



UNIVERSITY OF  
**LEICESTER**

Archaeological Services

**A Heritage Assessment of  
The Settling Rooms, Springfield Street,  
Market Harborough, Leicestershire**

**NGR: SP 73708 87075**

Sue Henderson



ULAS Report No. 2016-131  
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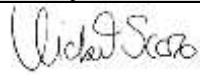
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**August 2016**

**For: Market Harborough District Council**

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## **A Heritage Assessment at the Settling Rooms, Springfield Street, Market Harborough. NGR SP 73708 87075**

***Sue Henderson***

### **Summary**

*A Heritage Assessment was undertaken by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) of The Settling Rooms, Market Harborough, Leicestershire, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August 2016 on behalf of Market Harborough District Council. The Grade II listed building, a former refreshment room for the cattle market, was assessed and recorded with a view to an application for planning permission being made for change of use. Particular reference was made to the interior of the building, the intention being to adapt this to suit a retail or food outlet. Both floors of the building are currently being occupied as suites of offices by two separate voluntary organisations.*

*The assessment identified the significance of particular aspects of the building and the context of the asset to the local community. It is recommended that an historic building record to a suitable Historic England Level is undertaken if the building is to be substantially altered.*

### **Introduction**

In accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 12 *Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment* this document forms the report for a Heritage Assessment at The Settling Rooms, Springfield Street, Market Harborough, Leicestershire. The 'Rooms', which are housed in one building, were built in 1902 as part of the development of a New Cattle Market on land purchased by the then Urban District Council. The Rooms, as the name 'Settling' suggests, were a place to settle bills and take refreshment, whilst doing business in the market. The building is also referred to as the Refreshment Rooms in some documents. The building is Grade II listed under List Entry Number 1228047 (Appendix A). As a listed building, the Settling Rooms are a 'Heritage Asset', positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions and a Heritage Assessment of the building has been requested by the Council in advance of submitting plans.

As part of the Heritage Assessment archaeological building investigation and recording was undertaken. The definition of an archaeological building investigation and recording is taken from The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Standards and Guidance: Recording Standing Buildings or Structures* (2014) and is a programme of work intended to establish the character, history, dating, form and archaeological development of a specified building or structure or complex and its setting. In accordance with paragraph 128 of the NPPF, the level of information provided should be appropriate and proportionate to the significance of the heritage asset and the potential impact of that proposal upon that significance. In this instance a rapid assessment was made of external features, and more attention paid to internal features, these being considered more at risk with the present design for change of use.

## Background

The building is currently tenanted by two voluntary organisations, Shopmobility and Voluntary Action South Leicestershire (VASL) and is utilised largely as office and storage space. Market Harborough District Council are considering sale of the property and intend to seek planning permission for a change of use, potentially to accommodate either a retail or food outlet.

The Settling Rooms are situated approximately 400m to the south east of Market Harborough town centre. Once central to Market Harborough's Cattle Market, the Rooms now lie within a large parking area which serves surrounding shops and businesses (Figs 1- 3). Many of the features of the cattle market, the pens, gates and fences, were removed in the redevelopment of the area in 1989, leaving the Settling Rooms an isolated building. The present building is well maintained and appears little altered externally. The building is occupied on both floors, access to the top floor is gained principally through the main doors on the west side and access to the ground floor through the original bar entrance on the north side.

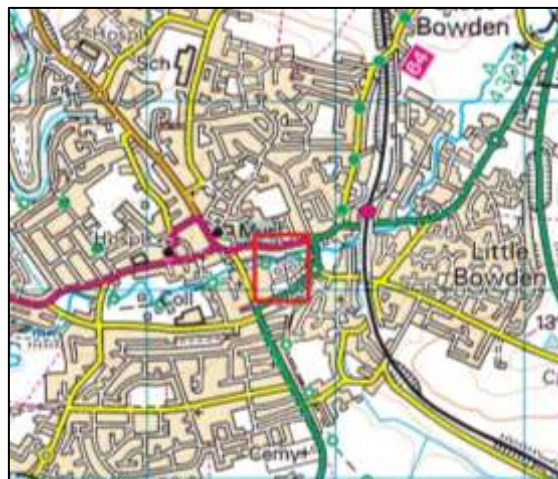


Figure 1: Location of the Settling Rooms within Market Harborough

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Figure 2: Aerial photograph showing the Settling Rooms within the car park.



Figure 3: The Settling Rooms in their modern setting, with nearby shops and parking looking west

## Objectives

The purpose of the work is to record and advance understanding of the significance of the affected heritage asset. It is intended to provide an outline chronology for the development of the site, to establish the significance of the site as a heritage asset and to assess the potential impact of the proposed development upon the heritage asset. The outcome will provide some base-line data from which appropriate and informed decisions can be made by the planning authority.

The work was carried out in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) *Code of Conduct*, adhering to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures* (2014).

## Methodology

A photographic record of external and internal features was made using a Sony Digital SLR 10.2 megapixel camera. Notes were made alongside current plans regarding the nature and fabric of internal and external features and any changes where these were discernible. Records and archives were consulted to provide a context for the role of the building in the development of Market Harborough and the lives of its inhabitants.

## Results

### *Historical Background*

Market Harborough is first mentioned as 'Hauerberga' in Pipe Rolls of 1176/7; the town name means 'the hill where oats are grown' (Bourne 2003, 62). The first reference to a market can be found in the Close Rolls of 1219 during the reign of Henry III. The markets were held in the streets of the town and by the end of the nineteenth century there could be as many as 2000 beasts on some market days (Fig. 4). The necessary cleansing of the streets following these events proved expensive for the public authorities.



Figure 4: Photograph showing the overcrowded cattle market in Upper High Street in 1870



A poll was conducted amongst the inhabitants and it was decided to purchase the land and rights for a purpose built market from Lord Barnard, the Lord of the Manor (|Figs 5 - 6). Twelve acres of land and the market rights were bought for £5967. Contracts were awarded for the work and architect and engineer Herbert G. Coales, with partner Henry W. Johnson designed the market layout and associated buildings. The total cost of the works was £18,781 13s 5d, with the buildings, including the Settling Rooms, costing £6589.

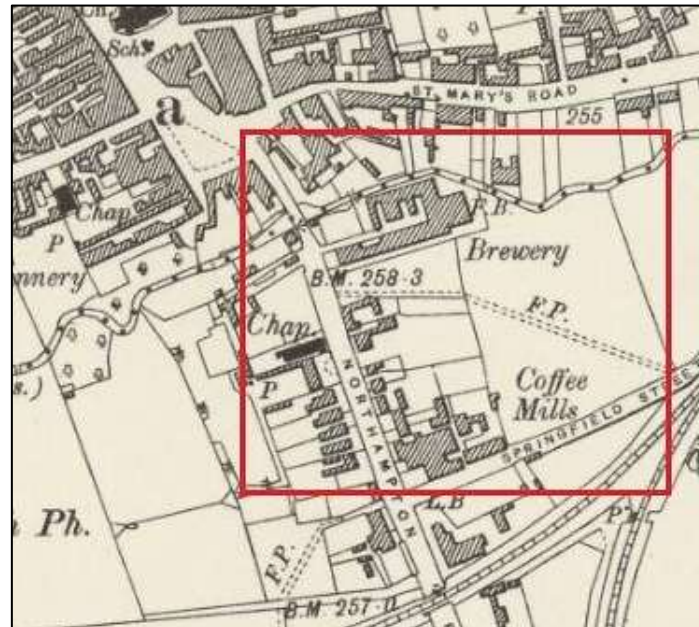


Figure 5: Ordnance Survey map published in 1899, showing the land available for the planned cattle market.

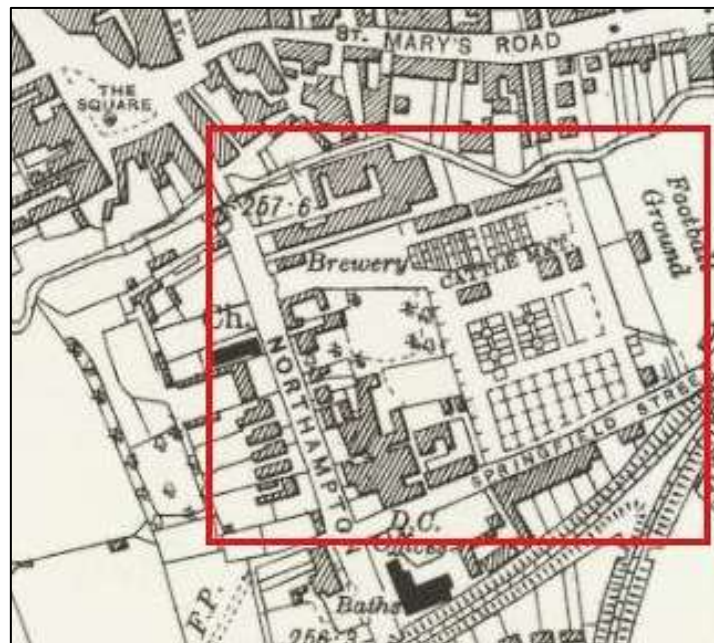


Figure 6: Ordnance Survey map published in 1931, showing the cattle market buildings in place.

Herbert G. Coales (Fig. 7) was born in 1863 and died in 1944. From 1888 he worked as the principal surveyor and engineer for Market Harborough Urban District Council. This was a period of rapid expansion in the town and Coales was instrumental in designing many of the civic buildings, improving sewage systems road layouts and developing housing estates. As well as the Settling Rooms, he built the swimming baths, the waterworks and with Henry Johnson, designed the fire station and Robert Smyth School (F). Of the buildings he designed, only the Settling Rooms, Robert Smyth School and Hill House are listed.



Figures 7 & 8: Photographs of Herbert G Coales (Leicester Mercury) and the façade of Robert Smyth School, looking north-east (right).

The Settling Rooms were built in 1902 and the cattle market formally opened on April 14<sup>th</sup> 1903 (Fig. 9). The day was celebrated with a luncheon in the Settling Rooms, by officials of the Urban District Council (Fig. 10).



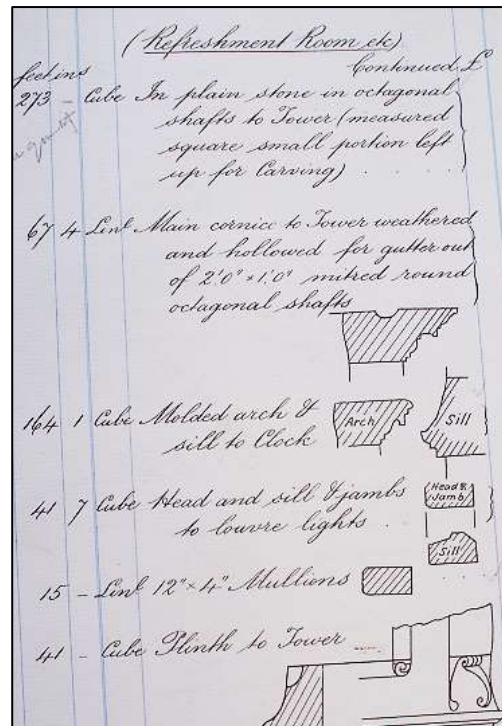
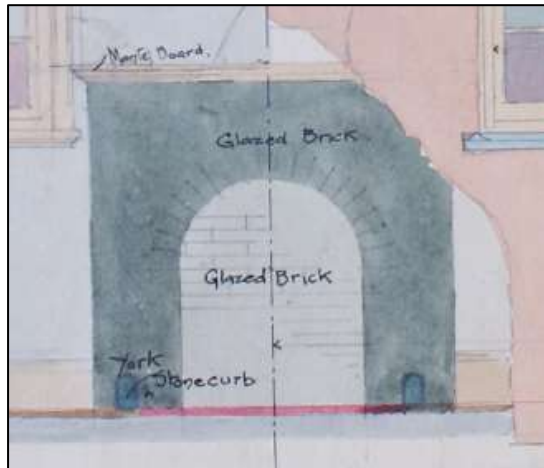
Figures 9 & 10: Photographs showing the official opening of the cattle market at the Northampton Road gates (left) and councillors JL Douglas and JJ Clark who opened the new market (right).

Two photographs (Fig. 11) show the layout of the market as it appeared in the early 20th century with cattle pens and additional buildings such as auctions rooms



Figure 11: The Cattle Market in the early 20th century (pictures courtesy of VASL)

Original drawings of the Settling Rooms by Coales (Appendix B) and details from the contract awarded to him (Appendix C) shed light on the design and fabric of the original building. The contract specifies 2 and 5/8" best Woodville facing bricks in Old English bond, with York Stone for the window surrounds and Weldon stone for the decorative detailing on the pediments and clock tower and Brosely tiles for the roof. Internally were to be Staffordshire tiles to the entrances, scullery and larder; wood block flooring to the bars and granolithic paving to the toilets. Wrought iron balusters with No. 4 wreaths are specified for the stairs to the upper floor, Honduras Mahogany for the bar, yellow pine for the seats and coloured glazed brick for the fireplaces (Figs 12-13).

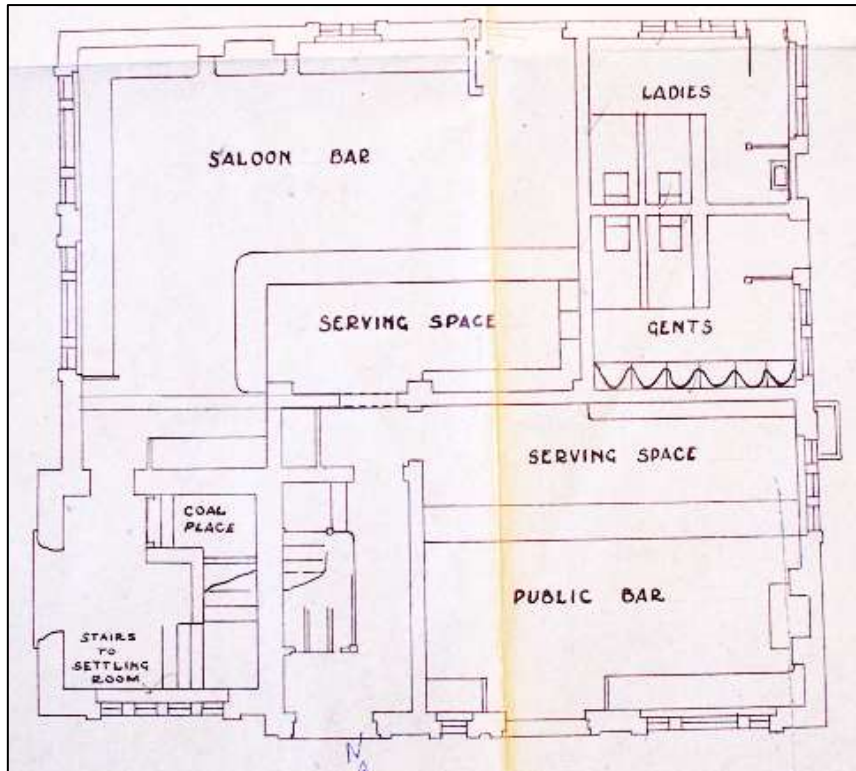


Figures 12 & 13: On the left, an extract from the original drawings by Coales, showing details relating to the fireplace and on the right notes and diagrams relating to the Weldon stone detailing on the tower.  
(DE7817/3 New Cattle Market Drawings by H.G Coales).

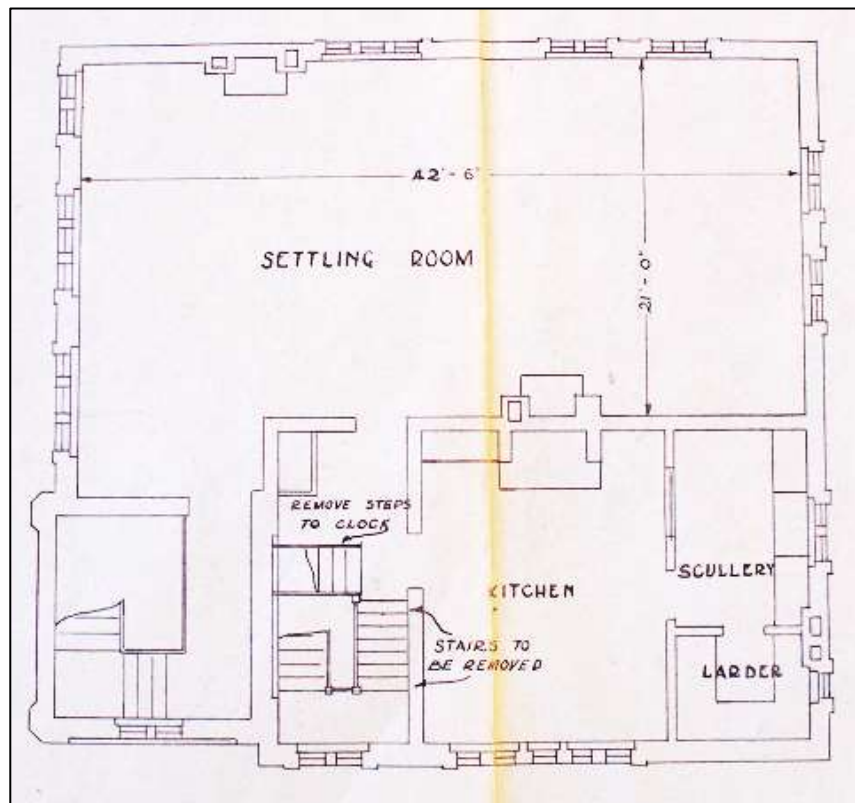
Whilst the original plans of the building cannot be traced, there are copies of what may be close to the original plans surviving in a later planning application and these are shown in Fig 14. The ground floor space is essentially divided into two separate bars and ladies and gents toilets. Coales in a paper he presented at a district meeting in May 1905 described

‘first and second class refreshment rooms with cellarage under and a kitchen, scullery and larder over second class bar with a dining room (settling room) over the other bar.’

The first class bar is shown in the copied plans as the saloon bar with peripheral benches and the smaller second class bar as the public bar, also with benches. In his paper Coales also mentions a suite of first and second class lavatories; this subdivision is not evident on the later plan. On the first floor, the kitchen appears to have a fireplace on the northern wall sharing a chimney with a second fireplace in the dining/settling room. The settling room has no subdivisions.



Ground Floor Rooms



First Floor Rooms

Figure 14: Copies of plans by JG Barlow at a scale of approximately 1:100 showing the layout of the Settling Rooms in 1953, before planned alterations. (DE7817/4 Alterations to Cattle Market 1st Floor Refreshment Rooms for housing).

The planning application containing these plans is dated April 1953 and the drawings by JG Barlow depict intended changes to the first floor rooms for housing. The request involved changes to the bell tower stairs, essentially blocking these and the insertion of an iron wall ladder to replace them. Also included is a request to reconfigure the upstairs space to incorporate two bedrooms, a sitting room and a hall (Fig. 15).

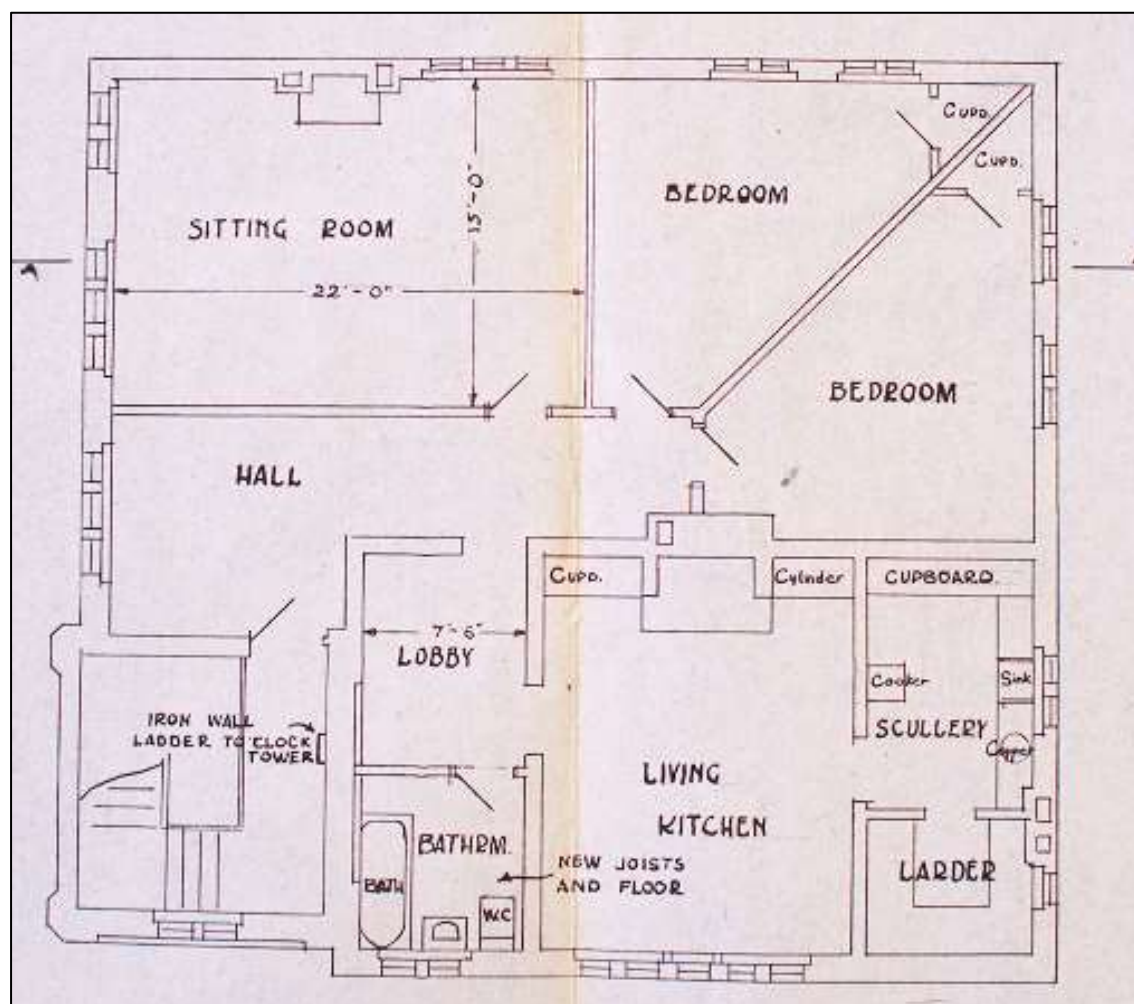


Figure 15: Planned changes to the Settling Rooms from an application of 1953

Further internal refurbishments were carried out in 1983 and the building re-opened on the 4<sup>th</sup> of December, commemorated by a plaque on the wall of the coffee bar, 'as part of the St Mary's Place development for community use'. Further internal work was carried out in 2007 (VASL pers.comm) to reconfigure office spaces.

### ***Building Description***

This section provides a rapid assessment of the existing building, as defined in the English Heritage guidance document *Informed Conservation* (2003). Rapid Assessment provides an overview of what is important about a building and its landscape and why. It determines the significance of the building/landscape, highlights areas of risk or uncertainty, and establishes the need for further work if necessary. The site was visited on the 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2016. At the time of assessment the building was in use, however, all but the loft space was accessible. Storage of equipment did hamper some recording of features.

The building lies on relatively flat ground, the area having been landscaped to cope with flooding when the cattle market was originally built. The surrounding land is paved and tarmacked with trees and hedges on most sides of the building, giving this a degree of camouflage. There are a number of retail units 200m to the north, where the River Welland runs through, and larger outlets 400m to the east and west.

The building is of red brick with limestone dressings and detailing, a clay tile roof and stone copings to the parapets. The clock tower, in the south west corner, is of four stages and the remainder a double-pile two-storeyed building.

### ***Exterior***

The principal elevation is the west facing elevation, with the clock tower to the south. The ground floor has an arched doorway with SETTLING ROOM in relief above. There is a stone string course between ground and second storey with waterleaf decoration. The 2<sup>nd</sup> stage of the tower has a large stone carving of the arms of the Earls of Harborough. The 3<sup>rd</sup> stage has a two light mullioned window and the 4<sup>th</sup> stage displays the clock, alike and visible on all four sides in ashlar with stone pineapples decorating the corners of the tower. The ogee copper roof carries a wind vane with spiked ball finial (Fig. 16).

The south facing elevation has two arched doorways to the ground floor and three stone mullioned windows, one with arched transom. The first floor has moulded string course at cill level and three further windows, the one to the east extending into the gable pediment (Fig. 17).



Figure 16: Photograph showing the west facing elevation, looking east, and details of the clock tower.





The east facing elevation shows stone mullioned windows to both floors and a gable end stack to the southern pile. Noticeable are the blocked doorways on the ground floor to the north and the newly decorated glass to the ground floor toilet windows (Fig. 18).



Figure 18: Photographs of the east facing elevation looking west with detail of the blocked doorways to the north

The north facing elevation has similar stone mullioned windows, an arched doorway and window extending into a gable pediment. The western range has a gable end stack with stone dated AD.1902 at the base of the stack (Fig. 19).



Figure 19: Photographs of the north facing elevation and datestone.

### *Interior*

Recent plans, provided by the current tenants, show the current layout of the building and date to the last refurbishment in 2007 and these are shown in Fig. 21. The main entrance is through a double door at the base of the tower on west side into a hall and stairwell. This space is dominated by a staircase of five flights with wrought iron balusters, integral motifs and a wooden rail (Fig. 20).



Figure 20: The entrance and stairwell with wrought iron balusters.

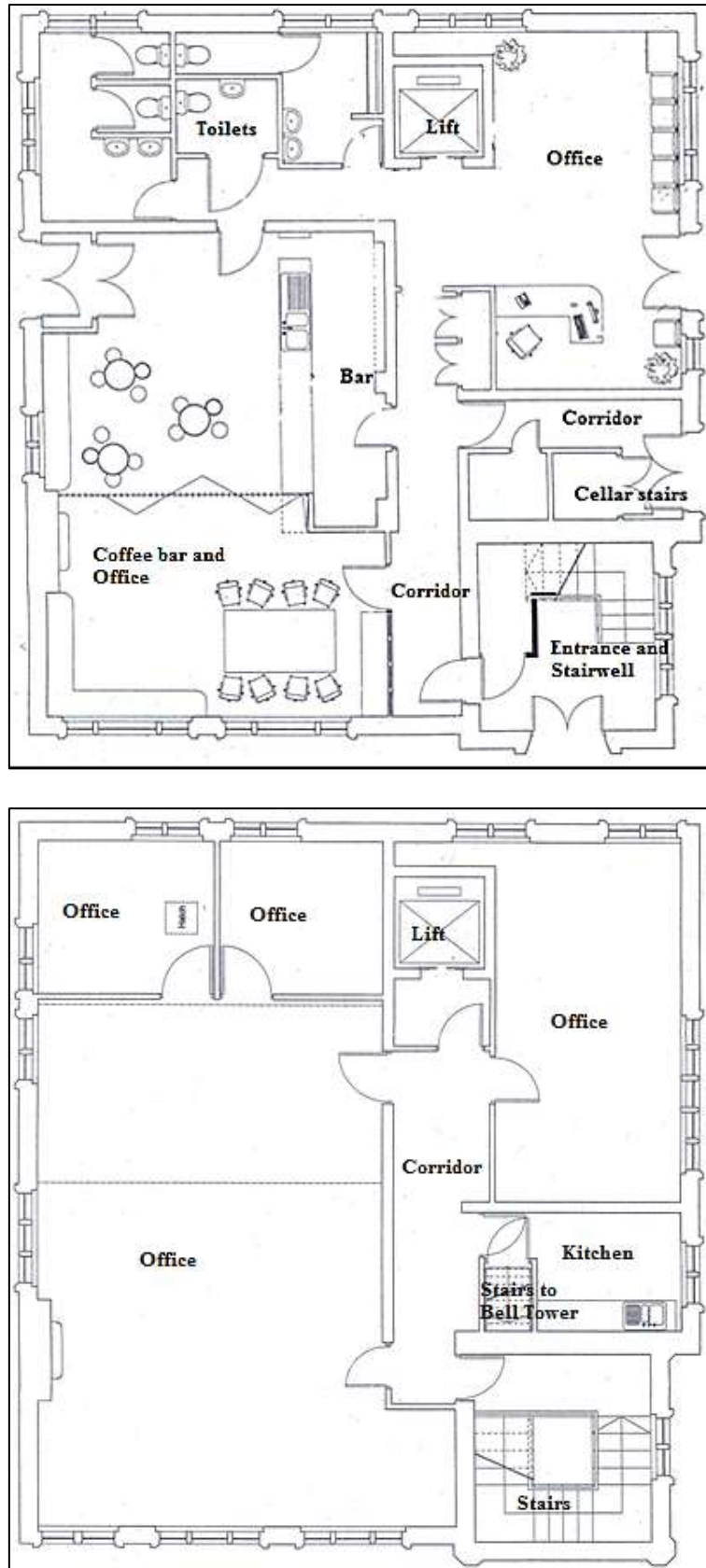


Figure 21: Existing Ground Floor and First Floor Plans courtesy of VASL at a scale of approximately 1:100

There is an entrance door to the cellar beneath the stairs, although this no longer provides access having been blocked at some point. The cellar is now accessed through what was the bell tower stairwell. The cellar is not large for a building of this size bearing in mind the past need for the storage of coal and beer. The cellar has recently been lined with breeze block and it is possible that there may be internal walls reducing the visible size (Fig. 22).



Figure 22: The bell tower entrance to the cellar and cellar detail

On the ground floor, the original ‘first class’ bar remains an open area of similar dimensions, but is now used for the storage of mobility scooters and other shopmobility aids, which masks many of the features. Visible, however, are the original fireplace, the mahogany bar and the peripheral seating (Fig 23).



Figure 23: The layout of the coffee bar looking north east, with details of fixtures and fittings.

The 'second class' bar area is now an office space, slightly open plan with original fireplace and peripheral seating (Fig. 24). The lift occupies a portion of this open space.



Figure 24: Features of the second class bar area

There are now three toilets with tiled floors, the layout as per the recent plan. This area has possibly been refurbished several times. The bars and corridors have wooden block floors which may be the original blocks mentioned in the contract. There are high skirting boards throughout and the bar areas have picture rails and moulded cornices. (Fig. 25)



Figure 25: Detail from the bar area ceiling and the wood block corridor with lift, looking east.

The wrought iron tower staircase is the only access route to the first floor and leads to a carpeted corridor which mirrors that of the ground floor. The room over the first class bar or what was the original settling and dining room is now an open plan office space. There are two further offices at the east end of the room. Features of the room include braced roof beams resting on stone corbels and supported by metal ties. These beams are illustrated in Herbert Coales original drawings in Appendix B. Also an original fireplace can be found on the north wall (Fig. 26).



Figure 26: The Settling Room as office space with beams to the east end and original fireplace.

The area that was originally a kitchen, larder and scullery is now an office space. This is now enclosed by a glass partition similar to one on the ground floor between the corridor and the coffee bar. It is likely that these relate to the refurbishment of 1983 (Fig. 27), although possibly re-using original doors. There are no indications of a fireplace, if this existed, as was suggested on the earlier plans. Interestingly there is also no evidence of a corresponding chimney stack.



Figure 27: Partition to the office space that once housed the kitchen

The modern kitchen occupies the space that once housed the stairs to the bell tower and if the plans of 1953 are accepted, also a bathroom. It appears that the request to replace the upper bell tower stairs with an iron ladder was not carried out as steps still rise from the modern kitchen. The original four faced electric clock manufactured by Gillett and Johnson still functions and is checked and adjusted regularly (Fig. 28).



Figure 28: The bell tower steps and clock faces

There are some final observations concerning fixtures and fittings. The stone mullioned windows, with iron frames, still possess the original catches and the description of door panelling by Coales matches some of the existing doors. Whilst some may have been copied, others retain original fittings such as the Perkomatic door closer to the kitchen door (Fig. 29).



Figure 29: Window fittings to the stone mullioned windows and an example of door furniture.

## Discussion

The Settling Rooms were built in a period of rapid growth in population, industry and agriculture in Market Harborough at the turn of the twentieth century. Architects like Herbert G. Coales played an important part in providing buildings, essentially amenities that could keep pace with change. This building is one of a few local listed buildings which not only typifies the design, building styles and building materials of the time, but also provides a well maintained example.

Much of the exterior remains unaltered, with the exception of some changes of access to the toilets and the replacement of window glass. The brickwork has been repointed and there may have been the replacement of roof tiles. The stonework and brickwork, generally, is in good condition.

The interior has seen more alteration with changes of use over time. The points of access to the cellar and the bell tower have altered and the accessible cellar space may have been altered. The access and configuration of the toilets has changed. Wall partitions have been added and removed on both floors to allow for a change of function and a lift has been inserted for access purposes and modern kitchen facilities added.

The shape of the main rooms has not altered significantly and many of the original features remain. Three original tiled fireplaces survive as well as a mahogany bar and possibly some seating, although this does not match the original description of yellow pine. The block wood floors on the ground floor remain, although the Staffordshire tiles have been replaced. The granolithic paving to the toilets has been replaced by modern tiles. The bell tower appears unchanged and retains the original functioning clock.

The preliminary proposals are to convert the building into either a retail outlet or a food outlet. This change of use may require adaptation of internal space. The internal wall divisions are largely removable partitions which have been altered in the past. There are, however, exceptions; the solid original walls surrounding the main staircase and what was the bell tower stairwell; the wall bordering the first floor main room on the south side which has wall ties supporting the wooden roof beams; also bearing in mind the double pile nature of the roof, it is likely that the corresponding wall on the ground floor between the bar and the corridor will have a supporting function.

The walls surrounding the lift shaft are solid but as they are a later insertion they are probably not supporting walls. The main rooms are currently open areas as they were originally intended and to leave these open would mitigate any impact on the original design.

Original features where they survive should be incorporated into the new proposal. Particularly worthy of retention are the fireplaces, the mahogany bar, the wood block flooring and the window fittings. Access to the clock tower should be maintained as regular adjustment of the clock is required. The clock tower is a recognized landmark and the clock relied upon by the inhabitants of the town.

The building as it appears today is perhaps a little isolated and out of context, as other buildings relating to the original market function have since been removed. The St. Mary's Square development, however, is a flourishing commercial zone and the



building is certainly accessible from here. Considering the size, position and nature of the building, a change of use may be beneficial if it is to be realistically maintained.

As an example of a listed civic building, representative of its time and built by a celebrated local architect, with many internal features surviving, it is recommended that an historic building record to a suitable Historic England Level is undertaken if the building is to be substantially altered.

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25.08.16

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ROLLR Records Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland maps and records.

### **OS MAPS:**

LEICS.LNE map published in 1931;

Northamptonshire XVNE map published in 1899.

DE1387/252/1-6 Contracts for New Cattle Market.

DE7817/3 New Cattle Market Drawings by H.G Coales.

DE7817/4 Alterations to Cattle Market 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Refreshment Rooms for housing.  
Drawings by JG Barlow.

## Appendix A: Historic England List Entry

### THE SETTLING ROOMS List Entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

**Name:** THE SETTLING ROOMS

**List entry Number:** 1228047

**Location:** THE SETTLING ROOMS, CATTLE STREET

**County:** Leicestershire

**District:** Harborough

**District Type:** District Authority

**Parish:**

**National Park:** Not applicable to this List entry.

**Grade:** II

**Date first listed:** 18-Dec-1992

**Date of most recent amendment:** Not applicable to this List entry.

### Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

**UID:** 402545

### Asset Groupings

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

### Details

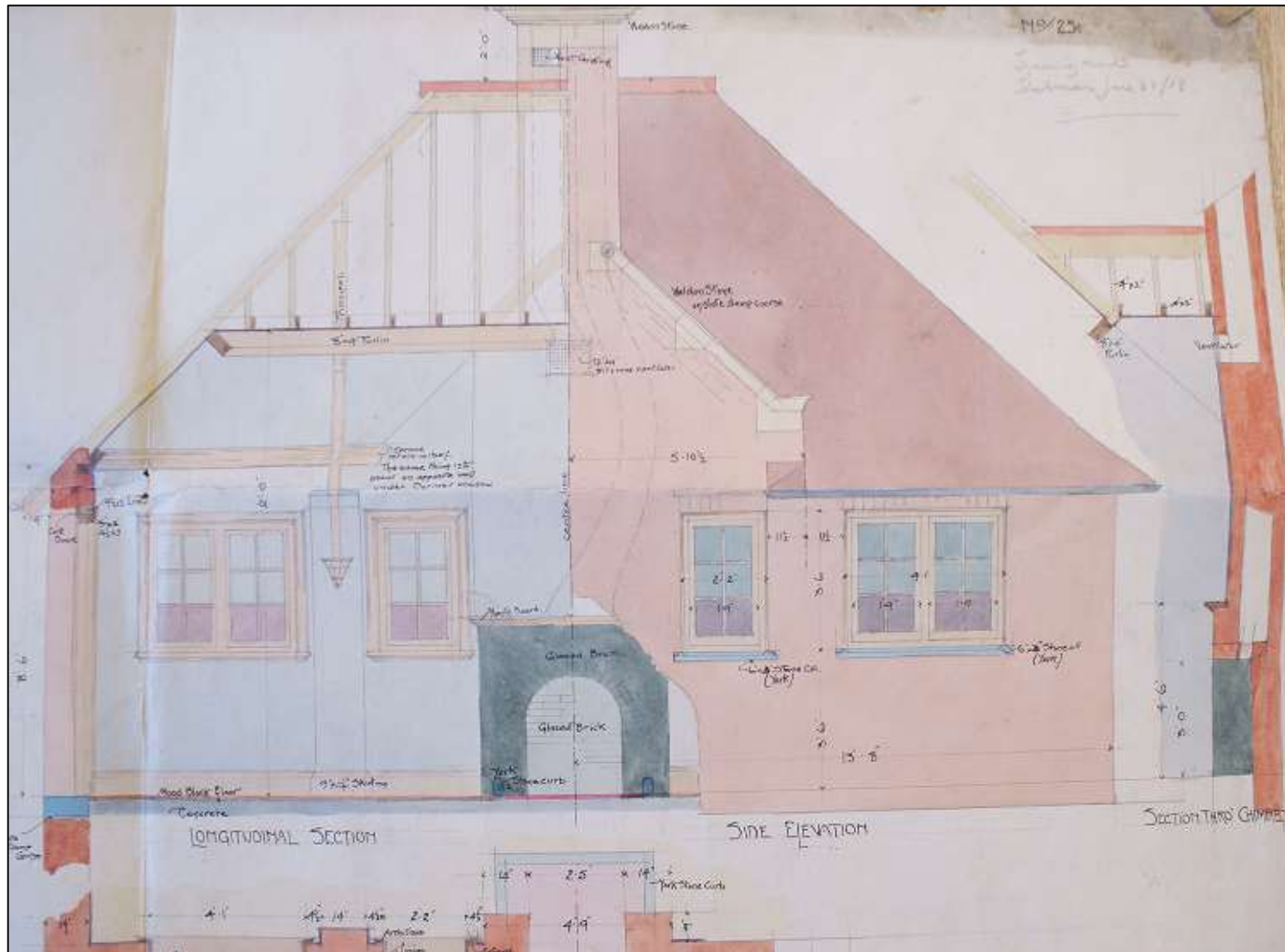
MARKET HARBOROUGH CATTLE MARKET SP 73 87 The Settling Rooms 2/10000 II

Market building incorporating clock tower, dated 1902, by Coales and Johnson (C & J were architects of Market Harborough listed buildings Hill House (109-113) Lubenham Hill and Robert Smythe School in Burnmill Road) with stone work by William Allsop. Red brick with limestone free-style dressings and detailing, clay tile roof, stone copings to gable parapets. Double-pile two-storeyed building to left with gable end stack to front range having stone dated in relief 'AD 1902' at base of shafts. Ground floor with 2 tripartite stone mullioned windows with central section having arched transom; first floor with moulded string at cill level, 3 stone mullioned windows of 2, 3 and 3 lights, windows 1 and 3 with classical moulded stone lintels forming the eaves, window 2 has a taller central light extending into central gable pediment.

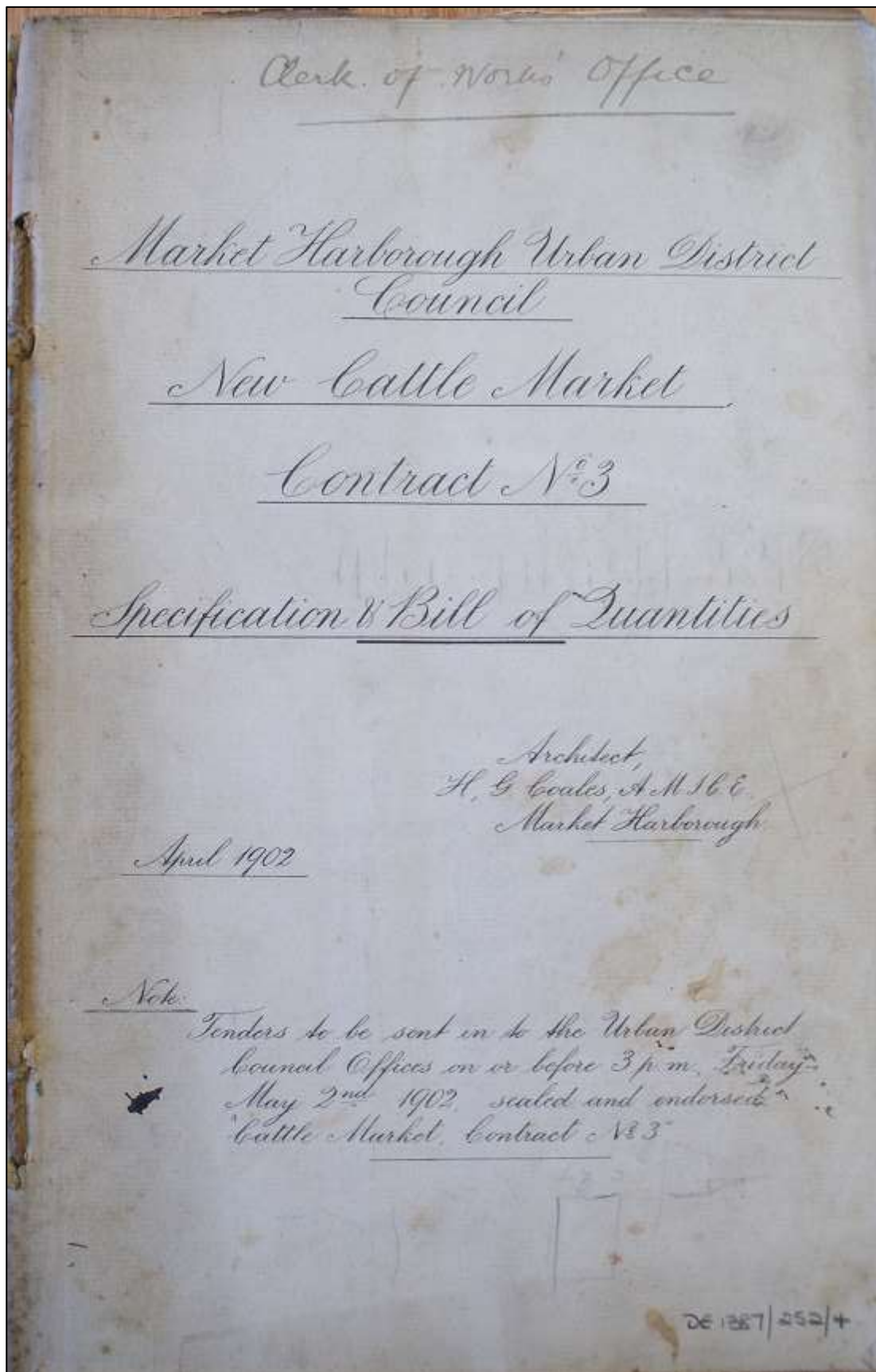
Clock tower to right of 4 stages; stages 1 to 3 of brick, stage 4 of Limestone ashlar. Polygonal clasping angles to stages 2 to 4. Ground stage with lugged stone surround to arched doorway inscribed 'SETTLEMENT ROOMS' in relief above. Stone string course between ground and second stage having waterleaf decoration at angles; second stage with large stone achievement of Earls of Harborough; third stage with tall 2-light mullioned window. Fourth stage with all four sides alike, ashlar with clock face under segmental cornice and having stone strapwork surround, white opaque glass face with copper numerals; stone pineapples to clasping angles; ogee roof of copper surmounted by wind vane with spiked ball finial.

Listing NGR: SP7370887075

Appendix B: DE7817/3 New Cattle Market Drawings by H.G Coales.



Appendix C: DE1387/252/1-6 Contracts for New Cattle Market.





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