

**Free Grammar School,
Highcross Street, Leicester:
Report on Phase 2 Intrusive
Opening Up Works**

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Checked by Project Manager

Signed:**Date**

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Free Grammar School, Highcross Street, Leicester Report on Phase 2 Intrusive Opening Up Works

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Free Grammar School, Highcross Street, Leicester Report on Phase 2 Intrusive Opening Up Works

1. Summary

A programme of intrusive opening up works at the Free Grammar School, Highcross Street, Leicester (SK58360460), designed to assess the survival and condition of elements of the historic built fabric of the grade II* listed building, has established that:

Nothing of the early first floor structure now survives. A series of transverse beams that were *in situ* in 1966 are no longer extant, these having been replaced by steel I-beams, probably as part of the 1966 development.

On the Highcross Street elevation early stone surrounds survive beneath the present concrete render on all ground floor 3-light mullion windows (W1, W3 & W7). The stone surrounds were first rendered over in the 19th century and were subsequently coated in concrete as part of the 1966 development. It is likely that similar stone surrounds survive for the first floor windows W9, W11 & W15 and plaque surrounds on this elevation.

The ground floor 2-light window W5 and the doorway D1 on the Highcross Street elevation both have 19th century brick surrounds. In these instances 19th century render comparable with that applied to the 3-light windows is probably a contemporary finish to the brickwork.

On the east (car park) elevation the northernmost first floor window W16, now with a 20th century concrete surround, corresponds with the position of an earlier window opening with stone surround. Investigation of two other windows on this elevation, W6 & W14, revealed no evidence that these correspond with the position of original window openings.

Traces of earlier wall coverings, including lime plaster and lime wash, survive beneath the modern gypsum plaster at various locations on the inner faces of the stone-built east and west walls. However, as part of the 1966 development steel mesh was nailed to the wall faces to provide a key for plastering, which has caused considerable damage to these earlier coverings. In some areas earlier wall coverings appear to have been deliberately removed to expose bare stonework.

2. Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological Services carried out a programme of limited intrusive investigation at the above property in January 2005 on behalf of Shires GP Ltd. This was intended to assess the survival and condition of elements of the historic built fabric of the grade II* listed building where it was not possible to determine this by visual inspection alone.

This phase of work was designed to inform the development and planning processes, supplementing the information gathered as part of the Historic Building Assessment (ULAS report 2004-161) and contributing towards the Historic Building Impact Assessment required by the planning authority in the *Brief* issued by the City Archaeologist (Wardle 2004).

The areas targeted for investigation were selected to address specific questions regarding the survival or otherwise, and condition of historic built fabric, in order to facilitate the formulation of detailed design proposals sympathetic to the historic character and fabric of the building. In addition, an understanding of the nature and date of the built fabric in these areas would contribute towards the Impact Assessment process, permitting an informed assessment of the potential impact of development proposals in these areas.

Areas targeted for investigation were:

The first floor structure

The aim being the clarification of the make up, dating and condition of the structure of the first floor.

External window and door surrounds on the west (Highcross Street) elevation

The aim being to provide an assessment of the survival of earlier stonework beneath later concrete surrounds.

Internal wall coverings

The aim being to provide an assessment of the survival of earlier wall coverings beneath later finishes on the interior faces of the original east and west walls of the building.

Window openings on the east (car park) elevation

The aim being to assess the originality or otherwise of window openings on the rear elevation.

Detailed archaeological aims and objectives and methods statement are included in the *Design Specification for Historic Building Impact Assessment: Phase 2 Intrusive Opening Up works, Free Grammar School, Highcross Street* reproduced here as an Appendix.

Minor variations to the scheme of work proposed in the Design Specification included the re-location of one of the openings to investigate the first floor structure to a position away from the west wall (Area G), this was to avoid blocking an access corridor in use at the time of the survey. On the Highcross Street elevation the opening to investigate the surround of the central 3-light mullion window W3 was relocated to avoid obstruction of a parking ticket machine. And the opening to investigate the surround of the southern ground floor window W1 was relocated from the lower north to the south corner of that window where water ingress from a leaking gutter above had caused deterioration of the concrete surround, facilitating its removal. Detailed investigation of the hoodmould of this window was not undertaken at the instruction of the Conservation Officer.

The location of all of the areas of intervention are shown on Figures 1-5. Openings to investigate the first floor structure are identified by letter codes (Areas A to H). External and internal openings in the east and west walls are identified by a single numeric sequence (Areas 1 to 12).

3. Record of Interventions

3.1 First Floor Structure

Area A (Plate 1, Figure 1)

0.3m wide x 0.2m high opening at east end, south side of boxed in feature at ground floor ceiling level. *Sequence*: plaster skim over double layer of plasterboard fixed to softwood battens wedged into side of 10 x 6 inch (c. 254 x 152 mm) steel I-beam. No evidence of fabric predating c.1966.



Plate 1. Area A opening to investigate first floor structure

Area B (Plate 2, Figure 1)

0.25m x 0.1m opening at west end, underside/north side of boxed in feature at ground floor ceiling level. *Sequence*: plaster skim over single layer of plasterboard on underside of 10 x 6 inch (c. 254 x 152 mm) steel I-beam; and plaster skim over double layer of plasterboard fixed to softwood battens wedged into side of I-beam. No evidence of fabric predating c.1966.



Plate 2. Area B opening to investigate first floor structure

Area C (Plate 3, Figure 1)

1.10m square opening in ceiling against west wall face. *Sequence*: plaster skim over single layer of plasterboard over fibreboard sheeting fixed with softwood battens onto 3 x 2 inch (c. 76 x 50mm)

ceiling joists running north-south at 16 inch (c. 400mm) centres. Exposing two 10 x 6 inch (c. 254 x 152 mm) steel I-beams supporting the c. 9 inch (c. 230mm) wide brick-built party wall between the two first floor flats. Note: the I-beams are not parallel, but diverge slightly to the east. A narrow gap between the beams is filled with reused Swithland slate roof tiles. No evidence of fabric predating c.1966.



Plate 3. Area C opening to investigate first floor structure

Area D (Plate 4, Figure 1)

0.35m x 0.4m opening at west end, north side of boxed in feature at ground floor ceiling level. *Sequence:* plaster skim over single thickness of plasterboard on 4 x 2 inch (c. 100 x 50mm) softwood frame. This appears to be the vestige of an earlier stud partition wall, the line of which is visible as a scar on the inside face of the west wall extending down to floor level. This corresponds with the arrangement shown on the 1966 proposed drawings e.g. Leicester Building Register plan B12738, dated 10.8.1966 (see Figure 25 of Historic Building Assessment ULAS report 2004-161). No evidence of fabric predating c.1966.



Plate 4. Area D (to rear) and E (to front) openings to investigate first floor structure

Area E (Plate 4, Figure 1)

0.2m x 0.25m opening at west end, north side of boxed in feature at ground floor ceiling level. *Sequence*: plaster skim over double thickness of plasterboard on softwood battens wedged into side of 10 x 6 inch (c. 254 x 152 mm) steel I-beam. No evidence of fabric predating c.1966.

Area F (Plate 5, Figure 1)

0.67m square opening in underside, and 0.36m x 0.3m opening in west side of boxed in feature at ground floor ceiling level. *Sequence*: ceiling - plaster skim over single layer of plasterboard, covering boxed in steel I-beam, being a further section of that exposed at Area E (above) and with equivalent covering. North-south aligned feature is a pair of 7 x 2 inch (c. 180 x 50mm) softwood timbers supported by the I-beams exposed at Areas E and C (above). No evidence of fabric predating c.1966.



Plate 5. Area F opening to investigate first floor structure

Area G (Plate 6, Figure 1)

0.4m x 0.25m opening in south face of boxed in feature at ground floor ceiling level. *Sequence*: plaster skim over double thickness of plasterboard fixed to softwood battens wedged into south side of 10 x 6 inch (c. 254 x 152 mm) steel I-beam. No evidence of fabric predating c.1966.



Plate 6. Area G opening to investigate first floor structure

Area H (Plate 7, Figure 1)

0.3m x 0.25m opening in south face of wall defining lobby/staircase to first floor flat at north end of building. *Sequence:* 20th century plaster over 20th century brickwork. No evidence of fabric predating c.1966.



Plate 7. Area H opening to investigate first floor structure

3.2 External window and door surrounds: Highcross Street elevation

Area 1 Door D1 (Plate 8, Figures 2 & 6)

0.65m high opening in south jamb of surround to door D1. *Sequence:* 1966 concrete facing on steel mesh over earlier (?19th century) brown-coloured cementitious render applied over 19th century brick (brick dimensions: 9¼ x ? x 3 inches (235 x ? x 76mm)). The brickwork into which the doorframe is set is later, probably c.1966 (no complete brick dimensions recorded). The quality of finish of the 19th century brickwork is poor and this was apparently not intended to be seen, the brown-coloured render is assumed to be a contemporary finish.



Plate 8. Area 1 opening to investigate surround of door D1

Area 2 Window W7 (Plate 9, Figures 2 & 9)

Opening at lower right corner of 3-light mullion window W7. Max length of opening: 0.75m, max height: 0.75m. *Sequence:* 1966 concrete facing over 1966 steel mesh reinforced concrete, over brown-

coloured cementitious render, this formed around a series of lengths of string/twine tied between nails driven into the mortar beds of the underlying stonework. Limestone window surround with sill, jamb and one mullion partly exposed. Jamb and mullion in oolitic limestone with the sill in a seemingly more durable shelly limestone.



Plate 9. Area 2 opening to investigate surround of window W7

Area 3 Window W5 (Plate 10, Figures 2 & 8)

Opening at lower right corner of 2-light mullion window W5. Max length of opening: 0.35m, max height: 0.45m. Illustrative evidence indicates that this window was inserted some time between 1828 and c. 1880. *Sequence*: on sill, 1966 concrete facing over 1966 steel mesh reinforced concrete, over a coarser concrete with steel reinforcing mesh, over brick sill (brick dimensions: ? x 4½ x 3 inches (? x 114 x 76mm)). On right hand jamb, 1966 concrete facing over 1966 steel mesh reinforced concrete, over a coarser concrete formed around ½ inch diameter steel reinforcing bar, over black-coloured ash mortar render, over brown-coloured cementitious render forming splayed reveal, applied over rubble stonework of west wall.



Plate 10. Area 3 opening to investigate surround of window W5

Area 4 Window W3 (Plates 11 & 12 ,Figure 1)

Opening at lower left corner of central 3-light mullion window W3. Max length of opening: 0.4m, max height: 0.65m. *Sequence*: 1966 concrete facing over 1966 steel mesh reinforced concrete, over a coarse concrete formed around ½ inch diameter steel reinforcing bar (on sill only, not jamb), over

brown-coloured cementitious render, this formed around lengths of string/twine tied between nails driven into the mortar beds of the underlying stonework. Limestone window surround with sill and jamb partly exposed, both in oolitic limestone. Fragment of timber shutter frame remains, with simple bead decoration.



Plates 11 & 12. Two views of Area 4 opening to investigate surround of window W3

Area 5 Window W1 (Plates 13 & 14, Figure 2)

Opening at lower right corner of southernmost 3-light mullion window W1. Max length of opening: 0.75m, max height: 0.40m. *Sequence*: identical to that for Area 4 (above), including the vestige of timber shutter frame.



Plates 13 & 14. Two views of Area 5 opening to investigate surround of window W1

Area 6 Window W1 (Plate 15, Figure 2)

Small opening at top right corner of southernmost 3-light mullion window W1. *Sequence*: decayed fragment of 1966 concrete facing removed, exposing corner of oolitic limestone hoodmould. No further investigation of hoodmoulds at direction of Conservation Officer.



Plate 15. Area 6 opening to investigate hoodmould of window W1

3.3 Interior wall coverings and window surrounds

Ground Floor

Area 7 Adjacent to window W1 (Plate 16, Figure 4)

Opening to the south of/below southernmost 3-light mullion window W1 on west (Highcross Street) elevation. Lower edge of opening at sill/dado level. Total thickness of wall coverings: 35mm. *Sequence*: c.1966 gypsum plaster on steel mesh nailed to stonework; mesh also covers electrical trunking nailed to stonework. Slight traces of limewash on faced stones of window surround, but mainly bare stonework. The wall is very damp as a result of water ingress from a leaking gutter above this point. The steel mesh, corner reinforcing, electrical trunking and fixing nails have all corroded. There is also root penetration from a buddleia bush that was growing out of the external wall face above this window.



Plate 16. Area 7 opening to investigate internal wall coverings

Area 8 Adjacent to window W3 (Plate 17, Figure 4)

Opening on north side of central 3-light mullion window W3 on west (Highcross Street) elevation. Lower edge of opening 70mm below sill level. Total thickness of wall coverings: 30mm. *Sequence*: inner face of wall, c.1966 gypsum plaster on steel mesh nailed to stonework; window splay, c.1966

gypsum plaster on steel mesh over lime render over stonework. There is localised damage to the lime render from nails used to fix mesh. Wall is slightly damp and steel mesh, corner reinforcing and fixing nails have corroded, resulting in rust staining to surviving render in window splay. Any early render on inner wall face must have been removed as part of, or prior to, the 1966 alterations.



Plate 17. Area 8 opening to investigate internal wall coverings

Area 9 Adjacent to window W6 (Plate 18, Figure 4)

Opening to the north of/below 3-light mullion window W6 on east (car park) elevation. Lower edge of opening at sill height. Total thickness of wall coverings: 25mm. *Sequence*: late 20th century wallpaper over c.1966 gypsum plaster on steel mesh (at corner of window splay only) over brickwork and limewashed/painted stonework; electrical trunking nailed to stonework. There is a vertical joint 0.2m north of the corner of the window opening with limewashed/painted rubble stonework to the north and 20th century brickwork to the south, the latter forming the window opening. This vertical division corresponds with the position of a vertical joint in the stonework on the external face of this wall with apparently original rubble stonework to the north and later repair/infilling to the south. There is no clear evidence for there having been an original window opening at this point.



Plate 18. Area 9 opening to investigate internal wall coverings/window W6

First Floor

Area 10 Adjacent to window W11 (Plate 19, Figure 5)

Opening to the north of/below central 3-light mullion window W11 on west (Highcross Street) elevation. Dimensions: 0.4m wide, increasing to 0.7m below sill level x 0.6m high; return into window aperture: 0.25m wide x 0.4m high. Lower edge of opening 0.25m below sill level. Total thickness of wall coverings: 25mm. *Sequence*: painted c.1966 gypsum plaster on steel mesh nailed to stonework. No earlier wall coverings survive on inner face of wall but traces of limewash are present on the window return. Dressed sandstone blocks form the window aperture; these 'pecked' to provide a key for internal rendering.



Plate 19. Area 10 opening to investigate internal wall coverings

Area 11 Adjacent to window W14 (Plate 20, Figure 5)

Opening to the south of 3-light mullion window W14 on east (car park) elevation. Dimensions: 0.5m wide x 0.5m high; return into window aperture: 0.25m wide x 0.5m high. Lower edge of opening 0.2m above sill level. Total thickness of wall coverings: 25mm. *Sequence*: Late 20th century wallpaper on c.1966 gypsum plaster on steel mesh, over smear-rendered stonework with limewash finish, this badly damaged by nails used to fix steel mesh. The window opening is finished in brick with cement mortar. The exposed stonework is random rubble with no clear indication (e.g. larger dressed blocks) of an original window opening at this point (c/f Area 12 below).



Plate 20. Area 11 opening to investigate internal wall coverings/window W14

Area 12 Adjacent to window W16 (Plate 21, Figure 5)

Opening to the south of the 3-light mullion window W16 on east (car park) elevation. Dimensions: 0.5m wide x 0.56m high; return into window aperture: 0.25m wide x 0.56m high. Lower edge of opening 0.15m above sill level. Total thickness of wall coverings: 20mm. *Sequence*: Inner wall face, painted gypsum plaster on steel mesh, over smear rendered stonework. There are fragmentary traces of limewash on larger dressed stones that are the remains of an original/early window opening at this point. On window return painted gypsum plaster covers c.1966 brickwork forming present window opening. Large dressed stones forming the south jamb of an early window at this point are also visible externally (Plate 22); these were truncated by the insertion of the present pre-cast concrete surround in 1966.

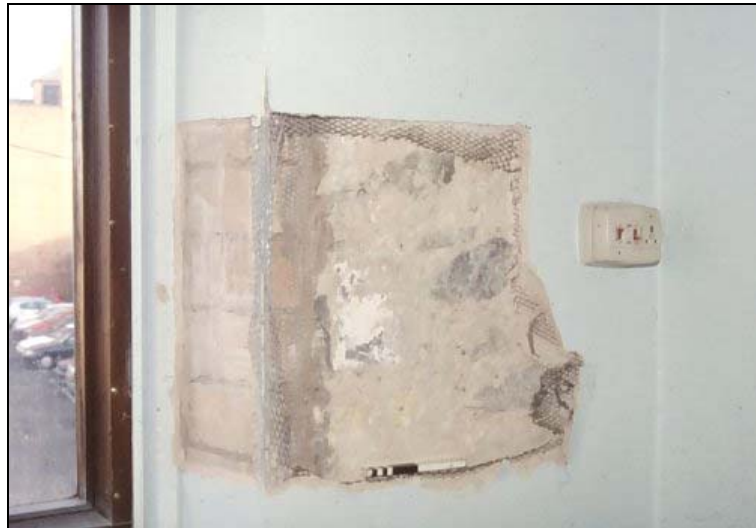


Plate 21. Area 12 opening to investigate internal wall coverings/window W16

4. Discussion

Nothing survives of the original/early first floor structure. A series of transverse beams at the bay intervals that were extant in 1966 are no longer *in situ*. These were probably removed as part of the 1966 development and were replaced with steel I-beams. The sequence of coverings over the I-beams corresponds with the requirements of contemporary fire regulations. None of the fabric of the first floor structure is likely to be earlier in date than 1966.

Early stone window surrounds survive beneath the present external concrete render in the three ground floor 3-light mullion windows of the west (Highcross Street) elevation: W1, W3 & W7. First floor windows W9, W11 & W15 and the surrounds to the two plaques on this elevation were not investigated during this phase of work, however earlier stonework is visible where the concrete covering of window W9 has blown. There is a strong possibility that early stonework survives in all first floor windows and in the plaque surrounds.

The early stone windows on the Highcross Street elevation use a combination of oolitic limestone and a shelly limestone. The stone appears to be in reasonably good condition, however assessment by a specialist in the conservation of historic stonework would be required to confirm this, and to provide an informed assessment of the potential for removing subsequent coverings without causing excessive damage to the underlying stonework, if exposure of the early surrounds is proposed as part of the development.

The ground floor 2-light window W5 and the doorway D1 at the north end of the Highcross Street elevation have 19th century brick surrounds coated with an early form of cement render. The window was inserted between 1828 and c.1880 based on the illustrative evidence. A similar cement render

was applied over the stone mullion windows of this elevation in the 19th century, before c.1880 and possibly at the same time that W5 was inserted and the doorway D1 remodelled. A date of c.1840s - 1880s is suggested for this type of cement by a specialist conservator (Dr. Graham Morgan, University of Leicester pers. comm., see below).

In 1966 a concrete coating was applied over the earlier, 19th century render applied to the window (and probably door and plaque) surrounds of the Highcross Street elevation. In some cases the 1966 concrete was formed around steel reinforcing bars. The 19th century render does not appear to have been applied to the mullions of the 3-light windows, and the 1966 concrete coating is applied directly over the stonework in these areas. Figures 6-9 illustrate the sequence of materials forming the the surround to door D1 and windows W1, W5 and W7.

On the east (car park) elevation, two early window openings on the ground floor, W2 & W4, were reconstructed in 1966 with new stonework copying the profile of surviving moulded window jamb fragments. It is notable that the early stone window surrounds on the east elevation are in sandstone, whereas those of the Highcross Street elevation are limestone. All other window and door surrounds on the east elevation date from 1966 and consist of pre-cast concrete sections inserted into the stonework of the wall face. The remains of one other early stone window surround is apparent on this elevation: the northernmost first floor window W16 (Plate 22). In this case the stonework of the south window jamb was truncated in 1966 when the pre-cast concrete surround was inserted. Removal of internal wall coverings at this point also exposed large, dressed stone blocks confirming the position of an original/early window opening (see Area 12).



Plate 22. Window W16 east (car park) elevation showing remains of early stone window surround to left of and truncated by 1960s concrete surround

Traces of earlier internal wall finishes (of unknown date) survive beneath the modern gypsum plaster in several locations on both the ground and first floors. Significant damage to these earlier finishes was caused in the 1960s when steel mesh was nailed to the internal wall faces to provide a key for plastering. In some locations (eg. Area 8) early wall coverings appear to have been deliberately removed in the past, though at what date and for what reason is uncertain.

In addition to assessing the character of internal wall coverings, Areas 9 & 11 were positioned to determine whether there was surviving historic testimony for the existence of original window openings in these locations (the present windows W6 & W14). No evidence for early stone window surrounds was exposed in the areas investigated, however this does not preclude the possibility of such evidence surviving elsewhere around the present openings. The current window openings in both of these locations are formed in brickwork attributable to the 1966 phase of alteration, these correspond approximately with the position of full-height openings predating the 1966 as seen in the photograph of this elevation taken following demolition of the adjacent structure (ULAS report 2004-161, Figure33).

If development proposals are to include the removal of the present gypsum plaster coating and keying mesh from the whole of the internal face of the east wall, then a more detailed assessment of the historic precedent of all of the present openings in this elevation would be possible at that stage.

Assessment of materials covering external stone surrounds

Early photographs of the Highcross Street elevation of the Free Grammar School (eg ULAS report 2004-161, Figures 30-32) show that the projecting window and door surrounds on this elevation were introduced prior to the 1966 alterations. Intrusive investigation has determined that the present concrete surrounds, attributable to 1966, were formed over an earlier brown-coloured render, applied some time between 1828 and c.1880, based on the illustrative evidence. Samples of the 19th century render were collected and have been examined by Dr Graham Morgan, archaeological conservator, of the University of Leicester. Detailed chemical analysis has not been undertaken.

The hard, brown-coloured material that was used as a facing coat over the 19th century brickwork of the door surround D1 and the 19th century 2-light window W5, and which was also used to coat the stonework of the original 3-light windows on the Highcross Street elevation, is a cementitious material, being a mixture of lime and alumino-silicate. This is typical of early cements, common in the period between the c.1840s and 1880s. In forming the window surrounds this render was applied over lengths of string/twine stretched between nails driven into the mortar beds of the underlying stonework. This 'string' appears to be twisted willow withies or possibly bark, but is certainly too coarse to be hemp.

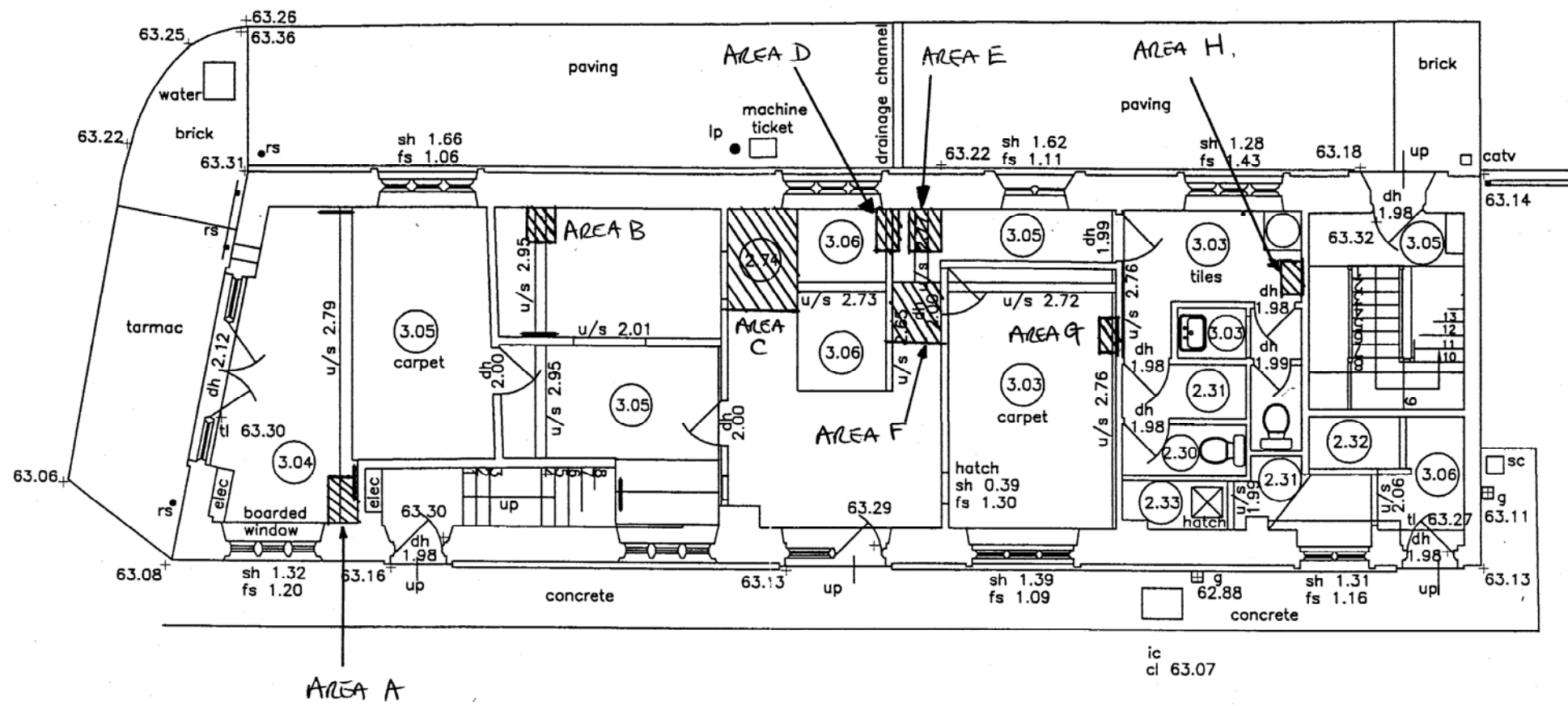
A very hard black material applied over the brown-coloured render on the south jamb of the 2-light mullion window W5 (Area 3, Plate 10) is an ash mortar – a combination of lime and coal ash. This appears to represent a phase of repair or patching to this window surround some time prior to the application of the 1966 concrete covering.

5. Sources

ULAS report 2004-161. *The Free Grammar School, Highcross Street, Leicester: Historic Building Assessment*. University of Leicester Archaeological Services.

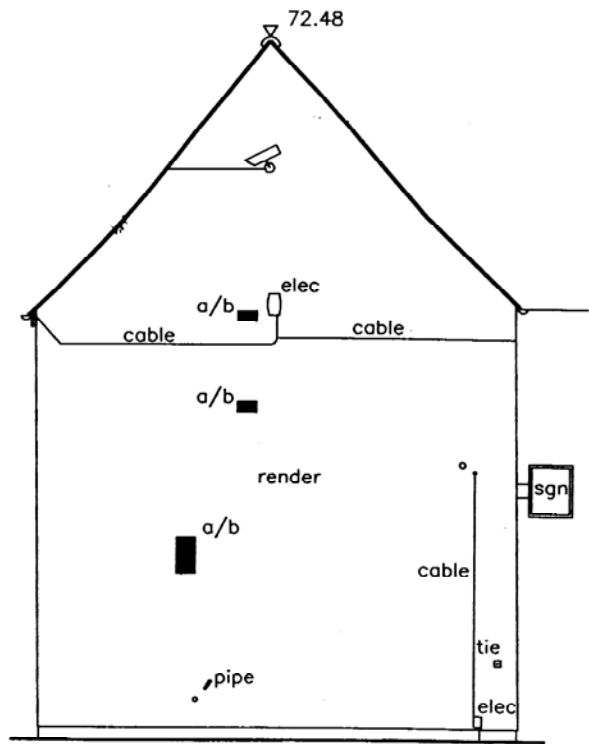
ULAS 2004. *Design Specification for Historic Building Impact Assessment: Phase 2 Intrusive Opening Up works, Free Grammar School, Highcross Street*. University of Leicester Archaeological Services.

Wardle, C., 2004 *Brief for Historic Building Impact Assessment: for Former Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Highcross Street, Leicester*. Leicester City Council Environment and Development.

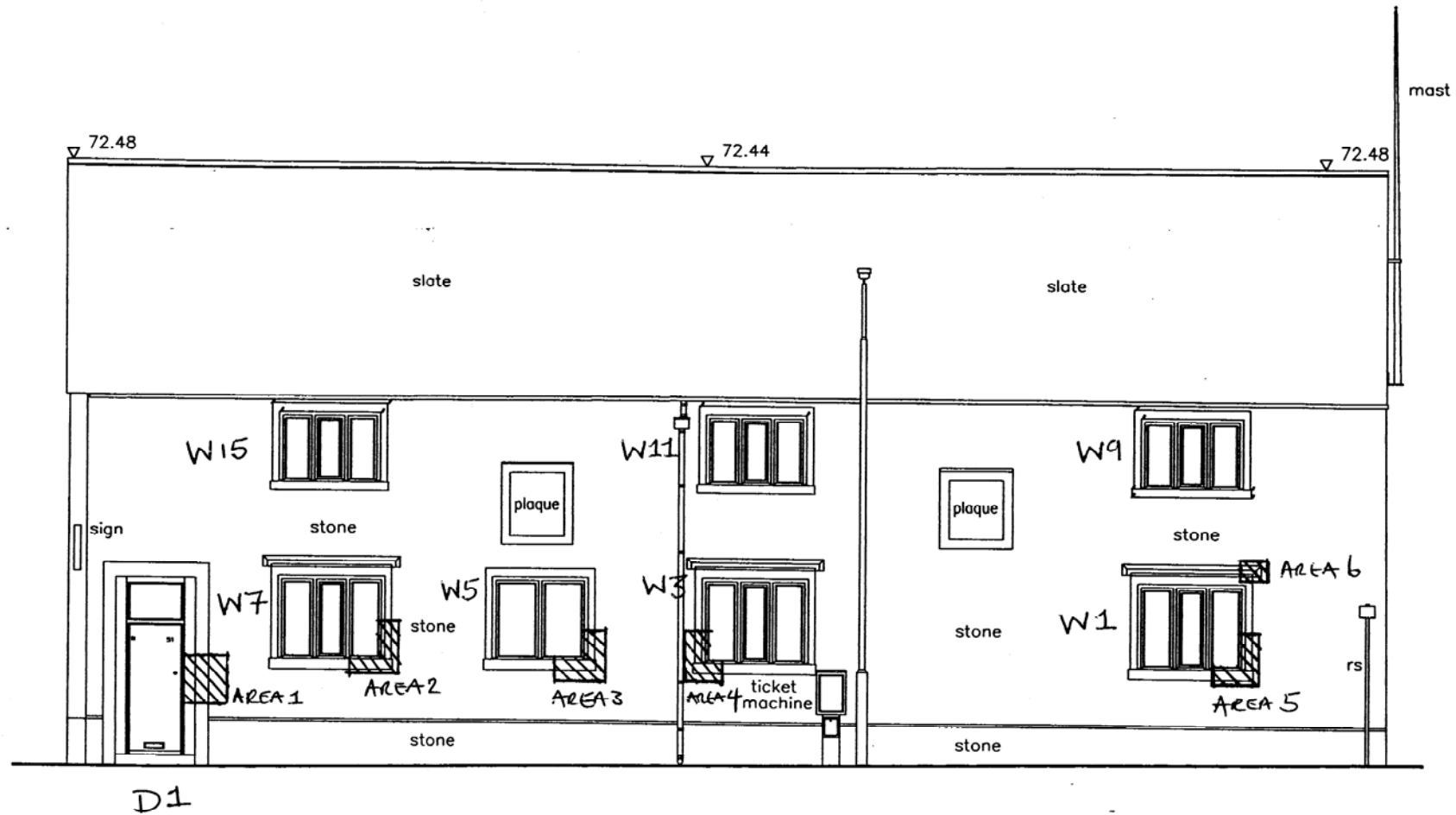


**THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL
GROUND FLOOR PLAN**

Figure 1. Free Grammar School, Highcross Street, Leicester. Scale 1:100. Ground Floor Plan showing location of openings to investigate first floor structure.



NORTH ELEVATION
THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL
 (58.00m)



WEST ELEVATION
THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL
 (58.00m)

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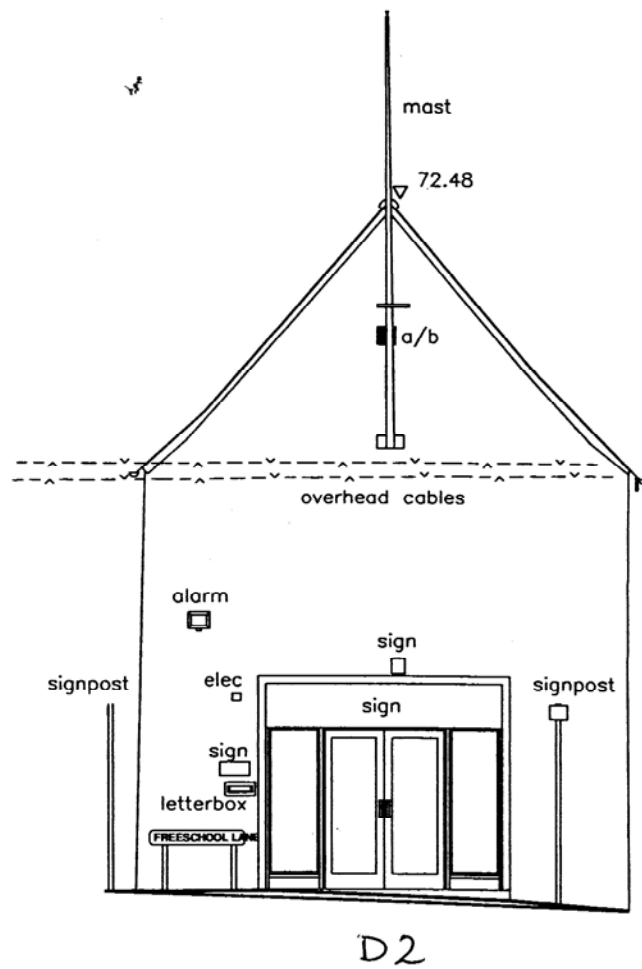
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THE SHIRES WEST
LEICESTER - 8 MAY 2003

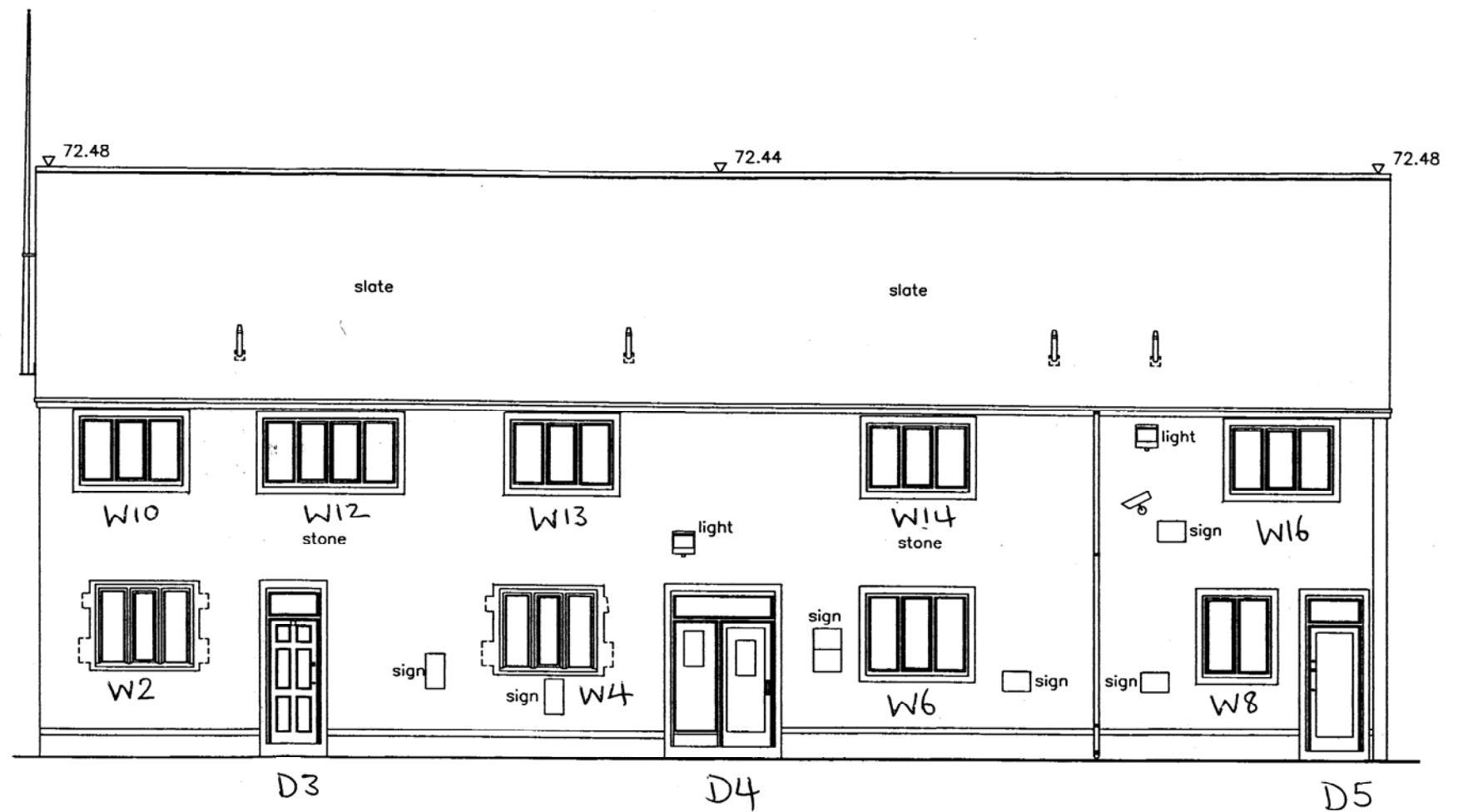
Figure 2. Free Grammar School, Highcross Street, Leicester. Scale 1:100. West (Highcross Street) elevation showing location of openings to investigate window & door surrounds. Numbering of windows and doors follows that of RG+P.

Notes

THIS SURVEY HAS BEEN PREPARED WITH A SCALING ACCURACY FOR A PLOT AT A SCALE OF 1/100

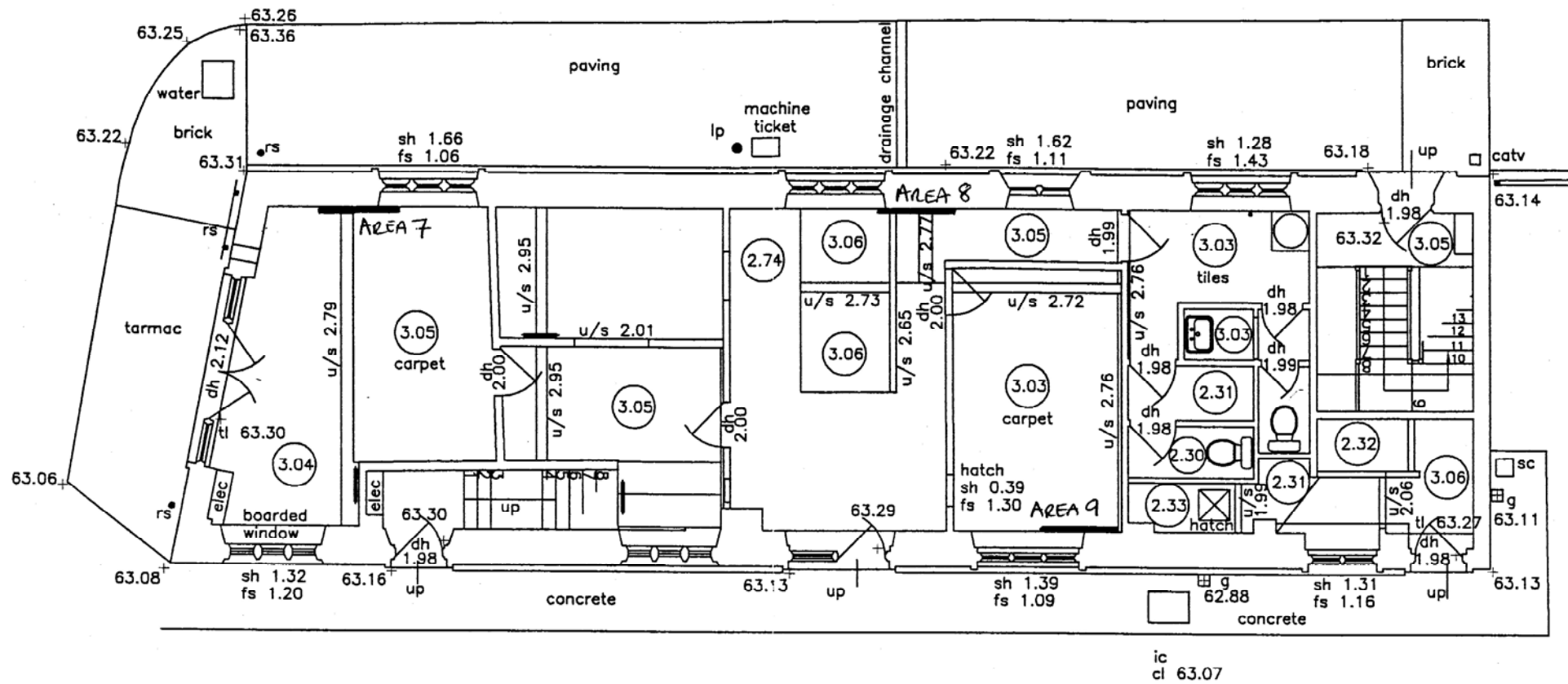


SOUTH ELEVATION
THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL
△ (58.00m)



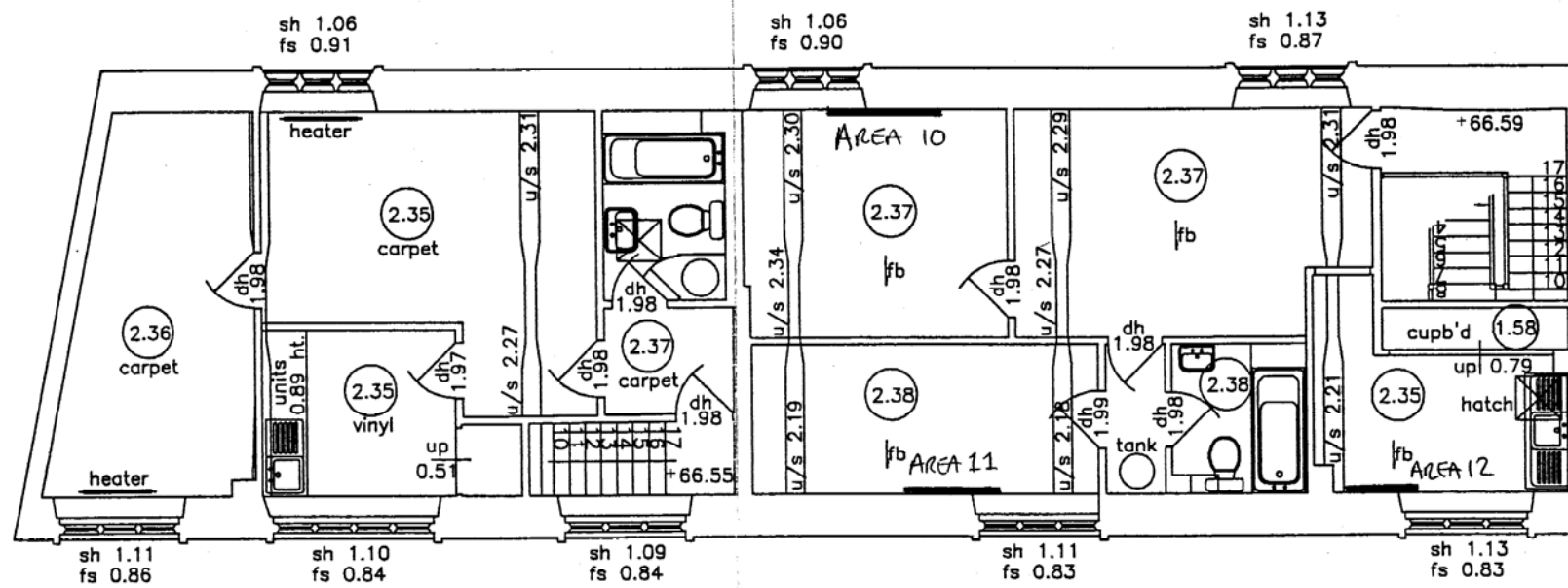
EAST ELEVATION
THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL
△ (58.00m)

Figure 3. Free Grammar School, Highcross Street, Leicester. Scale 1:100. East and South Elevations showing window and door numbers (following RG+P).



THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL
GROUND FLOOR PLAN

Figure 4. Free Grammar School, Highcross Street, Leicester. Scale 1:100.
Ground Floor Plan showing location of openings to investigate internal wall coverings
and assess historic precedent of current openings in east wall.



THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL
FIRST FLOOR PLAN

Figure 5. Free Grammar School, Highcross Street, Leicester. Scale 1:100.
First Floor Plan showing location of openings to investigate internal wall coverings
and assess historic precedent of current openings in east wall.

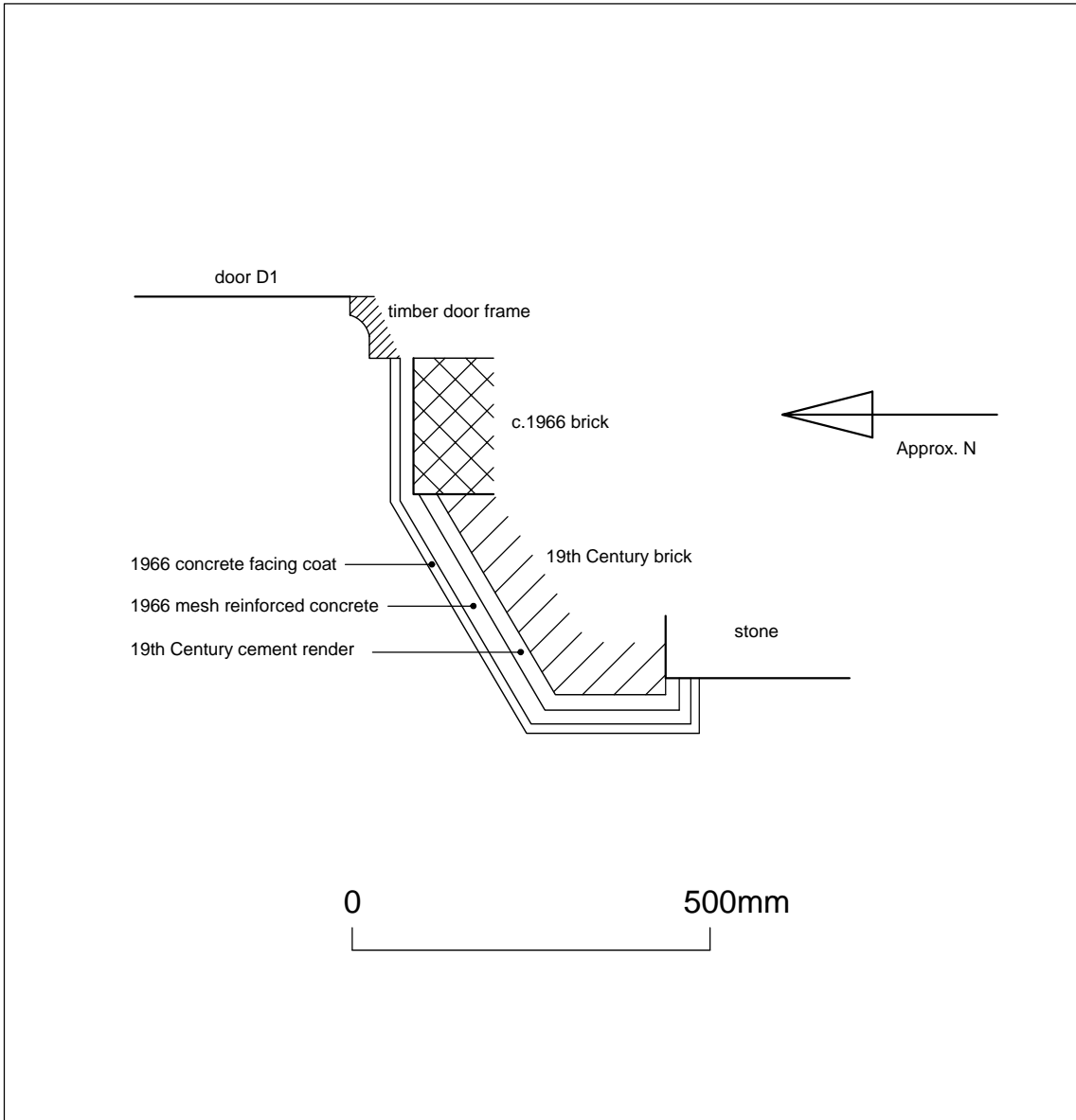


Figure 6. Plan view illustrating sequence of materials forming surround to doorway D1 (Area 1)

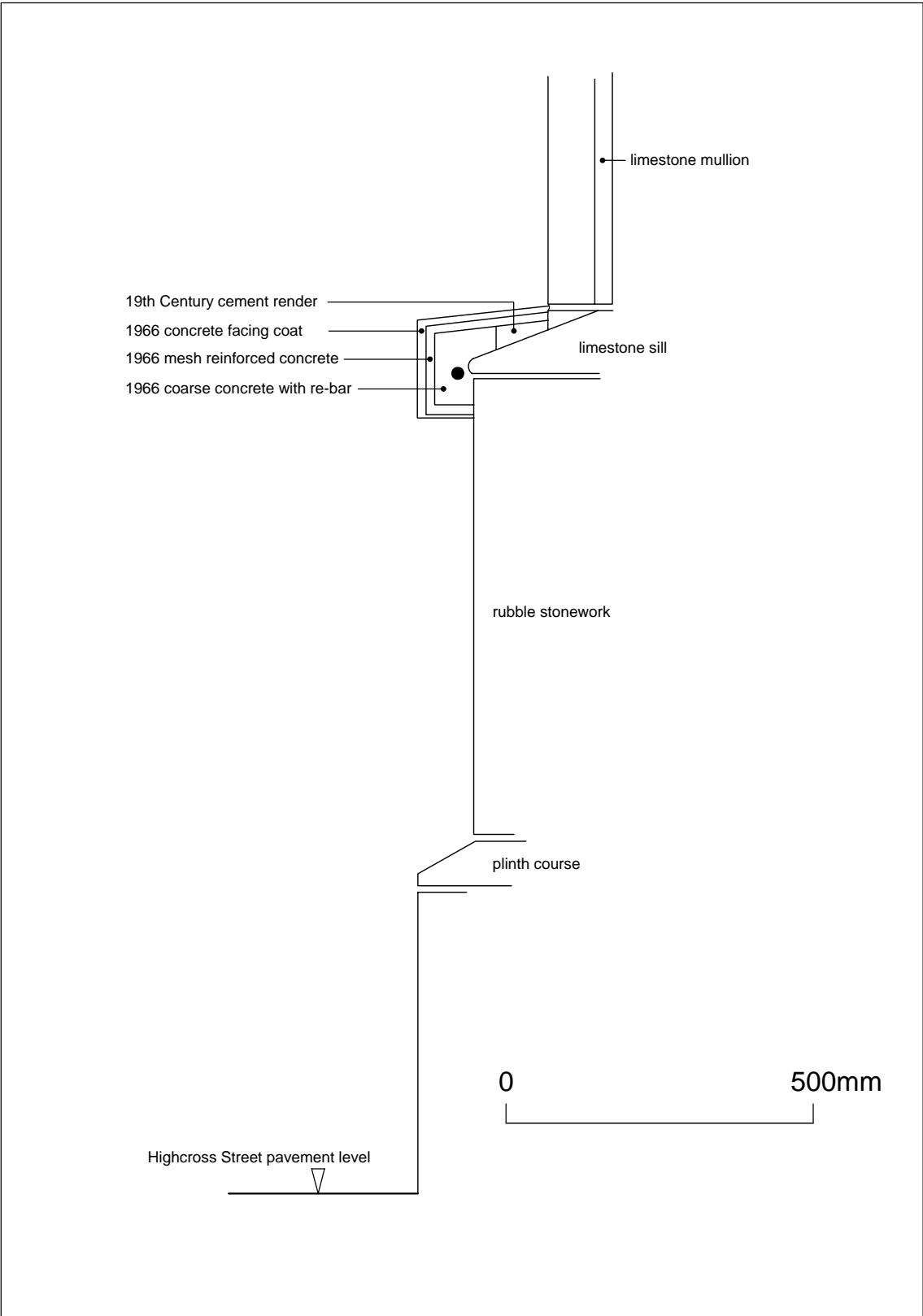


Figure 7. Section illustrating sequence of materials forming surround to window W1 (Area 5)

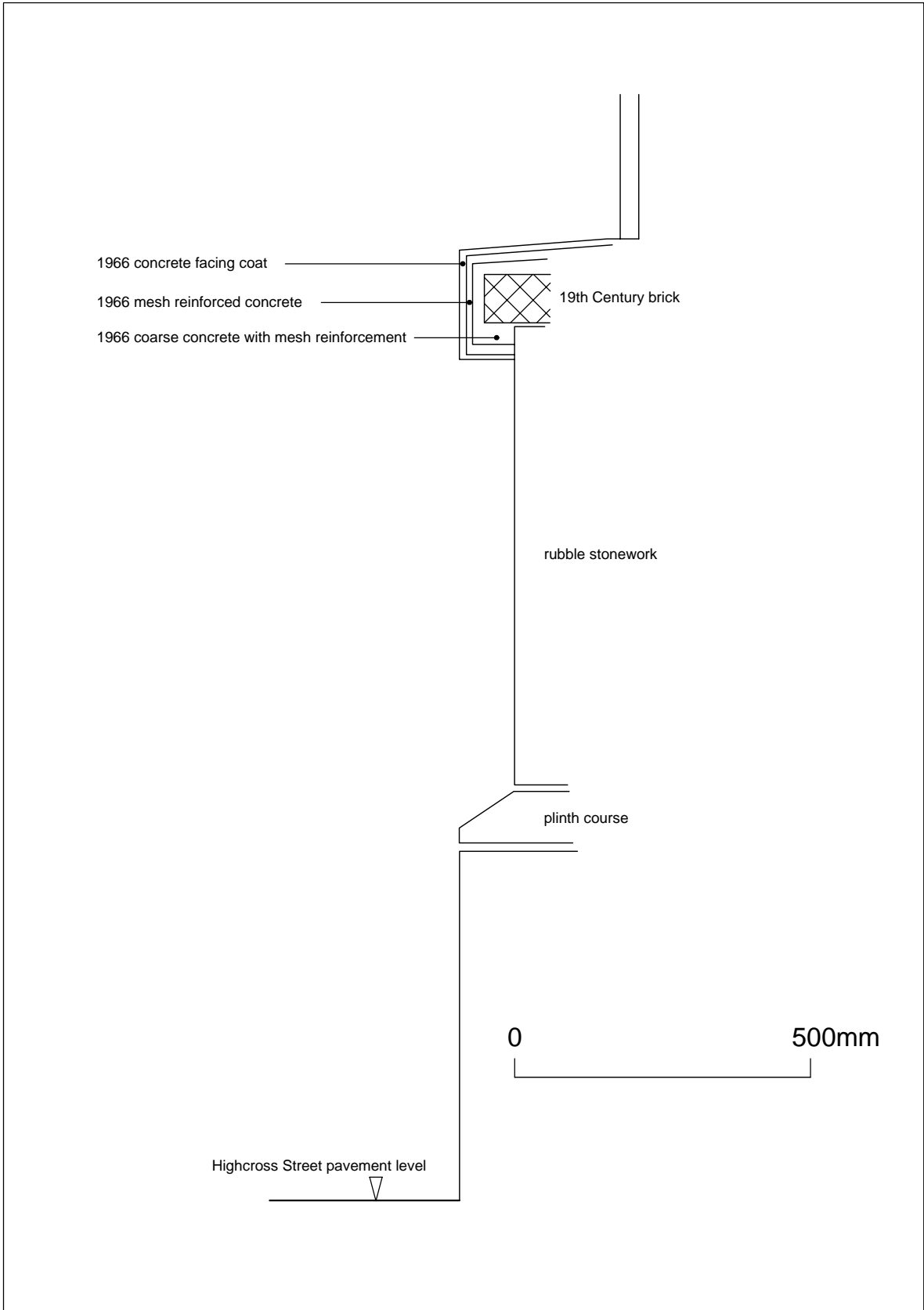


Figure 8. Section illustrating sequence of materials forming surround to window W5 (Area 3)

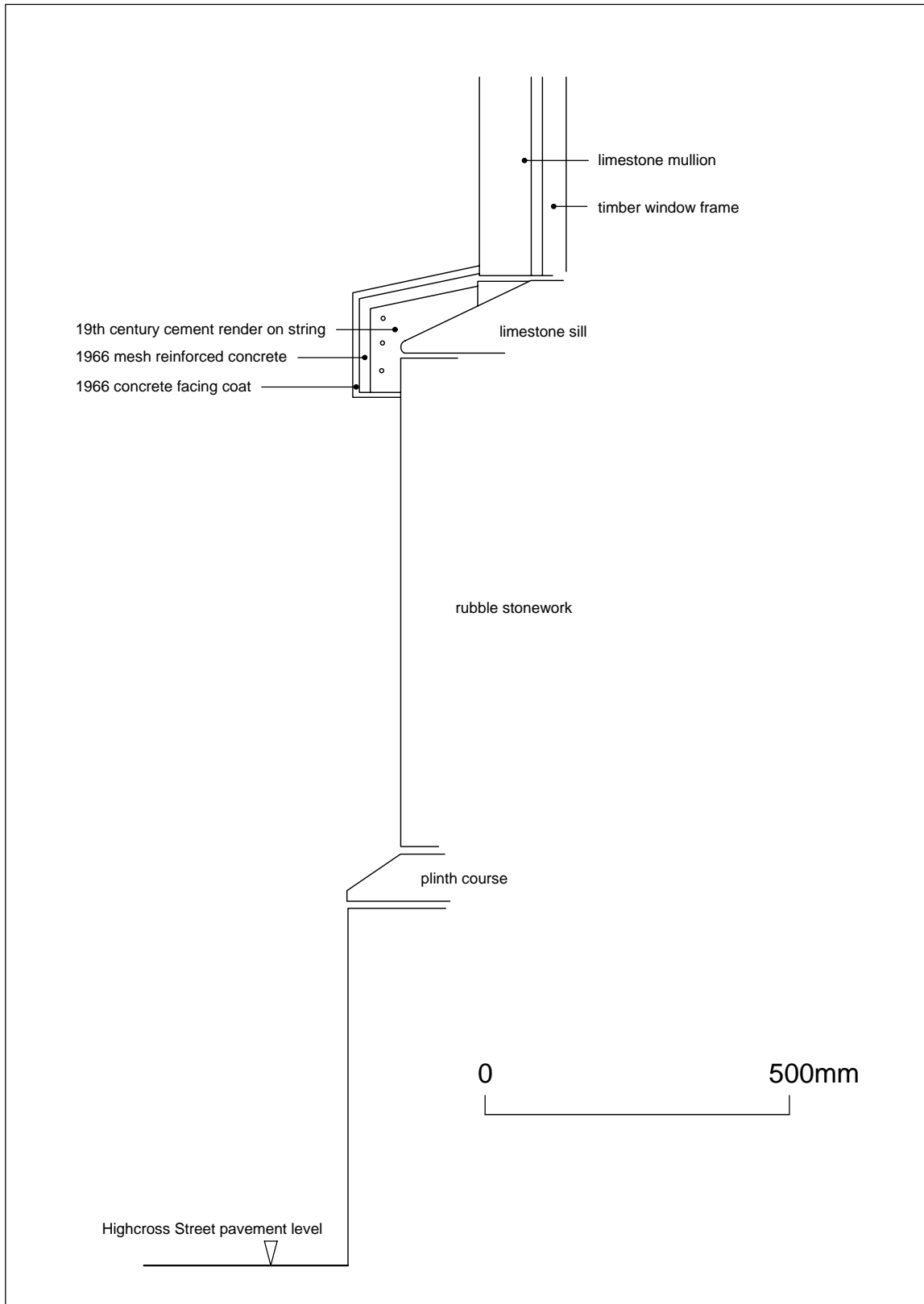


Figure 9. Section illustrating sequence of materials forming surround to window W7 (Area 2)

Appendix

Design Specification for Historic Building Impact Assessment: Phase 2 Intrusive Opening Up works, Free Grammar School, Highcross Street.

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Design Specification for Historic Buildings Impact Assessment:

Phase 2: Intrusive opening up works,

Free Grammar school, Highcross Street,

Leicester

NGR: SK 5836 0460

Client: Hammerson UK Properties

Planning Authority: Leicester City Council

1 Introduction

1.1 *Definition and scope of the specification*

This document is a written scheme of investigation for the second stage of an historic building assessment of the above property in accordance with DOE Planning Policy Guidance note 15 (PPG15). The requirements of the planning authority are set out in the 'Brief for Historic Building Impact Assessment for Former Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Highcross Street, Leicester' issued by the City Archaeologist, Leicester City Council, Dept. of Culture and Regeneration.

- 1.2 The initial phase of the assessment (Finn 2004) comprised desk-based research and limited inspection of the interior and exterior of the building. This has enabled the identification of areas which will require further intrusive investigation in order to clarify their dating and significance. This document provides details of the work proposed by ULAS on behalf of the client.

2. Background and context of the project (taken from Finn 2004)

- 2.1 The Free Grammar School stands on the north side of the junction of Highcross Street (the medieval High Street) and Freeschool Lane (the medieval Dead Lane), and was purpose-built as a schoolhouse in 1573-4, using materials salvaged from the medieval church of St. Peter. The building was originally longer, with accommodation for the headmaster provided at the north end; this range was demolished in the late 19th century. The schoolhouse was also shortened slightly at the south end when Freeschool Lane was widened, again in the late 19th century. The building ceased to function as a school in 1841 and was eventually sold in 1860. It was used as a carpet warehouse from the late 19th until the mid 20th century. In the mid 1960s the schoolhouse was converted into a booking office for a transportation firm, with two flats on the first floor. As part of this conversion the building was unsympathetically restored. Today it remains essentially as it was following the 1960s alterations.
- 2.2 The Free Grammar School lies on the western side of the Shires West development area and it is proposed to incorporate the change of use and refurbishment of the building within this development. The archaeological and historical study of the building will contribute towards the formulation of an appropriate and informed strategy for the treatment of the building as part of the development.
- 2.3 The initial phase of desk-based assessment concluded that in general, the proposals were likely to constitute a beneficial impact to the building, removing modern internal walls and ceilings to reveal more of the original structure, including the roof, and recreate something more like the original form of the school. It was also noted that some elements of the building would require further investigation to clarify the degree of survival of historic fabric, in particular external windows, the first floor structure and original internal walls, all of which are obscured by later finishes.

3. Archaeological Aims and Objectives

- 3.1 The aim of the intrusive investigation is to provide additional information, in terms of date, condition and significance, for those parts of the building which are currently obscured with later claddings. In this way, the results can inform the strategy for repair and restoration of the building, ensuring that the works will be sympathetic to important surviving fabric of historical or architectural significance.
- 3.2 The specific objectives of the intrusive archaeological investigations may be summarised as follows:
- Clarification of the make up, dating and condition of the structure of the first floor.
 - Assessment of the survival of earlier wall claddings beneath later plaster finishes of the interior faces of the east and west walls..
 - Assessment of originality or otherwise of window openings on the rear elevation
 - Assessment of the survival of earlier stonework beneath later concrete window and door surrounds
 - To produce an archive and report of the results.

4. Methodology

4.1 General Methodology and Standards

- 4.1.1 All work will follow the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IF) Code of Conduct and adhere to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing buildings or Structures*. In addition, Leicestershire County Council's *Guidelines and Procedures for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire* will be adhered to. The Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME) *Recording Historic Buildings: a Descriptive Specification* (3rd edition, 1996) has been used as a basis for defining levels of recording.
- 4.1.2 Staffing, Recording systems, Health and Safety provisions and Insurance details are provided.
- 4.1.3 Internal monitoring procedures will be undertaken including visits to the site by the project manager. These will ensure that project targets are being met and professional standards are being maintained. Provision will be made for external monitoring meetings with representatives of Leicestershire County Council Historic Buildings Conservation Team (LCCHBCT), Leicestershire Museums Service and the Client.

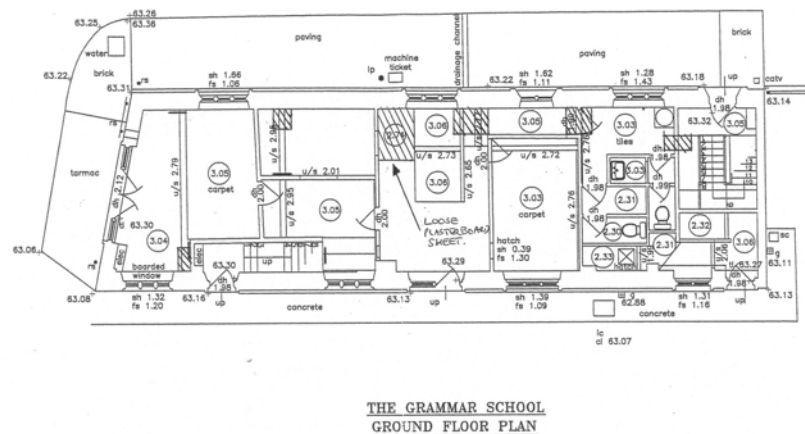


Fig. 1: proposed areas for investigation of first floor structure (hatched)

4.2 Opening Up Works

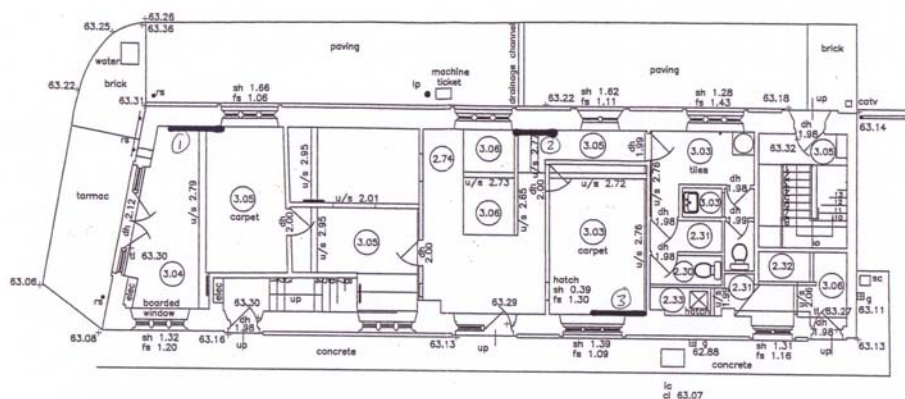
4.2.1 ULAS shall carefully remove modern claddings in the specified areas to reveal underlying fabric. A record shall be made of claddings removed and historic fabric exposed during the works to RCHME level 2 (includes photographs, dimensioned sketch drawings, brief written description).

4.1.3 The areas to be investigated will be as follows:

First floor structure (fig. 1).

Removal of cladding/boxing in on the underside of ceiling beams in six locations (hatched). Largest area (towards the centre of the building) corresponds with a loose sheet of plasterboard where the transverse beam is fully underdrawn in the present reception area. Positions against the side walls have been chosen to permit assessment of the condition of timbers in areas most vulnerable to rot (ie beam ends).

At the northernmost area of proposed intervention it appears that the ceiling beam may have been removed. Areas on one, and if necessary both, sides of the 9 inch brick wall that closes off the staircase to the N end first floor flat will be opened up to verify this.



THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL
GROUND FLOOR PLAN

Fig. 2: proposed areas for investigation of wall coverings and assessment of historic precedent of current openings in rear wall. ground floor areas 1-3

Wall Coverings.(figs. 2-3)

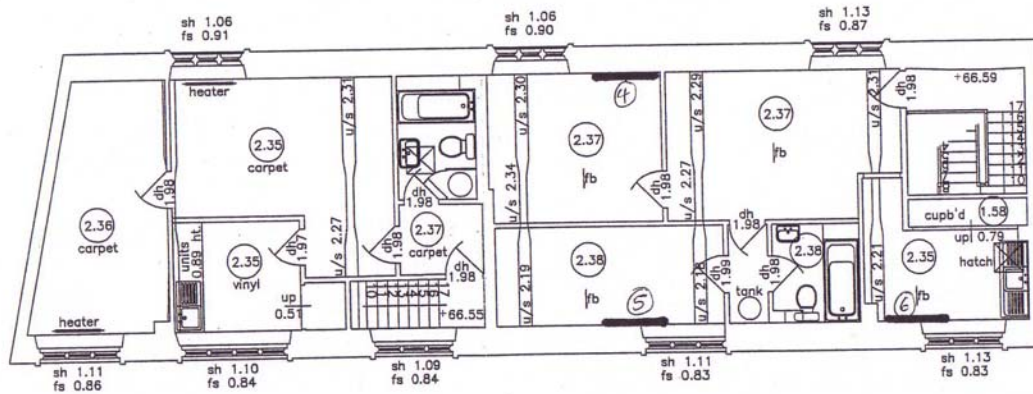
Three areas on each floor have been selected to investigate both the survival or otherwise of early wall coverings, and the originality or otherwise of window openings on the rear elevation (ie. looking for evidence of early stone jambs).

Window/door surrounds on front (Highcross Street) elevation.(fig.4)

Six areas will be investigated, covering all ground floor openings, including hood moulds,, in order to assess the degree of survival, condition and nature of original moulded stonework

4.3 Recording systems

4.3.1 Individual descriptions of all archaeological strata and features excavated or exposed will be entered onto prepared pro-forma recording sheets, fully indexed and cross referenced with the drawn and photographic record.



**THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL
FIRST FLOOR PLAN**

Fig. 3: Proposed areas for investigation of wall coverings and assessment of historic precedent of current openings in rear wall. First floor areas 4-6



Fig. 4: Proposed areas for removal of concrete render to door and window surrounds, 6 areas in total

4.3.2 A site location plan based on the current Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map (reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO) will be prepared. This will be supplemented by a detail plan of the building showing the location of the areas investigated.

4.3.3 A photographic record of the investigations will be maintained in 35mm format. This will include black and white prints and colour transparencies illustrating in both detail and general context the principal features and finds discovered. The photographic record will also include 'working shots' to illustrate more generally the nature of the archaeological operation. The transparencies will be mounted in suitable frames.

4.3.4 Drawings will be made on drafting film at a scale of 1:20, or 1:50 as appropriate and will be cross indexed with the written archive. Certain constructional details will be recorded in measured sketches, again on drafting film.

This record will be compiled and fully checked during the course of the work.

4.3.5 Descriptive records of any constructional details will follow accepted terminology, e.g. Alcock, N.W., Barley M.W., *et al* 1996 *Recording Timber Framed Buildings: An Illustrated Glossary*. Council for British Archaeology Practical Handbook 5

5. Report and Archive

5.1 The existing phase 1 desk-based historic building assessment will be updated with the results of the intrusive investigations and will be issued within eight weeks of the completion of the fieldwork and copies will be directed to the Client (2) Conservation Officer at Leicester City Council (1 copy), to the City Archaeologist, Leicester City Council (1 copy), and to the Leicester Sites and Monuments Record Leicester City Council (1 copies).

5.2 The report will include consideration of:

- The aims and methods adopted in the course of the work.
- The location, date, significance and quality of the building.
- Summary.
- The location and size of the archive.

6 Publication and Dissemination of Results

6.1 A summary of the work will be submitted to the local archaeological journal, the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*. A larger report will be submitted for inclusion if the results of the evaluation warrant it.

7. Copyright

7.1 The copyright of all original finished documents shall remain vested in ULAS and ULAS will be entitled as of right to publish any material in any form produced as a result of its investigations.

8. Timetable

8.1 It is envisaged that the work will take approximately 5 days on site, with additional time for updating the phase 1 assessment report. The work will be carried out during w.c 10.1.05

9. Health and Safety

9.1 A Risks assessment form will be completed prior to work commencing on-site, and updated as necessary during the site works.

10 Insurance

10.1 All employees, consultants and volunteers are covered by the University of Leicester public liability insurance, £20m cover with Gerling Insurance Service Co. Ltd. and others (leading policy no. 62/99094/D). Professional indemnity insurance is with Royal and Sun Alliance, £10m cover, policy no. 03A/SA 001 05978. Employer's Liability Insurance is with Eagle Star, cover £25m. Copies of the certificates are attached.

11. Monitoring arrangements

- 11.1 Unlimited access to monitor the project will be available to both the Client and his representatives and Planning Archaeologist subject to the health and safety requirements of the site. Notice will be given to the Leicestershire Planning Archaeologist before the commencement of the archaeological evaluation in order that monitoring arrangements can be made.
- 11.2 All monitoring shall be carried out in accordance with the IFA *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations*.
- 11.3 Internal monitoring will be carried out by the ULAS project manager.

12. Contingencies and unforeseen circumstances

- 12.1 In the event that unforeseen archaeological discoveries are made during the project, ULAS shall inform the site agent/project manager, Client and the Planning Archaeologist and Planning Authority and prepare a short written statement with plan detailing the archaeological evidence. Following assessment of the archaeological remains by the Planning Archaeologist, ULAS shall, if required, implement an amended scheme of investigation on behalf of the client as appropriate.

13. Bibliography

Finn, N., 2004 *The Free Grammar School, Highcross Street, Leicester: Historic Building Assessment* (ULAS Report 2004-161)

RCHME 1996 *Recording Historic Buildings; A Descriptive Specification Third Edition*, Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England

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APPENDIX 1

Draft Project Health and Safety Policy Statement:

**Phase 2: Intrusive opening up works,
Free Grammar school, Highcross Street,
Leicester**

NGR: SK 5836 0460

Client: Hammerson UK Properties

Planning Authority: Leicester City Council

A risks assessment will be produced by on-site staff, which will be updated and amended

1. Nature of the work during the course of the survey

- 1.1 The work will involve removal by hand of small areas of plywood/plasterboard claddings, plaster and cement render. Tools to be used will include lump hammer and bolster, and wrecking bar.

2 Risks Assessment

2.1 Working within a derelict building.

Precautions. University of Leicester Archaeological Services has been led to believe that it is safe to enter the majority of the building.

The archaeological building recorder will only enter rooms that they feel are safe.

2.2 Use of hand tools

Precautions: use of hand tools which are in good condition and appropriate to the work in hand.

2.3 Dust

The work will generate plaster and other dust

Precautions: appropriate face mask/breathing apparatus, hand protection (gloves)

2.4 Other risks

Precautions. If unforeseen hazards being encountered e.g. pigeon guano or other contaminants or hazards are identified, such areas will not be entered, and the client will be informed of the risk.