

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL BUILDING SURVEY, TRENCH EVALUATION  
AND WATCHING BRIEF AT THE FORMER WEST OF ENGLAND  
EYE INFIRMARY, MAGDALEN ROAD, EXETER**

**by**

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## INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of two phases of archaeological recording undertaken by Exeter Archaeology at the former West of England Eye Infirmary, Magdalen Street, Exeter (NGR SX 92329226, Fig. 1). The former eye infirmary is a grade II Listed building, and the site lies within the statutory *Exeter Area of Archaeological Importance* designated under the 1979 *Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act*.

This report was originally produced, as a draft, in 2001 and has been revised to include the results of recent archaeological investigations at the site.

Part 1 of the report comprises observations and architectural notes compiled during a rapid survey of the building in March 2000 following the abandonment of the building as a training college and prior to its subsequent development as a hotel (Hotel Barcelona). Part 2 describes the results of monitoring and recording (a watching brief) carried out between June and November 2000 during external groundworks on the site of a new restaurant, and during excavations around the building for services. Both of these recording elements were commissioned by Heighway Field Associates and undertaken as a requirement of the local planning authority (Exeter City Council) under conditions attached to the grant of planning permission (ref: 99/0627/03, condition 8) and listed building consent (ref: 99/0628/07, condition 8) for the conversion of the infirmary to a hotel. The scope of the required archaeological works was set out in a project brief supplied on behalf of the planning authority by the ECC Archaeology Officer.

Part 3 of the report describes the results of a trench evaluation (August 2010) and subsequent watching brief (April 2011) carried out prior to the refurbishment of the (former) Hotel Barcelona. The work was commissioned by Swire Hotels in order to fulfil archaeological conditions attached to the grant of planning permission for the refurbishment (planning refs: 09/1604/07, condition 5; 08/0946/03, condition 6; 09/0009/03, condition 14; 09/1603/03, condition 14. Advice on the scope of required archaeological works was provided by the ECC Archaeology Officer via an email to Rider Levett Bucknall UK Ltd, dated 13th July 2010.

The site lies in an area of high archaeological potential just outside the south gate of the Roman and medieval town, adjacent to one of the major historic routes into Exeter. Due to its location it was considered possible that buried features and deposits dating from the Roman period onwards may survive. There is also thought to have been an outer line of Civil War defences protecting the south gate, within the general area of the site.

## **PART 1: ARCHITECTURAL OBSERVATIONS WITHIN THE BUILDING (2000)**

by T. Gent

This element of works entailed a rapid room-by-room survey of surviving historic architectural detail, fixtures and fittings. The 140 rooms and corridors comprising the building have been numbered from the ground floor up and annotated onto architects floor plans (Figs 2-4); rooms 1-45 on the ground floor, rooms 46-87 on the first floor, and rooms 88-140 on the second. Notes on each space follow. A photographic record was made on colour slide and

black and white film, with 105 exposures taken on black and white film and 33 on colour slide indoors, and a further 20 and 7 respectively of the exterior. The photographic record comprises part of the site archive, which is to be deposited at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Queen St, Exeter.

### 1.1 **General** (Plates 1-4)

The Eye Infirmary was purpose-built built between 1899 and 1900, designed by the architect A. Brumwell Thomas and built by Stevens and Son Ltd. of Exeter. Much of the ground floor and the rooms to the east of the corridor divide on the first floor have seen recent modifications to cater for the last use of the building as a nurse training college. The remainder of the building has seen some adaptation; notably the introduction, or updating of the heating system (the cast iron radiator in room 124, which is seemingly representative of others in the building, sits across a blocked entrance). The introduction of art deco style fireplaces in the large wards, which have themselves often been blocked off by false walling, and the slight rearrangement of rooms through the blocking of some original doorways for example has also taken place. Subdivision of large rooms on both the first and second floors appears to have taken place in the earlier 20th century. Subdivision of the two large wards on the second floor took place towards the end of the 1900s.

Externally, the only major change to the building has been the addition of a lift shaft at the rear, blocking two windows on each floor. A winch-room for the lift has been added to the roof. A low outbuilding, originally standing alongside the boiler house has been removed.

Access to all internal rooms except the lift shaft was possible. The external boiler house and other outbuildings were locked, as was external access to a cellar. Parts of the roof were not accessible.

### 1.2 **The rooms**

#### ***Ground floor***

##### ***1 Entrance Hall***

Original entrance doors (double doors, half-glazed, ornate brass handle plates). Largely unaltered. Late 20C reception desk to right of entrance, fire doors to corridors 16 and 32, and adjoining rooms 31, 31a, 33 and 34.

Surviving door frames, cornice plaster, mosaic floor - external bands of orange, black and yellow, interior fill of random grey/mixed colours and central design of foliage in white, grey, yellow, black and orange.

Ornate ?18C marble fireplace with pastoral scene in half-relief at centre of lintel. Green glazed tiles in fireplace.

Ornate oval bronze plaque over fireplace commemorating Georgina Kinnimont, Matron, Sept.1890-Sept.1906. Red/white veined marble surround of foliage and lions' heads.

Modern light fittings. Early radiator. Plastered.

##### ***2 Porch***

Barrel-vaulted porch (wood-panelled ceiling and walls)

Mosaic floor as room 1, without central motif. No obvious modernisation.

##### ***3 Corridor***

Original but for modern light fittings, the blocking of the first two windows beyond the entrance (for the lift shaft), and 2 early radiators. Original doors (with modern handles), half glazed to room 1. Plain floor mosaic with coloured edge banding.

**4 Classroom/former office**

Formed by subdivision (stud wall) of larger room to produce this and 5. Parqué floor (lifting). Original door (modern handles). Modern light fittings. Plastered. One early radiator. Late 20C electrical distribution box in plywood cupboard covering much of wall to right of door.

**5 Office**

Parqué floor. Late 20C replaced door. Modern light fittings. Plastered. One early radiator. Removed and blocked fireplace.

**6 ?Former Office**

Parqué floor. Late 20C replaced door to exterior. Original doors (modern handles) to 3 and 7. Modern light fittings. Plastered. Three early radiators. Removed and blocked fireplace.

**7 Lobby**

Bare brick walls. Modern carpet. L20C to exterior. Original door (modern handles) to exterior opposite. Modern light fittings.

**7a Lobby**

Bare brick walls. Modern carpet. Modern light fittings.

**8 Lavatory/washroom**

Original doors (lovely original brass knobs) to 16 and WC. Part glazed tile (brick shaped and sized as others in building), part plastered. Early radiator in washroom. Modern light fittings. Modern basin.

**9 Stairs**

Original wood handrail to either wall. Dado rail above handrail. Plastered. Lino. Modern light fittings. Early radiator under windows.

**10 Office**

Original door (modern handle). Early radiator. Plastered. Carpet. Modern light fittings.

**11 Corridor**

Formed by modern partition of 13. Modern fire doors. Blocked entrance to 16. Plastered. Carpet. Modern light fittings. Early radiator.

**12 Storeroom**

Tiled. Replaced door. Early radiator. L20C false ceiling.

**13 Ward**

Replaced doors. Modern light fittings. 8 early radiators. Carpet. Plastered.

**14 Lobby**

Tiled. Replaced door to exterior in original part-glazed frame. Carpet. Early radiator.

**15 Office(former bathrooms/sluiice)**

Replaced door. Modern light fittings. 3 early radiators. Carpet. Plastered.

**16 Corridor**

Plain mosaic floor with decorative edge (as 3). Plastered. Modern light fittings. Mid 20C firehose reel.

**17 Stair well**

L20C white painted (?plastic coated) metal fireplace (failed modern attempt at pleasing architecture). Plasterd. Modern radiators. ?Original door to exterior (boarded over, modern handle)

**18 Store**

Original door (modern handles). Lino. Plastered. Modern light fittings.

**19 Corridor**

Original ½-glazed door (modern handles) within original glazed frame. ?Original wooden handrails to stairs. Plastered. Carpet. Early radiator.

**20 Physiology department**

All recent fixtures and fittings. Modern radiators, cupboards, sinks etc. Modern partition supporting modern floor to 29. Replacement door. Plastered. Lino.

**21 Former ward**

L20C false ceiling to 75% of space. Modern partition to produce 22 and bathroom. Infilled entrance with replacement doors. Carpet. Plastered.

**22 Modern corridor**

False ceiling. Blocked entrance to 24. Plastered. Carpet.

**23 Lavatories in former bathroom/sluice**

All modern stud walls, doors and fittings. Door frames to 22 look original.

**24 ?Office**

Replacement doors in old frames. Carpet. Papered walls. 2 early radiators.

**25 Office**

Replacement door in original frame. 2 early radiators. Modern light fittings. Plastered. Carpet.

**26 Office**

As 25, but 1 Early radiator.

**27 Corridor**

Plastered. Carpet.

**28 Lobby**

Lovely glazed frame to replacement door. Original frame in arch to 20. Tiled. Blocked entrance to 21.

**29 Store**

All modern. Modern entrance pierces wall to 16.

**30 Office**

Mostly original. Ornate cornice, picture rail and deep, moulded skirting (noticeably finer than other rooms except 31). Plastered. Modern light fittings. Carpet. Removed and blocked fireplace. Original door (modern handles). 2 early radiators.

**31 Office**

As 30, but 1 early radiator. Was once part of 30. Original door (modern handles). Blocked doorway to 31a.

**31a ?Porters Lodge**

Replacement door. Plastered. Modern light fittings. Carpet.

**32 Corridor**

Plain mosaic floor with decorative edge (as 3). Plastered. Modern light fittings. No dado. Original wooden staircase at end.

**33 ?Porters lodge**

As 31a.

**34 Office**

Less grand than 30/31. Low moulded skirting. Replacement door. Carpet. Plastered. Modern light fittings. Early radiator. Blocked doorway to 35.

**35 Office**

As 34.

**36 Lobby**

Original door (modern handles) set within two windows. Carpet. Plastered. Modern light fittings.

**37 Office**

As 34. Early radiator.

**38 Office**

As 34. Early radiator. Original wooden pigeonhole arrangement to left of removed and blocked fireplace.

**39 Store/sub-office to 38**

As 34. Early radiator. No skirting

**40 Lavatories**

Probable original layout. Replacement doors, fittings. Lino.

**41 Corridor**

With 42, 43, 44, formed by modern stud walls dividing a single room. Entrance from 32 formed by modern piercing of wall.

**42 ?Store**

All modern fittings except window. Plastered. Carpet.

**43 Kitchen**

All modern fittings. Early radiator. Plastered.

**44 Office**

All modern fittings. Early radiator. Plastered. Removed and blocked fireplace.

**45 Boiler room**

No access.

**First Floor**

**46, 47, 48 Bathroom/lavatories/sluite**

Tiled. Bare floor. No light fittings. Early radiators. Mid to late 20C medical fittings, including bed pan cleaner, heated drier, sit-in bath. Original door (modern handles/ repanelled).

**49 Ward**

Parqué floor. 11 early radiators. Modern light fittings. Timber box-cover to fireplace. Evidence of removed ? nurses office within floor opposite 50. Replacement door to 46-48. Original door (modern handles, modern half-glazing) to 51 (fireproof [?asbestos] sheeting on interior).

**50 Store**

Tiled. Original door (original brass handles). Modern light fittings.

**51 Corridor**

Mosaic floor as 3. Plastered, but over tiles below dado. Mid 20C firehose reel. Early radiator.

**52 Stairwell**

As 9.

**53 Store**

As 50.

**54 Ward**

As 49, but 9 early radiators, and no evidence of nurses office. Art Deco fireplace behind timber boxed cover.

**55-58 Bathroom/lavatories/sluite**

Almost original structurally, with early (?original) fittings including bath. Original doors (modern handles) to washroom and WC. Mid to late 20C medical fittings, including bed pan cleaner, heated drier.

**59 Lavatory/washroom**

Formed by a modern dividing wall. Tiled. Original door (modern handles) (fireproof [?asbestos] sheeting on interior). Early radiator.

**60 Stairs**

As 9, but tiles exposed below dado in damaged area.

**61 Lavatory**

As 59.

**62 Corridor**

Mosaic floor as 3. blocked windows for lift shaft. Early radiator. Dado.

**63 Ward**

Plastered. Carpet. Modern light fittings. 6 early radiators. Original doors.

**64 Changing room/former store or sluice**

Early radiator. Original door. Tiled. Modern light fittings.

**65 Lavatory/washroom**

Original door. Tiled. Modern light and other fittings.

**66 Bathroom to 67**

Appears to be an original division. Original door. Early radiator. Modern false ceiling and bathroom fittings.

**67 Private room**

Original door with inserted viewing window with sliding cover (fireproof [?asbestos] sheeting on interior) . 2 early radiators. Plastered. Modern light fittings. L20C false ceiling.

**68 Corridor**

As 51.

**69 Bathroom/washroom/lavatory**

All early fittings (original to sub-division) bar light fittings, carpet and handles to bathroom door.

**70 Kitchen**

Rooms 69-73 the result of an early 20C subdivision of a large room. Skirting moulding is different between outer and inner walls. All plastered, modern light fittings, early doors.

**71 Corridor**

Pierced entrance with original door to large room (opposite entrance to 80) blocked.

**72 Sitting room****73 Sitting room****74 Stairs**

Wooden staircase with wood paneling to underside.

**75 Corridor**

Rooms 75-80 also formed by early 20C subdivision. All plastered, modern light fittings, early doors. Door to room 80 once formed door to large room. Access to 75 through pierced wall.

**76 Lavatories****77 Lavatories****78 Changing room**

Removed and blocked fireplace.

**79 Changing room****80 Office**

Original door (fireproof [?asbestos] sheeting on interior) .



**81 Unidentified room**

?Former private/small ward. Two doorways, replacement doors. Central false doorway. 2 early radiators. Plastered. Carpet. Removed and blocked fireplace.

**82 Private room**

Original door with inserted viewing window with sliding cover (fireproof (?asbestos) sheeting on interior). Early radiator. Plastered. Carpet. Original door to small wardrobe. Removed and blocked fireplace.

**83 Small ward**

Parqué floor. Original door (fireproof [?asbestos] sheeting on interior). Original door to small wardrobe. Removed and blocked fireplace with early Belling bar-heater.

**84 Office/former small room**

Parqué floor beneath carpet. Removed and blocked fireplace. Picture rail. Good skirting. Early radiator. Modern light fittings. Original door (modern handles, fireproof [?asbestos] sheeting on interior).

**85 Office**

Parqué floor beneath carpet. Blocked white, simple classical fireplace. Cornice. Picture rail. Good skirting. A little grander than other rooms on floor. 2 early radiators. Modern light fittings. Original door (modern handles, fireproof [?asbestos] sheeting on interior).

**86 Store**

Tiled. Early radiator. Original door (modern handles). Modern light fittings. Carpet.

**87 Store/former office**

Tiled. Early radiator. Original door (modern handles). Modern light fittings. Carpet.

**Second floor****88 Stairs**

As 74.

**89 Corridor**

Rooms 89-93 once one room, seemingly with two doorways as original door (modern handles). Early 20C subdivision. Plastered.

**90 Unidentified room**

Carpet. Plastered. 2 early radiators. Removed and blocked fireplace. Replacement door.

**91 Lavatory/changing room**

No early fittings.

**92 Store**

Early radiator. Down Bothers chrome and glass instrument cabinet.

**93 Kitchen**

Early radiator, otherwise new fittings. Removed and blocked fireplace.

**94 Theatre**

Enter by original varnished wood double doors (legend THEATRE on the right). Green brick shaped tiles on walls to ceiling. Simple cornice. Mosaic floor as 3. Removed and blocked fireplace, with blue tiles in crescent. Early, tubed wiring ducting. Early switches. Earlyish scrubbing basin and elbow-taps. Deep, varnished wood sash-frame windows with inbuilt black fabric blinds. 2 early radiators. Modern light fittings. 1950s-1970s theatre lights. Mount for Zeiss ?lazer/light/camera/microscope.

**95 Corridor**

Once contiguous with 88. Separated from 104 by glazed divide and ½-glazed door (possibly original) All original features. No dado. Wooden cabinet to left of doors to 94 contain ?emergency backup batteries.

**96 Corridor**

Blocked windows for lift shaft. Early radiator. Dado. Plastered. Early, ?original theatre lighting control box.

**97 Small ward**

Parqué floor. 7 early radiators. Modern light fittings. Plastered. Original door. Art Deco, tiled fireplace.

**98 Bathroom**

Tiled. Early radiator. Modern light fittings. Original door (modern handles).

**99 Lavatory/washroom**

Early Original doors, radiator. Tiled.

**100 Lift shaft**

Recent insertion. Brick exterior. No access to interior.

**101 Sluice**

Plastered. Early radiator. Early or ?original Armitage Shanks basin. Late 20C Dent and Hellyer Bed pan cleaner. Original door. Modern light fittings.

**102 Stairs**

As 60.

**103 Small office**

Plastered. Early radiator. Original door. Modern light fittings. Carpet.

**104 Corridor**

Dado, with plaster over tiles below. Modern light fittings. Lino over cement floor. Floral patterned circular hatches in floor.

**105 Small ward**

105-107 created by late 20C subdivision with false ceilings. Early radiator in each room.

**106 Corridor**

**107 Small ward**

**108 Store**

Original door (no handles). Tiled. Early radiator.

**109 Unidentified room**

Modern construct with 105-107.

**110 Remains of ward**

Parqué floor. Early radiators. Tiled Art Deco fireplace.

**111-114 Bathroom/lavatory/sluice**

Tiled. Original doors (modern handles). Doorway to right of fireplace blocked with hatchway. No other original features.

**115 Library**

Green crushed stone in green cement flooring. 2 early radiators. Removed and blocked fireplace. Glazed lights to 108 and 116.

**116 Store**

Tiles. Carpet. Recent radiator. Modern light fittings.

**117-122 Modern rooms and corridor**

Late 20C subdivision with false ceilings. Early radiators.

**123 Remains of ward**

Long parqué flooring tiles. Tiled art Deco fireplace. Blocked entrance to left of fireplace. Early radiators.

**124-126 Bathroom/lavatory/sluice**

Tiled. Original doors (modern handles/repanelled). Modern light fittings. Early radiator in blocked entrance.

**127 Office/?Sister's office**

Tiled. Carpet. Early radiator. Original door (modern handles). Blocked hatch to ward.

**128 Office**

Lino. Plastered. Early radiator. Original door (no handles).

**129 Unidentified room**

Parqué floor. Early radiator. Original door (modern handles) inserted viewing window with slide. Removed and blocked fireplace.

**130-131 Small ward and bathroom**

Parqué floor. Early radiator. Original doors, except to 130. Removed and blocked fireplace. Early sink and taps.

**132 Small ward**

Parqué floor. 2 early radiators. Original door (modern handles). Removed and blocked fireplace with early Belling bar heater. Modern light fittings.

**133 Medical store**

Green floor as 115, also 1/3 way up walls. Modern retort. Early 20C steel and glass instrument cabinets. Early radiator. Original door (modern handles). Modern light fittings.

**134 Room**

Divided from 136 by recent wall. Lino. Replacement doors. Removed and blocked fireplace.

**135 Room**

Original door (modern handles, repanelled). Part-tiled wall had wide, arched entrance to 137 (no blocked).

**136 Room**

Entrance a possible recent insertion. Lino. Early radiator. Modern light fittings.

**137 Corridor**

Suspected non-original piercing for entrance. Modern divide between 137-139.

**138 Changing room**

Removed and blocked fireplace.

**139 Lavatories**

Original door. Modern wall to produce division.

**140 lavatories**

Original door. Modern wall to produce division.

### 1.3 The roof space

The roof space is produced by softwood rafters and purlins, with widely-spaced principal trusses supported by king-posts and common rafters. Water tanks are contained within the roof. Some areas were not accessible. The external and independent winch-room to the lift is accessed by steps and a door. This room was locked.

### 1.4 The exterior

The exterior of the building appears largely unchanged. An unidentified single-storey outbuilding, which originally stood alongside the boiler house has been removed, making the

double-door exit onto its roof from the first floor redundant. A lift-shaft, built in red brick has been added to the rear of the building within the north-west corner produced by the central rear wing. The addition of the shaft required the blocking of the innermost two windows to this wing on each floor. A timber-built winch-room has been constructed on the roof for the lift. All work relating to the lift presumably took place at the end of the third, or during the last quarter of the 20th century.

## **PART 2: WATCHING BRIEF DURING GROUNDWORKS (2000) by R. Woodgate.**

### **2.1 Method**

Visits were made between June and November 2000 to monitor the excavation of a series of service trenches around the building, and excavations on the site of a new restaurant to the south-west of the building. The standard EA recording system was employed: stratigraphic information was recorded on *pro-forma* watching brief record sheets and context record sheets, a drawn record was compiled in plan and section at scales of 1:20 or 1: 50 as appropriate and a photographic record was made in black and white print and colour slide.

### **2.2 Results**

The site was found to be largely devoid of archaeological features or deposits. The broad deposit sequence exposed across the site consisted of topsoil overlying post-medieval levelling layers which in turn overlay either redeposited or *in-situ* natural subsoil. The post-medieval deposits predominantly yielded high quantities of late 19th-century material, which may well be contemporary with the construction of the Eye Infirmary.

A solitary and heavily truncated post-medieval pit (501) was observed 16m to the south of the boiler room. Only its basal fill (500) survived, from which four sherds of late 17th or 18th century pottery and one Beerstone architectural fragment were recovered. The latter was partially moulded, but was too fragmented to provide a secure indication of date. Stylistically however it appeared to be post-medieval.

On the south side of the building a previously unidentified Victorian coal chute, was exposed, leading into a cellar. The chute was brick built and measured approximately 80cm square.

The foundations of a NW/SE aligned wall were observed within the north facing section of a service trench excavated across Bull Meadow Road. The foundations, of which three courses survived, were composed of Heavitree stone blocks, 62cm long by 26cm high, of undetermined width. A slate damp proofing layer was apparent beneath the first course. The location and orientation of the wall is consistent with a building shown on the 1876 OS map. The wall was abutted by a later brick built wall directly below which was an arched brick built culvert measuring 52cm x 52cm.

It should be noted with regard to potential future investigations at the site that several tonnes of the post-medieval deposits were transported to the Cricklepit Lower Mills site, which was also under development by the main contractor.

### **2.3 Conclusion**

The excavated evidence is suggestive of a major clearance of the area during the Victorian period prior to the construction of the Infirmary in 1899-1900.

Another possible explanation for the lack of archaeological deposits and features is that the ground has been heavily disturbed at some point, possibly due to service trenching.

The foundations observed in Bull Meadow Road probably relate to an 18th or 19th century structure; probably an internal or external wall.

The post-medieval pit observed to the south of the boiler room may date to the demolition of a previous structure. The material recovered from the fill of the pit indicates a date of the late 17th-18th century, which could point to the feature having been dug as a refuse pit in a previous phase of the site's history.

### **PART 3: TRENCH EVALUATION AND RECORDING (2010-11) by P. Stead**

A trench evaluation, and a watching brief during subsequent groundworks were commissioned by Swire Hotels in July 2010 in order to fulfil the requirements of archaeological conditions attached the grant of planning permission and listed building consent for the refurbishment of the former Hotel Barcelona.

#### **3.1 The Trench Evaluation**

The evaluation specifically targeted the location of a proposed detached swimming pool and changing room/spa area, with one trench located within the footprint of each structure. The aim of the evaluation was to establish the presence or absence, character, depth, extent and date of any archaeological deposits within this development area, and to inform a decision on what if any further archaeological work would be required before or during construction report on the findings as appropriate.

During the post-medieval period the front of the site was occupied by houses on Magdalen Street. The area of the proposed swimming pool and changing room/spa lies to the south of these former properties on land formerly depicted as open space, perhaps fields or gardens. By the mid-19th century the area was part of the larger Bull Meadow Gardens.

##### **3.1.1 *Method***

The fieldwork was undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation prepared by EA (2010).

The presence of large trees close to the boundary wall, plus the presence of electricity cables, necessitated a revised placement of the two proposed trenches from that produced for the written scheme; both nevertheless lay across the footprint of the development. The trenches totalled 27.5m in length, and measured 1.8m wide and up to 1.9m deep. The trenches were excavated in spits using a wheeled digger fitted with a toothless grading bucket, down to the level of early post-medieval deposits or natural subsoil, whichever was higher. Investigation then continued by hand; the sides of the trenches were cleaned and features hand excavated. Features extending below the general level of the base of the trench were investigated as far as was safely possible.

Stratigraphic information was recorded on single context record sheets and a drawn record was compiled in plan and section at scales of 1:20 or 1:50 as appropriate. This was accompanied by a photographic record using black-and-white photography and a high-quality digital camera.

Where present, finds were recovered from all pre-20th-century layers. Details of these finds are listed in Appendix 1.

### 3.1.2 *Results*

#### **Trench 1** (Fig. 5, plates 5-7)

Natural subsoil was exposed at a depth of 1.8m from the surface, at 29.95m AOD. At the west end of the trench an E-W aligned feature (109), measuring 0.3m wide by 0.2m deep cut through the subsoil (Pl. 3). The feature had steep sides with a generally flat, but undulating base. It contained a fill (110) of friable dark-brown silt with patches of fine gravelly orange clay, from which fragments of brick, bottle glass, and coarseware pottery dating to c.1670-1730 were recovered. The undulating nature of the base of the feature and the clay pockets within its fill indicate that it probably represents a garden planting trench.

The trench was sealed by a 0.55m thick layer of red-brown stiff silty clay (108). This deposit was not very humic and may represent a dump or levelling layer rather than a cultivation soil. Sherds of late17th-/early18th-century coarsewares were recovered from this deposit. At the east end of the trench this layer was truncated by the construction trench (105) for a wall (106). The wall was constructed of volcanic trap and flint and aligned approximately E-W, although the ends of its construction trench curved to the north (Pl. 1). The feature had been backfilled with stiff yellow-red/brown clay (107) from which a residual sherd of late16th-/early17th-century pottery was recovered.

Directly above wall 105 lay a later surface (104), constructed of coarse orange, red and blue industrial bricks (Pl. 2). These were bonded with a pale cream mortar, with some slate packing. This mortar was also present over the surface and continued to the east, beyond the limit of the bricks as 103.

From the level of the surface the ground had been raised by up to 1.15m through a series of dumped soils (101 and 102), interpreted as being associated with the construction of the Eye Infirmary in 1899-1900. At the east end of the trench soils 101 and 102 had been truncated by a large pit that contained demolition debris, which may be associated with a phase of alteration to the infirmary. Landscaping features associated with the conversion of the building to the Hotel Barcelona in 2000 were present throughout the trench (100).

#### **Trench 2** (Fig. 5, plate 8)

Natural subsoil was exposed at depths of between 1.70m and 2m below the surface (30.12m and 29.83m AOD), with the ground sloping to the south. This natural slope to the south accords with the observations made in 2000 in the restaurant area to the north where natural ground was encountered at 1.5m below the surface (Pl. 4).

Two features were exposed cutting into the natural; feature 210, a post hole, measured 0.5m in diameter by 0.2m deep, and contained a fill (209) of grey-brown soft clayey silt from which

a single sherd of 14th-century pottery was recovered. Within this fill was a large roughly squared block of volcanic trap that would have formed a pad for the removed post. The top of the pad was exposed just below the top of the feature indicating that the posthole must have been severely truncated.

To the south was an E-W aligned ditch (208) which had gently sloping sides and a wide flat base. The ditch was filled with dark slightly red-brown clayey silt (207) from which slate, coal, a clay pipe stem and a sherd of early-mid 18th-century porcelain were recovered.

These features were sealed by a 0.5m thick layer of friable red-brown sandy clayey silt (206), from which a single sherd of 17th-18th century pottery was recovered, along with a residual medieval sherd. The layer was much more humic than the equivalent layer (108) in trench 1.

Above, and possibly cut into 206 was a band of roof slate fragments (205) and a large quantity of sherds from a large, late 19th-century South Somerset coarseware vessel. This deposit was orientated E-W, apparently coincidentally aligned with the ditch 208 below and the end of a brick surface 203 above. This spread was sealed by a grey-brown silty layer (204), possibly a cultivation layer. Above this soil was a brick and mortar surface (203) - a continuation of the surfaces observed in trench 1 (103 and 104). Above this surface was a demolition deposit of brick and mortar rubble (211).

Demolition and landscaping deposits (200-202) of 20th-century date, similar to those observed in trench 1, were present above the demolition layer 211.

### 3.1.3 *Discussion*

No evidence for any prehistoric, Roman or early medieval activity was uncovered during the evaluation. Posthole 210 is likely to be of late medieval date. Given that a sherd of residual medieval pottery was also found in a later context, it is possible that the pottery in this posthole is also residual and that the feature is later in date. However, the shallow nature of the posthole, with the post pad present just below its present top surface, indicates significant historic truncation of the feature, which is probably further evidence of an early date.

No evidence was found for features of a Civil War date, with the other early features (109 and 208) broadly dating to the 30 years either side of 1700. The features were parallel to each other and may be contemporary. Their exact functions are unknown but the character and fill of 109 indicates it was probably a planting trench within a garden.

The later features (undated wall 105 and 19th-century surfaces 103, 104/203) are also something of an enigma. Historic mapping (the Chamber map book of 1758, Coldridge's map of 1819 and the 1:500 Ordnance Survey map of 1876) indicates this area was, until 1899-1900, open ground, and none of this mapping depicts buildings or other features in the area. The curving nature of wall 105 could hint at a specialist function, such as a dovecote, but this is very much speculative.

In summary, a small number of later medieval and post-medieval features survive within the area of the new swimming pool and changing rooms. These are overlain by a depth of deposits, including surfaces and a significant raising of the ground level associated with the construction of the Eye Infirmary in 1899-1900.

### 3.1.4 *Finds listing*, by C. Coles

#### Context Dating

107	Late C16th/early C17th
108	C17th/early C18th
110	c.1670-1730
205	After 1870
206	C17th-C18th
207	Early/mid C18th
209	C14th-C15th

#### Clay Pipe

<i>context</i>	<i>bowls</i>	<i>stems</i>	<i>dates/comments</i>
207	0	1	Discarded

#### Glass

<i>context</i>	<i>qty</i>	<i>comments</i>
110	4	Green Bottle Glass

#### Pottery & Dating Evidence

<i>context</i>	<i>contents/dating evidence</i>	<i>sherds</i>	<i>vessels</i>
107	N.D.G.T. type 2A bowl, late C16th/early C17th	1	1
108	N.D.G.T. tripod foot	1	1
108	S.S. plain ware	3	2
110	N.D.G.T.	1	1
110	S.S.C.W.	1	1
205	Creamware (Discarded)	1	1
205	S.S.C.W. (Discarded)	10	1
206	Fabric 20 – Medieval residual sherd C10th- C14th	1	1
206	N.D.G.T.	1	1
206	S.S.C.W C17th/C18th	1	1
207	Porcelain C18th (Discarded)	1	1
209	Exeter Fabric 42, C14th/C15th	1	1

#### Abbreviations

N – North  
D – Devon  
G – Gravel  
T – Tempered  
SS – South Somerset  
CW – Coarseware

#### Statistics

total number of sherds: 23  
minimum number of vessels: 13

#### Tile

<i>context</i>	<i>Comments</i>
108	2 pieces of ridge tile



## 3.2 Watching brief

### 3.2.1 *Method*

Visits were made between March and May 2011 to monitor excavations within the footprint of the new swimming pool and changing room/spa complex, which had been the subject of a trench evaluation in August 2010 (3.1 above). Photographic recording was also undertaken at the boiler house; the only room within the former infirmary where access was not possible at the time of the building survey of 2000.

With regard to the groundworks, the standard EA recording system was employed: stratigraphic information was recorded on *pro-forma* watching brief record sheets and context record sheets, a drawn record was compiled in plan and section at scales of 1:20 or 1: 50 as appropriate and a photographic record was made in black and white print and colour slide. The photographic coverage of the boiler room has been added to that of the 2000 building survey.

### 3.2.2 *Results*

Groundworks entailed the bulk excavation of material to a depth of up to 2.3m below ground level. No significant archaeological deposits or features were exposed, the only feature present comprising a modern E-W aligned trench containing 20th century pottery and building material.

The typical deposit sequence was as follows:

0 - 600mm	modern levelling deposits
600 - 1300mm	mixed levelling deposits containing 19th century pottery
1300 - 1600mm	dark brown silty clay, devoid of dating evidence and probably representing weathered natural subsoil
1600mm +	natural clay subsoil

Excavation terminated at 2.3m below ground level (29.41m AOD).

### 3.2.3 *Conclusion*

The trench evaluation and subsequent watching brief have not identified any significant archaeological deposits or features. All material has proved to be post-medieval in date, indicating that the immediate area to the rear of the building lies away from the Civil War outworks believed to have existed somewhere in the wider area. The absence of early structural remains is consistent with the depiction of the area on 19th century mapping as lying within Bull Meadow Gardens.

## SITE ARCHIVE

The site records have been compiled into a fully integrated site archive which is currently held at Exeter Archaeology's offices under project number 3847 / 7308, pending deposition at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum. Details of the investigations, including a pdf copy of this

report have been submitted to the on-line archaeological database OASIS (reference exeterar1 - 113307).

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The 2000 works (parts 1 and 2 of this report) were commissioned by Heighway Field Associates. The project was administered by T Williamson (Heighway Field) and P.J. Weddell (Exeter Archaeology). The building survey was carried out by T. Gent and the monitoring of groundworks was undertaken by R. Woodgate and P. Manning.

The 2010-11 works (part 3 of this report) was commissioned by Swire Hotels. The project was administered by Paul Beeston (Rider Levett Bucknall UK Ltd, for Swire Hotels) and Peter Stead (Exeter Archaeology). The fieldwork was carried out by A.J. Passmore, M. Leverett and G. Young. The finds were processed by C. Coles and J.P. Allan, and the report illustrations prepared by S.E. Blackmore.

## SOURCES CONSULTED

Pye, A. 1999 Brief for an archaeological recording project: Development of the former West of England Eye Infirmary, Magdalen Street, Exeter

Exeter Archaeology 2010 Written Scheme of Investigation for Historic Building Recording and Evaluative Trial Trenching at the Former Hotel Barcelona, Magdalen Street, Exeter (Proj. No. 7308).

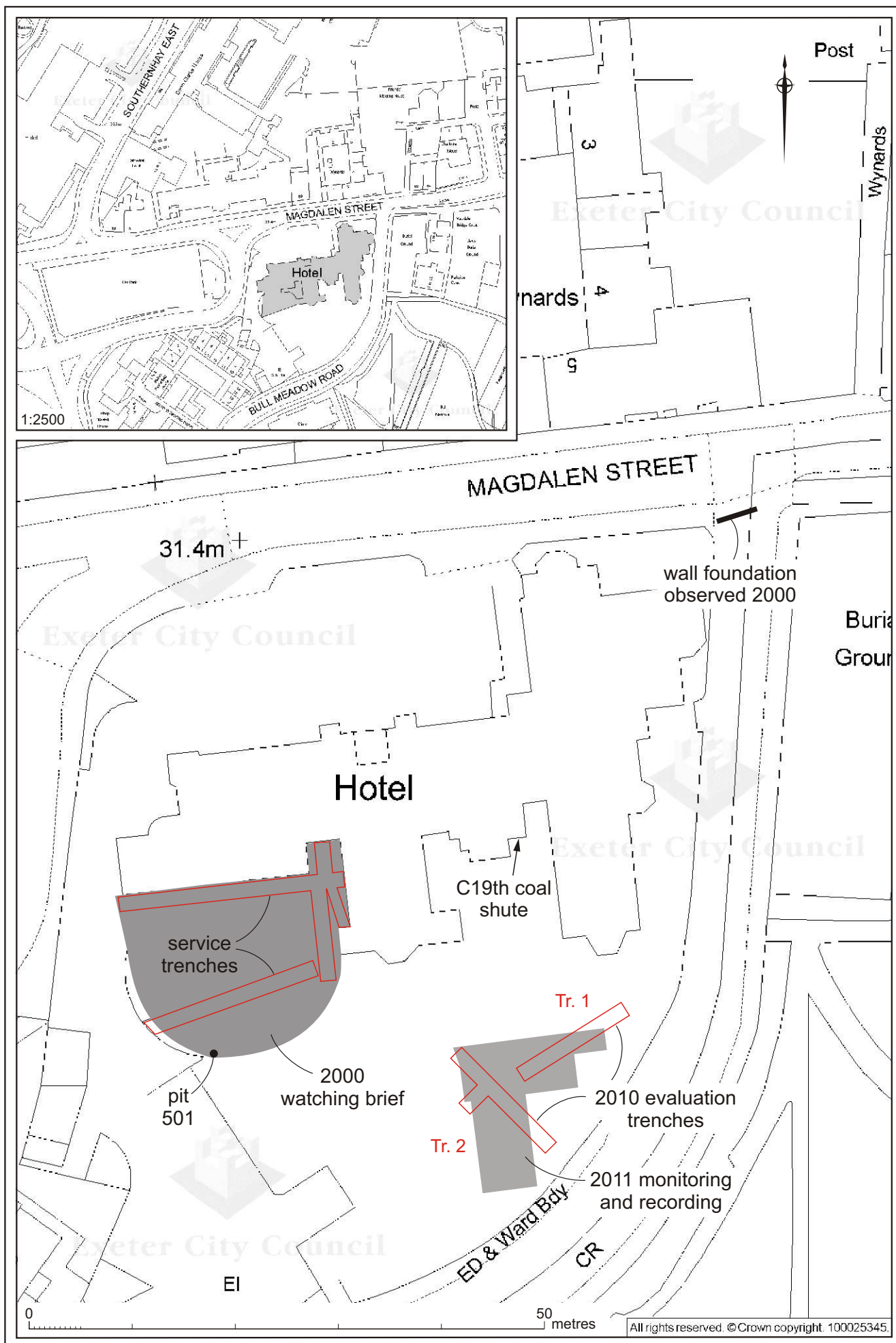


Fig. 1 Location of site, showing areas of investigation.

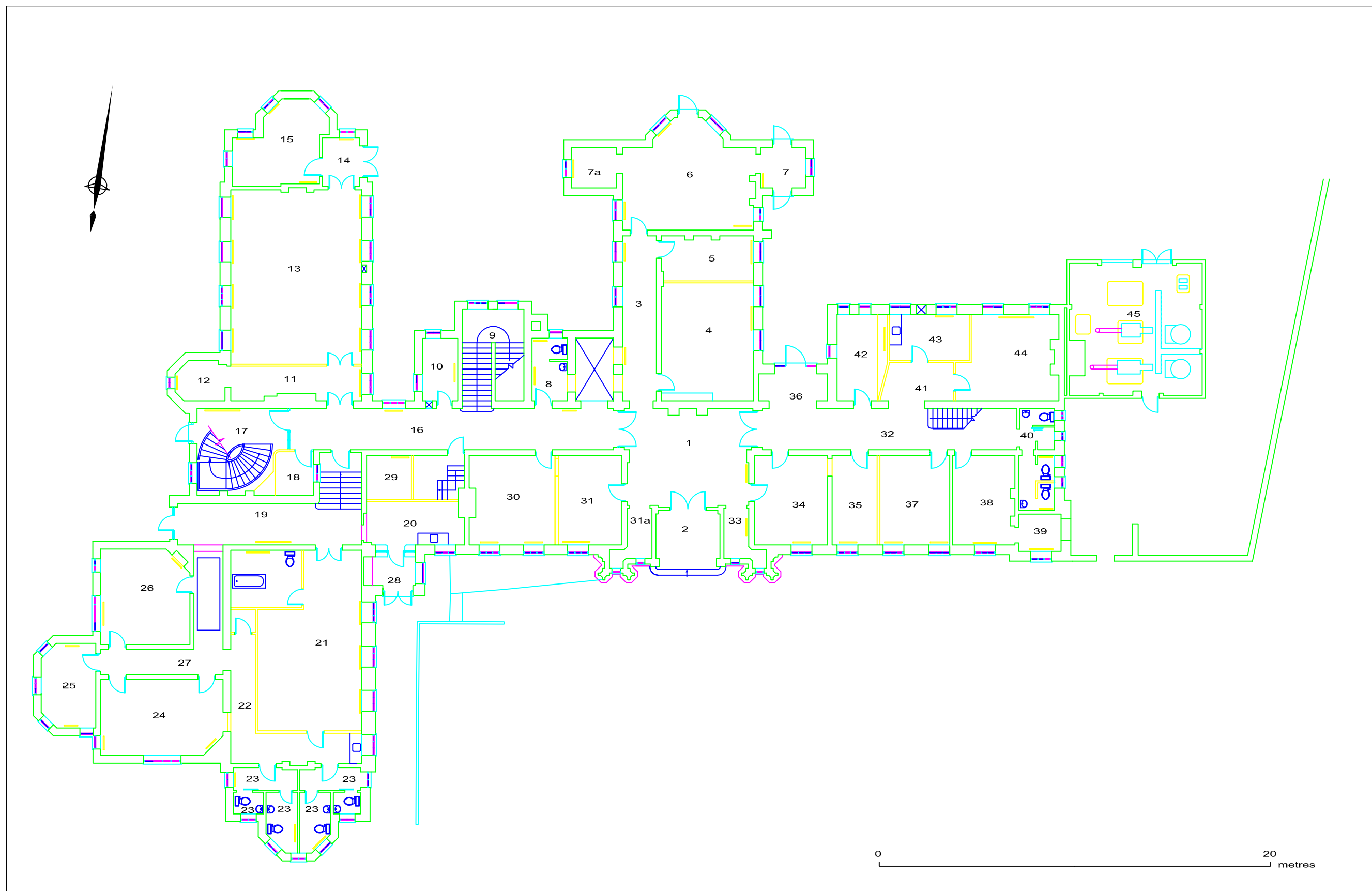


Fig. 2 Ground floor plan.

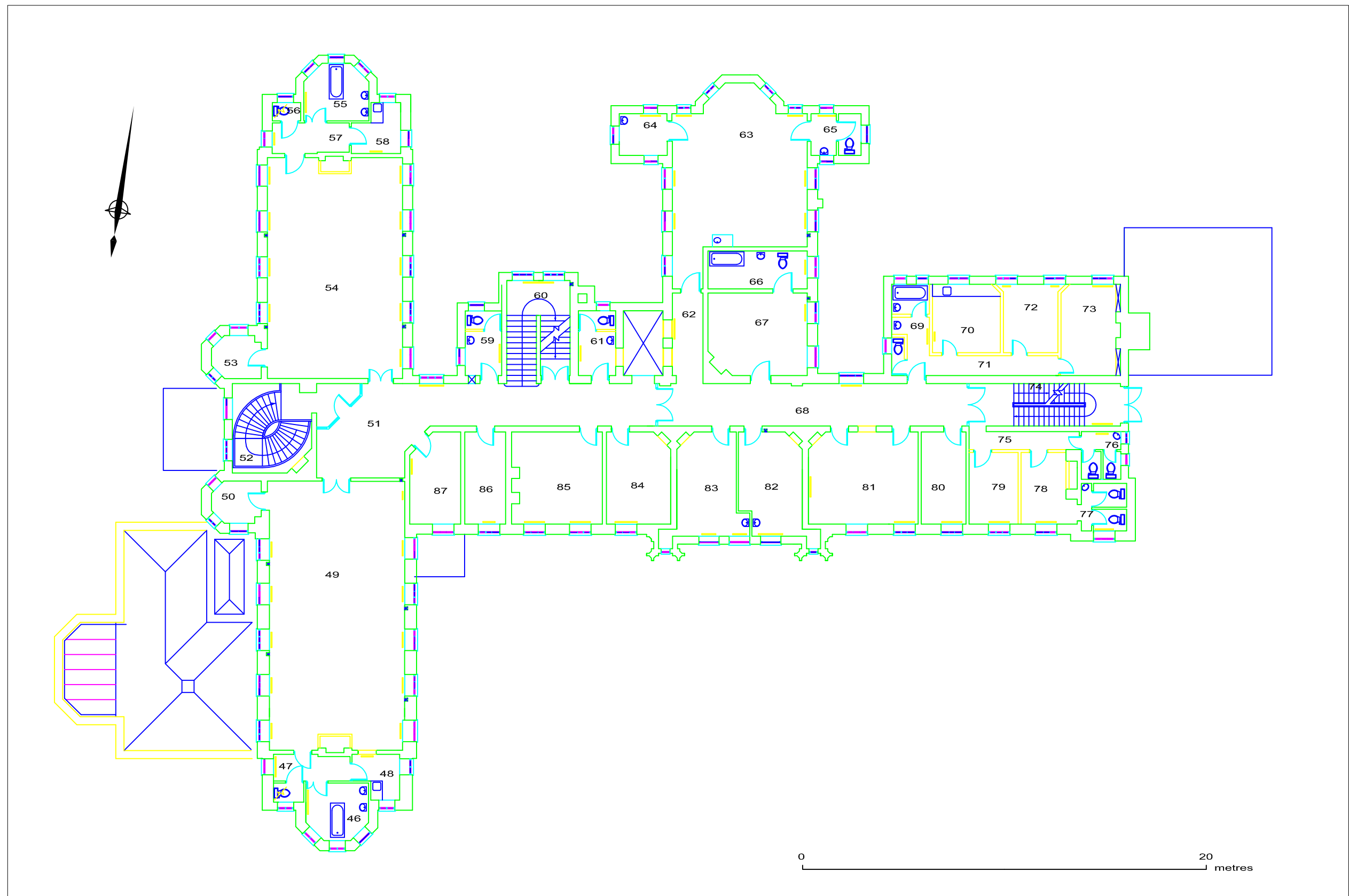


Fig. 3 First floor plan.

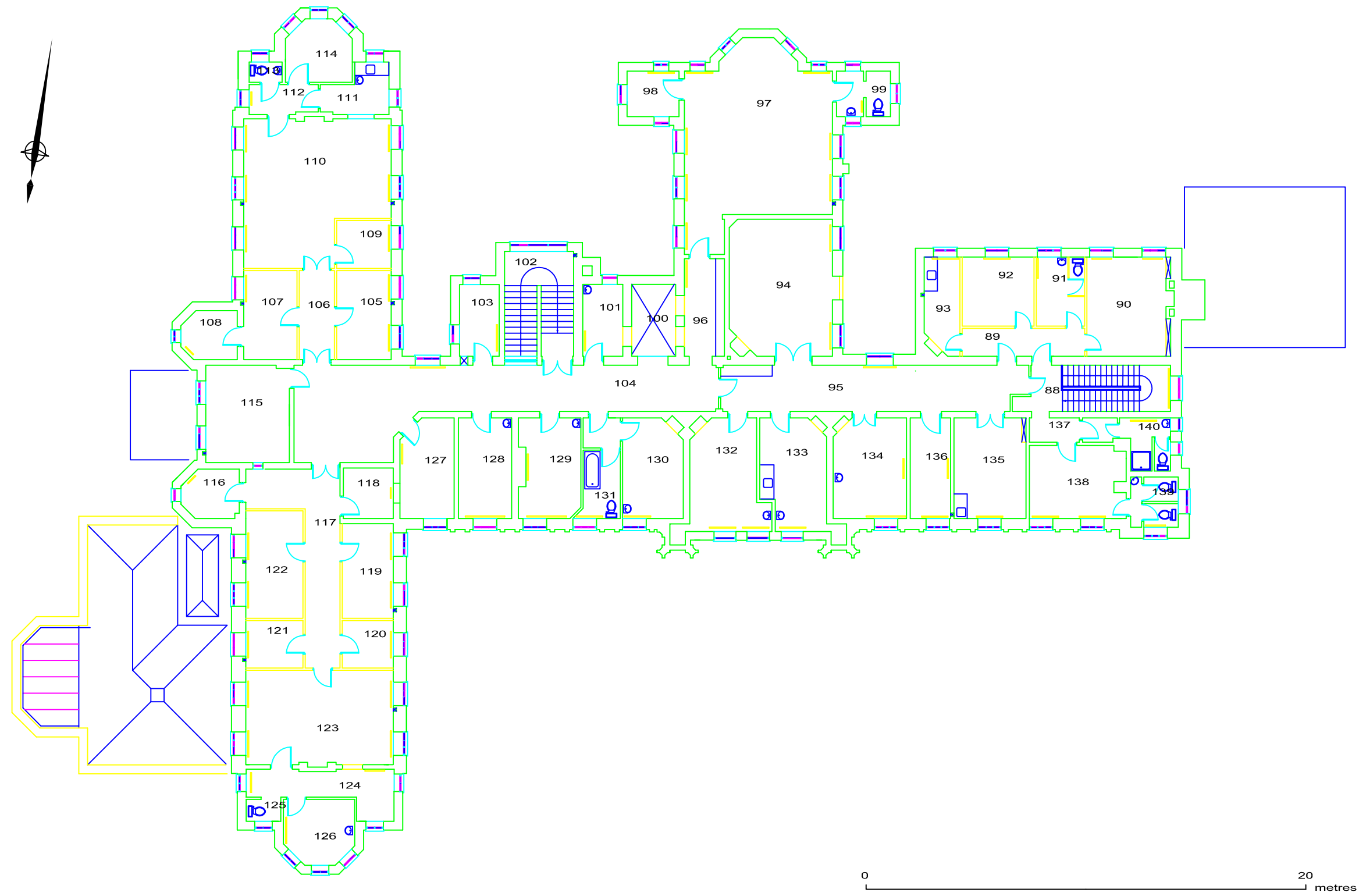
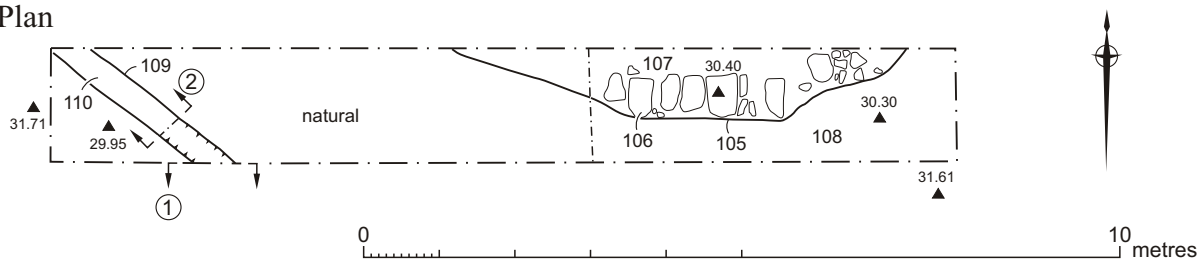


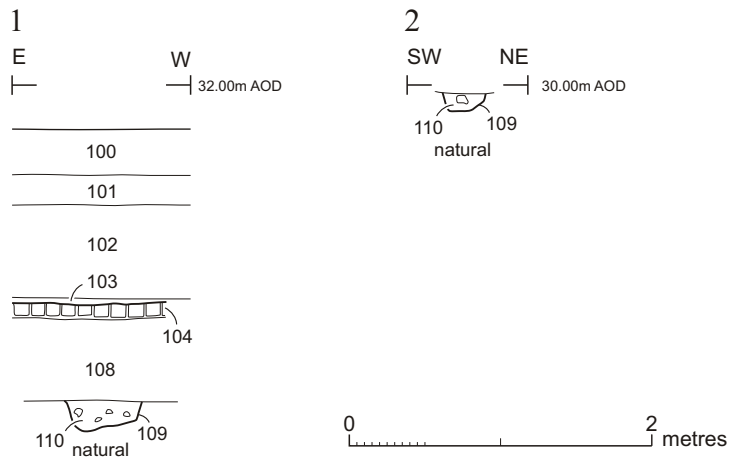
Fig. 4 Second floor plan.

## Trench 1

### Plan

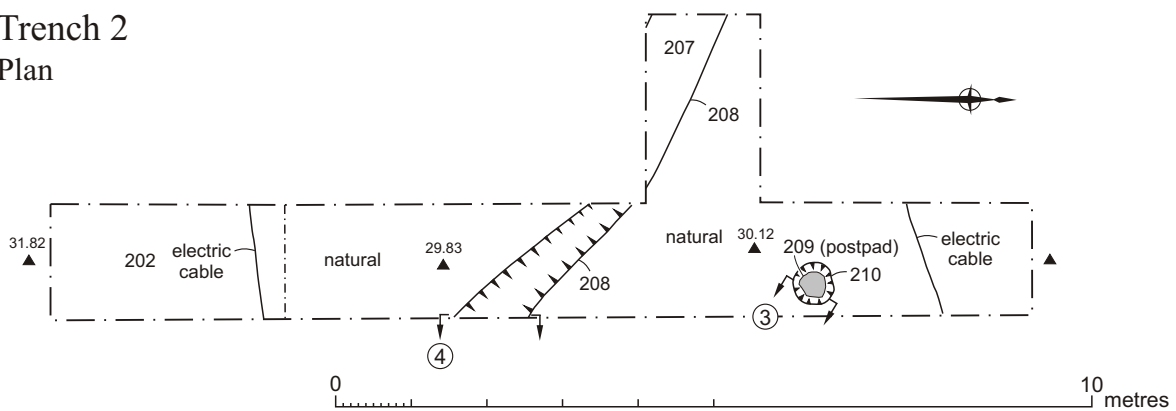


### Sections:



## Trench 2

### Plan



### Sections:

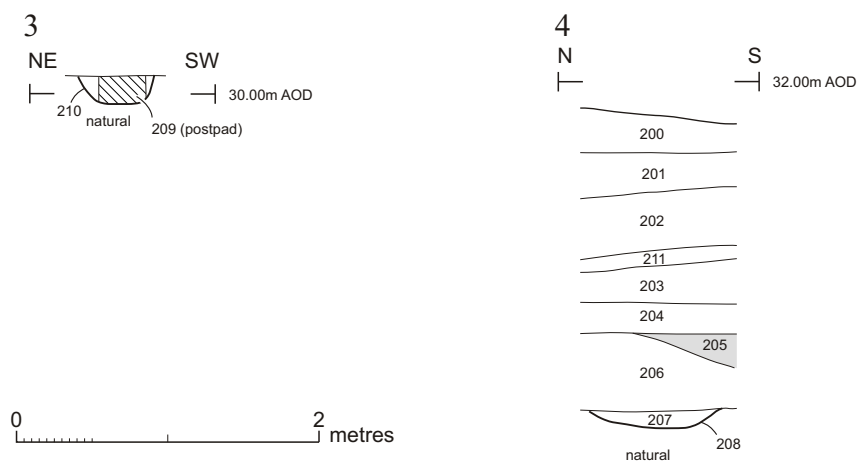


Fig. 5 Trench plans and sections.





Plate 1 Main entrance to hospital. Looking south.



Plate 2 North elevation of hospital. Looking east.





Plate 3 West elevation of hospital. Looking east.



Plate 4 South elevation of hospital. Looking north.





Plate 5 Trench 1, east end showing wall 106. 1m scale.



Plate 6 Trench 1, northwest-facing section showing surfaces 103 and 104. 1m scale.





Plate 7 Trench 1, section through planting trench 109. 0.25m scale.



Plate 8 Trench 2, southwest-facing section with ditch 208 in foreground. 1m scale.