Albion archaeology

BLOCK D
SEGREGATION UNIT
YOI AYLESBURY

BUILDING RECORDING

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Contents

Preface 7

Structure of this report 7

Non-Technical Summary 9

1. INTRODUCTION 11

1.1 Planning Background 11

1.2 The Research Background 11

1.3 Aims and Objectives 11

1.4 Site Location and Description 12

1.5 Stages of Work 12

1.6 Constraints 13

1.7 The Report 13

2. HISTORICAL AND DOCUMENTARY BACKGROUND 14

2.1 Introduction 14

2.2 Classification of Prisoners and Specialist Prisons 14

2.3 Historical, Architectural and Social background 16

2.4 Aylesbury Prison 22

3. BUILDING RECORDING: DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS 29

3.1 Methodology: Building Recording 29

3.2 Results of Survey 30

3.3 Phasing 35

3.4 Circulation and Control 36

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF 38

5. SUMMARY AND ASSESSMENT 39

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY 40

7. ARCHIVE AND RECORD 41

7.1 Archive 41

8. CONTENTS OF APPENDICES 42

8.1 Appendix 1: Summary of Photographic Record (Historic Building Recording) 42

List of Figures

Figure 1 Site location plan
Figure 2 D-Wing, floor plans
Figure 3 D-Wing, elevations
Figure 4 D-Wing, sections
Figure 5 Architect's plan 1844, ground floor (D-Wing)
Figure 6 Architect's plan 1844 first floor (D-Wing)
Figure 7 Architect's plan undated, ground floor (D-Wing)

List of Plates

Plate 1a South western elevation, entrance courtyard
Plate 1b Entrance courtyard elevations
Plate 2a South western elevation, inner courtyard
Plate 2b South western elevation, inner courtyard
Plate 3a Architectural detail, north western gable end
Plate 3b Foul air chimney
Plate 4a Detail, south western elevation
Plate 4b Detail, south western elevation
Plate 5a North eastern elevation, north west end
Plate 5b North eastern elevation, south east end
Plate 6a North eastern elevation, north west end (oblique)
Plate 6b North eastern elevation, south east end (oblique)
Plate 7a Window Cell 16
Plate 7b Window Cell 15
Plate 8 Examples of graffiti on north eastern elevation (1)
Plate 9 Examples of graffiti on north eastern elevation (2)
Plate 10 Internal view of D-Wing
Plate 11a External entrance door in south eastern gable wall
Plate 11b Ground floor corridor (south western wall)
Plate 12a External door (south western wall)
Plate 12b Detail of gallery
Plate 13a Ground floor corridor (view north west)
Plate 13b Ground floor corridor (view south east)
Plate 14 Cells (internal detail)
Plate15a Office (former day room) south eastern end, ground floor
Plate 15b Day room (former cells) north western end, ground floor
Plate 16a Cell 18, prison bed
Plate 16b Cell 18, internal detail
Plate 17a Detail of stairs up to gallery, north west end, staff cloakroom
Plate 17b First floor, north western end
Plate 18a First floor (view south east)
Plate 18b Detail of first floor window, north western end
Plate 19 Semi-circular window, first floor
Plate 20a Cell window and ventilation system
Plate 20b Cell window and ventilation system, detail
Plate 21a Cell door
Plate 21b Roof space, detail of roof structure
Plate 22a Roof space, foul air flue
Plate 22b Roof space, inspection hatch to foul air flue
Plate 23a Roof space, barrel vaulting
Plate 23b Roof space, foul air duct
Plate 24 Demolition groundworks, northern end of (demolished) D wing
Plate 25 Foundations for new building and service trenches

All photographs Nigel Macbeth (unless otherwise acknowledged)

Preface

Every effort has been made in the preparation of this document to provide as complete a report as possible, within the terms of the specification. All statements and opinions in this document are offered in good faith. Albion Archaeology cannot accept responsibility for errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by a third party, or for any loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in this document.

The project was managed on behalf of Albion Archaeology by Hester Cooper-Reade BA (hons) who also undertook the building recording and wrote this report. The watching brief was carried out by Christiane Meckseper MA MSc and Iain Leslie MA. All photographs were taken by Nigel Macbeth unless otherwise acknowledged. Joan Lightning BA(hons), AIFA, prepared the original plans and illustrations.

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Structure of this report

After the introductory Section 1, this report presents the results of the historic building survey. The survey requirements were for a record to Level 3 standard (English Heritage 2006). The report includes background information to place the buildings in context, a description of the site and an overview of process and phasing, where possible to ascertain. The Watching Brief is described in Section 4. Conclusions are presented in Section 5 and a number of separate appendices contain information on content of archive. A selection of photographs and copies of the drawn plans are included to illustrate the text.

Plans are based on those provided by the client and the various archive plans that exist of the site. Historic measurements are given in feet and inches; where these relate to survey measurements the metric equivalent in also given. For historic descriptions the imperial measurement is used with the metric equivalent in brackets; otherwise the metric measurement is given with the imperial equivalent only if it is relevant to the description.

Compiled by	Checked by	Approved by
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Non-Technical Summary

During October 2009 a project team from Albion Archaeology carried out a Level 3 (English Heritage 2006) historic building survey at the Segregation Unit, Block D, Aylesbury Young Offenders Institution. The work was commissioned by Pick Everard , on behalf of Keir Southern. The work was a requirement of a planning condition compliance which was monitored on behalf of the local planning authority by the County Archaeological Officer.

The present Segregation Unit, Block D is due for demolition and replacement with a new purpose-built wing. The archaeological works required by planning condition comprise a building record of Block D and observation and recording of any groundworks associated with the construction of the new unit. This report details the results of the building recording, observation and recording of groundworks will be the subject of a separate report.

Aylesbury Prison was built between 1844-47 using model plans drawn up by Joshua Jebb, the government advisor who became the first Surveyor General of Prisons in 1844. The architect was Charles James Peirce who was also employed to build Walton (Liverpool) prison, a building which shares some architectural similarities to Aylesbury. Aylesbury was built as a male local prison with separate female and debtors' wings' D-Wing was the debtors' wing. Although imprisonment for debt as all but abolished in 1869, debtors remained incarcerated in D-Wing until at least 1877. By 1895 Aylesbury had become a female convict prison, although D-Wing was used to house local male remand prisoners. Between 1902 and 1905,in addition to the occasional male remand prisoner, D-Wing was briefly used to house female inebriates whilst a separate prison was being built elsewhere on site. When male prisoners were not on remand in D-Wing the area was reserved for industrial beadwork.

Although D-Wing retains much of its later 19th-century form, it clearly underwent a number of changes in the later Victorian period; at least based on the as-built plans published by the Prison Inspectors in 1847. The most substantive change was the shortening of D-Wing that is likely to have taken place between 1885 and 1902; most likely around 1895 when Aylesbury became a female convict prison. Other small alterations to cell layout and the removal of a central stair well also appear to have taken place, although there is no evidence of this former layout in the current fabric. More recent changes to D-Wing have been largely cosmetic and it is likely very much as it would have been when visited by Alford in 1902.

An archaeological Watching Brief undertaken during the demolition groundworks and any groundworks associated with the construction of the new building revealed no archaeological remains.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Planning Background

As part of planning Application 09/00736/ALB (submitted to Aylesbury Vale District Council), the segregation unit of HM youth offenders is to be demolished and replaced with a new purpose-built unit.

The site has been identified as of particular interest in relation to its origins as a Victorian prison. The prison gate and gate lodges are listed Grade 2 (LBS number 502254). They are not part of the present development area. Although most of the prison wings have been refurbished over the years, Victorian and early 20th-century features remain throughout the prison and D Wing, in particular, has few later 20th-century alterations.

As a result of the advice in PPG16, as reflected in policy HE 1 of the County Structure Plan and the archaeological policies of the District Local Plan and bearing in mind the significance of the site, planning consent is subject to archaeological condition. This is in accordance with advice received from their archaeological advisors, Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (BCAS).

1.2 The Research Background

The 1991 prison disturbances and the subsequent publication of the Woolf Report, led to a dramatic transformation of the country's largely Victorian prison buildings. The Woolf report led to an end to the building programme managed by the Property Services Agency, the creation of privately managed prisons and an emergency building programme, that from 1996 provided additional accommodation. In the absence of any systematic modern record of working prisons, the RCHME carried out a survey which led to a photographic record of every English prison and the publication of English Prisons: an architectural history (Brodie et al 2002). This survey highlighted the significant survival of the Victorian prison stock both in fabric, plan form and details of design. Whilst some of the principal elements of the former Victorian prisons are listed, many of the buildings are undesignated and thus more likely subject to change and alteration.

The draft of the Solent Thames Historic Environment Research Frameworks (Green et al. 2006) recognises the extensive range of post-medieval and modern buildings in Buckinghamshire and acknowledges a gap in the published and accessible literature. The archaeology of social organisation and administration for the modern period is largely associated with buildings and structures and the research agenda highlights the need for more detailed study of buildings of administration and justice. It also highlights the need for sufficient documentary study to accompany physical survey work.

1.3 Aims and Objectives

The purpose of the work as outlined in the Written Scheme of Investigation (2009a, 2009b Albion Archaeology) produced to show how the work would comply with the brief (2009 BCAS) is a follows:

- Identification and record any significant structural features or relationships. Investigation of the chronology, construction, fabric and development of the building
- An annotated ground plan and interpretation of the structure
- A photographic record
- An account of plan, form, function, age and development
- An account of materials and construction
- An account of any fixtures or fittings associated with the building and their purpose
- An account of the relationship between the building and its immediate environs, in particular any traces of earlier related structures
- Identification and record of any significant archaeological remains revealed by the demolition groundworks
- A report on results to include an assessment of the function and significance of the various components of the complex.
- A record any significant archaeological remains revealed by the demolition ground works, paying particular regard to the potential for medieval or post-medieval deposits associated with the manor.
- An account of the relationship between the building and its immediate environs, in particular any traces of earlier related structures

In view of the proposed demolition of the buildings the principle aim of the works is to record the building prior to demolition. The record will be carried out to Level 3 as defined by EH's *Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Practice* (2006).

1.4 Site Location and Description

Fig. 1
Aylesbury Young Offenders Institute is located on the eastern edge of Aylesbury town on Bierton Road, SP 82721 14437.

The site is in use as a prison, although the Segregation Unit had been vacated prior to the recording work.

D-Wing is a small two-storey wing on the eastern side of the prison, running between the northern boundary wall and the main cross-shaped radial blocks. The wing is accessed via the main block or through security gates off the entrance courtyard.

1.5 Stages of Work

Albion Archaeology carried out a photographic survey and building analysis during October 2009.

Survey work was carried out by UKgeomatics directly for the client. The resulting drawings have been provided for use in this report and will form part of the project archive.

An archaeological Watching Brief was carried out on the demolition groundworks and groundworks associated with the construction of the new building between January and July 2010.

1.6 Constraints

The secure nature of the prison environment placed a number of access restrictions on the work. All visits were escorted and access was strictly to D-Wing and its immediate environs. No photographs of locks and keys or inmates were allowed and photographic shots of the general setting were limited to external views showing small portions of adjoining wings. All photographs were checked by prison staff to ensure they complied with the relevant security rules.

1.7 The Report

This report is intended to give an overview of the site, its historical background and context. It draws on primary and secondary documentary and cartographic sources, and a detailed photographic record and building recording survey of the structure. D-wing is described in detail in its current form, with particular emphasis on those aspects that relate to its earlier history.

The development and history of prison architecture is covered reasonably well in the literature, but in order to give the reader a better understanding of the social and historical context against which prison-building took place, the main body of the report is preceded by a section giving background information.

2. HISTORICAL AND DOCUMENTARY BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

Aylesbury prison was built at a time of rapid change in England's penal systems and against a background of ongoing debate into the methods of punishment, classification of prisoners and the design of prison buildings. The Prison Acts of the late 1830s and the building of Pentonville model prison 1840-42 clearly showed the influence of the advocates of the separate system, although, as events during the planning of Aylesbury show, this was not universally accepted by many of the local authorities charged with building or adapting prisons in their area.

During the 19th and early 20th centuries the classifications of prisoner held at Aylesbury varied, as did the methods of imprisonment and punishment. Although new buildings have been constructed and existing ones adapted to take account of changes to legislation and practice, much of the Victorian fabric and layout of the prison is readily recognisable. D-Wing in particular has retained much of its later 19th-century form and other than the addition of more modern security features has not been substantially altered or added to.

The design and architecture of prisons not only reflects the social and political thought of the time, but shows the influences of key figures involved in setting government and local policy. A brief overview of the political, social and historical background and chronology of the key changes to prison systems during the 19th and early 20th century are helpful to an understanding of changing prison design. Much of the history of Victorian and earlier 20th-Century prisons is covered by Brodie et al in *English Prisons: an architectural history* (2002), various contemporary descriptions from prison visits and the annual Inspectors' Reports. A short summary from some of the key secondary and primary sources is given below.

2.2 Classification of Prisoners and Specialist Prisons

2.2.1 Classification

Prisoners were divided into groups according to sex, age, nature of offence (e.g., felony, misdemeanour, debt, vagrancy) and whether the prisoner was charged or convicted. The accommodation and management of each class of prisoner was different and subject to different rules and regulations. As the 19th century progressed prisons became more specialised, with most change occurring after 1877 when the government took over centralized control of prisons and introduced, amongst other things, the concept of productive labour. The period towards the end of the 19th century and into the early 20th century saw the development of specialist prisons for women, juveniles and young offenders.

Aylesbury Prison, or parts of it, have variously been a local prison, a debtors prison, an inebriates reformatory, a women's convict prison, a borstal and, more recently, a Young Offenders Institution

2.2.2 Local Prisoners

In the 19th century, local prisons held minor or first offenders sentenced to a term not exceeding two years, with or without hard labour.

2.2.3 Inebriates

The 1879 Habitual Drunkards Act had established retreats that drunkards could enter voluntarily, but the Departmental Committee on the Treatment of Inebriates formed in 1892 and the Gladstone Committee of 1894 argued that a different system was required. Under the 1898 Inebriates Act, an habitual drunkard who committed an offence whilst under the influence of alcohol could be sentenced to a maximum term of 3 years. The Act allowed the Home Secretary to establish state reformatories and to certify those founded by local authorities or charitable bodies. State reformatories were established at Warwick (for 31 men) and Aylesbury (for 120 women). At Aylesbury accommodation for 16 female inebriates was initially made available in D wing (1902-1905), whilst a purpose-built institution was erected on an adjacent site. By the end of 1906, 163 women and 71 men were admitted to Aylesbury and Warwick respectively. The high number of women committed for drunkenness reflected contemporary perception and a reluctance to imprison male wage-earners.

2.2.4 Debtors

Over the course of the 19th century, successive Acts reduced the numbers of insolvents committed to prison. The 1869 Debtors Act largely abolished imprisonment for debt, although debtors were held at Aylesbury until at least 1885.

2.2.5 Juveniles and Juvenile Adults

In the years after 1854, the growth of a network of reformatory schools for juvenile offenders meant that little provision had to be made for children within prisons. Older juveniles and young offenders were however often held with adult prisoners.

The Gladstone Committee (1894) was concerned to keep young offenders out of prison or at least, to keep them apart from adult criminals. They wanted juveniles to receive special reformatory treatment in prison through the establishment of a state penal reformatory for those aged between 16 and 21. After 1899 young offenders sentenced to a reformatory school no longer had to serve a preliminary term in prison and following the 1908 Children's Act, juveniles were sent to Home Office Schools instead of prison.

Juveniles aged 16-21 were singled out for special treatment as this was the age when it was felt that criminal habits would form. A class of young adult prisoners was established at Bedford 1899-1900. These offenders were kept away from adult prisoners and received school lessons, industrial training, physical exercise, sound discipline and close supervision on discharge. The scheme was extended to part of the convict prison at Borstal the following year and then to a number of other prisons. In 1908-09 a borstal institution for young women was established in the convict prison at Aylesbury, based on the model of the American female reformatories such as Sherburn (Massachusetts) and Bedford (New York) (Brodie et al. 2002).

2.2.6 Convicts and preventative detainees

Convict prisons held serious offenders sentenced to penal servitude for a minimum of three years.

Punishment of those sentenced for serious, but non-capital, offences was the responsibility of central government, with specialist prisons being developed for juvenile, female and invalid convicts. A sentence of penal servitude was introduced in 1853 to replace short terms of transportation. It was extended to long sentences in 1857, although transportation continued until 1867.

The Gladstone Committee had proposed creating a new, long sentence for professional criminals and the 1908 Prisons Act meant that an habitual criminal who had spent three terms in prison since the age of 16 and who persisted in leading a dishonest life, could receive an additional term of 5-10 years preventive detention to be served after the completion of a sentence of penal servitude. Males sentenced to preventive detention were held in a purpose-built prison, Camp Hill, on the Isle of Wight, and female preventive detainees served their sentence at Aylesbury and later, at Liverpool. However, between 1909-28 only 23 women had been sentenced to preventive detention.

2.2.7 Women

Until around 1900 all local prisons, with the exception of two in London, had accommodation for female prisoners. From 1878 the Prison Commissioners expressed their intention to create specialised women's prisons. The process of concentrating women into fewer prisons accelerated after WW1; and by 1931 only eight local prisons held women

2.3 Historical, Architectural and Social background

2.3.1 Systems of imprisonment

Before John Howard's reforms in the late 18th century, most prisons allowed unregulated association between prisoners. Between the late 18th and the early 20th centuries, the two main systems of imprisonment were the associated and separate systems.

Under the associated, or congregate, system prisoners occupied individual sleeping cells at night, but worked together in common workrooms during the day. This system was practiced in most English prisons in the late 18th and early 19th centuries and prisons were built with one or more floors of sleeping cells above arcaded work and day rooms. Some productive work was undertaken but with the invention of an improved treadwheel in 1818, penal hard labour was introduced.

In the separate system, inmates occupied individual cells, working and sleeping in them. They left their cells only for religious worship and exercise, but complete separation continued in both the chapel and airing yard.

The separate system had been briefly used in some prisons in the late 18th century, and became popular again, in local prisons, in the decades after 1840. The uptake of the separate system was patchy, although it became compulsory in 1865. Intended to be reformatory with an emphasis on religious and moral

influences, the system became increasingly deterrent and was characterized by punitive hard labour on the treadwheel and crank. (Brodie et al. 2002).

In contrast, during the mid to late 19th century, convicts were held under an associated system. During the day they worked together and at night they slept in small individual sleeping berths. By the end of the 19th century, the associated system had been readopted in local prisons and productive work was introduced after 1878, at first carried out in cells, but later in silent association in wing corridors. Industrial training was provided to help inmates earn their living on release.

2.3.2 Prison Design

During the Victorian period there were great variations in the size of prisons. In general, the county and borough prisons had 200 to 400 cells, but those serving large urban areas held between 500 and 1,000 (Brodie et al. 2002). Many prisons built in the 1840s and 1850s had separate accommodation for different categories of prisoner. The county gaols at Reading and Aylesbury were built with cells for males, females and debtors.

Since the late 18th century there have been successive re-buildings of prisons leading to a great diversity in layout and appearance. However the nature of prisons means that, whatever their date, all share a number of characteristics such as a perimeter wall, gatehouse, cell blocks and cells.

Whether or not local authorities supported the separate system, most prisons built from the mid-1840s were influenced by the model prison at Pentonville built in the 1840s to the radial design developed by the Home District Prison Inspectors William Crawford and Whitworth Russell, assisted by Joshua Jebb, technical advisor to the Home Office and later Surveyor-General of prisons. In most prisons specific classes of prisoner were housed in a separate cell block or wing.

The cell was an invention of the 18th century. Originally for occupation during the night only, the introduction of the separate system in the 1840s meant that inmates spent 23 hours per day in their cells. A simple toilet and washbasin were incorporated to allow this, but these had been removed by the end of the 19th century when wings were built with ablution towers instead. From the 1840s cells usually measured 13ft x 7ft by 10ft high (3.9 x 2.1 x 3.0m) and were furnished to allow them to be occupied by day and night. This was slightly different to the 12ft long, 8ft, wide and 20ft high (3.6 x 2.4 x 3.0m) measurements in the first model plans drawn up by Crawford and Russell. Special cells were provided for inmates who caused control problems and prisons built between 1780 and 1835 had dark solitary cells for this purpose. From the mid-19th century small punishment cells were often situated in basements. In modern prisons separate segregation units are provided. (Brodie et al. 2002)

After 1842 most prisons were built to a fairly standard ‘radial’ design using the model plans developed by Crawford, Russell and Jebb. There were four main types of radial prison: 1) four cell blocks radiating in a half-cartwheel plan, 2) prisons with a cruciform layout (Reading, Aylesbury, Clerkenwell, Exeter, Lewes, Manchester female prison, Hull and Lincoln), 3) 3-5 cell blocks and an

administration wing in a star-shaped arrangement, and 4) prisons which contained a radial and a linear plan.

The main entrance was through an imposing gatehouse, which contained the porter's lodge and was often castellated. Two symmetrical houses flanked the gatehouse for the governor and the chaplain. In later prisons, these buildings were located outside the prison, either side of the gate. Immediately inside the gate was the entrance building, the front elevation of which was often decorated with stone quoins and dressings. The ground floor administration rooms, on either side of a corridor leading to the central hall, included offices, a committee room, a waiting room and a visiting room. Facilities for the reception of male prisoners were located in the administration block basement and included a receiving room, examination room, clothing store, fumigating closet and baths. The chapel, two storey's high, was usually found above the administration rooms. Typically rectangular in plan it contained tiered single pews and a gallery at one end.

The entrance building led into the central inspection hall from which three to five wings radiated. This design facilitated surveillance and segregation, as from a central point, a small number of warders would be able to see into all the cells, quickly identifying any signs of trouble or misbehaviour.

The hall, which was open from floor to roof, was polygonal of half-polygonal in shape. Opening off some halls, in the angles between the wings, were rooms which served as offices for staff. The main wings were for adult male prisoners and were generally double-sided with tiers of cells on either side of the central atrium. These wings were two- or three storeys in height and the galleries serving the upper levels of the cells were reached by staircases in the wings and were enclosed by iron railings.

Separate accommodation was provided in early radial prisons for women, juveniles and debtors, often in wings with cells on one side of the corridor (as at Aylesbury). Female offenders were sometimes held in another, smaller, radial prison on the same site. Separate reception facilities were provided for women, often in the wing basement. Juveniles and debtors' wings could be either attached to, or detached from, the main prison. At Alylesbury women and debtors occupied wings parallel to the main prison (D- and F-Wing).

Separate prisons of the mid 19th century required a number of services, including a heating and ventilation system, airing yards, a kitchen, a laundry and wash-house, infirmaries for men and women and staff quarters. Most radial prisons had plenum towers for the waste air flues, one for each cell block, situated in the centre of the wing roof. Prisons during the 1840s were usually provided with circular groups of segmental exercise yards. The exercise yards which were wedge-shaped were arranged in five circular or oval blocks around a central observation area.

One of the design features at Pentonville included cell windows, which did not open, and which were situated high up in the wall, to prevent prisoners looking outside. Because of this the cells needed a separate ventilation and heating system. The system employed at Pentonville was the ascending air system. Fresh air passed over a hot-water apparatus in the basement of each wing and was conveyed through flues in the corridor walls to a grating under the ceiling of each cell. Foul air was extracted through a vent near the floor and then drawn

through flues in the outer cell walls up to a foul-air shaft on the roof (Tomlinson 1984). Keeping cells at a reasonable temperature proved impossible in many of the prisons and Aylesbury was no exception. Temperatures in the cells were reported as varying between 50°F and 78°F and the only way of making the extracting flues work was to open the cell doors (Q/AG/14).

Security was, of course, a significant feature of prison design. The 19th century model prison plans show that cell walls had iron loops set into them at narrow intervals to guard against anyone chipping through to the outside, doors were heavily locked and bolted and the 11-inch high window had a sloping sill and was barred on the outside. The 15 ft perimeter wall had an even, smooth surface and semi-circular, projection-free coping and was built with foundations too deep to allow them to be undermined during the course of one night (Tomlinson 1984).

Prison architects of the 19th century had two basic models to follow: the massive solidarity of Newgate or the turrets and crenellations of a medieval castle. It was the latter style which found most favour in the 19th century despite Crawford and Russells recommendations that the outside of a prison should be plain and simple: 'the absence of ornament, and the utmost simplicity, will not only be in accordance with the object of the building, but it will be the most economical' (Inspectors' of Prisons 1838). Many prison authorities ignored this advice and agreed designs in almost every type of gothic revivalist style. Reading, a prison the gaol-building committee at Aylesbury had visited, was criticized as 'resembling more a ducal seat than a penitentiary' (Jebb, quoted in Tomlinson 1984). Not all architects chose gothic styles; classical designs were also adopted. However, in all cases the connection with castles and seats of power, was a deliberate attempt to create a deterrent and sense of foreboding.

2.3.3 The development of prisons in the 19th and early 20th century

By the 1830s, every local authority had the right and responsibility to maintain a prison, with offenders incarcerated in the prison of the authority in which they were convicted. There was no uniform system of discipline, management or design and during the 1830s the British government looked to the USA for a new direction in prison management (Brodie et al. 2002). After convening a series of select committees, William Crawford was sent to the USA to examine their state prisons. On his return, he recommended the adoption of a modified form for the separate system in which every prisoner should have his own cell in which to sleep and eat. Certain classes should be held in solitary confinement, with or without work. Where separation was not enforced, prisoners should undertake associated labour in strict silence. Crawford also emphasized the importance of employment, religious instruction and the uniform application of discipline.

Crawford's recommendations were implemented by the 1835 Prisons Act. Under this Act all prison rules were to be submitted to the Home Secretary for approval and Inspectors were appointed to visit and make annual reports. Four districts were created and Crawford and Whitworth Russell, both advocates of the separate system were appointed to the Home District, of which Aylesbury was part. The used their second, third and fourth (1837-1839) annual reports to refine the workings of the separate system and develop an improved design. They also produced a series of plans of model prisons with the assistance, from

September 1837, of Joshua Jebb, a Captain in the Royal Engineers seconded to the Home Office as a technical advisor, and, from 1844, Surveyor General of Prisons. These designs, influenced by the New Jersey State Penitentiary, took on board their belief in the importance of separation, security, observation and ease of access.

During the late 1830s amid national and local debate about the separate and silent systems, some counties and boroughs took firm steps towards implementing one or other system, others were more hesitant or used a mixture of systems. An Act of 1837 did, however, prohibit solitary confinement for more than one month or three months in any one year and, although Crawford defined solitary confinement differently, building work to adapt prisons to the separate system had to be postponed until legislative reform was introduced through the Prisons Act of 1839. In their third report of 1838, Crawford and Russell proposed the establishment of a model prison in London, at Pentonville. This was built as a convict prison between 1840 and 1842.

The Pentonville model of a separate-system prison was influential throughout Europe. The implementation of the separate system did not become compulsory until 1865 and the progress of its acceptance in the intervening period was uneven. The separate system was also imposed in some unmodified buildings and a return of 1856 showed that about two-thirds of English prisons had wholly or partly adopted it (Brodie et al 2002). In some prisons only certain classes were held separately, in others inmates slept in separate cells but might work and exercise together.

Nine county and five borough gaols and houses of correction, including Aylesbury, were rebuilt using a radial plan between 1842 and 1865, together with a further three county and two borough prisons between 1865 and 1877 (Brodie et al. 2002).

Two architects were particularly prolific during the 1840s and 1850s, Chalres James Peirce and Daniel Rowlinson Hill. Pierce was said to be a 'gentleman of considerable experience', who had been employed at Pentonville by Jebb (Brodie et al. 2002). Jebb recommended his appointment as architect at Aylesbury, and he also designed Winchester and Walton (Liverpool) prisons.

A number of the early radial prisons were erected by the same builders. Messrs Locke and Nesham were involved in the later stages of Lewes prison and also built Aylesbutry and Wandsworth (Brodie et al. 2002).

Successive measures were implemented by the government between 1835 and 1877 to enforce greater uniformity in, and centralized control of, penal discipline and prison architecture. During the 1850s many of the strictest elements of the separate system were relaxed both in Pentonville and local prisons. Circular paths replaced the separate airing yards and segregation during worship ended. However, during the 1860s and 1870s penal discipline also became more severe. Many of the alterations and additions to prisons undertaken during this period were to bring them into conformity with the 1865 Prison Act. The Select Committee set up to examine prisons prior to this Act found an 'inequality, uncertainty and inefficiency of punishment' caused by a great variation in the buildings, labour, diet and discipline of prisons and the subsequent Act attempted to standardize these areas. The 200 plus gaols and houses of correction in late 1830s reduced to 113 local prisons by 1877. The process of

centralizing and rationalizing county and borough prisons continued with the passing of the 1877 Prisons Act. The creation of the Prison Commission under this Act, which brought prisons under centralised control, would lead to new developments in the discipline, design and facilities of local prisons during the 19th and 20th centuries. In 1878 the local prison estate comprised both radial prisons erected between 1842 and 1877 and earlier prisons which had been adapted to the separate system. However, the Commissioners rejected the radial plan at the four prisons they rebuilt during the 1880s and early 1890s. In its place, they favoured a plan characterized by detached pavilions with opposed windows, to provide cross-ventilation, and corner sanitary annexes.

1895 saw the appointment of Evelyn Ruggles-Brise as the Chairman of the Prison Commissioners and the publication of the report of the Departmental Committee on prisons. The 1898 Prison Act introduced a three-fold classification of local prisoners and the 1899 Prison Rules initiated productive, associated labour. It also amalgamated the local- and convict prison systems meaning that many features of convict prisons were introduced into local prisons and vice versa. Two features of convict prisons introduced into local prisons by the 1898 Act were a period of separation followed by work in association for those sentenced to hard labour and the possibility of remission for the well-behaved and industrious.

R G Alford published 6 Volumes of *Notes on the Buildings of English Prisons* in 1909-10. This publication gave detailed information about the 61 local and convict prisons then open in England and Wales. His accounts show that in the decades following the appointment of the Prison Commissioners, many of the prisons built before 1878 had been extended and altered to provide additional accommodation. One of the first means employed was the conversion into cells of stores, workshops and bathrooms in wing basements and the opening up of the corridor floors. Public concern about preventing the spread of infectious diseases had led to the 1875 Public Health Act, and one of the Commissioners' main priorities was to make improvements to the facilities which contributed to the health and welfare of prisoners, including kitchens, laundries, receptions, hospitals, sanitation and anti-suicide measures. In order to ensure conformity with the requirement that all labour should be productive, new flour mills were built and old ones brought into use again at 14 prisons before 1890.

The recommendations of an inquiry into habitual inebriates in 1893 formed the basis of the 1898 Inebriates Act, under which special provision was made for criminal habitual drunkards. The 1908 Prevention of Crime Act made special provision for the reformation and detention of juveniles and habitual criminals by the formal establishment of borstal institutions and the creation of a sentence of preventive detention along with prisons for those serving it.

The profusion of new facilities at local prisons during the late 19th and early 20th centuries ensured that radial prisons lost the simplicity of plan envisaged by Jebb. Often the spaces between cell blocks, formerly occupied by exercise yards or left open, had become filled with a proliferation of buildings deemed essential for the modern prison, a trend that continued up until the late 20th century.

2.4 Aylesbury Prison

Figs. 1-7

Aylesbury built 1844-47 as a replacement to the County Gaol and House of Correction based in the Market Place. The architect Charles James Peirce, also commissioned for Winchester (c.1846-9) and Walton (Liverpool) (c.1850-4) was responsible for the detailed design. Initially a male local prison with a female and debtors wing, Aylesbury became a female convict prison 1895-6 and remained so until 1918. Parts of the prison not used for female convicts also functioned as the State Inebriate Reformatory from 1902-1930, for women undergoing preventative detention from 1912-33 and as a female borstal from 1908-1960. Although classified as a female prison, on occasion parts of the prison were still used to house men on remand as indicated by Alford after his visit 1902 when he records 16 men awaiting trial (Alford 1909). In 1902-05 a State Inebriate Reformatory for women was established on land adjoining the prison and this functioned independently until 1930 when it was incorporated with the prison and used as part of the Borstal for girls. In 1960 the borstal closed and the prison now holds young offenders, many of whom are serving lengthy sentences, including a number of prisoners with life sentences (Home Office 1992).

Joshua Jebb the government advisor on prison building was influential in the design of Aylesbury prison and had considerable input into the plans. After his appointment to the government in the late 1830s, he examined all plans for new prisons and wings and, if necessary amended them, before passing them on to the Home Secretary for approval. Jebb was also active locally, attending meetings of gaol-building committees and visiting existing prisons to advise on the possibility of modifying them to the separate system (Brodie et al. 2002). He responded for requests for estimates at Aylesbury in June 1841, and provided his own plans in both 1841 and again 1843.

In June 1841 Jebb attended the meeting of the committee tasked with enlarging or re-building Aylesbury County Gaol in accordance with the 1839 Act. In the event the committee decided to postpone action until Pentonville was completed and they were not then re-appointed until July 1843. Once the committee had been re-appointed it again sought the advice of Jebb and it was on one of his visits to Aylesbury that the site on Bierton Road was chosen for a new prison (Q/AG/21). In November 1843 Jebb submitted a design to accommodate 300 prisoners (235 adult males, 25 females, 20 juveniles and 20 debtors) and recommended the appointment of Charles James Peirce as the architect. Peirce attended a committee meeting in December 1843 and provided an estimate of £40,000 for the work. At this meeting it was agreed that a clay pit should be dug on site to make bricks for the prison (Q/AG/21).

Reading county gaol appears to have been used as a model for Aylesbury. The Aylesbury committee visited Reading in spring of 1845. Prior to this they had decided on a heating and ventilation system similar to that used at Reading. This was commissioned from a Mr Day (Q/AG/21). It was also decided to erect a separate laundry and wash house in the women's yard because that at Reading in the basement of the female wing had proved unsatisfactory.

In April 1844, the committee requested that Peirce alter the plan before it was sent to the Home Secretary for approval. Alterations requested included the addition of ten day rooms for male prisoners and two for females, a separate

female infirmary and a treadwheel for pumping water. In the event, the wrong set of plans was sent and they did not include the alterations approved by the committee. However, the committee reiterated to Peirce their desire to include day rooms and their reluctance to wholeheartedly embrace the separate system is further shown when they recommended the adoption of the plan but without commitment to any particular system of discipline

A set of plans made a few days after the first set had been sent to the Home Secretary included a separate female infirmary and a treadwheel. A note attached to the plans dated from June 1844 and signed by the Home Secretary indicates approval of the altered plans. Alterations included changes to the exercise yards. Russell, the Prison Inspector, was not given the opportunity to inspect the plans before work started and he subsequently disagreed with Jebb's decisions regarding the amount of accommodation, the provision of dayrooms and details of construction. Russell attended a meeting of the gaol building committee in November 1844 and in consequence work on the female and debtors' wings was suspended for a month until the committee decided to stick to the original plans. Other items discussed at this meeting and recorded in the sessions books (Q/AG/21) were the provision of 18" thick partition walls and use of tiles in the cells and corridors and not asphalt. A meeting in March 1845 specified the use of 'best' Staffordshire blue paving throughout the prison, samples of which were to be approved by the committee before use. The Tenth Report of the Inspectors, published 1845, presents Crawford and Russell's objections to the provision of dayrooms and a treadwheel at Aylesbury. In November 1845 the Committee decided that day rooms and airing yards for association should be placed on the west side of the gaol and those for the separate system on the east. This arrangement is shown on the 1847 published plan. In 1849 the associated yards were converted into separate ones.

In April 1846 the committee ordered that the clerk of works direct the contractors to substitute slate sills instead of paving tiles to the doorways of the cells. Jebb wanted to separate the two classes of debtors and the contractors were therefore ordered to make an entrance to each of the debtors' dayrooms from their respective airing yards "…instead of those present laid down on the plan which are directed to be stopped up". The plan published in the 1847 report of the surveyor-General of Prisons does appear to show a possible entrance to the second-class debtor's day room not indicated on the previous architect's plans. It is less clear whether the entrance towards the centre of the wing and shown on the previous plans exists. There is no entrance to the first class debtor's day room indicating that, for this class, the central entrance to the wing remained as their main entrance. The sessions books also allude to the division of one of the debtors' wards with reference to a new regulation on fraudulent debtors that had been passed since plans were approved. In June 1846 the debtors' wing and associated airing yards were once more subject to alteration with orders to erect an iron railing 12 feet from the boundary wall to improve security.

By April 1847 approval for the final works had been given and the prison which opened in the spring of that year, although it was not fully complete until November that year. The total cost including fittings had been £43,716.

Jebb's1845 model plan of a prison for 250 inmates comprised a cross-shape with an octagonal central observation hall. At cardinal points of the central block were three double-sided wings of cells for male prisoners and an

administration wing. The administration wing was opposite the gateway, which was flanked by houses for the chaplain and governor. Extending at right angles between the two horizontal wings and the governor's and chaplain's houses were two single-sided wings for juvenile prisoners and females. The Aylesbury plans differ from Jebb's in two main respects: the shape of the central hall and the function of the wings. At Aylesbury, the central block is half-octagonal and the left-hand single-sided wing was for debtors and not juveniles.

As built, Aylesbury prison provided accommodation for 285 inmates: 242 men, 22 male debtors and 21 women. The prison was visited by A B McHardy in October 1877 when he found 207 male cells, 17 female cells and 17 for debtors, together with 10 reception cells, six punishment cells, four with looms in and nine used as mill cells (Brodie et al. 2002). In the settlement made between the county prison authority and the prison commissioners in 1878, following government centralisation, the commissioners found 234 cells of which 111 were required to meet the average number of prisoners. When Gibbs described the prison in 1885 he reported a total of 256 cells, including the 'reception' and 'refactory' ones.

In 1895-6 Aylesbury became a female convict prison, taking women from Woking and it remained the only convict prison for women until 1918. Meanwhile it also became the first female borstal in 1908. R G Alford visited the prison in 1902 and found cells for 253 women and 16 men awaiting trial; the average daily roll was 130 women (Alford 1909).

Under the provisions of the Inebriates Act of 1898 Ayelsbury became a Sate Inebriate Reformatory for women. At first the women were house temporarily in D-Wing but between 1902 and 1905 a permanent structure was built on land adjoining the prison. With the introduction of licensing laws during the First World War, convictions arising from drunkenness fell and by 1921 all 15 state reformatories had closed. At Aylesbury, part of the former Inebriate Reformatory was used between 1912 and 1933 for women undergoing preventive detention and part was used from 1917 as a borstal. The reformatory became part of the prison in 1930 and was used as a girls' borstal until 1959.

In addition to plans and descriptions published in the annual Inspectors' Reports, there are a number of near contemporary accounts of Aylesbury prison. Sheahan in his history of Buckinghamshire published in 1862 describes the prison in some detail, as does Gibbs in his history published in 1885, some years after the 1877 Prison Act led to the centralisation of local prisons under the control of the government.

Sheahan (1862), writing whilst Aylesbury was a local prison largely containing male prisoners but also with a debtors' and a female wing, he describes the outer entrance as an archway of 'fine proportion' with stone dressings and built in the Italian style. On the either side of the gateway are the houses of the governor (to the west) and the chaplain (to the east), each with a 'good garden' attached. The gateway leads to a court yard measuring 80' x 60', flanked on each side by the debtor and female wings. This description implies that these wings, which were later reduced in length; were at this time still abutting the perimeter wall. The entrance building, on the side of the quadrangle opposite the gateway, contains a ground floor comprising six reception cells, a visiting room and rooms for the magistrates, governor, and head turn-key and a second

storey containing six sick wards or infirmaries. Behind the centre building, stretching out in the form of a letter T reversed, are the cells in wings, each three storeys high and approached by outside iron galleries and crossings at each storey and accessed from below by an iron spiral staircase. The chapel could hold up to 274 persons and Sheahan comments that 'the seats are so arranged that whilst all the prisoners can see and be seen no one prisoner can see another'. The basement of the building is described as containing the kitchens. The cooked food being raised by windlass to the different galleries and placed silently in an aperture in the door of each cell.

In 1862 the prison contained 220 cells for male and just over 20 for females, in addition there were 17 sleeping rooms and two day rooms for debtors. Each prisoner has a separate cell measuring 13' by 7', and the building is 'so constructed that it is almost impossible it could be destroyed by fire. Indeed the only part, almost, of the prison that could be destroyed by fire is the roof which is wooden covered with slates'. Ironically the chapel roof was destroyed by fire in 1904 (Alford 1909). Sheahan goes on to comment that: 'Happily up to the present time but one execution has taken place at the new Gaol.'

Writing slightly later, some years after the prison had been centralised under government control but still during its time as a local prison. Gibbs (1885) also describes the prison and its buildings in some detail. Giving some details of the origins of the prison he notes that in March, 1847, a special Session was held for the purpose of appointing officers for the new prison and in May of the same year "…the inmates of the old prison, both alive and dead were removed to their new quarters (some bodies of recently executed felons were removed to and re-interred in the precincts of the new prison)".

He describes the façade of the building as having 'a neat and handsome appearance: the only entrance is by a lofty arch, which like the façade is of brick with stone dressings. Over this arch was the place appointed for the execution of criminals when the took place in public'. His description mirrors that of Sheahan and he too describes the internal courtyard as enclosed on one side by D Wing (debtors); on the other side, by F-Wing (female). He describes the room used as an infirmary as spacious and goes on to note that the reception cells are located on the same floor as the infirmary.

Gibbs then goes on to describe the cell blocks in some detail along with the workings of the separate system which had been made compulsory in 1869 but which from the late 1870s became more relaxed in a number of prisons. Gibbs makes the comment that many changes in management and arrangement of the prison had occurred since it was transferred into government hands in the late 1870s to become 'Her Majesty's Prison'. The prison was acquired by the government for a valuation of '£16,000 subject to certain deductions' (Gibbs, 1885).

> *Issuing from the outer passage is the central hall which consists of three arcades radiating from a point, and opening from the floor to the roof of the building, but covered with sky-lights. The cells are entered from the sides of the arcades, and there are three storeys of them. The lower row of cells is entered from the floor; but those above are reached by galleries of light and ornamental ironwork, fixed along the walls, adding much to the appearance of the hall. These galleries are*

reached by narrow cork screw stairs of open ironwork; at the centering part of the arcades these galleries can be very conveniently attained. The arcades are lettered A, B and C, and the storeys and rows are marked 1, 2, and 3. The cells are also numbered. On the clothing of the prisoners corresponding markings are inscribed. Separation, as well as silence, is enforced. Each prisoner has a cell to himself, in which he can work, eat and sleep. At certain hours detachments are allowed to march out to court-yards for open-air exercise.

The court-yards instil into the mind that the essence of the system is separation for the prisoners and prevention of contamination. In marching to the yards, each prisoner must be 8' from another; no one is allowed to speak a single word to a companion; and everyone on leaving his cell is locked in his own separate courtyard. There is a small central lodge, in which a superintendent in charge of the prisoners presides during the time they are exercising. Since the prison has been in Government hands the partition walls of the exercising yards have been removed. If the strict discipline of the model system be carried out, there can be not only no intercourse by words or signs between prisoners, but no personal knowledge of each other.

The organization of the cells is full of ingenious contrivances. Each cell is a neat white-washed compartment, 13' long by 7' broad and 9' high with a window in the end admitting light but so constructed that the inmate cannot distinguish any object outside; the aperture for admitting the light is so formed that it is impossible to look in any direction excepting upwards to the sky, and a further precaution is also taken to use a fluted glass, so that any object, on either side, is so distorted that it is not possible to distinguish its form. In each cell is a shelf on which the rolled-up hammock or bed is placed during the day, and beneath it a drawer, in which any small articles might be deposited. Near these conveniences is a table. Over the table and projecting from the wall is a gas burner. A short way farther in the cell is a very neat washing apparatus. A metal basin is fixed to the wall, with a water-pie in it, which can be turned at pleasure, for washing the face and hands, the waste water escaped from the bottom of the basin and flows by tube into a seat-pan or jar provided with a lid, moveable on a hinge; each prisoner may use 6 gallons of water daily in his cell independently of the quantity consumed in baths, to which he is subjected at regular intervals. Hooks are fastened in the walls to which the hammock is hung at night, and the cells are supplied with warm air. The heated air from the stoves in the lower storey is admitted through perforated plates in the floor of the cell, and the vitiated atmosphere escapes through perforations above the door.

The prisoner can, at any time during day or night, call an attendant. Within the cell is a spring, which, on being touched, causes a bell in the arcade to sound and at the same time a tablet, which is hinged to the wall, to start conspicuously out; and, as a number is marked on the tabled corresponds with that of the cell, the officer in attendance is directed to the spot where his services are required. In the door is a small eye-hole, covered with gauze and a shield, and through this aperture the prisoners' actions can be at all times unobservedly watched. The door is likewise furnished with a small wicket, through which meals may be readily conveyed. Prisoners are allowed the use of religious and other instructive books and slates; writing books were for some time permitted, but the privilege was abused; the library

contains 300 vols.; and, in cases where their avocations permit, prisoners may follow their mechanical trades in their separate cells.

Aylesbury prison was visited in 1902 by R G Alford who described it in his *Notes on the buildings of English Prisons* published in 1909. Alford notes that the chapel roof was gutted by fire in 1904. As the prison was now a convict prison, reception cells were no longer required and these had been given over to storage. D-Wing is described as two cell-spaces shorter than F. Previous descriptions indicate that D-Wing abutted the boundary wall suggesting that the shortening took place sometime between 1885 and 1902. Alford describes D-Wing as 'an excellent little prison' and notes that its upper floor was occupied by inebriate women during 1902-03, the lower floor containing the governor's and staff offices as a result of the fire in 1904. 16 of the 24 lower floor cells were kept for men awaiting trial. Alford also comments that parts of D-Wing had also been used for the 'feeble-minded', but by 1908 this category had once more been moved into a partitioned off section of a wing.

In the garden behind D was a small detached work room which at the time of the visit was used as a visiting room. At the corner of D nearest the gatehouse was a full-sized weighbridge manufactured by F Morton & Co of Liverpool, but 'now worn out'.

Describing the layout of the main prison, Alford comments that the matron was not in favour of the radial design for female convicts as 'noisy outbreaks are not isolated here as they were at Woking'. Alford notes that the inebriate women in D-Wing could look down on the male remand prisoners entering the prison from the gallery railings and that this arrangement was 'not a desirable one'. When men were not being held on remand the area reserved for their use was used alternatively for industrial beadwork 'at which the Female Convicts appear proficient'. Alford further notes that the use of the prison for male remand prisoners was infrequent and 'sometimes 2 years pass without any men appearing at all'.

Alford comments on the dark tiled floors that are 'gloomy' and describes the blocking of the gas box flues which had been replaced by tin shutters, with a very small slit above for smoke exit which 'blackens the walls visibly'. The iron frames holding the clear glass panes in the cells were described as very small and prone to frequent cracking from internal heat. He also notes that the corridors are 'reputed to be poorly lighted at night, and of course no assistance is received from the cell boxes where shutters exist outside.'

Alford describes a specimen cell:

'As a specimen cell B III 11 was measured, and found to be 13' x 7' x 9', a regular "Pentonville" cell, with the 14 pane, earlier window 3'6" x 1'6", a long horizontal hot air grating for inlet, over door, and a similar foul air extract grating below window. There is no clear glass, but Convict Womens' cells are furnished with iron bedsteads.'

In 1992 the large, central steam boiler plant which once serviced the site recently replaced by small, individual gas-fired boilers (Home Office 1922).

3. BUILDING RECORDING: DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

3.1 Methodology: Building Recording

Throughout the project the standards set in the IFA *Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings and Structures* and English Heritage's *Understanding Historic Buildings* (2006) have been adhered to. All work has been done in accordance with the IFA Code of Conduct.

The site survey comprised detailed examination of the buildings, compilation of a plan record of the structures (using a separately commissioned digital survey) and a photographic survey. The requirement was for a survey at English Heritage Level 3 standard (2006). The photographic survey was undertaken using high quality, high resolution digital photographs. The photographs will be stored in .tiff format. A selection of the photographs have been reproduced to illustrate the report. These photographs have been reproduced as lower resolution jpegs in order to ensure digital versions of the report are of a manageable size.

A number of historic plans, mostly architectural drawings, dating from the mid 19th century were available for consultation in the Buckinghamshire Records Office.

A full range of photographs were taken of D-wing, along with detailed points of interest. Photographs of the building in its context were, however, limited due to security restrictions on what could be photographed.

At the time of the survey conditions were good and, despite a number of security restrictions, full access to the wing was possible.

The site sits at an angle to the main compass points, on the drawn plans the gable end facing Bierton Road is designated as site north.

3.2 Results of Survey

3.2.1 General Description of Site and Its Layout

Fig.s 1-8

Aylesbury Prison is located alongside the main Aylesbury to Leighton Buzzard road some two miles from the town centre. A small forecourt joins the road to the original gatehouse. The prison site slopes substantially away from the gatehouse, though to the south west of D-Wing the ground is relatively flat. The principal buildings are generally of two- or three-storey brick construction.

The gateway to prison Grade 2 listed. This is the only listed structure within the prison. The list description is as follows:

> *1845 on frieze of gateway. Red brick, stucco quoins and dressings. Central tall arch to massive rusticated doorway, portcullis motif in tympanum. Frieze, dentil cornice, blocking course, small wooden bell turret. Recessed 2 storey 3 sash window wings, wide window surrounds, stucco parapets. End blocks each projecting 2 storeys with first floor sill band. 3 sashes in wide surrounds, central doorways. Frieze, modillion cornice, blocking course.*

The prison buildings fall into three age groups: those built 1844-7, those added in 1902 (the State Inebriate Reformatory in the south-east corner of the site) and later infill additions. The buildings completed in 1847 comprise (in addition to the perimeter wall) the two-storey gatehouse, a three-storey, three-wing radial prison block with two additional ancillary wings and single-storey out buildings. They are in the classical Victorian-Georgian prison style in local red brick with ashlar quoins and decorations on the public-facing elevations. Walls are solid as are most of the floors, although there is some timber flooring in limited areas (Alford 1908). Roofs are pitched on timber trusses, the former slate covering having been replaced more recently by man-made slate.

The 1902 group of buildings comprise two, three-storey residential blocks, a three-storey office block and some ancillary accommodation. The residential blocks have a plain architectural style and are constructed in a similar red brick to that of the older buildings. The buildings have yellow brick string courses running the length of the structures.

The infill buildings are in mixed styles and construction ranging from modern, two- and single-storey red brick blocks to concrete slab and slotted post structures.

Sometime before 1992, a considerable run of new perimeter walling was added to the Victorian section. It is in concrete but clad internally and externally with red bricks to match existing structures. Additionally, the original wall has been strengthened by external piers in the same modern red brick (Home Office 1992).

The current development area comprises D Wing. The former debtor and female wings (D- and F-, respectively) originally had 14 bays and extended from A- and C- wings to the perimeter wall behind the chaplain's and governor's houses. However, both wings have been truncated by two bays at their northern end. F-wing still abutted the perimeter wall at the time of Alford's visit in 1902 (Alford 1909), but D-wing had already been shortened by then. At the

time of Alford's visit part of F-Wing had also been heightened to three stories towards its south eastern end.

F- and D-Wings are single-sided with corridors facing the entrance court and lit by semi-circular windows. A bridge originally connected the first floor level of each wing with the chapel. When RCHME surveyed the site in 1995 it was noted that the steps which led to the bridges survived (1995).

On Peirce's plans of 1844 (Q/AG/57/1) D-Wing, the debtor's wing, had eight sleeping cells in the centre of the ground floor with dayrooms for first- and second-class debtors at either end. The first floor was the same, except that there were nine sleeping cells. This was still the arrangement in 1877. In 1902, Alford found 12 cells on each floor, of which 16 were reserved for men awaiting trial (Alford 1908). The remaining cells were being used on a temporary basis as the state reformatory for inebriate women, whilst a separate prison was under construction elsewhere on the prison site. Afterwards D-Wing reverted to use as part of the female convict prison, although during the 1930s it was being used as part of the borstal accommodation. The prison has been a Male Young Offenders Institute since 1960 and D-Wing is now the Segregation Unit.

3.2.2 External Description

D-wing is a two-storey, red-brick structure in English bond with a pitched roof and waste air chimney projecting from the roof apex. The wing has been built on sloping ground and as a result has a partial basement, although, other than a small area used as a plant room, this has not been constructed as usable space. D-Wing and its counterpart, F-Wing, are located to the north-west of the main radial wings, either side of, and parallel to, the administration block. Part of D- and F– Wings extend beyond the frontage of the administration block to form the north-eastern and south-western boundaries of the enclosed entrance courtyard. The north-western side of the courtyard is formed by the entrance gateway block, the south-eastern side by walls the administration block frontage and wall on either side extending to each of the wings. In the past the two opposing wings continued to the perimeter fence, but have both since been shortened, the corresponding gaps being replaced by secure gateways. The gateway in the wall extending from the administration block to the south-western facing elevation of D-Wing leads to an enclosed area between the remainder of D-Wing, the administration block and A-Wing.

The gable ends of the wing have a parapet with flat ashlar coping and brick corbelling. A denticulated brick cornice runs beneath the eaves. (Pl.s 1b, 3a)

The foul air chimney is slightly north west of centre to the current elevation and adjacent to the former position of the stairwell as shown on plans dating to the 1844. The wide, square brick chimney stack sits on a deep brick plinth and, at its top, steps outwards to form a wide capping. (Pl 3b)

The entrance courtyard-facing, south-western portions, of the elevations of both D- and F-Wings continue the decorative architectural style of the administration block. On D-wing a similar, but slightly less imposing, decorative style continues along the remainder of the south-western-facing elevation (Pl.s 1-2). The more recently constructed gable end, and the north-eastern elevation are plain. The entablature across the doorway of the administration block continues as a plat band with projecting cornice across the façade of that building, across

the top of the walls extending from either side of that block and then, as a flat band, still at first-floor level, along the courtyard-facing elevations of each of the wings. Again mirroring the administration block, another plat band runs at second floor level.

On each of the wings, semi-circular windows, similar to those seen at first-floor level in the administration block, are repeated between the two plat bands (Pl.s 1, 2, 19). On D-Wing the two semi-circular windows on the courtyard-facing section have ashlar sills and are set in a wide ashlar surrounds with a stepped outer edge. This mirrors the bold 'gibbs'-style' blocked surrounds to the windows and doorways on the main administration block and gatehouse. The semi-circular, upper storey windows facing the gated space beyond the entrance courtyard do not have ashlar surrounds and the sills become a continuous band, replacing the wider banding seen in the courtyard. The upper plat band continues beyond the gated space along the whole elevation, although half-way along this part of the elevation it runs above a projecting brick band. Unfortunately a rainwater down pipe obscures the point at which the projecting brick string course occurs, making it difficult to ascertain what this change in architectural detail represents. At first floor level there is an additional rectangular window with brick arch voussoir between the two semi-circular windows on the entrance courtyard-facing part of elevation.

The ground floor windows on this elevation comprise three rectangular openings with flat arches (pl. 2) overlooking the space beyond the entrance courtyard and, in the entrance courtyard-facing part of the elevation, a square window opening with ashlar sill and lintel (Pl. 4a). On this side, at ground level, there is also a small rectangular opening. This opening is located in the brick plinth of the wing and gives access to the below ground floor level via a wooden hatch. The rectangular opening has ashlar lintel and sill (Pl. 4b).

The slope in ground level means that the ground floor door openings on this side of the building have steps up to the top of the brick plinth which marks the internal floor level (Pl.s 2, 4b, 24). The door openings are constructed with brick voussoirs forming flat arches, and contain heavy wooden doors with metal studwork and two window lights with heavy glazing bars set as a cross (Pl.s 11a, 12a).

The north-east elevation comprises a plain brick façade containing the window openings for the ground- and first-floor cells (Pl.s 5-6). Whilst all the upper floor cell window openings are of similar dimensions with concrete sills, most of the ground floor window openings, with the exception of those for Cells 12, 16 and 18 (3rd, 8th and 10th from the north-eastern end), are larger. The smaller cell window openings have brick voussoirs forming flat arches and contain thick metal-barred windows (6 (high) x 10 (wide) small rectangular panes) with external horizontal bars (Pl. 7). Most of the larger openings on the ground floor also have brick voussoirs forming flat arches and contain barred windows made up of 3 (high) x 7 (wide) panes. Replacement windows have been more recently inserted into the window openings for the unnumbered cell between 12 and 13, and Cells 13, 14, 15 and 17. The window opening for the shower block is a later insertion or replacement with concrete lintel. Ceramic vent tiles are visible immediately below each of the earlier 19th-century cell windows and two of the later insertions (Cells 17 and 14). The windows which would have formed part of the day room at the south eastern end of the elevation do not have this type of ventilation system.

There is some evidence for re-pointing and replacement brick work along this elevation, in particular the section which forms the outer wall of the current shower block (Pl 5a). There is also faint scarring immediately to the north-west of Cell 14, that might represent the position of the former wall dividing the first and second-class debtors. There is a large amount of graffiti on this elevation, mostly inscriptions of names and dates. Although the names are at mostly illegible the earliest dates are from the mid 1850s whilst the most recent are from the late 1980s (Pl.s 8-9).

The current entrance to D-Wing is via a door in the south eastern elevation of a small linking corridor between D- and A-Wing (Pl. 6b). This door leads into a lobby area containing doors through to D-Wing on the right and A-Wing on the left.

The north western-facing gable end, constructed when D-Wing was shortened sometime before 1902, contains two upper floor rectangular window openings with flat arches formed from brick voussoirs, and an ashlar sill (Pl.s 1b, 3a). Below these openings is a single, wider window opening on the ground floor, with ashlar lintel and sill. The upper floor openings which are at the end of the main galleried corridor, contain wooden-framed windows, 2 panes wide by 2 panes high with a narrower, opening upper lights. The ground-floor opening, in the outer wall of the staff toilet contains a similar window 3 panes wide by 2 panes high, the upper portion of which also opens.

3.2.3 Internal Description

Fig.s 2, 6-7
(Plates)
Entrance to D-Wing is through a heavy, metal-studded, wooden-panelled door opening off the entrance lobby at the south-eastern end of the ground floor corridor (Pl. 11a). Internally, both floors of D-Wing comprise a corridor along the south-western long elevation with cells and other rooms along the north-eastern elevation (Pl. 10). On the ground floor, there is also a small staff washroom at the north-western end of the corridor. The internal walls are of brick, those forming the cells being 18" thick. Most of the exposed brickwork has been painted, although some of the cells are rendered.

The building is barrel-vaulted, with the corridor open to the roof level, and a first floor gallery giving access to the upper-level cells. The gallery is supported by thin metal bracing and is accessed via steep metal staircases at either end of the corridor (Pl.s 13, 17a), . The stairs at the south-eastern end being a more recent replacement. The banisters, hand rails and gallery railings are of a plain design, although the bolted cross members bracing the gallery hand rail supports, mirror the cross-shaped glazing bar seen in the door lights (Pl. 12).

The present building is divided equally into 12 bays. Each of the cells retains its traditional measurement of 13' x 7' x 9' high (3.96m x 2.13m x 2.74m) and is barrel vaulted (Pl.s 14, 16, 20a). A double-width room is formed from the first two bays at each end of the corridor, most recently used as an office and day room respectively (Pl. 15). The double-width room at the south eastern end of the wing occupies the position of the former day room shown on the plans dating to the 1844 (Q/AG/57/1). Towards the north-western end of the wing the room between Cell 12 and Cell 13 has been most recently used as a shower

room, although during the 19th and, probably, early 20th century, this would have been a cell. There is no evidence for the slightly off-centre door into the debtors' prison, nor the stairwell up to the first floor, as shown on the 19th-century plans (Q/AG/57/1). On the ground floor, blocked doorways can be seen in the wall between Cell 12 and the dayroom, between Cell 12 and the shower room, and again, between the shower room and Cell 13. There is no indication of doorways in this location on the historic plans and it is possible that these were in use when some of the cells were being used as offices after the fire of 1904 (Alford 1909). Cell 18, at the south-east end of the corridor, currently used as a store room, contains a raised dais against the wall (Pl. 16). This measures 1.92 x 0.80m and is formed from a brick surround with wooden planks laid across. Although the earliest prison descriptions suggests the use of hammocks and these were being used at Aylesbury around the time Gibbs was writing in 1885, hard beds comprising three planks were introduced into prisons from around 1869. The first floor is divided into 12 equal-sized rooms: Cells 1-11 (north west to south east) with a shower room between Cells 3 and 4. There is no evidence of the upper floor day room at the south eastern end of the building, now Cells 10 and 11, nor the stairwell shown in the space now occupied by Cell 5.

Internally the decoration is relatively plain (Pl.s 10, 11b) Most of the walls are painted brick, although some of the cell walls have been more recently rendered. The arches forming the barrel vaulted corridor roof spring from moulded capitals projecting out of the internal corridor wall to corresponding capitals projecting from the external wall (Pl. 10). The decoration continues as a moulded cornice along the full length of the corridor and external walls. Along the cell-side, the capitals project from the point at which the cell dividing walls meet the internal corridor wall, whilst along the external wall the capitals in some cases are cut into the brick voussoir arches of the external semi-circular window openings (Pl. 19).

The cell door openings mostly have a shallow arch formed from brick voussoirs, although the openings into the more recently converted shower blocks and day rooms have been enlarged and squared off (Pl. 15b). The semi-circular windows ranging along the north-eastern external wall retain their 19th-century iron bar frame, bolted as a single piece to the window surround (Pl. 19). Iron frames bolted to the internal brickwork are also present on most of the 19th-century cell windows (Pl. 20). The top lights in windows in the south-eastern gable end can be opened for ventilation, via a an iron mechanical opening mechanism (Pl. 17b). The former ventilation system comprising metal-grate vents in the sloping window cells and similar vents below the window at floor level are still visible in most of the cells (Pl.s 14, 20).

The roof space of D-Wing is accessed via a small high-level opening in the barrel roof of the corridor at the third bay from the north western end of the wing (Pl.s 20b-23). The floor for the attic storey of the building is some 1.30m below the roof truss to allow for the barrel vaulting and foul air system. The roof structure is formed from wooden trusses with purlins and rafters. The trusses comprise king post with joggle at the foot supporting struts. The components of the truss are bolted together and have metal braces clamping the tie beam to central post and principal rafter (Pl.s 20b, 21a). The roof space is divided by the large foul air chimney projecting between the current sixth and eighth bay from the north-western end. There is an opening with a small wooden door forming an inspection hatch on the south-eastern face of the chimney flue (Pl.

21). A brick-formed ledge along outer wall on the cell-side of the building is the duct for the foul air system (Pl.s 21a, 22b). Foul air was supposed to exit the cells through the ventilation at floor level then rising up through ducting into a longitudinal roof duct before exiting up the foul air shaft (Brodie et al, 2002: 96). There is an inspection hatch comprising a small opening with wooden door at the south-eastern end of brick duct (Pl. 22b).

3.3 Phasing

Contemporary plans held by the Buckinghamshire County Record Office are either undated, or are the architect's plans dating to the mid-1840s and therefore prior to the completion of the building. The 1847 plan published in the Surveyor-General's report and reproduced in Bordie et al. (2002) is probably the final as-built plan. This plan and subsequent descriptions of the prison suggest that D-Wing would have been built largely to plan. However, although there is little structural evidence for change, its current form is somewhat different.

It seems clear that the two ground-floor bays at the south eastern end of the wing formed a single dayroom, subsequently an office. Although evidence from the 1840s plans (Q/AG/57/2) suggests that the first bay on the ground floor was a visiting room, and that the day room was formed from the two adjacent bays, the published plan of the prison as built (Brodie et al 2002: 100) suggests the visiting room was not included in the final design. The ground- and first-floor day rooms at the south-eastern end of D-Wing were in that part of the wing shortened prior to 1902. There is no evidence of an upper floor dayroom at the north-western end of the building, although this is shown on the 1844 architect's plans (Q/AG/57/1).

In addition to the later shortening of the wing, there are a number of key structural differences between the surviving architect's plans and D-Wing in its current form. As originally built D-Wing and the exercise yard were divided by a wall into two separate sections for first-class debtors at the south-eastern end and second-class debtors at the north-western end. Both classes of debtors were kept apart with separate access to the wing from their respective exercise yards. On the 1844 plan the prisoners' entrance in the north-western elevation could have been accessed from both airing yards and would therefore have been shared by both classes of debtor. The documentary evidence suggests that Jebb insisted that the debtor's should have separate entrances and there is some suggestion on the plan published in 1847 that the second class debtors had a separate entrance directly into their dayroom. As there were a larger number of sleeping cells for the first-class debtors, the prisoner's entrance towards the centre of the wing was not quite central but had 6 bays to the south east and 9 bays (now 5) to the north west. Although some faint scarring on the wall to the south-east of the former stairwell bay may represent the position of the formerly abutting exercise yard wall and the ground floor window in the stairwell bay itself is not consistent with those that appear to represent the earlier, as-built cell windows, there is no substantive evidence for the presence of a former stairwell and entrance into the wing at this point.

The 1844 architect's plans also show bridges connecting the first floor of the main entrance hall and administration block to the first floor on both D- and F-Wing (Q/AG/57/1). The RCHME report indicates that the steps up to these bridges were still present, presumably in the main administration block which

was not surveyed as part of this work (1996). The plan evidence suggests that the bridge would have crossed adjacent to the third bay from the south-eastern end of the wing. The point at which the bridge would have entered D-Wing would have been adjacent to an existing window and immediately below the projecting string course beneath the semi-circular windows lighting the upper level of the first floor corridor. There is no evidence of a former access at this point, either through changes to the brickwork, or from an indication that the first floor gallery extended at this point towards the outer wall.

Although the documentary evidences shows that the architect's plans underwent constant alteration to detail both immediately prior to and during construction, the published as-built plans are substantially the same as those dating to 1844 (Q/AG/57/1). By 1844 the plans had largely been approved by the Home Office, although the ongoing debate between the gaol building committee, the Surveyor General and the Prison Inspectors did result in a number of subsequent minor alterations.

The evidence suggests that the layout of some of the cells and the positioning of window openings was changed during the lifetime of the prison. However, the style and similarity of the new arrangements to existing parts of the structure, suggests that the prison was in its present form from the later 19th or first few years of the 20th century.

Although imprisonment for debt was all but abolished by 1869, debtors remained incarcerated in D-wing at least until 1877 when A B McHardy noted that 17 debtors were imprisoned at Aylesbury (RCHME 1996). Describing the prison in, or immediately prior to, 1885, Gibbs also describes D-wing as the debtors' wing, although he does mention the many changes in management and 'arrangement' that had taken place as a result of the 1878 Prison Act. By 1895 the prison became a female convict prison and D-Wing does not appear to have housed debtors, although some local male prisoners on remand were imprisoned there (Alford 1909). This substantive change to the use of the prison may have led to a number of structural alterations. Various descriptions suggest that D-wing was shortened after 1885 but before Alford's visit in 1902. It is more likely that the shortening of the wing took place at the time of the other more substantial alterations (e.g., removal of bridge, changes to window openings in D wing).

Between 1902 and 1905 D-Wing was briefly used to house female inebriates whilst a separate prison was being built elsewhere on site, although it is likely that existing arrangements were adapted without any need for structural alteration. Other significant events that may have occasioned alterations to the structure of the prison were the centralisation of prisons under government control as a result of the 1877 Prisons Act and the 1898 Prison Act which led to the amalgamation of local and convict prisons and changes to the work regime of prisoners. Given Gibbs 1885 description of D-Wing as 'enclosing' one side of the courtyard, and that the substantial alterations are likely to have taken place at one time, the most likely date for this is around 1895, the date at which Aylesbury became a female convict prison.

3.4 Circulation and Control

A key design aspect of 19th century and early 20th century prisons was the control of circulation and separation of different classes of prisoner. D-Wing is

slightly separate from the main radial wings and in many of the descriptions both D- and F-Wing are considered as separate prisons. Whilst D-Wing was in use a debtors' prison, it was largely self-contained and the design of the wing with its enclosed exercise yard and separate prisoners' entrances meant that those incarcerated here would have had little contact with any other class of prisoner. Bridges, at first-floor level, from the main administration and entrance blocks however provided easy access for staff. The debtors themselves were separated into first- and second-class debtors, each with a separate exercise yard, and separate entrances to the prison. Early plans of the prison suggest that the first class debtors had a slightly larger day room and possibly a separate toilet at the end of the main corridor.

Debtors remained in D-wing until 1895. After that the wing seems to have been largely used for male prisoners on remand and, between 1902-05 a few female inebriates awaiting completion of the new prison buildings to the south-east of the main complex. Alford comments on that inadequate arrangements that meant the inebriate women were able to look down from the gallery at the male remand prisoners entering the prison. Although the inebriate women, male remand prisoners and staff offices would have been kept separate, there is no existing evidence for any previous structural divisions.

Although it is hard to discern any former layout of arrangement of D-wing from the existing structure, the various contemporary plans indicate the careful design of circulation routes throughout the prison. Access to D-wing is separate from other areas of the prison and once incarcerated in the wing contact with other areas of the prison is limited. Access to the former chapel was via a linking bridge from the first floor gallery and access to the visiting area in the administration block could be gained through the enclosed yard at the south-eastern end of the south-western elevation.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

A programme of archaeological observation was carried out during the demolition groundworks and groundworks for the construction of the new wing and associated services.

The purpose of the Watching Brief, as set out in the WSI (2009 Albion Archaeology), was to identify and record any significant archaeological remains, either relating to the prison itself or to any earlier structures that may have stood on the site. If possible, the relationship between the building and its immediate environs would also be investigated.

Several considerations gave rise to the Watching Brief. These were reports that the construction of the prison disturbed earlier human remains suggesting the presence of medieval, Roman or Iron Age remains. (Although dead prisoners were buried on the prison site, these were more likely buried outside the precinct walls).

Also, D wing was not entirely in its original form and it is possible that below-ground structural remains associated with the separation of the wing into first and second class debtors could have survived. Excavation of service trenches and other associated groundworks may also have revealed previously demolished prison structures.

It was also thought that the site may reveal traces of the possible medieval manor of Aylesbury. However research undertaken by Albion Archaeology prior to the building recording and Watching Brief revealed that the site was adjacent to a large 19th century building complex, designated in local histories as the 'manor'. While the site was part of a long-established manorial estate it was previously pasture land and unlikely to be associated with any medieval settlement (2009 Albion Archaeology).

Three visits were undertaken to Aylesbury between January and July 2010. These recorded the demolition groundworks and excavation of the foundations for the new building on the same site as well as the construction of new service trenches (Plates 24 and 25).

No archaeological remains, either relating to the demolished prison wing or any earlier structures or remains were revealed during any of the groundworks.

5. SUMMARY AND ASSESSMENT

Aylesbury prison was designed as a radial prison with many of the typical features of a post-Pentonville local prison housing several classes of prisoner. Although the architectural finish is particular to Aylesbury and from that perspective unique, most of the design was based on standard plans. As with all prisons of this period the gaol-building committee, the views of which often conflicted with those of the government advisors, were influential in the design and changed details of the design; although with varying degrees of success. Reading prison (Glibert Scott and William Moffatt) served as the model for Aylesbury and shared the same cruciform layout. Other similar prisons built around the same period were Clerkenwell, Exeter, Lewes, Manchester, Lincoln and Hull. However, despite being based on similar principals of design, these prisons are architecturally different.

D-wing appears to have been altered from its original form at some point in the nineteenth century, although many earlier features remain and subsequent lack of modernisation has meant that it retains much of its Victorian form, such as windows, entrance doors, first floor gallery and foul air system. The courtyard-facing part of south-western elevation, which continues the more ornate architectural decoration of the gatehouse and entrance block is of particular note. In style this has many similarities with Walton (Liverpool) prison, also built by Peirce between 1850-4.

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Primary Sources (Buckinghamshire Records Office)

Q/AG/57/1 ground, gallery and basement plans April 1844; with additions June 1844; approved 18th June 1844
Q/AG/57/2 ground plan (undated)
Q/AG/55 basement plan December 1843

Q/AG/14 Report by Inspector Russell, March 1848
Q/AG/21 Minute Book of the Proceedings of the Gaol Building Committee (appointed 1841 & 1843)

7. ARCHIVE AND RECORD

7.1 Archive

7.1.1 Summary of Archive Contents

Report (hard and pdf digital copy)

Set of survey plans as provided (digital)

CAD drawings – digital and hard copy, detailed survey plan based on architect's drawings

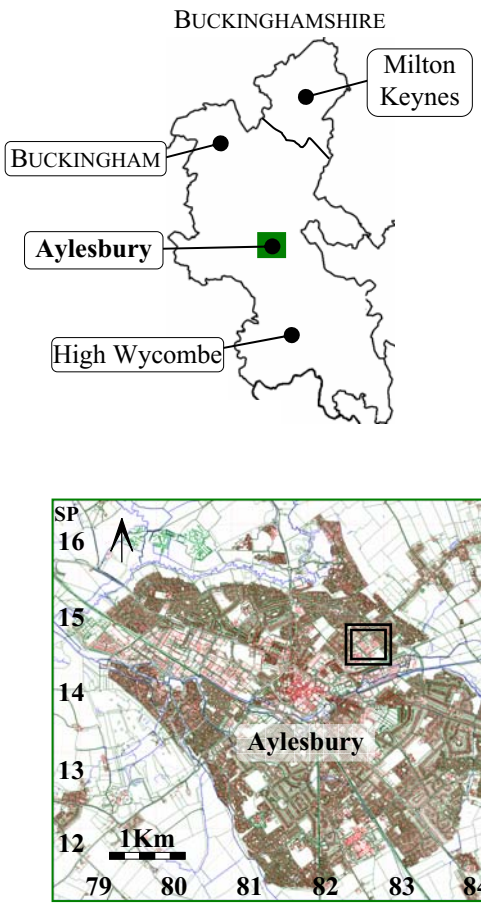
Digital photographs – saved on CD format (.tiff)
Prints on archival quality paper

7.1.2 Arrangements for Long-Term Deposition

The project archive will be deposited at Buckinghamshire County Museum. Copies of the report will be deposited with the relevant Historic Environment Record and with the National Monuments Record: Buildings

8. CONTENTS OF APPENDICES

8.1 Appendix 1: Summary of Photographic Record (Historic Building Recording)



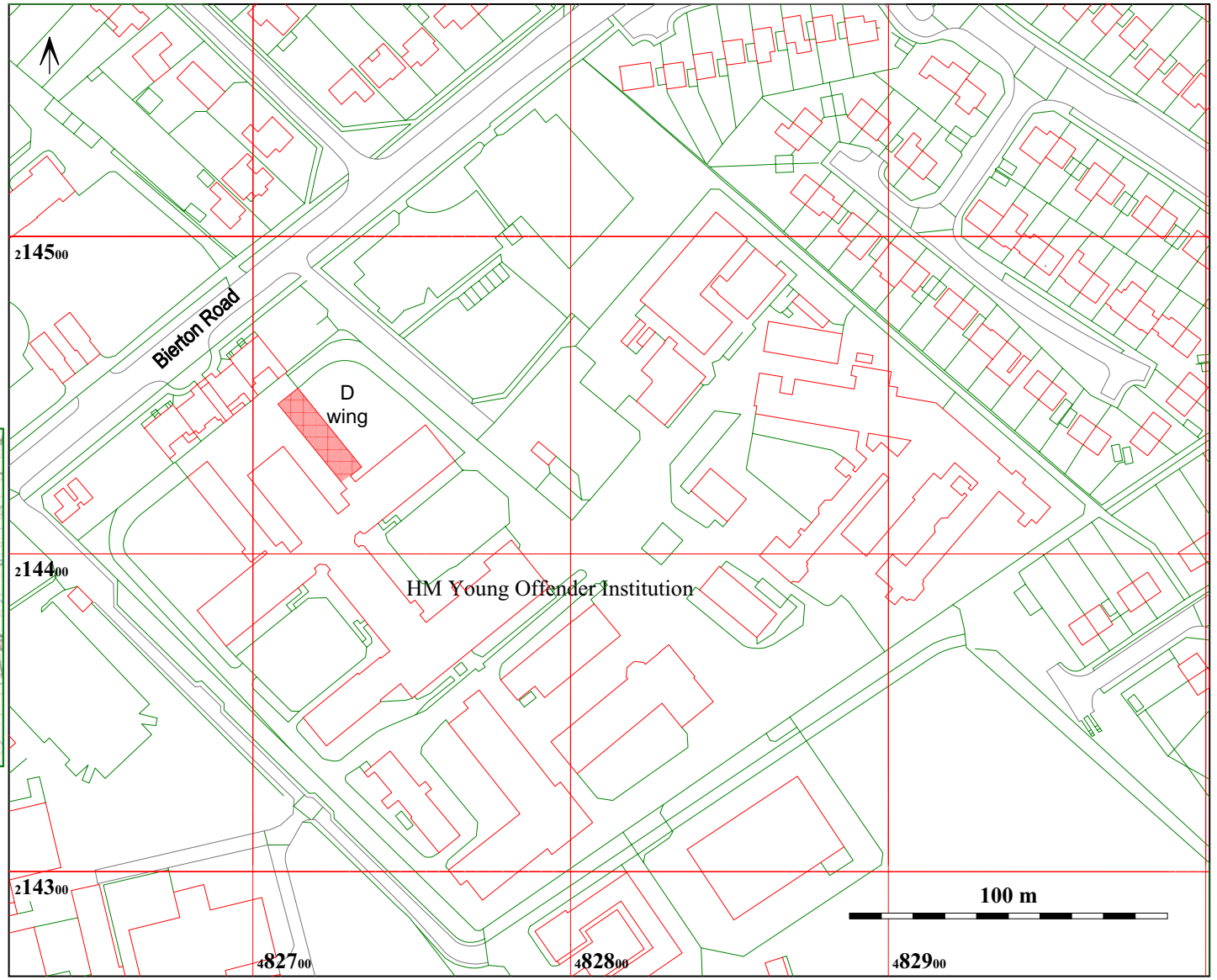
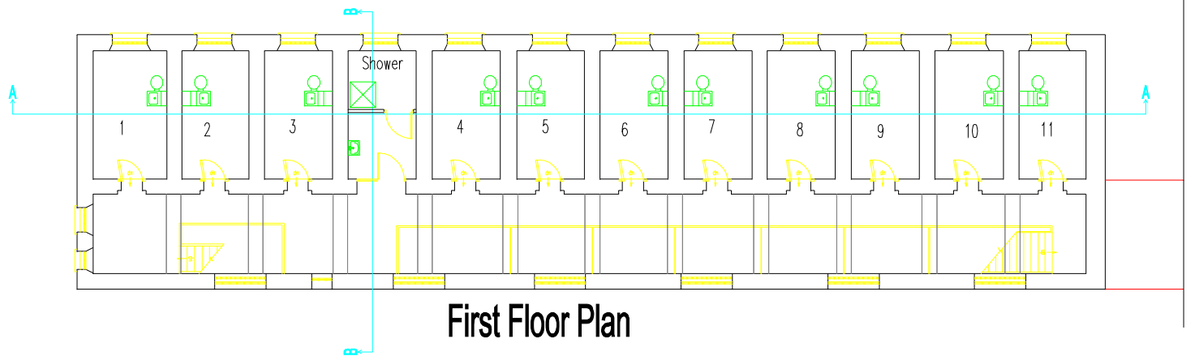


Figure 1: Site location



First Floor Plan

NW

SE

20M

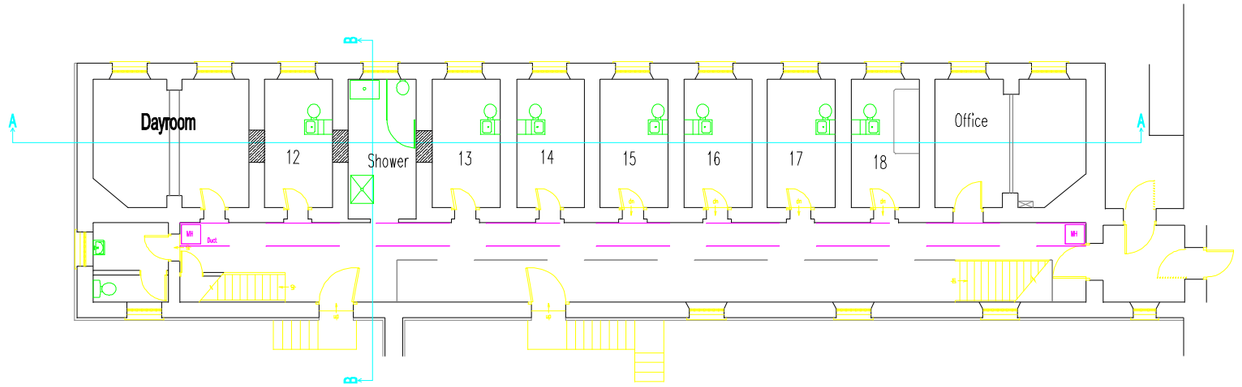
10M

5M

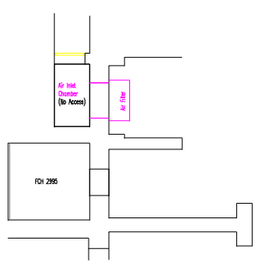
2M

1M

0



Ground Floor Plan



Basement Floor Plan

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Job: Measured Survey

Project: Segregation Unit
Aylesbury YOI

Drawing Title: Floor Plans

Client: Pick Everard

DATE	DESIGNED	DRAWN	CHECKED
Oct 2009		RGA	

SCALES	DIGITAL FILE	REVISIONS
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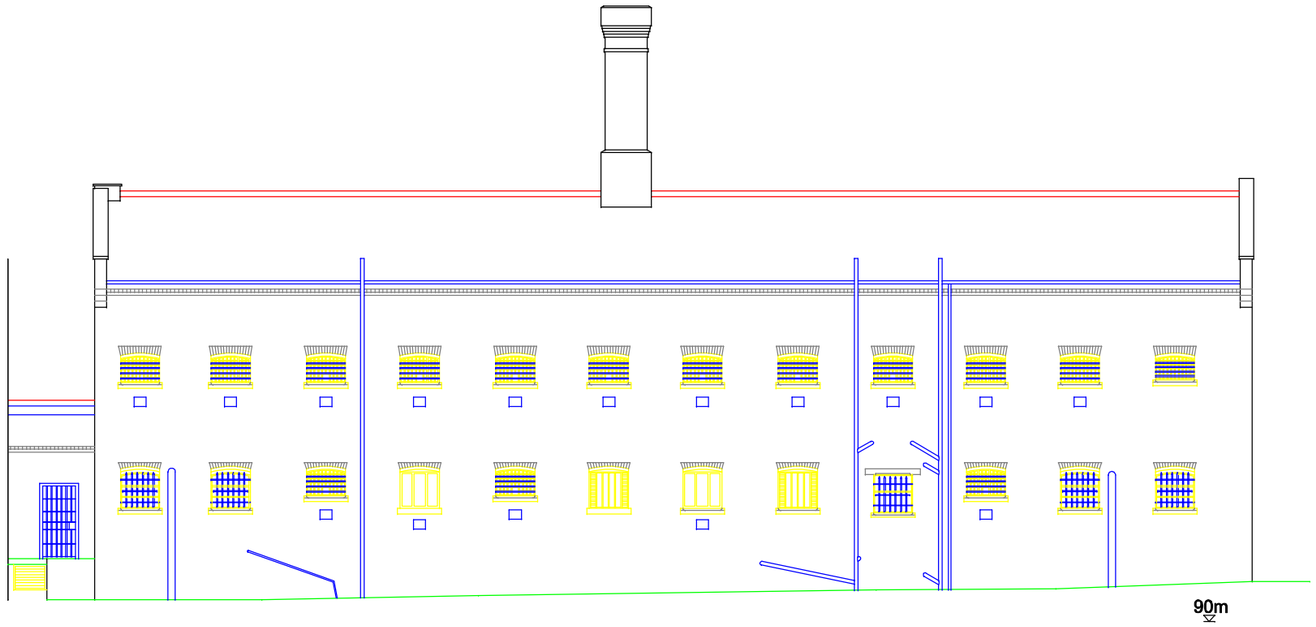
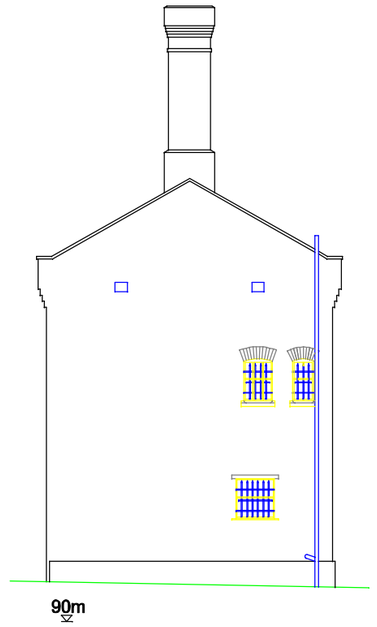
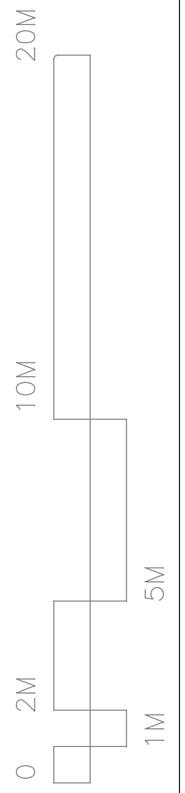
Figure 2: D-Wing floor plans

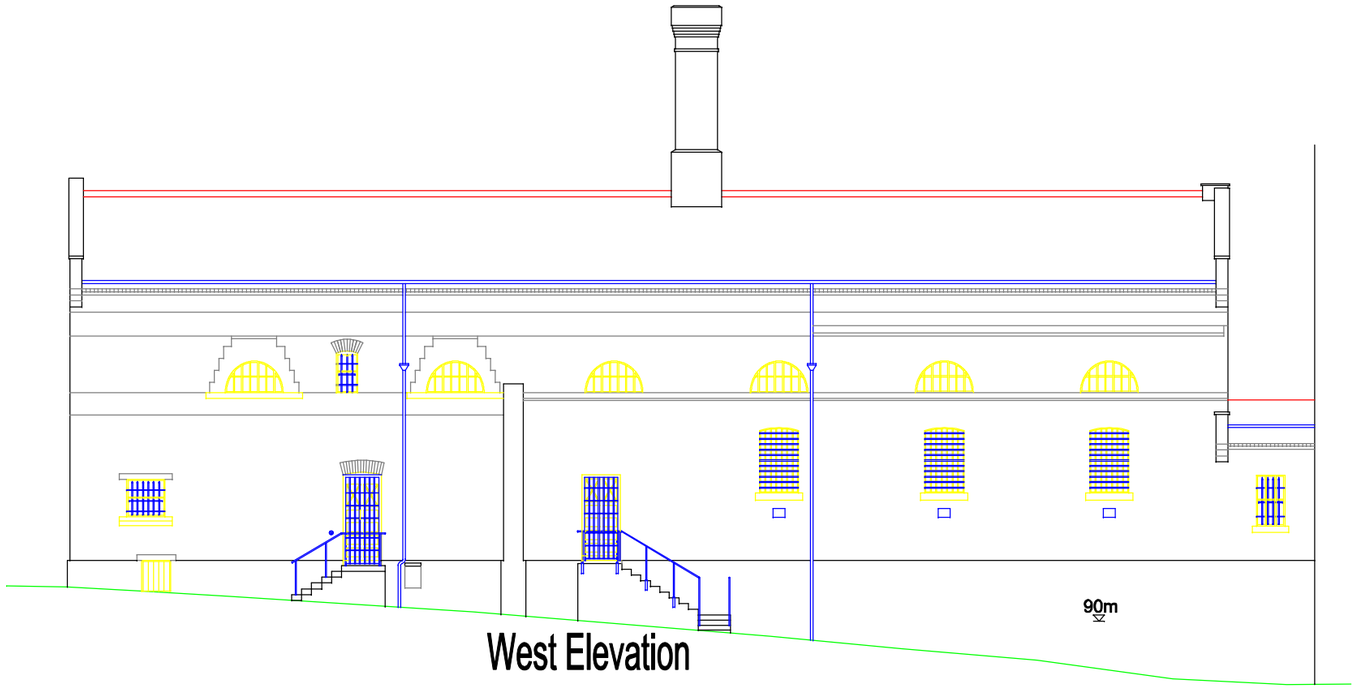


East Elevation



North Elevation





West Elevation

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Job
Measured Survey

Project
Segregation Unit
Aylesbury YOI

Drawing Title
Elevations

Client
Pick Everard

DATE	DESIGNED	DRAWN	CHECKED
Oct 2009		RGA	

SCALES	DIGITAL FILE	REVISIONS
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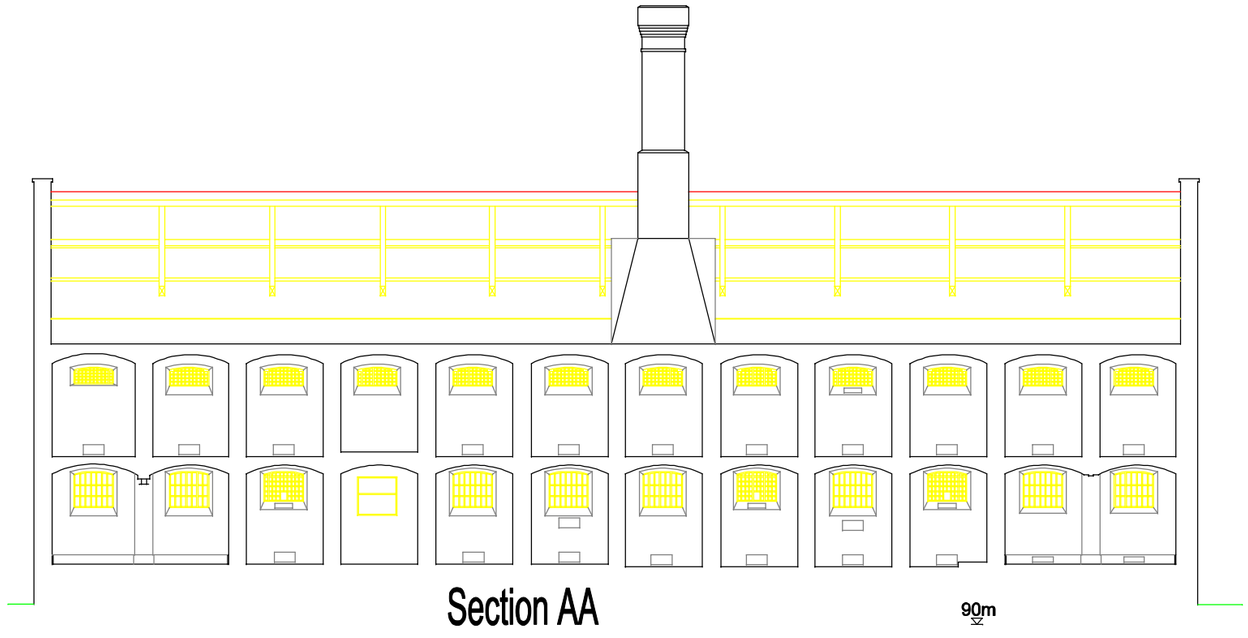
Figure 3 D-Wing Elevations



Section AA

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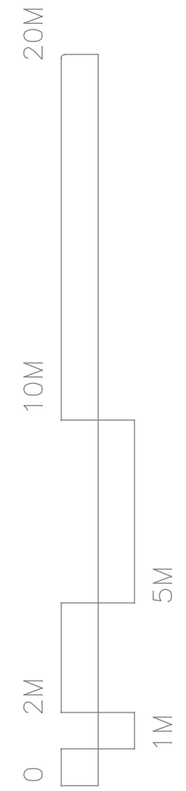
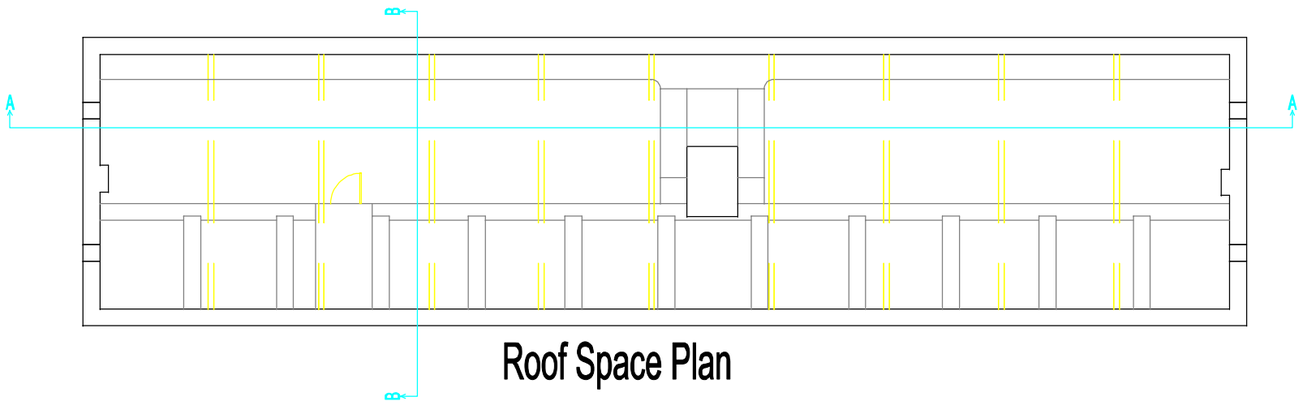
Section BB

90m





Roof Space Plan

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Job
Measured Survey

Project
Segregation Unit
Aylesbury YOI

Drawing Title
Roof Void Plan & Sections

Client
Pick Everard

DATE	DESIGNED	DRAWN	CHECKED
Oct 2009		RGA	

SCALES	DIGITAL FILE	REVISIONS
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Figure 4. D-Wing Sections

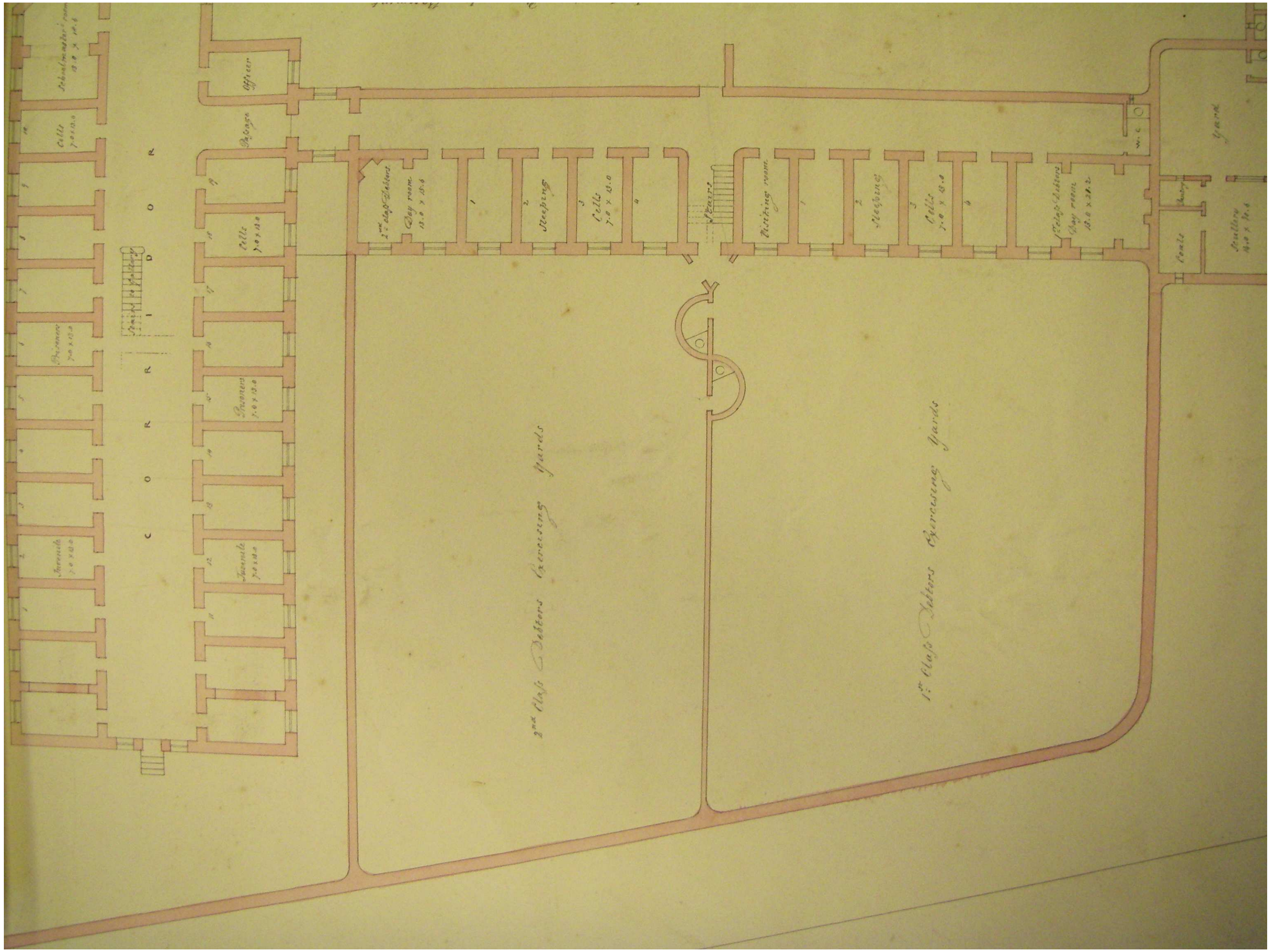

Figure 5 : Architect’s Plan 1844, ground floor

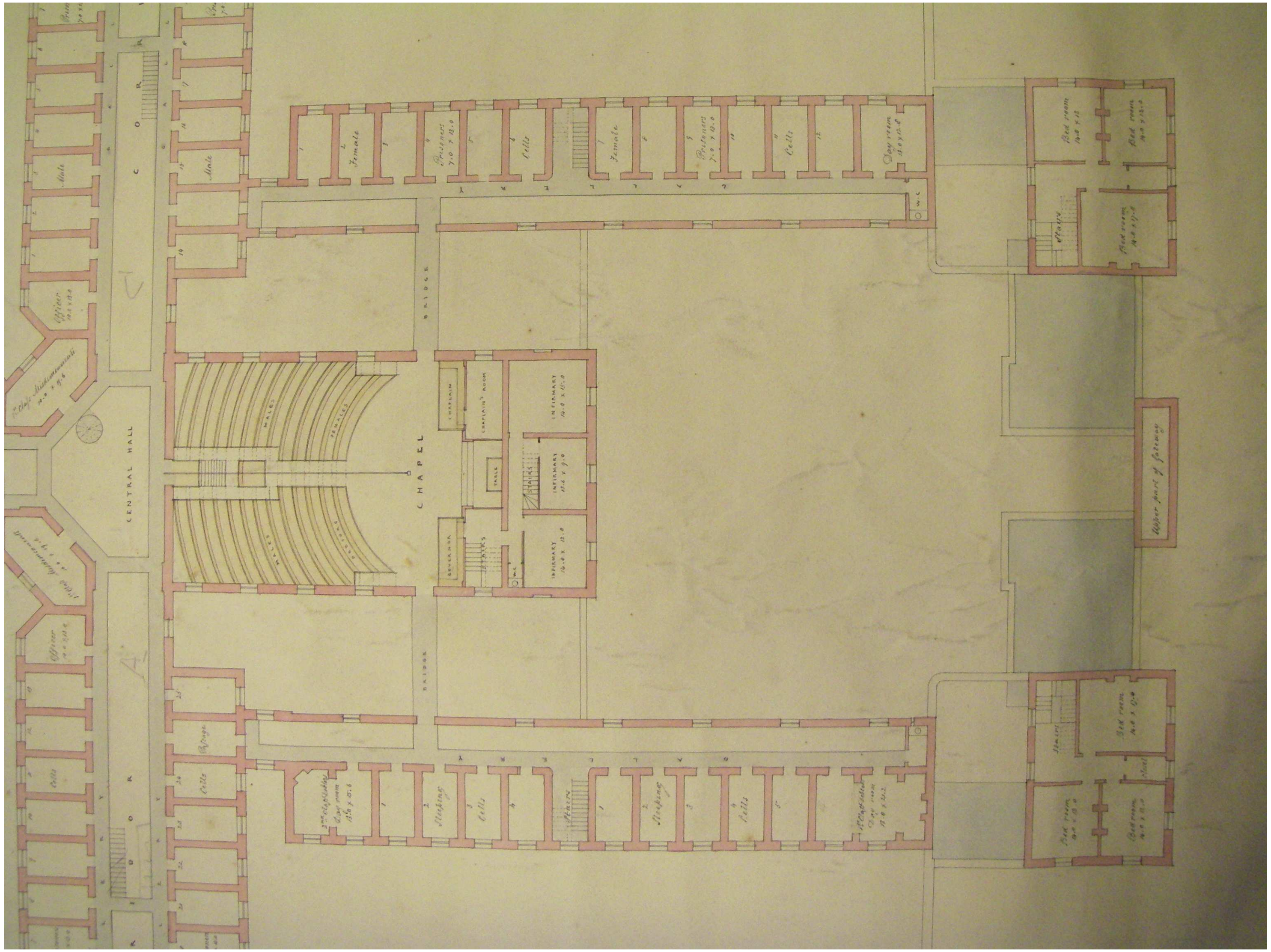

Figure 6: Architect's plan 1844, first floor

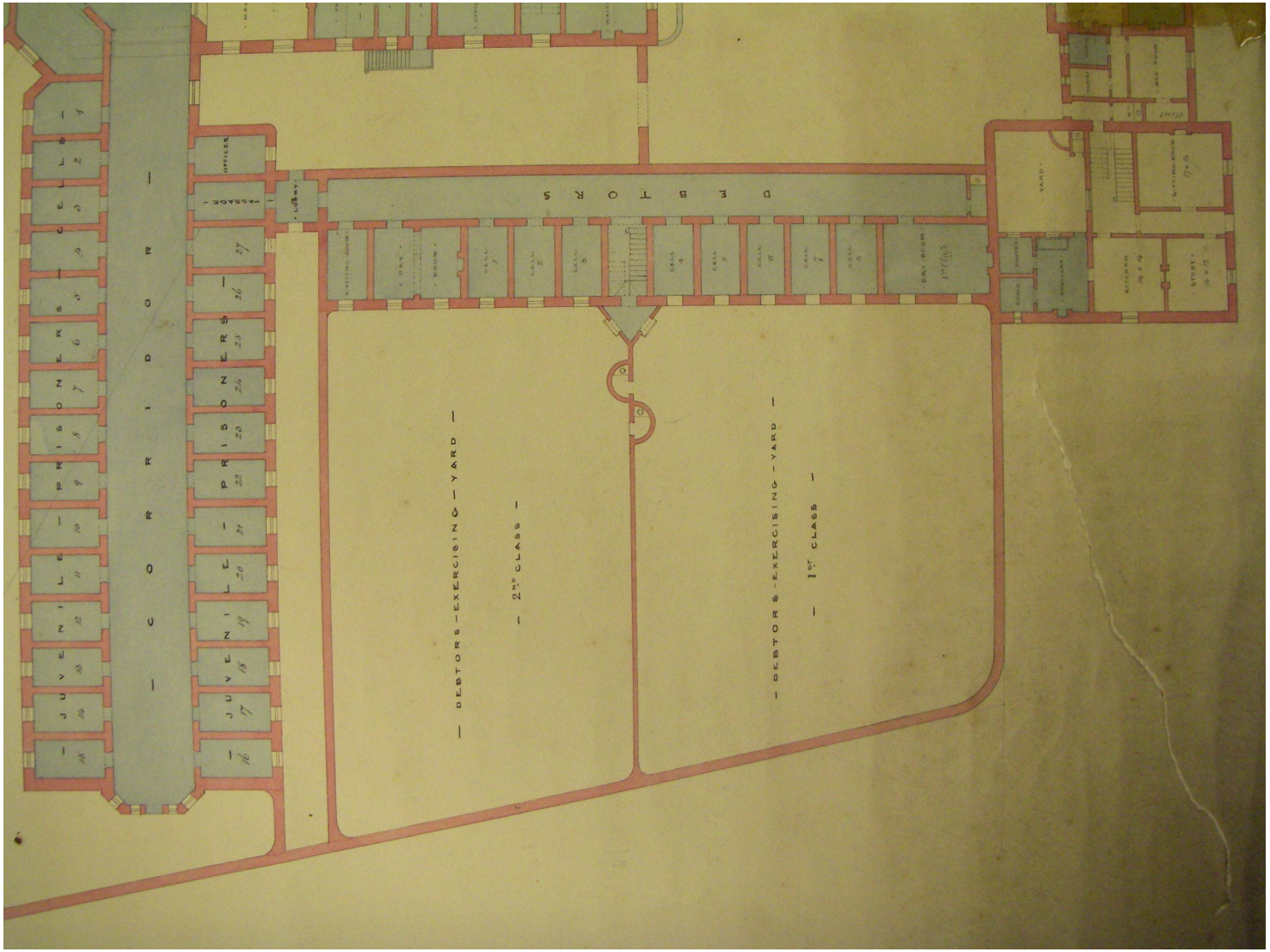

Figure 7: Architect's plan undated, first floor

Plate 1a: South western elevation, entrance courtyard

Plate 1b: Entrance courtyard elevations

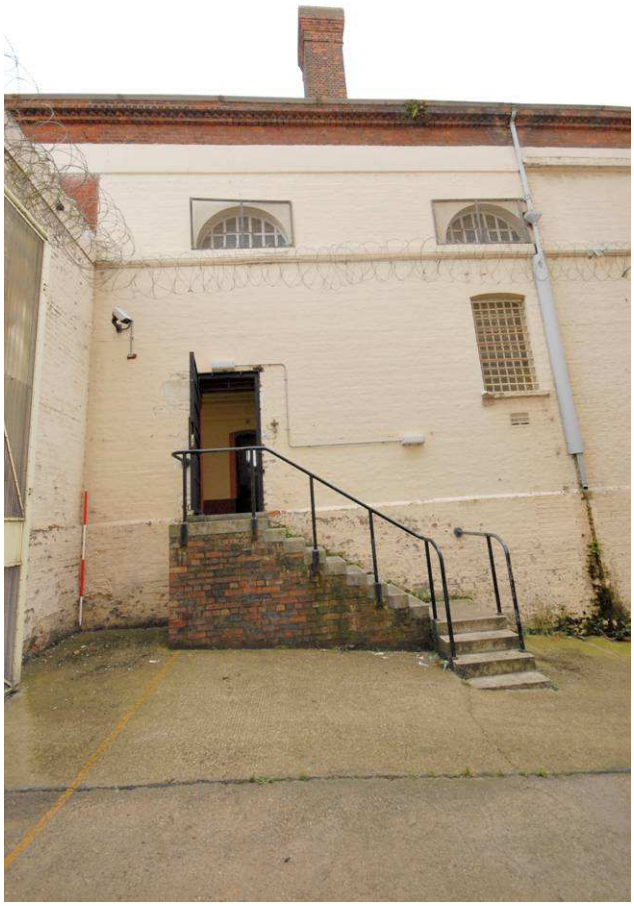

Plate 2a: South western elevation, inner courtyard

Plate 2b: South western elevation, inner courtyard

Plate 3a: Architectural detail, north western gable end

Plate 3b: Foul air chimney

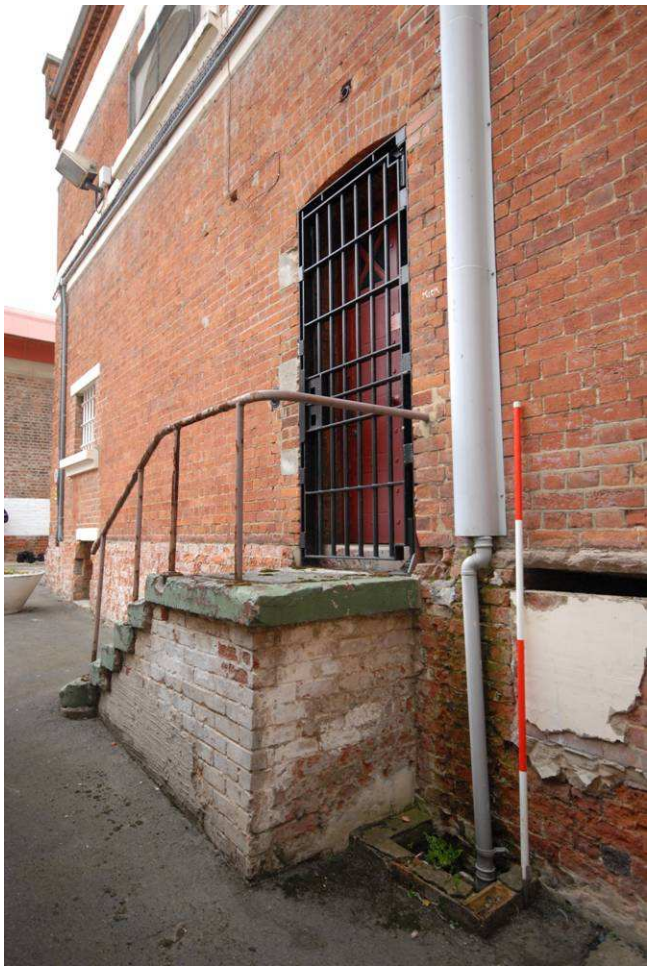

Plate 4a: Detail, south western elevation

Plate 4b: Detail, south western elevation

Plate 5a: North eastern elevation, north west end

Plate 5b: North eastern elevation, south east end

Plate 6a: North eastern elevation, north west end (oblique)

Plate 6b: North eastern elevation, south east end (oblique)

Plate 7a: Window Cell 16

Plate 7b: Window Cell 15

Plate 8: Examples of graffiti on north eastern elevation (1)

Plate 9: Examples of graffiti on north eastern elevation (2)

Plate 10: Internal view of D-Wing

Plate 11a: External entrance door in south eastern gable wall

Plate 11b: Ground floor corridor (south western wall)

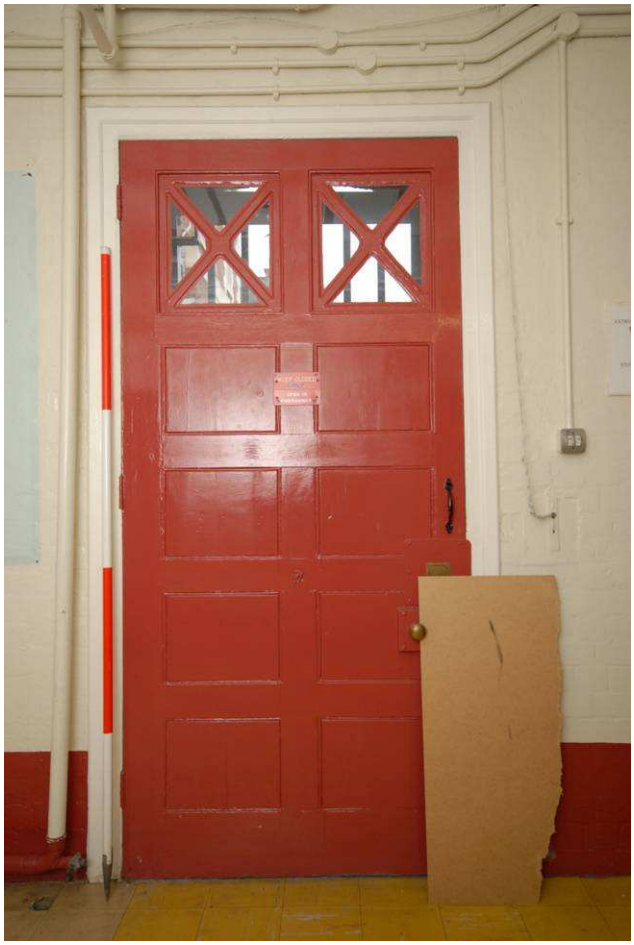

Plate 12a: External door (south western wall)

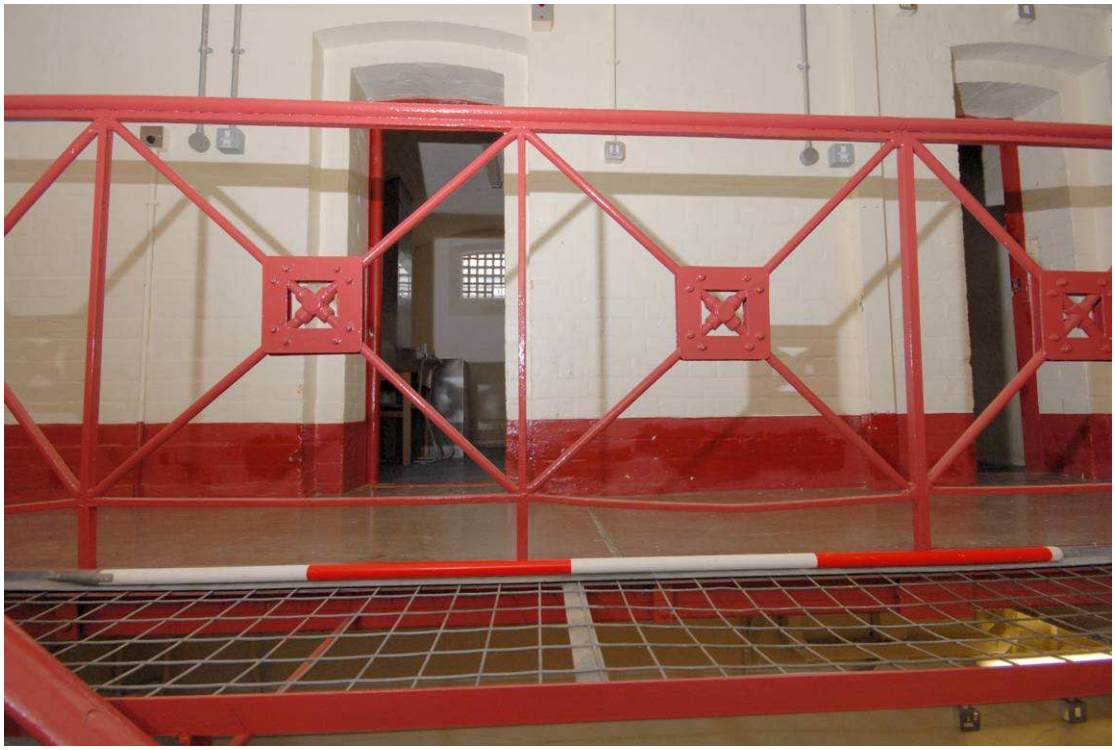

Plate 12b: Detail of gallery

Plate 13a: Ground floor corridor (view north west)

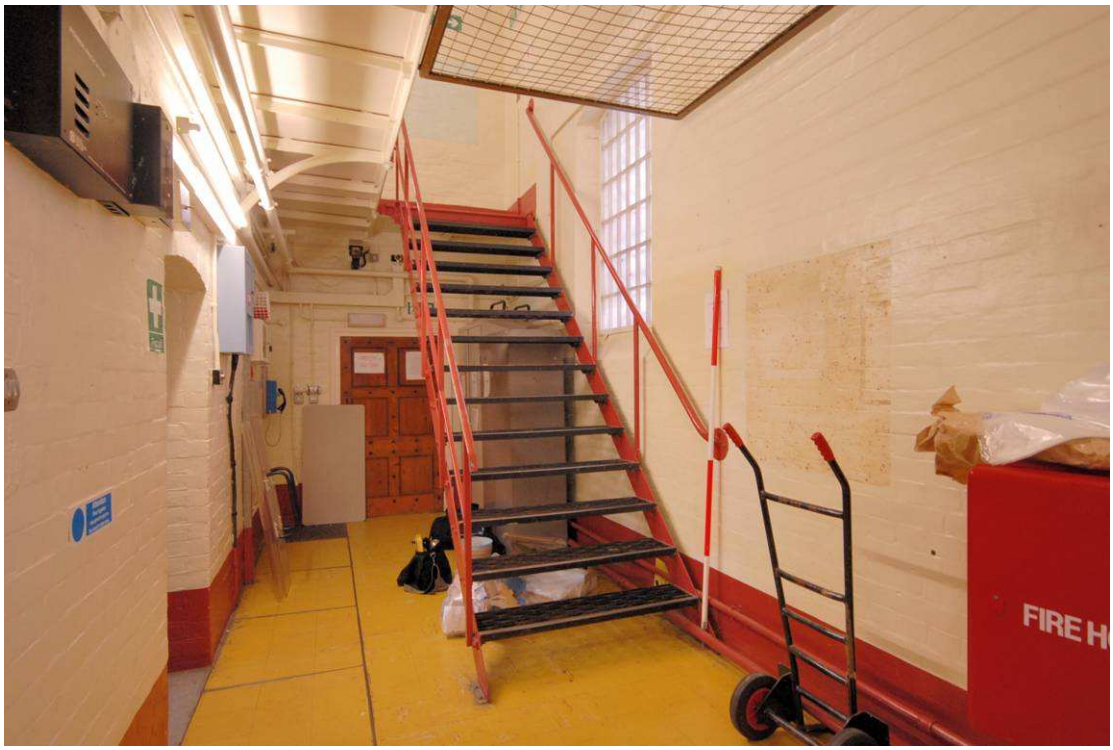

Plate 13b: Ground floor corridor (view south east)

Plate 14: Cells (internal detail)

Plate 15a: Office (former day room) south eastern end, ground floor

Plate 15b: Day room (former cells) north western end, ground floor

Plate 16a: Cell 18, prison bed

Plate 16b: Cell 18, internal detail

Plate 17a: Detail of stairs up to gallery, north west end, staff cloakroom

Plate 17b: First floor, north western end

Plate 18a: First floor (view south east)

Plate 18b: Detail of first floor window, north western end

Plate 19: Semi-circular window, first floor

Plate 20a: Cell window and ventilation system

Plate 20b: Cell window and ventilation system, detail

Plate 21a: Cell door

Plate 21b Roof space, detail of roof structure

Plate 22a: Roof space, foul air flue

Plate 22b Roof space, inspection hatch to foul air flue

Plate 23a: Roof space, barrel vaulting

Plate 23b: Roof space, foul air duct

Plate 24: Demolition groundworks, northern end of (demolished) D wing (Photograph Albion Archaeology)

Plate 25: Foundations for new building and service trenches (Photograph Albion Archaeology)