 8], the Culross Building [Example 26] and No. 41 Battle Bridge Road [Examples 27 and 28]. These machine-made bricks were produced after 1850 and were widely used at the turn of the 20th century. They typically measured 225x115x67mm. Designs within the frog include an octagon [Example 27] and a double circle [Example 28]. The 1891 Specification stated that the "blue brick facing to [the] plinth next Road" (i.e. at ground level) was to be constructed of best quality Staffordshire Blue bricks (see Section 4.4.5).

## **6.2 Stone**

- 6.2.1 The stone step [Example 17] in a stairwell in the Culross Building was identified as fine banded, green, micaceous York stone of Upper Carboniferous age. This hard homogeneous stone was widely used throughout the King's Cross Railway Goods Yard during the 19th century and along with the kiln bricks from Yorkshire would have been brought direct by train. The 1891 Specification stated that stone steps leading to the staircases were to be fashioned from 'Silex Brand' York stone obtained from Messrs Joseph Brooke & Sons of Halifax (see Section 4.4.6).

## **6.3 Concrete**

- 6.3.1 Two lumps of hard, clinker rich dark grey, coarse concrete were collected from Culross Hall and the Culross Building. Example 6 came from the floor of the first floor of Culross Hall while Example 24, which was covered with a render, came from the floor of a stairwell in the Culross Building. This very coarse concrete with many inclusions came into use during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The 1891 Specification stated that concrete floors were to be made up from six parts coke breeze to one part Portland cement (see Section 4.4.5).



## **7 CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 Fabric analysis, drawn recording and documentary research on the Culross Buildings has shown that their building fabric survived largely intact, although internal finishes and services have been the subject of alteration. Few changes have been made to the buildings' external elevations, basic footprint and main layout in over 100 years. The plan of the Culross Building, as designed by Richard Johnson (GNR Chief Engineer), with its five sections each arranged around a central open stairwell and providing six larger flats at the north-east end of the building and four smaller flats at the south-west end, still survived on all four floors of the tenement block.
- 7.2 Documentary research and building recording has shown that the main alteration to the flats occurred in 1984 when the flats were modernised and each flat was provided with a self-contained kitchen and bathroom, and the entire building was rewired. Alterations included the addition of new partitions and the blocking of some windows. Some original features survived including sash windows, skirting boards, architraves, stair balusters, cast iron covers to the ash chutes, wrought iron railings to the parapets and open stairwells, and a few fireplaces. All the original ranges in the living rooms and coppers had however been removed.
- 7.3 The demolition of the building revealed that the building was constructed with brick external and dividing walls with floors of filler joist construction that is unreinforced concrete spanning between RSJs. Clay hollow pots as part of a patent floor system had been laid between concrete in the floors and flat roof of No. 41 Battle Bridge Road. Fabric analysis and a study of brick stamps showed that the original specification for the construction of the building had been adhered to. Building materials found included London stock bricks for the walls, Staffordshire Blue bricks for the plinth, York stone for the steps in the Culross Building stairwells, and glazed bricks from Leeds, as originally specified. King's Cross's excellent and direct railway links at the end of the 19th century would have facilitated the transport of construction material to the site.

## **8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- 8.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank King's Cross Central General Partner Limited for commissioning the work. The assistance of Ken Trew of Argent is gratefully acknowledged. The collaborative role of Kim Stabler, English Heritage Greater London Archaeological Advisor (North West) and Michelle O'Doherty, Senior Conservation Officer at London Borough of Camden, is also acknowledged. Michael Bussell, Richard Hughes and Ela Palmer of International Heritage Conservation and Management (IHCM) are thanked for their help and advice.
- 8.2 The staff of Camden Local Studies Library, the British Library, The National Archives, Kew and English Heritage National Monuments Record Centre, Swindon and the King's Cross Voices project are thanked for their help and assistance.
- 8.3 The project was managed for Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited by Helen Hawkins, Charlotte Matthews and Alex Rose-Deacon. The building recording was carried out by Daniel Graham, Amanda Hayhurst, Daniel Jackson, Tom O'Gorman, Rhiannon Rhys and Tudor Skinner. Edwin Baker undertook the photographic survey. Nathalie Barrett, Phil Frickers, Jeremy Rogers and Aidan Turner carried out the surveying. Guy Thompson carried out the documentary research. Kevin Hayward carried out the material fabric analysis. Helen Robertson (building description) and Guy Thompson (historical background) wrote this report, with contributions from Amanda Hayhurst (results of the building recording watching brief during demolition) and Kevin Hayward (fabric analysis). Cate Davies, Amanda Hayhurst, Ruben Lopez, Rhiannon Rhys, Mark Roughley and Jennifer Simonson prepared the illustrations.

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10 APPENDIX 1: NMR OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-70607

**Project details**

Project name Culross Buildings Kings Cross London Building Recording

Short description of the project Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited was commissioned by King's Cross Central General Partner Limited to undertake building recording of the Culross Buildings, Battle Bridge Road, London, centred on OS NGR TQ 3014 8326. The buildings were located within the King's Cross Conservation Area and were not Listed Buildings. They were constructed in 1891 and 1892 by the Great Northern Railway and comprised the Culross Building (Flats 1-40), the adjoining Culross Hall and No. 41 Battle Bridge Road. They provided rented accommodation, a Mission Hall and a canteen for railway workers, respectively. The basement storey housed workshops and a boiler room. A major regeneration development scheme has been proposed for the King's Cross area. Outline Planning Permission for the scheme has been granted subject to certain conditions, one of which requires a programme of building recording. Conservation Area Consent was granted for demolition of the Culross Buildings and building recording was carried out before and during demolition in 2008 in accordance with English Heritage's Level 4. The building recording showed that few changes had been made to the buildings' external elevations, basic footprint and main layout. It established that the main alteration to the Culross Building occurred in 1984 when the flats were modernised. The buildings were constructed with brick external and dividing walls with concrete floors supported by rolled steel joists. Building materials included London stock bricks, Staffordshire Blue bricks, York stone and glazed bricks from Leeds. Many original features survived including sash windows, stair balusters, iron railings and a few fireplaces.

Project dates Start: 01-01-2008 End: 01-01-2010

Previous/future work No / No

Any associated project reference codes K1583 - Contracting Unit No.

Any associated project reference codes KXG08 – Site code

Type of project Building Recording

Site status Conservation Area

Current Land use Residential 1 - General Residential

Monument type FLATS Post Medieval

Significant Finds NONE None

**Project location**

Country England

Site location GREATER LONDON CAMDEN CAMDEN Culross Buildings

Postcode WC1N 1HQ

Study area 898.00 Square metres

Site coordinates TQ 3014 8326 51.5327327737 -0.123526899625 51 31 57 N 000  
07 24 W Point

**Project creators**

Name of Organisation Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd

Project brief originator IHCM

Project design originator Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd

Project director/manager Charlotte Matthews

Project supervisor Tom O'Gorman

Type of sponsor/funding body Developer

Name of sponsor/funding body King's Cross General Partner Limited

**Project archives**

Physical Archive Exists? No

Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Archive ID	KXG08
Digital Contents	'none'
Digital Media available	'Database', 'Images raster / digital photography', 'Survey', 'Text'
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Archive ID	KXG08
Paper Contents	'Survey'
Paper Media available	'Drawing', 'Map', 'Plan', 'Report', 'Survey', 'Unpublished Text'

**Project bibliography 1**

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Historic Building Recording of the Culross Buildings, King's Cross Central, London Borough of Camden
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Robertson, H. and Thompson, G.
Date	2010
Issuer or publisher	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Place of issue or publication	London
Description	A4 document

Entered by	Archivist (archive@pre-construct.com)
Entered on	18 January 2010

## Plates



**Plate 1:** Front (north-west and south-west) elevations of the Culross Buildings with Culross Hall to the north-east (far left), Culross Building (left) and No. 41 Battle Bridge Road to the south-west (right)



**Plate 2:** Front (north-west) elevation of the Culross Building





**Plate 3:** Front (north-west) elevation of Culross Hall



**Plate 4:** Front (north-west) elevation of No. 41 Battle Bridge Road



**Plate 5:** Rear (south-east) elevation of Culross Building



**Plate 6:** Hoop iron in a mortar joint within the brickwork of a basement dividing wall under the Culross Building, viewed from the east



**Plate 7:** South-west end of the front (north-west) elevation of the Culross Building



**Plate 8:** Brick plinth on front (north-west) elevation of Culross Building (viewed from the north-east)



**Plate 9:** Relieving arch above window on interior (south-east) side of front (north-west) elevation of the Culross Building exposed during demolition



**Plate 10:** Flat numbers on entrance lintel of front (north-west) elevation of Culross Building



**Plate 11:** Iron railings in a stairwell of the Culross Building



**Plate 12:** Rear (south-east) elevation of Culross Building showing Culross Hall to the right



**Plate 13:** Iron lintel behind window arch in rear (south-east) elevation of Culross Building exposed during demolition



**Plate 14:** Iron lintel behind window arch in rear (south-east) elevation of Culross Building exposed during demolition



**Plate 15:** Rear (south-east) elevation of the basement of the Culross Building



**Plate 16:** Roof of Culross Building (viewed from the south-west)



**Plate 17:** The demolition of the Culross Building showed that its flat roof was formed of screed over concrete



**Plate 18:** Vertical rod for fastening railing to side (south-west) parapet wall of Culross Building exposed during demolition





**Plate 19:** Horizontal fastening for railing on side (south-west) parapet wall of Culcross Building exposed during demolition



**Plate 20:** Dividing wall between Culcross Building flats (viewed from the south) exposed during demolition



**Plate 21:** Roof of Culross Building with chimney stacks and a covered stairway (viewed from the east)



**Plate 22:** Covered stairway on Culross Building's roof with attached chimney stack (left) and ash chute vent (right), viewed from the south



**Plate 23:** Chimney stack on roof of Culross Building



**Plate 24:** Drainage hole in roof of Culross Building



**Plate 25:** Recesses for stone steps in stairway wall of the Culross Building exposed during demolition



**Plate 26:** Blocked windows and ash chute in stairwell between Flats 5 and 6 (Figure 16) of Culross Building



**Plate 27:** Foot of ash chute in Culross Building



**Plate 28:** Foot of ash chute and void beneath stairwell to Culross Building Flats 1 to 8



**Plate 29:** Culross Building filler joist floor with concrete laid between RSJs



**Plate 30:** Bathroom CB7B (Figure 17) in Culross Building with blocked window behind water heater



**Plate 31:** Kitchen CB8C (Figure 17) in Culross Building with window in rear (south-east) wall



**Plate 32:** Kitchen CB6C (Figure 16) in Culross Building with window in rear (south-east) wall



**Plate 33:** Glazed brick walls in Bathroom CB8B (Figure 17) in Culross Building



**Plate 34:** Cast iron fireplace (Figure 35) in Bedroom CB16F (Figure 17) in Culross Building





**Plate 35:** Window in front (north-west) wall of Bedroom CB8E (Figure 17) in Culross Building



**Plate 36:** Living Room CB18D (Figure 14) in Culross Building with window in front (north-west) wall



**Plate 37:** Living Room CB40D (Figure 17) in Culross Building with some original skirting board and architrave and 1930s or 1950s fireplace surround



**Plate 38:** South-west wall of Room CBB2 in the basement below the Culross Building with mass concrete retaining rear wall to the right (north-west)



**Plate 39:** Room CBB9 in the basement below the Culross Building viewed from the east



**Plate 40:** North-east wall of Room CBB7 in the basement below the Culross Building viewed from the south-west



**Plate 41:** North-east wall of Room CBB13 in the basement below the Culross Building viewed from the south



**Plate 42:** North-east wall of Room CBB13 in the basement below the Culross Building viewed from the south



**Plate 43:** Straight joint between Culross Hall (right) and Culross Building (left) on the rear (south-east) side of the buildings during demolition



**Plate 44:** Ragged brickwork from bonded joint between Culross Hall (was left) and Culross Building (right) on the front (north-west) side of the buildings during demolition



**Plate 45:** Pitched roof of Culross Hall looking north-east



**Plate 46:** Roof truss of Culross Hall (looking north) exposed during demolition



**Plate 47:** North-east end of front (north-west) elevation of Culross Hall



**Plate 48:** Rear (south-east) elevation of Culross Hall



**Plate 49:** Timber staircase on rear (south-east) elevation of Culross Hall



**Plate 50:** Basement Room CBB1 below Culross Hall viewed from the west





**Plate 51:** Basement Room CBB1 below Culross Hall viewed from the east



**Plate 52:** Timber staircase (CH1A) leading from ground to first floor, Culross Hall



**Plate 53:** Hatch in floor of Room CHGD (Figure 14), Culross Hall, leading to basement



**Plate 54:** An RSJ supporting the first floor in Room CHGG (Figure 14) in Culross Hall



**Plate 55:** Room CH1F (Figure 15) on first floor of Culross Hall looking north during demolition



**Plate 56:** Low timber stage against south-west wall in Room CH1F (Figure 15) in Culross Hall



**Plate 57:** Fireplace in north-west wall of Room CH1F (Figure 15), Culross Hall



**Plate 58:** Fireplace (Figure 43) in south-east wall of Room CH1F (Figure 15), Culross Hall



**Plate 59:** Central heating vent on north-west wall of Room CH1F (Figure 15), Culross Hall



**Plate 60:** Kitchen CH1C (Figure 15), Culross Hall



**Plate 61:** White and brown glazed brick walls of Toilet CH1D (Figure 15), Culross Hall



**Plate 62:** Timber partition in Toilet CH1E (Figure 15), Culross Hall



**Plate 63:** Room CH1B, Culross Hall, with stairs against north-west wall



**Plate 64:** Attic of Culross Hall



**Plate 65:** Hatch in ceiling of Room CH1A (Figure 15), Culross Hall, leading to the attic



**Plate 66:** Roof structure of No. 41 Battle Bridge Road exposed during demolition





**Plate 67:** South-east elevation of No. 41 Battle Bridge Road



**Plate 68:** Room CBB24 in the basement below No. 41 Battle Bridge Road viewed from the south-east



**Plate 69:** Room CBB23 in the basement below No. 41 Battle Bridge Road viewed from the south-east



**Plate 70:** North-east wall of Hallway CB41A in No. 41 Battle Bridge Road



**Plate 71:** Stair CB41B leading to first floor of No. 41 Battle Bridge Road



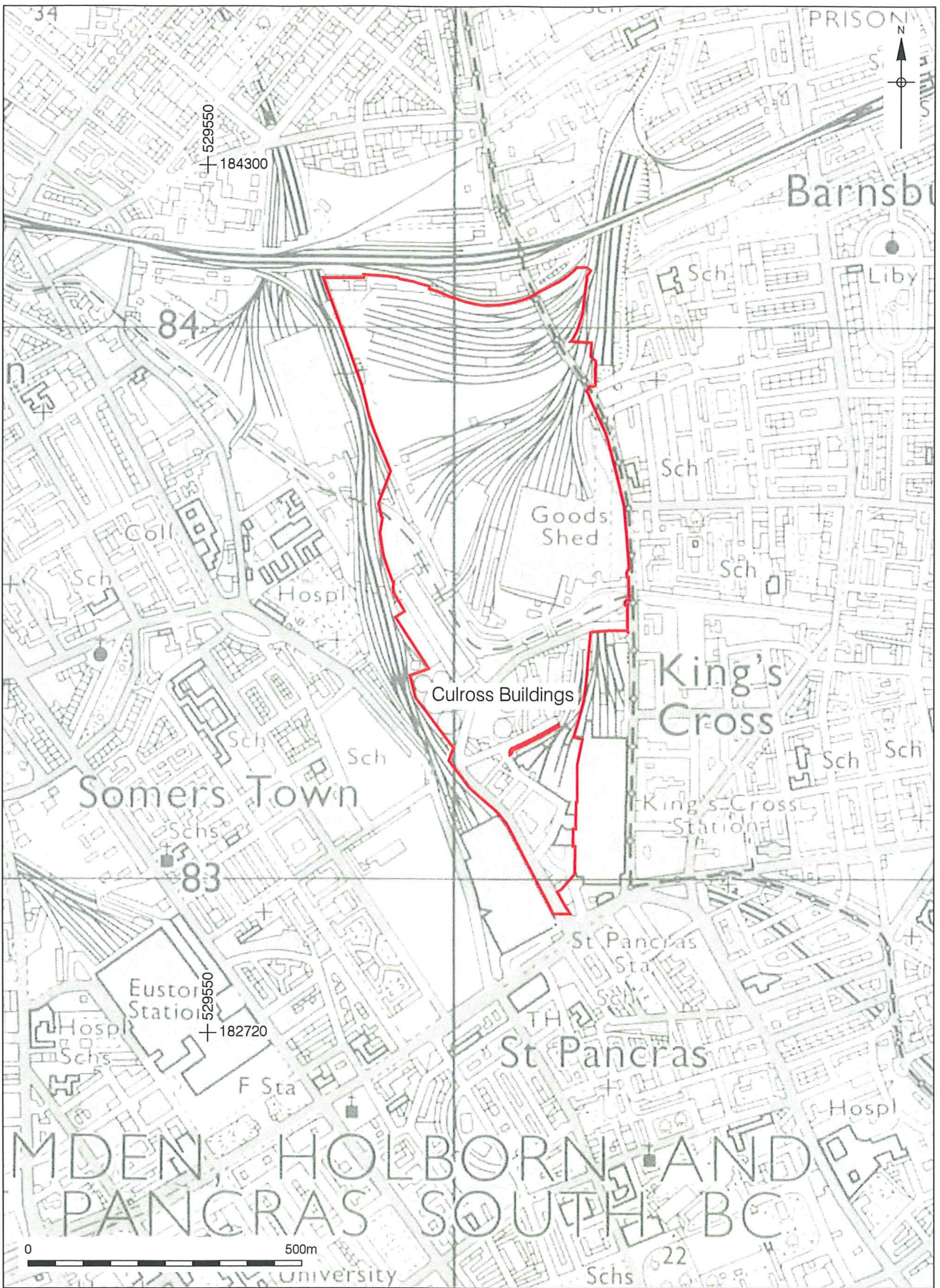
**Plate 72:** Covered RSJs in ground floor Meeting Room CB41D, No. 41 Battle Bridge Road, viewed from the north



**Plate 73:** First floor Meeting Room CB41L, No. 41 Battle Bridge Road, viewed from the south

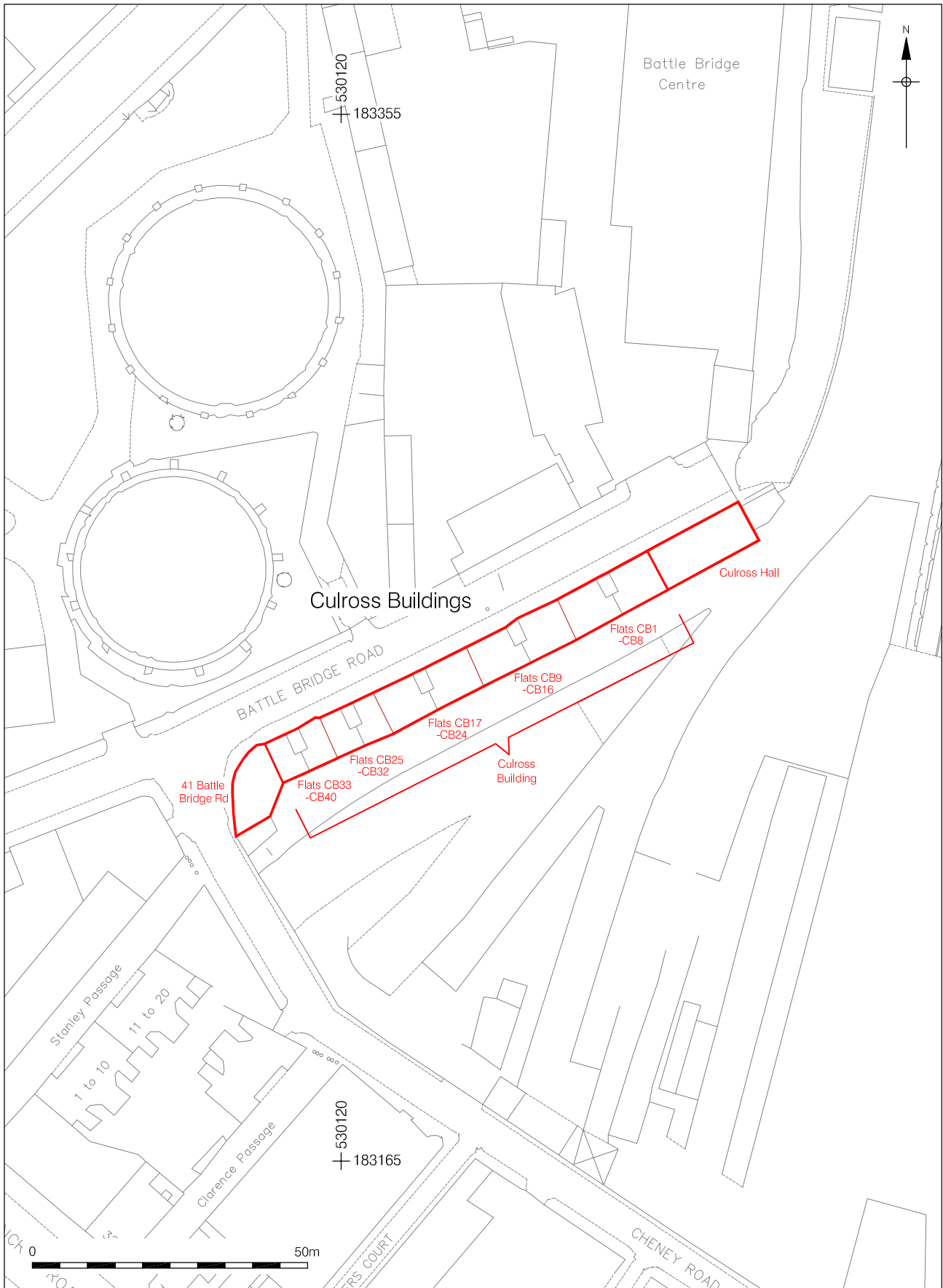


**Plate 74:** First floor Room CB41I, No. 41 Battle Bridge Road, viewed from the south-west



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Figure 1  
 Site Location  
 1:10,000 at A4



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Figure 2  
 Detailed Site Location  
 1:1,000 at A4

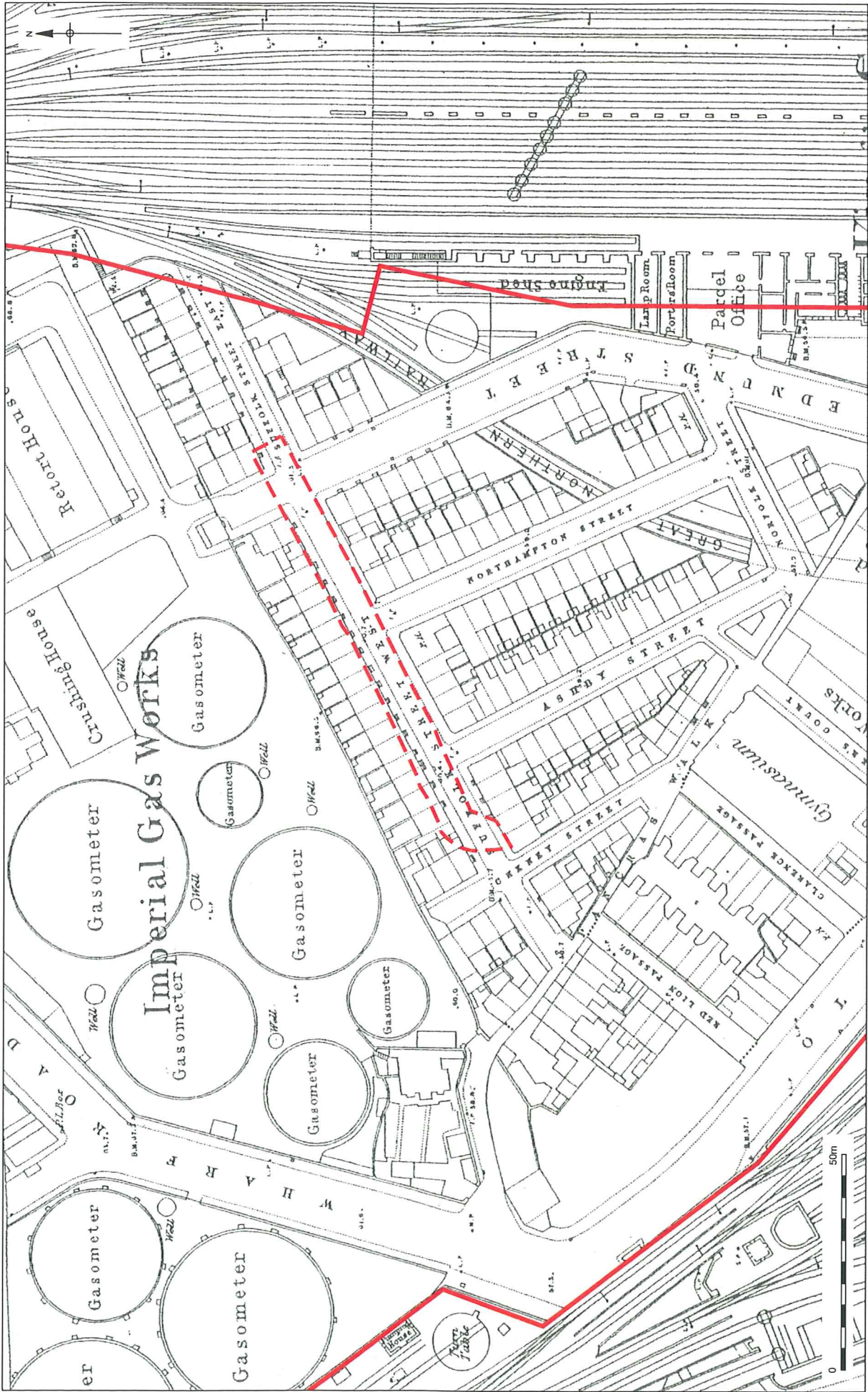


Figure 3  
 Ordnance Survey large-scale map (originally 1:1,056), 1871  
 1:1250 at A4

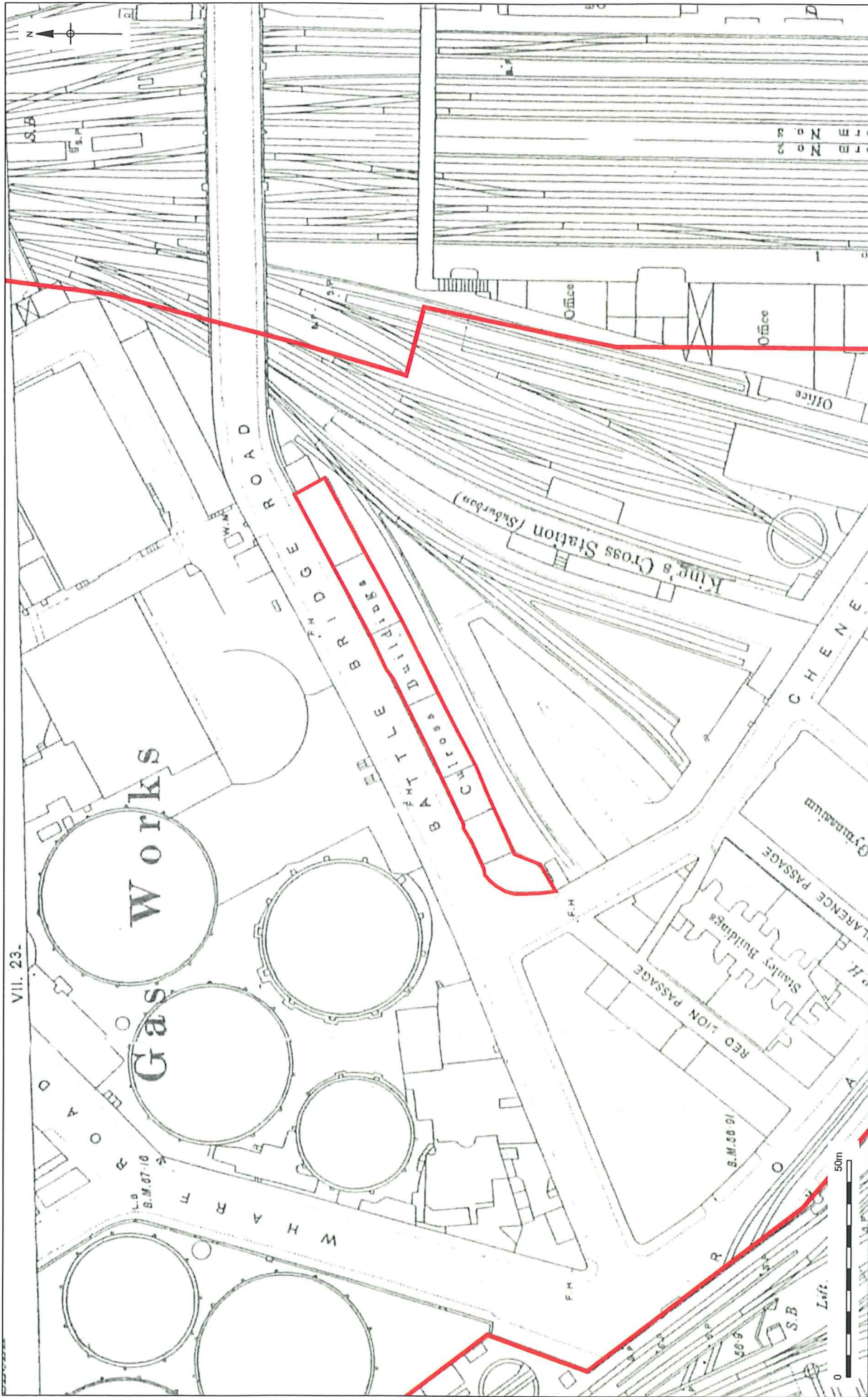
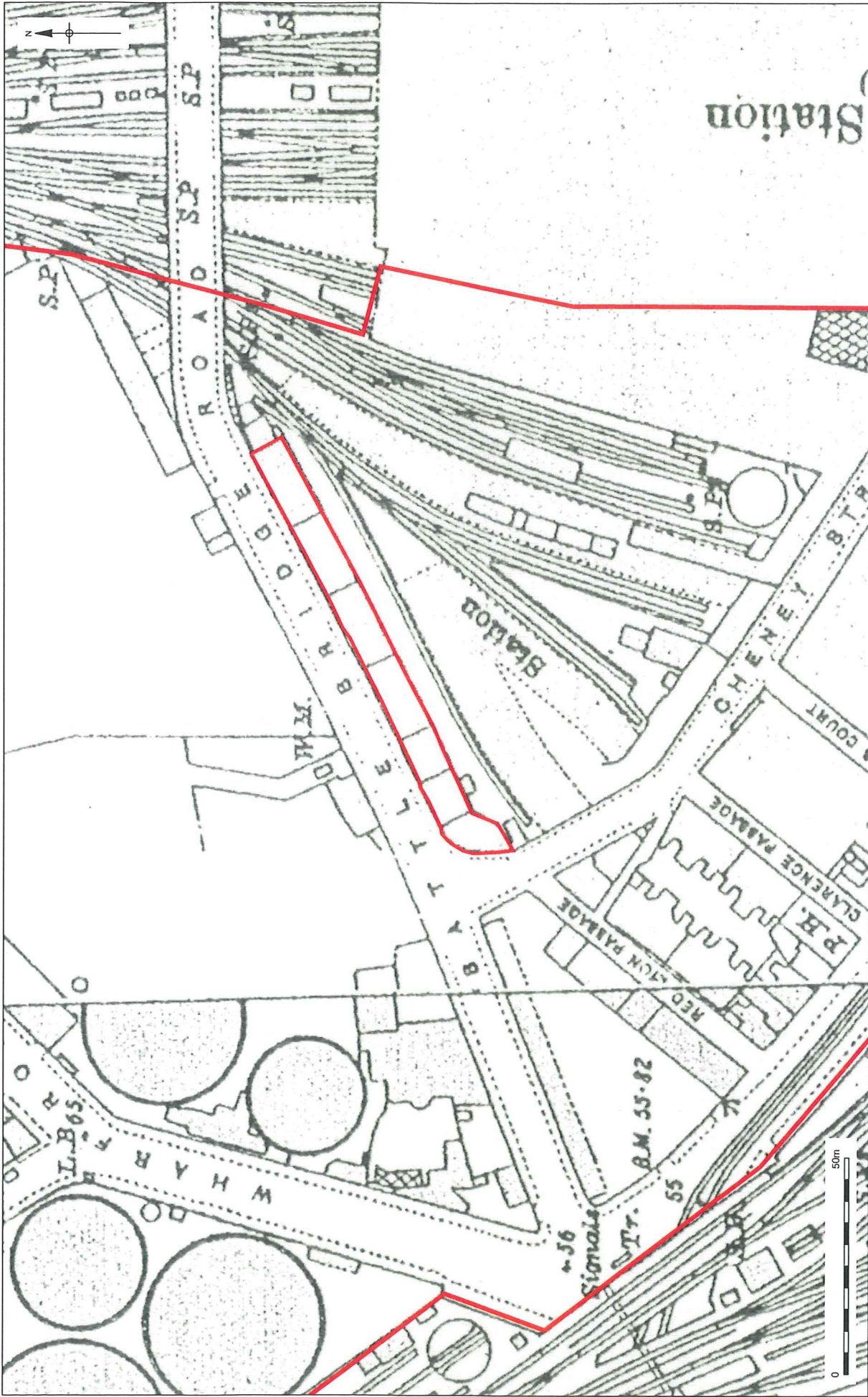


Figure 4  
 Ordnance Survey map, 1894  
 1:1250 at A4





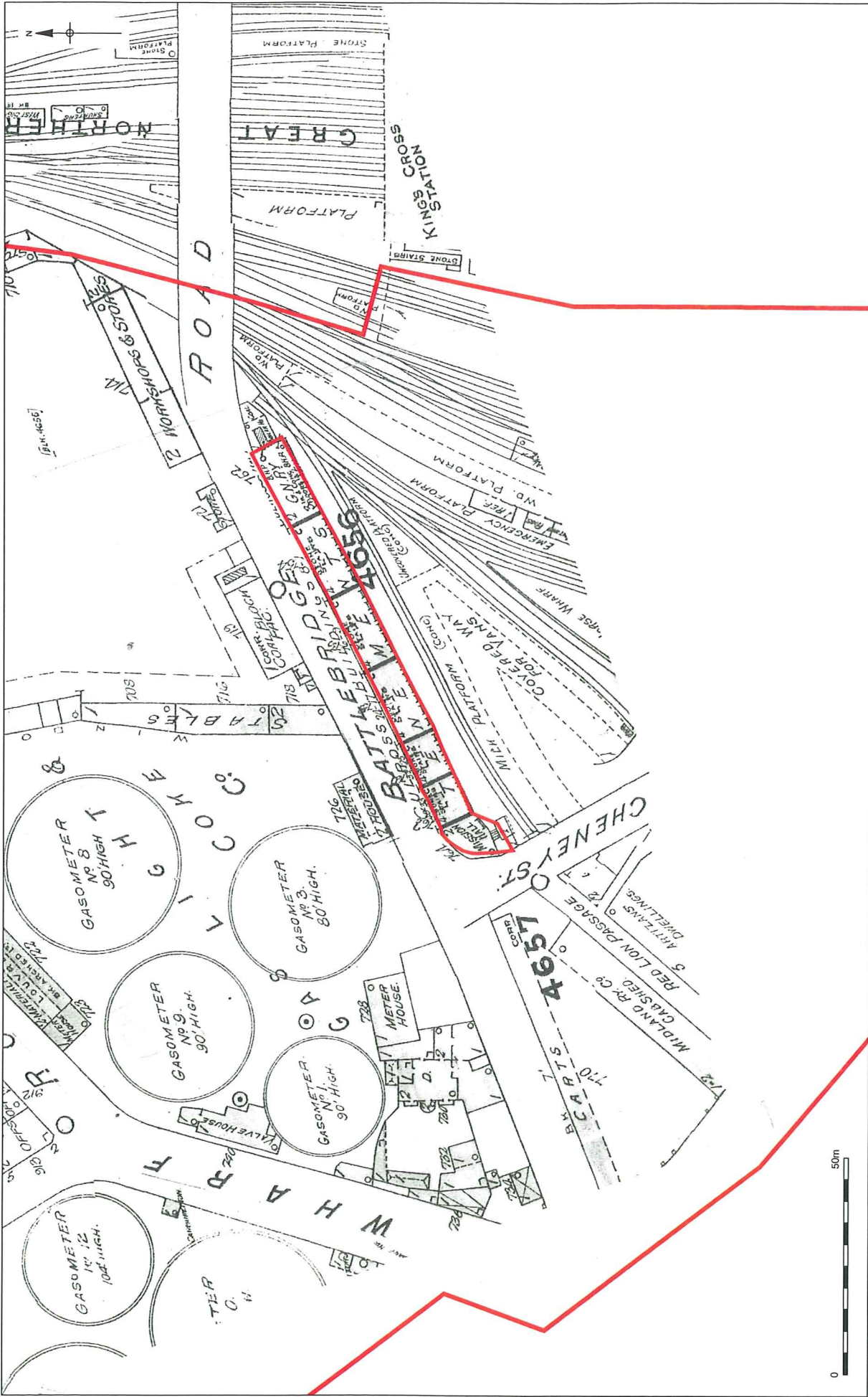


Figure 6  
 Goad Insurance plan 1921, Vol.XII plan 400  
 1:1250 at A4

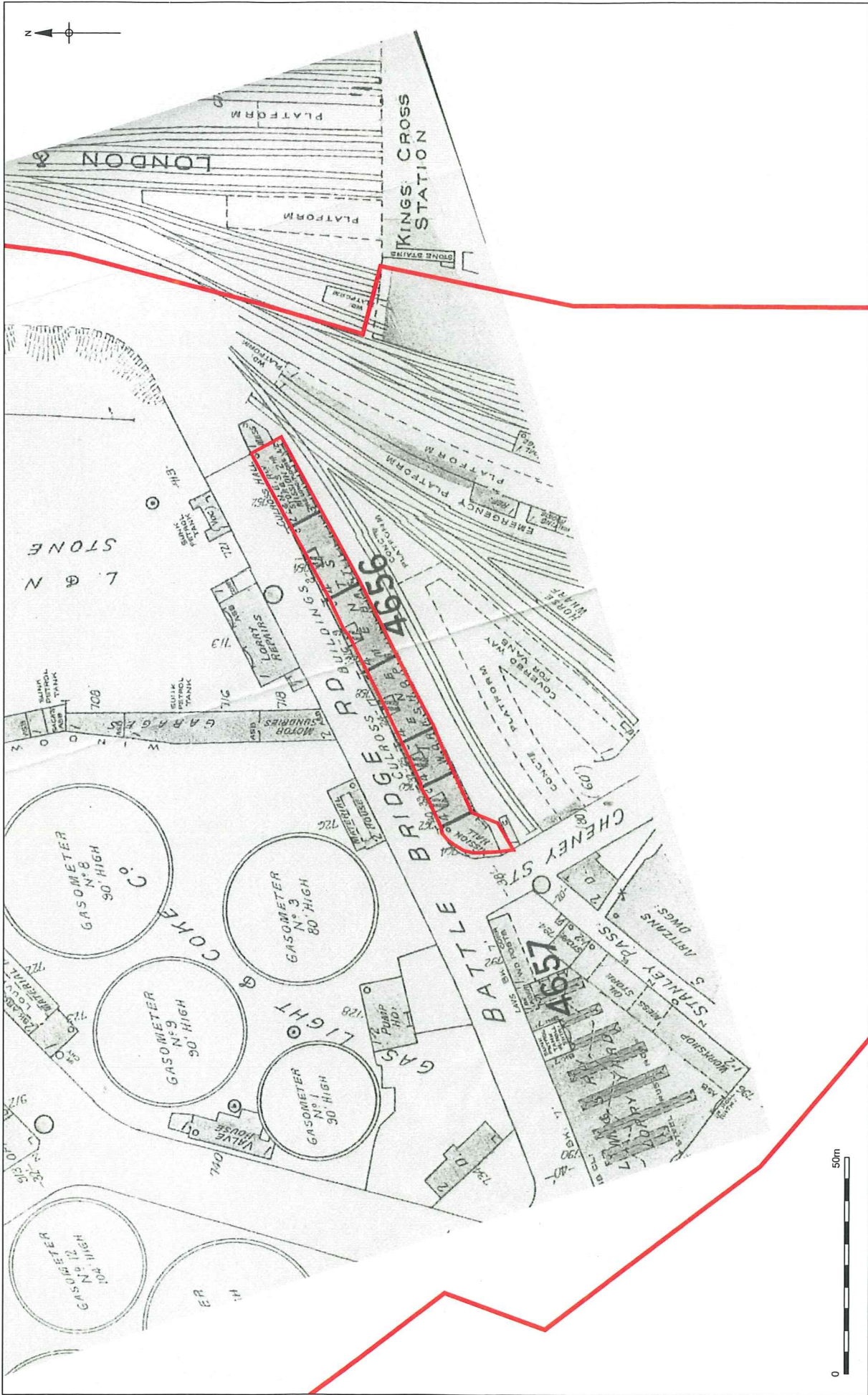
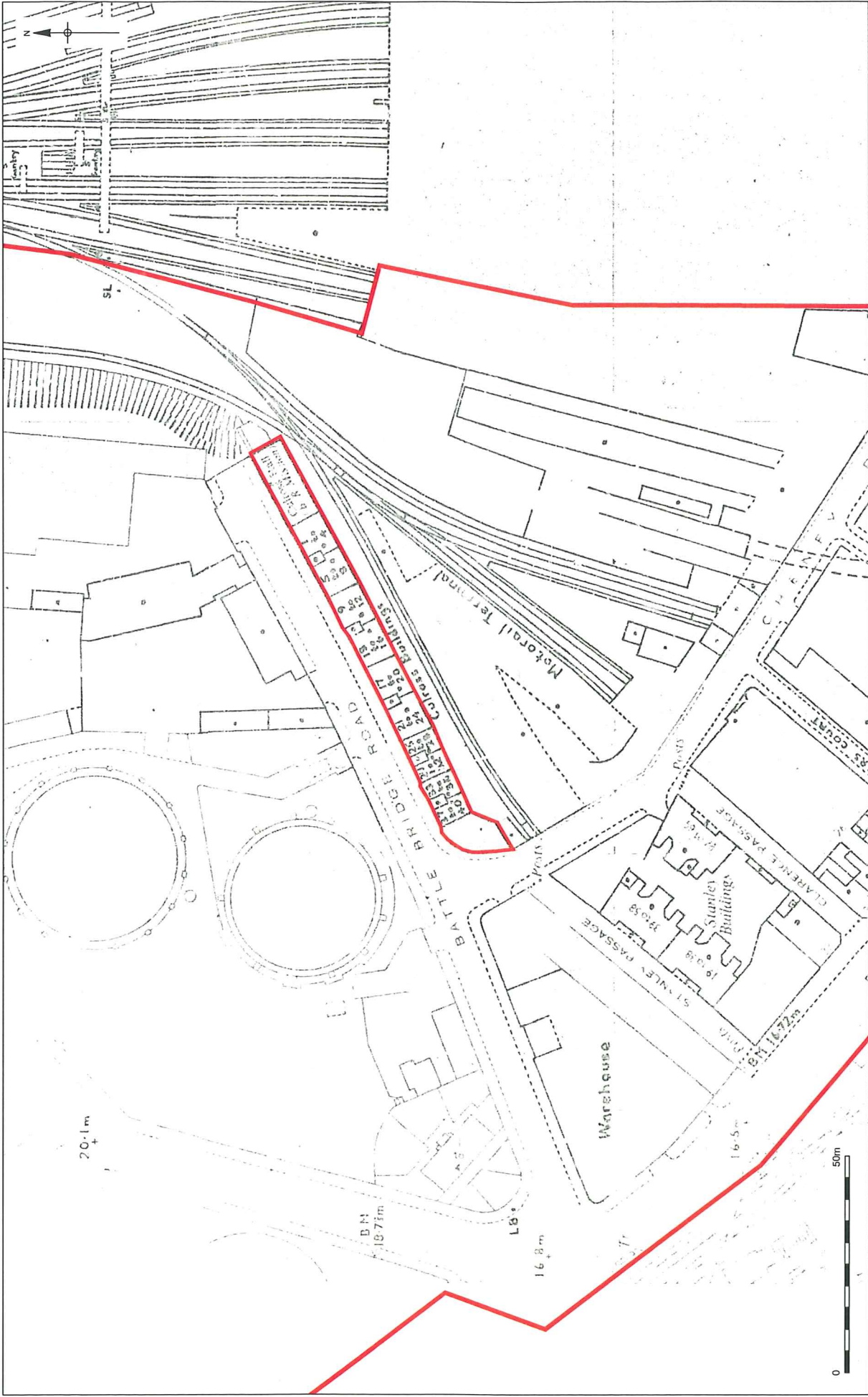


Figure 7  
 Goad Insurance plan 1942, Vol.XII plan 400  
 1:1250 at A4



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Figure 8  
Ordnance Survey map, 1983  
1:1250 at A4

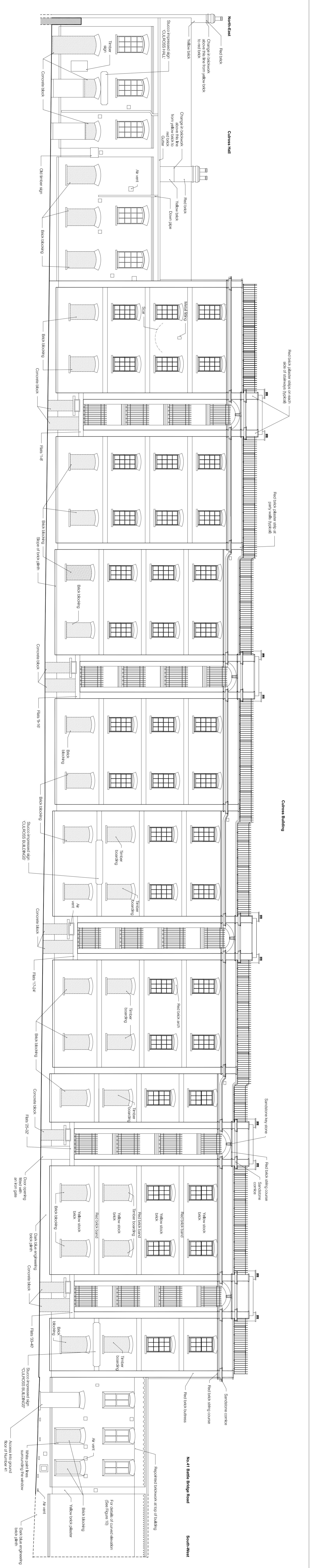
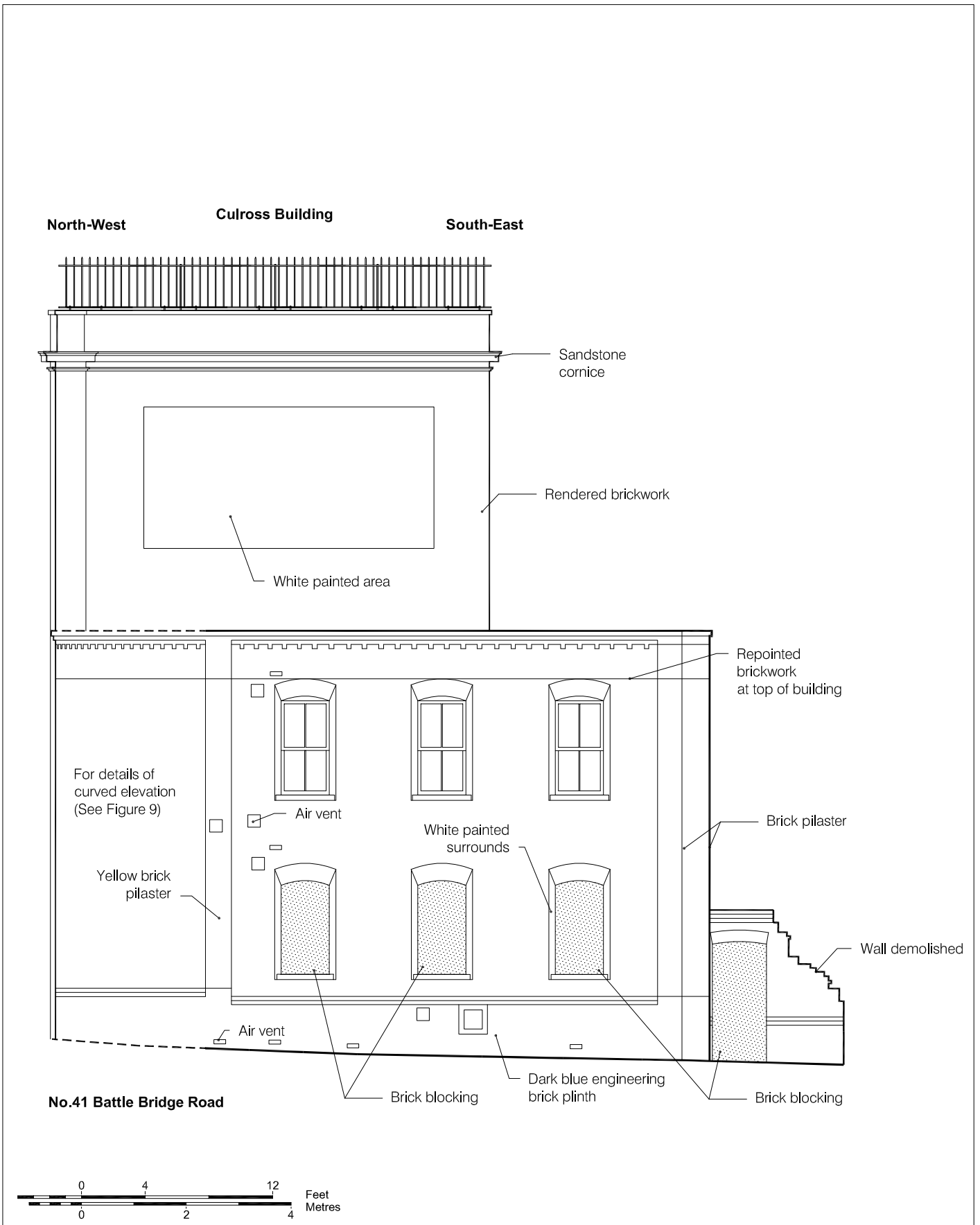


Figure 9  
 Front (North West) Elevation  
 Curcross Hall, Curcross Building and No 41 Battle Bridge Road  
 King's Cross  
 1:1000 at A0



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Figure 10  
Side (South-West) Elevation  
Culross Building and No.41 Battle Bridge Road  
King's Cross  
1:100 at A4

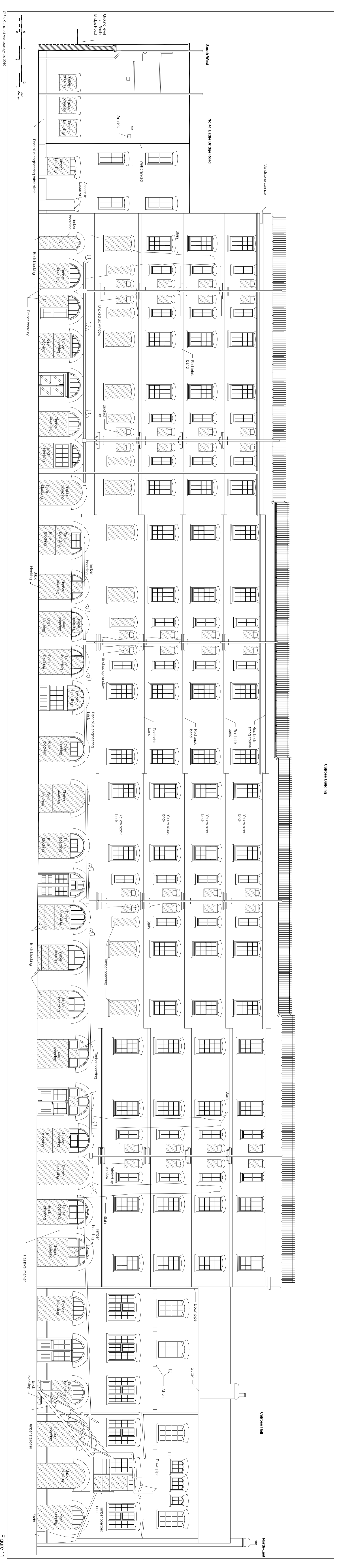


Figure 11  
 Rear (South East) End  
 No. 41 Balm Bridge Road, Curfew Building and Curfew Hall  
 Kings Cross  
 1:100 at A0

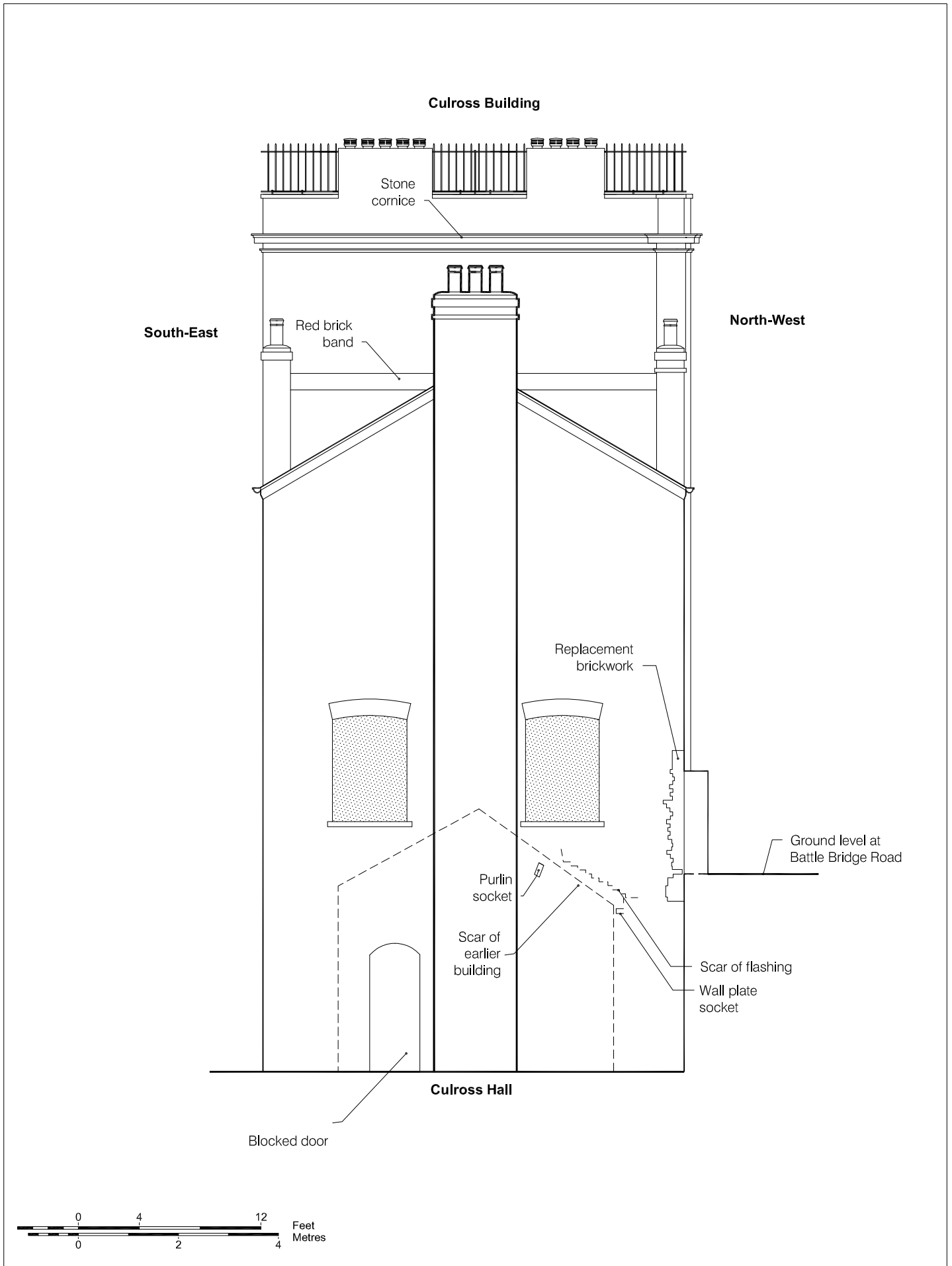


Figure 12  
 Side (North-East) Elevation  
 Culross Hall and Culross Building  
 King's Cross  
 1:100 at A4



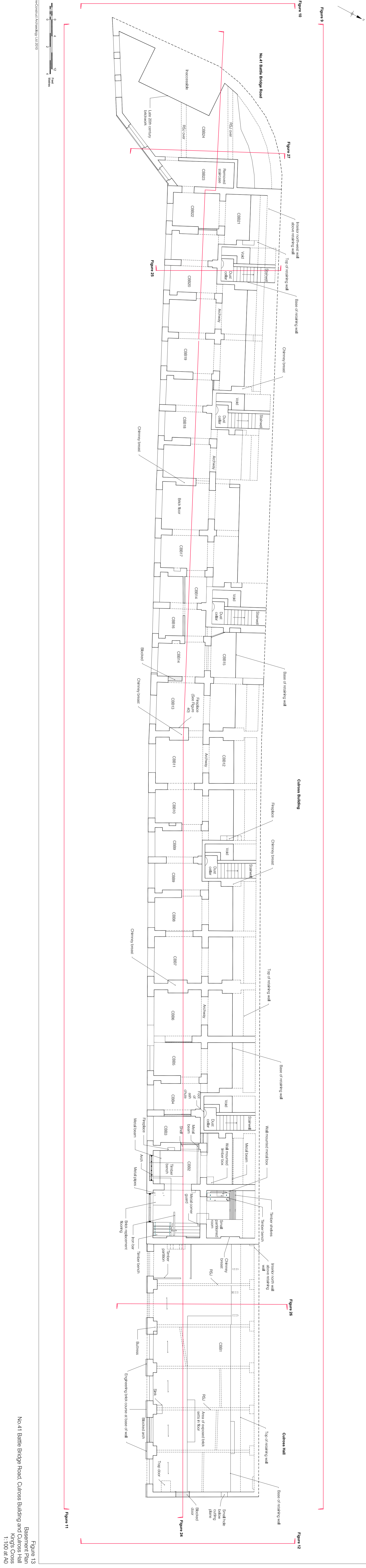
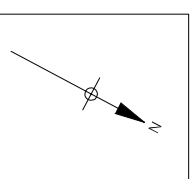


Figure 13  
 No. 41 Baltic Bridge Road, Cursons Building and Cursons Hall  
 Key's Cross  
 1:100 at A0



0 2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20 22 24 26 28 30 32 34 36 38 40 42 44 46 48 50 52 54 56 58 60 62 64 66 68 70 72 74 76 78 80 82 84 86 88 90 92 94 96 98 100 Feet

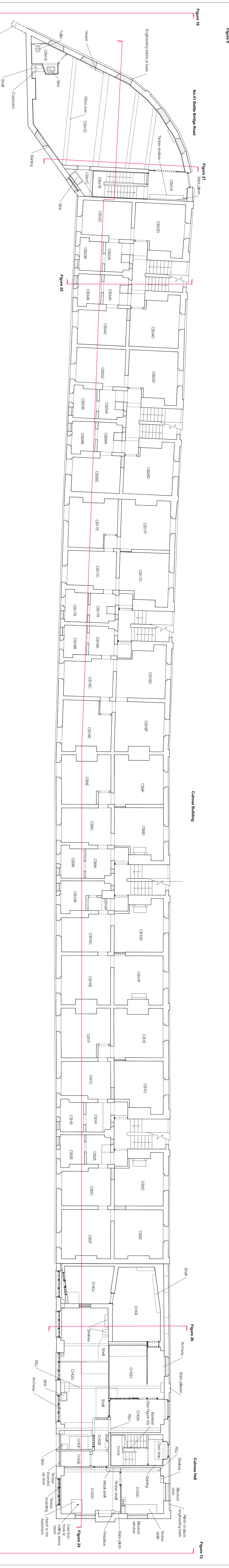


Figure 14  
Ground Floor Plan  
Curlew Building and Curlew Hall  
1:100 at A0

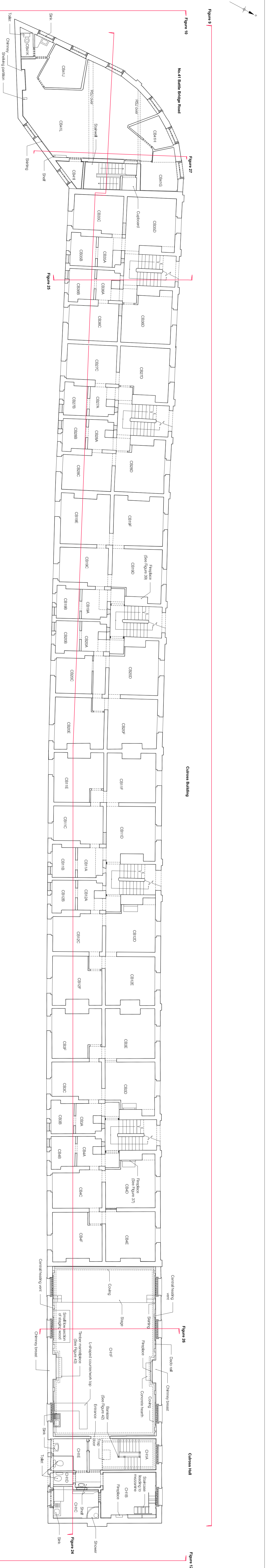


Figure 15  
 No. 41 Balm Bridge Road, Curious Building and Curious Hill  
 1:100 at A0

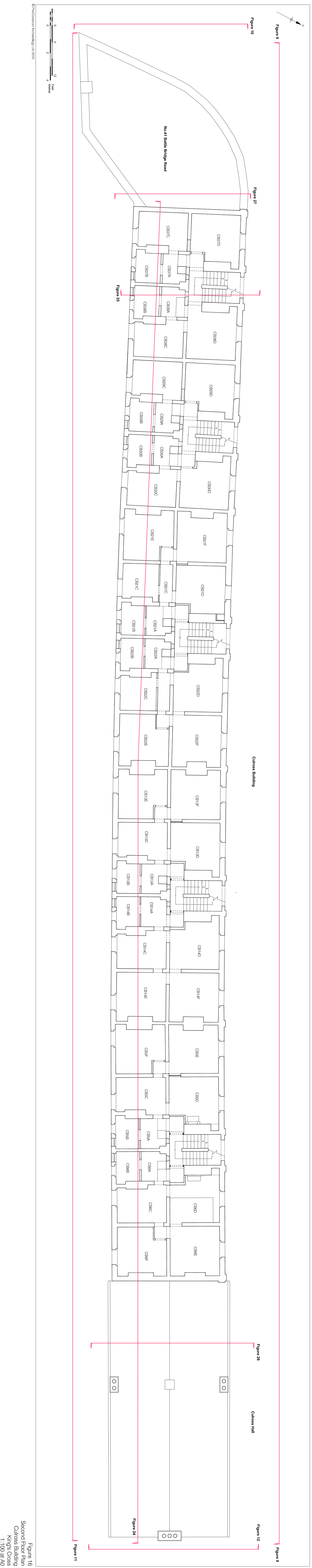


Figure 9

Figure 10

Figure 11

Figure 12

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Figure 99

Figure 100

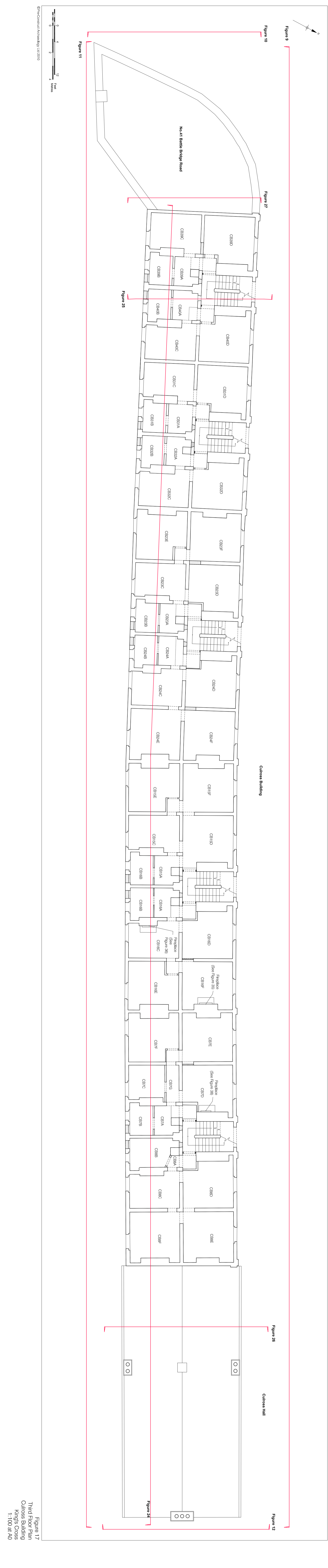
Figure 101

Figure 102

Figure 103

Figure 104

Figure 105



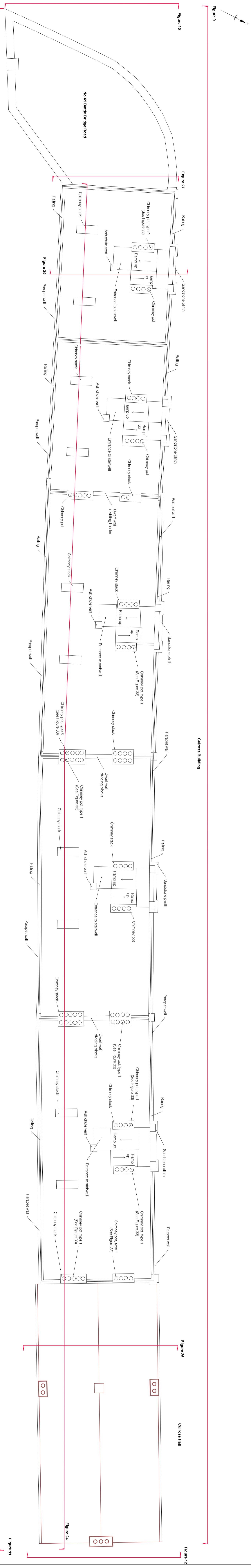


Figure 18  
 No. 41 Battle Bridge Road, Culicross Building and Culicross Hall  
 Kings Cross  
 1:100 (A14)

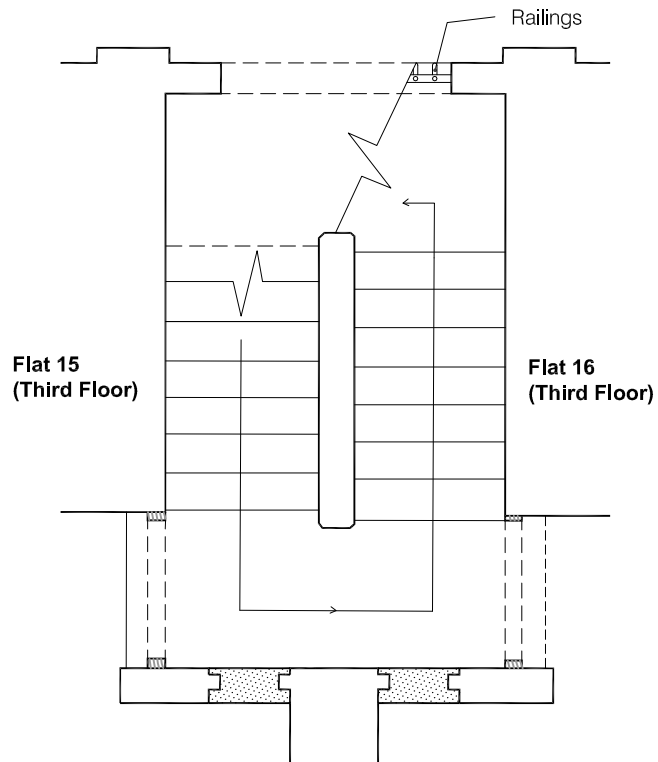
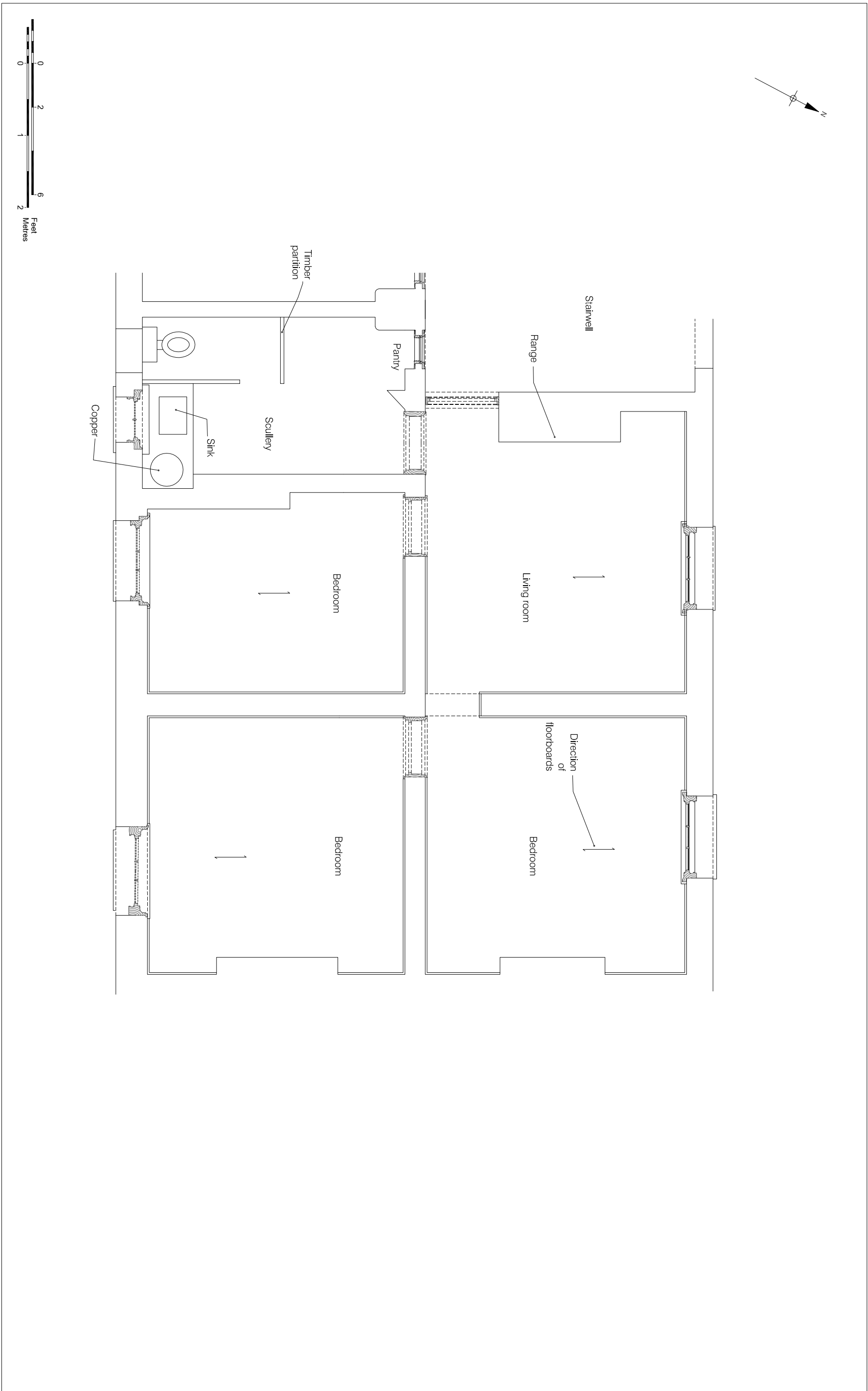


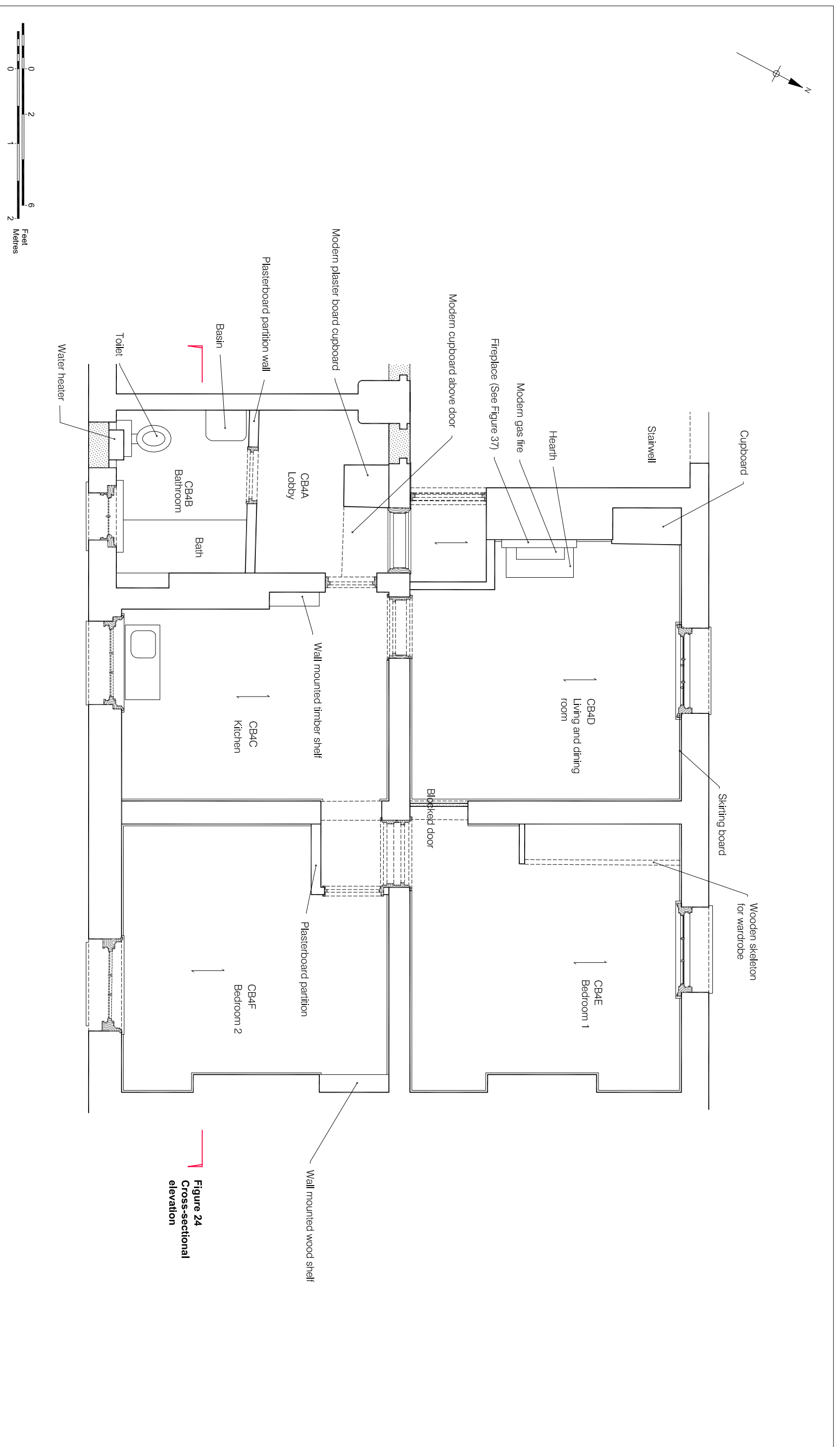
Figure 19  
Typical Staircase Plan  
Culross Building  
King's Cross  
1:50 at A4



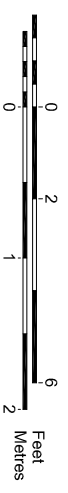
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Figure 20  
 Original Larger Flat Floor Plan  
 Culross Building  
 King's Cross  
 1:50 at A3





**Figure 24**  
Cross-sectional elevation



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**Figure 21**  
Typical Larger Flat Floor Plan - Flat 4  
(See Figure 15 for Location)  
Culross Building  
King's Cross  
1:50 at A3

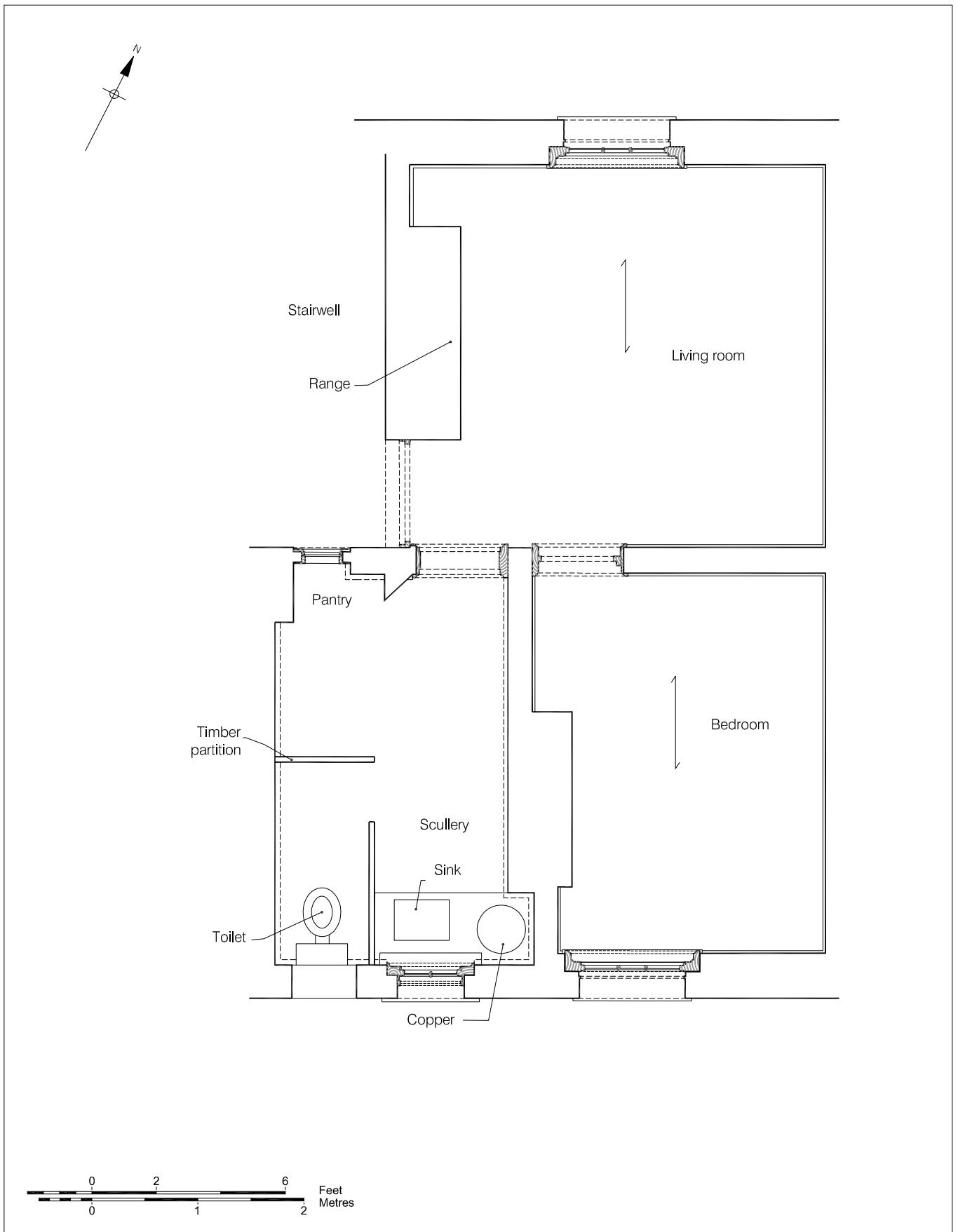
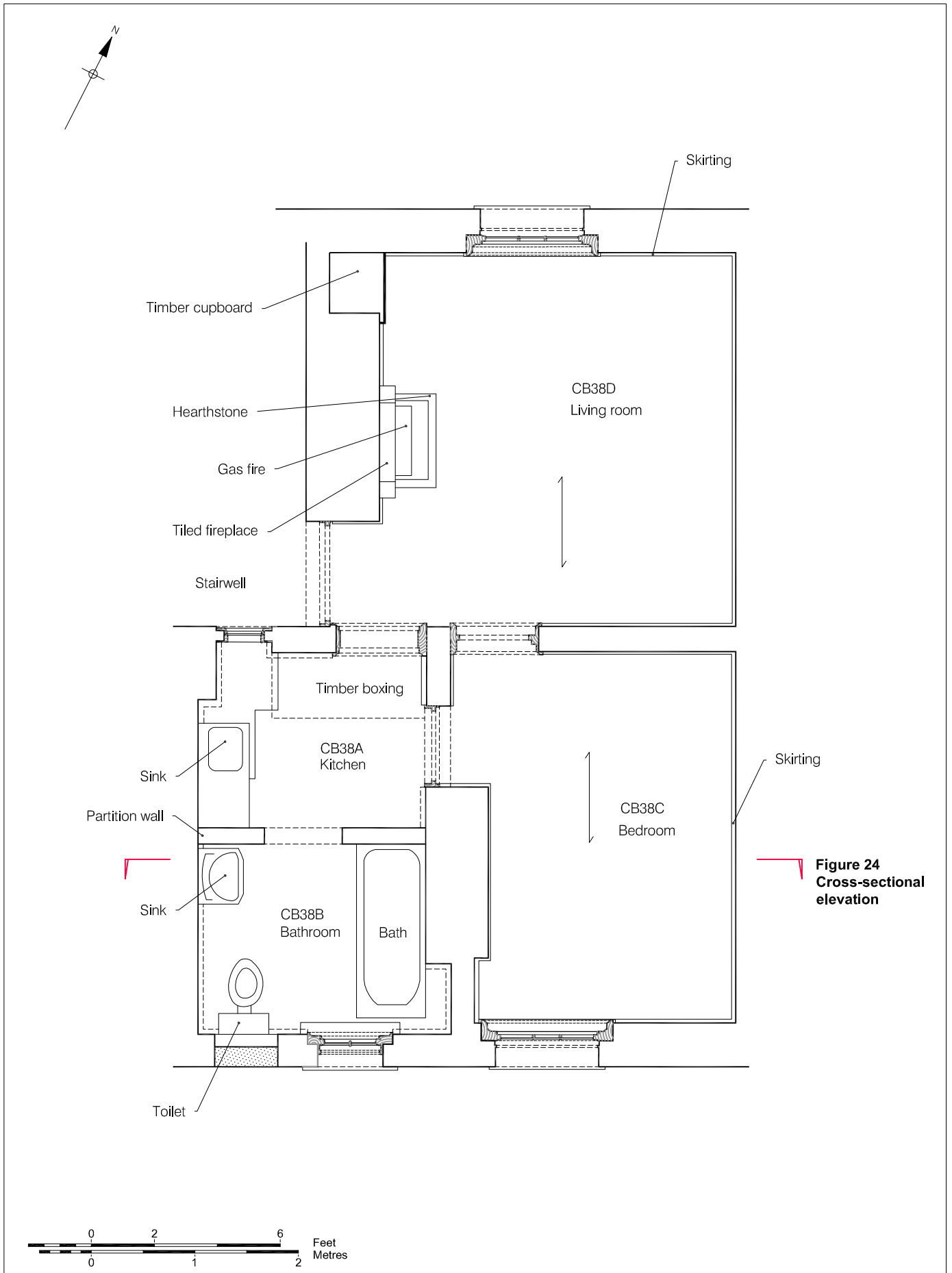


Figure 22  
 Original Smaller Flat Floor Plan  
 Culcross Building  
 King's Cross  
 1:50 at A4



**Figure 24**  
Cross-sectional  
elevation

Figure 23  
Typical Smaller Flat Floor Plan - Flat 38  
(See Figure 16 for Location)  
Culcross Building  
King's Cross  
1:50 at A4

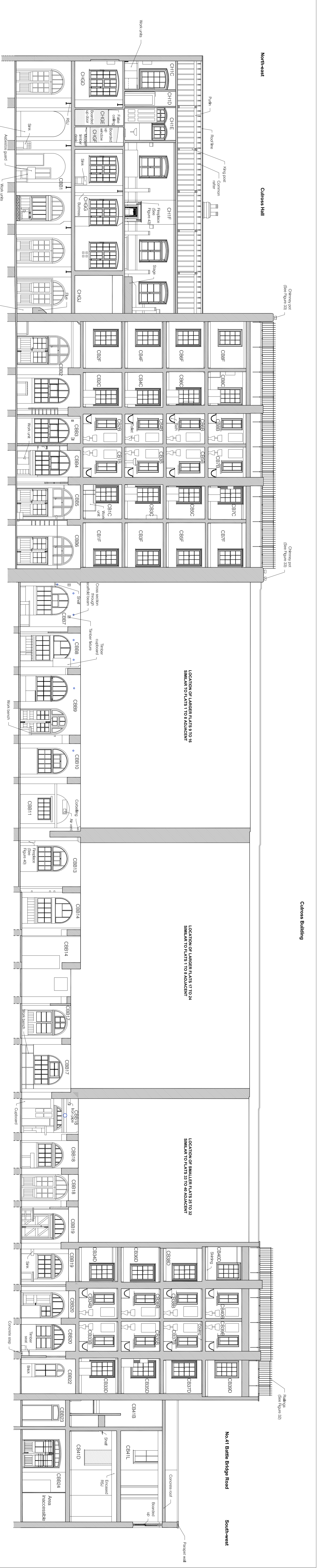
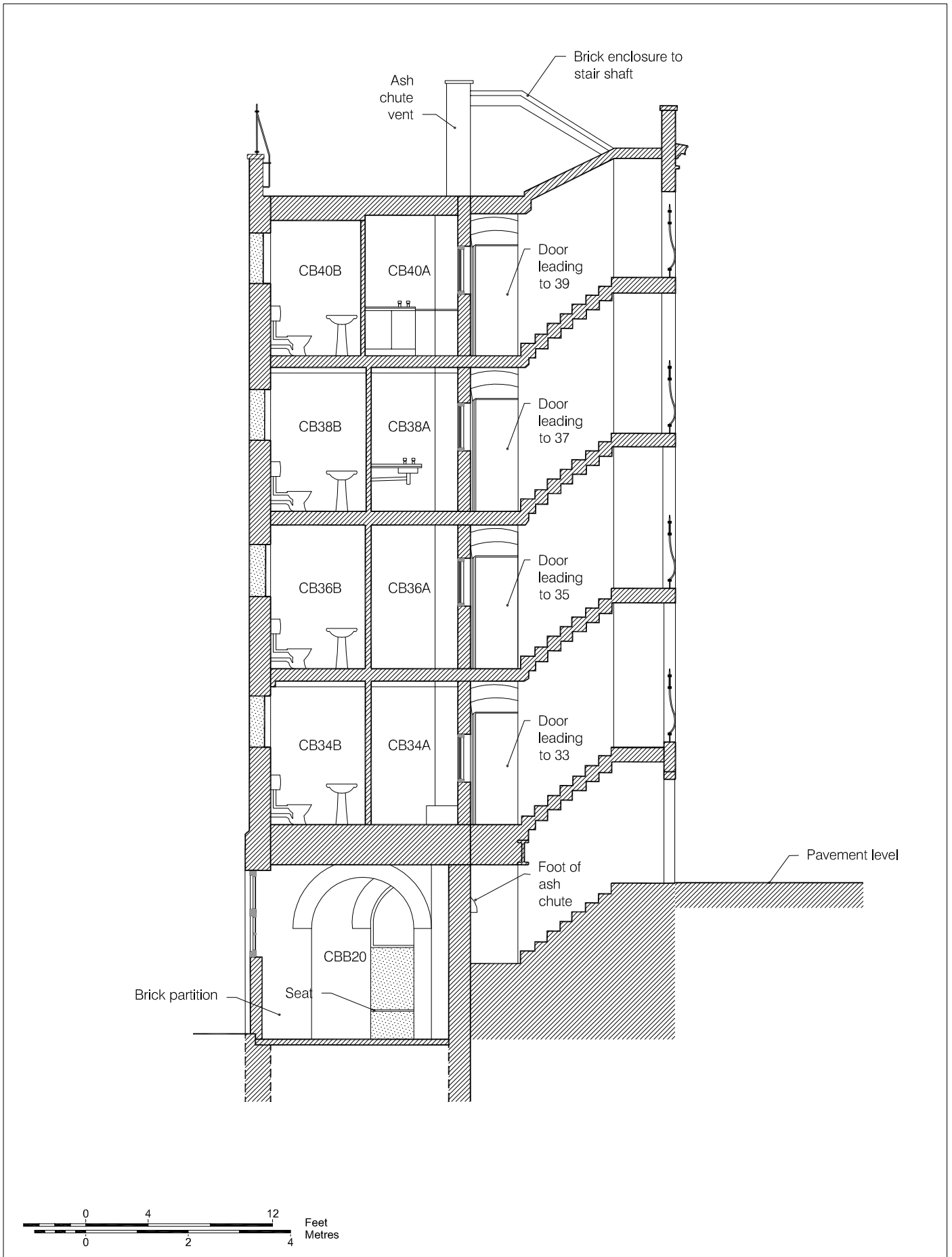


Figure 24  
Long Cross-Sectional Elevation Through Curtain Hall, Curtain Buildings and No. 41 Battle Bridge Road  
Kings Cross  
1:100 A3/A0



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Figure 25  
 Cross-Sectional Elevation Through Smaller Flats  
 (Flats 34, 36, 38 and 40)  
 Culcross Building  
 King's Cross  
 1:100 at A4

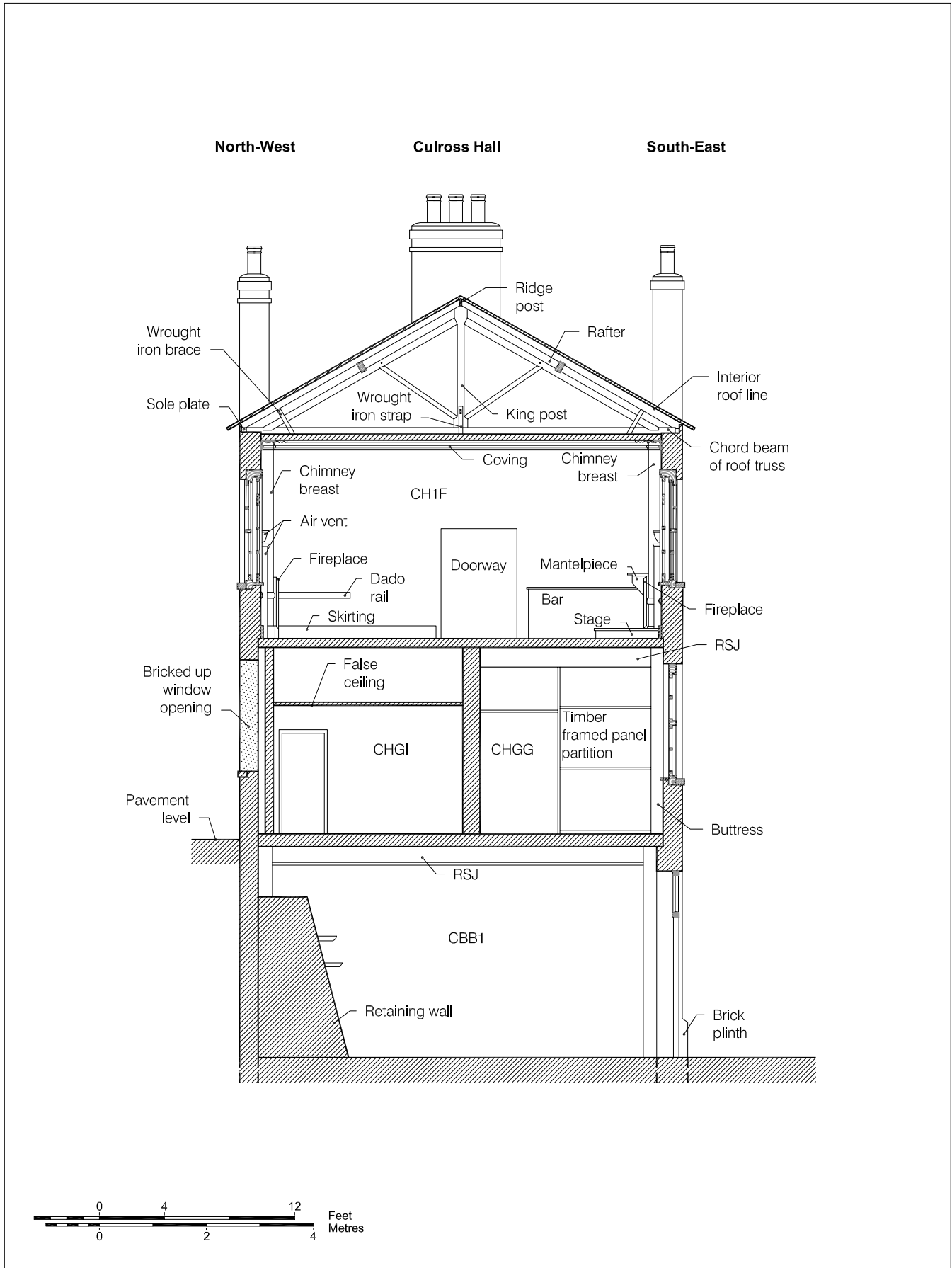


Figure 26  
 Cross-Sectional Elevation Through Culross Hall  
 King's Cross  
 1:100 at A4

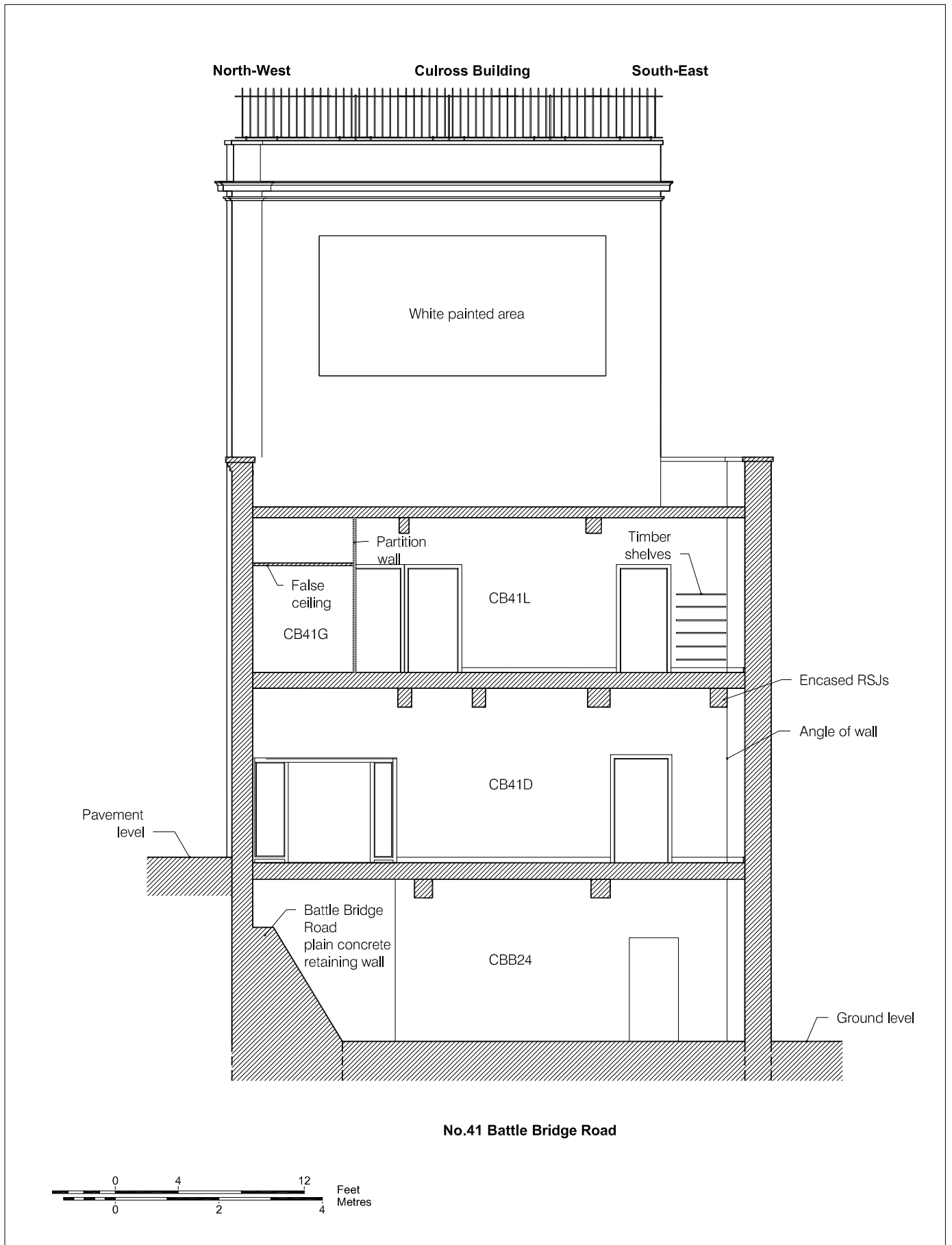
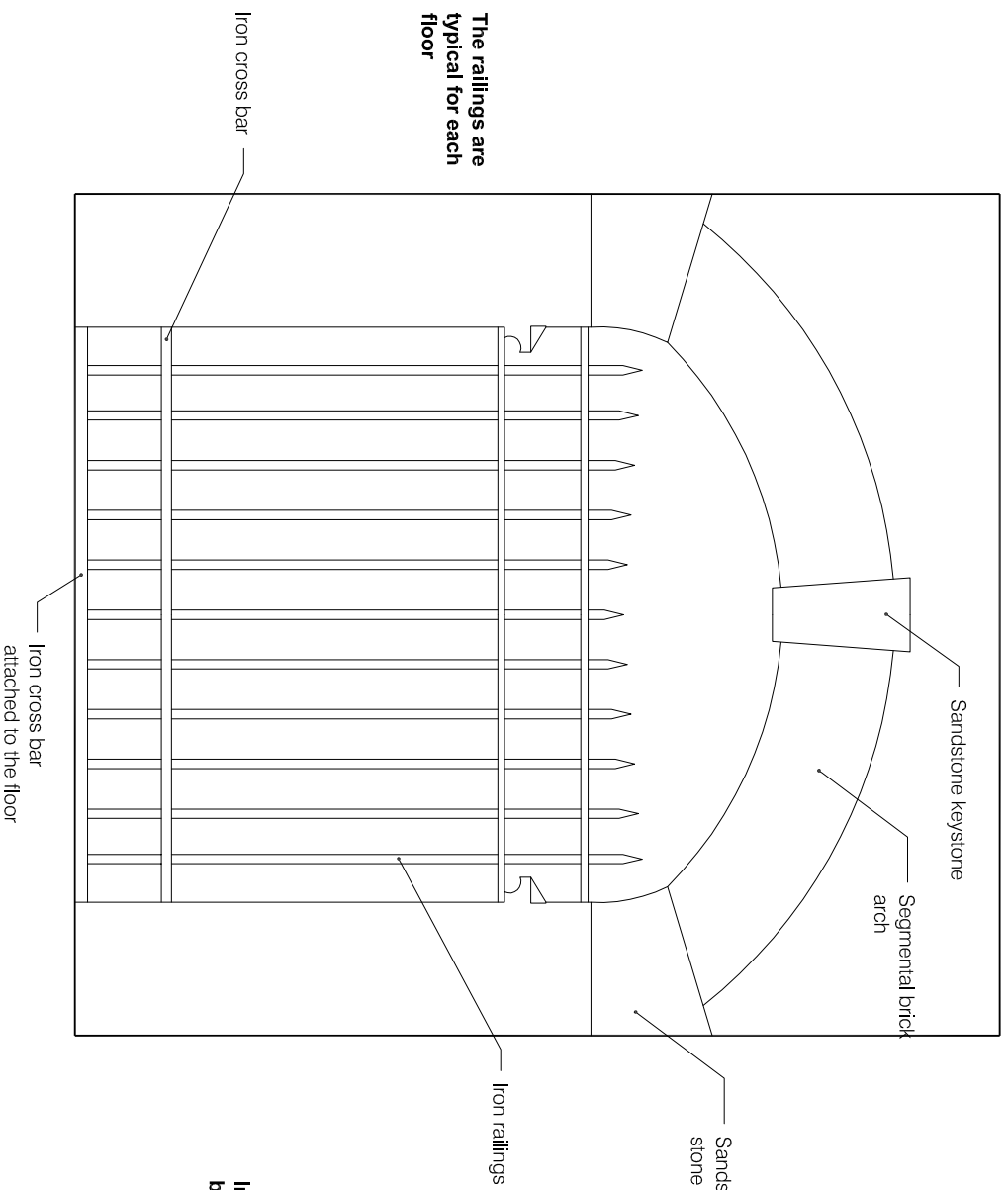
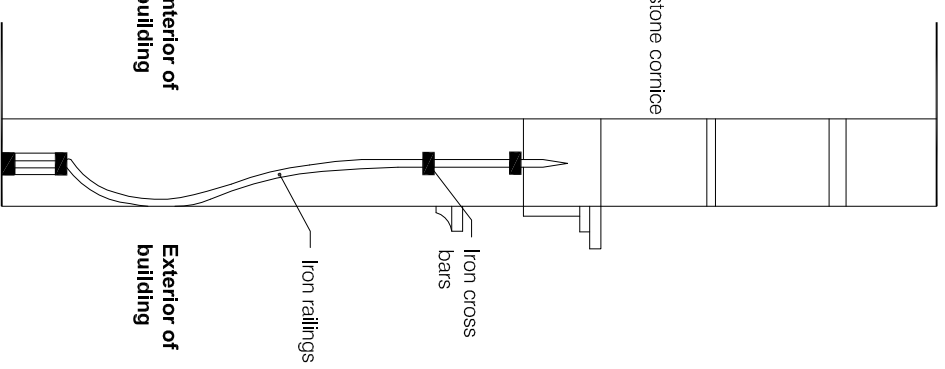


Figure 27  
 Cross-Sectional Elevation Through No.41 Battle Bridge Road  
 Culcross Building  
 King's Cross  
 1:100 at A4

**Elevation of arch and railings at the top of each stairwell**



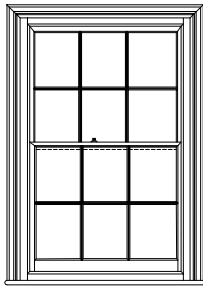
**Cross-section of iron railings located in each stairwell**



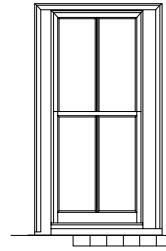
**Figure 28**  
 Detail of Railings on Each Stairwell in the Front (North-West) Elevation

Culross Building  
 Kings Cross  
 1:20 at A4

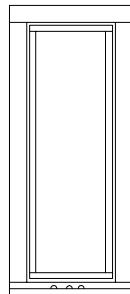




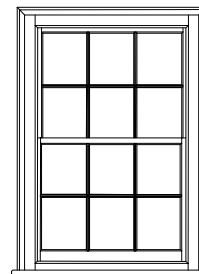
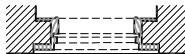
**Type 1 Window - CB4C**  
(See Figure 15 for location)



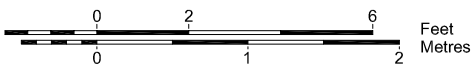
**Type 2 Window - CB4B**  
(See Figure 15 for location)

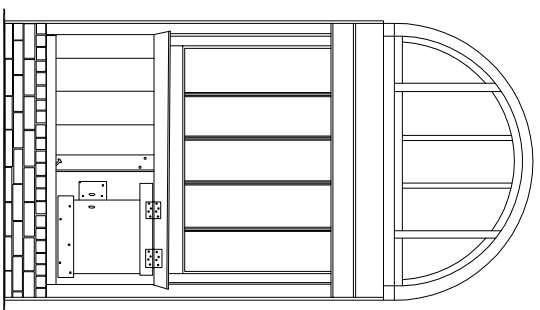


**Type 3 Window - CB30A**  
(See Figure 16 for location)

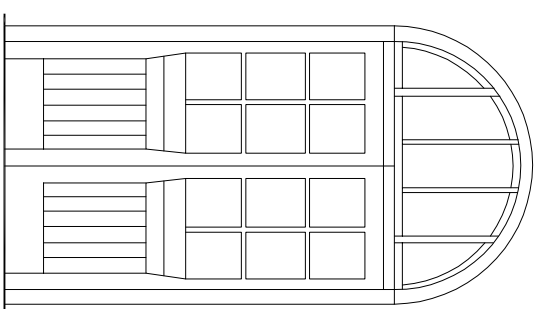


**Type 4 Window - CB8D**  
(See Figure 17 for location)

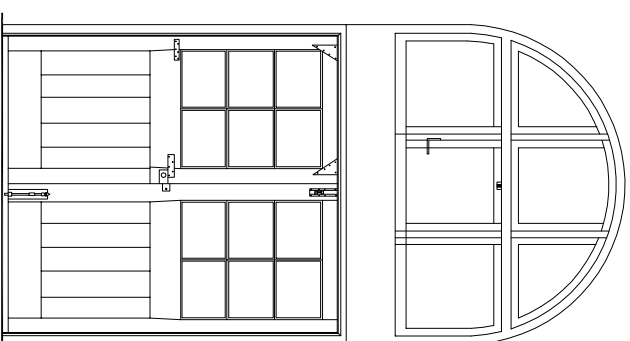




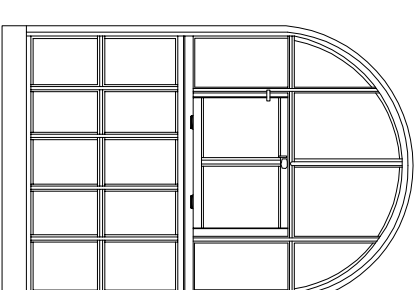
Type 1A - CBB1



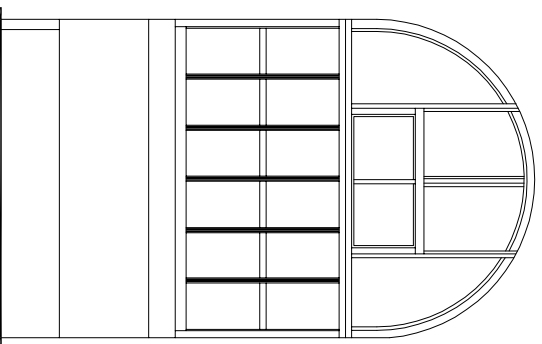
Type 2A - CBB18



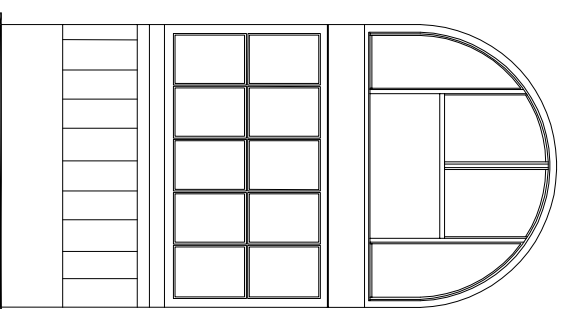
Type 3A - CBB2



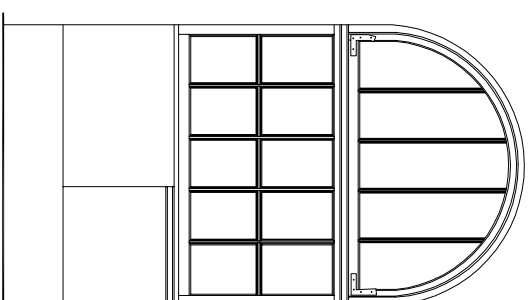
Type 4A - CBB2



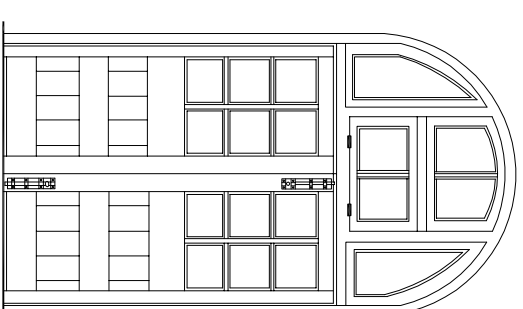
Type 5A - CBB7



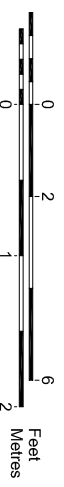
Type 6A - CBB8



Type 7A - CBB9

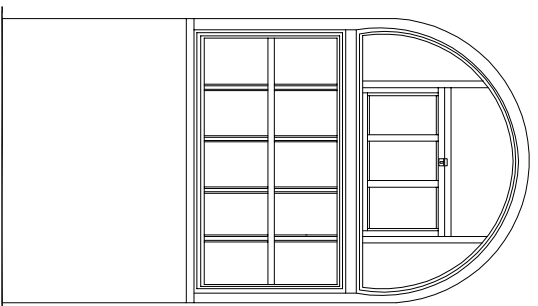


Type 8A - CBB9

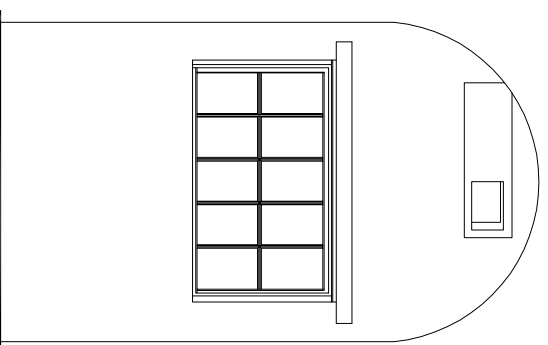


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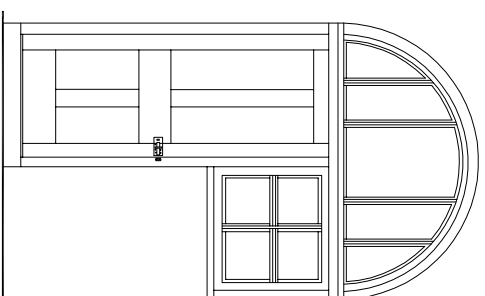
Figure 30  
Examples of Basement Windows and Doors  
Culross Building  
Kings Cross  
1:50 at A3



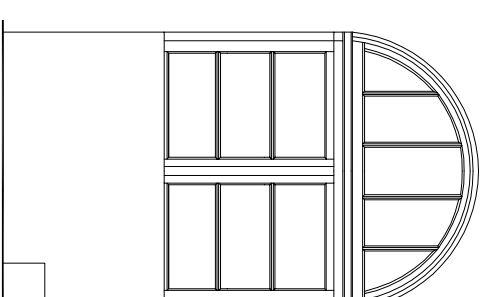
Type 9A - CBB10



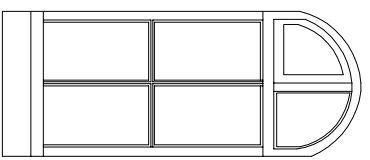
Type 10A - CBB11



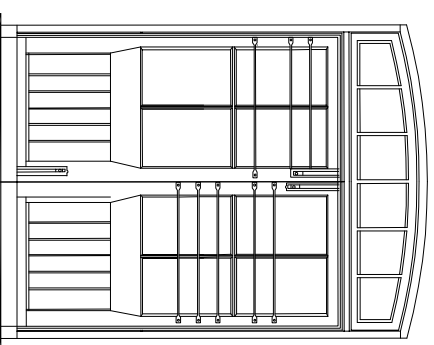
Type 12A - CBB20



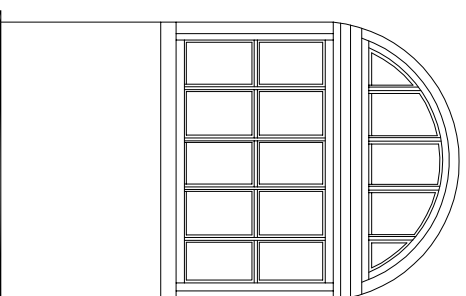
Type 13A - CBB20



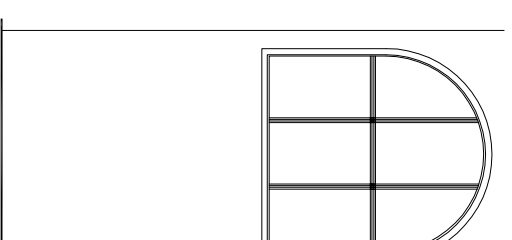
Type 14A - CBB22



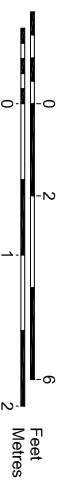
Type 16A - CBB24



Type 18A - CBB18



Type 19A - CBB20



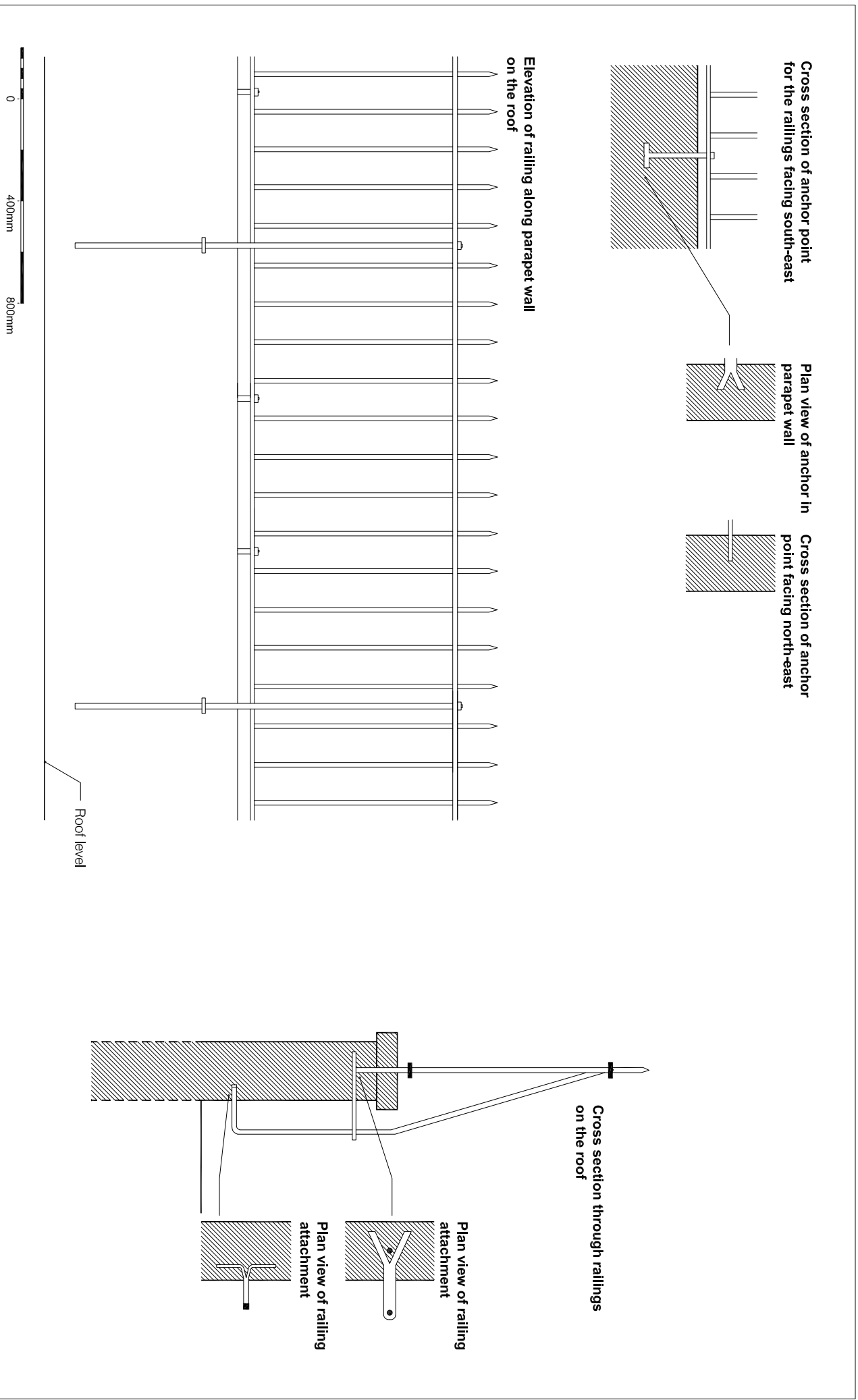


Figure 32

Detail of the Railings on the Parapet Wall of the Roof  
 Culross Building  
 King's Cross  
 1:20 at A4

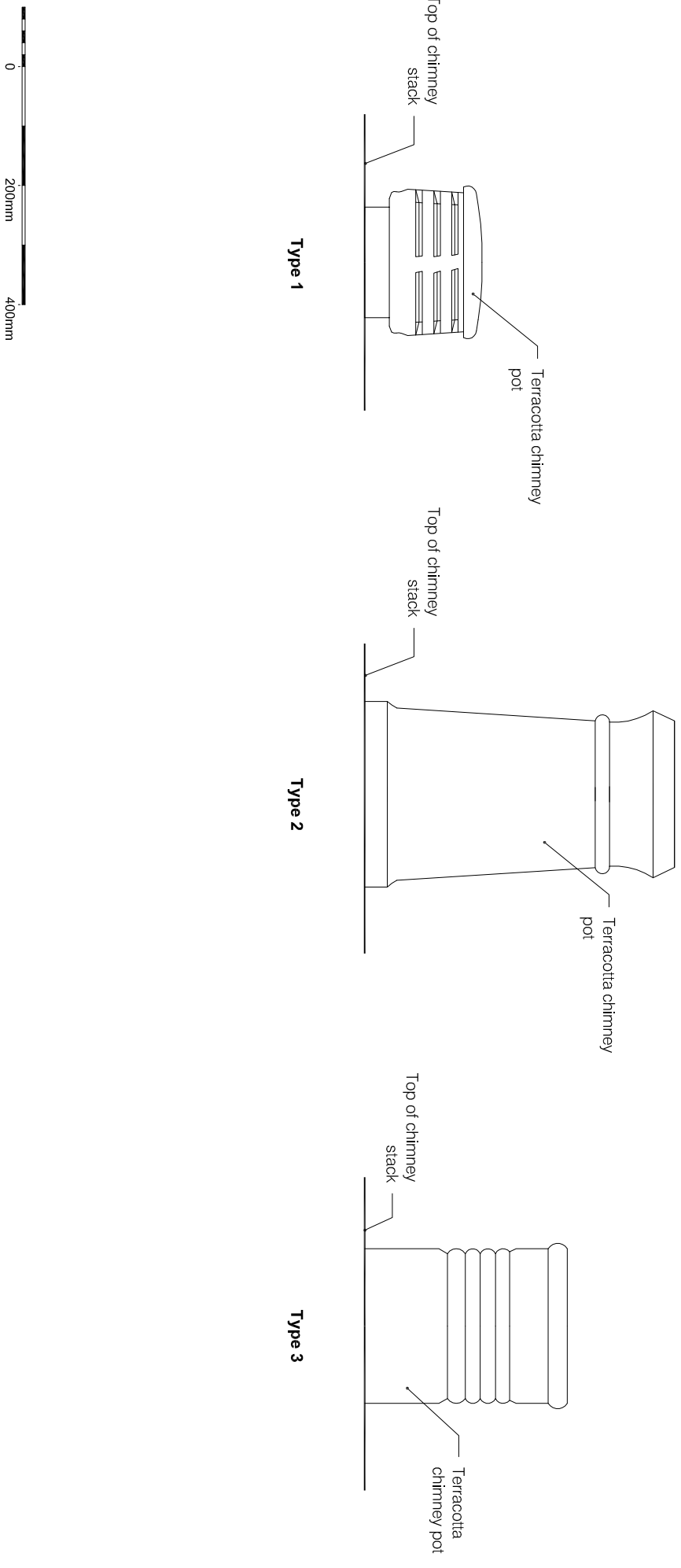


Figure 33  
 Types of Chimney Pots  
 Culross Building  
 King's Cross  
 1:10 at A4

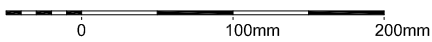
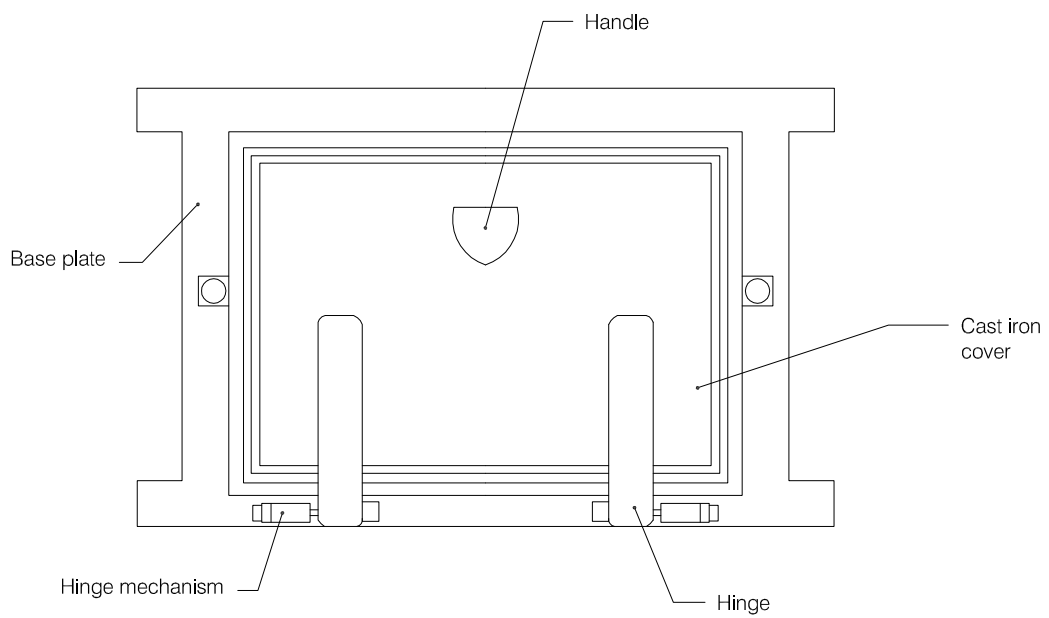
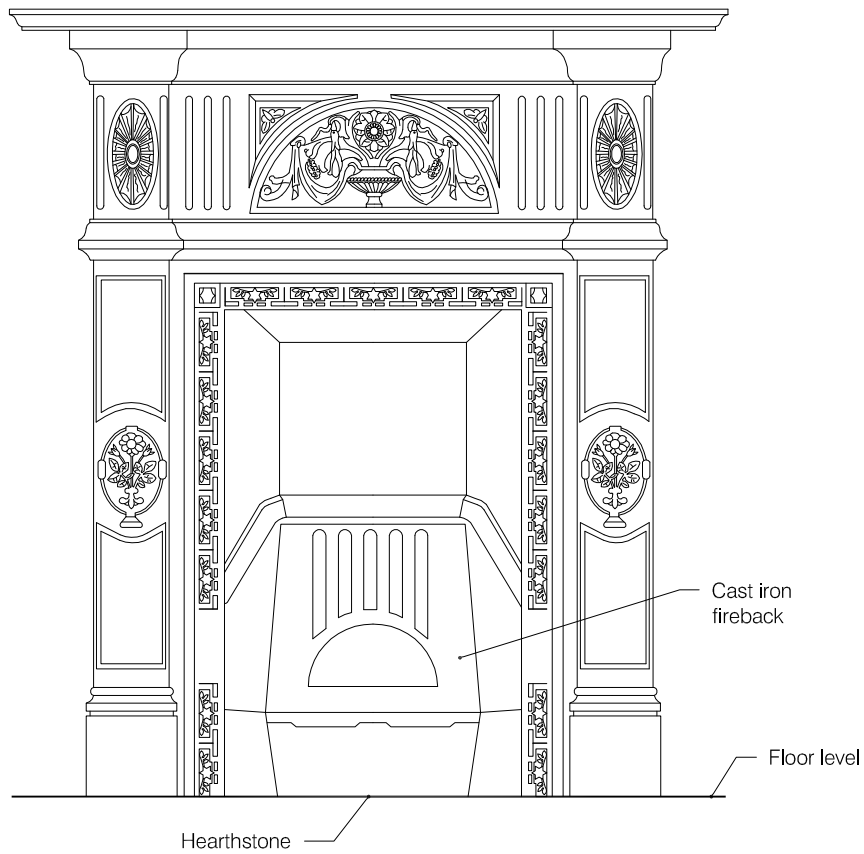


Figure 34  
Cast Iron Cover Over Ash Chutes on Landing  
Culross Building  
King's Cross  
1:5 at A4



0 200mm 400mm

Figure 35  
Fireplace in Bedroom CB16F  
(See Figure 17 for Location, See Also Plate 34)  
Culross Building  
King's Cross  
1:10 at A4

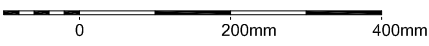
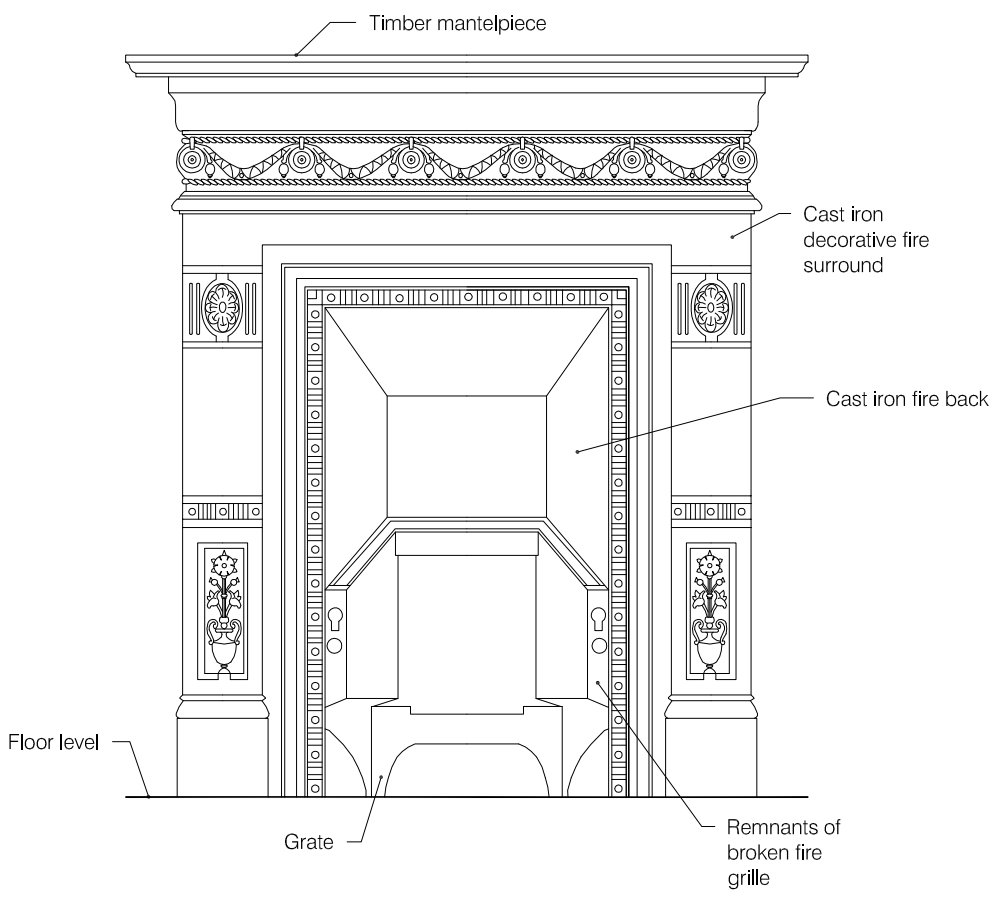


Figure 36  
 Fireplace in Bedroom CB16C  
 (See Figure 17 for Location)  
 Culross Building  
 King's Cross  
 1:10 at A4



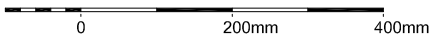
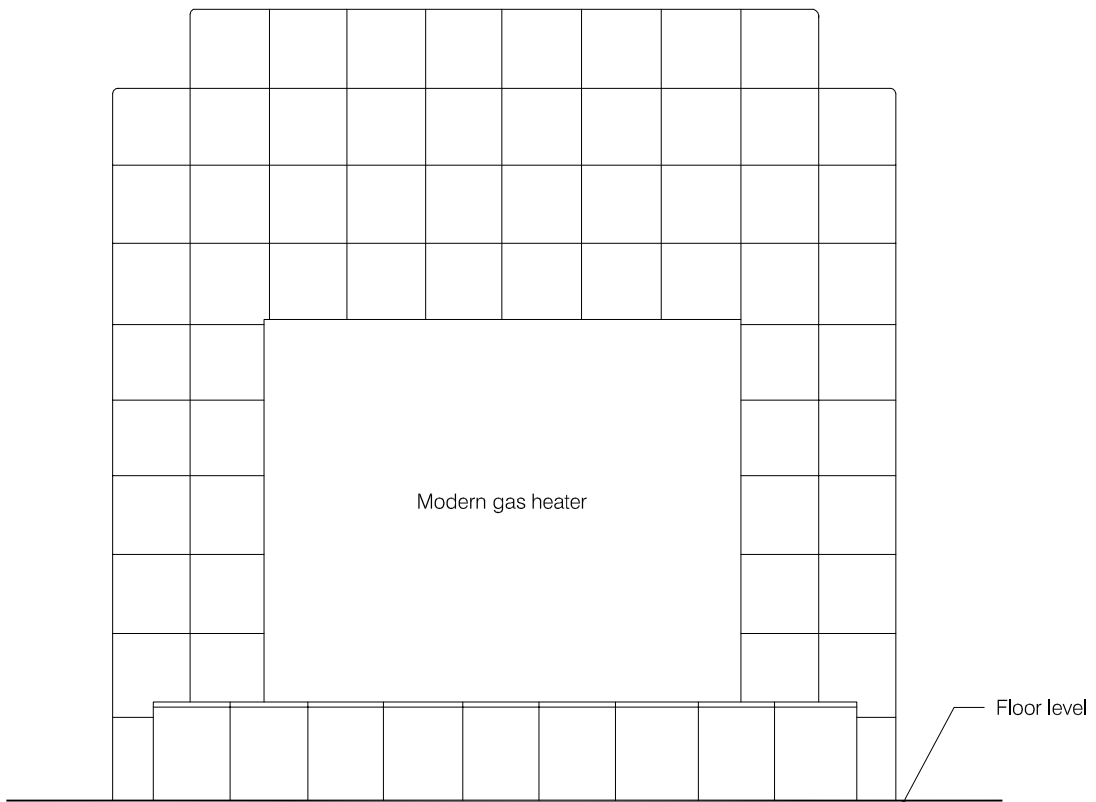


Figure 37  
Fireplace in Living Room CB4D  
(See Figure 15 for Location)  
Culross Building  
King's Cross  
1:10 at A4

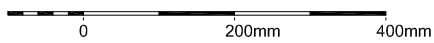
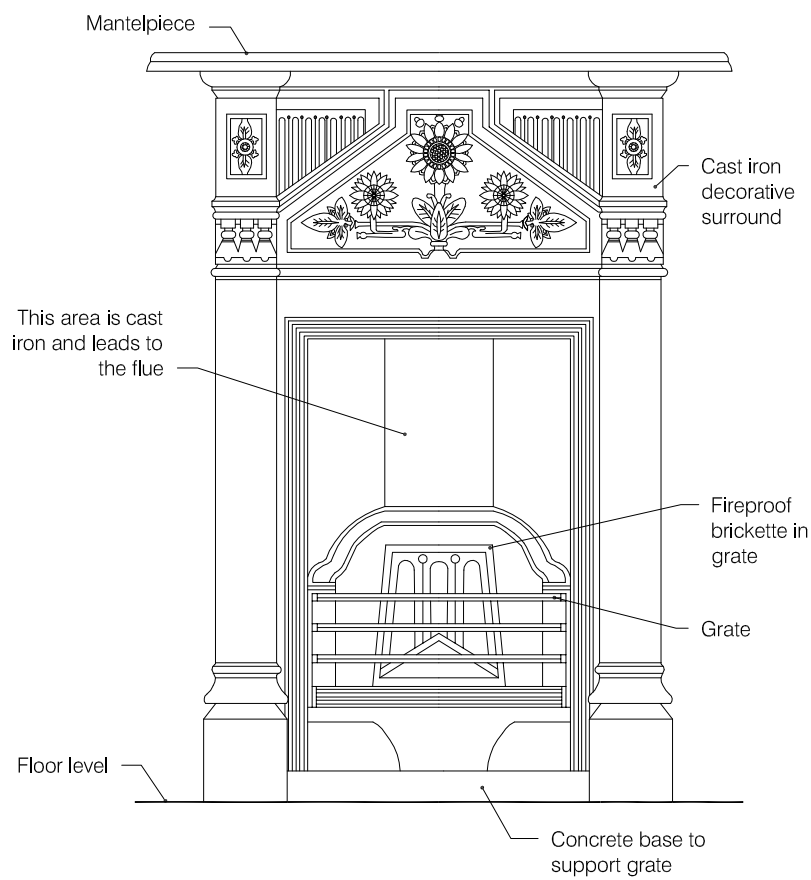


Figure 38  
Fireplace in Living Room CB7D  
(See Figure 17 for Location)  
Culross Building  
King's Cross  
1:10 at A4

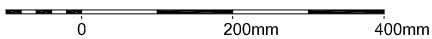
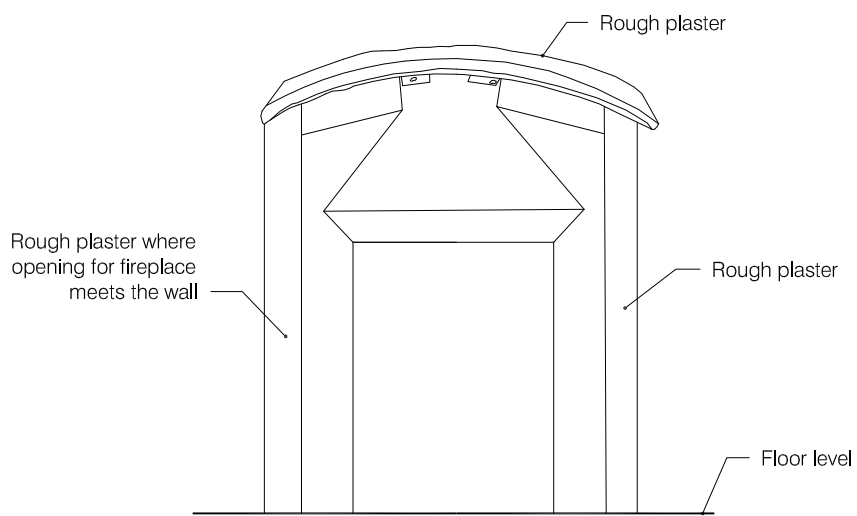


Figure 39  
Fireplace in Living Room CB19D  
(See Figure 15 for Location)  
Culross Building  
King's Cross  
1:10 at A4

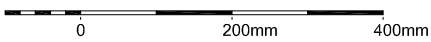
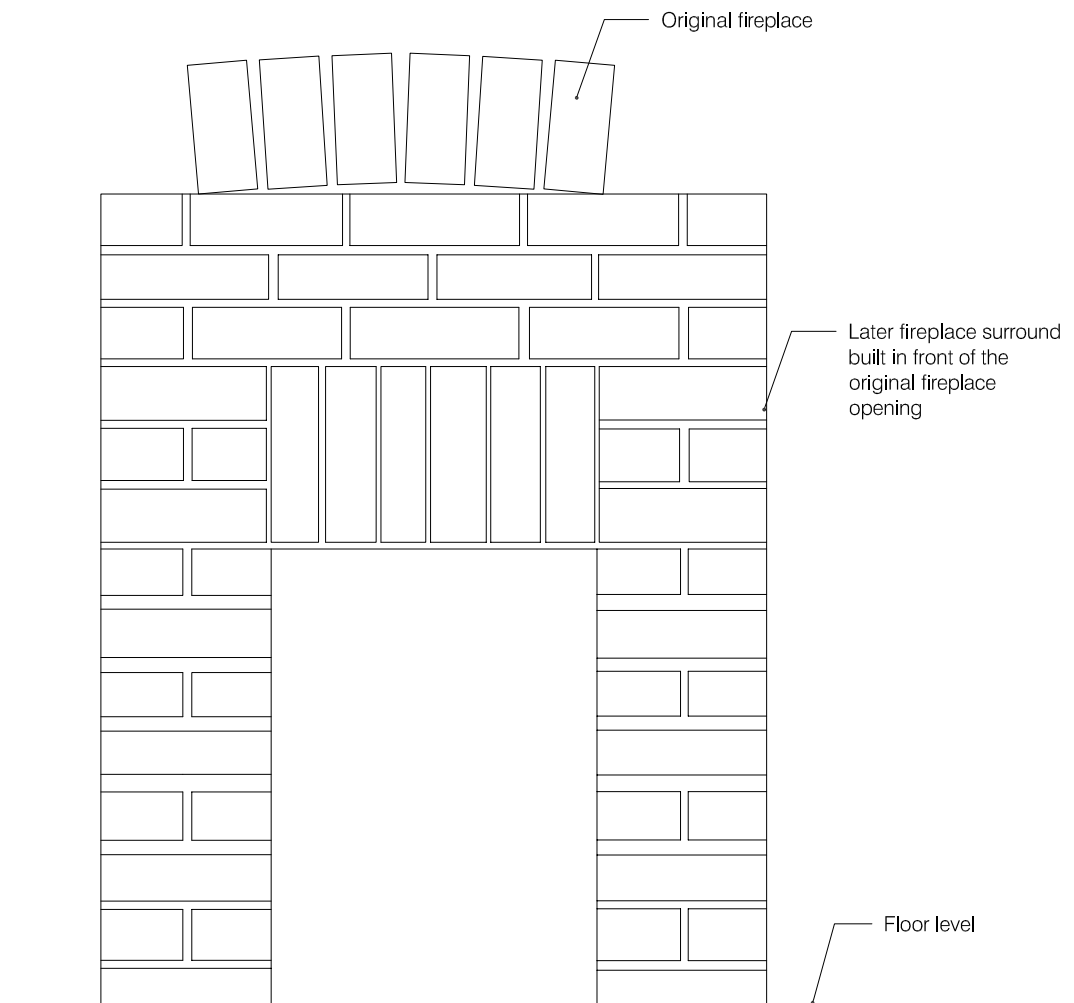
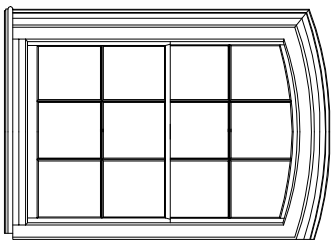
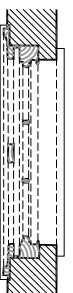
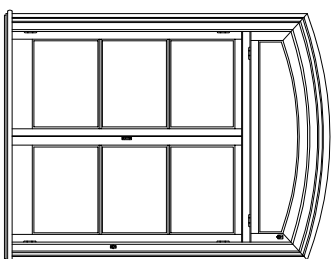


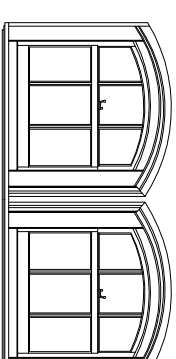
Figure 40  
Fireplace in Room CBB13  
(See Figure 13 for Location, See Also Plate 41)  
Culross Building  
King's Cross  
1:10 at A4



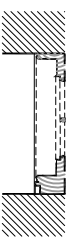
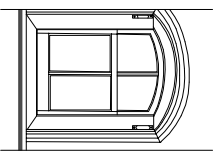
**Type 4x Window - CH1C**  
(See Figures 15 and 24 for location)



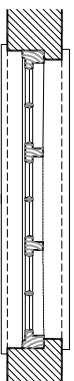
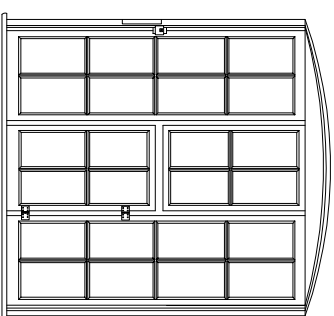
**Type 4Y Window - Rear (south-east) wall of Meeting Room CH1F**  
(See Figures 15 and 24 for location)



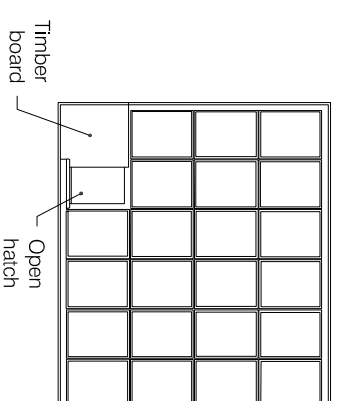
**Type 5 Window - CH1E**  
(See Figures 15 and 24 for location)



**Type 6 Window - CH1D**  
(See Figures 15 and 24 for location)

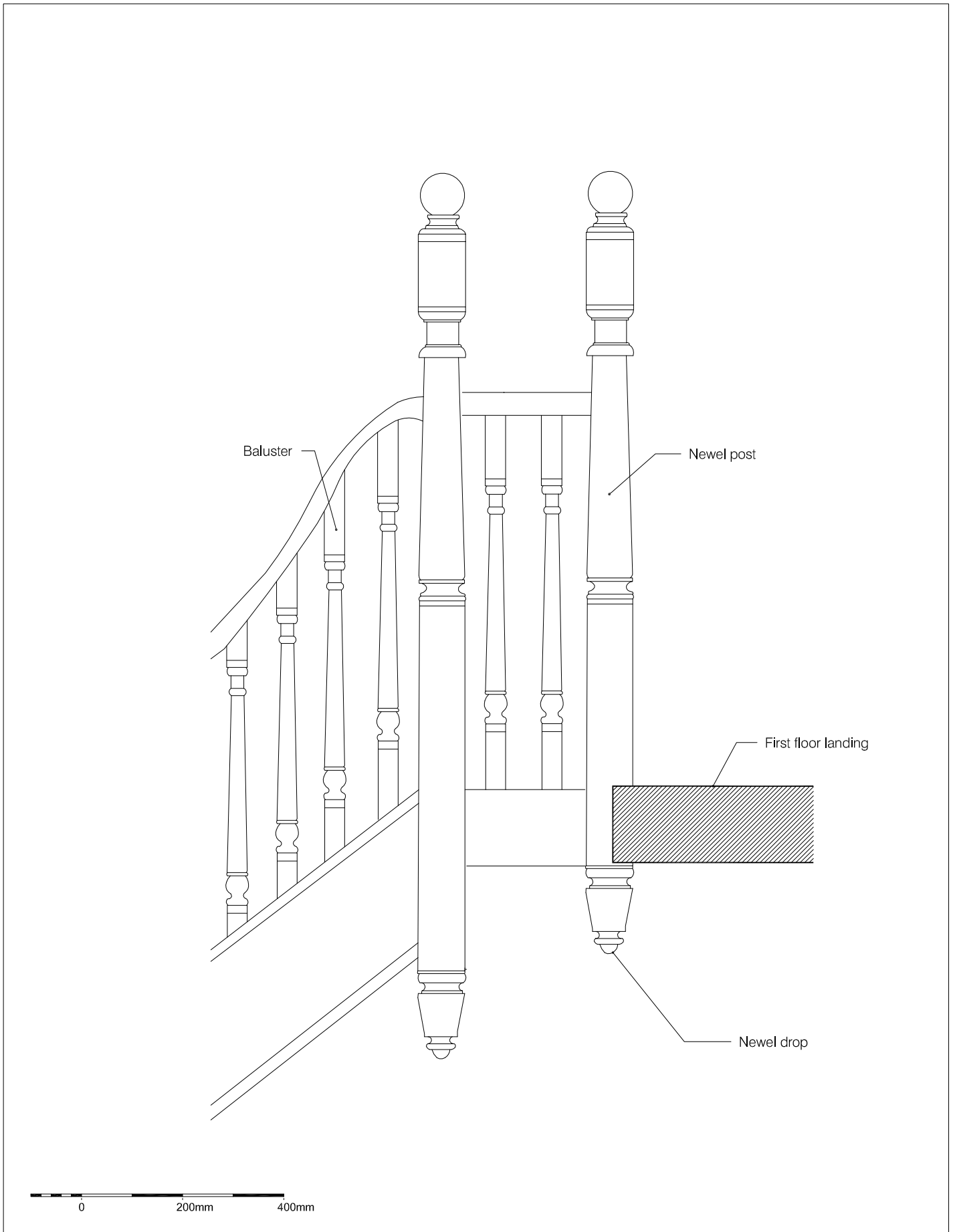


**Type 7 Window - CHGG**  
(See Figures 14 and 24 for location)



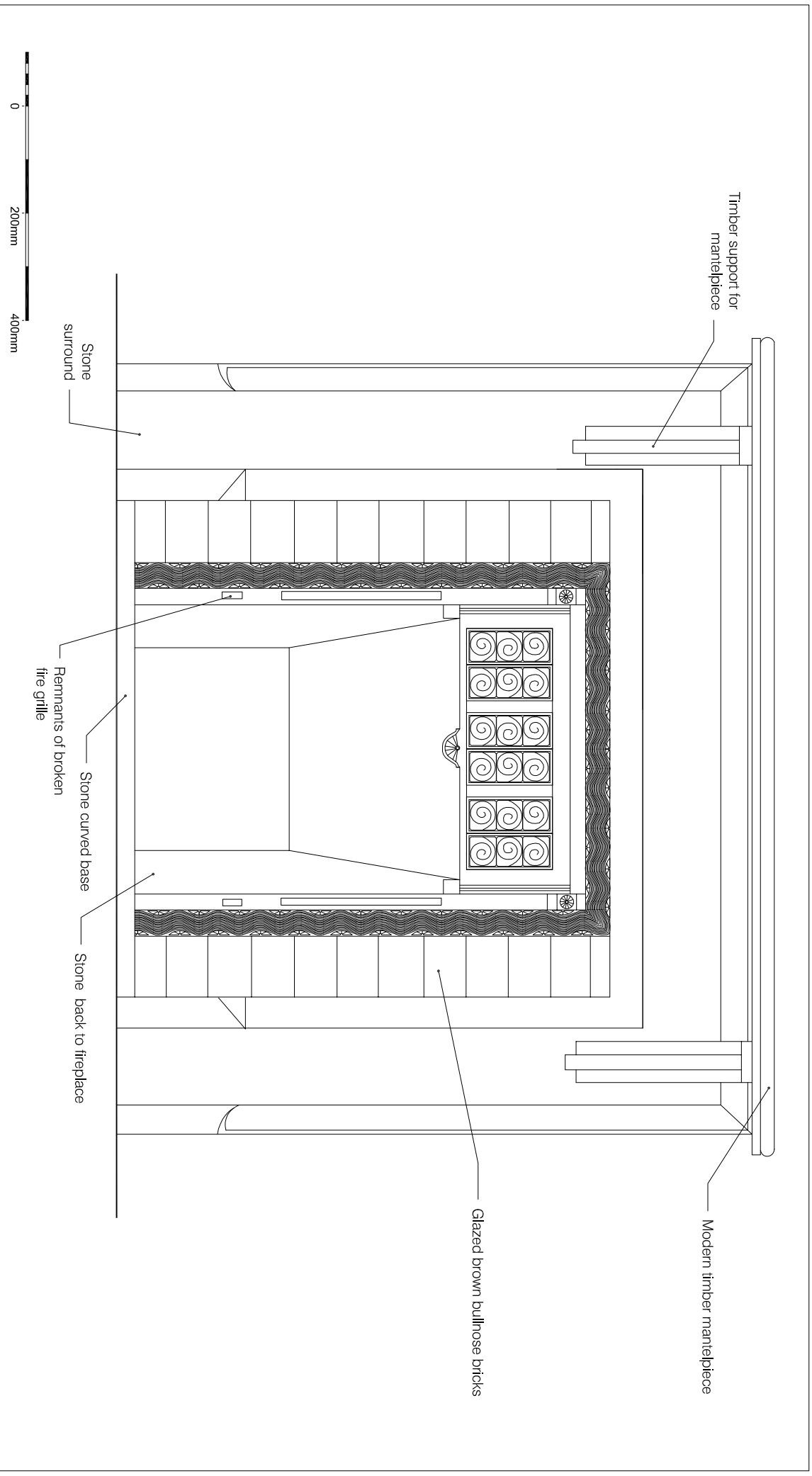
**Type 9 Window - between CHGA and CHGH**  
(See Figure 14 for location)





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Figure 42  
Detail of Banister, Room CH1A  
(See Figure 14 for Location, See Also Plate 52)  
Culross Hall  
King's Cross  
1:10 at A4



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Figure 43  
 Fireplace in South-East Wall, Room CH1F  
 (See Figure 15 for Location, See Also Plate 58)  
 Culross Hall  
 King's Cross  
 1:10 at A4