



University of Leicester

Archaeological Services

**An Historic Building Survey (Level 2)
and Archaeological Fieldwork at the
Former Jemsox Factory,
39-41 Welford Road,
Leicester**

NGR: SK 5873 0394

Andrew Hyam



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An Historic Building Survey (Level 2)
And Archaeological Fieldwork at the former
Jemsox Factory, 39-41 Welford Road,
Leicester

NGR: SK 5873 0394

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Summary

An historic building survey (level 2) and archaeological fieldwork was undertaken by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) at the Former Jemsox Factory at 39-41 Welford Road, Leicester between the 22nd of February and 28th of February 2013. The work took place during the conversion of the redundant hosiery factory into student accommodation.

The three main building ranges date to the later 19th century with all being present by 1888. All of the ranges were built within a short space of time. Later additions include a remodelled internal staircase and single storey external structures built in the rear courtyards.

No archaeological features or deposits were observed during ground works in the courtyard.

The report and archive will be deposited with Leicester City Museums under Accession Number A3.2013

Introduction

In accordance with NPPF (Section 12 Enhancing and Conserving the Historic Environment) this document forms the report for an historic buildings survey to Level 2 of the former Jemsox Factory at 39-41 Welford Road, Leicester. It also forms the report for a small programme of archaeological fieldwork carried out at the same site. The building survey followed the guidelines laid out in *RCHME Recording Historic Buildings – a Descriptive Specification* (this document has since been superseded by English Heritage guidance – *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice*, 2006). The project was completed in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct* (rev. 2012) and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing buildings or Structures* (Rev. 2010).

Background

Under planning application number 20120886 (39-41 Welford Road, Jemsox Factory: *Change of use from Hosiery Factory and new 5 storey buildings following demolition of existing single storey buildings to provide 173 student bedrooms in 34 cluster flats: landscaping: external alterations*) it is proposed to convert the redundant former hosiery building to provide new accommodation on all four floors. The conversion also involves the demolition of two single storey structures located to the rear of the main building which will be replaced by two smaller blocks of accommodation.

The development site is located at NGR SK 5873 0394 to the south-west of central Leicester, and is bounded to the east by Welford Road (Figs. 1 and 2). The application area is currently occupied by the Jemsox Factory and a small service yard to the immediate south. At the time of the building survey the single storey structures to the rear (west side) of the main building had already been demolished and the refurbishment was well underway. The outside of the building was also covered in scaffolding and protective sheeting.

An archaeological desk-based assessment of the site was undertaken by ULAS in 2007 (Boutsikas 2007) and established that the hosiery factory reached its present extent of development by the late 19th century. Although it lies outside the limit of the Roman walls, the site had the potential for Roman burials and later Anglo-Saxon activity. In addition to this the possibility of medieval and post-medieval activity was also highlighted.

In the early 19th century the site was occupied by a small garden area belonging to nearby properties. By the time the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1888 was published it shows the general area around the application area as being completely developed. The road layout at this date remains similar to that seen in the first half of the 19th century, with the addition of various smaller streets between the major thoroughfares, and the presence of the Infirmary and prison to the south. By 1888 terraced houses have also been constructed and front onto Welford Road, Oxford Street and Grange Lane. To the rear of the terraced houses are outbuildings and yards. A more detailed map of 1888 shows the construction of industrial structures within, and surrounding, the development area, which include hosiery and wool factories, an elastic web factory, a sawmill, boot and shoe factories, a cigar factory, warehouses and a malt house. The Jemsox factory is shown on the map as being occupied by a boot and shoe factory fronting on to Welford Road. This gradual development in land-use is also shown on subsequent editions of the Ordnance Survey maps of 1904 and 1915. The factory layout appears to have remained virtually unchanged up to and including the 1955 edition with the only difference being that it is identified as a Hosiery, Underwear and Knitwear Factory.

The present structure is formed of three main ranges, two facing out onto Welford Road and a rear, east to west range (Fig. 3; plans and elevations are in Appendix 2).



Figure 1 General location of site

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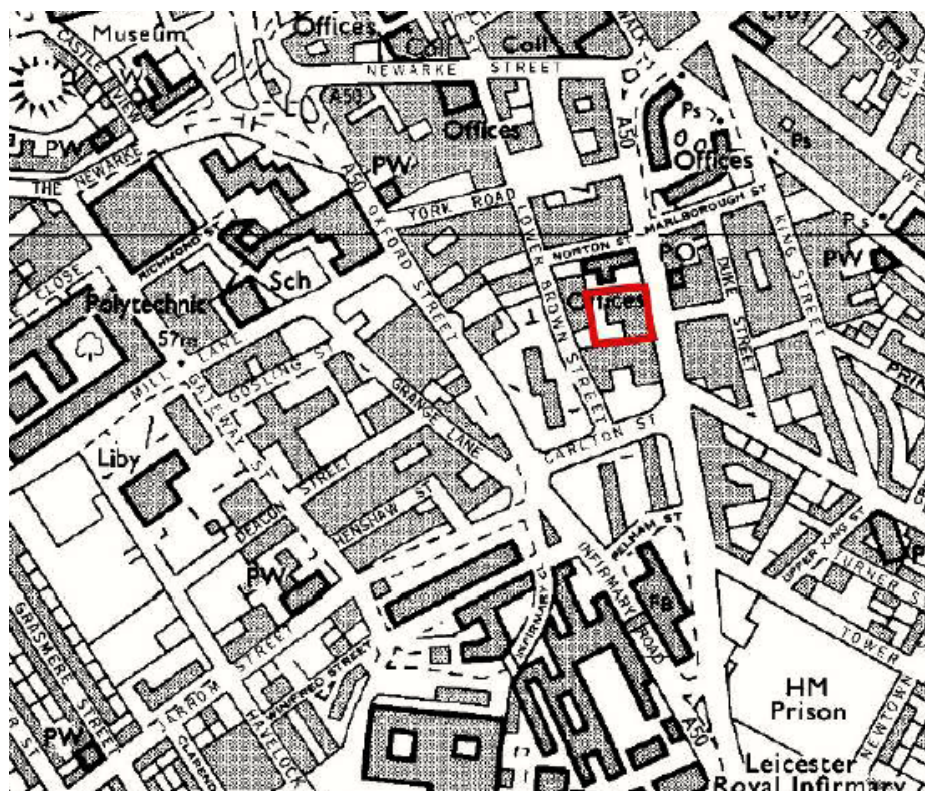


Figure 2 Site location on the 1991 OS map

Site highlighted in red

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Objectives

The objectives of the historic building survey were:

- To provide a written, drawn and photographic record of all the buildings on site prior to the commencement of works with specific attention given to those elements proposed for demolition, conversion and/or alteration. This work to be undertaken to a standard that will allow the future interpretation of the building within the context for which it was originally designed and which subsequently evolved.
- To ensure the long-term preservation of the information through deposition of the record and a summary written report with an appropriate depository.

Through archaeological attendance and, as appropriate, investigation, the objectives of the archaeological fieldwork were:

- To identify the presence/absence of any earlier building phases or archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed refurbishment and ground works.
- To record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

Methodology

The building survey:

Black and white 35mm photographs and digital colour photographs were taken throughout the survey. Notes and sketches were also made and scale site plans supplied by the client were used and modified to suit the purposes of this survey. The specific levels of detail used in the Level 2 survey followed the guidelines laid down in the English Heritage (2006) Guidelines, which are:

1. The Written Account:

- The precise location of the building, by name or street number, civil parish, town, etc, and National Grid reference and details of listing or scheduling.
- The date when the record was made, and the name(s) of the recorder(s).
- A statement describing the building's plan, form, function, age and development sequence. The names of architects, builders, patrons and owners should be given if known.
- An account of the building's overall form (structure, materials, layout) and its successive phases of development, together with the evidence supporting this analysis.
- An account of past and present uses of the building and its parts, with the evidence for these interpretations. An analysis of any circulation pattern or decorative, iconographic or liturgical scheme.

2. Drawn Record:

- Shall comprise plans (to scale or full dimensioned) of all main floors as existing. Small buildings of well-known types, or buildings with a repetitive structure (e.g. many industrial buildings) may be planned on one floor only, but a note or a sketch plan should be made to show the arrangement of other floors. Plans may show the form and location of any structural features of historic significance (e.g. blocked doors and windows; former fireplace openings; masonry joints; changes in internal levels).
- As a minimum, in all cases, the drawn record will include a sketch plan roughly dimensioned (when no more thorough drawn record is required). Such a plan may not always include structural details (e.g. timber framing).
- In each of the above cases, use may be made of available plans (i.e. those prepared as part of a planning application). In all cases these shall be checked by the historic building specialist and supplemented or amended where necessary.

3. Photographic Record:

- General view of views of the exterior of the building.
- The overall appearance of principal rooms and circulation areas.
- Detailed coverage of the building's external appearance. In the case of a building designed by an architect, or intended to be seen from a certain point of view, it is important to have regard to the builder's intentions and to record the effect of the design or of the building's placing.
-

The strip, map and record objectives were as follows:

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed ground works.
- To record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
- To advance understanding of the heritage assets.
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

All work followed the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct* (2012) and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing buildings or Structures* (2010). In addition, Leicestershire County Council's *Guidelines and Procedures for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire* (1997) was followed.

During the fieldwork stage all groundworks and deposits were recorded by notes, sketches and both digital colour and 35mm black and white photographs. The recording methodology followed that specified in the ULAS Design Specification for Archaeological Work for *39-41 Welford Road*.

Results

The building survey

Neil Finn and Efrosyni Boutsikas (ULAS) visited the site in 2007 and carried out a rapid assessment of the building paying particular attention to the outside elevations (ULAS Report 2007-153). At the time of their visit the factory was still in use. During the present survey most of the outside elevations were not fully visible due to the presence of scaffolding, therefore some of the 2007 photographs and text have been used here.

East facing elevation

The east facing street frontage range at 39-41 Welford Road is a late 19th century factory building of 12 window bays and 4 storeys, plus attic and basement (Fig. 3). It was constructed in two phases, these corresponding with the street numbering as shown on Ordnance Survey mapping. Number 39 constitutes the five bays on the northern side (the right as viewed from Welford Road) and Number 41 the 7 bays to the south. The two sections are executed in similar architectural style and materials, but with some differences in detail (e.g. window frames) but were clearly designed to match each other. It seems highly likely that both sections were built for the same firm probably within the space of a few years. It is built from red brick laid in Flemish bond on a stone plinth. Window and door openings have segmental arched heads with keystones, except for a goods entrance at the northern end, which looks to be an early opening but has been altered by the addition of a modern lintel. A goods entrance at the southern end, which provides access to a small service yard, has a segmental arch head with stone detailing. All window and door openings have quarter round brick detailing to the reveals. The principal pedestrian entrance is at the northern end bay of Number 41 (7th bay from the south end of the building) and matches the detailing around the other windows. There is a projecting painted stone band between each floor, and at the eaves there are paired brackets above a projecting stone band which is interrupted by the third floor windows. The roof covering is of slate with the south end gabled and the north end hipped. The party wall between Numbers 39 and 41 rises above roof level forming a clear separation between the two structural phases. The windows of Number 39 are two-over-two pane timber sashes with arched heads. Number 41 has metal framed windows. There are basements beneath both sections of the frontage range which are lit by glass blocks set immediately below the ground floor windows. The basement windows are protected from the street by low cast iron railings.



Figure 3 East facing elevation
Looking south-west. Photograph taken in 2007

Rear of Number 39

At the time of the Desk-Based Assessment the space to the rear of Number 39 was occupied by a large single-storey brick-built pitched roof structure which housed modern machinery (Fig. 4). By the time of this survey this structure had been removed leaving an open space. The windows on this elevation of Number 39 are metal framed, three over three panes which match the east to west rear range extending out from the main building. The ground floor windows on the rear (west) elevation have been removed and replaced with modern flat-headed openings. A projecting structure near to the northern end of the elevation houses a small toilet block which serves every floor. It is not clear from the outside whether this is part of the original design or a later addition. An obvious later addition is a modern lift shaft added into the corner angle of Number 39 and the east to west range extending from Number 41.

Most of the ground floor windows on the east to west range have been blocked by later brickwork. This was presumably done when the later single storey building was added to the rear courtyard. A modern double width entrance has been cut through two windows into the ground floor of the range.

Rear of No 41

The west facing elevation of Number 41 has a plain red brick façade with four storeys of windows of the same design as those used on the east facing elevation (Fig. 5). A number of these windows have been modified to provide access to a metal fire escape which had been removed shortly before this survey. This elevation faces into a small service yard which had been occupied by a single storey structure, later in date than the main buildings and this appeared to have been constructed in at least two separate

phases. It was brick built and the roof partly corrugated, probably with asbestos. The rear section housed modern plant equipment. By the time of this survey the building had been removed to expose the ground floor windows and modified openings around the service yard.

At the rear of the north end of Number 41 is a tall, narrow range of four storeys plus attic running on an east to west alignment (Fig. 5 and 6). This range has no basement and is brick built with a slate roof. The style suggests that it may be broadly contemporary with the construction of the Number 41 frontage range. Interestingly, although the north facing windows have three x three panes, the south facing windows have multiple panes to match the rear (west face) of Number 41. At ground floor level two large brick-built relieving arches spring from a central column towards each corner which suggests that the ground floor wall was used as a pair of wide doorways rather than as windows. This suggests that the ground floor was built as an open fronted structure. At the back of this range, is a square brick-built factory chimney, which presumably served an engine within the factory at some stage of its working life.

North and south facing elevations

The north facing elevation is partially rendered suggesting that it masks some scarring caused by buildings which once butted up against it. Some decorative brickwork banding wraps around this elevation as a continuation from the front elevation. Breaks in this banding may indicate the location of former structures. The south facing elevation is obscured by a modern building.



Figure 4 West facing elevation of Number 39 and east to west range
Looking south-east. Photographs taken in 2007 with single storey structure (red
painted brick) still present in courtyard



Figure 5 West facing elevation of Number 41 and rear range
Looking north-east. Photograph taken in 2007 with single storey structure (red painted brick) still present



Figure 6 North facing elevation of rear east to west range
Looking south. Single storey structure removed

Inside

Basement

The basement of Number 39 has had the ceiling removed to create a large open space up to the ground floor ceiling. A north to south low brick wall used to support the ground floor joists and a single cast iron column rests on this to support the floor above (Fig. 7). This floor appears to have been only recently removed as part of the conversion process. On the north wall is evidence of a timber staircase which once led up to the ground floor. A small hallway and stairwell at the base of a set of concrete replacement stairs separates the basements of Numbers 39 and 41. The stairwell forms part of the structure of Number 41. Number 41 basement has also had the ceiling removed to open up the space to include the ground floor room (Figs 8 and 9). As in Number 39 this split-level room is divided into two by a brick wall running from north to south. Two brick-arched alcoves extend below the covered entranceway from Welford Road. Four partially bricked-up metal-framed windows are located at basement level along the west wall. The two northern windows on this wall have been completely blocked due to the construction of the rear east to west range suggesting a slightly later date for this range. Rectangular blocked windows on the east wall at basement height show where light wells used to rise up to pavement level. Access to the rear courtyard is via a set of narrow external steps in the south-west corner. The rear, east to west, range has a solid ground floor with no basement.



Figure 7 Basement of Number 39 with Ground floor removed
Looking north-west. 1m scale



Figure 8 Basement of Number 41 viewed from ground floor
Looking north-west



Figure 9 Basement of Number 41
Looking south-east. Note arches under entrance in lower centre of picture

Ground Floor

As noted the original floor joists and floor boards have recently been removed leaving the empty shell of each ground floor and basement room. The east windows of Number 39 are as already described with a double width loading door in the north-east corner. Most of the windows on the western side have been modified to form larger openings, presumably to create easier access for goods and materials into the single-storey building which, until recently, stood in the courtyard. There is evidence in the paintwork on the northern wall of a staircase leading up to the next floor. There does not appear to be any access from this floor to the central staircase. The main pedestrian doorway out onto Welford Road leads in to the central staircase which ascends to the top floor. The remains of a terrazzo floor are evident on this floor but this area has seen a lot of alteration and the present stairs are relatively modern concrete ones (Fig. 10). Surviving paintwork on the walls indicates that the original staircase, although in the same position, was laid out in the opposite way to the current stairs. That is, the stairs to the floor above faced the outside doors rather than facing away as they do now.

More of the windows are intact on the ground floor of Number 41, although again two windows have been obscured and blocked by the addition of the east to west range. The northernmost window on the west wall has also been modified to create a doorway into this range. Two rectangular windows, which appear to be modern, have been added to the south wall and look out into the covered entranceway.

The east to west range has three central timber-clad posts supporting steel fireproof floor joists from which the masonry floor covering has been removed (Fig. 11). Three additional small circular diameter metal posts also support the roof. As noted, three of the windows on the north wall have been blocked with brickwork. A recent modification has cut through two of the blocked windows to create a large opening out to the northern courtyard.



Figure 10 Main entrance and staircase
Looking east



Figure 11 Ground floor of east to west range
Looking east. 1m scale

First Floor

The first floor east facing windows of Number 39 are two-paned wooden sliding sashes (Fig. 12). The west facing windows are smaller paned metal-framed ones (Fig. 13). The small toilet block in the north-west corner of the room appears to be a later addition as the brickwork does not bond properly with the main wall. A blocked hole in the floor in the north-east corner marks where an earlier set of stairs came up from the floor below. A patched ceiling shows that the stairs continued upwards to the top floor. The later lift shaft, seen in the south-east corner of the north courtyard opens into the south-west corner of this room. A cast iron central column supports the floor above. There are no visible marks or attachments for machinery on this column.

As well as connecting Numbers 39 and 41 by doors from the central staircase, a large double-width opening to the west of the stairs connects the two first floor rooms. This opening appears to be fairly late and has a steel joist lintel. A small internal goods lift is located behind the central staircase in Number 41 and reaches all floors. This floor extends southwards over the covered ground level entrance and has a south wall set at an obtuse angle to the east and west walls (Fig. 14). A doorway from Number 41 into the east to west range has been created by modifying a window. Two central cast-iron columns support the floor above.

The rear east to west range at the time of the survey did not have a floor so could not be entered. The heads of two relieving arches, as noted above, can be seen on the south wall (Fig. 15). The two outermost windows have slightly higher sills to accommodate the head of the arches. The ceiling is made of conventional wooden floor joists rather than the metal joists used on the floor, which again would indicate that the ground floor was original designed as an open loading bay.



Figure 12 First floor of Number 39
Looking south-east



Figure 13 First floor of Number 39
Looking north-west



Figure 14 First floor of Number 41
Looking north-west



Figure 15 First floor of east to west range
Looking west. Note relieving arches under windows.

Second Floor

The second floor of all ranges has been built to the same layout and design as that seen on the floor below. The supporting column details differ slightly (Figs 16 and 17). Three doorways have been made by opening up the original three windows leading from Number 41 into the east west range (Fig. 18). The main north to south floor joist in the ceiling has fractured and split possibly due to the weight of machinery suspended from it. The remaining floor/ceiling joists in this range have stop-chamfers.



Figure 16 Support column detail, Second floor, Number 39
Looking north-west. 1m scale



Figure 17 Supporting column detail, Second floor, Number 41
Looking west. 1m scale



Figure 18 Second floor, east to west range
Looking east towards Number 41 and modified window openings

Third Floor

The third floor matches the layout of the floors below and shows the same modifications. The only significant difference being in the east to west range where there are no stop-chamfered joists and the longitudinal east to west joist is a replacement I-section steel beam. No traces of machinery or other former uses remain on this floor.

Fourth Floor/Roof space

The fourth floor of Number 39 cannot be reached from the central staircase. This area appears to have been built as a storage area rather than a proper floor level and could not be reached during the survey due to contamination issues.

The fourth floor of Number 41 has been built into the roof space and is reached by the central staircase. The roof structure has clasped purlins sat on the backs of the principal rafters which join at their apex in a cast-iron socket (Fig. 19). Tie-beams are step lap jointed and bolted to the principals. The floor, which rises up along the eastern side to let in more light on the third floor, is suspended from timber posts which are attached by metal straps attached to the sides of the principals.

The east to west range is partially blocked by the roof timbers of Number 41 making access slightly awkward (Fig. 20). This range has a different method of construction possibly because the building is not as wide as the main building. Here, the principal rafters join at their apex and have small collars bolted near to the top. Raking L-section steel struts support the principals near to the floor (Fig.21).



Figure 19 Fourth floor, Number 41 roof detail
Looking south



Figure 20 Fourth floor, junction of Number 41 and east to west range
Looking north-west



Figure 21 Fourth floor, east to west range
Looking west

The Strip, Map and Record Exercise (watching brief)

The removal of the single storey buildings in both of the rear courtyards revealed a level but quite disturbed surface. The northern yard, at the time of the archaeological work, was covered in a thin layer of building demolition rubble. The southern yard retained a small concrete plinth on which part of the single storey building had recently stood. Around the plinth the ground had been heavily disturbed.

After clearing away most of the building debris within the angle created by Number 39 and the east to west range a 4.5m by 4.5m square crane base was excavated as part of the redevelopment construction programme (Fig. 22). Immediately below the demolition debris was the natural substratum consisting of reddish brown clay which continued down to the bottom of the crane base which was 1.7m below present ground level. Dug directly into the clay along the eastern edge of the trench were eight courses of unmortared bricks which appeared to be the foundations of a narrow wall. The bricks were of a typical early to mid-20th century factory-made style and seem likely to be part of the single storey extension which previously occupied this space (Fig. 23). Other small areas of cleared ground elsewhere in this courtyard indicate that the natural substratum is directly below the demolition overburden.

The southern courtyard appears to be similarly disturbed either by landscaping when the original factory buildings were constructed or when later buildings were added. No archaeological features or deposits were observed during this work.



Figure 22 Location of crane base in northern courtyard
Looking south-east



Figure 23 Excavated crane base
Looking north-west

Discussion

As noted in the desk-based assessment the former Jemsox factory building has some local historic architectural significance in terms of its association with Leicester's 19th-century industrialisation and its connection with two key regional industries: hosiery and boot and shoe manufacture. The building appears to have undergone three major phases of development over its lifetime. The earliest phase appears to be the seven bays of Number 41 which was built as a stand-alone gable-ended structure with a covered entranceway to the south end of the Welford Road elevation and main office doors at the northern end. Very shortly after Number 41 was constructed an extra four bays were then added as Number 39. With the exception of the windows the decorative detailing on the front of the building match almost exactly which would suggest that the two ranges are virtually contemporary. It also seems very likely that the work was carried out for the same client and, probably, executed by the same designer and builder. The third phase was the addition of the rear east to west range which was attached to the north-west corner of Number 41. This addition forced the blocking off of some windows on the west wall of Number 41. The fact that the windows on either side of the east to west range match the differing windows on the rear of 39 and 41 indicates that these two structures pre-date the range. All of these additions had taken place by the date of the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1888.

Later minor modifications include the addition of the toilet block to Number 39, the external lift shaft and the insertion of the single storey structures in each courtyard. Internally, with the exception of blocked windows, one of the main alterations has been the replacement of the original staircase by a set of concrete stairs.

The strip, plan and sample exercise failed to identify any archaeological features or deposits due to earlier disturbance. It seems likely that the ground level was landscaped and reduced when the different ranges were first built which would have removed any overburden and possibly affected the natural substratum. Later structural work within the north and south courtyards would also have disturbed any remaining features which may have been present.

Archive

The archive consists of:

This report,

99 digital photographs (93 from survey, 6 from watching brief)

54 35mm black and white photographs: as negatives and contact sheet,

3 A4 pro-forma photograph record sheets,

1 pro-forma ULAS watching brief record sheet,

CD of this report and the digital photographs.

Publication

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* in due course. A record of the project will also be submitted to the OASIS project. OASIS is an online index to archaeological grey literature.

Bibliography

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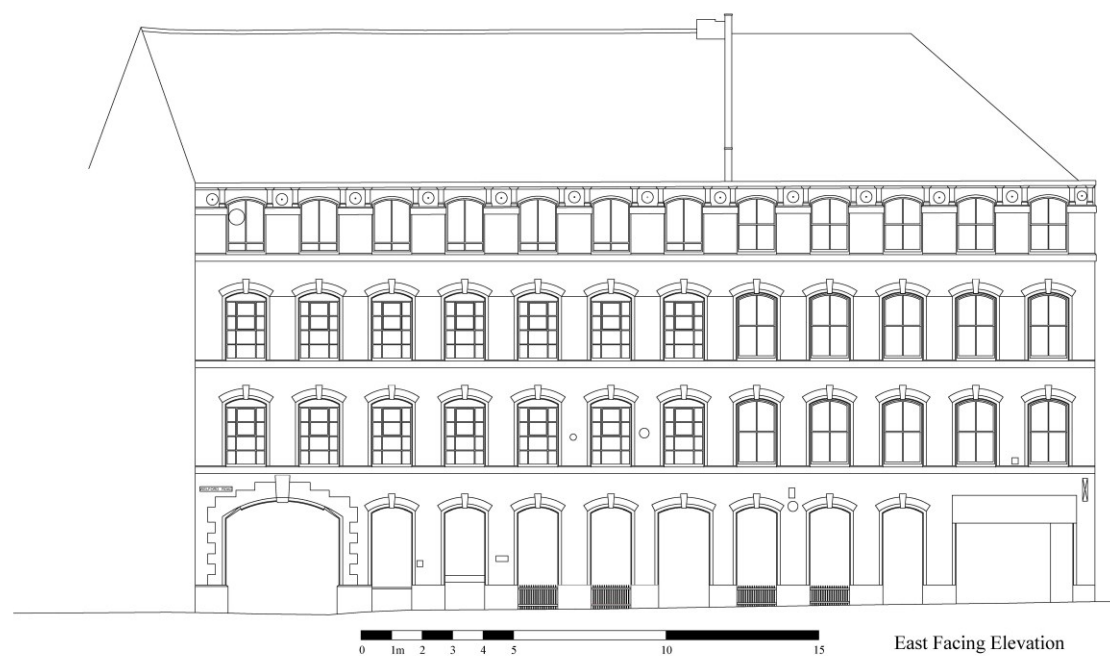
ULAS, 2013, *Written Scheme of Investigation for Historic Building Recording and archaeological fieldwork: The former Jemsox Factory 39-41 Welford Road, Leicester*. 30.01.2013.

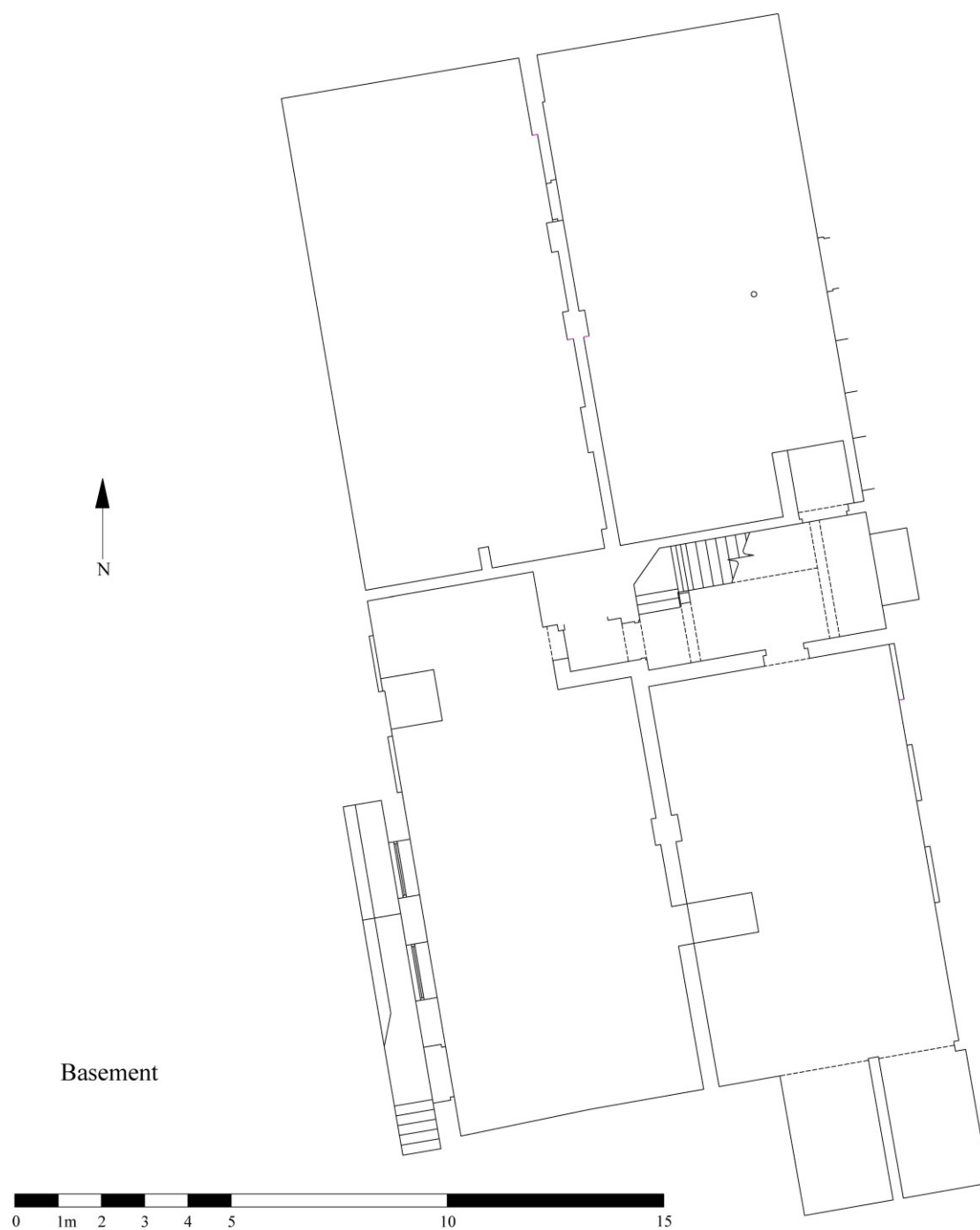
Appendix 1 OASIS Information

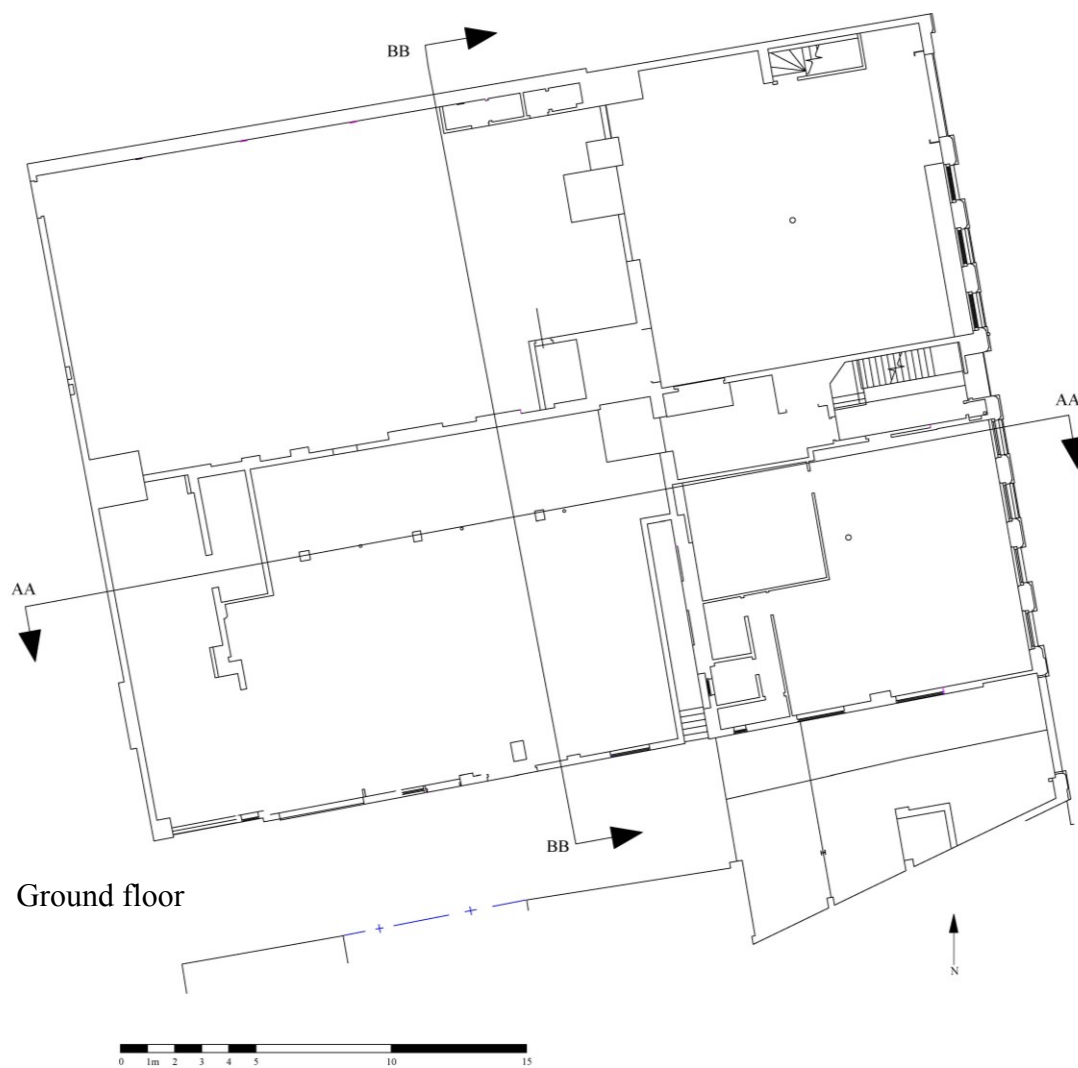
Project Name	Former Jemsox Factory, 39-41 Welford Road, Leicester
Project Type	Historic Building and watching brief
Project Manager	R Buckley
Project Supervisor	A Hyam
Previous/Future work	None
Current Land Use	Industrial building
Development Type	Conversion to residential
Reason for Investigation	As a condition
Position in the Planning Process	Ongoing
Site Co ordinates	SK 5873 0394
Start/end dates of field work	22..02.2013 – 28.02.2013
Archive Recipient	Leicester Museums
Study Area	100m ²

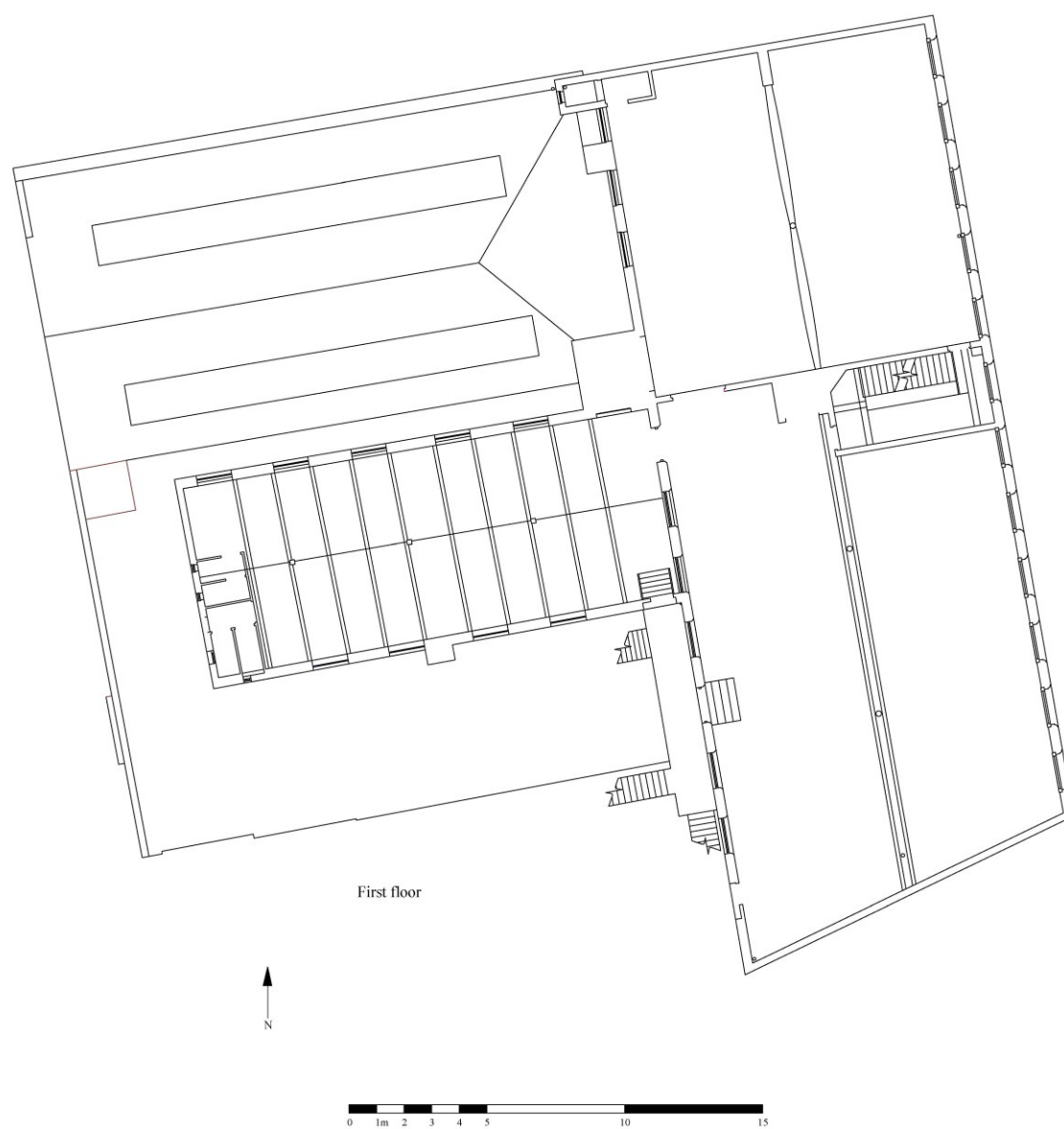
Appendix 2 Plans and Elevations

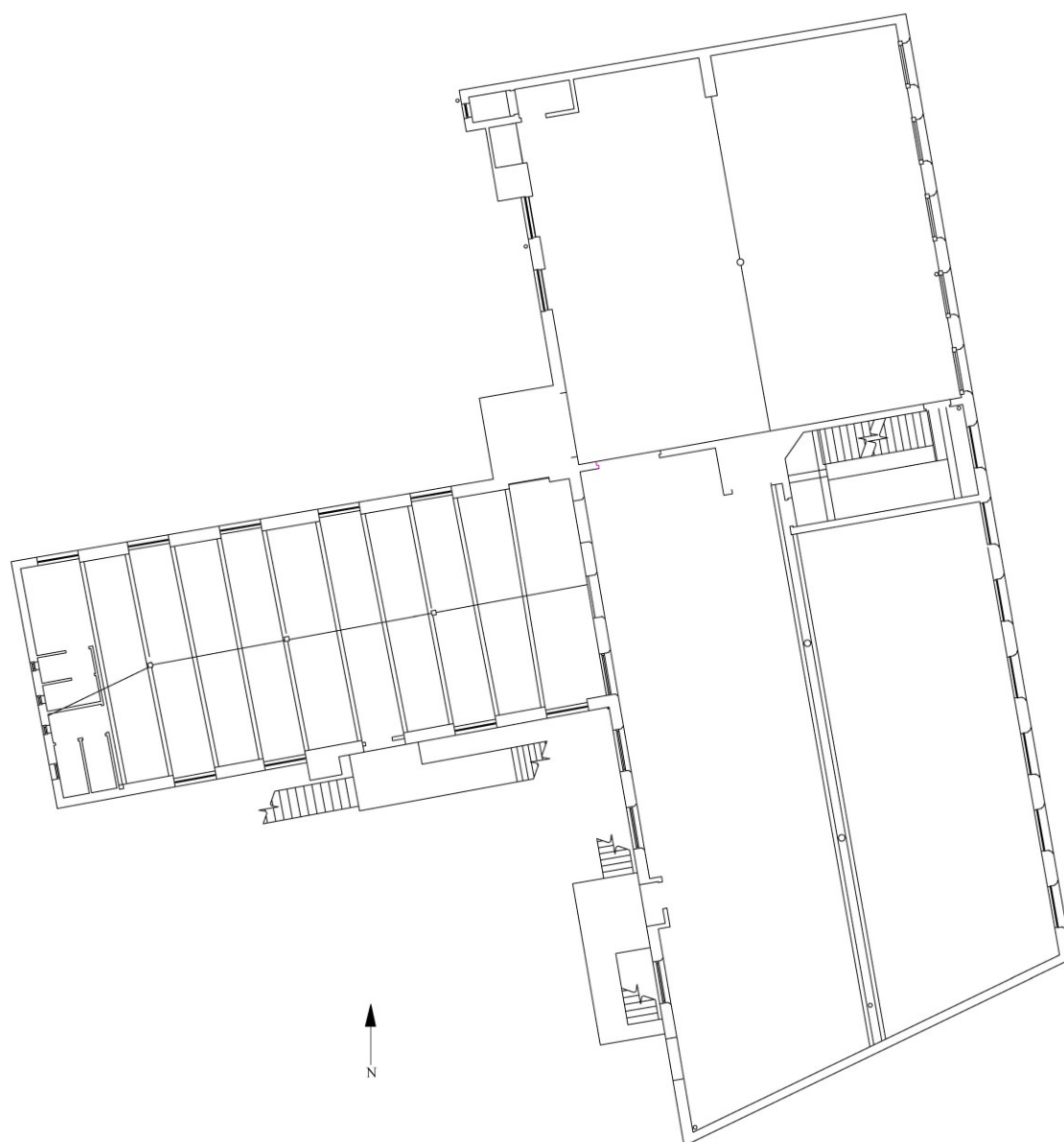
Modified from drawings supplied by client





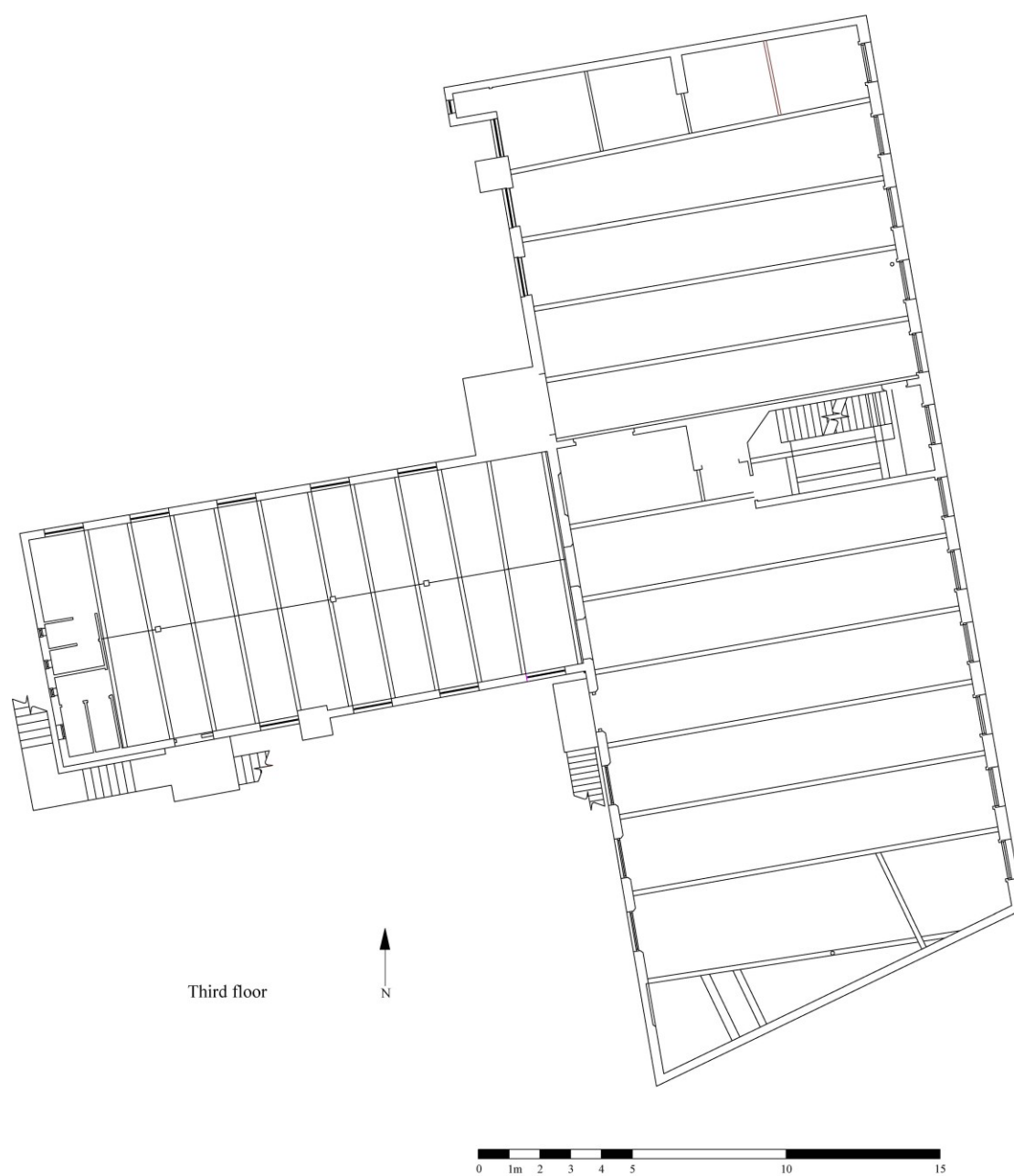


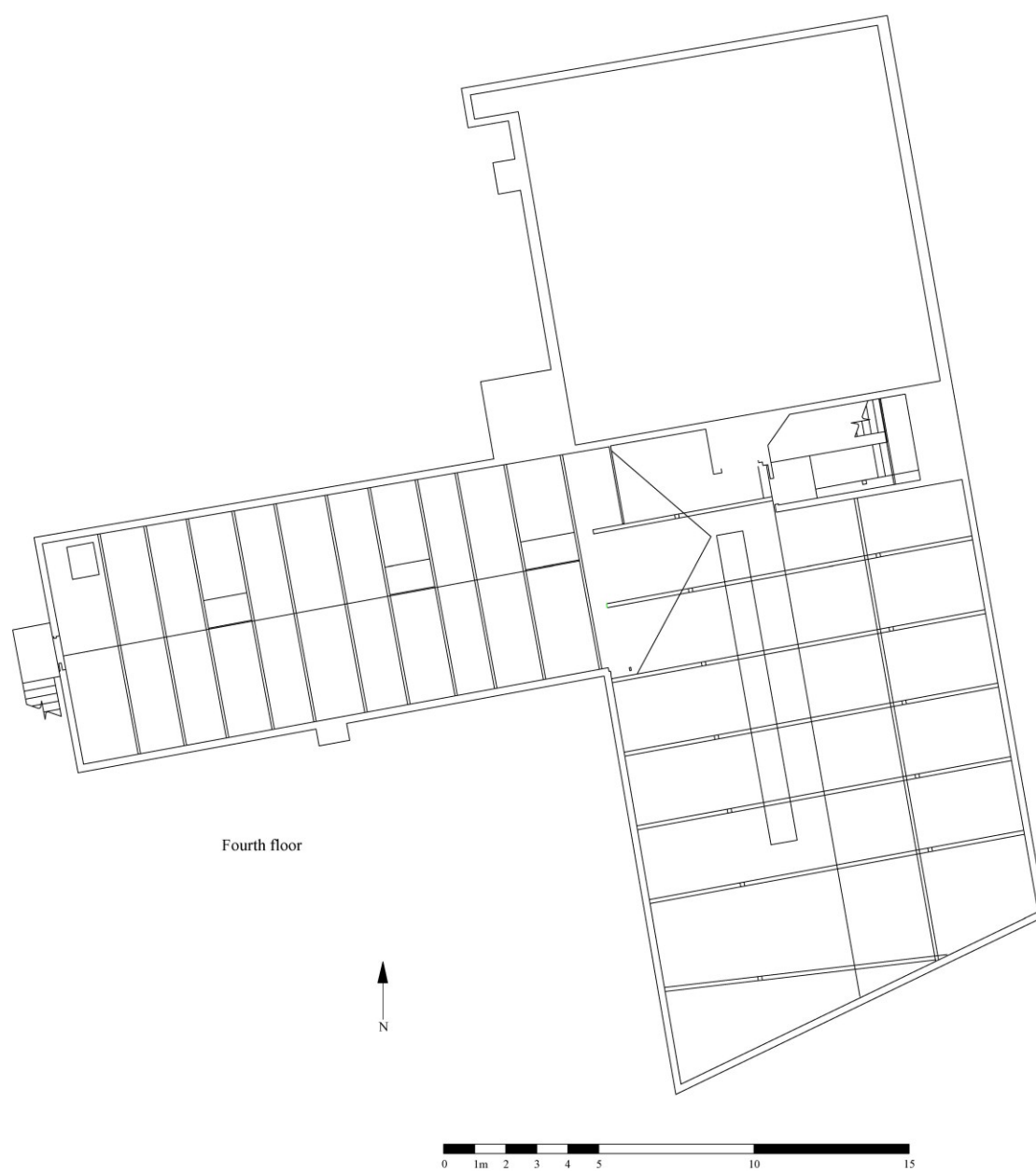


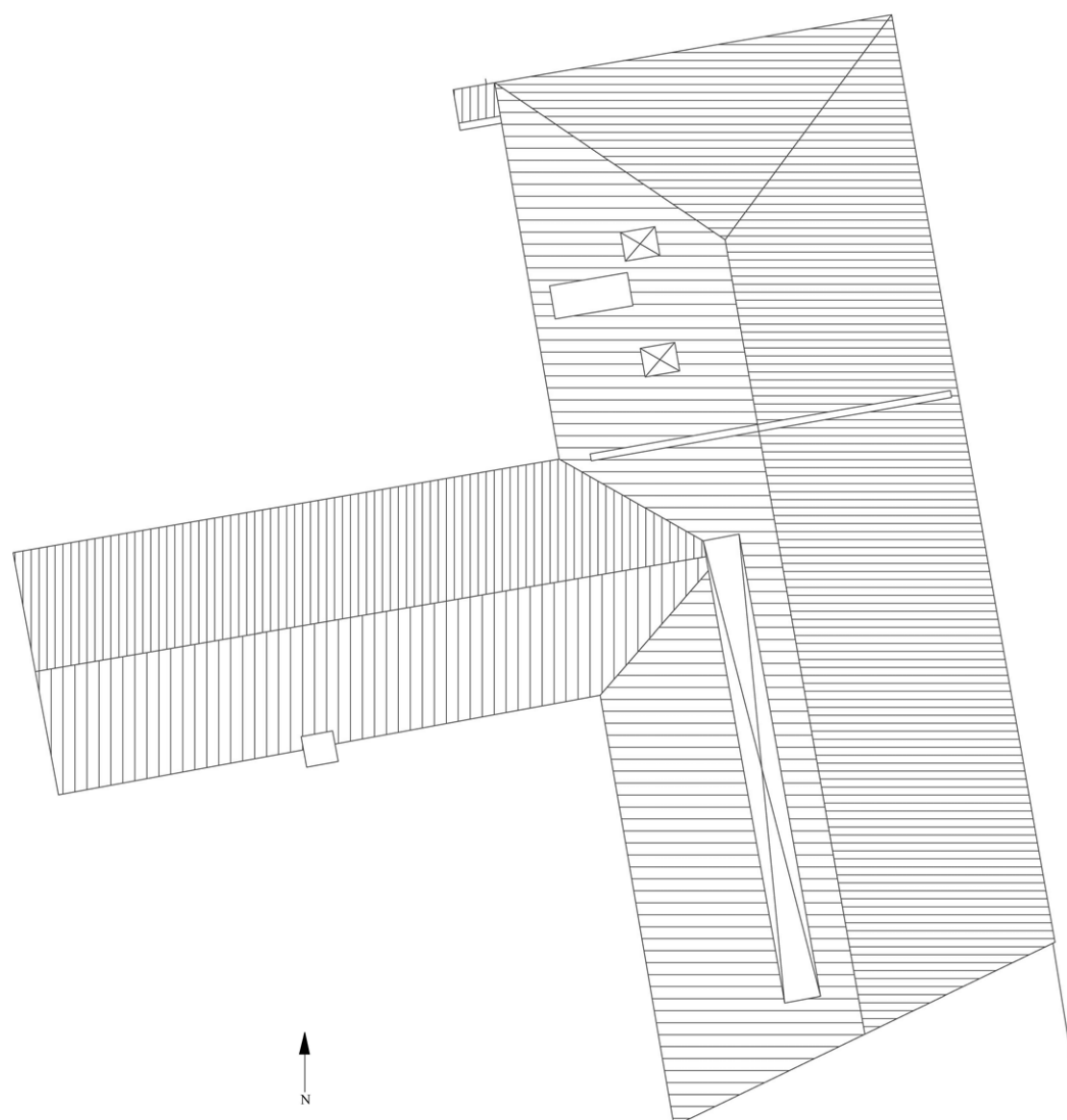


Second floor









Roof detail



ULAS Contact Details

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