

Building Recording at The Drill Hall,  
Recreation Road,  
Bromsgrove,  
Worcestershire



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<b>Contents</b>	
<b>Summary</b>	<b>1</b>

## **Report**

<b>1 Background</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 Reasons for the project	3
<b>2 Aims</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3 Methods</b>	<b>3</b>
3.1 Personnel	3
3.2 Documentary research	3
3.3 List of sources consulted	3
3.4 Fieldwork strategy	4
3.5 Building analysis	4
3.6 Statement of confidence in the methods and results	4
<b>4 Context</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5 The building</b>	<b>5</b>
5.1 Historical information	5
5.2 Building development	7
5.3 Phase 1: 1914	7
5.4 Phase 2: 1960s to 1970s	8
5.5 Phase 3: 1980s to 1994	9
<b>6 Discussion</b>	<b>9</b>
6.1 Research frameworks	10
<b>7 Publication summary</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>8 Acknowledgements</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>9 Bibliography</b>	<b>11</b>



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## **Building recording at the Drill Hall, Recreation Road, Worcestershire**

Tim Cornah

### **Summary**

Building recording was required to meet a planning condition relating to the redevelopment of the Drill Hall, Recreation Road, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire

The planning condition specified that the building should be recorded to English Heritage specified standards. This required photographing the exterior and interior of the building and annotating existing survey drawings. This produced an archive of the Drill Hall before any changes were made to the building.

An element of historical research and synthesis was also a condition of planning approval. Original records relating to the Drill Hall were studied at Worcestershire Archives along with historic maps. Digitised historic mapping and other online sources were accessed.

Analysis of the Drill Hall was based upon the recorded fabric and documentary research. The development of the building was reconstructed and illustrated on phased ground plans and elevations. These have been reproduced at the end of the report along with relevant photographs.

The Drill Hall at Recreation Road, Bromsgrove consists largely of its original fabric, which dates to 1914. It comprises a large central hall, originally accessed by large double doors from Recreation Road at the southern end. These double doors were flanked by projected structures, complete with battlements and an arched window above the doorway. The main fabric is of brick with some stone detailing on its front elevation, including originally the regimental crest. The hall roof is largely replaced but that which remains suggests that there were roof windows along the line of the ridge. This was supported by eight steel roof trusses.

To the west of the hall was located a domestic space which made up of eight rooms split over two floors. This was of the same brick as the hall but with little stone detailing. To the south of the hall was a further block which consisted of five further rooms split over two floors, and a likely to have been used social spaces such as common rooms as well as an office on the ground floor. Both of these wings were covered by hipped common rafter roofs and then ceramic tiles. The style of these structures may be said to be broadly neo-Georgian.

Two further original structures were built on the southern side of the hall and were each of ground floor construction only. The first of these was a large rectangular room with a centrally ridged common rafter and tile roof. This had barred windows and evidence of a reinforced concrete structure in its south east corner, possibly for munitions storage. The second room was flat roofed with four windows facing onto the street and appears to have been a toilet block. These latter two structures were built in a slightly more Italianate style though using many of the same techniques.

During the second phase, a further largely rectangular single storey brick structure was added to the North West corner of the hall, possibly in the 1960s or 1970s. This structure was also of brick, with a flat roof and consisted of four rooms, latterly used as toilets and common rooms.

The third phase of construction saw the addition of a two storey structure, joining together the residential space and the single storey building to its north. This was a brick built, gabled structure with a tiled roof, split into a single room on each floor, the ground floor of which is a changing room. The function of the first floor room is unclear. Also broadly at this time, a firing range was added on the northern end of the building, along with a garage. A number of internal divisions and changes through all of the phases can be broadly attributed to this phase.



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## Report

### 1 Background

#### 1.1 Reasons for the project

Recording of a historic building was undertaken at the Drill Hall, Recreation Road, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire (NGR SO 96007 70979). It was commissioned by Mr M Sargent (the Client), whose client intends the demolition of the existing Drill Hall and the erection of an 81 bedroom care home (Site 1) and 66 bedroom extra-care apartments for older persons (Site 2) and 26 affordable apartments for older persons (Site 3), with supporting facilities, parking and access.. A planning application was granted for this work by Bromsgrove District Council (reference 14/0821) subject to conditions including a programme of archaeological works

The building is an undesignated heritage asset within the terms used by the *National Planning Policy Framework*. The building is also registered with the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record (HER; WSM27357).

The project conforms to a brief prepared by Worcestershire County Council (WCC 2014) and for which a project proposal (including detailed specification) was produced (WA 2015) and agreed by Aisling Nash, Historic Environment Planning Officer (The Curator). The curator agreed that photographs would be sufficient to illustrate exterior elevations of the building.

The project also conforms to the *Standard and guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* (IfA 2008) and the *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (WCC 2010).

The event reference for this project, given by the HER is WSM66604.

### 2 Aims

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists defines the aims of building recording as 'a programme of work intended to establish the character, history, dating, form and archaeological development of a specified building' (*Standard and guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures*, IfA 2012).

### 3 Methods

#### 3.1 Personnel

The project was undertaken by Tim Cornah BA ; who joined Worcestershire Archaeology in 2006 and has been practicing buildings archaeology since 2012. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Rogers BA Hons, MSc. Illustrations were prepared by Steve Rigby.

#### 3.2 Documentary research

Prior to fieldwork commencing a search was made of the Historic Environment Record (HER).

#### 3.3 List of sources consulted

##### *Cartographic sources*

- 1883 Ordnance Survey Map 1:10,560
- 1901 Ordnance Survey Map 1:10,560
- 1927 Ordnance Survey Map 1:10,560
- 1937 Ordnance Survey Map 1:25,000

##### *Documentary sources*

Published and grey literature sources are listed in the bibliography.

- BA5204 parcel number 35
- BA5204 parcel number 36

### 3.4 Fieldwork strategy

A detailed specification has been prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2015).

Fieldwork was undertaken between the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March and the 5<sup>th</sup> of March. The site reference number and site code is WSM 66604.

Building recording consisted of a photographic survey of the interior and exterior of the buildings, analysis of their development, annotation of existing survey drawings and measured survey. All photographs were taken with photographic scales visible in each shot. The photographic survey was carried out with a Sony  $\alpha$ 350 digital SLR camera. All photographs were recorded on a pro-forma Photographic Record Sheet. Annotation of existing ground plans and elevations, and completion of pro-forma Building Record sheets, complemented the photographic record along with measured drawings completed to scale on drawing film at 1:100 scale.

The project conformed to the specification for a level 3 survey as defined in the English Heritage document *Understanding historic buildings: a guide to good recording practice* (EH 2006). This level of survey is described as 'an analytical record' comprising of 'an introductory description followed by a systematic account of the buildings origins, development and use' (EH 2006). This required the following elements of survey.

#### Survey and drawings

- Plans of all main floors.
- Measured drawings showing the form of any architectural or functional detail not more readily captured by photography.

#### Photography

- Overall appearance of rooms and circulation areas.
- Detailed coverage of the building's external appearance.
- Any detail, structural or decorative, relevant to the building's design, development and use, which does not show on general photographs.

### 3.5 Building analysis

Analysis of the building was based on the study of the photographic record, building recording forms and measured drawings. It was also informed by the documentary sources listed above. This allowed plans to be drawn up showing the structural development of the building.

The building as recorded is depicted in Plates 1-58. Phase plans have been reproduced as Figures 2-3.

### 3.6 Statement of confidence in the methods and results

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved .

## 4 Context

The Drill Hall is located at the southern end of Recreation Road, to the north of the historic core of the town of Bromsgrove. The solid geology of the area is Bromsgrove Sandstone Formation overlain by sand and gravels along the line of the Spadesbourne Brook (BGS 2015), which is located on the southern side of Market Street and opposite the Drill Hall. The town lies broadly within its valley at a height of about 90m AOD.



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The historic core of the town is believed to have developed from the early medieval period onwards, and was mentioned in an 11<sup>th</sup> century copy of a charter that is likely to be of 9<sup>th</sup> century date. It is possible that the town developed initially around a minster, the location and presence of which have yet to be confirmed in the vicinity of St Johns Church to the south west of the Drill Hall (Rogers, Robson-Glyde and Dalwood 2013).

The position of the current town centre developed in the later medieval period along the line of the Roman Road from Worcester to Lickey (WSM30529). A scatter of late medieval buildings survive in the town centre (WSM01996, WSM02009, WSM02010) and late medieval pottery was recovered from an evaluation on Recreation Road (WSM26932). The centre of the town was laid out at this period (WSM19682) and a manor (WSM21482) is also considered to have existed.

It was in the post-medieval period that town expanded into its current form with new development along the High Street and 18<sup>th</sup> Century expansion in the area of The Strand. Numerous houses dating to the 17<sup>th</sup> century exist on the High Street to the south of the Drill Hall whereas those on the Strand more typically date to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The buildings of the Strand also included the Queens head Pub (WSM17524) and a former workhouse (WSM21487) both of which date to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The town in this era became increasingly industrialised and is particularly linked to the production of nails. This industry was partially based in tenement plots to the west of Birmingham road (WSM19696).

The 19<sup>th</sup> century saw little encroachment outside of the established town centre within this area. This is illustrated by the Ordnance Map of 1883 which shows the areas north west of Market Street as fields, and a cricket ground. Shortly after this, the tenements on the western side of Birmingham Road were flattened and Parkside School (WSM29372) was constructed between 1909 and 1912. This was closely followed by the Drill Hall itself in 1914.

The area remained broadly undeveloped in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as it was retained as open space to the north and west of Market Street. This changed to some degree during the Second World War, when a clinic and first aid post was built to the north west of the Drill Hall (WSM36576) but was subsequently demolished. This area of the town became increasingly used for military purposes during the Second World War as Parkside School was used as a civil defence site. A further building on Church Street was also used as a drill hall at this time, also now demolished (WSM29375). Air raid shelters on also existed on Market Street at this time (WSM27640) and were located immediately south of The Drill Hall.

Within the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this area of Bromsgrove was increasingly developed. This was largely commercial development with a supermarket to the south west of The Drill Hall, a clinic to its north and other commercial buildings to its north west. These commercial buildings to the north-west were included within the same development project as the Drill Hall.

## **5 The building**

### **5.1 Historical information**

Drill Halls became a common feature in Britain shortly after the end of the Crimean War in the 1860s. They were largely constructed for volunteer regiments and funded by public subscription. It was in the 1880s that many of these buildings were constructed after the Cardwell army reforms, whereby these volunteer units were incorporated into volunteer battalions of the associated county regiments. Many of the senior officers of these units were local landowners and businessmen and built and equipped these buildings themselves, whilst others were set up as limited companies. It was not uncommon for public fundraising events such as fetes to be held in these buildings (The Drill Hall Project 2015). This largely unofficial approach to the erection of drill halls led to them being created with an extremely wide variety of architectural styles. Many were simple structures that resembled warehouses, others were the embodiment of the Victorian Gothic, Queen Anne revival and neo-Georgian styles with lavish external detailing (Osborne 2006).

Further major reform took place in 1908 when these volunteer regiments were disbanded when Territorial Forces and County Territorial Forces were created (The Drill Hall Project 2015). This led to an attempt to standardise these buildings, though the success of this was minimal and their outward appearance remained varied. Despite this, a distinct architectural style can be seen in a number of Worcestershire Drill Halls of this period, those at Tenbury Wells and Droitwich have a very similar outward appearance to the building recorded here (Osborne 2006).

Despite their outward differences, these buildings have a number of broad features which characterise them. The first is obviously an interior hall for drilling. These varied in size about 45m by 23m to 18m by 9m (The Drill Hall Project Website). The Drill Hall at Stourport on Severn measured about 24m by 12m. The Stourport drill hall also had a wooden solid floor, laid in pitch so as to quieten the sound made during drilling practice (Cook 2002), a feature which is found elsewhere. These spaces were usually accessed by a pair of double doors "sufficiently wide to admit the Volunteers in full marching order, four abreast". They sometimes also contained armouries and stores as well as firing ranges. Many also had spaces for external drilling (The Drill Hall Project website).

As well as these obviously military needs, they often contained recreation rooms such as reading rooms, libraries, billiard rooms and gymnasiums. They often contained catering facilities such as kitchens, not only for military use but also public functions. Many of these buildings also had accommodation built in for a care taker, often a retired sergeant who was also carry out training (The Drill Hall Project Website).

The Territorial Army was established in Bromsgrove by 1912 when a lease was given to rent them a piece of land at or near Whitford Road in Bromsgrove. This land was to be used for as a rifle range (BA5204 parcel no 35). Shortly after this a, contract of agreement dated to January 1914 stated that there was to be constructed "a Drill Hall and company headquarters for G company of the 8th battalion Worcestershire Regiment at Bromsgrove in Recreation Road". This building was to be built by William Weaver Ltd at a cost of £2189 and completed by the 15th of August 1914 (BA5204 parcel no 36). The architect for this project was A. Vernon Rowe, who later served in WW1 as a Lieutenant Colonel as commander of the Worcestershire 8<sup>th</sup> battalion. Rowe was also the architect of the nearby Parkside School (Mc Gregor Smith 2011). The configuration of phase 1, as discussed below, is confirmed by the Ordnance Survey map of 1927, which is the first to show this building.

At the time of the declaration of war on August the 4th 1914, the 8<sup>th</sup> battalion were due to be at a training exercise at Minehead though this had been disbanded the day before. Though many men returned to Bromsgrove the building was never given its official opening and the regiment were eventually deployed to Europe. For the remainder of the war, the building was used by the Volunteer Training Corp and the Red Cross (Mc Gregor Smith 2011). The Ordnance Survey map of 1937 shows the building still within its phase 1 configuration, though a long building to the north may be tentatively interpreted as a firing range.

During the Second World War, the Drill Hall was used as a headquarters of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Worcestershire Bromsgrove Battalion, as well as the Home Guard and the Red Cross. The building continued to be used up until 1994 by 2 Troop of 225 Field Squadron Royal Monmouthshire Royal Engineers and the Worcestershire Army Cadet Force. It was bought in 1994 by the District Council and due to be converted into an arts centre but was then sold shortly after and has since been used for storage (Mc Gregor Smith 2011).

The use of this building was primarily military with space for drilling and other such training. A firing range was also added at some point. Whilst these military uses continued, the hall was used for public functions. After World War 2, these are recorded as town dances, boxing matches, wrestling matches and an annual flower show (Mc Gregor Smith 2011).

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## 5.2 Building development

### 5.3 Phase 1: 1914

The primary phase of this building consisted of five broad areas. These shall be referred to as the drill sergeants' residence, the drill hall, the social rooms, the armoury and the toilet block. Reasons for these descriptions shall be given below. These rooms can be seen on Figures 2 and 3.

The facade of the whole building, as shown in Plates 1 to 3, faces south onto Recreation Road and comprises of the two hipped gables of the drills sergeants' residence and the social rooms , flanking double 't' projecting battlements and former central door that led into the drill hall. This elevation held the majority of the stone detailing of the building, including a regimental crest on the central gable above the former wide entrance. This crest had been removed by the time of recording. The brick battlements also include stone facing and a stone arch above a former window.

The **drill hall** was originally accessed from double doors between the two battlements, as seen from a photograph dating to 1940 (Mc Gregor Smith 2011). This double door fits with the description of being sufficiently wide to admit troops in marching order, four abreast, as given above. The internal space of the hall itself, Plates 4 to 5, measured 26m by 9m (about 85ft by 29ft) and was spanned by eight steel trusses. The current roof covering is of modern, aluminium construction, though internal planking suggests that there were originally roof lights on either side of the ridge for its full length.

There were a further six doors that originally entered this space. Two of these are in the east wall and entered the social rooms and armoury. One of those in the west wall entered the drill sergeants' residence, whilst the further three appear to have exited into external space. The purpose of these three doors remains unclear. A further doorway was inserted into the northern gable at a later date. This northern gable was partially visible from within the later firing range, as well as partially externally, Plates 6 to 8. It consisted of the brick end wall which had a degree of buttressing, below a brick pediment at the gable in an Italianate style. This pediment was decorated by a brick circle and further stone detailing. Buttresses were also seen on the external sides of the wall elevations of the hall, one on the east and three on the west.

The bricks used in the construction of the hall, along with the rest of phase 1, were machine made and measured 8 by 4 ¼ by 3 ½ inches. These are entirely consistent with an early 20<sup>th</sup> date (WCC Brick Catalogue). Moulded bricks existed around some, but not all of the door openings, as shown in Plate 9. The floor of the drill hall was of solid construction, though covered by a modern concrete screed, so its original materials were not determined. However, a pile of oak herringbone floor tiles were noted in the firing range that had tar covering their base. Which room these had been removed from was not clear but would fit with flooring techniques as seen in other drill halls.

The **drill sergeants' residence**, shown externally on plates 1 and 10 to 14, was located at the south-west corner of the drill hall and measured 8.5 by 6m externally. It was accessed internally from the hall, but also from a door onto Recreation Road as well as a further door facing west. The door from Recreation Road entered a passageway which contained stairs to the first floor, Plate 15, and then led into rooms which are likely to have been a living room and a dining room, plates 16 and 17. A kitchen and a pantry could also be accessed from the dining room, Plates 18 and 19, and it was the kitchen that contained the external door.

The first floor may have been split into four rooms and a passage. The room as it existed at the time of recording on its northern side, Plate 20, appeared to have had two fireplaces and have been split by an internal stud division. This room had two windows facing to the north, the eastern most of which was later converted into a door. A room to the south of this was also heated by a fireplace and is likely to have been a bedroom, Plates 21 and 22. A further small room in the south east corner may have been a bathroom, as it remained, Plate 23. The first floor was boarded with 5 ¾ inch wide pine floor boards on top of vertically set pine joists.

The **social rooms** were located at the south west corner of the drill hall, and could be accessed internally from there. A further double door exited onto Market Street to the east and is likely to have been the more routine access into the whole building during this phase, Plate 25 and 30. The ground floor passage way, Plates 26 to 29, also led to the first floor as well as the munitions storage and possible office, as discussed below.

The two rooms on the ground floor are of much larger scale than those in the drill sergeants residence, and may well have been functioned a billiard room, library or common room. Both were heated by fireplaces. In the southern room, three former windows existed facing south, though these were later changed into doors, Plate 31. The space may reasonably be interpreted as a mess room. The northern of these rooms were lit by two windows in the eastern wall and retained its original door, Plate 32. Whilst a social function for this room is possible, an interpretation of it as an office may be more likely. No original flooring was noted on the ground floor, as it was covered by a modern concrete screed.

The first floor was accessed by a flight of stairs, Plates 28 and 33, constructed of concrete but with a wooden banister and simple steel balustrades and lit by large windows. The two rooms in the north east corner, Plates 35 and 36, may have been designed as one room, as the dividing wall is of stud, wattle and lime render construction. This lime render contains horse hair, consistent with phase 1 render in the drill sergeants' residence and the social rooms. As well as this, both these rooms retain their original doors, Plates 37. It is likely that this division was a change during construction, as it partially obscures one of the window frames. The smaller of these rooms contained a basin, so is likely to have been a washroom, as well as a fitting for a gas light, plate 38. The function of the northern of these rooms is unclear. The southern of the first floor rooms is likely also to have had a social function, given its scale, Plate 39. The first floor was boarded with 5 ¾ inch wide pine floor boards on top of vertically set pine joists.

Both the social rooms and the drill sergeants' residence were built in a style reminiscent of the Georgian era using rubbed brick lintels above the windows externally and keystones within these lintels. The windows themselves were almost all sashes, though of slightly varying design. The overall symmetry of the front façade does not quite fulfil a Georgian ideal in that the social rooms are taller built than the sergeants' quarters. These features are illustrated on Plates 1 to 3 and 25.

The ground floor passage of the social rooms led into a structure that has been interpreted as toilet block, seen externally on Plates 40 to 41. This is a single storey construction with a flat roof, with a stone string course heading the bricks externally. Plate 41 shows that there were originally five windows facing towards what is now Market Street. These are likely to be windows into individual cubicles so the building is interpreted as a toilet block. This function was retained throughout though with a changed interior layout, plate 42.

To the north of the social rooms was located the **armoury**, shown externally in Plates 40 and 43. This was a rectangular room accessed from both the passage to the south and from the drill hall to the west. This room had three windows in its northern wall, as well as a small round window high in its eastern gable. All of these windows had bars across them which appeared to be original, Plate 44, possibly supporting the interpretation of this room as an armoury. The modern floor in this room was partially removed and revealed a concrete floor below. Also, in its south east corner there is evidence of there having been a brick rectangular structure built with a flat concrete roof that was reinforced by small gauge steel rods, Plate 45. A potential interpretation of this is for munitions storage. This is supported by the fact that this structure is not located next to any exterior walls, providing extra security as well as protection from damp.

#### **5.4 Phase 2: 1960s to 1970s**

A small single storey brick extension with a flat roof was added onto the north western corner of the hall, seen externally in Plate 46, and consisted of four rooms connected by a passage. The southernmost of these was used as a toilet, Plate 47 and 48, whilst the northernmost, Plate 51, may have been a storage room as it had double doors opening to the exterior. The two rooms

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between appear to have been used up until recently as social spaces though the central room without a window may have been used for secure storage, Plates 49 and 50.

Some of the small internal divisions attributed to phase 3 may relate to this phase but are broadly updateable. It is likely that the door from the north-west corner of the drill hall was blocked at this point.

### **5.5 Phase 3: 1980s to 1994**

A long rectangular, single storey building with a flat roof was added on the northern end of the drill hall in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, seen externally in Plates 8 and 54. This measured 28.5m by 4.2m internally and has been interpreted as a firing range. This is supported by a steel covering on the west interior end wall that shows evidence of bullet marks just above ground level, Plate 53. This may have been accessed from the double doors inserted in the previous phase, or by a new door in the former northern gable of the drill hall. These entrances at this point are odd in that they are in the target end of the firing range. It is possible that the door in the gable of the drill hall could be attributed to phase 2. The eastern wall of the firing range was designed with a full height sliding garage door. This was clearly the point of entry whilst the range was in use and would allow other functions, such as vehicle storage.

Further vehicle storage appears to have been the function of another single storey, flat roofed building between the east end of the firing range and the phase 1 armoury. This had double garage doors, Plate 54.

Also broadly within this phase, a two storey building was added between the phase drill sergeants' residence and the phase 2 extension. This consisted of a gabled extension with a tile covered roof, Plate 55, that was made up of a single room on each floor. The ground floor room was accessed through a phase 1 door in the western side of the drill hall and was used as a changing room. The first floor room was accessed through the position of a former window in the northernmost room of the drill sergeants' residence, as well as a fire escape door in its western side. The function of this room is unclear.

A number of small divisions and blockings are shown on Figure 2, and are broadly attributed to this stage, as the date of them is difficult to determine. The northern end of the drill hall was partitioned into two rooms using timber stud work and ply boarding. The function of these rooms is unclear. The door in the western side of the drill hall may have been blocked with breeze blocks at around this time. One of the eastern doors of the drill hall was also blocked using the same materials and a contemporary store room was built to its east. The main door of the drill hall was also bricked in, leaving only a single pedestrian doorway. A small partition was also created in the former toilet block to create a shower room and the internal divisions within the first floor northernmost room of the drill sergeants' residence were changed using a stud timber division, as shown on Figure 3.

## **6 Discussion**

The Drill Hall recorded during this project fits closely into the closely known development of these monuments nationwide. Its largely neo-Georgian architectural style is relatively unique when seen in a national setting but is very similar to two others within the county of Worcestershire. The unique element of style reflects the manner in which drill halls nationwide were both conceived and funded historically, as previously outlined. Its element of similarity to other drill halls locally may reflect a move towards a degree of standardisation after the formation of the Territorial Army in 1908. It was in this period that the Bromsgrove drill hall was completed, probably only a very short time after the outbreak of World War 1.

Phase 1 of this building also fits closely with other such buildings, in terms of both layout and function. The most dominant feature was the hall itself which measured 26m by 9m. This compares to national measurements of these halls which varied from 45m by 23m to 18m by 9m. These spaces were accessed from double doors wide enough to admit troops in marching order, a feature which was seen within this building.

The hall frontage was flanked by two other buildings that also belonged to phase 1. One of these was of domestic character and arranged over two floors. It contained all the features that would be expected with a domestic space, such as a kitchen, living rooms and bedrooms. Such domestic accommodation is commonplace within these buildings and is considered to have been for the use of a drill sergeant. The second building was of a larger scale than the domestic accommodation, and a social use seems likely. One of the downstairs rooms, however, was located next to a southern entrance into the building, and an office function is possible. The function of the remainder of these rooms is less clear but other drill halls are known to have had mess rooms, billiard rooms and even libraries. To the north of the possible office, was a toilet block as well as an armoury, complete with barred windows and possibly also munitions storage. These rooms are also entirely consistent with drill halls nationally.

One feature that is missing from the earliest phase of this building is a rifle range. It is possible that an outdoor range was still being used at this point, as had existed at Whitford Road in 1912. Whether this was a small bore rifle range or otherwise is unclear. By 1937 it is possible that a range had been built to the west of the drill hall, as depicted on the Ordnance Survey map of this date. This map also shows the building outline as that described for phase 1. The map evidence also shows that there was no obvious yard associated with this building in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The building was further developed after World War 2 with the addition of a small single storey block on its western side. The function of these was toilets, a store room and possibly further social spaces. Whilst the exact dating for this cannot be confirmed, it is likely to have been within the 1960s or 1970s.

This single storey block was also extended on its southern side with a two storey structure that was accessed from the hall on the ground floor and from the former drill sergeants' residence on the first floor. The ground floor room was a changing room, and the first floor room is of uncertain use. The date of this is likely to be relatively close to it having been sold in 1994, as the first floor was also accessed by an original aluminium fire escape. A firing range was also added on the northern end of the building along with a garage to the north east. These additions are all broadly contemporary as they all use the same bricks and are likely to be attributable to the 1980s.

Whilst the layout and use of these buildings clearly show their military character, it is equally evident that residents of Bromsgrove will have a different memory of the building due to its use as a social space throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This wider community use is also characteristic of other drill halls nationally.

## **6.1 Research frameworks**

The results of this report remains relevant to researchers into the not only the building itself but also the history of the Worcestershire regiment. This is particularly pertinent to the residents of Bromsgrove who may have had family members and friends in the regiment, as well as other members of the town who remember public functions within this building.

The Drill Hall Project was set up in order to raise awareness of these buildings as well as to further characterise them. This project has created a national database for these buildings which will be invaluable for future research. Building recording such as this will further add to this resource.

## **7 Publication summary**

Worcestershire Archaeology has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, Worcestershire Archaeology intends to use this summary as the basis for publication through local or regional journals. The client is requested to consider the content of this section as being acceptable for such publication.

*Recording of a historic building was undertaken at the Drill Hall, Recreation Road, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire (NGR SO 96007 70979). WSM66604*

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*The Territorial Army was established in Bromsgrove by 1912 and was possibly based in a drill hall in Church Street. However in 1914 local architect A Vernon Rowe was commissioned to build a new drill hall and company headquarters for G Company of the 8th battalion Worcestershire Regiment on Recreation Road. This building was not finished by the time of the outbreak of World War 2 in August of 1914 and it was never given its official opening.*

*Whilst the external neo-Georgian style of this building appeared to be unique, like many other such buildings nationally, it actually had a striking outward resemblance to two others in Worcestershire, that which still exists at Tenbury Wells and that which formerly existed at Droitwich.*

*The initial phase of this building is almost entirely complete so it can be stated with confidence that internal uses and organisation of space also fits closely other buildings both nationally and locally. This was a well-equipped building, complete with a drill hall, drill sergeants residence, an office, social spaces and an armoury. One feature missing from its initial use a firing range but documentary evidence suggests that the Territorial Army were using an open air range to the north of the town. A map of 1937 suggests that a firing range may have been built by this date to the west of the building, but this no longer exists.*

*The drill hall was further extended in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with addition of further social rooms, toilets, changing rooms, a garage and firing range.*

*Whilst the primarily military character of this building cannot be denied, all such drill halls are known to have been used by the wider community for social events. This was the case in Bromsgrove as the drill hall was used for town dances, boxing matches, wrestling matches and an annual flower show after The Second World War.*

## **8 Acknowledgements**

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Mr M Sargent (the client) and Aisling Nash (the curator).

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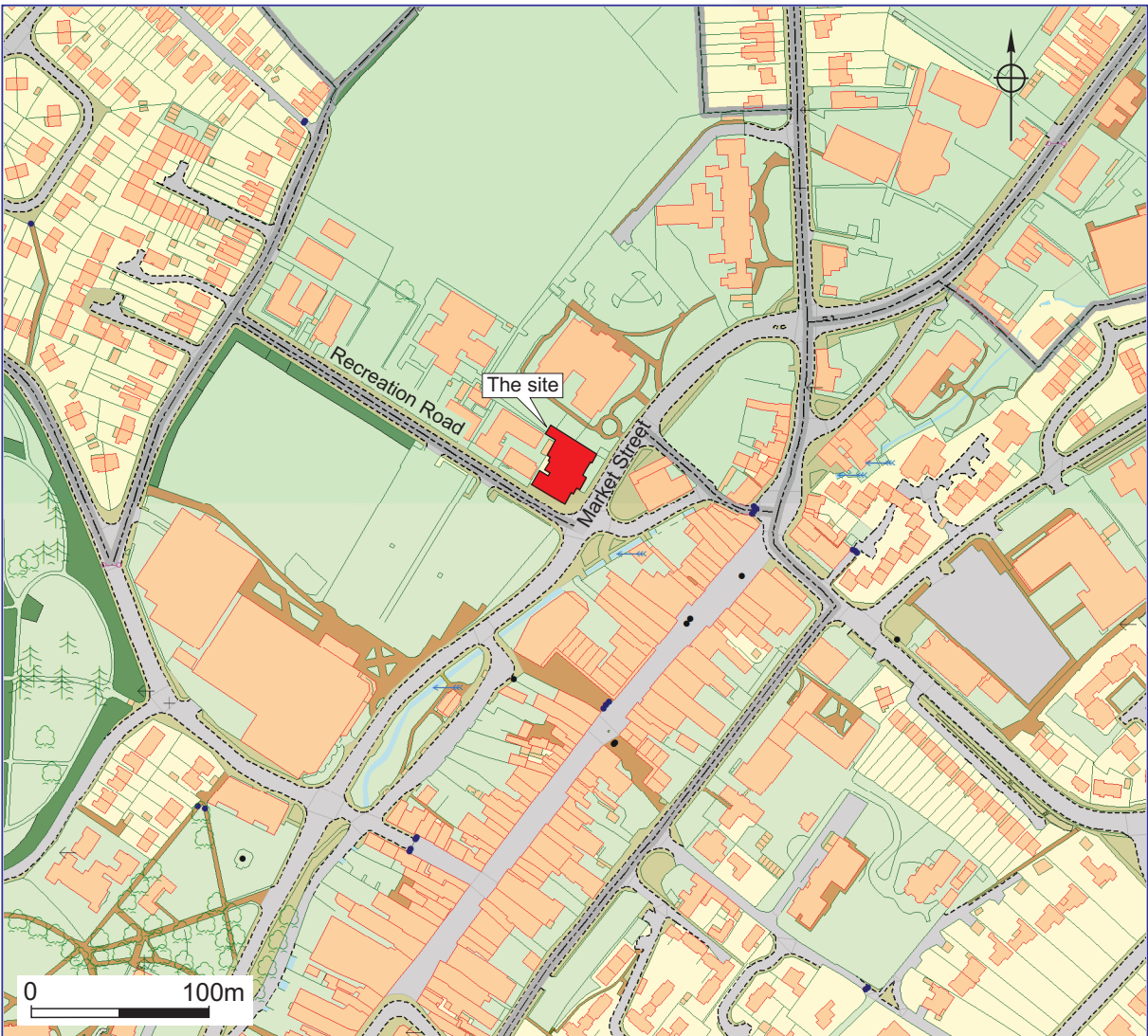
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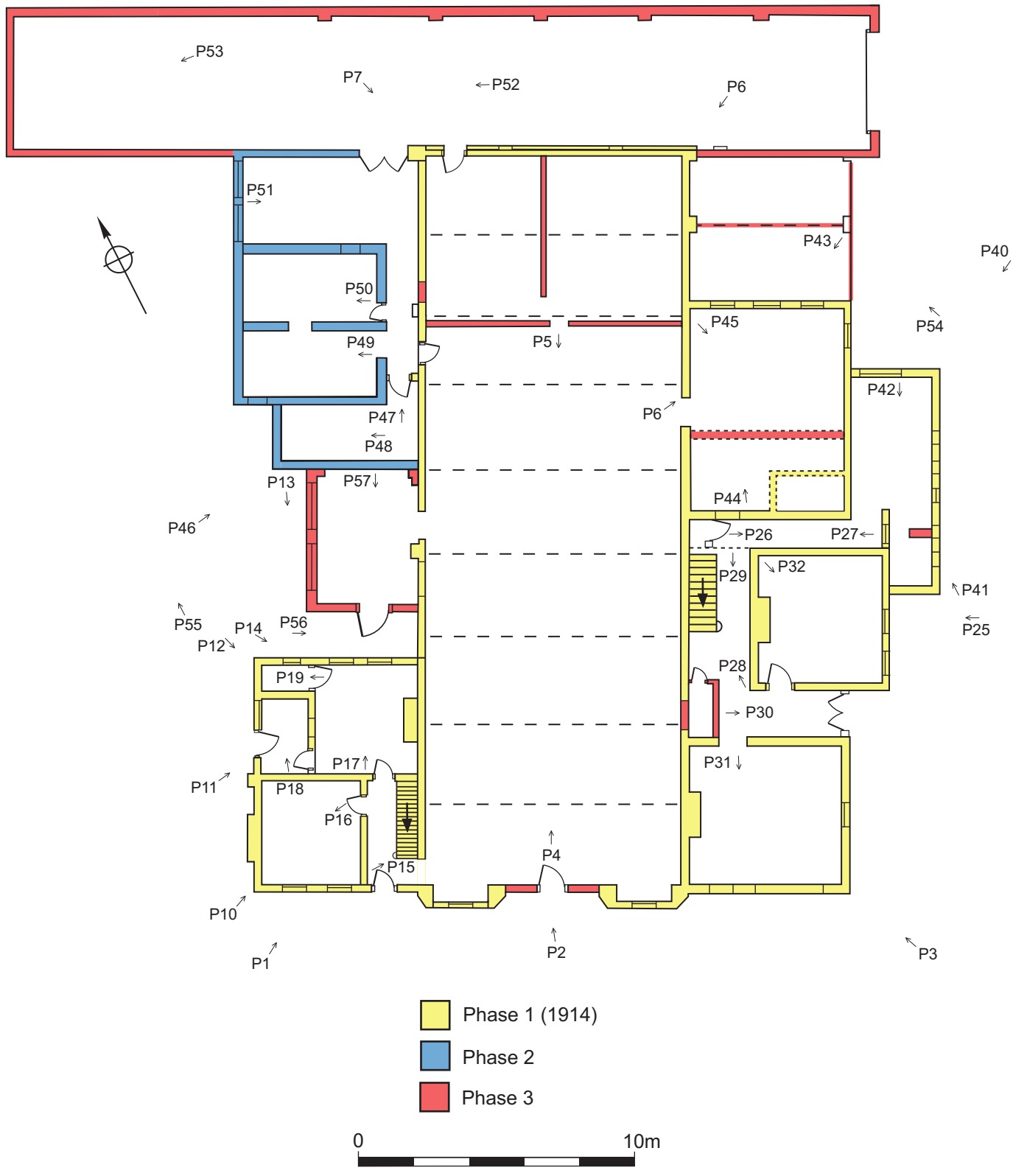
## Figures



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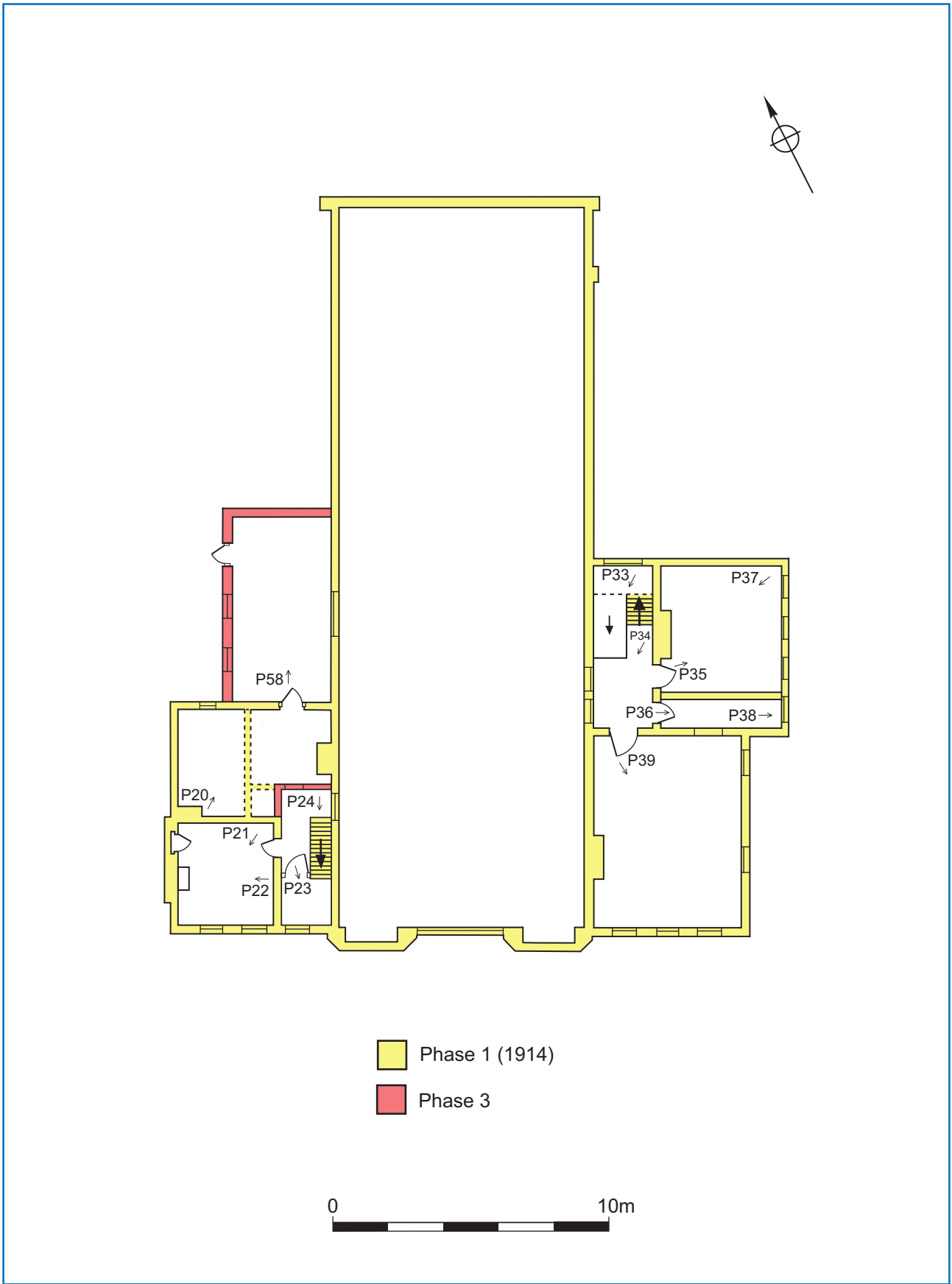
Location of the site

Figure 1



Plan of ground floor, showing phasing

Figure 2



Plan of first floor, showing phasing

Figure 3

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## Plates



***Plate 1 The Drill Hall looking east***



***Plate 2 The Drill Hall looking north east***

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***Plate 3 The Drill Hall looking north***



***Plate 4 The hall, looking north east***

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*Plate 5 The hall, looking south west*



*Plate 6 The gable end of the hall, looking west*





***Plate 7 The gable end of the hall, looking south***



***Plate 8 The gable end of the hall with firing range in the foreground***

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***Plate 9 Moulded bricks***



***Plate 10 Exterior elevation of the drill sergeants' house, looking north east***

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*Plate 11 Exterior elevation of the drill sergeants' house, looking north east*



*Plate 12 Exterior elevation of the drill sergeants' house, looking south west*

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***Plate 13 Exterior elevation of the drill sergeants' house, looking south west***



***Plate 14 Exterior elevation of the drill sergeants' house, looking south east***

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***Plate 15 Interior of the drill sergeants' house, looking north east***



***Plate 16 Interior of the drill sergeants' house, looking south west***

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***Plate 17 Interior of the drill sergeants' house, looking north east***



***Plate 18 Kitchen of the drill sergeants' house, looking north east***

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***Plate 19 Pantry of the drill sergeants' house, looking north west***



***Plate 20 Bedroom of the drill sergeants' house, looking north east***

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*Plate 21 Bedroom of the drill sergeants' house, looking west*



*Plate 22 Bedroom of the drill sergeants' house, looking north west*





*Plate 23 Toilet of the drill sergeants' house, looking south west*



*Plate 24 Stairs in the drill sergeants' house, looking south west*

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*Plate 25 Exterior elevation of the social rooms, looking north west*



*Plate 26 Interior passage of the social rooms, looking south east*



*Plate 27 Interior passage of the social rooms, looking north west*



*Plate 28 Interior passage of the social rooms, looking north east*

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***Plate 29 Interior passage of the social rooms, looking south west***



***Plate 30 Interior passage of the social rooms, looking south east***

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***Plate 31 Interior of the social rooms, looking south west***



***Plate 32 Interior of the social rooms, looking south***

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***Plate 33 Stairs in the social rooms, looking south west***



***Plate 34 Passage area in the social rooms' first floor, looking south west***

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***Plate 35 First floor of the social rooms, looking east***



***Plate 36 First floor of the social rooms, looking south east***

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*Plate 37 First floor of the social rooms, looking west*



*Plate 38 Detail of a gas light fitting*

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***Plate 39 First floor of the social rooms, looking south***



***Plate 40 Exterior elevation of the toilet block and armoury, looking south west***

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***Plate 41 Exterior elevation of the toilet block and armoury, looking north***



***Plate 42 Interior of the toilet block and armoury, looking south west***



*Plate 43 Exterior elevation of the armoury, looking south west*



*Plate 44 Interior of the armoury, looking north east*

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***Plate 45 Interior of the armoury, looking south east***



***Plate 46 Exterior elevation of phase 2 structures, looking north east***



***Plate 47 Interior of phase 2 structures, looking north east***



***Plate 48 Interior of phase 2 structures, looking north west***

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*Plate 49 Interior of phase 2 structures, looking north west*



*Plate 50 Interior of phase 2 structures, looking north west*



*Plate 51 Interior of phase 2 structures, looking south east*



*Plate 52 Interior of phase 3 rifle range, looking north west*

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***Plate 53 Interior of phase 3 rifle range, looking north west***



***Plate 54 Exterior of phase 3 rifle range and garage, looking north west***

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***Plate 55 Exterior elevation of phase 3 structure, looking north east***



***Plate 56 Exterior elevation of phase 3 structure, looking south east***

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*Plate 57 Interior of phase 3 structure, looking south west*



*Plate 58 Interior of phase 3 structure, looking north east*

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## Appendix 2 Technical information

### **The archive (site code: WSM 66604)**

The archive consists of:

- 1 Field progress reports AS2
- 5 Photographic records AS3
- 1 Building Record Sheets
- 351 Digital photographs
- 4 Scale drawings
- 1 CD-Rom/DVDs
- 1 Copy of this report (bound hard copy)

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Worcestershire County Museum  
Museums Worcestershire  
Hartlebury Castle  
Hartlebury  
Near Kidderminster  
Worcestershire DY11 7XZ  
Tel Hartlebury (01299) 250416