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The Boiler House, High School Wynd, Edinburgh

Level 2 Historic Building Survey
Report No. 3610

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**The Boiler House
High School Wynd, Edinburgh
Level 2 Historic Building Survey**

Report No. 3610

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Thumbnail Contact sheet: Bound at rear

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

This report presents the results of an Level 2 building survey undertaken by CFA Archaeology the boiler house, Old High School Wynd, Edinburgh (NGR:, Fig. 1) during November 2017. The work was commissioned by Crichton Lang, Willis & Galloway Architects acting on behalf of the University of Edinburgh. John Lawson at the City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service (CECAS) requested that a Level 2 building survey be carried out on the redundant boiler house prior to its change of use to modern offices.

During the conversion works an archaeological watching brief will be carried out to monitor groundbreaking work in order to fulfil the planning condition. The results of this work will form the subject of a separate report.

1.2 Background

The site lies at the heart of Edinburgh's medieval old town, a UNESCO World Heritage site, though it is outside the early medieval town limits. The site formed part of the Dominican (Black Friars) Friary, constructed in 1260 and dissolved during the mid 16th century Reformation. The site then formed part of the Old High School and Infirmary. The remains of the Dominican Friary along with its associated graveyard were discovered and excavated in 2013 across the yard in front of the boiler house. Since the 17th/18th centuries the site has had a shared history between the Old High School and Royal Infirmary and Surgeons Hall with the site being closely associated with medical teaching throughout the 19th century.

1.3 Objectives

The objectives of the programme of archaeological work described under this cover were:

1. To carry out a desk-based assessment and place the boiler house in its historical context
2. To carry out a Level 2 standing building survey supported by a descriptive narrative
3. To produce an illustrated Historic Building Survey report to include annotated plans, elevation drawings and photographs.

2. METHODS

2.1 General

CFA followed the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standards and Guidance and Code of Conduct. CFA based its recording levels described on those described in English Heritage (2016).

2.2 Desk-based Assessment

A rapid desk-based assessment was conducted prior to fieldwork, in order to collate relevant information on the historic development of the buildings. Sources included the National Monuments Record of Scotland, Statutory List and examination of early map coverage for the area including the Ordnance Survey maps of Edinburgh.

2.3 Historic Building Survey

Photographic Survey

CFA used a Nikon D300 to take digital photographs of buildings and specific architectural features. A photographic record was made of all internal and external elevations (Appendix 1). Selected representative images are incorporated into this report. A photographic location plan has been produced showing the orientation at which each photograph was taken (Fig. 3).

Standing Building Recording

CFA followed the *Descriptive Specification for Recording Historic Buildings* (English Heritage 2006). The Level 2 survey requirements are listed in Table 1.

Area	Measured survey	Photographic
Boiler House interior	Floor plans with annotations	Internal features including blocking work
Boiler House exterior	Architect's elevation drawings	External elevations

Table 1 list of building recording requirements

The architects 'as existing' floor plans were found to be suitable for the survey and these were annotated with internal Unit numbers. The external elevation drawings were also annotated and corrected as appropriate.

A written descriptive record of the building was made on pro-forma building recording forms and included a synthesis on the stone type, brick bond, blocking work and any other features of historical and architectural significance.

3. SURVEY RESULTS

3.1 Desk Based Assessment

Cartographic

The 1896 Ordnance Survey map (Fig 2a) shows the site of the boiler house was part of the City Fever Hospital. The boiler house is depicted as part of the hospital that has an inverted T footprint.

The 1908 Ordnance Survey map (Fig 2b) shows the City Fever Hospital was now part of the University of Edinburgh and the boiler house was detached from the main block. A small two compartment building is shown on its NE side along with the position of its chimney stack.

The 1933 Ordnance Survey map (Fig 2c) shows the boiler house with a single non-compartmentalised building on its NE side and the chimney stack is now not shown.

The 1953 Ordnance Survey map (Fig 2d) shows that the annex building on the west side of the boiler house was built after this year. The footprint of the boiler house is the same as that depicted in 1933.

Historic Environment Scotland Statutory List

The boiler house was a Category B listed building by association and was an integral part of the former site of the Hospital for Infectious Diseases (Listed Building 28000) situated on Drumond Street. The building was bought by the University of Edinburgh in 1904 and re-opened in 1906 as the Department of Natural Philosophy. It is now the Department of Geography. This building connected with the former classically designed Royal High School (LB27999) built in the 18th century. In 1832 it became a Surgical Hospital. In the 20th century it was used as the Universities of Edinburgh as a Dental school and later as the Department of Archaeology Building (1991-2011). It was later refurbished (2011-2013) as the Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation.

National Monuments Record of Scotland

The HES National Monument Record of Scotland does not contain a record for the boiler house. Record NT27SE 5931 describes a programme of archaeological work carried out by Headland Archaeology Ltd between March and May 2013 within High School Yards. A watching brief revealed limited evidence of early buildings to the rear of the Old High School but recorded a number of culverts to the front of the building. An excavation located near the front entrance of the building contained the remains of the Royal High School, as well as part of the Dominican Friary and associated graveyard. In total 95 burials were excavated, including one which had an elaborately carved grave slab.

Previous archaeological work

Excavation in the forecourt of High School Yards by AOC Archaeology in 2016 (Roy & Streatfield-James 2016) revealed a series of structures surviving under tarmac and cobbles. The earliest evidence recorded was a clay-bonded wall that may have been related to a group of buildings depicted on a Rothiemay's map of 1647. Other features included a series of stone culverts and a pit. Post-medieval levelling was apparent and the fills contained glass and pottery dating to

the 17th and 18th century. Later phases included so called ‘garden’ features and structural remains dating to the late 18th and early 19th century.

3.2 Standing Building Survey

Building Layout (Figs 3a-b)

The building layout comprised the main block of the boiler house with Units 3-6 on the ground floor and Units 9-12 on the first floor. On the east side of the boiler house was a c.1930s addition comprising the Edinburgh University Switch Room (Unit 8) and a Scottish Power electrical room (Unit 7). On the west side of the boiler house was a workshop/garage (Unit 1) with a boiler room attached to its rear (Unit 2).

The Boiler House exterior

The exterior of the boiler house is now described followed by a descriptive narrative of the individual units within the building. The exterior elevations are produced as Figs 4a-d.

North-facing elevation (Fig 4a)

The north-facing elevation included an Edinburgh University electrical switch room building that did not form part of the survey. This was a single storey addition dating to the 1930s attached to the east side of the boiler house. The building was constructed of snecked sandstone with an off-centre panelled door. The door was flanked by a pair of windows on its east side and three more on its west side. All were nine-paned casement windows. The hipped roof was slated.

The main boiler house block measured 12.5m long and 5.5m to the cornice at eaves level. The building had been constructed of snecked and stugged ashlar sandstone and framed by raised quoins and the ashlar margins around the windows were polished and raised. The ground floor contained a tall barred window at its east end and two large blue painted plank-built sliding doors on rails. The pier between the two doors comprised polished ashlar and is a recent addition.

The first floor had three identical windows which comprised rectangular openings with raised ashlar margins each containing six paned windows. Above the windows at eaves level was a plain ashlar cornice.

Adjoining the west side of the boiler house was a modern garage (1980s) used as a workshop and storage area with a large bay entrance with roller shutter door. The garage was built of snecked sandstone that was heavily stugged. The doorway was framed by polished ashlar. The roof was flat and felted.

East-facing elevation (Fig 4b)

The east-facing elevation (Fig 6) comprised the aforementioned electrical switch gear room behind which was a Scottish Power sub-station. Two large boarded windows occupied the centre of the wall. The window reveals were surrounded by ashlar. The roof was slate and contained a louver vented pagoda.

The only notable feature in this elevation was an earlier roof raggle on the main boiler house block which marked the position of an earlier roofline. This earlier roofline possibly relates to an earlier

building shown on the 1908 OS map (Fig 2b). The east-facing wall of the boiler house also contained a single central window at first floor level. This window was the same as those described on the North-facing elevation.

South-facing elevation (Fig 4c)

The south-facing elevation comprised the back wall of the boiler house workshop/stores building that was brick-built. The rear of the plant room was snecked ashlar. A central window contained a galvanised zinc louver vent. The elevation of the boiler house workshop/stores abutted the main elevation of the back wall of the boiler house which was brick-built (EGB 3:1) and framed by dressed ashlar sandstone quoins. The only notable feature was a small blocked brick arch (Fig 7) about 1m high and 1m wide, its function other than a flue is not exactly clear. The rest of the wall was uniform brick for its full length. At the east end of the elevation access was restricted but the back wall of the aforementioned switch-gear room was visible and it contained four nine-paned windows below very wide eaves.

West-facing elevation (Fig 4d)

The west-facing elevation formed the side wall of the workshop/storage building and comprised the same fabric as that on the north-facing elevation (Fig 8). Three blocked windows were present on this elevation and were painted to resemble actual windows. The south end of the building previously contained a boiler. Two black-painted plank-built doors with louver vents above provided access to this part of the building.

The Boiler House Interior

The interior of the boiler house comprised 12 individual units. The dimension and function of each is listed in Table 2.

Unit No	Function	Dimensions (L x B)
1	Workshop/stores	7.9m x 5.5m
2	Edinburgh University CHP Boiler House	No interior access (no alteration)
3	Workshop/stores	12.5m x 7.4m
4	Plant Room	4.4m x 3.4m
5	Plant Room	2.1m x 1.6m
6	Office	4.4m x 2.4m
7	Scottish Power	(outwith survey area)
8	Edinburgh University Switch Room	(outwith survey area)
9	Office	7.2m x 7.1m
10	Mess Room	6m x 4.8
11	Toilet	2m x 1.3
12	Toilet	2.6m x 0.79

Table 2 Individual Unit No, Function and Dimensions

Unit 1 Workshop & Stores

The west-facing elevation of Unit 1 was stone-built and was the original outside wall of the main block prior to the construction of Unit 1. A series of quoins were still visible at the north end of the wall. The north-facing elevation wall was a brick-built partition between Unit 1 and Unit 2. The east-facing elevation comprised snecked sandstone with brick-built buttresses to support the slab concrete roof. Two brick blocked windows were present on the right hand side of the buttress (Fig

9). The south-facing elevation contained a steel roller door. The floor was a mixture of concrete and flagstones.

Unit 2 Edinburgh University Boiler House

The interior of Unit 2 was not examined but was not affected by the proposals.

Unit 3 Workshop and Stores (Fig 10)

This large open plan room was accessed on the north wall by a large sliding plank-built door that was flanked on its east side by a staircase. The east and west-facing long walls comprised cream-painted walls with an array of electrical sockets for benches that had since been removed (Fig 10). The rear wall (south end of the unit) was clad with plaster board and was featureless.

Unit 4 Plant Room (Fig 12)

Unit 4 was a former plant room with brick and stone walls on its east and west sides. A stone and brick partition wall contained a bricked-up arch (Fig 12) which was flanked by a doorway leading into Unit 5; a storeroom. It is surmised that the bricked-up opening was a flue leading to the chimney stack.

Unit 5 Plant Room/stores

Unit 5 This windowless former plant room had brick and stone-built walls and was very narrow. A blocked-up arched doorway was present at the north end of the unit and may have been an original early doorway.

Unit 6 Office (Fig 11)

Unit 6 was a small office lit on its north wall by a six-paned window (Fig 11). The wall on the east side (west-facing elevation) was stone-built and the one opposite was lined with plaster board. A desk with built-in bookcase dominated the room. At the south end was the other side of the blocked-up doorway that once accessed Unit 5. The interior walls were 0.5m thick showing that this was a substantial spine or load-bearing wall.

Unit 7 Scottish Power plant room (outwith the survey area)

Unit 8 University of Edinburgh Switch Gear Room (outwith the survey area)

Unit 9 Office (Fig 13)

The office (Unit 9) was accessed off the main stairs and was roughly square in shape and lit by a small 6-paned window on the east wall. The rest of the walls were featureless and clad with plaster-board. Two rectangular roof lights provided natural lighting above the false ceiling.

Unit 10 Mess Room (Fig 14)

This was the former mess room (Fig 14) of the maintenance personnel and it contained featureless plaster-boarded walls and modern kitchen units and worktops. Two rectangular six-paned windows were present on the south-facing wall.

Unit 11 Toilet

A modern toilet of no historical interest.

Unit 12 Toilet & Shower

A modern toilet and shower cubicle of no historical interest.

4. DISCUSSION

The historic map evidence shows that the boiler house was originally part of the late 19th century Edinburgh Fever Hospital and part of the University of Edinburgh (1906). The building remained largely unaltered until the 1930s when Units 7 and 8 were added to the east side of the boiler house. An earlier roof raggle (Fig 15) above the present roofline of Unit 8 confirms the presence of an earlier building shown on Fig 2b. Units 1 and 2 the workshop/stores and boiler house on the west side of the main block are not shown on the 1952 Ordnance Survey map. The character of the fabric suggests that the probably date to the 1980s or 1990s.

The rear wall of the Boiler House incorporated 19th century shale brick that was framed by ashlar dressings. A small blocked arched-opening (Fig 7) close to ground level may be the remains of a flue that was made redundant in the mid-20th century when the boilers became oil fired.

The chimney stack rises at the centre of the boiler house from the ground floor and it has a rectangular-shaped footprint. It was built of polished ashlar with a single string-course close to its top. The pristine condition of the stack suggests that this is not the original chimney and is probably a replacement built sometime in the late 20th century to vent the oil fired boiler.

The thickness of the walls confirms that the late 19th century core-block of the boiler house is distinct from the two later additions attached at each end of the building. The boiler house was refurbished in the late 20th century to suit the requirements of a maintenance workshop with office space. Later the first floor was completely modernised with a mess-room, office and toilets.

4.1 Phase Development

The four main phases of development are colour-coded and shown on Figure 3a-b.

Phase 1 Square-shaped core block dating to the late 19th century (Red)

Phase 2 Units 7 and 8 added c.1930s replacing an earlier building (Blue)

Phase 3 Units 1 and 2 added c.1980s (Brown)

Phase 4 Modern additions including staircase and internal divisions and a rebuilt chimney (Green)

5. CONCLUSION

The Level 2 standing building survey has recorded the architectural character and plan form of the boiler house, and it is recommended that no further building recording work is required prior to its alteration although it is recognised that the decision for any further recording work lies with CECAS.

A watching brief will be undertaken and will be reported on under separate cover.

A summary statement for publication in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* and OASIS, will be sufficient to disseminate the results of the work. In line with the Written Scheme of Investigation, copies of the report will be lodged with the CECAS Sites and Monuments Record and the NHRE.

6. REFERENCES

Bibliographic

English Heritage 2016 *Understanding Historic Buildings – A Guide to Good Recording Practice*. London.

Roy, N and Streatfield-James, J 2016 *Combined Heat and Power Network*, University of Edinburgh: Data Structure Report.

Cartographic

Ordnance Survey 1896 Second Edition, Edinburghshire Sheet 003.08 25” to the mile

Ordnance Survey 1908 Third Edition, Edinburghshire Sheet 008.08 25” to the mile

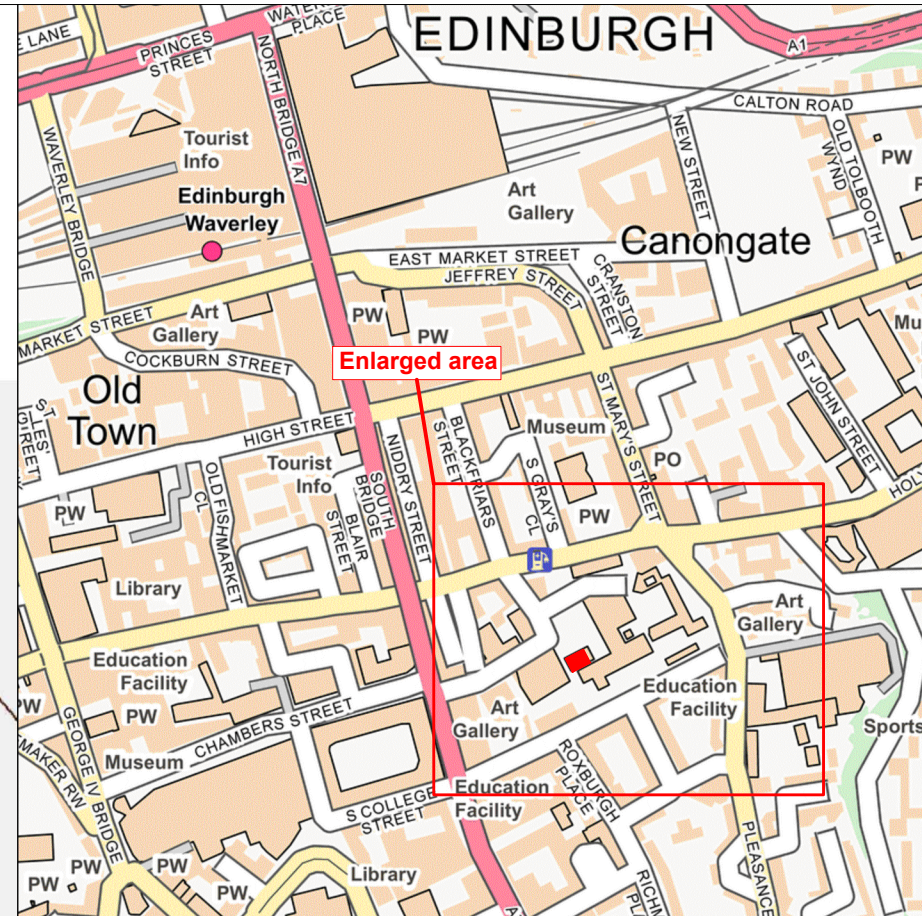
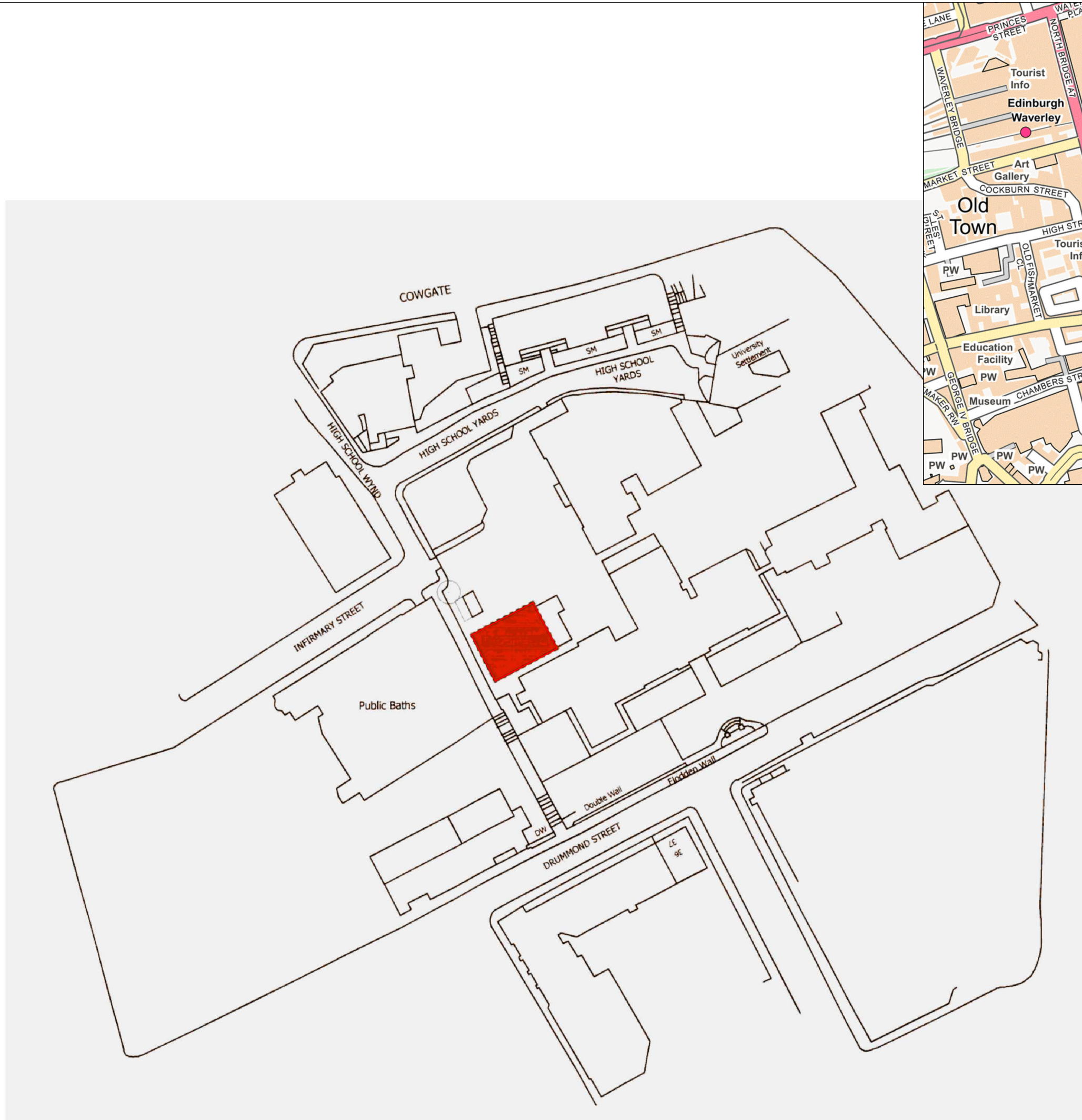
Ordnance Survey 1933 Edinburghshire Sheet 003.08 25” to the mile

Ordnance Survey 1952 Edinburgh NT2673SW B includes Edinburgh

APPENDIX 1: PHOTOGRAPHIC REGISTER

Shot No.	Description	Facing
001	Registration shot	N/a
002-003	External view of the east end of the boiler house	SW
004	External quoins on the east end of the boiler house	W
005-006	General view of the east end of the boiler house	W
007	General view of the north-west corner of the boiler house	SE
008	External view of Unit 8 switch room	S
009-010	North-facing elevation of the boiler house	S
011-012	North facing elevation, sliding doors	S
013-015	External north-west corner, garage	S
016-019	External west-facing elevation	S
020	External south-facing elevation of Unit 2	N
021	External south-facing elevation of the boiler house	NE
022-023	External south-facing elevation of the boiler house, blocked opening	NE
024	External south-facing elevation of the boiler house showing brick-built wall	E
025	External east end of the boiler house with polished ashlar quoins	NE
026-027	Unit 1 interior east-facing wall	W
028-029	Unit 1 roller door	N
030	Unit 1, west-facing elevation with blocking work	E
031-032	Unit 1, north-facing elevation showing brick-built wall	S
033	Unit 1, internal NE corner showing the original quoins of the boiler house	NE
034	Unit 3, interior south-facing elevation, sliding door	N
035	Unit 3 east-facing elevation	NW
036	Unit 3, west-facing elevation	E
037	Unit 3, understairs cupboard	N
038	Unit 6, general view of the interior	N
039-040	Unit 6, blocked arched opening	S
041	Unit 4, east-facing elevation	W
042-043	Unit 4, rubble and later wall with blocked arched opening	N
044	Unit 4 west-facing rubble built wall	E
045	Unit 4 back wall, north-facing brick wall	S
046-047	Unit 5 south-facing elevation, blocked arched opening	N
048	Unit 5 partition wall and doorway	S
049	Staircase, with ashlar and brickwork infil	NE
050-051	Unit 10, east-facing elevation	W
052	Unit 10, south-facing elevation	N
053	Unit 10, west-facing elevation, kitchen area	E
054	Unit 10, north-facing partition wall	S
055	Unit 9, north-facing elevation	S
056	Unit 9, south-facing partition wall	N
057	Unit 9, east-facing elevation	W
058	Unit 9, west-facing elevation	E

059 & 062	Unit 11, modern toilet	N
060-061	Unit 12, modern toilet	N
063	Staircase, looking down from the top	Oblique
064	Panoramic view of the boiler house	S
065	Detailed shot of an earlier roofline on the east gable of the boiler house	SW
066	General view of the boiler house	SW
067-070	General view of the north-facing elevation	S & SW
071	General view of the toe of the main elevation	S
072-134	Overlapping shots of the north-facing elevation of the boiler house	S



Key:

■ Site location

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Title:
Location Plan

Project:
**The Boiler House,
High School Wynd, Edinburgh:
Level 2 Historic Building Survey**

Client:
**Crichton Lang, Willis & Galloway
Architects**

Scale at A3:
1:1,000

Drawn by: SW	Checked: MC	Date: 12/01/2018
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Report.No: 3610	Fig. No: 1
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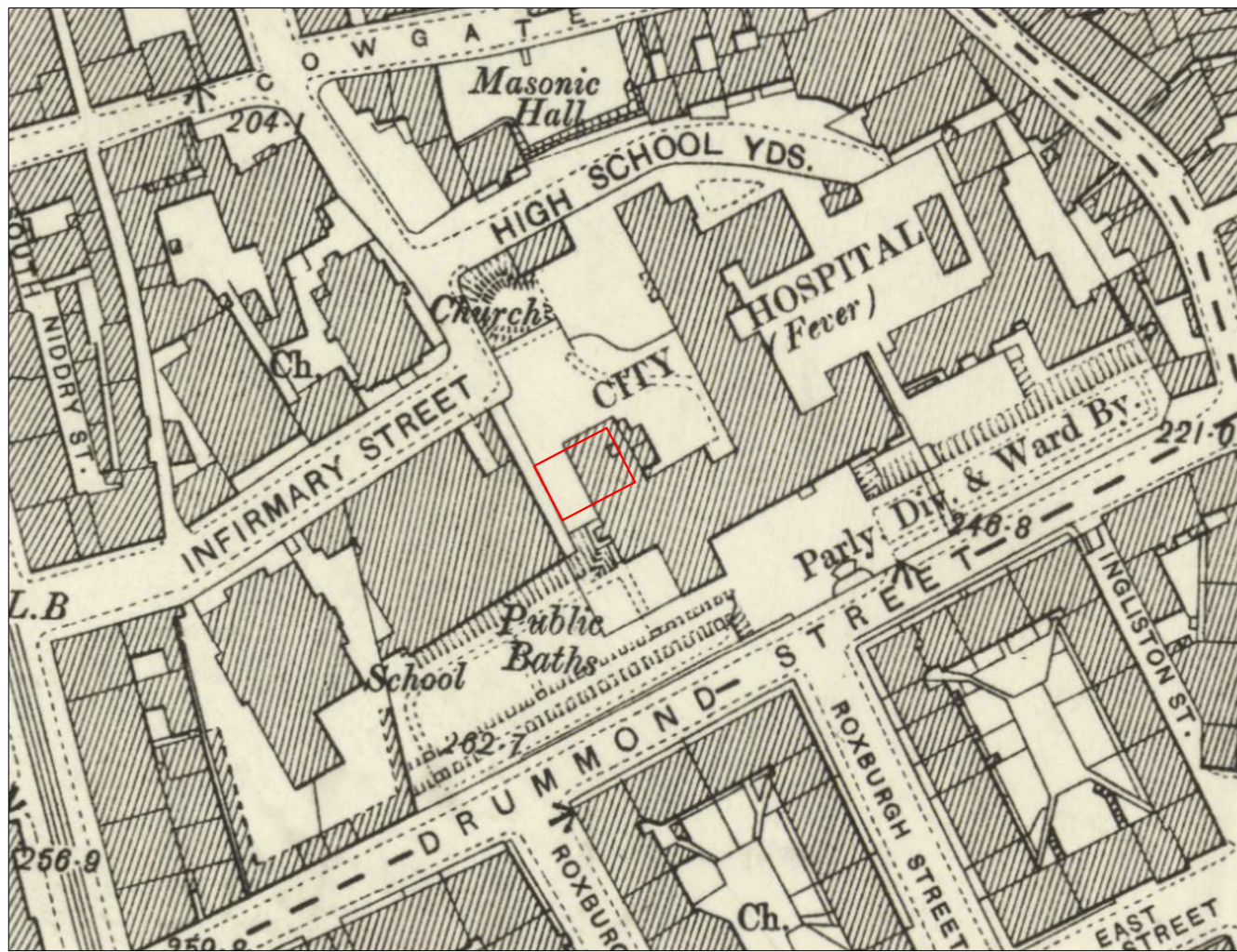


Fig. 2a - 1896 OS Map

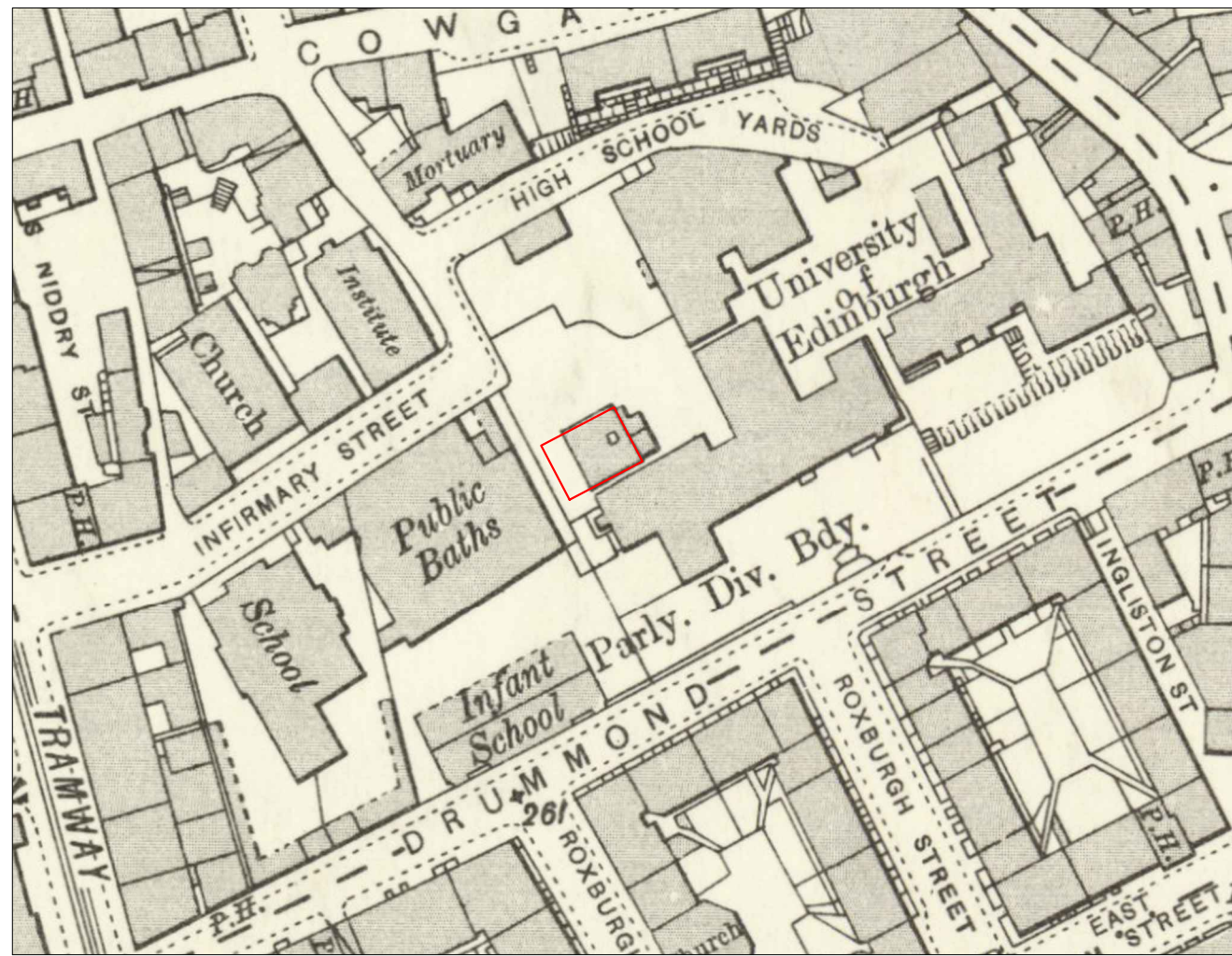


Fig. 2b - 1908 OS Map

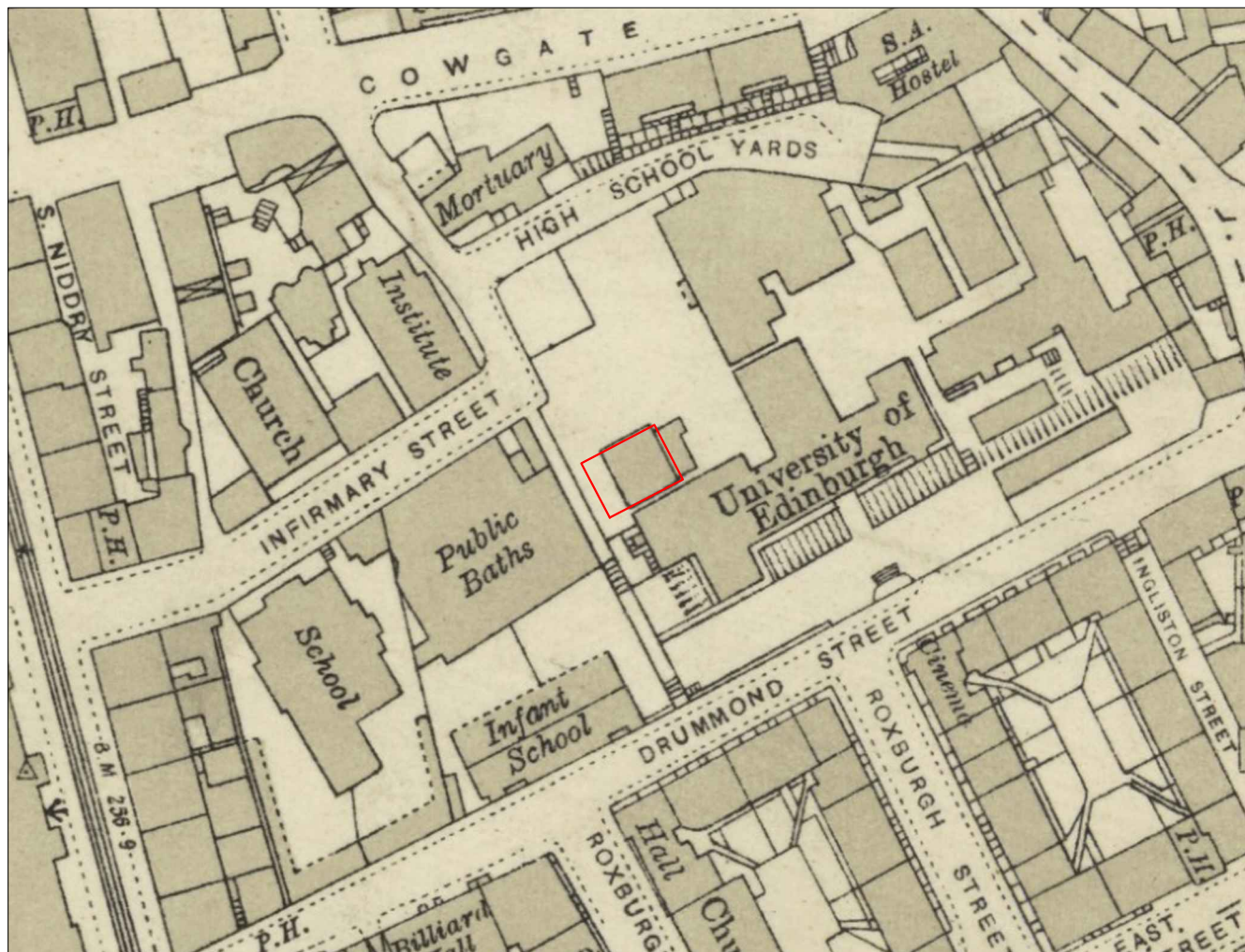


Fig. 2c - 1933 OS Map

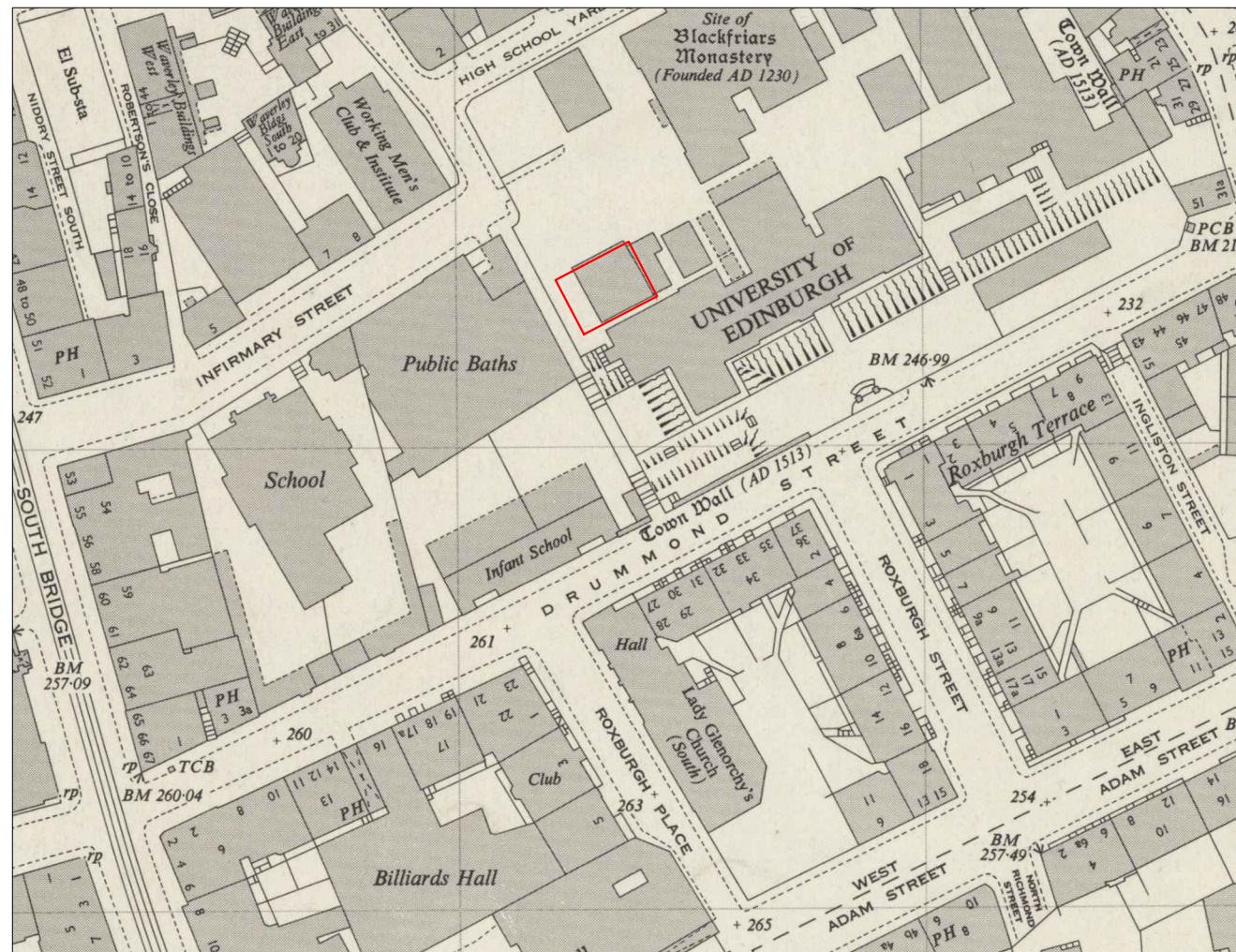


Fig. 2d - 1952 OS Map

Key:

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Title:
Historic Map extracts

Project:
The Boiler House,
High School Wynd, Edinburgh:
Level 2 Historic Building Survey

Client:
Crichton Lang, Willis & Galloway
Architects

Scale at A3:
1:1,500

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Report No: 3610	Fig. No: 2a - 2d
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Key:

- Late 19th Century
- 1930s
- c.1980s
- Modern
- Blocked Opening
- 1 Room Number



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Title:
 Colour coded floor plans and photographic viewpoints
 Ground Floor

Project:
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 Architects

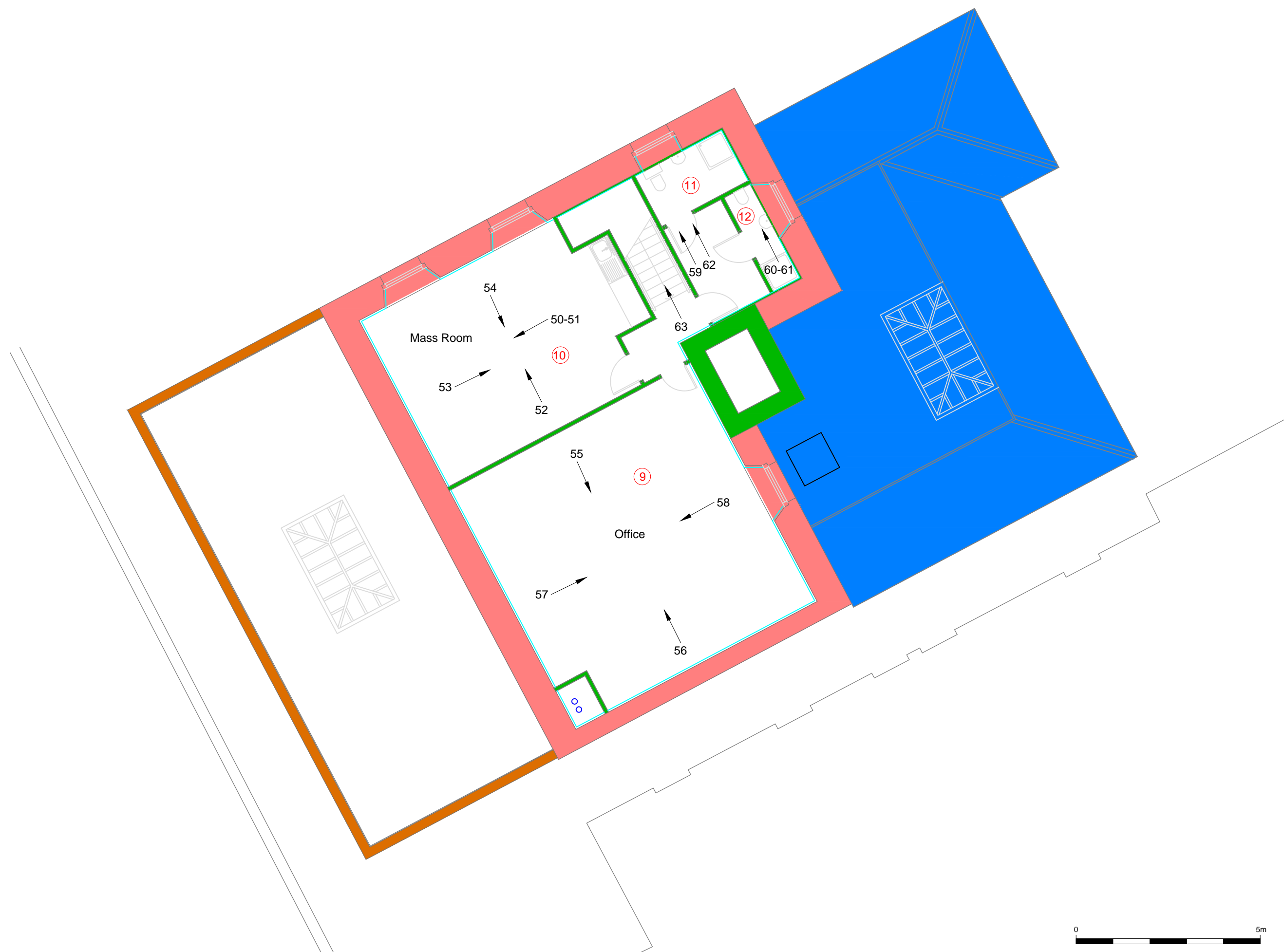
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Report No.: 3610	Fig. No.: 3a
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Key:

- Late 19th Century
- 1930s
- c.1980s
- Modern
- 1 Room Number



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Title:
**Colour coded floor plans and photographic viewpoints
 Ground Floor**

Project:
**The Boiler House,
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Report.No: 3610	Fig. No: 3b
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Title:
North-facing elevation

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1:100

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Report.No: 3610	Fig. No: 4a
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Key:

 Boarded Windows



Title:
East-facing elevation

Project:
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Level 2 Historic Building Survey**

Client:
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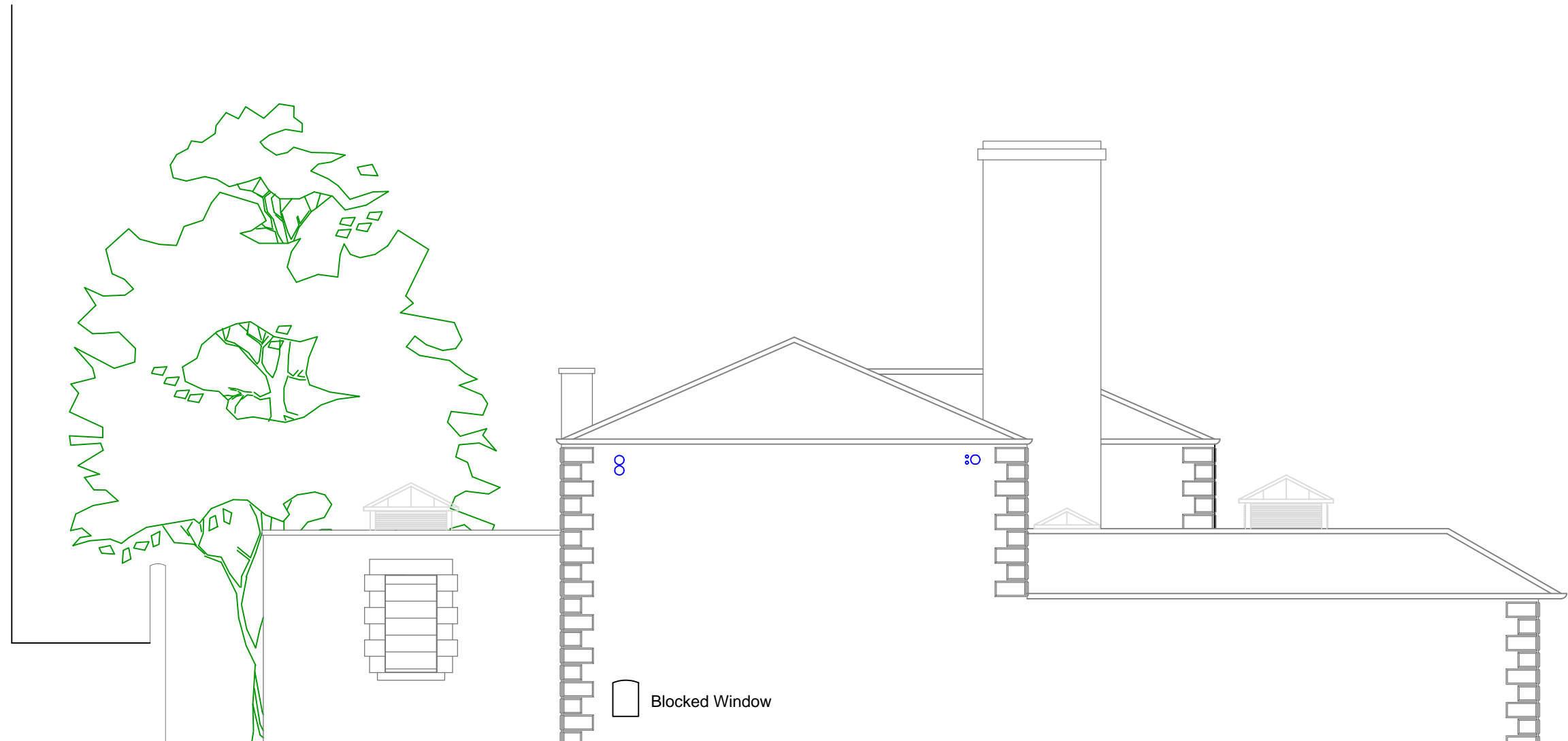
Scale at A3:
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Report.No: 3610	Fig. No: 4b
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Key:



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Title:
South-facing elevation

Project:
**The Boiler House,
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Level 2 Historic Building Survey**

Client:
**Crichton Lang, Willis & Galloway
Architects**

Scale at A3:
1:100

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Report.No: 3610	Fig. No: 4c
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Key:



Title:
West-facing elevation

Project:
The Boiler House,
High School Wynd, Edinburgh:
Level 2 Historic Building Survey

Client:
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Architects

Scale at A3:
1:100

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Report.No: 3610	Fig. No: 4d
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Fig. 5 - North-facing elevation



Fig. 6 - East-facing elevation

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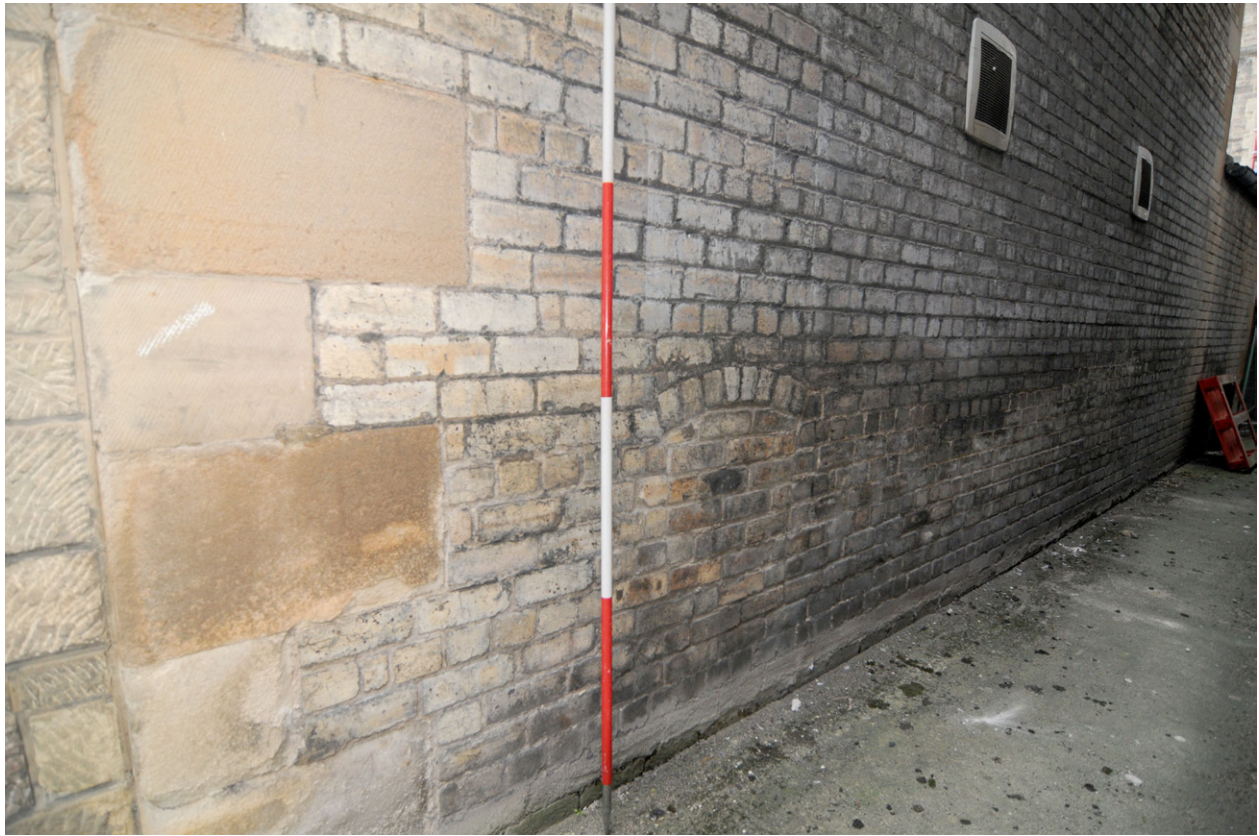


Fig. 7 - South-facing elevation



Fig. 8 - West-facing elevation

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Fig. 9 - Ground floor Unit 1 workshop/storage showing two brick-blocked windows



Fig. 10 - Ground floor Unit 3 workshop/storage general view

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Fig. 11 - Unit 6 Ground floor office



Fig. 12 - Unit 4 Ground floor plant room

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Fig. 13 - Unit 9 First floor modern office



Fig. 14 - Unit 10 First floor mess room

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Fig. 15 - Exterior east-facing elevation showing the position of an earlier roofline

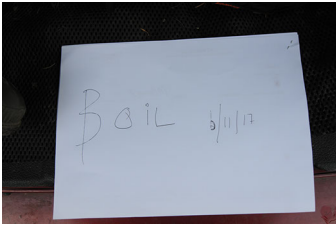
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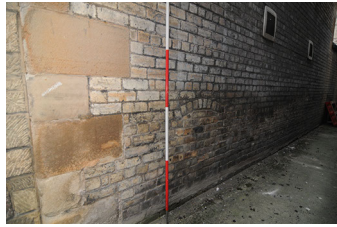
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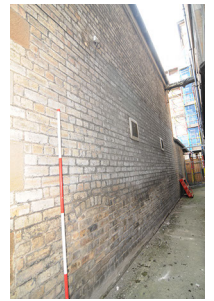
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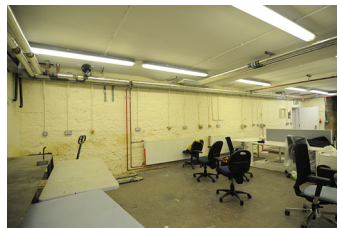
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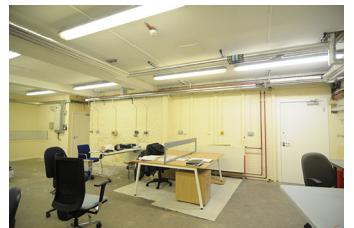
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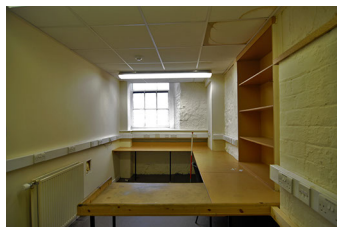
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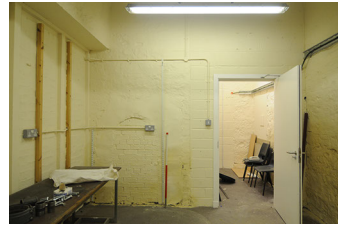
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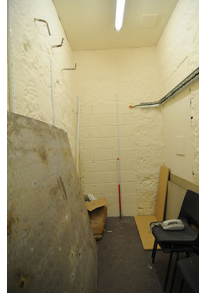
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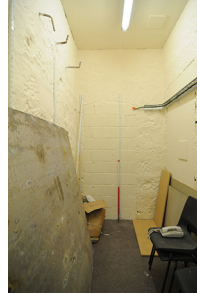
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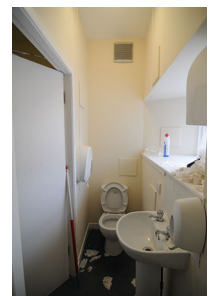
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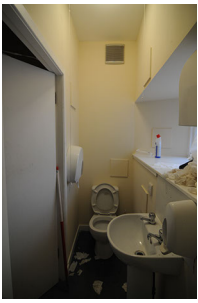
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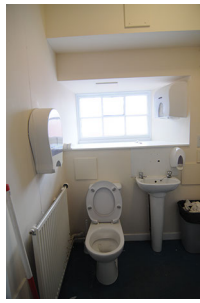
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