

**A Historic Building Heritage Impact Assessment at
The Knighton Street Outpatients Building,
Leicester Royal Infirmary,
Leicester
NGR: SK58735 03545**



Site Name: Knighton Street Outpatients Building, Leicester Royal Infirmary.

Grid Ref: SK 58735 03545

Author: Andrew Hyam

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University of Leicester, Archaeological Services,
University Rd., Leicester, LE1 7RH
Tel: (0116) 2522848
www.le.ac.uk/ulas

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A Heritage Impact Assessment at the Knighton Street Outpatients Building, Leicester Royal Infirmary (SK 58735 03545)

Summary

A Heritage Impact Assessment was undertaken at the Knighton Street Outpatients Building, Leicester Royal Infirmary. The work was commissioned by University Hospitals Leicester from University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) in advance of the proposed demolition of the building as part of a major redevelopment of the site.

The two storey building is not listed or locally listed but has formed a prominent structure within the heart of the hospital site throughout the 20th century. The building was built as the outpatients' department and underwent a number of significant extensions in the first half of the century. Most of the original fixtures and fittings have been removed and the building is now in use as offices, laboratories and teaching rooms.

Despite being thoroughly modernised there are some features worthy of retention such as bronze plaques commemorating donations towards extensions. Another plaque marks the opening of an education centre. Also noteworthy is a delicate weather vane set on the top of the original building. Elsewhere in the building some original doors and door fittings have survived as have a number of wrought iron grilles.

Another feature which, if not recovered, could be studied further is a decorative tile frieze within the main hall. The frieze is complete but is currently hidden behind layers of paint.

The report and archive will be deposited under Accession Number Y.A14.2021

Introduction

This document forms the report for a Heritage Impact Assessment at the Knighton Street Outpatients Building, Leicester Royal Infirmary, Leicester (SK 58735 03545).

A proposed redevelopment of the area around the site of the former Outpatients Department on Knighton Street and around the adjacent Knighton Street Offices means that these buildings will be demolished to provide adequate space for a new purpose-built structure. As the building will be permanently lost the client has requested that a historic impact assessment take place before any planning applications are made. The aim of the assessment is to identify any historical and architectural features of significance within the building.

The other buildings on the proposed redevelopment site do not form part of this historic building survey. The former nurses' home known as Knighton Street Offices has been the subject of a Level 3 historic building recording and has a separate report (Hyam, 2021).

Site Location, Geology and Topography

The site of the Leicester Royal Infirmary (LRI) lies to the south of the city centre and is on the western side of the junctions of Welford Road, Infirmary Road and Aylestone Road (Fig. 1). The current extent of the LRI is surrounded by Jarrom Street, to the north, Havelock Street, to the west and Walnut Street running along its southern boundary. The earliest hospital buildings are in the north-eastern corner of the site with a variety of buildings of different periods spreading south and west across the rest of the site. The Knighton Street Outpatients Building is located close to the eastern edge of the hospital site and is close to the line of the former Knighton Street as discussed later in this report (Figs 2 and 3). On the north-western side of the Knighton Street Building is a recently added building housing the A and E department. Immediately to the west of the Knighton Street Building are the four storey Knighton Street Offices which are also proposed to be demolished in the scheme. To the south is the modern Hearing Services block whilst to the east is an open space extending as far as Infirmary Road

The LRI site is generally level slopes down towards the south-east with a fall from around 60m aOD in the north-east down to around 57m aOD in the south-west.

The British Geological Survey indicates that the underlying geology of the area is likely to be Branscombe Mudstone Formation, overlain by Syston Member sand and gravel in places.



Figure 1 Site Location

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Figure 2 Aerial view of site

Knighton Street Building highlighted in yellow

Imagery ©2021 Bluesky. Getmapping plc. Infoterra Ltd & Bluesky. Maxar Technologies. Map data ©2021

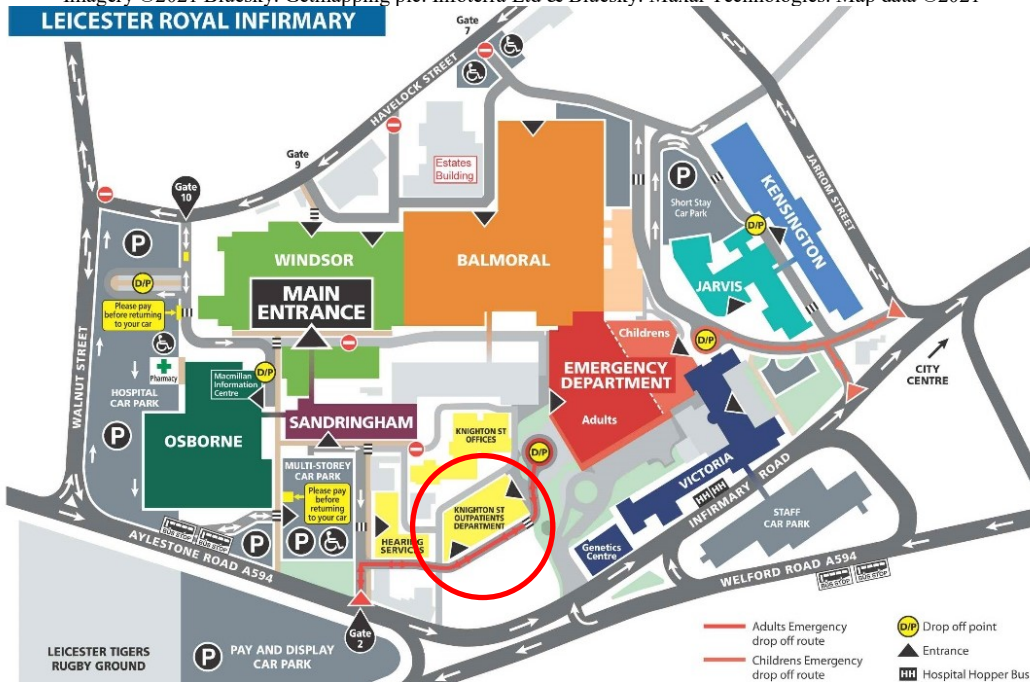


Figure 3 Hospital site plan

North to right of picture. Knighton Street Outpatients Building shown in lower centre of site in yellow with red circle. Source: Leicester Royal Infirmary

Historical Background of the Hospital

The Leicester Royal Infirmary was founded in 1771 by the Reverend William Watts although at this time it was simply known as the Leicester Infirmary. The new hospital was built on open land to the south of the Leicester town limits which at that time were defined by the town walls and associated defences. The hospital was constructed on a five-hectare site which was known as ‘Chapel Close’.

After the severe damage caused during the Civil War in 1645, the town gates were finally taken down in 1774 just three years after the opening of the hospital. This removal of any physical barriers provided the impetus for settlement to expand beyond the earlier town limits and, within a few years, the expansion of the town was already threatening to engulf the hospital site. This was a problem which has followed the hospital up to the present day. By around 1808 the original 40 bed hospital had increased to 60 beds and a fever house was added in 1820. This steady growth meant that in the 1830s the Leicester Infirmary acquired more land. The enlarged hospital limits at this time were defined by Cow Lane (Bridge Street), Infirmary Street and Parliament Street (Frizelle 1971). St. Luke’s Chapel was added in 1887. In the 19th century, there was further expansion of the hospital site southwards resulting in the demolition of houses on Parliament Street, which dated to the 1820s.

The name of the hospital was expanded to become the Leicester Infirmary and Children’s Hospital in 1911 with the word Royal being added in 1914. The hospital became part of the new National Health Service in 1948.

Since the early 20th century, the Royal Infirmary had been buying houses and land close to the hospital with a view to expansion. A large scale programme of ‘slum clearance’ was undertaken in the middle of the century in order to make way for further expansion of both the Royal Infirmary and the former Polytechnic (now De Montfort University). This expansion began with the partial truncation of Knighton Street in the 1930s which continued until the 1970s (Courtney and Courtney 1992). Expansion and redevelopment of the site has been a constant theme throughout the history of the hospital. This reflects both the ever-expanding population and advances in medical treatment.

The history of the Knighton Street Building has not been studied in great detail for this report although a number of old photographs have been used for this report for comparison purposes. The photographs can be viewed on the online Leicestershire Hospital virtual website. The photographs indicate that the large central hall was flanked by a range of treatment and consultation rooms. During the First World War the hall appears to have been used as an overflow ward to cope with additional patients. The building is presently in use as an office block with no patients using the building at all.

Cartographic Evidence

The first available map showing any clear details of the hospital site is the First edition Ordnance Survey 25 inch scale map published in 1888 (Fig. 4). This map shows the LRI site significantly smaller than it is at present. The original 1771 block is shown to the north of the site with a fever house added to one wing (now known as the Victoria building). A large open space is shown covering most of the rest of the site with what appear to be laid out gardens and a tennis lawn. Two narrow streets with terraced housing either side are shown as Parliament Street and Knighton Street and extend

westwards across the site of the Knighton Street Building which has yet to be built at this date.

By the time of the second edition of the Ordnance Survey map in 1915 the hospital site has undergone a significant transformation (Fig. 5). All of the houses on both sides of Parliament Street have been removed and the first phase of the Knighton Street Building has been built across the former line of this road. This new building is on the same north-west to south-east alignment as the earlier hospital buildings to the north. The south-western corner of the new Knighton Street Building cuts across the site of the terraced houses which were on the north side of Knighton Street. With the exception of a few at each end of the street these have all been removed by this time. It would be expected that even the remaining householders knew that their remaining time there was limited. The main hospital buildings have also been enlarged and now extend south-eastwards towards the northern end of the new Knighton Street Building. To the west the first phase of the new nurses' home has also been built.

A gap of fifteen years has brought about another change to the Knighton Street Building so that the 1930 Ordnance Survey map shows that it has been extended southwards to meet the northern edge of Knighton Street (Fig. 6). This extension has entailed the removal of the remaining houses at the eastern end of Knighton Street leaving only those along the southern side. The new Knighton Street Building extension has altered the alignment of the southern end which now faces due south across Knighton Street creating a slightly strange angle along this face. To the east of the Knighton Street Building a large rectangular building has been added which follows the original alignment. To the west the nurses' home, which faces due south across Knighton Street, has had a small wing added to the eastern side.

The 1938 Ordnance Survey map shows the Knighton Street Building very much as it does in the 1930 edition. However, the hospital site around it has once again changed. All of the houses along Knighton Street have been removed, as has most of Knighton Street, leaving only a small stub of the street at its eastern end (Fig. 7). The building to the east of the Knighton Street Building has almost doubled in size and the nurses' home, to the west, has also been extended. The area to the south of the Knighton Street Building appears to be an open space which may explain why the extension was built with such a strangely angled south side.

A map published in 1955 shows a gradual increase in the number of buildings around the Knighton Street Building. The eastern side of the building appears to have been remodelled by this date as it is shown as a long smooth-sided building rather than having stepped sections as seen on earlier maps. The 1955 map cannot be used in this report due to copyright reasons but it shows the Hearing Services building to the south as being present. The gap between the two buildings respects the old line of Knighton Street. The Hearing Services building has cut across the former line of some houses on the north side of Aylestone Street which have been removed. This is a foretaste of future hospital expansion across the streets to the south. There is a large gap until the publication of the next Ordnance Survey map in 1979. This map cannot be shown due to copyright reasons but shows that the whole hospital site has been transformed. All of the streets to the south down to Walnut Street have been removed leaving, at this time, a large open area south. Since that date a range of new buildings have been inserted into spaces in and around the hospital. The 1979 map appears to show the Knighton Street Building as it is in previous editions although there is a narrow link

with the building to the east. All subsequent maps still show this building to the east which had been demolished by the time of this assessment.



Figure 4 Detail from the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1888
 Approximate location of current building highlighted
 Sheet: XXXI.14. Original scale 25 inches to 1 mile

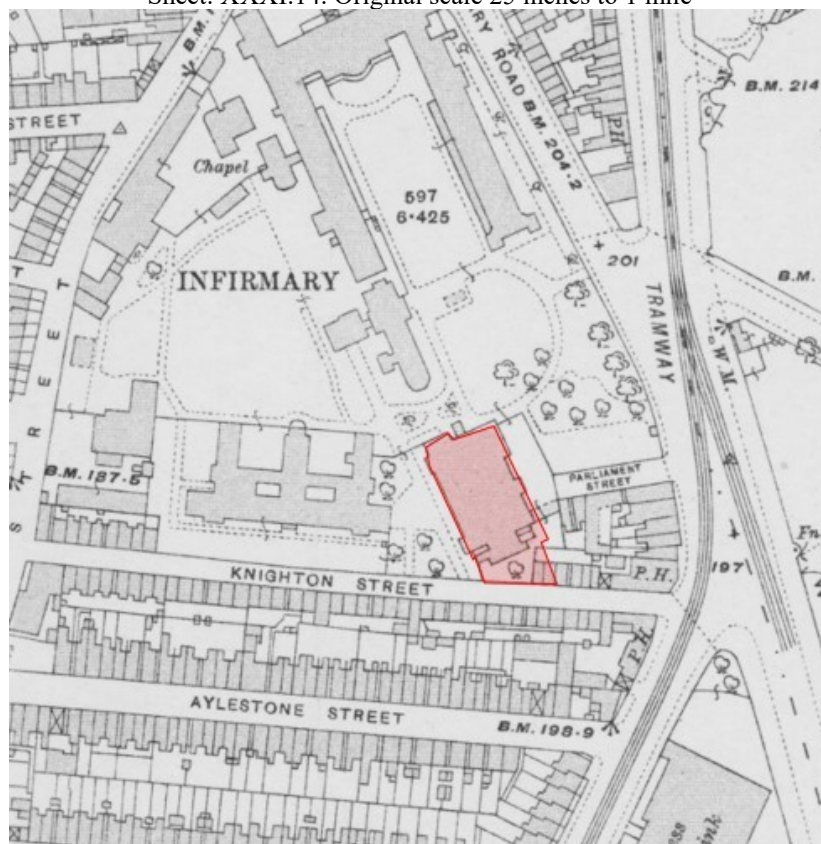


Figure 5 Detail from the Second Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1915
 Location of full extent of current building highlighted
 Sheet: XXXI.14. Original scale 25 inches to 1 mile

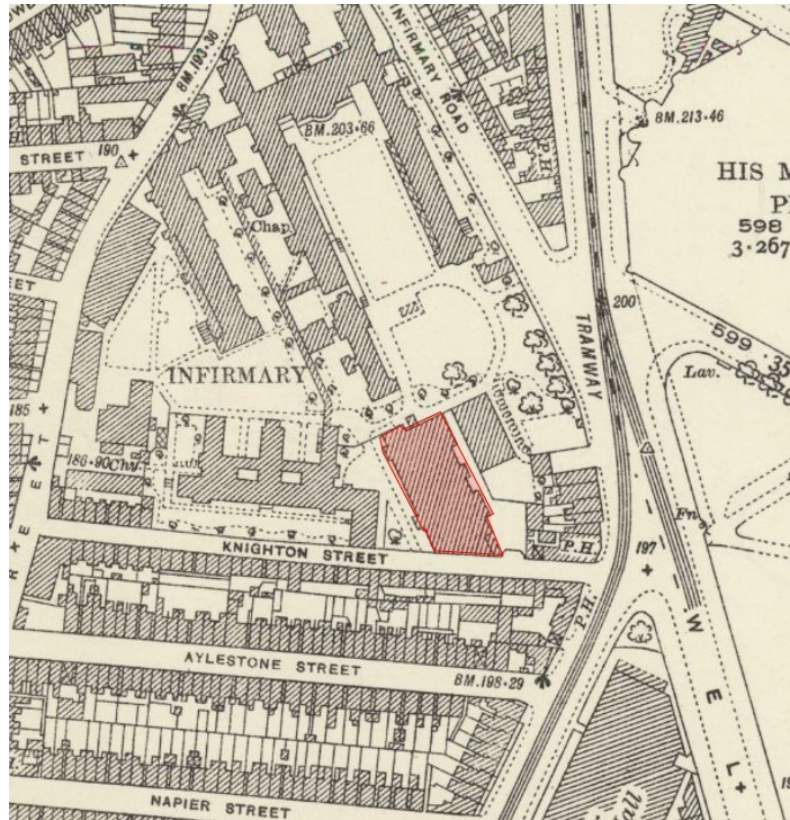


Figure 6 Detail from the Ordnance Survey 1930 Edition map
Location of full extent of current building highlighted
Sheet: XXXI.14. Original scale 25 inches to 1 mile

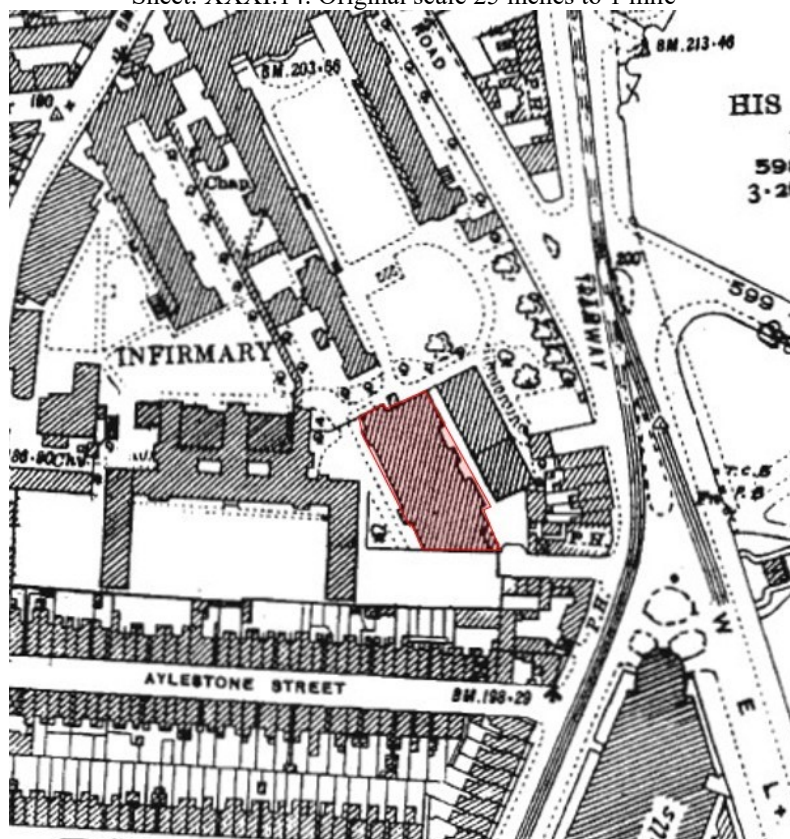


Figure 7 Detail from the Ordnance Survey 1938 Edition map
Location of full extent of current building highlighted. Sheet: XXXI.14

Conservation Area and listed buildings

The closest conservation area to the Knighton Street Building is the New Walk Conservation Area which lies along the opposite side of Welford Road and includes the prison. The closest listed building is the Grade II listed original 1771 part of the hospital. The Knighton Street Offices, the former nurses' home, is included on the Leicester City Council Local List as Number LL/107. The Knighton Street Buildings are not on any local or national list.

Objectives

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was produced by ULAS defines the project and details the scope of the impact assessment project. Within the stated project objectives, the principal aim of the building recording was to provide a brief photographic, written and drawn record of the historic building and associated structures prior to the commencement of any redevelopment or demolition work.

In brief, the objectives of the Heritage Impact Assessment were to:

- To provide a photographic and written assessment of all the affected parts of the historic fabric prior to the commencement of works.
- To identify areas and items of architectural and historic interest which may be suitable for retention and incorporation into the proposed new redevelopment project.

Methodology

The methodology and recording system employed for the Impact Assessment was as stated in the ULAS WSI. The general work followed Historic England's guidelines *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (2016). The Knighton Street Building, which is in this report, was the subject of the Heritage Impact Assessment. The adjacent Knighton Street Offices were the subject of a Level 3 Historic Building Recording and are reported separately.

No architectural elevation drawings of the Knighton Street Building were available. Plans were supplied by the client and are used in this report.

All work followed the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Code of Conduct* (2014).

The fieldwork was undertaken between the 25th and 31st of August 2021.

Plan Drawings

Elevation drawings supplied by the Client can be seen in Appendix 2

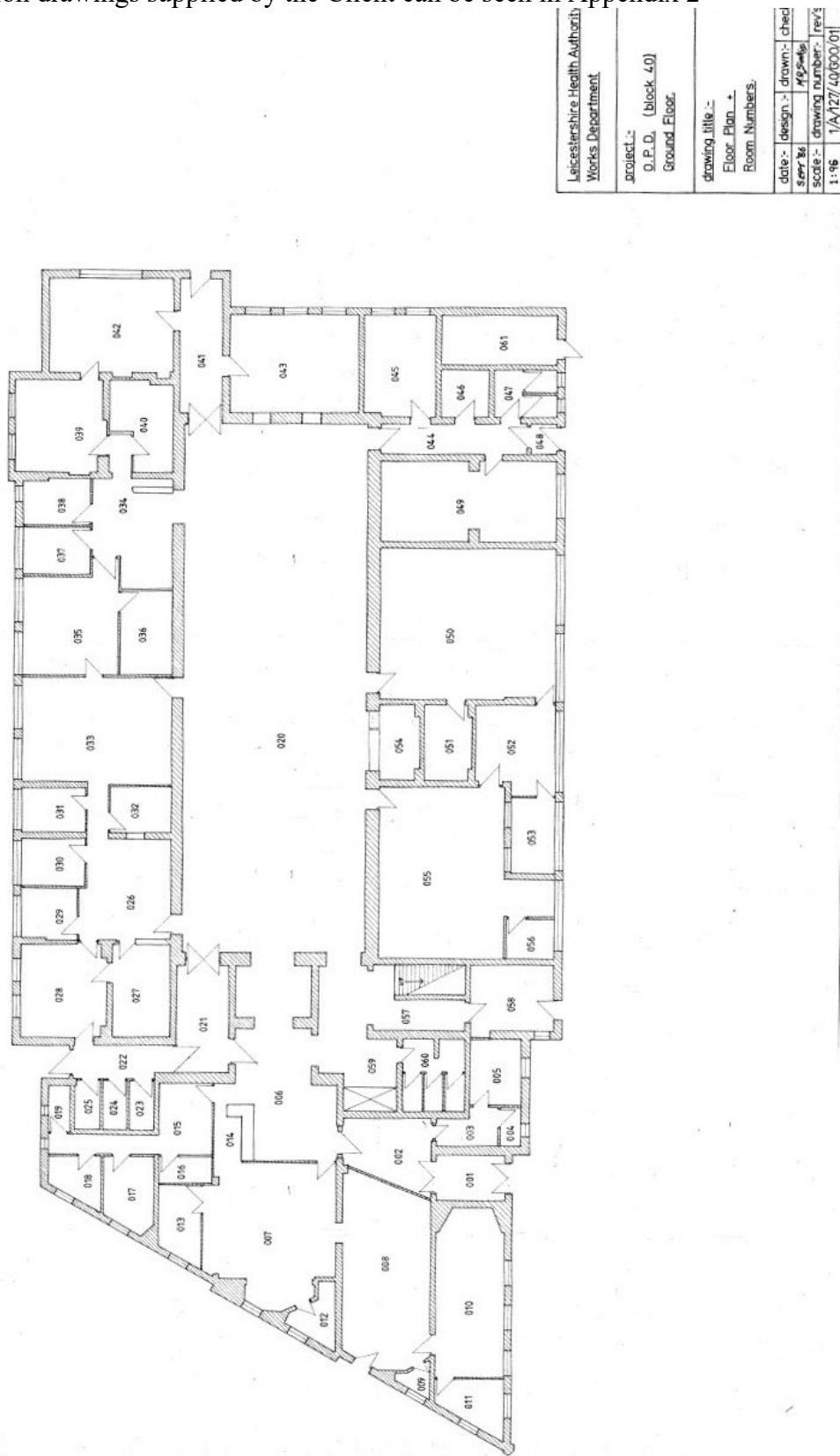


Figure 8 Knighton Street Buildings – Ground floor plan
Plan supplied by client

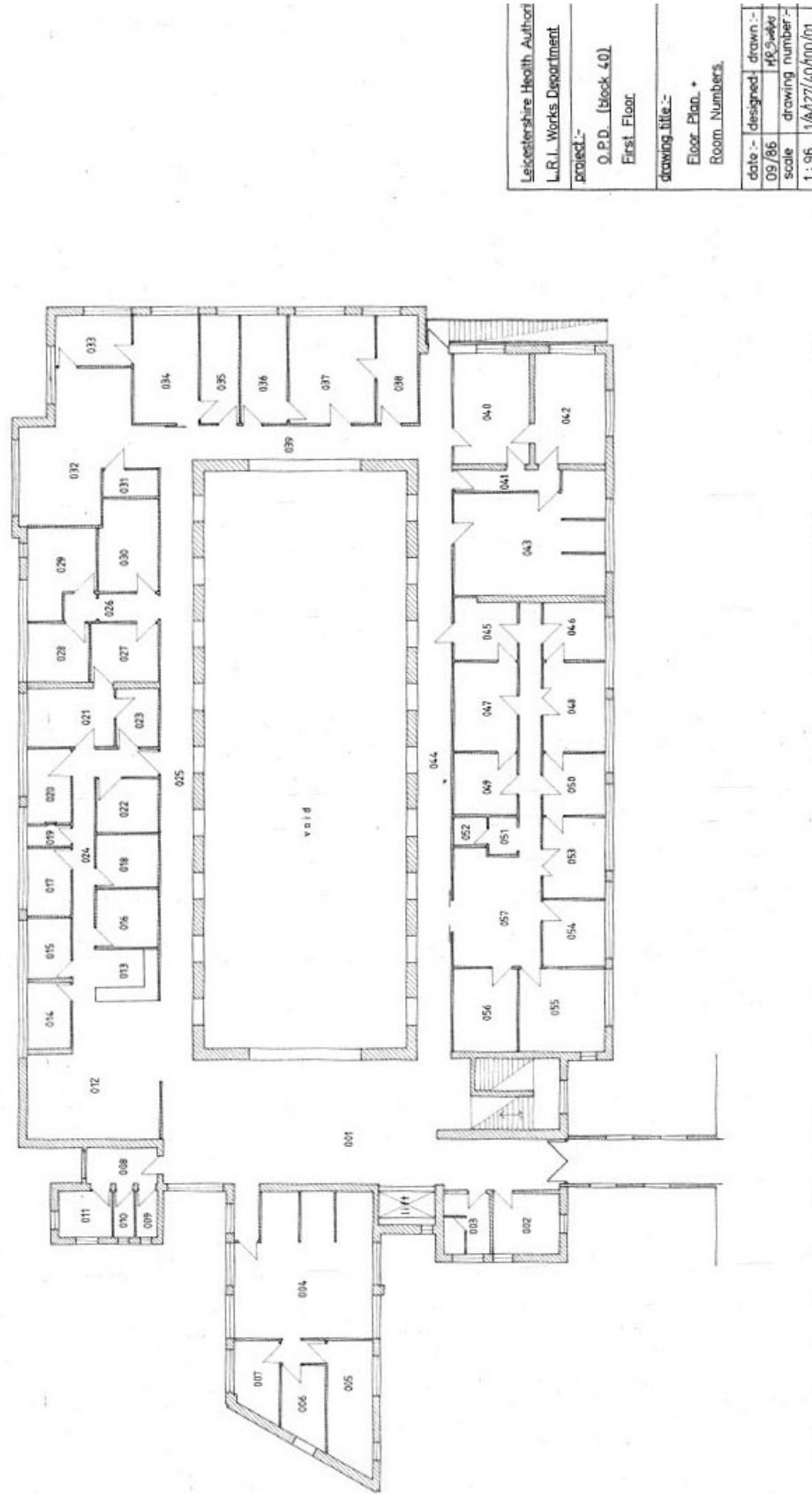


Figure 9 Knighton Street Buildings – First floor plan
Plan supplied by client

Results

The site was visited between the 25th and 31st of August 2021. The weather was dry and generally cloudy. The building was still in use as offices, laboratories and teaching rooms at the time.

The Outside

As noted earlier, the former Outpatients Department lies within a busy modern hospital with a range of modern buildings of varying ages fitted into a relatively restricted space. Map evidence and a visual inspection shows that the building has been extensively altered and enlarged throughout its life.

At its heart the building consists of a central hall with a large ventilation tower built across the ridgeline of the roof (Fig. 10 and 11). The vent has decorative leadwork and a delicate weathervane on top. When first built the hall appears to have had single storey rooms built around it so that the vent could easily be seen (Fig. 12). Later extensions have increased the side rooms to two storeys so that the original roofline is very hard to see. All external elevations have been heavily modified from their original state with little attempt to achieve a continuous style across the building.

The west facing elevation is a typical example of this piecemeal growth with some sash windows surviving near the northern end of the elevation but with metal 1930s style Crittal windows along the rest of the elevation which has also been increased from a single storey to two storeys (Fig. 13). Even more phases can be seen on the angled, south-facing, elevation which was extended to face across Knighton Street between 1915 and 1920 (Figs 14, 15 and 16). This elevation contains some dressed stonework but appears to have been added to grace the open space to the south and a decorative bay on the south-east corner of the nurses' home. As a wall it does little to benefit the use of the Knighton Street Building.

At the southern end of the east facing elevation the junction of the earlier phase and angled later phase can be seen along with later first floor additions (Fig. 17). An earlier entrance appears to have faced south as the edge of a painted sign has been partially obscured by the later extension (Fig. 18). At first floor height modern blocking brickwork can be seen where a pedestrian overbridge connected to the now-demolished building to the east. Elsewhere along this elevation Crittal windows show where the façade was extended to create a smooth wall line and where the upper floor was added (Fig. 19). Some sash windows survive on the earlier parts of this elevation. The same pattern is seen on the north-facing elevation although here the added first floor steps out beyond the original building footprint (Fig. 20). A low brick building gives access to the basement which was not accessed during this assessment.

A decorative feature seen across all elevations are the cast iron rainwater hoppers (Fig. 21). These are a simple design of a circle surrounded by a ring of dots. The same design is seen on the rainwater goods on the neighbouring Knighton Street Offices.

The interior of the building is discussed following the photographs of the exterior.



Figure 10 Knighton Street Building roofscape
Looking east. Note central hall roof and tall vent



Figure 11 Close-up of vent and weather vane
Looking east



Figure 12 Knighton Street Buildings in 1905

Looking west along Parliament Street. Note that the flanking rooms are single storey in this picture.
Source: Leicestershire Hospital virtual museum website



Figure 13 East facing elevation

Looking south-east. Note original sash windows on left with added second floor above them. 1930s windows to right



Figure 14 Western end of south facing elevation
Looking north. The line of Knighton Street ran from left to right in front of the building



Figure 15 South facing elevation
Looking north-east



Figure 16 Close-up of south facing elevation
Looking north-east. Note that the door has been modified from a window



Figure 17 South-east corner of east facing elevation
Looking north-east. Yellow arrow points to obscured sign – see Figure 18



Figure 18 Partially obscured sign on east facing elevation
This appears to have been to the side of an earlier south facing entrance but was later built-over



Figure 19 East facing elevation
Looking south-west. Note the variety of window styles



Figure 20 North facing elevation
Looking south. Note how the later first floor steps out beyond the original wall line



Figure 21 Decorative rainwater hopper
This pattern is seen around this building and on the adjacent Knighton Street Offices

The Inside

Entering the building from the southern end of the east facing elevation leads into a slightly strangely shaped hallway with an angled partition south wall (Fig. 22). The space and the open area beyond are very plain although there are two pilasters supporting a flat arch which have some plaster decoration close to the top. There are a number of low lintels in this area which support walls from earlier phases. Within the larger entrance area are the female toilets which have retained their brass handles, hinges and fittings (Fig. 23). The doors are painted on the outside but are still stained bare wood inside.

To the south of the entrance area are a set of rooms with the angled southern wall (see Fig. 15) forming one side (Fig. 24). The rooms have no decorative features although the east side has sash windows which appear to have been outside windows at one stage. The splayed blocked doorway indicated by the painted over sign seen in Figure 18 can be seen in the easternmost of these rooms (Fig. 25). At the western end of these angled rooms are three small rooms, one of which has a wooden picture rail whilst another has painted glazed brick walls. Otherwise there is little of architectural interest in this area.

The full-height central hall is the main feature of the building and, at the time of this assessment, was in use as an open plan office with partial false ceilings which obscured much of the area (Fig. 26). When first built this hall had glazed brick or tile walls to picture rail height and a frieze of patterned tiles (Fig. 27). At the time of the survey these tiles were still present but were painted over (Fig. 28). Black and white images suggest that the tiles are multi-coloured. Despite the paint they were still in an apparently good state and may be recoverable. Just above the frieze old photographs indicate that the title and function of each side room was marked to the side of the doorway. Careful cleaning may reveal these although, at present, nothing could be seen. At ground level are a series of open vents which, presumably lead up to the central vent seen on the roof acting as a passive ventilation system for the large number of people who would be in the room. At the time of the assessment these vents had been boarded over.

The hall has a series of windows at first floor level running around the perimeter. When first built these were external windows but the addition of a first floor meant that these were replaced by wrought iron grilles which subsequently have been covered by glazed panels (Figs 29 and 30). The grilles are simple but attractive and could be easily removed for re-use elsewhere.

All of the ground floor side rooms have had their earlier fixtures and fittings removed and modernised. Some rooms have glass brick sky lights which form part of the floor of the rooms above. A small kitchen area to the south of the eastern fire escape door still has its heavy wooden door although the fittings have been removed (Fig. 31). This area still has its original terrazzo floor.

A wide set of stairs in the south-eastern part of the building leads up to the first floor (Fig. 32). The stairs are functional with a hint of art deco styling especially around the newel post at ground floor level. The walls have painted-over glazed bricks or tiles on them. At the bottom of the stairs is a large but undecorated archway and the original brass light switch panel (Fig. 33).

The stairs lead up to the first floor which consists of a ring of rooms surrounding the full-height central hall. On the south side is an open space with more rooms to the south filling a later extension. At the top of the stairs, close to the eastern corridor is a large

bronze plaque marking the donation of £5,000 in 1939 by the Leicestershire Miners' Welfare Committee towards the costs of the Outpatients building (Figs 34 and 35). This gives an idea of the date of at least one phase of the extensions but is also a plaque worthy of retention not only for the sake of the Hospital but also as a reminder of a now-dead local industry.

Another similarly-sized and styled plaque is located close to the corner of the western corridor (Fig. 36). This commemorates the raising of funds for the addition of an extra floor as a memorial to King George V. The King died in 1936 so the plaque is likely to be of a similar date to the miners' plaque. Also in this area is a smaller and more modern plaque dedicated to the opening of the Knighton Street Education and Practice Learning Academy in 2015 (Fig. 37). Although not as grand as the other two bronze plaques this one still represents a significant part of the history of the building. It also reflects the age when it was put up when all funds go towards the project rather than diverting some towards what would be quite expensive memorial plaques.

The first floor corridors have outer walls made of fairly thin section timber frames and boards. Along the inner walls are the original cast iron radiators set into the former window recesses. Along the northern corridor the radiators have glazed tile panels behind them (Fig. 38). Within the rooms there are no fittings which relate to any earlier uses and most spaces have been modernised. In some cases 1930s style panelled doors have survived but these have modern fittings attached (Fig. 39). The doors, as with the partition walls, appear to have been built with a tight budget.



Figure 22 Entrance hallway
Note decorative plasterwork on pilaster on left



Figure 23 Entrance area: female toilet doors and fittings



Figure 24 Southern offices

Looking south-east. Note the sash windows which appear to have been outside windows at one stage



Figure 25 Blocked entrance in SE corner of building
Looking north. The painted over sign in Fig. 18 is in the far right corner



Figure 26 Central hall
Looking north-east. See also Figure 27



Figure 27 Central hall as first built

Taken from same location as Figure 26. Note that the far doors match that shown in Figure 23.

Source: Leicestershire Hospital virtual museum website



Figure 28 Painted over frieze running around the hall



Figure 29 Former external window in central hall
Modern glazing unit is in front of the earlier iron grille



Figure 30 Former external window in central hall
Seen from the first floor corridor



Figure 31 One of the few remaining original doors
Room to south of the east fire escape. Note original terrazzo floor



Figure 32 Stairs up to first floor
Looking east



Figure 33 Archway at bottom of stairs
Looking west. Inset shows the light switch panel



Figure 34 First floor eastern corridor
Looking north-west. See Figure 35 for close-up of plaque



Figure 35 Plaque on first floor close to eastern corridor



Figure 36 Plaque close to the first floor western corridor



Figure 37 Plaque on the first floor west corridor wall



Figure 38 First floor northern corridor
Note original radiator with glazed panel behind



Figure 39 First floor panelled door
Located on the northern corridor although others survive elsewhere

Conclusion

The Knighton Street Buildings have undergone a number of significant extensions over its lifetime. The major phases include the extension southwards to create the angled face running alongside Knighton Street. Another key building phase was the addition of a first floor to the rooms which wrap around the central hall.

There is very little of exceptional architectural or historical interest on the outside of the building apart from the weather vane and decorative leadwork on the roof vent. The moulded stone on the south facing elevation has some merit as do the rainwater hoppers which are also seen elsewhere on site. Observation during the proposed demolition could be useful when the original south-facing entrance is opened which may expose the partially painted sign seen in Figure 18.

Internally the building has been thoroughly modernised leaving few fittings present although it would seem that all of the phases were built without too much decoration and embellishment anyway. The obvious features worthy of retention are the three commemorative plaques on the first floor which should not be too difficult to remove. Also relatively easy to remove would be the wrought iron grilles around the upper windows of the hall. The same applies to any surviving door fittings.

Ideally the glazed tiles and frieze within the central hall should receive further attention. At the very least an area of paint could be removed in order to observe and record the colour and pattern of the frieze and surrounding tiles. Such cleaning may also reveal the original name and room titles seen in earlier photographs. It may be possible to lift and retain at least some of the tiles for future use.

Acknowledgements

The project was managed by Gavin Speed and the fieldwork was carried out and written up by Andrew Hyam. Thanks are due to Helen Williams, Estates Capital Project Manager and to Jon Currington, Head of Partnerships and Business Development. A number of other staff within the Knighton Street Buildings were also very helpful in helping to gain access to various rooms including Karen for providing photographs of the rooms shortly before conversion to offices.

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ULAS
University of Leicester
University Road
Leicester LE1 7RH
Tel: 0116 252 2848
Fax: 0116 252 2614

October 2021. Updated to include elevation drawings May 2022

Appendix 1 Digital Photographs taken during the assessment



KSB (1)

KSB (2)

KSB (3)

KSB (4)

KSB (5)



KSB (6)

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KSB (67)



KSB (68)



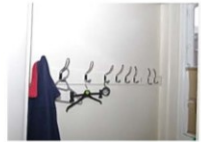
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KSB (76)



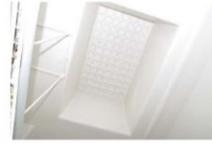
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KSB (101)



KSB (102)



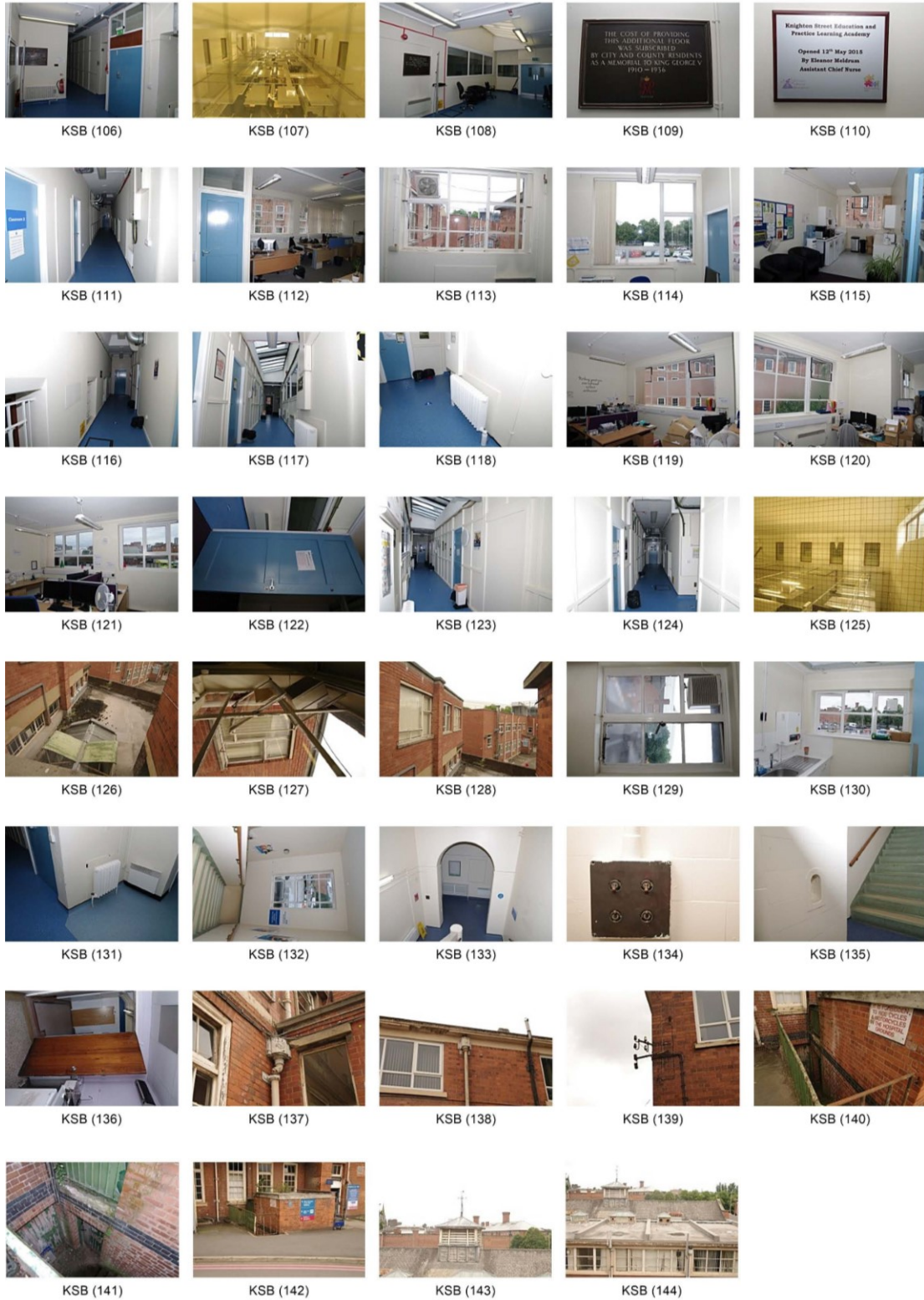
KSB (103)



KSB (104)

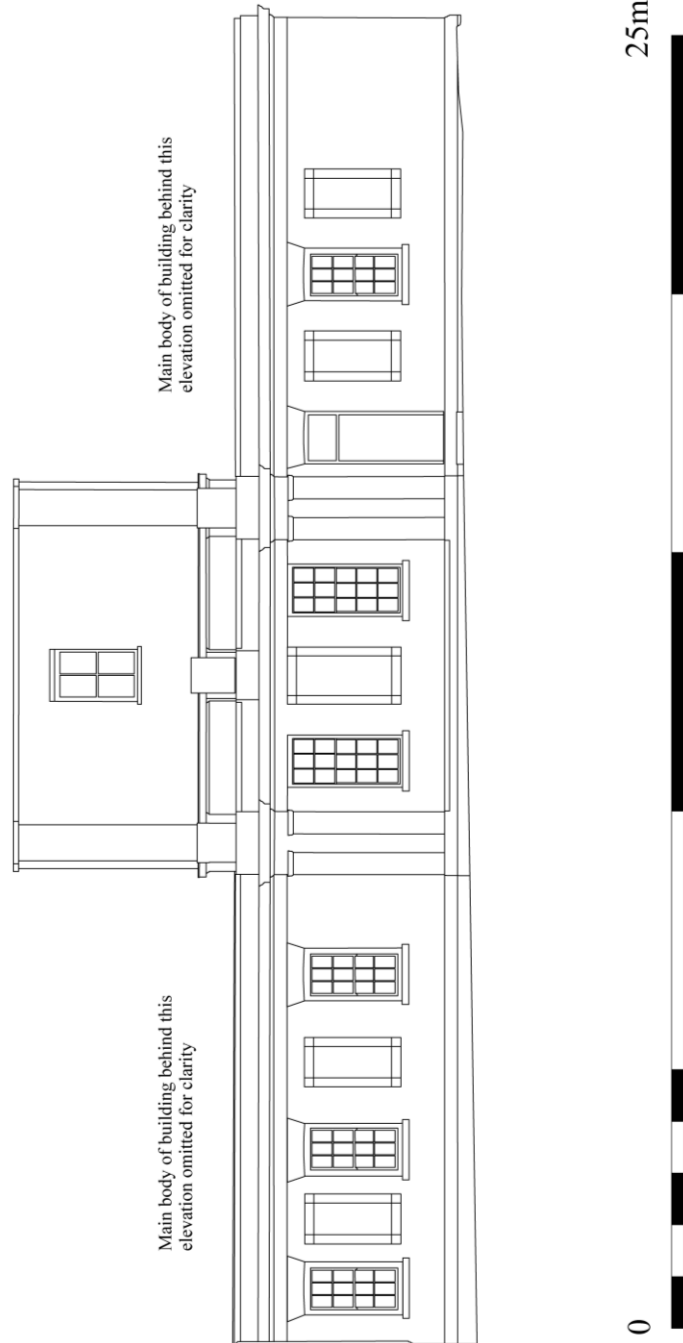


KSB (105)

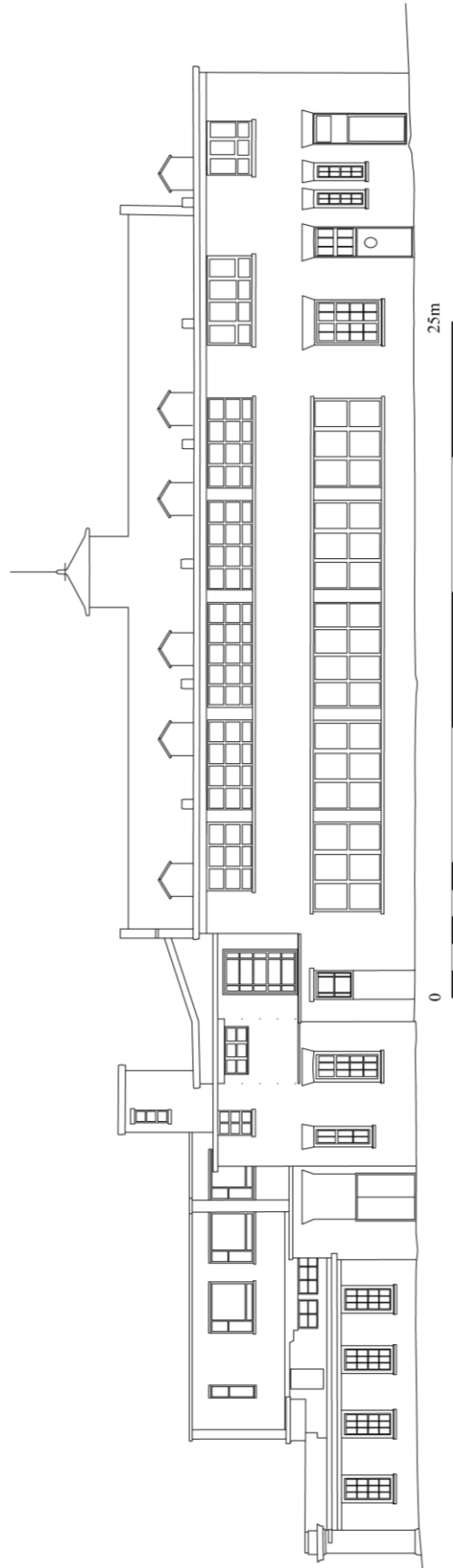


Appendix 2 Elevation drawings

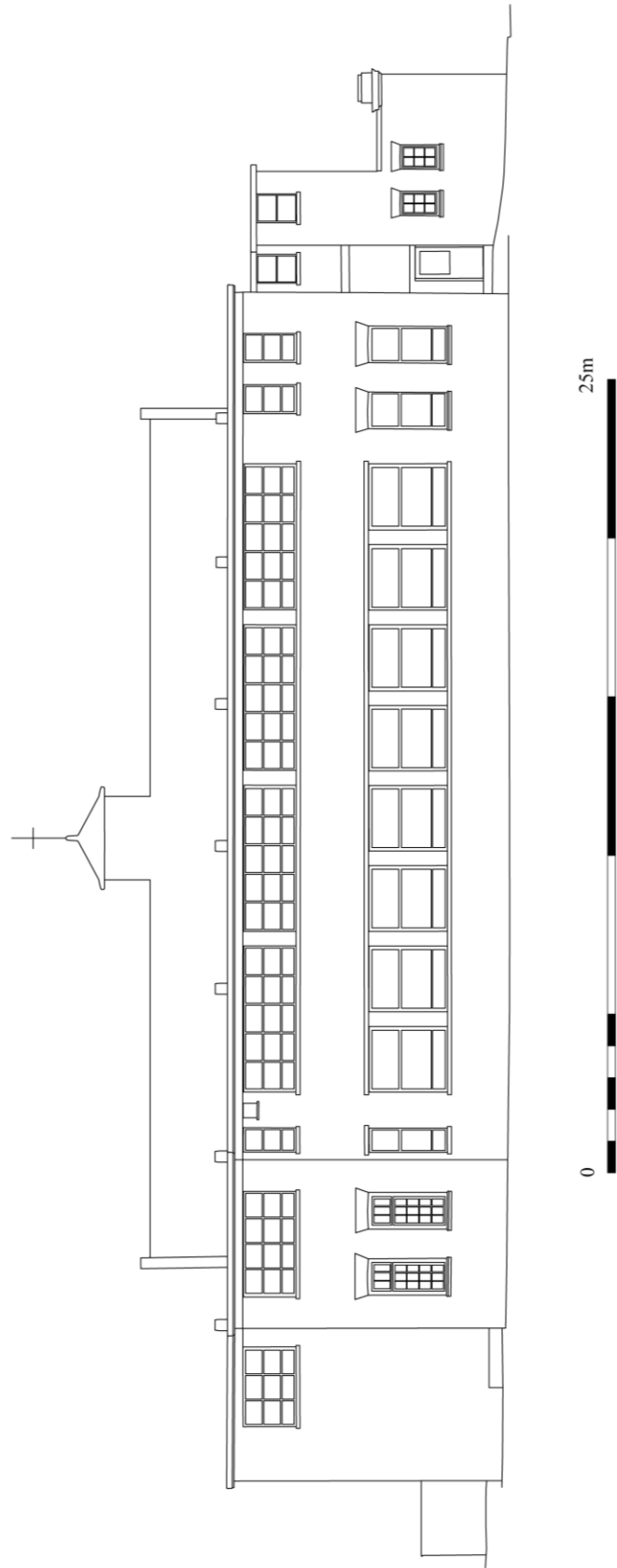
Modified from drawings supplied by the Client



South facing elevation



East facing elevation



West facing elevation



North facing elevation



UNIVERSITY OF
LEICESTER

Archaeological Services

University of Leicester
University Road
Leicester LE1 7RH
UK

t: +44 (0)116 252 2848

f: +44 (0)116 252 2614

e: ulas@le.ac.uk

