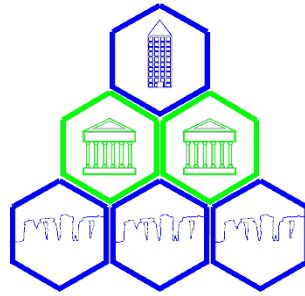


# The Historic Environment Consultancy



**Historic England (Designation) Consultation Report**  
**Case Name: The Blue Bird Toffee Factory, Hunnington B62 0JW**  
**Case Number: 1464539**

**Response for and on behalf of the land owners Opalmech Ltd and an  
“interested party” Seven Capital (Halesowen) Ltd**

Dr Peter Wardle

Document Reference Number 2019/1490  
Version 1  
5<sup>th</sup> August 2019

## Heritage Statement: Blue Bird Park Dr Peter Wardle

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Version No	Draft	Content Added/Omitted	Date
0.5	Client Draft		
0.7	LPA Draft	Client Comments	
1	Issued Report		

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 The Client

This report has been prepared for and on behalf of Opalmech Ltd who are the land owners and Seven Capital (Halesowen) Ltd who are an interested party.

### 1.2 Confidentiality and Copyright

This document is confidential - it may be shared with:

- The Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
- The person who requested these buildings be considered for listing
- Bromsgrove District Council

The copyright of this report belongs to the Historic Environment Consultancy. No liability to third parties is accepted for advice and statements made in this report.

### 1.3 Location

Site Address:	Blue Bird Park Bromsgrove Road Hunnington Halesowen Worcestershire
Post Code	B62 0JW

## 2. Procedural Matters

### 2.1 Material Matters – Attached Factory to the Rear of Administration Building

We agree that the above entity is best treated as a separate building. Should the decision be taken to list the administration building the powers given to the Secretary of State under the 2013 Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act Schedule 17 Section 8 3 a and b are as follows:

*“(3)After subsection (5) insert—*

*“(5A)In a list compiled or approved under this section, an entry for a building situated in England may provide—*

*(a)that an object or structure mentioned in subsection (5)(a) or (b) is not to be treated as part of the building for the purposes of this Act;*

*(b)that any part or feature of the building is not of special architectural or historic interest.”*

### 2.2 Interested Parties

It is unclear to us who the other interested parties are (other than the person who requested the building be considered for listing).

We note that both local authorities have commented on the recent planning application. We question the understanding of the archaeology section of Worcestershire County Council of a 1920s building, and the veracity of their description.

### 2.3 Other Documents

We draw attention to two documents submitted to Bromsgrove District Council as part of a planning application these are:

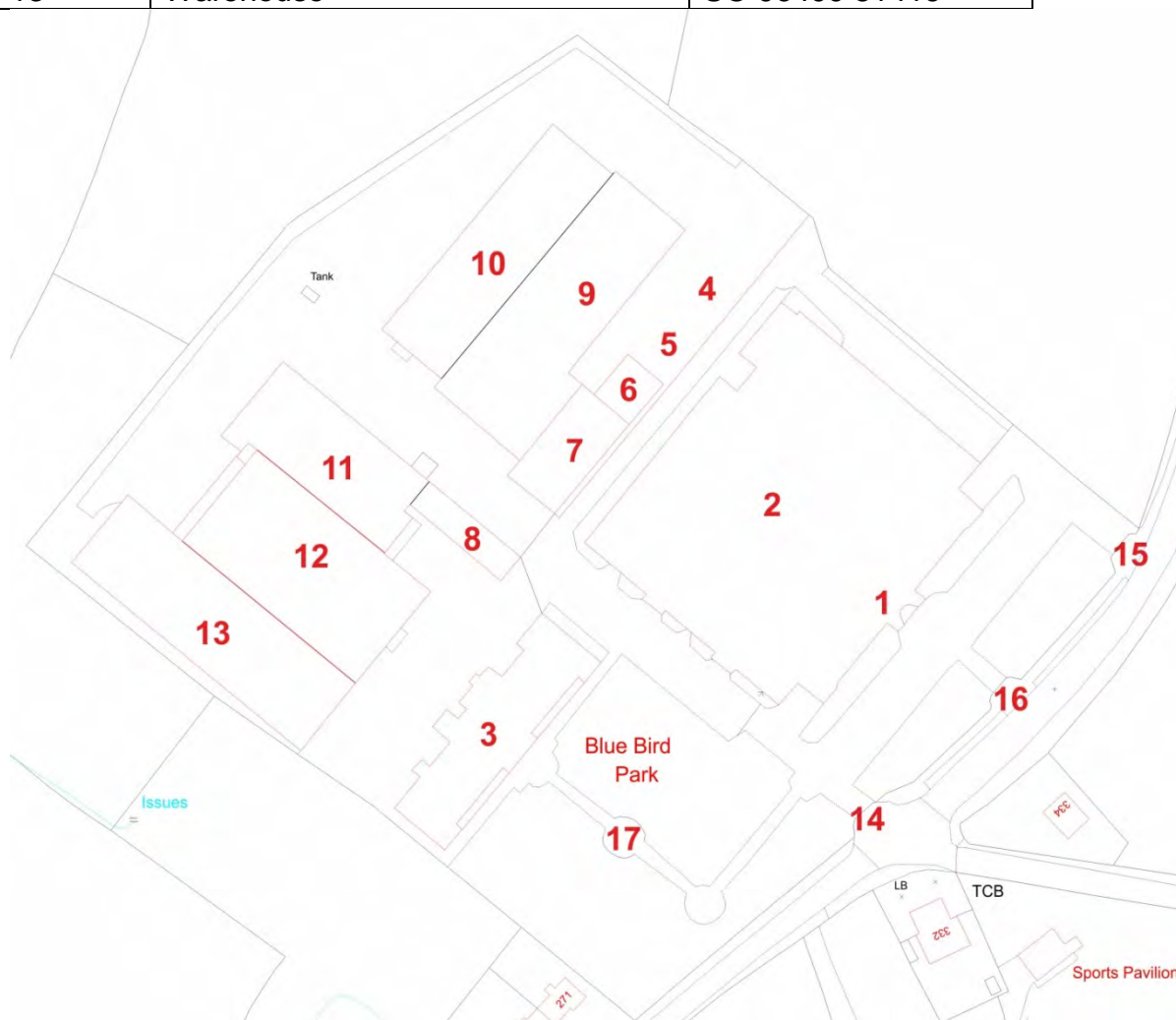
2019 **Heritage Statement** by Simon Roper-Pressdee of WYG Ltd – Planning Consultants  
2019 **Industrial' Appraisal** in respect of Bluebird Park, Bromsgrove Road, Hunnington, Halesowen 862 OEW by MN Shephard of Sellers Ltd Chartered Surveyors

### 3. Nomenclature Identification of Buildings

The original purposes of the “listing descriptions” should be recalled – that is as an aid to the identification of a listed building. We note that the map that accompanies the listing notice depicts a single point.

We note that the Consultation Report used names for some of the buildings. We suggest that the historic names for the buildings as used in the 1927 article in the Midlander (shown in bold below) should be used. For clarity and for the purpose of this report the following numbering scheme has been adopted:

Building	Name & Function	Grid Ref
1	<b>Administration Building</b>	SO 96680 81421
2	<b>Factory</b>	SO 96647 81438
3	<b>Canteen</b>	SO 96574 81388
4	Boiler House / Power House	SO 96629 81505
5	Water Tower	SO 96617 81490
6	Unknown	SO 96610 81477
7	Unknown	SO 96593 81460
8	Unknown	SO 96567 81440
9	Warehouse	SO 96593 81497
10	Warehouse	SO 96574 81513
11	Warehouse	SO 96531 81460
12	Warehouse	SO 96524 81431
13	Warehouse	SO 96499 81416



**Figure 1: Building Numbers**

## 4. Extent of The Entity Being Considered

The Consultation Report states:

*A factory of 1925-7 constructed to the designs of S N Cooke for Harry Vincent Limited with later C20 warehouse buildings to the rear of the site.*

And:

*The factory scheme was by S N Cooke F.R.I.B.A., of Birmingham, and included a model village (24 of the planned 100 houses were built), village shop with post office, cricket pavilion and other leisure buildings in a designed landscape extending across 150 acres.*

The Consultation Report also states that SN Cooke designed a landscape extending over 150 acres (60 ha). No evidence for this is presented.

Indeed the Harry Vincent Ltd factory and other associated buildings are two obviously distinct areas.

While the account in the Midlander says that Harry Vincent purchased 150 acres including two farms, we have no evidence for such a wide scale designed landscape, in contrast to the factory itself and the areas of housing. The land surrounding the factory is simply tracts of agricultural land.

While such a landscape would not be listed (the correct designation would be the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens) this statement infers much about the setting.

## 5. Classification of Buildings

Key to deciding if any building meets the criteria for listing set by the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport is the use of English Heritage (now Historic England) Listing Guides.

The Consultation Report states that the building is “A factory of 1925-7”.

The following selection guides are therefore relevant:

Industrial Buildings

**Commerce and Exchange**

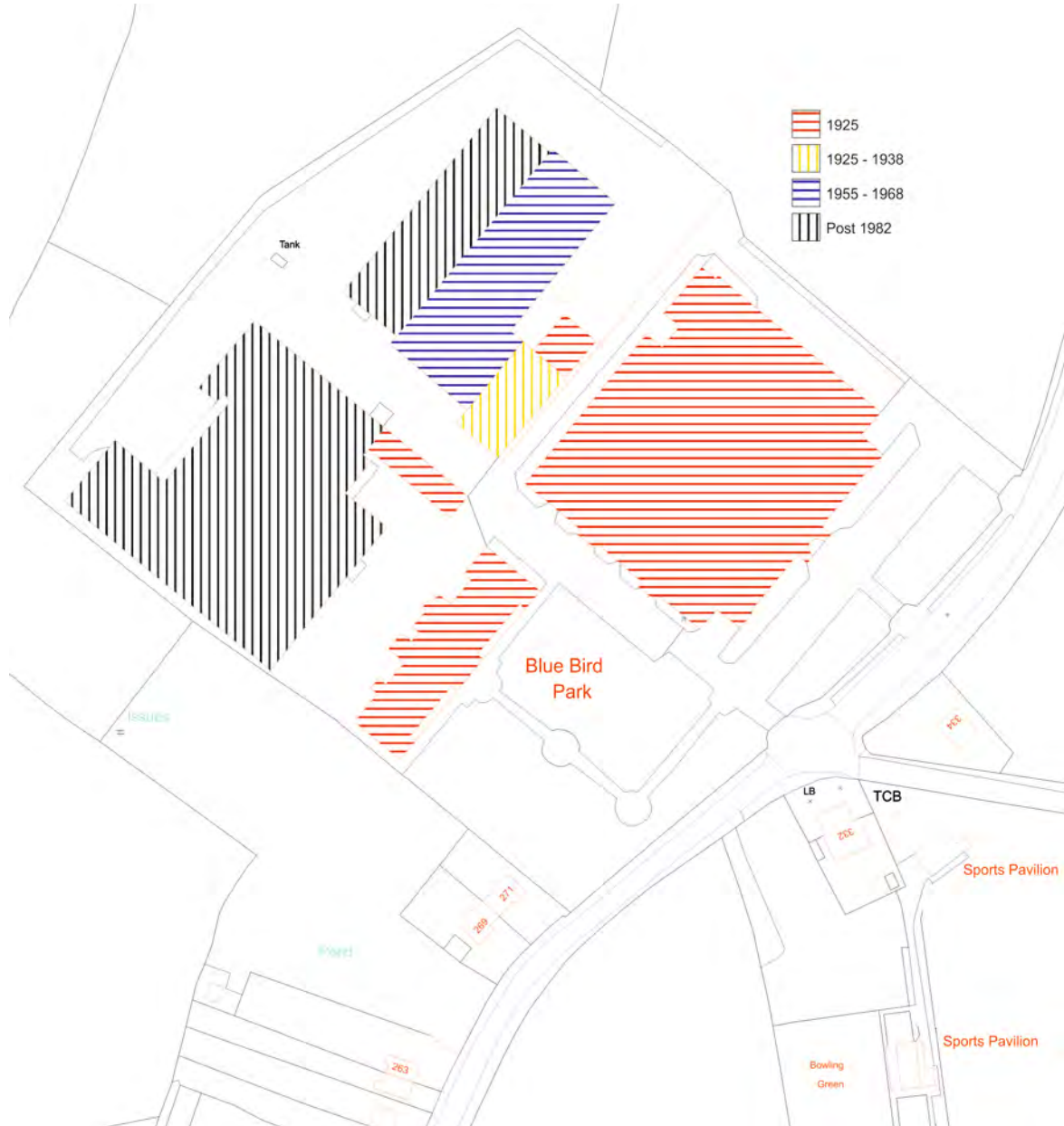
Culture and Entertainment Buildings

Garden and Park Structures

Also relevant is the Historic England 2016 Introductions to Heritage Assets: Public Art.

Despite the fact that one of the buildings is being called the “Welfare Building” the listing selection guide “Health and welfare Buildings” does not cover this type of building.

## 6. Date of Buildings & Date of Key Buildings



**Figure 2: Dates of Buildings, 1:2000 @ A4**

We note paragraphs 18 & 19 of the DDCMA criteria for listing which states:

*“from 1850 to 1945, because of the greatly increased number of buildings erected and the much larger numbers that have survived, progressively greater selection is necessary;*

*careful selection is required for buildings from the period after 1945, another watershed for architecture.”*

*“19. Buildings less than 30 years old: such buildings are not normally considered to be of special architectural or historic interest because they have yet to stand the test of time. It may nevertheless be appropriate to list some modern buildings despite their relatively recent construction – for example, if they demonstrate outstanding quality (generally interpreted as being equivalent to Grade I or II\*). The Secretary of State calculates the age of a building from the point at which the ground was first broken.”*



Paragraph 16 states:

*“For more recent buildings in particular, the functioning of the building (to the extent that this reflects on its original design and planned use, where known) will also be a consideration.”*

are relevant.

Thus buildings 9 to 13 and 17 can be ruled out on the grounds they are less than 30 years old and are clearly not outstanding.

The remaining buildings are towards the end of the 1850-1945 spectrum so progressively greater selection is necessary.

Thus for the buildings to qualify for listing there would have to be other compelling reasons for listing.

## **7. Historic Interest**

*DDCMS para 16 states:*

*Historic Interest:*

*To be able to justify special historic interest a building must illustrate important aspects of the nation’s history and / or have closely substantiated historical associations with nationally important individuals, groups or events; and the building itself in its current form will afford a strong connection with the valued aspect of history.*

Sweet making is not an important aspect of the nation’s history. Neither is Harry Vincent a nationally important figure.

The evolution of industry is an important aspect of the nation’s history (Nation is defined as the United Kingdom not England) - so commentators imply there was something revolutionary in the construction of the Harry Vincent Ltd Factory as a highly efficient and mechanised factory with decent housing for the work force.

However it is noted that the model village at Hunnington was never completed –about 25% was built.

Moreover New Lanark was constructed in 1786, Bromborough 1853, Saltaire 1851, Port Sunlight 1887, Bournville 1880 showing that the Harry Vincent Ltd setup had many older and more illustrious predecessors. Indeed the 1919 Housing Act greatly improved the standard of workers housing so the associated Harry Vincent Ltd housing belongs to this epoch, not that of philanthropic housing.

The modern factory as a type is attributed to the early Victorian period or even the Georgian period so the Harry Vincent Factory does not illustrate this important aspect of the nation’s history.

## **8. Regional Factors**

It is recognised that there are regional specialisations in industrial processes - for example shoe making in Northampton. While there are two other examples of industrial food production in Birmingham - Cadburys Chocolate Factory at Bournville and Birds Custard Factory at Digbeth, it would be stretching a point to call this a regional specialisation. Confectionary production is spread throughout the United Kingdom, eg Edinburgh Rock is made in Edinburgh and Mars Bars in Slough.

## 9. Completeness of Factory Complex

The Selection Guide for industrial buildings suggests that completeness is a key factor. It states:

“With industrial sites it is important to consider how they functioned in terms process-flow: from receiving and storing raw materials, via the various manufacturing stages, through to warehousing and the selling of the end product. In addition, other structures may be present which served the needs of the workforce or facilitated maintenance. With sites of acknowledged historic interest, consideration should be given to listing all relevant structures, even where they are architecturally utilitarian. If elements have been lost from the complex, undermining the understanding of how the site functioned, this may make the surviving buildings unlistable unless they are of special interest for some other reason.”

The factory is incomplete. The following buildings have been demolished:

1. The power plant
2. The water tower
3. Refrigerated Storage (for cream and butter)

The laboratory building cannot be identified.

## 10. Innovation

No evidence has been presented for innovation in construction techniques.

## 11. The Architect

The building is attributed to the architect S.N. Cooke in the Midlander article. A biography of him can be found on Wikipedia. He is perhaps best known for being the architect of the tower blocks in Birmingham. In fact many of his buildings have been demolished. His career is best summed up by the eminent architectural historian Cook 2007 who states:

*The most important interwar commercial architecture [in Birmingham] was produced by S.N. Cooke & Partners, though their work is difficult to assess. It starts with good stripped classical: No.126 Colmore Row, 1929, and the Sun Building, Bennets Hill, 1922-8. Smart Bros furnishing store, Temple Street, 1931, combines streamlined moderne features with residual classical motifs in quite a sophisticated way. The Legal and General Assurance, Waterloo Street, 1931-2, a progressive cubic block, shows the influence of the emerging Modern Movement. But then their work goes rapidly downhill: Lombard House, Great Charles Street, 1933, and New Oxford House, Waterloo Street, 1934-5, are big lumpy classical jobs of little merit.*

This building shows the start in the decline of his work, or him conforming to constraints of money & the wishes of his clients. It is thus suggested the architect is not a decisive factor.

## 12. Drink and food processing

The designation guide states:

*A rapidly increasing population from the late eighteenth century on, together with revolutions in transport, led to major changes in the organisation of the food and drink trades, to mechanisation in processing, and transformations in the scale of buildings. Consequently, many early buildings – the predecessors of the giants of the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries – have disappeared or been substantially altered or camouflaged. Such buildings (for instance, eighteenth-century maltings) are rare and will be serious candidates for listing, even if substantially changed.*

The Harvino or Harry Vincent Factory is dated to 1925 and thus falls outside the above category.

### 13. The manufactory

Not all of the factory has tiled walls.



**Plate 1: Section of factory without tiled walls**

The sole surviving complete piece of machinery is a mid C20 set of weighing scales. There are some steam pipes surviving.

There are few clues to what was manufactured at the site except:

1. Glazed Tiles
2. The company logo on the main gates.

Our analysis of the function of the room concurs with the designated description - that there is not sufficient evidence to allow a good understanding of the manufacturing process. Therefore this building fails this test for listing.

Even with contemporary accounts, and photographs, of the factory it is not possible to work out the “flow of the process”.

We note much alteration will be needed to make the building lettable and bring the building’s energy performance up to legal standards.

## 14. Building 1 – The Administration Buildings

### 14.1 Alteration

Like most factories's office buildings there is a high degree of alteration with only the director's suite and the strong room relatively unaltered.

The use of powder coated aluminium for replacement windows is noted.



**Plate 2: Powder coated Aluminium windows on "Admin" building**

Some of the doors of the "Admin" building are recent in date.



**Plate 3: Modern doors, "Admin" building, ground floor**

We note much alteration will be needed to make the building lettable and bring the building's energy performance up to legal standards.

## **14.2 Historic features**

Few historic features such as fire places, chimney breasts, or light fittings survive.

## **14.3 The Selection Guide**

The selection guide for Commerce and Exchange Buildings notes that offices were often frontages to factories. It notes that offices were on many floors because of the shortage of land within towns. It also notes the innovative use of architectural styles.

The conservative architectural style of this building is noted.

## **14.4 The Plan Form**

The plan form with a single room depth served by a corridor is a common one for early twentieth century offices. Over half the plan forms as built have been lost.

## 15. The Canteen Building

The fact that the building is multi-purpose means it does not fall neatly into one of the types of buildings described in the designation guides.

The plan form is much altered. It is not possible to identify many of the room functions given in the Midlander or whose presence is inferred, for example currently there are no male lavatories or an obvious food storage area. The Midlander lists the following room functions:

1. Theatre and large canteen
2. Rest rooms
3. Changing rooms
4. First aid rooms

The Birmingham Gazette adds the following:

5. Billiards room
6. Cards room
7. Library

It is unclear for example how food was served.

### 15.1 Materials

We note that the “Welfare” building has recent tiles at the front as well as slate to the rear.



**Plate 4: Concrete tiles on roof of “Welfare” building**



**Plate 5 The slate roof of the rear of the welfare building**

## **15.2 Alterations**

The performance space has been lost by partitions blocking off the stage area and other partitions sub-dividing the non stage space. The stage area itself has been converted.

We note much alteration will be needed to make the building lettable and bring the building's energy performance up to legal standards.





## 16. Optimum Viable Use Compatible with its Conservation

It has to be accepted that there have been changes in standards of hygiene in the last hundred years for industrial scale food production. Equally many household confectionary brands are now owned by overseas companies and production has moved out of this country.

Equally the nature of UK manufacturing in the last 100 years has changed dramatically – Britain has gone from being one of the largest manufacturing nations to being relatively small. Similarly the use of computers has dramatically changed the nature of offices which no longer need large areas for storing paper.

The buildings have actively been marketed in whole and in part and no takers have been forthcoming. The last tenant has now vacated the park. It therefore has to be concluded that there is no viable use of the building complex.

It is noted that all the buildings have an EPC Rating of F-G which makes them unlettable under the Energy Act 2011 as from April 2018 onwards without major upgrading.

This is the conclusion for many historic manufactories as a whole, such as parts of the Marconi factory in Chelmsford or the Birds Custard Factory in Birmingham. In these two cases the administration blocks and the power houses have been saved but no beneficial use has been found for these power houses.

The administrative building could be converted into offices but:

1. There is abundance of offices available for rent within a 10 mile radius
2. They are too small for a corporate headquarters
3. They are too small for serviced offices (where there is economy of scale for security and reception services).

Thus the only viable use of Building One is conversion into dwellings.

For Building 2 conversion is difficult because the auditorium would have to be sub-divided.

## 17. Conclusion

It is concluded that none of the buildings meet the criteria for listing.

Dr Peter Wardle 5<sup>th</sup> August 2019<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Dr Peter Wardle has 44 years' experience of working in the Historic Environment. He has run the Historic Environment Consultancy for 28 years. Notable work includes the Heritage Master Planning for the 2012 Olympic Games and his work for the Church of England on redundant Churches for which he was awarded membership of the Association of Diocesan and Cathedral Archaeologists for his notable work on Church Archaeology. He has recorded 2800 Parish Churches. (see [www.theparishchurch.co.uk](http://www.theparishchurch.co.uk)) A full CV and examples of his work can be found on [www.historicenvironment.co.uk](http://www.historicenvironment.co.uk). He is on the West Berkshire Conservation Panel and is a West Berkshire Local Listing Assessor.

## 18. Annex One Garden Villages Source Wikipedia

### England[[edit](#)]

(Chronological order)

- [Trowse](#), Norfolk (1805)
  - [Blaise Hamlet](#), Gloucestershire (1811)
  - [Selworthy](#), Somerset (1828)
  - [Barrow Bridge, Bolton](#) (1830s)<sup>[12]</sup>
  - [Snelston](#), Derbyshire (1840s)
  - [Swindon Railway Village](#), Wiltshire (1840s)
  - [Withnell Fold](#), Lancashire (1844)
  - [Meltham](#), Yorkshire (1850)
  - [Bromborough Pool](#) ("[Price's Village](#)") (1853)
  - [Saltaire](#), Yorkshire (1853)
  - [Akroydon](#), Yorkshire (1859)
  - [Nenthead](#), Cumberland (1861)
  - [New Sharlston Colliery Village](#), Yorkshire (1864)<sup>[13]</sup>
  - [Ripley Ville](#), Yorkshire (1866)
  - [Copley](#), Yorkshire (1874)
  - [Howe Bridge](#), Lancashire (1873–79)
  - [Bournville](#), Worcestershire (1879)
  - [Barwick](#) Hertfordshire (1888)
  - [Port Sunlight](#), Cheshire (1888)<sup>[14]</sup>
  - [Creswell Model Village](#), Derbyshire (1895)<sup>[15]</sup>
  - [New Bolsover model village](#), Derbyshire (1896)<sup>[16]</sup>
  - [Vickerstown](#), Lancashire (1901)
  - [New Earswick](#), Yorkshire (1904)<sup>[17]</sup>
  - [Woodlands](#), Yorkshire (1905)<sup>[18]</sup>
  - [Whiteley Village](#), Surrey (1907)
  - [The Garden Village, Kingston upon Hull](#), Yorkshire (1908)
  - [Silver End](#), Essex (1926)
  - [Stewartby](#), Bedfordshire (1926)
- **Ireland**[[edit](#)]
    - [Milford, County Armagh](#), Northern Ireland (1800s)
    - [Portlaw](#), County Waterford, Republic of Ireland (1825)
    - [Sion Mills](#), County Tyrone, Northern Ireland (1835)
    - [Bessbrook](#), County Armagh, Northern Ireland (1845)
    - [Laurelvale](#), County Armagh, Northern Ireland (1850s)
    - Model Village, County Cork (1910s; usually called [Tower](#), the name of the pre-existing hamlet)
- **Scotland**[[edit](#)]
  - [New Lanark](#), Lanarkshire (1786)
  - **Wales**[[edit](#)]
    - [Tremadog](#), Caernarfonshire (1798)
    - [Elan Village](#), Powys (1892)
    - [Portmeirion](#), Merioneth (1925)

19. Annex 2 Plans

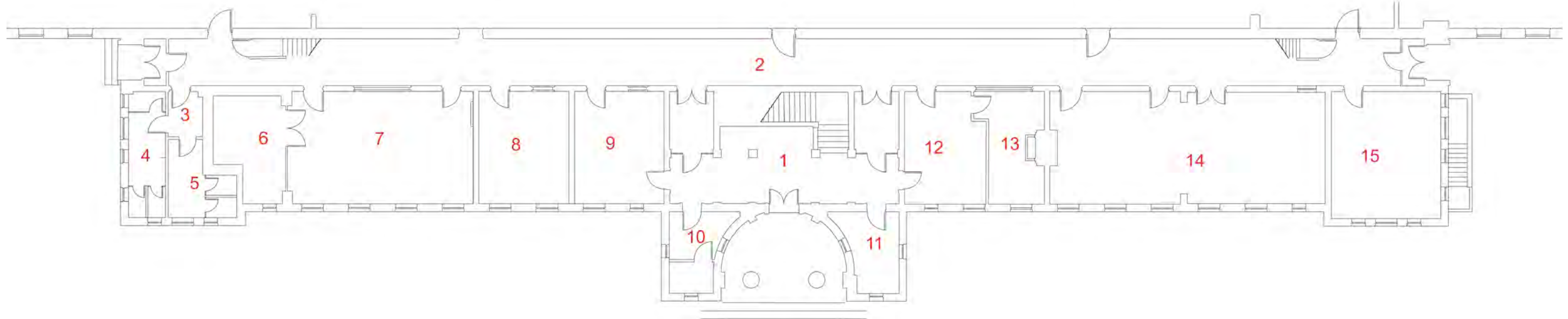


Figure 4: Ground Floor Plan, 1:200 @ A3

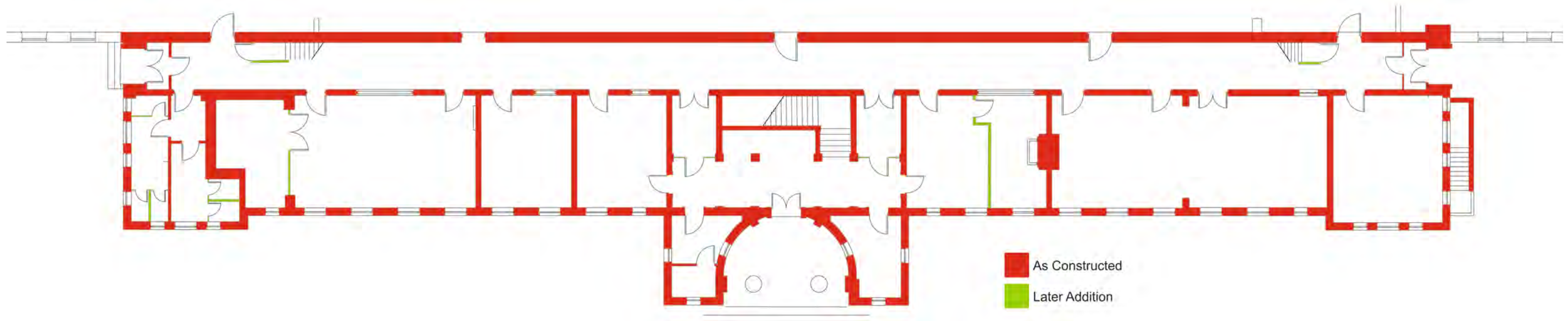


Figure 5: Ground Floor Phased, 1:200 @ A3

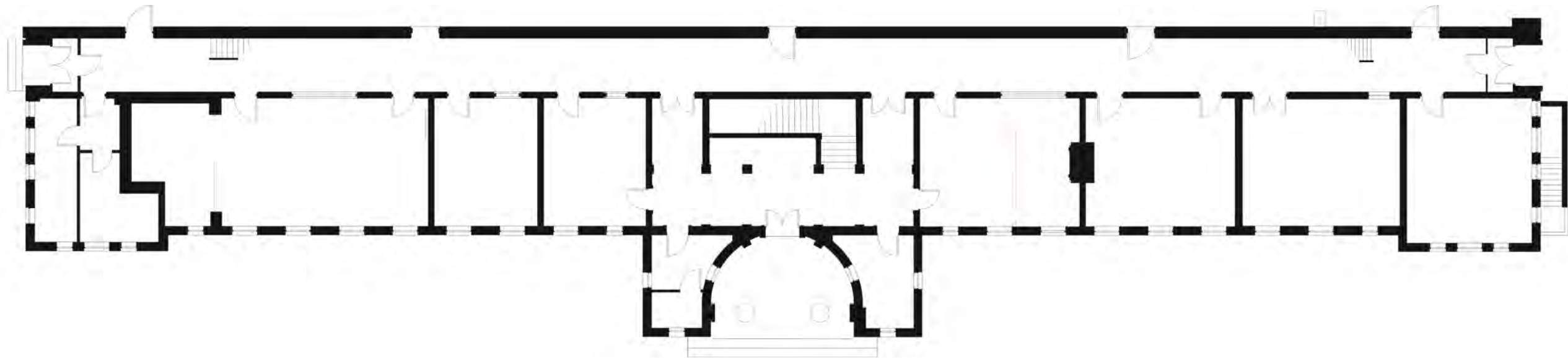


Figure 6: Ground Floor As Constructed, 1:200 @ A3

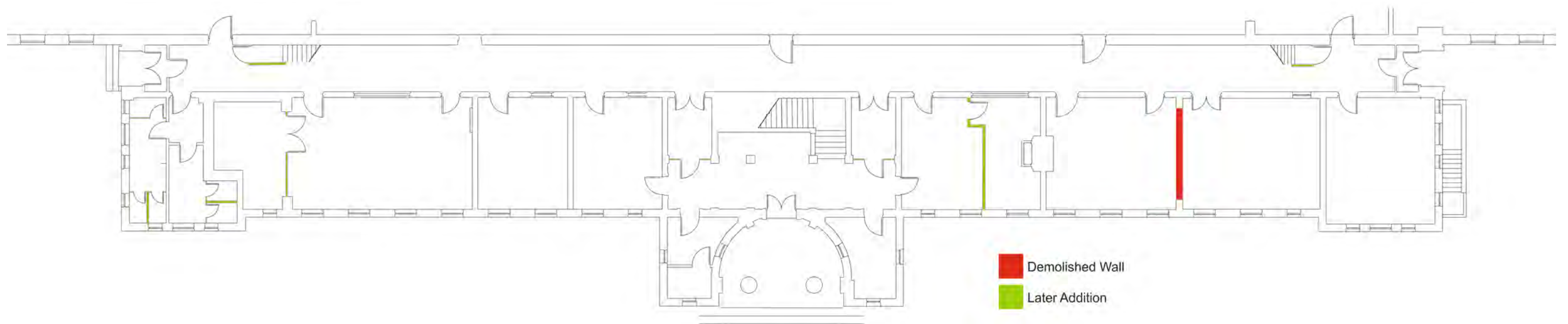


Figure 7: Ground Floor, Added and Demolished Walls, 1:200 @ A3

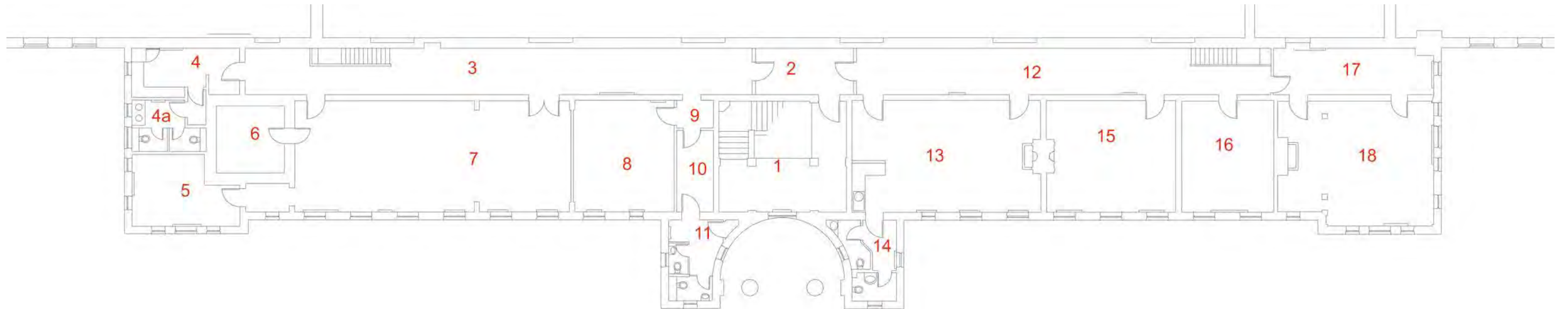


Figure 8: First Floor Plan, 1:200 @ A3

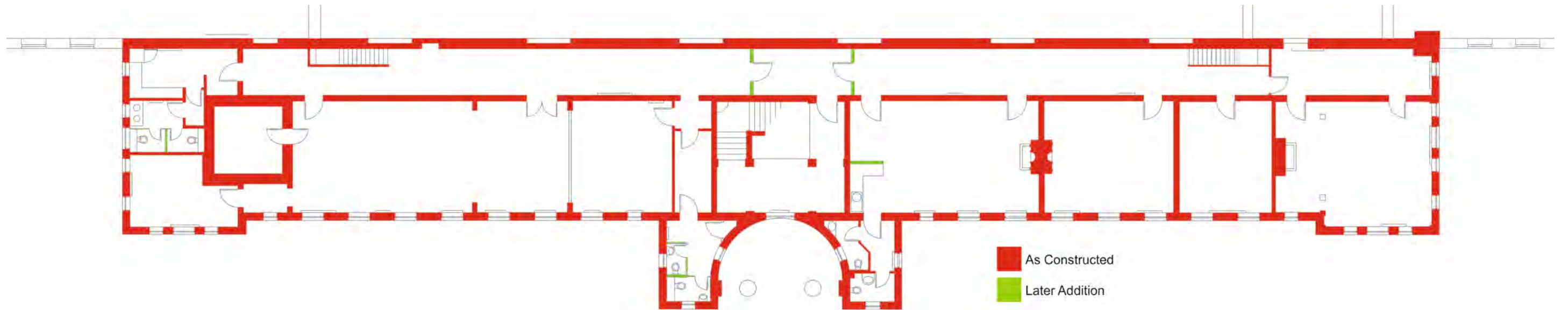


Figure 9: First Floor Phased, 1:200 @ A3

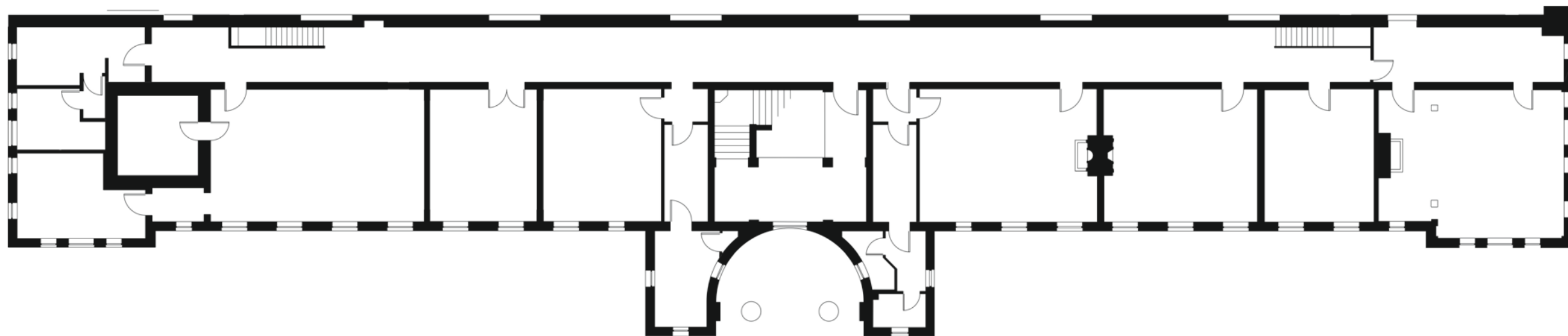


Figure 10: First Floor As Constructed, 1:200 @ A3

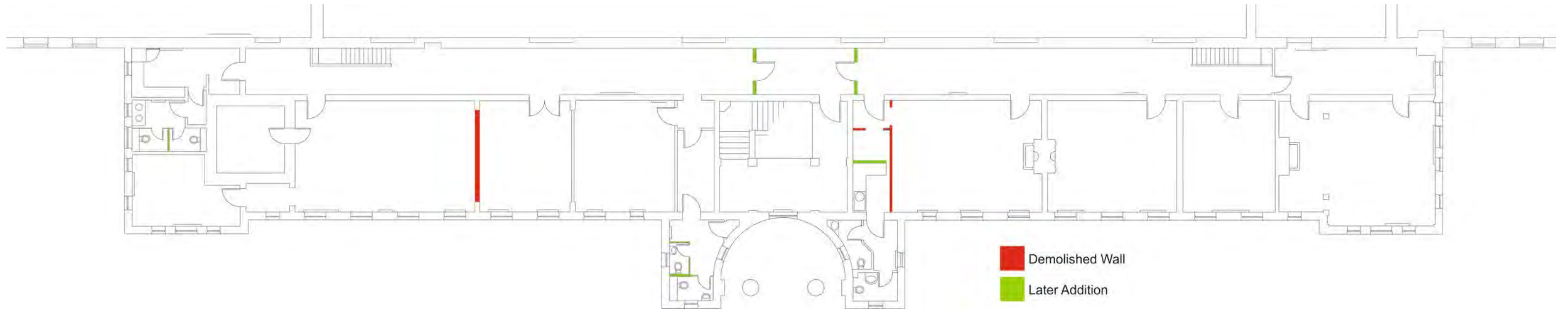


Figure 11: First Floor, Added and Demolished Walls, 1:200 @ A3



Figure 12: Canteen Floor Plan, 1:200 @ A3



Figure 13: Canteen Phased, 1:200 @ A3

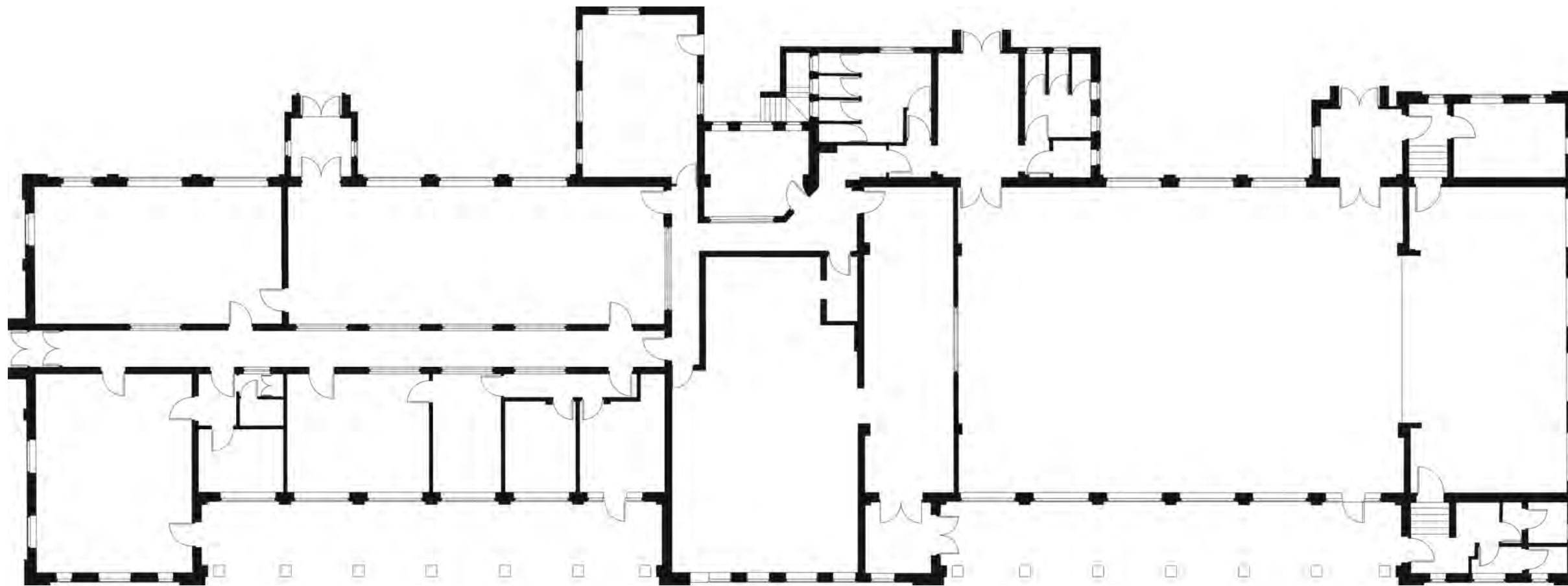


Figure 14: Canteen As Constructed, 1:200 @ A3



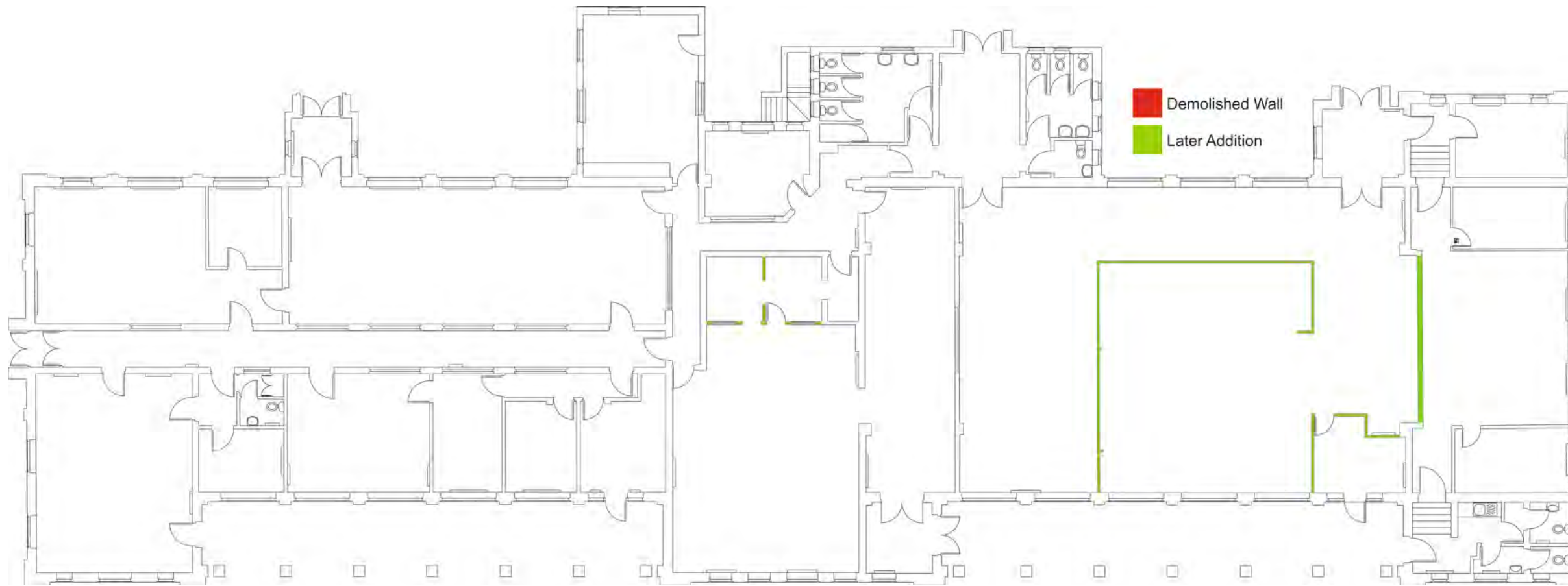


Figure 15: Canteen Added Walls, 1:200 @ A3