

## Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING:  
ROEBUCK PRIMARY SCHOOL  
ST MARGARETS  
STEVENAGE  
HERTFORDSHIRE**

NGR: TL 2466 2252

*on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council*



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July 2010

ASC: 1310/SRS/3



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## Site Data

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<i>Village/Town:</i>	Stevenage		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Stevenage		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	TL 2466 2252		
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<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Construction of new school building		
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<i>Client:</i>	Hertfordshire County Council Herts Property County Hall Hertford SG13 8DN		
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## Internal Quality Check

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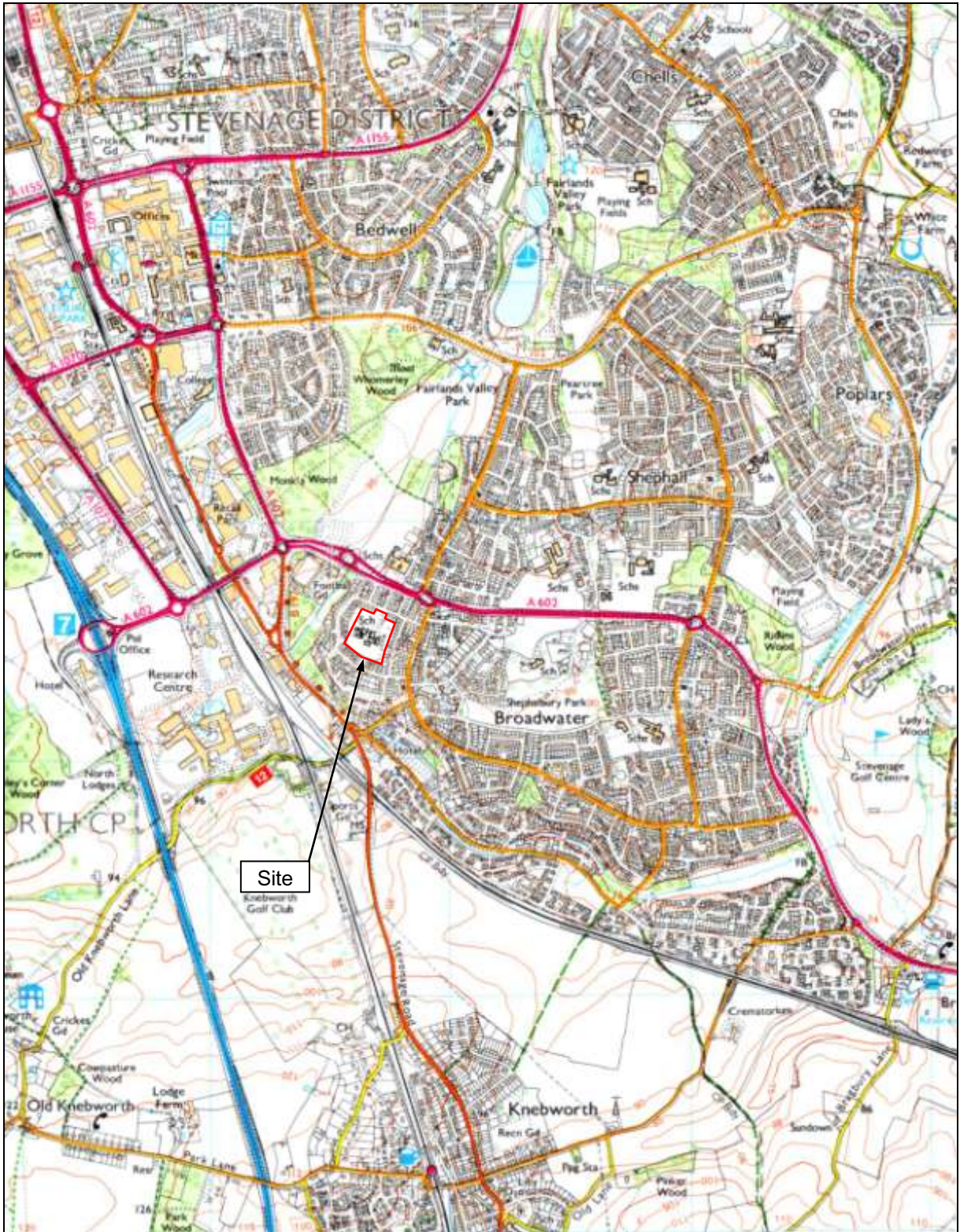


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

## Summary

*In June 2010 an historic building survey was undertaken of Roebuck Primary School, St Margarets, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, prior to its replacement by a new school building. The school was opened in 1955 to serve the Broadwater neighbourhood of Stevenage New Town. The building was designed by the architect's department of Hertfordshire County Council, as part of a wider programme of school building in the immediate post-war decades. This programme has been recognised for its innovation, in developing standardised systems of construction using steel and timber framing, coupled with new ideas regarding the layout of school buildings.*

*Roebuck School was opened in 1955 as a combined two-form entry eight-class junior and six-class infants' school. Its flat-roofed single-storey structure, built on several levels, is timber-framed and clad with characteristic Y-shaped upright supports, and was based on a commercially available industrial building system. Later additions, comprising a brick-built classroom block to the west, two timber-framed, gable-roofed classroom blocks to the east, and a brick-built toilet block east of the main hall, were in place by 1965. The only major addition since that date has been extensions to the dining area, built in 1966, and to the kitchen, built in 1975. Other changes have related mainly to changing trends in education over the last half-century, notably the provision of an ICT suite, music room and library, a nursery school and an after-school club.*

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 In June 2010 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out historic building recording of Roebuck Primary School, St Margarets, Stevenage, Hertfordshire. The work was commissioned by *Hertfordshire County Council* (HCC), and was carried out according to a project design prepared by ASC (Zeepvat 2010). The work was required under the terms of *Planning Policy Statement 5* (PPS5), by the *HCC Historic Environment Unit*, archaeological advisors (AA) to HCC. The local planning authority (LPA) is Stevenage Borough Council. The relevant planning application reference is not known.

In addition to the building recording, a programme of archaeological evaluation was carried out on the site, according to the same project design. The results of this are described in a separate report (Shane 2010).

### 1.2 *Planning Background*

This building recording project has been required under the terms of *Planning Policy Statement 5* (PPS5), as a condition for development involving buildings on the site.

### 1.3 *Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd*

ASC is an independent archaeological practice providing a full range of archaeological services including consultancy, field evaluation, mitigation and post-excavation studies, historic building recording and analysis. ASC is recognised as a *Registered Organisation* by the Institute for Archaeologists and is also accredited ISO 9001, in recognition of its high standards and working practices.

#### 1.4 **Management**

The project was managed and carried out under the overall direction of Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA.

#### 1.5 **The Site**

##### 1.5.1 *Location & Description*

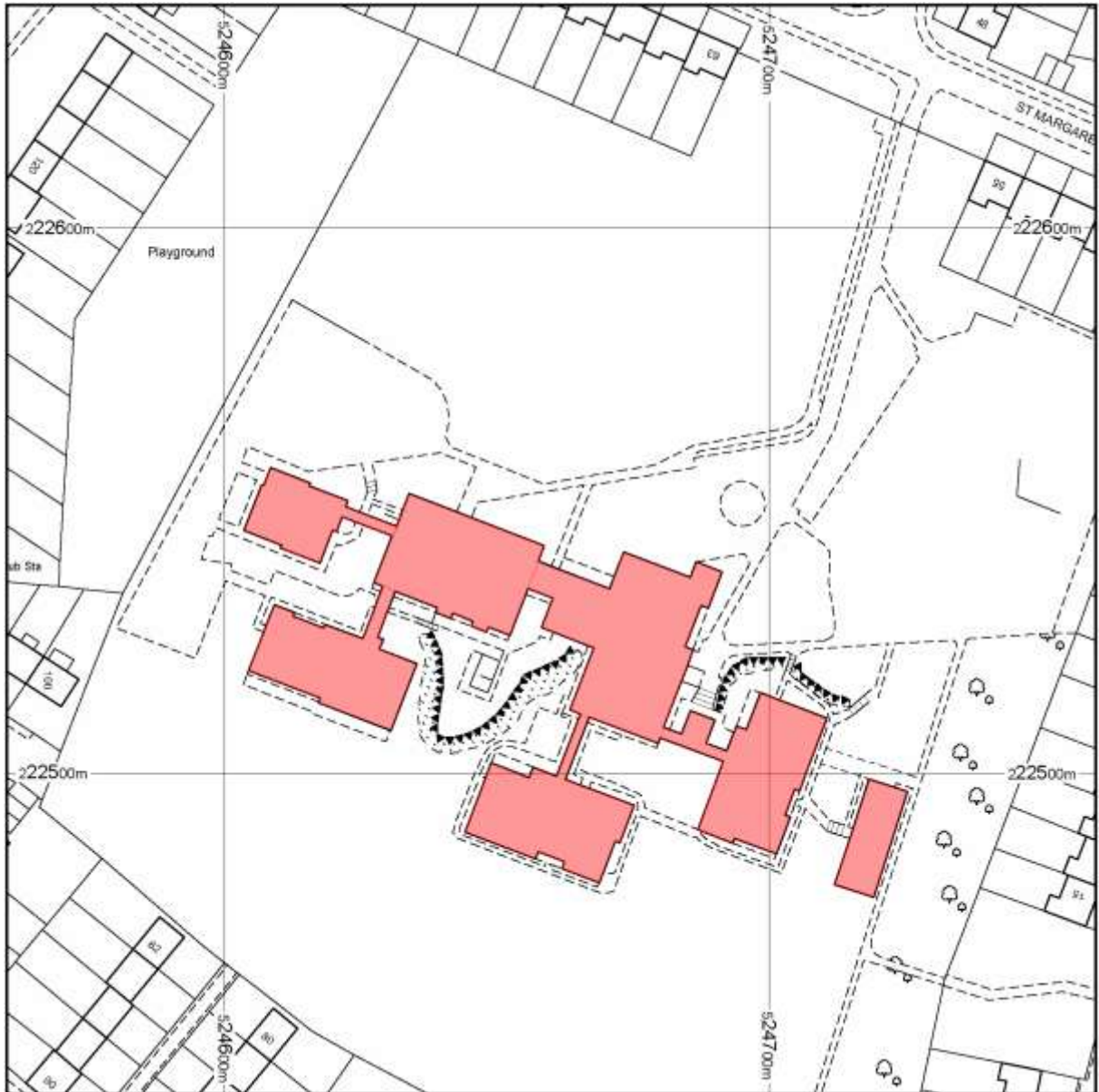
Roebuck Primary School is located in the Broadwater district of Stevenage new town, centred on Ordnance Survey Grid Reference TL 2466 2252 (Fig. 1). The school site occupies a roughly square area of *c.*2.4 hectares, bounded on all sides by modern residential development. The school buildings are located in the centre of the site, with a tarmac area to the north-east. The rest of the site is under grass, with a few mature trees. Access is from St Margarets, to the north.

##### 1.5.2 *Geology & Topography*

The site is located on more or less level ground, at an elevation of *c.*90m AOD. As the site is within an urban area, soils have not been mapped. However, they are likely to belong to the *Hornbeam 2* or *Hornbeam 3 Association*, both described as '*deep fine loamy over clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging*' (Soil Survey 1983, 582c or 582d). The underlying geology is Middle Chalk (BGS 221, Hitchin).

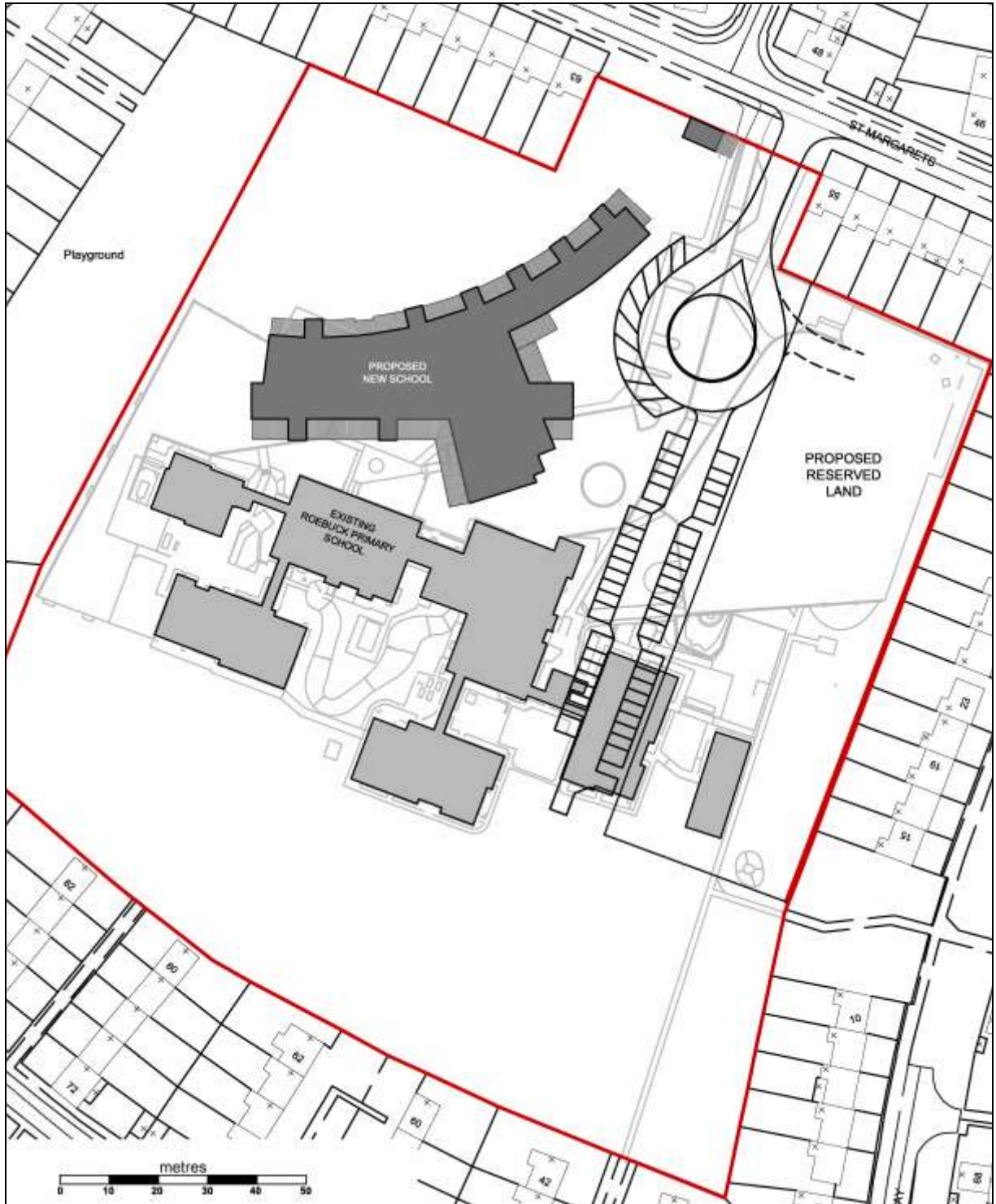
##### 1.5.3 *Proposed Development*

The proposed development comprises demolition of the present school buildings, and construction of a new school to the immediate north, along with new access and parking arrangements (Fig. 3).



**Figure 2:** Site location (*scale 1:1250*)





**Figure 3:** Proposed development (scale 1:1250)

## **2 Aims & Methods**

### **2.1 Aims**

As described in the project design (Section 2.1), the aims of the building recording were:

- To compile a comprehensive and high quality record of the school buildings in advance of development.
- To provide a comprehensive review of the local and regional historical context of the structure recorded by the project.
- To produce of a high quality, fully integrated archive, suitable for long-term deposition, in order to ‘preserve by record’ the building, prior to conversion.

### **2.2 Standards**

The work conforms to the project design, to the relevant sections of the Institute for Archaeologists’ *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000) and *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001), to current English Heritage guidelines (EH 2006), to the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers East of England Region *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (ALGAO 2003), and to the relevant sections of ASC’s own *Operations Manual*.

### **2.3 Methods**

The work was carried out according to the project design (Section 2.3), which required historic building recording to English Heritage Level 3 (EH 2006).

### **2.4 Constraints**

No constraints were encountered in carrying out the survey.

### 3 Historical Background

3.1 The following section provides a summary of the readily available historical background to the site and its environs. This section has been compiled with information from the Hertfordshire Archives & Local Studies Library, Hertford (HALS), and ASC's reference collection.

#### 3.2 *Medieval* (1066-1500)

Roebuck School is located in the historic parish of Shephall, locally situated within the hundred of Broadwater but administratively a detached part of Cashio Hundred (Page 1971, 443). The Domesday Survey of 1086 records that Shephall (*Escephale*) was divided into two parts. One was held by the abbot of St Albans as part of the abbey demesne. The other was held by Anschitil Ros of Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury (Morris 1976, sections 2.3 and 10.8). Anschitil's lands had belonged to the Abbey demesne in the time of Edward the Confessor, and could not be sold or alienated from the church.

During the medieval period the site lay within the lands of the parish, probably within its open field system. The nearest settlement was the hamlet of Broadwater, 0.5km to the south, at the junction of the high road from Welwyn to Stevenage and a by-road crossing the parish from north to south (Page 1971, 443). The hamlet is first mentioned in documents dated to 1221.

#### 3.3 *Post-Medieval* (1500-1900)

The Abbey's tenure of Shephall was terminated during the Dissolution, when in 1542 the manor, with a pension of five shillings from the Rectory, was granted by Henry VIII to George Nodes, serjeant of the royal Buckhounds (Page 1971, 444). Nodes had previously been lessee of the manor. In 1564 Nodes obtained licence to grant the manor to his nephew Charles Nodes and his heirs.

The 'Roebuck Hotel' in Broadwater, from which the name of the school derives, dates from the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

#### 3.4 *Modern* (1900-present)

Throughout the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the school site remained as open fields to the north of Broadwater (Fig. 4). The town of Stevenage, to the north of the site, continued to grow slowly as it had done following the coming of the railways in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. Following the Second World War, the publication of the Abercrombie Plan proposed construction of a ring of new towns around London, of which the first, Stevenage, was designated in 1946. In keeping with the sociological outlook of the day, the town was to consist of six self-contained neighbourhoods, and separate commercial and industrial areas.

The Abercrombie Plan specified two primary schools for each neighbourhood, equivalent to a population of 60,000 (Gallone 1971, 42). This proved to be the main fault in the Plan, as Abercrombie underestimated the eventual population levels (Hardy, n.d, 47). Roebuck School is one of the two primary schools in the Broadwater district: the other is Longmeadow, 1.2km to the south-east.

### 3.5 *The Post-War Hertfordshire School Building Programme*

Following the 1944 Education Act, in common with other education authorities, Hertfordshire County Council was faced with the need to provide 175 new primary schools throughout the county by 1960 (Aslin 1949). This demand was brought about by a significant increase in the county's population, over 50% between 1931 and 1951 (Maclure 1984), caused by London overspill development, bomb damage, and the age and condition of existing schools. In response to this, the Council set up the County Architect's Department in 1945, appointing Herbert Aslin from Derby as county architect (Saint 1990, 7). It soon became apparent that traditional construction materials and methods were not appropriate in this instance: both materials and skilled labour were in short supply, and there was a need for designs that were sufficiently flexible to meet the demands of educationalists in post-war Britain, but sufficiently standardised to keep costs down and permit rapid construction (*ibid.*).

Obviously there was no time to devise a range of buildings from scratch. Aslin's team turned to the various prefabricated 'kits', typically for industrial buildings, that were available or emerging on the open market. As a starting point they initially settled on a design using a steel frame with concrete cladding, produced by Hills of West Bromwich. This was developed by Hills and the HCC architects as the 'Hills 8'3" system, using as a basis for classrooms a module of 8'3" (2515mm), recommended in the Wood Report of 1944 (*ibid.*). This became one of the principal methods of construction for junior schools in the county in the immediate post-war years. Other commercially available systems using steel or timber framing were tried, but none were as successful.

The post war programme of school building in Hertfordshire is described by the Royal Institute of British Architects as "world class architecture with a uniquely British flavour" (Elwall 2000, 7). The noted International Modernist architect Walter Gropius acclaimed it in 1952 as the most advanced in the world (*ibid.*, 30). A recently published guide to the refurbishment of school buildings by English Heritage includes a case study of Hertfordshire schools. Seven are listed out of a post-war total of thirty-eight listings throughout the country (English Heritage 2010, 5).

### 3.6 *Roebuck School*

Roebuck School opened in 1955, as a combined two-form entry eight-class junior and six-class infants' school. The school was designed by the Hertfordshire County Architect's department. Aslin subsequently described the buildings as follows:

*The schools have been planned round two open courtyards so as to create internal views within the complex of the building. The schools consist of a two-form entry eight-class junior and six-class infant. Planned on one floor, both schools have a timber frame. The cladding is external quality plywood and western Red Cedar boarding. The timber frame was developed by the Hertfordshire County Architect's Department in co-operation with Elliott and Sons (Reading) Ltd. The primary and secondary beams are a constant in depth, so as to give a flat soffit throughout the building. A single kitchen, boiler room and dining hall serves both schools. Heating is by the Weatherfoil system. (Aslin 1957, 1011-1012).*

Aslin's article also lists the contractors involved in building the school:

<i>General Contractors:</i>	Ekins & Co. Ltd
<i>Structural Framing:</i>	Elliott & Sons (Reading) Ltd
<i>Structural Roof:</i>	William Briggs Ltd
<i>Ceilings:</i>	Gyproc
<i>Wood Block Floors:</i>	Viger Brothers Ltd
<i>External Doors:</i>	Jayanbee Joinery Ltd
<i>Heating:</i>	Weatherfoil Heating Systems Ltd

The plan accompanying this description (Fig. 6) shows the functions of each area. It also reveals that the building plan was designed on a modular system, based on units of 3'4" (1015mm). This system was recommended in a report issued by the Ministry of Education in 1948 (Saint 1990, 18), as an alternative to a modular system based on units of 8'3" (2515mm), which had been pioneered and developed by the Hertfordshire County Architect's department.

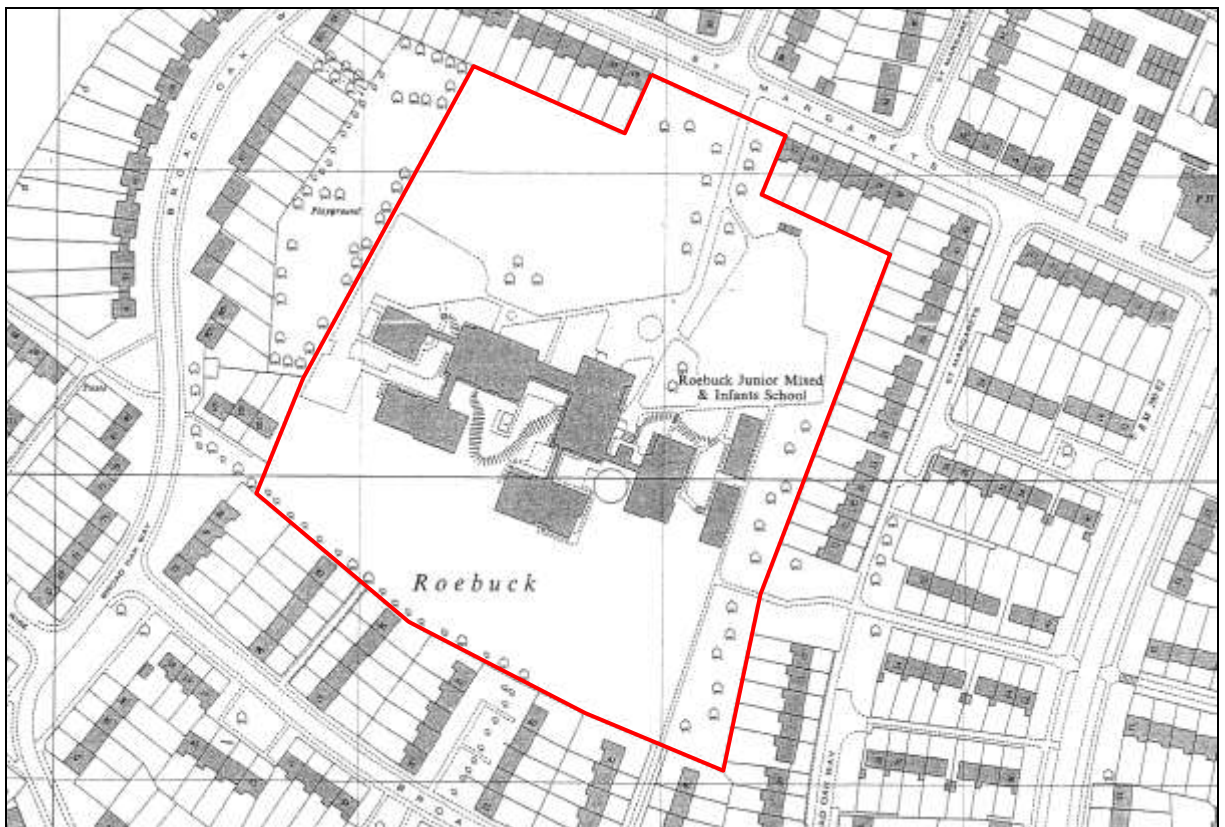
Fig. 6 is similar in plan to an architect's drawing of the school, dated March 1954, held in the Council archives (Fig. 7). Also from the archives is an elevation drawing of the school (Fig. 8) dated July 1951. Examination of the North Hertfordshire planning records has revealed of the subsequent structural history of Roebuck School:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Planning ref.</i>	<i>Description</i>
1959	STV/41/59	Mobile classrooms
1959	2/0051/59	Construction of two-classroom extension (Block F)
1966	2/0153/66	Extension to Dining Room (Block D)
1975	2/0205/75	Extension to Kitchen (Block A)

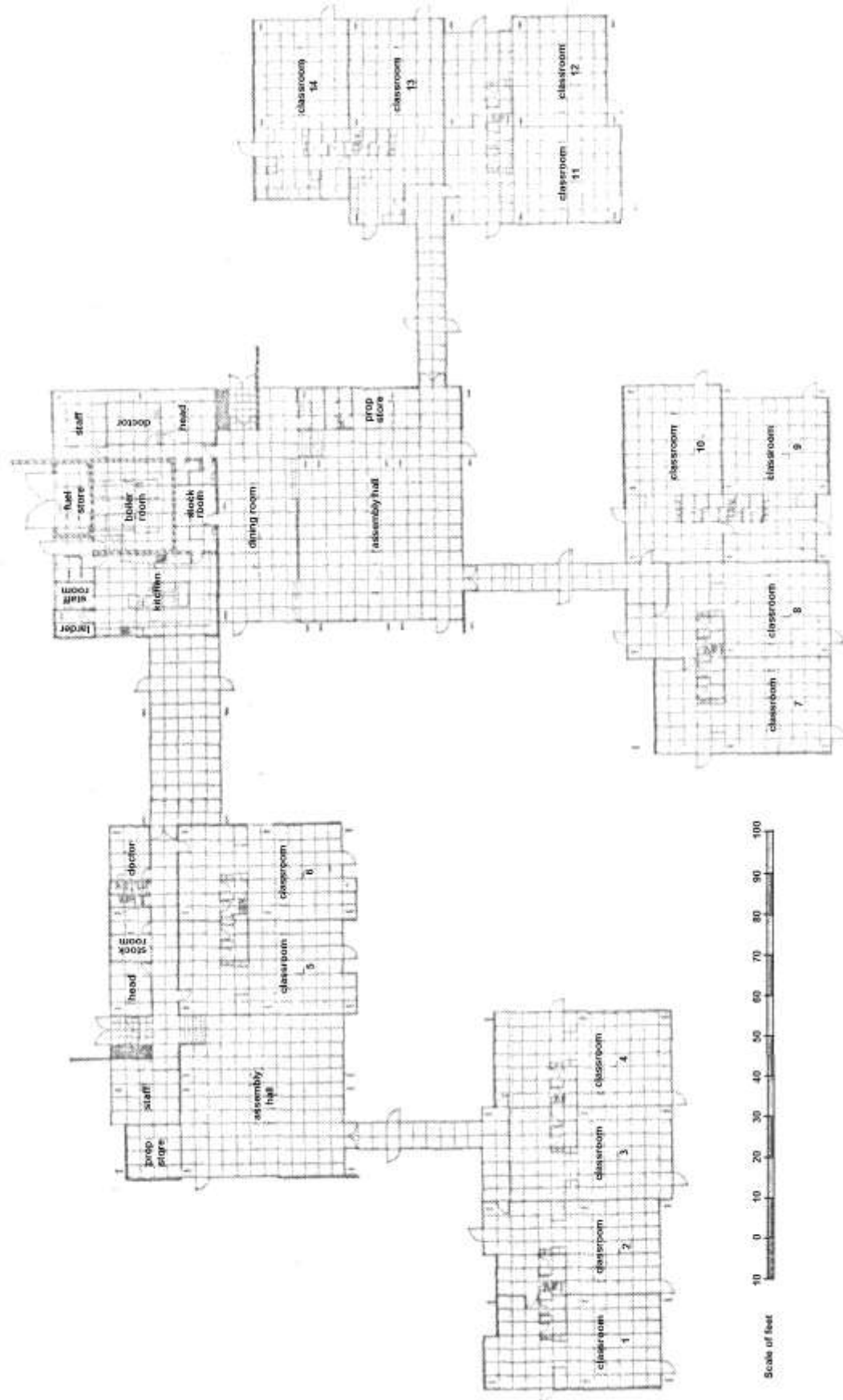
This list makes no mention of the toilet block added to the walkway to Block B. Cartographic evidence (Fig. 6) indicates that this was in place by 1965, and it seems reasonable to suggest that it was built to serve the pupils in the mobile classrooms erected in 1959, of which Block G is the sole survivor.



**Figure 4:** Extract from Ordnance Survey 25" sheet XX.4, 1924



**Figure 5:** Extract from Ordnance Survey 1:2500 sheet TL2422, 1965



**Figure 6:** Plan and functions of Roebuck School as built, after Aslin 1957 (scale as shown)

## 4 Description

### 4.1 General

Roebuck School is an extensive, flat roofed, single-storey complex, built on several levels and comprising seven blocks (Fig. 9, A-G), linked by glazed covered walkways. As previously noted, the construction of the original school buildings (Blocks A-E) comprises a timber frame clad with external quality plywood and western Red Cedar boarding. The flat roofs are presumably also plywood, clad with roofing felt. The roofs of the walkways linking the blocks are lightweight corrugated plastic on timber beams, and are probably modern replacements.

Externally, the main characteristics of the original school buildings are large areas of glazing, consisting of tripartite panels, the lower part being unglazed, the middle being a fixed window, and the upper part an opening window, with top hinges (Plates 1-3). Each classroom is also lit by two fixed skylights. Unglazed external walls are clad in narrow vertical planking. Above the walls, and overhanging them, is a deep soffit clad with plywood panels. Planked walls and soffit boards have been treated in the past with a very dark stain, which has weathered to grey. In certain areas the outer walls are inset to a depth of one module (1.015m) to form 'porches'.

Perhaps the most distinctive features of the form of construction used are the Y-shaped upright supports, formed by two lengths of planed cedar with a tapered spacing block between them, set in a metal shoe, with a plywood box structure bolted to their upper end (Plate 4). These occur singly and in pairs, inside the building and supporting external 'porches'.

Internally, floors are concrete, covered by vinyl tiles, parquet or quarry tiles, depending upon the location. Walls are boarded. Ceilings consist of plasterboard panels. Ceiling heights in all rooms except the halls is 2.48m. Windows, and most external doors, are metal-framed.

Standardisation is particularly apparent in the design of the original classrooms. The classrooms are all in pairs. The standard size for classrooms is about 98 square metres, equating to 97 or 98 modular units squared (see 3.5 and Fig. 6). Within each classroom, just over 6 square metres (6 units) is allocated to a toilet block, containing three stalls, each with a high-level cistern and a child-size WC. Each classroom has an internal entrance door, two external doors, and a door linking it to the adjoining classroom. Midway along the outer wall of each classroom, opposite the toilet block, is a low box housing the vent for the 'Weatherfoil' warm air heating system. Floors of all classrooms and covered walkways are vinyl tiled, some with carpet over.

Exceptions to the above structural description are Blocks F and G, and parts of Blocks A, B and D, all being later additions to the school. These are described below.

*NB: Room numbers [xxx] used in the following descriptions and on Figs 10 and 11 are those currently assigned by the County Council and the school administration.*



#### 4.2 **Block A** (Figs 9 & 10: Plates 5-11)

*Max. dimensions:* 32.4 × 24.6m

*Description:* Block A houses the school administration, kitchen, boiler room and the hall for juniors. Its functions remain largely unchanged from 1955.

The main entrance to the building is on its east side (Plate 5). The entrance foyer [131] has a hatch on its north side, connecting to the school office [124]. The foyer leads to a concourse [126] running through the centre of Block A. This space (Plate 6), currently described as ‘multi-use area’ was originally the junior school dining room (Fig. 6). It still retains roller shutter hatches to the adjoining kitchen [114], with wood panelling below. The floor is parquet, now partly carpeted. On the south side, this area is open to the juniors’ (KS2) hall [127], with a handrail along the edge. The centre section can be removed, allowing [126] to be used as a stage. Access to the hall is by steps down from the south-east corner of [126]. Maximum dimensions of the hall (Plates 7 & 8) are 15.6 × 11.6m, with a height of 3.48m. The floor is parquet, and the west and south walls are mostly glazed. Probably the most distinctive features in this room are two pairs of tall Y-shaped roof supports. From the south-east and south-west corners of the hall, covered walkways lead east [174] and south [164] to Blocks B and C respectively. From the north-east corner of the concourse, a corridor [133] leads northwards to two WCs, the school office [124], the head’s office [156, and [126], described as a ‘multi use’ room (Plate 9). In 1955, [124] was the head’s office, [125] the medical room, and [126] the junior school staff room. West of the corridor, accessed externally, are the boiler room [119] and the former coal store [121]. West and south of the boiler room is the kitchen [114], which has a quarry tiled floor, and serving hatches to the south and west (Plates 10 & 11). The kitchen office [116] is on the north side of the kitchen: the rooms to the west of this, the store [115] outside entrance foyer and ‘circulation area’ [113] have an external west wall of brick, and are a later addition to the block, built in 1975. On the east side of the hall, south of the main entrance, are the medical room [113], the caretaker’s office [114] and a storeroom [115].

#### 4.3 **Block B** (Figs 9 & 11: Plates 12-14)

*Max. dimensions:* 26.6 × 14.8m (exc. corridor)

*Description:* As noted above, Block B is accessed from the hall by covered walkway [174], 13.4m in length (Plate 12). The south side of the walkway is glazed, with an external door part way along. On the north side is [172], a brick-built, flat-roofed toilet block which appears to be a later addition. The walkway ends in a foyer [180], from which the classrooms in Block B are accessed.

In common with the other original classroom blocks, Block B consists of two pairs of classrooms. To the south, classrooms [179/222] and [178/223] are occupied by Years 5 and 6 respectively. To the north, [175] currently houses the ‘Buccaneers’ after-school club (Plates 13 & 14). Its south-west corner has been partitioned off with half-height walls to form a kitchen area. The northernmost classroom, [176], has been separated from [175], and has its own external entrance as a pre-school nursery. The west end of [176] has been partitioned off to provide storage [177] for the after-school club.

4.4 **Block C** (Fig. 9: Plates 2 & 15)

*Max. dimensions:* 26.6 × 14.8m (exc. corridor)

*Description:* Block C (Plates 2 & 15) is accessed from the hall by a glazed walkway [164], 12m in length, with external doors to east and west, terminating in a foyer [163], from which the classrooms are accessed. The layout of Block C is a mirror image of Block B, and therefore has not been illustrated separately. The four classrooms in Block C currently house (from west to east): music room, library, Year 3 and Year 4.

4.5 **Block D** (Figs 9 & 10: Plates 16-20)

*Max. dimensions:* 39.0 × 17.8m

*Description:* Block D was originally accessed from the north, though this entrance appears to be no longer in use. Two pairs of double doors led through a foyer [142] to an east-west corridor [141] running the length of the block. The rooms on the north side of the corridor, now a meeting room [105], stores [106] & [107] and a disabled toilet [110] were originally the infant head's office, storerooms and infant's medical room respectively. On the south side of the corridor are the infants' (KS1) assembly hall [103] and a pair of former classrooms, now the ICT suite [132/157] (Plate 16) and staff room [111] (Plate 17). The hall (Plates 18 & 19) measures 11.5 × 12.2m, with a ceiling height of 3.48m. It is accessed by steps down from the corridor. The floor is parquet, and the west and south walls are mostly glazed. From the west and south sides of the hall, covered walkways lead west [143] and south [144] to Blocks F and E respectively. At the west end of the corridor, two rooms house a 'den' [104] and store [102]. Room [104] was originally the infants' school staff room. At the east end of the corridor is the dining area [112] (Plate 20). Originally a long narrow room, 14.0 × 4.8m, this was extended to the south in 1966.

4.6 **Block E** (Figs 9 & 11: Plates 21-24)

*Max. dimensions:* 27.6 × 13.8m (exc. corridor)

*Description:* Block E is accessed from the infants' hall by a glazed walkway [144], 10m in length, with external doors to east and west, terminating in a foyer [145], from which the classrooms are accessed. The layout of Block E is similar to that of Blocks B and C, with two pairs of classrooms, but in this case all on a north-south alignment. The western pair of classrooms, [134] and [135] has been linked together by the removal of part of the partition wall, and is used for the reception class (Plates 21-24). The eastern pair, [133] and [134], remains largely unaltered, and houses the Year 1 and Year 2 classes.

4.8 **Block F** (Figs 9 & 11: Plates 25-30)

*Max. dimensions:* 15.4 × 12.4m (exc. corridor)

*Description:* Block F is located at the western end of the school, linked to the infants' hall by a glazed covered walkway [143], 10m in length, with external doors to the north and south. Although superficially similar in appearance to the other classroom blocks (Plates 25 & 26), Block F is brick-built, and its classrooms (Plates 27-29) are smaller, and of unequal sizes ([137] covers 83.6 sq. m, and [138] covers 77 sq. m.). Toilet provision comprises two stalls, each fitted with a high-level cistern and child-size WC (Plate 30), and a separate larger stall, presumably for supervised or

disabled children's use. The partition wall between the two classrooms has been partly removed, and the block currently houses the nursery class. Planning records show it was constructed in 1959.

4.9 **Block G** (Fig. 9: Plate 31)

*Max. dimensions:* 19.6 × 7.2m

*Description:* Located at the east end of the school, Block G is the survivor of two similar classroom blocks probably erected in 1959 (Fig. 6). Like the rest of the school, the block appears to be of timber construction, with a felted, pitched roof, horizontal planked walls, and large areas of glazing to east and west (Plate 31). Internally it is divided into three similar-sized sections. To the north and south are classrooms, each *c.*7.0m square: the central section comprises an entrance foyer and three store cupboards. The building is accessed from the west by double doors into each section: the central doors are approached by a concrete ramp.

The windows of this building were boarded up at the time of the survey, and it was in use as a store. It was not examined internally.



**Plate 1:** Block B, south-east corner from south-east



**Plate 2:** Block C, east elevation from east



**Plate 3:** Block E, east elevation from east



**Plate 4:** Block E, corridor (145), example of Y pillar, looking east



**Plate 5:** Block A, north-east corner from north-east



**Plate 6:** Block A, concourse (126) looking east



**Plate 7:** Block A, juniors' hall (127), looking north



**Plate 8:** Block A, juniors' hall (127), looking south-west



**Plate 9:** Block A, meeting room (125), looking south



**Plate 10:** Block A, kitchen (114), looking south



**Plate 11:** Block A, kitchen (114), looking east



**Plate 12:** Walkway (174) between Blocks A & B, looking east



**Plate 13:** Block B, Buccaneers' club (175), looking north



**Plate 14:** Block B, Buccaneers' club (175), looking west





**Plate 15:** Block C, south elevation from south



**Plate 16:** Block D, ICT/resources room (132/157) looking north



**Plate 17:** Block D, staff room (111) looking north



**Plate 18:** Block D, infants' hall (103) looking north-east



**Plate 19:** Block D, infants' hall (103) looking south-west



**Plate 20:** Block D, dining room (112) looking north-west



**Plate 21:** Block E, reception class (135/136) looking north-west



**Plate 22:** Block E, reception class (135) looking north



**Plate 23:** Block E, reception class (136) north end looking east



**Plate 24:** Block E, toilet (153), looking south



**Plate 25:** Block F, south-west corner from south-west



**Plate 26:** Block F and walkway, north elevation from north



**Plate 27:** Block F, Nursery (137/138) looking west



**Plate 28:** Block F, Nursery (138) looking north



**Plate 29:** Block F, Nursery cloakroom area (137) looking north-east



**Plate 30:** Block F, Nursery toilet (150) looking south



**Plate 31:** Block G, west elevation from south-west

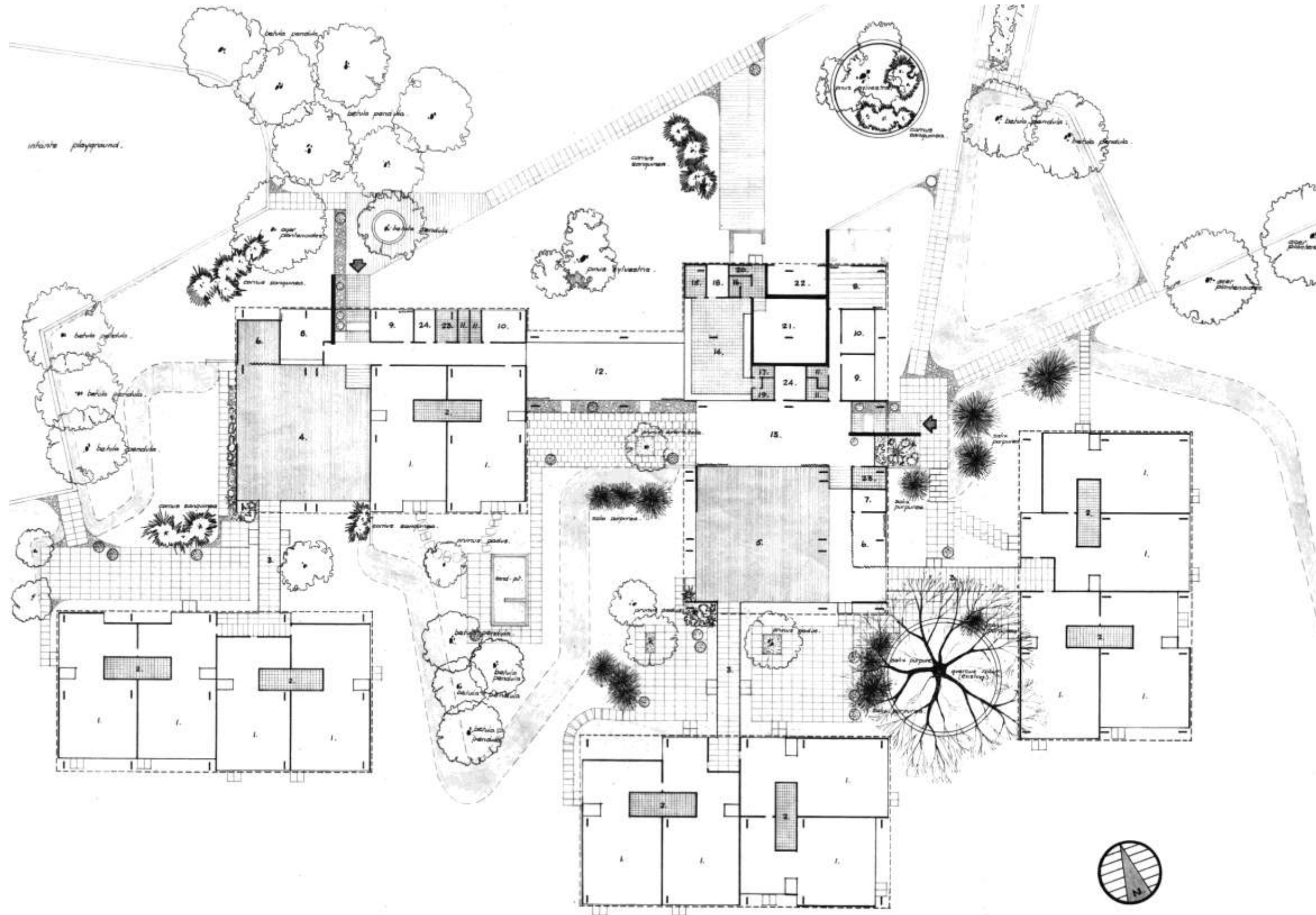
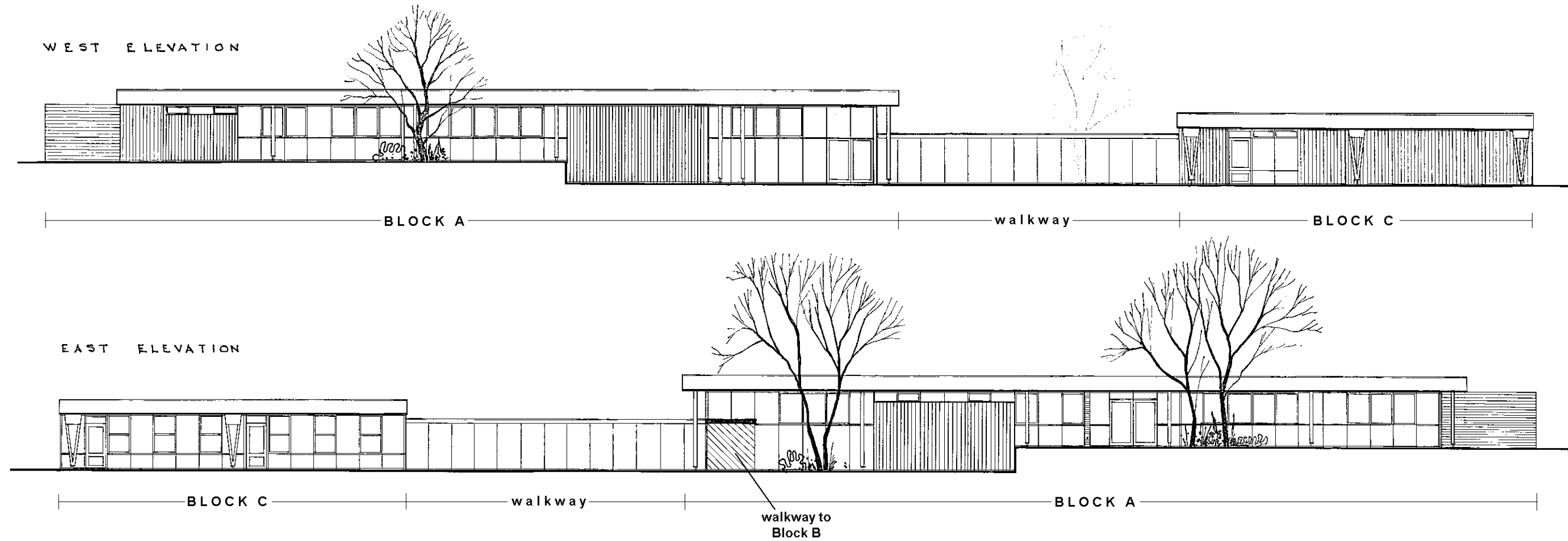


Figure 7: Original plan for school, dated March 1954 (reproduced half size: original scale  $1/16''$  to 1 foot)



**Figure 8:** Elevations for Blocks A and C, dated July 1951 (*reproduced half size: original scale 1/8" to 1 foot*)



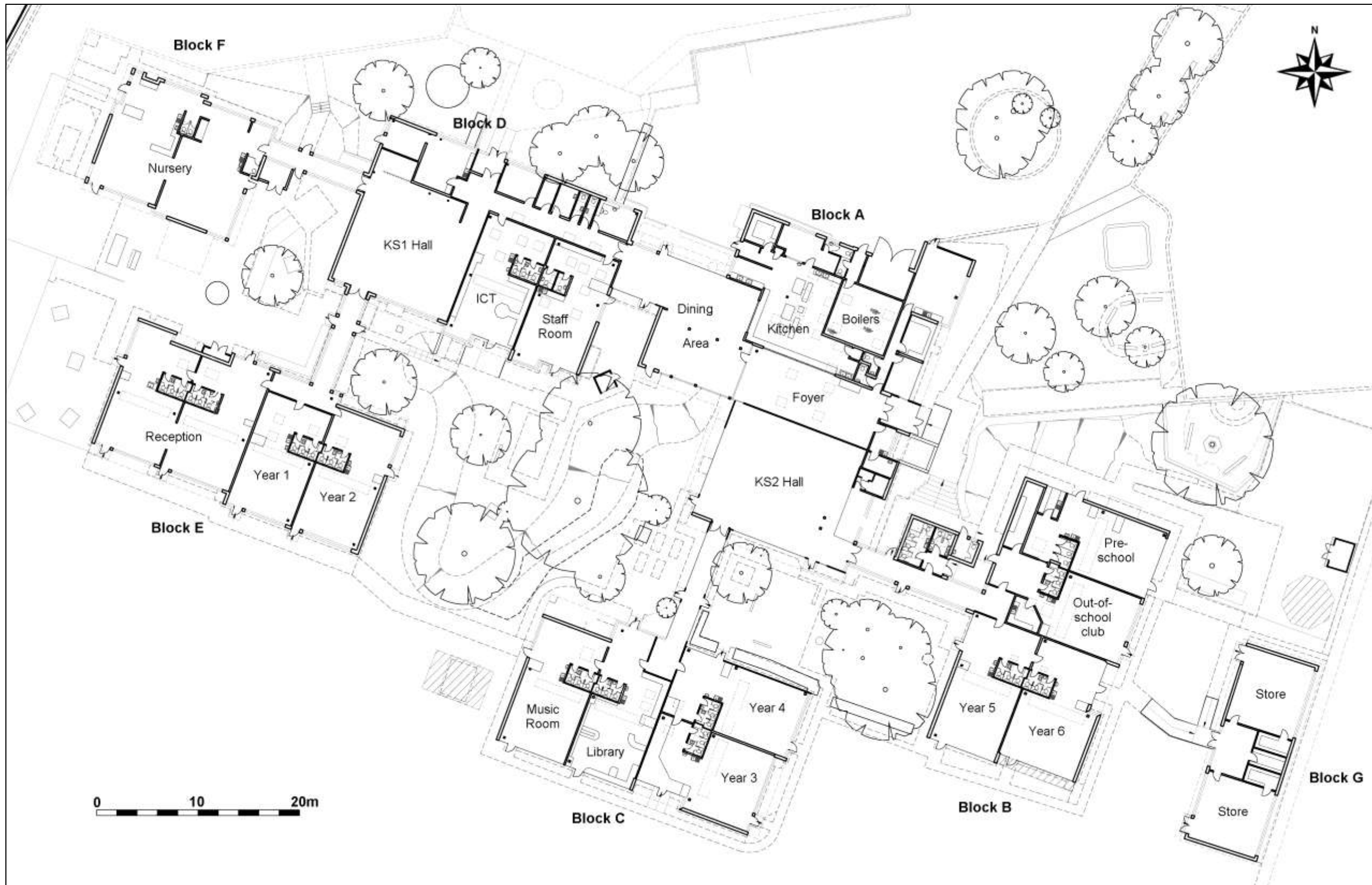


Figure 9: School floor plan, 2010, showing functions (scale 1:400)

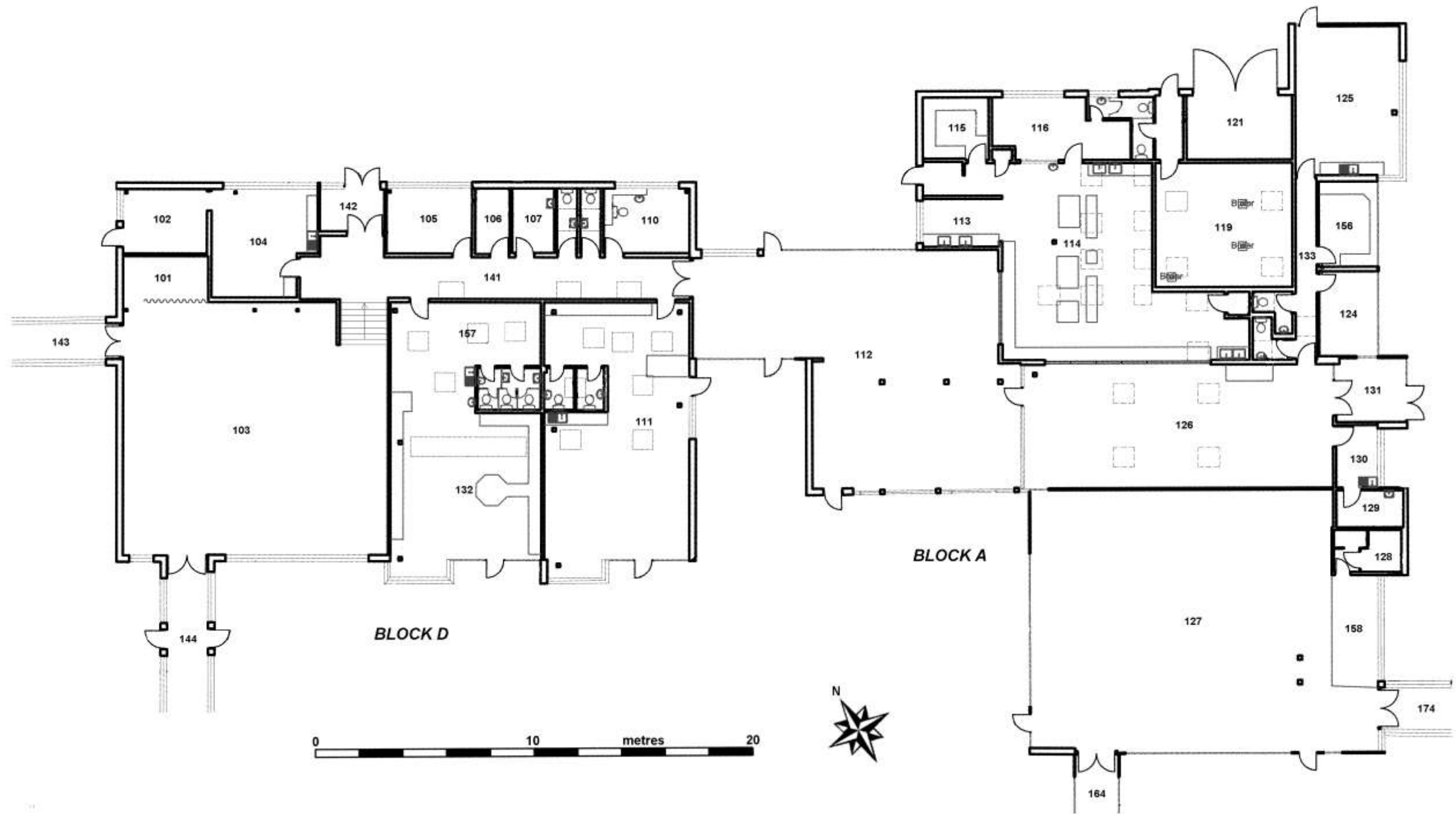


Figure 10: Floor plan, Blocks A & D (scale 1:200)

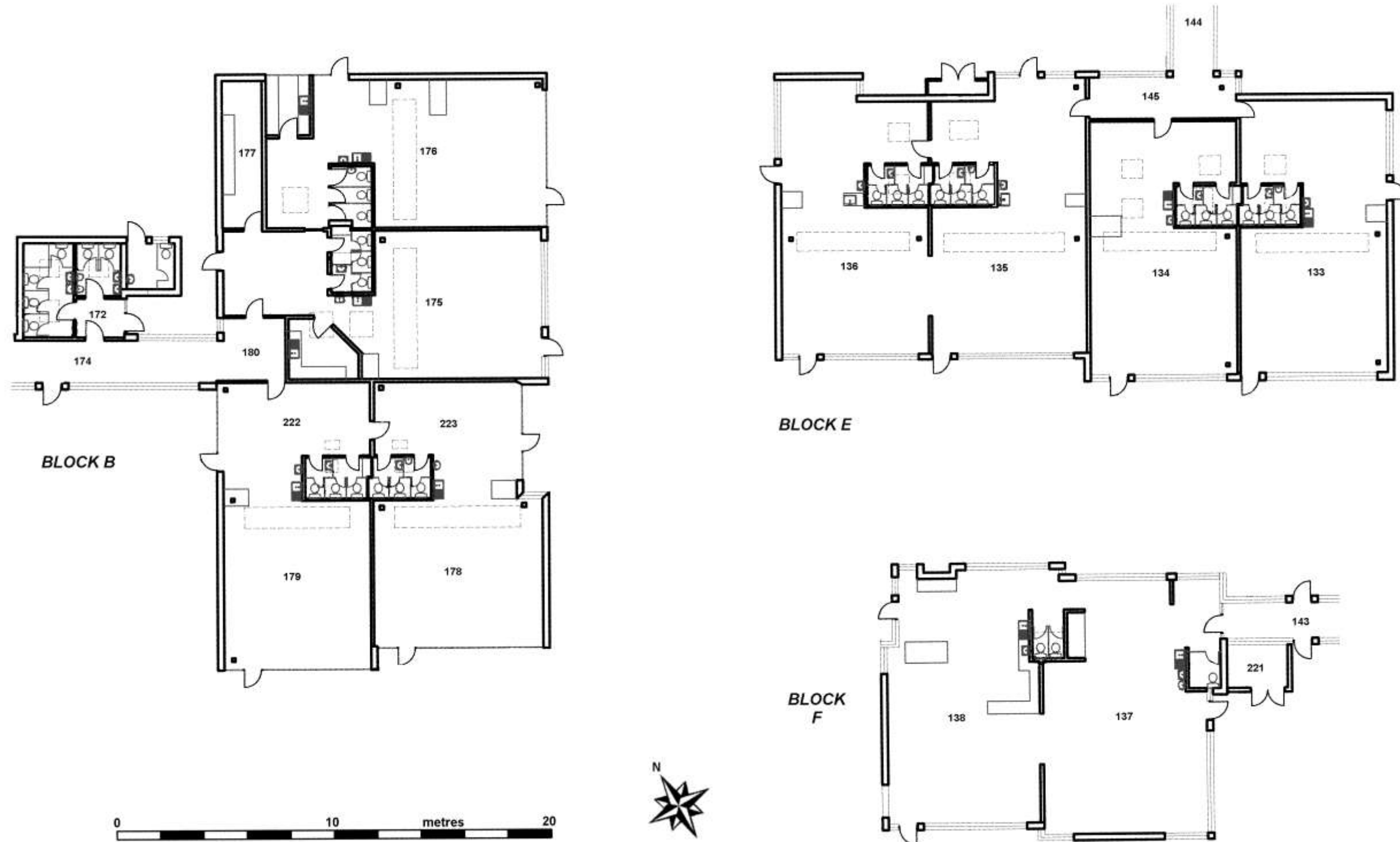


Figure 11: Floor plans, Blocks B, E & F (scale 1:200)

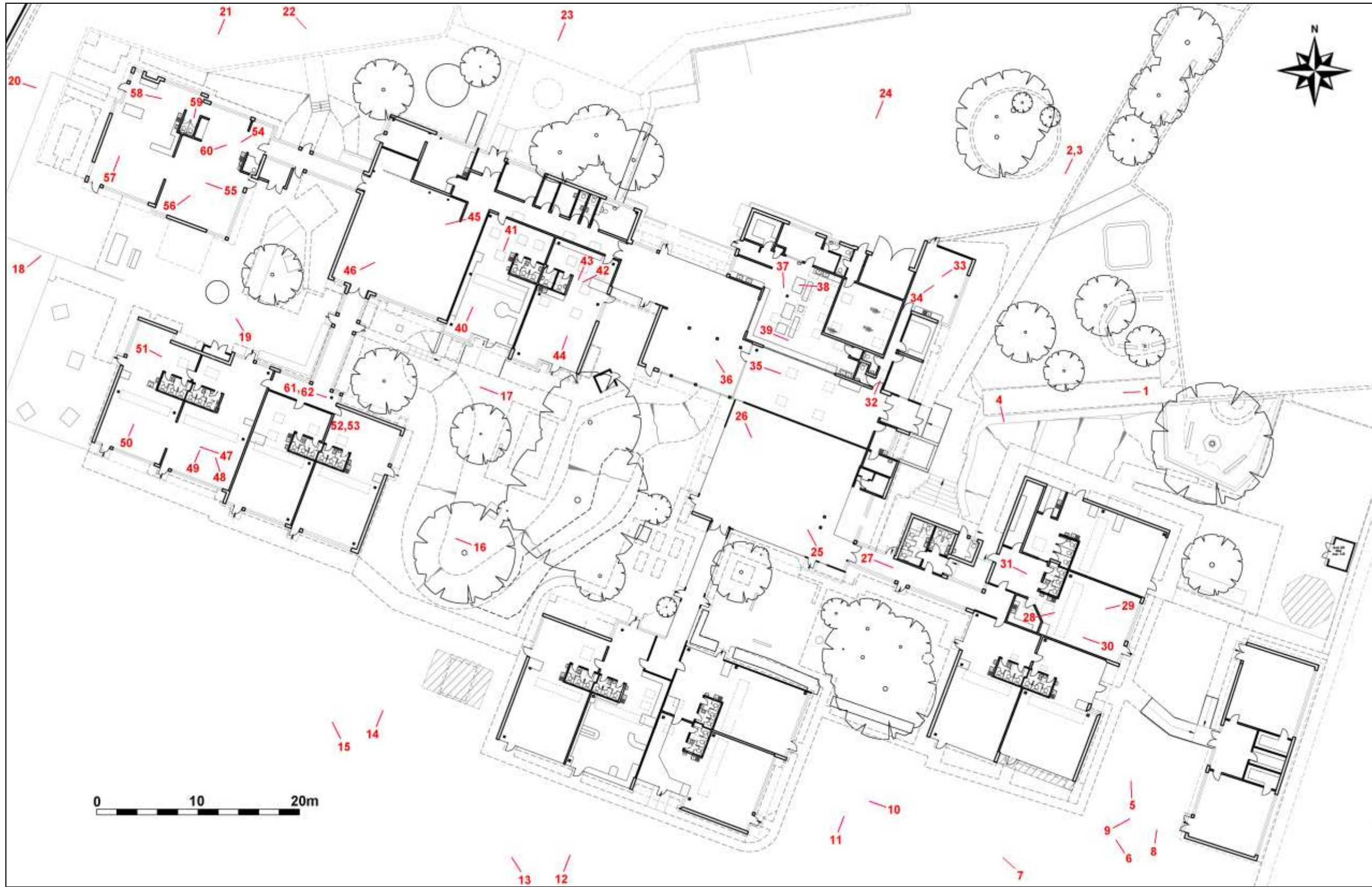


Figure 12: Photo location plan (scale 1:400)

## 5 Conclusions

- 5.1 Roebuck School opened in 1955, as a combined two-form entry eight-class junior and six-class infants' school. The school was designed by the Hertfordshire County Architect's department, as part of a major programme of junior school construction, following the 1944 Education Act. Like most other schools built as part of this programme, it was based upon a commercially available 'kit', in this case a timber frame made by Elliott & Sons (Reading) Ltd, clad with exterior grade plywood and western Red Cedar planking. Perhaps the most significant features of this design are the Y-shaped upright supports, used externally and internally.
- 5.2 The plan of the school is based upon a module of 3'4", one of several modular systems tried out in the design of Hertfordshire schools. Classroom sizes are standardised throughout the original building, which is built as a single-storey structure on two levels, linked by the two assembly halls.
- 5.3 Subsequent additions to the school, comprising a brick-built classroom block to the west, two timber-framed, gable-roofed classroom blocks to the east, and a brick-built toilet block east of the main hall, were all in place by 1965. Since that date there have been extensions to the dining area, built in 1966, and to the kitchen, built in 1975. Other changes have related mainly to changing trends in education over the last half-century, notably the provision of an ICT suite, music room and library, a nursery school and an after-school club.
- 5.4 Hertfordshire's post war school building programme has been described as "world class architecture with a uniquely British flavour" (Elwall 2000, 7). A recently published guide to the refurbishment of school buildings includes a case study of Hertfordshire schools. Seven are listed out of a post-war total of thirty-eight listings throughout the country (English Heritage 2010, 5). There is little doubt that the buildings produced by this programme, though in no way describable as elegant, provided an effective solution to the problem of providing large numbers of schools that fulfilled the requirements of contemporary educational practice, and influenced the construction of schools in many other parts of Britain.

## **6 Acknowledgements**

The project was commissioned by Hertfordshire County Council. The writer is grateful to Bob Chapman of Hertfordshire Properties for his assistance. The project was monitored by Andy Instone of the HCC Historic Environment Unit. Thanks are also due to staff at HALS for assistance with background research, and to the headmistress and site manager at Roebuck School for their information and assistance.

The project was managed for ASC by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA. Fieldwork was carried out by Bob Zeepvat and Karin Semmelmann MA MIFA. The report was prepared by Bob Zeepvat and edited by Karin Semmelmann.

## **7 Archive**

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Project Design
2. Report
3. Historical & Survey notes
4. Architect's survey drawings
5. List of photographs
6. B/W prints
7. B/W negatives
8. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with the Hertfordshire Archives & Local Studies Library.

## 8 References

### ***Standards & Specifications***

- ALGAO 2003 *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper **14**.
- EH 2006 *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice*. English Heritage (London).
- IFA 2000a Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*.
- IFA 2000b Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology*.
- IFA 2001 Institute for Archaeologists' *Standards & Guidance documents (Desk-Based Assessments, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings)*.
- Zeepvat B 2010 *Roebuck Primary School, St Margarets, Stevenage, Hertfordshire: Project Design for Archaeological Evaluation and Historic Building Recording*. ASC doc. ref. **1310/SRS/1**.

### ***Books and Historical Sources:***

- Aslin C.H. 1949 'Schools in Herts: Building Programme', *Architects' Journal*, 20<sup>th</sup> Oct 1949.
- Aslin C.H. 1957 'Schools at Stevenage', *The Municipal Journal*, May 10 1957, 1007-1013.
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- Elwall, R 2000 *Building a Better Tomorrow*. Wiley Academy (Chichester)
- English Heritage 2010 *Refurbishing Historic School Buildings* (London)
- Grant, J. & Hounsell, D. 2003 *Shephalbury Manor, Stevenage: An Archaeological Excavation Interim Site Narrative*. Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust Report **1241**.
- Maclure, S 1984 'Trumpet and Trowel', *Times Educational Supplement*, 28<sup>th</sup> Sept 1984, 23-24.
- Morris, J. 1976 *Domesday Book vol 12 Hertfordshire*. Phillimore (Chichester).
- Shane G 2010 *Archaeological Evaluation: Roebuck Primary School, St Margarets, Stevenage, Hertfordshire*. ASC report ref. **1310/SRS/2**.
- Soil Survey 1983 *The 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpenden).
- Saint, A 1990 *Not Buildings but a Method of Building ...the achievement of the post-war Hertfordshire School Building Programme*. Hertfordshire Publications.
- Thompson I 2002 *Stevenage: Extensive Urban Survey Project Assessment Report*. Herts County Council.

### ***Maps & Plans***

- 1924 Ordnance Survey 25" edition, sheet XX.4
- 1951 Roebuck School, elevations, July 1951. HCC archives, ref. E697:1850
- 1954 Roebuck School, floor plan & landscaping, March 1954. HCC archives, ref. E697
- 1965 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 edition, sheet TL 2422 + TL 2522
- 1975 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 edition, sheet TL 2422 + TL 2522
- 2010 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 Siteplan

## Appendix 1: List of Photographs

SITE NO/CODE: 1310/SRS			Site Name: Roebuck Primary School, St Margarets, Stevenage
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1	1/19	1	Block A, east elevation, main entrance from east
2	1/18	2	Block A, north-east corner from north-east
3	1/17	3	Block A, north-east corner from north-east (wider view)
4	1/16	4	Block B, north-west corner from north-west
5	1/15	5	Block B, east elevation from south-east
6	1/14	6	Block B, south-east corner from south-east
7	1/13	7	Blocks B & C, general view from south-east
8	1/12	8	Blocks B & G, general view from south
9	1/11	9	Block G, west elevation from south-west
10	1/10	10	Block C, east elevation from east
11	1/9	11	Gap between Blocks B & C, from south
12	1/8	12	Block C, south elevation from south
13	1/7	13	Blocks C & E, general view from south
14	1/6	14	Gap between Blocks C & E, from south
15	1/5	15	Block E, south elevation from south-east
16	1/4	16	Block E, east elevation from east
17	1/3	17	Courtyard area between Blocks D & E, looking west
18	1/2	18	Block F, south-west corner from south-west
19	1/1	19	Block F, south elevation from south-east
20	2/36	20	Block F, west elevation from west
21	2/35	21	Block F and link passage, north elevation from north
22	2/34	22	Block D, north-west corner from north-west
23	2/33	23	Block D, north elevation from north
24	2/32	24	Block A, north elevation from north
25	2/31	25	Block A, KS2 hall (127), looking north
26	2/30	26	Block A, KS2 hall (127), looking south-west
27	2/29	27	Corridor (174) between Blocks A & B, looking east
28	2/28	28	Block B, Buccaneers (175), looking north
29	2/27	29	Block B, Buccaneers (175), looking west
30	2/26	30	Block B, Buccaneers (175), west end, looking west
31	2/25	31	Block B, Buccaneers (175), west end, looking east
32	2/24	32	Block A, admin. corridor (133) looking north
33	2/23	33	Block A, meeting room (125), looking south
34	2/22	34	Block A, meeting room (125), looking north-east
35	2/21	35	Block A, concourse (126) looking east
36	2/20	36	Block D, dining room (112) looking north-west
37	2/19	37	Block A, kitchen (114), looking south
38	2/18	38	Block A, kitchen (114), looking south-west
39	2/17	39	Block A, kitchen (114), looking east
40	2/16	40	Block D, ICT/resources (132/157) looking north
41	2/15	41	Block D, ICT(132) looking south
42	2/14	42	Block D, staff room (111) looking south-west
43	2/13	43	Block D, staff room (111) looking south
44	2/12	44	Block D, staff room (111) looking north
45	2/11	45	Block D, KS1 hall (103) looking south-west
46	2/10	46	Block D, KS1 hall (103) looking north-east
47	2/9	47	Block E, reception class (135/136) looking west



48	2/8	48	Block E, reception class (135/136) looking north-west
49	2/7	49	Block E, reception class (135) looking north
50	2/6	50	Block E, reception class (136) looking north
51	2/5	51	Block E, reception class (136) north end looking east
52	2/4	52	Block E, Year 2 girls' toilet (153), looking south
53	2/3	53	Block F, Nursery (137) looking south-west
54	2/2	54	Block F, Nursery (137/138) looking west
55	2/1	55	Block F, Nursery (137) looking north-east
56	--	56	Block F, Nursery (138) looking north
57	3/36	57	Block F, Nursery (137/138) north end, looking east
58	3/35	58	Block F, Nursery toilet (150) looking south
59	3/34	59	Block F, Nursery (137/138) looking west
60	3/33	60	Block F, Nursery cloakroom area (137) looking north-east
61	3/32	61	Block E, corridor (145), example of Y pillar, looking east
62	--	62	Block E, corridor (145), example of Y pillar, looking east

A CDROM containing copies of all the digital photos listed above is included in the back cover of this report



**Shot 1**



**Shot 2**



**Shot 3**



**Shot 4**



**Shot 5**



**Shot 6**



**Shot 7**



**Shot 8**



**Shot 9**



**Shot 10**



**Shot 11**



**Shot 12**



**Shot 13**



**Shot 14**



**Shot 15**



**Shot 16**



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**Shot 52**



**Shot 53**



**Shot 54**



**Shot 55**



**Shot 56**



**Shot 57**



**Shot 58**



**Shot 59**



**Shot 60**



**Shot 61**



**Shot 62**

## Appendix 2: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	Roebuck Primary School	OASIS reference:	archaeol2-79185
Short Description:	<p>In June 2010 an historic building survey was undertaken of Roebuck Primary School, St Margarets, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, prior to its replacement by a new school building. The school was opened in 1955 to serve the Broadwater neighbourhood of Stevenage New Town. The building was designed by the architect's department of Hertfordshire County Council, as part of a wider programme of school building in the post-war decade. This programme has been recognised for its innovation, in developing standardised systems of construction using steel and timber framing, coupled with new ideas regarding the layout of school buildings.</p> <p>Roebuck School was opened in 1955 as a combined two form-entry eight-class junior and six-class infants' school. Its flat-roofed single-storey structure, built on several levels, is timber-framed and clad with characteristic Y-shaped upright supports, and was based on a commercially available industrial building system. Later additions, comprising a brick-built classroom block to the west, two timber-framed, gable-roofed classroom blocks to the east, and a brick-built toilet block east of the main hall, were in place by 1965. The only major addition since that date has been extensions to the dining area, built in 1966, and to the kitchen, built in 1975. Other changes have related mainly to changing trends in education over the last half-century, notably the provision of an ICT suite, music room and library, a nursery school and an after-school club.</p>		
Project Type:	Historic Building Recording		
Previous work:	none	Site status:	none
Current land use:	School & grounds	Future work:	no
Monument type:	School	Monument period:	Modern
Significant finds:	none		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Hertfordshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	TL 2466 2252
Site address:	Roebuck Primary School, St Margarets, Stevenage, Herts SG2 8RF		
Study area: (sq. m./ha)	n/a	Height OD: (metres)	n/a
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	A Instone (HCC)	Project design originator:	B Zeepvat (ASC)
Project Manager:	B Zeepvat (ASC)	Director/Supervisor:	K Semmelmann (ASC)
Sponsor / funding body:	Hertfordshire County Council		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	2 <sup>nd</sup> June 2010	End date:	2 <sup>nd</sup> June 2010
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	Hertfordshire Archives & Local Studies Library	none	
Paper:		Project design, report, site records, plans, photos	
Digital:		CD with all digital files	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Roebuck Primary School, St Margarets, Stevenage, Hertfordshire: Historic Building Recording		
Serial title & volume:	ASC Ltd Report ref. 1310/SRS/3		
Author(s):	Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA		
Page nos	46	Date:	13 <sup>th</sup> July 2010