



# Temple Room, Dining Room and West Corridor Stowe House, Buckinghamshire.

## Historic Building Recording

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# Temple Room, Dining Room and West Corridor. Stowe House, Buckinghamshire.

## *Historic Building Recording*

*Written by Angela Warner*

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## Summary

*Oxford Archaeology was commissioned by the Stowe House Preservation Trust to undertake historic building investigation and recording during a programme of repairs and conservation works at Stowe House, Stowe, Buckinghamshire. The works focused on three rooms to the west side of the house: the Temple Room (or State Drawing Room), the Dining Room and the West Corridor.*

*Stowe House is a Grade 1 listed mansion of exceptional historic significance and the conservation works have provided an opportunity to investigate parts of the structure which are usually hidden.*

*The rooms covered by the recording were constructed during the various phases of extensive remodelling at Stowe during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The State Dining Room was established in the 1740s, initially comprising a gallery but having been converted to the State Dining Room by 1817; the West Corridor was formed between 1733-1750 due to the reconfiguration of the Great Parlour; and the State Drawing Room was constructed in 1776.*

*The work has included preparing an archive record of the rooms prior to the start of conservation as well as the further investigation of areas during intrusive works. These largely concentrated on the ceilings, walls and floors (boards and joists beneath) but also included other features such as a fireplace.*

*The pre-works recording has included photogrammetric survey of the exquisite ceiling in the Temple Room and the floors in the Temple Room and State Dining Room.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Nick Morris on behalf of the Stowe House Preservation Trust (SHPT) to undertake Historic Building Recording during the work to undertake repairs and conservation work to two of the State Rooms and nearby areas at the Grade I listed Stowe House, Stowe, Buckinghamshire.

1.1.2 Following several major repair and conservation projects, Stowe House Preservation Trust embarked on a project to replace the floor coverings of the State Drawing Room, the State Dining Room and the West Corridor which had each become unsafe due to wear and tear. In conjunction with this, extensive conservation work to the decorative ceilings of the Drawing and Dining rooms was also undertaken. For several years, wall paintings to the landing of the east staircase have been gradually uncovered by conservators, and a short update to this work is also included in this report.

### 1.2 Aims and Objectives

1.2.1 The principal aims and objectives of the historic building recording were to:

- investigate and record those areas of the buildings which were impacted by the work;
- record any areas, features or materials which were temporarily exposed by the work;
- enhance the overall understanding of the buildings;
- analyse and study the recorded data;
- 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 Stowe House is located in the civil parish of Stowe at the northern end of the county of Buckinghamshire, approximately 4km, 2.5 miles north-west of Buckingham (Figure 1).

1.3.2 Stowe House is located within the grounds now cared for by the National Trust; the buildings of the house are now occupied by Stowe School.

1.3.3 Although the building is aligned approximately north-east to south-west the convention is to refer to the north-west facing elevation as the 'north', and the south-east facing elevation, as the 'south' and this convention will be followed in room and photograph descriptions throughout this report.

### 1.4 Methodology

1.4.1 The listed status of Stowe House necessitates obtaining Listed Building Consent for any work undertaken; the conditions of the grant of the planning permission are as follows:

- Planning application 19/02002/ALB for the replacement of the stone slabs to the western corridor and the use of the salvaged stones to repair the floor surface in the east corridor. Condition 3 states: "*Prior to the commencement of*

*works a WSI/methodology of the recording of the existing flooring, slabs to be replaced and the areas revealed during the course of works shall be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Reason: To ensure that the proposed works can be affected without detriment to the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building and to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework.”* The required WSI was submitted and approved.

- 19/00271/ALB for the controlled uncovering of wall paintings on the east staircase did not include archaeological conditions.
- 19/01958/ALB for the repairs and conservation work to the Western suite of rooms. Condition 5 states “*As per the phasing of the works, no works permitted by the consent shall take place until the applicant has secured the making of a detailed record of the existing scheme/features above the floor to a specification level of 2-3, with the existing floorboarding to a specification level 3-4 from Historic England's 'Understanding Historic Buildings'. This must be carried out by an archaeological/building recording consultant or organisation approved by the Local Planning Authority in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which shall first be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Reason: To comply with the National Planning Policy Framework. This condition is a pre-commencement condition as a failure to secure appropriate archaeological investigation in advance of development would be contrary to Paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework that requires the recording and advancement of understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part).”*

1.4.2 The Historic England guidance document states that Level 2 *'is a descriptive record, made in similar circumstances to Level 1 but when more information is needed. It may be made of a building which is judged not to require a more detailed record, or it may serve to gather data for a wider project. Both the exterior and interior of the building will be seen, described and photographed. The examination of the building will produce an analysis of its development and use and the record will include the conclusions reached, but it will not discuss in detail the evidence on which this analysis is based. A plan and sometimes other drawings may be made but the drawn record will normally not be comprehensive and may be tailored to the scope of a wider project...'*

1.4.3 The same document states that Level 3 *'is an analytical record, and will comprise an introductory description followed by a systematic account of the building's origins, development and use. The record will include an account of the evidence on which the analysis has been based, allowing the validity of the record to be re-examined in detail. 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. The information contained in the record will for the most part have been obtained through an examination of the building itself. The documentary sources used are likely to be those which are most readily accessible, such as historic Ordnance Survey maps, trade directories and other published sources. The record may contain some discussion the building's broader stylistic or historical context and importance. It may form part of a wider survey of a number of buildings which will aim at an overall synthesis, such*

*as a thematic or regional publication, when the use of additional source material may be necessary as well as a broader historical and architectural discussion of the buildings as a group.'*

1.4.4 Level 4 *'provides a comprehensive analytical record and is appropriate for buildings of special importance. Whereas the analysis and interpretation employed at Level 3 will clarify the building's history so far as it may be deduced from the structure itself, the record at Level 4 will draw on the full range of other sources of information about the building and discuss its significance in terms of architectural, social, regional or economic history. The range of drawings may also be greater than at other levels.'*

1.4.5 Site visits were carried out prior to the work and following each stage of exposure of historic fabric, between 26 May 2020 and 31 March 2021.

1.4.6 The building recording and watching brief consists of three main elements: a drawn record, a descriptive written record and a photographic record.

#### *Photographic Record*

1.4.7 The photographic record is intended to act as a detailed record of the structure prior to and during the alterations. It includes both general views of the structure as well as photographs of specific details such as evidence of prior alteration.

#### *Drawn Record*

1.4.8 The drawn record comprises the scaled drawing of uncovered features and structures to explain and describe the structure.

#### *Written Record*

1.4.9 The written record is intended to supplement and support the other two elements of the recording and to provide additional descriptive analysis of the structure in terms of its general design, setting, construction and alteration.

## 2 BACKGROUND HISTORY AND GENERAL DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The rich history and development of Stowe House has been widely documented, researched and published, including in guidebooks to the house which date back to the later part of the 18th century.
- 2.1.2 Following the sale of the house and contents in 1922 and subsequent sales, the documentary archive of the house is now located in the Huntingdon Library in California. Catalogues indicate that there are documents which are likely to contain accounts and building details which will provide further information regarding the alterations to the building which formed the rooms within the scope of this project.

### 2.2 Historical Background

- 2.2.1 This report concentrates solely on those rooms which underwent repair during the project, however, their context within the house should be briefly outlined. Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the development of the house described in the following timeline, with Figure 4 illustrating the current plan of the Piano Nobile.
- 2.2.2 The history of Stowe House has been extensively published by Michael Bevington, former archivist at Stowe School, including several guides to the school and its architecture. The information which follows draws the relevant history largely from his publications, adding the information to the concise timeline published in *Stowe House: saving an architectural masterpiece* (Morris, 2018. pp. 147-148).

1611: Sir Thomas Temple, a sheep farmer from Warwickshire, purchases a knighthood from King James I

1653: Sir Richard Temple, the 3rd Baronet of Stowe, inherited the former house at the age of 19

1677-1683: A new manor house at Stowe is built by the 3rd Baronet. It was designed by William Cleare who had worked under Sir Christopher Wren. The house was of brick with stone quoins and a tiled roof with a leaded platform with balustrade for views over the surrounding countryside. The double piled house had an 18m long spine wall and two 13-bay façades facing approximately north and south. Four storeys were visible in the south façade, the ground floor being partially concealed to the north by the slope of the ground. The ground floor housed administrative functions, with the piano nobile accessed from both fronts via steps, which has continued to the current building (Bevington in Morris (ed.), 2018, pp. 34-35)

1710: Sir Richard Temple's sister, Hester, marries Richard Grenville from nearby Wootton House, creating the Temple-Grenville family

1718: Sir Richard Temple, 4th Baronet, is created 1st Viscount Cobham

Early 1720s: Sir John Vanbrugh is believed to have redesigned the North Front for Viscount Cobham

1730s-40s: The stairwells added to either side of the central pavilion.

1740s: State Gallery constructed, raised above and south of the corridor connecting the central block with the Western Pavilion (Bevington 2002, p. 57).

1750-51 State Gallery ceiling painted

1749: Viscount Cobham dies and the estate passes to his nephew, Richard Temple-Grenville. He gains his title of Earl from his mother

18th century: Throughout the 18th century, the house is extensively remodelled and extended. Earl Temple oversees the redesign of Stowe House as it survives today, commissioning architects including Giovanni Battista Borra, Georges-François Blondel, Robert Adam and Thomas Pitt. The State Drawing Room, Marble Saloon and State Music Room occupy the newly enlarged central pavilion

1760s: The North Front was rebuilt, with changes made while the building was still underway (Bevington in Morris (ed.), 2018, p. 47) (Plate 1)

1771: The South Front was rebuilt, close to a design by Robert and James Adam, but reduced by Thomas Pitt (Bevington in Morris (ed.), 2018, p. 47) (Plate 2)

1774: Lord Temple's nephew and heir, George Grenville, leaves for his Grand Tour around Europe

1776: State Drawing Room ceiling and pilasters added. Plaster pierced for the new fireplace, fitted the following year

1779: Lord Temple dies before the completion of his building project, leaving George Grenville to oversee it

1796: Richard Grenville, the future 1st Duke, marries Anna Eliza Brydges, the last heiress to the Chandos estate, bringing the Chandos name into the title that her husband would take as the 1st Duke of Buckingham and Chandos

1817: The State Gallery became the State Dining Room

1822: Richard Temple-Grenville is created 1st Duke of Buckingham and Chandos

1845: Queen Victoria and Prince Albert visit Stowe, staying for three days. In anticipation, the 2nd Duke spent thousands of pounds preparing the house and grounds, while already in debt of over a million pounds

1848: Much of the contents of the Stowe estate are sold, including the famous Chandos portrait of Shakespeare now in the National Portrait Gallery, much of the statuary and painting collection

1861: Richard, the 3rd Duke inherits the estate

1889-1894: The estate is let after the death of the 3rd Duke

1921: The estate is sold to Harry Shaw, a property developer who intends to present Stowe to the nation

1922: As Shaw lacks the necessary endowment, the government declines his offer. Shaw strips and sells the fittings and sells the estate to the Martyrs Memorial Trust which intends to establish a boarding school



1923: Clough Williams-Ellis is employed to oversee the conversion of the house to a school. The State Drawing Room became the Temple Room

1989: The school gave Stowe Landscape Gardens to the National Trust

1997: Stowe House Preservation Trust was formed

### 3 TEMPLE ROOM (THE STATE DRAWING ROOM)

#### 3.1 Development and Description Prior to the Work

- 3.1.1 The State Drawing Room dates from the rebuilding of 1774 and was known as the State Drawing Room until the opening of the school; from then until 1989 it became the Temple Houseroom. It is to the west of the Marble Saloon and was built as a pair with the State Music Room to the east. There are doors at either end of the east and west walls, although only the northern pair are functional, the southern two were added for symmetry and lead to shallow cupboards (Plates 3 & 4). Three tall sash windows with shutters are set between pilasters to the south wall; the north wall is apsed (Plate 5). The Neoclassical ceiling was probably designed by Valdrè and executed by James Lovell (Musson in Morris (ed.), 2018, p. 27).
- 3.1.2 Bevington, in his 2002 publication, notes that the room is formed from an extension, south of rooms at the south-west corner of the 1677 house. Until 1766, this was a suite containing a bedroom and two dressing rooms, although for seven years following this, they were used as a waiting room, private dining room and a small drawing room at the east, which was then incorporated into the saloon.
- 3.1.3 The plaster was pierced for the chimneypiece in late 1776 and the chimneypiece was installed in 1777 (Bevington, 2002, p.55). It contained an antique alabaster bas-relief from Egypt of a Sacrifice to Bacchus. The fireplace was sold in 1921 and fitted in the Bank of Santander in Spain in 1957. A new fireplace, that removed as part of this work, was installed in approximately 1922. A plaque formerly above the fireplace listed the names of the first Heads of the House.

#### 3.2 Decorative History

- 3.2.1 Patrick Baty examined the decorative finishes of the room in 2009 and 2019, taking and analysing paint samples during each visit, finding that areas of the room had been repainted up to ten times. Baty's reports were created before the 1965 hardboard was removed from the walls, revealing the green schemes of the early days of the school phase. The details of his analysis, including individual elements of gilding, colouring and type of paint is minutely detailed within his reports, but very briefly summarised, with the addition of the findings during the project. Figure 5 is a photogrammetric record of the ceiling prior to the conservation work.

1780 - c1798:

Ceiling off-white with no gilding. Woodwork off-white and gilded. The ceiling was repainted after a fairly short period, indicated by there being little dirt between the layers, possibly required by the silvered mouldings tarnishing (Baty, 2009, p. 11).

c1798-1825:

Ceiling in various pinks with silvered mouldings within panels and gilded frames and leaves. Woodwork off-white and gilded. A watercolour by Elizabeth (Betsey) Wynne Fremantle (1778-1857), likely of the first decade of the 19th century, is included in Baty's 2019 report which indicates the walls may have been decorated in a yellow colour; the remnants of yellow paint were found during the project (on top of a pink

wallpaper), however, this contradicts various guide books of the time which mention the orange damask, and Bevington states the room was hung in orange damask soon after 1781 (Bevington, 2002, p. 56).

#### Pre 1845:

Ceiling off-white beds with 4 pink beds. Silvered mouldings within panels and gilded frames, leaves and eagles. Off-white joinery and gilded. Woodwork off-white and gilded. Lower walls off-white. Upper walls red [orange] damask (Figure 6 shows the watercolour of 1845 by Joseph Nash (1809-1878) which has been used to inform the colour of the damask).

#### 1922:

The damask wall covering appears in the sale catalogue of 1921 and so it is likely it was taken down at the conversion of the room to school use and the underlying hessian scrim – or, less likely, a new scrim – painted dark green. The woodwork and ceiling likely to be unchanged.

#### Post 1922 and pre 1965:

The dark green-painted scrim repainted in a mid green, painting around plaques, clocks and larger furniture. The woodwork and ceiling likely to be unchanged.

#### 1965 to the beginning of the project:

Hardboard fitted over all walls, leaving the woodwork exposed. The woodwork scheme remains generally unchanged, although areas of stripping and repainting are undertaken in modern paints, including gold paint rather than gilding. The lower elements of woodwork such as the bases of the pilasters were painted from off-white to a more practical dark brown. The ceiling redecoration consisted of overpainting the flat bed, cove and gilded decorative mouldings. A layer of gold size was applied to the decorative mouldings and aluminium leaf applied instead of silver due to the lower cost. Some small repairs were carried out (Baty, 2009, p. 12). At around this time, likely prompting the work, an area to the east of the room was replaced due to water leaks from the bathrooms above.

- 3.2.2 A sequence of wall coverings more extensive than found elsewhere in the room was uncovered to the underside of the cornice above the fireplace during the work (Plate 6). The lack of context of the finishes did not allow for dating or firmly tying into the schemes uncovered by Patrick Baty or during the project. This full sequence of wall coverings comprised: timber boards over the frame attached to the brickwork, off-white paint, pink wallpaper or pink-painted wallpaper, yellow paint, [likely hessian scrim with orange damask over], dark green paint, mid-green paint, hardboard, layers of modern off-white paint.
- 3.2.3 It was judged that to replicate the orange damask was not hardy enough for the modern function of the room as a dining and function room, and so the pattern was recreated in a durable wallpaper (Plates 7-9).

### 3.3 Ceiling and Coving

- 3.3.1 The cracks above the cornice to the east were c450 - 470mm apart, corresponding with the joists above, these are less severe to the west side, although still evident (Plate 10).
- 3.3.2 A report following an inspection by Chroma Conservation in January 2021 stated the cracks above the cornice were due to physical and thermal movement and stresses to the timbers, rather than necessarily being due to a loss of key of the plaster. It also notes the hessian or scrim applied over the laths as there was insufficient spacing of the laths to provide a key. It also notes that the majority of the ceiling has been repaired with gypsum plaster (Wooles, 2021). The ceiling plaster was 14mm thick where measurable. The plaster contained a small amount of hair and, where visible, was over laths attached to the ceiling joists.
- 3.3.3 A hole measuring 290 x 600mm, was cut into the decorated panel at the east of the ceiling which dates to 1965 and was replaced due to water damage from the bathrooms above, presumably prompting the 1965 phase of work (Plate 11). This replacement panel was mounted on modern battens of 34 x 14mm in section and made from very fine gypsum plaster on hessian on modern laths. The panel is approximately 10mm thick and pre-formed before installation. Visible above the hole are two ceiling joists which are 103 x 76mm in section, and a joist for the floor above, which is staggered from the ceiling joists below (Plate 12). A beam, presumably a secondary beam judging by the size (300mm deep, no other dimensions were visible), runs north to south, in line with the applied decorative beam. Also visible is reed pugging on diagonal braces (26 x 30mm but variable), for the floor above, as per that of the floor of the Temple Room.
- 3.3.4 Cracks and flaking of finishes were observed generally due to movement of the building, humidity and water ingress from the bathrooms above (Plates 13 & 14). General cleaning of surfaces was also required where repairs were not necessary (Plate 15).
- 3.3.5 Graffiti was found to the cornice to the east of the alcove, dated to the 1965 phase. Scored in plaster were the names: [?] McCann 1965, J. Wright and what appears to be G Cameron. J. Wright had also signed his name in the gold paint used instead of gilding in 1965, as had someone signing their name as Sir R. E. Humphrey (Plates 16 & 17).
- 3.3.6 The ceiling was also re-lit by new lighting set above the coving (Plate 18).

### 3.4 Walls

- 3.4.1 The hardboard was stripped from the walls, revealing that it had been fixed over green-painted hessian scrim over wooden boards (Plates 19-22). The timber boards were tongue and groove, 15mm thick with variable widths up to 336mm as observed (Plate 23).
- 3.4.2 The brickwork was exposed in places, particularly to the top of the walls beneath the level of the cornice to assess the suitability for fixing the new picture rail. In the apse, an iron hook remained beneath the cornice which had been used to hang paintings; no other early fittings were noted (Plate 24).

- 3.4.3 The west, south and east walls are brick, covered with a timber frame and boards above the chair rail, with lath and plaster below. The lath and plaster was fully visible to the walls either side of the alcove beneath the rail where the radiators had been removed (Plate 25). The hessian scrim overlying the boards was handstitched together at the joins (Plate 26). Narrow strips had been applied to the edges of the joinery, preserving the scrim in those areas where it had been removed, indicating it was originally over all of the walls (Plate 27). As noted previously, the light green paint had evidently been applied around larger items of furniture and had itself faded around pictures and plaques hung on the walls (Plates 28 & 29). The scrim had been cut away in places prior to the fitting of the hardboard in 1965.
- 3.4.4 The walls behind the panelling in the doorway between the Temple Room and Dining Room demonstrate the alterations which formed the Temple Room in 1774. To both sides of the doorway, the brickwork of the later structure can be seen abutting the plastered wall of the doorway between the earlier Dressing Room and the State Gallery (latterly the Dining Room). The hair plasterwork is fairly rough, suggesting that this was likely panelled or otherwise concealed, although it had been finished in a stone-coloured paint. The brickwork to the west wall which abutted the earlier plastered wall was one-brick-thick to the north of the doorway and two-and-a-half-bricks-thick to the south and bonded with a very hard white lime mortar (Plates 30 & 31). Several bricks had mortar to the faces, suggesting several may have been reused, however, the general quality of the brickwork was poor and unfinished. The bricks varied between 217-225mm x 95-110mm x 60-68mm and were of poor quality.
- 3.4.5 A strip of the brickwork beneath the cornice to the west, south and east walls was exposed by removing the timber boards in order to assess the wall's suitability for the attachment of the new picture rail. The strip of brickwork visible immediately beneath the coving to the west wall was as per the rough brickwork visible around the doorway to this side of the room, although towards the northern end of the wall, the upper courses included limestone rubble (Plate 32). An area of modern brickwork originating in mid-20th century repairs was partially exposed level with the south of the doorway to the Dining Room (Plate 33). The strip of brickwork uncovered along the east wall also uncovered rough brickwork, with many of the perpendicular joints un-mortared, particularly to the south end of the wall where the perpendicular joints were also wider. The timber frame and its fixings over the brickwork was also exposed in this strip (Plate 34).
- 3.4.6 Only a small area of brickwork was exposed to the south wall, at the east end (Plate 35). The brickwork in this area was more uniform than that to the east and west walls, although a brick was missing in this area. The bricks visible measured a variable 220mm x 104-111mm x 55-60mm, with wide joints of 25-30mm and hard lime mortar.
- 3.4.7 Graffiti and patterns of unknown origin were found in several areas. In the alcove, both '1933' and '1937' were written in pencil on top of the lighter green paint, however, due to the discrepancy in the numbers, it is not clear if they refer to a date or a note of measurements during an unknown phase of work. Above the doorway to the Dining Room, a pattern was found on the unpainted boards; this is unrelated to any known scheme in the room and may have been a cartoon for an unused idea for decoration (Plate 36). Occasional partial signatures were also observed (as that visible in plate 35).

### 3.5 Joinery

- 3.5.1 Cupboards were behind the false doorways to the south end of the west and east walls (Plates 37 & 38). They originally had hessian scrim lining over unpainted inner faces of the doors, although the scrim of the east cupboard had been removed and that in the west was in poor condition (Plate 39). The shelves of the west cupboard are modern plywood, the shelf brackets are simple and earlier but probably not original; the shelves of the east cupboard are later replacements but not as modern as the west cupboard. The interiors are finished with fine white lime plaster. All ironmongery is 20th-century and the hinges also have been rehung with later screws.
- 3.5.2 The doorway between the Temple Room and the Dining Room required repair comprising the replacement of several modern panels and the recreation of the original moulding. The panelling from the north side of the doorway included two phases of modern panels to the centre and bottom of the panelling, comprising hardboard and plywood, and had lost much of the moulding surrounding those replacements. The replacements had been carried out while the panelling was in situ (Plate 40). The panelling to the south of the doorway retained the original panels, although this had undergone repairs to splits consisting of linen strips glued to the rear of the panels (Plate 41). The walls behind the panelling are shown in plates 30 & 31.
- 3.5.3 Mis-matching door furniture had been added during the life of the doors to the north end of the east and west walls, particularly that to the dining room (Plates 42-44) which also required several areas of replacement moulding. Numerous layers of paint were removed from the moulding of all doors and the moulding regilded (PI 46-48).
- 3.5.4 The skirting boards were formed from a plain board with a rebate to the back upon which a strip of moulded timber was added (Figure 7, section 2) (Plates 49 & 50). The chair rail had also been overpainted with modern paint and showed damage (PI 51).
- 3.5.5 Three of the four pilasters along the south wall were marked with Roman numerals to the upper surface: the westernmost lacked a number, that between the west and central window was marked 'VIII', that between the central and east windows 'IX' and the easternmost 'X' (Plate 52). The pilaster bases were made of plain timber (Plate 53).

### 3.6 Fireplace

- 3.6.1 The plaster for the fireplace was 'pierced' in 1776, according to most of the sources, suggesting the alteration was carried out to the face of the existing wall of the earlier State Gallery (latterly the Dining Room) to which the later southernmost part of the Temple Room abuts. The original fireplace was sold in 1921 and a new fireplace installed, presumably in time for the use associated with the school. The original fireplace, now in the Bank of Santander, was laser scanned and the new fireplace surround was recreated in timber by a UK company, 'Refinery' and painted to replicate marble and alabaster as per the original; this was not only due to the cost but also any newly-sourced stone would not match the original (pers. comm. Colin Staff). The c1922 fireplace was entirely removed, exposing the phases of alteration (Plates 54-57).
- 3.6.2 The brick arch over the fireplace opening was supported on an iron bar, 77mm wide (3 inches in the original Imperial) and 12mm thick (half an inch in the original Imperial).

The bar is shaped at the southern end; the northern end is likely to be the same but it was obscured by the mortar of the joint it was bedded into.

- 3.6.3 There are three instances of pencil setting out marks plus four lines in the brickwork, probably associated with the fitting of the c 1922 fireplace. The southernmost pencil mark is in line with the plaster edge of the c 1922 fireplace, the following is in line with the opening, the next is in line with the canted edge. The central mark is an arrow incised into the brick to the south of the voussoir, plus a pencil line, so probably the centre of the c 1922 fireplace (Plate 58). The next two pencil lines are level with the canted edge and opening, as per those at the southern end. The northernmost mark depicts a diagonal detail; it is not evident what this detail relates to, but the vertical lines are aligned with the edge of the plaster (Plate 59).
- 3.6.4 The brickwork of the opening was bonded with a cement mortar, indicating the opening was altered for the c1922 fireplace. The c1922 bricks were standard machine fired red bricks with stacking marks to many and one had straw marks from drying; they were 250mm x 100mm x 66mm (in the original Imperial 10" x 4" x 2.75"). There were occasional reused tiles or brick slips of unknown origin with no obvious previous location. One was 35mm thick, one of 45mm thick was certainly associated with the c1922 brickwork and covered the northern end of the aforementioned iron bar supporting the arch.
- 3.6.5 The chimney has a blocked circular flue, and all of the flue and c1922 fireplace back had been painted black. The rear of the fireplace had a simple cross pattern formed of a stretcher and two headers projecting slightly from the brickwork (Plate 60). Several bricks to the curved back of the fireplace, including the upper stretcher of the cross patten, were wedge-shaped, possibly voussoirs (Plate 61). Some were cut standard bricks but all were early 20th-century which confirmed the back of the fireplace was altered in c1922. The wedge-shaped bricks had stamps and were manufactured by Hall of Stourbridge (Plate 62), a fire brick manufacturer (Grace's Guide, 2018). The cut bricks and the full bricks did not have stamps.
- 3.6.6 Half of a wedge brick had a partial stamp of Trotter, Haines and Corbett of Stourbridge, a fire clay and brick manufacturer. Harris and Pearson acquired a controlling interest in this company around 1902 (Grace's Guide, 2021) and so further research may establish whether the company were still stamping their bricks as such or if the brick is up to two decades older than the fireplace.
- 3.6.7 The large fireplace blocks surrounding the grate were stamped 'John Knowles & Co. Wooden Box' (Plate 63), a manufacturer of fire bricks, terracotta goods and sanitaryware based in Wooden Box, later renamed Woodville, to the south-east of Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire, across the border into Derbyshire (Derbyshire County Council, 2021). They appear to have been using 'Wooden Box' after the area was re-named Woodville and so it is not evident what date the blocks are, although the company's records are held at Derbyshire Record Office and further research may enable the blocks to be dated.
- 3.6.8 The opening was surrounded with 30mm battens to allow for plastering and attaching the c1922 surround. All of these c1922 elements were removed to allow for the new installation.

- 3.6.9 The brickwork of the sides of the original opening appear to have been roughly cut back to allow for the canted edge and the fireplace back of the c1922 fireplace and the gap filled with broken earlier bricks and mortar (Plate 64). The earlier bricks are well-fired fairly hard red bricks, 205-220mm x 100mm x 60-67mm (in the original Imperial 8.5" x 4" x 2.5") with very occasional stacking marks.
- 3.6.10 New pieces of dado and skirting board were moulded to match the existing and extend the original joinery to the edge of the new fireplace (Plate 65).

### 3.7 Floor

- 3.7.1 The Temple Room floorboards at the beginning of the project were the original to the extension of the former rooms to form the State Drawing Room. The oak boards were between 220mm and 265mm wide and up to 4110mm long, although lengths were variable and affected by numerous repairs (Figure 8). The boards extended beneath the skirting boards to the south of the room which preserved the unworn thickness of 27mm.
- 3.7.2 The floor was widely affected by severe wear, caused partially by several centuries of continuous use, but largely exacerbated by excessive use of a mechanical floor polisher on a daily basis which removed the surface of the floorboards in those areas likely to show scuff marks, particularly to the through-route between the doorways along the north of the room and in front of the window at the south of the room. The boards between the doors had been replaced with narrower, 120mm wide, 19mm thick, softwood boards in the later part of the 20th century. Original boards in shorter lengths had been reused for patching, and unrelated varnished boards had also been used in places (Plate 66).
- 3.7.3 The boards were nailed at an angle to the joists and the adjacent floorboard dowelled to it (Plates 67 & 68). The ends of the boards were tongue and groove (Plate 69). The majority of the dowels which joined the boards were exposed in the floor surface, themselves worn approximately halfway through. The boards in front of the south window were worn to a thickness of 7mm at the area of most wear (Plate 70). The extent of the wear caused the floorboards to be unsafe: severe deflection during dancing during events was observed, and the extent of repair required rendered the floorboards unsalvageable.
- 3.7.4 The softwood floor structure of the Temple Room was exposed and recorded during the project following the removal of the floorboards (Figure 9) (Plates 71-74). The majority of the structure was obscured by the pugging and could only be recorded in detail where the pugging was damaged towards the south-east corner of the room. The east-west primary beams are composite beams, formed of two lengths of timber bolted together, giving a combined width of approximately 460mm (Plates 75 & 76). A diagonal composite beam runs from the south of the fireplace to the east wall (Plate 77). Secondary beams run north-south and are joined to the primary beams with pegged tusk tenons (Figure 7, section 1) (Plate 78). The secondary beams are generally 100mm wide by approximately 250mm deep with a fillet of around 50mm applied to the top. Joists run east-west, parallel with the primary beams and are generally 77mm wide and 95mm deep where accessible beneath the pugging. Ceiling joists for the



ceiling below were visible where the pugging is missing. No carpenter's marks were observed, although most of the joints were obscured, however, a mark observed in one location may be the remnants of an import mark, such as that for Baltic timber (Plate 79).

- 3.7.5 The pugging between the joists is supported on crossed pieces of timber. It consists of reeds with a layer of lime (Plates 80-82). It is feasible that these water reeds were sourced from the grounds, being a free and useful material and still observed in the current landscape of the National Trust land surrounding the school. Although reeds are usually associated with thatching of roofs, generally harvested in Norfolk, they grow alongside ditches and rivers in many parts of the country in insufficient quantities for thatching but would have been used for other uses such as providing a key for plastering (English Heritage, 2013, p. 336).
- 3.7.6 New oak boards were laid and the use of the mechanical polisher is to be limited (Plate 83).

### 3.8 Void Behind the Apse

- 3.8.1 To the north of the room is an east-west wall concealed by the apsidal wall, forming two voids either side of the apse. The easternmost void is accessed from the cleaners' cupboard. The westernmost void is concealed behind the lift and could not be inspected. The bricks of this wall measured 210-220mm x 110-125mm x 62-65mm, and bonded very unevenly with a rough, unfinished lime mortar (Plate 84). The north face of the wall is roughly plastered to approximately 5ft. The rear of the apse is visible, confirming its construction of lath and plaster over timber studs below the dado level and boards above (Plates 85 & 86).
- 3.8.2 The corridor wall to the north of the voids forms a further space used for electrical distribution (Plate 87). In the cleaner's cupboard, a brick arch associated with later structural repairs cuts across a ceiling with a dentilled cornice, likely that of the dressing room which was reconfigured during the formation of the State Drawing Room (Plate 88).

### 3.9 Finds

- 3.9.1 No finds pre-dating the house's use as a school were found following the lifting of the floorboards, the exception was numerous dropped dowels and the cut-off ends of the trimmed dowels (see plate 68). Numerous items were found dating from the use as a schoolroom and use as a function room in recent years.
- 3.9.2 The schoolroom finds were likely deposited as the boards became worn and gaps became wider, allowing some relatively large items to fall or be posted beneath the floorboards. These items ranged from sweet wrappers to equipment such as rulers and even books and textbooks (Plates 89-92).
- 3.9.3 From the use as a further dining room and function room in recent years, dining-related items such as sachets of pepper were found alongside sequins and confetti associated with the function room.

## 4 DINING ROOM (THE STATE DINING ROOM)

### 4.1 Development and Description Prior to Work

- 4.1.1 The State Dining Room dates from the alterations of the 1740s; initially the State Gallery, by 1817 the room had become the State Dining Room due to the proximity to the kitchen. The use as a dining room continued when the school was established.
- 4.1.2 The Dining Room is to the west of the former Drawing Room, accessed via a doorway from the Drawing Room and three doorways to the corridor to the north, all formed during the use as a school (Plate 93). A doorway to the Servery is at the west end of the room. The pairs of doors at either end of the room are formed of the aforementioned doors to the Servery and Dining Room plus false doors to provide symmetry (Plates 94 & 95). No cupboards are behind the false doors, unlike the pairs of doors to the east and west walls of the Drawing Room.
- 4.1.3 Seven sash windows are to the south wall with surviving shutters (Plate 96). Radiators dating to around the time of the foundation of the school are to alternate recesses beneath the windows (Plate 97) and three slightly later radiators are to the north wall (Plate 98). Until the sale of 1922, the north, east and west walls were hung with tapestries; the fireplaces were sold at the same date and the current fireplaces date to around the opening of the school (Plates 99 & 100).
- 4.1.4 The ceiling is highly decorative (Plates 101 & 102). Bevington discusses the possible designers of the decorations in the room, including Lancelot 'Capability' Brown and Henry Flitcroft, however, Francesco Sleter appears to have been paid for the four paintings in the cove in April 1747 and his assistant painter's signature is in the cove to the south: *Josh: Harris 1750*. The three large octagonal grisaille paintings to the ceilings were probably originally by Sleter, however, the extant paintings on canvas are not original; the ceiling above each has been replaced and it is likely they were damaged as the extant paintings were by Robert Jones in the 1820s (Bevington, 2002, pp. 57-58).
- 4.1.5 Baty, taking information from Bevington (2002), well describes the ceiling:

*...[it] has an elaborate plaster entablature supporting a deep cove, this has painted decoration dated 1747 by Francesco Sleter, including Hebe feeding Jupiter's Eagle (east), Cupid playing with two Graces (north), Cupid asleep with two Graces (south) and Diana and her Hounds (west), the spaces between these paintings are decorated with animals including swans and their cygnets, pigeons and rabbits. There are three large octagonal paintings on the central flat of the ceiling. These are probably early 19th century replacements for the original by Robert Jones. They are Venus disarming Cupid (east), Venus on her Chariot, crowned by Cupid and attended by the Three Graces (centre) and Venus at her Toilet, attended by the Graces (west). There are also eight smaller octagonal panels depicting pairs of vases and classical reliefs. The areas between these paintings are decorated with painted acanthus and all the paintings are bordered by white and gilt plaster beams decorated in guilloche (Baty, 2020, pp. 3-4).*

## 4.2 Decorative History

- 4.2.1 Patrick Baty examined the painted surfaces of the room, taking paint samples. The full details of his investigation, paint types and images are in his 2009 and 2020 reports and this section summarises the extensive information of his findings. Baty found that parts of the room had been decorated up to thirteen times in places, and up to five occasions on the cornice. Original 18th-century paint survived on the window architraves and early gilding survived on the ceiling. The 1817 scheme survives to the ceiling and cornice.
- 4.2.2 The walls of the dining room are to be uncovered in a future project and so are not dealt with here, other than to summarise Baty's analysis of the lower wall - the upper wall was not sampled - which found around 13 decorative schemes. The first three schemes were off-white: the initial decorative scheme, one applied in 1771 and around 1817. A dull yellow scheme followed, then a further off-white scheme from the 1930s. Further off-white layers were followed by dark green and pinks. Painted lining paper formed the decorative layer at the time of the current project.
- 4.2.3 The quatrefoil decoration in the cove was found to have only two schemes: the initial distemper was applied at least four years before the decorative scheme by Joshua Harris in 1751 which comprised a yellow gold size overlaid with gold leaf. A second gilded scheme was applied in 1771 (Baty, 2020, p. 7-8)
- 4.2.4 Some parts of the cornice had been decorated twice, while others had been decorated up to five times (ibid, p. 8). Baty has analysed five distinct individual schemes of decoration of elements spanning the history of the room, these include combinations of areas which still display early paint, areas which were last overpainted around 1817 and those which have been painted since. The phases date to approximately 1751, 1771, 1817 and at some date post 1960s, possibly 1990. Baty's report details these phases throughout the elements he has sampled. The most notable change which Baty has revealed is the reversal of the decoration of the frieze bed and mouldings in 1817.
- 4.2.5 The gilding was originally more widespread, for instance, the dentils on the cornice were all originally gilded, although since, alternating dentils been painted gold and silver. The egg and darts and the astragal between the lower and middle fasciae of the cornice were also originally gilded (ibid, pp. 9-10). The window architraves have their original scheme, although alterations in the paint as it ages have had an effect on the appearance of the originally off-white colour. The chair rail was originally painted off-white and the moulded elements gilded (ibid, p. 11). The skirting has been painted black, in 20th-century paint, on the last eight occasions over a dark brown with red-brown primer (ibid, p. 13).
- 4.2.6 Some areas of the room were repainted in June 1990 and the chimneypiece may have been picked out in bronze paint prior to the visit of Queen Elizabeth II in November 2007. The majority of the joinery is painted in modern brilliant white gloss paint (ibid, p. 7).

## 4.3 Ceiling, Cornice and Cove

- 4.3.1 An internal scaffold was constructed and protected sheeting was installed to enable the conservation work (Plates 103 & 104).

- 4.3.2 Evidence of numerous phases of repair to differing qualities were observed across the entire ceiling (Plates 105-107). Cracking of the cove above the cornice corresponds approximately with the joists (Plate 108). Damage caused by movement (Plates 109 & 110), water ingress, and moisture from the dining room function (Plate 111) is also widespread, as is dirt and deposits due to the same reason (Plates 112 & 113). A hole at the west end, possibly from earlier electrical fittings, exposed the structure of lath and hair plaster consisting of 25mm of plaster and a 2mm skim.
- 4.3.3 One area of repair towards the eastern end of the south of the ceiling had been repainted over the bulge of the failure (Plates 114 & 115). The background no longer matched the surrounding area, potentially through oxidisation of the paint and the use of gold paint instead of gilding.
- 4.3.4 The flaking of the painted decoration of the cove is worse towards the west end. The flaking areas of the paintwork were consolidated and an isolation layer applied on top to ensure that any finish and infilling of unpainted areas was reversible.
- 4.3.5 The moulded applied beams of the ceiling are approximately 100mm deep and decorated with gilded Plaster of Paris laurel-style leaves which appear to be individually applied to split laths (Plates 116 & 117). The moulding along these beams was originally run in *in situ*. That moulding at the west end of the room had been extensively repaired, although to a poor standard (Plate 118). Areas of moulding which were loose were reattached, using a resin for the smaller pieces of loose material which would adhere it to the secure areas, and the larger loose pieces were reattached to the laths or battens with screws.
- 4.3.6 Where the ceiling was exposed, particularly around the large area of damage towards the west end of the ceiling, the original hair plaster over split laths was evident. The layers of plaster observed consisted of a 30mm levelling coat (possibly comprising two coats) with a 2mm skim. The area of damage had been covered with a plywood board and poorly painted to resemble the background cover of the ceiling (Plates 119 & 120). Two areas of hessian and white plaster were observed between the laths which may be related to the layer of lime mortar believed to have been applied above the ceiling. The battens visible in the area of damage match those battens visible beneath the applied moulded elements.
- 4.3.7 The ceiling behind the large octagonal paintings had been repaired with gypsum plaster (Plate 121). Where the smaller paintings were installed, animal glue had been applied over the skim. Lime plaster was beneath the smaller paintings, although this had been repaired with a white Plaster of Paris-type filler (Plate 122). The smaller paintings are painted canvas on fibreglass and so the paintings may be earlier and reinforced later with fibreglass. Pencil marks are around the edge which indicate that the paintings were intended for those locations (Plates 123 – 125). The mass production of fibreglass began in 1933, although fibreglass textile was patented in 1880. The octagonal paintings, previously described, are canvas on a wooden frame.
- 4.3.8 The signature of Joshua Harris 'Ios: Harris 1750' was noted on the cove to the south wall, 7305mm from the east end of the room (Plates 126 & 127). To the east end of the room, three signatures and items of graffiti were noted to the cornice: to the urn above the doorway, the signature of J. Phillip and the date 1776 was noted (Plate 128),

to the approximate centre of the room, the signatures of J. Andrews and W. E. Turvey and the date of August 25th 1953 was seen (Plate 129), and above the false door, the signatures of D. Dunkley and G Blacknell and the date of 27/03/[19]73 (Plate 130). The signature of c. Shellnack [?] and the date of 1990 was noted approximately 3495mm from the east end of the room (Plate 131). Pencil-drawn arrows at intervals to the top of the cornice throughout were observed, although no corresponding features indicated their meaning (Plate 132).

- 4.3.9 The redundant fittings in the ceiling are likely to have been gas light fittings (Plate 133).
- 4.3.10 Following the extensive conservation work, the ceiling was re-lit with new fitting above the cornice (Plates 134 & 135).

## 4.4 Walls

- 4.4.1 The walls, as noted, were not included in this phase of the project. A small area of the wall covering to the immediate east of the central doorway in the north wall, was partially detached from the wall to reveal that the wall covering in that area consisted of layers of modern lining paper and hessian over remnants of an earlier thick paper applied directly to the tongue and grooved boards nailed to the frame of the wall, which was not itself viewed.
- 4.4.2 The walls behind the skirting were exposed in places (Plate 136). It was roughly plastered and the skirting and moulded timber above the plain boards was shown to be mounted on a frame. The walls between the windows were shown to be proud of the brickwork behind (Plate 137). The lower part of the south wall was exposed by the removal of the floorboards. Relieving arches of modern bricks were visible beneath the windows (Plate 138). Modern brickwork was exposed beneath the false door at the east end of the room, indicating the location of modern structural work (Plate 139).

## 4.5 Joinery

- 4.5.1 The joinery was not included in the current project.
- 4.5.2 The panelling forming the false door to the south end of the east wall was blocked in by the floorboards, indicating that this was unlikely to have ever been a cupboard as per the false doors in the Temple Room, and simply a decorative doorway to provide symmetry; the rear of the 'door' panel was not accessed to view the form of the opening (see plate 139).
- 4.5.3 The doorways in the north wall were formed since the founding of the school, although no evidence of the date of formation was seen. The brass manufacturer's plates for the fittings of the central doors are from Gibbons of London and Wolverhampton, and those of the easternmost door are Parker, Winder and Achurch Limited of Birmingham (Plates 140 & 141).

## 4.6 Floor

- 4.6.1 The floor prior to the project was oak floorboards (Plates 142 & 143), although the boards differed to those in the adjacent Temple Room. The widths of the boards, which ran east-west, were of variable widths between 122-215mm (Figure 10). The boards

were heavily patched with assorted materials (Plate 144); the most recent to the east of the central doorway was plywood with a pattern of floorboards marked in permanent marker pen and fitted following a failure of the floorboards (Plate 145). Several patches were made from old school furniture including desk lids and drawer fronts (Plates 146-149).

- 4.6.2 The dowelling was exposed in several areas where the boards were worn to almost half of their thickness (Plate 150). One instance of a repair, towards the west of the room, carried out far more carefully than the later patches, was noted (Plate 151). Features almost hearth-like in appearance were to the east and west ends of the room (Plate 152) which will be discussed below.
- 4.6.3 The wear patterns, as per the Temple Room, caused mainly by overuse of the mechanical floor polisher, were concentrated on the route along the north of the room. The areas of wear close to the windows seen in the Temple Room were not observed in the Dining Room, however, it appears likely that the boards closest to the windows have been replaced.
- 4.6.4 The floor was stripped in sections, although the whole floor could not be stripped at once due to the need for safe walkways and storage of materials (Plates 153 & 154).
- 4.6.5 The floor structure consists of a similar structure to that of the Temple Room, with composite primary beams formed of two lengths of timber of 150mm width each (Figure 11) (Plates 155 & 156). There is more ironwork visible in this room, although much was obscured in the Temple Room by the pugging (Plates 157-160). Secondary beams of around 100mm wide supported joists of around 80mm. The secondary beams are simply lapped where they are extended, whereas the joists are splay scarfed (Plates 161 & 162). The joints are tusk tenon joints (Figure 7, section 3) (Plate 163). A diagonal beam comprising two lengths of timber formed from a roughly-hewn trunk, runs from the north of the east wall, across the front of the easternmost fireplace and terminates abruptly to the west of the fireplace, approximately level with the middle of the second and third windows from the east (Plates 164 & 165). This might indicate the location of an earlier wall or extremity of the building as may be suggested by the development of the house in this location, however, there is no longer any visible indication why this beam terminates in this location.
- 4.6.6 At either end of the room, two reinforced structures were uncovered which are similar in appearance to that of a hearth (Plates 166 & 167). Although there is a fireplace in this location in the room beneath the west end and a fireplace to the opposite side of the wall at the east end, there is no evidence of former fireplaces in this room or its past configurations. More evidence may be uncovered in the future phase of repair to the walls. It is more likely that they relate to structural strengthening for statues or heavy furniture. There was less wear to the floorboards above the features which supports this interpretation.
- 4.6.7 There are few signs of alterations, although two redundant mortices to the west end of the room in the primary beam close to the reinforced area indicate that the feature may be a later addition in a contemporary floor (Plates 168 & 169). Carpenter's marks are inconsistently incised into the beams and joists which do not suggest a construction pattern to the floor, however, neither is there sufficient evidence of reuse

to suggest the timbers have been recycled or the floor heavily reconfigured (Plates 170 & 171).

4.6.8 A temporary floor surface was installed while new oak floorboards are sourced (Plate 172).

#### **4.7 Finds**

4.7.1 A sausage was found on top of the cornice, presumably thrown by pupils (Plate 173). This was not retained.

## 5 WEST CORRIDOR

### 5.1 Development

5.1.1 The west corridor was formed between 1733 and 1750 as a result of the reconfiguration of the Great Parlour (Bevington in Morris (ed.), 2018, p. 39).

### 5.2 Description Prior to the Work

5.2.1 The floor covering before work commenced comprised the surviving area of light brown-grey octagonal stone tiles of 450 x 450mm with dark grey square insets of 150 x 150mm (Figure 12) (Plates 175 & 176). There were several concrete repairs of different phases to the floor to replace broken tiles (Plates 177 – 181). To the west, surrounding the staircase, are later square grey stone tiles measuring 510mm square (Plate 182) and to the east is the modern stone floor extending through to the North Hall.

5.2.2 The least damaged tiles were used to replace the modern replacements in the east corridor which had previously undergone a similar scheme of repair and which had retained the majority of the original floor covering (Plate 183).

### 5.3 Floor

5.3.1 Beneath the stone floor was a packed sandy layer laid over the pugging boards (Plates 184 & 185). This had partially fallen between the boards and onto the ceiling below, causing the stones to shift and break.

5.3.2 The pugging boards are 1" (25mm) thick, all cut to fit and are unfinished to the underside. They are all of different widths, with the widest noted at 280mm (Plates 186 & 187). A circular hole was in the pugging boards towards the east end of the floor which also cut into the joist and the pugging supports, which indicates that either the hole was cut *in situ* and post-dates the flooring, or it may represent a former structure which was worked around while constructing the floor (Plate 188). There was no reflection of any such feature in the floor covering and the lath and plaster of the floor below indicates any evidence beneath which may support that interpretation no longer exists.

5.3.3 The exposed floor structure of the west corridor comprises three bays with two fully-exposed beams running north-south (Figure 13).

5.3.4 The easternmost of the beams appears to be surviving from the 1680s original phase of the building, having been fairly roughly hewn with an adze to the upper face to reduce it to the required height for the current floor surface and configuration (Plate 189). The original 1680s joists are mortice and tenoned into the east face of this eastern beam with no reinforcement; the upper edge of the mortices have been exposed by the hewing. The two sets of joists either side are staggered.

5.3.5 Several of the joists of the central bay are reused. They are all mortice and tenoned to the c1730s beam to the west, whereas to the 1680s eastern beam they are simply hung on a timber hanger fixed to the lower edge of the west face of the beam and reinforced with a wrought iron strap to the sides. The eastern end of most of these



- joists have the remnants of iron straps to the upper surface indicating that they have been reused and the fixings altered. Some of the joists are waney-edged and poor quality.
- 5.3.6 The westernmost beam uncovered is in its primary phase of use, dating to the extension of the house in the c1730s. The joists either side of this beam are parallel and are mortice and tenoned; the outer joists and the central joist are also pegged (Plate 190). Carpenter's marks are chiselled to the east edge of the westernmost beam, with 'V' towards the northern end and running through to 'IIIV' (i.e. '8') at the southern end, suggesting that the beam continues north under the offices (Plate 191). The joists of the c1730s westernmost bay are in their primary phase of use, although fairly roughly finished and the northernmost is very waney. The westernmost ends of these joists are not fully visible.
- 5.3.7 A large piece of timber runs east-west from the central bay to the west bay in the third space from the north (Plate 192). It may represent an earlier phase or function as it does not align with the surrounding timbers or perform a function in the current structure, other than the later ceiling attached to the underside. It has been cut to let in the westernmost beam and ends short of the easternmost beam.
- 5.3.8 Sawn battens have been fixed to the side of all joists to support the pugging boards, these are likely to date from the c1730s phase.
- 5.3.9 A brick vault is to the west end with what appears to be a further vault beyond under the grey flooring to the west, which was not lifted (Plates 193 & 194). The vault incorporated some reused roof tiles, measuring 240 x 150 x 9mm. No bricks of the vault are fully visible but the composite measurement of a brick would be 225 x 107 x 66mm.
- 5.3.10 A reused roof slate is visible beneath the south jamb of the northernmost door at the east end. The remainder of the visible elements was a lath and plaster ceiling to the rooms below.
- 5.3.11 A temporary floor covering was laid until the stone is sourced (Plate 195).
- 5.3.12 Comparison of the floor structure with that of the east corridor is possible, as shown in the 2013 report by the Jessop Consultancy following the repair of the floor of the east corridor. While the configuration of the two floors is similar, Jessops concluded that some of the east corridor's timbers were reused elements of the stairs of the former staircase, replaced at the time of the extension. In the west corridor, while some of the timbers are reused, it is likely they originate in a similar floor structure, or reconfiguration of the previous floor structure. Jessops state that the iron straps recorded in the east corridor were added later due to ongoing issues to the floor. Although there are also numerous iron fixings to the west corridor floor, these appear to date to the construction of this c1730s extension, with the exception of the remnants of those on the upper surface of the reused joists in the central bay. The sand levelling layer beneath the stone tiles is the same in both floors. There were two phases of alteration and repair noted in the east corridor which were not present in the west corridor: a 19th-century phase of floor repairs and a 1930s installation of piping for a heating system.

## 6 EAST CORRIDOR WALL PAINTINGS

### 6.1 Project Update

- 6.1.1 For several years prior to the beginning of the current project, work has been undertaken to uncover the Baroque wall paintings in the upper floor of the East Staircase. The project has been well-described by conservator and researcher Rhiannon Clarricoates in the 2018 publication *Stowe: Saving an architectural masterpiece* and the opportunity to update the progress of this project has been taken in this report.
- 6.1.2 In summary, as detailed in Clarricoates' chapter, the c1740 painted ceiling 'Fame and Victory' by Francesco Sleter above the staircase and decorated ceiling above the landing were until recently the only prominent decoration of the east staircase (Plates 196 & 197). Clarricoates describes the inclusion of the 'Grand Staircase' paintings in 18th-century guidebooks, however, it appears that two of the paintings named alongside 'Fame and Victory' were lost, likely during the 1770s remodelling. The decoration to the walls had been described as 'warlike pieces' in the same guidebooks. The 'warlike pieces' have now been uncovered sufficiently to be shown to include a figure of Minerva or Athena carrying a shield in a trompe-l'oeil niche on the landing (Plates 198 & 199). Further figures and emblems are being revealed (Plates 200 – 202).
- 6.1.3 Following an investigation by a team lead by Clarricoates in 2016, outlines visible in raking light were investigated further by mechanically removing layers of paint using scalpels in several areas to reveal the earlier painted surface. This was supplemented with analysis of the paint layers and documentary research. The wall paintings are thought to be by William Kent (pers. comm. Clarricoates).
- 6.1.4 The layers of paint over the wall paintings were plain with the exception of the second scheme which comprised a pale stone colour paint with thin, white painted lines to imitate ashlar blockwork (Plates 203 & 204).
- 6.1.5 There are two asymmetrical doors in the west wall and as yet, the relationship to the paintings is unclear (Plate 205). Cracks in the wall have been filled by modern filler, there is also chasing for cables and electrical equipment fitted to the walls and so the extent of survival is uncertain, although it is evident that the majority of the paintings survive well.

## **7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 7.1.1 Historic building recording works have been undertaken by Oxford Archaeology at Stowe House in Buckinghamshire focusing on three rooms in the western part of the house. The work related to a programme of conservation and repair works at the house and it was undertaken as conditions of planning approval and listed building consent.
- 7.1.2 The three rooms covered by the recording were each constructed as part of the major 18th-century remodelling of the house. . The State Dining Room was established in the 1740s, initially comprising a gallery but having been converted to the State Dining Room by 1817; the West Corridor was formed between 1733-1750 due to the reconfiguration of the Great Parlour; and the State Drawing Room was constructed in 1776.
- 7.1.3 Detailed recording (including photogrammetry) was undertaken prior to the start of conservation works to document the floor surfaces, walls and the fine ceiling in the Temple Room. Further recording was then undertaken during intrusive conservation works, in the form of an intermittent watching brief.
- 7.1.4 The investigation has provided a fuller understanding of these areas of the house, particularly with regard the construction of the building and areas that are normally obscured.

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## APPENDIX B LISTED BUILDING DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

### Official list entry

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: I

List Entry Number: 1289788

Date first listed: 25-Sep-1951

Date of most recent amendment: 21-Apr-1983

Statutory Address: THE MANSION WITH ATTACHED SERVICE RANGES (NOW NUGENT HOUSE, COBHAM HOUSE AND GRAFTON HOUSE)

National Grid Reference: SP 67463 37436

### Details

Mansion of 1680 by William Cleare for Sir Richard Temple. Greatly altered and enlarged in stages until 1779, by Vanbrugh in the 1720's for Viscount Cobham, Gibbs 1740's for Lord Cobham. Work also by Leoni and Kent.

South front 1771 by Thomas Pitt (Lord Camelford) based on design of Robert Adam, for Earl Temple. North front: stucco with stone portico and dressings. Roof concealed by balustraded parapet. Three storeys and basement, cornice at second floor. Eleven bays, the two end bays projecting; sash windows, architraves only to end bays. Central portico with steps and flanking stone lions. Ionic pilasters, 4 Ionic columns, design attributed to Vanbrugh or Leoni. Curved Ionic colonnades added 1771-2 by William Ride, perhaps to designs by Pitt or Lord Temple. Screen walls each side with Ionic order. c1780 by Valdre, pierced by pair of tall pedimented gateways leading to the service yards, c1744 by Kent, originally freestanding. (for gateways at right angles, see separate item). South front: ashlar, basement and one lofty storey. Balustraded parapets. Central block with 5-bay corinthian portico with steps, flanked by triple windows under semi-circular tympana. Giant corinthian pilasters each side. Lower colonnaded links, arcaded at basement level, attach centre block to two large pavilions, with giant corinthian pilasters and three bays of triple windows under semi-circular tympana. At each end, a 2-storey arcaded wing of 5 bays with blank arcading, connects to the service wings, now boarding houses, early C18, attributed to Vanbrugh. Stucco with ironstone dressings, slate roofs, eaves cornices two storeys, first floor bands. Nugent House, at the west end, has a central 5 bay block, the central bay projecting and pedimented on both sides. Five arches on the east elevation. Two bay single storey links each side. Northern block pedimented at each end, wooden cupola at east end of roof. Cobham House, at east end of Mansion is similar in design. Grafton House, attached at the east end is similar, with a basement storey faced in ironstone, central pedimented bay with arch, modern Mansard roof.

Interior: North entrance hall decoration before c1732 by Kent. Oval saloon with doric columns and pantheon ceiling. c1780 by Valdre (probably based on design by G F Blondel). Music Room painted by Valdre with 'Pompeian' decoration. Library, in E. link, 7 bays with

ornamental ceiling, Dining Hall, in W. link, ceiling c1750. Two easterly state rooms with late C18 ornamental ceilings. Basement: Gothic library, vestibule and staircase 1805-06 by Soane. Remains of early C19 Egyptian style entrance hall with two carved columns and frieze. First floor: Garter Room ceiling by Borra c.1760 renewed and altered 1930's.

Chapel: upper part, with coffered ceiling. RCHM II p.287 MON.6

### **Sources**

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Buckinghamshire.



C:\Users\charles.rousseau\OXARCH\Desktop\GRAPHICS\STHSEBS\Figure 1\_Master.mxd\charles.rousseau\04/08/2020

Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

Figure 1: Site location





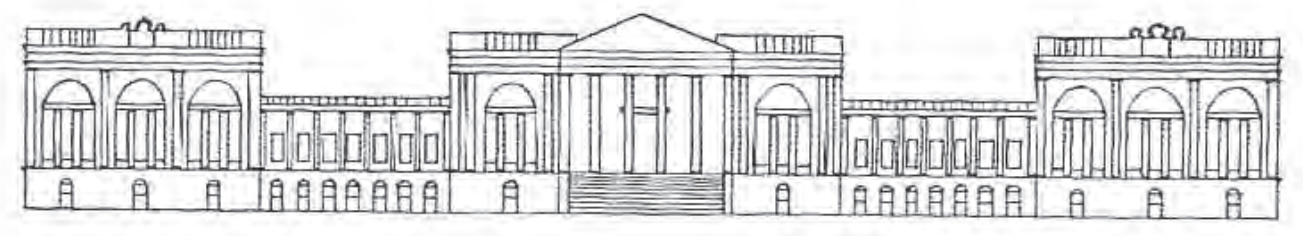
1683 – Sir Richard Temple



1749 – Viscount Cobham



1733 – Viscount Cobham



1779 – Earl Temple

Figure 2: Development of the north elevation, from Bevington, 2002

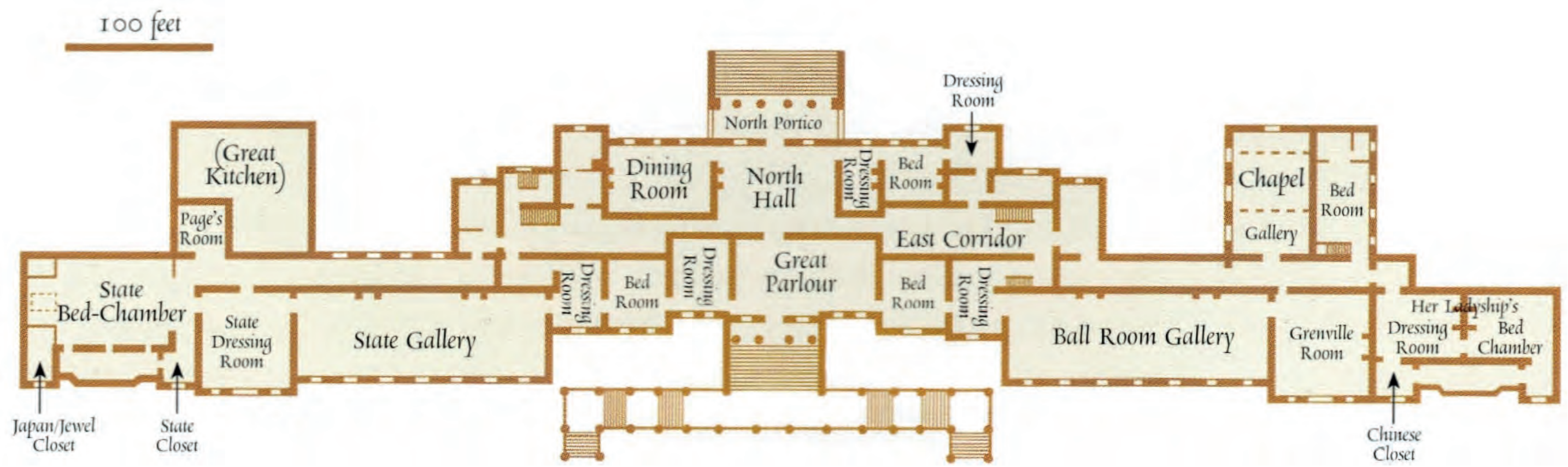


Figure 3: Piano Nobile floor plan of 1759, from Bevington, 2002

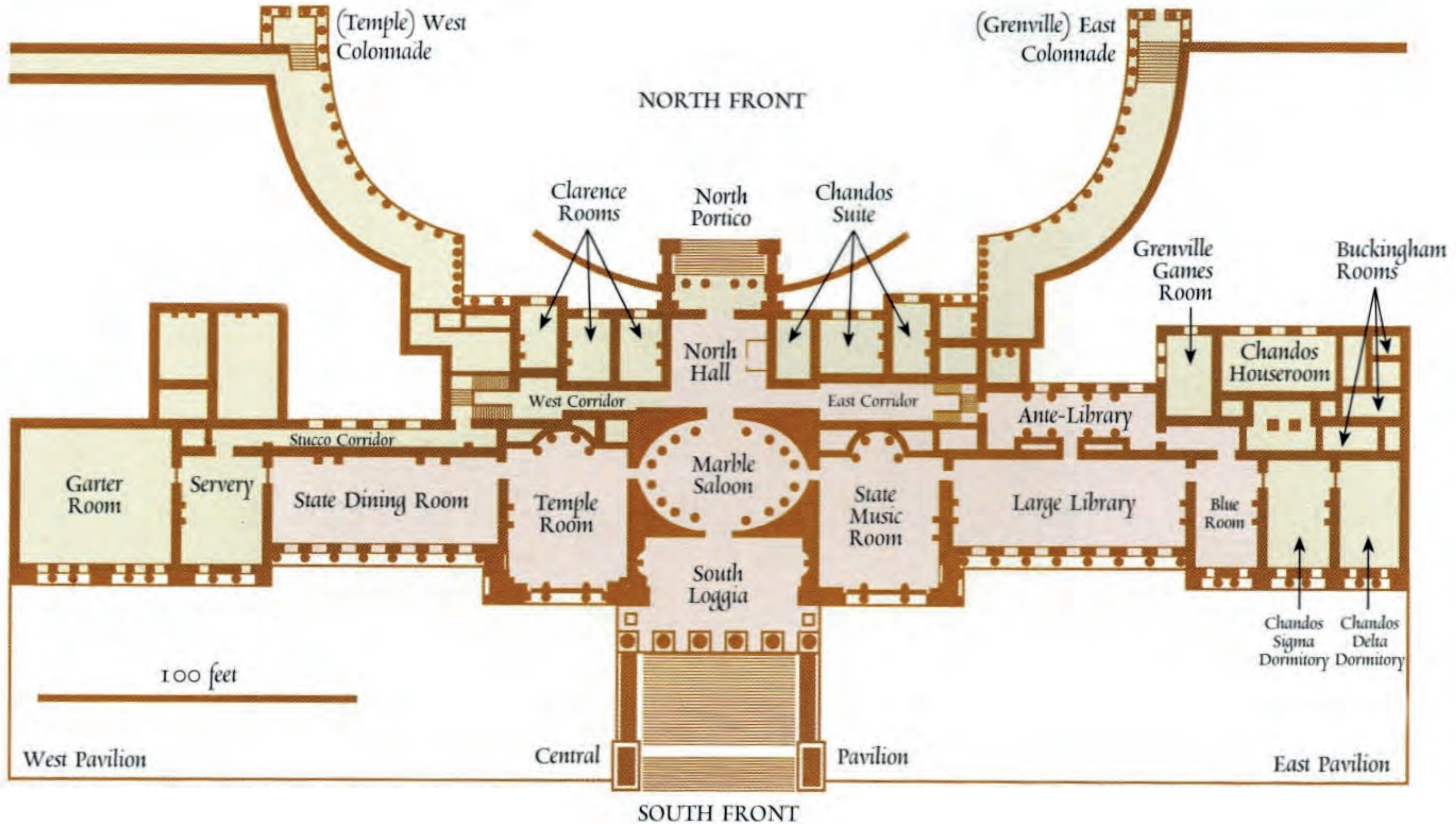
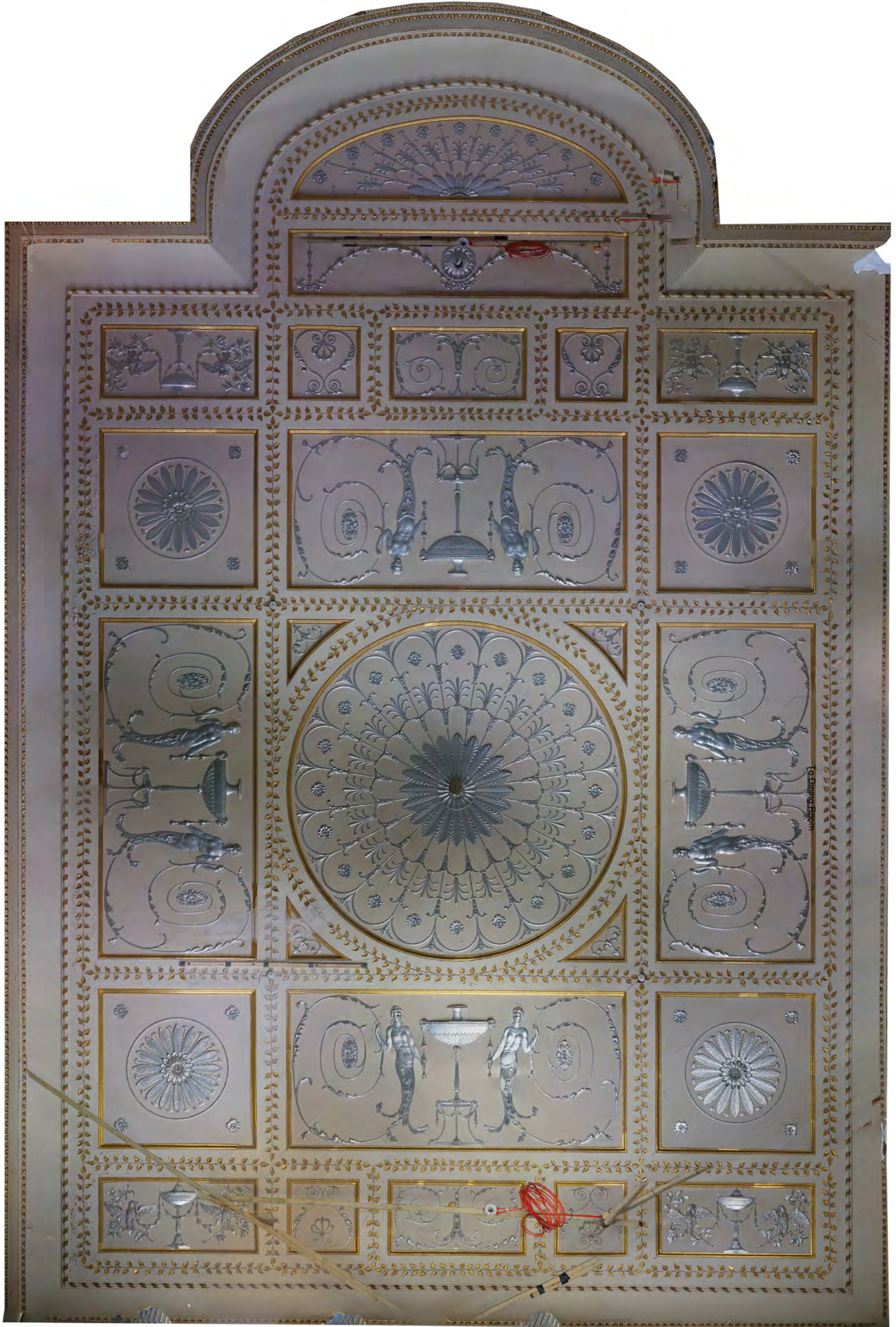


Figure 4: Piano Nobile current floor plan, from Bevington, 2002



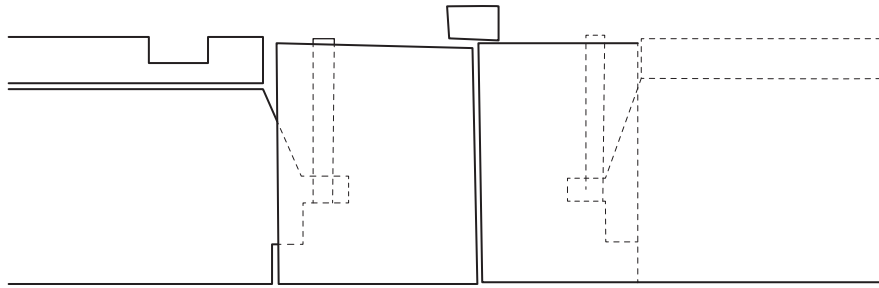
To Dining Room

0 2m  
1:40

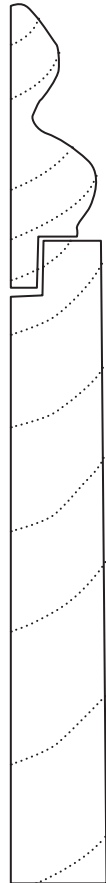
Figure 5: Photogrammetric image of the Temple Room ceiling



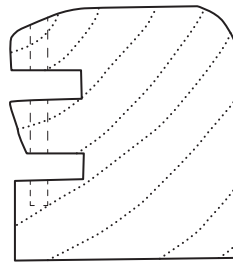
Figure 6: State Drawing Room watercolour by Joseph Nash, 1845



Section 1 - Temple Room floor  
Example of a typical joint between composite  
primary beams (centre) and secondary beams (left and right)



Section 2 - Temple Room floor  
Cross section of skirting board



Section 3 - Dining Room floor  
Example of a redundant mortice  
westface of westernmost beam



Figure 7: Stowe House, Cross sections



0 2m  
1:50

Figure 8: Photogrammetric image of the Temple Room floor

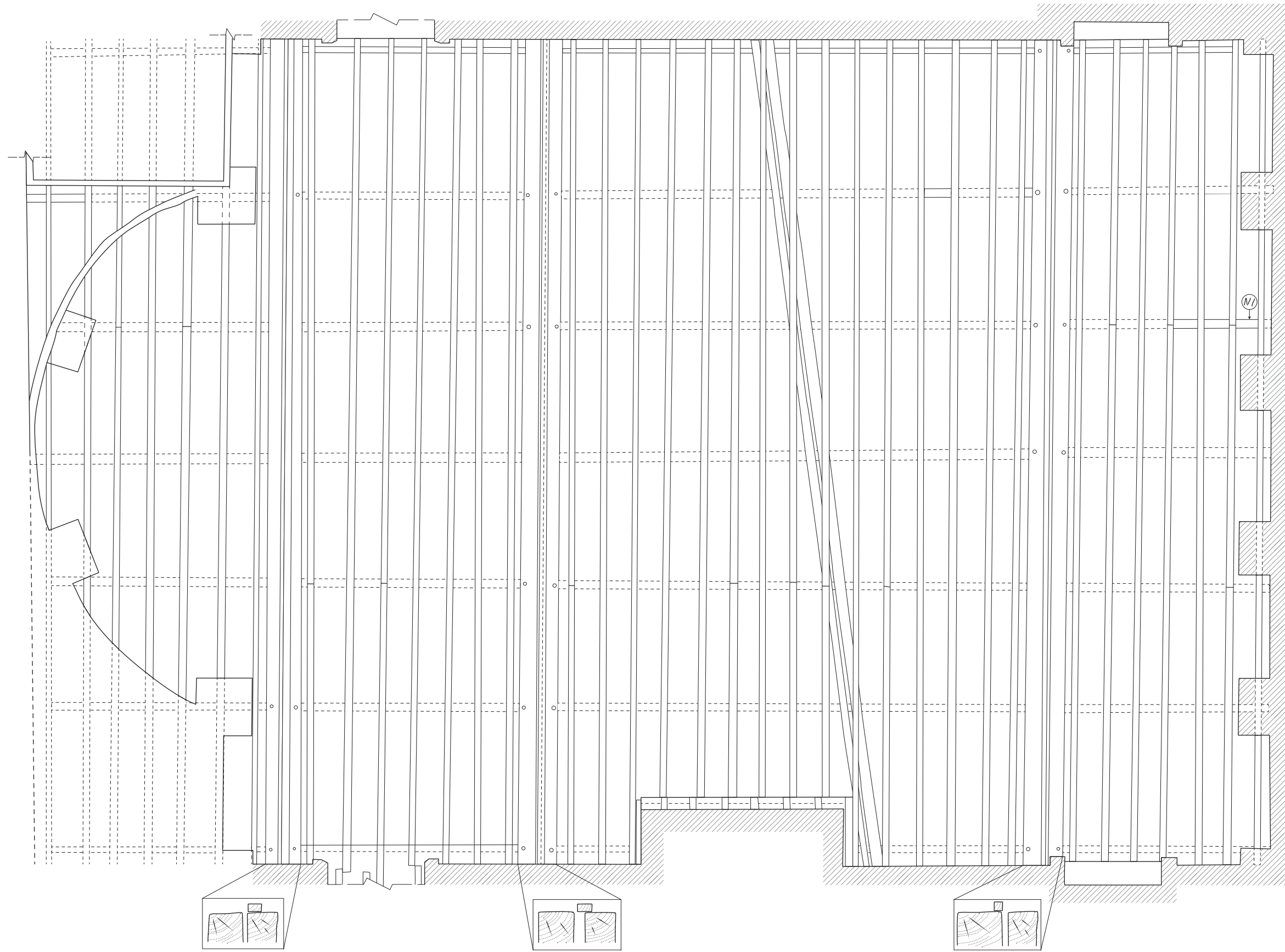
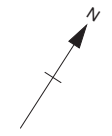
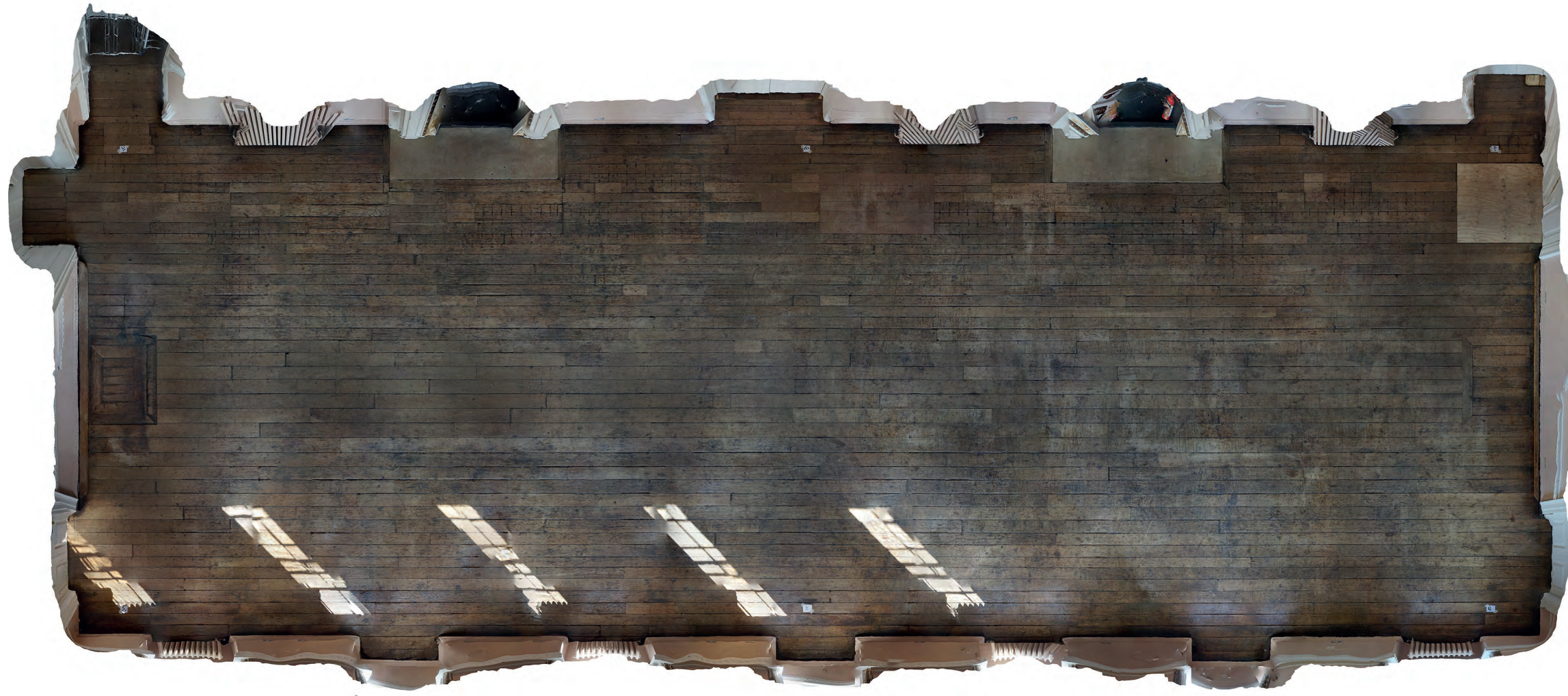


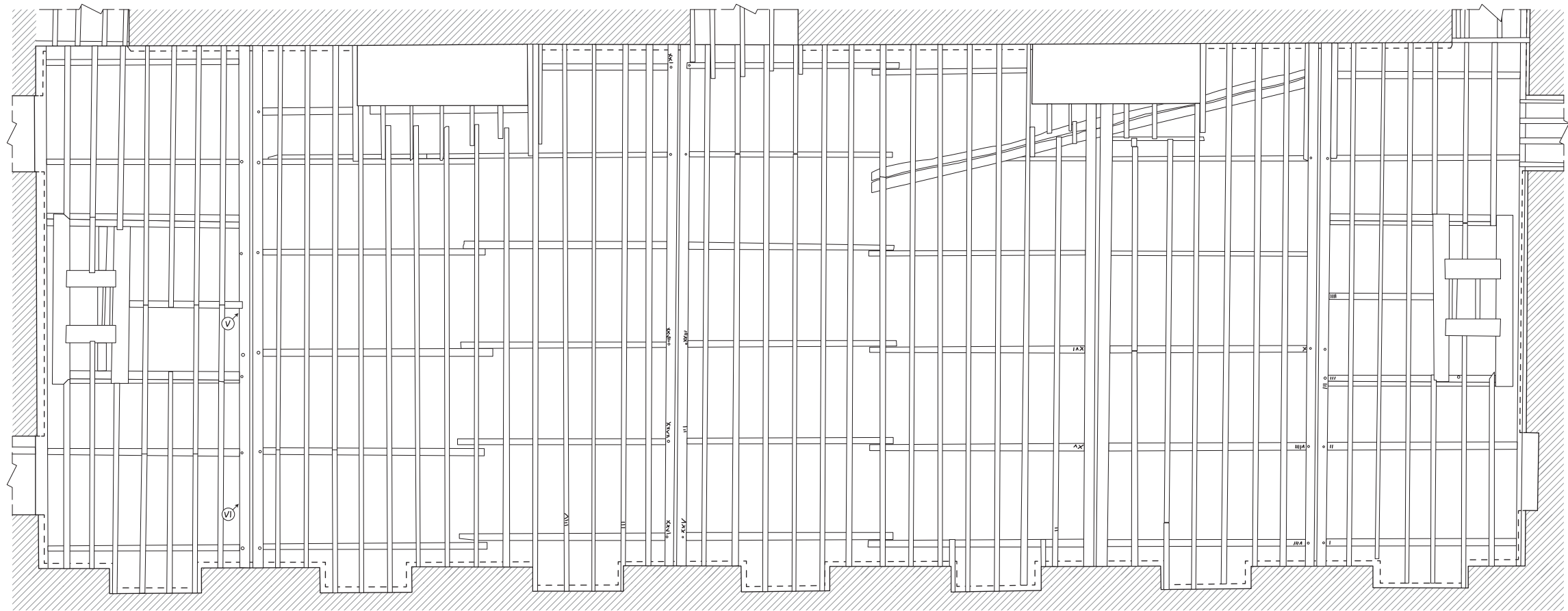
Figure 9: Stowe House, Temple room floor





0 5m  
1:75

Figure 10: Photogrammetric image of the Dining Room floor



0 5m  
1:75

Figure 11: Stowe House, dining room floor

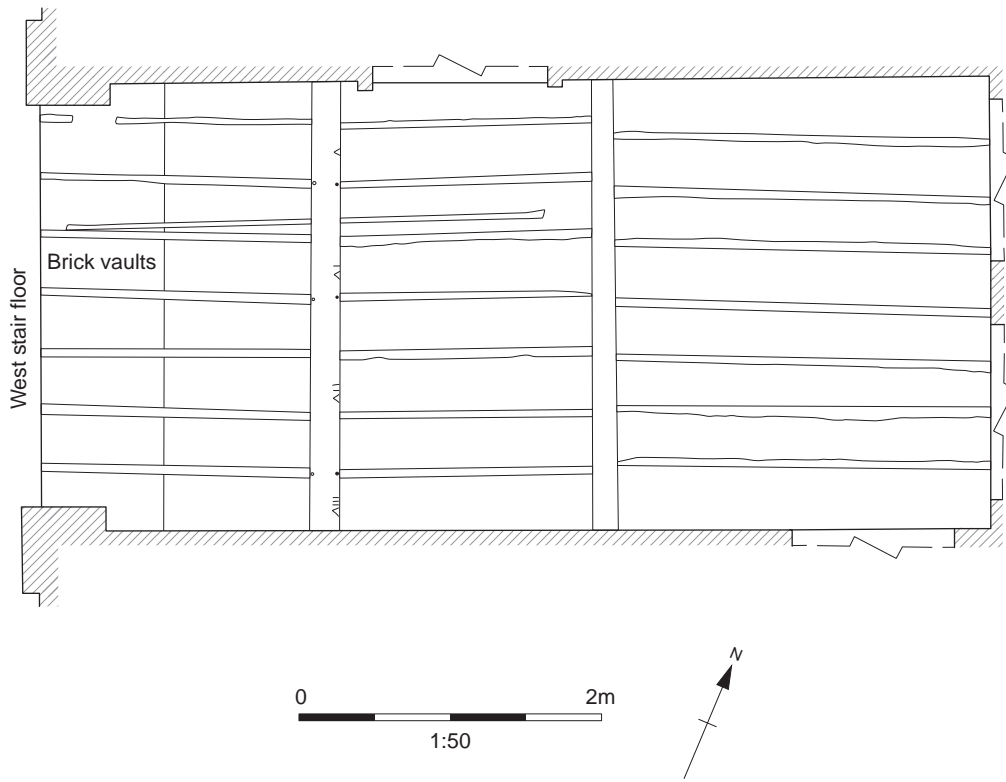


Figure 12: Stowe House, West corridor floor



Plate 1: South elevation



Plate 2: North elevation



Plate 3: Temple Room, east wall, at the start of the project



Plate 4: Temple Room, west wall, at the start of the project



Plate 5: Temple Room, north apse, at the start of the project



Plate 6: Temple Room, partial sequence of decorative finishes



Plate 7: Temple Room, east wall, following the conservation work



Plate 8: Temple Room, west wall, following the conservation work



Plate 9: Temple Room, south wall, following the conservation work



Plate 10: Temple Room, ceiling, during conservation work





Plate 11: Temple Room, ceiling, 1965 panel towards the south east



Plate 12: Temple Room, ceiling, 1965 panel towards the south east



Plate 13: Temple Room, ceiling, example of cracking



Plate 14: Temple Room, ceiling, example of flaking paint



Plate 15: Temple Room, cornice, example of cleaning



Plate 16: Temple Room, cornice, example of graffiti



Plate 17: Temple Room, cornice, example of graffiti



Plate 18: Temple Room, ceiling, following the conservation work



Plate 19: Temple Room, north wall, following stripping



Plate 20: Temple Room, east wall, following stripping



Plate 21: Temple Room, west wall, following stripping



Plate 22: Temple Room, south wall, following stripping



Plate 23: Temple Room, wall, example of boards



Plate 24: Temple Room, wall, hook in the north wall



Plate 25: Temple Room, wall, example of lath and plaster

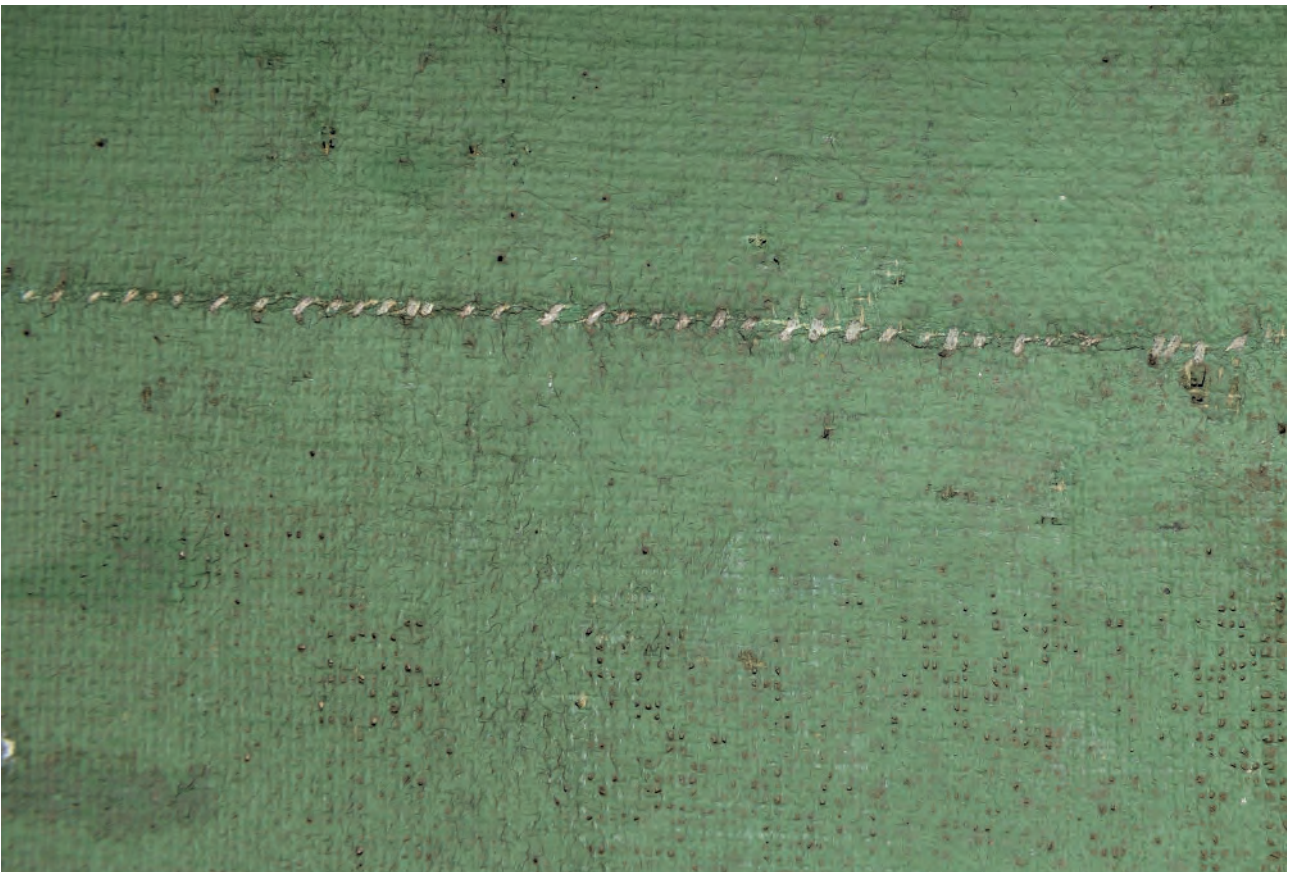


Plate 26: Temple Room, wall, example of hessian stitching





Plate 27: Temple Room, wall, example of strip of hessian remaining around joinery



Plate 28: Temple Room, wall, example of light green paint applied around furniture



Plate 29: Temple Room, wall, example of light green paint fading around pictures



Plate 30: Temple Room, doorway to Dining Room, south return and later brickwork



Plate 31: Temple Room, doorway to Dining Room, north return and later brickwork



Plate 32: Temple Room, west wall, exposed brickwork



Plate 33: Temple Room, west wall, modern brickwork



Plate 34: Temple Room, east wall, exposed brickwork



Plate 35: Temple Room, south wall, exposed brickwork



Plate 36: Temple Room, doorway to Dining Room, graffiti or cartoon



Plate 37: Temple Room, east wall, cupboard



Plate 38: Temple Room, west wall, cupboard



Plate 39: Temple Room, west wall, cupboard



Plate 40: Temple Room, doorway to Dining Room, evidence of panel repair



Plate 41: Temple Room, doorway to Dining Room, south panel



Plate 42: Temple Room, door to Dining Room





Plate 43: Temple Room, door to Dining Room, detail



Plate 44: Temple Room, door to Dining Room, detail



Plate 45: Temple Room, door to Dining Room, damage to moulding



Plate 46: Temple Room, example of stripping moulding



Plate 47: Temple Room, example of regilded moulding



Plate 48: Temple Room, example of door following conservation work



Plate 49: Temple Room, example of skirting



Plate 50: Temple Room, example of skirting



Plate 51: Temple Room, example of chair rail



Plate 52: Temple Room, south wall, example of numbered pilaster



Plate 53: Temple Room, north wall, example of pilaster base construction



Plate 54: Temple Room, 1922 fireplace



Plate 55: Temple Room, 1922 fireplace



Plate 56: Temple Room, 1922 fireplace



Plate 57: Temple Room, following removal of 1922 fireplace



Plate 58: Temple Room, 1922 fireplace construction marks





Plate 59: Temple Room, 1922 fireplace construction marks



Plate 60: Temple Room, 1922 fireplace back



Plate 61: Temple Room, 1922 fireplace back



Plate 62: Temple Room, 1922 fireplace back brick



Plate 63: Temple Room, 1922 fireplace firebrick



Plate 64: Temple Room, fireplace following stripping of 1922 material (provided by Nick Jones of Messenger)



Plate 65: Temple Room, new fireplace



Plate 66: Temple Room, floor, example of floorboard wear



Plate 67: Temple Room, floor, examples of floorboard nails



Plate 68: Temple Room, floor, example of floorboard dowels and discarded cut pieces



Plate 69: Temple Room, floor, example of floorboard end



Plate 70: Temple Room, floor, example of floorboard wear in front of the window



Plate 71: Temple Room, floor, north end, following stripping of floorboards



Plate 72: Temple Room, floor, south end, following stripping of floorboards



Plate 73: Temple Room, floor, west end, following stripping of floorboards



Plate 74: Temple Room, floor, east end, following stripping of floorboards





Plate 75: Temple Room, floor, example of a primary beam



Plate 76: Temple Room, floor, example of ironwork



Plate 77: Temple Room, floor, diagonal beam, looking east



Plate 78: Temple Room, floor, example of joist to secondary beam joint



Plate 79: Temple Room, floor, possible import mark



Plate 80: Temple Room, floor, area of damaged pugging exposing floor structure



Plate 81: Temple Room, floor, section through pugging



Plate 82: Temple Room, floor, upper surface of pugging



Plate 83: Temple Room, floor, following replacement



Plate 84: Void behind Temple Room apse, wall to the north of the void



Plate 85: Void behind Temple Room apse,  
structure of apse



Plate 86: Void behind Temple Room apse, structure of apse

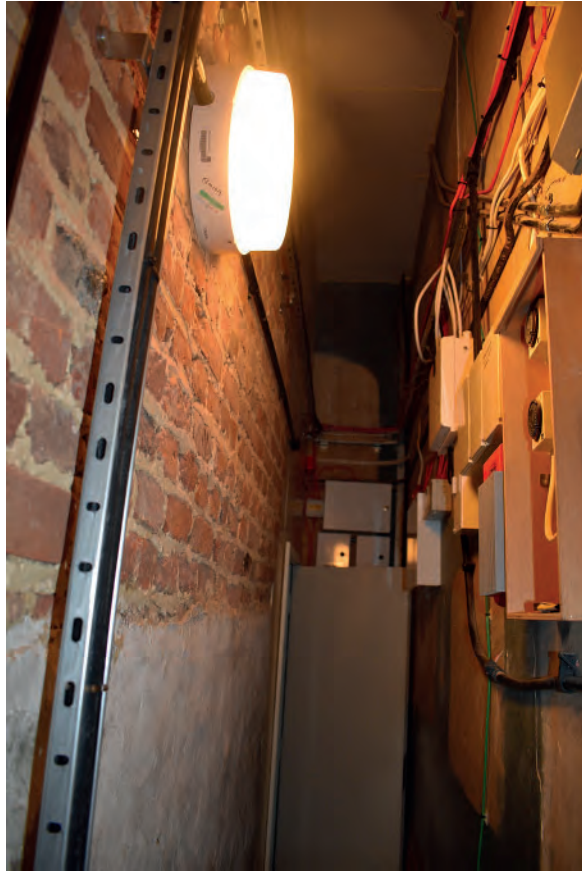


Plate 87: Void behind Temple Room apse, void along the south of the west corridor

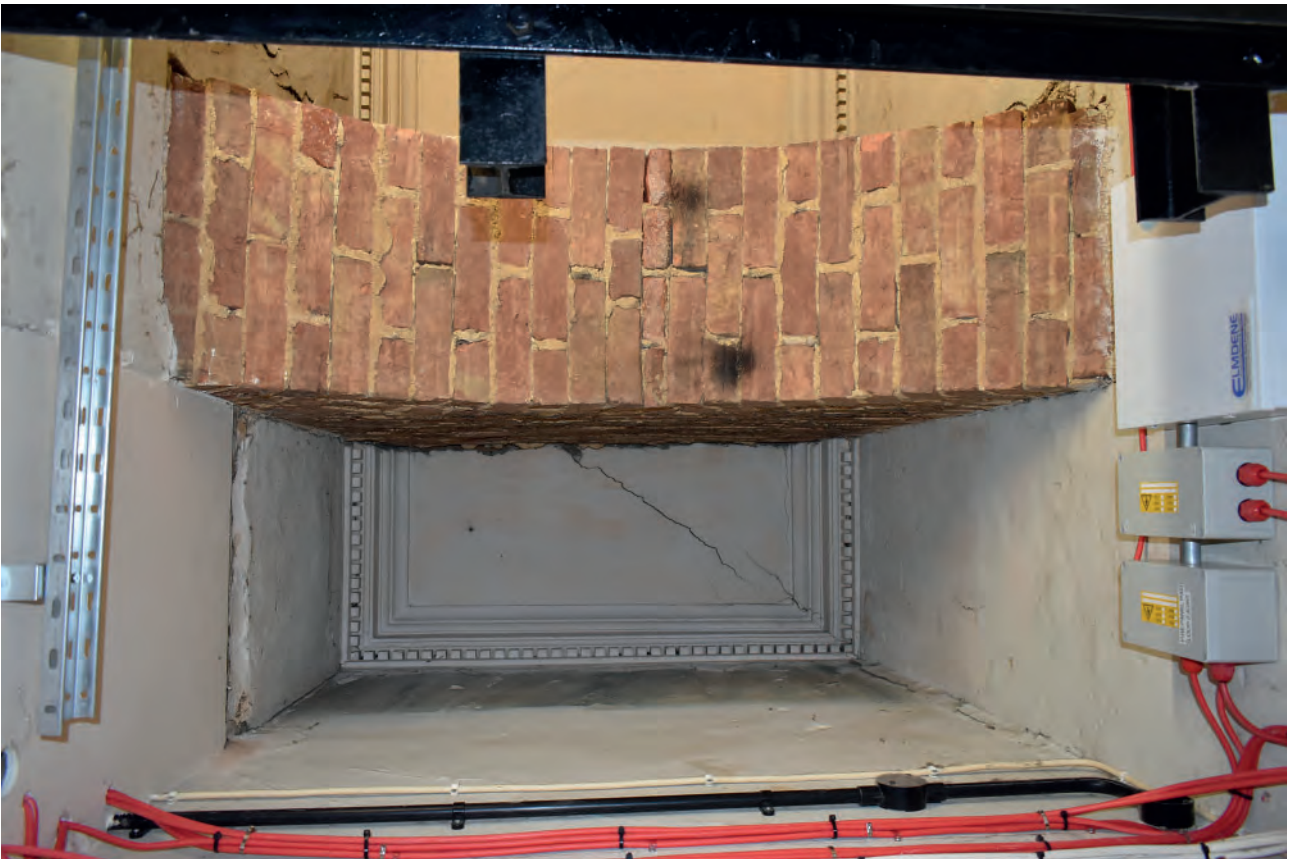


Plate 88: Void behind Temple Room apse, reinforcing brickwork in cleaners' cupboard



Plate 89: Temple Room, finds, example of finds beneath the floorboards



Plate 90: Temple Room, finds, example of finds beneath the floorboards



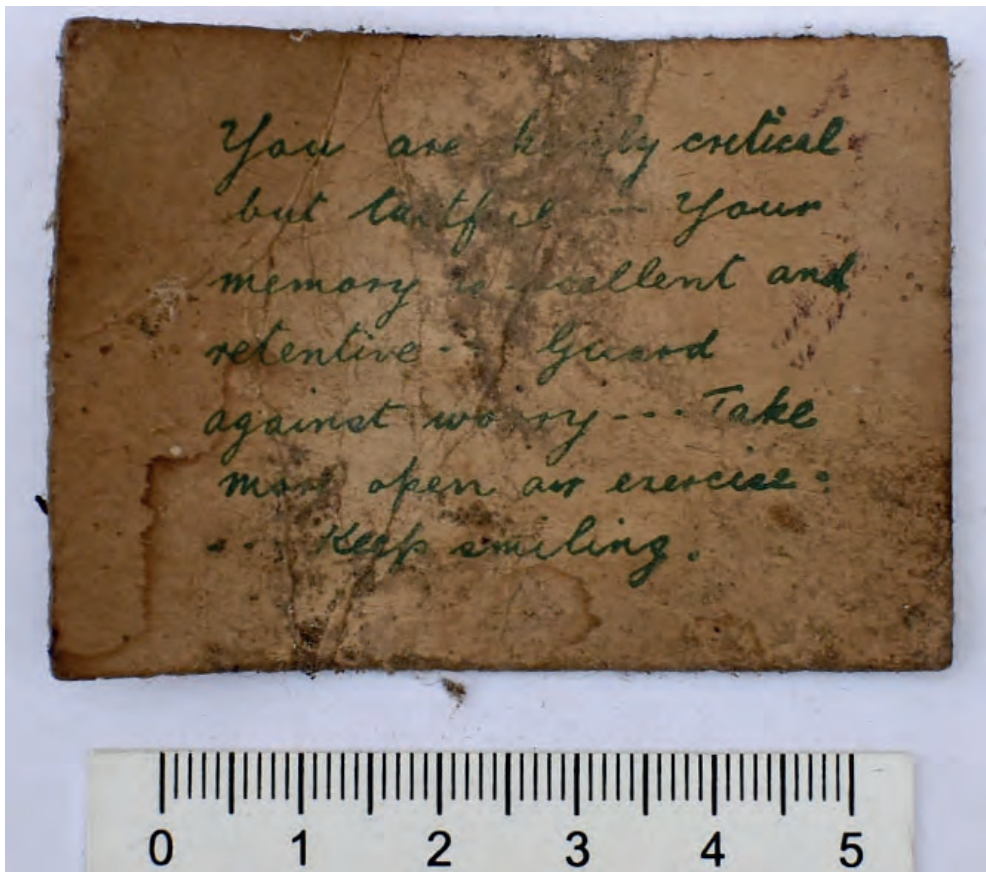


Plate 91: Temple Room, finds, example of finds beneath the floorboards



Plate 92: Temple Room, finds, example of finds beneath the floorboards



Plate 93: Dining Room, north wall, example of an early 20th-century doorway



Plate 94: Dining Room, east wall, at the start of the project



Plate 95: Dining Room, west wall, at the start of the project



Plate 96: Dining Room, south wall, example of windows at the start of the project



Plate 97: Dining Room, example of a radiator to the south wall



Plate 98: Dining Room, example of a radiator to the north wall



Plate 99: Dining Room, example of a later fireplace



Plate 100: Dining Room, example of a later fireplace



Plate 101: Dining Room, ceiling, before conservation work, looking east



Plate 102: Dining Room, ceiling, before conservation work, looking west



Plate 103: Dining Room, preparation for conservation work



Plate 104: Dining Room, ceiling, at the beginning of conservation work



Plate 105: Dining Room, ceiling, example of poor earlier repair



Plate 106: Dining Room, ceiling, example of poor earlier repair





Plate 107: Dining Room, ceiling, example of poor earlier repair



Plate 108: Dining Room, ceiling, example of cracking



Plate 109: Dining Room, ceiling, example of cracking

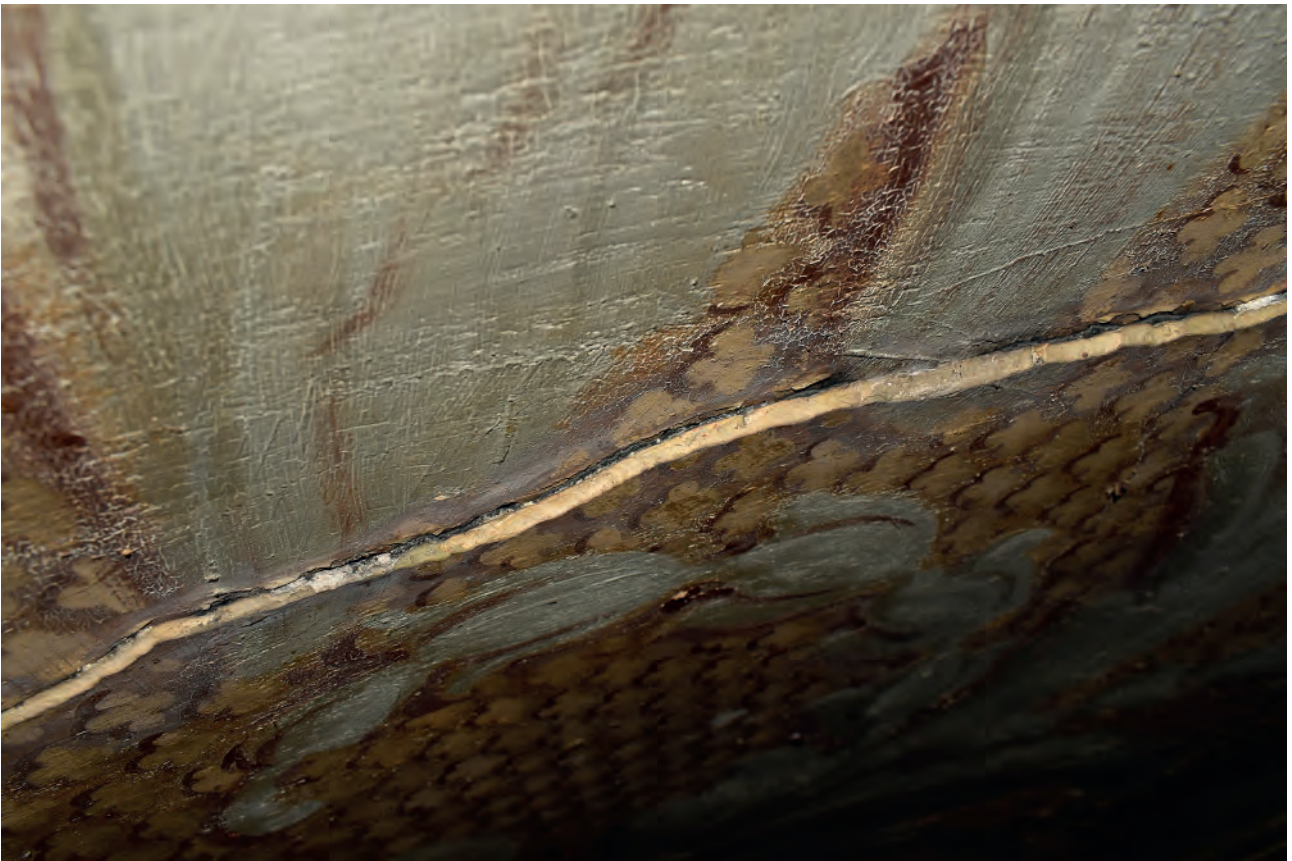


Plate 110: Dining Room, ceiling, example of cracking



Plate 111: Dining Room, ceiling, example of flaking paint



Plate 112: Dining Room, ceiling, example of dirt to decoration



Plate 113: Dining Room, ceiling, example of dirt to decoration



Plate 114: Dining Room, ceiling, example of poor repair and redecoration



Plate 115: Dining Room, ceiling, example of poor repair and redecoration



Plate 116: Dining Room, ceiling, example of poor condition of decorative beam



Plate 117: Dining Room, ceiling, detail of applied decoration



Plate 118: Dining Room, ceiling, example of poor repair of moulding



Plate 119: Dining Room, ceiling, area of damage and poor repair to the west end



Plate 120: Dining Room, ceiling, during repair to the west end



Plate 121: Dining Room, ceiling, example of earlier ceiling repair



Plate 122: Dining Room, ceiling, example of earlier ceiling repair





Plate 123: Dining Room, ceiling, example of a smaller painting



Plate 124: Dining Room, ceiling, detail of a smaller painting



Plate 125: Dining Room, ceiling, detail of a smaller painting



Plate 126: Dining Room, ceiling, signature of the artist



Plate 127: Dining Room, ceiling, signature of the artist



Plate 128: Dining Room, ceiling, example of graffiti



Plate 129: Dining Room, ceiling, example of graffiti



Plate 130: Dining Room, ceiling, example of graffiti

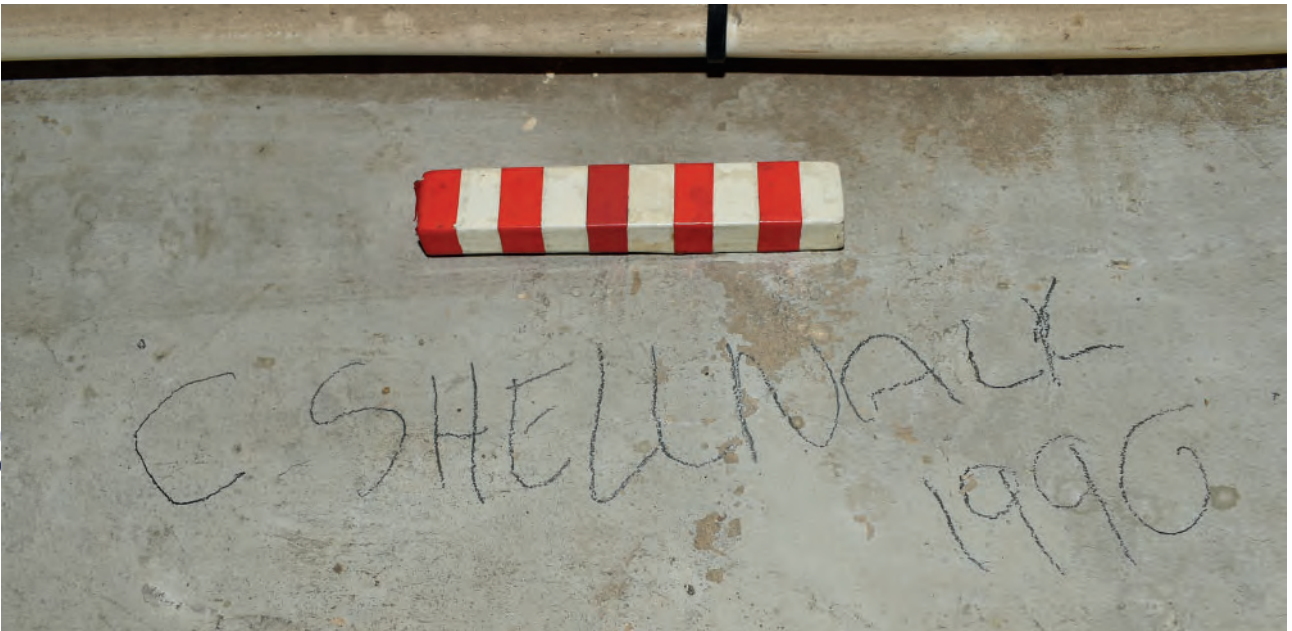


Plate 131: Dining Room, ceiling, example of graffiti



Plate 132: Dining Room, ceiling, example of graffiti



Plate 133: Dining Room, ceiling, redundant gas light fitting



Plate 134: Dining Room, ceiling, detail following conservation



Plate 135: Dining Room, ceiling, following conservation, looking east



Plate 136: Dining Room, wall, example of rough plaster behind wall surface



Plate 137: Dining Room, wall, example of brickwork set behind wall surface



Plate 138: Dining Room, wall, example of relieving arch beneath windows





Plate 139: Dining Room, wall, modern brickwork beneath false door to the east wall



Plate 140: Dining Room, joinery, example of manufacturer's plate to central door



Plate 141: Dining Room, joinery, example of manufacturer's plate to east door



Plate 142: Dining Room, floor, at the start of the project, looking east



Plate 143: Dining Room, floor, at the start of the project, looking west



Plate 144: Dining Room, floor, example of patching of the floorboards



Plate 145: Dining Room, floor, example of patching of the floorboards



Plate 146: Dining Room, floor, example of furniture used to patch the floorboards



Plate 147: Dining Room, floor, example of furniture used to patch the floorboards



Plate 148: Dining Room, floor, example of furniture used to patch the floorboards



Plate 149: Dining Room, floor, example of furniture used to patch the floorboards



Plate 150: Dining Room, floor, example of worn floorboards



Plate 151: Dining Room, floor, example of early repair to the floorboards



Plate 152: Dining Room, floor, the strengthened feature at the west end of the room



Plate 153: Dining Room, floor, following stripping of the floorboards



Plate 154: Dining Room, floor, following stripping of the floorboards





Plate 155: Dining Room, floor, example of a primary beam and ironwork



Plate 156: Dining Room, floor, example of primary and secondary beams and joists with ceiling below



Plate 157: Dining Room, floor, example of ironwork



Plate 158: Dining Room, floor, example of ironwork



Plate 159: Dining Room, floor, example of ironwork



Plate 160: Dining Room, floor, example of ironwork



Plate 161: Dining Room, floor, example of overlapping secondary beams



Plate 162: Dining Room, floor, example of jointed joists



Plate 163: Dining Room, floor, example of joint between a secondary beam and joist



Plate 164: Dining Room, floor, diagonal beam



Plate 165: Dining Room, floor, diagonal beam



Plate 166: Dining Room, floor, strengthened feature at the east end of the room



Plate 167: Dining Room, floor, strengthened feature at the west end of the room



Plate 168: Dining Room, floor, evidence of reconfiguration at the west end of the room



Plate 169: Dining Room, floor, redundant mortice at the west end of the room



Plate 170: Dining Room, floor, example of carpenter's marks





Plate 171: Dining Room, floor, example of carpenter's marks



Plate 172: Dining Room, floor, temporary floor covering



Plate 173: Dining Room, finds, sausage found on coving



Plate 174: West Corridor, floor, before replacement, looking east



Plate 175: West Corridor, floor, example of original stone floor covering



Plate 176: West Corridor, floor, example of original stone floor covering



Plate 177: West Corridor, floor, example of concrete repair



Plate 178: West Corridor, floor, example of concrete repair



Plate 179: West Corridor, floor, example of concrete repair



Plate 180: West Corridor, floor, example of concrete repair



Plate 181: West Corridor, floor, example of concrete repair



Plate 182: West Corridor, floor, later floor covering to west



Plate 183: East Corridor, floor following repair work in 2013



Plate 184: West Corridor, floor, sandy levelling layer (provided by Nick Jones of Messenger)



Plate 185: West Corridor, floor, sandy levelling layer



Plate 186: West Corridor, floor, exposed pugging boards, looking east





Plate 187: West Corridor, floor, exposed pugging boards, looking west



Plate 188: West Corridor, floor, hole in the east end of the pugging boards



Plate 189: West Corridor, floor, detail of the altered easternmost beam



Plate 190: West Corridor, floor, example of the joint between joists and westernmost beam



Plate 191: West Corridor, floor, example of carpenter's marks to the westernmost beam

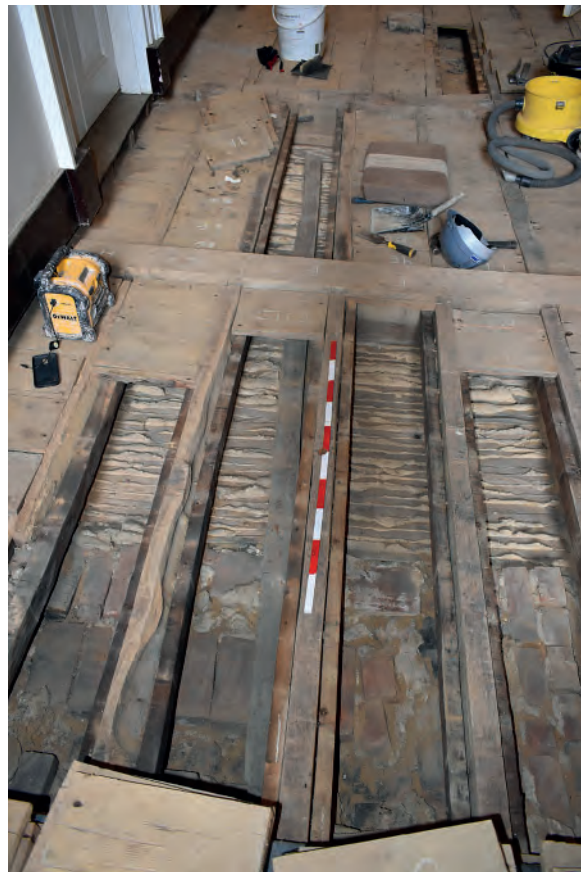


Plate 192: West Corridor, floor, additional timber, looking east



Plate 193: West Corridor, floor, brick vault beneath floor, looking west



Plate 194: West Corridor, floor, brick vault beneath floor, looking west



Plate 195: West Corridor, floor, temporary floor covering



Plate 196: East Corridor Wall Paintings, ceiling above stairs



Plate 197: East Corridor Wall Paintings, ceiling above landing



Plate 198: East Corridor Wall Paintings, north wall



Plate 199: East Corridor Wall Paintings, north west corner



Plate 200: East Corridor Wall Paintings, example of emerging detail



Plate 201: East Corridor Wall Paintings, example of emerging detail

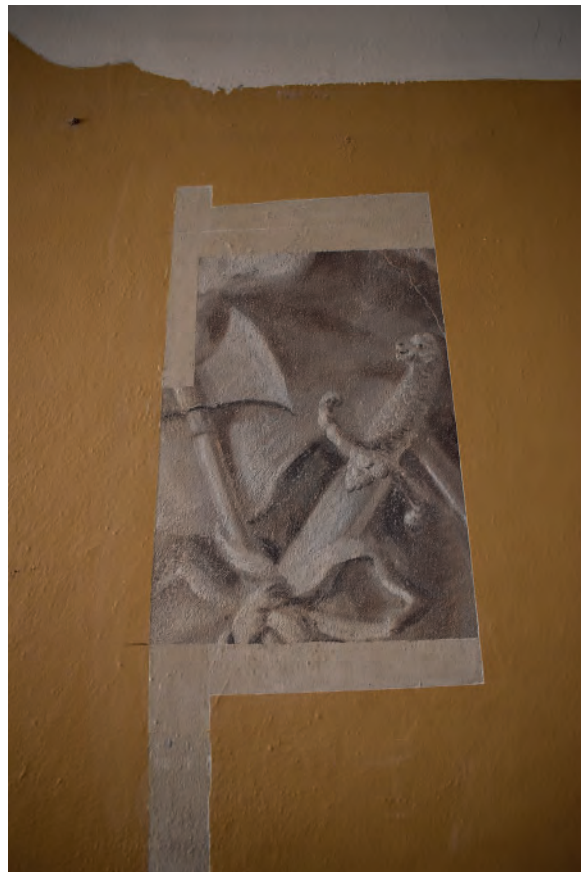


Plate 202: East Corridor Wall Paintings, example of emerging detail





Plate 203: East Corridor Wall Paintings, example of second phase of decoration



Plate 204: East Corridor Wall Paintings, example of sequence of layers of finishes



Plate 205: East Corridor Wall Paintings, west wall





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