

YMCA, LLANELLI, CARMARTHENSHIRE

HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING

(NGR SN 50571 00263)



Prepared by DAT Archaeological Services
For: T. Richard Jones (Betws) Ltd



DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

REPORT NO. 2020-47
EVENT RECORD No.125512

September 2020

**YMCA, LLANELLI, CARMARTHENSHIRE:
(NGR SN 50571 00263)
HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING**

By

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Client

T. Richard Jones (Betws) Ltd

Event Record No

125512

Report No

2020-47

Project Code

FS19-079

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Rev Number	Description	Undertaken	Approved	Date
v1	Draft	PP	FM	14/11/2020

YMCA, LLANELLI, CARMARTHENSHIRE: HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING

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YMCA, LLANELLI, CARMARTHENSHIRE: HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING

SUMMARY

DAT Archaeological Services were commissioned to undertake an archaeological scheme of historic building recording of the former YMCA building on Stepney Street, Llanelli, Carmarthenshire, centred on NGR SN 50571 00263.

The YMCA was built between 1909 and 1911, a three-storey structure with a decorative brick façade in a Neo-Georgian style, an extension added to the rear in by the mid-20th century. The building is now derelict, but throughout its' use the building contained halls and meeting rooms for functions, lounges, club and cafes, a gymnasium and accommodation on its upper floors, with shops along the street frontage. The interior of the building has been remodelled on the ground floor, with few original fixtures and fittings remaining, but the exterior has remained remarkably unchanged since its original construction.

CRYNODEB

Comisiynwyd Gwasanaethau Archeolegol YAD i ymgymryd â chynllun archeolegol o gofnodi adeiladau hanesyddol o hen adeilad YMCA ar Stryd Stepney, Llanelli, Sir Gaerfyrddin, wedi'i ganoli ar NGR SN 50571 00263.

Adeiladwyd yr YMCA rhwng 1909 a 1911, strwythur tri llawr gyda ffasâd brics addurniadol mewn arddull Neo-Sioraidd, estyniad a ychwanegwyd yn y cefn erbyn canol yr 20fed ganrif. Mae'r adeilad bellach yn ddiffaith, ond trwy gydol ei 'ddefnydd roedd yr adeilad yn cynnwys neuaddau ac ystafelloedd cyfarfod ar gyfer digwyddiadau, lolfeydd, clwb a fwytyau, gymnasiwm a llety ar ei llawr uchaf, gyda siopau ar hyd ffryntiad y stryd. Mae tu mewn yr adeilad wedi'i ailfodelu ar y llawr gwaelod, heb lawer o osodiadau a ffitiadau gwreiddiol ar ôl, ond mae'r tu allan wedi aros yn rhyfeddol o ddigyfnewid ers ei adeiladu gwreiddiol.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 DAT Archaeological Services, in response to a request from T. Richard Jones (Betws) Ltd, were commissioned to undertake an archaeological scheme of historic building recording works on the former YMCA building, Stepney Street, Llanelli, Carmarthenshire (SN 50571 00263), prior to an application for renovation and conversion works on the structure. The application is still in the pre-planning stages of development, but it was considered likely that a scheme to record the building prior to development would be requested by Carmarthenshire County Council (Local Planning Authority) and their archaeological advisors, Dyfed Archaeological Trust-Development Management (DAT-DM).
- 1.1.2 The building is not listed, but it is recorded on the regional Historic Environment Record (PRN 117971). This ornate early 20th century building stands in a prominent location on Stepney Street, overlooking a small area of parkland in front of the town hall, and therefore the building is considered to have local historical and architectural interest.
- 1.1.3 The historic building recording scheme has been undertaken to a Level 2 standard as defined in the Historic England 'Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice' (2016), which is described thus:
- Level 2 is a descriptive record, made in circumstances similar to those of Level 1 (basic photographic survey) but when more information is needed. ... The record will present conclusions regarding the building's development and use, but will not discuss in detail the evidence on which these conclusions are based. A plan and sometimes other drawings may be made ...*
- 1.1.4 The historic building recording has been undertaken in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological investigation and recording of Standing Buildings and Structures* (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA), 1996, revised 2001 & 2008).
- 1.1.5 A site visit was made to the building on the 23rd September 2020.

1.2 Site Location

- 1.2.1 The former YMCA building stands on the street frontage at the western end of Stepney Street, Llanelli. It stands in an area of large municipal building, flanked to the west by a former cinema and a row of shops with a decorative façade, all built in the 1920s, and to the east by a Presbyterian Church, built in the 1870s and enlarged in 1902. Opposite these buildings lies the open space of the Town Hall Square, a small area of parkland flanked by the Town Hall, Magistrates Court and Council Offices.
- 1.2.2 To the east the line of Stepney Street is broken up by Cowell Street running off to the south, beyond which Stepney Street forms the main commercial street through Llanelli.
- 1.2.3 The buildings lie at approximately 7.6mOD in a relatively level area. The river Lliedi formerly ran across the park to the north of the site, but the course has been altered over the years, and it now runs underground.
- 1.2.4 The underlying solid geology of the area is represented by sedimentary mudstone, siltstone and sandstone of the Swansea Member, part of the South Wales Upper Coal Measures Formation. This is overlain by alluvium, formed along the former banks of the Lliedi.

1.3 Scope of the Project

- 1.3.1 The building recording was designed to record the existing fabric of the structures (at the time of the survey) through a combination of a photographic survey, along with site notes, drawings and historic research.

1.4 Report Outline

- 1.4.1 This report describes the location of the site, its known archaeological and historical background and photographs of the site. Sources are referenced within the text or as footnotes.

1.5 Abbreviations

Regional Historic Environment Record – HER; Primary Record Number – PRN; National Grid Reference – NGR; Written Scheme of Investigation – WSI.

1.6 Illustrations

Record photographs are included to the rear of the text. Printed map extracts are not necessarily reproduced to their original scale and are illustrative only.



Figure 1: Location of site

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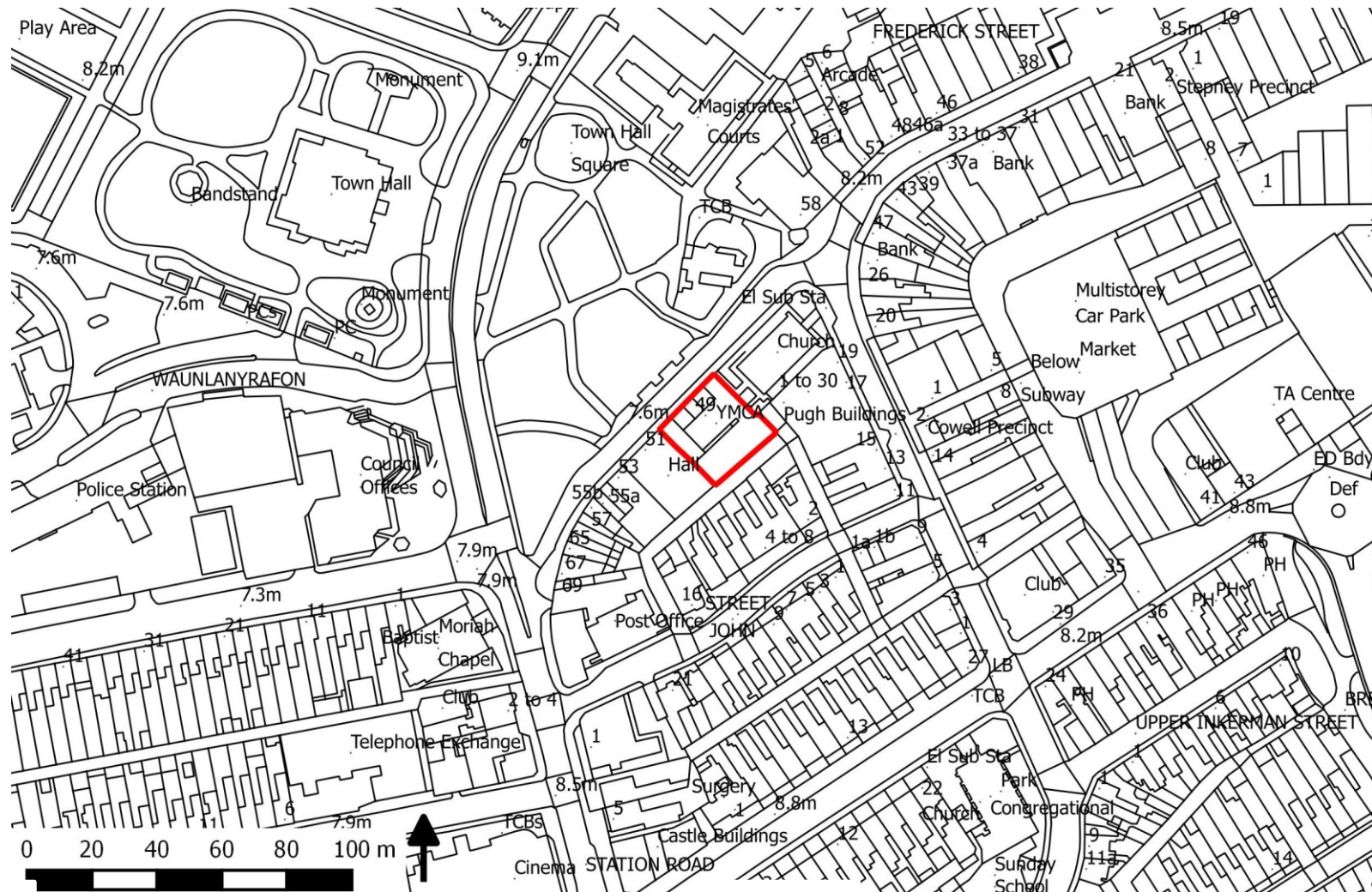


Figure 2: Detailed site location plan of YMCA building (red).

2 METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 The historic building recording scheme has been undertaken to a Level 2 standard as defined in the Historic England 'Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice' (2016). This level of recording is described thus:

Level 2 is a descriptive record, made in similar circumstances to Level 1 [basic photographic survey] but when more information is needed.....Both the exterior and interior of the building will be seen, described and photographed. The examination of the building will produce an analysis of its development and use and the record will include the conclusions reached, but will not discuss in detail the evidence on which this analysis is based. A plan and sometimes other drawings may be made but the drawn record will not normally be comprehensive...

- 2.2 To supplement the on-site survey a review of information held at the DAT HER and readily available online source was undertaken. The on-site survey completed the relevant tasks outlined below, where possible, to complete the record to Level 2 guidelines. Only photos taken during this survey will be included within the site archive and report.
- 2.3 Based on the Level 2 record as defined in the Historic England guidelines (2016) the following has been undertaken:

Written Record

- The building's precise location, as a National Grid reference and in address form.
- A note of any statutory designation (listing, scheduling or conservation area) and non-statutory designations (historic parks and gardens registers, local lists etc).
- The date of the record, the name(s) of the recorder(s) and, if an archive has been created, its location.
- A summary of the building's type or purpose, historically and at present, its materials and possible date(s). The names of architects, builders, patrons and owners will be given if known.
- An introduction briefly setting out the circumstances in which the record was made, its objectives, methods, scope and limitations, and any constraints.
- Any evidence for the former existence of demolished structures or removed features associated with the building.
- Copies of historic maps, drawings, views or photographs illustrating the development of the building or its site (if readily available and permissible).

Drawn Record

- Measured plans (to scale) as existing
- A site plan, typically at 1:500 or 1:1250 relating the building to other structures and to related topographical feature and landscape features.
- A plan or plans identifying the location and direction of accompanying photographs
- Copies of earlier drawings throwing light on the building's history, if available

Photographic Record

- A general view or views of the building (in its wider setting or landscape).
- The building's external appearance. Typically a series of oblique views will show all external elevations of the building, and give an overall impression of its size and shape.
- The overall appearance of the principal rooms and circulation areas.

3 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 Although settlement in Llanelli has some early origins focused around St Ellyw's Church to the northeast, the YMCA stands in an area of largely late 19th to early 20th-century development, during a period of significant expansion in the town. Before this much of this area was occupied by the parks and grounds of the early 18th century Llanelly House, with the original course of the Lliedi River winding its way across what is now Town Hall Square a short distance to the north of the present YMCA.
- 3.2 Much of the surrounding commercial and residential development of Llanelli was laid out in the latter part of the 19th century, with Stepney Street laid out in the late 1860s/early 1870s, becoming the commercial centre of the town. However, other than the Presbyterian Chapel (built in 1872) adjacent to the current YMCA, this particular site remained undeveloped until the YMCA building was built.
- 3.3 Plans for the YMCA were put forward in early 1909, for a substantial building that included a 'fine swimming bath', designed by the architect William Griffiths of Llanelli, and to be built by T.P.Jones of Llanelli. The building was proposed as a way of providing a social centre with Christian background, as a counter to the numerous clubs and pubs of a less-salubrious nature that had been developing in the newly expanding town. As funds were being sought in mid-1909 the plans for the building were subdivided, with an initial contract to include three shops, lounge, reception hall, billiard room, parlour hall accommodating 350, rooms for holding friendly society meetings, rooms for bible study and gospel meeting, rooms for strangers and visitors, caretakers apartments, and a gymnasium. The second part of the contract would comprise a swimming bath, which could be used as a large hall in the winter, and an additional shop.
- 3.4 The foundation stones for the site were laid in October 1909. The opening ceremony was held in March 1911 after some delays to the building programme, and it was heralded as "the first of its kind to which the working-men have contributed weekly through their pay offices". As the full sum had not been raised, only the initial part of the contract had been fulfilled, with the planned swimming pool and gymnasium to be added at a later date once the fund had been secured.
- 3.5 Initial photographs (Photo 1) indicate the building was built as a four-bay structure, but presumably accommodating the shops and rooms laid out in the initial contract. The 1916 Ordnance Survey map suggests that the additional shop may have been added on the west side of the building by that time (figure 3), and the façade shows no change in design other than in height. It is uncertain when the building was extended to the rear, to accommodate the promised gymnasium, but this extension is visible on Ordnance Survey maps of 1950. It is not known if the proposed swimming pool was ever eventually built.
- 3.6 The site was used by the YMCA throughout much of the 20th century, with women finally being admitted in the 1960s. The ground floor premises appear to have housed shops until relatively recently. By the early 21st century the building was in the ownership of the County Council, but was still being administered by the YMCA Wales until the expiration of their 99 year lease in 2008. Around that time the building was still used as a social club, community café, gym and crèche, with shops occupying the frontage, although progressive disrepair was noted. Currently the entire building is disused and in a deteriorating condition.

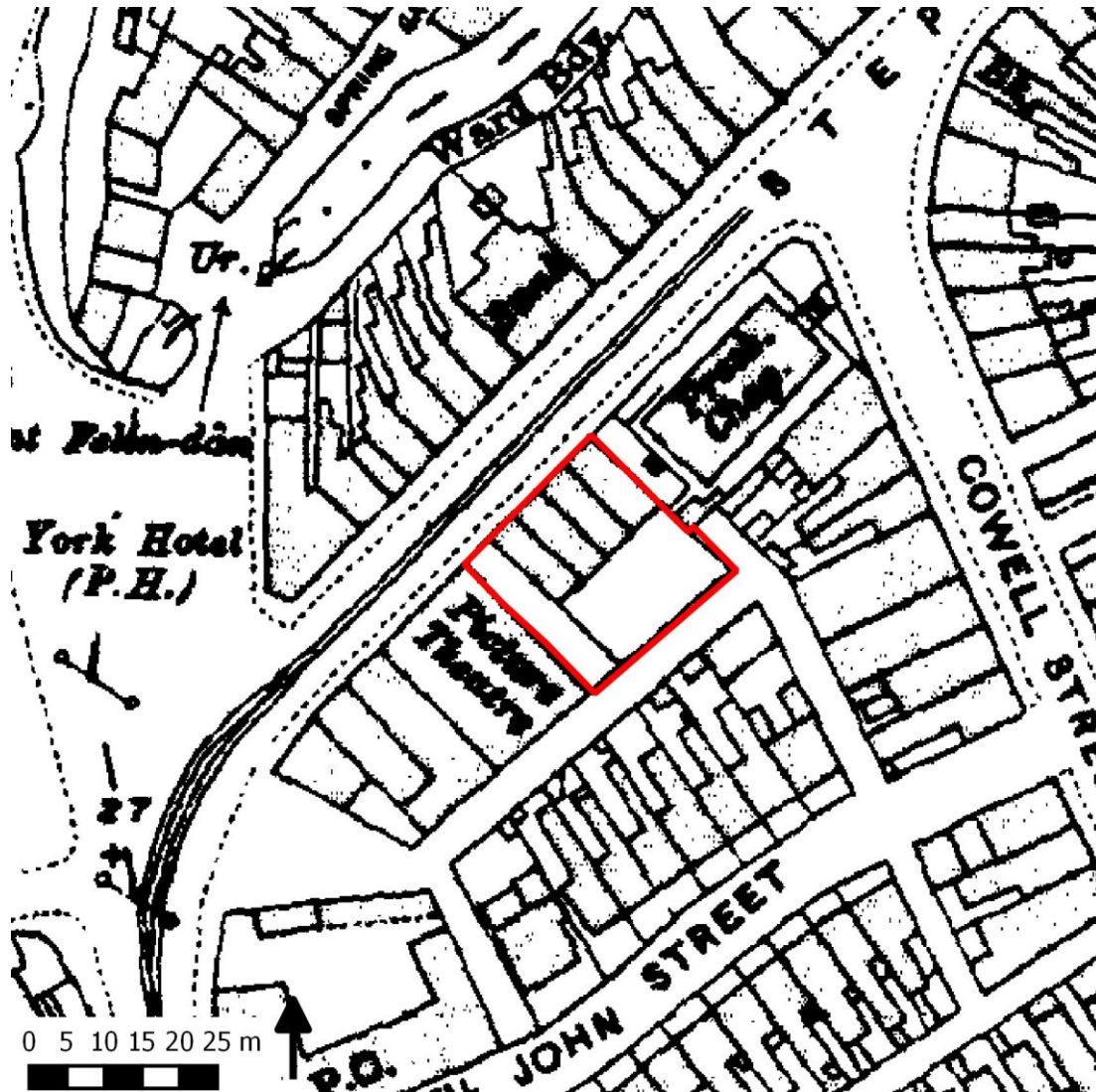


Figure 3: Extract from the 1916 Ordnance Survey map, with the outlines of the current YMCA in red.

4 BUILDING DESCRIPTION

4.1 Exterior (Figures 4 & 5, Photos 1 – 9)

- 4.1.1 The building comprises two main units. An original three storey unit with basement fronts Stepney Street, with a more modern two-storey brick unit attached to the rear (southeast). The architectural detail of the building is concentrated on the northwest-facing street frontage, presenting a five-bay façade in red brick with bath stone pilasters and an ornamental entrance, built in a Neo-Georgian Palladian style. Four bays are three-storey high, with the central entrance placed in the third bay. This presumably relates to the original 1909-11 construction, and is stone-built, with a brick façade and rendered side and rear faces. The fifth, south-westernmost, bay is two-storey high, and appears to have been added within five years of the original build, and appears to be stone and brick built. Each bay is separated by squared pilasters, topped by a Corinthian capital at each floor level, the ground floor capital also topped by a further projecting triangular pediment on ogee support. The ground floor pilasters are fronted in pink granite, the upper floors in pale bath stone.
- 4.1.2 At ground floor the bays are filled by shop units. The north-eastern bay contains a timber frame, with metal-shuttered window in one half, a recessed double-door in the other half, now providing the main access to the building. Above is a glazed unit with small panels set in two arched mullions, containing decorative coloured glass. The plain frieze above is overlaid with a modern sign for the YMCA. The adjacent bay contains a shuttered shop front, not visible at the time of the survey, with a pane above for 'The Cats Whiskers, Unisex Hair Salon'. The third bay contains the original main entrance, converted into a shop unit. The side pilasters contain engraved foundation stones, dated to October 1909. The entrance is topped by a rounded arch containing transom light with coloured glass in lead surrounds. The arch is decorated in dogtooth design with a central keystone with a carved floral design. This is protected by a short projecting balcony on corbels. A granite-effect step extends across, now partly obscured by the later shopfront, but appears to have been inlaid with '* YMCA *', within parallel dark bands. A wood-framed shop front is inserted, with plain glass to the left set on a low wall fronted in green-glazed brick tiles, and a recessed half-glazed door to the right. Internally the shop area has plain plastered walls, a modern lowered ceiling, and modern laminated flooring. The two western bays are fronted by metal-shutters, closed at the time of survey, with modern boarding over the plain frieze for 'The Candy Box' and 'Computer Xchange'.
- 4.1.3 The foundation stones commemorate:
- Howard Williams Esq. Chairman of the British and Colonial Committee of the Young Mens Christian Association, 30th October 1909.
 - Mrs Joseph Mayberry, 30th October 1909
 - Miss Stepney, 30th October 1909
 - W. Llewelyn Williams Esq. M.P. on behalf of the workingmen of Llanelli, 30th October 1909
 - [section obscured] Cory Esq. J.P.D.1., 30th October 1909
 - This building was opened by [section obscured] Beaumont Thomas, March 18th 1911
- 4.1.4 First floor bays are brick fronted in a Flemish Bond, the two side bays on either side of the central entrance bay each containing a pair of rectangular windows. The windows sit in a brick surround, with a

projecting brick sill, and topped by decorative hood above the lintel. The sash windows sit in wooden frames, with 36 panels in the upper frame, single panel below. The central bay contains a double glazed door, flanked by narrow sash windows, separated by brick columns. The door is topped by a fanlight window under a rounded brick arch, with floral decorative frieze in brick above. The projecting balcony is surrounded by cast-iron fence, with 'YMCA' in large letters adhering to the front of the fence.

- 4.1.5 At second floor level the western bay is topped by a moulded brick parapet. The remaining bays each contain four narrow sash windows separated by brick columns, topped by rounded arches, sat on a projecting sill. Above the windows lies a strong course, and a plain brick architrave below a simple projecting cornice. Each pilaster is topped by a squared brick finial, with metal bars between. The central bay is infilled with a brick wall, embossed with 'YMCA'.
- 4.1.6 The roof is a gable roof in concrete tile, clearly not original, with the lower western bay topped by a flat roof. Brick chimney columns project from each end of the gable roof, containing banks of six chimneys in hexagonal or octagonal pots.
- 4.1.7 The northeast gable is in plain cement render, with a pair of windows at first floor, and second floor level. The windows are sash, in wooden frames, with low curved lintels and concrete sills. The 1st floor windows are four panel, the 2nd floor windows two panel. The southeast end of the gable contains openings at off-set levels, but also in wood-frame sashes in lower arched openings. The southwest gable is hidden by adjoining buildings.
- 4.1.8 The later adjoining building on the southeast side is brick built, two-storey with exposed brickwork in a stretcher bond, topped by a hipped slate roof. The southeast and northeast faces are exposed, all openings are topped by concrete lintels, with concrete sills under the windows.
- 4.1.9 The long southeast face has boarded-up doorways at either end, with a row of six similarly sized windows at ground floor level in between the doorways. The window openings contain pairs of plain sash windows with lights above. The windows openings are mirrored at 1st floor level with 6-pane windows in uPVC frames, and two smaller openings above the southwest door.
- 4.1.10 The northeast face is stepped, with a doorway and boarded-up side window at ground level opening to a side alley, and two sash-windows with plain panes in the recessed section overlooking the chapel yard. These opening are mirrored at first floor level with sash windows.



Photo 1: Southeast facing shot of the Stepney Street frontage to the YMCA.



Photo 2: South facing shot of the YMCA in its street frontage setting.



Photo 3: The YMCA, taken shortly after its construction, showing the original 4-bay structure. Photo courtesy of Lanelli Library.



Photo 4: Current view replicating Photo 3, demonstrating remarkably little change in the outer appearance of the original structure below roof level.



Photo 5: Southeast facing shot of the original central entrance to the YMCA, with shop conversion within. 2m scale.



Photo 6: Detail of the window design above the original central entrance, as seen from the inside.



Photo 7: Detail of the original central entrance step, likely originally spelling 'YMCA', but since covered by the shop conversion.



Photo 8: WNW facing shot showing the gable end of the mid-20th century rear extension to the YMCA.



Photo 9: West facing shot of the rear elevation to the YMCA, showing the later mid-20th century extension.

4.2 Ground Floor (Figure 6, Photos 10-29)

- 4.2.1 The ground floor is split into a row of five small individual shop units fronting the street, the remainder of the original building divided between an entrance foyer and hall, main hall and kitchen, and a series of rooms in the later extension to the rear. The original entrance and its later inserted shop unit are described above, the remaining shop units were inaccessible at the time of survey.
- 4.2.2 The double doors in the northeast bay open into the entrance foyer. The walls are plain plasterwork up to a decorative cornice around the plain plastered ceiling, with modern drop lighting, and lino flooring. A glazed wood double swing door is inserted between two protruding columns on either side of the corridor, beyond which a modern lowered ceiling has been inserted. A modern doorway accesses a small room to the northeast, most recently used for spray tanning. The rear wall of the street frontage units is marked in the entrance corridor by a squared opening 2.5m high, the lintel supported by floral plaster corbels.



Photo 10: Northwest facing shot of the current main entrance. The left wall and decorated pillars may be original, the remaining features are later inserts
2m scale.



Photo 11: Detail of the window design and original ceiling above the later inserted doorway.



Photo 12: Southeast facing shot into the stairway hall, with original decorative corbels retained.

4.2.3 The entrance corridor opens into the stairway hall. A glazed uPVC door access the main hall to the southwest, plain doors and inserted walling subdivide a small store room and the base of a dumbwaiter shaft opposite, against the northeast wall. Modern wood-framed glazed doors then subdivide the area, with the staircase to the southeast. The staircase occupies the rear wall of the easternmost bay of the original building. 1.7m wide steps, with turned newels and balusters along the outer edge, along with rounded bannister and panelled skirt board, all in dark wood. The rear southeast wall, and the southwest dividing wall with the hall, have an infilled arch each, with a decorated upper plaster panels supported on side columns now largely subsumed into the wall. A passage runs against the north-eastern side wall, with a doorway under the stairs access the basement, and five steps leading up into the later extension to the rear.

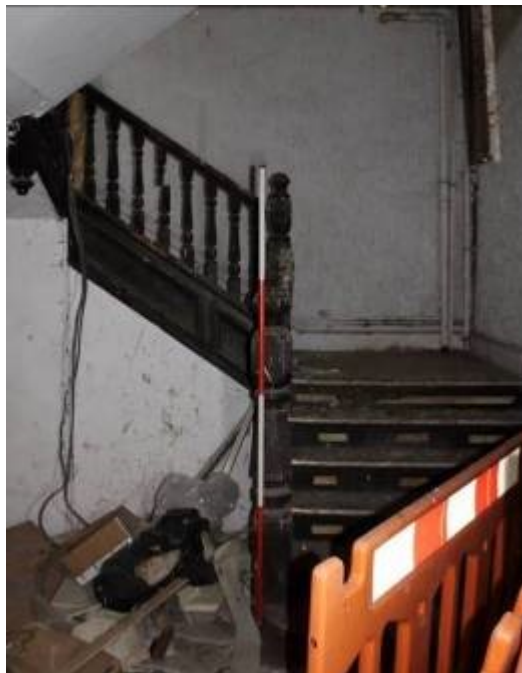


Photo 13: Southeast facing shot of the foot of the main stairs. 2m scale.

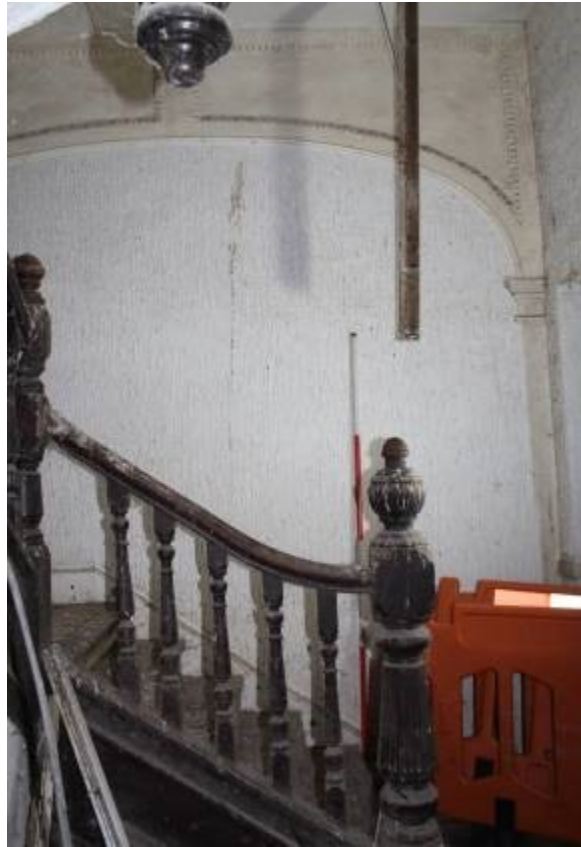


Photo 14: Southwest facing shot of the foot of the main staircase with the infilled archway behind. 2m scale.

4.2.4 The main hall occupies much of the ground floor area across the rear half of the original building, with modern wooden board flooring, high skirting, plain plastered walls with dado rail. A lowered panel ceiling has been inserted, above which is the original plain plastered ceiling at a height of 4m, with decorative coving and inlaid floral plaster banding around the edges. Two opposing square fluted pillars stand two-thirds of the way into the room. At the southwest end a large squared opening accesses the kitchen, possibly inserted through the location of an original fireplace with the 0.7m thick wall. To the south lies a narrow open doorway in a wooden frame. Along the southeast wall wooden boarding is inserted with a central service hatch cover, presumably covering a former original rear window opening, a central doorway with plain double-doors opens into a WC block, and at the northeast end five steps lead into an adjoining side room. The east wall has two infilled arched openings held on square fluted columns. The openings measure 2.8m and 2.2m across, a modern glazed door inserted into the blocking of the shorter of the two, against the northwest wall.



Photo 15: Northeast facing shot of the main hall room with infilled arches to the rear. 2m scale.



Photo 16: Southwest facing of the main hall room, with kitchen opening to the rear, potentially inserted through a former fireplace. 2m scale.



Photo 17: Detail of original ceiling within the main hall.



Photo 18: Interior shot for the YMCA shortly after construction. The presence of the arched openings suggests this is the ground floor, but as the openings do not correspond directly to remaining features, it is possible the external walls (including the doorway) and internal arches have since been altered or removed. Photo courtesy of Llanelli Library.

- 4.2.5 The kitchen has a plain concrete floor, white glazed wall tiles up to lowered ceiling height, with a wood-panelled ceiling above. Steel beams are exposed that presumably run the full length of the ground floor. Brickwork is exposed in the upper part of the southwest wall. Against the southeast wall is plain door opening into a rear passage, and a large boarded fixed

four-panel window in the original rear wall. The northwest wall appears to be a breezeblock insert, with a plain door through it accessing a small storeroom.



Photo 19: South facing shot of the kitchen, showing rear passage access and boarded-up original rear window. 2m scale

4.2.6 To the south of the kitchen lies a rear passage, which may have run between the original building and the later extension, although the eastern part of the passage has been incorporated into the extended building. At the western end the area is infilled with scaffolding, but natural light come in from corrugated plastic sheeting at roof level. A doorway opens to a rear access area to the southeast, along the south-western side of the building.



Photo 20: Northeast facing shot of formerly rear, now internal, passageway. Kitchen window visible on the left. 2m scale.

- 4.2.7 Adjoining the main hall is a WC block, extending across the rear passage into the later extension to the southeast. It comprises three rooms, all with modern toilet furniture, plain plastered walls and a lowered ceiling. A subdividing east – west wall continues the line of the rear extension and is presumably therefore brick built, the dividing wall with the main hall may be masonry, the remaining walls are breezeblock.



Photo 21: Southeast facing shot of toilet furniture in central WC block.

- 4.2.8 The steps to the adjoining side room from the main hall lead to a room with a raised concrete floor, plain plastered walls and a modern panel ceiling, with steel beams above. A row of fixed windows line half of the east wall, which looks out into an internal corridor. A central pillar continues the line of the rear extension, suggestion this room is a relatively recent addition. Coat hooks and a pay phone stand on one wall.



Photo 22: Northeast facing shot of side room to the main hall, showing windows to an internal corridor. 2m scale



Photo 23: Payphone within the adjoining side room.

- 4.2.9 The corridor under the stairs along the northeast wall accesses the rear extension. Within which a large open room occupies much of the southeast corner, with a rear entrance through fire-doors to the northeast. The room has a concrete floor, plastered lower wall to dado, painted stipple above with picture rail, and a lowered inserted ceiling. Two steel uprights within the room helps support steel room beams, with wooden beams above. The room is lit by four windows in the southeast wall. An opening in the

southwest wall leads to the adjacent room. A small doorway in the northeast wall accesses a side store.



Photo 24: Southwest facing shot of the main ground floor room in the rear extension. 2m scale.



Photo 25: As previous photo, northeast facing.

4.2.10 The adjacent room continues the same style, lit by one similar window and a narrower window in the southeast wall. A row of upper fixed panel windows line the northwest wall, with an open doorway providing access to a WC block and changing rooms to the northwest. In the southwest wall a panelled door accesses an entrance corridor along the south-western wall of the building. This corridor has exposed brick walling, with a fire-door and adjacent window in the southeast wall, and a simple wooden staircase

accessing the 1st floor against the southwest wall. Coat hooks line the southwest wall. A concrete ramp lowers the floor level to the northwest with a wood-panelled door accessing the open rear passage between the original block and the rear extension.



Photo 26: South facing shot of secondary ground floor room in rear extension.
2m scale.



Photo 27: Northwest facing shot of window lights into the adjacent changing room area.



Photo 28: Southeast facing shot of the rear access on the southwest side of the building. 2m scale.



Photo 29: Northwest facing shot of rear access corridor, with simple stairs to the 1st floor, and door access to the rear passage/corridor behind the kitchen.

4.3 1st floor (Figure 6, Photos 30 – 43)

- 4.3.1 At 1st floor level the original building is divided between a landing with two main rooms. A third room occupies the south-western bay, but only accessible via the later rear extension. The later extension houses a sports hall, with small rooms occupying the space between.
- 4.3.2 The mid landing on the stairwell is lit by a double sash window with painted wood frames with a curved lintel. The stairwell walls are otherwise plain, with stippled paint. On the rise to the 2nd floor the internal face of the southeast wall (the rear wall of the original build) is left exposed, revealing mortared random rubble. The 1st floor landing is separated from the stairwell by an inserted glazed screen. The landing has wooden floorboards, papered walls and a lowered ceiling. Plain double doors lie in the southwest wall, plain double door with light above stand above a low step in the southeast wall, a single plain door lies in the northwest wall, and a single plain door access a side corridor in the northeast wall.



Photo 30: Northeast facing shot from the 1st floor landing showing the staircase and mid-floor window.



Photo 31: Southeast facing shot of the exposed masonry on the rear wall of the original building.



Photo 32: Southeast facing shot of the 1st floor landing.

- 4.3.3 The room to the northwest occupies the corner of the building, lit by two large sash windows in the east wall, four in the north wall. They sit within rectangular openings, with wood lintels. A modern kitchen vent stands behind a semi-enclosed area on the northeast wall, standard floor boards are exposed beneath linoleum, and plasterwork has come off the walls revealing the outer walls built of random rubble masonry with brick window surrounds, with internal walls of brick. A lowered ceiling has been inserted beneath the original lathe and plaster ceiling with decorative cornice. A small door stands adjacent to the main door in the southeast wall, access a small side storeroom and open dumbwaiter shaft.



Photo 33: Northeast facing shot of the 1st floor frontage room, with kitchen vent visible. 2m scale.



Photo 34: Northwest facing shot of the exposed inner face of the frontage wall. 2m scale.



Photo 35: Detail of the frontage windows. 2m scale.



Photo 36: Detail of the original ceiling.

- 4.3.4 The room to the southwest of the landing is a large open room, lit by two sash windows in the outer northeast wall, and a glazed wood-panel door accessing a small balcony over the original building entrance. The door is flanked by narrow sash window units and a glazed transom above, topped by a wooden lintel. The outer wall, and southwest wall are of one build, exhibiting the same masonry. The room is open to the original ceiling, in the same design as the adjacent room, with two enclosed steel beams visible. Two former window openings lie in the southeast wall, currently boarded. An inserted WC lies in the east corner of the room.



Photo 37: Northwest facing shot of the central 1st floor frontage room. 2m scale.



Photo 38: Detail of the balcony door. 2m scale.



Photo 39: Southeast facing shot of the central 1st floor frontage room. 2m scale.

- 4.3.5 The southwest room on the street frontage is only accessible via the rear gymnasium. A narrow room with plain plastered walls and ceilings, with three enclosed steel beams supported on protruding pillars in the southwest wall, the northernmost being wider and possible representing a blocked fireplace. The inner face of the northwest wall is exposed, continuing the random rubble construction with brick surrounds for two sash window, also continuing the typical frontage design. A section of the outer southwest wall is also exposed, of brick construction.



Photo 40: Northwest facing shot of the final 1st floor frontage room. 2m scale.

- 4.3.6 The space between the original building and rear extension contains WC units, with modern WC furniture in plain plastered rooms. A boarded window unit lies in the outer northeast wall.



Photo 41: WC unit contained in the infill between original building and later extension.

- 4.3.7 The later extension contains an open gymnasium for almost the full extent of the extension. Badminton courts are laid out on the narrow woodblock flooring. The walls are plain plasterwork between five pairs of protruding support pillars, with a shallow trapezoidal ceiling. Seven fixed panel uPVC framed windows line the outer southeast wall, with two boarded windows at the southwest end of the northwest wall. Two doors lie in the northeast wall. The easternmost accesses a side storeroom, lit by a blocked window. The westernmost accesses a set of rear access steps, with a boarded window opening. A second door at the western end of the northwest wall accesses a further set of steps to the rear access along the southwest wall of the building, and also accesses the room over the southwest bay of the frontage building.



Photo 42: Southwest facing shot of the 1st floor gymnasium within the later extension.



Photo 43: As above, in the opposite direction.

4.4 Second Floor (Figure 7, Photos 44 – 54)

- 4.4.1 The second floor level was confined to the four bays of the original building, and included three frontage rooms, and two rear rooms.
- 4.4.2 The narrow landing area is enclosed by an inserted glazed and panel screen, with a door to the northwest accessing a central corridor. To the northeast a plain door encloses the end of the corridor, beyond which a wood panel door to the dumbwaiter shaft. The corridor has modern floor coverings, low skirting, papered walls with a plain ceiling. A corridor spur

to the southeast accesses a WC, enclosed by a wood panel door, with modern WC furniture and a boarded window opening behind.



Photo 44: Southwest facing shot of the 2nd floor landing.

4.4.3 The northeast room had plain plastered walls and ceiling, partly removed to reveal a continuation of the masonry outer walls with brick surrounds, and single-skin brick internal wall. Two sash-windows with low arched upper mullion stand in the northeast wall, with a blocked fireplace in between. Four adjoining windows stand in the same opening in the northwest wall, with a steel bar lintel. Exposed roof structure above is a wooden frame with attached steel support, and roofing underlay beneath the concrete tiles above.



Photo 45: Northeast facing shot of initial 2nd floor frontage room, showing blocked fireplace in gable wall. 2m scale.



Photo 46: Northwest facing shot of initial 2nd floor frontage room, showing frontage wall detail. 2m scale.



Photo 47: Detail of roof structure.

- 4.4.4 The central frontage room was accessed via a plain door, revealing a continuation of the outer masonry wall with adjoining windows in a single opening, and single-skin brick internal walling. Plain plastered walls with picture rail sit above a low skirting, with plain plastered ceiling.



Photo 48: Northwest facing shot of the central 2nd floor frontage room. 2m scale.

- 4.4.5 The southwest room is the largest room, lit by two window units in the northwest wall. Exposed walling indicates the southwest outer wall is continuation of the masonry construction of the northwest wall, with a blocked central fireplace. The masonry walling extends to the roofline in the southwest wall, but is topped by brickwork above the steel window lintels in the northwest wall.



Photo 49: Northwest facing shoot of the western 2nd floor frontage room. 2m scale.



Photo 50: Detail of the interior face of the southwest gable wall and roof.

- 4.4.6 The southern corner of the building contains a room with short skirting, plain plastered walls and ceiling, a blocked central fireplace in the southwest wall, and lit by two rectangular windows in the southeast wall, currently boarded.



Photo 51: Southwest facing shot of the 2nd floor rear room, showing the blocked fireplace in the gable wall. 2m scale.

- 4.4.7 The final room lies against the southeast wall, subdivided from the room to the southwest by stud walling. A dado and picture rail remains, with a fireplace located on the southeast wall. A wooden Edwardian style surround with grooved legs and ogee shelf brackets, with a cast iron

fireplace set in green-glazed brick tiles, brick lintel behind. A four-panel sash window lies adjacent to the fireplace.



Photo 52: SSE facing shot of the final 2nd floor rear room. 2m scale.



Photo 53: Detail of the fireplace within the 2nd floor rear room. 2m scale (in 0.5m segments).



Photo 54: Detail of the brick lintel behind the fire surround.

4.5 Third Floor (Figure 7, Photos 55 – 69)

- 4.5.1 The third floor contains three rooms along the frontage, with six small rooms to the rear, separated by a dividing corridor.
- 4.5.2 The top of the staircase is enclosed by a plain door with window light above. A wood panelled door encloses the dumbwaiter shaft at the northeast end of the corridor, with winch and pulley system still in place above. The corridor is lit by a series of roof lights that have been covered by the present roof.



Photo 55: View down the stairwell from the 3rd floor.



Photo 56: Southwest facing shot down the central 3rd floor corridor.



Photo 57: Northeast facing shot along the central 3rd floor corridor, showing the door enclosing the otherwise open dumbwaiter shaft. 2m scale.



Photo 58: Detail of the dumbwaiter pulleys.

- 4.5.3 The northeast frontage room has a low skirting, plain papered walls, plain sloping ceiling with encased main rafters exposed.

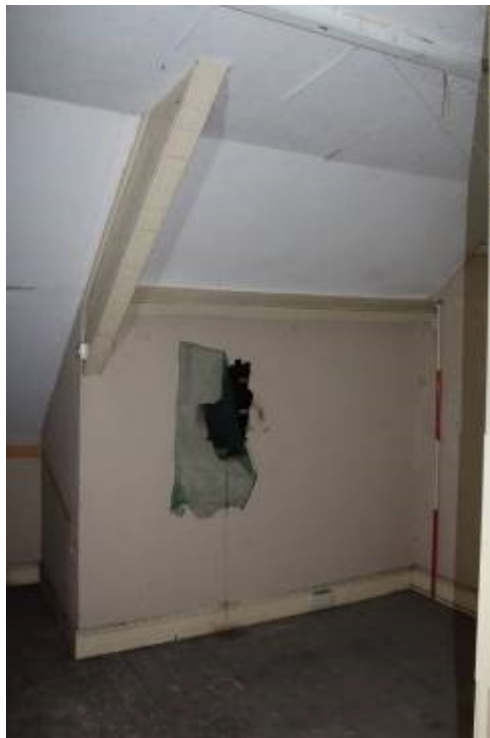


Photo 59: Northeast facing shot of the 3rd floor northeast frontage room. 2 scale.

- 4.5.4 The central frontage room was formerly two individual rooms, but the stud walling partition has been removed. The room is accessed by two wood panelled doors (formerly one for each room), the room has low skirting,

plain plastered walls with dado rail, and plain ceiling. Two fireplaces stand on the southeast corridor wall, one on either side of the former partition. Each fireplace is a simple cast-iron design with curved hood, and a plain wood surround with mantel above. The small chimney above, visible on the 1929 aerial photographs, is no longer present.



Photo 60: Southeast facing shot of the 3rd floor central frontage room, showing the fireplaces and the removed central division. 1m scale.



Photo 61: Northeast facing shot of the roof space accessible from the central frontage room.

- 4.5.5 The southwest frontage room has a picture rail, and fireplace in the southwest wall, a small roof light block by the current roof covering. A cast iron fireplace sits within a green-painted cast iron surround with decorative band around the fireplace. An enclosed storeroom has been built into northwest side of the room. Wood boarding surrounds a fire escape in the western corner, which accesses an aluminium staircase to the flat roof of the fifth bay unit.



Photo 62: Southwest facing shot of the 3rd floor southwest frontage room, with enclosed fire-escape to the right. 1m scale.



Photo 63: Northwest facing shot of the 3rd floor southwest frontage room, showing roof light. 1m scale.



Photo 63: Detail of the fireplace in the 3rd floor southwest frontage room.

4.5.6 Five rooms of identical size line the southeast side of the building, all accessed via plain doors, subdivided by lathe and plaster walling, a plain sloping ceiling with small square roof lights in the slope, blocked by the current roof covering. Within the north-eastern room a slate bench sits on brick supports, lining the southeast wall, with a small square loft access below. The adjacent room has a taller loft access, with an oven lying on the otherwise featureless floor. The central room has no loft access, with airplane wallpaper on the walling, the images dating from the 1950s/60s. The two southwest units are combined into a single room, with a partial central division. The room is generally featureless other than a small water tank against the southwest wall.



Photo 64: Southeast facing shot of the 3rd floor rear room with slate shelf to the rear. 1m scale.



Photo 65: Southeast facing shot of 3rd floor rear room with oven. 1m scale.



Photo 66: Southwest facing shot of 1950/60s wallpaper in 3rd floor rear room.



Photo 67: Southwest facing shot of 3rd floor rear gable-end room. 1m scale.

- 4.5.7 A room stands in the northeast corner above the staircase unit, accessed via a wood panelled door. A fireplace stands in the southeast corner, although the fireplace itself and the surround have been removed. The opening is built of masonry with a brick surround, and a low arched brick lintel. A boarded window opening stands adjacent. Stud walling encloses two store rooms against the northeast wall, with a partly boarded sash window in the wall behind.



Photo 68: Southeast facing shot of the fireplace in the 3rd floor room above the staircase. 2m scale.



Photo 69: Northeast facing shot of the storage areas in the 3rd floor room above the staircase. 2m scale.

4.6 Basement (Figure 6, Photos 70 – 77)

- 4.6.1 The basement occupies the rear half of the original four bay building. It is accessed via a plain door beneath the ground floor staircase. Stairs lead down to a narrow corridor running along the rear wall of the original building, with a concrete floor and plain rendered walling with lathe and plaster ceiling above. An inserted blue-painted wood-framed door encloses the southwest end of the corridor, which then opens into a room containing WCs. Three toilet cubicles line the southeast side, with porcelain toilet bowls and metal header tanks above, lower glazed wall tiles, plain plaster above covered in graffiti. Three upright porcelain urinals stand on the southeast wall, with three square porcelain sinks adjacent. Square quarry tiles line the floor, the walls are half covered in glazed tiles. Two former access ramps lie in the former rear wall behind the urinals and sinks suggesting a former coal cellar converted into a WC.



Photo 70: Southwest facing shot of the rear corridor and inserted doorway enclosing the basement WC. 2m scale.



Photo 71: Northwest facing shot of the WC unit within the basement.



Photo 72: Southeast facing shot of the urinals in the basement.



Photo 73: Southeast facing shot of the sink units in the basement WC, with the former access ramps in the wall to the rear.

4.6.2 A door to the northwest of the foot of the stairs accesses service rooms and corridors along the northwest side of the basement unit. A corridor accesses the boiler room, occupying the full width of the basement unit at the southwest end. The boiler unit stands at the southeast end, the walls are part rendered, and part exposed with masonry visible, and brickwork infill around pipes, with a flat concrete ceiling above. Midway along the corridor is a plain empty room, with three high window lights to the corridor. At the other end of the corridor, against the northeast wall, a short flight of steps accesses a secondary entrance for the service part of

the basement, presumably via a hatch in the floor above, currently blocked.



Photo 74: Southwest facing shot of the boiler room, and gable end of the original structure.



Photo 75: South facing shot of the boiler units within the basement.



Photo 76: Southwest facing shot down the basement services corridor.



Photo 77: Southeast facing shot of the access stairs to the service part of the basement, presumably originally accessed via a hatch, currently blocked.
1m scale.

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The YMCA was constructed between 1909 and 1911, originally as a three-storey, basemented, four bay structure, built in masonry with a decorative brick façade in a Neo-Georgian Palladian style to Stepney Street. Shortly after (possibly within five years) a fifth bay had been added, two-storey but continuing the same façade for the ground and first floor.
- 5.2 The original building contained shop units in the ground floor street frontage, with a central entrance into the YMCA. The ground floor and first floor contained a lounge, reception hall, parlour hall, billiard room, gymnasium and various meeting rooms. The building also contained some domestic apartments, these were likely contained within the upper two floors.
- 5.2 The addition of the 5th bay added an additional shop unit, along with a rear room and 1st floor room. It is not clear how these additional rooms would have been initially accessed from the main YMCA building however, as the adjoining wall was an original masonry outer wall with fireplaces. It may be that joint access to these areas was only achieved when the rear extension was added by the mid-20th century. This rear extension contained additional ground floor halls and a 1st floor gymnasium. It is unclear if the original plan of adding a swimming pool was ever undertaken.
- 5.3 The original design of the shop fronts, and the décor of the lounge, is captured in Photos 3 and 18. The arched openings visible in Photo 18 are still visible on the ground floor, although it is unclear precisely which area this relates to. The internal space, particularly at ground floor level, has clearly been rearranged, with new openings created subsequent to the addition of the rear extension. At some point the main entrance was converted into an additional shop unit, and the entrance moved into the first bay. Aerial photographs (www.britainfromabove.org.uk) from 1929 indicate that originally the third floor frontage rooms were lit by dormer windows in the roof, the current roof being a modern replacement. Very few original fixtures and fittings survive within the building, although many of the windows appear original. Most original fireplaces have been blocked, with some smaller fireplace units surviving in the upper floors.

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