

CPAT Report No. 1768




Machynlleth Hospital, Powys

Building Survey



YMDDIRIEDOLAETH ARCHAEOLEGOL CLWYD-POWYS
CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Client name: Willmott Dixon
 CPAT Project No: 2505
 Project Name: Machynlleth Hospital, Powys
 Grid Reference: SH 7508 0088
 County/LPA: Powys
 Planning Application: 20/0858/CAC
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 with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

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Summary

In December 2020 the Clywd Powys Archaeological Trust carried out a building survey in connection with proposals to demolish part of Bro Dyfi Hospital, Machynlleth, a former workhouse built in the mid-19th century. The survey revealed that several of the original building had survived and some of the original features including the chimney stacks were still partially extant. Many of the architectural details were obscured by the fitment of boarded wall finishes and suspended ceilings.

Crynodeb

Ym mis Rhagfyr 2020, bu Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Clwyd-Powys yn cynnal arolwg adeilad mewn cysylltiad â chynigion i ddymchwel rhan o Ysbyty Bro Ddyfi, Machynlleth, sef cyn wyrchwys a adeiladwyd yng nghanol y 19eg ganrif. Datgelodd yr arolwg bod rhywfaint o'r adeilad gwreiddiol wedi goroesi a bod rhai o'r nodweddion gwreiddiol, gan gynnwys y cynn simnai, wedi goroesi'n rhannol. Roedd gorchuddion waliau bordiog a nenfydau crog wedi cuddio llawer o'r manylion pensaernïol.

1 Introduction

- 1.1. In December 2020 the Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust carried out a programme of building recording on behalf of Willmott Dixon in connection with proposals to demolish Bro Dyfi Hospital, Machynlleth, with the exception of the main façade.
- 1.2. The hospital is located centrally within the town of Machynlleth at the junction of Maengwyn Street, Newtown Road and Forge Road (Fig. 1; SH 7508 0088).



Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2018

Fig. 1 Location of the hospital, circled in red

- 1.3. Conservation Area Consent (20/0858/CAC) was granted in September 2020 with the inclusion of the following condition:
5. Prior to the demolition of any part of the building identified on application 20/0858/CAC the building shall be recorded by an approved contractor who specialises in building recording, both its structure and history including evolution where relevant. The survey should be completed in accordance with an Historic England (Understanding Historic Buildings) equivalent level 3 survey, and the survey should include the elements that are currently visible

and also the elements currently not visible including roofspaces. The survey shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and placed on the Historic Environment Record and shall be agreed in writing prior to the demolition.

Reason: To secure a full photographic record of the original building prior to demolition in accordance with policy SP7 of the Powys LDP and TAN 24.

2 Historical Background

- 2.1. Machynlleth Poor Law Union was formed in 1837. It represented 11 constituent parishes, eight of which were located in Montgomery, two in Merioneth and one in Cardigan, a total population of approximately 12,000 people.
- 2.2. As with a number of other areas of central Wales, such as Rhayader, Builth Wells, Lampeter, Tregaron and Presteigne, Machynlleth was initially resistant to the construction of a workhouse, preferring to dispense relief to people within their own homes. This was compounded by the difficulty in finding a suitable site for a workhouse, which was not constructed until 1860. This was still somewhat earlier than many other areas, which held out until the mid-1870s when they were threatened with the dissolution of their union.
- 2.3. Machynlleth Workhouse was built on a plot fairly centrally within the town and comprised a T-shaped plan with the principal elevation facing onto the junction of Maengwyn Street, Newtown Road and Forge Road (Fig. 2). A number of ancillary buildings were constructed to the rear of the plot.

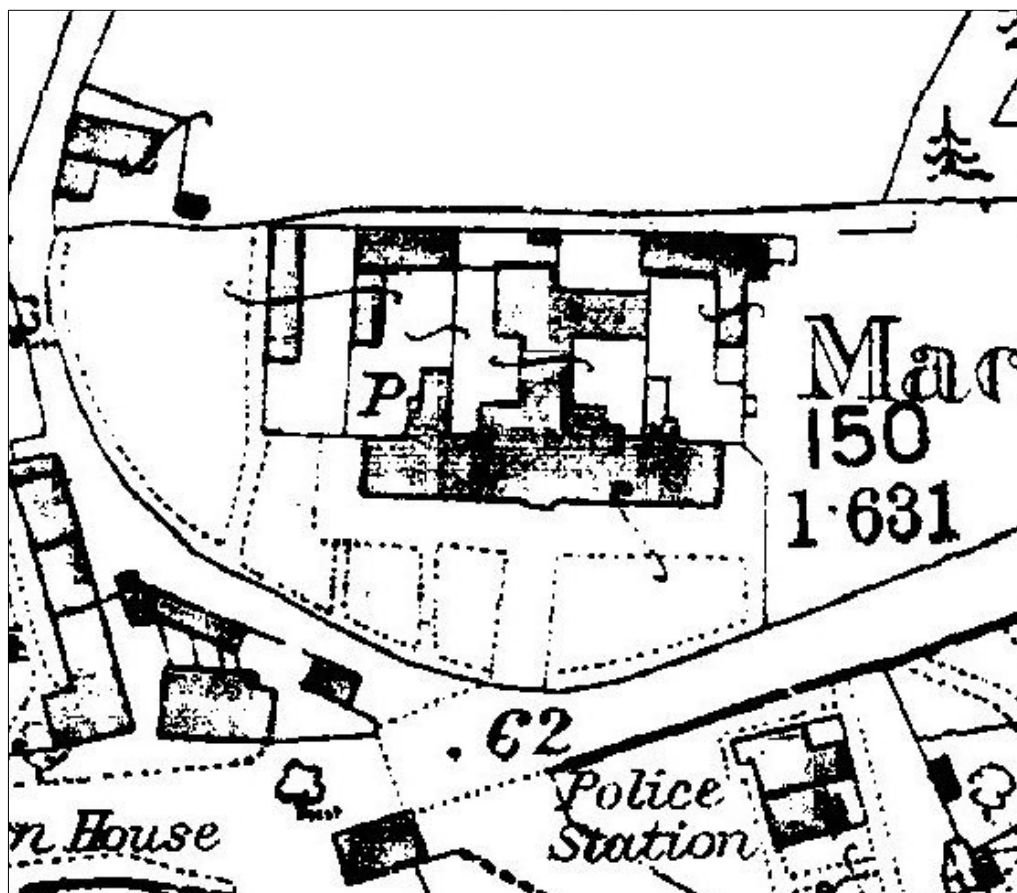


Fig. 2 Extract from the Ordnance Survey map of 1889 showing the layout of the workhouse.

- 2.4. The decision to close the workhouse was made in 1914, with the remaining inmates transferred to a neighbouring institution by 1916.
- 2.5. Shortly after the outbreak of war in 1914 the guardians of the workhouse offered the use of the buildings to the Red Cross to serve as a military hospital. This offer was taken up in 1917, the hospital accommodating 48 wounded service personnel. Nurses were locally sourced via the county Voluntary Aid Detachment scheme. These nurses served alongside medical professionals who likewise provided their services free of charge.
- 2.6. In 1920 the former workhouse was leased to the King Edward VII Welsh Memorial Association, for use as a hospital specialising in the treatment of tuberculosis. It continued in use as a hospital and was later known as the Machynlleth Chest Hospital, and currently the Bro Ddyfi Hospital

3 Building Survey

- 3.1. The survey was conducted according to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* (2014), and took the form of a Level 3 building survey as defined by Historic England (2016) *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice*.
- 3.2. The workhouse complex was subdivided into eight buildings recorded on 19th-century historic mapping within the proposed development area (Fig. 16). Most of the buildings within the complex were rendered, and were largely built of stone with slate roofing.
- 3.3. It should be noted that some areas of the site, still a working hospital were not accessible at the time of the survey, although this did not prevent a reasonably comprehensive assessment of the complex.



Fig. 3 King Edward VII Welsh Memorial Hospital post 1920. Reproduced from www.workhouses.org.uk

- 3.4. Building 1 comprised the main workhouse building and was a large two storey block oriented east-west, with the principal elevation facing south. The building was constructed from thin,

roughly shaped shale or sandstone pieces, covered externally with render, with sandstone blockwork quoins on the corners. The windows had slate sills and the original frames had been replaced. The gables at either end of the principal elevation had decorative timber purlin ends where they protruded under the bargeboards. A lift had been installed near the main stairs in the centre of the building, which required the construction of a brick-built machine room above the lift shaft.



Fig. 4 View from the south-east of the principal elevation of Building 1 Photo CPAT 4849-116.

- 3.5. An investigation within the roof space suggested that some if not all the stone chimney stacks were still extant although the external chimneys had been taken down. The slate roof, felting and rafters looked quite recent. The roof frame was a common type timber frame. Traces of the original lath were visible through the modern suspended ceiling in the corridor on the upper floor.



Fig. 5 Upper remnant chimney stack in eastern extent of Building 1 Photo CPAT 4849-072



Fig. 6 Roof lath visible in corridor on northern side of Building 1 Photo CPAT 4849-070

- 3.6. Building 2 was an intermediate building between Building 1 and Building 3 oriented north-south. It was a low single storey building with a later lean-to extension on the east elevation. Two sash windows were visible on the east elevation which may have been original features.



Fig. 7 Building 2 viewed from the east Photo CPAT 4849-122

- 3.7. Building 3 was located to the north of Building 2 and accessed via an internal doorway. It was a single storey building oriented east-west. A modern extension with a bay window had been constructed on the north side of the building. A chimney stack on the apex of this building was also modern.



Fig. 8 View from the north-east of Building 3 (to the east of shot) and the modern extension (to the west of shot) Photo CPAT 4849-124

- 3.8. Building 4 was a small L-shaped, single-storey outbuilding oriented north-south on the north elevation of Building 1, to the west of Building 2. No 19th-century architectural features were

visible internally, and the doors and windows, with the exception of a single metal casement on the west elevation, were 20th-century in date.



Fig. 9 View from the north-west of Building 4 Photo CPAT 4849-130

- 3.9. Building 5 was located to the east of Building 2 and oriented north-south. It probably comprised a small single storey outbuilding similar to Building 4. No evidence of this building was apparent in the much larger two storey building extant in this location, suggesting that the earlier structure had been completely taken rather than incorporated into the later fabric.



Fig. 10 View from the north-east of Building 5 Photo CPAT 4849-121

- 3.10. Building 6 was a freestanding, single-storey building, oriented north-south. It was located to the north of the west end of Building 1. It had an unusual asymmetrical roof pitch and a covered porch at the south end with a side entrance. The building had evidently been much altered, especially internally to allow it to function as offices with an internal corridor between Building 1 to the south and the hospital wards to the north. As with elsewhere in the complex, much of the original fabric was obscured by modern interior cladding. A possible former window aperture used a decorative niche was located at the south end of the building.



Fig. 11 Possible window opening in south end of Building 6 Photo CPAT 4849-101

- 3.11. Building 7 was a two-storey building located to the north of Building 8 and apparently linked to it by a corridor. It was oriented east-west. The ground floor retained a parquet floor surface. A clothes-drying apparatus was attached to the ceiling and there was an infilled doorway in the south elevation. A lean-to on the east elevation was a later feature.



Fig. 12 Drying apparatus on ceiling of ground floor room Photo CPAT 4849-106



Fig. 13 Wooden stairs to upper floor of Building 7 Photo CPAT 4849-103

- 3.12. The stairs to the upper floor were wooden and possibly 19th-century in date, as were the floorboards on the first floor level. A truncated chimney stack was visible through a loft aperture, this was made of stone and similar to those in Building 1. An examination of the interior of the west gable showed the building was stone but that part of the upper structure had been repaired in brick. Building 7 had sash windows but these were of uncertain date.



Fig. 14 Internal western gable end of building 7 Photo CPAT 4849-115



Fig. 15 View from the north-east of Building 7 and later lean-to Photo CPAT 4849-127

- 3.13. Building 8 was a freestanding building located to the north-east of the main complex. This was still extant during the mid-1960s but had gone by the mid-1970s. The hospital boiler room is now located where Building 8 once stood.

4 Conclusions

- 4.1. The basic form and fabric of the former workhouse at Machynlleth was still largely recognisable, despite numerous extensions and alterations to suit its role as a hospital after it closed in 1916. Most of the original features and fittings had however been removed or hidden during subsequent modernisation work, which made interpretation difficult and rather speculative, especially in respect of the ancillary buildings.
- 4.2. The design of workhouses varied quite a lot even regionally. In Montgomeryshire, Forden workhouse was U-shaped in plan. The workhouses at Llanfyllin and Newtown & Llanidloes were cruciform in plan, a design which was strongly influenced by contemporary prison design. Machynlleth workhouse was T-shaped, a unique design in the region, but recorded elsewhere in the United Kingdom at Wetherby in West Yorkshire. Wetherby workhouse was also built around 1860 and shares other characteristics with the workhouse at Machynlleth. Both were stone built quite austere designs, located within rural market towns. The choice of design was largely influenced by economic considerations, though in contrast to workhouses including those at Builth Wells and Knighton it was well made and durable.
- 4.3. Building 1 was the main accommodation block for the workhouse inmates. It would have been segregated into male and female dormitories and living space to either side of the main entrance. Contemporary plans usually have women's accommodation to the left of the main entrance, men's accommodation to the right. The large rooms on either floor at the east and west ends of the building were the main dormitories, with the inner rooms utilized to accommodate the sick and infirm. The central rooms were usually occupied by the workhouse master. There may have also been accommodation put aside for overnight accommodation of vagrants. There would have been an administration area where inmates were booked in and out and stores for clothing and a boot room, probably in the rooms adjacent to the main entrance.
- 4.4. Buildings 2 and 3 were most likely a day room and a work room. Most workhouses were designed to ensure segregation between male and female inmates at all times, although historical plans depicting workhouse designs often indicate that size and designation of the rooms allocated to each gender was not necessarily equal.
- 4.5. Buildings 4 and 5 were rather small and may have originally been ancillary buildings for a laundry or a washroom perhaps, or lavatories.
- 4.6. Building 6 has been interpreted as a dining hall, which would have also been used as a public space. Building 7 was attached to Building 6 so may have functioned as a kitchen and or bakehouse. No historical data relating to Building 8 was identified. A separate infirmary was located to the east of the main complex, although this appeared not to have been built before the early 20th century.

5 Sources

Web based sources

<https://historypoints.org> accessed January 2021

<https://www.wetherbycivicsociety.org.uk> accessed January 2021

<http://www.workhouses.org.uk> accessed January 2021

Cartographic sources

1889 Ordnance Survey 25" 1st edition Montgomeryshire 47-12

6 Archive deposition Statement

- 6.1. The project archive has been prepared according to the CPAT Archive Policy and in line with the CIfA *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives guidance* (2014). The archive is entirely digital and will be deposited jointly with the Historic Environment Record, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust and the National Monuments Record (RCAHMW).

Archive summary

CPAT Event PRN: 140352

84 digital photographs, CPAT film no 4849

Appendix 1: CPAT WSI 2255

1 Introduction

- 1.1. The Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust has been invited by Willmott Dixon to undertake a programme of building recording in connection with proposals to demolish Bro Dyfi Hospital, Machynlleth, with the exception of the main façade.
- 1.2. Bryn Eglwys is located 250km north of Dylife (Fig. 1; SH 7508 0088).
- 1.3. Conservation Area Consent (20/0858/CAC) was granted in September 2020 with the inclusion of the following condition:

5. Prior to the demolition of any part of the building identified on application 20/0858/CAC the building shall be recorded to by an approved contractor who specialises in building recording, both its structure and history including evolution where relevant. The survey should be completed in accordance with an Historic England (Understanding Historic Buildings) equivalent level 3 survey, and the survey should include the elements that are currently visible and also the elements currently not visible including roofspaces. The survey shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and placed on the Historic Environment Record and shall be agreed in writing prior to the demolition.

Reason: To secure a full photographic record of the original building prior to demolition in accordance with policy SP7 of the Powys LDP and TAN 24.

2 Objectives

- 2.1. The objectives of the survey are:
 - to describe and record all of the key internal and external components of the building through measured survey, written description and photography;
 - to prepare a report outlining the results of the survey;
 - to prepare a final publication of the results in an appropriate regional or national journal, depending on the nature and significance of any archaeology.

3 Methodology

- 3.1. The archaeological works will be conducted according to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* (2020) and *Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-based Assessment* (2017).

Desk-based Assessment

- 3.2. A rapid desk-based study will be conducted accessing all readily available on-line resources.
- 3.3. All cartographic sources consulted will be included within the desktop section of the report, together with transcriptions of relevant documents and copies of plans, maps and photographs containing relevant information, subject to any copyright restrictions.

Building Survey

- 3.4. The survey will take the form of a Level 3 building survey as defined by Historic England *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice* (2016). This level of survey is intended to create an analytical record of the building, and will include:

-
- Description and photographic record of the exterior and the interior
 - Detailed account of type, construction, form, function
 - Phasing
 - Past and present use and relationship with setting
 - Copies of historic maps, plans, photographs and documents
 - Conclusions regarding the building's development and use
- 3.5. The survey will focus solely on the historic elements of the building which relate to its original use as a workhouse.
- 3.6. The drawn record will be based on existing detailed floor plans and elevations, which will be checked amended and annotated as necessary. The end result will include:
- Measured plans of each floor and main elevations
 - Drawings of any architectural features/decoration
 - Phase plans showing the development of the structure
- 3.7. The photographic survey will be conducted using digital photography with a minimum resolution of 12 mega pixels to include:
- General views of elevations
 - General views of external appearance
 - Overall appearance of principal rooms
 - Internal and external structural detail
 - Fixtures, fittings, machinery, related contents

4 Report

- 4.1. Following the on-site work an illustrated report will be prepared containing conventional sections to include:
- Non-technical summary
 - Location and NGR
 - Statutory designations
 - Date of record, recorder and archive deposition
 - Introduction
 - Site location
 - Methodology
 - Summary of the form, function, date and development of the building
 - Desk-based study, including copies of historic maps and photographs where permitted
 - Summary description of the building
 - Past and present usage
 - Evidence for former existence of demolished structures, removed fittings etc
 - Conclusions
 - References
- 4.2. The report summary will be provided in English and Welsh, in accordance with the *Guidance for the Submission of Data to the Welsh Historic Environment Records (HERs) V1* (July 2018).

5 Site archive

- 5.1. The overall archive will conform to guidelines described in Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE), Historic England 2015, the CIfA (2014) *Standard and Guidance for the Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Deposition of Archaeological Archives*

and *The National Standard and Guidance to Best Practice for Collecting and Depositing Archaeological Archives in Wales* (NPAAW, 2017) and *Guidance for the Submission of Data to the Welsh Historic Environment Records (HERs) V1* (July 2018).

- 5.2. The paper and digital archive will be deposited with the National Monuments Record (NMR), RCAHMW, including a copy of the final report. This archive will include all written, drawn, survey and photographic records relating directly to the investigations undertaken. NMR Digital archives will follow the standard required by the RCAHMW (RCAHMW 2015). A copy of the digital archive only will also be lodged with the Historic Environment Record, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust.

Data management plan

- 5.3. The project will be conducted in accordance with CPAT's data management policy. All paper records will be collated, catalogued and labelled with the unique project code. All digital data will follow strict file naming, to include the unique project code, and be sorted into a standard series of sub-folders. The digital data will be catalogued, including a list of file types and relevant software.

6 Resources and programming

- 6.1. The assessment will be undertaken by a team of skilled archaeologists under the overall supervision of Nigel Jones, a senior member of CPAT's staff who is also a member of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). CPAT is also a CIfA Registered Organisation and as such agrees to abide by their *Code of Conduct* (2014) and the *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology* (2014).
- 6.2. All report preparation will be completed by or with the assistance of the same field archaeologist(s) who conducted the fieldwork.
- 6.3. Requirements relating to Health and Safety regulations will be adhered to by CPAT and its staff.
- 6.4. CPAT is covered by appropriate Public and Employer's Liability insurance, as well as

N W Jones

30 November 2020



Fig. 16 Extract from a ground-floor plan of the hospital showing in red those parts which were recorded on 19th-century historic mapping and buildings identified during the survey

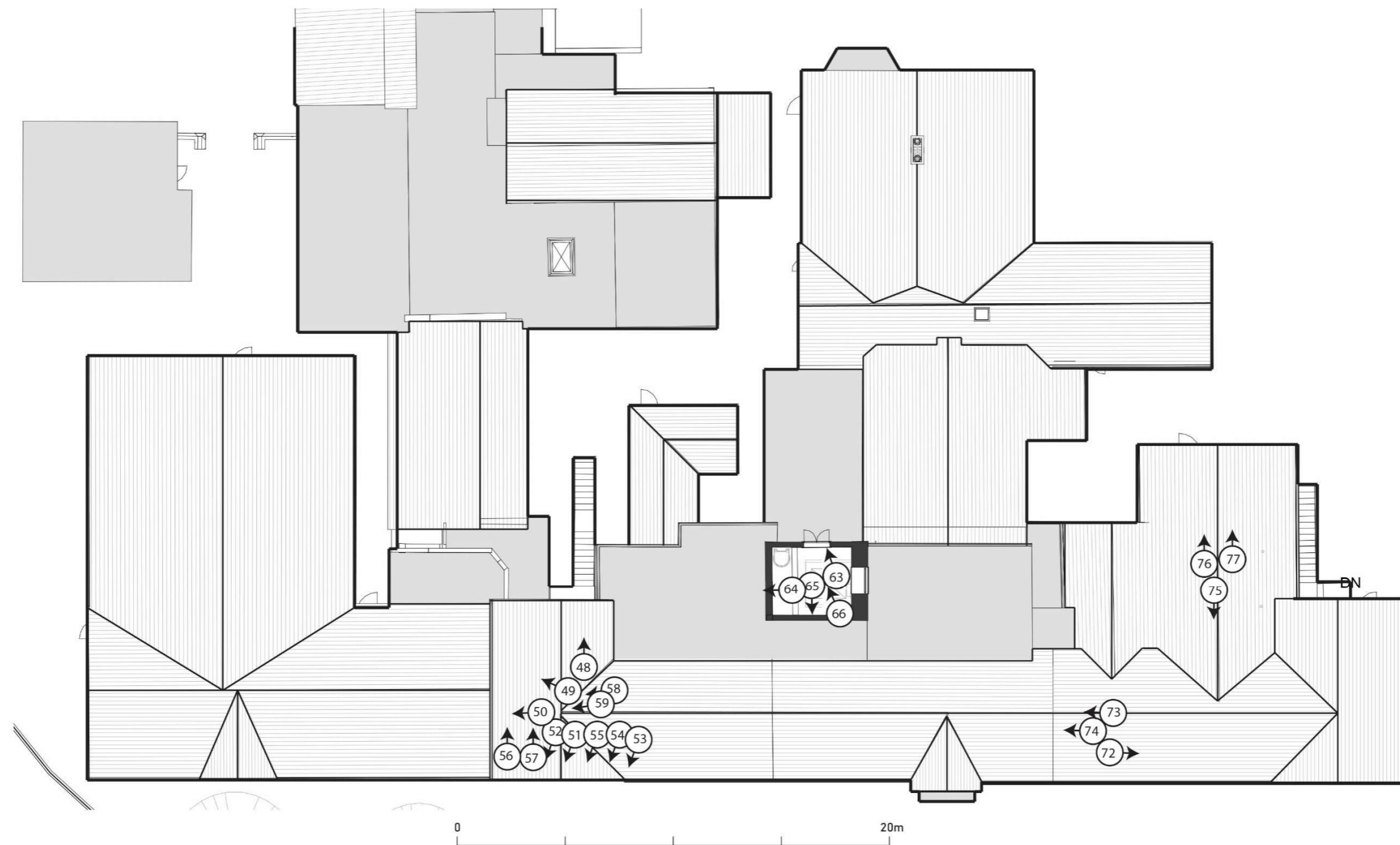


Fig. 17 Plan showing photograph locations within the roof space



Fig. 18 Plan showing photograph locations on the upper floor

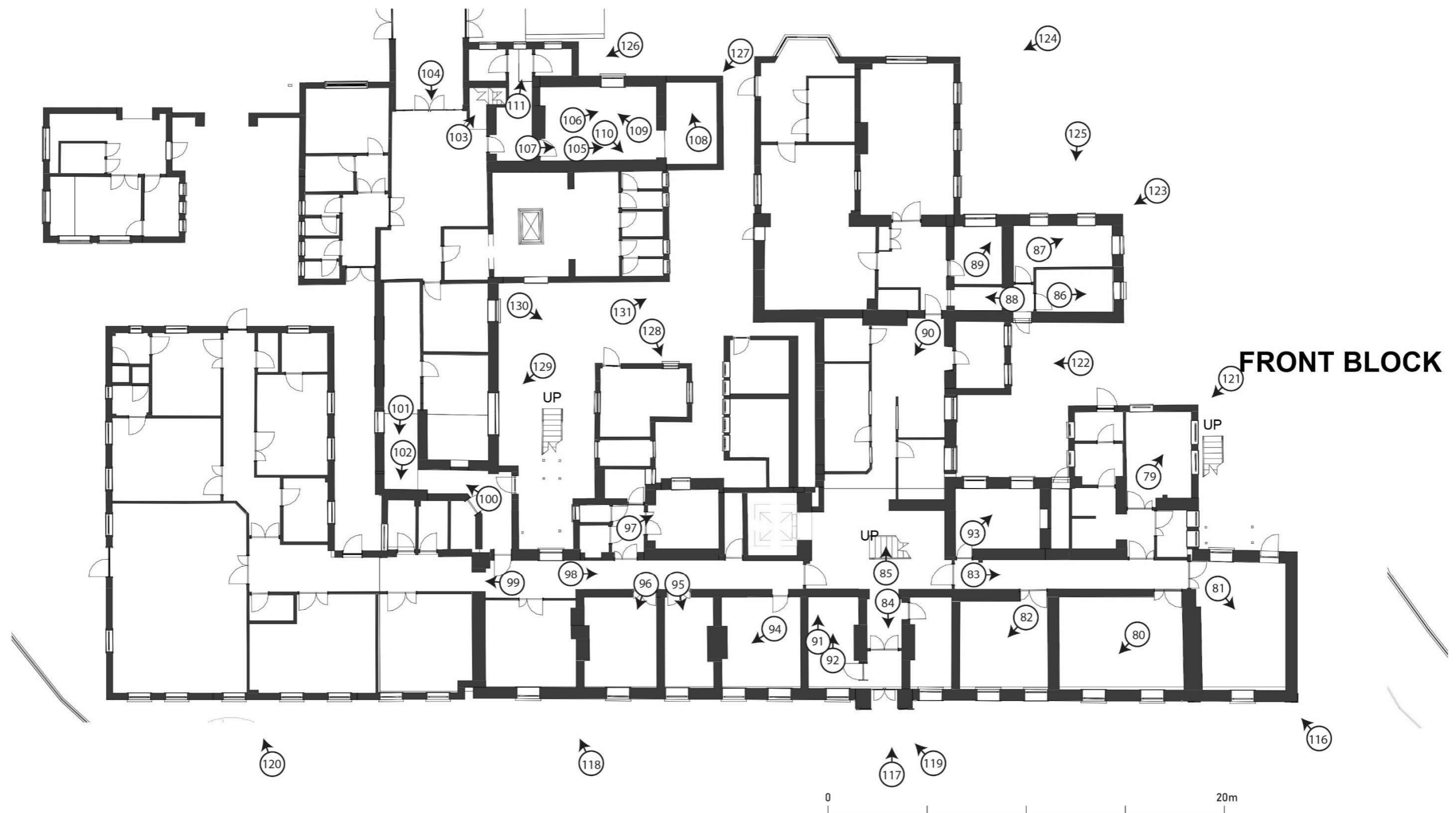
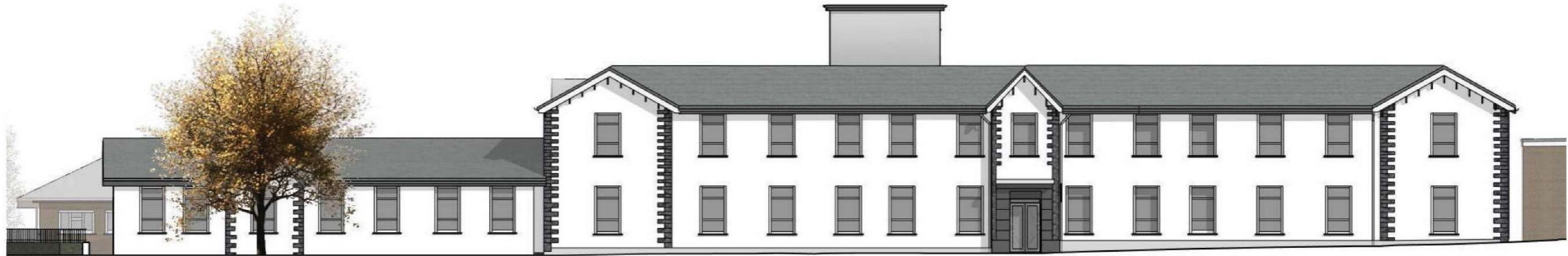


Fig. 19 Plan showing photographs locations on the ground floor

South elevation



North elevation



0 20m

Fig. 20 South (principal) and North elevations of the former workhouse (reproduction of drawing supplied by Willmott Dixon)



Fig. 21 Upper floor plan showing construction phases

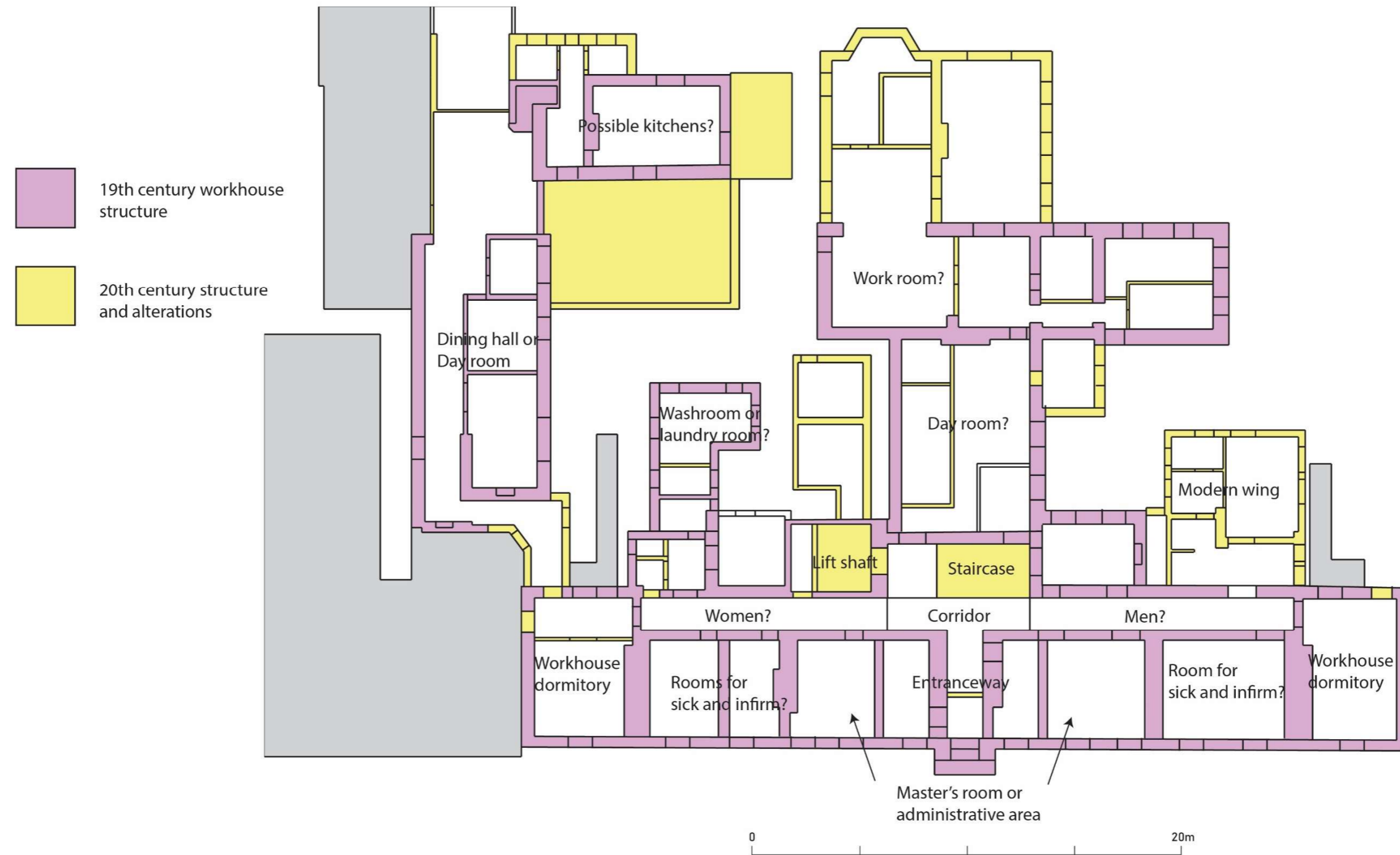


Fig. 22 Ground floor plan showing construction phases

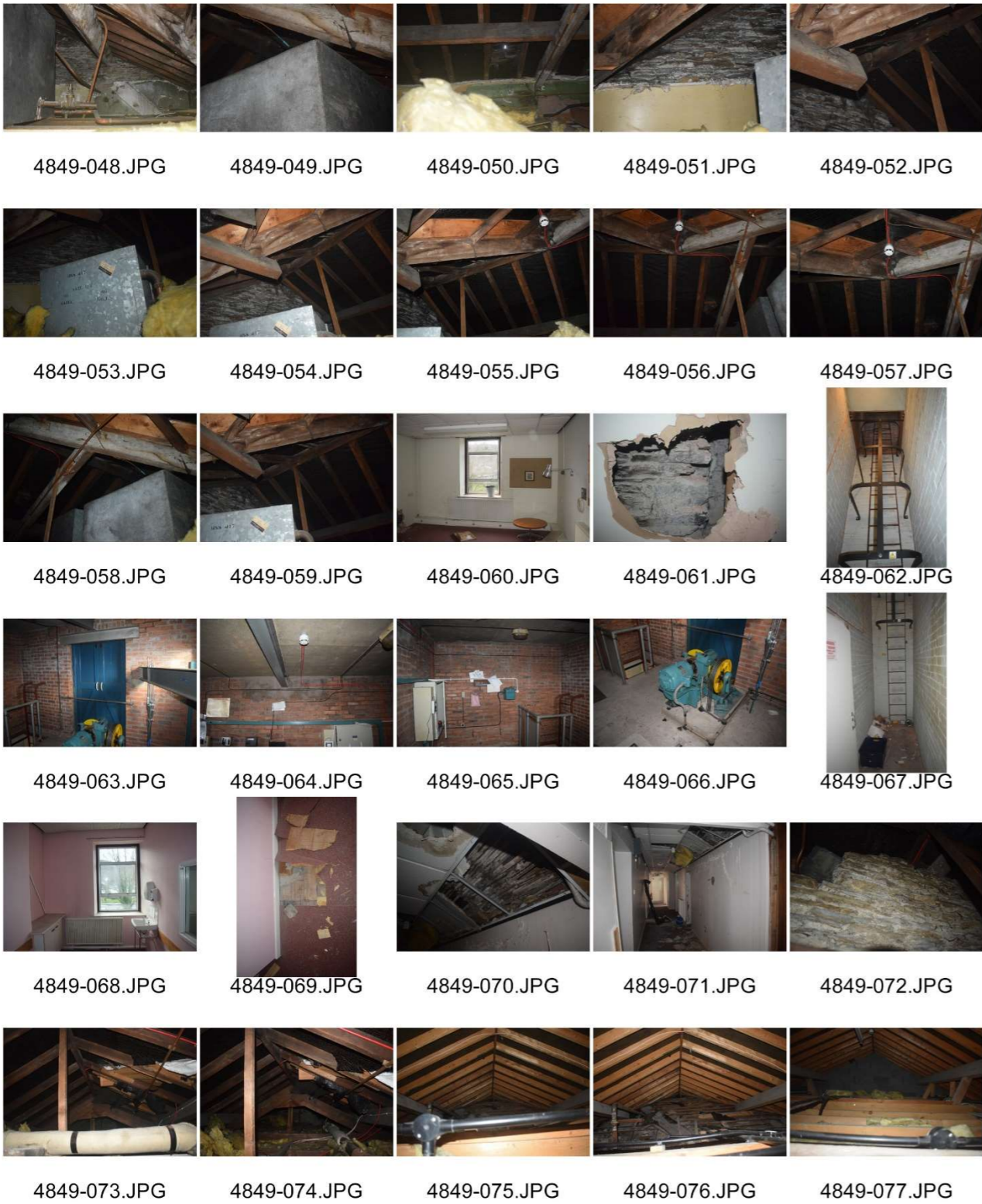


Fig. 23 Contact Sheet 1

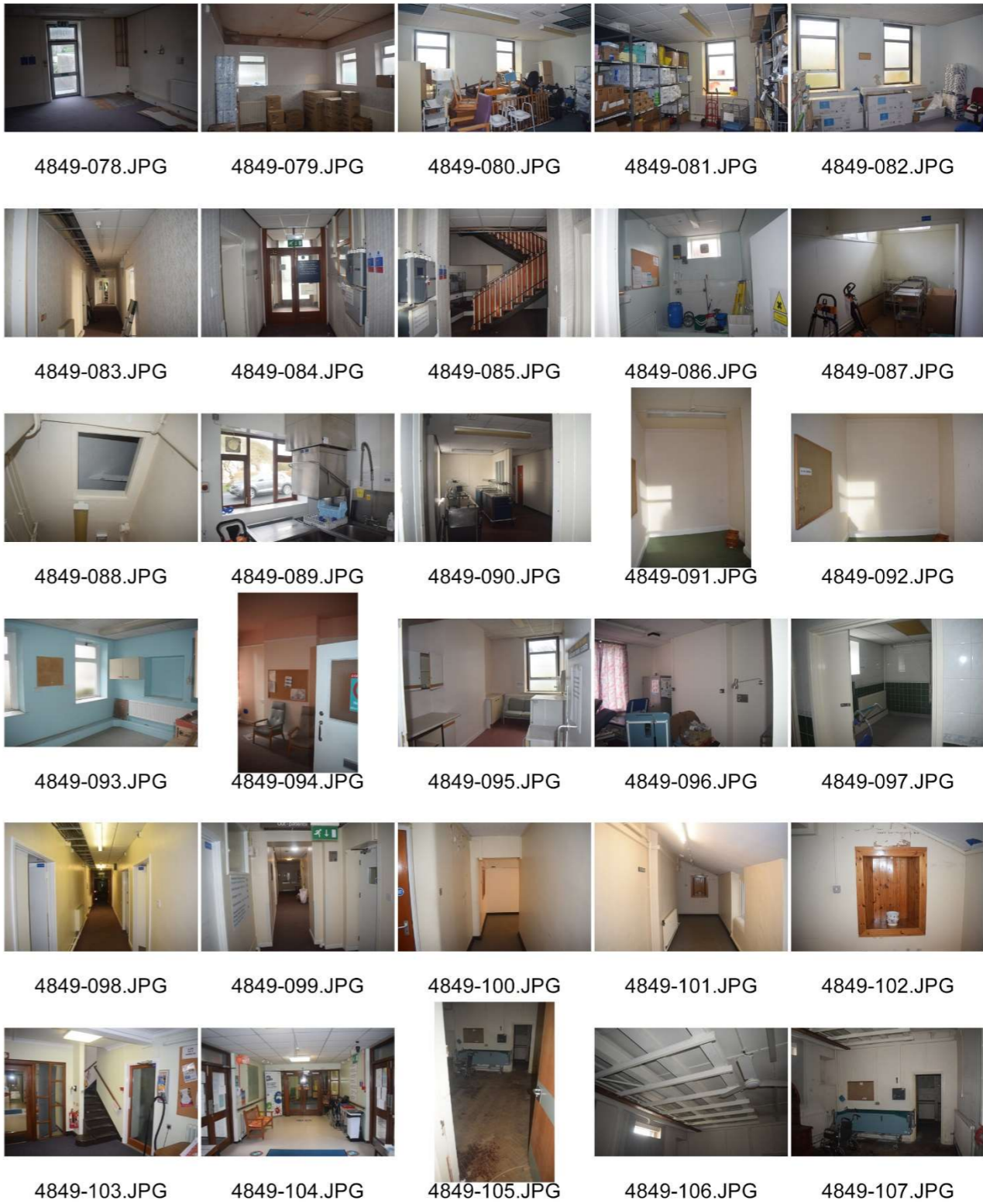


Fig. 24 Contact Sheet 2

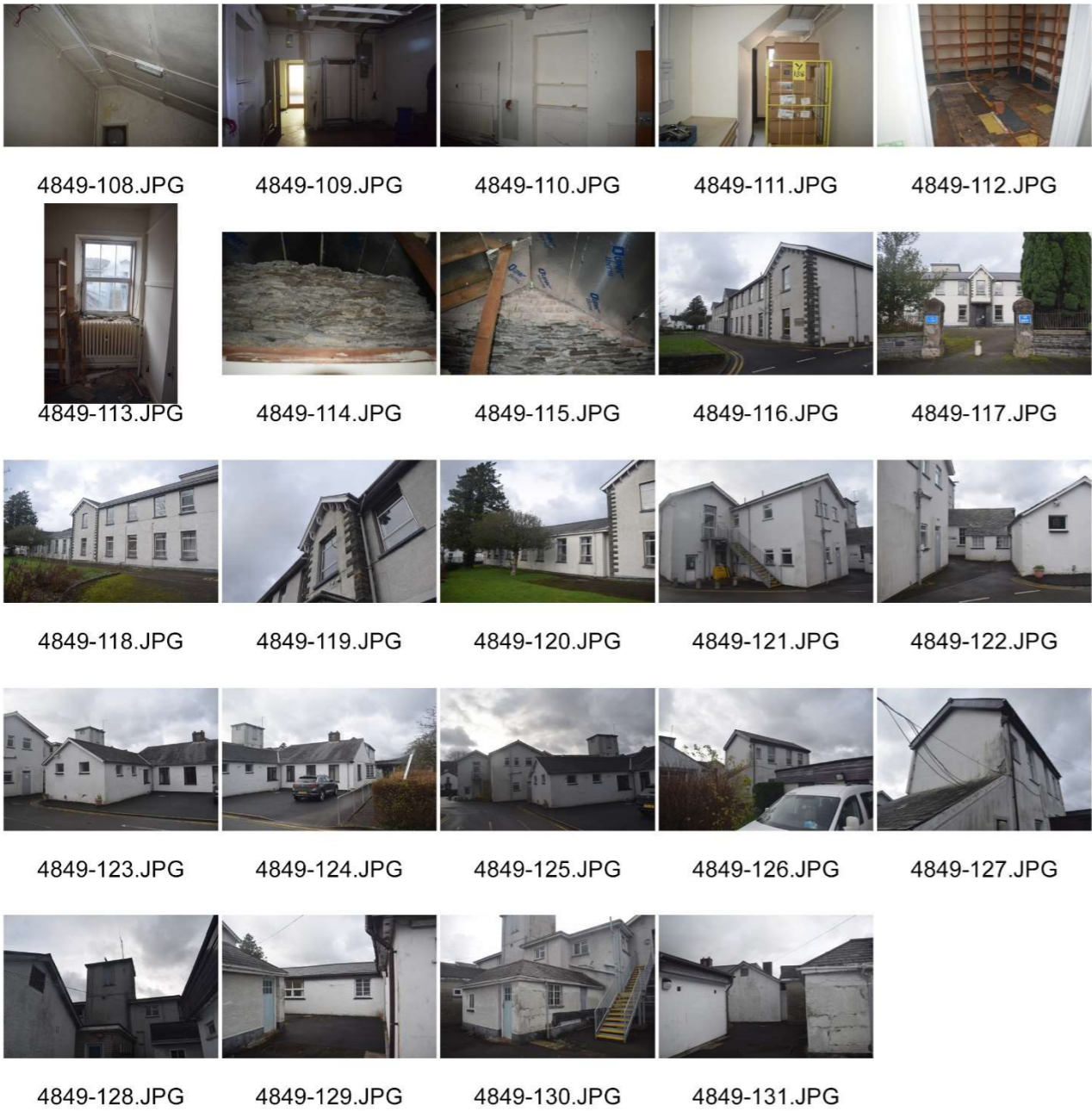


Fig. 25 Contact Sheet 3