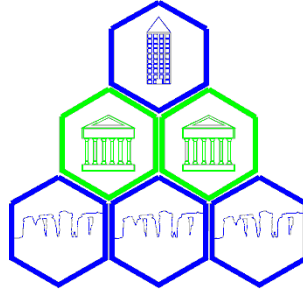


The Historic Environment Consultancy



Appendix 6: Level 3 Building Recording of **Power House & Boiler House**

Blue Bird Park
Bromsgrove Road
Hunnington
Worcestershire
B62 0JW

National Grid Reference: SO 96609 81481

Planning Reference Number: 19/00592/FUL
OASIS ID: thearcha1-516388
HER Event No. WSM80084

Document Reference Number 2023/1681

Version 2.0
31/8/2023

Dr Peter Wardle & Colin Lacey

**Building Recording of: Power House
Dr Peter Wardle & Colin Lacey**

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Version Control

Version No	Draft	Content Added/Omitted	Date
0.5	Client Draft		24/4/23
0.7	LPA Draft	Client Comments	
1	Issued Report	OASIS Ref	9/6/22
2	Issued Report	Historic photos, floor plan	31/8/23

Heritage Statement: Power House Dr Peter Wardle & Colin Lacey
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1. Summary

The building is an industrial building constructed in the 1920s of red brick. The building was most recently used to house electrical distribution equipment. Until its demolition in 2007 a boiler house with water tower was located adjacent to the power house.

Current Function	Power House
Original Function	Power House
Period	Modern
Century	20th
Precise Date	1925-7
Architectural Style	Utilitarian
Architect	S N Cooke FRIBA
Materials	Brick, concrete
Designation	Not Listed
Conservation Area	Not located within a conservation area

2. Introduction

2.1 The Building

The building is a former power distribution building – purpose-built for the Blue Bird toffee factory. It was built during the initial construction of the factory site in 1925-7.

2.2 The Client

This report was commissioned by J Richards of Seven Capital (Halesowen) Ltd. and subsequently Malvern Estates Ltd.

2.3 Copyright

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.

2.4 Location

Site Address:	Power House Blue Bird Park Bromsgrove Road Hunnington Worcestershire
Post Code:	B62 0JW
Grid Reference:	SO 96609 81481
Latitude and Longitude	52.431299 , -2.0512950

The general location is shown in Figure 1 and the detailed location in Figure 2.

2.5 Date of Recording

The building was initially visited by Dr Peter Wardle in July & October 2019. Subsequent visits were made by Dr Wardle and Colin Lacey between this point and September 2022.

2.6 Circumstances of The Project

The recording of the building was required as a condition of a grant of planning permission and listed building consent reference Bromsgrove Borough Council 19/00592/FUL for:

“Part demolition and site clearance of the former Blue Bird factory site for its redevelopment to provide 116 residential dwellings (Use Class C3), consisting of both new dwellings and conversion of the Welfare and Administration buildings, along with associated landscaping; drainage; engineering; highways and access works”.

The wording of the planning condition is as follows:

No development shall commence until a programme of research and building recording including a Written Scheme of Investigation(s), has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The scheme shall include an assessment of significance and research questions; and:

- a) The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording which will include:
 1. A Level 3 historic building recording (as defined by Historic England) on all pre 1980s buildings. This will include documentary research.
 2. A Level 1 historic building recording (as defined by Historic England) on warehouses, dating to the 1980s.
 3. Investigative works prior to and during construction works to recover structural information.*
- b) The programme for post investigation assessment.*
- c) Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording.*
- d) Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation*
- e) Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation*
- f) Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the Written Scheme of Investigation.*

REASON: In accordance with the requirements of paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

2.7 Location of The Archive

The archive of this project consists solely in the form of digital records. This report contains 667 high resolution photographs and 40 plans and elevations. The drawings are appended to the report as layered vector files. Copies of this report in pdf format therefore represents the archive.

Copies of this archive are therefore given to the Archaeology Data Service and Worcestershire County Council Historic Environment Record.

2.8 Methodology

The building was recorded according to the requirements set out in the English Heritage 2016 *Understanding Historic Buildings A Guide to Recording Practice* and the method statement. There were no difficulties experienced in the recording process.

2.9 Reference Numbers

Planning Reference Number: 19/00592/FUL

OASIS ID: thearcha1-516388

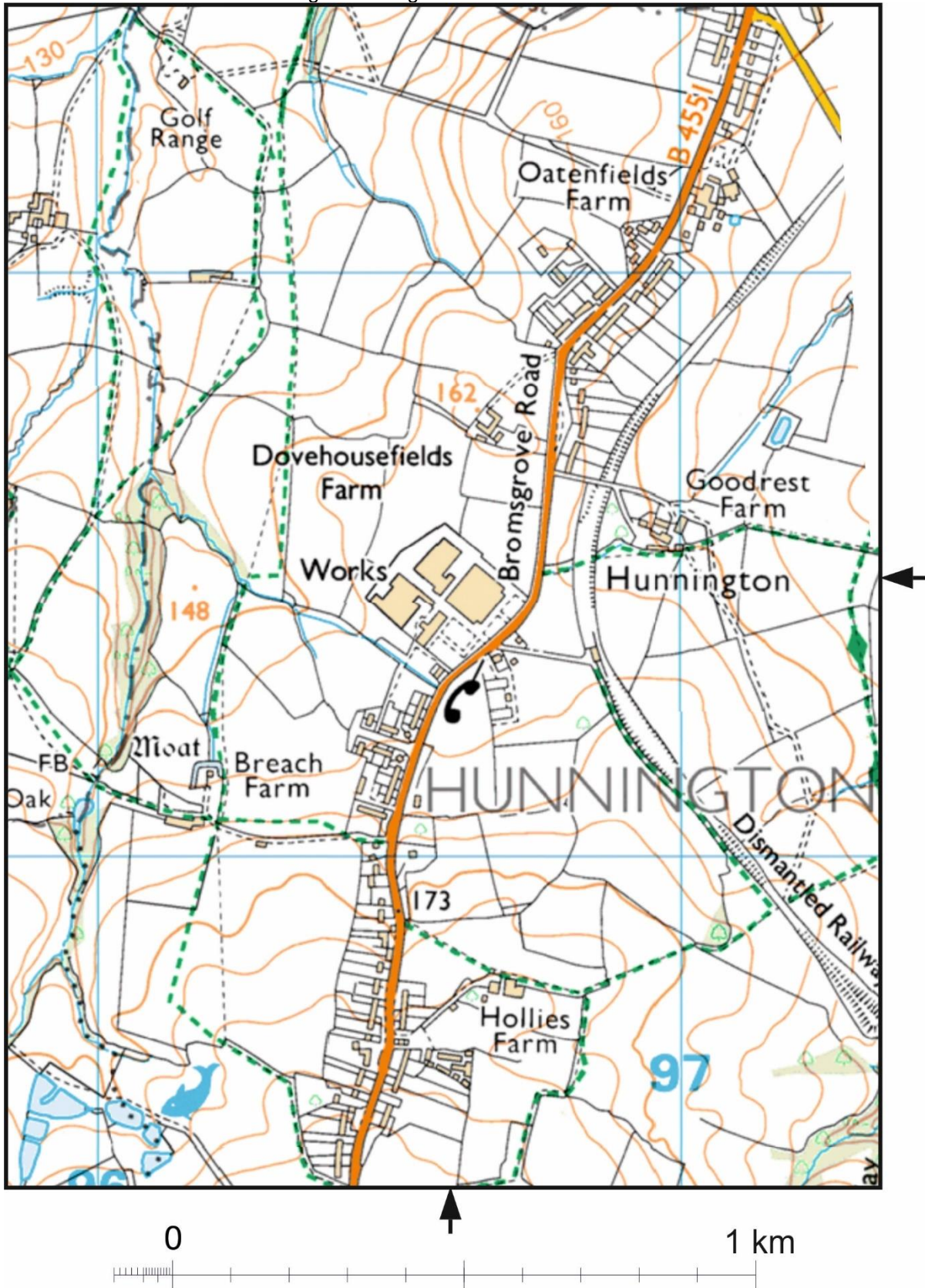
HER Event No. WSM80084

Listing Reference Numbers:

1464601 (Administration Building)

1466995 (Canteen)

1466996 (Walls, Railings and Gates)



Metres 1:10,000 @ A4

Figure 1: General Location Plan. Scale 1:10,000

Building Recording Power House Blue Bird Park



Figure 2: Detailed Location Plan. Scale 1:2500

3. Historic Background

3.1 Documentary Evidence

An article was published in *The Midlander* in February 1927. The article details the background behind the Blue Bird factory and the village of Hunnington describing the history of the Messrs Harry Vincent Ltd and Harry Vincent, himself. The article does not mention the power house building or boiler house

A newspaper article from the *Birmingham Gazette*, published on the 13th May 1930, concerning the factory does not mention the power house building or boiler house.

In more recent history, the then-imminent demolition of the boiler house was documented by Halesowen News on 27th July 2007 as follows:

Village tower to be levelled

27th July 2007

By Matt Maher

An iconic Hunnington landmark which has dominated the village skyline for 80 years is set to be demolished.

A 140-foot tall brick chimney stack, which towers over the site of the former Bluebird Toffee factory on Bromsgrove Road, will be torn down next month over fears it could become a health and safety risk.

Part of an old boiler house is also set for the bulldozers along with the tower, which was built at the same time as the rest of the factory in 1927.

The news has surprised many residents, some of whom have questioned why the structure cannot be saved.

Barbara Sifford, who found out about the impending demolition from friends who work at the site, said: "I think it's a real shame something can't be done about it.

"The tower can be seen for miles and is instantly recognisable from the top of the Clent hills, you would think they could find the money from somewhere to restore it."

Built by confectioner Harry Vincent, the factory produced the popular Bluebird toffee until 1998 when production moved to Hull.

The site is now owned by wholesalers Solus Garden and Leisure, and Bromsgrove District Council confirmed no planning permission was required for the demolition work to take place.

Shock Parish councillor Steve Fitzpatrick said he could understand why the decision had been taken.

He said: "Initially it came as a bit of a shock and it is a shame that the chimney has to come down.

"But when you realise how much it costs to maintain and the fact it is unsafe there was really little option."

A spokesman for Solus said the buildings due for demolition were no longer used, and there was no prospect of them ever being used again for their original purpose.

He also made it clear none of the original factory's frontage buildings or former manufacturing premises would be affected by the work.

Deteriorated He said: "The tall brick chimney has slowly deteriorated with lack of use and this in turn can lead to future health and safety issues."

<https://www.halesowennews.co.uk/news/1578364.village-tower-to-be-levelled/>

4. The Building

4.1 The Building

Current Function	Industrial
Original Function	Power House
Period	Modern
Century	20th
Precise Date	1925-7
Architectural Style	Utilitarian
Architect	S N Cooke FRIBA
Materials	Brick, concrete
Designation	Not Listed
Conservation Area	Not located within a conservation area

4.2 The Importance of the Building Listing Criteria

Date		For modern buildings one of the other criteria has to be clearly met.
Rarity		Industrial Buildings are a common type of historic building.
Architectural Interest		
	Architect	The building was designed by a prominent architect.
	Type	There is little particular interest in the building type.
	Innovation	This building does not use innovative building techniques or materials.
	Virtuosity	The building does not demonstrate a particularly high standard of craftsmanship.
	Plan Form	The plan form is not significant.
Historic Interest		This building does not illustrate important aspects of the nation's history. It is not associated with a Nationally Important person.
Group Value		There is group value with the other historic buildings.
Contribution of Setting		The building is surrounded by buildings of different dates and therefore there is no added importance from the setting.

4.3 Importance of the Building Understanding Heritage – Values Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance 2008

Evidential		The building dates from a period when the physical evidence of the building adds little novel information.
Historical		
	Illustrative	Low The building does not illustrate an unusual historic connection.
	Association	Low The building is not associated with a notable person, family, event, movement or cultural heritage.
Aesthetic		
	Design	The building is a utilitarian building and design is not a factor.
	Detailing & Craftsmanship	The building does not demonstrate a very high standard of craftsmanship.
	Architect	The building was designed by a prominent architect.
	Innovation	This building does not use innovative building techniques or materials.
Communal		Low – The building is not readily visible from the public realm so it does not have a communal value.

4.4 Designations

The building is not listed.



Figure 3: Boiler house and power house under construction, 1920s (Blue Bird Album, Romsley & Hunnington History Society)



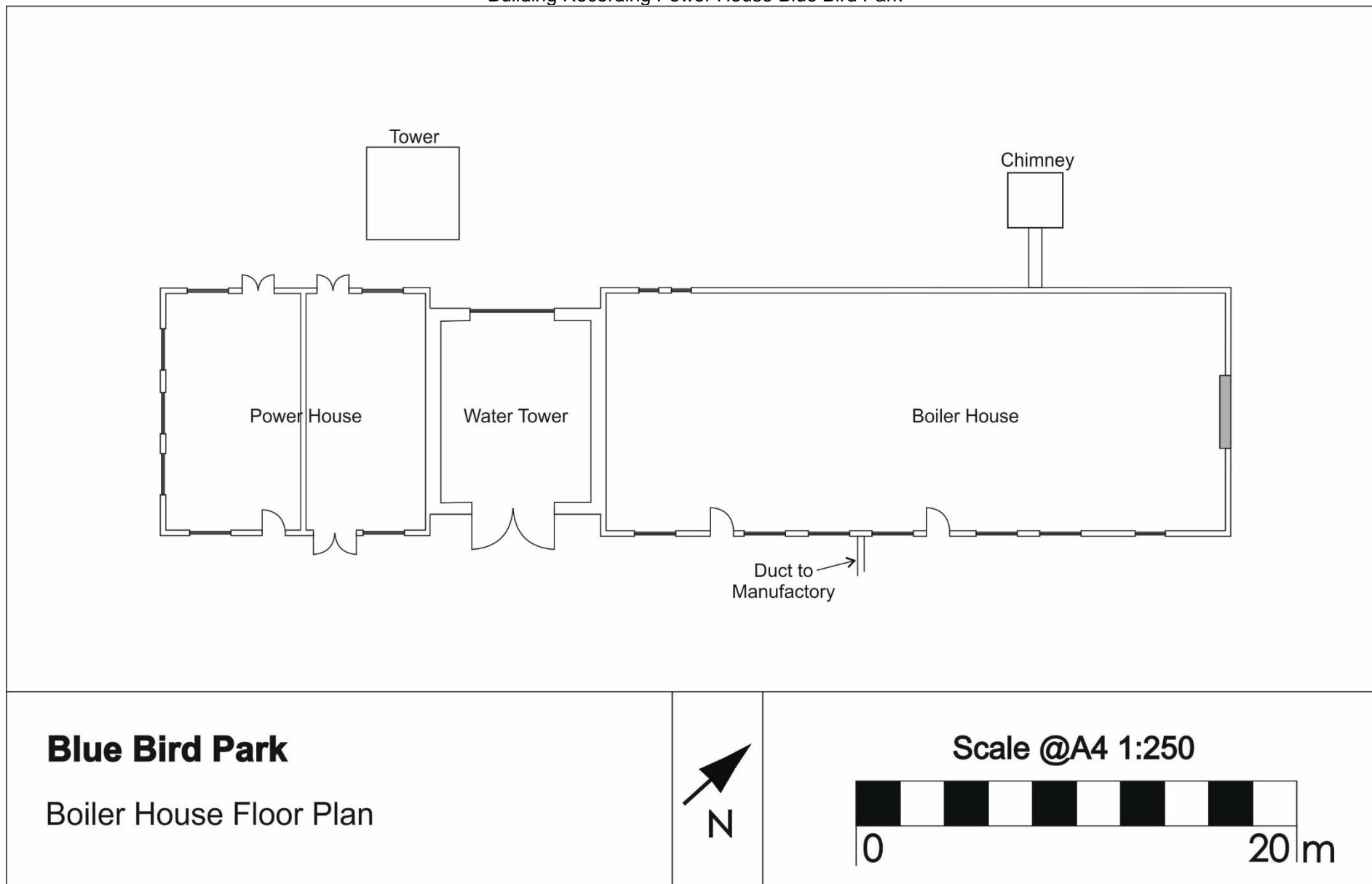
Plate 1: The Building



Plate 2: The Building Interior

4.5 The Layout of The Building

The layout of the power house and boiler house is shown overleaf.



Blue Bird Park

Boiler House Floor Plan



Scale @A4 1:250



Figure 4 Layout of power house and boiler house, 1:250 @ A4

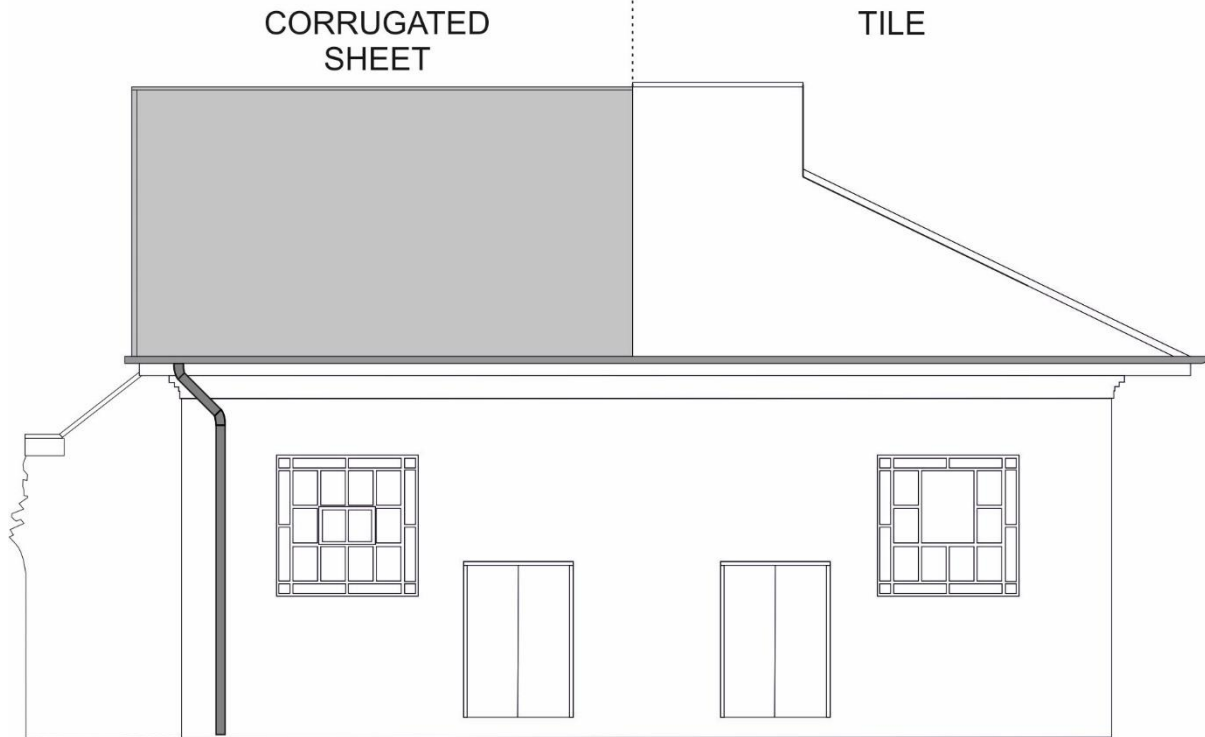


Figure 5: Northwest elevation

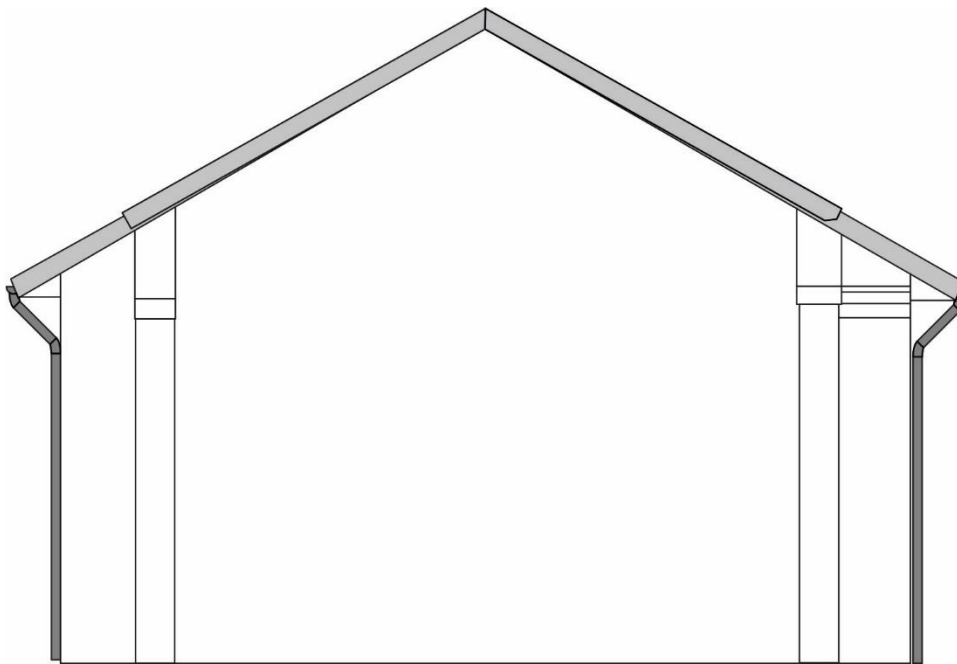


Figure 6: Northeast elevation

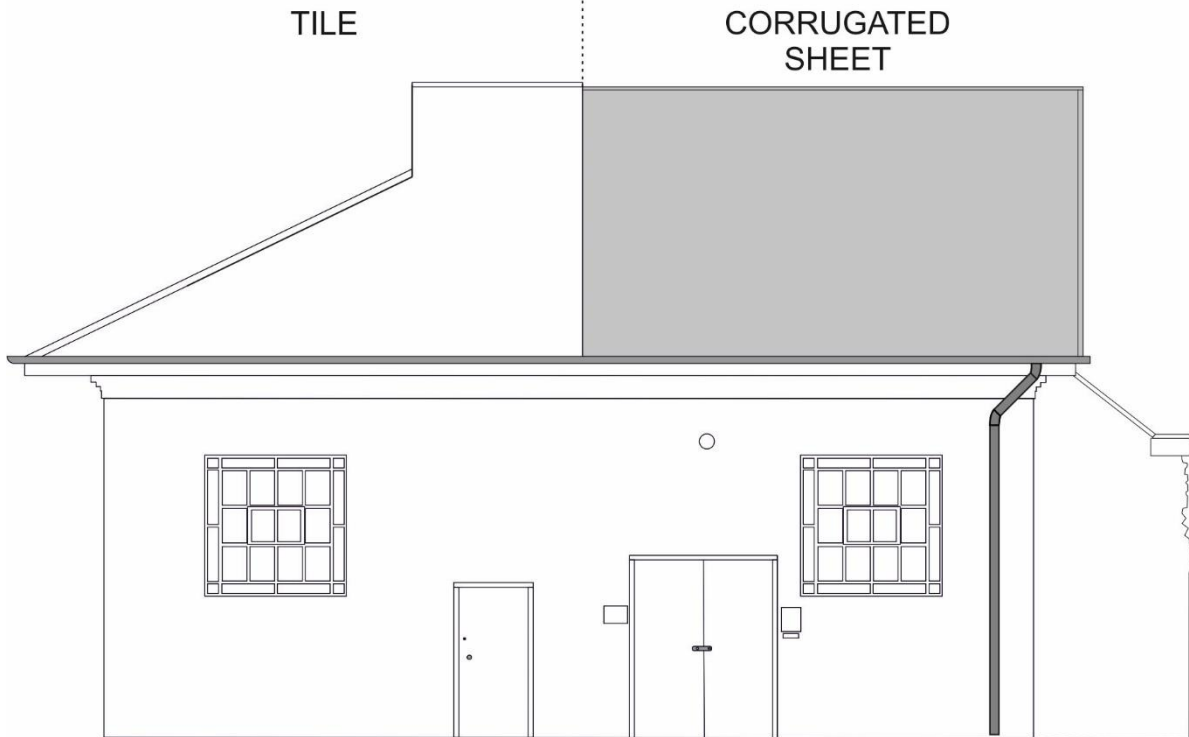


Figure 7: Southeast elevation

4.6 The Date of the Building

The building was built in the years between 1925 and 1927.

The power house is considered to have been constructed in a single phase.



Figure 8: North aspect of boiler house and power house under construction, 1920s (Blue Bird Album, Romsley & Hunnington History Society)

Xxx put this in correct place

5. Description: Exterior



Plate 3 The Front (Southeast) Elevation

Building 5 is constructed of red brick in Flemish bond, with decorative courses of vertical-header engineering bricks. The roof, hipped to the southwest, is of slate to the southwest and of corrugated sheet to the northeast.

Two windows are present in the southeast wall. These are steel-framed multi-pane windows. Between, two doors are present. To the left, a planked personnel door, to the right, tall double louvered doors. Warning signs either side of the double doors suggest the interior of the building at this may have been used for power distribution.

The southwest part of the roof is of tile in a suppressed gable form, however following the demolition of the adjacent boiler house at some point around August 2007, the northeast part of the roof is of corrugated metal sheet.



Plate 4: Northeast elevation

The northeast wall was once the southwest wall of the adjacent former boiler house, now demolished. The stubs of the walls of the former boiler house are present on the northeast wall of the building, which still bears paint from the interior of the boiler house.



Plate 5: Northwest elevation

The northwest elevation, like the southeast, features two steel-framed windows and two pairs of planked double doors.



Plate 6: North aspect

The southwest of the building is located a short distance from the northeast of building 4. A narrow passageway is present between the buildings. The southwest wall of building 5 has three steel-framed windows and no doors. A duct carries cables from building 5 to building 4.



Plate 7: View between laboratory and power house



Plate 8: View of window in southwest wall



Plate 9: View from the southeast along southwest wall

5.1 Historic Photographs



Plate 10: 1936 Air Photograph (Britain From Above)

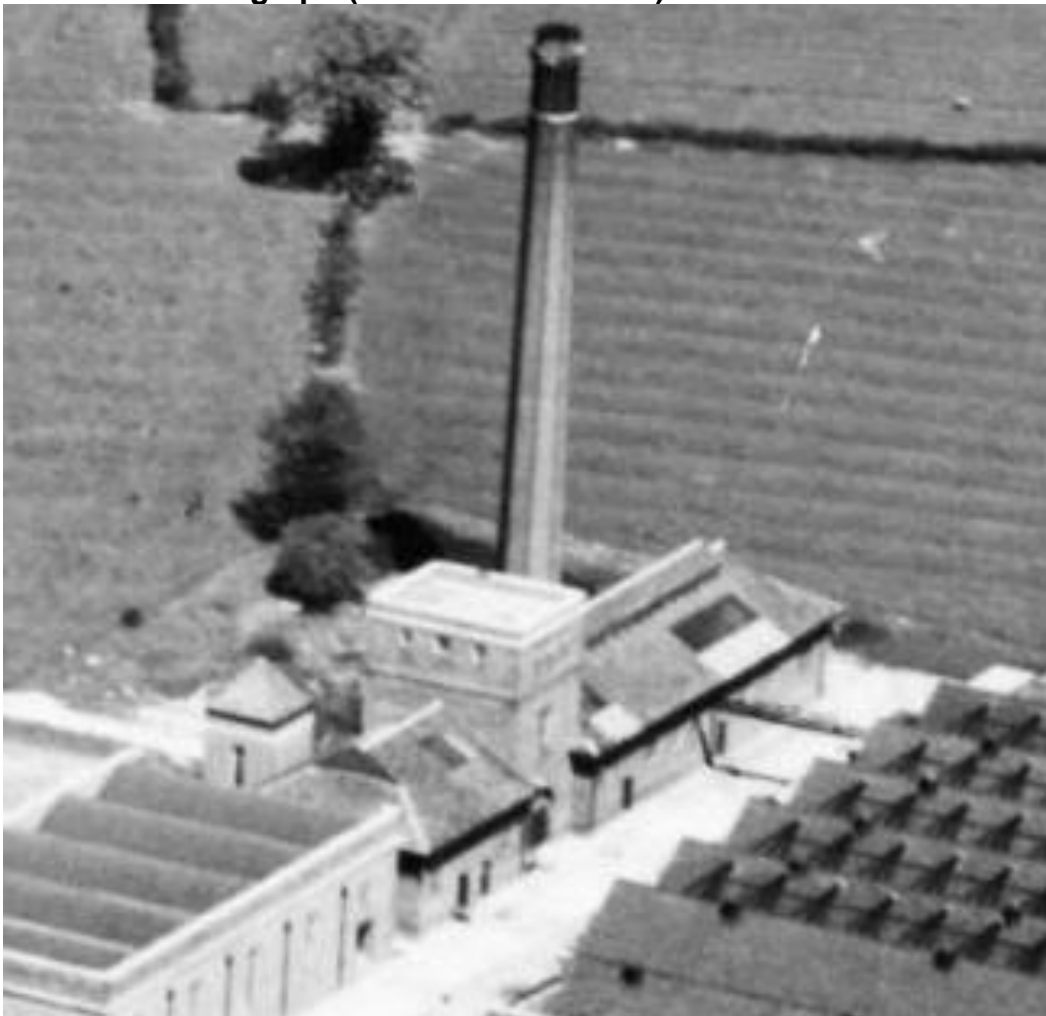


Plate 11: 1948 Air Photograph (Britain From Above)



Plate 12: 2006 Air Photograph (Google Earth)



Plate 13: 2007 Air Photograph, partway through demolition of boiler house (Google Earth)



Plate 14: 2022 aerial view of engine house location and power house (left)

6. Description: Interior

The interior is divided into two rooms by a northwest-southeast wall.

The southwest room is empty. The walls are painted white and the floor is of poured concrete.



Plate 15: Northwest aspect, southwest room

Spanning the width of this room, a duct at eaves-height takes cables from the northeast room to the alley between this building and building 4.

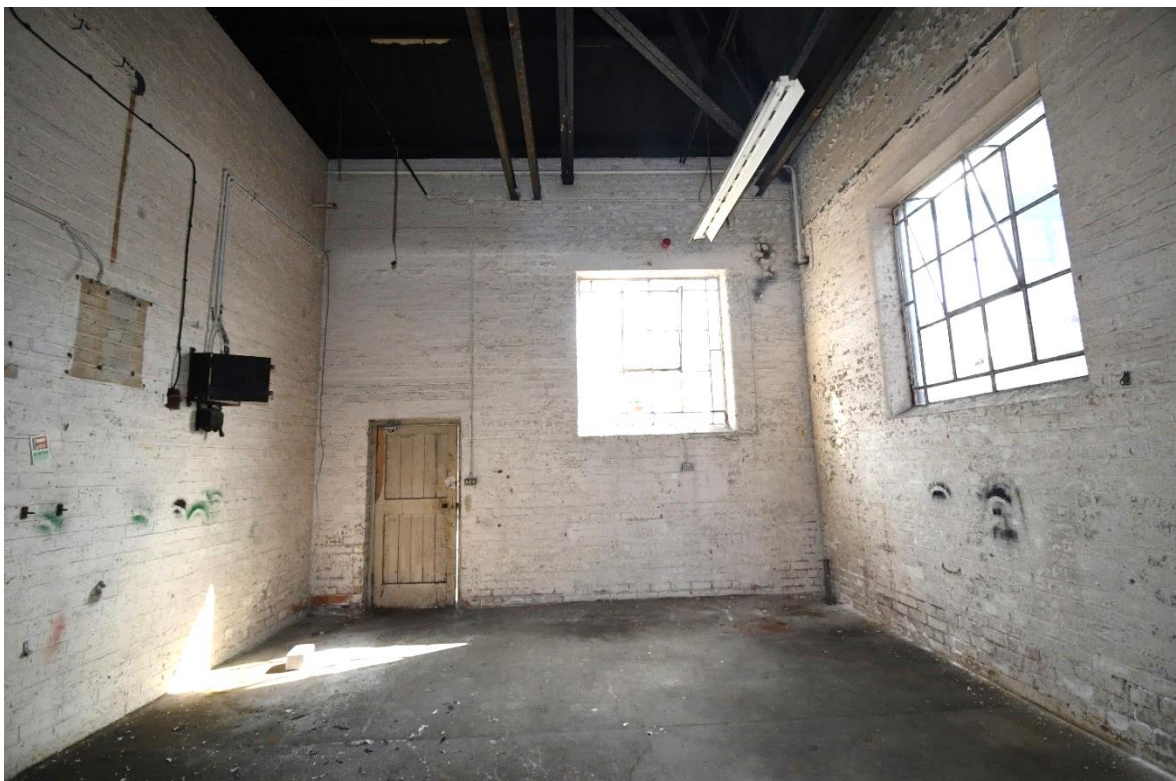


Plate 16: Southeast aspect, southwest room

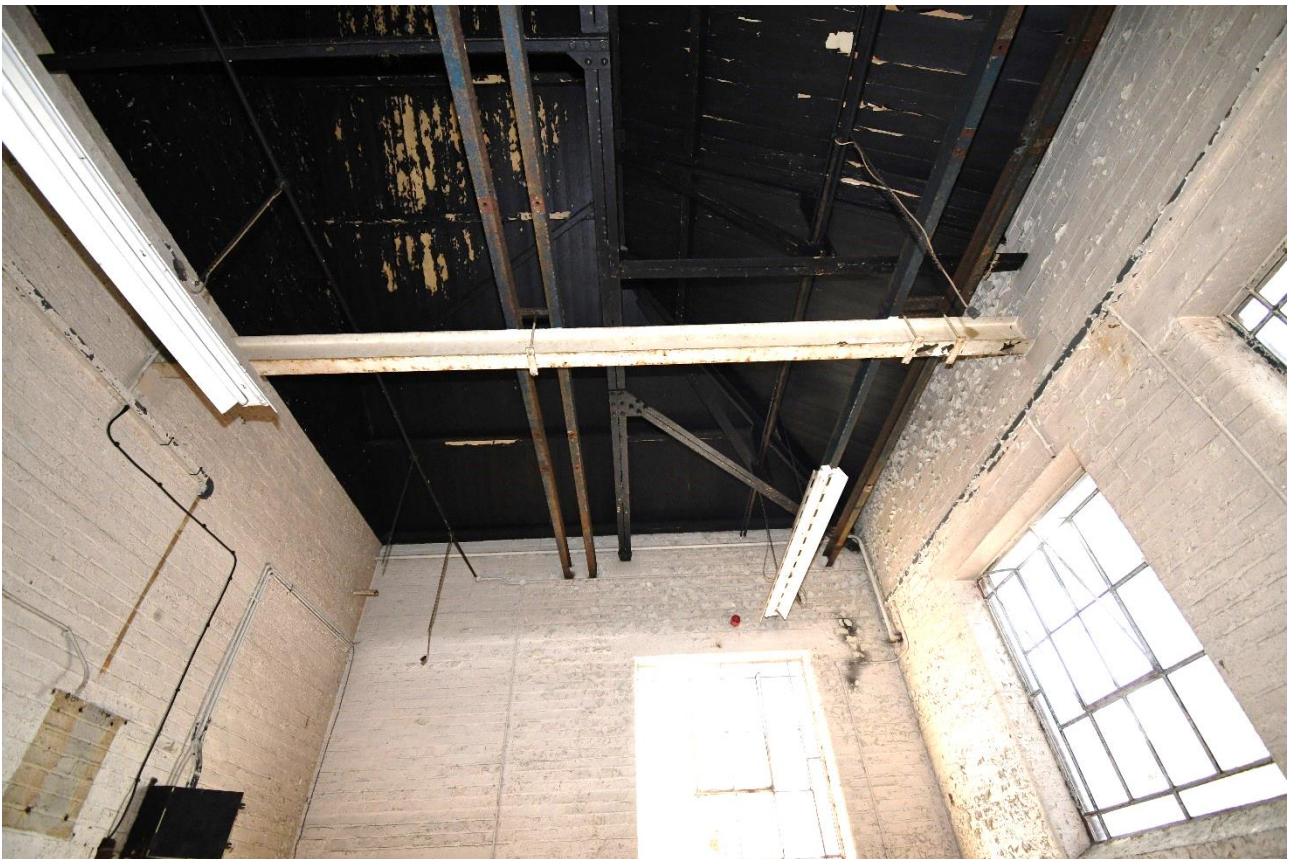


Plate 17: Roof structure, southwest room



Plate 18: Southwest elevation, southwest room

The room occupying the remaining (northeast) part of the building was most recently used for electrical distribution. A substantial transformer is fitted, along with banks of switchgear.

Building Recording Power House Blue Bird Park

The former boiler house, joined to the northeast side of the building, is considered to have contained electricity generation equipment, this room distributing the power around the Blue Bird site.

Equipment is raised above floor level on low brick plinths, and sunken areas of the floor are present, possibly for cable distribution.



Plate 19: Northwest aspect, northeast room



Plate 20: Western corner, northeast room



Plate 21: Southern corner, northeast room

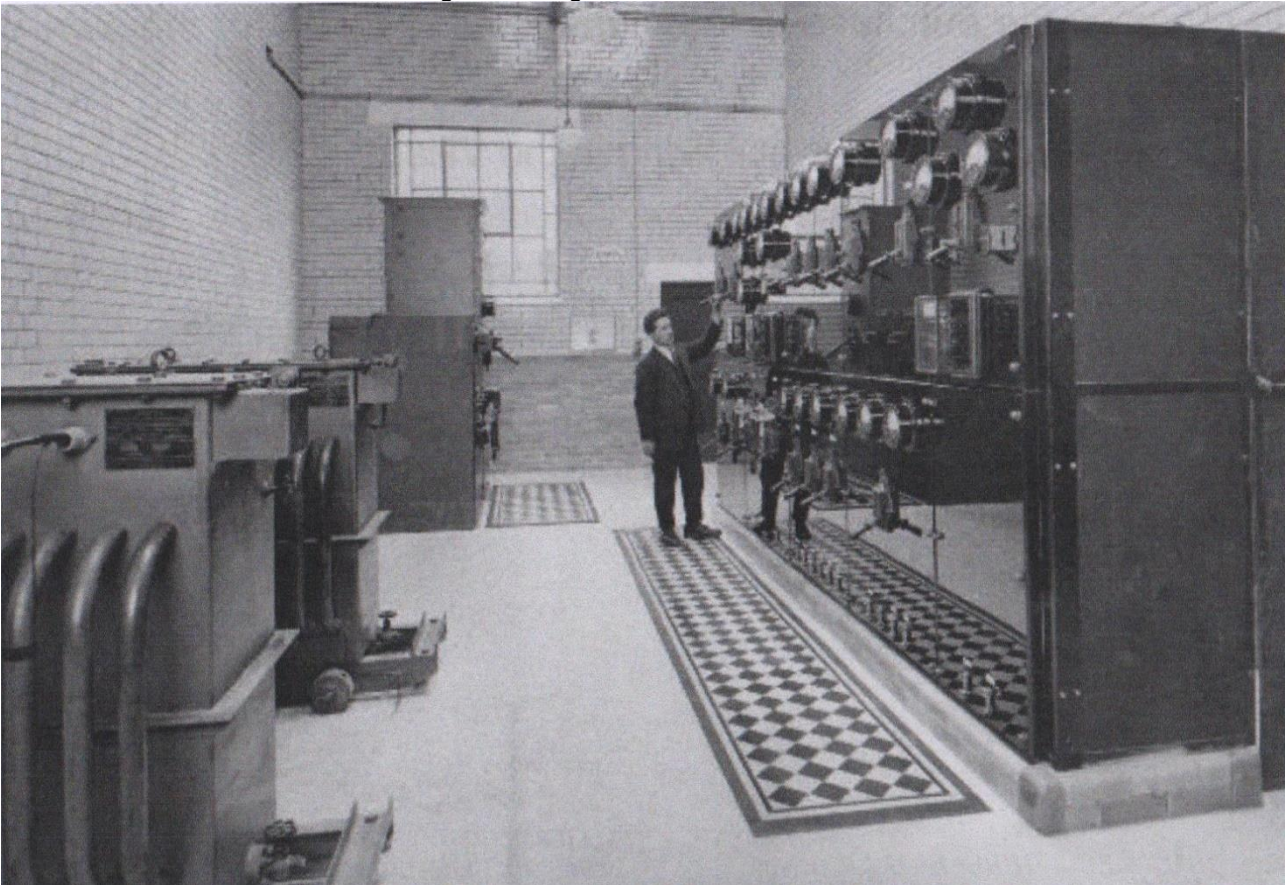


Plate 22: Historic image of power house, 1930s (Blue Bird Album, Romsley & Hunnington History Society)



Plate 23: Southeast aspect, northeast room

7. Discussion Boiler House and Water Tower

The boiler house was demolished in August 2007.

Historic photographs show the boiler house once had a chimney on its northwest side. The southwest end of the building, where it joins to the power house, was significantly taller. This was a water tower to supply the boiler. The boiler house is considered to have contained electricity generation equipment, distributed by the power house.

At its northeast end, the adjacent power house has the stubs of the northwest and southeast walls of the boiler house. Each shows the end of an arch of bricks, presumably to support the weight of the water in the water tower above. Following demolition of the boiler house, these walls were capped, to prevent water ingress.



Plate 24: Stub of northwest wall of boiler house, showing start of arch

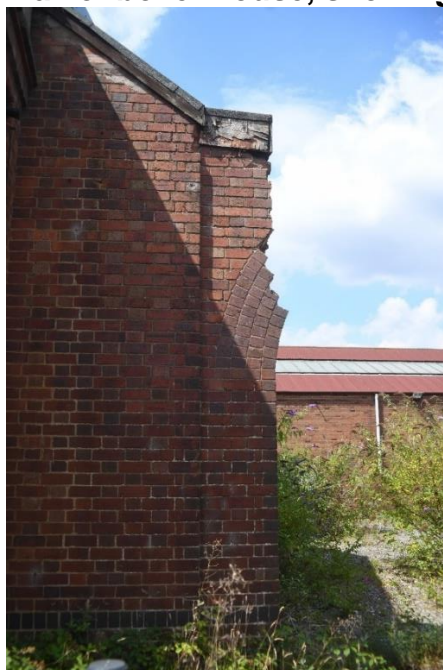


Plate 25: Stub of northwest wall of boiler house, showing start of arch



Plate 26: Interior of southwest wall (northeast wall of power house)

There is evidence for a former first floor or ground floor ceiling just below eaves level of the southwest wall. A large concrete slab is present in the location of the former boiler house. This is thought to be partly comprised of the floor of the original building and of surrounding hardstanding.

A further small tower was present to the rear of the power house and water tower. It is considered likely this tower housed fuel for the boiler.



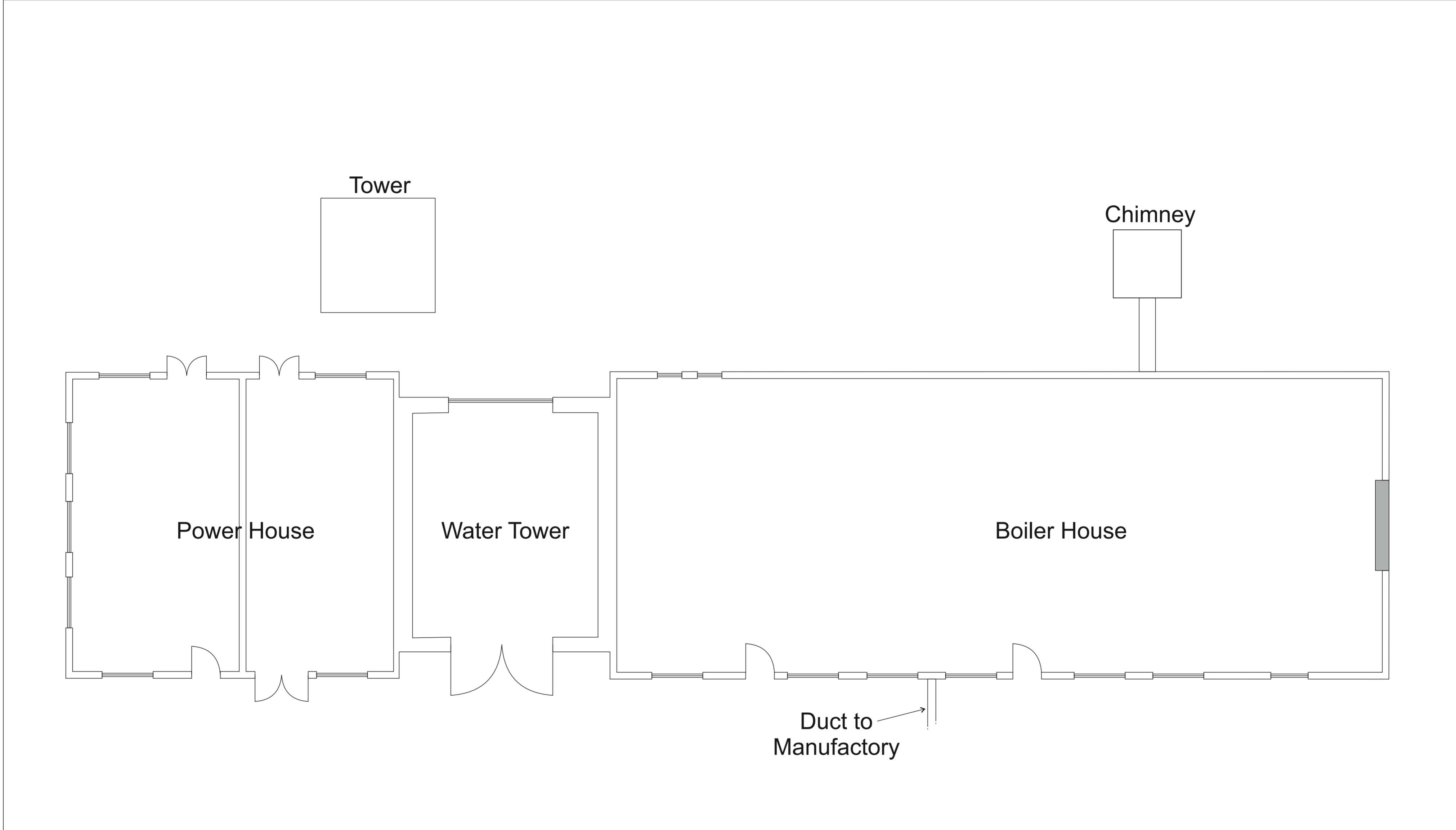
Plate 27: Concrete slab viewed from the northeast, looking towards the manufactory



Plate 28: View between power house and manufactory, showing southwest side of the building (pre 1927, Blue Bird Album, Romsley & Hunnington History Society)



Plate 29: Rear of power house and boiler house viewed from the west, December 1926 (Romsley & Hunnington History Society)



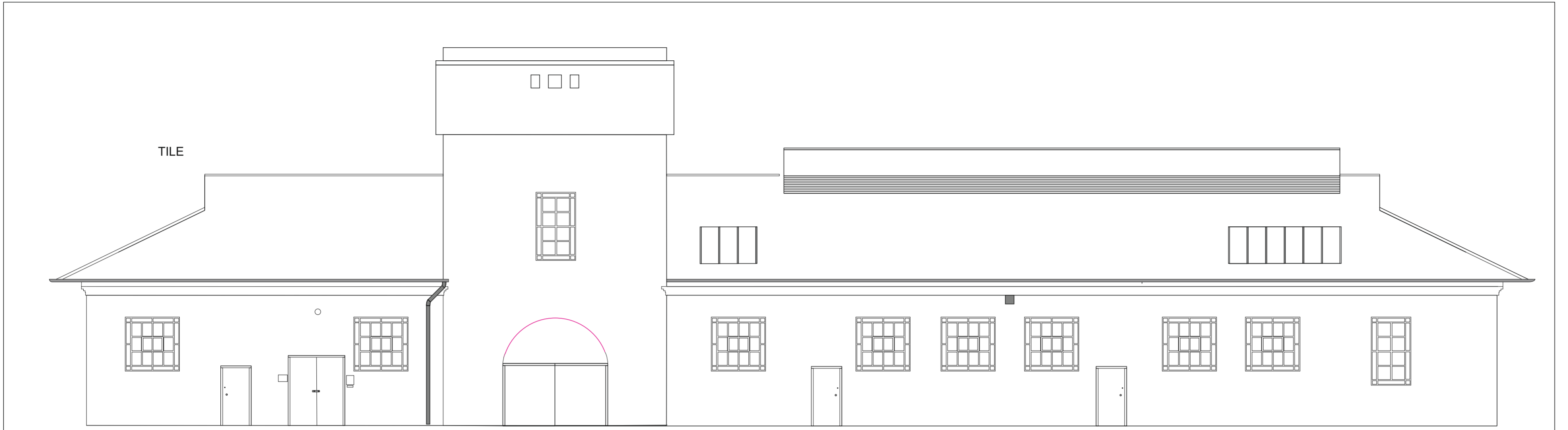
Blue Bird Park

Boiler House, Water Tower and Power House Floor Plan



Scale @A2 1:100





SOUTHEAST

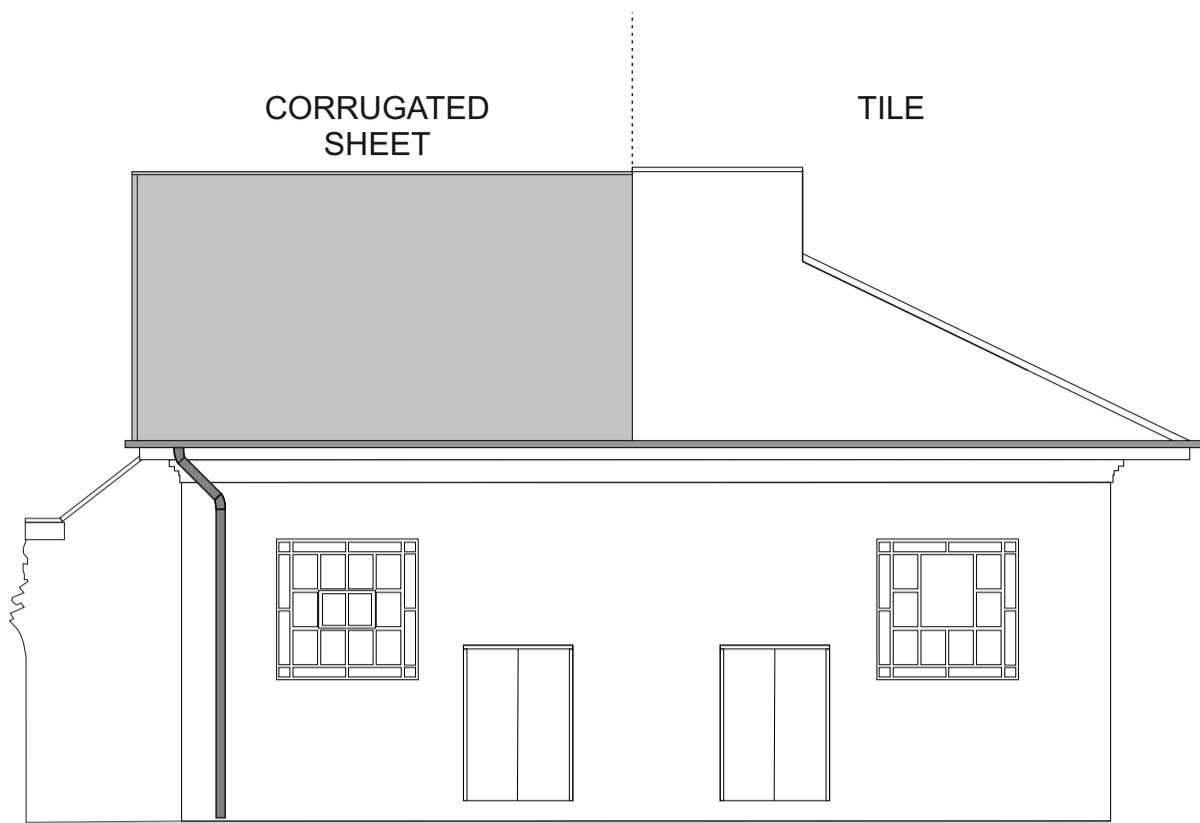
Blue Bird Park

Boiler House, Water Tower and Power House Front Elevation

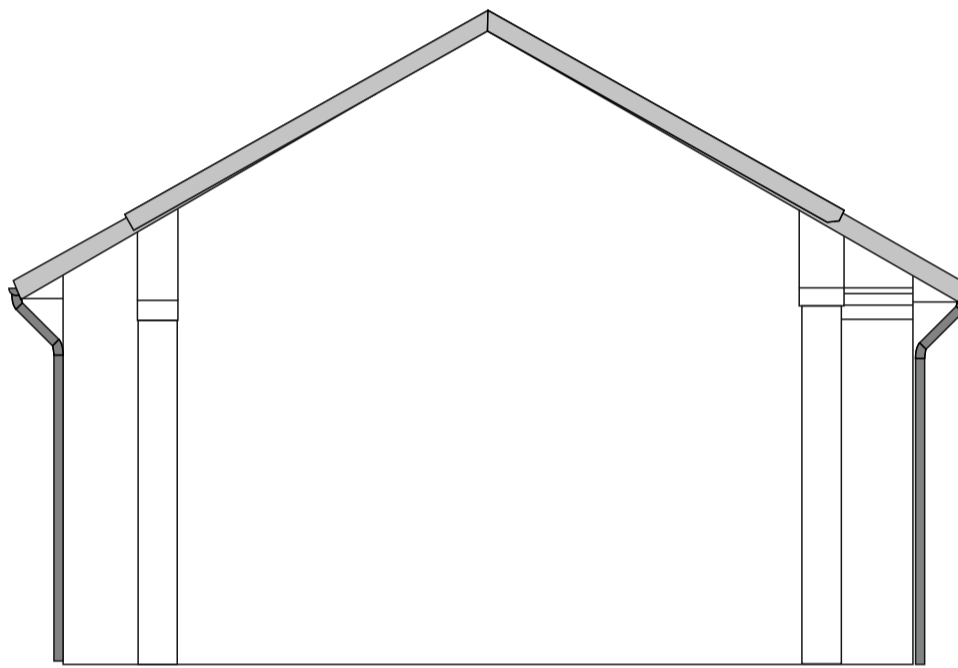


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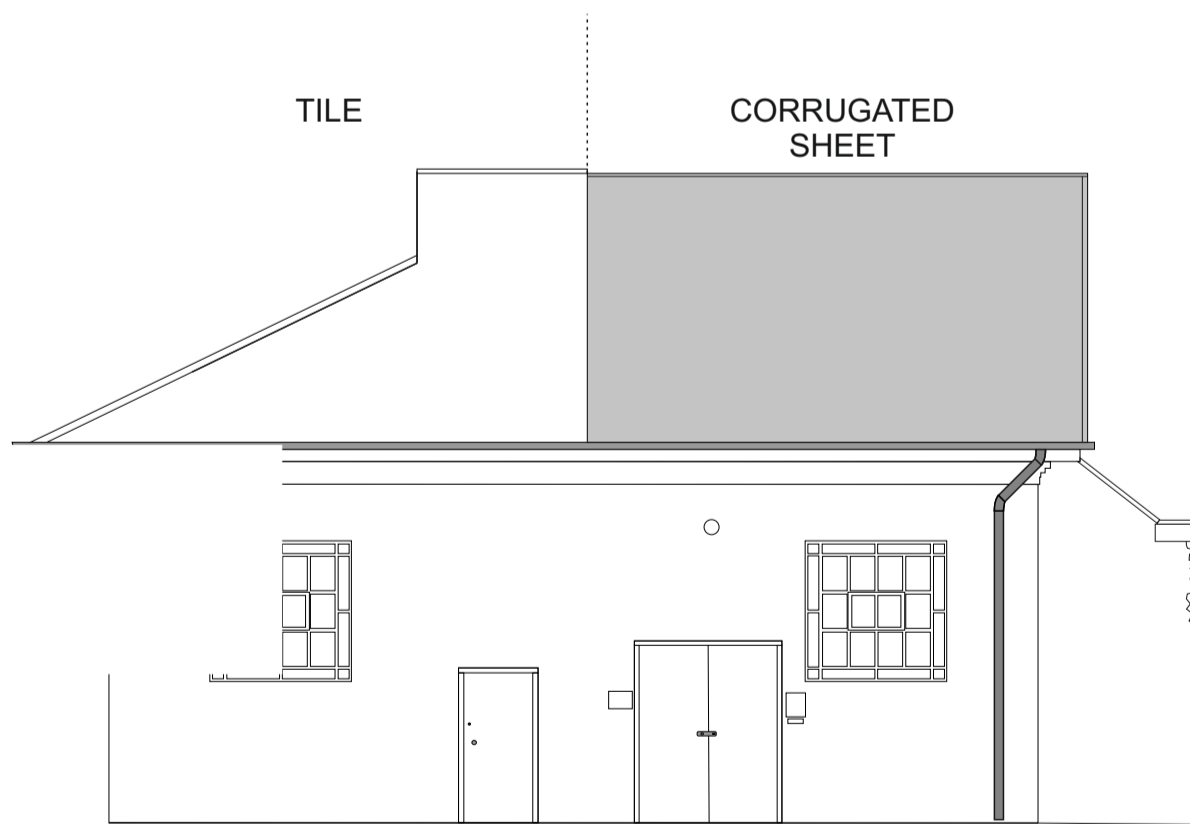




NORTHWEST



NORTHEAST



SOUTHEAST

Blue Bird Park

Power House Elevations

Scale @A3 1:100

