

Mickleham & Westhumble Local History Group

ST MICHAEL'S INFANT SCHOOL MICKLEHAM

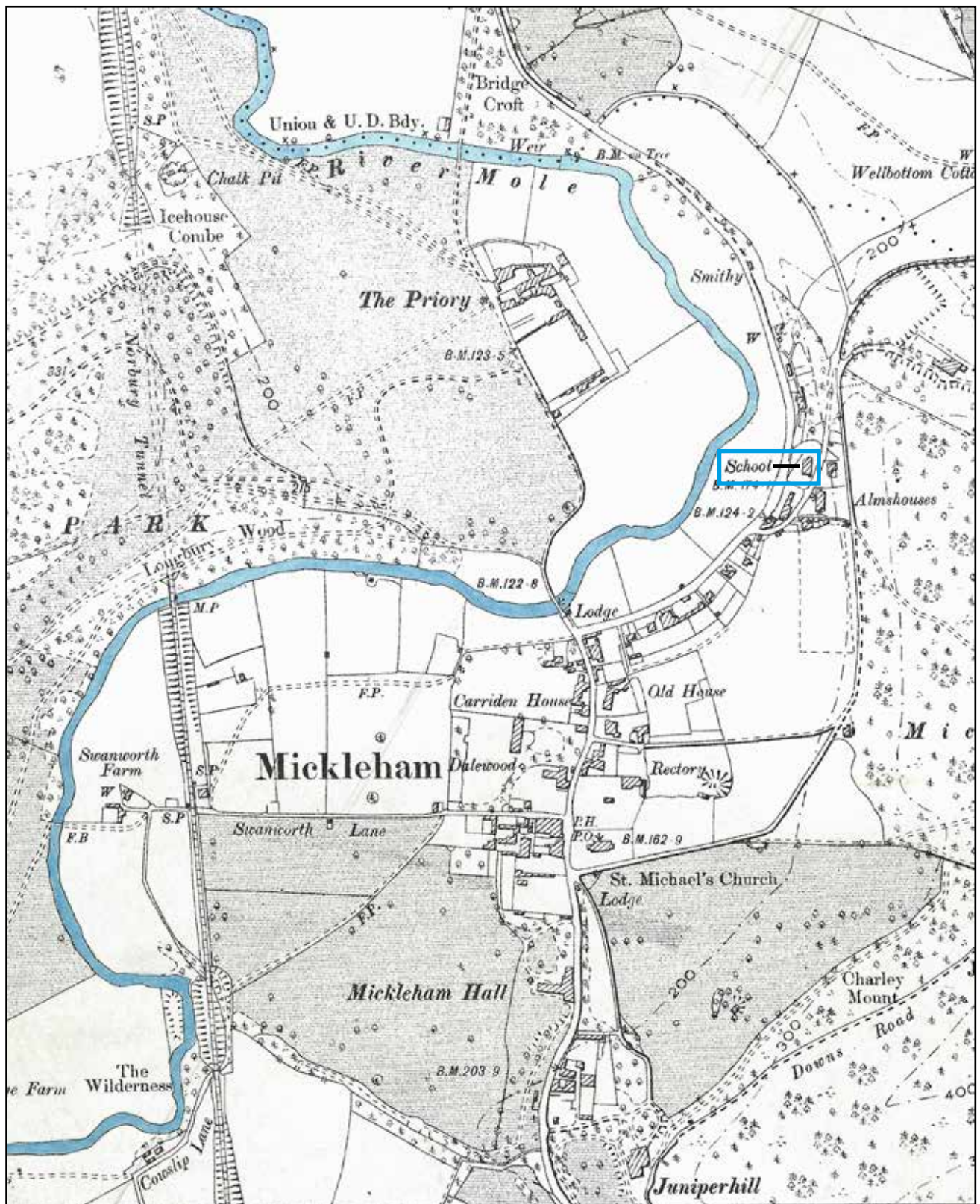
History of the Buildings

by Ben Tatham 2019



Figure 1 – Mickleham New National School 1848

The first school in Mickleham was opened in 1843 between Byttom Hill and what is now the A24. The building survives as two private houses: 'The Old School House' and the 'The Old School Cottage'. Ronnie Shepherd in his book 'Micklam: the Story of a Parish' records that 'The school was paid for and erected, together with a master's house, by public subscription.' A copy of a print of a painting showing this school in 1848 is shown above.



The school building on Byttom Hill was extended in 1872 when it became a Public Elementary School. But by the early 1900s the old school building was deemed inadequate by the County Education Authority and the foundation stone of a new school was laid in what was to become School Lane by the Bishop of Dorking on 26 July 1907, Figure 3. The original site plan is shown in Figure 4. The teacher's house was never built. Figures 5 and 6 *overleaf* show photographs of the school when it was finished in 1908. School Lane was constructed at the same time.

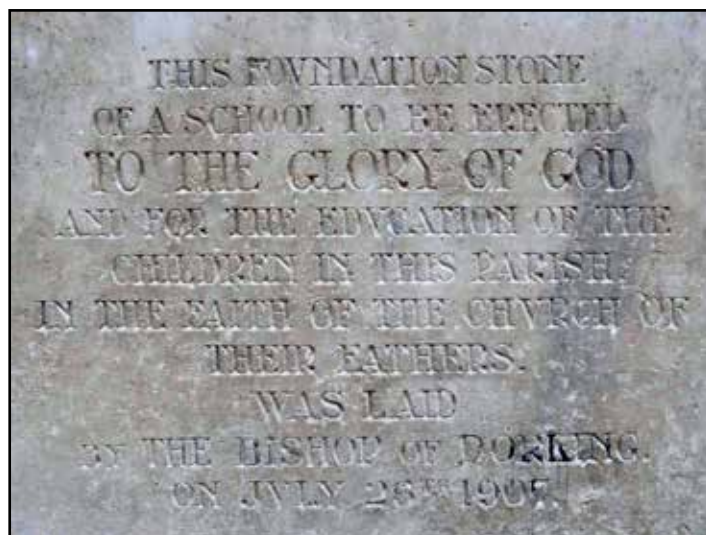


Figure 3 – The foundation stone of the new school

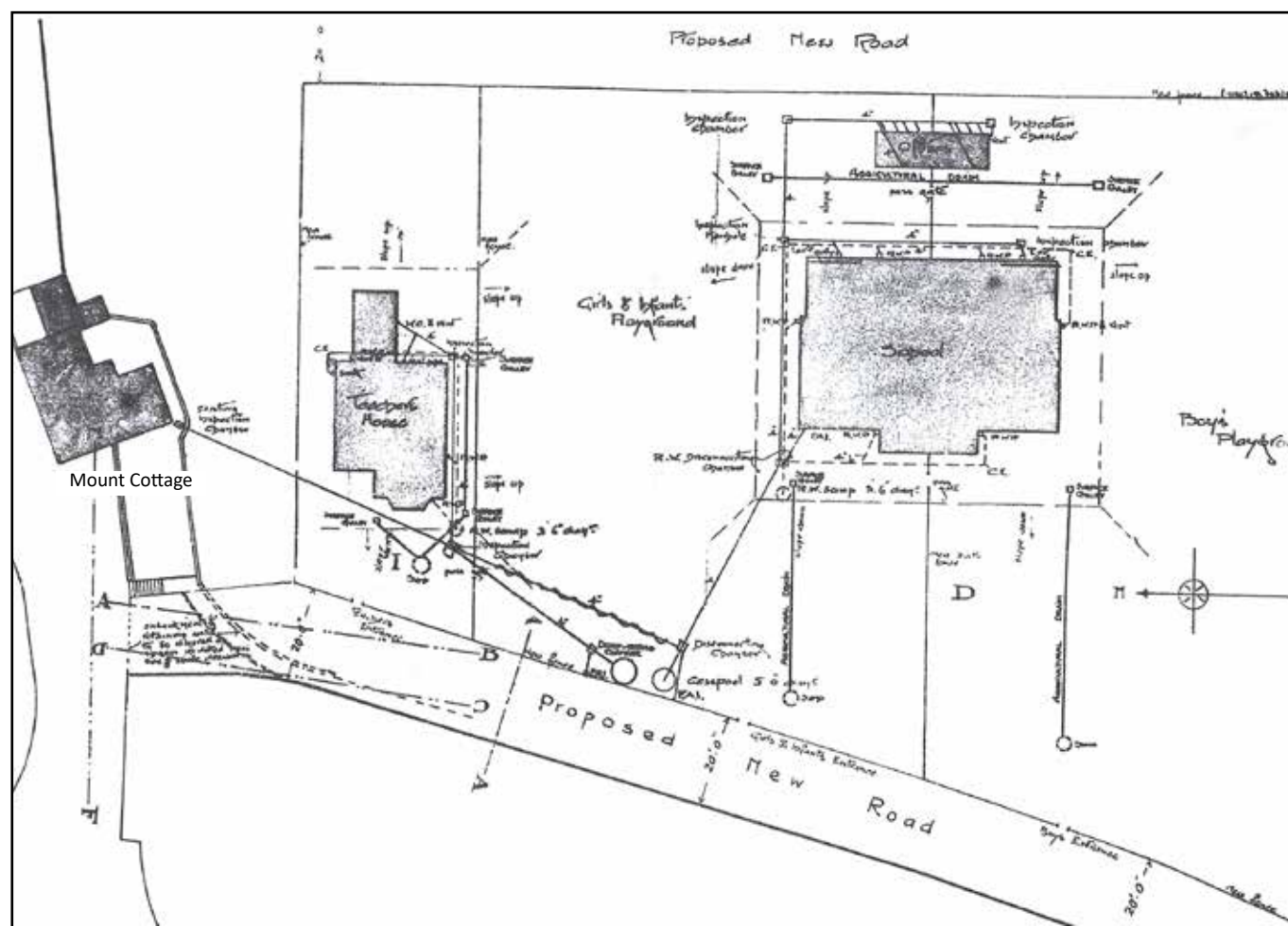


Figure 4 Original site plan for the new school



Figure 5 The school just after it was built 1908



Figure 6 The new school, pupils and staff when it opened in 1908

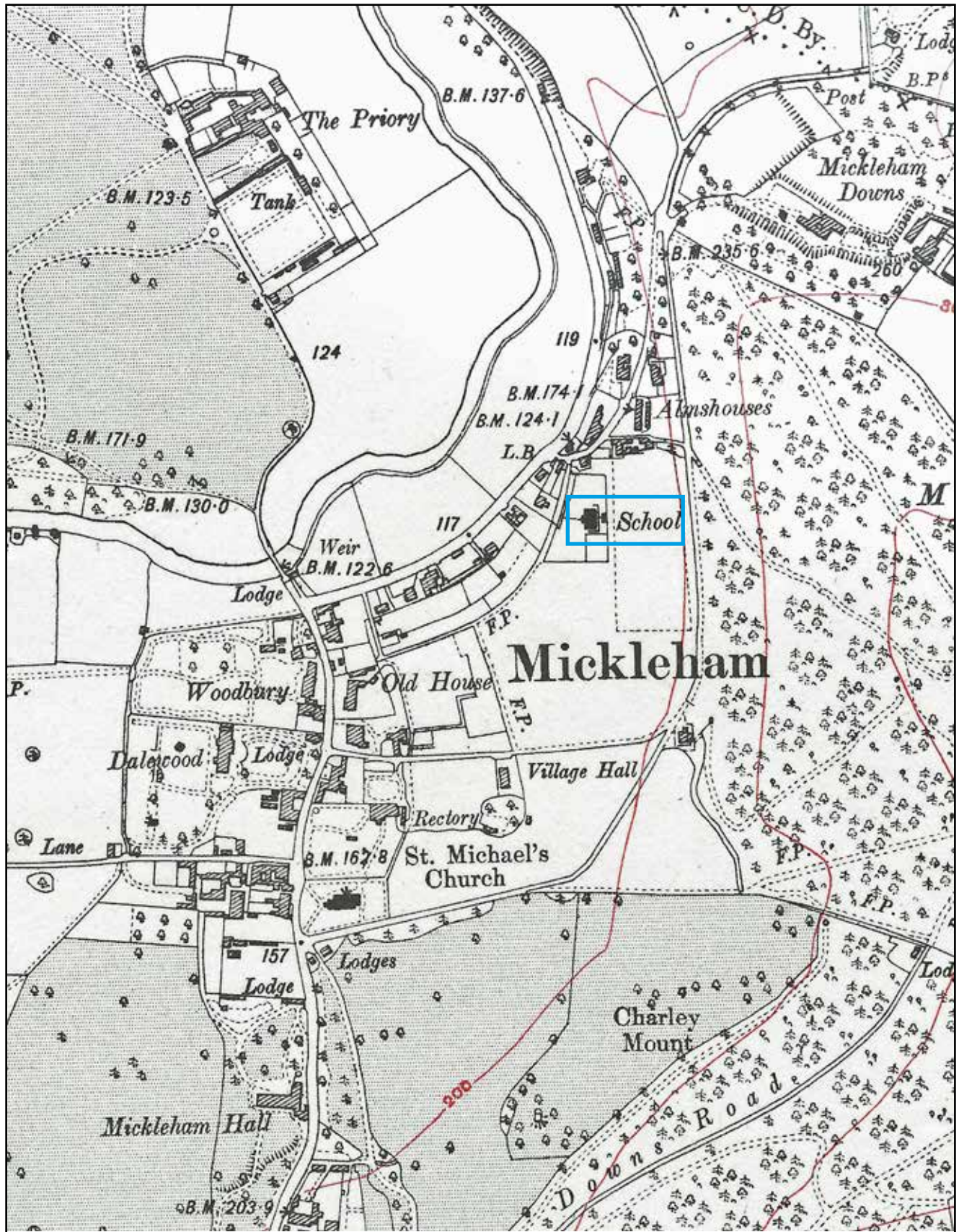


Figure 7 Map of Mickleham 1919 showing site of new school and School Lane

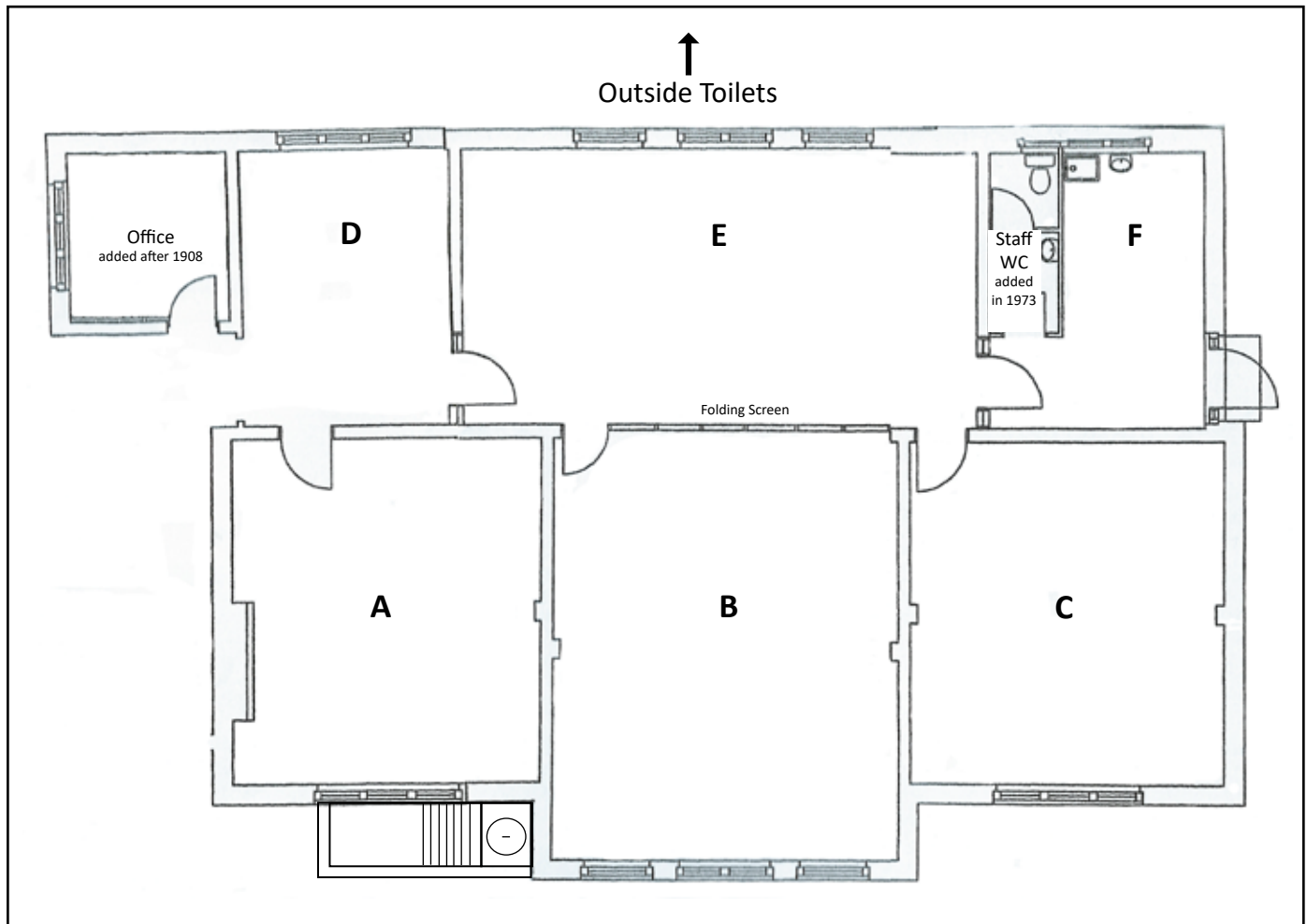


Figure 8 – School layout before extension in 1995 - ‘temporary’ classroom (1964-2015)not shown

Figure 8 shows the plan of the original building with the addition of the space labelled ‘office’ which had been added sometime before 1995. This space is now the toilets for the top two classes. The staff toilet was not in the original building but was added in 1973. The staff previously used an outside toilet in the centre of what was the outside toilet block. This space is now used as a store.

Marked on the plan:

- A, B and C: Classrooms, all of which were smaller than the present classrooms.
- D : used for various things – there was no staff room or library or store for resources.
- E : the School Hall. This extended into what is now the cloak room for the Y2 classroom and into what is now the new corridor. There was a folding screen between spaces B and E so that the school Hall could be expanded.
- F: eventually became the servery after lunches were no longer provided in the Village Hall.

In the front of the school there were steps leading down into the room for the coal fired boiler. There is a manhole cover on the top level of the steps – this covers the coal hole through which coal or coke was delivered into the boiler room.



Figure 9 Detail from an aerial view of school and surroundings 1920

This 1920 photograph of the school shows the dividing wall between the boys' and the girls' playgrounds. Behind the school (to the east) there is a large area of allotments. These probably developed during the last two years of WWI when there were severe food shortages after Germany started the unrestricted sinking of merchant ships by U boats.

Photographs: britainfromabove image.org.uk © copyright English Heritage



Figure 10 A further 1920 aerial view of Mickleham taken from the west

This photograph shows the position of the school in the village and records that the council houses in Dell Close were being built at this time.

A 1945 photograph shows the original building unchanged from when it was built. It also shows that many of the allotments to the east appear to have continued in use. In WW2 food was grown in every available piece of land.

In 1958 the outside toilets were extended. This can be seen in the change of the brickwork between the old and the new parts.`



Figure 11 The school in 1959

This photograph taken in 1959 shows the front of the school with children and two teachers in the playground. The outside of the three bays of the building appeared much the same as when they were built. They remain the same now. The foundation stone is in the centre of the central bay.

It is difficult to imagine how, when the school was an all through primary until 1971, up to 120 pupils aged from 5 to 14 plus the staff managed to operate in the small space available. The children walked across the Rec to the village hall where in 1952 Surrey County Council had built the kitchen to cook the school lunches. The use of the village hall for lunches went on until 1981. The children used the Rec for games.



Figure 12 Lunchtime in the village hall 1959 supervised by Miss Jeffries

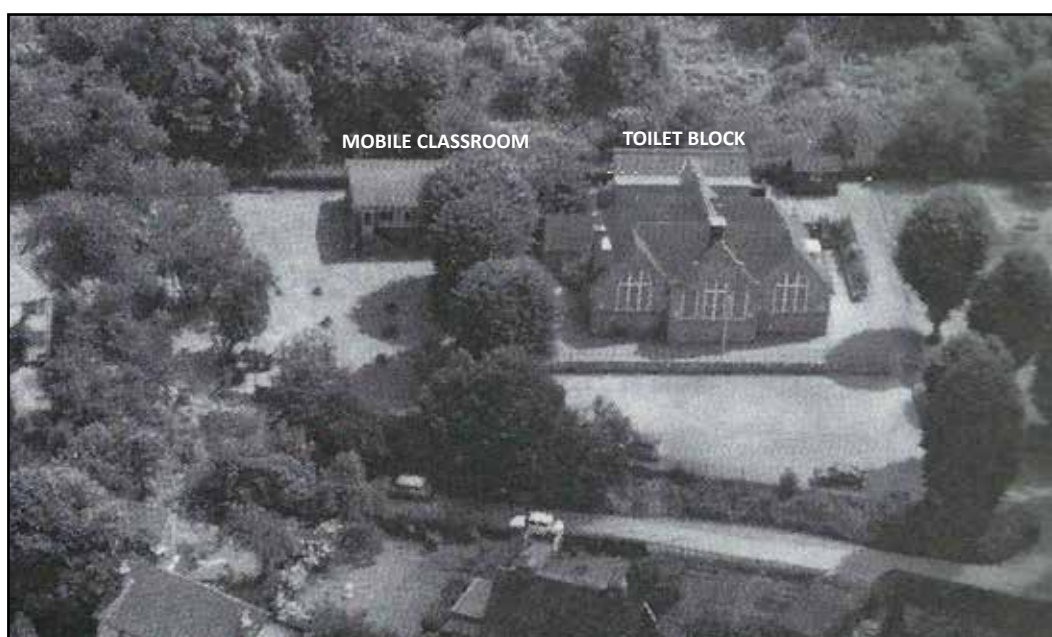


Figure 13 The school with School Lane in the foreground 1980 (detail of an aerial photograph)

In 1964 the 'Mobile' a 'temporary' wooden classroom was put up to cater for the increase in numbers of pupils. The classroom measured 6.8 by 6.8 metres plus a store and an entrance cloakroom. The photograph above shows:

- the mobile classroom.
- the original building which was unaltered from the original except for the addition of the office at the north east corner (later converted to toilets which are still there).
- the outside toilet block.

The office measured just 2.8m by 3.2m and was the only office space for the Head Teacher, the secretary and the school admin officer.



Figure 14 Mobile classroom before its demolition in 2013

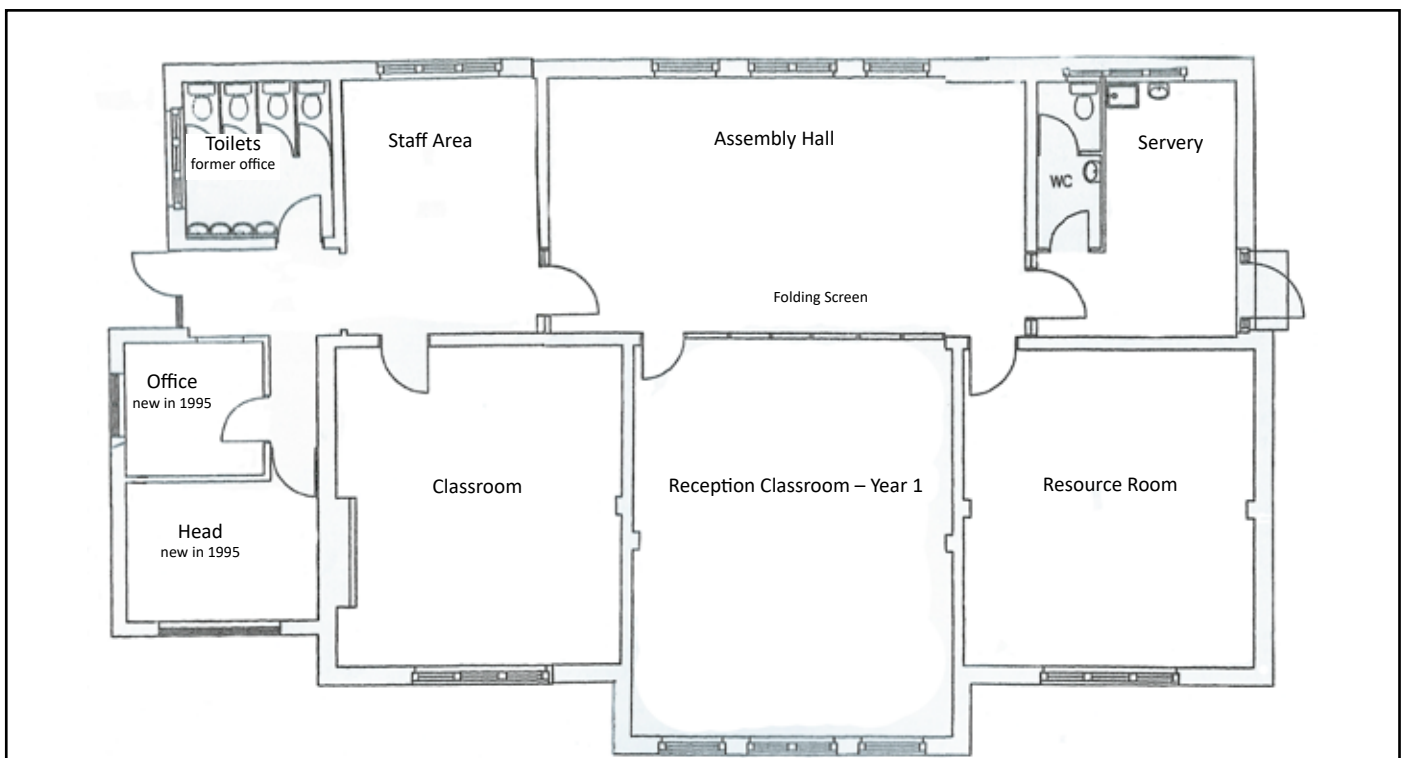


Figure 15 The layout of the school after 1995 improvements

In 1995 a new office was built for the Head Teacher, another for the secretary and admin officer – this was all in the space now occupied by the Head's office. A lobby was also added and the old office was converted to toilets.

In 2000 the right hand gable was added with additional space for the Reception Class and toilets for the Reception Class on the ground floor plus a staff room on the first floor. We were told that a staff room was unnecessary for this size of school but the governors and parents went ahead and raised the £43,000 to complete the work. The ground floor was re-arranged and the folding partition was removed. The school hall was changed from the space shown in Figure 8 to that shown in Figure 16 *below*. This extension required a new retaining wall to be built at the southern end of the school. The Reception Class outdoor play area was added at the same time.

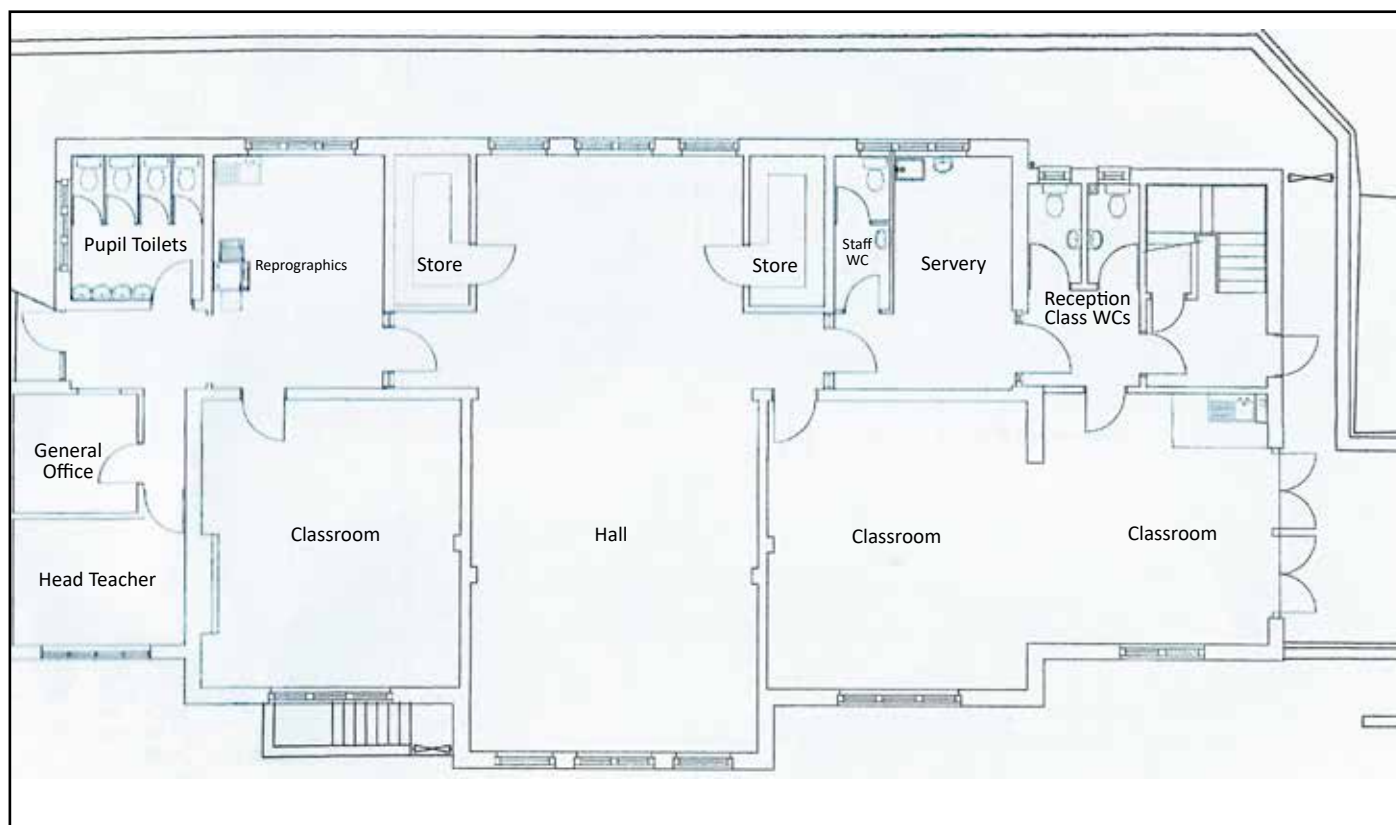


Figure 16 The layout of the school after 2000 extension. See Fig 8 to compare the changes



Figure 17 Interior of the school hall after 2000. This space in 2019 is being used as the Year 1 classroom.

In 2004 a toilet was installed in the mobile classroom.

In 2005 the old outside toilets were converted into storage.

In 2007 the 8 by 4 metre canopy was erected in the Reception class playground so that the playground can be used in all weathers.

In 2008 the southernmost shed was replaced.

In 2010 the general office, print room, toilet for the disabled, outer and inner lobby with new entrance and the canopy on the east and south sides were added as shown on the plan opposite.

At the same time the old general office was merged into the Head's office and the classroom next to the Head's office was enlarged by taking down its east wall. This involved putting in new steel beams at ceiling level to support the roof structure. False ceilings were put in over this classroom and the room which was used as the Hall at that time – see the photographs in Figures 18 and 19.



Figure 18 Showing new steel beam in place



Figure 19 Construction of false ceiling

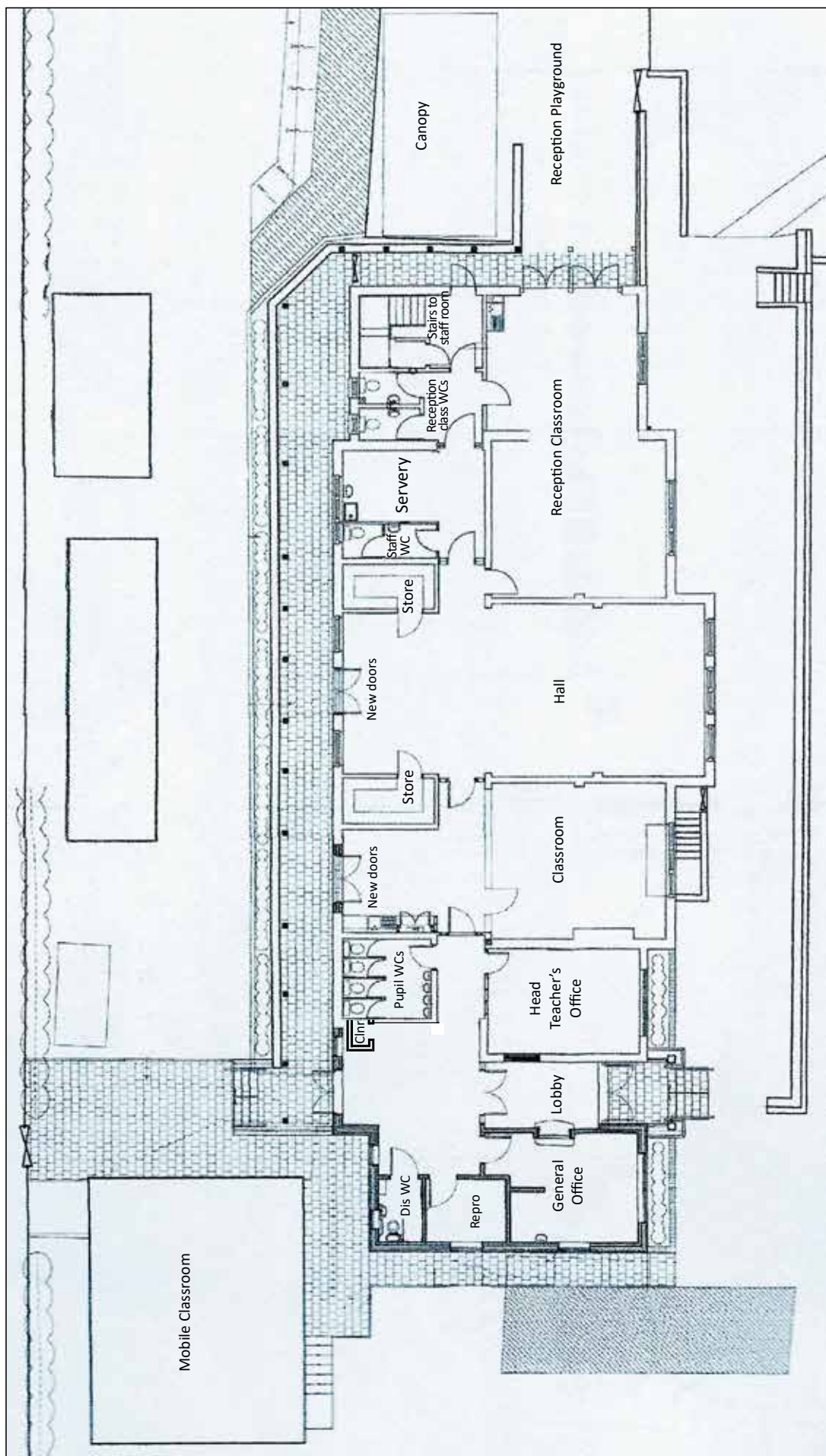


Figure 20 Layout of school after 2010 building works

In 2013 the new staff car park and pedestrian entrance was constructed to improve security and to separate vehicles from the children as shown in the before and after plans below.

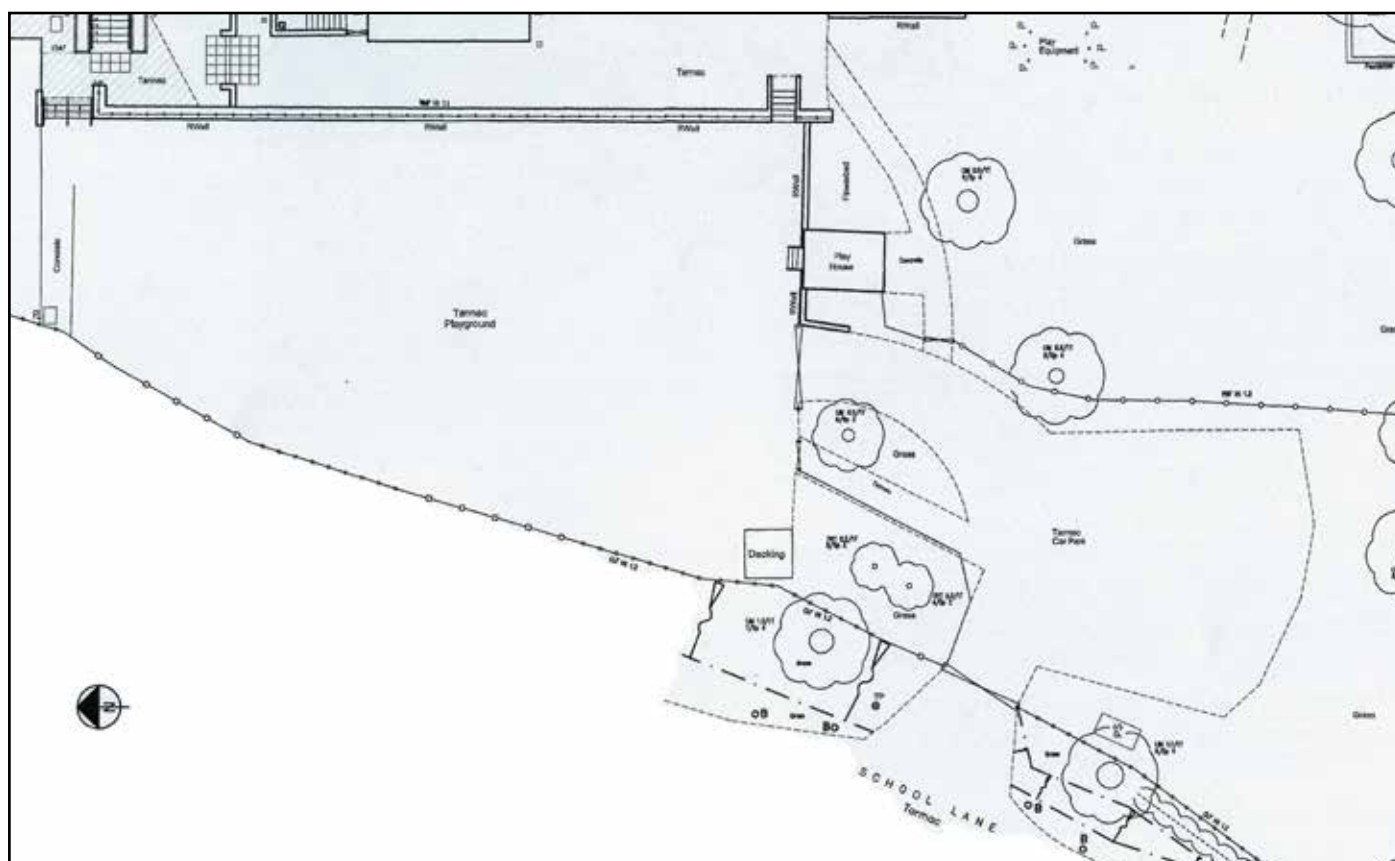


Figure 21 Layout of school entrance and car park after 2010 building works

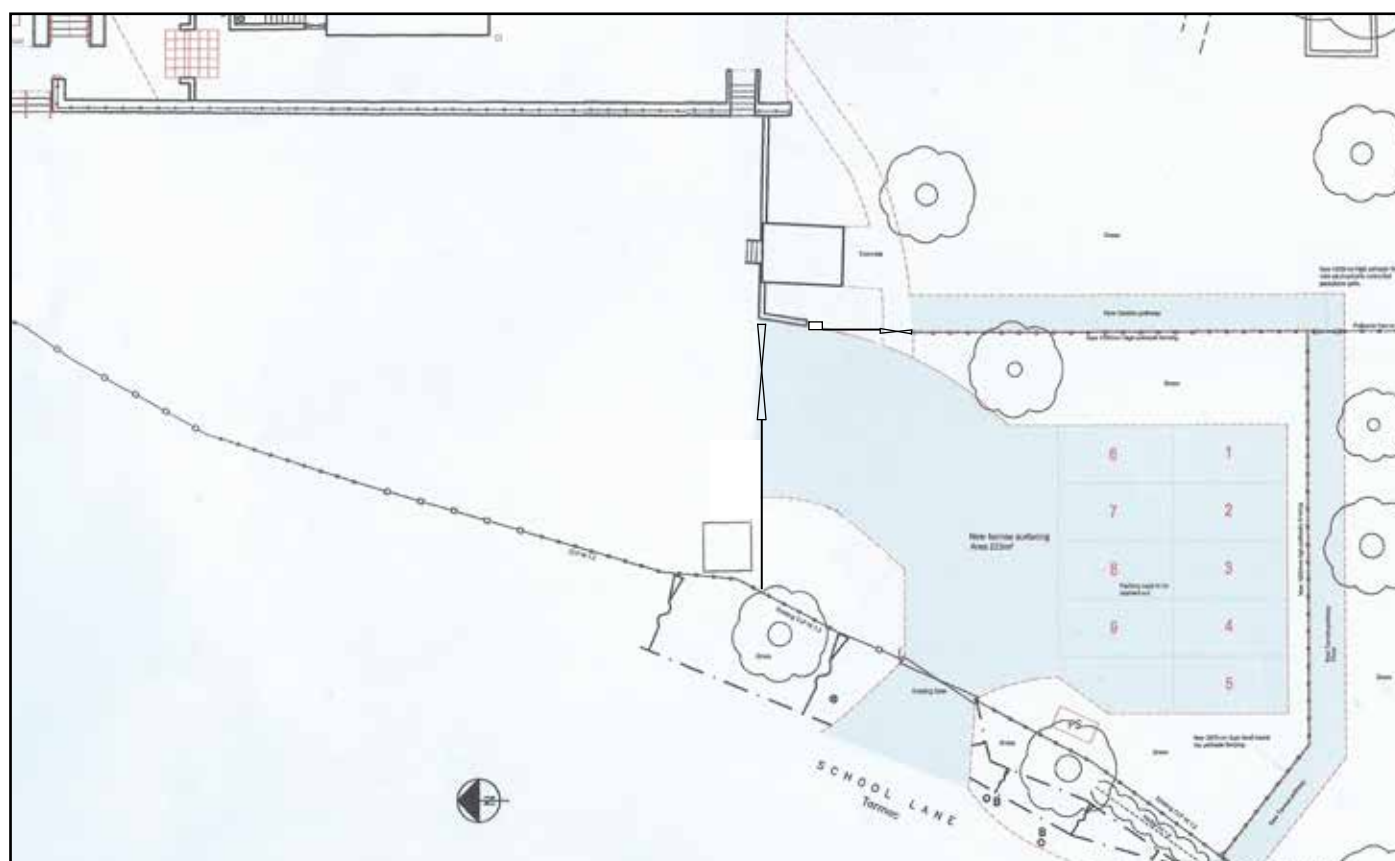


Figure 22 Layout of school entrance and car park after 2013 changes



Figure 23 This 2013 photograph taken from Norbury Park shows the school buildings before the start of building works

In 2014 and 2015 the 50-year-old ‘temporary’ mobile classroom was demolished and replaced by a new school hall, library, two store rooms and a new servery and the old school hall was converted into a classroom as shown in Figure 26 *overleaf*. The new hall and library had to be structurally separate from the existing building so that we did not have to pay VAT on the new building. The total cost was about £712,000. The Governors had to raise 10% of this – in fact they raised £82,000. The surplus was used for other items in the school.



Figure 24 Interior of the mobile classroom just before it was demolished in 2014

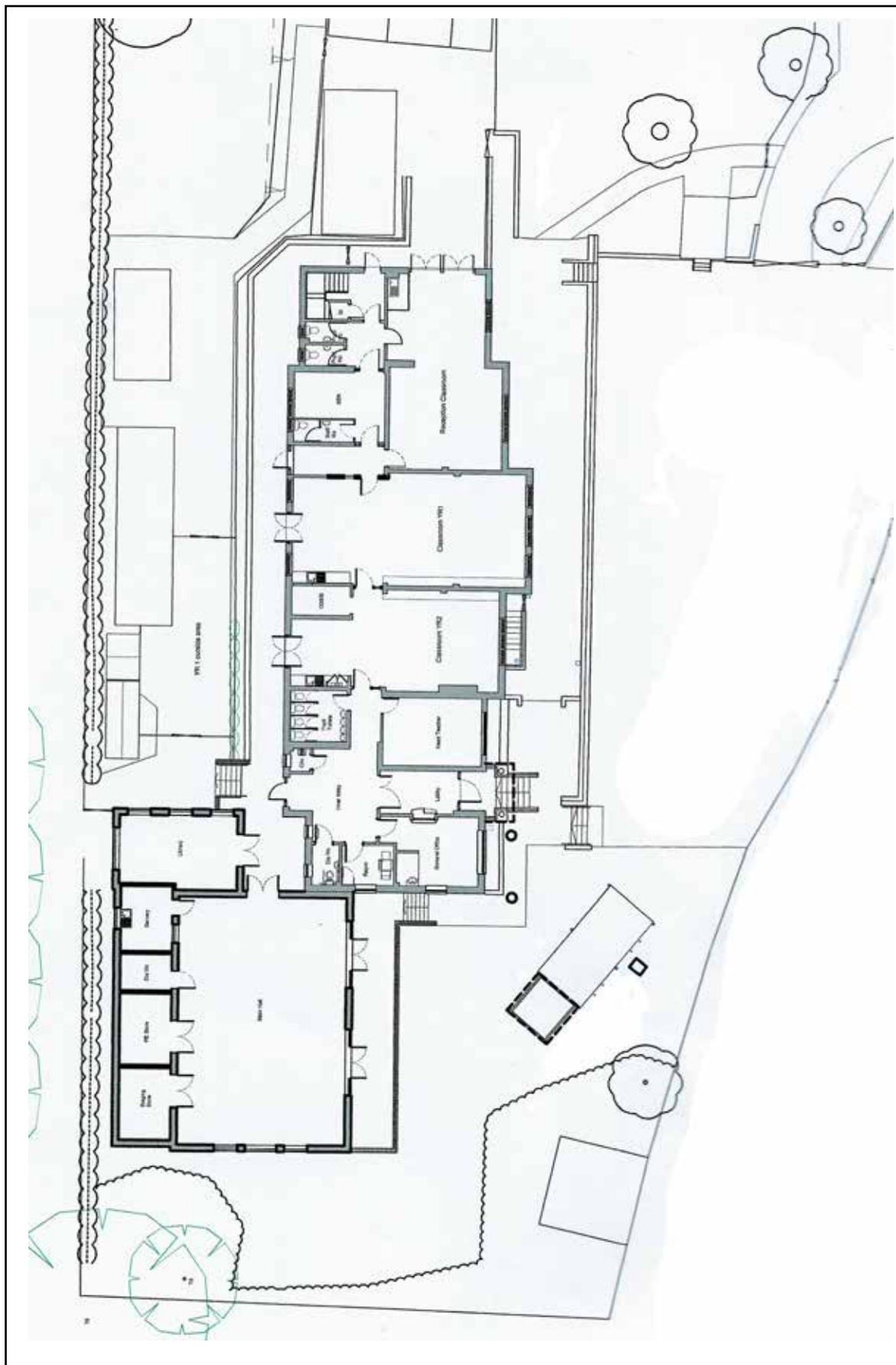


Figure 25 Layout of the school in 2015 following construction of the new hall and revision of the classroom space



The original 1908 building

Figure 26 Drone photograph of the school taken in 2017



Figure 27 Newly completed school hall 2017



Figure 28 New hall being used for a children's craft workshop



In 2019 the Friends of the School raised the money for and installed acoustic 'sound clouds' in the School Hall. These have been very successful in reducing noise and reverberation.



Staff entrance



Pedestrian entrance

In 2019 the wooden entrance gates were replaced by new automatic metal gates which allow us to see who is seeking entry to the school and to open the gates from anywhere in the school. High level buttons allow adults to leave the school by pressing a high-level button.