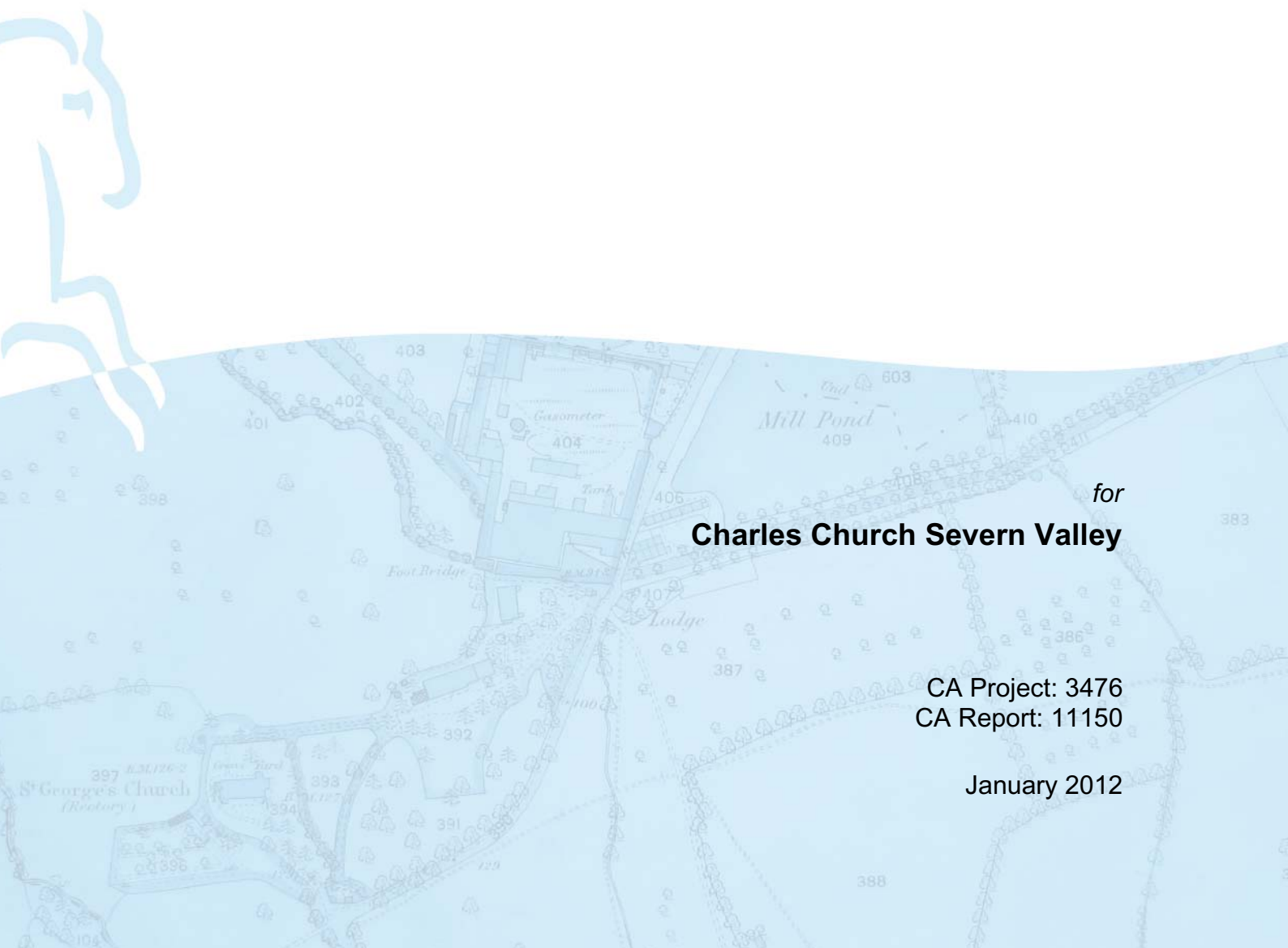


**Allen House  
Ashley Down  
Bristol**

**Historic Building Investigation and Impact  
Assessment**



for  
**Charles Church Severn Valley**


CA Project: 3476  
CA Report: 11150

January 2012

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Ashley Down  
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|-------------|--|
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| issue       | 01   |

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## SUMMARY

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| <b>Project Name:</b> | Allen House   |
| <b>Location:</b>     | Ashley Down, Bristol                                  |
| <b>NGR:</b>          | ST 5972 7569  |
| <b>Type:</b>         | Historic Building Investigation and Impact Assessment |

In June 2011 Cotswold Archaeology was commissioned to carry out a historic building investigation of Allen House, Ashley Down, Bristol; for Charles Church Severn Valley. This report presents the findings of the investigation and assesses the effects of proposed works on the heritage significance of the asset.

Allen House (formerly No. 1 New Orphan House) was built between 1847 and 1849 and lies in the suburb of Ashley Down, 2km north of Bristol city centre. It is built of Pennant stone rubble with Bath stone window frames and re-clad gable-ended roofs. The building is a 'modified cross plan' with extra wings on the south-west and north-east ends of the south-west and north-east arms. Allen House was originally built by George Muller as an orphan house to home 300 children. Allen House was designated as a Grade II Listed building on 5 August 1998. It also lies within the Ashley Down Conservation Area, which includes four further orphan houses.

Although the building has been altered internally and externally, mostly after 1954, much of the original mid-19th century structure survives. The building possesses limited architectural interest in its own right, however; its historic interest through its association with a key period in social reform is where its heritage significance lies. It is possibly the earliest example of a non fee-paying orphanage in England and the work of George Muller influenced the development of orphanages across Britain including the work of Thomas John Barnardo.

It is proposed to refurbish the existing building for conversion into apartments and houses. Three wings will be removed and replaced with like-for-like new built wings. The remainder of the building will be refurbished and will retain the surviving exterior fabric where possible, including restoring original elements. Further new build is proposed to recreate the originally enclosed 'playgrounds' (courtyards).

It is the conclusion of this assessment that although the proposals require the loss of original fabric its considerable historic interest and to a lesser degree its architectural interest will not be lost or substantially harmed and furthermore the proposed scheme will seek to safeguard and better reveal the building's heritage significance.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### *Introduction*

- 1.1 In June 2011 Cotswold Archaeology was commissioned to carry out a historic building investigation of Allen House (former Orphan House), Ashley Down, Bristol for Charles Church Severn Valley (centred on NGR ST 5972 7569; Fig. 1).

### *The Building*

- 1.2 Allen House (formerly No. 1 New Orphan House) was built between 1847 and 1849 and lies in the suburb of Ashley Down, 2km north of Bristol city centre (Fig. 2). It is built of Pennant stone rubble with Bath stone window frames and re-clad gable-ended roofs. The building is a 'modified cross plan' with extra wings on the south-west and north-east ends of the south-west and north-east arms. The main entrance is in the south-west bay of the house, a stone portico with pairs of square piers. Allen House was originally built as an orphan house to home 300 children.
- 1.3 Allen House was designated as a Grade II Listed building on 5 August 1998. It was also designated within the Ashley Down Conservation Area, which includes four further orphan houses built subsequently to No. 1 New Orphan House.

### *Scope of report*

- 1.4 This report includes an outline of the methodology, including historical research and building inspections; a summary of the planning context, including Planning Policy Statement 5 and Local Planning Policy; the Historical Context; a Descriptive Building Analysis; a Statement of Significance and an Assessment of the Effects of the Proposed Scheme.
- 1.5 Planning permission and Listed Building Consent has already been granted for a scheme works to renovate Allen House. The historic building investigations presented within this report have allowed for an improved understanding of the significance of the building. This prompted a re-design to better safeguard and reveal the heritage significance of the building. Therefore, it understood that this report will form part of a suite of documents and plans to be resubmitted to Bristol City Council.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 The assessment has been carried out to meet the requirements defined in the English Heritage publication *Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice* (EH 2006). The assessment consists of a Level Two survey, with additional tasks often undertaken as part of a Level Three Survey. These include the following (the numbering system is derived directly from the EH 2006 publication):

For the drawn record:

1. Measured plans as existing, indicating the form and location of any structural features;
2. Detail of historic significance including any evidence for fixtures of significance, including former machinery;
6. Measured elevations to aid the understanding of the building's design, development or function;
7. A site plan at 1:500 or 1:1250 relating the building to other structures, topographical and landscape features;

For the photographic record:

1. General views of the building;
2. Shots of the building's external appearance and the overall appearance of principal rooms and circulation areas;
3. Further views to indicate the original design intentions of the builder or architect, where these are known from documentary sources;
4. The overall appearance of the principal rooms and circulation areas;
5. Any external or internal detail, structural or decorative, which is relevant to the building's design, development or use and which does not show adequately on general photographs;

For the written account:

1. The location of the building;
2. Any designations;
11. An account of the buildings' form, development sequence, past and present uses of the building and its parts, with the evidence for these interpretations;



12. Any fixtures, fittings, plant or machinery associated with the building, and their purposes;
  13. Any evidence for the former existence of demolished structures or removed plant associated with the building;
  15. A discussion of the building's past and present relationship to its setting (its part in any larger architectural or functional group of buildings; its visual importance as a landmark);
  16. Potential for further investigative or documentary work, and the potential survival of below-ground evidence for the history of the building and its site;
  17. The architectural or historical context or significance of the building locally, regionally or nationally, in terms of its origin, purpose, form, construction, design, materials, status or historical associations;
  18. Copies of historic maps, drawings, views or photographs illustrating the development of the building or its site (the permission of owners or copyright holders may be required);
  20. Any further information from documentary sources, published or unpublished;
  22. Full list of references consulted;
- 2.2 It was also guided by the IfA Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures (IfA 2008) and the Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE): Project Manager's Guide (EH 2006).
- 2.3 The scope of this assessment was informed by discussions with Mr Guy Benson-Hill at Bristol City Council conservation team.

### **Sources accessed**

- 2.4 Documentary research has been informed using the following sources:
- Historic maps and documents held at Bristol Record Office (visited 16 June 2011);
  - The Muller Museum archives (visited 16 June 2011);
  - English Heritage National Monuments Record of Listed buildings (accessed 10 June 2011);
  - Other published sources (see references in section 8 of this report); and

- In addition, two site visits to investigate the building (18 May & 20 June 2011). This involved the visual inspection of the interior and exterior of the building and the creation of a photographic record. Detailed measured survey plans and elevations were provided to Cotswold Archaeology by the client as AutoCad and PDF files, which were used as the base for annotations during inspection and for the illustrations.



### 3 PLANNING CONTEXT

#### ***Designated heritage assets and planning guidance***

3.1 Allen House is statutorily designated as a Grade II Listed building and is set within the context of the four other Grade II Listed orphan houses on Ashley Down. It also lies within the Ashley Down Conservation Area, which includes the four additional orphan houses all built by George Muller between 1847 and 1870.

3.2 The assessment is written within the following legislative, planning policy and guidance context:

- National Heritage Act 1983 (amended 2002);
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990);
- Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (2010);
- PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide (2010);
- English Heritage Conservation Principles: policies and guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment (2008);
- English Heritage Health and Welfare Buildings: Designation Listing Selection Guide (2011); and
- English Heritage The Setting of Heritage Assets: a guidance document (2011)

#### ***Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 5: Planning for the Historic Environment***

3.3 PPS5 is the main national policy guidance document related to the historic environment, and sets out planning policies relating to the conservation of the historic environment. It classifies as 'heritage assets' all those parts of the historic environment that have significance because of their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest. Its policies cover heritage assets which are designated and those which are non-designated. Policies relate to both the treatment of the assets themselves and their settings, both of which are a material consideration in development management decision making.

3.4 The Practice Guide for PPS5 (DCLG/DCMS/EH, 2010, pp.7) states that "The PPS sets out the Government's objectives for the historic environment and the rationale for its conservation. It recognises the unique place the historic environment holds in

England's cultural heritage and the multiple ways it supports and contributes to the economy, society and daily life. The PPS also identifies the historic environment as a non-renewable resource. Its fragile and finite nature is a particularly important consideration in planning. Conserving this resource for future generations accords with the principles of sustainable development. Government places a priority on its conservation and has set out tests to ensure that any damage or loss is permitted only where it is properly justified."

- 3.5 The policies in PPS5 are based on the principle that the historic environment and its heritage assets should be conserved and enjoyed for the quality of life they bring to this and future generations. Heritage assets should be put to appropriate uses consistent with their conservation and with policies on climate change, and should be employed in place shaping and in enhancing local character (Policies HE1, HE2 and HE3).
- 3.6 In development management, planning authorities are obliged to ask the applicant for a description of the significance of the heritage assets affected and the contribution of their setting to that significance. The level of detail required should be 'proportionate to the importance of the heritage asset and no more than sufficient to understand the significance of potential impact' (Policy HE6).
- 3.7 Policies also recognise that decisions are based on the nature, extent and level of significance of heritage assets, and on a level of information proportionate to the importance of the asset. There is a presumption in favour of conserving designated assets and their settings, as well as those assets and their settings which merit designation but have not yet been formally assessed (Policy HE9).
- 3.8 Where there will be substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated asset, consent may be refused unless it is demonstrated that i) the substantial harm to or loss of significance is necessary in order to deliver substantial public benefits, or ii) the nature of the asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site, no viable medium term use can be found, conservation through grant funding is not possible, and the loss is outweighed by the benefits of bringing the site back into use (Policy HE9.2).
- 3.9 Where there will be less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, planning authorities should i) weigh the public benefit of the proposal against the harm, and ii) recognise that the greater the harm to the significance of the heritage asset, the greater the justification will be needed for any

loss (HE9.4). Proposals that preserve or make a positive contribution to the setting of a heritage asset are to be regarded favourably (HE10).

### **Local planning policy**

- 3.10 The site is situated within the Ashley Down Conservation Area. Local planning policy is also set out in the Bristol Local Plan (adopted December 1997). Policy relating to Conservation and Listed Buildings is covered in policy B13. It states that, 'development should preserve Listed buildings, their features and settings, and preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the city's designated Conservation Areas, as defined on the proposals map. Development which conflicts with these objectives will not be permitted.
- 3.11 Policy B15 comments on new buildings in Conservation Areas and states that the council will, 'seek to ensure that new development is in keeping with its surroundings both in character and appearance. New schemes should contain both the individuality of the designer and the need to respond to context. Where building groups are less formal or of lesser architectural merit, building forms other than replicas are appropriate provided they compliment and contribute to the character of the area'.
- 3.12 Policy B17 states that, 'Extensions to buildings that contribute to the character of a Conservation Area should not dominate that original building by virtue of their scale, materials or location'.
- 3.13 Policy B20 states, 'Applications for planning permission which involve the demolition of Listed buildings will not be permitted without clear and convincing evidence that; (i) All reasonable efforts have been made to sustain an existing use or find new uses; (ii) Redevelopment would produce substantial benefits for the community. In all cases demolition should be assessed on the importance and condition of the building that are of particular historical or architectural interest'.
- 3.14 The Health and Welfare Buildings: Designation Listing Selection Guide (English Heritage, 2011) discusses Listing selection for 'Children's Homes' and states that, 'examples that pre-date 1800 are rare. Until the 1870s, pauper children attended industrial or 'barrack' schools'. The guidance states that these were, 'discredited by the 1890s although not universally rejected, few industrial or workhouse schools survive today. In the 1870s Dr Thomas Barnardo adopted the cottage home system on a vast scale... (however), not many examples of industrial or cottage homes survive today with their interiors intact'.

## 4 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

### ***George Muller – The Philanthropist***

- 4.1 Allen House was built in 1849 by George Muller, a Prussian born missionary and philanthropist. Muller attended Halle University, Germany, and during his time there spent two months living and working in a large orphanage built in 1698 by A.H. Francke (Fig. 16). He graduated from Halle in the 1820s and moved to London to train to be a missionary. He became pastor of a local chapel in Teignmouth and later was called to Bristol to minister at Bethesda Church; drawing a congregation of up to several hundred (The Muller Homes for Children, 1971, p. 80).
- 4.2 Recognising the poor healthcare conditions of the time with high mortality rates, Muller decided that he wanted to act to improve the care of orphaned children. He wanted to give orphaned children an alternative to the workhouse and opened the first of his homes for orphans in 1836, a large rented house in Wilson Street, Bristol. In 1845, after objections to noise in Wilson Street, he purchased a site at Ashley Down and began to raise funds for an orphan house large enough to home several hundred children (Aughton, 2000, 190).

### ***Thomas Foster – The Architect***

- 4.3 In c.1847 Muller engaged Thomas Foster, of John Foster and Sons, to prepare the plans for his first orphan house. A local architect and active Christian, Foster offered his services to prepare plans for the building free of charge. John Foster & Sons had designed a number of prominent buildings locally including Red Maids School, Bristol (1844) and Queen Elizabeth's Hospital School, Bristol (1845) and had competed for the commission to design the Houses of Parliament in 1835 (Colvin, 2008, 387).

### ***Ashley Down – The Location***

- 4.4 Ashley Down was an area of open countryside, north of Bristol, with a few farms commanding a view over the city. The surroundings were entirely rural and during the 18th century several large houses were built in the area by Bristol gentlemen wishing to move out of the city. Issues regarding noise disturbance, that Muller encountered at Wilson Street could be countered by locating his new purpose built orphanage at a distance from the urban centre and other neighbouring dwellings.

By 1904, the expansion of the city and the creation of the suburbs meant that the orphan house was almost entirely surrounded by late 19th century terrace housing.

### **No. 1 New Orphan House – Allen House**

- 4.5 The New Orphan House, as it was originally known, is built of grey Pennant stone dressed with oolite limestone and features high ceilings and a large number of windows. Undoubtedly, the design for Allen House was inspired by Muller's experience of the large orphanage in Halle, Germany where he had lived for two months. Although the functionality and monumentality of the Halle orphanage clearly inspired him, the Orphan Houses built at Ashley Down are far more modest in scale than Halle.
- 4.6 The earliest depiction of Allen House can be found on Thomas Foster's original architectural plans, c.1840s. These original plans demonstrate the intended functions of each of the wings, individual rooms and spaces between (Fig. 10).

### **The other Orphan Houses, Nos. 2, 3, 4 and 5**

- 4.7 A further four orphan houses were built between 1857 and 1870 (Fig. 2). They were also designed and built by John Foster and Sons and were constructed on similar principals, using similar materials, although the form of these later buildings does differ from Allen House. They are not based on a "cross plan" design and have a collegiate appearance to their facades. Orphan Houses 2, 4 and 5 are now owned by the City of Bristol College, while No. 3 Orphan House was converted into private dwellings in 2007.
- 4.8 The Orphan Houses at Ashley Down are early examples of large scale orphanages and are highly likely to be unique for their time. The orphanages were very popular and received applications from orphans all over the UK. Such was Muller's reputation that Charles Dickens visited the Orphan Houses in 1857 and reported in his journal *Household Words* of the excellent work that was conducted at the orphanages. It was not until 20 years later that Charles Spurgeon, following Muller's example, founded Stockwell Orphanage in 1867 and Thomas John Barnardo opened his orphanage in 1870. Only then did applications begin to ease as extended families sought to send orphaned children to more local orphanages.

### **Post-orphanage**

- 4.9 In its 100 years functioning as an orphanage few alterations were made to Allen House (No.1 New Orphan House). High level tanks were installed to collect rainwater in 1909 and a hot-air laundry was built. The orphanage ran successfully up to and throughout World War Two, and remained mostly unaltered until it was sold with the other four (orphan) houses to Bristol Corporation in 1954. Substantial repairs were conducted to the building in the post-1950s period in order to prepare the building for use as a college. Chimneys were blocked, the entire building was re-roofed, numerous partition walls were inserted within the large, formerly open dormitories, three large infill buildings were built within the courtyards and the building was re-named 'Allen House'. These three infill buildings were demolished in 2007; however, other alterations remain.





## 5 DESCRIPTIVE BUILDING ANALYSIS

### ***Site & Setting***

- 5.1 Allen House is located within the suburb of Ashley Down, 2km north of Bristol city centre. The building lies on a slight gradient sloping down to the north-west. With the exception of the cricket ground to the south-west, the building is set within a densely populated urban area (Fig. 2). The building was part of a large-scale, planned collection of five orphan houses, originally set within open fields with good intervisibility between each Orphan House. Allen House is the northernmost of the five orphan houses. All five orphan houses survive, however, new buildings built around them in the early 21st century has dramatically reduced intervisibility between them.

### ***The Building***

#### *Summary*

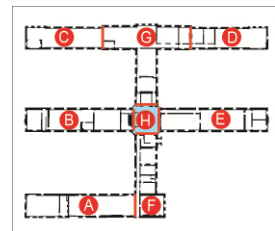
- 5.2 Allen House is a large, former barrack-type orphanage of a modified cross plan and was built in one phase between 1847 and 1849. Foster and Sons built a number of other buildings in the Bristol and local area, including the four other orphan houses on Ashley Down. The orphanages were not typical of Foster and Sons style; however, they met the Muller's specification for simple, large functional buildings.
- 5.3 For the purposes of this report the building as been sub-divided to aid in the interpretation and description as follows: the central tower, H; the north-east to south-west central axis, Wings G and F; the north-west to south-east central axis, Wings B and E; the north-eastern range, Wings C, D and part of G; and the south-western range, Wing A (Fig. 3). The following description also refers to the original proposed functions of rooms and spaces as depicted on the original architectural plans (Fig. 10). It should be noted that these functions may have changed whilst the building was in use as an orphanage.
- 5.4 Covered sheds, Washrooms and Water Closets originally connected the ends of the wings to enclose three courtyards or playgrounds: the 'infants playground' to the north-west; the 'girls playground' (Fig. 19) to the north-east; and the 'boys playground' to the south-east. The south-west courtyard was open on two sides with a formal garden which introduced the main entrance to the orphanage (Fig.13).
- 5.5 Although the concept of the large, privately run orphanage was rare for the period, the architectural style of the building is typical of large institutional buildings and has

a distinct 'workhouse' appearance identifiable from the modified cross plan and the repetitive symmetry of simple, austere, utilitarian design. It is constructed of Pennant stone rubble with Bath Stone window frames, some are sliding sashes and some are vertically hinged casements. Part of the original design featured pavilions on the north-east elevation (Wings C, D and G), (Fig. 15).

- 5.6 Pevsner described the group of orphan houses as 'impressively large but bleak' (Pevsner 1958, 457). Of the style, he commented that it was 'that of contemporary workhouses, latest Classical, with Italianate low-pitched gables'.
- 5.7 The interiors have been partially reworked and although many rooms have had partitions and decoration inserted post-1954 for use as a college (Fig. 26), a few original 19th century partition walls remain in situ. The staircases and handrails are original throughout, with some post-1954 infill additions (Fig. 27).
- 5.8 The original interior decoration was likely to have been kept simple in order to conserve orphanage funds and this plain functional character permeates the buildings interior. All of the fireplaces have been blocked and are barely visible. There is a mixture of angled and flat interior sills throughout the building, probably associated with the status of the room and a possible safety feature to prevent children climbing too close to the windows.

#### *H - The Central Tower*

- 5.9 The central tower, H, is a four-storey, square central tower with canted corners, at the centre of the cross plan, forming the centrepiece from which Wings B, E, F and G project. It has a flat roof with post-1950s concrete and metal railing additions forming a parapet. This has replaced the original roof which had a central lantern, shown on Fig. 14. The ground floor was original intended as a 'disbursement room'.



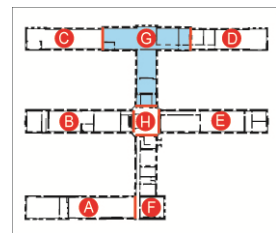
- 5.10 One feature of interest in the interior of H is the cast iron flue present within the centre of the tower throughout all storeys (Figs. 30, 31 & 32). This is believed to be original, serving as the heating duct for all storeys of the building. On the fourth storey, remains of the cast iron ring survive in the middle of the floor, aligned with this shaft. Also, on the fourth storey a pair of timber beams run south-west to north-east across the ceiling, originally to support the lantern above, and these have been cased at a later date (Fig. 29). Later inserted steel water tank supports and a blocked in 19th century fireplace are also located on this storey. The main cellar

space under the central tower contains platforms and heating paraphernalia and it is assumed to be the heating room associated with the central flue. It has been underpinned, post-1950, when a central heating oil pump was inserted.

- 5.11 Within each storey is evidence of scarring from existing, or recently removed post-1954 partition walls of expanded metal and plaster (Fig. 26). These have been inserted around the cast iron column within the central tower to form corridors around a central space.

*Wing G – the north-eastern arm of the central, northeast-southwest axis*

- 5.12 Wing G was designed as the Dining Room and Chapel, with the School Mistress Room, the Master of the Boys School room and the Girls Workroom. It is a two floor 'T-shaped' wing. Its principal elevation faces north-east with two single storey wings either side (C and D) (Fig. 15). The elevation has a central projecting three-bay gable, with three bays either side. The



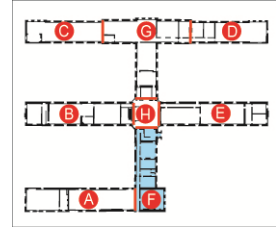
effect of this design, using different heights for different sections of the building, is indicative of a hierarchy of function. The central projecting gable on the north-east elevation was originally designed as a dining room and chapel above. The adjacent single-storey wings were designed to contain classrooms.

- 5.13 There have been modifications to the exterior of this wing after 1954. This includes the insertion, and later removal, of concrete steps and a concrete ramp in the former girl's playground on the north side of wing G, evident from scarring. There is also an inserted first-floor window on the north-west (courtyard facing) elevation where Wing C meets Wing G.
- 5.14 Two original internal walls survive at the north and south ends, where Wings C and D meet Wing G. The cantilevered staircase and handrail, evident on the original architectural drawing (Fig. 10), is original and sits next to the Girls Classroom. Changes to the internal sub-divisions of rooms are evident throughout. A floor has been inserted between the two sets of stairs immediately next to H, and numerous boxed-in RSJ's, supporting older beams are evident throughout this wing and the wider building (Fig. 29). The large, central, ground-floor room has four sections of original chamfered beams with simple stops and three bolt holes are still visible with RSJ's inserted to support them.
- 5.15 This wing, designed as a Chapel and Dining Room, may have had orphan accommodation above on the first floor. More recently it is likely that the larger open plan rooms would have been used as general meeting or assembly spaces and the

partitioned rooms evident on the first floor (Fig. 26) are likely to have functioned as classrooms.

*Wing F - the south-western arm of the central, northeast-southwest axis*

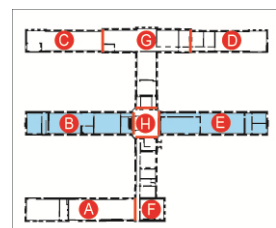
- 5.16 Wing F was designed to include the main staircase, the Housekeepers and Kitchen Store Room and the Kitchen. It forms the main entrance façade to Allen House and has consequently received a higher degree of architectural treatment relative to the rest of the building. It is a two-storey wing with the exception of one three-storey bay, located above the entrance portico. The gabled end of the south elevation adds to this wings designed prominence.



- 5.17 The main entrance is located in the north-east bay, with a stone portico, pairs of square piers, post-1954 inserted concrete block walls and the name 'Allen House' in a plaque (Fig. 22). The south-facing two-sided entrance courtyard garden as shown in historic photographs (Fig. 13 and 14) was likely to have been an original design feature, intended to maximise internal light in this key section of the building. The former designed garden within this courtyard formed a key visual element within the landscaping of the grounds around the orphanage, and the formal nature of the planting elevated the status of this façade.
- 5.18 Remnants of post-1954 extensions are visible on the exterior of the wing through scarring and white painted plaster on the north-west elevation, with evidence of sockets cut into the stone for inserted steel purloins. Evidence of a post-1954 inserted fire escape, now blocked, can be seen on the west gable end. The extension is one of three infill buildings built in the late 20th century and demolished in 2007. These can be seen on the 2006 aerial photograph (Fig. 11).
- 5.19 The partition walls on the ground and first floors, the staircase to the cellar with panelling and glass partition windows appear to be original. The main staircase opposite the entrance is also original with later inserted blocking. A heating duct and glass blocks form later additions within the corridor, inserted after 1954.

*Wings B and E - the central, northwest-southeast axis*

- 5.20 Wings B and E have been described together due to their symmetrical design. The ground floor of Wing B was originally designed as the Infants Day and School Room and Wing E was designed as the Domestic Dining Room, the Bread Room, Flour Chamber, Grinding Room, Bake House and Boys Shoe Room. They

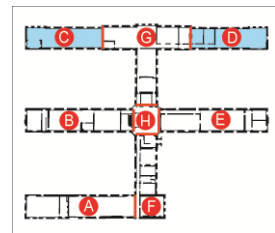


were originally designed as two three-storey, nine-bay wings forming the buildings north-west to south-east axis through the central tower (H). The wings have a total of nine recently blocked doorways which provided access to the courtyards, three of which were original window openings. Evidence of covered sheds is visible on the north and south ends of the north-east elevation, as scarring from the original roof. In addition, holes cut into the stone are evidence of former timber purloins (Fig. 23). The cantilevered staircases and handrails in each wing are original.

- 5.21 Post-1954 additions include inserted concrete lintels on the east side of Wing E, supporting a former projecting structure within the boy's playground. Internally, insertions include several RSJ's on the ground floor and numerous partition walls, all of which remain in situ with the exception of the second floor in Wing E. It is likely that accommodation would have been located on the first and second floors. Following the buildings conversion to a college, it is likely that all floors were utilised as classrooms for Bristol City College due to the inserted partition walls throughout.

#### *Wings C and D - the north-eastern range*

- 5.22 Wings C and D have been described together due to their symmetrical design. Wing C was designed as the Girls Bonnet and Cloak Room, the Girls School Room and a Girls Classroom. Wing D was designed as the Boys Hat and Coat Room, the Boys School Room, the Shoemakers Room and the Taylors Workroom. They form the single-storey side wings either side of wing G on the north-east elevation. Originally the wings featured two small pavilions located on the north and south ends of the single storey wings (Fig. 15). New roof cladding in the post-1954 period led to the removal of the gables defining these pavilions. Pointed lintels above the three end windows and a projecting step in the stonework indicate this former gable end. The hierarchy of form related to function referred to above for Wing G is also evident here as the single-storey Wings C and D, inferior to G, would have been themselves elevated above the height of the adjacent (no longer present) 'covered sheds'. These covered sheds held less importance functionally than the classrooms within the single-storey wings.



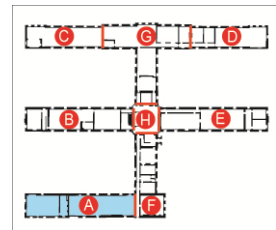
- 5.23 All of the windows on the north-east elevation are original; however, in the post-1954 period, two windows on the south-west elevation of Wing D were partially blocked; a further door was blocked and a door has also been inserted.
- 5.24 Large timber beams approximately 6m in length with relieving arches over, show entrances to a former Washroom and Water Closet located at the north end of wing

C and the south end of wing D (Fig. 24). These beams remain *in situ*; however they are mostly hidden due to later rendering on the exterior of the building.

- 5.25 Wing C has recently been used as a carpentry workshop, evident from paraphernalia still present within the building. There is little evidence of the most recent use of Wing D; however, several partition walls have been inserted to create classrooms. Recent fire damage has obscured any previous uses of this wing and there is no roof.

#### *Wing A - the south-western range*

- 5.26 Wing A was designed as the Scullery, Dairy, Larder, Mangle Room, Wash House and Laundry. There are three windows converted to doorways on the north-east elevation, and substantial evidence of scarring on the west elevation, indicating the location of original farm buildings.



- 5.27 It has undergone substantial alteration and is the only wing with a replacement roof. The steel roof was inserted in the post-1954 period (Fig. 25). The roof sits on a concrete wall plate and is clad in asbestos, with six roof lights on each roof slope. The roof frame is not wide enough for the width of the walls and fails to project over the walls; unlike the overhanging eaves which can be found in the other wings.

#### *Former structures*

- 5.28 Covered sheds including a Washroom and Water Closets are visible on Thomas Foster's architectural plan (Fig. 10) previously enclosed the three-sided courtyards. These were designed spaces and originally enclosed playgrounds for Infants, Girls and Boys. Demolished after 1954, evidence of these former structures is visible as scarring on the ends of Wings A, B, C, D and E. Their demolition allowed for the subsequent infilling of buildings in the former playgrounds, visible on the 2006 aerial photograph (Fig. 11). These infill structures were demolished in 2007.
- 5.29 Additional ancillary structures attached to the original building included an annex to the west of Wing A, believed to be a complex of farm buildings, including pigsties, a stable and a barn. These are also depicted on the original architectural drawings (Fig. 10) and on historic photographs (Fig. 14); however, it appears to have been demolished recently as it is visible on an aerial photograph of 2006 (Fig. 11). A lodge, now demolished, is depicted on the 1855 Ashmead Survey Plan (Fig. 12) in

the south-east corner of the site. There is no surviving visual evidence of this building or evidence of its function. The architectural plans depict an 'Infirmery'; however, this is in a different location to the building depicted on the Ashmead Survey Plan and was probably never built.



## 6 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### **Summary**

- 6.1 The Grade II Listed Allen House (No.1 New Orphan House) is one of a complex of five former orphan houses, all set within the Ashley Down Conservation Area. Although the building has been altered internally and externally, mostly after 1954, much of the original mid-19th century building survives.
- 6.2 The building possess limited architectural interest in its own right, however; its historic interest through its association with a key period (and event) in social reform is where its heritage significance lies. It is possibly the earliest example of a non fee-paying orphanage in England and the work of George Muller (at Allen House and the other orphan houses) influenced the development of orphanages across Britain including the work of Thomas John Barnardo.
- 6.3 The following section provides further discussion on the heritage significance of the building.

### **Historic interest**

#### *An early example of an orphanage in a local and national context*

- 6.4 Allen House is a testament to George Muller's work, and a material record of a key phase within the nation's history of orphanages and social reform. Allen House and the four other orphan houses were not only unique to Bristol; it has been suggested that they were the only free orphanages existing in the country at the time, amidst a handful of fee-paying orphanages (Jessop, pers comm. 2011). Muller's exposure to Francke's orphanage at Halle, Germany and the influence this had on Foster's design is embodied within the building and the functional layout recognisable from Halle, is still evident in the surviving remains.

#### *A positive example, influencing the development of orphanages*

- 6.5 The orphanages provided the children with an education, a fact that was highly criticised by the workhouses who accused Muller of stealing valuable labour. Muller's work was renowned and it is of particular significance that Charles Dickens visited the Orphanage in 1857, writing an article praising Muller's work there. Allen House was a significant influence in the development of free orphan houses. Charles Spurgeon took inspiration from Muller and founded Stockwell Orphanage in 1867; and in 1870 Thomas John Barnardo opened his first (and now world famous) orphanage.



*Communal value*

- 6.6 Allen House continues to be appreciated by its former occupants (orphans and students) and as such it possesses communal values more subtle than the identified associations with social reform and improvements in orphan care.
- 6.7 These communal values are held by those orphans and descendants of orphans still living within the communities that neighbour Allen House but also those from further afield (as can be attested by the 'overseas' inquiries made to the Muller Museum concerning former residents).
- 6.8 Although Allen House ceased to have residents after the 1950s, there is a modern community of the late 20th, early 21st century associated with the building from its use as the Faculty of Construction for Bristol City College. The collective experience of this building for this community is still very present within Bristol.
- 6.9 This interest is not intrinsically embodied within any particular element of the surviving fabric, but is intimately associated with it.

*A symbol of wider values such as faith and cultural identity*

- 6.10 Allen House is also a symbol of the faith values held by George Muller. His commitment to the Christian faith and the influence of other Christians, such as Augustus Francke, helped inspire his vision of improving care for orphans. Muller's orphanages at Ashley Down were built entirely from voluntary contributions, which Muller believed were received as a direct result of his prayers. This interest is embodied within the whole building, but specifically within Wing G where the chapel is believed to have been located.

**Architectural interest***Hierarchy of function through form*

- 6.11 Allen House is a building of limited architectural interest. Despite the impressive size of the building and its late classical form, the utilitarian nature of the design is synonymous with contemporary workhouses, welfare buildings and other mid-Victorian structures and is not a rare example of its type. The interior of the building retains even less interest with the exceptions being the surviving original staircases.
- 6.12 Although the building is relatively architecturally undistinguished, some parts of the building have been given a higher degree of architectural treatment than others. The north-east elevation of Wing G, designed as the chapel, has been given special

architectural treatment visible in the stepped gable centre piece set forward from the main elevation, with set-back, single-storey adjacent wings finished with end pavilions which would have sat above the covered sheds originally visible on the return. The status of religion would have been a key concern to Muller and this function is visible in the design of the building's north-east elevation. Emphasis is reflected in the design of the chapel, two-storeys above the adjacent single-storey wings. This is one such example of the architectural treatment reflecting the hierarchy of use within different sections of the building.

*Group value, associations with other structures and its setting*

- 6.13 Allen House was the first of five orphan houses built and it set out Muller's initial vision of how orphan accommodation should be. Muller did not originally anticipate building five; however, demand was so high the additional four buildings were commissioned. The survival of all five orphan houses greatly contributes to the significance of Allen House; and the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. This is key contributory factor to the significance of the Conservation Area.
- 6.14 The original setting of Allen House and the other orphan houses was one of open pasture on Ashley Down, and it remained this way until the end of the 19th century. The development of immediate surrounding of Allen House throughout the late 19th and 20th century has contributed nothing to the heritage significance of the building. However, the inter-visibility between Allen House and the adjacent Brunel House (No. 2 Orphan House) to the south-east, contributes in a small way to its significance through the intelligibility of this association.
- 6.15 Some of the immediate spaces around the building contribute to the significance of the building. The removal in recent times of the infilled structures within the courtyard spaces and the retention of open garden courtyard are the key elements of the setting that contribute to the intelligibility and significance of the building.

## 7 ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS OF THE PROPOSED SCHEME ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ASSET

### *The proposed scheme*

- 7.1 The details of the proposed scheme can be found in the Design and Access Statement; and the plans and elevation by AWW (drawing numbers 210A, 211A, 212A, 213A, 300A, 301A, 302A & 303A).
- 7.2 In summary, it is proposed to refurbish the existing building for conversion into apartments and houses. Wings C, D and E will be removed and replaced with like-for-like new built wings. The remainder of the building will be refurbished and will retain the surviving exterior fabric where possible, including restoring original (but since lost) elements such as the lantern and weather vane. Further new build is proposed to recreate the original three enclosed playgrounds (replacing the covered sheds, Washrooms and Water Closets removed in the 1950's) and the garden at the entrance to building (Fig. 13).

### *The effects of the proposals on heritage significance*

- 7.3 The three wings proposed for removal and replacement retain little or no architectural interest within their surviving fabric. All three wings retain no internal features of interest and their existing poor condition and modified state (specifically Wings D and A) is detrimental to the significance and intelligibility of the wider building. The replacement of Wings C, D and A to a height similar to the original wings will ensure that the significance of the *hierarchy of function* will be retained (especially key for the north-eastern elevation – see AWW drawing 300A referred to as 'Proposed East Elevation'). Although, the removal of the modified and dilapidated wings will result in a loss of original fabric their replacement with sensitively designed new build can safeguard some of the key significances of the building (see paragraph 6.12).
- 7.4 The proposed new build that will create enclosed courtyards will better reveal the architectural interest and heritage significance of the building (through the restoration of the 'playgrounds'). The proposed garden will closely replicate the original design as understood from contemporary photos and although enclosed by a wall will still provide a sense of openness compared to the other spaces (the enclosed 'playgrounds'). The new build has also been sensitively designed to reflect the *hierarchy of function* that can be seen in the existing surviving remains but as is also evident from historic photos of the building (Figs. 13, 14 & 15) (i.e. at the same

- or lower height to other wings) ensuring the heritage significance is not adversely affected.
- 7.5 The retention of the staircase and the restoration of other key external features such as the original central tower lantern and weather vane will also better reveal the significance of the heritage asset and safeguard the architectural interest.
- 7.6 However, it is the historic associations and interest of the building that is chief to its significance. The three wings proposed for removal are not specifically associated with the historic interest of the building but they do form part of the 'whole'. Therefore, although their loss will adversely affect the level of survival of original fabric the historic interest will not be lost or harmed. The retention of the larger portion of the building will ensure that the historic interest is 'authentically' embodied within the surviving and restored fabric.
- 7.7 Authentic re-use of a heritage asset is often deemed the most appropriate means of ensuring its significance is safeguarded or better revealed. In the specific case of Allen House this is not possible and would be entirely undesirable. However, the proposed future use (residential) would not be incongruent with the historic use of the building and would not diminish the historic interest. Furthermore, the proposed scheme will ensure the long-term preservation of the building and the safeguarding of its heritage significance.

### ***Heritage statutes, policy and conclusions***

- 7.8 It is considered that the information contained within this report, the Design and Access Statement and supporting plans and elevations is sufficient to adequately inform the plan-making process (PPS5, Policy HE 2).
- 7.9 Furthermore, the level of detail contained within these reports is considered to be proportionate to the importance of the heritage assets potentially affected by the proposed development (PPS5, Policy HE 6).
- 7.10 This assessment has concluded that the proposed scheme will not result in substantial harm to, or total loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset. Therefore, it is deemed that the proposed scheme will not conflict with national or local heritage policy as contained within PPS5 and the Bristol Local Plan.
- 7.11 As highlighted in the introduction of this report an existing scheme of refurbishment work has already been permitted (planning permission and Listed Building Consent). Although the details of this permitted scheme are not discussed in this report it is the conclusion of this assessment that the proposed scheme will better

reveal and better safeguard the heritage significance of the building when compared to the existing permitted scheme.



## 8 REFERENCES

### ***Relevant Policy Documents***

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Bristol City Council, 1998, Ashley Down Conservation Area Enhancement Statement

Department of Communities and Local Government 2010, Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment;

Department of Communities and Local Government, Department of Culture Media and Sport & English Heritage 2010: Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Practice Guide;

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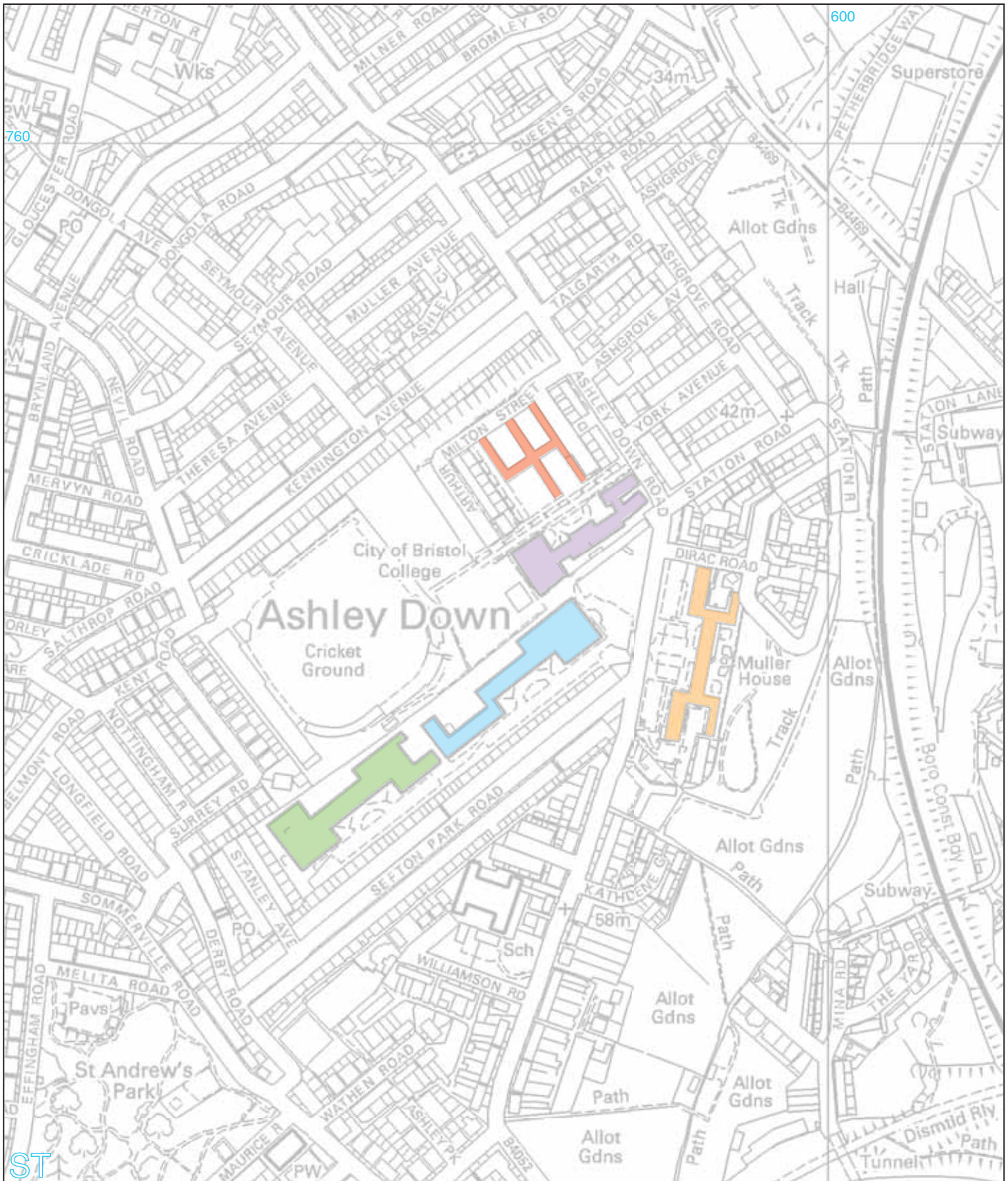
**PROJECT TITLE**  
 Allen House, Ashley Down, Bristol

**FIGURE TITLE**  
 Site location plan

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- Allen House, No. 1, 1849
- Brunel House, No. 2, 1857
- Muller House, No. 3, 1862
- Davy House, No. 4, 1868
- Cabot House, No. 5, 1870



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**PROJECT TITLE**

Allen House, Ashley Down, Bristol

**FIGURE TITLE**

**The site showing location of Allen House and the four other Orphan Houses**

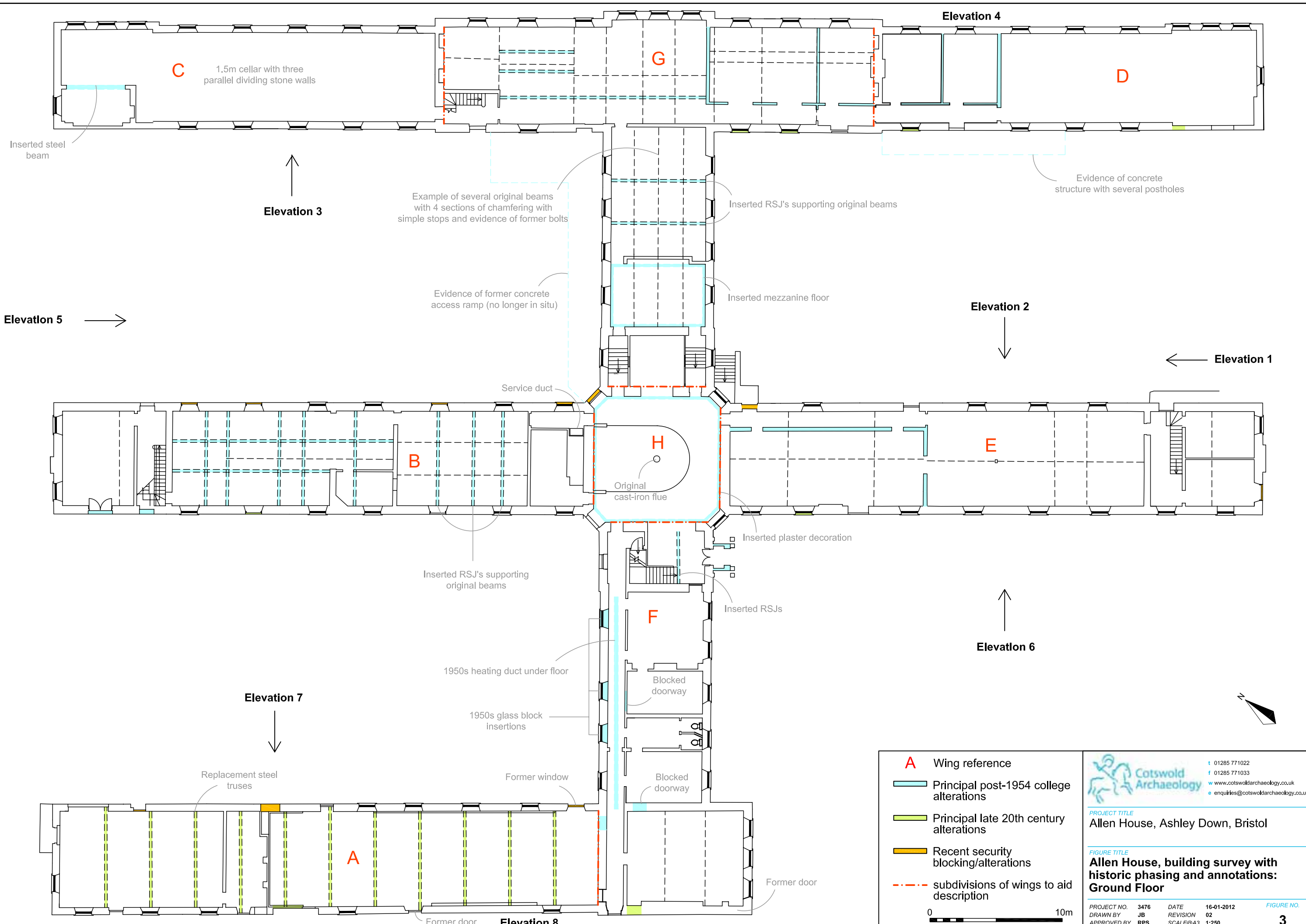
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FIGURE NO.

**2**





**C** 1.5m cellar with three parallel dividing stone walls

**Elevation 3**

**Elevation 4**

**D**

Inserted steel beam

Example of several original beams with 4 sections of chamfering with simple stops and evidence of former bolts

**G**

Inserted RSJ's supporting original beams

Evidence of concrete structure with several postholes

Evidence of former concrete access ramp (no longer in situ)

Inserted mezzanine floor

**Elevation 2**

**Elevation 5**

**Elevation 1**

Service duct

**H**

Original cast-iron flue

**E**

Inserted plaster decoration

Inserted RSJ's supporting original beams

Inserted RSJs

**Elevation 6**

1950s heating duct under floor

Blocked doorway

**Elevation 7**

1950s glass block insertions

Blocked doorway

Replacement steel trusses

Former window

**A**

Former door

Former door

**Elevation 8**

- A** Wing reference
- Principal post-1954 college alterations
- Principal late 20th century alterations
- Recent security blocking/alterations
- subdivisions of wings to aid description

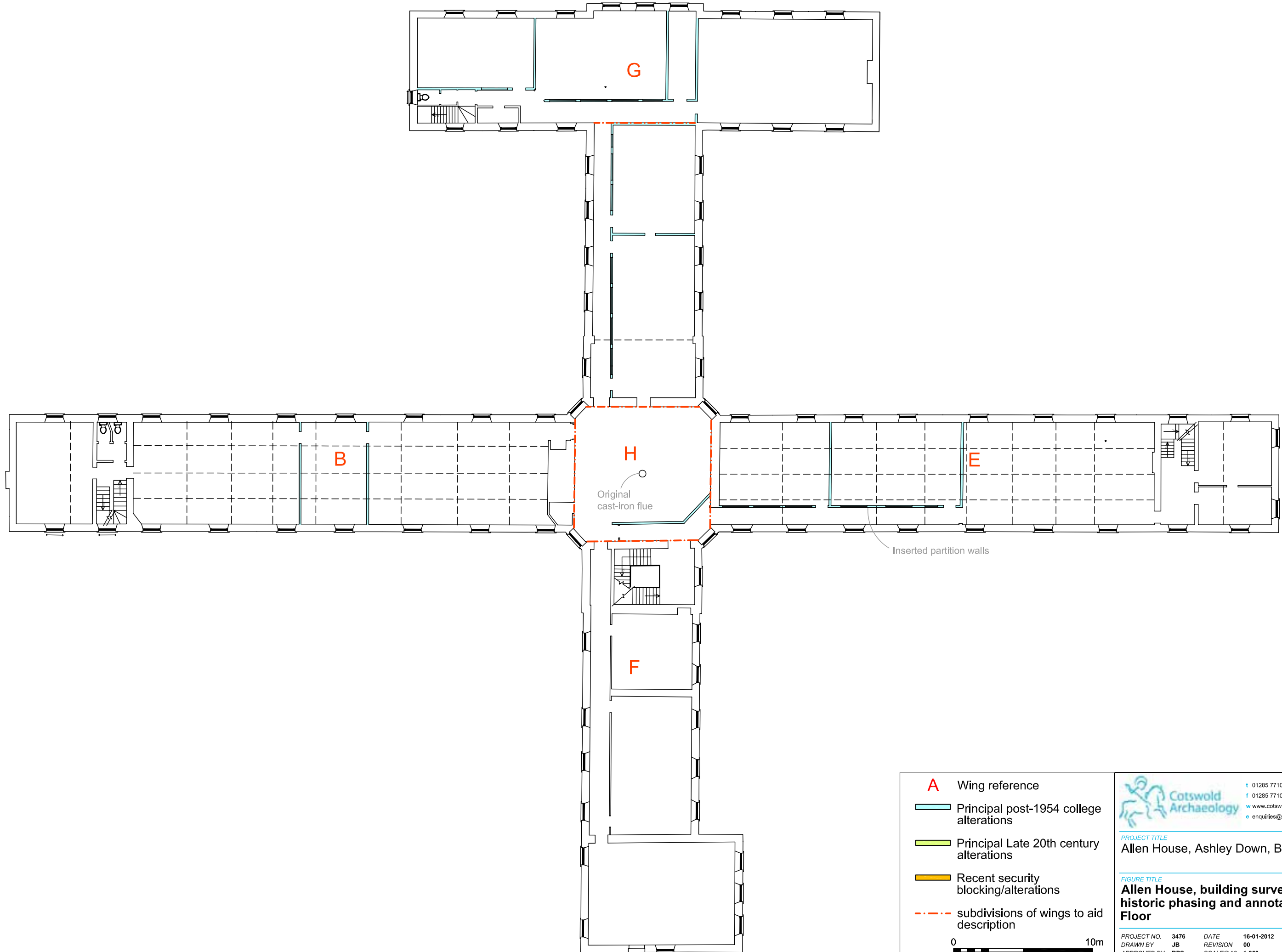


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**PROJECT TITLE**  
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**FIGURE TITLE**  
 Allen House, building survey with historic phasing and annotations:  
**Ground Floor**

|                  |                 |              |
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| PROJECT NO. 3476 | DATE 16-01-2012 | FIGURE NO. 3 |
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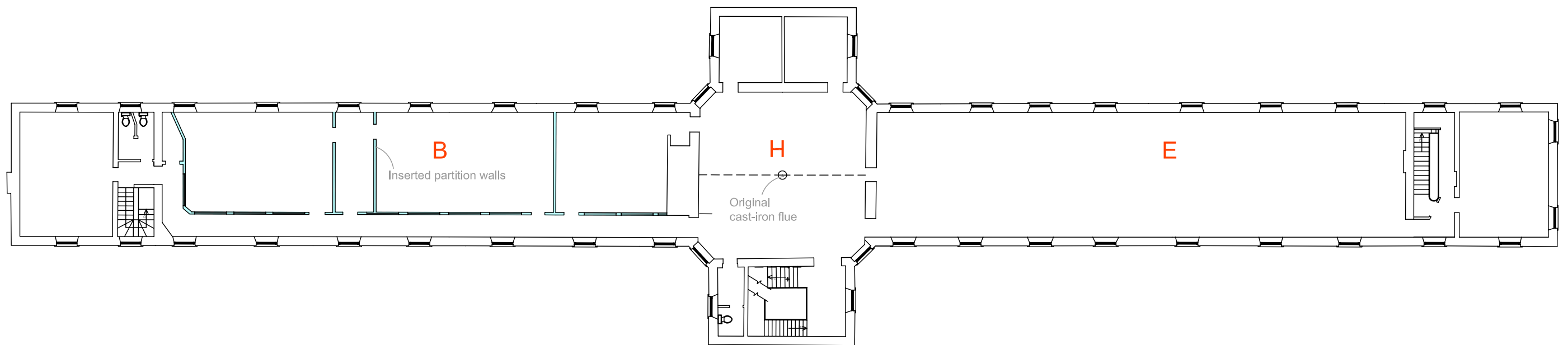
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  - Principal post-1954 college alterations
  - Principal Late 20th century alterations
  - Recent security blocking/alterations
  - - - subdivisions of wings to aid description
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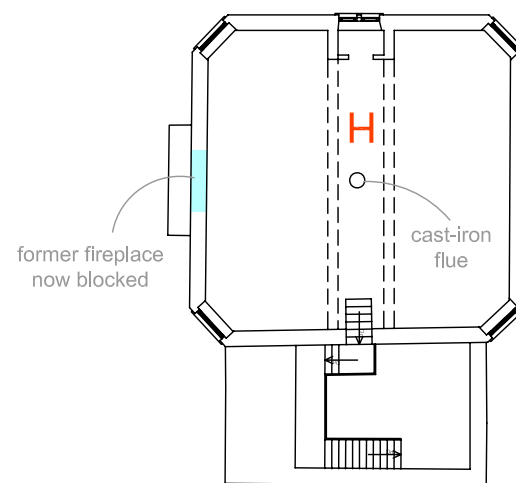
PROJECT TITLE  
**Allen House, Ashley Down, Bristol**

FIGURE TITLE  
**Allen House, building survey with historic phasing and annotations: First Floor**

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



Second Floor





Third floor


**A** Wing reference


 Principal post-1954 college alterations

 Principal Late 20th century alterations

 Recent security blocking/alterations

 subdivisions of wings to aid description

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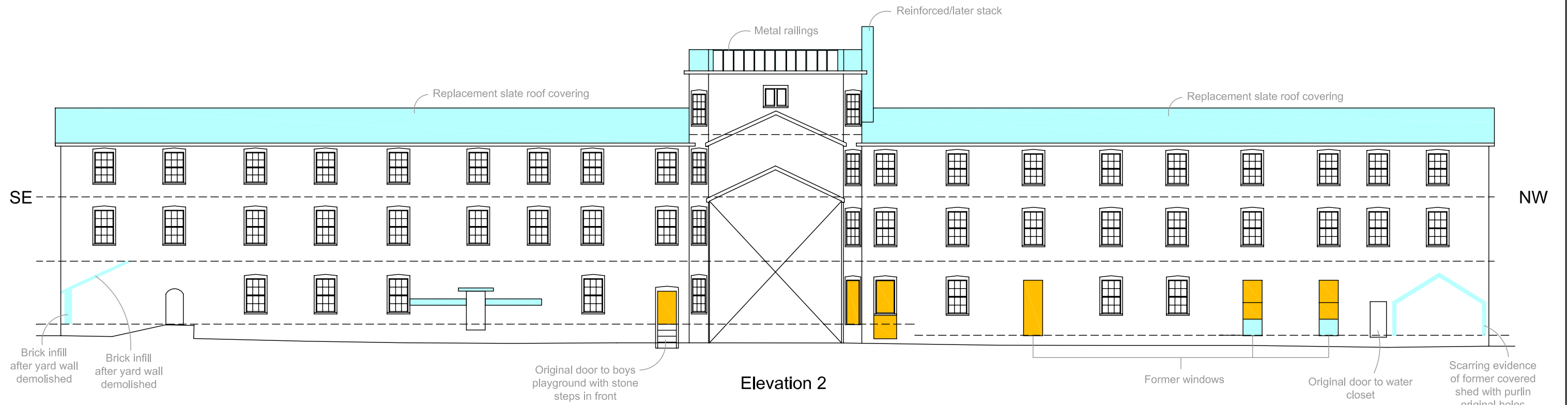
FIGURE TITLE  
**Allen House, building survey with historic phasing and annotations: Second and Third Floors**

PROJECT NO. 3476 DATE 16-01-2012 FIGURE NO.  
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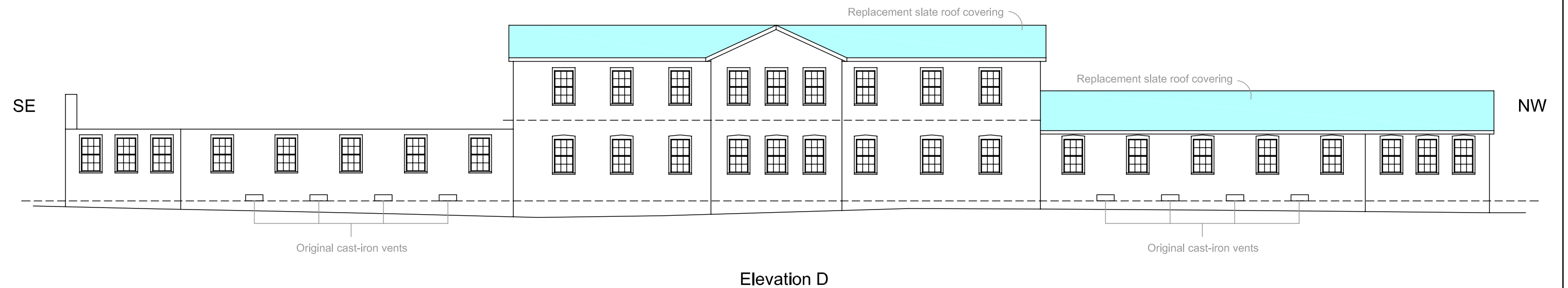
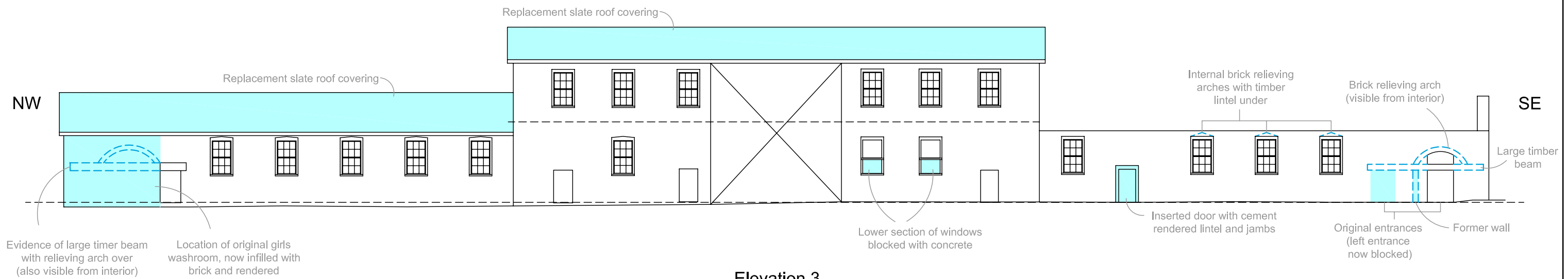



Elevation 1




Elevation 2

|   |                  |                 |  |                  |                 |            |             |             |          |                 |                |
|---|------------------|-----------------|--|------------------|-----------------|------------|-------------|-------------|----------|-----------------|----------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #ADD8E6; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> post-1954 college alterations</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #90EE90; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> late 20th century alterations</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #FFA500; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> recent security blocking/alterations</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; border-bottom: 1px dashed black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> structural details</li> </ul> |                  |                 | <p>             t 01285 771022<br/>             f 01285 771033<br/>             www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk<br/>             enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk           </p> <p> <b>PROJECT TITLE</b><br/>             Allen House, Ashley Down, Bristol           </p> <p> <b>FIGURE TITLE</b><br/>             Allen House, building survey. Elevation with historic phasing and annotations: Elevations 1 &amp; 2           </p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%; font-size: small;"> <tr> <td>PROJECT NO. 3476</td> <td>DATE 16-01-2012</td> <td>FIGURE NO.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DRAWN BY JB</td> <td>REVISION 00</td> <td rowspan="2" style="text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;"><b>6</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>APPROVED BY RPS</td> <td>SCALE@A3 1:250</td> </tr> </table> | PROJECT NO. 3476 | DATE 16-01-2012 | FIGURE NO. | DRAWN BY JB | REVISION 00 | <b>6</b> | APPROVED BY RPS | SCALE@A3 1:250 |
|   | PROJECT NO. 3476 | DATE 16-01-2012 |  | FIGURE NO.       |                 |            |             |             |          |                 |                |
|   | DRAWN BY JB      | REVISION 00     |  | <b>6</b>         |                 |            |             |             |          |                 |                |
|   | APPROVED BY RPS  | SCALE@A3 1:250  |  |                  |                 |            |             |             |          |                 |                |

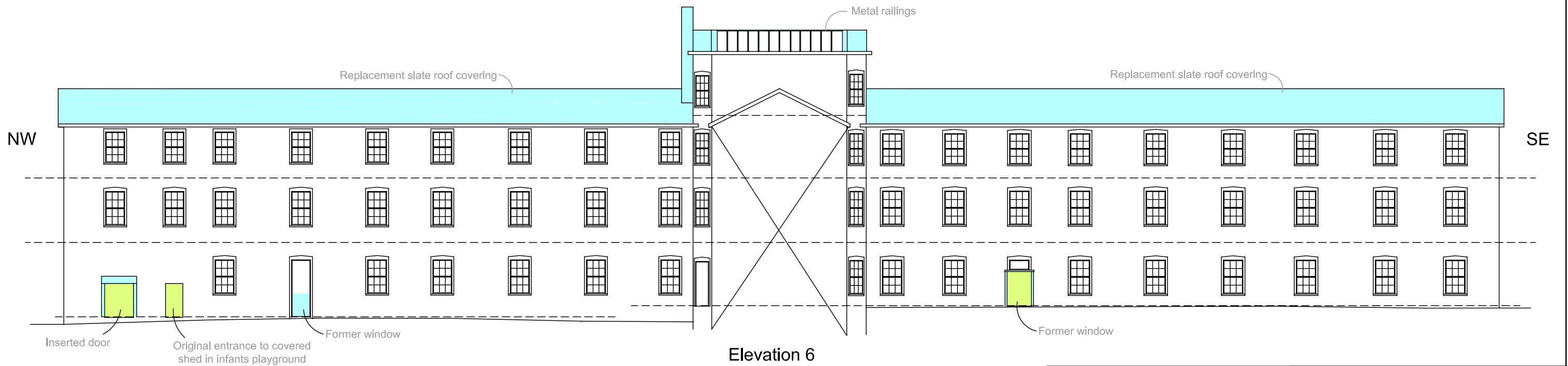


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|---|--|--|--|
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|   | PROJECT TITLE<br><b>Allen House, Ashley Down, Bristol</b>  |  |  |
|   | FIGURE TITLE<br><b>Allen House, building survey. Elevation with historic phasing and annotations: Elevations 3 &amp; 4</b> |  |  |
|   | PROJECT NO. 3476<br>DRAWN BY JB<br>APPROVED BY RPS   | DATE 16-01-2012<br>REVISION 00<br>SCALE@A3 1:250 | FIGURE NO.<br><b>7</b>   |

0  10m



Elevation 5



Elevation 6

- post-1954 college alterations
- late 20th century alterations
- recent security blocking/alterations
- structural details




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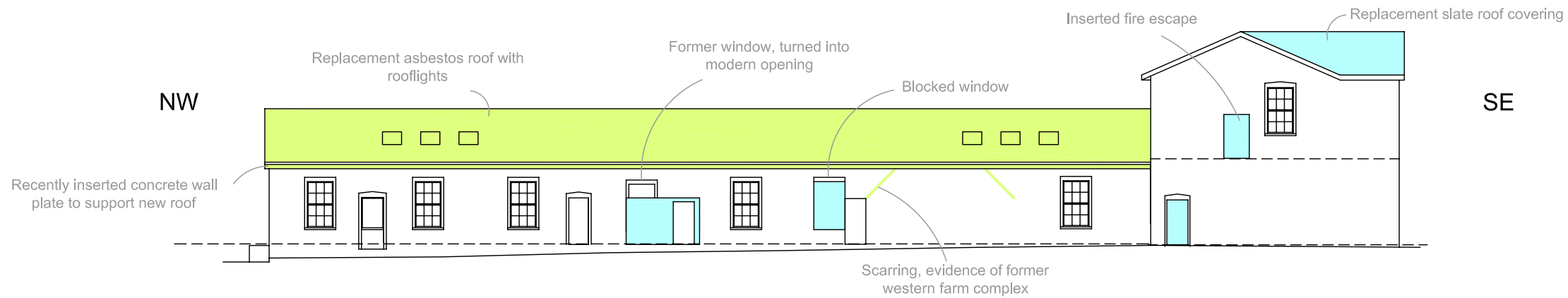
PROJECT TITLE  
**Allen House, Ashley Down, Bristol**

FIGURE TITLE  
**Allen House, building survey. Elevation with historic phasing and annotations: Elevations 5 & 6**


|                  |                 |            |
|------------------|-----------------|------------|
| PROJECT NO. 3476 | DATE 16-01-2012 | FIGURE NO. |
| DRAWN BY JB      | REVISION 00     | 8          |
| APPROVED BY RPS  | SCALE@A3 1:250  |            |



Elevation 7

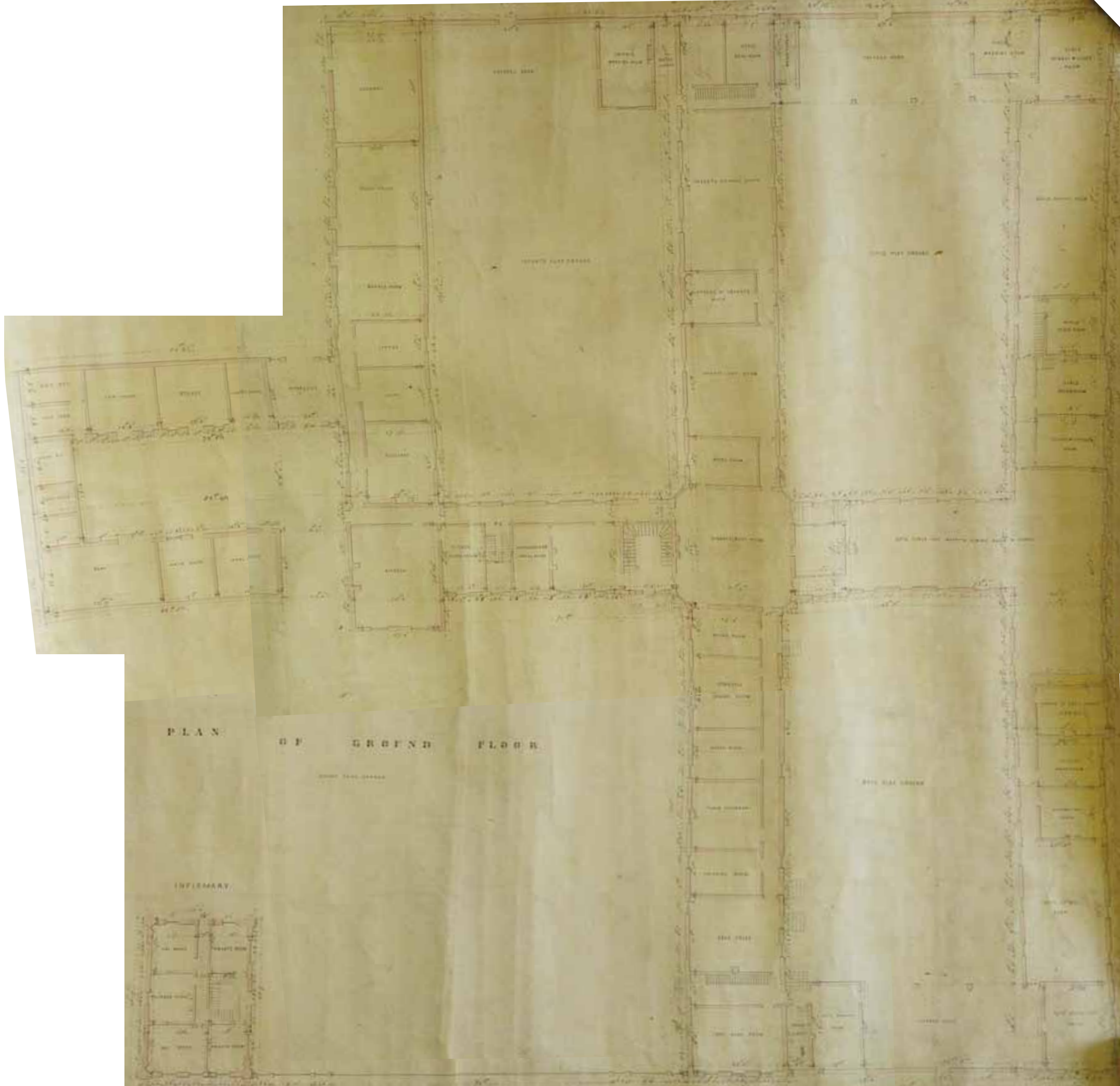


Elevation 8

|   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
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|   | PROJECT NO. 3476<br>DRAWN BY JB<br>APPROVED BY RPS   | DATE 16-01-2012<br>REVISION 00<br>SCALE@A3 1:250 | FIGURE NO.<br><b>9</b>   |





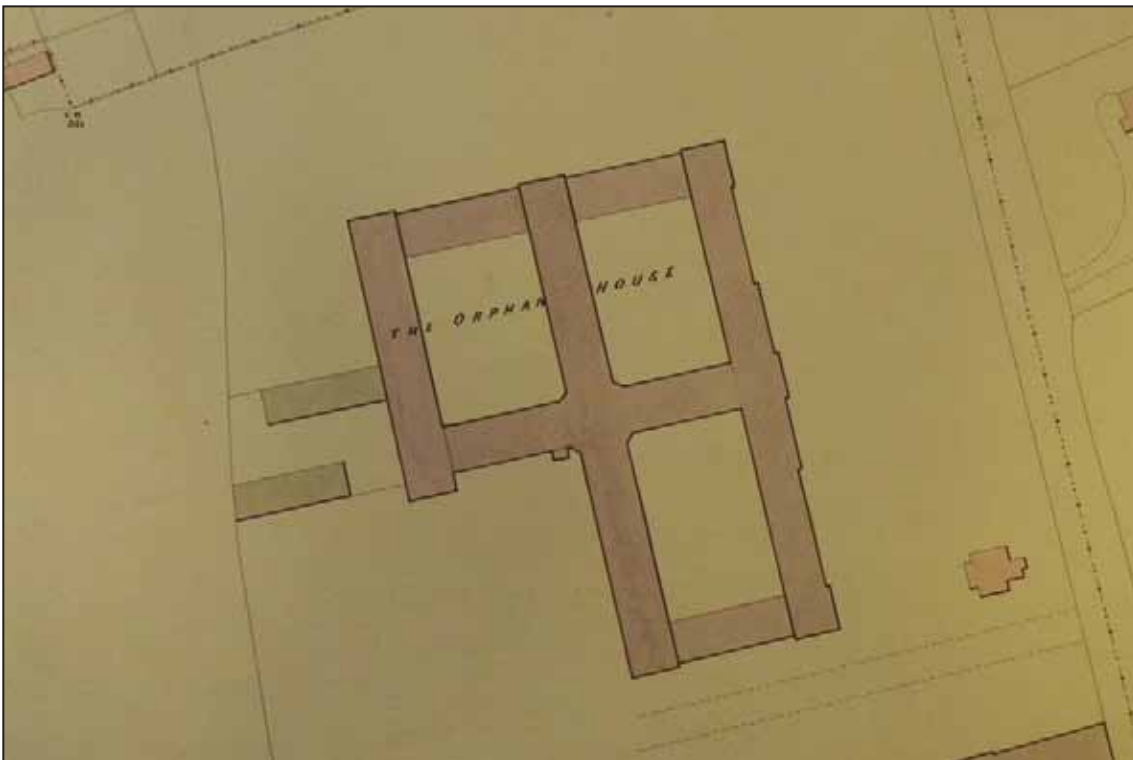


PROJECT TITLE  
 Allen House, Ashley Down, Bristol

FIGURE TITLE  
**Foster & Sons proposed drawing for Allen House, ground floor c.1840s. Drawing depicts proposed room functions**



11



12

**11 2006 Aerial Photograph of Allen House showing post-war infill within playground areas (© 2011 Getmapping plc)**

**12 1855 Ashmead Survey Plan. Earliest plan of Allen House showing now demolished covered sheds, farm buildings (west) and lodge (south-east)**



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PROJECT TITLE

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FIGURE TITLE

**Aerial photograph (2006) and Ashmead Survey Plan (1855)**

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FIGURE NO.

**11-12**



South-facing historic photograph of Allen House entrance and formal gardens, looking north. c.1850s. Photograph depicts original lantern chimneys, farm buildings and portico with lamp over



Historic photograph of Allen House entrance and north-east wing, looking north. Photograph depicts original lantern, chimneys, roof and the north-east covered shed between Wings D and E



Historic photograph of Allen House north-east elevation, looking south. Photograph depicts two-storey chapel on north-east elevation, single storey gabled pavilions on north and south ends, and two northerly covered sheds. See fig. 7 for elevation 4 and fig. 20 for photograph of elevation 4 (may 2011)



Augustus Francke's Orphan House, Halle, Germany built in 1698. Francke established this orphanage and charity school for for the education of poor children. George Muller spent two months living here, whilst studying in Halle in the mid-19th century.



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PROJECT TITLE

Allen House, Ashley Down, Bristol

FIGURE TITLE

**Image of Augustus Francke's Orphan House, Halle, Germany, c. 18th century**

PROJECT NO. 3476 DATE 16-01-2012  
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APPROVED BY RPS SCALE@A4 N/A

FIGURE NO.

**16**



- A** Wing reference
- - - -** subdivision of wings to aid description
- fig** photograph taken on ground floor
- fig** photograph taken on first floor
- fig** photograph taken on second floor
- fig** photograph taken on third floor


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PROJECT TITLE  
 Allen House, Ashley Down, Bristol

FIGURE TITLE  
 Direction and location of photographs



18



19



20



21

- 18 Wing B and Former Infants Playground, looking east
- 19 Wing C and Former Girls Playground, looking south-east
- 20 Wing C, north-east elevation looking south showing former chapel and side wings
- 21 Wing D, north-east elevation, south end looking west (scale 2m)





22



23



24



25

22 Entrance to Allen House, looking north (scale 2m). See fig 13 for original entrance

23 Wing B, north end of east elevation looking south. Scarring evidence of former covered shed with holes for timber purlins

24 Wing C, north end, west elevation looking north-east. Evidence of large timber beam, partially concealed behind later render (scale 2m)

25 Wing A, facing north, showing inserted steel roof (scale 2m)



26



27



28



29

26 Wing G, first floor, looking north  
Showing a typical example of  
post-war inserted partition walls  
(scale 2m)

27 Wing F, main staircase leading to  
third floor, looking north-west.  
Showing original staircase and newel  
posts with post-war infill

28 Wing B, first floor looking north.  
Showing boxed-in RSJ's supporting  
older beams

29 Wing H (central tower), third  
floor, looking north-east.  
Showing two beams supporting  
the lantern



30



31



32

- 30 Wing H (central tower) first floor looking east. Showing detail of cast iron heating flue (scale 2m)
- 31 Wing H (central tower) ground floor looking north. Showing cast iron heating flue and boxed-in platform (scale 2m)
- 32 Historic photograph of 'Disbursement Room' (Wing H) ground floor, looking north. Showing cast iron heating flue with staff around central table, c.late 19th century