



# Historic building recording at the former Victoria Junior School Wellingborough, Northamptonshire

Report No. 17/69

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NGR: SP 89746 68154  
Planning Ref: WP/14/00628/FUL  
Accession No: ENN108699

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Quality control and sign off:

Issue No.	Date approved:	Checked by:	Verified by:	Approved by:	Status:	Reason for Issue:
1	09.06.17	C Finn	R Atkins	M Holmes	Awaiting approval	Draft for client review

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**OAS/S REPORT FORM**

PROJECT DETAILS		OAS/S molanort1-287014
Project title	Historic building recording at the former Victoria Junior School, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire	
Short description	<p>MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) carried out historic building recording of the former Victoria Junior School, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire. The Junior School is one of three principal buildings of the former school which included the former Infants' School and Schoolmaster's house, though these are not the subject of this recording. The Junior School, which opened in 1895, is to a design by the architect Walter Talbot Brown of Talbot Brown and Fisher and is a good example of late 19th century Victorian civic architecture. The building is in the Queen Anne revival style and rendered in red brick with stone dressings and comprises an amalgamation of classroom and entrance blocks surrounding a central double-height hall with a barrel vaulted ceiling. The hall retained a full complement of original panelling with matching cupboards and glazed screens to the classrooms.</p>	
Project type	Historic England Level 3, Historic Building Recording	
Previous work	None	
Future work	Unknown	
Monument type and period	Late 19th-century school	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address	Victoria Junior School, Stanley Road, Wellingborough	
NGR	SP 89746 68154	
Area	c1170 sq m (footprint)	
Height	66m aOD	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology)	
Project brief originator	Northamptonshire Assistant Archaeological Advisor	
Project Design originator	MOLA	
Director/Supervisor	Amir Bassir	
Project Manager	Amir Bassir	
Sponsor or funding body	Mr Dilip Patel	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	April 2017	
End date	June 2017	
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Title	Historic building recording at the former Victoria Junior School, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire	
Serial title	MOLA report,17/69	
Author(s)	Amir Bassir	
Page numbers	83	
Date	07/06/17	



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# Historic building recording at the former Victoria Junior School Wellingborough, Northamptonshire

## ABSTRACT

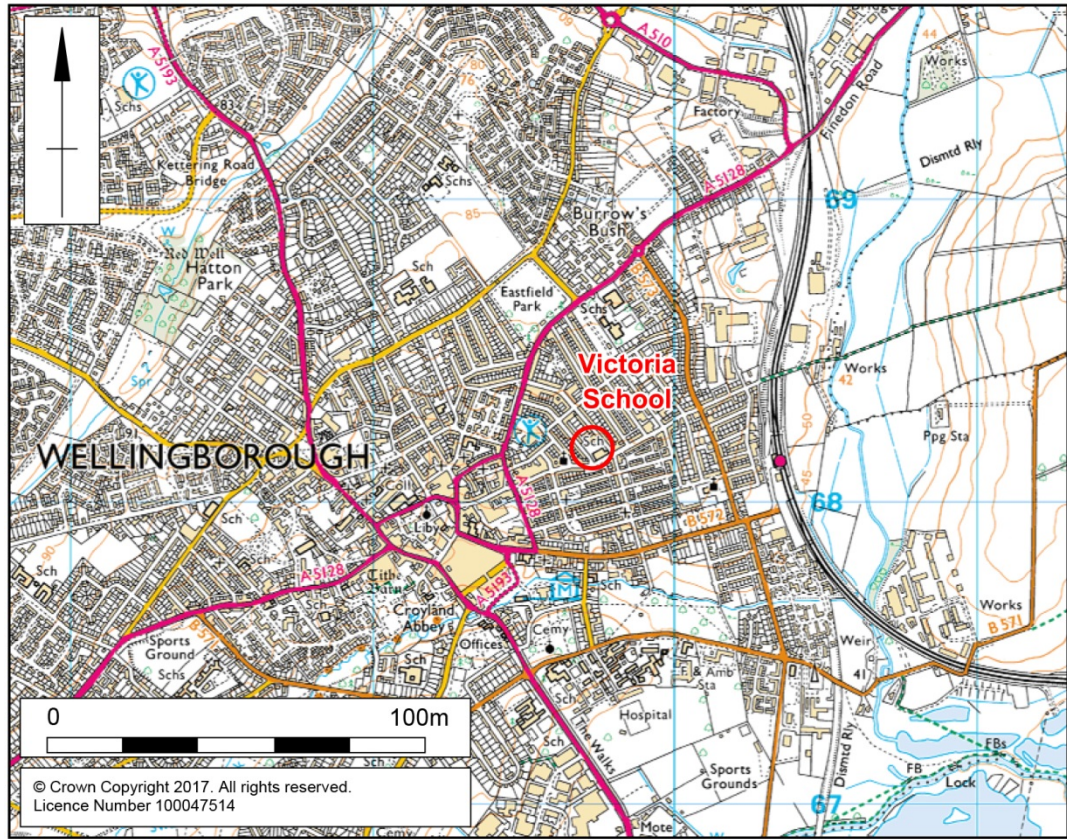
*MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) carried out historic building recording of the former Victoria Junior School, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire. The Junior School is one of three principal buildings of the former school which included the former Infants' School and Schoolmaster's house, though these are not the subject of this recording. The Junior School, which opened in 1895, is to a design by the architect Walter Talbot Brown of Talbot Brown and Fisher and is a good example of late 19th-century Victorian civic architecture. The building is in the Queen Anne revival style and rendered in red brick with stone dressings and comprises an amalgamation of classroom and entrance blocks surrounding a central double-height hall with a barrel vaulted ceiling. The hall retained a full complement of original panelling with matching cupboards and glazed screens to the classrooms.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

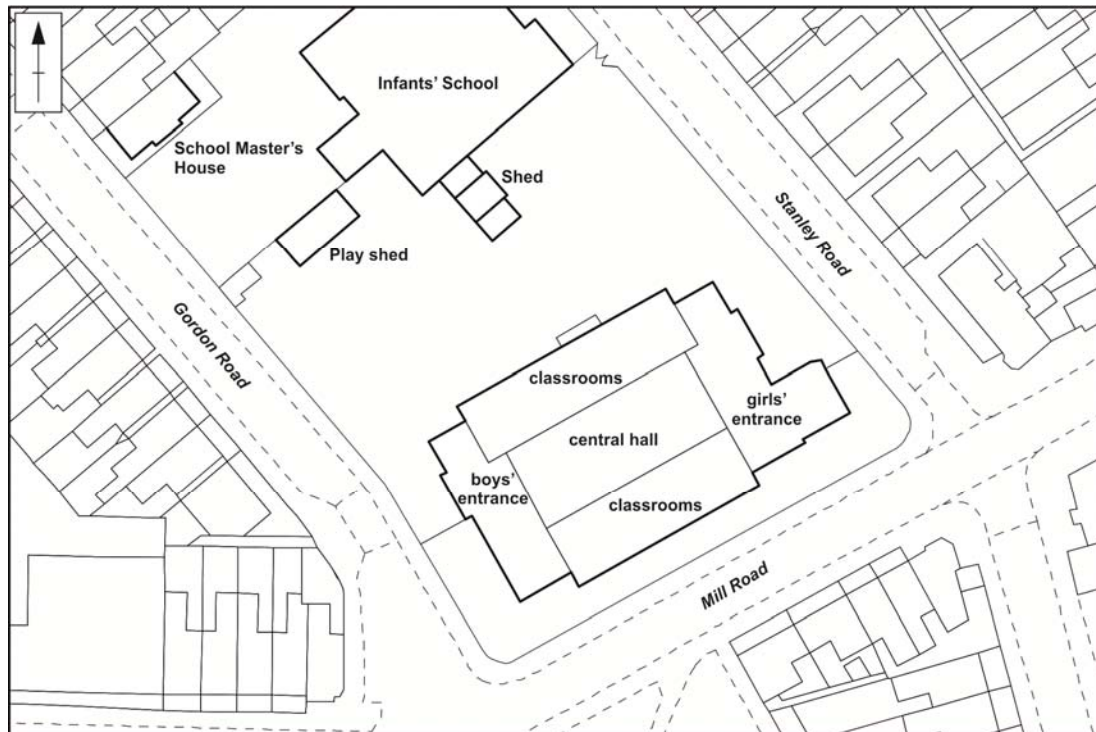
MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) was commissioned by Mr Patel to undertake a programme of historic building recording at the former Victoria Junior School, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire (SP 89746 68154). Planning consent has been granted for the conversion of the building to approximately twenty three self-contained apartments (WP/14/00628/FUL). A condition of this consent is for the implementation of a programme of historic building recording in accordance with Historic England Level 3 as defined in the document *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (HE 2016)

This report follows an approved Written Scheme of Investigation (MOLA 2017) which set out a methodology for archaeological recording in-line with Historic England Level 3 historic building recording (HE 2016). All works were undertaken in accordance with current guidelines (ClfA 2014a and 2014b) and Historic England (MORPHE) (HE2015).

The school was constructed in 1895 to a design by Walter Talbot Brown and is part of a group of three buildings including the adjacent Infants' School (Waendel Centre) and the former Schoolmaster's house. Also recorded were a former playground shed and a garage / shed block. The Victoria Junior School is the largest of the two school buildings, with separate girls' and boys' entrances and a double-height central hall with flanking classrooms. The building had unfortunately been derelict for around ten years by the time of this survey and had been adversely impacted by water ingress, pigeon nesting, and vandalism. Despite this, it was found that the building retained an impressive array of original features such as panelling and glazed screens, as well as windows throughout.



Site location Fig 1



The recording area (not to scale) Fig 2

## 2 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The objective of Historic England (HE) Level 3 building recording is to provide an analytical record of an extant structure in accordance with the HE document *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (HE 2016). It provides a systematic account of a building's origins, development and use.

Site visits were carried out in May and June 2017 and recording included the following elements:

- Establishing an accurate archaeological record of the buildings to Historic England Level 3 (HE 2016, section 5.3);
- An overall photographic survey of the exterior and interior of the buildings in their present condition comprising general and detailed shots. Photography was carried out using a Nikon D7200 DSLR equipped with Sigma 35-17mm and Nikon 18-70mm lenses. Supplementary photographs were taken using a Panasonic LUMIX DMC-FZ1000. Files are in RAW with high quality JPEG duplicates. Where possible and appropriate 1m scales or smaller were included in all photographs;
- Detailed photographic recording of architectural and decorative features, signage, electrical fittings, and any features of historic interest;
- Written notes on the buildings' construction, present and former use and, where appropriate, the buildings' past and present relationship to their setting in the wider landscape;
- Annotation of existing survey drawings to depict features of archaeological or architectural interest.

Site location plans indicating the position and orientation of photographs are included in this report. Classrooms have been numbered in this report for ease of room description and photograph identification. This project has generated a photographic archive of approximately 730 images, of which a selection is utilised in this report.

Plans and elevations were provided by Design Board Architectural Services and have been amended and annotated for use in this report.

### 3 LOCATION AND TOPOGRAPHY

The former Victoria Junior School is one of group of buildings which form the Victoria Schools, the others being the former Infants' School or Waendel Centre and the former Schoolmasters House. These buildings are located together within a rectangular site bound by enclosing walls and are separate by a concreted playground. The site is located within Wellingborough's Victoria Estate and is bound to the east by Stanley Road, to the west by Gordon Road and to the south by Mill Road. The surrounding area is comprised primarily of late 19th-century terraced housing with associated contemporary infrastructure and some modern development such as the Waendel Leisure Centre.

The underlying geology of the area has been mapped as comprising Jurassic sedimentary deposits of the Northampton Sand Formation and Whitby Mudstone Formation, with alluvial deposits around the Nene Valley to the east and south of the town. Quaternary glacial deposits of the Oadby Member have been mapped to the west of Wellingborough (BGS 2017).

### 4 HISTORIC BACKGROUND

Following 14th and 15th-century recession, Wellingborough developed into a significant urban centre which was described by Leland as a "good quik market toune builded of stone as almost al the tounes be of Northamptonshire" (Foard and Ballinger 2000).

The town's post-medieval economic growth and physical expansion was enabled by the development of both the wool and the boot and shoe industries. The town was second only to Northampton in terms of the number of persons employed in the boot and shoe industry.

A fire in 1738 consumed over 200 dwellings chiefly in the best and most trading parts of the town (Foard and Ballinger 2000). The town was rapidly and successfully rebuilt and by the mid-19th century had been modernised with railway links, planned street layouts, and other public improvements such as sewerage and gas lighting.

The main focus for the initial outward expansion of the town, between 1803 and 1880, was around Midland Road to the east of the settlement. This would appear to be due to the existence of both the river and, in particular, the railway in this location. Large numbers of terraced streets were laid out in a grid between the centre of the town and the Midland Railway Line. These streets were mixed zones with houses; chapels, schools and factories all intermixed within each street (Foard and Ballinger 2000).

By 1888 the Victoria estate had not yet been created and the area to the north-east of Wellingborough, between Mill Road and Cannon Street, remained essentially undeveloped, though an iron foundry was located adjacent to Cannon Street at the west of the site (Fig 3). Two other iron foundries were located within the mid 19th-century development to the south of the site.

The development of the area immediately surrounding the site, between Thomas Street and Alexandra Road, was carried out by 1900 and continued into the early 20th century (Fig 4-6). Development took the form of terraced housing with regular linear garden plots, with occasional schools and churches. This housing was primarily for workers in the town's main industries and were of good quality, mixed design and interspersed with industrial buildings and factories of the period (Foard and Ballinger 2000).

A large number of board schools and other educational establishments were erected to cater for the large population of Wellingborough. Twelve mixed or infant schools were established in Wellingborough in the 19th and early 20th centuries...The best preserved of these schools are the Victoria Board Schools



on Stanley Road / Mill Road – the complex consists of two schools (one now Wellingborough Professional Development Centre) and a possible Masters' House (Foard and Ballinger 2000).

The school's opening was covered in the 17th January 1896 Northampton Mercury:

On Monday afternoon, Mr F. A. Channing MP, opened the new Victoria Board Schools at Wellingborough which have been erected to supply the place of buildings that have been rented from the Congregational trustees, and at the same time to provide for the large increase of the population in the North-Eastern part of the town. When the idea of opening a Board School on the Victoria Estate was first adopted the Congregational Schoolrooms were amply sufficient, but as the estate developed and another building estate in the same neighbourhood was opened up, the accommodation became insufficient, whilst the buildings which had been erected for Sunday-school purposes were ill-adapted for Day Schools, and about two years ago the School Board decided to put up schools which should comply with all the requirements of the Education Department as well as fully provide for the necessities of the district. An eligible site on the Stanley Estate and within a very short distance of the Victoria Estate, was secured, and upon this Messrs Brown and Sons have built from the designs of Messrs Talbot Brown and Fisher two splendid blocks of schools, which in size, design, and appointments will rank amongst the finest in the county.

The schools are planned on what is known as the central hall system, in two blocks - one for 740 boys and girls known as the Mixed Department, and the other for 436 infants, a total of 1175 children. By having schools erected on this system every class is under the eye of the head master or mistress, who, from the central hall, can keep observation upon every class-room. In each school the floors are composed of wood blocks, laid on concrete. Both schools are heated on Grundy's principle, by fresh warmed air, brought from all four sides of the buildings to the heating apparatus in the basements, and from there conveyed through large glazed pipes to each class-room and central hall. The vitiated air is drawn from each room by flues built in the walls and carried to a large trunk over each central hall, that in the Mixed School being extracted by the high ventilating tower, which also acts as the smoke stack for the heating apparatus, and in the Infants' School by the powerful ventilator placed in the turret on the roof.

Coming to the outside, it will be seen that from whatever point of view the schools are observed they form a pleasing and effective group, of which the tower forms the centre and culminating point. The style of the building is a quiet treatment of English Renaissance, the main effect being relied upon from the picturesque grouping, the contrast in the materials, red brick for the walls, with tile roofs and a sparing use of stone, and richness being reserved for the entrance gable and tower. The school bell is placed in an ornamental turret over the central hall in the Mixed School. The exterior from the Mill-road side is considerably improved by a bed of turf and some flowering and other shrubs. The playgrounds for all the three departments are ample in size, and each has a covered play-shed and the requisite number of latrines and is laid with tar paving. The sanitary arrangements are of the most perfect description. The total cost of the buildings, exclusive of the site, but inclusive of the fittings, has been about £11,000, and it is not the cheapest built in the country upon the principle of the central hall and for the number of children.

A different cost of construction and student capacity is given in the Kelly's directory of 1898 which says that the school was built in 1894-5 at a cost, including fittings, of £14,000, for 690 mixed and 436 infants; average attendance, 580 mixed & 244 infants; John Richard Griffiths, master; Miss Ada Andrews Ford, infants' mistress (Kelly 1898-1920). John Richard Griffiths appears to have held the position of school master until at least 1906. The position of master is listed as being held by A. F. Austin in the 1910 and 1920 directories, after which the school is no longer mentioned in the directories. Ada Andrews Ford is listed as infants' mistress until 1920 when the position is held by Miss Elizabeth Sothern.

The newspaper article provides some interesting pieces of information concerning the building's construction, notably the heating and ventilation system. The Grundy principle of heating was a Late Victorian invention of John Grundy and Son, wherein a stove was placed in a room (in this case, the cellar), which acted as a plenum chamber for warmed air which was routed throughout ventilation ducts throughout the building (Hevac heritage 2017).

Use of warm air stove grew considerably from the middle of the 19th century with the tremendous wave of Victorian church building and the construction of many and varied institutions – prisons, hospitals, schools, workhouses and asylums...Another notable heating apparatus manufacturer was John Grundy of London and Tydesley Ironworks, Manchester (the first President of the Institution of Heating and Ventilating Engineers in 1898) whose products included the Helios and Sirius smoke-consuming grates and the Hestia warming and ventilating stone. But the increasing use of hot water heating systems and the introduction of the radiator soon caused a marked decline in the use of warm air stoves (EH 2009).

The Victoria School is a Grade II Listed building (NHLE: 1392597) and the extensive listing description is as follows:

GV II Board schools, 1895 by W. Talbot Brown for the Wellingborough School Board. Queen Anne style, with Elizabethan and Jacobean detailing. Infants school now in use as an education centre.

**MATERIALS:** Red brick with stone dressings. Red tile roofs with lead cladding on cupolas.

**PLAN:** There are two detached buildings for juniors and infants. The junior school is the larger of the two and comprises a double-height central hall with single-storey classroom/office ranges on four sides and a plenum tower. The girls' entrance is on the east side facing Stanley Road, next to a cookery block. The boys' entrance is on the west side facing Gordon Road. The infants school has a double-height central hall with single-storey classroom/office ranges on three sides, and an entrance on Stanley Road.

**EXTERIOR:** The junior school has three principal elevations facing the surrounding roads, and one secondary elevation facing the playground.

The Mill Road elevation is dominated by the roofline of the central hall, which has a bell-cote on its left side and a striking octagonal plenum tower attached to the right. The top stage of the tower has eight round-arched openings with banded stone and red brick columns in between, carved stone festoons and cherubs below, and a stone dentil course above. The tower is surmounted by a banded stone and red brick spire with a miniature stone lantern. The wooden bell-cote is octagonal and has a balustrade and dentilated eaves. It is surmounted by a lead-clad cupola and spire and sits on a square lead-clad base. In front of the central

hall is a single-storey classroom range with a hipped roof and spike-and-ball leaded finials. This range has four cross-gables with cat slides in between, so that it presents a straight front to the road. The two central cross-gables are larger and have three tall sash and pivot windows with glazing bars, above which is a round window with glazing bars surrounded by a square stone moulding with scrolled top. The smaller cross-gables have two sash and pivot windows each. Between the gables and at the sides there are cast-iron rainwater heads decorated with Tudor roses, masks and fleurs-de-lys. On either side of this range and set back from it are the end gables of the east and west ranges, each with three segmental-headed sash and pivot windows and a round window above with stone surround. On the far right is the flank of the cookery block which has a single window.

The Stanley Road elevation has a single-storey classroom range with a gabled roof and chimney stack, and two cross-gables: one forming the girls' entrance block and the other the cookery block. The two-storey entrance block has a round-arched porch with a Renaissance-style moulded stone surround on the left, three small windows to the right, and three segmental-headed windows flanked by brick pilasters on the first floor. The gable has stone banding, a segmental stone pediment, and a round window with glazing bars and square moulded stone surround. The cookery block has three tall sash windows on its gable end, with a small three-light rectangular window above, surrounded by brick pilasters and mouldings. This block has its own chimney stack and an angled entrance porch on the right side, with a round-arched door, stone mouldings and ball finials. On the wall above the porch is an ornate cast-iron rainwater head dated '1895'.

The main feature of the Gordon Road elevation is the projecting gable end of the boys' entrance block, which is a slightly more ornate version of the girls' entrance. It has a round-arched porch on the right with a Renaissance-style moulded stone surround and three windows to the left. Above is a wide stone band, carved in relief over the porch with the inscription 'BOYS' flanked by Elizabethan strapwork motifs. On the first floor, five sash windows are framed by brick pilasters and surmounted by a stone cornice. The gable has stone banding, a segmental stone pediment, and a relief stone plaque with egg-and-dart moulding around the inscription 'VICTORIA BOARD SCHOOLS BUILT 1895'. The single-storey range to the right of the entrance block has a cross-gable with two large sash and pivot windows, while the two-storey range to the left has a small round window with stone surround on the upper floor and a chimney stack with stone banding. Behind the entrance block is the end gable of the central hall, which has a three-light rectangular window with an arched brick moulding above, paraphrasing a Serliana window.

The playground elevation is a plainer echo of the Mill Road elevation, without the stone detailing.

The principal elevation of the infants' school faces Stanley Road. It has a two-storey central section with a double-gabled roof, a round-arched door and a stone plaque inscribed 'INFANTS' in relief. There are three round-arched windows on the ground floor and six sash windows on the first floor. To the right and left there are projecting single-storey gabled blocks, each with three tall segmental-headed sash/pivot windows and a round window above with stone surround. There are two tall chimney stacks on the roof. The west elevation of the infants' school, facing the playground, reveals the gable end of the central hall which has two large round-arched windows with a buttress in between, flanked by two smaller gable ends. On the roof of the central hall there is an octagonal wooden bell-cote

surmounted by a lead-clad cupola and spire and sitting on an octagonal lead-clad base. The single-storey block with corrugated roof attached to the south of the infants school, and the covered play area and dividing playground wall on the west side, are in their original position but have undergone alterations. The two small single-storey plant blocks attached to the building on the west side are later additions and are not of special interest.

**INTERIOR:** The most significant feature is the impressive double-height central hall in the junior school. This has a high barrel-vaulted roof with timber trusses springing from carved brackets. The cast iron tie-rods have floriated connectors. The end walls have single large round-arched windows with patterned leaded lights and coloured margin-panes. The side walls have clerestories of six round-arched windows with glazing bars. At the west end of the hall there is a mezzanine gallery with a Queen Anne-style balustrade. At the east end there is a canted oriel look-out window with leaded lights, which was accessed via a staircase adjacent to the schoolmaster's study. The walls at ground floor level are covered in high-quality moulded panelling, with matching cupboards and glazed partitions to the classrooms. The classrooms have semi-glazed panelled doors, exposed roof braces on ornate brackets, and the original opening mechanisms for the pivot windows. Other features of interest in the junior school include the staircase up to the gallery which has Queen Anne-style balusters, and the staircase window with its Art Nouveau patterned leading and coloured margin-panes.

The central hall in the infants' school is a simpler and smaller version of the junior one, though still grand for an infants' school. The roof has depressed arch braces and carved brackets, and tie-rods with floriated connectors. At the west end there is a pair of large round-arched windows with glazing bars, while at the east end there is a gallery with a stick balustrade. Behind the balustrade there is at present a temporary wooden partition. Along the sides of the hall there are clerestories and part-panelled glazed partitions to the classrooms, and one side also has a panelled cupboard. Other features of note in the infants' school include the staircase to the gallery which has stick balusters, and two fireplaces in the classrooms with Renaissance-style carved timber surrounds (one temporarily covered).

**SUBSIDIARY FEATURES:** Red brick entrance gateway with moulded stone dressings on Gordon Road. Red brick piers with moulded stone caps on Gordon Road, Stanley Road and the north side of the playground. Some surviving sections of wrought and cast iron railings on Stanley Road and attached to the boys' entrance on Gordon Road. Red brick walls on the east and west sides of the playground, with moulded brick coping and buttresses. Other sections of wall are later additions and not of special interest.

**HISTORY:** Victoria Schools were designed by Walter Talbot Brown for the Wellingborough School Board and opened in 1895. The unprecedented rate of expansion of Northamptonshire towns such as Wellingborough, Kettering and Rushden in the late C19 and early C20 was due to the wealth generated by boot and shoe production. On the 1888 Ordnance Survey map, the area to the north of Mill Road is occupied by vacant fields. By the second edition map of 1900, Victoria Schools appear on the north side of the road, surrounded by small boot and shoe factories and terraced housing for the workers whose children attended the schools. By the third edition map of 1925, the boot and shoe factories have been enlarged and the terraced housing expanded further. The wealth and civic pride generated by the Wellingborough boot and shoe industry are reflected in the

high quality of craftsmanship and materials of Victoria Schools and the Board's choice of architect.

Walter Talbot Brown had been articled to E. F. Law of Northampton in 1869-74, and commenced independent practice in Wellingborough in 1876 or 1877. From 1880 he was in partnership with James William Fisher (1857-1936). He was made an Associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1880 and a Fellow in 1894. He attended every sketching excursion of the Architectural Association from 1870 to 1914 and was considered 'an acknowledged authority on English work in planning, detail, furniture fabrics, embroidery, colour decoration, metal work, and glass'. He collaborated with John Alfred Gotch on the seminal work *Architecture of the Renaissance in England*, published in six parts in 1891-4 and as a two-volume book in 1894. When Talbot Brown died in 1931, he was described by *The Builder* as 'a notable figure in the development of English architecture, particularly in the country district of Northampton'. His work was considered of 'a high and personal nature', although his 'retiring disposition' prevented it from being as well-known as it should be. He designed many new houses, schools and churches in Northamptonshire, restored several medieval churches and was responsible for over thirty First World War memorials (HE 2017).

Walter Talbot Brown was one of Wellingborough's prominent late 19th and early 20th century architects, working extensively on church restoration and designing war memorials. The architectural firm Talbot Brown and Fisher, the other architect being Col J W Fisher, built several schools in the county, including Wellingborough School and its associated chapel and cricket pavilion (1879-95, and 1928); the former Grammar School on Doddington Road (1930), Wellingborough; Mulson Junior School in Finedon (1900), and Community Primary School in Irchester (1906). The Library in Higham Ferrers (1904) and the former Silver Street cinema in Wellingborough (1920) are also by Talbot Brown individually or Talbot Brown and Fisher. The firm was also involved in the conversion of the west wing of the former Northampton Gaol into offices in the 1930s, shortly before Talbot Brown's death. The schools are all designed in a similar style, mainly in the neo-gothic or Queen Anne revival, primarily in red brick, and share common elements, such as multi-sided leaded bellcotes or clock turrets, tall chimneys, stone dressings, and large round-headed windows.

Talbot Brown's obituary in the *Northampton Mercury* (Fri 21st August 1931) reads as follows:

Architect of one of the newest of Wellingborough churches and of several other important buildings in the town...the designer of St Barnabas' Church, Wellingborough, and of the extensions to All Saints' Church . Wellingborough School and the new Grammar School on the Doddington-road were from the plans of his firm which also provided them for the erection of the Granville Hotel, the Conservative Club, and other buildings.

Mr Brown was articled to the late Mr Law of Northampton, and some of his earlier years were spent in Italy, where he gained a knowledge of the architecture of that country. Fifty-four years ago [1877] he gained a Pugin scholarship, awarded by the Royal Institute, for the study of medieval architecture. He was a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects and of the Society of Antiquarians and he was a member of the Northamptonshire Archaeological Society and of the Wentworth Lodge of Freemasons...Mr Brown was an expert in church design and from the first so great was his interest in this class of work that he was appointed a member of the Bishop's Advisory Board. Mr Brown and Mr J. A. Gotch, of

Lettering, were responsible for the production of a book on English Renaissance architecture, which is regarded as a standard work on the subject.

It should be noted that although the school is attributed to Talbot Brown, it could perhaps be more correctly described as a collaboration of both Brown and his architectural partner Mr J. W. Fisher who is noted as being in attendance of the opening ceremony, at which it is not stated whether Mr Brown was present. Owing to the lack of primary documentation, it is unclear as to the extent of each architect's input in the design. Col. Fisher died in October 1935 and his obituary in the Mercury and Herald (Friday, October 30th 1935) describes him as an Architect and public worker who was the Principal of the firm of Talbot Brown and Fisher, who were the architects for the Wellingborough Grammar School, blocks of buildings at Wellingborough School, and other schools and public buildings throughout the country. Fisher was a Fellow of the Society of Antiquarians, as was Talbot Brown, and also a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects, and upon the death of Talbot Brown, he accepted the position of honorary treasurer of the Northamptonshire Archaeological Society.

As part of research for this report a search was undertaken of the Northamptonshire Records Office and Local Studies Library. This search included the Talbot Brown and Fisher index, and also the map, photographic, architectural, place name and schools indexes. It was hoped that original designs and drawings relating to the building's construction might be found, however very little archival material was discovered.

With regards the reasons for Listing and the significance of the historic fabric, Historic England states that:

Victoria Schools are designated at grade II, for the following principal reasons: \* Opened in 1895, they are an impressive example of a late C19 provincial board school, with three handsome street frontages, two cupolas and a striking plenum tower \* The design was by Walter Talbot Brown, a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects with a number of listed buildings to his name \* The high-quality Elizabethan and Jacobean decorations owe their inspiration to his collaboration with J. A. Gotch on Architecture of the Renaissance in England, published in 1891-4 \* Both the junior and infants schools have double-height central halls with elaborate interiors, that of the junior school being particularly fine \* The schools are remarkably unaltered and retain all their original features including panelling, glazed screens, cupboards, doors and windows \* The quality of craftsmanship and materials reflects the wealth and civic pride generated by the Northamptonshire boot and shoe industry \* The schools are still surrounded by their original context of terraced housing and boot and shoe factory buildings. (HE 2017).





Ordnance Survey map of 1888, showing the site prior to development (NRO Map 5112)  
Fig 3

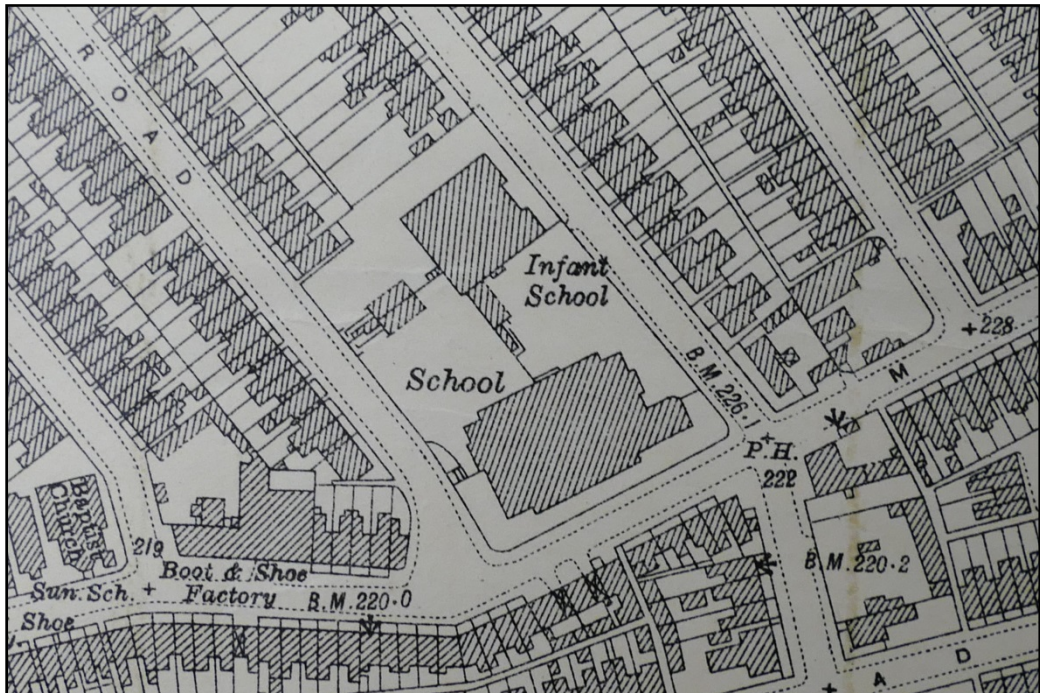


Ordnance Survey map of 1900 with the Victoria Schools highlighted in blue (NRO Map 3557) Fig 4





Aerial photograph of 1926 with the Victoria Schools at the right of the photograph (Palmer and Palmer 1983) Fig 5



Ordnance Survey map of 1925 Fig 6

## 5 BUILDING DESCRIPTION

Victoria Schools, Stanley Road and Mill Road. 1895 by W. Talbot Brown. An impressive ensemble in the Neo-Queen Anne manner, sadly unoccupied and becoming derelict. Red brick with stone dressings. The Mill Road elevation dominated by the roof-line of the central hall, which has a pretty balustrade bellcote, and behind an extraordinary campanile-like octagonal chimney tower with eight arched openings and conical top (Bailey *et al* 2013).

The school is a handsomely built and well-designed red-brick structure presenting street frontages to the south, east, and west. It comprises a number of gabled ranges projecting from the tall central hall, and the whole is unified by a cascade of tiled roofs and surmounted by an octagonal plenum tower, which is balanced to the west by a balustrade bell-cote (Figs 114-117). The school has an asymmetrical arrangement which is driven by the internal layout rather than an imposition of a unifying external façade. The building has a fairly restrained decorative treatment which is expressed primarily around the door and window openings in a mixture of moulded brick and carved stone. The north elevation has a plainer treatment with no stone detailing.

There are separate girls' and boys' entrances at the east and west, leading into glazed brick corridors that open to an impressive double-height hall with vaulted roof. The central hall was the main circulation area from which the surrounding class rooms were accessed and it features moulded panelling and glazed screens, as well as bespoke cupboards matching the panelling scheme. The school rooms are largely single-storey, except for offices at the east and western ends of the building and a mezzanine balcony at the western end of the hall.

### 5.1 The exterior

The red-brick of the exterior walls is generally laid in English garden wall bond, being of three courses of stretchers between courses of headers. The bonding is not strict and some variation is evident in smaller areas and in awkward spaces such as between windows. The bricks are machine made, of a consistent pale red colour with a fine sandy texture which results in onion-skin spalling where weathered. The mortar and pointing is a fairly coarse mix, either flush with the bricks or slightly set back. The average brick dimensions are 225-235mm (length) x 75-80mm (thickness) x 110mm (width), and three courses are 250mm in height. Spacers are 55mm in width. The site boundary wall is in Flemish garden wall bond, comprising three stretchers between headers, with decorative gauged brick coping. At the school's wall corners bullnose bricks are used to a height of c1.4m, a practical safety feature to protect children. A blue brick plinth, c1m in height, spans the south elevation and parts of the east and west elevations. The brickwork is in stretcher bond and measures 230mm x 75mm x 110mm. Canted coping is placed at the top of the plinth and at a ledge within the plinth. It was evident that cheaper common bricks were utilised externally where these areas would not be visible from street level. This is particularly evident where brickwork is hidden by surrounding roof ridges and can only be seen by walking out onto the roof guttering. Common or stock bricks in Flemish garden wall bond make up many of the internal partition walls.

A number of loose bricks within the site were examined, however it was unclear which of these were sourced from the school and which, were sourced from a different site and were being stored here. A number of London Brick Company bricks were found and these were stamped PHORPRES, referring to the four-way pressing of this type of brick. These bricks may have been produced in Bedfordshire (Sallery, 2017). Individual instances of bricks by Wright Bros. of Sileby were also found. A larger number of un-

frogged bricks with no manufacturer stamps were found and it is more likely that these are sourced from the school and are representative of the building's fabric. Many of these had horizontal grooves pressed into the surface.

Several roof tile types were also found on site, of which the greater proportion was stamped ROSEMARY. These appear to constitute the primary roofing materials. Other tiles included REDLAND and PROCTOR AND LAVENDER of Staffordshire.

### **5.1.1 Stanley Road elevation (Figs 7-14)**

The Stanley Road elevation is comprised of a c24m long range aligned north-south, with two cross-gable ranges projecting eastwards, formerly functioning as the girls' entrance, reception and headmaster's office, and an adjacent classroom (formerly a cookery room, classroom 1). The octagonal tower rises from behind the roof valley of the main range, and the gable of the hall is just visible beyond. The entrance block is 6m wide and projects 0.8m from the main range. It is two storeys with a loft space formed in the roof. The entrance is located off-centre to the south at ground floor and has a round-arched porch of moulded stone with an acanthus-style keystone to a moulded stone band that separates the two storeys. Within the band are two panels with relief carved inscription "GIRLS" and geometric strapwork. Adjacent to the porch are three plain windows with flat arches of brick and moulded stone sills. At first floor is a symmetrical arrangement of sash windows flanked by brick pilasters. A stone string course spans below the windows, acting as a sill, and a stone cornice bounds the elevation at eaves level. The windows are each of ten lights, four fixed and six within the sliding sash. The frames and glazing bars are of white-painted moulded wood. The gable is a variation of the Dutch style, with straight edges curving up to meet a detached rounded pediment of moulded stone. The brickwork within the gable is interspersed with stone bands and a small round window set within a square stone surround is located central to the gable. A brick chimney rises from the south corner of the entrance block. This has a moulded stone string course towards the top and a stone cornice and has two terracotta pots.

The former cookery block, classroom 1, comprises the main classroom area with a shorter entrance and porch adjacent. The whole structure is 13.5m in width and projects outward by 7.2m. A blue-brick plinth course is built around the base of the classroom and continues around the south elevation. The classroom is single storey and has three tall sash windows in the east elevation. The sash occupies the main part of each window, but the upper area of each window comprises a pivoting panel which is operated internally by means of a tall hand operated screw and pivoting arms. The moulded stone window sills are incorporated into a stone band that spans the width of the block. The flat window arches are surmounted by semi-circular arches. A rectangular three-panel window is located centrally to the gable and is set within a pilastered surround with an egg and dart cornice over. The window has a white painted frame and transoms and the glazing is set within leaded bars with some decorative elements at the top. Lead flashing is installed at the sill and atop the moulded window cornice. This window does not illuminate the room as it opens into the roof space above. The gable is edged with moulded bricks which rise from brick kneelers which are a return of the eaves moulding and form a broken pediment.

The entrance and porch is set within a low block which also houses a narrow store room. The block is angled at the corner to better occupy the doorway. The porch has a simple moulded stone surround with exaggerated keystone which connects it to a stone cornice that marks the roof level. Above this is a brick parapet with moulded stone coping. Two ball finials are mounted on the angled corners of the parapet. The small store room is lit by three north-facing windows. These are fairly simple,

comprising a fixed top panel and a square casement. They have flat arch brick lintels and simple stone sills incorporated into a stone band. A short chimney stack projects from the north edge of the classroom roof. This is a brick structure with stone detailing and a tiled apex, with ventilation bricks just below the tiles.

Between the entrance block and the classroom block are two tall sash windows with rubbed brick flat arch lintels bound by a brick string course. The roof's drip edge projects forward slightly over moulded brick eaves. Above the classroom's porch / adjacent store room is a decorative rainwater hopper with a vase and flower design over the date 1895. The northern part of the range is a simpler affair with little decorative treatment. Instead of having moulded eaves there are white-painted wooden modillions.

### **5.1.2 Mill Road elevation (Figs 15-19)**

The Mill Road elevation comprises a central block with four cross-gables, flanked by the side elevation of the cookery block (classroom 1) at the east, and the end gable of the westernmost classroom. The central block is essentially a single rectangular range measuring 26.5m x 9m, which is subdivided into two square classrooms with two smaller rooms at each end. The building is hipped at each end and the roof and projecting gables are achieved by a well-designed and well-built roof structure which is described further in this report. Lead-built spike and ball finials are installed at each end of the central range at the ends of the ridge.

The south elevation of classroom 1 is fairly plain with a single window in the western end of the wall. A rainwater downpipe is located centrally to the wall. The adjacent classroom is 8m wide and has three tall sash windows with rubbed brick segmental arches with drip moulds over. The moulded stone sills are incorporated into a stone band that spans the full length of the elevation, across all of its constituent parts. As with other windows of this type, the upper portion of each window comprises a pivoting panel operated by means of a hand crank and tall screw which connects to pivoting arms at the top of the window. The sashes comprise a fixed, horned upper sash, two lights tall, with curved meeting rail, and a lower sash which is three lights tall. The sashes are found in groups of three, the central windows being four lights in width and the flanking pair being three lights wide. Central to the gable is a round window with wooden frame set within a square, stone surround.

The two central classrooms are wider than the end rooms of the range and have three windows instead of two. The windows here again are sashes with pivoting upper panels, but have rubbed brick flat arched lintels with flat drip moulds over. The two central rooms also have rounded windows with decorative surrounds in the gables. Between the gables, the roof surface forms small cat-slides that channel rainwater into short crown moulded eaves that hold the guttering. Central to each are downpipes with cast-iron decorative hoppers. These hoppers are bolted to wall and have a central Tudor rose design flanked by lion heads or masks and fleur-de-lis on the bolt panels. Drop finials are located on the underside of the hoppers and at the top of each hopper is a crown mould with square dentils. The hopper outlets have a simple moulded shape but are free of decorative elements.

A blue brick dwarf wall with bullnose coping spans the width of the elevation, separating the site from the pavement. The wall is stepped to match the rise of the road. Above the wall and set a little way back is a modern fence with concrete posts. The narrow strip of ground between the building and the fence line had become overgrown by the time of this survey and included a well-established fig tree.

### 5.1.3 *Gordon Road elevation* (Figs 20-27)

The lower part of the Gordon Road elevation is obscured by the playground wall which starts in line with the entrance block door and continues northwards up the road to the Schoolmasters' House. There are two gates entrances in the wall, one directly in front of the boys' entrance and another, a little way further north, which leads to the playground. The boys' entrance gate is a double width entrance c2m wide, flanked by brick piers with stone hinge blocks and stone caps. From the gate are several steps to the playground level. The enclosure wall is carried up the steps to another pier to which is attached an inner double gate. The south side of the stair is enclosed by iron railings with a decorative pier to which the gate is hinged at this side. The playground entrance is through a gateway with moulded stone dressings with a segmental and shouldered crown. This entrance is single width, c1m wide.

The prominent feature of the Gordon Road elevation is the entrance block, a two-storey gabled frontage of a similar design to the Stanley Road entrance block, with a greater degree of ornamentation. The doorway is of the same dimensions and features the same decorative motifs and moulding but has two additional acanthus blocks in the door arch. A stone band stretches across the elevation, above the door, and the carved lettering BOYS is placed centrally to the door rather than offset, as seen at the girls' entrance. To each side of the door are pilasters rising level with the door imposts and interrupting the stone band. Adjacent to the door are three plain sash windows with rubbed brick flat arched headers and moulded stone sills. At the north side of the windows is a brick pilaster with moulded stone corbel. At first floor level are five, four over four, sash windows, each window separated from its neighbour by a simple brick pilaster. The pilasters have an odd arrangement of moulded brackets which is thrown out of symmetry by the continuation of the porch pilasters to this level. Above the windows is a stone cornice. The gable is a Dutch variant with a rounded segmented apex. Within the gable is a stone plaque with a recessed, egg and dart edged panel, within which is the raised carved inscription VICTORIA BOARD SCHOOLS BUILT 1895.

To the south of the entrance block is a cross gable classroom block with pedimented gable and three sash windows with pivoting upper panels. To the north of the entrance block is the side elevation of a north-south cross gable. This view presents two sash windows at ground floor and a roundel window in the upper right corner. At the eaves are moulded timber modillions. Approximately mid-way along the gable ridge is a double-flue chimney, constructed of red brick with bands of stone, a stone capped plinth, and a moulded stone crown. A small cast-iron hatch is installed on the north side of the chimney. At the top of the chimney are two terracotta pots.

Behind the gable of the entrance block, the upper portion of the hall gable is visible. Within the gable is a three light window with hood mould which is accurately described in the Listing description as paraphrasing a Serliana window (HE 2017). The central window is missing but the flanking lights are leaded and have a diamond pattern within rectangular panes. This window allows light into the passage way above the hall ceiling which is described further in this report.

### 5.1.4 *The north elevation* (Figs 28-29)

The north elevation is, in contrast to the three main facades, a fairly plain design with little decorative embellishment. The layout is a mirror of the Mill Road elevation, comprising a central class room block of four cross-gables, flanked by recessed gabled ranges and having the broad tiled roof of the hall as the backdrop. The brickwork utilised here is a more common type and comprises a mix of hues, presenting a slightly



messy effect compared to the uniform brickwork of the publically visible facades. The bonding remains English garden wall, and a blue brick plinth spans the base of the elevation, though it gradually disappears at the eastern end of the wall due to the incline of the ground level.

Each of the four classrooms has three tall sash and pivot windows, the central window in each case being one light wider, with segmental lintels, simple stone sills, and segmental drip moulds over. Simple brick-edged roundel windows are located within the gables of the two central classroom blocks.

The recessed block at the corner of the north and east elevations has four small sash windows at ground floor level and two small windows to the first floor. The opposing block at the corner of the west and north elevations has the same arrangement of fenestration though the first floor windows are spaced further apart.

### **5.1.5 The bellcote** (Figs 30-32)

The bellcote is located at the western side of the hall and straddles the roof's ridge. It has a tapered square section base covered in overlapping lead panels and measuring c1.6m in width at its broadest. The bellcote is an octagonal timber structure with eight arched openings over a balustrade. Four moulded timber brackets support the balustrade from the leaded base. Above the arched openings is a dentil cornice from which rises a lead covered cupola and spire. From the base to the apex of the spire is c6m, or approximately 21m from ground level. The bellcote was not accessed during this survey however it can be seen that the bellcote retains its internal bell support and a single bell.

Access to the bellcote is from the hall's roof walkway, where a wooden ladder allows access to the base, and a further ladder with trapdoor hatch accesses the bell.

### **5.1.6 The tower** (Figs 33-37)

The tower is described by Pevsner as an extraordinary campanile-like octagonal chimney tower with eight arched openings and conical top (Bailey *et al* 2013). It reaches approximately 24m from ground level and is at its tallest 19m when viewed from the south. It has an octagonal section which is c2.5m in diameter, and the individual sides are each c1m in width. It is positioned at the junction of the central hall and western range and the various roof slopes wrap around the tower at different levels. The tower achieves its maximum height on its southern side and at the lower part of this side is constructed of common bricks in English garden wall bond. The use of this cheap brick type is allowed by this area being hidden from street level. Here is a small four light casement window which opens onto the eastern stair landing at first floor. Just above the window is a circular ventilation duct. Above this area, the brickwork changes to a darker facing brick in English garden wall bond, with spacers to allow for the octagonal section. Weathering towards the top of the tower has lightened the brickwork due to spalling. Above the brickwork is a stone band, festooned, and with winged cherubs carrying the decoration onto a stone cornice. Above this are eight arched openings separated by brick and stone columns and capped by a stone band and dentilled cornice. The circular tower flue can be seen through the openings. At the top of the tower is an octagonal brick spire with stone bands, rising to a brick and stone lantern. At the very peak of the lantern there is a circular terracotta cowl.

The tower interior can be accessed at first floor level through the loft space, where a wooden door grants access to the tower's internal base or landing. The tower's internal profile is also octagonal. A metal flue descends from the top of the tower where it is

supported by a wooden structure and enters into an opening in the brickwork at the tower base. Approximately four meters from the landing is a passage way which is accessed by a fixed steel ladder. This passage allows access through the tower and into the hall roof space. Access from this passage to the top of the tower is enabled by wrought iron staples embedded in the brickwork, which act as a crude ladder. Lighting within the tower is from daylight only.

The tower is positioned directly above the girls' entrance corridor at the stair landing. The brickwork of the tower continues through the first floor and to the ground, forming the eastern side of the stairwell. When viewed in the roof space, this brickwork forms a spiral structure which wraps around the north side of the tower. The brickwork here is of stock brick in English bond, a stronger bonding scheme than English garden wall. A vertical shaft with iron ladder is located within the under stair cupboard, and allows access to a small below-ground chamber at the base of the tower. This chamber measures c2m x 1.5 and has a circular vent leading eastwards, and to the west is a square vent with iron cover, within which is a vertical shaft connecting to the tower flue, and a horizontal flue leading to the west. This small space seems to have acted as a plenum chamber, with warm air entering from the cellar heaters and being distributed throughout the building, and stale air being drawn back in and exiting through the tower. In the classrooms and elsewhere in the school, the ventilation panels are placed in pairs, one above the other, at ground level and at ceiling level. This allows warm air to enter the room at ceiling level and to circulate downwards, exiting the rooms at ground level.

## **5.2 Internal description**

### **5.2.1 *The cellar*** (Figs 104-107)

The cellar is accessed from the north of the school, where a set of brick steps lead down to the cellar landing from the playground. The cellar occupies a fairly large footprint below classroom 9, and extends below the hall and to the western side of the tower. The ceiling is formed of a series of jack arches – shallow brick vaults with steel beams between each, spanning between the side walls and brick piers or columns. From the door there is a sloping ramp with brick dwarf wall enclosures to each side. The main heating apparatus is located below the hall and connects, via a circular aluminium flue, to the brick stack of the tower which projects westward into the cellar. The flue then passes into the small plenum chamber beneath the tower. The current heating system is very modern and none of the original heating system remained in the cellar.

In addition to electric lights, the room is lit by two windows in the north wall, adjacent to the door. These are simple fixed windows with metal glazing for security.

### **5.2.2 *The girls' entrance block and western rooms***

The entrance door opens into a double-door porch at the head of an entrance corridor. A strangely awkward arrangement is produced because the outer doors open inwards and the inner doors open outwards thereby trapping someone trying to open both simultaneously (Fig 114). It is uncertain if this was the original opening direction or if the inner doors have been reset. The arrangement may rely on keeping one of the sets of doors open during the day. The outer door appears to be original to the building and is a panelled door, blue painted and moulded, with a round brass door knob. The inner door is semi-glazed, blue painted with moulded panels and a push bar on one side. A transom is located above the door. The entrance hall is floored with square stone tiles and the walls, up to a height of c1.6m are faced with brown glazed bricks, laid in English garden wall bond, and capped with sandstone rails (Fig 41). The brickwork above is also in English garden wall bond but is of stock bricks and thus likely intended

to be painted in the original design. At the time of the survey the walls had been fully painted bright yellow.

A square-headed door opens southwards into the former lavatories (Figs 42-43). Within the room is a free-standing double-row of *Twyfords* sinks mounted on steel frames. On the south wall are five toilets with elevated cisterns and chain pulls. These are separated by modern stalls. A sixth toilet is located at the north-west corner of the room where a stud partition separates the lavatories from the girls changing room which occupies the remainder of the room. Both rooms have a linoleum floor and are lit by modern chain-hung strip lights.

Immediately to the right of the entrance is a former door opening which has been converted into a reception window. The doorway had glazed bullnose brick jambs and an arched head. Adjacent to this is a short corridor leading to the Headmaster's Office. The corridor also has an arched opening and bullnose jambs. The reception room had been fully plastered and retained no original fixtures or fittings except for the windows. The tower's supporting structure descends into the corridor adjacent to reception.

Beyond the entrance hall is a stair landing from which a stair leads to the first floor offices (Figs 45-46). A cupboard has been built into the space below the stair and opposite to this is a doorway to the changing room. A shaft is located in the corner of the under-stairs cupboard, and descends to the tower plenum chamber (See 5.1.6). The stair balusters are described as being in the Queen-Anne style in the Listing description (HE2017). The stair also has matching newel posts and a wooden drop finial is located at the corner of the stair and ceiling. The lowest steps are curved and the stairs are carpeted and edged. The stairs' skirting is well executed and curves smoothly onto each landing. Above the stair is a four-light window with leaded panes in an art-nouveau pattern. The sill is sloped to allow maximum light into the stair well. As seen in the entrance corridor, the walls of the stairwell are brick in English garden wall bond and painted yellow. Where the yellow paint has flaked away, an underlying grey scheme is evident. At the top of the stair is an interesting oriel window with segmental arch, which projects outward from the wall and overlooks the hall (Figs 47-48). The window has four lights, three fixed and one side hung, with leaded panes. The casement light has a cast iron stay, latch and hinges. On the wall above the first floor landing is a simple four-light casement window through which can be viewed the northern classroom roofs.

On the first floor were two offices and a WC, created with stud partitions which had been removed prior to this survey (Figs 49-51). The floorboards had also been partially lifted in the rooms. Two chimney stacks project into this space but neither had an open fire place. There is some indication that a fireplace may have formerly been installed in the south wall. A loft access doorway is located on the landing outside of the larger office. From here access can be gained the roof of the northern block and from there to the base of the tower (Fig 52).

### **5.2.3 The central hall (Figs 53-69)**

The most impressive room in the building is the double-height central hall, which apart from its wide roof is not evident from outside the building and is an unexpected space when ones emerges from the entrance corridors. The hall has a rectangular plan measuring c25m x c10m and rises to a height of c10m. The room acted as the main circulation area between the classrooms and at the ground floor level there is well-built and well-preserved panelling over the walls, and glazed and panelled screens to each classroom. A number of bespoke, integral cupboards are positioned against several of the walls.

The panelling is in a Jacobean style, comprising rectangular raised and fielded panels each of a uniform measurement of 310mm x 500mm or 250mm x 500mm around doorways. Moulded dado rails are located at a height of c1m around each area of panelling. Likewise, moulded skirting is located at the base of the panelling. The glazed screens separate each classroom from the hall and each has a single-width doorway to one side and a fluted pilaster central to the screen. The bases of the screens match the panelling, skirting and dado of the wall panelling. Small hooks are located adjacent to each classroom door. The use of these hooks is unclear as they are only sufficient for a single garment.

The cupboards are c2m wide and 0.4m deep, and stand to a height of 2.5m. The basal units match carry the panelling design for their doors and the upper unit doors are a simpler variant with plain moulding. At the top of cupboards is a moulded and dentilled architrave.

Warm air from the school's heating system was carried around the hall and adjacent classrooms via ducts located above the panels and classroom screens. Steel beams clad in white-painted wood form a hollow trunking which runs as a band between the ground floor and first floor levels and flues are located in the brickwork below. Pairs of square vents, measuring 410mm x 410mm and covered with iron grills, can be found adjacent to the classroom doors, both in the hall and in the classrooms. The grills were locked but could be opened by means of a square profile key, of a same design as that which was used for turning the window screws that operate the upper pivoting panels.

The hall's floor, although described as wood in the newspaper article that records the school's opening, was actually found to consist of small rectangular tiles of plaster mix, laid in a cubical pattern on a concrete surface.

At each end of the hall is a large arch-headed window of twelve lights. Each light is leaded, and has an art-nouveau style pattern to the upper panels and coloured margins. Viewed externally, it can be seen that the timber window frame utilises wooden pegs at the intersections of transoms and mullions. Round-arched clerestory windows are located in the long elevations. These are six lights, with fixed upper panels and pivoting basal panels flanking a central fixed light. The pivot lights are operated by means of a long cord attached to a latch at the top of each light. The window sills are sloped to facilitate light into the room. Between each window is a shallow pilaster spanning between the panelled ventilation ducts and the moulded cornice. Carved wooden brackets or corbels are installed at the top of each pilaster and carry the roof structure which is hidden above the vaulted ceiling. Iron tie rods span between the each pair of brackets and connect to a central vertical tie rod. At each of the rod connections is a decorative ring with fleur-de-lis design. The ceiling is clad in narrow planks spanning between moulded timbers. The underside of the roof trusses project through the ceiling and are shaped to match the roof's curve. The exposed trusses are each comprised of four individual timbers with rods passing through each and bolted to the underside. At the apex is a decorative drop finial from which the vertical tie rod descends.

At the time of survey the panelling and all ground floor elements including the glazed screens and cupboards were painted white. In several places around the room, where the white paint of the panelling and glazed screens had flaked off, an underlying dark green colour of a previous paint scheme was revealed. A light blue paint scheme was applied to the area between the clerestory window sills and the ducting / first floor, ground floor transition. Above this, and up to the ceiling, was a dark red paint scheme.

A mezzanine balcony is located at the far western side of the hall and is accessed from a stair external to hall. The edge of the balcony is formed by iron beams clad in wood

and is supported centrally by an iron post with decorative capital and base. The underside of the balcony is clad in white-painted planks in the same manner as the hall ceiling. At the edge of the balcony is a Queen-Anne style balustrade with moulded hand rail.

#### **5.2.4 The classrooms (Figs 70-95)**

There are nine classrooms and a room marked as Staff Room on the architect's drawings. A former library is located at the west side of the building, adjacent to the boys' entrance. These rooms surround the central hall and can be accessed from the hall and through doorways between each other. No classroom fixtures or fittings remained in any of these rooms. The classrooms are of a fairly uniform dimension, measuring c7.5m x 8m, with a smaller classroom occupying the eastern end of the south block. The library measures 4.5m x 8m. The doorways between the class rooms are single-width with bullnose brick jambs, with bullnose arches. The upper portion of each door opening, above the timber door lintels, is infilled with brick. It is uncertain if this brickwork is a later addition and if the doors formerly had transom windows. There is some variety between the remaining door lintels, some being flat, some arched, and it probable that several of the doors have been replaced through the years. None of the doors remained *in situ* but had been stored on site and it is intended to re-use them as part of the building's redevelopment. The library is separated from its neighbouring classroom by a sliding glazed screen of the same design as the fixed screens. Adjacent to the sliding door is also a single-width doorway.

The rooms are separated from each by brick partition walls. These are built of stock bricks in Flemish garden wall bond. Similarly, the brickwork between the classrooms and the hall is also common brick in Flemish garden wall bond. The walls had been generally painted a white colour with some coloured panels visible in some of the rooms, though this paintwork had largely flaked away in most of the rooms. The western room of the south block was painted orange, The glazed screens to the hall were, in most cases, painted white, however a former dark green paint scheme was visible where the white paint had flaked away. Above the screens the load of the wall is carried on metal beams. Plain concrete floors are present throughout the classrooms.

The rooms formerly had coved ceilings which, unfortunately had been removed prior to this survey and were evident only from the roof structure. It is possible that the ceilings matched that of the hall, comprising thin planks. Some evidence for this can be seen on the moulded truss brackets which have thin plank cladding where they meet the walls. A length of this type of cladding can be seen above the sliding door of the library. Some partial lengths of moulded wood cornices remained in a few of the rooms.

It was evident from marks on the walls, that most of the classrooms formerly had at least one radiator in each room. None of these remained *in situ* however a number of cast-iron radiators were stacked in one room. It is unclear if these are original to the building or were a later addition.

#### **5.2.5 The boys' entrance block and eastern rooms (Figs 96-103)**

The boys' entrance is of the same layout as the girls' entrance, comprising two sets of double doors opening into corridor of glazed brown bricks. To the north of the corridor is a changing room with lavatories beyond this. Within the changing room are two iron columns supporting two lengths of RSJ. These beams carry the brick chimney stack which rises from the first floor; however, the arrangement of column supports seems somewhat clumsy in comparison to the rest of the building. Both of the columns also have apparently purposeless brackets along their length, indicating that these are re-used elements.

The lavatory room is of the same specification as the girls' lavatories, with free-standing sinks and elevated cistern toilets with modern stalls.

### 5.3 The roof

The central hall range has an impressive, steeply-pitched gabled roof, c7m in height and spanning 26m. The surface is of closely-spaced tiles with inverted Y-profile ridge tiles and lead flashing at the edges. The underside of the tile surface appears to have lime or plaster torching.

An enclosed lath and plaster corridor stretches across the top of the central hall at the peak of the roof, allowing access across the full length of the hall, and with doors into the sides of the roof and to the bellcote. A surprising amount of graffiti was present in this corridor, mainly names, initials and dates, scratched into the plasterwork. These marks covered a range of dates from very recent until at least the 1930s. The roof structure over the hall is comprised of seven king post trusses with raking struts; these are connected by cleated purlins and with additional bracing in the spaces between the trusses. The truss chords are carried down c3m to the top of the walls. The trusses are incorporated into the hall's ceiling design and are carried on moulded timber brackets and given additional strength and tension with tie rods. A network of narrow metal pipes is installed within the roof space. Carved into one of the rafters is the inscription *Lights Rewired Dec 1992 C. Tipler + Son.*

The north and south classroom ranges have hipped roofs and each has four gables projecting from the outer pitch. Both ranges are clad in close-spaced tiles whose undersides have plaster or lime torching. The north range is longer by 5.5m and this additional length necessitated a slightly different roofing arrangement. The two central classrooms of the south range (classrooms 4 and 5) each have two queen post trusses crossing the rooms parallel with the range rather than perpendicular to it. These trusses are connected to each other by timber beams which essentially form shared top and bottom chords and which also act as purlins. The gable purlins project perpendicularly into the main roof space and are supported over the main purlins. The narrower rooms at the east and west of the range have more compact king post trusses which better accommodate the slope of the roof hips. These trusses are connected to the central queen posts by the shared purlins. The brick partition walls of the end rooms also project up into the roof space, though with a central gap allowing access across the length of the roof. The lower part of the king post trusses are incorporated into the ceilings of the end classrooms are shaped and moulded with decorative brackets. Small loft hatches are located in the ceilings of these rooms.

The two central classrooms of the north range (classrooms 8 and 9) also have queen post trusses running parallel to the range and acting as purlins with shared top and bottom chords. The two end classrooms, however, have king post trusses positioned perpendicular to the range, spanning north to south across the rooms. Due to the wider span of these members, they carried over RSJs that span between the north and south walls. These trusses are set back into the room and do not form part of the hip structure, instead acting to carry the purlins and ridge.

### 5.4 The play shed (Figs 108-110)

To the north-east of the Junior School and adjacent to the Infants' School is a covered, open-fronted, play shed, rectangular in plan, measuring c10m x 5m. The north and west walls are of common brick in Flemish garden wall bond, with bullnose bricks are the wall edges. At the south edge of the shed are three cast iron columns which carry the roof at this side. The columns have moulded capitals culminating in flat brackets which support the lintel. No foundry marks were visible. The columns are carried on

blue brick piers. The roof is of corrugated sheeting carried over three mono or half trusses which span from brick pilasters on the north wall to the column-carried lintel. Three cleated purlins span between the trusses. The western wall is extended fully up to the roof while to the east, the roof pitch is clad.

Another open-fronted play shed formerly back onto this one, on its northern side, and is visible on Ordnance Survey mapping until the late 1930s but had been removed by the 1960s.

## **5.5 The sheds (Figs 111-113)**

Abutting the infant school on its south elevation, and projecting on a north-south alignment into the playground, is a rectangular, three-unit shed, c10m x 5m. The shed appears to have originated as a single or two room unit but the east elevation has been modified to convert the building into three rooms. The west elevation is red brick in Flemish garden wall bond, of a single homogenous phase, and has a single-width door in the far north side where it abuts the school. The south gable wall is of the same phase but has been repaired or perhaps partly rebuilt in common brick. The east elevation has been remodelled and the central room projects forward from the main line of the wall. The roof has been lifted in order to accommodate a taller garage door than the original roofline would allow. Only the central room was accessible during this survey. This room has a double-width door which fully spans the eastern side of the room. The north and south walls of the room are of stock brick and are not jointed to the west wall. Within the room can be seen the original roofing structure, now rendered obsolete. This comprises king post trusses supported on brick piers and cast iron columns of the same type as in the play shed. Ordnance Survey mapping of the 1920s show that the shed was open-fronted on its eastern side and formerly had a smaller building abutting it to the south, corresponding with an area of rebuilding visible on the south gable elevation. The modifications to the building, including the creation of the projecting central room, had been carried out by the mid 1960s.

## 6 DISCUSSION

The Victoria Junior School is a well-preserved example of late Victorian civic architecture, showcasing a restrained but well-executed Queen Anne revival style, which balances a successful design with economic and practical necessity. The design competently unifies an ensemble of interconnected gabled blocks and presents attractive views in all directions. In this regard the roofs play a key role and are designed in such a way that they visually form a continuous sweep with no jarring breaks between the individual roof elements. The design is further enhanced and balanced by the tower and bellcote.

Economic restraint is evident in the use of cheaper stock bricks for the internal walls, and also externally in areas which are not visible from the street. The less publically visible northern elevation is much plainer in comparison to the street elevations. This is also seen on the adjacent Infant's school which reserves decorative embellishment to the publically visible Stanley Road elevation. This cost-saving approach does not detract from design, but rather demonstrates the experience of the architect and his ability to deliver an attractive and high quality building to a limited budget. The roof structure is particularly worthy of merit, being solidly built and consisting of an impressive array of timberwork supplemented by iron or steel beams, and despite being derelict for ten years has retained its structural integrity, with only the tilework becoming loosened and allowing water ingress.

The double-height central hall with vaulted roof is the crowning feature of the building and includes high quality panelling in a Jacobean style, with matching cupboards and glazed screens to the classrooms. Within the walls is an integrated heating and ventilation system which starts at the basement, circulating warm air into the classrooms and culminating at the octagonal chimney tower.

Although Talbot Brown is better known for his church restorations, he also designed several schools, of which three are located in Wellingborough and the others in towns close by. The use of the Grundy heating method was widespread in churches, and given Talbot Brown's church building experience, it is natural that he would transpose this heating into system into his schools. Victoria Junior School may perhaps be the largest of these schools and well demonstrates Mr Brown's skill and experience as an architect.





The Stanley Road elevation, looking west Fig 7



The girls' entrance Fig 8



Detail of the entrance Fig 9



East elevation of classroom 1 Fig 10





Detail of ground floor window, classroom 1 Fig 11



Detail of first floor window with egg and dart moulding Fig 12





Porch and store adjacent to classroom 1 Fig 13



Detail of commemorative cast iron hopper with date of 1895 Fig 14



The Mill Road elevation, looking north-west Fig 15



Detail of round-headed window Fig 16





Detail of round window Fig 17



Detail of guttering and decorative hopper Fig 18



Detail of lead finial Fig 19



General view of the school, looking east Fig 20





The Gordon Road elevation Fig 21



Detail of the boys' entrance Fig 22





Detail of school sign over the boys' entrance Fig 23



Detail of window to corridor above the central hall Fig 24





Interior view of the same window Fig 25



Detail of roof parapet and gable pinnacle Fig 26





Detail of round window Fig 27



The north elevation, looking south-east Fig 28



Classroom elevation with stairs to basement Fig 29





The bellcote, looking north-west Fig 30



Detail of the bellcote Fig 31



The bellcote, looking up at the trapdoor from the base stair Fig 32



The tower, looking north-west, also showing the elevated access to the hall roof corridor Fig 33





Detail of the tower Fig 34



Common bricks utilised on the tower Fig 35



The spiralling brickwork of the tower support, and door to tower landing Fig 36



The interior of the tower, also showing entrance to hall roof access Fig 37

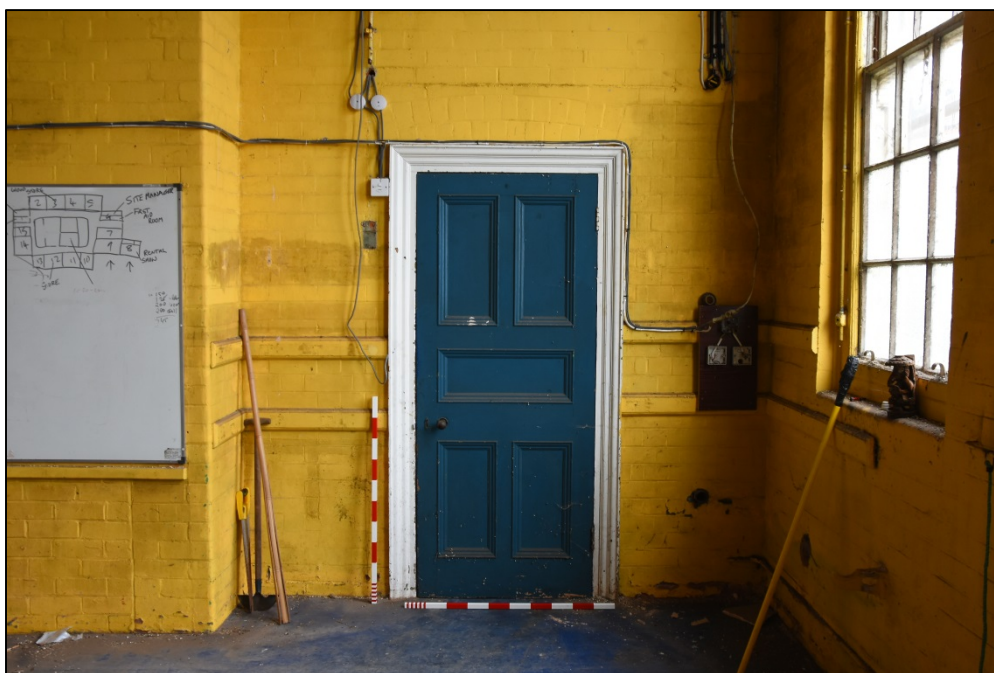




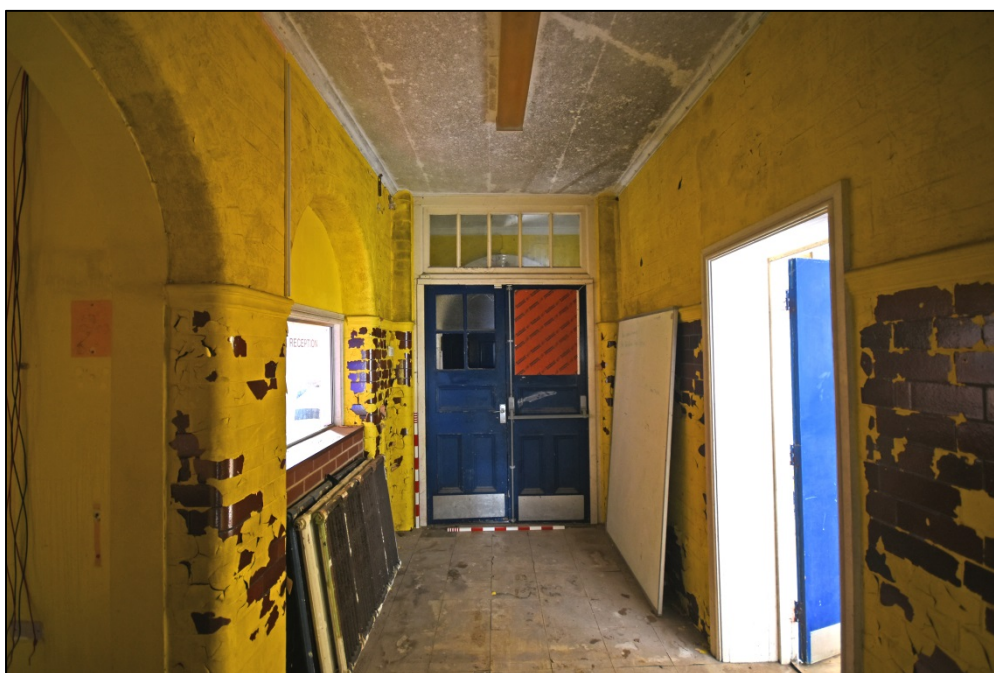
Classroom 1, looking north-east Fig 38



Detail of window pivoting arms Fig 39



Detail of the door Fig 40



The girls' entrance corridor, looking north-east Fig 41





The girls' lavatory Fig 42



The view towards the changing room Fig 43



The girls' entrance, stair landing Fig 44



The stairwell Fig 45





Detail of balustrade Fig 46



Interior view of oriel window at first floor landing Fig 47



The oriel window, viewed from the hall Fig 48



First floor office, looking south Fig 49





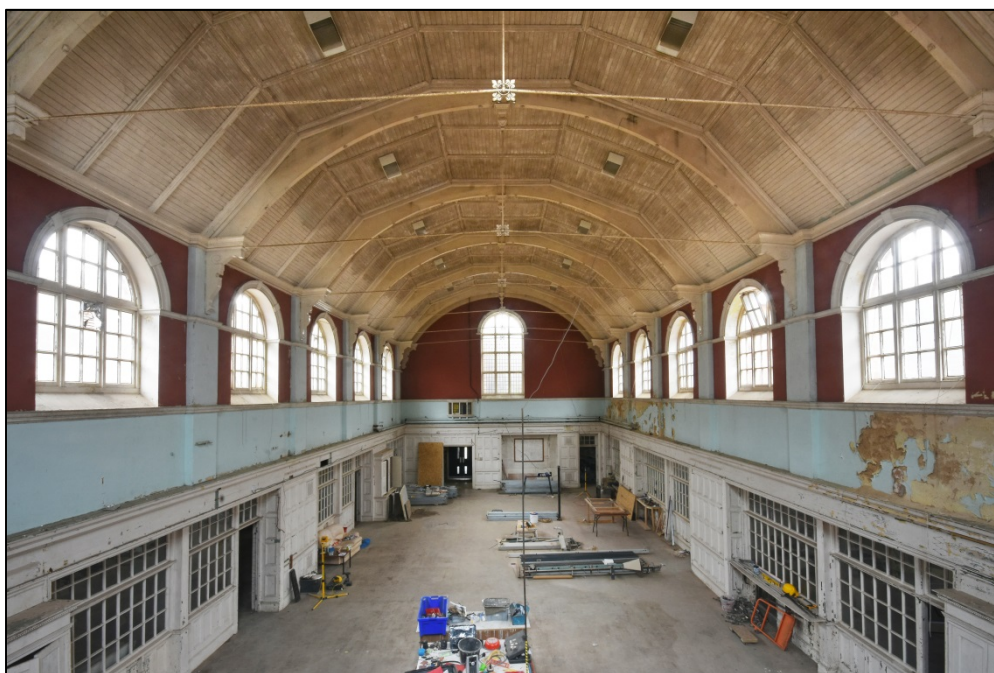
Detail of windows in the first floor office Fig 50



The first floor, looking north-west Fig 51



The roof over the first floor rooms, looking north, with tower base to the left Fig 52



The hall, looking north-east Fig 53





The hall, looking south-west Fig 54



Example of the glazed screens to the classrooms Fig 55



Detail of the hall cupboards Fig 56



Detail of panelling, doorways, and ventilation Fig 57





Detail of ventilation panel Fig 58



The mezzanine balcony with supporting column at the west of the hall Fig 59



Example of the clerestory windows Fig 60



External view of the southern clerestory windows; note change of brick type Fig 61





The eastern hall window Fig 62



The western hall window Fig 63





Exterior view of the leadwork and frame of the western hall window Fig 64



Detail of truss bracket Fig 65



Detail of truss rod connector Fig 66



Detail of truss base / ceiling apex, with truss rod and decorative drop finial Fig 67





The roof structure of the hall, looking west along the side of the roof walkway Fig 68



The hall roof walkway, looking east Fig 69





Classroom 2, looking north-west Fig 70



Classroom 2, looking south-east Fig 71



Detail of the classroom window Fig 72



Detail of the upper window panel Fig 73





Detail of the base of the window, showing the winding mechanism Fig 74



The roof structure over classroom 2 Fig 75





Classroom 3, looking south Fig 76



The roof structure over classroom 3 Fig 77





The doorways between the classrooms, looking west Fig 78



Detail of vent cover adjacent to doorway, classroom 3 Fig 79





Classroom 4, looking south-east Fig 80



The roof structure over classroom 5 Fig 81





The staff room, looking north Fig 82



The roof structure over the staff room Fig 83





Detail of window, staff room Fig 84



Classroom 6, looking south Fig 85



Detail of bracket Fig 86



Classroom 6, showing the sliding door to the library Fig 87





The library, looking south, showing the sliding door Fig 88



The roof above the library and classroom 6, looking south Fig 89



Classroom 7, looking north-west Fig 90



Glazed screen to classroom 7, note ventilation adjacent to door Fig 91





The roof over classroom 7, showing the hip, and the king post truss carried on an RSJ  
Fig 92



Classroom 8, looking north Fig 93





The roof over classroom 9, showing gable arrangement and queen post purlin supports Fig 94



Classroom 10, looking south, note vent in corner, and RSJ supporting the roof truss Fig 95



The boys' entrance corridor, looking south-west Fig 96



The boys' changing room, note columns supporting RSJs Fig 97





The boys' lavatory Fig 98



The stair landing, with door to balcony Fig 99





Window overlooking the stair landing Fig 100



Windows of the first floor office of the boy's entrance block Fig 101



First floor office Fig 102



Internal face of round window of first floor office Fig 103





The cellar, below classroom 9, looking south-east Fig 104



The cellar, looking north-west Fig 105





The cellar; below the hall, looking east. Note brick flue stack adjacent to plenum chamber Fig 106



Interior view of cellar windows at the bottom of the stairwell Fig 107



The play shed, looking north-west Fig 108



Detail of the column roof supports Fig 109





The roof structure Fig 110



The sheds, looking north-east Fig 111

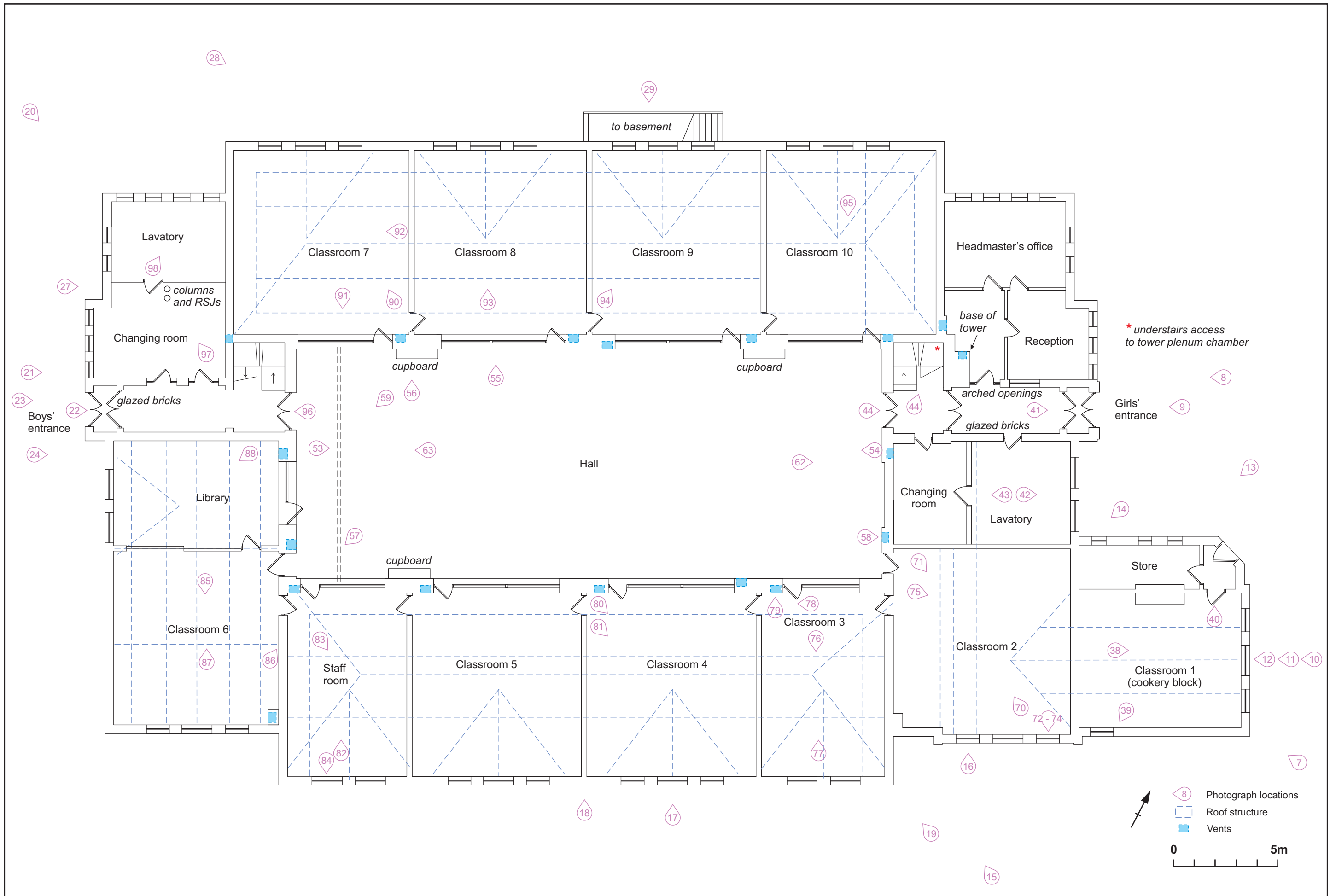


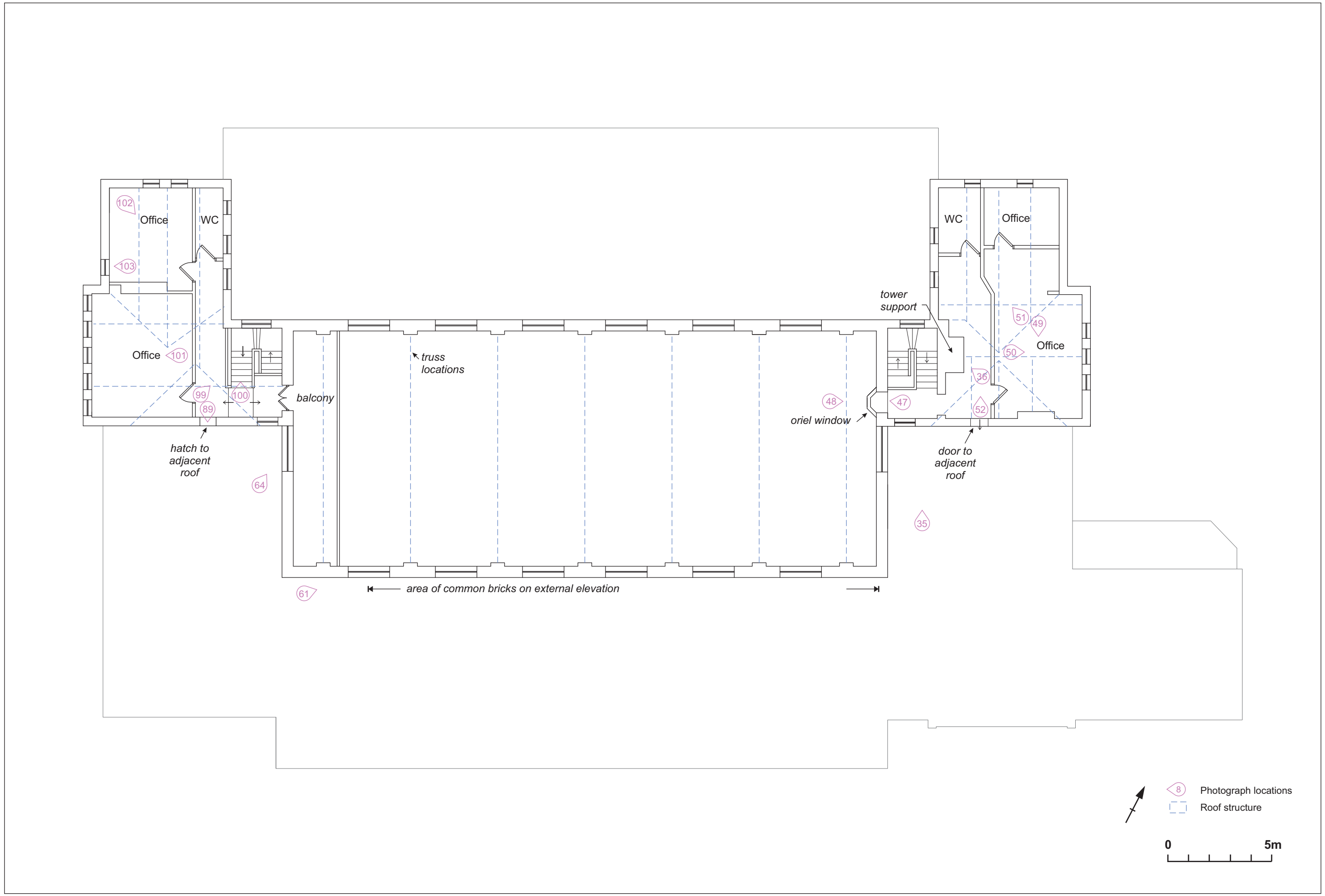


The sheds, looking west Fig 112

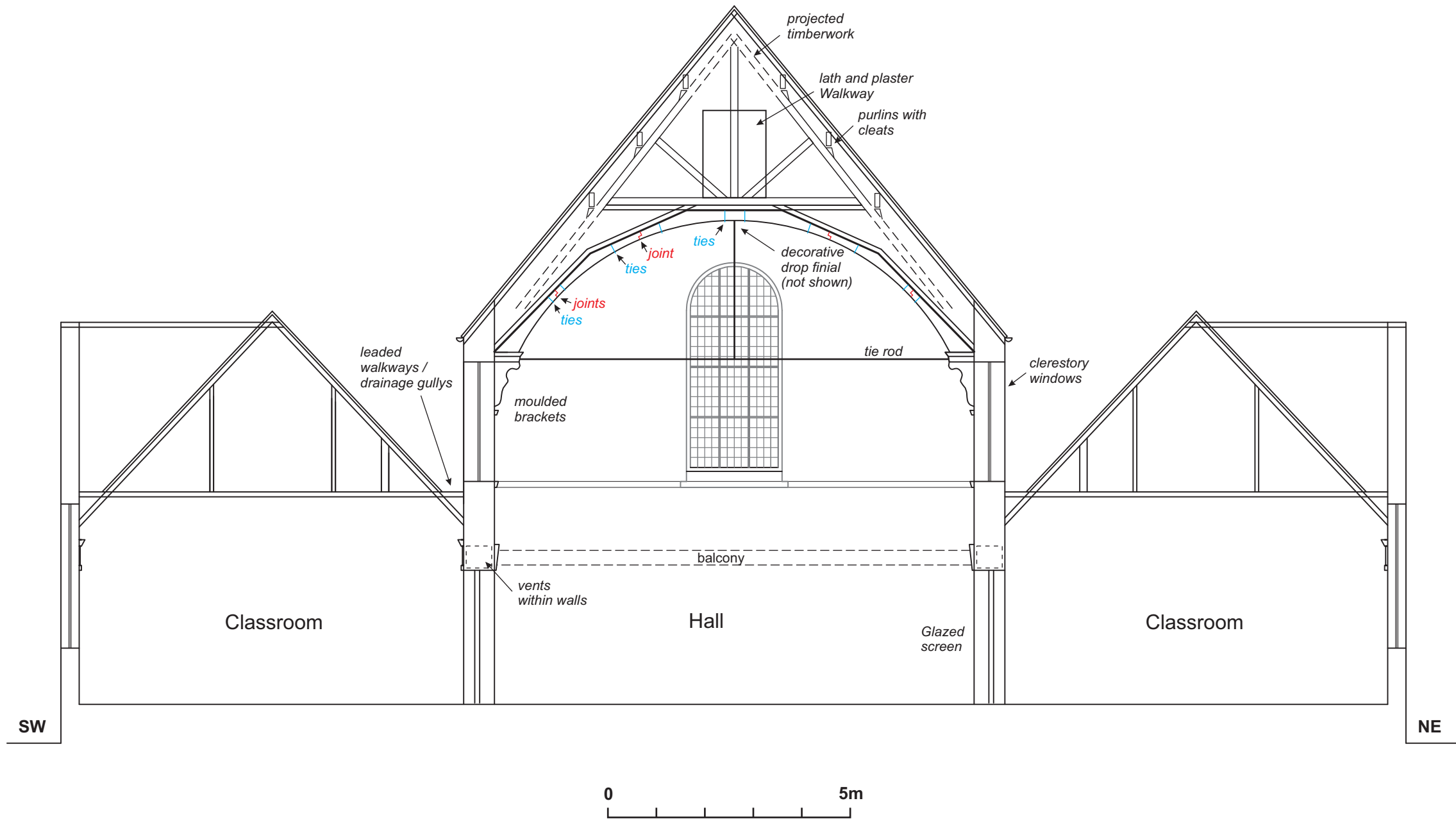


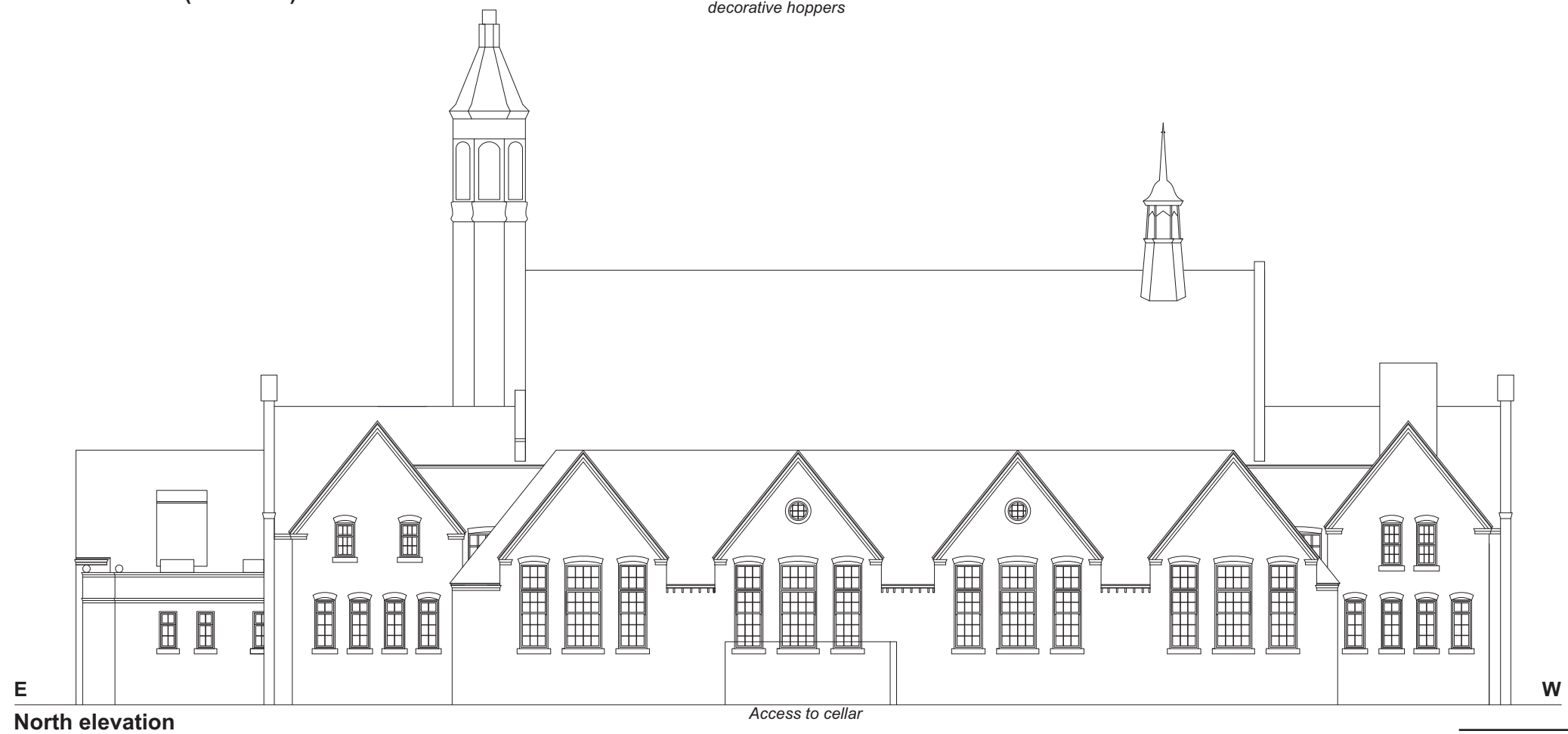
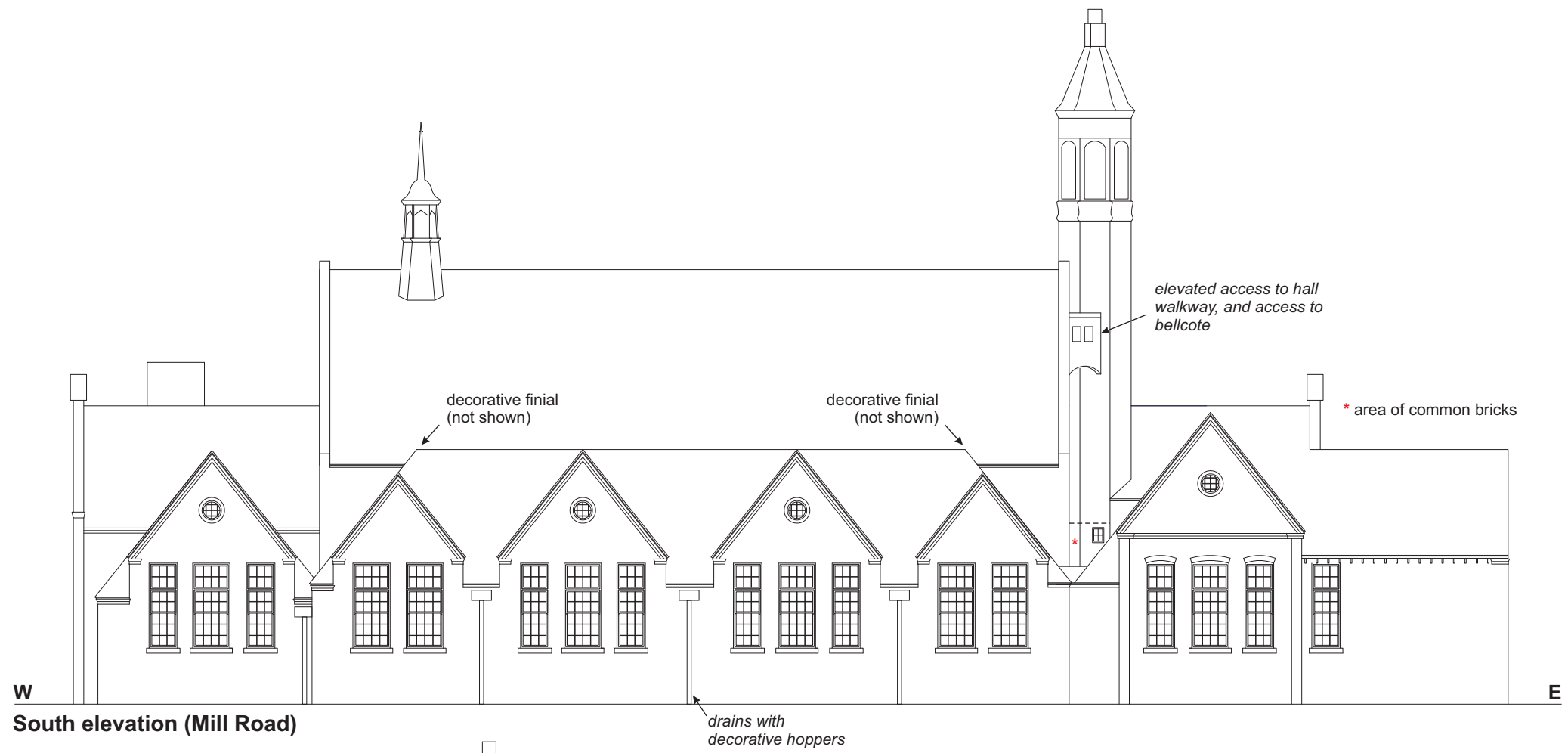
The central shed, showing defunct roof structure Fig 113











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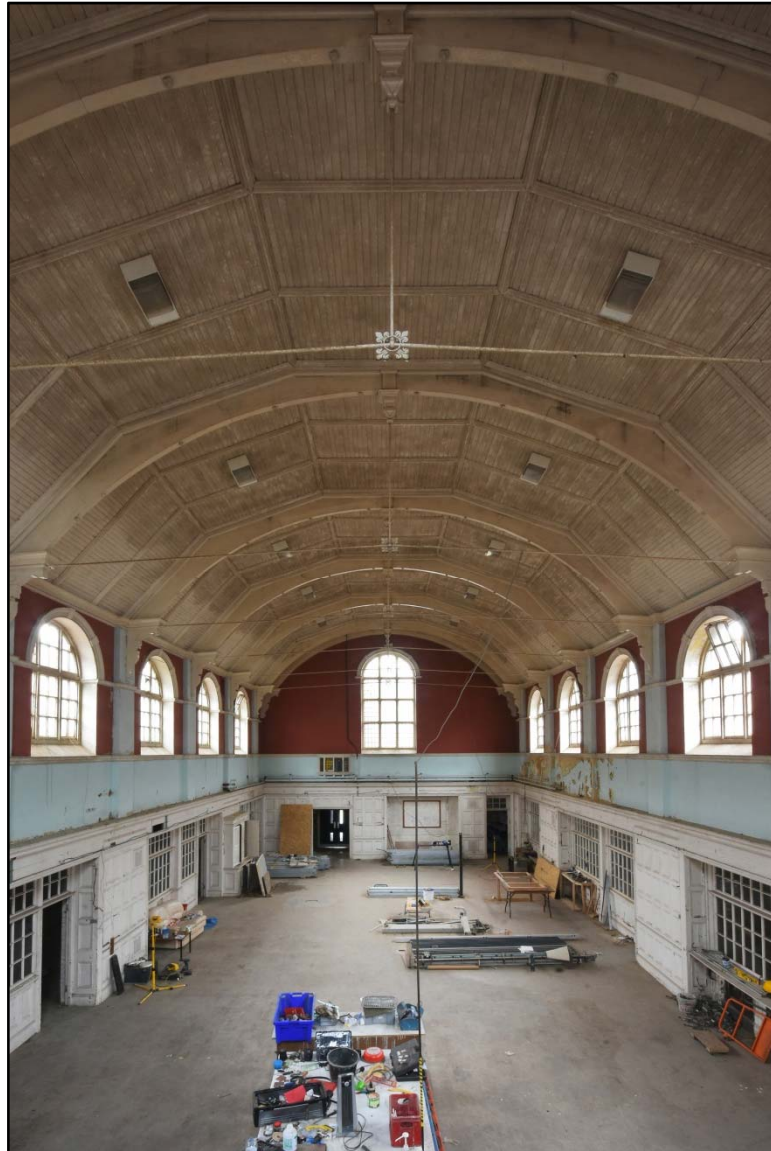
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