

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING:
VICTORIA WORKS & LEYTON HALL
AMENBURY LANE
HARPENDEN
HERTFORDSHIRE**

NGR: TL 1339 1415

for the MacMillan Scott Practice, on behalf of Mr Pearse



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October 2010

ASC: 1344/HAL/2



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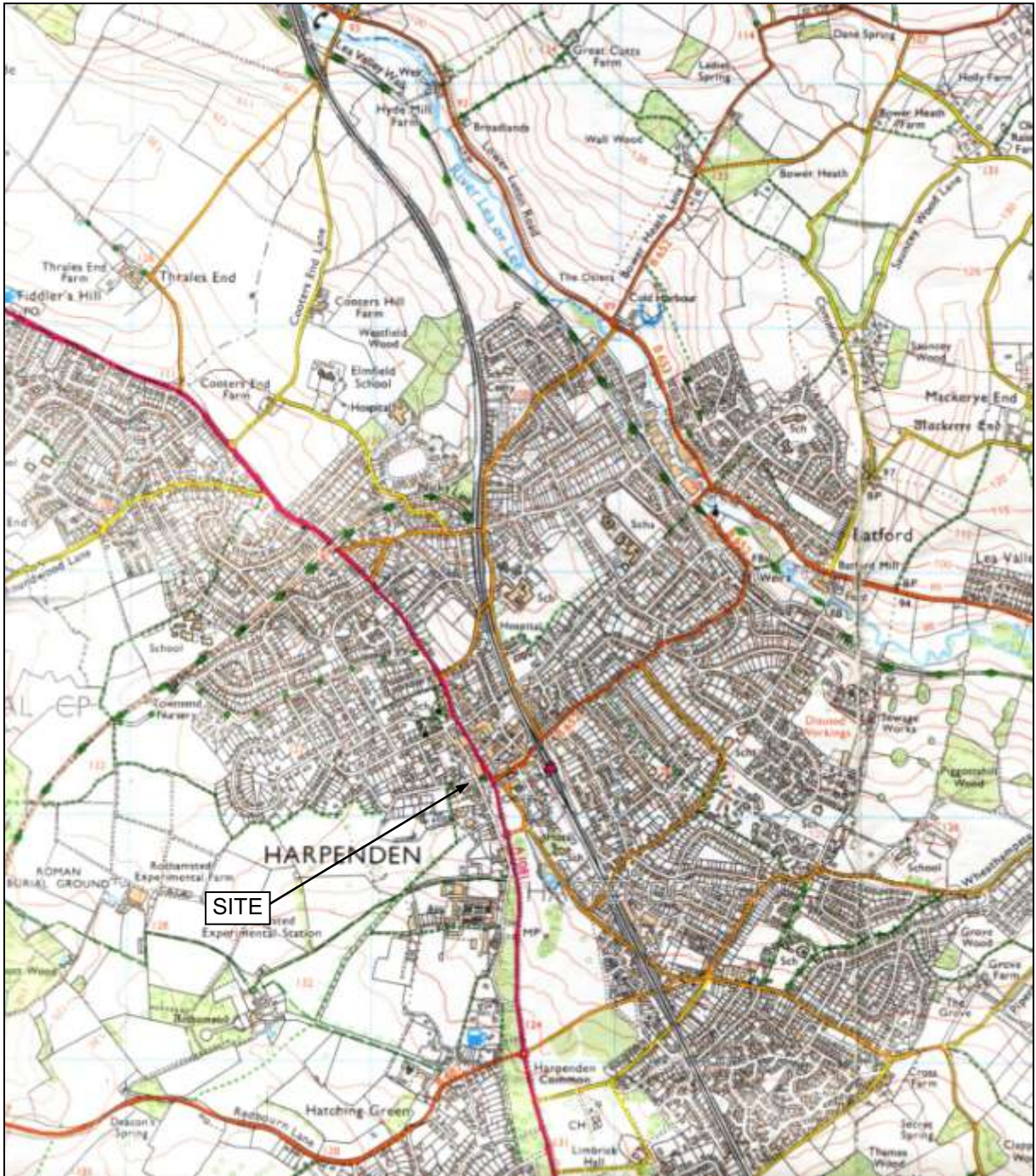


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

In September 2010 a programme of historic building recording was carried out on Victoria Works and Leyton Hall, Amenbury Lane, Harpenden, prior to refurbishment and conversion to a restaurant and function room respectively.

The Victoria Works was constructed as the White Palace cinema in 1913. In 1934 it became either a knitted goods factory or a garage/workshop: information is conflicting on this point. More recently, the building was occupied by Hunton Bridge Engineering. The building is constructed of brick, under a slate roof carried on riveted iron trusses. The main entrance was to the north, with exit doors to the former passage to the west. The auditorium occupies much of the interior. At the south end, a small balcony is reached by stairs from the auditorium: above and to the west is the projection room, which has a fireproof concrete floor and ceiling, and a steel entrance door.

Leyton Hall was built in 1934, and has seen use as a dancing school and auction rooms. In 1950 it was converted for light industrial use. The building is of brick construction, with internal piers supporting trusses similar to those in Victoria Works, but with a roof of moulded asbestos sheeting. Internally a central foyer on the north side, flanked by cloakrooms, leads to the central hall, which is overlooked to the north and south by balconies. Each balcony has a stairway from the hall, and a fire escape ladder to one of the rooms beneath. To the rear is a modern single-storey extension.

Permission for the construction of the single-storey link building was granted in 1956. It comprises three rooms beneath a flat roof, with toilets extending to the rear of Victoria Works.

1 Introduction

1.1 In September 2010 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out historic building recording of Victoria Works and Leyton Hall, Amenbury Lane, Harpenden, Hertfordshire. The project was commissioned by *The MacMillan Scott Practice* on behalf of their client, *Mr Pearse*, and was carried at the request of the *St Albans District Council Archaeological Officer*, to a project design prepared by ASC (Rouse 2010). The relevant planning application reference is 5/09/2520.

1.2 *Planning Background*

This building recording project has been required under the terms of *Planning Policy Statement 5* (PPS5), as a condition of planning permission 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 by Karin Semmelmann BA MA MIFA, and was carried out under the overall direction of Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA.

1.5 ***The Site***

1.5.1 *Location & Description*

The development site is located in the administrative district of St Albans, on the south western side of the town, at NGR TL 1339 1415 (Fig. 1).

The development site is roughly square, and is accessed from Amenbury Lane, which forms the site's northernmost boundary. There is additional access via an alleyway leading from Leyton Road. The site is bounded by both residential and commercial premises, with a car park to the south west (Fig. 2).

The site comprises three structures. To the east is Victoria Works, a two-storey brick-built structure under a slate roof, and to the west is Leyton Hall, a two-storey brick-built structure under a slate roof. Between them is a single-storey, flat-roofed link building. Both buildings are currently classified as B1 (light industrial) use. Victoria Works was last used as a furniture store, and Leyton Hall as electrical showrooms, both unlicensed.

1.5.2 *Proposed Development*

The proposed development comprises the conversion of Victoria Works and the link building into a restaurant, and conversion of Leyton Hall to Class D2 (assembly and leisure) use.

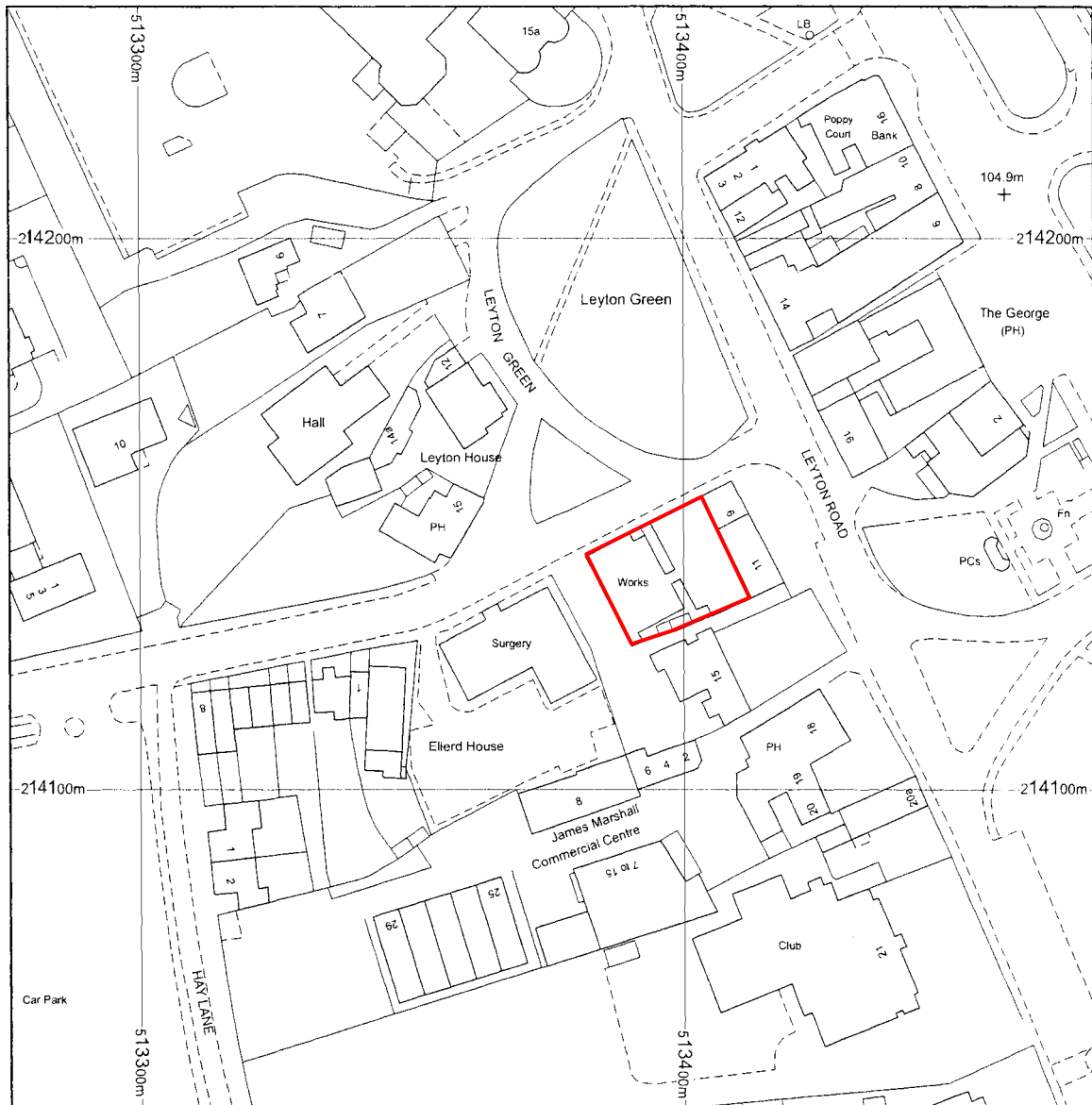


Figure 2: Site location (scale 1:1250)

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 detailed record of the structure concerned, prior to refurbishment, conversion or demolition
- To ascertain the structural history and development of the building, within its local context
- To provide sufficient information on the historic and architectural significance of the building to inform proposals relating to its refurbishment / 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:

- A programme of historic building recording to English Heritage Level 3 (EH 2006).

2.4 *Constraints*

By the time on-site works commenced, the interior of Victoria Works had been stripped of the partitioning, suspended floors etc, relating to the building's last (unlicensed) use as a furniture store. One wall and an area of concrete floor in the link building had also been removed. The 'cellar' room (G1), which actually lies beneath an adjoining property, was not examined in the survey. The internal roof cladding of Leyton Hall had been stripped out, revealing details of the roof construction.

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, and ASC's reference collection.

3.2 *Medieval* (1066-1500)

The earliest reference to Harpenden (*Herpedene*) appears in an 11th-century charter, recording a bequest by Edward the Confessor of land in the Wheathampstead area to Westminster Abbey (West 2004, 5.1). The place name comprises two elements, *herepæð*, which probably refers to the St Albans to Luton road, and *den*, which probably refers to the dry valley in which the town is located (*ibid.*). The Old English derivation of the name suggests there was possibly settlement in the area by the late Saxon period.

St Nicholas' Church, now the parish church of Harpenden, was a chapel of ease from c.1217 until c.1470, when it was enlarged and the tower was added. Harpenden originally fell within the ecclesiastical parish of Wheathampstead, though from the medieval period it was a separate civil parish, its officials being elected annually (*ibid.*).

The settlement at Harpenden appears to have developed during the medieval and later periods as a convenient market centre on a main road. Streets were formed by rows of buildings along the sides of the common. As the central area became more built up, Church Green and Leyton Green were separated from Harpenden Green, as The Common was called, and the High Street and Leyton Road became separated (WEA 1991).

3.3 *Post-Medieval* (1500-1900)

During the medieval and post-medieval periods, agriculture was the main occupation in the Harpenden area, as the soils are particularly good for growing wheat. The abundant supply of strong straw produced as a by-product encouraged the growth of a local straw-plaiting industry in the 18th and 19th centuries (West 2004, 6.8). From the late medieval period onwards the production of bricks and pottery was carried out in the Harpenden area, using local clays, not always obtained legitimately. Potters and brick-makers were frequently presented before the courts for taking clay from Harpenden Common (*ibid.*, 6.6).

During the early post-medieval period Harpenden prospered, increasing significantly in population (Thompson 2002, 13) by around 60% between 1563 and 1603. This growth continued, albeit at a slower rate, between the 17th and 19th centuries. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the earliest surviving buildings in Harpenden are dated to the 15th and 16th centuries. Prominent among these is Bowers House, a large 16th-century timber framed house behind the High Street frontage. By the mid 17th century, the carrier service from Harpenden to London was already considerable (*ibid.*). Although the highway from Bedford and Luton to St Albans was never a major long-distance coach route it became a turnpike in 1743, and one of Harpenden's functions was to serve travellers using it.

3.4 *Modern* (1900-present)

Harpenden continued to flourish into the 19th century. The 1840 tithe award lists a range of trades typical of a small but prosperous country town (beer shops and inns, two breweries, blacksmiths, a wheelwright, brickyards, a butcher, baker and chemist). In the 1860s a hat factory was operating in Heathfield Lodge, close to the north end of the Common (Thompson 2002, 24), using locally produced straw plait. A number of nonconformist chapels were established in the town in the late 18th and 19th centuries (*ibid.*).

The main impetus to development during the Victorian period came in 1859, when Harpenden at last became a parish in its own right. The following year the Hatfield, Luton & Dunstable Railway was opened along the Lea Valley with a station to the east of Harpenden, and in 1868 the Midland Railway main line from St Pancras to Luton opened, with a station in Harpenden itself.

The building known as Victoria Works was constructed in 1913 as the *White Palace* cinema, the first of three cinemas in Harpenden (Brandreth 1997, 56). At the opening, the audience was shown several silent films including 'The Parting of the Ways', which showed the rescue of a girl from a burning lighthouse by aeroplane (Brandreth 1983, 52). The pianist at the time was a young lady called Ursula Bloom, who later became a famous novelist (*ibid.*). In 1934 permission was granted for use of the building as a garage/workshop (pers. comm. D Hume): Brandreth (*ibid.*) states that it was used by a knitted goods manufacturer. More recently, the building was occupied by Hunton Bridge Engineering.

Leyton Hall was built in 1934, and has seen use as a dancing school and auction rooms until permission for change of use for light industrial purposes was granted in 1950 (Plate 1). Permission for construction of the link building was granted in 1956 (pers. comm. D Hume).

3.5 *Cartographic Evidence*

The earliest map to show Harpenden in any detail is Dury and Andrews' map of Hertfordshire of 1766 (Fig. 3). This shows a building on the corner of Leyton Road and Leyton Green (Amenbury Lane is not shown). Subsequent maps, notably the 1840 Tithe map of Harpenden (Fig. 4) and the First Edition Ordnance Survey 25" sheet of 1879 (Fig. 5), show ranges of farm buildings on the north, east and west sides of the site, with the farmhouse, named *Yewtree Farm* on the latter map, to the immediate south. By 1898 (Fig. 6) the north range of farm buildings had been demolished. The west range appeared unchanged, and the south part of the east range is shown as three similar-sized units.

Following the construction of the *White Palace* cinema in 1913, the building is first shown on the Ordnance Survey 25" sheet of 1924 (Fig. 7). All the elements of the present building are shown, with a narrow alley to the west between the cinema and the adjoining buildings on the site of Leyton Hall. The east side of the building is straight, indicating that its north-east corner, which now forms part of 9 Leyton Road, was presumably separated off after the latter was built. Two of the divisions to the earlier east range of farm buildings are shown within the cinema: it seems likely that this is a cartographic error.



Plate 1: Interior of Hunton Bridge Engineering (Leyton Hall), prob. 1960s



Figure 3: Extract from Dury & Andrews' map of Hertfordshire, 1766



Figure 4: Extract from Harpenden Tithe Map, c.1840

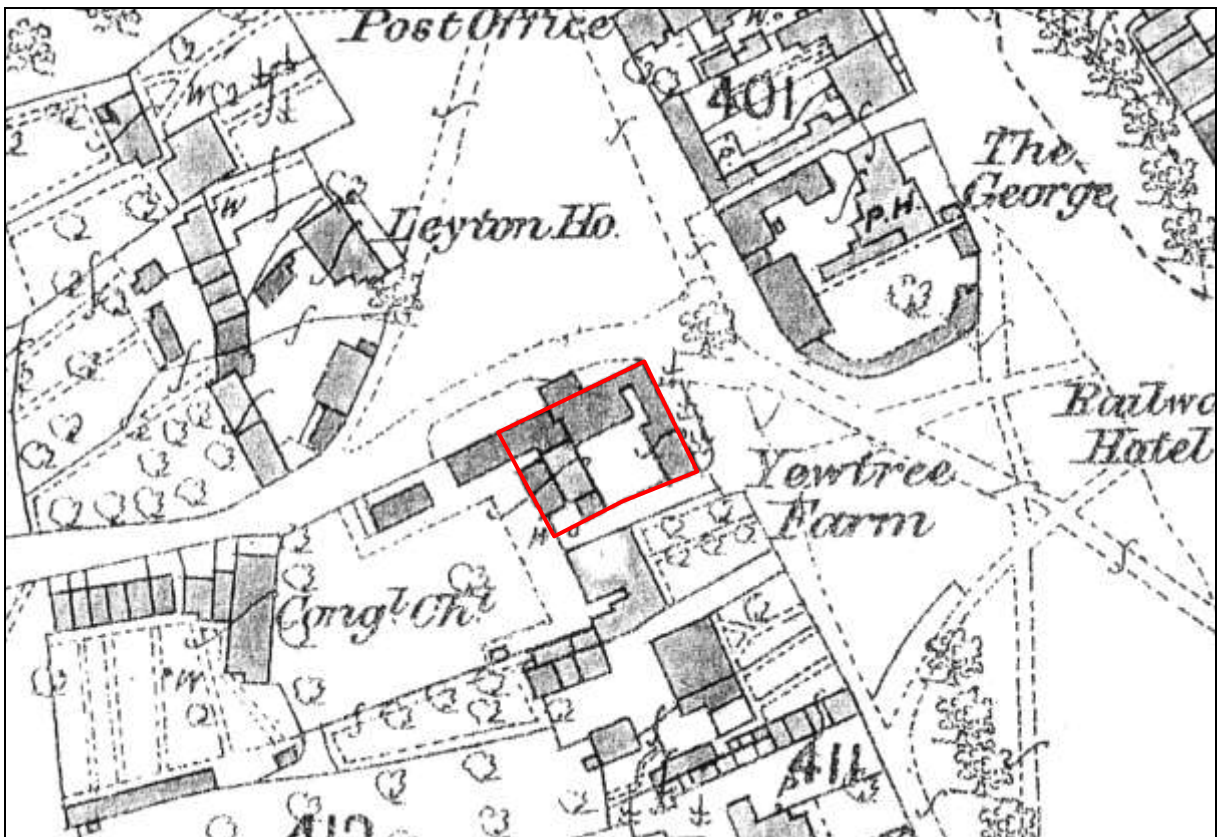


Figure 5: Extract from Ordnance Survey First Edition 25" sheet, 1879



Figure 6: Extract from Ordnance Survey Second Edition 25" sheet, 1898

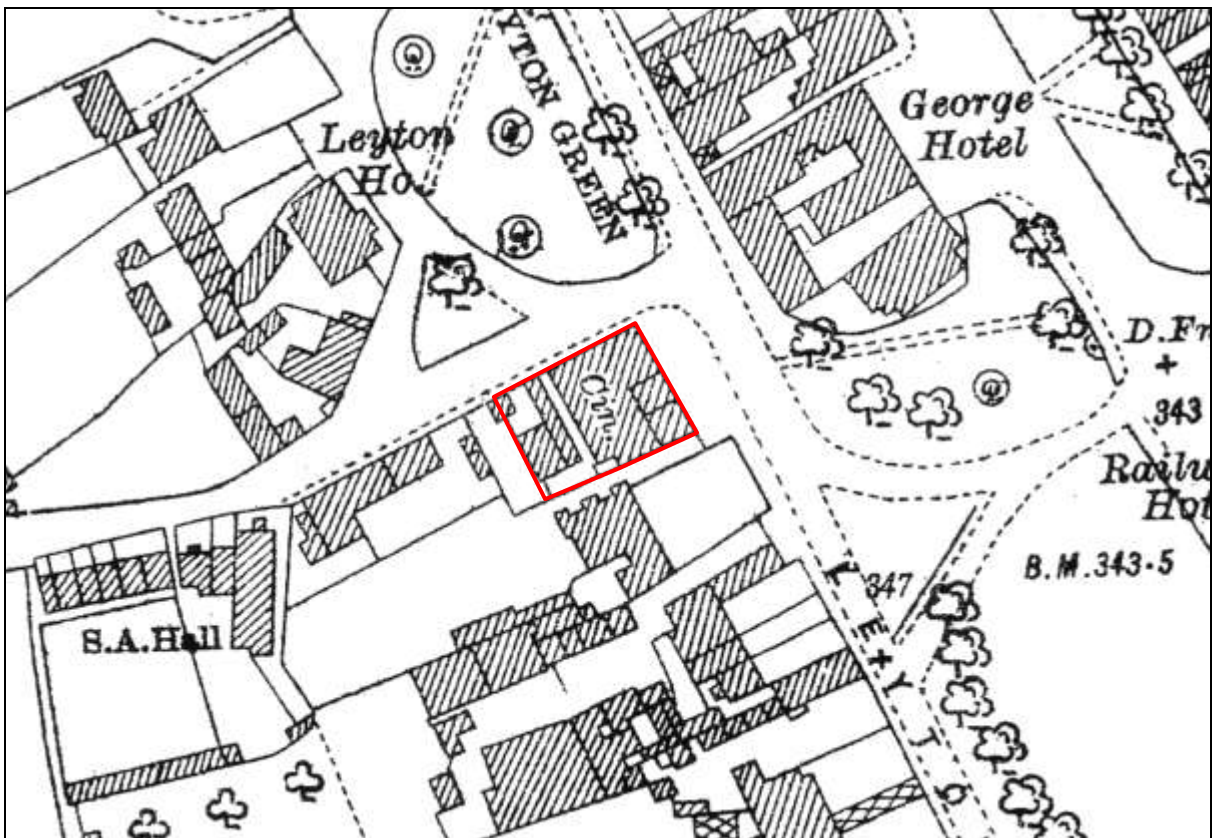


Figure 7: Extract from Ordnance Survey 25" sheet, 1924

4 Description

4.1 *Victoria Works*

Victoria Works forms the easternmost part of the surveyed complex. It is a brick-built structure under a slate roof, covering an area of $11.2 \times 20.8\text{m}$ max, and standing to heights of *c.*5.0m (eaves) and *c.*7.6m (ridge). The walls are constructed of stock bricks, laid in English bond in cement mortar. Victoria Works consists of two parts: the main building, essentially a large single enclosed space under a ridged slate roof, and a much smaller section at the south end, comprising two stories beneath a flat roof. The east elevation, originally open to Leyton Road, is now hidden by (shared with?) 9 & 11 Leyton Road. To the west, the lower part of the building is obscured by the single-storey Link Building. The main access to Victoria Works is from Amenbury Lane to the north. It also has connections to the Link Building, but there are no external doors to the alleyway to the south. Part of 9 Leyton Road now extends into the original envelope of Victoria Works at its north-east corner, while Victoria Works has access to a cellar area (G5) beneath 11 Leyton Road.

North Elevation (Fig. 8, Plate 2)

The north elevation, which originally formed the frontage of the *White Palace* cinema, is rendered and painted white, above a black rendered plinth. Relief detailing in reddish-brown rustic brick comprises quoins and two full-height piers, with two semicircular arches between the piers, and curved bonded arches between quoins and piers. Beneath the easternmost bonded arch is the present inset front entrance, with double doors. Beneath the westernmost arch is a small 2-light window, within that part of the building now belonging to 9 Leyton Road. It is possible that there was originally a second entrance here. Internally, it is apparent that there was originally a large *oueil-de-beouf* window which has long been bricked up, within the gable end. There are two air bricks above this former window, and a light fitting below.

South Elevation (Fig. 8, Plates 3, 4)

The south elevation is rendered and painted white, above a black brick plinth. The elevation is pierced by five modern single-pane windows, four at differing heights at ground-floor level (G2, G3, G4, G9) and one at first-floor level (F2). There is a second window aperture, now blocked, to F1.

West Elevation (Fig. 9)

The upper part of the west elevation, above the Link Building, is rendered and painted white. It is pierced by three 50-light metal-framed windows, all of which extend below the roof of the Link Building. The lower part of this elevation is pierced by three doors, each flanked by triangular-section piers.

Ground Floor (Fig. 10)

Room G1 (Plates 5-9)

Size: $17.5 \times 10.3\text{m}$, height (max) 7.3m

Location: Interior of main part of building.

Description: This large room was evidently the auditorium of the *White Palace* cinema. Its floor appears to have been concrete (there were abundant traces of more recent suspended timber floors, presumably associated with the building's final use for

furniture retail), and its walls of brick, plastered and painted. The room is lit by a rooflight to the east, and three windows to the west. The main entrance is through double doors to Amenbury Lane to the north, and there are three doors (presumably originally exits) to the Link Building (formerly a lane) to the west. In the south-east corner, concrete steps rise to a narrow door leading to the steps to the balcony (F1) and projection room (F2). A second set of concrete steps rises to a door in the south wall, leading to rooms G2-G5.

On the walls of G1 there is evidence of the building's use as an engineering works, in the form of the remains of electrical conduits, and debris left by grinders and other equipment. Set into the south-facing wall of the projection in the north-east corner are two cast iron shaft bearing mountings, one c.0.1m above the floor, and one at a height of 2.1m. Brackets in line with the higher mounting on the adjoining wall possibly supported a shaft extending along the wall. Other fixtures include wall-mounted radiators.

Room G2

Size: 2.4 × 1.9m, height 3.05m

Location: South of G1, east of G3, west of G4, below F1

Description: This small room is entered up a flight of concrete steps from G1. It has a concrete floor (c.0.6m above that of G1) and ceiling, plastered and painted walls, a window to the south and doors to the west (G3) and east (G4). In the north-west corner is a modern sink and water heater.

Room G3

Size: 1.8 × 2.0m, height 3.06m

Location: South of G1, west of G2, east of G9

Description: Toilet. It has a concrete floor and ceiling, plastered and painted walls, a window to the south and a door to the east (G2). Modern WC to the west.

Room G4

Size: 2.35 × 1.6m, height 3.06m

Location: South of G1, east of G2, west of Gs

Description: This small room is entered from G2 to the west. It has a concrete floor and ceiling, plastered and painted walls, a window to the south and a small window to G1, to the north. To the east, concrete steps lead downward to G5.

Room G5

Size: 3.85 × 2.35m, height 2.14m

Location: East of G4: beneath 11 Leyton Road

Description: This room, effectively a cellar beneath 11 Leyton Road, was not examined in detail. It has a concrete floor, 2.18m below that of G1, and brick walls.

First Floor (Fig. 11)

Room F1 (Plates 10, 11)

Size: 3.2 × 2.5m, height 3.32m

Location: Above G4, east of F2.

Description: F1 is accessed by a flight of stairs from the south-east corner of G1. Its timber floor is 2.57m above that of G1. The walls are all plastered and painted. On the south side of the room is a blocked window: to the north, the room opens out onto

a curved balcony, extending into G1. In the south-west corner, wooden stairs lead up to F2.

Room F2 (Plates 12, 13)

Size: 5.5 × 2.2-1.6m, height 2.14m

Location: Above G2/G3/G9: west of F1

Description: This was originally the projection room of the *White Palace* cinema. The floor and ceiling are concrete, the walls are brick. The door from F1 is of riveted iron construction, set in an iron frame. An external window faces south, and an internal wooden casement to G1 to the north. The west end of the room is partitioned off to form a store cupboard, with a window facing west.

Roof (Plate 14)

The main roof of Victoria Works is carried on five riveted angle-iron trusses with braces in a 'W' pattern, and is clad with slates, laid over boards. Set in the east side of the roof is a 15-light patent skylight, extending almost the full length of the building. On the ridge are two louvred ventilator boxes, and a modern metal flue rises through the north end of the roof. At the south end of the building, the flat roof over F1 & F2 is felted.



Plate 2: Victoria Works, north elevation



Plate 3: Victoria Works, south elevation from west



Plate 4: Victoria Works, south elevation from east



Plate 5: Victoria Works, G1 looking north



Plate 6: Victoria Works, G1 looking south



Plate 7: Victoria Works, G1 looking north-west



Plate 8: Victoria Works, G1, detail of bearing mounts in east wall



Plate 9: Victoria Works, G1, balcony and openings in south wall



Plate 10: Victoria Works, F1, looking north



Plate 11: Victoria Works, F1 and stairwell



Plate 12: Victoria Works, F2 looking west



Plate 13: Victoria Works, F2 looking east



Plate 14: Victoria Works, roof structure

4.2 ***Link Building***

As its name suggests, the Link Building spans the gap between Victoria Works and Leyton Hall, formerly a lane separating the two buildings (Fig. 7). It measures *c.*19m in length, 4m in width and *c.*3m in height. Its main structural elements comprise the north wall between the two adjoining buildings, an extension to an existing boundary wall to the south, and its flat roof. Internally, the Link Building is divided into three rooms, the southernmost (G8) extending eastwards to the rear of Victoria Works.

North Elevation (Fig. 8, Plate 15)

The north elevation is constructed of dark red stock bricks, laid in Stretcher bond, with a doorway and window beneath row-lock arches, and concrete capping.

South Elevation (Fig. 8, Plate 3)

The lower part of this elevation is a rendered and painted brick wall *c.*1.8m high, beneath tile capping. When the Link Building was constructed this wall was raised in height by *c.*0.8m by the addition of courses of stock brick, laid in Stretcher bond. At the west end of this wall is a door, leading to G8.

Ground Floor (Fig. 10)

Room G6 (Plate 16)

Size: 8.5 × 3.7m, height 2.75m

Location: Between G1 & G13: north of G7

Description: The northernmost room in the Link Building, G6 has a concrete floor and unpainted brick walls. In the east wall is one of the exit doors from Victoria Works, and to the south is a doorway with a step rising to the slightly higher floor in G7.

Room G7 (Plate 17)

Size: 6.3 × 3.7m, height 2.70m

Location: Between G1 & G13: south of G6, north of G8

Description: The middle room in the Link Building, G7 has a concrete floor (recently removed) and unpainted brick walls. Along the west side of the room, the east wall of Leyton Hall has been reinforced by a structure of stock bricks, c.0.5m high, built along its length. In the east wall is one of the exit doors from Victoria Works, and to the west is a door to Leyton Hall, its sill at the same level as the reinforcement (the level of the floor in Leyton Hall). To the south, the single-skin brick wall that separated G7 and G8 had been demolished prior to the survey.

Room G8 (Plates 17, 18)

Size: 6.3 × 3.4m (max), height 2.60m

Location: Between G1 & G17: south of G7, west of G9

Description: The southernmost room in the Link Building, G8 has a concrete floor and unpainted brick walls. In the east wall is one of the exit doors from Victoria Works, and to the south is an external door. This room extends to the east as a narrow corridor, south of Victoria Works, leading to G9. As noted above in the general introduction to the Link Building, the south wall of G8 is a boundary wall that was raised in height when the Link Building was constructed.

Room G9

Size: 1.85 × 1.75m (max), height 2.60m

Location: South of G1, east of G8, west of G3

Description: Although structurally G9 forms part of Victoria Works, it is accessed from the Link Building, hence its inclusion here. This small room is a WC, with a window to the south and a door to G8 to the west.

Roof

The roof of the Link Building is flat, stepped up between G6 and G7. Details of its construction were not apparent: presumably it is carried on beams set into the walls of the adjoining buildings. The only feature of note is a skylight above G7, aligned with the southernmost west window of Victoria Works.



Plate 15: Link Building, north elevation



Plate 16: Link Building, G6, looking north



Plate 17: Link Building, G7 and G8, looking south



Plate 18: Link Building, G8, looking eastwards to G9

4.4 *Leyton Hall*

Leyton Hall forms the westernmost part of the surveyed complex. It is a brick-built structure of two storeys under a roof of profiled asbestos sheet, covering an area of 19.4 (max) × 9.7m overall, and standing to heights of c.3.7m (eaves, west side) and c.6.3m (ridge). The walls are constructed of brick, laid in Stretcher bond in cement mortar. The main access to Leyton Hall is from Amenbury Lane to the north, and to the adjoining car park to the west. It also has a connection to the Link Building. To the rear is a single-storey pent-roofed extension across the width of the building, with a door to the rear alley. Windows are all metal-framed.

North Elevation (Fig. 8, Plate 19)

This elevation forms the street frontage on Amenbury Lane. It is constructed of dark reddish-brown bricks with soldier arches above the windows, and corbelled eaves and a gable rising above the roof in the same material. The central front door has a stepped concrete surround, and double doors with their upper parts glazed. Flanking the door are 12-light casement windows, with wooden frames and sills: centrally located above the door is a wide Venetian window.

South Elevation (Fig. 8, Plate 20)

The upper part of this elevation is rendered and painted: the only feature is a wide central Venetian window, identical to that in the north elevation. The lower part of this elevation consists of the single-storey extension, which is also rendered and painted, and is pierced by a single door at its east end.

West Elevation (Fig. 9, Plate 21)

This elevation is also rendered and painted, except at the south end, where the west wall of the rear extension extends along the wall for c.6m, forming an extended buttress capped with plain tile. At the north end, the brickwork on the north elevation extends around the corner to form quoins. This elevation is pierced by two doors, both with 8-light transom windows above, each with a pivoting central section. There are also five windows, of varying sizes, in this elevation.

East Elevation (Fig. 9)

The lower part of this elevation is within the Link Building, and consists of bare brickwork with a single doorway, in G7. The upper part of the elevation rendered and painted, and is pierced by three 10-light windows illuminating the central hall, and two 4-light windows, one at each end.

Ground Floor (Fig. 10)

Room G10

Size: 3.0 × 2.0m, height 2.70 & 2.85m

Location: North end of building, east of G11, west of G12, north of G13

Description: Entrance foyer. Inside the recessed front doors is a shallow step, rising to the level of the main hall (G13). Doors to the east and west lead to former cloakrooms (G11, G12). At the south end of the foyer, part-glazed double doors lead into the main hall. Immediately before these doors, to the west, is a cupboard beneath the stairs leading to the balcony above (F3).

Room G11

Size: 3.10 × 1.92m, height 2.70m

Location: North end of building, west of G10, north of G13

Description: Cloakroom, with WC at west end. Windows to north in cloakroom, west in WC. 4-panel doors to foyer (G10) and between cloakroom and WC.

Room G12 (Plate 22)

Size: 3.25 × 1.92m, height 2.70m

Location: North end of building, east of G10, north of G13

Description: Cloakroom, with WC at east end. Window to north in cloakroom. 4-panel doors to foyer (G10) and between cloakroom and WC. Fixed iron fire escape ladder in WC, from F5.

Room G13 (Plates 24-27)

Size: 10.5 × 8.63m, height 6.2m

Location: Central part of building

Description: Central hall area, open to roof. Suspended timber floor, punctuated by several inserted concrete machine bases. Plastered walls, painted brown (lower) and yellow (higher), with shallow piers supporting roof trusses. The east wall has three 20-light windows at first-floor level, and a wide doorway to G7. The west wall has two external doors with transom windows above, and two tall windows (10-light and 25-light). Doorways in north-west and south-east corners leading to stairs to the balconies at each end (F3, F6). Doorway at centre of south end, leading to rear lobby (G14). Room west of lobby (G15) is open to G13.

Room G14

Size: 2.35 × 1.91m, height 2.65m

Location: East of G15, west of G16, south of G13, north of G17

Description: Rear lobby, giving access to G16 and G17. Suspended timber floor, plain painted walls.

Room G15

Size: 2.45 × 2.35m, height 2.65m

Location: West of G14, south of G13, north of G17

Description: Room, open to G13 to north, inserted door and window to south. Suspended timber floor, fixed iron fire escape ladder from F7.

Room G16 (Plate 23)

Size: 4.03 × 2.35m, height 2.65m

Location: East of G14, south of G13, north of G17

Description: Room accessed from G14 to west. Suspended timber floor, window to south. Sliding hatch in wall to G13, in north-west corner.

Room G17 (Plate 28)

Size: 8.6 × 1.7-2.7m, height 2.95m (max)

Location: South of G14/15/16

Description: Single-storey extension to rear of Leyton Hall, probably built over former yard area. Concrete floor with drain, plastered/rendered painted walls, sloping

roof of corrugated sheet, with skylights. External door in south-east corner. Windows to G15, G16, doorways to G14, G15.

First Floor (Fig. 11)

The first floor of Leyton Hall consists of balconies at the north and south ends of the building, overlooking the central hall. Each balcony comprises a central open space, separated from the hall by a handrail and solid balustrade, flanked to the east and west by two small enclosures, which differ in size between the balconies. One enclosure on each balcony has a trapdoor in the floor, with a fixed iron ladder to the floor below, as a crude fire escape.

Room F3 (Plates 29, 30)

Size: 4.25 × 2.90m, height 3.2m (max)

Location: North balcony. East of F4, west of F5

Description: Balcony, reached by stairs from G13. East-west planked floor, plastered/painted north wall, timber-framed partition walls to west (F4) and east (F5), both with plank-and-batten doors. Large casement window to north.

Room F4 (Plate 29)

Size: 2.20 × 2.05m, height 2.35m (max)

Location: North balcony. West of F3

Description: Enclosure, west end of balcony. East-west planked floor, timber-framed partition walls to south (stairwell) and east (F3): plank-and-batten door in the latter. Ceiling slopes from east partition to floor. Because of restricted headroom, only of use as cupboard.

Room F5 (Plate 30)

Size: 2.05 × 2.90m, height 2.35m (max)

Location: North balcony. East of F3

Description: Enclosure, east end of balcony. East-west planked floor, timber-framed partition walls to south (edge of balcony) and west (F3): plank-and-batten door in the latter. Ceiling slopes from west partition to floor. Trapdoor in floor, with fire escape ladder. Because of restricted headroom, only of use as cupboard.

Room F6 (Plate 31)

Size: 5.55 × 3.35m, height 3.2m (max)

Location: South balcony. East of F7, west of F8

Description: Balcony, reached by stairs from G13. East-west planked floor, plastered/painted south wall, timber-framed partition walls to west (F7) and east (F8), both with plank-and-batten doors. Large casement window to south.

Room F7 (Plate 32)

Size: 2.90 × 1.35m, height 2.35m

Location: South balcony. West of F6

Description: Enclosure, west end of balcony. East-west planked floor, timber-framed partition walls to north (edge of balcony) and east (F6): plank-and-batten door in the latter. Ceiling slopes from east partition to floor. Trapdoor in floor, with fire escape ladder. Because of restricted headroom, only of use as cupboard.

Room F8

Size: 2.35 × 1.45m, height 2.35m

Location: South balcony. East of F6

Description: Enclosure, east end of balcony. East-west planked floor, timber-framed partition walls to north (stairwell) and west (F6): plank-and-batten door in the latter. Ceiling slopes from west partition to floor. Because of restricted headroom, only of use as cupboard.

Roof (Plate 33)

The main roof of Leyton Hall is carried on four riveted angle-iron trusses with braces in a 'W' pattern, and queen posts. It is clad with profiled asbestos sheets, laid on a timber frame. At the time of the survey, all internal roof cladding had been removed. As previously noted, the southern extension to the hall is roofed with corrugated sheet, including skylights.



Plate 19: Leyton Hall, north elevation



Plate 20: Leyton Hall, south elevation



Plate 21: Leyton Hall, west elevation



Plate 22: Leyton Hall, G12, looking east



Plate 23: Leyton Hall, G16, looking east



Plate 24: Leyton Hall, G13, looking north



Plate 25: Leyton Hall, G13, looking south



Plate 26: Leyton Hall, G13, looking west



Plate 27: Leyton Hall, G13, looking east



Plate 28: Leyton Hall, G17, looking east



Plate 29: Leyton Hall, F3 & F4, looking west



Plate 30: Leyton Hall, F3 & F5, looking east



Plate 31: Leyton Hall, F6, stairway



Plate 32: Leyton Hall, F7, fire escape



Plate 33: Leyton Hall, roof structure

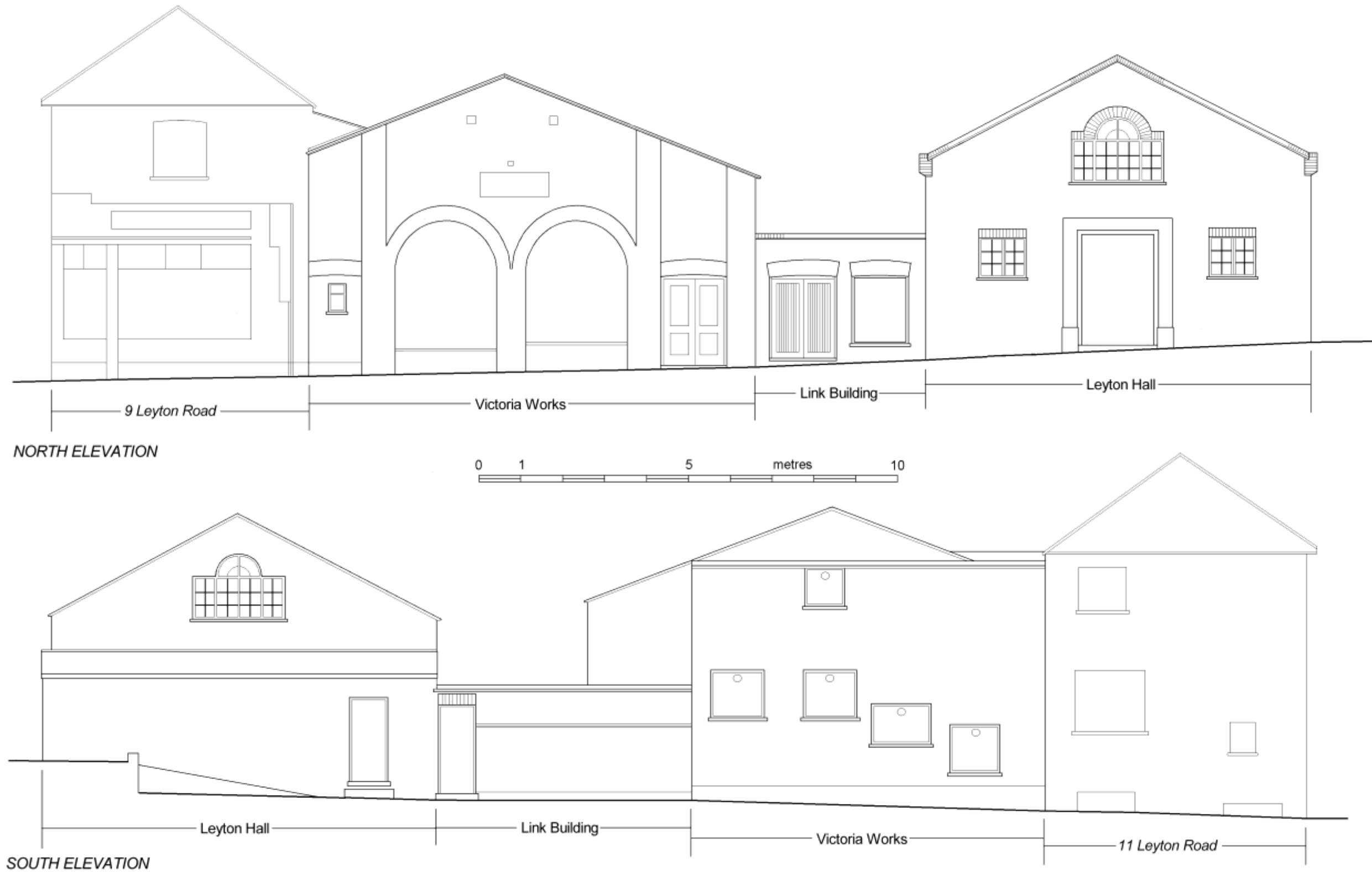


Figure 8: North and south elevations (scale 1:100)

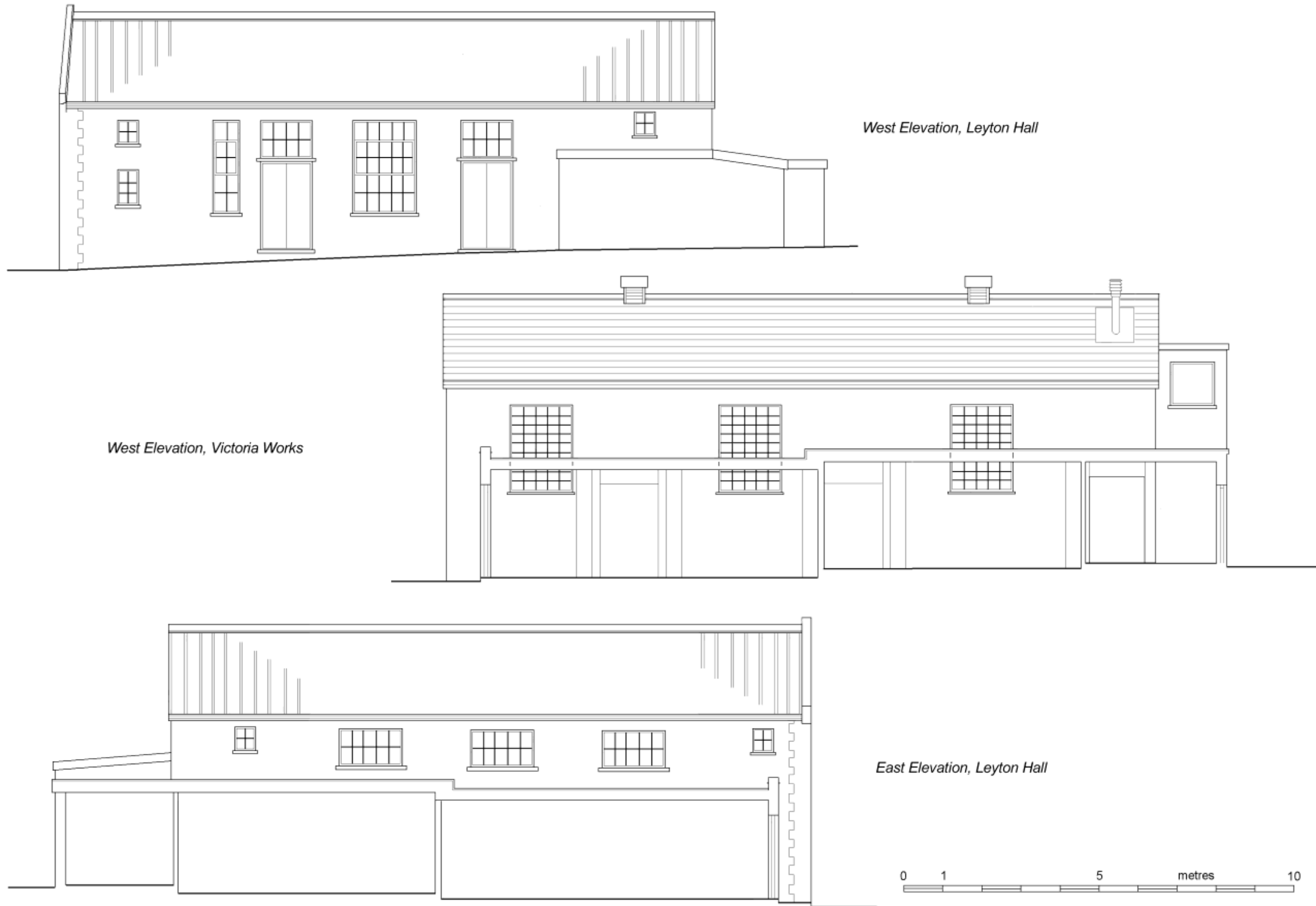


Figure 9: East and west elevations (scale 1:100)

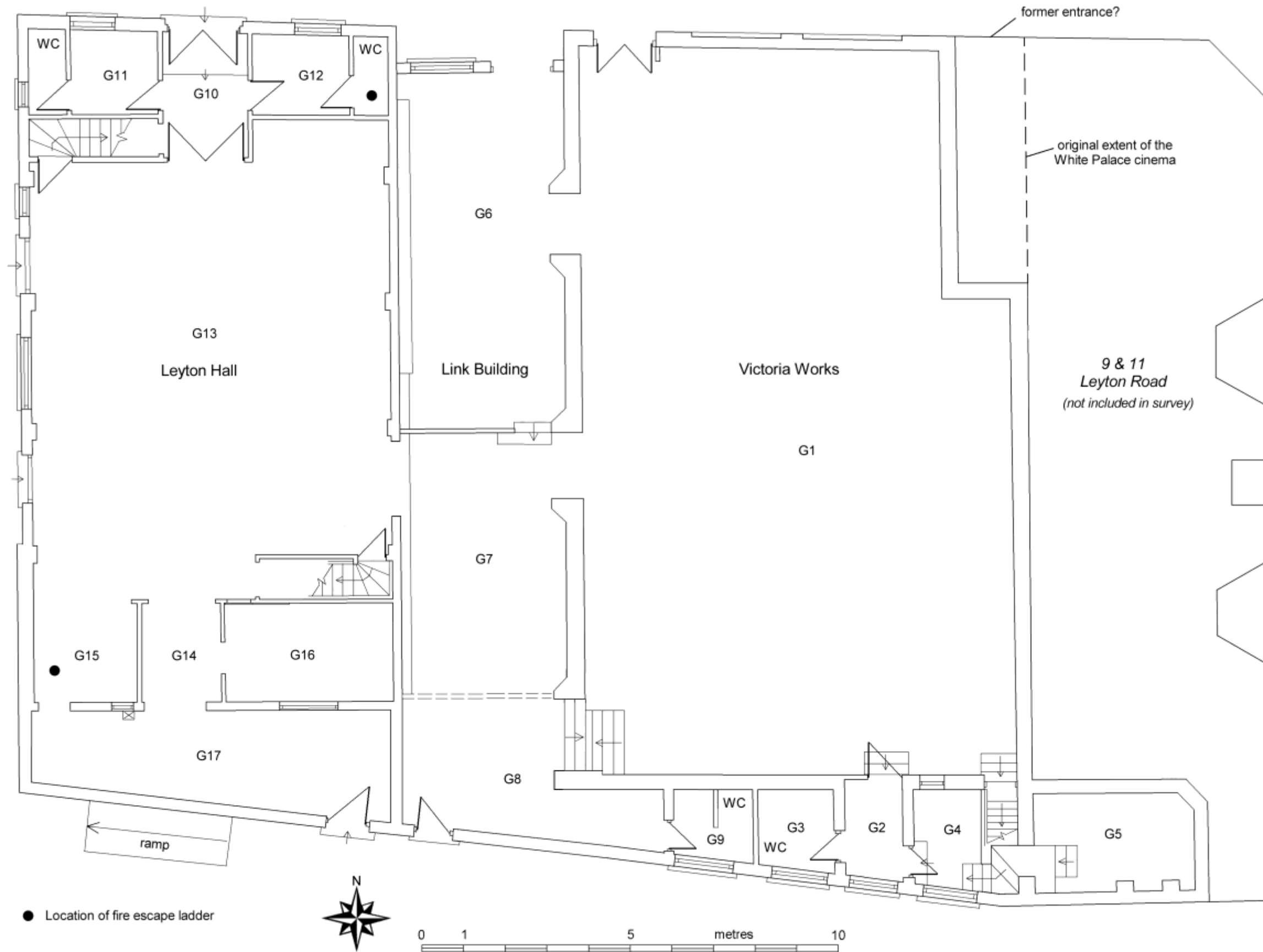


Figure 10: Overall ground floor plan (scale 1:100)

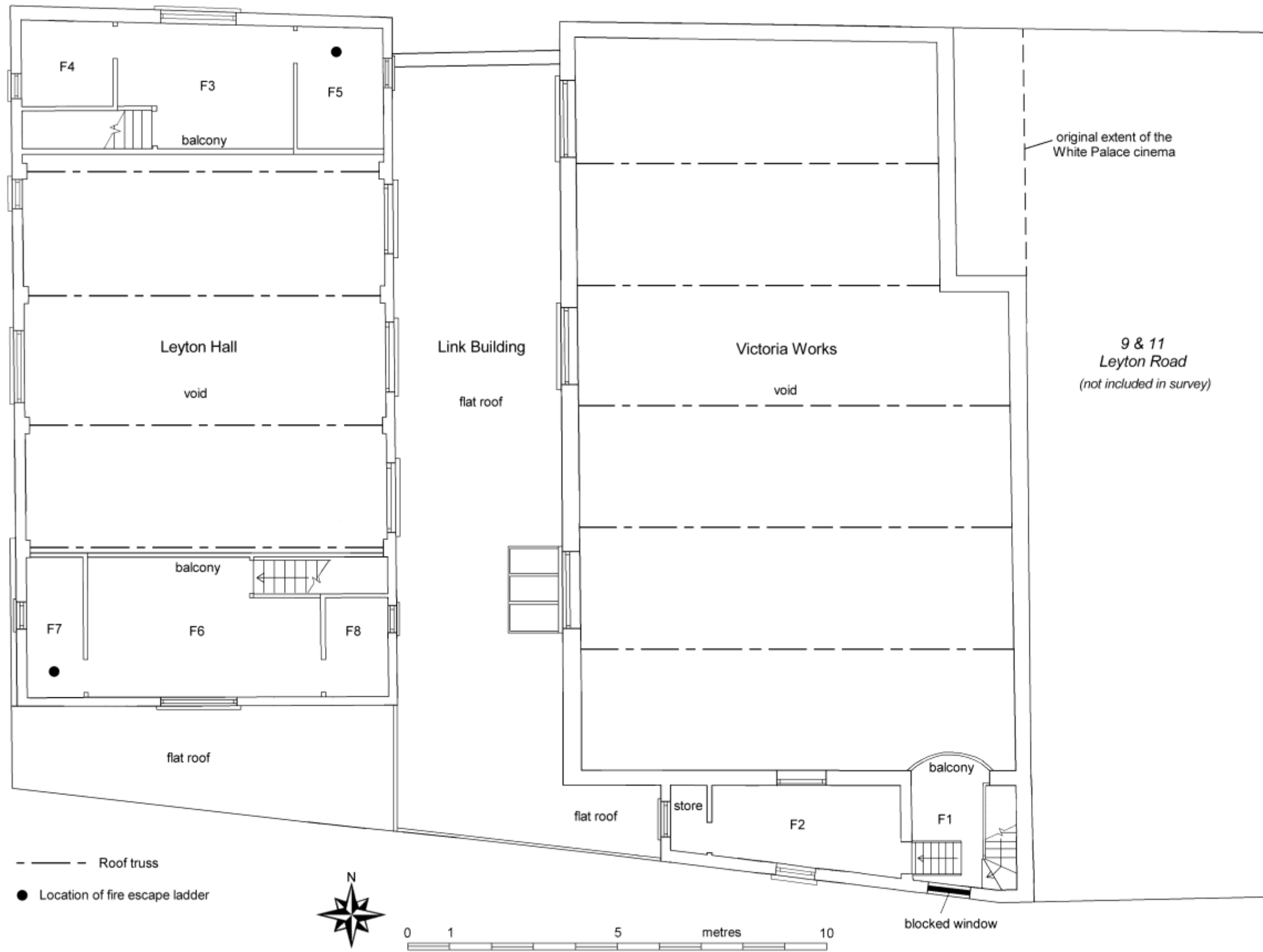


Figure 11: Overall first floor (scale 1:100)

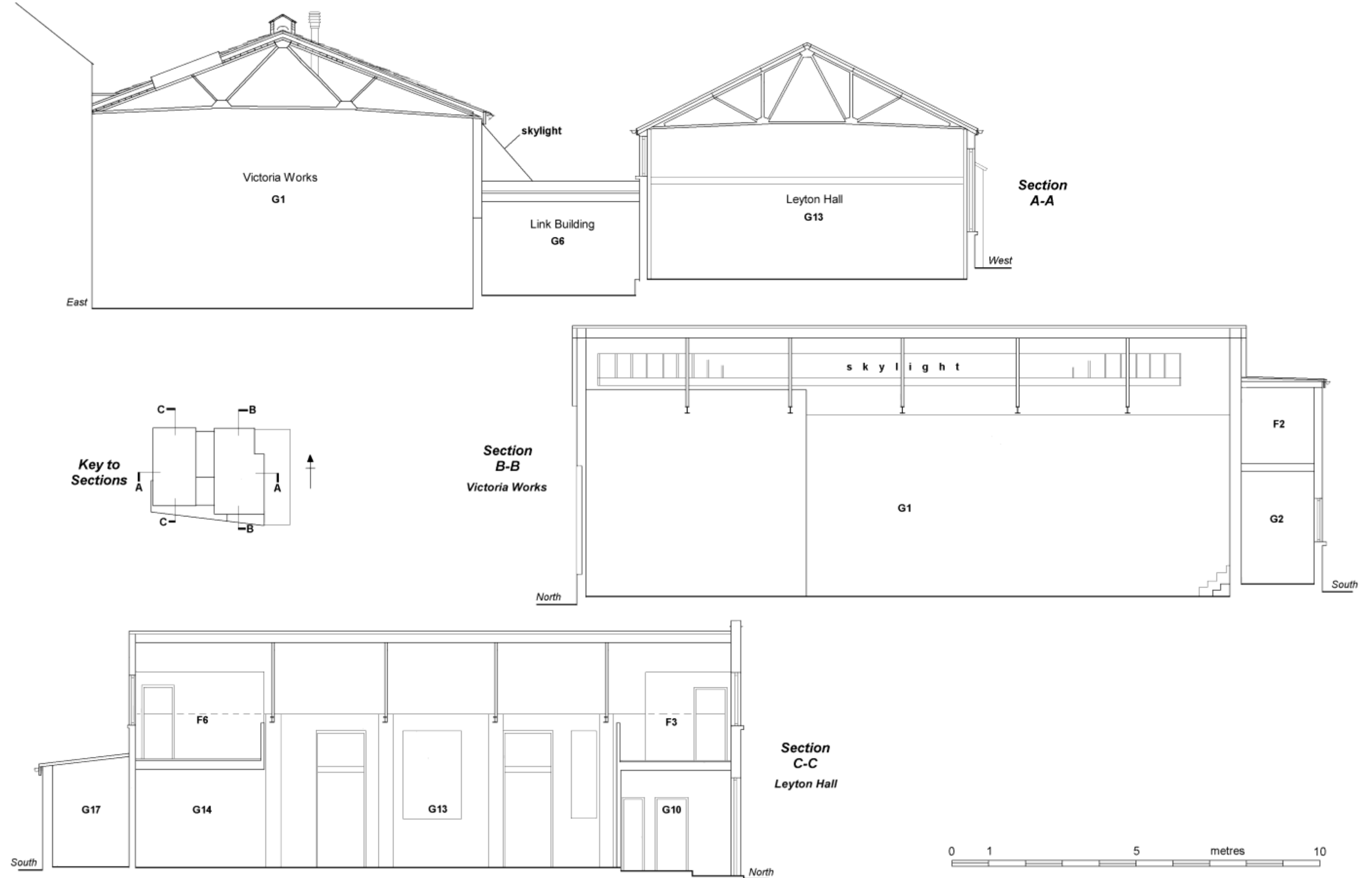


Figure 12: Sections (scale 1:100)

5 Conclusions

5.1 *Victoria Works*

Victoria Works was constructed in 1913 as the *White Palace* cinema, on a site formerly occupied by farm buildings belonging to Yewtree Farm. Externally, the fabric of the cinema is partly obscured by the later construction of 9 & 11 Leyton Road to the east, and the Link Building to the west. The frontage on Amenbury Lane retains some of its original character, though the large *oueil-de-beouf* window has been bricked up and hidden by rendering, and it is likely that a second entrance, now in that part of the building belonging to 9 Leyton Road, has been bricked up.

Internally, despite subsequent alternative uses, the building retains the essential layout of an early cinema: the auditorium, a small balcony for privileged clients, and the fireproof projection room, essential in the days of early projection equipment and flammable film stock. The rooms beneath the projection room probably served originally as cloakrooms and the manager's office. Apart from the fabric of the building, probably the only original fittings remaining are the fireproof door to the projection room, and its surround.

In 1934 the *White Palace* cinema closed, and was converted to an engineering works. It is likely that the large east-facing skylight and the three west-facing windows date from this period: while it was desirable in an engineering works, provision of natural lighting was not likely to have been a feature of the cinema. Other features, such as the separation of the north-east corner of the auditorium, with its two cast iron shaft bearing supports, probably also belong to this phase of use, though their function remains uncertain. The building's final use as a furniture store seems to have resulted in little change to the fabric: most of the features belonging to this phase were ephemeral, and had been removed prior to the survey.

5.2 *Leyton Hall*

Leyton Hall was built in 1934 as a location for public meetings, dances and other events, and retains much of its original character, both externally and internally. Subsequent change of use for light industrial purposes in 1950 appears to have had little effect on the fabric, beyond the installation of concrete machine bases in the dance hall floor. It is likely that the single-storey rear extension to the building belongs to this period.

5.3 *Link Building*

The link building was constructed in or after 1956, to join the two parts of the engineering works together, covering the alley that had run along the west side of Victoria Works, and associated yard areas. It is an essentially functional structure, of no historical or architectural merit.

6 Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by the MacMillan Scott Practice on behalf of their client, Mr Pearse. The writer is grateful to Tom Scott for his assistance. The project was monitored by Simon West, St Albans DC Archaeological Officer, on behalf of the local planning authority.

The project was managed for ASC by Karin Semmelmann MA MIFA. Fieldwork was carried out by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA, assisted by Lydia Breeze-Chilcott. 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 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)*.
- Rouse, C 2010 *Victoria Works/Leyton Hall, Amenbury Lane, Harpenden, Hertfordshire. Project Design for Historic Building Recording*. ASC doc. ref. 1344/HAL/1

Books and Historical Sources:

- Brandreth, R 1983 *Harpenden on Old Pictures*. Zattbommel: European Library.
- Brandreth, R 1997 *Harpenden: the Second Collection*. Chalford Publishing Co. (Chalford).
- Thompson, I 2002 *Wheathampstead and Harpenden: Extensive Urban Survey Project Assessment Report*. Herts. County Council.
- WEA 1991 *Wheathampstead and Harpenden, part IV. The Age of Independence*. History Publishing Society (Harpenden).
- West, S 2004 *Bower's Parade, Harpenden: a Desk-Top Assessment*. St Albans Museums Service.

Maps

- 1766 Dury & Andrews' Map of Hertfordshire (Hertfordshire Publications 1980)
- 1825 Bryant's Map of Hertfordshire (Hertfordshire Publications 1980)
- c.1840 Harpenden Tithe Map & Award (HALS PC680, PC681)
- 1879 Ordnance Survey First Edition 25" sheet XVII.7
- 1898 Ordnance Survey First Edition 25" sheet XVII.7
- 1924 Ordnance Survey First Edition 25" sheet XVII.7
- 1967 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 sheet TL 1314
- 2010 Ordnance Survey 1:1250 digital mapping

Appendix 1: List of Photographs

SITE NO/CODE: 1344/HAL			Site Name: Victoria Works & Leyton Hall, Harpenden
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1	1/9	✓	Leyton Hall, south elevation
2	1/8	✓	Victoria Works, south elevation from west
3	1/7	✓	Leyton Hall, west elevation
4	1/6	✓	Leyton Hall, north elevation
5	1/5	✓	Victoria Works, the link building and Leyton Hall, from north
6	1/4	✓	Link Building, north elevation
7	1/3	✓	Victoria Works, north elevation
8	1/2	✓	Victoria Works, south elevation from east
9	1/1	✓	Victoria Works, G1 looking south
10	2/36	✓	Victoria Works, G1 looking north-west
11	2/35	✓	Victoria Works, G1 looking north
12	2/34	✓	Victoria Works, G1, detail of bearing mounts in east wall
13	2/33	✓	Victoria Works, G1, looking north-east
14	2/32	✓	Victoria Works, roof structure
15	2/31	✓	Victoria Works, G1, balcony and openings in south wall
16	2/30	✓	Victoria Works, G1, stairs to F1
17	2/29	✓	Victoria Works, F1 and F2, looking west
18	2/28	✓	Victoria Works, F1, looking north
19	2/27	✓	Victoria Works, F1 and stairwell
20	2/26	✓	Victoria Works, F2 looking west
21	2/25	✓	Victoria Works, F2 looking east
22	2/24	✓	Victoria Works, view northwards from F2 projection window
23	2/23	✓	Link Building, G7, looking north
24	2/22	✓	Link Building, G7 and G8, looking south
25	2/21	✓	Link Building, G8, looking eastwards to G9
26	2/20	✓	Link Building, G6, looking south
27	2/19	✓	Link Building, G6, looking north
28	2/18	✓	Leyton Hall, G13, looking north
29	2/17	✓	Leyton Hall, G13, looking west
30	2/16	✓	Leyton Hall, G13, looking south
31	2/15	✓	Leyton Hall, G13, looking east
32	2/14	✓	Leyton Hall, roof structure
33	2/13	✓	Leyton Hall, stairs to F3
34	2/12	✓	Leyton Hall, F3 & F5, looking east
35	2/11	✓	Leyton Hall, F3 & F4, looking west
36	2/10	✓	Leyton Hall, F3, north-facing window
37	2/9	✓	Leyton Hall, G12, looking east
38	2/8	✓	Leyton Hall, G16, looking east
39	2/7	✓	Leyton Hall, F6, stairway
40	2/6	✓	Leyton Hall, F6, looking east
41	2/5	✓	Leyton Hall, F6, looking west
42	2/4	✓	Leyton Hall, F7, fire escape
43	2/3	✓	Leyton Hall, roof structure, looking northward
44	2/2	✓	Leyton Hall, G17, looking east
45	2/1	✓	Leyton Hall, G17, looking west

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

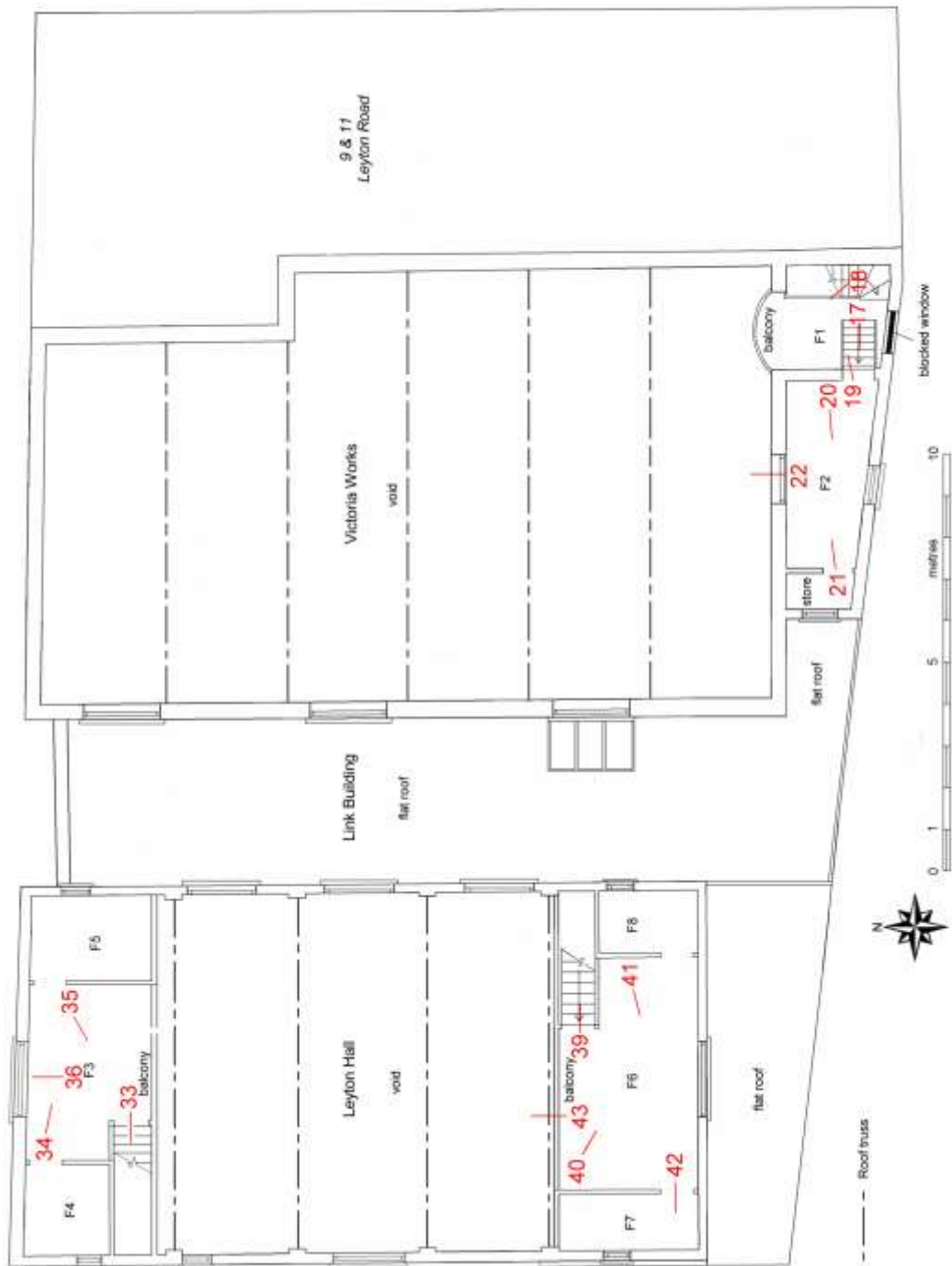


Figure 14: Photo locations, first floor (scale as shown)

Appendix 2: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	Victoria Works & Leyton Hall, Harpenden	OASIS reference:	archaeol2-83453
Short Description:	<p>In September 2010 a programme of historic building recording was carried out on Victoria Works and Leyton Hall, Amenbury Lane, Harpenden, prior to refurbishment and conversion to a restaurant and function room respectively.</p> <p>The Victoria Works was constructed as the <i>White Palace</i> cinema in 1913. In 1934 it became either a knitted goods factory or a garage/workshop: information is conflicting on this point. More recently, the building was occupied by Hunton Bridge Engineering. The building is constructed of brick, under a slate roof carried on riveted iron trusses. The main entrance was to the north, with exit doors to the former passage to the west. The auditorium occupies much of the interior. At the south end, a small balcony is reached by stairs from the auditorium: above and to the west is the projection room, which has a fireproof concrete floor and ceiling, and a steel entrance door.</p> <p>Leyton Hall was built in 1934, and has seen use as a dancing school and auction rooms. In 1950 it was converted for light industrial use. The building is of brick construction, with internal piers supporting trusses similar to those in Victoria Works, but with a roof of moulded asbestos-type sheeting. Internally a central foyer on the north side, flanked by cloakrooms, leads to the central hall, which is overlooked to the north and south by balconies. Each balcony has a stairway from the hall, and a fire escape ladder to one of the rooms beneath. To the rear is a modern single-storey extension.</p> <p>Permission for the construction of the single-storey link building was granted in 1956. It comprises three rooms beneath a flat roof, with toilets extending to the rear of Victoria Hall.</p>		
Project Type:	Historic building recording		
Previous work:	none	Site status:	none
Current land use:	Light industrial	Future work:	unknown
Monument type:	Industrial/amenity buildings	Monument period:	Early/mid C20
Significant finds:	none		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Hertfordshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	TL 1339 1415
Site address:	Victoria Works & Leyton Hall, Amenbury Lane, Harpenden		
Study area: (sq. m. / ha)	500 sq m approx	Height OD: (metres)	104m AOD approx
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	n/a	Project design originator:	Calli Rouse, ASC
Project Manager:	Karin Semmelmann, ASC	Director/Supervisor:	Bob Zeepvat, ASC
Sponsor / funding body:	The MacMillan Scott Practice / Mr Pearse		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	2 nd September 2010	End date:	29 th September 2010
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	Hertfordshire Archives & Local Studies	None	
Paper:		Project design, survey notes, photos, report	
Digital:		CD with all digital files	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Historic Building Recording: Victoria Works & Leyton Hall, Amenbury Lane, Harpenden, Herts		
Serial title & volume:	ASC Ltd Report ref. 1344/HAL/2		
Author(s):	Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA		
Page nos	44	Date:	29 September 2010