



# University of Leicester

## Archaeological Services

**An Historic Building Analytical Survey  
(Level 3) of the St John's Block and  
East Wing, Walsall Manor Hospital,  
Pleck Road, Walsall.  
NGR: SP0316 8455 centre**

Andrew Hyam



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**An Historic Building Analytical Survey (Level 3)**  
**of the St. John's Block and East Wing,**  
**Manor Hospital,**  
**Pleck Road, Walsall.**

**NGR: SP003 984**

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## **An Historic Building Analytical Survey (Level 3) of the St. John's Block and East Wing, Manor Hospital, Walsall. NGR: SP 003 984**

**Andrew Hyam**

### **Summary**

*As part of the major redevelopment of the Walsall Manor Hospital it is proposed to demolish the former workhouse and infirmary, known as the St. John's Block and East Wing respectively, to provide car parking facilities necessary for the newly built hospital buildings located nearby. This report presents the results of an Historic Building Analytical Survey (English Heritage (2006) Level 3) of the three structures undertaken by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) between the 4th and 11th of May 2010.*

*The original workhouse was constructed in 1838 by architect W. Watson in response to the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 and followed a basic double cruciform floor plan. Later extensions added extra floors to the main side arms of the building in order to increase inmate accommodation. Internal modifications, especially in the 1950s and late 1990s, have removed most internal details relating to the early life of the workhouse.*

*The two infirmary buildings, constructed in 1896 and 1902, were designed by local architect H. E. Lavender were both built in a single phase. Later modernisation and additions around the core of the infirmary buildings in the second half of the 20th century have obscured much of the original design. Internal modernisation has removed many of the original fittings.*

*The archive will be deposited with Walsall Museum under event number EBL878 for the building recording and as HER number 13533.*

### **Introduction**

In accordance with PPS5 (Planning for the Historic Environment, 2010), this document forms the report for a level 3 historic building analytical survey of the St. John's Block and East Wing, Manor Hospital, Pleck Road, Walsall, NGR SP 003 984. As part of a major building and redevelopment plan both of these buildings are to be demolished to provide parking space for the new hospital. Policies relating to buildings and areas of special or historic interest are listed in the Walsall Unitary development plan (adopted March 2007). Specifically sections E2.7 and E2.8 (*Environment Improvement & Protection*) discuss the treatment of archaeology and the built heritage. The Black Country Archaeologist of Wolverhampton City Council, as advisor to Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council, recommended that an historic building survey equivalent to a Level 3 record as defined by English Heritage (2006) should take place prior to demolition. Although none of the buildings are listed they have played a key role in the welfare and social care of the local area and as such are worthy of recording before their demolition.

Walsall is a reasonably large industrial town now part of a larger Metropolitan borough and is located to the north west of Birmingham and to the east of Wolverhampton (fig. 1). The former workhouse and infirmary (now known as the St.

John's Block and East Wing respectively) is located on the western side of the A4148 Pleck Road where it forms the junction with Moat Road which forms the site's northern boundary (figs. 2 and 3). The hospital site rises towards the north and west from Pleck Road over an underlying geology of stratified sand and gravels with glacial till deposits along the eastern boundary. The St. John's Block and East Wing buildings and ground in between cover an area of approximately 2.6ha.

At the time of the survey the St. John's block was still fully occupied and being used as an educational centre for healthcare staff. The ground floors of both East Wing ranges were still in use both by staff and patients whilst the first floor wards had been vacated leaving a number of office and hospital staff still in residence.

## **Background**

Much of the history of the workhouse and associated infirmary buildings has been covered at length in P. B. Carpenter's (1998) book on the history of Walsall hospitals and in the desk-based assessment produced by WSP Environmental UK. It is however, useful to further discuss some details which directly relate to the evolution of the buildings on the hospital site.

The original Walsall Workhouse building began its life in 1838 and was constructed in a double cruciform plan as designed by the architect W. Watson. The records are not clear however what the exact form the original buildings took as it is known that they were subsequently enlarged in 1842, 1881 and in 1903. Records indicate that in the late 18th century there were around 200 people lodged in three small houses provided by the parish for the poor. This would suggest that there was already a sizeable population requiring some form of shelter. The earliest available Ordnance Survey map of 1887 shows the plan of the workhouse buildings very much as they remained until the early 1960s with building ranges radiating from all four points of two central cruciform towers. A survey of 1899 shows the same plan but with the addition of the first building of the workhouse infirmary, which was constructed in 1896, on the western side of the workhouse (fig. 4). In addition to the main workhouse buildings there were a series of receiving rooms, tramp wards and stone breaking sheds located immediately to the south of the workhouse range. Between 1899 and 1920 a large laundry and washhouse were built to the south west of the workhouse (fig. 5). A plan of 1923 (produced for the installation of central heating) indicates that by this date all of the main buildings of the workhouse were of more than one storey except for the two linking buildings to the north and south of the central block (fig. 6). By 1915 the original board room and adjacent buildings had been removed from the Pleck Road side of the workhouse leaving just a small single storey chapel. The chapel was to survive until the 1980s when it and the east arm of the northern cruciform would be demolished. The rear single storey buildings attached to the west side of the central block are shown on the 1962 OS map but the area they covered is now occupied by a small car park. In the late 1960s the old boiler house became redundant when a new one was constructed elsewhere on site. It appears to have been demolished relatively recently along with the laundry and washhouse as it is still shown on the 1992 OS map. Carpenter's book mentions that during the Second World War the workhouse cellar was modified for use as an air-raid shelter but no trace of this was visible during the survey. A boundary wall around the main workhouse range has been gradually eroded in a piecemeal fashion until only a few small portions now remain along Pleck and Moat Road.

Details are scarce but under a general improvement scheme the workhouse was renamed Beacon Lodge probably in an attempt to break free of the grim workhouse image. In 1950 it was renamed again to become St. John's when the wards on all three floors were substantially rebuilt over a few years to provide much more modern and acceptable accommodation. During this refurbishment on the first and second floors the original multi-panelled iron framed windows set within a larger wooden frame were replaced with larger glass panes. No patients are now treated in the St. John's Block which is presently used for in-house staff teaching and training.

The East Wing was constructed in two main phases as shown in figures 4 and 5 the first north to south range being built in 1896 followed by the second parallel range in 1902. Initially the Workhouse Infirmary, as it was then known, consisted of four wards built as two pairs of two stories linked by a central block and having a separate toilet and bathroom at each corner (fig. 4). The building, designed by local architect H. E. Lavender, followed the typical Nightingale style ward layout with a large open ward with beds placed along either side. The advantage of such a layout was that each ward was separated from each other by a central administration block and each had its own toilet and bathroom to prevent cross-infection from ward to ward. A Mr Alfred Lynex carried out the construction work although reports later in the year indicate that modifications had to be made to mend a badly leaking roof. The second block of the infirmary was opened in 1902 and followed the same basic floor plan as the earlier range and was designed by the same architect but had a number of stylistic differences discussed below. The two infirmary buildings were joined by a central linking passage. A plan produced in 1923 shows that the north end wards of both ranges were for male patients and the south end for females. Each ward had its own kitchen, isolation ward and day room to prevent any spread of infection, and possible communication, between patients. A small door into each male and female ward also helped to separate the patients.

At the same time as the renaming of the workhouse the infirmary became the Manor Hospital a title it was to retain until 1989 when additional hospital buildings constructed elsewhere on site meant that it became the East Wing. A number of modifications and additions in and around the infirmary buildings have taken place mostly during the 1950s and 1960s. Of particular note was the addition of an operating theatre block on the west side of the 1902 range and the conversion of the nightingale wards into partitioned wards. In the early 1960s and onwards a number of additional structures were added to the outside of both infirmary ranges and the space in between so that today only small portions of the original façades can be seen. A further programme of modernisation of the wards took place in 1990 with other areas following suit in subsequent years.

## Objectives

The key objectives of the analytical survey as specified in the Design Brief were:

- The recording by photography, notes and drawings of the buildings that are to be surveyed. This work to be undertaken to a standard that will allow the future interpretation of the building within the context for which it was originally designed and which subsequently evolved.

- To produce an archive and report of the results.

## Methodology

Black and white 35mm photographs and digital colour photographs were taken throughout the survey. Field notes and sketches were also made. Scale drawings supplied by the architects were verified on site for accuracy and supplemented with the addition of historic architectural details. Key elevations of the buildings were surveyed using a reflectorless EDM. All work followed the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) Code of Conduct and adhered to their *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing buildings or Structures*. The specific levels of detail used in the analysis followed the guidelines laid down in the RCHME (1996) and English Heritage (2006) specification for recording historic buildings, which were:

### The Photographic Survey:

- 1) A general view or views of the buildings (in their wider setting or landscape, if the views noted in 2 below are also adopted).
- 2) The building's external appearance. Typically a series of oblique views will show all external elevations of the building, and give an overall impression of its size and shape. Where an individual elevation embodies complex historical information, views at right angles to the plane of the elevation may also be appropriate.
- 3) Further views may be desirable to indicate the original design intentions of the builder or architect, where these are known from documentary sources or can be inferred from the buildings or their settings. In the case of building elevations which have been conceived as formal compositions, views at right angles to the plane of the elevation may again be appropriate.
- 4) The overall appearance of the principal rooms and circulation areas. The approach will be similar to that outlined in 2 above.
- 5) Any external or internal detail, structural or decorative, which is relevant to the building's design, development or use and which does not show adequately on general photographs. When photographing details it can be helpful to include a clearly marked and suitably sized scale next to the subject and parallel to one edge of the photograph.
- 6) Any machinery or other plant, or evidence for its former existence.
- 7) Any dates or other inscriptions, any signage, makers' plates or graffiti which contribute to an understanding of the building or its fixtures or machinery, if not adequately captured by transcription. A contemporaneous transcription should be made wherever characters are difficult to interpret.
- 8) Any building contents or ephemera which have a significant bearing on the building's history (for example, a cheese press or a malt shovel), where not sufficiently treated in general photographs.
- 9) Copies of maps, drawings, views and photographs, present in the building and illustrating its development or that of its site. The owner's consent may be required.

### The Drawings:

- 1) These will include hand drawn plans and sketches on drawing film and annotated copies of earlier plans of the buildings. A reflectorless EDM will be used for surveying of elevations and cross sections etc. Information will be transposed into CAD drawings.
- 2) Measured plans (to scale or fully dimensioned) as existing. Through discussion with the temporary Conservation Officer at Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council it has been agreed that copies of plans dating from 1899 and 1923, as held at the Walsall Local History Centre, will be used as a record of the layout of the buildings, and modern extensions, demolition or alterations will be appended to these plans. Other plans of the outline of the existing buildings have been prepared by Greenhatch Limited already.
- 4) Measured cross-sections, long-sections or elevational sections illustrating the vertical relationships within a building (floor and ceiling heights or the form of roof trusses, for example). It is proposed to prepare internal cross sections of one of the Infirmary buildings (the buildings were originally built to identical layouts).
- 6) Measured elevations, where these are necessary to an understanding of the building's design, development or function and not more readily obtained by photography. It is proposed that the eastern elevation of the Workhouse will be recorded as it is the most complete of the buildings facades. There are no clearly visible elevations of the Infirmary buildings due to modern extension and alteration.
- 7) A site plan, typically at 1:500 or 1:1250, relating the building to other structures and to related topographical and landscape features. Already prepared as part of the survey of the site.
- 8) A plan or plans identifying the location and direction of accompanying photographs. Locations of photographs will be indicated on the building floor plans as discussed above.
- 9) Copies of earlier drawings throwing light on the building's history. Copies of existing plans held at the Walsall Local History centre will be included where appropriate.

### The Written Account:

- 1) The building's precise location, as a National Grid reference and in address form.
- 2) A note of any statutory designation (listing, scheduling or conservation area). Non-statutory designations (historic parks and gardens registers, local lists etc) may be added.
- 3) The date of the record, the name(s) of the recorder(s) and, if an archive has been created, its location.
- 6) Details of the building's form, function, date and sequence of development. The names of architects, builders, patrons and owners should be given if known. The purpose of such an expansion is to describe the building when no fuller record is necessary, to serve as an introduction to the more detailed body of the record that may follow, and to satisfy those users who may need no more than a summary of the report's findings.



- 7) An introduction, setting out the circumstances in which the record was made, its objectives, methods, scope and limitations, and any constraints which limited the achievement of objectives. Where appropriate the brief for the work or the project design should be stated or appended.
  - 8) Acknowledgements to all those who made significant contributions – practical, intellectual or financial – to the record or its analysis, or who gave permission for copyright items to be reproduced.
  - 9) A discussion of published sources relating to the building and its setting, an account of its history as given in published sources, an analysis of historic map evidence (map regression) and a critical evaluation of previous records of the building, where they exist. - Much of this has been covered within the desk-based assessment.
  - 11) An account of the building's overall form (structure, materials, layout) and its successive phases of development, together with the evidence supporting this analysis.
  - 12) An account of the past and present uses of the building and its parts, with the evidence for these interpretations. An analysis of any circulation pattern or decorative, iconographic or liturgical scheme. An account of any fixtures, fittings, plant or machinery associated with the building, and their purposes.
  - 13) Any evidence for the former existence of demolished structures or removed plant associated with the building.
  - 22) Full bibliographic and other references, or a list of the sources consulted (in long reports it is preferable to include both). Websites which may prove to be ephemeral should be avoided as references wherever possible; where their use is unavoidable the date on which the site was consulted should be noted.
- Building recording will be undertaken once the buildings have been vacated to allow ease of access and prevent disruption. It would be beneficial if the survey can be done following the soft strip of the buildings (after modern partition walls/suspended ceilings have been removed).
- The building recording will be undertaken by University of Leicester Archaeological Services.

## **Building Description**

### *St. John's Block*

As discussed the St. John's Block consists of a double cruciform plan laid out to the north and south of a central three storey building (figs. 7 – 13). The eastern arm of the northern cruciform has been demolished, probably in the late 1980s, along with the chapel and other single storey buildings along the Pleck Road (figs. 14, 15 and 16). A number of buildings attached to the west face of the central building have also been removed to leave an uncluttered series of elevations (fig. 17). The construction throughout is of red brick laid in a Flemish bond with flat arched gauged bricks acting as lintels and dressed chamfered bricks around each window. A shallow chamfered plinth runs around the entire building and follows a similar profile to the brick window sills. Overall there is little additional decoration to relieve the imposing nature of the building. The roof of all ranges of the building is of Welsh slate and it seems likely that this was used for the original roof covering although the present one has been modified to cover over a number of redundant chimneys.

*Pleck Road, east facing elevation*

The original central block is of a three storied double pile building with a gable fronted range attached to the north and south sides. The windows are of wooden framed vertical sliding sash type of the same basic pattern on all three floors. There is evidence on the north and south faces of a chimney running up the outside of the wall. Both have been capped at eaves level and the roof now extends over them. A skylight on the north side of the roof lights the main staircase within the block. The main entrance into the workhouse was through this central block and appears to have been a set of double doors flanked by two sash windows. The doorway has undergone some modification leaving a rather plain modern set of doors surrounded by a simple flat roofed porch. The gable ends on either side of this doorway have raised parapets supported by skewed corbels with a brick string course below both of which show signs of repair and rebuilding (fig. 18). A circular opening near to the apex of the string course adds a small decorative touch to the gable. Both gables are set slightly forward of the central façade.

To the north and south of the central block are a pair of two storied wings each of three bays which connect the block to the north and south cruciform towers. As mentioned the 1923 plan shows these to be only one storey high. In confirmation of this the brickwork of the ground floor is bonded into both the central block and the cruciform towers but forms a butt-joint at first floor level. This would also indicate that the central range and ground floors of the wings are contemporary. The new brickwork on the first floor however is of very similar quality to the ground floor making it difficult to detect any change. Where the wing roof meets the cruciform towers they impinge very slightly on the sills of two windows indicating that this extra floor was not part of the original design. The ground floor windows are of the same vertical sliding sash design as the centre block whilst those on the first floor are wooden casements. The top two lights of each casement are top hinged so that the bottom can swing outwards, the larger lower lights are fixed. Carpenter indicates these casement windows had cast-iron inserts containing multiple panes which survived at least into the 1950s but no trace if the ironwork now remains.

The cruciform towers have an irregular octagonal shape with the longer flat faces following a north to south and east to west alignment. A parapet and matching string course covers the outward facing three angles of each tower which both have pitched roofs running from east to west. The western faces of both towers extend out further than on the eastern faces to accommodate a single window on each floor facing out parallel to the other buildings. Because of this extension the parapet extends out further on this side. Windows are built into the angled faces of each tower. Most of the eastern face of the south cruciform tower, including part of the gable string course, is obscured by the eastern arm of the cruciform which now has three storeys (fig. 19). As with the wing linking it to the central block the ground floor brickwork of the tower is keyed into the ground floor of the eastern arm but not at first and second floor level. The cruciform tower has sash windows on the ground floor and casement windows on the first and second floors to match those on the rest of this elevation. The east face of the north cruciform tower has been substantially rebuilt following the removal of the eastern arm (fig. 20). A photograph taken in the early part of the 20th century shows this arm to be of three stories and six bays in the same way as the southern east arm. Two brick buttresses support the rebuilt face of the tower which

has no east facing windows at ground floor level. All of the windows here are wooden framed sash windows.

To the north of the north cruciform tower is a three storey four bay gable ended arm with a butt-joint at ground level between the two indicating a later date of construction than the tower. A vertical joint in the brickwork can be seen running above ground floor window height and again at first floor window height suggesting three phases of growth. The windows are a variety of styles most of which are modern but the sills on the first floor are of either stone or concrete which is different from all others on this elevation. One of the first floor windows has been modified to create a fire escape door as has a first floor window. To the north of this window is another modified window which was apparently used as a doorway at some stage, it is also offset to the windows above and below it although the reason for this is not clear. There is a capped chimney breast running up the centre of the north gable end but no window openings. The corresponding arm leading southwards from the south cruciform tower shows the same pattern of development although both first and second floors have stone or concrete sills (fig. 21). It again has sash windows on all floors and also has modified openings for fire escape doors. The gable end has a decorative string course following the angle of the roof and a small parapet matching those seen on the cruciform towers and central block (fig. 22). An internal chimney breaks the ridge at the centre of the gable.

The east arm radiating from the south cruciform tower is another three storied structure with six bays with only the ground floor keyed into the south cruciform tower. Four blocked windows on the first and second floors are evident on the east gable end (fig. 23). There is a clear change in brickwork running horizontally across the top of the ground floor windows clearly showing that this arm also began as a single storey structure. On the northern face of this arm, adjacent to the tower, is a four-centred Tudor style brick arch over a single doorway set into the ground floor westernmost bay (fig. 16). This appears to be an original feature and is repeated immediately opposite on the southern face of this arm. Much of the remainder of the southern face is obscured by a large three storied block with a flat roof set at eaves height (fig. 24). The western half of the brickwork belonging to this block appears to be contemporary with the upper two stories of the main arm and is shown on the 1887 OS map and described as latrines on the 1923 plan. A relatively modern addition with probable 1950s style windows has been built up against the eastern side of this block. The eastern gable end of the arm partially overhangs a small covered corridor running from the front of the workhouse to the yard surrounded by the receiving ward outbuildings. There is evidence on the Pleck Road side of this corridor of a small circular opening which may have housed a bell to ring for admission. A painted white rectangle surrounds the opening but no writing is visible on it (fig. 25).

The brick built boundary wall running along Pleck Road shows a number of phases along its length which survives from the north edge of the covered corridor southwards to approximately 4m beyond the limit of the receiving ward. Against the gable end of the east arm the bricks are laid in an English bond with a straight joint against a further stretch laid in a Flemish Garden wall bond built up to the eastern end of the receiving ward. There is evidence of a small doorway, now blocked, leading into the courtyard in front of the receiving wards (fig. 26).

### *West facing elevation*

The west side of the central block now faces into an open car parking space enclosed by the two western wings to the north and south. The two projecting gable ends have a decorative brick string course, parapet and circular opening mirroring those seen on the east elevation. There is some evidence of repair work around both parapets. The first and second floor windows are wooden casement windows. The ground floor of the central block has been rendered presumably to cover any scars left after the removal of the scullery, larder and other buildings. All of the ground floor windows are modern double-glazed replacements and the original layout of openings is not obvious and the 1923 plan suggests that there were no windows on the ground floor gable ends. Because the central block is set further back behind the wings on this elevation it has two sets of casement windows on the first and second floors (fig. 27). The 1923 plan shows that there were also north and south facing windows on the ground floor which have subsequently been obscured by modern lean-to structures built against the two wings.

Either side of the central block the two connecting wings have been obscured at ground floor level by modern lean-to style extensions and much of the original ground floor brickwork has been removed (fig. 28). The first floor window openings match those on the east elevation but have a variety of framing styles including some modified casement windows.

Two three storied arms extend westwards from the north and south cruciform towers. Because of the presence of a single storey building running along the boundary with Moat Road it was not possible to closely study the north and west faces of the arms extending from the north cruciform tower. However, it can be seen that a gable ended latrine block is attached to the north face of the western arm and, unlike those in the other arms, appears to be as originally built (fig. 29). The gable ended western arm has three stories and six bays with the bays set in two sets of three. Two windows are set into the gable end at ground floor level but there is no other decoration on this face. A modern lift shaft breaks the roofline and wall where the cruciform tower joins the western arm destroying any relationship between the two. The second floor of the western arm has been heavily rebuilt with the addition of a concrete ring beam at floor level although a small portion of the original second floor wall survives on the northern side. It is likely that the rebuilding coincides with the introduction of the hospital radio equipment installed in this block in 1977. On the south face of the north arm a modified window on the first floor shows where a relatively modern fire escape ran from the floor above (fig. 30). At ground floor level two buttresses either side of a rendered area show where, according to the 1923 plan, a small coal yard was placed.

The western arm extending from the southern cruciform tower has three stories and six equally spaced bays. On the north face of the arm the easternmost ground floor window has been blocked and also shows evidence of having been modified to be used as a door. The adjacent two windows are multi-paned vertical sliding sashes. Beyond these, to the west, are two similar but shorter sash windows with concrete lintels and blue brick detailing around the sides. An irregular vertical joint in the brickwork between the third and fourth windows joins a horizontal joint just above ground floor lintel height indicating that this arm was originally constructed as a single storied building of only three bays (fig. 31). West of the vertical joint and smaller sash window is a blocked doorway with a Tudor style brick arched head

which has been cut by a later insertion associated with a probable fire escape. The western end of the ground floor appears to have been rebuilt relatively recently. This may have been to modify a passageway shown on the 1923 plan. The first floor has modern looking sash windows with very thin frames. One window has been modified to create a door for a fire escape whilst the second from the north end is missing with no evidence of any blocking. A horizontal joint in the brickwork shows where the second floor was added in another phase of rebuilding. The second floor windows have concrete or stone sills and thicker wooden framed sash windows. A doorway has been placed between two windows and leads onto a fire escape. Because it has a flat arched gauged brick head it may be part of the original design or a relatively early modification. The west gable end has two multi-paned sash windows with blue brick headed arches and blue brick detailing around the sides (fig. 32). There is no string or parapet decoration at roof height. The south face of this western arm has a similarly modified latrine block as seen on the opposite eastern arm. At the junction of the arm and the south cruciform tower is a small wooden framed bay window at ground floor level (fig. 33).

Internally many of the fixtures and fittings have either been removed or are obscured by modern false ceilings etc. The ground floor corridor of the central block still has a decorative dado rail running along it indicating that this area may not have been intended to be used by the inmates of the workhouse (fig. 34). There is a curious angled recess in the western side of the corridor where a smaller corridor led past the kitchens. The angle is not shown on any of the early plans and its purpose is not clear. Also of note is another Tudor style arch in the same position on the north facing western arm as that seen on the north facing eastern arm (fig. 35). This internal arch has been plastered over and is now covered by the lean-to addition. The ground floor western arm extending from the southern cruciform has a number of blocked arches and a blocked fireplace at the same point as the vertical joint noted on the outside wall (fig. 36). This confirms the idea that the arm was extended westwards in a later phase of development.

On the first floor the central block has seven large open plan classrooms and houses the main stairs accessing all floors. Although they are the main stairs they are not particularly wide or grand and reflect the rather austere style of the building. Presently the rooms in this block all have plain walls, false ceilings and carpeted floors making close inspection difficult. The two storey linking wings are both open rooms with two timber beams running from east to west at ceiling height (fig. 37). The south cruciform tower retains what look like the original office partitions with multi-paned windows at shoulder height set around two cross passages (fig. 38). On each arm are a series of interlinking small rooms, known at the time of the workhouse as warrens, containing four to six beds each. These rooms are still present with the two central rooms both having, a now blocked, fireplace. There is no evidence regarding the former uses of the rooms as described on the 1923 plan.

At second floor level the central block is isolated from the cruciform towers and arms. As with the other floors the rooms have been refurbished to the extent that very little remains to show their original use. The staircase has a wide skylight set in the roof and in the wall at eaves height as noted earlier (fig. 39). All of the chimney breasts survive but have been blocked and have no trace of any fireplace or surround. A square section timber beam with a small bead along the lower edges runs from north



to south across the ceilings of the western rooms but otherwise there are no decorative details. The cruciform towers and side arms have small rooms opening out from a main corridor unlike the floor below.

Little remains of the ancillary buildings to the south of the workhouse complex. Only the two receiving wards and the clothing room grouped around the courtyard created by the two southern east and south arms are left (fig. 40). The red brick buildings have Welsh slate roofs and wooden vertical sashes. A slate roofed lean-to structure runs across the north face of the wards from the passage under the eastern gable end. Inside, the rooms are plain painted plaster with no indication of their former uses. A small portion of the original boiler house with a pitched roof is located to the south west. Beyond this is a low stub wall with evidence of a glazed brick internal surface which matches the location of the west wall of the washhouse and laundry buildings.

### *East Wing, the 1896 Infirmary Range*

The original workhouse infirmary range, completed in 1896, is of undecorated red brick with Welsh slate roofs and blue ceramic ridge tiles (figs. 41 - 46). Each ward block has two storeys with seven bays and has a rectangular administration block at one end linked by a short narrow corridor to a three storey central building formerly containing, among other things, doctor's rooms and the operating theatre (fig. 47). At the opposite ends of the wards is an opposing pair of two storied structures containing the toilets and bathrooms (fig. 48). The toilet and bathrooms are connected to the wards by short flat roofed corridors. All of the windows are wooden framed vertical sliding sashes with inward opening bottom hinged upper lights set at the head of each frame. The windows on all floors have stone or concrete sills laid on a course thin bricks or tiles. The ground floor windows have arched brick headers and the first floor windows have flat stone lintels matching the simple brick cornice detail below the eaves. The corridor linking the wards to the central block is obscured at ground level but is fully glazed above dado height with horizontal York sliding sash windows (fig. 49). A brick plinth runs around the whole of the building, including the toilets, and has a chamfered blue brick upper edge. There is evidence of a basement beneath the centre block which holds, or held, the boiler room. Currently the building has a rather inconspicuous double door entrance into the connecting corridor to the north of the central block. This has been modified from the original doorway which gave the only external access to the wards. A matching door, now hidden, was located in the south connecting corridor. To the west side of the central block is a three storied toilet block connected on all floor by a narrow corridor which was probably for staff use only.

Inspection of the building and of the available plans indicates that the whole complex was built in a single stage and was not substantially modified until the second half of the 20th century. A large number of single and two storey modern structures have now been added around and between the ranges which rather screen the original clean aspect of the infirmary. New additions to each end of the building cover over open cast-iron balconies built to give patients some fresh air and to air bed linen. A photograph in Carpenter's book shows the balconies still in use until 1974 at which time the entire end of each ward had to be rebuilt when the supports began to corrode (fig. 50 and 51).

Inside the 1896 infirmary the original Nightingale wards have been subdivided into smaller bays following the more modern ideas of privacy (fig. 52). The windows on the south side of the ground floor wards have been opened out to form doors leading to the modern single storey side wards. In common with all rooms and wards on this floor there is a false ceiling throughout. At the far end of each ward are the separate toilet and bathroom blocks with the rebuilt end rooms set between them as discussed above. As would be expected the interior of the toilets are completely modernised leaving nothing of the original design. The rectangular blocks built across the inner end of the main wards have a number of large rooms which have been subdivided from the kitchens, isolation wards and day rooms as shown on the 1923 infirmary plan. The central block has the same four large rooms and a set of single stairs which were designed to be used as doctor's rooms and store rooms. Between the store rooms a corridor heads westwards through the western toilet block and then kinks southwards towards the link building and the 1902 infirmary range (fig. 53).

The two recently vacated second floor wards have had their modern fittings partially removed to give an impression of the open aspect as first intended (figs. 54 and 55). Traces of two blocked holes can be seen on the west walls approximately 1.8m above floor level where flue pipes from small stoves once stood to heat the wards. Despite having false ceilings the room layout of the large end blocks and centre block remains the same as built but most are now used for administrative purposes. Two blocked fireplaces set at 45° to the main axis of the building are located in the front, eastern rooms of the central block. A corridor between the western rooms leads out through the west toilet block and on to the second floor of the link building.

Only the central block has a second storey and has three main rooms divided by a north to south corridor. A matching pair of blocked angled fireplaces mirrors those seen on the floor below. A modern lift shaft built on the north side of the central block has doors opening into it on all three floors.

#### *East Wing, the 1902 Infirmary Range*

The 1902 infirmary range has the same footprint and internal layout as the earlier range and is located to the west and slightly south in order to fit the angle of the site with Moat Road. The same red bricks and slate roof are used but there are a number of styling details which have been added to the outside of this range (figs. 56 and 57). Profiled bull-nose bricks have been used to create stringing courses at first floor sill height, at ground floor lintel height and at ground floor sill height. The string course at ground floor lintel height follows the curve of the arched windows. A chamfered plinth running around the base of the building also has the same decorative shaped bricks. A similar range of modern buildings to those on the 1896 range have been attached to the outside of this range in addition to a large operating theatre building extending westwards from the central block. The north and south ends of the wards have been rebuilt between the toilet and bathroom blocks probably in the 1970s when the cast-iron balconies were replaced. At the far end of the ground floor south ward (Lincoln ward) a single cast-iron post survives and has been incorporated into the new and larger room (fig. 58). A two storey link building runs to the east in a zigzag fashion between the two ranges and has a glazed upper floor and slate roof with red ridge tiles. Inside the link building a plaque moved from the chapel rooms, added in 1984, commemorates the lives of two nurses from 1933 (fig. 59).

Internally the details are the same as noted in the 1896 range although the stairs in the central block are in a different position and are slightly wider and grander matching the rather more affluent air of this range. The second floor of the central block has seven small rooms with a large fireplace set at an angle in the corner of each room (fig. 60).

## Discussion

### *St. John's Block*

It is clear that the St. John's Block has undergone a number of phases of both major and minor alterations and additions since its initial construction in 1838. What is not quite so clear are the exact dates and sequence when these changes took place. It has been suggested that the central block was the only building on site in 1838. However, from the evidence of the keyed joints, it would appear that the initial central block, single storey side wings, cruciform towers and single storied arms were initially constructed as a single phase. If this is the case then it seems likely that the footprint of the whole complex was similar to that seen now with the exception of the northern arm leading from the northern cruciform tower which was initially omitted. It would also indicate that the Board of Guardians expected to house a large number of inmates from the beginning, and may also indicate that the buildings were designed to be extended by adding additional floors. The WSP DBA suggests that initially 350 inmates entered the newly built workhouse again suggesting that it must have been a reasonably substantial building.

Thus, the initial layout in 1838 probably consisted of the central block, both single storey side wings, the full-height cruciform towers and all of the side arms with the exception of the northern arm extending from the north cruciform tower. It is probable that the northern end arm followed on quite quickly as another single storey to complete the full footprint plan. The next extensions to the complex, although in an unknown sequence, were the additional floors on the side wings and arms. The southern, western arm was also increased in length from three bays to six bays when the extra floors were added. It is interesting to note that some arms were extended to three storeys immediately whilst others, namely the northernmost and the westernmost pair, were extended by one floor at a time. At the same time as the final second floors were added the toilet blocks were built on the rear faces of each arm. One can only imagine the workings of such a building without the provision of these toilet blocks.

Internally little can be seen either of the development sequence or of the previous uses of the building. The only clue to the increase in size is seen on the southernmost western arm which has the remains of two doors or windows at the west end used before the extension was added. The wholesale modernisations carried out in the 1950s probably removed most traces of the earlier workhouse days and the subsequent conversion to offices and classrooms would have completed the work. It is possible however that a brief inspection between the internal soft-strip and final demolition may help clarify the development sequence. It has been suggested that the windows in the cruciform towers were built to observe and control the courtyards formed by the arms of the building. Whilst they probably controlled movement within the buildings, the windows were more likely to simply allow light into an otherwise

dark area. Many of the sash windows are as originally fitted although some have been replaced on an ad hoc basis seemingly according to the use of each room. The casement windows were modified in the 1950s to remove the iron framework within which may have served in place of bars to prevent unauthorised exits.

The rear receiving wards and access corridor across the end of the eastern arm remain to give an impression of the grim reality of entering the workhouse as an inmate. It is a pity that the associated tramp wards and other buildings have not survived for recording to complete the overall picture of the workhouse and its function.

Overall the St. John's Block is an interesting example of an early workhouse and its development over time. Although the establishment must have been an expensive undertaking to both construct and run there was a clear attempt to build a reasonably attractive building. Extra small decorative touches such as the stringing courses, parapets and gauged brick lintels tend to break the otherwise plain façade. The removal of the Board of Governor's building in the early 1900s from in front of the workhouse was probably a visual improvement. Conversely the use of a Flemish bond allowed a poorer quality of brick to be used which would have reduced construction costs. A note on a proposal in 1899 for a new kitchen stipulates that any demolished building material should be reused in the new build which indicates that there was always an eye on costs.

#### *East Wing infirmary buildings*

As noted in the survey both the 1896 and 1902 ranges were built in single phases of construction with later additions not appearing until the late 1950s. As such they are typical examples of the ideas surrounding patient care and treatment. The clear segregation of sexes and wards show how attempts were made to prevent both cross-infection from ward to ward and prevention of patient interaction. Later additions have significantly increased the size of the wards and made movement around the various building much easier but have had the effect of screening off much of the old ranges. Despite all of the internal modification many of the original large sash windows have survived although little else has.

Although built to the same plan and layout there is a subtle change in the exterior decoration of the two buildings with the later infirmary having slightly more detailing especially around the windows and the internal staircases. When first built neither of the ranges had particularly grand entrances as may be expected from a large hospital. External access to each ward was through a small door in the connecting corridor at one end. For such a large hospital one may expect a reasonably grand entrance until it is remembered that when first built it was for the workhouse inmates who would be taken straight from the workhouse without much ceremony.

#### **Archive**

The archive consists of:

This report,  
35mm black and white contact sheets and negatives,  
Cd of digital photographs in jpeg and tiff format,  
Contact sheets of digital photographs,

Notes and sketches taken during the survey

The project archive will be deposited with Walsall Museum under event number EBL878 for the building recording and as HER number 13533.

### **Acknowledgements**

The survey was commissioned by Skanska UK plc. Principal contacts at Skanska have been Mike Charlesworth and Jane Longden. The assistance and interest of Skanska and Walsall Manor Hospital staff is also acknowledged. Fieldwork was carried out by A.R.Hyam, W. Jarvis and G. Richards, the project was managed by S. Ripper.

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## Appendix 1. Figures

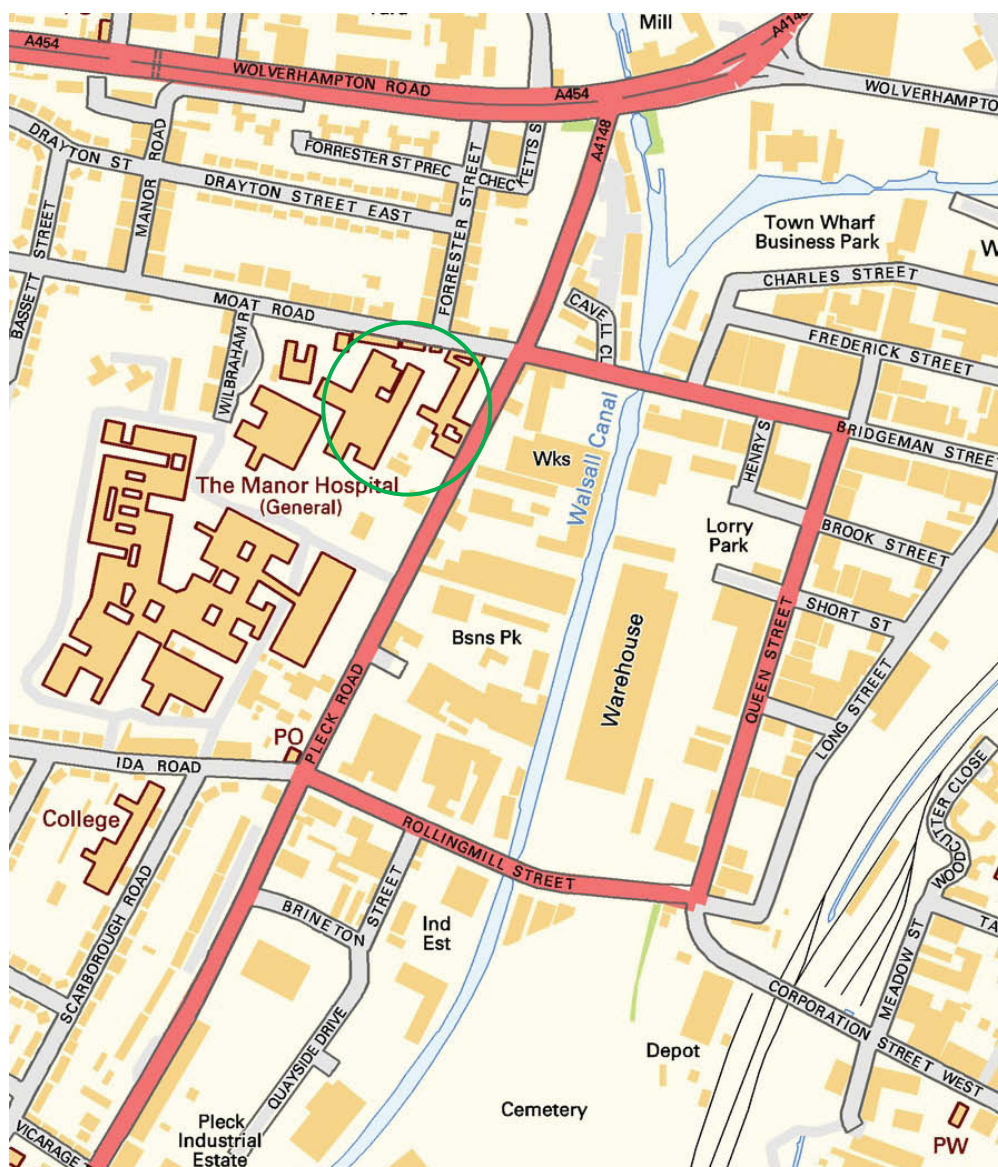


Figure 1 Manor Hospital location.  
St. John's Block and East wing circled.

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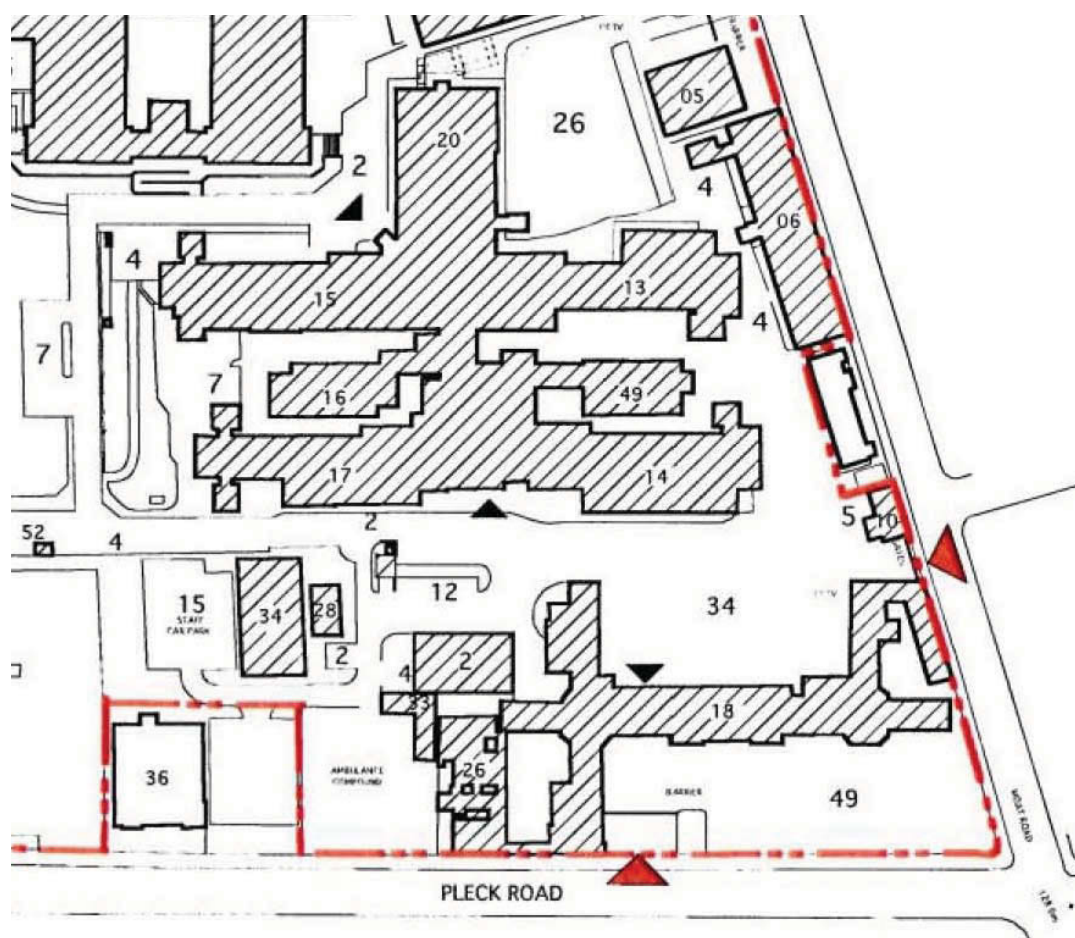


Figure 2 Manor Hospital site.  
St. John's labelled as No.18, East Wing infirmary labelled as Nos. 13, 14, 15 and 17.  
Nos. 16, 20 and 49 are modern additions  
Plan supplied by Greenhatch





Figure 3 Aerial photo of site  
St. John's Block bottom right, East Wing top right

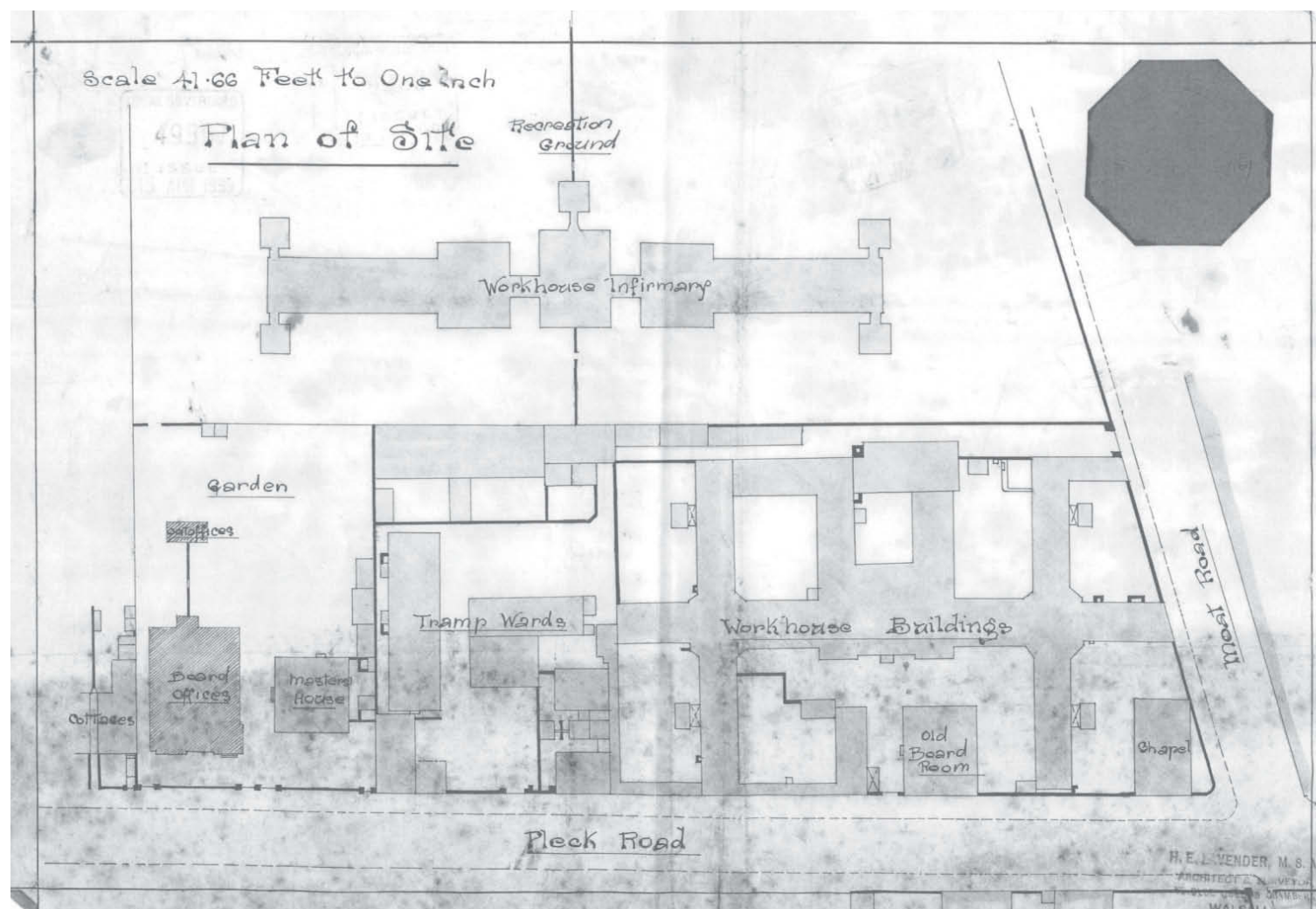


Figure 4 1899 plan  
Walsall Local History Centre Acc 322/21

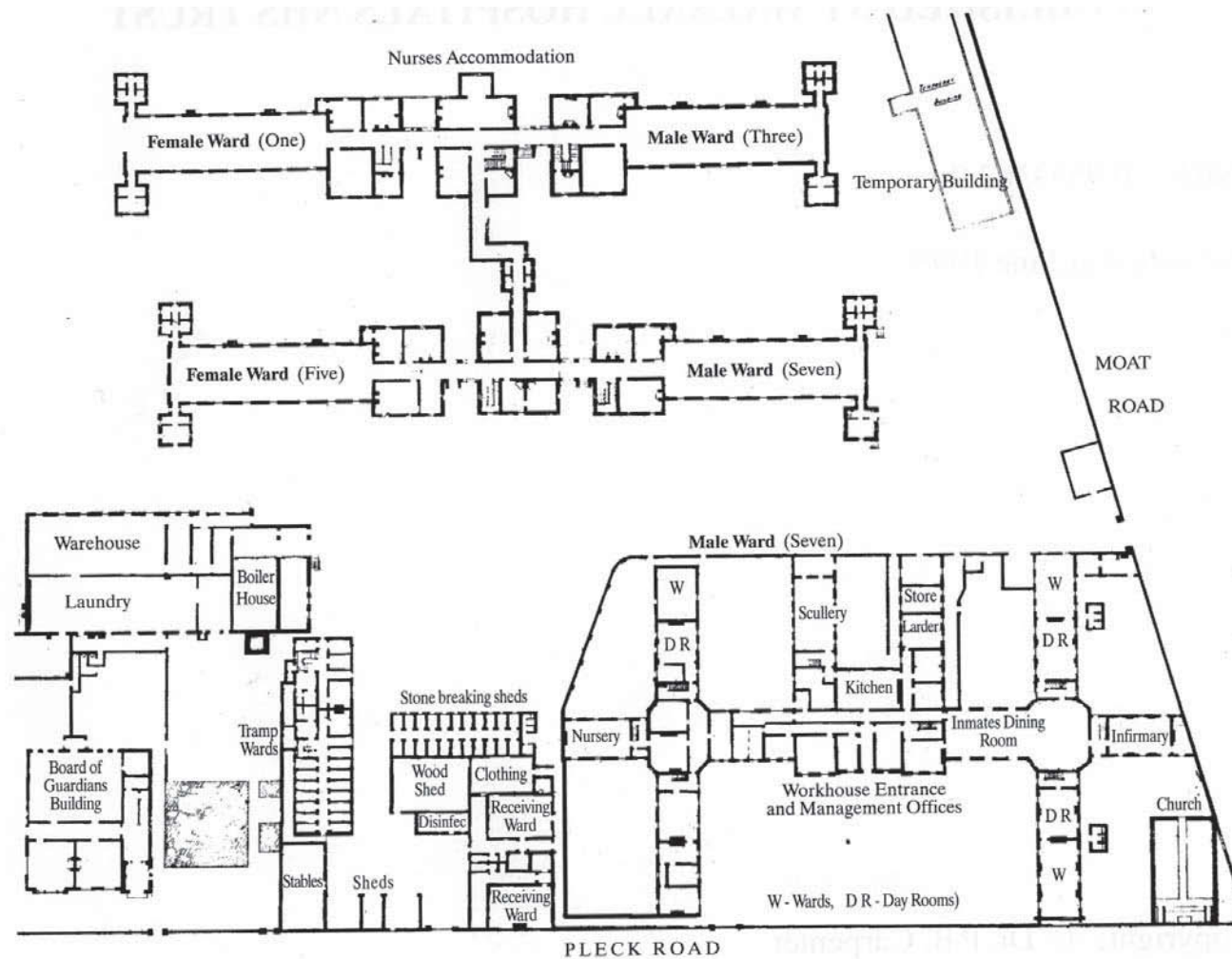
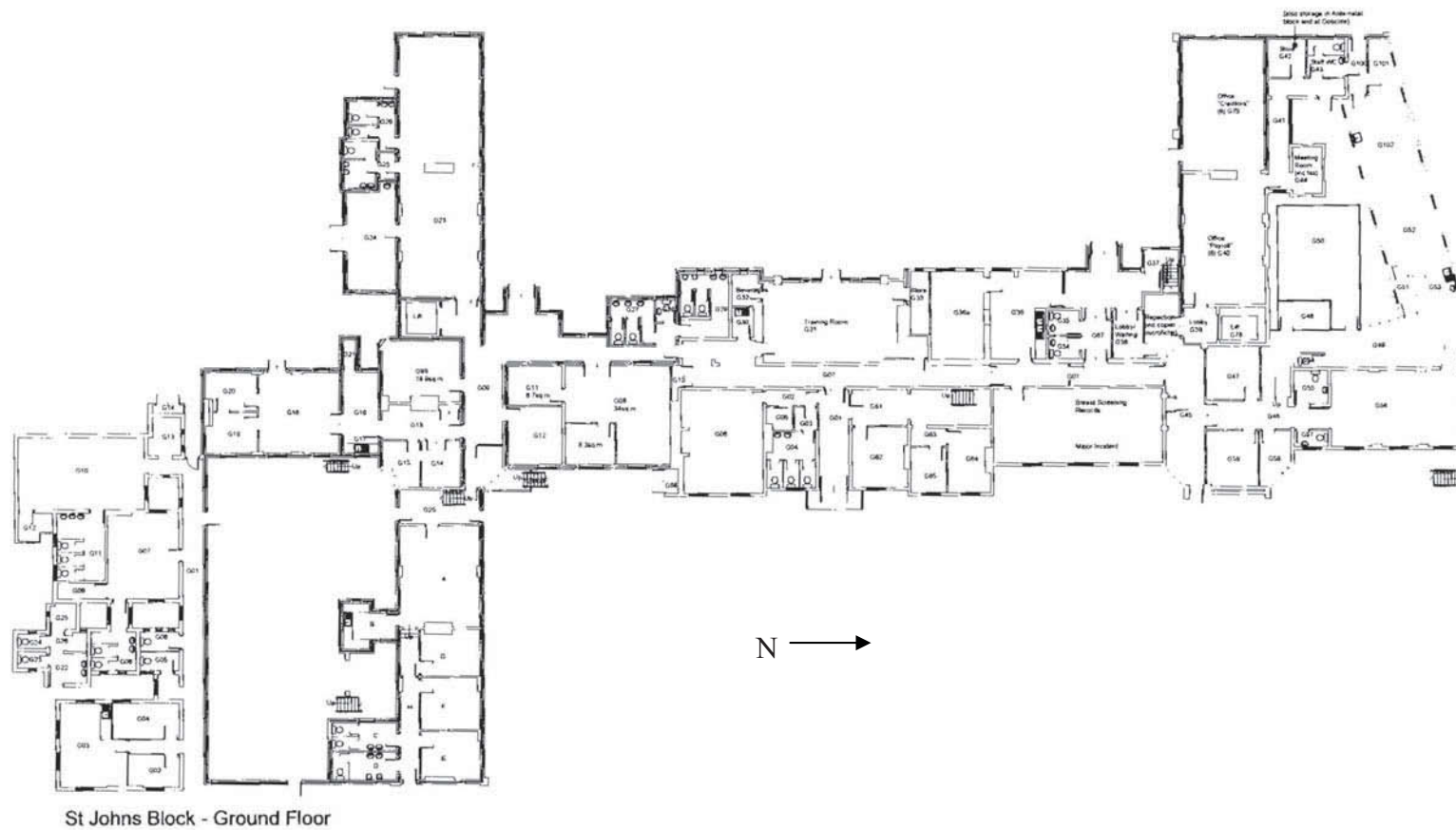


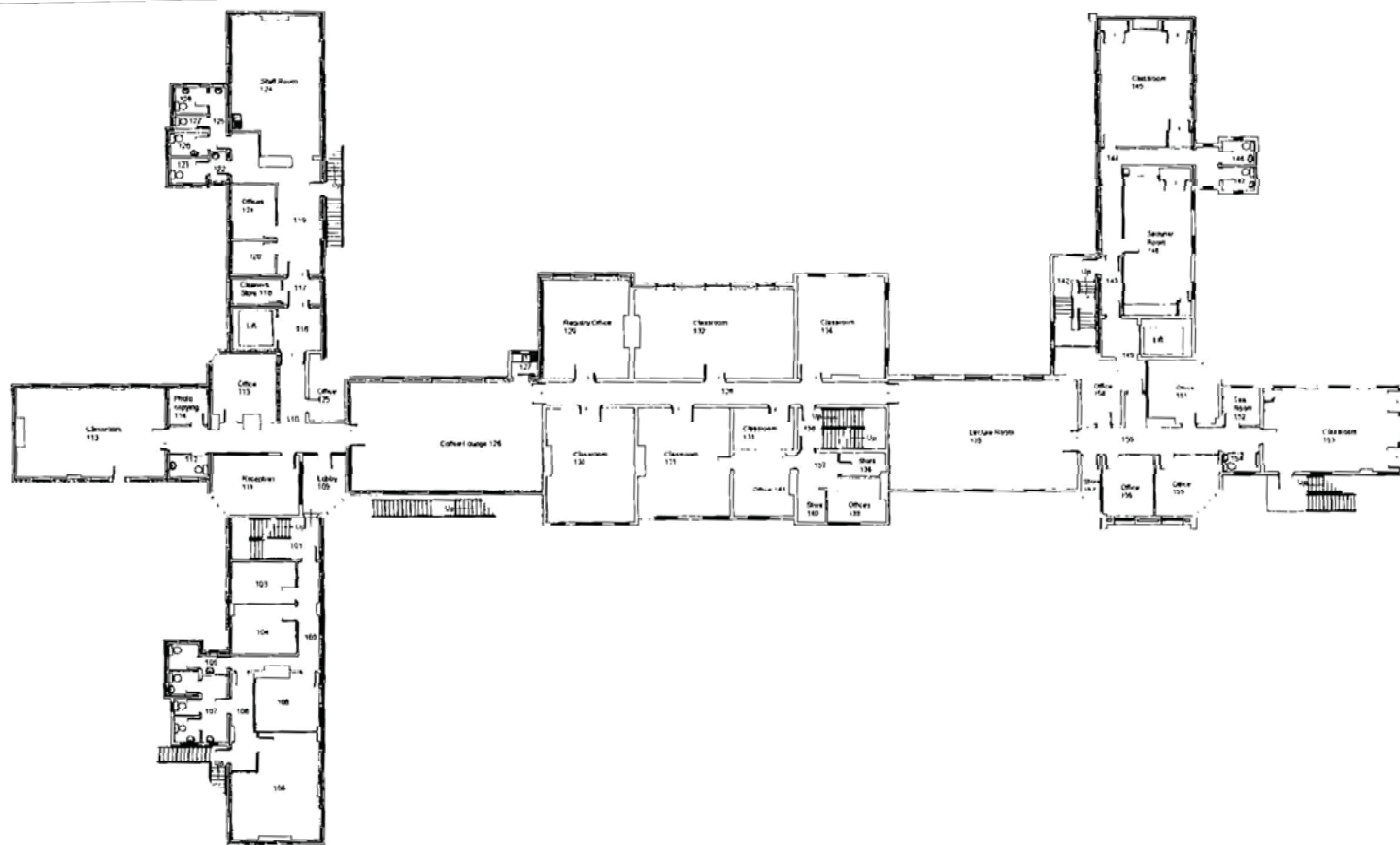
Figure 5 1920 plan (note washhouse above laundry erroneously marked as warehouse)  
From Carpenter 1998





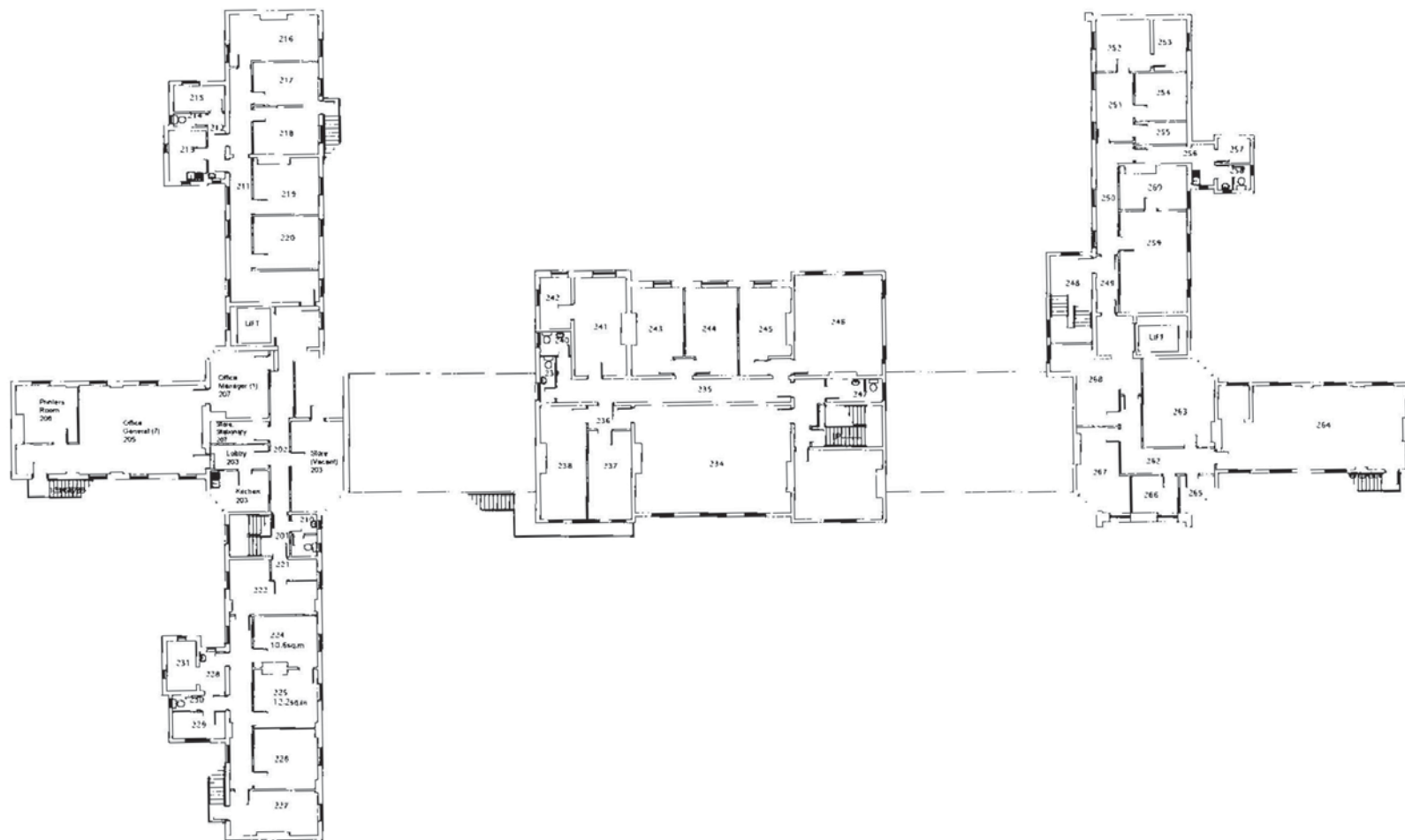
Figure 6 Workhouse floor plan in 1923 with single storied wings shown as hatched areas  
Walsall Local History Centre Acc 322/22





### St Johns Block - First Floor

Figure 8 St. John's, first floor plan



St Johns Block - Second Floor

Figure 9 St. John's, second floor plan



Figure 10 St. John's, east facing elevation  
Adapted from Greenhatch survey



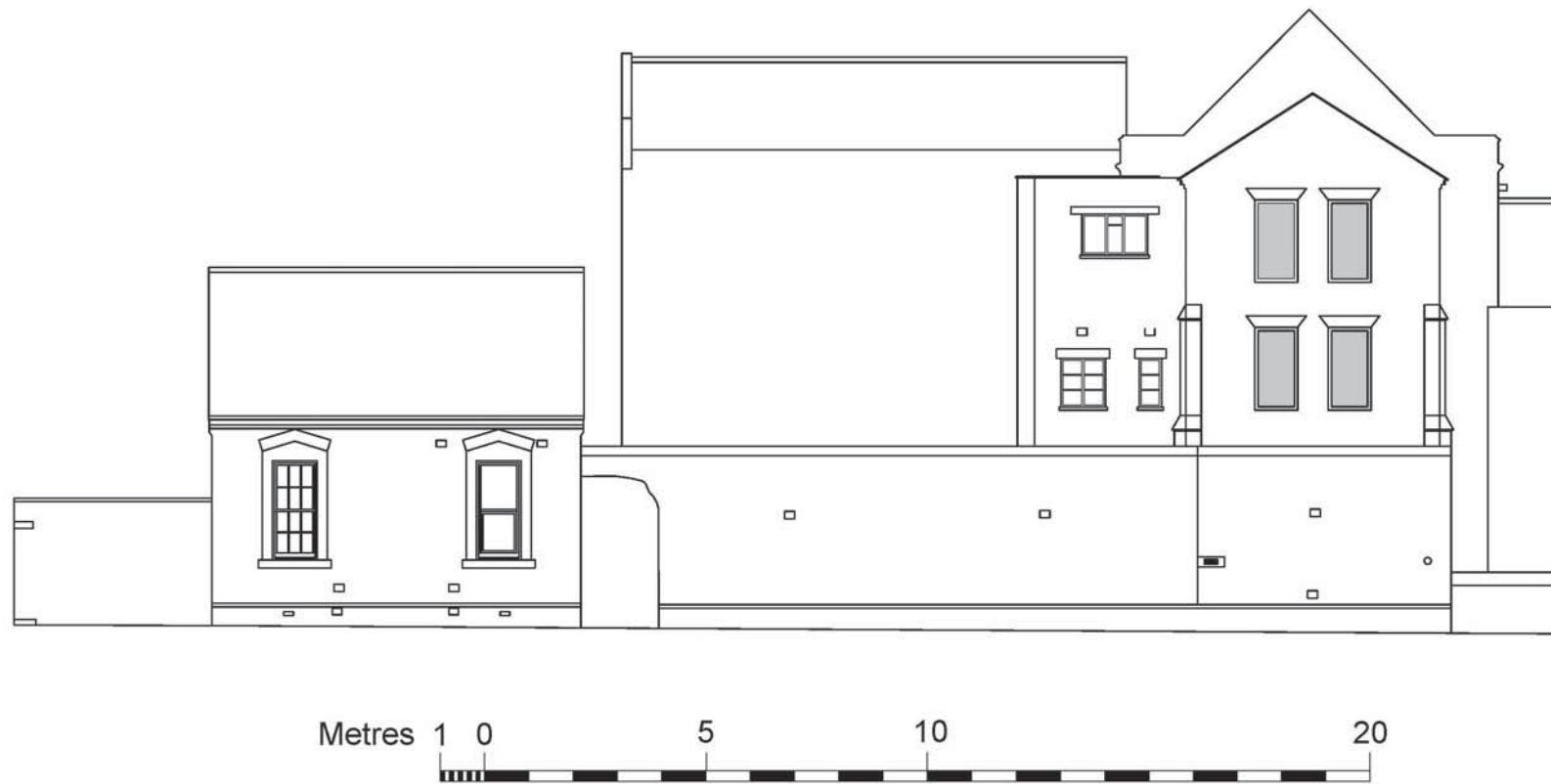


Figure 11 St. John's, surviving boundary wall along Pleck Road  
Adapted from Greenhatch survey



Figure 12 St. John's, south cruciform, north facing elevation  
Adapted from Greenhatch survey

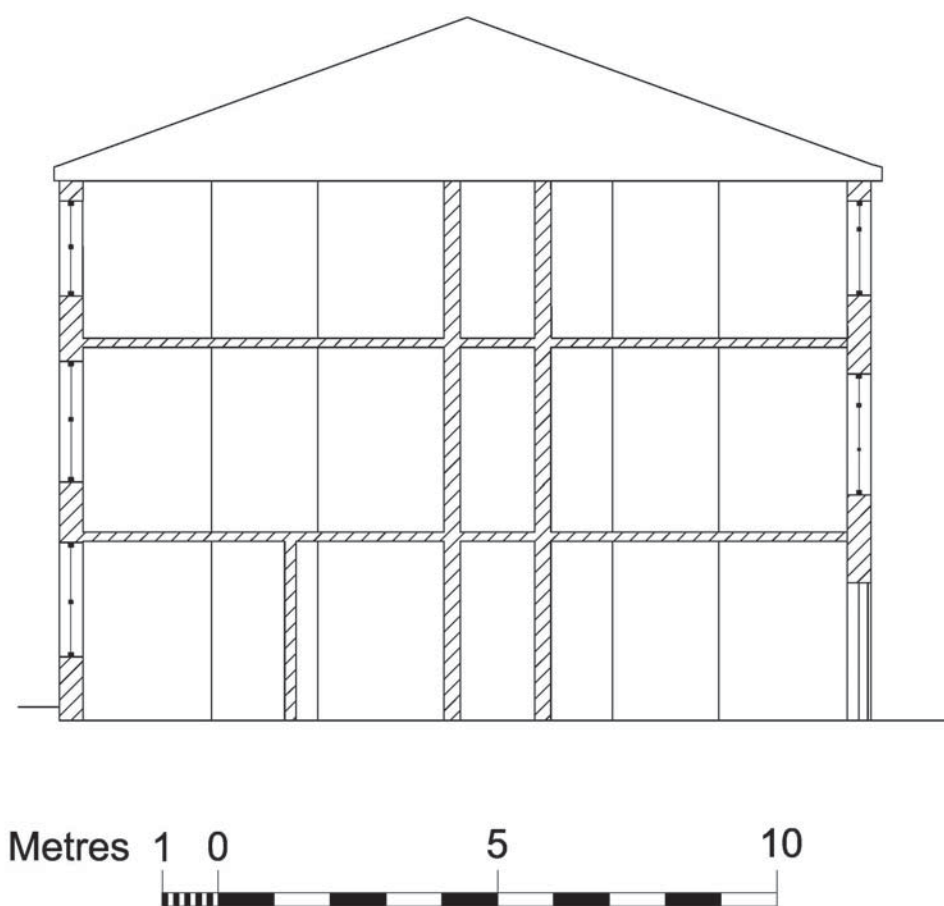


Figure 13 St. John's cross-section through central block



Figure 14 East facing elevation of St. John's Block from Pleck Road.



Figure 15 East and north facing elevations of St. John's Block  
Looking south west



Figure 16 North facing elevation, southern cruciform east arm  
Looking south





Figure 17 West elevation of St. John's Block  
Looking east



Figure 18 Central Block south gable.  
Looking west





Figure 19 South cruciform tower and east arm junction  
Looking south west



Figure 20 North cruciform tower east gable end  
Looking north west



Figure 21 West elevation of southernmost arm  
Looking east



Figure 22 South facing gable end south arm  
Looking north east





Figure 23 East face of east arm from Pleck Road  
Looking north west



Figure 24 South cruciform tower, east and south arms  
Looking north west



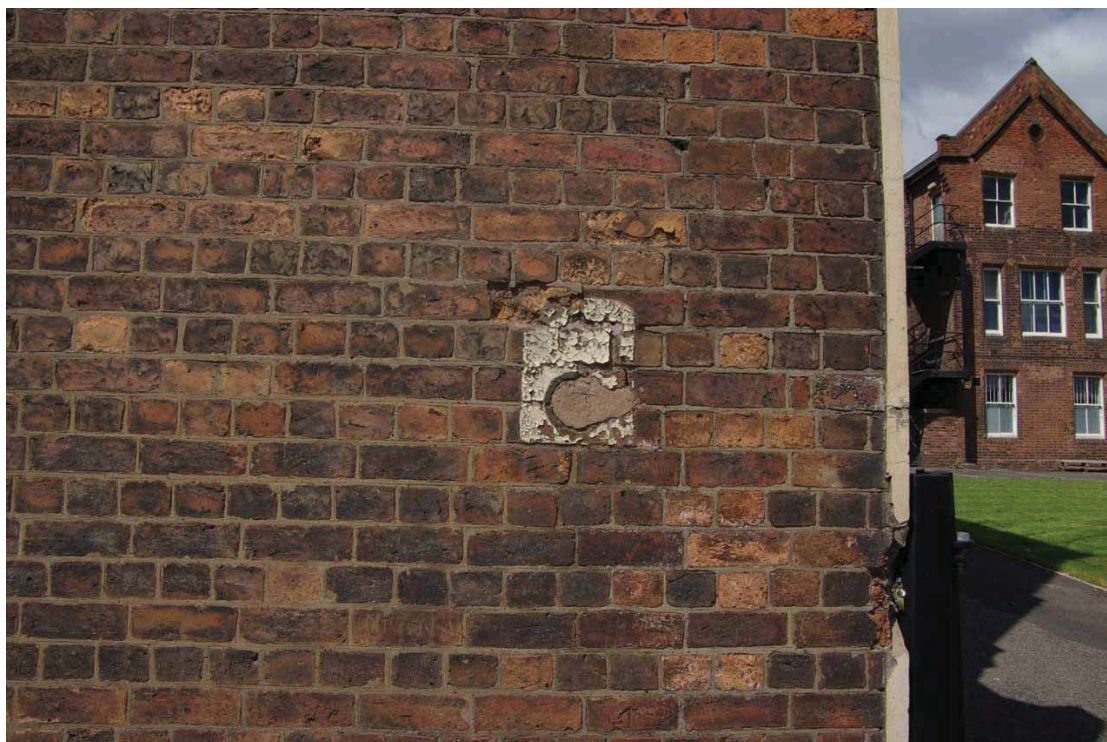


Figure 25 Possible entry bell on Pleck Road  
Looking west



Figure 26 Pleck Road boundary wall and east receiving ward  
Looking west





Figure 27 West and south face of central block  
Looking north east



Figure 28 East elevation of southernmost arm  
Looking south





Figure 29 North cruciform tower and north and west arms and latrine block  
Looking south east



Figure 30 South elevation of northernmost west arm  
Looking north



Figure 31 North elevation, southernmost arm. Vertical joint and blocked door  
Looking south



Figure 32 West gable end, southernmost arm  
Looking east





Figure 33 South cruciform tower bay window  
Looking north east

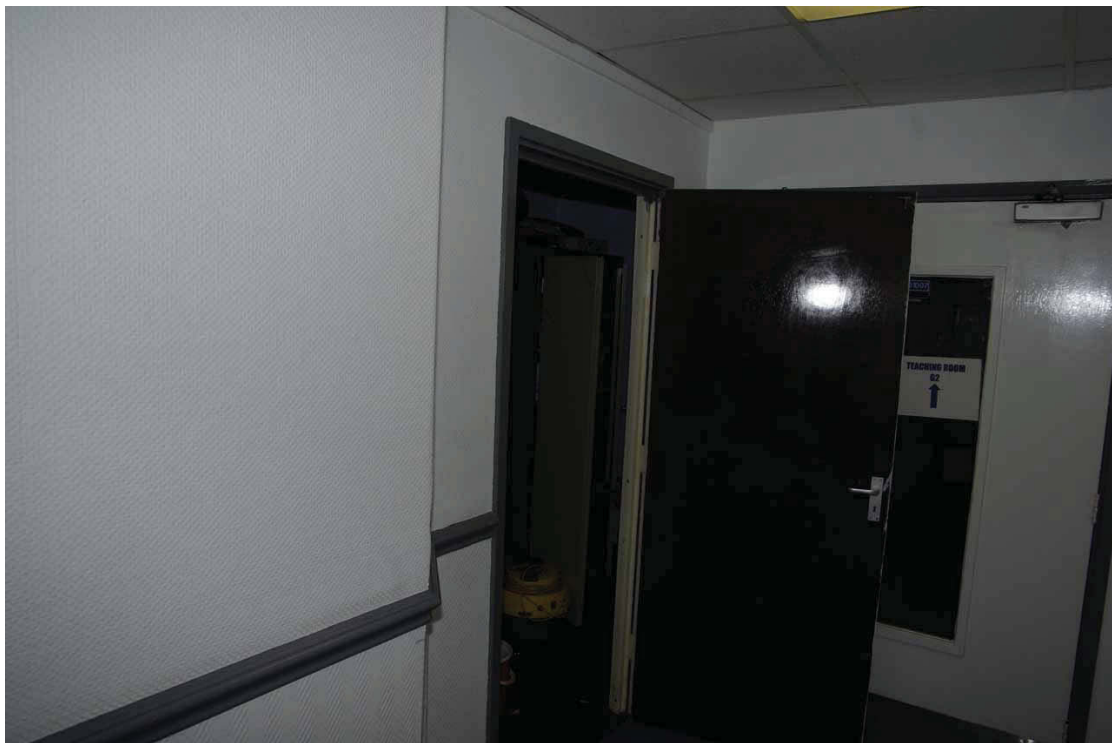


Figure 34 St. John's ground floor corridor and angled recess  
Looking north west



Figure 35 Base of south cruciform tower  
Looking south



Figure 36 Southern easternmost arm. Blocked doors  
Looking west



Figure 37 Southern linking wing  
Looking north east

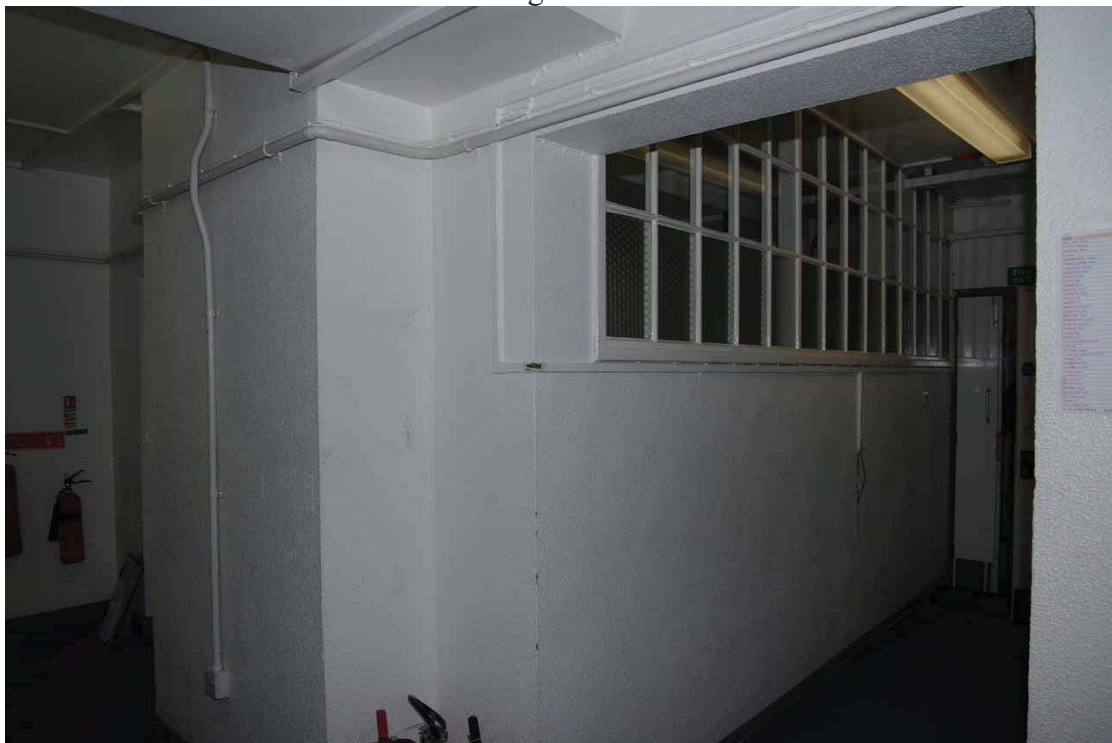


Figure 38 South cruciform tower, first floor offices  
Looking south





Figure 39 Central block stairs skylight  
Looking north



Figure 40 Receiving wards and covered corridor  
Looking south east

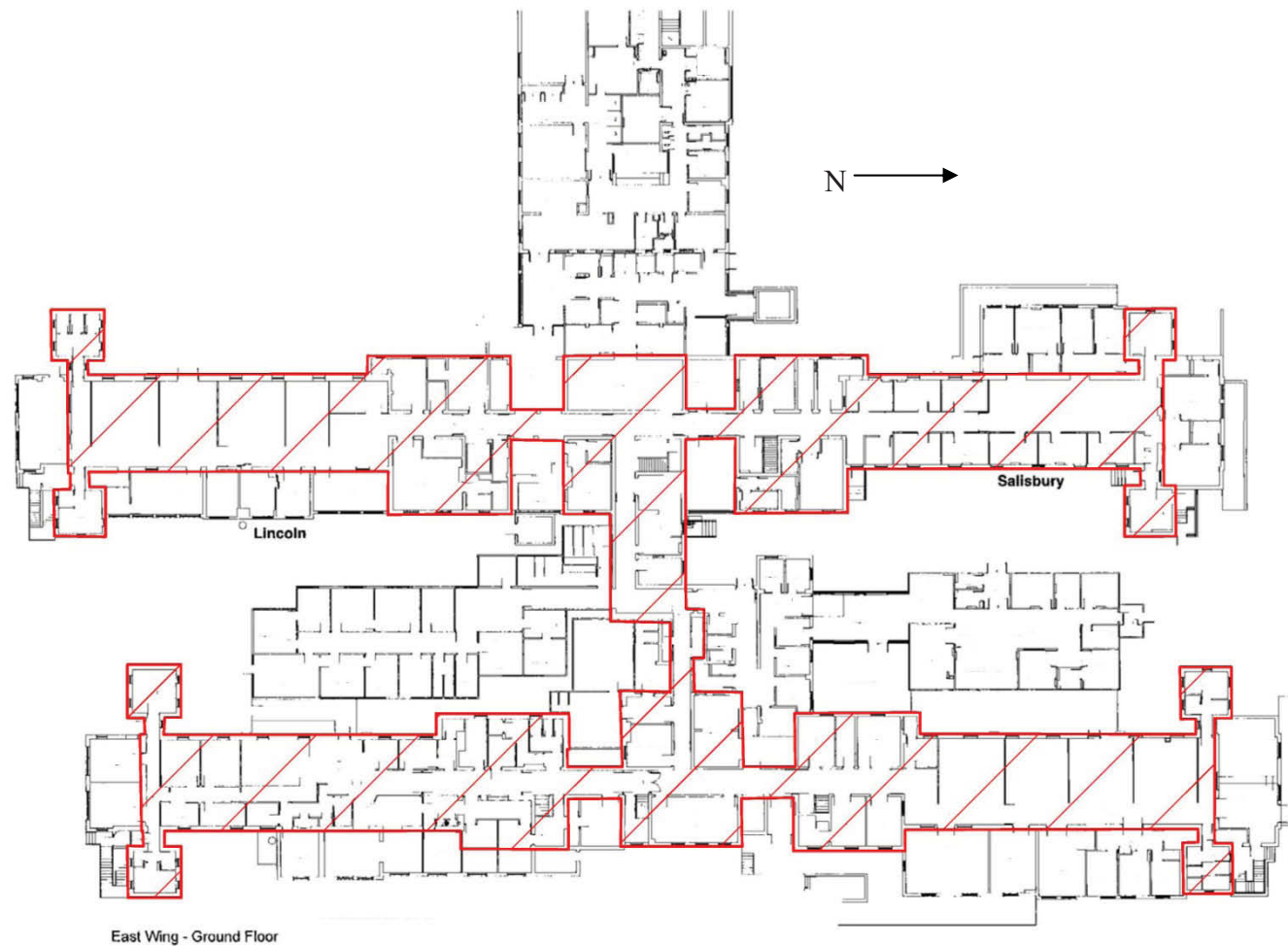


Figure 41 East Wing ground floor  
1896 range on south side, 1902 to north  
Original limits of 1896 and 1902 ranges highlighted

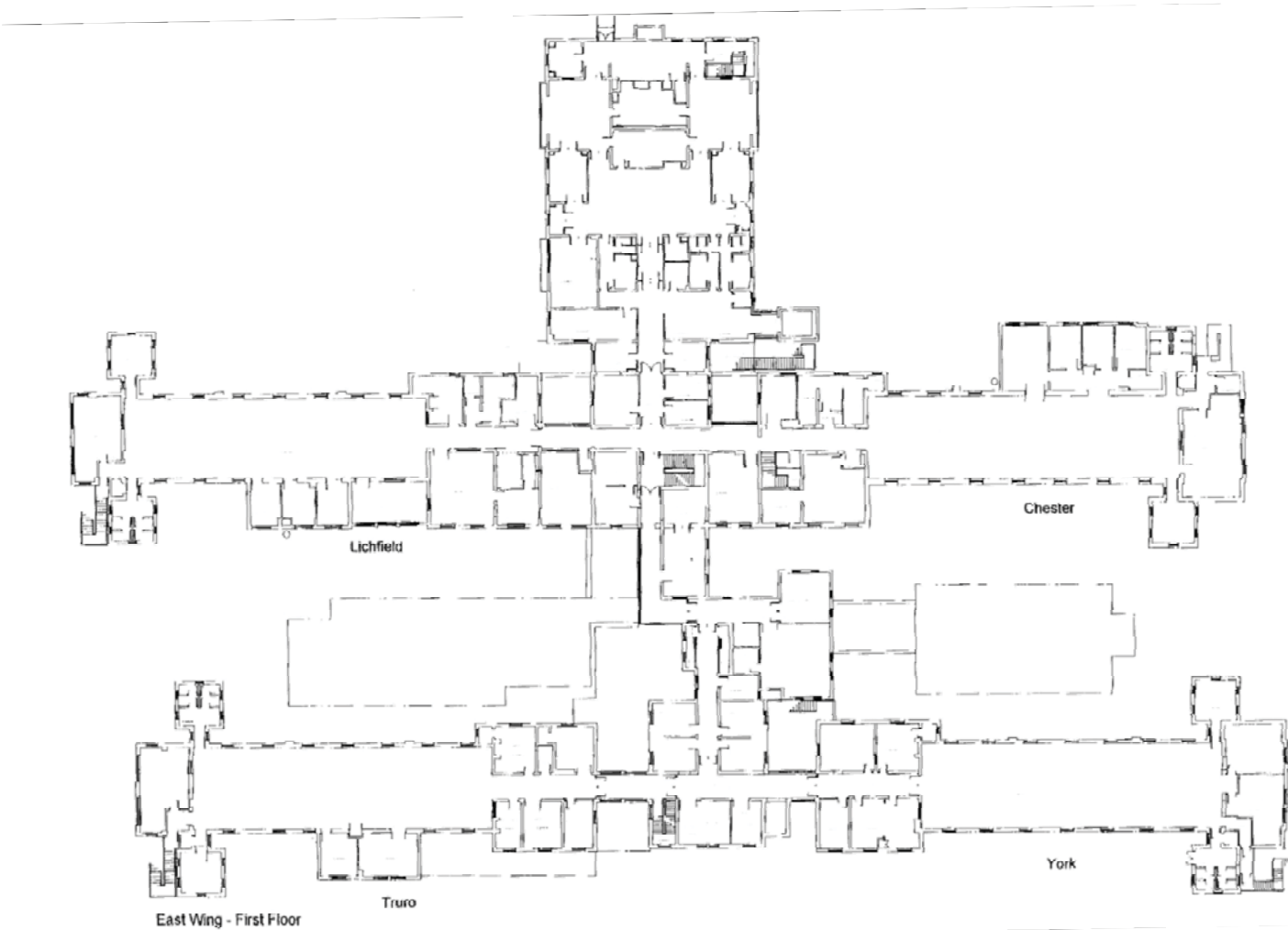


Figure 42 East Wing first floor plan

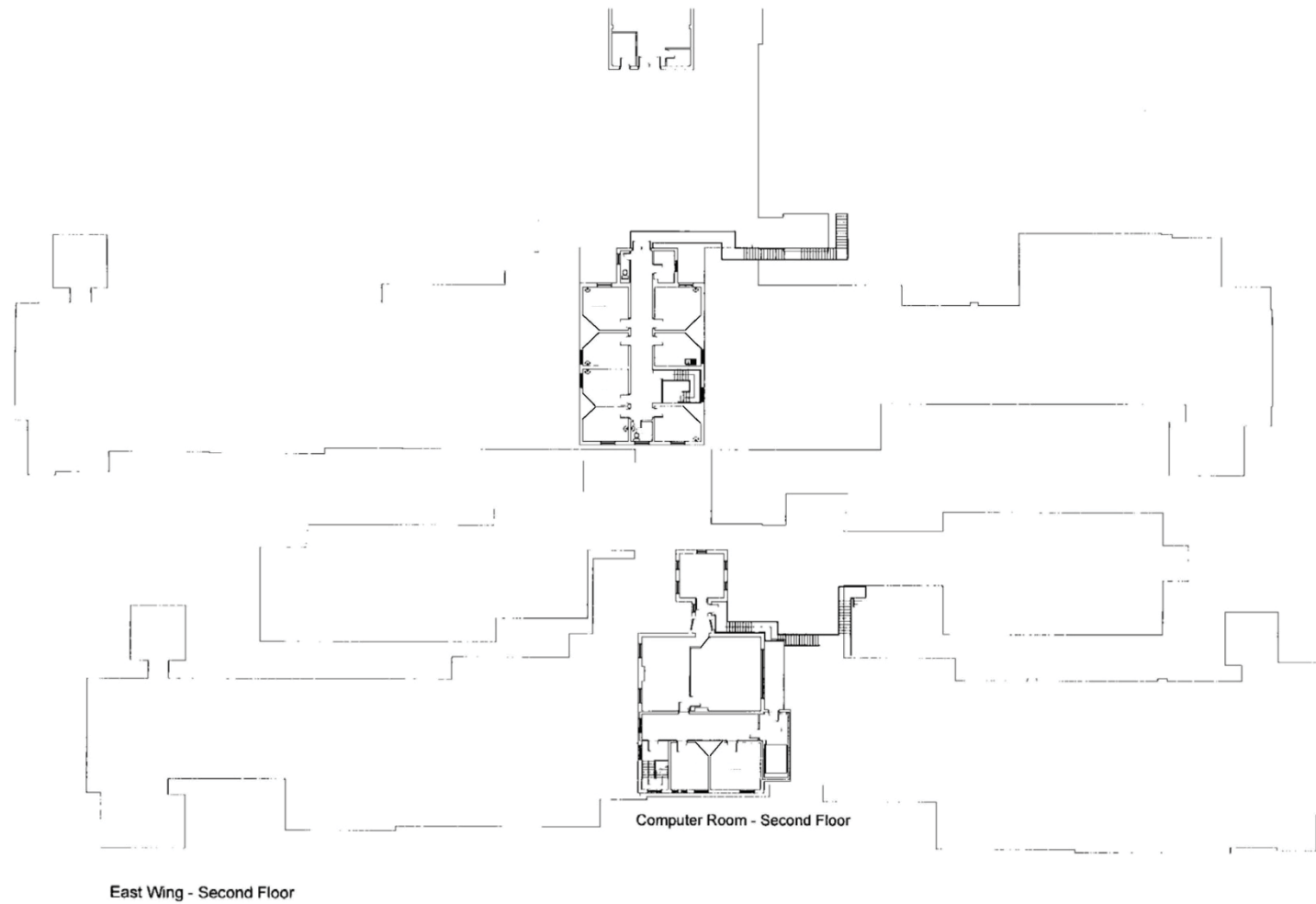


Figure 43 East Wing second floor plan



Figure 44 East Wing east elevation, 1896 range



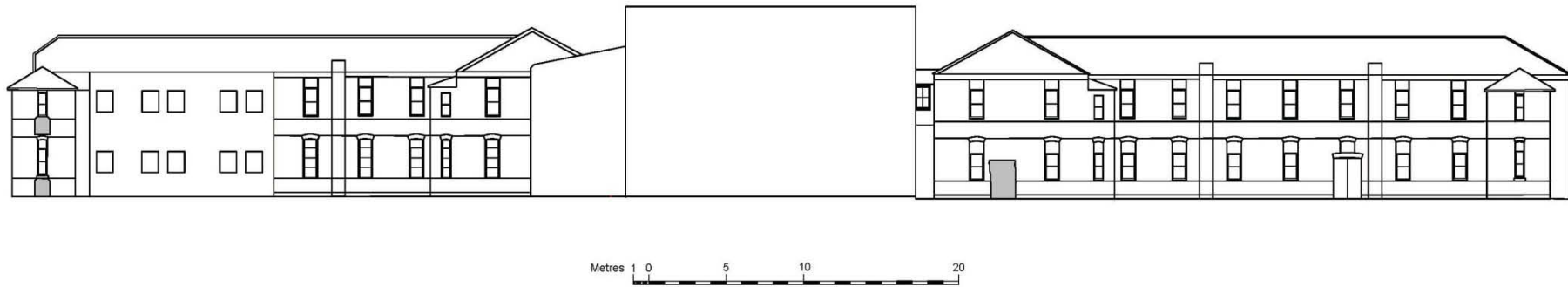


Figure 45 East Wing west elevation, 1902 range

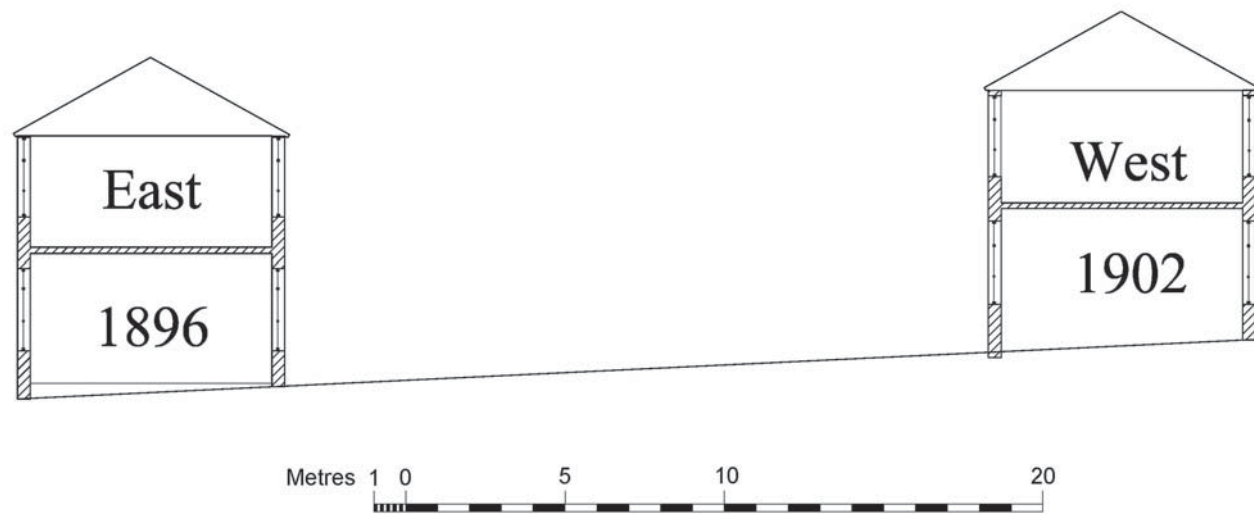


Figure 46 East Wing sections through southern wards



Figure 47 East elevation East Wing, 1896 range  
Looking north west



Figure 48 Southern end toilet block, East Wing, 1896 range  
Looking south west



Figure 49 Entrance to wards. East Wing, 1896 range  
Looking west



Figure 50 Original balcony at north end of 1896 range  
From Carpenter 1998 p70





Figure 51 East Wing, north end of 1896 range  
Looking south west



Figure 52 South end ground floor ward  
Looking south



Figure 53 Connecting link corridor, first floor  
Looking east

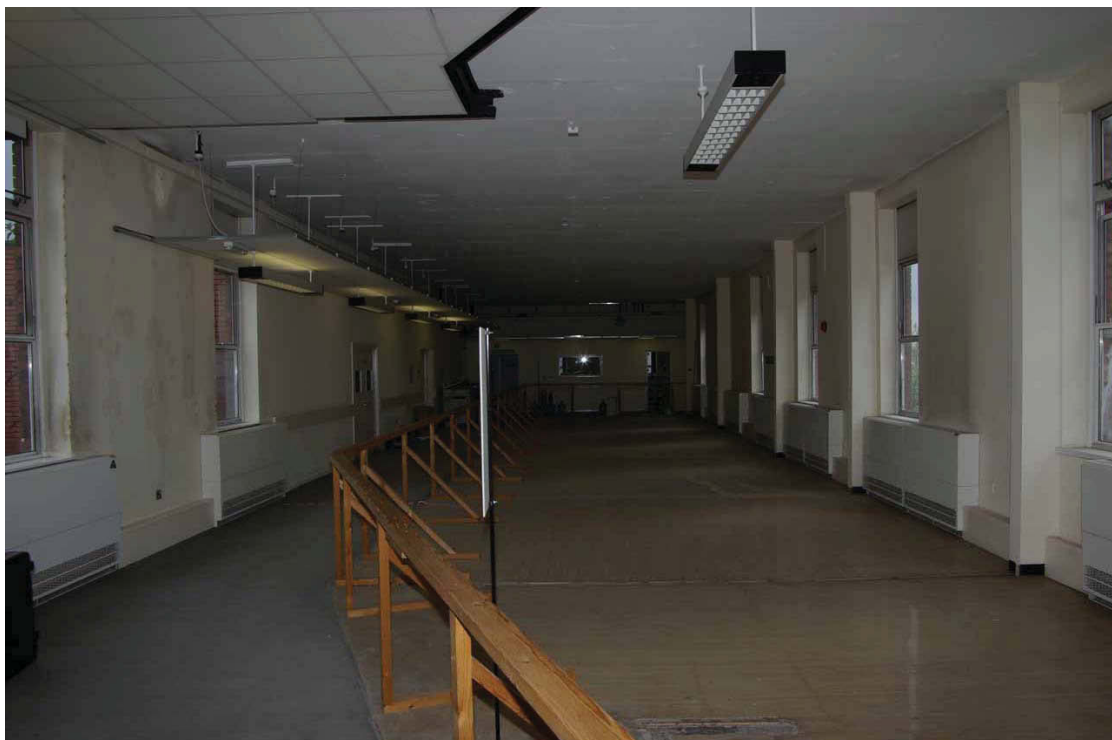


Figure 54 First floor wards following soft strip  
Looking south



Figure 55 First floor wards following soft strip  
Looking north



Figure 56 West elevation East Wing, 1902 range (south end)  
Looking south east





Figure 57 West elevation East Wing, 1902 range (north end)  
Looking east

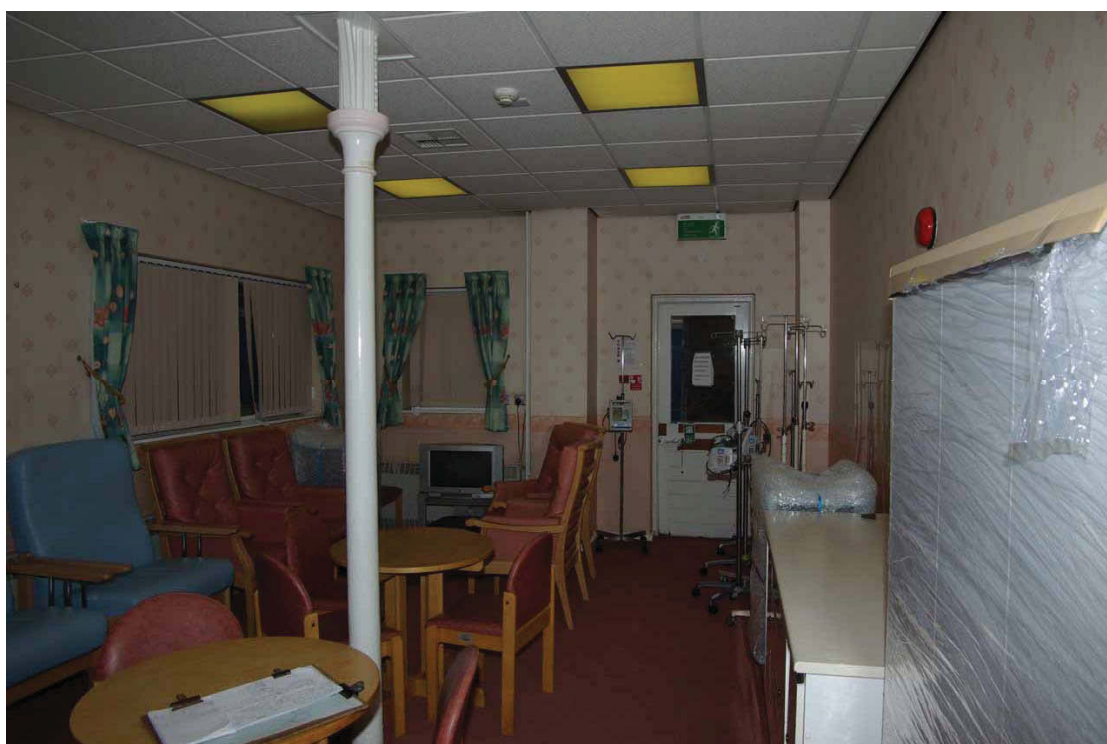


Figure 58 Surviving cast iron post in 1902 ground floor ward  
Looking south west



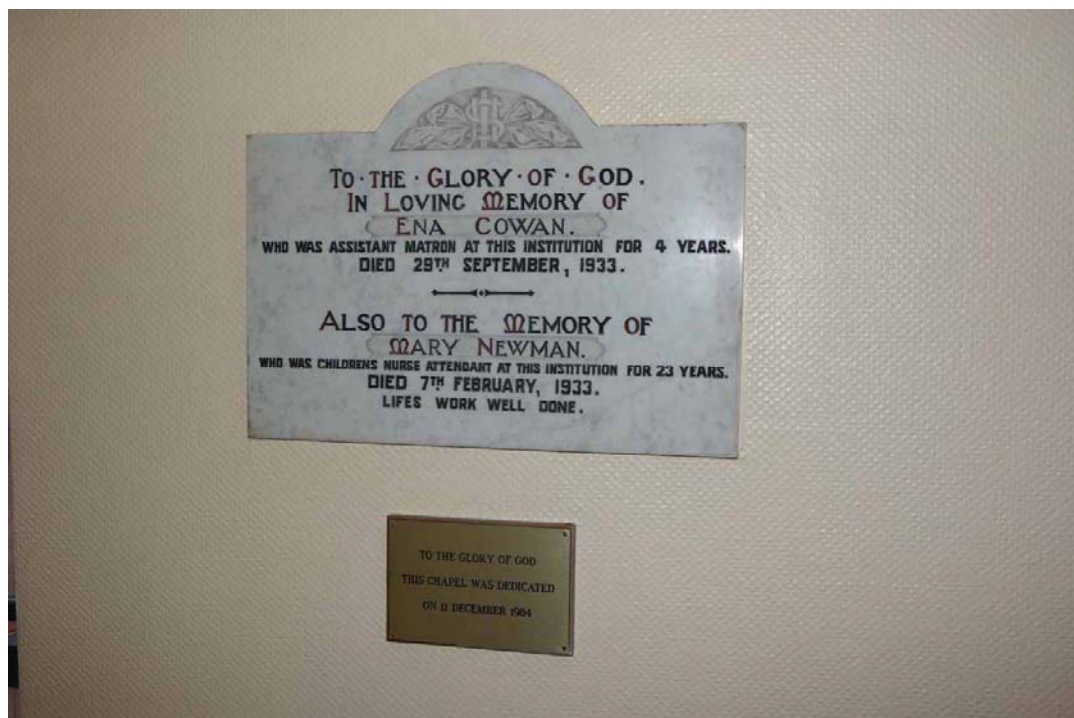


Figure 59 Memorial plaque adjacent to chapel in link corridor

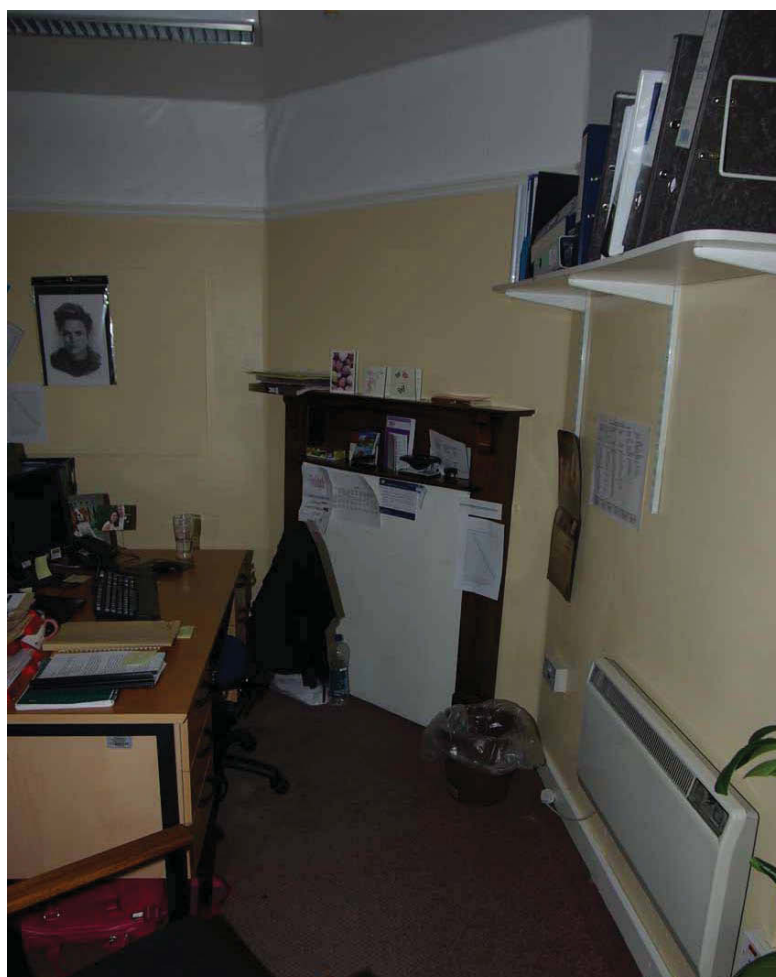
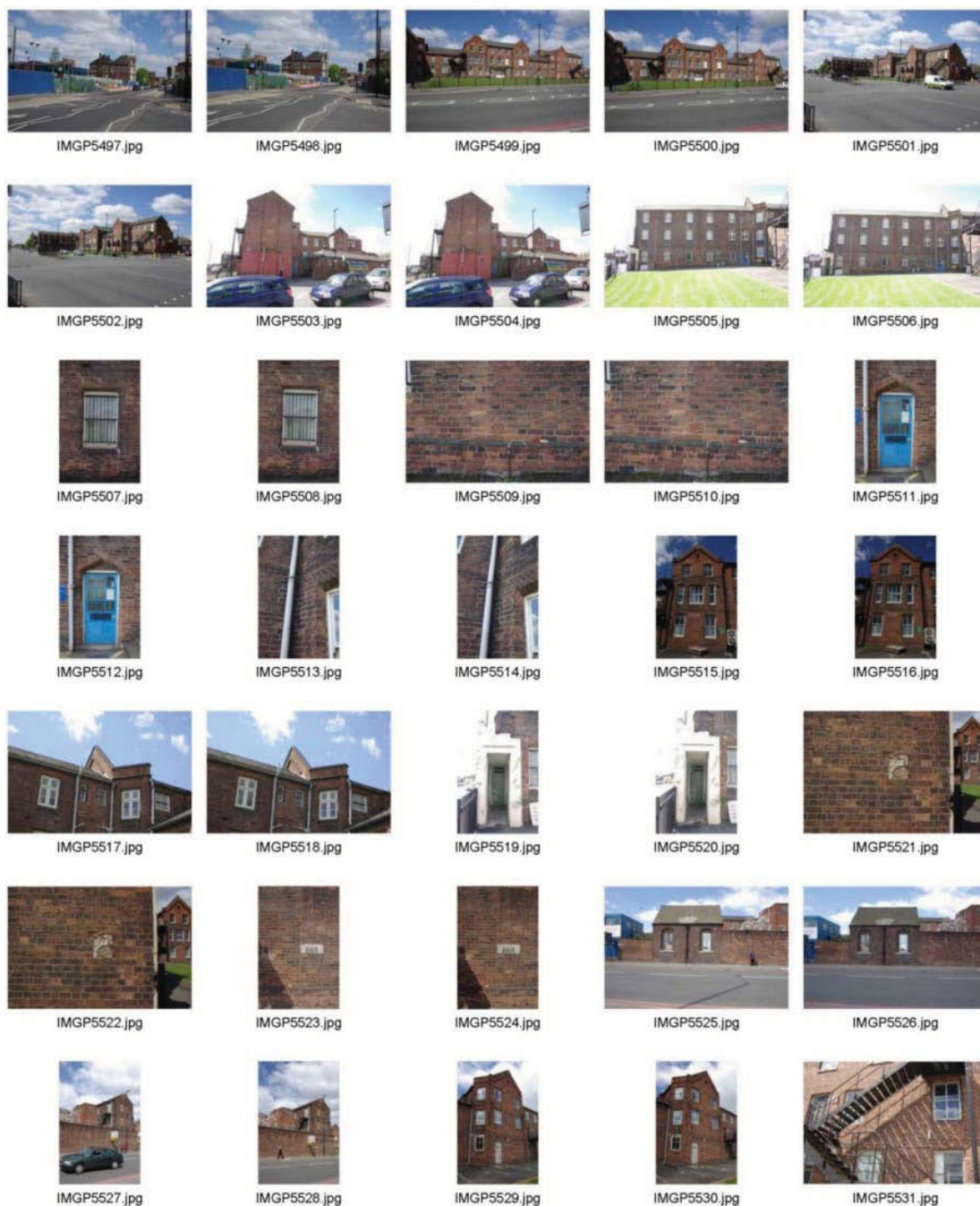
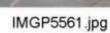
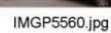
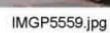
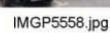
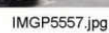
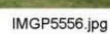
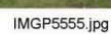
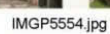
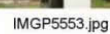
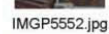
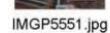
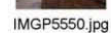
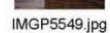
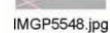
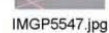
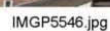
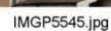
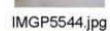
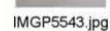
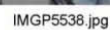
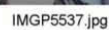
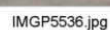
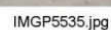
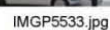


Figure 60 East Wing second floor 1902 range. Office fireplace  
Looking south

## Appendix 2 All digital photographs

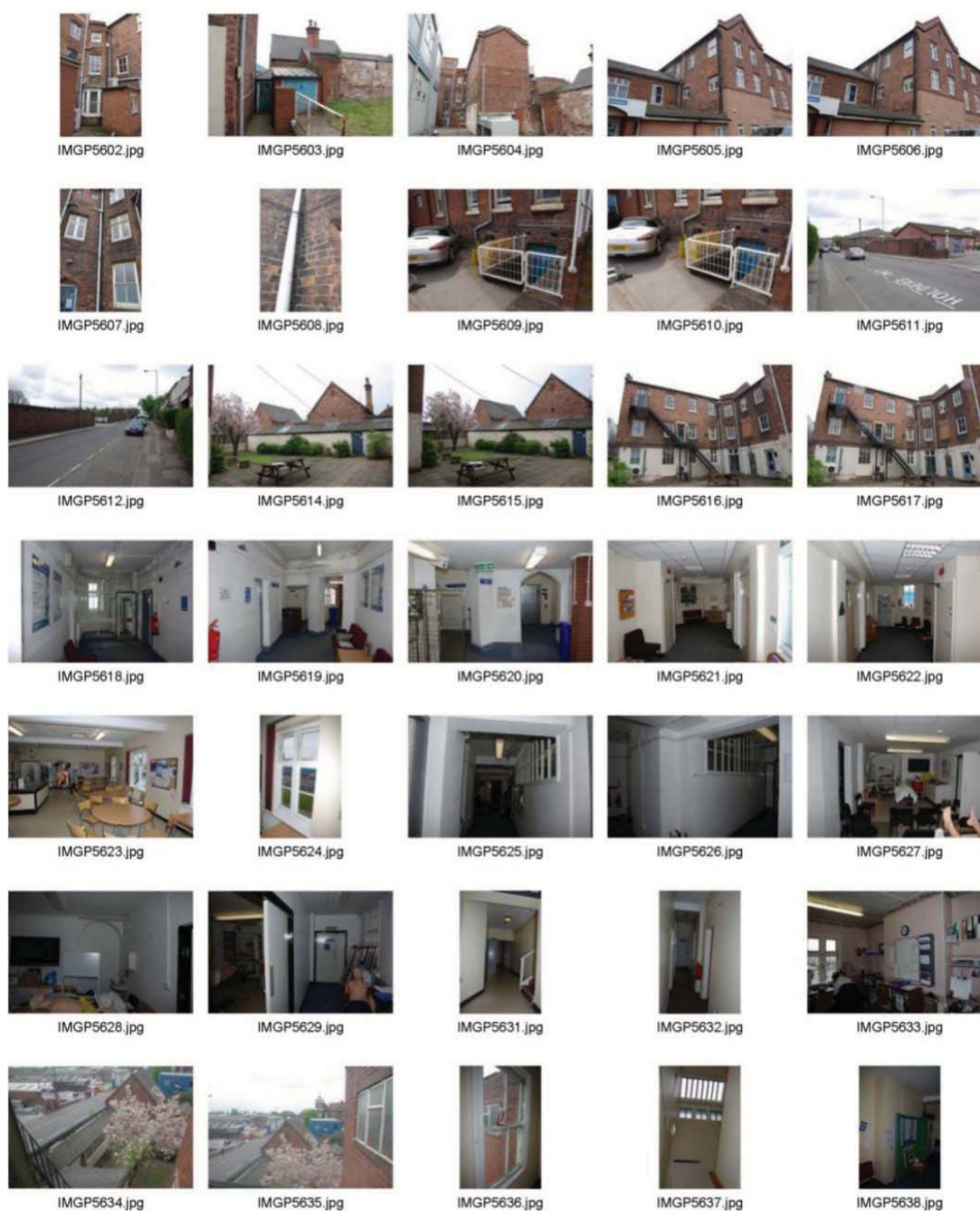


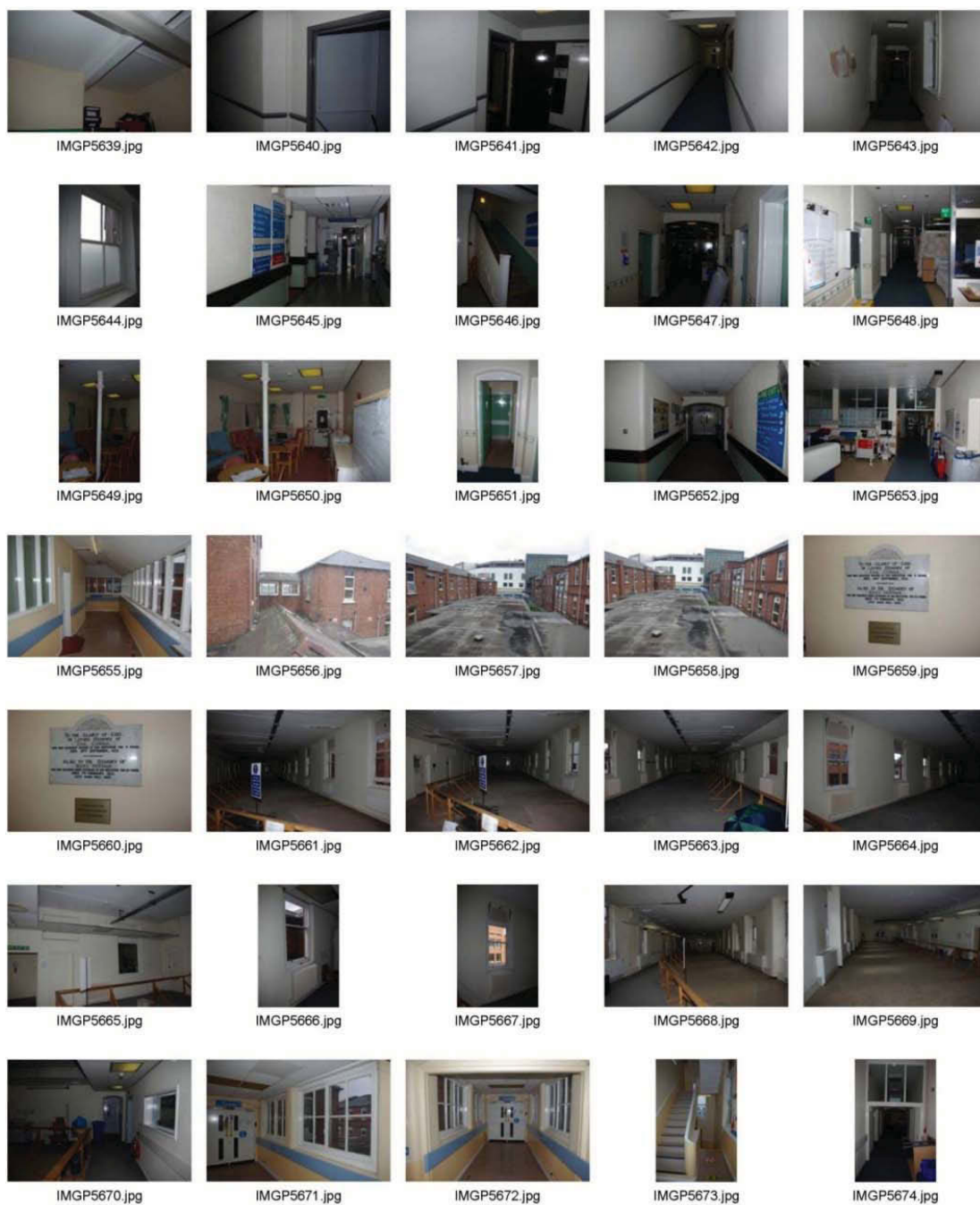














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IMGP5711.jpg



IMGP5712.jpg

### Appendix 3 OASIS Information

OASIS INFORMATION	
Project Name	St. John's Block and East Wing, Manor Hospital, Walsall
Project Type	Level 3 building survey
Project Manager	S Ripper
Project Supervisor	A Hyam
Previous/Future work	None
Current Land Use	Hospital
Development Type	Car park
Reason for Investigation	Demolition
Position in the Planning Process	As a condition
Site Co ordinates	SP 0316 8455
Start/end dates of field work	4.05.2010 – 11.05.2010
Archive Recipient	Walsall Museum
Study Area	2.6ha



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