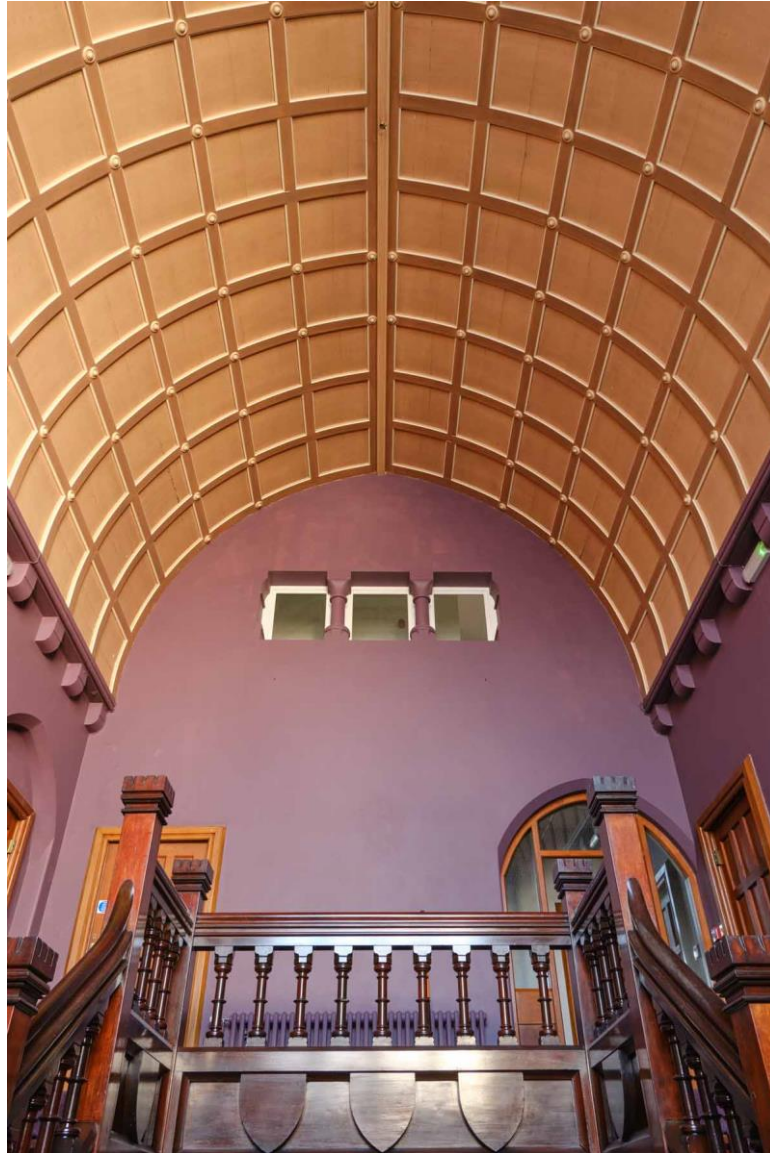


Park House, 20 Park Place Cardiff

Level 3 Historic Building Record



Richard Hayman

for

Simmons Property Investments Ltd

November 2024

Crynodeb

Ym mis Tachwedd 2024 comisiynwyd Richard Hayman i ymgymryd â gwaith paratoi cofnod adeilad hanesyddol yn Tŷ'r Parc, 20 Plas y Parc, Caerdydd. Mae'r adeilad yn rhestredig gradd I ac fe'i disgrifiwyd fel y tŷ tref Fictoriaidd pwysicaf yng Nghymru. Mae angen cofnod adeilad hanesyddol, sy'n gyfystyr â Lefel 3 Historic England, er mwyn addysgu Asesiad Effaith Treftadaeth arfaethedig, a fydd yn ffurfio rhan o gais caniatâd adeilad rhestredig ar gyfer gwneud newidiadau i'r adeilad. Mae Lefel 3 yn gofnod dadansoddol sy'n cynnwys disgrifiad ac yna gyfrif systematig o ddechreuadau, datblygiad a defnydd yr adeilad.

Cynlluniwyd Park House gan William Burges ar gyfer James McConnochie, prif beiriannydd Dociau Bute yng Nghaerdydd. Adeiladwyd y tŷ rhwng 1871 ac 1875, ond ni chwblhawyd y tu mewn tan 1880. Roedd Burges yn frwd o blaid mabwysiadu arddull Gothig Ffrengig Cynnar fel model ar gyfer pensaernïaeth gyfoes, yn hytrach na'r Gothig Seisnig a argymhellwyd A.W.N. Pugin a'r Gothig Eidalaid yr oedd John Ruskin yn ei ffafrio. Mae'r adeilad yn cynrychioli'r uchelgais hwn yn dda, ac mae'n nodedig am ei gymysgedd o ddeunyddiau, gan gynnwys tywodfaen Pennant lleol, naddiadau o gerrig Bath a cholofnau o ithfaen Aberdeen. Gellir gweld ei ddylanwad ar nifer o dai dosbarth canol diwedd Oes Fictoria a'r cyfnod Edwardaidd yng Nghaerdydd.

Mae'r tŷ hefyd yn parhau i gadw manylion mewnol o bwys yn ei brif ystafelloedd ar y llawr gwaelod, gan gynnwys mentyll simneiau gyda phentanau mahogani, a nenfwd planciau pren 'deal'. Y brif nodwedd fewnol yw'r grisiau mawreddog yn y cyntedd sy'n ymestyn i uchder llawn y tŷ.

Mae'r adroddiad yn disgrifio hanes yr adeilad, gan gynnwys ei hanes mwy diweddar fel swyddfeydd cyngor a chlwb / bwyty, ac mae'n darparu cyfrif dehongliadau sy'n esbonio'r newidiadau a wnaed i'r lloriau uwch dros gyfnod. Mae datganiad o arwyddocâd yn ystyried pwysigrwydd yr adeilad yng ngwaith William Burges, a'i ddylanwad ar bensaernïaeth De Cymru ar ddiwedd y bedwaredd ganrif ar bymtheg a dechrau'r ugeinfed ganrif.

Summary

In November 2024 Richard Hayman was commissioned to undertake historic building recording of Park House, 20 Park Place, Cardiff. The building is listed grade I and has been described as the most important Victorian town house in Wales. A historic building record, equivalent to Historic England's Level 3, is required to inform a forthcoming Heritage Impact Assessment, which is to form part of a listed-building consent application for alterations to the building. Level 3 is an analytical record that comprises a description followed by a systematic account of the building's origins, development and use.

Park House was designed by William Burges for James McConnochie, chief engineer for the Bute Docks in Cardiff. The house was built between 1871 and 1875, but the interior was not completed until 1880. Burges advocated the adoption of Early French Gothic as a model for contemporary architecture, as opposed to the English Gothic recommended by A.W.N. Pugin and the Italian Gothic favoured by John Ruskin. The building well represents this ambition, and is notable for its mix of materials, including local Pennant sandstone, Bath stone dressings and Aberdeen granite piers. Its influence can be seen in numerous late-Victorian and Edwardian middle-class houses in Cardiff.

The house also retains significant interior detail in its principal ground-floor rooms, including marble chimneypieces with mahogany overmantels, and panelled deal ceilings. The principal interior feature is the grand staircase in the full-height entrance hall.

The report describes the history of the building, including its later history as council offices and a club/restaurant, and provides an interpretive account that explains the changes made to the upper floors over time. A statement of significance considers the importance of the building in the work of William Burges, and its influence on the architecture of South Wales in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

Park House, 20 Park Place
Cardiff

Level 3 Historic Building Record

Richard Hayman

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I Introduction

A historic building record equivalent to Historic England’s Level 3 has been commissioned by Simmons Property Investments Ltd to support a forthcoming application for listed building consent to make alterations to Park House. The building is listed grade I (Cadw ref I3772), is within Windsor Place Conservation Area and is on the edge of Cardiff’s civic centre. The building is recorded in the National Monuments Record (nprn I9603).

Park House, 20 Park Place, stands on the east side of the road, opposite Gorsedd Gardens, at ST I8470 76874 (fig I). It is a detached town house, occupying a plot between Park Place and Park Lane, although the rear of the plot, backing on to Pak Lane, is a modern office block known as Park Court Mews.

The building was visited on 11 November 2024.

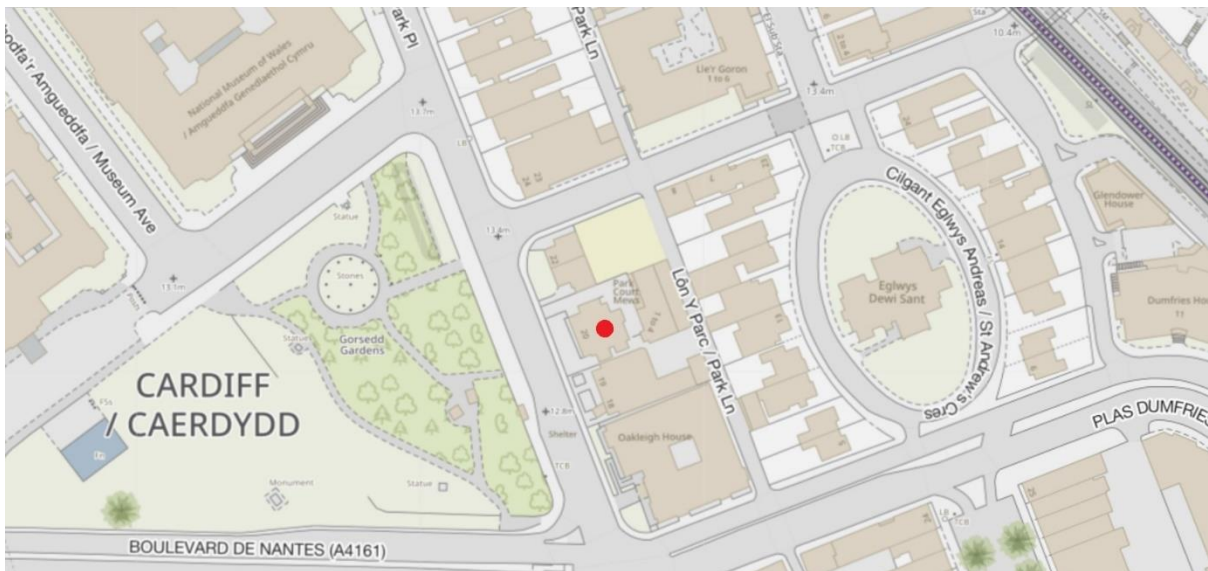


Figure I. Location plan.

2 Aims and Objectives

The purpose of the historic building record is to provide a written, drawn, and photographic record of the building before any alterations are made to it. As a Level 3 ‘analytical’ record, it takes the form of a systematic account of the building’s origins, development and use. The record includes an account of the evidence on which the analysis has been based, allowing the validity of the record to be re-examined in detail. It also includes the drawn and photographic records required to illustrate the building’s appearance and structure and to support an historical analysis. The report then measures the significance of the building against established criteria for the significance of historic buildings.

3 Methodology and Standards

The work has followed the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) Code of Conduct and adheres to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures* (CIfA 2016).

Historic England's guidelines, *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (2016), have been used as a basis for defining levels of recording. The Historic Building Record for this project is at Level 3.

The measured survey was undertaken by Connections Design. The text and photographs are by Richard Hayman. Access was possible to all of the building's interior rooms, except some parts of the basement. Photography of the west front was hindered by a hoarding erected across the front of the building, meaning that the building could not be seen in its entirety from Park Place. Historical research included consultation of historic Ordnance Survey maps, authoritative literature on the work of William Burges, and a search of the Glamorgan Archives online catalogue.

4 Historical Background

William Burges (1827-1881) was an established London-based architect, who had already won a commission to design St Fin Barre's Cathedral in Cork by the time he met John Patrick Crichton Stuart, third Marquess of Bute, in 1865. The Marquess of Bute was a major landowner in South Wales, owner of Cardiff Docks and landlord to lucrative coal measures in the Cardiff valleys. In 1865 he engaged William Burges to work in Cardiff on the restoration of Cardiff Castle, including extensions to the existing residential apartments, and in 1875 at Castell Coch. On both of these schemes, which made his reputation as an influential Gothic-Revival Architect, Burges designed lavish interiors.

James McConnochie (1823-1889) was well known to the Burges family long before he commissioned William Burges to design a new house in 1871. He had come to Cardiff first as an employee of the civil-engineering firm Walker Burges and Cooper, engaged to work on the Bute East Dock. One of the partners in the firm was Alfred Burges (1796-1886), father of William Burges. McConnochie enjoyed an amicable relationship with the third Marquess of Bute – both of them were Scots Catholics – and it may have been through McConnochie that William Burges was first introduced to the Marquess. McConnochie was engaged by the Marquess of Bute in 1865 to be the chief engineer of the Bute Docks, just when the port of Cardiff was in a period of rapid expansion as its coal and iron exports were on the increase. Cardiff now became his permanent home, serving as Mayor of the town in 1879-80.

The new house was to be built on a vacant plot on Park Place, facing Cathays Park before it was developed as Cardiff's civic centre. The building was put up in the period 1871-75, employing workmen from Bute Docks, and was originally known as McConnochie House. For some unspecified reason, the interior fittings were not completed until 1880, when two of the architect's long-term collaborators, the decorative painters Campbell, Smith & Co,

and the sculptor Thomas Nicholls (1825-96), worked on the house (Mordaunt Crook 2013, 305-6). Campbell, Smith & Co were responsible for decorating the drawing room. Their work may have survived beneath later coats of paint. Thomas Nicholls, best known for the animal wall alongside Cardiff Castle, could have been responsible for the head corbels in the drawing room, and perhaps work on the chimney pieces. The external animal figures may also be his.

Plans of the ground and first floor, with a brief description, were published in *The Architect* in 1871 (23/12/1871, 314). In 1872, before the house was completed, Burges commissioned an artist's impression of the house from Axel Haig (Hilling 1975, number 22). An engraving made from the painting, together with floor plans, was published in 1882 in *The Architect* (8/4/1882, 221), with a short article repeating the details described in 1871:

The house at Cardiff is erected in Park Lane, and has a frontage on one side only, the neighbouring houses being the usual detached and semi-detached specimens common to the suburbs of all towns. Caerphilly stone has been used for the walls, with Box-ground dressings and square granite shafts for the balcony and porch. All the windows are fitted with iron casements divided up into patterns. Internally the ceilings of the best rooms are executed in deal, so as to allow of decoration; and the staircase, which occupies the whole height of the house, is of teak.

The Caerphilly stone is Pennant sandstone, the dressings of Bath Stone and the granite shafts were from Aberdeen.

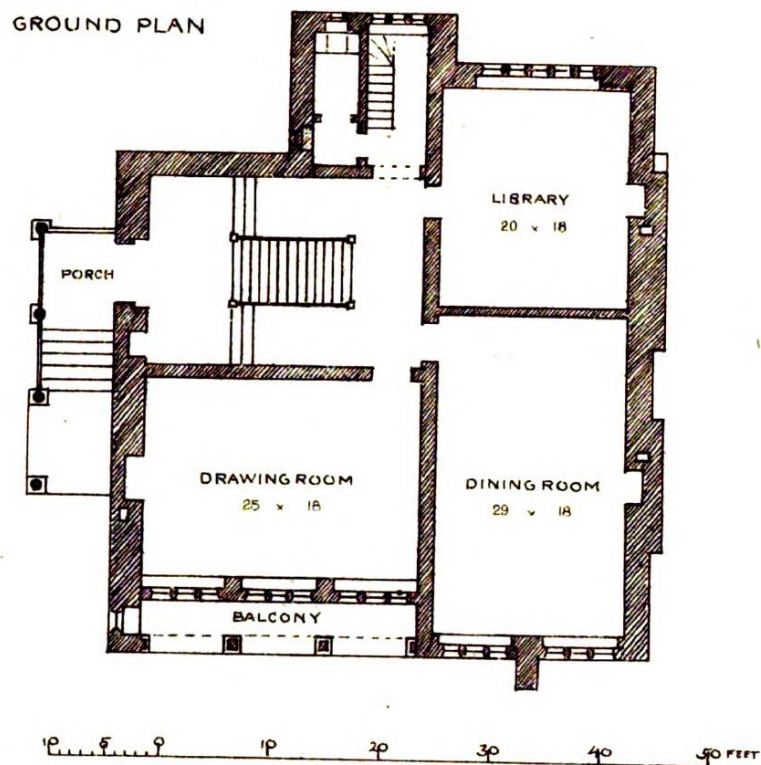


Figure 2. Proposed ground plan, published 1871. (North is to the left)

BEDROOM PLAN
1ST FLOOR

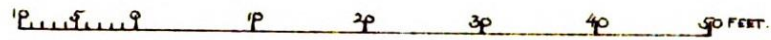
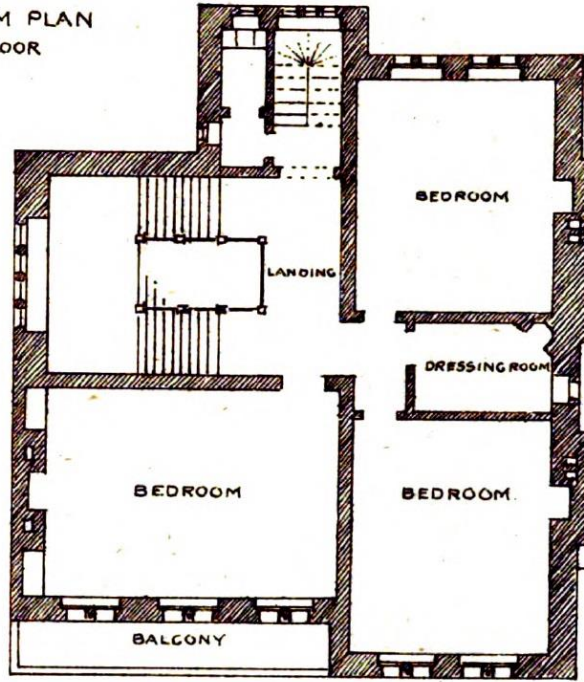


Figure 3. Proposed first-floor plan, published in 1871. (North is to the left)



Figure 4. Engraving of Park House, after a painting by Axel Haig of 1872.

Plans of the two principal floors demonstrate the basic layout. On the ground floor is a stair hall and three rooms – drawing room, dining room and library (fig 2). The first floor is shown with three bedrooms, and a dressing room between two of them (fig 3). A projection at the rear of the building housed the service stair to all floors.

The artists' impression of the original house indicates that very little has changed to the main external fronts of the building, although the inclusion of trees around the house was clearly the product of artistic licence (fig 4). The engraving shows a pair of wooden gates at the entrance, and a boundary wall that incorporated railings between wide piers, although an early photograph shows modest iron gates (fig 5).



Figure 5. Late-nineteenth century photograph, viewed from Park Place.

The house was built opposite Cathays Park, a private park owned by the Marquess of Bute, on the edge of the town, and looked across it to the castle stables, another (unfinished) work of William Burges. The setting was clearly part of its status, shared by other middle-class houses on Park Place. The southern part of the park, now known as Gorsedd Gardens, was retained when much of Cathays Park was transformed to create the civic centre, beginning in the early years of the twentieth century and containing the Town Hall, university and National Museum among others, recognised as the finest civic centre in Britain.

McConnochie died in 1889 and the house was sold by auction in 1891 to the Vachell family who owned it until at least the death of Ivor Vachell c1919 (Glamorgan Archives DSA/12/358, DSA/12/3371). Plans made for the sale of the house in 1891 show some minor changes to the first floor (fig 6). The dressing room shown on the 1871/1882 plans was now designated a bathroom, although retaining the fireplace. The larger bedroom on the west side had been sub-divided to create a small lobby and a dressing room. In the stair projection the small room is described as a water closet. Although no plan of the attic

storey was included in the sales particulars, a list of the upper rooms was given, comprising three bedrooms, lavatories and a billiard room measuring 25x18 feet, the identical dimensions of the drawing room, and the first-floor bedroom above it, and was therefore presumably directly above them.

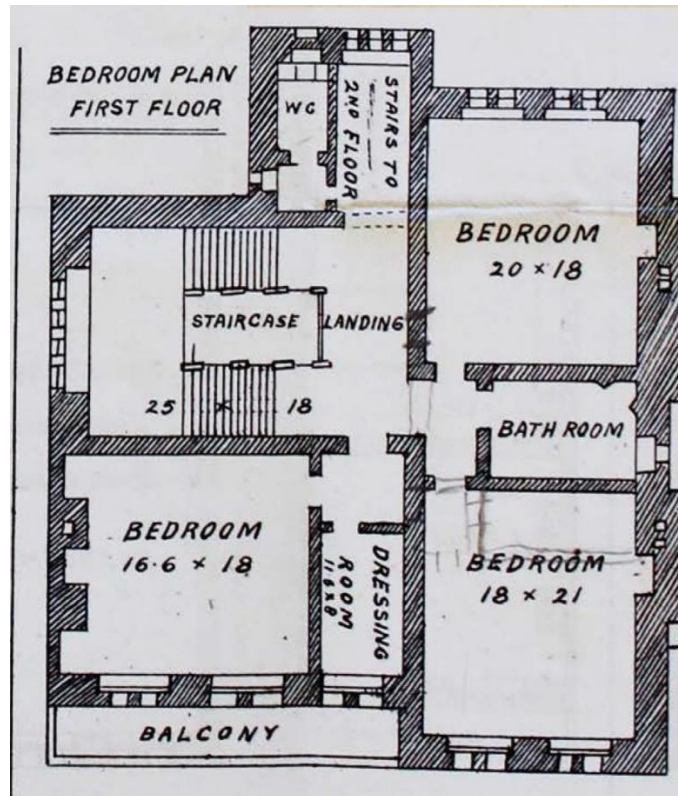


Figure 6. First floor plan, 1889. (North is to the left)

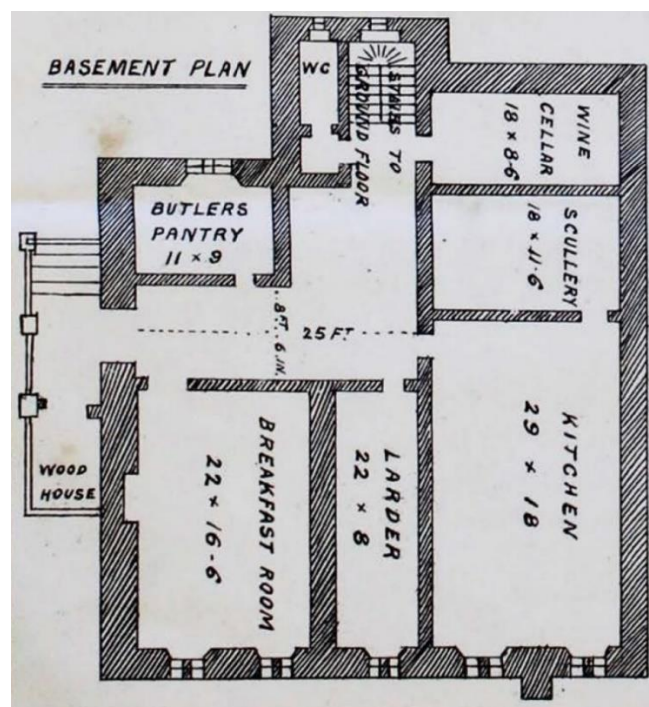


Figure 7. Basement plan, 1889. (North is to the left)

A plan also shows the layout of the basement in 1889, which is unlikely to have changed significantly since the house was first built (fig 7). It shows an L-shaped corridor linking the base of the service stair and an external doorway on the north side, beneath the porch. Kitchen, scullery, larder and wine cellar occupy the south side of the basement, butler's pantry and breakfast room on the north side.

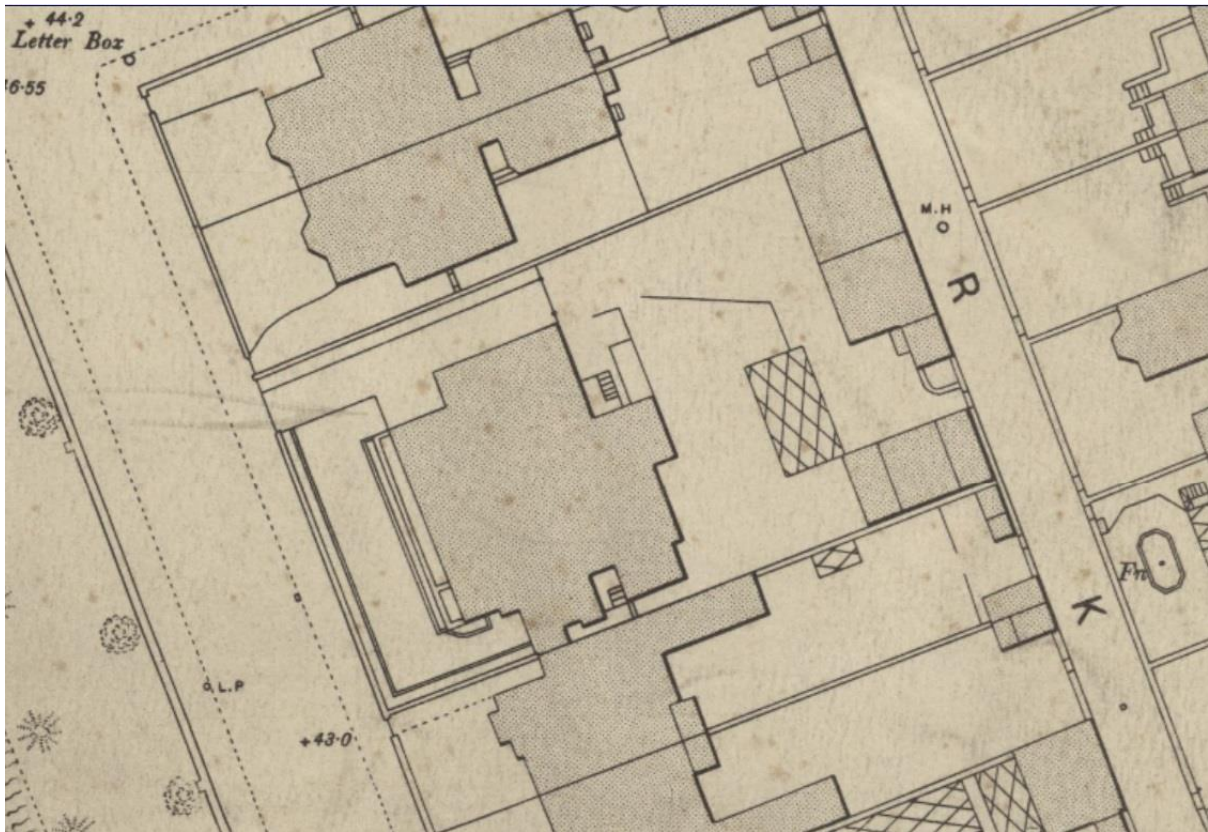


Figure 8. Ordnance Survey, Cardiff town plan, 1900.

The house appears on the 1886 Ordnance Survey and is shown in much more detail on the 1900 Cardiff Town Plan produced by the Ordnance Survey (fig 8). The 1900 map shows the footprint of the building which, with the exception of the service-stair projection described above, has survived. It includes the projections at basement level, including the boiler house, that are not shown in 1889 and were therefore added during the period of Vachell family ownership. It also shows outbuildings at the rear of the plot which have a different footprint to the 1886 map. One of these buildings was a stable and coach house, as indicated in an early photograph (fig 5). The map also shows smaller structures in the south-east corner of the plot, purpose unknown. Despite having no garden, the 1900 and 1920 maps show a glass house behind the main house. The glass house may have been added by the Vachell family – Dr Charles Tanfield Vachell (1848-1914) was a well-known botanist, member of the management committee that established the National Museum of Wales, and instrumental in founding the botanical garden in Roath Park. His daughter Eleanor (1878-1948) was also a well-known botanist, one of the governors of the National Museum of Wales, and president of the Cardiff Naturalists' Society. Whether either of them lived at Park Place is not known.

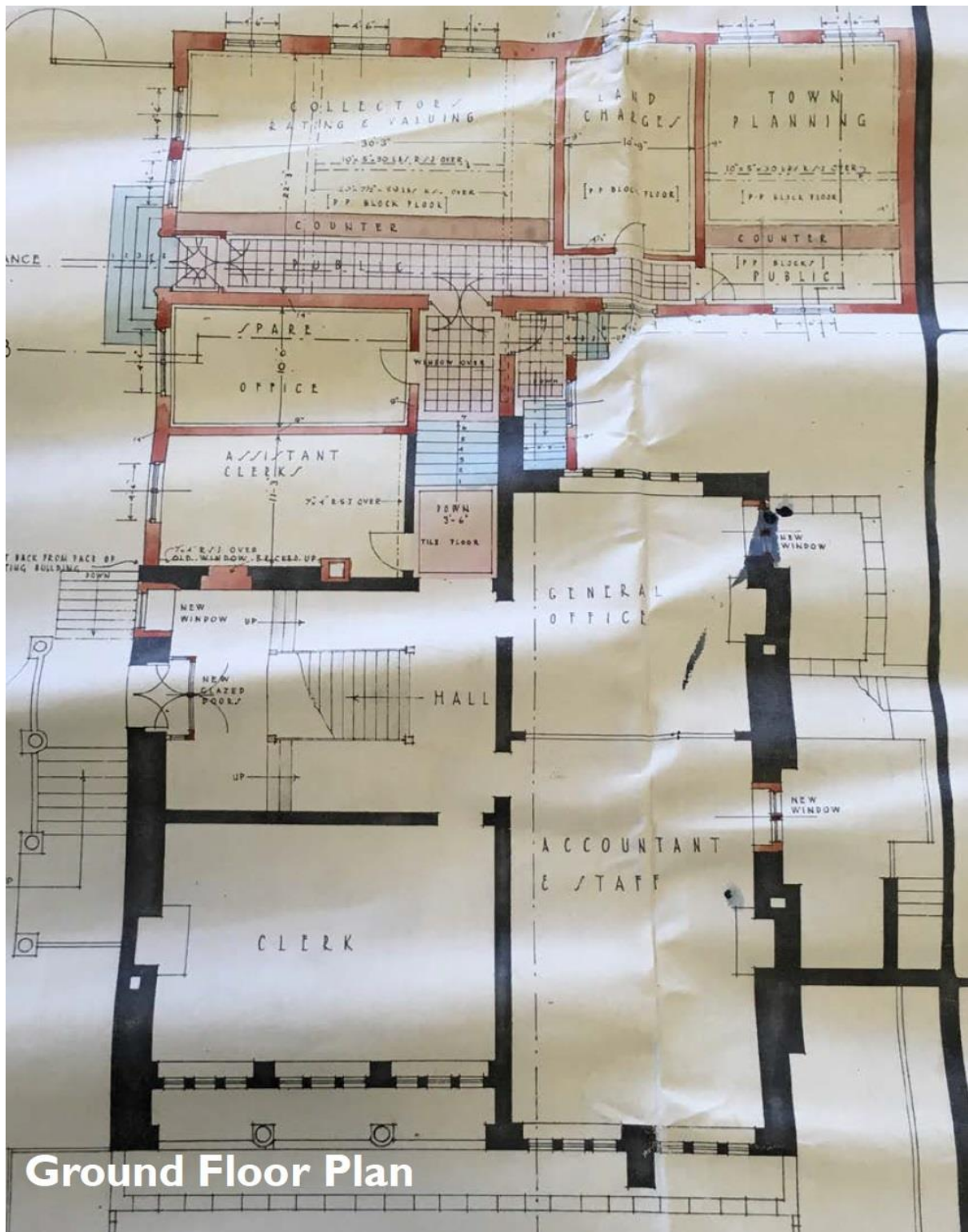
From 1926 the building was occupied by Cardiff Rural District Council and the building was altered and extended to accommodate its office requirements. The plans drawn up by Ivor Jones and Percy Thomas, architects of Cardiff, in 1926 show how the building had been altered by the Vachell family, and how the building was adapted to its new use (Glamorgan Archives BC/S/1/24806). The building was extended by taking down the original service-stair projection and adding a L-shaped rear wing, set slightly back from the north front. A mid-century photograph shows this wing to have been of white-rendered concrete under a flat roof (fig 9).



Figure 9. Mid-twentieth century photograph from Park Place, showing the added rear wing on the left.

In the ground floor new windows were inserted into the south wall of the former library and dining room, and the north wall of the entrance hall (fig 10). A window in the east wall of the entrance hall, which must have been inserted after 1891, was blocked. The ground floor remained divided into three rooms – the former drawing room became the Clerk's office, the dining room the Accountant's office, and the former library a general office. The dividing wall between the latter two was replaced by a screen.

Entrance to the added rear wing was on the north side, opening to a long corridor, on the left-hand (east) side past the Collector, Rating & Valuing office, Land Charges office, leading to a public counter, with Town Planning office behind it. A Spare Office and Assistant Clerk's office were on the right-hand side.



Ground Floor Plan

Figure 10. Ground plan, 1926, by Ivor Jones and Percy Thomas. (North is to the left)

Minor changes were made to the first floor (fig 11). An attic stair was inserted beside the bathroom shown in 1889, sub-dividing one of the bedrooms. The two bedrooms on the west side overlooking Park Place housed the Surveyors' offices, with typists housed in the former dressing room. A window was inserted into the south wall, which the drawing indicates was intended to be a window re-set from the demolished service stair projection.

The smaller bedroom on the east side housed the Assistant Surveyor, reached through a new doorway inserted from the landing. The original dressing room, later bathroom, was to be used as a plan store. The added rear wing housed the Surveyors' Drawing office, Committee Room and Council Chamber.

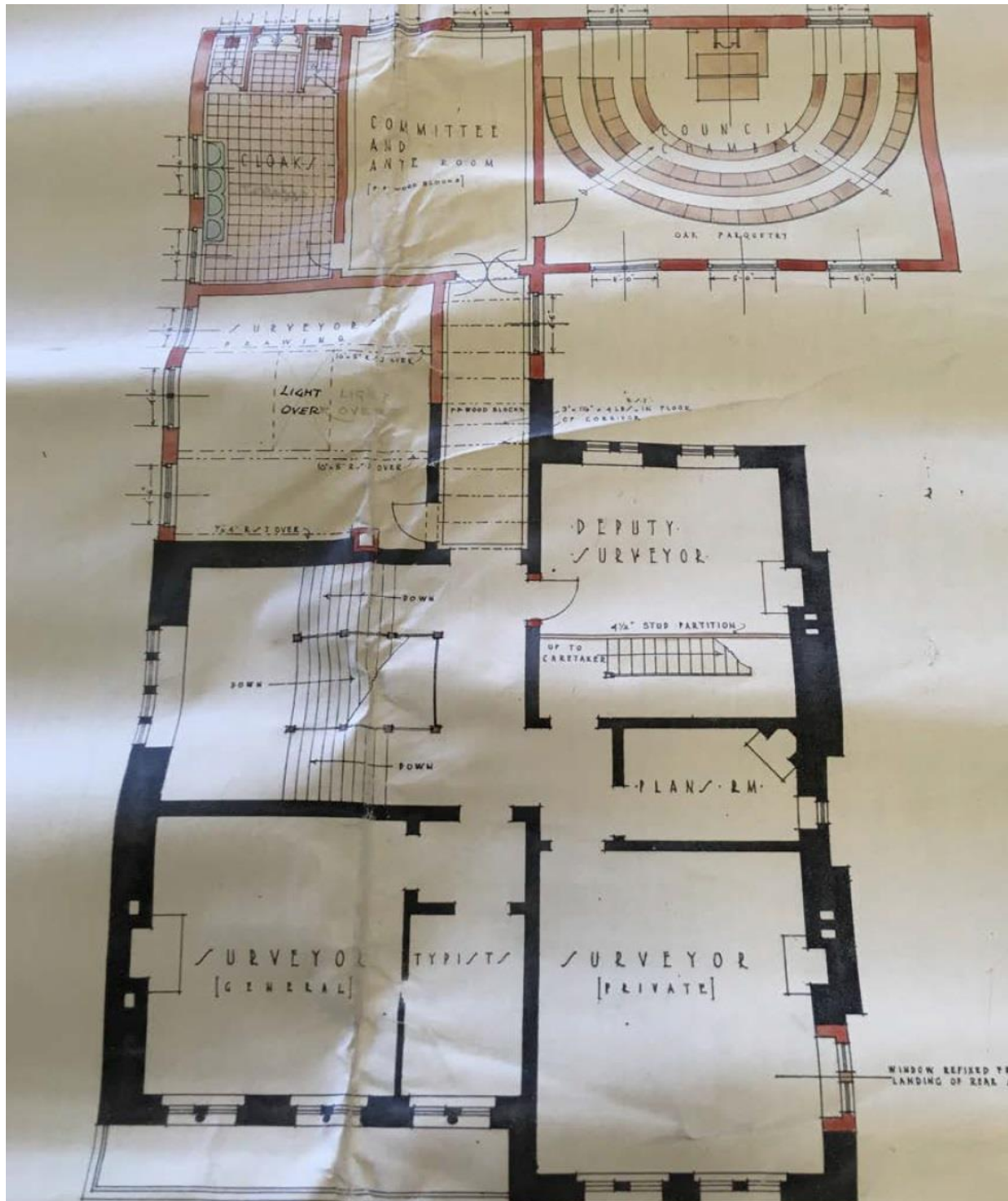


Figure 11. First floor, 1926, by Ivor Jones and Percy Thomas. (North is to the left)

The attic floor provided residential accommodation for a caretaker (fig 12). The former billiards room was sub-divided into two bedrooms, with a sitting room in the next room and a caretaker's kitchen in the room on the east side. Between the kitchen and sitting

room was a ladies toilet and plan store, for staff use. In a short projection over the flat roof of the added rear wing was a larder, bathroom and coal store.

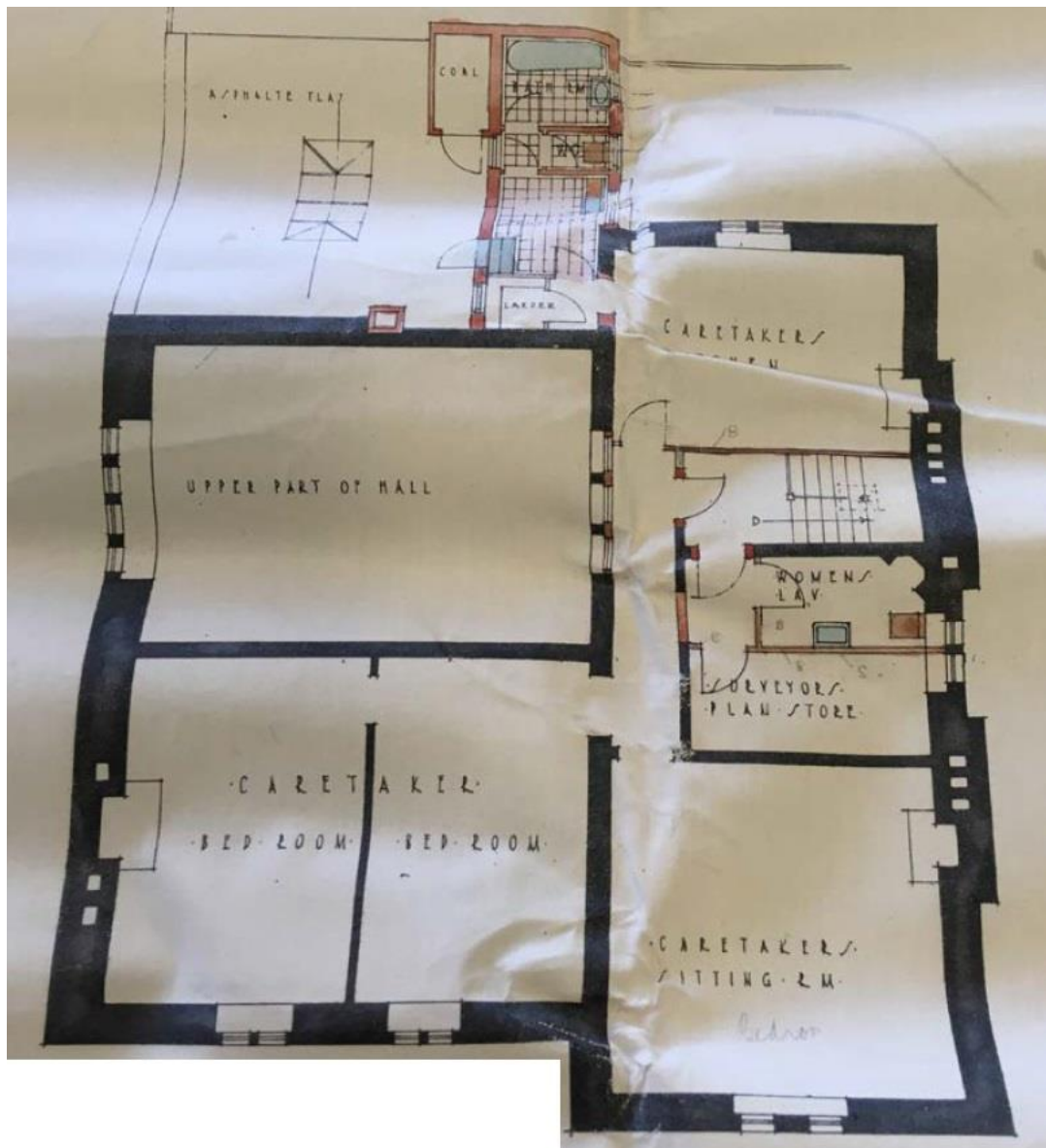


Figure 12. Attic floor plan, 1926, by Ivor Jones and Percy Thomas. (North is to the left)

The basement plan shows that there had been significant alteration to the plan after 1889 and during the Vachell family period of ownership, in addition to the basement projections described above (fig 13). A three-bay arcade had been inserted in the former breakfast room and larder to support the west wall of the building – the west wall at basement level is built below the balcony on the west front (see fig 51). The partition between breakfast room and larder was removed and this larger room was designated as a store, as was the former kitchen. The former wine cellar and scullery were replaced by toilets, with windows inserted into the east wall. A strong room was created at the base of the former service stairs. The butler’s pantry was unaltered but its use is not specified on the drawing.

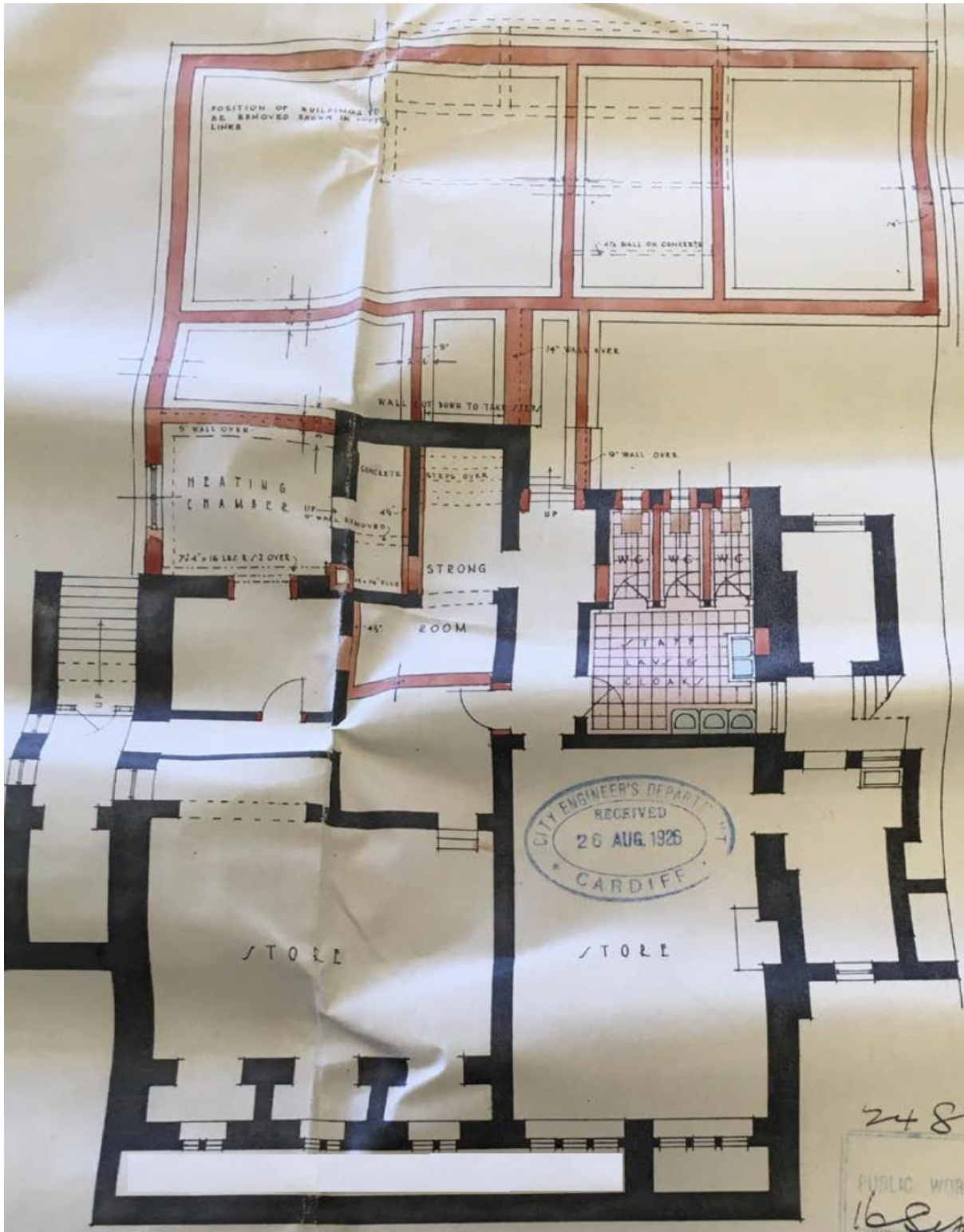


Figure 13. Basement plan, 1926, by Ivor Jones and Percy Thomas. (North is to the left)

In the 1974 reform following the Local Government Act, Cardiff Rural District was divided into several constituent parts, including Taff Ely, Rhymney Valley and new local authority districts of Cardiff, but Park House became the offices of the new Vale of Glamorgan District Council. In 1990, the 1926 rear wing was taken down and Hoggett, Lock-Necreus Architects added steel escape stairs encased in glass to the rear of the original building, in

the position of the original service stair (Newman 1995, 219). The same firm replaced outbuildings in the rear yard with the range of offices known as Park Court Mews c1997.

Plans for conversion of the building to a restaurant were produced in 1998 by Clive Hill Associates, which show the escape stairs added in 1990. On the ground floor it was intended to remove the folding screen between the former dining room and library (fig 14). (The plan shows a pair of windows in the east wall rather than the five-light window, which appears to have been an error.) The first-floor plan indicates that there had been no significant alterations to this floor since 1926, except for a doorway inserted to the escape stairs, probably therefore made in 1990 (fig 15). The proposal for this floor included removal of the dressing-room partition added in 1889, and creation of a smaller office on the east side by inserting a new partition. The proposals were not necessarily carried out entirely, since it does not include the extant straight stair which is likely to have been added at this time. No significant alterations were proposed for the attic storey, but it shows that the former caretaker's kitchen from the 1926 plan had been sub-divided to create a smaller bedroom and corridor (fig 16). The basement plan shows little alteration from 1926, and so the changes to the extant plan can be attributed to the twenty-first century (fig 17).

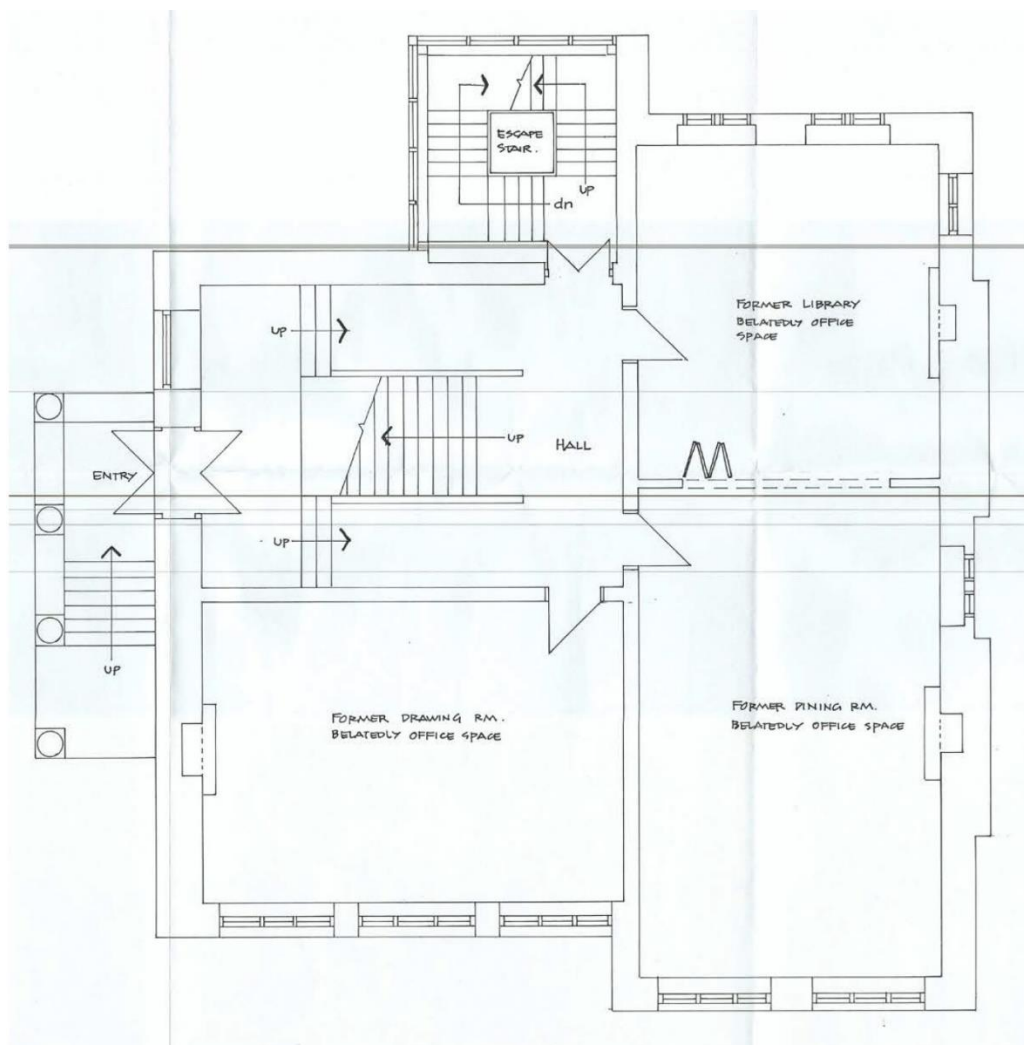


Figure 14. Ground floor plan, 1998, by Clive Hill Associates. (North is to the left)

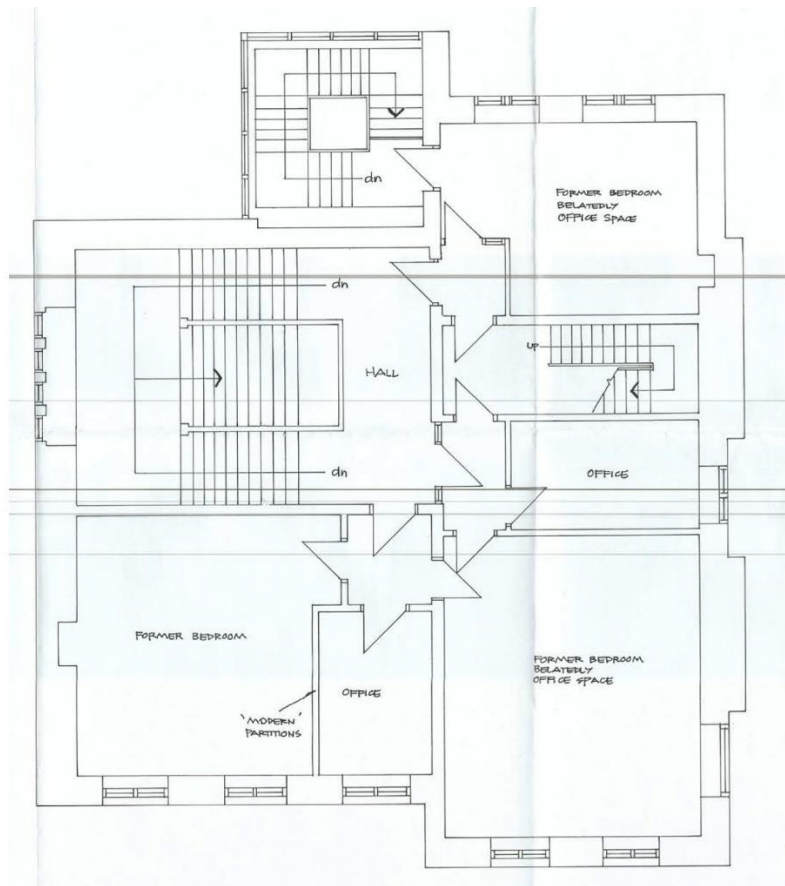


Figure 15. First-floor plan, 1998, by Clive Hill Associates. (North is to the left)

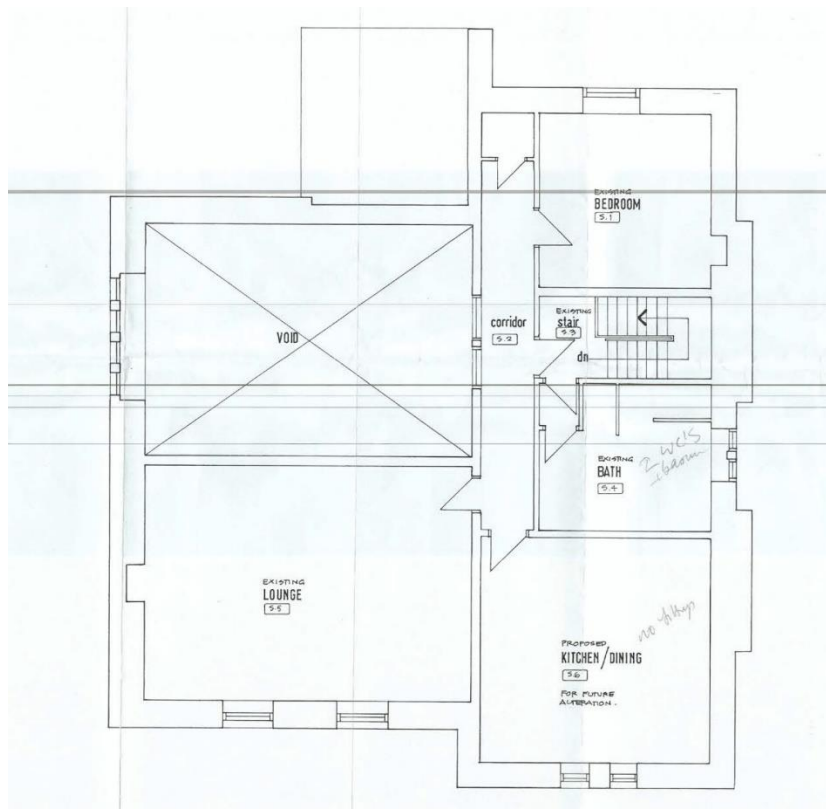


Figure 16. Attic plan, 1998, by Clive Hill Associates. (North is to the left)

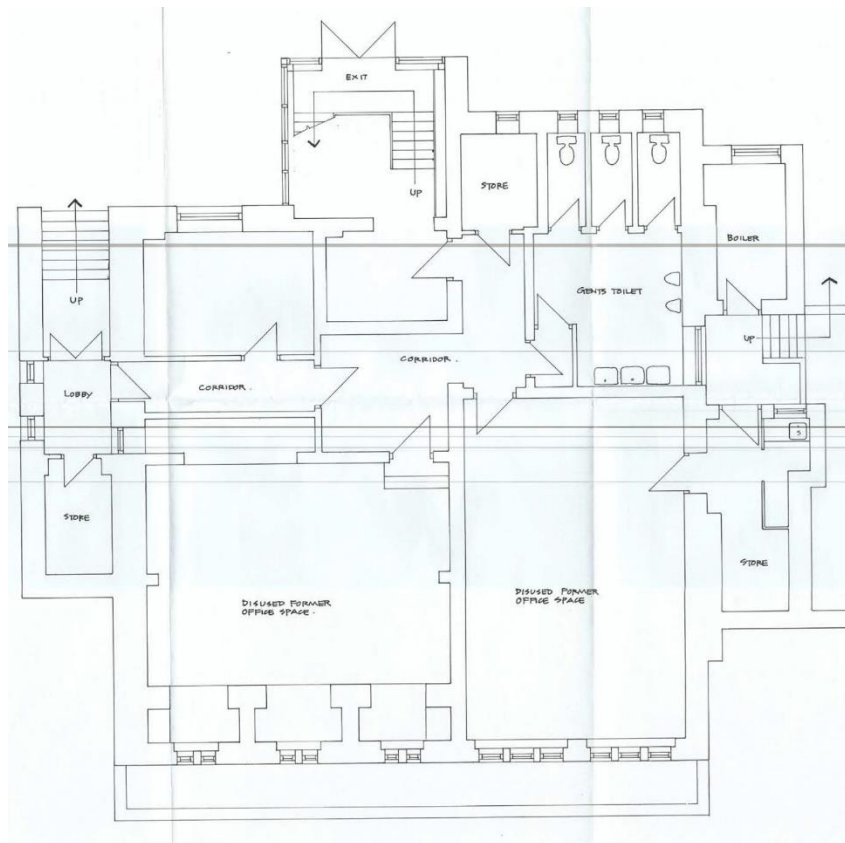


Figure 17. Basement plan, 1998, by Clive Hill Associates. (North is to the left)

Since the turn of the century the building has been adapted for use by the hospitality trade – as club, restaurant and wine bar – but was vacant at the time of survey.

5 Building Description

Park House is set back from the street, where there is a dwarf wall with intermediate wide piers and iron railings. These railings have replaced the original railings that were probably removed during World War II. The double gates at the entrance are modern. They lead to a driveway on the north side of the house, which is laid with stone setts, probably original. Beyond the house, however, the courtyard is laid with bricks of two distinct types – covering the area of the mid-twentieth century rear wing, and the forecourt in front of Park Court Mews. The southern boundary of the site is the boundary wall and end wall of 19 Park Place, the north boundary a brick wall.

5.1 Exterior

Park House is built in an Early-French Gothic style, of two storeys, attic and basement, of snecked, rock-faced Pennant sandstone, with Bath stone dressings and Aberdeen pink granite shafts, under steep slate roofs, which are behind coped gables. Windows have iron glazing bars forming a variety of geometrical patterns, all with margin lights, and incorporate casements. The ground floor is raised above the surrounding street and forecourt level.

The west front facing the street has three bays on the left-hand side, set back behind a loggia on the ground floor, and two bays to the right under a gable and with a buttress between the bays to the basement and ground floor (fig 18). The three-bay loggia has square granite shafts, crocket capitals, and pointed arches with continuous hood mould (fig 19). Below it is a string course carried across the entire west front, and at the base of the parapet is another string course, incorporating a dog-tooth frieze, which is also carried across the entire front. The windows at the rear of the loggia are three-light with mullions and transoms, and cusped upper lights. On the right-hand side are similar three-light windows but with double transoms. On the first floor the windows are set back on the west side. The windows are two-light plate-tracery windows grouped 3+2, featuring broad-banded voussoirs and colonettes. In the attic are two steeply pitched dormer windows to the left, a pair of arched windows to the right, with narrow loop in the gable and a fleur-de-lys apex finial. There are animal carvings at the base of the loggia and parapet, and beneath the eaves. The basement has mullioned and transomed windows, which are three square-headed cross windows on the left and two larger three-light arched windows on the right. The three-light windows were added after 1891 and are shown on the 1926 plan (figs 7, 13).



Figure 18. West elevation.



Figure 19. Capital, loggia, west front.

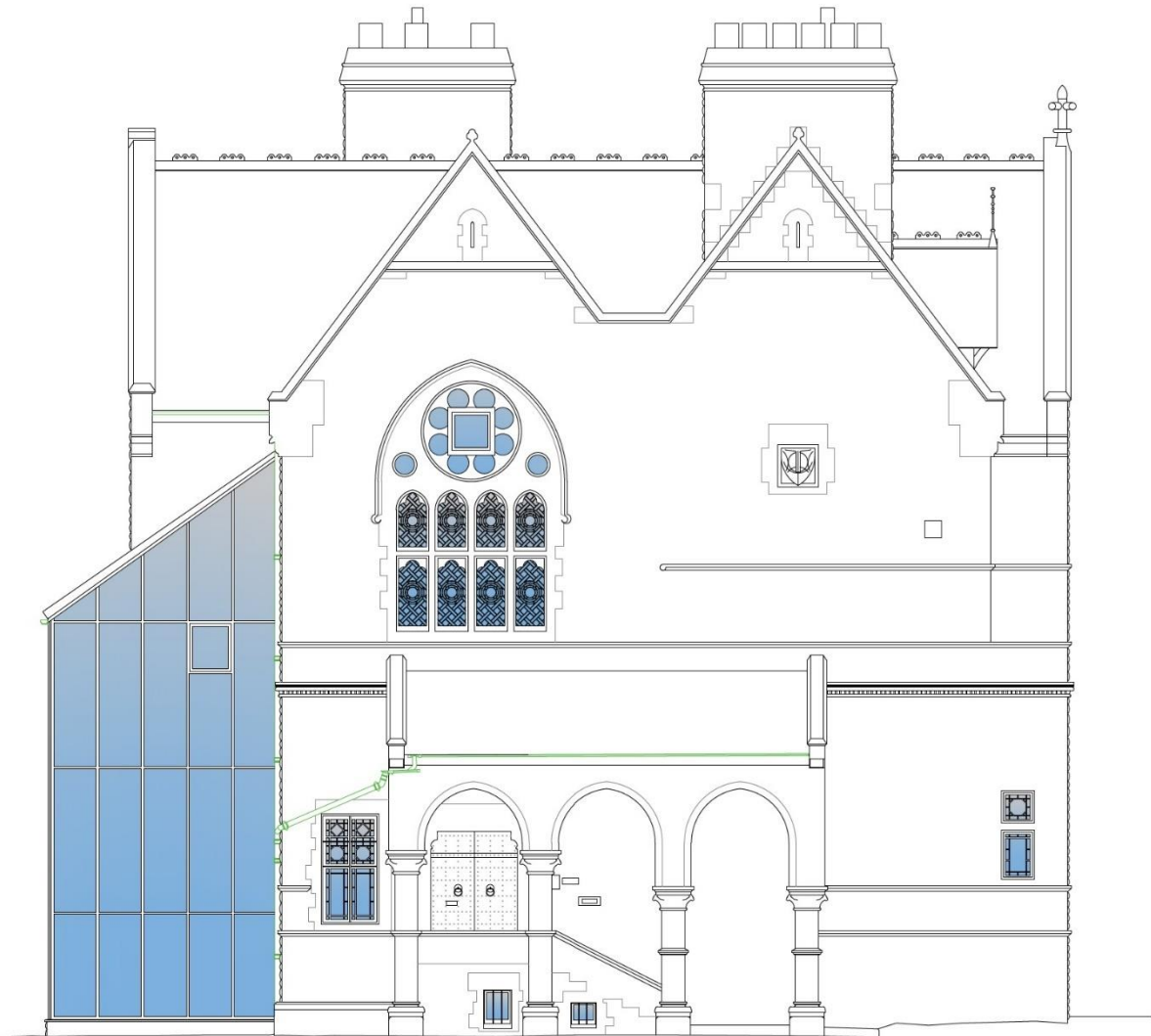


Figure 20. North elevation.



Figure 21. Porch, north front.

The main entrance is in the north front. It is defined by its two gables, with tall stack to the right-hand (fig 20). Both gables have narrow loops below the apex. The right-hand has a panel incorporating a shield with McConnochie's monogram in Lombardic uncials, all in high relief. On the left-hand side is a pointed four-light stair window with plate tracery. The entrance is offset left inside a lean-to open-fronted porch (fig 21). This has three arched bays, with circular piers. The two piers on the left have moulded capitals, whereas the two piers on the right, effectively where the porch is entered, have foliage capitals, one noticeably more weathered than the other (fig 22). There are steps up from the right to ground floor level to the double front doors, sturdy timber doors with strap hinges and studs (fig 23). On the right side of the door is a letter box installed by Cardiff RDC. To the left of the porch is a narrow two-light square-headed window added in 1926, and at the right end is a narrow single-light window at the end of the loggia. At ground level the porch also has two basement windows, first shown on the 1926 plan.



Figure 22. Capital, porch, north front

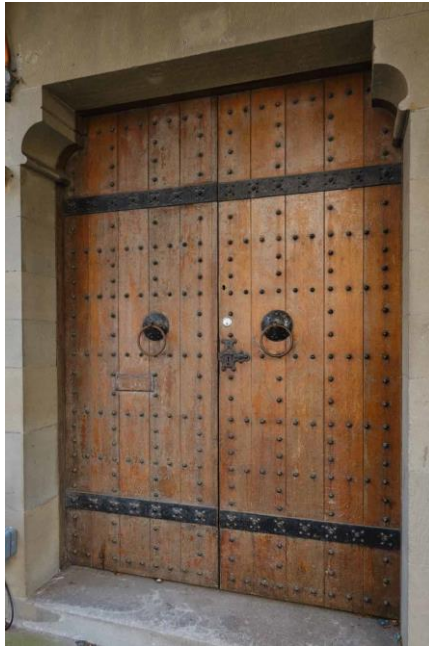


Figure 23. Front doors, north front.



Figure 24. East elevation.



Figure 25. Escape stairs in east front.

The east front was the rear of the house, facing the courtyard buildings. It is structured in a similar way to the front, with an advanced gable on the left side (fig 24). In the gabled bay are mullioned and transomed windows: a five-light double-transomed library window on the ground floor, two cross windows on the first floor and a single cross window in the attic. In the right-hand angle of this projection is the glazed lean-to in a thin metal frame, housing the 1990 escape stairs (fig 25). On its right-hand side is a basement window and further right are external steps leading to a basement doorway below the porch, boarded up at the time of survey but concealing a pair of half-glazed panel doors. The 1900 town plan shows basement steps leading to the original stair projection, but the extant steps appear to be integral with the original building. On the left hand side are four simple basement windows: three of them are toilet windows inserted in 1926 and are boarded over; the fourth, on the right-hand side, is first shown on the 1998 survey, replacing a doorway here that was inserted in 1926.

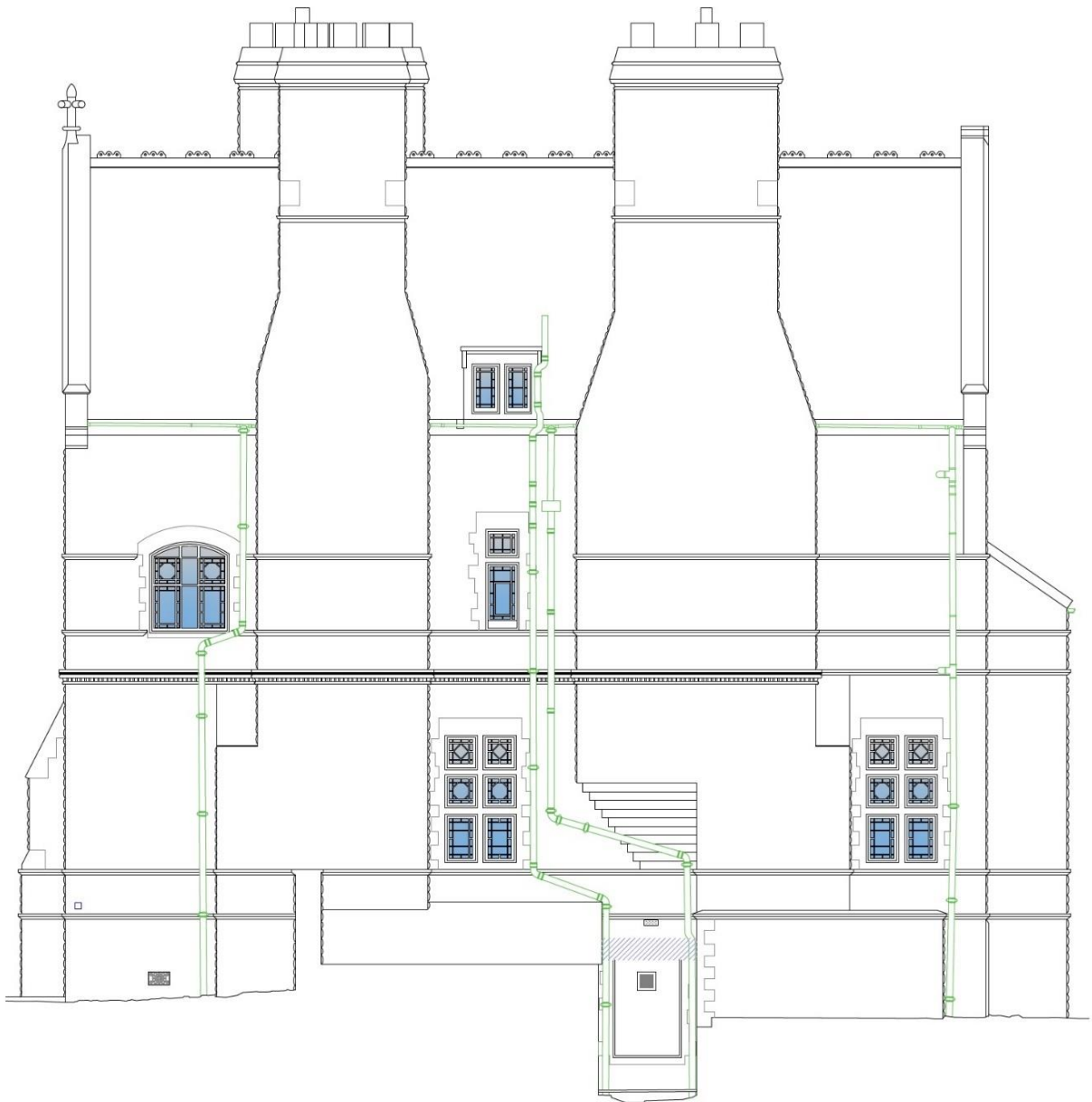


Figure 26. South elevation.

The south front faces the neighbouring number 19 Park Place and was always the least conspicuous side of the building. It is dominated by its two external stacks, and the fenestration is less regular than the other fronts (fig 26). On the ground floor are two square-headed double-transomed two-light windows – at the right hand end lighting the library, and left of centre lighting the dining room – both of them inserted in 1926 but respecting the original character of the building. The narrow first-floor window left of centre is the one included in the 1871 plan, while to the left side is a three light window under a segmental arch, also inserted in 1926, but it is not the mullioned window suggested on the 1926 plan (fig 11). Between the stacks is a small two-light attic window. At basement level there is a boiler house on the right-hand side, under a flat roof, and lean-to on the left

side, part of the kitchen. Both of these projections are shown on the 1900 Ordnance Survey map. Steps lead down to a doorway to the main range and to the boiler house.

5.2 Interior

The interior retains many of its original fittings. Original doors have been retained for the most part, which are panelled with broach-stopped chamfers (plainer stop-chamfers to the attic), in panelled reveals. Many retain simple triangular brass handles set in a round plate, but in places the handles are missing (fig 27). The casements mostly retain their iron handles (fig 28). Apart from the entrance/stair hall and drawing room there are floorboards in all of the rooms.



Figure 27. Door furniture, library (G4).



Figure 28. Iron handle to casement window.



Figure 29. Ground floor plan.

The ground floor consists of the full-height entrance/stair hall, former drawing room, dining room and library, as first built (fig 29).

The entrance opens to the stair hall (G1) and faces directly to the underside of the stair. There is a tile floor made up of red and green tiles, forming a simple pattern where visible (the room was laid with carpet at the time of survey) (fig 30). The imperial stair is of teak (the list description says mahogany), with square castellated newels and intermediate posts, and turned balusters like ringed shafts (figs 31, 32). The three-bay Gothic window lights the half landing and is the dominant feature. The stair hall is spanned by a keeled wagon roof on a corbel table, with painted panels (fig 33).



Figure 30. Tile floor beneath the stairs.

Above the landing, at attic level, is a three-light square-headed window divided by round shafts. Beneath the landing, half-landing and the upper flights are panelled deal ceilings with Gothic and plainer designs. To the right of the entrance are two mahogany wall panels, probably taken from the dining room. There is a double doorway on the east side which opens to the escape stairs (originally the service stair), which has a castellated surround. One of the doors is original, but it has been re-set with hinges on the opposite side to the original. Its large brass handle is probably c1926. The other three doorways open to the drawing room, dining room and library.

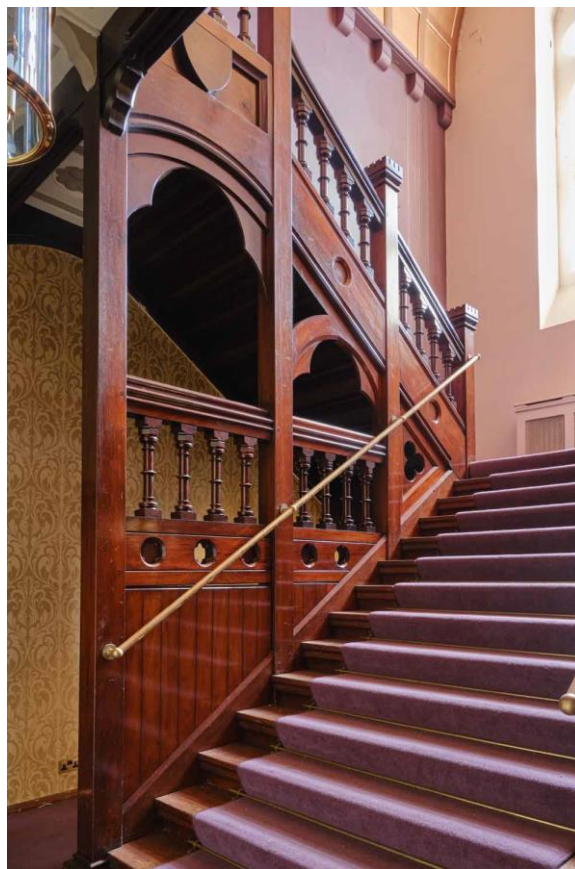


Figure 31. Main stair.



Figure 32. Main stair, viewed from the half landing.

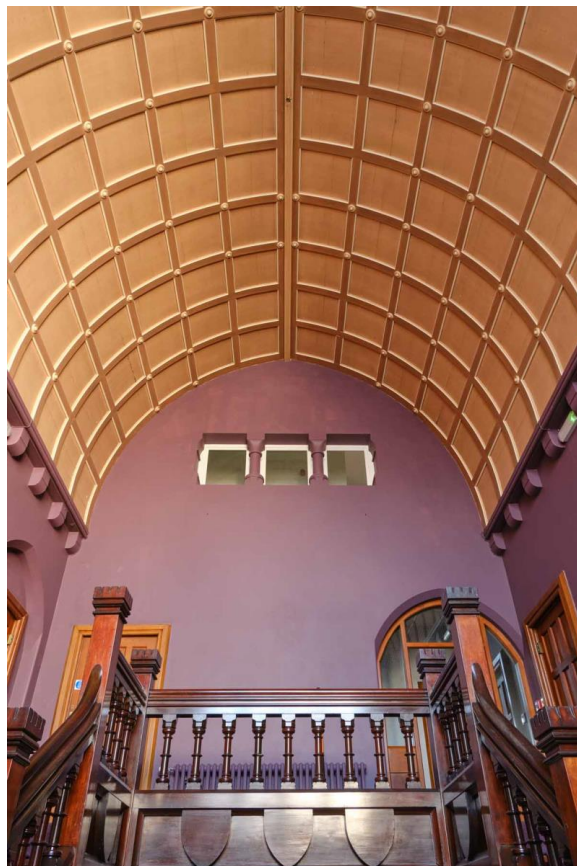


Figure 33. Roof of entrance/stair hall.

The drawing room (G2) is the most richly decorated of the principal rooms (fig 34). It has a ceiling divided into six panels by heavy beams, with head corbels and, at the angles, foliage corbels, and panels with octfoil decoration (fig 35). The fireplace, of cast iron with decorative tiles, is set within a grand white and grey marble surround, with teak overmantel incorporating a mirror (fig 36). The parquet floor may be original.



Figure 34. Drawing room.



Figure 35. Drawing room ceiling.



Figure 36. Drawing room fireplace.



Figure 37. View from the dining room (G3) into the library (G4).



Figure 38. Dining room (G3), with mahogany wall panels.

Originally there was no opening between the drawing room (G2) and dining room (G3), but the dividing wall has been opened up to give the impression of a single space. There is no longer a division between the dining room (G3) and library (G4): the wide opening between them was created in 1926 and had folding doors, which no longer survive following the proposal in 1998 to remove them (fig 37). The dining room has mahogany-panelled walls, extending round to the west wall, where there are window seats (figs 38, 39). These are simple panels with cusped decoration to the upper tier. The fireplace is similar to the drawing room fireplace. It has the same white and grey marble surround, teak overmantel with a small mirror, and fireplace of cast iron and decorative tiles laid in a chevron pattern (fig 40). The beamed ceiling is divided into eight bays. The central four have quatrefoil decoration, while in the outer bays are stylised round joists (fig 41).



Figure 39. Window seats in the dining room (G3).

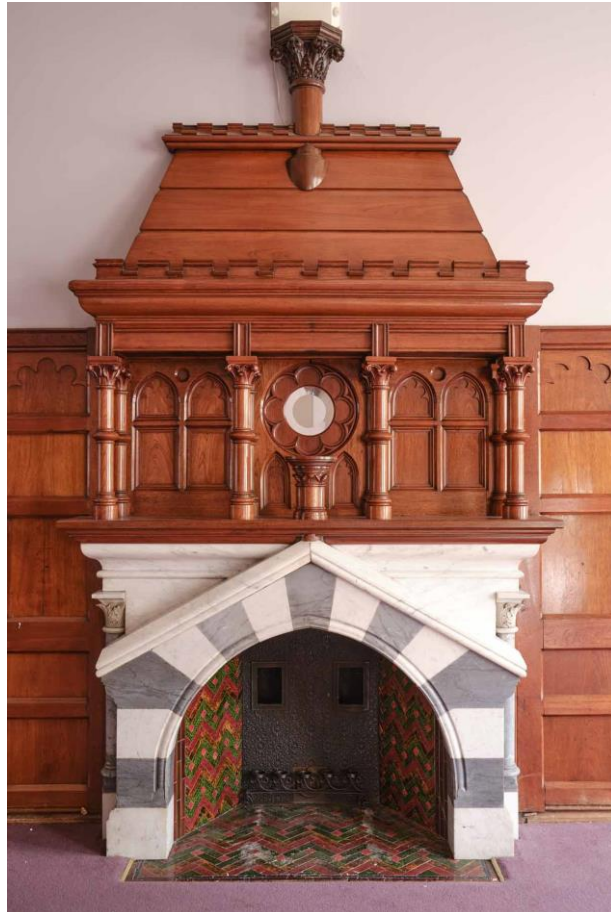


Figure 40. Dining room fireplace.



Figure 41. Dining room ceiling.

In the library (G4) is a fireplace in a mahogany surround, with ornate classical cast iron fireplace and decorative blue and white tiles (fig 42). The beamed ceiling is divided into six bays, with simple panelled decoration. In the east wall is a mahogany window seat.



Figure 42. Library fireplace.



Figure 43. First-floor plan.

The first floor consisted originally of three bedrooms and a dressing room between two of them (fig 3). It has been altered significantly since first built (fig 43). On the landing (1.7) the three doorways marked on the plan published in 1871 have been retained. There is an additional door, in a similar style to the original doors, inserted in 1926 for the Assistant Surveyor's office (fig 44). It is now a false door because it opens to the side of one of the attic stairs.



Figure 44. Doorways on the landing. The right-hand door was added in 1926.

The dividing wall between the two principal bedrooms on the west side (1.1 and 1.2) has been partially opened to create a continuous space. The original dressing room (1.3) survives in part, including its door, but has also been partially opened up as part of the single space with 1.2.

The space on the east side of the dressing room has been divided up (1.4, 1.5, 1.6) since it was a single bedroom. The dog-leg stair was inserted in 1926 and incorporates simple details typical of the period – plain square newels and stick balusters (fig 37). The closed-string straight stair is not shown on the 1998 plan but was presumably added soon after. There are also inserted gents' toilets (1.5), all reached from a small lobby (1.4), the partitions for which have been inserted after 1998, perhaps contemporary with the straight stair.



Figure 45. Dog-leg stair on first floor, inserted 1926.



Figure 46. Fireplace, first floor (1.1).

A simple cast-iron fireplace survives in the former dressing room (1.3), set diagonally across the angle, as shown on the 1871 plan. The only other extant fireplace on the first floor is in 1.1, a cast-iron fireplace within a slate surround (fig 46). The first floor has a suspended ceiling, concealing the original ceiling.



Figure 47. Attic room plan.

The attic rooms were presumably always intended for servants, except for the billiards room (2.1) (fig 47). There have been some changes to the original attic plan, such as the addition of the two attic stairs, already described. There are cast-iron fireplaces in slate surrounds in the two rooms on the west side (2.1, 2.2) (fig 48). On the east side is a ladies' toilet (2.3), which was a ladies' toilet and store in 1926, but perhaps housed the original toilets on the attic floor mentioned in 1889; then landing (2.4), which is post-1998 in its present form; and an unheated room (2.5) at the east end, again modern in its present form but erstwhile a larger heated bedroom and caretaker's kitchen. In this room, raising of the floorboards has revealed a composite steel beam supporting the attic floor, presumably the result of a later intervention (fig 49). The roof trusses were not visible.



Figure 48. Attic, room 2.1, former billiards room.



Figure 49. Composite beam in room 2.5.



Figure 50. Basement plan.

The basement is reached from the modern escape stairs (B9, replacing the original stairs), and by external steps that lead to a doorway beneath the porch (fig 50). It consists of two principal rooms (B1, B2). On the north side B1 has been created post-1998 by removing original partitions to the butler's pantry, following removal of earlier partitions to the breakfast room and larder, and the corridor inserted by the Vachells before 1926. On the west side it has a three-bay arcade supporting the main west wall where the ground-floor loggia projects outwards (fig 51). This insertion also belongs to the Vachell period of ownership. The room on the south side (B2) is shown as early as 1889 and contains a modern kitchen, with associated white-tiled pantry and cold store (B4, B5), both post-1998 in their present form, and access to the boiler room (B7). There is also a toilet (B6), but occupying half the space of the toilet inserted in 1926, in order to create a small store room

(B11). Most of these rooms have no historic features and some were not accessible – the boiler room (B7) and former wood store (B10).



Figure 51. Arcade in basement (B1) supporting the upper floors, added after 1891.

6 Statement of Significance

The significance of heritage assets is measured against agreed heritage values, as set out in Conservation Principles published by Cadw (2011):

- **Evidential value:** This derives from those elements of an historic asset that can provide evidence about past human activity, including its physical remains or historic fabric.
- **Historical value:** An historic asset might illustrate a particular aspect of past life or it might be associated with a notable family, person, event or movement.
- **Aesthetic value:** This derives from the way in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from an historic asset. This might include the form of an historic asset, its external appearance and how it lies within its setting.
- **Communal value:** This derives from the meanings that an historic asset has for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory. It is closely linked to historical and aesthetic values but tends to have additional or specific aspects.

Park House has high evidential value. Its original exterior fabric has been retained almost entirely and its choice of materials makes a strong contribution to its aesthetic value. Pennant sandstone, probably from the large Pwll y Pant quarry north of Caerphilly, was the ubiquitous building material in South Wales in the late-nineteenth century. The house retains its original interior plan on the ground floor, including significant detail in the ground-

floor rooms, such as the fireplaces and deal ceilings. The entrance hall with staircase, wagon roof, panelled ceilings and tile floor, is also especially well preserved. The first floor and attic retain elements of their original plan, and some original fireplaces, but have been compromised by the significant alterations and additions made since 1926. Likewise the basement has lost some of its evidential value by successive alterations.

Park House has high historical and aesthetic value in its own right, as one of the works of William Burges in Cardiff, and in the career of Burges as a whole. Burges advocated the adoption of Early French Gothic as a model for contemporary architecture, as opposed to the English Gothic recommended by A.W.N. Pugin and the Italian Gothic favoured by John Ruskin. The building well represents this ambition, with its crocket capitals, broad-banded voussoirs and plate tracery. The influence of his early-French Gothic style and careful choice of mixed materials can be seen in late-Victorian and Edwardian houses in Cardiff, best represented by 31-34 Park Place, on the Bute Estate developments on Cathedral Road and subsidiary streets, and around Ninian Road, Tydfil Place and Shirley Road. Henry C Harris is the local architect in whom the influence of Burges is most clearly seen, albeit in chapels rather than houses, including Capel Pembroke Terrace on Churchill Way (1877), and St David's Presbyterian Church in Pontypridd (1883).

Although the high reputation of Park House rests largely upon its exterior, the interior also contributes to the aesthetic and historical interest of the building, especially on the ground floor. The stair hall, fireplaces and wall panelling are all testament to the attention to detail that Burges advocated for his interiors, even if the decorative painting originally envisaged was either not carried out or is obscured beneath later paint. The late-Victorian character of the first floor is much diminished by conversions to offices and later restaurant. In the basement, alterations made during the Vachell period of ownership are of interest as they were obviously intended to improve the practical functions of the home. Alterations made by Ivor Jones and Percy Thomas included new windows in the south wall, which are sympathetic to the original character of the building.

Burges was the architect of three other important buildings in Cardiff in the 1860s and 1870s, all for the Marquess of Bute. He was responsible for additions to Cardiff Castle, including its landmark clock tower and its extravagant interiors, the reconstruction of Castell Coch, as well as the more modest Cardiff Castle stables, only partially completed and on the north side of the castle. Park House makes a significant contribution to the work of William Burges and to his impact on Victorian Cardiff during a period when it was emerging as Britain's chief coal port.

Park House was the precursor to Tower House (1875-1881), built by William Burges for himself in Melbury Road, Kensington (fig 52). Although its brick exterior is plainer than Park House, a round tower with conical roof was included, similar to the one he added to Castell Coch. The London house retains the same general room plan as Park House, but the stairs was located in the tower rather than the entrance hall, correcting the main flaw in the interior plan of Park House.

Park House is the outstanding building on the east side of Park Place, south of the university, on what was once a residential street. Its historic setting is further enhanced by Gorsedd Gardens, on the opposite side of Park Place and south of the National Museum of Wales. Park House in turn contributes to the setting of the historic civic centre and to the Gorsedd gardens, which forms part of Cathays Park, a grade II registered Park and Garden.



Figure 52. Tower House, Kensington.

Park House makes a significant contribution to the Windsor Place Conservation Area, in which it is one of the landmark buildings. High-quality architectural detailing is characteristic of the conservation area, of which Park House is the prime example.

Communal value is not an important aspect of the building's significance, although it has gained some familiarity as council offices and club/restaurant.

7 References

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8 Archive

The archive deposited with the National Monuments Record comprises:

Report (pdf)

Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (pdf)

117 digital photographs (tif)

Photographic catalogue (Excel)

6 Survey drawings (pdf)

Appendix I: Digital Photographs



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| File number | description |
|--------------------|--|
| ParkHouse24.001 | W front view looking E across Park Place |
| ParkHouse24.002 | W front view looking NE across Park Place |
| ParkHouse24.003 | W front, basement and ground floor, looking NE |
| ParkHouse24.004 | W front, basement and ground floor, looking NE |
| ParkHouse24.005 | W front, 1st floor windows looking E |
| ParkHouse24.006 | W front, 1st floor windows looking E |
| ParkHouse24.007 | W front dormer windows, looking E |
| ParkHouse24.008 | Bird carving on sill of loggia, W front |
| ParkHouse24.009 | capital, W front loggia, looking NE |
| ParkHouse24.010 | grotesque on NW angle looking E |
| ParkHouse24.011 | N front looking SW |
| ParkHouse24.012 | porch on N front, arcade looking E |
| ParkHouse24.013 | porch on N front, looking SW |
| ParkHouse24.014 | detail of porch showing arch with foliage capital, looking SE |
| ParkHouse24.015 | weathered foliage capital to porch, looking SE |
| ParkHouse24.016 | foliage capital to porch, looking SE |
| ParkHouse24.017 | Cardiff RDC letter box in porch |
| ParkHouse24.018 | roof porch looking W |
| ParkHouse24.019 | main entrance doors in porch |
| ParkHouse24.020 | basement windows below porch, looking S |
| ParkHouse24.021 | N front viewed looking SE from Park Place |
| ParkHouse24.022 | stair window in N front, viewed looking SE from Park Place |
| ParkHouse24.023 | N front R-hand gable looking SE from Park Place |
| ParkHouse24.024 | E front, escape stairs in glazed lean-to, looking S |
| ParkHouse24.025 | E front, gable (library), looking W |
| ParkHouse24.026 | E front, basement windows looking NW |
| ParkHouse24.027 | E front, basement window looking W |
| ParkHouse24.028 | E front, external steps below porch, looking W |
| ParkHouse24.029 | S front, looking NW |
| ParkHouse24.030 | boiler house, looking W |
| ParkHouse24.031 | S front, boiler house entrance looking NE |
| ParkHouse24.032 | S front kitchen entrance, with lean-to looking NW |
| ParkHouse24.033 | driveway on N side of house, looking E |
| ParkHouse24.034 | stair hall (G1), view from entrance looking E |
| ParkHouse24.035 | stair hall (G1), panelling in NW corner, taken from dining room, looking W |
| ParkHouse24.036 | tile floor below stair in stair hall (G1) |
| ParkHouse24.037 | tile floor in stair hall (G1) |
| ParkHouse24.038 | stairs (G1) looking NW |
| ParkHouse24.039 | stairs (G1) looking SW from half landing |
| ParkHouse24.040 | stairs (G1) looking SE from half landing |
| ParkHouse24.041 | stair window (G1) looking N |
| ParkHouse24.042 | stair hall (G1) ceiling looking S |

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| ParkHouse24.043 | stair hall (G1) ceiling under landing, looking W |
| ParkHouse24.044 | stair hall (G1) ceiling under stairs looking S |
| ParkHouse24.045 | stair hall (G1) ceiling under half landing looking E |
| ParkHouse24.046 | stair hall (G1), radiator cover, looking SW |
| ParkHouse24.047 | stair hall (G1), doors to service stair and library looking E |
| ParkHouse24.048 | drawing room (G2) looking NW |
| ParkHouse24.049 | drawing room (G2) looking SE to dining room (G3) |
| ParkHouse24.050 | drawing room (G2) fireplace in n wall |
| ParkHouse24.051 | drawing room (G2) ceiling, looking N |
| ParkHouse24.052 | drawing room (G2) ceiling panel |
| ParkHouse24.053 | drawing room (G2) ceiling head corbel, N wall |
| ParkHouse24.054 | drawing room (G2) ceiling foliage corbel, NW angle |
| ParkHouse24.055 | drawing room (G2) ceiling head corbel, W wall |
| ParkHouse24.056 | drawing room (G2) ceiling head corbel, W wall |
| ParkHouse24.057 | drawing room (G2) ceiling foliage corbel, SW angle |
| ParkHouse24.058 | drawing room (G2) ceiling head corbel, S wall |
| ParkHouse24.059 | drawing room (G2) ceiling foliage corbel, SE angle |
| ParkHouse24.060 | drawing room (G2) ceiling head corbel, E wall |
| ParkHouse24.061 | drawing room (G2) ceiling head corbel, E wall |
| ParkHouse24.062 | drawing room (G2) ceiling foliage corbel, NE angle |
| ParkHouse24.063 | dining room (G3) looking N into drawing room (G2) |
| ParkHouse24.064 | dining room (G3) looking SE |
| ParkHouse24.065 | dining room (G3) looking SE |
| ParkHouse24.066 | dining room (G3) fireplace in S wall |
| ParkHouse24.067 | dining room (G3) detail of decorative tiles |
| ParkHouse24.068 | dining room (G3), wall panels and window seats in W wall, looking N |
| ParkHouse24.069 | dining room (G3) wall panels looking NW |
| ParkHouse24.070 | dining room (G3) wall panels looking NE |
| ParkHouse24.071 | dining room (G3) overmantel looking SE |
| ParkHouse24.072 | dining room (G3), corbel above fireplace in S wall |
| ParkHouse24.073 | dining room (G3) ceiling corbel looking SE |
| ParkHouse24.074 | dining room (G3) ceiling corbel looking SE |
| ParkHouse24.075 | dining room (G3) ceiling, looking W |
| ParkHouse24.076 | dining room (G3) ceiling panel |
| ParkHouse24.077 | dining room (G3) ceiling panel |
| ParkHouse24.078 | dining room (G3) ceiling bay at W end, looking NW |
| ParkHouse24.079 | dining room (G3) looking E into library (G4) |
| ParkHouse24.080 | library (G4) fireplace in S wall |
| ParkHouse24.081 | library (G4) detail of fireplace in S wall |
| ParkHouse24.082 | library (G4) looking W into dining room |
| ParkHouse24.083 | library (G4), ceiling looking E |
| ParkHouse24.084 | library (G4) ceiling corbel looking E |
| ParkHouse24.085 | library (G4) door furniture, N wall |
| ParkHouse24.086 | room 1.1 looking NW |
| ParkHouse24.087 | room 1.1 looking SE |

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| ParkHouse24.088 | room 1.1, fireplace in N wall |
| ParkHouse24.089 | room 1.1, window moulding and iron vent, NW angle |
| ParkHouse24.090 | room 1.2, looking SW |
| ParkHouse24.091 | room 1.2, looking SE |
| ParkHouse24.092 | room 1.2, glazing bars to S window |
| ParkHouse24.093 | room 1.2, casement handle to S window |
| ParkHouse24.094 | room 1.2, casement in W window, looking NW |
| ParkHouse24.095 | room 1.2, casement detail (missing handle) in W window, looking NW |
| ParkHouse24.096 | room 1.2, glazing bars in hexafoil light, W window |
| ParkHouse24.097 | room 1.3, fireplace looking SE |
| ParkHouse24.098 | room 1.3, modern casement in S window |
| ParkHouse24.099 | lobby (1.4) in 1st floor looking E |
| ParkHouse24.100 | dog-leg stair in lobby 1.4, looking SE |
| ParkHouse24.101 | closed-string stair in lobby 1.4 looking W |
| ParkHouse24.102 | landing (1.7) doorways, to service stair, looking E |
| ParkHouse24.103 | landing (1.7) doorway to lobby outside dressing room (1.3), looking SE |
| ParkHouse24.104 | attic room 2.1, looking NW |
| ParkHouse24.105 | attic room 2.1, fireplace in N wall |
| ParkHouse24.106 | attic room 2.1, door to 2.2, looking SE |
| ParkHouse24.107 | attic room 2.2, looking SW |
| ParkHouse24.108 | attic room 2.2, fireplace in S wall |
| ParkHouse24.109 | ladies toilet (2.3), looking S |
| ParkHouse24.110 | ladies toilet (2.3), looking SW |
| ParkHouse24.111 | attic, lobby 2.4, glazed screen to stair hall, looking NE |
| ParkHouse24.112 | attic room 2.5, looking SW |
| ParkHouse24.113 | attic room 2.5, composite steel beam, looking S |
| ParkHouse24.114 | basement B1, looking W |
| ParkHouse24.115 | basement B1, arcade supporting W wall, looking SW |
| ParkHouse24.116 | basement B2, looking SW |
| ParkHouse24.117 | basement B2, looking SE to B4 |

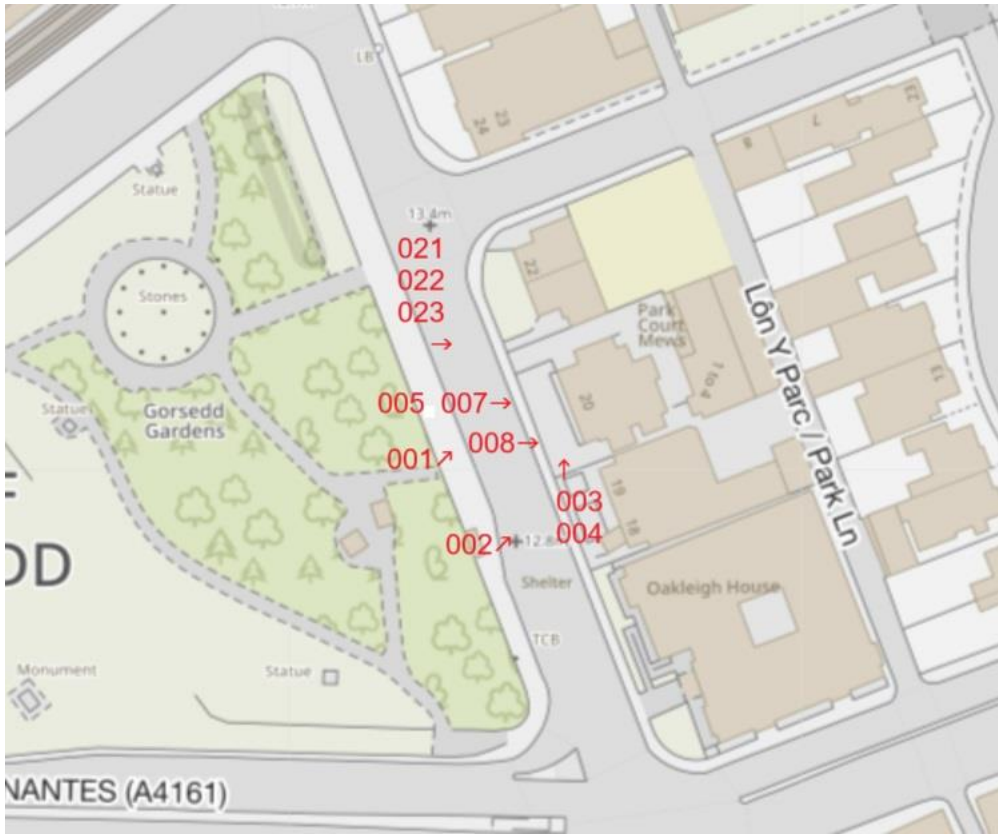


Figure 53. Direction of exterior photographs.

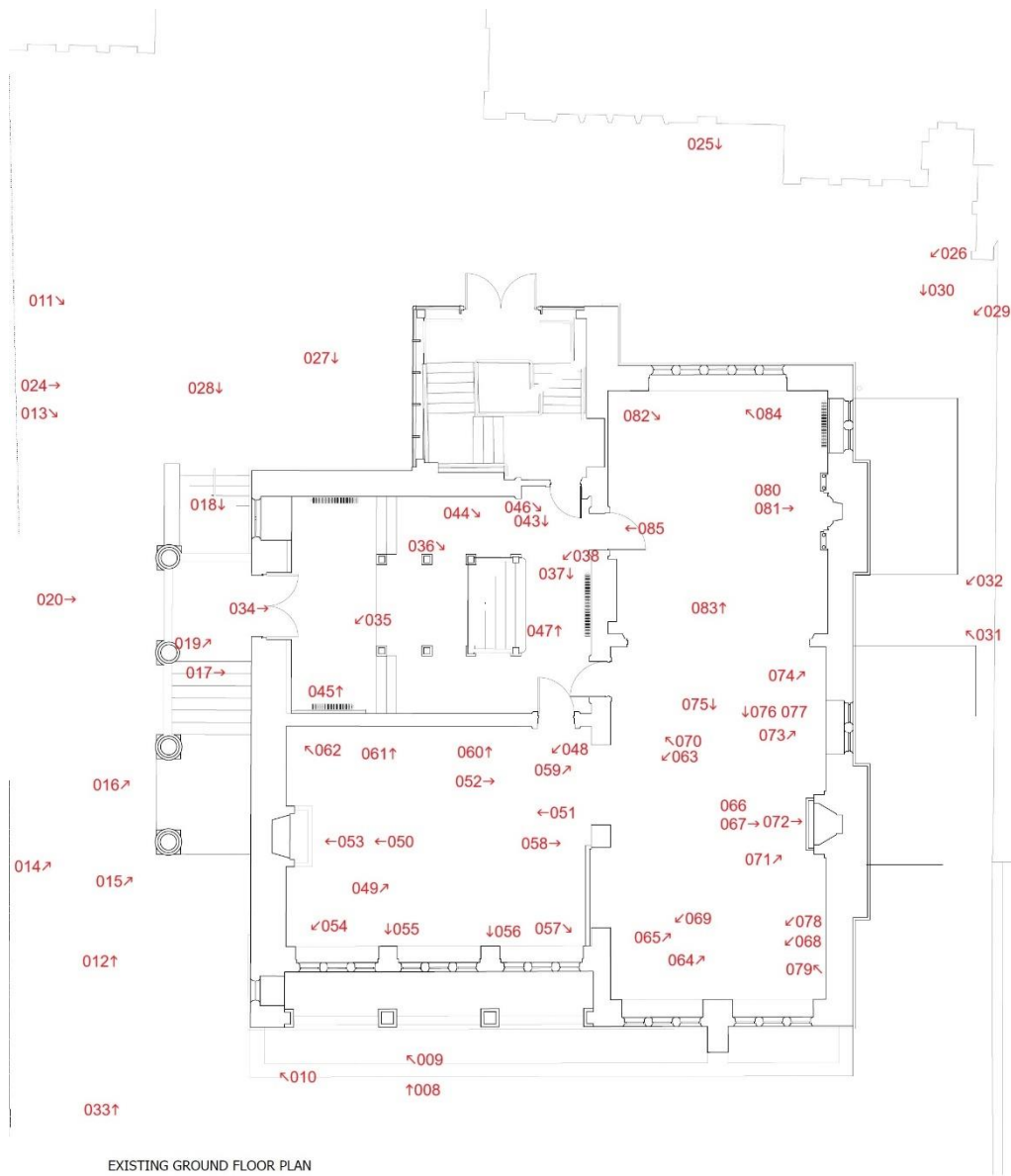


Figure 54. Direction of ground-floor photographs.

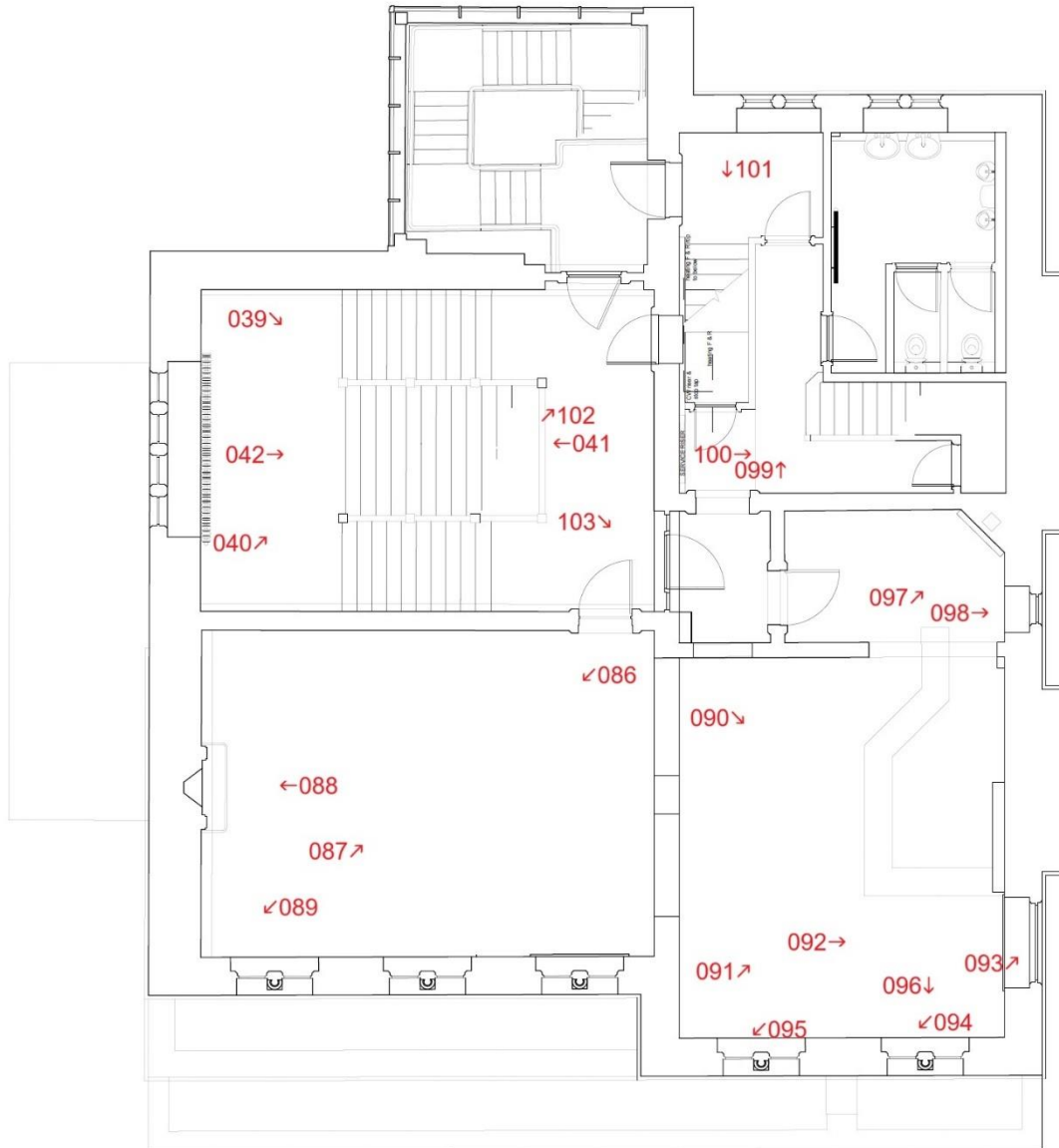


Figure 55. Direction of first-floor photographs.

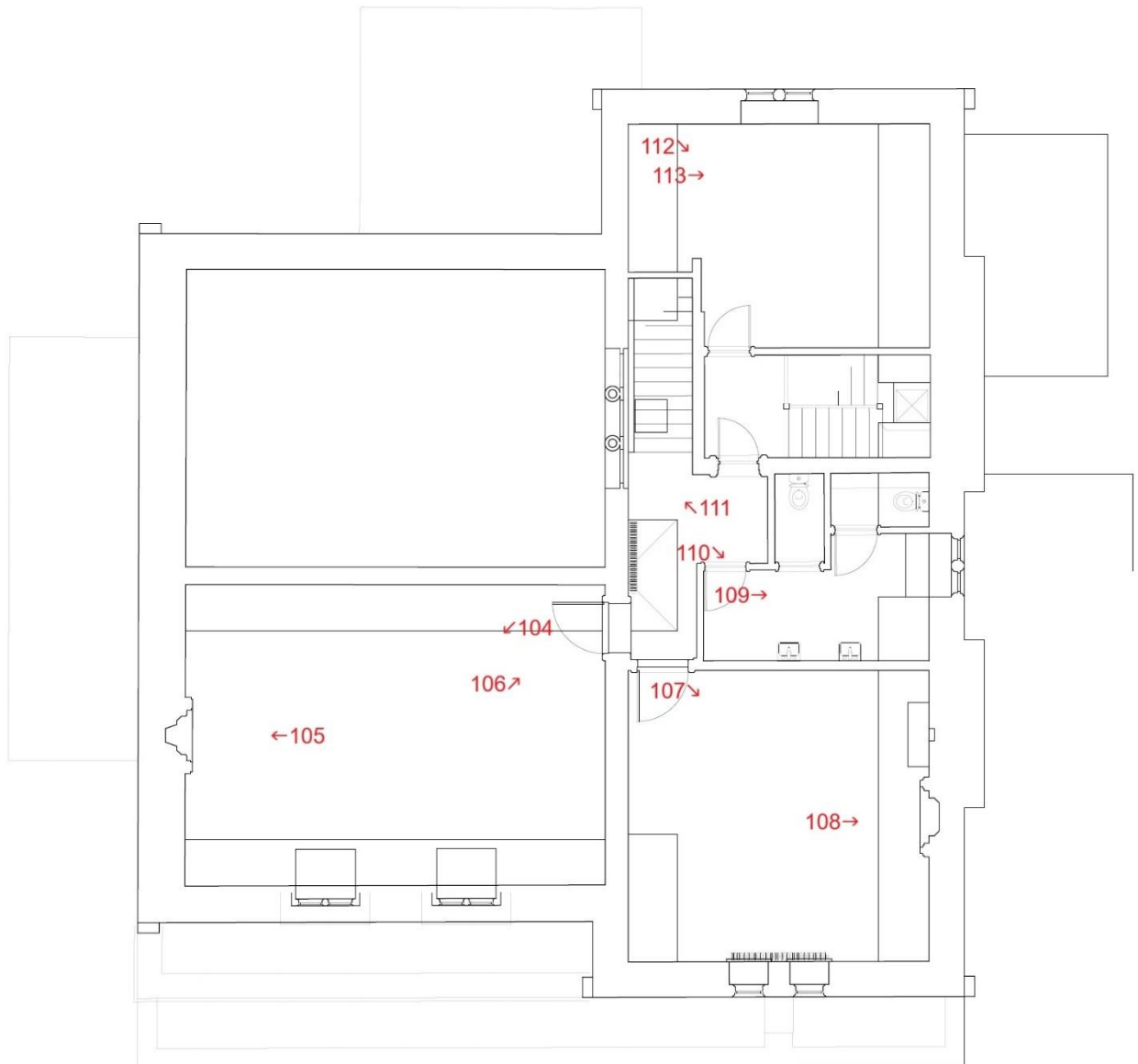


Figure 56. Direction of attic photographs.

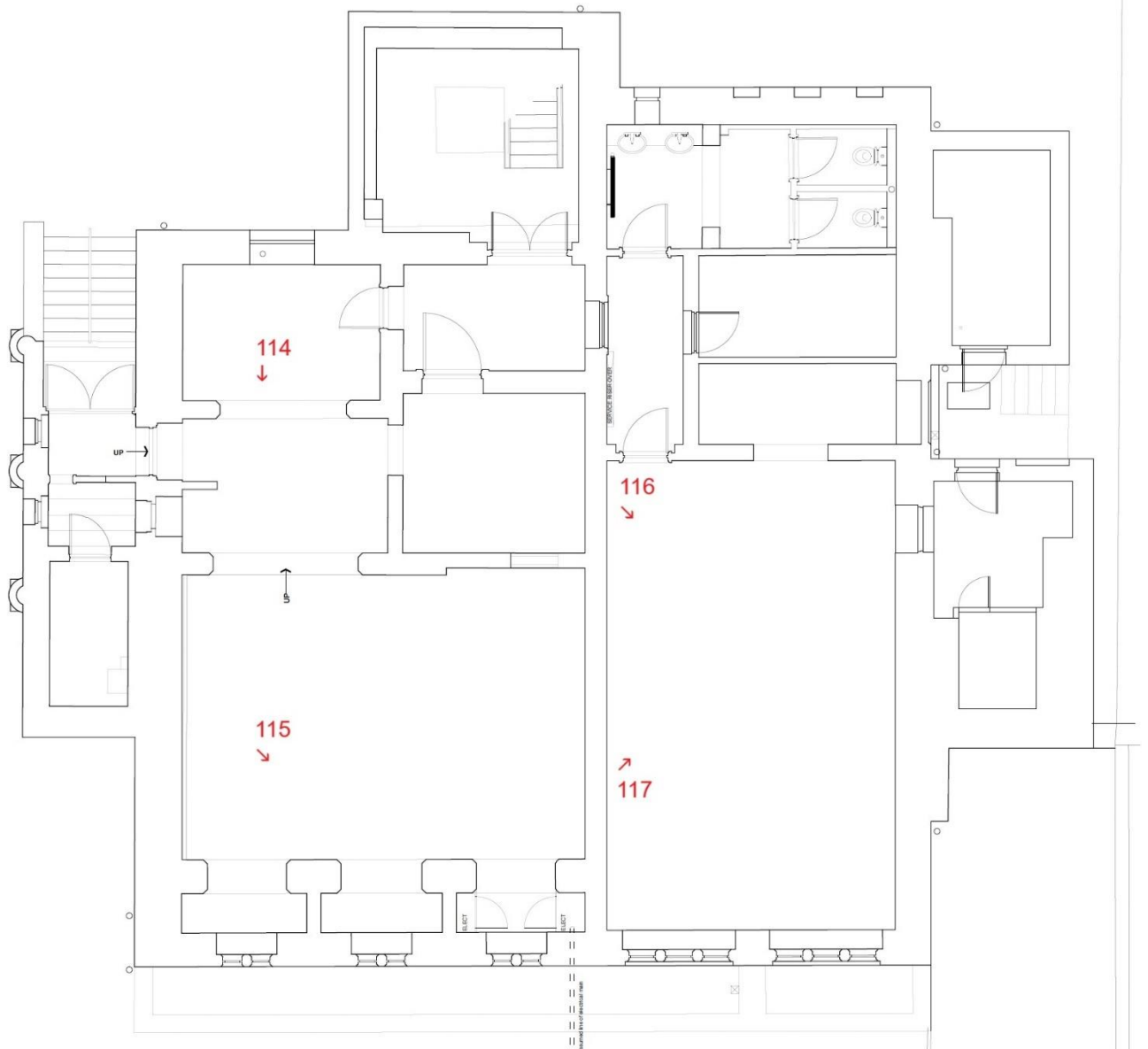


Figure 57. Direction of basement photographs.

Appendix 2: Survey Drawings



Figure 58. West elevation.

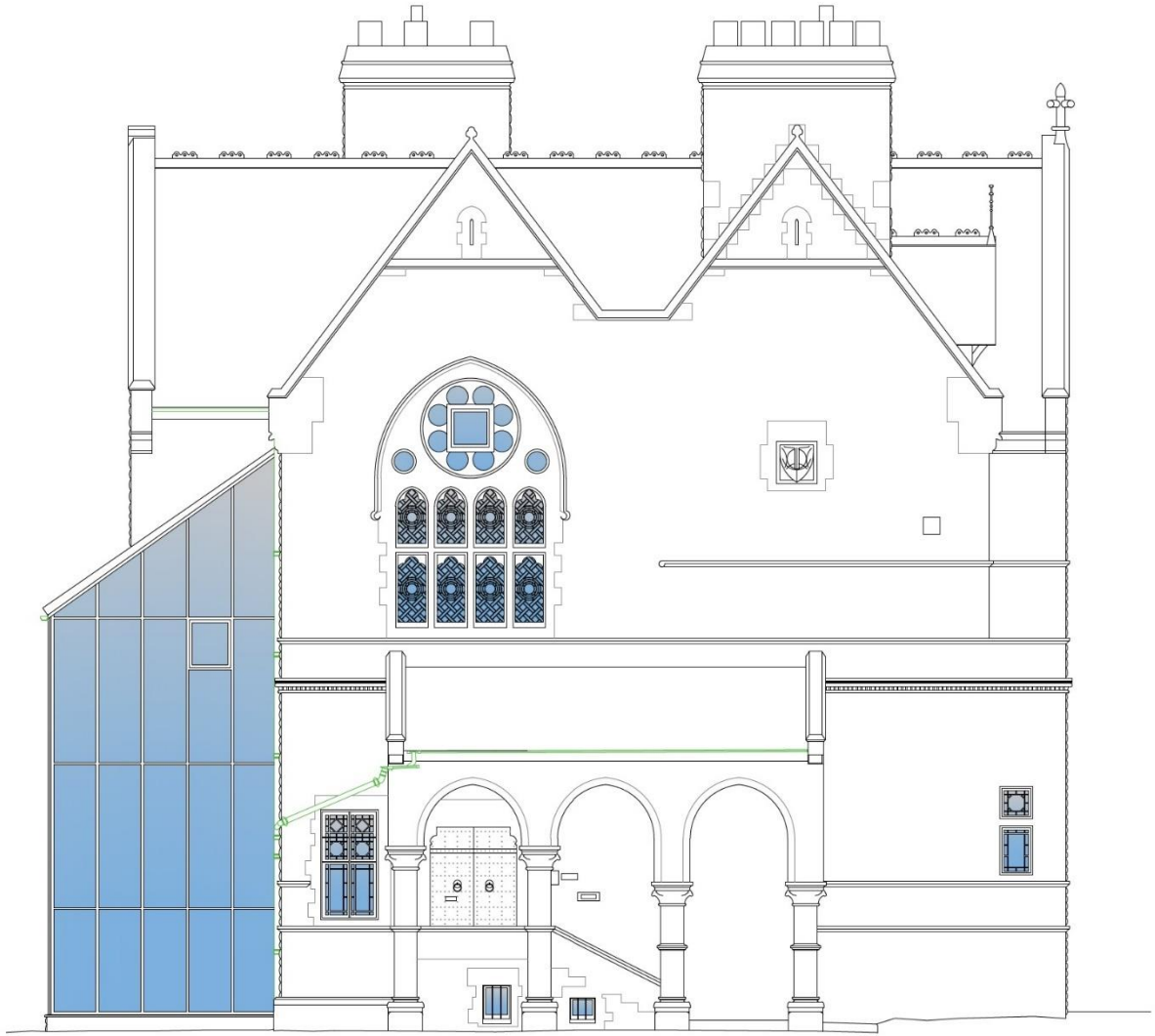


Figure 59. North elevation.



Figure 60. East elevation.

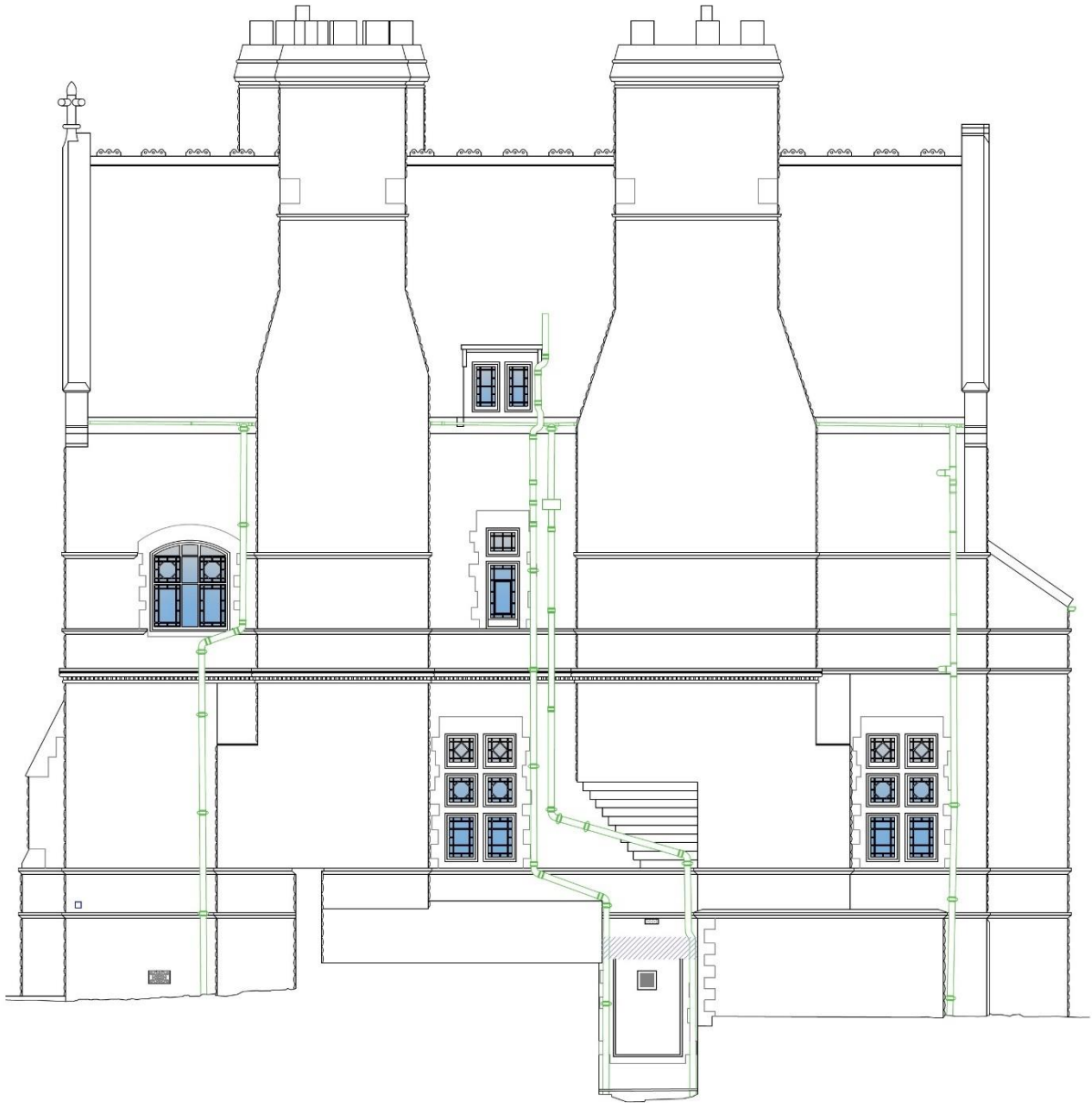


Figure 61. South elevation.

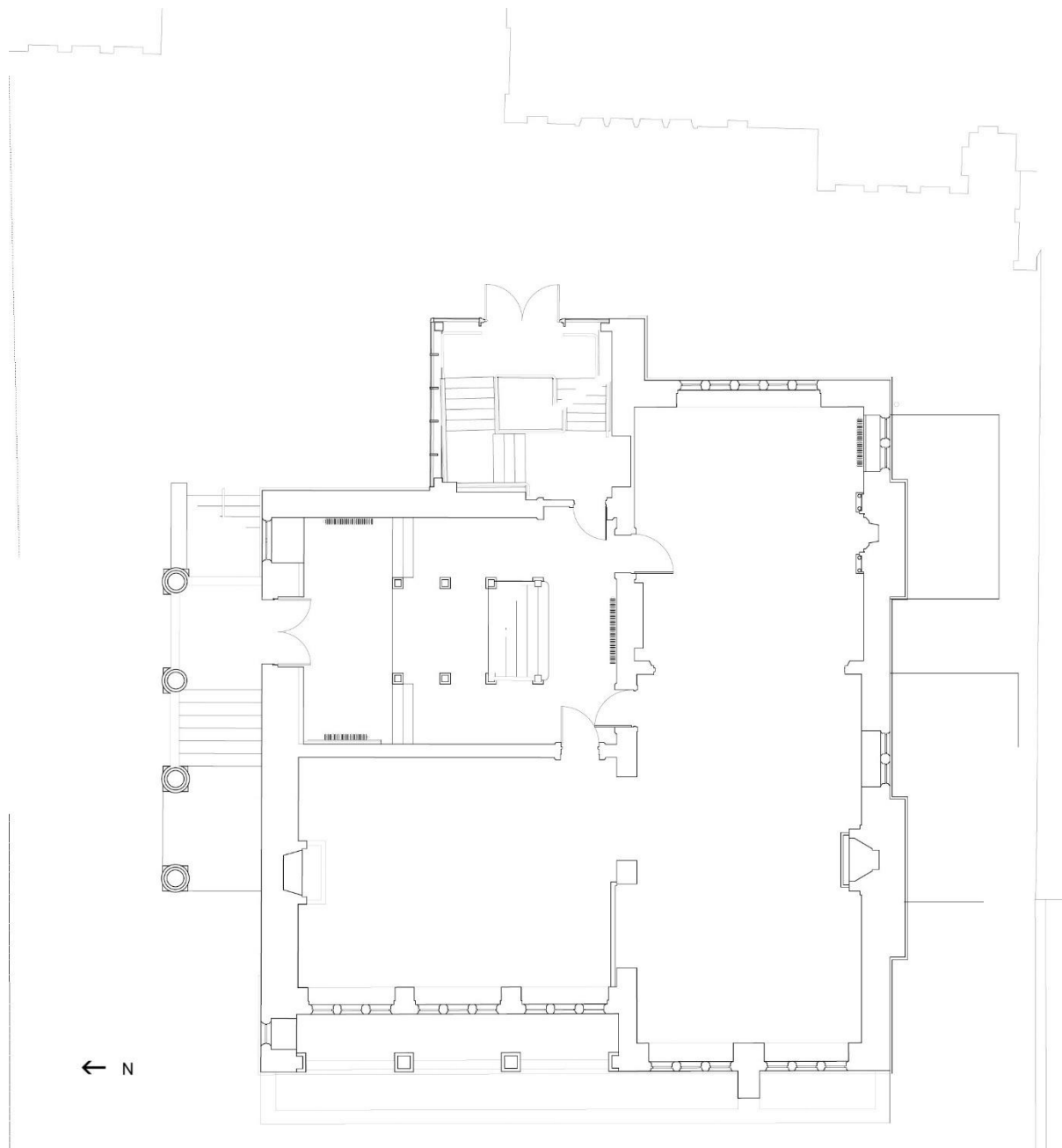


Figure 62. Ground-floor plan.

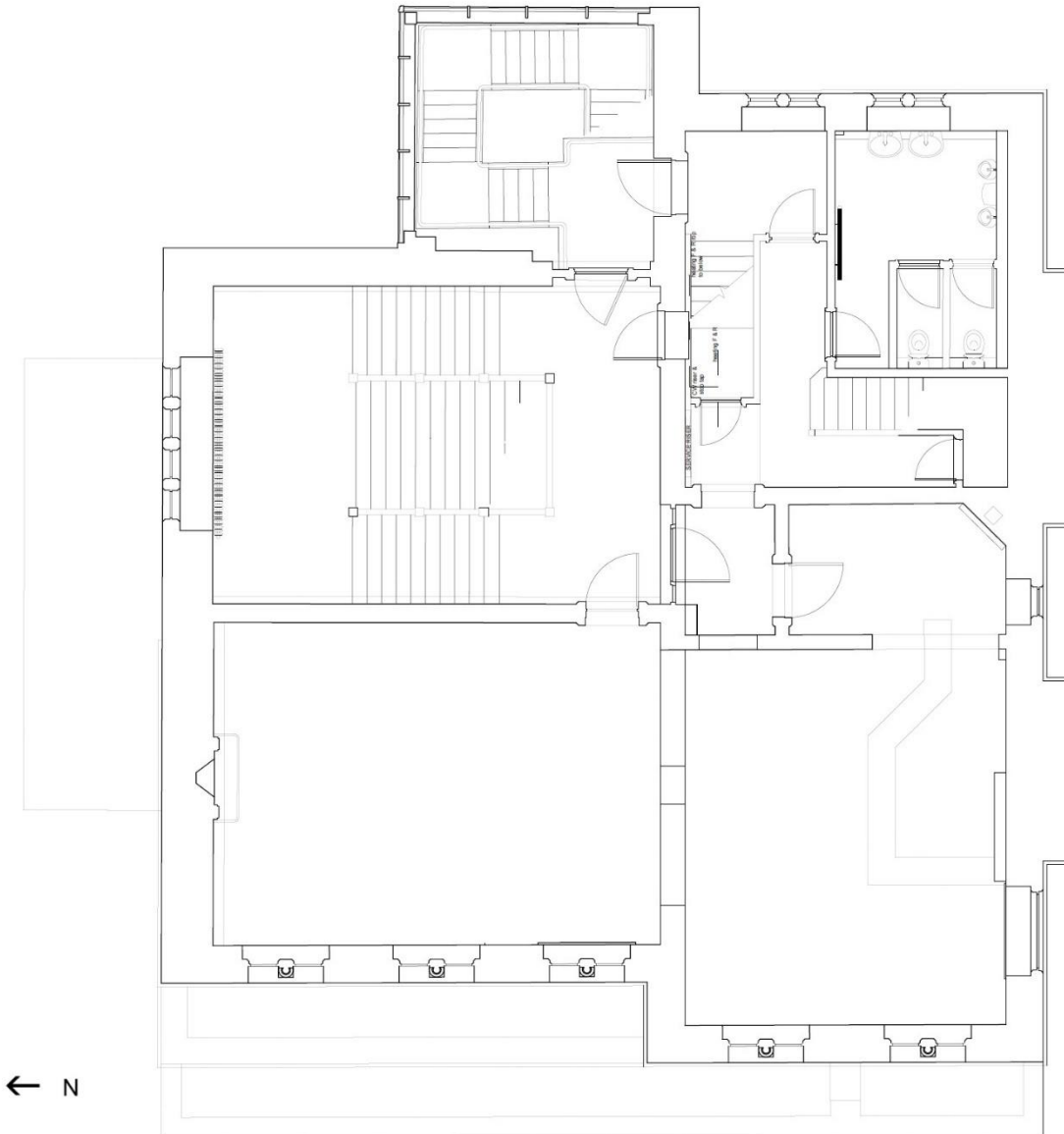


Figure 63. First-floor plan.

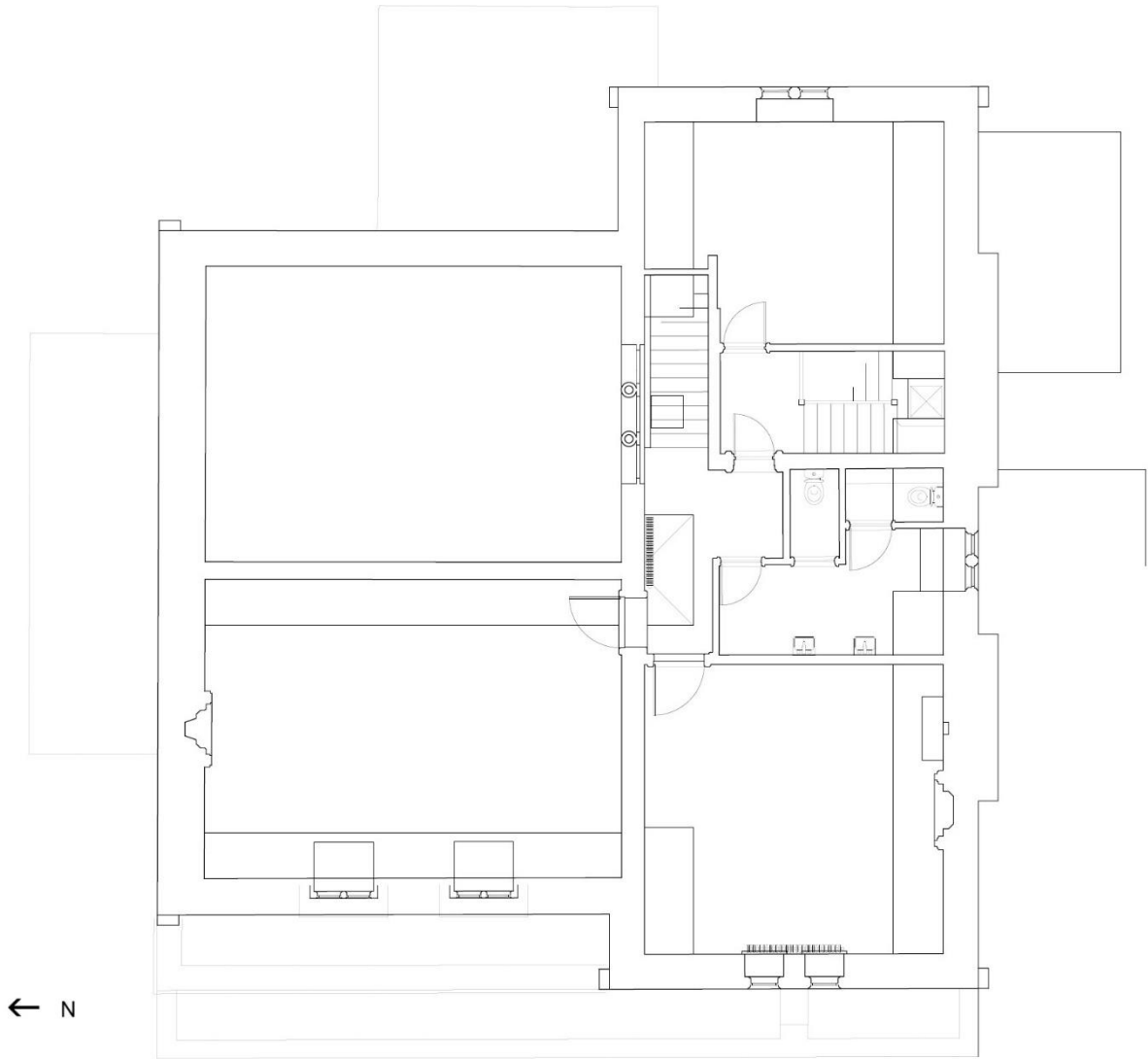


Figure 64. Attic floor plan.

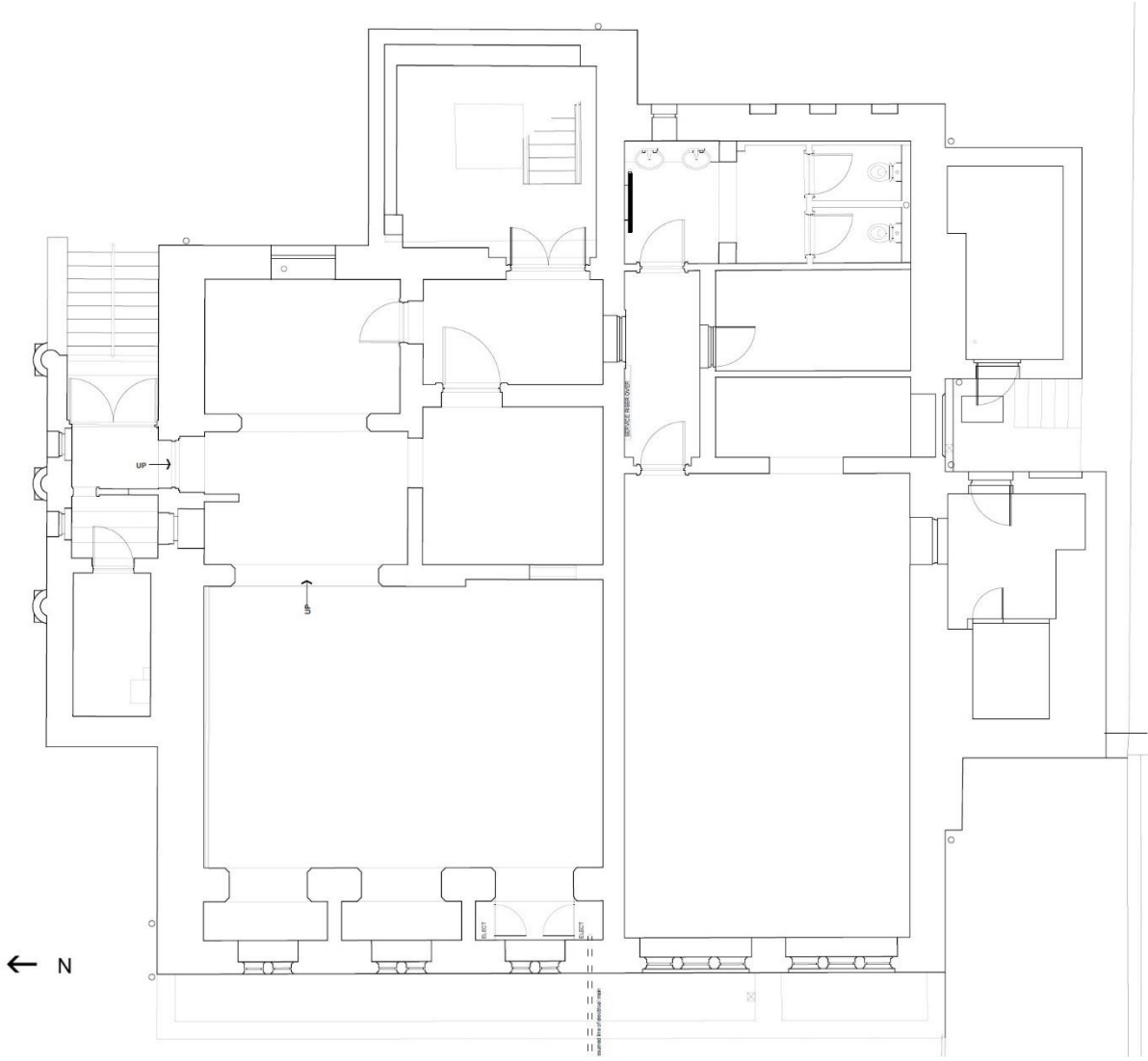


Figure 65. Basement plan.

Appendix 3: Listed building description

Full Report for Listed Buildings



Cadw



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

The list description is not intended to be a complete inventory of what is listed: it is principally intended to aid identification. By law, the definition of a listed building includes the entire building (i) and any structure or object that is fixed to the said building and ancillary to it and (ii) any other structure or object that forms part of the land and has done so since before 1 July 1948, and was within the curtilage of the building, and ancillary to it, on the date on which said building was first included in the list, or on 1 January 1969, whichever was later.

Summary Description

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Reference Number | Building Number | Grade | Status | Date of Designation | Date of Amendment |
| 13772 | 20 | I | Designated | 25/01/1966 | 30/04/1999 |
| Name of Property | | Address | | | |
| Park House | | 20 Park Place | | | |

Location

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Unitary Authority | Community | Town | Locality | Easting | Northing |
| Cardiff | Castle | | | 318470 | 176874 |
| Street Side | Location | | | | |
| E | Opposite Gorsedd Gardens. | | | | |

Description

| | |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Broad Class | Period |
| Domestic | |

History

Built in 1871-5 for James McConnochie, dock engineer to Bute Estate, Mayor of Cardiff 1880. Designed by William Burges, architect, amongst leading architects and designers of his day.

Exterior

House in powerful French Gothic style. Snecked rock-faced grey Caerphilly stone with Boxground (bathstone) dressings; steeply-pitched slate roofs, stone chimneys. Two storeys plus attic, over basement. On right hand side

advanced gabled block (Fleur-de-lys pinnacle) with paired Gothic windows to attic, and two Gothic windows of 2 lights with straight heads divided by Romanesque columns; arched tympana with hexafoils. Ground floor windows with three lights and two transoms divided by a buttress. To L, 2 attic dormers; on first floor, 3 windows as in gabled block; on first floor, arcade of 3 bays with pointed Gothic arches and granite columns with floreated capitals, string course with gargoyles. Basement with 3 mullion and transom windows and one 3-light arched window (R). Left elevation of 2 gables; tall chimney to front gable; 4-light Gothic window with plate tracery to rear gable. Entrance in north side through Gothic loggia of granite columns with foliated caps; original wooden doors. To rear, S gabled block with mullion and transom window to attic, 2 similar windows to first floor, and 5-light mullion and transom window to ground floor. Steel staircase encased in glass by Hoggett, Lock-Necrews, 1990.

Interior

Entrance lobby faces underside of staircase, and then leads to high stair hall with broad timber staircase with richly carved mahogany balustrade. At half landing (which is above entrance) stair divides, 3-bay Gothic window dominates hall with panelled and vaulted ceiling. Also on ground floor, drawing room, ante room to dining room, and dining room; heavily beamed ceilings, half round beams on stone corbels, arched grey and white fireplaces under mahogany overmantels with colonettes and mirrors. On first floor, 3 bedrooms.

Reason for designation

Graded I as striking Gothic house by important architect which set pattern for much housing in Cardiff in later C19. Perhaps the most important C19 town house in Wales.