

OFFICERS BUILDING
LONGFORD | COUNTY LONGFORD
ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT



ROBIN LEE ARCHITECTURE
JANUARY 2025

CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION / OVERVIEW

2.0 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.0 DESCRIPTION

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE & RECOMMENDED MITIGATION MEASURES

5.0 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

6.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE & RECOMMENDED MITIGATION MEASURES

7.0 CONCLUSION

1.0 INTRODUCTION / OVERVIEW

1.1 Location

The subject site, the former Officers Building, is situated within the grounds of Sean Connolly Barracks to the north of Longford Town centre, in the townland of Abbeycarton, Co. Longford. The building is located at the western side of the parade ground and barrack complex. The latter is bounded to the south by a shopping centre, the west by a green field, the north by residential properties and the east by Barrack Road. Several other buildings, including a hospital, guard house, prison and market house (used as stables) are also associated with the former barrack complex.

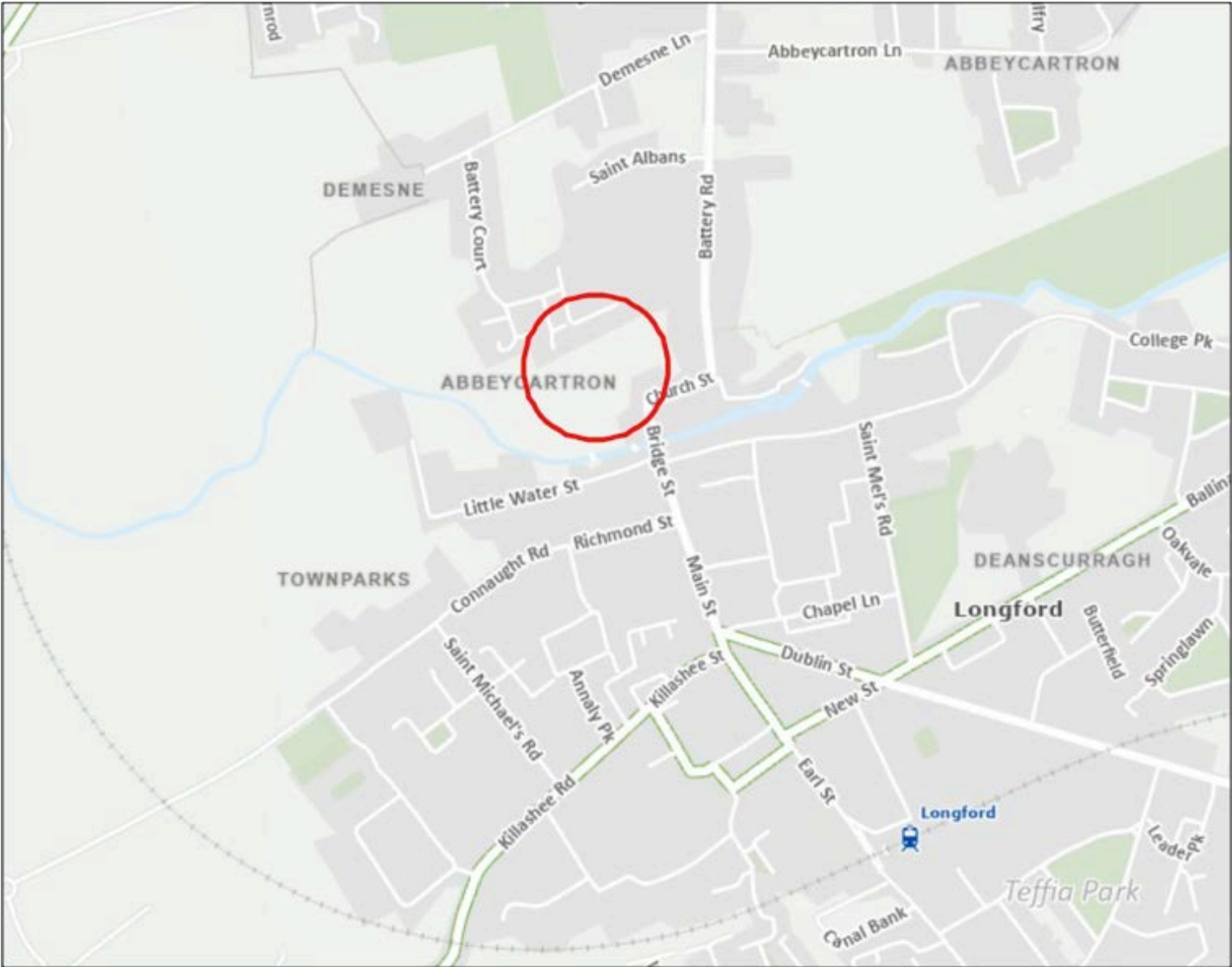


Figure 1: Location of subject site circled in red (Source: Government of Ireland, Historic Environment Viewer)

1.0 INTRODUCTION / OVERVIEW

1.2 Legal & Policy Framework

The protection of the architectural heritage resource is provided for through a range of legal instruments that include the Heritage Act 1995, the Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and National Monuments (Misc. Provisions) Act 1999, and the Planning and Development Act 2000. The Planning and Development Act 2000 requires all Planning Authorities to keep a ‘Record of Protected Structures’ (RPS) of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest. As of the 1st January 2000, all structures listed for protection in current Development Plans, have become ‘protected structures’. Since the introduction of this legislation, planning permission is required for any works to a protected structure that would affect its character. A protected structure also includes the land and other structures within its curtilage. While the term ‘curtilage’ is not defined by legislation, the *Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Local Authorities* (Department Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht 2011), describes it as the parcel of land immediately associated with a structure and which is (or was) in use for the purposes of the structure. In addition, local authorities must provide for the preservation of places, groups of structures and townscapes of architectural heritage significance through designation of Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs).

The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) was established under the Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1999 to record architectural heritage structures within the State. While inclusion in the NIAH does not provide statutory protection to a structure it is intended to advise local authorities on compilation of their Record of Protected Structures. The NIAH also includes a Designed Landscapes and Historic Gardens Survey which comprises a non-statutory, desk-based survey of such features. There are no NIAH-listed structures, or historical gardens of landscapes, located within the proposed development site.

1.0 INTRODUCTION / OVERVIEW

1.3 NIAH Description

The NIAH have described the building as follows in 2005:

Detached nineteen-bay barracks on H-shaped plan, built 1815. Originally in use as main military accommodation building and officers' mess. Composed of a central five-bay three-storey block, flanked to either side (north and south) by six-bay two-storey ranges, and with advanced single-bay two-storey gable-fronted end blocks. Two-storey returns and single-storey extensions to rear (west). Single-storey extension to north elevation. Porch extension to front elevation (east) of south flanking range. Auxiliary buildings to rear (west). Hipped and pitched slate roofs with cast-iron rainwater goods, rendered and dressed coursed limestone chimneystacks. Roughcast rendered walls with rusticated coursed limestone to ground floor to central and advanced end blocks. Dressed limestone plinth and raised dressed limestone quoins. Dressed limestone string courses, sills and sill courses. Square-headed window openings having timber frame windows with hinged panes. Wyatt windows to front elevation of end blocks at first floor level, now with timber casement windows. Square-headed main entrance opening to centre of main block with replacement glazed timber door, accessed via concrete steps. Situated within the grounds of Sean Connolly Barracks, to the west side of the parade ground and barrack complex, and located to the north of Longford Town centre. Rubble stone boundary wall and complex of single-storey outbuildings to the rear (west).

The NIAH's appraisal of the significance of the building was as follows:

This monumental, classically-inspired former cavalry barrack building forms the principal element of the Sean Connolly Barrack complex (13008016 - 20). It retains its early character, form, massing and much of its important early fabric. Fine craftsmanship and attention to detailing are evident throughout. It was built to designs by John Behan and was built to provide accommodation for 9 officers and 222 non-commissioned officers and privates. The impressive scale of the building and the repetition of simple, well-proportioned elements create a powerful and striking architectural effect. Its form, with classical proportions, is very typical of the military architecture of the time and similar buildings are to be found at Custume Barracks, Athlone, and at Columb Barracks, Mullingar, dating to the same period. The complex of single-storey outbuildings and the rubble stone boundary wall to the rear complete the setting and add to this fine composition. This building forms the centrepiece of a group of related structures within the Sean Connolly Barracks complex (13008016 - 20) that together represents an important element of the architectural heritage of the area and is of considerable social and historical importance to County Longford. Sean Connolly Barracks is named after Brigadier Sean Connolly, of the Longford Brigade, who was fatally wounded in action in 1921 by British forces during the War of Independence.

There are ten Recorded Protected Structures (RPS) listed within the *Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027* within 100m of the subject site (see **Figure 2** and **Table 1** below). The subject building, the former Cavalry Barracks, is a Protected Structure (**RPS ref. 9**) according to the *Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027*. The listing also includes the field to the rear. Several other buildings within the Sean Connolly Barracks complex are also RPS sites. The former Market house (**RPS ref. 17**) is also a recorded monument (**LF013-026008-**). The barracks are also recorded by the NIAH (**NIAH ref. 13008020**). The subject site is located outside the Barrack Street Architectural Conservation Area to the east (shaded pink in **Figure 2**).

1.0 INTRODUCTION / OVERVIEW

1.4 Recorded Protected Structures

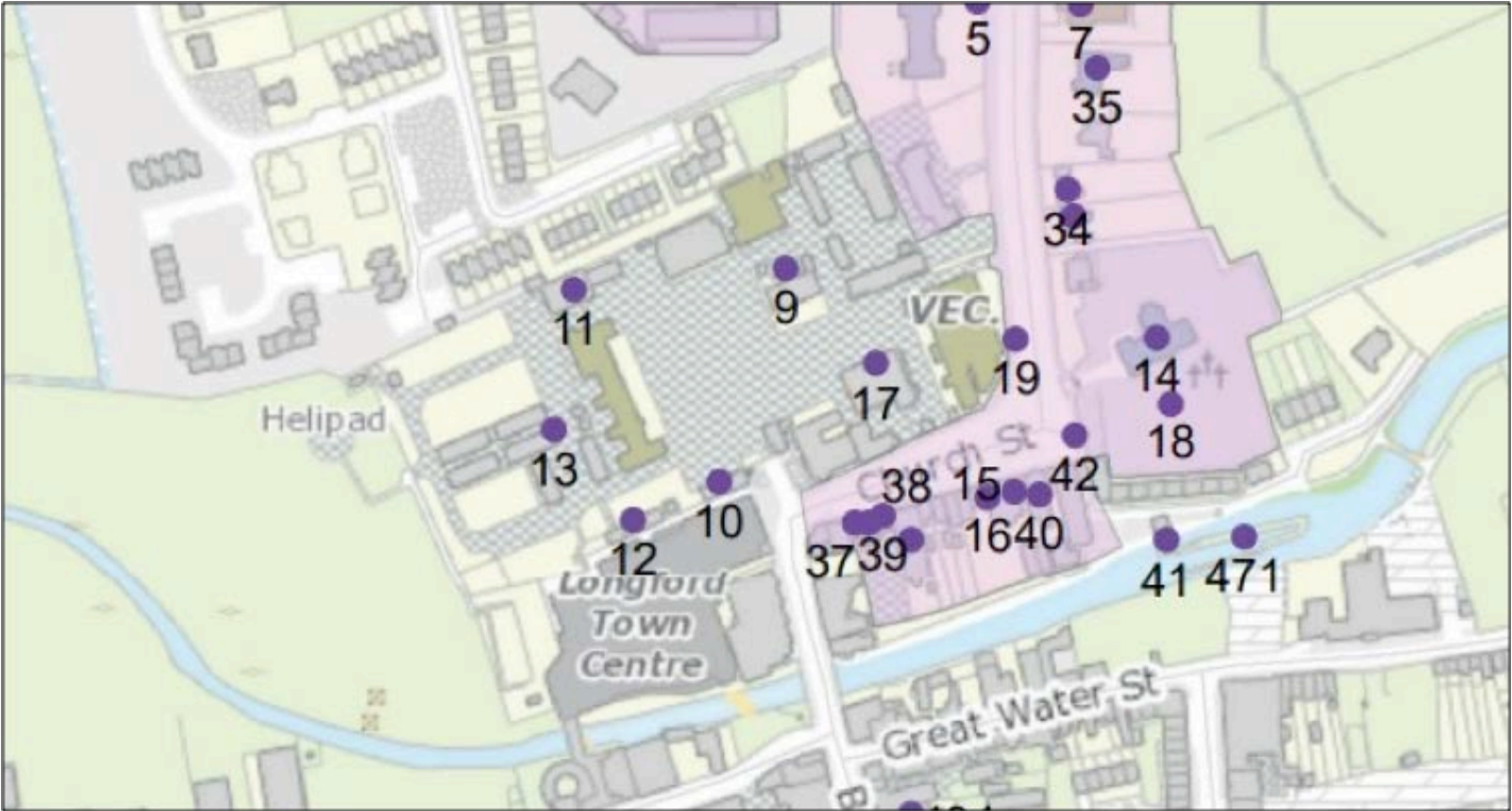


Figure 2: Extract from map of protected structures in the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027 (Source: Longford County Council)

Name/location	Description	NIAH Ref.	RPS Ref.	Rating	Distance
No. 5 Church Street	Church Hall	13002022	451	Regional	100m SE
Church Street	House	13002023	39	Regional	86m SE
Church Street	House	13002024	38	Regional	82m SE
Church Street	House	13002025	37	Regional	75m SE
Sean Connolly Barracks, Church Street	Market house	13002495	17	National	80m E
Sean Connolly Barracks, Church Street	Hospital/infirmary	13008016	9	Regional	65m E
Sean Connolly Barracks, Church Street	Guard house	13008017	10	Regional	24m SE
Sean Connolly Barracks, Church Street	Prison/jail	13008018	11	Regional	13m N
Sean Connolly Barracks, Church Street	Outbuilding	13008019	12	Regional	22m S
Sean Connolly Barracks, Church Street	Barracks	13008020	13	Regional	Site itself

Table 1: Protected structures within 100 metres of the subject site

1.0 INTRODUCTION / OVERVIEW

1.5 Policy Objectives

The *Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027* presents a number of policy objectives to ensure the protection of the architectural heritage resource within the County and these include:

CPO 11.1 - Promote and direct users to the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) website (www.buildingsofireland.ie) wherever appropriate.

CPO 11.2 - Cooperate with the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage in assessing and celebrating historic designed landscapes, demesnes and gardens.

CPO 11.3 - Implement the County Heritage Plan 2019-2024 and seek to update the Heritage Plan over the lifetime of the County Development Plan.

CPO 11.4 - Promote the maintenance and appropriate re-use of the existing building stock.

CPO 11.5 - Ensure that all development should be appropriate to its setting in the landscape or townscape and responds to and reinforces local character and heritage.

CPO 11.6 - Encourage the enhancement, management, protection and the promotion of access to and understanding of the architectural heritage of the County.

CPO 11.9 - Ensure that proposals for development to structures included as part of the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (DoEHLG) and any updated version, maintain and enhance the character of these structures.

CPO 11.10 - Ensure that development in the vicinity of a Recorded Monument or Zone of Archaeological Potential is sited and designed in a sensitive manner with a view to minimal detracting from the monument or its setting.

CPO 11.11 - Require, as part of the development management process, archaeological impact assessments, geophysical survey, test excavations or monitoring as appropriate, for development in the vicinity of monuments or in areas of archaeological potential. Where there are upstanding remains, a visual impact assessment may be required.

CPO 11.12 - Refer any proposed development which may impact on the integrity and/or setting of any monuments, sites, objects or areas of archaeological, cultural, architectural, historical or heritage importance under the protection of this Development Plan and/or the Department of the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht to the relevant section of the DoAHG for observations/comment prior to a grant of permission/approval being obtained.

CPO 11.16 - Promote best conservation practice and encourage the use of appropriately qualified professional advisors, tradesmen and craftsmen, with recognised conservation expertise, for works to Protected Structures.

CPO 11.17 - Ensure the protection of structures included in the Record of Protected Structures by:

- Controlling development which would alter the character of Protected Structures and proposed Protected Structures.*
- Monitoring the condition of Protected Structures and proposed protected structures to identify those endangered by neglect, vandalism or unauthorised development and taking appropriate action.*
- Preventing the endangerment of Protected Structures in the Council's ownership.*

CPO 11.19 - Encourage the rehabilitation, renovation and reuse of existing older buildings/ buildings of architectural merit, where appropriate, in preference to their demolition and redevelopment. In certain cases, land use zoning restrictions may be relaxed in order to secure the conservation of the Protected Structure.

CPO 11.20 - Facilitate contemporary and innovative design providing that they are of a sufficient high quality and do not detract from the character of the historic fabric of the Protected Structure.

CPO 11.21 - Require applications for development where a Protected Structure or its setting is likely to be materially affected, to submit a detailed assessment of the building.

CPO 11.22 - Protect the setting of Protected Structures and refuse permission for development within the curtilage or adjacent to a Protected Structure which would adversely impact on the character and special interest of the structure, where appropriate

2.0 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Historical Overview

The town of Longford developed at a fording point of the Camlin River, on the route known as Slige Assail, which connected the royal sites of Tara in Meath and Rathcroghan in Connacht during the early medieval period. Evidence of early medieval occupation at Longford is scant, however it has been suggested that the unidentified place referred to as Cluain Lis Becc in the annals may have been located to the north of the Camlin River in the vicinity of the present barracks (Gearty et al 2020). Cluain Lis Becc translates as ‘meadow of the enclosure of Bec’. The town’s name does not derive from its position on a ford, but comes from the Irish Longphort, meaning fortress or stronghold (Irish Placenames Database). The longphort, later replaced by a stone castle, is believed to have been constructed in the mid to late thirteenth century by the O’Farrell or O’Ferrall clan who controlled the surrounding territory known as Annaly. No trace of the longphort has been found, but it is assumed that it was located in the vicinity of the area now occupied by the barracks north of the Camlin River. A substantial gaelic settlement developed around the O’Ferrall castle and the Dominican priory of St Brigid which was established in the fifteenth century. A complaint in the Irish parliament dating to c.1480AD about markets being held in Longford is the earliest reference to a town at this location.

After the creation of the County of Longford in 1570 the castle served as the centre of administration by the English and later became the property of Francis Aungier who was granted the town of Longford in 1620 during the plantation. Aungier built a castle to the south of the present barracks complex in 1627, at the west end of present day Church Street, likely on the site of the earlier castle. Longford castle was sold in 1774, by the Earl of Longford, who also leased the surrounding land to the British government for the establishment of a cavalry barracks. This castle, immediately south of the main barracks entrance, was gradually demolished (Gearty et al 2020). The first Cavalry Regiment to serve in the barracks, in 1778, were the 8th King’s Royal Irish Hussars. The Irish regiment, including a man from Longford named John Reynolds, took part in the charge of the Light Brigade on October the 25th 1854. Two horses owned by the 8th Hussars, ‘Paddy’ and ‘Smiler’, are buried in the barracks grounds (Longford Historical Society).

The current main barracks building, designed by architect John Behan, was built in 1815 and contained living quarters and the officer’s mess (NIAH 2005). Over time the barrack complex was extended to include an infirmary and stables, the latter housed in the 18th century market house, as well as a jail, guard house and various outbuildings. Following Irish independence, the barracks were handed over by the British on February 17th 1922 and renamed after Brigadier Sean Connolly, of the Longford Brigade, who was killed in action at Selton Hill in 1921. The barracks were decommissioned in 2009.

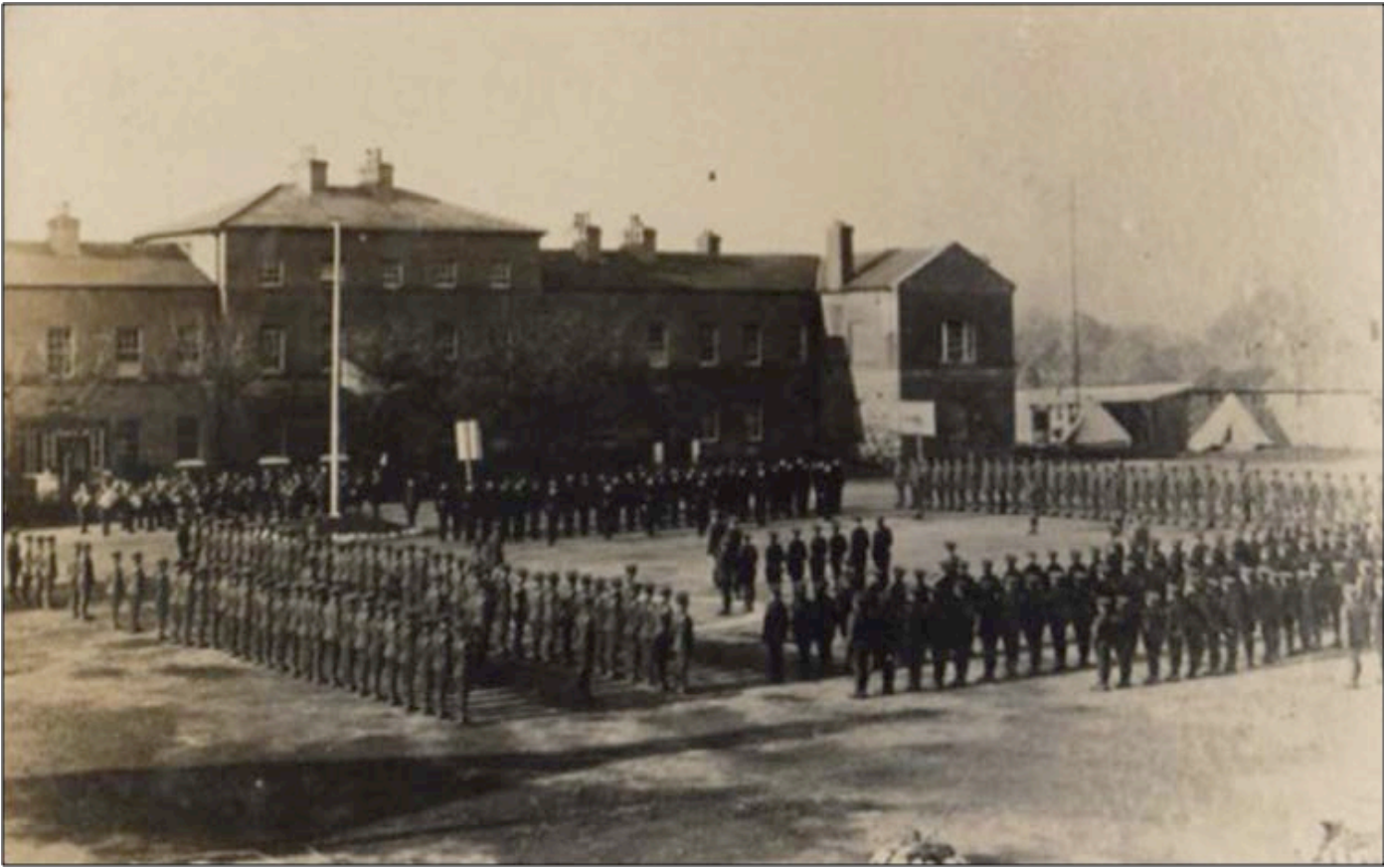


Figure 3: Photograph showing Lower (Cavalry) Barracks in 1922 (Source: Longford Historical Society)

2.0 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.2 Cartographic Review

The detail on historic cartographic sources demonstrates the nature of past settlements and land use patterns in recent centuries and can also highlight the impacts of modern developments and agricultural practices. This information can aid in the identification of the location and extent of unrecorded or partially levelled features of archaeological or architectural heritage interest. The cartographic sources examined for the study areas include the 1:10,560 Ordnance Survey map (1829-1834), the 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map (1863-1924).

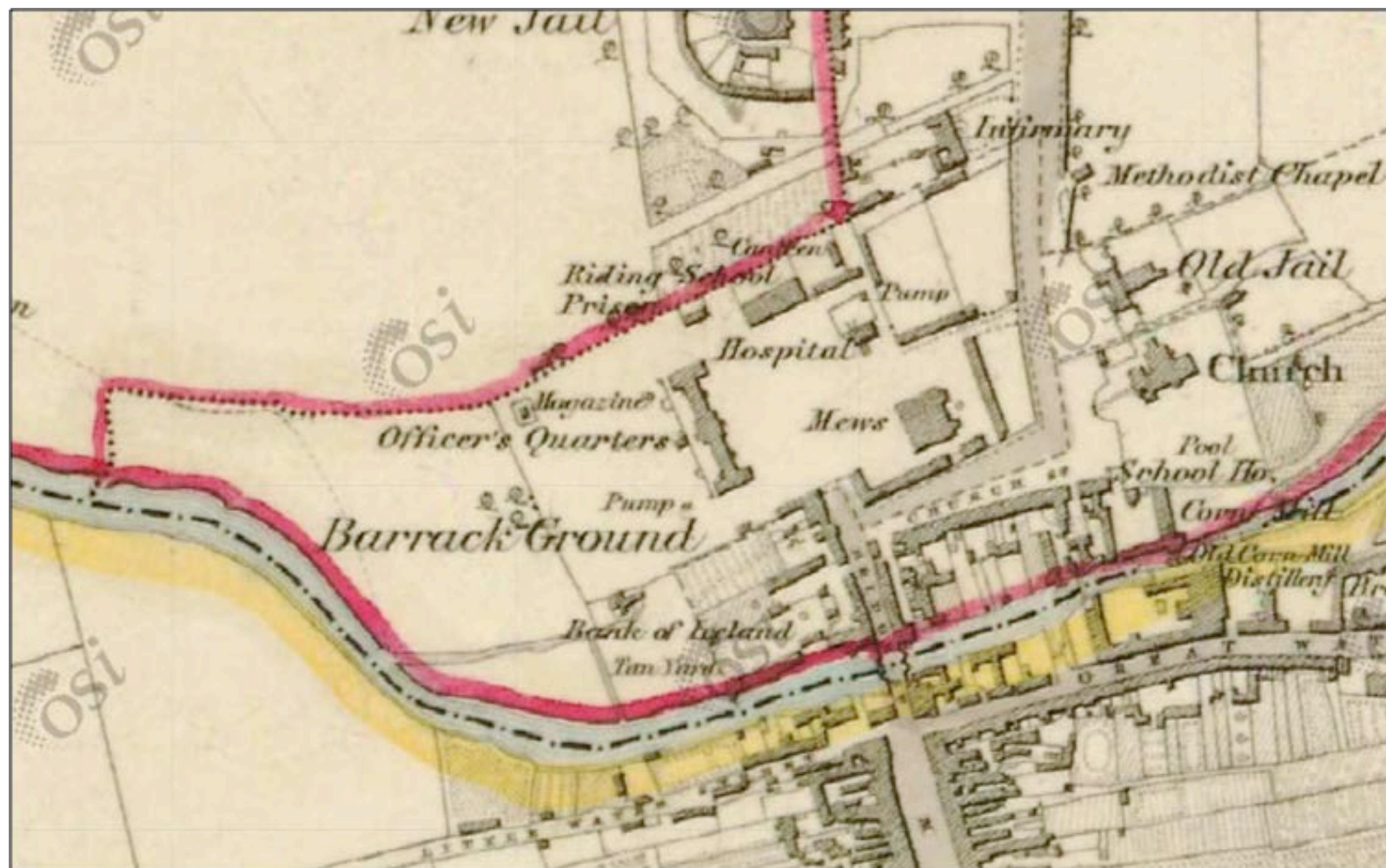


Figure 4: Extract from 1:10,560 Ordnance Survey map (1836) (Source: Tailte Eireann)

The first edition 1:10,560 Ordnance Survey map (see **Figure 4** and **Figure 6**) shows the subject site with the main barracks building labelled 'Officer's Quarters' forming the western side of a square parade ground. A square building labelled 'Magazine' and a pump are depicted to the rear of the building. The field to the rear of the building is separated from the main barrack grounds by a north-south boundary. A hospital, prison, riding school, canteen and mews as well as several outbuildings are also depicted as part of the barrack complex. The area to the south of the subject site, formerly the location of Longford Castle, is occupied by the Bank of Ireland and a tan yard. Bridge Street leads south from the main entrance of the Barrack grounds across the Camlin River to the main portion of Longford town on the south side of the river.

A map of the Cavalry Barracks dating from 1863 (see **Figure 5**) shows the subject site in greater detail with areas within the main barrack building labelled ‘Officer’s Quarters’, ‘Mess establishment’ and ‘Soldier’s Quarters’. A ‘Turf House’, ‘Urinal’ and ‘Larder’ are depicted within a drying ground to the rear of the building. The square ‘Magazine’ building which includes a lightning conductor, and two pumps are also depicted to the rear of the building. The field behind the barracks is divided into a Sick Horse Field and Arable Grounds. A hospital, prison, riding school, stables, canteen, and mews barracks as well as several outbuildings for hay and straw, and yards for forage, coal and manure are also depicted as part of the barrack complex.

The Final Edition 1:2500 (or ‘25-inch’) Ordnance Survey maps dating from late 19th/early 20th century (see **Figure 7** and **Figure 8**) showed little change had taken place in the area from the 1863 detailed map. The main barracks remained unchanged with the addition of a rectangular building and a second pump to the rear and a number of ancillary buildings within the eastern portion of the barrack complex.

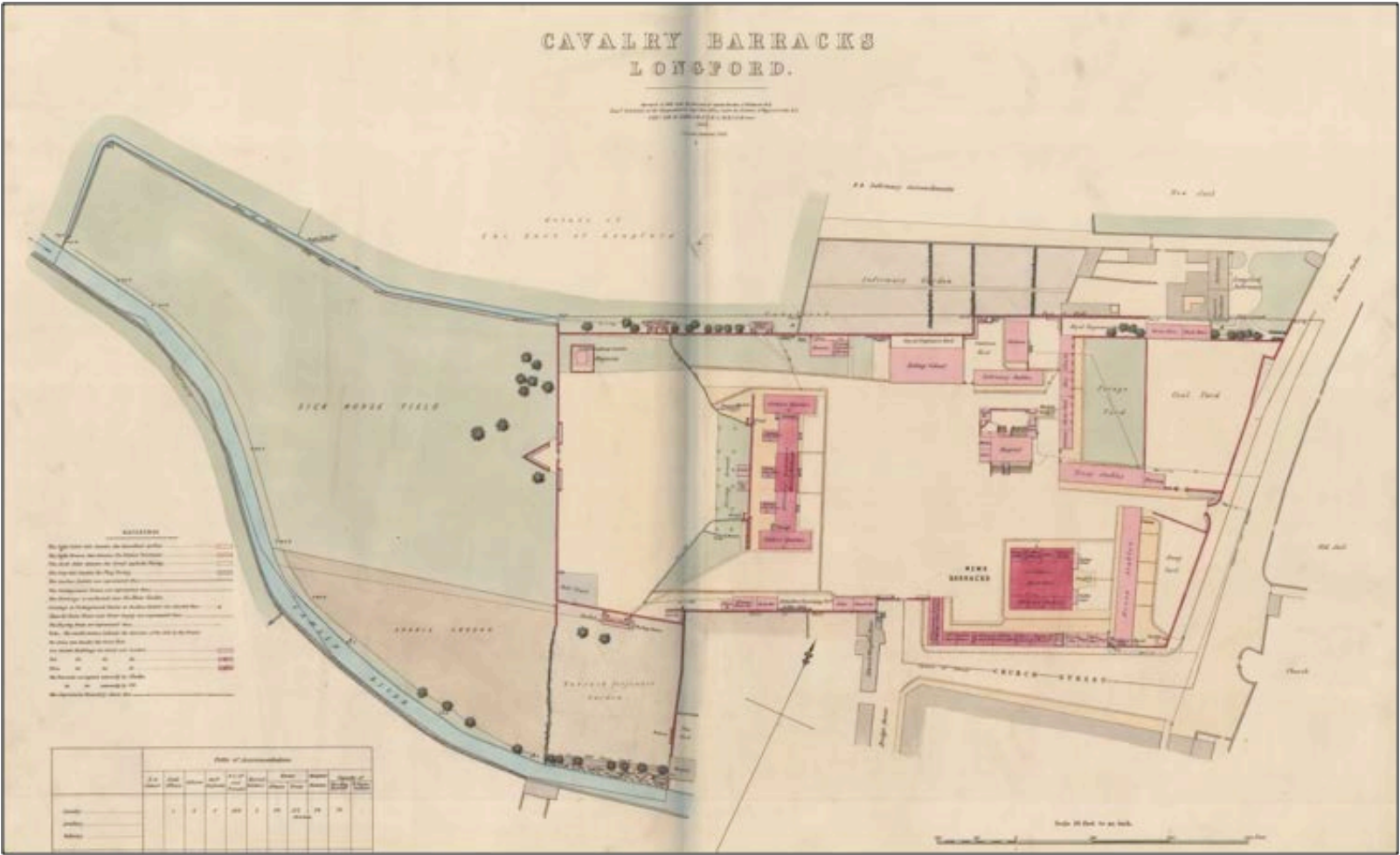


Figure 5: Cavalry Barracks site map from 1863 (Source: www.militaryarchives.ie)

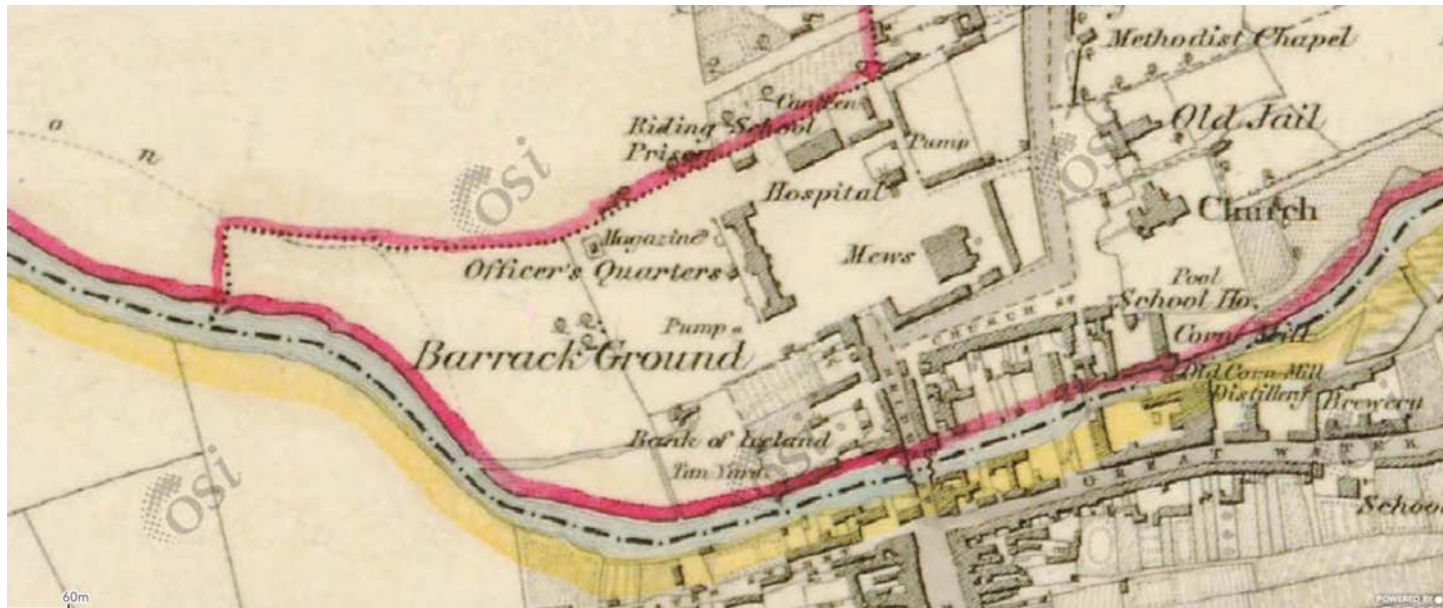


Figure 6: First Edition 1:10,560 Ordnance Survey map (1829-1834)

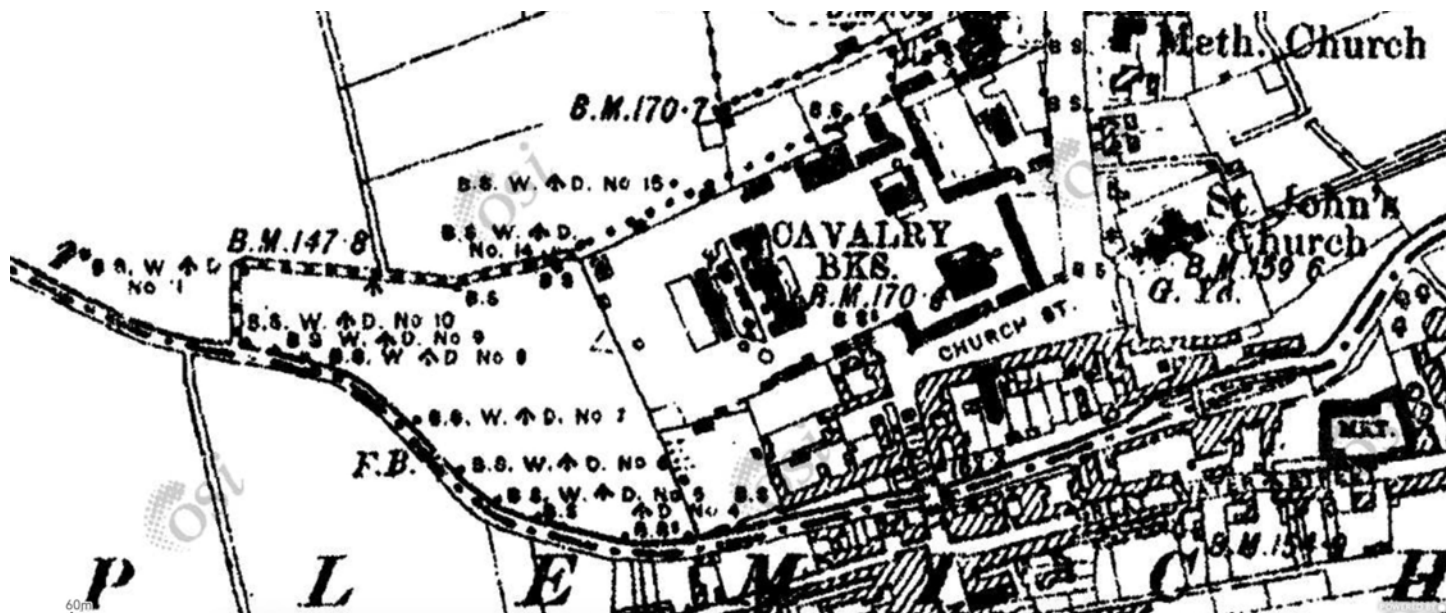


Figure 7: Last Edition 1:10,560 Ordnance Survey map (1830's - 1930's)

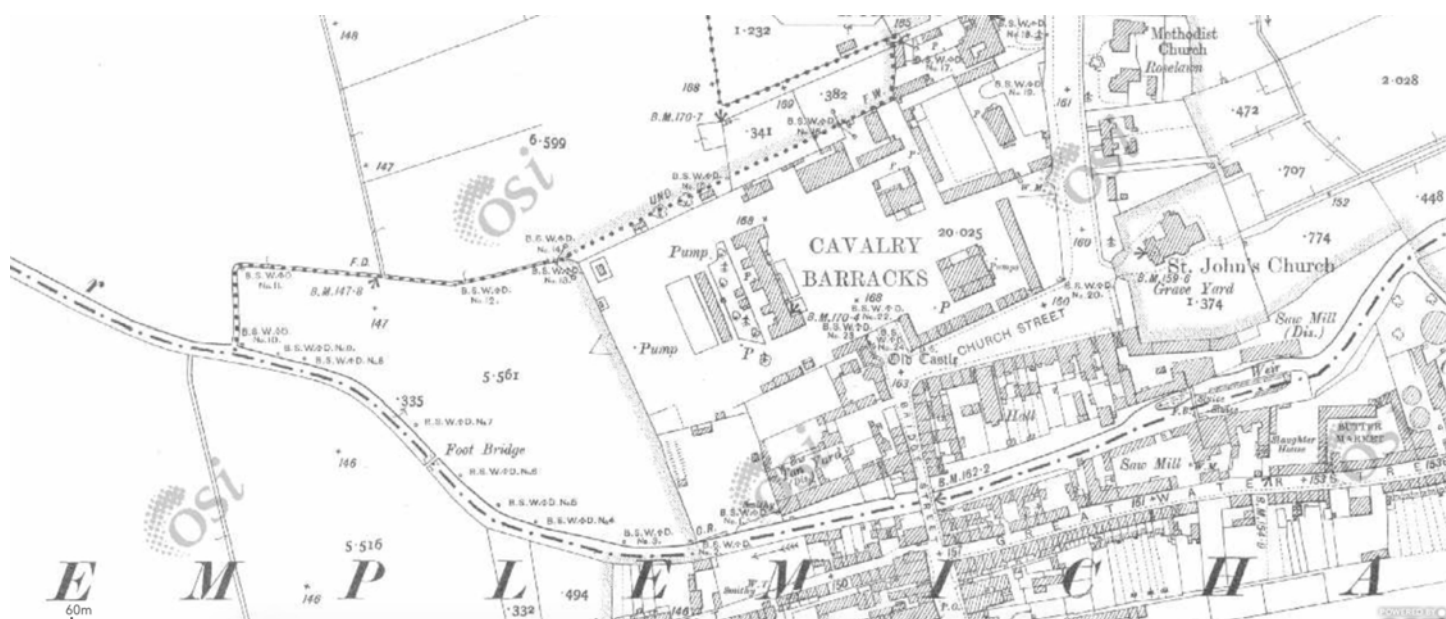
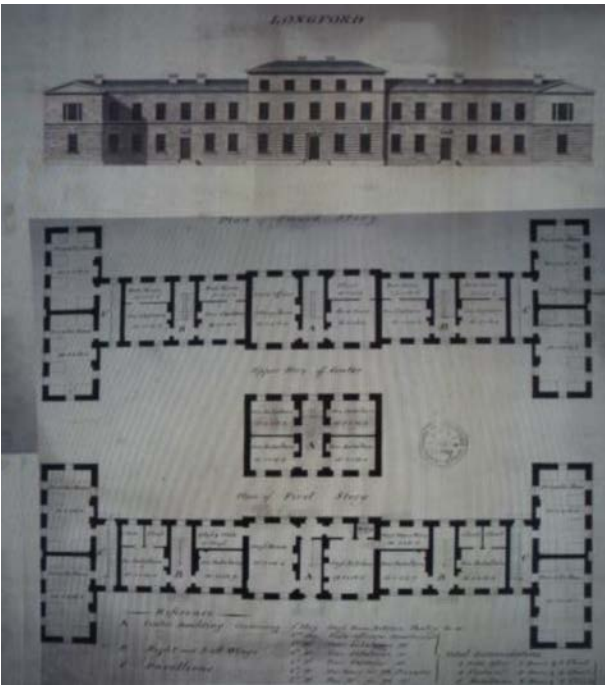


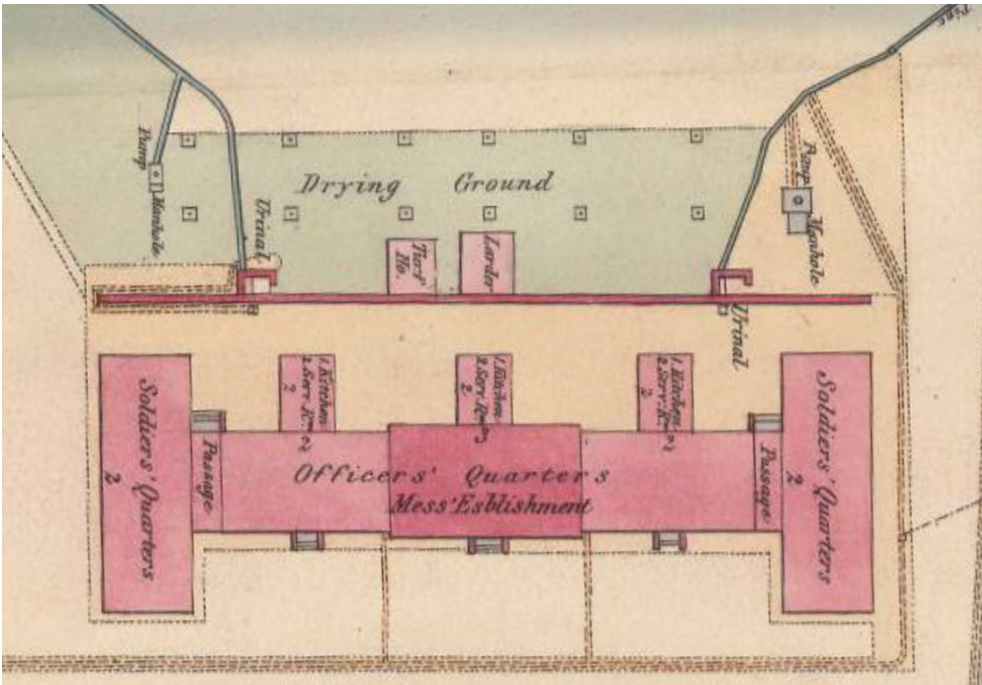
Figure 8: '25-inch' Ordnance Survey map (1863-1924)

2.0 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

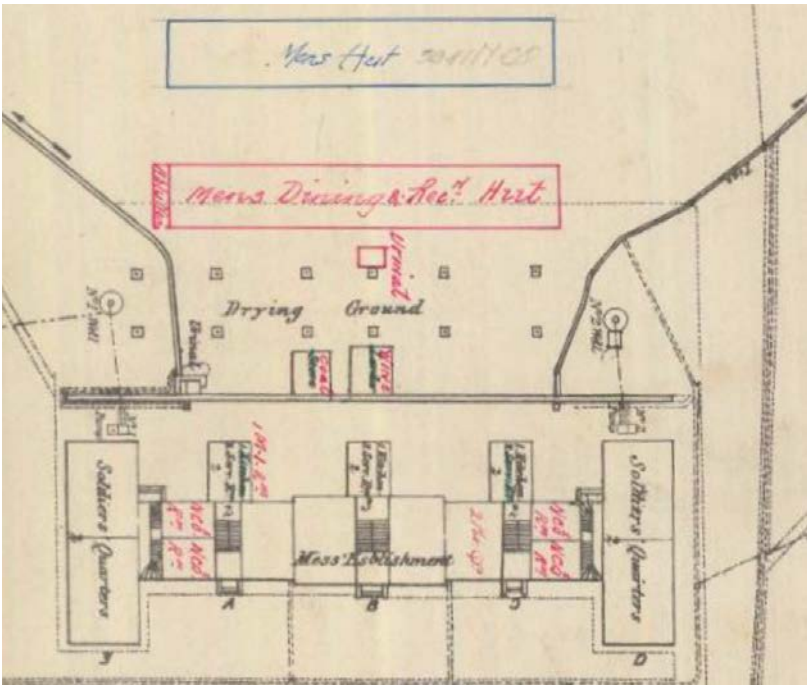
2.3 Chronological Reference Material



Drawing, signed by John Behan
Dated: August 1814



Extract from Site plans of Calvary Barracks, Longford
Dated: 1863, with corrections dated September 1866. Reference 13472-003 (Military Archives, Dublin)



Extract of Ground floor plan of Calvary Barracks, Longford
Dated: 15 September 1919. Reference 134215-002 (Military Archives, Dublin).



Lawrence Collection 1865-1914

2.0 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.4 Sources

Gearty, S. Morris, M. and O’Ferrall, F. 2010 Irish Historic Towns Atlas, no. 22, Longford. Royal Irish Academy, Dublin Available at: www.ihta.ie (Accessed 04/12/2024).

Irish Historic Environment Viewer 2024. Archaeological Survey of Ireland. Available at: www.archaeology.ie (Accessed 04/12/2024)

Irish Placenames Database 2024. Available at: www.logainm.ie (Accessed 04/12/2024)

Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027 Available at: <https://www.longfordcoco.ie/services/planning/longford-county-development-plan-2021-2027/volume-1-compressed.pdf> (Accessed 04/12/2024)

Longford Historical Society, 2020. Longford Cavalry Barracks 1872. Available at <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1847750155355143&id=269890479807793&set=a.736917353105101> (Accessed 04/12/2024)

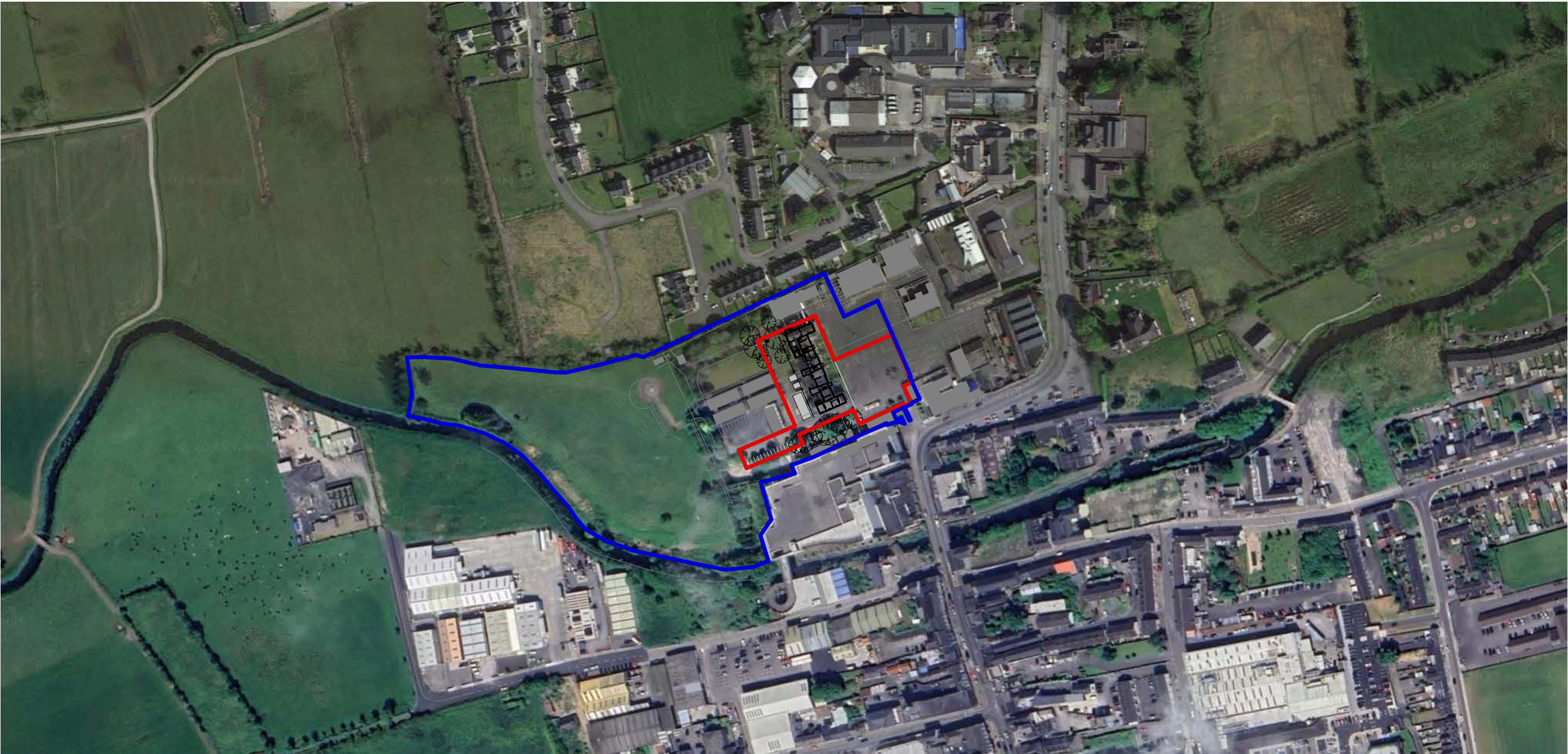
<https://www.irelandxo.com/ireland-xo/history-and-genealogy/buildings-database/cavalry-barracks-longford-lower-barracks>

Longford Cavalry Barracks map (1863). Available at: <https://www.militaryarchives.ie/uploads/mpdsearch/ad134729-003.pdf> (Accessed 04/12/2024)

National Inventory of Architectural Heritage survey. Available at: www.buildingsofireland.ie (Accessed 04/12/2024)

3.0 DESCRIPTION

3.1 SITE & CONTEXT _ AERIAL VIEW



Lands under the ownership of Longford CoCo are outlined in BLUE and the application site is outlined in RED.

3.0 DESCRIPTION

3.1 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD

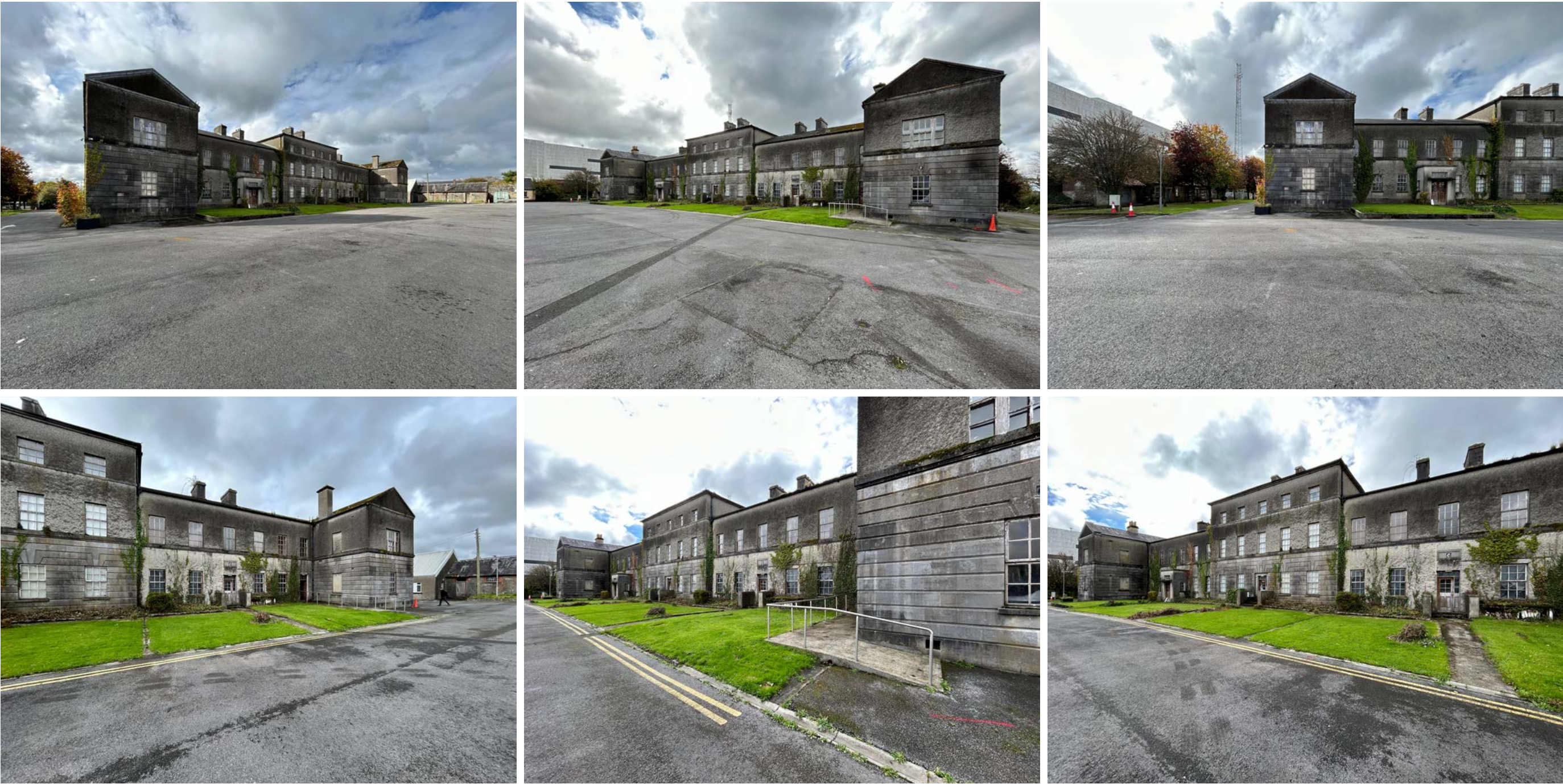


Officers Building _ East Elevation

View of the Officers Building east elevation from the former parade yard.
Note alterations to existing frontage including infilled window openings, projecting porch to the front southernmost entrance, replacement of ground floor window with door opening adjacent to northern wing.

3.0 DESCRIPTION

2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



Officers Building _ East Elevation

Oblique views of the Officers Building east elevation from the former parade yard.
Note alterations to existing frontage including ramped entrance route adjacent to and extending across the front elevation of the northern wing.

3.0 DESCRIPTION
2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



Officer's Building _ South and North Elevation

Elevation views of the south and north gables to Officers Building.
Note alterations to existing frontages including infilled window openings and consequent loss of sash windows, ramped entrance route and projecting single storey porch to north elevation.

3.0 DESCRIPTION

2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



Officers Building _ Western Frontage and Adjacent Lands

Views of the laneway that extends across the length of the west elevation to Officers Building showing stone boundary wall and small stone outbuildings.
To the west of the boundary wall an open area is situated with single storey accommodation buildings of 20th century construction, one of which sits within the application site.

3.0 DESCRIPTION

2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



Officers Building _ West Elevation

Oblique views of the Officers Building west elevation from the rear laneway showing projecting two-storey annexe structures. To the northern end the northern wing and northern annexe have been conjoined by the construction of a single storey flat-roofed infill with rear access door and two small windows. A fire escape stair is located adjacent to the southern wing.

3.0 DESCRIPTION

2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



Officers Building _ Western Context

To the west of the Officers Building are extents of open land with two small stone outbuildings and a single storey building. The Officers Building west elevation is partially visible over the roofs of and between these structures.

3.0 DESCRIPTION

2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



Officers Building _ South Western Context

To the south west of the Officers Building is a single storey building situated adjacent to the existing stone boundary wall.
The setting is otherwise open at this location with extents of hard-standing allowing vehicular access to the site area to the west.

3.0 DESCRIPTION
2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



ROOM 00.S.01

Access to Room 00.S.01 is currently restricted as illustrated above. It can be assumed that the condition of the room is similar to other rooms within the building. The room is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses.

3.0 DESCRIPTION
2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



ROOM 00.S.02

Access to Room 00.S.02 is currently restricted as illustrated above. It can be assumed that the condition of the room is similar to other rooms within the building. The room is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses.

3.0 DESCRIPTION
2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



ROOM 00.S.03

Access to Room 00.S.01 is currently restricted as illustrated above. It can be assumed that the condition of the room is similar to other rooms within the building. The room is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses.

3.0 DESCRIPTION
2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



ROOM 00.M.02

Access to Room 00.M.02 is currently restricted as illustrated above. It can be assumed that the condition of the room is similar to other rooms within the building. The room is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses.

3.0 DESCRIPTION

2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



ROOM 00.M.03

Access to Room 00.M.03 is currently restricted as illustrated above. It can be assumed that the condition of the room is similar to other rooms within the building. The room is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses.

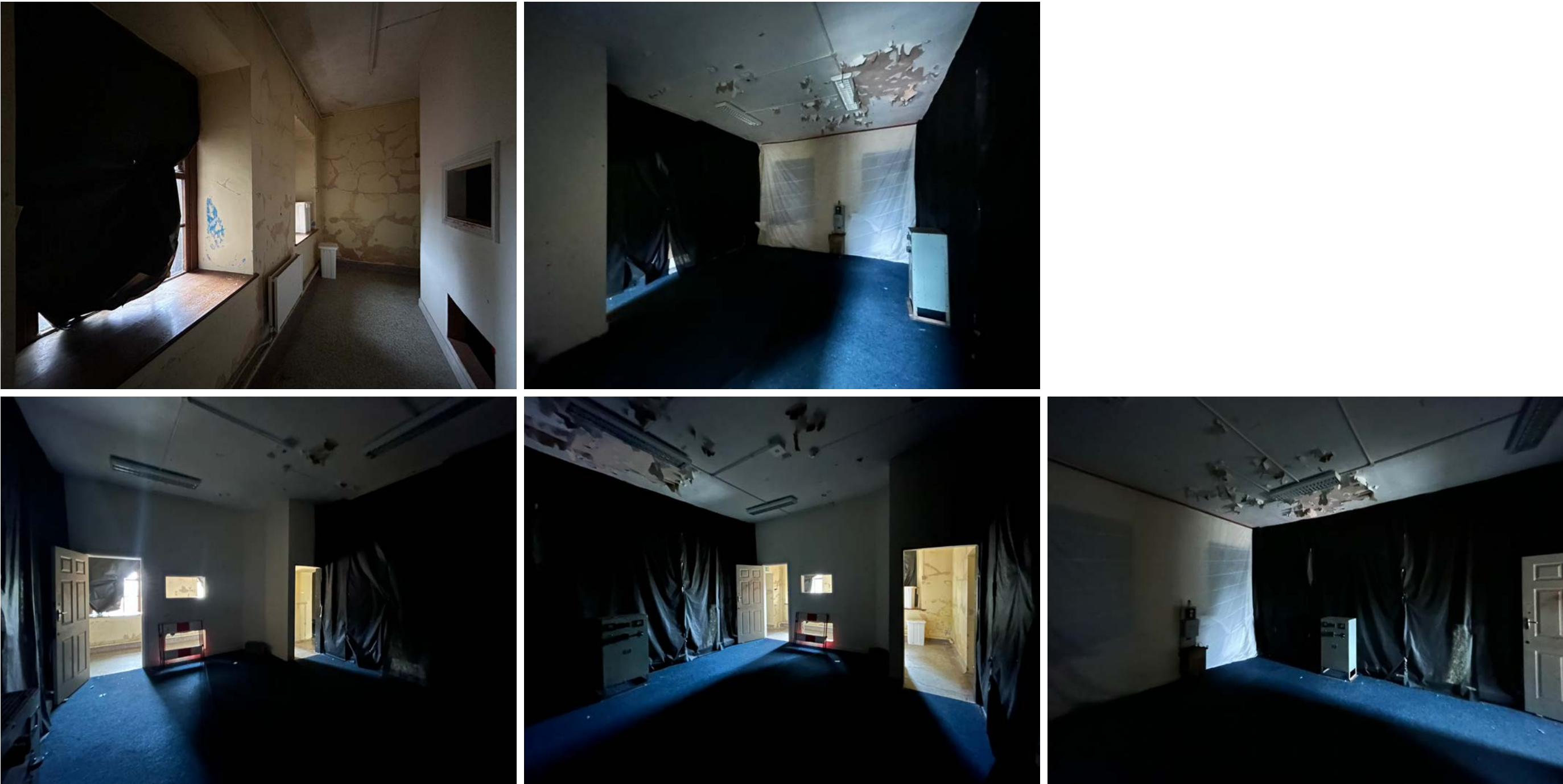
3.0 DESCRIPTION
2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



ROOM 00.M.04

Access to Room 00.M.04 is currently restricted as illustrated above. It can be assumed that the condition of the room is similar to other rooms within the building. The room is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. The ceiling is lined with timber boards.

3.0 DESCRIPTION
2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



ROOM 00.M.05

Access to Room 00.M.05 is currently restricted as illustrated above. It can be assumed that the condition of the room is similar to other rooms within the building.

The room is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. Lightweight partitions and doors subdivide the room.

3.0 DESCRIPTION
2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



ROOM 00.M.06

Access to Room 00.M.06 is currently restricted as illustrated above. It can be assumed that the condition of the room is similar to other rooms within the building.

The room is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. A door opening is noted as located of an original window opening.

2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



ROOM 00.M.07

Access to Room 00.M.07 is currently restricted as illustrated above. It can be assumed that the condition of the room is similar to other rooms within the building. The room is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses.

2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



ROOM 00.M.08

Access to Room 00.M.08 is currently restricted as illustrated above. It can be assumed that the condition of the room is similar to other rooms within the building. The room is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses.

2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD

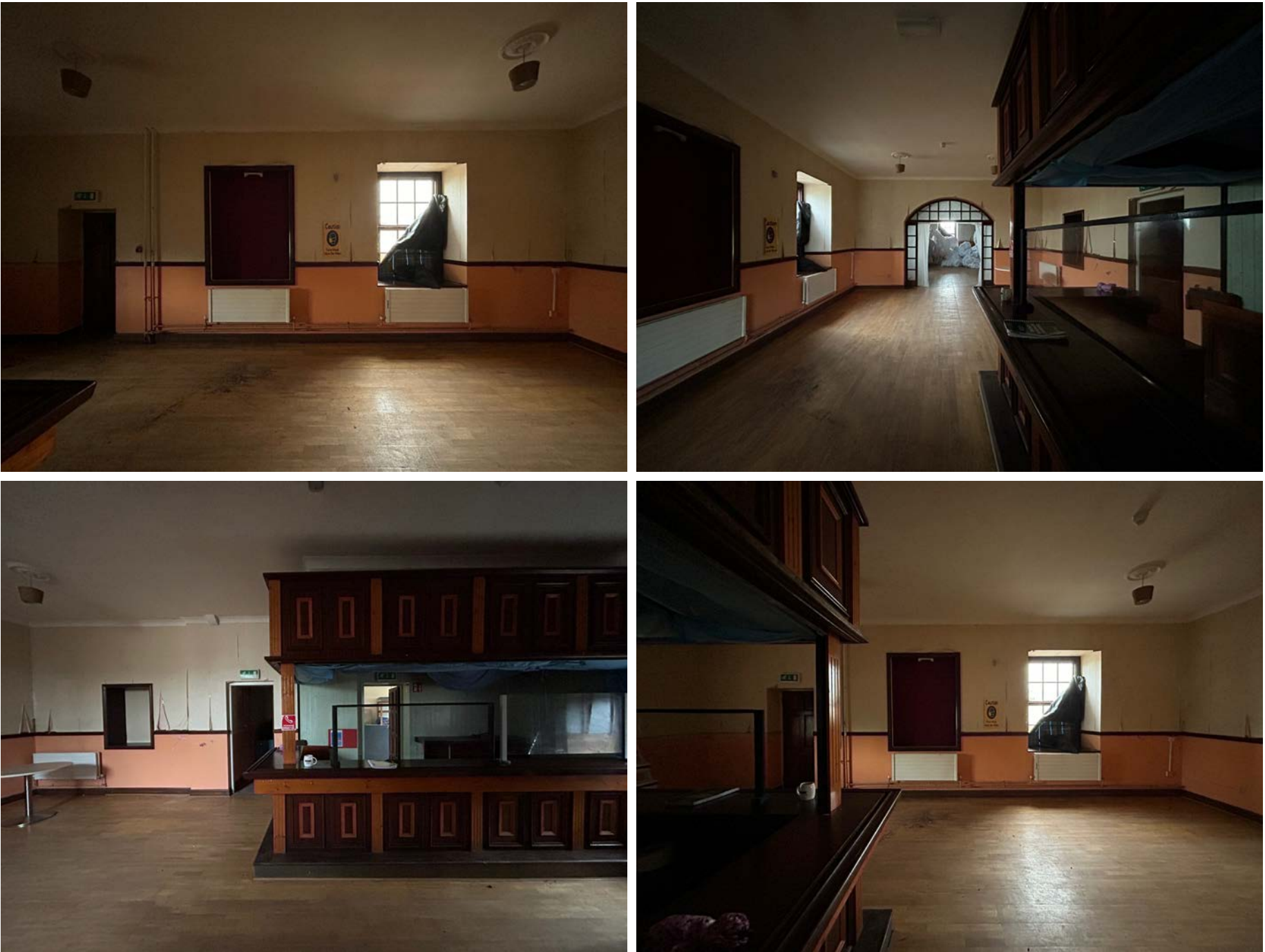


ROOM 00.N.01

Access to Room 00.N.01 is currently restricted as illustrated above. It can be assumed that the condition of the room is similar to other rooms within the building.

The room is plain and unadorned in character. Some timber fitted furniture and lining features and plain cornice-work and roses are evident and further research into their origins and date will be carried out.

2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



ROOM 00.N.02

Access to Room 00.N.02 is currently restricted as illustrated above. It can be assumed that the condition of the room is similar to other rooms within the building. The room is plain and unadorned in character. Some timber fitted furniture and lining features and plain cornice-work and roses are evident and further research into their origins and date will be carried out.

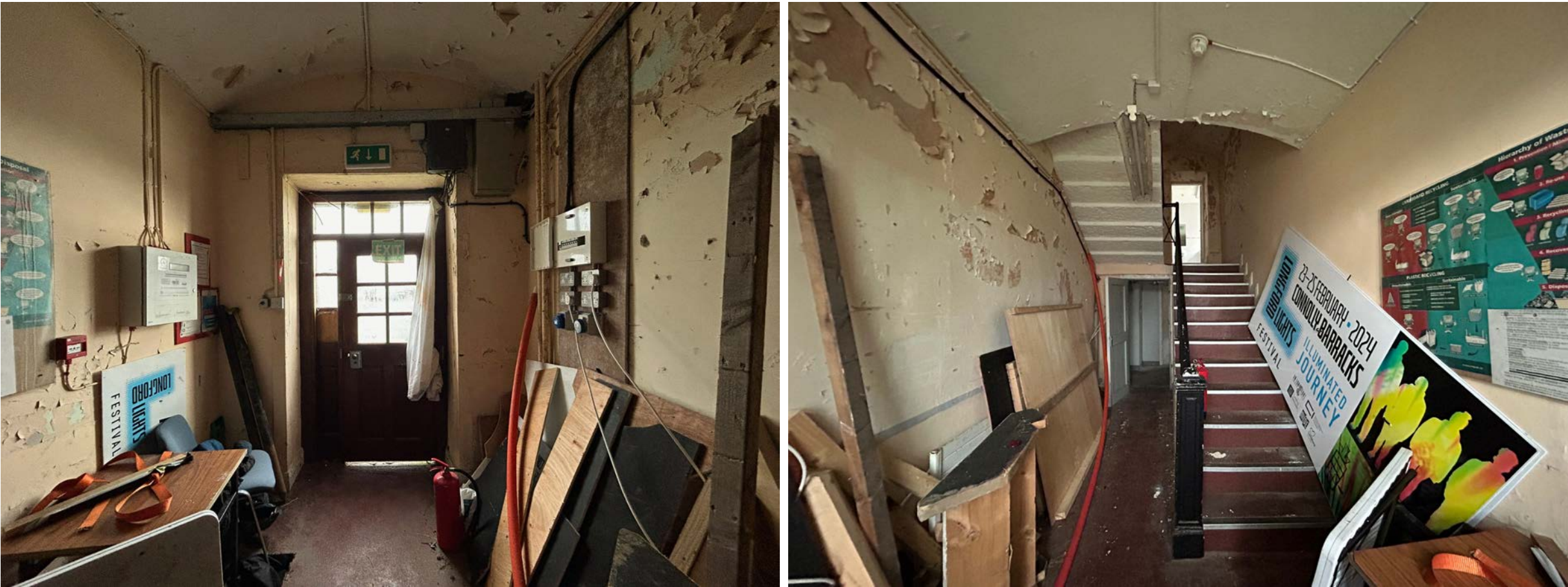
2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



ROOM 00.ST.01

Access to Room 00.ST.01 is currently restricted as illustrated above. It can be assumed that the condition of the room is similar to other rooms within the building. The room is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses.

2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



ROOM 00.ST.02

The entrance and stairwell is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. Glazed timber door and fixed surround screen, timber newel post, cast ironwork to stair, cantilevered stone stair and vaulted ceiling are features of significance. Potential historic floor finishes to be uncovered.

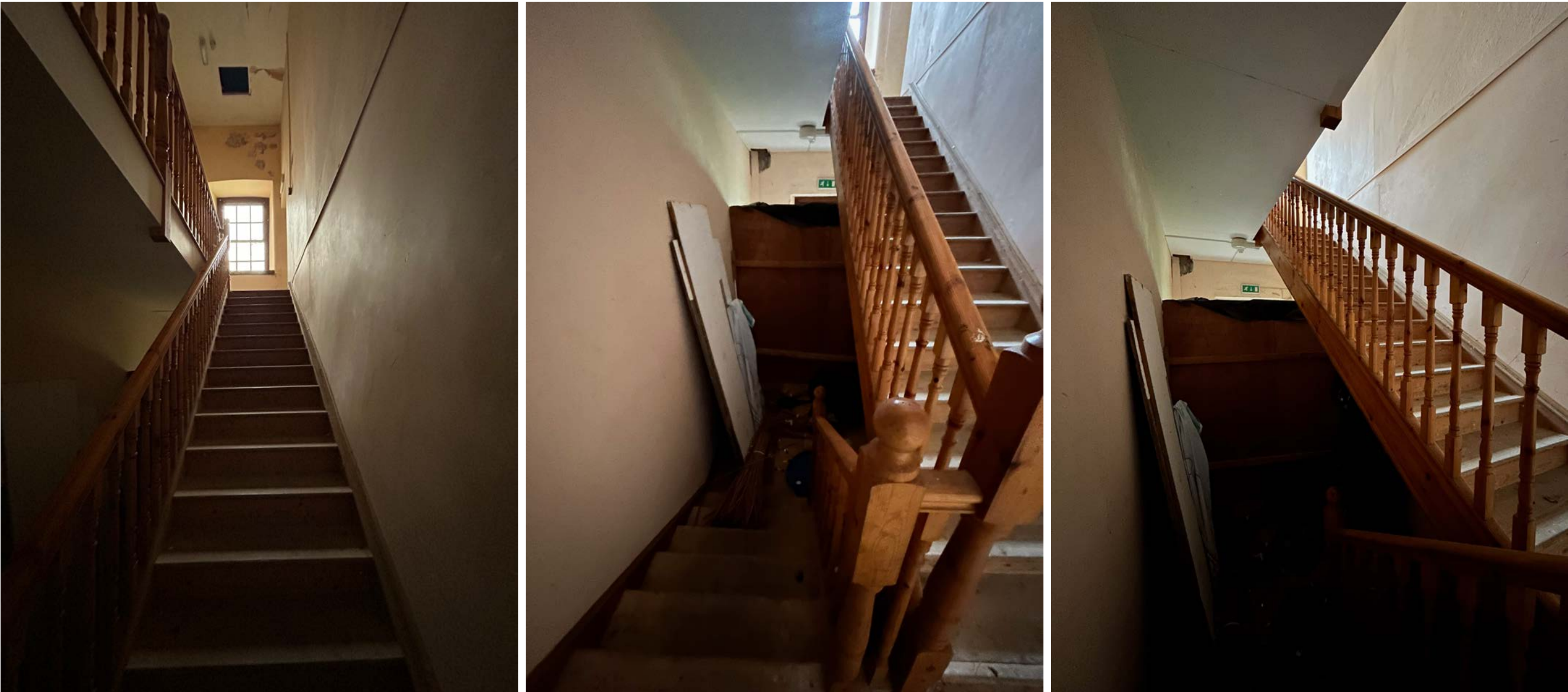
2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



ROOM 00.ST.03

The entrance hall is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. Glazed timber door and fixed surround screen and vaulted ceiling are features of significance. Historic floor finishes (stone flagstones) are features of significance.

2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



ROOM 00.ST.04

The stairwell is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. Timber constructed stair, newel posts, spindles and handrails appear to be of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance.

2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



ROOM 00.A.01

The room is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. Sanitaryware, fitted joinery, partitions and doors appear to be of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance.

2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



ROOM 00.A.02

The room and stairwell is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. Glazed timber door and fixed surround screen, timber newel post, cast ironwork to stair, cantilevered stone stair and vaulted ceiling are features of significance. Potential historic floor finishes to be uncovered.

2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



ROOM 00.A.04

The room is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. Partitions and doors appear to be of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance.

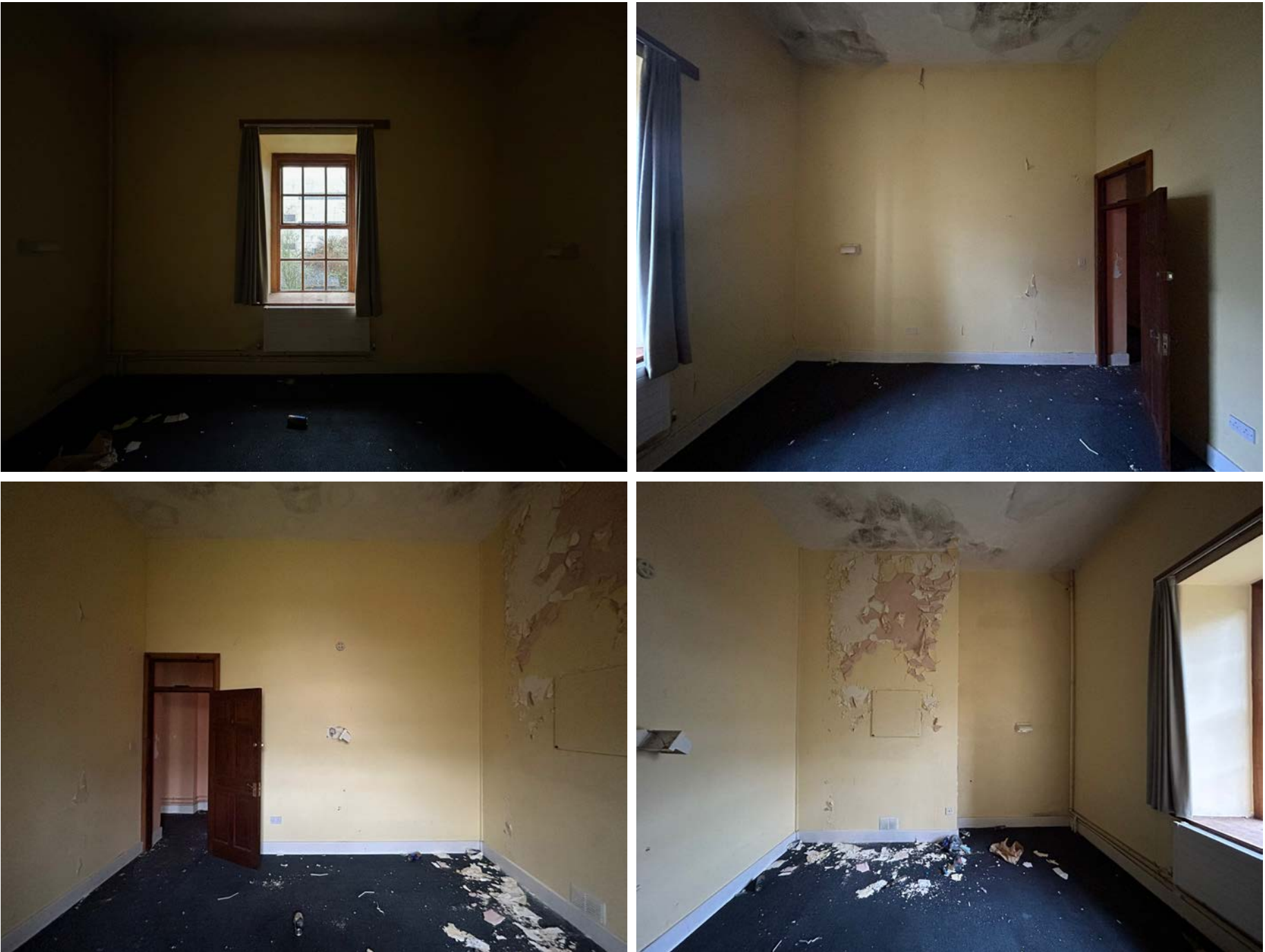
2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



ROOM 01.S.01

The room is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. The form of the chimney breast is visible but no features. Partitions and doors appear to be of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance. Subdivision of rooms with lightweight partitions suggest the skirting boards are of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance.

2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



ROOM 01.S.02

The room is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. The form of the chimney breast is visible but no features. Partitions and doors appear to be of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance. Subdivision of rooms with lightweight partitions suggest the skirting boards are of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance.

2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



ROOM 01.S.03

The room is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. The form of the chimney breast is visible but no features. Partitions and doors appear to be of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance. Subdivision of rooms with lightweight partitions suggest the skirting boards are of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance.

2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



ROOM 01.S.04

The room is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. The form of the chimney breast is visible but no features. Partitions and doors appear to be of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance. Subdivision of rooms with lightweight partitions suggest the skirting boards are of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance.

2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



ROOM 01.S.05

The room is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. Partitions and doors appear to be of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance. Subdivision of rooms with lightweight partitions suggest the skirting boards are of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance.

2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



ROOM 01.M.01

The room is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. Sanitaryware,, built-in showers, partitions and doors appear to be of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance.

2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



ROOM 01.M.02

The room is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. Partitions and doors appear to be of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance. Subdivision of rooms with lightweight partitions suggest the skirting boards are of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance.

2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



ROOM 01.M.03

The room is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. Partitions and doors appear to be of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance. Subdivision of rooms with lightweight partitions suggest the skirting boards are of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance.

2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



ROOM 01.M.04

The room is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. Partitions and doors appear to be of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance. Subdivision of rooms with lightweight partitions suggest the skirting boards are of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance.

2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



ROOM 01.M.05

The room is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. Partitions and doors appear to be of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance. Subdivision of rooms with lightweight partitions suggest the skirting boards are of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance.

2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



ROOM 01.M.06

The room is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. Partitions and doors appear to be of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance. Subdivision of rooms with lightweight partitions suggest the skirting boards are of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance.

2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



ROOM 01.M.07

The room is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. Partitions and doors appear to be of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance. Subdivision of rooms with lightweight partitions suggest the skirting boards are of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance.

2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



ROOM 01.M.08

The room is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. Sanitaryware, built-in showers, partitions and doors appear to be of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance.

2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



ROOM 01.N.01

The room is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. Partitions and doors appear to be of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance. Subdivision of rooms with lightweight partitions suggest the skirting boards are of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance.

2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



ROOM 01.N.02

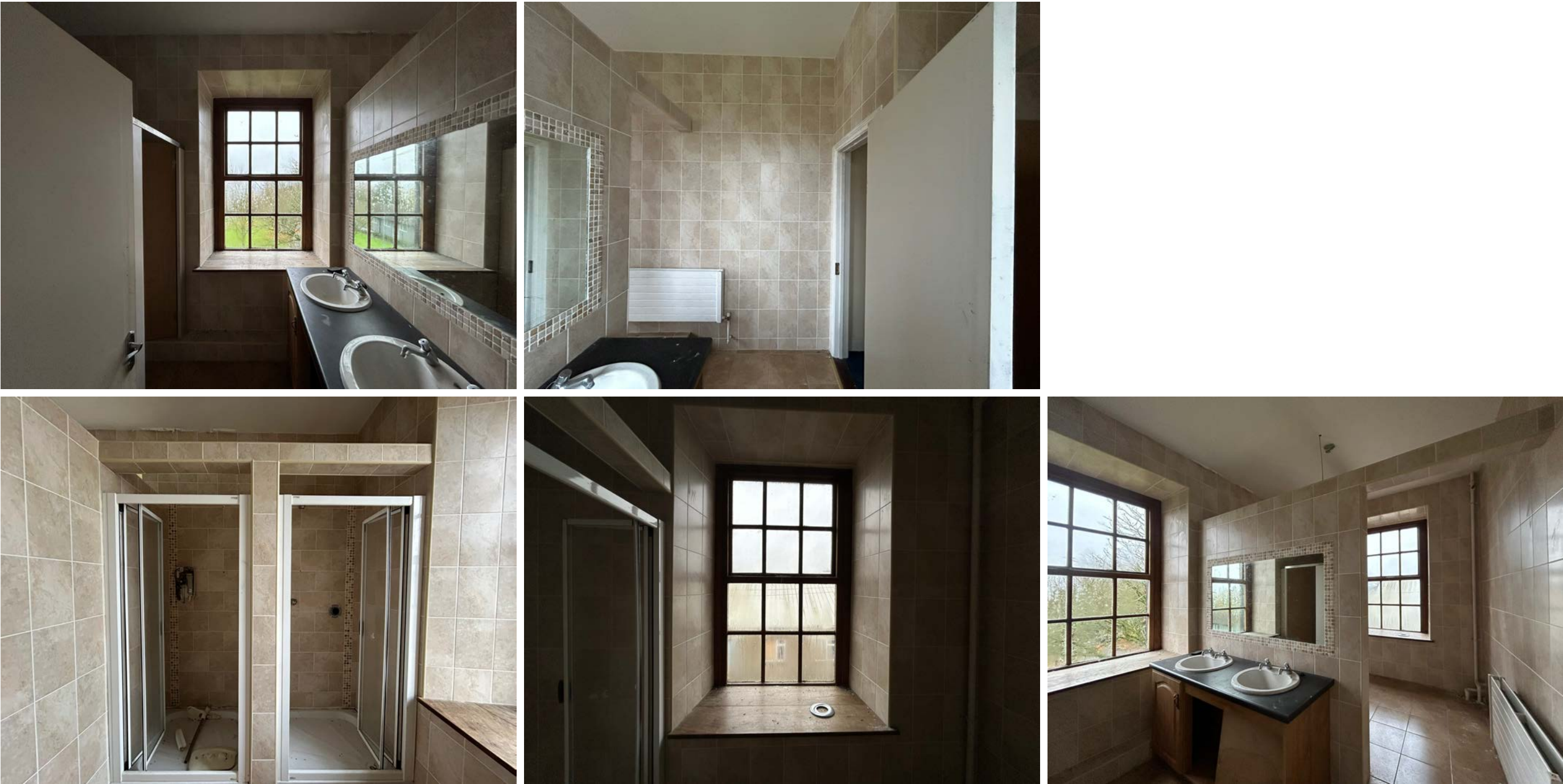
The room is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. Partitions and doors appear to be of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance. Subdivision of rooms with lightweight partitions suggest the skirting boards are of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance.

2.4.11 SITE & CONTEXT _ PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



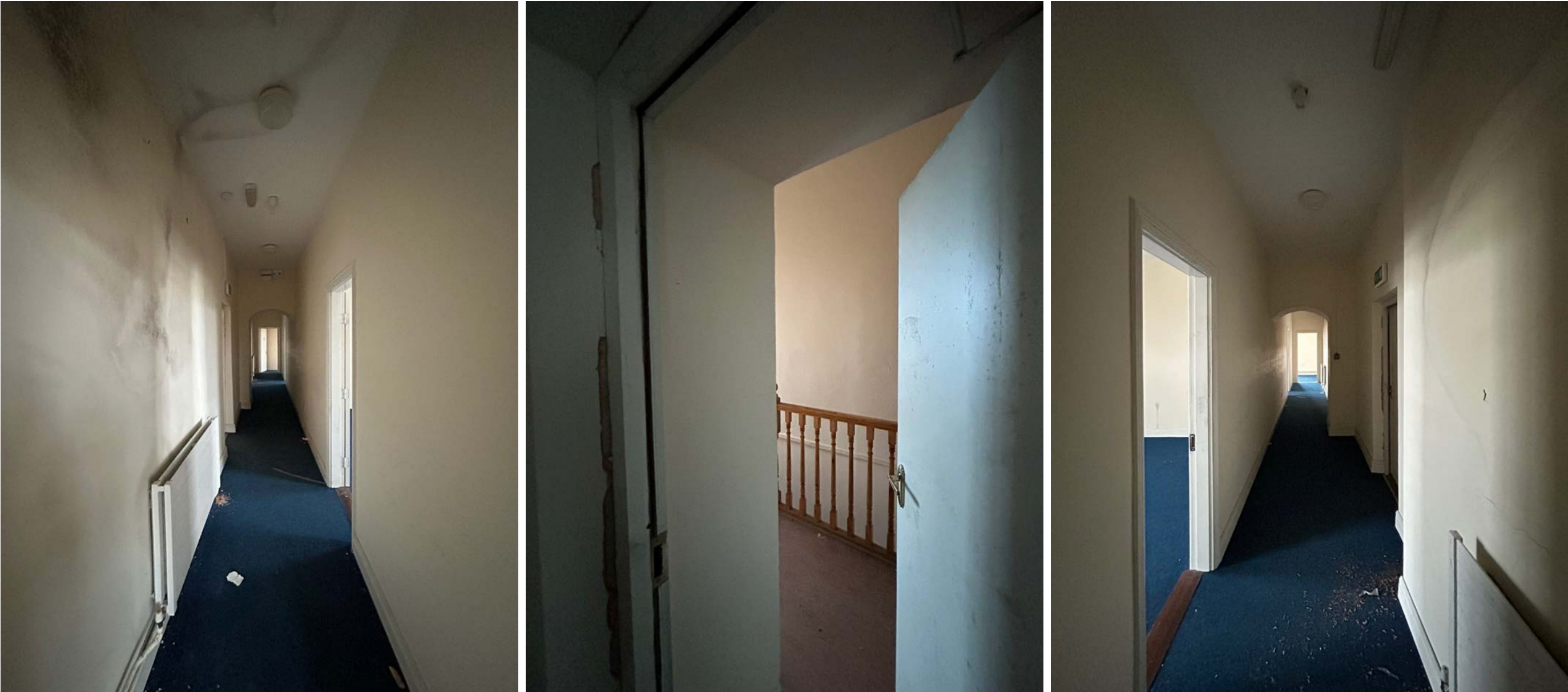
ROOM 01.N.03

The room is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. Partitions and doors appear to be of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance. Subdivision of rooms with lightweight partitions suggest the skirting boards are of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance.



ROOM 01.N.04

The room is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. Sanitaryware, built-in showers, partitions and doors appear to be of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance.



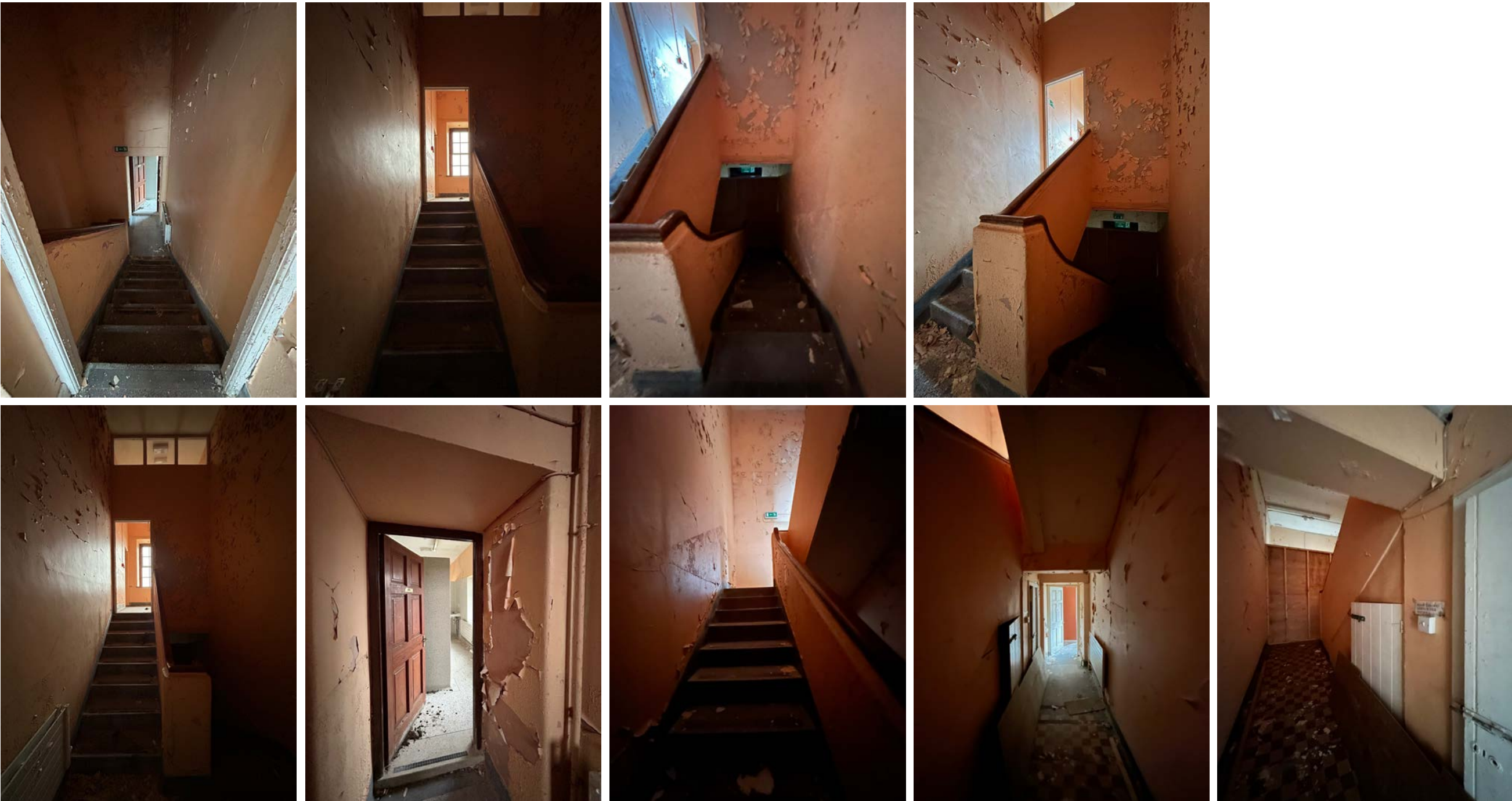
ROOM 01.N.05

The room is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. Partitions and doors appear to be of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance. Subdivision of rooms with lightweight partitions suggest the skirting boards are of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance.



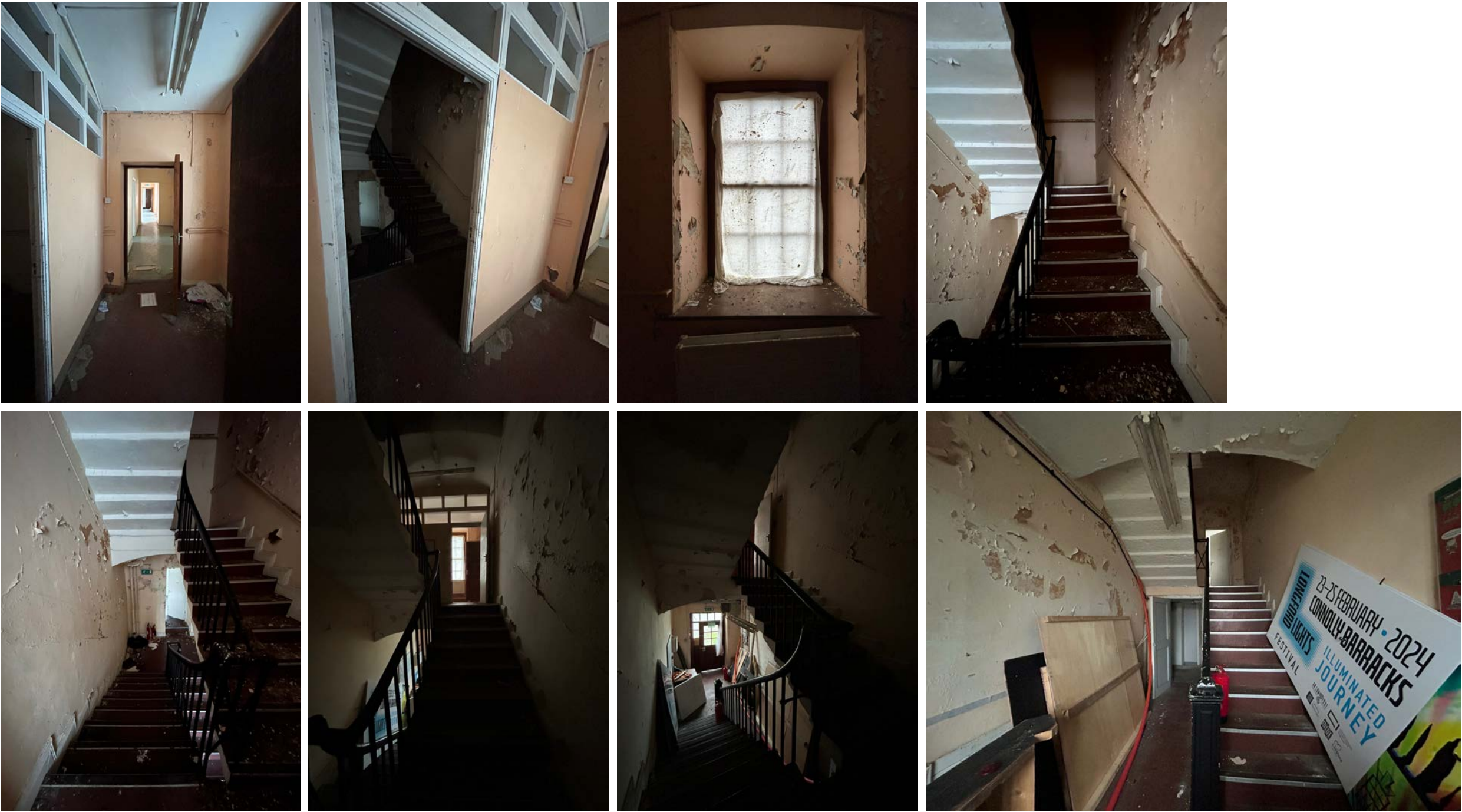
ROOM 01.ST.01

The room is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. Partitions and doors appear to be of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance. Subdivision of rooms with lightweight partitions suggest the skirting boards are of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance.



ROOM 01.ST.01

The stairwell is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. The stair formed in concrete and terrazzo although of a date later than the original constructed has secondary significance.



ROOM 01.ST.02

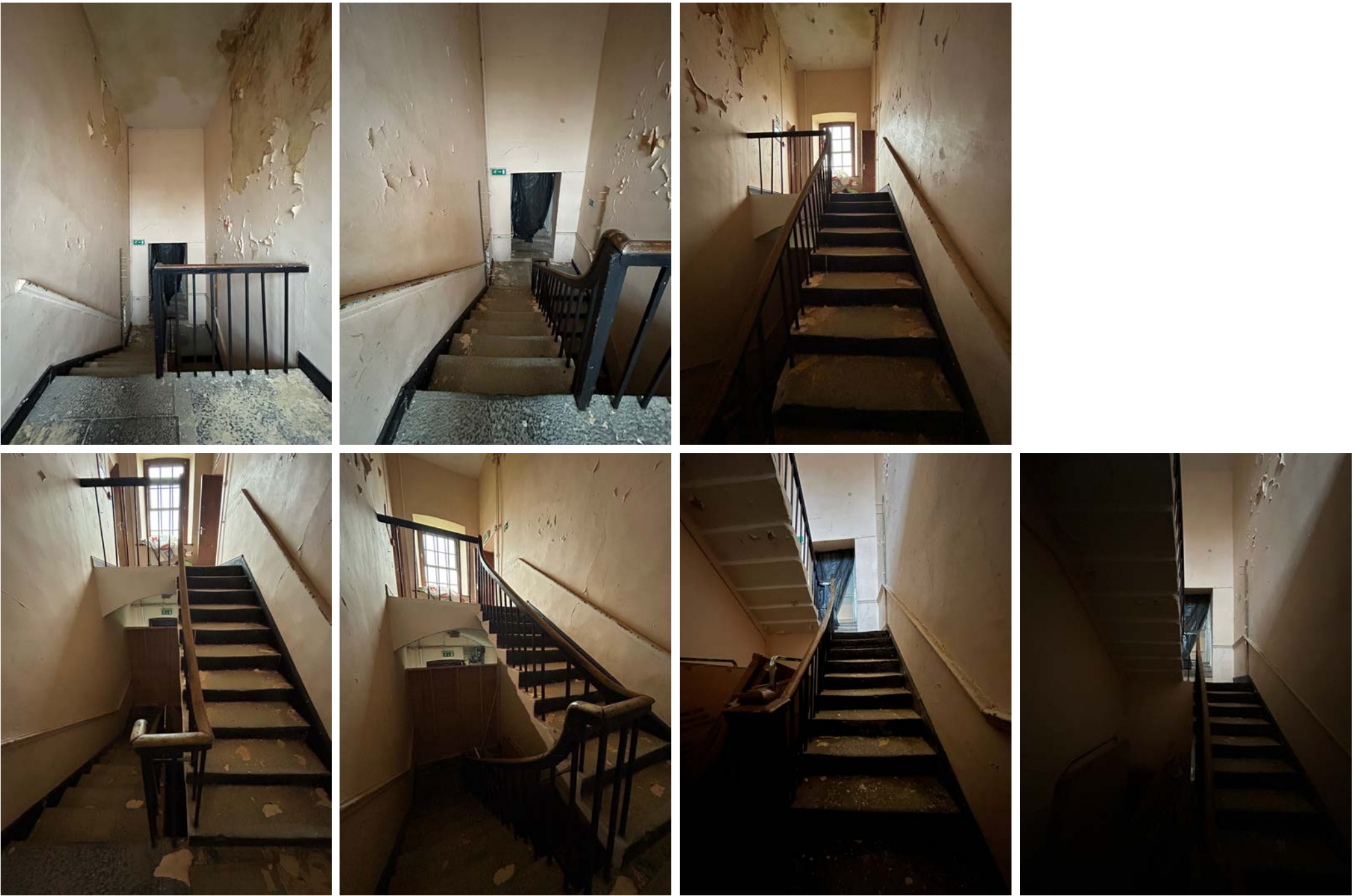
The stairwell is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses.

Glazed timber door and fixed surround screen, timber newel post, cast ironwork to stair, cantilevered stone stair and vaulted ceiling are features of significance. Potential historic floor finishes to be uncovered.



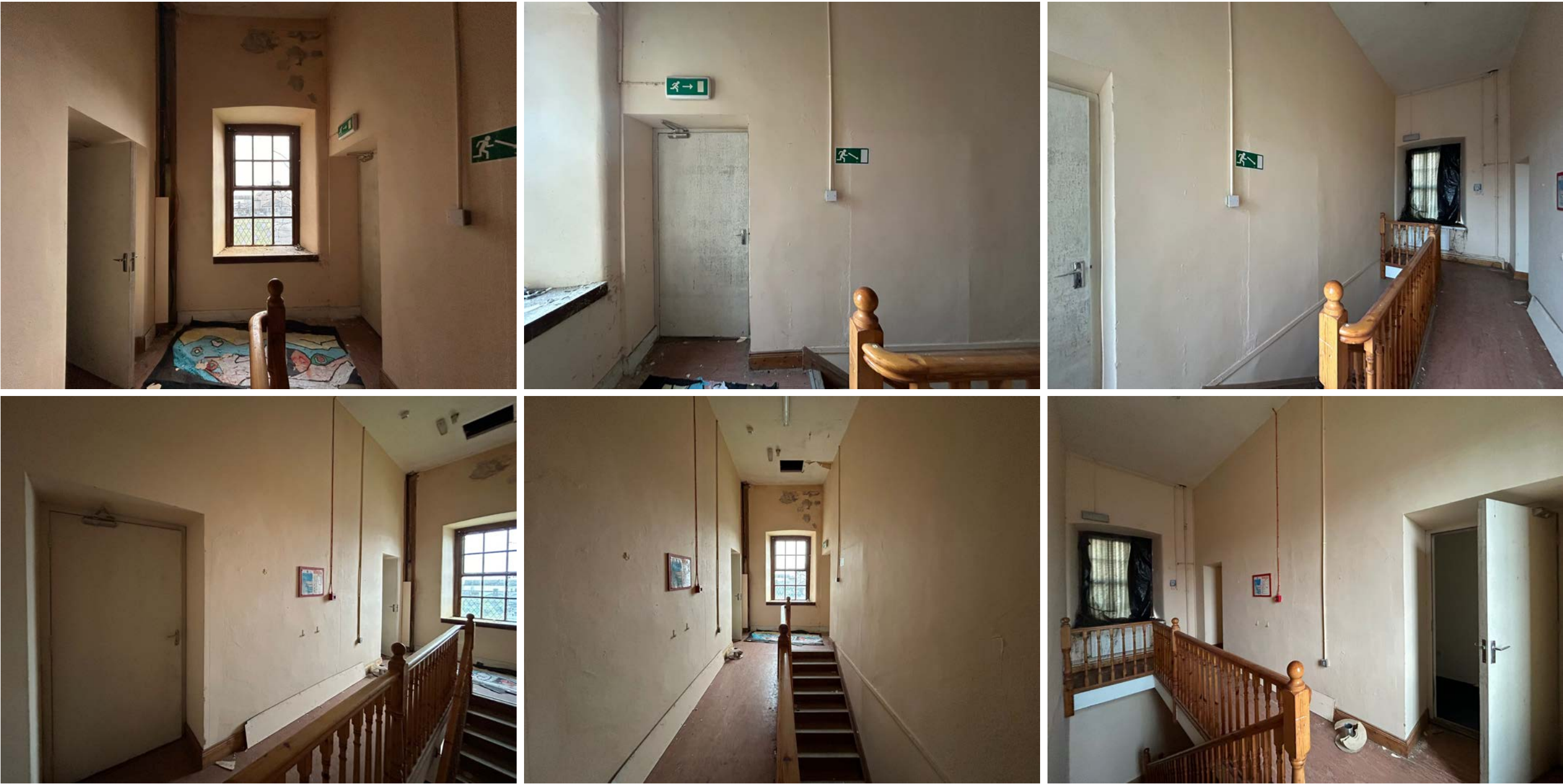
ROOM 01.ST.03

The stairwell landing is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. Cast ironwork to stair, timber handrail and cantilevered stone stair are features of significance. Potential historic floor finishes to be uncovered.



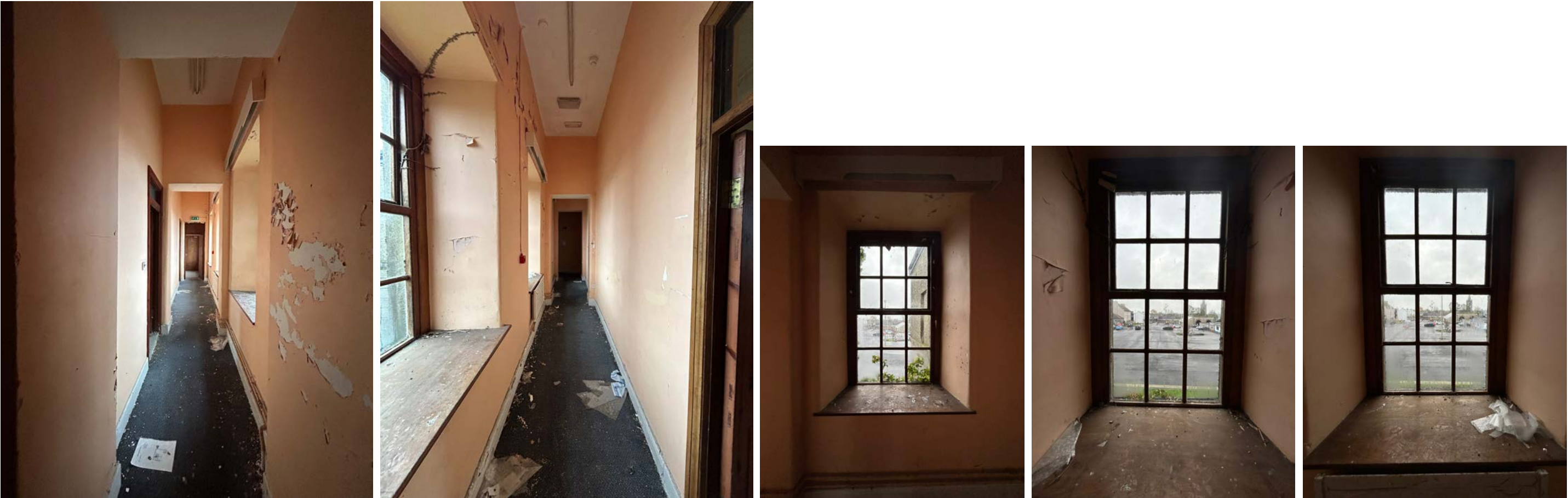
ROOM 01.ST.03

The stairwell is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. Cast ironwork to stair, timber handrail, and cantilevered stone stair are features of significance. Potential historic floor finishes to be uncovered.



ROOM 01.ST.04

The stairwell landing is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. Timber constructed stair, newel posts, spindles and handrails appear to be of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance.



ROOM 01.C.01

The corridor is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. Partitions and doors appear to be of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance. Subdivision of rooms with lightweight partitions suggest the skirting boards are of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance.



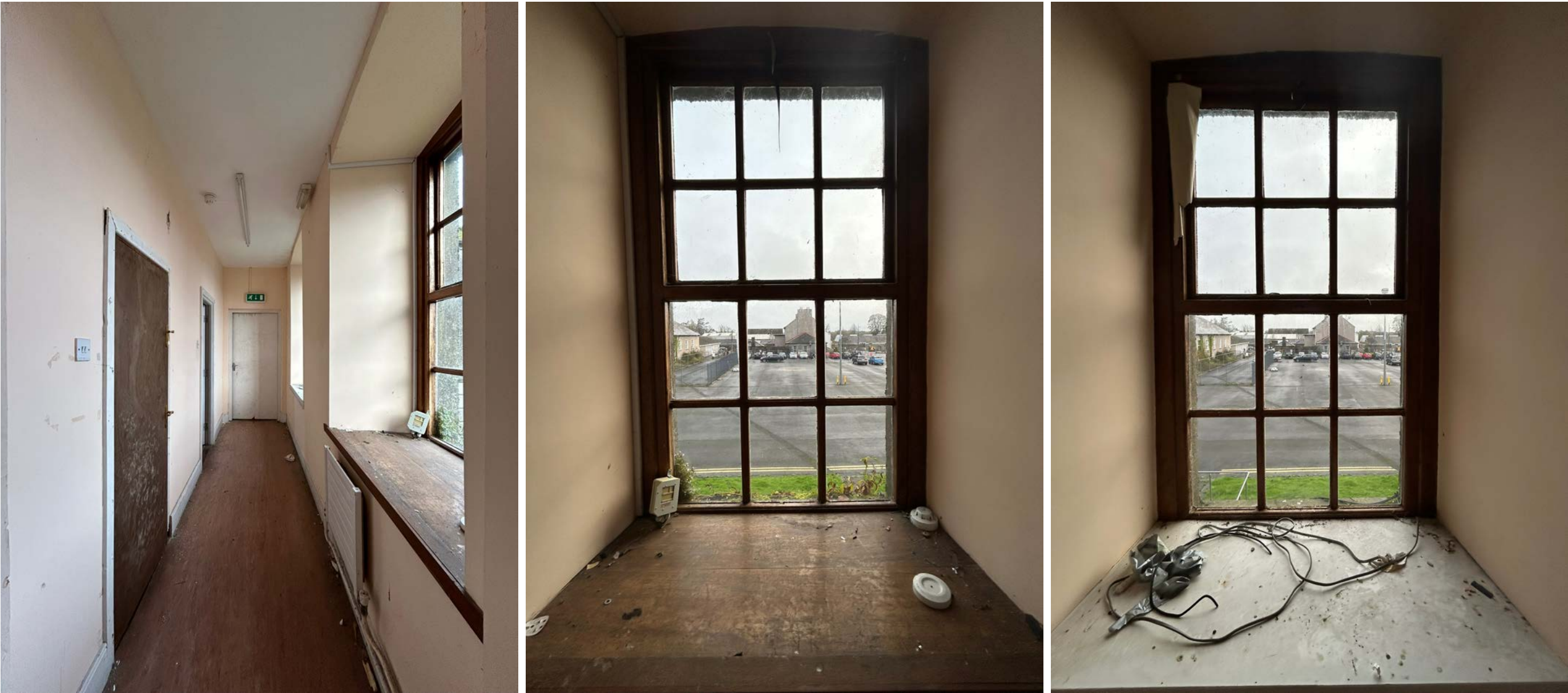
ROOM 01.C.02

The corridor is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. Partitions and doors appear to be of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance. Subdivision of rooms with lightweight partitions suggest the skirting boards are of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance.



ROOM 01.C.03

The corridor is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. Partitions and doors appear to be of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance. Subdivision of rooms with lightweight partitions suggest the skirting boards are of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance.



ROOM 01.C.04

The corridor is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. Partitions and doors appear to be of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance. Subdivision of rooms with lightweight partitions suggest the skirting boards are of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance.



ROOM 01.A.01

The room is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. Sanitaryware, built-in showers, partitions and doors appear to be of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance.



ROOM 01.A.02

The room is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. Sanitaryware, built-in showers, partitions and doors appear to be of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance.



ROOM 01.A.03

The room is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. Partitions and doors appear to be of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance. Subdivision of rooms with lightweight partitions suggest the skirting boards are of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance..



ROOM 02.M.01

The room is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses.

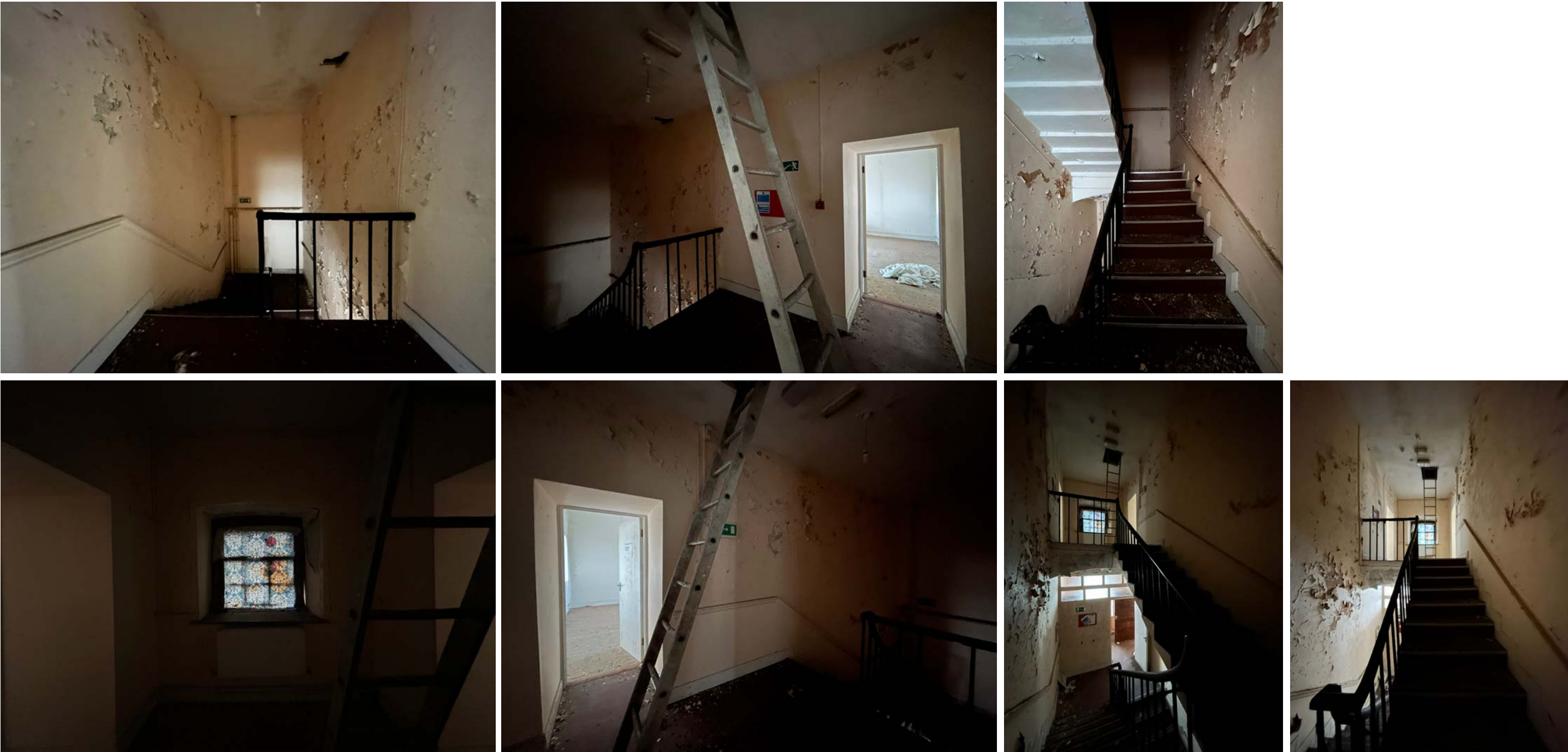
Partitions and doors appear to be of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance. Subdivision of rooms with lightweight partitions suggest the skirting boards are of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance.



ROOM 02.M.02

The room is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses.

Partitions and doors appear to be of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance. Subdivision of rooms with lightweight partitions suggest the skirting boards are of 20th century origin and do not contribute to significance.



ROOM 01.C.03

The room is plain and unadorned in character with no ornamental historic plasterwork or timber features evident, such as cornice-work, dado rails, architraves or roses. Cast ironwork to stair, timber handrail, and cantilevered stone stair are features of significance. Potential historic floor finishes to be uncovered.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section is to provide an assessment of significance of the Officer’s Building, Connolly Barracks, Longford, so that the proposals for change to this site are fully informed as to its significance and so that the effect of the proposals on that significance can be evaluated.

The assessment begins with a general summary of the building’s history and significance, while the various elements of the site are assessed according to a sliding scale of significance, reflecting the extent to which they contribute to the special interest.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

4.2 Assessing Significance

The assessment of significance follows the definitions given by English Heritage in *Conservation Principles, Policies & Guidance 2008*.

Conservation Principles provides the following explanation of significance:

EVIDENTIAL	The potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.
HISTORIC	Ways in which past people and events and aspects of life can be connected through the site to the present.
AESTHETIC	Ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.
COMMUNAL	This relates to the meanings (commemorative symbolic or spiritual) that a place may have for those who relate to it.
ARCHITECTURAL	In considering the architectural significance of the Officer’s Building, Connolly Barracks,, various aspects can overlap with all four of these criteria. We have found it useful to cover architectural significance separately

The following levels of significance are suggested in Conservation Principles:

OUTSTANDING	An attribute which is of national and international significance.
HIGHEST	An attribute of value which contributes strongly to the significance and is a critical part of understanding its history.
HIGH	An attribute of value which is an important contribution to the significance of a site/building and understanding its history.
MODERATE	An attribute of value which forms part of the significance of the site/building and may help to understand its history.
NEUTRAL	This attribute neither adds nor detracts from the significance of the site/building.
DETRIMENTAL	This attribute detracts from the value of the site/ building and removal may well be encouraged.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

4.3 Significance of the surviving fabric

The Officers Building at Connolly Barracks was added to the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage in 2004, when it was recognised as being of regional importance. This is the lowest level of importance recognised in the National Heritage Inventory (the others being national and international). Its special interest is manifest in the fabric and form of the building, which has the following hierarchy of significance:

Of the **highest significance** are:

- The original site comprising the Officers Building within its barracks complex setting, with proximity to other 19th century buildings related to the barracks (such as the prison/jail, guard house and hospital/infirmery) and other adjacent buildings (such as the market house and church hall) which have separate Protected Structure designations. Several factors (outlined below) detract from these elements;
- The external H-form footprint of the building, which remains largely intact;
- The dominant east elevation fronting the former parade yard;
- The survival of the cantilevered internal stone staircases combined with timber handrails and cast iron spindles towards the centre and northern end of the central range;

Of **high significance** are:

- The northern and south elevations of the northern and southern wings;
- The upper west elevation of the central range, with its windows at first floor;
- The west elevation of the northern and southern wings, with their windows at ground and first floor;
- The legibility of the historic floor plan and circulation, particularly at ground floor level, and the survival or visibility of historic internal openings;
- The survival of historic carpentry in the roof structure (albeit in a poor state of repair) and the floor and ceiling joists of the first floor structure;
- Possible 19th-century 6-panelled doors and architraves surviving together with associated ironmongery and brassware;
- Areas of flagstone paving at ground floor, with others possibly concealed under modern flooring;
- Two-storey projecting rear annexes;

Of **moderate significance** are:

- The possible survival of some historic lath and plaster to the ground and first floor ceilings (concealed above later ceilings);
- The possible survival of some historic plaster wall finishes, largely concealed behind later linings;

Of **neutral significance, neither contributing to nor detracting** from the significance of the whole are:

- The stone boundary wall and outbuildings to the west;
- Internal concrete staircase built in assume location of original (lost) cantilevered internal stone staircase towards the southern end of the central range;

Factors that detract from the building's significance are:

- 20th century extension, infill, external staircase, steps, window and door openings to the ground floor of the west elevation variously attached to and incorporated within the projecting rear annexes and elevations of the historic H-form;
- Porch extension, ramp, window and door openings to the ground floor of the north elevation;
- Infilling of historic window opes with rendered blockwork;
- Poor quality public realm to the north, south and east, particularly in the varied and low quality road and forecourt surfacing and predominant allocation of space for car parking;
- Poor quality open spaces to the west, particularly low quality surfacing, weeds and undergrowth, mechanical plant equipment and inspection chambers combining to create a low quality patchwork of elements which detract from the historic building;
- Ductwork and mechanical plant equipment mounted to the facades of the historic building;
- Mid- and late-20th century and 21st century fittings, sanitaryware and decorative schemes, visible throughout the building;
- Mid- and late-20th century door and window openings and window replacements to the main body of the H-form and particularly to the projecting rear annexes;
- Late-20th century interventions visible throughout the building including modern strip lighting, a concrete floors, trunking, surface wiring and sockets, dropped ceilings, flush doors, floor finishes and partition walls.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

4.4 Historical Value

The building dates from c.1815 at a time that the influence of the Industrial Revolution in England had influence in the development of towns in Ireland. Industry in Longford was concentrated in the what is now the northern area of Longford around Great Water Street, due to the presence of the Camlin River . Industry in this location pre-dates the construction of the Officers Building at Connolly Barracks with activity coalesced around the river from the early 1800s including included a Fowl Market (on the site now occupied by the new Council Offices), a Butter Market, Longford Gas Works (formed in 1857), a Bonded Warehouse, a Pottery and Lime Kiln, Corn Mill, Timber Mill, Distillery, Flax Mill and a Tannery and Abattoir. It is into this context that the main barracks building, designed by architect John Behan, was built in 1815.

The Officers Building and the entire barracks complex relates to an important, but not unproblematic, period in Irish history, when the efforts of some native Irish communities to resist rule from England resulted in rebellion, war, land seizures and the imposition of English, Scottish and French, Protestant, settler colonies. In its origins and in, and use by and for, such a 'plantation' it has, therefore, high historical value.

Of moderate historical value is the role of the building in the town's municipal, social and economic life during the 19th and 20th centuries. As such, it is associated with a period in history in which the Irish provincial town was to a great degree self-autonomous and self-managing, prior to the 20th century separation and centralisation.

Its role subsequently is of only low historical value as its functions were lost when Connolly Barracks ceased operations in 2009 when all remaining staff transferred to Athlone. Longford County Council purchased part of the site, including the former Officer's Mess building and the parade square. Despite numerous ideas generated in the intervening years for the use of the building, it has lain empty since its closure.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

4.5 Communal Value

The Officers Building within the Connolly Barracks complex has high communal significance within the context of Longford town, both historic and current, some of which has changed in nature over time. Historically, the Officers Building was designed and functioned as strident and powerful centrepiece with an imposing and commanding presence within the town. The Officers Building at least remained in use within living memory, until it's decommissioning in 2009.

The building has high architectural value stemming from its origins as a building of military typology designed by John Behan (or Beahan), measurer, architect and timber merchant, of Dublin. John Behan was appointed measurer for the Board of Works in 1801 and sworn in the following January. He resigned when he was appointed third architect to the Barrack Department in 1807, though he is still referred to as measurer of works in the Board of Works minutes in 1809. His name last appears as one of Barrack Department's architects in Watsons's Almanack for 1817.(4) In Wilson's Dublin Directory he is also described as a timber merchant from 1804 until 1816.

20th century interventions that have seen the building adapted to changing needs are regarded as being of comparatively little architectural value indeed many of these interventions have had a negative impact on the building. Those of the 20th century typically use low quality materials. The Officers Building has moderate to high architectural value commensurate with its Regional rating. It constitutes one of a number of Protected Structures surviving buildings from the early 19th century which combine to give identity to the northern quarter of Longford town.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

4.6 Evidential Value

Evidentially, the building combined with adjacent parade yard and collection of supporting buildings along the northern and southern boundaries provides a reminder of Longford's military history. In the absence of interpretation materials, however, this is not indicated to the casual viewer.

The overall evidential value of the building is high. Many of the surviving detached barracks buildings of this period have undergone subsequent remodelling and extension that has resulted in the fundamental loss of fabric, footprints and historic plan forms. Consequently, analysis of this building has the potential to cast light on not only its own construction and development over time but also that of the 19th century military barracks typology in Ireland more broadly.

With the readable historic plan form this could increase our understanding of the typology and its evolution over time. Surviving evidence such as the the hierarchical plan form and cellular arrangement of accommodation rooms are also important evidence of that functional operation of the building.

In the absence of a documented history the exposure and analysis of the fabric also potentially has high evidential value in its potential ability to provide evidence of the redevelopment and changing use of the building at different times in its history. This could provide important information as to the original fenestration and openings of the non-dominant elevations, the circulation in and out of the building and between interconnected parts of the building and the age of the of the external doors that at some point provided direct access into the staircases. Examination of known and potential historic internal openings also has the potential to increase our understanding of circulation and the differentiation and demarcation of space.

There is a medium to high potential for the survival of historic fabric, indicated in the known survival of areas of lathe, flagstones and render. This historic fabric potentially offers a medium to high evidential value in the potential to cast light on early-19th century construction. This knowledge could aid understanding of Longford's many other buildings of this area and inform their conservation.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

4.7 Aesthetic Value

The core aesthetic value of the building stems from its designed views to all elevations, framed by what was the historic approach from all four sides. These views remain in place today and create a strong visual dominance and resultant high aesthetic value. This is increased by the building's scale and massing rather than any decorative details. The aesthetic value associated with the dominant east elevation, manifested in its symmetry at both ground, first and second floor levels, is particularly high. The building's spatial and visual relationship to the adjacent 19th century outbuildings housing prison/jail, guard house and hospital/infirmary and importantly to the large open parade yard to the east that allows for an understanding of and appreciation of the formal eastern frontage. The primacy of this relationship between the free-standing form of the building as viewed from the east and the level open space of the parade yard is of paramount and the highest aesthetic value.

Also of high aesthetic value is its contribution to the town centre's mixed roof-scape of taller and lower buildings and its varied scale and massing. Also of medium to high aesthetic value is the Officers Building's contribution to the visual character of Longford town centre as an area of primarily Georgian construction with shared features that include square-headed sash windows and steeply pitched roofs.

At present the parade yard itself has only moderate aesthetic value as the setting of the building. This is due to its current use as a car park surfaced throughout in tarmac, combined with the poor edge condition to the west comprised of a metal fence.

Several factors, however, are detrimental and detract from the significance of the building. In particular, its setting to the west has been eroded over time with a collection of utilitarian buildings, parking areas and extents of grass and road surfacing creating a patchwork of elements developed over time in an unplanned and discordant manner. The western frontage and setting therefore detracts from the significance of the building.

5.0 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Overview of Proposals

Proposals for the redevelopment of the Officers Building at Connolly Barracks are summarised as follows:

Refurbishment, repurposing and extension of the former Officers Building, Connolly Barracks, Longford, Co. Longford as a multi-purpose community-focussed hub use.

Works involve:

- I. Refurbishment with internal and external alterations to the Protected Structure (former Officers Building) including installation of new windows and doors, building fabric upgrades for energy efficiency, building services installations, with repairs and upgrades to roof coverings and rainwater goods and including installation of a new lift which will access all floor and the installation of new fully accessible toilets on the ground floor.
The buildings as existing have a gross internal area of circa **1,162m²**. This gives a gross internal area of the buildings as existing of **1,662m²**.
- II. New west single storey extension extending the length of the Officers Building and to its rear with access points from the existing building via existing rear annexes. Associated demolition of rear boundary wall and utilitarian buildings to the west with existing materials reclaimed for use within landscaping solutions for the development.
- III. New doorway openings in lieu of existing window openings in existing external walls to rear of the Officers Building to facilitate access to external terraces.
- IV. Selective removal of non-original extensions, infills, porches, staircase and ramps from around the periphery of the Officers Building to reinstate the original H-shaped plan.
- V. Selective of non-original partitions, doors, linings, stairs, lobbies, fixtures and fittings within the interior of the Officers Building to restore the integrity of the original layouts where possible.
- VI. Selective addition of new partitions, doors, linings, fixings and fittings within the interior of the Officers Building to enable new uses, to effect Regulatory compliance and in support of building fabric upgrades.
- VII. Selective new openings within existing internal walls in order to facilitate access throughout the building for Regulatory compliance and/or connectivity between activity spaces.
- VIII. Public realm enhancements comprised of predominantly hard landscaping to east providing a universally accessible entrance sequence to existing entrance doors. Permeable natural stone paving to the public areas, with installation of Nature Based Sustainable Urban Drainage Management system.
- IX. Inclusion of sustainability features in support of low energy / low carbon NZEB strategy including green roof for controlled attenuation of rainfall and permeable paving as part of a Sustainable Urban Drainage System, Air Source Heat Pump and PV panels.
- X. Installation of feature lighting to former Officers Building building.
- XI. Provision of 8no. secure car parking spaces to service the multi-purpose community-focussed hub including 1no. accessible parking space in close proximity to the building entrance from the public realm, provision of EV charging point and short stay secure bicycle parking.

5.0 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

5.2 Site Development Diagram

The primary interventions and alterations to the Officers Building with objectives summarised as follows:

- 1. To retain and enhance the primary elevations to the north and south of the existing building and in particular the east elevation with its important relationship to the former parade yard.
- 2. To attend to the poor quality of the eastern frontage particularly at ground floor level through a suite of improvements including the removal of non-original extensions and other additions to the historic H-form.
- 3. To activate the western frontage for public use by forming a new extension to the western (rear) side of the Officers Building that connects to the host building only at the projecting rear annexes in order to minimise any loss or concealment of historic fabric to the primary body of the H-form.
- 4. Some loss of historic (albeit secondary) fabric is proposed via the removal of a stone boundary wall and two small utility outbuildings to the western side however it is intended that all existing stone will be retained on site and utilised in the construction of paved areas combined with a scheme of recording and interpretation. The public value and potential to unlock the overall site potential to the west up to and including the banks of the Camlin River is considered an appropriate justification in a trade off between material loss and community / civic gain.
- 5. Retain of internal room arrangements and hierarchies to maintain understanding of historic patterns of use with minimal removal of internal fabric to enable new uses and regulatory compliance only.
- 6. Minimal internal interventions including lightweight doors and partitions, suitably concealed building services installations and essential upgrades for thermal performance and fire compliance.

6.0 IMPACT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Change of Use of former Officers Building to Multi-Purpose Community Facility

Description:

The Officers Building fulfilled an active role in Longford from the early 19th century to 2009 when Connolly Barracks ceased operations and remaining personnel were transferred to Athlone. During this period it is assumed that in response to changing needs of the building historic features along with the spatial quality of the former Officers Building was compromised through the subsequent internal alterations. The proposed change of use of the former Officers Building to a multi-purpose community facility, with Longford County Council as promoters of the project, is welcome insofar as it will facilitate improved public access to the interior of the building and creates an opportunity to improve and enhance the presentation of the Protected Structure.

Mitigation:

The proposed change of use will have a positive impact on the Protected Structure by re-establishing a permanent public use for the first time since the decommissioning of the building. No particular mitigation measures are required in relation to the proposed change of use. Measures to improve the presentation of the Protected Structure arising from this change of use are highlighted below.

6.2 Demolition of the single storey structures attached porches to the elevations of the former Officers Building.

Description:

The proposed development includes for the demolition of the single-storey attached porches to the east and north elevations of the former Officers Building. These porches are of not original to the historic building (as evidenced by historic drawings) and of no obvious architectural significance. These proposed demolitions will not involve the loss of fabric that contributes to the significance of the former Officers Building.

Mitigation:

A detailed photographic record of the interior of the building, to include the attached outbuildings, is to be lodged with the Irish Architectural Archive prior to the commencement of demolition work.

6.3 Removal of external fire escape and external ramps to the east and north elevations

Description:

The existing external fire escape staircase on the west façade of the former Officers Building is to be removed along with external ramps attached to the east and north elevations. These structures date from the late-20th century or early 21st century and their removal will not involve the loss of significant material rather it will serve to reinstate order and hierarchy to the elevations.

Mitigation:

The demolition of these structures is to be carried out by operatives with experience of similar work within close proximity to a Protected Structure. All demolition work within 500mm of the retained structure of the building is to be carried out using hand tools only.

6.4 Removal of window infill and introduction of windows within existing structural openings

Description:

The infill panels of masonry will be removed from original windows openings on all elevations of the building. New hardwood framed sash windows to match existing windows are to be installed within original openings. The removal of the existing masonry is a significant improvement to the building reinstating the original elevational arrangements and improving the interior environments.

Mitigation:

A detailed photographic record of the exterior of the building is to be lodged with the Irish Architectural Archive prior to the commencement of demolition work. The removal of non-structural window infills will be undertaken by operatives with experience of similar work within close proximity to a Protected Structure and is to be carried out using hand tools only.

6.5 Works to interior of Officers Building, including new lift, removal of internal walls and alterations to openings within existing walls.

Description:

New connecting door openings are to be introduced at the ground floor to create a circulation route connecting rooms and to connect existing staircases.

A new lift is to be introduced towards the centre of the building in a location that will give access to the rooms on the second floor. This will allow universal access throughout the three floors of the building.

The removal of existing walls and alterations to existing openings will allow for open plan flexible use activity spaces to be formed, facilitating public use and engagement with the Protected Structure.

The removal of existing fabric will have a moderate impact on the Protected Structure and is unavoidable if the building is to be brought fully back into use.

Mitigation:

A detailed photographic record of the interior of the building is to be lodged with the Irish Architectural Archive prior to the commencement of demolition work. The demolition works are to be carried out by operatives with experience of similar work within a Protected Structure and is to be carried out using hand tools only. Particular care is to be taken to minimise damage to surviving terrazzo staircase finishes within the building.

The cast iron balustrades and timber hand rails within the existing staircase will be protected during the works and retained, with replacement balustrades and handrails to be introduced where missing. A detailed drawing and written specification for the conservation and refurbishment of the staircases will be submitted to the planning authority for review and agreement prior to the commencement of work in this part of the building.

6.6 Demolition of the single storey detached outbuildings and boundary wall

Description:

The application includes for the development of the lands to the west of the former Officers Building. A new single storey extension is proposed to the west side of the Protected Structure. This will require the demolition of a boundary wall along with two small stone outbuildings attached to the boundary wall which are secondary components of the original design. This removal is required to facilitate the proposed extension and will not significantly impact on the form, character and architectural integrity of the former Officers Building as a whole.

A single storey building to the west of the boundary wall at its southern end with no significant features is also proposed for removal.

The new west-facing extension will have a positive impact on the presentation of the Protected Structure and its relationship to the wider extent of lands to the west which extend to the Camlin River, which are under ownership of Longford CoCo and may be developed in the future. The loss of these structures should therefore be evaluated in the context of the wider benefit to the site and setting of the Protected Structure along with the potential to activate an unused frontage to the existing building.

This proposal will require the removal of the stone rubble walls forming the boundary wall and outbuildings, which date from the construction of the former Officers Building. While this will result in the loss of historic features it is noted that they are situated to the rear of the Officers Building within an area that was map evidence records as being for utility use to service the mess and quarters accommodation within the main building. Mapping illustrates a number of structures and amenities including reference to urinals, drying ground and water pumps. The two outbuildings proposed for removed are various annotated in mapping as being for storage - larder, turf, coal and wine are referred to.

Mitigation:

Stone removed as part of the demolition works will be carefully set aside and used in the formation of the landscaping of courtyards proposed between the rear annexes at ground floor. Detailed drawings of the proposed landscaping design are to be prepared, with input from the project conservation architect, and submitted to the planning authority for review and agreement before this work commences.

A detailed photographic record of the interior and exterior of the buildings, to include the attached outbuildings, along with a detailed photographic record of the boundary wall is to be lodged with the Irish Architectural Archive prior to the commencement of demolition work.

6.7 Introduction of new partition walls and doors throughout

Existing lightweight stud partitions, timber stairs and other joinerywork including bar counter which appear to be of late-20th century origin, will be removed. New partition walls, comprising lightweight stud partitions and glass screens will be installed at ground, first and second floors level to meet currently Building Regulations standards and to create a series of spaces for multi-purpose community use.

Mitigation:

As evidenced in the photo document of interior spaces contained within this report there exists no ornamental plasterwork such as cornices, roses or other decorative features such as dado rails and skirting boards. As such the introduction of new lightweight partitions presents no conflict in terms of junctions or interfaces with historic features. The partition walls are lightweight in construction and therefore demountable so that the fit-out of the internal spaces is fully reversible without damage to the surviving fabric and features of the interior.

6.8 Energy efficiency improvements

The attic void throughout is to be upgraded with new mineral wool insulation. External walls are to be upgraded internally to incorporate insulation to modern standards and will contribute to a significantly improved thermal performance to the building.

Mitigation:

The approach to the thermal upgrading of the building will be to optimise the energy efficiency of the building without negatively impacting the character, fabric or significant architectural features of the Protected Structure. A detailed energy efficiency strategy for the building is to be prepared, with input from the project conservation architect, and submitted to the planning authority for review and agreement before this work commences.

7.0 CONCLUSION

The proposed development creates an important and welcome opportunity to introduce an appropriate sustainable long-term use to the former Officers Building. The proposed use, as a multi-purpose community facility, will allow improved and permanent public access to and use of the interior of the building.

Externally infilled windows will be opened with new windows installed and the building re-rendered with lime render to improve the elevations of the building. Key internal features, including the internal arrangement of rooms and existing staircases will be retained as important components of the refurbished building, providing a strong visual link to the building's past.

The proposed development includes for the removal of later interventions in order to de-clutter the building both externally and internally restoring order and hierarchy to the Protected Structure and improving the presentation of the building.

The proposed new use will require additions and alterations that will impact on the fabric and character of the Protected Structure, as described in Section 6 of this report. These interventions are proportionate and necessary to achieve the proposed new use and their impact will be minimised by the adoption of the mitigation measures outlined in this report.

ROBIN LEE ARCHITECTURE is the author of this report, except where noted otherwise.
Historic research supported by John Cronin & Associates.

