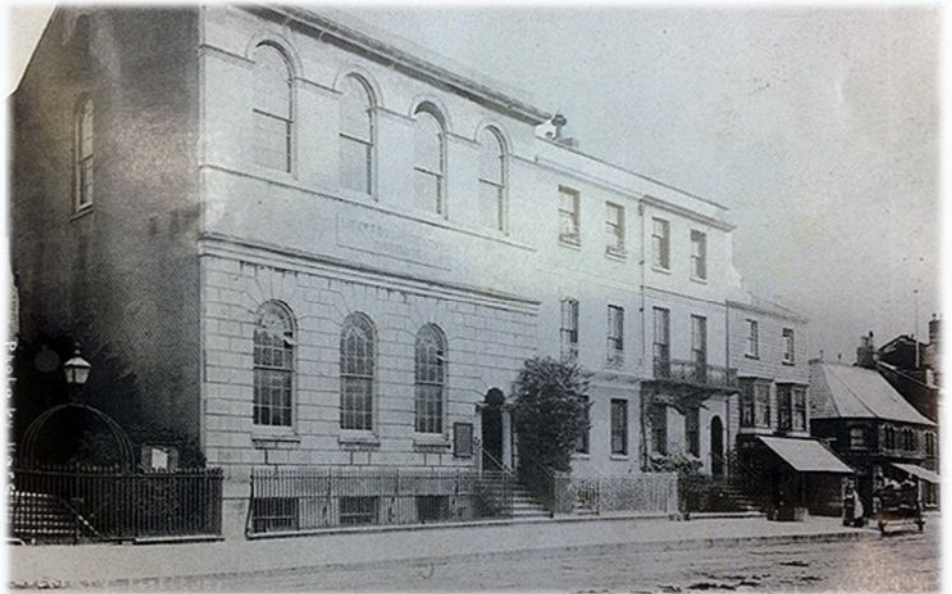


# Former Bridport Literary and Scientific Institute, 51 East Street, Bridport, Dorset

Historic Building Recording and  
Archaeological Monitoring and  
Recording

**REPORT**

April 2017





**Former Bridport Literary and Scientific Institute**  
**51 East Street**  
**Bridport**  
**Dorset**

*for*

**C1 project code: C1/SBR/15/LBD**

**Bridport Area Development Trust**

**WSI**

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 Date 18/03/17

Approved by Richard McConnell, Director

Signed

Date 20/04/17

Issue 01

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL DETAILS**

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Museum accession code	N/A
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Front cover image: The Literary and Scientific Institute, 1904

## Summary

*Context One Heritage and Archaeology (C1) carried out a programme of historic building recording and archaeological monitoring and recording at the Grade II\* Listed former Bridport Literary and Scientific Institute, 51 East Street, Bridport, Dorset. The project was commissioned by Mr Paul Richold (Architecton) on behalf of the Bridport Area Development Trust, and funded by the Heritage Lottery.*

*The building recording and monitoring programme were required as a condition of planning consent (West Dorset District Council LBC application ref. WD/D/14/001182) in mitigation of the ‘Repair, alteration and extension of Bridport Literary and Scientific Institute building to form a cafe with ancillary facilities, workspace/hub, training facilities, business space, and meeting areas for community use’.*

*The renovation project provided an opportunity to reverse some of the effects caused by the various uses of the building since it ceased being the Literary and Scientific Institute in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, so that the interior more closely resembles its Victorian layout and design. Observations confirm the previous opinion that the building is good quality but not outstanding, probably designed by a local builder/ architect but inspired by fashionable classical architecture of the period (Baxter 2013, 22). The Institute replaced a longer building on the same plot for which no structural evidence remains, except perhaps one wall outside of the Institute. The North Building formed part of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Art School. Despite the alterations carried out as the building acquired new functions, particularly when it changed from being the Mechanics Institute to the Literary and Scientific Institute in 1865, it remains a fine example of a Victorian public building.*

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## 1. Introduction

1.1 Context One Heritage & Archaeology (C1) carried out a programme of historic building recording and archaeological monitoring and recording at the former Bridport Literary and Scientific Institute, 51 East Street, Bridport, Dorset (the 'Site'), over six days between 7 August 2015 and 23 February 2017. The project was commissioned by Mr Paul Richold (Architecton) on behalf of the Bridport Area Development Trust, and funded by the Heritage Lottery.

1.2 The building recording and monitoring programme were required by West Dorset District Council (WDDC) as a condition of planning consent (Listed Building Consent (LBC) reference WD/D/14/001182) in mitigation of the 'Repair, alteration and extension of Bridport Literary and Scientific Institute building to form a cafe with ancillary facilities, workspace/hub, training facilities, business space, and meeting areas for community use'.

1.3 Bridport Literary and Scientific Institute was listed at Grade II\* in 1950 (List entry number: 1118999). It has Group Value with neighbouring buildings: the Unitarian Chapel (also Grade II\*), and Nos 37 to 47 (odd) East Street (Grade II), and Nos 53 to 55 (odd) East Street (Grade II). The majority of buildings in the vicinity are also listed, mostly at Grade II. The significance of the Institute is set-out in a Consultation Response letter dated 20 June 2014 by Ms Jacqueline Martinez, Assistant Inspector of Historic Buildings & Areas, Historic England (then English Heritage). This stated:

*"The heritage significance of the building lies primarily in the survival of the architectural details and plan form of the 1830's building and its association with the C19 adult education. The building has seen many uses and alterations to the original plan form are still very visible at ground floor level, the front elevation is relatively intact and particular internal features such as the staircase remain intact. Of the external constructions, the north extension provides some evidential value in regards to the buildings continued and changing use."*

1.4 Listed Building Consent (LBC) was granted on 21 July 2014 and Condition 4 of the Listed Building Consent stated that:

*"No works shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. This scheme shall cover archaeological fieldwork together with post-excavation work, it shall include building work relating to the removal of walls and floors to accommodate new services, the creation of openings and blocking up of openings, and the removal and conservation of fireplaces, and shall include publication of the results. Thereafter, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, works shall proceed in strict accordance with such details as have been agreed."*

*REASON: To protect the historic fabric and safeguard the historic interest of the listed building in accordance with West Dorset District Local Plan (2006) Policy SA19."*

1.5 The LBC condition effectively breaks down into five elements: the production of a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which set out the project strategy; historic building recording; monitoring and recording during development groundworks; post-excavation and report production (this document); and archive deposition. The WSI was submitted to WDDC prior to the commencement of any Site works.

1.6 The requirement follows advice by Central Government as set out in paragraph 141 the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) (DCLG 2012). This states:

*'Local planning authorities should make information about the significance of the historic environment gathered as part of plan-making or development management publicly accessible. They should also require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible'. (DCLG 2012, para 141).*

## 2. Site and Historical Background

- 2.1 The Site (centred on NGR SY 46786 92918) is located on the eastern part of Bridport town centre, c. 160m east of Market House and fronting East Street, the main arterial road through the town centre (see **Figure 1**). The imposing square building of the Institute occupies part of a rectangular plot which extends north-north-eastwards from the street, with further buildings to the rear. These comprise a modern connecting structure which until recently was connected to the rear north elevation of the Institute, and a separate North Building.
- 2.2 The ground floor of the Institute is located at c. 18m above Ordnance Datum (aoD), on land that rises gently towards the north. The recorded solid geology is Jurassic Eype Clay Member, Siltstone and Limestone (BGS 2017). The soils are characterised by shallow lime-rich soils over chalk or limestone (CSAIS 2017).
- 2.3 The history of the Institute is fully set-out in the *Bridport Literary and Scientific Institute Conservation Plan* (Baxter 2013). Historic maps provide a useful indication of the chronological development of the Site (see **Figure 2**). A 1774 map of Bridport (as shown in Hutchins' *History and Antiquities of Bridport*) shows the Site area encompassing two long narrow buildings flanking a central property (**Figure 2; a**). The tithe map of Bridport does not depict details of buildings in the area, therefore unfortunately there is a 100-year gap in the cartographic evidence. The Institute is first depicted on the first edition 1888 Ordnance Survey (OS) map, labelled as the 'Literary and Scientific Institute' (**Figure 2; b**), by which time all the building shown on the Site and adjoining plots had been removed. A small structure is attached to the north elevation, adjacent to a narrow structure against the east boundary which leads to the North Building. The latter is depicted with an off-centre division running north to south, suggesting that the western part of the North Building was under separate ownership. The space between the Institute and the North Building was open (a courtyard), bordered to the west by the burial ground of the Unitarian Chapel. No discernible changes are evident on the 1902 OS map (**Figure 2; c**), however the 1929 OS map appears to show infilling of the yard excepting a narrow corridor (light well) along the western side (**Figure 2; d**) with no changes evidence on the 1962 OS map (**Figure 2; e**) (now labelled as County Library) nor indeed to the present day.
- 2.4 The Historic England List Entry for the Institute is as follows:
- 'Originally founded as a Mechanics Institute by Henry Warburton MP, then in 1855 reconstituted as a Literary and Scientific Institute and later used as a public library in C20. Portland ashlar. 2 storeys and high basement. Moulded band. Moulded eaves cornice and blocking course. Rusticated ground floor. 4 ranges round-headed sashes with glazing bars, those on 1<sup>st</sup> floor with continuous sill band and moulded voussoirs and impost band. Panel with "Literary and Scientific Institute" inscribed. Panelled door with contemporary acanthus moulding and semi-circular fanlight, flanked by Greek Doric columns taking semi-circular arch. Some railings with spear finals'.*
- 2.5 The Mechanics Institute, built in 1832-33, comprised large rooms to the ground and first floor, with service rooms in the basement and a rear yard to the north. Unfortunately, there are no original architect drawings or records although it has been suggested it may have been designed by Joseph Galpin, a local builder active in Bridport between the 1820s and the 1840s (Connor 2009). Buildings attributed to him adopt severe classicism, favouring use of the Doric order as employed at the Institute.
- 2.6 In 1864, the building was reconstituted as the Literary and Scientific Institute following refurbishment and alterations after a decade standing empty (Baxter 20013, 24). The *Bridport News* of 15 October 1864 reported that the existing staircase was very steep and dangerous, and that the '*long gracefully sweeping staircase leading to the lecture-hall has been taken down, and in its stead are two short flights*'. At the time the Conservation Plan was drafted, alterations were not apparent from the standing fabric (*ibid*). The Lecture Hall was reportedly re-fitted and the Reading Room re-decorated with the addition of busts and mounted reliefs, including the plaque on the front façade carved 'Literary and Scientific Institute' (*ibid*, 25). Use as a Literary and Scientific establishment was short lived, and in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century it became an art school. This necessitated some changes to the layout, with provision of the North Building towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Further alterations took place when the building became a public library in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.
- 2.7 The building was without purpose from 1997 and had been vacant since 2002. It was on English Heritage's Heritage at Risk Register since 2003 but the condition of the building has gradually deteriorated with water

damage to the plastered ceilings. The character of the building has also been compromised by the installation of modern stud walls, suspended ceilings, blocked openings, and the insertion of new openings.

### 3. Archaeological Aims and Research Objectives

#### **Historic Building Recording**

- 3.1 As most parts of the building are well dated/phased and their construction techniques known, it was not proposed that all works involving alterations and major repairs to the fabric of the building would require intensive historic building recording. Instead, the overall aim of the historic building was to investigate key areas, as identified in a consultation draft of the *Bridport Literary and Scientific Institute Conservation Plan* (Baxter 2013). This document states the following:

*“Given the lack of archival information to provide written evidence about the development of the building, there are many elements of the fabric which it has been difficult to date definitively. This is particularly the case in the basement. In the southern half, the interior walls show signs of having been modified and it is difficult to surmise the original plan form from what stands today.*

*The rear (north) wall of the basement is a curiosity as it incorporates a pair of brick fireplaces within the rubble wall but there is no sign of chimneys at the ground floor or externally at roof level. This raises the possibility that the wall survives from an earlier structure of uncertain, possibly eighteenth-century date. No detailed sources survive to be able to provide reasonable hypothesis of what existed on site previously, but further investigation of the fabric itself may reveal more.”* (Baxter 2013, para 3.4.2, 43)

- 3.2 The objectives of the historic building recording break-down as follows:

- prior to renovation works, to provide a general record of the appearance of the building
- during renovation works, to record any evidence within the basement for dating, original plan layout and development
- during renovation works, to record any newly exposed historical features such as blocked openings, covered fireplaces etc.
- to look for evidence for the documented reconfiguration of the main staircase

#### **Monitoring and Recording**

- 3.3 The overall aim of the monitoring and recording was to look for deposits/remains/features that might represent activity prior to the construction of the building, to potentially enhance our knowledge of the historical development of this area of the town. Neighbouring sites in the environs of the building, at 1-6 Rax Lane (Dorset HER Monument ID: MWX3425, MDO19927) and 26 East Street (Dorset HER Monument ID: MDO19930) for example, have demonstrated the presence of activity from the medieval and post-medieval periods.

- 3.4 The objectives of the archaeological monitoring were to:

- investigate the deposits beneath the basement floor as exposed in a series of test-pits
- identify, investigate and record all significant buried archaeological deposits revealed on the site during groundworks;
- determine the character of the archaeological remains, where present;
- recover environmental information, which may provide further information relating to the local historic environment of the area;
- provide sufficient information to enable further mitigation strategies to be determined, where appropriate

## 4. Methodology

- 4.1 The historic building recording programme conformed to guidelines set-out in *Understanding Historic Buildings – A guide to good recording practice* (Historic England 2016), and in *Standard and Guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* published by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) (December 2014a). The monitoring and recording programme was carried out in accordance with the *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) (December 2014b). COAS also adhered to the *Code of Conduct* of the CIfA (2014c), and *Regulations for Professional Conduct* (CIfA, 2014, rev. 2015) at all times. The fieldwork methodology is summarised below.

### **Historic Building Recording**

- 4.2 The building survey conformed to recording Level 2 with elements of Level 3 as set out in *Understanding Historic Buildings – A guide to good recording practice* (Historic England, 2016). This states:

*“This 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 examination of the building will produce an analysis of its development and use and the record will include the conclusions reached, but it will not discuss in detail the evidence on which this analysis is 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.” (para 5.2.1)*

*“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.” (para 5.3.1)*

*“The information contained in the record will for the most part have been obtained through an examination of the building itself. The documentary sources used are likely to be those which are most readily accessible, such as historic Ordnance Survey maps, trade directories and other published sources. The record may contain some discussion of the building’s broader stylistic or historical context and importance. It may form part of a wider survey of a number of buildings which will aim at an overall synthesis, such as a thematic or regional publication, when the use of additional source material may be necessary as well as a broader historical and architectural discussion of the buildings as a group. A Level 3 record may also be appropriate when the fabric of a building is under threat, but time or resources are insufficient to allow for detailed documentary research, or where the scope for such research is limited.” (para 5.3.2)*

- 4.3 The survey comprised photographs of the interior and exterior, with each viewpoint including a scale where possible. All main internal elevations were photographed where practical, although there were numerous obstacles within many of the buildings. Most of the exterior was shrouded in scaffolding. Evidence for structural alterations, phasing and significant historic features were also photographed. The photographs consisted of digital images taken with a Nikon D40X 10.1 megapixel digital SLR camera fitted with an 18-55mm lens. Digital photographs were taken in accordance with Historic England’s guidelines for Digital Image and Capture (<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/digital-image-capture-and-file-storage/>). Images were captured on a 4GB SD card on site and were subsequently transferred to the COAS Cloud server for storage.
- 4.4 The photographic survey was accompanied by observational notes/descriptions and the completion of a photographic register in digital format. Plans and elevations provided by the architect were used as a basis for recording observational notes and photo viewpoints.
- 4.5 A selection of photographs has been incorporated into this report. Information recorded in the photographic register is replicated in the photo captions.



### **Monitoring and Recording**

- 4.6 Prior to the commencement of Site works, the excavation methodology was agreed between those responsible for carrying out the groundworks and C1 to ensure that all parties were aware of the monitoring requirements.
- 4.7 An archaeologist was on Site to monitor all specified groundworks with the aim of identifying and recording any archaeological features/deposits present. Provision was made to allow extra time for the appropriate excavation and recording of features revealed as a result of groundworks.
- 4.8 A total of eight test pits were excavated in the basement prior to renovation works. Further monitoring of ground reduction beneath the North Building was carried out during the works. Two further monitoring visits were made to investigate unexpected structures exposed during groundworks.
- 4.9 By default, core details of the deposit sequence across the Site were recorded on C1 *pro-forma* profile forms in digital format using iPad mini tablets. The frequency with which profiles were recorded was based entirely on any variation of the deposit sequence. Spoil was examined for the retrieval of artefacts. The two structures exposed during groundworks were recorded using standard C1 *pro-forma* context forms in digital format using iPad mini tablets.
- 4.10 A photographic record of the monitoring and recording was carried out, and involved the sole use of digital images with an appropriate scale where possible. This included photographs illustrating in both detail, and general context, the deposit sequence and two structures. The photographic record also included working shots to illustrate more generally the nature of the archaeological operation mounted.

## **5. Results**

### **Historic Building Recording**

- 5.1 An initial photographic survey was carried out on 7 August 2015, followed by three, monthly progress visits between October and December 2016 during the removal of modern additions and decayed fabric. The results of all surveys are combined into the following account. For consistency, the room numbers correspond with those used in the Conservation Plan (Baxter 2013). The photo viewpoints for the plates referred to in the following text are shown on **Figure 3** (ground floor), **Figure 4** (first floor) and **Figure 5** (basement).

### **Institute**

- 5.2 The Institute is primarily constructed of course limestone rubble with stone and brick dressings, and ashlar facing to the ground floor of the frontage (south elevation) (see **Front cover**). The front entrance is original and comprises a timber door with fanlight above and panelling to the sides (**Plate 1**), although the entrance is now approached by a concrete ramp as opposed to steps (see **Front cover**). The entrance hall (G1) houses the staircase leading north up to a half landing (**Plate 2**). The ornate handrail and cast iron balusters are early to mid-18<sup>th</sup> century in style and therefore are likely to have been re-used during the documented reconfiguration of the staircase. As the wall plaster was predominantly left in place during the works it was not possible to look for scars in the wall fabric that may have revealed the original layout. Where small areas of plaster were cut-away in the hallway (G1) and Reading Room (G2), this exposed internal brickwork panels within a studwork frame to which lathes would have been fixed for the plaster covering (**Plates 2 & 3**).
- 5.3 The door from the entrance hall into the Reading Room (G2) appears to be original, with a semi-circular plaster relief panel facing into the room (**Plate 3**). At the southern end of the room are three arched sash windows with panelled shutters and fan lights above (**Plate 4**), with a further identical window in the centre of the east elevation (**Plate 5**), and two further identical windows in the north elevation (one blocked) flanking a square-headed door which is a later insertion (**Plate 6**). Other original features comprise cornicing, deep skirting boards, a large plaster ceiling rose in the centre of the room and four smaller roses. In the east elevation, adjacent to the blocked arched window, is a rectangular wooden hatch leading into the lobby (G3) (see below). Removal of modern features has exposed two rectangular original brick fireplaces in the west elevation (**Plate 5**), the brick stacks of which are visible externally amongst the rubble walling (**Plate 7**).

- 5.4 The building that once spanned the former courtyard area between the Institute and the North Building has been demolished as part of the works, together with the hallway (G5) along the east side of the courtyard. From the south, the hallway (G5) was accessed via the lobby (G3), and from the north via a doorway at the east end of the North Building, to the west of which is a large blocked doorway (**Plate 8**) which once led into the courtyard (see below). The installation of the hallway (G5) also necessitated the creation of a large opening into the lobby (G3) (**Plate 9**). The lobby (G3) originally only connected the entrance hall (G1) and the basement, the wooden hatch perhaps used to serve refreshments brought up from the basement kitchen.
- 5.5 From the half landing (F1) are two arched doors lead into two WCs with individual entrance vestibules (F5) (**Plate 10**). Above the two arched doors, and overlooking the landing, is a niche containing a statue of Minerva (**Plate 11**). The stairs turn southwards and lead up to a wider first floor landing, where a later partition formed an office (F2) which on a subsequent monitoring had been removed exposing the sash window (**Plate 12**). A plaster ceiling rose is positioned above the stair well (**Plate 13**), and the landing areas and stair well retain original skirting with cornicing above, and original timber floor boards. Removal of small areas of wall plaster reveal that at first floor level the internal partitions are constructed of timber framing with lathe and plaster, the brickwork panels ceasing between the ground and first floor (**Plate 12**).
- 5.6 The first floor was originally dominated by one large room that has since been divided into two, the main room on the south side (F3) (**Plate 14**) and a slightly narrower room on the north side (F4) (**Plate 15**), the latter adjoining a further small room (F5). The timber embellished four-panel door between the landing and the main room (F3) is original (**Plate 16**), together with three arched sash windows in the south elevation (**Plate 17**) and a single arched sash window in the west elevation (**Plate 18**), which would have been centrally placed before the partition was inserted. Also original are the skirting, the timber floor boards, and the fireplace (although the surround is later) (**Plate 14**). Plain angled boarding running around the tops of the walls probably obscures original moulded cornicing. Fixtures for desks, which on the north side of the room still retain desks, are remnants of the Art School (**Plate 19**).
- 5.7 The northern first floor room (F4) has two arched sash windows in the north elevation flanking a modern chimney surround (**Plate 20**). Following the removal of some plaster, a brick relieving arch was exposed above the chimney to support the brickwork above (**Plate 21**). Examination of the north elevation during scaffolding works reveals that the brick chimney stack is not original, using the same bricks as used in the blocking of the ground floor arched window, and was likely inserted after the first floor was partitioned. The original fireplace in the west elevation was probably blocked simultaneously. The skirting and moulded plaster cornicing runs around the room, including along the partitions between the adjoining rooms, showing the room was embellished after the partition was inserted. A timber embellished four-panel door leads into the small room (F5), and is identical to the door from the landing into the main room (F3) (**Plate 22**). The floorboards in this small room run north-south as opposed to east-west as for the rest of the first floor, supporting the theory that this area has always been separate. This is further supported by the presence of what appears to be an original decorative iron grate, albeit with a later art deco style surround (**Plate 23**). There is a single square sash window.
- 5.8 The basement is accessed from a staircase leading northwards from the lobby down into a small room (B10), with a sash window (**Plate 24**) and fireplace with decorative iron grate (**Plate 25**). The stub of wall at the base of the stairs probably once continued east, so that the small room (B10) was a private space. Indeed, the bottom of the staircase has been re-modelled and may have originally turned much earlier so that it terminated in the room to the north (B5). Nevertheless, doorways from both rooms led onto a central hallway (B1) which ran from south to north (**Plate 26**), with a flagstone floor and decorative wallpaper dado along the side walls. The hallway once led to an open area at the front of the property, with steps up to the pavement on the east side. This has since been ramped over and the tops of the three basement sash windows that were originally visible behind railings (see **Front cover**) are now obscured from the outside. One of these survives in the small room (B10) while the other two are blocked from the inside, at the southern end of a large room (B2) with a sunken concreted floor.
- 5.9 At the northern end of the central hallway (B1), a doorway gave access to the courtyard and was flanked by two square-headed windows, although a further window overlooks the light well along the western side of the courtyard (**Plate 27**). Facing onto the courtyard are two rooms both accessed from the hallway (B1). The

two windows in the western room (B3) had been blocked to varying degrees with modern bricks (**Plate 28**), and original features consisted of a flagstone floor and a brick-lined fireplace. The window in the eastern room (B4) was intact with a brick and stone sill (**Plate 29**).

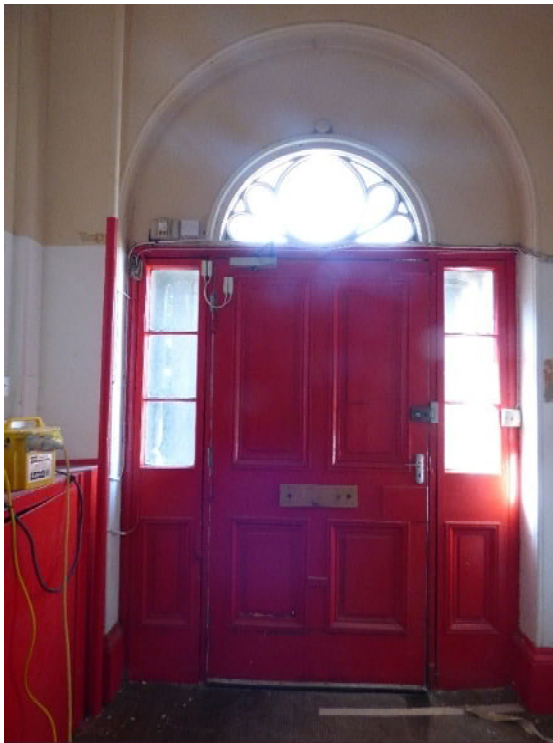


Plate 1. Front door from hallway (from N)

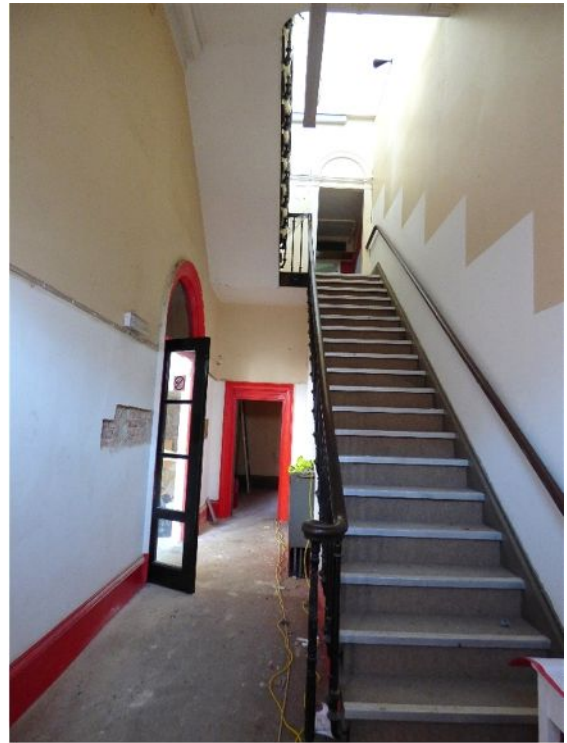


Plate 2. Ground floor hallway (from S)



Plate 3. Ground floor Reading Room showing exposed fabric of partition (from W)



Plate 4. Ground floor Reading Room (from N)



Plate 5. Ground floor Reading Room showing exposed fireplaces (from E)



Plate 6. Ground floor Reading Room showing later doorway & blocked window (from S)



Plate 7. External west elevation showing brick chimney flues (from NW; 2m scale)



Plate 8. North Building before works showing blocked door & door to east corridor (from N)



Plate 9. Lobby showing serving hatch to Reading Room & doorway to corridor (from S)



Plate 10. Half-landing from first floor landing (from S)



Plate 11. Minerva statue above half-landing (from S)



Plate 12. First floor landing showing exposed fabric of partition (from N)



Plate 13. Staircase from ground floor with ceiling rose above



Plate 14. First floor Lecture Room, south side (from E)



Plate 15. First floor Lecture Room, north side (from W)



Plate 16. Panelled door between first floor landing & Lecture Room (from N)



Plate 17. First floor Lecture Room, south side (from N)



Plate 18. Desks in south side of first floor Lecture Room (from SE)



Plate 19. Desks in south side of first floor Lecture Room (from SW)



Plate 20. First floor Lecture Room, north side (from SE)



Plate 21. Later fireplace in first floor Lecture Room (from S)



Plate 22. Panelled door between Lecture Room & adjacent office (from NNE)



Plate 23. Fireplace in first floor office (from W)



Plate 24. West side of basement showing internal stairs (from N)



Plate 25. Fireplace in basement parlour (from W)



Plate 26. Basement hallway (from S)



Plate 27. External north elevation of Institute at basement level (from N)



Plate 28. Windows of north elevation from basement parlour (from S)



Plate 29. Window of north elevation from basement room (from S)



### **North Building**

- 5.10 The North Building is separated from the Institute by a courtyard, with the connecting hallway (G5) on the east side. It is a single storey structure with a basement, the ground floor open to a scissor truss roof (**Plate 30**). The ground floor is of mixed construction. The south elevation comprises dark red and grey bricks laid as English bond, the fourth course from the eaves constructed of a row of headers set on edge (**Plates 31 & 32**). Both the east and west elevations are of coursed and random rubble (**Plates 30 & 33**), the exterior of the west elevation showing the two doors blocked with red bricks laid as stretcher bond (**Plate 34**). A former gable roof line indicates there was once an additional building attached to this side. In addition, the roof has been raised by approximately 0.50m, as shown by a change from rubble to brick. The central part of the north elevation was also of red bricks laid as stretcher bond set within walling of random rubble (**Plate 35**). With the exception of the chimney breasts, the basement was entirely constructed of coarsed, random rubble with the occasional brick (**Plate 36**).
- 5.11 Within the south elevation are four square-headed doorways (**Plates 31 & 32**). Two are very tall, the eastern one being the blocked opening which once led to the courtyard (**Plate 8**), while the other is partially blocked and houses a smaller doorway. The blocked high doorway is adjacent to the door leading to the hallway G5, the rubble surrounding the doorframe testimony to its later insertion. This indicates that the hallway (G5) is a later addition to the North Building, its construction making the large door redundant. The east elevation also contains a pair of blocked high square-headed doorways again with timber lintels, a brick arch above the northern of these doors suggesting the presence of an earlier opening (**Plate 30**). Within the west elevation are a pair of identical blocked doors (**Plates 33 & 34**). Three fireplaces have been exposed in the north elevation (see below) (**Plate 35**).
- 5.12 In the basement, the south elevation has a central door flanked by two windows with stone sills, virtually identical to the arrangement in the north elevation (**Plate 36**). The interior has a flagstone floor, and the north elevation contains two identical brick-lined fireplaces. Removal of the wooden floor at ground level allows the basement and ground floor fireplaces to be observed in one view (**Plate 35**). The ground floor fireplaces are smaller, the two outer ones (bricked up) directly above the larger basement fireplaces and no doubt utilizing the same flue. In between (but off centre) is a squatter fireplace, which is contemporary with the brickwork within which the ground floor fireplaces are constructed.



Plate 30. Ground floor of North Building showing brick arch above blocked door (from W; 1m scale)



Plate 31. Ground floor of North Building (from NE)



Plate 32. Ground floor of North Building (from NW)



Plate 33. Ground floor of North Building (from E; 1m scale)



Plate 34. External west elevation of North Building (from W; 2m scale)



Plate 35. Internal north elevation of North Building showing fireplaces (from S)



Plate 36. External south elevation of North Building basement (from S)

### **Monitoring and Recording**

- 5.13 The overall deposit sequence beneath the walls of the North Building comprised 0.16m of foundation (very coarse gritty sand matrix with small stones and chunks of lime), above a 0.01m deep soot deposit (**Plate 37**). This directly overlay the natural comprising orange compacted (friable to touch) fine silt sand, upon which the sandstone flag floor (measuring 0.12m thick) rested. A subsequent visit made during ground reduction within the North Building only revealed natural ground (**Plate 38**). The deposit sequence beneath the Institute was identical to that recorded in the North Building, although no soot line was present and the 0.15m deep foundation consisted of sandy lime mortar with small stones (**Plate 39**). Also, the flagstone floor had been largely replaced with concrete, and the presence of modern brick structures beneath this floor testify to previous disturbance (**Plate 40**). The test pit to the north of the Institute exposed a single deposit of pure coarse sand.

- 5.14 A brick culvert was discovered running beneath the basement hallway on the same north to south alignment. This turned out to be a modern brick arched construction measuring 0.0m wide and 0.35m high, and protected a modern service pipe (**Plate 41**).
- 5.15 A small trial hole measuring 0.60m by 0.40m and 1m+ deep was excavated in the re-entrant angle between the north-west corner of the Institute and the west wall of the courtyard. This revealed a buried brick retaining wall aligned north to south and running parallel and approximately 0.5m west of the courtyard wall (**Plates 42 & 43**).



Plate 37. Test-pit in NE corner of North Building basement (from W; 1m scale)



Plate 38. Excavation of North Building basement (from S)



Plate 39. Test-pit in west of Institute basement (from E; 1m scale)



Plate 40. Test-pit in NE corner of Institute basement (from S; 1m scale)



Plate 41. Modern brick culvert beneath basement hallway (from S; 1m scale)



Plate 42. Brick retaining wall running north from NW corner of Institute (from W; 0.5m scale)



Plate 43. Brick retaining wall running north from NW corner of Institute (from N; 0.5m scale)

## 6. The finds

- 6.1 No archaeological finds were noted or collected.

## 7. Discussion and Conclusion

- 7.1 The monitoring and recording within the basement established that the Institute and the North Building were constructed directly above natural sediments. A modern brick culvert ran beneath the basement hallway, while a buried brick wall running north from the north-west corner of the Institute may relate to the buildings shown on the 1774 Hutchins map, and indeed appears to align with a division between the properties. Otherwise all traces of the building shown on the 1774 Hutchins map as occupying the Site must have been expunged during construction, probably by the excavations of the basements.
- 7.2 Removal of render on the North Building has exposed a more complex building history than previously thought as first suggested in the Conservation Plan, although at the time this document was drafted the presence of external render made it difficult to read the building. The suggestion was made on the basis that the two basement fireplaces appeared to be unrelated to its first documented use in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century as an Art School (Baxter 2013, 26). This is perhaps confirmed by the new exposure of fireplaces at ground floor level, directly above the basement fireplaces. The central ground floor fireplace may relate to an earlier or, more likely, a later arrangement associated with the apparent division of the building into two properties as indicated by the 1888 OS map. Although the position of the dividing wall could not be accurately pinpointed in the building fabric, it is likely to have been between the eastern and the central fireplace. This may in part explain the number of fireplaces, although the proximity of the western and the central fireplace still suggest more than one phase to the building. Nevertheless, the brickwork of the fireplaces is Victorian, and the chimneys were inserted into an extensive area of brickwork from the same period. More convincing evidence for an earlier date is the English bond brickwork in the south elevation, typically used in industrial buildings from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century (Lynch 1993). Together with evidence for the raising of the roof, traces of an earlier arched opening and an attached structure to the west, this is strong evidence that the North Building had a previous purpose.
- 7.3 Removal of later fabric within the Institute has revealed more about the construction of the building and exposed original features that add to our understanding about layout and use. The internal walls of the ground floor are of timber studwork with brick infill panels, and a lathe and plaster finish. At first floor level, the brick infills cease and the studwork is straddled by lathes. The basement partitions are of a mixed construction, with original brickwork interspersed with later material, reflecting a series of alterations to the plan.
- 7.4 The layout of the ground floor is relatively unaltered, although the central door in the north elevation of the Reading Room (G2) was inserted in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, providing access to the building inserted in the courtyard (G4) (**Figure 3**). The window on the east side of the door may have been blocked at the same time. It was previously surmised that the Reading Room (G2) was equipped with fireplaces in the west wall, as indicated by flue lines evident from cracking between the flue brickwork and adjacent rubble stone (Baxter 2013, 21). This was confirmed following removal of internal and external render, on either side of the central window. This arrangement was also replicated in the first floor, although only the fireplace in the south room (F3) remains, with a new fireplace inserted in the north wall of the north room (F4) probably following the late 19<sup>th</sup> century partitioning of the Lecture Room (see below). The lobby (G3) at the end of the ground floor entrance hall originally only led to the basement, and therefore a convenient space from which to serve refreshments through the hatch. Only after the North Building became part of the Art School was a further doorway inserted, leading to a connecting corridor (G5) between the two buildings. The fabric in the hallway (G1) was not sufficiently exposed during the works to reveal evidence of the reported reconfiguration of the staircase in 1865, the original purportedly being too steep, although the balustrades are more typical of an 1830's as opposed to an 1860's date suggesting re-use (Baxter 2013, 24). Nevertheless, the high quality of the staircase and the balanced configuration of the space are in keeping with the date and function of the building. There must always have been a half-landing above the ground floor lobby, but whether this was

adapted as part of the re-working is unclear. If anything, the half-landing was probably larger if the stairs were steeper.

- 7.5 At first-floor level (**Figure 4**), the Lecture Room was originally of the same proportions as the Reading Room, but was subsequently divided into two rooms, the south room (F3) being larger than the north room (F4). Victorian period moulded cornicing and skirting around the north room reveals this was carried out as part of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century work. Further alterations were implemented when the building became an Art School, with provision of desks and, probably simultaneously, provision of a new fireplace in the north elevation. Within the basement (**Figure 5**), enough original fabric survives to suggest that the current arrangement is broadly similar to the original layout and that it had domestic functions, with remnants of wall paper, areas of flagstone flooring and provision of fireplaces. The hallway (B1) connected the front yard with the rear courtyard, and is slightly off-centre towards the east. On the eastern side of the hallway were three equally sized rooms, the internal stairs from the ground floor lobby (G3) probably terminating in the central room (B5). The bottom treads of the stairs are modern, now ending in the south-west room, but as this was equipped with a fireplace and window it was unlikely to have been a thoroughfare but more likely a cosy parlour. The rooms on the west side of the hallway (B1) are wider, reflecting the offset in the division of the building. The large room (B2), originally lit by two windows and an off-centre fireplace, may have been a kitchen, with no evidence of an internal division. The adjacent room (B3) was equipped with a fireplace and may have been another parlour.
- 7.6 To conclude, the renovation project provided an opportunity to reverse some of the effects caused by various uses so that the interior more closely resembles its mid-19<sup>th</sup> century layout and design. Observations confirm the previous opinion that the building is good quality but not outstanding, probably designed by a local builder/ architect but inspired by fashionable classical architecture of the period (Baxter 2013, 22). The main Institute structure replaced earlier buildings on the same plot for which no below-ground evidence remains, with the exception of one possible wall outside the Institute. Also, it has been observed that there is some difference between the plan alignment at ground level and the west wall of the basement (*pers comm.* Paul Richold). The North Building formed part of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Art School, but appears to have been adapted from a pre-existing structure. Indeed, the north wall aligns with the north walls of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century properties to the east suggesting a similar date for its construction. Despite the alterations carried out as the building acquired new functions, particularly when it changed from being the Mechanics Institute to the Literary and Scientific Institute, it remains a fine example of a Victorian public building.

## 8. Archive

- 8.1 The NPPF requires that an archaeological archive arising from development works is made publicly accessible (para. 141). The archive comprises two parts: the paper/digital archive including site records and images; and the artefact/ecofact assemblage. In this case, no artefacts were observed or recovered/retained.
- 8.2 All relevant data gathered as part of the historic building recording has been incorporated into this report. As no archaeological evidence was encountered during the archaeological monitoring and recording, all relevant data has been incorporated into this report. The paper/digital archive will be stored on the COAS cloud storage server or discarded.
- 8.3 A copy of this report will be provided to the client and to the HES so that it can be included as part of the county Historic Environment Record. A digital copy of the report will also be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service, via OASIS (On-line Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations – <http://oasis.ac.uk/england/>).

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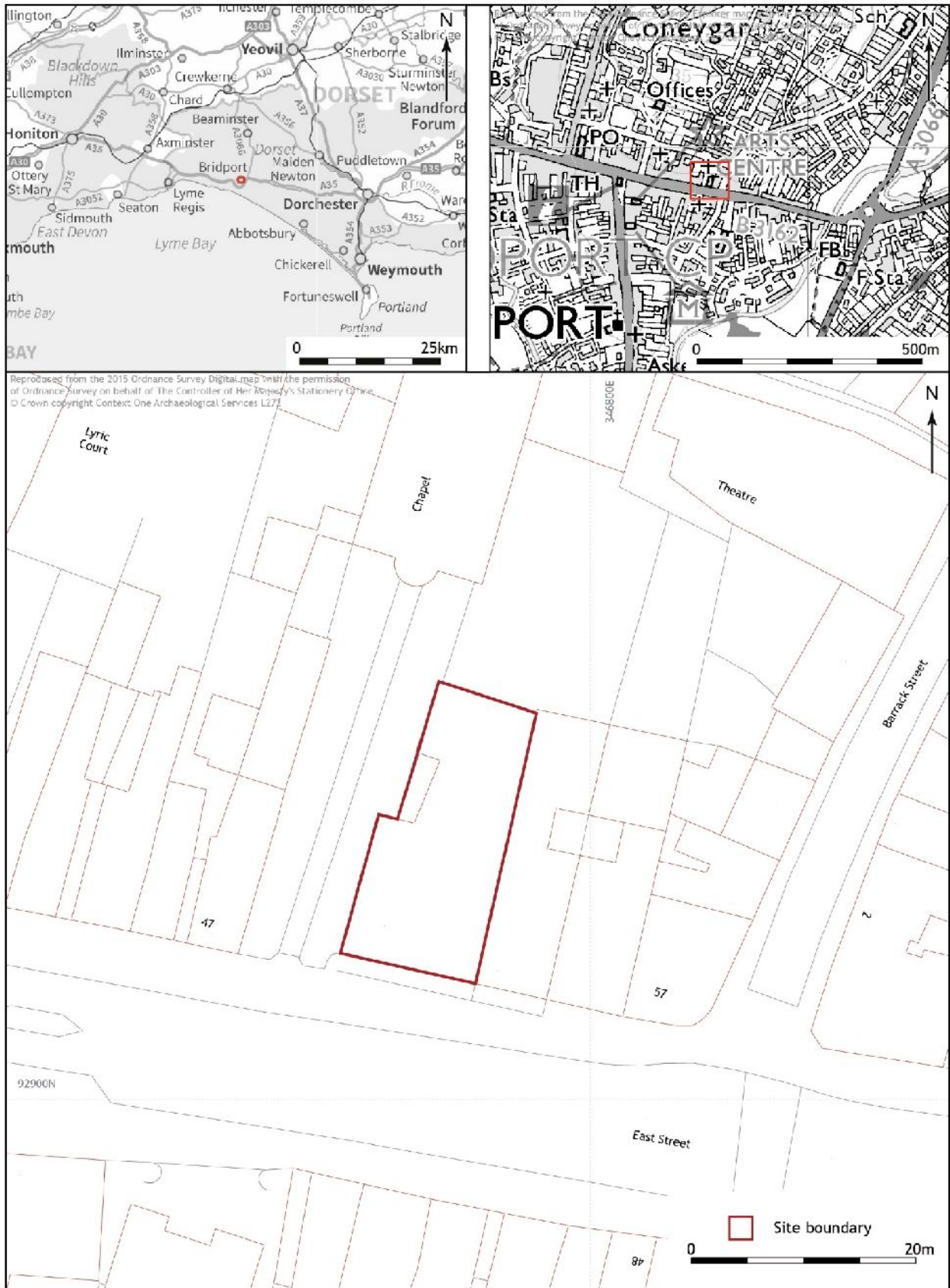


Figure 1. Site setting



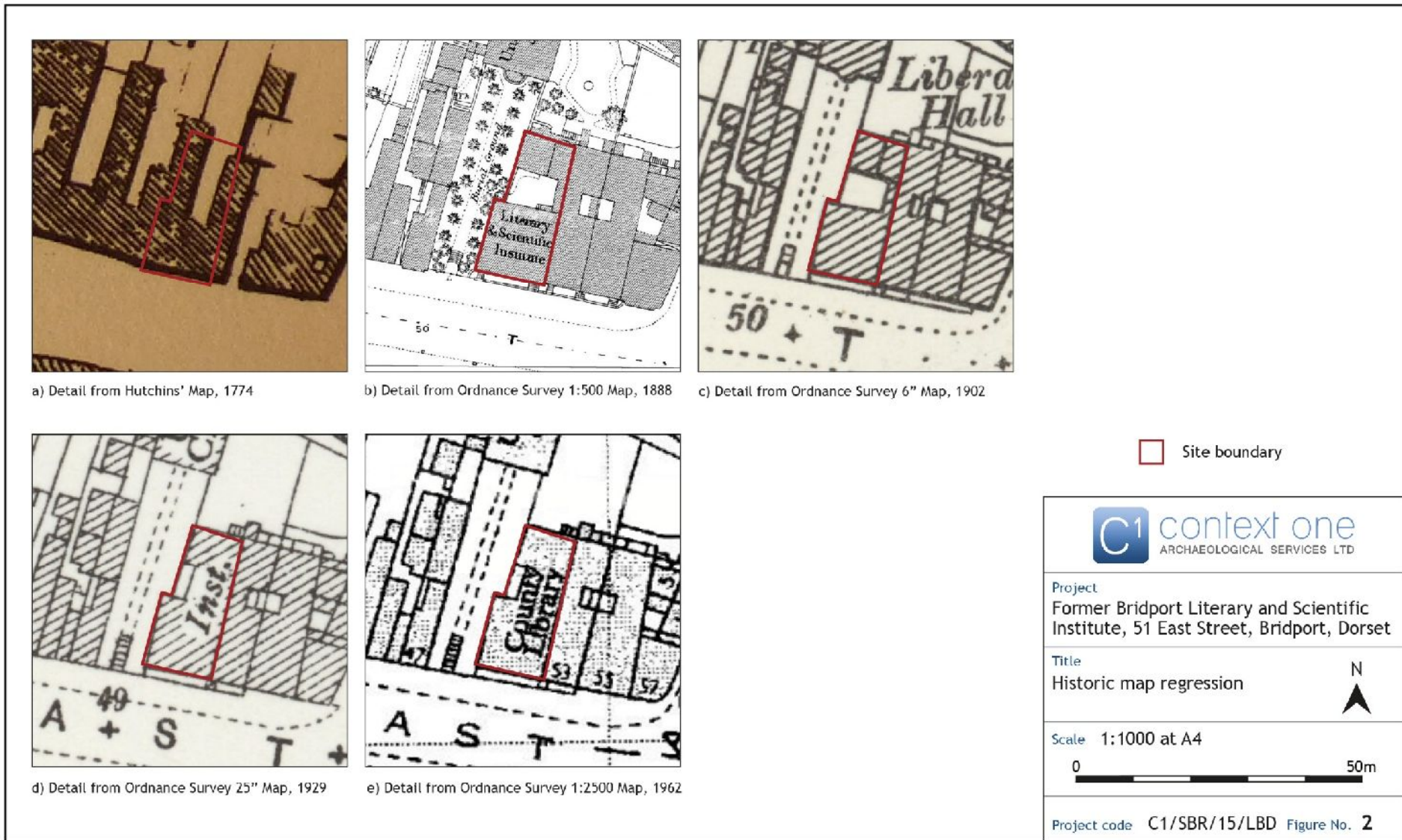


Figure 2. Historic map regression

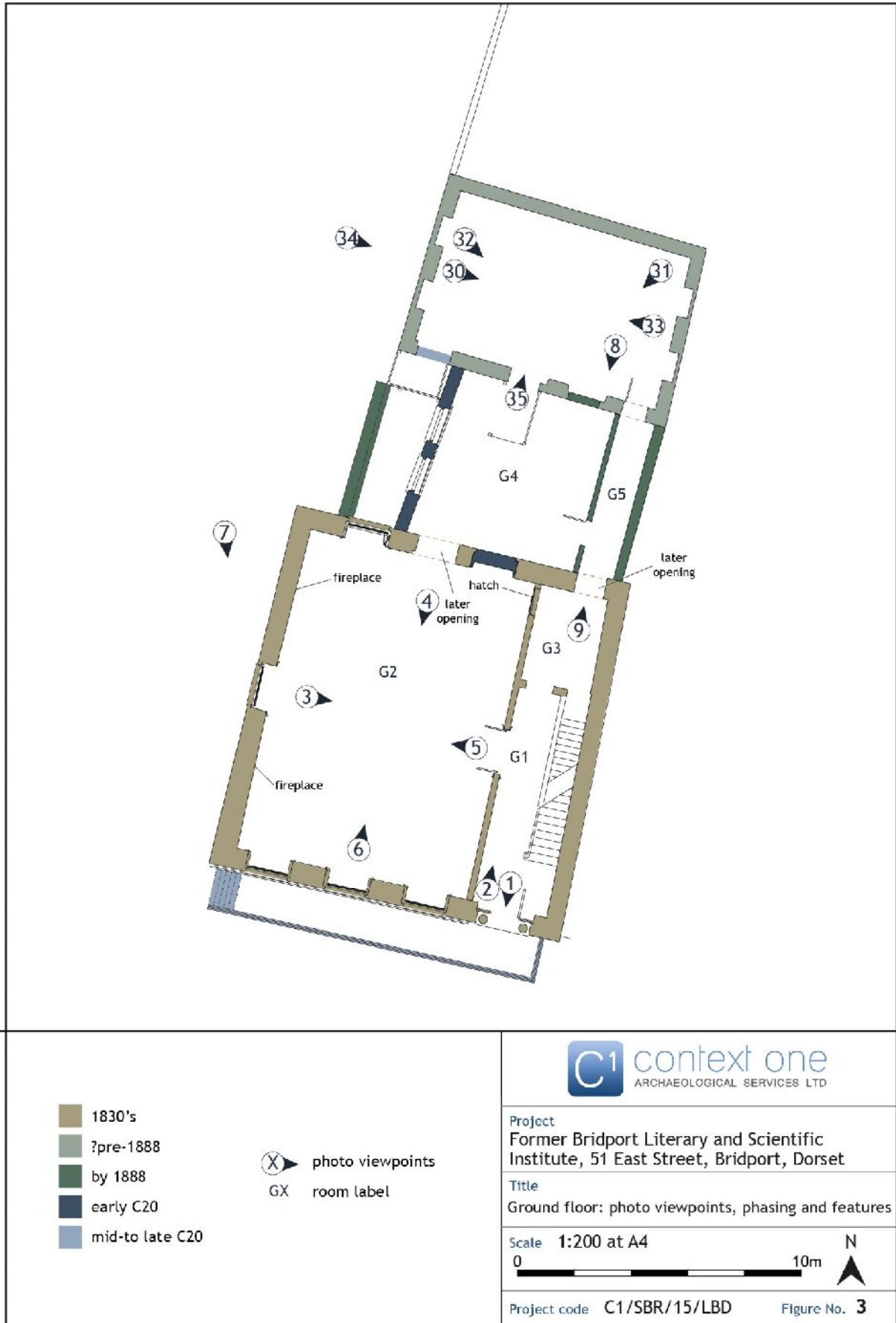


Figure 3. Ground floor: photo viewpoints, phasing and features

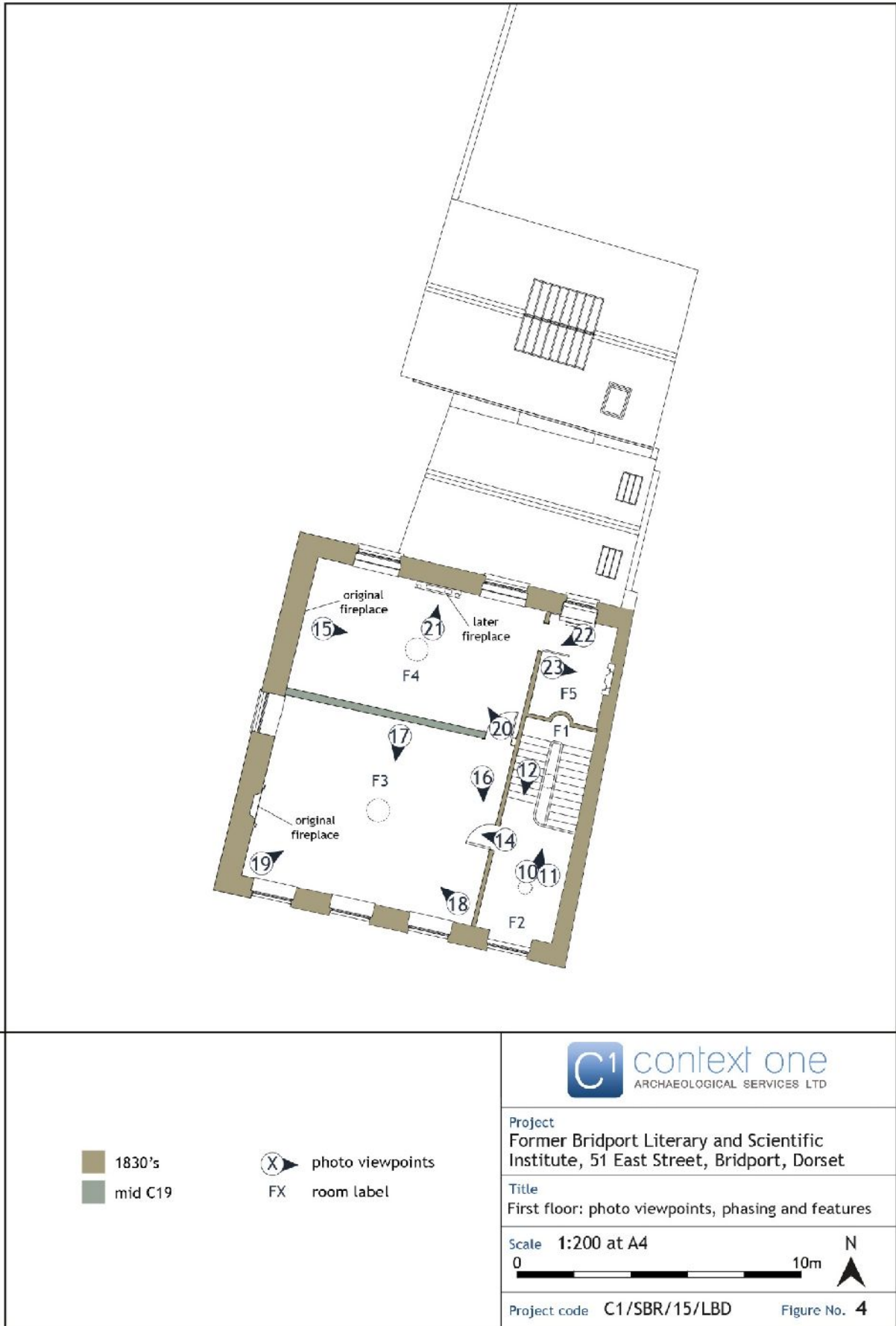


Figure 4. First floor: photo viewpoints, phasing and features

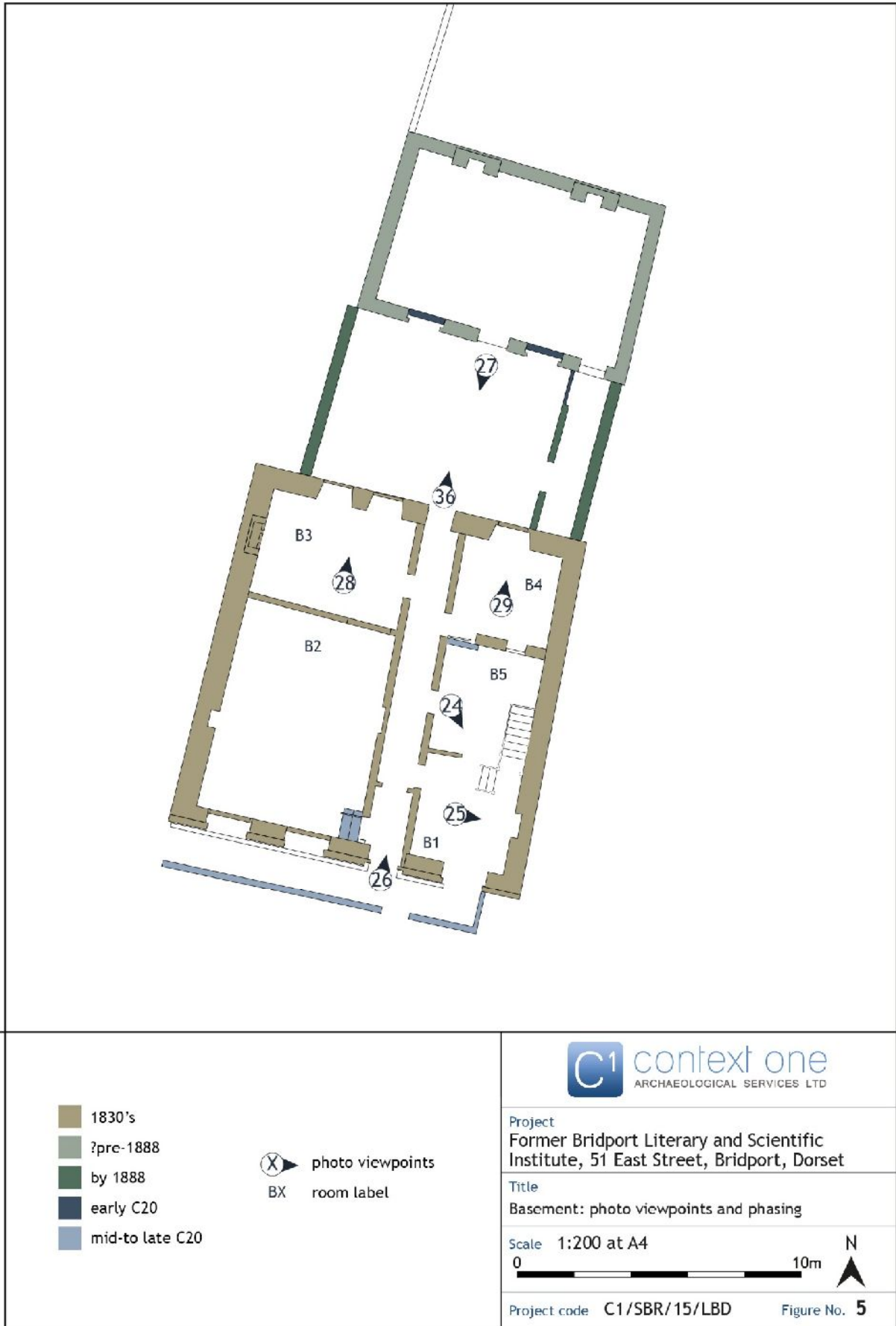


Figure 5. Basement: photo viewpoints and phasing

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