



KINMEL HALL

St. GEORGES

ABERGELE

CONWY

NORTH WALES

A Report on the Current Condition of the Hall

FOREWORD
'TRAGEDY TO TRIUMPH'
Courtesy of Mrs Elaine Boxhall nee Southern
PE Teacher 1950 – 55
Clarendon school for Girls
KINMEL HALL
1946 – 1975
By the Marquess of Anglesey,
DL, FSA, FR Hist S, Hon FRIBA, FRSL.

When I first heard that a Mr Vince was going to restore Kinmel Hall, I thought that he must be a madman. Soon though, I realised, particularly after first meeting him, that he was not only very sane indeed but that he was also well named. The dictionary definition of invincible is "incapable of being conquered, overcome, or subdued; insuperable". This sums up a vital part of the character of my friend Eddy. I soon discovered that the sure foundation of his invincibility is his unshakeable belief in the Christian God and the efficacy of prayer.

The Historic Buildings Council for Wales, of which I have the honour to be chairman, has the statutory duty, amongst others, of advising the Secretary of State on the giving of grants, for the structural repairs, to owners of outstanding historic buildings. After the awful fire at Kinmel we were all in despair. Here was one of Britain's (not just Wales') greatest and largest Victorian country houses ~ a veritable palace and an architectural gem ~in real danger of decay and demolition. The lack of an owner with a potential use in mind, and, just as vital, the means to effect the extensive and expensive repairs which were essential, seemed as inevitable as anything in this world.

I recollect that before the fire, Clarendon School had applied for grant aid towards the repairs necessary to just some of William Eden Nesfield's splendid chimneys. The sums required for these alone were enormous

How much vaster, then, was to be the cost of the post-fire structural costs! On top of these, of course, was the expense of interior decoration and all the large variety of works which, under the Historic Buildings Act of 1953, would not qualify for grant. The amount of taxpayers' money available for assistance to all the eligible historic buildings in the Principality is, naturally, limited.

Nevertheless, the tremendous importance of Kinmel architecturally and the wonderful enthusiasm and competence of its new owner, ensured that something approaching 40% of all structural repairs would be made available over the years. Not only is a very important part of Britain's heritage saved from extinction, but its new users are eminently excellent both from a spiritual and a social point of view.

In my thirty years of service on the Historic Buildings Council for Wales, I can honestly say that none of our numerous tasks of rescue and revival, repair and restitution has given me such profound satisfaction and joy.

Working in close partnership with Eddy Vince, on his great project, has been a prodigious privilege for all the Council's members and for the Welsh Office staff, especially the architectural assessor, Douglas Hogg. To have been participants in a miracle of this nature makes one at once humble and proud.

Mrs. Boxhall's excellent and telling account of the way in which things proceeded is indeed worthy of the subject. Higher praise cannot be given.

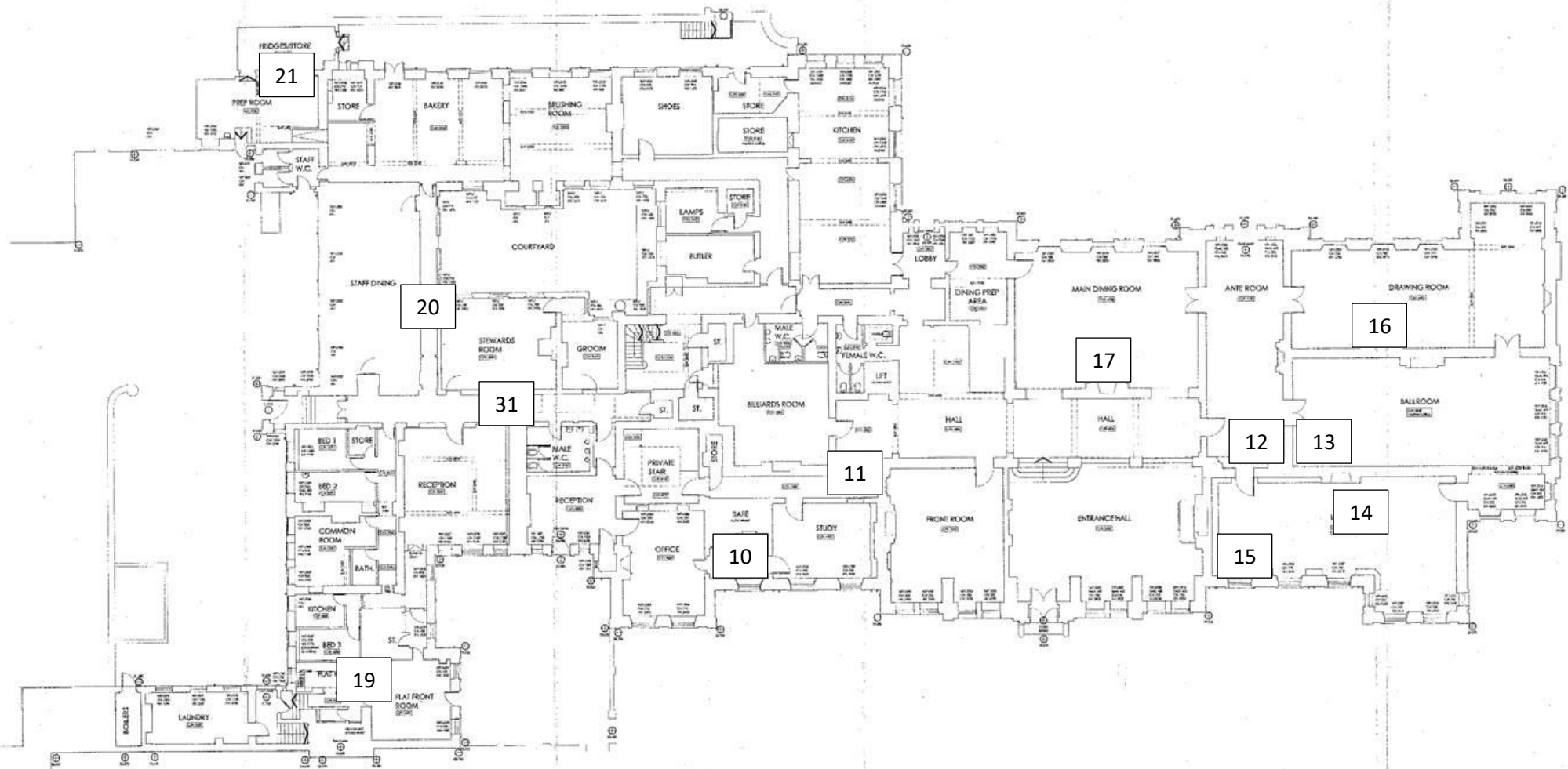
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The following pages show plans of the Hall as
it appears today.

The numbers super imposed on these plans
are the page numbers that refer to the
current state of that part of the Hall.

The details are not complete but go a long
way to show how the Hall has deteriorated
as a result of 14 years of Neglect, Vandalism
and Theft

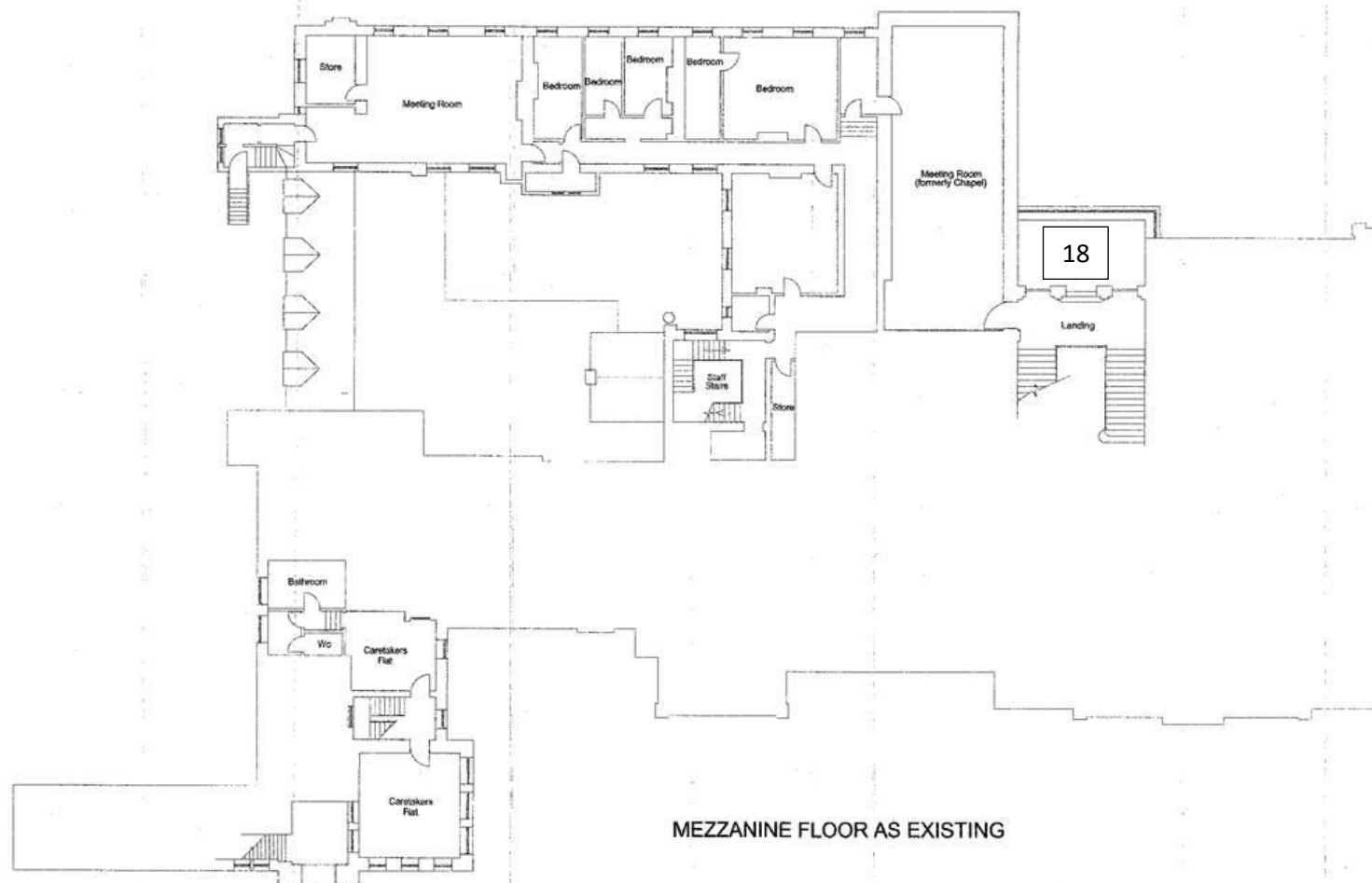
GROUND and FIRST FLOOR PLANS - AS EXISTING Scale 1:100



CONVERSION OF KINMEL HALL, ABERGELE to HOTEL for DERBYSHIRE INVESTMENTS LTD

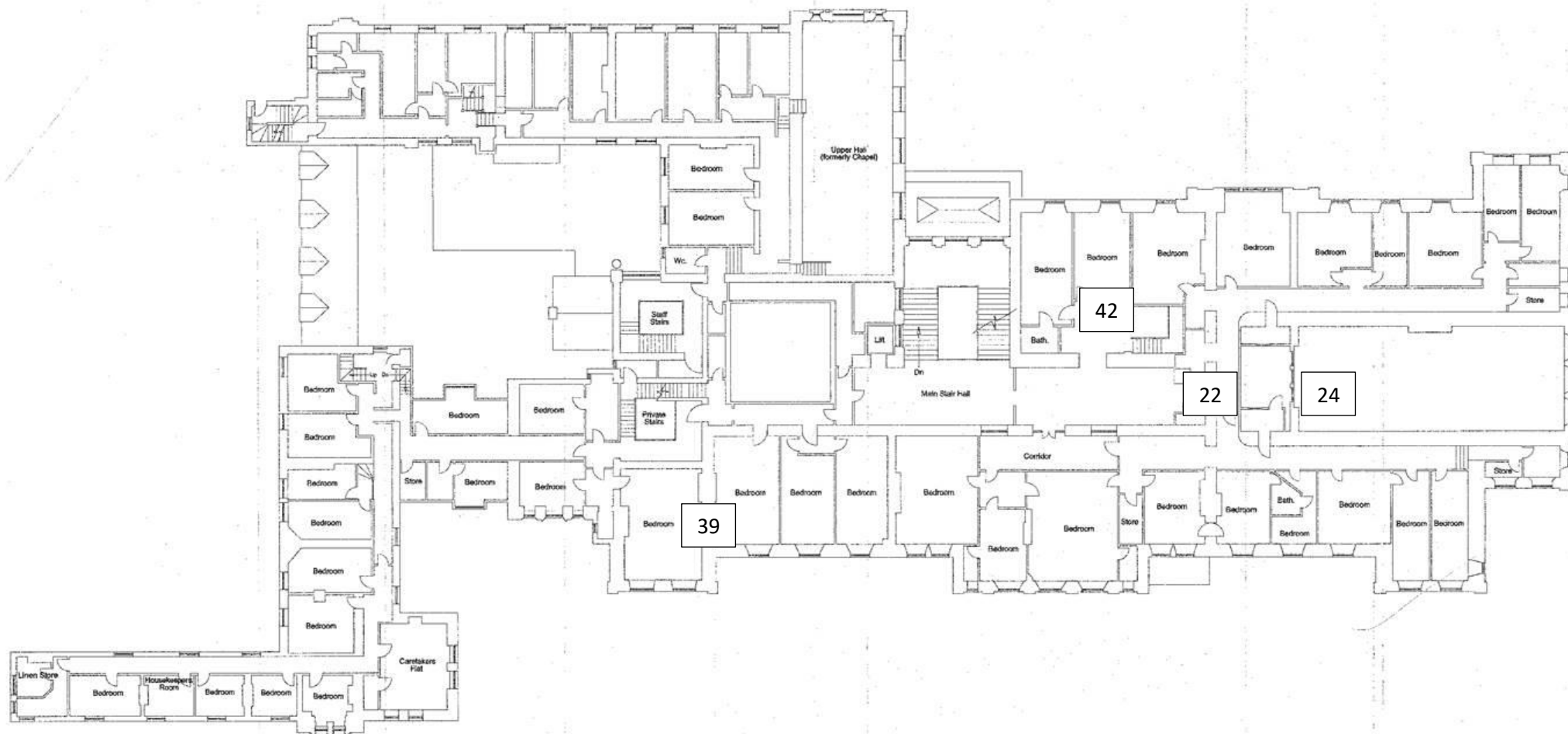
<p>DERBYSHIRE INVESTMENTS LTD CONVERSION OF KINMEL HALL KINMEL, ABERGELE, CONWY</p>	
<p>PROJECT Main Hall Ground floor plan - existing</p>	
<p>DATE 18.01.08</p>	<p>SCALE 1:100 @ A0</p>

MEZZANINE FLOOR PLAN - AS EXISTING Scale 1:100



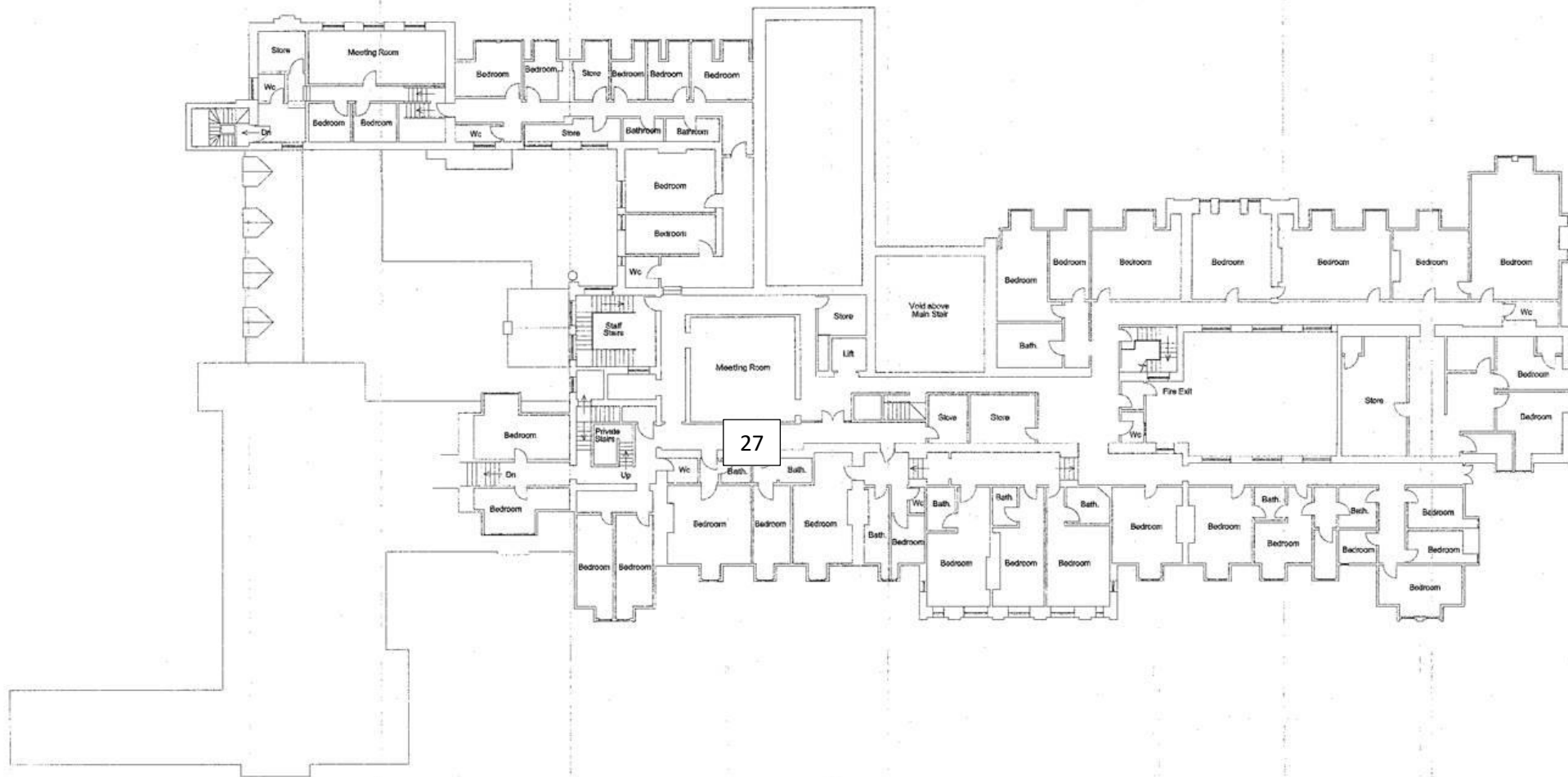
MEZZANINE FLOOR AS EXISTING

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FIRST FLOOR AS EXISTING

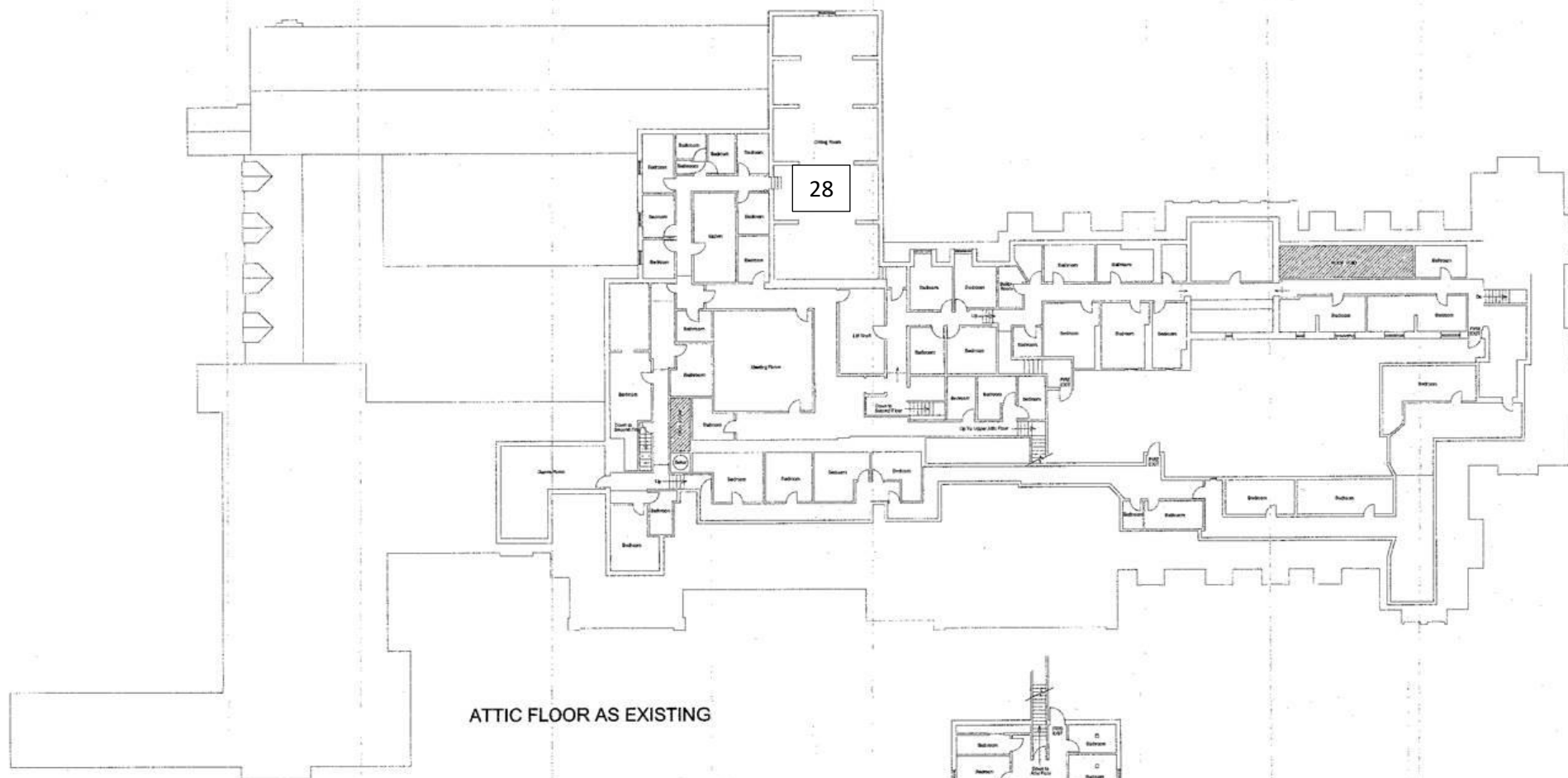
SECOND FLOOR PLAN - AS EXISTING Scale 1:100



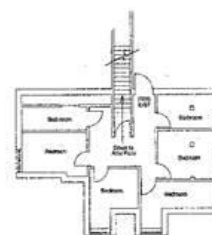
SECOND FLOOR AS EXISTING

CONVERSION OF KINMEL HALL, ABERGELE to HOTEL for DERBYSHIRE INVESTMENTS LTD

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ATTIC FLOOR AS EXISTING



UPPER ATTIC FLOOR

<p>DERBYSHIRE INVESTMENTS LTD 100, 101 & 102 103, 104 & 105 106, 107 & 108 109, 110 & 111 112, 113 & 114 115, 116 & 117 118, 119 & 120 121, 122 & 123 124, 125 & 126 127, 128 & 129 130, 131 & 132 133, 134 & 135 136, 137 & 138 139, 140 & 141 142, 143 & 144 145, 146 & 147 148, 149 & 150 151, 152 & 153 154, 155 & 156 157, 158 & 159 160, 161 & 162 163, 164 & 165 166, 167 & 168 169, 170 & 171 172, 173 & 174 175, 176 & 177 178, 179 & 180 181, 182 & 183 184, 185 & 186 187, 188 & 189 190, 191 & 192 193, 194 & 195 196, 197 & 198 199, 200 & 201 202, 203 & 204 205, 206 & 207 208, 209 & 210 211, 212 & 213 214, 215 & 216 217, 218 & 219 220, 221 & 222 223, 224 & 225 226, 227 & 228 229, 230 & 231 232, 233 & 234 235, 236 & 237 238, 239 & 240 241, 242 & 243 244, 245 & 246 247, 248 & 249 250, 251 & 252 253, 254 & 255 256, 257 & 258 259, 260 & 261 262, 263 & 264 265, 266 & 267 268, 269 & 270 271, 272 & 273 274, 275 & 276 277, 278 & 279 280, 281 & 282 283, 284 & 285 286, 287 & 288 289, 290 & 291 292, 293 & 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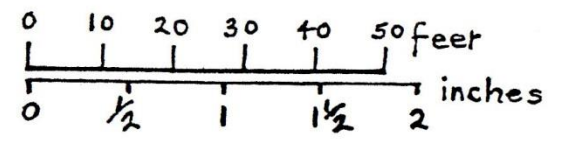
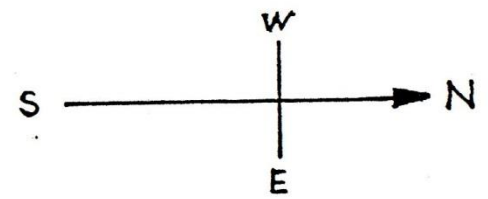
34

Stables

32

33

KINMEL HALL PLANS



THIS FIREPLACE SHOULD HAVE
BLUE AND WHITE DELFT TILES ON
EITHER SIDE. THEY ARE NOW ON
THE FLOOR SMASHED



SAFE IS ON THE RIGHT OF THIS
FIREPLACE



This is the door way from the Main Hall leading to the Reception.

These are the doors to the Library and Ballroom (Please see details of guttering problem later in report as to cause





This is the Ballroom. There is water damage to the underside of the Minstrel Gallery



WATER FROM BLOCKED GUTTER MAY HAVE TRACKED ALONG STEEL GIRDERS AND VOIDS TO CASEMENT WINDOWS. WHEN THE SHUTTERS ARE CLOSED THE PANELLING BEHIND IS WARPED AND CRACKED
SHUTTERS ARE NOW CLOSED AND SCREWED SHUT INTO THE WINDOW FRAMES THEMSELVES



Queen Victoria's Coat of Arms and Hugh Robert Hughes' Coat of Arms were removed on the evening of the 9th October 2013. The people responsible tried to remove the whole Fireplace without success.



This is the Fire place on the West facing wall of the Drawing Room it was damaged at the same time as the others.



This is the Dining Room Fireplace
which was also damaged in October
2013





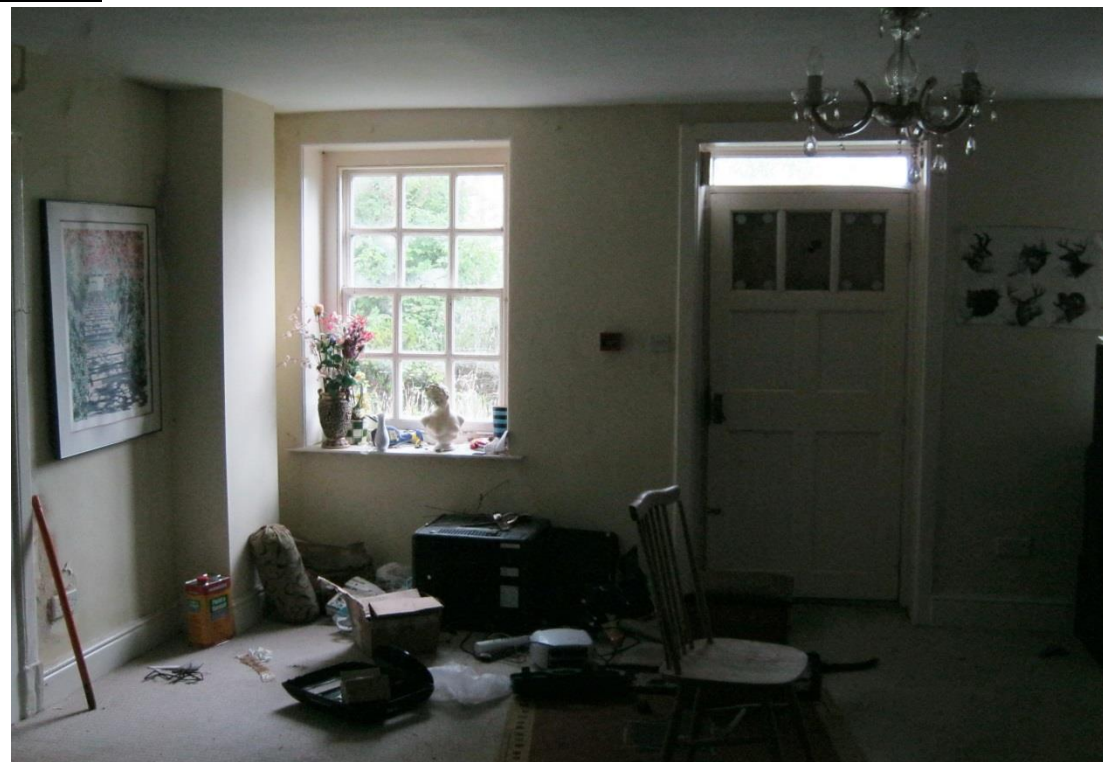
A panel of Marble installed 1936 – 40 has been smashed whilst trying to be removed



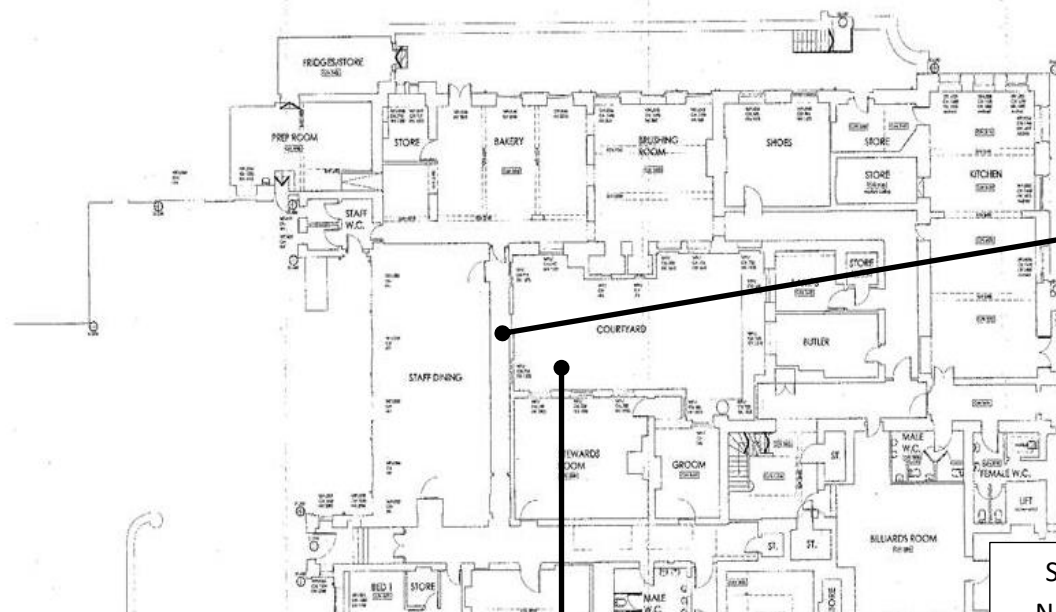


25TH OCTOBER 2011

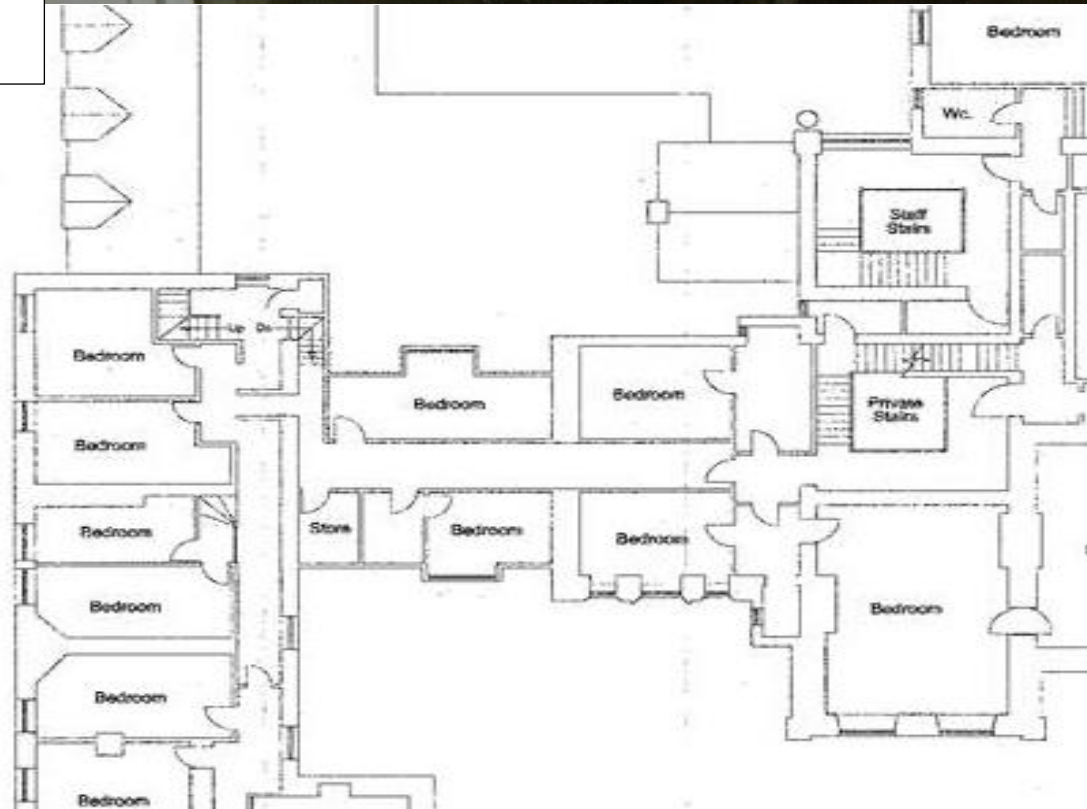
14TH AUGUST 2013



GROUND and FIRST FLOOR PLANS - AS EXISTING Scale 1:100



SEE
NEXT
PAGE





THE CEILING TO THE RIGHT OF THE DOME HAS COLLAPSED ONTO THE FLOOR REVEALING THE LATHS UNDERNEATH

THE WALL WITH THE ARCHITRAVING IS WHERE THE GUTTER IS THAT KEEPS BLOCKING

During the rebuilding of Kinmel Hall an error was made with the drainage that runs across the roof of the Ballroom adjoining the end wall of the SECOND FLOOR Corridor (as shown in the photo).

In the top end of the Down Pipe that runs down the far left hand corner at the back of the ballroom a leaf trap was inserted to stop debris getting into the pipe

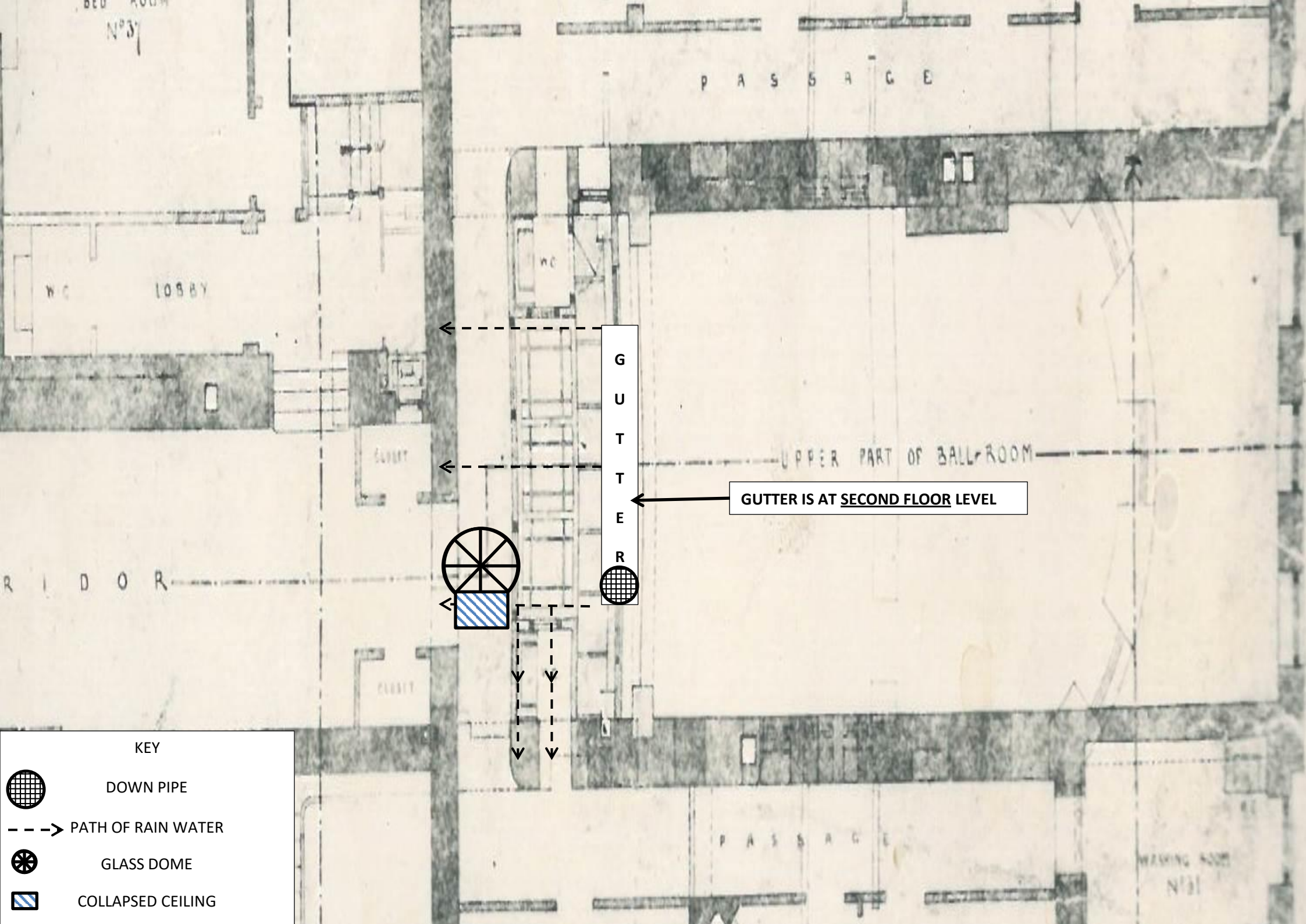
Unfortunately it was put in upside down

As a result, at regular intervals, the Trap becomes blocked with leaves etc. As a result the Gutter (shown in the plans) fills with rainwater, which then seeps under the lead flashing and into the building. For the most part the water finds its way to the void containing the Down Pipe that is supposed to get rid of the water. This may also be the cause of the Dry Rot on the back wall of the Drawing Room and Ball Room.





Following a recent visit to the Hall it would appear that the damp has affected the ceiling of the First Floor Landing.

As the Hall is built on a Steel Scaffold it is possible that there are voids running through the ceilings of the hall – as there are under the floor of the Salon – allowing the damp to penetrate wider than the single wall affected directly by the blocked gutter which may be part of the reason for the Dry Rot in the casement of the Library Windows

Due to Kinmel's design it is UNLIKELY that damp has penetrated from the outside unless the trenches have become water logged or blocked



KEY

-  DOWN PIPE
-  PATH OF RAIN WATER
-  GLASS DOME
-  COLLAPSED CEILING

THE GUTTER CAUSING THE PROBLEM IS UNDERNEATH
THE FIRE ESCAPE ACCESSED FROM THE SECOND FLOOR
LANDING





This is the Second Floor Landing on the East Front. The Collapsed Ceiling is a long standing problem due to a leak in the roof



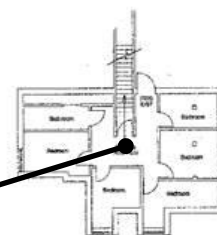
There is a collapsed section of ceiling just out of shot at the top right hand corner of this picture which shows the room in the roof of the Chapel.

Staircase is rotten on both flights

ATTIC FLOOR AS EXISTING

Several rooms in the tower show signs of water damage

Several rooms in the tower show damp and exposed burnt beams that are from the 75 fire. These were checked and found to be safe in 78 - 84

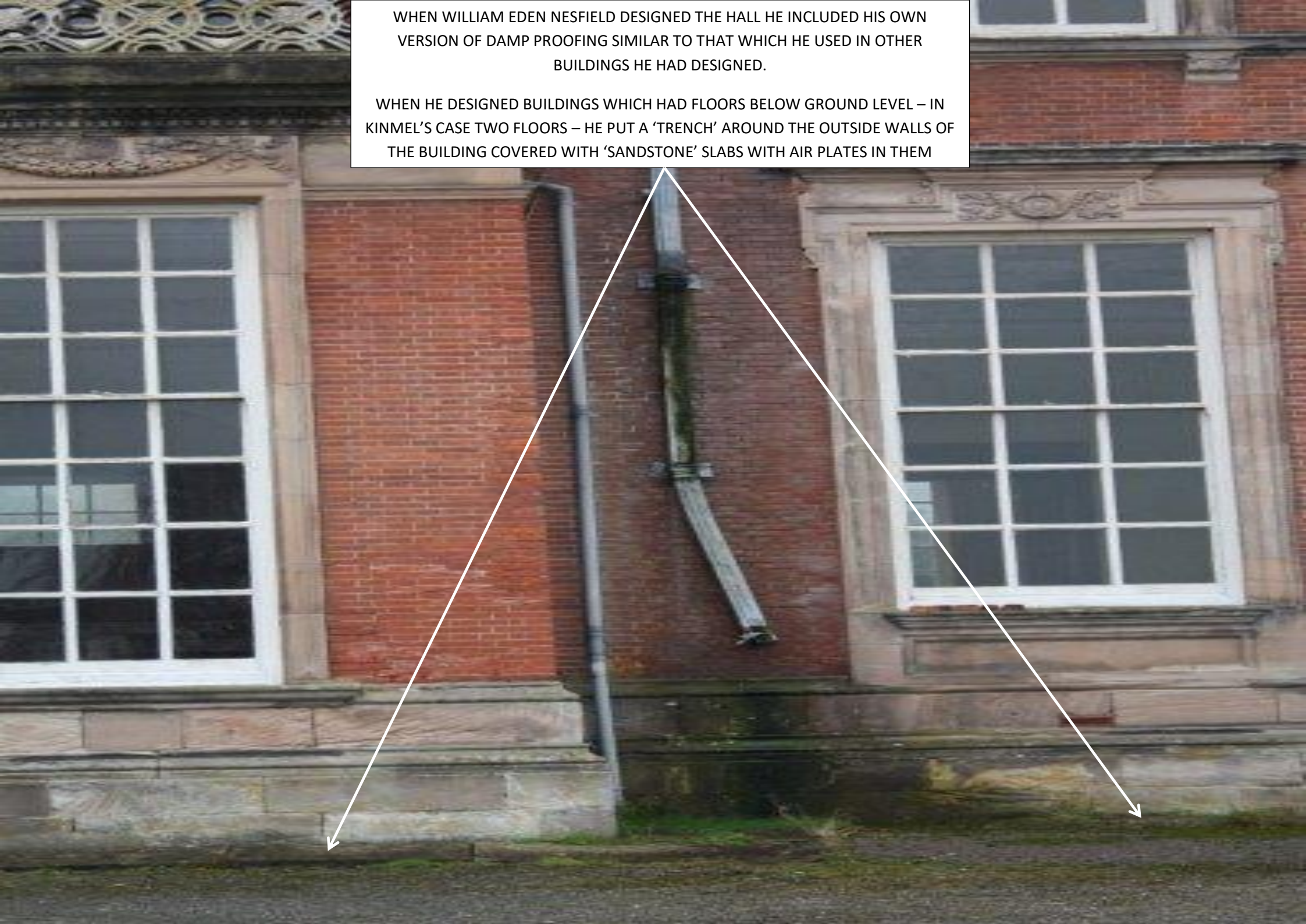


UPPER ATTIC FLOOR

Staircase is rotten
on both flights

WHEN WILLIAM EDEN NESFIELD DESIGNED THE HALL HE INCLUDED HIS OWN VERSION OF DAMP PROOFING SIMILAR TO THAT WHICH HE USED IN OTHER BUILDINGS HE HAD DESIGNED.

WHEN HE DESIGNED BUILDINGS WHICH HAD FLOORS BELOW GROUND LEVEL – IN KINMEL’S CASE TWO FLOORS – HE PUT A ‘TRENCH’ AROUND THE OUTSIDE WALLS OF THE BUILDING COVERED WITH ‘SANDSTONE’ SLABS WITH AIR PLATES IN THEM



THE STEWARDS ROOM/LINK DINING ROOM HAS A LATH AND PLASTER CEILING.



WHILST THE FIRST FLOOR PLAN SHOWS TWO BEDROOMS OVER THIS PART OF THE HALL HOWEVER THERE IS A FLAT ROOF WHICH IS NOT SHOWN. IF YOU ARE STANDING IN THE GROUND FLOOR CORRIDOR WITH THE SERVANTS HALL ON YOUR LEFT THE FLAT ROOF OF THE CORRIDOR CONTINUES ACROSS THE ROOF OF THE STEWARDS ROOM/LINK DINING ROOM AND IT JOINS UP WITH THE ROOF OF THE CORRIDOR THAT RUNS DOWN THE RIGHT HAND SIDE OF THE SERVANTS HALL WHICH LEADS TO THE ENCLOSED COURTYARD AND THE CLOSE DINING ROOM. STANDING IN THE SAME LOCATION THERE IS A VOID ABOVE THE TOILETS AT THE FAR END OF THE CORRIDOR ON THE RIGHT

THE IMAGES BELOW ARE OF THE GARDEN HOUSE WHICH WAS THE ADMINISTRATORS RESIDENCE AND LATTERLY THE SECURITY FIRMS ACCOMODATION (GUARD WATCH), HOWEVER THE DAMAGE DONE TO IT WAS THANKS TO VANDALS ON THE MORNING OF SATURDAY 13TH AUGUST 2013





WHILST THE STABLE BLOCK AS SHOWN IN THE PRECEDING PAGES LOOKS THE WORSE FOR WARE IT IS IMPORTANT TO POINT OUT THAT THIS SECTION OF THE HALL HAS NOT BEEN USED SINCE THE EARLY 1990'S. IT WAS NOT EVEN SHOWN TO THE INSPECTION TEAM IN AUGUST 1995.

THIS IS NOT THE CASE WHERE THE MEWS BLOCK IS CONCERNED



THIS SECTION OF THE HALL WAS STILL BEING USED BY PAYING GUESTS AS LATE AS OCTOBER 1995 AND MAYBE EVEN LATER.

THE AREA WHERE THE ROOF HAS COLLAPSED CONTAINS BATHROOMS AND SHOWERS. WHILST I HAVE NOT BEEN IN THIS PART SINCE THE 90'S IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT THIS COLLAPSE HAS BROUGHT DOWN THE SECOND FLOOR INTO THE FIRST FLOOR

IT IS ALSO ACCESSIBLE FROM THE BACK





THE SPORTS HALL AND GARAGE WERE BUILT AROUND 1932. THE BIG WHITE BUILDING HAS AN ASBESTOS RIBBED ROOF. WHEN EDDIE VINCE LEASED THE HALL BETWEEN 1978 – 2000 HE OPENED UP THE TWO BUILDINGS INTO ONE BIG BUILDING. THIS WAS SO THAT IT COULD BE USED BY THE BIGGER GROUPS WHO BOOKED THE ENTIRE HALL OR MULTIPLE SECTIONS ON BLOCK. IT WAS THE VINCE FAMILY WHO PUT THE SUSPENDED CEILING INTO THE HALL AND AN RSJ IN PLACE OF THE DIVIDING WALL.

THERE IS A CENTRAL HEATING SYSTEM AT THE BACK OF THE SMALLER HALL WHICH WAS NOT INSPECTED WHEN THE FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT WAS CARRIED OUT IN 2012 AND AS THE RECEIVERS WERE NOT AWARE OF ITS EXISTENCE IT WAS NOT DRAINED.



THE CURRENT OWNERS 'CLAIM' THEY HAVE EMPTIED IT BUT AS THEY WERE FOUND TO BE REMOVING THE ASBESTOS WITHOUT THE CORRECT PERMITS OR PROTECTIVE CLOTHING IT IS ANYONES GUESS WHERE IT WAS EMPTIED TO IF AT ALL.
IT IS OIL FIRED AND HAS ITS OWN TANK



WHEN DERBYSHIRE INVESTMENTS TOOK OVER THE HALL IT BECAME A DUMPING GROUND

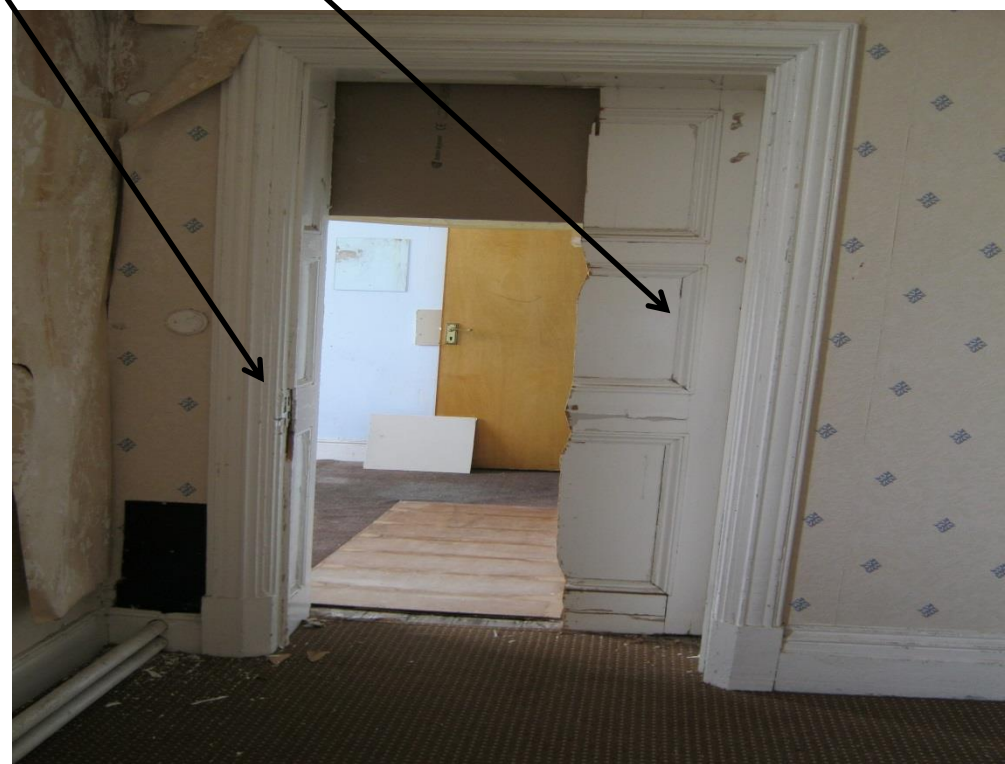




THIS DOORWAY WAS SEALED AT THE AUCTION



THIS ROOM WAS LOCKED WITH NO KEYS



THERE IS A FIRE HYDRANT POINT OUTSIDE THE SOUTH END OF THE HALL AS SHOWN BY THE MARKER TO THE LEFT OF THE WINDOW. THIS WAS THE WATER SUPPLY POINT USED BY THE VINCE FAMILY WHEN THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE HALL BEGAN IN 1978. THIS WAS BECAUSE THE MAINS SUPPLY COULD NOT BE TURNED ON WHEN THE HALL WAS AS SHOWN IN THE PICTURE THE SUPPLY INTO THE HALL BRANCHES OF AT THIS POINT AND ENTERS THE HALL UNDER THE TRAP DOOR TO THE CELLAR



DURING MY VISIT ON THE 14TH AUGUST IT WAS DISCOVERED THAT THE PIPE THAT SUPPLIES WATER TO THE THREE FIRE HOSE REEL POINTS IN THE MAIN HALL HAD BEEN SMASHED AND WATER WAS POURING OUT OF IT, INTO A BARREL OF FAT AND FROM THERE INTO THE GRID IN THE FLOOR OF THE CELLAR WHICH FEEDS INTO THE SEPTIC TANK IN THE PARK. AT THE NORTH END OF THE HALL THE LAST TWO GRIDS IN THE FLOOR OF THE CORRIDOR WERE UNDER AT LEAST 7 INCHES OF 'WATER' WHICH WAS A CLEAR SIGN THAT THERE IS A PROBLEM WITH THE SEPTIC TANK OR THE PIPE TO IT.



DURING MY VISIT ON THE 11TH OCTOBER 2013 I DISCOVERED THAT THE FIRE HYDRANT PIPE WAS NO LONGER POURING WATER.

THE BUILDER HAD CAPPED THE PIPE OFF AND CONVERTED IT TO A DOMESTIC SUPPLY USING POLY PIPE.

THE BLUE POLY-PIPE WAS FED THROUGH THE CELLAR AND UP TO THE FIRST FLOOR WHERE IT TERMINATED AT THE WALL MOUNTED WATER HEATER IN THE VICTORIA SUITE KITCHEN.

DURING THIS VISIT I WAS ALSO ABLE TO CONFIRM SOMETHING THAT HAD BEEN OF CONCERN TO ME SINCE BEFORE THE AUCTION.



WHEN DERBYSHIRE INVESTMENTS REMOVED THE EN-SUITE BATHROOMS AND TOILETS THEY REMOVED ALL THE PARTITION WALLS LEAVING GAPS IN THE FLOORS BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY THEY DID NOT CAP OFF THE WATER PIPES. INSTEAD THEY SIMPLY CRIMPED THE ENDS OF THE PIPES AS IS THE CASE WITH THE PIPES IN THIS ROOM ON THE WEST FRONT OF THE HALL ON THE FIRST FLOOR. AS A RESULT THERE IS A STRONG POSSIBILITY THAT IF THE MAINS ARE TURNED BACK ON FROM THE STOP TAP BY THE CROSS ROADS. THE HALL WILL FLOOD

THERE ARE FIVE SETS OF STOP TAPS LOCATED BY THE CLUMP OF TREES NEAR TO THE TENNIS COURTS OUTSIDE THE GROUNDS OF THE HALL

TWO SUPPLY WATER TO THE HOUSES ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE CROSS ROADS TO THE HALL, ONE SUPPLIES WATER TO THE WATER TROUGHS ON THE PARK. ONE SUPPLIES WATER TO THE FIRE HYDRANT FOR THE HALL AND THE OTHER ONE SUPPLIES THE HALL ITSELF BUT NONE OF THEM ARE LABELLED

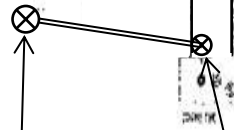


THE ONLY POSSIBLE CHANCE THAT HAS STOPPED THE UPPER FLOORS OF THE MAIN HALL NOT FLOODING IS THAT THESE GATE TAPS ARE CLOSED. THEY CUT OFF THE SUPPLY OF WATER TO THE UPPER FLOORS OF THE MAIN HALL ONLY

LOCATION OF SERVICES, LEAKS AND FLOODED AREAS AS AT OCTOBER 2013

FROM INFORMATION RECEIVED THIS IS
THE POSSIBLE LOCATION WHERE MAINS
WATER SUPPLY ENTERS HALL

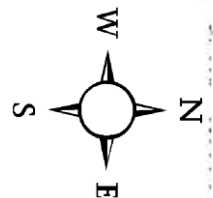
LOCATION OF FUSE BOXES POWER SERVER UNITS AND
MAINS SUPPLY TO HALL



FIRE
HYDRANT
LOCATION

FIRE HYDRANT SUPPLY TO THE HALL ENTERS
CELLAR HERE – BROKEN BY VANDALS AND
CONVERTED BY WORKMEN TO DOMESTIC SUPPLY
FOR CARETAKER

FLOODED DRAINS



The Following pages show what
'The Crown in Nesfield's Career'

looks like as of the 20th September 2020.

I will take you through each image and explain what I
can about the potential problems and the previous
history of the area.







The Courtyard of the Stable Block (known as Kinmel Court) These rooms were used as Classrooms during Clarendon and Kinmel Boys School and Hospital wards during War time. The slates currently on the roof of the Clock Tower section of the Hall came off the roof of the garage which cannot be seen in the corner of the buildings to the right of the picture. The archway to the right gives access to the Sunken Driveway which brings you out in front of the Hall at the Cross Roads.



Martins Yard giving access to the old Servants Quarters, formerly the Biology labs from Clarendon and the Gymnasium from the Rheuma Spa. It was known as the Link and Close when Kinmel was a Conference Centre. The Link entrance can be seen in the form of the big white door in the middle of the image. The Close is accessed via the door hidden behind the foliage here



The Salon Entrance overlooking the Venetian Gardens. These were the first Formal Gardens Kinmel EVER had. They include an Ornamental Fountain powered originally by a Hydrostatic Ram which is still in situ beneath the Gardens













The Main Corridor of the Main Hall showing the Sunken Lounge and the former shop from the Conference Centre's days and the Music Room from Clarendon's time. The walls of the Sunken Lounge are of Sicilian Marble the details for which can be found in the V&A Archives



This is the entrance to the Library from the Salon. The door you can see in the Salon leads to the formal Drawing Room with its Pillar Box Red paneling!



The Oak carved Library Fireplace damaged by thieves in October 2013. The panel on the left should hold Queen Victoria's Coat of Arms and the panel on the right should hold the Coat of Arms of H R Hughes created from the Coats of Arms of the tribes of Wales as depicted in the Fireplace at Kinnel Manor Hotel which came from the Hall.



Three of the Full height windows in the Library. Surprisingly in these image the original oak shutters which survived the '75 fire are open. On my last visit they were bolted shut through the window frames!



The Ballroom complete with its Minstrel Gallery and sprung dance floor. The damage visible in the left hand corner of the image is due to the down pipe referred to earlier in this document



The Drawing Room. The wood paneling is as previously stated the wrong colour. The removal of the radiators is a new occurrence. The damage to the fireplace was done in October 2013



The Sunken Lounge.

The fireplace seen here comes from another estate in Cheshire. The correct fireplace is in Kinmel Manor Hotel.

The bottled water visible in the corner is there because the mains supply to the Hall needs repairing







The Lower Cellars! These run the full length of the Hall with storerooms off on each side under the main Hall. This runs BELOW another set of cellars under the ground floor of the Hall.





The workings of the Clock in the Clock Tower looking towards the Mews Building. This is accessed from the toilets on either side of the Clock Tower. It was used as a Fire Escape for the bedrooms during the Conference Centre days.



The Main Staircase



The Main Staircase. Showing the false ceiling installed by the Vincés to reduce heating cost and create a fire break. Nesfield's original ceiling is above this





Ghosts from Wartime. These signatures were found in the former stables and date from the Hospital occupation



Proof of date of construction. This is located in the main Hall and dates from the construction of the Hall

DAMAGE DONE TO THE HALL
‘APPARENTLY BY THE OWNERS
OR AT THEIR INSTRUCTION’
BETWEEN APRIL 2019 – SEPTEMBER 2020

EXTERNAL























INTERNAL









































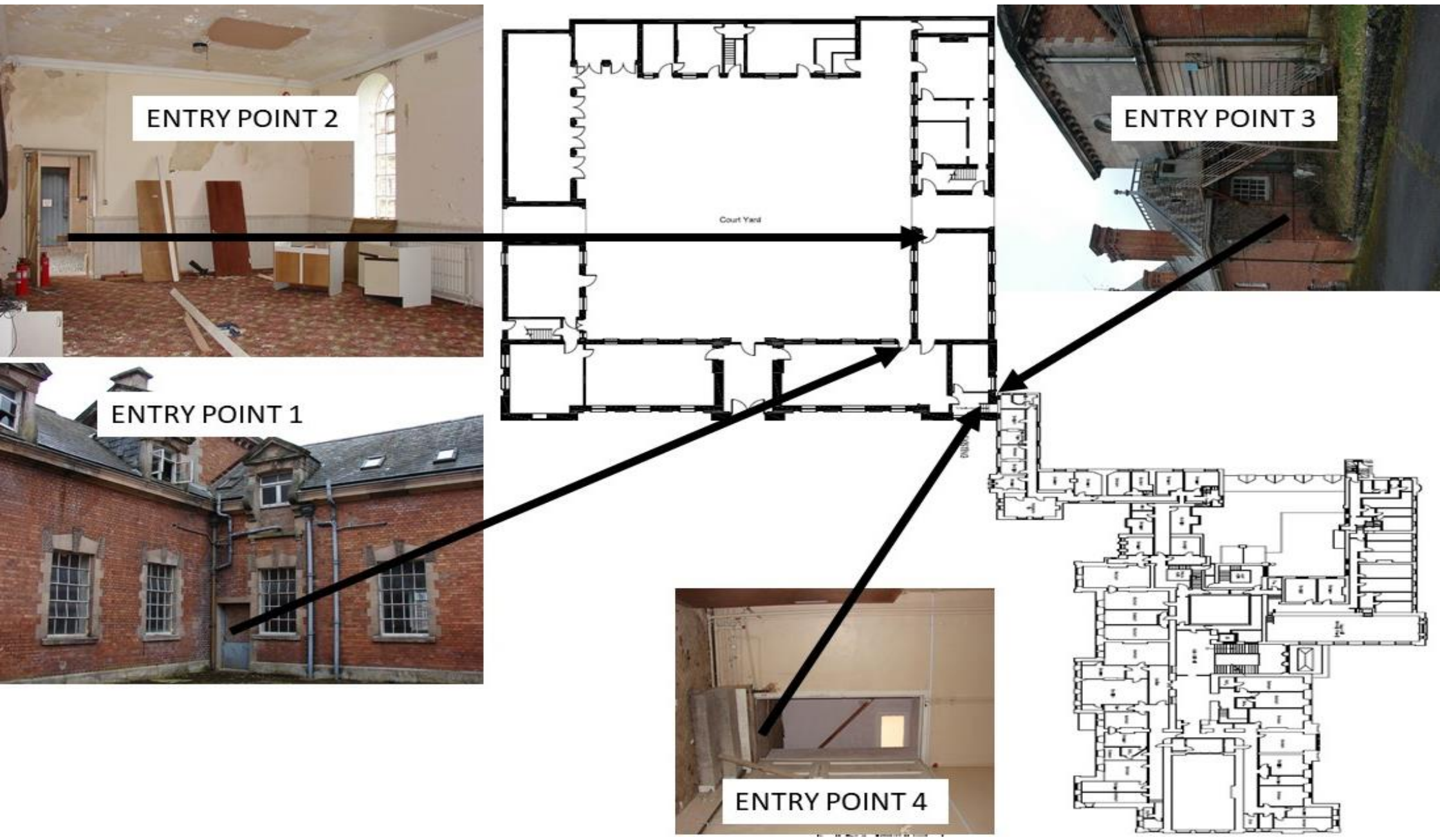






On the 17th October 2020 work was supposedly carried out to make the Hall Totally Secure.

Sadly this has been proved not to be the case as can be seen from these images: -



THIS STAIRCASE BRINGS YOU OUT TO THIS STAIRCASE ON THE 'STONE PASSAGE' THAT RUNS FROM THE SOUTH END OF THE HALL INTO THE MAIN HALL



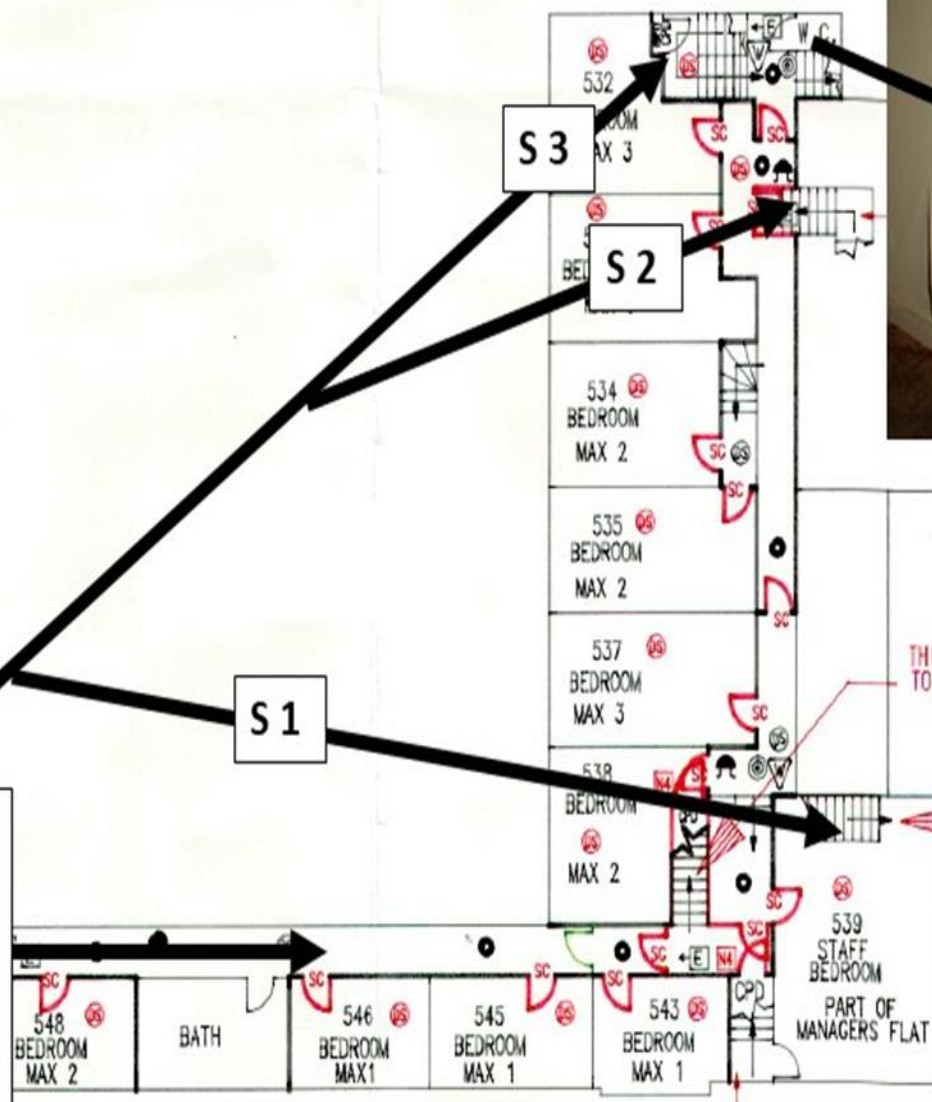
S 2

THIS STAIRCASE BRINGS YOU OUT TO THIS STAIRCASE OR THE FIRST FLOOR LANDING OF THE MAIN HALL BY THE LIFT

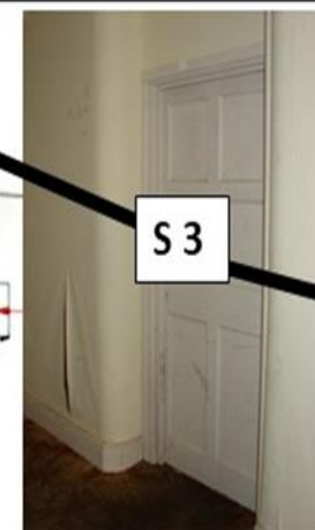


S 2

ENTRY POINTS 1, 2, 3, 4 ALL GIVE ACCESS TO THIS CORRIDOR WHICH GIVES YOU ACCESS TO THE MAIN HALL FROM THESE POINTS



THIS STAIRCASE GOES UP TO SECOND FLOOR



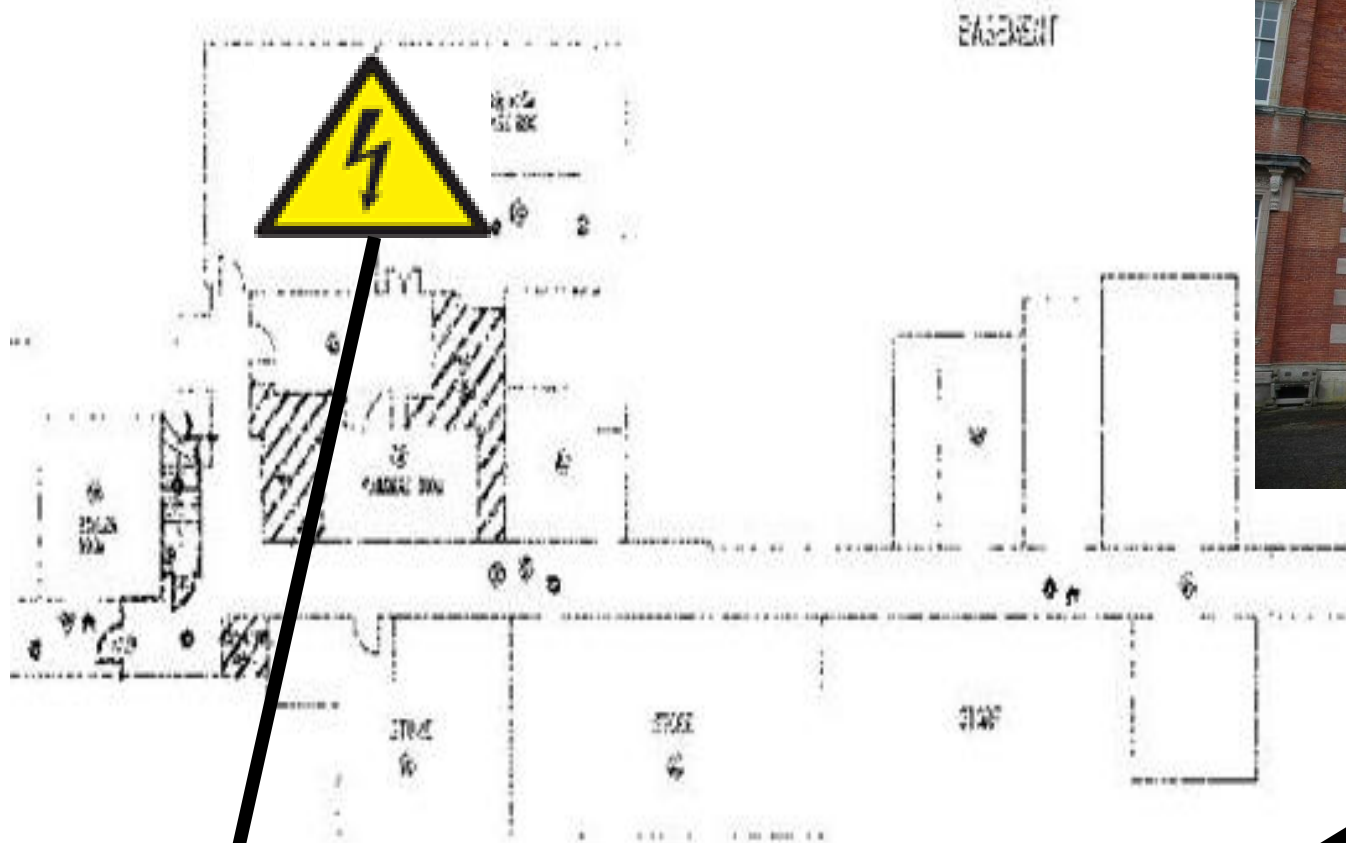
S 3



S 1



THIS STAIRCASE COMES OUT INTO THIS ROOM WHICH HAS 'LINK MEETING ROOM' ON THE DOOR



ON THE 21ST OCTOBER 2020 EDF ENERGY CONFIRMED THERE WAS A SUPPLY TO THE HALL. THEIR RECORDS SHOW THEY HAVE HAD NO CONTACT WITH THE OWNERS SINCE 2014 AND THERE IS A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OWED ON THE ACCOUNT.

SCOTTISH POWER NETWORK DISTRIBUTION CONFIRM THERE IS SUPPLY TO THE HALL THAT ENTERS THE HALL UNDER THE CHAPEL BY THE METAL AND GLASS GRID SHOWN IN THE IMAGE

THIS MEANS THERE IS A RISK OF FIRE SHOULD ANY WATER COME INTO CONTACT WITH EPOSED WIRES WITHIN THE HALL