



# HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING OF ST JOHN'S BOARD SCHOOL, ST JOHN'S PLACE, CANTERBURY, KENT

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Front cover: Photograph of St John’s Board School

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In December 2016 Dr Paul Wilkinson MCIfA of SWAT Archaeology carried out a historic building recording of the St John's Board School, St John's Place, Canterbury, Kent (Figures 11-14). The building is presently unoccupied and is undergoing conversion.

1.2 With the granting of planning permission (16/01249) for conversion of St John's Board School to a dwelling with replacement annex to the side one of the planning conditions (6) attached to the permission required that a programme of a full archaeological and historical study be undertaken in advance of any site works:

*(Condition 6) No development shall take place until a full archaeological and historical study of St John's Hall has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.*

**REASON:** *To secure the provision of historic investigation and subsequent recording of the building in accordance with Policies BE5 and BE6 of the Canterbury District Local Plan 2006, Policies HE4 and HE5 of the Canterbury District Local Plan Publication Draft 2014 and the National Planning Policy Framework.*

1.3 The building recording was conducted in accordance with a SWAT specification issued in December 2016 and was carried out in December 2016 in accordance with a Level 2 survey as detailed in the English Heritage publication *Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice* (2006) and the *Institute of Field Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* (2014). A Level 2 recording is described by Historic England as a 'descriptive record' to include inspection and description of the exterior and interior of the buildings:

*This is a descriptive record. Similar to Level 1, but in addition both the interior and exterior will be described and photographed. The written account will make conclusions regarding the building's development and use(s), but will not*

*discuss in any detail the evidence on which these conclusions are made. Measured drawings should be made of cross sections, elevations and structural details, such as roof trusses. External and internal photographs of the building(s) should be taken including any items associated with the use of the building(s), i.e. machinery (English Heritage 2006).*

1.4 The principal elements of the survey involved the creation of a record and description of the historic fabric of the building together with an analysis and interpretation of the buildings origins and historic development.

1.5 A review of Historic OS mapping has been made (Figures 1-10) and the Historic Statement by Clague Architects was consulted as was the National Heritage Register for England.

1.6 In summary the work consists of a descriptive report accompanied by digital photographs and annotated plans.

## **2.0 HISTORICAL/ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Location**

The building is located in St John's Place which is a short cul-de-sac running northwest from its junction with Northgate and leading to the British School, the St John's Board School, and, the former Frank Hooker Secondary School. This building was constructed as a 'Primitive' Methodist Chapel and forms part of the proposed development (TR 15 NE 728).

### **2.2 Historical development of the site and its environs**

2.2.1 The proposed development area (PDA) is located in part of the city of Canterbury that was just outside the northern line of the City Wall, although

little of it remains visible above ground. Part of the wall can be seen on the western side of Pound Lane between the Old Wool Store (The Riverside) and the Sudbury Tower. Further along Pound Lane is another tower (Number 16) dating from 1380 to 1390.

A large part of the area south of the PDA contains the site of the Dominican Friary, or Blackfriars, which was established in 1236.

2.2.2 To the north and adjacent of the PDA is located the St John's Hospital. Reputed to be the oldest group of almshouses in England and founded by the first Norman Archbishop of Canterbury Lanfranc in about 1085. Running to the east of the PDA is the Roman road which on leaving the city of *Durovernum* went on its way to the Roman fort of Reculver and the Island of Thanet.

St John' Place is a short cul-de-sac running northwest from its junction with Northgate leading to the British School, the St John's Board School, and, the former Frank Hooker Secondary School.

These buildings now form Kingsmead School and Kent County Council offices.

2.2.3 A limited map regression exercise on large scale Ordnance Survey maps has been carried out on the proposed development area. In addition earlier historical maps have been viewed and have shown that the site in 1588 was probably open fields. This map, the William Smith's Canterbury survey of c.1588 for Braun and Hogenberg's *Civitates Orbis Terrarum* is not terribly good on detail but does show the religious houses of St John and Gregory north of the Roman city walls (Figure 1).

The maps of John Speed (1611) and Wenceslas Hollar (1670) seem to be based on an earlier survey, now lost but a detail show St John's Hospital to the west of Northgate with what appears to be a formal garden that is in later maps, a portion of which seems to be part of the PDA (Figure 2).

By 1825 the coloured map of Canterbury by Fenner shows the same layout of garden around the buildings of St John/s Hospital (Figure 3).

The Ordnance Survey map of 1873 shows for the first time buildings on the PDA, the Methodist (Primitive) Chapel, the British School opposite and terraced housing running along St John's Place (Figure 4).

By 1898 the OS map shows the Methodist Chapel is now a school and the north-west facade has been rebuilt and the school opposite extended (Figure 5).

The 1907 OS map shows no change on the PDA but the school opposite has been demolished and rebuilt as two schools, one set back from St John's Place (Figure 6).

By 1955 the gardens of St John's Hospital have given way to large rectangular greenhouses-St John's Nursery. The strip of land running down from the PDA to the River Stour has now a number of buildings on it including one inside the PDA. The schools opposite are now named- Kingsmead County Primary Infants School and Kingsmead County Primary Junior School (Figure 7).

The OS maps of 1971, 1988 and 1992 show little change apart from the development of Kings Mews (Figures 8, 9, 10).

## **2.3 Ownership data**

The following historical information has been taken from title deeds 1830 to 1860 at Canterbury Archives. A small piece of land was purchased in 1839 which was large enough only for the chapel building.

2.3.1 At the same time in 1839, the land to the left of the hall was purchased separately by Mr. George White, whom already owned the rest of the land to the River Stour and where the school and car parks now sit.

The small section of land that houses the St Johns Board Hall was sold to William Howland (WH), from Canterbury. A further conveyance followed in 1842 to Reverend Philip Carter and states "he" (WH) " has erected a building to be used as a chapel".

When WH died in 1860 it was sold to the trustees of the Primitive Methodist Chapel. The deeds state that the trustees may mortgage the Chapel, or dispose of "at any time to sell, alien or convey if they require a larger more commodious chapel".

2.3.2 By 1870 the chapel had been sold to the School Board Hall and the primitive Methodists moved to the chapel in Northgate. Research has not been able to determine exactly when the annex was added but by reading the logs of the Schools headmaster Mr. A Paine there are entries as follows:

March 26 1870 "Alterations and repairs begun on Monday in the Boys Board Hall".  
December 2 1875 "A committee of the board Comprising Colonel Horsley, G Furley-Drury Esq., Mr. Harris with Mr. Hall the surveyor and J F Lancaster visited the school and adjoining chapel with a view to converting it into a boys school pending the sanction of the department".

## **2.4 Statutory Designation**

The building is Grade II listed. The main construction period is 1876. Its protected status is Listed building (II) 1241918 St John's Board School TR 1558 SW 3/665. Listing location: NGR TR1514 358323.

## **2.5 Significance of the Building**

The principal elevation of St John's Board As described in the listing is described as:

"2 storeys buff brick, pediment stone dressings, three round head sashes. String course.

Ground floor has two sashes and a door case set in a wide moulded architrave. Three sashes on side elevation".

2.5.1 All the features described in the listing above show that externally the building has a high level of architectural rigor and quality. It is a rather understated building lacking ornate detailing but this aspect of the design simply magnifies the stronger elements of the building such as the bold upper level original rounded sash windows.

The windows are an elaborate adaptation of the classic Georgian six over six sliding sash windows; they have a slender margin light running the parameter of the opening. There is no evidence that would suggest that these have been replaced or changed since their formation, other than having had the usual running repairs made.

The building has matching windows on three sides, the principal (south west), south-east and north-west. These provide a high level of light internally whilst giving these three elevations a symmetrical rhythm.

The Listing states the “door case is set within a wide moulded architrave”. This appears to have been lost since at some point over the last 42 years. The gable end of the roof structure is temple like in appearance.

2.5.2 The single storey Victorian extension added to the north east elevation is smaller in scale and mass than the main form. The relationship of this building is subservient in nature to its counterpart whilst adhering to the strong principles of symmetry that the main building follows. The window detailing differs greatly, with the classic window horns commonly found with the invention of larger panes of glass. In general the materials used for the extension match the main building, including a slate roof, buff bricks and painted soft wood windows. However, most of the internal detail has been lost over the last 50 years.

2.5.3 The main hall is a large double height space that fills with light from nine rounded sliding sash windows. These are largely intact and are the main original features of note remaining.

The Victorian extension is in very much the same state of repair as the main hall but differs in volume and style. Currently exposed brickwork and rafters are visible in areas. Although these details are only visible because of ongoing repair works to the roof and walling.

“It is clear that the original form and massing of the building is aesthetically similar from its inception, although as you would expect from a building of this period many changes have been made.

The historic significance of the site has been encroached upon, with ownership shifting from various groups. However, the original use is still clear externally on the front facade and should be retained” (Clague 2016).



### 3. DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDING

#### 3.1 Exterior (Figure 11. Plates 1-5)

The building is a two storied rectangular shaped building with a slate pitched roof and hipped to the rear is fronted by a classical facade topped by a brick built triangular pediment framed by a moulded stone raking cornice embellished on the pediment with a stone rectangular plaque carved with an inscription in capital letters ' St. JOHN'S BOARD SCHOOL 1876'.

The dimensions of the facade are 11.40m wide, 3.80m to the stringer course and 4.00m to the lower pediment course. The pediment is 3.20m high and 12.00m wide with the stone plaque 3.70m wide and 0.80m high.

3.1.2 The frontage is built with buff bricks laid in a Flemish bond pattern with 46 courses to the white painted stone string course and 52 courses above. The facade is pierced in the upper storey by three recessed rounded original six over six sliding sash windows which measure 3.25m high and 1.55m wide and are topped by a arched soldier course of rubbed buff bricks.

The windows seem to have the original glass and the glazing bars are of ovolo moulded pine painted white. The lower two rectangular windows set either side of the main double-leafed door are 1.60m wide and 1.60m high. The windows are boarded up but the white painted stone architrave and cill can still be seen.

3.2.3 The doorway is described in the EH listing as 'door case is set within a wide moulded architrave' which unfortunately has not survived the test of time and is now a blue painted double timber door set into a white painted stone door case framed by two rectangular stone engaged columns without any carved decoration. The entrance is 2.30m wide centre to centre on the columns and 2.30m high whilst the two doors are 1.50m wide.

3.2.4 The sides of the building are built of Flemish bond brick with the upper storey defined by the stone stringer course with the same number of courses as seen on the frontage and bayed by four double height external brick-built buttresses about 0.60m wide and 7.25m high topped by a stone stringer course set three courses down and the top of the buttress flanchued by concrete render.

3.2.5 Both sides of the building are pierced in the upper storey by three recessed rounded original six over six sliding sash windows which measure 3.25m high and 1.55m wide and are topped by an arched soldier course of rubbed buff bricks.

The lower storey is somewhat restricted in the recording by the Victorian building adjacent to the school but seemed to have six rectangular windows about 1.60m square with a stone cill and rubbed brick segmental arch.

The rear of the building was not accessible for recording.

#### 4. INTERIOR (Figure 12)

4.1 The main hall has lost all of its internal fittings and what is left is a large double height space that is filled with light from the nine rounded sliding sash windows.

4.2 Removal of the internal fittings and some demolition had already taken place at the time of the survey but photographs are useful for the interior layout (Plates 6, 8-10).

### 5.0 PARAMETERS

5.1 The photographic survey was conducted using digital photography and as the exterior of the building was accessible no drone coverage of the exterior of the building was undertaken. However, the use of drones for capturing important buildings is now an acknowledged part of historic building recording. For drone footage of other building and archaeological sites recorded by SWAT Archaeology access here: [www.swatarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.swatarchaeology.co.uk) and go to 'NEWS'.

5.2 This work did not include any investigation of below ground archaeology. Such work is administered separately by SWAT Archaeology to a WSI prepared for the Local Planning Authority.

5.3 The site survey took place in December 2016 and photographs can be seen in the following Plates.

Paul Wilkinson PhD., MCifA., FRSA

31/01/2017

## 6. References

English Heritage, 2006 *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice*

The National Heritage List for England (accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2016)

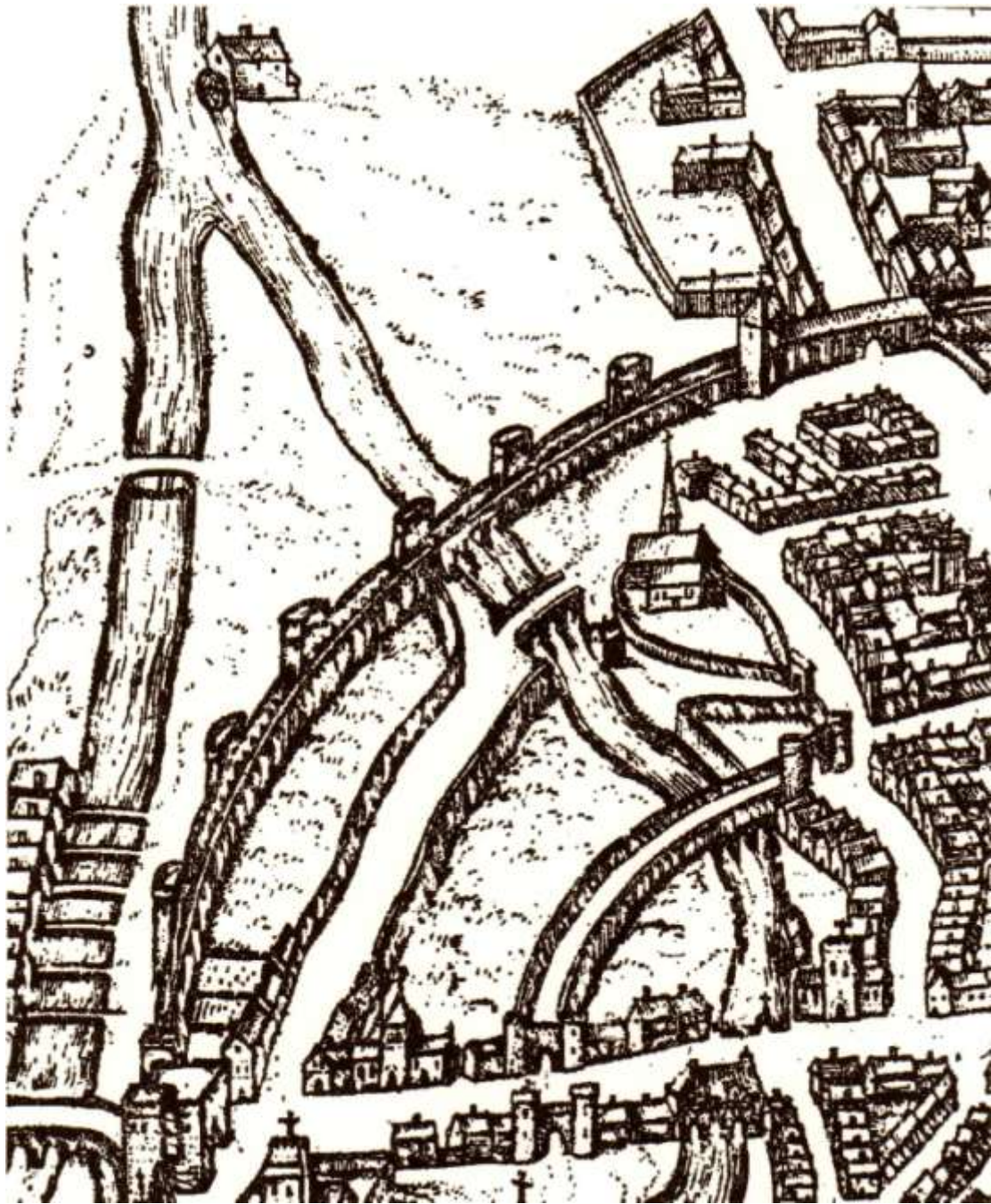


Figure 1. Braun map of 1688



Figure 2. John Speed map of 1611

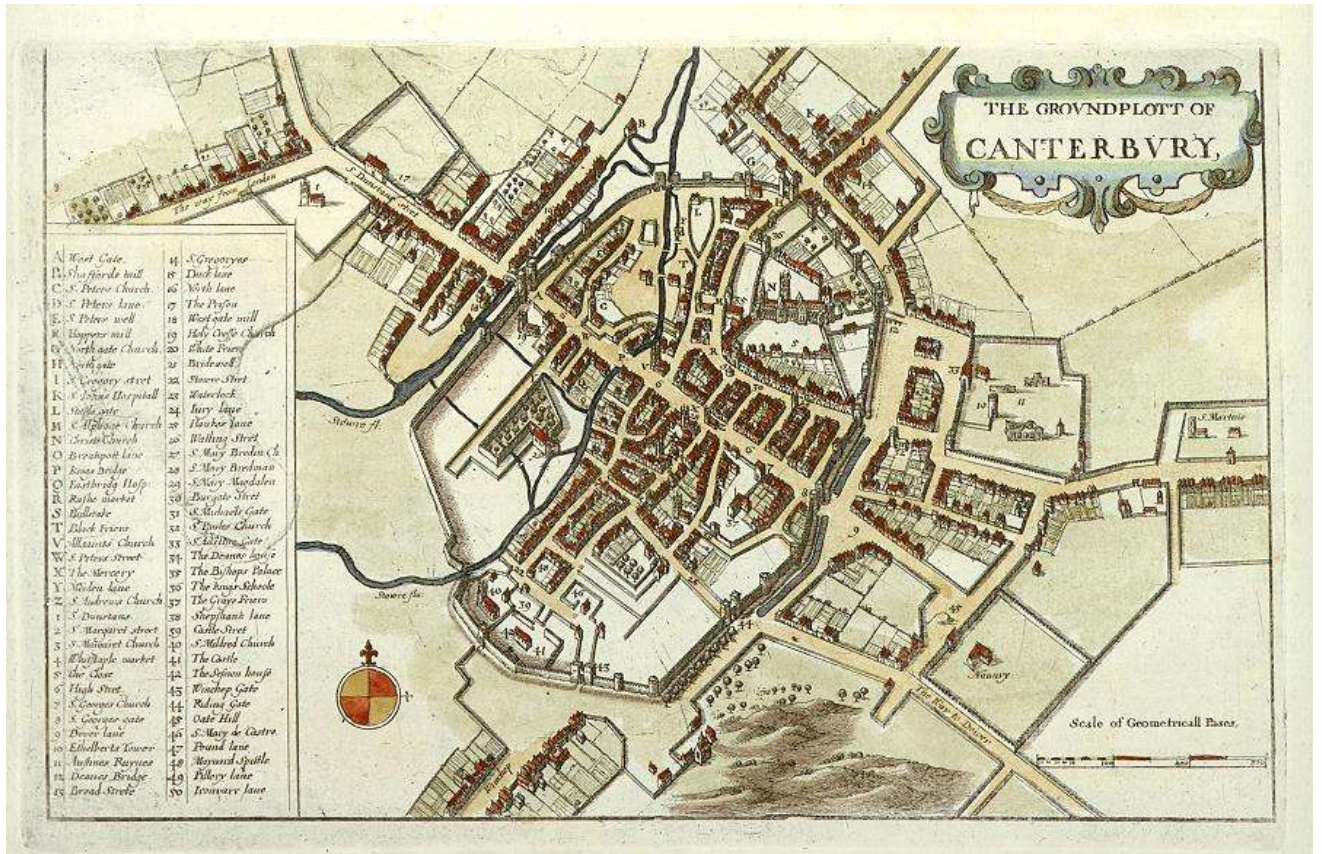


Figure 3. Hollar map of 1670

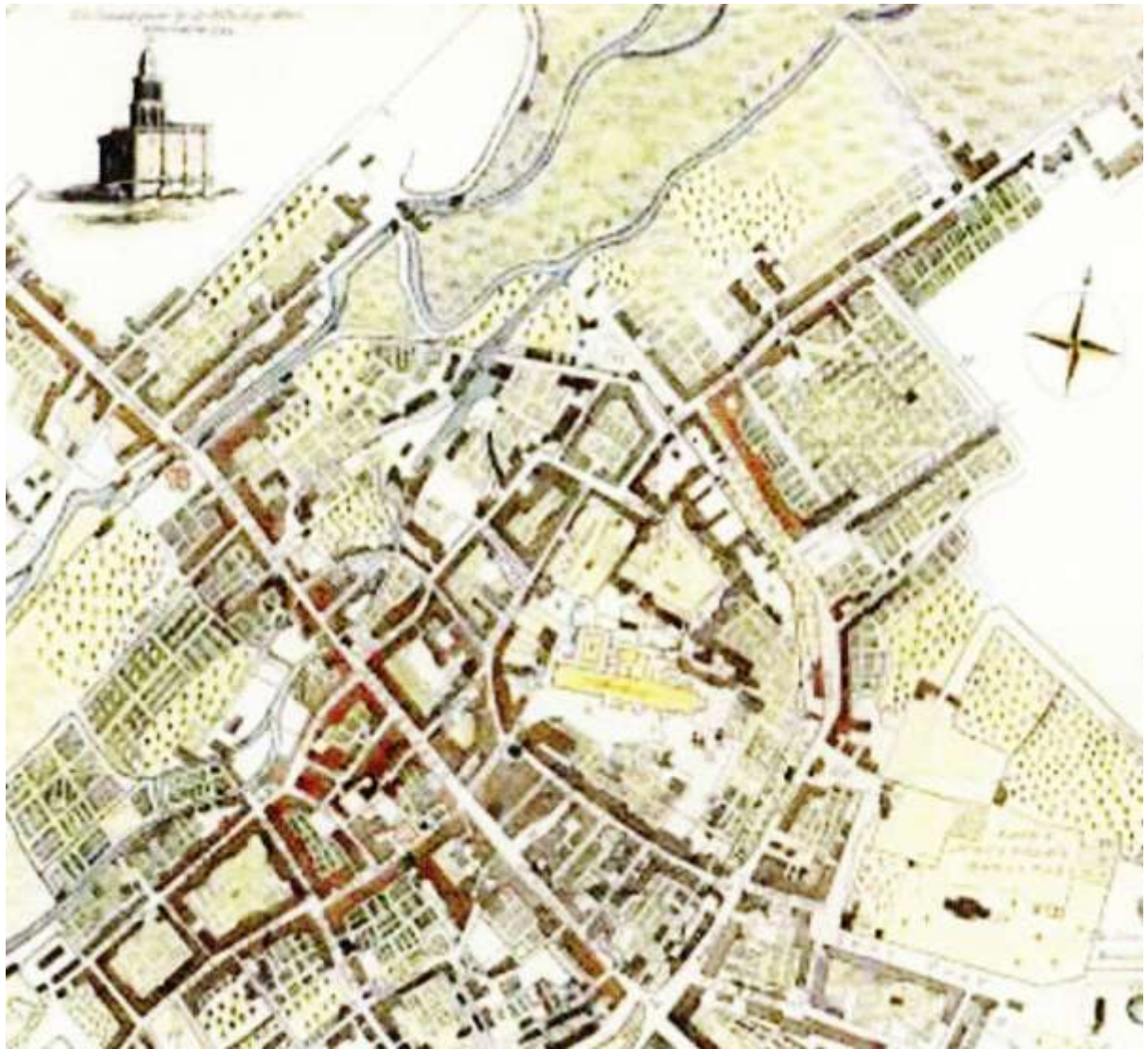


Figure 4. Fennar map of 1825

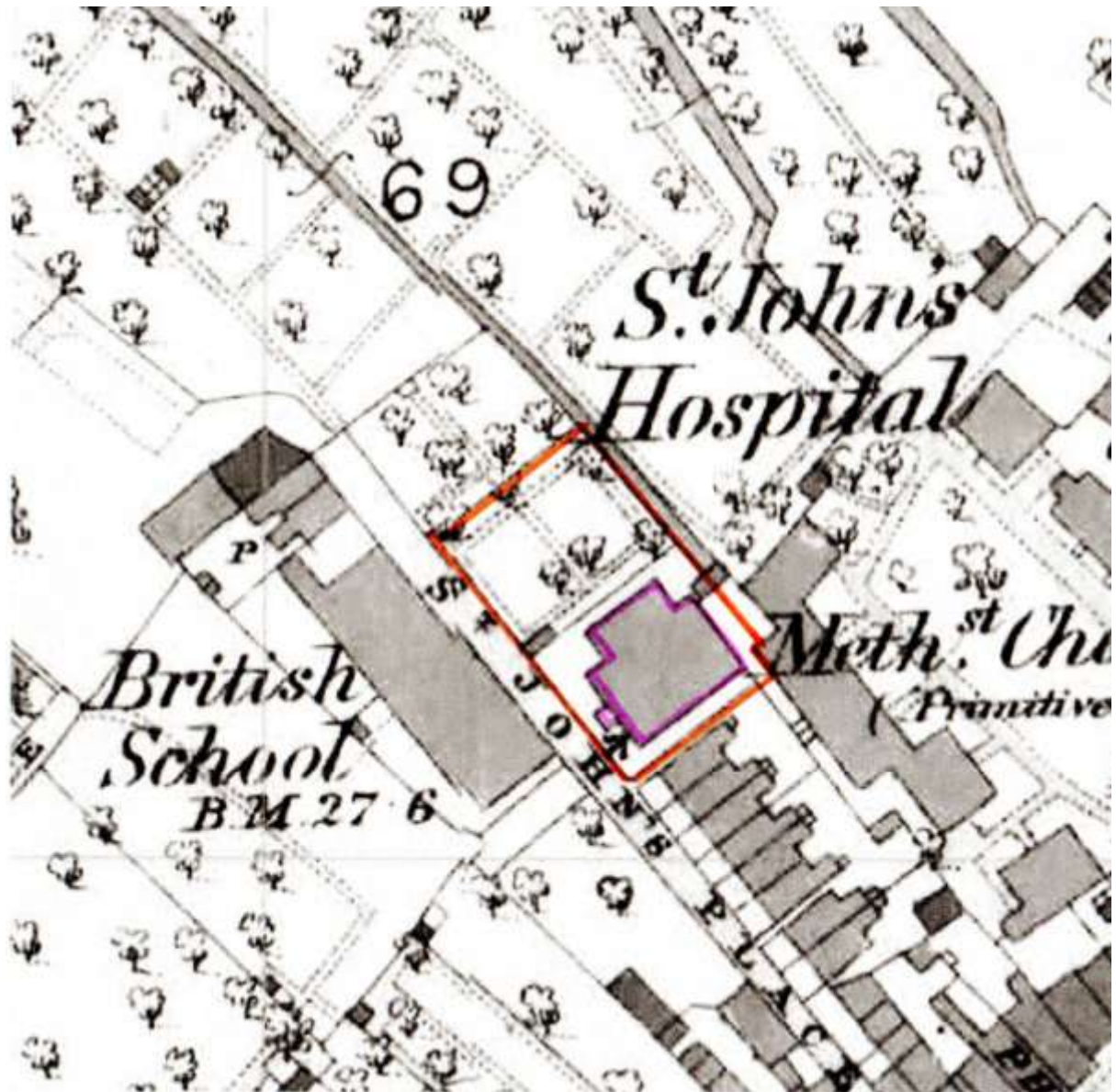


Figure 5. OS map of 1873



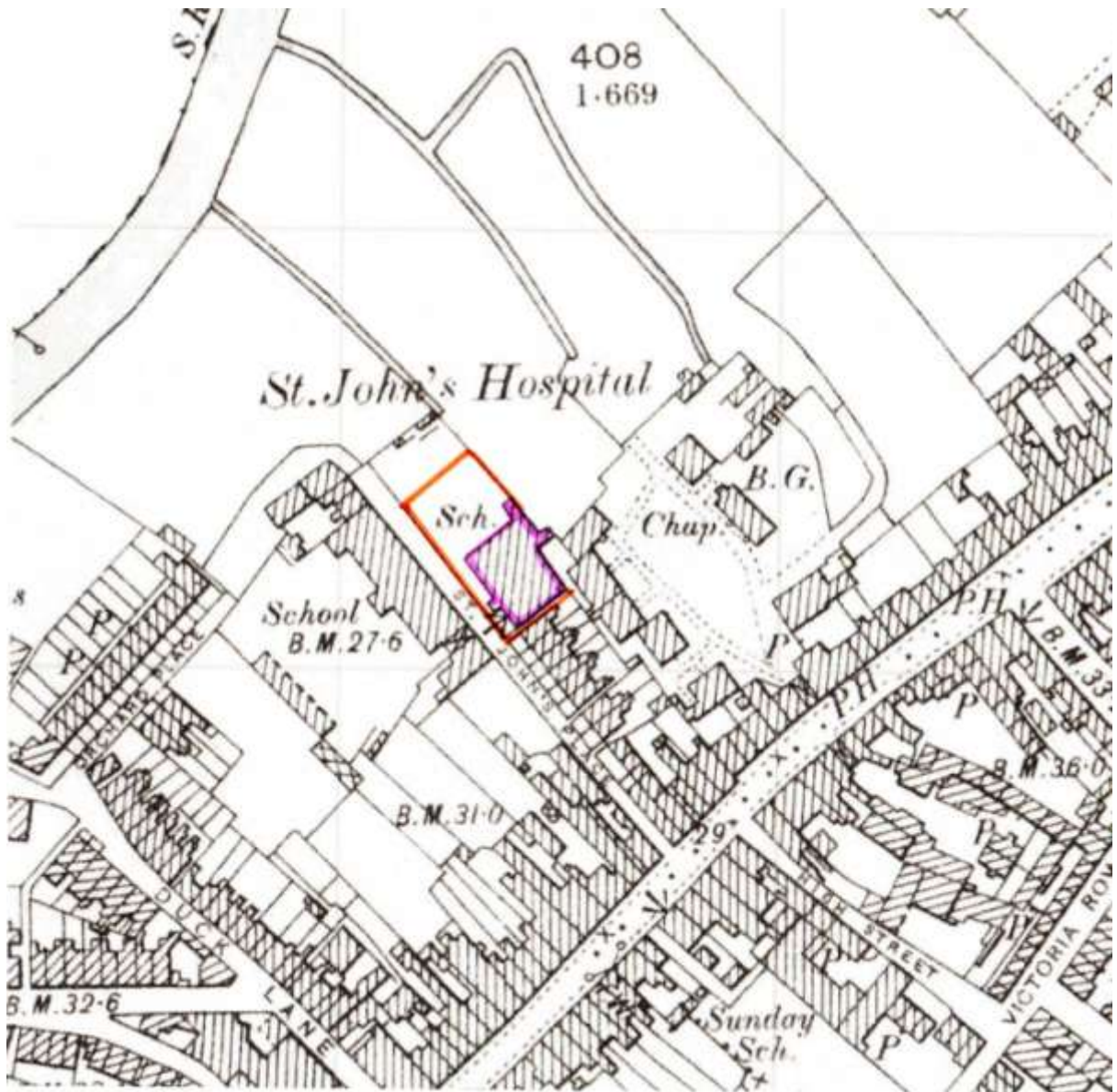


Figure 6. OS map of 1898

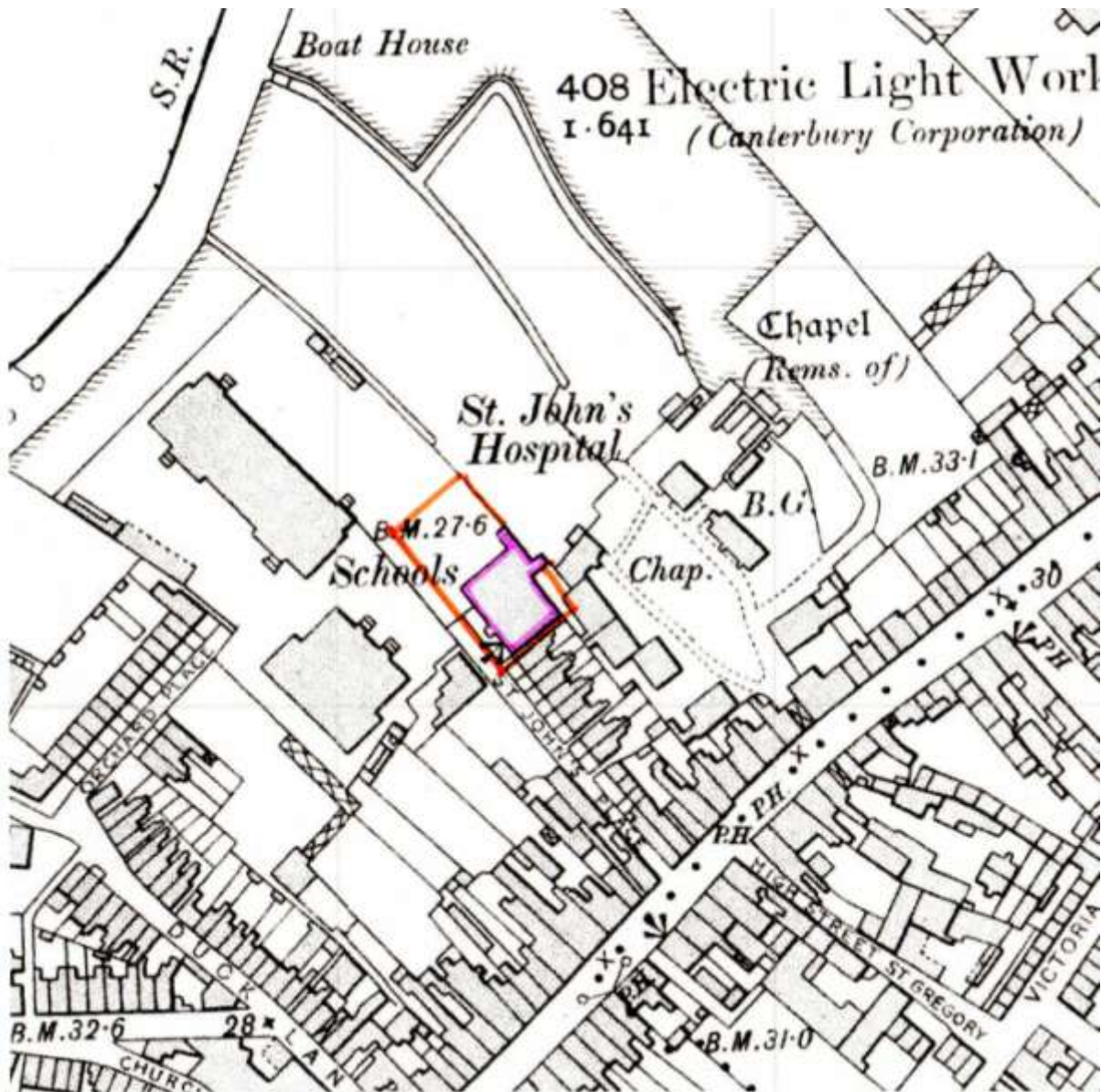


Figure 7. OS map of 1907

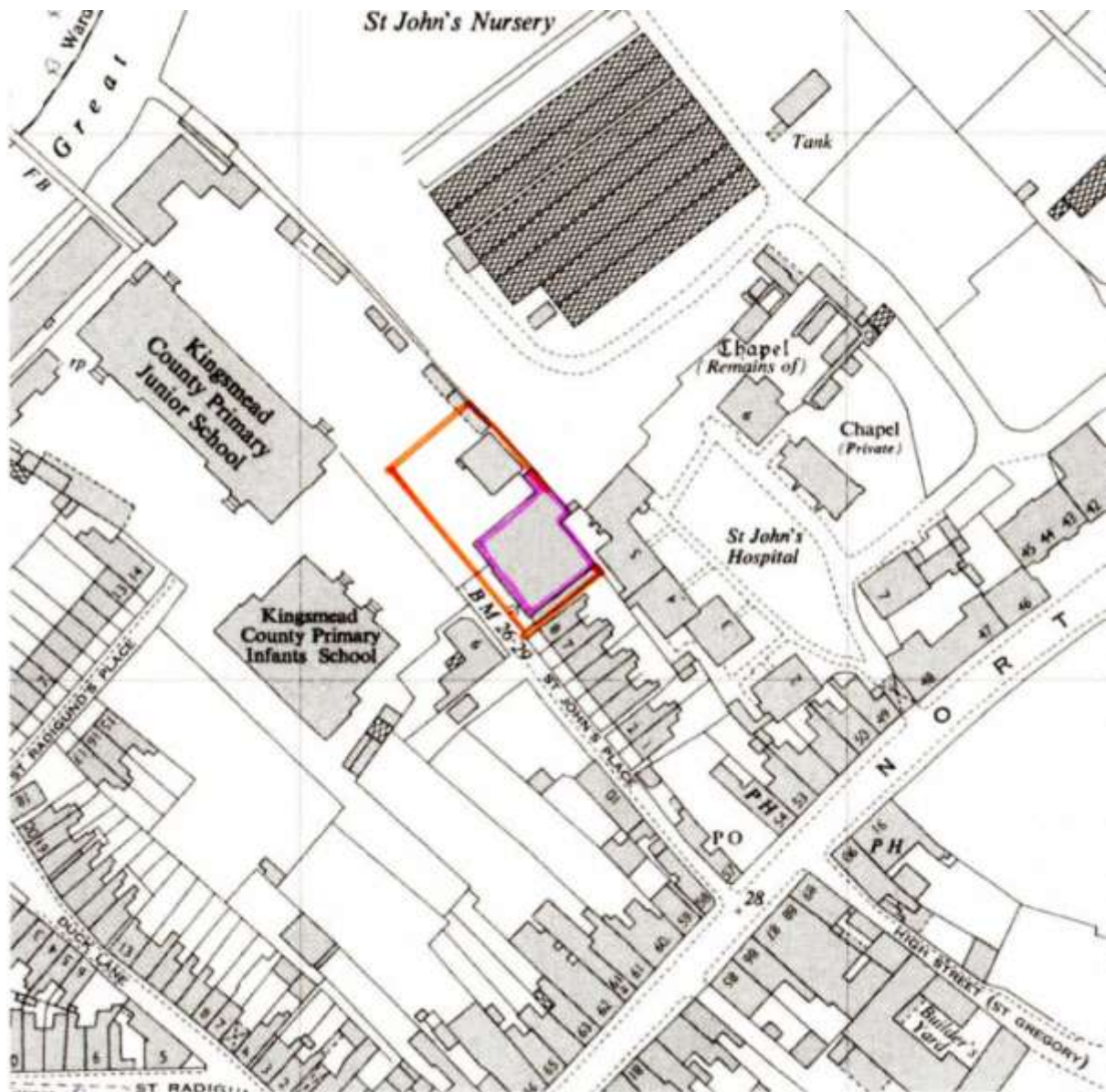


Figure 8. OS map of 1955

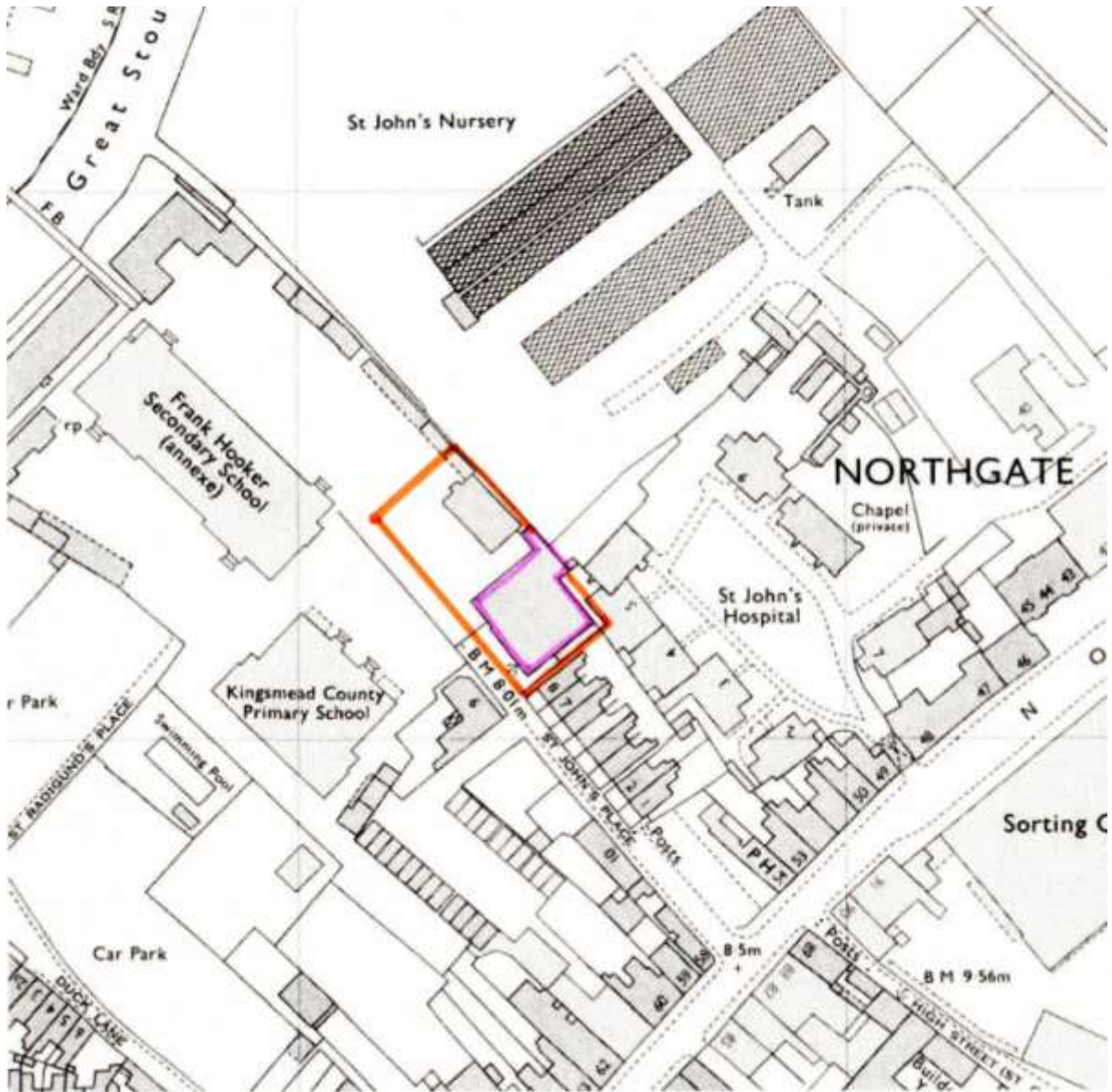


Figure 9. OS map of 1971

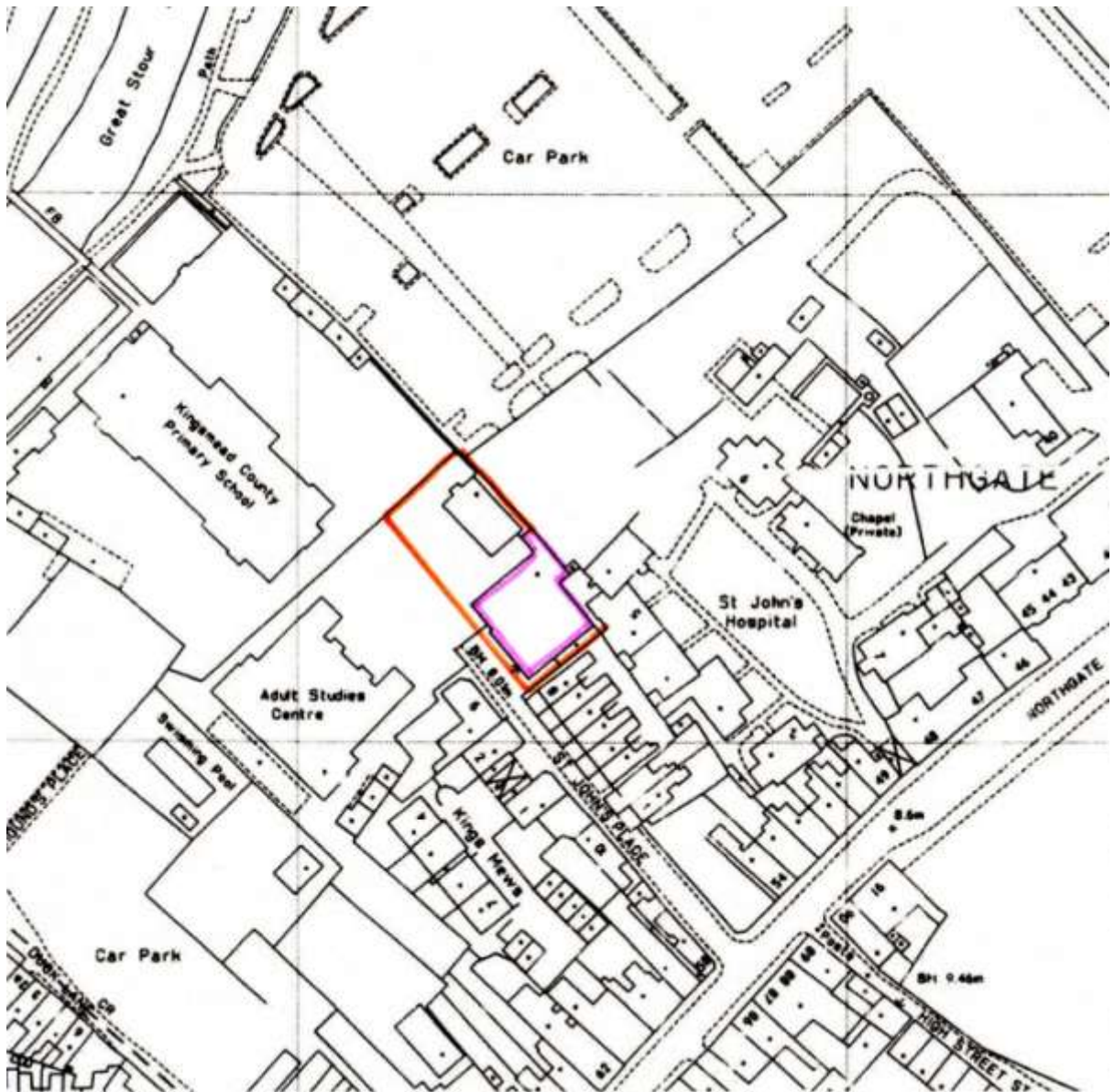


Figure 10. OS map of 1992



Plate 1. View of site (looking NW)



Plate 2. View of building (looking SE)



Plate 3. View of building (looking SE)



Plate 4. View of building (looking SE)



Plate 5. View of façade



Plate 6. View of interior (looking SE)





Plate 7. View of internal brick detail



Plate 8. View of interior (looking NE)



Plate 9. View of interior (looking SW)



Plate 10. View of interior (looking south)

## Appendix 1

### HISTORIC BUILDINGS SURVEY:

#### Summary Sheet

<b>Property Name</b> St John's Board School	<b>Address</b> St John's Place, Canterbury, Kent	<b>Building Name</b> St John's Board School
<b>Property/ Building Reference</b>	<b>OS Grid Reference</b> 615145 158320	<b>Surveyor/Date of Survey</b> Paul Wilkinson 13 <sup>th</sup> December 2016
<b>Category</b> Public building	<b>Original Use</b> Community	<b>Current Use</b> To be converted to residential
<b>Date(s) of Construction</b>  The building is a Methodist Hall built in 1842 and converted to a school in 1876	<b>Statutory Designation (s)</b>  Grade II listed	<b>HER Reference</b>  TR 15 NE 728
<b>Walling Materials</b> Wall construction is of brick	<b>Roofing Materials</b> slate	<b>Flooring Materials</b> T & G timber boarding
<b>Description:</b> The building is a rectangular building with an imposing classical Georgian facade		
<b>Architectural/Historic Significance:</b> The building is significant as part of the life of the community since 1842		<b>Landscape Significance:</b> No significance
<b>Notes/Qualifications Regarding Survey:</b> The survey was undertaken whilst the building was being readied for conversion to residential		
<b>Additional Information Sources for this Building (s):</b>		
<b>Copies &amp; CDs of this report held at:</b> SWAT Archaeology, The Office, School Farm Oast, Faversham		

## Appendix 2. Digital Photography Register

Plate No.	Camera Facing	Description
1	NW	General view of building
2	SE	General view of the building
3	SE	General view of the building
4	SE	General view of the building
5	NE	View of the facade
6	S	Detail of interior
7	SE	Detail of brick
8	SE	Detail of the interior
9	SE	Detail of the interior
10	NE	Detail of the interior

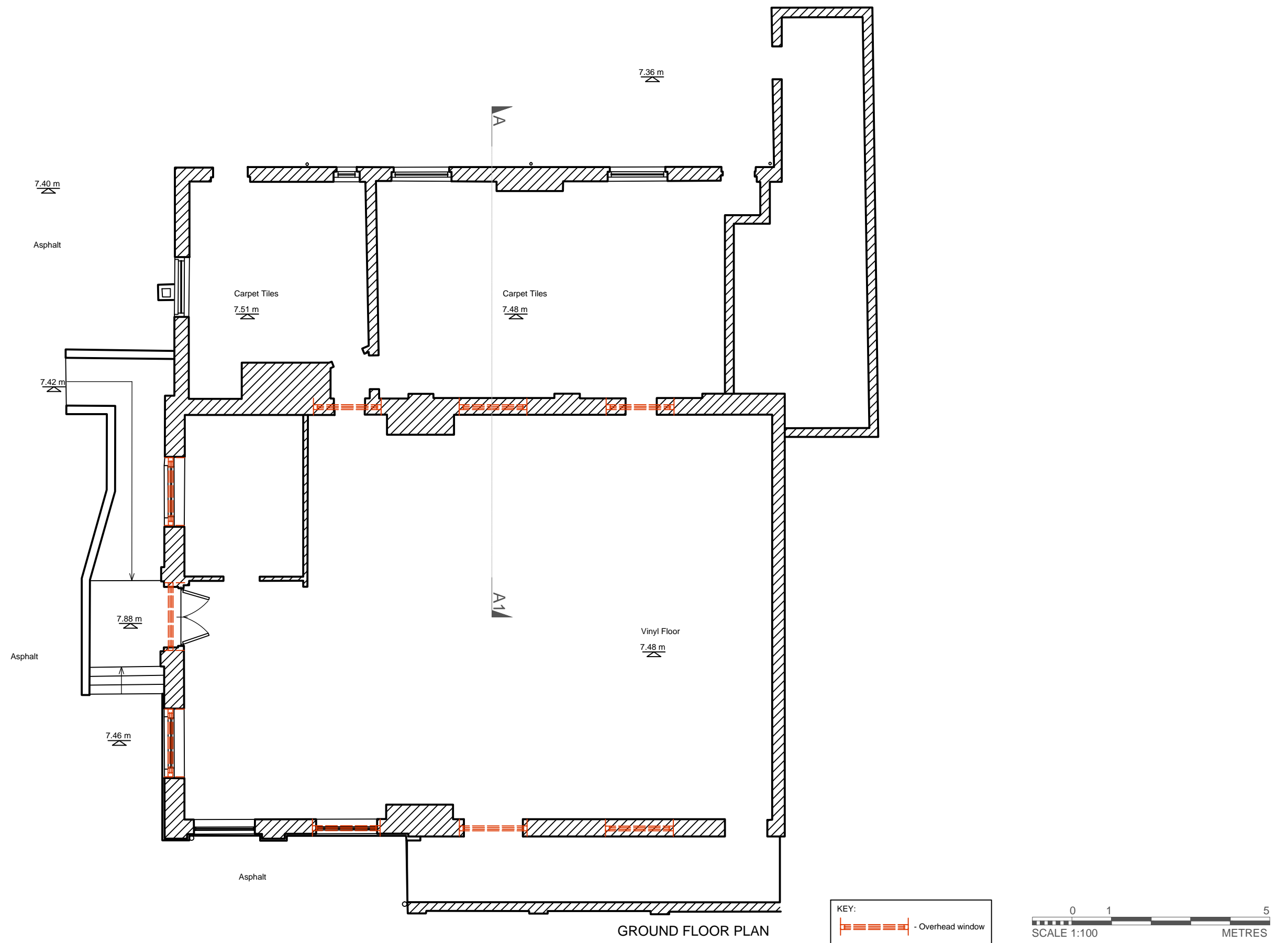



Figure 11. Existing floor plan

PROJECT: St. John's Place, Canterbury, CT1-1BD, Kent			SWAT ARCHAEOLOGY The Office: School Farm Oast, Graveney Road, Faversham, Kent ME13 8UP	
DRAWING TITLE: Floor Plan				
SIZE AND SCALE: 1:100@A3	DATE: 31/01/2017	DRAWN BY: BARTOSZ CICHY		
DRAWING NUMBER: 1	SITE CODE: CSP-BR17	REF. FILE: StJohnsPlaceDrawing.DWG		



FRONT ELEVATION



LEFT ELEVATION



Figure 12. Elevations of existing buildings

PROJECT: St. John's Place, Canterbury, CT1-1BD, Kent

DRAWING TITLE: Front and left side elevation.

SIZE AND SCALE: 1:100@A3

DATE: 31/01/2017

DRAWN BY: BARTOSZ CICHY

DRAWING NUMBER: 2

SITE CODE: CSP-BR17

REF. FILE: StJohnsPlaceDrawing.DWG

SWAT ARCHAEOLOGY

The Office: School Farm  
Oast, Graveney Road,  
Faversham, Kent ME13 8UP



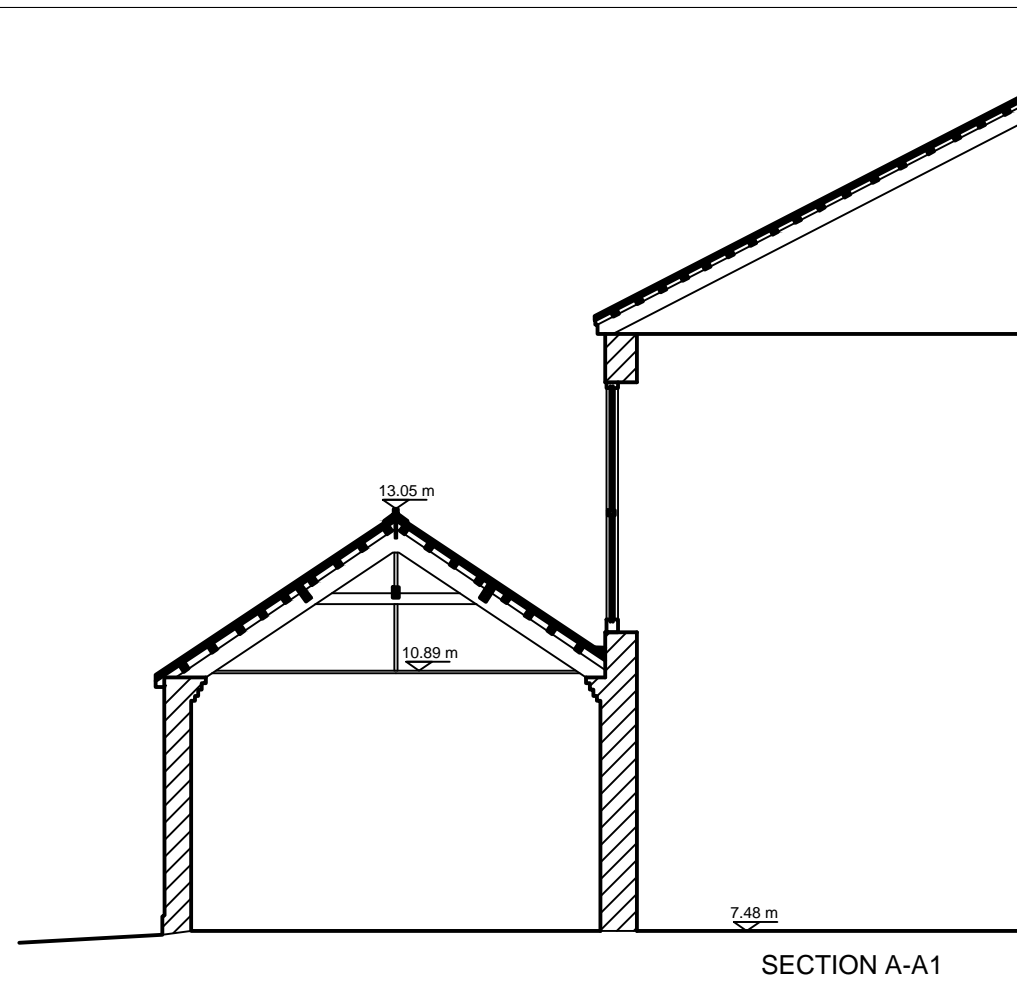
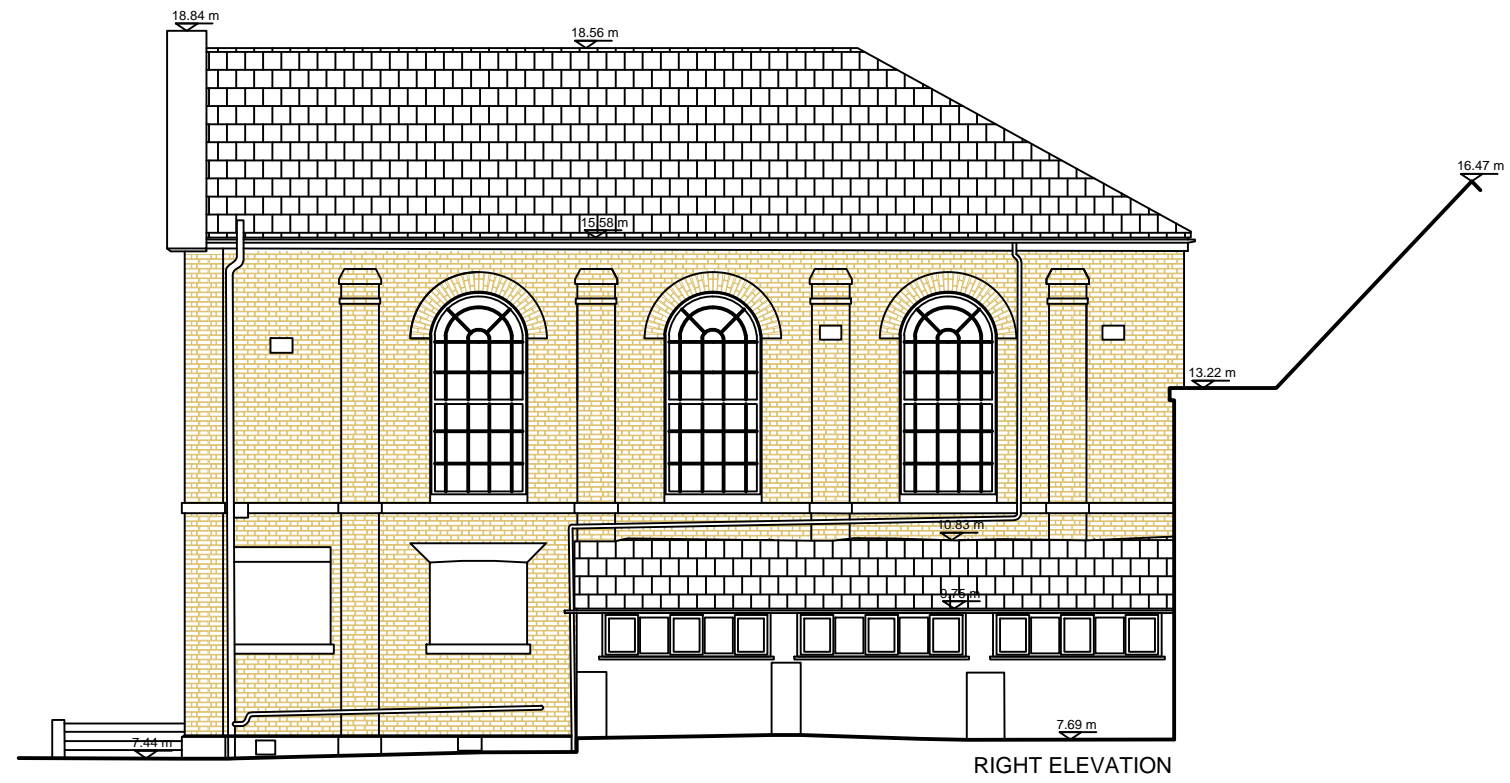


Figure 13. Section

PROJECT: St. John's Place, Canterbury, CT1-1BD, Kent

DRAWING TITLE: Right side elevation and section

SIZE AND SCALE: 1:100@A3

DATE: 31/01/2017

DRAWN BY: BARTOSZ CICHY

DRAWING NUMBER: 3

SITE CODE: CSP-BR17

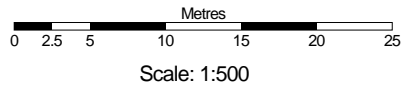
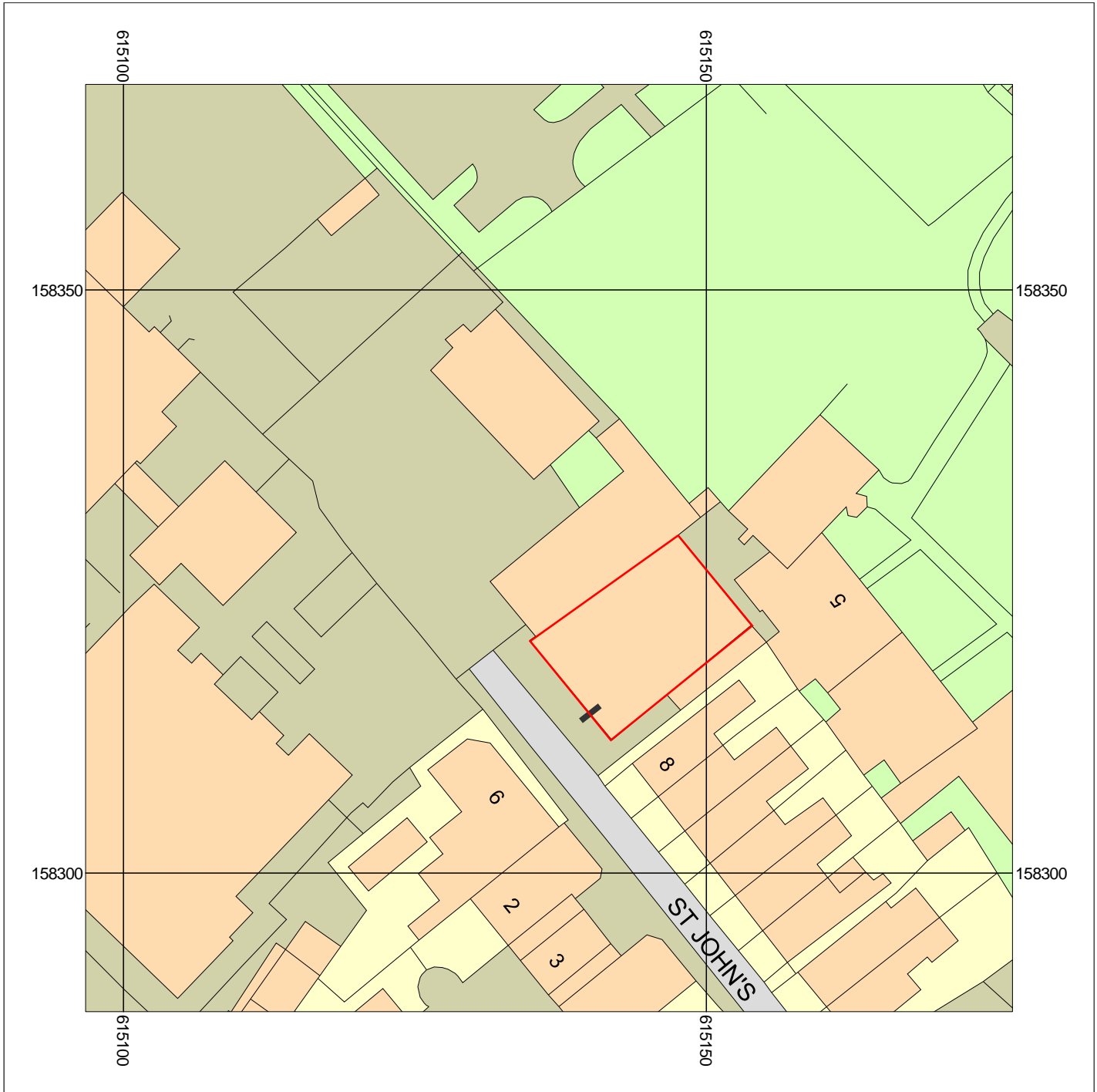
REF. FILE: StJohnsPlaceDrawing.DWG

SWAT ARCHAEOLOGY

The Office: School Farm  
Oast, Graveney Road,  
Faversham, Kent ME13 8UP



Figure 4  
Building recorded  
(Red line)



**St John's Place**  
**Canterbury**

Supplied by: National Map Centre  
License number: 100031961  
Produced: 01/02/2017  
Serial number: 1792262

Plot centre co-ordinates: 615137,158328  
Download file: stjohns.zip  
Project name: swat1

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