



**HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING AT 81 LONDON  
ROAD, MAIDSTONE, KENT**

Date of report 29<sup>th</sup> May 2023

1.0 INTRODUCTION.....PAGE 3  
2.0 HISTORICAL/ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND.....PAGE 4  
3.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDING.....PAGE 6  
4.0 PARAMETERS.....PAGE 7  
5.0 REFERENCES.....PAGE 8

Front cover: Site photograph of the site (2023)

Appendix 1. Historic Building Survey Summary

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In May 2023 Dr Paul Wilkinson of SWAT Archaeology carried out a historic building recording of 81 London Road, Maidstone in Kent (Figures 1-9). The buildings are presently unoccupied and are about to undergo development (Plates 1-62).

Following the planning application for the development of 81 London Road and before the development of the site the County Archaeologist is requiring that a programme of Level 2 Building Recording be undertaken in advance of any site works.

### **1.2 Planning background**

The site has a planning application 23/500244/FULL for conversion of main (2/3-storey) building to 14(no) self-contained flats, including fenestration alterations; conversion of outbuildings to 2(no) dwellings including fenestration alterations and alterations to roof of existing storage building; and rearrangement of parking area and associated works.

The Conservation Officer Maidstone Borough Council has advised that a programme of building recording be undertaken in advance of any site development or demolition works:

*There is an approved application for the conversion (20/501315/FULL) for the conversion into 13 No. residential flats, of a similar design. Within the Officers Report, the Conservation Officer highlighted that LBC was required and that the submitted Heritage Statement (which has been copied for this application) was insufficient. The proposed application looks to convert the existing main building and outbuildings into residential use. In principle this is considered acceptable. There are some concerns over the proposed internal works, which will be covered within the LBC application. No information has been provided on the curtilage listed outbuildings.*

### **1.3 The building recording has been conducted in one phase:**

Phase 1: Recording of buildings as existing to Level 2 (Plates 1-62).

1.3.1 This survey work and specification has been carried out in accordance with a Level 2 survey as detailed in the Historic England volume 'Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide

to Good Recording Practice' (2016) and the Chartered Institute for Archaeology- Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures (2017)) and the KCC Historic Building Recording Requirements (undated and attached as Appendix 1).

1.3.2 In summary the work will consist of a basic descriptive report accompanied by digital images and site and building plans (Plates 1-62 & Figures 1-9).

1.3.3 The recording of these heritage assets has followed the available professional standards and guidance such as the Chartered Institute for Archaeology 'Standards and Guidance'. The most commonly referred to guidance is the Royal Commission of the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME) advice note 'Recording Historic Buildings' (1996). This guidance has been revised and expanded by Historic England in their publication 'Understanding Historic Buildings – a guide to good recording practice' (2016). These documents define four levels of building recording (see below) that are frequently used in planning permission and listed building consent conditions.

1.3.4 Level 2 is an analytical record, and will comprise an introductory description followed by a systematic account of the buildings origins, development and use including measured plans. The principal elements of the survey involved the creation of a record and description of the historic fabric of the buildings together with an analysis and interpretation of the site and historic development. In summary the report consists of a Level 2 descriptive report of the buildings accompanied by digital photographs and annotated measured plans.

## **2.0 HISTORICAL/ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

2.1 The development site is located on the west side of London Road and the south side of Queens Road with The Maplesden Noakes School and the Maidstone Grammar School for Girls about 500m to the east. Immediately across the road (London Road) to the east is the Allington Baptist Church and to the south Somerfield Terrace. The site itself started life as the Seven Sisters Hotel, then Fanum House and is now called Medway House (MAP 1-7).

The KCCHER description of the building is from the English Heritage. *List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest* (SKE 16160).

The following text is from the original listed building designation:

*LONDON ROAD 1. 5278 (South West Side) No 81 TQ 75 NW 8/141 (Fanum House) 30.7.51. II Large late C18 building originally the Seven Stars Hotel. 3 storeys and basement red brick. Parapet with pediment-shaped outline in the centre portion above the centre window bay. Circle of ornamental bricks in the tympanum of this pediment. String course above each floor. 7 windows including 2 curved bays of 3 windows each on all floors. Glazing bars intact. Centre 1st floor window round-headed. Centre 2nd floor window circular. 5 semi-circular steps leading up to the doorway. Deep round hood over the doorway, its frieze enriched and with dentilled cornice. Rectangular fanlight below the hood. 4 panel double doors. Modern addition in neo-Georgian style to the south containing 2 storeys and 3 windows. Ground floor addition of 2 windows to the north. Listing NGR: TQ7497156185*

2.2 The site is located close to a number of archaeological sites which are identified on the KCCHER database. About 100m to the East post-medieval boundary ditches have been found (TQ 75 NE 390). Just to the south of TQ 75 NE 390 an WWII anti-tank ditch is known (TQ 75 NE 148) and about 180m SSE Romano-British urns were found (TQ 75 NE 44). About 200m to the south dug out canoes were found in 1720 (TQ 75 NE 47). The development of the site has been recorded in the Ordnance Survey plans and form part of this report (MAP 1-7).

2.3 The British Geological Society (BGS 1995) shows that the PDA (Proposed Development Area) is set on bedrock geology of Hythe Formation Sandstone & Limestone interbedded. Superficial deposits are not recorded. The NGR to centre of site is 574971 156157 and the OD height is about 40m in the centre of the site (Figure 1).

2.4 On the basis of the present archaeological information. KCCHC advising Maidstone Borough Council recommended that the proposed development should be subject to a programme of building recording in order to clarify the architectural elements within the site.

## **2.6 Statutory Designation**

The buildings are listed as a Grade II listed building with main construction periods 1767 to 1974 and the KCC HER number is TQ 75 NW 223.

## **2.7 Significance of the Buildings**

The significance of the buildings is that they illustrate the development of a building with later impressive architectural details but the main build dating from the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century.

## **2.8 Setting**

The PDA (Proposed Development Area) comprise a detached main building, ancillary buildings and car parking and these areas have been mapped and are attached (Figures 1-9).

## **2.9 Historic Mapping Background**

2.9.1 The Ordnance Survey plan of 1871 shows the original building set in a wooded landscape with a path shown to the front door and two bay windows facing east (MAP 1).

2.9.2 The Ordnance Survey plan of 1897 shows that the surrounding land has been cleared of trees and with two new build brick buildings fronting Queen's Road and three greenhouses (MAP 2).

2.9.3 The Ordnance Survey plan of 1929 show that the two bay windows have been removed and the large greenhouse replaced with what may be another building or tennis court (MAP 3).

2.9.4 The KCCHER Ordnance Survey plan of 1929 shows the archaeological activity around the site including Roman burials to the south-east (MAP 4).

2.9.5 The Ordnance Survey plan of 1932 again show no bay windows on the east facing façade (MAP 5) as does the Ordnance Survey plan of 1936 (MAP 7).

2.9.6 The aerial photograph of 1940 may show two bay windows on the east façade (AP 1) and the aerial photograph of 1960 certainly does (AP 2) as do the aerial photographs of 1990 and 2006 (APs 3, 4).

### **3. DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDINGS**

#### **3.1 External**

The original building is a brick built three storey building with cellars. Built of red brick laid in a stretcher bond the frontage is architecturally impressive with a ground floor central doorway accessed by five stone semi-circular steps to a four-panel double door with a deep round timber hood with frieze and above a glazed rectangular fanlight. Above the doorway a round headed first floor timber window with glazing bars and above the white painted string course a second floor circular timber window within a circle of ornamental bricks in the tympanum capped with a pediment shaped moulding painted white (Plates 2-13).

3.2 Either side of the central doorway are a three-storey curved red brick-built bay with a white painted string course above each window with three double hung sash windows with stone cill lighting each floor (Plates 11-13).

3.3 Each bay has a ground level light pit and window to light the cellars (Plate 12).

3.4 To the right of the original bay frontage is a modern extension again with a white painted plinth and built of brick in a stretcher bond with two stringer courses, six double hung sash windows and with a slate hipped roof (Plate 13).

3.5 The façade to the left is part of the original build as an additional bay with six double hung sash windows to the front, two windows to the side and built of rubbed red brick set in a Flemish bond with a stringer brick course, a white painted string course and a carved stone string course (Plates 6-9).

3.6. To the south facing side of the original building can be seen a brick built chimney stack set on a stone corbelled base and to the left the join with the modern extension with the original brick build set in Flemish Bond and the later extension in a different coloured brick set in a cavity wall Stretcher Bond (Plate 20).

3.7 The south facing two storey modern build is an office block built after 1936 (MAP 7) and before 1940 (AP1). The north and west facing office blocks are of the same build with a modern staircase in the north-west corner (Figures 3-4. Plates 4, 16, 17, 18, 19).

### **3.8 Internal**

The building is accessed through the main doorway in the centre of the north-east facing elaborate façade (Plates 29, 30, 31). The main internal entrance area is dominated by a splayed timber built staircase with elaborate newel posts but somewhat marred by two square later build steel columns boxed in timber but enhanced by a 'art deco' style timber banded with centre horizontal band in Walnut Burr veneer desk (Plates 29, 30, 31). To the left a white painted four panelled door leads to a fine room with a moulded plaster ceiling (Plates 43, 44, 45) and with three sash windows looking to the north-east and a single sash window looking to the south-east and with original internal frame with white painted panelled timber shutters (Plates 41, 42, 43, 44). The other modern door located to the right of the room entrance leads to a small storeroom and another door in the storeroom leads to the attached modern office block (Plate 52).

3.9 Retracing our steps to the reception area and turning right through a modern door to the front bay room we have modern office storage and toilets and disabled toilets in this modern block (Plate 47).

3.10 The main staircase leads to a landing with two staircases, one to the south-west and one to the north-east (Plate 35) and behind and opposite the main entrance is a fine stained glass window dating to 1902 (Plates 36-40).

3.11. This staircase leads to the two second floor rooms of the original building both used as offices and storage areas (Plates 50-51) and another staircase leads to the third floor room in the original build (Plate 52).

3.12 The later build office blocks are open spaces and have stripped out ready for conversion (Plates 52-57).

#### **4.0 PARAMETERS**

4.1 The photographic survey was conducted using digital photography and a site survey undertaken by Dr Paul Wilkinson MCIfA on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

4.2 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.

Dr Paul Wilkinson PhD., MCIfA., FRSA, Member IHBC



#### **5. References**

Historic England, 2017 *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice.*

SWAT Archaeology 2022 *Specification for an Archaeological Building Recording at 81 London Road, Maidstone, Kent*

## Appendix 1 HISTORIC BUILDINGS SURVEY:

### Summary Sheet

<b>Property Name</b> Medway House	<b>Address</b> 81 London Road, Maidstone	<b>Building Name</b> Fanum House now called Medway House
<b>Property/ Building Reference</b>	<b>OS Grid Reference</b> 629755 164915	<b>Surveyor/Date of Survey</b> SWAT Archaeology 5/05/2023
<b>Category</b> Residential/office building	<b>Original Use</b> Residential	<b>Current Use</b> Empty office building
<b>Date(s) of Construction</b>  The present building dates from about 1767-1974	<b>Statutory Designation</b>  Grade II Listed	<b>HER Reference</b>  TQ 75 NW 223
<b>Walling Materials</b> Wall construction is brick	<b>Roofing Materials</b> Slate tiles	<b>Flooring Materials</b> Wooden floors
<b>Description:</b>  81 London Road is Grade II listed. Whilst originally listed as Fanum House, the building has been renamed to Medway House; and it is currently vacant but last used as offices. The main building is a large, late C18 building; and the listing description notes that it was formerly built as the Seven Stars Hotel. The building has been subject to numerous extensions and alterations, but the front historic core retains internal features such as plaster coving and details, doors/architraves and a fine staircase.		
<b>Architectural/Historic Significance:</b>  The building is significant as part of Maidstone history		<b>Landscape Significance:</b>  No significance
<b>Notes/Qualifications Regarding Survey:</b>  The survey was undertaken whilst the buildings was empty		
<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		

Figure 1. OS plan

Figure 2. Site plan

Figure 3. Site as existing (May 2023)

Figure 4. Ground floor

Figure 5. First floor

Figure 6. Attic or Third floor

Figure 7. Basement

Figure 8. Ground floor detailing

Figure 9. First floor detailing

Plate 1. Aerial photograph (2022)

Plate 2. Historic view of façade (2011)

Plate 3. Front façade (2023)

Plate 4. North-east facade and to the left the later two storey build

Plate 5. Close view north-east facade

Plate 6. Ground view north-east facade and view of later extension (left)

Plate 7. Ground view north-east facade

Plate 8. Sash windows north-east facade

Plate 9. Detail of left corner of frontage facade

Plate 10. Brick details of corner built with splayed bricks set with Flemish Bond courses

Plate 11. Front entrance (1m scale)

Plate 12. Frontage detail (1m scale)

Plate 13. Main frontage with later build to the right (1m scale)

Plate 14. Later build to the right of original building to the left (1m scale)

Plate 15. Window detail (1m scale)

Plate 16. Later north-west build (1m scale)

Plate 17. Detail of later north-west build (1m scale)

Plate 18. Later north-west build (1m scale)

Plate 19. Later north-west build (1m scale)

Plate 20. Detail of later south-east build to the left and red arrow marks the join

Plate 21. View of internal courtyard (looking north-east)

Plate 22. View of internal courtyard (looking NNE)

Plate 23. Ground floor view of internal courtyard (looking NNE)

Plate 25. Courtyard view of rear of original build 1m scale (looking north-east)

Plate 26. View of round window in original build with details (1m scale)

Plate 27. External view of rear facade of original build with stained glass window dated to 1902

Plate 28. View of rear double doors with stained glass fanlight (1m scale)

Plate 29. View of entrance hall and desk (looking south-west) 1m scale

Plate 30. View of entrance hall and desk (looking west) 1m scale

Plate 31. View of stairs in entrance hall. 1m scale

Plate 32. View of stairs in entrance hall. 1m scale

Plate 33. View of stairs in entrance hall. 1m scale

Plate 34. Detail of stairs in entrance hall. 1m scale

Plate 35. View of stairs landing in entrance hall. 1m scale

Plate 36. View of staircase leading to entrance hall and stained glass window in rear wall

Plate 37. Detail of stained glass window

Plate 38. Detail of stained glass window

Plate 39. Detail of stained glass window

Plate 40. Detail of stained glass window

Plate 41. View of south-east corner office in original build (1m scale)

Plate 42. Plaster decoration with ceiling rose, coving, cornice and panel moulding

Plate 43. Detail of plaster ceiling mouldings

Plate 44. Detail of plaster ceiling rose

Plate 45. Detail of plaster ceiling moulding

Plate 46. Detail of plaster ceiling moulding

Plate 47. North-west room in the original build

Plate 48. Stair landing in original build with stained glass window beyond 1m scale

Plate 49. View of stair landing (looking north-west)

Plate 50. Third floor office room (looking north-east) 1m scale

Plate 51. Third floor office room (looking north-east) 1m scale

Plate 52. Later build office space (looking north-east)

Plate 53. Later build office space (looking south-west)

Plate 54. Later build office space (looking north-west)

Plate 55. Later build office space (looking south-west)

Plate 56. Later build office space (looking south-west)

Plate 57. Later build office space (looking north-east)

Plate 58. Staircase in later build office space

Plate 59. View of ancillary buildings situated NW of main building

Plate 60. View of ancillary buildings situated NW of main building

Plate 61. View of ancillary buildings situated NW of main building

Plate 62. View of ancillary buildings situated NW of main building



Figure 1. Ordnance Survey plan of existing site location

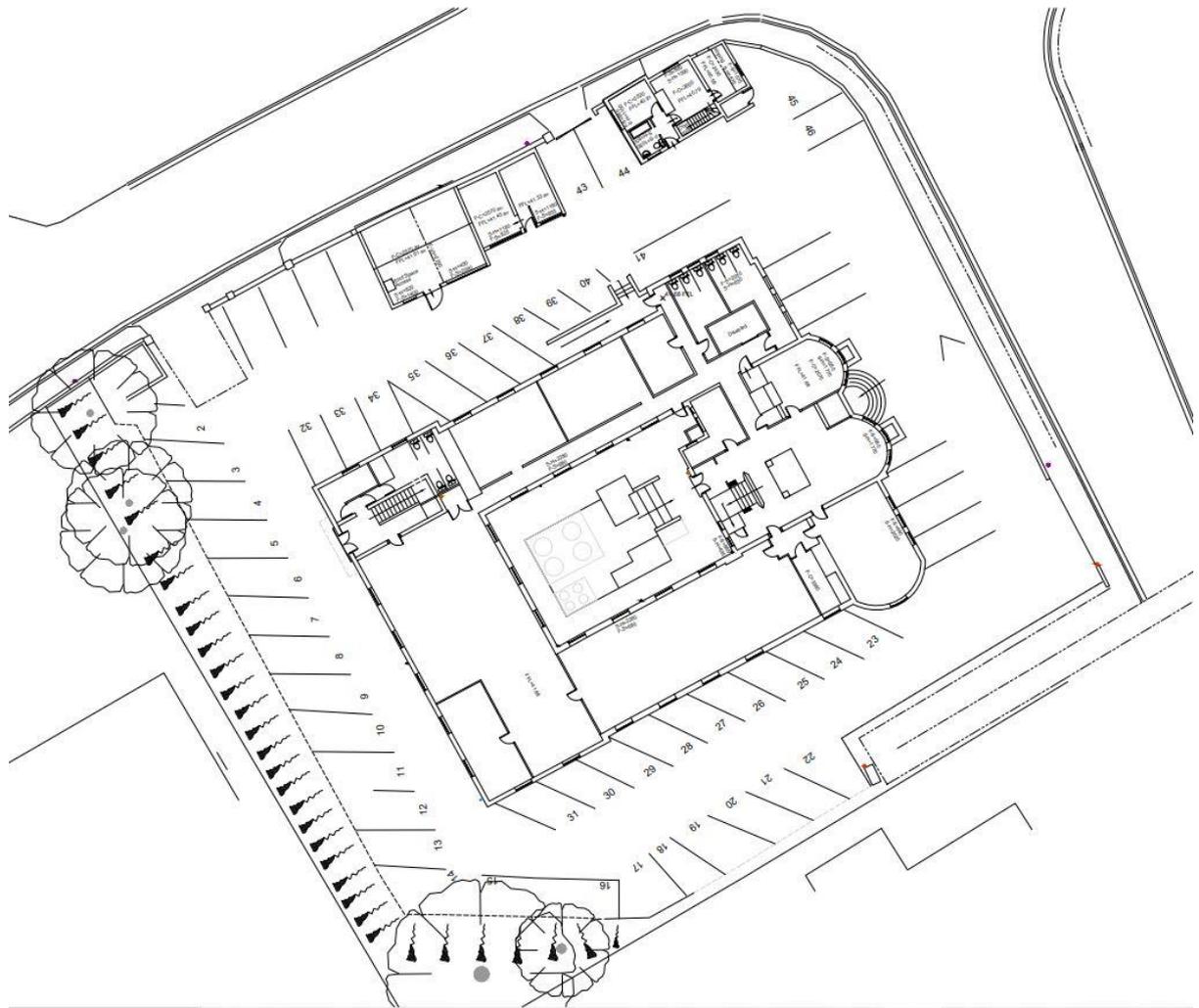


Figure 3. Site as existing (May 2023)

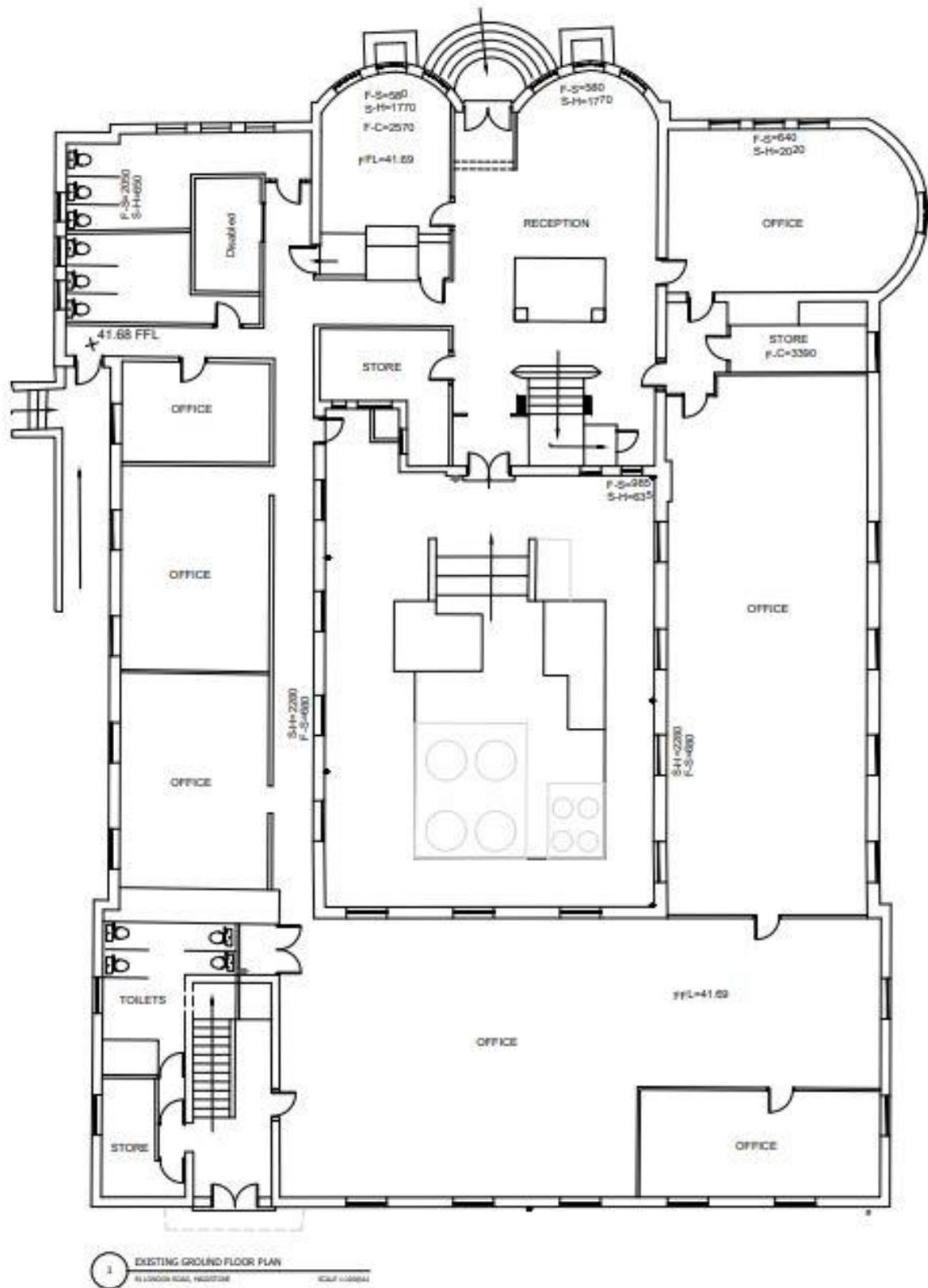


Figure 4. Ground floor



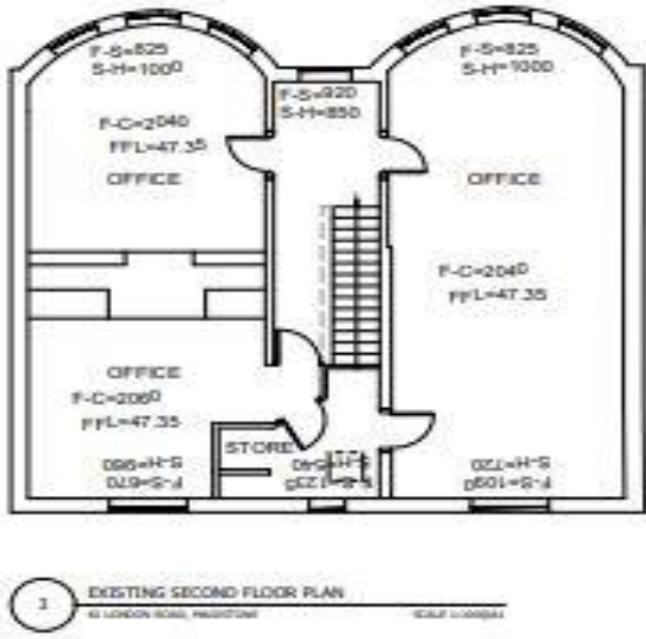


Figure 6. Attic or Second floor (above) and Figure 7 (below) Basement

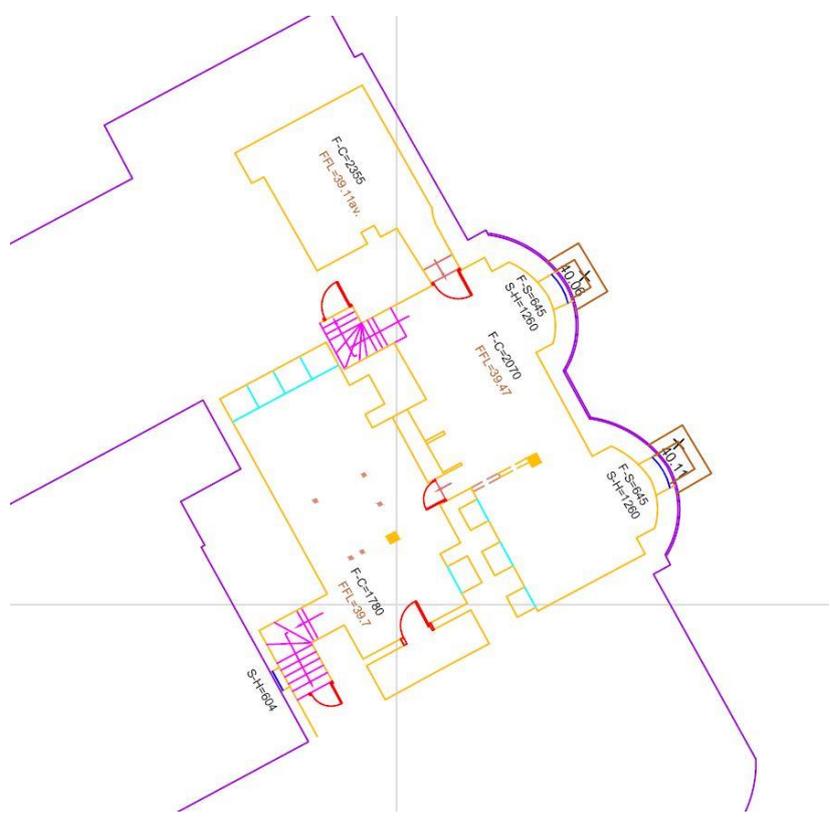






Figure 9. First floor detailing

PLATES



Plate 1. Aerial photograph (2022)



Plate 2. Historic view of facade with later build to the right (Google Street View 2011)



Plate 3. Front facade and later build to the right (May 2023)



Plate 4. North-east facade and to the left the later two storey build



Plate 5. Close view north-east facade



Plate 6. Ground view north-east facade and view of later extension (left)



Plate 7. Ground view north-east facade



Plate 8. Sash windows north-east facade



Plate 9. Detail of left corner of frontage facade



Plate 10. Brick details of corner built with splayed bricks set with Flemish Bond courses



Plate 11. Front entrance (1m scale)



Plate 12. Frontage detail (1m scale)



Plate 13. Main frontage with later build to the right (1m scale)



Plate 14. Later build to the right of original building to the left (1m scale)



Plate 15. Window detail (1m scale)



Plate 16. Later north-west build (1m scale)



Plate 17. Detail of later north-west build (1m scale)



Plate 18. Later north-west build (1m scale)



Plate 19. Later north-west build (1m scale)



Plate 20. Detail of later south-east build to the left and red arrow marks the join



Plate 21. View of internal courtyard (looking north-east)



Plate 22. View of internal courtyard (looking NNE)



Plate 23. Ground floor view of internal courtyard and to the right the original build (looking NNE)



Plate 25. Courtyard view of rear of original build 1m scale (looking north-east)



Plate 26. View of round window in original build with details (1m scale)



Plate 27. External view of rear facade of original build with stained glass window dated to 1902



Plate 28. View of rear double doors with stained glass fanlight (1m scale)



Plate 29. View of entrance hall and desk (looking south-west) 1m scale



Plate 30. View of entrance hall and desk (looking west) 1m scale



Plate 31. View of stairs in entrance hall. 1m scale

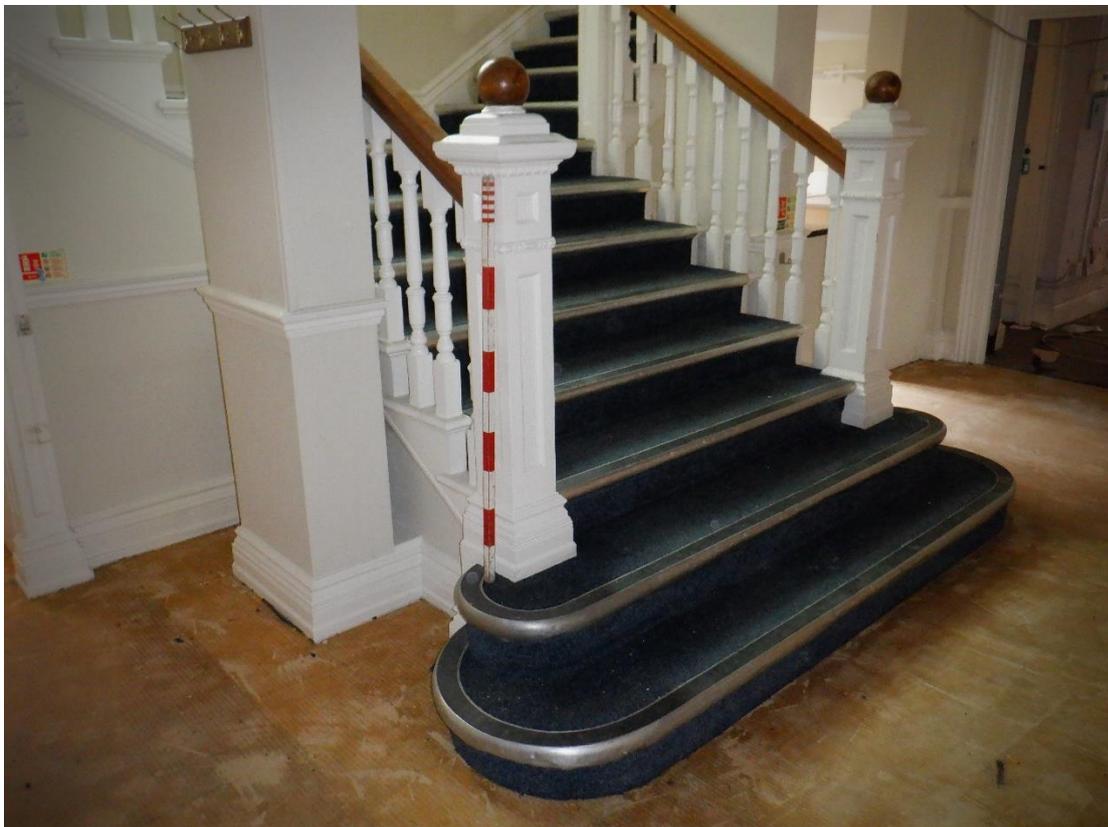


Plate 32. View of stairs in entrance hall. 1m scale



Plate 33. View of stairs in entrance hall. 1m scale



Plate 34. Detail of stairs in entrance hall. 1m scale

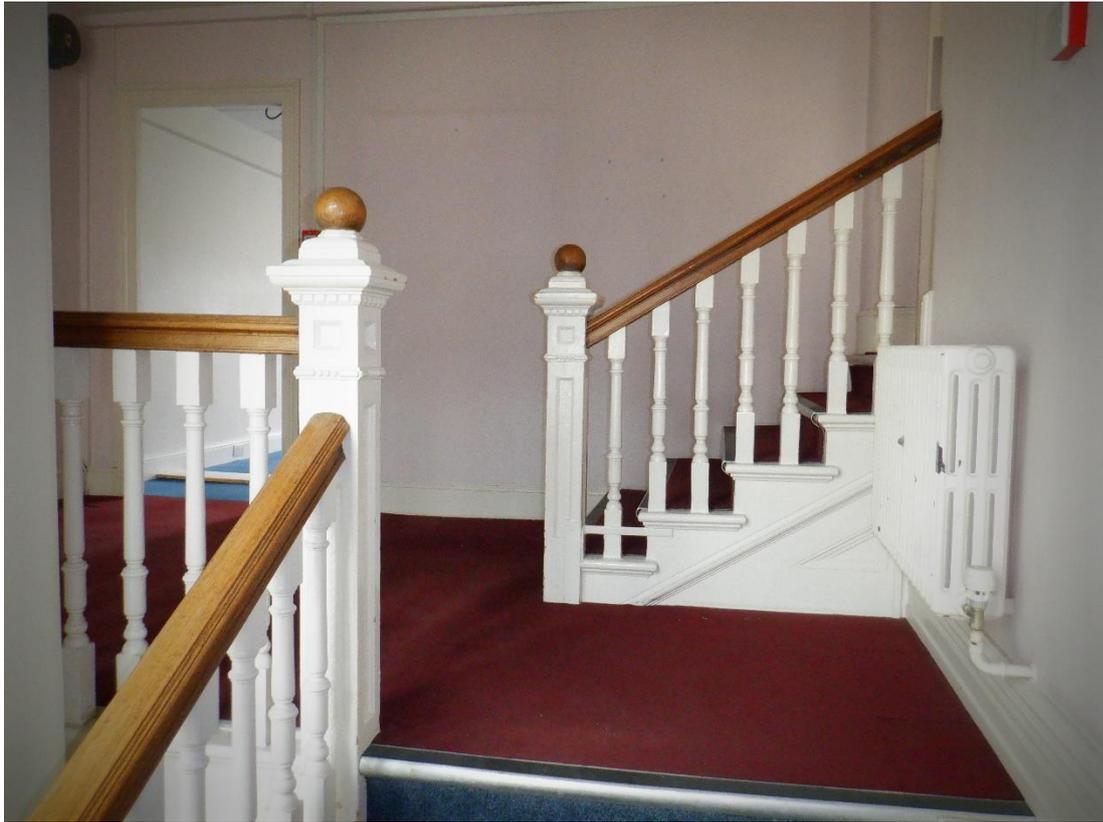


Plate 35. View of stairs landing in entrance hall. 1m scale

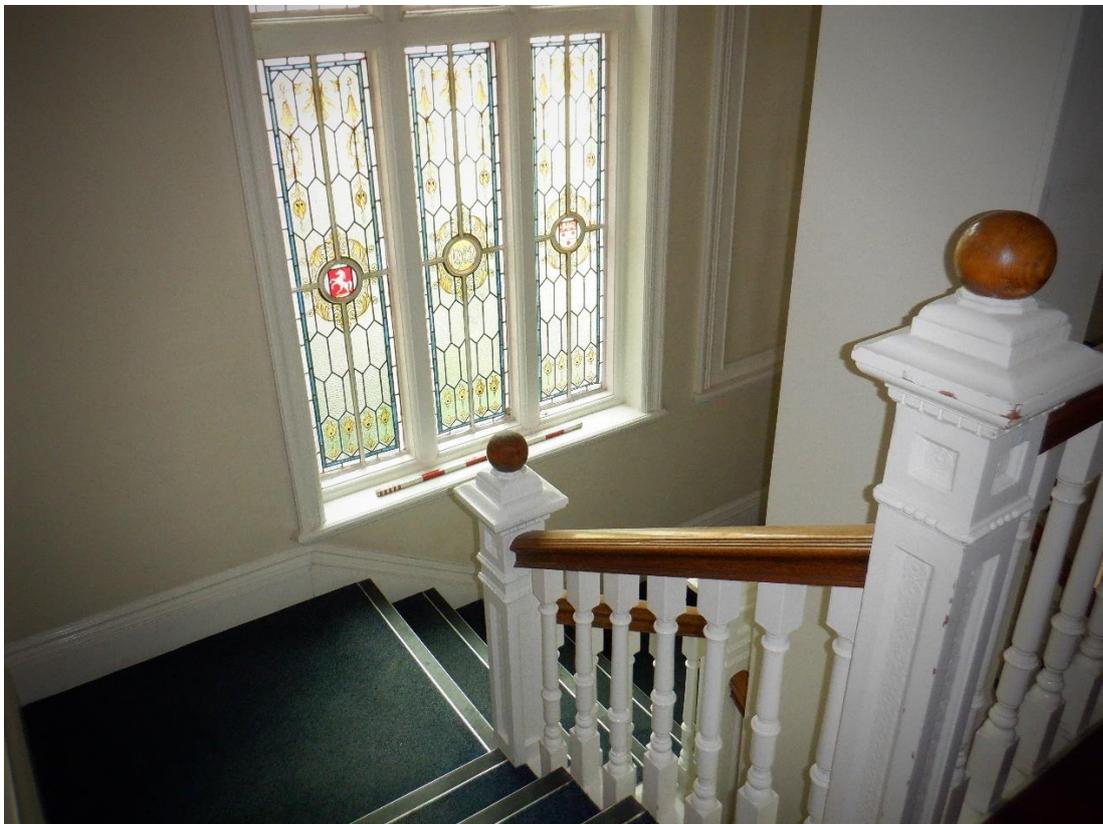


Plate 36. View of staircase leading to entrance hall and stained glass window in rear wall



Plate 37. Detail of stained glass window



Plate 38. Detail of stained glass window



Plate 39. Detail of stained glass window

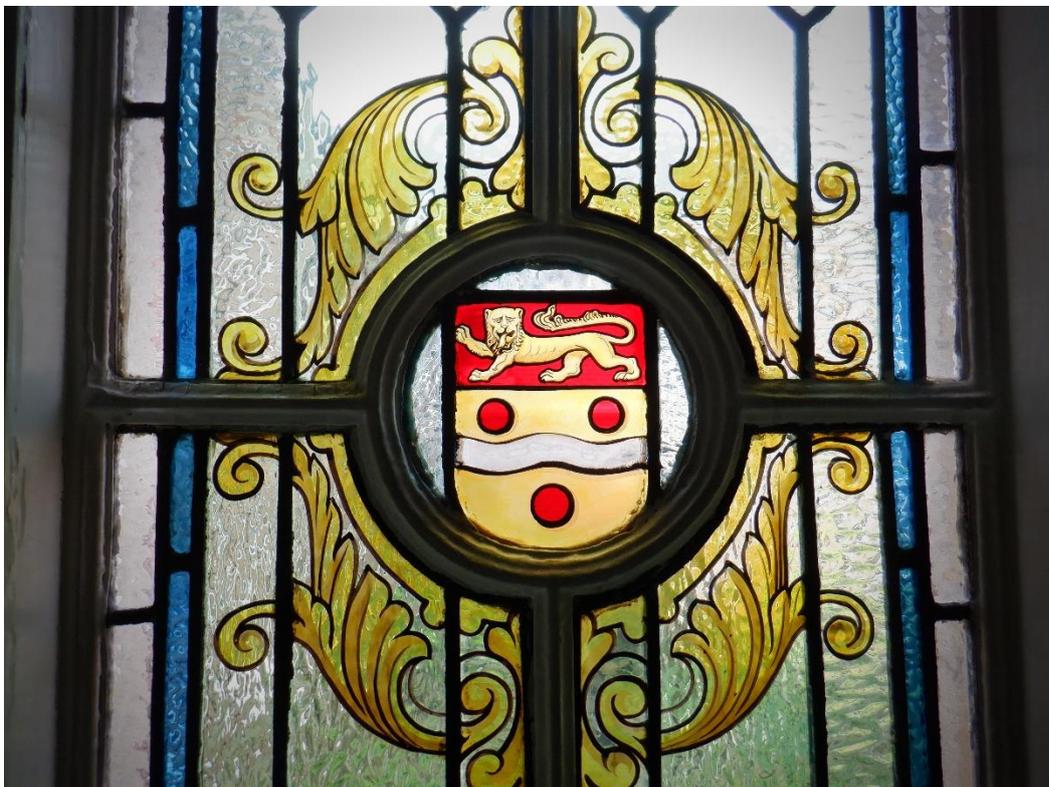


Plate 40. Detail of stained glass window



Plate 41. View of south-east corner office in original build (1m scale)



Plate 42. Plaster decoration with ceiling rose, coving, cornice and panel moulding



Plate 43. Detail of plaster ceiling mouldings

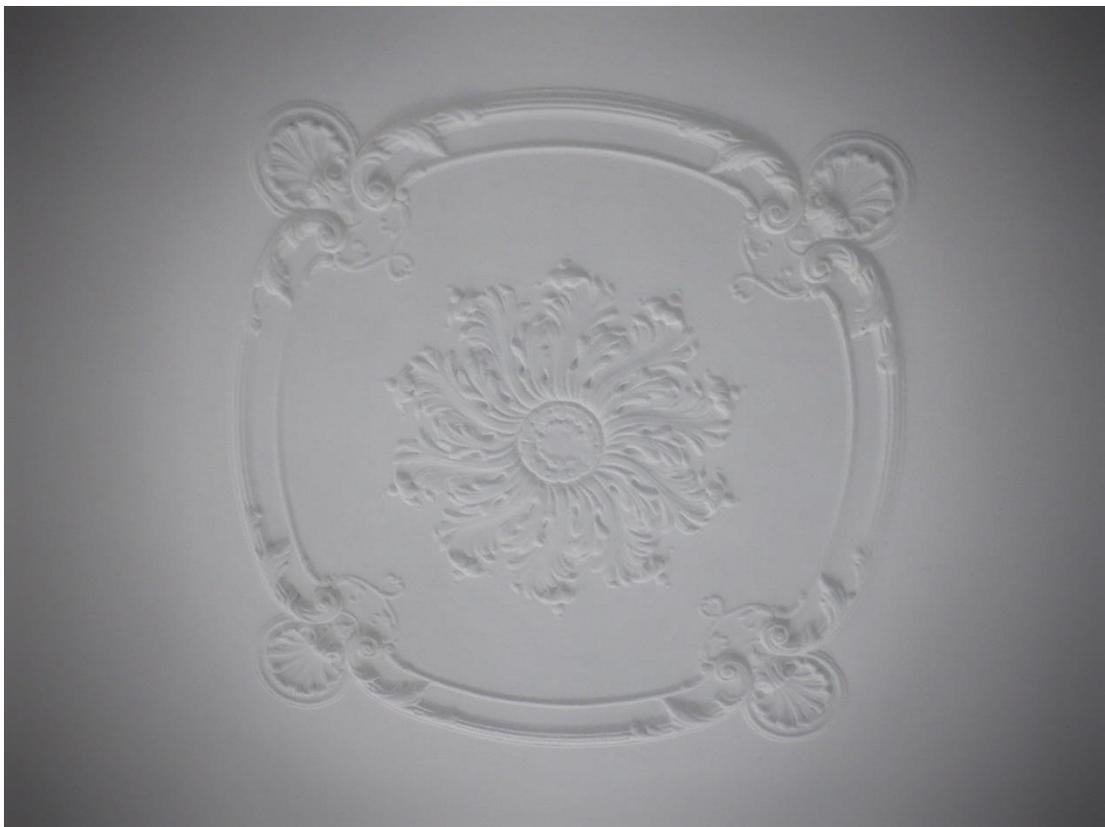


Plate 44. Detail of plaster ceiling rose



Plate 45. Detail of plaster ceiling moulding



Plate 46. Detail of plaster ceiling moulding



Plate 47. North-west room in the original build



Plate 48. Stair landing in original build with stained glass window beyond 1m scale



Plate 49. View of stair landing (looking north-west)



Plate 50. Third floor office room (looking north-east) 1m scale



Plate 51. Third floor office room (looking north-east) 1m scale

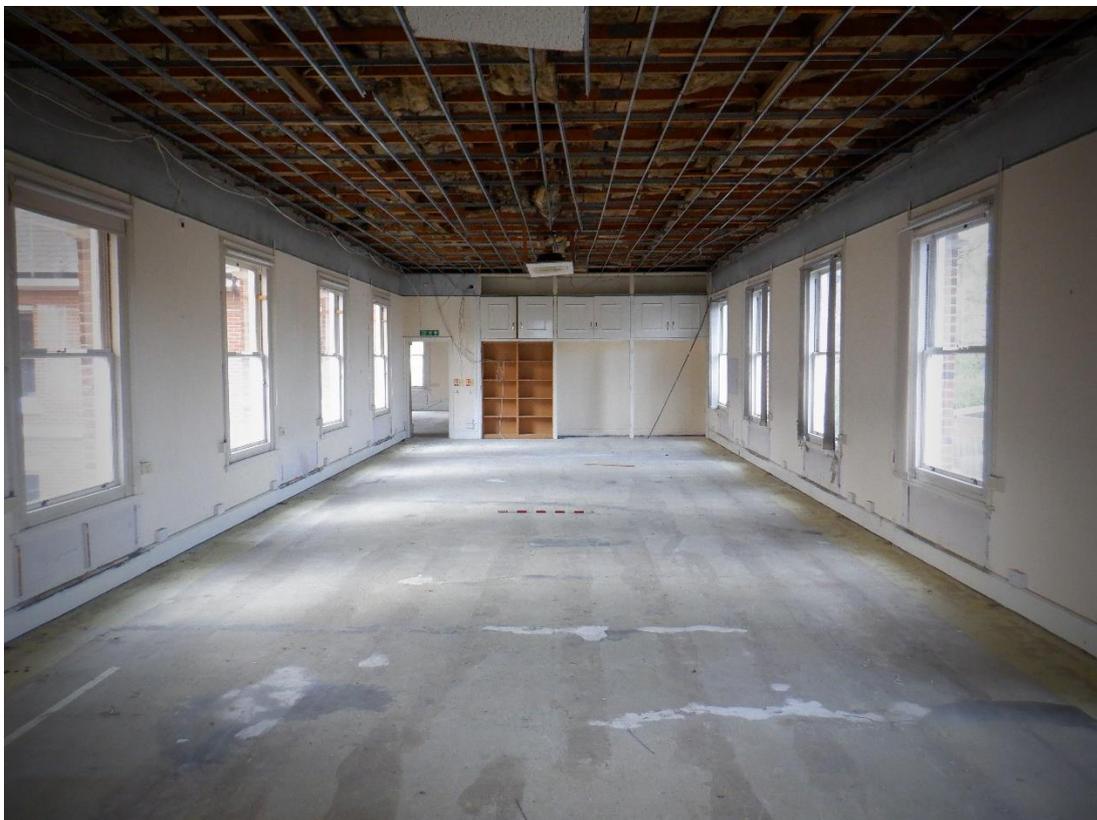


Plate 52. Later build office space (looking north-east)



Plate 53. Later build office space (looking south-west)



Plate 54. Later build office space (looking north-west)



Plate 55. Later build office space (looking south-west)



Plate 56. Later build office space (looking south-west)



Plate 57. Later build office space (looking north-east)

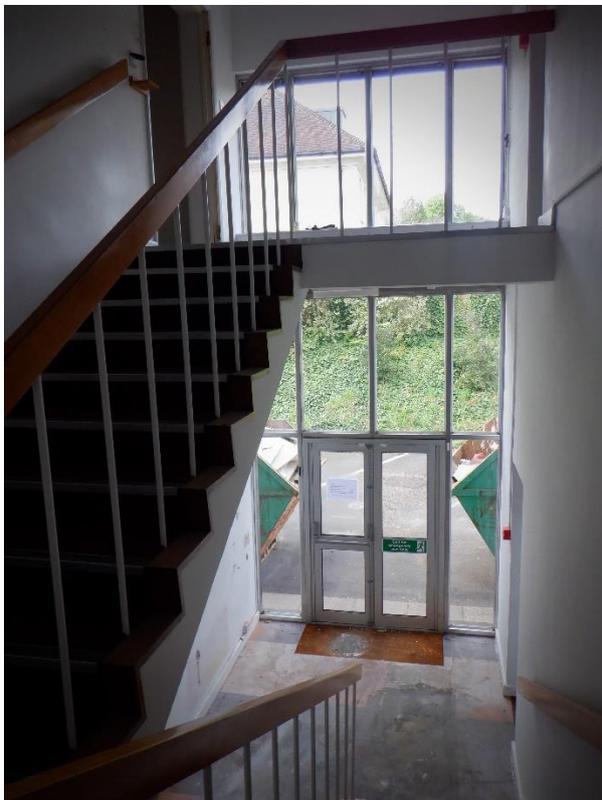


Plate 58. Staircase in later build office space



Plate 59. View of ancillary buildings situated NW of main building



Plate 60. View of ancillary buildings situated NW of main building



Plate 61. View of ancillary buildings situated NW of main building



Plate 62. View of ancillary buildings situated NW of main building