

1-8 St. Clements' Gardens, Cambridge

Historic Building Recording



Alison Dickens and Richard Newman

1-8 St. Clement's Gardens, Thompson's Lane, Cambridge

Historic Building Recording

Alison Dickens and Richard Newman

With photography by Dave Webb
and graphics by John Moller

© **Cambridge Archaeological Unit**
University of Cambridge
Division of Archaeology
March 2016

Report No. 1330
ECB 4386

Summary

No's 1-8 St Clement's Gardens comprise a terrace of eight Edwardian townhouses that were constructed on the east side of Thompson's Lane in 1911. Arranged over three floors, each property originally contained five bedrooms (two of which were probably intended for servants); as such, they are typical of houses of the middle class of the period, but somewhat untypical of the part of Cambridge in which they were located. A number of original features were recorded. From 1971 onwards the properties were acquired piecemeal by Trinity Hall College, who converted them into student accommodation.

Introduction

This report presents the results of a historic building survey that was conducted by the Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) at No's 1-8 St Clement's Gardens, Thompson's Lane, Cambridge (Figure 1), on the 1st of October 2014. The site is subsequently to be redeveloped as WYNG Gardens by Trinity Hall College. In response to a brief issued by the Cambridge Historic Environment Team (Thomas 2014) a written scheme of investigation was prepared (Dickens 2014). This specified that a Level 2 building survey was required. A Level 2 survey consists of an illustrated record in which both the exterior and interior will be viewed, described and illustrated; conclusions will be presented, but detailed descriptions will not be provided (Mengue 2006, 14; Bedford and Papworth 2010, 31). Throughout the following account, architectural terminology follows Lever and Harris (1993). Beacon Planning prepared a Heritage Statement for the buildings at an earlier stage of the project (Beacon 2014).

Landscape context

In the most recent historic core appraisal, No's 1-8 St Clement's Gardens were defined as 'positive buildings'; that is, structures of local significance that make a positive contribution to the appearance of an area (Cambridge City Council 2015, 4). In addition, the buildings are located within the Central Conservation Area of Cambridge. A number of Grade II listed buildings are present in the vicinity, the closest of which comprise the early to mid-19th-century houses at 29-31 Thompson's Lane and the Old Vicarage, which is late 16th/early 17th century in date. Today the surrounding area is primarily characterised by urban development, particularly domestic housing. Historically, however, Thompson's Lane comprised part of a bustling waterfront zone (Cam 1934, 43; Bryan 1999, 32-3). The historic background of the site is discussed in greater depth in the desk-based archaeological assessment (Newman 2013) and the setting of the buildings in the Heritage Statement (Beacon 2014).

Historic building record

As specified for a Level 2 survey, the record is primarily illustrative; it consists of measured plans and elevations (Figures 2-5) plus a detailed photographic archive (from which Figures 6-21 have been selected). The following text provides a brief overview of the most salient points of interest.

Materials and construction

As is typical for buildings of their date and status, No's 1-8 St. Clement's Gardens were primarily constructed in red brick with machine-made red plain tiled false mansard roofs (Figures 2, 6 and 7). Portions of their exterior were

also rendered. Consistent with their relatively nondescript appearance, the materials and methods of construction used were generally un-noteworthy. In addition, there was a high degree of uniformity between the eight properties; a pattern that is typical of a speculative development.

Layout

In terms of design, the houses in the terrace were arranged symmetrically into four sets of mirrored pairs, with each pair being identical in size and layout to its neighbours (Figures 3-5). Arranged over three storeys, each individual property represented a typical middle-class dwelling of the Edwardian period. On the ground floor, an entrance hall led to both a front parlour/drawing room (measuring 3.9m by 3.6m with an additional bay window) and rear parlour/dining room (measuring 3.3m by 3.3m), each with their own fireplace. To the rear of the building was a kitchen (measuring 3.9m by 3.5m) and scullery (measuring 3.5m by 3.3m) that were separated by a central double-flued chimney (Figure 3).

A similar layout was replicated on the first floor, where three bedrooms were located (Figure 4). The master bedroom, at the front of the house, was the largest (measuring 5.1m by 3.6m with an additional bay window); the two remaining bedrooms measured 3.3m by 3.3m each. Also present on this floor was an indoor bathroom with separate toilet. Although no original fittings remained, both the bathroom and toilet appear to have been integral to the initial design and are a further indicator of the middle class status of the original build.

Finally, the second storey was smaller than the others (Figure 5) and had a lower ceiling height. Here, the largest bedroom at the front of the house had a dormer window and a partially sloping ceiling; it measured 5.3m by 3.4m in extent. The second bedroom measured 3.3m by 3.3m. To the rear were two much smaller rooms, one of which now houses a toilet and may well have originally been designed for this purpose. The final room at the back is too small to have served as accommodation (being only 1.8m by 1.8m); it may have functioned as a store room or linen cupboard. When the houses were first constructed this floor is likely to have primarily been occupied by servants (such as a cook, scullery maid and/or nanny). Nevertheless, it contained some decorative elements; most notably a decorated support arch that spanned the landing at the top of the each set of stairs (Figure 21).

Original features

Up until their acquisition by Trinity Hall in the early 1970s, only relatively minor modifications appear to have been undertaken to the properties

(consistent with a typical pattern of gradual, piecemeal modernisation). Subsequently, however, the buildings were transformed from domestic to institutional use. As well as a substantial increase in the overall quantity of accommodation – the original 40 bedrooms, including servants' quarters, were increased to 66, for example – this transformation also required modifications to meet particular health and safety requirements, such as the provision of adequate fire escapes. This led to substantial changes in the original fabric, including the removal of many original fixtures and fittings and the addition of numerous internal stud walls, as well as the construction of several extensions; most notably, those infilling former yard spaces on the ground floor (Figures 3 and 8).

The most extensive modifications were made to No's 1-3, the first properties that the college acquired. The best-preserved structure was No. 8, which for much of the 20th century had been used as offices and hence may not have required the same degree of gradual modernisation as a domestic property.

Despite the extent of the various alterations a number of original features did survive. These were widely scattered across the various properties and only the most representative and/or best-preserved have been selected for illustration. Examples include fireplaces and fire surrounds (Figures 14-16), staircases (Figure 17), wooden panelling (Figure 18), cupboards (Figure 19A), doors (Figure 20) and decorated supporting arches (Figure 21). In general, these features were highly typical of the period immediately before World War One. Decorative elements were neither as ornate as those of the preceding *Art Nouveau* era nor as streamlined as those of the succeeding *Art Deco* period.

Documentary sources

The former garden upon which the houses were erected was first established by John Purchas in 1791 to accompany the construction of a row of Georgian townhouses on the opposite side of Thompson's Lane (Faber 2006, 88). The garden subsequently passed through a variety of owners, including Swann Hurrell, a two-time mayor of Cambridge, until in 1910 it belonged to one Herbert Edward Gray. It appears that Gray sold the site on shortly after this and it was the new owner who developed it.

The Heritage Statement (Beacon 2014: 7) identifies that the former garden plot was developed by a Mr Bulmer, who was given permission to erect 11 terraced houses in 1911. The other three (21-22a Portugal Place on the eastern side of the former garden) are virtually identical in style. The houses were designed by G. P. Banyard, a local architect, perhaps best known for his work on the Central and Tivoli cinemas in Cambridge.

Construction also commenced in 1911. Spalding’s Directory of Cambridge for that year described the plot as ‘building land’. By 1912 work upon the houses had been completed, but only five were occupied; by 1913, all eight were inhabited (the names of these individuals are recorded in Table 1, below). In the first instance, seven of the properties appear to have been used domestically while the eighth functioned as University offices (it is unclear to what extent, if any, the structure was modified for this use). Lodging undergraduates outside colleges has a long history in Cambridge, and was a common practice in the early 20th century (Holbrook 2006).

No.	Name of occupier	Occupation	Occupied in 1912?
1	Harper, John Percival	Plumber	Yes
2	Wallis, Miss	-	No
3	Cole, William	-	No
4	Hayward, Miss	-	No
5	Henwood, Rev. A. D., M. A	Curate of Holy Trinity	Yes
6	Taylor, Arthur James	Cabinet maker	Yes
7	Wood, Harry	-	Yes
8	Southcott, T.	Offices of the University Lodging House Syndicate	Yes

Table 1: Names of occupiers of No’s 1-8 St Clement’s Gardens in 1913, as recorded in Spalding’s Directory

Where recorded, the occupations of the residents appear consistent with the middle-class design of the architecture and a similar pattern of primarily domestic use continued until 1971, when Trinity Hall purchased No’s 1-3. Over the next few years, the college also acquired the remaining properties in the terrace on a piecemeal basis and eventually converted them all into student accommodation.

Discussion

Architecturally, the buildings themselves are of very limited interest; a point that was raised by Nikolaus Pevsner when he described the terrace as “a deplorable intrusion of the national speculative-builders-between-the-wars-style” (Pevsner 1986, 254). More recently they were referred to as ‘that seaside stucco row of villas down Thompson’s Lane’ (Payne 1983). Historically, however, they tell a rather eloquent story of the development of this portion of Cambridge. In 1533, when St John’s College purchased the previously relatively little-used site, they undertook a speculative development involving the erection of ten small tenements (Underwood 1993, 173; Faber 2006, 89; Newman 2013, 10; Cessford *in prep.*). This was very much in keeping with the nature of the surrounding area, which at the time

comprised a bustling waterfront zone containing a mixture of domestic and commercial premises. These tenements remained in use until 1791, when the site was cleared in order to make way for a formal garden (Faber 2006, 88). This change was associated with the gradual gentrification of the area; although riverfront activity continued, an increasing number of higher status properties were now being established in the vicinity.

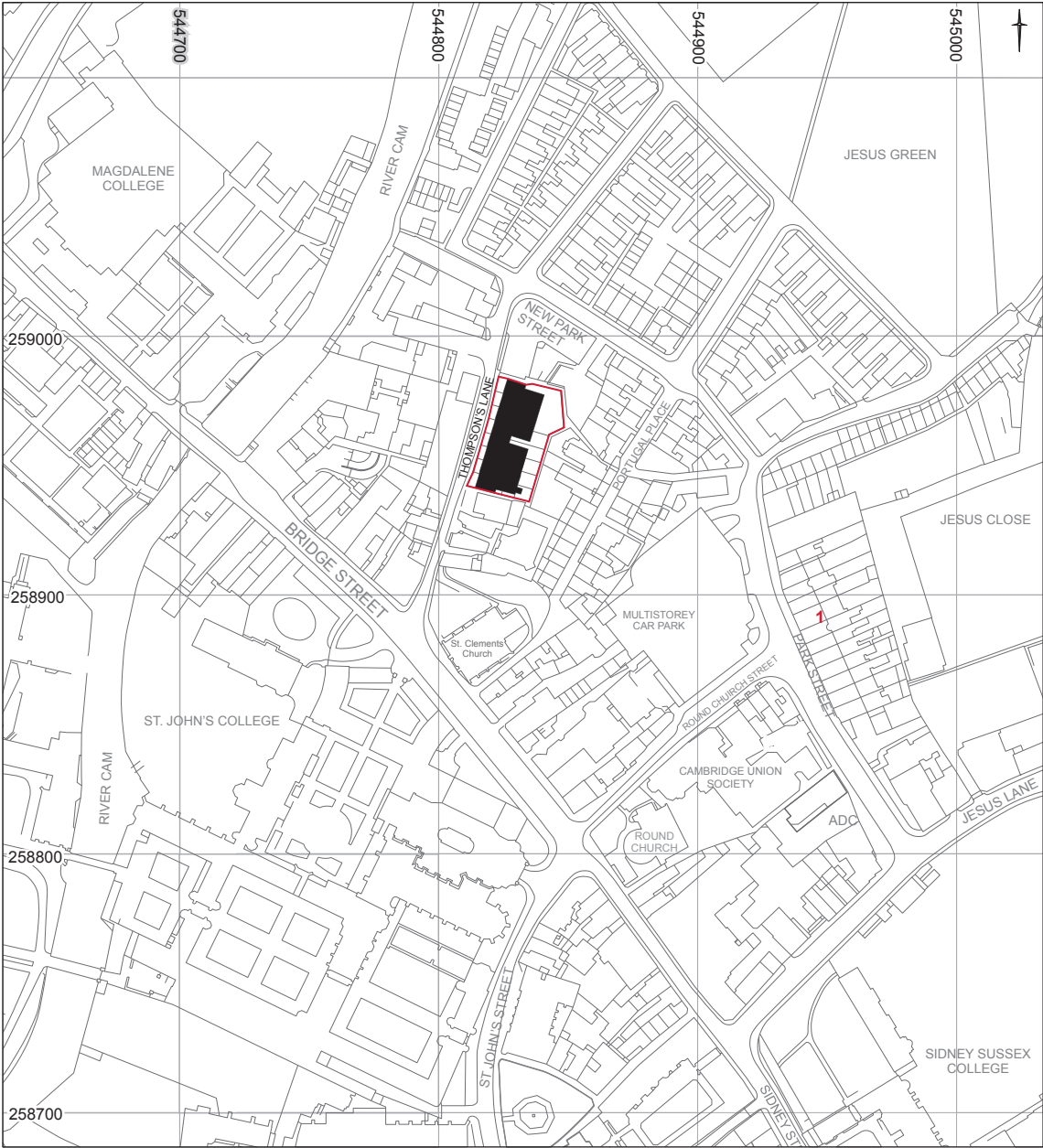
By the beginning of the 20th century, the balance of use of the area shifted once again. Riverfront activity declined and urban villas were no longer considered as desirable as those situated in the suburbs. At this time, the garden was replaced by a second phase of speculative development. In contrast to the preceding tenements, however, the newly-erected housing was intended for members of the emergent middle class. Provision was made for the accommodation of servants and the households would have been relatively expensive to maintain, especially in comparison to the multitude of two-up two-down terraces that were then being constructed elsewhere in Cambridge. Yet by the mid-20th century the properties had become very dated; servants were no longer common and an ever greater proportion of the middle class population had now relocated to the suburbs. As a result, the spacious properties were ideal for conversion into college accommodation. This final development in the site's history reflects the growing economic importance of the university in the town.

Acknowledgements

This project was commissioned by Trinity Hall, Cambridge, in advance of redevelopment. It was managed for the CAU by Alison Dickens, who also conducted the on-site recording. A detailed photographic archive was compiled by Dave Webb and the graphics for this report were prepared by Alison Dickens and John Moller. We are grateful to John Pearson of Bidwells and Russell Waller, Head of Buildings and Services at Trinity Hall, for their friendly co-operation and also the college archivist, Dr John Pollard, and the staff of the County Records Office.

Bibliography

- Beacon Planning 2014 *Heritage Statement: St Clement's Gardens Thompson's Lane* 12-1005 Planning Document
- Bedford, J. and Papworth, H. (ed's) 2010. *Measured and Drawn: Techniques and practice for the metric survey of historic buildings*. Swindon: English Heritage
- Bryan, P. 1999. *Cambridge: the shaping of the city*. Cambridge: privately printed
- Cam, H. 1934. 'The Origin of the Borough of Cambridge: A Consideration of Professor Carl Stephenson's Theories', in *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society* 35, 33-53
- Cambridge City Council, 2015. *Historic Core Appraisal*. <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/sites/default/files/docs/historic-core-appraisal> [accessed 07-03-2016]
- Cessford, C. in prep. *WYNG Gardens, Thompson's Lane, Cambridge: an Archaeological Excavation*. Cambridge Archaeological Unit Report
- Dickens, A. 1996. *A Written Scheme of Investigation for Historic Building Recording at 1-8 St Clement's Gardens, Thompson's Lane, Cambridge*. Unpublished Cambridge Archaeological Unit document
- Faber, T. E. 2006. *An intimate history of the parish of St. Clement in Cambridge, 1250 -1950*. Cambridge: privately printed
- Holbrook, M. 2006. *Where do you keep? Lodging the Cambridge undergraduate*. Great Malvern: Capella Archive
- Lever, J. and Harris, J. 1993. *Illustrated Dictionary of Architecture 800-1914* (2nd edition). London: Faber & Faber
- Mengue, A. (ed) 2006. *Understanding Historic Buildings: a Guide to Good Practice*. Swindon: English Heritage
- Newman, R. 2013. *1-8 St Clement's Gardens, Cambridge: an archaeological desk-based assessment and deposit model*. Cambridge Archaeological Unit Report No. 1168
- Payne, S. 1983 *Down Your Street: Cambridge Past and Present Vol. 1 Central Cambridge* Cambridge: Pevensey Press.
- Pevsner, N. 1986. *The Buildings of England: Cambridgeshire* (2nd edition). London: Penguin
- Thomas, D. 2014. *Brief for Archaeological Evaluation and Historic Building Recording: St Clements Garden, 1-8 Thompsons Lane, Cambridge*. CHET Cambridgeshire County Council
- Underwood, M. 1993. 'The impact of St. John's College as Landowner in the West Fields of Cambridge in the Early Sixteenth Century', in Zutshi, P. (ed.) *Medieval Cambridge: Essays on the Pre-Reformation University*. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 167-88

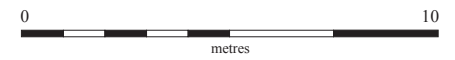


- St Clement's Gardens Development area
- Buildings Recorded

Figure 1. Location map



Figure 2. Front Elevation at 1-8 St Clements Gardens



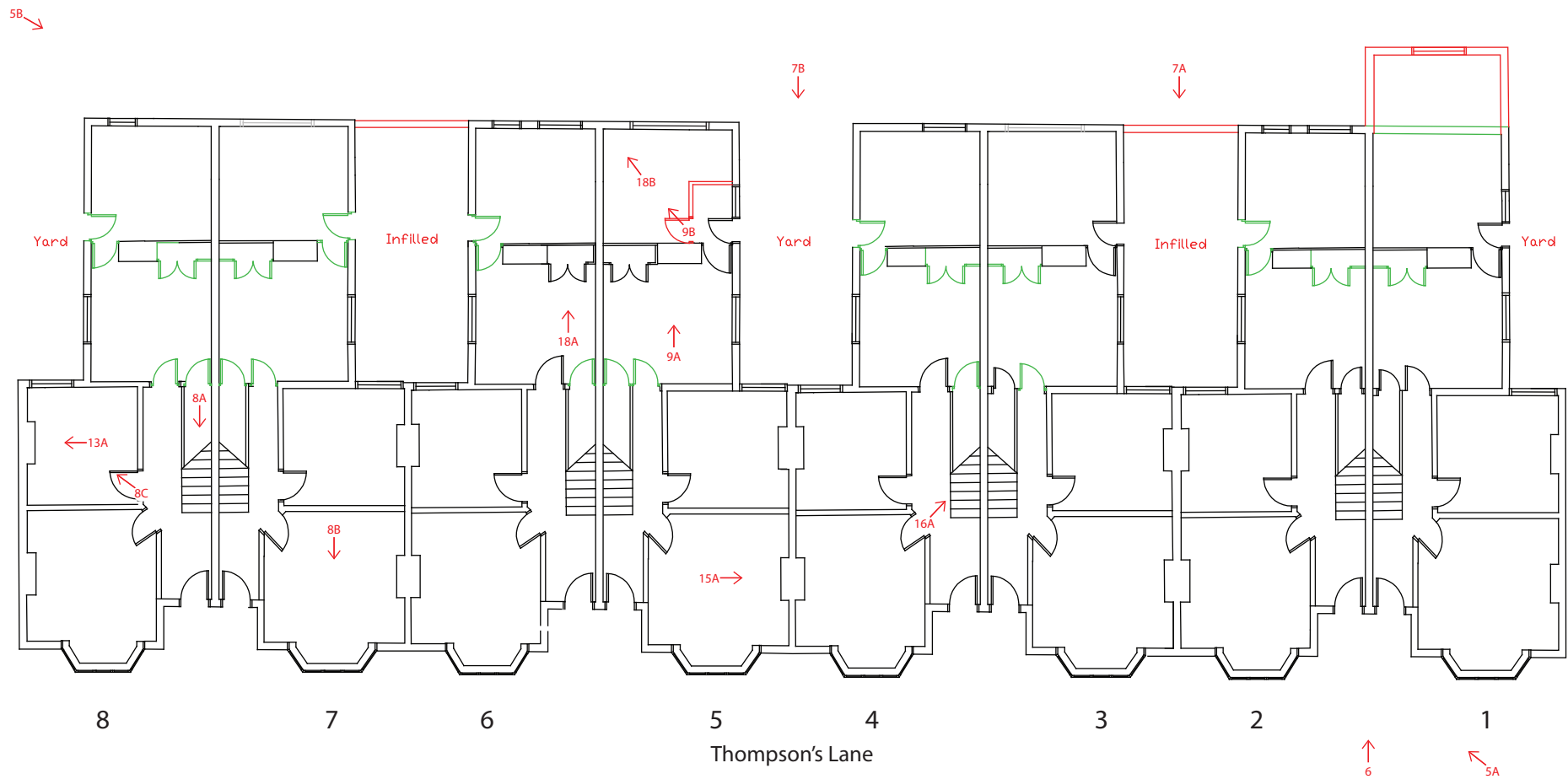



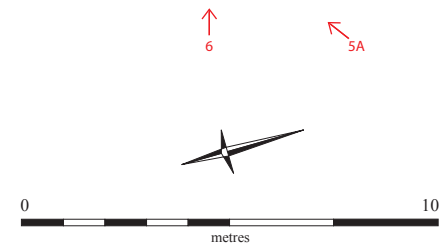


Figure 3. Ground Floor Plan at 1-8 St Clements Gardens

	Modern (post 1971)
	Reconstructed original feature/layout
	Figure number and direction of view



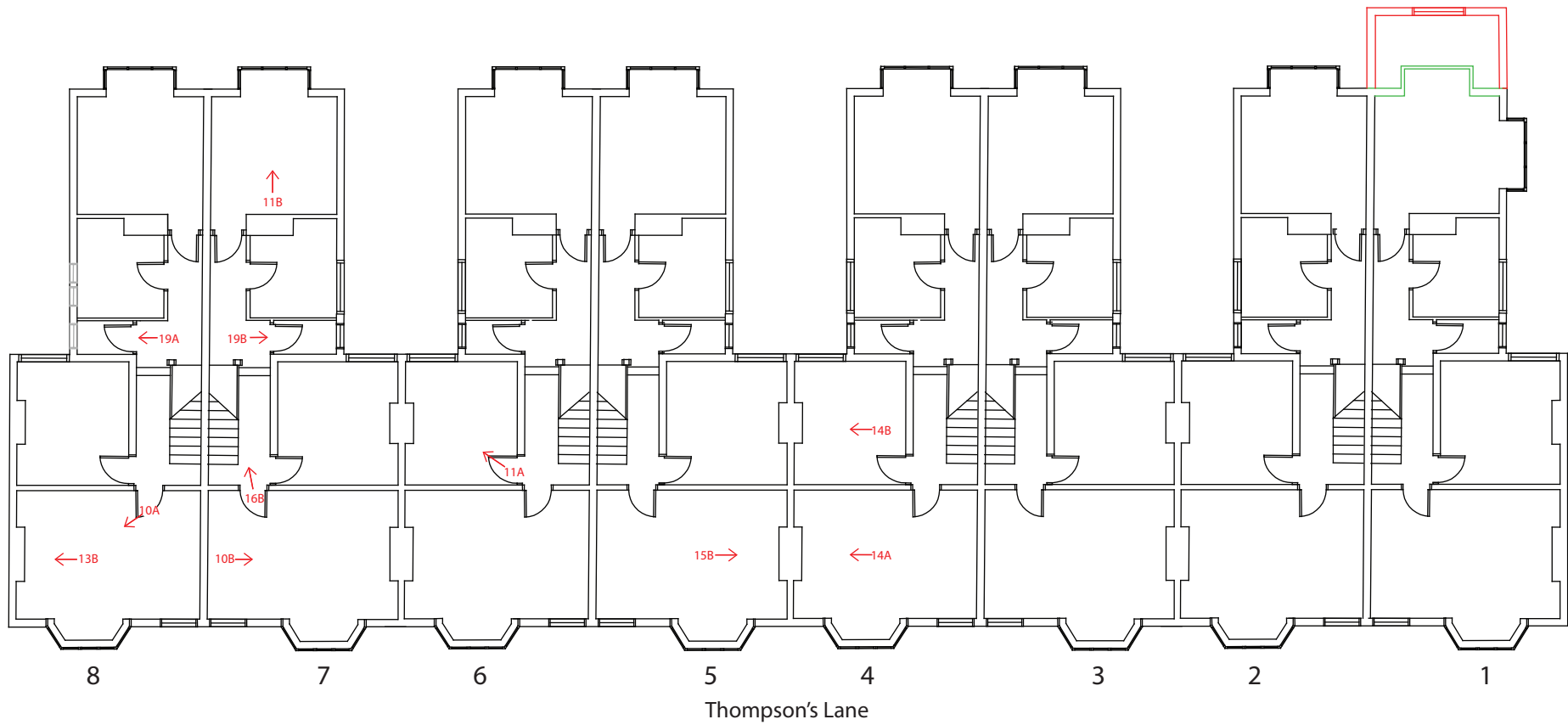



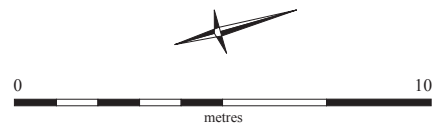


Figure 4. First Floor Plan at 1-8 St Clements Gardens

 Modern (post 1971)
 Reconstructed original feature/layout
 Figure number and direction of view



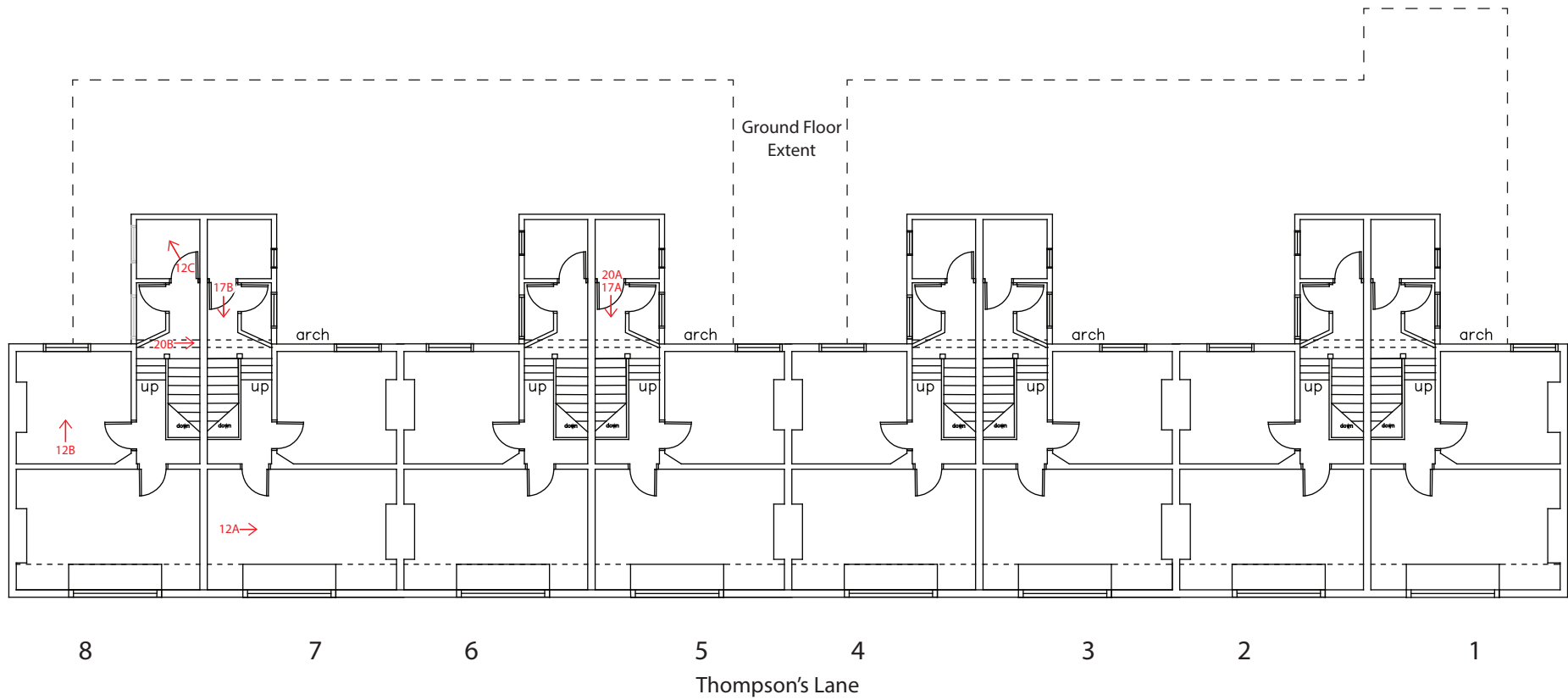


Figure 5. Second Floor Plan at 1-8 St Clements Gardens



Figure 5. The Front Elevation of 1-8 St Clements' Gardens, facing northeast (A) and the rear elevation, facing southwest (B)

A



B



Figure 7. Front elevation of No's 1-2, facing east (A) with inset detail of dual porch (B)

A



B



Figure 8. Rear elevation of No's 2-3, facing west, showing 1970s infill extension (A) and retained yard space between No's 4-5 (B), also facing west



Figure 9. Views of rooms on the ground floor, including the hallway of No. 8 (A), the front parlour of No. 7 (B) and the rear parlour of No. 8 (C)



Figure 10. Views of the former kitchen (A) and former scullery (B) in No. 5

A



B



Figure 11. Views of the master bedroom on the first floor of No. 8 (A) and No. 7 (B)

A



B



Figure 12. Views of the second bedroom on the first floor of No. 6 (A) and the rear bedroom on the first floor of No. 7 (B)

A



B



C



Figure 13. Views of the second storey, including the front bedroom of No. 7 (A) the rear bedroom of No. 8 (B) and the bathroom of No. 8 (C- formerly a linen closet?)

A



B



Figure 14. Detail of the fireplace in the rear parlour of No. 8 (A). The best preserved example in the terrace, this was the only remaining unblocked fireplace. The surround, which was also well-preserved, is different from those found in other properties, thereby providing a level of individuality. It is unclear whether the fires themselves varied to the same degree between houses; due to the cost involved, this appears less likely. In the master bedroom of No. 8 only the surround remains (B).

A



B



Figure 15. Details of the blocked fireplaces in the front parlour (A) and rear parlour (B) of No. 4.

A



B



Figure 16. Details of the matching fire surrounds in the front parlour (A) and master bedroom (B) of No. 5.

A



B



Figure 17. Staircase variations, showing : (A) the ground floor, No. 4 and (B) the first floor landing, No. 7.

A



B



Figure 18. Details of the original panelling on the second floor. In No. 5, the formerly open balustrade has been extended to ceiling height (A), whereas in No. 7 it remains open but has a watertank installed above (B).

A



B



Figure 19. Details of the original kitchen cupboard in No. 6 (A) and butler sink in the scullery of No. 5 (B).

A



B



Figure 20. Details of the first floor toilets in No. 8 (A), which retains the original door, and No. 7 (B), where the door has been panelled over.



Figure 21. A supporting arch was present on the second storey of all eight properties. Here, the best preserved example is shown (A, from No. 5) with an inset detail of the decorated stop from No. 8 (B).

Oasis Form

OASIS ID: cambridg3-245650	
Project details	
Project name	1-8 St Clement's Gardens
Short description of the project	No's 1-8 St Clement's Gardens comprise a terrace of eight Edwardian townhouses that were constructed in 1911. Arranged over three floors, each property originally contained five bedrooms (two of which were probably intended for servants); as such, they are typical of the houses of the middle class of the period. A number of original features were recorded. From 1971 onwards the properties were acquired piecemeal by Trinity Hall College, who converted them into student accommodation.
Project dates	Start: 01-10-2014 End: 01-10-2014
Previous/future work	No / Yes
Any associated project reference codes	ECB 4386 - HER event no.
Type of project	Building Recording
Site status	Conservation Area
Current Land use	Residential 2 - Institutional and communal accommodation
Monument type	BUILDING Modern
Significant Finds	N/A None
Methods & techniques	"Measured Survey", "Photographic Survey", "Survey/Recording Of Fabric/Structure"
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	CAMBRIDGESHIRE CAMBRIDGE CAMBRIDGE 1-8 St Clement's Gardens
Postcode	CB5 8AB
Study area	1117 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 44823 58965 52.209422909428 0.119798495073 52 12 33 N 000 07 11 E Point
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Alison Dickens
Project director/manager	Alison Dickens
Project supervisor	Richard Newman
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer

Name of sponsor/funding body	Trinity Hall college, Cambridge
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Cambridgeshire County Archaeology Store
Digital Archive ID	1-8 St Clement's Gardens
Digital Contents	"Survey"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Survey", "Text"
Paper Archive Exists?	No
Project bibliography	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	1-8 St Clement's Gardens, Cambridge: Historic Building Recording
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Dickens, A. and Newman, R.
Other bibliographic details	Cambridge Archaeological Unit Report No. 1330
Date	2016
Issuer or publisher	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Place of issue or publication	Cambridge
Description	An A4 spiral-bound document with a plastic laminate cover. It is 30 pages long and has 20 figures. Also a .PDF file
Entered by	Richard Newman (rn276@cam.ac.uk)
Entered on	14 March 2016