

Montgomery Primary School, Redvers Road, Exeter, Devon

An Historic Building Recording Survey



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Montgomery Primary School, Redvers Road, Exeter, Devon

An Historic Building Recording Survey

for

NPS South West Ltd

by



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Front cover image: School courtyard interior © Context One Archaeological Services 2011

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Non-Technical Summary

Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) was awarded the contract to carry out a programme of archaeological works during development groundworks associated with the replacement of Montgomery Primary School, Redvers Road, Exeter, Devon (centred on NGR SX 91020 92140). The project was commissioned by Ms Claire Walkey of NPS South West Ltd and was carried between 23rd August 2010 and December 2011.

The programme of works was requested by the County Planning Authority (Devon County Council) on the advice of Ms Helen Rance (Archaeological Officer, Devon County Council) as a condition of planning consent for the replacement of the existing Primary School (Planning Application Reference: DCC/2987/2010).

The original school buildings were constructed between 1929 and 1930 to replace a school constructed in 1891, close to Emmanuel Church in Okehampton Road, which burnt down in 1917. There are no records of any earlier buildings or developments on the present site and the school opened on 1 September 1930. The school was named after a local educationalist, Jessie Montgomery, and was designed by the then City Architect, John Bennett. The buildings consisted of four ranges arranged around a central quadrangle or garden with circulation around the school buildings via a 'cloister' walkway overlooking the garden.

The school complex also includes several detached structures. Four of these belong to the original buildings. These consisted of two covered play areas and two other buildings (possible lavatories) along the northern boundary of the site, on either side of the main entrance from Manor Road. The lavatory block is linked to the main school buildings by covered walkways.

The school buildings have been extended on several occasions by the addition of new buildings. The earliest of these are a group of prefabricated huts to the southeast of the main school which may have been constructed to provide accommodation. It is known that these were present on the site by 1945 as they appear on aerial photographs of that date. This type of hut is known as 'standard MOWP (Ministry of War Production) hut'. The huts form an L-shape and are linked by a small corridor. More recently these structures have been utilised as a kitchen and dining room.

A modern extension to the north of the school is likely to have been added to the site in the 1970s. This building consists of a prefabricated timber structure with boarded panels, continuous windows and a flat roof. It was constructed between the two covered walkways and provided extra classrooms.

1. Introduction

1.1. Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) was awarded the contract to carry out a programme of archaeological works during development groundworks associated with the replacement of Montgomery Primary School, Redvers Road, Exeter, Devon (centred on NGR SX 91020 92140; hereafter referred to as ‘the Site’). The project was commissioned by Ms Claire Walkey of NPS South West Ltd and was carried over eight days between 23rd August 2010 and 7th December 2011.

1.2. The archaeological investigation was requested by the County Planning Authority (Devon County Council) on the advice of Ms Helen Rance (Archaeological Officer, Devon County Council) as a condition of planning consent for the replacement of the existing Primary School (Planning Application Reference: DCC/2987/2010). In a brief for an historic building recording and the monitoring and recording of groundworks issued on 22nd July 2010 (paragraph 1.4) Ms Rance stated that:

“The Architectural Appraisal of Montgomery Primary School provided in support of the above planning application demonstrates that Montgomery Primary School is of high historical and architectural interest. The Architectural Appraisal also identifies the presence of a northwest-southeast aligned watercourse which crosses the school field and may have originated as an early medieval leat. There is also further potential for the discovery of ancient environmental and archaeological evidence.”

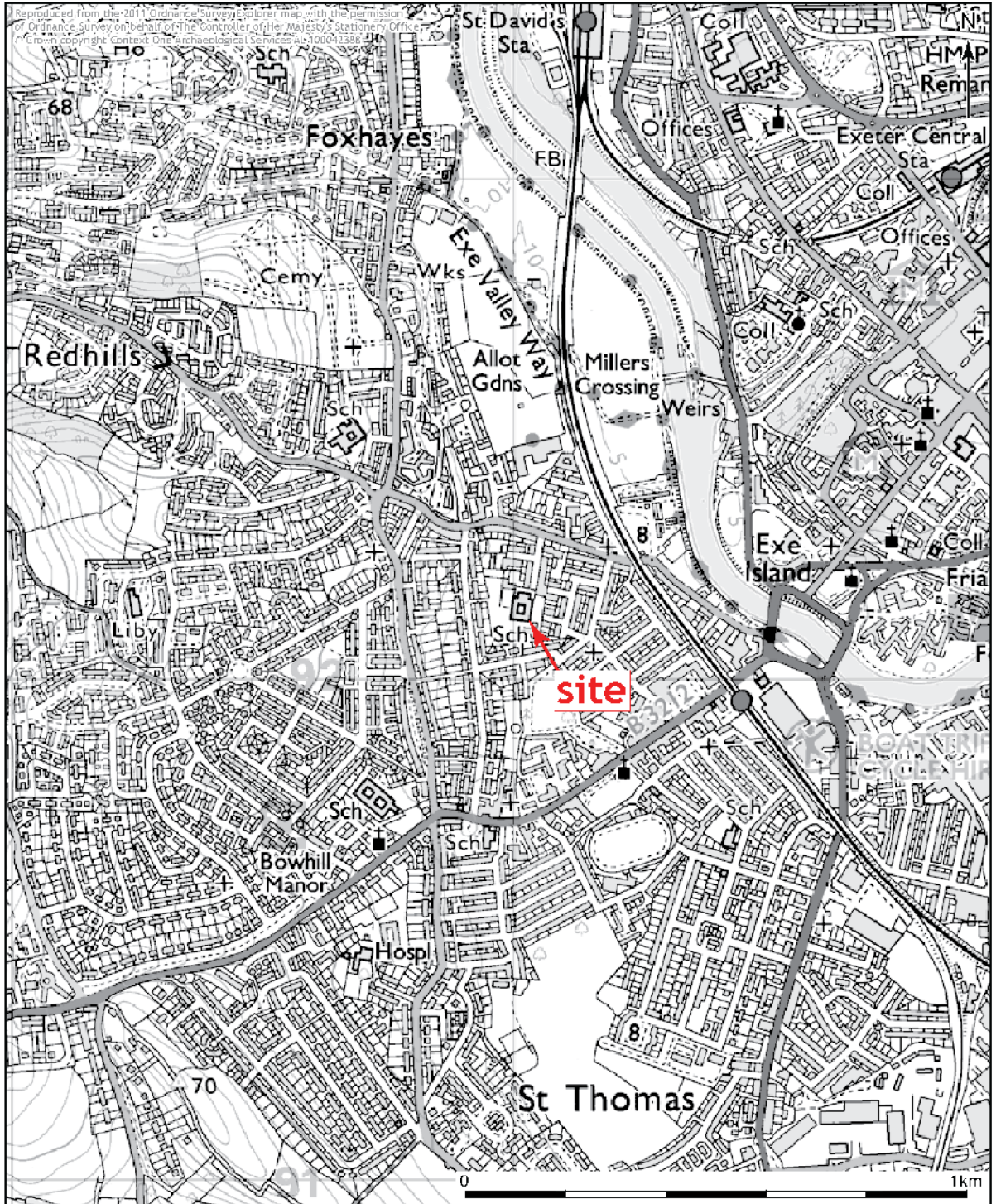
1.3. Given the archaeological and historic significance of these buildings, it was determined that a reasonable archaeological response in mitigation of the development would be to carry out a programme of archaeological works comprising a historic building recording survey and archaeological monitoring and recording (watching brief) during development groundworks. The present report concerns the historic building recording survey. That concerned with the development phase has been produced separately (Tabor 2012).

1.4. The request for the archaeological work follows advice given by Central Government as set out formerly in *Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS 5)* issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government, 2010. It also conforms to Local Plan and County Structure Plan policies.

2. Site location, topography

2.1 The Site (centred on NGR SX 91020 92140) is situated c.470m west of the River Exe, in the south west of the city of Exeter in the county of Devon (**Figure 1**). It lies ca.8m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The school buildings lie from north to south, along the east side of a trapezoidal plot surrounded on all four sides by the houses of Wardrew and Maple roads, Brunswick Street and Landscore. Two outbuildings (**Figure 2**, B and C) lie to the north of the west and east flanks of the main quadrangular school building (**Figure 2**, A), which has pre-fabricated structures added to its north range. Two adjoining brick buildings **Figure 2**, D and E) are south of the south east corner of the main building.

2.2 An architectural appraisal of the school was carried out previously (Parker 2008) and has been integrated into the final discussion below.



<p>PROJECT TITLE</p> <p>Montgomery Primary School, Redvers Road, Exeter, Devon</p>		
<p>FIGURE TITLE</p> <p>Site setting</p>		
<p>SCALE</p> <p>as shown</p>	<p>PROJECT CODE</p> <p>C1/WBF/10/MRE</p>	<p>FIGURE NO.</p> <p>1</p>

3. Survey methodology

- 3.1 The survey was carried out to Levels 1-4 as set out in *Understanding Historic Buildings - A guide to good recording practice* (English Heritage, 2006). This states that:

“Level 1 surveys will generally be of exteriors only, although they may include superficial interior inspection for significant features. Only if circumstances and objectives allow will any drawings be produced, and these are likely to take the form of sketches.

Level 2 is a descriptive record, made in circumstances similar to those of Level 1 but when more information is needed. It may be made of a building which is judged not to require any fuller record, or it may serve to gather data for a wider project. Both the exterior and the interior will be viewed, described and photographed. The record will present conclusions regarding the building’s development and use, but will not discuss in detail the evidence on which these conclusions are based. A plan and sometimes other drawings may be made but the drawn record will normally not be comprehensive and may be tailored to the scope of a wider project.

*Level 3 is an **analytical** record, and will comprise an introductory description followed by a systematic account of the building’s origins, development and use. The record will include an account of the evidence on which the analysis has been based, allowing the validity of the record to be re-examined in detail. It will also include all drawn and photographic records that may be required to illustrate the building’s appearance and structure and to support an historical analysis. The information contained in the record will for the most part have been obtained through an examination of the building itself. If documentary sources are used they are likely to be those which are most readily accessible, such as historic Ordnance Survey maps, trade directories and other published sources. The record will not normally discuss the building’s broader stylistic or historical context and importance at any length. It may, however, form part of a wider survey - thematic or regional, for example - of a group of buildings, in which additional source material contributes to an overall historical and architectural synthesis. A Level 3 record may also be appropriate when the fabric of a building is under threat but time or resources are insufficient for detailed documentary research, or where the scope for such research is limited.*

*Level 4 provides a **comprehensive analytical record** and is appropriate for buildings of special importance. Whereas Level 3 analysis and interpretation will clarify the building’s history in so far as it may be deduced from the structure itself, the record at Level 4 will draw on the full range of available resources and discuss the building’s significance in terms of architectural, social, regional or economic history. The range of drawings may also be greater than at other levels.”*

- 3.2 Level 2 recording was considered sufficient for buildings D and E, which were not part of the original school building. The original buildings were the subjects of levels 2 and 3 recording, supplemented by an existing architectural appraisal (Parker 2008) which included interpretation of the school complex.
- 3.3 Plans and sections provided by the Client’s architect were used as a basis for the recording of structural features of historic or architectural significance. These were supplied as photocopies and have been subsequently digitised for inclusion in this report.
- 3.4 The photographic survey was undertaken of the interior and exterior, including features of historical and architectural significance, and consisted of digital images taken with a Nikon D40X 10.1 megapixel digital SLR camera fitted with an 18-55mm lens. High level photographs were taken from an extendable pole using a remote control. Images were captured on a 4GB SD card in the field and were subsequently transferred to the COAS server for storage. For archival purposes, selected digital images will be printed by a photographic laboratory as 18cm x 13cm prints.
- 3.5 This report supplements the architectural appraisal of the school carried out by Exeter Archaeology (2008); which is summarised in this report.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> site boundary A main school building B outbuilding C covered play area D MOWP, kitchen E MOWP, dining room F prefabricated extension 	PROJECT TITLE Montgomery Primary School, Redvers Road, Exeter, Devon		
	FIGURE TITLE Detailed site setting		
SCALE as shown	PROJECT CODE C1/AWB/10/MRE	FIGURE NO. 2	

4. Results

- 4.1 The results have been divided into two main sections, the first dealing with the original school building and two contemporary buildings to its north, the second with the later Ministry of War Production (MOWP) structures, added during World War 2. **Tables 1** summarises the results of the survey around the original school buildings (**Figure 3; Plates 1-34**) with cross-referencing to the photographic record and Table 3 summaries the MOWP structures similarly (**Figure 4; Table 2**). The plates also refer to viewpoints on **Figures 3** and **4** showing the location and direction that the photographs were taken.
- 4.2 The 25" Ordnance Survey map of 1888 shows the school site to be open land with housing developing on its north, east and south sides. By 1906 the Site remains open ground but the number of houses has grown. The Montgomery School is first marked during the 1930s, showing buildings A, B and C (Figure 2), when it replaced the Girls' School in Okehampton Road, which had burnt down in 1917 (HER 71035). The MOWP buildings are shown for the first time in 1951.

Element	Observations	Plate(s)
General	A square one and two storey brick building with central quadrangle garden (c.40 m x 40m) roughly aligned N-S and E-W. 'Cloister' Walkway. Also includes out building with covered walkways and play areas.	1, 2, 3, 4, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 5, 6
Main Assembly Hall	Occupies the greater part of the north range, flanked by the main entrances, served by porches in the northern elevation.	19, 20, 21
Classrooms	The eastern and western ranges contain a group of three classrooms with cloakrooms to the north. The southern range has four identical classrooms and two slightly smaller ones to the east and west.	11, 12
Roof	Hipped roof with slate covering.	11, 12
Walls	Frogged bricks laid in stretcher Bond (sometimes known as regular Bond). There was also architectural detail in the form of bricks laid in English cross with every fourth row inlaid with dark brown bricks.	12, 14
Floors	In the gymnasium and a changing room there were wooden floors, in the remainder of the building floor coverings such as carpet and tiles masked the underlying original floor.	18, 19, 20, 21
Doors	Original 1930's half glass half wood panelled doors populate the majority of the interior whilst the remainder are modern fire doors.	34
Windows	Original 1930's metal casement windows equally matched with wooden framed windows throughout the interior.	26, 30, 31
Graffiti/murals	Externally there was a mural in the covered play area.	10, cover
Later annexe	Prefabricated structure (10m x 35m) of timber and boarded panels with continuous bands of windows and a flat roof. Structure appears to have been constructed to house additional classrooms.	5, 8

Table 1. Main school building, structural elements

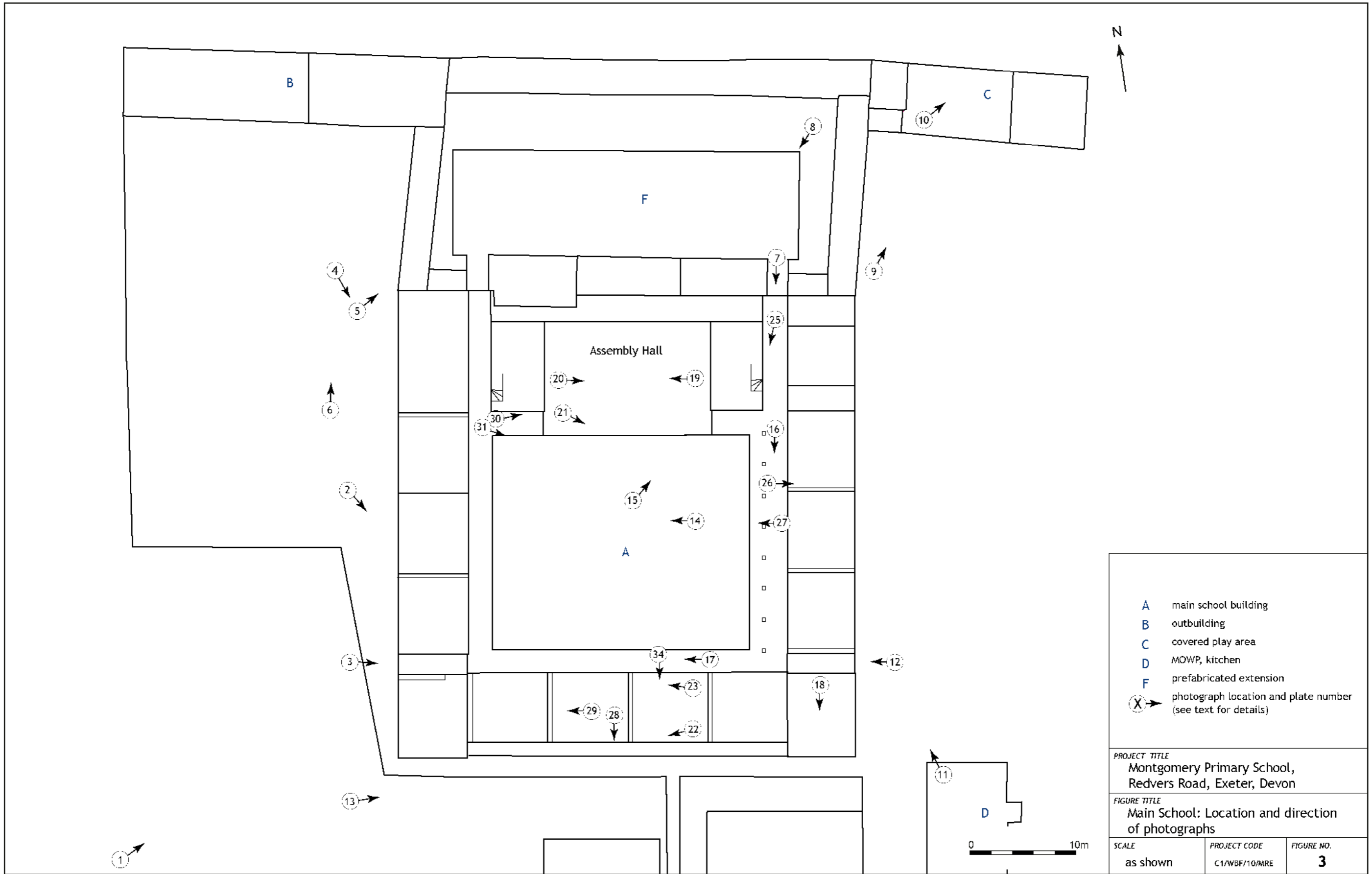




Plate 1. West and south ranges of main school building showing roof structure (from SW)



Plate 2. Overview of brickwork and western entrance, Scale 2m, Looking SE



Plate 3. Western Entrance, Looking E



Plate 4. Main School, north west corner and west range exterior (scale 2m; from NNW)



Plate 5. Covered walkway from north range (scale 2m; from SW)



Plate 6. Covered play area (B) (scale 2m; from S)



Plate 7. Original 'Infants' entrance (scale 2m; from N)



Plate 8. Modern extension to main school, scale 2m, Looking SW



Plate 9. Covered play area (C) (scale 2m; from SSW)



Plate 10. Mural in covered play area (C) (scale 2m; from SW)



Plate 11. East range exterior (scale 2m; from SE)



Plate 12. East range entrance (scale 2m; from E)



Plate 13. South range (no scale; from SW)



Plate 14. West courtyard interior, across 'cloister' garden (scale 2m; from E)



Plate 15. Junction of north and east ranges courtyard interior (scale 2m; from SW)

Main School Building

- 4.3 The main building is in the form of a quadrangle surrounded by a grassed play area. The slate-covered, hipped, roofs (**Plate 1**) are set over frogged brick, stretcher bonded walls (**Plate 2**), with breeze block architraves over the original entrances, the best example of which is one original designated for ‘Girls’ (**Plate 3**). The west and east ranges each comprise two north to south oriented units, the longer to the north, with converging hips concealed behind the breeze block architraves above the entrances. The longer section of the west range rises to two storey height. The north and south range roofs converge with the west and east at ridge height.
- 4.4 A covered walkway (**Plates 4 and 5**) links the west of the north range to outbuilding B which combines a flat roofed element leading to a fully hipped slate roofed building (**Plate 6**), both single storey and facing south onto a play area put down to Tarmac and marked for sports.
- 4.5 East of the walkway a prefabricated structure has been annexed to the north range of the main building (**Plates 5 and 8**). On the east side it conceals the original ‘Infants’ entrance, the lintel for which can be seen above a modern two-leaved door (**Plate 7**). To the north east a covered play area (**Figure 2, B; Plate 9**), open on the south side, faces onto a second tarmac-covered play area. A bench along the north wall of the covered area is probably original. Above pupils have been allowed to create a colourful mural over all three walls, including a door through the east end (**Plate 10**).
- 4.6 As noted, the east range comprises two hipped units (**Plate 11**; the photograph was taken after building D had been levelled). Each bay of the north section is lit by large windows. The original lintel above the entrance, between the north and south sections, has been covered with a ‘welcome’ board (**Plate 12**). There is no entrance to south range, which is lit by long windows through each bay.
- 4.7 The courtyard formed by the ranges is fringed by a single storey flat roof (**Plates 14 and 15**). This appears to have been part of the original scheme when it served as a covered walkway, open on the inside. Timber clad walls have since been added.
- 4.8 The inner area has been laid to lawn broken with shrubs, concrete stepping ‘stones’, a greenhouse, a pond, a metal shed and other garden features, including benches.
- ### **Interior features of the main school building**
- 4.9 The main building is served by four principal corridors along each range. The east range corridor is open on its east side where the flat-roofed cloister has become a library and reading. Original wooden columns are fully exposed (**Plates 16 and 27**). In the south range the originally external wall facing onto the cloister is now fully enclosed by the timber cladding and windows added to the inner side of the cloister (**Plate 17**). Expanses of well-maintained polished wooden floor survive in a cloakroom (**Plate 18**) in the south east corner of the building, and in the two storey high main hall which takes up much of the north range. The hall is covered by an arched ceiling (**Plates 19 and 20**) and lit by windows which reach from below the eaves to the ground.
- 4.10 Classrooms were accessed directly from the corridor by single a door in a corner. Typically they included built-in shelving set to one side of (**Plate 22**) and below a blackboard (**Plate 23**).



Plate 16. The 'Cloister' with library enclosed by later wall, (scale 2m; from N)



Plate 17. The 'Cloister' enclosed by later wall and windows (scale 2m, from E)



Plate 18. Cloakroom with wooden floor (scale 2m; from N)



Plate 19. Assembly Hall, west end, showing sprung floor (scale 2m; from E)



Plate 20. Assembly Hall, east end (scale 2m; from W)



Plate 21. View across Assembly Hall full length windows (scale 2m, from NE)



Plate 22. Typical Classroom teaching wall (scale 2m; from ENE)



Plate 23. Typical Classroom teaching wall (scale 2m; from ESE)

The Fixtures and fittings in the main school building

- 4.11 Many original fixtures and fittings survive. A wooden plaque (Plate 24) inside the school entrance commemorates Jessie Anne Douglas Montgomery, after whom the school was named in recognition of her contribution to education locally. The plaque is set over lower wall tiling which covers sections of the corridor (Plate 25).
- 4.12 Metal casement windows were still *in situ* (Plates 26 and 30) and wooden framed windows with ring-pull latches for upper sections were also still in place (Plate 31). Distinctive rectangular planned column bases and capitals are fully exposed along the east corridor (Plate 27). It is not clear whether or not a Belfast sink (Plate 28) in an art room is part of the original scheme but a gauzed vent in the same room (Plate 29) is of a style which suggests it might be, as is true of a built in cupboard in the first floor staff room (Plate 32). Elsewhere there are metal electric switches (Plate 33) and Bakelite door knobs (Plate 34) which may also date to the time when the school was built.



Plate 24. Dedication plaque (no scale; from E)

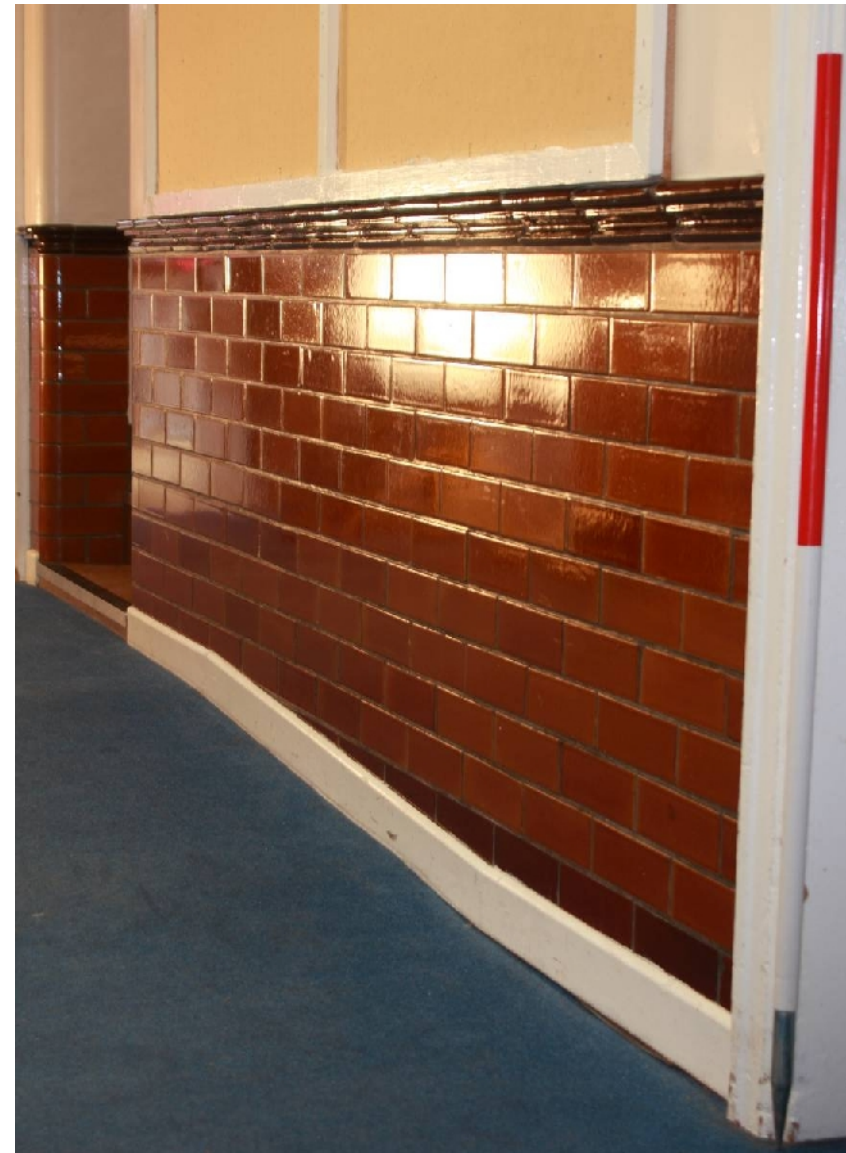


Plate 25. Lower wall tiling (scale 1m, from NE)



Plate 26. Original east range metal casement window (scale 1m; from W)



Plate 27. Detail of roof support, east corridor (no scale; from W)



Plate 28. Classroom, Belfast sink (scale 0.2m, from N)

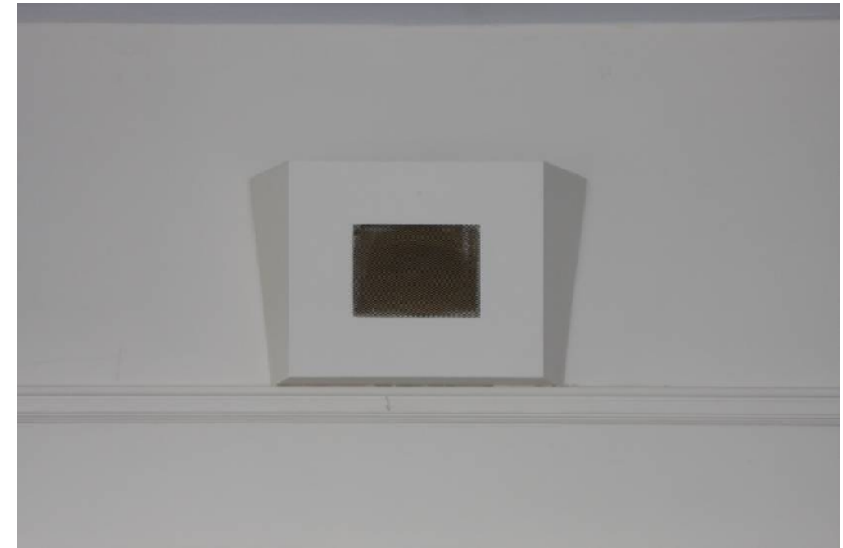


Plate 29. Classroom, possible vent (no scale 2m, from E)



Plate 30. Original metal window, hall approach (scale 2m; from WSW)



Plate 31. Original wooden window, hall approach (scale 2m; from WNW)



Plate 32. Upper floor staff room, built-in cupboard (scale 2m; from E)



Plate 33. West corridor, light switch (scale 0.1m, from E)



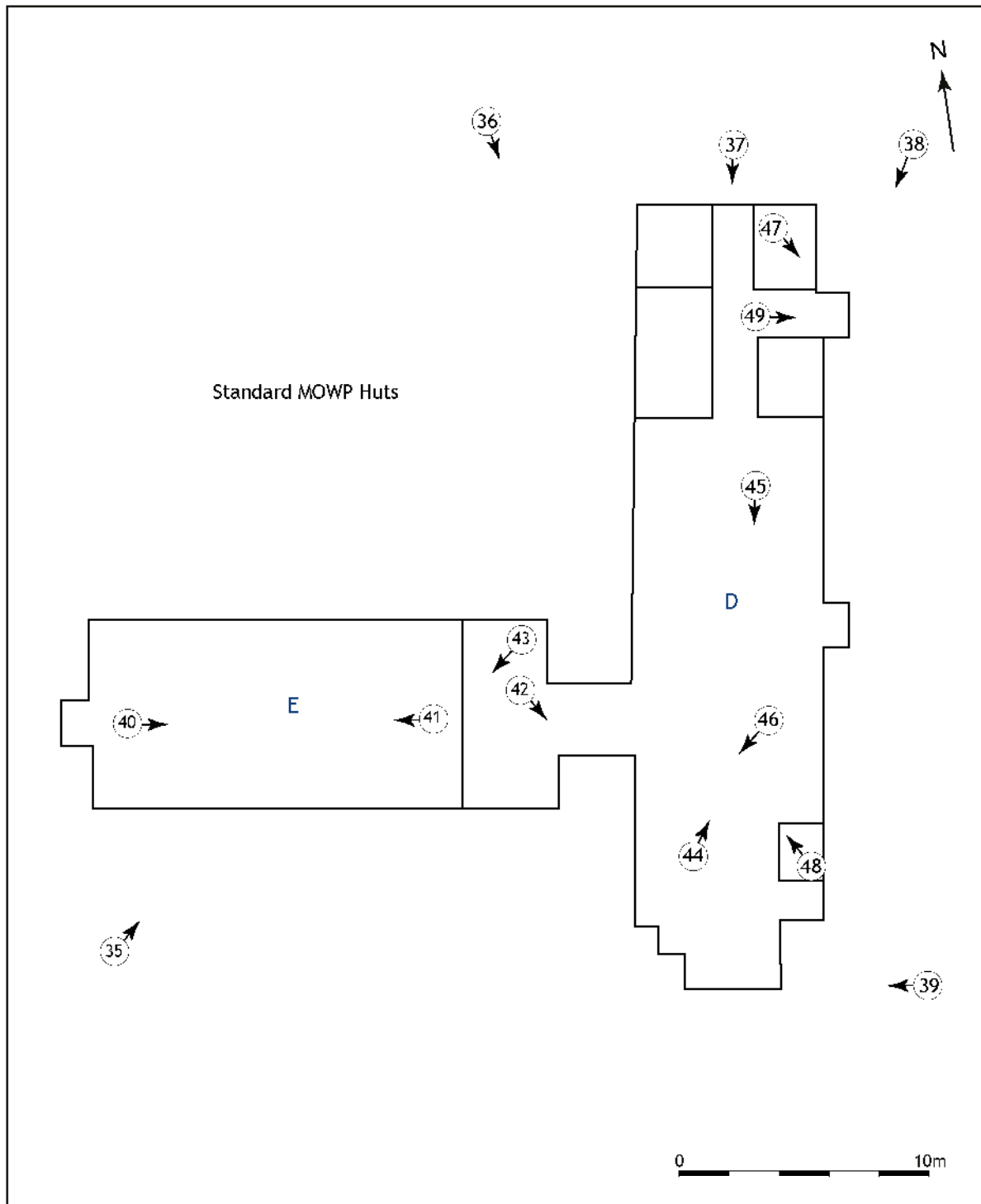
Plate 34. Bakelite door knob (no scale; from NW)

The Ministry of War Production (MOWP) huts

- 4.13 The adjoining MOWP huts, D and E (**Figure 4**), were added to the south east of the main building during World War 2. It is not clear when they became an integral part of the working school's fabric.
- 4.14 The gable roofs are covered with corrugated asbestos over walls of frogged brick in stretcher bond set between concrete uprights (**Plates 35-38**). A boiler house chimney stands at the south end of building D (**Plate 39**). Building E housed a school dining area (**Plate 40**), accessed by twin leaved wooden doors at the west end (**Plate 41**) and served by a row of hatches at the east end (**Plate 42**). Beyond the hatches an internal twin leaved door (**Plate 43**) gives access to the kitchen area in building D. Ceramic tiles cover the floor east of the hatches and throughout the open areas of building D (**Plates 43 to 46**).
- 4.15 Original fitting included panelled doors (**Plate 46**) and metal framed windows (**Plate 47**). Bricks under a lintel show that a small room on the south of the east side of the building had internal access but at the time of the survey it could only be reached from the outside. Access to the building was via a projecting porch at the north end of the east side.

Element	Observations	Plate(s)
General	An 'L' shaped single storey concrete frame and brick building (c. 36m x 37m) roughly aligned N-S and E-W. The N-S part of the building was set out as a kitchen and the E-W part as a dining area. On the western side of the kitchen area there is a connecting walkway to the dining area. Additionally a boiler room was at the southern end of the kitchen building.	35, 36, 37, 38, 39
Roof	Gable roof with corrugated asbestos sheets.	37
Walls	Frogged bricks laid in stretcher Bond (sometimes known as regular Bond). This infills a concrete framework.	37, 38
Floors	Light ceramic tiles cover the majority of the floor with areas of terracotta coloured tiles for the placement of permanent kitchen equipment.	43, 44, 45, 46
Doors	Original wood panelled doors populate the interior and exterior whilst the boiler room has striate planked doors.	42, 46, 49
Windows	Original metal casement windows equally matched with Modern double glazed casement windows throughout.	37, 38, 39, 46, 47
Graffiti	Externally there was a small amount of graffiti.	Cover

Table 2. MOWP huts, structural elements



<p>D MOWP, kitchen</p> <p>E MOWP, dining room</p> <p>X → photograph location and plate number (see text for details)</p>	<p>PROJECT TITLE</p> <p>Montgomery Primary School, Redvers Road, Exeter, Devon</p>		
	<p>FIGURE TITLE</p> <p>MOWP Huts: Location and direction of photographs</p>		
	<p>SCALE</p> <p>as shown</p>	<p>PROJECT CODE</p> <p>C1/WBF/10/MRE</p>	<p>FIGURE NO.</p> <p>4</p>



Plate 35. MOWP Hut (E) showing roof structure (scale 2m; from SW)



Plate 36. MOWP Hut (D), west exterior (scale 2m; from NNW)



Plate 37. MOWP Hut (D) (scale 2m; from N)



Plate 38. MOWP Hut (D), east exterior (scale 2m, from NE)



Plate 39. MOWP Hut (D) boiler chimney (scale 2m; from E)



Plate 40. Dining Area within MOWP Hut (E) (scale 2m; from W)



Plate 41. Dining Area within MOWP Hut (E) (scale 2m; from E)



Plate 43. Detail of doors and floor in MOWP Hut (E) (scale 2m; from NW)



Plate 42. Kitchen Area within MOWP Hut detailing floor (scale 1m; from NE)



Plate 44. Kitchen Area within MOWP Hut detailing floor (scale 1m; from SW)



Plate 45. Overview of Kitchen Area within MOWP Hut (D) (from N)



Plate 46. Kitchen Area within MOWP Hut (D) detailing floor (scale 2m, from NE)



Plate 47. Detail of metal windows within MOWP Hut (D) (scale 2m; from NW)



Plate 48. Detail of MOWP Hut (D) brickwork (from SE)



Plate 49. East exit from MOWP Hut (D) (scale 2m; from W)

5. Discussion

- 5.1 The original school buildings were constructed between 1929 and 1930 to replace a school constructed in 1891, close to Emmanuel Church in Okehampton Road, which burnt down in 1917. There are no records of any earlier buildings or developments on the present site and the school opened on 1 September 1930.
- 5.2 The school was named after a local educationalist, Jessie Montgomery, and was designed by the then City Architect, John Bennett. The buildings consisted of four ranges arranged around a central quadrangle or garden with circulation around the school buildings taking place within a 'cloister' walkway overlooking the garden.
- 5.3 The hall range has the principal facade of the school, facing north towards the gates of Manor Road. The facade has five tall windows lighting the volume of the hall, which is flanked by, and equal in height with, the only two storey elements of the structure (Parker 2008). Either side of the hall are two smaller rooms on two storeys lit by smaller windows. Flanking these are a pair of porches with adjoining bays that appear to have been flat-roofed cloakrooms, beyond which are covered walkways that run northwards towards the school gates. The elevation of the hall to the cloister and garden is similar in detail and appears to have originally had French windows opening directly into the central garden. The hall also houses the most highly finished and architectural interior, which is a well-proportioned room with segmental, barrel-vaulted ceiling. The walls are articulated by pilasters decorated with incised panels rising to moulded entablatures and cornices. There are broad, flat ribs crossing the segmental ceiling and a highly polished sprung floor (Parker 2008).
- 5.4 To either side of the hall lie the east and west classroom ranges, each containing a group of three classrooms, with cloakrooms to the north. The south range has four identical classrooms and two slightly smaller ones to the east and west. The original cloister walkway between classrooms also survives, though concealed behind a later extension with a glazed frontage. Although it is possible that the cloister was always glazed, this seems unlikely as one of the original arcade posts retains a shaped impost block and bracket. This indicates that this part of the cloister was an open veranda-like structure allowing ventilation to this side of the classrooms and providing a covered, but not enclosed walkway between the classrooms; in fact the present school library appears to have been created by glazing and extending this veranda into the garden in the late 20th century (Parker 2008). The south range is the least altered of the ranges and the facade of this range towards the cloister is better preserved and retains the original width and original steel windows both above and below the cloister roof. Each classroom had a built-in teaching wall containing cupboards and blackboards filling the end wall. On the outer wall of each classroom there was a large storage cupboard, closed by a six panelled door and a similar cupboard on the opposing wall with a four panelled door.
- 5.5 The school complex also includes several detached structures. Four of these belong to the original buildings. These consisted of two covered play areas and two other buildings (possible lavatories) along the northern boundary of the site, on either side of the main entrance from Manor Road. The lavatory block is linked to the main school buildings by covered walkways.
- 5.6 The school buildings have been extended on several occasions by the addition of new buildings. The earliest of these are a group of prefabricated huts to the southeast of the main school which may have been constructed to provide accommodation. It is known that these were present on the site by 1945 as they appear on aerial photographs of that date. This type of hut is known as 'standard MOWP (Ministry of War Production) hut'. The huts form an L-shape and are linked by a small corridor. More recently these structures have been utilised as a kitchen and dining room.

- 5.7 A modern extension to the north of the school is likely to have been added to the site in the 1970s. This building consists of a prefabricated timber structure with boarded panels, continuous windows and a flat roof. It was constructed between the two covered walkways and provided extra classrooms.
- 5.8 Something of the school's prevailing ethos is captured in the mural by children in the covered play area. The lasting affection of its pupils is represented by the farewells to 'Monty' scrawled on the boiler-house window.

6. Archive

- 6.1 The archive will be prepared to comply with guidelines set out in Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage (UKIC 1990)/ Standards in the Museums Care of Archaeological Collections (Museum and Galleries Commission 1992)/ Management of Archaeological Projects 2 (English Heritage 1991).
- 6.2 Copies of this report in both printed and digital format will be deposited with:

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7. COAS Acknowledgements

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