

**THE PARKWAY CENTRE (FORMER PARKWAY SCHOOL)
WELWYN GARDEN CITY
HERTFORDSHIRE**

LEVEL III HISTORIC BUILDING SURVEY



**Essex County Council
Field Archaeology Unit**

December 2011

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Client: CgMs Consulting

Planning ref.: N6/2011/1177/MA & N6/2011/1179/CA

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Date of Fieldwork: 21st October 2011

1.0 INTRODUCTION

A programme of historic building recording was undertaken by the Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) at the Parkway Centre, (former Parkway School), prior to demolition and redevelopment of the site for housing. The work was commissioned by CgMs Consulting in accordance with a request from the Historic Environment Unit of Hertfordshire County Council (HCC HEU) for an English Heritage Level III record of the building, following on from an earlier Heritage Statement produced for the site (CgMs 2011).

The school was opened in 1934 as the Birdcroft Junior School, and contained 9 classrooms catering for 48 pupils each. In 1939 the school was devastated by fire and was subsequently rebuilt to its present form and design, virtually identical in plan form and appearance to the original school but with an extension to the west wing of the building. After the school closed in 1986 it became the 'Parkway Centre', housing various charities, support and counselling services, and recently closed. The buildings have low architectural merit and are not Listed, being described in a recent Conservation Area Appraisal undertaken by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council as being of only 'neutral value' to the Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area (WHBC 2007, Section 7.9, paragraph 167 & Appendix 1 Analysis Map, CgMs 2011).

Copies of the report will be supplied to CgMs Consulting, HCC HEU and the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record. The archive will be deposited with Welwyn Hatfield Museums Service. An OASIS online record has been created at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/oasis/index.cfm>.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1.1 Site location and description

The former Parkway School is situated at the southern end of Parkway, one of the main thoroughfares within the original garden city plan and crucial to its layout (fig. 1). Much of the area around it has been used for housing in recent years, particularly the former school playing fields, which were developed in the late 1990's and are now known as Parkway Gardens (fig. 3).

The building comprises two surviving single-storey brick classroom ranges, plus the limited remains of a third and fourth range. The buildings are of uniform design apart from the two storey staff block at the eastern end and the former assembly hall to the rear. It is surrounded on three sides by tarmac hardstanding, which on the eastern side is used for car parking. The plot is enclosed by a plain iron railing fence apart from a new boundary on the eastern side, where the school grounds have been replaced by the modern houses of Parkway Gardens (fig. 1).

Externally the structure has changed very little, but internally much of the original layout has been broken up to create modern offices and meeting and interview rooms for various social services providers. However, it is still possible in many cases to understand the original spatial layout and function of the various areas and how they have developed.

2.2 Planning background

A series of applications for planning permission and conservation area consent (N6/2011/1177/MA & N6/2011/1179/CA respectively) have been submitted to, and subsequently approved by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council for the demolition of the existing school building and the construction of 10 new three-bedroom houses, of between 2 and 2 and a half storeys, with associated landscaping. The design of these new buildings is intended to preserve and enhance the character of the Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area, by virtue of their massing, layout, design and materials (CgMs 2011).

Following the production of a Heritage Statement (CgMs 2011) to support the planning application, it was recommended by the HCC HEU that an English Heritage level 3 historic building record should be made of the school, in order to 'preserve by record' the existing buildings prior to demolition. This recommendation was based upon guidance contained in Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (DCMS 2010).

2.3 Objectives

The purpose of the historic building survey was to produce a detailed record of the school to English Heritage level 3 standard prior to demolition and redevelopment of the site, addressing plan form, materials and method of construction, dating and phasing, room function and internal spatial layout, fixtures and fittings. Emphasis was placed on recording, as much as possible, the original school exteriors, interiors and spatial layout rather than later alterations during its last phase of use as the Parkway Centre, though plans in this report include the most recent layout. Similarly, the objective was to recognise original room function and any fixtures and fittings in order to create as complete a record of the 1930s school as possible.

3.0 DESCRIPTION OF WORKS

Following discussions between CgMs Consulting and the HCC HEU it was agreed that the existing Heritage Statement previously produced for the site would form the basis for this report. Plans and elevation drawings were supplied by the architects. As noted on the plans, they were drawn from the outside of the building which meant that further internal detail was added during the survey.

As part of the survey, external and internal architectural descriptions were made, plans and elevations of the school annotated and amended. Full access was possible except for classroom 2, the basement and modern OT store, for which no keys were available.

Much of the internal layout of the school has been radically altered, having been changed into offices and interview rooms, etc for the various charities and other organisations that used the Parkway Centre. In most cases later internal changes were easy to identify, but meant that some areas were difficult to photograph during the survey, and so the report therefore contains photographs of those rooms that were least impacted upon.

A series of digital and black & white photographs were taken internally and externally, and specific shots taken of areas of architectural detail, fixtures and fittings. A representative selection of photographs is reproduced at the back of the report as plates 1-22 and their locations provided in figure 7. The remainder can be found in the archive.

4.0 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT

The Parkway School was built during Welwyn's initial Garden City era - placed at the southern end of the Parkway it was the fourth school to be built in the town. According to a contemporary news article in the *Welwyn Times*, it was opened on 17 November 1934, initially as the Birdcroft Junior School. Designed by Deputy County Architect H. Whitaker, it was described as, 'a pleasant, well lighted school of the usual design'. It was built to a courtyard plan-form with three ranges of classrooms, a hall and probable utility range. In all there were nine classrooms, each for 48 pupils, and floored throughout with parquet made of Australian Jarrah wood. While Louis de Soissons had designed earlier schools in the city, it was clear that given the population had risen from 200 to 4,000 over the previous decade, time was of the essence and a standardised, utilitarian design was required. Aerial photos illustrate that at the time of its construction, Parkway School was built at the edge of a still sparse settlement, well short of its projected 50,000 population (CgMs 2011).

The original building was not to last for long, as on the night of 26 March 1939 a major fire occurred in the building, less than five years after its completion. A contemporary report described how the building was 'completely gutted, except for a small section in the north east corner, which housed the kitchen, cloakroom, lavatories and two small classrooms' (CgMs 2011). 17 year old Ronald Barker was subsequently convicted of arson and sentenced to 18 months in Borstal (<http://www.ourwelwyngardencity.org.uk>).

Based upon contemporary accounts, the most affected areas were the west and south ranges and figure 2 shows the north range shortly after the fire, its roof destroyed, leaving only the outer walls.

After the fire, the school was rebuilt/ refurbished almost exactly to its previous form, although it was also enlarged by extending the western range by a further three bays to the north. This is shown by comparing figure 2 with the current floor plan and photographs. It is possible that other, unrecognised, alterations occurred at this time.

The school was reopened in March 1940 and remained occupied and in constant use for the next sixty years. A map of 1948 shows it marked as 'County School No. 4' (fig 3), but a few years later, in 1953, it became purely an Infants School, following a merger with the Applecroft School. It was finally closed in 1986, but has remained in use, most notably as 'The Parkway Centre', housing a number of charities, support and counselling providers. Internally the old classrooms were divided up to provide modern offices and treatment

rooms. Its original courtyard plan was lost during the late 1990s when the south east part of the building was demolished to provide additional car parking (CgMs 2011).

5.0 BUILDING DESCRIPTIONS

The building itself is primarily a functional single-storey building originally designed on a square plan, with four linear ranges surrounding a small courtyard, and grounds extending to the east. All building elements are brick-built, generally in Flemish bond, using the same red and blue bricks seen in many other buildings in the city (CgMs 2011) and fenestrated with steel windows with wooden frames. The eaves are decorated with a classical-style moulded wooden cornice above similarly-moulded metal guttering connected to cast iron downpipes. Architectural interest is minimal and largely confined to the most prominent western elevation. Roofs are pitched at 45°, invariably half-hipped and clad in plain clay tiles with plain chimneys.

In terms of its construction, the external walls and main load-bearing walls between the classrooms are built in 14-inch brickwork. Other internal walls are generally built in 9-inch brickwork, but some are only 4-inch (single-skin) width. All modern partition walls, added since 1986, are also this size. Most of these are plasterboarded studwalls, but some are built of brick.

Although it was not possible to observe the roof space during the survey, it is unlikely to differ from the roof shown in the 1939 photograph, which shows bolted angled iron trusses in a strong king post strut form, with iron purlins passing either side through the tops of the load-bearing walls (fig. 2).

5.1 External descriptions

The following descriptions include all the built elements that make up the school.

5.1.1 Western range 1

The **western elevation** forms the main façade, containing five classrooms fronted by a long, heavily fenestrated frontage either side of a central broken pediment and hipped roof either end (plate 1). Originally there were six bays either side of the pediment but after the 1939/40 rebuild the northern end was increased to nine. The windows, which are the same as those used on all of the surviving outer walls, are in a multi-paned (36 panes each), neo-Georgian style, suiting the pediment above, and have wooden sills. Each window is divided into three

registers, one above the other, comprising paired 6-pane lights, giving 12 panes to each register, divided by a central glazing bar. The bottom pair are hopper windows and the two pairs above are tilting windows (see plate 18 for internal view).

A central pediment encloses a three-window range with narrower 24-pane windows either side of a central, larger, 36-pane window, in the same combination as those either side. Each is topped with flat gauged brick heads and stepped brickwork keystones (plate 2). The pediment is raised on brick piers and carries the same mouldings as the cornice either side. Inside is a cast stone or concrete plaque depicting the county arms of Hertfordshire.

The **north elevation** contains few features apart from a high tilting window just below the eaves and an inserted modern fire door (plate 3). The **south elevation** (plate 4) has been rebuilt and the only feature is a pair of modern semi-glazed fire doors similar to those on the OT store, with the same soldier brick heads. Originally this end was probably fenestrated the same as the north end, with a high, tilting window (plate 3).

Most of the **eastern elevation** of the west range is hidden by the hall and the two side ranges. At the extended north end (plate 5) the windows are in the same positions as those on the main façade with the omission of the window nearest the north range, whose location would have been too close to the entrance porch

5.1.2 Northern range 2

The northern classroom range stands between the western range and a two-storey staff block and originally contained two classrooms and an unidentified room, perhaps a reception/office area based on its location near to the entrance. Its character is the same as the western range, with good use of windows on the **north elevation** to light the classroom interiors (plate 5). The main features of this elevation are the two entrances at either end. Identical in form, each is open-fronted with moulded brick sides and segmental brick arches behind a flat-roofed moulded canopy. The doors themselves are set back from the wall line and comprise a pair of twin-panelled semi-glazed doors (with later safety glass) below three-light rectangular fanlights (plate 6). The door panels are chamfered on the inside, which is a common theme to all original doors throughout the school. To the side of the eastern doorway is a small soldier-arched casement window lighting the current kitchen, perhaps the former reception/admin area. The brickwork below the window has been rebuilt, suggesting there was a lower window here previously. Above is the former staff room, signified by a steel casement window embedded in a hanging tiled surround (plate 5). Another steel casement lights the staff room on the **south elevation**, above the flat-roofed corridor (plate

7). Further to the west, two slightly lower dormer windows provide additional light to classrooms 1 and 2 below. The ground floor window range comprises steel-framed casements. Unusually, this elevation is built in stretcher bond. To rear, a plain flat-roofed entrance porch towards the east end is fitted with the same semi-glazed doors seen on the other entrance points, but here represents the cut-back former east range corridor (fig. 4 & plate 7).

5.1.3 Staff block 3

At the eastern end of the northern range is the staff block, a two-storey, square structure with a fully-hipped roof. What remains of the present internal layout suggests the ground floor may have been used as cloakrooms beside the main entrance and the first floor as staff rooms, though in both cases, particularly on the ground floor, the original internal layout is unclear.

The main **north and eastern elevations** are broadly the same, with two rows of steel-framed casement windows. Those on the ground floor have brick soldier heads while continuous brick soldier bands provide the heads above the first floor windows (plate 5). Other detailing such as the moulded cornice/gutter are the same as the linear ranges and the rainwater goods, downpipes and hoppers, are all cast iron. At the base of the eastern elevation are two basement vents, but the southern ground floor window on this side has been sealed to prevent access onto the basement stair (plate 8). Part of the **southern elevation** is occupied by the remnants of the flat-roofed eastern range (6), which was probably removed along with the southern range in the 1990s and partly replaced by a modern storage building (OT store). The door to the side (plate 8) leads into the basement and boiler room but was locked during the survey. A small window lights the first floor stair landing between the head teacher's room and staff room (plate 8). The first floor of the **western elevation** contains an inserted doorway that provides entry onto the corridor roof from the staff block (fig. 5).

5.1.4 Assembly hall 4

This may be regarded as a separate structure attached to the rear of the main range (fig. 1), which displays a slightly higher architectural detail than the main ranges (plate 9). The hall would have been used for school assembly, PE classes and a dining room at lunchtimes.

The hall is a tall single storey structure comprising six bays defined on the exposed **eastern elevation** by brick piers either side of a series of six 42-pane windows, which are taller than those on the outer walls of the ranges but share the same form and opening arrangements.

Like those on the pediment at the front, they have flat gauged brick heads (plate 10). The roof is half hipped, ending with high, slightly arched windows either end (north and south), that have segmental arched heads (plate 9). One of the more interesting features is an ornate pair of copper roof vents along the ridge (plate 11).

5.1.5 Remains of southern range 5

A small part of the southern range survived the late 1990s demolition: a former classroom (now toilets and offices) and part of the associated corridor, which latterly became an entrance into the Parkway Centre from the car park. The **south elevation** comprises a four window range. Three of the windows comprise the typical classroom form, but the lower one to the west has been inserted into a former doorway at this point that would have led into the western corridor (fig. 4 & plate 4). The roof is hipped at the eastern end. On the eastern elevation, the existing end wall was inserted after the range was removed (plate 9), but originally the flat-roofed corridor and range would have mirrored the opposing north range and contained a similar layout, including classroom 9.

5.1.6 Remains of eastern range and OT Store 6

The eastern range survives as a small store, the staff toilet and a second car park entrance into the Parkway Centre, which is the truncated remains of the former corridor (plate 7). This was a narrower flat-roofed range, more suited to a service function and it was here that the toilets and kitchens of the old school were probably located. The OT store in front of it is constructed in similar style but is late 1990s's in date as is not depicted on the current OS map (fig. 1) and there is a clear, straight joint in the brickwork between it and the adjacent store (fig. 4). It has the same flat concrete slab roof and soldier-headed doorway as the open store next to it (plate 7), which appears to be part of the old range.

5.2 Internal descriptions

The original layout of the school had a square, symmetrical form, with three ranges of well-lit classrooms around the courtyard and a narrower fourth range enclosing the yard to the east, with interlinking corridors. The western corridor, with entrances either end, was the main access route between the north and south ends and assembly hall, though the main entrance appears to have been at the east end of the northern range, where the cloakrooms are likely to have been. Staff also entered here to access the staff rooms on the first floor of the staff block, with views over the school grounds.

As far as possible, the original room layout is shown in the accompanying plans (figs. 4-6) in black and the modern partitions in grey. The majority of rooms are defined by thick load-

bearing walls but others have narrower 4-inch walls. Some earlier doorways and internal corridor windows were blocked when the Parkway Centre was established. Most of the modern partitions are plasterboarded stud walls but others are built of brick and in a few cases it is difficult to determine between the two.

Generally many larger early fixtures and fittings remain, such as the doors and windows, as well as more minor features associated with room decor, such as skirting boards and cornices, particularly in the western range. These give an insight into how the original classrooms appeared. Parquet flooring probably remains throughout beneath later floor coverings but was only exposed in the north corridor (fig. 4).

In the accompanying figures plans have been reproduced at 1:150 in order to show the school as a single working unit. 1:100 plans are included in the archive. No cross sections were drawn through the building as modern ceilings blocked all useful loft access. Classrooms have been given numbers from 1-8, out of 9 originally, but classroom 3 retains the best surviving features. All but classroom 2, which has been sub-divided internally and was partially locked, were investigated during the survey.

5.2.1 Ground floor

The two surviving original entrances were on the north side of the school, at the western and eastern ends of the north range (fig. 4). Each is entered through an open porch that contains contemporary doors fitted with modern fire door fixtures. The doors have heavy, black, cast iron handles (plate 6) also found on many of the existing classroom doors. A short **corridor** leads from the eastern entrance. To the left are two doorways, suggesting two separate rooms, perhaps the cloakrooms mentioned in the 1939 post-fire report. The first of these has been reduced from a double to a single-width doorway and contains the typical semi-glazed and panelled door seen throughout the school with 9-pane glazing and internally-chamfered lower panels (plate 12). The door frames are chamfered too. The second doorway had its door removed when the Parkway Centre was established to create a corridor between the new offices and other rooms here. Because this area was heavily altered in the modern period the original room layout is difficult to determine. There are no original fixtures and fittings, all the floors are carpeted and suspended ceilings have been added. On the right hand side of the corridor is a blocked doorway that may have led into a reception/office area, which now houses modern toilets and a kitchen (fig. 4). This short corridor is bare and functional in its decoration, with the typical painted brick walls that are a common feature throughout, a practical coved vinyl skirting and suspended ceiling. Double doors at the end lead into the **north corridor** (fig. 4), with access on the left side to the staff toilet (WC in fig.

4) and stair (plate 13) and on the right side past the modern kitchen, toilets and classrooms 1 and 2. Vinyl flooring has been installed in the eastern half, up to the fire doors, but on the other side is the original parquet flooring, the only place where it is still exposed (plate 14). The corridor and classrooms are well-lit by the ground floor windows facing onto the courtyard, side windows between corridor and classroom, and skylights within the flat roof, all typical features of 20th century school design. Both classrooms, like **classroom 1**, are lit not only from the corridor and external walls but also by dormer windows above the flat-roofed corridor (plate 15) and the same was probably true of the classrooms in the demolished southern range opposite. All corridor and dormer windows are multi-paned and metal framed. Original apertures to ground floor windows and doors have chamfered edges echoing those around the door panels (plate 15). Dormer windows have splayed sills but are fixed, while the corridor windows have hopper openings on the top panes. The kitchen and toilet attached to classroom 1 are part of the later refurbishment, probably after the eastern range was demolished. Both have modern fixtures and fittings such as coved skirting and vinyl floors, but the dividing wall with classroom 1 is contemporary with the school and contains an earlier blocked doorway (fig. 1).

Classroom 2 has been heavily altered to become three separate offices and meeting rooms and displays carpeted floors and suspended ceilings with no historic features of interest. It was locked during the survey.

The north corridor leads onto the **western corridor** which links to the western entrance and extends the whole length of the range, joining with the remains of the former southern corridor (fig. 4). It is lit by internal windows from the hall and classrooms on either side, some of which were latterly blocked, and skylights in the flat roof above, all of which have the same multi-pane form (plate 16). The bare painted brickwork and door/window surrounds are identical to the other corridor, but this one retains its original skirting boards: plain and quite low (3½ inch) but robust with a chamfered top. The corridor has a plastered ceiling and carpeted floor. The heavy cast iron radiators are typical of institutional buildings of the time and in general the old school fixtures and fittings survive much better in the western range.

Before the fire, it is probable that **classroom 3** was the mirror image of classroom 7 at the opposite end of the corridor (fig. 4). However, after the 1939/40 rebuild, the north end was extended by three extra bays, creating the largest classroom in the school and the two bays to the south of the classroom were used for storage, and still are. The doorway into classroom 3 is contained within the inserted 1930/40 wall (fig. 4) and is typical of the semi-glazed form throughout the school. The square door light above it is a substitute for the more

common dormer windows (plate 17). Interior detail survives well here, though only as minor embellishments such as plain 3½ inch skirting boards, slightly-moulded cornice and exposed boarded ceiling, fitted to the underside of the joists by wooden battens (plate 17). Like all the other classrooms, the brick walls are painted rather than plastered. This is perhaps the best example of a typical classroom, as it is less affected by later developments.

Beyond the stores is **classroom 4**, which retains the same fixtures and fittings as classroom 3 but has a suspended ceiling. A detail photograph of the front window is included as plate 18 and is representative of all the external classroom windows. It shows the two hopper windows at the bottom, the central screw-operated tilting windows partly open and a set of closed cord-operated tilting windows above. The sill is tiled.

Classroom 5 occupies the central part of the western range, behind the broken pediment, and has slightly shorter bays than the others. Again, it retains the same original décor as the other classrooms on this side, with only partial modern impact. Further along the corridor, **classroom 6** has been altered to accommodate modern toilets and a meeting room, but otherwise retains original décor in the form of skirting boards and moulded cornice, beneath a modern suspended ceiling.

On the opposite side of the corridor is the **assembly hall**. Both former entrances off the western corridor originally held double doors but have been reduced in width to accommodate single ones (fig. 4). The interior is amply lit by high windows set above the flat roofed western corridor and at either end that are now partially hidden by a suspended ceiling (plate 19). Room partitions, ceilings and carpet are all modern, but the skirting boards are contemporary with the school and it is interesting to note how they curve around the rounded corners of the walls (plate 19). The southern wall has been cut through to create a visitor's room beside the modern reception area (plate 4).

Classroom 7 is at the southern end of the range and has been altered extensively to create offices and toilets but the original doorway survives at the northern end of the room. The fire doors at the southern end are a modern insertion after the corridor was blocked off (fig. 4). No original décor remains.

Classroom 8 and the corridor next to it are all that remains of the southern range, which probably mirrored the northern range with the exception of the staff block. The walls of the **corridor** are plastered (probably a later development), as well as the ceiling. Original skirting remains against the modern carpet. A pair of 1939/40 firedoors provides a good example of

type (plate 20). Beyond these to the east are modern inserted doorways (fig. 4) and similar fire doors at the other end, recessed within a short porch, to provide a modern entry point when the original corridor was demolished (plate 9). At the eastern end of the corridor is the original entrance into **classroom 8**, whose interior has been divided up into modern toilets, offices and interview rooms; no original décor remains. Its eastern wall was rebuilt flush with the rear doorway after the south range was demolished and incorporates a reused window.

5.2.2 First floor

Stairs to the first floor staff rooms are located at the eastern end of north corridor (fig. 4). The stairs have a modern design of long chamfered newel posts and disc-shaped terminals and plain railings (plate 13). They lead upwards to a landing entered through a modern glazed screen. From the landing there is a modern doorway leading out onto the flat roofed corridor below (fig. 5). There are three main rooms upstairs, the head teacher's office, ?deputy and staff room, as well as ancillary rooms. The abundance of good fixtures and fittings suggest this floor retains its original layout.

The **head teacher's office** is entered by a short corridor off the landing and comprises a main room with smaller rooms to either side (stores, etc) that all feature the same fixtures and fittings and décor. Around the walls, such features include a tall 7½ -inch chamfered skirting and 2½ -inch moulded dado picture rails: more prominent fixtures than those seen in the school below, but contemporary (plate 21). Other fixtures such as the semi-glazed doors (though with more slender handles) and radiators are common to both. The same features are included in the ?deputy head's room. All windows are metal-framed casements with deep wooden sills.

The **staff room** is built into the eaves of the northern range. In modern times it was divided into two and a toilet added. Its decoration is minimal compared to the head's room, with the same skirting as the classrooms downstairs and no other features of interest (plate 22). Originally there was a linking doorway between the deputy head's room and this one (fig. 5).

A doorway on the southern side of the staff block leads down to the **basement** (fig. 4). The basement was locked during the survey, but a plan showing its store and boiler house is provided as figure 6 to complete the record.

6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The original Parkway School was built in 1930s to serve the expanding population of Welwyn Garden City, opening in 1934 as the Birdcroft Junior School. Only five years later there was a devastating fire, with main areas affected appearing to have been the western and southern ranges. Photographs taken at the time show the gutted western range with its roof destroyed but the outer walls still standing and given this it seems unlikely the school was completely demolished and then rebuilt to its earlier form, but rather it was cleared out, refurbished and re-roofed. However, the opportunity was taken at the time to carry out some improvements including extending the north range by a further three bays. It is also possible that other changes not picked up by this survey may have been carried out at the time.

The general design of the school is typical of the time, adopting an austere bungaloid form of three classroom ranges and a fourth probable service/utility/workshop range, enclosing a small courtyard or quadrangle. Staff and administration areas for the running of the school were clustered around the main school entrance and the staff rooms elevated to first floor, representing order and control. The assembly hall, used for school gatherings and special occasions, stood behind the main range and was one of the main components. Although still a utilitarian building, its gauged brickwork and pier and panel frontage, high roof and copper vents provide a relatively grand appearance, as does the detailing of the neo-Georgian broken pediment on the main roadside elevation. Otherwise the architecture of the school is plain and functionary.

The internal layout is fairly typical of schools and institutional buildings in general, a square symmetrical plan form of four ranges linked by connecting corridors around the courtyard and classrooms on the outside, lit both externally and internally. Windows onto the corridor and glazed classroom doors facilitated a level of general control and supervision of the children during class-time and the well-lit first floor staff rooms meant that playtimes could be monitored from an elevated position.

The survey identified eight of the nine classrooms known to have been here, most of which were quite regular and of three bays, though their limited size (average 6m by 7.5m) questions the fact that they were built to hold 48 pupils, as is believed. It also appears that the internal layout was consistent between the ranges, although the precise room functions and layout of parts of the demolished eastern and southern ranges remains unknown.

Major school-period fixtures and fittings such as desks, cupboards, shelving, etc are no longer present; stripped-out when the Parkway Centre was established. Other more practical and less obstructive features remain, such as doors, windows, radiators and more minor fittings. Externally these maintain the early-mid 20th century historic character of the building and internally form an interesting contemporary group even though their context is disrupted by the high level of modern intrusion. Because of the fire, it is likely that many of the remaining fixtures and fittings date to the 1939/40 refurbishment rather than the original 1934 build.

The old Parkway School is typical of 20th century school design and has maintained its character as such as part of the urban typology of Welwyn Garden City. Although of some local significance and importance to social and educational history, it is a simple structure with little architectural significance, and as such, its recording before demolition is appropriate.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to Matthew Smith of CgMs for commissioning this survey and for supplying site drawings. Thanks also to Phil Bringlowe of Leach Homes for facilitating the works and Karen Batten for supplying background information. Survey, recording and photography were undertaken by the author. Illustrations were prepared by the author and produced by Andrew Lewsey of ECC FAU. The project was managed by Adrian Scruby and monitored by Andy Instone of HCC HEU, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority.

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|---------------------------------|------|--|
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Appendix 1: Contents of Archive

Former Parkway School, Welwyn, Garden City, Hertfordshire

Building Recording

1. Research Archive

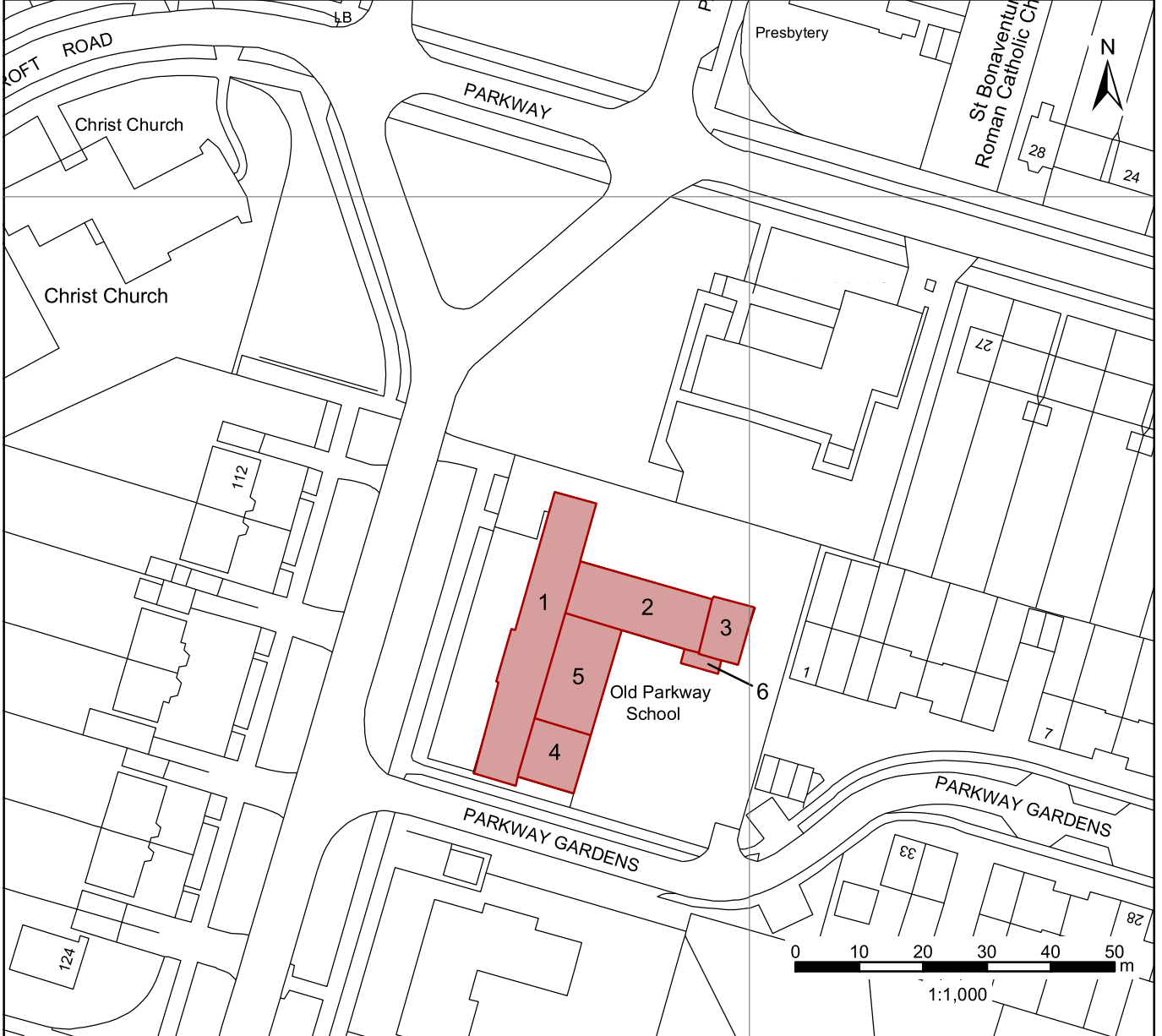
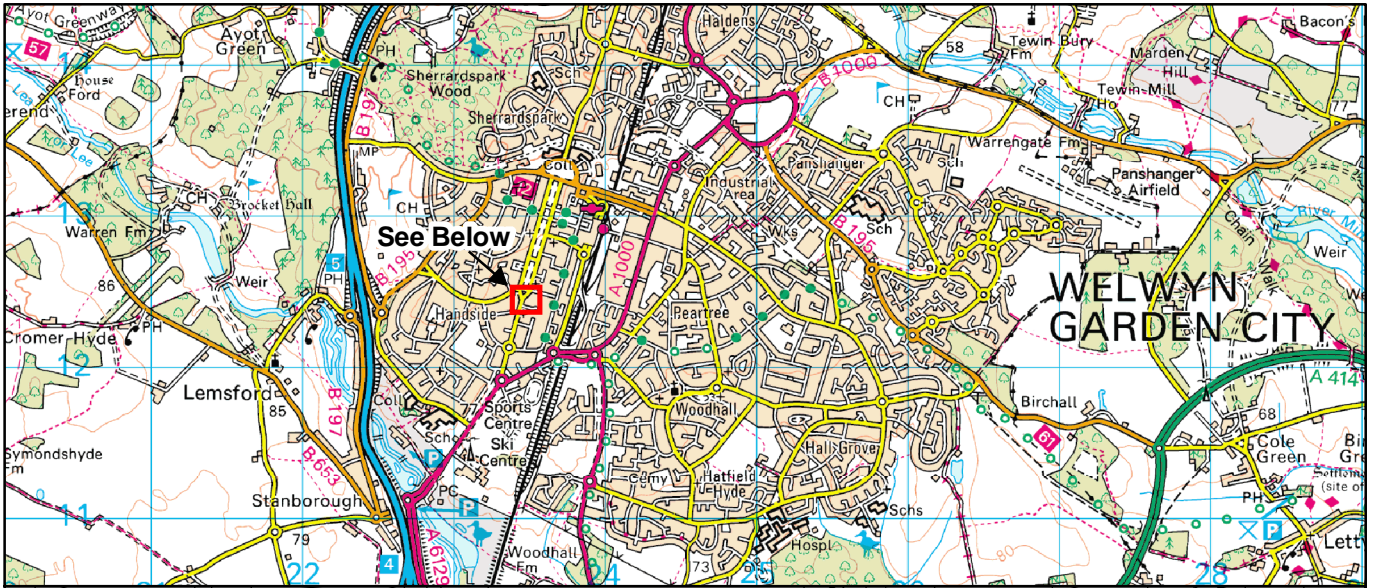
- 1.1 Copy of report
- 1.2 Copy of report pdf-formatted

2. Site Archive

- 2.1 Site photographic record: digital images on CD & selected prints
- 2.2 Photographic register
- 2.3 Site notes & plans
- 2.4 Architect's survey

Appendix 2: Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record sheet

Site name and address: Parkway Centre, Former Parkway School, Welwyn Garden City		
County: Hertfordshire	District: Welwyn Hatfield	
Village/Town: Welwyn Garden City	Parish: Welwyn Garden City	
Planning application reference: N6/2011/1177 & 1179		
Client name, address, and tel. no.: CgMs Consulting, 5-11 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3HS		
Nature of application: Demolition		
Present land use: Redundant former school, latterly used by social services & other groups		
Size of application area: n/a	Size of area investigated: n/a	
NGR (to 8 figures): TL 2350 1246		
Site code: n/a		
Site director/Organization: Andy Letch, Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit		
Type of work: Building recording		
Date of work:	Start: 21/10/2011	Finish: 21/10/2011
Location of archive (no finds): HALS		
Related HER Nos.: none	Periods represented: mid 20th century	
Relevant previous summaries/reports None		
<p>Summary of fieldwork results:</p> <p>The Former Parkway School, Welwyn Garden City, a purpose-built mid-20th century structure, was recorded prior to demolition and redevelopment of the site for housing, and following a heritage statement by CgMs Consulting. The school was built in 1934 but damaged by a fire in 1939 that led to its partial rebuilding and refurbishment. In 1986 the school close and became the Parkway Centre, housing charities and support services. In the late 1990s almost half the school was demolished to create further car parking. The centre closed in 2010/11.</p> <p>The general design of the school is typical of the time, adopting an austere bungalow form of three classroom ranges and fourth, probable service range enclosing a small courtyard or quadrangle. Staff and administration areas were clustered around the eastern entrance and the staff rooms elevated to first floor. The assembly hall, used for school gatherings and special occasions, stood behind the main range. Apart from some embellishment to the northern (roadside) elevation and the hall, the architecture of the school is plain and functionary.</p> <p>Internal layout was fairly typical of schools and institutional buildings in general, a symmetrical layout with separate wings or ranges linked by connecting corridors with well-lit classrooms to one side, lit both externally and internally. Windows onto the corridor and glazed classroom doors facilitated a level of general control and supervision of the children during class-time and the well-lit first floor staff rooms meant that playtimes could be monitored from an elevated position.</p> <p>The survey identified eight of the nine classrooms, most of which were quite regular of three bays. The precise room functions and layout and to parts of the demolished eastern and southern ranges are not fully understood. Basic fixtures remain inside, but no furniture or other school fittings.</p>		
Author of summary: Andy Letch (ECC FAU)		Date of summary: 10th November 2011



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Fig.1. Location and block plan



Fig. 2 Photograph of the front of the school and part of the north range taken after the 1939 fire

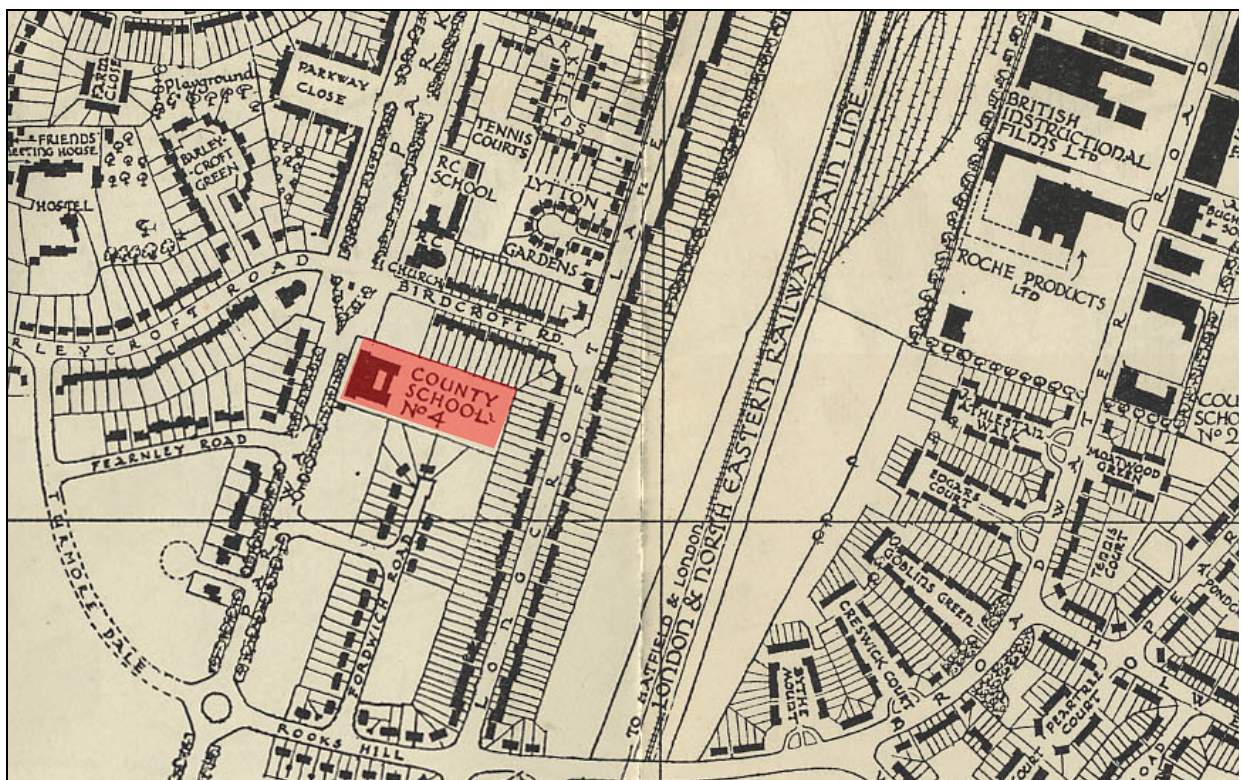


Fig. 3 Parkway School, or 'County School No. 4' as shown on a Map from Welwyn Garden Citizens' Handbook, 1948

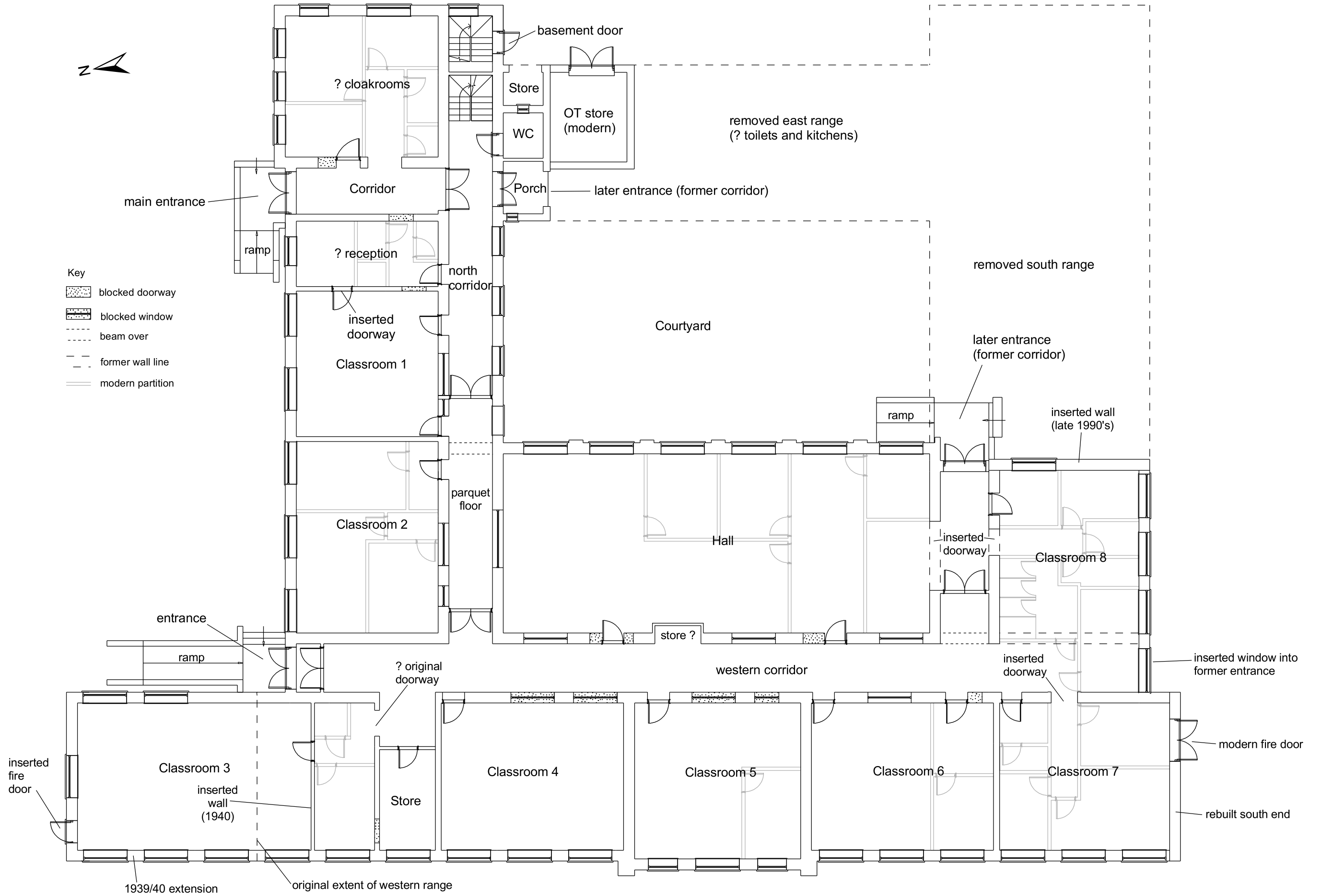
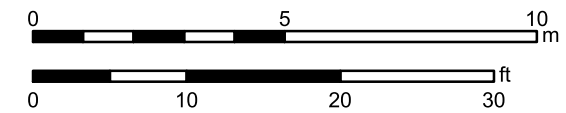


Fig.4 Plan of ground floor



1:150

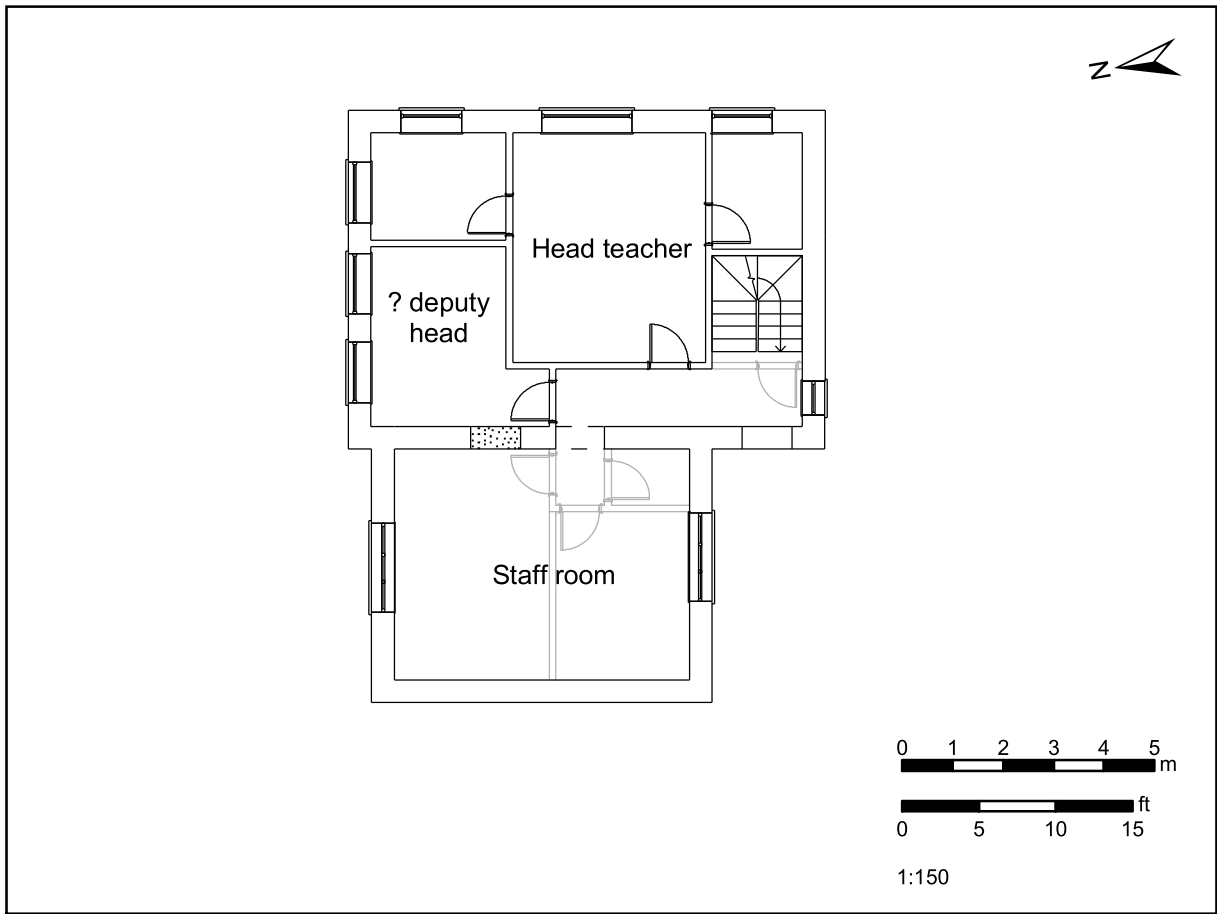


Fig.5. Plan of first floor

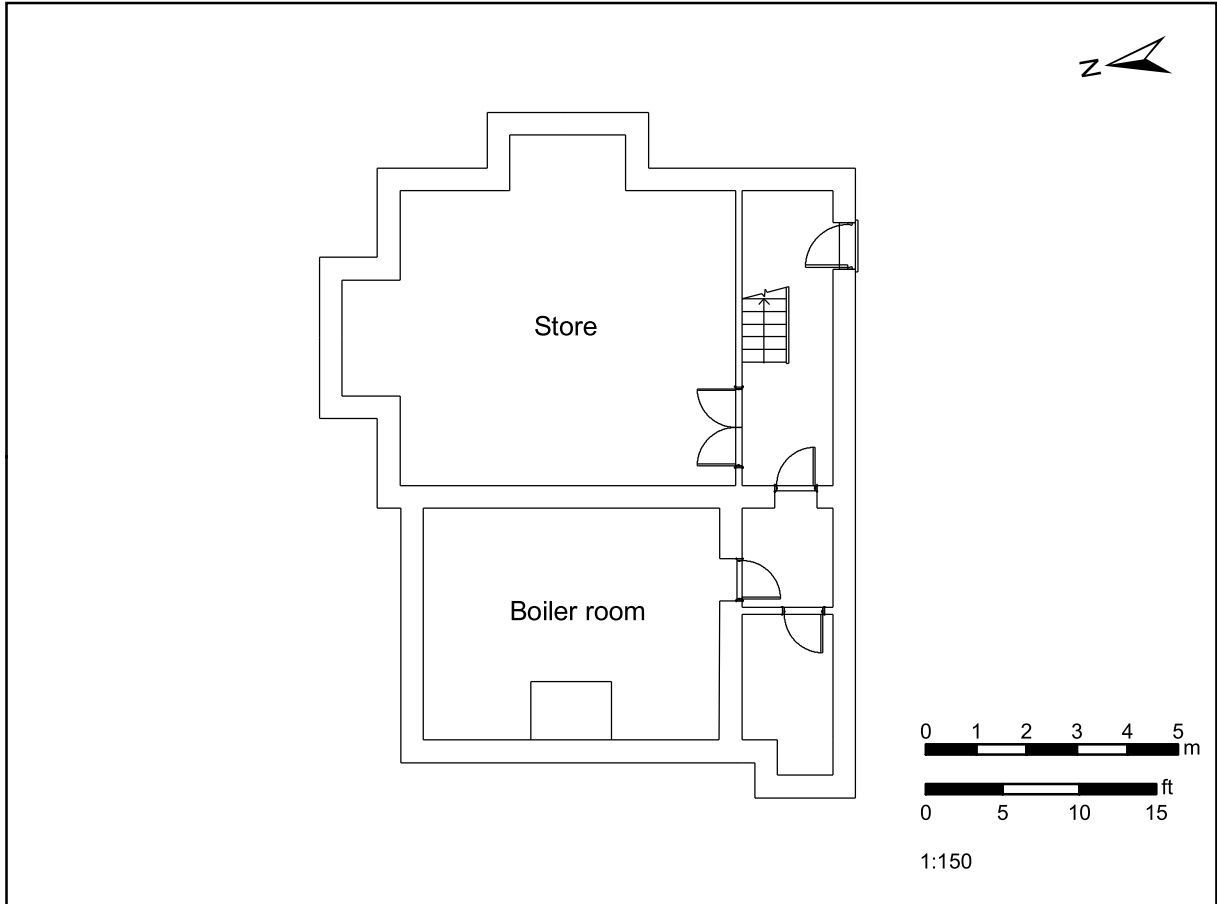


Fig.6. Plan of basement

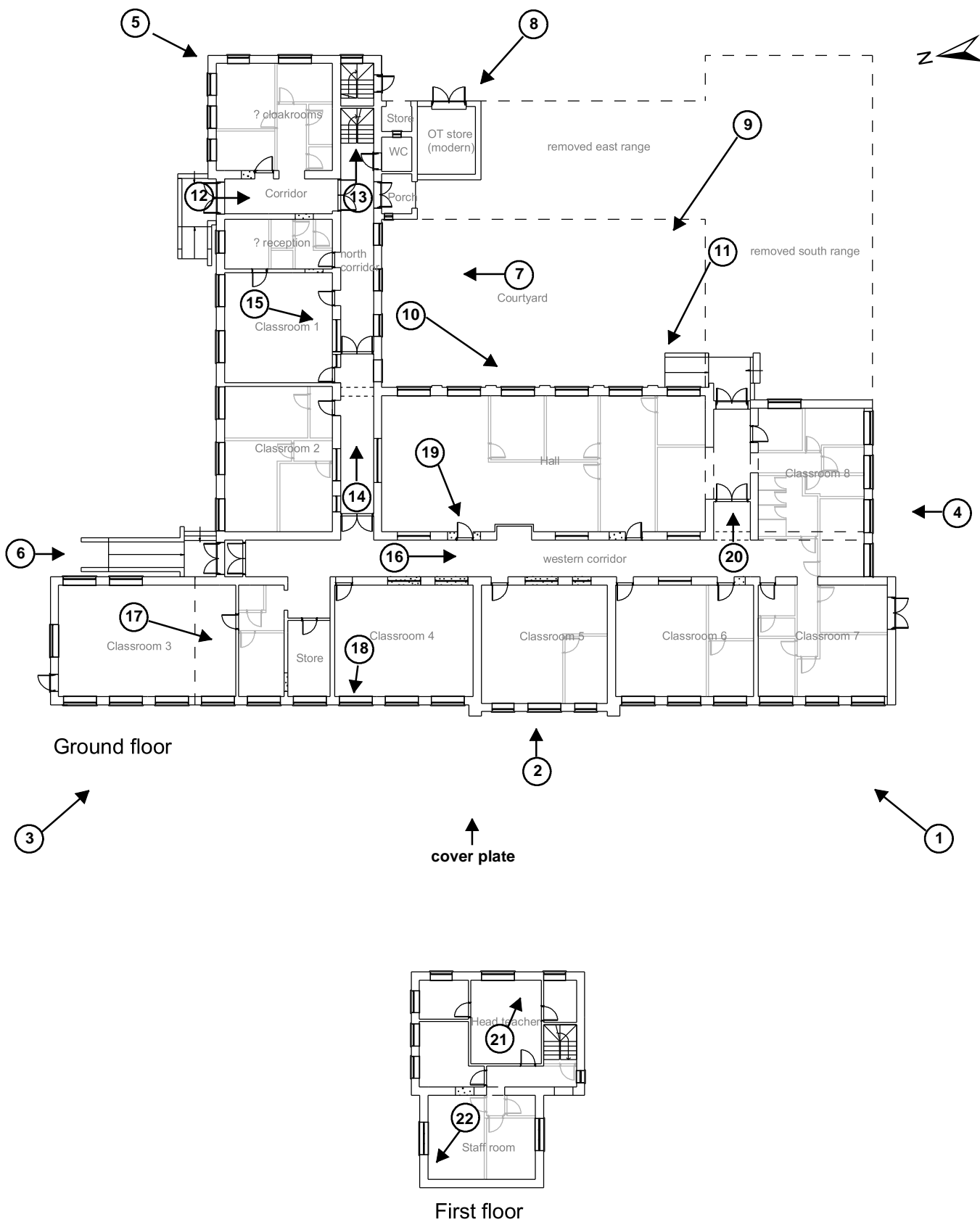


Fig.7. Direction of photographic plates



Plate 1 Main elevation viewed to north-east



Plate 2 Central pediment



Plate 3 Western range viewed to south-east



Plate 4 South elevation from road



Plate 5 School viewed to south-west with staff block in foreground



Plate 6 Western entrance



Plate 7 Northern range and remains of eastern range viewed to north



Plate 8 Staff block and remains of eastern range viewed to north-west



Plate 9 Rear of school viewed to north



Plate 10 Assembly hall viewed to south-west from north corridor roof



Plate 11 Ridge vent on assembly hall

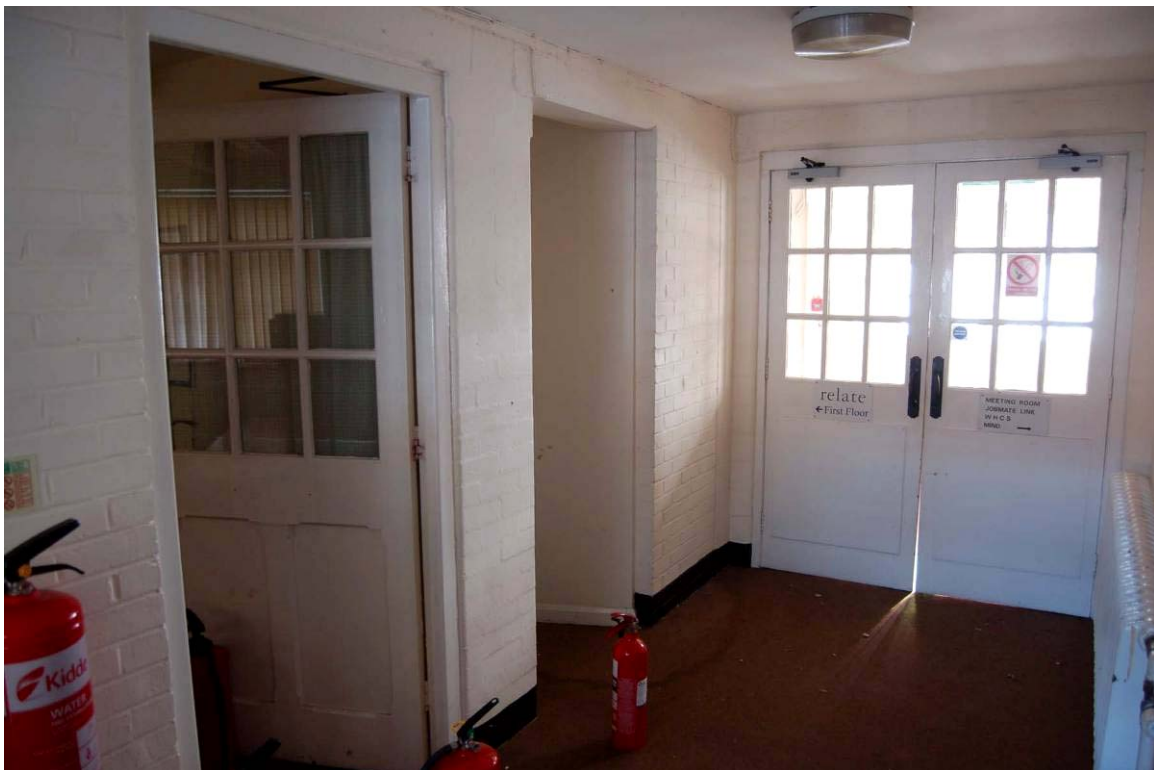


Plate 12 Entrance corridor in staff block viewed to north-east



Plate 13 Stairs up to staff rooms



Plate 14 North corridor viewed to east



Plate 15 Classroom 1 viewed to south



Plate 16 Western corridor viewed to south



Plate 17 Classroom 3 viewed to east



Plate 18 Typical classroom window



Plate 19 Hall viewed to south-west

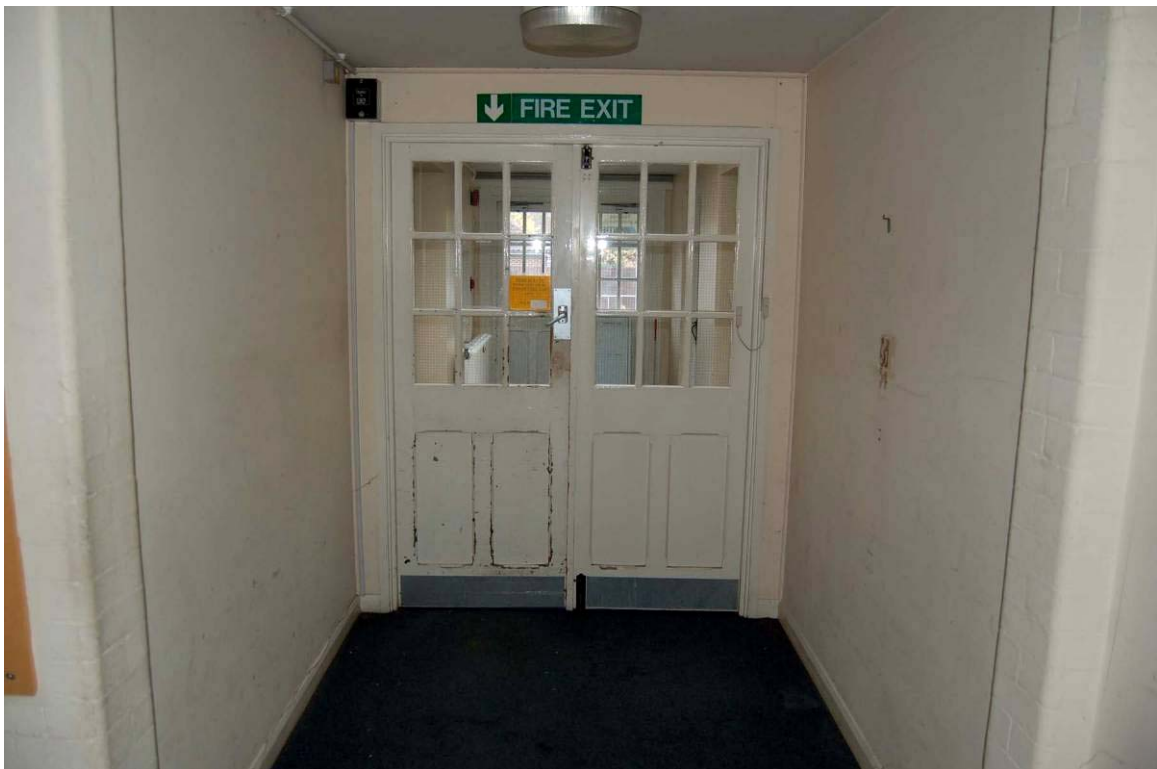


Plate 20 Corridor of former south range viewed to east



Plate 21 Head teacher's office viewed to south-east



Plate 22 Staff room viewed to north-west