



Northamptonshire
County Council

Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological desk-based assessment
and building recording
at the former Atlanta Works
Irthlingborough, Northamptonshire
March 2008



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March 2008

Report 08/55

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**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY
MARCH 2008**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT
AND BUILDING RECORDING
AT THE FORMER ATLANTA WORKS
IRTHLINGBOROUGH, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
MARCH 2008**

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QUALITY CONTROL

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	Atlanta Works, Irthlingborough	
Short description	Archaeological desk-based assessment and building survey on the site at the former Atlanta Works, Irthlingborough revealed that until the construction of the first phase of the present factory after 1885 the area was open fields. The factory then expanded until reaching its fullest extent in 1926.	
Project type	Desk-based assessment and building survey	
Site status	N/A	
Previous work	No	
Current Land use	Factory and yard	
Future work	Proposed residential development	
Monument type/ period	Post-medieval buildings	
Significant finds	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address	Atlanta Works, Victoria Street, Irthlingborough, Northamptonshire, NN9 5RG	
Study area		
OS Easting & Northing	SP 9419 7044	
Height OD		
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Galliford Try Ltd	
Project brief originator	Lloyd Mills, ENDC	
Project Design originator	Joe Prentice, Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	Joe Prentice	
Project Manager	Steve Parry	
Sponsor or funding body	Galliford Try Ltd	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	March 2008	
End date	March 2008	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical		
Paper		
Digital		
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)		
Title		
Serial title & volume	08/55	
Author(s)	Joe Prentice	
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT
AND BUILDING SURVEY AT THE FORMER ATLANTA WORKS
IRTHLINGBOROUGH, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
JANUARY 2008**

Abstract

Archaeological desk-based assessment and building survey on the site at Atlanta works, Victoria Street, Irthlingborough revealed that until the construction of the first phase of the present factory after 1885 the area was open fields. The factory then expanded, presumably as the business grew, until reaching its fullest extent in 1926.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Galliford Try Ltd are seeking to re-develop a site on Victoria Street, Irthlingborough currently occupied by a factory and associated yard (Fig 1, NGR SP 9419 7044). The company has been granted Planning Permission (EN/06/01888/FUL) with a condition requiring historic building recording. Northamptonshire Archaeology has been engaged to undertake a desk-based assessment and building survey of the proposed development area in order to establish the historical development of the site using documentary evidence available in the public domain, and a study of the standing buildings.
- 1.2 The work commenced on 3 March 2008 and was completed on 26 March 2008. A formal written brief was issued by East Northants District Council (ENDC) which laid out the aims of the work. The record is required to broadly equate to 'Level 3' as defined in English Heritage's current guidance *Understanding Historic Buildings, A guide to good recording practise*.

2 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 The general objectives of the assessment were:
- To examine the potential for archaeological remains within the proposed development area and the potential for meeting regional research objectives covering the prehistoric, Roman, medieval and later periods, and the economy, land use and development through to the present day
 - To provide information about the historic development of the site and the buildings on it which were in part elements of a late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century factory, using information available in order to constitute a desk-based assessment.
 - A full drawn, written and photographic record of the standing buildings on the site
- 2.2 The scope of the investigation was limited to the proposed development site although this was placed in the wider context of the current landscape setting. This appraisal of the setting took the form of a study of historic maps and evidence from the Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record (HER).
- 2.3 Historic maps and other primary and secondary sources relating to the site and the surrounding area held at the Northamptonshire Record Office (NRO) were examined. Enquiries were also made of the Local Studies Library (LSL) to ascertain whether there was any relevant information available. Background archaeological information was also

obtained from the Northamptonshire Extensive Urban Survey (Ballinger 2000). Excerpts of historic maps have been reproduced or transcribed onto the current Ordnance Survey map base.

- 2.4 Site visits were made to record the standing buildings. The area around the site was also noted in order to place the building in its local context

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The site lies on the north-west side of the town of Irthlingborough on land which slopes gently downwards to the south-east. It lies on a corner plot bordered on the south-east by Victoria Street and on the north-east by Jubilee Road, both names which imply that the date at which they were laid out might have occurred at the time of Queen Victoria's 50th jubilee in 1887 (Fig 1). There is another, now burnt out, late nineteenth-century factory building opposite on the south side of Victoria Street which was formerly a curriers and leather merchants according to a very faded painted sign over its main entrance (Normandy Leathers, MNN100911, Fig 2). The remainder of the streets close by are a mixture of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century terraced houses with either vacant plots which may have been occupied by factory buildings, or standing factory buildings of the same date now used for modern purposes. The natural geology is on the border of Boulder Clay and Great Oolite Limestone. The site on which the factory sits has been reduced on the northern side to form a flat terrace (BGS 1990 Sheet 186).
- 3.2 The site is occupied by factory buildings which face primarily onto Victoria Street and a yard with access to the rear of the plot from Jubilee Street. The buildings are all constructed of red brick and are an amalgamation of different phases.

4 DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 The area where the factory now stands remained in use as open fields until well into the nineteenth century. The Northamptonshire HER lists over seventy monuments, findspots and other historic sites within a half kilometre radius of the factory but since the majority have no relevance to the site (Roman sites, burials, pubs, recreation grounds, chapels etc) only those which are roughly contemporary or relate to the boot and shoe industry have been presented here (Figs 2 and 6).

<i>Monument No</i>	<i>Description</i>
MNN31007	Excelsior Boot and Shoe Works
MNN100902	George Street Works (boot and shoe factory)
MNN100903	Shoe factory (now demolished)
MNN100904	Tower Factory, boot and shoe. 1875? (now demolished)
MNN100905	Excelsior Boot and Shoe Works. 1893. (converted to flats)
MNN100910	Progressive Works (The site)
MNN100911	Normandy Leathers
MNN100912	Victoria Works (leather dressing)
MNN100948	Possible boot and shoe factory
MNN103713	Hobbs and Co Victoria Works, leather factory. 1900.

- 4.2 The HER list indicates that the majority of the recorded factories and workshops associated with the boot and shoe industry are located on the north side of the town; some lie within

the historic core, others are in the newly developed land to the north of Victoria Street (Fig 2). As stated in the HER, all of the factories appear to have been built late in the nineteenth century and were simple, brick-built structures. It is not clear if the duplication of names on the list indicates more than one factory belonging to the same company or is a discrepancy on the part of the recorder.

- 4.3 The Northamptonshire Extensive Urban Survey records the presence of the shoe making industry in the town from the eighteenth century (Ballinger 2000). The Militia Lists of 1777 record 16 shoemakers, a number which increases steadily, with 52 listed for the period 1777-1820. By 1841 this figure had increased to 127 and by 1851 to 268. It appears that this was mainly carried out by individuals working from their homes rather than in factories and it is not until the last quarter of the nineteenth century that purpose built factories are constructed.
- 4.4 The Ordnance Survey preparatory map of 1810 shows regularly-shaped fields positioned in neatly aligned rows to the north-west of Victoria Street but there are no buildings shown on the area where the factory now stands (Fig 3). In 1880 when the First Edition Ordnance Survey map was published the field boundaries remain the same, and the plot on which the site stands still remains open fields. The 1885 25 inch Ordnance Survey map shows no development on the north side of the road, and what is now Victoria Street is called Back Lane and is clearly a much older thoroughfare (Fig 4).
- 4.5 The 1900 Edition Ordnance Survey map shows the road frontage part of the factory (see section 5.5 below, phase 1) sitting alone in the centre of the current plot within its own, smaller plot (Fig 5). Back Lane has become Victoria Street, and Jubilee Road, though present and with some houses along its western side only, has yet to be named. The rectangular shape of the main factory building is clear but there is a small addition on the north-west corner which was presumably removed when the phase 2 building was added.
- 4.6 By 1926 the map shows that the area has undergone significant development (Fig 6). The factory has assumed its current size, and even the two sections identified on site as indications of demolished phases are present (see below, section 5.22). The western boundary of the site remains unaltered but the eastern side was at that time only as far as the eastern end of the phase 1 building; to the immediate east were three terraced houses only one of which now remains as the buildings offices (see below, section 5.19). Three further terraced houses were situated on the north-east side of the factory in the current yard facing onto Jubilee Street. The factory is named as *Progressive Works (Leather Dressing)* which indicates that it was one of the support industries for the Northamptonshire Boot and Shoe industry rather than a boot and shoe factory. Other similar factories appear on the same edition and it seems that Irthlingborough was mostly engaged in support industry for the trade. Leather dressing, traditionally known as currying, became significant in Northamptonshire as a support trade from the middle of the nineteenth century (Morrison 2004). Curriers used a wide range of presses and other machines to produce a variety of finishes including calf kid, coloured “Russian” leather and patent leather. Most, but not all, was sold to the boot and shoe industry. Whilst curriers often bought ready-tanned leather, they sometimes had their own pits for tanning. This required processing on the ground floor of the building and needed large amounts of water. Drying took place on the upper floors and attic space where louvred windows allowed free movement of air. Such factories, however, were outdated by the turn of the century when new drying techniques using fan- or blast-drying were introduced.
- 4.7 Records relating to the factory itself do not significantly add to the understanding of the building. It is recorded as belonging to J K Perkins and Sons Ltd in 1922, and was still occupied by them in 1939 (English Heritage 2000) In 1969 it is listed in the Leather Trades directory under Stimpson Perkins Ltd (Progressive Works) who were leather

manufacturers, although English Heritage suggest that in 1967 it was owned by Geilich Leathers. The last occupants of the site were Frank Thomas Ltd, suppliers of motorcycle clothes and accessories who were still on the site in 2000. It is understood that the factory has been empty for a number of years. It is not known when the factory became known as Atlanta Works.

5 BUILDING ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The present site comprises a variety of buildings, all of which are constructed in red brick, though varying tremendously in quality, both of the individual bricks and the way in which they were laid. The surviving building has been phased by observations on site and will be described in the order in which it was built (Fig 7). The factory retains no machinery or equipment other than the usual debris associated with a derelict building that has been boarded or bricked up and partly vandalised. Heavy pigeon infestation had been cleared before the site visits were made, and modern plasterboard partitions removed. The building was accessible throughout, any areas of unsafe flooring had been identified and taped-off by the site owners. For the sake of ease in this report, site north is being taken as on the line of Jubilee Street thereby making the Victoria Street elevation the south side of the building. True north is marked on all figures.

- 5.2 ***Phase 1. Exterior.*** This does not appear on the 1885 Ordnance Survey map and must therefore post-date it, though it is present on the 1900 edition. It comprises a single rectangular block of four bays over three floors with its long side parallel to Victoria Street. It is built of red brick with string courses picked out in blue engineering brick at sill and lintel level with the course at lintel level following the curve of the segmental arches above the windows (Figs 7 and 11, Plate 1). At eaves level there is a simple decoration formed by alternate plain and chamfered bricks set edge-wise and stepping out slightly to create a simple dentil cornice. The roof is of blue Welsh slate. Both gable ends appear to have been plain and there is no evidence that they contained either windows or doors. The rear façade was similar to the street frontage but is now all painted and has had another phase built against it; it seems unlikely that it would have had either the blue brick string course or the dentil cornice.

The Victoria Street façade at ground floor level has double doors at the western end and three large windows of the same width, each fitted with cast iron frames of 48 lights beneath a segmental arched top. The openings have been filled by breeze blocks externally to make the building secure. The centre six lights of each frame could be opened for ventilation. The same configuration of windows is present on the other two floors making the façade regular and clearly of one period. A doorway has been inserted on the ground floor at the eastern end during the early twentieth century, probably during the 1930s. There are no chimney stacks and never appear to never have been any.

- 5.3 ***Phase 1. Interior, Ground floor.*** The ground floor is a single open space and is accessed from the street via the large double doors (Fig 8). These are fitted within a pine frame which follows the shape of the arched opening rather than having the upper edge squared off (Plate 2). Each leaf is ledged and braced and fitted externally with vertical boards. There are a number of modern hasps and latches, none appear to be original although the hinges probably are. Just inside the doorway there is a double trapdoor in the ceiling indicating that goods were brought in and out at this point and were able to be taken to other floors (the trapdoor is present on both upper floors). The remainder of the room is devoid of any evidence of its early layout and it is unclear if it was sub-divided in any way. The floor is of modern concrete throughout. The west (gable) wall has had a double width doorway knocked through to provide access to the phase 3 extension. The north wall originally had four large windows, identical to those on the street frontage, but the frames

have been removed and the wall below sill level removed allowing access through to the next phase of building (Plate 3). Vertical scars along the jambs of the original window openings indicate that they were positioned exactly as those which remain *in situ* in the south wall. At the west end of the north wall is a blocked single width doorway corresponding with the access to the building indicated on the 1900 Ordnance Survey map; it is not known if this was a single storey or taller addition (Figs 5 and 8). At the eastern end there is a single door to the east of the window which has been knocked through to create access to the offices added later on the eastern end of the building. A timber screen wall has been added at the same time to separate the lobby from the factory floor. Timber (pine) stairs lead up to the first floor, boarded in on their west side by vertical matchboard. There are no fixtures or fitting which give any indication of what process was carried out on this floor. The timber floor joists of the floor above are supported on H-section steel beams. They are awkwardly positioned at the western end due to the location of the openings in the north wall which precludes them from being placed perpendicular to the wall. The westernmost beam is a later insertion as its north end sits within the blocked doorway. The ceiling was not covered or boarded in any way, it is simply the underside of the floor boards of the first floor.

- 5.4 ***Phase 1. Interior, First floor.*** Of the same size and layout as the ground floor, lit from the south by four large cast iron 48 light windows, and originally from the north also, but these have been removed and the arches converted into walk-through openings (Fig 9, Plate 4). There is a tall, narrow doorway in the north wall at the top of the stairs which indicate that when first built there must have been another section of at least two storeys, now removed by the next phase immediately to the north. All of the original north wall windows have been removed as on the ground floor and there is a modern opening in the west wall, again in the same position as that on the ground floor. Around the trapdoor are four small holes, one at each corner suggesting the positions of posts which probably supported a rail for safety reasons. The walls are painted white and there are no fixtures or fittings. The ceiling is supported by regularly-spaced steel beams which carry pine joists. There is no indication that the ceiling was boarded. A flight of timber stairs leads to the second floor at the eastern end of the building.
- 5.5 ***Phase 1. Interior, Second floor.*** Essentially the same as the ground and first floors, the north wall has had the windows removed and the sill knocked out to allow movement through to the next phase extension (Fig 10). There is a modern opening through the west wall to phase 3. The roof is supported on three timber trusses, almost certainly pine (Plate 5). It is of Queen post construction but without the upper part of the truss; the reason for this is not immediately obvious although it might be to allow drive belt or other machinery to be placed high up close to the ridge. There is not, however, any evidence to support this view. The truss is fixed together by flat iron plates bolted onto the wooden frame, all is now painted white. The underside of the roof is covered by pine boards, each side has only one purlin supported by a cleat on the upper surface of the truss.
- 5.6 ***Phase 2, Exterior.*** A rectangular building the same length as phase 1, but slightly deeper, this extension was added to the north side of the original building (Figs 7 and 11). It too comprises three storeys and four bays but is built in a brick of poorer quality which has been laid in a much poorer way. This most likely reflects the fact that it is hidden from the street by phase 1. There is no decorative detail and the whole building has the impression of being built “on the cheap”; the east gable wall does not even have the four square headed windows at second floor level equally placed (Fig 11, Plate 6). At the opposite end at the same level the window in the gable has a segmental arch, fitted with a frame perhaps left over from another job. It is in stark contrast to the symmetry and high quality of the Victoria Street frontage.

- 5.7 **Phase 2. Interior, Ground floor.** The extension now has no external walls (since the addition of phase 5), but when it was originally built its north wall was an external wall fitted with the window frames taken from the north wall of phase 1 (Fig 8). It is now connected to phase 1 through the window openings which have had their lower section removed after the removal of the window frames. The floor is of modern concrete and there is no staircase, presumably the stair in phase 1 was used. The ceiling is as in phase 1, comprising steel H-section beams supporting timber joists. There are no fixtures or fittings and the walls are painted white. In the west wall a doorway has been made, set beneath a concrete lintel, to its north are the slight remains of a fireplace and chimney since removed. At the eastern end a breeze block wall (which extends north into phase 5) has been inserted to create an area which houses toilet facilities and a store room.
- 5.8 **Phase 2. Interior, first floor.** In plan identical to the ground floor, also with windows taken from the north side of phase 1, now moved into phase 5 (Fig 9). At the east end of the north wall a modern door has been cut through the wall to allow access into phase 5. In the west gable wall is a doorway through to phase 3, which must have been created only after that phase was added, and a window with a sill on the then exterior, towards the southern end fitted with a 20 light cast iron frame. The doorway stands in the position of an earlier chimney (originally rising from the fireplace on the ground floor) but it has been completely removed and can only be seen on the underside of the ceiling above where the truncated base of the section in the second floor has been covered with hardboard. There is a window in the east gable wall fitted with a cast iron frame of 36 lights, the central six of which could be opened (Fig 11). There are no fixtures or fittings, and modern timber stud walls had been removed at the time of the survey.
- 5.9 **Phase 2. Interior, Second floor.** The same as the ground and first floors, the north wall windows having been removed from the north wall of phase 1 and re-used (Fig 10). The east wall has four windows, and fitted with 20 light cast iron frames and each set beneath a concrete lintel. There are three at floor level and one in the gable above eaves level. The three roof trusses are angle-iron frames bolted together, each is positioned above a steel H-section tie beam set into the walls (Fig 10, Plate 7). There are three rows of purlins on each side, the underside of the roof is boarded with planks and set with skylights. The roof covering is blue Welsh slate. In the west gable wall there are two openings into phase 3, though both share the same steel lintel. To the north of the opening is the chimney stack which served the fireplace on the ground floor. Above eaves level in the gable is a window fitted with a 16 light cast iron frame beneath a segmentally arched top.
- 5.10 **Phase 3. Exterior.** This phase comprises a rectangular building with its gable ends aligned perpendicular to phase 1 (Figs 7 and 11, Plate 8). Built of a paler and poorer quality red brick compared to the original building it has none of the detail which characterises phase 1 and is clearly a much more utilitarian structure. This addition (and phase 4, see below section 5.13) is present on the 1926 Ordnance Survey map, though the English Heritage Rapid Survey Record incorrectly suggests it was added along with phase 4 in a single phase in the 1930s. The original configuration of the gable end on Victoria Street is not entirely clear. A large doorway has been inserted at ground level which has removed any earlier layout though an original pedestrian door survives close to the west wall (Fig 11). The west wall is partly below the ground level of the adjoining plot and serves not only as the west wall of the building, but also as a retaining wall; it has no windows at this level. On the first floor there appears to be some evidence of former windows on the street frontage but this is not certain. A small window remains set beneath a flat lintel of edge set bricks capped by a single, slightly projecting course of tiles to form a drip mould. The sill is concrete. In the west wall at first floor level there are two wide windows beneath concrete lintels set with 28 light cast iron frames, the central six of which could be opened. The same size and shape windows are present in the south elevation. In the gable above eaves level is an oculus, set within two rows of edge set brick. The

opening is fitted with a fixed set of 6 cast iron lights. The west wall has two windows fitted with louvres. The original north gable end has been almost entirely removed following the addition of phase 4; practically nothing of the ground floor section of wall remains, and most of the first floor wall has also been removed, apart from the upper section which indicates that there were originally three windows here (Plate 9). The gable wall at second floor level has been taken out and just the gable above eaves level remains, set with a single central rectangular window, now boarded over. The roof is of blue Welsh slate.

- 5.11 **Phase 3. Interior, ground and first floors.** Now a single space since the first floor was removed when the tall steel doors onto Victoria Street were inserted, though when this took place is not clear (Figs 8 and 9). The floor is concrete and there are openings through into phases 1 and 2, both beneath concrete lintels. The ground and first floor rear wall of this phase of building has been almost totally removed and the upper section of the first floor is now supported on a deep H-section steel beam (Plate 9). This, however, has cut through three window openings, the upper parts of which remain though without any indication of how they were fitted. The only indication of any layout on the second floor comes from the underside of the ceiling where the outlines of timber partitions can be seen against the painted areas within former rooms (Plate 10). In the south-west corner was a toilet cubicles, this is the room which was lit by the small window seen from the street. The size of the room is indicated by the scars of the walls and a stub of waste pipe can be seen *in situ* in the south wall. None of the other spaces can be ascribed functions.
- 5.12 **Phase 3. Interior, Second floor.** The second floor is accessed either via the stairs in phase 1 or phase 4, but it has none of its own (Fig 10). The floor is a single open space and is lit by windows in the south wall (see section 5.10, Plate 11). The west wall has three openings but these are fitted with horizontal wooden louvres not windows (Plate 12). This suggests that the upper floor was used for the drying of materials, almost certainly leather, at some stage. Each horizontal section of the arrangement is hinged at either end on the outer frame and would have been connected to a central vertical bar which when moved up or down would have opened or closed the louvres. There are two full height opening in the east wall which connects with phase 1 and two through to phase 2, both with concrete lintels. The remainder of the room is a single open space. The roof is supported on simple angle-iron steel trusses which rest on H section beams (Plate 11). The underside of the slate roof is boarded.
- 5.13 **Phase 4. Exterior.** This building lies to the north of phase 3 and borders the west side of the plot (Figs 7 and 12). It is the same width and height as phase 3 and appears to have been three open floors with no internal divisions (Fig *, Plates 13 and 14). It is constructed of pale red brick and most, but not all, of the windows and doors have concrete lintels. The roof is covered with Welsh slate.
- 5.14 **Phase 4. Interior, ground floor.** There are no windows on the west side but two on the east, both now blocked with brickwork (Fig 8). A double width garage type door has been inserted into the north gable end. There is a timber flight of stairs against the east wall near the southern end, these appear to be secondary. A doorway connects the east side of the building with phase 5, and the entire south wall has been removed to make this phase and phase 3 a single open space. The floor is of concrete and the ceiling timber supported by H-section steel beams.
- 5.15 **Phase 4. Interior, First floor.** A single open space originally connected through to the now missing first floor of phase 3 and reached via steps leading from the ground floor but also from the first floor of phase 5 (Fig 9). It is lit by three 20 light windows in the east wall, and originally there was a fourth, now filled by breeze blocks (Plate 14). A door at the north-east corner originally led onto a fire escape, now removed. In the north gable end

there are two windows fitted with 20 light cast iron frames beneath a segmental brick arch. The ceiling is the underside of the floor above which is of timber supported on steel beams. There are no fixtures or fittings.

- 5.16 **Phase 4. Interior, Second floor.** Essentially the same as the first floor with windows in the east wall, though here there is one more at the southern end though truncated by the roof line of phase 5 (Fig 10). In the north gable wall there are four windows at room level and one above eaves level (Fig 12). In the west wall are four openings fitted with louvres, identical to those in phase 3 but slightly wider. The roof is of the same configuration as in phase 3.
- 5.17 **Phase 5. Exterior.** The same width as phase 1 and 2 but curiously built slightly off-square (Figs 7 and 12). It is two storeys high and constructed of pale red brick beneath a Welsh slate and glass roof (Plate 15).
- 5.18 **Phase 5. Interior, Ground Floor.** A single open space lit from the north side through six 24 light cast iron windows beneath segmental arched tops (Figs 8 and 12). Only two now remain, towards the western end of the room, the other have been filled with breeze blocks. To the west of the windows is a blocked door fitted internally with a sliding door. The south side of the room is the north wall of phase 2 and has had the windows removed and walls below sill level removed to form openings through into this phase. The floor and ceiling are both concrete. The eastern end of the room is occupied by the modern toilet block, to the immediate north of this is a double width opening beneath a concrete lintel; it is not clear if this is original or a later addition (Fig 11).
- 5.19 **Phase 5. Interior, First Floor.** Originally a single open space, subsequently subdivided to accommodate toilets and wash room at the eastern end (Fig 9). The south wall was the external north elevation of phase 2 and has had the window frames removed and re-used, with three windows in the north and one in the east walls (Fig 12). Light appears to have been important in this room to the extent that the north slope of the roof is principally glass with only small areas of slate at the edges and ridge (Plate 15). The roof is supported on an angle-iron frame bolted together with the underside of the roof covered with boards painted white (Plate 16). The west wall is the original external east wall of phase 4 and contains a 12 light cast iron frame window with an overhanging brick sill with drip gully confirming that this was originally an external elevation.
- 5.20 **Offices, Exterior.** A two storey buildings on the east side of the phase 1 and 2 buildings is clearly a later addition, added between 1900 and 1926 (Figs 7 and 11). It is built of red brick with a Welsh slate roof and was one of three terraced houses between the factory and the corner of Jubilee Street. The present east gable wall was the party wall and the whole has been cement rendered when the other two houses were demolished, the date of which is unknown (Plate 17). The frontage onto Victoria Street must originally have had a front door and window to the house, both have now been removed and replaced by a narrow and wide window which lit the offices on the ground floor, and a single window on the first floor. So little of this façade looks like the street front of a terraced house it is possible that it has been entirely rebuilt when the other two were removed and this section converted to offices. It seems likely that the terrace was built before phase 2 of the factory as the chimney from the rear kitchen has been extended upwards considerably when phase 2 was added (Fig 11).
- 5.21 **Offices, Interior Ground Floor.** Accessed from a single doorway in the east gable wall of phase one adjacent to the lobby created when the doorway was inserted in the south wall of phase 1 (Fig 8). The main area of the ground floor is now a single room made out of two separate rooms, each originally with a fireplace against the east wall. The floor is probably now concrete (beneath carpet) and the walls are all covered in modern plaster. There is a

simple skirting board of late twentieth-century date and apart from a screen wall added to form a small reception area with window/hatch there are no fixtures or fittings. At the northern end is a small room which appears to have originally been the kitchen or scullery. In the east wall there is a door which would have led to the back yard, and a window, both beneath segmental arches. A fireplace is situated against the west wall though the opening has been blocked. The chimney (above the slate roof) rises against the east wall of phase 2 (Fig 11). The floor is of red quarry tiles.

- 5.22 **Offices, Interior, First Floor.** The first floor is accessed by a doorway in the east gable wall of phase 1 at the top of the stairs (Fig 9). Due to the discrepancy in floor levels between the two buildings (one domestic the other industrial) there is a short flight of two steps into the middle of the three rooms. These rooms have been modernised and retain no original fittings. The southern room (facing Victoria Street) has had a new Crittall type window added and is otherwise plain; the chimney breast remains but the fireplace has been covered over. The middle room is subdivided to create a toilet and washroom with two small windows being inserted in the position of the original (Fig 12). The chimney breast is present but the fireplace is boarded over. The rear (northern) room has no features apart from the chimney stack rising from the room below. All of the door frame architraves and skirting boards are of late twentieth-century profiles and these rooms appear to have been used as either offices or staff rooms.
- 5.23 **Demolished buildings.** There is evidence, in the form of scars on wall surfaces, of two buildings; one joined to the north end of phase 4, and the other on the east side of phase 4 and north side of phase 5 (Fig 8). Little can be said about either apart from their outline at roof level, although both are present on the 1926 Ordnance Survey map (Fig 6). The building joined to the north end of phase 4 had a pitched roof with a central louvered or glazed section which in turn was topped by a pitched roof (Fig 12). Two cut-off purlins and a single purlin socket indicate that the roof structure was of timber. The west boundary wall of the site at this point also served as the west wall of the demolished building. The east wall was presumably also brick as a scar in the north-east corner of phase 4 suggests a keyed-in wall here. The floor was of red quarry tiles, now covered in cement.

The second building lay in the angle created by phases 4 and 5 (Fig 7). All that remains is the scar of a shallow pitched roof in the north wall of phase 5. There are no indications of keyed-in brickwork and it may be that the building had metal or timber framed walls. No wall line or floor surface can be seen in the ground but it can be seen on the 1926 map that this building extended to the north end of Phase 4 (Fig 6).

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Evidence suggests that Irthlingborough was a relatively small player in the late nineteenth-century boot and shoe industry which was so important in Northamptonshire. Whilst there are ten recorded factory sites (and probably a number which have been lost) the factories appear generally to have been relatively small and perhaps half of the number were engaged in supporting the industry by supplying leather rather than actually making boots or shoes. All of these purpose-built factories date to the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries.
- 6.2 The first phase of Atlanta Works, formerly Progressive Works, on the north side of Victoria Street was built in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, certainly after 1885. Its role was probably to support the boot and shoe industry as a leather dressing factory though it is not known who the original manufacturer was. The first building was relatively small, but well built, and of a coherent four bay design spread over three floors with a small extension at the north-west corner of unknown height. It was relatively

narrow and would have been exceptionally well lit, with large windows on both the north and south sides. It is not clear if tanning was carried out on the site as it grew, for although the top floor of phases 3 and 4 have louvered windows which suggest the drying of leather, no evidence survives on the ground floor to support this. It is possible that this was the case though, as all of the present ground floors are of modern concrete and any tanning pits will have been filled in after they were no longer needed. It appears from published sources that such processes were outdated at just the time at which the factory was being extended (Morrison 2004). The total lack of any internal fixtures and fittings makes the assessment of function a difficult, if not impossible, task when all that remains are the walls, doorways, windows and floors and many of those are not original.

- 6.3 Whatever took place in the factory appears to have been a success as new additions were made. The first expansion doubled the space available, and then each subsequent addition added on a similar sized area each time until the present layout was reached, all completed by 1926. The now demolished rows of terraced houses were also added before this date. The bulk of the present factory therefore dates to the early years of the twentieth century.

Whilst the factory was originally named Progressive Works, the company appears to have been less than progressive in its attitude towards advertising, and few references have been found in trade directories. The quality of the first phase is good, if unremarkable, but each subsequent phase is less so and the later additions are not only built with cheap materials, but are poorly put together. The re-use of the large cast iron windows can be seen either as a sensible re-cycling of materials or an indication that the owners wished to maximise output but minimise outlay. Given the general standard of the extensions, the latter appears to be more likely. It is not known when the factory changed its name to Atlanta Works.

- 6.4 After 1926 the factory appears to have then remained unchanged until relatively recently when two of the later additions were removed. It is not clear whether the adjoining terraced houses were demolished at the same time, and if the whole operation was to increase the amount of space available in the yard. If so, it might signify a change in ownership and possibly also production. Certainly, as the twentieth century wore on, the boot and shoe industry declined, and with it the factories which supplied the component materials.
- 6.5 The factory as it stood at the time of the survey retained no features which can be related to its former use, and without documentary evidence could have not been connected with the boot and shoe industry. Whilst the phasing of the development has been determined, little else can be said about how the building was used. A terraced house to the immediate east, once one of a row of three, was at some stage incorporated to be used for offices, though where any original office space was located has not been determined. Apart from louvres on the upper floor of a later two-stage extension, nothing can be said about use of the factory floor space. Doorways, knocked through from one phase to another can similarly not be dated, other than relatively i.e. apart from saying that a certain doorway can only have been created after the adjoining extension was added. The lack of detailed map evidence means that there are only effectively two representations of the building: the single block of the first phase and then the complete factory as it now stands (apart from the two demolished ranges). None of the intervening phases can therefore be dated closer than between 1900 and 1926.

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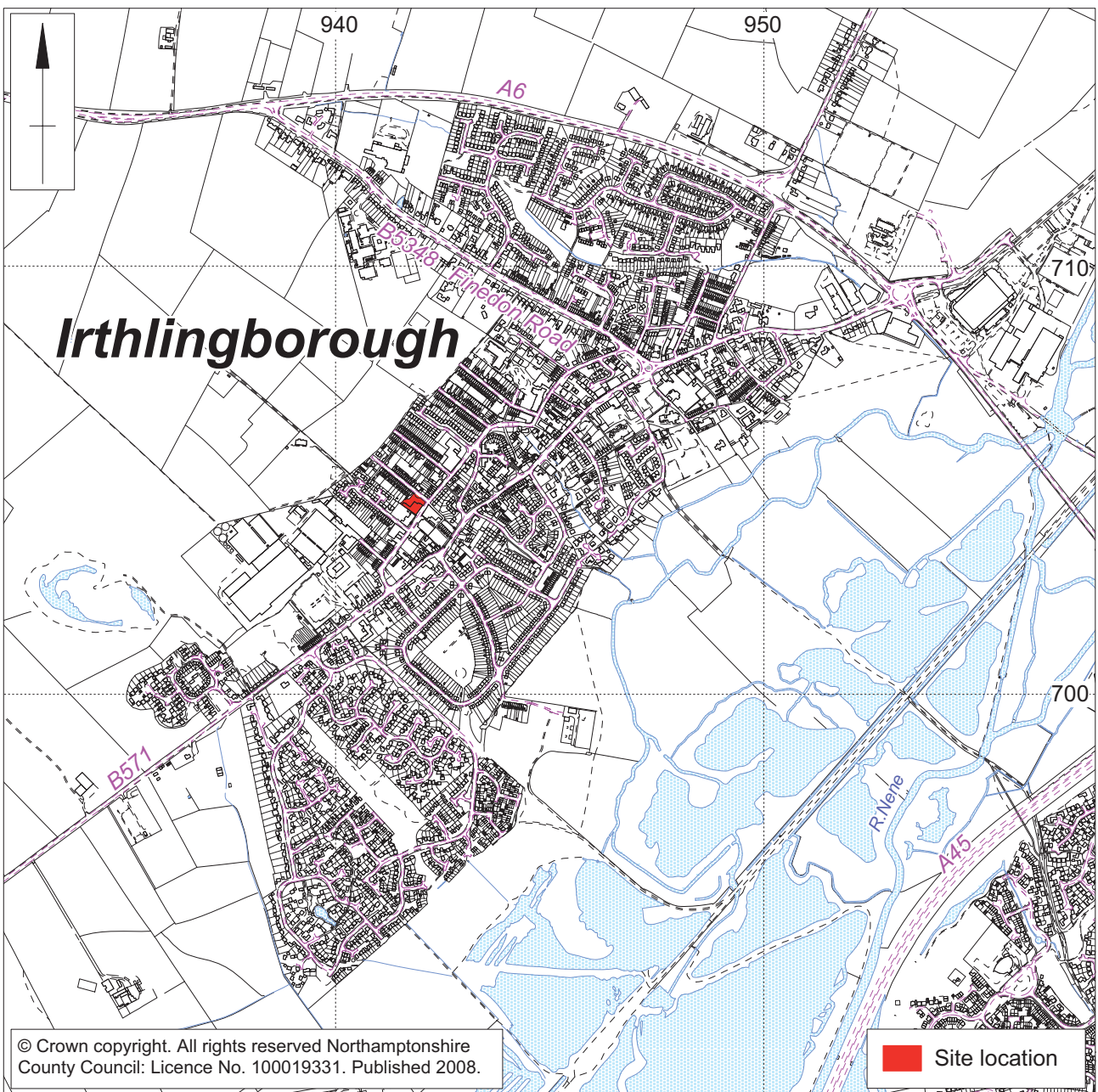
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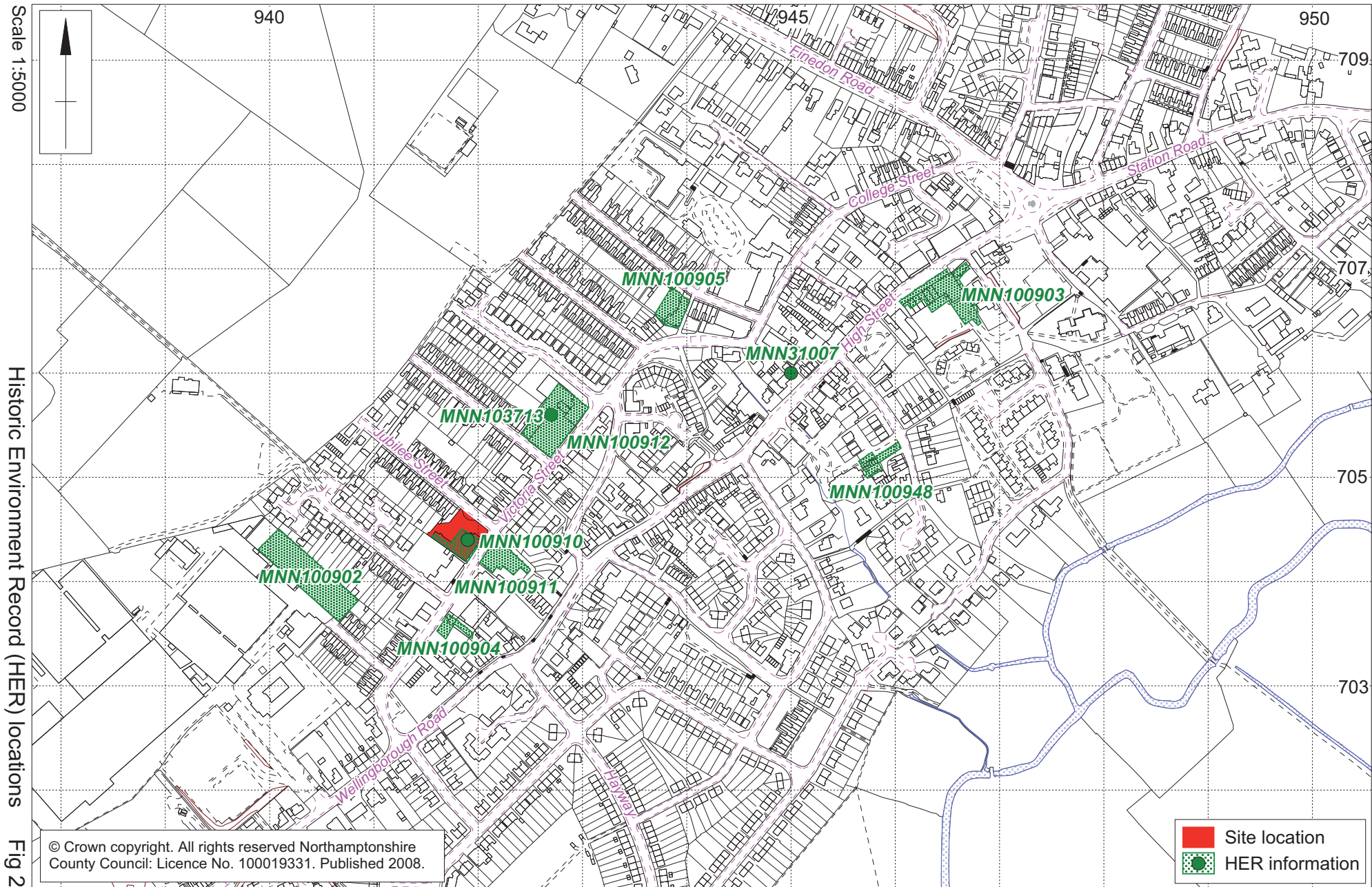
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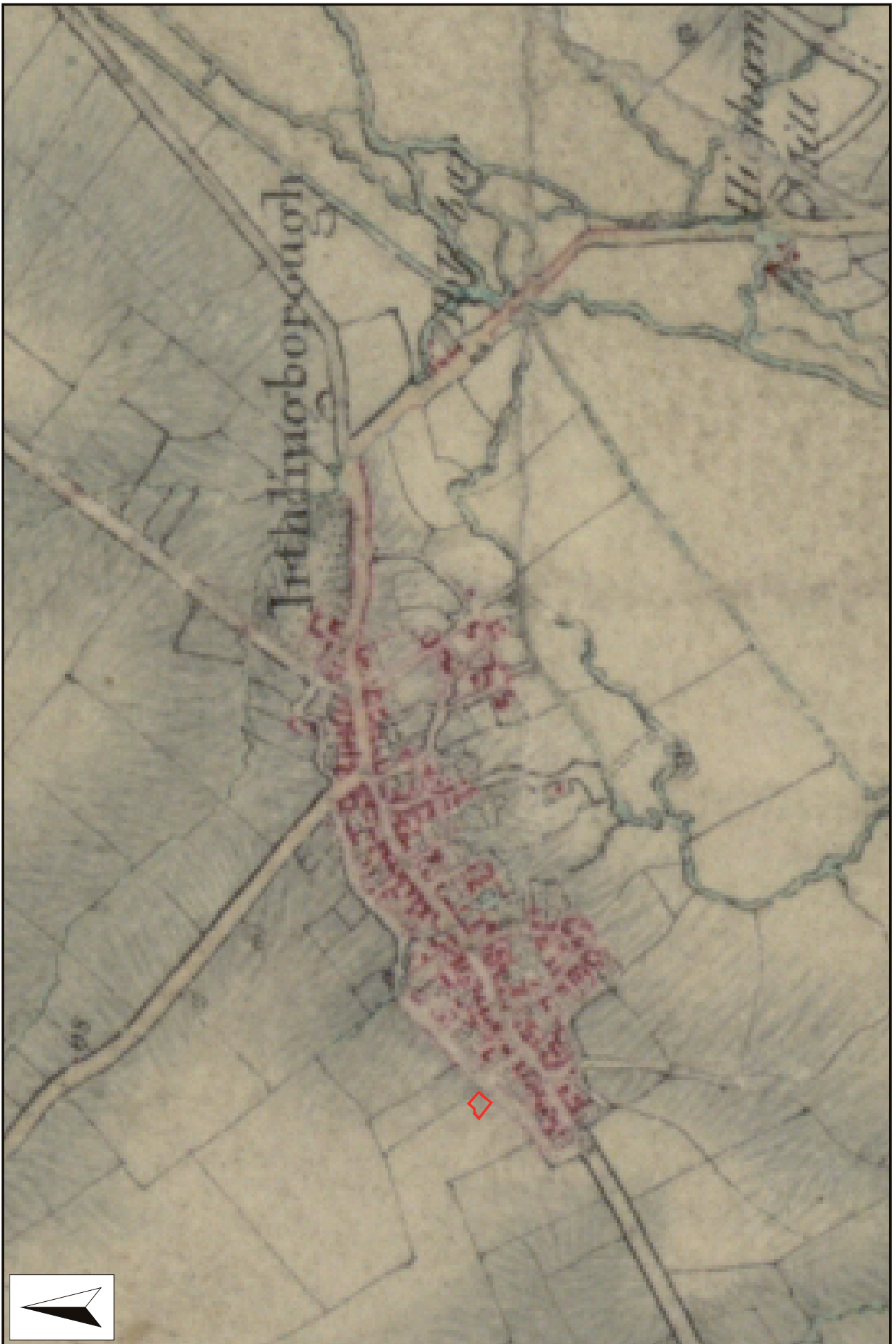
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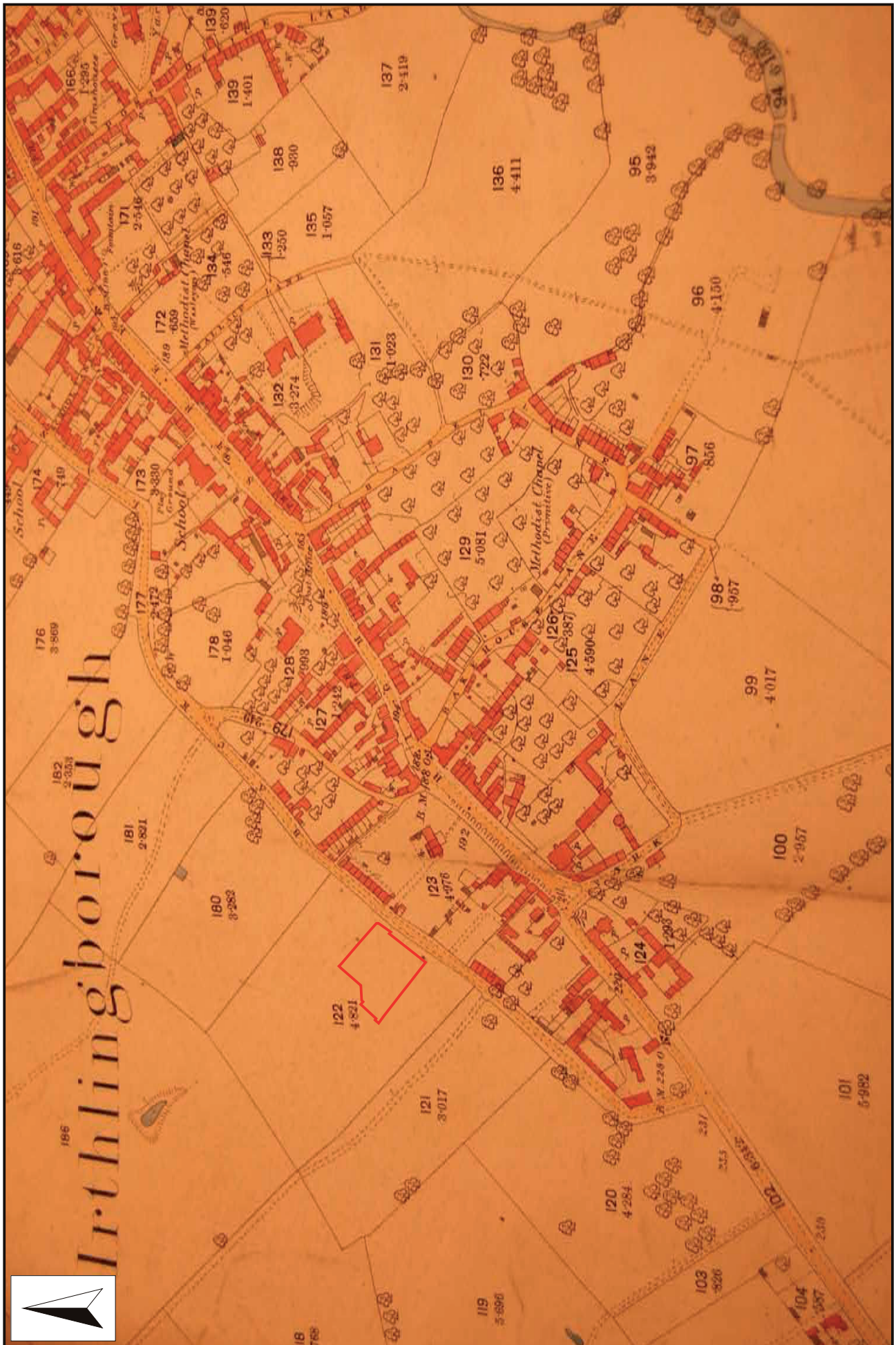
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Site location Fig 1

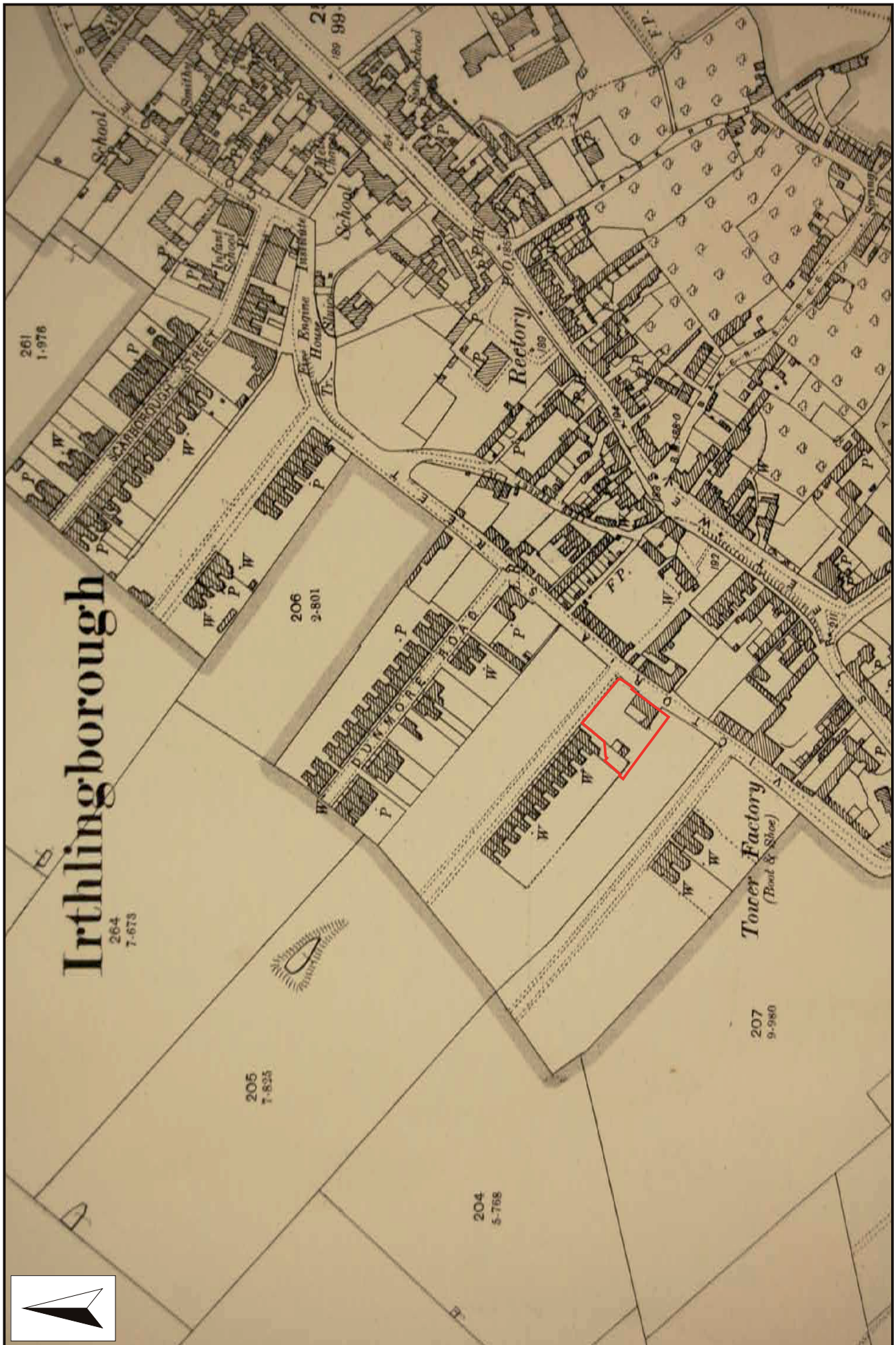




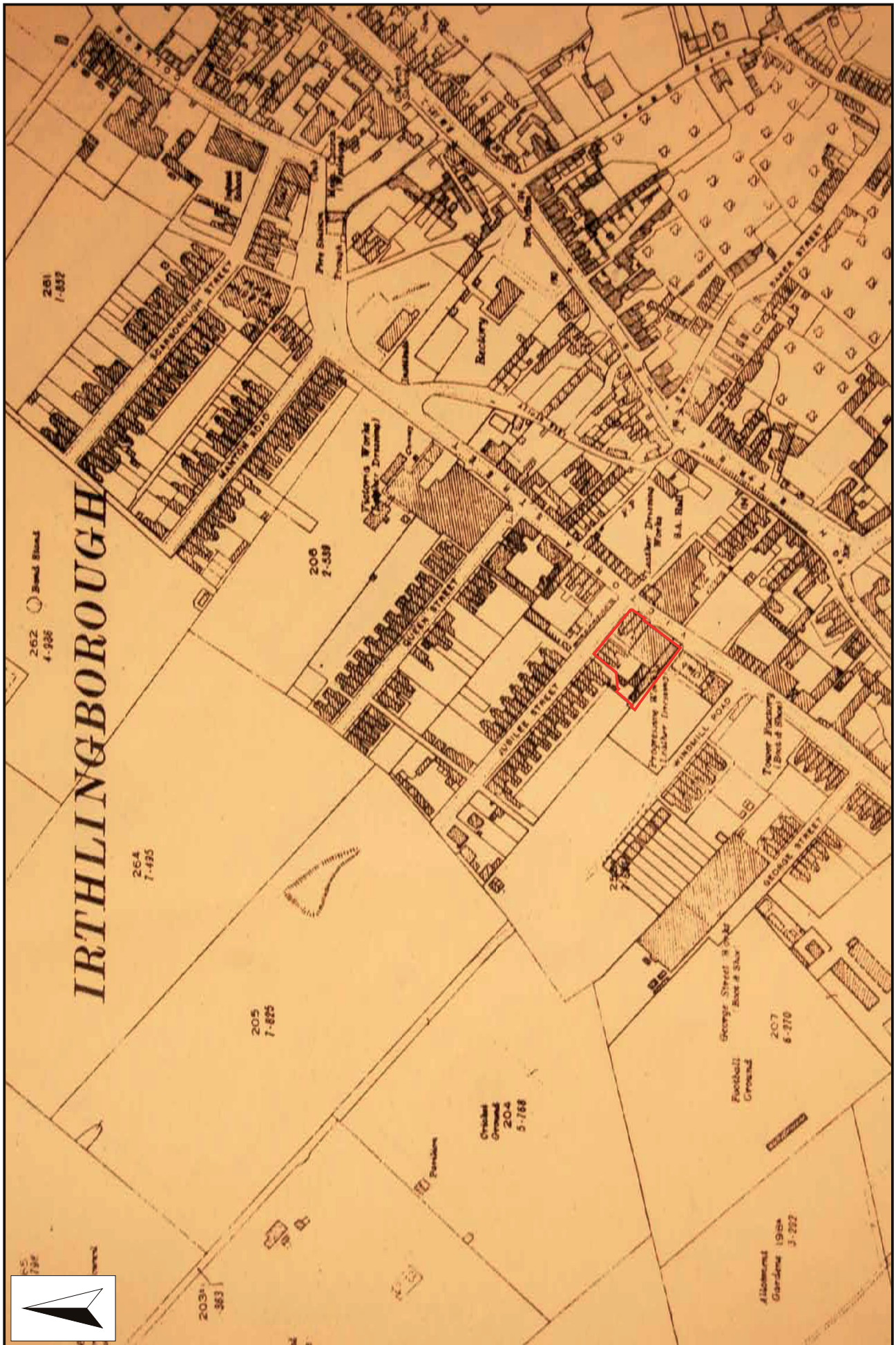
1810 Ordnance Survey preparatory map Fig 3



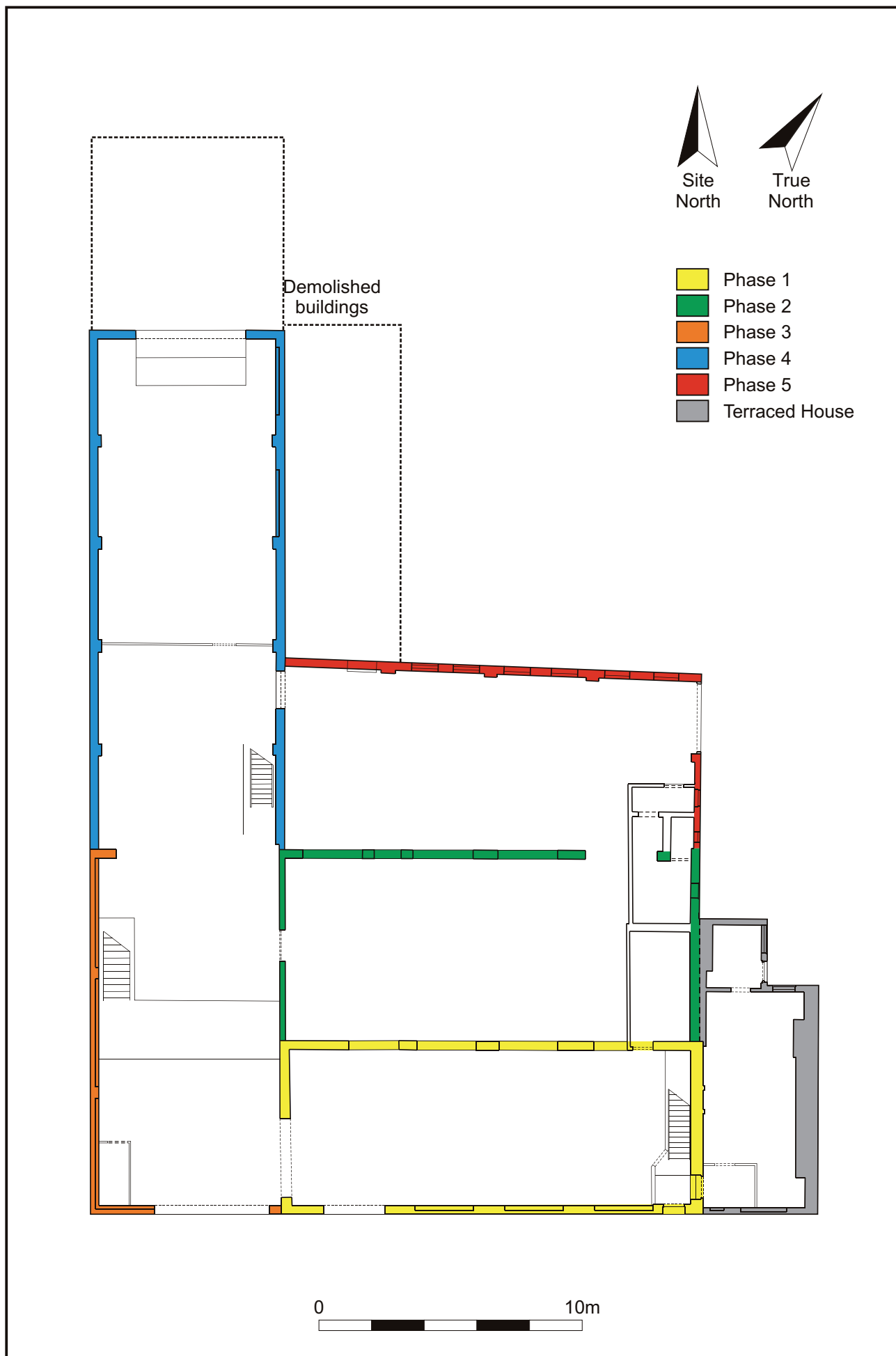
1885 25 inch Ordnance Survey map Fig 4



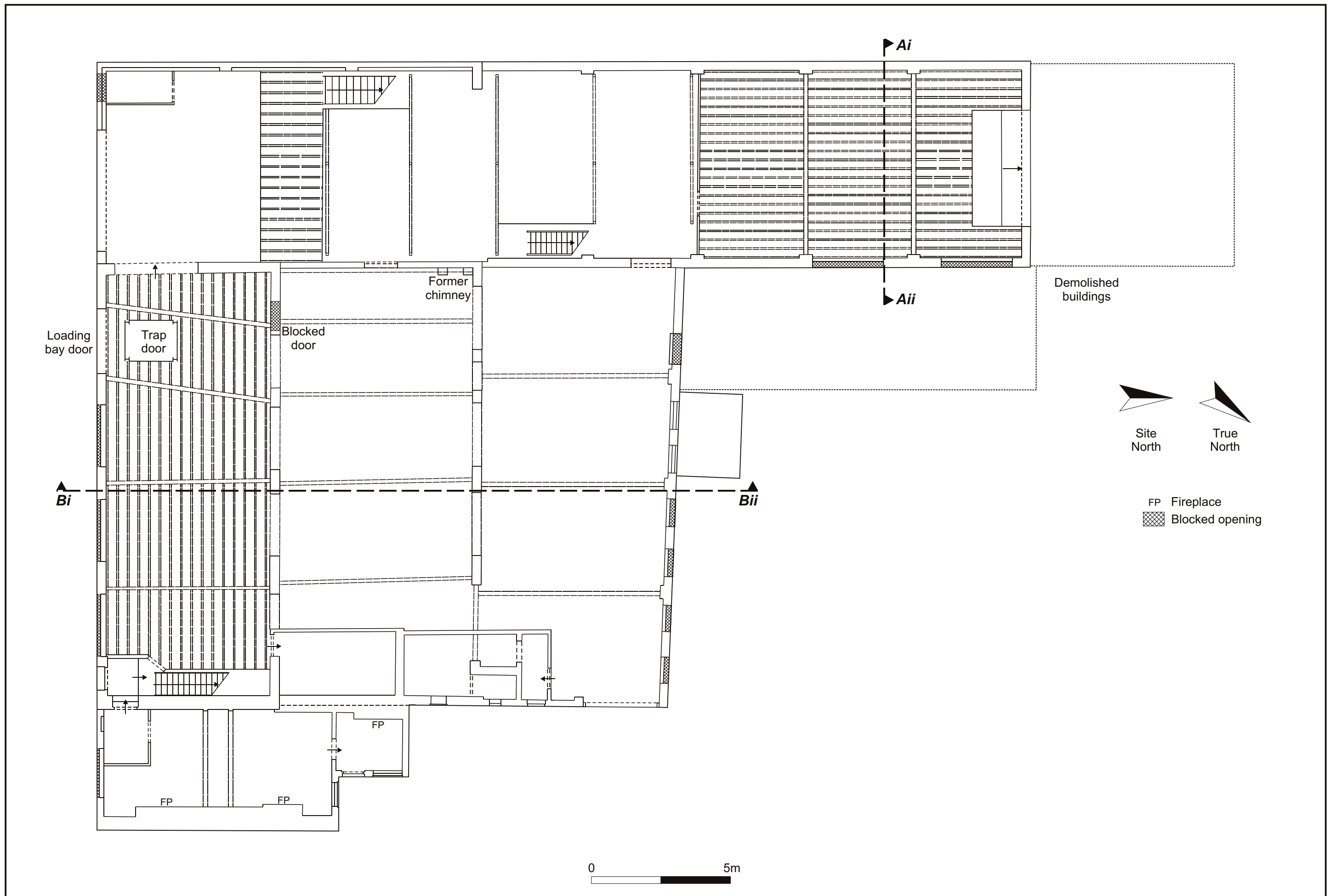
1900 Ordnance Survey map Fig 5



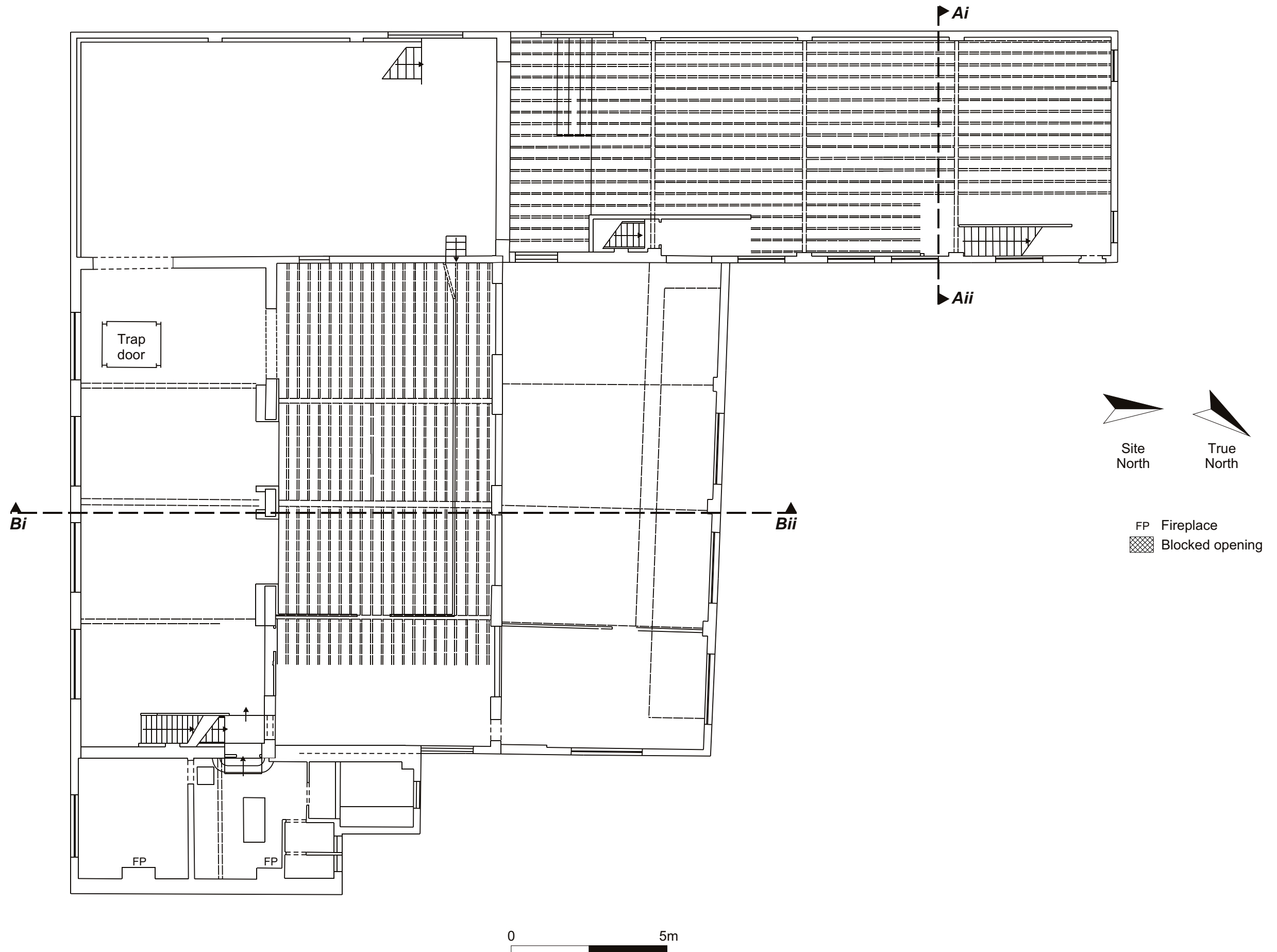
1926 Ordnance Survey map Fig 6



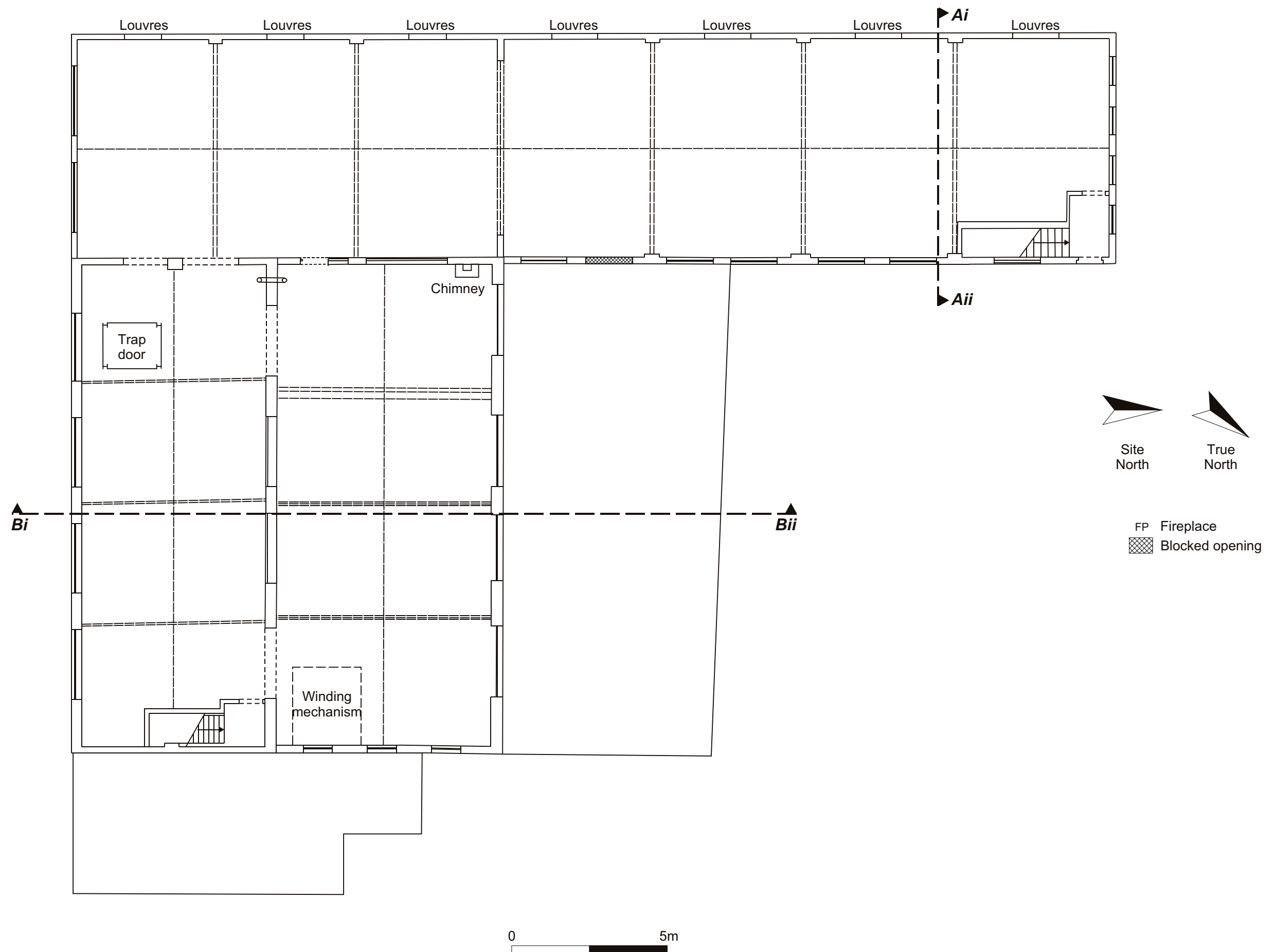
Phase plan of the factory Fig 7



Atlanta Works: Ground floor plan Fig 8

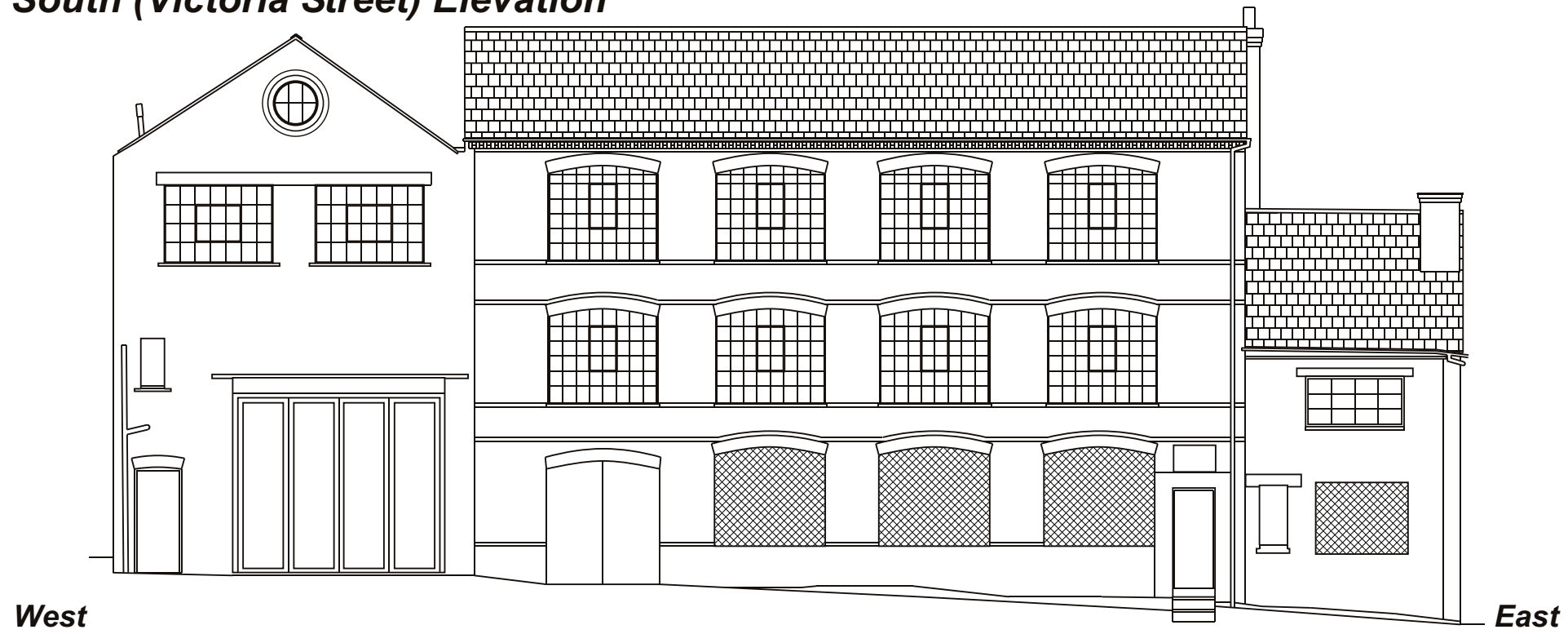


Atlanta Works: First floor plan Fig 9



Atlanta Works: Second floor plan Fig 10

South (Victoria Street) Elevation



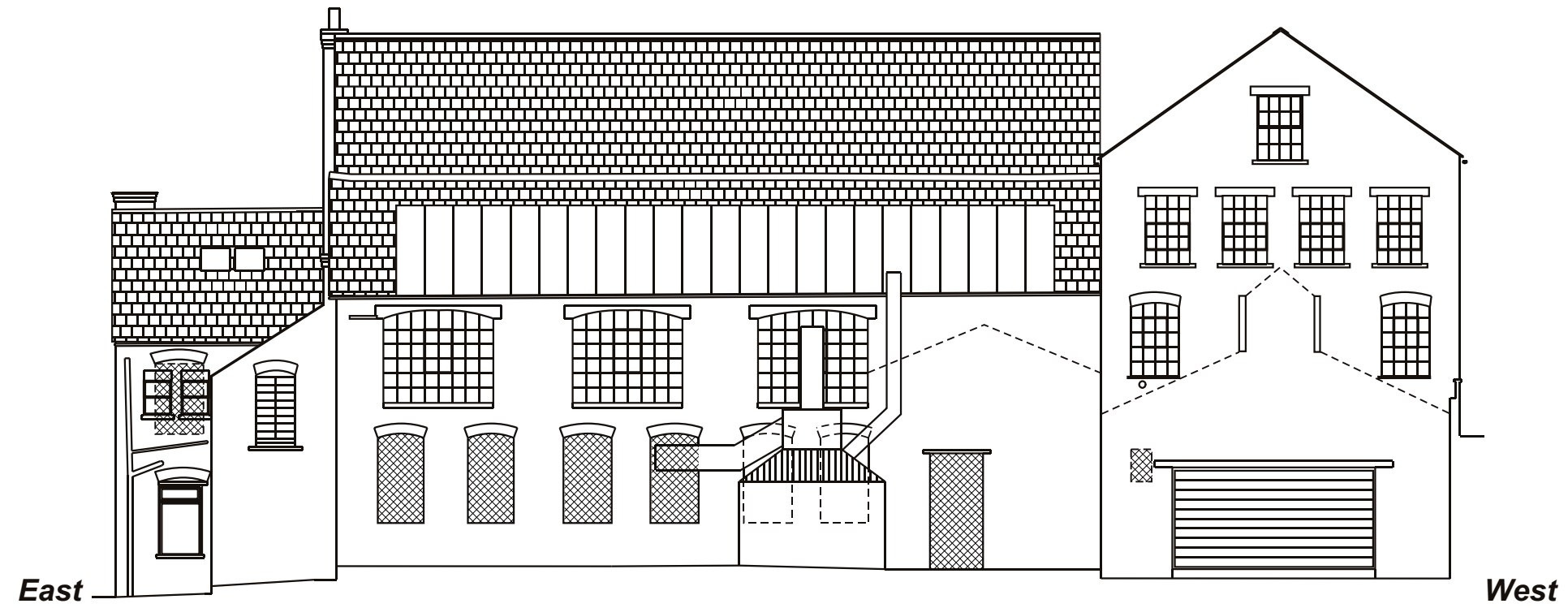
East (Jubilee Street) Elevation



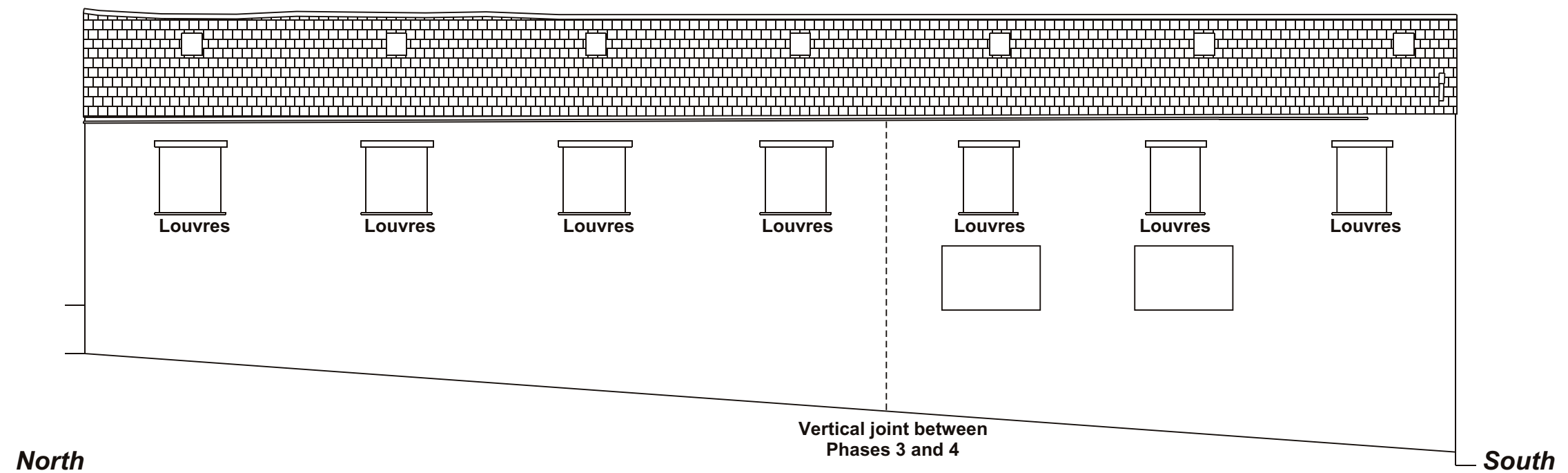
Blocked opening

0 5m

North Elevation



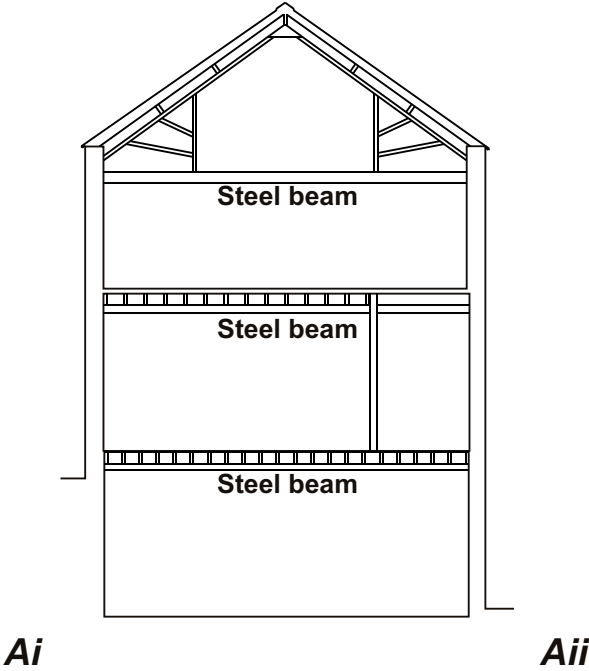
West Elevation



 Blocked opening

0  5m

Section Ai-Aii



Section Bi-Bii

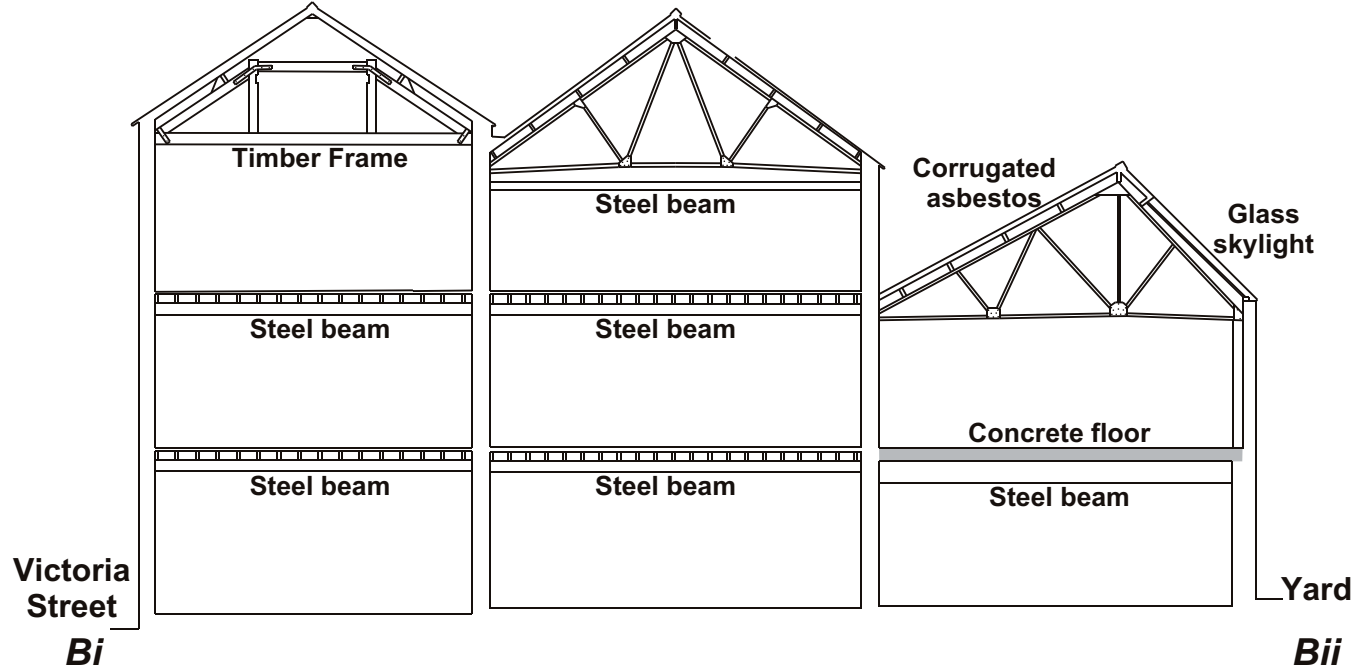




Plate 1: Victoria Street elevation of Phase 1 factory, looking north-east.

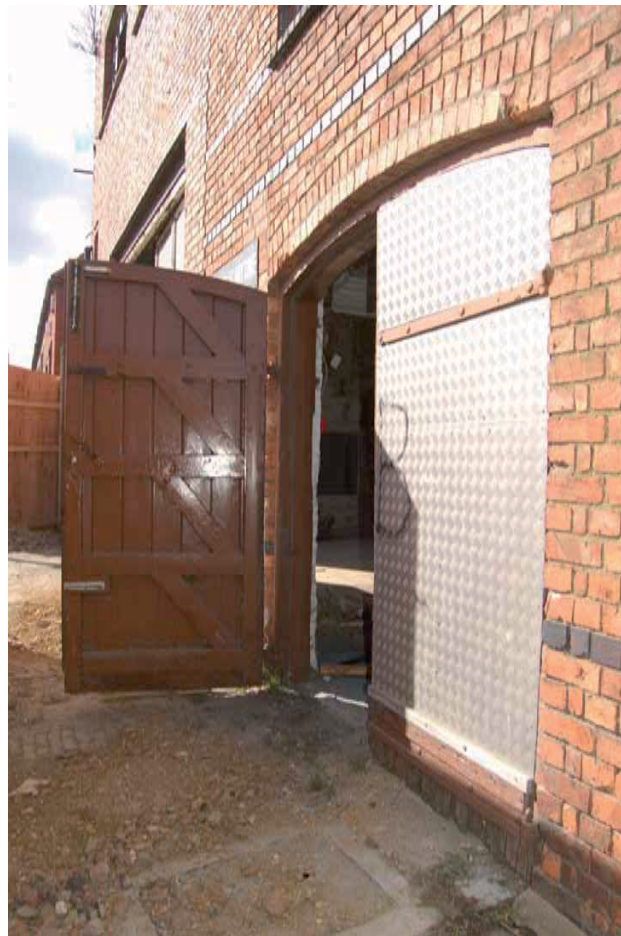


Plate 2: Double loading doors to Phase 1, looking west.



Plate 3: Former windows in north wall of Phase 1, ground floor.



Plate 4: Former windows in north wall of Phase 1, first floor.



Plate 5: Queen post roof trusses in Phase 1, looking east.



Plate 6: East elevation of the factory with Phase 2, central gabled section.



Plate 7: Angle-iron roof trusses of Phase 2, looking west.



Plate 8: Victoria Street elevation of Phase 3, looking north.



Plate 9: North wall of Phase 3 with truncated windows at first floor level, looking north.

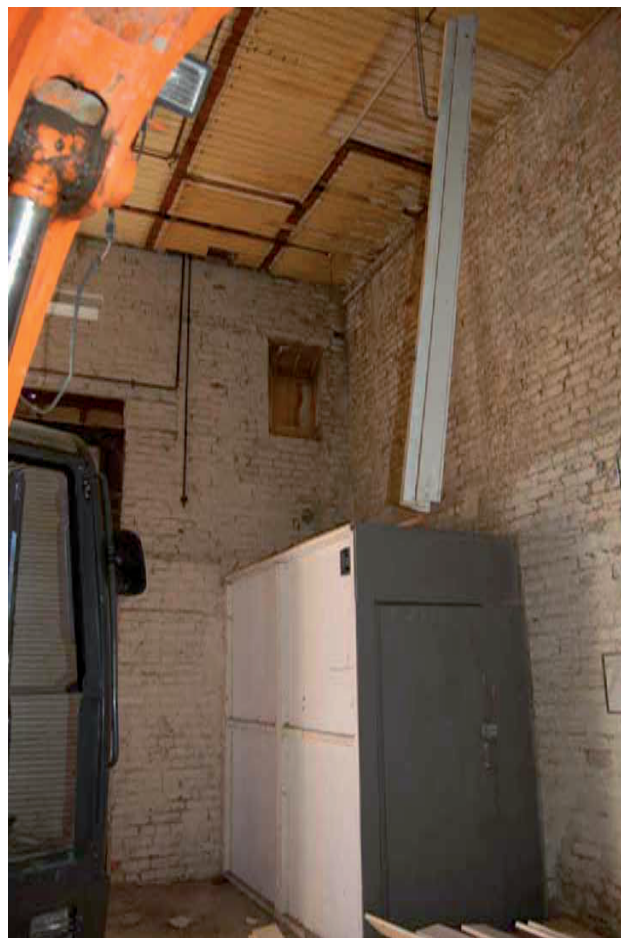


Plate 10: Scars in ceiling paintwork indicating former room layout at first floor level of Phase 3, south-west corner of building, looking south.



Plate 11: South gable end of Phase 3, looking south.



Plate 12: Louvred window in west wall of Phase 3.



Plate 13: West elevation of Phase 4, looking east.



Plate 14: East elevation of Phase 4, looking west.



Plate 15: North elevation of Phase 5, looking south.



Plate 16: Angle-iron roof trusses of Phase 5 and skylights, looking east.



Plate 17: East elevation of the terraced house with cement rendered east gable wall showing where the adjoining terrace has been removed.