

**Bedlington Station High  
School,  
Northumberland  
Level II Historic  
Building Record**

Client: GALLIFORD TRY

AB Heritage Project No:10452

Date:17/11/2014

## Bedlington Station High School, Northumberland

### Level II Historic Building Record

**Client** Galliford Try  
**Project Number** 10452  
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Rev Number	Description	Undertaken	Approved	Date
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Level II Historic Building Record was undertaken at Bedlington Station High School, Palace Road, Bedlington, Northumberland prior to its demolition. The work was undertaken to satisfy a pre-planning application request relating to the demolition of the current school buildings, which range in date from the early to late 20<sup>th</sup> century, in favour of a new school building complex.

AB Heritage was commissioned by Galliford Try to undertake the historic building record.

This report constitutes the results of documentary research undertaken at the Northumberland County Record Office, Woodhorn Colliery Museum, Ashington and using appropriate online resources.

A comprehensive photographic survey was undertaken of the exterior and interior of the buildings, focusing on the early 20<sup>th</sup> century core of the school.

The earliest phase of the school buildings (Buildings 1-5) were constructed in 1925. These all have a similar design and both interior and exterior architectural details. The buildings have some interesting early art deco features including a mixture of smooth arches and dramatic straight lines. The design of the original school buildings is a clear reflection of the social and economic environment in Britain during the mid 1920's.

A single wooden prefabricated building, Building 6, survives from the phase between 1938 and 1960.

The group of buildings located on the east side of the complex were all constructed c. 1974 and all have a similar design and construction with modern interiors.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Project Background**

- 1.1.1 In November 2014, AB Heritage Ltd carried out a programme of historic building recording at Bedlington Station High School, Palace Road, Bedlington, Northumberland. The work was recommended following the completion of an archaeological desk based assessment, carried out in August 2014 by The Archaeological Practice Ltd. It satisfies a pre-planning application request relating to the demolition of the current school buildings, which range in date from the early to late 20<sup>th</sup> century, in favour of a new school building complex. The school buildings were still in use at the time of the survey.
- 1.1.2 The buildings are not registered on any local or National designated Lists and are not located within the Bedlington Conservation Area. Neither are the buildings listed on the Northumberland Historic Environment Record confirmed by a search of the Heritage Gateway website and the Northumberland Historic Environment Record online.
- 1.1.3 In accordance with paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework and standard practice, a programme of recording was undertaken in order to provide a better understanding and to compile a permanent archive record of the buildings.
- 1.1.4 The on-site survey was undertaken on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> and Friday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2014.

### **1.2 Site Location & Description**

- 1.2.1 Bedlington Station High School is located c. 2km to the east of the core of the historic town of Bedlington, on the east side of Bedlington Station. Palace Road runs adjacent to the west boundary and the A1147 road forms the east boundary of the school complex, which comprises a series of buildings located within the northwest corner of the site (Figure 1).
- 1.2.2 A sports pavilion and bowling green are present to the south of the school buildings and playing fields are situated to the south and east, along with a running track.

### **1.3 Proposed Development**

- 1.3.1 The proposed development comprises the demolition of the existing school buildings in favour of a new school building complex.

## 2. AIMS & METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Aims of Works

- 2.1.1 The aim of the work is to provide a better understanding and to compile a permanent archive record of the buildings.
- 2.1.2 The research aims of the project are to contribute towards the appreciation of the history of schools in the North-East of England, in line with the North-East Regional Research Framework for the Historic Environment<sup>1</sup> – in line with research priority 10: *20<sup>th</sup> century* (Petts & Gerrard, 2006).

### 2.2 Methodology of Works

- 2.2.1 The report will comply with English Heritage, 2006, *Understanding Historic Buildings – A Guide to Good Recording Practice* (revised and expanded version of the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England's 1996 document *Recording Historic Buildings – A Descriptive Specification (Third Edition)*).
- 2.2.2 The report will:
- chart the historical development of the building and adequately explain and illustrate what is significant;
  - explain the level of the record and limitations of the record.
- 2.2.3 The survey will be carried out broadly in accordance with an English Heritage Level 2 recording. This will be a descriptive record.
- 2.2.4 Within the report, selected digital images have been reproduced as plates (Plates 1 – 5), together with a full index of the digital photography and location plots (Appendix 1. Figures 2 - 7). A full catalogue of all photographs is included in the archive.
- 2.2.5 A drawn record has not been produced as part of this survey.

#### ***Documentary Research***

- 2.2.6 Initial research was undertaken using the following online resources:
- Heritage Gateway: [www.heritagegateway.org.uk](http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk) to access the English Heritage National Monuments Record and to undertake an initial assessment of the Northumberland Historic Environment Record;
  - Northumberland Record Office at the Woodhorn Colliery Museum: <http://www.experiencewoodhorn.com/catalogue/> to identify pertinent resources to access when visiting the archives.

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<sup>1</sup> NERRF, p.195: <http://www.durham.gov.uk/media/1551/Shared-Visions-North-East-Regional-0Research-Framework-for-the-Historic-Environment/pdf/SharedVisionsNERegionalResearchFrameworkHistoricEnvironment.pdf>

- Bedlington Station High School: original plans of the school are still currently held at the school.

2.27 Visits were made by AB Heritage to the Northumberland Record Office at the Woodhorn Colliery Museum on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2014.

### ***Photographic Survey***

2.2.7 The site was visited by Kerry Kerr-Peterson of AB Heritage on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> November 2014, in order to compile descriptions of the building and to undertake the photographic work.

2.2.8 Both the exterior and interior of the property was viewed, described and photographed.

2.2.9 The photographic record was made using 14-42mm DSLR colour photography. Photographs were taken with the assistance of a flash and tripod where required.

## **2.3 Limitations**

2.3.1 Access was gained to all areas required to carry out a comprehensive photographic survey, apart from the loft of the Gate House (Building 3).

2.3.2 It should be noted that the report has been prepared under the express instruction and solely for the use of Galliford Try, and any associated parties they elect to share this information with. Measurements and distances referred to in the report should be taken as approximations only and should not be used for detailed design purposes.

2.3.3 All the work carried out in this report is based upon the professional knowledge and understanding of AB Heritage on current (November 2014) and relevant United Kingdom standards and codes, technology and legislation. Changes in these areas may occur in the future and cause changes to the conclusions, advice, recommendations or design given. AB Heritage does not accept responsibility for advising the client's or associated parties of the facts or implications of any such changes in the future.

2.3.4 This report has been prepared utilising factual information obtained from third party sources. AB Heritage takes no responsibility for the accuracy of such information. It should also be noted that this report represents an early stage of a phased approach to assessing the archaeological and cultural heritage resource of the application site to allow the development of an appropriate mitigation strategy, should this be required. It does not comprise mitigation of impacts in itself.



### 3. HISTORIC BACKGROUND

#### 3.1 Statutory / Non Statutory Designated Features

- 3.1.1 The buildings are not registered on any local or National designated Lists and are not located within the Bedlington Conservation Area. None of the buildings are listed on the Northumberland Historic Environment Record either, which was confirmed by a search of the Heritage Gateway website and the Northumberland Historic Environment Record online.
- 3.1.2 The school buildings are considered to have some significant local and some wider architectural and historical interest (The Archaeological Practice, 2014).

#### 3.2 Historical Background

##### *Inter-war State Education*

- 3.2.1 The Education Act that was passed in 1918 raised the school leaving age from twelve to fourteen. This sparked a period between the First and Second World Wars associated with the construction of Secondary and Grammar Schools. These were modelled, where funding and space allowed, on the design of public school complexes, typically comprising quadrangle shaped buildings with one or more playing fields (English Heritage, 2011). In 1925, The Baines Committee recommended that roofs were set at a lower pitch, amongst other solutions, to reduce costs after the recent economic problems (Harwood, 2010). This is seen in the earliest phase of buildings at Bedlington (Plate 1).



Plate 1: Main Entrance of Building 1, Viewed from South-West (Scale 2m)

***The Opening of Bedlington Secondary School***

- 3.2.2 The Governors meeting minute books examined at the Northumberland Record Office indicate that the first phase of the school (Buildings 1 – 5, Figure 8) was constructed during first half of 1925 and preparations were made toward the end of that year for the appointment of the staff, including the first Head Master (Mr Arthur. J. Williams). Prior to this, the site had been undeveloped agricultural land. Provisions were also arranged for the grand opening of the school, which was carried out by Her Grace the Duchess of Atholl on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> October 1926. At the time the school was opened, the 122 pupils were charged £3 per term to attend, not including the 8d charge for their school dinner.
- 3.2.3 The earliest plans of the school are the original blue prints that date to 1924. These are owned by the school and were shown to AB Heritage by the school caretaker. They are in a poor state of preservation and it was advised that they be deposited with the Northumberland Record Office to prevent further deterioration. These show the main quadrangle block (Building 1) with bay windows flanking the main entrance, two inner courtyards and corridors adjoining the rectangular former Girls Toilet Block with porch on the north side (Building 2) and the larger former Boys Toilet Block on the south side (Building 4). A former T-shaped building is located to the northwest on the plan, where Building 7 is now located, which has two porches on the south side and one on the west.
- 3.2.4 The Governors meeting minute book 1925 - 1945 examined at the Northumberland Record Office record the erection of several buildings including the sports pavilion, located at the south end of the complex, which was constructed around 1934.
- 3.2.5 The 1938 25-inch Edition of the Ordnance Survey Map is the first of the Ordnance Survey maps to depict the school. It shows the school buildings much as they were on the 1924 blue prints. Two ancillary buildings are shown, one at the north end and one along the east boundary.

***The Second World War Years***

- 3.2.6 The documentary sources describe 1939 as 'the most difficult and the most interesting in the history of the school'. The start of the autumn term was deferred until 22<sup>nd</sup> November, pending the arrival of 8 air raid shelters, which were located on the north and east sides of the school complex. During this period the pupils were only required to come to the school to collect and hand in work done at home.
- 3.2.7 The staff and pupils were praised for taking 'the war as a matter of course', despite occasional interruptions caused by the air raid warnings. Extra ground within the school was used for cultivating vegetables, while two teachers left to take up military service, including Pilot Officer A. J. Cogbill, who taught English; he lost his life and is commemorated in a memorial, formerly located at the school. A garden of remembrance was established in the school grounds during the summer of 1947.

***Post War Schools***

- 3.2.8 The Education Act, which was passed in 1944, re-organised the secondary education system, grouping schools into Grammar, Technical or Modern establishments (English Heritage,

2011). It was around this time that Bedlington Secondary School became Bedlington Grammar School.

- 3.2.9 The birth rate in Britain, which had been declining since 1901, experienced a sharp increase between 1942 and 1948. The result of this, in relation to the need for new school buildings, was a system of using prefabricated methods of school building, in order to meet the demand. However, the earliest prefabricated methods were only suitable for single storey buildings. From the 1950's the use of material such as steel and concrete created more robust framed structures, suitable for multi-storey buildings. A number of prefabricated huts were built on the field at the rear of the school in 1945, while a 'new hut' is mentioned in 1953 by the Governors meeting minute book 1945 - 1966.

#### ***Development of the school (Figure 8)***

- 3.2.10 The 1960 25-inch Edition of the Ordnance Survey Map shows the complex with extensions on the east side of the main block (Building 1). There is an additional building on the south side of the complex and the former air raid shelters are depicted along the north and east boundaries.
- 3.2.11 The plans and elevations for the late 20<sup>th</sup> century additions to the school date to 1972-73. These show the additional buildings on the east and south side of the complex much as they are depicted on the modern map.
- 3.2.12 The 1993 6-inch Edition of the Ordnance Survey Map shows the school complex much as it is shown on the modern edition of the map. Several of the ancillary buildings shown on the 1960 Edition of the map are no longer extant, including the south part of Building 3 which has been replaced by a building on the same location (Building 7).

#### ***Famous Former Pupils***

- 3.2.13 The footballer Sir Bobby Charlton attended the Grammar School between 1948 and 1954. It was during his time at the school, in 1953, that he was talent spotted by Manchester United's chief scout, Joe Armstrong, whilst playing football for the East Northumberland Schools division.

### **3.3 Historic Building Recording**

#### ***Building 1 – The Main Block (Figure 2)***

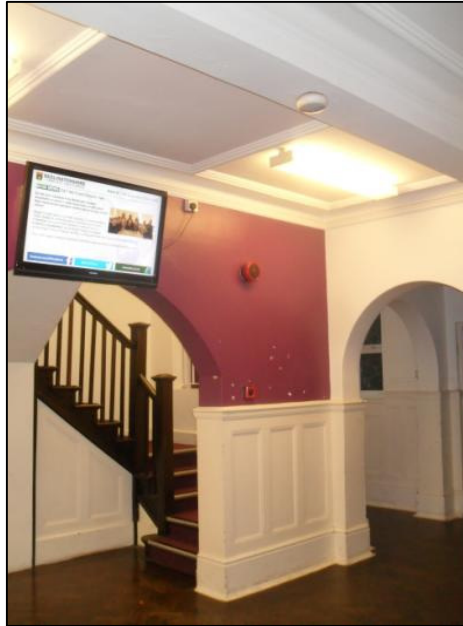
- 3.3.1 The main block of the school consists of a quadrangle constructed of Stretcher bonded red brick with concrete eaves and a pitched pan tiled roof. The southwest facing main entrance consist of two pitched gables with projecting, three sided bay windows. A suspended wooden porch with a concave mid-section is located over the main entrance. An art deco style window is situated above the main doorway with a design containing circles and rectangles. A date stone is present above the main entrance with the school badge carved in limestone with the date 1925 (Plate 2). Four projecting bricks detail the top of the gables and 6 short rows of the same are present on the front corners.

- 3.3.2 A blocked up doorway is present near the southwest corner of the building. This is a former exit from the corridor on the south side of the building that led to the former Girls Toilet Block (Building 2). Later and less ornate brick extensions are present at the north and southeast corners of the building. Copper has been used as flashing on some areas of the roof.



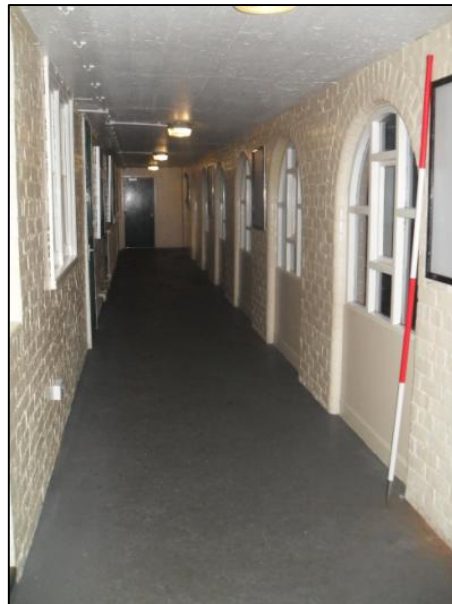
**Plate 2: Carved Date Stone Over Main Entrance of Building 1. Viewed from SW**

- 3.3.3 The ground floor (Figure 2) contains a lobby, a hall, offices, store cupboards and 18 classrooms accessed from four conjoining corridors with an internal courtyard at the north and south ends of the hall.
- 3.3.4 The first floor (Figure 2) is accessed via a slip staircase. The front of the building consists of a large classroom with two bay windows and two smaller classrooms on the north and south sides. The rear of the first floor consists of two stairwells leading to a large classroom.
- 3.3.5 On the ground floor (Figure 2), the lobby and corridors contain several rounded arched doorways and windows with rounded edging bricks and arched doors and window fittings (Plate 4). The lobby also contains plastered square ceiling panels, cornicing and dado high wooden panelling (Plate 3). There is an ornate cast iron grill situated in a niche on the south side of the main stairway. The offices at the front of the building, flanking the main entrance have bay windows, cornicing and dado rail details.



**Plate 3: Details of Building 1 Plaster Ceiling Panels & Lobby Panelling**

- 3.3.6 The hall (Figure 2) contains several wooden Head Boy & Head Girl boards and the roof has carved wooden corbels below the modern ceiling. Classrooms G10 & G11 have mid-height panelling on the exterior of the room and all of the classrooms have interior opening windows. The short section of corridor leading to the later extension classrooms G13 & G14 has circular skylights along the ceiling. The boiler house in the basement has an original fireplace on the west wall that contains a cast iron grate. A large iron pipe protrudes from the ceiling adjacent to the fireplace. A coal shoot is present on the east wall of the main gas room.



**Plate 4: Corridor within Building 1; Viewed from SE (Scale 2m)**

***Building 2 – The Reception Building (Figure 3)***

- 3.3.7 The reception building is located in the former Girls Toilet Block. The exterior is the same construction as Building 1 with a porch towards the east end of the west facing front of the building, which has projecting brick detail on the gable end. The main entrance has a rounded arch doorway with a semi-circular window above the door. A porch with external arches is located at the east end of the building.
- 3.3.9 The interior has been highly modernised. A blocked up doorway is present in the toilet in the southeast corner of the building. This is the former entrance to the corridor leading to the main block (Building 1). It is believed that the original tiled surfaces survive beneath the modern walls.

***Building 3 – The Gate House (Figure 4)***

- 3.3.10 The exterior of the building is the same construction as Buildings 1 & 2. A gabled porch is located on the south side of the building with projecting brick detail. A coal store is located on the north side of the building. The loft was not accessed during the survey.
- 3.3.11 The interior is mostly modernised and consists of classrooms, offices and storerooms. All of the windows have ornate cast iron grills (Plate 5) of the same design as present in the stairway of the main block (Building 1).



**Plate 5: Details of Window Grill in Building 3; Viewed from East**



***Building 4 – The Music Block (Figure 3)***

- 3.3.12 The music block is of the same construction as Buildings 1 - 3. A porch is located on the north facing front entrance which has a gable end with projecting brick detail. It has a rounded arched doorway with a semi-circular window. Projecting brick detail is also present along the corners of the building. The rear of the roof is covered with mineral felt and a later buttress has been constructed against the rear wall. A blocked up window is present towards the southeast corner of the rear of the building, within the former toilets area.
- 3.3.13 The interior consists of the main music room which has wooden beams supporting the ceiling. The storeroom on the north side of the main music room has three blocked up windows, two on the south side and one on the west side. The offices and practice rooms have all been modernised. The music room at the west end of the building has wooden panels above the windows. The internal walls of the former toilet area are tiled and a blocked up window is present along the south wall. The original urinal trough is still present along the east wall.

***Building 5 – The Sports Pavilion (Figure 5)***

- 3.3.14 The sports pavilion is of rendered brick construction with a pitched pan tiled roof. A wooden roofed veranda is present on the west side with metal pole supports. Another veranda is located on the south side which has square concrete support pillars and a red quarry tile floor.
- 3.3.15 The interior consists of male and female changing areas, a hall and a kitchen and has been essentially modernised. An honours board for the Bowling Green is present within the hall.

***Building 6 – Prefabricated Classroom (Figure 3)***

- 3.3.16 The prefabricated classroom is of wooden construction with full length UPVC double glazed windows. It has a pitched mineral felt roof and the interior is essentially modern. This building is attached to Building 4 via a covered corridor.

***Building 7 – The Sixth Form (Figure 3)***

- 3.3.17 The sixth form block is of a similar construction to the previous brick buildings. It consists of a common room with large single glazed windows with a boiler room on the north side. To the west is a later workroom extension of a similar design. This is sited on the location of a former T-shaped building constructed in 1925. The interior is of modern construction.

***Buildings 8 to 11 – Years 9, 10 & 11 Building, Admin Block, Sports Block & Craft Block (Figure s 3 & 5 - 7)***

- 3.3.18 The 1970's buildings are all of the same design and construction. They consisted of dark brown, Stretcher bonded bricks and concrete with large single glazed windows. A large concrete boiler tower is located adjacent to the west end of the Sports Block (Building 10) (Plate 6). The interior of these buildings are modern.



**Plate 6: View of Buildings 9 & 10; Viewed from South-East (Scale 2m)**

### **3.4 Discussion**

- 3.4.1 The earliest phase of the school buildings (Buildings 1-5) were constructed in 1925. These all have a similar design and both interior and exterior architectural details. The buildings have some interesting early art deco features, including a mixture of smooth arches and dramatic straight lines. The design of the original school buildings is a clear reflection of the social and economic environment in Britain during the mid 1920's.
- 3.4.2 A single wooden prefabricated building, Building 6, survives from the phase between 1938 and 1960.
- 3.4.3 The group of buildings located on the east side of the complex were all constructed c. 1974 and all have a similar design and construction with modern interiors.



#### 4. REFERENCES

Charlton, B, 2007, The Autobiography: My Manchester United Years.

English Heritage, 2011, Education Buildings – Listed Selection Guide.

Harwood, E, 2010, England's Schools History, Architecture and Adaptation.

Rose, G, 2014, Bedlington School. Northumberland Method Statement and Risk Assessment.

The Archaeological Practice Ltd, 2014, Bedlington Station School Site, Northumberland – Archaeological Assessment.

##### **Internet Resource**

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Accessed 11/11/2014

<http://www.newmp.org.uk/detail.php?contentId=6462>. Accessed 11/11/2014

## **Appendix 1 - Photograph Index**



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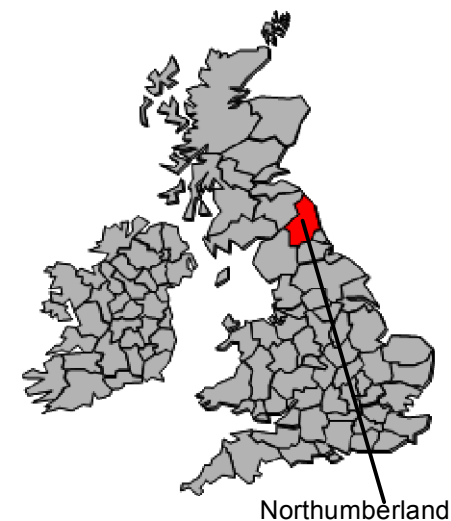
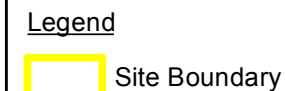


Figure 1: Site Location

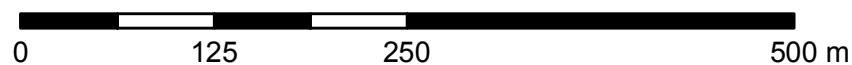
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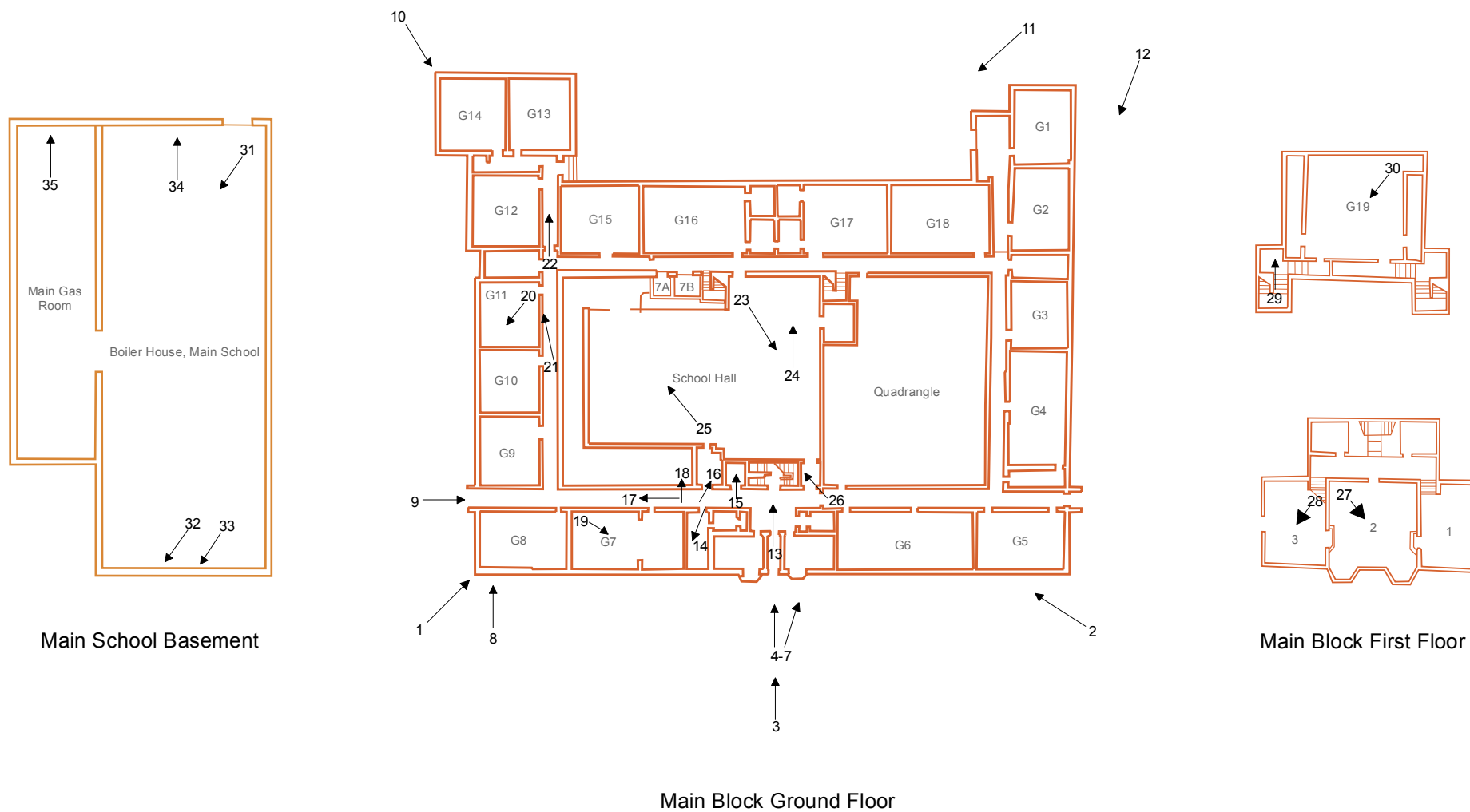
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Drawn by: ZE

Approved by: AB
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The numbers refer to the photograph caption numbers in the main document

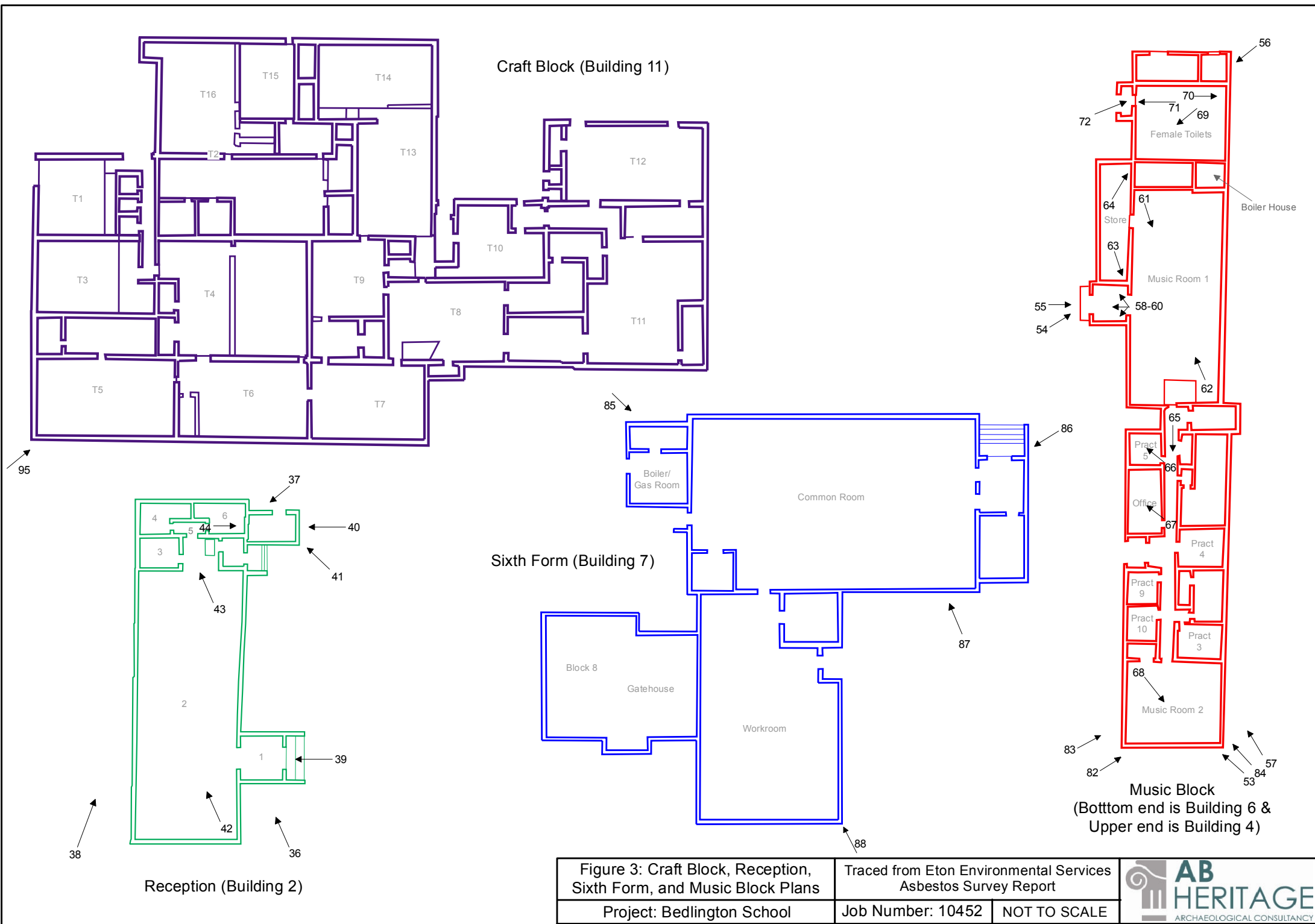
Figure 2: Main Block and Main School Basement Plans (Building 1)

Traced from Eton Environmental Services  
Asbestos Survey Report

Project: Bedlington School

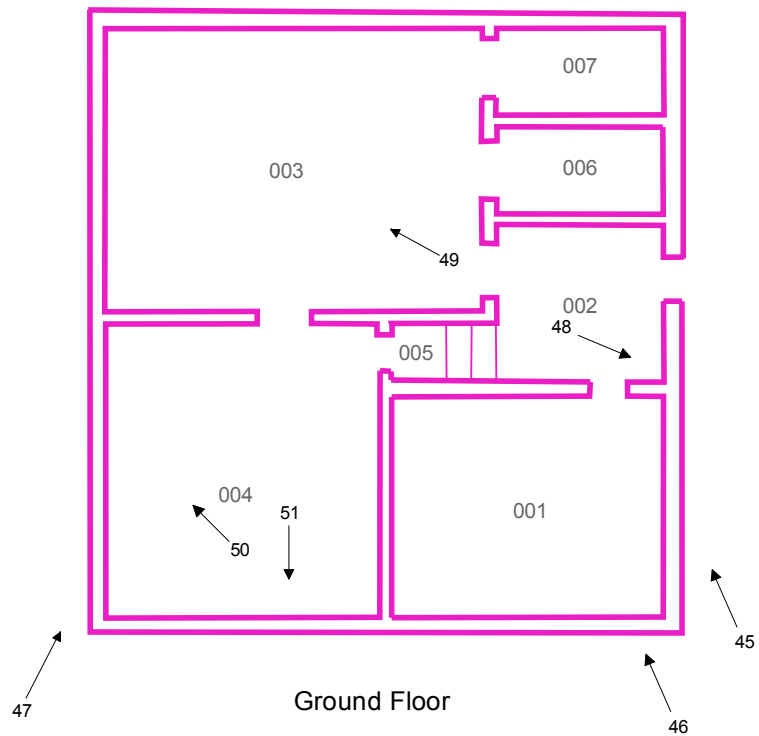
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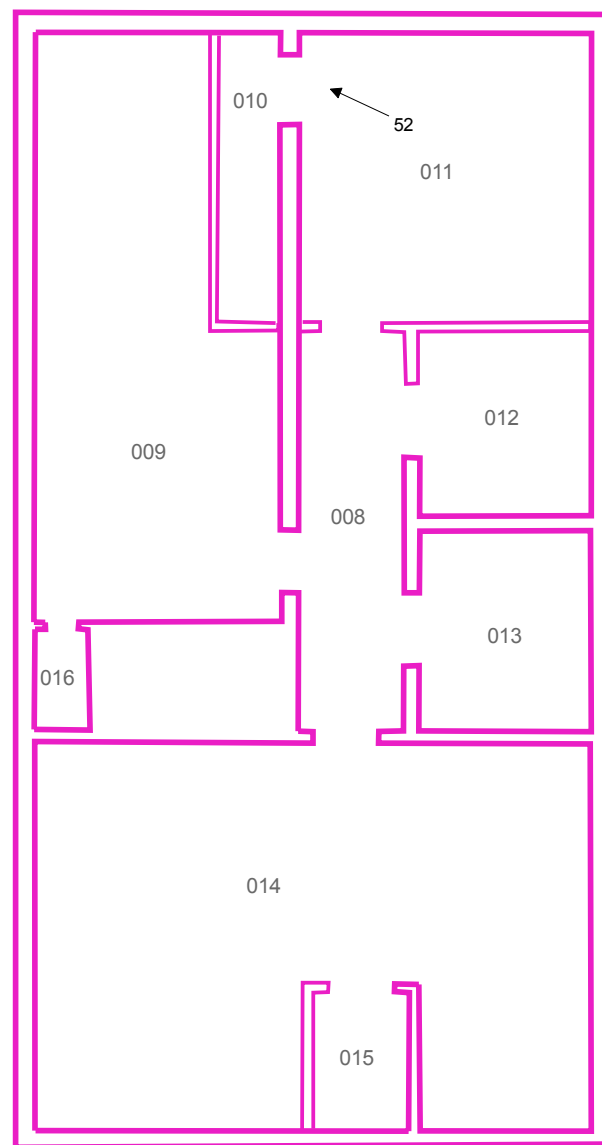


<p>Figure 3: Craft Block, Reception, Sixth Form, and Music Block Plans</p> <p>Project: Bedlington School</p>	<p>Traced from Eton Environmental Services Asbestos Survey Report</p> <p>Job Number: 10452</p>		<p>NOT TO SCALE</p>	
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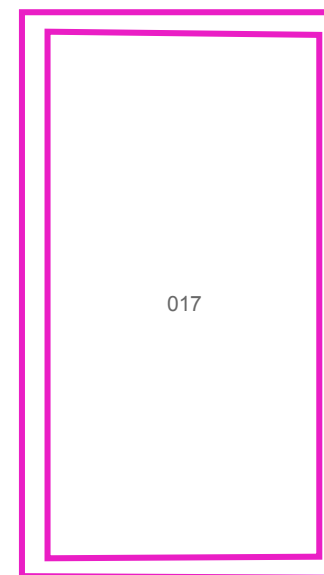




Ground Floor



First Floor



Loft

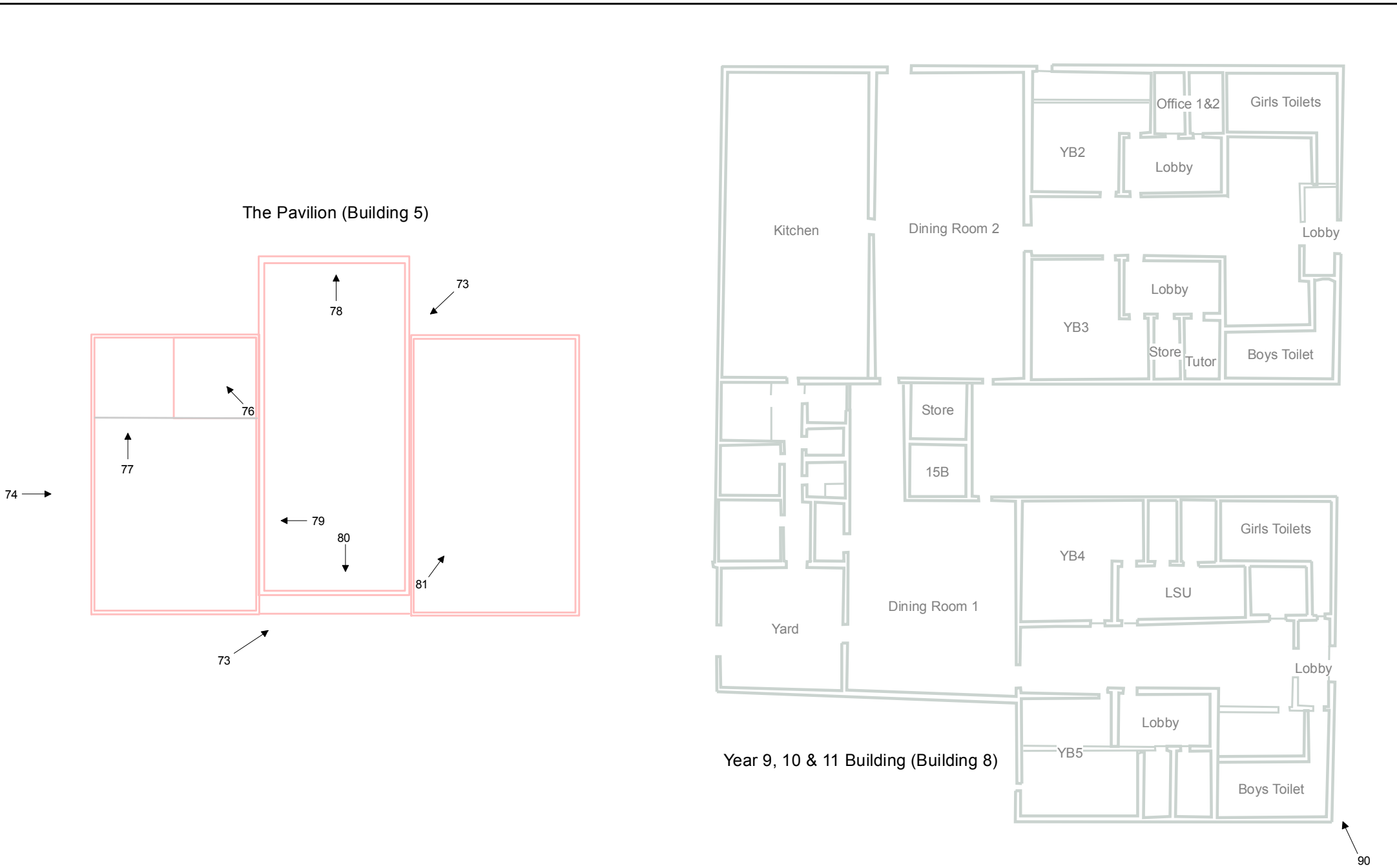
Figure 4: Gatehouse Plan (Building 3)

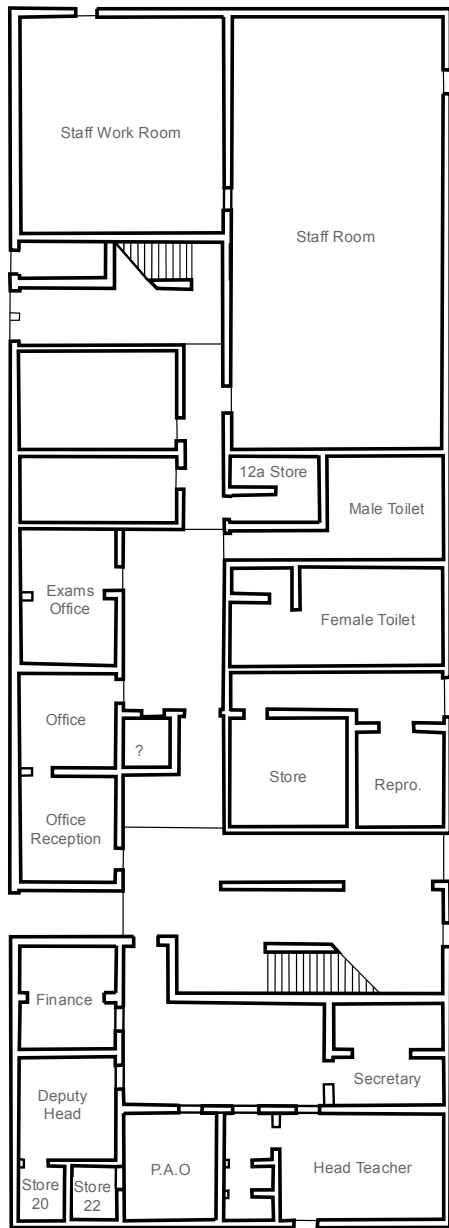
Traced from Eton Environmental Services  
Asbestos Survey Report

Project: Bedlington School

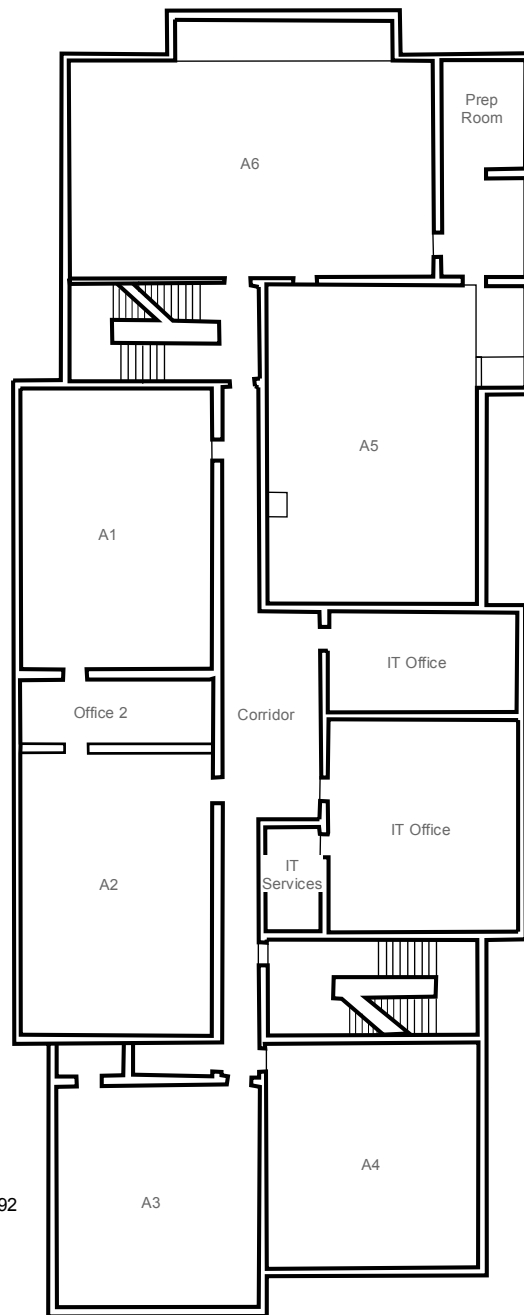
Job Number: 10452

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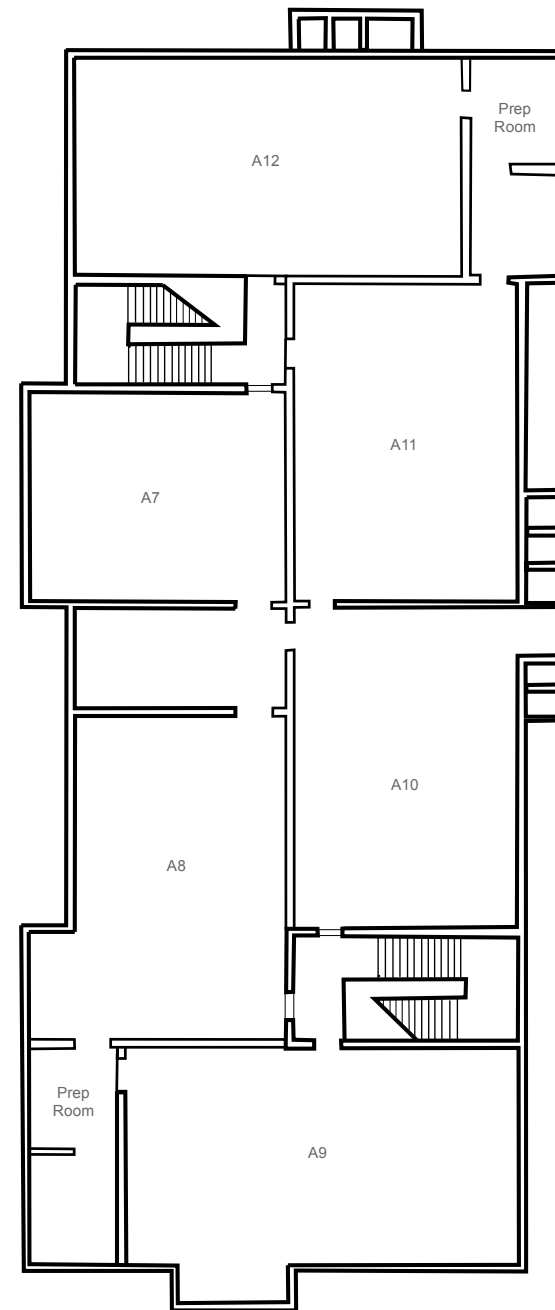




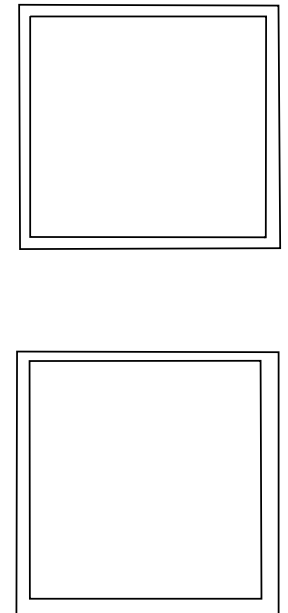
Ground Floor



First Floor



Second Floor



Tank Rooms

91

92

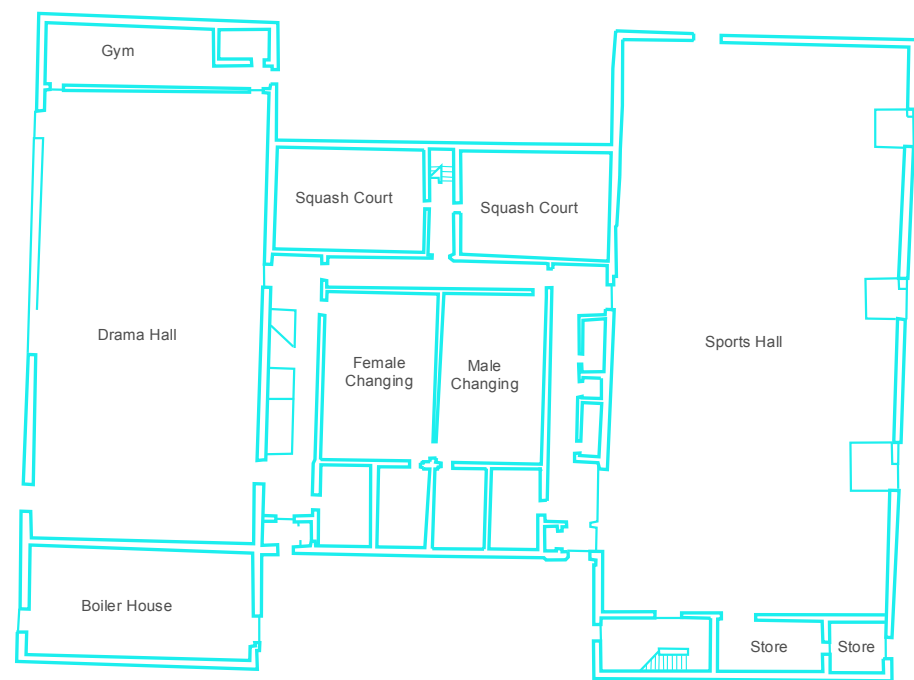
Figure 6: Admin Block Plan (Building 9)

Traced from Eton Environmental Services  
Asbestos Survey Report

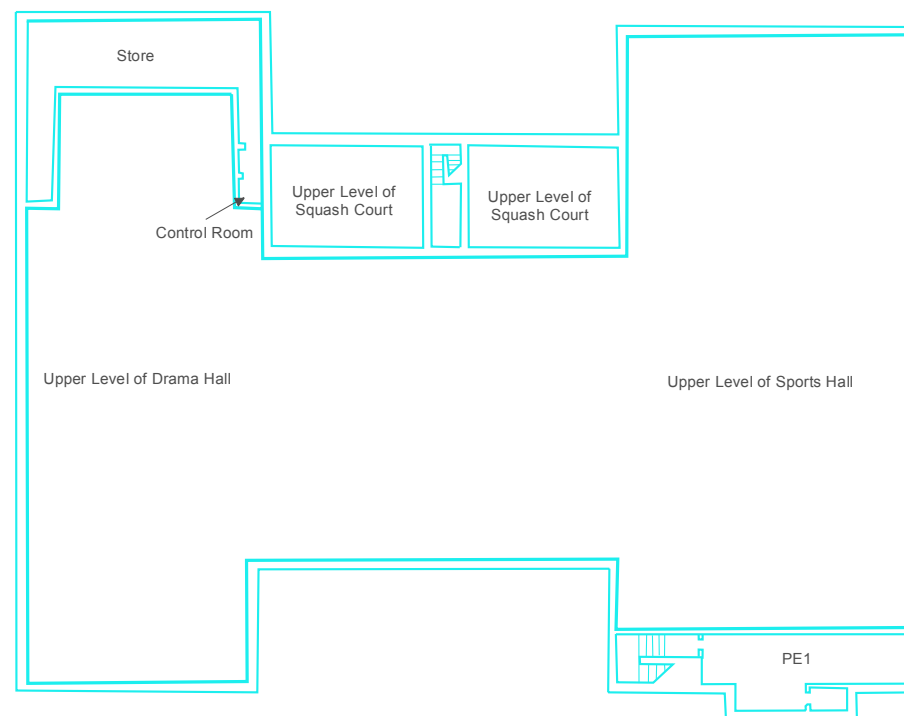
Project: Bedlington School

Job Number: 10452

NOT TO SCALE



Sports Block Ground Floor



Sports Block First Floor

Figure 7: Sports Block Plan (Building 10)

Project: Bedlington School

Traced from Eton Environmental Services  
Asbestos Survey Report

Job Number: 10452

NOT TO SCALE



#### Legend

- Site Boundary
- Phase 1: 1925
- Phase 2: 1934-1960
- Phase 3: 1970s



#### Site Plan

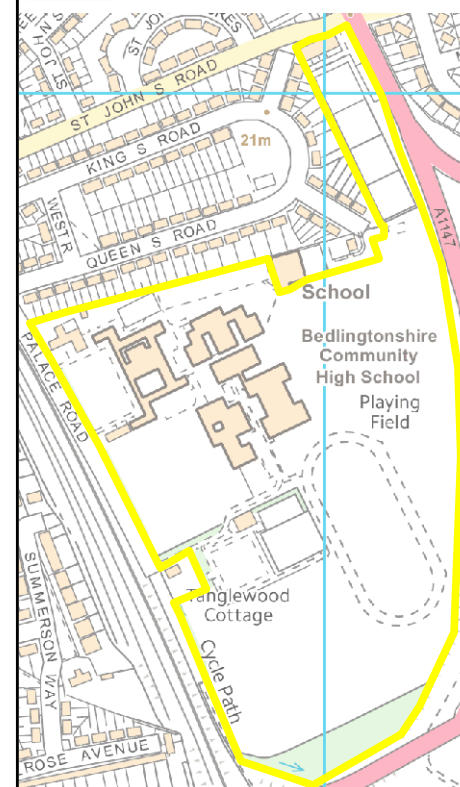


Figure 8: Phase Map

Project: Bedlington School

Date: 17/11/14

Job number: 10452

Drawn by: ZE

Approved by: AB



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