



# SCR Lift Installation, SCR Lift Installation, Merton College, Oxford Historic Building Recording

February 2018

**Client: Merton College, Oxford**

Issue No: 1

OA Reference No: 6483

NGR: SP51731 06065

oxfordarchaeology



southsouthsouth



Client Name: Merton College, Oxford

Document Title: SCR Lift Installation, Merton College, Oxford

Document Type: Historic Building Recording

Grid Reference: SP51731 06065

Site Code: OXMEGHBS

Invoice Code: OXMEGH16

OA Document File Location: \\10.0.10.86\Projects\o\Oxford\_Merton College Lift\building recording\Report

OA Graphics File Location: \\10.0.10.86\invoice codes i thru q\O\_codes\OXMEGHBS

Issue No: 1

Date: 28 February 2018

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**SCR Lift Installation, Merton College, Oxford**  
***Historic Buildings Archaeology Recording Report***

*Written by Alison de Turberville*

*With illustrations by Markus Dylewski*

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## Summary

*Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by James Roach of BGS Architects, on behalf of Merton College, Oxford to undertake a programme of archaeological building recording and watching brief during the installation of a new lift extension to the Senior Common Room (SCR) at Merton College.*

*The lift was to be installed in a new extension located on the east elevation of Patey's Quad which was constructed in 1610 and forms the west range of Fellows Quadrangle. This range extends southwards from the Hall and currently contains the college kitchen and potwash on the ground floor, servery and buttery on the first floor and Pantry and Senior Common Room on the second floor.*

*The kitchen and east elevation of Pateys Quad had been extensively refurbished in 1960-62 which included the demolition of a series of buildings within Patey's Quad, the refacing of parts of the east elevation within Patey's Quad and the blocking of a passageway between Patey's and Fellows Quads.*

*The lift installation works included the opening up of two windows (first and second floors) to allow access to the lift and the rearrangement of some late 19<sup>th</sup> /early 20<sup>th</sup> century doors that were erected as a screen concealing the pantry on the second floor. No works took place on the ground or third floors, although the external face is now enclosed by the lift extension.*

*The areas exposed during the works were photographed and recorded in detail prior to and during the works and this report is the archaeological record of the building prior to its conversion.*





## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by James Roach of BGS Architects, on behalf of Merton College, Oxford to undertake a programme of archaeological building recording and watching brief during the installation of a new lift extension to the Senior Common Room (SCR) at Merton College.

1.1.2 The work was part of a wider programme of archaeological investigation at the college and it was required as part of Condition 4 of the Planning Permission granted by Oxford City Council (Planning Reference: 16/00655/FUL and Listed building consent 16/00656/LBC) for the construction of a new lift. It forms Stage 3 of a staged archaeological recording programme as outlined in a brief set by David Radford of Oxford City Council. Stages 1 and 2 relate to below ground archaeological works and are reported separately to the Historic Building Archaeological recording.

1.1.3 The requirements for the work within the brief were:

*The Stage 3 historic building recording (including watching brief) should seek to:*

- *Produce an archive record of the fabric to be removed. Identify and record any significant structural features or relationships revealed by the building work.*
- *Investigate the chronology, construction and development of the building.*

1.1.4 The recording and watching brief was carried out by Alison de Turberville (Project Officer, Historic Building Archaeology) during November 2016 to August 2017.

### 1.2 Aims and Objectives

1.2.1 The principal aims of the project were:

- to investigate and record for posterity elements of the college which will be lost or temporarily exposed during the current works;
- to enhance understanding of the structure and how it related to the overall college;
- to make the record publicly accessible through a report (a public document) and a project archive deposited with a public institution.

### 1.3 Location

1.3.1 Merton College is located in central Oxford, fronting onto Merton Street with Corpus Christi College to the west and Christchurch Meadow to the south. The College is located within the medieval city, and the southern boundary of the college is defined by a surviving section of city wall which is a Scheduled Monument.

1.3.2 The Site is located in Patey's Quad, a passageway which lies between the Mob Quadrangle to the west and the Fellows Quadrangle to the east. The lift was to be installed on the east elevation of the Grade I listed 17<sup>th</sup> century kitchen range to the south of the 13<sup>th</sup> century Hall entrance.

## 1.4 Methodology

- 1.4.1 The project brief stated that a photographic record of the existing building fabric should be produced and a watching brief maintained *'during works to the listed building that have the potential to reveal historic fabric, fixtures or fittings'*.
- 1.4.2 The brief added that *'The results of the photographic recording of the existing building, watching brief (including a photographic record of the exposed fabric annotated to appropriately scaled plans as appropriate), should be formatted in a report to level 3 standard (Historic England 2006 Understanding Historic Buildings).'*
- 1.4.3 Historic England set out the levels of archaeological building recording in their document *Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice* and a Level 3 Record is described as *'an analytical record, and will comprise an introductory description followed by a systematic account of the buildings origins development and use.... It will also include all drawn and photographic records that may be required to illustrate the building's appearance and structure and to support an historical analysis'. A level 3 record would include a plan of the building and other drawings such as elevations, sections, detail drawings, 3-dimensional projections when they would be of use in interpreting the building.*
- 1.4.4 The building recording essentially comprised an initial stage of photographic recording and then subsequent targeted watching brief visits during the course of the work to record previously hidden features or areas.
- 1.4.5 The building recording consisted of three main elements: a drawn record, a descriptive, written record and a photographic record.
- 1.4.6 The photographic recording of the building was carried out using a digital camera with up to 24-megapixel capability and stored in jpeg format. The photographs included general views of the interior and exterior as well as photographs of features or archaeological details. All photographic records are accompanied by a photographic register. A photographic scale was used where appropriate.
- 1.4.7 Detailed measured drawings of the building were provided by the consultant and these were used as a basis for phased plans included within the report as Figure 2. Some moulding profiles were taken of the first floor window and are included in this report as Figures 8 and 9.
- 1.4.8 The written record supplemented and supported the other two elements of the recording and provided additional descriptive analysis of the building in terms of its design, setting, construction, development, history and use.

## 2 BACKGROUND HISTORY

### 2.1 General Historical Background

2.1.1 Merton College was founded in 1264 by Walter de Merton, Lord Chancellor and Bishop of Rochester, and a few years later a plot of land was purchased in central Oxford where the college now stands. The Chapel choir (originally the Parish church of St John), Wardens Hall and Hall are buildings that date to this phase of works. The Mob quad was constructed in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and the gatehouse in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The Fellows quadrangle sits south and west of the hall and forms part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century construction works described in more detail below.

### 2.2 The 17<sup>th</sup> Century Kitchen Range

2.2.1 The Kitchen and buttery range south of the hall form part of the Fellows Quadrangle buildings which were built in 1608-10 under Sir Henry Savile, Warden of Merton College between 1585 and 1625. Prior to this it is thought that the earlier kitchen was situated in the same location, south of the screens passage for the hall. Four timber corbels on the east elevation of the hall suggest another early structure, since removed which may be part of the early kitchens. The Senior Common Room was first established at Merton in 1661 and is situated above the kitchen.

2.2.2 The kitchen range of the Fellows court buildings is constructed in Headington stone with John Acroyd of Halifax listed as chief mason and Thomas Holt listed as carpenter. The range is three storeys high and according to Pevsner is the earliest 3 storeyed quad in Oxford. The battlements were added to the facades within the quad in 1622 and were later replaced in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

2.2.3 The elevation facing into Patey's Quad has a more varied appearance with ashlar stonework, gabled rooflines and less uniform fenestration and door openings. Patey's Quad was formerly a small service quad with passageways linking the Mob Quad to the west and Fellows Quad to the east and a toilet block and shop to the south. The shop was run by a retired Butler, James Patey, and his son in 'an upper room of the tiny quad in which the muniment room had place' in the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century (Martin 1997, 317). The tiny quad later became known as Patey's Quad. The toilet block and shop, which are shown on early plans, were demolished as part of extensive refurbishment works to the kitchen and Savile Room in 1960-62 however photographs of the buildings prior to this show a mix of differing blocks and an erratic roofline.

2.2.4 Loggan's 1675 print of Merton (Figure 3) shows a small part of Patey's Quad with an unidentifiable building visible. A 1733 plan by Wm Williams (Figure 4) shows a structure within Patey's quad but the layout is very different to that shown in the James King 1848 plan (Figure 5) where a new structure containing water closets and a small yard seemingly replace that shown on the 1733 plan. The Ordnance Survey 1<sup>st</sup> edition map of 1876/8 (Figure 6) shows a different layout but still clearly containing toilet facilities. A 1900 plan of the college showing sewerage details shows the same layout but in more details. The plan of the college within the RCHME survey dating to 1912 (Figure 7) shows the same layout but the addition of further buildings to the

south. The layout of the kitchen ground floor appears little changed from the 1733 plan of the college.

- 2.2.5 The 1960s works included the demolition of the buildings to the south of the quad; the blocking of the passageway between Patey's and Fellow's Quads; refacing stonework on the east elevation; Insertion of new floor at first floor level and a large scale refurbishment of the kitchen and buttery areas.
- 2.2.6 Further works to the kitchen area were carried out in 2011 including the installation of replacement hoists and the insertion of a new chimney on the east elevation of Patey's Quad.

### **3 OUTLINE DESCRIPTION**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

3.1.1 The lift was to be inserted into a new structure set within Patey's Quad and accessed via new openings formed by enlarging windows on the first and second floor of the 17<sup>th</sup> century range extending south of the dining hall. An adjacent bin store is to be erected to the south of the lift extension.

#### **3.2 Ground Floor**

3.2.1 No invasive works were carried out on the ground floor, which is currently configured as a potwash for the kitchen above, however the new extension housing the lift structure enclosed two ground floor windows. The northernmost window is a stone window with central mullion and two 4-centered arch openings. The northern opening has been replaced with wood louvre ventilation shuttering and the southern opening contains a rectangular multi-light leaded casement with fixed 3-light window above.

3.2.2 The mullion, sill and much of the lintel stonework has been replaced in the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Beneath this window is a decorative plinth of a slightly greyer coloured limestone with moulded coping.

3.2.3 The window to the south is located within a former arched entrance which provided access to a passageway leading to Fellows Quad and was blocked up during works to Patey's Quad in the 1960s. The window inserted has three lights with leaded glazing and the frame is timber with moulded detail and the date of the window construction on the spandrels '1960'. Beneath the window is a large ventilation louvre. Aside from the inserted sill for the window the stonework appears original.

#### **3.3 First Floor**

3.3.1 The first floor forms the main kitchen servery area which was extensively refurbished in the 1960s and updated in c.2011. The area where the lift access was inserted is an open area behind the servery containing hoists.

3.3.2 The window within this area is a 17<sup>th</sup> century stone window which is barred from the outside with vertical bars. The window has two lights with four centered arches over and moulded detail around the openings. The stonework is entirely hidden behind a wood frame containing two 2-light sash windows of early 20<sup>th</sup> century date. The reveal for the window is not symmetrical reflecting the awkward position of the opening in the present kitchen configuration and internal space adjacent to this window is covered with plastic sheeting which covers the wall beneath and obscures any features. Externally the window has moulded jambs, a square hood mould over and is surrounded by dressed stone walling, some of which dates to the 1960s refacing works. A small masons mark could be seen on an external ashlar stone (Plate 23).

3.3.3 To the south of this kitchen area is the Buttery pantry and to the north is a small storeroom and WC of modern date. The doorway of the WC is to be enlarged to allow for wheelchair access.

3.3.4 The window was removed during the works to allow access from the lift to the second floor. The works revealed the stone facing in the reveal and under the window to be between 15cm and 57.5cm depth with a rubble core behind which included some fairly large, irregular stones. The stone around this window was unusually friable at the edges. The mortar seen was a very pale cream friable lime mortar with occasional inclusions. The internal face of the stonework was mostly covered in a hard grey/white coloured render and larger blocks of dress stone were seen at the edge of the reveal. The lintel of the reveal was seen during the works and was of concrete with a large amount of mixed stone inclusions, metal supports were seen within the stonework further indicating the reveal had been rebuilt at some point probably during the 1960s works.

### 3.4 Second floor

3.4.1 The second floor contains the Senior Common Room and a pantry. The pantry area is accessed via a doorway within a wooden screen at the top of the stair.

3.4.2 The screen is formed of three sections of recessed panelled doors with moulded cornice detail over. The doors date to the late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century, however the corncicing and timber frame behind the doors are mid 20<sup>th</sup> century indicating the screen was inserted here during the 1960s works. The entrance to the pantry is via the two smaller width doors and the remaining door is wider and opens to reveal the rear of the horizontally boarded wall within the pantry. The space within the frame behind the door is used for storing small cleaning items.

3.4.3 The doors have an elaborate metal spring latch and the hinges are H-hinges with keyplates in a similar style. The doors have been reused from elsewhere in the college or reset as on the southern door there is evidence of former hinge location on the edges of the shutting stiles and there is a keyhole in the same side as the hinges. This keyhole is without a keyplate, although nearby nail holes suggest one was formerly in situ. There is an extant keyplate on the central door and on the wider door to the north, the height and placing of which closely match the missing one from the former keyhole. These doors will be reused as part of the works.

3.4.4 Behind the wooden screen doors is a small pantry with modern fixtures including a hoist. The main feature of this room is the 17<sup>th</sup> century stone window which is barred from the inside with vertical bars.

3.4.5 The window has two lights with four centered arches over and, apart from the simple rounded moulded detail around the openings, the stonework is unadorned. Each opening has a wooden frame with two lights which are non-opening. The reveal for the window is not symmetrical reflecting the awkward position of the opening which is probably part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century reconfiguration of the kitchens. Externally the window has moulded jambs (Figure 9), a square hood mould over (Figure 10) and is surrounded by dress stone walling.

3.4.6 The window was removed during the works to allow access from the lift to the second floor. The works revealed the stone facing to be unusually shallow at an average of 10cm depth with a rubble core behind which included some fairly large, irregular stones (10-45cm x 3-10cm). The mortar seen was a very pale cream friable lime

mortar with occasional inclusions. The internal face of the stonework was mostly covered in a hard grey/white coloured render and larger blocks of dress stone were seen at the edge of the reveal. The lintel of the reveal was seen during the works and was of timber with frassed ends.

## 4 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by James Roach of BGS Architects, on behalf of Merton College, Oxford to undertake a programme of archaeological building recording and watching brief during the installation of a new lift extension to the Senior Common Room (SCR) at Merton College.
- 4.1.2 The lift was to be installed in a new extension located on the east elevation of Patey's Quad which was constructed in 1610 and forms the west range of Fellows Quadrangle. This range extends southwards from the Hall and currently contains the college kitchen and potwash on the ground floor, servery and buttery on the first floor and Pantry and Senior Common Room on the second floor.
- 4.1.3 The kitchen and east elevation of Pateys Quad had been extensively refurbished in 1960-62 which included the demolition of a series of buildings within Patey's Quad, the refacing of parts of the east elevation within Patey's quad and the blocking of a passageway between Patey's and Fellows quads.
- 4.1.4 The lift installation works included the opening up of two windows (ground and first floor) to allow access to the lift and the rearrangement of some late 19<sup>th</sup> /early 20<sup>th</sup> century doors that were erected as a screen concealing the pantry on the second floor. Now works took place on the ground or third floor, however the external face is now enclosed by the lift extension.
- 4.1.5 The areas exposed during the works were photographed and recorded in detail prior to and during the works and this report is the archaeological record of the building prior to its conversion.



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## APPENDIX A      BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Published

- Historic England (2016)      *Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice*
- Martin, G and Highfield, J (1997)      *A History of Merton College*
- Pevsner, N and Sherwood, J (1974)      *Oxfordshire*
- RCHME (1939)      *City of Oxford - A Survey and Inventory by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments*
- Victoria County History (1954)      *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 3, the University of Oxford.*

## APPENDIX B LISTED BUILDING DESCRIPTION

### MERTON COLLEGE, FELLOWS QUADRANGLE

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: MERTON COLLEGE, FELLOWS QUADRANGLE

List entry Number: 1200042

### MERTON COLLEGE, FELLOWS QUADRANGLE

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: Oxfordshire

District: Oxford

District Type: District Authority

Parish:

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: I

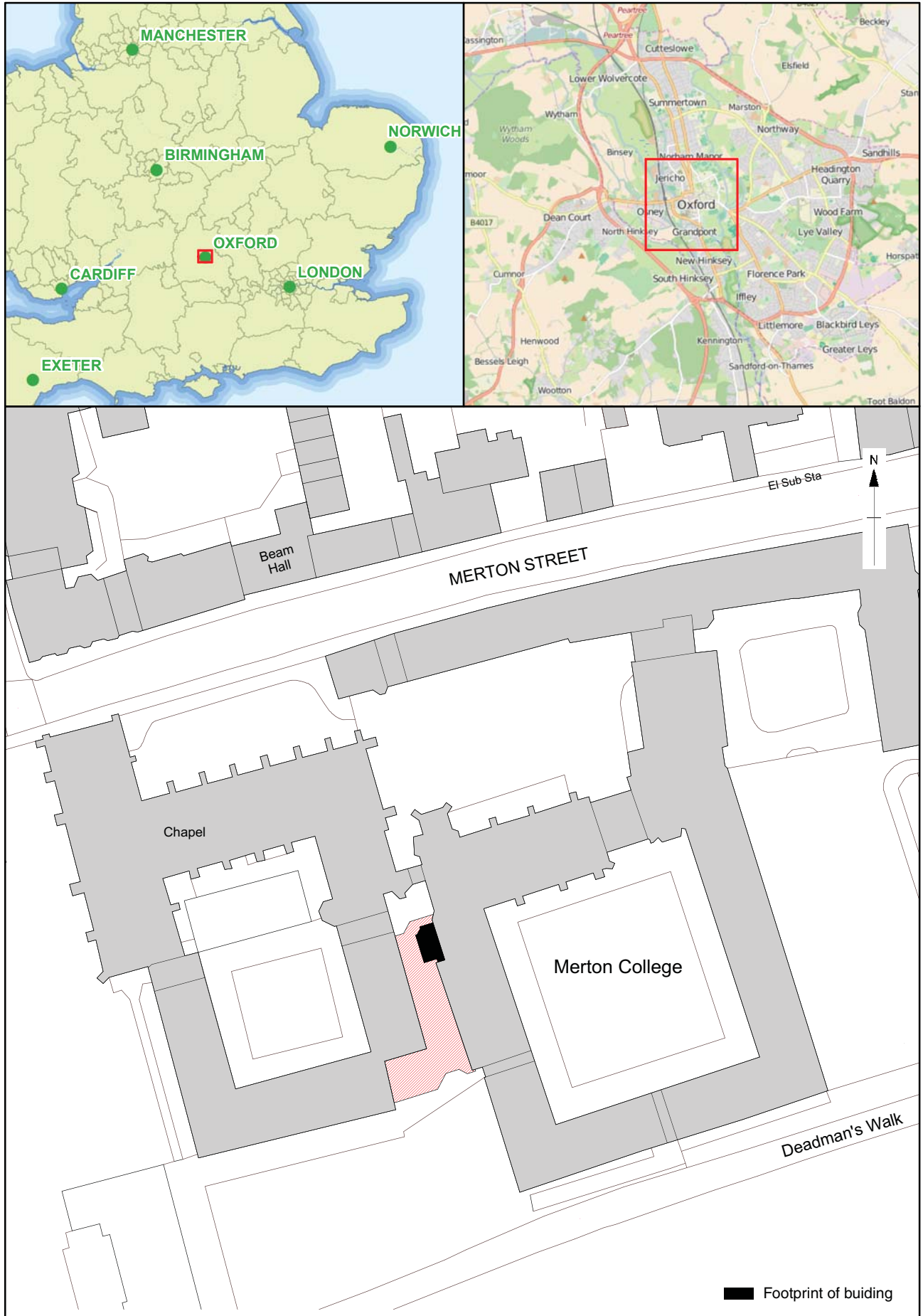
Date first listed: 12-Jan-1954

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

### Summary of Building

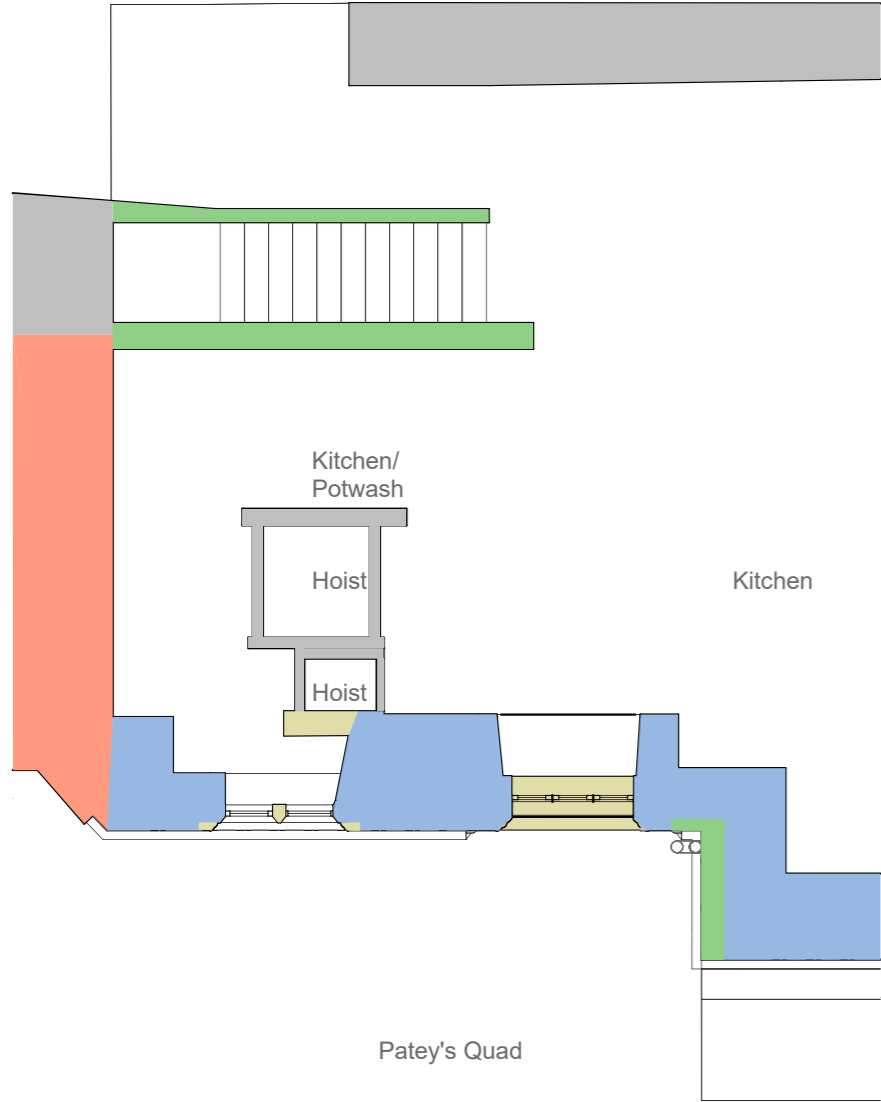
MERTON COLLEGE 1. 1485 Fellows' Quadrangle SP 5106 SE 9/480J 12.1.54. I 2. Built 1608-10 in Headington stone, John Acroyd of Halifax being chief mason and Thomas Holt, carpenter. Battlements added 1622. The SCR in West range made 1671; it contains panelling and fireplace of 1680. In North face of South range is a notable centrepiece of the 4 orders. The whole quad partly restored. The interiors contain some C18 panelling. The Kitchen and Buttery are at North end of West range. Alterations 1960-2.

National Grid Reference: SP 51755 06039

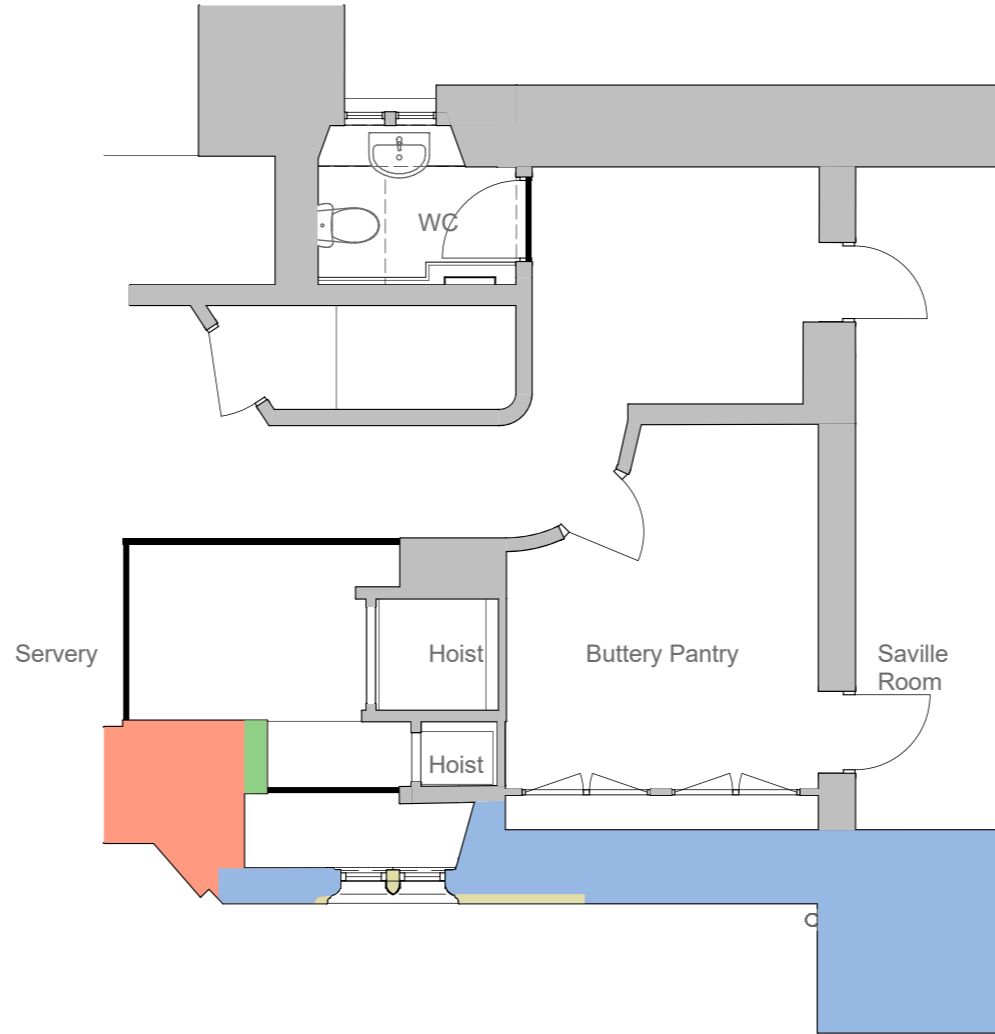


Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2016  
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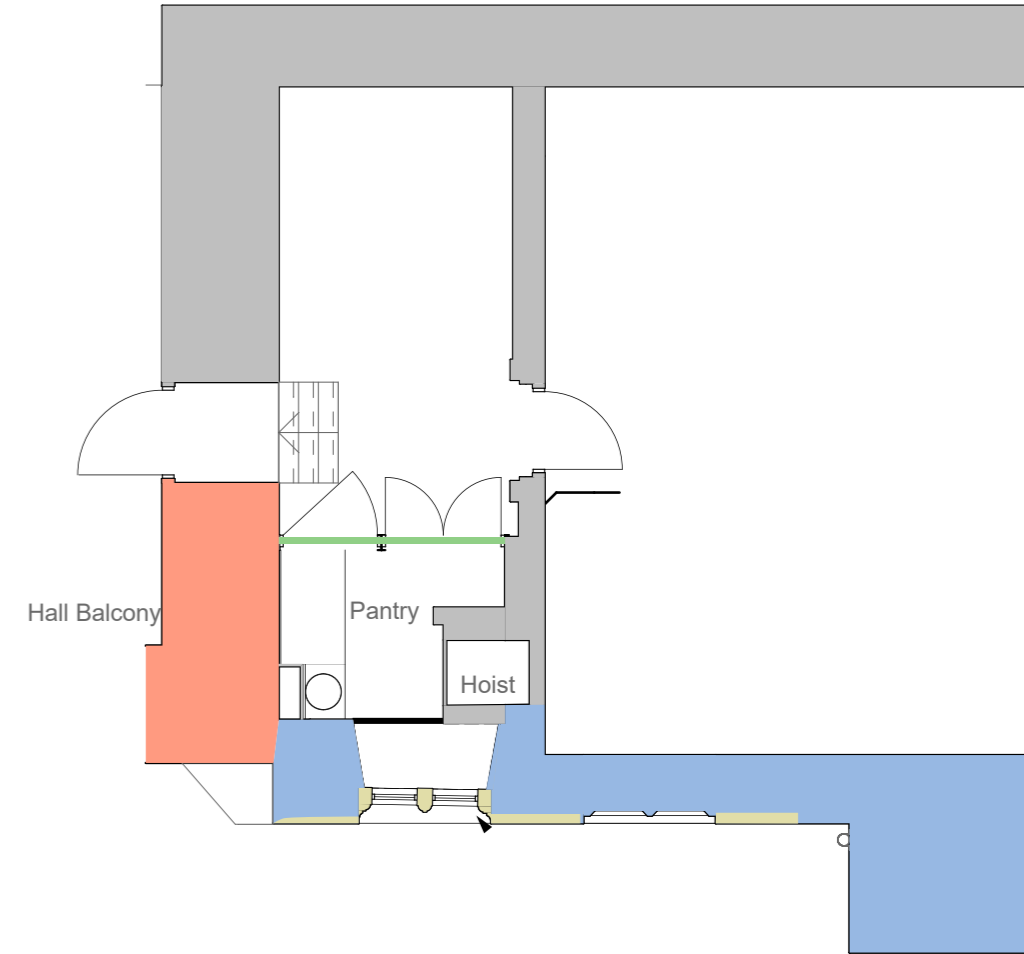
Figure 1: Site location



Ground Floor Plan 1:75



First Floor Plan 1:75



Second Floor Plan 1:75

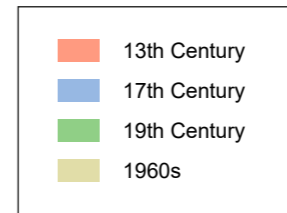
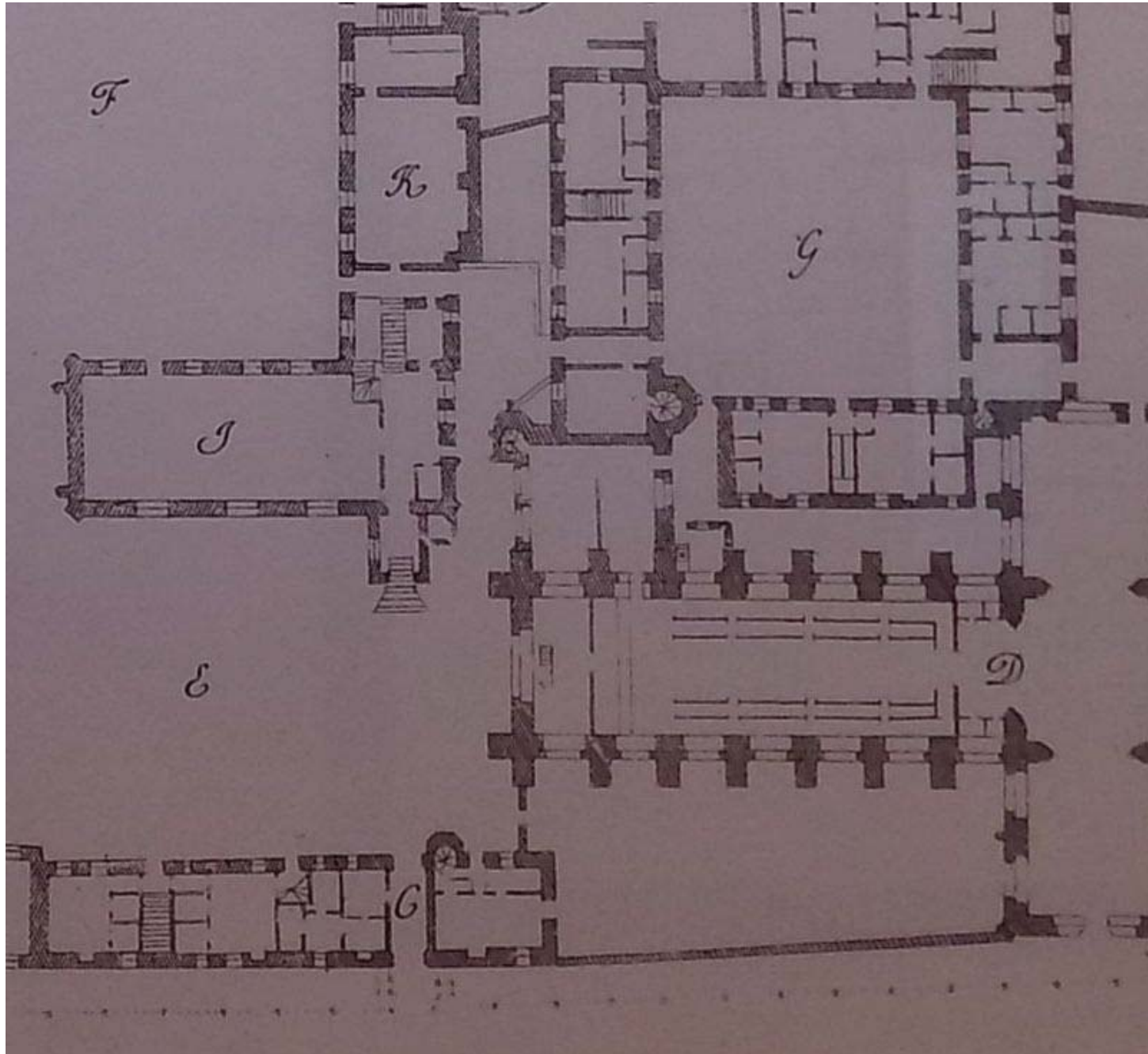


Figure 2: Phase plans for Ground, First and Second floors (from drawings by bermanguedesstretton)



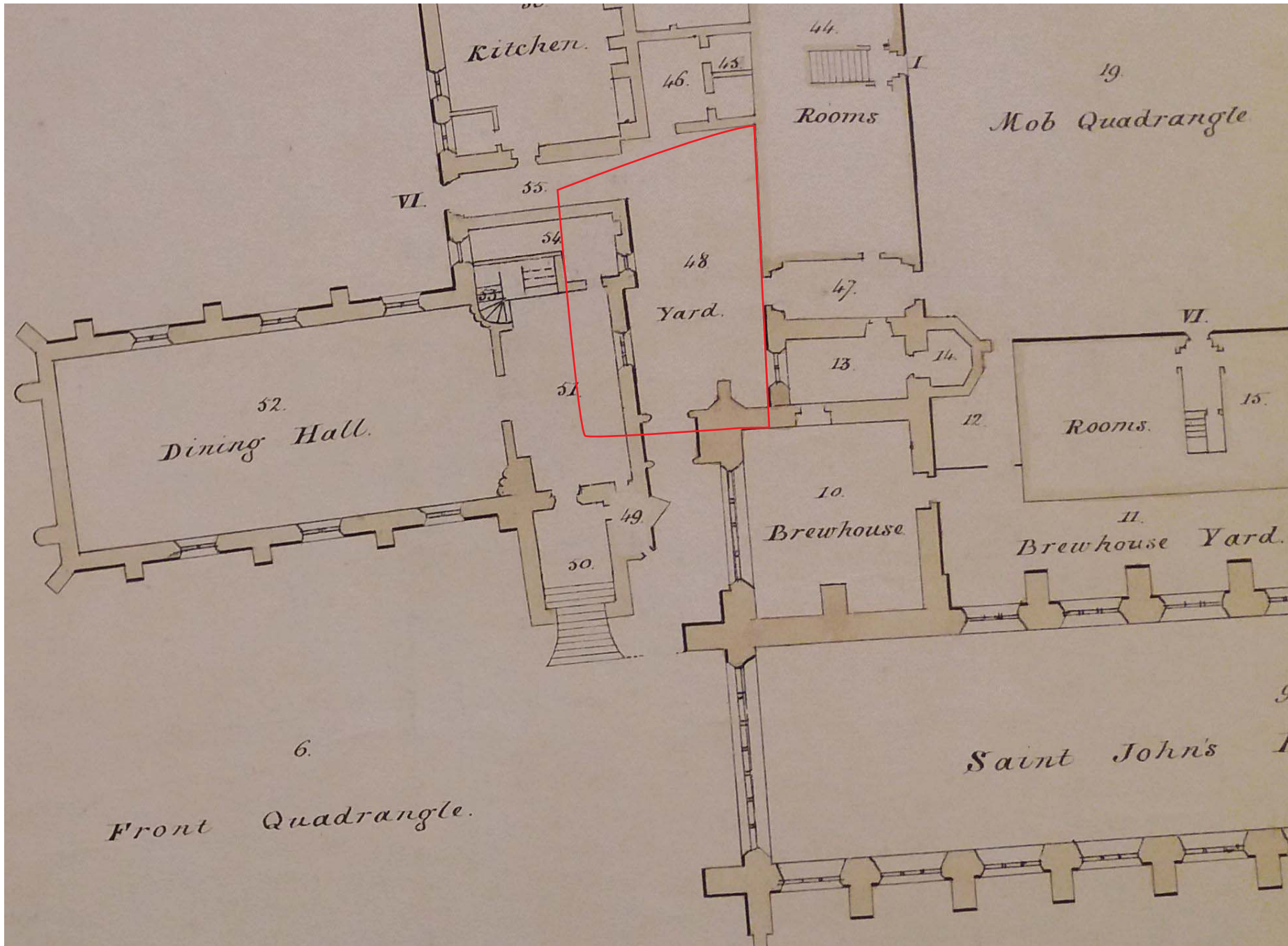






Not to scale

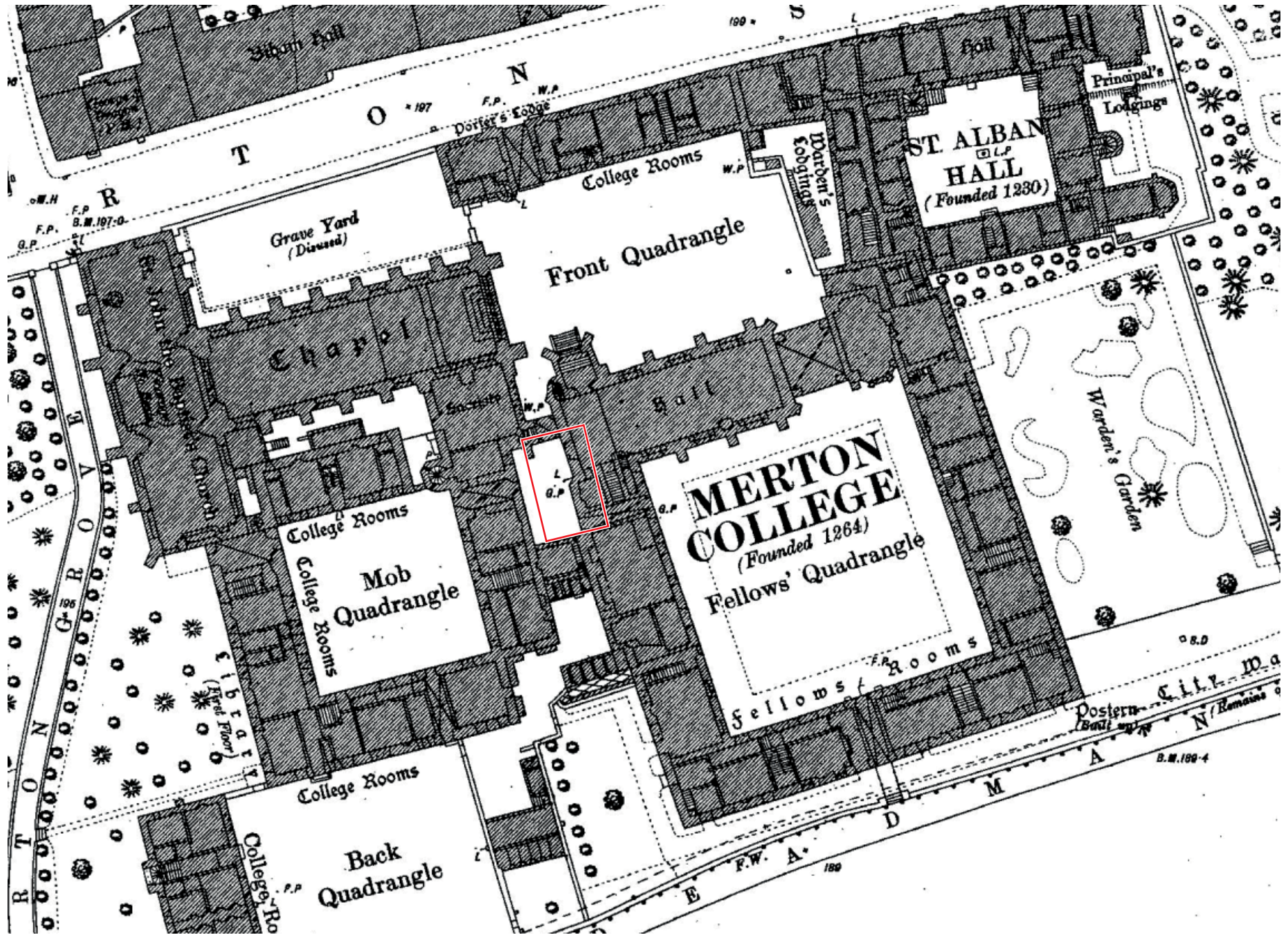
Figure 4: Detail from Wm. Williams plan of Merton College (1733)



Not to scale

Figure 5: Detail from James King plan of Merton College (1848)

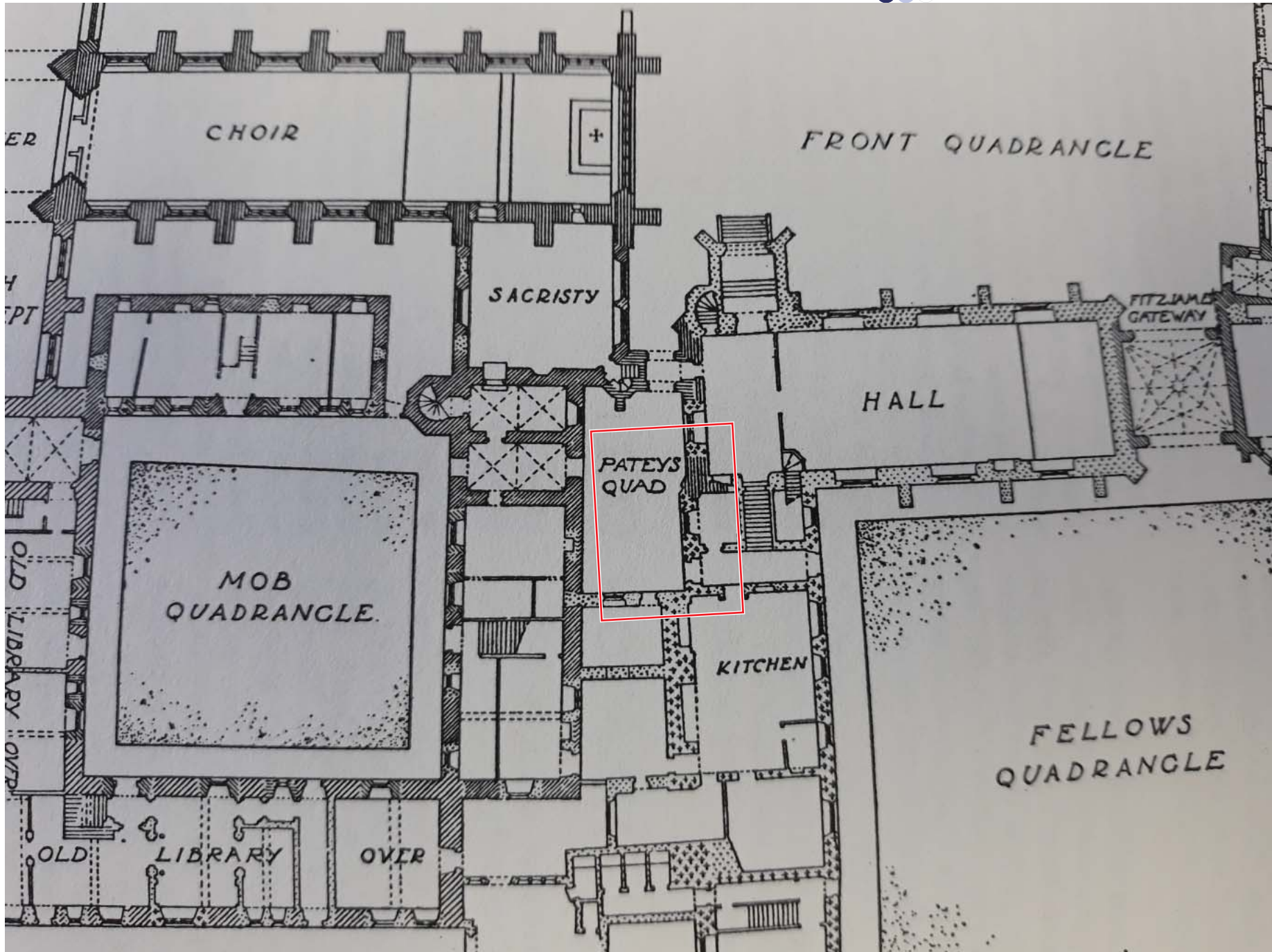




Not to scale

Figure 6: OS 1st edition 1:500 (1876/8)





Not to scale

Figure 7: RCHME survey plan (1912)

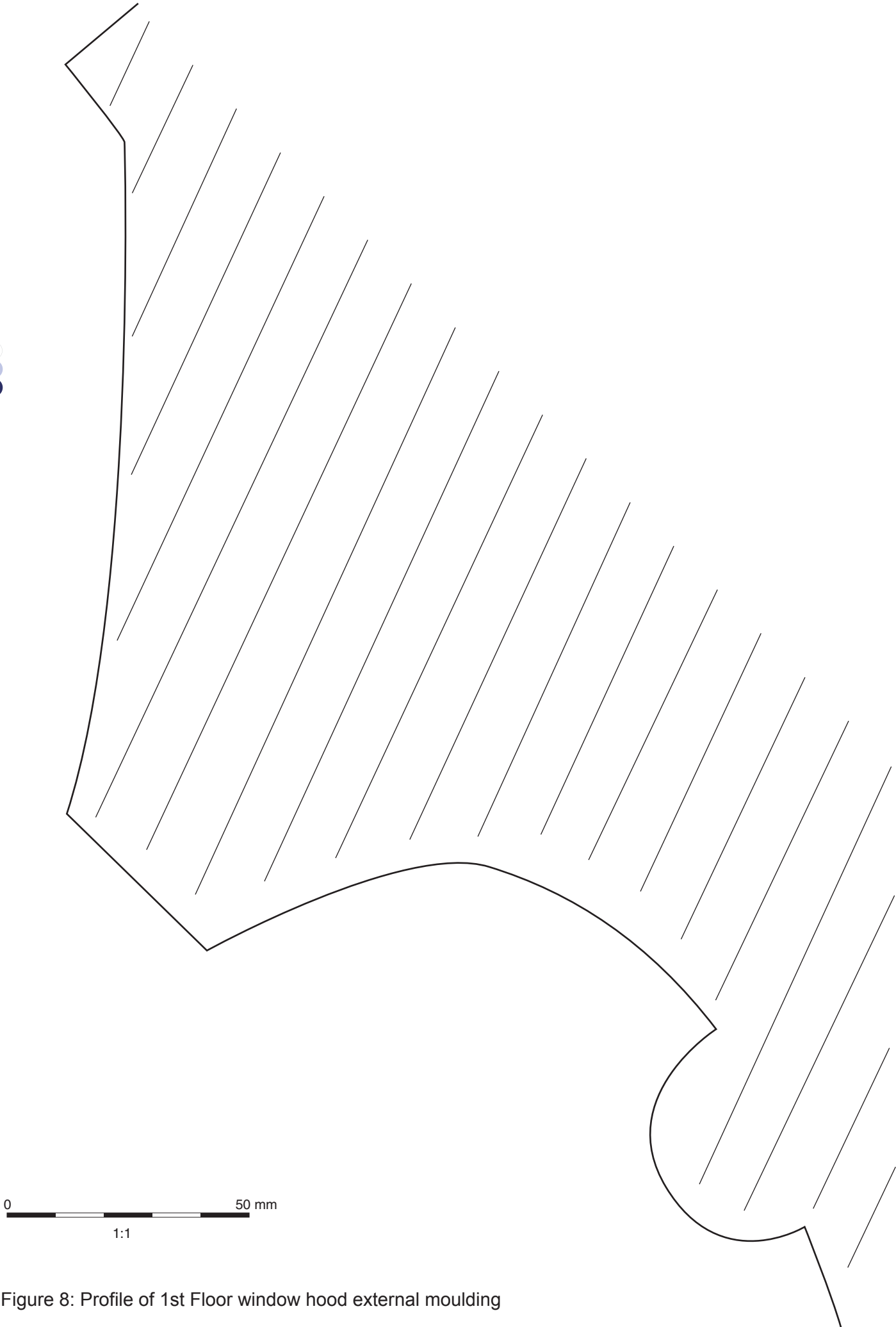


Figure 8: Profile of 1st Floor window hood external moulding

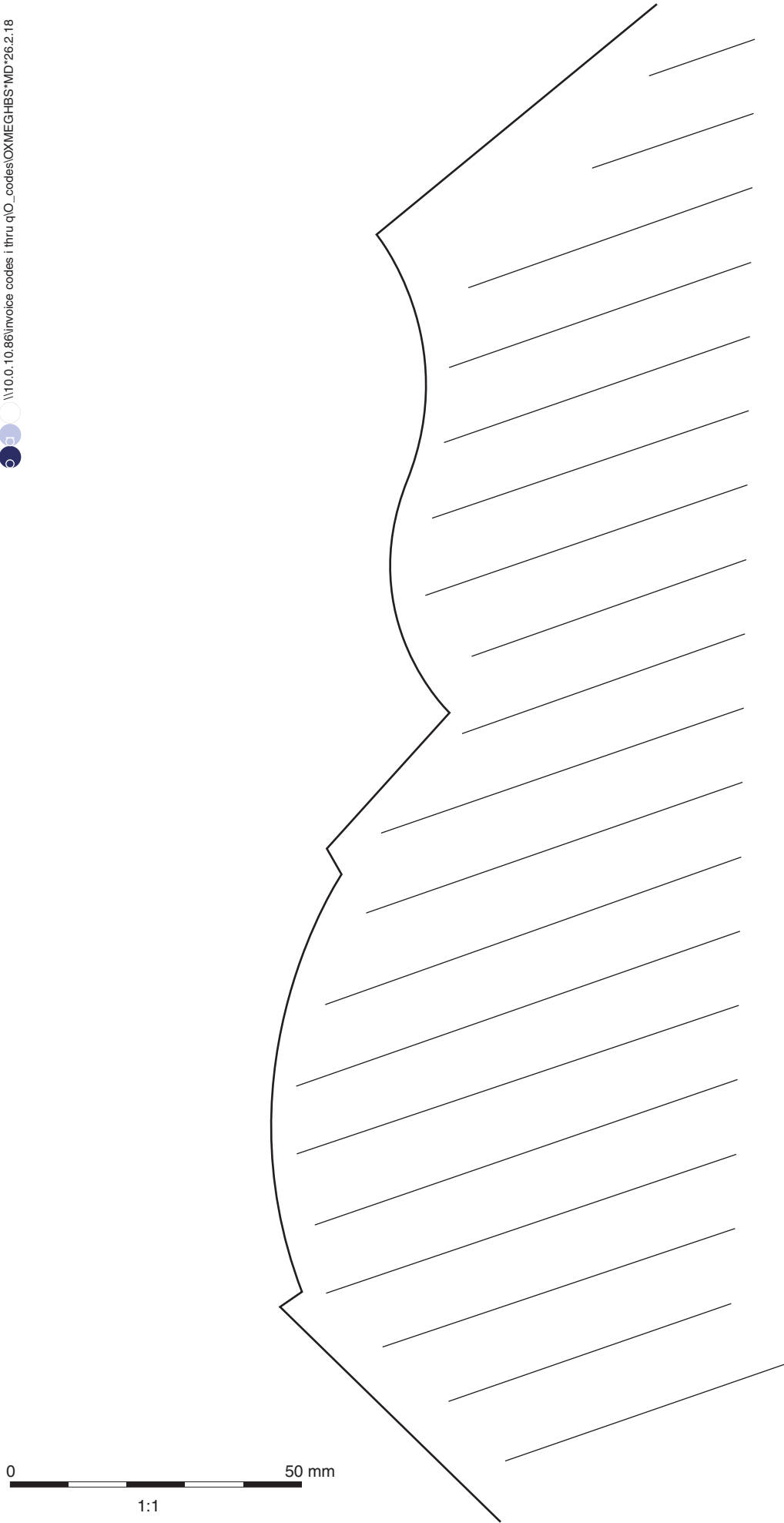


Figure 9: Profile of 1st Floor window external moulding



Plate 1: External view of first, second and third floor windows after extension frame constructions



Plate 2: View of ground floor window inserted into former corridor opening to Mob Quad in 1960





Plate 3: View of northern ground floor window



Plate 4: View of first floor window





Plate 5: View of second floor windows



Plate 6: View of third floor windows



Plate 7: Internal view of first floor window



Plate 8: Internal view of second floor window





Plate 9: Detail of first floor window moulding and bars



Plate 10: View of second floor joinery screen





Plate 11: Detail of second floor joinery screen latch

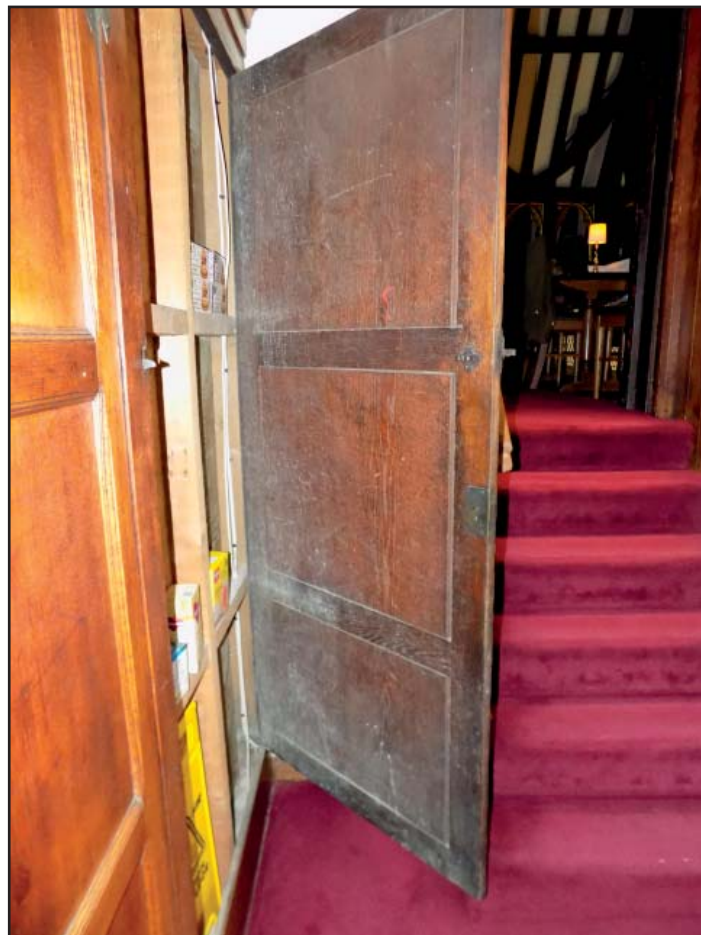


Plate 12: View of second floor joinery screen internal





Plate 13: View of second floor joinery screen



Plate 14: Second floor window following removal of modern material





Plate 15: Second floor window following removal of modern material



Plate 16: Second floor window following removal of modern material





Plate 17: Second floor window following removal of modern material



Plate 18: First floor window following removal of modern material



Plate 19 : First floor window following removal of modern material



Plate 20: Detail of first floor window showing depth of worked stone and rubble core



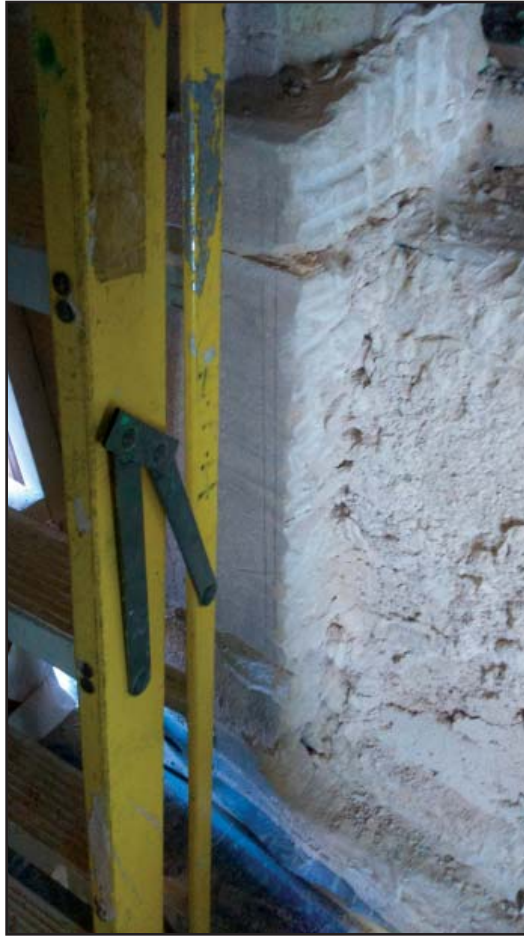


Plate 21: Detail of second floor window showing depth of worked stone and rubble core

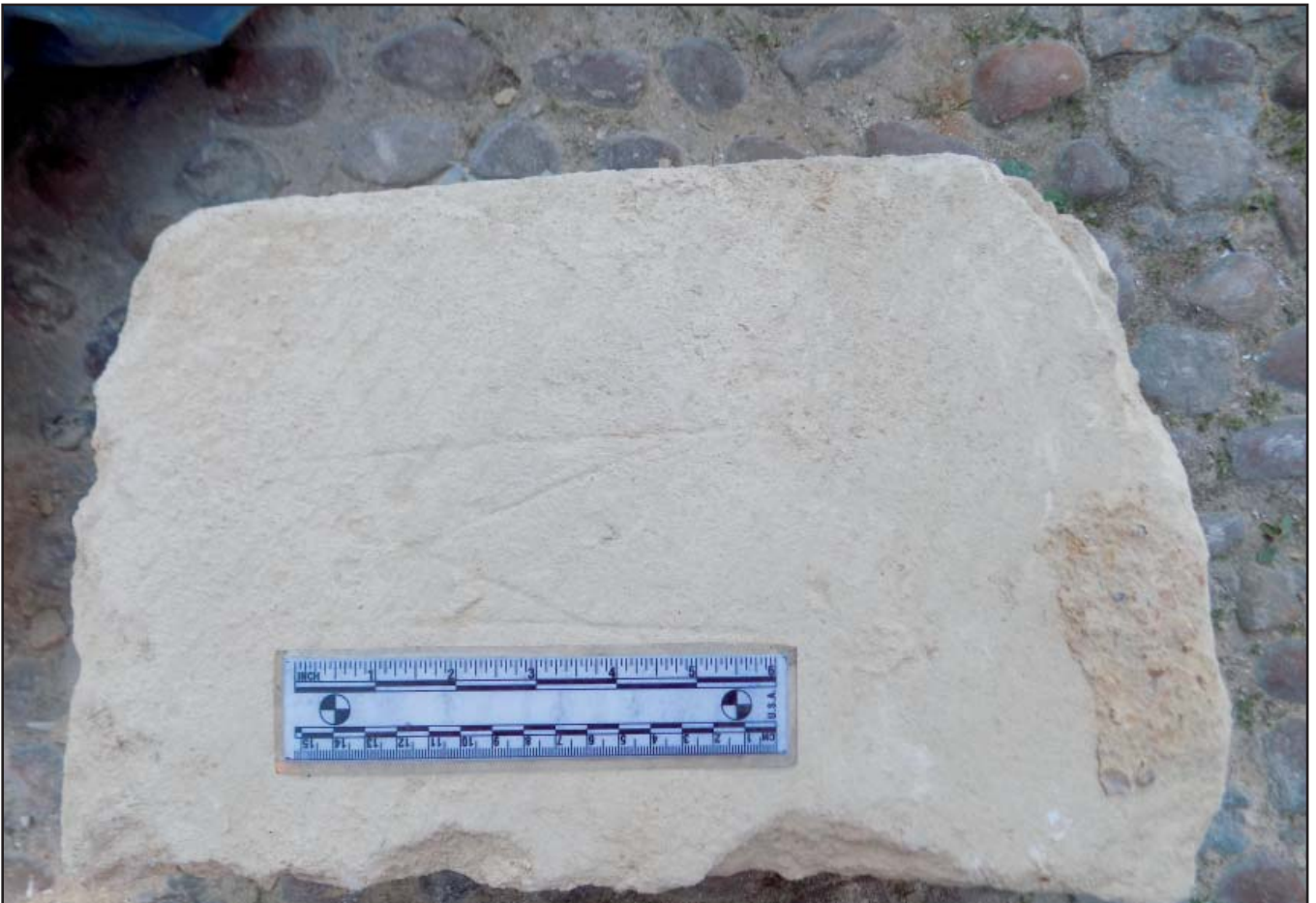


Plate 22 : Detail of masons mark on removed stone



Plate 23: Detail of masons mark on 2nd floor of external elevation







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