

Desk-Based Assessment
(Revised)

**The Jenner School
(Parish Hall)
Cricklade
Wiltshire**

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Report Specification

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1. Non-Technical Summary

Robert Jenner's Schoolhouse, now used as the Parish Hall, is a Grade II Listed Building, situated on the S side of Bath Road, Cricklade, adjacent to the churchyard of the medieval parish church of St Sampson.*

Analysis of the documentary and cartographic evidence has shown that the schoolhouse has an extremely complex history, undergoing four changes of use over its 350-year history. The structural evidence of the present schoolhouse building is equally complicated, reflecting these changes in function from the mid-17th century right up to the present day.

The building stands in the SW corner of the old medieval market place of Cricklade, which was swept away by the middle of the 16th century.

Initially founded as a school in 1652, in accordance with the will of Robert Jenner, a wealthy London merchant, it was closed in about 1680 and was subsequently repaired and converted for use as the parish workhouse in 1726. The two-storey eastern extension to the building, of early 18th century date, was probably built as the residence of the workhouse master and his family; it later became the Schoolmaster's House.

In 1840, the building reverted to its original function as a schoolhouse and was extensively refurbished between 1841 and 1843. Further significant structural changes to the schoolhouse were made in 1874-75, when a single-storey extension was added to the north elevation. The north entrance porch, in the way of the new wing, was dismantled and re-erected to its present position, while the north wall was completely rebuilt

It remained in use as a school until about 1966, when it was finally closed. In the 1980s, the old schoolhouse underwent a substantial programme of restoration and refurbishment, when it was converted for use as the Parish Hall and community centre.

2. Introduction

Further to the original instruction by Bartosch & Stokes to undertake a Desk-Based Assessment of the Jenner School (Parish Hall), Border Archaeology decided to reissue a revised report.

The new report examined documentary evidence not initially believed to be available and should be used in conjunction with Border Archaeology's very limited evaluation within the Jenner School which was undertaken to evaluate the rammed earth floor and the existence or otherwise of sub-structures.

Copies of this report will be submitted to Bartosch & Stokes and the Parish Hall Trustees

3. Methodology

The research carried out for this DBA consisted of the following elements:

Evaluation and study of archaeological databases:

The National Monuments Record at Swindon and the Wiltshire Sites and Monuments Record at Trowbridge were both consulted and lists were obtained of all known archaeological sites, listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments in the study area. A copy of the Wiltshire Towns Extensive Urban Survey for Cricklade was also obtained from the Wiltshire Sites and Monuments Record.

Evaluation and study of cartographic and other pictorial evidence:

A detailed map regression analysis of the study area was carried out, examining historic maps of the town of Cricklade dating back to 1770 and all available editions of the Ordnance Survey (from the 19th century to the present) as well as the tithe map for the parish of Cricklade (1847). An important ground plan of the Jenner School building, made c.1840, was also consulted. This information was obtained from the Cricklade Museum and the Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office at Trowbridge.

Evaluation and study of primary written evidence:

Original 17th-19th c. written records of the Jenner School, the Vestry of St Sampson's Cricklade and the Cricklade Overseers for the Poor were consulted. These included an account for the refurbishment of the school buildings in 1841-43. These records were held at Cricklade Museum and the Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office at Trowbridge.

Evaluation and study of secondary (published) sources:

All published and unpublished works relating to sites and structures of archaeological and historical interest within the study area were evaluated, including local and county histories and appropriate archaeological and historical journals, including the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine.

4. Geology

The Soil Survey of England & Wales (1983) identifies three soil associations within the research area: a THAMES [814a], Newchurch 1 [814b] and a WICKHAM 2 [711f]. The THAMES [814a] soils are stoneless, mainly calcareous and clayey and are affected by groundwater. These soils occur on flat land that is prone to flooding. The underlying geology consists of river alluvium.

Newchurch 1 [814b] soils are deep, stoneless, calcareous clayey and fine silty soils over marine alluvium. The groundwater level in these areas is controlled by ditches and pumps. The generally flat land with low ridges gives a complex soil pattern.

The WICKHAM 2 [711f] soil association consists of slowly permeable, seasonally waterlogged, fine loamy over clayey, fine silty over clayey and clayey soils. Small areas of slowly permeable calcareous soils are found on steeper slopes. The geology of these areas consists of drift over Jurassic and Cretaceous clay or mudstone.

Cricklade is located on land that gradually slopes towards flat alluvial gravels of the Upper Thames series. There is also a gentle slope towards the E and W of the town. Close to the town's northern rampart is a slight scarp marking the edge of the valley floor. S of the southern rampart is a shallow valley. The highest part of Cricklade is the ground surrounding St Sampson's Church (91.5m above ordnance datum), the lowest area being the NE corner of the town (79.2m AOD).

5. Historical and Archaeological Overview

5.1 Roman (43-410 AD)

The town of Cricklade is situated on the S bank of the Upper Thames, at a point where the wide alluvial valley was crossed by Ermine Street, the Roman road from Silchester to Cirencester. It appears to have been a location of major strategic importance at least since the Roman period. A large body of archaeological evidence has been found indicating a substantial Roman presence in Cricklade. Excavations carried out in 1980 at St Sampson's School playing field uncovered an extensive occupation layer, dating from the 3rd-4th centuries AD, including pottery sherds, building materials and animal bone. In the S part of the High St, numerous pottery sherds, wall plaster and fragments of tesserae were found, of 2nd-4th century date (WCAS, 2002, 8).

It has been suggested that Cricklade formed the river port for the Roman town of Corinium (Cirencester) some eight miles away (Thompson, 1971, 177-78). The place name Cricklade appears to incorporate the Celtic place name element *craig*, meaning rock, and the Old English element (*ge*)/*lad* 'passage', presumably referring to the crossing of the Thames at this point (Gover et al., 1939, 42-43; Mills, 2003, 140).

5.2 Saxon (c.410-1066 AD)

The origins of the present town date from the late 9th century, when a planned, fortified urban settlement or borough was established there, probably by King Alfred, forming one of a chain of fortified boroughs organized to defend the frontiers of Wessex against the Danes during the late 9th-early 10th centuries. Cricklade itself is first mentioned in 905, when a Danish host crossed the Thames at that point to raid the surrounding countryside (Garmonsway, 1972, 92).

The borough at Cricklade was certainly in existence by the beginning of the 10th century, as it is mentioned in the Burghal Hidage, a list of the boroughs of Wessex compiled in about 910-920 AD. The regular quadrilateral plan of the defences of the Saxon borough of Cricklade and the gridiron street layout within the defences have been the subject of extensive archaeological investigations during the second half of the 20th century. These have shown that the construction of the defences fell into three phases.

The initial defences consisted of an earthen rampart with timber revetment and palisade, which was in turn replaced by a stone revetment wall in the late 10th-early 11th century. The last phase witnessed the destruction of the walled defences, which, it has been suggested, may have been carried out in 1016 by the Danish leader Cnut, who appears to have carried out a deliberate policy of razing existing fortresses to consolidate his position in Wessex (Wainwright, 1956, 162-66; Radford 1972, 61-111; Haslam, 1982, 77-81; Haslam 1984, 107-10).

Archaeological evidence for settlement activity within the borough during the Anglo-Saxon period is surprisingly scarce. The most substantial evidence comes from St Sampson's Church (**Plate 1**), situated immediately SW of the Jenner School in the SW corner of the Anglo-Saxon borough. Several fragments of Anglo-Saxon stone carving, including a fragment of a biblical scene, are embedded in the wall above the great N door of the church, while in the S wall of the nave, a complete pilaster strip, some 4 ft thick, survives in situ above the S arcade (Taylor & Taylor, 1963, 16-17). These features, which have been dated to the 10th-11th centuries, indicate that a church of substantial size existed there before the Norman Conquest.



Plate 1: St Sampson's Church - N elevation



It is uncertain when St Sampson's Church was originally built, although it is usually assumed to have been founded at the same time as the borough in the late 9th-early 10th century. However, its dedication to St Sampson, a Cornish-Breton saint of the 6th century AD, implies an early origin, and it has been suggested that it may originally have been founded as a minster church by St Aldhelm, Abbot of Malmesbury, in about 700AD (Haslam, 1984, 106). The parish church of St Mary, adjacent to the N gate of the Anglo-Saxon borough, is also believed to be of pre-Conquest origin (Haslam 1981).

5.3 Medieval (11th-16th c.)

There is abundant archaeological, documentary and structural evidence for settlement activity in Cricklade during the 11th-16th centuries. The most prominent extant structures from this period are the parish churches of St Sampson and St Mary. There is evidence indicating that St Sampson's Church was altered in the late 12th century, when the N and S arcades were added to the pre-Conquest nave. The church underwent a substantial process of enlargement during the mid-late 13th century, with the addition of the N and S aisles and transepts, the rebuilding of the chancel and the remodelling of the nave arcades (Pevsner, 1963, 199-200).

The next major phase of alterations occurred in the 15th century, with the addition of the gabled N porch, the remodelling of the chancel windows and the addition of the N chapel by Sir Edmund Hungerford (d.1484). The impressive crossing tower, an ornate example of the late Perpendicular style, was begun in about 1512-13 but not finally completed until about 1553 at the expense of John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland (Pevsner; 1963-199-201).

Excavations carried out in 1975 have shown that the town defences were refurbished during the 12th century, with the construction of a wooden palisade along the line of the demolished Anglo-Saxon borough wall, and the digging of an outer ditch some distance forward of the palisade (Haslam, 1975, 3; WCAS, 2002, 10).

The evidence of archaeology and the existing topography of the town points to an intensification of settlement, population growth and commercial activity within the borough defences during the 13th-14th centuries. The later medieval settlement observed the existing street plan of the Anglo-Saxon borough, being concentrated along the High Street, Calcutt Street and Horsefair Lane, with long narrow strips, characteristic of medieval burgage plots, extending to the rear of the properties on either side of the High Street.

Although a mint is known to have existed continuously at Cricklade during the 10th-11th centuries (Haslam, 1976, 18), little is known about the existence of a market there until 1257, when the grant of an annual market and fair was made by King Henry III to Baldwin de Insula, then lord of the manor of Cricklade. The site of the medieval market place appears to have been located in a rectangular open space at the crossroads with High Street and Calcutt Street, extending W along Church Lane (the line of the old Bath Road) towards St Sampson's Church and E along part of Calcutt Street. The site of the Jenner School is located in the SW corner of the former medieval market place. The onset of the Black Death in the mid-14th century appears to have severely affected the town, and the market place was gradually abandoned and built over during the late medieval/early post-medieval period.

5.4 Post-medieval (16th century to present)

Cricklade, like many other small towns in Wiltshire, saw relatively little physical growth during the 16th to 19th centuries. However, the topography of the centre of Cricklade did change in several significant respects, with the gradual abandonment and building over of the old market place and the establishment of Bath Road on its modern alignment. The building over of the market place seems to have begun during the late 15th/early 16th century, with the southward extension of St Sampson's churchyard and the erection of a substantial house at No. 3 Church Lane, immediately to the SE of the Jenner School site, in about 1500. The old market place was certainly abandoned by 1569, when the Market Hall was built farther N along the High Street. The present alignment of Bath Road appears to have been established by about 1650, a *terminus post quem* is provided by the building of the Jenner School in 1652.

Cricklade experienced a serious fire in 1723, but the extent of the damage caused to the town is unclear (Thomson, 1961). The town witnessed a slow, steady growth in population during the 18th and early 19th century and many of the houses along High Street and Calcutt Street date from this period. Various small industries were established in Cricklade during this period and the economy of the town further benefited from the construction of the Thames and Severn Canal in 1789 and the North Wiltshire Canal in 1819, linking it with the port of Bristol. However, urban growth in Cricklade during the 19th and early 20th centuries was minimal and it was only after the 1950s that major suburban expansion occurred outside the limits of the medieval borough.

6. Site Specific Information: A History of the Jenner School, Cricklade



Plate 2: The Jenner School – N elevation showing 18th C. Schoolmaster's House to E & single-storey N extension added in 1875

Robert Jenner's Schoolhouse (**Plate 2**), now used as the Parish Hall, is a Grade II* Listed Building (EH Listed Building Record No. 317727) situated on the S side of Bath Road, Cricklade, adjacent to the churchyard of the parish church of St Sampson. The building has undergone four changes of use. Initially built as a schoolhouse in 1652, the building was converted for use as the parish workhouse in 1726, subsequently resuming its original function as a schoolhouse from 1840 up to 1966. From the mid-1980s onwards it has been used as the Parish Hall.

The School was founded by Robert Jenner, a London goldsmith and MP for Cricklade from 1628 until his death in 1651. Jenner was a county JP and a prominent local landowner, who had bought several local manors, including Widhill, Eisey and Marston Maisey.

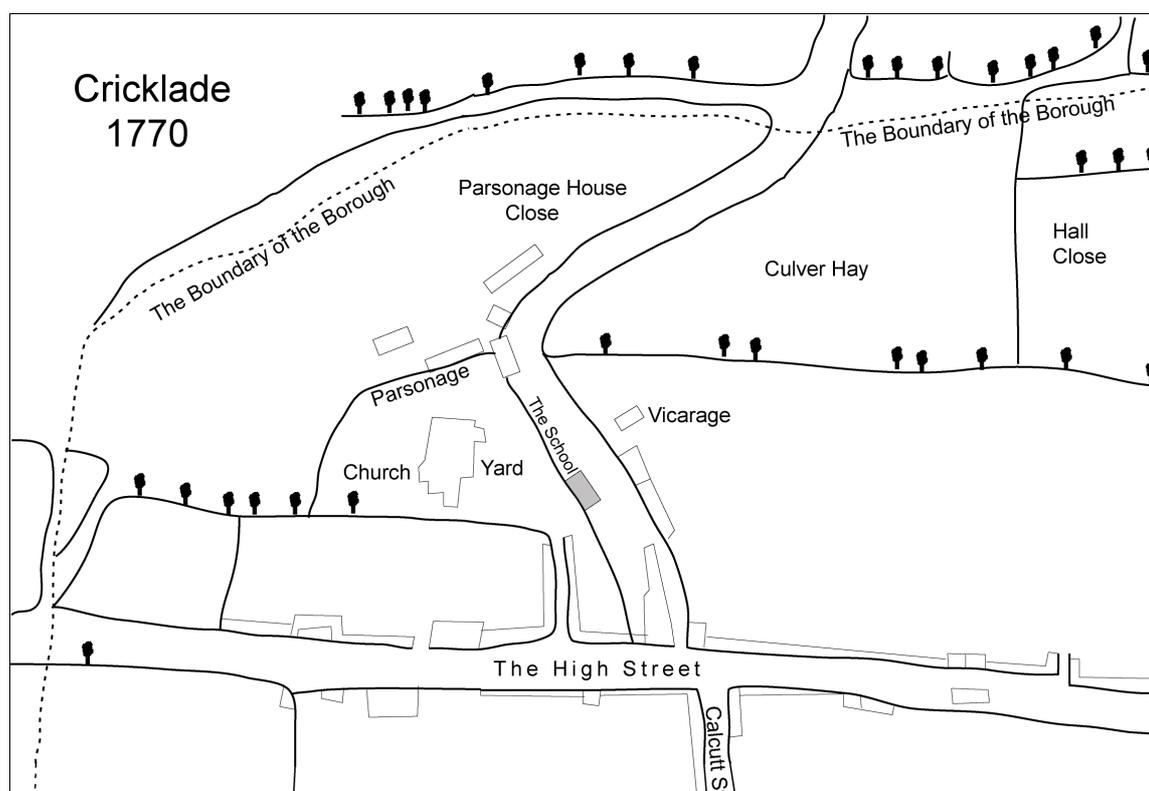


Fig. 1: Plan of the borough of Cricklade, based on an original map of 1770

According to the terms of a codicil annexed to his will, made on the day of his death (6 December 1651), Jenner desired that the inhabitants of Cricklade should purchase a piece of land in the parish of St Sampson's within the next two years, to build a school thereon for the parishioners of St Sampson's and St Mary's Cricklade (Ramsden-Binks, 2002, 1, 6). Jenner further stipulated that the sum of £20 per annum was to be paid from his personal estate to maintain a schoolmaster, who was to teach only Latin scholars. The running of the school was initially placed in the hands of Robert Jenner's executors, during the minority of Jenner's nephew and heir, John Jenner the younger. The executors paid £20 a year for a schoolmaster out of the profits of the manor of Widhill, the first master being one Mr Farmer, who was succeeded by a clerk named Francis Green (Ramsden-Binks, 2002, 1).

The School was built on land immediately adjacent to the NE corner of St Sampson's churchyard, abutting a lane called Ham Lane, which ran in a N-S direction, parallel and

to the W of the High St. The lane was blocked off in the early 18th century, when the E extension to the school (later known as the Schoolmaster's House) was built, but its line is still traceable, running along the back of the burgage plots lying to the W of the High Street and is clearly shown on a plan of the town made in 1770 (Cricklade Museum Ref. CRDWH 303) and the 1842 parish tithe map (**Figs. 1, 2**).



Plate 3: Entrance porch located on the N elevation, dismantled and re-erected in its present position in 1875

The original schoolhouse building of 1652 has been greatly obscured by 18th and 19th century alterations and additions to the fabric, particularly to the N elevation and E gable end, but its layout and appearance can be reconstructed from the surviving structural evidence and from a ground plan made c.1840. The S elevation, in particular, has remained largely intact, although extensively restored in the 1980s. The schoolhouse as built in 1652 consisted of three gabled bays, with the entrance porch originally located in the central bay of the N elevation, with a hearth and chimney in the W wall (**Fig. 3**). The original fenestration is still preserved on the S elevation, consisting of two 4-light mullioned windows on the ground storey and three 3-light mullioned windows on the upper storey (**Plate 4**). The roof of the old schoolhouse building appears originally to have been of collar rafter construction (i.e. a roof consisting of pairs of inclined common rafters, each pair linked by a collar). It has been extensively altered in recent years, with the original collar rafters being replaced by modern wrought iron ties. The principal rafters of the roof also appear to have been heavily restored, although some of the timbers may well be of 17th century date.

By the early 1670s, Robert Jenner's heir, John Jenner the younger (d.1706), had amassed huge debts for which one John Haugh, Master of Cricklade School, was his surety. Jenner was subsequently outlawed and absconded in about 1672, while Haugh, who was unable to meet the debts, was forced to resign his post and fled to Ireland. As

a consequence, the school was deprived of the Jenner endowment, its only source of revenue, and was closed in about 1680 (Ramsden-Binks, 2002, 1). For the next 50 years, the churchwardens of the parish of St Sampson's Cricklade engaged in protracted and ultimately fruitless legal suits against John Jenner and his heirs in order to recover the monies owed for the maintenance of the school. During this period, the fabric of the schoolhouse appears to have fallen into considerable disrepair (Ramsden-Binks, 2002, 2).

On 12 May 1726, at a meeting of the vestry of St Sampson's, it was ordered that the Schoolhouse should 'be employed for a workhouse or house of maintenance of the poor...and that the Overseers of the Poor do employ proper workmen...to set the house in fitting repair and to make a choice of a Governor or Master to manage the said workhouse and the poor within' (Ramsden-Binks, 2; WRO Cricklade Vestry Minutes).



Plate 4: The Jenner School – S elevation (restored c.1980) showing original fenestration of the 1652 building

It is likely that the two-storey building of early 18th century date adjoining the E end of the schoolhouse, usually referred to as the Schoolmaster's House, was in fact originally built as the residence of the Master of the workhouse. The house, which is two bays long, is constructed of coursed limestone rubble with a stone slate roof; the rear (S) elevation has 3-light windows in the central bay (the lower of which has been converted into a door) and two hipped casement dormer windows. The roof of the house is of typical 18th century kingpost construction.

On the ground floor of the Master's house was a brewhouse, built to provide a supply of ale for the consumption of the inmates, probably because well water was notoriously prone to contamination. It was still being used as a brewhouse in 1840, and three large brewing vats, located in the NE corner of the house, are clearly visible on a ground floor plan of the building probably drawn up at about the same date (Cricklade Museum Ref. CRDWH 2398). The size of the vats suggests that the ale may also have been sold to local taverns, although the accounts of the Overseers of the Cricklade workhouse make no reference to the sale of ale.



Fig. 2: Tithe map of the parish of St Sampson's Cricklade (1842)

The number of inmates at the Cricklade workhouse gradually increased during the 18th and early 19th centuries. By 1821, there were 26 inmates at the workhouse, while many other paupers were lodged in 'poor houses', properties in the town rented for the accommodation of the poor. It has been suggested that the house No. 3 Church Lane, adjacent to the SE of the schoolmaster's house may also have been refurbished and used as additional accommodation for the workhouse inmates (Ramsden-Binks, 2002, 3).

An entry in the Cricklade Vestry minutes for 1819 refers to an agreement with one William Seeley to take on the post of Master of the workhouse, with the stipulation that he and his wife were 'required to live in the House and to occupy the two rooms as bedrooms (if required) in the old apartment called the 'Jail Room' and the room adjoining' (WRO Cricklade Vestry Minutes). The precise location and function of the 'Jail Room' is uncertain; presumably it served as a place of incarceration for unruly inmates of the workhouse, although it may also have been the parish lock-up.

In 1834, under the provisions of the Poor Law Act, the workhouse at Cricklade was closed and the inmates transferred to the Union Poorhouse at Purton. The parish was

required to dispose of all buildings which had previously been used to house the poor and at a public vestry meeting held on 17 April 1834 it was proposed that the workhouse should be returned to its former use as a school 'so soon as the endowment of £20 per annum shall have been recovered'. However, it was not until 1840 that a local solicitor, James Lovett, obtained permission from the Poor Law Commissioners to exempt the workhouse from disposal, providing it reverted to use as a school (Ramsden-Binks, 2002, 3).

At a Vestry meeting of 30 May 1840, it was agreed that 'all that messuage or tenement and yard situate and adjoining the churchyard of Cricklade St Sampson formerly used as a workhouse, should be delivered into the hands of the vicar of St Sampson's and the rector of St Mary's aforesaid to be used by them and their successors for the purpose of a school for the instruction of boys and girls belonging or residing in both the same parishes'. A description of the state of the building in 1841 mentions that 'it was in a very dilapidated condition and was fast going to decay' and that it was 'necessary to go to a considerable expense in order to put it into a thorough state of repair' (Cricklade Museum Ref. CRDWH 840).

Following its reversion to use as a schoolhouse, the buildings were extensively refurbished, under the supervision of Thomas Taylor, a surgeon and High Bailiff of Cricklade, the work being funded by public subscription, the Council on Education and the National Society (Ramsden-Binks, 2002, 4). The accounts for the refurbishment of the schoolhouse between 1841 and 1843 have survived, revealing that the building was re-roofed with new stone slates, the walls were plastered, the woodwork painted, new floors were laid, the windows re-glazed and the mullioned windows were repaired and restored. At about the same time, it appears that the original hearth and chimney at the W end of the schoolhouse were removed and the present W gable end wall was built (Cricklade Museum Ref. CRDWH 840). The total cost of these repairs amounted to £436 12s 6d.

It should be noted that, in 1858, an inspection report on the Cricklade School described the classroom on the ground floor of the schoolhouse as having a 'flagged floor' (i.e. paved with flagstones). This was presumably the floor laid in 1841-43, although it is unclear whether it was paved with flagstones prior to that date. It is possible that there may have been an earlier floor surface, possibly a compressed earthen floor, belonging to the original schoolhouse built in 1652.

A ground plan of the building, probably made c.1840, shortly before its reversion to use as a schoolhouse, provides the earliest detailed picture of the layout of the structure and sheds valuable light on the alterations made during the 18th century, when it functioned as a workhouse (Cricklade Museum Ref. CRDWH 2398) (**Fig. 3**).

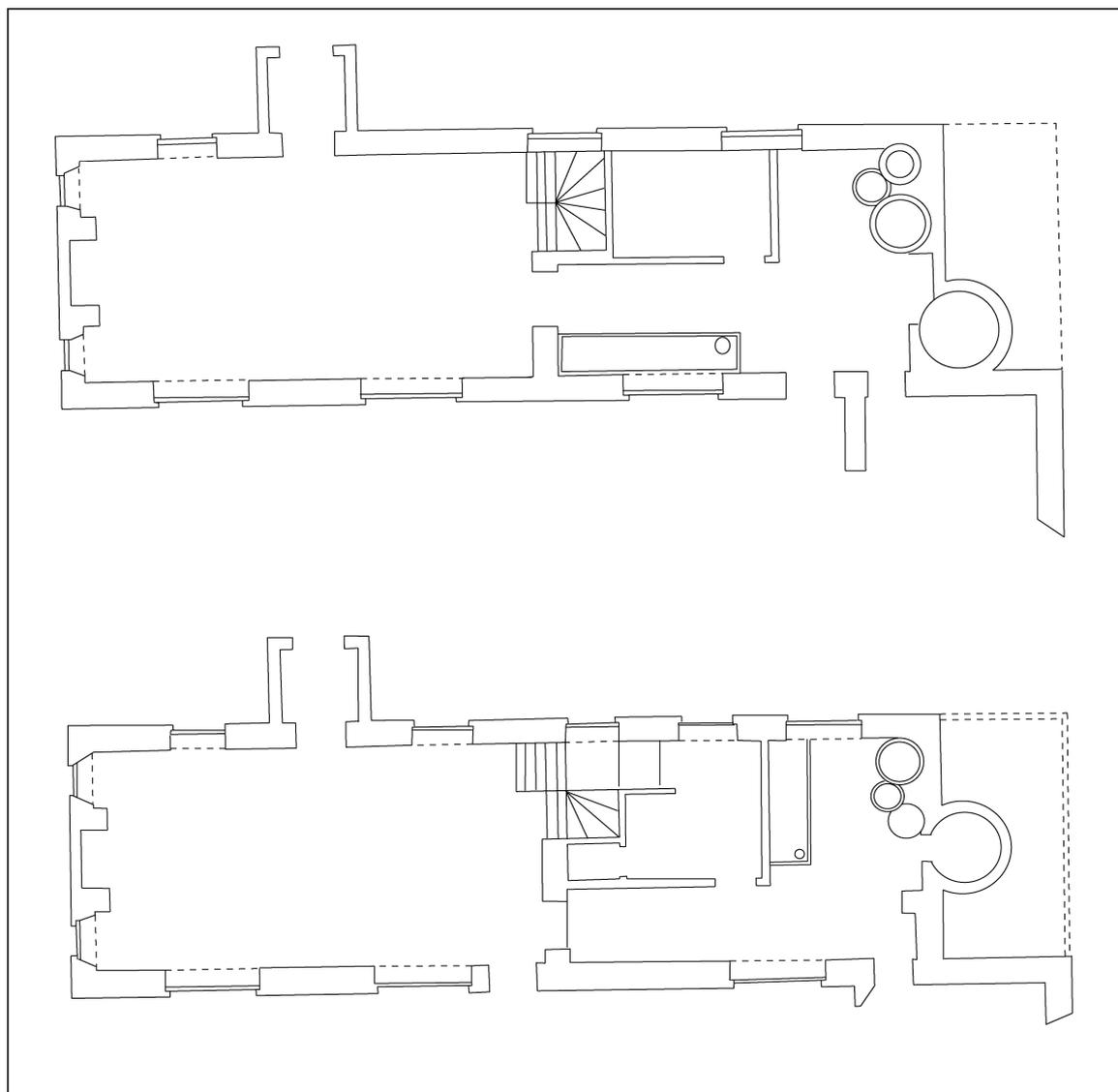


Fig. 3: Ground floor plan of the Jenner School, based on an original plan of c.1840

The plan shows two different layouts within the building, the bottom plan probably representing the earlier building while the upper plan probably depicts the proposed changes. Both plans show the main N entrance porch in its original position, now occupied by the E wall of the N wing built in the mid-1870s. On the upper plan, one of the windows on the N wall, immediately to the E of the entrance porch, is shown to have been blocked up and two other windows farther E along the N wall are shown to have been filled in and replaced by the existing single window. On the S elevation, a doorway in the SE corner of the old schoolhouse which gave access to the churchyard is shown to have been removed on the upper plan.

The upper plan also shows that significant alterations were proposed to the 18th century extension at the E end of the old schoolhouse. Changes were made to the layout of the brewing vats, the ground floor rooms and the staircase to the first floor. The S window was to be blocked up and replaced by a window farther to the W, while a new door into the churchyard was to be inserted in its place. In this case, the extant structural evidence indicates that, instead of completely blocking up the window and building a

new one further W, as shown on the plan, the doorway was inserted directly into the window, leaving part of it intact.

Significantly, both plans show a doorway at the SE corner of the 18th century extension, linking it to No. 3 Church Lane. This suggests that No. 3 was being used either as accommodation for the inmates of the workhouse or as the residence of the workhouse master and his family. No information is given on either plan relating to drainage or latrine arrangements within the workhouse buildings.

Plate 5: View of the Jenner School looking NE and showing No. 3 Church Lane adjacent to Schoolmaster's House



Further significant structural changes to the schoolhouse were made in 1874-75, when a single-storey extension was added to the N elevation in order to comply with the Board of Education requirement for places for 72 more children. The N entrance porch, in the way of the new wing, was dismantled and re-erected to its present position in line with the E gable wall of the schoolhouse, while the N wall was completely rebuilt. A comparison of the plan of the school as depicted on the OS 1st edition map of 1875 (surveyed before the addition of the N wing and the relocation of the entrance porch from its original position) (**Fig. 4**) with that shown on the OS 2nd edition map of 1900 (**Fig. 5**) illustrates the extensive alterations made to the layout of the building *post* 1875.

From 1875, Jenner's School was called the National School and remained in use until the mid 1960s, being superseded by the new St Sampson's Junior School on Bath Road. By the 1970s, the fabric of the schoolhouse had deteriorated considerably and the possibility of demolition loomed but, thanks to the efforts of local parishioners, sufficient funds were raised for the substantial refurbishment of the building during the 1980s, which now serves as the Parish Hall and community centre.

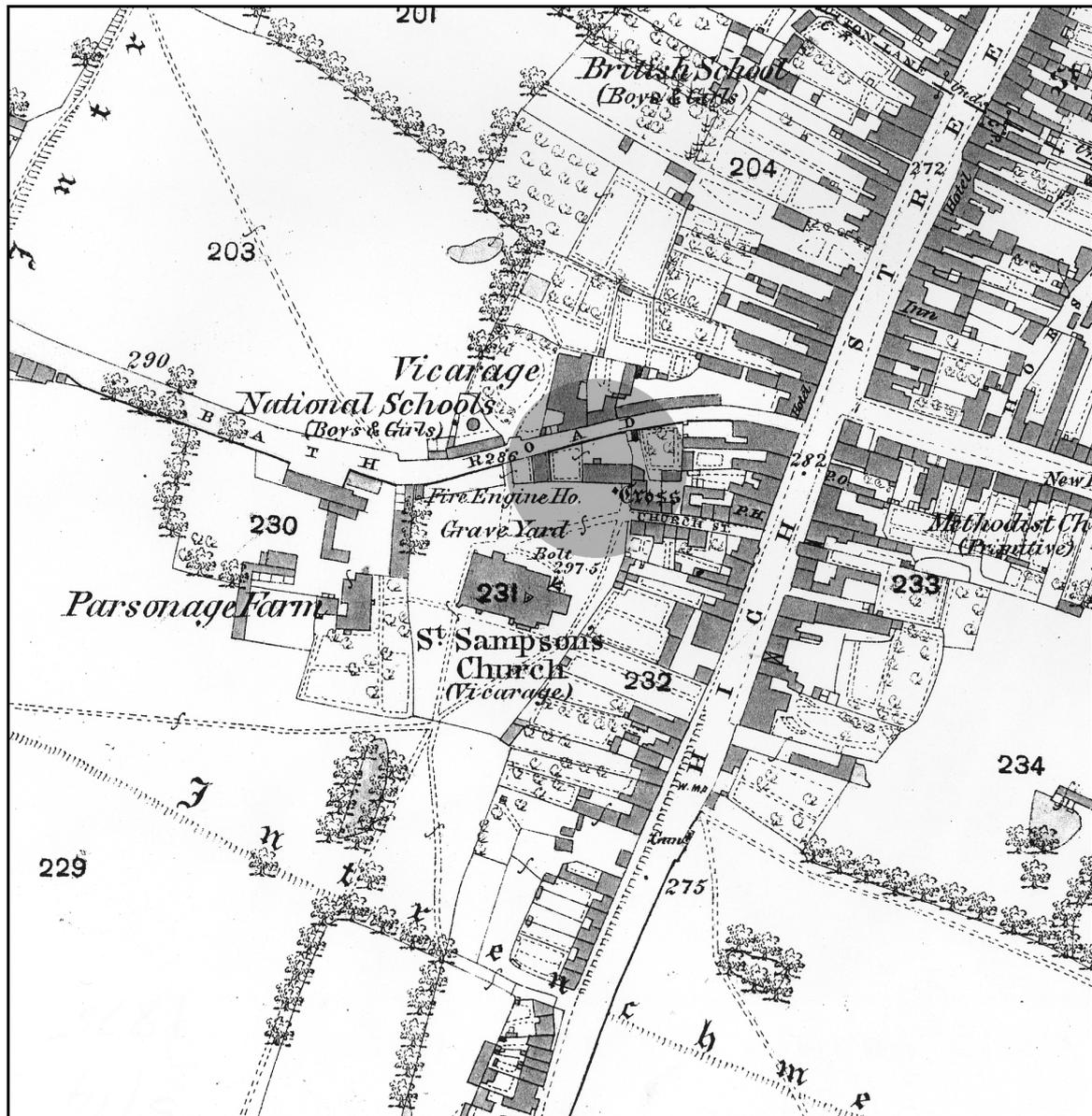


Fig. 4: OS 1st edition 25 inch map Wiltshire V. 14 (1875), showing original position of N entrance porch

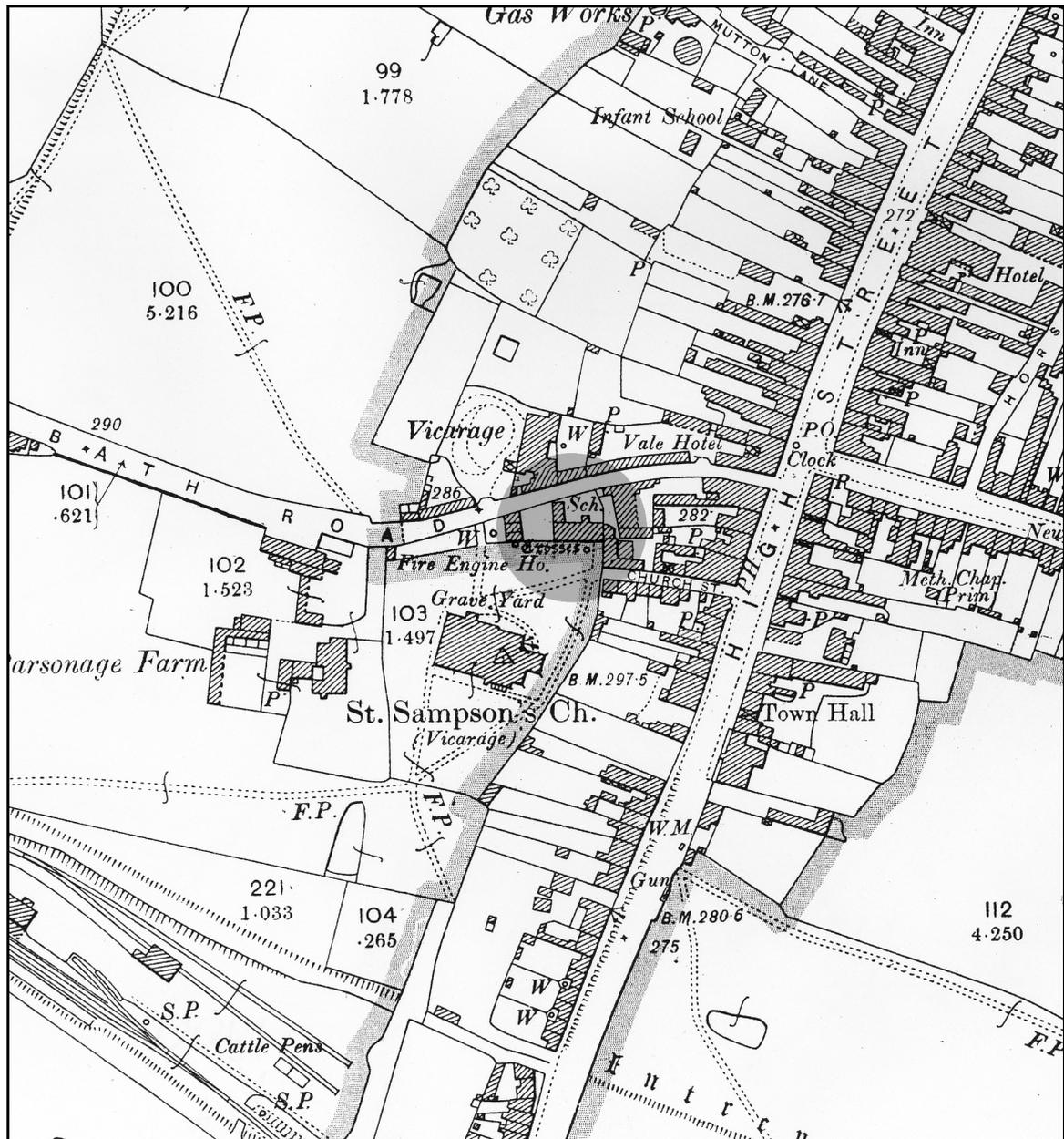


Fig. 5: OS 2nd edition 25 inch map Wiltshire V. 14 (1900), showing addition of N wing and relocation of entrance porch

7. Bibliography & Cartography

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CRDWH Ref. 303 Plan of the borough of Cricklade (1770)

CRDWH Ref. 2398 Ground floor plan of the Jenner School (undated c.1840)

CRDWH Ref. 840 Accounts of Thomas Taylor for the refurbishment of the Jenner School (1841-43)

7.1.2 Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office, Trowbridge

WRO Ref. 1632: Cricklade Vestry Minutes 1670-1850

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Tithe Map of the Parish of St Sampson, Cricklade (1842)

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