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Dee House, Chester
An Investigation and Assessment

Matthew Withey and Adam Menuge

Discovery, Innovation and Science in the Historic Environment

Research Report Series no. 5-2016

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Research Report Series 005-2016

DEE HOUSE
LITTLE ST JOHN STREET
CHESTER

AN INVESTIGATION AND ASSESSMENT OF THE EARLY 18TH CENTURY HOUSE AND 19TH CENTURY CONVENT SCHOOL

Matthew Withey and Adam Menuge

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SUMMARY
Dee House was probably built around 1730 by James Comberbach (d.1737), a former mayor and alderman of Chester, for the Comberbach family, but over the years it has served as a family residence, a convent school and a telephone exchange. The basic plan of the 18th-century house is intact. It consisted of a double-pile main block with a five-bay north front and a service range projecting westwards (extended by one bay during the later 19th century) from the rear half of the main block. Built of brick with red sandstone details, the house is three storeys high with cellars under the northern half of the main block. The principal reception rooms were on the ground floor in the eastern half of the main block, with smaller rooms in the western half being placed on either side of the large stair hall. The latter was the only space to be lit only from one of the end walls, where opportunities for windows were restricted by the presence of chimney stacks. The service range was lit from both the north and the south but any evidence for original windows in its western end has been lost. The construction of the internal walls is flimsily executed in studwork with brick panels.

In the main block the entrance hall and stair hall preserve their 18th-century appearance largely unaltered except where damaged. The greater part of the original stair, with its fine twisted balusters, survives, together with evidence for a pair of stair windows, now blocked, and not noted in previous accounts. Original joinery in these areas is also reasonably complete, including cornices, a panelled dado to the stair and door architraves, but not the doors themselves. Elsewhere the prevailing character of the rooms is 19th-century, but the dining room has a re-set bolection-moulded chimney-piece and one first-floor bedroom has a simple early chimney-piece *in situ*. A number of the rooms retain contemporary door and window architraves. A service stair, probably in the central bay to the rear, has been lost.

In the first quarter of the 19th century the interior of the house was extensively remodelled. The impact of these changes was felt particularly in the principal reception rooms and in the bedrooms directly above them. Here an original partition was removed and replaced, apparently on the same line, by a studwork partition which incorporated shallow recesses at the end of each ground and first-floor room. This phase is associated with reeded architraves incorporating corner blocks, with reeded cornices, and with doors, skirtings, shutters and so forth, incorporating a flush reed. In the drawing room occupying the north-east quadrant of the ground floor there is in addition a reeded chimney-piece of this period with Tuscan columns, and the remains of a painted panelling scheme.

In 1854 Dee House was acquired by an order of Roman Catholic nuns, the Faithful Companions of Jesus, and between 1867 and 1869 a new wing was built on the east side of the house to provide a purpose-built chapel and schoolrooms. The three-storey chapel wing, designed by the Liverpool architect, Edmund Kirby, is built in a muscular Gothic interpretation of the Early English style, with groups of lancets on each gable and a robust interior scheme characterised by the use of prominent chamfers and stops. It provided a chapel on the ground floor, a large open-plan classroom on the first floor and a dormitory on the second. The central section of the separate two-storey range along Souter's Lane, which has more restrained Gothic detailing to its window

joinery, appears to be roughly contemporary and is probably also by Kirby.

Probably in the late-1880s a three-storey, four-bay extension, roughly matching the original house in its details, was built in the angle formed by the main block and service wing. This provided a dining room on the ground floor, with food stores in the cellars below and dormitories on the first and second floors, reached by a new stair (since destroyed by fire) to the rear. In the same period, perhaps extending into the early 20th century, the range along Souter's Lane was enlarged. During the 20th century a large school extension was built on the south side of Dee House. This has been demolished, and the rear elevation of Dee House, which it partially obscured, has been made good. At the time of survey (2005-6), the building had lain empty since its sale to Chester City Council by British Telecom in 1993.

CONTRIBUTORS

Report by Matthew Withey and Adam Menuge. Drawings by Simon Taylor and Allan T Adams. Photography by Adam Menuge and Bob Skingle.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ARCHIVE LOCATION

Historic England Archive, The Engine House, Fire Fly Avenue, Swindon, SN2 2EH

DATE OF RESEARCH SURVEY

The following report is based on findings from a detailed survey carried out by Adam Menuge, Simon Taylor, Matthew Withey, Allan T Adams and Naomi Archer on 29 and 30 September and 17 and 18 October 2005, and 21 and 22 August 2006. It amplifies the findings of the preliminary building assessment presented in the Historic Area Assessment *The Environs of Chester Amphitheatre: Preliminary Building Assessments* (English Heritage Historic Buildings and Areas Research Department Report Series B/016/2004).

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INTRODUCTION

Dee House (SJ 40819 66112), a Grade II listed building, occupies a site just outside Chester's city walls and partially overlying the southern side of the Roman amphitheatre, to the south of the city centre. Immediately to its east lies the churchyard of St John the Baptist, and its western side is confined by Souter's Lane (formerly New Gate Street and later Dee Lane), which in turn respects the walled circuit of the medieval city. When first built the house enjoyed clear views all the way to the River Dee, 150m to the south, but these were partially obscured by the erection of the Old Bishop's Palace during the second quarter of the 18th century. They were further interrupted during the 20th century with the erection of various ancillary buildings relating to Dee House's function as a school. These buildings were demolished *circa* 2000 to make way for the four-storey Trident House, Chester's Civil Justice Centre, which occupies former garden to the rear of Dee House.

An earlier Historic Area Assessment (*The Environs of Chester Amphitheatre*, 2004) established that a broadly coherent character had prevailed in the area around Dee House since the Civil War.[1] This character was conditioned by natural topography, by the area's extra-mural and riverside position, by the enduring presence of open space associated with St John's Church, and by the exploitation for houses and gardens of sites benefiting from attractive riverside and rural vistas and easy access to a popular riverside walk (The Groves). As a result the area developed as a hybrid between a merchant villa suburb and a cathedral close. An understanding of this context helps to offset what may be perceived as the visual intrusiveness of Dee House in terms of its building materials and styles when set alongside its sandstone neighbours, the remains of the amphitheatre, and St John's Church.

The discovery of Chester's Roman amphitheatre in 1929 led to the transformation of the area immediately to the north of Dee House. Part of the amphitheatre was excavated between 1930 and 1934, and a later excavation extended the area, but a portion of it remains unexplored beneath Dee House. This has led some to question whether Dee House merits retention, or whether, by demolishing it, more might be learnt about the underlying Roman structure. The question has acquired greater urgency as the condition of the building, which has been subject to vandalism and arson, has deteriorated. The investigation and survey on which this report is based were therefore requested by the North-West Region of English Heritage to supplement information gathered in the course of the Chester Amphitheatre Project in collaboration with Chester City Council.

The report's authors have benefited from the existence of a number of previous reports covering different aspects of the building, its history and its physical context. In particular, the house was recorded by the former Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England in 1987; a short report by Nicholas Cooper, a phased sketch plan by John Reeves and a number of photographs are held in the Historic England Archive, as are large-format black-and-white photographs taken in 1991.[2]

The investigation and survey of the building were constrained by a number of factors. Movement around the ground floor of the building was severely impeded by internal scaffolding installed to safeguard the structure. This also made conventional internal photography difficult. The internal studwork and brick partitions, particularly on the first floor, are fragile. Access to the second floor was ruled out by an identified asbestos risk, but plans prepared by Post Office Telephones in the 1970s, and now in the possession of Cheshire West and Chester Council, (with revisions in the mid and late-1980s) allowed its general form to be assessed.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The origins of Dee House

No documentary evidence for the building of Dee House has so far come to light, but on stylistic grounds it is usually considered to have been built *circa* 1730.[3] Because the property is thought to have belonged to the locally important Comberbach family, the building has generally been attributed to James Comberbach, an alderman and City Recorder who served as mayor of Chester in 1727. Indeed his impending or actual mayoralty may well have been the spur for constructing a prestigious new house. James Comberbach made a will on 21 May 1736 (proved 10 April 1738) in which he referred to two properties in St John's Lane 'lately erected and built by me', and 'my other messuage or dwelling house situate ... in St John's Lane ... where I now co-habit or dwell'.[4] It is unclear which of these properties equates to Dee House, though it seems very likely that one of them does.

The Comberbach family's association with the area goes back some decades before 1730. Records in Chester Archives indicate that on 31 March 1699 Roger Comberbach (James's father) and his business partners were reported as having 'lately purchased a messuage situated between St John's Churchyard and the River Dee'; apparently this consortium was 'now desirous to erect some buildings on a piece of waste ground between this messuage and Dee Lane end, if they might have a grant of this ground'.[5] This they duly received, with a 'lease for three lives and twenty-one years', but no record exists to confirm the commencement of the proposed building work at this time. It seems likely, too, that the waste ground referred to lay towards the bottom of Dee Lane (where the Bishop's Palace was later built) rather than the top.

Early maps, which take Speed's 1610 map as their basis, offer little that can be interpreted with confidence, though there is some variation in what they depict. What is certain is that a house had been erected by 1745, when the 'Plan of the City & Castle of Chester survey'd and drawn by Alexander de Lavaux' was published (Figure 1).[6] This apparently shows Dee House as 'Mr Comberbacks' although the footprint differs from that of the 18th-century fabric of the surviving building.

The 1745 plan shows a house on the approximate site of the present Dee House with a long rectangular footprint aligned north-west to south-east; the south-west elevation is irregular and there is a long narrow projection on the north-west side. The house is shown to be a little to the south east of Dee House Convent as it is shown on later Ordnance Survey maps relative to St John's Church, but it is in the same position relative to an oval carriage drive and the line of Dee (later Souter's) Lane to the north west and west respectively, and so its misalignment with the church might perhaps be put down to a cartographic inaccuracy (in common with all pre-Ordnance Survey maps of Chester, both the scale and the outline of the building shown by de Lavaux must be treated with caution). However, the discrepancy between the depicted footprint and the L-shaped plan of the surviving early fabric at Dee house is considerable and cannot be adequately explained unless surveyor's error is assumed or, as others have suggested, the house was once either just one of a semi-

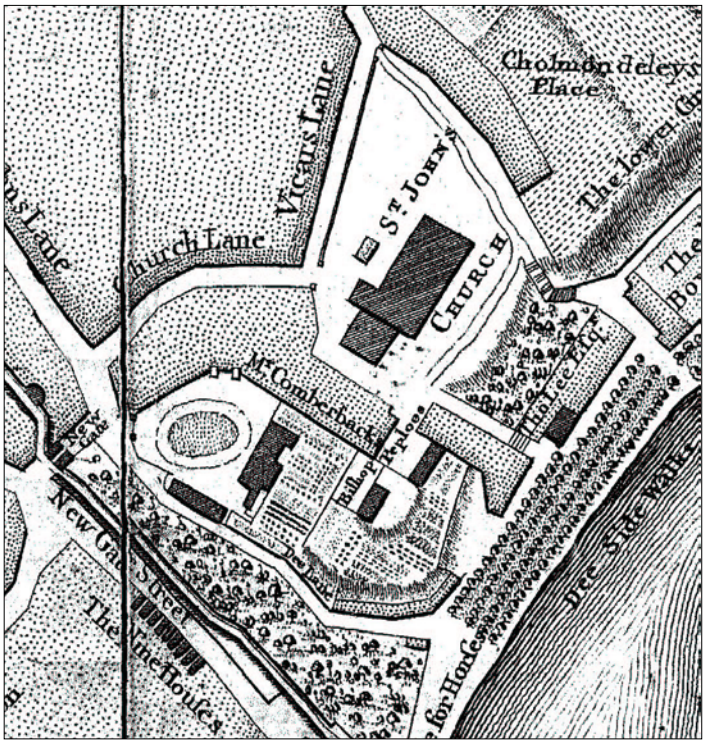


Figure 1: Detail from Alexander de Lavaux's 1745 plan of Chester (reproduced courtesy of Cheshire Archives & Local Studies).

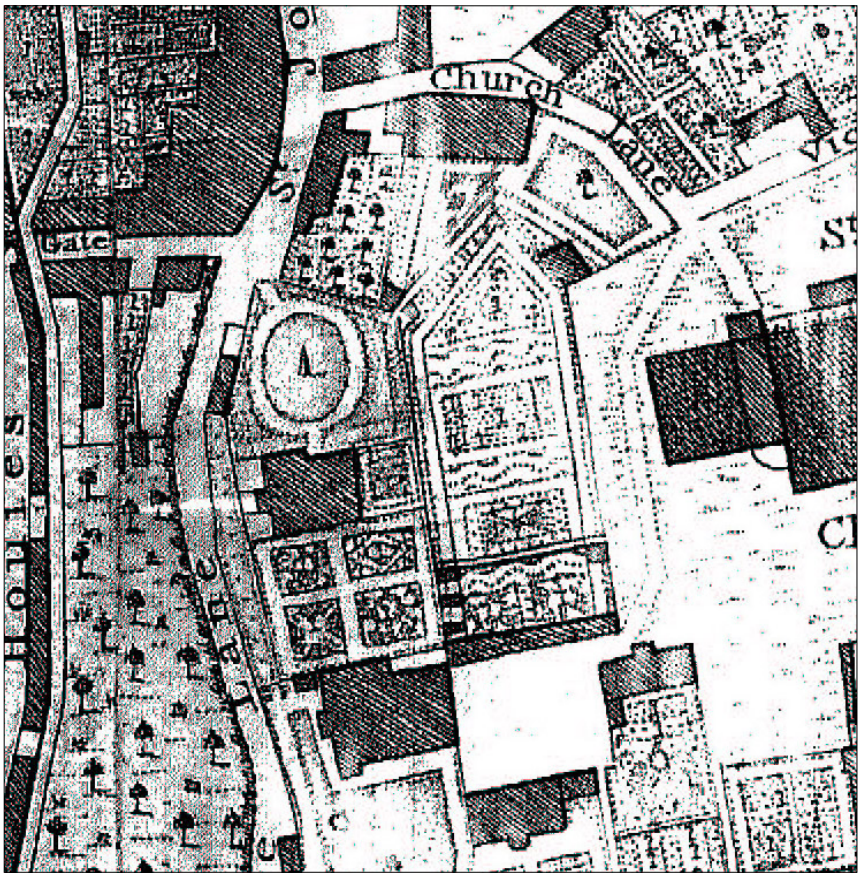


Figure 2: Detail from James Hunter's 1789 plan of Chester (reproduced courtesy of Cheshire Archives & Local Studies).

Figure 3: Depiction by Moses Griffith of St John's Church and The Groves (credit: Grosvenor Museum, Chester).

detached pair,[7] or was at times larger and more complex during the 18th century.[8] A depiction of Dee Bank by Moses Griffith dating from the second half of the 18th century also implies a more extensive house than the surviving early fabric suggests (see Figure 3). On the 1745 plan the property is entered from the southern end of St John's Lane and its address would have been St John's Lane rather than the diminutive Dee Lane which flanks its entirety to the west. The label 'Mr. Comberbacks' appears against the full length of the eastern edge of the property and, because names given elsewhere on the plan usually correspond to specific buildings and indicate ownership, It seems likely that 'Comberbacks' applies to the adjacent house and not specifically to the area of generic stippling, also applied to much of the rest of the city, over which it is written. No other buildings are depicted or named on St John's Lane, nor does the name Comberbach, or 'Comberback', appear elsewhere on the map.

A house in the same position is also shown on Hunter's plan of 1789[9] (Figure 2) but the footprint matches neither that depicted by de Lavaux nor the footprint of the surviving fabric. However, the oval carriage drive to the north is shown, as are formal gardens to the rear. A view of St John's Church, the buildings to the immediate south and west of it and the River Dee by Moses Griffith, which dates from sometime after 1754 (Figure 3),[10] shows The Archdeacon's House[11] in the centre, while Samuel Peploe's house, which became the Bishop's Palace,[12] stands to the left with part of the southern elevation of Dee House visible behind it. What appears to be the present western service wing of Dee House is shown with a shallow southern projection, no longer extant, which is roughly three bays long on the south side (the western-most bay is blind) and three storeys high with first and second-floor platbands. The roof of the projection is hidden by a parapet, behind which rises, roughly centrally, a single tall chimney with another shown behind

it and to the north. The main house is glimpsed further back and to the right and is also three storeys high, but higher than the projection, with a parapet. All the windows which are shown appear to have square heads and stone surrounds. The service wing also has what might be a western projection (it appears too narrow to be the main service range) which is shallow, roughly square and possibly with platbands on the western side, but apparently lacking windows and a parapet. This projection appears to rise slightly above the level of the parapet of the southern projection, and to match the height of the main house. Griffith's view also shows the southern end of what must have been the coach house and stable block with upper hayloft mentioned in later advertisements and published descriptions.[13] The block is shown to be rectangular, two storeys high with first-floor platband, oval first-floor windows or pitching eyes and a pitched or hipped roof behind a parapet. The footprint of the house implied by this depiction might roughly equate to that shown on de Lavaux's plan of 1745, although the proportions do not match, and partly with Hunter's depiction, although no southern projection is shown by the latter.

A building with a footprint which does match that of the extant early fabric is depicted on Murray and Stuart's 1791 map of Chester[14] and a building with an L-shaped plan, correctly orientated, also appears on Stockdale's map of 1796 (Figure 4),[15] although Neele's plan of 1809[16] shows the building with the same footprint as Hunter's, as does Neele's plan of 1817,[17] suggesting perhaps that both the 1809 and 1817 depictions were derived from Hunter. John Wood's map of 1833[18] (Figure 5) shows an L shape with certainty, but here it is apparently subdivided into three units and has a shallow southward projection from the western part of the south elevation (which concurs with Griffith's depiction). The oval carriage drive to front and formal gardens to rear appear largely unchanged from de Lavaux's and Hunter's maps. Thomas's map of *circa* 1853,[19] the year before the acquisition of Dee House by the Faithful Companions of Jesus, shows a building with an L-shaped footprint which closely matches that of the earliest phase of the extant building, lacking, as it does, the southward projection from the service wing shown by Griffith and Wood. McGahey's depiction of Dee House on his view from a balloon of 1855[20] (Figure 6), however, is puzzling as it appears to contradict both near-contemporary cartographic evidence and the earliest phase of the extant structure. McGahey shows a house with

Figure 4: Detail from John Stockdale's 1796 plan of Chester (reproduced courtesy of Cheshire Archives & Local Studies).

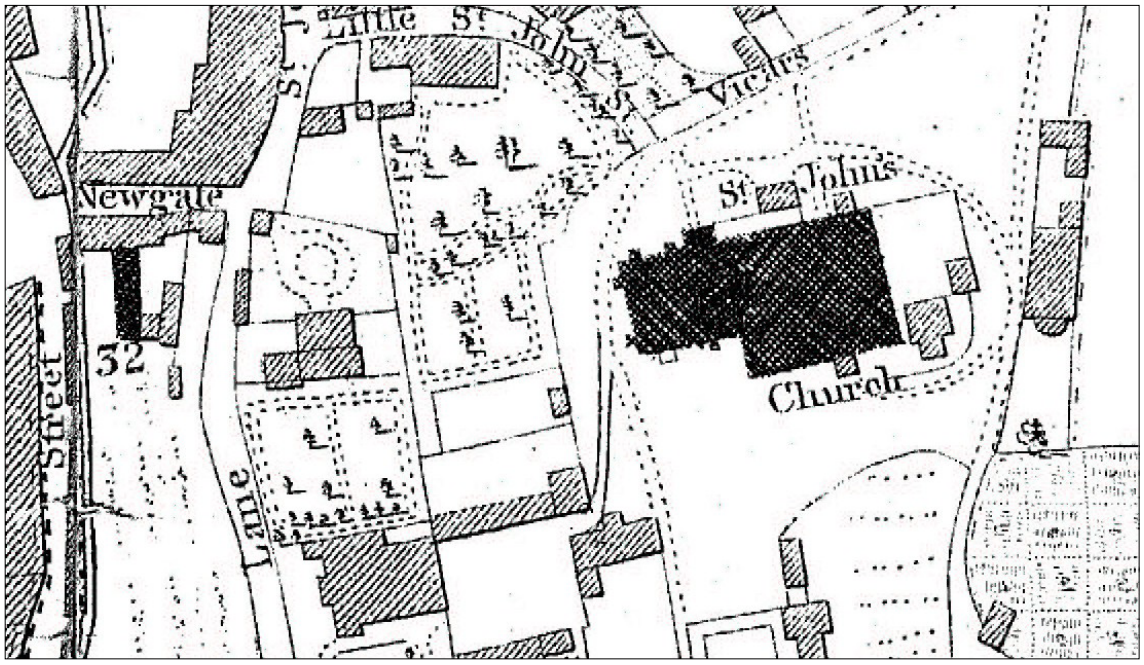


Figure 5: Detail from John Wood's 1833 plan of Chester (reproduced courtesy of Cheshire Archives & Local Studies).

Figure 6: Detail from John McGahey's 1855 view of Chester from a balloon (reproduced courtesy of Cheshire Archives & Local Studies).

a narrow but regular rectangular plan which is three storeys high and has a long, six-bay north elevation, the ground floor of which is completely obscured by tall trees which also hem the house in on all sides. The oval carriage drive at the front, the coach house and stable block to the west and the formal garden to the south – all prominent features of the convent grounds which are shown on earlier and later maps – are also omitted in favour of an extensive arboreous mélange, arousing a reasonable degree of scepticism regarding this depiction as a reliable record.

According to Mary Winefride Sturman, Dee House remained a possession of the Comberbach family until shortly before 1850, when it was purchased by a local Anglican minister, apparently with connections to the nearby St John's Church.[21] It is clear, however, that no Comberbach was resident at Dee House at that time, even if the family still owned the property. Epistolary evidence indicates that the Aldine L Tayler was living at Dee House in 1838,[22] and the presence of the Tayler family at Dee House is further implied by the census return of 1841 which lists Charles Taylor, clergyman aged 40, as resident at St John's Street, in the parish of St John's, Chester, along with Aldine Tayler, aged 35, and four other members of the Tayler family plus a boy of 15 called John Wood and four others, presumably servants.[23] The Comberbachs are not mentioned amongst the other census entries for St John's Street. The Taylers had evidently left Dee House and moved to Lower Bridge Street, Chester, by 1846[24] and Dee House was advertised for sale or let in the Chester Chronicle of 8 October 1847;[25] if the house did change hands at about this time the purchaser may well have been George John Chamberlaine, who is listed on a mortgage document of 1852 as resident at Dee House, although it is not clear that he was also a minister.[26] Whatever the identity of the resident Anglican minister referred to by Sturman he was, it seems reprimanded by his superiors for giving hospitality to Alessandro Gavazzi (1809-89) at Dee House on the occasion of the controversial Italian protestant's tour through Britain.[27] By the early 1850s the house had also, it seems, become very dilapidated.

The Dee House Convent

On 29 January 1854 four nuns arrived in Chester from Birkenhead following the acquisition of Dee House by the Faithful Companions of Jesus.[28] Their original intention was to use the ground for the erection of a church, but this idea was vetoed by James Brown (1812-1881), the first Catholic bishop of the Diocese of Shrewsbury. Catholics were enjoying greater freedoms at this time to own property, openly practise the rituals of their faith and educate their children in the traditions of the Roman church, and it was for this last purpose that Bishop Brown earmarked Dee House.[29] The sisters were immediately set to work establishing a boarding school for girls. 'One of the parlours' was converted into a chapel at this point, though it is not immediately apparent – as the house currently stands – which room this might have been.[30] In her history of the educational activities of the Faithful Companions of Jesus from 1849 to 1999, Mary Campion McCarren states that at first a coach house and hayloft were also used as accommodation for the first real parish school – the boys housed in the coach house, the girls and infants in the hayloft – but that in 1858 the boys moved to a newly-built school in Queen Street while the girls and infants were temporarily accommodated in two rooms on Water Gate Row while a

new building for the school was erected in the grounds of Dee House, the foundation stone of which was laid on 5 November of the same year. When finished the new building apparently consisted of an upper room for girls and a lower room for infants with a gallery running from end to end.[31] According to Sturman, the early use of the coach house and hayloft at Dee House as a parish school was attested by Mother Louise of Dee House who, talking 40 years after the event, described the parish school occupying the site on the right the coach house and hayloft, as the convent gate was entered.[32] Sturman also states that the new school building, paid for by Bishop Brown was erected on the site of the old coach house and that it remained the infants' school until 1872.[33]

Edmund Kirby and the chapel extension

Growing numbers of pupils and the need for a more permanent chapel eventually led the sisters to hire the architect Edmund Kirby (1838-1920) to design a Gothic-style extension to the east of the original house. Kirby was a Liverpudlian and a Catholic. As a young pupil at Sedgeley Park School in Wolverhampton his natural abilities as a draughtsman were encouraged by the Reverend James Moore (d.1873), vice-president of the school (the aforementioned Bishop Brown was president), who eventually secured him an introduction to A W N Pugin (1812-52).[34] He was articled for five years to Pugin's son Edward Welby Pugin (1834-75), first in Birmingham, then at Golden Square, London, from where he trained simultaneously as an architect at the Royal Academy Schools.[35] On finishing his spell with Pugin, Kirby worked briefly for Hardman & Co., a firm of ecclesiastical designers in Birmingham, then became an assistant to the Chester architect John Douglas (1830-1911). He was probably practising on his own by 1863, from a house at 82 Claughton Road, Birkenhead, and by January 1866 he had taken an office in Derby Buildings, 24 Fenwick Street, Liverpool.[36] Judging by the dates, it seems reasonable to assume that the contract to design the extension at Dee House was in hand by the time Kirby made his move across the Mersey, and it is intriguing to speculate upon the precise lines of communication between the Faithful Companions of Jesus in Birkenhead and a young Catholic architect seemingly struggling to establish himself from domestic premises in the same town.

Kirby's basic working plans, elevations and sections date from 1866 (Figures 7, 8 & 9) as does at least one drawing showing details of the extension's northern window- and door-openings, and we may assume that work to make the site ready and sink the foundations commenced in this year.[37] There is also an undated but very possibly contemporary sheet showing external and internal features such as chimney-stacks and fireplaces, and a tracing of plans and sections, again undated, which deals exclusively with the arrangement of the roof timbers and floor joists, presumably for the express attention of the joiners.

The work at Dee House coincided with Kirby's admittance as an Associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects on 25 January 1867.[38] It seems the interior of the extension was being dealt with at around this point, with several near-contemporary drawings showing the architect setting down his intentions for the layout and decoration of the various rooms. There is, for example, a life-size drawing

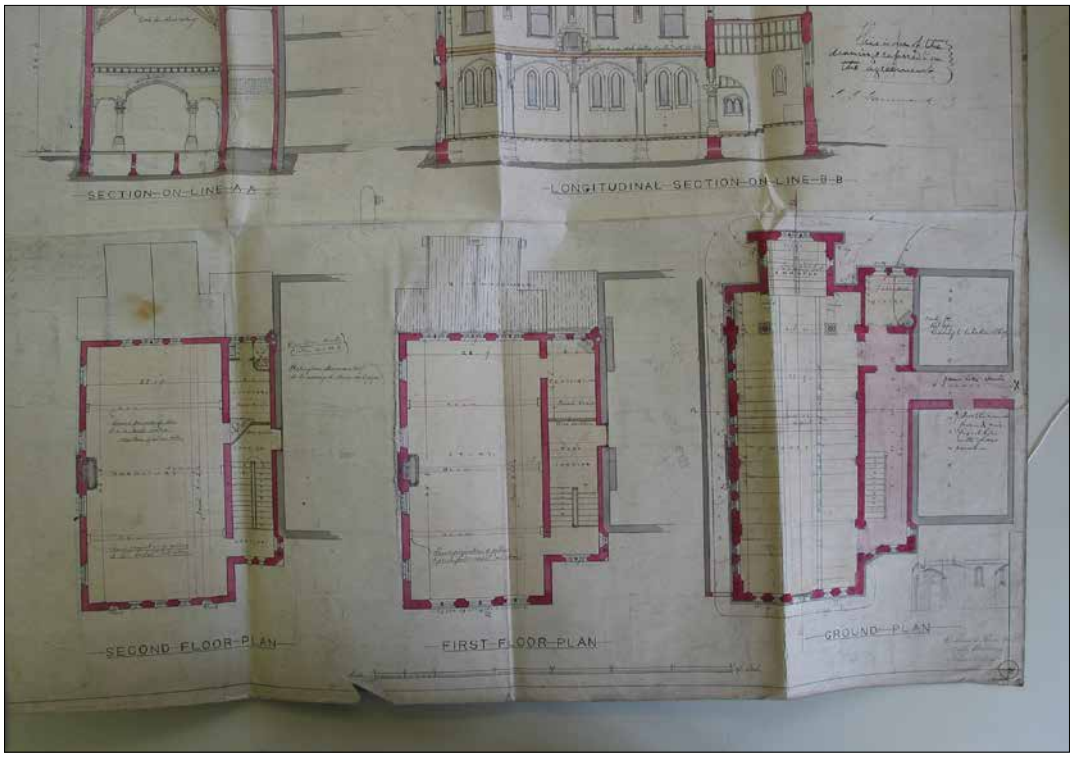


Figure 7: Plan drawings of the chapel extension by Edmund Kirby (© Matthews & Goodman, reproduced courtesy of Liverpool Record Office, Liverpool Libraries).

Figure 8: Elevation drawings of the chapel extension by Edmund Kirby (© Matthews & Goodman, reproduced courtesy of Liverpool Record Office, Liverpool Libraries).

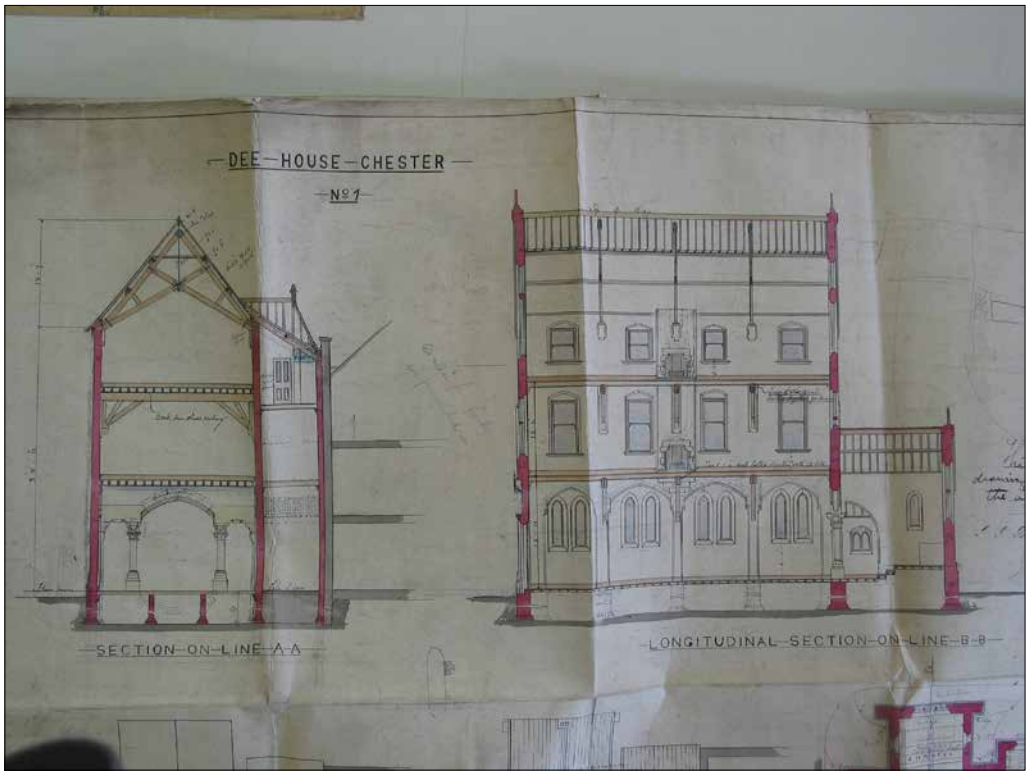


Figure 9: Section drawings of the chapel extension by Edmund Kirby (© Matthews & Goodman, reproduced courtesy of Liverpool Record Office, Liverpool Libraries).

on tracing paper dated 26 February 1867, stipulating the precise form of some trefoil decoration to be carved into the mullion springers of the main chancel window. Drawings produced the following month deal with the structural masonry of the chapel interior, and there are also half-size details of the capitals and bases of the two pillars that frame the passage from the chapel to the chancel (Figure 10). There is also a more general tracing showing the plan of the ground-floor chapel, which though undated, looks as though it may have been made in anticipation of the works just described. Another tracing, again undated, this time showing a range of interior elevations and sections, might relate to the plan of the ground-floor chapel just described. In relation to the second floor, a half-size drawing on tracing paper, dated 14 March 1867, shows details of the fireplaces to be placed in the dormitory.

It seems the exterior of the eastern extension was still being dealt with at this point too. Drawings on tracing paper – one dated 6 March 1867, the other undated but probably contemporary – give life-size details of the forms of moulded brick to be used at two separate windows. Two further drawings, both undated, one showing various exterior brickwork details, the other a tracing showing the original form of the chimneypots, were probably produced at a similar time. There is also a drawing from 1867 showing Kirby's intentions for the front door of the chapel.

Though the extension officially opened on 23 October 1867, when it was consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, it seems there was still much work to be done inside.[39] A drawing dated November 1867 deals for a second time with the bases of the chancel pillars, while several others appear to confirm that designs for various

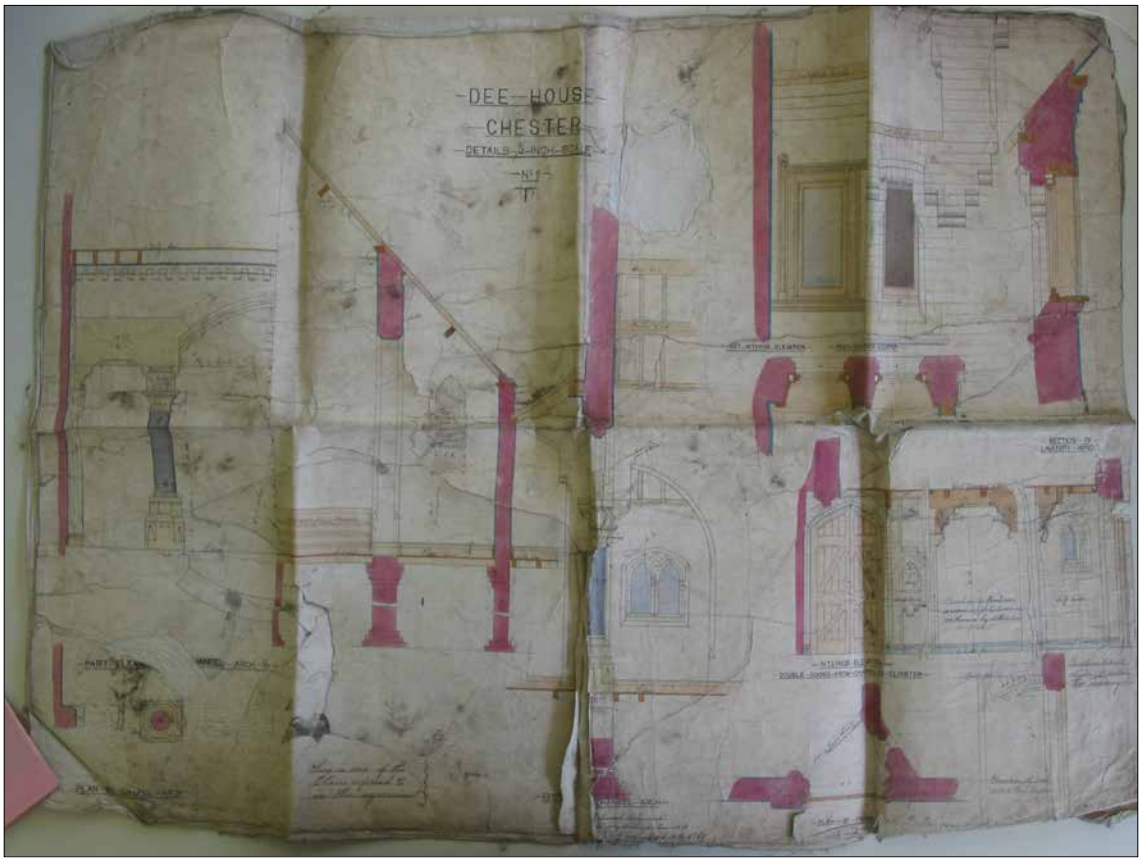


Figure 10: Drawing of the bases and caps of chancel pillars for the chapel extension by Edmund Kirby (© Matthews & Goodman, reproduced courtesy of Liverpool Record Office, Liverpool Libraries).

internal fixtures and fittings were still being worked out fully two years later. There is also a contemporary drawing showing the plan of the roof of the old part of the convent (Figure 11).

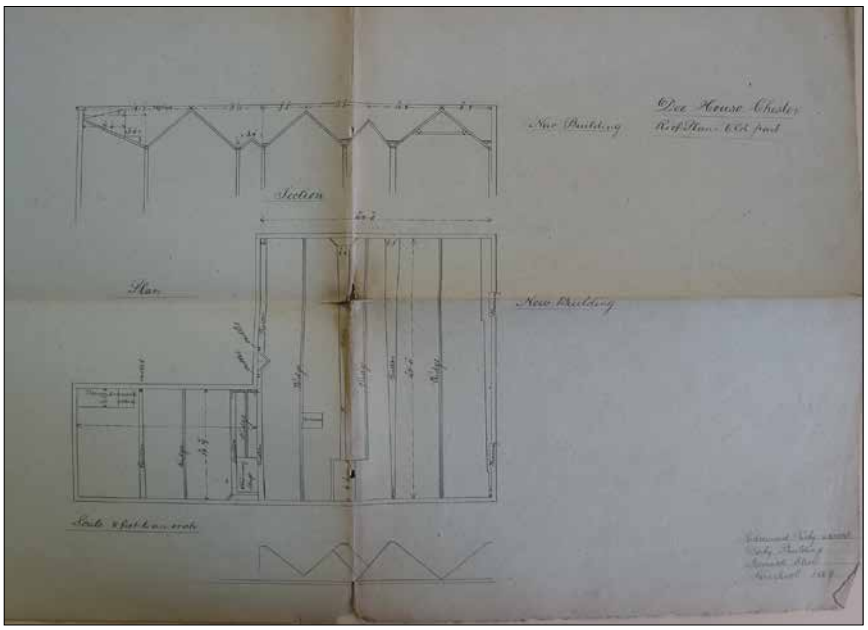


Figure 11: Drawing by Edmund Kirby of the roof of the old part of the house (© Matthews & Goodman, reproduced courtesy of Liverpool Record Office, Liverpool Libraries).

Another plan of the layout of the ground around Dee House was sent by post (dated 8 June 1869) from Chester to Edmund Kirby's Liverpool office. It shows a linear arrangement attached to the school house (which is noted but not depicted and which Kirby had perhaps himself lately rebuilt) of playground, 'building' (with external steps), garden (presumably vegetable), then a passage and then a fowl house and pig sty, forming a narrow range alongside Souter's (formerly Dee) Lane.[40] This arrangement is also depicted on the Ordnance Survey map surveyed between 1871-3 and together with the buildings further north extended southwards from the convent's main entrance all the way to the southern boundary of the plot, skirting the western edge of the rear garden (Figure 12).

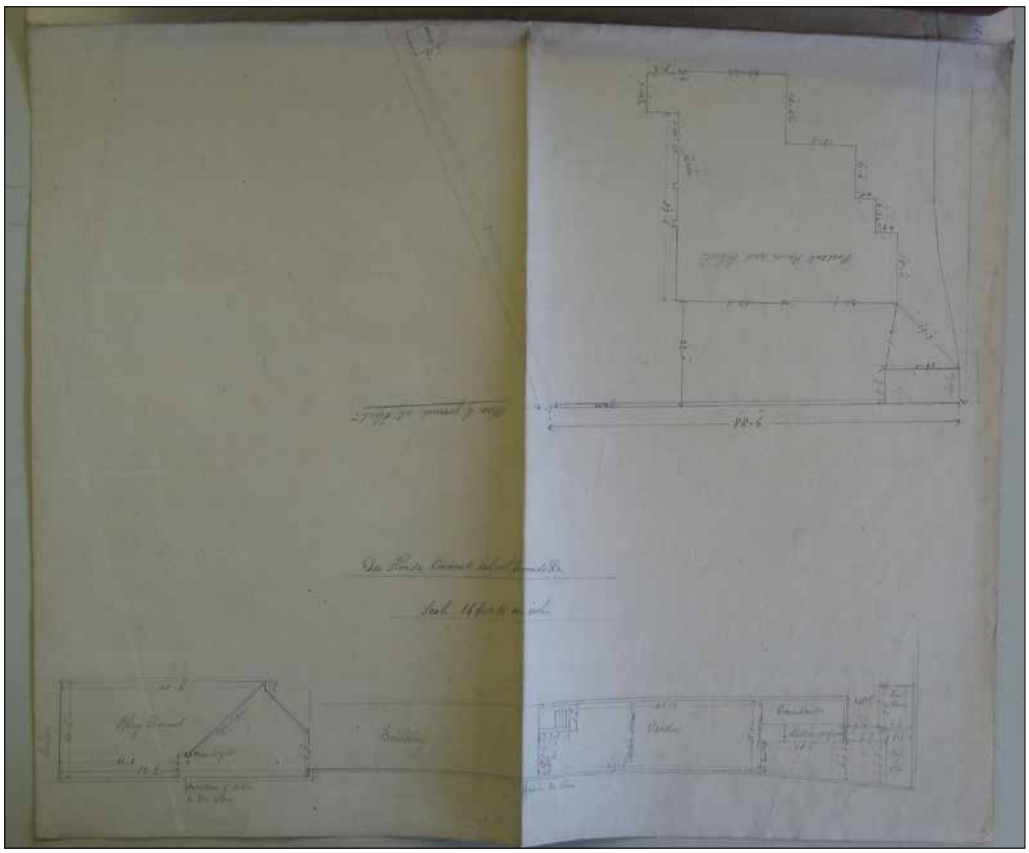


Figure 12: Drawing by Edmund Kirby of the ground around Dee House (© Matthews & Goodman, reproduced courtesy of Liverpool Record Office, Liverpool Libraries).

Kirby was also responsible for a new gate lodge house – now demolished – on the western side of the driveway leading from Little St John Street, but it is difficult to say precisely when this structure was built, due to the architect's initial drawing being undated. Similarities between the paper used for this diagram and that for the design of the 'doors to staircase' hint at a possible date of 1869 and we can certainly date Kirby's alterations to the lodge to 1874, but beyond this our knowledge is speculative.

Late 19th and 20th-century extensions

The date of the western extension to Dee House is even more difficult to pinpoint. According to Sturman 'the adjacent property' – formerly belonging to a prominent Chester citizen by the name of Meadows Frost who was resident at St John's House[41] – was purchased in 1886 'and further extensions were made to the buildings'[42] but it is not known where or what these extensions were. The footprints outlined on Ordnance Survey maps published in 1875[43] and 1899[44] (Figures 13 and 14) do indicate significant developments to the west of the original house during the 25-year period in question, with a smallish structure in front of the service wing seemingly replaced by the more substantial extension we see today.

Figure 13: Detail from Ordnance Survey 1:500 scale town plan of Chester published in 1875 (© Crown Copyright [and database rights] 2016. OS 100024900).

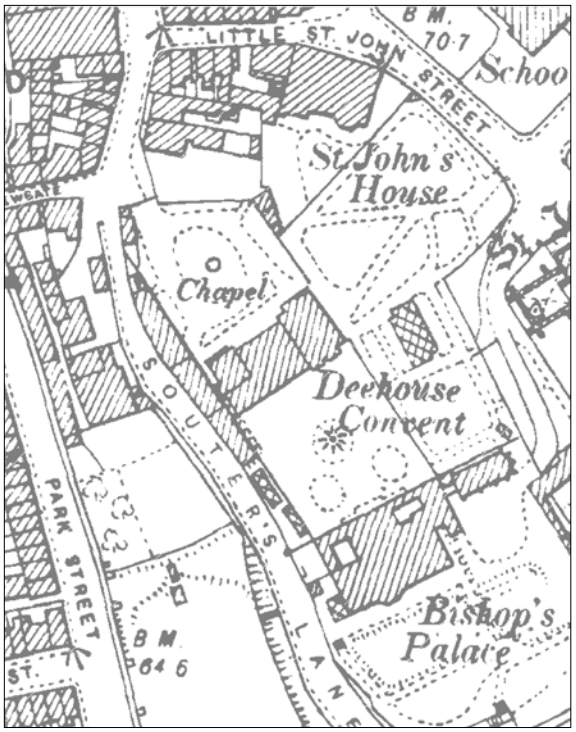


Figure 14: Detail from Ordnance Survey 1:2500 scale map published in 1899 (© Crown Copyright [and database rights] 2016. OS 100024900).

Recognised by the Board of Education for the first time in 1921, the school remained in the hands of the Faithful Companions of Jesus until 1925, when the Ursulines of Crewe took over.[45] A large flat-roofed block containing a gymnasium and classrooms was built in 1929, perpendicular and directly to the rear of the original Dee House (Figure 15), as can be seen from a map of the site made three years later by the Chester and North Wales Architectural, Archaeological and Historic Society. It was during excavations for the building of this extension that a massive, buttressed wall was revealed, nine feet thick and patently of Roman construction.[46] The ancient amphitheatre's rediscovery effectively foiled plans, ongoing at the time, to cut a new by-pass road directly across the area from Pepper Street to Vicar's Lane. A concerted

Figure 15: Part of the rear range at Dee House in 1991 (BB91/26351 © Historic England, photograph: Bob Skingle).

local campaign, supported by national figures such as the archaeologist Mortimer Wheeler (1890-1976), eventually ensured the new road's diversion along the line of the mediaeval Little St John Street.

Further wings were added in 1955 and 1960, containing respectively a domestic science laboratory and library and a physics laboratory and art room, but the institution's days were numbered. The advent of the comprehensive school system and the opening of a new Catholic high school nearby led to the closure of the school at Dee House in September 1976.[47]

Recent history

The building was acquired by Post Office Telephones (later British Telecom) and converted into a telephone exchange with offices and training facilities.[48] It stayed in BT's hands until 1993, when it was sold to Chester City Council. The gymnasium and classroom block of 1929 was demolished in about 1999-2000, along with the wings of 1955 and 1960, and the rear elevation of Dee House, which these additions partially obscured, was made good. The house passed to Cheshire West and Chester Council in 2009, in whose ownership it remains today.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF DEE HOUSE

The original house

Dee House is situated on a flat expanse of ground to the north of the River Dee overlooking the gully of Souter's Lane to the west and with the Church of St John the Baptist to the east. The remaining elements of the first phase are L-shaped in plan with a main rectangular block facing the centre of Chester roughly to the north and a narrower service wing which projects approximately ten metres (three bays) beyond the western edge of the main block and is set back from it at the front, but is in line with it at the rear. The original house is three storeys high, with rebuilt parapets over the front and rear elevations and a storey of cellars occupying the front half of the house below. It is constructed in brick – laid in Flemish bond to the front and an irregular English garden-wall bond to the rear – and has stone dressings on its front elevation, including a plinth, a door-surround, bands on the first and second floors, sills and key-blocks to the windows on each floor, chamfered quoins, an eaves cornice and a rebuilt parapet containing re-used stone from the original coping.

Exterior

The front elevation (Figure 16) is five bays wide and broadly symmetrical, with two windows placed either side of the entrance and corresponding rows of five windows on each floor above; these levels are demarcated by platbands. There are also four windows below ground level on the front elevation of the house, these designed to light the cellars. Though not immediately obvious, careful scrutiny confirms that the windows are more widely spaced to the east of the front door, giving more generous proportions to the higher-status rooms held within this side of the main block. The windows have flat brick arches of gauged brick with imitation mortar joints on many of the splayed heads – a refinement applied for aesthetic reasons and indicative of high levels of craftsmanship and attention to detail. On the ground floor the

Figure 16: The front of the original house (© Historic England, photograph: Adam Menuge).

keystones are slightly broader than those on the floors above, and the openings themselves are marginally squatter on the second floor than on the floors below. The sills are uniformly moulded throughout, but at least three on the ground floor and another on the first have been replaced with pre-cast concrete substitutes.

The door surround has a bolection moulding (Figure 17), suggesting a date probably no later than about 1730. The plinth is moulded too, but in a simpler fashion. The quoins are chamfered where visible on the north-eastern edge of the original frontage, though they are partially covered by the 1867 chapel block which protrudes forward at this side (Figure 18) and obscures the corner. The quoins on the north western corner of the original building are completely covered by the later 19th-century extension which abuts on this side, as are those on the western elevation of the main block and the northern elevation of the service wing. The eaves cornice of the main block is moulded in a manner quite distinct from the mouldings on the sills, plinth and door-surround, being comprised of a cyma above a cavetto. The coping to the parapet is moulded also, but with a double fascia. The parapet – which, as mentioned before, is rebuilt – recedes and projects in direct correspondence with the succession of windows on the floors below. The roof cannot be seen from the ground, other than a low apex glimpsed above and between the first two bays from the east, but, viewed from above, the main house can be seen to now have a double-span, partially-pitched roof, the eastern span being hipped to the front and rear, while the service wing has a pitched roof of one and a half spans.[49]

Figure 17: Bolection moulding on the original front entrance in 1991 (BB91/26352 © Historic England, photograph: Bob Skingle).

Figure 18: Partially concealed quoins at the north-east corner of the original house (© Historic England, photograph: Adam Menuge).

Compared with the smooth red of the front elevation, the brick to the rear appears rough and brown, while the stone features used to dress this elevation are fewer and plainer. There is no plinth, and the bands and projecting eaves are constructed in common brick. The windows have segmental arches without keystones, and the sills, though stone and projecting, are plain. Only the moulding to the parapet coping matches the elaboration of the front. The parapet itself differs, however, in that it is straight, lacking any sort of articulation.

The fenestration of the rear elevation (Figure 19) does not match that of the front. There are seven window bays, of which just four correspond to the five-bay front of the main block. A small ground-floor window between bays three and four, as one looks from east to west, originally gave light to a room just off the kitchen inside, henceforth to be termed the 'parlour'.[50] To the west of this the three remaining bays extend across the back of the service wing, each with a regular, vertical sequence of windows on the ground, first and second floors. In common with the front elevation, the window openings across the rear of the building are shorter on the second floor than on the floors below. The windows on the eastern two bays are unaltered, but the head and jambs of the ground-floor window opening on the third bay appear to have been rebuilt (the segmental arch that was here has been replaced with a straight head), possibly at the same time as this opening was being altered to serve as a doorway. Above, the window opening on the first floor has been widened towards the right, indicated by the fact that it is slightly broader than the segmental arch that heads it and perhaps also by the lack of a sill, though there is no obvious sign to confirm the removal of this feature. After the small window between bays three and four, the fourth bay takes us back to regularity, though there is a sill missing from the window on the ground floor, and the general ratio of wall to window is greater here than at bays one and two. The fifth bay is regular too, despite its first-floor window opening having been slimmed down and shifted slightly to one side, while the second-floor window has been blocked completely. Much rebuilding has taken place at ground-floor level between bays six and seven, but it seems fair to assume that the newly constructed parts simply replicate what was there before.[51] To the right of the ground-floor window on bay seven there is a straight joint, which could indicate that the opening has been narrowed.

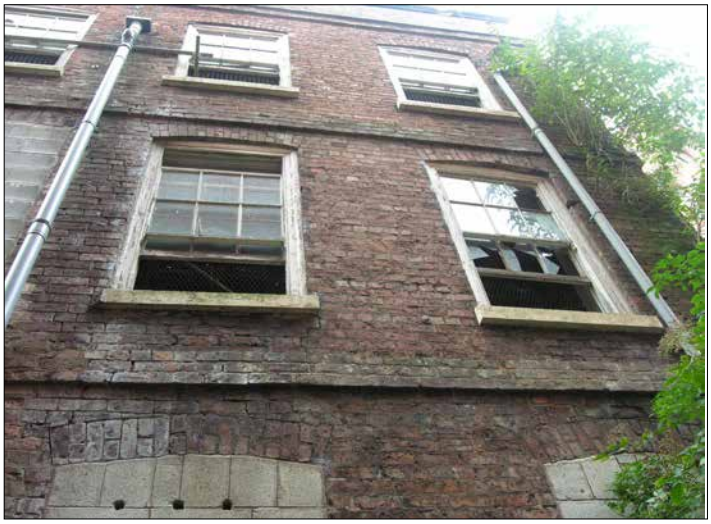


Figure 19: Window bays at the rear of the original house (© Historic England, photograph: Adam Menuge).

The service wing footings run on beyond the western end of the rear elevation, but the corner has been rebuilt at ground-floor level, indicating probably that an adjacent single-storey range has been demolished at some point in the past. There is also a straight joint in the footing, suggesting a phase break.

The eastern corner of the rear elevation is obscured for the most part by the later chapel block, though the parapet returns along the eastern wall for approximately 3.5m, above the line of the single storey chancel and vestry, with the same cornice as on the elevation to the rear. The platband above first-floor window level also returns, but that beneath the first-floor window, if it exists, is not visible. There are two diagonal scars running across the first of these bands, possibly signifying the roof of a now-demolished phase, though they might also have been left by pipes, now removed. In addition to this there is a straight joint beneath the band, which may indicate a blocked window.

Interior

The original house was arranged with the better rooms towards the eastern side of the main block on the ground and first floors, and the smaller, more informal rooms located towards the western side of the main block on the ground floor and above the service wing on the first. The ground floor of the service wing held the kitchen. The residence's main stair, taking in the ground and first floors only, was positioned in the hall at the centre of the house. Another stair, now removed, was most probably located in the corridor at the rear, allowing quick access to and from corridors leading to the front of the service wing on the ground and first floors. A stair in this position would have enabled servants to move discreetly through the house, without recourse to the grand staircase in the main hall. It would also have allowed access to the second floor, the most likely location for servants' living quarters. The house's internal walls are brick, with mostly studwork partitions between the rooms. In most cases the ceilings are constructed of plaster on reeds, and are suspended below the floor above on separate joists.

Ground floor

The original purpose of many of the ground-floor rooms at Dee House is unclear, with the exception of the entrance and stair halls and the kitchen, but, given the layout of the house and what might be expected of a house of this period and of this status and size, this can be speculated upon with some degree of confidence. The entrance hall is situated centrally at the front of the house and is flanked on the west side by a small square room, plain but polite in character, which faces towards the town. It is possible that it was a library, or more probably a private study or office and is herein referred to as the study. To the east of the entrance hall is a larger polite room which was probably the drawing room, and is subsequently referred to as such, assumed to be so because it is adjacent to a further polite room to the rear of about the same size (originally) which is assumed to be the dining room. The dining room faces south east, away from the evening sun, and was served by two doorways, a principal one which opened into the stair-hall and a service one which opened onto a short narrow corridor situated centrally at the rear of the house. This corridor was

probably the rear stair-compartment, in addition to leading to a back door, and lies at the end of a narrow service passage extending westwards to the kitchen. Between the kitchen and the rear stair-compartment is a further room to the south of the service, or kitchen, passage which might have been a servants' hall or more probably a private parlour for the family; it is herein referred to as the parlour.

Describing in sequence what we know of the original character of the ground-floor rooms, the front door of the house opens onto a small lobby or **entrance hall** with a moulded cornice. On entering, one is faced by a large archway (Figure 20) immediately to the south, offering a grand frame to the main stair-hall (though a flimsy partition with a door has been inserted in recent times, obscuring any sort of clear view). The arch is semi-elliptical, with a moulded and keyed archivolt set on cyma-recta-moulded, sunk-panelled jambs – essentially panelled pilasters with entablatures on top instead of plainer imposts. The sunk-panels on the cheeks of the opening make use of simpler ovolo mouldings.

Figure 20: Stair hall archway in 1991 (BB91/26353 © Historic England, photograph: Bob Skingle).

The doorway from the entrance hall to the **study** has architraves dating from a later refurbishment, and most of the other features that originally characterised the room – including the door, the skirting and the cornice – have either been replaced or removed altogether. The architraves on the inside of the doorway are original, however. These are of the same basic form as the slightly wider architraves on the surrounds of the two windows, which frame views towards Chester from

the northern wall of the room. The shutter boxes for these windows have raised and fielded sunk panels, and the risers and soffits are panelled also. The room was heated by a fireplace situated in the middle of the western wall. The chimney-breast survives, but the fire has been blocked and the surround removed.

The most striking original feature in the **large stair-hall** is the staircase itself (Figure 21). Open-string and constructed entirely of wood, it rises over three flights around the open well via two quarter landings. At the curtail step and each of the three landings there are column newels with Tuscan heads, with three twisted-shaft balusters per tread, each with oblong knops and urn-shaped pedestals. Each tread has a rounded-edge nosing with, just below, a cyma-recta moulding and a small bead – embellishments that return along the cheek. The handrail has mirrored torus mouldings along the upper edges and astragals lower down. It traverses the landings using serpentine ramps, with the supporting balusters adjusted in their successive heights so as to negotiate steeply rising corners. Typically among 18th-century staircases, the dado-rail running parallel to the handrail at Dee House mimics precisely the upwards course of its partner and is identical to one half-side of it in terms of mouldings. Below the dado-rail the wooden panelling is raised and fielded, as it is too with the soffit and boxing beneath the staircase. The large window lighting the staircase is not original, built as it is into a straight joint. What appear to be the arched heads of two blocked windows can be seen towards the top of the wall,

Figure 21: The main staircase (© Historic England, photograph: Adam Menuge).

on either side of and at a level with the head of the single window there currently, but a wrinkle in the plaster to the right of the window, roughly three quarters of the way up from the sill, seems to indicate the position of a much lower head to the window previously located on this side; this would make the above feature a relieving arch and nothing more (an odd notion given that it appears deliberately to match the arched head to the south). Conversely the wrinkle could simply be announcing the presence of a lacing timber in the brickwork underneath. This explanation is contradicted, however, by the way in which the wall below has been rebuilt to the right of the straight joint using a pinkish, later brick, which merges with the darker 18th-century brick above the wrinkle.

Scars on the eastern wall of the large stair-hall indicate that the **drawing room** (Figure 22) was entered originally through a doorway, now blocked, directly opposite the foot of the stair. Owing to a comprehensive 19th-century remodelling, few of the room's original 18th-century features remain, but the positions of the window openings at the front of the house and the fireplace on the eastern wall are unchanged, even if the windows themselves, their surrounds and the chimney-piece are all later replacements. The plaster-on-reeds ceiling is original too.

Figure 22: The drawing room (© Historic England, photograph: Adam Menuge).

Though radically truncated in the early 19th century in terms of overall dimensions, the **dining room** retains many of its original fittings. Most striking amongst these is the bolection-moulded chimney-piece on the eastern wall (Figure 23), though it should be noted that this has been moved in response to said truncation – the fire-surround sits asymmetrically on the chimney-breast, though it does now occupy a central position within the room as a whole. The window openings on the back wall and the small service doorway on the wall to the west retain their original positions, with the doorway opening onto the stair corridor at the rear of the house and ultimately giving access to and from the kitchen. The doorway has a cyma-recta-moulded and beaded architrave, most probably original.

Figure 23: Fireplace in the dining room (© Historic England, photograph: Adam Menuge).

The **rear stair-compartment** has been relieved of almost all its original decorative features; indeed, the only surface elements of any significance to survive are two fragments of moulded 18th-century dado-rail on the eastern wall. Interestingly, the first of these respects the northern edge of the doorway through to the dining room, and the rail may once have continued from the southern edge in an uninterrupted line all the way to the rear of the house, though this is difficult to say with any certainty – a brick-deep section of the room's eastern wall has been removed, meaning that the rail only picks up its journey again a metre or so from the back wall. A continuous dado-rail would create problems, however, for the notion that this side of the compartment originally held a service stair running up to the top floor of the house. There must have been a stair of this sort somewhere in the room –

no other room in the house convinces as a likely setting – and the eastern wall does seem the most logical place for such a provision, but a definitive answer remains elusive.

Elsewhere in the rear stair-compartment, the doorway leading to the dining room is original, in terms of location at least, but its architraves have been removed. Similarly, the doorway in the rear wall most probably mimics the position of an original opening, despite the fact that its jambs are built using a newer type of brick and the current form of the brickwork outside suggests it may once have been a window rather than an entrance. On the other hand, it does seem inconceivable that a house of this size and type would ever have made do without a back door for servants, and the proximity of the service stairway makes this particular location entirely plausible.[52] The current door offers no clues, unfortunately, and similarly its architrave, though incorporating classical elements, is probably too narrow to be considered 18th-century. The rear stair-compartment's cornice is gone completely, with the absence of any sort of surface finishing allowing us to see that the ceiling underneath is made of plaster on laths rather than the plaster-on-reeds construction found elsewhere in the house (e.g. the large stair-hall); this suggests it has been replaced at some point in the past. The doorway in the western wall that currently leads directly to the parlour is not original, but the very tall archway further north along the same wall most probably is, especially given that it is respected by the 18th-century dado-rail.

The narrow passageway connecting the house's rear stair-compartment with the rooms of the service wing is original. The first of these, entered through a doorway in the southern wall of said passageway, is the **parlour**.[53] This retains almost none of its 18th-century features, though there is a beam running from the head of the larger of the two windows in back wall, through the flimsy partition that separates the parlour from the service wing corridor, and out as far as the opposite wall of this passageway. The beam has been lathed and plastered in the past, but a carefully-cut chamfer and run-out stop suggests it may once have been exposed, lending weight to the supposition that the parlour was first planned as an informal room for private use by the family of the house. The window-openings in the southern wall occupy their original positions, but the brickwork of the jambs on the larger of these reveals some evidence of a sill, now removed. This implies that the opening was adjusted and extended downwards as far as the floor at some point subsequent to the 19th century; the Victorian skirting currently lining the room has been cut into in a very crude manner. The fireplace, now blocked, was in the centre of the western wall. The construction of the ceiling, by convenient contrast, is revealed thanks to several large holes; like in the rear stair-compartment next door, it is made up of plaster on laths and is most probably a post-18th-century replacement of an earlier plaster-on-reeds ceiling.

The **kitchen** is likely to have occupied the full width of the service range. It was entered through a doorway at the western end of the passageway, though slightly further east than the location of the entrance today. The kitchen has been extensively altered over the years, with the western wall and everything to the west of the window in the southern wall completely rebuilt. The wall to the front of the house

gives nothing away as to the positions of the north-facing windows that may once have been here; an examination of the brickwork beneath the plaster would be needed in order to discover this information. A brick-built cooking area is located within the very large fire recess on the eastern wall of the kitchen (Figure 24). The kitchen ceiling is plaster on laths, with no direct evidence to suggest it was ever plaster on reeds, though it probably was.

Figure 24: Cooking area in the kitchen (© Historic England, photograph: Adam Menuge).

The cellar-stair, which descends directly beneath the second flight of the main stair to the first floor, was reached through a doorway just inside the original entrance to the kitchen, on the northern wall. This stair is made of stone and sets visitors down in the **cellars**, at the western end of a long, narrow chamber, aligned from west to east and taking in the entire width of the main body of the original house. The northern wall of this chamber aligns with the southern wall of the study on the floor above and continues as far as the southern edge of the drawing room fireplace. To the north of the first cellar-chamber, and linked by a doorway directly beneath the archway upstairs, a second chamber takes up the remaining space to the front of the house, with a third, slightly smaller chamber to the east of this, behind a wall running beneath the line of the drawing room's western wall. Chambers two and three are each served by two light-wells, these placed below ground level on the front elevation of the house. With no discernible sources of heat, rubble stone walls and vaulted brick ceilings presumably to reinforce the cold, and given the proximity of the kitchen upstairs, it seems most likely the cellars were used to store food (Figure 25).

Figure 25: Cellar beneath the original house (© Historic England, photograph: Adam Menuge).

First floor

The owners of the house used the stairway from the main stair-hall to reach the first floor. This rises to a landing, square in plan, from which doorways opened onto four rooms: one to the north, one to the south and two to the east. The doorway to the north leads to a bedroom at the front of the house (here termed 'bedroom one'), directly above the study, the entrance hall and the front part of the stair-hall. To the east of the first-floor landing, the more northerly of the two doorways originally gave access to a second bedroom at the front of the house (here termed 'bedroom two'), directly above the ground-floor drawing room. The other doorway to the east of the landing leads to a large bedroom at the back of the house, directly above the ground-floor dining room (here termed 'bedroom three'). Returning again to the first-floor landing, the doorway to the south probably led originally to a stair-landing, this corresponding to the rear stair-compartment between the dining room and the parlour on the floor below. An arched opening – just inside the door from the main landing and directly above the similarly arched opening between the rear stair-compartment and the parlour downstairs – gave access to the first-floor rooms in the service wing of the house. The first of these, directly above the parlour, will henceforth be termed 'bedroom four', with the room over the kitchen being 'bedroom five'.

Of the fixtures and fittings currently found on the **landing**, almost nothing is original, though the doorway through to the back stair has 18th-century architraves and there is scarring to indicate that the room once had a dado rail.

Bedroom one (Figure 26) is entered through a door at the eastern end of the room's southern wall. It has three north-facing windows and was originally heated by a fireplace on the wall to the west, but this is currently blocked and its surround has been removed. Original or later 18th-century fixtures within the room include the architraves on the door leading through from the landing, these featuring cavetto, cyma-recta and cyma-reversa mouldings. The architraves on the middle window of the northern wall are 18th-century too, though the mouldings here are organised differently from those on the door. The shutters belonging to the middle window date from the same century, as does the soffit, this being square rather than splayed like those to the 19th-century windows either side.

Figure 26: Bedroom 1 on the first floor (© Historic England, photograph: Adam Menuge).

In **bedroom two** (Figure 27) a partition has been inserted to the north of what was once the southern wall in order to form a corridor between this room and bedroom three. Originally bedroom two was entered directly from the landing, through the doorway that now gives access to the corridor. None of the woodwork relating to this door is original, however. Bedroom two is now entered through the doorway in its southern wall, which obviously is contemporary with the insertion of the partition and the forming of the corridor. However this does seem to intimate that the shallow recess on the south side of the corridor is in fact original to the bedroom to the north. Very few original features remain in bedroom two itself. The two north-facing windows are in their original positions, but the related joinery is entirely 19th-century. A pair of beams, probably of 18th-century date, running east

Figure 27: Bedroom 2 on the first floor (© Historic England, photograph: Adam Menuge).

to west, can be seen through holes in the ceiling, which is fully under-drawn with a plaster-on-reeds surface to finish. Interestingly, the joists in the ceiling of the corridor – originally part of bedroom two, remember – actually rest on a third beam, this running along the line of the wall adjoining bedroom three and at a level just *below* the joists themselves.

Bedroom three (Figure 28) originally had a door at the northern end of its western wall, giving direct access to and from the landing; this door is now blocked. The shallow recess along the room's northern wall is original, as are the positions of the pair of south-facing windows, these each topped on the inside by timber lintels – a standard feature of the period for buildings with brick arches externally. None of the decorative joinery is original, however. Indeed the only other 18th-century features that remain in the room are two beams running from north to south and terminating in a huge, secondary timber made of pine, which runs from east to west. The rest of the ceiling has been removed. Inconsistencies in the brickwork at the top of the chimney-breast indicate that it has been widened at some point in the past, most probably in response to re-arrangements in the dining room directly below, which took place in the late-1860s; the current position of the fireplace corresponds to the chimney-breast as widened. Half of the wall that once separated bedroom three from the stair-landing to the west has been removed, enabling us to see the composition of what remains: studwork with brick infill panels.

Figure 28: Bedroom 3 on the first floor (© Historic England, photograph: Adam Menuge).

The soffit of the archway that separates the **stair-landing** from the corridor leading to bedrooms four and five is panelled (Figure 29) – a refinement that cogently illustrates the differences in function between the rear wing of the house on this floor and the service wing on the floor below, where the corresponding archway is plain. Little or nothing else that remains in the room is original.

Figure 29: Panelled archway between the stair-landing and the rear first-floor corridor (© Historic England, photograph: Adam Menuge).

The **corridor** to the service wing has a door in its southern wall, at the eastern extreme of its length giving access to bedroom four. Interestingly, a close examination of the wall itself – particularly when viewed from inside bedroom four – reveals it to be butted up against a joist in the ceiling above, rather than extended up through the floor; this means the wall is a simple partition and was never intended to act structurally. Originally the corridor would have been shorter than it is today, with a doorway roughly half way along its current length leading directly to bedroom five.

As well as conforming to its original layout, **bedroom four** has more 18th-century fittings than any other room in the house. The doorways and window openings all remain in their original positions, as does a cupboard slightly to the north of the fireplace (Figure 30), and the joinery that goes with these features is almost exclusively of the 18th century. Interestingly, the mouldings on the architraves of the doors to the corridor, to bedroom five and to the cupboard are identical to those found on the middle window of bedroom one, which very probably confirms this as the original decorative treatment. The four-panel doors in bedroom four are all 18th-century too, though that leading to the corridor has had its two top panels replaced with glazing. There are two large, L-shaped hinges on the room-side of this door and appropriately plain, sunk panels, whereas those on the corridor-side are raised and fielded; this would seem to corroborate the decorative hierarchy that once existed between the semi-public passageway and the adjacent, essentially private bedrooms.

Figure 30: Bedroom 4 on the first floor (© Historic England, photograph: Adam Menuge).

The western wall of **bedroom five** (Figure 31) once formed the outer wall of the house, so we can say with some certainty that the doorway at the southern end of this wall is not original, though it may possibly have been a window at one time. The same applies to the matching doorway, now blocked, at the northern end of the same wall. Bedroom five was entered through a doorway to the north of the fireplace, but this arrangement was superseded by the extension of the adjacent corridor in the later 19th century. Segmental arches of alternating headers and stretchers indicate that the room would once have had two windows on its northern wall (now the north wall of the corridor). This is confirmed by the remnants of two large sandstone sills. The windows overlooked ground to the west of the building's main body – the same ground, in fact, that would have been visible from the large windows of the main stair-hall – and were seemingly designed with languid surveillance in mind; supporting bricks in the corners show where seat-shelves would once have been placed. The only element in the room itself that remains from the 18th century is the ceiling, which is composed of plaster on reeds and is fully under-drawn.

Figure 31: Bedroom 5 on the first floor (© Historic England, photograph: Adam Menuge).

Second floor

Due to the possible presence of asbestos, English Heritage was not able to examine the second floor of Dee House at the time of survey, though an idea of its current layout is provided by plans drawn up in the 1970s (with revisions in the mid and late-1980s) by Post Office Telephones, the building's owners at that time. These suggest a plan roughly analogous to that found on the first floor, although it does

seem that later partitions may have been put in place to subdivide the room directly above bedroom one.

Early 19th-century refurbishments

The interiors at Dee House give evidence for at least three separate phases of remodelling during the early 19th century, with a great many original features altered or replaced in this time. In addition to a first stage in which the partition originally placed between the drawing room and the dining room was moved roughly a metre and three-quarters to the south (this may even have happened prior to the early 19th century), comparisons of mouldings and other types of evidence suggest that the drawing room and dining room on the ground floor and bedrooms two and three on the first floor were remodelled later as part of a second stage, with bedroom one, the corridor between bedrooms two and three, and bedrooms four and five done later still.

Ground floor

The **drawing room** witnessed the most changes during the early 19th century, with all of the room's joinery replaced, the original entrance opposite the main stair blocked and a new doorway inserted, giving access from the eastern wall of the entrance hall, just to the right as one enters the front door of the house. The surround to this door is synonymous with the early 19th-century joinery still found throughout the drawing room. It consists of architraves with reeds and an ogee moulding, but instead of being intercepted by plinths, as is often the case with architraves of the period, the mouldings run all the way to the floor, and there are two undecorated, sunk blocks at the top corners. The two windows on the north wall have, in addition to similarly decorated architraves, moulded and sunk panel rises, splays and soffits. The top edge of the room's skirting incorporates an ogee moulding similar to that found on the door and window architraves, and there is a large, reeded insert half way down the fixture's primary plane. The cornice also dates from the early 19th century. It consists mainly of reeds, these running along the flat of the ceiling. The fireplace (Figure 32) is of the period too and incorporates Tuscan pilasters and a frieze of pulvinated reeds, these set in panels either side of a raised and moulded oblong centrepiece.

Arguably the most remarkable addition to survive in the drawing room is the scheme of applied decoration, which consists of imitation panelling along the walls, with quadrants in the various corners, all painted in subtle tones of ochre and red (Figure 33). On the north wall the panels are interspersed between the windows, while on the east and west they pay heed, respectively, to the fireplace and the doorway. The decoration may be taken, with caution, as an indicator for the date of the remodelled drawing room, with the interior design specialist Ian C. Bristow noting the way in which 'this treatment of the wall with applied panels found parallel expression in paint, and (possibly again as a result of Continental influence) became quite common. The use of painted panels surrounded by raised gilt mouldings was mentioned by John Pincot and advocated by George Smith in 1812 and 1826; and gilded pressed-metal strips and corner ornaments such as those still existing in the

Figure 32: Early-19th-century fireplace in the drawing room (© Historic England, photograph: Adam Menuge).

Figure 33: Early-19th-century applied decoration in the drawing room (© Historic England, photograph: Adam Menuge).

Sultana Room at Attingham became commercially available for the purpose. In 1819 and 1820 respectively, Buckler depicted the Drawing Rooms at 45 Grosvenor Square and 33 Upper Brook Street, London, with panels which appear to have been painted in this way; and a view of about 1830 shows the Drawing Room at 45 Bedford Square, London, with the same treatment'.[54] It should be noted, however, that despite the presence of consistent decoration on the south wall at Dee House, it seems the original partition that stood here was removed at some point prior to the remodelling and replaced by the wall currently separating the corridor next door from the dining room further south. The south wall as it stands today is in fact the work of Edmund Kirby, and as such will be discussed later.

Having originally been much larger, the **dining room** was reduced to its present dimensions as part of the first phase of changes taking place in the early 19th century. The room's northern wall, which is made of timber with brick panels, dates from this time, and the fireplace – which though clearly original, is placed asymmetrically on the chimney-breast – was probably moved also. Most everything else still seen in the room is original.

First floor

Similarities between decorative features seem to indicate that **bedroom two** and **bedroom three** were remodelled at the same time as the drawing room downstairs. Bedroom two has a cornice that at one time incorporated four corner blocks, though only one of these remains today – in the north-eastern corner of the room. There are reed mouldings and corner blocks on the door- and window-surrounds, together with a skirting board incorporating the by-now-familiar early 19th-century motif of the single, flush reed.[55] Bedroom three has a four-panelled door with tall upper panels and shorter panels below, which perhaps inconveniently suggests a date in the 1830s or 1840s. It should be noted, though, that the door mouldings do not quite match the architraves, which are identical to those found in bedroom two. The door was perhaps fitted later.

In addition to the drawing room and bedrooms two and three, the architraves on two of the doors leading off the **first-floor landing** indicate that this room was probably remodelled at the same time as the others.

The next stage of the early 19th-century remodelling is exemplified by a **first-floor corridor** (Figure 34) which runs from the landing to the eastern edge of the original house, between bedrooms two and three. The corridor was formed by the insertion of a studwork partition towards the southern end of bedroom two. As well as the doorway from the landing that originally led to bedroom two, the corridor has facing doorways in its northern and southern walls, these giving access to the rooms at the front and back of the house.[56] The doorways have several details in common with the early 19th-century designs found in bedrooms two and three and also in the drawing room downstairs, such as corner blocks and a gathered-reed moulding as part of the architraves, but they also have an echinus moulding – a Greek Revival feature that post-dates the second decade of the 19th century and features nowhere in the other three rooms. This verifies with reasonable certainty

Figure 34: First-floor corridor between bedrooms 2 and 3 (© Historic England, photograph: Adam Menuge).

the fact that the corridor belongs to a separate phase. In addition to this, the flush reed inserted half way down the skirting board in the corridor can be seen to be identical to that in bedroom two, which rather confirms the fact that this particular feature pre-dates the partition wall. However, the cornice in the corridor only runs along the east and west ends rather than wrapping around as it would if added in response to the formation of a new room (Figure 35) and both partitions appear to butt up against it. It doesn't match up with the cornice in bedroom two either, so it can't simply be explained as an element that pre-dates the insertion of the partition wall, but might point to an earlier phase during which the east side of the first floor was without division and perhaps served as a large saloon or drawing room.[57] It is also possible that the partition separating bedrooms 2 and 3 was originally an open frame between the front and rear, giving a sense of two spaces, which was itself an insertion and which was later converted into a partition, hence the shallow recesses on either side of this partition wall.

Bedroom one has a four-panelled door with tall upper panels and shorter panels below, which suggests a date no earlier than the 1830s or 1840s for the second phase of early 19th-century remodelling. In an effort, perhaps, to correspond with design features in the earlier phase, sunken beads have been added to the door, running horizontally between the upper and lower panels, and vertically down the middle. The cornice in bedroom one includes torus and triple-reed mouldings, this running along the flat of the ceiling in a way that deliberately echoes the ceiling of the drawing room. More pertinently, however, the cornice of bedroom one shares several features in common with that in the first-floor corridor, and this fact confirms that the fittings in the two rooms were done contemporaneously. The matter is confused, however, by the joinery of the two outer windows on the northern wall of bedroom

Figure 35: First-floor cornice detail (© Historic England, photograph: Adam Menuge).

one, which probably dates from the same early 19th-century period as the cornice and the door, but has been done in such a way as to imitate the 18th-century joinery of the middle window. The architraves of the outer windows appear almost identical, but the shutters and soffits and the ovolo mouldings of the later panels are thicker, while the panels themselves are flatter, without the pronounced fielding of those done earlier. The skirting below, which includes a torus moulding, has not been interrupted by the imitation joinery of the windows, so it is safe to assume it is contemporaneous. The dado rail, in the places where it remains, is more obviously linked to the early 19th-century refurbishments due to its inclusion of a three-part reed as the central moulding. The surround of the fire that once warmed the room has gone completely, but it seems fair to assume it was replaced in the early 19th century.

Bedroom four and **bedroom five** were most probably remodelled at the same time as bedroom one. The cornice in bedroom four has a diminutive version of the same three-part reed moulding found in several other rooms in the house. The motif also forms part of the skirting and there is a reeded scheme of decoration to be seen on the cheeks and basket of the room's fire-grate, as well as a leaf motif on the back that is entirely in keeping with the early 19th-century themes explored throughout the rest of the room. The cornice in bedroom five is similar. Tellingly, though, the skirting in this room, in addition to a torus moulding at the top, has the same chamfered lower part as found in bedroom one.

The chapel wing extension

Before considering the chapel wing proper, we should look first at changes made to the original block of Dee House in anticipation of the extension. The first of these is found between the drawing room and the dining room on the ground floor, where a corridor or passage runs west to east from a doorway on the east side of the main stair-hall. Kirby's plans (See Figures 7-9) suggest that the southern wall of the drawing room was reinstated at this time in order to form said corridor, which means in turn that the painted decoration of the drawing room-side of this wall was applied in imitation of the scheme found throughout the rest of the room.

The corridor terminates with a doorway at the eastern edge of the original house, giving direct access to a narrow stair hall, labelled 'CLOISTER' on Kirby's plan, within the chapel block. The joinery relating to this doorway belongs undoubtedly to Kirby, but we should keep in mind the possibility that the opening may well date from earlier, working either as a side door to the original house or as a point of access between that and the second 'mansion' that may or may not have been here before the chapel-wing extension was built. Openings into the drawing room and the dining room face each other from the side walls of the corridor. The cornice and skirting of this **ground-floor corridor** take in the entire room, while the architrave moulding on the corridor-side of the drawing room doorway makes use of a Gothic-style splay cut, thus providing a telling association with the erection of the chapel block next door. The corridor has a recess in its southern wall.

The ground-floor corridor is further from the front of the house than its equivalent corridor on the floor above, with the result that the drawing room is larger than bedroom two, and the dining room significantly smaller than bedroom three. The partition wall on this floor is the one to the south rather than the north; partly for this reason and partly because Kirby's plans confirm the fact, there can be little doubt that it was inserted at a different time from that on the floor above. Indeed it seems entirely reasonable to assume, as we have done already, that the **first-floor corridor** was formed long before the erection of the chapel block extension. However, the doorway at the eastern end of this corridor was most probably punched through in the 1860s to give a point of entry to the new wing. There would be no reason for a doorway in this position at any time prior to the building of the chapel block, and though the corridor-side architraves appear at first to be quite similar to the early 19th-century types found elsewhere in the corridor, closer inspection reveals telling peculiarities. Not least among these are the corner blocks at the head of the doorway, which have both had decorative inserts of oak leaves modelled in plaster, whereas those belonging to the earlier doorways appear always to have been plain. Looking elsewhere, there are Gothic-style splay-cuts on the imposts of the pilasters that frame the shallow recess of the corridor's southern wall; interestingly, these appear to be mirrored by similar mouldings on the northern wall of **bedroom three**. The dado rail in the corridor is also not original to it and where part of it has fallen away an earlier two-part paint scheme (black and red, upper and lower) is revealed beneath.

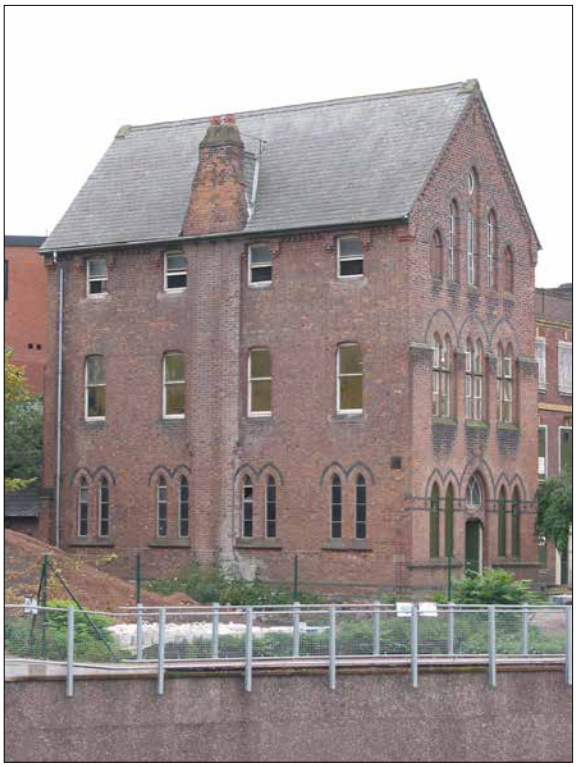


Figure 36: The chapel-wing extension (© Historic England, photograph: Adam Menuge).

Exterior

Moving on to the chapel wing proper (Figure 36), the main body is rectangular in plan, with a stair-turret forming a second, much narrower rectangle immediately adjacent to the original block of Dee House the ground floor marked as 'CLOISTER' on Kirby's plan (see above and Figures 7-9), and a single-storey chancel and adjacent vestry at the southern end. Like the original house, the chapel wing faces north by north-west, but it also has an entirely open elevation to the side, which looks east by north-east. For the sake of convenience these outlooks will henceforth be described as north and east. The building has three storeys, though a half-landing in the staircase, between the ground floor and the first floor of the main block, has been demarcated with its own windows on the front and west elevations of the stair-turret. It is constructed in red brick in Flemish bond, with red St Helens sandstone sills, transoms, springers at the tops of the mullions on the first floor and an apex at the coping of the main part of the roof.[58] Dark blue brick has been used to form framing bands over the windows on the ground, first and second floors, as well as the first- and second-floor windows on the stair-turret. There is also a chamfered band of blue bricks topping the plinth, and a roll set in a cavetto running into pyramid stops at the sides of the main entrance. A band of dog-tooth moulded brick runs just beneath the ground-floor windows, and rows of dentils line the verges on the north gable, as well as the eaves cornice of the stair-turret. The roof is covered in Welsh slate, laid in irregular courses, with ridges of rolled clay.

The front elevation of the main part of the chapel block is three bays wide, symmetrical and sets back above a chamfered course at the impost-level of the first-floor windows, with a further bay to the front of the stair-turret. The ground floor of the main part has a simple battened-wood door at the centre, headed by a chamfered

stone lintel with a shouldered arch and, above this, an iron-framed fanlight with two pointed-arch swing casements, all set in a chamfered, pointed-arch recess. There are paired window-openings flanking the door on each side, these too with pointed arches. The first floor has three sets of paired window-openings, again with pointed arches and this time with transoms. Here too the glazing is fixed and iron-framed. The second floor has five single lights, again with iron-framed, fixed windows and swing casements, all set in pointed recesses with the tallest at the centre, extending up into the gable and headed by a mandorla, and the other four decreasing in size in two steps either side. The two outer windows are blind. The single-bay elevation of the stair-turret has paired windows in pointed arches on the first and second floors (those on the first floor have transoms and are a good deal taller than the ones above and below) and also on the half-landing between the ground and first floors. This particular pair is headed by a relieving arch of raised brick, the design of which is unique throughout the building. The ground floor has two small single lights, the first on the main elevation, the second set in a squinch at the angle between the main block and the stair-turret. The squinch window has a pointed arch, while the other is topped by a Caernarfon arch, but with chamfers to its head and haunches. The same system of fenestration is repeated on the little side elevation of the stair-turret, but with single windows on the half-landing, first and second floors instead of paired.

The side elevation to the east is four bays wide, with paired pointed-arch window-openings on the ground floor, single shouldered-arch window-openings with chamfered heads on the first, and straight-headed window-openings on the second, these framed by projecting stacks with tumbled shoulders, descending down from a corbel table, partially dentilled, at the eaves. The windows – where visible, on the first and second floors – are sashes while those of the ground floor are iron-framed with swing casements. The chimney-breast splits the elevation into equal halves. It broadens at a midway point between the ground and first floors, and again at the eaves. It also has two shoulders at ground-floor level. The chimney-stack has two corresponding shoulders of tumbling brickwork, with a third shoulder encompassed within the stone cap. The cap is topped by two terracotta chimney-pots.

The decorative treatment of the rear elevation (Figure 37) is very nearly as elaborate as that to the front, suggesting that the ground at the back of the building was intended always to be open and accessible. There is the same setting back arrangement at first-floor level as found on the elevation to the north, and the fenestration on the first and second floors is similar too, though slightly simpler in some of its details. The three sets of paired window-openings at first-floor level are precisely the same as those on the front, but slightly smaller. The second floor is different, however, with four pointed-arch window-openings – a pair with transoms flanked by two single lights, all the same size, without the recesses found at the front, meaning that the mandorla at the head of the gable is singled out as a feature in its own right. There is the same dentilled treatment of the eaves as at the front, and the window-openings are framed in similar bands of dark-glazed brick. The windows are iron-framed, again like those to the front.

A single-storey, gabled back-building encloses the ground floor of the main block to the rear, providing a setting for the chancel and altar at the southern end of the

Figure 37: The rear of the chapel-wing extension (© Historic England, photograph: Adam Menuge).

nave inside, with small transepts to the west and east. The building has, on its main southern elevation, a tripartite window with moulded stone sills, transoms and ogee arches, with the same dark brick banding and eaves dentils as found elsewhere. The elevation is shouldered with tumbling brickwork, with a stone cross at the apex of the gable and another in relief at the centre of the plinth. The west elevation of the back-building is two bays wide and projects out at the bay immediately adjacent to the main block, forming transepts. Each bay has a pair of pointed-arch window-openings, with those to the south considerably larger than the ones on the transept bays to the north.

Interior

Inside, the ground floor is taken up by a **chapel**, with the altar to the south behind a screen that includes a corbel table along its pointed segmental chancel arch and stone columns to the east and west, these topped by capitals carved abundantly with flowers and single angels above (Figure 38). The angels face the altar, that to the east holding a palm, the one to the west bearing a ribbon with the incised axiom 'SANCTUS'. The chancel arch is flanked by openings with chamfered and carved ashlar lintels, supported by the columns and by pilaster strips which are corbelled out at the tops, beyond which are ledged lancet niches set within the chapel's south wall. The sanctuary occupies a single-storey gabled projection from the centre of the south wall and is lit from the south by a single window of three lancets. The rest of the chapel is lit by windows on the east side of the interior which are placed on panels, these separated by piers. The piers, five per wall in total, have stone corbels on which are carried wooden beams, splayed out, with a flitched beam of Baltic pine

Figure 38: Ground floor of the chapel-wing extension looking south in 1991 (BB91/26355 © Historic England, photograph: Bob Skingle).

just to the north of the chancel arch. There is another corbel table at ceiling-level along the north wall. The walls of the interior are currently plastered and probably always have been so, given the rough way in which the original brick underneath is laid.

The floors of the extension are connected by a wooden staircase (Figure 39) running up through the **turret** on the west side of the building, which is reached through a large, depressed-arch doorway at the northern end of the west wall of the chapel, on the right as one enters from the front. There is a little pointed-arch niche just inside this doorway on the turret-side, with a basin or stoup for holy water; this allowed residents to cross themselves before entering the chapel. Corbels either side of the doorway indicate the former positions, no doubt, of iconic statuettes. The staircase has alternating turned and chamfered balusters, one each per tread, and chamfered newels with trefoils and domed finials marking the start of each flight on the journey up through the turret. The newels are of oak, the balusters of pine. A moulded oak hand-rail links these elements, while the treads are moulded and made of pine, as is the skirting up as far as the first floor. A simple flush skirting of cement – a material most often associated with areas that are expected to be busy – lines the walls on the floors above.

Figure 39: Staircase in chapel-wing extension (© Historic England, photograph: Adam Menuge).

The staircase splits in two at the half-landing between the ground and first floors, with one flight leading to a first-floor doorway in the eastern wall of the turret at the front of the building, and the other to a doorway in the same wall at the rear. The doorways are straight-headed with chamfered architraves and Gothicising corner posts featuring a variety of splay-cut mouldings. This decorative treatment is uniform for the door and window architraves throughout the rest of the extension. Where they remain, the doors themselves are also generic, with two large upper sunk-panels and smaller ones lower down. There are pyramid stops at the bases of the panels and scroll stops above.

The doorways on the first floor of the turret's eastern wall give two points of access to the main room on this storey, one entrance for children and the other presumably for their teachers; the chamber seems to have been planned as a large and well-lit **first-floor classroom** (Figure 40). It is a single space, its walls lined with piers and panels. The panels to the east hold four timber sash-and-case windows. The piers have stone corbels, on which are held the ceiling-supporting beams, these for the most part pragmatic and undecorated. On the southern wall the windows are paired and have pointed arches, with the gabled head of the back-building outside echoed in a triangular element that pushes up into the middle pair.

The **second-floor dormitory** (Figure 41) is also accessed via doorways at the front and back of the building, and has the same panels-and-piers arrangement to its walls as seen on the floors below. The fireplace on the eastern wall has a chamfered lintel over shouldered jambs, with splay-cuts running down the outer edges of these cheeks. Looking up through gaps in the later tiled ceiling, one can see that

Figure 40: First-floor classroom in chapel-wing extension (© Historic England, photograph: Adam Menuge).

Figure 41: Second-floor interior of chapel-wing extension (© Historic England, photograph: Adam Menuge).

the original eaves treatment is stepped with round-sided bricks. The roof trusses above this are scissor-braced, with a saltire-shaped iron fixing where they join in the middle. The upper ends of the scissor-braces dovetail with the principal rafter and are secured by an iron strap.

Later 19th-century extension

The extension to the west of the 18th-century Dee House fills the space that once existed between the front elevation of that building and the service wing to the rear, overlapping the quoins on the western edge of the original building's facade. The extension was designed to balance the Gothic chapel wing to the east, but in a way that was more sympathetic to the style of the original house. Indeed the intention seems to have been to mimic the original house to such an extent as to make the later 19th-century wing appear original too.

Exterior

The extension is three storeys high and four bays wide at the front (Figure 42) and at the rear it projects westwards of the line of the original service wing by one bay. Because the extension is intended as a facsimile of the original house, a description is probably best given in terms of the ways in which it differs from the original house, rather than the ways in which it conforms. For instance, the Ruabon brick

Figure 42: Late-19th-century extension to the west of the original house (© Historic England, photograph: Adam Menuge).

with which it is constructed is brighter and more orange in colour than the dark red brick of the house. There are ventilation openings with decorative terracotta covers between the windows on each floor, whereas the original has no such provision. The spaces between these windows are regular and precise (three headers, two stretchers), in contrast to the pragmatic variations found adjacent. The left jamb of the eastern-most windows and the right jamb of those furthest to the west have closing bricks; the corresponding windows on the original building do not. Most of the stone details (the plinth, the keystones, etc.) remain unpainted on the extension, though it should be noted that the paint seen on the adjacent 18th-century dressings may not necessarily be original. Interestingly, the stone sills on the extension – one of the few elements here that have been painted – have block endings, in correspondence with the concrete replacements on the original building rather than the stone sills first inserted. The later building has also been provided with an elaborate rainwater hopper of cast iron between the heads of the middle windows on the second floor, with a box-section down-pipe (replaced with a circular pipe lower down the building) running to a drain on the ground.

The western elevation of the extension is blind as far back as the stair-turret, which has been built just to the north of the corridor and kitchen in the service wing. There are paired windows at the first and second floors of the turret, with a window and a door on the ground floor, all blocked. The openings have segmental brick arches, with simple stone sills beneath. The platbands, which continue round the side of the extension from the front, terminate as they reach the turret, but the bricks used for this tower have been carefully matched in size so as to cause a minimum of disruption in the coursing at the join with the original building. Remnants of the platbands that originally lined the front elevation of the service wing can just be seen where the extension butts up. Beyond the turret, and the end of the original service wing, the western elevation continues for a further bay, though it appears this was all but blind until relatively recent times on the first and second floor. A solitary window-opening, now blocked, on the second floor towards the southern end of the wall has the same segmental brick arch as found on the openings to the north of the turret, and also at one time had a sill, though this has been removed. The elevation to the south of the turret has a single platband just above second floor level, which at one time was cut into by the window just described. The parapet above, like those on the front and rear elevations, has been rebuilt. Possibly the most interesting thing about the elevation is the straight joint just north of centre on the wall, running from the ground to a little below the second floor. At ground-floor level it interrupts a blocked archway, providing seemingly conclusive proof that this section of the elevation has been rebuilt, possibly in response to the later 20th-century extension that once enclosed this part of the building. The blocked doorway and window-opening currently found at ground-floor level are also later 20th-century insertions. Another straight joint just east of the westernmost window on the ground floor of the southern elevation shows where the rebuilding work began on this particular wall.

Interior

The extension incorporated a **stair-well** immediately to the west of the main stair-hall in the original Dee House, probably with a skylight at the top (there is no

other way of explaining how it might have been illuminated, the light from exterior windows being obstructed by rooms on all sides) but any evidence of such a feature has been lost to a fire. On the ground floor the stair-well was lined with white bricks in order to maximise the illumination coming down through the space and also into the main stair-hall of the house, from which it is overlooked by the large arched window above the staircase. On the first floor the extension's staircase changed from a single flight along the northern wall to a landing with flights leading up along the southern wall and down along that to the west. Two more half-landings, in the south-east and north-east corners of the well, took residents to the second floor. Regrettably, the entire staircase has been lost to the same fire that claimed the skylight, but scars on the walls of the well confirm the course of its journey, as well as that of a moulded handrail.

What appears to be a straight joint can be seen in the north-east corner of the room immediately west of the kitchen, suggesting that this space was probably added as part of the extension, in all likelihood for use as a **scullery**. The straight joint previously described on the rear elevation of the building is located just east of the window-opening on the room's southern wall. A very large beam runs from east to west near the middle of the room, instead of north to south as one might expect. To the north of the beam the joists in the ceiling above are clearly older than those to the south, a fact that fits neatly with the external evidence – mentioned earlier – suggesting that the western wall of the extension has been rebuilt from this point southwards. A small **storeroom**, including a water closet, was located directly north of the scullery, through a connecting doorway.

To the north of the storeroom and the stair-well, the extension consisted of a large **dining room** with four front-facing windows, and chimney-breasts at the east and western ends, though only that to the east can be said for certain to have contained a fireplace. Some decorative elements remain, such as the skirting, the window architraves and the cornice. The cornice is cut into by two beams running north to south. These have ovolo mouldings, suggesting that the beams have always been exposed, and tending to confirm a degree of utilitarianism in terms of the room's intended function. Of the two entrances into the room originally placed on the southern wall (both have been annihilated by fire and subsequent demolitions), that to the east was convenient for residents coming down the stairs or along the corridor from the older parts of the house, and so would most likely have had more decorative mouldings in recognition of its formality. The entranceway to the west, which was approached from beneath the stairs, was more convenient for the kitchen, so would have been comparatively workmanlike in its details.

This approach also gave access to the four-chambered **food store** in the cellars. The architraves on the doorways of this group of rooms are uniform throughout, and contemporary with the few bits of moulding still to be found upstairs. The doors themselves have four panels each, sunk and moulded, with the top two panels glazed so as to aid the circulation of light. There are chimney bases with arched recesses on the western wall of the western-most chamber and the east wall of that furthest to the east, with half-vaults above, presumably to support hearth-stones at *both* ends of the dining room.

Coming back up the stairs, the landing had doorways to rooms on three sides. The first of these was to the north, leading to a large, single chamber directly above the dining room. The room was most probably used as a **first-floor dormitory**, and enjoyed very similar decorative details to those found in the room below. The cornice is precisely the same, in fact, it too being interrupted by two beams with ovolo mouldings. The chimney-breast on the west side of the room is much larger than that to the east, however, and the fact that it has a hearth-stone rather confirms the original position of the room's fireplace, though long gone, and suggests that the eastern chimney breast simply contained the flue from the fireplace in the ground floor. Just to the south of the dormitory, reached through a doorway leading west off the landing, was a **first-floor water closet** divided into two small cubicles: one with a toilet, the other with a sink.

The third doorway on the landing leads south to a **first-floor storage cupboard** directly above the scullery. In addition to the entrance from the landing, this room enjoyed direct access to bedroom five, adjoining to the east, through a door inserted at the southern end of its eastern wall. With the dormitory close by, bedroom five may well have played host at this time to a member of staff with warden duties, so it seems reasonable to conclude that the cupboard adjoining was used to store bed linens, blankets and possibly medical supplies, as well no doubt as cleaning materials and other such things, though obviously there is nothing left in the room to confirm or disprove this assumption. The room has a plaster-on-laths ceiling, unlike the plaster-on-reeds ceilings found in the older rooms along the corridor to the east, thus corroborating the theory that the service wing was added to by a bay of rooms as part of operations to erect the extension.

The top storey of the extension was inaccessible at the time of survey due to the possible presence of asbestos. Nevertheless, parts of a **second-floor dormitory** can be made out from the floor below, as well a **second-floor water closet** and two **second-floor storage cupboards**. The dormitory has nothing in the way of moulded beams, but an uninterrupted cornice confirms that it is a large, single room like those on the floors below. The WC is divided into two cubicles, again like its equivalent directly below. The cupboards are arranged along the western side of the extension, to the south of the landing, directly above the storeroom just described on the first floors. These rooms' diminutive size suggests even more stridently that they were used solely for storage.

Range along Souter's Lane[59]

Closing off the western side of the Dee House plot, north of the house itself, is a range of brick buildings perched above the deeply sunken Souter's Lane. It was constructed in three principal phases, the earliest of which, forming the central portion, is probably contemporary with the building of the chapel block or perhaps earlier, with a later 19th-century block to the south and a 1950s addition to the north-east. There is a longer history of building on the site, however. As early as 1745 De Lavaux's map (see Figure 1) shows an outbuilding to the north-west of Dee House and it is possible that this was contemporary with the original phase of the house, perhaps serving as stables and coach house. The only visible fabric which can now be associated with

it is a length of red sandstone rubble retaining wall, over which the earliest part of the present range has been raised. The stones are variable in character and it seems probable that they have been re-used from elsewhere although such irregularity can perhaps be explained if, as MacCarren states, the land on which the coach house and hayloft had stood did indeed slide unexpectedly into Souter's Lane in 1858 or shortly afterwards.[60] Masonry of similar character is encountered in a basement boiler room at the north end of the range, to the rear of the 1950s block. Here, too, it functions as a revetment, possibly to provide a level approach to the house, and again map evidence suggests a pre-1745 date. The full extent of this revetment, which stands to a height of about 2.5m, is obscured at both ends by later fabric.

The earliest part of the present range, occupying the centre, consists of two storeys and five bays, of which the southern three are in line, the next is gabled to the east as a cross-wing and the northernmost takes the form of an outshot continuing the slope of the cross-wing gable (Figure 43). The plan tapers towards the northern end, respecting the curved alignment of Souter's Lane. The brickwork is in Flemish bond and is closed at the southern end of both main elevations, where a later building abuts. On the western elevation, as already noted, it overlies earlier masonry (Figure 44), but on the eastern elevation it stands on a chamfered plinth of blue brick. In the south gable wall, now largely removed, there was a large first-floor window, of which the two-centred arch (or possibly the relieving arch) survives. The openings

Figure 43: Range along Souter's Lane from the east (© Historic England, photograph: Adam Menuge).

Figure 44: Early masonry underlying range along Souter's Lane (© Historic England, photograph: Adam Menuge).

elsewhere have cambered brick heads and stone sills, those on the ground floor of the east elevation set flush with the wall. The openings are alternating two- and three-light timber mullion-and-transom windows. These are original features and the fact that they are chamfered and stopped links them stylistically with elements of the chapel block. Since this building appears on the Ordnance Survey map published in 1875 (see Figure 13) it seems likely that it forms part of Edmund Kirby's work for the Convent.[61]

The ground floor has been very considerably altered by late 20th-century office use. It is set well below the present ground level to the east and it would appear that the stair, and probably the entrance, was positioned in the outshot, and that a stack wall divided the cross-wing from the three bays to the south. A second stack projects on the west elevation and heats the three bays south of the cross-wing. On the first floor, where the rooms extend into the roof space, rather more original detail survives. The three-bay room south of the cross-wing was spanned by collar trusses and ceiled at collar level, a decorative emphasis being provided by moulded spandrel braces. A central bolt on the collar soffits indicates the presence of king-posts. The decorative treatment of the roof, coupled with the large room volumes and ample fenestration, suggest that this three-bay room probably served as a classroom, and the same is probably true of the ground-floor room.

During the last quarter of the 19th century the range was extended southwards by what appears to have been another classroom block on the site of the playground shown on Kirby's sketch plan of the grounds of *circa* 1869 (see above). Whereas the earlier range was built above an existing revetment on the Souter's Lane elevation, on this occasion the revetment was dismantled (leaving a ragged end to the surviving masonry) and replaced in inclined courses of brickwork incorporating numerous drains. This may indicate dissatisfaction with the performance of the earlier range. The brickwork is in English garden-wall bond and has a slightly lower eaves than the earlier range which it abuts at a straight joint. The external detailing is plainer and more conventional, the windows having segmental brick heads, stone sills and horned sashes. Again the ground floor is much altered. The first floor appears to have provided a three-bay classroom, lit from both sides but particularly from the west, reached from a stair in a further bay to the south and heated by a fireplace on the wall separating the two. The queen-post roof trusses were exposed up to the level of a low collar, which was interrupted by the queen-posts. Between this collar and the tie-beam there were in addition a series of cavetto-moulded openwork studs. A more substantial (and uninterrupted) collar linked the heads of the queen-posts, which in turn supported timber plates on which a continuous clerestory or louvre may once have been mounted in place of the present lead flat.

At the north end of the earlier range a basement boiler house was created in the late 19th or early 20th century. This contains quantities of an unusual interlocking tile of French manufacture. Each tile incorporates two concave channels in its upper surface, while the lower surface is stamped 'BREVETTE S.G.D.G.' and 'GILARDONI FRERES BOIS DU ROI MARNE'. It is not known from which building they come but they are likely to date from the lifetime of the Convent at Dee House. It is unusual to find French building materials in English buildings of this period but ties between English Catholics and their brethren in north-eastern France and Belgium were strong and may explain the presence of the tiles. There are also refractory bricks stamped 'ALITE.D'.

Later developments and miscellaneous additions

In the late 19th or early 20th-century toilets, cupboards and a skylight were inserted into the stair-turret of the chapel-wing extension, replacing a single second-floor lavatory serving the dormitory and shown on Kirby's original plan, and in the early 20th-century a screen was inserted into the second-floor classroom of the same building. In 1929 a large flat-roofed block, since demolished, containing a gymnasium and classrooms was built perpendicular and directly to the rear of the original Dee House; further wings, also since demolished, were added in 1955 and 1960, containing respectively a domestic science laboratory and library and a physics laboratory and art room. Also probably in the 1950s a further block was added to the range along Souter's Lane. It has cavity walls of rustic brick, limestone window sills and a hipped slate roof; it projects eastwards slightly at the south end to form a wing.

CONCLUSION AND SIGNIFICANCE

The setting of Dee House is distinctive and unusual and contributes to its significance. The area lies just outside the south-east corner of the Roman legionary fortress of Deva and immediately east of the walled circuit of medieval Chester, and borders the River Dee to the south. It is likely to have sustained damage between 1644 and 1646 when Parliamentary forces besieged the city, establishing a battery close to St John's Church. The Groves was established as a fashionable riverside walk in 1732 and has retained something of this function ever since, assisted by works of embanking in the 1880s. Another decisive event was the 2nd Marquess of Westminster's grant, in 1867, of the land for Grosvenor Park, which altered, but also protected, the setting of the church, and ensured that it remained separate from developments further east. The Roman amphitheatre was discovered in 1929 and initially excavated between 1965 and 1969. With its distinctive quality of seclusion and spaciousness, the vicinity of Dee House is a cross between a cathedral close and a villa suburb hemmed in by the river to the south, and cut off from the city by St John's churchyard (and later Grosvenor Park) to the east and the deeply sunken Souter's Lane (formerly Dee Lane) to the west.

The importance of St John's Church (a pre-Conquest foundation and Chester's first cathedral, with fabric from the late 11th century onwards) in shaping the area was substantial. Ecclesiastical ownership, occupancy or influence either directly or indirectly related to the development of most of the buildings in the neighbourhood of Dee House and the character of the area. In about 1741 Samuel Peploe (Bishop of Chester from 1725 until his death in 1752) built a new house in the garden or orchard of an existing residence (since demolished) known as the Archdeacon's House, to the immediate south of Dee House, obscuring its view of the river.[62] Then, in 1754, both the Archdeacon's House and the house in its garden or orchard were substantially rebuilt by Samuel and Mary Peploe, the former Bishop's son and daughter, and are shown in their rebuilt form in the forefront in the watercolour depiction of St John's Church and The Groves by Moses Griffith, mentioned above (see Figure 3).[63] The Archdeacon's House and the house in its garden or orchard were both acquired in 1865 by Bishop Jacobson who demolished the former and converted and enlarged the latter to serve as a new Bishop's Palace (1876-1919), replacing the former official residence on St Werburgh Street. It is known today as 'The Old Palace'.

In this context however, Dee House is unusual. It began in secular ownership as something between a town house and a villa, enjoying the ample space which an extra-mural position afforded but turning its back on the river views even though, when first built, the view to the south would have been unobstructed by buildings. Its subsequent history is more varied. In the early 19th century its occupants were mostly Anglican clerics and from 1854 until 1976 it was a centre of Catholic education and devotion – an uneasy juxtaposition, for many years, with the nearby Anglican Bishop's Palace.

In recent years, however, Dee House has been a particular cause of concern owing to its poor condition. Part of the building overlies the amphitheatre, and there has

been considerable debate as to whether this important historic building should be sacrificed in order to gain access to the Roman remains beneath. But it should not be forgotten that, despite its dilapidated appearance, the original plan-form of the house survives substantially intact, together with some decorative details and an impressive twisted-baluster staircase occupying a generous stair hall. The house was partially remodelled in the early 19th century when the principal ground-floor rooms were fitted out with doorcases and other features incorporating reeded decoration and paterae. More significantly, the mid-19th-century additions for the Catholic convent had a profound effect on its external appearance and character. The three-storey chapel wing, built in a muscular Gothic interpretation of the Early English style, is an early design by the Liverpool architect, Edmund Kirby (1838-1920). Kirby was a pupil of Edward Welby Pugin (A W N Pugin's son) and worked with John Douglas, arguably Chester's most celebrated architect, before establishing his own practice. He worked extensively in Cheshire and Liverpool and the Catholic Church was one of his most important clients. Dee House was one of his earlier commissions and it is likely that his work there contributed to his success in winning the commission to design St Werburgh's Church on Grosvenor Park Road, his most significant building in Chester.

Dee House has its own particular story to tell but it also reflects the twin characteristics – ecclesiastical enclave and villa suburb – which emerged during the 18th century. Today its history and significance are better appreciated and we can see how both Dee House and the particular characteristics of its setting have their roots in the disposition of the Roman town, of the amphitheatre outside the walls and of the resulting street pattern. With the earlier loss of both The Archdeacon's House and St John's House (demolished in 1958 to make way for the excavation of the amphitheatre) Dee House and the Old Palace (the latter unoccupied but in good condition at the time of writing) stand together as the last reminders of the fine residences which once constituted 'Dee Side' (Figure 45).

Figure 45: Dee House photographed from the north in 1991 before falling into decay (BB91/26343 © Historic England, photograph: Bob Skingle).

ENDNOTES

1 Adam Menuge, Linda Monckton, Simon Taylor & Nicola Wray, *The Environs of Chester Amphitheatre: Preliminary Building Assessments* (English Heritage Historic Buildings & Areas Research Department Report Series B/016/2004), 21-8.

2 Historic England Archive, NBR Index Number 060181.

3 The Department of the Environment Statutory List Entry suggests (without the benefit of internal inspection) a mid-18th-century date; Nicholas Cooper's RCHME report of 1987, based on a more detailed examination, including the interior, assigns a date of *circa* 1730 on stylistic grounds.

4 Cheshire Archives & Local Studies, WS 1738. Also quoted in Gerrard Barnes & Keith J Matthews, 'The Documentary Evidence', in K Matthews et al., *Chester Amphitheatre Investigations Summer 2000* (Chester: Chester City Council, 2001), 57.

5 See the Third Assembly Book of the City of Chester Assembly, 31 March 1699, in Cheshire and Chester Archives and Local Studies Service (ZA/B/3/68v-70v). A follow-up entry dated 19 May 1699 (ZA/B/3/72v) states that '*it was ordered that Roger Comberbach, esq., And his partners might have a lease for three lives and twenty-one years of the piece of waste ground near St. John's churchyard containing 65 yards in length and thirty yards in breadth, and bounded by a messuage and garden formerly in the possession of Elizabeth Lem, widow, on the east part, by a cottage and garden then in the possession of Hugh Roberts, labourer, on the west part, by the River Dee on the south part and by another garden formerly in the possession of Elizabeth Lem and part of a garden in the possession of [Mrs] Orange, widow on the north-east part, at the yearly rent of 6s: 8d. They were to leave a way through the ground from the end of Dee Lane to the south side of the said messuage, and also the ancient way from the house then in the possession of Mrs. Orange down to the River Dee. They were to have liberty to get stone in Dee Lane, leading from St. John's Lane to the River Dee, for levelling and enlarging the Lane in such manner as the Treasurers should approve*'.

6 Cheshire Archives and Local Studies, PM18/2. 1745 Plan of the City and Castle of Chester by Alexander de Lavaux.

7 See www.Chesterwalls.Info/amphitheatre.

8 Rob Cleary et al., 'Dee House, Chester: Evaluation, March 1994', Chester Archaeological Service Evaluation Report No. 30 (1994), 7. The conclusion that Dee House was once larger and more complex is drawn from the various cartographic depictions prior to the appearance of the first large-scale Ordnance Survey map.

9 Cheshire Archives and Local Studies, PM18/4. 1789 Survey of the Ancient and Loyal City of Chester by James Hunter.

10 Moses Griffith (1747-1819), "St John's Church and the Groves, Chester", pen and ink with watercolour, 25.5 X 40.7 cm, at the Grosvenor Museum, Chester.

11 The archdeacon's house was leased by Bishop Samuel Peploe to Mary Peploe (his daughter and the later Mrs Mary Jodrell) in 1741 and by 1757 it had been substantially rebuilt, evidently as the three-storey mansion, with a five-bay, south-facing front with a deep central bow, shown in Griffith's watercolour (Cheshire Archives & Local Studies, EEB 99070 and 99071). The Archdeacon's House was demolished in the second half of the 19th century.

12 See Adam Menuge et al. 2004, 29-34.

13 See notes 25 and 31.

14 Map of Chester in 1791 by Murray and Stuart, detail reproduced in Garner, D, 'Dee House Chester' unpublished archaeological desk-based assessment for Chester Renaissance and Cheshire West and Chester Council (2015).

15 Cheshire Archives and Local Studies, PM14/2. 1796 A Plan of Chester by John Stockdale.

16 Cheshire Archives and Local Studies, PM15/2. 1809 Plan of Chester by Samuel John Neele.

17 Cheshire Archives and Local Studies, PM15/3. 1817 Plan of Chester by Neele & Son.

18 Cheshire Archives and Local Studies, PM18/5. 1833 Plan of the City of Chester by John Wood.

19 Cheshire Archives and Local Studies, PM15/12. *Circa* 1853 Plan of the City and Liberties of Chester with Recent Additional Buildings by T Thomas.

20 Cheshire Archives and Local Studies, PM18/9. 1855 View of Chester from a Balloon by John McGahey.

21 M W Sturman, *Catholicism in Chester, 1875-1975* (Chester, 1975), 67.

22 See a pair of letters (811/41 and 811/42) in Shropshire Archives, Shrewsbury, dated 9 July and 17 December 1838, from a Mrs Aldine L Tayler of Dee House, Chester, to a Mrs Annette Hill of The Citadel in Hawkstone, Shropshire. The *Cheshire Sheaf* series starting September 1884 also states that other prior residents of the Convent near St John included Dr Orred, Dr Cumming, Rev C B Tayler and Rev Frederick Forde.

23 Charles Benjamin Tayler (1797-1875) was a Cambridge-educated Church of England clergyman and writer for the young, who developed strong protestant views and an equally strong antipathy to Roman Catholicism whilst curate at Hadleigh in Suffolk. In 1836 he was made Rector of St Peter's (Chester) by John Bird Sumner, Bishop of Chester, which he remained until 1846. Tayler is best known for a number of books or tracts, published on both sides of the Atlantic, which are either warnings against the errors of Catholics or earnestly moral manuals of religious instruction for the young. While resident at Chester he published, from 1838, a series of *Tracts for the Rich*. Charles Benjamin Tayler was married to Aldine Louisa Lewis, daughter of A D Lewis Agassiz of Finsbury Square, London (*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*).

24 Williams's Directory of the City and Borough of Chester (Liverpool, 1846), 47.

25 *Chester Chronicle*, 8 october 1847, 2 (text consulted via www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk). The advert describes Dee House as a very eligible mansion with dining, drawing and morning rooms and other accommodation, with a court in front with attached and detached offices, including stables, coach house etc.

26 See a mortgage document dated 1852 (dd\np/2/1/2d) in Somerset Archive and Record Service, Taunton, which cites a '*Geo. John Chamberlaine of Dee House, Chester'. The census return for 1851 lists George John Chamberlain, age 38, as resident at St John's churchyard in Chester, along with two married servants and their young daughter; his occupation is given as 'Proprietor of Land & House'*.

27 *Anon, Diocese of Shrewsbury – a Centenary Record, 1851-1951* (Wirral, 1951), 57. Gavazzi was formerly a Barnabite monk, but left the order in 1848. His liberal ideas and disillusionment with the social order in Italy caused him to emigrate from the Papal States to London, where he joined the Italian protestant community and led an anti-Papal campaign. After his return to Italy in 1859 he was twice a chaplain to Garibaldi's army – in 1860 and 1866. He later established the Free Christian Church in Italy, also known as the Evangelical Church. According to McCarren (see note 31) the nuns who came to Dee House in 1854 found Gavazzi's name written on the door of the room he had occupied and this room was then used for the first mass of their residence.

28 See www.fcjsisters.org for a complete history of this organisation. The Faithful Companions of Jesus was founded in 1820 in Amiens, France, by Marie Madeline de Bonnault d'Hoüet. Political instability brought about by the 1830 revolution in France encouraged the society to establish foundations in other countries, including Italy, Switzerland, Ireland and England. A community was set up at St Aloysius Charity School for Girls in Somers Town, London, that very year, and in 1845 a convent of the Faithful Companions of Jesus opened at 3 Great George Square in Liverpool. As well as working to educate the poor, the society was intent on spreading its message to the middle and upper classes, and boarding schools were established for this very reason. A particularly

exclusive one was set up in 1849 at Lingdale House near Birkenhead, with a school for middle-class children following in Birkenhead itself – at Holt Hill – in 1851. It was from here that four Sisters were sent, in January 1854, to establish the community at Dee House in Chester.

29 Pigot & Co's *National Commercial Directory* of 1828-9 lists Catholic chapels in Stockport, Blackburn, Lytham in Lancashire, Lancaster, Leigh in Lancashire, Liverpool (where there were five such establishments), Manchester, St. Helens (where there were two) and Ulverstone in Lancashire. Catholic schools could be found at Chorley in Lancashire, Garstang in Lancashire, Lancaster, Manchester, Preston and St. Helens. In the Lancashire town of Orrell a convent school run since 1821 by Benedictine nuns was even praised: 'By their unremitting and successful attention to the education of the youth of the catholic persuasion, and their exemplary deportment, this society has obtained the patronage of many distinguished individuals, and the kindly feelings of all who know the establishment'. The directory also lists many Catholic institutions in counties other than Cheshire and Lancashire, throughout the north and midlands of England.

30 Anon 1951, 57.

31 M C McCarren fcj, 'A Mine of Gold': a Celebration of 150 years in the Service of Catholic Education on the Wirral by the Sisters, Faithful Companions of Jesus 1849-1999 (Wirral, 1999), 18-20.

32 Sturman 1975, 69.

33 Sturman 1975, 77.

34 Anon, Edmund Kirby and Sons, 1868-1968 (Liverpool, 1968), 4.

35 Anon 1968, 4-5.

36 C J Williams, *Catalogue of the Records of Edmund Kirby & Sons, Architects and Surveyors, Liverpool* (Liverpool, 1999), ix. Williams' opinion on when Kirby established his own practice is more convincing than that offered by Anon 1968, 5-6.

37 See Kirby's drawings for the extension of Dee House: Liverpool Record Office, Liverpool Libraries (720 KIR 891).

38 British Architectural Library (Royal Institute of British Architects), *Directory of British Architects, 1834-1900* (London, 1993), 528.

39 Sturman 1975, 67. According to specifications held at the Liverpool Record Office (720 KIR 891) the extension was expected to be finished by 1 September 1867. The Sacred Heart of Jesus is a Roman Catholic devotion generally attributed to St Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153), though St Bonaventure

(1221-1274) is also said to have claims on its authorship. It was given further richness by the mystical visions of St Gertrude (1256-1302).

40 This drawing appears on a sheet with another drawing labelled 'Plan of ground at Flint.' Which shows a large plot of land and the rough, dimensioned, outline of an irregularly-shaped building marked 'Present House and School' which perhaps shows the intended site of a new orphanage and industrial school for the Sisters of Mercy at St Francis' Orphanage at Pantasaph in Flintshire – a contemporary commission for Kirby, also for the Diocese of Shrewsbury. See www.archive.thetablet.co.uk for 26 may 1866, 6.

41 See www.chesterwalls.info/amphitheatre.

42 Sturman 1975, 67.

43 Ordnance Survey 1:500 Chester Town Plan surveyed 1871-3, published in 39 sheets 1875.

44 Ordnance Survey 1:2,500 map, Cheshire Sheet 38.11 Revised 1898, published 1899.

45 Sturman 1975, 67. According to information found on its English website (www.ursulines.co.uk) the Ursuline Order of nuns has roots in the Company of St Ursula, founded by St Angela Merici in Brescia, Italy, in 1535. The order established a community in Crewe in 1906 and erected a convent on Nantwich Road in the town *circa* 1910. Grade II listed and executed in an Arts-and-Crafts style, the building operated until recently as a police training college, but in 2005 was subject to a façade-retention scheme and conversion into flats by the developer Morris Homes.

46 Chester and North Wales Architectural, Archaeological and Historic Society, *Save the Chester Amphitheatre!* (Chester, 1932), 1.

47 See www.chesterwalls.info/amphitheatre.

48 See www.chesterwalls.info/amphitheatre.

49 See www.google.co.uk/maps/@53.1887649,-2.8872107,135m/data=!3m1!1e3?hl=en-GB.
The present roof arrangement is unlikely to be original since Edmund Kirby's 1869 drawing of the roof of the old part of Dee House shows an un-hipped pitched roof with three ridges over the main house and a roof with three unevenly spaced ridges over the service wing.

50 The bricks currently blocking this window slot very neatly into the old bricks of the jambs, belying the notion that the opening is a later insert. Nor is there any evidence of disturbance in the pattern of bricks above, which there would almost certainly be had the opening been punched through. Interestingly,

though, the window's splayed head is constructed entirely from stretcher bricks, while almost all the other window-heads on the same elevation comprise both headers and stretchers. Only the first-floor window on the third bay from the east makes similarly exclusive use of stretchers.

51 The watercolour by Moses Griffith which dates from the second half of the 18th century shows a two-bay projection at the rear of the service wing and it is possible that much of the disturbance evident in the present rear elevation relate to its removal.

52 The Ordnance Survey map surveyed between 1871-3 shows some external steps in this position, suggesting that a south entrance leading to the garden existed by this date at least.

53 The 'parlour' is so called because of its geographical detachment from the 'polite', public areas of the house, rather than anything that can reasonably be deduced from the room and fixtures as they currently stand.

54 Ian C Bristow, *Architectural Colour in British Interiors, 1615-1840* (New Haven and London, 1996), 211.

55 The skirting runs along the front of where the fireplace was originally sited, which is surprising because the fitting would presumably have pre-dated central heating.

56 There is also a doorway at the east end of the corridor that leads directly to the chapel block, but this belongs to adjustments made in the 1860s, and will be discussed later.

57 From front to rear, such a room would have been roughly 13.3 metres, or 43 feet and 8 inches in depth.

58 See Kirby's specifications for the bricklayers and masons in the Liverpool Record Office (720 KIR 891).

59 This section is taken from Menuge, Monckton, Taylor & Wray 2004, 25-26.

60 McCarren 1999, 20.

61 It should be noted that Kirby's drawings for the extension of Dee House in the Liverpool Record Office (720 KIR 891) do not appear to depict this building but on the sketch plan of the Dee House Convent School grounds the structure in this position, although not shown, is marked 'School' and might be the stable and coach house said to have been rebuilt as such in 1858.

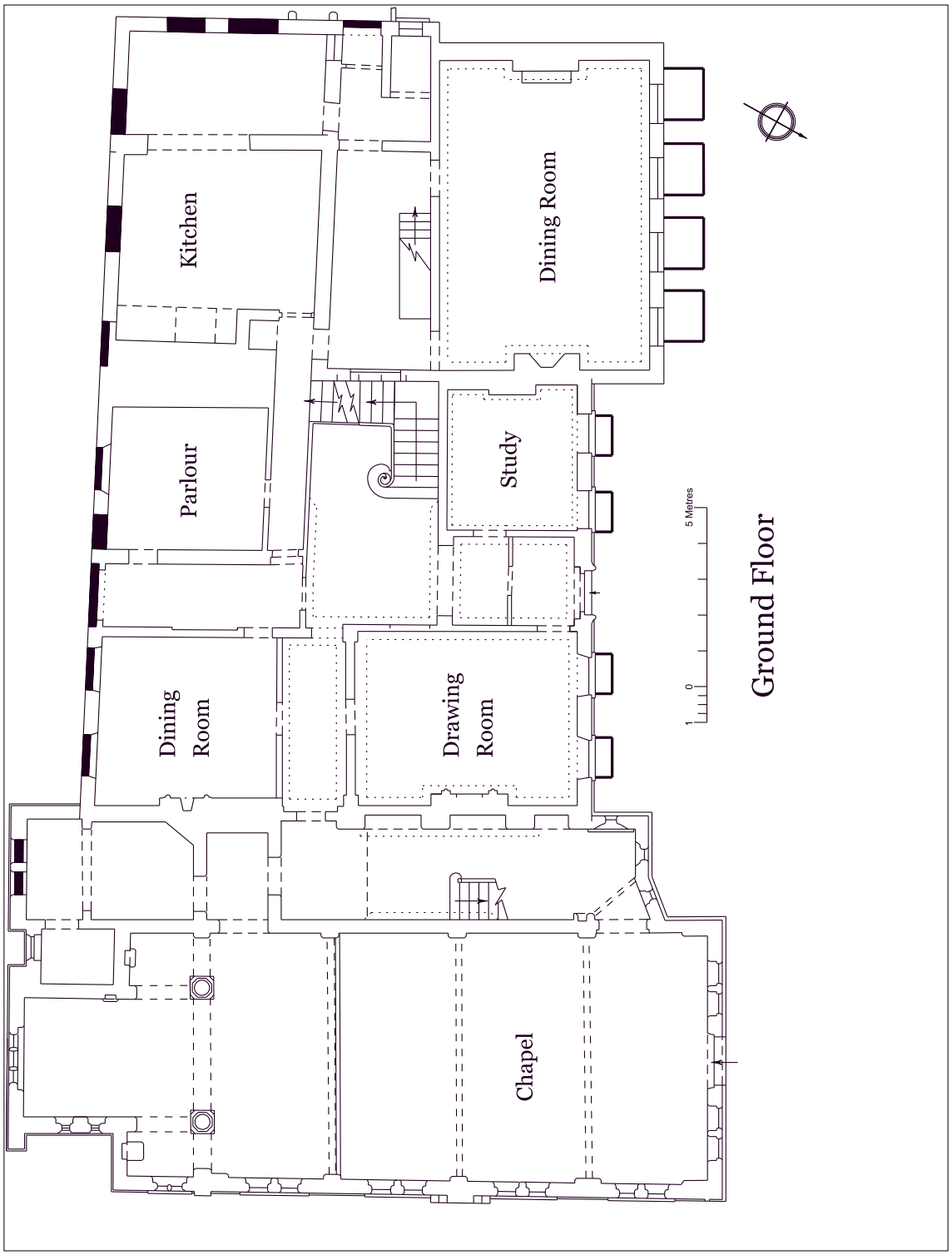
62 Cheshire Archives & Local Studies, EEB 99070.

63 Cheshire Archives & Local Studies, EEB 99071. There is stylistic and

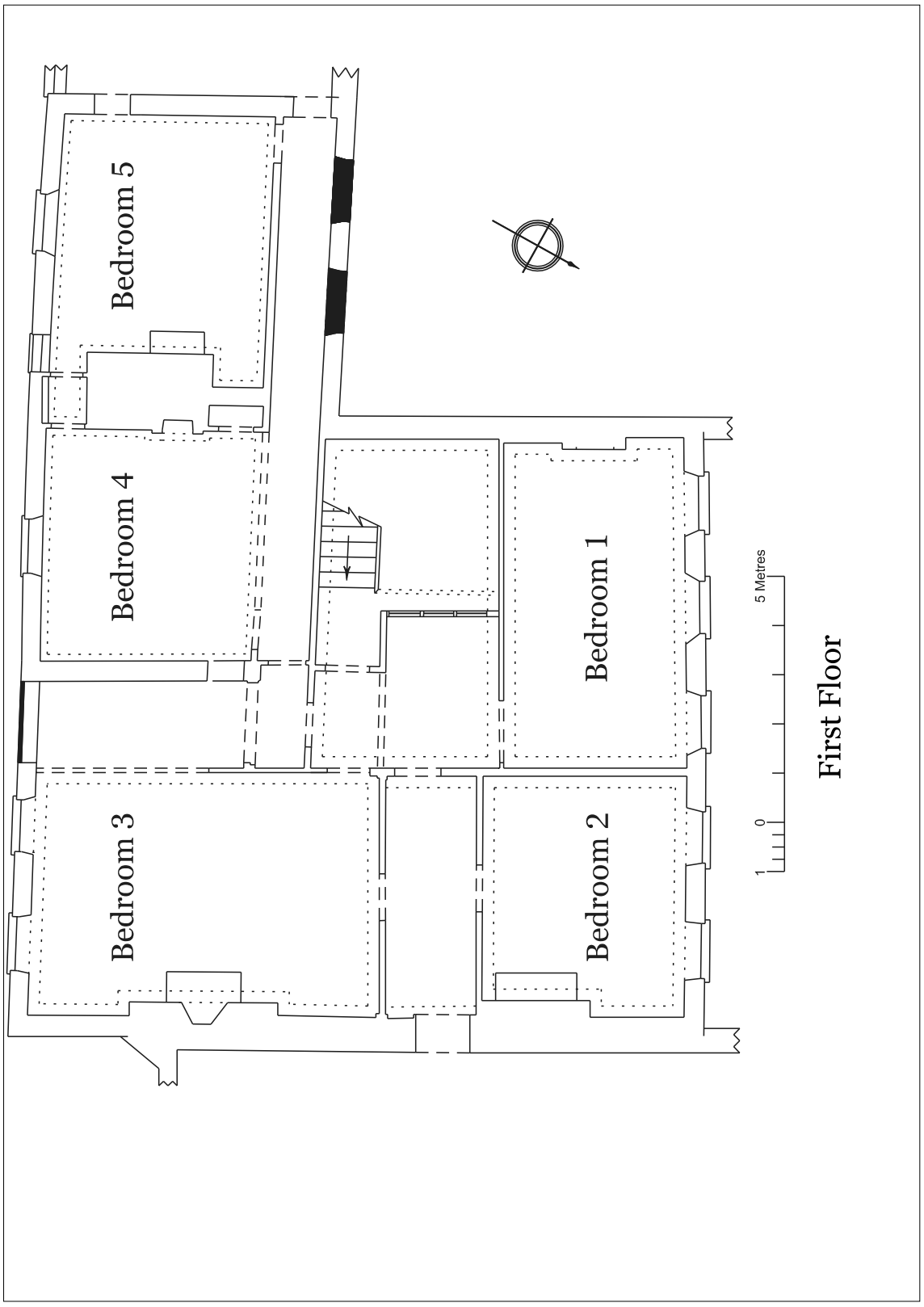
circumstantial evidence to suggest that the house in the garden or orchard was rebuilt to designs by Robert Taylor – the prominent canted bay, Rococo saloon and Chinese Chippendale staircase are typical of his hand and he was working in Chester at the time (1754-7), remodelling the Bishop's Palace for Bishop Keene (Binney, M, *Sir Robert Taylor: From Rococo to Neoclassism* (London, 1984), 94.).

APPENDIX 1: PLANS AND DRAWINGS

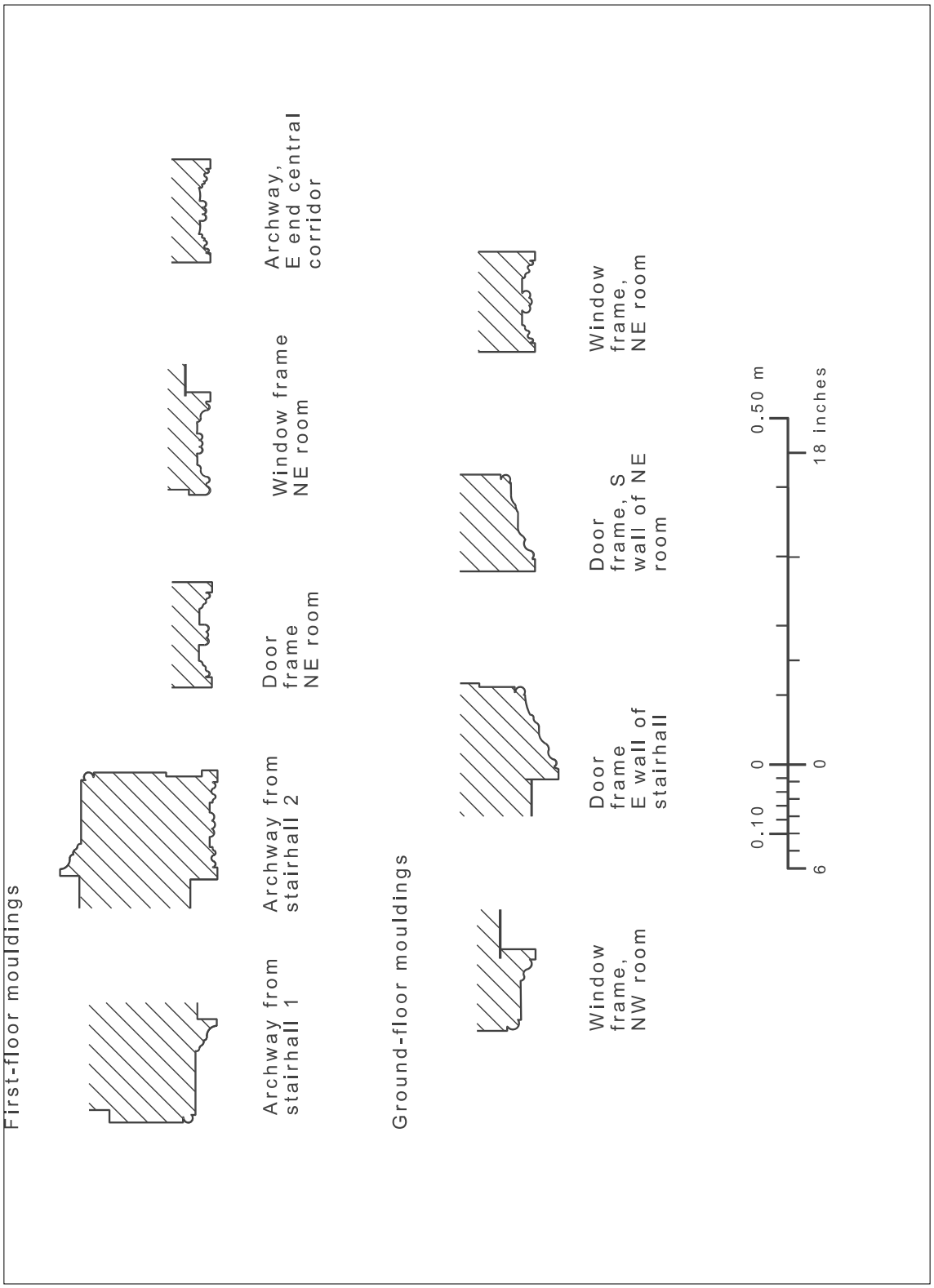
Appendix 1.1: Ground-floor plan



Appendix 1.2: First-floor plan - surviving elements of primary phase



Appendix 1.3: Architectural mouldings



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