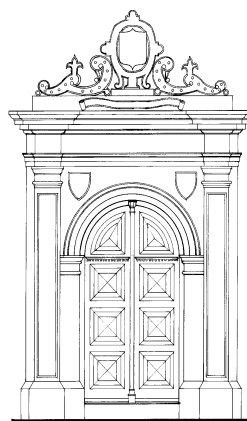


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## Statement of Historic Significance



**Minehead Old Hospital  
The Parade  
Minehead  
Somerset**

**on behalf of  
Minehead Old Town Hall Investments Ltd**



**Partners:**  
**A. T. HAYES, BSc DipBldgCons MRICS IHBC**  
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## **1.00 Introduction**

This statement of historic significance aims to identify the historic fabric of the former hospital buildings in The Parade, Minehead and to chart its historic development by interpretation of site evidence, historic map regression and other relevant material to provide a thorough understanding of the property.

## **2.00 Property description**

The site is located on the north side of the principal main street of Minehead made up of The Parade and The Avenue which leads in an easterly direction to the steam railway terminus and the sea. There is no clear demarcation between where The Parade ends and The Avenue commences.

The site is bounded to the east by shop premises and to the west by the Methodist Chapel. To the northern rear the site adjoins Blenheim Road which connects through to The Parade and adjoins the public open space area of Blenheim Gardens.

The majority of the site is covered with building structures which are all inter-linked as a result of development and expansion of the former hospital. There are three principal structures set within the site, the first being a substantial gothic revival building facing The Parade, rectangular on plan, of two storey with attics, constructed of local rubblestone beneath pitched and slated roofs. To the rear is a substantial three storey early C20<sup>th</sup> former nurses' accommodation building and beyond that a two storey former police station set adjoining Blenheim Gardens.

The structures are linked by a series of single storey buildings filling the rest of the site with a mixture of flat and pitched slated roofs. The group of properties are listed Grade II under The Town & Country Planning Acts with a listing date of 30 September 1994. The listing description states that the principal building fronting on to The Parade was originally built as a public hall for concerts and dramatic performances and seated 500 persons, designed by Piers St Alban and constructed in 1888 – 89.

## **3.00 Archive evidence**

### **3.01 History of the local area**

Minehead is recorded in the Domesday Survey as a settlement consisting of a small agricultural village and group of dispersed farms, particularly set to the higher ground.

In 1066 Minehead was held by Algar, an important Somerset landowner and after the Conquest it passed to William de Mohun who retained the manor until 1404 where it passed to Hugh Luttrell and his successors until the C20<sup>th</sup>. It is interesting to note that the Luttrell family tried to sell Minehead out of the Estate in the late C18<sup>th</sup> without success.

Minehead remained largely an agricultural and fishing settlement and greatly expanded through cloth making and tanning processes peaking in the C17<sup>th</sup>. The expansion of the

port of Minehead in the C15<sup>th</sup> also stimulated development of several industries and trades. After 1700, however, there are many empty properties recorded and house sites were turned into gardens. The prosperity of Minehead continued to decline and coupled with several serious fires in the late C18<sup>th</sup>. By 1846 working people were said to be destitute. In 1874 the railway arrived in Minehead and the town began to grow again as a retail service administrative centre and expanded further in the latter part of the C19<sup>th</sup> / early C20<sup>th</sup> with the tourist trade. Although the traditional seaside resort went into decline in the late C20<sup>th</sup>, Minehead remains a popular place to visit and retire to. Its economy relies heavily on tourism, with Butlin's being one of the largest employers in the town. In recent years expansion of the business park adjoining the railway and the success of the West Somerset Railway has also increased Minehead's popularity.

The expansion of the town in the late C19<sup>th</sup> / early C20<sup>th</sup> resulted in the construction of a number of notable civic buildings such as the Town Hall, Magistrates' Court and the Town Assembly Rooms whose building is at the centre of this site.

It is intriguing to note that a belated campaign of municipal works from the 1860s onwards at the Luttrell's expense transformed the town, particularly Lower Town. The town centre in the main C19<sup>th</sup> suburbs was laid out on the ruins of the Old Town and the streets re-named. Puddle Street became The Parade and Watery Lane became The Avenue.

### 3.02 Documents

- a) The Applicants, through their own research of the local records office, have recovered a number of drawing documents relating to alterations to the property. Copies of these drawings are shown in Appendix B of this report.

These are as follows:

- i. 1910

Conversion of the former Assembly building to the Wiltshire & Dorset Bank. These plans clearly show the sub-division of the ground and first floor areas of the 1899 principal building as well as the insertion of a second floor and dormers to the front and rear roof slopes.

- ii. 1919

Design drawings of 1919 showing the construction of a pair of second floor extensions with pitched roofs parallel to the original rear addition roof to the rear of the principal 1899 building to provide additional rooms for what was then the Minehead & West Somerset Hospital.

iii.1923

Drawings showing the detailed plans and elevations and section of the 1923 extension to the rear of the main building to provide a new nurses' quarters for the Hospital, reputedly by the renowned local architect William John Tamlyn.

b) Newspaper extracts

i. Newspaper article dated 8 June 1889

A press report for the first public meeting in the new public hall which gives a useful detailed description of the building at that time. It states that the first floor is a single, fine room 70' x 35' lit by 10 large windows approached by a wide double staircase which leads to two entrance doors and will comfortably accommodate about 500 people. To the rear of the hall at first floor level are two other rooms 20' square. On the ground floor to the front are two rooms 27' square and at the back two rooms 24' x 18'. It also records that at that stage these were unfinished.

The entrance hall is indicated at being 27 x 18'. It also records that there are the usual offices but does not indicate where these were located. See Appendix B

ii. Newspaper cuttings from 1919

These state that the Public Hall Company was bankrupt and being wound up with the sale of the Assembly Hall to The Wiltshire & Dorset Bank.

c) Victoria County History Newsletter Autumn / Winter 2013

The extract records the change of use of the Minehead Public Hall to a Hospital and states that in 1914 the Wilts & Dorset Bank was taken over by Lloyds Bank who made the bank house redundant. The property was used as a convalescent home for wounded soldiers, run by the Red Cross Society under the Voluntary Aid Detachment Scheme and hence lead to the expansion and development of the building and site as a Hospital for Minehead, remaining as such until 2011 when the new Hospital was built in Seaward Way.

d) Victoria County History of Somerset – Minehead

This document is still in draft form, but the relevant extracts are as follows:

1879 a company was established to build a public hall which was constructed 1888 - 89 to the designs of J P St Alban at a cost of circa £4,000.00.

There is no reference to its use as a bank in 1910 – 1914. The article goes on to state that in 1919 it was decided to amalgamate this hospital with the Dunster and Minehead Village Hospital in memory of George Fowens Luttrell who died in 1910. In 1922 it was re-named Minehead & West Somerset Hospital to avoid confusion with the Isolation Hospital and refers to the construction of the Nurses' Home and the extra second floor inserted in the roof for an operating theatre in 1926. However our research (reported later) indicates that these dates are erroneous.

It goes on to report that in the 1930s the old police station was added to the Hospital and an Out Patients' Department was built at the angle between them. It refers to a new Out Patients' Department being built in 1947.

The VCH also records a police station being present in 1889 complete with two officers and in 1897 George Fowens Luttrell gave the Council the site of Blenheim Road behind the Public Hall for a three bedroomed house with an office, two cells and an exercise yard. Architect William Wilcox of Bath designed the property.

### 3.03 Mapping evidence – Also see Appendix C

#### i. Estate map 1803

This indicates a degree of urban development around the Square and the top end of The Parade, (at that time named Puddle Street,) with The Avenue (formerly Watery Lane) extending westwards. The position of Blenheim Road is also visible on the map and the land between The Avenue and Blenheim Road indicated as largely field and water meadows.

#### ii. First OS Map of 1889

This indicates the public hall with its original footprint fronting on to The Parade with parallel boundaries east, west and north enclosing the site.

#### iii. OS Map of 1904

This map shows the building still in its original form with the addition of a structure to the west side of the main hall (possibly a further entrance or porch) and the formalization of the pair of vehicle entrances and centre gate providing access to the main hall entrance.

The police station and its enclosure appears on this map, also identifying the exercise yard to the south east corner of the building.

iv. OS map of 1929

The map now labels the building as Hospital, the nurses' quarters is clearly visible to the rear of the main building, including the ancillary structures shown on the 1919 design drawings. Blenheim Gardens is also shown to the north east of the site.

v. OS map of 1938

Slightly less detailed map but shows the footprint as per 1929 map.

vi. OS map of 1964

This map shows the infill of the front façade up to the eastern boundary wall. Construction of the Out Patients' Department between the former police house and the back of the nurses' accommodation and a small extension to the north west corner of the original Assembly room building.

vii. OS map 1973 – 1989

This map shows the appearance of the single storey flat roof entrance structure to the east of the original public buildings and an extension of the Out Patients' Department in a westerly direction. An open courtyard still exists between the east boundary structures and the former nurses' accommodation of the 1927 expansion.

The former exercise area to the west of the Police Station is now in-filled with solid structures.

### 3.04 Archive photographs

a) The Applicant has been fortunate enough to locate a number of archive photographs as follows and included in Appendix B

- i. Photograph taken circa 1890 of front of building as originally built complete with iron gates and railings along the front wall. The front roof slope is devoid of dormers and it is possible to see along the east gable to the eaves of the rear roof, extending down from the rear gable projection which was converted post 1910 into the hospital operating theatre prior to the later two storey wing extension. A rather grainy photograph taken from North Hill shows this to be the case.
- ii. Archive photograph circa 1920 described as 'The Hospital, Minehead' showing the front elevation with the 4 no. dormers and 2 central chimney stacks in place post 1910 Bank alterations. The iron railings and gate posts are still retained fronting on to the pavement.

- iii. Photograph circa 1933 showing construction of the new Regal Theatre site front elevation of the former Assembly Buildings with a two storey façade extension to the west of the main building linking with the party boundary wall and the appearance of a hipped roof porch to the east end. (now lost).

### 3.05 Notes on Architects

#### a) James Piers St Alban - 1815 - 1895

J P St Alban is credited as the architect of the building. Predominantly a church architect through his life, is well known for buildings such as St Michael's Mount in Cornwall, many new and church restorations in Devon and Cornwall and by 1885 was in partnership with Henry J Waddling and largely in retirement. He was proposed in 1856 as a Fellow of British Architects by well known Victorian architect Giles Gilbert Scott and others.

#### b) 1927 Nurses' quarters – designed by local Minehead architect William John Tamlyn – 1870 – 1933.

#### c) The former Police Station is attributed to William John Wilcox, Architect of Bath 1838 – 1928 who also acted as the County Surveyor for Somerset. He twice served as Mayor of Bath and, as a Victorian architect, was adept at working in Classical and Gothic styles. Many of his Bath buildings still survive.

### 3.06 Planning history

#### a) The planning history commences with the Archive Design Drawing plans of the early C20<sup>th</sup>.

#### b) The on-line planning record for the building commences in 1974 with a new Recovery Room in the Casualty Department with extensions and alterations to the Accident Department in 1977 and 1978, including an extension to the Out Patients' Department. In 1992 a new building and internal alterations were created to accommodate a new Day Hospital and further alterations were carried out in 1995 and 1996 to improve access to the property for the disabled. The latest application of 1999 related to further proposed alterations and additional external duct work. All of these works would appear to be restricted to the late C 20<sup>th</sup> single storey part of the site.

## 4.00 Site evidence

### 4.01 'The Parade' north façade

- a) Low stone wall, railing and pedestrian gate fronting site 1888, entrance gates lost. West boundary wall reconstructed stone late C20<sup>th</sup>, though 1888 stone pier retained.



- b) Principal building centre, two storey 5 bay, squared and coursed local stone with quoins. Centre 2 bay set forward with coped gable, stone balcony on fan vault support. Main paired entrance door centre. Slate pitched roof with coped gables ashlar stone chimneys to gable apex. Fenestration, leaded light set in stone mullion and tracery surrounds. All 1888-89. Pair ashlar chimneys centre, 4 hipped slated dormers, in two pairs each side of centre gable set behind parapet, leaded light casement windows c1910. Later modification to some dormer and main windows to plain casement – mid late C20th. Original finials to centre gable base lost.
- c) Two storey infill east of main building – square and coursed local stone with ashlar string and plinth course. Flat roof behind freestone parapet and chamfered balustrade. Freestone cruciform mullion windows, lead light glazed fanlights, plain metal casement below. All c1934
- d) Single storey structure west of main building – timber and glass façade with ramped access, plain fascia with flat roof. Extends depth of site up former police station. Late C20th. Rendered side elevation over original stone boundary wall.

#### 4.02 West Side Elevations

- a) Former assembly hall – Square and coursed local stone to gable with Bathstone copings, two bay, lancet tracery windows with remains of leaded lights. Bathstone niche in apex, all 1888. 2 light leaded metal casement window to gable apex c1920s (note not on early photograph with dormers). Upvc window insertions to main gable windows late C20th/early C21st.
- b) Rear range three storey structure of coursed and squared local stone, blank façade, chimney breast set forward. 3 timber dormers with lead covered flat roofs at eaves level, pitch slate roof. Windows side hung casement, some leaded light, some plain. Lower section and chimney 1888, rear upper section dormers and roof 1919.
- c) Former nurse's accommodation – three storey building of local stone rubble stone, slated hipped roof with large attic room dormer, brick chimney right corner, ashlar stone chimney to centre of roof. Cast iron rainwater goods on exposed rafters. Four bay, 2 light cruciform timber windows to first floor, 2 light casement windows to second floor, mixture of leaded light and plain glazing. 1923, with later glazing changes. Ground floor obscured by late C20th flat roof addition.

#### 4.03 East Side Elevations

- a) Former assembly hall – Square and coursed local stone to gable with Bathstone copings, two bay, lancet tracery windows with remains of leaded lights, much altered. Bathstone niche in apex, all 1888. First and second floor doorways and metal fire escape inserted mid/late C20th.

- b) Rear range three storey structure of coursed and squared local stone, chimney breast set forward. 3 timber dormers with lead covered flat roofs at eaves level, pitch slate roof. Lower section and chimney 1888, rear upper section, dormers and roof 1919. Simple plain window openings inserted first floor with replacement upvc inserts Mid/Late 20<sup>th</sup>. Original dormer window joinery replaced with large plain glazing panels late C20<sup>th</sup>. Stainless steel boiler flue attached to chimney, late C20<sup>th</sup>. Two storey tower with hipped slate roof 1888, altered fenestration Mid/late C20<sup>th</sup>.
- c) Former nurse's accommodation – three storey building of local stone rubble stone, slated hipped roof with large attic room dormer, brick chimney right, ashlar stone chimney to centre of roof. Cast iron rainwater goods on exposed rafters. Four bay, 2 light cruciform timber windows to ground and first floor, 2 light casement windows to second floor, mixture of leaded light and plain glazing. 1923, with later glazing changes. Date stone at ground level, 1923.
- d) Link between buildings – timber framed, slate roofed bridge between rear of main building and nurses home, c1923. Metal landings and stair to upper level, mid/late C20<sup>th</sup>. Plethora of service pipes and ducting, Mid/Late 20<sup>th</sup>.
- e) Blenheim Road courtyard – Mixture of single storey structures for former out patient's departments. Brick faced facades under pitched slates roofs, mixture of timber and upvc, plain casement windows. Mid/late C20<sup>th</sup>.

#### 4.04 Rear Elevations

- a) Former assembly room building - walls of coursed and squared local stone, centre stone gable with timber barge board, slates roofs with east and west roofs sections hipped ended, centre valleys. Lower wall section and gable and centre roof form 1888, outer roofs and second storey walls 1919. Timber cruciform window to centre gable in bath stone surround c1919. Fires escape door and dormer west side c mid/late C20<sup>th</sup>. The original stone mullion windows have been sealed and heavily altered Mid C20<sup>th</sup>.
- b) Former nurse's accommodation building - three storey building of local stone rubble stone, slated hipped roof with large ashlar chimney stack rising through eaves centre with slated shoulders, Bath stone shield motif with 1923 date. Plain façade all 1923, obscured at ground storey by later single storey structures. Cast iron rainwater goods on exposed rafters.

#### 4.05 Former Police Station

- a) Front north Blenheim Road façade – Two storey, squared and coursed local stone walls with bath stone quoins, opening surrounds and plinth band, coped gable right with finials on shoulders. Pitched slate roof, cast iron rainwater goods. 9 over 2 timber sash windows, all 1897. Single storey extensions left (west) mixture of slate hipped and flat roofs behind parapets. Brick and rendered walls – late C20<sup>th</sup>.

- b) West side elevation – ground storey obscured by late C20th additions. Upper storey, squared and coursed local stone walls with bath stone quoins, coped gable right with finials on shoulders. Hipped slate roof with ventilator left. Bath stone window surround with tripartite with timber sash windows, 2 over 2 design centre. All 1897.
- c) East Side elevation - squared and coursed local stone walls with bath stone quoins, coped gable centre over window with finials on shoulders. Pitched slate roof. 3 bay, single storey centre projection for porch with flat roof behind parapet. Ground floor left, obscured by single storey Mid C20th addition. Ground floor left and centre first floor window 9 over 2 and 6 over 1 timber sash. All 1897. First floor metal casement window, left, mid C20th
- d) Rear south elevation – Ground storey obscured by mid and late C20th flat roofed additions - Squared and coursed local stone walls with bath stone quoins, window surround, coped gable with finials on shoulders. Local stone relieving arch over window with brick basket weave pattern spandrel. All 1897.
- e) Link structures – The space between the former police house and the former nurse's accommodation is filled with single storey structures comprising brick faced walls beneath flat roofs set behind brick coped parapet walls. All of mid/late C20th date.

#### 4.06 Internal Details – Former Assembly Rooms building

- a) Ground Floor Level
  - i. Ceilings – Late C20th suspended ceilings in front west and rear east rooms obscure ceilings and beams above, where tiles removed, lath and plaster ceilings with first floor supporting beams with plaster corncicing are visible. The cornice design is the same throughout this level. The corncicing follows the perimeter of the masonry walls and partitions. Including the small lobbies and circulation areas adjacent to the former Bank vault and office rooms at on the east side of the entrance hall. Mixture of 1888 and 1910 work, difficult to separate though Bank plans show areas of alteration without which dating would not be possible.
  - ii. Walls – Plastered on masonry, partitions each side of entrance lobby and rear stair hall west, 1888 with chimney breast inserted in lobby 1910. Rear lobby/west side room door blocked, 1910. Partition dividing stairs 1910. Insertion of office partitions and vault, 1910. Alterations to rear area mid/late C20th.
  - iii. Floors - generally solid construction, though west room timber boards, probably 1888, with later changes.

- iv. Joinery – dog leg stairs with stick balusters and continuous handrail, 1888, one of pair, other lost mid C20th. Alterations to first floor landing late C20th. Entrance door and frame, painting framed and plank arched headed with iron strap hinges 1888. Internal doors veneered plywood fire doors, and glazed screens all late C20th except east end front office screen which retains 1910 six panel door. Most of 1901 architraves and skirting boards survive. Secondary glazing to west front room, Late C20th.

b) First floor level

- i. Ceilings – Lath and plaster, with cornice to stair well c1888. suspended ceilings throughout rest of space, late C20th, concealing the ceilings above. Lath and plaster with remains of cornice in rear rooms adjoining remaining stairwell - ceiling of former stairwell, 1888, now lost. Ceiling above modern false ceiling probably lath and plaster belongs to 1910 Bank inserted second floor to front and 1919 alterations to rear parts.
- ii. Walls and partitions – Perimeter and main centre cross wall plastered masonry, 1888, rear section upper part 1919. Internal partition west of stairwell, 1888, east of stairwell, centre front chimney breast wall and partitions 1910, sections removed for hospital use, mid/late C20th. All other partitions, mid/late C20th. Gothic archway to head of stairs 1888, original matching arch east of present now lost and modified to rectangular opening C20th.
- iii. Floors – timber structure 1888, with later extension to south west and south east corners 1919. Infill of former stairs, mid C20th.
- iv. Joinery – Painted and veneered plywood fire doors throughout, late C20th. Timber stairs to second floor 1910 originally open to lobby now enclosed.

c) Second floor level

- i. Ceilings and sloping soffits – lath and plaster inserted 1910, with some later plasterboard repairs/alterations. Roof structure exposed within rooms, arched truss braces, trusses, purlins and king posts, all 1888. Rear section of roof trusses removed and supported on partitions, partly 1919 rear adaptations and post 1923 work. Trimming for dormers removing original centre purlins to front slopes and dormer insertion 1910. Rear west and east room areas 1919, centre rear room (operating theatre) c 1914 – 1918.
- ii. Walls – masonry plaster walls to end gables, 1888. Centre front chimney breast walls, east and west front room timber framed partitions, 1910. West rear range timber framed partitions largely 1919, remainder mid C20th.

- iii. Floors – Timber floors – to front area inserted 1910, rear areas added 1919.
- iv. Joinery - Painted and veneered plywood fire doors throughout, late C20th
- v. Roof structure – upper loft area visible via hatch in lift motor room access area. All rafters, trusses and braces decorated with lime plaster panels between rafters, all 1888. Suggests original assembly room open to roof full height. Inside face of east gable part plastered, brick chimney structure visible indicating 1910 chimney remodelling as per Bank drawings.

#### 4.07 Internal details - Former nurse's accommodation building.

##### a) Ground floor level

- i. Ceilings – lath and plaster 1923
- ii. Walls and partitions – plastered masonry, 1923
- iii. Floors – solid construction - C20th
- iv. Joinery – Veneer plywood fire doors late C20th. Timber painted chamfered skirting and architraves – 1923. Timber stairs with stick balusters – 1923.
- v. Floor plan - floor plan layout largely as per 1923 design, with Mid/late C20th changes to south end. Windows along west wall sealed.

##### b) First floor level

- i. Ceilings – Lath and plaster – 1923
- ii. Walls and partitions – plastered masonry 1923, north windows blocked.
- iii. Floors, timber construction, 1923
- iv. Joinery – Veneer plywood fire doors late C20th. Timber painted chamfered skirting and architraves – 1923. Timber stairs with stick balusters – 1923. 1923 Fireplace surrounds retained in most rooms.
- v. Floor plan - floor plan layout as per 1923 design, glazed screen to stairs added mid C20th

c) Second floor level

- i. Ceilings – Lath and plaster – 1923
- ii. Walls and partitions – plastered masonry 1923, partition removed between centre east rooms mid/late C20th. WC partitions revised, north windows blocked.
- iii. Floors, timber construction, 1923
- iv. Joinery – Veneer plywood fire doors late C20th. Timber painted chamfered skirting and architraves – 1923. Timber stairs with stick balusters – 1923. 1923 Fireplace surrounds retained in most rooms.
- v. Floor plan - floor plan layout as per 1923 design, glazed screen to stairs added mid C20th

d) Attic floor level

- i. Ceiling and sloping soffits, lath and plaster – 1923
- ii. Walls and partitions, timber frame with lath and plaster. Centre wall/chimney breast masonry. 1923
- iii. Floors, timber construction, 1923
- iv. Joinery – Veneer plywood fire doors late C20th. Timber painted chamfered skirting and architraves – 1923. Timber stairs with stick balusters – 1923. 1923 Fireplace surrounds retained in most rooms.
- v. Floor plan - floor plan layout largely as per 1923 design except. centre opening in breast blocked, corridor partition removed, new access to rear room and wc cubicles and glazed screen to stairs added mid/late C20th.

4.08 Internal details – Former Police Station

- a) Ceilings and sloping soffits– Plastered 1897
- b) Walls and partitions – plastered masonry generally, L plan area 1897, timber partition to first floor shower room mid C20th. Rectangular room north of L plan with roof vent, 1897 location of former exercise yard and cells, much altered, window in north wall covered.
- c) Floors – Ground floor solid construction with wood block finish. First floor timber structure 1897.
- d) Joinery – Winder staircase with stick balusters and turned newels, moulded architraves and skirting boards, kitchen cupboards – 1897. Doors veneered fire doors, late C20th.

- 4.09 Internal details – Single storey ranges to Blenheim Road courtyard and west of main buildings.
- a) Ceilings – Mixture of plasterboard and grid suspended units – Mid/late 20<sup>th</sup>
  - b) Walls – mixture of plastered masonry and plasterboard faced timber framed – mid/late C20th
  - c) Floors – solid construction – Mid/late C20th
  - d) Joinery – veneer faced fire doors, painted architraves and skirting boards – Mid/late C20th

## 5.00 Interpretation

- 5.01 Please refer to historic development plans in Appendix A to be read in conjunction with the information below.

### 5.02 Phase 1 - Pre-1889

Are largely in marsh and agricultural land with some building structures towards the western end of The Avenue.

### 5.03 Phase II – 1888 / 89

Construction of the public Assembly Building by architect J P St Alban in Gothic Revival Style of 2 storey with double storey height first floor Assembly Rooms and meeting rooms, double dog-leg stair, pair of Gothic arch entrance doors to Assembly Room on first floor, large open plan spaces each side of entrance hall and to the rear of the building; all within the rectangular floor plan. Stone wall surmounted by iron railings and iron gates for both vehicular and pedestrian access to the front of the building adjoining the foot way on to The Parade.

### 5.04 Phase III - 1897

Construction of Police Station and Police House to the rear of Public Assembly Rooms adjoining Blenheim Road by architect Michael John Wilcox of Bath.

### 5.05 Phase IV – circa 1910

Purchase of Public Assembly Building by Wilts & Dorset Bank. Extensive internal alterations to sub-divide entrance hall and rooms to the west of the Hall. Construction of dividing wall between the paired staircases. Insertion of the strong room, sub-division of the first floor Assembly Room into offices. Insertion of second floor for living accommodation; insertion of 4 no. hipped dormers to front elevation; insertion of pair of central chimney breasts, fireplaces and chimneys.

5.06 Phase V – 1914

Redundancy by Lloyds Bank; occupation of building by VAC and conversion to Hospital. Conversion of second floor rear central roof area to operating theatre and insertion of window in north gable.

5.07 Phase VI – 1919

Removal of rear east and west roof extensions, raising of rear wall to second floor level to provide additional hospital bed accommodation and WC facilities each side of the operating theatre, as shown on the architect's drawings 1919.

5.08 Phase VII – 1923

Construction of four storey nursing accommodation attached to the rear of the main building by William John Tamlyn, local Minehead architect.

5.09 Phase VIII – 1934

Construction of two storey stone faced façade in-fill to west side of former Assembly Rooms.

5.10 Phase IX - c1937

Absorption and conversion of former Police Station into additional Hospital accommodation with first floor living accommodation. Lift to centre of Hospital and other internal alterations.

5.11 Phase X – c1950's

Construction of Out Patients' Department to west side of former Police Station.

5.12 Phase XI – 1964 – 1989

Extension of Out Patients' Department to west of former Police Station. Construction of flat roofed single storey reception area to east of former Assembly Room building and removal of side porch.

5.13 Phase XII – 1989 – 1999

Construction of new buildings as Day Hospital within the courtyard adjoining Blenheim Road. The over-roofing and incorporation of the courtyard to the east of the former nurses' accommodation.



## **6.00 Assessment of historic significance**

### **6.01 High Significance**

- a) 1888 original assembly room building, elevation design, hammer beam roof structure and finishes, coped gables and gable chimney stacks, fan faulted balcony, remains of original fenestration, and leaded light glazing. Remains of original floor plan. Main staircase and ceiling over. Panelled beams on corbel brackets, lath and plaster ceilings with cornice detail. Moulded architraves and skirtings boards. The Parade stone wall and railings.
- b) 1897 Police House and Station, elevations, surviving joinery, and plan form.
- c) 1910 Bank ground floor alterations, including, front roof dormers and central chimneys stacks, ground floor office insertions, details and ceiling cornicing.
- d) 1919 rear wing second floor alterations to assembly room building.
- e) 1923 Nurse's accommodation building, elevations, roof and floor plan layouts, fenestration, fireplace surrounds, internally joinery and staircase on upper floors where original.

### **6.02 Medium significance**

- a) 1934 two storey façade east of main assembly building.
- b) 1910 insertion of second floor and partitioning.
- c) 1910 insertion of main Bank vault.

### **6.03 Low significance**

- a) All post 1934 mid/late C20th single storey infill and building structures.
- b) All post 1934 internal alterations and joinery
- c) All upvc replacement windows and secondary glazing. Insertion of second floor window to west gable, insertion of metal fire escape external stairs and details
- d) External service pipes, ducting gangways.

## 7.00 **Comment on proposal and conclusion**

### 7.01 Summary.

- a) There are three principal buildings of important local and architectural significance on the site, 1 – the 1888 assembly room building, 2, the 1897 police station and 3, the 1923 nurse's accommodation building. While the 1910 and 1919 alterations changed the appearance and floor plan of the principal assembly room building, it is the change of use to the hospital that has had the greatest negative impact on these important historic buildings and their setting, by the construction of the single storey structures filling the space around the main buildings.
- b) The internal adaptations and service equipment for the hospital operation has further compounded the issue.
- c) The group of buildings have been redundant since the hospital relocated in 2011. Neglect has now left the building vulnerable to decay and damage. Water leaks have already caused severe damage to original lath and plaster ceiling and an outbreak of dry rot has resulted in the partial loss of the 1888 ground floor structure.

### 7.02 Comment on proposals

- a) The applicant has submitted proposals to the planning authority for a viable change of use for the site and its buildings. Their proposal comprises:-
  - i) The restoration of the former main assembly room building to its original plan form and use as a community centre for concerts, meetings, theatre, film and other community functions.
  - ii) The conversion of the former nurse's accommodation to community use on the ground floor with self-contained living apartments on the upper floors.
  - iii) Conversion of the former police station first floor to an apartment.
  - iv) The removal of the single storey side extension to the west of the main 1888 building.
  - v) Renovation of the remaining structures to various community functions.
- b) The principle of the proposal is considered appropriate to secure the future of these heritage assets and while the conversion work to the 1897 police building and 1923 nurse's accommodation respects and retains the historically significant parts of the buildings without loss, there is an impact of the main 1888 to consider.

- c) The 1910 and 1919 alterations to the main 1888 building resulted in major alterations to the original building. Namely, the subdivision of the main first floor full height and length assembly room, including the insertion of the second floor structure with four dormers set into the front roof slope, a pair of central chimney breast and stacks; a large vault to the west rear of the ground floor room and creation of offices at the east end. The 1919 work raised the rear corners of the building at second floor level and added new rear roofs with additional accommodation for the hospital.
- d) The proposals have little impact on the rear second floor area, except for the removal of the centre roof (operating theatre) for a flat roof zone for eco energy units. However, this would appear to have been part of the 1888 roof and gable structure converted out of the roof void area during WWI. The area is much altered and re-laid with poor fibre cement slate. The 1923 building behind obscures this roof structure and its modification is not seen as detrimental to the main 1888 building or impacts on the setting. The detailing of how this is to be achieved shown be conditioned.
- e) In order for the original first floor assembly room to be reinstated, the 1910 alterations will need to be reversed, i.e removal of the second floor structure, first and second floor partitions, the removal of the centre pair of chimneys and the supporting breasts down to first floor floor level. The 1919 alterations have removed the rear sections of most the 1888 hammer beam main roof structure and this will need to be repaired and reinstated. In addition, there is this issue of the front dormer windows to consider relating to either their removal or retention and support.
- f) A structural engineers report has been commissioned to look at the principle of the above. In general terms the restoration is physically possible. The debate is regarding historic loss. The dormer windows relate to an early phase of the building and along the centre chimneys constructed at the same time over 100 years ago are now a part of the heritage asset and street scene. While the engineers report indicates the dormers could be supported and sealed off underneath to retain their external presence, supporting the chimneys above the hall ceiling is not physically possible. On this basis as they are coeval, they either all remain or are all removed to revert the façade back to its original 1888 design.
- g) It can be argued that the proposal to re-instate the first floor room to its original form will provide Minehead with a grand civic building once more capable of many community uses for the long term public benefit. The original building function and design has also been heavily compromised by the 1910 and 1919 alterations. It has to be said the internal changes have had a negative impact on the heritage asset. The proposals, though there is historic loss, are considered to be a positive enhancement for the Gothic revival building.

- h) The reinstatement of the lost main stairs and entrance arch to the first floor hall, is also considered a positive enhancement and compliments the full reinstatement of building as originally intended.
- i) The removal of the front dormer window and central chimneys, while a loss of historic fabric from an earlier phase, is considered necessary if the original hall is to be re-instated to its original use for the community. A detailed survey and photographic record is recommended prior to their removal and the details lodged with the Records Office.
- j) The ground floor 1910 alterations should be retained to provide an administrative function spaces to avoid the loss of the ceilings and cornicing of this phase subdividing the spaces, as it is not possible to identify which cornice detail is clearly of 1888 or 1910 origin.

### 7.03 Conclusion

The site is quite complex with three important heritage assets that have been compromised by the expansion the hospital in a haphazard way to address need rather than with complementary design. The proposals seek to address this by providing a viable alternative use for the buildings, enhancing the setting by removing negative modern structures. The restoration of the 1888 assembly room building to its original form and function is seen as a positive enhancement and while there will be some historic loss of early phase change details, their loss is considered acceptable in conservation terms to ensure the survival of the heritage asset in the long term, and benefit the public and community of Minehead and the wider area.

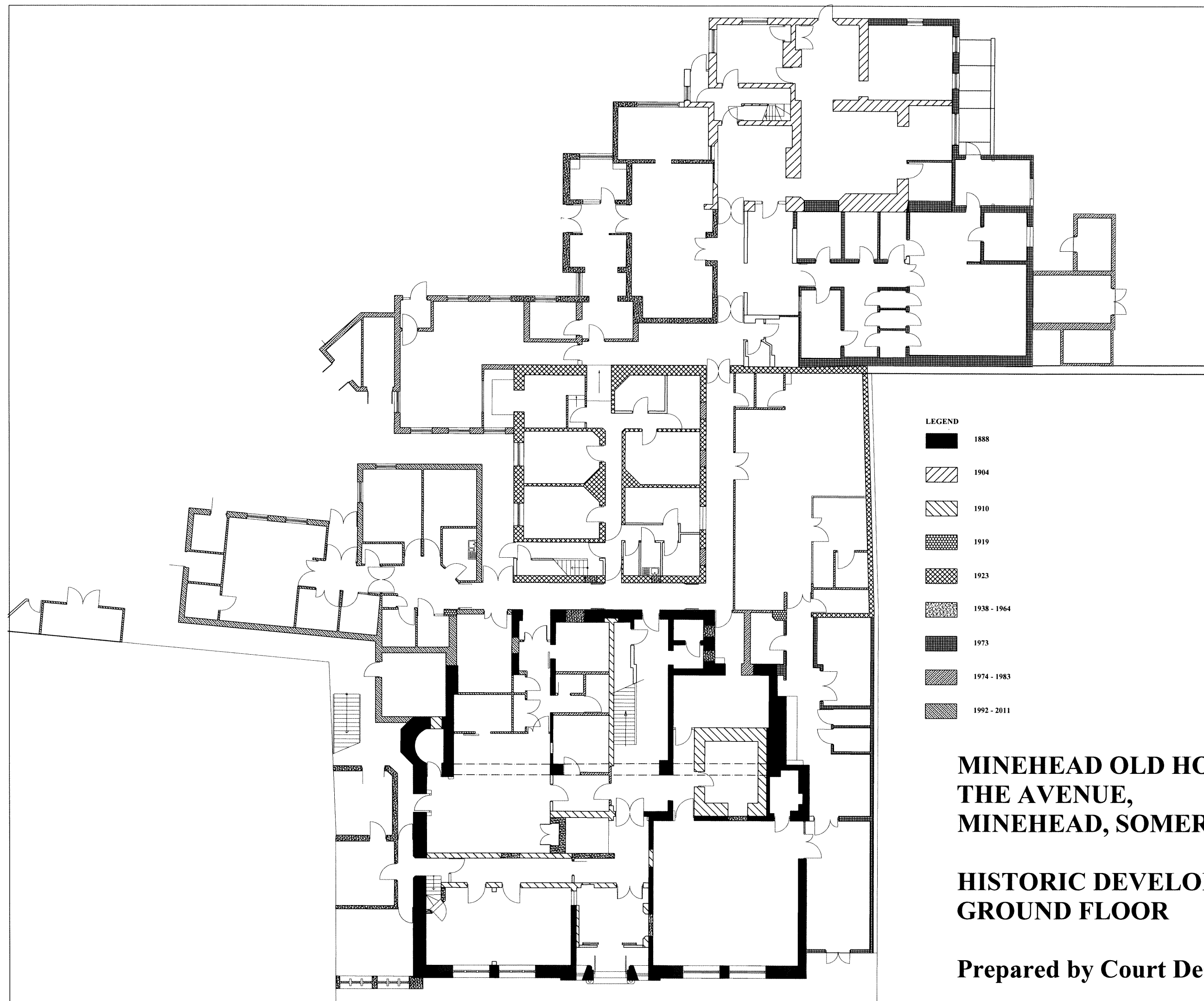
This heritage appraisal has been carried out in accordance with the NPPF clauses 128, 129, and 133.

Research and report by

Andrew T Hayes BSc DipBldgCons MRICS IHBC  
RICS accredited in building conservation

June 2016

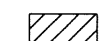
**APPENDIX A**  
**HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT PLANS**



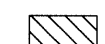
**LEGEND**



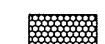
1888



1904



1910



1919



1923



1938 - 1964



1973



1974 - 1983

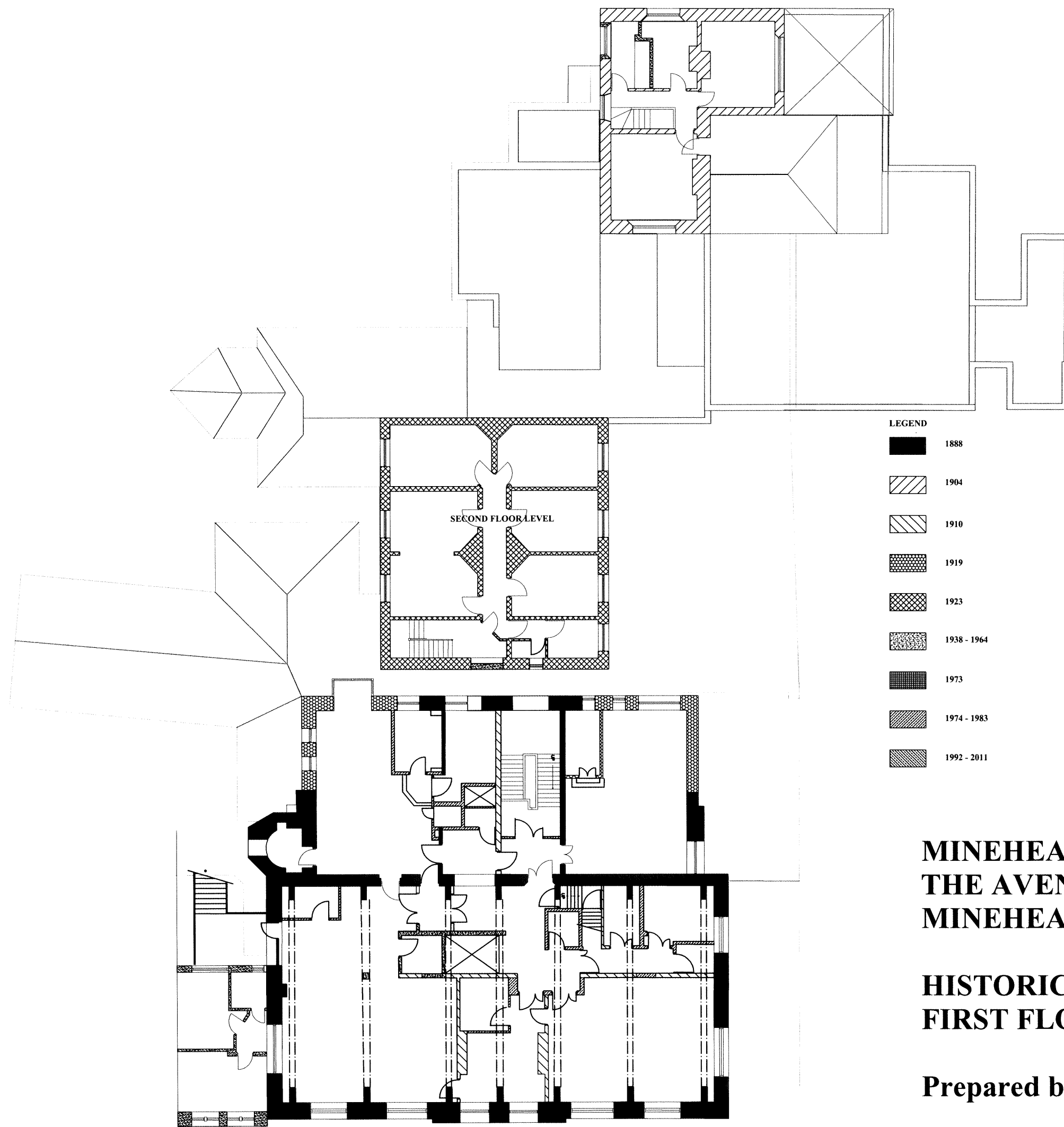


1992 - 2011

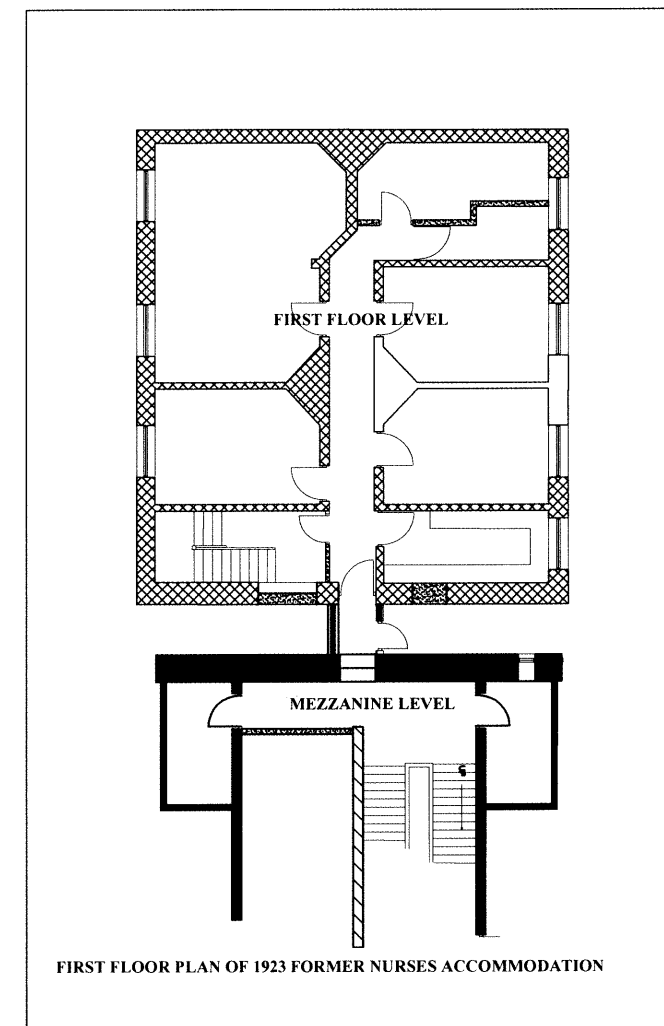
**MINEHEAD OLD HOSPITAL,  
THE AVENUE,  
MINEHEAD, SOMERSET**

**HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
GROUND FLOOR**

**Prepared by Court Design & Conservation**



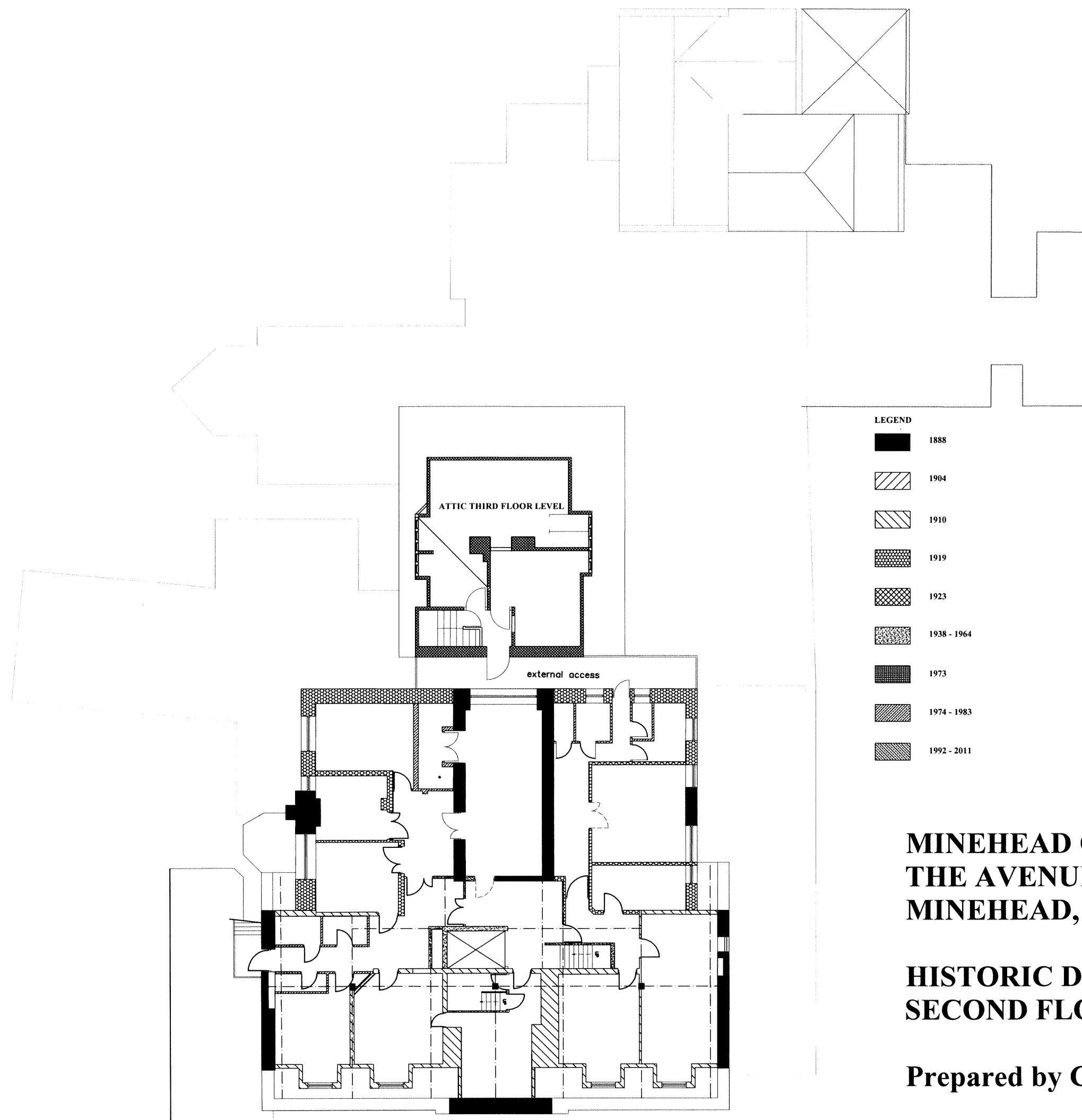
LEGEND	
	1888
	1904
	1910
	1919
	1923
	1938 - 1964
	1973
	1974 - 1983
	1992 - 2011












# **MINEHEAD OLD HOSPITAL, THE AVENUE, MINEHEAD, SOMERSET**

## **HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN FIRST FLOOR**

**Prepared by Court Design & Conservation**



**LEGEND**

-  1888
-  1904
-  1910
-  1919
-  1923
-  1938 - 1964
-  1973
-  1974 - 1983
-  1992 - 2011

**MINEHEAD OLD HOSPITAL,  
THE AVENUE,  
MINEHEAD, SOMERSET**

**HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
SECOND FLOOR**

**Prepared by Court Design & Conservation**



## **APPENDIX B**

### **ARCHIVE DOCUMENTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS**

# Images of England

[Back To Results](#) [Non Print Page](#)

© Mr R.M Rayner

IoE Number:	391248
Location:	MINEHEAD HOSPITAL, THE PARADE (north side) MINEHEAD, WEST SOMERSET, SOMERSET
Photographer:	Mr R.M Rayner
Date Photographed:	16 July 2001
Date listed:	30 September 1994
Date of last amendment:	30 September 1994
Grade	II

The Images of England website consists of images of listed buildings based on the statutory list as it was in 2001 and does not incorporate subsequent amendments to the list. For the statutory list and information on the current listed status of individual buildings please go to [The National Heritage List for England](#).

SS9646  
900-1/3/89

MINEHEAD  
THE PARADE  
(North side)

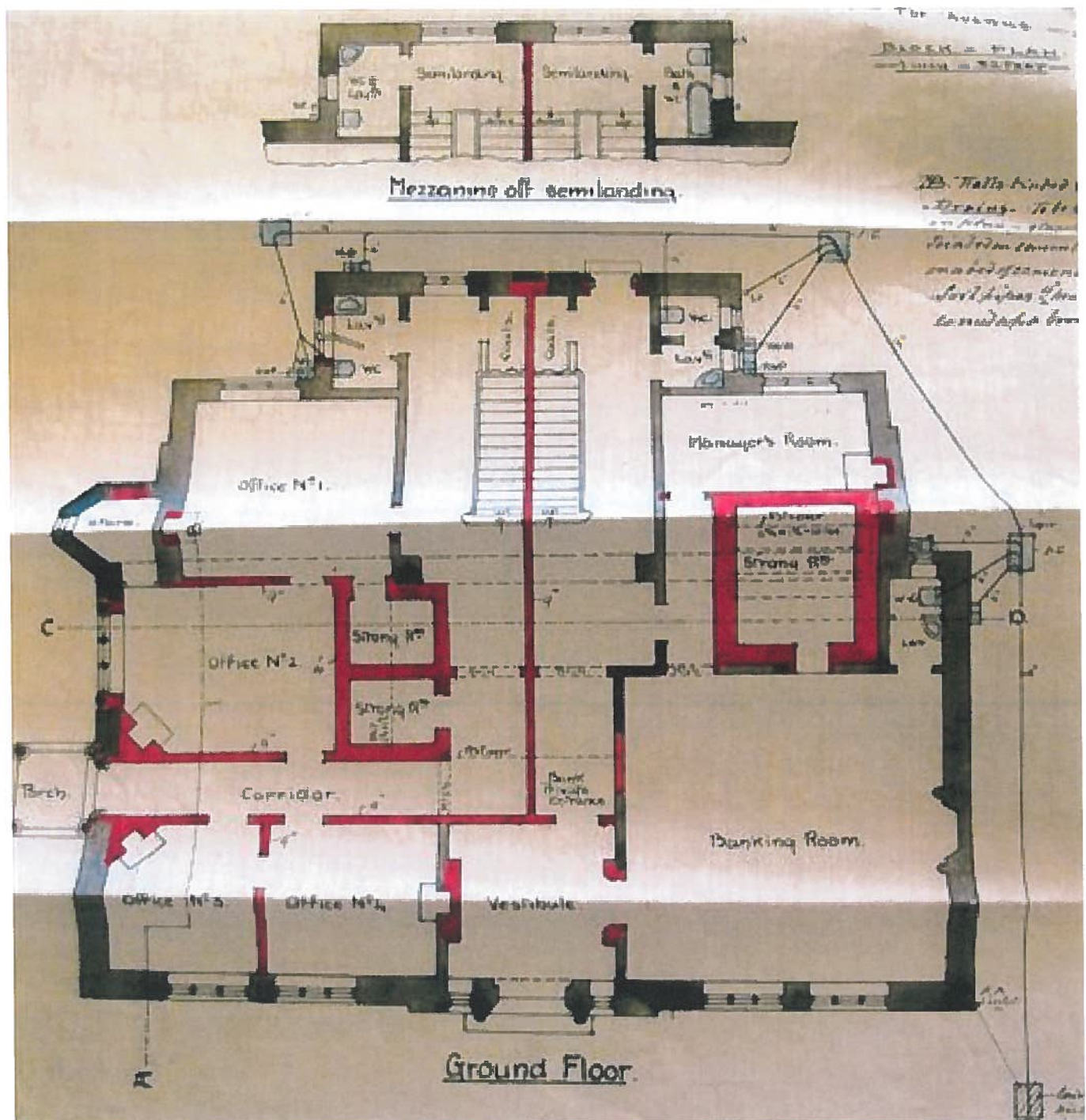
MINEHEAD SS9646 THE PARADE 900-1/3/89 (North side) Minehead Hospital GV II Public hall,

later a first World War hospital. 1888-9 by Piers St Aubyn. Snecked rubblestone with ashlar dressings, crested slate roof with stone stacks to gable ends and flanking the central gable. Rectangular plan. Gothic Revival style. 2 storeys with attics; symmetrical 6-window range. The 2 central ranges are stepped slightly forward under a high gable with moulded coping and a shield to the apex; a string course steps down at the sides and spans the building below a parapet. The central pointed-arched doorway is flanked by fan-vaulted supports to a canted balcony with pointed-arched panelling. Gauged stone pointed arches and hoodmoulds to two 2-light Decorated-style windows with transoms opening onto the balcony. 3-light flat-arched windows with reticulated tracery to the sides have transoms; above them are substantial original hipped dormers with C20 windows. The right return has 2 large Decorated-style pointed-arched windows. INTERIOR: the reception hall is altered. HISTORY: the Public Hall, the property of a company, was erected in 1888-9 at a cost of about »4,000. The large hall was used for concerts, dramatic performances etc, and sat 550 persons. A visually prominent building by a notable local architect. Included for group value. (Kelly's Directory: London: 1908-: 339).

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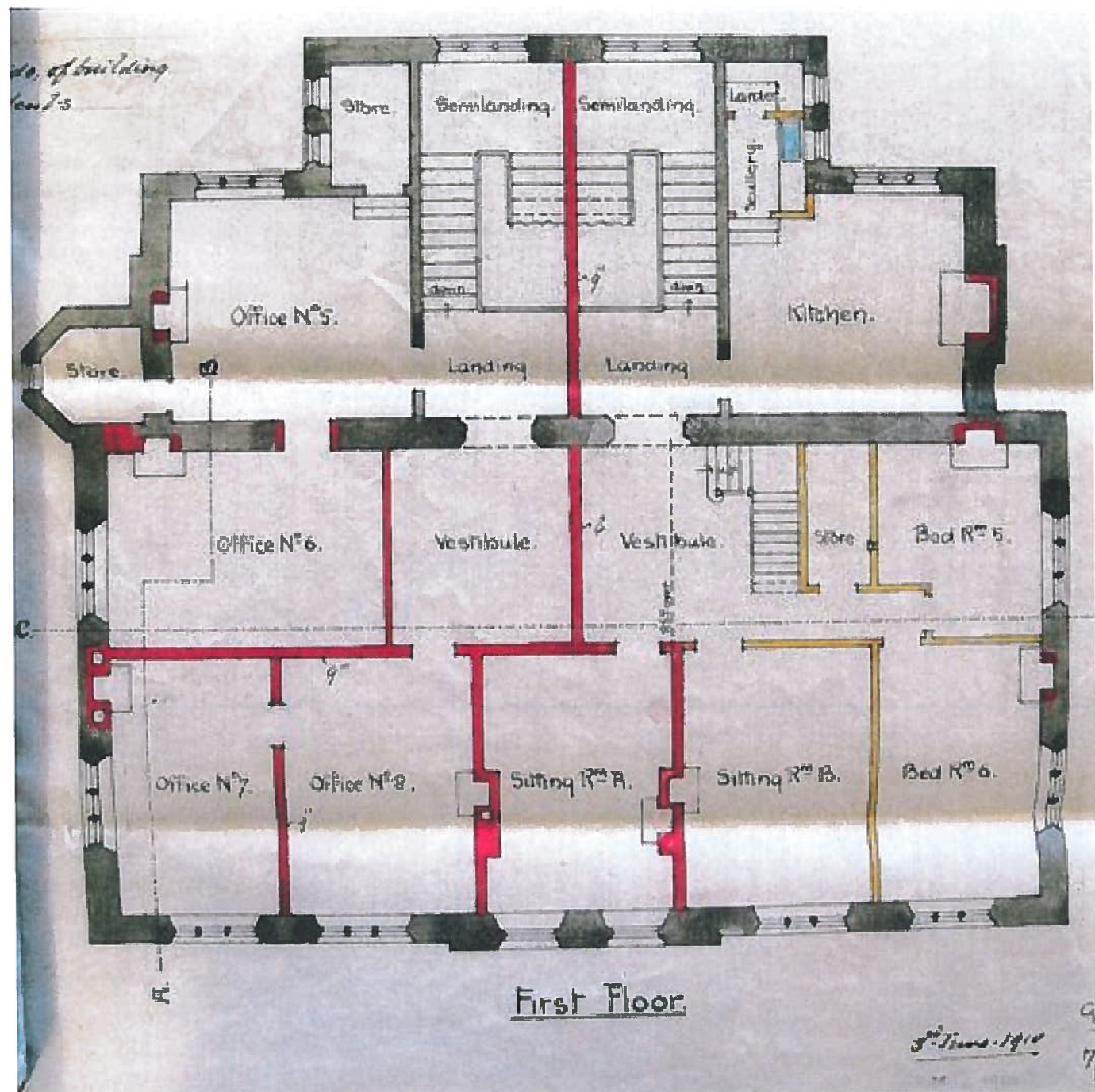
Please note that the inclusion of a listed building on this website does not mean it is open to the public.

## 1910 - GROUND FLOOR PLAN ALTERATIONS



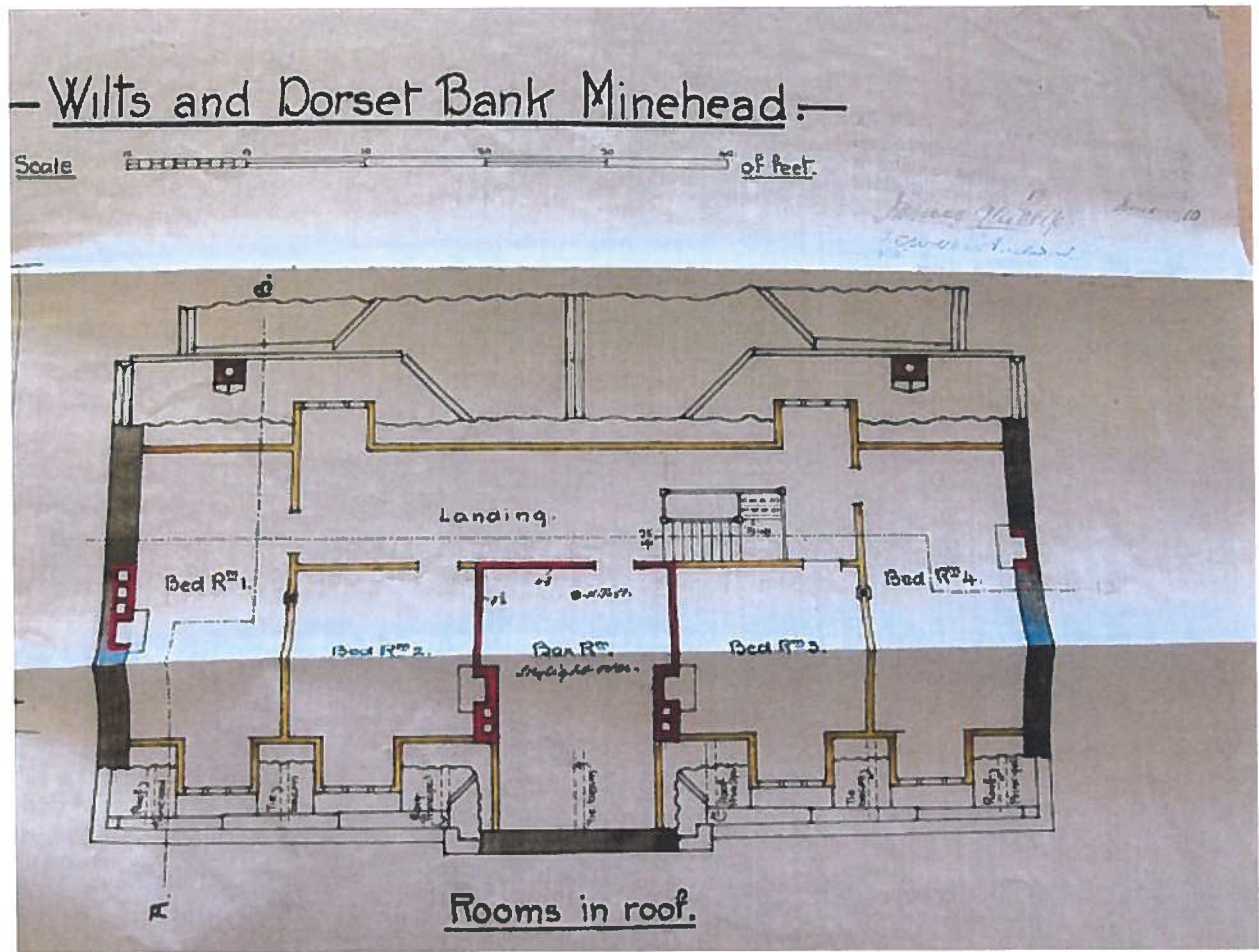


1910 - FIRST FLOOR PLAN ALTERATIONS

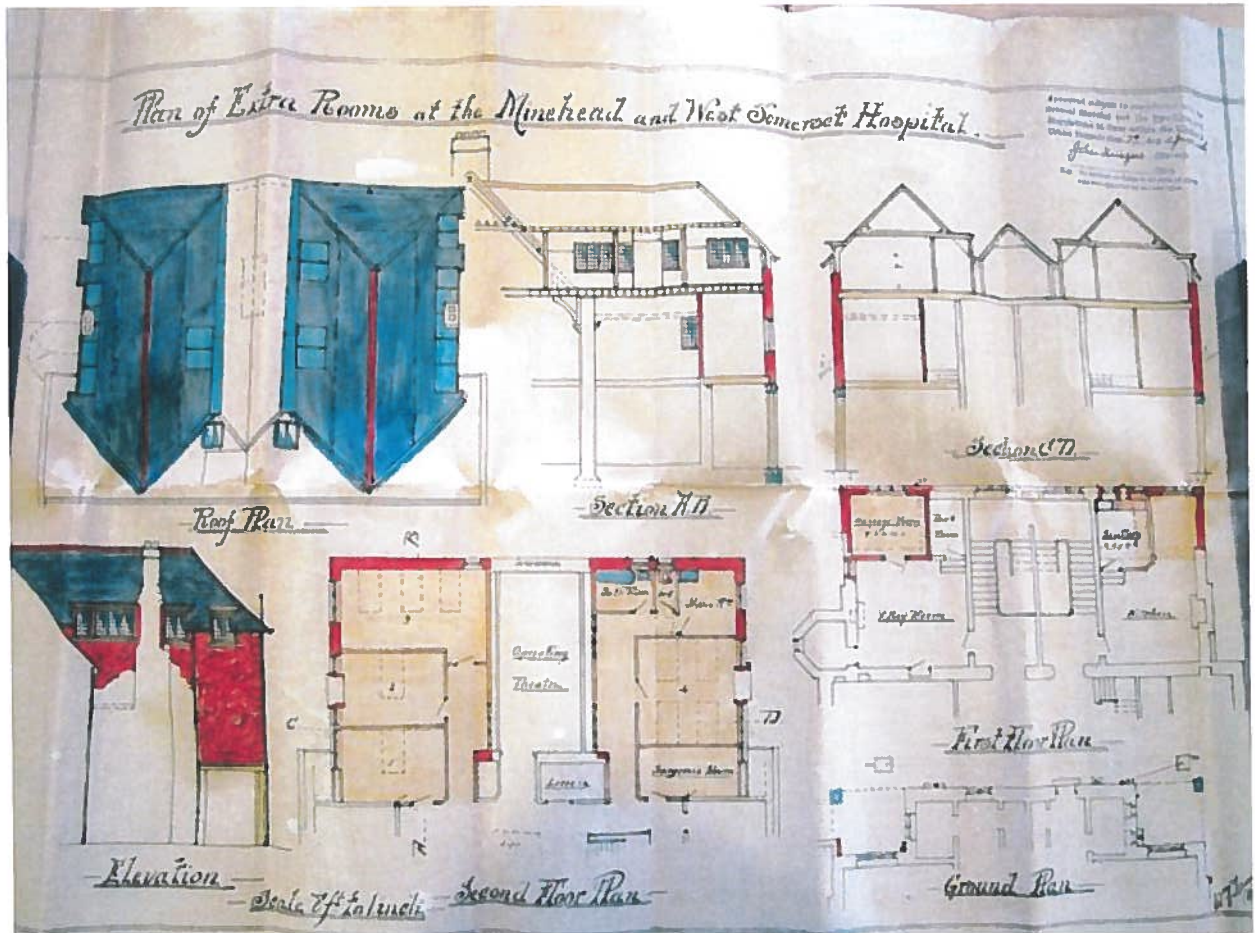




## 1910 – SECOND FLOOR INSERTION

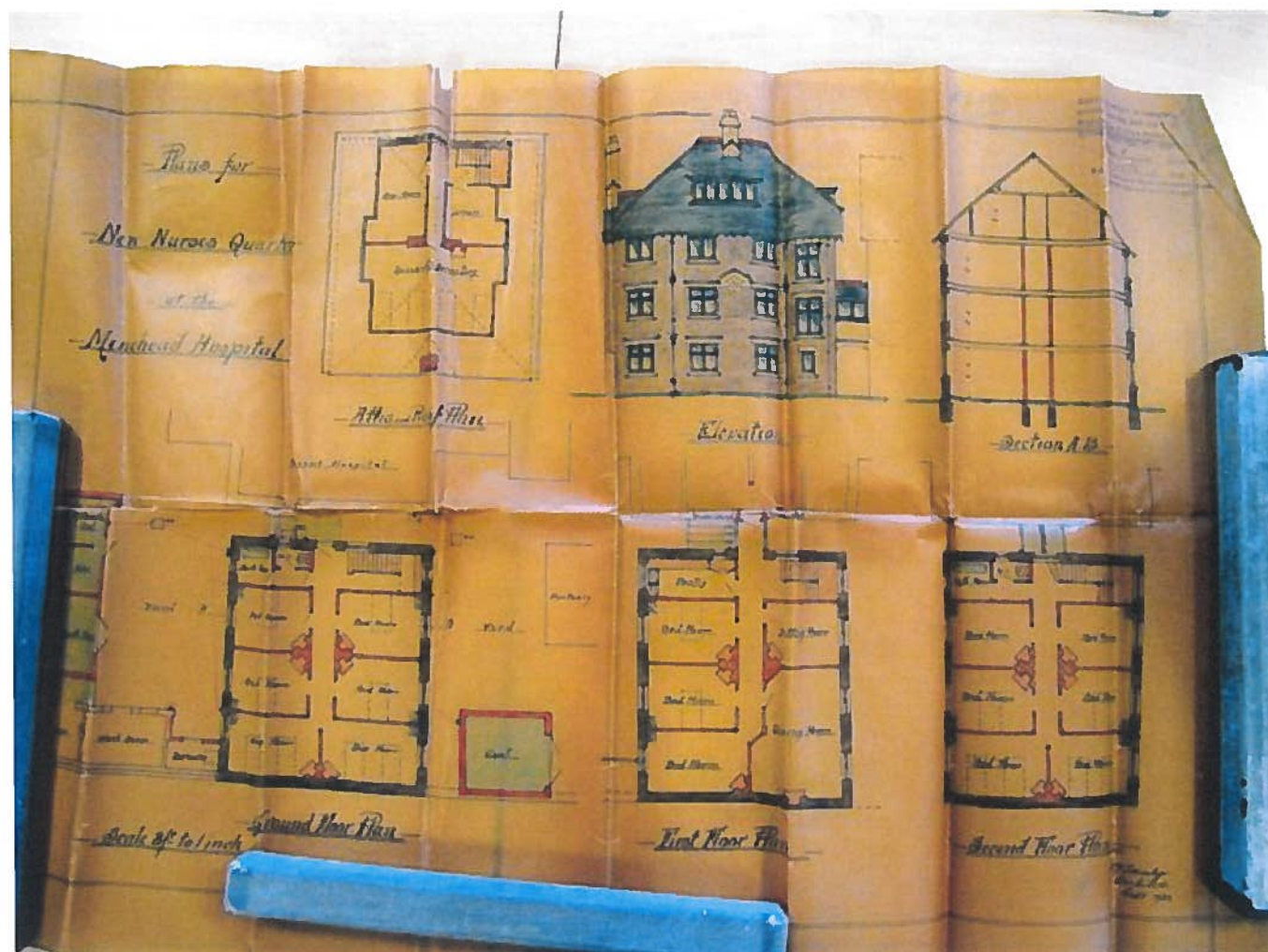


## 1919 – HOSPITAL ALTERATIONS





1923 - NURSE'S ACCOMMODATION BUILDING



ARCHIVE PHOTOGRAPHS

c 1889

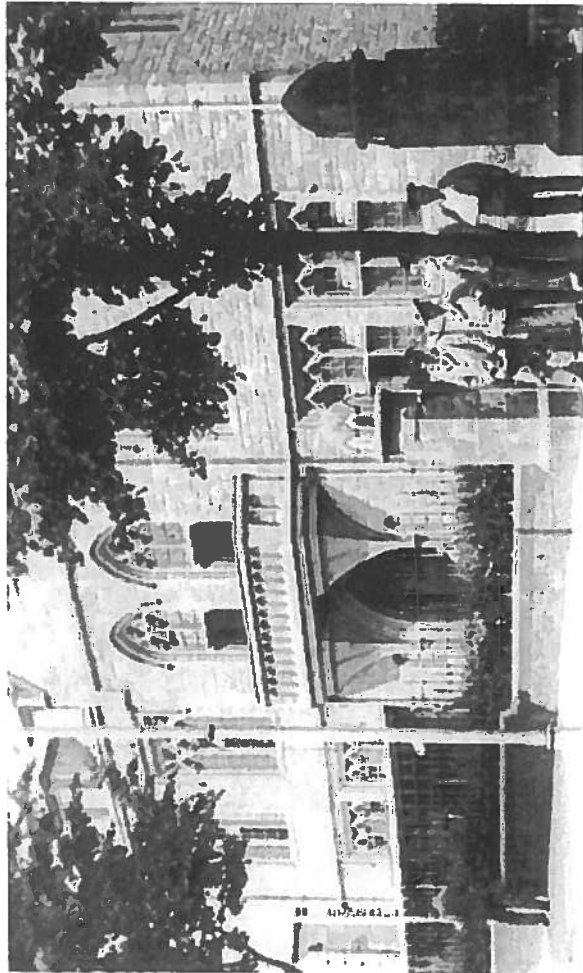


c 1900





## Change Of Use: From Public Hall To Hospital



*A group of convalescent soldiers outside Bank House (Minehead Red Cross Auxiliary Hospital) c.1917*

The old hospital in the centre of Minehead stands empty, on the market since a new community hospital was built on the outskirts of the town in 2011. The Grade 2 listed building was designed by James Piers St Aubyn in 1888/9 to serve as a public hall. Upstairs, and approached by a double-branching staircase, was a large auditorium where popular concerts, plays and public meetings were held. The hall belonged to a company of local business men but the project soon proved unprofitable and the building was taken over by the Wilts and Dorset Bank and became known as Bank House. In 1914 the Wilts and Dorset was taken over by Lloyds and Bank House became redundant. It was soon to become a convalescent home for wounded soldiers.

In 1905 the National Society for Aid to the Sick and Wounded in War were reconstituted as the British Red Cross Society and branches set up across the United Kingdom to recruit individual supporters and be prepared in the event of war being declared. This was followed in 1909 by the setting up of the Voluntary

Aid Detachment (VAD) scheme and volunteers (VADs) were trained to supplement military medical forces in times of war.

In 1908 Mrs B M Dawson Thomas came to live in Minehead and soon after her arrival formed the Red Cross VAD of Somerset 14; an enterprise that seems to have been received with enthusiasm by the local community. There were regular training sessions which included two field days each year attended by an inspector from the War Office. Photographer Alfred Vowles recorded the detail of one Porlock Field Day showing the clerks outside the clerical tent, VADs making Bovril, the 'cooks' eating lunch near the field kitchen and a men's detachment of stretcher bearers'.

The outbreak of war in 1914 transformed the unit from a training group to one on active service. By this time a number of mules had been sent to Minehead to be trained for use at the front. The War Office ordered Mrs Dawson Thomas to find a house suitable for hospital use where men injured in accidents with the unbroken animals could be nursed by the VADs. She eventually took over Avalon in Blenheim Road.



*VADs making Bovril, etc, etc, at a training camp at Porlock c.1912*

When the mules left in 1915, orders were received to find larger quarters for a convalescent home for wounded soldiers and Mrs Dawson Thomas obtained Bank House on loan. The home (later known as Minehead Auxiliary Red Cross Hospital) was staffed by the VADs with Mrs Dawson Thomas as commandant and Dr Hamilton Ollerhead as medical officer. At first there were 50 beds and for a time the Wesleyan schoolroom next door housed extra patients. A later annexe enlarged capacity to 120. Patients were fetched from the hospital in vans lent by local tradesmen and boy scouts helped by pushing convalescents in wheel chairs to the sea front. There were outings and entertainments and the attention and care received by patients was much appreciated. There were hospital rules (curfew at 8.30pm!) but the needs of the soldiers were paramount, both physically and spiritually, and one patient describes the nurses as giving all that was best in them so that 'we sick and wounded from the harrowing toil of grim and awful war may recover in some measure that, in the execution of our duty, we had lost.'



VADs and convalescent soldiers outside Bank House c. 1915 Dr Hamilton Ollerhead sports a bow tie and sitting beside him is Mrs Dawson Thomas, commandant.

Mrs Dawson Thomas received the MBE and Bank House later became the Luttrell Memorial Hospital.

**Hilary Binding**

*Thanks to the Dawson Thomas archive for information and photographs.*

## Wiveliscombe and The Black Death

On the evening of Thursday 24 October Tom Mayberry presented 'the Bishop and the Black Death' to an audience in Wiveliscombe church. People were also able to see Bishop Ralph of Shrewsbury's register, probably the first time it had been in Wiveliscombe since large sections of it were compiled there in the mid-14th century.

This small town in West Somerset played a significant part in the story of the Black Death in Somerset. The terrible outbreak of bubonic plague throughout Europe began in the Genoese citadel at Caffa in the Crimea, which was besieged by an infected Tartar army. The Tartars catapulted their dead soldiers into Caffa infecting the Genoese defenders. As the Genoese travelled home they took the plague to Constantinople, the Arabian Peninsula and the ports of the Mediterranean. Despite the drastic measures taken at places such as Messina and Milan to avoid the infection it spread rapidly through a population with no immunity to this deadly disease and already weakened in many European countries by famine after a succession of poor harvests, deteriorating climate and war.

In England as in other European countries there was a large and growing population following two centuries of benign weather and expanding agriculture. There were also expanding towns, a flourishing woollen industry and extensive trade with considerable movement of people along the roads and across the seas. England was therefore very vulnerable when the plague arrived in June 1348 at the port of Melcombe Regis in Dorset. The disease spread rapidly along Somerset's routes leaving a trail of death and resulting chaos as communities lost their leaders and farmers at places like North and South Cadbury where most of the tenant farmers, and presumably their families, were killed.

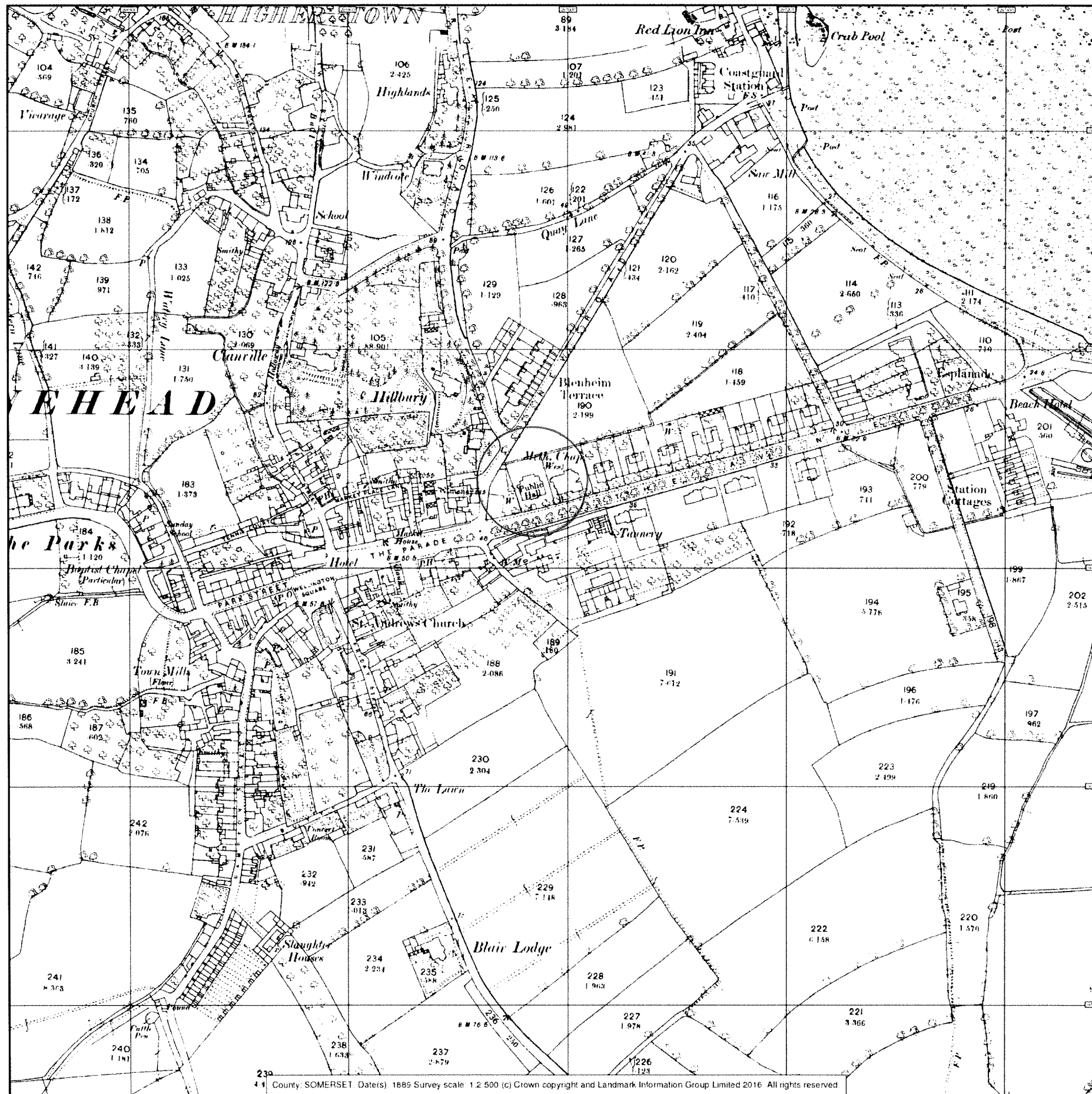
Bishop Ralph of Shrewsbury, a zealous reformer and builder in the diocese, probably realised very quickly that the clergy, who attended the sick and dying as a matter of course, were among the most vulnerable. He made the decision to move from Wells to a favourite residence, his palace at Wiveliscombe. He gave orders for prayers but lost many clergy and in some parishes he made several appointments



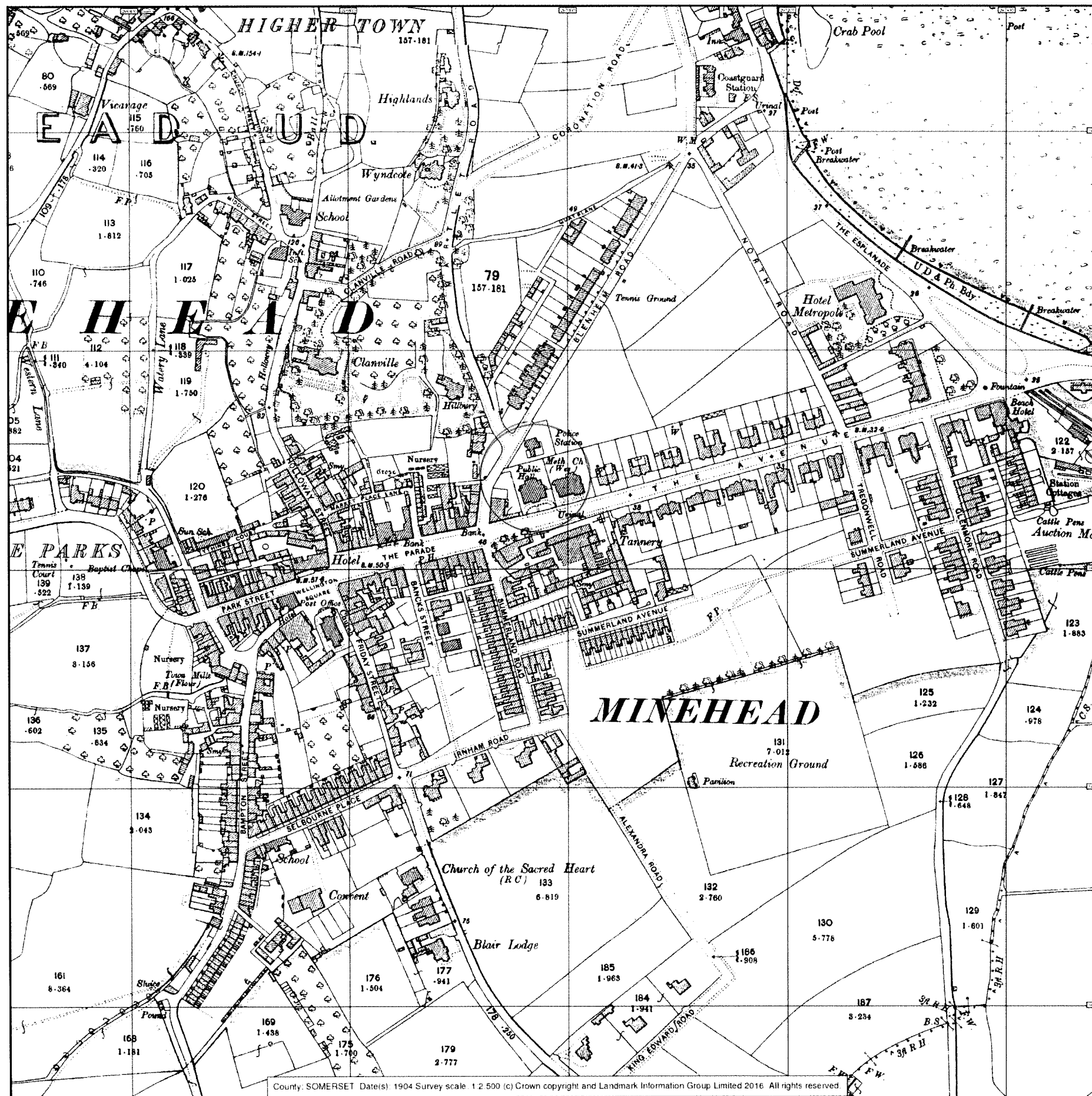
In Wiveliscombe church: Mary Siraut, Jane de Gruchy and Tom Mayberry

## **APPENDIX C**

### **ARCHIVE MAPS**



**Landmark Historical Map**  
 County: SOMERSET  
 Published Date(s): 1889  
 Originally plotted at: 1:2,500



**Landmark Historical Map**  
 County: SOMERSET  
 Published Date(s): 1904  
 Originally plotted at: 1:2,500



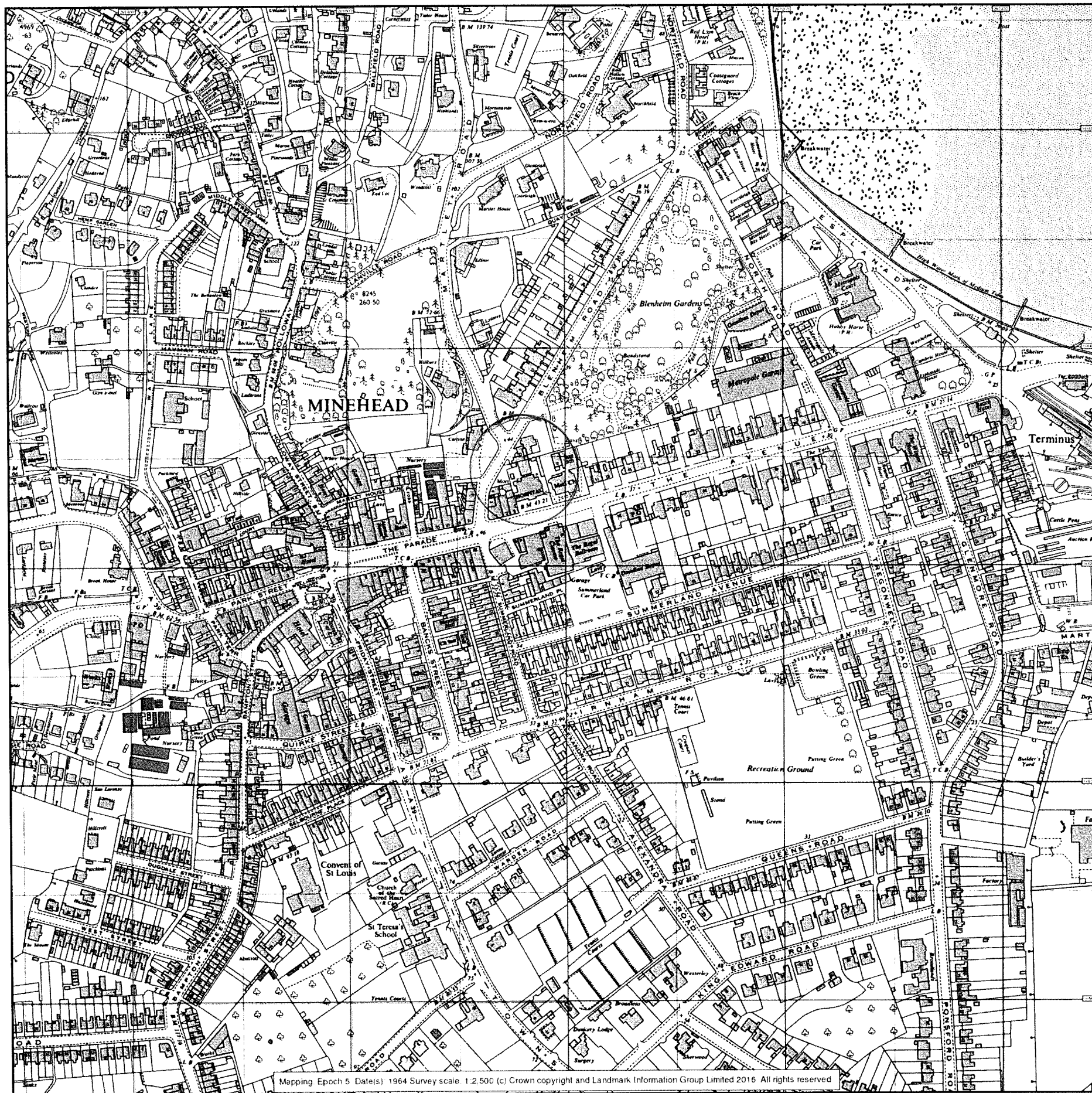




County: SOMERSET. Date(s): 1938 Survey scale: 1:10,560 (c) Crown copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited 2016. All rights reserved.



Landmark Historical Map  
County: SOMERSET  
Published Date(s): 1938  
Originally plotted at: 1:10,560



**Landmark Historical Map**  
Mapping: Epoch 5  
Published Date(s): 1964  
Originally plotted at: 1:2,500





Mapping Epoch 5 Date(s) 1973-1989 Survey scale 1:2,500 (c) Crown copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited 2016. All rights reserved



**Landmark Historical Map**  
Mapping: Epoch 5  
Published Date(s): 1973-1989  
Originally plotted at: 1:2,500

**APPENDIX D**  
**SITE PHOTOGRAPHS**





01 Main front 1888 elevation.JPG



02 1910 front west dormers.JPG



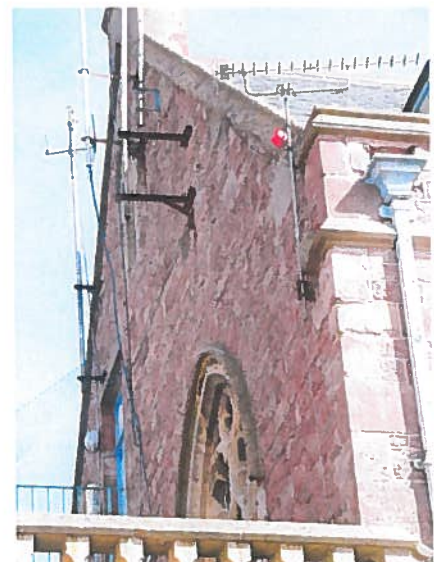
03 1888 front centre gable.JPG



04 1910 front east dormers.JPG



05 1934 front west infill section.JPG



06 1888 west gable end.JPG





07 c1973 east front extension.JPG



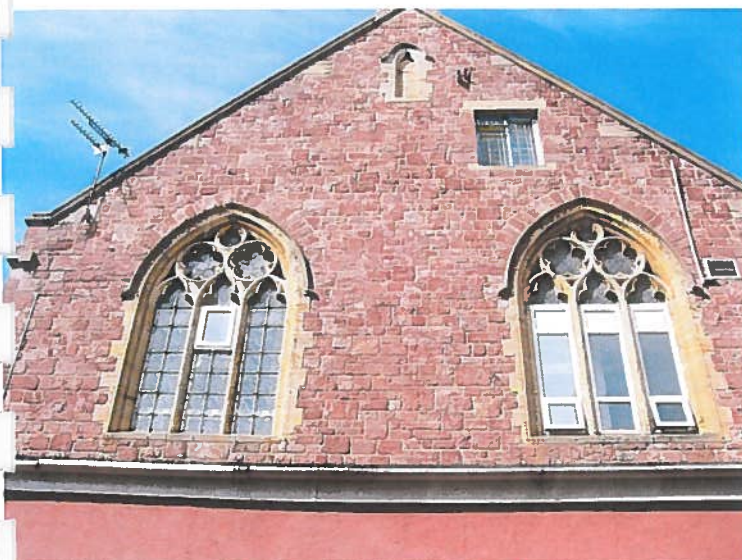
08 1888 front wall and railings.JPG



09 1888 front gate.JPG



10 East side boundary.JPG



11 1888 east gable end.JPG



12 1919 Second floor addition east side.JPG





13 East elevation 1923 Nurse's accommodation.JPG



14 West elevataion 1923 nurse's accommodation.JPG



15 date shield on north wall of nurse's building.JPG



16 1923 foundation stone west wall nurse's building.JPG



17 General view from Bleheim Road (northwest).JPG



18 View looking north east from rear of 1888 building to form...





19. Blenheim Road view of former 1897 Police Station.JPG



20 Modern additions to 1897 Police Station east side.JPG



21 Former ground floor Banking Hall.JPG



22 Former Banking Hall floor.JPG



23 1888 east end first floor support beam.JPG



24 1888 beam with 1910 cornicing and bank vault.JPG





25 1888 west end first floor beam support with 1910 alteration...



26. East end first floor former hospital ward - hammer truss ba...



27. 1888 gothic arch to former first floor assembly room.JPG



28 1888 main staircase.JPG



29. 1888 east end arch roof bracing.JPG



30. 1888 centre roof kingpost and brace adjacent to lift area.J...



31. Post 1919 main roof support alterations adjoining lift area...



32. Roof void over second showing 1888 plaster and decorati...



33. 1923 staircase to nurse's building.JPG



34. Attic level in 1923 nurse's building.JPG