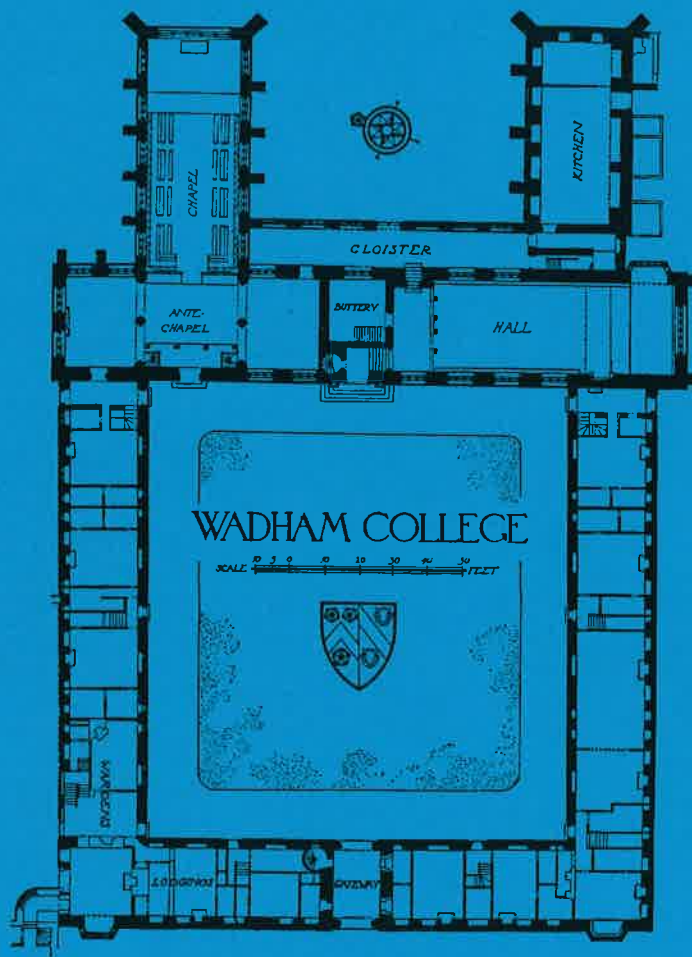


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WADHAM COLLEGE

WADHAM COLLEGE FRONT QUAD, OXFORD
ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD IN ADVANCE OF ALTERATIONS



OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT
MARCH 2001

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| NMR DATA | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| SITE NAME | SOUTH RANGE, FRONT QUAD |
| ADDRESS | WADHAM COLLEGE PARKS ROAD |
| TOWN | OXFORD |
| COUNTY | OXFORDSHIRE |
| NGR | SP 5158 0662 |
| LISTED STATUS | GRADE I |
| VISIT/SURVEY DATE | JULY -- SEPT 1997 |
| OAU SITE CODE | OXWADH 97 |

WADHAM COLLEGE FRONT QUAD, OXFORD
ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEY IN ADVANCE OF ALTERATIONS

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WADHAM COLLEGE FRONT QUAD, OXFORD
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY IN ADVANCE OF ALTERATIONS

Summary

Alterations to the Front Quad of Wadham College in 1997 resulted in the changes to the historic fabric that were the subject of archaeological recording before and during works. The discoveries could be related to historic plans of the original room layout, which is derived from the newly built Fellows Quadrangle at Merton College. Evidence was also found for painted decoration on the chamber walls.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) was commissioned by Wadham College to undertake a programme of archaeological recording within the south range of the Front Quad, Wadham College (NGR 5158 0662) in advance of the installation of a wheel chair lift to provide access to the MCR on the first floor and consequential alterations within nearby surrounding ground floor rooms. The archaeological record was required as a condition of planning consent in accordance with the provisions laid down in PPG15/16 (Listed Building Consent 96/01867/L).

1.2 The archaeological investigation associated with the building works consisted of the following targeted recording areas:

JCR and adjoining room:

- i) the evidence in the floor and ceiling of the JCR work room for the character of any previous partitions in this location
- ii) historic fabric exposed as a result of the building works in the JCR and the adjoining room.

Lift Shaft and Lift access:

- iii) the character of the wall in the passage where the new opening was made for the lift
- iv) the details of first-floor construction which to be lost during the insertion of the lift

1.3 The recording strategy involved the inspection of the targeted areas following opening up by the building contractors, the production of a drawn, written and photographic record of any historic information where appropriate.

2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Wadham College is of especial interest as a complete and relatively little altered college building of early 17th-century date,¹ whose plan was influential on later college buildings (e.g. University and Oriel colleges). It was built largely as a single-phase construction (Figure 1), to

¹ RCHM *Inventory* (1939), 118; *VCH Oxon III* (1954), 283-7.

a quadrangular plan between 1610 and 1613 by the Somerset master mason William Arnold.² In some respects he seems to have been following the precedent of the Fellows Quadrangle at Merton College built by Warden Savile and his Halifax masons in 1608-10 (Figure 2).³

2.2 The rooms being discussed here are in the south side of the main quadrangle and were originally used as study bedrooms. According to the early chamber lists these were still being occupied after the medieval pattern with a large living and bedroom, with two smaller studies.⁴ The 1848 plan of the college by James King shows the original room layout, but with the uses reversed and the studies now serving as bedroom and dressing room (Figure 3).⁵ The south range has three staircases with two accommodation units between the stair bays. Each study / sitting room is lit by a large window in the north wall with a fireplace in the south flanked by two further windows. Each of the smaller adjacent rooms are lit by a small window. This room arrangement leads to a fenestration pattern along the north wall of (i) door to stair; (ii) large window to chamber; (iii) two small windows to study/bedroom; (iv) large window to chamber; (v) door to stair, etc. To the south side the pattern is less uniform but is generally (i) larger window; (ii) chimney stack; (iii) larger window; (iv) two small windows; (v) larger window; (vi) chimney stack, larger window, etc. Plans of the college show that by 1939 (Figure 1) the partition walls of this original layout had been partially lost, with further losses occurring subsequently (Figure 4). The first-floor rooms would also have followed this pattern – as shown in the fenestration – and several of the original partition walls survive at this level (Figure 5).

2.4 During the recording work a ceiling beam on the line of one of the original partition walls in the ground floor JCR was exposed and recorded. It had mortice holes originally housing the former stud and lath wall between the large study room and the two adjacent smaller rooms of the accommodation unit – see §3.1.1 and Figure 6. Also exposed during the works was a stone fireplace with the remains of a former painted finish originally serving the former study room – see §3.1.2.

3 ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

3.1 JCR and adjoining room:

3.1.1 *Evidence in the floor and ceiling of the JCR work room for the character of any previous partitions*

3.1.1.1 During building works a ceiling beam was exposed in the JCR on the line of one of the former partition walls between the chamber and the smaller study/bed rooms, described above. The beam was drawn at 1:10 and is reproduced here as Figure 6. The mortice holes along the underside of the beam relate to the former partition wall – the rounded end mortices relating to stud uprights and the rectangular mortices to the more substantial posts of the wall. The former partition wall can be located on the 1848 plan (Figure 3) with doors at either end. However the

² H.M. Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600-1840* (1978 edn), 70.

³ John Newman 'The Architectural Setting', in N Tyacke (ed.) *The History of the University of Oxford Vol. IV Seventeenth-Century Oxford* (1997), 149, 155-8.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 157 (three occupants to a room in 1620s-30s).

⁵ This series of plans of the colleges by James King, formerly in the University Archives and now in the Bodleian Library (MS Top. Oxon. a.22 no. 18) is an important source for the appearance of Oxford College buildings prior to Victorian restoration and new building.

evidence of the post mortices on the beam suggests an alternate original arrangement with one post at either end of the wall and three posts placed centrally along the beam possibly framing two doors. This central arrangement of the two doors to the bed room and dressing room is seen in the 1848 plan in the eastern accommodation unit of the south range. The doors indicated in the post mortices of the beam seem to have been subsequently blocked with the insertion of further stud uprights within the door openings and presumably at this point the doors moved the positions seen on the 1848 plan, either end of the wall.

3.1.1.2 An area of floor boards was lifted under the ceiling beam but no evidence was seen for a base plate to the former partition wall. Instead evidence was seen for a number of reflooring phases – details of which can be found in the archive. None of the joists appeared to be of original 17th-century date. It should, however, be noted that the framing of the floor construction changed directly under the beam and therefore relates to the former room division. In the area of the former study/bed room the floor joists run east-west, while within the large chamber they run north-south (Plate 1).

3.1.2 *Historic fabric exposed as a result of the building works in the JCR and adjoining room*

3.1.2.1 During the course of works the fireplace, originally serving the large study room, was exposed and recorded (Plate 2). The carved spandrels either side of the Tudor arch of the hearth survive, as does limited evidence of the former mouldings and chamfer down either side of the opening. Above the carved element of the hearth surround traces of a former painted decoration were observed and recorded (Plates 3 & 4). The patterns were executed in blues, greens and cream colours and were of swirling curlicues and possible foliage motifs. Remnants of dark blue paint were also seen on the west spandrel and mouldings.

3.1.2.2 During the opening up for a new door to the 'New Pantry' to the south side of the east wall of the JCR the wooden frame of a former door was rediscovered (Plate 5). This door is shown on the 1848 college plan giving access to a Scouts room.

3.1.2.3 The area converted into a Pantry in the current works is marked on the 1846 plan as two Scouts rooms within the stair bay. It is apparent that the window opposite the stair has been inserted into the wall after the 1846 plan but by the 1939 plan in Figure 1. During the works the walling under the window was exposed revealing stone rubble with a few red brick pieces (Plate 6).

3.2 **Lift Shaft and Lift access**

3.2.1 *Character of the wall in the passage where the new opening was made for the lift*

The new lift for wheel chair access was inserted at the east end of the south range behind Stair 4. In the 1848 plan of the college the area is marked as a Scouts room. A number of structural observations were made in the east wall of the room prior to and during its partial demolition. The recess seen in the plan to the north of the wall was a blocked doorway (Plate 7). The blocking was of modern materials and the door itself post dates the 1846 plan, but is visible on the 1939 plan. The internal partition wall was seen to be constructed of limestone rubble with a core mortar of red/brown earth, with the wall surface pointed with lime mortar. This wall was seen to be of a separate construction to the ashlar walling of the exterior wall (Plate 8). The rubble wall had also truncated the eastern splay of the window with the resultant squared jamb shown correctly on the 1939 plan in Figure 1. The rubble wall, however, is likely to be of the initial 1610-13 building phase and the difference in build suggests that the external shell of the building was constructed as a separate stage of the building process with high quality materials

and that later the internal partition walls were constructed with poorer materials.

3.2.2 *Details of first-floor construction to be lost during the insertion of the lift*

The area of the first floor construction which was to be removed for the installation of the lift was recorded prior to removal. Two main framing chamfered and stopped beams (0.27 x 0.30 m) were observed running north-south, one approximately centrally situated between the two small windows lighting what is now used as the MCR TV room and the southern beam on the line of the partition wall to the west (Plate 9). The floor construction showed signs of alteration with the original mortice-and-tenon joints between beam and joists often not in use. Instead the floor construction involved the joists resting on a piece of softwood attached to the eastern beam and slotted into mortices without tenons to the west. The east-west running joists were 0.05 x 0.18m in dimension and were set at 0.4m centres, with standard joints of the diminished haunch type (i.e. the joist tenons have a sloping entry to the main beam).

4 CONCLUSIONS

The recording of these minor features has added something to the existing information about the historic fabric of the college and ensured that no features of significance were lost during the works. It has emphasised the regularity of the original layout of the buildings, and the extent to which they have been changed over the years. It has also drawn attention yet again to the survival of painted decoration in college rooms.

Kate Newell and Julian Munby
Oxford Archaeological Unit
March 2001

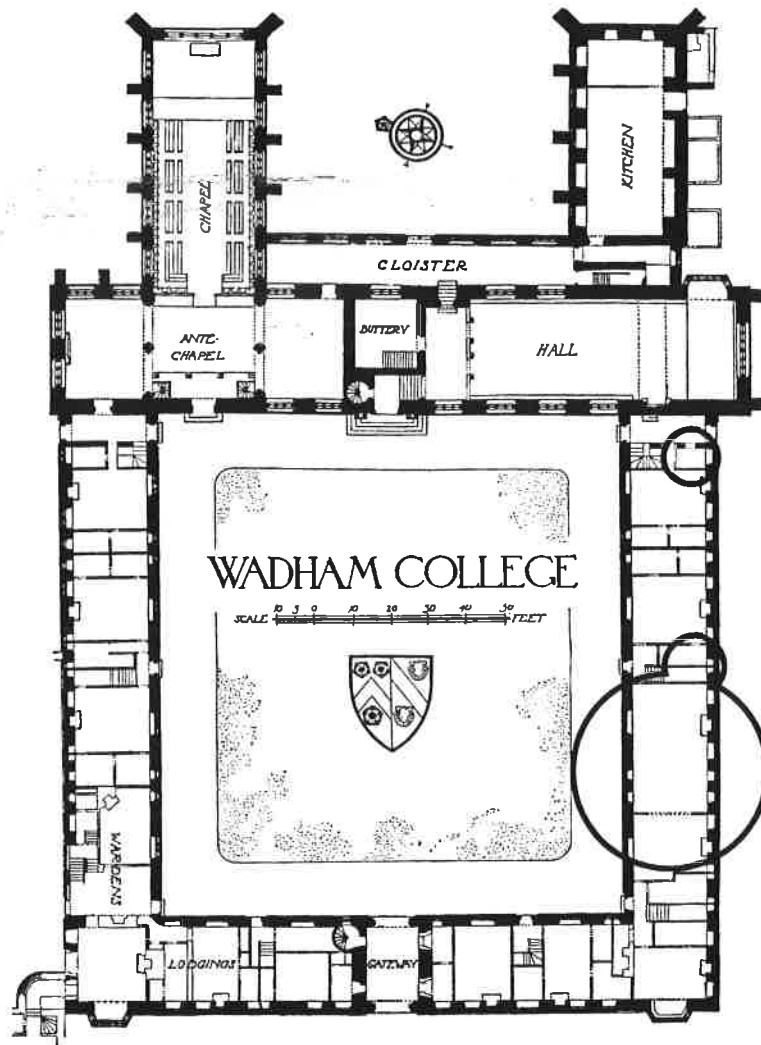


Figure 1: Plan of Wadham College, 1939 RCHME with areas of investigation circled

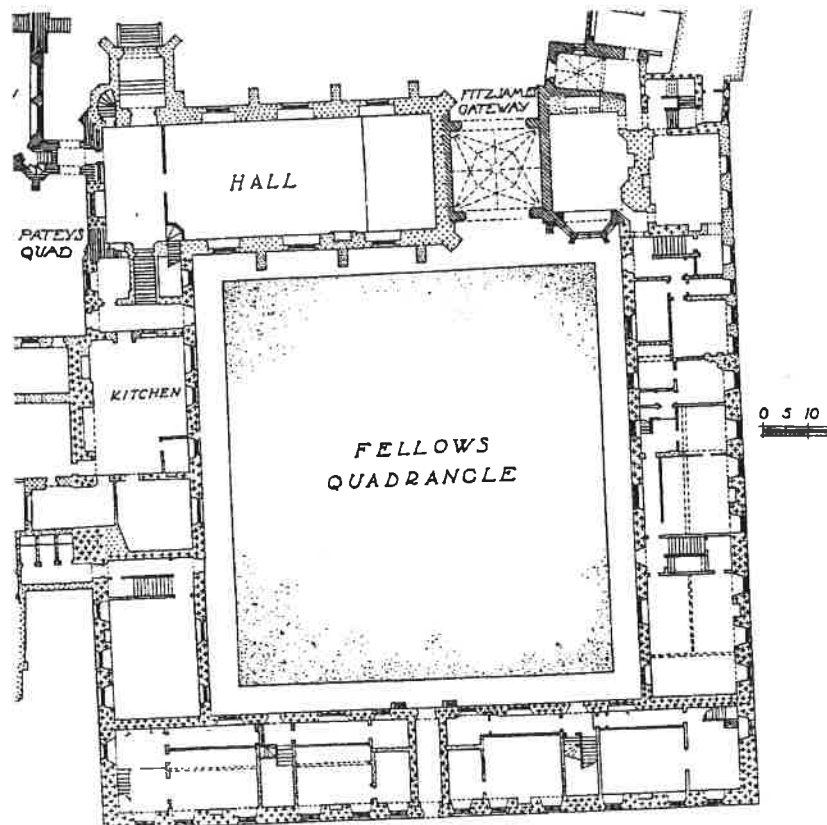


Figure 2: Plan of Merton College, 1939 RCHME

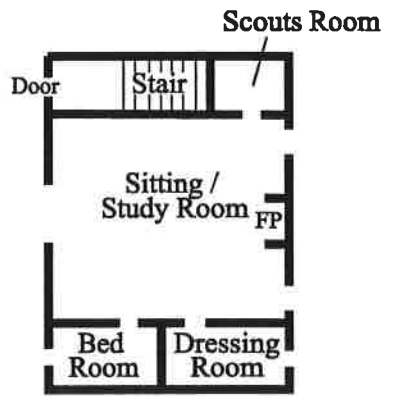
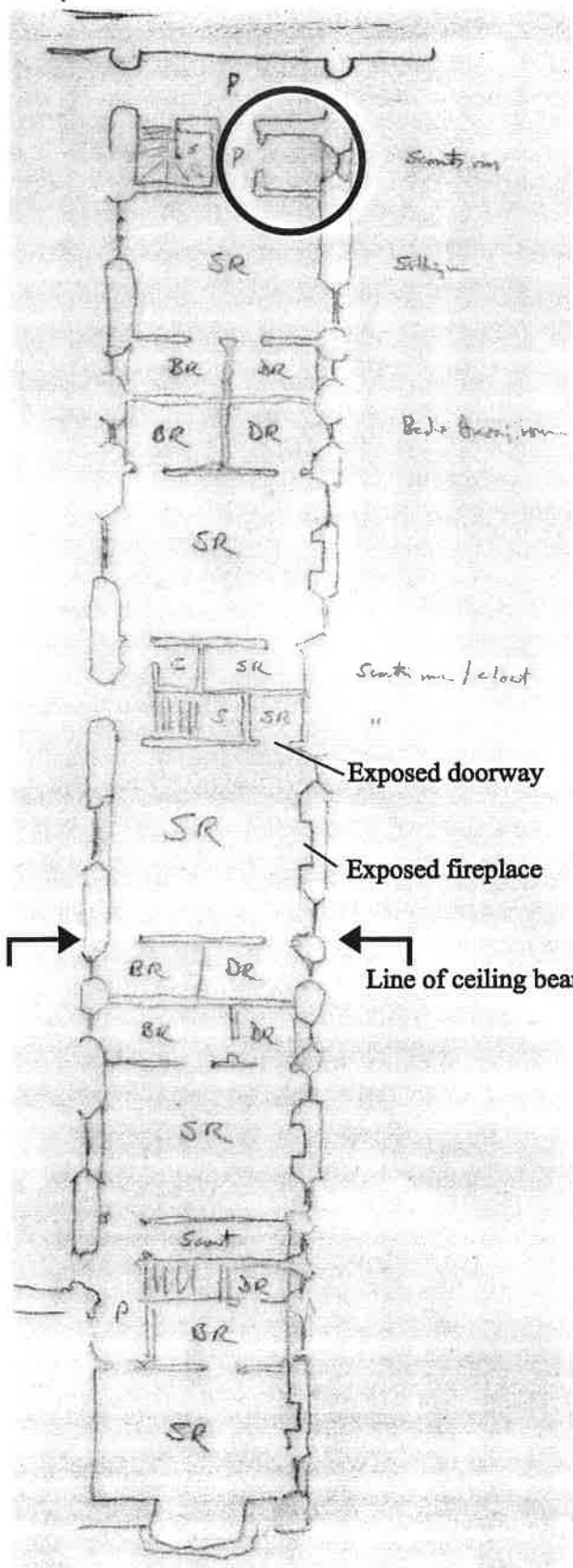
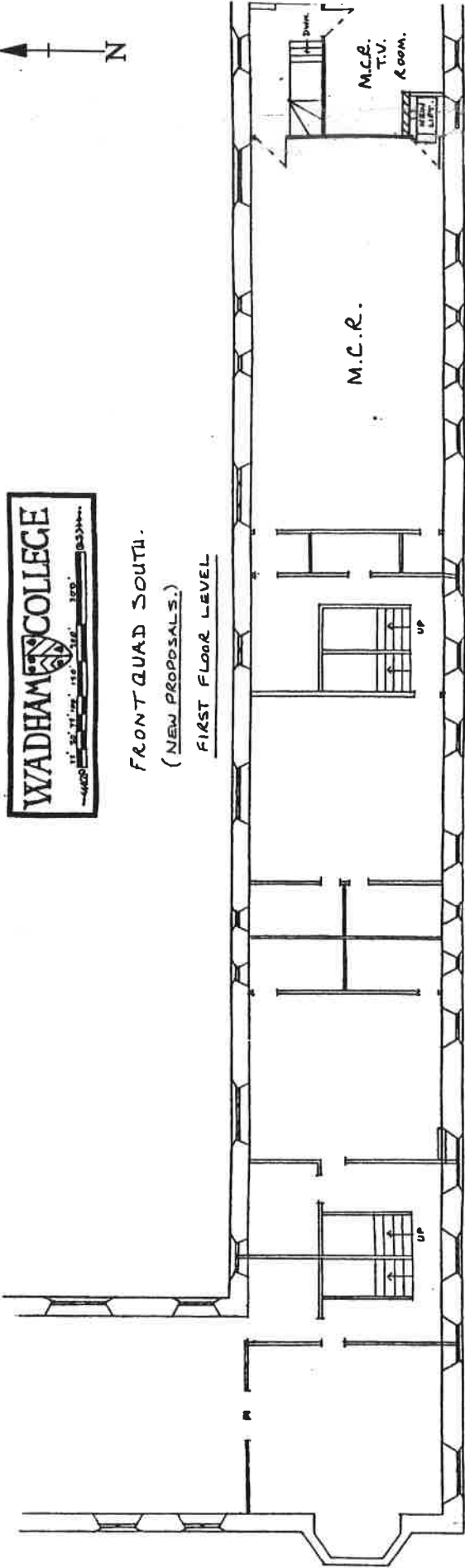


Diagram of typical accommodation unit

Figure 3: 1848 James King plan of Wadham College MS Top Oxon a 22 plan XVIII

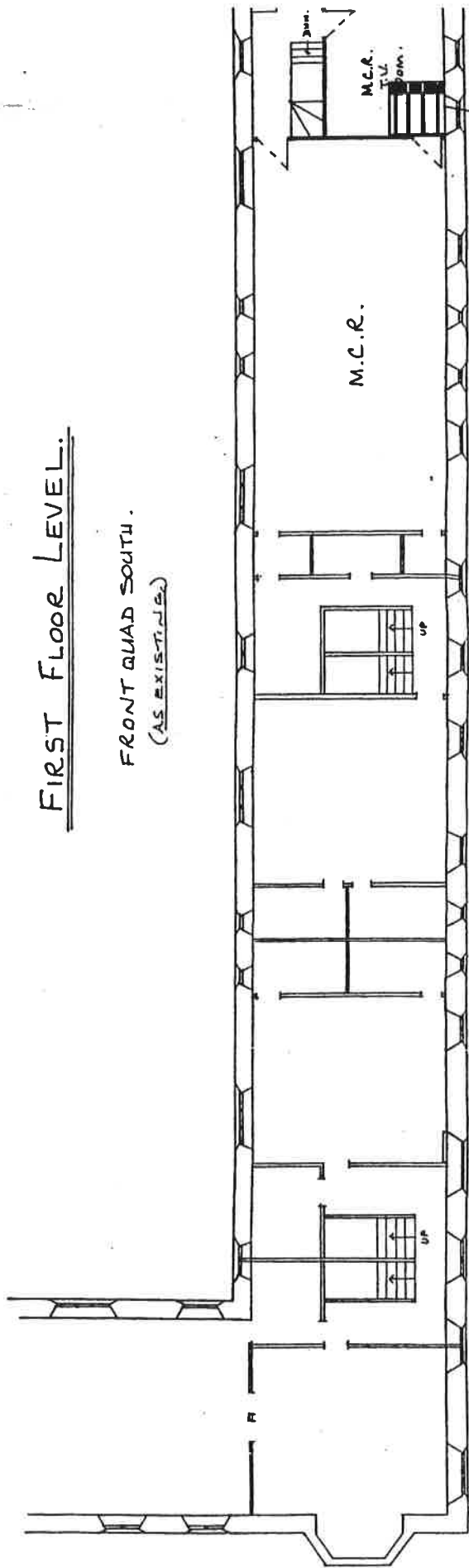


FRONT QUAD SOUTH.
(NEW PROPOSALS.)
FIRST FLOOR LEVEL



FIRST FLOOR LEVEL.

FRONT QUAD SOUTH.
(AS EXISTING.)



Recorded floor
construction

DRAWING N° 8.

Figure 5: First Floor Plans, showing recorded floor joists and beam

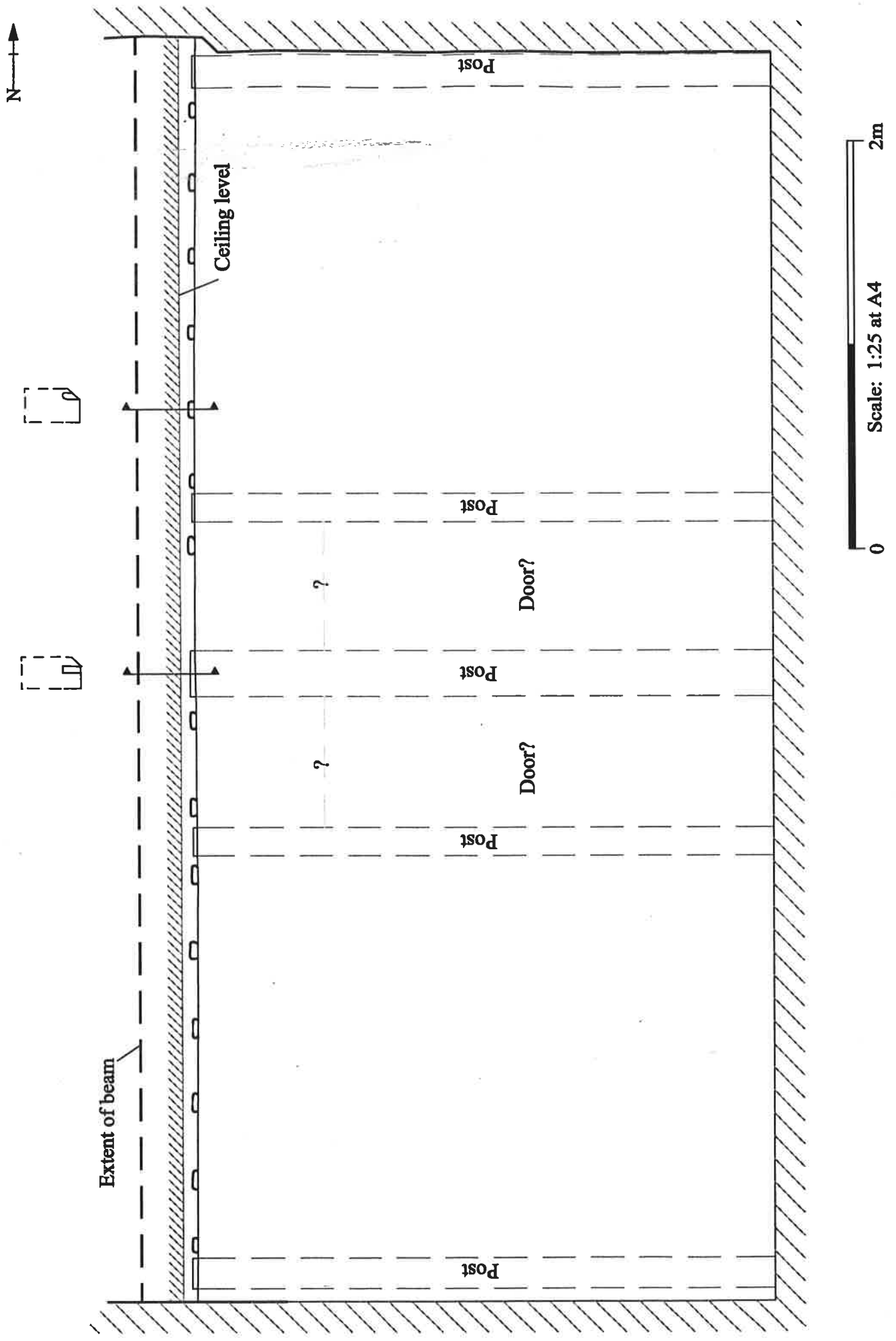


Figure 6: Ceiling beam with post and stud motices, reconstruction showing possible position of former doors in partition wall

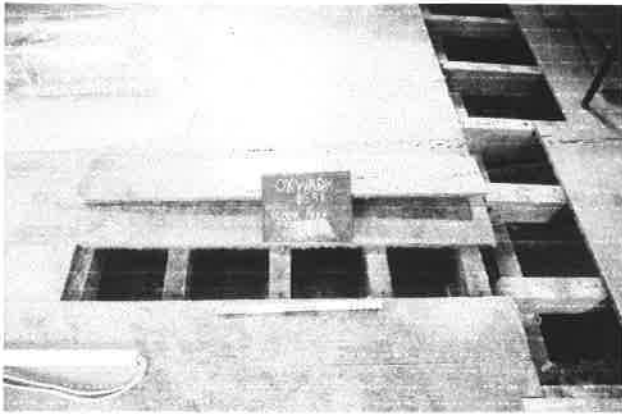


Plate 1: Change of floor framing below line of ceiling beam

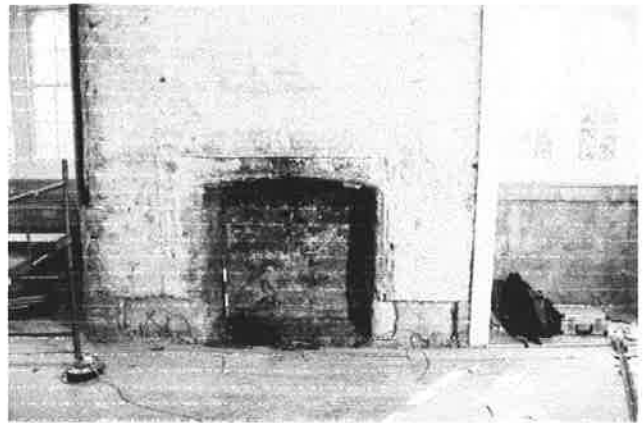


Plate 2: Rediscovered fireplace, south wall



Plate 3: Detail of spandrel and painted decoration on fireplace

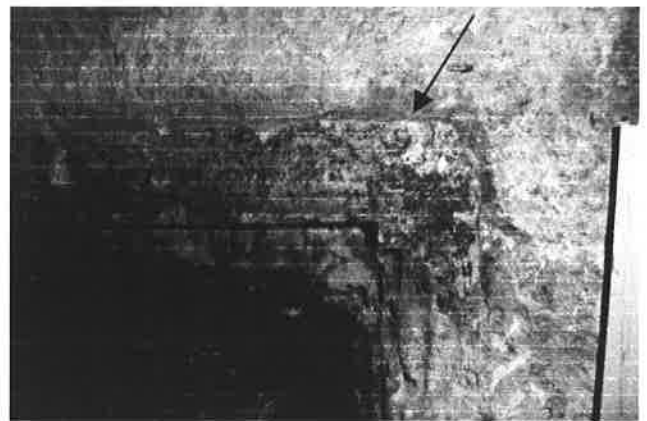


Plate 4: Detail of painted decoration on fireplace



Plate 5: Reopened historic door, east wall of the JCR

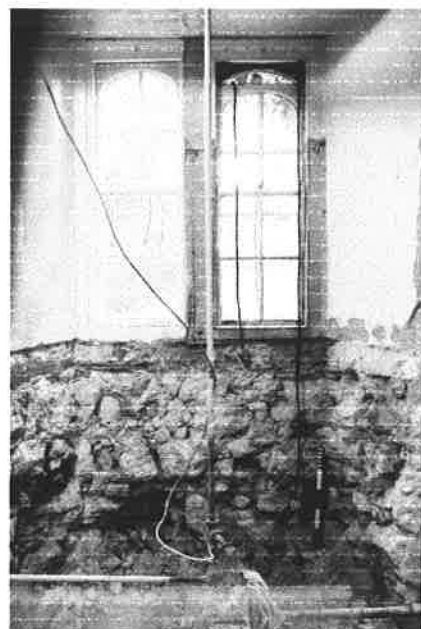


Plate 6: Exposed historic fabric and inserted window



Plate 7: Blocked doorway in former Scouts room at east end of south range



Plate 8: Straight joint between external ashlar construction and rubble internal partition wall, location as Plate 7

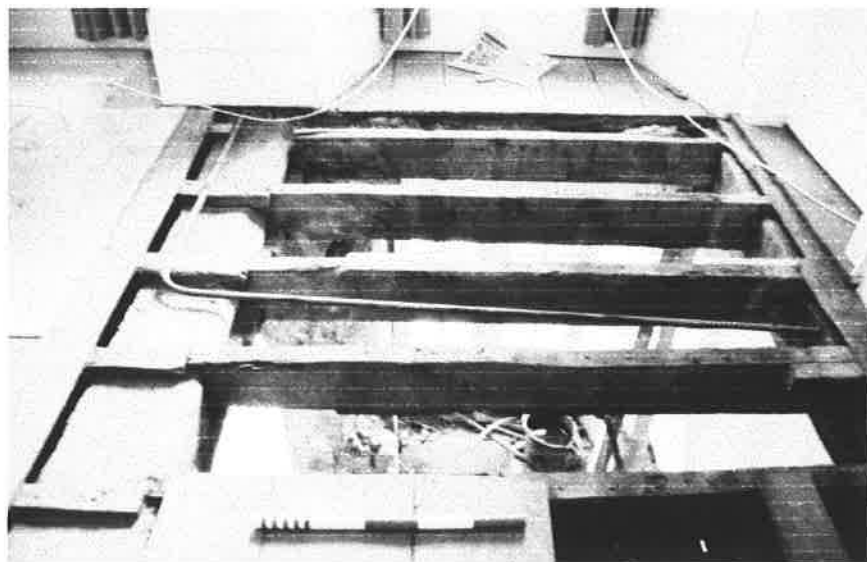


Plate 9: Floor construction exposed prior to removal for lift shaft, first floor MCR TV room



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