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The Church of The Immaculate Conception & St Norbert
Henrietta Street
Spalding
Lincolnshire

Archeological Building Recording & Historic Account

YF24380 22430



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The Church of The Immaculate Conception & St. Norbert, Henrietta Street, Spalding

Archaeological Building Record & Historical Account

The Church of The Immaculate Conception & St Norbert, constructed in 1877 was funded by Mr Thomas Arthur Young (1805-1891). Mr Young was the Lord of the Manor of Kingerby, near Market Rasen in Lincolnshire who purchased the site at the corner of St Thomas's Street (as it was then) and Henrietta Street in 1874.

There was strong resistance against the building of the new church as the Spalding Free Press announced in December 1875:

[the opening of the new church] *"is very much to be deplored... we commend therefore our townsmen to be wary of their wives and daughters, and manhood of their sons, to stand shoulder to shoulder in obstructing its progress in the town..."*

Despite these protestations the construction of the new church was commenced in 1876 with the first stage completed in 1877. The architects of the church were M. E. Hadfield of Sheffield and the building work was carried out by Messrs. S. Dawson and Sons.



The two houses on the site, No.s 52 and 54 St Thomas's Road but pre-date the church buildings and formed part of the original site purchase by Mr Young. The two properties are typical mid-late Victorian domestic buildings constructed over two floors with offshoot accommodation to the rear. Constructed in smooth faced orange/red brickwork and slate roofed these buildings have been much adapted and extended over time. Originally No. 54 was converted to become the priory, it is not clear when the Priory was moved to its current location at No. 52 St Thomas's Road but it would be sensible to conclude that this move was made when the adjacent school hall was constructed. Notable details of these houses externally are the dentilated timber eaves to No. 54 and the principal entrance door surrounds. Externally No. 54 is finer in architectural detail than neighbouring No.52, which would appear to have been built at a later date. Both houses are double bay fronted featuring large timber bay windows typical of their period with painted stonework cills and dressings to the brickwork.

Building work continued with the extended church, sanctuary and a confraternity in honour of Our Lady of Lourdes completed in 1879. The church was constructed principally of smooth imperial orange/red brickwork with local stone bullnosed string-coursing and dressings. Entrance doorways and windows are formed as Gothic pointed arches with brick voussoirs. The West gable is buttressed and features three inset stone carvings below the West window. The West window consists of 5 staged lancet windows in stone together with stone hood moulding over. The East gable consists of 3 staged lancet windows in stone with a pointed relieving arch in brick voussoirs over. The East gable similarly features stone carvings in particular immediately below the East window the inscription "Blessed be Jesus Christ True God and True Man".

In 1881 the large sanctuary windows were given to the church by a Mr Bothamley.

In 1904 the church was consecrated by Dr Heylen, the Lord Bishop of Namur, and former Lord Abbot of Tongerlo.



The church receives an entry in Pevsner's Lincolnshire as follows:

"IMMACULATE CONCEPTION AND ST NORBERT (R.C), Henrietta Street. Nave 1877, the rest 1879 by M.E. Hadfield & Son, Red brick, with lancet windows and a bellcote. Not in a detached position."

In addition to the extended church, 1 a Henrietta Street was built as a caretakers residence and St Norbert's School was also constructed with entrance off Henrietta Street it features the same orange/red brickwork and similar stonework as the neighbouring church. Doors and windows to the school hall are formed as flat arches with brick voussoirs. The school hall was later modified with the introduction of a full first floor. To achieve this the roof was raised, evidence of this can be seen in the facing brickwork. Access to this new floor was achieved by the introduction of the concrete stairs located to the rear of the hall, which also provide access to the choir loft, which was introduced in the 1930's.

The roof to the church, school hall and 1(a) Henrietta Street is steeply pitched at approximately 55 degrees with plain clay tiled covering. All buildings have a deep overhanging eaves detail and cast iron rainwater goods.

In 1908 a replica of the Lourdes Grotto was constructed adjacent to the church sandwiched between the south wall of the church and 1(a) Henrietta Street to celebrate the golden jubilee of the Miracle of Lourdes. The grotto referred to as "The English Lourdes" was the work of Jacque Coomans of Antwerp and was blessed on the 17th September 1908. The stained glass windows of the adjacent wall were removed to be replaced in the opposite wall but the openings left bare.

At the same time a new stained glass window of the Annunciation and the Lourdes Apparition was unveiled. This window was given by the Right Reverend Adrian Deckers, Abbot of Tongerlo and was the work of local craftsman Edward Smith of St. Thomas's Road, Spalding.

1934 saw the next development at the church when the renovated organ was installed on a purpose built balcony erected at the back of the church. The organ was installed by Messrs. Walker and Taylor, organ builders of Lincoln. The old organ had stood just inside the church to the right; the repositioning of the organ to the new choir loft enabled a greater seating capacity to the church.

By 1940 the church and other buildings had fallen into a state of disrepair and required much restoration work.

In 1942 the openings left by the removal of the stained glass following the construction of the grotto in 1908 were finally filled with simple cathedral glass. At the same time the large window behind the organ loft was replaced. Wooden altar steps were replaced and new altar rails were installed.

Work began in earnest in 1948 which required the temporary moving of the congregation to nearby St. Peter's church. A new floor of polished terrazzo was installed with the coloured monogram of St. Norbert inset. The font was also relocated, as was the timber confessional booth, which was moved to within the entrance area to the Grotto.

In 1949 the sanctuary was decorated and the altar moved forward and modified in line with the demands of the new liturgy.

By 1950 much of the work to the church was complete and the congregation returned. The church has remained principally unchanged since this date.

By 1962 St Norberts School had outgrown their original building adjacent to the church and moved to new purpose built premises in Tollgate off Penneygate, Spalding. This allowed the old school halls to be occupied by the church for use as the church hall however this never proved ideal due to the fact that it was split over two floors and that the upper floor had to be accessed via an external concrete stair.

The church buildings remained unchanged for twenty years until the arrival of Father Oliver Martin in 1982 by which time the church halls and the houses were again in need of modernisation. Work was carried out between 1985-1987 with all rooms refurbished. Unfortunately during this time much of the original internal features of the domestic properties were removed and little evidence of these remain today. All decorative plasterwork normally seen in this type of property has been removed, as have timber picture rails and fireplaces. At the same time the new brick built toilet block was constructed adjacent to the priory.

From the late 1980's to date no significant improvements have been possible and the buildings have steadily fallen into disrepair.

The Parish of The Immaculate Conception and St. Norbert carried out a survey of their buildings in the late 1990's, which clearly identified the need for substantial improvement works. A decision was made that as the buildings were no longer satisfying the changing requirements of the Parish it would not be sensible to spend large amounts of money on refurbishment works which could be spent on improving the facility in the form of a purpose built complex of buildings.

Several alternative proposals were put forward over the following years by a number of architectural practices, the final scheme produced by John Roberts Architects Ltd. of Lincoln won approval from the Diocese of Nottingham in 2002 and funding was granted to the Parish to enable the construction.

The proposal requires the demolition of all buildings currently occupying the site, 1(a) Henrietta Street, the main church building fronting Henrietta Street, the old school hall and No.s 52-54 St Thomas's Road.

A survey of the buildings found that whilst they represent typical buildings of their type for the Victorian period they have little significant architectural or historic interest. An inspection by English Heritage confirms this. The Parish are sad to see the loss of the buildings, which have served them since 1879 but are conscious of moving forward and meeting the current and future liturgical and social requirements of the Roman Catholic Church.

The demolition of the buildings is to be carried out over a 4-5 week period with much of the building material and stonework features salvaged by the demolition contractor. Of the 5 buildings present on the site, whilst all are typical of their time only the Church has any features which merit retention. The existing stained glass windows have been removed by specialist contractor Art in Glass of Stamford and are currently in storage ready for partial re-use within the internal glazed screens of the new church facility. Any panels of stained glass, which cannot be incorporated, will be taken by the Diocese of Nottingham who have a strict policy that no stained glass should be lost. The status of the Grotto has been debated with the Parish wishing to retain this for incorporation within the new facility, however further inspection has revealed that due to the nature of the construction of this element it would be impossible to remove intact or in any re-useable form, much of the Grotto structure is plaster-cast with stonework embedded within. With exception to the stained glass and the Grotto there is little else of notable interest and as such all other material will be salvaged for re-sale by the demolition company.



ELEVATION A

Elevation of 1a Henrietta Street showing orange/red brickwork with simple stone dressings, openings have flat arches over with brick voussoirs. Deep overhang to eaves is common within the Church, School Hall and 1a Henrietta Street.



Entrance door to 1a Henrietta Street

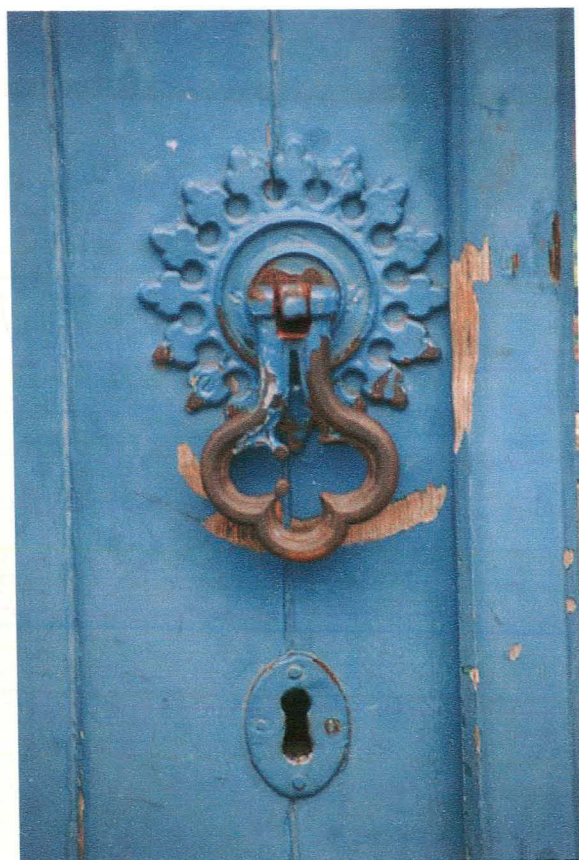
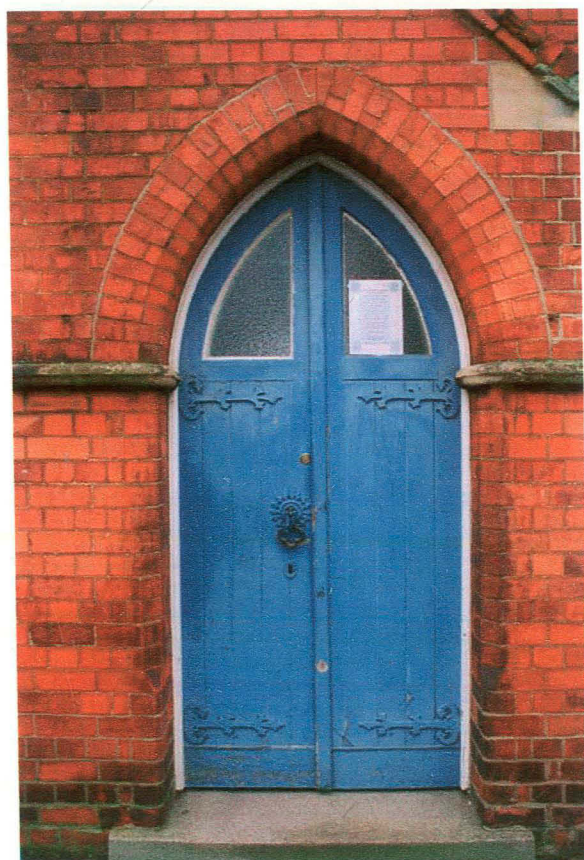


ELEVATION B

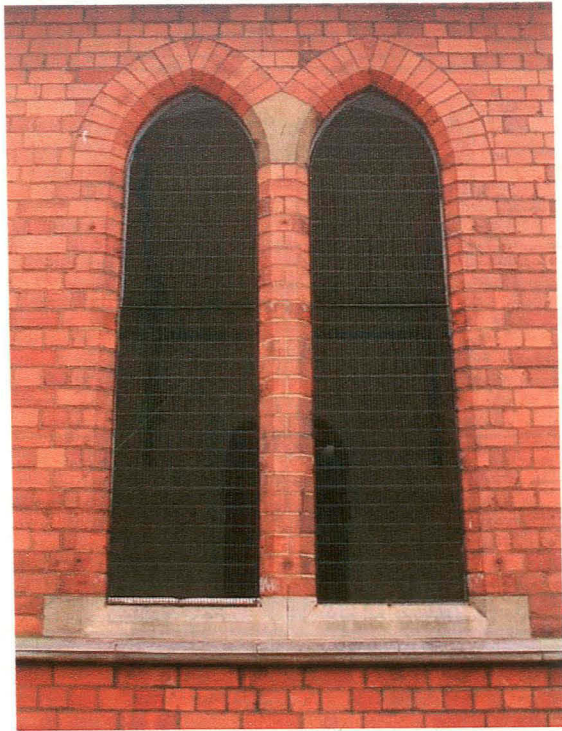
East Gable Elevation to Henrietta Street showing bellcote, stone carvings and lancet windows with brick voussoir relieving arch over



Detail of stonework carving to East elevation



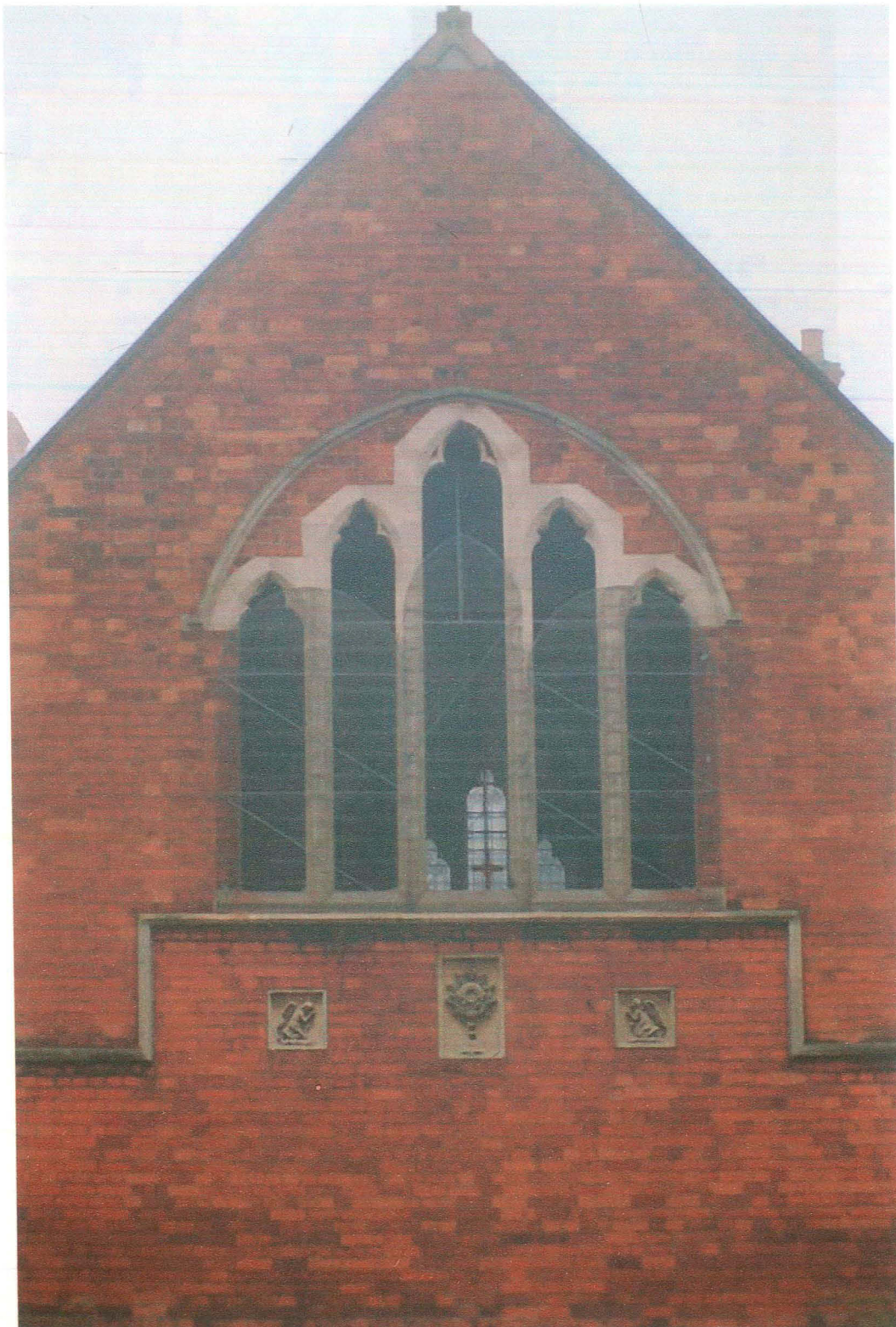
01 Church entrance doors on Henrietta Street & door handle detail



02 Nave windows to South Elevation

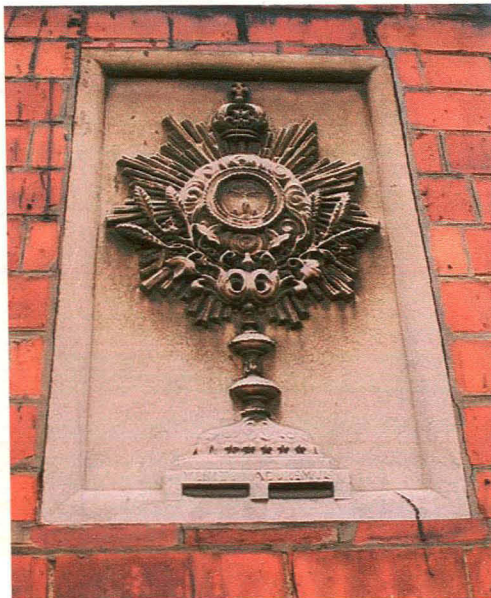


03 Brickwork buttressing and simple stone stringcourse to South elevation



ELEVATION H

West Gable Elevation to the car park showing stone string course and hood moulding together with stonework carvings



Various stonework carving details



ELEVATION C

School hall elevation to Henrietta Street with brickwork identifying introduction of first floor



ELEVATION C

School Hall Elevation to Henrietta Street showing entrance annexed to 54 St Thomas's Road



ELEVATION D

52 St Thomas's Road Elevation



ELEVATION E

54 St Thomas's Road Elevation



04 Rear Elevation 54 St Thomas's Road showing a variety of window and door styles



05 Rear Elevation 52 St Thomas's Road



ELEVATION G

52 St Thomas's Road Side Elevation to Car Park



ELEVATION F

52 St Thomas's Road Side Elevation



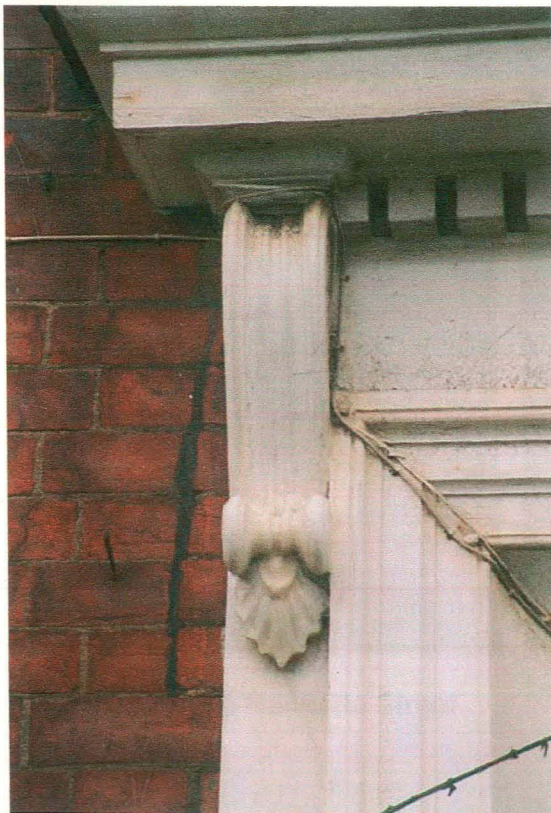
06 Bay Window 52 St Thomas's Road



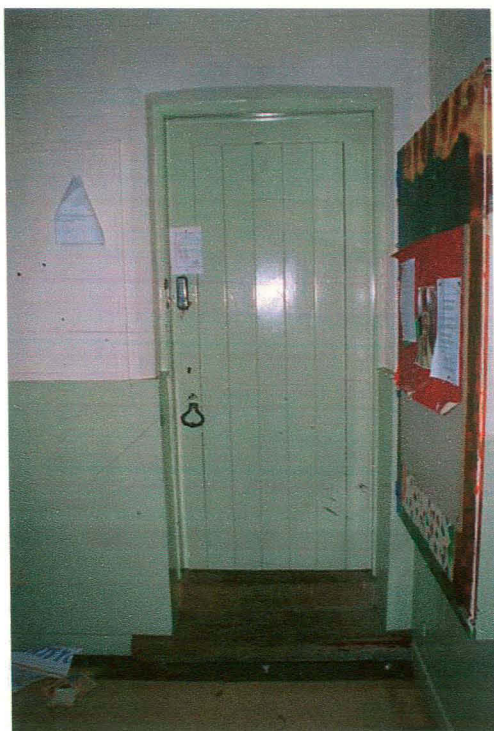
07 Bay Window 54 St Thomas's Road



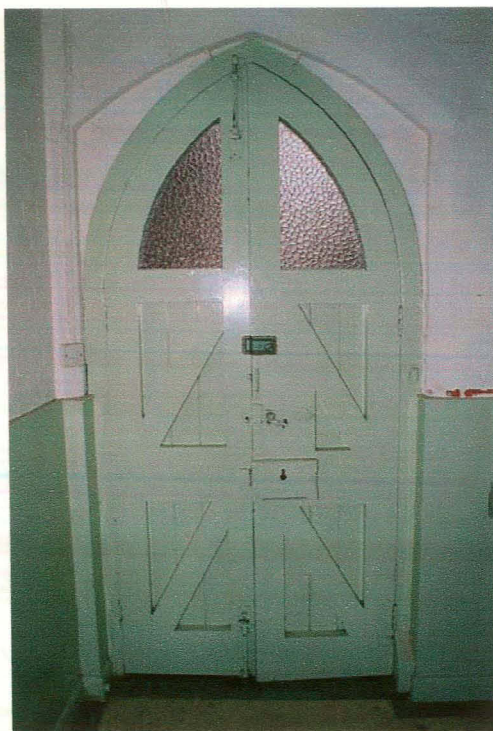
08/09 Entrance door surrounds to No.s 52 & 54 St Thomas's Road



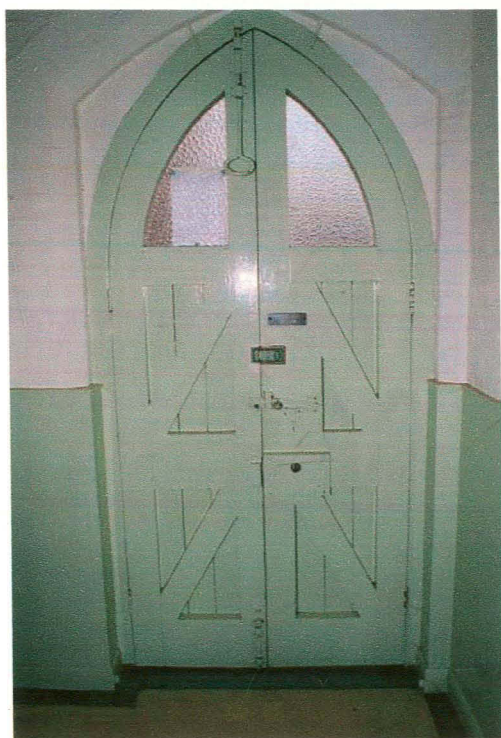
Door detail to 54 St Thomas's Road



10 Porch door to Hall



11 Porch door to rear courtyard



12 Porch door to Henrietta Street



13 Porch door to Church



14 View of Nave looking back towards the Choir Loft



15 View of Sanctuary Area



16 East window from the Choir Loft



17 Choir Loft Showing Organ



18 Motif within terrazzo flooring



19 Altar Rail Detail



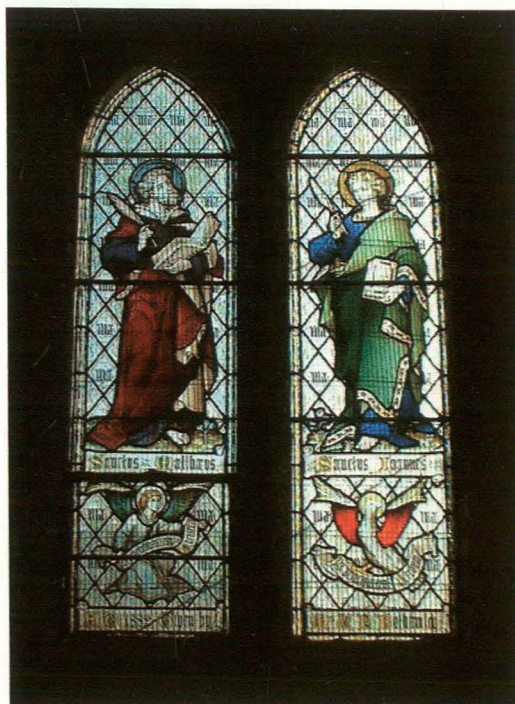
20 Altar



21 Tabernacle Stand to rear of Altar



Sanctuary Window W04



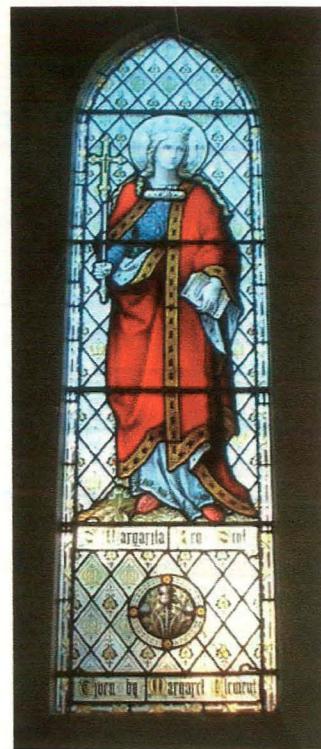
Window W01



Window W02



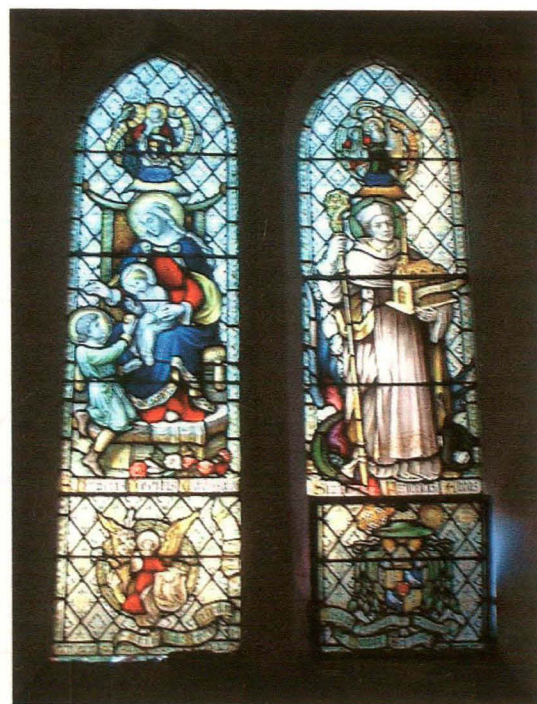
Window W03



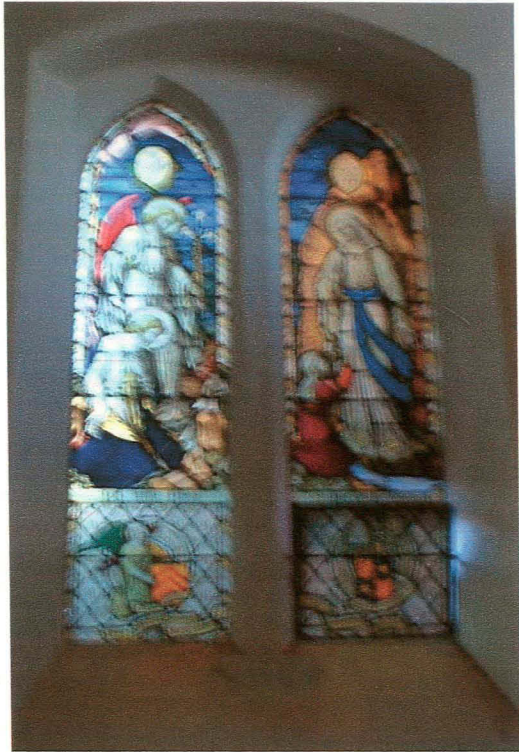
Window W05



Window W06



Window W07



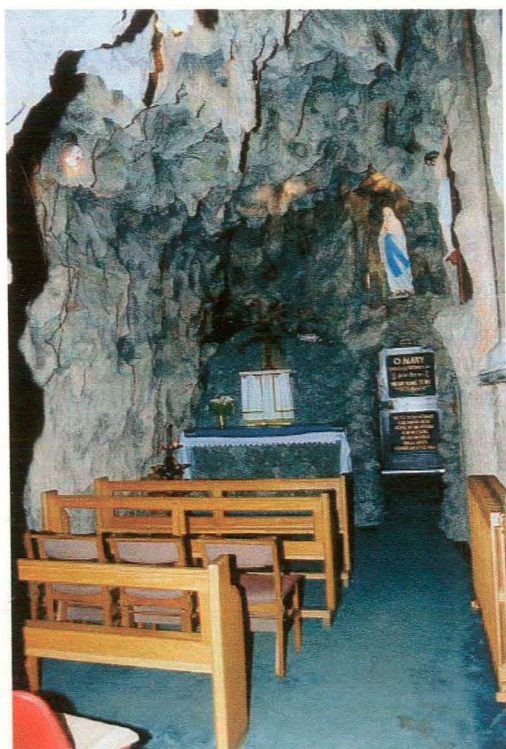
Window W08



22 Confessional Booth



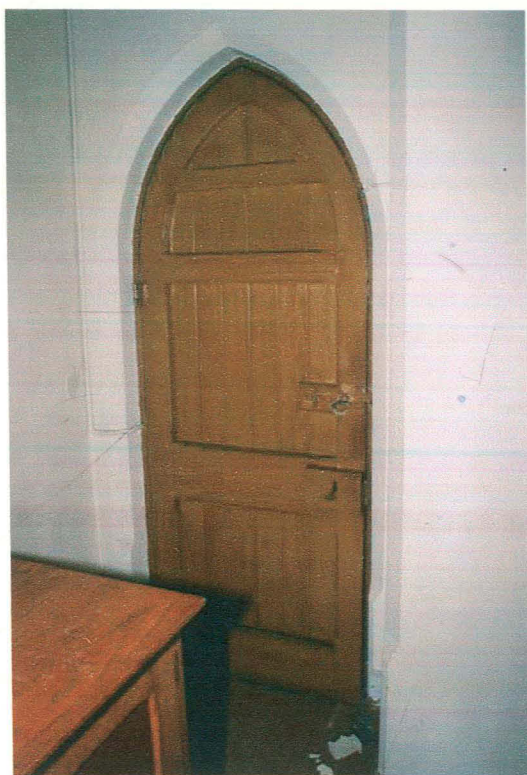
23 Grotto Door



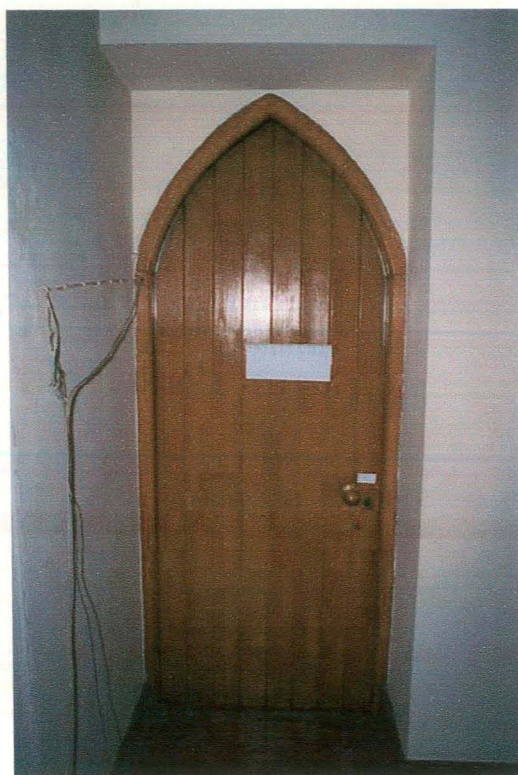
24 Grotto



25 Rear Door to Grotto



26 Sacristy door to Church



27 Sacristy door to Grotto



28 Sacristy



29 Sacristy/Storage Space



30 Hall Interior



Hall casement window detail



31 Hall Corridor showing entrance
from Henrietta Street
corner



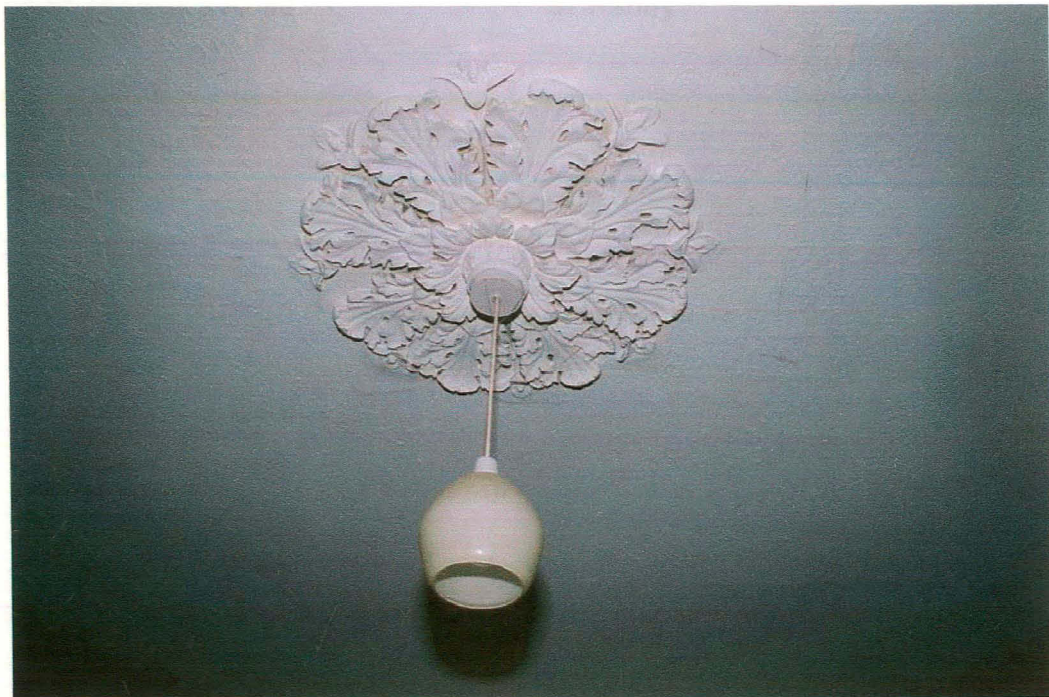
32 Hall Kitchen with pier detail to
corner



33 Hall WC



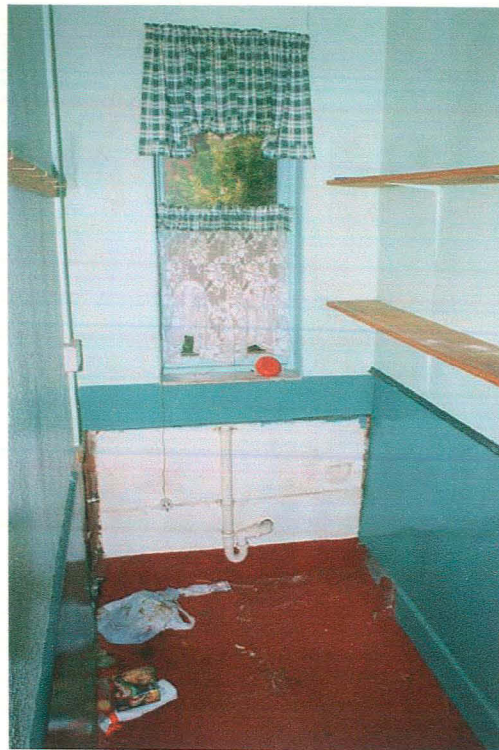
34 Hall Classroom (previously part of 54 St Thomas's Road) - note pier detail to corner indicating subdivision of previous larger room



35 Plaster ceiling rose to hall classroom (the only remaining decorative plasterwork)



36 Rear entrance to
54 St Thomas's Road



37 Pantry



38 Kitchen



39 Staircase and door to rear entrance



40 Hall and front entrance door



41 Staircase with simple square balusters



42 Coloured glass window to stair



43 Bathroom



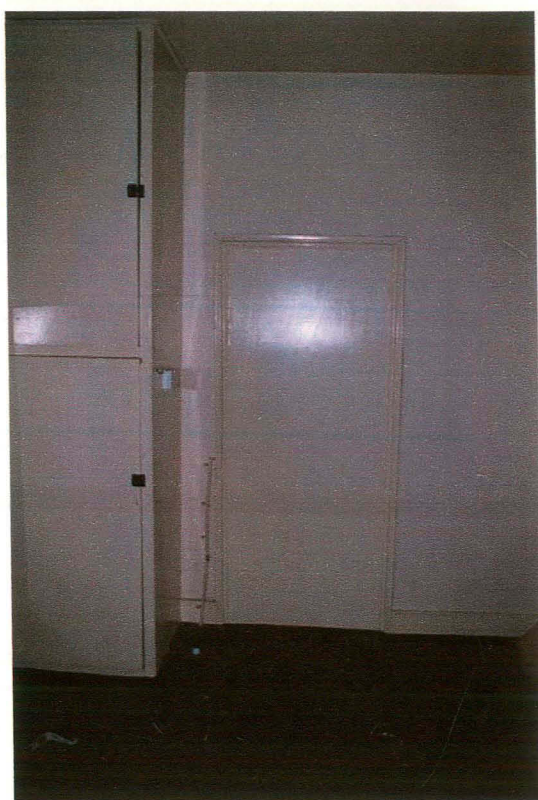
44 Bedroom 1 with picture rail intact and "6 on 6" sash window but modern chamfered skirtings



45 Study with "6 on 6" sash window



46 Bedroom 2 with simple four panel doors



47 Previous bedroom converted to large storeroom due to loss of window following construction of the school hall to the side and rear of No. 54 St Thomas's Road. This picture shows an original door opening blocked up to separate from first floor school hall accommodation.



48 Priory kitchen



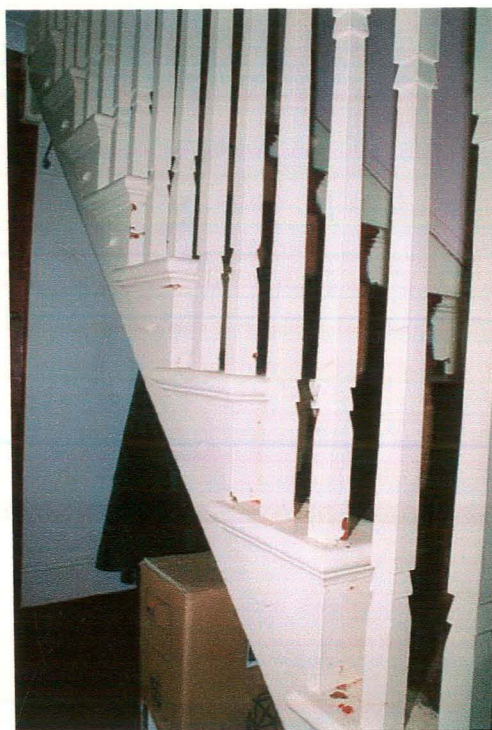
49 Priory rear dining room



50 Priory lounge



51 Priory staircase



52 Staircase detail



53 Priory entrance hall from St Thomas's road



54 Priory study showing all period features previously removed



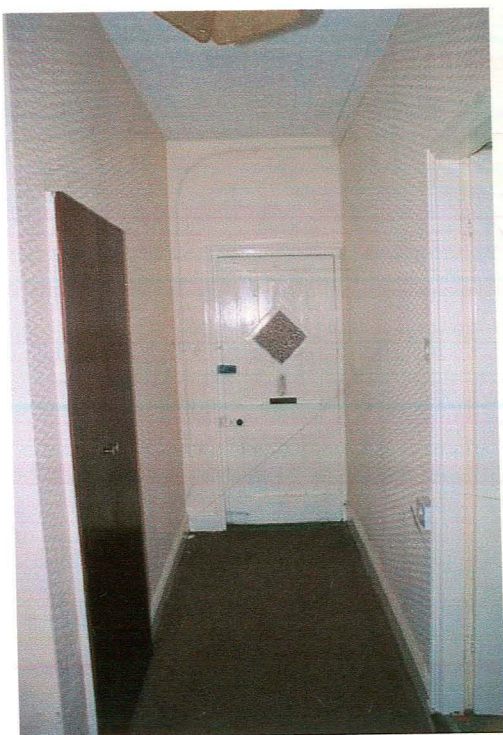
55 Priory living room showing period skirtings but modern reproduction fireplace and plaster coving to ceiling



56 Priory front dining room bay window timber surround and skirtings intact



57 Priory dining room 4 panel door



58 Priory rear entrance corridor

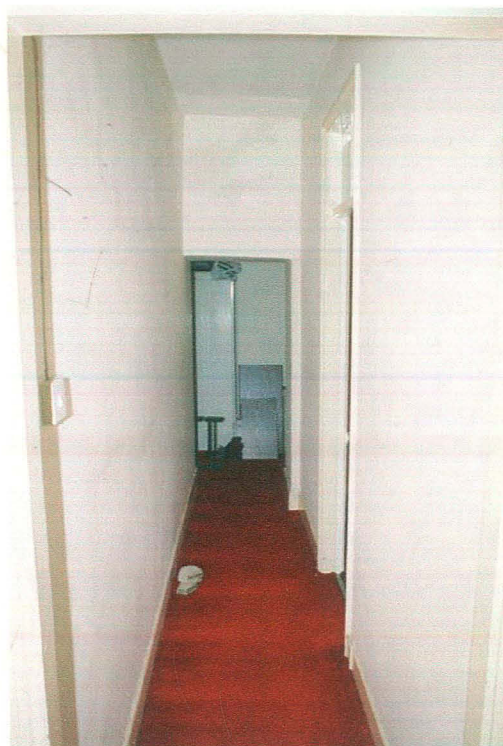


59 Priory ground floor WC



60 Priory landing





61 Priory landing showing modern chamfered architrave and skirtings and modern plaster coving to ceilings



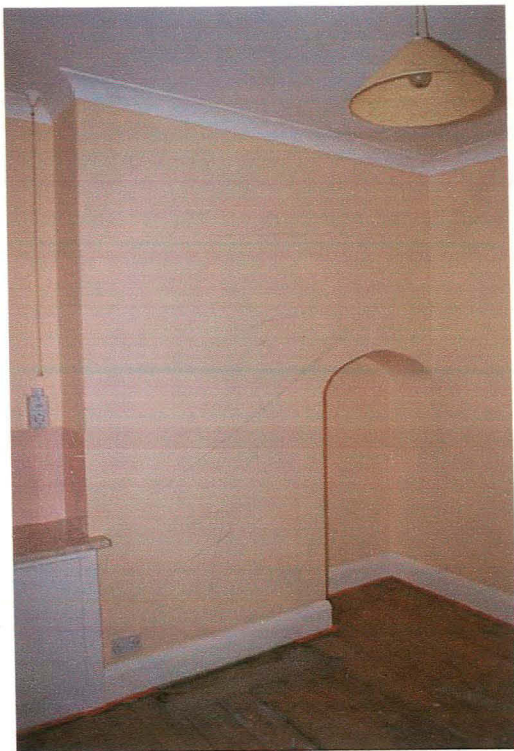
62 Priory bedroom 1 with all period features removed



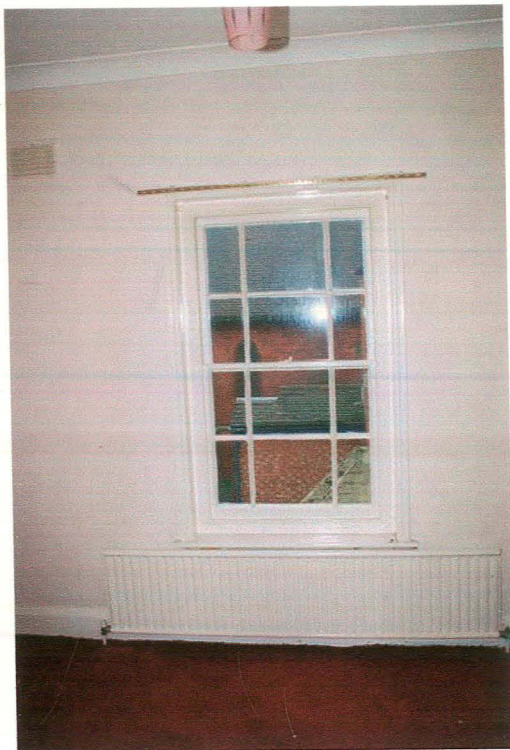
63 Priory bedroom 2 showing picture rail cast iron fire surround and simple sunk bead skirting



64 Priory bedroom 3 with Victorian eccentric 3 over 3 sash window



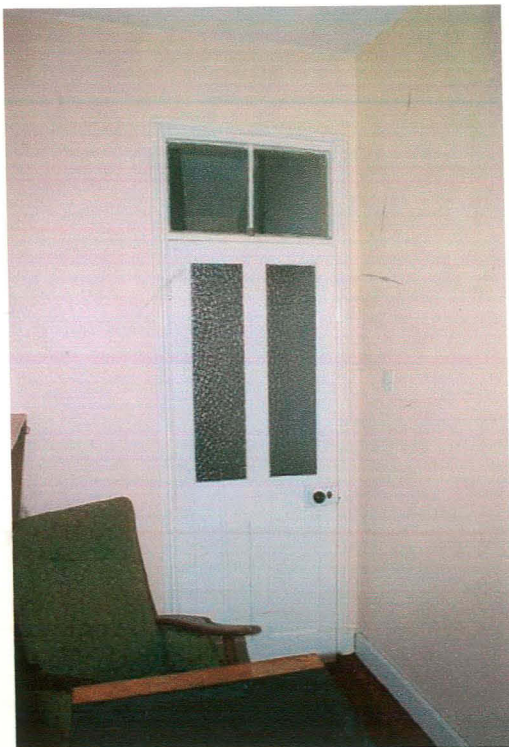
65 Priory bedroom 4 with all period features removed



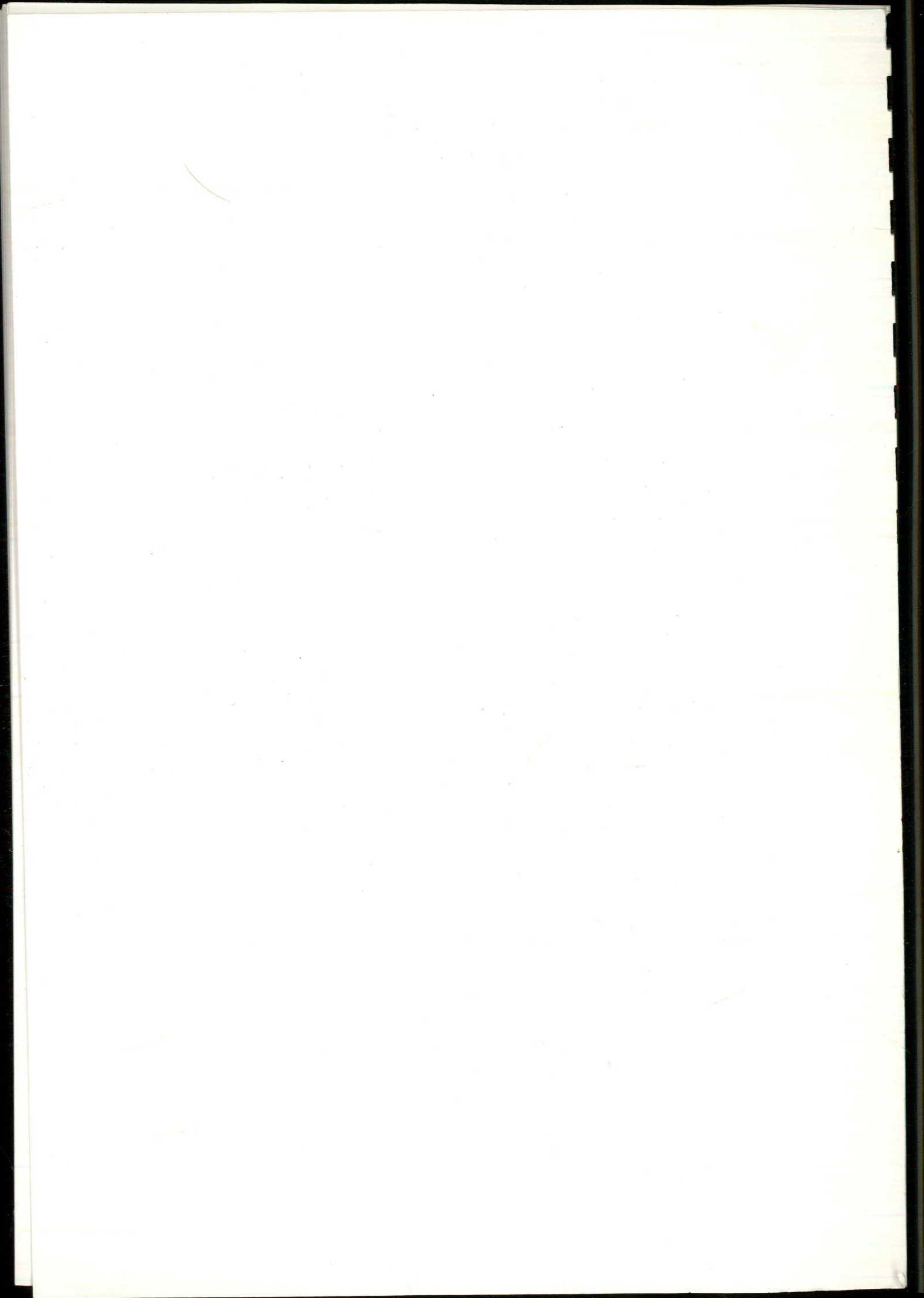
66 Priory bedroom 5 "6 on 6" sash window

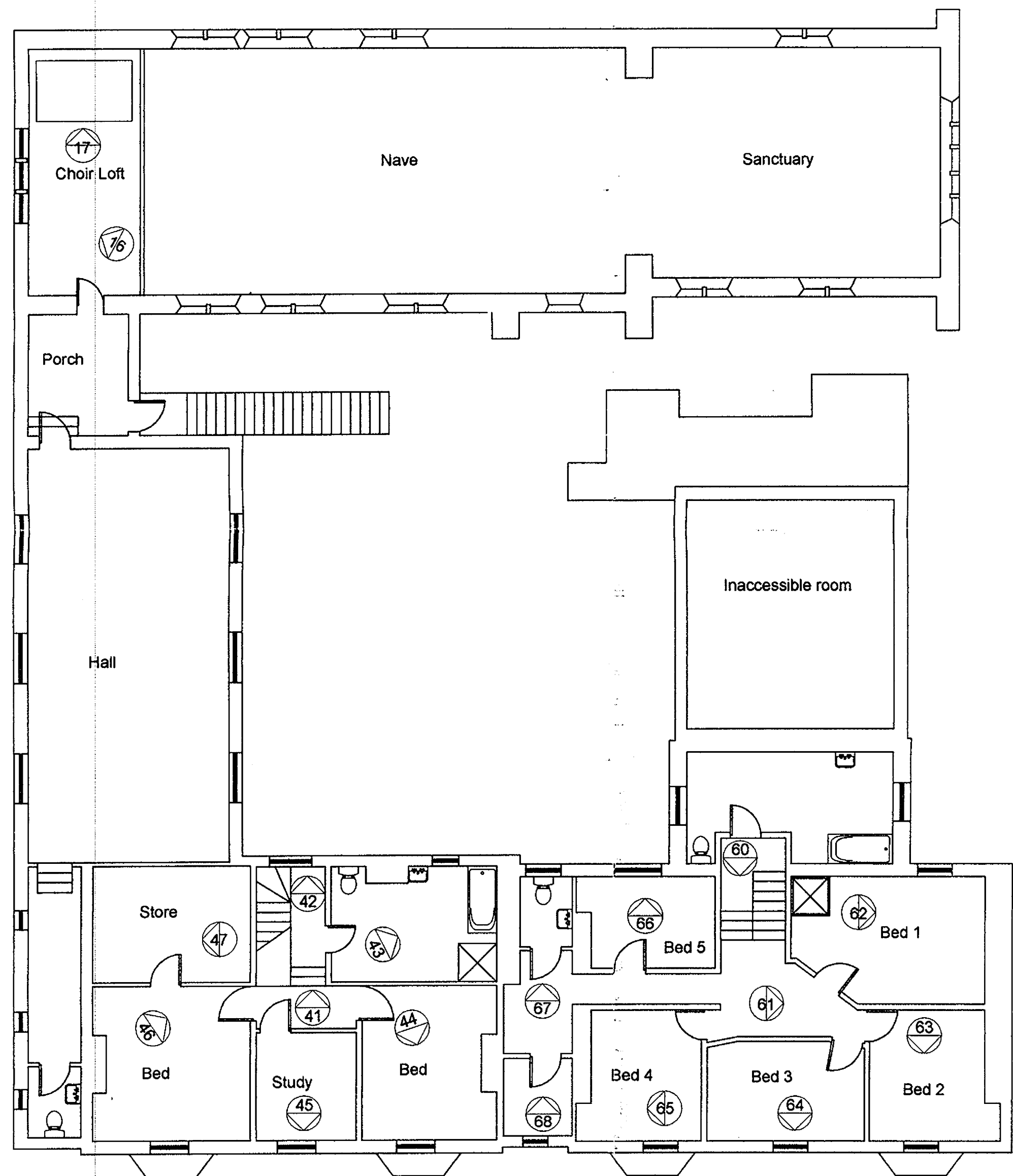


67 Priory first floor WC

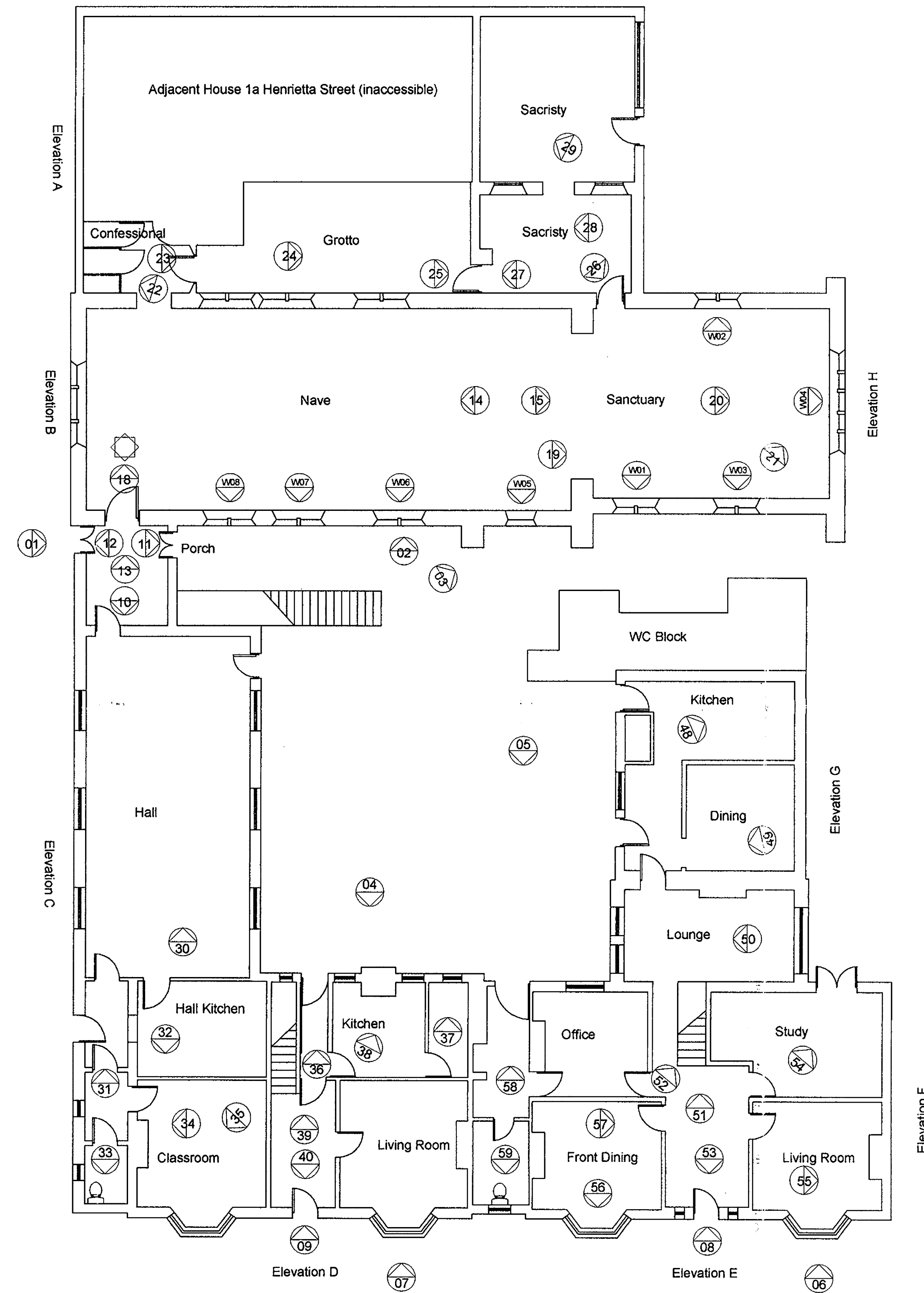


68 Priory first floor store





First Floor Plan



Ground Floor Plan

SHDC
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10 DEC 2002
1346/02
Ret

client
DIOCESE OF NOTTINGHAM

project
**ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH
SPALDING
LINCOLNSHIRE**

drawing
SURVEY OF EXISTING BUILDINGS

scale	date	drawn	checked
1:100	NOV 02	PAP	

drawing no.	revision
5932-10	

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