



**NEUADD MALDWYN,
SEVERN STREET,
WELSHPOOL, POWYS**

Statement of Significance



for Lovelock Mitchell Architects

March 2019

Holland Heritage
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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This report provides a Statement of Significance for Neuadd Maldwyn, offices of Powys County Council, in Severn Street, Welshpool, located at approximately SJ 2282 0730. The building is set in its own grounds on the north-east side of the street (fig 1).

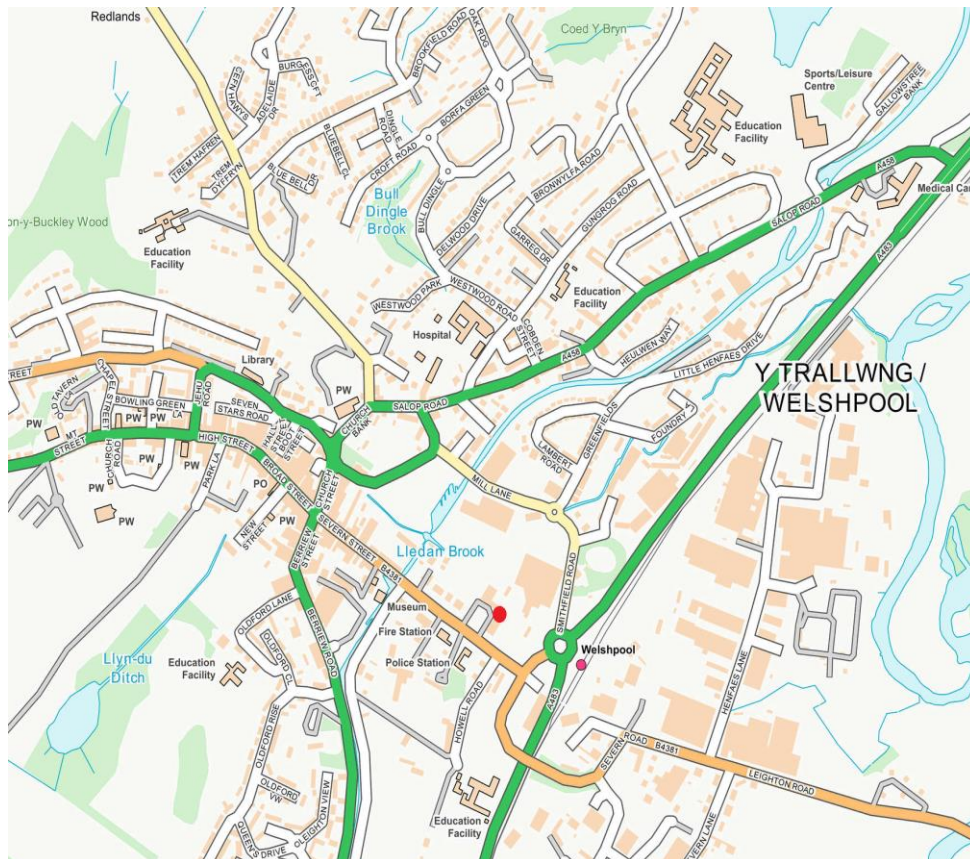


Figure 1. Location plan

1.2 The report was commissioned by Marc Roberts, Director of Lovelock Mitchell Architects, on 11th February 2019 to inform emerging proposals for the adaptive reuse of Neuadd Maldwyn. It is written following survey of the building and its environs by Dr. Richard Hayman on 18th February 2019. Architects' drawings displayed in the building were consulted and comparison is also made with relevant buildings which have a similar function and with other works by the same architects.

1.3 Unless otherwise stated, all photographs were taken by the author on the day of site visit. All rights are reserved. No part of this document may be otherwise reproduced or published in any form or by any means, including photocopying, storage on computer or otherwise without the prior permission of the author and client.

1.4 Two designations affect Neuadd Maldwyn. Under the name Powys County Council Offices it is a grade-II listed building, designated in 2008 (listed building reference 87576, see Appendix 1) and it is within Welshpool Conservation Area (fig 2). The wider Welshpool Community has 311 listed buildings as at 5th March 2019.

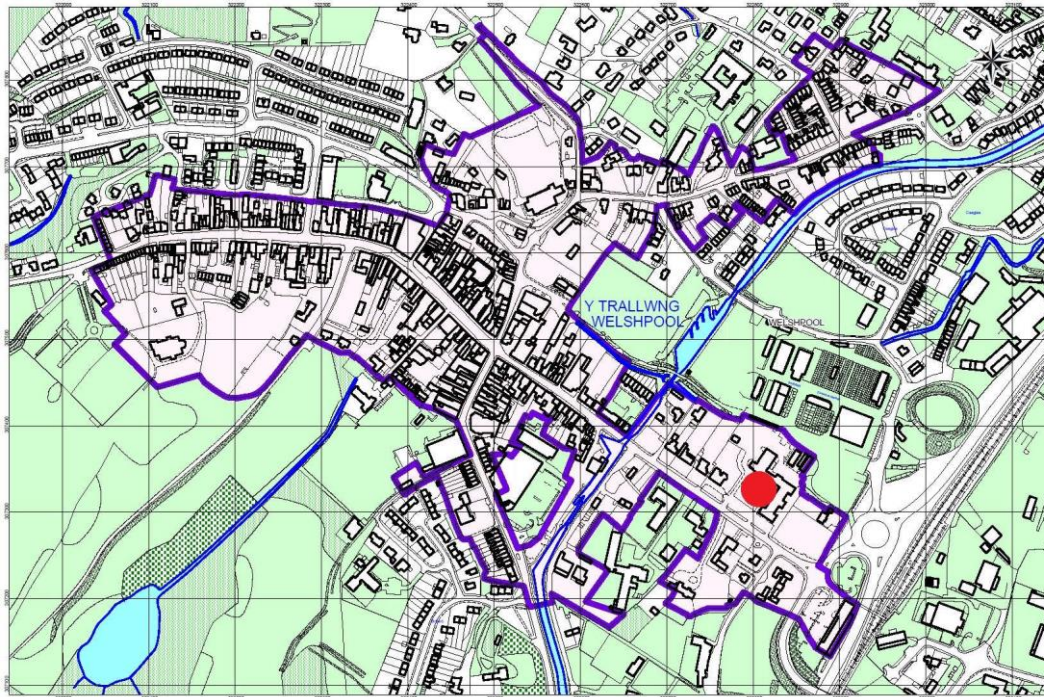


Figure 2. Welshpool Conservation Area, with Neuadd Maldwyn marked in red.

1.5 In preparing this report, several key criteria have been addressed to assess the significance of the building

- The historical context of the county council offices
- The significance of the surviving fabric
- The contribution to the heritage of works by the architects Briggs & Thornely and Herbert Carr
- Contribution to the significance of Severn Street specifically and Welshpool Conservation Area in general

2.0 Historical Background

2.1 Montgomeryshire County Council was formed in 1889 under the Local Government Act 1888. Its council met initially in Montgomery but to accommodate its increasing administrative functions the County Council Offices were opened in 1931 in Welshpool. However, the council did not meet in a specially-designed council chamber in the building until the 1960s.

2.2 The site of the new building was land on Severn Street (originally known as Severn Road) between the town centre and the railway station. By the third decade of the twentieth century Severn Street was still largely undeveloped, except for the four Powis Estate houses known as Clive Place built c1820. The view down Severn Street was terminated by the railway station, completed in 1860. The opposite side of Severn Street was developed after Neuadd Maldwyn had been built, mostly with public-funded buildings, including almshouses (1938), a police station and police houses (1951-53) and a fire station (1963-64) (Scourfield and Haslam 2013, 273). These developments are shown in a series of Ordnance Survey maps from the period 1901 to 1963 (figs 3-6).



Figure 3. Severn Street on 1901 Ordnance Survey. Neuadd Maldwyn was built on plot 542.

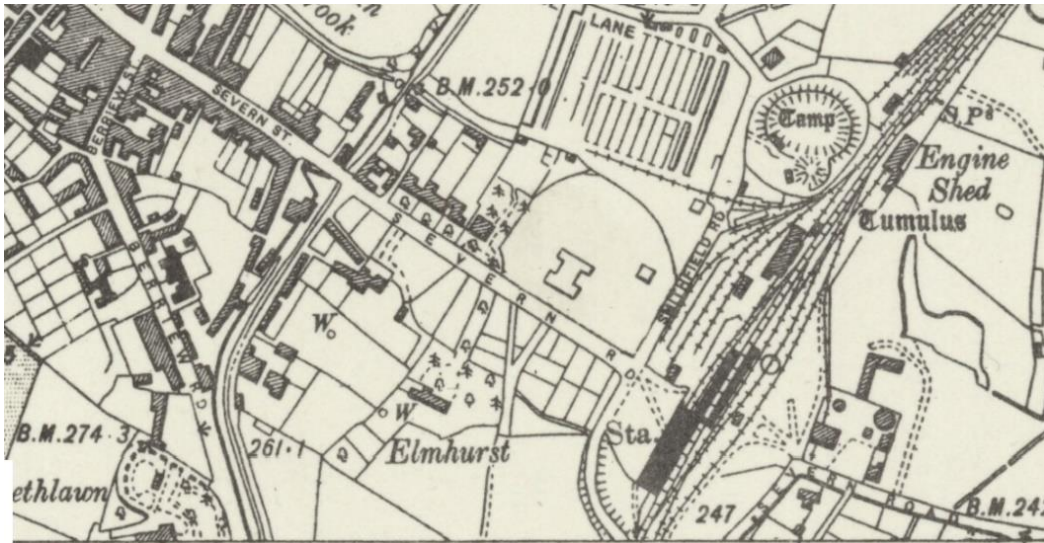


Figure 4. Ordnance Survey 1943, revised in 1938.



Figure 5. Ordnance Survey 1953, revised 1949.

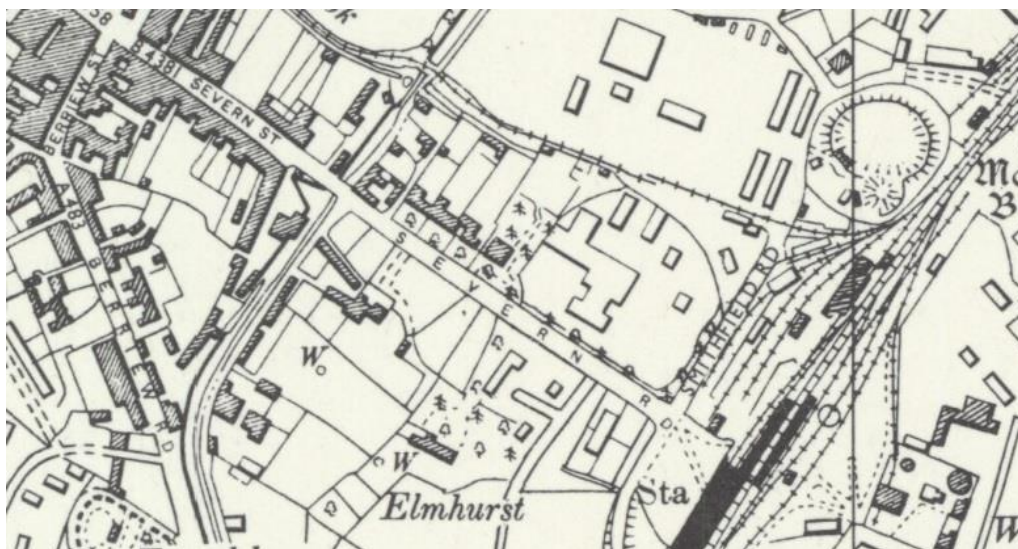


Figure 6. Ordnance Survey, 1964



2.3 Our understanding of the complex evolution of the building is aided by the survival of architects' drawings covering three phases of construction – three drawings dated 1927, and one drawing each dated 1938 and 1959 (Appendix 2).

2.4 The first phase was designed by the Liverpool architects Briggs and Thornely. Frank Gatley Briggs (1862-1921) was a founding partner but had died before Neuadd Maldwyn was designed, and so it should be assumed that the lead architect was Sir Arnold Thornely (1870-1953). Three design drawings show elevations and cross sections. As the drawings are numbered it is evident that originally there was a total of at least seven drawings. The original design comprised a main seven-bay entrance range (fig 7) and a narrower rear wing of three bays at two-storey height, and a further two single-storey bays. The building was opened in 1931, although fenestration of the rear wing differed slightly from the original design.

2.5 The rear wing was subsequently extended by seven bays, based on a design of 1938 by the Montgomeryshire County Architect, Herbert Carr. The only drawing for this phase of work is of the outer (south-east) elevation. According to a later design of 1959, a secondary wing of four bays had been built at right angles on the north-west side of the rear wing. This could have been part of the 1938 design, although evidence of the building discussed below in Section 3.1 suggests that it was a separate, later phase, for which no drawings have been identified. The 1959 design, again by Herbert Carr, was for the extension, at right angles, of this secondary wing by thirteen bays, and incorporating a council chamber (fig 8) to the rear.



Figure 7. Front elevation, 1927, by Briggs and Thornely.



Figure 8. Front elevation of enlargement designed in 1959 by Herbert Carr.

3.0 Architectural Description

3.1 Exterior

3.1.1 Neuadd Maldwyn comprises, to the south-west, an entrance range, facing the street, with a long wing behind it and, set back to the north-west, a secondary wing incorporating the council chamber. Together this forms an extended L-plan building shown in the phased plan below (fig 9).

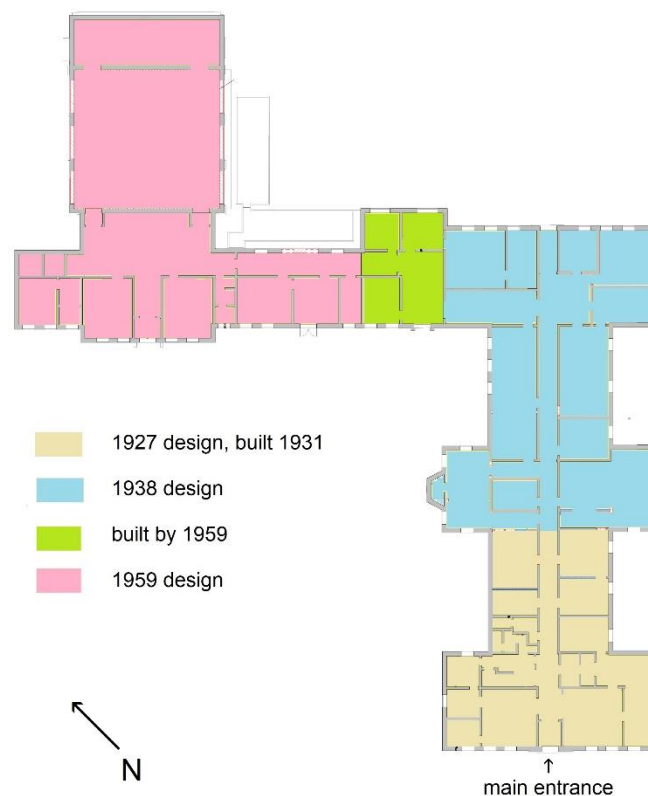


Figure 9. Indicative phased plan of building.

3.1.2 Although of several phases it is in a consistent Neo-Georgian style and is built throughout of red brick with dressings of reconstituted stone (the 1927 drawings specify that these were to be of 'Atlas White Cement' for the first phase of the building), under mostly hipped slate roofs on projecting eaves. Fenestration is of horned small-pane sash windows, 12-pane unless otherwise noted, and on the ground floor these are under rubbed brick heads with keystones. The first phase of the building is of two storeys with attic and basement, while the remainder is mainly of two storeys, except for the single-storey council chamber to the north.

3.1.3 Entrance Front

The entrance front to south-west is symmetrical with simple angle pilasters, though on the drawings these are shown as panelled. Its central bay is brought forward under a raised parapet with urn finials. The entrance has a finely moulded architrave with cornice carried on scrolled brackets and the original panelled double doors are retained. Above, is a window in a stone panel with an apron bearing the date of opening in 1931 and the Montgomeryshire arms (fig 11). There is a painted eaves cornice decorated with a key pattern beneath the projecting eaves.



Figure 10. Entrance front and forecourt.



Figure 11. Detail of main entrance.

3.1.4 The return walls are of three bays. On the left (north-west) side there is only a single ground-floor window and the eaves cornice is interrupted by a pediment crowned by the central chimney (which was not shown on the original design drawings, see Appendix 2).



Figure 12. North-west front of entrance range (on the right) and later rear wings

3.1.5 The original building extends for three bays of the rear wing which, on the left (north-west) side incorporates basement steps (fig 12). These bays have small-pane sash windows but in their use of shallower tripartite windows to the corner the fenestration differs slightly from the original design drawings of 1927.

3.1.6 The remainder of the rear wing is to the design of Herbert Carr in 1938. On the north-west side is an advanced 'pavilion' under a hipped roof with narrow 8-pane sashes. It has a central entrance in a splayed, flat-roof, porch with narrow 8-panel door under an overlight with margin glazing. Further left are four unequal bays, that to the south-west corner set apart, with tripartite sashes, similar to those in the corner behind the entrance range.

3.1.7 The manner in which the new work respected the original design is best seen on the outer, south-east side. Here there is a corresponding central 'pavilion', stepped forward to the centre under a pedimented gable, and with a single ground-floor 12-pane sash window framed by paired terracotta pilasters and entablature (fig 13). This window has a panelled apron and to the 1st floor there is a 9-pane sash.



Figure 13. Detail of central pavilion in south-east front of rear wing.

3.1.8 At the right-hand end the south-east front is terminated by three bays brought forward under a hipped roof that balances the composition with the original entrance range in order to create a coherent, near symmetrical front. These advanced right-hand bays have shallow brick pilasters similar to the entrance range.

3.1.9 To the rear the 1938 part of the north-east front has a central doorway under a margin-glazed overlight, flanked either side by three windows and, in the upper storey, two bands of small-pane sash windows (fig 14). In the opposite south-west front there is a single window and pilaster which seems to mark the extent of the 1938 design (see fig 15).



Figure 14. Rear (north-east) wall.

3.1.10 The secondary wing at right angles to the north-west is essentially of three phases, as seen on its south-west elevation (fig 15).



Figure 15. Secondary wing with council suite to left under taller hipped roof.

3.1.11 At the extreme right end is the termination of the 1938 work, marked by a pilaster. To the left of this are three unequal bays which appear from Carr's surviving drawings (fig 16) to have been built sometime between 1938 and 1959 (as inferred in fig 4 and discussed in 2.5 above).



Figure 16. South-west elevation drawing, 1959, marking the "extent of existing building"

This section incorporates a doorway in a reconstituted stone surround with simple cornice. The door has four vertically laid panels under an overlight with decorative lozenge pattern glazing bars. Either side are margin lights, which appear to be added later, with curious wave pattern glazing (fig 17).



Figure 17. Doorway in the secondary wing.

3.1.12 The remainder is the design of 1959 with the dominant element being the five-bay council suite under its hipped roof flanked to the right by three plus two bays and to the left by three equal bays. The council suite is stepped forward and framed by angle pilasters and its greater height allows for the 1st floor windows to also have keystones, though these are

curiously omitted from the narrower ground floor windows flanking the entrance. A stone architrave surrounds the central entrance, and the 16-pane window above it is beneath a small pediment (fig 18). The doorway is framed by unusually deep fluted pilasters surmounted by boldly detailed scrolled brackets and there are panelled double doors under a neo-Georgian fanlight. The design drawings show a row of blind panels between the 1st floor windows and the frieze but these were not implemented.



Figure 18. Entrance to the council suite.

3.1.13 Stepped back to the right are three equal bays and then two more widely spaced bays including a tall round-arched doorway with small-pane, mullion and transomed French doors and low-relief tympanum, all in painted wood. Stepped back to the left are three equal bays with 12-pane sashes and the left end is gabled rather than hipped. There are further similar windows to the rear.

3.1.14 The council chamber projects north-east to the rear of the secondary wing (fig 19). In its side walls the tripartite windows are set high and the three bays are framed by pilaster strips. On the end is the withdrawing room under a catslide roof, which is not marked on the design drawing but appears to be contemporary with the remainder of the building, and has a band of windows in its end wall.



Figure 19. Council chamber and withdrawing chamber to the left, viewed from the north-east.

3.2 Interior

3.2.1 The main entrance range opens into a central lobby. On the left side, set back to the rear, is the open-well staircase, which has metal balusters and X-shaped braces, with wooden handrail and newel (fig 20). The rooms in the upper storey, including the original office of the clerk to the council, are the most richly treated (fig 21). Each has panelled walls to a cornice with a key pattern matching the exterior cornice, and a plaster barrel ceiling. There is an attic stair in the rear wing of the entrance range, which is a simple cramped dog-leg stair, leading to disused attic rooms.



Figure 20. Detail of stairway in entrance range.



Figure 21. Clerk's office in the entrance range.

Corridors from the lobby and landing lead along the central spine of the rear wing and also the secondary wing (fig 22) and have round-arches, those to the front having deep imposts. In the rear wing there is a rise in the first-floor level between the original building and the extension designed in 1938. The corridors and rooms retain simple cornices and architraves, with parquet floors where visible. Most of the rooms retain two-panel half-glazed doors, some with overlights.



Figure 22. Ground-floor corridor in rear wing.

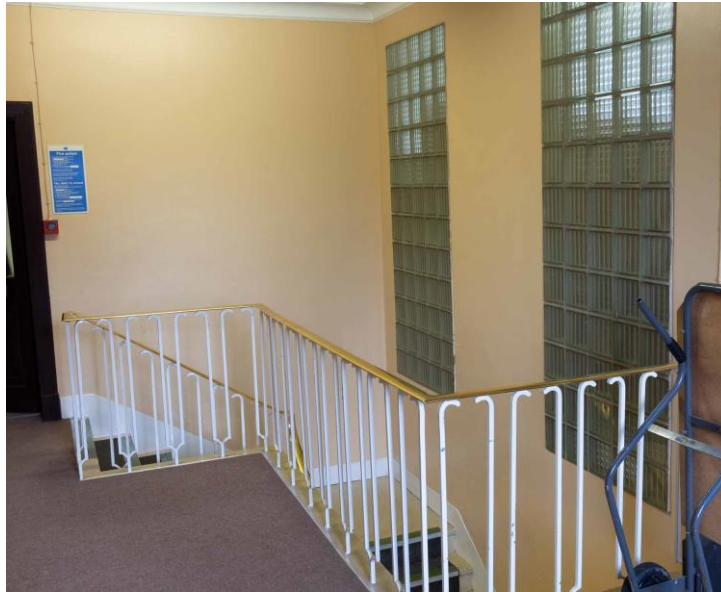


Figure 23. Stairway and landing in rear wing.

In the secondary wing there are two staircases. The earlier, in the section built before 1959, is a dog-leg stair of metal balusters with brass hand rail, opening to a landing where there are frosted-glass multipane panels (fig 23). The council suite has a wide stair hall with a grander staircase (fig 24). The stairs consist of a central flight that returns right and left above the council chamber entrances. Details include metal balusters, swept wooden hand-rail and treads with a terrazzo finish. From the stair hall double-panelled doors lead to lobbies and then to the council chamber proper. The council chamber retains its original seating (fig 25) and, behind the dais, is a panel with the county arms flanked by narrow windows (originally intended as exterior windows, see Appendix 2).



Figure 24. Stairway in council suite.



Figure 25. Interior of council chamber.

3.3 Setting



Figure 26. Railings and gate piers fronting Severn Street (© Google Street View).

Neuadd Maldwyn is set back from Severn Street in its own grounds. Facing the street, opposite the entrance range, are railings on dwarf walls, with brick piers to two entrances, although no gates (fig 26). The remainder of the frontage to Severn Street is a hedge. To the rear is a large car park and to the south-east is a grassed area with a Gorsedd circle.

3.4 Neuadd Maldwyn in the wider architectural context

3.4.1 *Sir Arnold Thornely*

As a building by Sir Arnold Thornely, Neuadd Maldwyn represents a rare work in the Neo-Georgian style. He designed mainly in a classical style, which was the prevalent style in Liverpool in the first two decades of the twentieth century, and many of his important buildings were faced in Portland stone (Sharples 2004, 31, 218). His obituary in *The Times* concluded that his architecture 'was distinguished by robust masculinity in the handling of the English Renaissance'. His best-known buildings, the Parliament Buildings at Stormont, Preston Town Hall (grade II, Historic England reference number 1207297) and the former Burnley Building Society (1927-30, listed grade II, Historic England reference number 1245015), are faced in stone and are more monumental than Neuadd Maldwyn, which has a lighter touch (Hartwell and Pevsner 2009, 185, 516). Other key works include extensions to the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool (1931-3). His design for the Jane Herdman Laboratories at the University of Liverpool (fig 27), built 1927-29, is closer in style to Neuadd Maldwyn, built of brick with stone dressings. Here, however, the building has a flat roof and is in a Neo-classical style reminiscent of American campus buildings.



Figure 27. *Jane Herdman Laboratories, University of Liverpool, by Sir Alfred Thornely* © Rept0n1x at Wikimedia Commons

3.4.2 Herbert Carr

The known works of Herbert Carr are confined to Montgomeryshire where he became County Architect in 1924. He is especially known for leading Wales's most distinctive programme of primary and secondary school building from the 1930s to 1960s including Ardwyn, Welshpool (1951), Llanweddyn, Abertridwr (1950), and Llanfechan (1951) and is also credited with the Almshouses Welshpool of 1941. He was awarded an O.B.E. in 1952. One of his final works before his retirement was the County Library for Montgomeryshire (1963) in Newtown. Herbert Carr's buildings are distinctive for their accomplished mix of Neo-Georgian and Modernist and can be appreciated in a variety of buildings in Severn Street, as already mentioned. The Neo-Georgian style is to the fore in the Almshouses, the police station and police houses, and even the fire station, which has a hipped tile roof (figs 28-30). Chalfont differs slightly because it has Arts-and-Crafts influences, with steep half-hipped roof and window shutters (fig 31). His 1961 Youth Centre on Howell Road, not quite visible from Neuadd Maldwyn (and outside the conservation area), has bands of near full-height glazing similar to the withdrawing chamber at Neuadd Maldwyn (fig 32, compare with windows in fig 18).



Figure 28. Almshouses, Severn Street.



Figure 29. Police Station, Severn Street.



Figure 30. Fire Station, Severn Street.



Figure 31. Chalfont, Severn Street.



Figure 32. Welshpool Youth Centre, Howell Road.

Neuadd Maldwyn also shares some of the characteristics of Carr’s school buildings. For example, the school buildings at Abermule (1951) and Trewern (1955) are centred on a taller block under a hipped roof, with the classrooms laid out in long ranges to overlook open spaces (fig 33). The secondary wing at Neuadd Maldwyn is also centred on a taller block under a hipped roof, and the two wings that Carr added to the original building share the same regard for open space.



Figure 33. Abermule Primary School, by Herbert Carr.

4.0 Conservation Principles

Cadw has published a set of conservation principles that sets out a logical approach to management of all aspects of the historic environment. The second of those principles is that 'understanding the significance of heritage assets is vital'. It explains further that 'the significance of an historic asset embraces all of the cultural heritage values that people associate with it, or which prompt them to respond to it. These values tend to grow in strength and complexity over time, as understanding deepens and people's perceptions evolve'.

There are four component heritage values in the significance of a historic asset:

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. These remains provide the primary evidence for when and how an historic asset was made or built, what it was used for and how it has changed over time.

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. These illustrative or associative values of an historic asset may be less tangible than its evidential value but will often connect past people, events and aspects of life with the present.

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. It can be the result of conscious design or it might be a seemingly fortuitous outcome of the way in which an historic asset has evolved and been used over time, or it may be a combination of both. Inevitably understanding the aesthetic value of an historic asset will be more subjective than the study of its evidential and historical values. Much of it will involve trying to express the aesthetic qualities or the relative value of different parts of its form or design.

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. Communal value might be

commemorative or symbolic. For example, people might draw part of their identity or collective memory from an historic asset, or have emotional links to it. Such values often change over time and they may be important for remembering both positive and uncomfortable events, attitudes or periods in Wales's history. Historic assets can also have social value, acting as a source of social interaction, distinctiveness or coherence; economic value, providing a valuable source of income or employment.

5.0 Statement of Significance

5.1 Evidential value

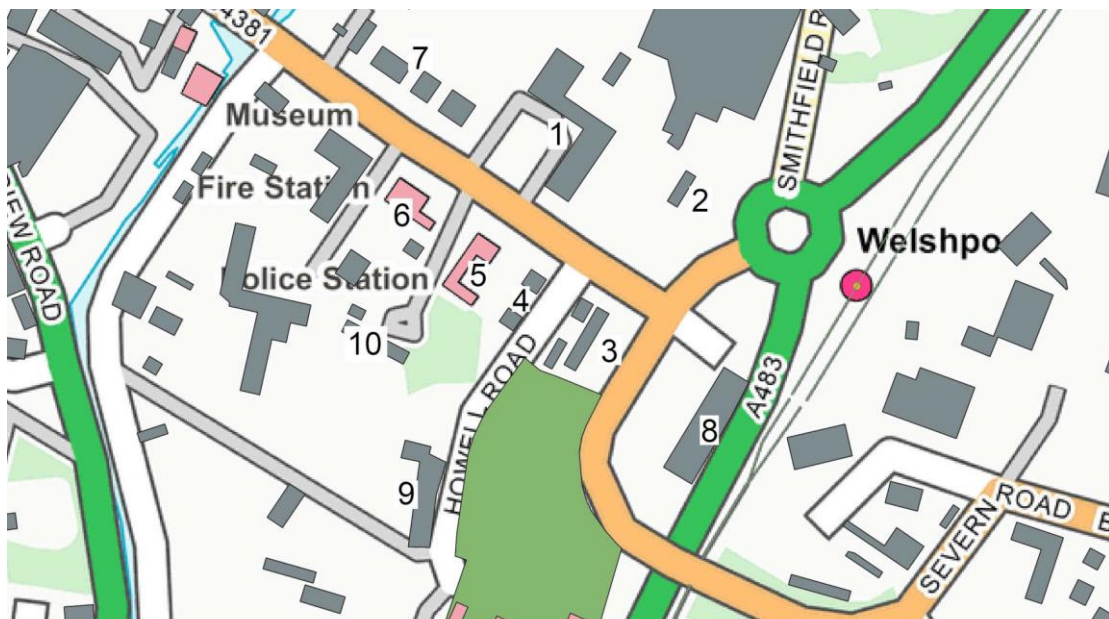
5.1.1 The building

The exterior fabric is well preserved throughout the building. This extends to the decorative elements of the reconstituted-stone dressings which show little sign of weathering (see fig 11). The materials of brick, reconstituted stone, horned small-pane sash windows and panel doors are characteristic of the period and of the Neo-Georgian style. The use of these materials, which are not specific to their locality, reflects contemporary trends in the building industry. The building has a slate roof, but the slates are probably not original. Both the 1927 and 1959 designs specified a pantile roof, and other buildings in the vicinity by Herbert Carr also have tile roofs.

The interior has undergone little alteration and is still structured by small rooms accessible from wide corridors down the spine of the building. Glazed screens with fire doors have been introduced into the corridors, and there are some plasterboard partitions introduced to subdivide rooms, but little sign that original fabric has been lost. The three main stairways, and the attic staircase in the entrance range, are also well preserved and are characteristic of the period in both style and materials. The superior treatment of the principal rooms in the entrance range, including panelled walls and barrel ceiling, and the council chamber and its stair hall, is retained. This preserves the hierarchy of use within the building.

5.1.2 The site and its surroundings

The immediate setting of Neuadd Maldwyn is well preserved by the fact that the original wall and railings to the front of the entrance range are retained. These add to the near completeness of the original fabric.



- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Neuadd Maldwyn | 6 Fire Station |
| 2 Chalfont | 7 Clive Place |
| 3 Almshouses | 8 Railway Station |
| 4 Police Houses | 9 Welshpool Youth Centre |
| 5 Police Station | 10 Elmhurst |

Figure 34. Buildings on Severn Street.

Severn Street is part of Welshpool Conservation Area where, to the south east of the point where the street crosses over the former Montgomeryshire Canal, there are buildings of the nineteenth century and a strong group of twentieth-century buildings that includes Neuadd Maldwyn (fig 34). On the north-east side of Severn Street is a row of four brick houses of c1820, known as Clive Place, all listed at grade II (listed building references 7840-7843), with corresponding gate piers, gates and boundary walls (listed building reference 7844). Another house, Elmhurst (listed building reference 16726), is set back from Severn Street in its own grounds and stands behind the later police houses, but it does not have a direct visual relationship with Neuadd Maldwyn. The twentieth-century buildings are all by Herbert Carr. On the south-west side of Severn Street, opposite Neuadd Maldwyn, are the fire station, police station with two police houses, and almshouses. Herbert Carr's own residence, Chalfont, is on the south-east side of Neuadd Maldwyn, facing the roundabout with Smithfield Road, where there is also a Gorsedd circle of c2003. Chalfont is marked on the revision of the Ordnance Survey made in 1938. At the end of Severn Street is the former railway station of 1859-60, which is also listed grade II (listed building reference 7845).



5.2 Historical value

5.2.1 The creation of county councils by the Act of 1888 required accommodation for local authorities which expanded through the twentieth century as the responsibilities of local authorities increased. This is well reflected by Neuadd Maldwyn, which was extended at least twice in its first three decades.

5.2.2 Not every Welsh county council needed a purpose-built administrative building, at least in the beginning. In the other former counties that make up Powys, Brecknock and Radnorshire had older shire halls in Brecon and Presteigne that initially served this function. A similar arrangement existed at Cardigan (old county of Cardiganshire) and Mold (Flintshire). However, several counties did require new accommodation, usually incorporating a purpose-built council chamber. Monmouthshire's Shire Hall was built in 1901-2 in Newport (listed building grade II, reference 205280). In Cardiff, the Glamorgan County Hall was opened in 1912 (listed building grade I, reference 13738). The County Hall in Carmarthen, built between 1938 and 1956 by Sir Percy Thomas (listed building grade II, reference 82151) is roughly contemporary with Neuadd Maldwyn.

5.2.3 The decision to build the county council headquarters in Welshpool shifted the county's administrative capital away from the old county town of Montgomery. Neuadd Maldwyn was therefore important for the development of Welshpool as an administrative centre in the twentieth century, reflecting perhaps its better communications within the county.

5.2.4 It is significant that the original building was designed by a private firm of architects but that the subsequent enlargements were the work of the County Architect. Many architectural practices won commissions for civic architecture in the early twentieth century. Briggs and Thornely was a well-established practice in Liverpool in the first half of the twentieth century and it was awarded several commissions. As discussed at 3.4.1 above, Thornely is best known as the architect of the Parliament Buildings at Stormont, Belfast (1927-32) although most of his work was built in north-west England. The employment of a county or city architect by the middle of the century was characteristic of the period (e.g John Dryburgh in Cardiff and Herbert Carr here in Powys). Towns and cities increasingly required the services of trained architects and planners to mastermind and oversee schemes including housing and the new generation of schools and libraries. Neuadd Maldwyn is part of a county architect's portfolio that

included several schools, including Llanfyllin and Llanidloes High Schools (1955), Newtown Library (1963 but burned down 1986), as well as the other buildings in Severn Street already mentioned.

5.3 Aesthetic value

5.3.1 Neo-Georgian is a style that spans a broad date range from the 1880s to the 1960s, although the style flourished in the 1920s. Neo-Georgian was embraced for a wide variety of building types across Wales and Britain, including commercial buildings, public institutions and domestic architecture. Neuadd Maldwyn is therefore a well-preserved example of an important building style in twentieth-century Wales and Britain.

5.3.2 The adoption of the Neo-Georgian style for Neuadd Maldwyn was not necessarily just contemporary fashion. On the north-east side of Severn Street are the houses making up Clive Place which are Georgian brick houses with sash windows, set back from the road behind dwarf walls and gate piers (fig 35). Although hedges now grow over the dwarf walls it is likely that they once carried iron railings. Neuadd Maldwyn therefore complements the style and setting of these earlier houses and of the market town.



Figure 35. Clive Place, Severn Street.

5.3.3 Although Neuadd Maldwyn is the dominant twentieth-century building on Severn Street the other works are complementary in style, if occasionally altered. The Almshouses has replacement windows but the block retains a symmetrical façade with hipped-roof central section. The police houses likewise have replacement windows but, with the police station, retain Neo-Georgian character with distinctive hipped roofs. As the



dominant building at the south-east end of Severn Street, Neuadd Maldwyn therefore makes a vital contribution to the stylistic coherence of buildings on the street, all part of Welshpool Conservation Area.

5.4 Communal value

Neuadd Maldwyn has communal value as a public building over nearly nine decades. It has been important as a place of employment, as one of the largest employers of office staff in Welshpool. The council chamber was a centre of debate and policy on local matters from the early 1960s until this function was transferred to Powys County Council in the 1970s.

Neuadd Maldwyn is a familiar landmark in Welshpool, a prominent building on Severn Street that is and has been passed by many people travelling between the town centre and the railway station.

6.0 Conclusion

Neuadd Maldwyn was opened in 1931, to designs by the Liverpool architects Briggs and Thornely, as an administrative centre for Montgomeryshire County Council. It was subsequently extended, based on designs of 1938 and 1959, by Herbert Carr, Montgomeryshire County Architect. The building is built of brick with reconstituted-stone dressings in a distinctive Neo-Georgian style. It retains mostly original fabric, with the exception of the slate roof that probably replaced original tile roofs. Interior plan and detail is also well-preserved, including three staircases, council chamber and well-detailed clerk's office in the original entrance range. Overall this Statement of Significance has demonstrated that the architectural character of the building is substantially retained.

Neuadd Maldwyn has a strong group value with other buildings on Severn Street, all within the Welshpool Conservation Area. Until the early twentieth century the street was largely undeveloped, with the exception of four houses built by the Powis Estate c1820 known as Clive Place. Twentieth-century development followed after Neuadd Maldwyn had been built and included several buildings with Neo-Georgian influence and signature hipped roofs, such as the Almshouses, Police Station, Fire Station and Carr's own residence, Chalfont.

The building represents the growth of county council functions in the twentieth century and its progressive enlargement highlights the council's increasing responsibilities from the mid-twentieth century. Not every county in Wales required a new building for administrative functions. However, Neuadd Maldwyn is one of a number of purpose-built administrative buildings for county councils in Wales, other notable examples being in Cardiff, Carmarthen and Newport. The transition in separate building phases from a private architectural practice to a county architect reflects an important development in the practice of architecture in the twentieth century.

In conclusion, Neuadd Maldwyn is a fine example of a Neo-Georgian building, a style that flourished in the 1920s and was popular for private and public buildings. For Briggs and Thornely it was one of a number of commissions for civic buildings, although the choice of Neo-Georgian was a change from the more monumental classical style with which Sir Arnold Thornely is chiefly associated. Herbert Carr's style ranged between Neo-Georgian and Modernist and both influences are apparent in his work at



Neuadd Maldwyn. The additions he made at Neuadd Maldwyn were careful to complement the earlier work, best seen in the south-east elevation designed in 1938, where the new and previous work are combined to create a balanced architectural composition. Modernist influences are seen in the use of metal glazing bars and modern materials inside the building, such as metal staircases and parquet floors.

The Neo-Georgian style of Neuadd Maldwyn complements the Georgian houses of Clive Place. It is also key to forming a strong architectural unity with Carr's other buildings in the street (all of which retain original tile roofs), which give the twentieth-century character to this part of the conservation area.

Neuadd Maldwyn has communal value as a centre of employment in Welshpool for nearly nine decades, as a public building and the place where issues of local government were debated.

7.0 References

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APPENDIX 1: LISTED BUILDING RECORD

Reference Number

87576

Grade

II

Date of Designation

17/10/2008

Name of Property

Powys County Council Offices

Unitary Authority

Powys

Community

Welshpool

Town

Welshpool

Easting

322829

Northing

307336

Location

At the bottom of Severn Street, close to its junction with the by-pass at the railway station.

History

Built as the offices for Montgomeryshire County Council, the original building was a small office block designed by Briggs and Thornely, architects, of Liverpool in 1927. Extended by Herbert Carr, the county architect, first in the late 1930s, and then in 1959.

Exterior

The building essentially comprises two ranges: the advanced range to the right represents the original office block and the first phase of extension; at right-angles to it, and set back is the main extension of 1959 - a long office range with the council chamber housed in a wing to the rear. The building is unified by the coherent use of a Neo-Georgian style, consistent in scale, and in the subtle vocabulary of material and detail. Small-paned sash windows, brick plinth, overhanging eaves and white-painted cornice. Entrance front of 1927: 2 storeyed, a 7-window range symmetrical about a slightly advanced central entrance bay, emphasised by raised parapet with urn finials. This has stone architrave to doorway, the window above it advanced in a stone panel. Windows are all 12-pane sashes - those to ground floor with rubbed brick heads with stone voussoirs, and raised brick aprons. Stripped down brick pilasters at angles. 3 window return elevations, that to right with single window to ground floor, and central chimney with pedimented base interrupting the eaves cornice. The long rear wing comprises two sections to either side of an advance pavilion facing NW. Similar window detail, arranged with tripartite sashes flanking

paired windows in its inner length, and a single tripartite window and 3 grouped windows beyond the pavilion. Pavilion has hipped roof and secondary entrance in brick porch, flanked by narrow sash windows. To front this range has similar detail (including tripartite sash windows), and a corresponding pavilion wing: this has boldly pedimented gable, and a terracotta architrave with paired pilasters surrounding ground-floor window, presumably intended as a feature visible from the open ground beyond. Secondary wing has advanced 5-bay block forming entrance to council suite: this is linked to the other (and earlier) wing by a long 8-window range, articulated by the differential spacing of windows, with a winder bay to left of centre which has full-height mullioned and transomed French Window to ground floor, and winder sash window above. Secondary entrance in stone architrave towards the right; similar window detail throughout (small-paned sashes, those to ground floor with rubbed brick heads and voussoirs). Council suite is higher, with stripped down brick pilasters to give emphasis. Central entrance in ornate stone architrave, with segmentally arched doorway and scrolled blocks surmounting the pilasters. Window above in pedimented stone panel. Narrower windows flank the doorway, but windows on both floors have rubbed brick heads and stone voussoirs. Council chamber in rear wing: 3 high-set tripartite windows immediately below the eaves. Its hipped roof is swept down low over withdrawing room at rear, which has continuous band of windows.

Interior

Original block has central entrance lobby giving access to long spinal corridor. Simple classical detail throughout, with plaster cornices and architraves. Original joinery detail survives: 2-panelled doorways. Staircase offset to rear of frontage block lead to original chief executive's office over the entrance: staircase has typical 1920s metalwork detail comprising rectangular open panels with diagonal braces. Lobby to office has shallow segmental archway from corridor, echoed in shallow panel in wall opposite: office has dado rail, wall panelling, and frieze. In the rear range, council suite has wide stair hall, with double return stairway swept over paired entrances to council chamber: stair has scrolled and twisted metal-work balusters, offset newel and swept rail. At the top of the central flight, an alcove has painting of county arms and the emblem of a swan above a semi-abstract tree. Council chamber appears to retain original seating.

Reason for designation

Listed as an exceptionally good example of an office building with its origins in an important phase in the development of local government. Both the original design and its extension employ a consistent and sophisticated Neo-Georgian style, with a fine vocabulary of detail, not least in the use of brick. The building retains most of its original detail, both internally and externally, and thus illustrates the structure and organisation of local government at this formative period with exceptional clarity.

APPENDIX 2: ARCHITECTS' DRAWINGS ON DISPLAY IN NEUADD MALDWYN



Front elevation, 1927, Drawing number 6, by Briggs and Thornely



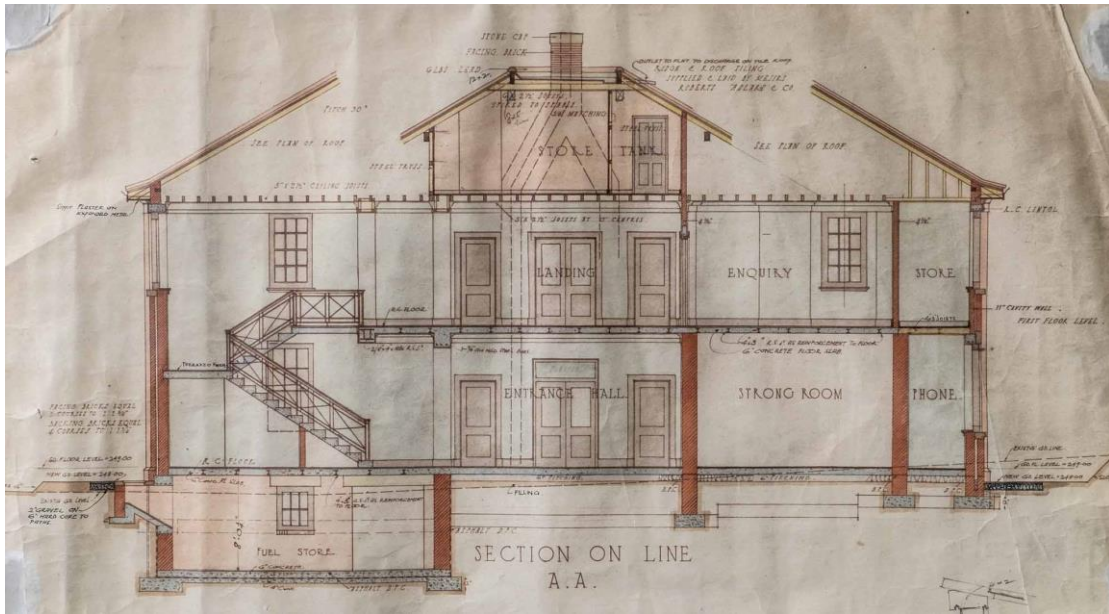
Rear elevation (north-east), 1927, drawing number 6, by Briggs and Thornely



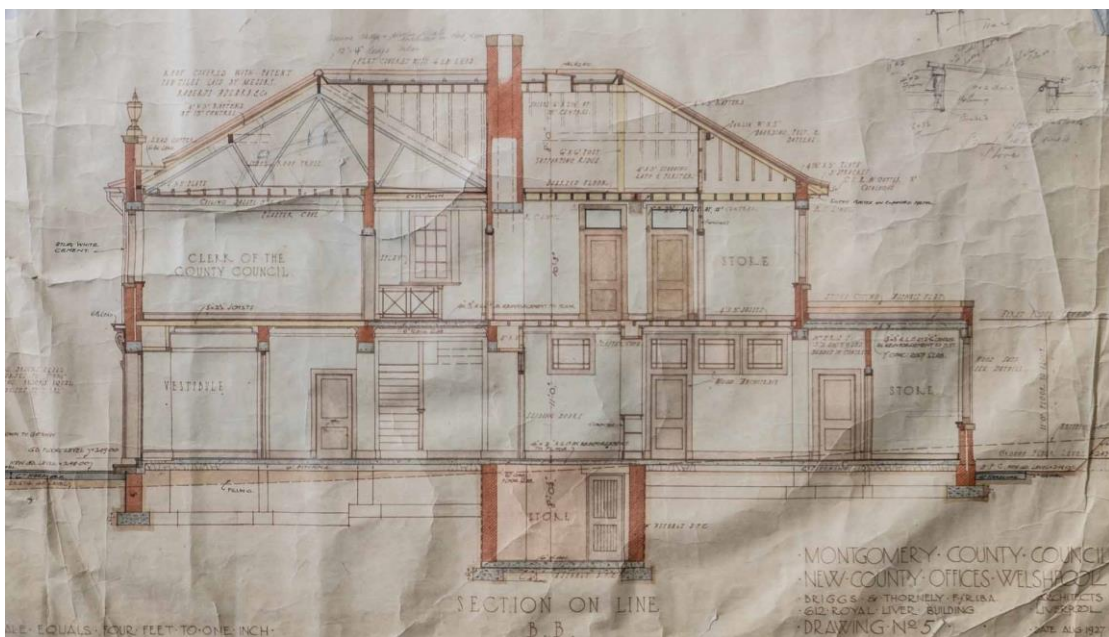
East elevation (i.e. south-east), 1927, Drawing number 7, by Briggs and Thornely



West elevation, 1927, Drawing number 7, by Briggs and Thornely



Cross-section of entrance range, 1927, Drawing number 5, by Briggs and Thornely



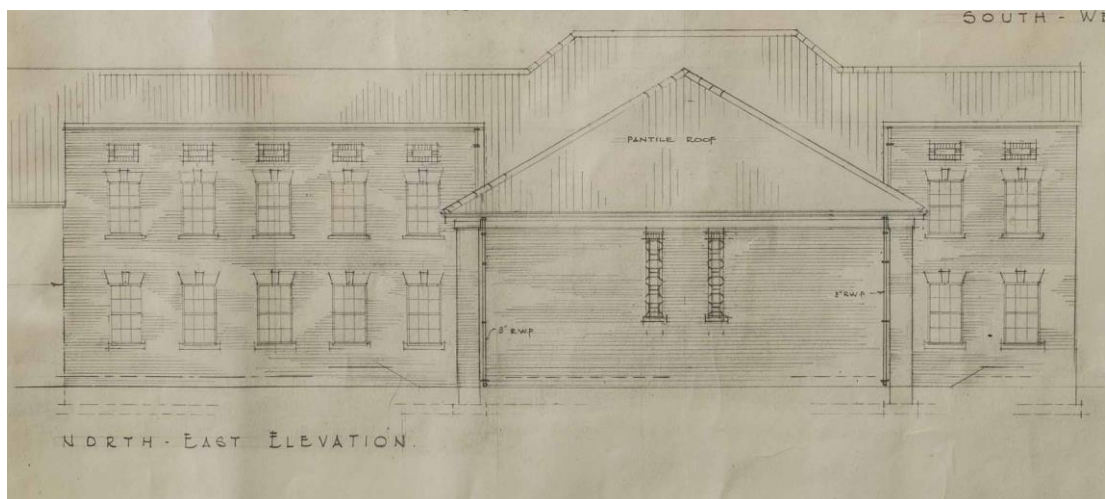
Cross-section of entrance range, 1927, Drawing number 5, by Briggs and Thornely



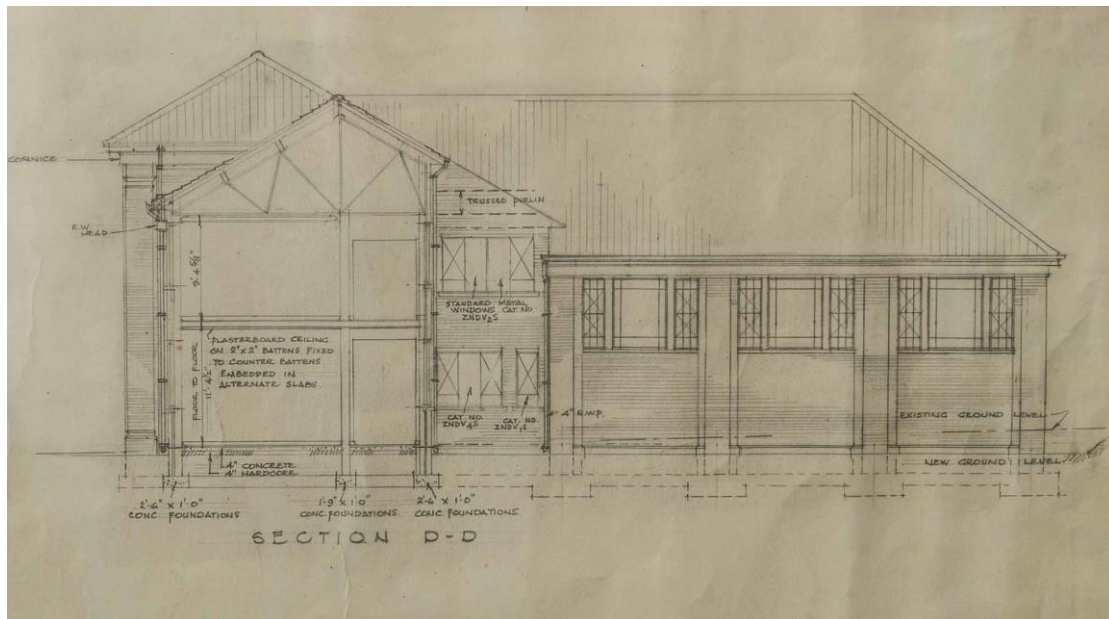
South-east elevation, 1938, by Herbert Carr



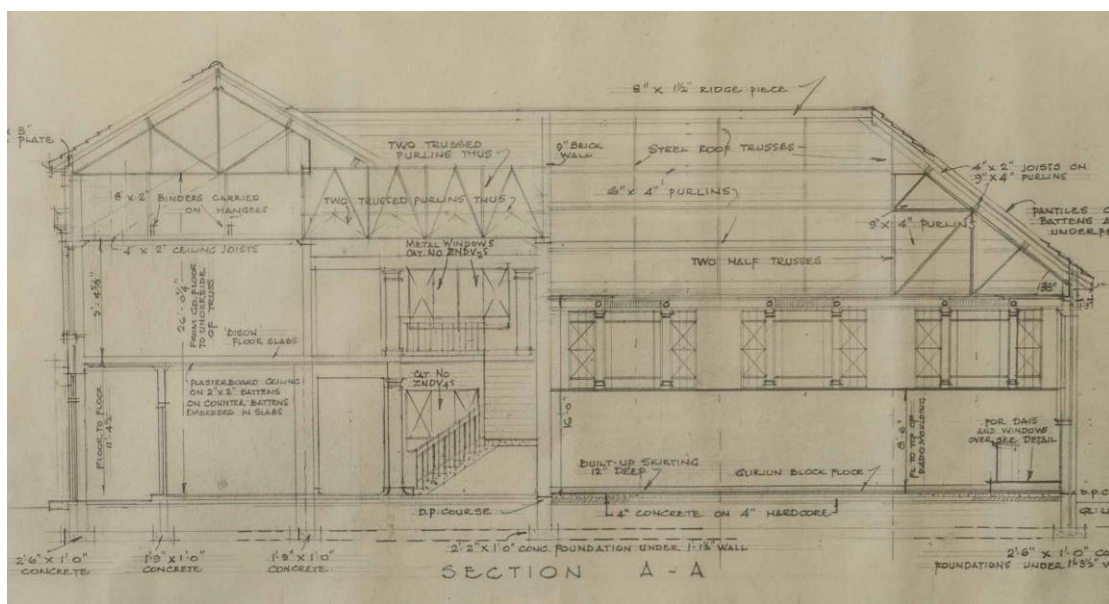
South-west elevation, 1959, by Herbert Carr



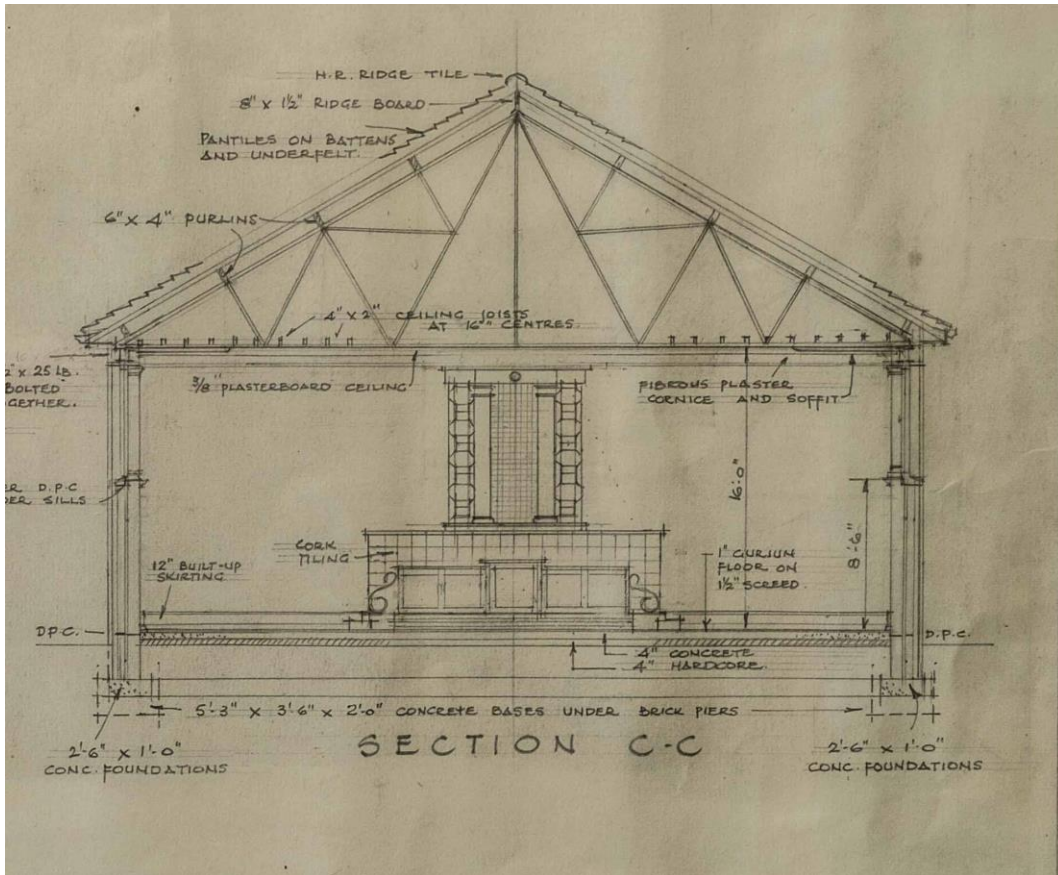
North-East (rear) elevation, 1959, by Herbert Carr



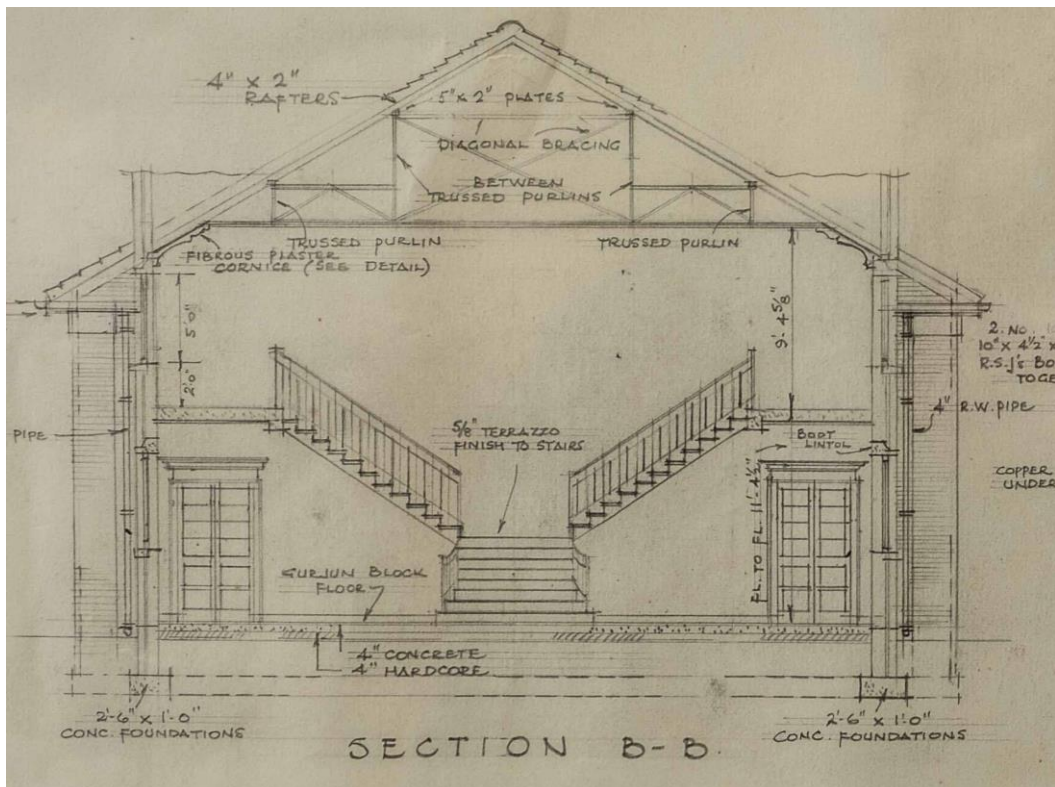
Cross-section and south-east elevation of council chamber, 1959, by Herbert Carr



Cross-section of council suite, 1959, by Herbert Carr



Cross section of council chamber, 1959, by Herbert Carr



Cross-section of stair hall to council suite, 1959, by Herbert Carr