

BUILT HERITAGE STATEMENT

Former Prescott Police Station, Derby Street, Prescott, Merseyside

HER00049
v.2
18 March 2024

REPORT

Document status

Version	Purpose of document	Authored by	Reviewed by	Approved by	Review date
1	Draft built heritage statement	Jonathan Smith	Susana Parker	Jonathan Smith	29.2.24
2	Final built heritage statement	Jonathan Smith		Jonathan Smith	18.3.24

Approval for issue

Jonathan Smith



18 March 2024

The report has been prepared for the exclusive use and benefit of our client and solely for the purpose for which it is provided. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by RPS Group Plc, any of its subsidiaries, or a related entity (collectively 'RPS') no part of this report should be reproduced, distributed or communicated to any third party. RPS does not accept any liability if this report is used for an alternative purpose from which it is intended, nor to any third party in respect of this report. The report does not account for any changes relating to the subject matter of the report, or any legislative or regulatory changes that have occurred since the report was produced and that may affect the report.

The report has been prepared using the information provided to RPS by its client, or others on behalf of its client. To the fullest extent permitted by law, RPS shall not be liable for any loss or damage suffered by the client arising from fraud, misrepresentation, withholding of information material relevant to the report or required by RPS, or other default relating to such information, whether on the client's part or that of the other information sources, unless such fraud, misrepresentation, withholding or such other default is evident to RPS without further enquiry. It is expressly stated that no independent verification of any documents or information supplied by the client or others on behalf of the client has been made. The report shall be used for general information only.

Prepared by:

RPS Consulting UK

Jonathan Smith
Senior Director - Heritage

Southgate House
Southgate Street
Gloucester
GL1 1UB

T +44 1242 259 290
E jonathan.smith@rpsgroup.com

Prepared for:

Prima Group Housing Association

Robbie Mannion
Development Programme Manager

8 Columbus Quay
Liverpool
L3 4DB

07885 366588
robbie.mannion@primagroup.org

Contents

1 INTRODUCTION1

2 LEGISLATIVE AND PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK2

 Legislation2

 National Planning Policy.....2

 National Guidance3

 Local Planning Policy6

3 HISTORIC BUILT ENVIRONMENT APPRAISAL8

 Introduction.....8

 Historic Development8

 Assessment of Significance9

4 PROPOSALS AND ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT15

 Proposals.....15

 Summary of Impact17

5 CONCLUSION18

Figures

Figure 1: Site Location

Appendices

Appendix A Historic Building Survey

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Built Heritage Statement has been researched and prepared by RPS, on behalf of the Prima Group, to assess the likely impacts on the historic built environment from development at the former Prescott Police Station, Derby Street, Prescott, L34 3LE (hereafter referred to as “the Site”). The Site is located on the north side of Derby Road, Prescott in the Metropolitan Borough of Knowsley in Merseyside. It is centred on NGR SJ 46304 92851 [Fig.1]. The Statement is focussed on built heritage considerations only.
- 1.2 The Site is formed of a large, near square plot with the main set of buildings largely addressing Derby Street, with a large, enclosed yard and a smaller courtyard to the rear. There are further ancillary buildings in the east and to the rear (north) of the plot. The buildings comprise the former Prescott Police Station, associated courtroom rear wing and ancillary buildings. The Site is ‘cut out’ to the southeast where there are the buildings comprising former police accommodation, contemporary with the former Police Station and set immediately east of the Site’s access drive off Derby Street (Nos 8-10 Derby Street).
- 1.3 The Site is wholly within an urban area, mainly surrounded by twentieth-century residential development. The Site is also wholly within the north-western margin of the Prescott Town Centre Conservation Area. A small section of the Area extends north of Derby Street to take in the Police Station and Nos 8-10 Derby Street. There are twelve listed buildings within 250m of the Site.
- 1.4 This report meets the requirement under paragraph 200 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for the applicant to explain the significance of the heritage assets likely to be affected by development and demonstrate the level of impact that any proposals would have upon that significance. This report accords with the requirements of the NPPF and local planning policy.
- 1.5 The assessment makes reference, as necessary, to the relevant legislative framework contained within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, as well as national and local planning policy. In addition, relevant Historic England guidance has been consulted to inform the judgements made. A summary of the relevant National and Local Planning Policy is included.
- 1.6 Relevant information, including from the Merseyside Historic Environment Record (HER) and the Council’s *Prescot Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal*, have also been consulted in preparing this Built Heritage Statement. The report is further informed by the findings of historical research, a Site and area walkover survey and assessment, an archaeological building recording survey of the Site’s buildings [Appendix A], map studies and the application of professional judgement.
- 1.7 The findings of this report are based on the known conditions at the time of writing and all findings and conclusions are time limited to no more than two years from the date of this report. All maps, plans and photographs are for illustrative purposes only.

2 LEGISLATIVE AND PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 2.1 The current national legislative and planning policy system identifies, through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), that applicants should consider the potential impact of development upon 'heritage assets'. This term includes designated heritage assets which possess a statutory designation (for example listed buildings and conservation areas); and non-designated heritage assets, typically identified by Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) and incorporated into a local list and/or recorded on the Historic Environment Record (HER).

Legislation

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

- 2.2 Where any development may affect certain designated heritage assets, there is a legislative framework to ensure proposed works are developed and considered with due regard to their impact on any designated heritage assets' significance. This extends from primary legislation under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 2.3 The relevant legislation for listed buildings extends from section 66 of the 1990 Act which states that special regard must be given by the decision maker, in the exercise of planning functions, to the desirability of preserving or enhancing listed buildings and their setting. This duty is not engaged in this case since the significance of no listed building will be affected by the proposed development.
- 2.4 Section 69(1) of the Act requires LPAs to '*determine areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*' and to designate them as conservation areas. Section 69(2) requires LPAs to review and, where necessary, amend those areas '*from time to time*'.
- 2.5 For development within a conservation area section 72 of the Act requires the decision maker to pay '*special attention [...] to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area*'. The duty to give special attention is considered commensurate with that under section 66(1) to give special regard, meaning that the decision maker must give considerable importance and weight to any such harm in the planning balance.
- 2.6 The Site is wholly located within a north-western portion of the Prescott Town Centre Conservation Area. As such, s.72 of the Act is engaged in this case.

Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023

- 2.7 Heritage is dealt with in Chapter 3 whereby amendments enacted to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 are set out.
- 2.8 Clause 102 of the Act enacts amendments to the two Acts such that a desirability to not only 'preserve' a designated asset (World Heritage Sites; Scheduled Monuments; Registered Parks and Gardens; listed buildings and Protected Wrecks, but not conservation areas) and its setting, but a desirability to 'preserve or enhance' such a designated asset and its setting.

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (Dec. 2023)

- 2.9 The NPPF is the principal document that sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It defines a heritage asset as a: '*building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest*'. This includes both designated and non-designated heritage assets.

- 2.10 Section 16: *Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment* relates to the conservation of heritage assets in the production of local plans and decision taking. It emphasises that heritage assets are '*an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance*'.
- 2.11 For proposals that have the potential to affect the significance of a heritage asset, paragraph 200 requires applicants to identify and describe the significance of any heritage assets that may be affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail provided should be proportionate to the significance of the heritage assets affected. This is supported by paragraph 201, which requires decision makers to take this assessment into account when considering applications.
- 2.12 Under '*Considering potential impacts*', paragraph 205 states that '*great weight*' should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets, irrespective of whether any potential impact equates to total loss, substantial harm or less than substantial harm to the significance of the affected heritage assets.
- 2.13 Paragraph 207 states that where a development will result in substantial harm to, or total loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset, permission should be refused, unless this harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits, or specified criteria are met. Where less than substantial harm is identified, paragraph 208 requires this harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposed development. Refusal is not advised by the NPPF for such cases.
- 2.14 Paragraph 209 states that where an application will affect the significance of a non-designated heritage asset, a balanced judgement is required, having regard to the scale of harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
- 2.15 Paragraph 212 notes that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas and World Heritage Sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. It also states that proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to, or better reveal the significance of, the asset should be treated favourably.
- 2.16 Furthermore, paragraph 213 states that not all elements of a conservation area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. When determining the impacts arising from the loss of a building or element that does positively contribute, consideration should be given to the relative significance of that building and the impact to the significance of the conservation area or World Heritage Site as a whole.

National Guidance

Planning Practice Guidance

- 2.17 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) has been adopted to aid and inform the application of the NPPF. It reiterates that conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance is a core planning principle. It also states that conservation is an active process of maintenance and managing change, requiring a flexible and thoughtful approach. It highlights that neglect and decay of heritage assets is best addressed through ensuring they remain in active use that is consistent with their conservation.
- 2.18 Key elements of the guidance related to assessing harm. It states that substantial harm is a high bar that may not arise in many cases and that while the level of harm will be at the discretion of the decision maker, generally, substantial harm is a high test that will only arise where a development seriously affects a key element of an asset's special interest. It is the degree of harm, rather than the scale of development, that is to be assessed.
- 2.19 Importantly, it is stated that harm may arise from work to the asset, or from development within its setting. Setting is defined as '*the surroundings in which an asset is experienced and may be more extensive than the curtilage*'. A thorough assessment of the impact of proposals upon setting must

take into account, and be proportionate to, the significance of the heritage asset and the degree to which proposed changes enhance or detract from that significance and the ability to appreciate it.

- 2.20 In terms of the identification of non-designated heritage assets, a number of processes through which they can be identified are noted, including through local and neighbourhood plan-making, and conservation area appraisals and reviews. It is noted that:

'Plan-making bodies should make clear and up to date information on non-designated heritage assets accessible [...]. This includes information on the criteria used to select non-designated heritage assets'.

- 2.21 It is also noted that *'local planning authorities may also identify non-designated heritage assets as part of the decision-making process on planning applications'*. While non-designated heritage assets could be identified against published criteria associated with a local list, the guidance suggests that local planning authorities maintain a local list of non-designated heritage assets.

- 2.22 Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council do not currently maintain a local list of non-designated heritage assets (though it is noted that they did so in the 1980s). However, the *Prescot Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal* [May 2012] identifies the former Prescot Police Station as an *'unlisted historic building'*; and as a *'positive'* building in the Area, though not as a *'principal'* building in the Area. The adjacent and associated former accommodation (Nos 8-10 Derby Street) is regarded in the Appraisal as being *'of note'*. The former Police Station is not referenced in the *Prescot Town Centre Conservation Area Management Plan* [May 2012].

- 2.23 The PPG defines the different heritage interests as follows:

- **archaeological interest:** As defined in the Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework, there will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.
- **architectural and artistic interest:** These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skill, like sculpture.
- **historic interest:** An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.

Overview: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning

- 2.24 Historic England have published a series of documents to advise applicants, owners, decision-takers and other stakeholders on managing change within the historic environment. These include Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning (GPAs) documents and Historic England Advice Notes (HEANS).

- 2.25 These GPAs provide supporting guidance relating to good conservation practice. The documents focus in particular on how the good practice can be achieved through the principles included within national policy and guidance. As such, the GPAs provide information on good practice to assist LPAs, planning and other consultants, owners, applicants, and other interested parties when implementing policy found within the NPPF relating to the historic environment.

- 2.26 These GPAs are complemented by the Historic England Advice Notes in Planning which includes HEAN1: *Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management* (second edition; February 2018), HEAN2: *Making Changes to Heritage Assets* (February 2016), HEAN3: *The Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans* (October 2015), and HEAN4: *Tall Buildings* (December 2015).

GPA1: The Historic Environment in Local Plans (March 2015)

- 2.27 This advice note focuses on the importance of identifying heritage policies within Local Plans. The advice echoes the NPPF by stressing the importance of formulating Local Plans based on up-to-date and relevant evidence on economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of the area, including the historic environment.

GPA2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (March 2015)

- 2.28 This document provides advice on numerous ways in which decision making in the historic environment could be undertaken, emphasising that the first step for all applicants is to understand the significance of any affected heritage asset and the contribution of its setting to that significance. In line with the NPPF and PPG, the document states that early engagement and expert advice in considering and assessing the significance of heritage assets is encouraged. The advice suggests a structured, staged approach to the assembly and analysis of relevant information:

1. Understand the significance of the affected assets;
2. Understand the impact of the proposal on that significance;
3. Avoid, minimise and mitigate impact in a way that meets the objectives of the NPPF;
4. Look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance;
5. Justify any harmful impacts in terms of the sustainable development objective of conserving significance balanced with the need for change; and
6. Offset negative impacts to significance by enhancing others through recording, disseminating and archiving archaeological and historical interest of the important elements of the heritage assets affected.

GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (2nd Ed. Dec. 2017)

- 2.29 This advice note focuses on the management of change within the setting of heritage assets. This document replaces GPA3: *The Setting of Heritage Assets* (March 2017) and *Seeing History in the View* (English Heritage, 2011) in order to aid practitioners with the implementation of national legislation, policies and guidance relating to the setting of heritage assets found in the 1990 Act, the NPPF and PPG. The guidance is largely a continuation of the philosophy and approach of the 2011 and 2015 documents and does not present a divergence in either the definition of setting or the way in which it should be assessed.
- 2.30 As with the NPPF the document defines setting as *'the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve'*. Setting is also described as being a separate term to curtilage, character and context. The guidance emphasises that setting is not a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation, and that its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset, or the ability to appreciate that significance. It also states that elements of setting may make a positive, negative or neutral contribution to the significance of the heritage asset.
- 2.31 While setting is largely a visual term, with views considered to be an important consideration in any assessment of the contribution that setting makes to the significance of an asset, and thus the way in which an asset is experienced, setting also encompasses other environmental factors including noise, vibration and odour. Historical and cultural associations may also form part of the asset's setting, which can inform or enhance the significance of a heritage asset.
- 2.32 This document provides guidance on practical and proportionate decision making with regards to the management of change within the setting of heritage assets. It is stated that the protection of the setting of a heritage asset need not prevent change and that decisions relating to such issues need to be based on the nature, extent and level of the significance of a heritage asset, further

weighing up the potential public benefits associated with the proposals. It is further stated that changes within the setting of a heritage asset may have positive or neutral effects.

- 2.33 The document also states that the contribution made to the significance of heritage assets by their settings will vary depending on the nature of the heritage asset and its setting, and that different heritage assets may have different abilities to accommodate change without harming their significance. Setting should, therefore, be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- 2.34 Historic England recommends using a series of detailed steps in order to assess the potential effects of a proposed development on significance of a heritage asset. The five-step process is as follows:
1. Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected;
 2. Assess the degree to which these settings and views make a contribution to the significance of a heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated;
 3. Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on the significance or on the ability to appreciate it;
 4. Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm; and
 5. Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

HEAN12: Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets (October 2019)

- 2.35 This advice note provides information on how to assess the significance of a heritage asset. It also explores how this should be used as part of a staged approach to decision-making in which assessing significance precedes designing the proposal(s).
- 2.36 Historic England notes that the first stage in identifying the significance of a heritage asset is by understanding its form and history. This includes the historical development, an analysis of its surviving fabric and an analysis of the setting, including the contribution setting makes to the significance of a heritage asset.
- 2.37 To assess the significance of the heritage asset, Historic England advise to describe various interests. These follow the heritage interest identified in the NPPF and PPG and are archaeological interest, architectural interest, and artistic interest and historic interest.

Local Planning Policy

- 2.38 In considering any planning application for development, the planning authority will be mindful of the framework set by government policy, in this instance the NPPF, by current Development Plan Policy and by other material considerations. In considering any planning application for development the Local Planning Authority, Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council, is bound in this case by the policies within the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy 2016.
- 2.39 The Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy, adopted 2016, deals with strategic issues and policies. It sets down the housing land requirement and supply considerations, as well as identifying the spatial strategy for the Borough. Policies of the Core Strategy that hold some relevance to built heritage considerations in planning include Policy CS19 *Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development* and CS20 *Managing the Borough's Historic Environment*.
- 2.40 Relevant elements to this case in **Policy CS19 Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development** include:
1. *To enhance the local distinctiveness, identity and accessibility of places, new development within Knowsley will be expected to:*

a) Respond to and integrate positive characteristics of immediate surroundings, including local materials, scale, mass, form, layout, alignment and density of the existing built environment;

b) Complement and enhance (where possible), existing landscape, topography, Green Infrastructure; and features of local importance and historic interest;

[...].

2.41 Relevant elements to this case in **Policy CS20 Managing the Borough's Historic Environment** include:

- '1. Development proposals in Knowsley should preserve or enhance the borough's historic and architectural assets, including Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Historic Parks and Gardens and archaeological remains, together with other local areas, buildings and structures of historic importance. The Council will:*
 - a) Require preservation of the local distinctiveness and character of historic assets through sensitive design of new development, including appropriate integration with their setting and immediate landscape;*
 - b) Prevent demolition and/or development which would result in substantial harm or the loss of a designated historic asset or its setting, unless the proposal would result in substantial public benefits which clearly outweigh the harm or loss;*
 - c) Where a development proposal will result in less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset or its setting, assess such harm against the benefits of the proposal;*
 - d) Facilitate long term conservation and enhancement of local assets and areas of historic importance, including through the preparation of Conservation Area Management Plans.*
- 2. The re-use of vacant and underused historic assets will be encouraged, with favourable consideration given, where appropriate, to proposals which will:*
 - a) Enable a use for a purpose sympathetic to its conservation;*
 - b) Retain or introduce public access; and*
 - c) Enhance the importance of the asset for local tourism, leisure or the economy.*
- 3. Development proposals on sites which include, or are considered to have the potential to include, heritage assets or comprising archaeological interest, should be accompanied by a heritage impact statement.*
- 4. Locally important historic assets which are not subject to statutory designation will be identified in a local list and will be afforded consideration in the decision-making process'.*

3 HISTORIC BUILT ENVIRONMENT APPRAISAL

Introduction

- 3.1 The Site, approximately 0.21ha. in area, is located on the north side of Derby Street and is centred on NGR SJ 46304 92851 [Fig.1]. The Site is formed of a large, near square plot with a 'cut out' to the southeast. The main set of buildings largely address Derby Street, with a large, enclosed yard to the rear (accessed from Derby Street by a north-south road to the immediate east of the main buildings). There are further ancillary buildings in the east and in the rear (north) of the plot. The buildings comprise the former Prescott Police Station, associated courtroom range and ancillary buildings. The Site is 'cut out' to the southeast where there are the buildings comprising former police accommodation, contemporary with the former Police Station, set immediately east of the access road off Derby Street (Nos 8-10 Derby Street).
- 3.2 The Site is within an urban area, mainly surrounded by twentieth-century residential development with some surviving later nineteenth-century elements. The Site is also wholly within the northern margin of the Prescott Town Centre Conservation Area [HER ref: DME3436]. A small section of the Area extends north of Derby Street to take in the Police Station and the associated, contemporary police accommodation to the east at 8-10 Derby Street.
- 3.3 There are twelve listed buildings within a 250m radius of the Site. The Site does not form any part of these designated heritage assets' setting. As such, none of the listed buildings can have their significance affected by the development of the Site and their significance will not be considered further in the Statement.
- 3.4 This Heritage Statement is based on historical research; a Site and area walkover survey and assessment; a review of the relevant sections of the Merseyside Historic Environment Record (HER) [accessed 27th Oct. 2023, ref: CME3006]; and historic map studies. Most particularly, this Statement is based on the record and analysis of the Site set out in the '*Historic Building Survey of the former Prescott Police Station, Derby Road, Prescott, Knowsley*' carried out by Ambrey Archaeology January-February 2024 [Appx A].
- 3.5 In addition to the Historic Building Survey, documents informing the Heritage Statement include Davey, P.J. *Prescot Action Area an Archaeological Overview* [1978]; Prima Group's *Heritage Statement: former Prescott Police Station, 12 Derby Street, Prescott* [2022]; with the Council's *Prescot Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal* [May 2012]; and *Prescot Town Centre Conservation Area Management Plan* [May 2012].

Historic Development

- 3.6 A comprehensive review of the Site's history and the building's development over time is set out in section 6 of the Historic Building Survey [Appx A]. A history of Prescott and the development of the area around the Site is also thoroughly rehearsed in the Council's *Prescot Town Centre Conservation Appraisal*. A summary of the Site's history is set out here.
- 3.7 The Lancashire Constabulary was formed in 1839. The chief constable appointed two Assistant Chief Constables, one of whom was based in Prescott. The 1841 Tithe Map of Prescott [Fig.3, Appx A] and the Ordnance Survey (OS) Town Plan of Prescott [Fig.4, Appx A] show the Site as undeveloped in an area of open fields on the north side of Fall Lane (from 1871 renamed as Derby Street).
- 3.8 On 24th April 1869, the Prescott Reporter newspaper noted that magistrates had approved a scheme to build a new court room, police station, four prisoners' cells and apartments for unmarried policemen on a plot of land on the north side of Fall Lane. On 2nd July 1870 the Prescott Reporter further recorded that the new police buildings were complete and occupied. It was reported that:

'the building comprises, on the ground floor, spacious offices for the superintendent of the police, and large general office, work room for adjusting weights and measures; hot water apparatus for heating the building; four spacious cells for prisoners; large day room for the police when coming to headquarters for inspection or pay, and various rooms for the married and single policemen residing within the building. On the second floor is the large room intended for the petty sessions. It is a wider room than the one hitherto used, but not so long, the extra width more than making up for what is short in the length. Leading from the petty sessions room, and behind the bench is a retiring room for the magistrates, taking up with a small anteroom the entire width of the large room. The other rooms on the second floor consist of bathroom and bedrooms for the single officers and married officers and their families. The entire building seems to be admirably adapted for the purposes to which it will be used'.

- 3.9 The earliest mapped record of a building on the Site is set out on the OS mapping of 1893 [Fig.6, Appx A]. The Site is shown largely developed with both the Police Station and the accommodation to the immediate east evident (Nos 8-10 Derby Street – a contemporary development built to house the sergeant and deputy sergeant and their families). We can also see many of the ancillary buildings to the rear of Nos 8-10, including an open-sided element facing onto the access road, and the stables attached to the rear of the small, enclosed yard to the rear of the Police Station and abutting the Site's western boundary wall. The space to the rear of Nos 8-10 is shown as an enclosed garden with a large, open yard to the rear of the Police Station.
- 3.10 The main building has a substantial rear wing on the eastern side aligned north-south on its long axis. This includes the courtroom on the first floor and the cells below it on the ground floor. The main building addressing Derby Street is shown on the 1893 mapping as divided into two fully adjoined buildings. That to the west is a third the size of that to the east. Census data indicates that the western building was intended to house unmarried police officers, although the majority of such accommodation was on the first floor, including above the Police Station. That to the east on the ground floor was the functioning part of the Police Station.
- 3.11 The immediate wider area is predominantly shown, at the end of the nineteenth century, as built up with residential development on the north side of Derby Road (formerly Falls Lane) up to the northern boundary of the parish of Prescott (along the northern boundary to the Site).
- 3.12 Little change is shown by the 1908 OS mapping [Fig.7, Appx A] but includes the removal of a box bay on the main, the southern, elevation of the Police Station. By 1927 [Fig.8, Appx A] a porch has been added to the main elevation and there is some amalgamation of the ancillary buildings to the rear. We can also see a narrow range along the northern wall in the garden to Nos 8-10 (now part of the Site).
- 3.13 The 1964 OS mapping shows the addition of the ground-floor box bay to the west elevation of the courtroom wing, thereby indicating the conversion of the southern cell (of four originally provided).
- 3.14 The 1966 OS mapping indicates that the courthouse had been moved from the Site to No.10 Derby Street. In 1994 a planning application provided for the construction of the access ramp to the front of the Police Station.
- 3.15 The former Prescott Police Station was closed in 2011 and has been disused since that time.

Assessment of Significance

Former Prescott Police Station

Introduction

- 3.16 The Site is systematically recorded to the appropriate Historic England requirements ('Level 2') and described in detail element by element, with associated illustrations, in the February 2024 *Historic Building Survey* [Appx A].

- 3.17 The Merseyside Historic Environment Record (HER) records the former Police Station as an 1870s' historic building [HER ref: MME6356]. Davey [1978] recorded the buildings as: *'Police Station. Brick, two storeys. Decorative use of light-coloured brick [sic] in window heads. Stone detail, slate roof. Inscription "Police Station" in sandstone'*.
- 3.18 The Council's *Prescot Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal* notes the building as being 'positive' [p.24]. It does not identify it as a 'principal building' in the Area. The Council does not currently maintain a local list of non-designated heritage assets, but the Appraisal describes the former Police Station as an 'unlisted historic building' [p.21]. It is also mentioned in the Appraisal [p.29] that the Council did maintain a local list during the 1980s and the building was included on that list.
- 3.19 The Council's Principal Conservation Officer's representation of 26th April 2023 [22/00757/FUL] identifies the former Police Station as 'a suitable candidate for Local Listing'. As such, the building is identified as a non-designated heritage asset.
- 3.20 The Representation notes that the:
'Police Station and Court Room were purpose built and opened in July 1870. The adjacent buildings (not part of this application) appear to have been built as police housing. The complex embodies part of the history of law and order and governance in Prescot. The buildings illustrate the lives and experiences of both prisoners and the police. [...].
The building was purpose built as a police station and law courts and it retains many original features, providing evidence of how police and court facilities were designed and functioned in the later Victorian Period in the local area'.
- 3.21 The Representation sets out the architectural interest of the asset, noting that:
'The building is well-detailed but not too fussy, with Gothic features, blue engineering brickwork string courses, special brick detailing and carved stonework. It has a strong character commensurate with the important civic role it was designed for. The architects were Reade and Goodison (a fairly prolific Liverpool-based architecture firm often associated with civic projects) and built by Messers Jones and Sons of Mount Pleasant. In the later Victorian period, the formal and imposing style of many civic buildings was designed to impress and dominate, symbolic of their roles. The Prescot Police station and Courtroom bears these hallmarks.
The red pressed brick at parapet level and the multiple red brick chimneys, which are a key feature on the skyline, may be later additions'.
- 3.22 The Representation identifies some notable internal features including: *'the characterful and evidentially important internal spaces of the jail cells; the staircases; the courtroom; and the double-height ceilinged first-floor courtroom'*. The Representation also notes chimney breasts and the windows as *'mostly historic features that add to the significance of the non-designated heritage asset'*, while recognising correctly, in regard to windows, that they *'vary in design and authenticity'*.

Description

- 3.23 The main building and most of the ancillary buildings are constructed in dark red/grey brick with stone (both buff and red in colour) used in architectural detailing. The buildings' architectural style is Gothic. The main body of the buildings address Derby Street and comprised the former Police Station with living accommodation to the first floor and the western element. There is a gabled slate roof over, the ridge aligned east-west, and fronted by a brick parapet (rebuilt in red semi-engineering brick) with stone coping over a deep, moulded cornice to the main elevation.
- 3.24 The frontage is of five bays over a plinth, with the central three bays set forward. The windows are mainly segmental arched with alternating red and buff stone voussoirs. The two doors and the central, upper-floor window are headed by pointed, two-centre arches. A dark, blue engineering brick forms two single-course stringlines set at the height of each storey's window shoulders. That

at the upper floor wrap over the voussoirs. The plinth bricks and immediate course below are of the same brick.

- 3.25 The left-hand bay of the central three is set further forward with a two-windowed box bay on the ground floor. This exhibits a projecting cornice supported on brackets. The bay has a parapet with similar stone coping as seen for the whole elevation. It too has been rebuilt in red semi-engineering brick. The two fronting and narrow side windows are headed with deep chamfered flat lintels and sills of red stone. It is evident that the lower part of the bay has been rebuilt/repared.
- 3.26 To the right of the box bay is the former Police Station's main entrance accessed by a late twentieth-century ramp. The entrance is headed with an arch, in common with the moulded stone window heads in this face, of alternate red and buff sandstone. The arch is pointed and chamfered, incorporating decorative cusping, almost forming a trefoil.
- 3.27 The left-hand (western) bay to the frontage, is wider than the other bays, forming the frontage to the western part of the buildings. It includes a narrow and less ornate doorway, accessed from the pavement by steps. It provides the access to the former living quarters in the western portion of the buildings.
- 3.28 On the eastern side of the frontage range, a large wing projects to the rear, formerly housing a secure area with cells at ground level with a large courtroom above, since divided into offices. This wing has a Dutch Gable roof with louvred gables, the ridge of which is higher than that at the frontage. To the west of the courtroom wing, and bound by the Site's western wall, is an enclosed small courtyard. This includes a later (1964) iron external staircase – a fire escape - to the courtroom level.
- 3.29 The eastern elevation of the courtroom wing, addressing the access road off Derby Street to the Site's rear yard, includes the public entrance to the courtroom. It forms the most ornate element of architectural detailing on the elevation. It is a tall doorway beneath a segmental brick arch. The lower voussoirs are chamfered, while the upper, projecting forward, are half bricks. Above the door, the words 'COURT ROOM' are raised from a red sandstone arch. Either side of the arch, brick pilasters, stepped at the base, continue to the top of the window above, encasing both the window and a decorative panel of three partial blind arches above the doorway. There is a slate awning over the window with projecting decorative joists.
- 3.30 The notable architectural detail on the north wall of the courtroom wing is a central, projecting chimney breast – serving a first-floor hearth - supported on decorative brick brackets. The chimney stack above eaves level has been rebuilt in the same red semi-engineering brick seen in the rebuilt parapets. This is the same for all of the building's chimney stacks. It is notable that this is the case too for those stacks on the adjacent No.8-10 Derby Street.
- 3.31 Internally, the main building remains largely of the form and, in the main, retains much of its original layout. The notable areas of greater change and remodelling are the former courtroom wing and the reception area. Rooms have been subdivided, repurposed and remodelled in these areas. There have also been a number of blockings and new openings of windows and doorways. The instances of remodelling have been caused by changing operational uses of the buildings. These, predominantly, have related to the cessation of providing on-site accommodation for police officers; the transfer of the courtroom to Nos 8-10 Derby Street in 1966; the expansion of police functions, mainly as offices, in the buildings; the infrastructure and technological upgrades (mainly conduits and cabling); and the eventual abandonment of the Police Station in 2011.
- 3.32 In the ground-floor reception area [RG02, Appx A], the box bay is an early addition. The layout within and in relation to the adjacent entrance lobby [RG001]; the east-west corridor [RG005]; and the room to the rear [RG013] have been repeatedly reordered. A new doorway was inserted to connect with the lobby to the former accommodation (presumably contemporary with the blocking of the lobby to the north). The former accommodation has also been reordered to the rear, with inserted walls and a blocked window [RG009 & 010].

- 3.33 Other than blocked fireplaces there has been minimal change to the two offices in the eastern portion of the frontage building [RG003 & 004].
- 3.34 The changes to the ground floor of the rear wing below the former courtroom include the conversion of the southern, fourth cell to a toilet block [RG015]. A box bay extended the room to the west in 1964. It is likely that the inserted door and partition in the adjacent corridor [RG025] is contemporary. The north end of this corridor, serving the cells, has a blocked external door.
- 3.35 The greater extent of changes is in the rooms along the eastern margin of the wing. This includes conversion of windows with glass bricks; internal partition; an insertion of a wall [RG020]; the insertion of a doorway [RG023]; and a conversion of an original doorway into a window [RG021].
- 3.36 The greater extent of changes on the first floor are with the former courtroom, which was moved to Nos 8-10 Derby Street in 1966. This came with the extensive subdivision of the courtroom; the blocking of the prisoner stairwell [in RF014]; the insertion of a lower ceiling across the whole former courtroom; and the addition of the fire escape doorway and external stairs into the courtyard.
- 3.37 Two inserted doorways are seen in the main east-west corridor [RF02]. The western instance is likely to have been driven by the cessation of accommodating police officers in the building (probably by the mid twentieth century); and the eastern insertion when the courtroom was moved in 1966.
- 3.38 The Historic Building Survey [Appx A] also describes the original and early ancillary buildings, including a boiler house; a stable block; an open-sided vehicle shed; kitchens; and refectory. Later ancillary buildings include a row of pre-cast concrete garages and a larger concrete shed.

Site Condition

- 3.39 The buildings making up the Site are largely watertight but have been the subject of break ins and anti-social behaviours including vandalism. The main impacts to the later nineteenth-century original and early buildings, however, is from operational changes through the twentieth century and up to the closure of the Police Station in 2011. There are also instances of poor maintenance.
- 3.40 In general terms, some original fireplaces survive as do most original windows, though those have had their frames, at some point, removed and reset at a different angle in their embrasures [see, as an example, Plate 44, Appx A]. Many are rotting, have no surviving weights or sash ropes and do not operate due to the strange angle of resetting or have been fixed shut, with many over-painted. A different style of sash windows is seen in the small rear wing to the former western accommodation element [RG08 & 09], suggesting that these are later replacements.
- 3.41 All chimney stacks and parapets have been rebuilt in red semi-engineering bricks.
- 3.42 The extensive examples of subdivision and reordering of rooms has used less high-quality material and specifications to the original and early construction of the buildings. Inserted walls and ceilings are generally light-weight stud walls and structures. The infrastructure, such as cabling, has largely been mounted above inserted ceilings and in conduits surface-mounted on walls. Consequently, such interventions are largely reversible.

Significance of the former Prescott Police Station

- 3.43 The former Police Station is a non-designated heritage asset of low, local significance. The Site does not meet the criteria to be statutorily designated. It is noted as a '*positive*' building in the Prescott Town Centre Conservation Area, but not as a '*principal building*' in the Area.
- 3.44 The building is well-detailed with Gothic features predominating in its main façade addressing Derby Street and, to a lesser extent, in the eastern elevation addressing the drive. The mainly brick building includes the polychromatic use of red and buff stonework for the architectural detailing on the main elevations. The architects were Reade and Goodison, Liverpool-based and associated with local civic projects. The main facades exude a gently imposing style of a local civic buildings designed to

impress and be symbolic of its role in Prescott (and south Lancashire). The former Prescott Police Station bears these hallmarks and has retained them in views from Derby Street.

- 3.45 The former Police Station is a purpose-built 1870 police station and courtroom. As such, the complex embodies an historic interest, illustrating a part of the history of law and order in Prescott and south Lancashire. The buildings can still illustrate the lives and experiences of both prisoners and the police. Many original features survive, providing evidence of how police and court facilities were designed and functioned in the later Victorian Period and how these institutions (and their facilities) reacted to operational and technological change through the twentieth century.
- 3.46 The fine original Gothic detailing in the two main facades have survived largely unaffected by other changes across and within the buildings and the architectural interest of the building is wholly legible from Derby Street. Architectural interest as a contributor to the asset's significance has wholly endured.
- 3.47 Internally, the building does not hold the same architectural quality and where such elements of any quality survive, they and the building in general has been notably affected by remodelling of the asset. Changes in operational use and technological 'upgrades' have seen windows and doorways inserted and others blocked; rooms subdivided and re-purposed; ceilings inserted; and cabling extended across walls. While most original windows (mainly two-light sashes) have been retained, effects of poor maintenance and failed attempts to correctly reinsert, have left most unable to function. They are also all single-glazed.
- 3.48 The internal changes have caused a degree of erosion to the asset's significance.
- 3.49 The adjacent buildings (not part of this application) at Nos 8-10 Derby Street were contemporary with the former Police Station. The building held an associated function to the former Police Station as the housing for the police sergeant and deputy police sergeant and their families. With the ancillary buildings within the Site, Nos 8-10 holds a group value with the former Police Station and, consequently, provide a degree of contribution to the asset's significance.
- 3.50 The walled rear yard – much of the side and rear walls are contemporary to the former Police Station – provides a degree of contribution to the asset's significance as part of its immediate setting. In terms of the street scene and the Prescott Town Centre Conservation Area, the former Police Station maintains its position in views up and down Derby Street. However, the Site is away from most of the key positive features in the Derby Street and West Street Character Area (a north-western portion of the Conservation Area). As such the asset's wider setting, excepting for its enduring topographic position, provides no more than a negligible contribution to the asset's significance.

Summary of Significance of the former Prescott Police Station

- 3.51 The significance of the asset is primarily embodied in the fabric and form of the buildings' later nineteenth-century layout and construction, which largely survive. There is notable group value with the adjacent Nos 8-10 Derby Street. The greater contributor to the asset's significance is its enduring architectural interest, which remains wholly legible in the main facades, predominantly that addressing Derby Street, but also the eastern elevation.
- 3.52 There is a lesser level of contribution from the internal layout which has been altered and, to an extent, compromised. However, an historic interest remains in terms of a notable remaining legibility of the operational uses of an 1870s' police station and courtroom. Also, the internal changes do offer a degree historic interest too, as they illustrate, to a degree, the operational changes made to the Lancashire Police and to this former Police Station through the twentieth century.
- 3.53 The former Prescott Police Station is a non-designated heritage asset of low, local significance. This is reflected by its recognition in the *Prescott Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal* as a 'positive' building in the Area.

Nos 8-10, Derby Street, Prescott

- 3.54 The Merseyside Historic Environment Record records this building as an 1870s' historic building [HER ref: MME6355]. Davey [1978] recorded the buildings as: '*Brick, two storeys, decorative use of light-coloured brick in window heads etc. Stone detail, slate roof. Impressive later Victorian building*'. [p.24] notes the building. It is also mentioned in the Appraisal [p.29] that the Council maintained a Local List during the 1980s and the building was included on that List.
- 3.55 Nos 8-10 Derby Street, holding a notable group value with the adjacent former Police Station, is a non-designated heritage asset of low, local significance. This is reflected by its recognition as being a building '*of note*' in the *Prescot Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal*.

Prescot Town Centre Conservation Area

- 3.56 Prescot Town Centre Conservation Area was first designated in 1978 with the amalgamation of the St Mary's Conservation Area and the Prescot High Street Conservation Area. The boundary was extended in 1997 when Sewell Street (to the south of the town centre) was added.
- 3.57 The landscape setting of the Conservation Area; the historic development of Prescot; a spatial analysis of the Area; and an assessment of the Area's building types are comprehensively set out in the Council's *Prescot Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal* [May 2012]. The Site is set within the north-western part of the Area in an extension to the north of Derby Street. The Site is within the Derby Street and West Street Character Area [p.23].
- 3.58 A summary of the key positive features to the Character Area include:
- '*Attractive location on west-facing slope, with long views along Derby Street over the roofs of a collection of mainly listed buildings at the junction with Knowsley Park Lane [c.100m west of the Site];*
 - *Derby Street's principal buildings are No. 2 (Tickle Hall Cross Solicitors) at one end of the street and West End House and the adjoining house and stables at the other end - both are listed grade II [both more than 150m from the Site and holding no intervisibility];*
 - *The unlisted but 'positive' Police Station and adjoining building (No. 10 Derby Street) are also of note;*
 - *Long terraces of well detailed mid to late 19th Century houses in both West Street (Nos. 2-12 even) and Derby Street (Nos. 79-97 odd) [both more than 70m from the Site and holding limited or no intervisibility];*
 - [...].
- 3.59 The Appraisal notes for the Character Area that the key negative features for the Area include the busy traffic along Derby Street; the 1970s' terraced housing facing the Site on the south side of Derby Street; and that unlisted but positive buildings need to be protected from unsympathetic alterations, such as uPVC windows.
- 3.60 The vast bulk of Prescot Town Centre Conservation Area, and the built heritage assets therein, is located at some distance from the Site towards and within the historic centre of Prescot [c.300m southeast of the Site] and holds no intervisibility with these assets or parts of the Area. While the former Prescot Police Station is largely discrete, peripheral and separated from the greater part of the Area, the Site does contribute a degree of architectural and historic interest to the Area's character and appearance (its significance) as a '*positive*' former civic building '*of note*'.
- 3.61 Prescot Town Centre Conservation Area is a statutorily designated local heritage asset of an aggregate high significance. The Site forms a very small, peripheral part of the Area, within a Character Area that, while including some important contributors to the asset's significance (largely away from the Site and without intervisibility with the Site), does not deliver the most significant elements of the Conservation Area's character and appearance (significance).

4 PROPOSALS AND ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

Proposals

- 4.1 As set out in the applications, the supporting planning statement and DAS, the description of the proposals for the Site is for the:
- ‘Change of use of former Police Station to seven apartments together with the erection of four new dwellings, with the conversion and extension of one ancillary building and the conversion of another’.*
- 4.2 The proposals will, in terms of the rear yard to the Site, introduce new built form into this open space, a substantial part of the immediate setting of the former Police Station, a non-designated heritage asset, and very small portion of the Prescott Town Centre Conservation Area. The current enclosure to the rear yard will be maintained with the retention of the 1870s’ boundary wall. An element of the current space will be retained in the centre of the rear yard. The concrete garages will be demolished. All other ancillary buildings will be retained.
- 4.3 The proposals will, in terms of the buildings forming the former Police Station and courtroom, entirely retain the existing form of the building. The only apparent external structural changes to the building will be three inserted roof lights on the eastern side of the rear wing roof; the reinstated ground-floor window on the rear wing’s northern gable [GW014]; and a new ground-floor window inserted on the western side of the northern gable to the rear wing [AGW01, planning drawings]. The new window will take the form of existing windows. A sill will be inserted to fully complete the historic insertion of a ground-floor window, previous converted from a door, in the centre of the rear wing’s eastern elevation [AGW02].
- 4.4 Externally, stonework and brickwork will be cleaned and re-mortared, as necessary. The ironwork will be stripped, repaired and repainted, as necessary. The specifications for any such conservation work can be controlled by condition.
- 4.5 Internally, there will be stripping back of much of the later twentieth-century insertions (walls and ceilings), remodelling and infrastructure (such as cabling and conduits). The proposal will involve new insertions of sub-dividing walls; an inserted mezzanine floor in the former courtroom; three removed staircases (including the 1964 external fire escape); removed party walls between the three cells (those stubs will be retained to indicate their former presence); an inserted platform lift; an inserted window; and three inserted roof lights.
- 4.6 An original window, now blocked, will be reinstated [GW14]. Where existing doors are to be blocked [DG14, 16, 31 & DE04], the immediate recess with chamfers will be retained so that the former presence of doorways will remain legible. The doors themselves will be retained for reuse elsewhere in the building. The doorway, already partly converted to a window [AGW02], will have a sill inserted with wall facing below. The ‘portcullis’ ironwork gate to stairwell 5 will be retained *in situ*.
- 4.7 All windows will be replaced with double-glazed new windows. These will otherwise be entirely like-for-like wooden replicants of the original box-sash windows, weighted and with the same dimensions and mouldings. These will be mainly of two lights, but where a greater number of lights currently exist, these too will be replicated.

Assessment of Impact

- 4.8 The proposed development will cause a number of harms to the significance of the non-designated former Prescott Police Station and the high, local significance (character and appearance) of the Prescott Town Centre Conservation Area. The proposed development will also cause a number of public benefits, including enhancements as heritage benefits, to the low, local significance of the former Prescott Police Station and the high, local significance of the Conservation Area.

- 4.9 The introduction of new built form – four new houses and an extension to the stable block – into the immediate setting of the former Police Station will cause a moderate level of harm within the spectrum of less than substantial to the non-designated asset. The new built form, within a very small, peripheral portion of Prescott Town Centre Conservation Area and not visible from any other part of the Area, will cause no meaningful impact to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 4.10 The removal of the later twentieth-century concrete garaging, within the non-designated asset's immediate setting, delivers a small enhancement to the significance of the non-designated asset and a negligible impact to the character and appearance of the Prescott Town Centre Conservation Area.
- 4.11 The internal stripping out of the inserted walls and ceilings with the reinstatement of a blocked window – all unsympathetic to the 1870s' character and form of the former Police Station – will deliver a moderate enhancement to the non-designated asset's significance. The loss of these insertion's low historic interest, being illustrative of operational changes through the later twentieth century, is offset by their record in the Historic Buildings Survey [Appx A].
- 4.12 The blocking of a small number of original doors and removal of original walls (for example two party walls between the cells) will deliver a low level of harm to the asset's significance. This will be partly mitigated by retention of the immediate recess and chamfers for the two doorways in question and the wall stubs, so that the former presence of these features will remain wholly legible. Their current presence is also wholly recorded in the Historic Building Survey [Appx A].
- 4.13 The loss of two of the original internal staircases and the insertion of a lift will cause a moderate degree of harm within the spectrum of less than substantial harm to the significance of the non-designated asset. These negative impacts are partly offset by their record in the Historic Buildings Survey [Appx A].
- 4.14 The insertion of a mezzanine floor, with associated staircases, in the former courtroom wing will cause a moderate level of harm within the spectrum of less than substantial harm to the non-designated asset's significance. This is mitigated, to a degree, with the set back of the proposed floor from and retention of the original windows (no longer cut across by the twentieth-century inserted ceiling) and the visual opening up of the original ceiling and roof form currently obscured by the 1966 inserted ceiling.
- 4.15 The only internal changes to the former police Station legible from any part of the Prescott Town Centre Conservation Area are the three roof lights on the eastern side of the rear wing; the removal of the 1964 external fire escape; the new ground-floor window inserted on the western side of the rear wing's northern gable; and, close to it, the reinsertion of a blocked original window. The latter is an enhancement (as is the removal of the fire escape) and collectively they represent no impact to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 4.16 The replacement of the existing windows with like-for-like (excepting double glazing) wooden box sash windows will have no impact on the character and appearance of Prescott Town Centre Conservation Area.
- 4.17 The windows' replacement will represent some loss of original and early fabric, which represents a harm to the significance of the non-designated asset. However, as set out in the planning statement and DAS supporting the application, the introduction of double glazing will reduce the building's operational carbon footprint. It should also be noted that the use of high-quality wooden sashes accords with the call in the *Prescott Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal* [p.24] that unlisted but positive buildings, such as the former Police Station, need to be protected from unsympathetic alterations, such as uPVC windows. A public benefit will also be realised by having functioning sash windows in the building.

- 4.18 Consequently, as an aggregate, the loss and replacement of original and early sash windows will have a low level of harm, within the spectrum of less than substantial harm, to the significance of the non-designated asset.
- 4.19 The proposed scheme will not only wholly retain the architectural interest of the building, the Gothic architectural details and form of the building that provides this interest, will be cleaned, re-mortared and conserved, as necessary. Such works can be managed by condition and would represent an enhancement to the non-designated asset's significance.
- 4.20 The former Police Station has been out of use since 2011 and was increasingly attracting antisocial behaviours. While the buildings are currently generally sound and waterproof, that situation cannot be maintained indefinitely in an unused building. The conversion of the Site to a residential use provides this non-designated asset with an optimum viable use that will secure its significance for future generations. This is a clear public benefit for the former Police Station

Summary of Impact

- 4.21 The proposed development will cause a number of specific and detailed harms and enhancements to the significance of the non-designated former Prescott Police Station and that of the Prescott Town Centre Conservation Area. The proposed development will have no impact on the low, local significance of the non-designated heritage asset Nos 8-10 Derby Street, other than to enhance the former Police Station's group value with this asset.

Former Prescott Police Station

- 4.22 The proposed development will deliver an aggregate low-moderate enhancement to the significance of the non-designated former Prescott Police Station. Importantly, the proposed scheme will wholly retain the asset's architectural interest as embodied in the Gothic detailing and form predominantly seen in the main elevation addressing Derby Street but also, to an extent, in the eastern elevation. Equally important, the scheme will secure an optimum viable use for the asset that will sustain it for future generations.

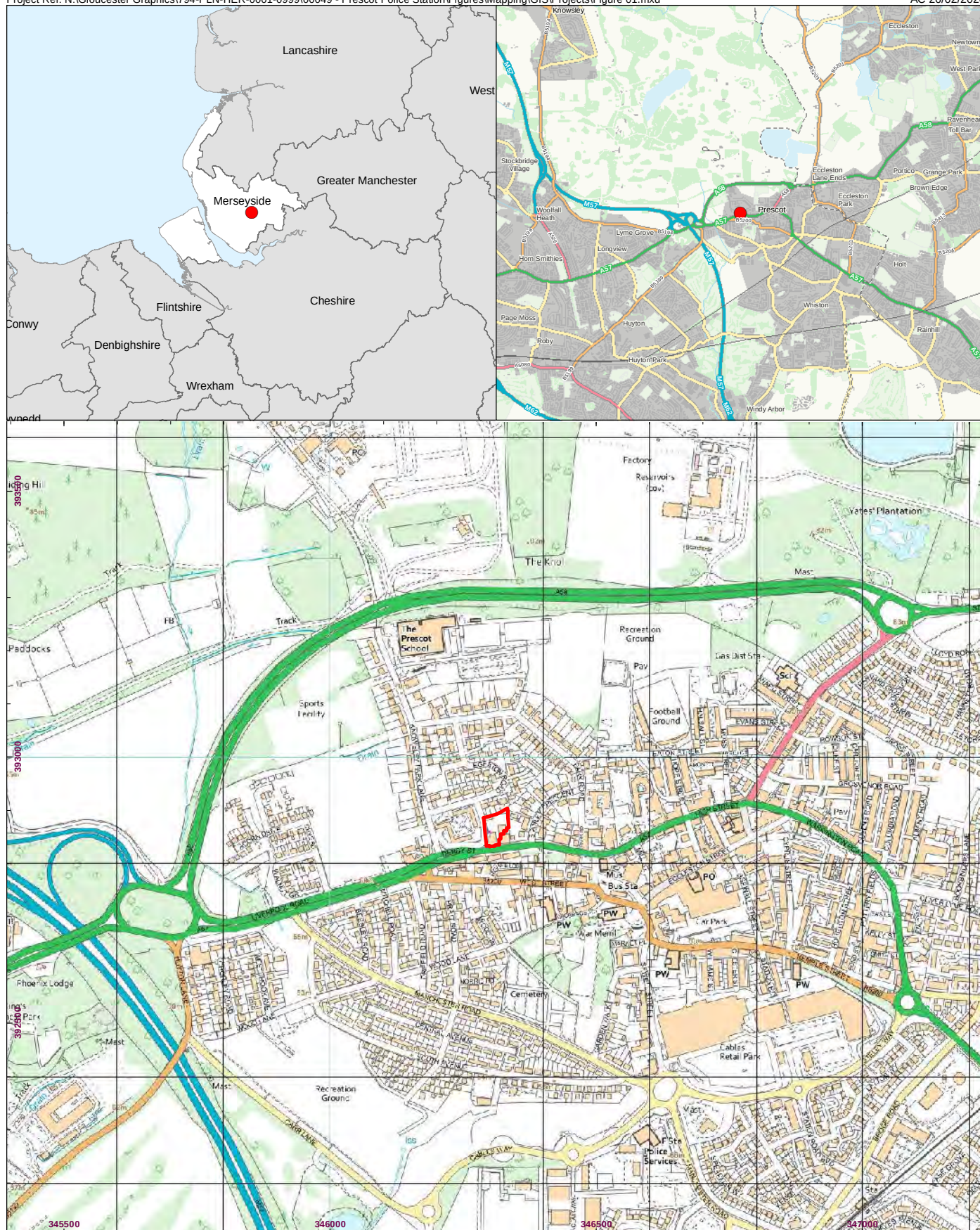
Prescot Town Centre Conservation Area

- 4.23 For the reasons set out in the preceding paragraphs, the proposal also delivers a very low enhancement (heritage benefit) to the character and appearance of Prescott Town Centre Conservation Area with the former Police Station a '*positive*' historic building of note within the Area.

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 This Built Heritage Statement has been researched and prepared by RPS, on behalf of the Prima Group, to assess the likely impacts on the historic built environment from development at the former Prescott Police Station, Derby Street, Prescott, L34 3LE. The Site is formed of a large, near square plot with the main set of buildings largely addressing Derby Street, with a large, enclosed yard and a smaller courtyard to the rear. There are further ancillary buildings in the east and to the rear (north) of the plot. The buildings comprise the former Prescott Police Station, associated courtroom rear wing and ancillary buildings. The buildings on Site are identified as a non-designated heritage asset.
- 5.2 The Site is 'cut out' to the southeast where there is a contemporary building of former police accommodation set immediately east of the Site's access drive off Derby Street (Nos 8-10 Derby Street). This building is also identified as a non-designated heritage asset.
- 5.3 The Site is wholly within the north-western margin of the Prescott Town Centre Conservation Area. A small section of the Area extends north of Derby Street to take in the Police Station and Nos 8-10 Derby Street. There are twelve listed buildings within 250m of the Site. None of these assets' significance will be affected by the proposed development.
- 5.4 This Heritage Statement meets the requirement under paragraph 200 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for the applicant to explain the significance of the heritage assets likely to be affected by development and demonstrate the level of impact that the proposals would have upon that significance. This report accords with the requirements of the NPPF and local planning policy. It provides sufficient information for an informed decision to be made on the application in relation to built heritage considerations.
- 5.5 The Statement refers, as necessary, to the relevant legislative framework contained within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as well as national and local planning policy. In addition, relevant Historic England guidance has been consulted to inform the judgements made. A summary of the relevant National and Local Planning Policy is included.
- 5.6 Relevant information, including from the Merseyside Historic Environment Record (HER), has also been consulted in preparing this Built Heritage Statement. The report is further informed by the findings of historical research, a number of Site and area walkover surveys and assessment, an archaeological building recording survey of the Site's buildings [Appendix A], map studies and the application of professional judgement.
- 5.7 Following the Site's lack of any use and maintenance for over twelve years, the non-designated asset therein can only become increasingly vulnerable to dilapidation and degradation. The proposal will deliver a much needed and timely optimum viable use for the Site that will see the significance of the non-designated heritage asset conserved for future generations.
- 5.8 This Built Heritage Statement concludes that the proposed development of the Site will result in an aggregate low-moderate level of enhancement (a heritage public benefit) to the significance of the non-designated former Prescott Police Station. The proposed development will result in an aggregate very low enhancement (heritage benefit) to the character and appearance of Prescott Town Centre Conservation Area.
- 5.9 Where specific and detailed instances of harm to the significance of these heritage assets have been identified (within the spectrum of less than substantial harm), these will be outweighed (as required by paragraphs 208 and 209 of the NPPF) by the heritage benefits and, furthermore, by other public benefits of the proposal (as set out in the planning statement). It is these collective public benefits (the aggregate heritage enhancements) that deliver clear and convincing justification for the specific instances of harm.
- 5.10 Consequently, the planning application, in terms of built heritage considerations, can be consented.

FIGURES



 Site Boundary



0 100 200m
Scale at A4: 1:10,000

rps
A TETRA TECH COMPANY

Figure 1

Site Location

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Historic Building Recording



Ambrey Archaeology Ltd

Historic Building Survey of the former Prescott Police Station, Derby Road, Prescott, Knowsley

Version 2

Date: 18th March 2024

Contact: Tom Rogers, ambreyarchtom@outlook.com, 01568 780918

Ambrey Archaeology, Yarpole, Herefordshire, HR6 0BJ

Contents

Summary	3
1. Introduction	4
2. Objectives.....	4
3. Methodology.....	4
4. Location, topography and geology	5
5. Archaeological background and historic context.....	6
5.1 The town of Prescot	6
5.2 Designated assets in the vicinity	6
5.3 Non designated assets	7
5.4 Prescot Police Station	8
5.5 Map regression and census	10
6. Building survey	16
6.1 External appearance – general	16
6.2 South elevation	17
6.3 East elevation	18
6.4 North elevation	18
6.5 Courtyard	19
6.6 West elevation	19
6.7 Ground Floor	20
6.8 First floor	27
6.9 Courtroom Wing	29
6.10 External buildings.....	30
7. Discussion.....	33
8. Acknowledgements.....	36
9. Sources consulted	37
8.1 Bibliography	37
8.2 Cartography.....	37

Figures 10-24

Plates

Summary

Ambrey Archaeology carried out an archaeological building survey of the former Prescot Police Station, Prescot, Knowsley in January 2024. The project was commissioned by Prima Group Housing Association who have applied to Knowsley Council for permission for change of use to form 8 residential apartments and the erection of six additional dwellings.

The building stands in the Conservation Area of Prescot Town Centre and is regarded as a non-designated heritage asset. It is therefore appropriate that a building record be compiled to support the application and to inform the proposed scheme. The building stands in a large plot on the north side of Derby Street in which there are also a number of outbuildings and a parking area.

Prescot Police Station was built in 1870, replacing an earlier station which stood 250m to the east. Contemporary newspaper accounts described it as comprising offices for the superintendent of the police, a large general office, a work room for adjusting weights and measures, hot water apparatus for heating the building, four spacious cells for prisoners, a large day room for the police, various rooms for the married and single policemen residing within the building and a large room intended for the petty sessions.

The building comprises a main east-west wing with a frontage onto Derby Street and a wing which formerly contained the courtroom extending back from the road on the eastern side of the building. It is in brick with slate roofs and decorative features including round headed windows, tapering chimneys, a parapet and a gabled roof over the courtroom with finial. The entrance to the police station was from the street frontage, while the courtroom was accessed through a decorative doorway in the eastern elevation.

Internally many original features are well preserved, including panel doors, staircases, pointed arched doorways with stopped chamfers and stone fireplaces. Three of the cells, latterly used for storage, are largely intact and other security features such as metal gates remain. The windows are largely sashes with cambered heads, although in the area of the cells these have been replaced with block glass windows. A former stables block, brick workshops and storage sheds survive to the rear.

The courtroom was moved to another location in the 1960s, the fittings removed and it was divided into offices. A stone staircase between the cells and the courtroom was blocked at this time.

More recently, adaptations were made to modernise the police station including division of some of the larger offices and the installation of suspended ceilings. The building operated as a police station until 2011 when it was relocated to a new site shared with the Fire Service.

1. Introduction

This document describes the results of an archaeological building survey and watching brief carried out by Ambrey Archaeology at the former Police Station, Prescot, Knowsley.

It was commissioned by Prima Group Housing Association who have applied to Knowsley Council for permission for change of use to form 8 residential apartments and the erection of six additional dwellings (22/00757/FUL).

The building stands in the Conservation Area of Prescot Town Centre and is regarded as a non-designated heritage asset. It is therefore appropriate that a building record be compiled to support the application and to inform the proposed scheme.

Prior to works a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) setting out a methodology and framework for the proposed works was produced by Ambrey Archaeology (Ambrey Archaeology 2023) and approved by Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service.

2. Objectives

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists defines the aims of **building recording** as 'a programme of work intended to establish the character, history, dating, form and archaeological development of a specified building' (Standard and guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures, CIfA 2014).

3. Methodology

The survey takes the form of a Level 2 historic building recording as defined by Historic England 2016 Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice. A Level 2 survey is intended to create a *descriptive* record of the building.

The building survey was undertaken by Tom Rogers and Elizabeth Connolly of Ambrey Archaeology on 18th and 19th January 2024.

Prior to fieldwork, a search of historic assets within 250m of the site was provided by Merseyside Historic Environment Record (HER). Primary sources were consulted at Liverpool Archives, Lancashire Archives in Preston. The Archive Resource for Knowsley and Census and Directory records were consulted online at The Genealogist.com. Historic maps are depicted in Figures 3-9.

The building survey conformed to the specification for a Level 2 survey as defined by Historic England (HE 2016). Recording was undertaken using pro-forma recording sheets and photographs were taken with a Nikon D3200 SLR camera and a DJI Osmo mobile 6 camera. Additional aerial images were taken with a Mavic Mini 2 UAV.

The building had been secured from illegal entry prior to the survey and some fittings, in particular ground floor doors and windows were obscured by chipboard panels.

4. Location, topography and geology

Prescot is a town and civil parish within the Metropolitan Borough of Knowsley in Merseyside about 8km east of the City of Liverpool and about 5km south-west of St Helens.

The former Police Station (NGR 346303,392846) stands on the north side of Derby Street, an arterial route leading to the town centre from the west, becoming High Street some 150m to the east. Immediately to the west is Elm House Service Road.

The building stands in a plot of land which continues northward from the rear of the building and extends to the rear of the adjacent building to the east, Nos 8 and 10 Derby Street.

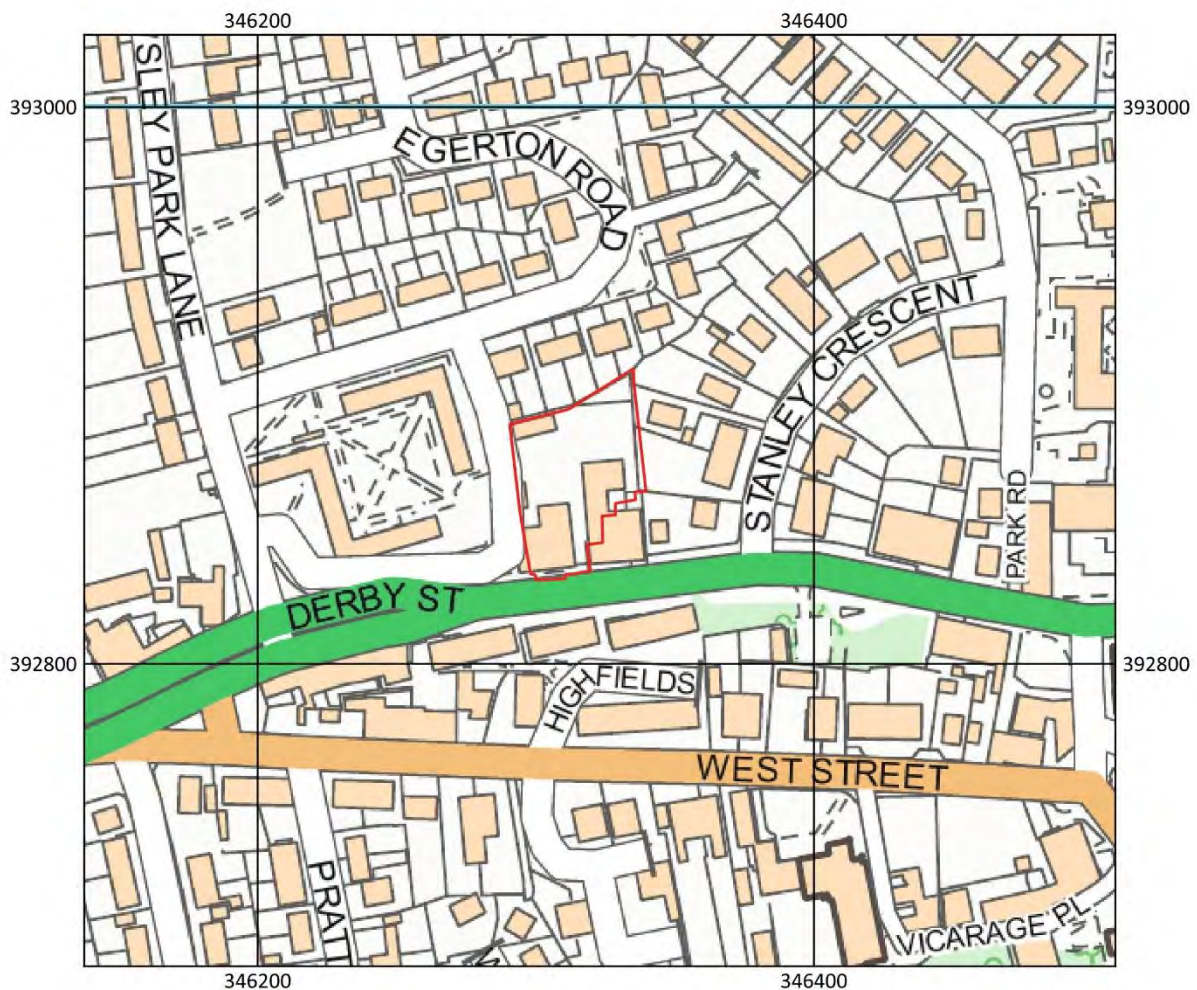


Figure 1. Site location

OS VectorMap Local Raster

© Crown copyright and database rights [2024] Ordnance Survey
0100031673

5. Archaeological background and historic context

5.1 The town of Prescot

The town of Prescot lies on a coal-measure sandstone ridge at some 80m above sea-level, roughly half-way between Liverpool and Warrington. The town lay within the historic county of Lancashire until Local Government reorganization in 1974 placed it on the eastern edge of the Knowsley Metropolitan District of Merseyside. The place-name is first recorded as *Prestecota* in 1178, meaning the manor or cottage of the priest or rectory (Davey 1989). A market was in existence before 1322 and Charters survive from 1333 and 1458. In the 12th and 13th centuries it appears that Prescot was divided into two small settlements; Prescot in the west and Churchley in the east. By the 14th century the town was simply called Prescot.

The town lies on sandstones which have been subject to complex faulting which results in the frequent exposure of coal seams at the surface. Coal mining in Prescot is first recorded in the early 16th century and was used initially to assist the salt-making industry in Cheshire, and then later, to provide power for the local pottery, glass and sugar factories.

In the early 17th century, a group of religious dissenters led by the Puritan Thomas Aspinwall in Toxteth, established a watch making industry, forming close ties with London manufacturers. Initially based more widely across south-west Lancashire, the industry became concentrated within Prescot during the 18th century and by 1861, 10% of the population were engaged in watch making.

However, soon after this, competition from Switzerland and the USA hit Prescot's trade badly and by 1885 most of the workshops had closed down.

Pottery was made in Prescot from at least 1550 and at its height in the 1750s there were around five potteries working in the town, manufacturing goods, a part of which were taken to Liverpool by canal for export to America.

Following the decline of the pottery industry in the late 19th century, the primary employer in the town was the production of cabling.

5.2 Designated assets in the vicinity

There are 12 listed buildings within 250m of the site (Figure 2). These include the Clock Face Public House (DME67, list entry 1075502) 130m to the west, also on the northern side of Derby Street, the adjacent 44-50 Derby Street (DME125, list entry 1283501) and a stable block to the rear (DME88, list entry 1199248) all of which date from the early 19th century and are Grade II listed. Other buildings on Derby Street include No 2 (DME66, list entry 1075501) and an early 19th century Masonic Hall (DME124, list entry 1283414).

The Grade I listed Prescot Parish Church (list entry 1199139) which largely dates to the 17th century, stands in a prominent location 250m south-east of the site overlooking the valley for the Hingle Brook to the south and the Prescot Brook to the west. Slightly to the west, the Roman Catholic church of Our Lady Immaculate, also Grade I listed, has a 14th century lean-to vestry, while the nave and chapel are dated to 1610. Between these is a cluster of Grade II listed buildings fronting Vicarage Place.

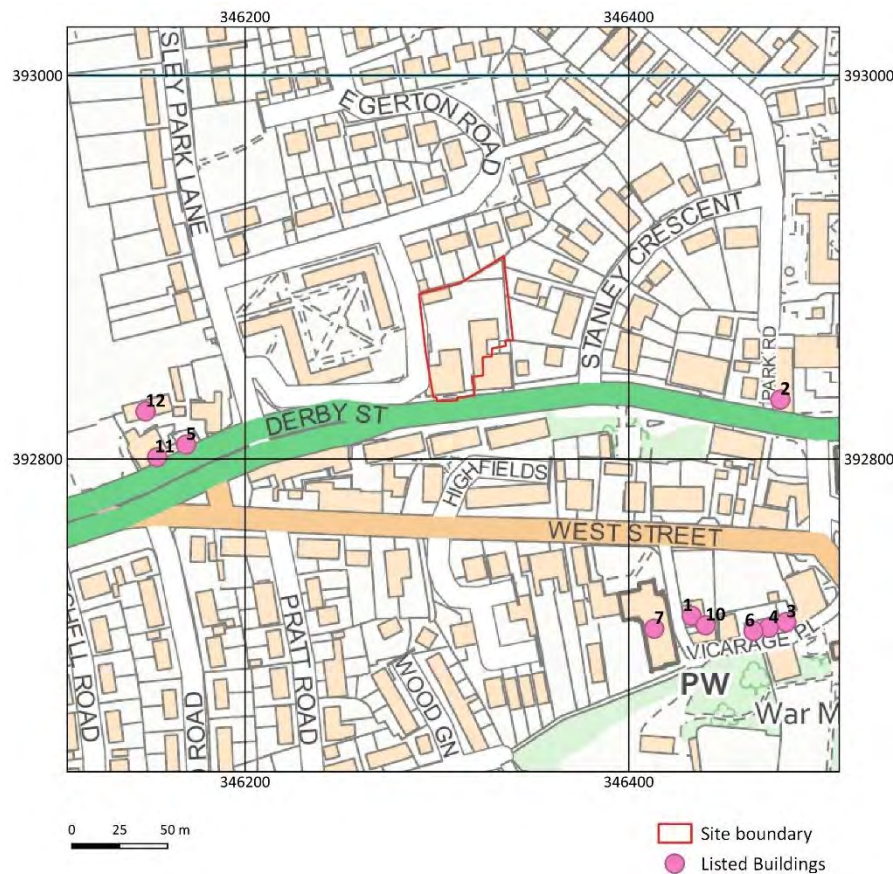


Figure 2. Listed buildings within the search area (referenced to Table 2, Appendix 1)

The building stands on the northern edge of the Prescot Town Centre Conservation Area (DME3436), one of 15 defined within Knowsley Council. It stands within the Character Area of Derby Street and West Street. The former police station is listed as a 'Focal point' (Section 4.3), as an unlisted historic building (Section 5.4), a 'positive feature' of Derby Street (Section 6.2) and as a Heritage Asset (Section 7.8).

5.3 Non designated assets

There are a number of other assets marked on the Merseyside HER in the vicinity of the police station. The majority of these are, or relate to, buildings either standing or known to have stood from map evidence. Nos 8 and 10 Derby Street immediately to the east of the police station (MME6355) is described as an impressive later Victorian building of brick with decorative use of light-coloured brick in the window heads.

These buildings functioned for a time as a Sergeant's dwelling and the Deputy Sergeant's dwelling (Prima Group Heritage Statement). The Ordnance Survey map of 1966 marks this as the Court House.

Opposite the police station in an open area on the west side of Elm House Service Road is the site of a former watch and clock tool manufactory (MME14420). This is labelled as such on the Town Plan of 1848 and is last shown on the 25" OS map of 1927.

Former watchmakers' shops are also marked at No 21 Derby Street (MME 14323), 120m east of the site and to the rear of No 4 West Street (MME14366), 80m to the south-east.

The site of a possible medieval building (MME19652) is marked on the HER opposite the police station on the south side of Derby Street, in an area now occupied by low rise flats. A survey of a former workshop to the rear of No 10 West Street identified the remains of a 16th or 17th century timber framed building thought to have been a workshop to the rear of an earlier building fronting Derby Street.

A Police Station (MME20879) is marked on the Ordnance Survey 1852 Town Map of Prescot on the east side of Rowson's Walk (now Park Road). The map is detailed enough to depict the internal divisions of the building. The eastern part of the building is labelled 'Sessions House', in which the quarter sessions would have been held.

Prescot Police Station (MME6356), the subject of this report, is described on the HER as: "Police Station. Brick, two storeys. Decorative use of light-coloured brick in window heads. Stone detail, slate roof. Inscription "Police Station" in sandstone".

5.4 Prescot Police Station

The modern police force was established by Robert Peel in 1829 when parliament approved his 'Metropolitan Police Improvement Bill' to replace the existing disparate bodies which had kept the peace to that juncture. Initially, the force operated only in London but the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 compelled boroughs and cities outside London to form their own police forces (Dell 2004) and Lancashire Constabulary was formed in 1839. The new chief constable appointed two assistant Chief Constables, one of whom was based in Prescot.

Each police force was divided into geographical areas known as 'divisions' with a superintendent in charge, beneath whom the next in rank were inspectors. An inspector would be in charge of a large police station, which might have smaller village and town stations in its control. Beneath the inspectors were sergeants in charge of a 'section' consisting of ten or more constables.

As demands on policing grew, police stations were designed to accommodate an expanding service, incorporating stables for the superintendent's horse, bedrooms for unmarried constables and cells. A number of the stations were often referred to as 'Bridewell' after a notorious house of correction which operated near the Holy Well of St Bride in London. The police at this time were responsible for checking weights and measures at shops and licenced premises, a role now undertaken by the Trading Standards Authority, and a room was also often provided for this function (*ibid*).

On 24th April 1869, the Prescot Reporter noted that magistrates had approved a scheme to build a new court room, police station, prisoners' cells and apartments for unmarried policemen on a plot of land at Fall Lane. The land was to be purchased from Mr. John Willams and the cost of the scheme estimated to be in the region of £5000. The name Fall Lane was changed to Derby Street on 21st February 1871 (Prima Group Heritage Statement).

On 21st August 1869, it was reported that on the conclusion of the business of the sessions, the magistrates proceeded down Fall Lane to the new courthouse etc. which was under construction. The object of the visit, it was reported, was to lay the foundation stone, already prepared, at the north-east corner of the building. Mr. E Gibbon, the chairman of the building committee, took the initiative amongst the presence of Admiral Hornby, Lieut.-Colonel Blackburne, Mr. W. N. Heald, Mr. W. L. Evans, MR. T. Pilkington, Mr. Spencley (Magistrate's Clerk), Mr. Supt. Flower and Mr. Bates the builder. A number of silver coins and copies of the Prestbury Reporter and Liverpool Mercury were

placed within a zinc-lined cavity within the stone which was placed in position by Mr. Gibbon and adjusted with a plumb-rule and a mallet.

A sum of £5 was enumerated from the gathering and given to Mr. Bates to pay for a supper for the workmen who gave three hearty cheers to the gentlemen as they left.

On 2nd July 1870 the same newspaper recorded that the new police buildings were complete and in occupation. It was reported that:-

'the building comprises on the ground floor, spacious offices for the superintendent of the police, and large general office, work room for adjusting weights and measures; hot water apparatus for heating the building; four spacious cells for prisoners; large day room for the police when coming to headquarters for inspection or pay, and various rooms for the married and single policemen residing within the building. On the second floor is the large room intended for the petty sessions. It is a wider room than the one hitherto used, but not so long, the extra width more than making up for what is short in the length. Leading from the petty sessions room, and behind the bench is a retiring room for the magistrates, taking up with a small ante room the entire width of the large room. The other rooms on the second floor consist of bathroom and bedrooms for the single officers and married officers and their families. The entire building seems to be admirably adapted for the purposes to which it will be used. The cells in which the prisoners will be confined would defy all the efforts of the Jack Shepherds of the past century to break out of them. All the brickwork is set in cement, and the floors, windows, and doors are of the most solid and massive construction. Altogether the county must have spent a large sum of money on the new buildings but it is money well laid out, as the old police headquarters of a district like Prescot. The arrangement of the new building, which appears to be everything which could be desired, is due to Mr. Supt, Fowler, who had the idea of the building laid out by the architect.'

Despite the lively praise the new building, the article does have one word of caution:-

'the only fault found by the people in the town with the building is that, according to the opinions of many, it is in the wrong place, too far from the people who stand most in need of the police force. We are not prepared to combat this opinion inasmuch as it has often occurred to us that had the county purchased some of the old property in Fazakerley-street and Mill-brow, for the purpose of erecting thereon the new building, it would have been in many respects better. However we believe the magistrates acted to the best of their judgements and we are not aware that any representations were made to them that another site would have been in some respects preferable.'

Precisely why Fazakerley Street and Mill-brow were more in need of a police station than other areas is not made clear.

The opening of the police station was also reported in the Liverpool Courier and Commercial Advertiser on 6th July 1870, noting that the building was erected by Messrs. Jones and Son of Mount Pleasant, Liverpool, from the designs of Messrs. Reade and Goodison, architect, of the town. The buildings are described as presenting:-

..a neat and substantial frontage to Fall Lane, comprising on the ground floor, besides spacious offices for the superintendent of police, a large general office, a workroom for adjusting weights and measures, hot water apparatus for heating the building, four cells for prisoners, a large day room for police officers on attendance for inspection or pay, and other apartments. Accommodation is also afforded for one side of the building and on the other side for the resident sergeant. The court for transacting the business of the petty sessions is on the first floor and is of dimensions we should hope amply sufficient for the criminal business of the division. Adjoining it are an ante room and a retiring room for the magistrates and the appointments of the place are well adapted to the purpose of a police station.

5.5 Map regression and census

On the 1841 tithe map of Prescot (Figure 3), the site of the police station is located in a large area of pasture called Glovers Field on the northern edge of which is the boundary of Prescot with the Township of Knowsley. Only fields are numbered and referred to in the apportionment accompanying the map, but areas of housing are depicted, and a line of probable terraced housing is depicted along the road to the west of the site.

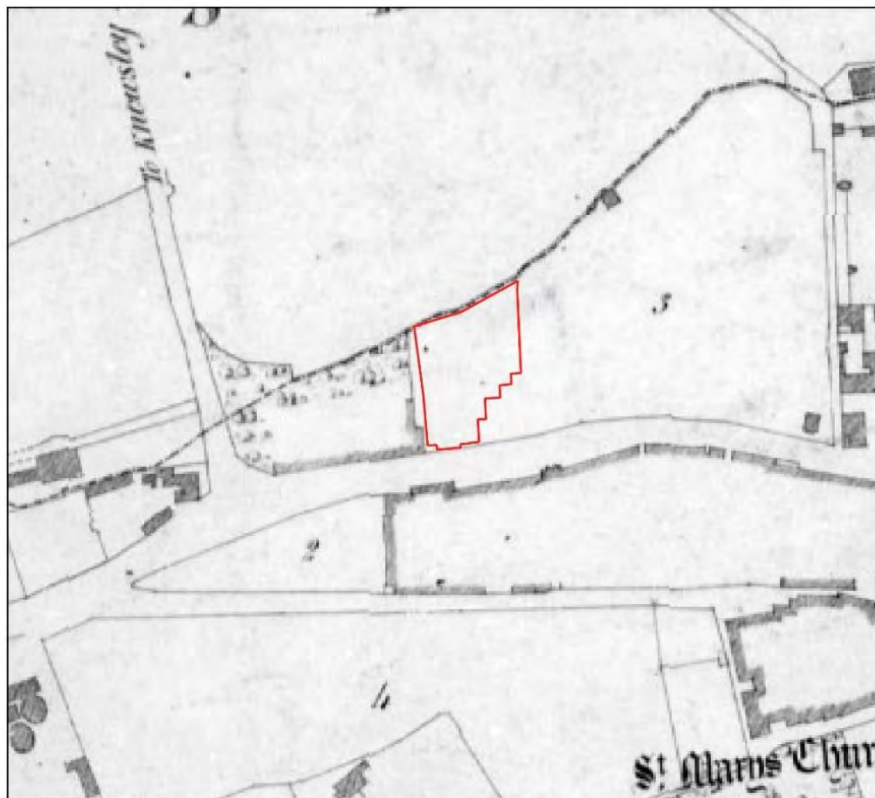


Figure 3. Extract of the 1841 tithe map of the parish of Prescot

On the 1852 Ordnance Survey Town Plan of Prescot, Sheets 1 and 3, scale 1:1056, the area is still shown as a field (Figure 4).

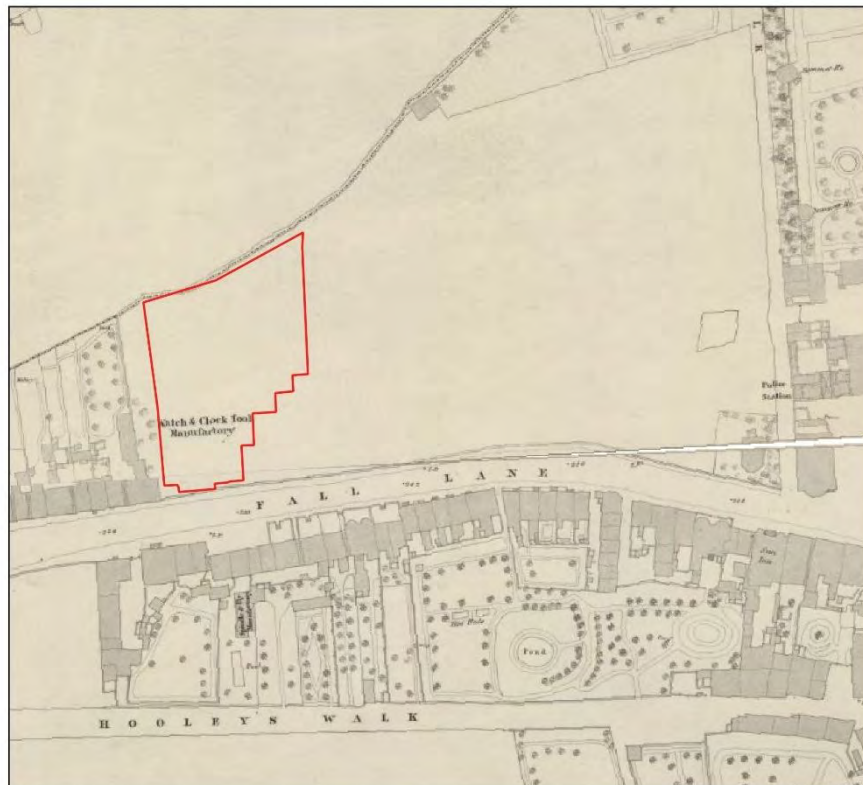


Figure 4. Extract of 1851 OS Town map of Prescot

On the Ordnance Survey 1:500 map of Lancashire (Sheet CVII.7), 1892 (Fig. 5 - *The south-west corner of the 1:500 scale map of 1892 on which the police station was depicted has been damaged*) and the Ordnance Survey First Edition 1:2500 map (Fig. 6), Prescot is a mid-sized town within a wider rural landscape. The town has a medieval street pattern centred on a church and marketplace, with blocks of burgage plots south of Derby Street and between the High Street and Eccleston Street. Rows of terraces with long gardens to the rear line the north of Derby Street, close to the police station, but villas in larger gardens have been constructed along West Street and Stanley Crescent, just to the east of the police station. To the west of the town there are large gardens and parkland associated with larger houses and estates. The northern boundary of the plot in which the police station has been built backs on to land which may belong to an estate associated with Elm House to the north-west. Lines of modern housing developments appear to be under construction to the south-east of the town.

The complex of buildings is indicated as 'Police Station', located on the northern side of Derby Street, set in a wider plot, which is largely empty to the north of the main buildings. The complex is set back somewhat from the street frontage which is mostly uniform to the west. There are empty

plots to the east and larger villas set in formal gardens front onto Stanley Crescent which leads north from Derby Street.

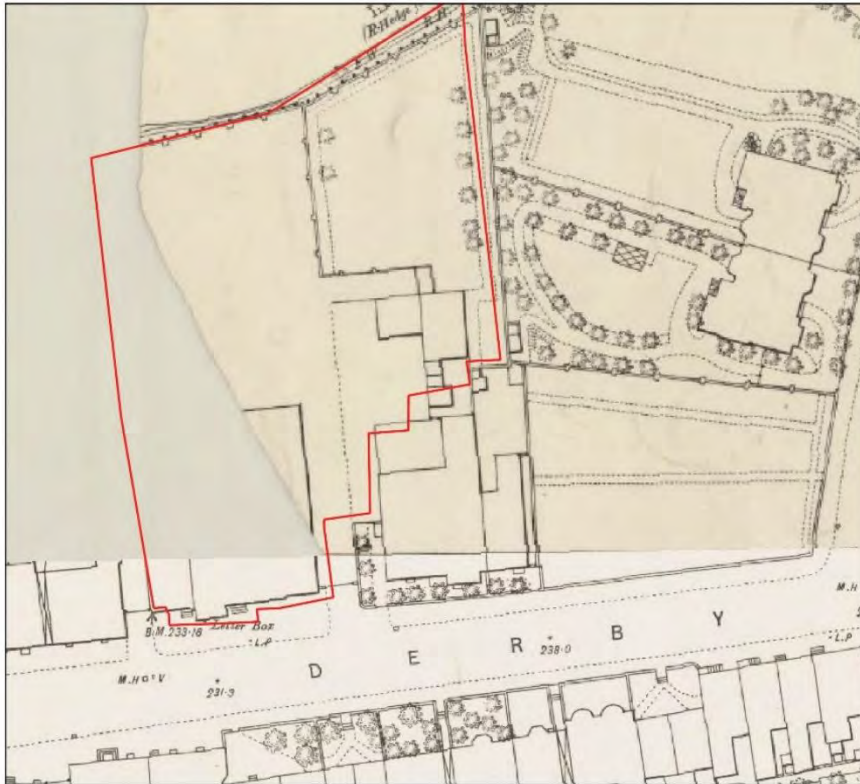


Figure 5. Extract of 1893 Town map of Prescot (police station only partially shown)

The complex comprises a number of buildings which are irregular in plan; the two largest being orientated north-south and facing onto Derby Street, with smaller buildings to the rear and along the western boundary of the plot. The larger of the two buildings along the frontage, is located to the east. It is L-shaped in plan, with a projection in the south-west – resembling a porch. Abutting this to the west is a shorter, narrower building. An enclosed yard to the rear and sides of the buildings, is enclosed partly by the buildings themselves with a boundary joining the larger building to the east to the south-eastern corner of a square building. A smaller building abutted the boundary formed by the wall and a larger rectangular building to the north, itself abutted to the north by a smaller building.



Figure 6. Extract of 1893 Ordnance Survey, scale 1:2500

To the rear of the western building a small rectangular building is located in the yard formed by a wall running west from the rear of the larger building to the east.

To the east of the police station building is a complex of buildings, one of which, fronting onto the road, is recorded on the Census as being the residence of a police superintendent. To the rear of the plot is a small garden planted with trees, possibly an orchard, and in between are a number of buildings of irregular size and shape in plan. The boundaries of the garden and an area to the west of the Superintendent's residence are indicated with a dotted line.

On the 1908 map (Figure 7), the building to the west appears to encompass one of the smaller buildings to the rear. The outbuildings to the rear of the western building have been mostly amalgamated into larger structures. The projection to the south of the larger of the two buildings fronting onto Derby Street is no longer in evidence. An OS bench mark is shown on the south-western corner of the western building.

To the east, in the adjacent plot to the rear of No 41 (the Superintendent's residence) the outbuildings to the rear are more clearly shown, the western boundary of the largest one closest to the police station is indicated with a dotted line which continues to the street frontage. The garden to the rear is no longer shown with trees, but this may be stylistic.



Figure 7. Extract of 1908 Ordnance Survey map of Lancashire, Sheet CVII.7; scale 1:2500

By 1927 (Figure 8), there appears to be a porch added to the frontage of the larger police station building, facing onto the Derby Street in the location of that marked on the 1893 map. The only other obvious change by 1927 is an addition to the east of the northernmost building on the western side of the development.



Figure 8. Extract of 1927 Ordnance Survey map of Lancashire, Sheet CVII.7; scale 1:2500

Another small building has been added in this area by 1939 (Figure 9), as well as a longer rectangular building (orientated east-west) to the north of this.



Figure 9. Extract of 1939 Ordnance Survey map of Lancashire, Sheet CVII.7; scale 1:2500

On the 1881 Census, moving west to east along the street, James Dickie, a police constable, is registered as the head of the household in the first part of the police station recorded. His wife Margaret and two daughters and two sons are all registered at the property as well as his mother-in-law. Three additional police constables are registered at the property.

At the next property on the Census, also listed as part of the police station, the head of the household is William Ball, a police sergeant, with his wife Mary and their daughter. His sister is also recorded and the final person registered at the property is Richard Wareing, a prisoner, whose occupation is given as 'Hawker.' The Superintendent of the County Police, John Brindle, is registered at a property at No 47 Derby Street.

On the 1891 Census the buildings are numbered. In 39 Derby St., the head of the household is Thomas Knott, a police sergeant, his wife and two daughters.

In 39A, James Dickie, his occupation now given as policeman is registered with his wife and three sons and a daughter. Four policemen are registered at the address. At No 41, William Barker, the Superintendent of the County Police is registered with his wife, family and a domestic servant. Police sergeants and constables are registered at other nearby addresses along Derby Street.

The occupants of 39 and 41 Derby Street were not recorded on the 1901 Census.

The numbering of properties along Derby Street has undergone changes. The buildings built to house the Sergeant and Deputy Sergeant adjacent to the police station are now Nos 8-10 (HER ref MME6355).

On the 1966 Ordnance Survey map it appears from the HER records that No 10 Derby Street become the court house in 1966. In 1994 an application was approved for the addition of an access ramp at the front of the building (ref. 94/00627/APP).

In 2011, Prescot Police Station closed and the building became disused. The service relocated in 2018 to a new site shared with the Fire Service, on Cables Way within Prescot, 600m to the south-east of the former site (Prima Group). In the intervening period it has suffered from unlawful entry and vandalism including at least two sets of people recording footage for YouTube 'urban archivist' videos.

6. Building survey

Photograph directions are shown on Figures 10-12. Figure 10 (external directions) also labels outbuildings A-L as defined for this survey. Figures 11 and 12 show the ground and first floors on which rooms are labelled with the prefixes RG (ground floor) and RF (first floor), as shown on floor plans produced by KWL Architects and on corresponding surviving signage within the building. Figures 13 and 14 locate individual features and fittings referred to in the text. The floorplans and elevations (Figures 15-21) are derived from a measured survey undertaken in January 2024 by Survey Solutions.

6.1 External appearance – general

The building is of brick with slate roofs (Plate 1). The main body comprises the original police station with living quarters above, on the frontage of Derby Street with a gabled roof, the ridge of which is orientated approximately east-west. From the eastern side of this, a wing projects to the rear, formerly housing a secure area with cells at ground level with the large courtroom above, since divided into offices (Plate 2). This wing has a Dutch Gable (or Gablet) roof with louvred gables, the ridge of which is higher than that at the frontage with a decorative finial at the southern end. The external woodwork and ironwork was painted mid navy blue at the time of the survey.

At the northern end of the Courthouse wing, a wall continues westward to meet the western boundary, forming a small courtyard in the north-western quadrant (Plate 3). A two-storey structure projects northward from the western end of the police station wing with a catslide roof, partially encroaching on this and abutting a single storey boiler house. Part of the northern wall of the courtyard is the southern end of a rectangular two-storey brick building with a gabled slate roof which was formerly the stables.

The area to the rear of the police station is accessed from the road by a driveway between the east side of the building and a brick wall, capped with two rows of coping bricks, which forms the boundary to the adjacent property (Plate 4). Along the frontage there are brick pillars, the western set with a partial moulded stone coping against the police station wall and the eastern, with a complete coping, at the south end of the boundary wall. Each has a projecting course at the height of the wall, below which is a stone facing panel on three sides and a plinth at the base (Plate 5). At the time of the survey the ledged and boarded, wooden double gates had been removed and laid on the ground nearby.

Immediately north of the eastern pillar is the wall between the police station and adjacent property. To the east of this accessway is a group of abutting outbuildings and a large, canopied area (Plate 6). The area to the rear of the building is largely covered with tarmac onto which numbered parking

places have been painted as well as yellow boxes to maintain access (Plate 7). A set of garages and a shed stand at the northern boundary of the property.

6.2 South elevation

The frontage of the building faces onto Derby Street (Plate 8). Here the ground level falls to the west and this slope is compensated by the wall to the west being taller than to the east. The wall is dark reddish/grey brick set in English Garden wall bond with headers every fourth row, bonded with a lime mortar.

There are six windows on the ground floor in this elevation and two doors while on the first floor there are a further six windows. All window jambs are formed of canted bricks.

The central section of this elevation projects slightly forward. At the base of the wall beneath the sills of the window is a projecting plinth of darker chamfered bricks. To the east of the building, this plinth is three courses beneath the window sills, but on the bay and to the west it is lower, taking the slope into account. A wooden moulded cornice projects at the top of the wall, above which is a parapet wall of comparatively regular red bricks with a stone coping. There are three chimneys of lighter regular brick to the rear of the parapet wall, each tapering with four rows of chamfered bricks and four rows of projecting bricks beneath the flaunching. The chimney pots are largely of 'bishop' style with some 'hooded'. At the centre, above the front door, a flagpole is braced to the parapet.

Central to the building is the front door to the police station, accessed by a brick ramp with railings (Plate 9). The arch, in common with the moulded stone window heads in this face, is of alternate red and buff sandstone. The arch is pointed and chamfered, incorporating decorative cusping. The alternate pattern of sandstone continues to the door surround into which narrow columns are carved. The double doors (viewed from the inside) are three panelled with chamfered mullions and rails and there is a fixed transom window above.

Above the door 'Police Station' is carved into a degraded, grey stone panel with frame.

To the left of this door is a rectangular bay with paired windows facing southwards onto the road and narrow windows in the sides facing east and west. The paired windows have moulded stone lintels angled to the window and the sills are similarly sloped. The windows to the north and south are identical in style, but narrower. The bay is topped by a projecting cornice supported on brick brackets above which are three rows of more regular lighter bricks with coping, mirroring the parapet wall above.

To the right of the front door are two windows, one in the section set forward. Both are beneath segmental round headers of alternate colours with large abutment stones. The arch is infilled with a stone inset. The surrounds are of chamfered brick, apart from two pairs of light buff moulded stones. There is an identical window at the far left of the south wall, to the right of which is a narrow doorway with pointed segmental arch in the same style, accessed by four stone steps to the pavement (Plate 10). The east side of the doorway is formed by the projecting wall and the arch on this side is partially obscured. There is one sandstone block set into the surround to the left and some replaced bricks might suggest that others have been removed.

A row of bricks at the base of the abutment to the windows at ground floor level is darker in hue and continues across the front of the building including the projecting bay. A similar course is present at the first-floor windows although here it rises over the window heads. The windows are similar to

those at ground floor except that the arch heads are not infilled. The pair of windows in the projecting bay are mirrored with a pair of round headed windows above and the symmetry is also maintained with the window above the front door having a pointed, rather than round arch.

6.3 East elevation

The east wall of the police station overlooks the access road to the rear as described above. It comprises the eastern gable of the main body of the police station and the east wall of the courtroom wing to the rear (Plate 11). The gable here is not symmetrical, the slope to the north being shorter to take the higher courtroom roof into account. The eaves of the courtroom are dentilled and the brick plinth continues the length of the building. In the south-east corner, a blue painted metal bracket, of unknown function, projects from slightly below the eaves.

The entrance to the courtroom is set in the north of the gable end (Plate 12). It comprises a tall, narrow doorway beneath a segmental brick arch. The lower voussoirs are chamfered, while the upper, projecting forward, are half bricks. The door is four panelled, there are smaller plain panels below with larger panels above divided into chevrons.

Above this, the words 'COURT ROOM' are raised from a red sandstone arch. Either side of the arch, brick pilasters, stepped at the base, continue to the top of the window above, encasing both the window and a decorative panel of three partial blind arches above the doorway (Plate 13). The window comprises two tall, narrow sashes with chamfered sandstone lintels and a central jamb. The external jambs are of chamfered brick and the upper sashes are cambered, beneath segmental arches of cambered brick. There is a slate awning over the window with projecting decorative joists.

There are five equally spaced single hung sash windows at first floor level in the courtroom wing of the same style but wider, beneath segmental arches with stone sills and chamfered brick jambs. Each sash comprises two panes. At ground level there are five windows, more randomly spaced, each beneath segmental brick arches with stone sills. Three of the window openings at this level are filled with glass block windows, comprising eight rows of four blocks while one (which lights RG20) is much smaller, comprising two rows of three, and high, the arch being at the same level as the others and the southernmost (to RG18) is a hung sash.

North of the small window is a narrow, cambered doorway also beneath a segmental brick arch. The door, now unused (blocked from the inside, see description of RG21), is of hardboard with a central vented panel (Plate 14). At the base, the recess of the doorway has been roofed with felt over hardboard and two louvred doors form an external cupboard, possibly for deliveries of fresh goods such as milk. There are further louvred, rectangular vents at floor level.

6.4 North elevation

At first floor level on the end wall of the courtroom wing there are three cambered sash windows beneath segmental brick arches (Plate 15). Two are to the left (east) of a central, projecting chimney breast supported on decorative brick brackets and there is one to the right (west). The easternmost of these (lighting room RF20) is narrow and slightly lower than other windows at this level. The chimney is of similar bricks to the main body of this wing to eaves level but above this are lighter and more regular.

There are two windows at ground floor level on either side of an inserted door with concrete lintel. The window to the east beneath a segmented brick arch and with a stone lintel is of glass blocks while that to the west, being beneath the brackets of the chimney breast has a sandstone lintel.

On the north-east corner of the building at ground level the bricks have been painted white, presumably to avoid collision from vehicles in the car park.

6.5 Courtyard

The courtyard is formed of the courthouse wing to the east, a northward projecting section of the main body of the police station with boiler house, and a wall with external door to the south which also forms the southern gable of a further outhouse (Plate 16). The surface of the courtyard is of tarmac.

On the southern end of the courthouse, a first-floor door (to Room RF19) is accessed by a metal fire escape comprising a platform supported on metal brackets accessed by two flights of steps with railings at a quarter turn south of the stables (Plate 17). The narrow door has a two-light transom window. South of the doorway on the first floor of the courtroom wing are three sash windows identical to those described on the eastern elevation.

On ground floor level in the courthouse wing are three small rectangular windows of two rows of four-light reinforced glass windows with chamfered sandstone surrounds (Plate 18). These are the windows to cells RG26-28. A slight rectangular projection to the south of these is the western end of Room RG15, latterly a male toilet and a modern addition, with a two-light fixed, frosted window in the western end. South of this is a small sash window, adjacent to a doorway accessed by three concrete steps with a rail of plain metal tubing (Plate 19). This doorway leads to Room RG14.

The western part of the north-facing wall of the police station within the courtyard projects slightly forward, forming the corner of Room RG08. In the set back eastern section, there is a hung sash window at ground and first floor level, each sash comprising three panes, whereas in the projecting section there are narrower windows of two panes in each sash.

In the east-facing wall of the projecting section there are two small sash windows at ground floor level, a third blocked to the south, presumably when Room RG10 was converted to a shower room. The two existing windows both have metal grilles attached externally (Plate 20).

At first floor level in this wall is a small single hung 1-over-1 frosted pane sash window lighting bathroom RF11 to the south, adjacent to a larger 2-over-2 single hung sash window.

The adjacent boiler house comprises a single storey building with a single east-facing pitched slate roof built set the western boundary wall (described in more detail in Section 6.10 below) adjacent to a metal boiler tank in a brick enclosure (Plate 21). The western boundary wall rises slightly as it joins the stables and the interior of these walls has been painted white at some point implying that a structure such as a lean-to stood here previously.

6.6 West elevation

The western wall of the police station and projecting northward section is rendered and entirely plain, apart from a metal bracket just below the eaves on the south-west corner of the building which matches that on the east elevation (Plate 22).

6.7 Ground Floor

RG01 is the main central corridor of the police station leading north from the front door, which comprises a pair of substantial, six panelled double doors with chamfered rails and mullions (Plate 23). These are set under a three-light fixed transom window with external metal bars, each with two square panels above and smaller, rectangular panels below. The panels are all chamfered.

Immediately inside the doors, the east and west walls of the entrance hall are solid and plastered. In the west wall there is a two-light fixed window, beside a modern flush hardboard door with a window light leading to RG07.

There is moulded skirting along the west wall while a radiator has been fixed to the east wall and the skirting is shorter. The suspended ceiling is fragmentary and of modular panels in an aluminium frame, in common with all the suspended ceilings in the building. The original plastered ceiling is visible approximately 0.5m above this. The floor is covered with linoleum tiles.

There are modern double doors to the north, each with a fixed single-light window, which lead to a further hallway, with a similar floor and ceiling from which several doorways lead to rooms either side (Plate 24). There is also a substantial three-panel external door to the courtyard with a cambered head in the western wall (Plate 25).

Central to the north-south section of the corridor, chamfer-decorated pilasters beneath a round arch are partially visible above the suspended ceiling (Plate 26). The arch is on a line with the two further arches in similar style at the base of stairwell, RG11.

At the eastern end of the east-west section of the corridor, a flush door in the south wall opens to a set of stone steps behind a metal barred gate. The gate is marked with "Worrall's Patent, Whitechapel Liverpool" and comprises vertical bars set as lozenges interspersed with inverted spears, resembling a portcullis.

The staircase forms a quarter turn westwards with a small landing after three steps and another quarter turn northwards above this (Plate 28) but then is blocked by the floor of RF14 above.

These were formerly the steps by which prisoners were taken from the cells directly into the dock of the courtroom, the barred gate being opposite to the heavy door to the corridor accessing the cells (see RG25 below). The approximate point at which the stairs would have emerged is marked by a red square in RF14 on Figure 14. Latterly it was used as a cleaning cupboard.

The northern part of **RG02** was a reception area defined by an inserted wall to the south and with a counter with storage shelves below crossing the room from north to south from the inserted wall (Plate 29). The public area is furnished with modern equipment –a set of three fixed chairs for waiting, racks for information leaflets etc and notice boards (Plate 30). The floor is of carpet tiles and the ceiling is suspended panels. Between the angle of the inserted wall and the wall by the front door there is a smaller shelving unit.

To the south, a rectangular bay with windows to the west of the front door contains two 1-over-1 sash windows to the front (1.05m wide) and one each 1-over-1 narrower sash windows in the east-facing and west-facing parts of the bay (0.6m wide). The windows are set deeply within wooden framing with moulded architraves (Plate 31). The windows have brass fittings and hooks for opening and decorative sash horns and there are smaller metal fittings at the tops for blinds. There is moulded skirting at the base of the wall of the bay.

A narrow four-panelled door, with chamfered decoration on the rails and mullions and with a pointed arch transom window over, leads to the street (Plate 32). A corridor leads from the door to a counter inserted in front of a flush hardboard door with a fixed single light transom window (Plate 33) which may have formed part of the reception area. There is plain skirting along the base of the wall. An electronic cell call and panic alarm system is located to the west of the door by an electric meter (Plate 34).

Between RG02 and the ante room there is a partially solid thick wall with integral storage units.

RG03 is a large room, located to the east of the central corridor, accessed by a four panelled wooden door with decorative chamfers on the panels. The ceiling is plastered and is probably at its original height (Plate 35). The floor is tiled with carpet squares and the walls have been papered with woodchip wallpaper. There are modern fittings in the room which include sockets for plugs and boxed-in electric wires. A modern cupboard in the western wall contains electric wires.

In the north-east of the room, the underside of the turn of stairwell (RG12) is visible, with a built-in cupboard under the stairs (Plate 36). The cupboard has an open bookshelf of deep shelves, surrounded by moulded architrave with evidence of a removed door.

A chimney breast in the east wall is located by a modern door with an inset fixed light window and with the door frame removed. There is wooden beading on the wall corner and built-in cupboards with modern doors between the chimney breast and front wall. There is moulded skirting along the base of the walls.

A double hung 1-over-1 sash window is located in the southern (front) wall with a chamfered design in the woodwork of the frame (Plate 37). To the west of the window is an early light switch (Plate 38). The window has internal venetian blinds.

RG04 was formerly used as an office. It is a slightly smaller room than RG03 to which it is connected by a doorway. The rooms also share a chimney, blocked, with a vent at the base in Room RG04. All walls are solid and covered with woodchip wallpaper. There is a 1-over-1 sash window in the front wall (southern), the same as others on the frontage. The floor is of carpet tiles and the ceiling is suspended tiles. A wire rack on the north wall is divided for administrative purposes.

There are two built-in cupboards, the larger of the two in the north wall (Plate 39) and while another to the west (Plate 40) is in the recess between the chimney breast and the southern wall. Both cupboards have plain hardboard modern doors above and wooden doors with a chamfered design underneath. There is moulded skirting which continues behind the cupboard doors.

A row of plugs, notice boards and a fixed radiator beneath the window form the remainder of the furniture in this room.

RG05 is a corridor, running east-west between the central corridor and stairs to the west (RG06). The corridor has had a suspended ceiling removed, with a layer of chicken wire visible below the original plaster ceiling (Plate 41). The walls on each side (north and south) are stud and plasterboard implying that this corridor is a later insertion.

There are chamfered frames in the opening in the east of the room, while to the west the frames are partially removed internally. With no evidence of door fittings or hinges it seems likely that this was always an open corridor.

There is a radiator on the northern wall, the floor is covered with linoleum and the walls are papered with woodchip wallpaper.

RG06 is a stairwell rising from a floor of red and black quarry tiles set in a diamond pattern. The stairs lead up to the west (Plate 42) and complete a full turn to the first floor.

There are plain modern treads on the stairs, with metal nosing. The newel post has stopped chamfer decoration and is topped with a ball cap with a finial on the woodwork below the top of the lowest flight (Plate 43).

There is plain skirting at the base of the walls but moulded skirting of the same height to the side of the stairs and beading on the corner of the wall at the foot of the stairs.

The doorway leading from Room RG06 to RG07 has a chamfered door surround and the internal wooden door also has chamfered rails and mullions.

RG07 is a rectangular room in the south-west corner of the building. It appears to have been used as an office, with fluorescent lighting and noticeboards remaining on the eastern wall beside a row of coat pegs and on the northern wall (Plate 44). The room has a full-height plaster ceiling, the floor is carpeted with tiles and the walls covered with woodchip wallpaper. There is a chamfered frame for a doorway present but not fully intact. The door has decorative chamfers on mullions and rails (Plate 45).

A single hung 1-over-1 sash window in the southern wall is similar to others in this wall, with similar chamfers to the woodwork. A modern radiator has been placed underneath the window. There is a blocked chimney breast in the western wall with a vent at ground level. Between this and the southern wall are several open shelves above a cupboard with wooden doors with a decorative chamfer (Plate 46).

A mixture of moulded and plain skirting runs along the base of the walls; with moulded skirting being present along the southern and eastern walls and plain skirting on the west wall.

RG08, accessed by a doorway from the stairwell (RG06), is a rectangular room with a chimney in the west wall and two doorways side by side in the northern wall (Plate 47). The door to the right is four panelled with chamfered mullions and rails, while that to the left is a modern flush hardboard door with fixed central light. The floor is carpeted with tiles, there is plain skirting on the south, east and north walls and a partially surviving suspended ceiling.

A large single hung 2-over-2 sash window is located in the northern wall. The window has a cambered head and is otherwise undecorated (Plate 48). The head of the window is partially obscured by the suspended ceiling. There is a blocked chimney breast in the western wall with a built-in cupboard to the south with chamfered panel doors (Plate 49).

RG09 and RG10 were previously a single room divided into two; RG09 being a shower room with a full height ceiling and a modern shower unit inserted (Plate 50).

A radiator in the northern wall may predate the shower insertion. The floor is tiled. There are two sash windows with cambered heads in the east wall (Plate 51) of similar design to that in RG08.

RG10 is divided from RG09 by a stud wall, creating a narrow corridor with a tiled floor which leads to the shower (Plate 52). The doorway at the northern end of RG10 is chamfered, implying either that

this is an early doorway formerly providing access to a smaller room cupboard or that it was re-set in this location.

North of the doorway there is an ante room (or changing room) with plumbing/pipe work in the northern wall. This leads eastwards to a fully tiled shower room with a rectangular window light over the door.

RG11 is the base of a set of stairs which ascend eastwards from the main corridor, RG01. The stairs have a westward return above the landing (four steps up eastwards in RG11). A 'clocking in' card rack is fixed to a blind arch with chamfers to the south just at the base of the stairs. The corner of the wall to the west of the arch is also chamfered (Plate 53).

A suspended ceiling, linoleum tiles at the base of the stairs and woodchip wallpaper are all modern features. The stair rail is wooden and curving and is attached to the wall with brackets.

RG012 is a small cupboard beneath the western return of the stairs accessed from the main corridor RG01. On the southern wall is an electrical box within the main body of the cupboard, while to the rear, a wooden partition forms a smaller cupboard accessed by a small door with five panels and chamfers in the rails and mullions. The top panel, similar to the others but narrow and horizontal, is covered with mesh (Plate 54).

The cupboard to the rear of this, below the stairs, has a concrete floor and two shelves supported on brackets with curved braces to the south (Plate 55). A small, square opening to the north leads to a cavity beneath the lower stairs while another to the east leads to a cavity beneath stairs RG17. Both of these spaces appear to have been used for storing coal, possibly for the boiler in the space below RF14.

To the left of the cupboard, the chamfered side of the blind arch on one side of the stairwell above (RF13) is visible.

RG13 is a former office on the western side of the corridor, with noticeboards and whiteboards on the walls which are covered with woodchip wallpaper. There is a blocked chimney breast in the west with shelves fixed on the wall to the north. The floor is carpeted and there is a suspended panel ceiling. A cambered window to north is obscured by chipboard inside and outside (Plate 56).

The room is accessed from the corridor by a substantial ledged and boarded door (Plate 57) with a built-in cupboard to the south-east. There is moulded skirting on all walls.

RG14, on the east side of the corridor, is a small room partially beneath the stone stairs which formerly led to the courtroom, described below. It is accessed from a doorway on the eastern side of corridor RG01 through a plain doorframe housing a containing a chamfered door. There are storage shelves along the southern wall which evidently formerly held documentation. A wooden fence-type grille is located under the stairwell (Plate 58) and there is frame of bonded timbers set into the southern face of the stone wall (Plate 59).

The floor is boarded and a hatch to the east gives access to a small brick lined cellar beneath (Plate 60). On the northern side of this are stone steps which would have formerly given access to the cellar directly from the corridor. To the south a rectangular brick frame set into the floor may formerly have supported a boiler and there are vents in the wall immediately to the west.

RG15 is a rectangular room accessed through a chamfered framed doorway, though with modern flush door from the corridor to the south. The room has recently functioned as a male toilet with

two inserted cubicles in the west, the walls of which do not reach the full height of the room. The ceiling is of suspended panels (Plate 61).

A large window with two rectangular lights hinged at the base light the cubicles from overhead. The floor is linoleum covered. Urinals and handwashing sinks with associated tiling are located along the north and south walls.

It appears that this room has been extended westwards into the courtyard,

RG16 is a corridor running north-south between stairwell RG17 to the south to the doorway to RG21 to the north, connecting centrally to corridor RG01 via a modern doorway to the west. Slightly to the north of this, a barred metal gate divides the corridor (Plate 62) delineating the 'secure area' to the north from the rest of the building.

The corridor continues north from the barred gate from which rooms RG18, RG19 and RG20 are accessed by doorways in the east wall and RG21 from the door at the northern end of the corridor.

The floor of the corridor is covered with lino tiles and there is a suspended ceiling. The walls are covered in woodchip wallpaper.

RG17 is the flight of stairs to the south of corridor RG16, leading south and then west around the corner via a rounded return and with moulded skirting along the base of the wall where it meets the treads. At the top of the lowest flight is a chamfered arch only partially spanning the width of the corridor. There is a moulded stair-rail along the east wall (Plate 63).

There is pipework just below ceiling height, some of which appears to be set into a niche along the southern wall above a wide rail. The corridor walls are covered in woodchip paper with a decorative 'tile pattern' wallpaper visible under the wood chip paper in places. The floor is of linoleum tiles.

RG18 and **RG18A** were most recently in use as Ladies toilets (Plate 64). A stud wall to the east of the entrance gives way to a narrow room with an inserted cubicle. The interior has a full height ceiling and a large sash window with a cambered head in the east wall, partially obscured by the inserted cubicle. Unlike other windows in this elevation, there is a single hung sash window with frosted panes with a substantial timber surround and embrasure.

The doorway has a partial chamfered door surround with a modern flush hardwood door inserted. The walls are covered with woodchip wallpaper and the floor with linoleum.

RG19 is divided by a stud wall with a modern doorway into a small ante room to the west and a larger room to the east (Plate 65). It has a suspended ceiling, the walls have a vinyl covering and the floor is carpeted. There are storage shelves in the south and a large window in the eastern wall. A red button on the south wall is probably related to an 'Engaged' sign in the corridor outside, suggesting that it functioned as an interview room, possibly the 'Tape Interview Room' included on the light panel in RG02, and there are some mounts remaining for recording equipment.

In the east wall there is a large window formed of block glass. As with all such windows at the ground floor the blocks are 230mm square, bonded with thin layers of mortar. This window is the largest at this level, comprising eight rows of eight blocks. It is covered internally by a fixed two light window of frosted glass, presumably for reasons of privacy.

The southern wall projects forward in the manner of a chimney breast forming a small alcove to the east (Plate 66), although the actual function of this is unclear, as there is no corresponding chimney breast in the former courtroom above.

RG20 is a narrow room, oriented east-west with a full height ceiling and floor of concrete and vinyl floor tiles. Modern fixtures, including wires and metal fittings, suggest that the room has recently been used for communications, perhaps the server for the police station. There is a plain, rectangular aperture filled with six panes of block glass set high in the east wall and no other window furniture (Plate 67).

RG21 is a large, rectangular room divided by a stud wall into a larger area to the north and a narrow east-west section to the south (Plate 68). This may have formerly been an entrance corridor to a doorway, visible from the outside but entirely blocked internally (Plate 69).

There is a suspended ceiling in both the main room and ante room and plain skirting on the west wall with moulded skirting on the south and east walls. A window in the east wall is rectangular and plain, and partially obscured by the suspended ceiling and a row of outlets which indicate that the room had recently been used as an office. It is of eight rows of four glass blocks, the lower three rows being frosted (Plate 70).

A radiator is fixed to the wall beneath the window and an extractor fan is located in the wall at ceiling height in the south-east of the room. Part of a metal extraction system similar to that in the vicinity of the cells to the west is installed in the eastern wall of the ante room. The floor is carpeted and the walls are solid and plastered, with notice boards fixed in places. The walls in the north of the room are stud walls.

The main room is accessed in the south-west corner via a modern door which has an internal chamfer on the doorframe.

There are two doors to rooms RG22 and RG23 to the north set in an inserted stud wall and one door which leads to the corridor outside the cells to the west (Plate 71).

RG22 was recently used as a kitchen/small canteen. The ceiling is suspended just above the level of the window height, there are large, plain, rectangular glass block windows in north and east wall. The floor is carpeted and there is moulded skirting on the north wall (Plate 72).

RG23 is a small, rectangular corridor, with a solid wall to the west and a stud wall to the east. The skirting is more substantial along the west wall (Plate 73) than the east, reflecting the fact that this was formerly part of a larger room and this corridor was inserted when the external doorway to north was added. The corridor is accessed by a plain doorway with the door missing. The external doorway to the north is a modern flush fire door with reinforced glass panel.

RG24 is a north-south corridor which accesses the three cells to the west of this wing (RG26, RG27 and RG28). The floor is covered with carpet tiles and a heating duct covered with a metal grille runs down the middle of the floor (Plate 74). The corridor has a full height ceiling and is formed of painted bricks. There is a rectangular window in the north wall formed of five rows of five panes with metal grilles, the second from the top being a bottom-opening circulation panel. Beneath this in the north wall is a service sink (Plate 75). Metal heating/ventilation ducts servicing the adjacent cells are fixed to the ceiling. There is also housing for pipes on the walls and across the corridor.

Three doorways to the west lead to former cells. Each door jamb, constructed of rounded bricks, has a chamfer decoration in the brickwork. Two of the doorways to the cells have flattish brick arches whilst the northernmost, to RG28, has a concrete lintel. Outside each cell on the west wall is a panel with a buzzer switch, orange light and reset button (Plate 76) for the cell call system (possibly linked to the panel in RG02).

There is a plain modern door at south end of the corridor, which leads to RG25. The wall at the southern end appears to be a later insertion (Plate 77).

RG25 is an ante room to the south of the corridor, probably inserted for security reasons. It has a carpeted floor and full height brick walls to an open ceiling as in the corridor described above. It is accessed from the north by a modern door in a modern inserted wall. A substantial wooden plank door with two large external bolts and a door viewer leads to the corridor to the south (Plate 78). The rear of the door is faced with flush metal sheeting (Plate 79).

RG26 is the most southerly cell to the west of the corridor, accessed through a doorway of rounded bricks with a segmental brick arch, filled with a substantial door of thick bolted boards with large bolts at the top and base, the former location of a dead lock and a central aperture for a service hatch (Plate 80). The interior of the door is faced with a metal sheet with a gap for the service hatch (Plate 81).

There is a brick barrel-vaulted ceiling on an east-west axis and there is a small rectangular window above head height in the western wall (Plate 82) comprising two rows of four rectangular reinforced panes with stone mullions and a chamfered stone surround.

The floor is concrete, partly covered with vinyl. The beige-painted brick walls and door are covered with graffiti, largely comprising personal names, football teams and uncomplimentary opinions of the police force (not reproduced in this document).

The room has recently been used for storage, with modern shelving units located against the northern wall. Radiators against the south wall are covered by a curved metal grille. The location of a former WC/sink is evident on the west wall and there is a vent above the door leading to the ducts in the adjacent corridor.

RG27, the central cell, is largely similar to RG26 (Plate 83). The location of a removed heating duct is evident on west wall.

RG28 is the northernmost cell and is similar to the others, although there are no storage units on the northern wall (Plate 84) and the segmental brick arch over the doorway has been replaced with a concrete lintel.

RG29 is the boilerhouse and is described in the section on external structures below.

RG30 is the formal stairwell to the courtroom. Immediately inside the doorway is a small lobby with a concrete floor, plastered walls and stone sills. A cavity below the stairs to the west is accessed by two plain arched openings of different heights (Plate 85).

To the right, the base of the stairs is accessed through a chamfered, round arched doorway. The stone steps curve a quarter turn through a similar arch on the same line. There is a baluster on the inside with plain banisters, moulded handrail and substantial post-to-post newel and there is a moulded handrail on the outside fixed to the wall (Plate 86).

6.8 First floor

RF01 is the upper section of stairs RG17 leading to corridor RF02 (Plate 87). The stairs quarter turn westwards mid-flight and there is a level balustrade to the south adjacent to the doorway to RF03. The newel post has stopped chamfers and a ball cap and the moulded wooden hand-rail attached.

The treads are linoleum covered with metal nosing. The skirting is moulded and shorter than that of the corridor which might imply that the stairs are a later addition but may equally reflect that they may have been installed as a set unit.

RF02 is a corridor which connects rooms on the frontage of the police station and the divided office space of the former courtroom. To the west it is defined by stud walls to the north and south, with plain flush doors containing single glass panels to Rooms RF06 and RF12 to the north, above which there is a panel of three fixed windows. The floor is of linoleum and there is woodchip wallpaper on the walls.

A parallel section set to the south and accessed by an open doorway (Plate 88) provides access to Rooms RF05, RF04, RF03 and staircase RF01. Here, the walls are solid except for the northern wall of RF04 which is a later addition, there is a high plaster ceiling, and the floor is covered with linoleum. Above the door which leads to RF06 is an asymmetrical rounded arch. There is little natural light in this corridor (Plate 89).

The section of the corridor which occupies the western side of the former courtroom wing is included in the description of the courtroom below.

RF03 is a square room in the south-east corner of the building. A sash window in the southern wall overlooking Derby Street is partially obscured by a suspended ceiling on an aluminium framework. The floor is linoleum covered and the skirting is plain. In the western wall is a stone fireplace with pointed arch over the hearth and stopped chamfers surrounding a Victorian cast iron grate (Plate 90). To the left of the chimney breast is a built-in shelf unit with architrave. Coat pegs to the rear demonstrate that the shelves are a later addition. The door to the right of the fireplace is four panelled with stopped chamfers on mullions and rails. Above the door, a plain hardboard hatch opens onto a cavity containing a metal header tank (Plate 91).

RF04 is an L-shaped room accessed by a modern door directly from corridor RF02. The northern wall is of stud construction. In the eastern wall is an identical fireplace to that in Room RF03 with which it shares a chimney (Plate 92). There is a single hung 1-over-1 sash window in the south wall overlooking the street.

RF05/RF05A are divided by a stud wall. They form a lobby to the north and toilet room with sink to the south (Plate 93). The floor is covered with linoleum and the ceiling is modular metal panels. A single window, narrower than others on the frontage of the building, was originally a single hung sash but has been adapted to form three horizontal lights, the central of which has a louvred opening.

RF06 is generally square, apart from a projection at the north-eastern corner into which the panelled door is set (Plate 94). The northern wall and that either on side of the door are of lath and plaster which might imply that the original panel door was moved and reset when the room was adapted from a larger space which may have extended to RF12 to the north.

The floor is carpeted and the walls covered with woodchip wallpaper. The suspended ceiling is of panels which partially obscure two 1-over-1 hung sash windows which overlook the rectangular bay below (Plate 95). There is a blocked fireplace in the chimney breast in the western wall.

RF07, in the south-west corner of the first floor, is accessed directly from stairwell RF08 through a doorway in the northern wall with four panelled door with chamfered mullions and rails. The floor is carpeted and there is moulded skirting on all walls. The suspended ceiling is of panels in aluminium frame. There is a sash window with a cambered head in the south (front) wall and a chimney breast in the east wall, with a blocked stone fireplace surround with a pointed arch and wooden mantel (Plate 96).

RF08 is the landing at the top of the stairs accessing lobby RG06 on the ground floor (Plate 97). Linoleum covers the floor and the stairs are covered with linoleum with metal nosing. The handrail is a plain wooden baluster and the newel post has stop chamfers and a ball cap. The high suspended ceiling is of modular panels and the walls covered with woodchip wallpaper.

The door to the east leading to corridor RF02 is flush hardwood with a modern frame and is likely to have been a later insertion (Plate 98).

RF09 is a roughly square room with a flush hardwood door to the south-east accessing the landing RF08 and an open doorway to the north-east leading to RF10. A cambered single hung 2-over-2 window in the east side of the north wall overlooks the courtyard (Plate 99). The floor is carpeted there is moulded skirting on all walls which are plastered with woodchip wallpaper over.

In the west wall is a chimney breast with a stone surround with pointed arch, a Victorian grate and wooden mantel (Plate 100). The ceiling is plastered and slopes at the northern end of the room, in line with the catslide roof above.

A modern electric bar with telephone sockets on the south wall at desk height would imply that this was latterly an office for communication.

RF10 is a small corridor accessing RF10A to the north and RF11 to the east. The floor is carpeted and a boxed-in beam crosses the ceiling from east to west. The wall to the east is of upright matchboarding into which the panel door to RF11 is set (Plate 101).

RF10A is a small storage area with sloping lath and plaster ceiling and has a line of deep wooden shelves along the north wall and a cambered single hung sash window with two panes to a sash in the east wall overlooking the courtyard (Plate 102). The floor is vinyl covered and the walls plastered and painted. The partition to the adjacent bathroom RF11 is formed of upright matchboarding.

RF11 is a small WC with a north-sloping lath and plaster ceiling, a sink and WC removed by time of the survey (Plate 103). It is defined by matchboarding walls to the north and west but there is a chamfered panel door and a small window.

RF12 is a rectangular room defined to the south by a stud wall with a modern flush hardwood door above which four rectangular fixed windows provide light to the corridor. There is a single hung 3-over-3 sash window in the north wall with overlooks the courtyard. It has a cambered head and a modern vertical blind installed (Plate 104).

A stone fireplace (partially obscured by a large metal cupboard at the time of the survey) of the same style to other fireplaces on this floor (Plate 105) is in the centre of the west wall with built-in

shelves to the right. The floor is vinyl covered with moulded skirting and the ceiling is plastered and at original height. Noticeboards and banks of sockets suggest that this room was latterly an office.

RF13 is the upper part of the stairwell leading to RG12 accessed from the corridor through a late 20th century hardwood flush door with a square pane of reinforced glass. The stairs are covered with vinyl with aluminium nosing and there is a curving wooden handrail on the south and east sides (Plate 106).

The wall to the north is solid, the stairs partially obscuring the top of a blind arch (Plate 107), the base of which is visible in cupboard RG12 below and the rear of which is at the base of the stairs (RG11, Plate 54). There is a suspended panel ceiling, but where the panels are missing the roof structure is visible, the slope rising southwards demonstrating that the staircase is within the main section of the police station rather than part of the Courtroom (Plate 108). The skirting on both sides of the staircase is moulded.

6.9 Courtroom Wing

The first floor of the rear wing of the building comprises the former retiring room for the magistrate (RF19) at the northern end with a small ante room the east (RF20), and the former area of the courtroom; itself divided relatively recently by stud walls into three offices (RF14, RF16, RF18), a kitchen (RF17) with an access corridor to the west (part of RF02).

The east wall of the corridor is a later insertion, with three flush hardwood doors leading into the offices (Plate 109) whilst the door to RF19 at the northern end is a four panelled door with chamfered mullions and rails set in an older lath and plaster wall. To the west, there are four single hung 2-over-2 sash windows overlooking the courtyard, the southern of which has been blocked. There are three corbels visible below the ceiling on which the metal roof trusses supporting the roof of this wing are placed (Plate 110).

Missing panels in the suspended ceiling afford a view of the roof structure of the courtroom. The ceiling is coved in plaster and supported by three transverse metal trusses with truss rods and supported on corbels on east and west walls with two half trusses to the north and south (Plate 111). A modern ventilation system is installed at the north-eastern corner of the roof space.

RF14 is a rectangular room formed from the southern end of the courtroom. The floor comprises carpet tiles over hardboard and there is a suspended panel ceiling (Plate 112). The doorway accessing the formal staircase to the courtroom is to the south-east, now occupied by a modern fire door within a chamfered frame. The window in the eastern wall is a single hung 2-over-2 sash with cambered head and there is a later internal casement, presumably for additional insulation and to exclude noise from the outside during proceedings. Adjacent to the windows, the suspended ceiling is set back to allow the inward swing of the casements (Plate 113).

A label of the door to this room marks is as 'Snooker Room'.

RF15 is the upper part of the formal staircase to the courtroom which projects slightly eastward from the main body of the building and is lit by two narrow, parallel sash windows (above the external 'Court Room' carving). The curving stairs are of stone with an external rail and a decorative wooden banister with elaborate newel posts (Plate 114). The wall is covered by chipboard wallpaper and there is moulded skirting above the stairs.

RF16 is the central office of the courtroom wing (Plate 115) and is defined by stud walls except to the east where there are two sash windows also with internal casements. The floor is of carpet over hardboard and the ceiling of suspended panels with a regular pattern of lighting panels. The southern wall is lined with noticeboards and there are fixed tables beneath the windows to the east.

RF17 is a former kitchen formed by stud walls out of the north-east corner of the former courtroom (Plate 116). The ceiling is of suspended panels and, unlike the other windows in RF14 and RF16, there are no internal casements, so the ceiling is not set back. The floor is of linoleum and there are modern kitchen units to the north, east and south. The wall to the north is of lath and plaster, reflecting the northern extent of the former courtroom.

RF18, the room to the west of the kitchen, is also formed of inserted walls to the south, east and west and shares the same suspended ceiling and flooring as other rooms formed of the courtroom (Plate 117). In the corridor to the west, it is labelled 'TV Lounge' and was probably selected for this purpose because there was no natural light here.

RF19 is the former Magistrate's retiring room, occupying the northern end of the Courtroom wing and is original to the building (Plate 118). The doors to the corridor and ante room to the east are panelled with chamfered rails and mullions. Central to the northern wall is a decorative cast iron fireplace enclosed by a moulded stone surround with sloped mantel, chamfered legs and two quatrefoil motifs (Plate 119).

Either side of the fireplace are single hung 2-over-2 sash windows with cambered heads. These are partly obscured by the suspended panel ceiling below a high, flat, plastered ceiling, separate to that of the courtroom. The wall to the south is of timber set with lath and plaster.

The door to RG20 to the east has four chamfered panels, the top left of which has been replaced with glass. To the west, an inserted plain doorway with a large, square, fixed transom window is an emergency exit leading to the metal fire escape in the courtyard (Plate 120).

RF20 is the ante room to the Magistrate's retiring room. The window to the east is a single hung sash of the same dimensions as others on this storey, while to the north a narrower window in the same style with single pane to each sash reflects the confines of the room. The lower pane is frosted, possibly to preserve the dignity of the magistrate while changing into his robes (Plate 121).

The floor is carpeted and the skirting is moulded. The plastered ceiling is lower than that of the adjacent RF19.

6.10 External buildings

Building A, the southernmost structure on the east side of the driveway, is a small (3.5m x 2m), rectangular, single storey brick building with a hatch opening to the driveway with large stone lintel and small stone sill, accessed by a door to the north (Plate 122). It has a mono pitched slate roof, rising eastward to join the wall with the adjacent property. This may have been a manned booth for security. The single internal space could not be accessed during the survey.

The slate roof continues northwards as a canopy (**Building B**) supported to the west by a steel joist on metal columns. It is open to the west with the rear formed of a white painted brick wall (Plate 123). The concrete floor is sloped with apertures for supporting bicycle wheels.

Further northwards as the property boundary extends eastwards, Buildings C-G form a conjoined group of structures to the east of the access road (Plates 124 and 125). Central to this, **Building C** has a canopy similar to Building B, but wider, slightly higher, formed of a gable pitched roof and supported on similar metal columns. It is divided into three bays by king post trusses with raking struts under which netting has been slung (Plate 126). The concrete floor is also sloped and a notice attached to the wall to the north denotes an area for car washing. The rear wall of the canopy is formed by the western wall of the brick building F which is accessed by a doorway beneath the canopy (Plate 127). The northern edge of this area is formed by buildings D and E which are also accessed from beneath the canopy. The canopy is joined to the northern end of the courtroom wing by a gantry supporting a central heating pipe.

Building D is a brick rectangular structure 5m long east-west and 4.5m north to south. It has a mono pitch slate roof rising westwards, slightly lower than the adjacent canopy but with a similar pitch (Plate 128). There is a brick chimney at the ridge and a louvred vent below. The brick continues to the height of the eaves to the west, above which the gables are weatherboarded.

The doorway is plain with a ledged and braced door and there are fixed two light windows to the west and north. Internally, there is a brick chimney breast in the east wall, tapering northwards with a dilapidated cast iron fireplace beneath a segmental brick arch formed of two rows of headers (Plate 129). North of this, a projecting brick structure houses a solid fuel boiler above which is a recess below another segmental brick arch, the sill being the same height as the top of the boiler.

This building may have been a workshop but, as suggested by the equipment and storage shelves, appears to have been used for bicycle repair in later years.

Adjacent to the east, **Building E** is also of brick with a mono pitched felt roof, though unlike other such buildings in this group, it rises to the south. As it is surrounded by buildings, it is only visible externally from the air (see Plate 125).

Internally it is divided into two by a brick wall with a large open doorway with the remains of a mechanism for sliding metal doors (Plate 130). The floor is concrete and the walls are painted brick. In the west wall of the space to the west is a projecting chimney breast with a blocked fireplace forming the rear of the chimney breast in Building D. In the space to the east is another chimney breast set at an angle in the north-west corner of the room, the fireplace, beneath a segmental brick arch, is also blocked (Plate 131). In the east wall of this building are large wooden sliding doors formed of upright boards, which would formerly have led into the adjacent Building F.

At the east of the group, **Building F** is a two-storey brick-built rectangular building (8m north south x 5m east-west) with pitched slate roof, the ridge line approximately north-south (Plate 132). The slates are larger and less regular than those on the other roofs in this complex.

It is accessed through a doorway at the northern end of the canopy of Building C (see Plate 127), south of which is a two light fixed window. In the continuation of this wall to the south are two projecting brick buttresses and on either side of the southern buttresses are blocked windows beneath stone lintels at differing heights with a blocked doorway to the south. The blocked windows and doors, however, are south of Building F and must have served a building which no longer stands in the adjacent property.

In the northern elevation there is a hatch at ground level (Plate 133) and a blocked window beneath a stone lintel and there are square vents at close to the apex of each gable.

At first floor level (visible on Plate 125), another hatch at the southern end of the building faces west and another blocked hatch or window at this level is visible within Building E. The southern elevation of this building faces the area to the rear of the adjacent property and was not accessible during the survey.

Internally the room's walls and ceiling are lined with laminated hardboard panels and floor is carpeted. There are no windows. Electric heaters are attached to the northern and southern walls. (Plates 134 and 135).

The hatch provides access to the attic space which is open to the unlined rafters, has wooden floorboards and bare white painted brick walls (Plate 136). A single central truss (structure not visible from the hatch) supported by metal brackets, defines two bays and the hatch in the eastern wall is apparent. At the northern end of the building, a square column formed of upright boards rises from the floor to the ridge of the roof (Plate 137). The function of this is not clear, it may have been a ventilation feature or may enclose a chimney or flue, however it does not correspond to an opening in the roof.

Projecting from the north of this group, **Building G** is a brick-built single storey building with a single pitch slate roof sloping to the west and a brick chimney in the south-east (Plate 138). Windows in the east, north and west walls were obscured by security boards but appear to be metal framed three-light windows, the central being a casement with fixed lights either side. Internally, the floor is concrete and a triangular fireplace, similar to that in Building E, occupies the south-east corner.

Building H is a row of five concrete pre-cast garages at the northern boundary of the property, open to the car parking area to the south (Plate 139). The single pitched roof is of interlocking cast concrete roofing panels. The two garages to the west have wooden frames but no doors but the remainder have no frames or doors. The users of the garage are stencil sprayed above the doorways, which from west to east are:-

AREA INSP

AREA SGT

AR.....GT (script partially missing)

D/INSP FSU

D/SGT FSU

Standing slightly apart to the east of the garages, **Building I** is a taller, rectangular concrete shed in a similar style to the garages with wooden double doors, only one of which was attached at the time of the survey (Plate 140). A vehicle inspection pit covered with thick wooden boards would suggest that this building was used for vehicle maintenance.

Building J is the former stables, a two-storey brick building forming the northern boundary of the courtyard and a section of the western boundary of the property. It is of brick in English Garden bond similar to that of the police station and the form and hue of the bricks are also similar. The roof is of slate with decorative ridge tiles and raised, capped barges (Plate 141).

In the east wall at ground level are two doorways with a window between. The doorway to the south is plain and modern bricks surrounding demonstrate that this was once a much larger opening

perhaps for a trap or buggy. The window and door to the north are beneath segmental brick arches. The window is louvred while the door is a stable half door.

The ground floor is divided into two by a brick wall. The space to the north is narrower and divided into two stables by a metal frame (Plate 142). Each stable has a metal door with mesh above and there is mesh between and above the doors. The area to the south is a rectangular storeroom with a suspended hardboard ceiling, painted brick walls and a concrete floor (Plate 143). Freestanding metal shelving was installed on the north and south walls at the time of the survey. This may have been for housing some form of small carriage such as a trap or buggy.

The upper floor of the building is accessed by a small hatch. The space was not fully accessed but the view from the hatch (Plate 144) demonstrates that the space is open to the roof and divided, as below, by a brick wall with an opening beneath a wooden lintel. It is probable that this was a hay loft.

There is a single half brick sized aperture slightly below the apex of the gable.

On the northern wall of the stables, a single storey brick lean-to extension (**Building K**) with mono pitch, north facing slate roof appears to be a later addition (Plate 145). This structure has a single doorway to the east and in the north wall a wooden hatch and louvred ventilation panel, both beneath large sandstone lintels. This houses a 'Lister' diesel driven generator, presumably used as an emergency power supply for the police station (Plate 146).

Building L, adjoining the projecting western wing of the police station on the west side of the courtyard, is the former boiler house (Plate 147). It is in brick with a mono pitch slate roof which rises westwards to the boundary wall with Elm House Service Road which has been raised to accommodate the height of the building. There is a brick chimney with 'bishop' ceramic chimney pot set against the adjacent wall and transversing the eaves and a louvred wooden vent below. The bricks are lighter in hue and more regular than the main body of the building and it is clearly a later addition as the wall has been raised with similar bricks. Conversely the slates are larger and less regular than on the roof of the police station. A brick chimney is set against the north wall of the extension and projects through the eaves.

On the eastern elevation there is a doorway with rounded brick jambs and large, rectangular, fixed window while to the north is a two-light casement. The building houses an 'Ideal' boiler and associated apparatus including a framed diagram detailing the connections (Plate 148). A cylindrical metal oil tank stands surrounded by a dwarf brick wall immediately to the north.

7. Discussion

The former Prescot Police Station is a well-preserved example of a Victorian civic building, built in gothic style and designed not only to be functional and to provide the facilities and accommodation required by a town police service of the day, but also to present a striking appearance both from the impressive exterior and the quality of internal fittings. Recurring elements such pointed arches with stopped chamfers, combine to present a continuity of design throughout the building. The striking first floor courtroom with imposing entranceway, stairwell and high ceiling was clearly designed to impress as well as perhaps to strike awe into those standing in the dock and the quality of fittings in the Magistrate's retiring room reflected the status of the holder of that position.

Although in continuous use as a police station for about 140 years, a period which saw major advances in the function and practice of police work, the building remained generally unchanged in size, alterations generally being to the internal layout, for the most part divisions of larger rooms, and the addition of some outbuildings.

Probably the most major adaptation of the building followed the transfer of the function of the courtroom to the adjacent building in the 1960s.

No plan of the entirety of the layout is known but a document held in Lancashire Archives and reproduced as Figure 22 shows plans and elevations of the magistrate's bench and dock (Lancashire Archives DDX 162/05/13). This, it is known from the contemporary newspaper account, was fitted at the northern end of the room, close to the magistrate's retiring room. There may have been fireplaces in the courtroom as there are two chimneys on this side of the building which do not seem to match with any chimney breasts on this level whilst there is a possible chimney breast in RG19 below.

The prisoners would have been led into the dock from the cells via the strong door at the southern end of RF25 and the metal gate at the base of the, later blocked, stone stairs, indicating that no risks were taken with security.

Access directly from the police station to the courtroom would have been afforded by stairs RG11/RF13. These stairs partially obscure the top of a blind arch visible at the base of the stairwell (Plate 53) and in the cupboard below (Plate 54). This was later blocked with hardboard or similar material implying that it was once open and that the stairs are a later insertion. However given that the wall to the north of the stairwell is solid to the height of the ceiling as well as the quality and continuity of workmanship, including an archway at which the chamfers are stopped above the floor level of the landing, it is thought that, despite the slightly incongruous arrangement, that the stairwell may be an original feature.

The requirement for these stairs would imply that, when the courtroom was in use, there was no access from the upstairs living quarters to the courtroom and that the western wall of the courtroom wing met the wall at the top of RF13, the plain doorway in this location being a modern insertion.

It is therefore thought that there were originally three sets of stairs to the courtroom; the formal entrance from the eastern side of the building which would have been used by the magistrate and other court officials; the staircase for the defendant leading directly from the cells and a third would have allowed direct access from the police station. This might account for the apparently parallel function of staircases as RF13 and RF01, the latter of which would have been specifically for the living quarters at the eastern end of the building. Floorplans showing the separate functional areas of the building and access routes are presented in Figures 23-24.

At some point following the abandonment of the courtroom (from the style of the stud walls and suspended ceilings, this is thought to have been probably in the late 20th or early 21st centuries), the fittings were removed and the large area was divided into offices and a kitchen. The insertion of a new floor blocked the redundant 'prisoner' steps, creating a cupboard off corridor RG01.

The remainder of the first floor provided living space for the resident sergeant and constables. On the 1893 Ordnance Survey 25 inch map the western section of the building is shown clearly divided. The narrow door on the frontage would have provided access without having to walk through the police station. Externally, the arch over this door appears to have been partially obscured by the projecting section of the south elevation. On the 1893 OS map a projection is shown, which appears to have been

removed by 1908. However, by 1927 a projection is shown once more in this location, suggesting that an original porch or bay may have been removed and replaced.

The doorway to the east of stairwell RF08 (Plate 98) is clearly a modern insertion and it is likely that RF07 and RF09 formed a self-contained apartment with a bathroom and WC to the rear (RF10 and RF11), very possibly for the sergeant.

On the ground floor on the western side of the building, RG08 may also have been living quarters with RG09 and RG10 as a bathroom and WC to the rear. The wall to the north of RG09 is solid, but that to the west is inserted, implying a larger bathroom with separate WC to the north. The Census of 1881 indicates that a married police constable and his family were the main residents of the western building, with three further police constables registered to the property. The same policeman and his family appear to have been resident in the western building by 1891 as well as four other policemen.

The living area on the east side of the building at first floor level could only be reached by stairwell RG17/RF01 which would have required walking through the police station and past the metal gates to the cells. A police sergeant and his family were registered in the eastern part of the station in 1881, as well as a prisoner. By 1891 another police sergeant with his family appear to be registered in this building. Other addresses in the street and nearby area have policemen registered during the 1891 census and as there are no residents of the buildings registered in subsequent censuses it seems likely the station was no longer used for accommodating the police officers and sergeants and may no longer have housed prisoners overnight.

The metal gate in the centre of RG13 would have provided extra security in this area.

It is probable that RF03, RF04 and RF06 were bedrooms, perhaps with RF12 (which would have been larger without the stud wall to the south) as a communal kitchen. The window to RF05 is narrower than others in the front of the building so it is likely that it was always a toilet.

It may also be that RF03 and RF04 at some point formed a single unit. The northern wall of RF04 is a later insertion implying that RF03 could only be accessed *through* RF04, the later adaption allowing direct access from the stairwell.

On the ground floor corridor, RG05 is formed of inserted walls and may have formed part of one large space which spanned the police station from front to back. This may have been the 'large day room' referred to at the opening of the station. It is not clear which would have originally been the 'weighing room' but RG03 or RG04 are likely candidates, being slightly distant from the entrance.

There were also some adaptations to the ground floor of the courtroom wing. There was formerly a large room at the northern end of the wing formed of RG21, RG22 and RG23 with an external doorway to the side of the building which was later blocked and replaced by a doorway to the north, perhaps as a safety measure when traffic on the access road to the east became heavier.

The secure area of the ground floor of the courtroom wing was enclosed by metal doors, providing extra security against escape from the cells and the former steps to the dock were similarly protected. At some point, an additional door was added to create the small lobby RG25, perhaps to aid in the safe transfer of prisoners from the cells.

A further security measure appears to have been the addition of glass block (or brick) windows within the secure parts of the ground floor. Such windows would be harder to break than ordinary panes and

would have provided more privacy from the outside. It is notable that the eastern sash window to RG18, latterly the female toilets was not replaced as it lay south of the secure area.

A photograph of Lancashire police lined up to the rear of the building c.1910 is reproduced as Plate 149. In this photograph, the door at the northern end of RG23 is not shown and the northern window in RG22 was originally a sash. The window at the northern end of the corridor which provides access to the cells (RG024) was formerly the high rectangular type used for the cells.

The newspaper articles state that there were four cells, although only three survive. The best candidate for the fourth cell is RG20 which has a small high window similar to that within the surviving cells and the room is of similar dimensions, although this interpretation is confused by the fact that the wall between this room and RG19 to the south is a later insertion of breeze blocks.

It is probable that hot water was originally provided by a boiler in the cellar below RG14 where a footing survives, heating at this time relying on coal fires. Later, the boiler house was added in the courtyard (evident due to the raising of the western wall). Map evidence shows that this took place between 1893 and 1908.

A ramp was installed at the front of the building to improve access in the 1990s. This replaced a set of steps which descended directly onto the pavement as shown on an undated photograph from Knowsley Archives, reproduced as Plate 150.

The earliest of the outbuildings appear to have been E and F which are depicted on the 1893 Ordnance Survey map, probably within the curtilage of the adjacent property. By 1927, the present configuration of buildings appears to be in place. This is likely to have been to provide space to park and maintain motorised vehicles. Later a row of garages was built.

Modern adaptations to the building included the installation of stud walls to divide larger offices, former living spaces and the courtroom into smaller offices. Modular panel suspended ceilings were also installed to make the rooms more efficient to heat and allow the multiple electricity and communication cables required for modern policing to be installed and adapted easily.

One element which is not clear is the location of the foundation stone in which some silver coins, and copies of the Prescot Reporter and Liverpool Mercury are stowed.

8. Acknowledgements

Ambrey Archaeology would like to thank the following for their help with this project: Jonathan Smith of RPS Consulting and Robbie Mannion of Prima Group for commissioning the works, Terry Meredith and Bob Evans of Wellcare Construction for arranging access.

9. Sources consulted

8.1 Bibliography

Ambrey Archaeology 2023 *Written Scheme of Investigation for a historic building survey at Prescot Police Station, Derby Street, Prescot* unpublished document dated 17th January 2024 (revision 1)

BGS 2023 Geoindex Onshore Viewer available online at: <https://www.bgs.ac.uk/map-viewers/geoindex-onshore/> (accessed 23rd October 2023)

CIfA, 2019, Standard and guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures

CIfA, 2020 Standard and Guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives

Davey, P.J. 1989 *Archaeological Research in Prescot 1978-86* Journal of Merseyside Archaeological Society Vol. 5

Dell. S. 2004 *The Victorian policeman* Shire publications, Oxford

Hall, L. 2005 *Period House fixtures and fittings 1300-1900* Countryside Books, Newbury

Historic England, 2016, *Understanding Historic Buildings, a Guide to Good Recording Practice*

Prima Group (undated) *Heritage Statement; Former Prescot Police Station, 12 Derby Street, Prescot* unpublished document

<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/worcs/vol4/pp319-328>

8.2 Cartography

1841 Tithe map of Prescot and apportionment

Ordnance Survey 1852 Town Plan; Prescot Sheets 1 and 3, scale 1:1056

1893 Ordnance Survey map of Lancashire, Sheet CVII.7; scale 1:2500

1908 Ordnance Survey map of Lancashire, Sheet CVII.7; scale 1:2500

1927 Ordnance Survey map of Lancashire, Sheet CVII.7; scale 1:2500

1939 Ordnance Survey map of Lancashire, Sheet CVII.7; scale 1:2500

Other web sources

Prescot Museum Lancashire Watch Company leaflet available at <https://www.prescotmuseum.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Watchmakers-Workshop.pdf>

8.3 Archive material

Lancashire Archives DDX 162/05/13 *Plans and elevations of the magistrate's bench and dock*

Article published in Prescot Reporter 24th April 1869 – *New Court House and Police Station for Prescot*

Article published in Prescot Reporter 21st August 1869 – *New Court House for Prescot*

Article published in Prescot Reporter 2nd July 1870 – *The New Police Buildings at Prescot*

Figures 10-24

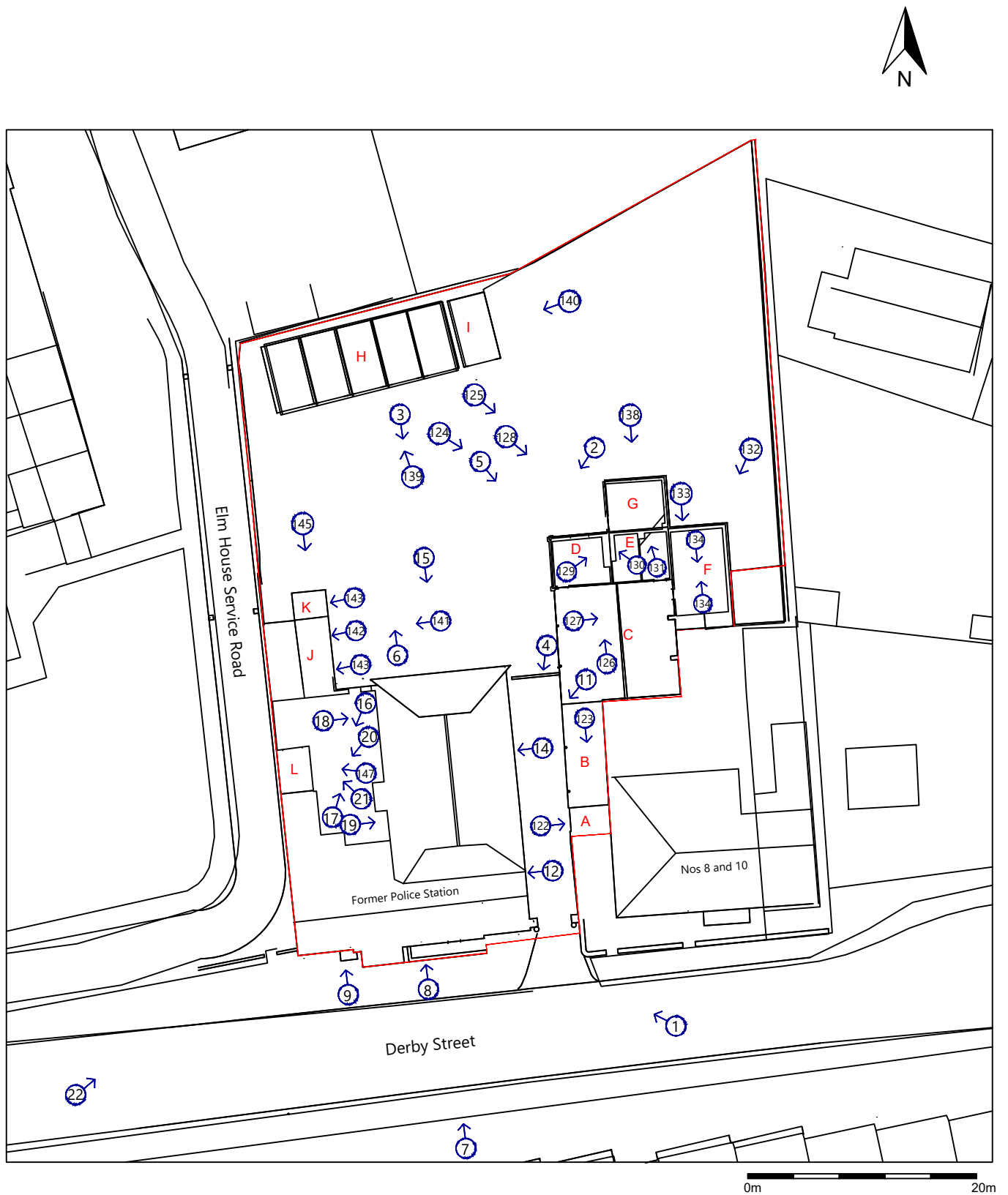


Figure 10. Sketch showing external and internal outbuilding photograph directions (outbuilding labels in red)

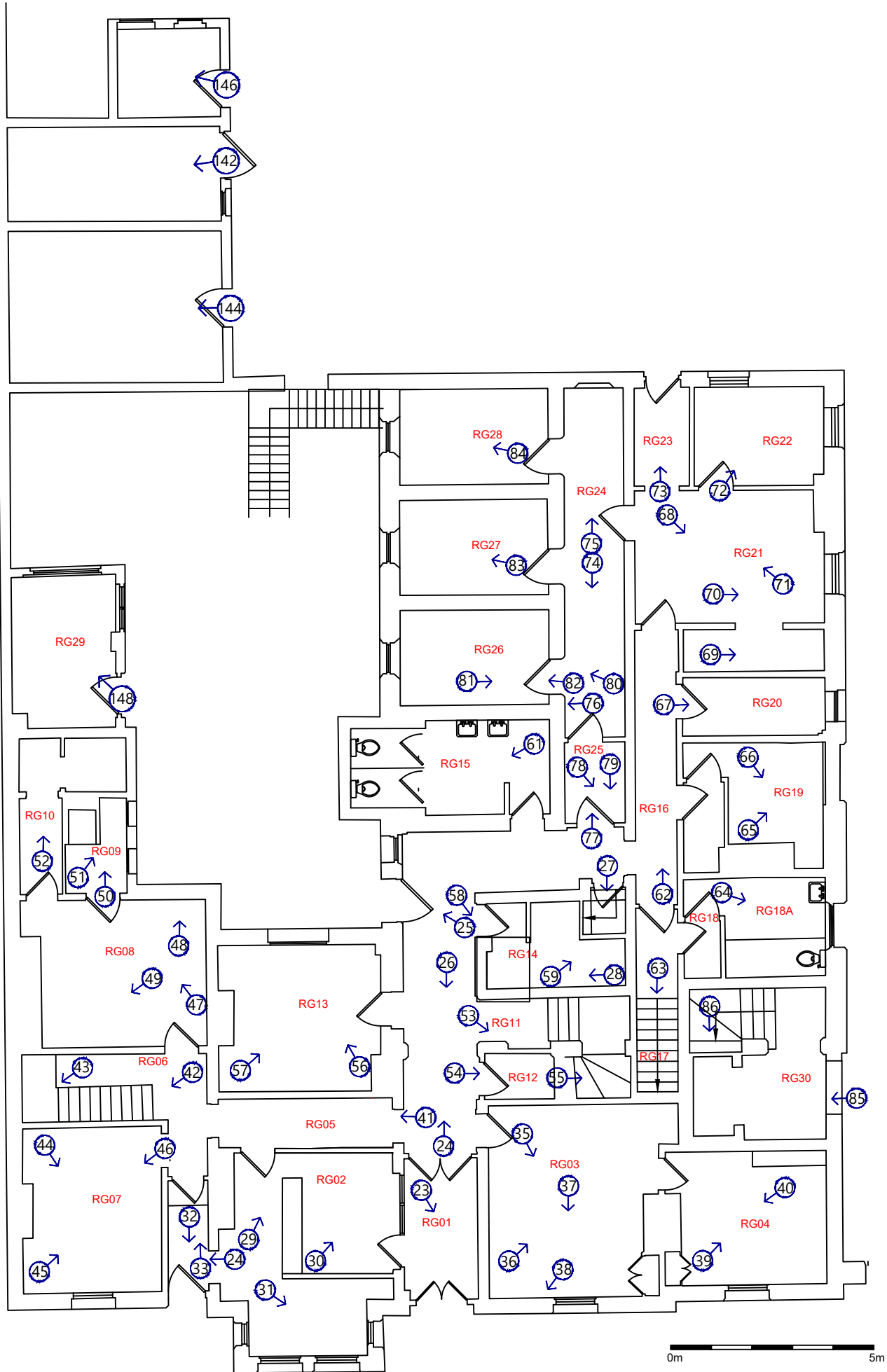


Figure 11. Ground floor plan showing photograph directions based on Survey Solutions drawing 6419BWLS-01

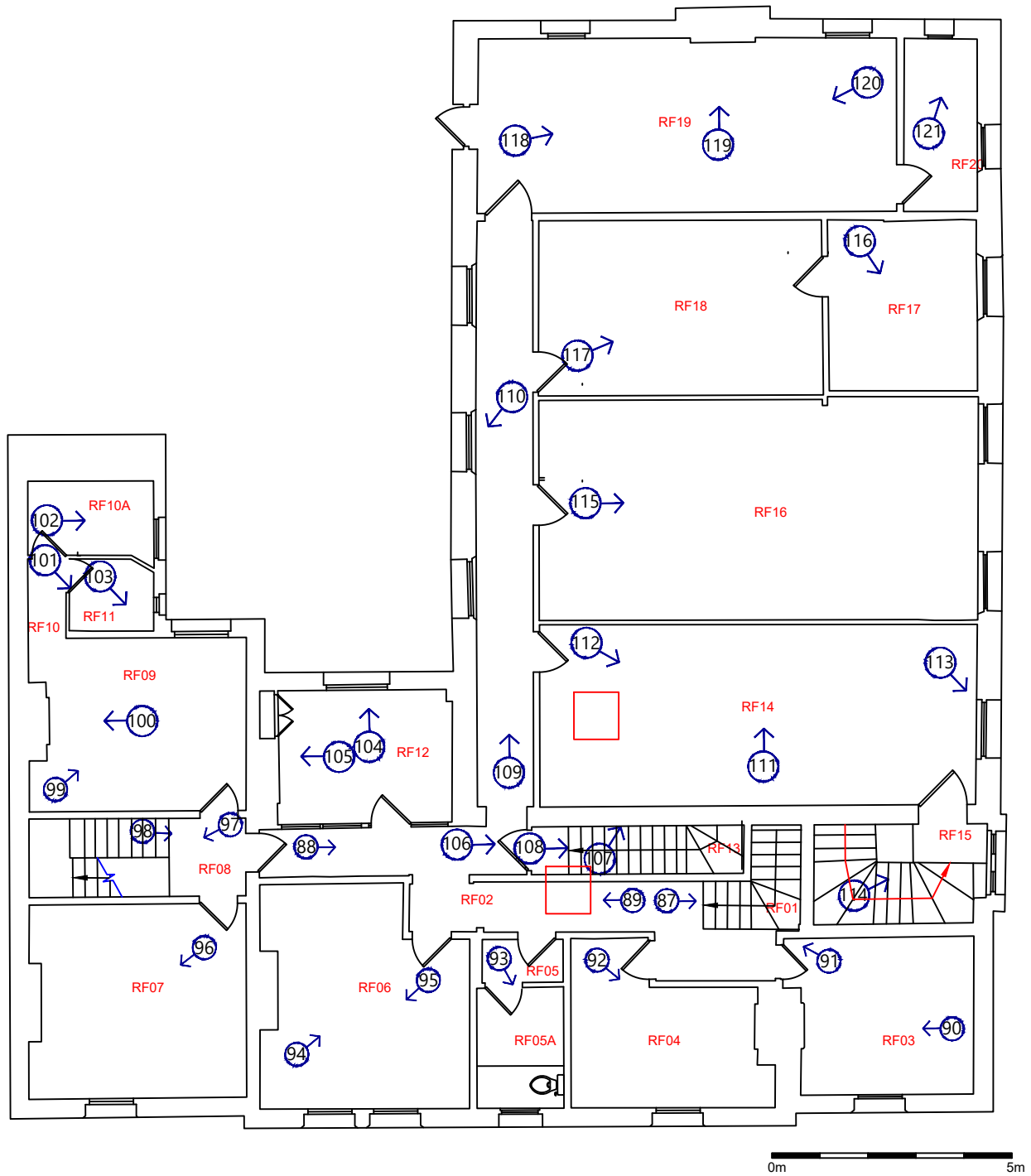


Figure 12. First floor plan showing photograph directions based on Survey Solutions drawing 6419BWLS-01

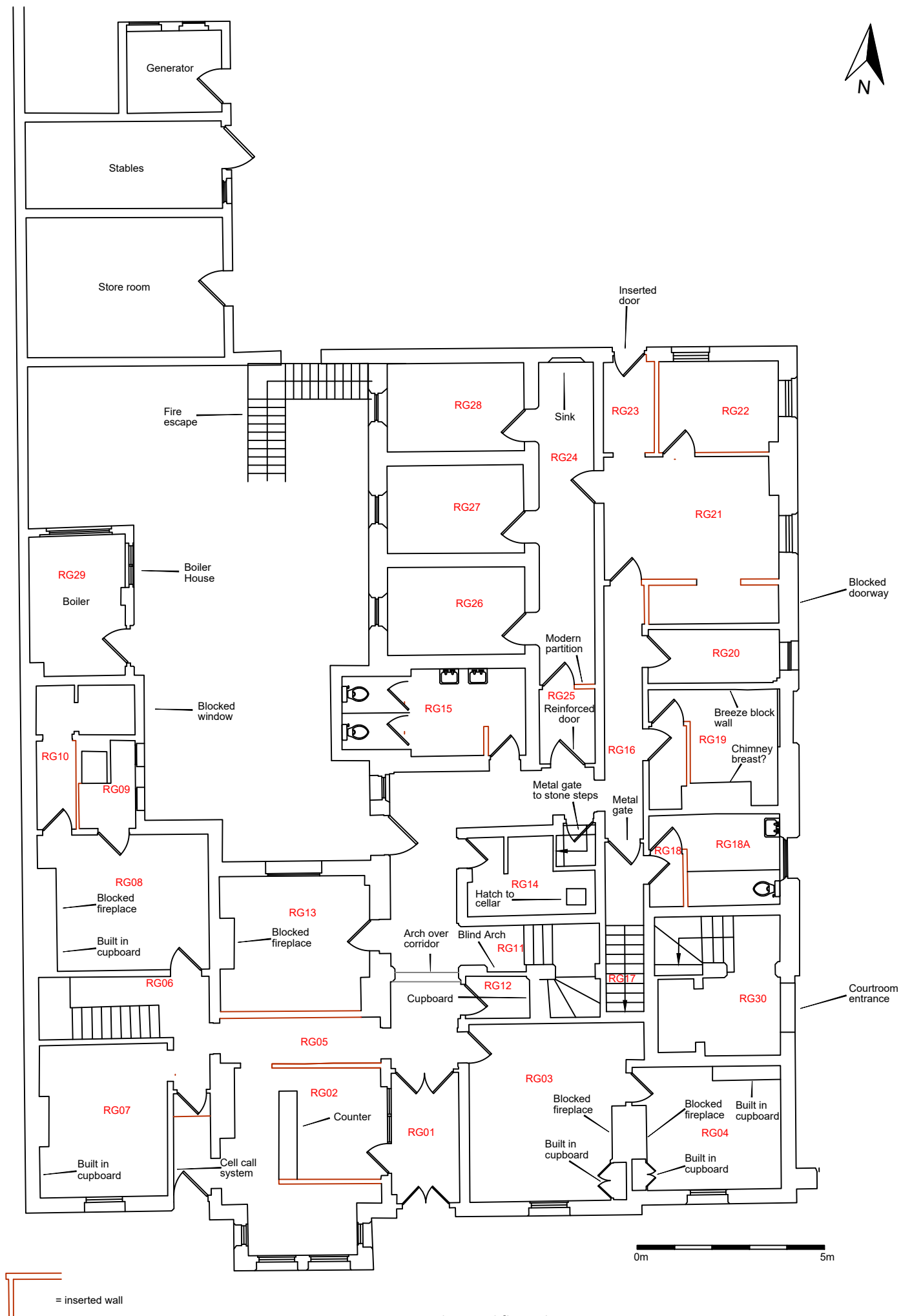


Figure 13. Annotated ground floor plan
based on Survey Solutions drawing 6419BWL5-01

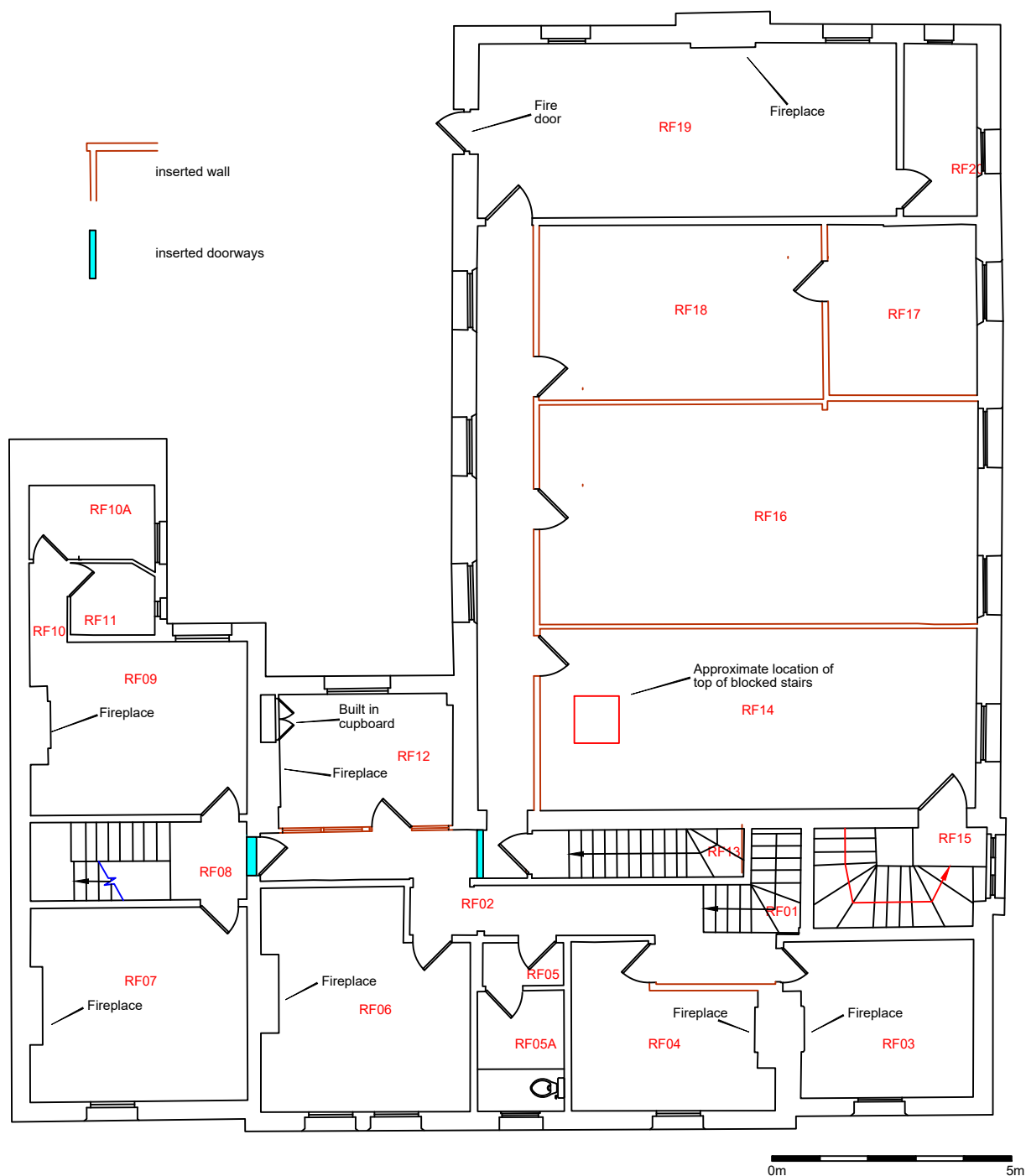


Figure 14. Annotated first floor plan
based on Survey Solutions drawing 6419BWLS-01



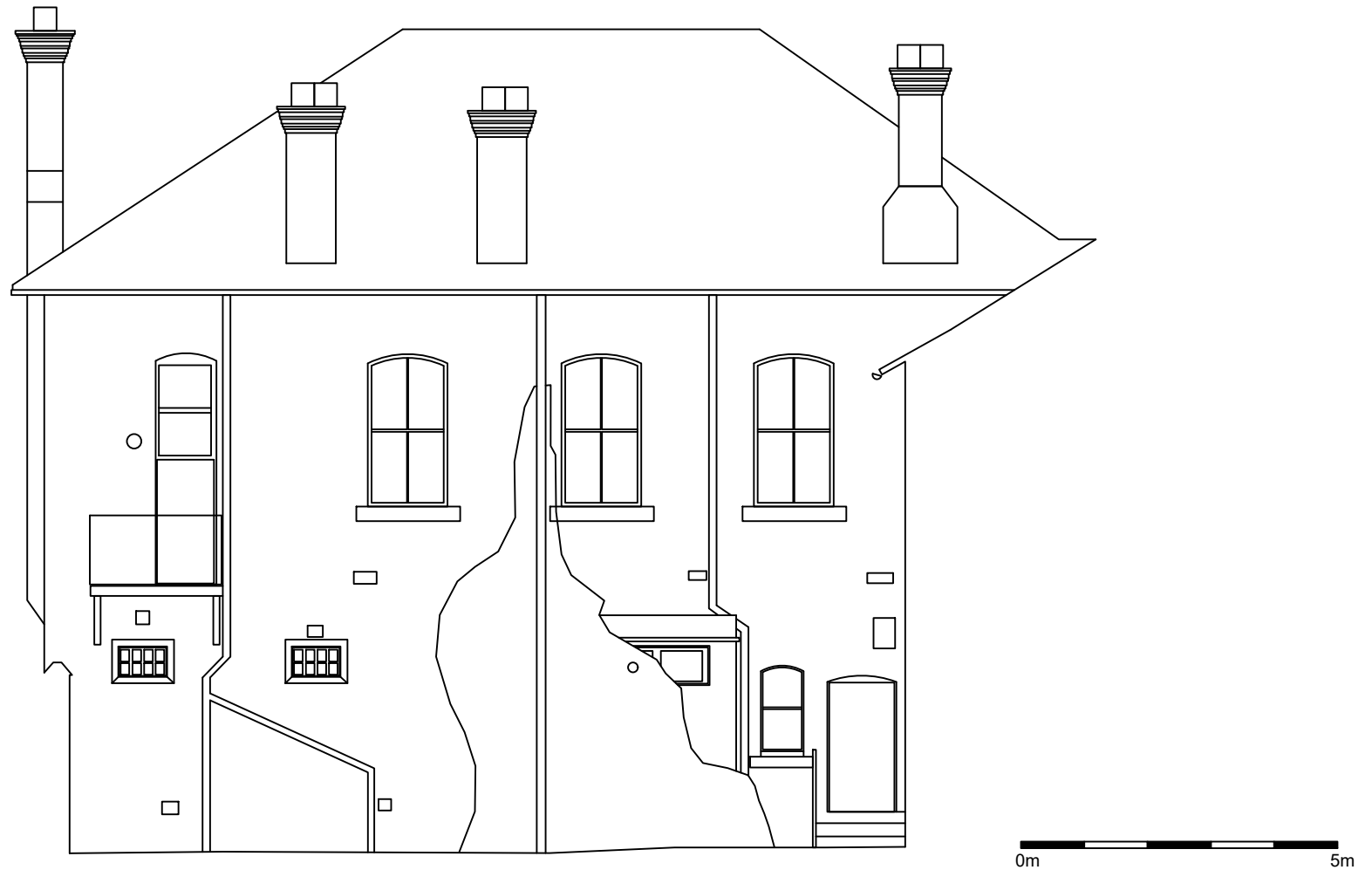
*Figure 15. South facing elevation of police station
reproduced and adapted from Survey Solutions drawing no. 64179BWLS-01)*



*Figure 16. East facing elevation of police station and courthouse wing
reproduced and adapted from Survey Solutions drawing no. 64179BWL5-01)*



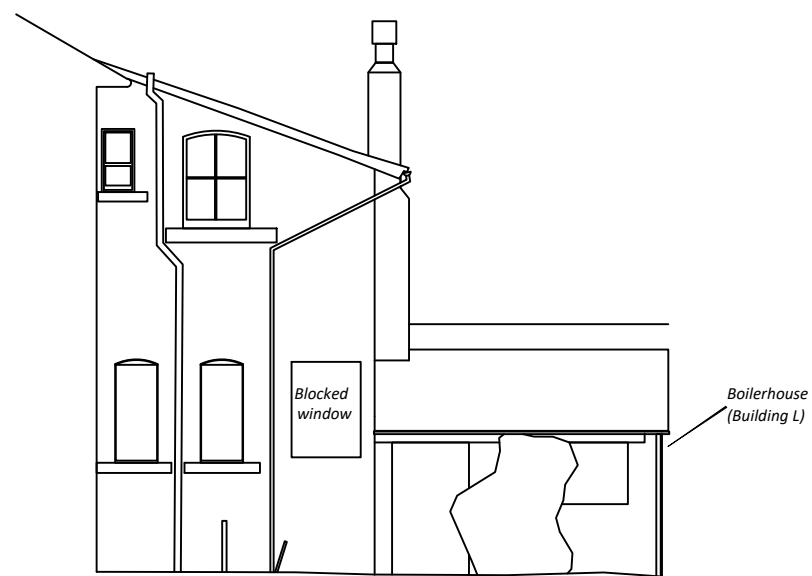
*Figure 17. North facing elevation of courthouse wing
reproduced and adapted from Survey Solutions drawing no. 64179BWL-01)*



*Figure 18. West facing elevation of courthouse wing
reproduced and adapted from Survey Solutions drawing no. 64179BWLS-01)*



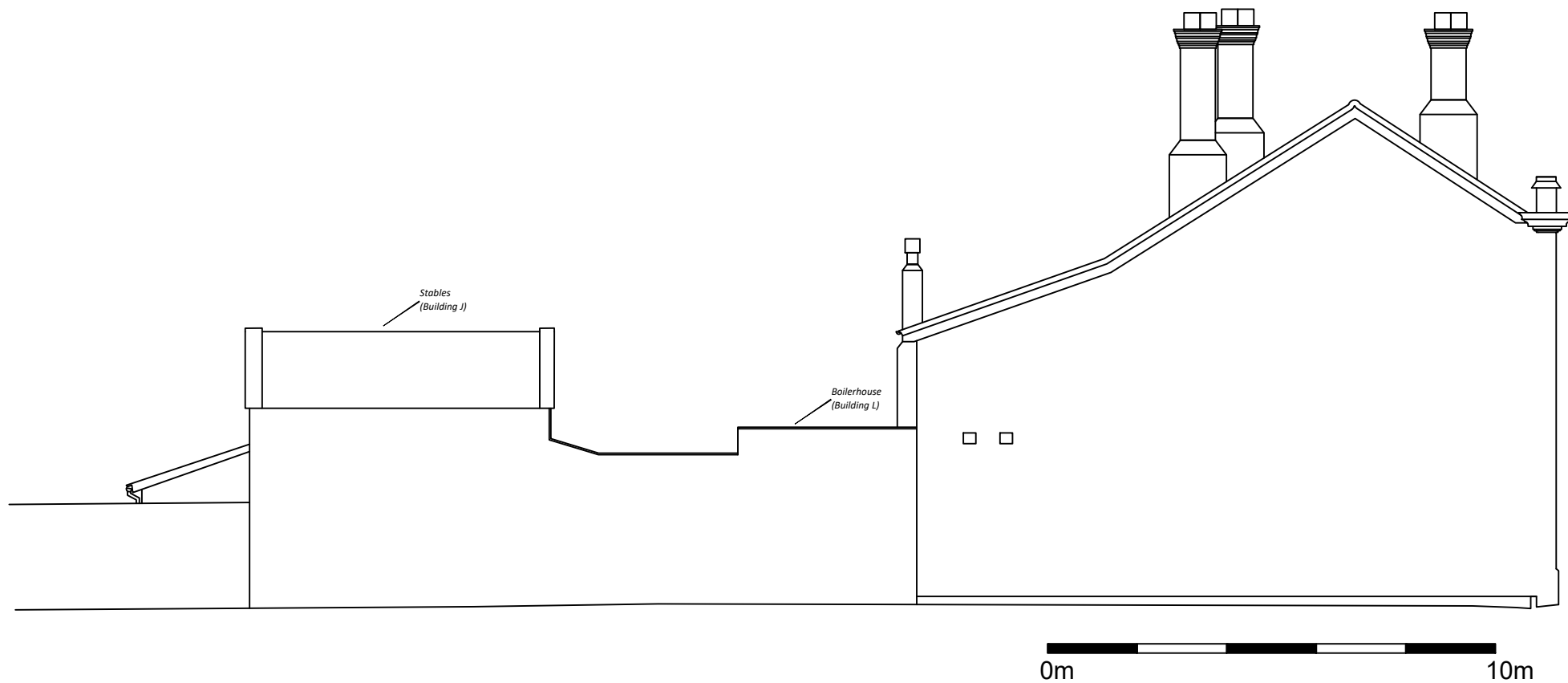
North facing



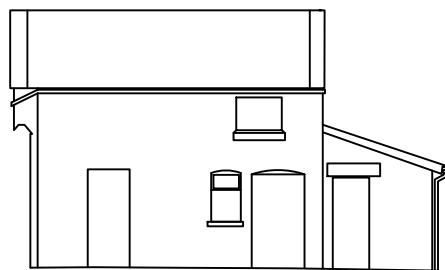
West facing

0m 5m

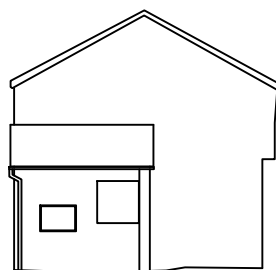
*Figure 19. North and west elevations facing courtyard
reproduced and adapted from Survey Solutions drawing no. 64179BWLS-01)*



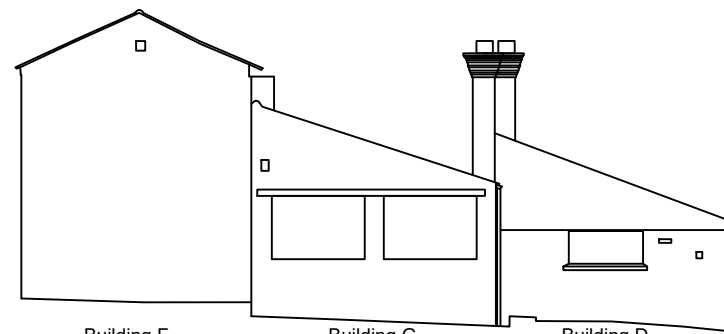
*Figure 20. West facing elevations of police station and boundary wall
reproduced and adapted from Survey Solutions drawing no. 64179BWLS-01)*



Building J (stables)
east facing elevation



Building J and Building K
south facing elevation

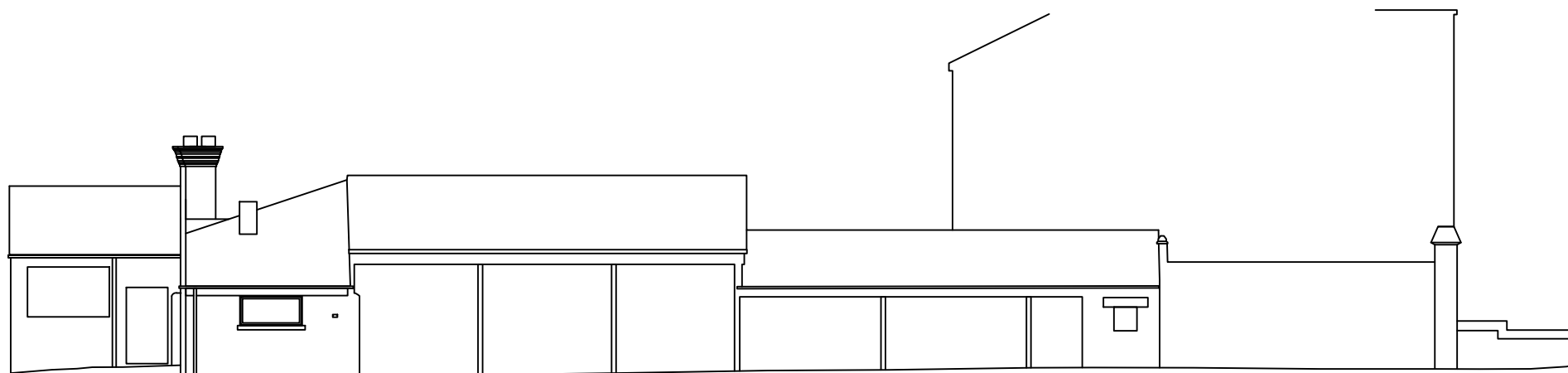


Building F

Building G

Building D

North facing elevations



Building G

Building D

Building C

Building B

Building A

West facing elevations



Figure 21. Elevations of outbuildings
reproduced and adapted from Survey Solutions drawing no. 64179BWS-01)

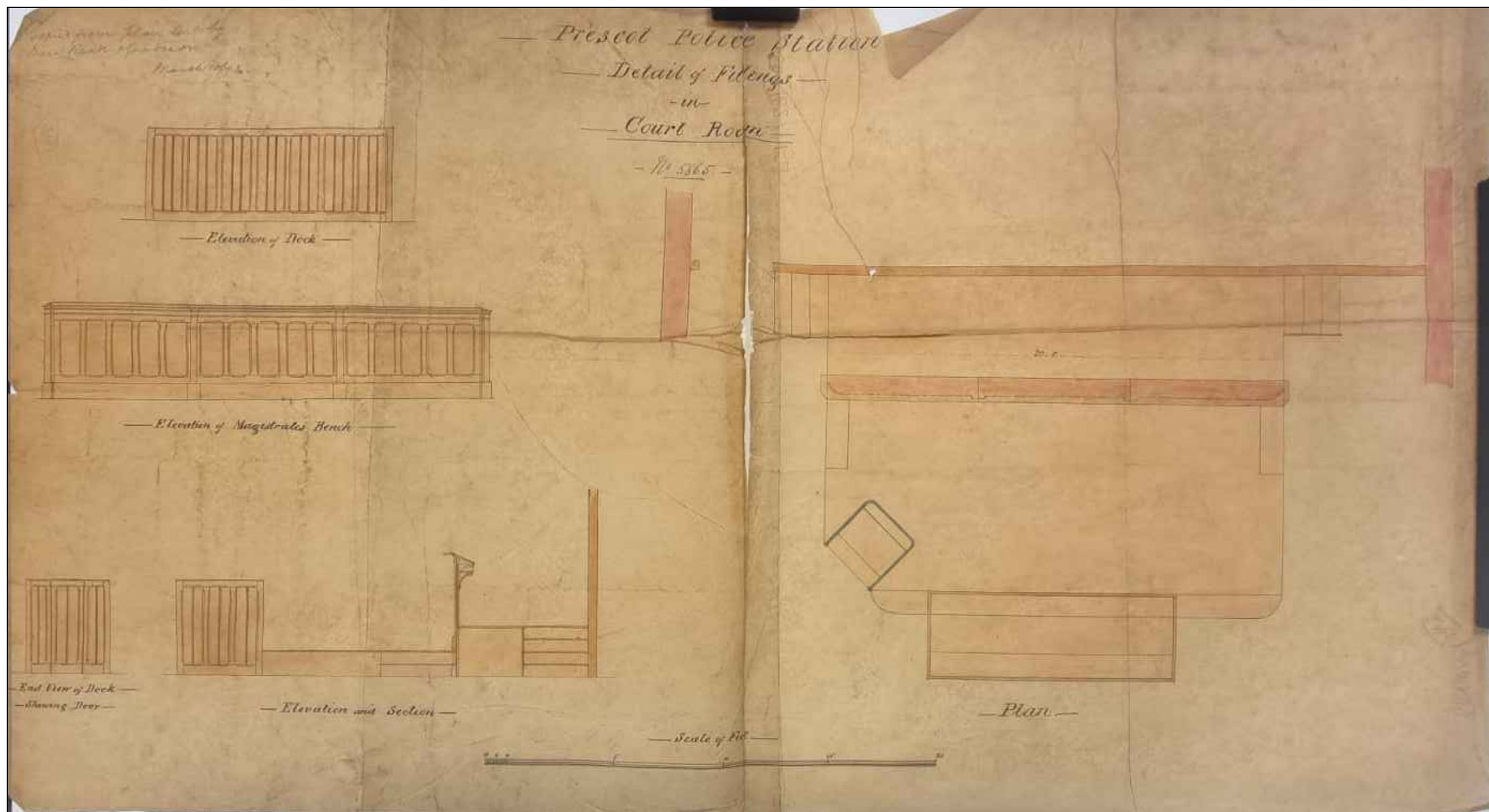


Figure 22. Plans and elevations of magistrate's bench and dock, 1870s

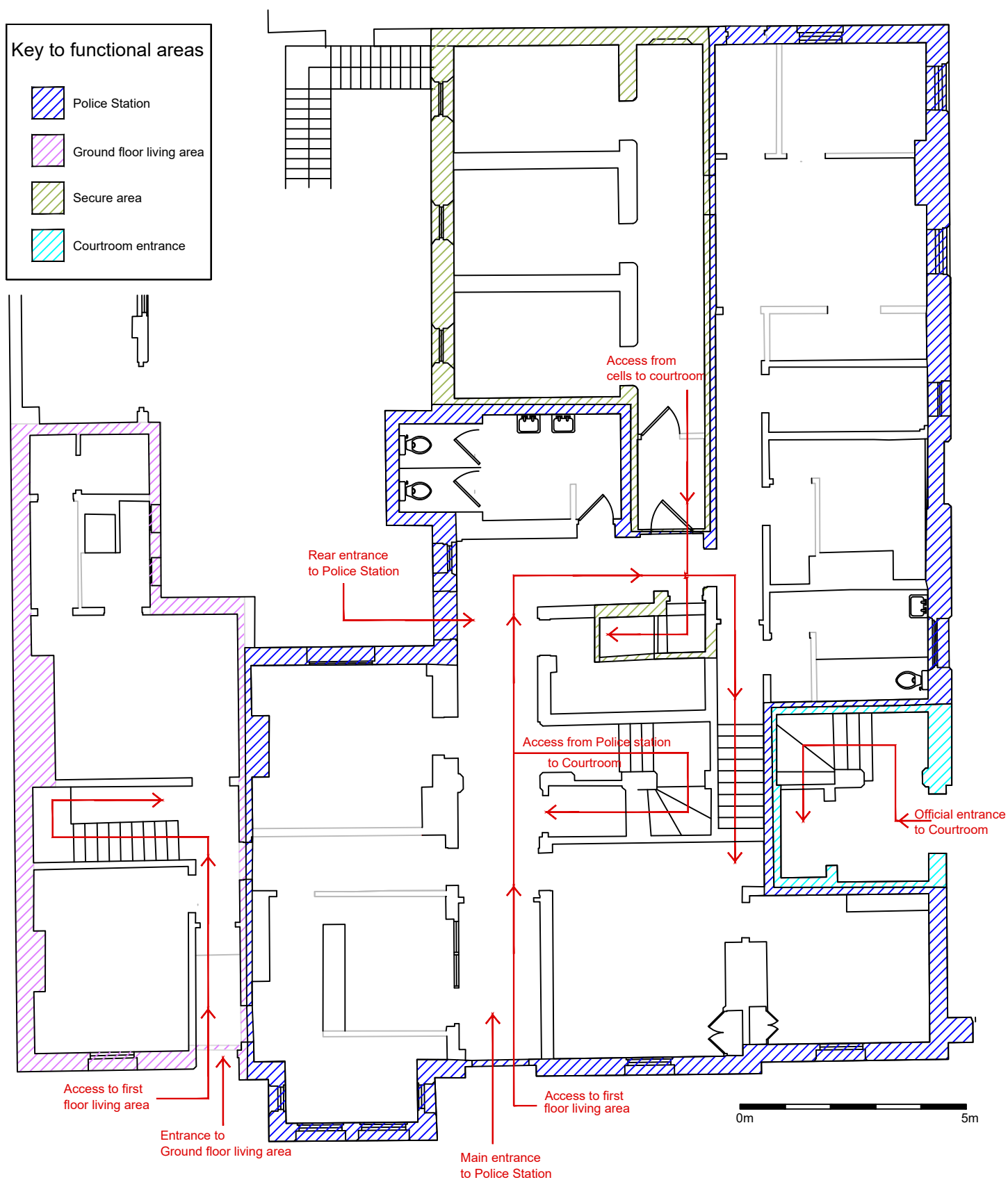
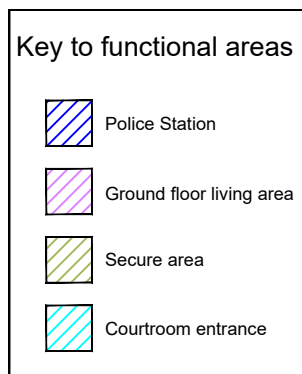


Figure 23. Ground floor plan divided into functional areas with access routes based on Survey Solutions drawing 6419BWLS-01

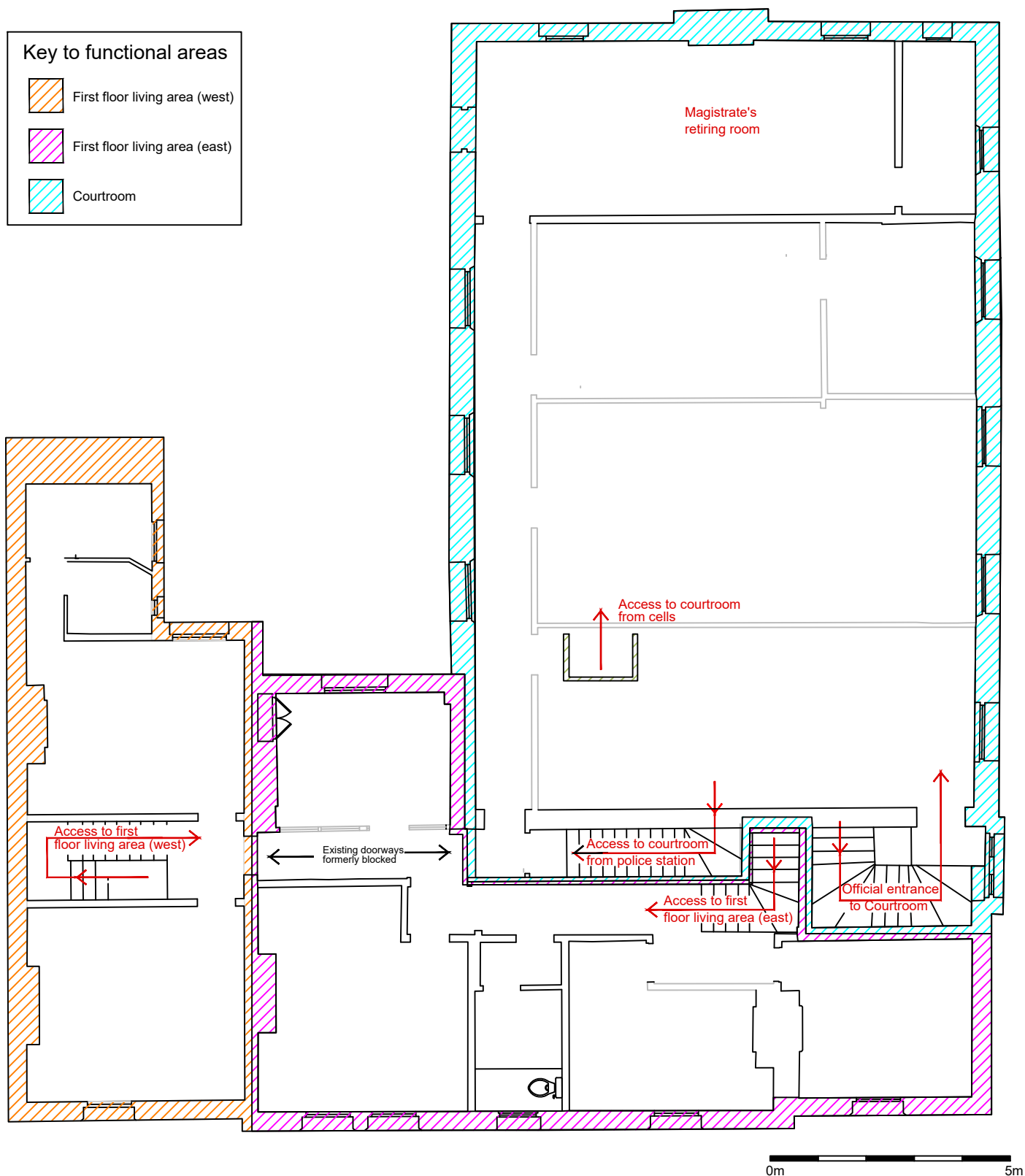


Figure 24. First floor plan divided into functional areas with access routes based on Survey Solutions drawing 6419BWS-01

Plates



Plate 1. The former Prescott Police Station from Derby Street, view north-west



Plate 2. Low level aerial view of courtroom wing, view south-east



Plate 3. Low level aerial view of rear of building, view south



Plate 4. Accessway at east of building, view south, scale 2m



Plate 5. Gate piers at Derby Street., view north-west



Plate 6. Low level aerial view of Buildings A-G, view south-east



Plate 7. View of car parking area to rear of building, view north, stables (Building J) to left



Plate 8. South facing elevation of police station, view north, scale 2m



Plate 9. Front door of police station and ramp,
view north, scale 2m

Plate 10. Narrow doorway in front elevation of
building, view north, scale 2m





Plate 11. East facing elevation of courtroom wing, view south-east



Plate 12. Formal door to courtroom stairs,
view west, scale 2m

Plate 13. Windows and blind arches above courtroom entrance, view west



Plate 14. Doorway to RG21 (blocked from inside), view west, scale 2m



Plate 15. North facing elevation of courtroom wing, view south



Plate 16. Courtyard to west of courtroom wing, view SSW

Plate 17. Courtyard, fire escape and west facing elevation of courtroom wing. View north-east



Plate 18. External view of window to cell RG28

Plate 19. Western elevation of courtyard wing, view east



Plate 20. Northward projection section of police station west of courtyard and boiler house, view south-west



Plate 21. The courtyard view north-west, scale 2m



Plate 22. South and west facing elevations of building from Derby Street, view north—east



Plate 23. Rear of front doors from lobby RG01
view SSE, scale 2m



Plate 24. Corridor RG01, view north



Plate 25. Rear of door to courtyard from RG01, view west, scale 1m



Plate 26. Arch over central section of RG01 adjacent to stairwell RG11, view south

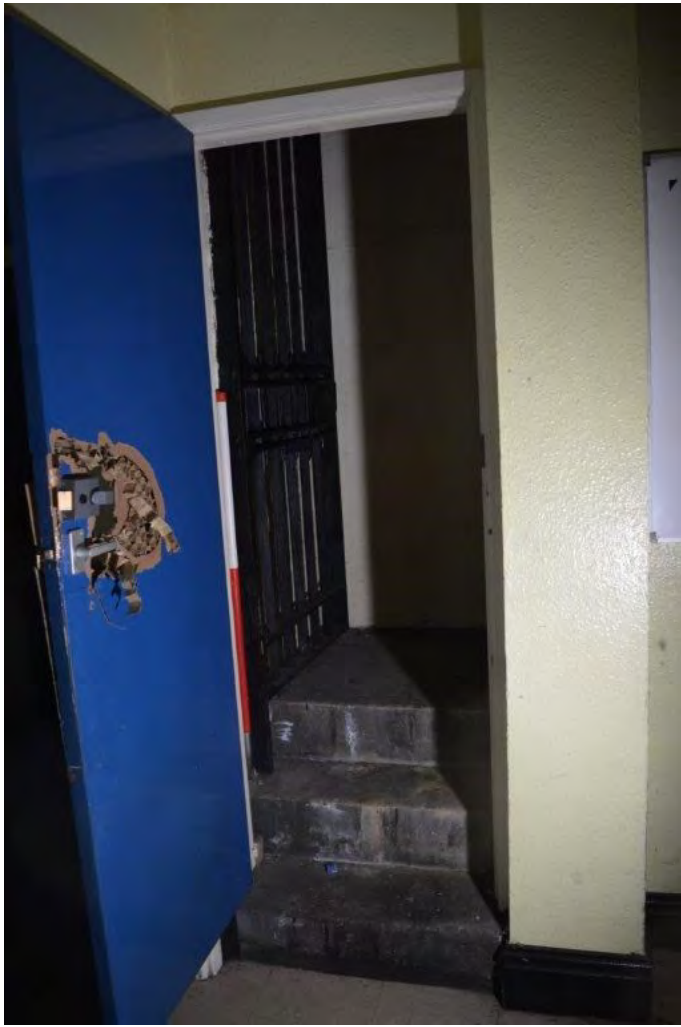


Plate 27. Door to stone stairs formerly leading to dock with metal gate, view south

Plate 28. Blocked stone staircase formerly leading to dock, later adapted as a cleaning cupboard, view west, scale 1m





Plate 29. Counter in reception area RG02, view north-east, scale 2m

Plate 30. Fixed seating in reception area within RG02, view north-east, scale 2m

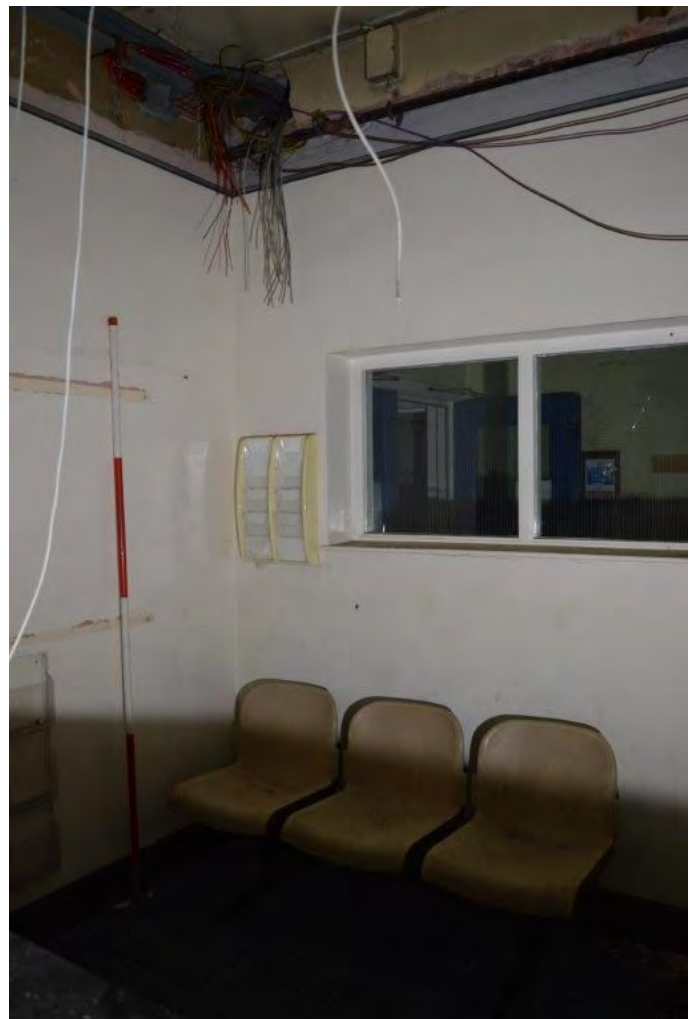




Plate 31. Interior of bay window at front of RG02, view south-east

Plate 32. Interior of narrow doorway to Derby Street, view south, scale 1m



Plate 33. Inserted former counter in lobby north of narrow doorway in RG02, view north, scale 1m

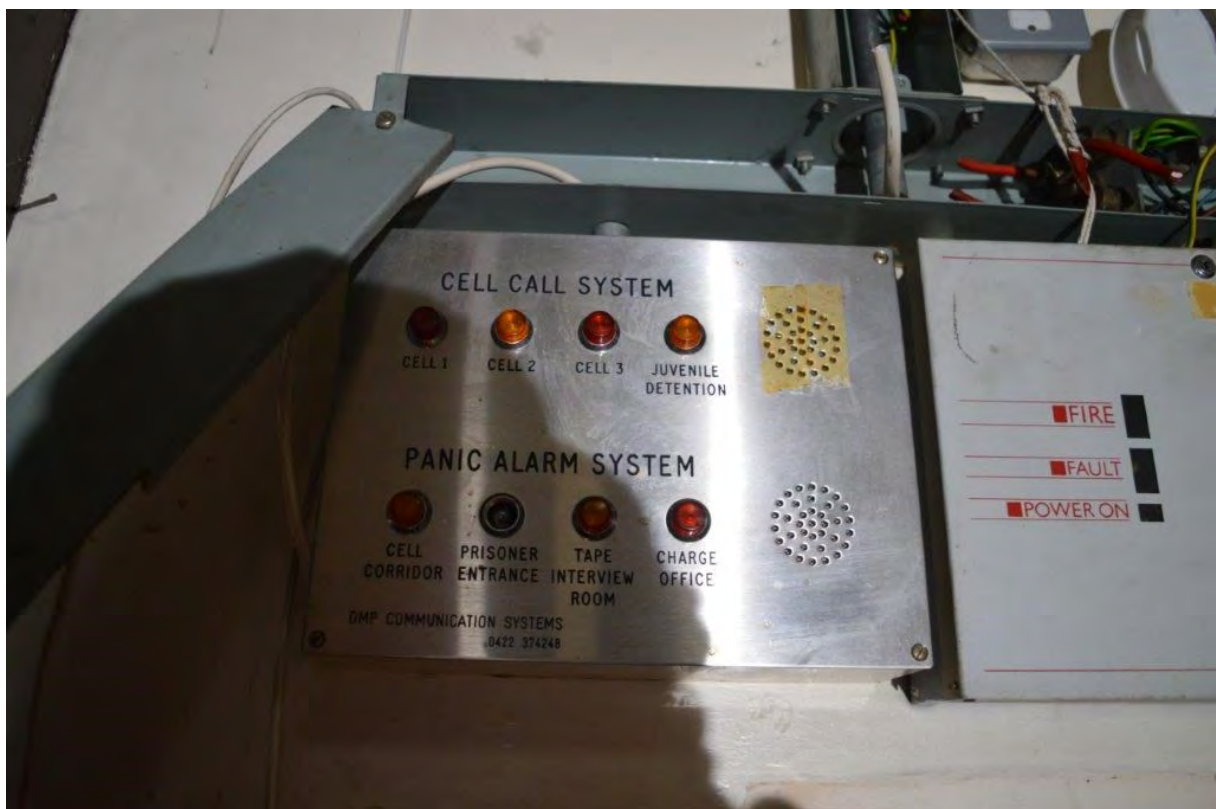


Plate 24. Cell call system and panic alarm system console in RG02, view west



Plate 35. View south-east in RG03, scale 1m



Plate 36. View north-east in RG03, scale 1m



Plate 37. Single hung sash window in south wall of RG03 facing Derby Street, view south, scale 1m



Plate 38. Light switch adjacent to window



Plate 39. Built in cupboards in north-east corner of RG04, view north-east, scale 1m

Plate 40. View south-west in RG04, scale 1m

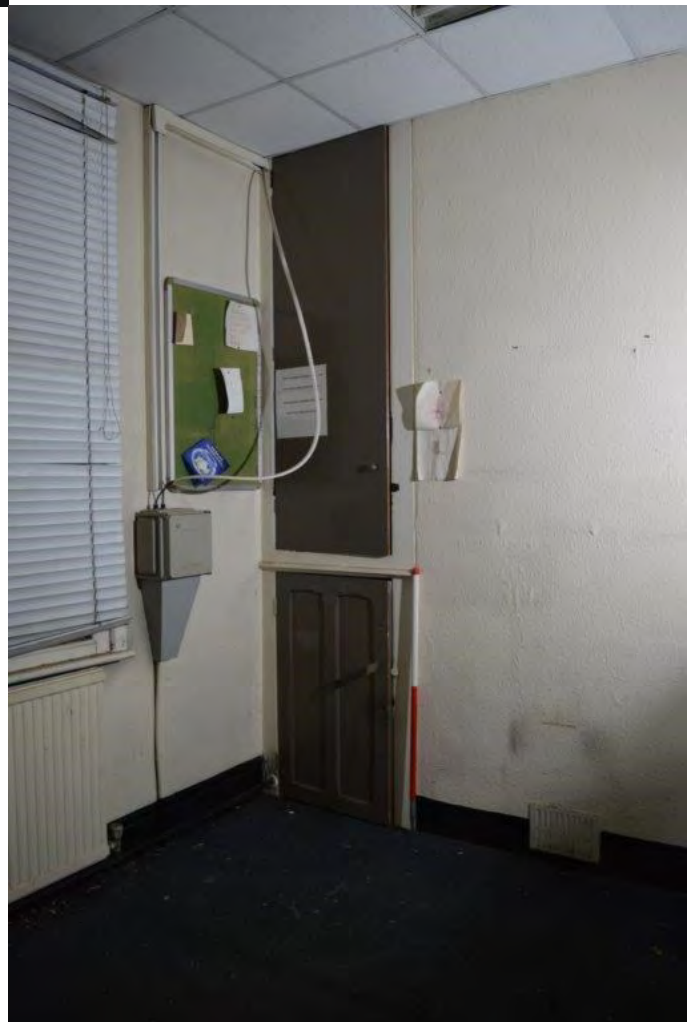




Plate 41. Corridor RG05 facing west, scale 1m



Plate 42. Base of stairwell RG06, view south-west



Plate 43. Finial beneath staircase in RG06



Plate 44. View south-east in RG07, scale 1m

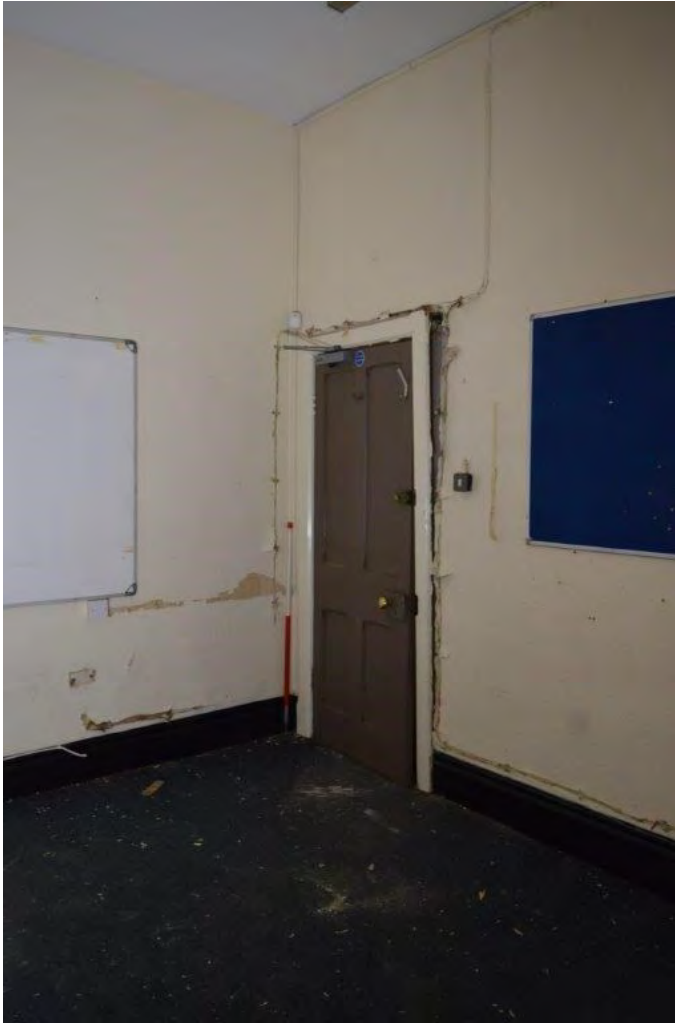


Plate 45. View north-east in RG07, scale 1m

Plate 46. View south-west in RG07, scale 1m





Plate 47. View north-west in RG08, scale 1m

Plate 48. Single hung sash window in north wall of RG08 overlooking courtyard, scale 1m





Plate

Plate 49.



Plate 50. View north into shower area RG09,
scale 1m

Plate 51. Window in east wall of RG09, view
NNE

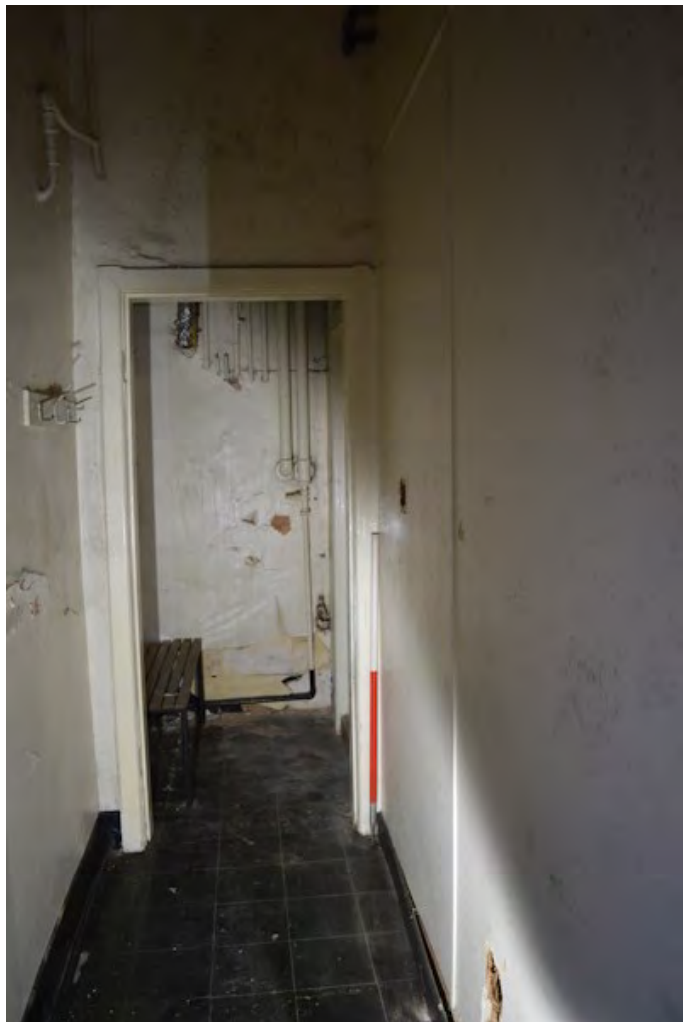


Plate 52. Facing north in inserted corridor
RG10 (far doorway original), scale 1m

Plate 53. Blind chamfered arch at the base of stairwell RG11, view south-east, scale 1m

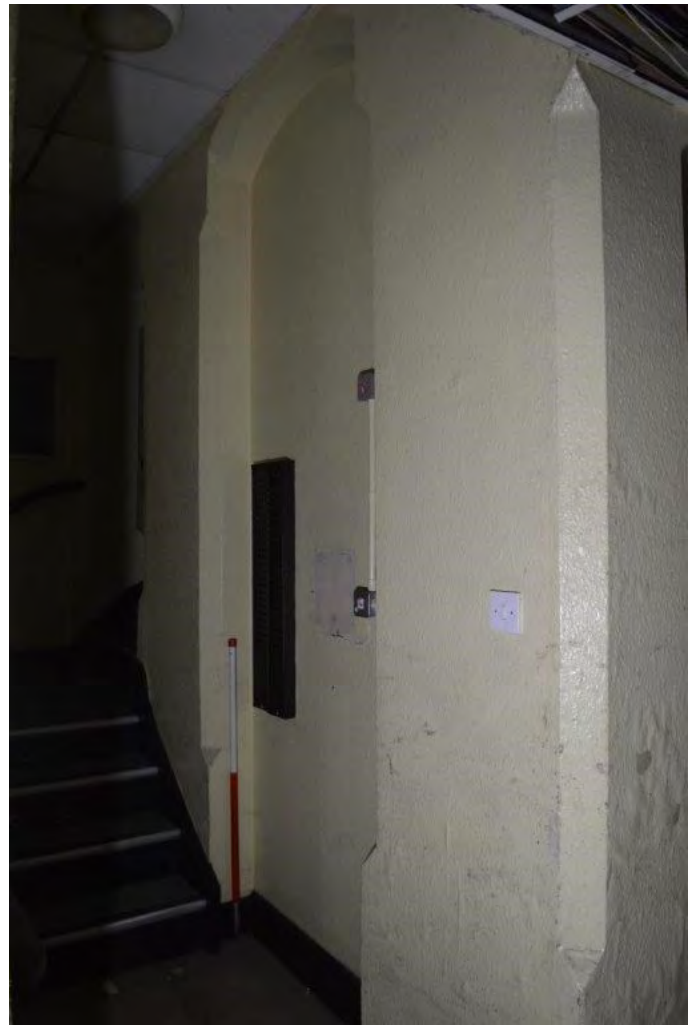


Plate 54. View east into RG12, a space below stairwell RG11, scale 1m

Plate 55. View east into cupboard to rear of RG12, and aperture to space below stairwell RG17, scale 1m

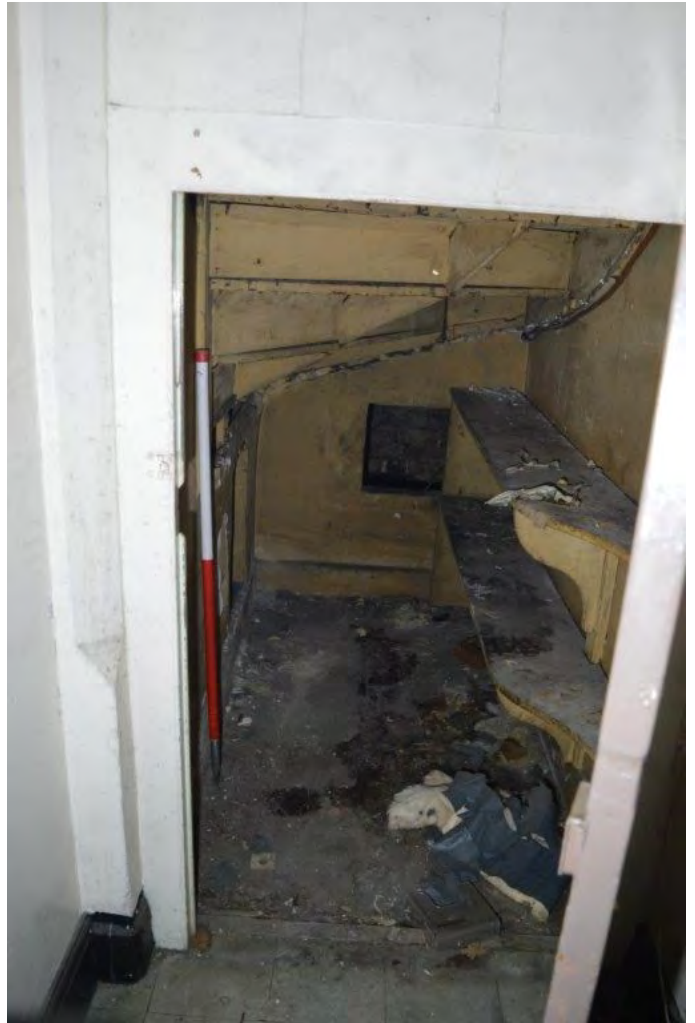


Plate 56. View north-west in RG13, scale 1m



Plate 57. View north-east in RG13, scale 1m



Plate 58. View south-east into RG14, scale 1m



Plate 59. Bonded timbers in south wall of former stone staircase to dock, view north-east



Plate 60. Small cellar below RG14, view west



Plate 61. View SSW in RG15, former male toilets, scale 1m

Plate 62. Metal gate crossing corridor RG16
view north, scale 1m

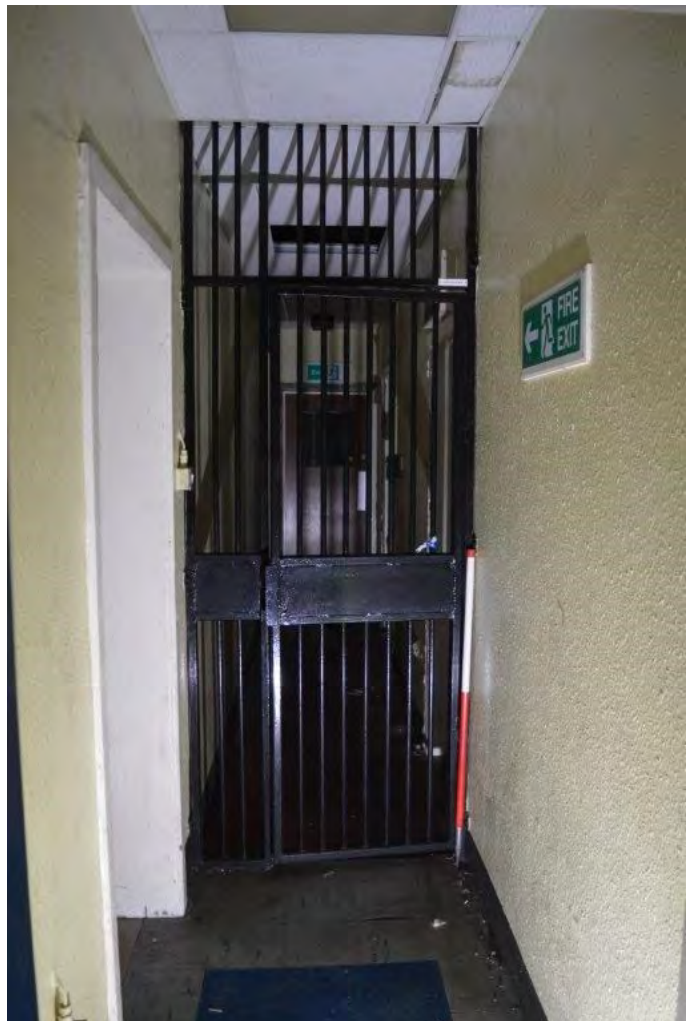


Plate 63. Staircase RG17 facing south, scale 1m



Plate 64. Single hung sash window in RG18a, view ESE, scale 1m



Plate 65. View north-east in interview room
RG19, scale 1m

Plate 66. View south-east in interview room
RG19, scale 1m



Plate 67. RG20, view east, scale 1m



Plate 68. View south-east in RG21, showing alcove to south formed of former entranceway, scale 1m



Plate 69. View east in alcove toward blocked door, scale 1m

Plate 70. View east to block glass window in east wall of RG21, scale 1m





Plate 71. View north-east in RG21, door to cell corridor RG24 on left, scale 1m



Plate 72. View north-east in former kitchen RG22, scale 1m



Plate 73. View north in corridor RG23 to inserted doorway in north wall of courtroom wing, scale 1m

Plate 74. View south in corridor RG24





Plate 75. View north in northern end of corridor RG24, scale 1m

Plate 76. Cell communication console outside cell RG26



Plate 77. Inserted doorway at northern end of RG25, scale 1m

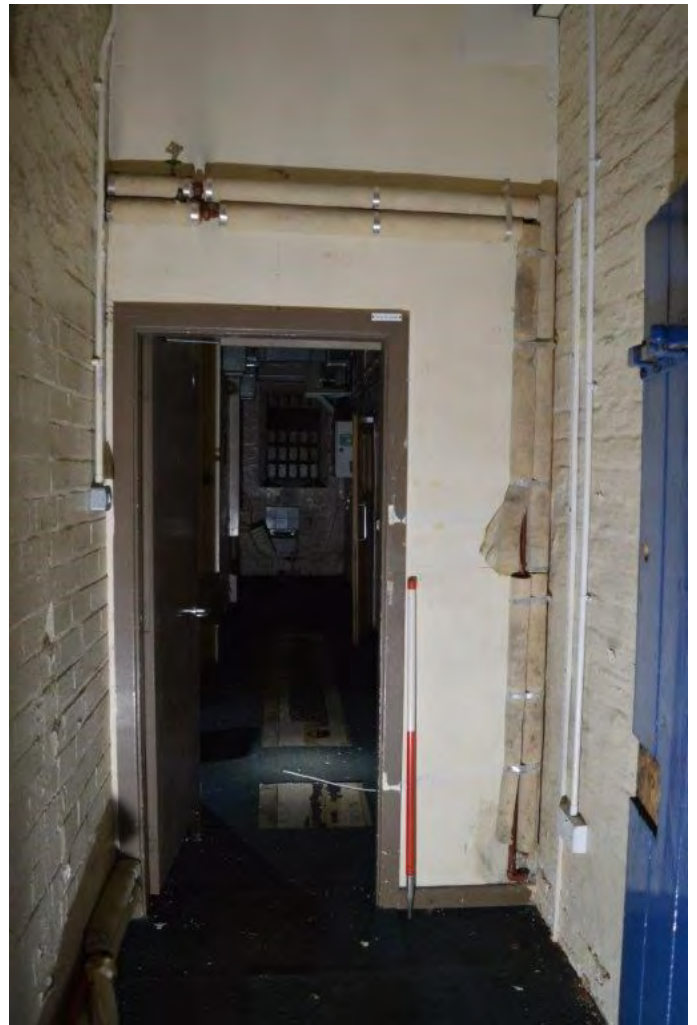


Plate 78. Heavy duty security door to south of RG25, scale 1m



Plate 79. Metal plated rear of security door, scale 1m

Plate 80. Door to cell RG26, view west, scale 1m

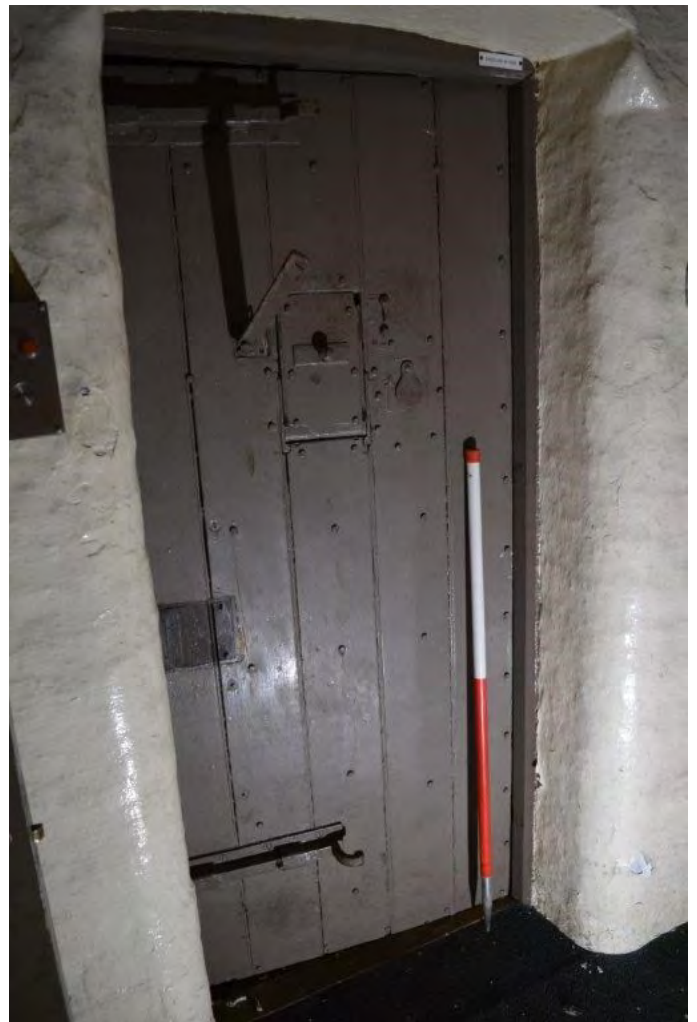


Plate 81. Metal plated rear of cell door in
RG26, view east, scale 1m



Plate 82. View west into former cell RG26



Plate 83. View west into former cell RG27,
scale 1m

Plate 84. View west into former cell RG28,
scale 1m





Plate 85. View west to base of formal stairs to courtroom, RG30, scale 1m

Plate 86. View south up courtroom stairs from first landing, scale 1m



Plate 87. Stairwell RF01 facing east, scale 1m

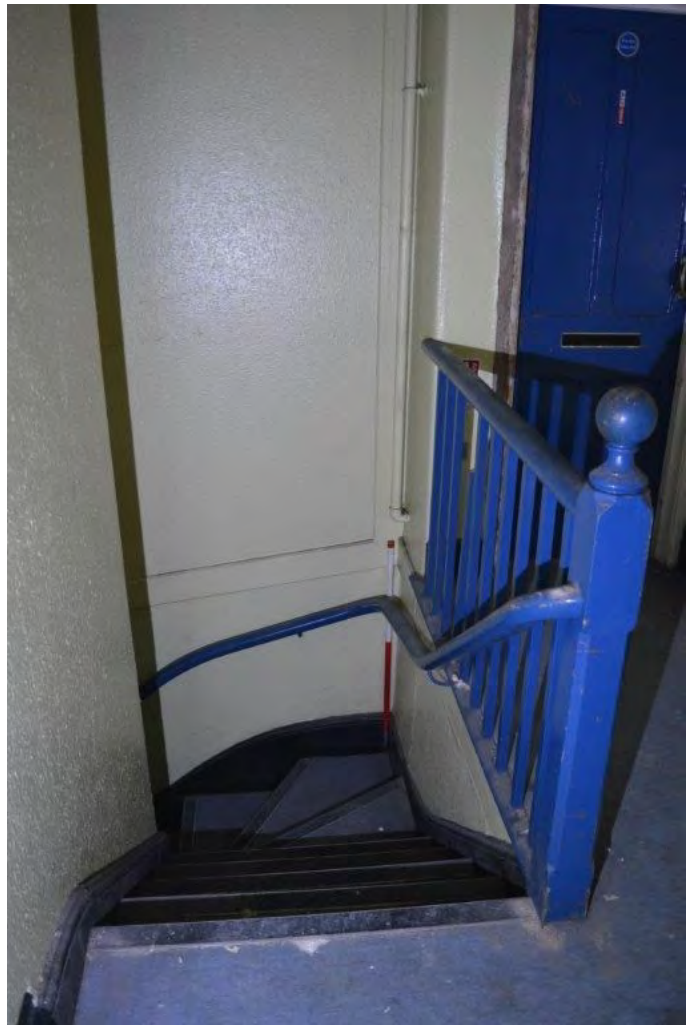


Plate 88. View east in corridor RF02 (northern section), scale 1m

Plate 89. View west in corridor RF02 (southern section), scale 1m



Plate 90. View west in RF03, scale 1m



Plate 91. Cupboard to header tank above door to RF03, view north-west



Plate 92. View south-east in RF04, scale 1m



Plate 93. View SSE into toilet RF05/RF05A,
scale 1m

Plate 94. Door in lath and plaster wall, north-
east corner of RF06, scale 1m

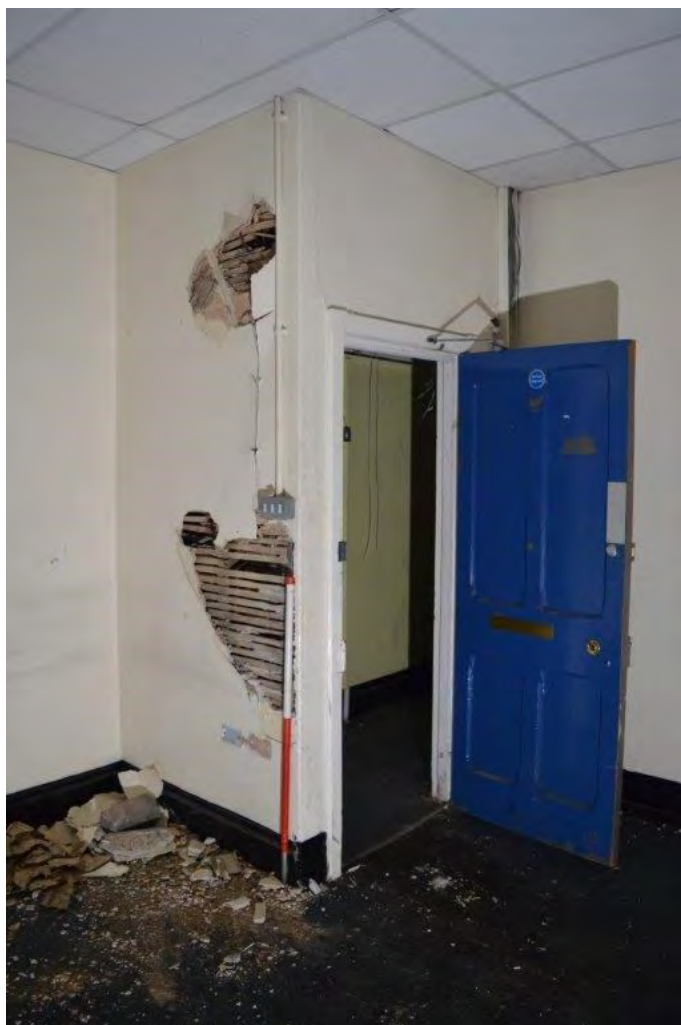




Plate 95. View south-west in RF06, scale 1m



Plate 96. View south-west in RF07, scale 1m

Plate 97. Stairwell RF08, view WSW, scale 1m



Plate 98. Inserted doorway between RF08 and RF02, view east, scale 1m



Plate 99. View north-east in RF12 to window overlooking courtyard, scale 1m



Plate 100. Fireplace in west wall of RF09, scale 1m

Plate 101. Original door to WC RF11 from corridor RF10, scale 1m

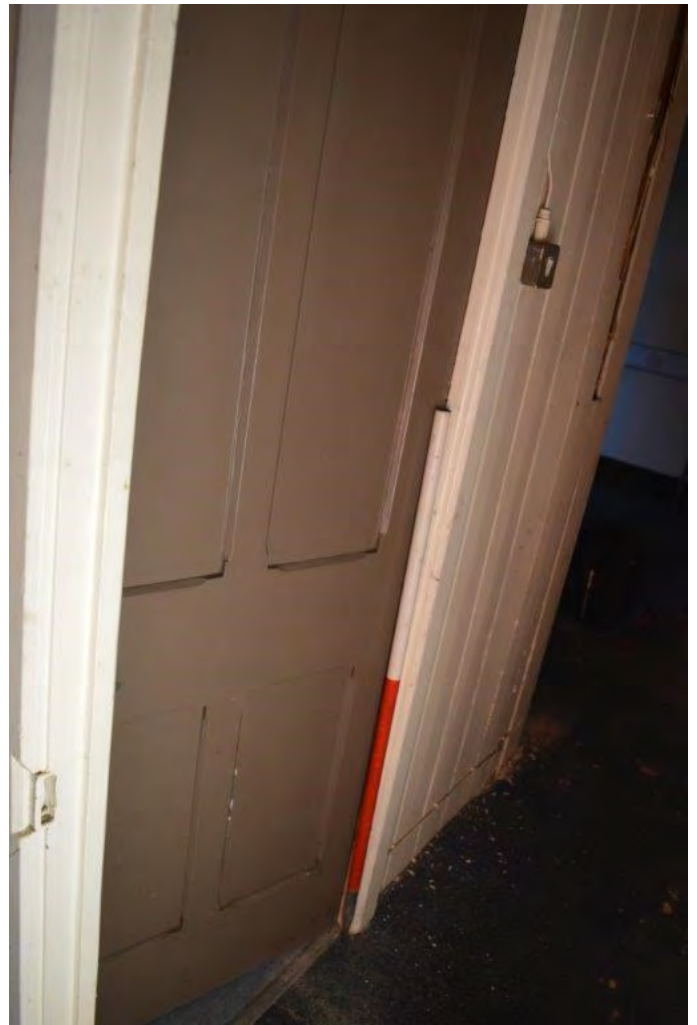


Plate 102. View east in storage area RF10A, scale 1m



Plate 103. View south-east into RF11, scale 1m

Plate 104. Window in north wall of RF12,
scale 1m



Plate 105. Fireplace in west wall of
RF12, scale 1m



Plate 106. Stairwell RF13/RG11 facing east



Plate 107. Top of blind arch partially obscured by staircase RF13, view north-east, scale 0.5m



Plate 108. Roofline visible through suspended ceiling above RF13

Plate 109. Corridor to west side of courtroom wing (part of RF02), view north

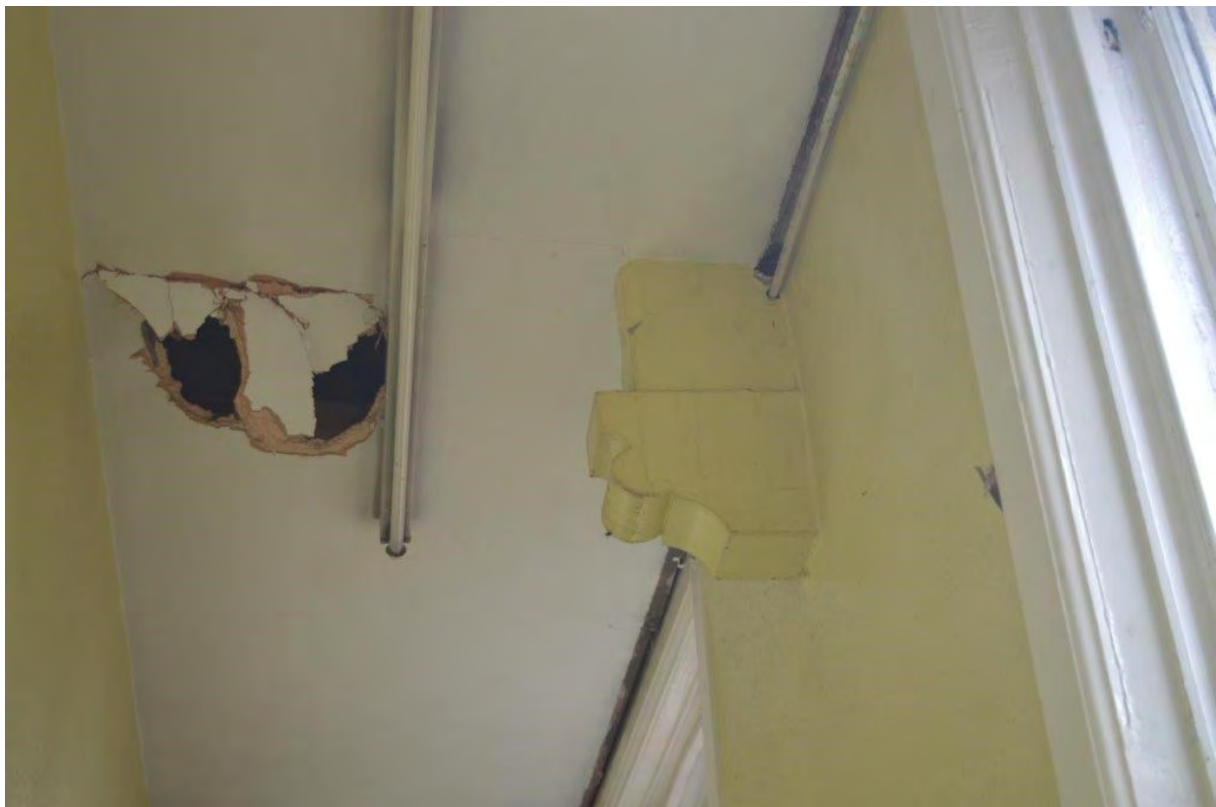


Plate 110 . Corbel supporting former courtroom roof structure, view south-west



Plate 111. Roof structure of former courtroom above RF14, view north



Plate 112. View east in RF14



Plate 113. Window in east wall of RF14 with internal casement, view south-east

Plate 114. View north-east to landing RF15, at the top of stairwell RG30





Plate 115. View east in RG16, scale 1m



Plate 116. View south-east in kitchen RF17, scale 1m



Plate 117. View ENE in RF18, scale 1m



Plate 118. View ENE in former magistrate's retiring room, RF19, scale 2m



Plate 119. Fireplace in north wall of RF19, scale 1m



Plate 120. View WSW in former magistrate's retiring room, RF19, scale 2m

Plate 121. View north in RF20, scale 1m



Plate 122. Building A view east, scale 1m



Plate 123. Building B view south, scale 1m



Plate 124. Buildings B-G view south-east



Plate 125. low level aerial view of buildings B-G, view south-east



Plate 126. Interior of Building C, view north



Plate 127. Interior of Building C, view east to Building F (doorway and window to left) and wall to adjacent property (right), scale 2m



Plate 128. Buildings D and G, view south-west, scale 2m



Plate 129. Interior of Building D, view north-east, scale 1m



Plate 130. Western section of Building E, view north-west, scale 1m



Plate 131. Blocked fireplace in eastern section of Building E, view NNW, scale 1m



Plate 132. Building F, view SSW, scale 2m



Plate 133. hatch in northern wall of Building F,
view SSE



Plate 134. Interior of Building F, view NNW, scale 2m



Plate 135. Interior of Building F, view SSE, scale 2m



Plate 136. Upper Storey of Building F, view west



Plate 137. Upper Storey of Building F, view north-east



Plate 138. North facing wall of Building G, view SSE



Plate 139. Low level aerial view of Buildings H (garages) and I (maintenance shed), view NNW



Plate 140. Building I, view WSW, scale 2m



Plate 141. Building J (former stables) view WSW, scale 2m



Plate 142. Northern section of Building J. view WSW



Plate 143. Southern section of Building J. view WSW



Plate 144. Upper floor of stables, Building J, probable former hay loft



Plate 145. Building K, view south, scale 1m



Plate 146. Interior of Building K, view WSW



Plate 147. Building L, former boiler house, view west, scale 2m



Plate 148. Interior of Building L, view west



Plate 149. Lancashire Police to rear of Courtroom wing c. 1910



Plate 150. Undated view of police station from Derby Street from Knowsley Archives

Appendix

Details of Listed Buildings within 250m of the recorded building (presented in Figure 2)

No. on Fig. 2	NHLE ref	Name	Grade
1	1075507	14, VICARAGE PLACE	II
2	1075501	2, DERBY STREET	II
3	1075506	2, VICARAGE PLACE	II
4	1199607	4 Vicarage Place	II
5	1283501	44-50, DERBY STREET	II
6	1343470	6 Vicarage Place	II
7	1199627	CHURCH OF OUR LADY IMMACULATE	II
8	1075500	Former town house and Parr's Bank	II
9	1283414	MASONIC HALL	II
10	1199612	NUMBER 10 INCLUDING GARDEN WALL	II
11	1075502	NUMBERS 52 AND 54 (CLOCK FACE PUBLIC HOUSE)	II
12	1199248	STABLE BLOCK TO NORTH EAST OF NUMBER 54	II



rpsgroup.com