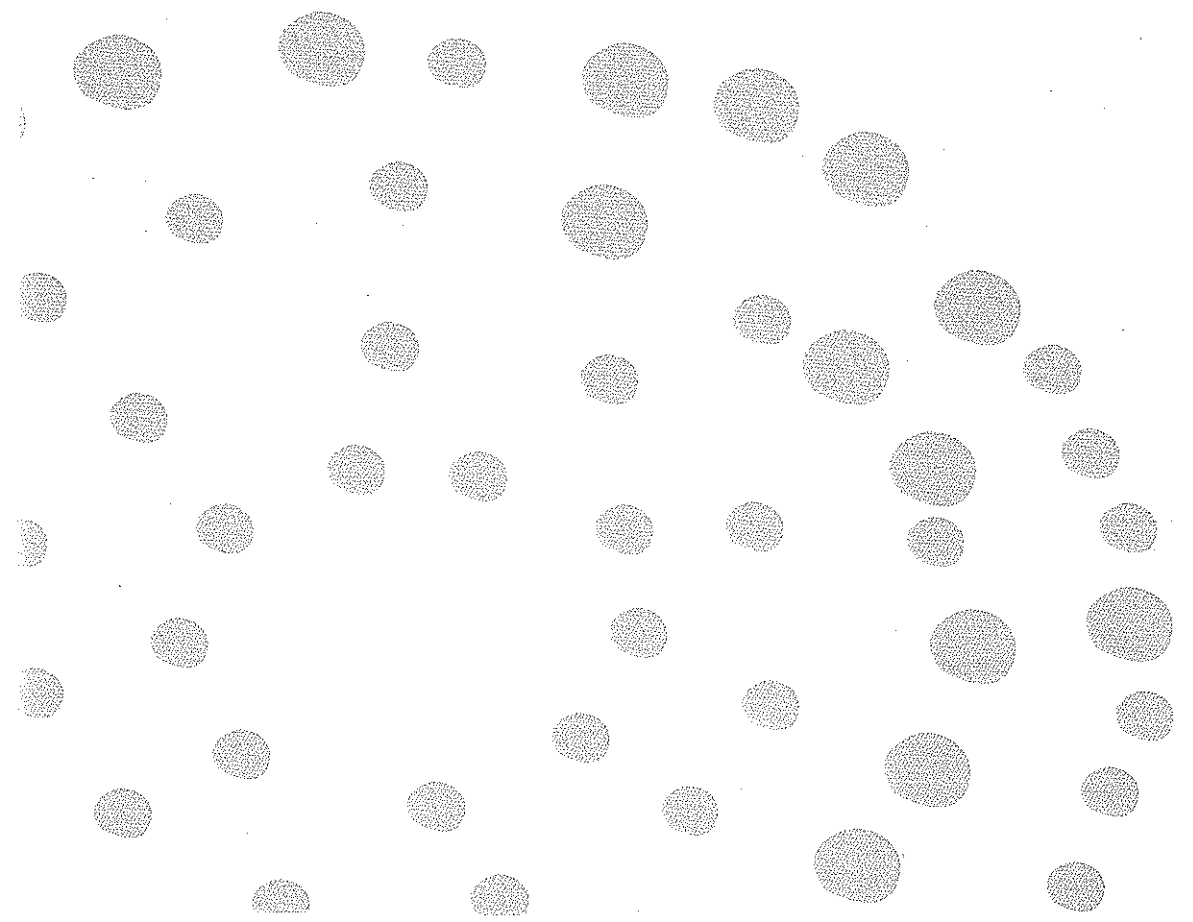


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**THE UNIVERSITY
OF BIRMINGHAM**

**Quarry Bank Primary
School, Dudley, West
Midlands 2003**



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Quarry Bank Primary School, Dudley, West Midlands
Archaeological Building Recording 2003

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**Quarry Bank Primary School, Quarry Bank, Dudley, West Midlands:
Archaeological Building Recording 2003**

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Summary

In October 2003 Birmingham Archaeology undertook archaeological building recording at Quarry Bank Primary School, Quarry Bank, Dudley, West Midlands (NGR SO 393220 286050). The work was commissioned by Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council Property Consultancy and was carried out in advance of the demolition of the former Quarry Bank Infant School which had become structurally unstable. The building was erected c.1896 to an eclectic design containing classical, Decorated Gothic and vernacular elements. Although minor additions had been made to it during the 20th century the original structure survived largely intact and served to illustrate the character of a school of its time.

1.0 Introduction

In October 2003 Birmingham Archaeology undertook the archaeological recording of the former Quarry Bank Infant School. The building dated from c. 1896 when the land on which it is situated was sold by the earl of Dudley to the Dudley School Board (Dudley MBC 2002) (Fig. 2). A century later the structural condition of the early buildings had deteriorated considerably, the dilapidation being recorded in a series of structural surveys carried out between 1996 and 2002 (Dudley Property Consultancy 2002). Owing to this deterioration a decision was made to build a new nursery school on the site and to demolish the old buildings. As the school was on Dudley Metropolitan Borough Sites and Monuments Record (No. 5042) and was regarded as a building of historic interest, permission to demolish was granted on condition that an archaeological record was made. Birmingham Archaeology was commissioned to carry out the building recording to fulfil this condition.

2.0 Site Location

The former Quarry Bank Infant School is situated on the south side of Quarry Bank High Street within the Metropolitan Borough of Dudley at NGR SO 393220 286050 (Fig. 1).

3.0 Objective

The purpose of the archaeological work is to identify, record and interpret successive phases in the development of Quarry Bank Infant School with the aim of providing a full record prior to demolition. To this end a photographic and drawn record (including plans, elevations and sections) is to be made at appropriate levels of detail, sufficient to illustrate the building's development.

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4.0 Methods

A measured phased plan of the buildings was produced at a scale of 1:100. This was supplemented by elevations and sections recorded by measured drawings at a scale of 1:50 off a horizontal datum.

In addition to the drawn record, a full referenced photographic survey was produced using monochrome and colour prints and colour transparencies. Interpretation of the building was assisted by written notes detailing the evolution of the structure into its final form.

The record included the external walls and roofs, noting the fabrics used and the forms of main architectural features such as doors, windows, dormers, as well as illustrative examples of fine architectural detailing. The interior floors, walls and ceilings have been recorded and architectural forms and fabrics noted.

5.0 Description

Phase 1

Quarry Bank Infant School was a single-storey school building the original elements of which dated from *c.* 1896. It was built to an eclectic design with classical, Decorated Gothic, and vernacular elements. The construction was of red brick, the plinth being laid in English bond, and the upper walls in English Garden Wall bond. The dressings were of terracotta, and the roof of plain tile with fish-scale tile bands and barge boards with linear decoration including billet mouldings. The principal range was orientated east-west, parallel with the High Street, and to the north were two subsidiary double-pile ranges, the western one aligned north-south, and the eastern one aligned east west, projecting beyond the main range to the east (Fig. 3).

The principal elevation faced south onto the street (Fig. 4, Plate 1). A moulded plinth, sill string and eaves band ran the length of the elevation. There were seven bays symmetrically arranged and articulated by brick pilaster buttresses capped by scrolls (Plate 2). The central bay was gabled with a large semi-circular arched window with shaped apron (Plate 3), gauged voussiors and ogee-arched hood mould. This was flanked on each side by a segmental-arched window with flat head, another gabled bay containing vertical glazing bar sashes with shaped apron. The gables were decorated with timber framing containing herringbone-patterned brick nogging. Decorated panels with a geometric pattern were located below the non-gabled windows (Plate 4). Originally the roof was surmounted by a central cupola, but this was taken down in 2001 owing to safety concerns.

The gables at either end of the principal range continued the style of the front elevation, the tops of the gables being timber-framed with brick nogging (Figs. 5 and 6, Plates 5 and 6). They were pierced by large segmental-arched windows with gauged voussiors, flanked by smaller rectangular lights. The main façades of the two northern wings were

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of near identical design (Figs. 5 and 7, Plates 5 and 7). They continued the plinth and string detail from the principal range, but the eaves had an egg and dart moulded eaves band. The two elevations each consisted of two bays, each with a tripartite window of identical design to those found in the gables of the principal range, and a half hipped roof. The north elevation of the northwestern wing contained a doorway with a semi-circular moulded arch, which appeared to be the original main entrance to the school.

The interior of the principal range comprised a single large open space, or assembly hall (Room A Fig. 3, Plate 8). Wood-framed glass partitions allowed temporary division of this hall into three separate spaces. The two northern wings had identical interior plans with twin rooms matching the exterior window bays. Modern alteration had occurred to the northeastern wing with wide bay doors creating a single open space within the interior.

A doorway linked the principal range to the northwestern wing, the two rooms of which were themselves connected by a doorway. Two interior windows visually connected these rooms (Room B and Room C) of the northwestern wing to the principal range. Access to the eastern range was through doorways located in a court between the two northern ranges.

The rooms had decorative tile friezes in the position of a dado rail (Plate 9). The principal range had a pitched roof and the two northern ranges were of hipped-roof design. Trusses of tie beams, crown struts and braced collars supported the roof-spaces, (the crown struts and tie beams mostly represented by iron rods). There were six in the principal range and a single one in each of the rooms of the northern ranges. The rafters and tie beams were carried on ornamental brackets (Plate 10).

Phase 2

Phase 2, which appeared to be of inter-war date, consisted of a low flat-roofed structure attached to the northwest corner of the building (Plate 11). It had double doors towards the west with a segmental-headed overlight. This building acted as a porch and cloakroom. Contemporary with this addition, is the infilling of the yard space between the two northern wings. The dormers located within the roof-spaces were probably added at this time in order to enable greater light access to the large interior spaces.

Phase 3

The final phase of construction was a series of post-war flat-roofed buildings to the north of the main school buildings. The National Union of Teachers occupied these at the time of the survey, and access was restricted to the exterior.

6.0 Discussion

The original buildings of the school comprised three blocks and dated from c. 1896. The five rooms originally appear to have been classrooms, with the largest, in the main range,

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acting as the assembly hall. This could have been separated into three separate sections by the addition of glass partitions to create a total of seven classrooms. Light was clearly a key element in the design of the building with large windows in all exterior elevations. Even after later alterations, dormer windows were added to enable greater light access to the interiors.

The Phase 2 alterations appear to have been designed at allowing cloakroom space for children. The Phase 3 additions to the school appear to suggest a change of use for the building with increased office space but also modernisation with the addition of interior toilets.

7.0 Historical Note

Expansion of educational facilities occurred in the late 19th century. Forster's Education Act of 1870 provided for elementary schools to be built in all areas where efficient schools were not already provided, to be controlled by local school boards. Subsequent acts in 1876 and 1880 made education compulsory to the age of 10, and in 1891 elementary education was made free. A consequence of this legislation was the construction of many new primary, or Board, schools (Hill 1970, 206-7). Quarry Bank Board School was built in 1877 and appears on the 1st edition of the Ordnance Survey 1:500 map of 1884 (Fig. 8). The Infant School was built immediately to the east and appears on the 2nd edition of the Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 9). Between 1920 (3rd edition) and 1936 (4th edition) the Board School had been demolished and replaced by a new building further to the north, which was still in use at the time of the survey (Fig. 10). Throughout this period the plan of the Infant School remained unchanged.

8.0 Acknowledgements

This report was written by Chris Hewitson and edited by Malcolm Hislop who also managed the project. Chris Hewitson and Kristina Krawiec carried out the site-based recording. Special thanks go to David Porter the headmaster of the school for his assistance. The illustrations were prepared by Nigel Dodds.

9.0 References

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Fig.1

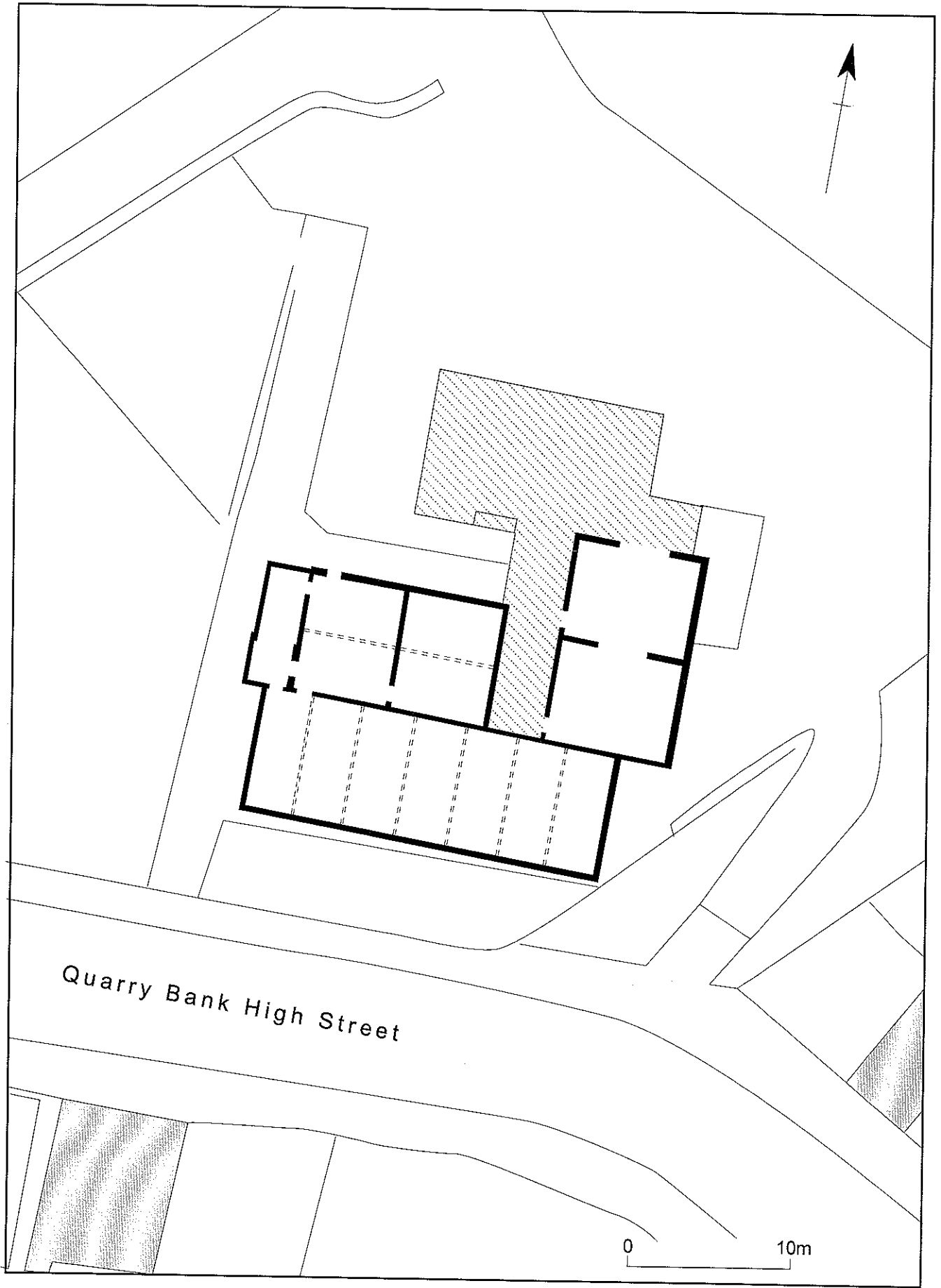


Fig.2

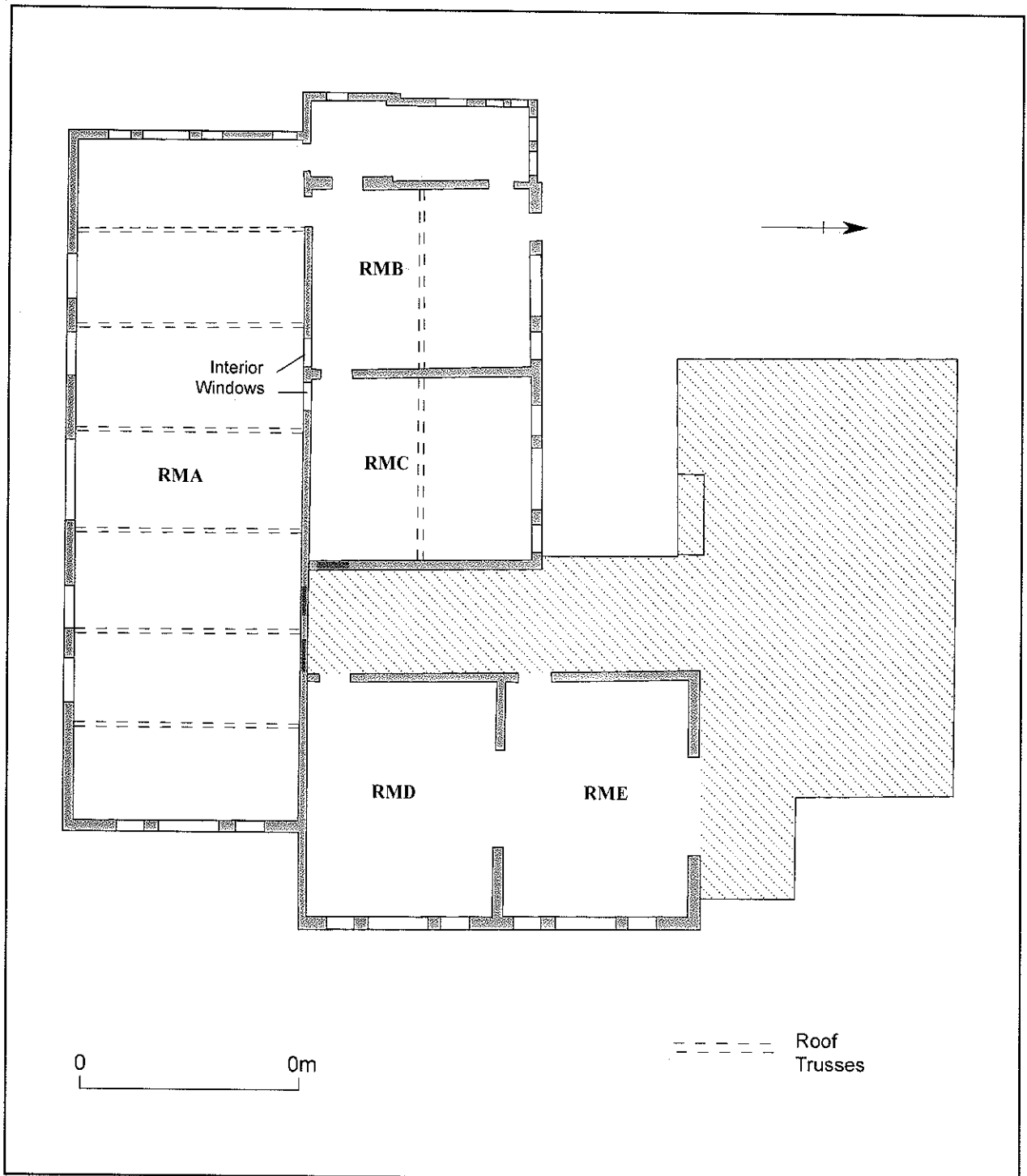


Fig.3

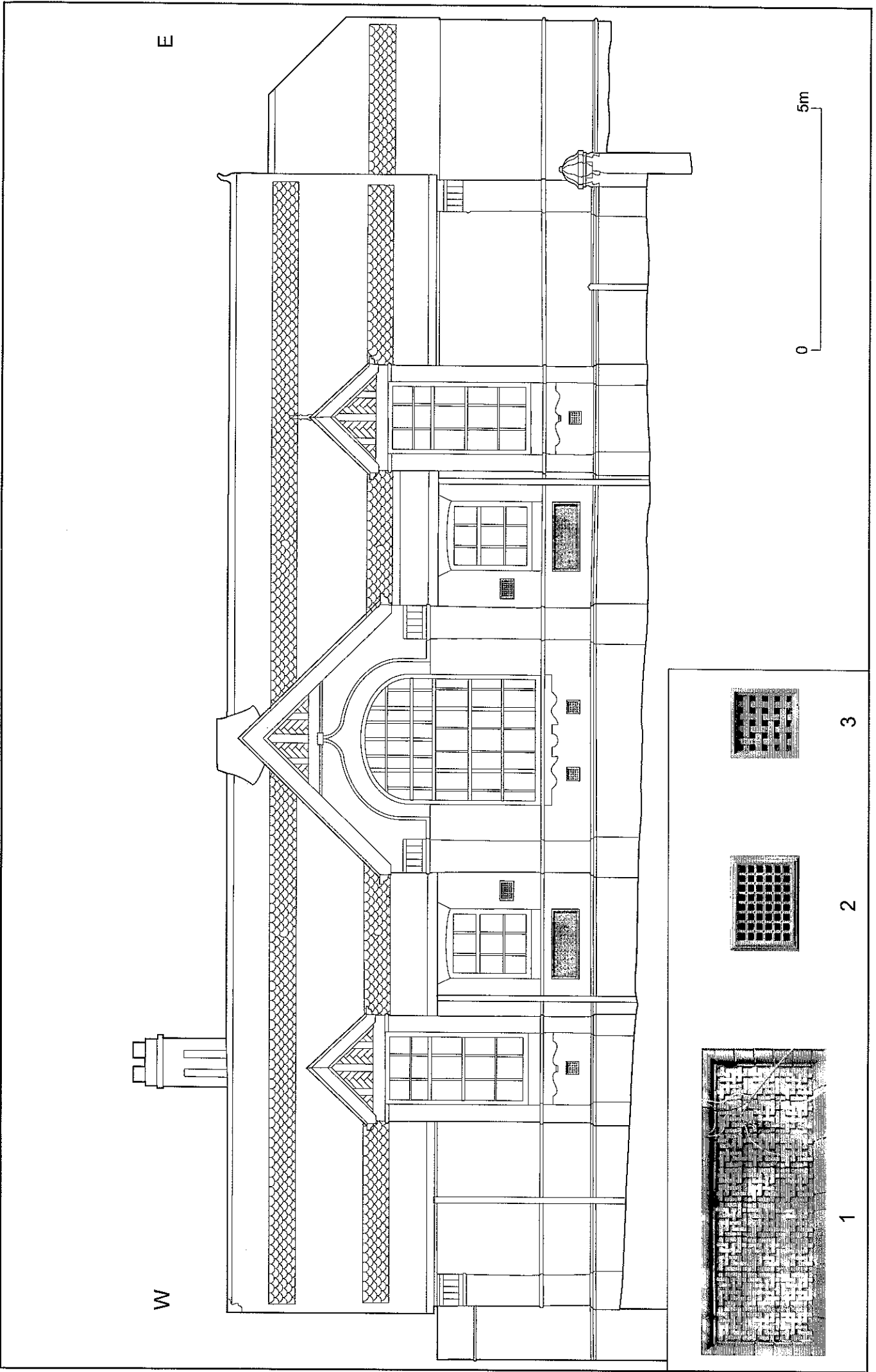


Fig.4

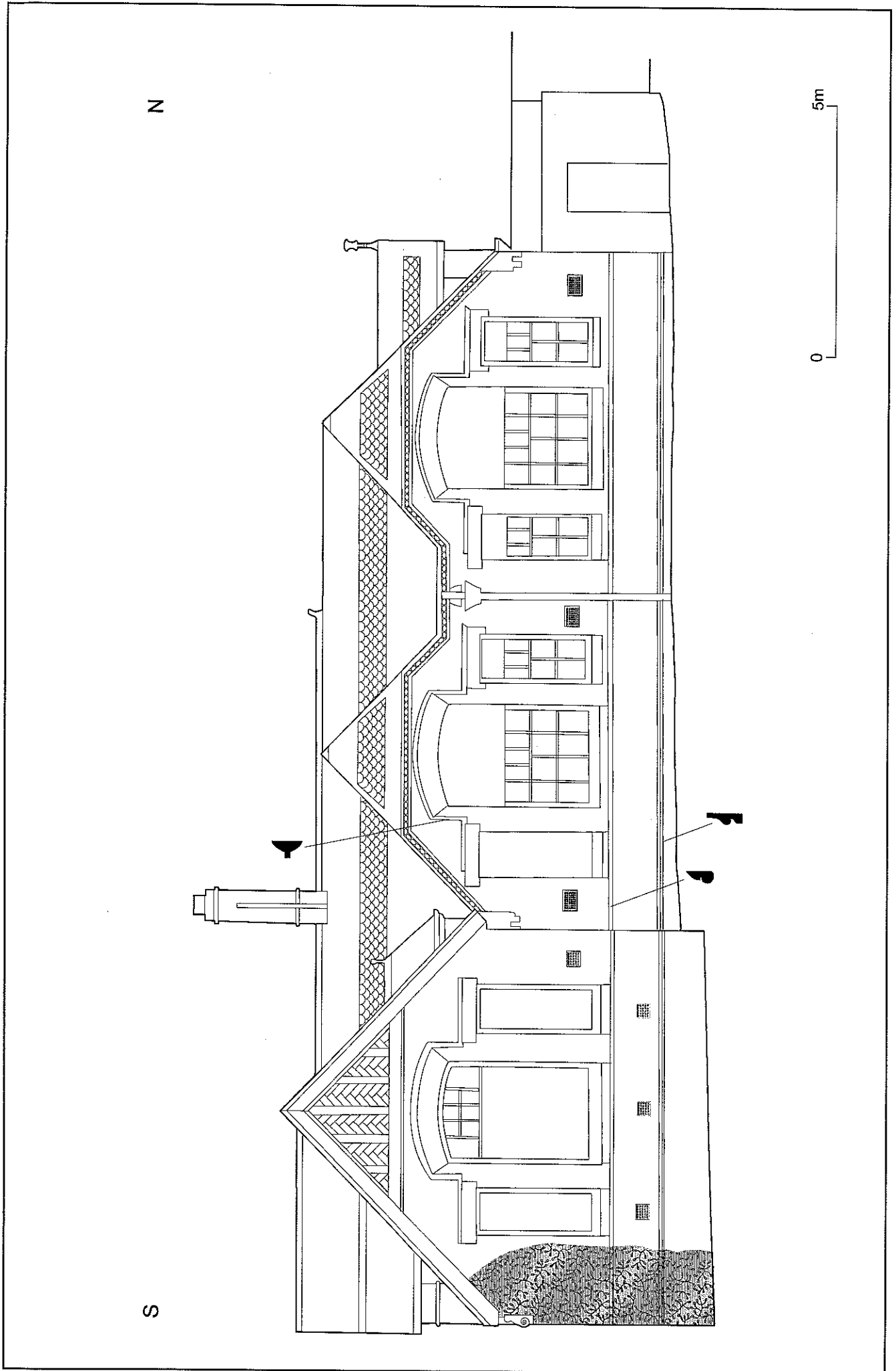


Fig.5

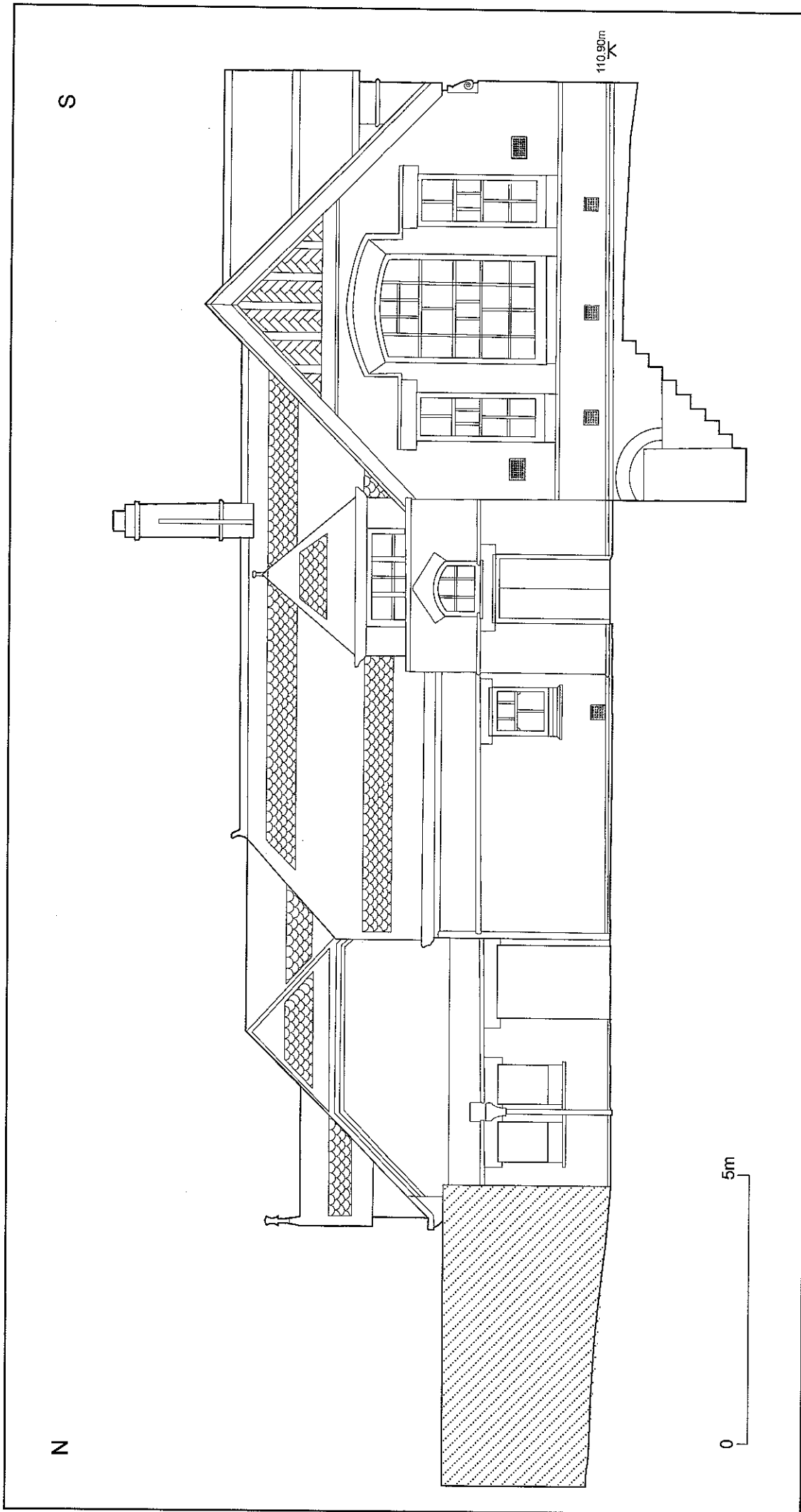


Fig.6

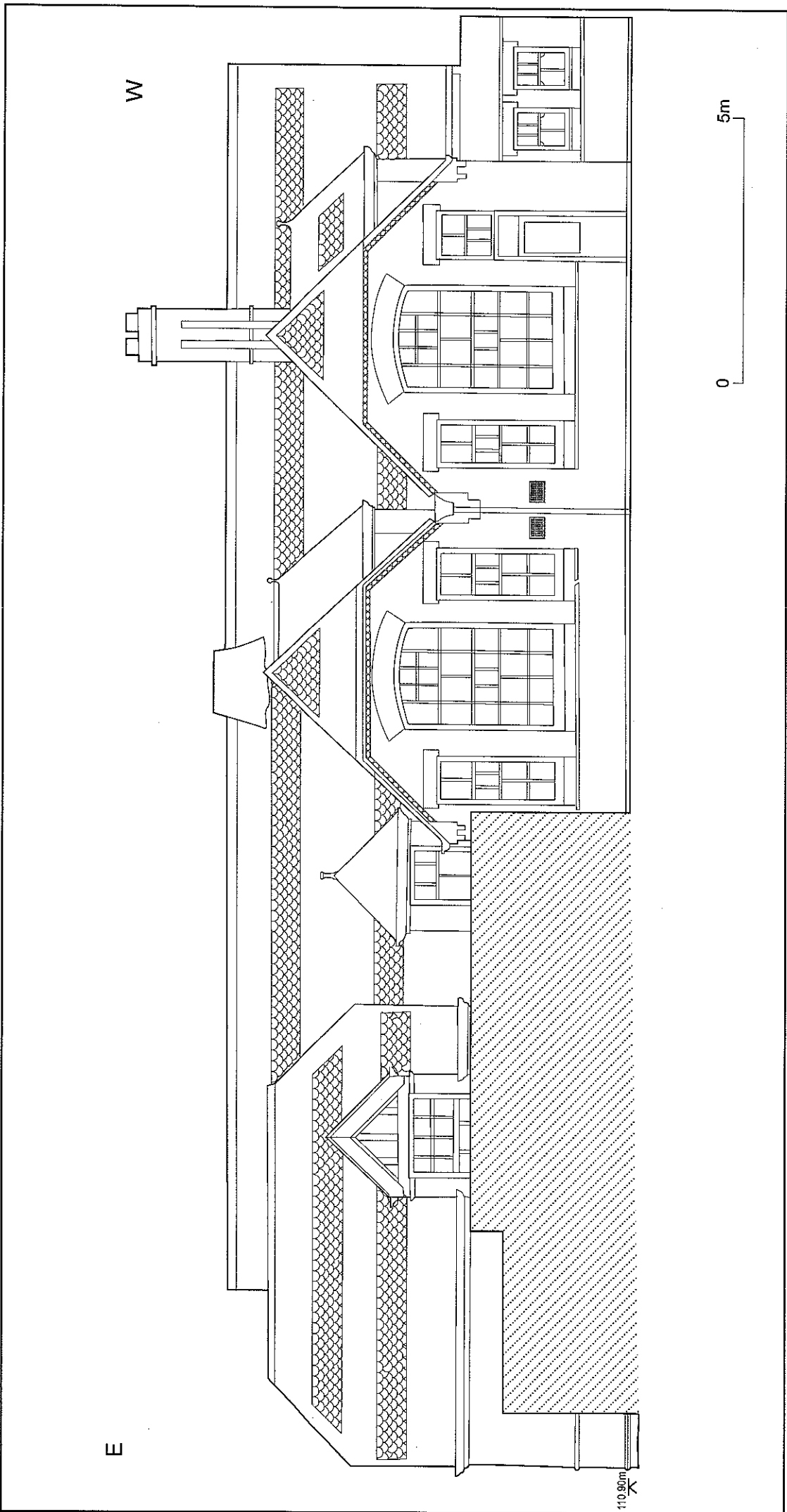


Fig.7

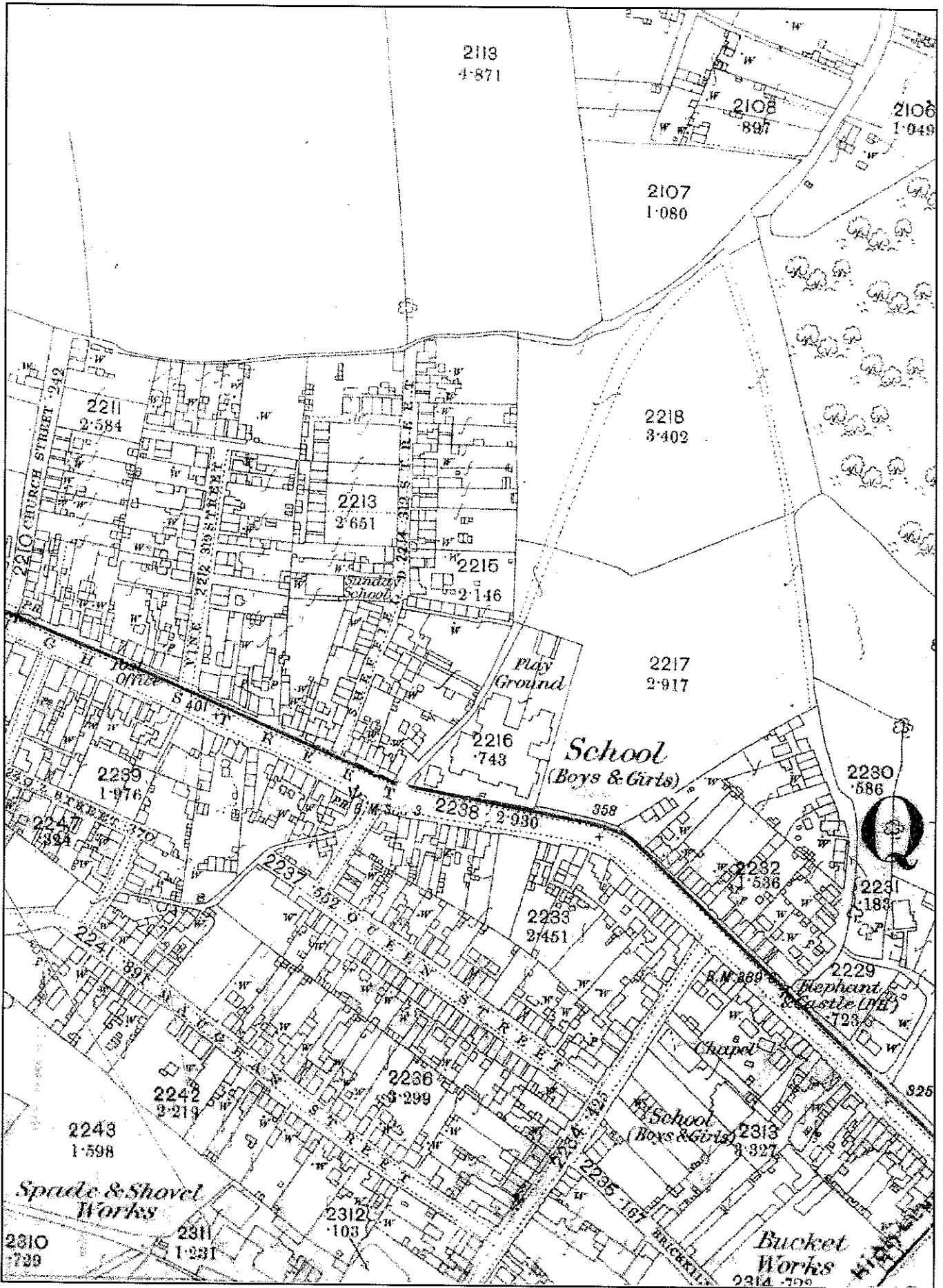


Fig.8 (1884)

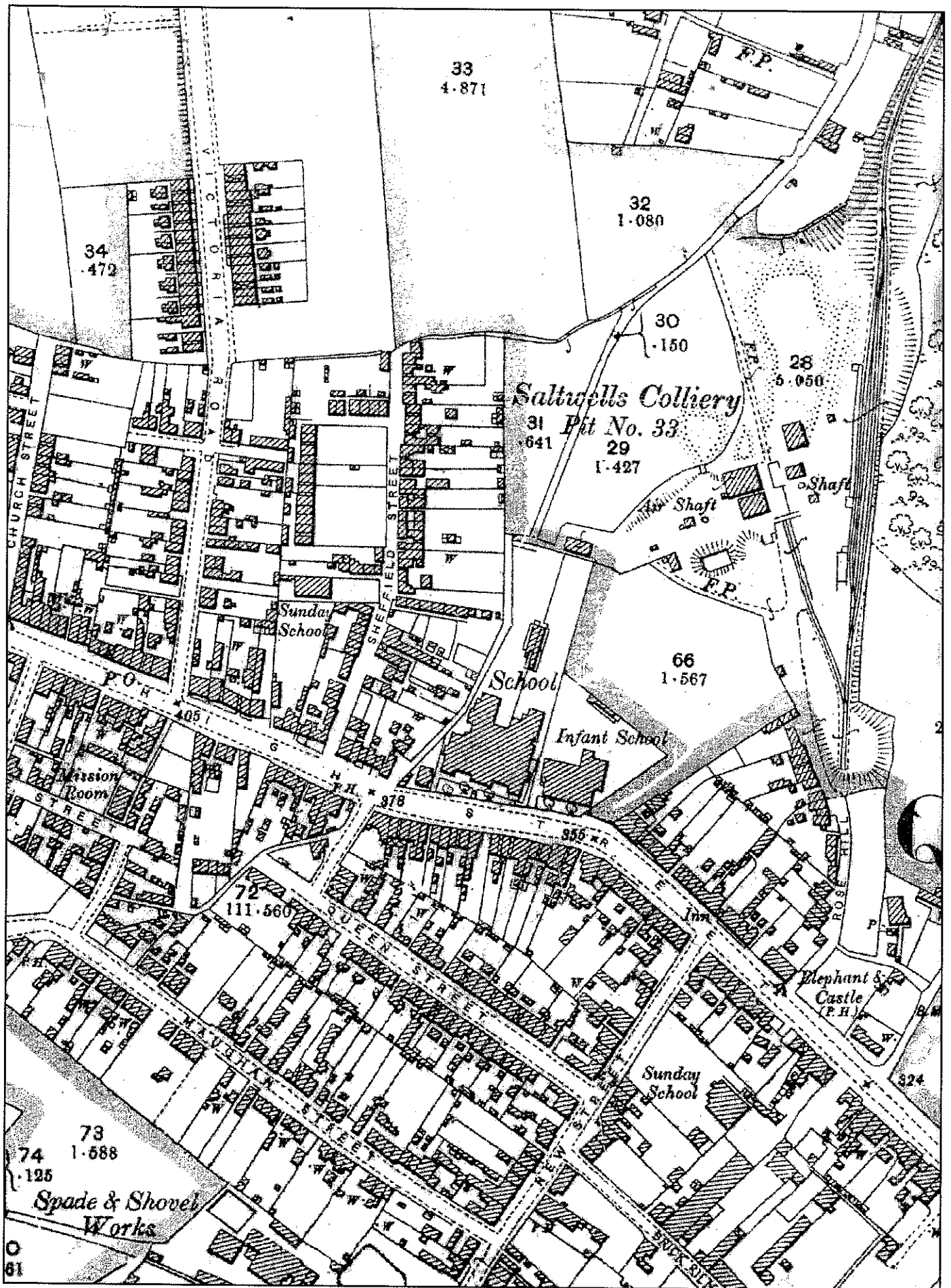


Fig.9 (1901)

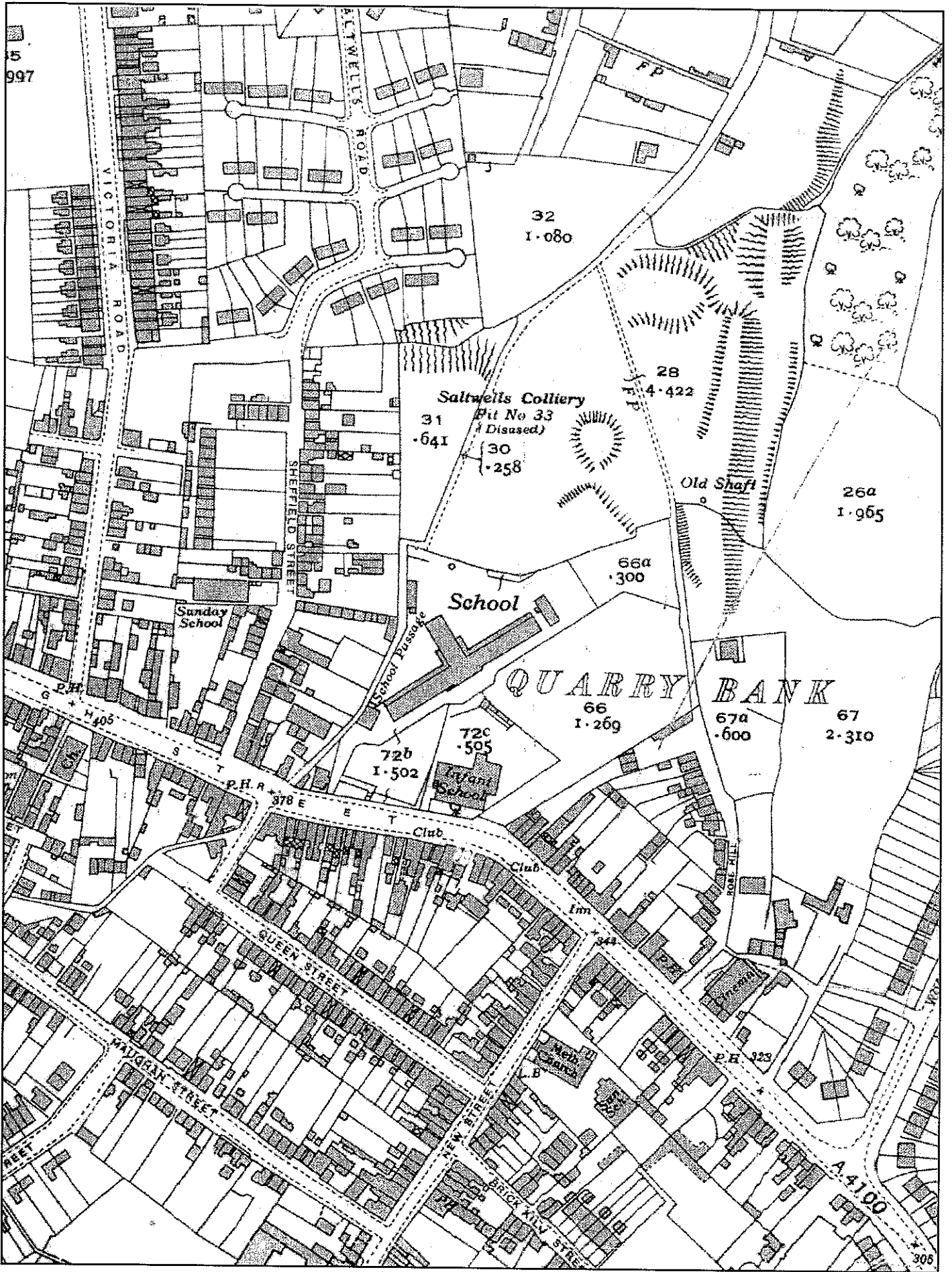


Fig.10 (1936)

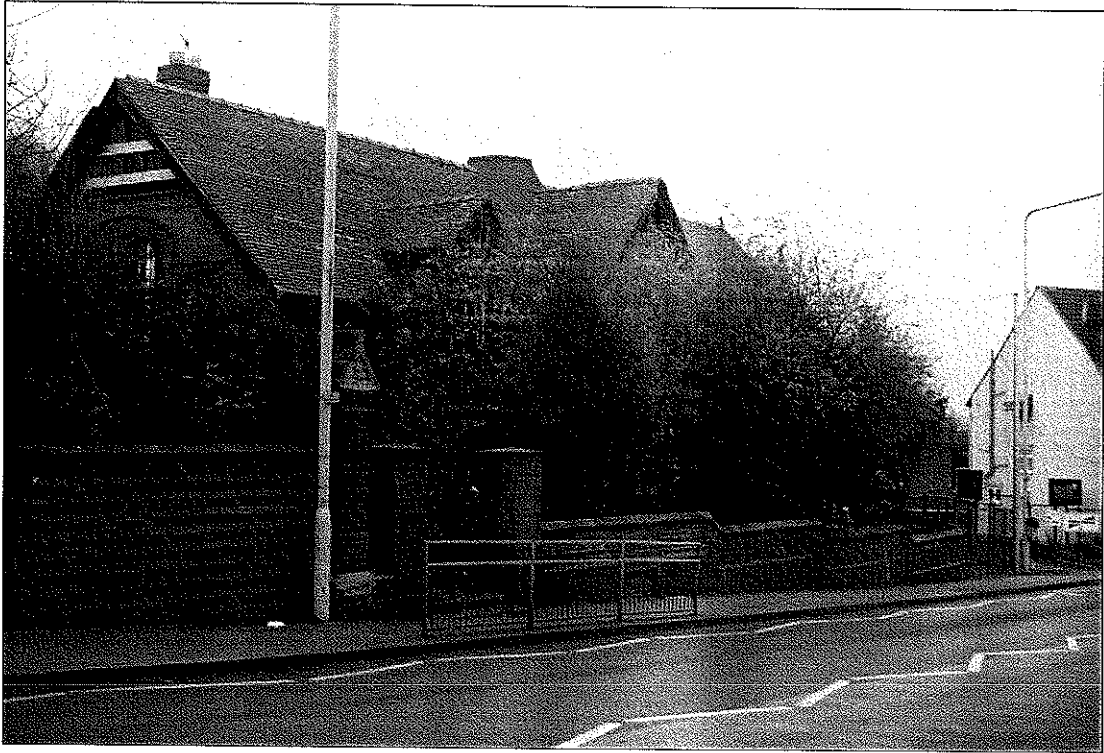


Plate 1



Plate 2



Plate 3

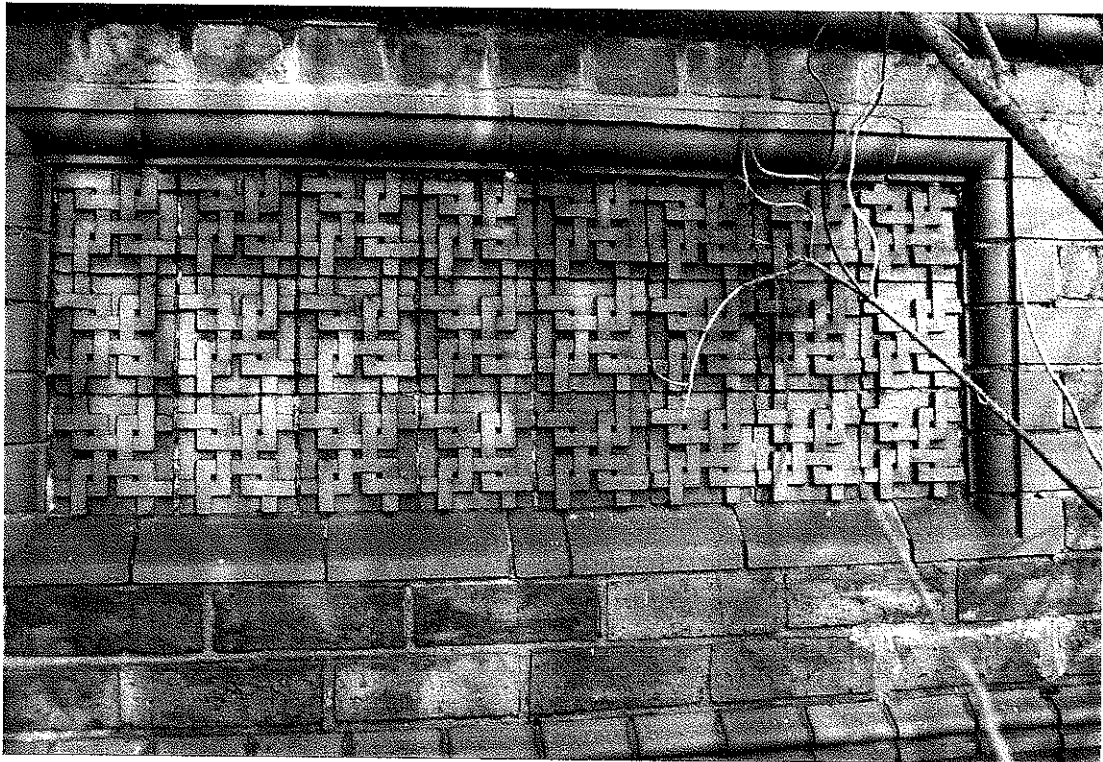


Plate 4

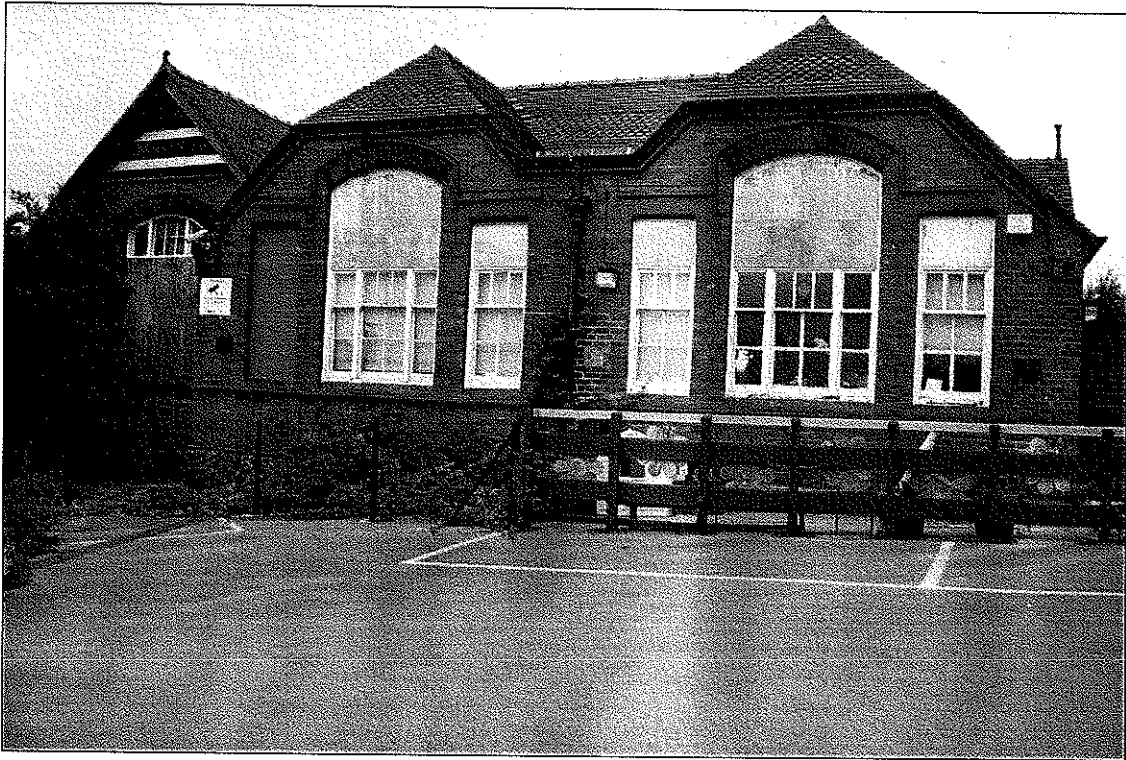


Plate 5



Plate 6



Plate 7

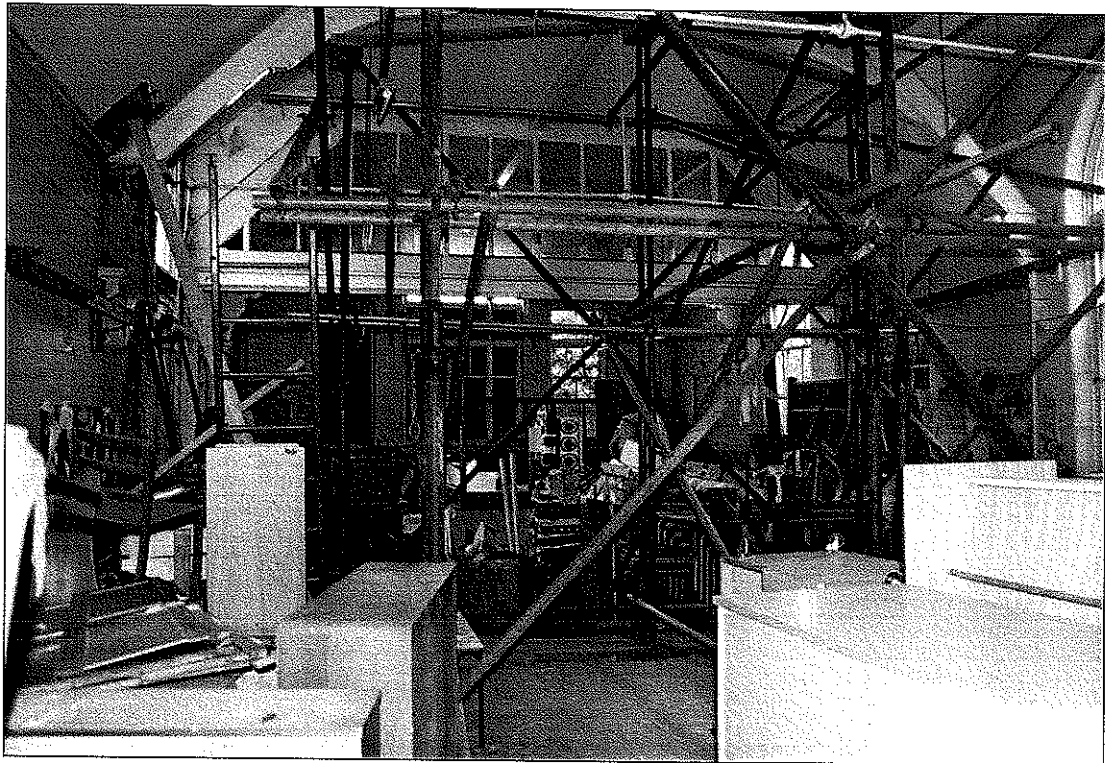


Plate 8



Plate 9



Plate 10

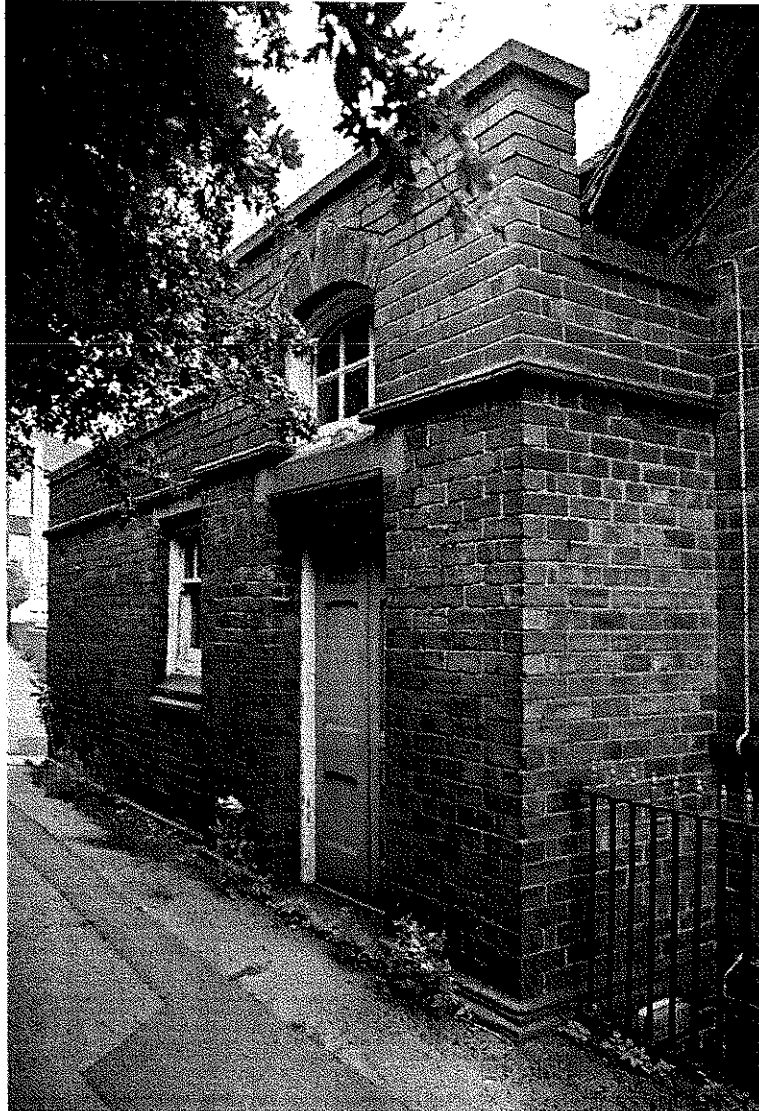


Plate 11