



Ragged School and Ardley Centre, Blackburn, Lancashire

Archaeological Building Recording



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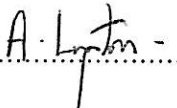
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SUMMARY

The building currently known as the Ragged School and Ardley Centre in, Blackburn has been earmarked for redevelopment in order to build an older persons' extra care scheme. The school is of local historical significance, providing for the poor and needy and, as a result, a condition for the archaeological recording of the building was attached to the planning consent. Following advice from the Lancashire County Archaeology Service (LCAS) and a verbal brief, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council (BDBC), commissioned Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) to carry out a programme of archaeological building recording. The Ragged School is positioned on Bent Street, Blackburn, which is situated at the southern end of Stonyhurst Road, approximately 0.8km to the west of Blackburn town centre (NGR SD 6778 2783).

An English Heritage Level I/II standard photographic and brief written record of the building was carried out, together with a desk-based assessment, which comprised a search of both published and unpublished records. The work was carried out in three stages, the exterior of the building being photographed in November 2009, the interior inspection being carried out in April 2009, and the now removed war memorials photographed in May 2009.

The Blackburn Ragged School was established in 1881 by John Thomas Walkden and James Dixon. In the late summer of that year a group of some 50 teachers from various Sunday Schools, of different denominations in Blackburn, met to share their concerns about the plight of poor children in the town, and set about setting up a 'Ragged School'. Initially, the school was housed in small rented premises on the corner of Lune Street and Leyland Street. The first meeting occurred on Saturday October 22nd 1881 and Sunday School teaching began on Sunday October 23rd 1881, and 198 children attended. The word 'Ragged' was an apt description of the attendees, for they are described as being 'ragged in both body and mind with bare heads, bare legs and bare feet'. The school was founded prior to national organisations so free meals were thus provided both on Sunday and also during the week, and an old clothes room benefited many children over the years to come.

The upper floors of the building on the corner of Lune Street and Leyland Street were refurbished in November 1881, which allowed separation of children by age. As numbers attending the school grew, the premises proved unsuitable and new premises were sought. A bazaar was held to raise funds for a new school site, and the proceeds enabled the purchase, at £150, of a redundant building on Bent Street, belonging to St Peter's Day School, which was empty and had been condemned. In 1895 the entire school was moved into an empty mill on Harley Street while the old St Peters' School building was demolished and a new building was constructed on the same site. This took two years to complete and on July 3rd 1897 the foundation stones were laid by Earl Compton MP, together with Walkden and Dixon, during a ceremony which attracted a substantial crowd. The architects of the new school building were Messrs. Briggs and Wolstenholme, and the projected cost was £2600. The school was officially opened on Saturday October 8th 1898 by Mrs R A Yerburgh.

By 1907 the new school building was becoming too small, necessitating an extension at a cost of some £750. The architects were the same Messrs. Briggs and Wolstenholme. The structure was to be a two-storey addition built in the same style, and would contain a room (mission-hall) capable of holding seating for 200 people.

The foundation stone was laid on Saturday 1st August 1908 by Robert A. Yerburgh and was opened in December the same year by Mr T Hart JP, the total cost being £936 10s.

In 1914 improvements were carried out to the building, such as installation of electric lighting throughout and removal of some internal walls which were replaced with folding partitions, which was to be again funded by a bazaar. The First World War effort required that some of the staff go to fight and every male of age went. In total, 339 past and present students took part, and their names are inscribed on the Roll of Honour. The Roll of Honour was unveiled on Sunday 28th September 1919 by Sir Henry Hibbert. It was made of alabaster and a mosaic depicts the figure of St George, in the central panel.

In 1931, the year of the jubilee of the Ragged School, a commemorative booklet outlining the history of the Ragged School was produced. During the great depression of 1929-1931, when the value of cotton had depreciated to almost nothing, the cotton towns in Lancashire, such as Blackburn, suffered greatly. The Ragged School once again stepped into the breach and provided much needed assistance to those poorest members of society. By 1931 there were two Sunday Schools. Thirteen classes of mainly young scholars were held upstairs, and downstairs 22 classes comprised 300-400 children. There was an infant room containing approximately 100-150 children, all under seven years of age. In 1936 James Dixon died, and on 9th May 1937 two stained glass windows, depicting scenes from the life of St Paul, were unveiled and are dedicated to his memory and that of John Thomas Walkden.

In 1952 the Blackburn Development Plan set out proposals that involved redeveloping the area around the Ragged School. The Ragged School, was to remain however, and was to be in a more appropriate open setting or 'garden suburb', with more room for expansion. The area was to consist of three-storey flats and two-storey houses most of which still survive. It was one of the first of the areas in the 1952 master plan to be redeveloped, which outlined the pattern of redevelopment for the following 15 years. Following the redevelopment, the school's youth activities increased, and plans to extend the premises, including a two-storey building, which would accommodate 200 members, were put forward. At this time the school claimed to have the oldest youth club in the British Isles. In 1961, an appeal for funds to pay for the extension scheme was launched, and on 29th October 1966 the 'ultra modern' new youth centre was opened by Earl Peel.

By the mid 1970s, the building had become too large for the needs of the school and, combined with rising costs and falling income, it was decided to put it up for sale. It was purchased by Lancashire County Council who leased back part of the building to provide a day care scheme for the elderly, although the Ragged School continued some religious and charitable work. The change was made on 17th February 1979 following building conversion and improvements. In 1995 the Ragged School became part of the United Reform Church.

The building investigation revealed that Ragged School had been quite thoroughly modernised internally, and most of the original decoration and fixtures and fittings had been removed. Externally, other than two late twentieth century additions, the appearance of the building had changed little since construction. Four main phases of construction and modification were identified.

Following a program of internal stripping of much of the later twentieth century fabric to reveal the original fabric for recording purposes, it was revealed that the original structure comprised two main halls probably used for teaching, one on the ground floor and the main, large hall on the first floor. These were surrounded by ancillary rooms, which were all connected by two corridors and two staircases. The main halls were probably used for teaching. Very little remained of the fabric of the original structure, the most interesting features that did remain being the iron trusses in the main hall on the first floor and the stained glass windows and Roll of Honour which were removed for repair and restoration. Two time capsules were also found during the demolition of the building.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) would like to thank Susan Kelly of Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council for commissioning the project. Thanks are also due to the staff of the Lancashire County Record Office, Preston, and the community history section of Blackburn Library for their kind assistance with this project. Doug Moir of LCAS for his advice. Thanks are due to Stuart Edworthy and Graham Neild of Capita Symonds for their help and assistance.

The documentary research and building survey was undertaken by Karl Taylor, who also wrote the report and production of the drawings. The project was managed by Emily Mercer, who also edited the report.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF PROJECT

- 1.1.1 The building currently known as the Ardley Centre and Ragged School in, Blackburn has been earmarked for redevelopment in order to build an older persons' extra care scheme. The school is of local historical significance, providing for the poor and needy and, as a result, a condition for the archaeological recording of the building was attached to the planning consent. Following advice from the Lancashire County Archaeology Service (LCAS) and a verbal brief, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council (BDBC), commissioned Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) to carry out a programme of archaeological building recording. Site access and other arrangements were organised by Capita Symonds on behalf of BDBC.
- 1.1.2 An English Heritage Level I/II standard (English Heritage 2006) photographic and brief written record of the building was carried out together with a desk-based assessment, which comprised a search of both published and unpublished records. This report sets out the results of the desk-based assessment and building survey in the form of a report, outlining the findings.
- 1.1.3 The work was carried out in three stages, the exterior of the building being photographed in November 2009, the interior inspection being carried out in April 2009, and the now removed war memorials photographed in May 2009.

1.2 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- 1.2.1 The Ragged School is positioned on Bent Street, Blackburn, which is situated at the southern end of Stonyhurst Road, approximately 0.8km to the west of Blackburn town centre (NGR SD 6778 2783) (Fig 1).
- 1.2.2 The site and the area surrounding it is generally level, and urban in nature, the school being surrounded by two-storey blocks of flats. The solid geology consists of Lower Westphalian coal measures and millstone grit (IGS 1979), whilst the drift geology is mainly of glacial origin and consists of till and sand and gravels (BGS 1977).

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 PROJECT DESIGN

2.1.1 A project design (*Appendix 1*) was produced by OA North, following a verbal brief provided by LCAS, which outlined the objectives of the project and the methodology. For the most part the methodology was adhered to in full. However, the requirement for a map regression was withdrawn by LCAS.

2.2 DOCUMENTARY RESEARCH

2.2.1 Research was undertaken at the Lancashire County Records Office (CRO) in Preston, and the Community History section at Blackburn central library, where the following sources were consulted:

- trade directories;
- school records;
- unpublished reports and papers;
- relevant cartographic material;
- relevant photographic material;
- general secondary sources including general local history books and local newspaper records.

2.3 BUILDING RECORDING SURVEY

2.3.1 ***Descriptive Record:*** a brief visual inspection of the exterior of the building was undertaken, and written records using OA North *pro-forma* record sheets were made of the buildings' location, together with a description of its function, materials and possible date. The internal inspection of the building was similarly limited to cursory description of the nature of the layout. Therefore, a full record of the nature of the buildings was not obtained. The internal record was obtained following soft stripping of the interior. The level of descriptive survey equated to an English Heritage Level I/II type record (English Heritage 2006).

2.3.2 ***Photographic Archive:*** black and white prints of the building were produced utilising 35mm SLR equipment. Digital images were also produced using DSLR equipment, primarily used for illustrative purposes. The photographic archive consists of internal and external views of the appearance of the building, and detailed photographs of specific architectural details that do not show or are not clearly represented on general views (Figs 2 and 3). The photographs were taken from viewpoints that maximise the amount of

information available and a variety of wide angle and telephoto lenses were used, including shift lenses. Tripods were used for all photographs.

- 2.3.3 **Drawn Record:** no drawings other than general site location and photographic location plans were produced.

2.4 ARCHIVE

- 2.4.1 A full professional archive has been compiled in accordance with the project design (*Appendix 1*), and in accordance with current IfA and English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage 1991). The paper and digital archive will be deposited in Lancashire County Record Office on completion of the project and copies forwarded to the HER, Preston. The Arts and Humanities data Service (AHDS) online database project *Online Access to index of Archaeological Investigations* (OASIS) will be completed as part of the archiving phase of the project.

3. DOCUMENTARY RESEARCH

3.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1.1 The Blackburn Ragged School was established in 1881 by John Thomas Walkden and James Dixon, both of whom had a desire to better the lives of the many poor children that they often encountered (Chilman 1931). Dixon, originally from Annan in Scotland, was a deeply religious man and was already involved in Sunday school teaching (Moore 1990). He was appalled by the poverty, deprivation and living conditions of his students, about which he was determined to do something. He met Walkden in February 1881, when both were attending a children's mission service, and they struck an immediate friendship. In the late summer of that year a group of some 50 teachers from various Sunday Schools, of different denominations in Blackburn, met to share their concerns about the plight of poor children in the town, and set about setting up a 'Ragged School' (*ibid*). Dixon and Walkden visited Charter Street Ragged School in Manchester in October 1881, where they met Thomas Johnson (the conductor of the school) a charismatic figure who attended the Charter Street School as an orphan child. He rose to the position of manager of one of the largest warehouses in Manchester and his personal commitment to his own school and Christian faith filled Dixon and Walkden with much enthusiasm (*ibid*). The group of teachers met again on October 16th 1881, when Dixon was elected Secretary and Walkden elected Treasurer (*ibid*).
- 3.1.2 Initially, the school was housed in small rented premises on the corner of Lune Street and Leyland Street. The first meeting occurred on Saturday October 22nd 1881 when 150 children crowded in to the small building to 'feast on buns and coffee' (*ibid*). Sunday School teaching began on Sunday October 23rd 1881, and 198 children attended (*ibid*). Sunday School lessons were conducted 'twice on the Sabbath', the early school workers being 'sent home with wearied brains and aching hearts from the sheer heathenism of their young charge' (Chilman 1931). The word 'Ragged' was an apt description of the attendees, for they are described as being 'ragged in both body and mind with bare heads, bare legs and bare feet' (*ibid*). The school was founded prior to national organisations, such as the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (SPCC), so free meals were thus started both on Sunday and also during the week, and an old clothes room benefited many children over the years to come (Chilman 1931).
- 3.1.3 The upper floors of the building on the corner of Lune Street and Leyland Street were refurbished in November 1881, which allowed separation of children by age (Moore 1990). A diverse range of activities were carried out at the school and the following list, outlined in Moore (1990), illustrates the wide ranging nature of the work; Sunday afternoon school (average attendance 450); Sunday evening school (average attendance 320); Sunday infant school (average attendance 150); Mission services every Tuesday and Thursday; Adult class (average attendance 75); Band of Hope; Tract distribution; Free breakfasts every Sunday morning during winter (about 7000 each winter); Free dinners, about 200 children received free soup or potato hash every Monday at 1pm; Sick and benevolent committee; Fife and Drum band; Annual

sea-side trip, about 450 children taken for the day to Lytham; Free reading room and library; Penny Bank; Cottage meetings; Evening educational classes; Sewing classes; Boy's brigade; Choir; Old clothes shop.

- 3.1.4 Dixon, employed as a joiner since 1878, and teaching at Sunday School on the Sabbath (Moore 1990), gave it up to work full time at the Ragged School as Superintendent of the Boy's Rest and Boy's Brigade. The Boys' Rest was set up to provide temporary accommodation for up to 18 homeless boys until a more permanent solution to the plight of homeless children was sought (*ibid*). It was housed at 18 Fielden Street. Some of the boys sold magazines in order to raise money and this was so successful that in January 1885 the school decided to produce their own, called 'Rags and Rubies' and it had average sales of 7500 copies per month in its first year (*Appendix 2*) (*ibid*). The Boys' Rest became very successful and it was decided that a similar facility for girls' was needed, which was housed in rented accommodation at 18 Paradise Terrace (*ibid*). Limited finances forced a change in accommodation, the boys' rest being transferred to Paradise Street and the Girls' Rest was moved to less costly premises. Ultimately, both the Boys' and Girls' rest became Blackburn Orphanage located in Wilpshire, which opened in 1891.
- 3.1.5 As numbers attending the school grew the premises proved unsuitable and new premises were sought (Chilman 1931). A bazaar was held to raise funds for a new school site, and the proceeds enabled the purchase, at £150, of a redundant building on Bent Street, belonging to St Peter's Day School (Plate 1), which was empty and had been condemned (*ibid*, Moore 1990). In 1895 the entire school was moved into an empty mill on Harley Street while the old dilapidated St Peters' School building was demolished and a new building was constructed on the same site (Chilman 1931). This took two years to complete and on July 3rd 1897 the foundation stones were laid by Earl Compton MP, together with Walkden and Dixon, during a ceremony which attracted a substantial crowd (Blackburn Times 10th July 1897 (**B362.76**)) (Plate 2). The architects of the new school building were Messrs. Briggs and Wolstenholme, and the projected cost was £2600 (*op cit*). The school was officially opened on Saturday October 8th 1898 by Mrs R A Yerburgh (Plate 5).
- 3.1.6 In 1902, the same year that one of the founders, John Thomas Walkden died, the twenty first anniversary of the school was celebrated and a memorial tablet to Walkden was unveiled (Blackburn Times, 25th October 1902 **B362.76**). By 1907 the new school building was becoming too small, necessitating an extension at a cost of some £750 (Blackburn Times 21st December 1907 **B362.76**; Chilman 1931). The architects were the same Messrs. Briggs and Wolstenholme. The structure was to be a two-storey addition built in the same style, and would contain a room (mission-hall) capable of holding seating for 200 people. The foundation stone was laid on Saturday 1st August 1908 by Robert A. Yerburgh and was opened free of debt in December the same year by Mr T Hart JP (Chilman 1931). the total cost being £936 10s (Blackburn Times, 26th December 1908 **B362.76**).
- 3.1.7 The school continued to carry out its vital work, and in 1914 improvements were carried out to the building, such as installation of electric lighting throughout and removal of some internal walls which were replaced with folding partitions (Blackburn Times, 21st March 1914 (**B362.76**)). This was

expected to cost £600, which was to be again funded by a bazaar. The First World War effort required that some of the staff go to fight and every male of age went to 'do his bit' (Chilman 1931). In total, 339 past and present students took part, and their names are inscribed on the Roll of Honour (Plate 4).

- 3.1.8 The Roll of Honour (Plates 4 and 23-24) was unveiled on Sunday 28th September 1919 by Sir Henry Hibbert, a gift from an anonymous donor (Blackburn Times, 4th October 1919 **B362.76**). It was made of alabaster and a mosaic depicts the figure of St George, in the central panel. The inscriptions read 'Their name liveth for ever more' and 'In memory of past members of this school who fell in the great European War, 1914-1919,' followed by the names of the 54 who made the 'supreme sacrifice'.
- 3.1.9 In 1931, the year of the jubilee of the Ragged School, a commemorative booklet outlining the history of the Ragged School was produced (Chilman 1931), the details of which have informed much of this historical background. During the great depression of 1929-1931, when the value of cotton had depreciated to almost nothing, the cotton towns in Lancashire, such as Blackburn, suffered greatly. The Ragged School once again stepped into the breach and provided much needed assistance to those poorest members of society. By 1931 there were two Sunday Schools at 2-30pm and 6-30pm, and 12 classrooms were fully occupied by adults aged from 16 to 60 (*ibid*). Thirteen classes of mainly young scholars were held upstairs, and downstairs 22 classes comprised 300-400 children. There was an infant room containing approximately 100-150 children, all under seven years of age (*ibid*). In 1936 James Dixon died, and on 9th May 1937 two stained glass windows, depicting scenes from the life of St Paul, were unveiled and are dedicated to his memory and that of John Thomas Walkden (Plates 25-28).
- 3.1.10 On 4th June 1950, a memorial to the Second World War was unveiled by Mr J W Phillips MBE, who was the honorary treasurer at the school (Blackburn Times, 2nd June 1950 **B362.76**). It was made of carved oak with a bronze tablet. The inscription read '1939-1945 To the Glory of God and to commemorate the loyalty, devotion and courage of the young men of this Blackburn Ragged School who served King and country during the Second World War, this platform was erected'. A list of those men who made the 'supreme sacrifice' followed (Plate 8). The current whereabouts of this memorial are unknown.
- 3.1.11 In 1952 the Blackburn Development Plan (**D2 BLA**) set out proposals that involved redeveloping the area around the Ragged School. Described as one of Blackburn's 'dingiest quarters', an area of 18 acres bounded by King Street, Montague Street, part of Nab Lane, Dugdale Street, Greaves Street, Little Peel Street, George Street West and Leyland Street was to be outlined and plans were passed by Blackburn Civic Development Committee in 1957 (Blackburn Times, 13th September 1957 **B362.76**). Plate 7, although undated, appears to show empty plots, as well as cobbled streets, around the School and may have been taken during the development. The Ragged School, was to remain however, and was to be in a more appropriate open setting or 'garden suburb', with more room for expansion. The area was to consist of three-storey flats and two-storey houses, most of which still survive. It was one of the first of

the areas in the 1952 master plan to be redeveloped, which outlined the pattern of redevelopment for the following 15 years.

- 3.1.12 Following the redevelopment, the school's youth activities increased, and plans to extend the premises, including a two-storey building, which would accommodate 200 members, were put forward (Lancashire Evening Telegraph, 11th July 1958 **B362.76**). At this time the school claimed to have the oldest youth club in the British Isles. In 1961, an appeal for funds to pay for the extension scheme was launched, and on 29th October 1966 the 'ultra modern' new youth centre was opened by Earl Peel (Blackburn Times, 22nd October 1971 **B362.76**). It was opened and an order of proceedings was produced (Chilman 1931 **Q 64**). The improvements included a large youth room with coffee bar (Plate 8) and dance floor, a billiards and games room, a large modern kitchen, storage room, ladies' powder room, shower room and cloakrooms, reception room, a chapel and a 'beautifully decorated church' (Blackburn Times, 22nd October 1971 **B362.76**). The improvements were perhaps more aptly described in 1974 as 'gutting and rebuilding' (Blackburn Times, 25th January 1974 **B362.76**). The school kept its name despite the derogatory connotations and increase in living standards, which forced the renaming of many other ragged schools (*ibid*).
- 3.1.13 By the mid 1970s, the building had become too large for the needs of the school and, combined with rising costs and falling, it was decided to put it up for sale (Lancashire Evening Telegraph, 8th July 1976 **B362.76**, Plate 9). Many of the original reasons for setting up the school had disappeared, most now being handled by the state. The school carried on in name only, and was purchased by Lancashire County Council who leased back part of the building to provide a day care scheme for the elderly, although the Ragged School continued some religious and charitable work (Lancashire Evening Telegraph, 24th February 1978 **B362.73**). The change was made on 17th February 1979 following building conversion and improvements (Lancashire Evening Telegraph, 21st December 1978 **B362.73**).
- 3.1.14 In 1995 the Ragged School became part of the United Reform Church (www.blackburnraggedschoolurc.co.uk).

3.2 DOCUMENTARY SOURCES

- 3.2.1 **Trade Directories:** Blackburn Ragged School is first listed by name in the 1885 edition of Barrett's Blackburn and District Directory. It is simply named, together with the name of the caretaker, T Proctor, in the street directory section (Bent Street), and there is no other listing. It is omitted from the 1887 edition, but then is listed from 1888, right through until 1957, in the street directory.
- 3.2.2 **Collections held at Blackburn Central Library:** the community history section of the central library holds a substantial archive (**Q64**) of material relating to the Ragged School, most of which is a comprehensive collection of newspaper cuttings (**B362.73**). These, together with copies of the school magazine and other pamphlets, provide a detailed history of the development of the Ragged School. The nature of the archive is outlined in *Appendix 2*.

4. BUILDING SURVEY RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

- 4.1.1 The survey comprised external and internal photographic recording and brief visual inspection, in order to provide an account of the nature of the fabric of the school. The interior was initially inspected by an OA North buildings archaeologist, from which it was discovered that much of the original fabric was hidden behind modern fittings. Therefore, an internal soft strip was required in order to adequately record the building. Following on-site consultation between the OA North buildings archaeologist, the demolition contractor and a representative from Capita Symonds, on behalf of BDBC, a plan of action was agreed to remove most of the fabric identified as not being part of the original layout of the building. Following the soft strip, the interior was recorded.
- 4.1.2 Prior to the commencement of the building recording survey, the Roll of Honour (*Section 4.2.9*) and both of the stained glass windows (*Section 4.2.5*), were removed in order to protect them from any damage. These were inspected and photographed separately (*Sections 4.2.13* and *4.2.14*).

4.2 DESCRIPTION AND LAYOUT

- 4.2.1 **General Description:** the building is of two stories (with a small cellar) and lies on an east/west axis, along the north side of Bent Street (Plate 11, Fig 1). The building comprises two main parts; an L-shaped main building and a later, east wing. The L-shaped part lies parallel to Bent Street. There are two gablets located on the north slope of the roof. The west end of the main part has a north/south wing, which has a hipped roof. An east wing, added in 1908 (see *Section 3.1.6*), lies perpendicularly to the main building. This has a half-hipped roof on the north side and two gablets on the south. Added to the main building are two late twentieth century single-storey extensions. There are three ventilation cowls located on the roof ridges of the main building. A single brick flue is located on the west elevation of the main building.
- 4.2.2 Nearly all of the structure is constructed from red brick, including various decorative elements, such as flat arch window heads and decorative diaper work on some of the gables (Plate 12). A low brick wall is also located at the front of the building. There are two single-storey flat-roofed extensions, attached to the north and west elevations. The rear extension (grey brick) contains kitchens, whilst a western extension comprises a boiler room and games room. The fenestration consists mainly of large multi-light timber framed windows, which appear to be original (Plate 11), although a number have been replaced by PVCu frames and late twentieth century timber casements. To the right of the main door on the front elevation the three foundations stones, laid by the co-founders and Earl Compton, are visible (see Plate 13).

- 4.2.3 **Layout:** the main entrance is located on Bent Street, and a small lobby is the first room to be encountered. The ground floor of the Ragged School (post-internal stripping) has numerous rooms, including a large main central hall (Plate 14) and a slightly smaller room at the east end (the Church, added in 1908) (Plate 17). There are two rooms at the west end of the building (boiler room and games room), and there are two staircases. Some of the rooms, including the kitchens and offices at the rear, and the games room and boiler room at the west end, are late twentieth century additions. Prior to the internal soft strip, more rooms were present. However, these were removed, as they were all of twentieth century origin and obscured the original layout.
- 4.2.4 The main hall was partially obscured by a modern suspended ceiling and when this was removed the ceiling was revealed to consist of rolled steel joists (RSJ), some of which appear to have been inserted later (Plate 15). It was apparent that the ceiling had been either repaired or strengthened; some of the beams appear to be part of the original fabric, whilst other have clearly been inserted, and burn-marks were visible, consistent with torch cutting (Plate 15). The room was plainly decorated, all of which appeared to be of late twentieth century origin and there was a stage at the east end. However, the removal of an inserted partition wall revealed part of the previous decoration, which consisted of a flush bead moulded dado (Plate 16). Access to the later kitchens was available through this room.
- 4.2.5 The other room of interest was the Church room at the east end of the main building, which was of modern appearance (Plate 17). The north wall of this room originally contained the stained glass windows that had been removed prior to inspection (Plates 17, 26 and 27). Little else of interest was contained in this room, other than a hardwood six panel door and door surround. A suspended ceiling was removed, which revealed boxed-in RSJ beams.
- 4.2.6 The two staircases were of identical open-well construction. Both had landings, but the east staircase had an additional landing and flight (Plate 18). The steps were of stone and the strings were plain. The balustrades were of painted wrought iron and were quite decorative, consisting of repeating straight and wavy vertical bars topped with scrolls, each panel being riveted to each other (Plate 17). The newels were turned painted wood, and the handrail was of hardwood. Both staircases had flush beaded dados. The west staircase had a tall multi-light window.
- 4.2.7 There was a small basement accessed via the corridor at the base of the west stairs. This appeared to contain the boiler, and there is evidence to suggest there was a coal chute.
- 4.2.8 Following stripping, the first floor was revealed to have a similar layout to the ground floor the main interest being the large main hall (Plate 19). The roof was obscured by a polystyrene suspended ceiling, which was removed during the internal soft strip to reveal five steel quadrangular or arched trusses, the joints of the webs being riveted together (Plate 20), and the heel of each truss was supported on a stone corbel (Plate 21). All the lower curved chords were joined together with a longitudinal member. The apex of each truss was obscured by the upper ceiling. This type of truss was obviously used in order

to maximise the space. There were two decorative ventilation grilles in the upper ceiling (Plate 22).

- 4.2.9 A vertical boxed-in ventilation flue was visible on the east wall, as well as a large scar, which is where the roll of honour war memorial was originally located (*Section 3.1.8* and Plates 4 and 23-25), which was inspected separately (see *Section 4.1.1* and 4.2.12). The west end of the room contained two further rooms, which appeared to be part of the original layout. There were two tall leaded windows located on the north wall, which appeared to be part of the original fabric.
- 4.2.10 At the east end of the first floor of the main building, a further flight of steps leads up to a large room, above the Church room on the ground floor. This room is all plain in decoration and RSJ beams support the ceiling. There is a small kitchen attached to the north-west corner, which exhibits some of the original plaster moulded skirting. An apparently blocked aperture on the west wall of this room suggests access to the main hall was once available.
- 4.2.11 The west end of the first floor contains two rooms of similar dimensions as the corresponding rooms on the ground floor. Little of interest was observed within these rooms except for a corresponding boxed ventilation flue and a built-in cupboard that appeared to be part of the original fabric.
- 4.2.12 ***Additional Off-Site Features:*** the Roll of Honour was found to be of identical appearance to the photograph printed in the Blackburn Times in 1919 (Plates 4 and 24). It is made of light coloured marble/alabaster, which appears to have been stained a slightly darker colour. It comprised various separate sections with no apparent evidence of holding the pieces together, other than when mounted on the wall. The layout consisted of three panels laid out symmetrically, with two wide flanking panels, and a narrow central panel containing a mosaic depiction of St George (Plate 25). Originally, there were 339 names inlaid on the memorial, all of whom were past students who took part in the First World War. The central panel, below the mosaic, lists the names of those who fell during the conflict. The mosaic panel is particularly fine and is of gold leaf, enamel and mother of pearl. It measured (maximum measurements) approximately 2.68m (8' 9 1/2") long by 2.12m high (6' 11 1/2"). The mosaic panel measures 0.444m (17 1/2") wide by 1.09m (43") high.
- 4.2.13 The two stained glass windows, removed from the Church room, were found to be in good condition and were still set within timber frames, although these were damaged (Plates 26 and 27). Each measured (not including the timber frame) some 0.67m wide (26 3/4") by 1.72m (5' 7 3/4") high, and reinforced with four, one inch square metal bars (probably not original). Each window contained a dedication panel to John Walkden and James Dixon (Plates 28 and 29). Both windows depict scenes from the life of St Paul.
- 4.2.14 During demolition of the Ragged School in May 2009, a time capsule was discovered below the foundation stone (Plate 30). It was a wide necked glass bottle/jar with a glass and cork stopper and measured some 0.245m (9 1/2") high by 0.95m (3 3/4") in diameter. A maker's name "Nuttal & Co, St Helens" is evident on the stopper. The contents were visible inside, and comprised a

rolled-up edition of the Blackburn Times, dated Saturday, 3rd July 1897. Inside this, are other, unknown, documents. At the time of writing the capsule remained un-opened.

- 4.2.15 A further capsule was discovered below the foundation stone of the east wing, added in 1908. This was a square jar measuring some 0.85m (3 ¼”) square by 0.22m (8 ½”) high. It also contained a rolled up newspaper. The capsule remains unopened.

5. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.1 DISCUSSION

5.1.1 The Ragged School has been thoroughly modernised internally, and most of the original decoration and fixtures and fittings removed. Externally, other than two late twentieth century additions, the appearance of the building had changed little since construction. Documentary research and building inspection revealed there to have been three main phases of building:

- Phase one included the original construction of the main building in 1897-1895 (*Section 3.1.5*);
- Phase two was the addition of the east wing added in 1907 (*Section 3.1.6*);
- Phase three included some internal modifications in the early twentieth century (*Section 3.1.7*);
- Phase four began in the 1960s and resulted in much internal modification (*Section 3.1.12*), described as the ‘gutting and rebuilding’ of the building (Blackburn Times, 25th January 1974 **B362.76**).

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

5.2.1 Following the removal of much of the later twentieth century fabric, it was revealed that the original structure comprised two main halls, probably used for teaching, one on the ground floor and the main, large hall, in the first floor. These were surrounded by ancillary rooms, connected by two corridors and two staircases. Very little remains of the fabric of the original structure, the most obvious surviving features being the iron trusses in the main hall on the first floor.

5.2.2 Some original features, such as the stained glass windows and the Roll of Honour, were removed from the building, and are being repaired and restored. These will be installed in the new structure to be constructed on the site of the demolished building. Two time capsules found during the demolition will be reburied, together with new time capsules, within the new building.

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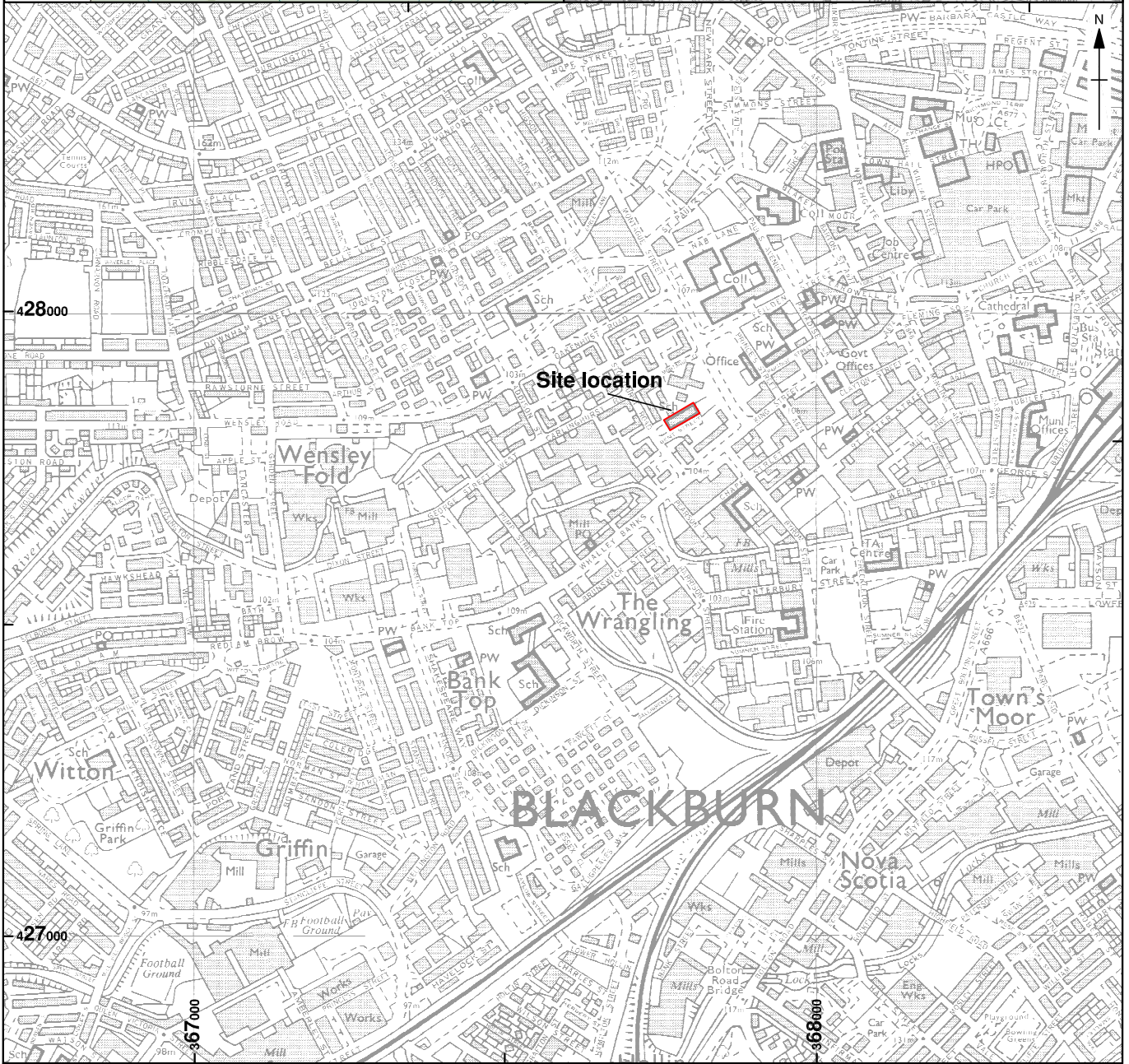
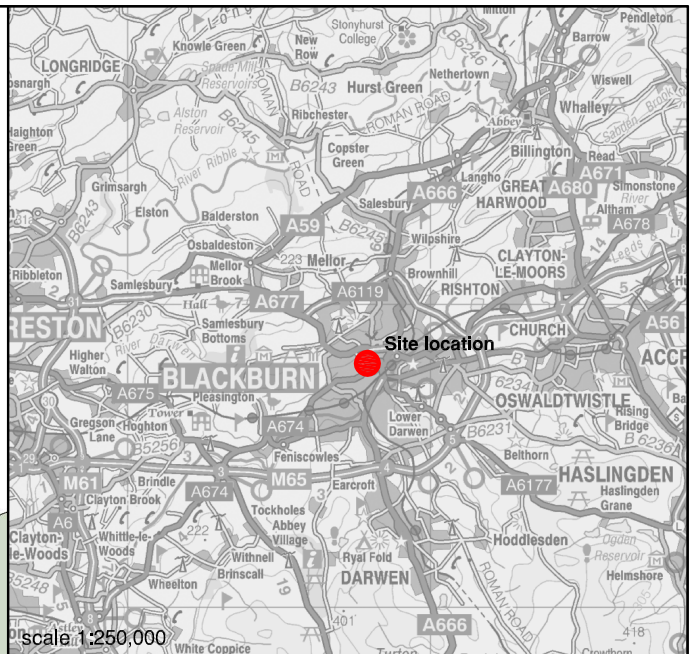
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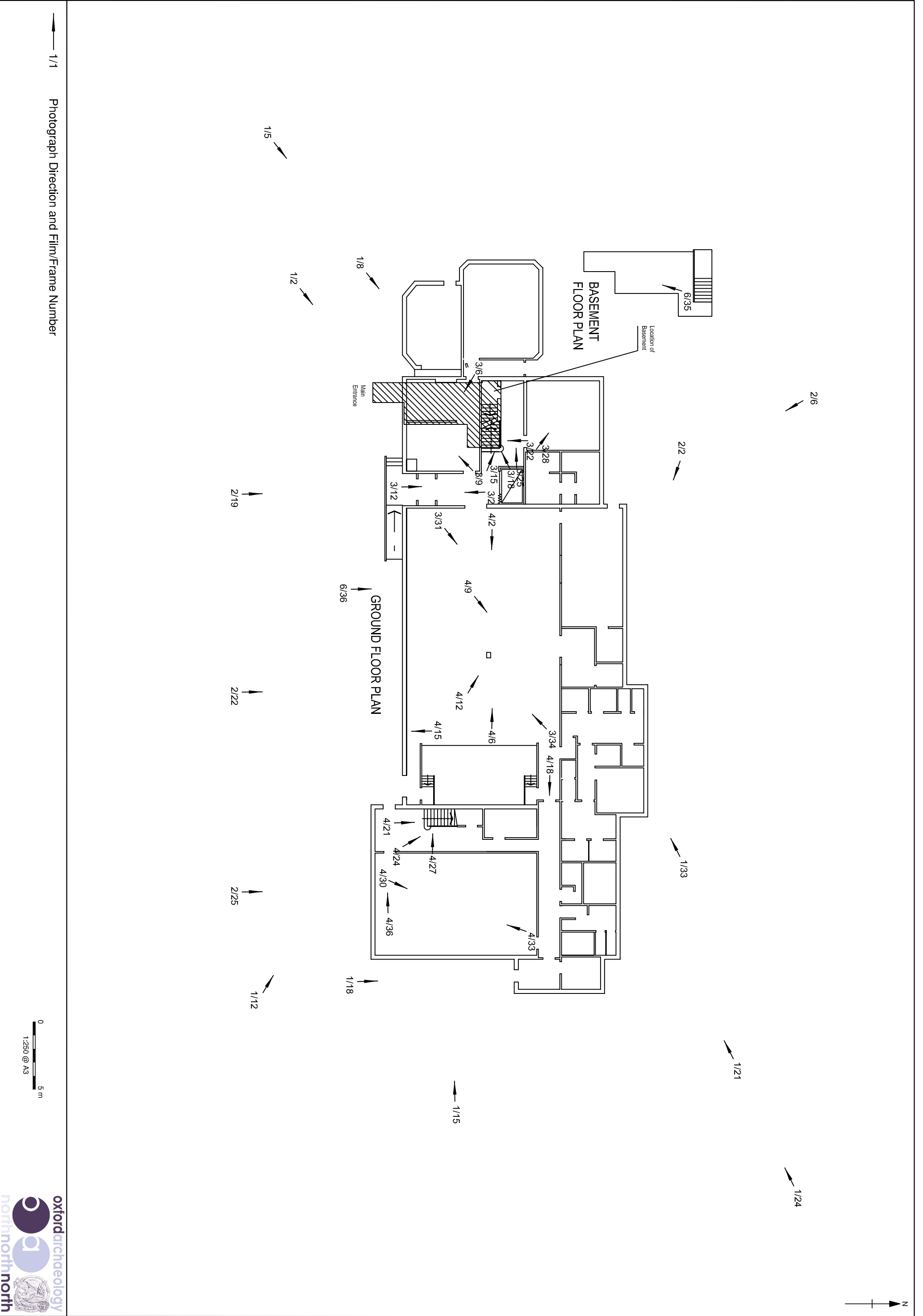
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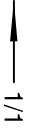
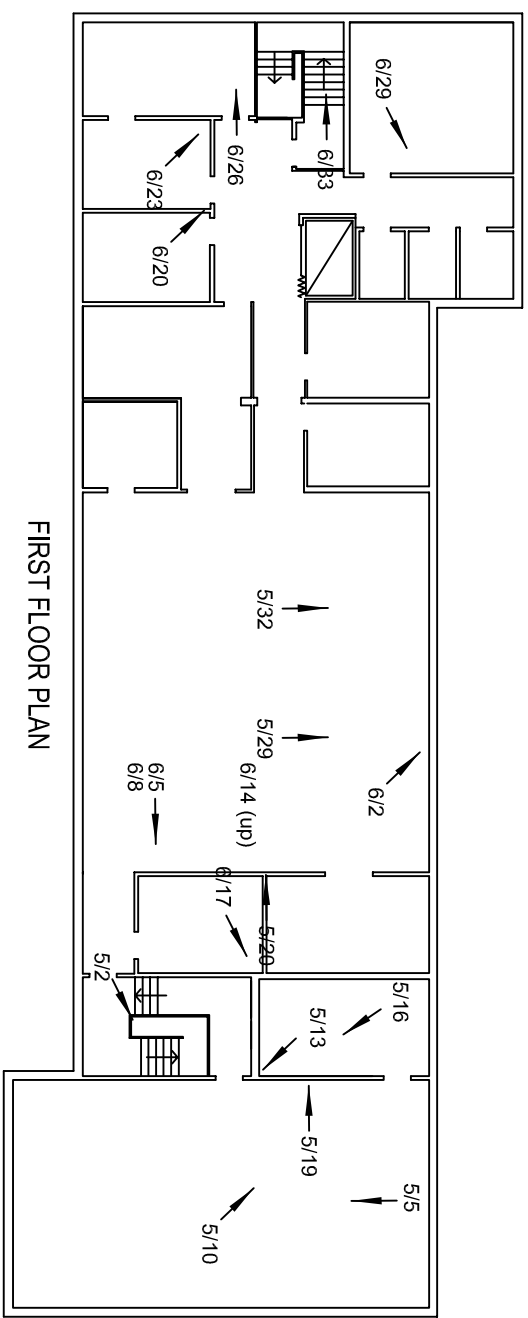
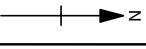
Figure 1: Site location

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1/1 Photograph Direction and Film/Frame Number

Figure 2: Ground Floor Photographic Locations



1/1 Photograph Direction and Film/Frame Number



Figure 3: First Floor Photographic Locations

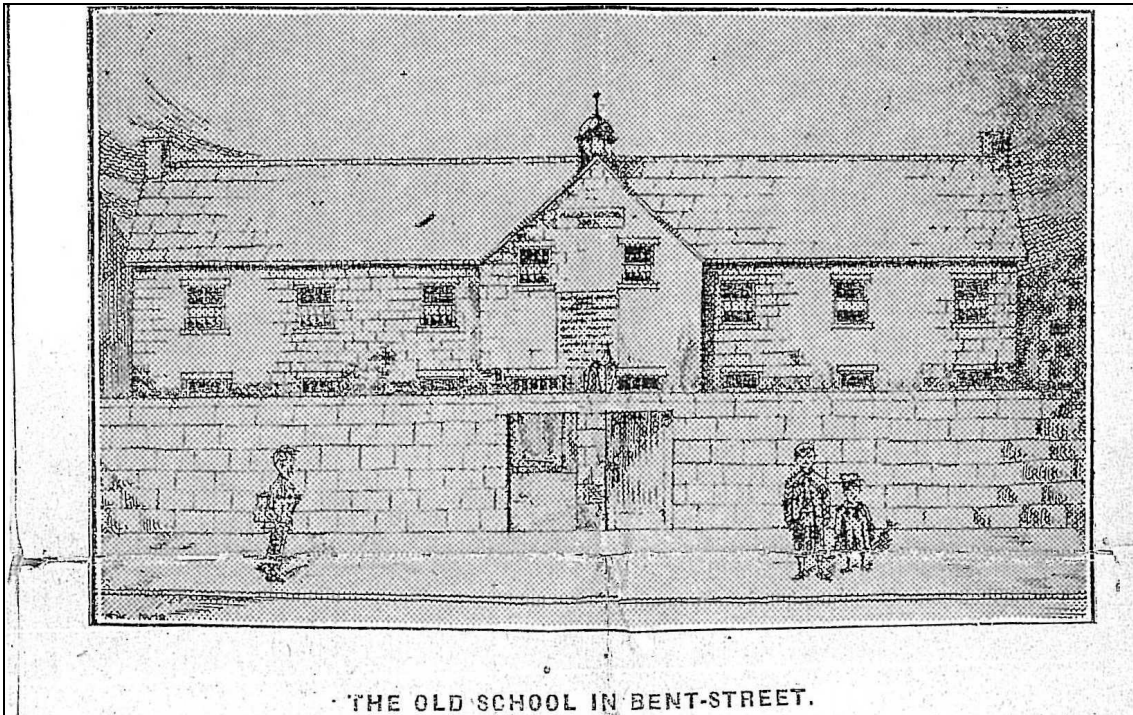


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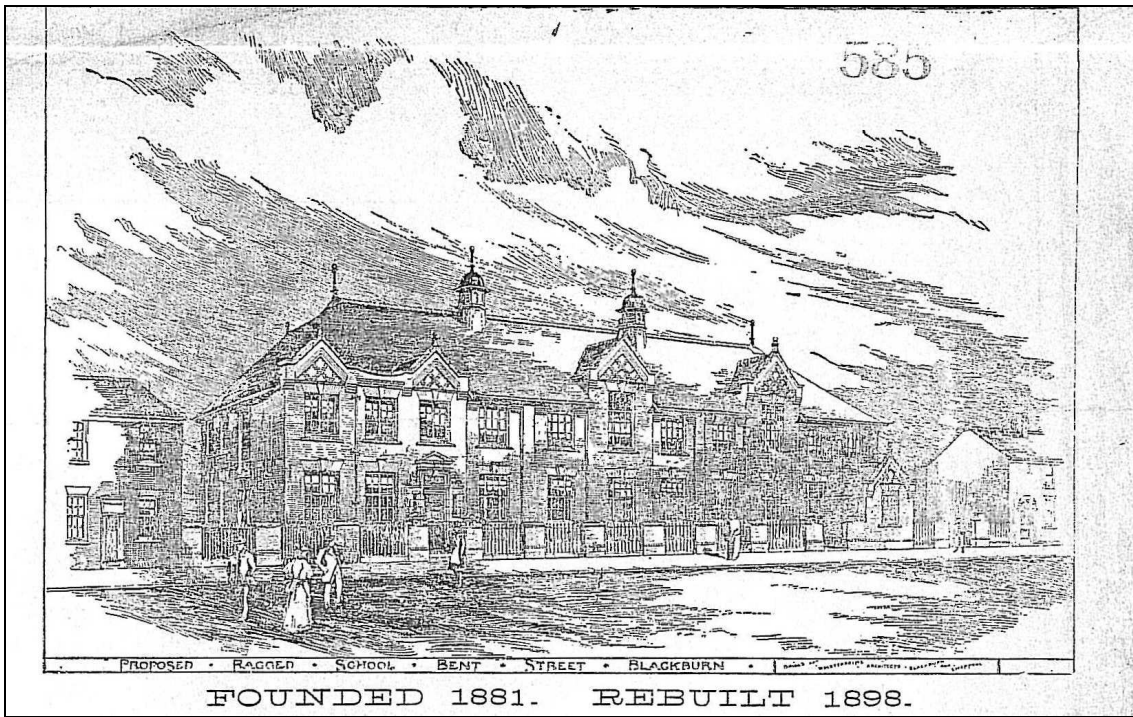
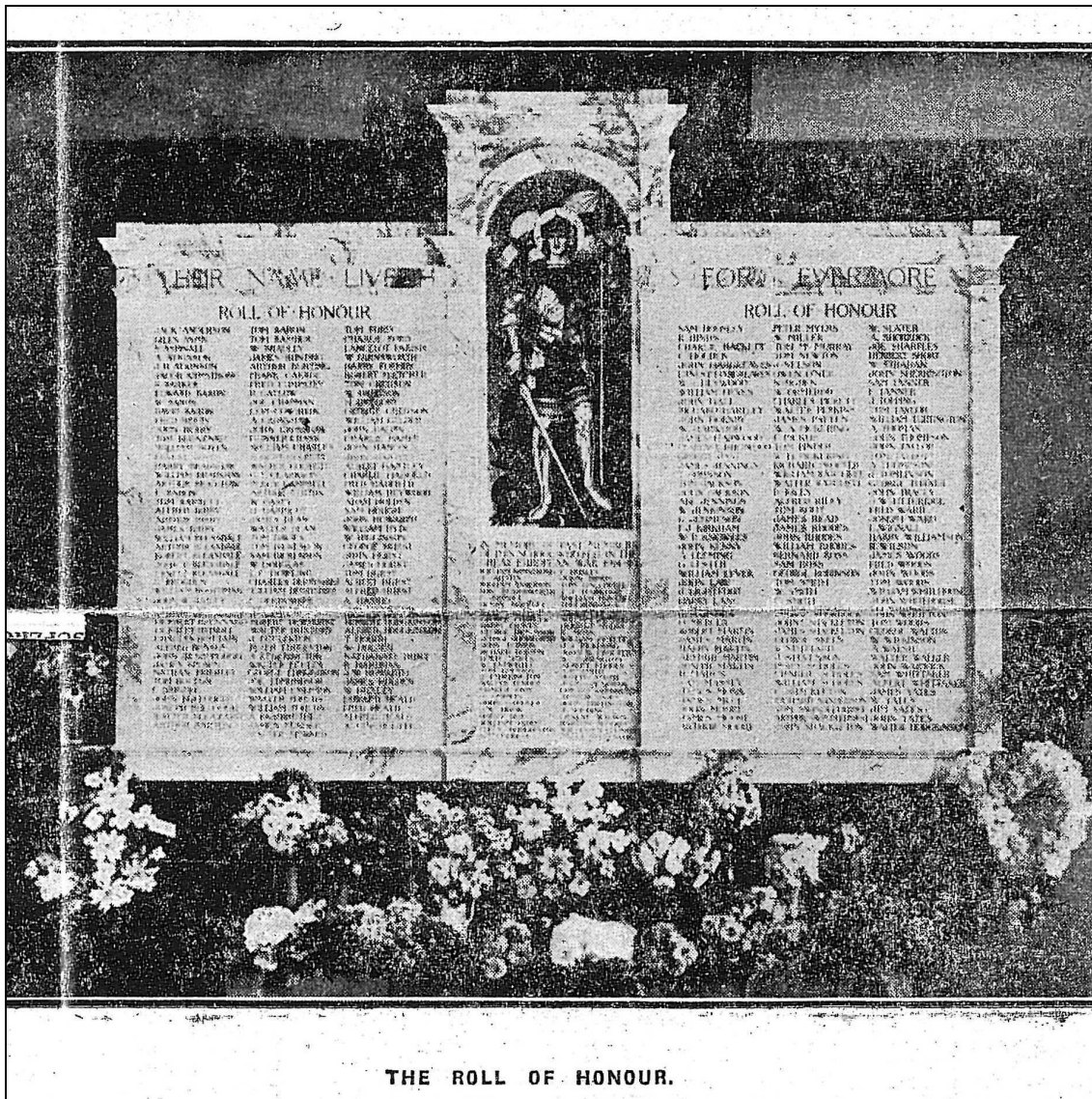


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THE ROLL OF HONOUR.

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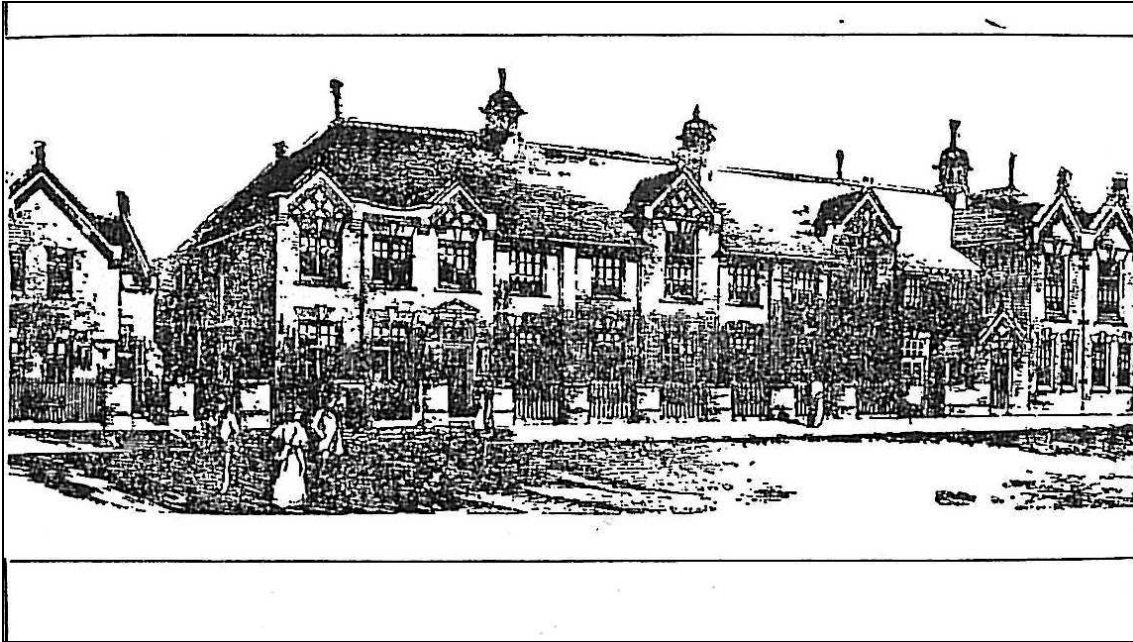


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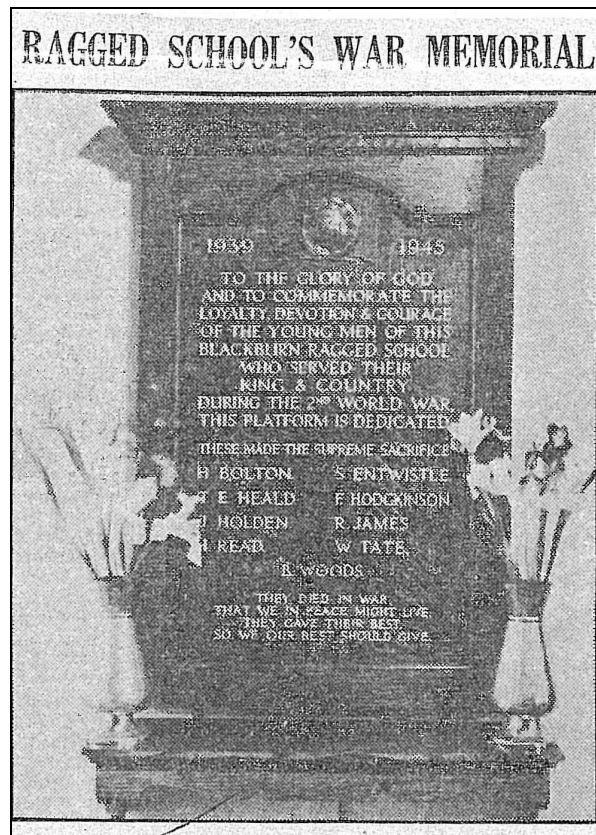


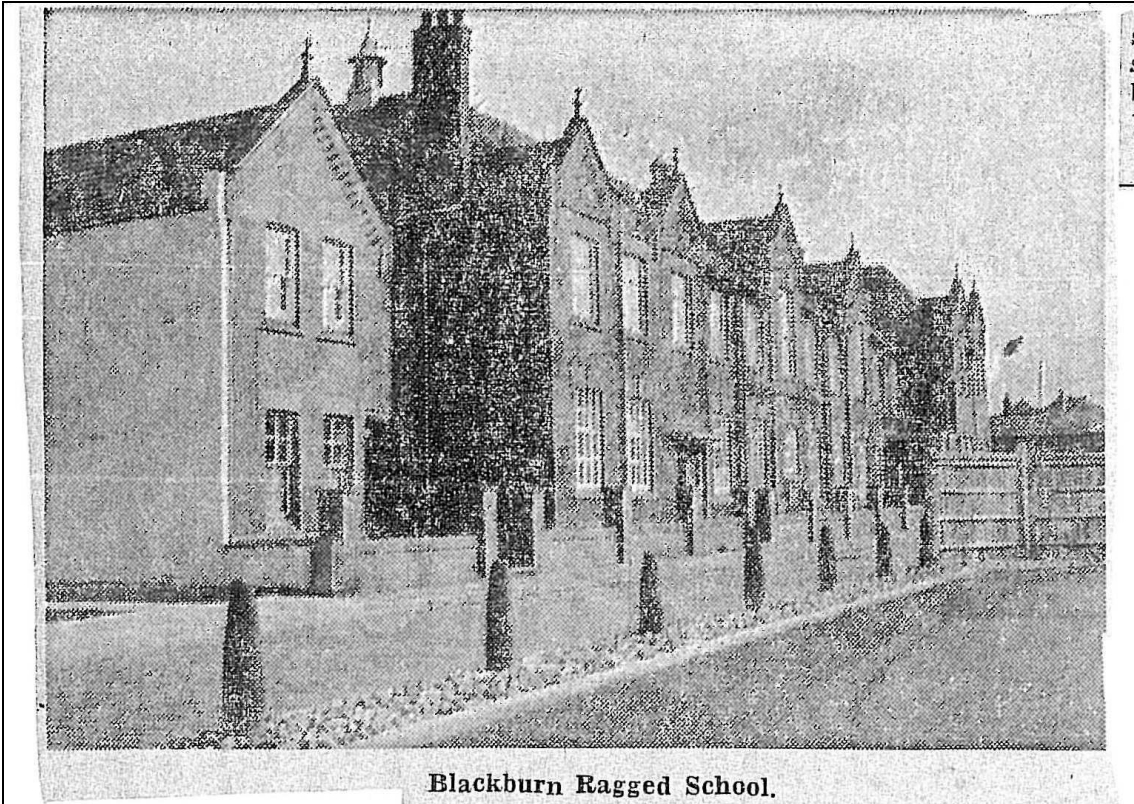
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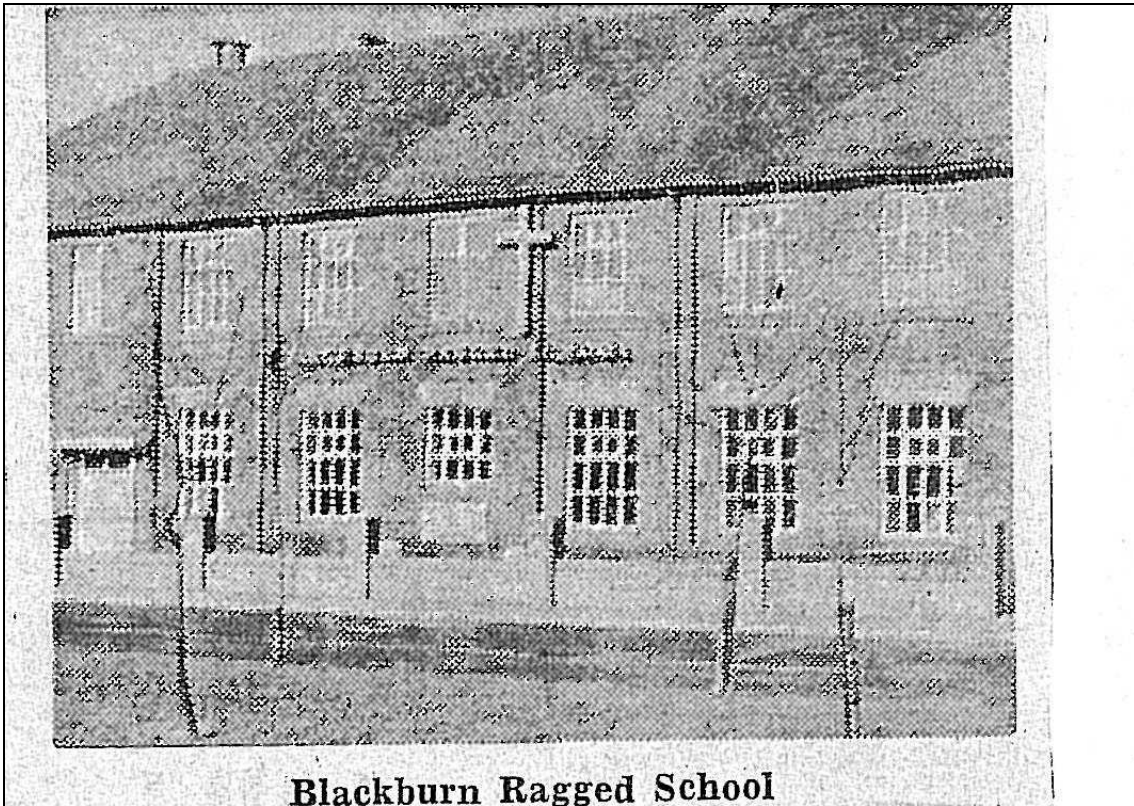


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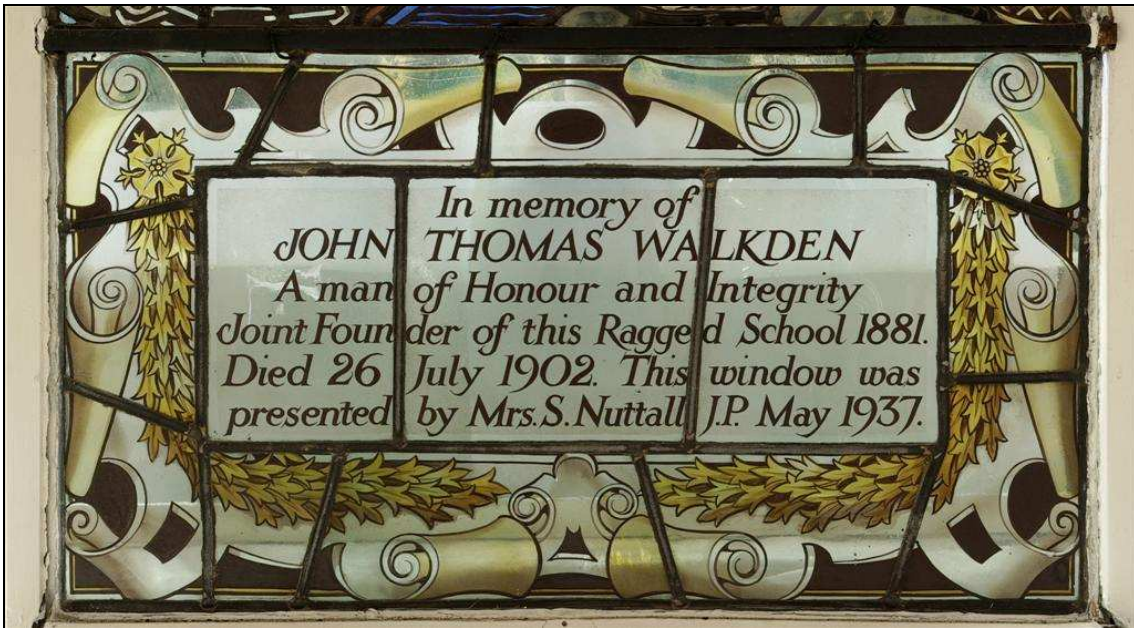


Plate 28: Memorial to John Walkden



Plate 29: Memorial to James Dixon



Plate 30: The time capsule found beneath the foundation stone

APPENDIX 1: PROJECT DESIGN

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1 Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council (BDBC) has requested that Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) submit proposals to undertake building recording of the Ragged School and Ardley Centre, Bent Street, Blackburn, Lancashire (NGR SD 677 278) prior to proposed conversion works. The Blackburn Ragged School was opened on the 16th October 1881 by a number of Presbyterian, Wesleyan, Congregational and other churches with a view to providing an interdenominational school for poor ragged street children. Its mission was;

...to impart moral and religious instruction to poor children, their parents and relations, and to carry the Gospel to those who from whatever circumstances have not yet come under its influence. To provide and distribute free meals, clothing, coals, to the poor and needy, especially children, to assist in the Battle of Life destitute and neglected boys and girls, and generally to help the aged sick and poor.

- 1.1.2 The building has provided charitable services to the Borough for over a 100 years, and in the 1940s it was used as an evacuation centre. By 1947 3000 people passed through the doors each week. In 1960 it was considered for Compulsory Purchase but due to its position, unique charitable organisation and that of its reasonable good appearance and construction it was decided to maintain it. However, the congregation has since dwindled and is now only used on Wednesdays (luncheon club and youth club) and Sundays for worship.
- 1.1.3 On the first and second floor are two wall plaque war memorials, dedicated to the First and Second World War, and the church has an ornate stained glass window. The buildings are proposed for demolition in order to build an older persons' extra care scheme. This will involve relocating the church, the war memorials and the foundation stones. The school is of local historical significance, providing for the poor and needy and, as a result, a condition for the archaeological recording of the building was attached to the planning consent. Subsequently, a verbal brief provided by the planning archaeologist, Doug Moir of Lancashire County Archaeological Services (LCAS) outlined the requirement for a desk-based assessment and a building record, which will be predominately a photographic record. The following project design details the work required to satisfy the planning condition.

1.2 OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGY NORTH

- 1.2.1 OA North has considerable experience of the interpretation and analysis of buildings of all periods, having undertaken a great number of small and large-scale projects during the past 30 years. Such projects have taken place within the planning process, to fulfil the requirements of clients and planning authorities, to very rigorous timetables. OA North has much experience of the recording and analysis of various types of school buildings particularly in East Lancashire, having recently undertaken work associated with the Building Schools for the Future (BSLF) project.
- 1.2.2 OA North has the professional expertise and resources to undertake the project detailed below to a high level of quality and efficiency. OA North is **an Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) registered organisation, registration number 17**, and all its members of staff operate subject to the IFA Code of Conduct.

2 OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The archaeological programme of work will consist of a discussion of the plan, form, function and history of the Ragged School, together with an permanent archive photographic record of its current appearance. A photographic record of fabric and features currently obscured by later fabric will also be provided. To achieve this, the following listed specific aims are proposed.
- 2.2 **Desk-Based Assessment:** to provide a history of the origin and development of the Ragged School, through consultation of the documentary record and through a historic map regression, to draw together into a single document all the available sources of information.

2.3 **Building Investigation:** to provide a photographic and brief written record of the main building of the Ragged School to English Heritage level I/II type standard (English Heritage 2006).

2.4 **Report and Archive:** a written report will assess the significance of the data generated by this programme within a local context. It will present the results of the building investigation. An archive will be produced to English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage 1991).

3. METHOD STATEMENT

3.1 DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

3.1.1 **Introduction:** a desk-based assessment is usually undertaken as the first stage of a programme of archaeological recording, prior to further field investigation. It is not intended to reduce the requirement for fieldwork, but it will provide an appraisal of the archaeological or historical significance. The focus of the assessment will be the school building but mention will be made of the immediate surroundings to provide a context for the historical background of the site.

3.1.2 The following research will be undertaken as appropriate, depending on the availability of source material. The level of such work will be dictated by the time scale of the project. The results will be analysed using the set of criteria used to assess the national importance of an ancient monument (DoE 1990). This aids in the presentation of the significance or otherwise of the site, and assessment during the planning process.

3.1.3 **Documentary and Cartographic Material:** this will include an appraisal of the data in the Historic Environment Record (HER) Preston, the County Record Office (CRO), Preston, and local studies section of the local library. Other sources such as online information and the OA North research archive will also be consulted. Data held at the National Monuments Record (NMR), Swindon may also be checked for additional information if required.

3.1.4 A review of all known and available resources of information relating to the site of the proposed development will be undertaken. The aim of this is to give consideration not only to the application site, in terms of historical and archaeological contexts. These include;

- (i) relevant published sources; to include articles, and regional and local journals,
- (ii) relevant unpublished documentary sources; to include, where appropriate, reports compiled by heritage conservation professionals and student theses,
- (iii) primary sources; to include trade directories, deeds, borough records and probate inventories
- (iv) data held in local and national archaeological databases,
- (v) printed and manuscript maps,
- (vi) aerial and other photographic/illustrative evidence.

3.1.5 **Lancashire HER:** the HER is a database of known archaeological sites within the County. It also holds an extensive library of published materials for consultation.

3.1.6 **County Record Office, Preston:** the office holds the main source of primary documentation, both maps and documents, for the site and its surrounding area.

3.2 BUILDING RECORDING

3.2.1 **Photographic Record:** a photographic archive will be produced utilising a 35mm SLR camera to produce black and white contact prints. Each photograph will be repeated using a digital SLR (10 megapixels). A variety of focal length lenses will be used in order to provide the best coverage. Perspective control or 'shift lenses' which eliminate converging verticals will also be utilised if required. A full photographic index will be produced. The archive will comprise the following:

- (i) the general external appearance and setting of the building including right angle views (where possible) of the *principal* elevation,
- (ii) the overall appearance of *principal* rooms and circulation areas,

- (iii) any external or internal detail, structural or architectural, which is relevant to the design, development and use of the building, and which does not show adequately on general photographs,
 - (iv) any internal detailed views of features of especial architectural interest, fixtures and fittings (specifically the First and Second World War memorials and the stained glass window in the chapel), or fabric detail relevant to phasing the building,
 - (v) a rectified photograph of the stained glass window present in the chapel can be produced if necessary. From this an elevation drawing may be produced, if required, in the future.
- 3.2.2 Either the contact print sheets/prints or digital versions of these will be submitted to LCAS for approval upon development. The LCAS will be responsible for returning the contact sheets to OA North for inclusion in the report and project archive.
- 3.2.3 **Drawn Record:** no site drawings other than general site location plans and a photographic location will be produced for the building recording. It is assumed that the client will provide suitable plans. The map regression will be presented as a series of plates.
- 3.2.4 **Written Record:** a general visual inspection of the buildings will be undertaken utilising the OA North building investigation proforma sheets. A general description of the buildings will be undertaken to English Heritage Level I/II standard.
- 3.2.5 The written record will include:
- (i) the precise location of the building including NGR and address,
 - (ii) a summary account of the plan, form, fabric, function, age and development sequence of the building together with an account of the past and present use of the building,
 - (iii) a summary account of the fixtures and fittings associated with the building, and their purpose, specifically the First and Second World War memorials and the stained glass window in the chapel,
 - (iv) identification of key architectural features (including fixtures and fittings) which should be preserved in-situ (if necessary),
 - (iv) a discussion of the relative significance of rooms within the building,
- 3.2.6 **Recording Constraints:** parts of the original internal fabric of the Ragged School are obscured by later fabric which dates mainly to the late twentieth century. The LCAS planning archaeologist has stated that this must be removed prior to the commencement of the internal inspection of the building. It is therefore intended to carry out all of the internal recording following the internal soft strip of the later material. Liaison between BDBC, demolition contractors and OA North (and the LCAS planning archaeologist if necessary) must be carried out prior to the soft strip and a strategy for the archaeological recording must be agreed in advance.
- 3.2.7 The stained glass window and war memorials may need to be removed in advance of the soft strip in order to prevent any damage. If this is necessary then they must be recorded prior to the soft strip on a separate mobilisation (see para 6.2). Otherwise they will be recorded following the soft strip. Any delays caused by the demolition contractors will be subject to an additional cost variation.
- 3.3 **REPORT /ARCHIVE**
- 3.3.1 **Report:** the content of the report will comprise the following:
- (i) a site location plan related to the national grid,
 - (ii) a front cover to include the planning application number and the NGR,
 - (iii) a concise, non-technical summary of the results,
 - (iv) an explanation to any agreed variations to the brief, including any justification for any analyses not undertaken,
 - (v) a description of the methodology employed, work undertaken and results obtained,

- (vi) copies of plans, photographs, and other illustrations as appropriate,
 - (vii) a copy of this project design, and indications of any agreed departure from that design,
 - (viii) the report will also include a complete bibliography of sources from which data has been derived,
 - (ix) a photographic index,
- 3.3.2 The report will be in the same basic format as this project design; a copy of the report can be provided on CD, if required. Two copies of the report will be supplied to the client and a further digital copy to the HER.
- 3.3.3 **Archive:** the results of all archaeological work carried out will form the basis for a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (*Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition, 1991). The project archive represents the collation and indexing of all the data and material gathered during the course of the project.
- 3.3.4 The deposition of a properly ordered and indexed project archive in an appropriate repository is considered an essential and integral element of all archaeological projects by the IFA in that organisation's code of conduct. OA North conforms to best practice in the preparation of project archives for long-term storage. This archive will be provided in the English Heritage Centre for Archaeology format and a synthesis will be submitted to the Lancashire HER (the index to the archive and a copy of the report). OA North practice is to deposit the original record archive of projects with the appropriate County Record Office, in this case Preston.
- 3.3.5 The Arts and Humanities Data Service (AHDS) online database project *Online Access to index of Archaeological Investigations* (OASIS) will be completed as part of the archiving phase of the project.
- 3.3.6 **Confidentiality:** all internal reports to the client are designed as documents for the specific use of the Client, for the particular purpose as defined in the project brief and project design, and should be treated as such. They are not suitable for publication as academic documents or otherwise without amendment or revision.

4. HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 4.1 OA North provides a Health and Safety Statement for all projects and maintains a Unit Safety policy. All site procedures are in accordance with the guidance set out in the Health and Safety Manual compiled by the Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers (1997). A written risk assessment will be undertaken in advance of project commencement and copies will be made available on request to all interested parties.

5 PROJECT MONITORING

- 5.1 Whilst the work is undertaken for the client, the LCAS will be kept fully informed of the work and its results and will be notified a week in advance of the commencement of the fieldwork in line with the usual requirements. Any proposed changes to the project design will be agreed with the planning archaeologist at LCAS in consultation with the client.

6 WORK TIMETABLE

- 6.1 **Desk-Based Assessment:** up to five days would be required to complete the documentary search, and assessment of all sources
- 6.2 **Building Recording:** approximately three days in the field will be required to complete this element. This includes a separate mobilisation of one day to record the stained glass window and war memorials if necessary.
- 6.3 **Reports/Archive:** the final report and archive will be produced within eight weeks of completion of the fieldwork. OA North can execute projects at very short notice once a formal written agreement has been received from the client.

7 STAFFING

- 7.1 The project will be under the direct management of **Emily Mercer BA (Hons) MSc AIFA** (OA North senior project manager) to whom all correspondence should be addressed.

7.2 The desk-based assessment and fieldwork will be undertaken by **Karl Taylor BSc (Hons) AIFA**. Karl has much experience in the recording and analysis of historic buildings within the North West, and in particular, schools, having recently worked on a number of BSF projects.

8 INSURANCE

8.1 OA North has a professional indemnity cover to a value of £2,000,000; proof of which can be supplied as required.

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English Heritage, 1991 *Management of Archaeological Projects*, second edition, London

English Heritage, 2006 *Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to good recording practice*, London

APPENDIX 2: DOCUMENTARY SOURCES

Blackburn Ragged School Publications: the school produced its own monthly fund-raising magazine as early as 1885 when it was known as ‘Rags and Rubies’. Various articles outlining the nature of the schools work were included in the publications, together with advertisements. Many articles, such as the laying of the foundation stones, were taken from local newspapers such as the Blackburn Times. Earl Compton MP wrote an article outlining the story of the Ragged School which was published in Volume XIII, No. 151, July 1897. The community history section at Blackburn Central Library holds bound copies of ‘Rags and Rubies’ from 1885 until 1904.

After 1904, ‘Rags and Rubies’ became ‘Rough Diamonds’, and copies are held at Blackburn Library, from 1904 until 1914. There is an apparent break during the First World War and it then resumes until 1923. It was published bi-monthly until at least 1931, when it is mentioned in the pamphlet written by Chilman (Chilman 1931). The publication status of the magazine after 1931 is unknown.

The records at Blackburn Library also contain the Blackburn Ragged School Annual Reports, which outline the financial records for the year. These date from 1882 until 1937, apart from years 1919-1922, which are either missing or unpublished.

Jubilee of Blackburn Ragged School, 1881-1931: this pamphlet, held in the collection at Blackburn Library was written by Mr J Chilman to commemorate the jubilee of the school. He worked for 50 years at the Ragged School, 33 of which he was Hon. SS Superintendent at the school and outlines a brief history of the school together with a description of the nature of the work carried out by the school in 1931. Various photographs of the founders and missionaries at the school are illustrated.

“Onward and Upward” 1966: this is an order of proceedings produced at the time of the youth centre being rebuilt and extended in 1966. The dedicatory service was carried out by The Lord Bishop of Blackburn, The Rt Reverend Dr C R Claxton DD The official opening and unveiling of the commemorative plaque was carried out by The Right Hon The Earl Peel.

Newspaper Articles: the library in Blackburn holds vast collections of newspaper cuttings on many subjects, including The Ragged School. The earliest dates to 10th July 1897 and describes the laying of the foundation stone. Most of the cuttings come from the Blackburn Times, with some from the Lancashire Evening Telegraph.

Annual Public Meeting: a copy of the poster advertising the annual general meeting of the school, on 8th February 1886 is held at Blackburn Library, together with an attendant letter written by James Dixon, which accompanied admission tickets.

Hymn Sheet: at the ceremony of the opening of the school by Mrs A Yerburgh in 1898, a pamphlet of the hymns sung was produced. An illustration of the new school is also included.

Historic Photographs: various sources, including internet resources, contain historic photographs pertaining to the Ragged School. These are outlined below as used in the desk-based assessment;

Plate 1: Illustration of St Peter’s Old Day School (Blackburn Times, 8th August 1908)

Plate 2: Laying the foundation stone of the Blackburn Ragged School, July 3rd 1897 (Provided by BWDBC for the Cotton Town Digitisation Project)

Plate 3: Appearance of the school (rear) as illustrated on the 1898 Opening Day Hymn Sheet (Q64)

Plate 4: The Roll of Honour, as illustrated in the Blackburn Times, 4th October 1919

Plate 5: Illustration of the rear of the Ragged School, as depicted on the cover of the Jubilee Pamphlet (Chilman, 1931)

Plate 6: The Second World War Memorial, as illustrated in the Blackburn Times, June 2nd 1950

Plate 7: View of the rear elevation of Blackburn Ragged School. Unknown date, but note the cobbled street in the foreground (Provided by E Binns for the Cotton Town Digitisation Project)

Plate 8: The Rev Royston Bishop chatting to Telegraph reporter Vivien Arabin, in the new Youth Centre at the Ragged School (Provided by LET for the Cotton Town Digitisation Project)

Plate 9: View of the rear of the Ragged School (Lancashire Evening Telegraph, July 8th 1976)

Plate 10: View of the front of the Ragged School (Lancashire Evening Telegraph, February 24th 1978)

Other Resources: information about the Ragged School was obtained from various sources, the most pertinent of which is the Cotton Town website produced by Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council. The site traces the history of Blackburn with the emphasis being on the story of the cotton manufacturing industry. Images and written resources are available on this site www.cottontown.org. Information regarding the war memorials which were housed in the buildings can be found at www.ukniwm.org.uk. There are three memorials listed, Nos. 51277, 51278 and 51279. The website details the nature of the memorials together with the maintenance history.