

**BLUECOAT
Conservation
Plan**

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**THE BLUECOAT ARTS CENTRE
CONSERVATION PLAN**

Prepared for

The Bluecoat Arts Centre Ltd

by

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THE BLUECOAT ARTS CENTRE LIVERPOOL

CONSERVATION PLAN

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Conservation Plan for the Bluecoat, central Liverpool's oldest building, follows the internationally recognised approach for a study which leads to the adoption of policies for the protection of important heritage assets. It provides, in a single document, an **understanding** of the site's history and present condition, an assessment of its **significance**, a discussion of the **issues** that may threaten its future well being, and a statement of **policies** to guide and test future management and development proposals.

The Blue Coat School was founded in 1708 and its home for 200 years, the Blue Coat Hospital, was finally completed in 1725. The identity of the architect is not known but two have emerged as strong possibilities: Thomas Steers, who was responsible for Liverpool's first dock, and Henry Sephton, the designer of the east wing of Knowsley Hall. The building is an exceptionally fine example of building in the reign of Queen Anne and the survival of its front façades, the earliest that have remained intact and unaltered in the city by some 50 years, is quite remarkable.

By the early 19th century, the School had outgrown the original accommodation and a new phase of buildings and alterations to the rear half of the building were planned by the Corporation's notable architect, John Foster. He designed and built the curved elevation at the rear of the central block, which had previously been a mirror of the front elevation.

The beginning of the 20th century saw the relocation of the School to new premises. The Bluecoat then became the home of the Sandon Studios Society and a focus for artistic and cultural life within the city. International figures became associated with the building, its studios and exhibitions, the most significant being the ground breaking Post-Impressionist exhibition of 1910/11. The Bluecoat's future as one of the country's first arts centres became finally secured in 1927 when it was purchased by the Bluecoat Society of Arts. Despite damage during the war and many periods of financial crisis, it has remained a vital part of Liverpool's cultural life.

The challenges that face the building's present managers are the same today as they have been for their forebears for generations: how to keep the building in good repair; how to adapt the site to changing demands; how to find the funds, and how best to remain true to the spirit of the place and all those who have struggled in the past to preserve its architectural heritage.

The Conservation Plan provides a set of policies to help in this task. They are structured to address the following key objectives:

- A** To ensure that all future management strategies and proposals for the site are based on and driven by a comprehensive understanding of its heritage assets. **(Understanding)**
- B** To ensure that the ownership, management and use of the site is such that the future well being of the historic buildings are secured while at the same time maintaining the "arts centre" vision. **(Management and Use)**
- C** To protect and conserve those parts of the building that are of cultural significance and ensure that their value is not diminished by unsympathetic alteration or new development. **(Conservation and Development)**

- D** To ensure that the accessibility and internal and external circulation within the site facilitates its efficient use without diminishing the appreciation of its historic significance or appearance. (**Access and Circulation**)

- E** To protect and enhance the setting of the site. (**Setting**)

- F** To support the understanding, interpretation and conservation of the study site through the sustainable and efficient use of the financial resources of the site owners and grant aid. (**Resources**)

- G** To present and interpret the historic assets of the site so that they can be popularly enjoyed, appreciated and understood. (**Interpretation**)

The Bluecoat is entering a crucial new phase in its history and it is important that decision-making is based on a sound understanding of the site and its significance, and is guided by policies that are adopted and implemented by all those with an active involvement in maintaining this historic site and shaping its future.

1.0 BACKGROUND TO THE PLAN

1.1 Introduction

This Conservation Plan for the Bluecoat was commissioned by The Bluecoat Arts Centre Ltd in March 2001.

In common with the generally accepted approach, this Conservation Plan provides an understanding of the site and its history and explains its significance. It considers how this significance may be threatened now and in the future and proposes policies to guide the long term management of the site. It has been specifically commissioned at this time to help The Bluecoat Arts Centre take a strategic view of the site. It will provide the basis for funding bids for the repair of the historic buildings and inform the brief for the forthcoming developments to enlarge the arts centre and improve the existing facilities.

1.2 The Site



Location plan showing study site

The study site comprises the Grade I listed group of buildings in the ownership of the Bluecoat Arts Centre Ltd located between School Lane and College Lane in Liverpool's city centre.

1.3 Historical Background

The Bluecoat School was first founded in 1708 by the Rector of Liverpool and Bryan Blundell, a local ship owner. Land was given by the town's Corporation at the rear of the newly constructed Church of St Peter on Church Street. Originally a day school housed in simple accommodation, the founders soon resolved to raise funds for a larger building within which children could board. The new building was commenced in 1715 with the construction of a brick kiln and was completed in 1725. The Architect is not known although this study considers three possible contenders.

The Bluecoat complex was designed to an 'H' plan form with a central block and wings enclosing a north courtyard facing School Lane and a south courtyard fronting onto College Lane.

The school was housed in the two storey central block and the three storey wings that enclosed the north courtyard. The three buildings were, when first constructed, only one room deep. Remarkably, the elevations facing the north courtyard still retain their original form to almost every detail. From the pedimented entrance facing school Lane a passageway led through the middle of the central block to the rear (south) courtyard. This passage effectively divided the ground floor of the school into two separate parts, possibly to separate the boys from the girls establishment. The lower floors of the central block and two wings appear to have contained larger rooms for teaching. The upper floors of the two wings were almost certainly divided into smaller rooms, with corner fire places, used as living accommodation. A number of these rooms and chimney pieces still exist today in modified form. Apart from these spaces, two internal features that still remain in their original form are the staircase in the north-east wing (Block 2) and the cellars below. The plan form of the stair with its curving ground floor flight is exactly as drawn in a plan of the building of 1722. Its structure has obviously been replaced following fire damage during the last war but, although heavily restored, the balusters and handrail still appear to contain much early 18th century joinery. Below the north-east wing is a brick arched undercroft that is still in its original condition. The plan of 1722 indicates that each half of the ground floor of the central block contained a single large space, which were no doubt school rooms or dining halls. The upper floor is likely to have been a chapel where the boys and girls would meet for joint daily worship and assembly. The chapel will have been accessed by the stairs within the north-east and north-west wings. (The stairs in the north-west wing (Block 3) are late 19th or early 20th century.)

The south elevation of the central block was originally the same as that to the north with a grand pedimented entrance and steps leading down to the south (rear) courtyard. This was also flanked by two wings (south-east and south-west wings) that now no longer exist in their original form. These were three stories and from the 1722 plan appear originally to have been designed as alms houses with six units of living accommodation per floor. A contemporary illustration shows that these flanking elevations were of brick with stone coins and string courses but had no doorways onto the courtyard the accommodation being entranced from the rear.

The school continued to increase in numbers throughout the 18th century and to outgrow the original buildings. By 1835 dramatic changes had taken place. The rear of the central block had been removed and replaced by the curved elevation that now exists with a chapel on the first floor and a dining hall occupying the entire ground floor. The north-east wing (Block 2) had the side extension and the frontage to School Lane added, and the old alms house had been removed and replaced by new constructions. The range of buildings (Block 8) now abutting College Lane were built later in the 19th century.

At the end of the 19th century decisions were made to relocate the school to the suburbs and the building was vacated in 1906.

Shortly afterwards moves were made to establish the Bluecoat as a centre for the arts. Lord Leverhulme purchased an interest in the buildings from the School's Trust and he let rooms to the Sandon Studios Society, the School of Architecture and for artists' studios. Major exhibitions were held including exhibitions of 1910/11 Post Impressionists first shown in London. This included works by Picasso, Van Gogh and Cezanne.

Following the First World War, and with the death of the first Lord Leverhulme, the future of the building and its use for the arts came under great threat. A public appeal from 1925 to 1927 resulted in the purchase of the site by the Bluecoat Society of Arts. Changes were then made to adapt the internal accommodation as an arts centre.

During the Second World War the Bluecoat suffered considerable fire damage to the central block and east wings. These parts of the building were substantially rebuilt internally and the façades carefully restored in the early 1950s.

The Bluecoat continues to function as a vibrant arts, community and heritage centre and a tourist attraction, and is planning a major repair and development programme.

1.4 Purposes of the Plan

In common with other Conservation Plans the purpose of this study is to provide an understanding of the site and its history, to explain its significance and how this is vulnerable now or may become so in the future. The plan proposes policies to manage the significant aspects of the site as a whole and its principle elements. It provides within a single document a comprehensive background of understanding and policies, which will:

- Help in the preparation of long-term management plans for the site as a whole.
- Assist in making short-term action plans and day to day decisions.
- Provide a clear set of guiding principles against which any new development proposals or new ways of using the site and its building can be tested and evaluated.
- Inform and contribute to proposals to reveal and assist in the appreciation of the significance of the site.
- Assist in the preparation of initiatives for interpretation and education.
- Contribute to design and planning briefs for alterations to the existing fabric and possible new development.
- Inform strategies and plans to improve accessibility to the site and enhance its potential to contribute to the life of the community and the local economy.

Certain particular circumstances and concerns have led to the requirement for the plan at this time. This Conservation Plan has been commissioned in order to enable the Bluecoat Arts Centre to plan a repair and maintenance programme. The plan will also assist in preparing the brief for guiding the design of proposals to provide new accommodation and make better use of existing spaces.

1.5 Methodology and Structure

The key steps in the Conservation Plan process are:

- **Understanding** the site.
- Determining the **significance** of the site and its individual components in terms of cultural, historical, ecological or other special interest.
- Identifying **issues and threats** that could impact upon the site's significance.
- Devising **policies** to protect the site and its important aspects and enable it to be better understood and appreciated.

The first three sections in the formal Plan deal with **understanding, significance and vulnerability** issues. Each begins with a general introduction to the broad issues involved and then proceeds to discuss the topic in detail. The **policy** section comprises policy statements under the following headings:

- Understanding
- Management and Use
- Conservation and Development
- Access and Circulation
- Setting
- Resources
- Interpretation

The method of study has involved detailed inspections of the study site by the consultants to gain an overall appreciation of its main components, its general condition and use. Desk based research has been undertaken using both secondary sources and primary sources where this has been possible. At each of the key stages in the process (understanding, issues and policies), workshops have been held with the commissioning team to share knowledge and discuss vulnerability and policy development. Discussion papers and drafts have been produced by the consultants for these sessions. Comments and ideas from the commissioning team have been crucial to the process and the final report.

1.6 Acknowledgements

Robert Fraser of Donald Insall Associates gratefully acknowledges the help and assistance provided by:

Bryan Biggs – Director, Bluecoat Arts Centre
Charlotte Myhrum – Deputy Director, Bluecoat Arts Centre
Alex Hurley – Finance and Building Manager, Bluecoat Arts Centre
Charles Metcalfe – Board of Directors, Bluecoat Arts Centre
Joseph Sharples – Architectural Historian
Glynn Marsden – Principal Conservation Officer, Liverpool City Council

2.0 UNDERSTANDING

2.1 Overview

The *Understanding* section of the Conservation Plan study provides the foundation upon which the consideration of the site's significance, the issues affecting its significance and the policies designed for its protection and enhancement are based. The standard Conservation Plan format is followed in which the *Understanding* section is commenced by a chronology summarising the key events in the history of the building. This is followed by a review of previous research studies and available source material.

Using these available documentary sources (plans, maps, illustrations and written material) together with the evidence of the building itself, a conjectural history of the site has been developed. This is described in stages taking the date of the key source material as the starting point for a retrospective view of the significant developments that took place in the preceding period.

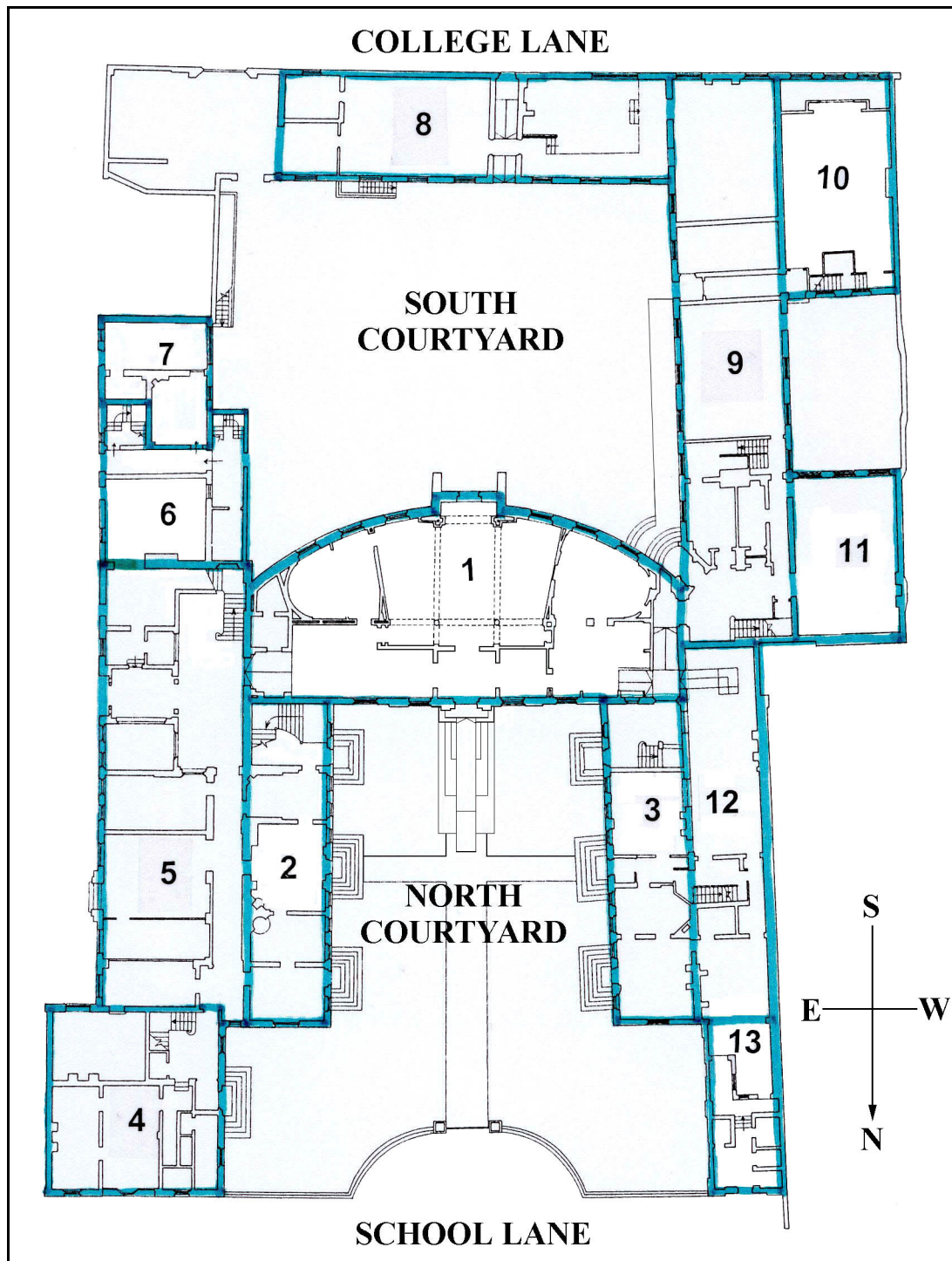
These periods and sources are as follows:

<i>Period</i>	<i>Map/Plan of Bluecoat at end of Period</i>
1708 – 1725	Map of Liverpool by Eyes, 1725
1725 – 1803	Map of Liverpool by Horwood, 1803
1803 – 1835	Map of Liverpool by Gage, 1835
1835 – 1891	The Bluecoat School Block Plan, 1881-91
1881 – 1937	Plans of Bluecoat Chambers, 1937
1937 – 2001	The Bluecoat Chambers Today

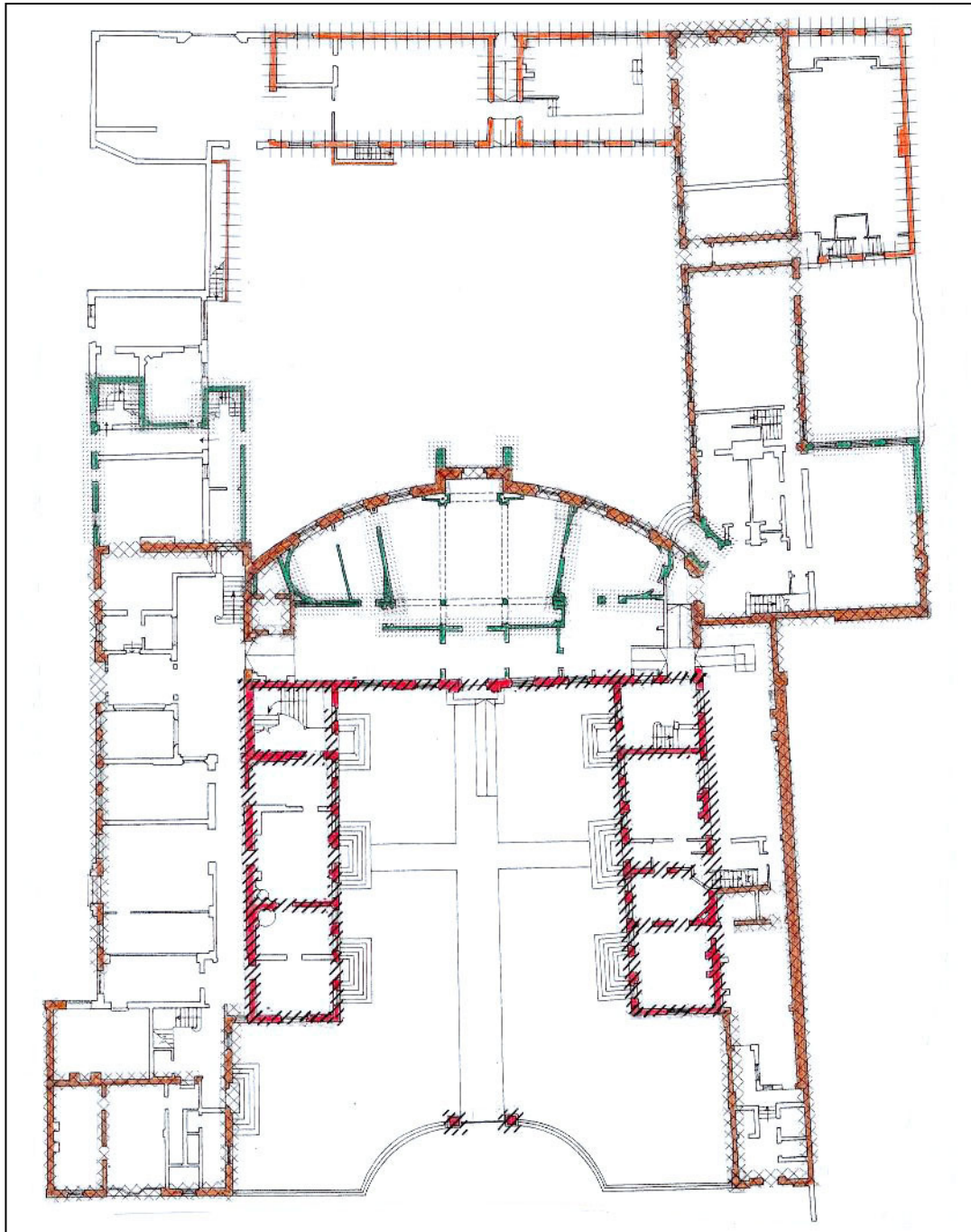
This chronological description of the site is supplemented by further detail in the Gazetteer, which analyses the building on a block-by-block basis. The Gazetteer is located at the end of the document.

Throughout the study reference is made to individual building blocks. These are identified on the plan at Page 6.

The *Understanding* section is concluded with a discussion on the building's architectural styles and those who have been suggested as the possible architects for the original construction.



Bluecoat Conservation Plan: Building Blocks

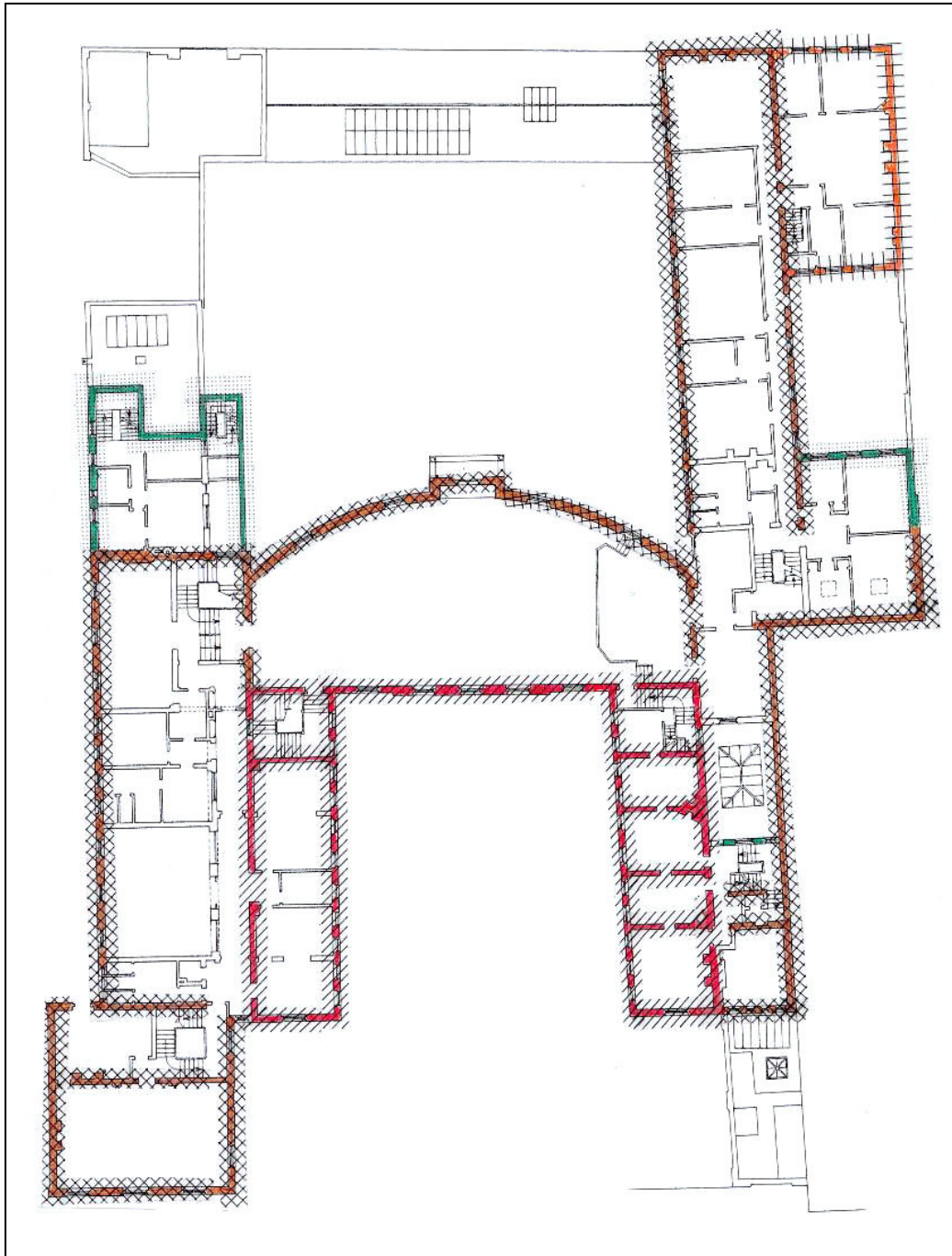


*Construction periods of principal elements: **Ground Floor***





-  Early 18th century
-  Early 19th century
-  Late 19th century
-  First half of 20th century

Note: The above plan shows the periods of construction of external and internal walls where this can be established with some confidence, and which have a degree of significance.

The internal walls left uncoloured have no particular significance and appear to date from later 19th and 20th century

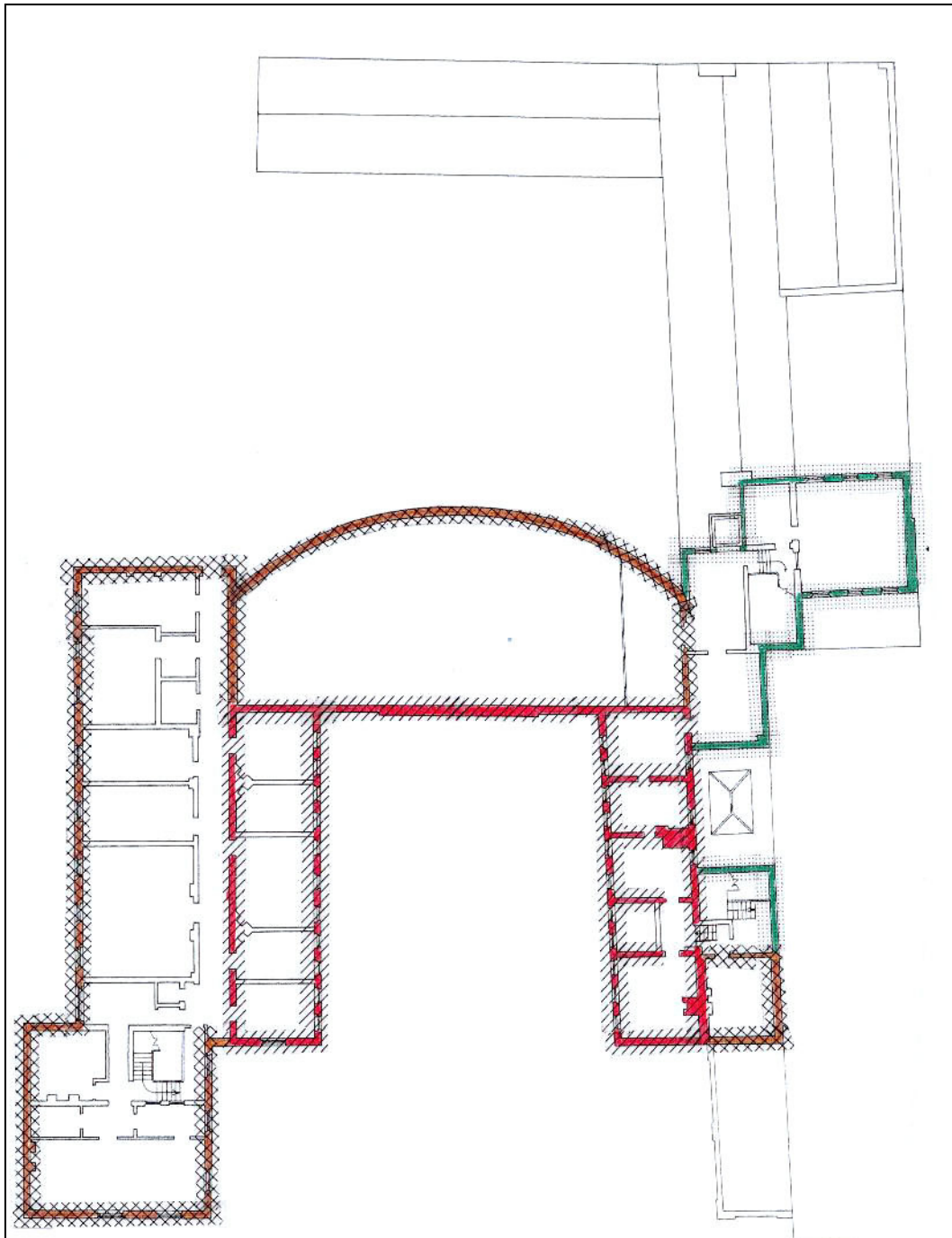


*Construction periods of principal elements: **First Floor***





-  Early 18th century
-  Early 19th century
-  Late 19th century
-  First half of 20th century

Note: The above plan shows the periods of construction of external and internal walls where this can be established with some confidence, and which have a degree of significance.

The internal walls left uncoloured have no particular significance and appear to date from later 19th and 20th century



*Construction periods of principal elements: **Second Floor***

-  Early 18th century
-  Early 19th century
-  Late 19th century
-  First half of 20th century

Note: The above plan shows the periods of construction of external and internal walls where this can be established with some confidence, and which have a degree of significance.

The internal walls left uncoloured have no particular significance and appear to date from later 19th and 20th century

2.2 Chronology

<i>Date (AD)</i>	<i>Key Events</i>
1704	St Peter's Church/Cathedral consecrated. Reverend Robert Styth appointed joint rector.
1708	Blue Coat Hospital founded by Brian Blundell and Reverend Robert Styth (died 1713). The building cost £35.
1710	Thomas Steers appointed as Liverpool Dock Engineer to design Liverpool's first wet dock.
1715	Brick kiln constructed for a new building.
1715	First commercial wet dock in Britain is opened in Liverpool.
1716	3 rd May – Foundation Stone laid.
1718	Drawing of school made by Joshua Mollineux (£1.1s.0d) and engraved by Hulsberg. Sold to raise money for the building.
1722	Plan prepared for conveyance purposes showing the then ground floor of the school and almshouses.
1725	Building completed at a total cost of £2,288.14s.0d.
1732	Manufactory building completed.
1771	Manufactory converted into a warehouse for rent.
1800	Annual Report of the Blue Coat Trustees gave consideration to moving the school to a new location 'more out of town', but decision made to remain with new buildings and repairs being planned by John Foster.
c1800-c1825	Major building works undertaken to plans by John Foster including the central block being extended and curved rear elevation formed. New buildings and extensions constructed to the north-east and south-west wings.
1840	Painting of Blue Coat Hospital.
1843	Painting by Richard Ansdell RA (a Blue Coat boy) of St George's Day parade.
1881	Block plan of Blue Coat prepared for insurance purposes.
1906	The Blue Coat School vacated the city centre for the seven acre site in Wavertree. The building was left empty. Mrs Calder, a member of the Sandon Terrace Painters, obtained the use of rooms for the newly formed Sandon Studios Society.
1909	Mr William Lever (later first Lord Leverhulme) was persuaded to rent the building on behalf of the University School of Architecture and Sandon Studios Society.
1911	Exhibition of Post Impressionist Artists. 46 works by the French School including five Picasso, eight Gauguin, three Matisse, two Derain, three Valminck, two Rouault, two Van Gogh and one Cezanne.

1914	29 th April – Title Deeds for the Bluecoat Chambers transferred to Sir William Lever. Lever would not agree to any of the proposals for the future use as an Arts Centre.
1922	St Peter’s Church/Cathedral was demolished and the site developed for the first UK Woolworth.
1925	Lord Leverhulme died. The building was put up for sale to go towards huge death duties. Mrs Calder led the Appeal for funds to raise £37,000, which culminated in a major anonymous donation and the building being purchased for the newly formed Bluecoat Society of Arts.
1927	11 th January – Executive Committee of the Bluecoat Society of Arts met for the first time
late 1920s-30s	Internal alterations notably the formation of the ground floor rooms of the central block and the upper concert hall
1941	3 rd -6 th May: Building suffered extensive damage during German bombing of the city
1954	Rebuilding completed
1960s	South Courtyard landscaped
1968	Bluecoat Gallery established to exhibit work by international and local contemporary artists
1998	Disabled ramp constructed to main entrance and rear courtyard designed by the Liverpool architects O’Mahoney Fozard

2.3 Previous Studies and Research Material

The available information upon which to base an understanding of the original construction and the subsequent building, additions, removals and alterations to Bluecoat Chambers is limited. While the history of the school and the 20th century arts societies that operated within the buildings as institutions have been previously researched and published, the references that help to trace the detailed development of the buildings themselves are few.

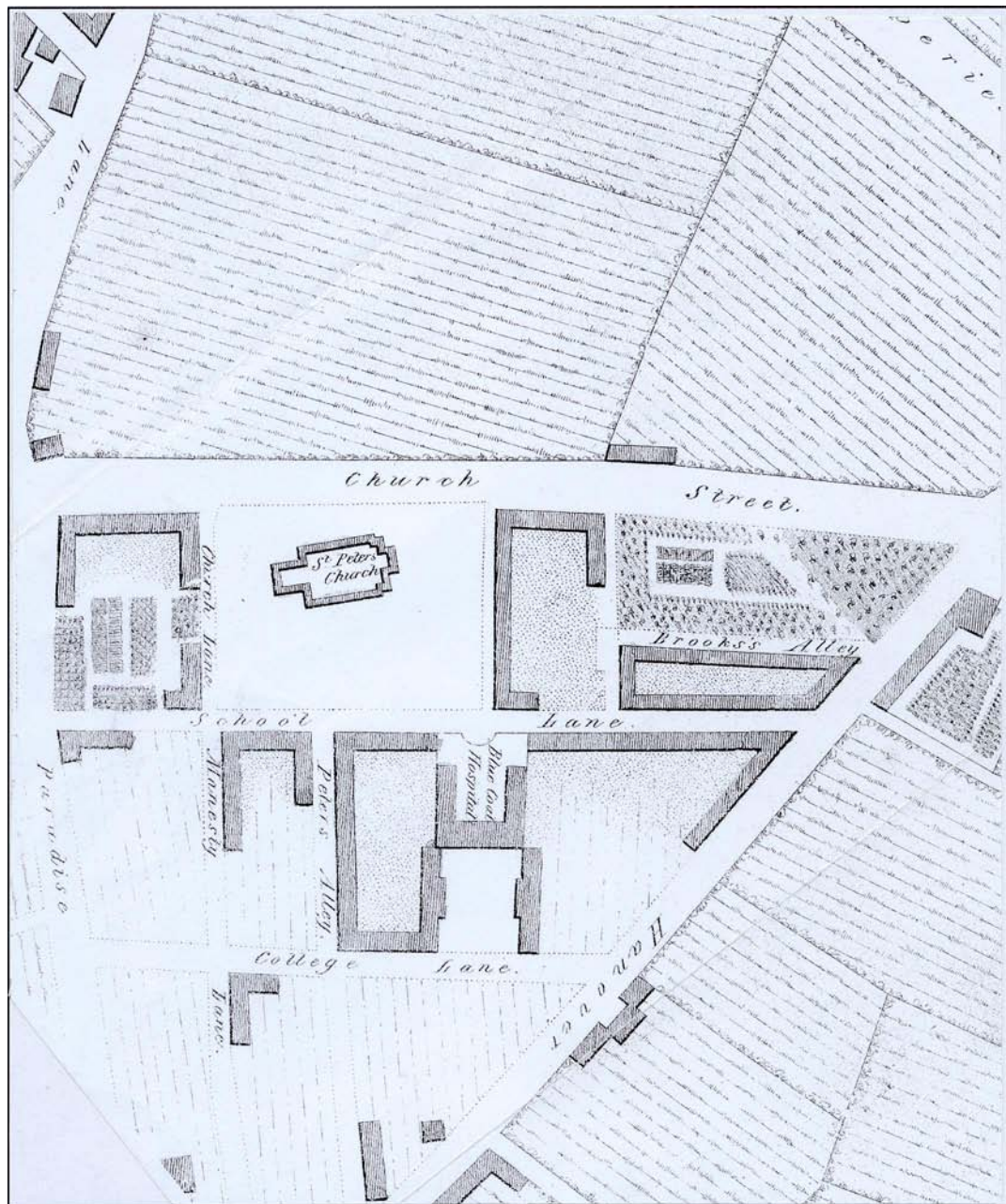
A conveyance plan dated 1722 shows some internal ground floor detail as it may have existed or been planned, three years before the completion of the building in 1725. Two engravings also exist from this period illustrating the front and rear elevations as originally conceived. From the 19th century there are two watercolour paintings (1840s), interior photographs (late 19th century) and a block plan (1881). There are no detailed plans of the building group before it ceased as a school in the first decade of the 20th century. The first detailed drawings available date from 1928 (as corrected to date 1937) by the Architects Shephard and Bower. The conservation work and changes that took place following the fire damage during World War Two can be generally established from plans of the Reparation Works by Shephard and Bower and by photographs and publicity material from the period.

The only other sources of plan information are the maps of Liverpool that have been published from time to time since 1725. Those that show the Bluecoat in block form to sufficient detail to be of value to understanding the development of the site are those of 1725, 1769, 1803, 1835 and 1848.

Two books have been published which trace the history of the Bluecoat as an arts centre: *Bluecoat Chambers* by W S MacCunn (Liverpool University Press, 1956) and *The Sandon Studios Society* by R F Bisson (Parry Books, 1965). Both make useful reference to aspects of the building's development and changes made post 1910. In his short private publication *The Liverpool Bluecoat School Past and Present* (1967), G G Watcyn, a former headmaster of the school, chronicles the origins and development of the 'school'. This is largely based on the archive that was deposited with the Liverpool Record Office when the school relocated to the new site in Wavertree. In notes for the anniversary celebrations of 1967, Robin Hewitt Jones provides a summary of the previously published material. Hewitt Jones also prepared an unpublished thesis, *The Background, Origins and Development of the Bluecoat School of Chester and Liverpool* (Liverpool University Library 1974). It principally concerns the institutions but has references to architecture.

A paper to the Lancashire Historical Society by Stanley A Harris (October 1957) discusses the architecture of the original building and puts forward a case for the designer being Thomas Ripley. Recent unpublished research by Charles Metcalfe and others casts doubt on this conclusion. Further research has very recently been undertaken by Joseph Sharples in preparation for the as yet unpublished new Pevsner, *Buildings of England: Liverpool City Centre* edition. The advice and suggestions provided by Charles Metcalfe and Joseph Sharples is gratefully acknowledged.

2.4 Period 1708 – 1725



Eyes 1725

2.4.1 The Foundation of the Bluecoat Hospital

In 1725 the surveyor John Eyes completed the first plan of the rapidly expanding town and port of Liverpool (Chadwick also prepared a plan in this year but in many respects it is less detailed). During the previous 25 years, Liverpool had grown in importance as one of the main ports in the North West of England. Chester and its harbours lower down the River Dee had become more difficult to use because of silting. Liverpool with its tidal creek, the pool, to the east of the rising ground upon which its castle had stood, offered an alternative safe anchorage.

Trade had increased and with this expansion came a growing population. At that time the only way in which the concerns of the poor could be addressed was through private charity. In 1708 a “Blue Coat Hospital” was founded by a merchant, master mariner and ship owner of the town, Bryan Blundell, in collaboration with the first Rector of Liverpool, the Reverend Robert Styth.

With public support, Styth approached the Common Council requesting a “convenient piece of ground for building a school for the teaching of poor children to read, write and cost accounts” and also “to be instructed in the doctrine of the Church of England” (*Blue Coat School*, G G Watcyn).

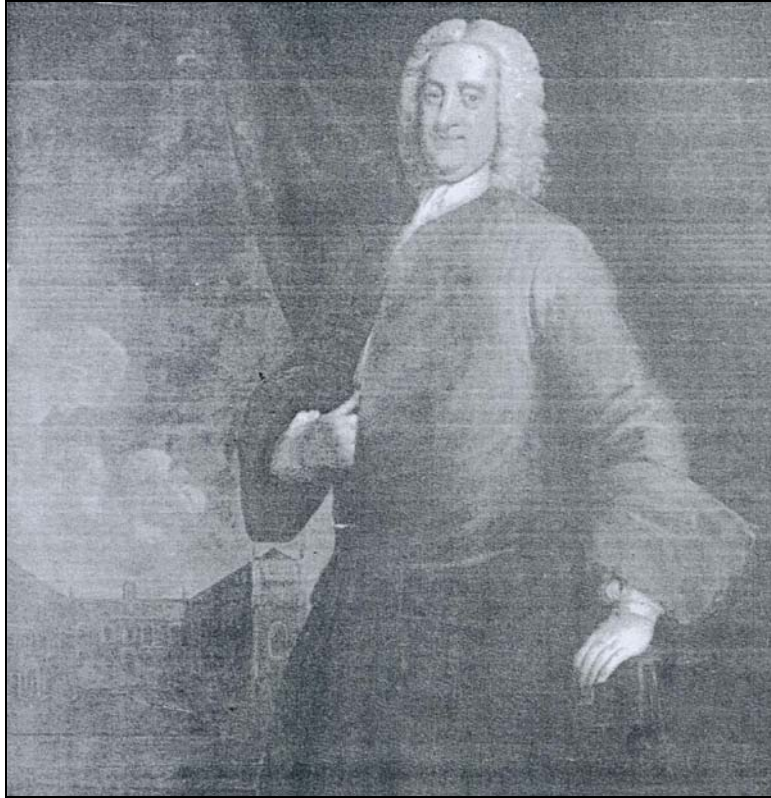
Land for the school was dedicated on part of the “waste” near St Peter’s Church. “Waste” was the term used for undeveloped land surrounding a settlement. The Church had been built in 1699 when Liverpool was first formed as a separate parish distinct from the older parish of Walton. At that time, the urban area of Liverpool was expanding from the old core of the settlement. This lay between the castle, where the Victoria Monument now stands and down to the shore of River Mersey (The Strand). The spread of the town to the south was constrained by the ‘tidal pool’ and it first began to grow outwards along the principle routes to the hinterland, Dale Street, and Church Street where the new parish church of St Peter was built.

The 1725 Eyes’ plan shows the church in its rectangular church yard which formed a ‘square’ between Church Street and School Lane. The site allocated by the Council for the Blue Coat Hospital lay between School Lane and College Lane to the south. G G Watcyn notes that an ‘ancient grammar school’ had previous been erected there from which College Lane presumably takes its name.

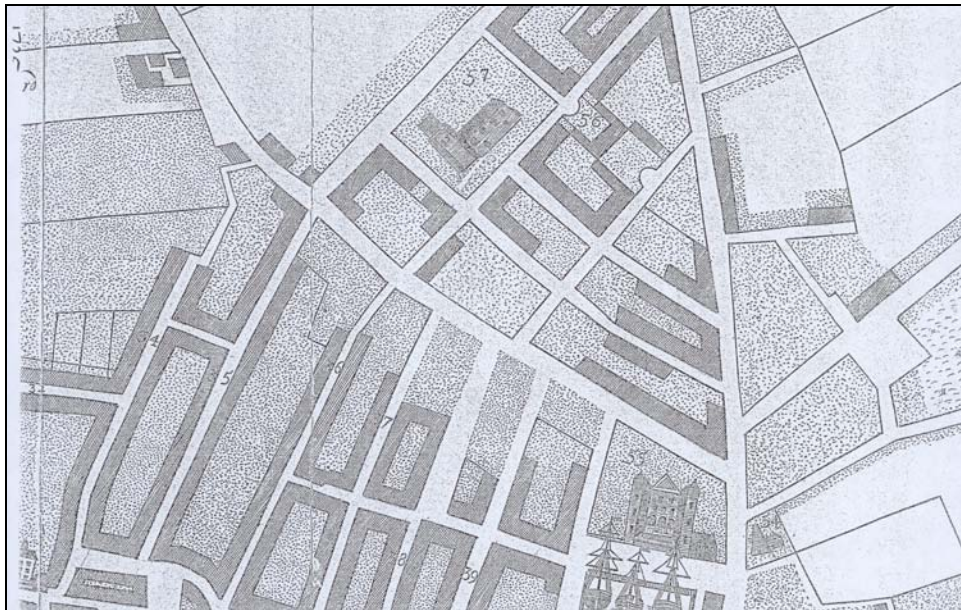
The first Blue Coat Hospital built in 1708 was undoubtedly a modest building, only costing £35 and was a day school; but it soon became apparent to the School’s Trustees that this establishment was insufficient to meet the needs of the community and their own aspirations. This was a time of ambitious projects. Liverpool ship owners, merchants and city elders were determined to increase their own wealth and the status of the town. In 1710 Thomas Steers, firstly an engineer and later an architect and Alderman of the town, was invited by the town council to construct the first commercial wet dock in the country on the site of the old ‘pool’. Its completion in 1715 is a pivotal event in the history of Liverpool and of very considerable significance in the growth of the country’s trade and industrial revolution.

While this massive project must have taken much civic and commercial effort, it is a testament to the times that during the same period the Blue Coat, a major new charity ‘hospital’ complex, was constructed. This must surely have been the largest secular building in the town (Hewitt-Jones). Bryan Blundell was concerned that the small day school was inadequate and not fulfilling its purpose.

“Out of school hours the children got into ‘such habits of idleness, and meet with so many diversions that they either neglect the school or profit little by coming’. If the School was to succeed, the only alternative was to convert it into a boarding School where the children could be provided with ‘meat, drink, clothes and lodging’ and ‘where they would be kept under such discipline, as with the blessing of God, might provide the desired effect’.”[Watkin, p4 para2]



Portrait of Bryan Blundell with the Blue Coat School



Chadwick 1725

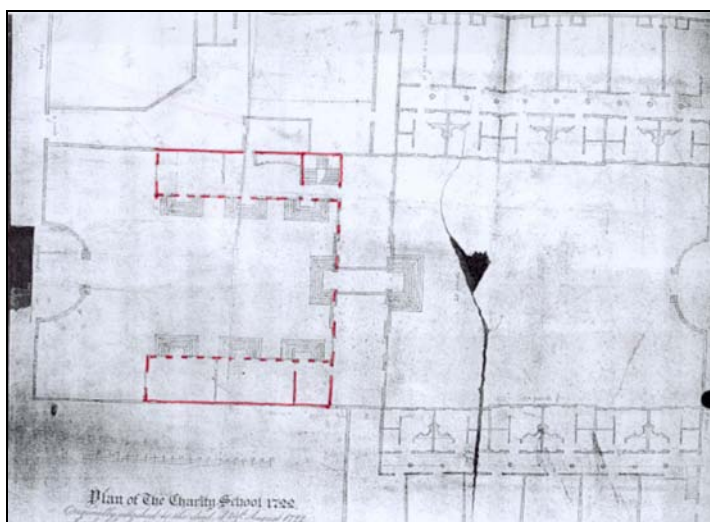
- 57 – St Peter’s Church*
- 56 – The Blue Coat Hospital*
- 55 – The Customs House and first dock*

Funds were raised and the project commenced with the construction of the Kiln for manufacturing the bricks for the new building. The foundation stone was laid on 3 May 1716 and by 1718 the first phase had been completed and occupied by the School, but it is not until 1725 that the complex including almshouses was reportedly completed. Blundell’s ledger indicates that the building costs amounted to £2,288.15s.8d. The builder of the almshouses was a J Brooks who was paid

£540, but no mention is made in the accounts that exist from the time of the identity of the Architect. For its location in a provincial town remote from London and the centres of fashion, the building's style is bold, contemporary and exhibits considerable enthusiasm for detail. (The architecture and possible designers are discussed in Section 2.10).

None of the previously published works on the Bluecoat's history refer to the almshouses. Both the 1722 building plan and the 1725 Eyes' plan clearly indicate their location and the School's archived records indicate that an annual rent of £45 for the Almshouse was paid to the Trustees by the Parish. D Cruickshank in *Georgian Buildings* indicated that "almshouses were closely related to other charitable institutions such as infirmaries for the sick, accommodation for the old or schools for poor children." He quotes (p161) Bailey's dictionary of 1733 as describing a 'hospital' as "any house erected out of charity for the entertainment or relief of the poor, sick, impotent or aged people". Cruickshank also notes "it was common for almshouses and charity schools (known as Blue Coat schools after the uniform commonly worn by the pupils) to be contained within the same building complex." The arrangement at Liverpool where the school and almshouses were combined was therefore not uncommon, neither was the composition of the charitable foundation; Cruickshank indicates that these were established by, amongst others, "professions such as mariners and clergymen for the lodging of their aged and impecunious brethren or widows". With seafaring being such a precarious livelihood, physically and commercially, Liverpool at the time must have been home to many widows, orphans and the dispossessed.

2.4.2 An Analysis of the 1722 Plan



Original 1722 Plan

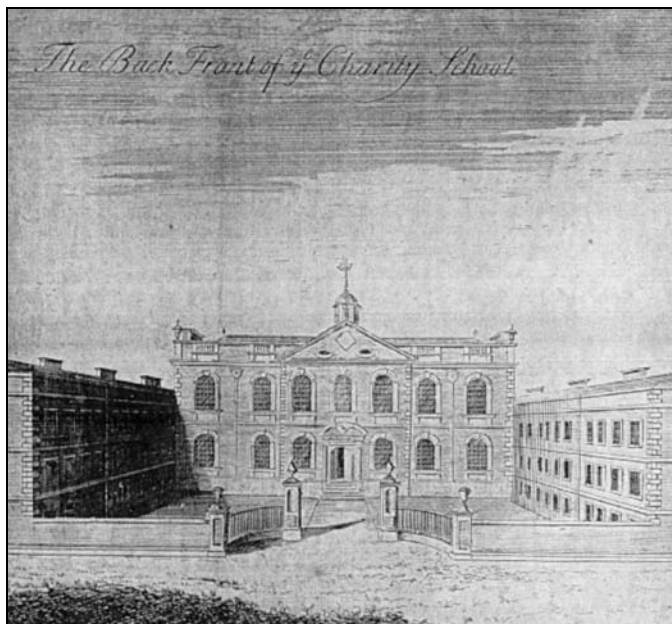
The first plan of the Bluecoat dated 1722 is held at the Liverpool Record Office. The title and text describing that it was "originally attached to the deed of 24th August 1722, whereby the Corporation of Liverpool conveyed the site to the Rector of Liverpool" is obviously inscribed at a very much later date, but the note at the back of the plan dated 1722 is by the then Town Clerk. There can be little doubt, however, that the plan itself is either of that date or earlier. It shows a central block with wings enclosing courtyards both to the north fronting onto

School Lane and to the south onto College Lane. This arrangement is confirmed by the first survey plan of Liverpool (Eyes, 1725) and by the engraving of the School Lane frontage by Hulsberg based on a drawing by J Mollineux and the engraving showing the “back front” onto College Lane (artist unknown).

The building work was not completed until 1725 and it may be that the ground floor plan of 1722 does not reflect the internal layout at the time of completion.

2.4.3 The Almshouses (original south-west and south-east wings)

Firstly we consider the two wings enclosing the south courtyard. Although these buildings do not exist now the layout is of considerable interest and the footprint of the west wing appears to be reflected in the plan as existing today. These are the alms or poor houses referred to in the early school documents. The plan shows that each wing is of identical design. Each contains six units of accommodation that face onto the courtyard. (The Blue Coat record refers to a total of 36 units in total, ie 18 per block on three floors). They are entered by doors leading from a passageway along the centre of which is a line of columns obviously supporting further structures above. Each unit facing the courtyard has a corner chimney with semi-circular hearth. The chimneys are paired, making three stacks. On the other side of the passageway are six square spaces. Whether these were covered work spaces or open yards is unclear. At the College Lane end of the passage is a stair leading to upper floors, which most probably reflected the frontage plan below with access to the six accommodation units entered from a gallery supported by the columns below.



*Engraving entitled
“Back Front of ye
Charity School”*

The engraving titled the “Back Front of ye Charity School” shows the two wings having been built to three storeys. The illustration agrees with the 1722 plan in showing three chimney groups; it also shows that both elevations facing the courtyard were articulated by central projections and that each unit had a pair of windows. There can be no doubt that these wings were constructed, but was the engraving a ‘proposal’ or a sketch of the building as completed? The illustration

shows a rear boundary with a segmental recessed entrance gateway. Although it is indicated on the less detailed Chadwick Plan of 1725, it is not shown on the 1725 plan by Eyes, or on any of the later plans by Eyes, Perry, Harwood or Gage. If this rear entrance was ever constructed, it is apparent from the map evidence that by the 1760s it had been removed and the rear courtyard formed into an enclosed garden.

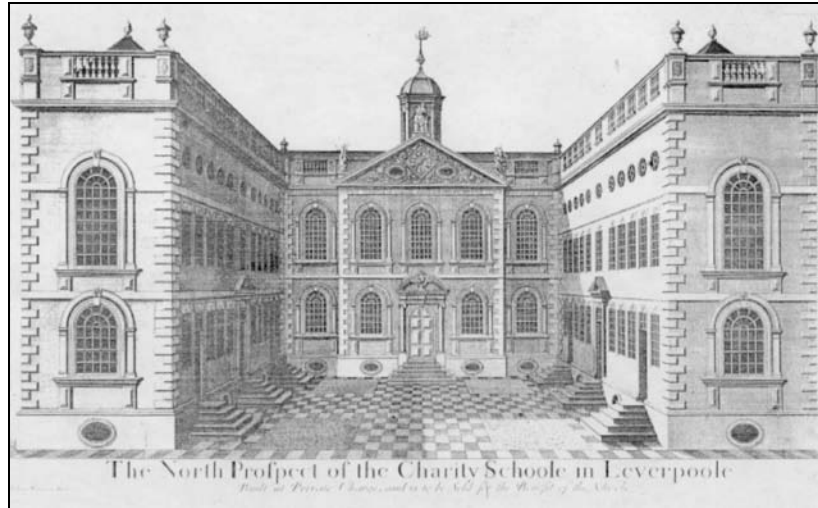
2.4.4 The original Central Block (B1)

The 1722 plan shows the central block drawn with a passageway connecting the north and south courtyards. The front entrance gave access not to an internal hall but to a passageway leading through to the south courtyard. Although not clear, the plan appears to indicate that there may have been doorways from the central passage to the rooms on either side. On the ground floor, at least, the building appears to have been constructed as two separate halves. Possibly this was a device to separate the boys from the girls. We know that in the early 19th century (certainly pre-1821) the upper floor of the central block was used as a chapel/assembly hall and it is possible that this continued the way in which the school had originally operated, with the boys and girls schools on either side of the complex joining only for religious assembly on the upper floor.

Architectural historian, Joseph Sharples notes that a very similar arrangement is indicated for the Grey Coat Hospital School, Westminster, 1701. This had an H plan with a chapel on the first floor of a central block with boy's and girl's school rooms on the ground floor on either side of the entrance, dormitories on the second floor wings and stairs in exactly the same position as the Bluecoat. (Reference: *The English School its Architecture and Organisation, 1370 – 1870 vol.1* by Malcom Seaborne). Also, William Enfield's *History of Liverpool, 1773*, p50 confirms the use of the use of the central upper room at that time: 'In the principle body of the building is a good hall and staircase, leading to a large room employed as a chapel and for other purposes'.

It is recorded that in 1717 a gallery was erected for the use of the school in St Peters Church, where children might "sit, stand and kneel and hear divine service and sermons". R Hewitt-Jones notes that this gallery was in use until the church was demolished in 1922. However, this arrangement does not necessarily imply that the school did not have a space for daily worship at its original inception.

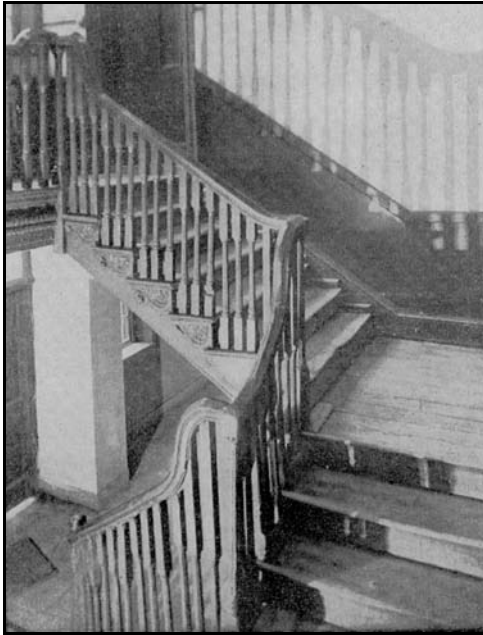
Cruickshank in *Georgian Buildings* indicates that in surveying 18th century almshouses it is apparent that "These compositions invariably include a pedimented centre containing a chapel flanked by one or more usually two storey blocks, one room deep, containing modest apartments in almshouses or classrooms in schools". The Blue Coat in Liverpool would appear to correspond to this description of the general building type. Where it appears to be exceptional is in the depth of its wings.



The Blue Coat Hospital in 1718 from an engraving by Hulsberg

2.4.5 The original North-West and North-East Wings (B2 and B3)

The ground floor plan of the two north projecting wings as shown in the 1722 plan clearly shows that they were one room deep. This is confirmed by the Mollineux engraving and the 1725 plan by Eyes. A staircase is located in the corner of the north-east wing (Block 2) where it abuts the central block. This staircase is in exactly the same location and has the same splayed first flight as the stair that exists today. The main structure of the present stair is recent but much of the handrail and balusters appear to be original. Curiously there is no stair indicated in a corresponding space in the north-west wing.



*Existing stair, north-west wing
(Photo by Chambre Hardman
1932)*

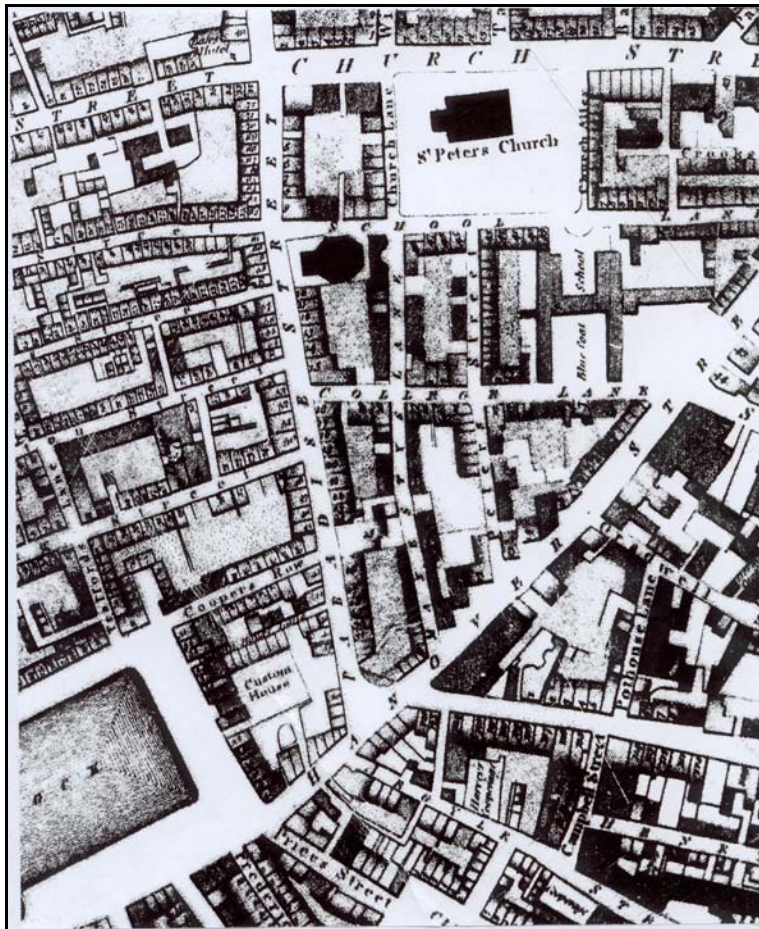
Did this stair serve both halves of the school, or is the plan as drawn incomplete? The next extant plan that shows the ground floor is the 1848 Ordnance Survey map and this indicates a narrow stair in the southern end of the north-west wing. There must be a likelihood that the 1722 drawing may not be a fully accurate illustration of what was actually built. An examination of the ground floor today shows dividing walls in different positions to those indicated on the 1722 plan. Not all of the existing walls are likely to be original but clues to the first structure layout surely lie in the positioning of the fireplaces and chimneys. The 1722 plan indicates only two principal rooms on the ground floor of each wing with no fire or chimney pieces. That these rooms would have been built without any means of heating must be unlikely. The late 17th and early 18th centuries were an exceptionally cold period, when frost fairs were held on the Thames.

A typical feature of the upper floors are the chimneys and fire places built diagonally across the corners of the smaller rooms. Although there is no early plan of the upper floors, this arrangement mirrors that seen in the 1722 ground plan of the almshouses. It must be reasonable to assume, therefore, that these chimneys and the cross walls they are built into are original. The north-east wing (Block 2) has been very considerably altered internally following wartime fire damage (apart from the stair restoration). Although corner chimneys on the upper floors remain embedded within the original brick walls, the upper floor structures are all recent.

In contrast, the north-west wing must contain much of the original structure and room layout. Perhaps the first floor is the most intact with four rooms spanning the width of the building and each accessed from the stair end by a central doorway leading from room to room. The large end rooms overlooking School Lane have a central fire place and chimney while the smaller rooms have the characteristic corner chimneys. The fire surrounds and grates are almost certainly of later date than the early 18th century but also are of interest.

Externally the north courtyard and its segmental gated entrance appear almost identical to the original engraving and 19th century illustrations.

2.5 1725 – 1803



Horwood 1803

2.5.1 Overview of the Period

The history of the buildings and development of the site during this period is unclear and the documentary records do not refer to or are not supported by any detailed plans. In his published research that describes the School during this period *A Short History of the Bluecoat Chambers*, Robin Hewitt-Jones relates:-

Bryan Blundell died in 1756. He had been Treasurer of the school since 1714 and during his long service had seen it expand to provide places for 70 boys and 30 girls. But the influence of the school did not end when the children left its doors. The pages of the first account book bear witness to payments made year

after year for apprenticing children at the age of fourteen to various local trades. As might be expected, a connection with the sea grew up and many 18th century Old Blues became mates or masters of their ships.

It is often said that the Blue Coat School, and indeed much of Liverpool's prosperity, was founded on the profits of the slave trade. This is regrettably true, and it can be shown that more than half the trustees in the mid-eighteenth century, including Bryan Blundell and his sons, were deeply involved in the business. It is also true that many of the boys were apprenticed into service in their households. The generous contributions to Liverpool's flourishing charity school may in many cases have taken the form of conscience money, but before too harsh a judgement is arrived at, one ought to remember that it was an age of extraordinary contrasts when callousness and philanthropy were often found incongruously side-by-side.

Progress continued during the treasurerships of two more Blundells, Richard (1756-60) and Jonathan (1760-96). Both were sons of Bryan. Subscriptions continued to flow in, numbers rose to over 200 and the building was enlarged to include further sleeping accommodation, workroom, sick room and dining room.

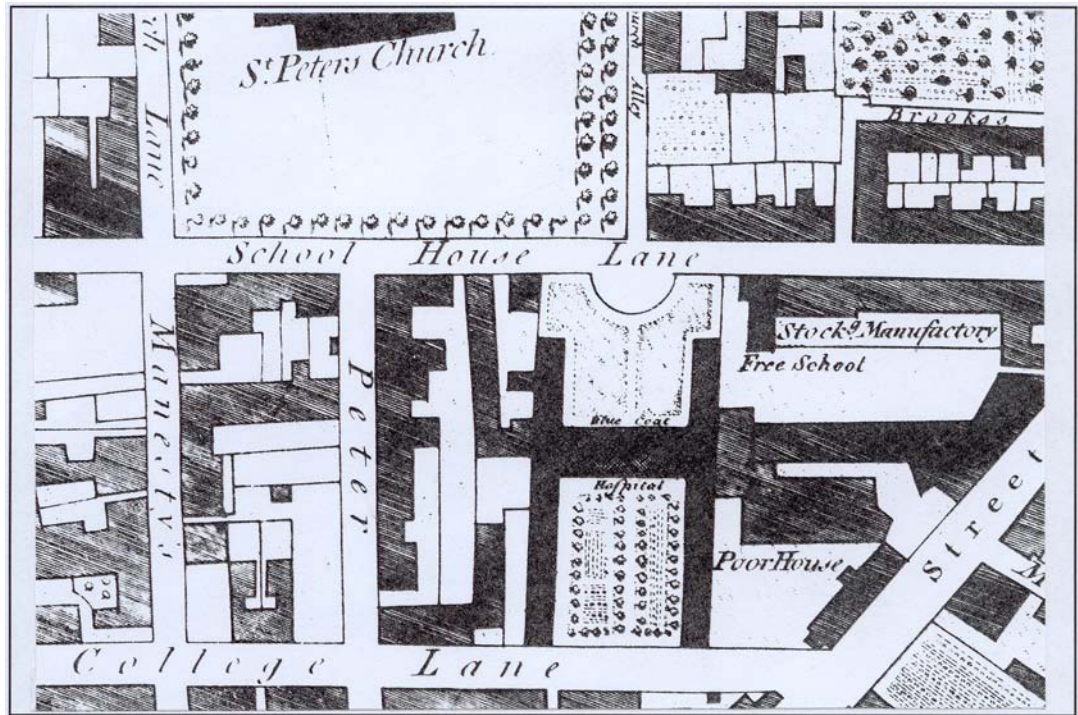
Hewitt-Jones is not clear about when or where this additional accommodation was constructed. It may be that they were early extensions to the rear of the north-east and north-west wings. From the Horwood Plan of 1803 it appears that such buildings did exist at that time.

Whether any of this late 18th century building survives is not obvious.

2.5.1 The South Wings

The almshouses, with their small scale domestic rooms must have been unsuitable for the expanding school either as dormitories or as workrooms. It may be that the south-west almshouse wing was demolished circa 1800 as the first stage of the major rebuilding programme of the early 19th century, and replaced with a new structure on the same footprint as the old. The lower storey external brickwork of the existing south-west wing (Block 9) facing the courtyard certainly appears older and more decayed than the upper storey brickwork. The shallow segmental brick lintels to the ground floor windows also have subtle variations to those above (the angle of the lintel brick). Taking these three features – the apparent age of the brick, and the lintels – it is not impossible that the lower storey of this wing dates from the first years of the 18th century with the upper storey having been constructed or reconstructed later. The record of 31 March 1800 refers to a plan having been prepared by John Foster. Although the location of the new building is not referred to, the south-west wing seems from its appearance and condition to pre date the other early 19th century works.

In relation to the south-east almshouse wing, there is inconsistency between the Eyes plan of 1765 and Perry's of 1769. One shows the south-east almshouse wing but the other does not. Building blocks in both locations are, however, indicated on the Horwood Plan 1803. Which is accurate cannot be determined.



Perry 1769

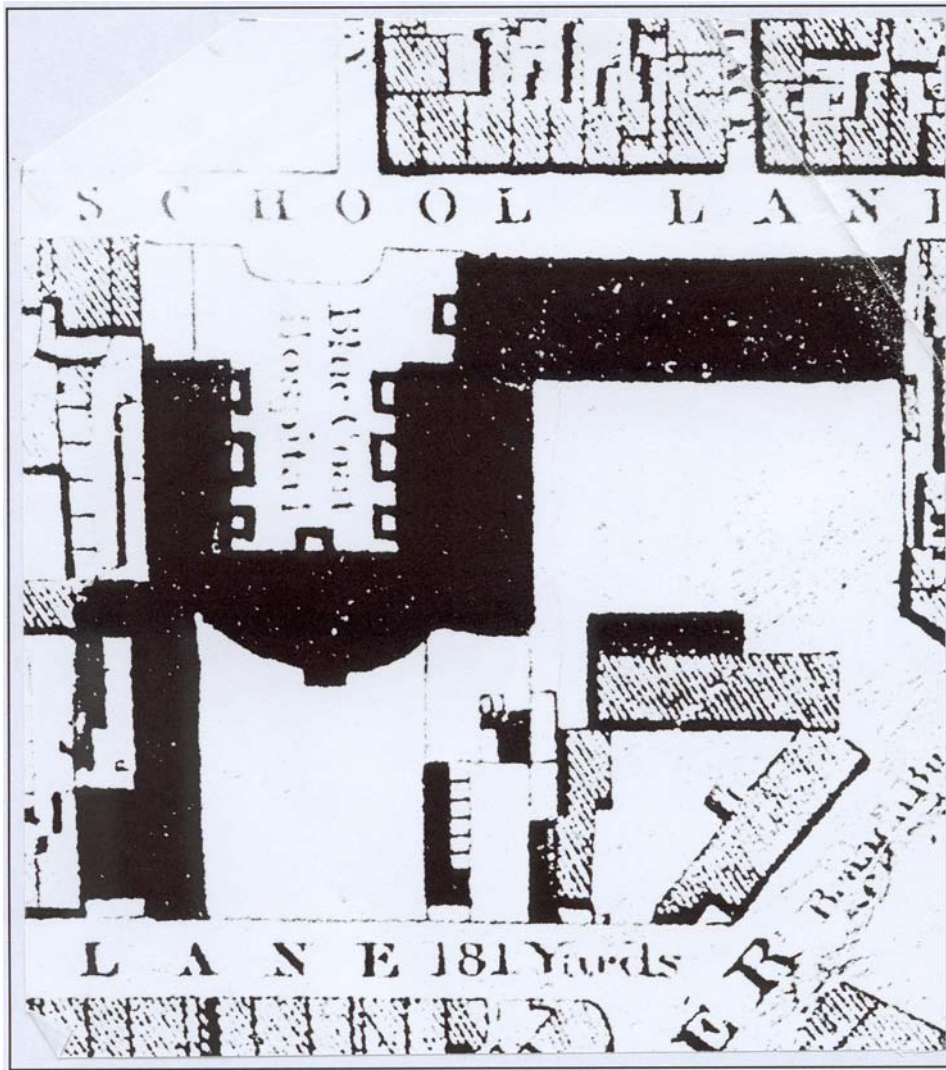
As far as the survival of the internal features from the mid and later 18th century is concerned, these are now limited to the north-west wing. It is possible that certain of the existing fire place and joinery details in the north-west wing are from the later eighteenth century, notably the fire surround in the upper ground floor room of the present bistro.

The 18th century plans show that the south courtyard was laid out as a formal garden with trees and planting (it presumably contained a herb garden). Although still a garden, none of the 18th century features remain in the south courtyard.

2.5.3 North-West Wing Extension (B12)

It is possible, and the 1803 plan would indicate, that during the later part of the 18th century extensions were added to the ground floor of the original north-west wing (B1). Being only one room wide, the original structure must soon have proved very constrained. However, no visible structure from this period appears to survive.

2.6 Period 1803 – 1835



Gage 1835

It is evident from the school records that the year 1799-1800 marked a crucial time in the history of both the school and the site. As a result of the growth in school numbers, serious consideration was given to moving the institution to a new location 'more out of town' where presumably it could expand on a less constrained site. This course was clearly rejected in favour of a radical examination of the existing accommodation. John Foster, the elder (1758-1827) was commissioned to prepare a plan and programme of works for the site. This included the removal of some buildings which were difficult to adapt and in a poor state, the repair and extension of others, and the construction of new blocks. The changes appear to have been commenced in c1800 with the construction of "a new school with bedroom over". In 1806 the Report of the State of Blue Coat Hospital states that the main elevations were repointed, and refurbished with new doors and windows, stone cills and the painting of the old stonework. It also indicates that the steps were to be replaced and new footwalks provided to the doors.

In 1815 at a special meeting of the Trustees (14 March) it was recorded that some of the principal buildings "are become so decayed ruinous and unsafe ... that it will be indispensably necessary to remove them and replace them by others". By

1821 (2 October) changes to the central block, containing the chapel and dining room, had been completed.

2.6.1 Overview of the Period

The Gage plan of Liverpool of 1835 is the first plan still existing which illustrates the changes of the early 19th century. It shows:

- The rear portion of the central block is now segmental in form.
- A new building has been constructed adjacent to the end of the north-east wing (now occupied by the barber's shop on the lower floor).
- New school buildings extend eastwards up School Lane.
- The south-east wing has been removed.
- The north-east and north-west wings are now clearly two blocks deep (ie Block 5 has been added to Block 2 and Block 12 has been added to 3).

R Hewitt-Jones makes the following references in connection with this period:-

The Blue Coat School continued its distinguished career during this century. Its numbers exceeded 300 by the time the French prisoners from the Napoleonic wars were being housed in the Old Tower of Liverpool on the waterfront, and there is evidence throughout the century of continued support from the citizens of Liverpool. It is notable that amongst these supporters were now appearing prosperous men who had once been educated at the school themselves. Such a one was George Brown, who entered the school as an eight-year-old orphan in 1765, went to sea on leaving school and became master of his ship at the age of twenty, owner of a small fleet by the age of thirty, and in 1808 was elected Treasurer of the Blue Coat School. (The office of Treasurer of the Blue Coat School has always been equivalent of Chairman of the Trustees).

The building received several repairs and alterations during this period. In 1807 the brickwork of the front of the building was pointed and the stone refaced, but care was taken not to 'injure or affect its present appearance and general character'. The back of the building, however, was considerably altered. It had originally balanced the front with a similar arrangement of windows and pediment, but sometime during the 1820s it was given its present, plainer, segmental appearance."

2.6.2 The Central Block (B1)

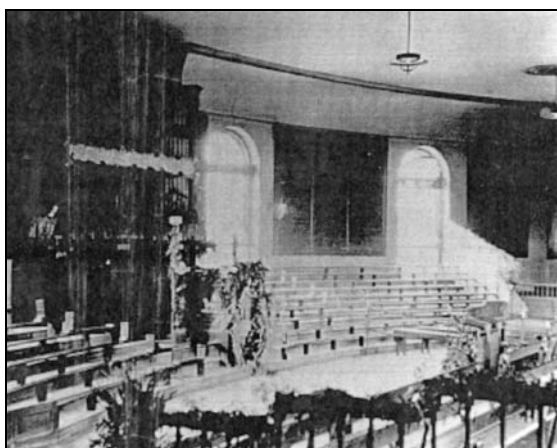
The changes to the central block were designed and built by John Foster. It was dramatically altered in 1820-21. The record of 13 March 1821 shows that Foster "be applied to for a plan and specification of the work to be done in the intended alteration and addition to the chapel and dining room". The internal accommodation was increased by forming a curved (segmental) rear elevation projecting into the south courtyard. The passageway linking the two courtyards was removed and a single large space formed. This lower room functioned as the school dining hall. It appears that this was entered directly from the front entrance without a lobby space. The only interruptions to this large space were the raised galleries at either end and the cast iron columns that supported the floor above. On

the upper floor, which remained as a chapel, an organ was installed within an externally projecting niche within the centre of the curved wall.

No remaining interior features from this period are apparent, the upper and lower floors having been substantially remodelled in the 20th century, although it is possible that the cast iron columns remain embedded within the lower floors' later walls and 'classical' columns.



*The School Dining Hall
Ground Floor Central Block
(19th century)*



*The School Chapel
Upper Floor Central Block
(19th century)*

Bisson in his book *The Sandon Studios Society* (p40) describes the dining hall as follows:-

On going through the centre doorway of the main building one would have found that the ground floor was not divided up into small rooms as now but was one large room with cast iron columns supporting the floor above. It had been the main dining room and at each end were galleries from which visitors had watched the children at meals.

This provides a picture of the interior of the central block at the beginning of the 20th century and it also fits with photographic evidence of the school in use (late 19th century), which indicates an interior that appears consistent with that which is likely to have been constructed in the first part of the 19th century.

It is interesting to speculate upon what must have been the then considerable technical difficulties of replacing the rear wall and internal structure of the central block while at the same time retaining the front façade. It certainly indicates the

value placed on the original frontage elevations. At that time they would only have been 100 years old and the project appears to have been an early and isolated example of façade conservation in Liverpool.

2.6.3 **Extension and Expansion towards Hanover Street**

It is evident from the 1835 plan and later evidence that by this date the School had expanded to take in the adjacent sites to the east (indicated on the Perry 1769 as the Stocking Manufactory and the Free School). School buildings now front onto the upper part of School Lane towards Hanover Street and these have a playground at the rear. This space extends to the rear of a group of buildings within the site at the corner of College Lane and Hanover Street, indicated on the Eyes 1779 plan as a 'poor house'. The old south-east wing containing the almshouse has clearly been demolished by this stage.

Bisson (p39) describing the School before the 20th century alterations writes:-

Standing in School Lane and looking towards the Blue Coat School one would have noticed that the building extended towards Hanover Street. This was the boys' wing on the ground floor of which there was a dining room with, above, a dormitory. At the back of this there was the covered boys' playground where in 1907 men of King Edward's Horse would drill. This was separated from the girls' playground, now the Back Courtyard, by a building on the ground floor of which the latrines were housed. The foundations of this can still be seen and there remains a step deeply worn by the shoes of the girls.

The buildings that still survive from the eastward expansion phase are the block (B5) to the rear of the original north-east wing and the corner building to School Lane (B4). The door from this building to the courtyard is shown on the illustrations of the 1840s and 1850s, and is stylistically from the early 19th century. The roof of Block B5 also appears on these drawings.

2.6.4 **South-West Wing (B9 and B10)**

As previously discussed, the ground floor of Block B9 may date from the late 18th century but it could have been constructed within the earlier part of the 1803-1835 period. Because of the utilitarian and restrained style that was deliberately in keeping with its setting, the upper storey cannot easily be dated.

By 1835 a building on the site of Block B10, the former cinema, clearly existed but it did not extend to the College Lane building line. The present building is likely to be later.

2.6.5 **North-West Wing Extension (B12)**

An illustration from 1851 shows a two storey addition (fronting Block 12) to the original north-west wing (Block 3) facing onto School Lane. The elevation still exists but is now three storeys. The original round arched window has been bricked up and new windows inserted. This structure will have had its own stair but how this was accessed at ground floor level is unclear. Whether it was one room or two rooms deep is also uncertain but it is obvious that the lightwell at the rear of Block 12 has never been roofed above first floor level.

Bisson (p40) notes that what became the Kitchen for the Sandon Society Luncheon Room (now the Bistro kitchen) was formerly part of the housekeeper's quarters, which also occupied the upper floor. It must be quite possible that the frontage portion of B12 was originally built as the school housekeeper's domestic accommodation.

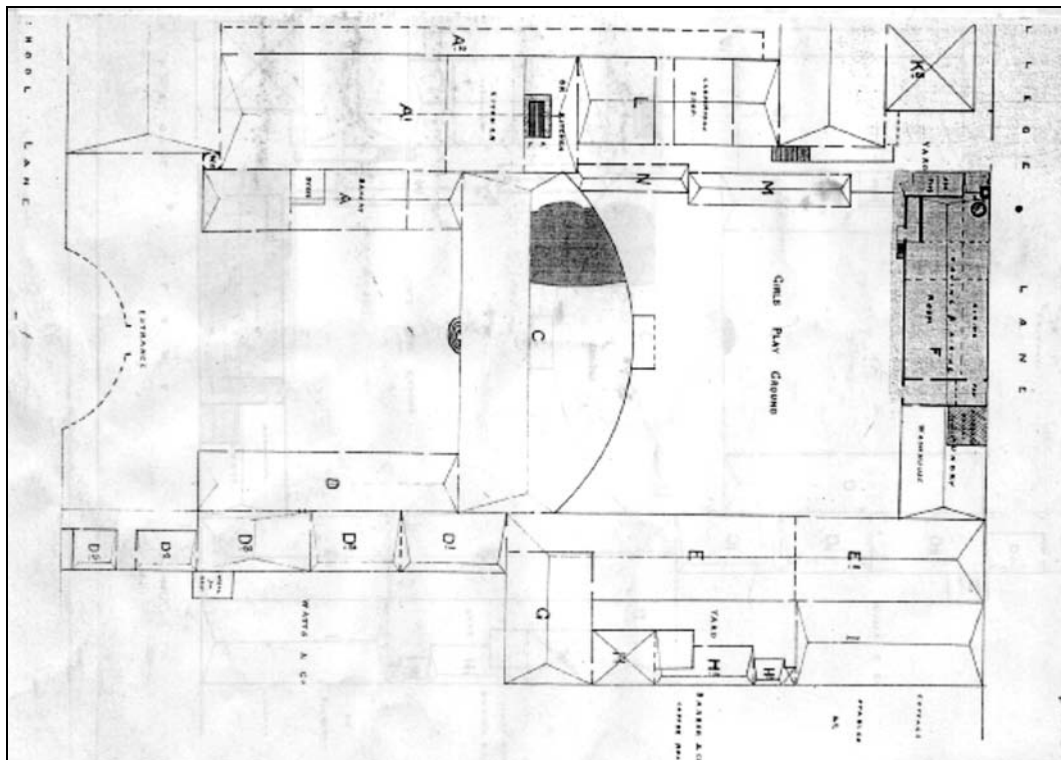
2.6.6 Internal Survivals

No notable surviving internal fabric remains from the early part of the 19th century, except perhaps examples of fire surrounds in the north-west wing.



View of the Bluecoat from St Peter's churchyard 1851

2.7 1835 – 1891



Plan 1881

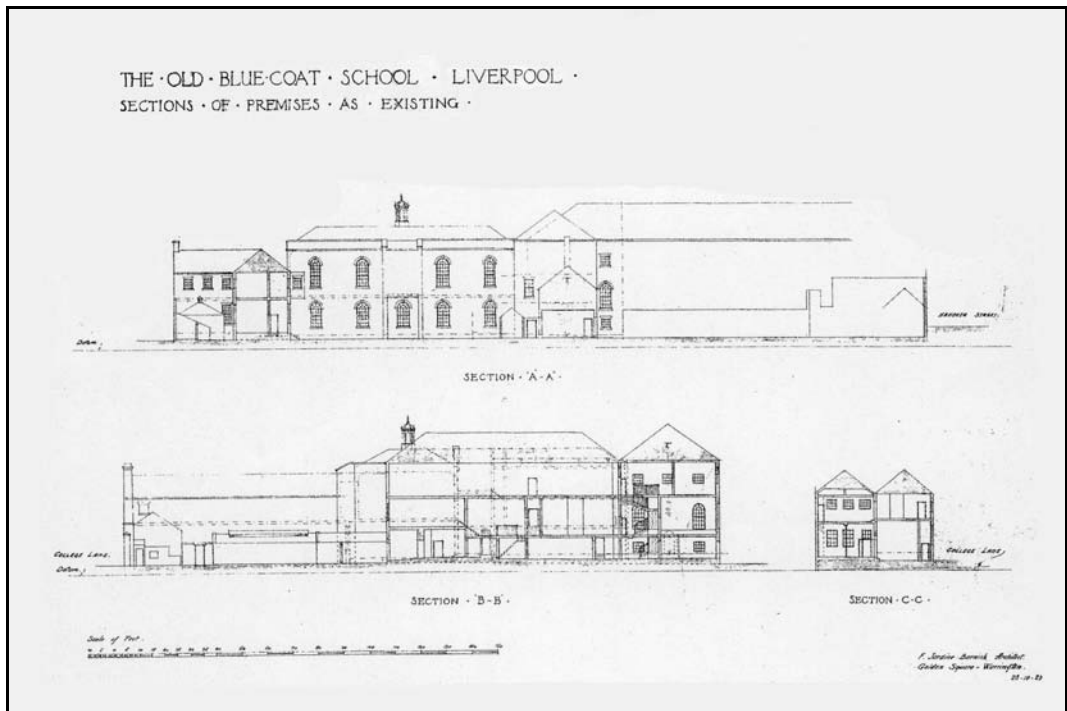
2.7.1 Overview of the Period

The reference plan that marks the end of this period is that prepared for insurance purposes in 1881 and amended ten years later. It indicates the following changes compared to the School in 1835:-

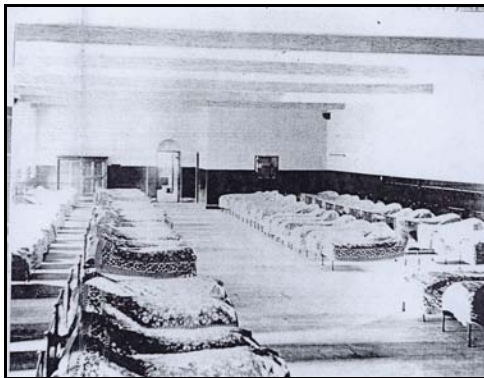
- The incorporation of the site of the old 'poor house' on the corner of College Lane and Hanover Street and the construction of new buildings on that land. None of these buildings remain.
- The erection of a new south-east wing and two smaller blocks, possibly shelters/toilets on the east side of the south (girls' court yard).
- The range of single storey buildings for laundry purposes enclosing the south courtyard to College Lane, Block B8, now the Bluecoat Display Centre and studios.
- The extension or most probably reconstruction of the present Block B10.

Of the 19th century south-east wing very little exists apart from the steps on the east side of the south courtyard which lead to a basement area below the existing 20th century Block B7.

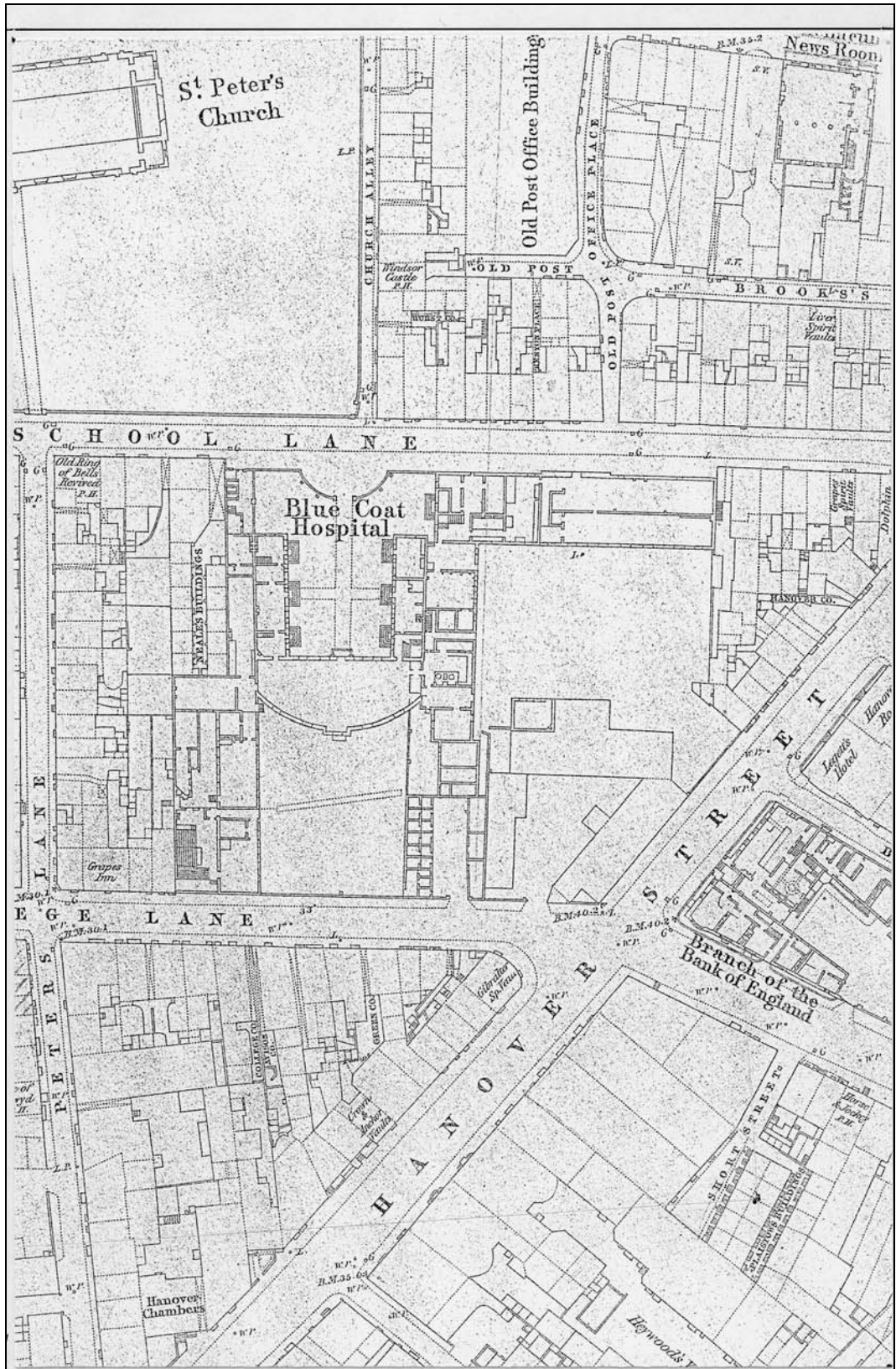
The laundry buildings (B8) still exist. That to the west of the entrance to College Lane is now the Bluecoat Display Centre which also occupies part of B9. This part of the building has recently been well restored and repaired and the original mid-19th century King Post roof trusses are exposed.



Plan by Jardine (1823)



The Blue Coat in the 19th century



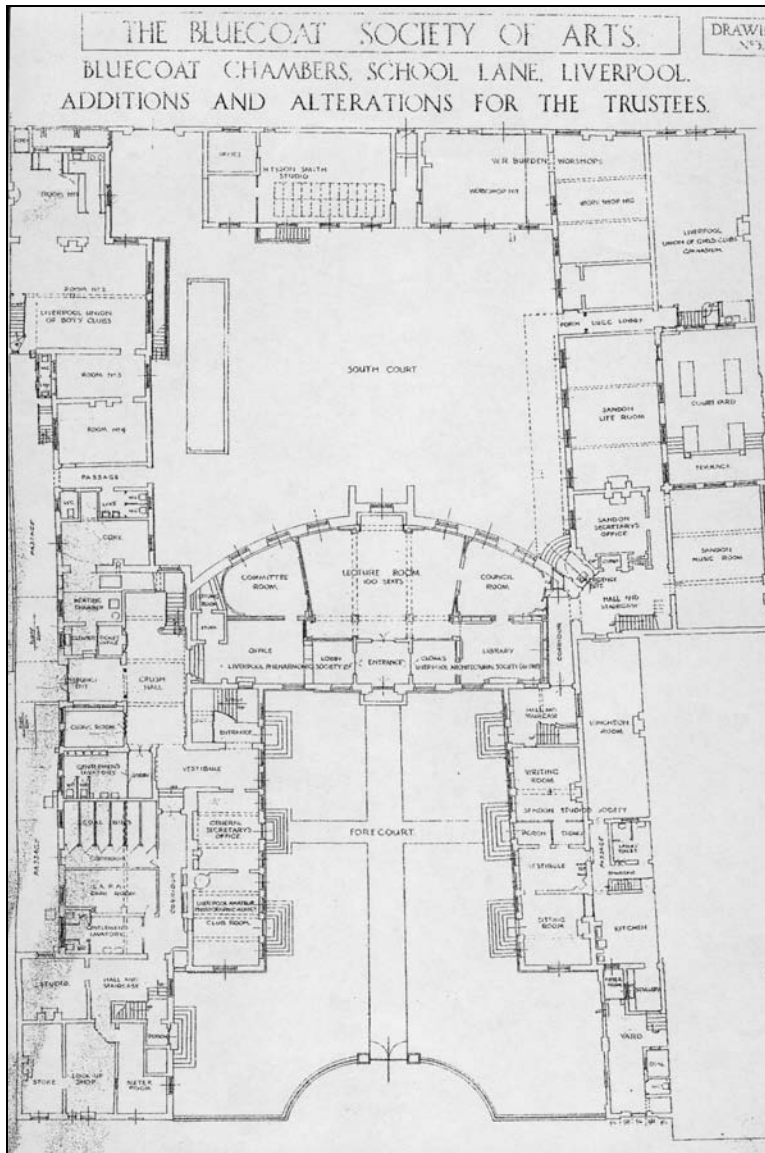
Ordnance Survey Plan 1848

(After the 1722 illustration this is the earliest plan to show the ground floor interior of the Blue Coat school.)

The building Block B10 incorporating the former cinema appears to be a mid- to late-19th century construction, possibly constructed on the foot print of an older building but extended to the College Lane building line. Bisson indicates that, when a school, the lower floor of this block was then the cobbler's shop.

The external space to the north of this block, now a landscaped court, was in 1881 occupied by a group of small ancillary buildings. Bisson (p40) indicates that this was the site of the Bath house (presumably girls), "with cold water only laid on".

2.8 1891 – 1937



Plan 1927 revised 1937 by Shephard and Bower

2.8.1 Overview of the Period

The plans for the Bluecoat (Arts Centre) prepared by Shephard and Bower, Architects, in 1928 as revised in 1937, indicate the extensive changes that took place during the first part of the 20th century. The School vacated the premises in 1906 and it was not until 1927 that the future of the Bluecoat as a building and as

an arts centre was finally secured. This process has been well documented in the two books by Bisson and MacCunn.

At the turn of the century, Liverpool, as well as flourishing commercially as the second port of the Empire, also excelled culturally. A notable arts group was the Sandon Studios Society. It had premises on upper Duke Street, Sandon Terrace, which in 1907 it had to vacate. The previous year the Bluecoat School had left its old site for a new building in the suburb of Wavertree. The old school was vacant and the Sandon Studios Society realised that this presented a unique opportunity to secure the future of one of the city's most historic buildings as a centre for the arts. Although parts of the premises were let, in response to an enquiry from the Sandon Studios Society the School's Trustees replied "do what you wish at the Old Bluecoat (Girls School)". The Girls' School occupied the western wings of the building and the south courtyard. Events moved rapidly. The Sandon Studios Society took over parts of the building and made ambitious plans for the future. The University Professor of Architecture, C H Reilly, was an influential figure with the Society and in 1909 moved the School of Architecture to the Bluecoat where it remained until 1918 (MacCunn, p3). Rooms were also let as painters' studios and exhibitions were held. The Sandon Society of Artists' exhibition of 1908 was of international standing and included works by Charles Rennie Macintosh, Augustus John and Claude Monet. This was surpassed by the exhibition of 1911 which, as well as local artists, displayed works from the London Grafton Galleries Post Impressionist Exhibition of 1910. This was a hugely influential event. Richard Cox writing in *The Times* December 31 1993 describes the 1910 Manet and the Post Impressionist Exhibition as one of the "six shows that shocked the world", arguing that "it ultimately shaped the sensibilities of an entire generation", prompting Virginia Woolf to make the extravagant claim that "on or about December 1910 human character changed". The fact that this was brought to Liverpool a few months later illustrates the importance of Liverpool culturally and its burgeoning arts centre. The event was held, according to Bisson (p62), in the "long room with a roof light at the rear of the premises, since divided up". This was the east portion of the range of buildings abutting College Lane, which are now studios.

Although the arts centre 'project' was well established in terms of activities, aspirations for the future were made uncertain due to financial difficulties and the problems of ownership. Lord Leverhulme purchased an interest in the property with the apparent intention of supporting the ambitious arts centre plans proposed during the pre First World War period. However, he appears to have been reticent in making any final commitments and when he died in 1925, it appeared that the Bluecoat would be sold for commercial use. In 1926 it "was advertised for sale by auction, in the coming October, as a building site" (MacCunn, p14). Meanwhile the ground floor of the central block had been let as a car showroom and other parts let to "unsuitable tenants – umbrella makers, a ticket writer and a seller of women's lingerie amongst others" (MacCunn, p14). The lofty ideas for a permanent arts centre appeared to be slipping out of reach. A fundraising campaign was launched to save the building and after exhaustive efforts, which at the time appeared close to failure, the building was eventually purchased in January 1927.

The property was now held in Trust by the Bluecoat Society of Arts, a new organisation especially formed for the purpose of owning and managing the site as an arts centre.

Although funds had been secured for the purchase of the Bluecoat by the Trust, finances for repair and adaptation were still a problem. Indeed this has remained a perennial difficulty since then for one reason or another. At times of greatest need, however, solutions have been found even if they appeared to have involved 'leaps of faith'.

2.8.2 **The Internal Restructuring of 1927-37**

The Liverpool architects Shepherd and Bower, who had offices in the premises, were appointed to prepare plans for the building's long term role. Early proposals included:

- Dividing the ground floor of the centre block (Block 1) into a small lecture hall flanked by committee rooms and adjoined by offices and cloakrooms to the front of the building
- Improvements to the south-west blocks
- Lavatories in the east wing

(MacCunn, pp26-27)

This first phase was completed by the autumn of 1927 and allowed rents to be increased to generate funds. The next phase included works to make the former chapel, the upper room of Block 1, into a concert hall which was to be a further source of income. A wide range of work was required to meet current regulations; these included (from MacCunn):-

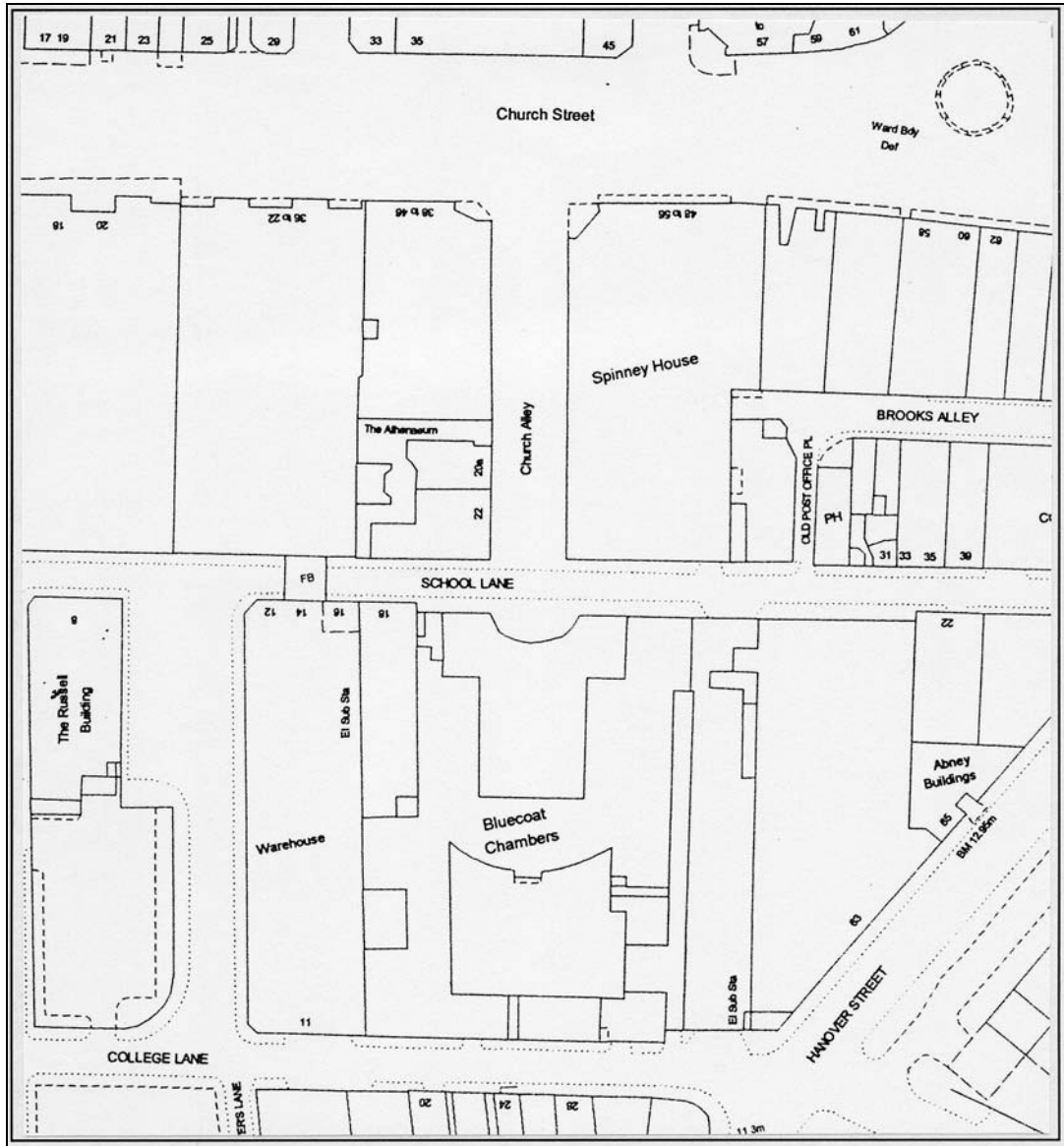
- A new approach to the hall from the east and with a 'dignified', fireproof staircase.
- A well proportioned vestibule
- Lavatories and cloakrooms
- A stage at the west end and to its rear lavatories, dressing rooms and a new staircase

It is also evident from the Shepherd and Bower plans that their adaptation works extended to most parts of the buildings that had been acquired by the Bluecoat Society for the Arts. Apart from the original north-west wing (Block 3) and the north-east wing staircase (Block 2), all other blocks appeared to have been quite radically altered internally.

The new interiors were designed to a 'classical' style intended to be sympathetic with the historic nature of the building. MacCunn, writing in 1956, considered that the scheme was most successful that Queen Anne and Georgian architecture had been a "special province" of the architects study and that they had approached the problem "with scrupulous and scholarly care". He considered that the subdivision of the large hall on the ground floor was, perhaps, their most successful

achievement “for a visitor, who had not known the hall in its original state, would have been unaware that any alteration had been made”. There is no reason to believe that this was not a generally held view at the time but it raises interesting issues about new design and conservation, which are considered later in the study.

2.9 1937 – 2001



Current Ordnance Survey Plan

2.9.1 Overview of the Period

The next crisis for the Bluecoat begins on 3rd May 1941. It was then that the sustained bombing of Liverpool during World War Two began a fire that spread to the east wings and the central block. MacCunn states that “the north-east wing was completely burnt out and though the walls remained standing the roof and floors collapsed. The south-east wing was destroyed. The roof of the central block collapsed and the concert hall was gutted”. The lower floor of the central block and the staircase approaches, which were “fire proof”, survived with only minor damage. “Two nights later the west side of the Bluecoat Chambers was hit

by a high explosive bomb and the blast and falling debris of bricks and girders did considerable damage to the north end of the west wing”.

Towards the end of the war there was much consideration given to how the restoration could be funded and whether the contribution from the “War Damage Commission” should be given to Liverpool City Council for it to take over the project and future running of the building as an art gallery and library. However, there was vehement objection to any such proposal by a group calling themselves the “United Liverpool Artists” (MacCunn, p49) and it was considered that this expressed a generally held view. The suggestion that the Bluecoat should be transferred to Council ownership stalled, only to be replaced by further uncertainty in relation to threats of the compulsory purchase of the rear part of the site (MacCunn, p52). by the City’s post-war planning Committee. Fortunately, it appears that all such threats to the Bluecoat’s organisation and buildings had been resolved by 1947 and that this allowed the rebuilding to commence.

Shepherd and Bower were again engaged for this task. Plans involved an almost complete internal rebuilding of the north-east wings (Blocks 2, 4, 6 and 7) and the upper parts of the north-west wing extension (Block 12) and Block 13. In addition much restoration work was undertaken to the stonework on the elevations. MacCunn reports that the scheme submitted to the Ministry of Works had the backing of a wide range of organisations including:-

- RIBA
- Georgian Group
- Liverpool Architectural Society
- Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire
- Merseyside Civic Society
- The Arts Council

The works were largely completed by 1952. They included the replacement of some of the keystone cherubs and the liver bird over the main door by the sculptor Herbert Tyson Smith who had a studio in the Bluecoat. Also in that year the building was listed for its architectural and historic interest.

Since that date there have been no substantial changes either internally or to the external elevations apart from minor adaptations to the Display Centre (a new window to College Lane with bronze and glass screen and enlarged windows to the south courtyard). However, there have been some alterations to the external spaces with the creation of the landscaped garden within the south courtyard, which was commenced in the 1960s, and the construction of the disabled ramp to the front entrance and garden courtyard in 1998 by the local architects O’Mahony Fozard.

Today the building functions as a lively arts centre with a gallery for contemporary exhibitions, a concert/performance hall, and studios for artists and music rehearsal. These facilities are complemented by office accommodation for arts-related businesses. A craft centre (for display and retail), a bistro, bookshop, card shop and artists’ materials shop add to the site as a visitor and retail attraction. The

courtyards provide quiet spaces for visitors and city centre workers to relax away from the bustle of the city centre.



Fire and bomb damage to the Bluecoat

2.10 The Architecture



Blue Coat 1840 (from 'Blue Coat School: Past and Present')

Viewed from the north courtyard the architecture of the original central block and the two side wings is today almost exactly as it was when first constructed. In a paper delivered to the Lancashire and Cheshire Historical Society in October 1957, Stanley Harris presented a description of the building and argued in support of his contention that the design should be attributed to Thomas Ripley (c1683-1758). Harris's full description of the principal elevations of the original buildings can hardly be improved upon and is quoted here:-

The building is of narrow red bricks with stone dressings. The two-storied main front has a pedimented centre set slightly forward; a cupola rises behind the pediment. Two eleven-windowed, three-storied wings with pedimented doorways project at right-angles from the main front; the upper windows are of the oval ox-eye type. Similar windows with moulded stone surrounds light the basement. The forecourt is enclosed by a low brick wall with a stone coping and iron railings, and a gateway in a wide segmental recess in the wall has its original massive panelled stone pillars and a fine wrought-iron overthrow. All the windows retain their glazing-bars. The roundheaded windows in the main front and the return fronts of the wings are attractive features; they have heavily moulded architraves with prominent keystones, and the architraves are enclosed by brickwork of "header" width separating them from Doric pilasters supporting moulded archivolt also with keystones, on each of which is carved the cherubic head of a child. The moulded cills are supported by panelled pedestal aprons resting on stringcourses. The arched entrance doorway in the main front is flanked by engaged half columns with plain shafts and Roman Ionic capitals. These support an entablature and a broken segmental pediment, both denticulated and enriched. The frieze is pulvinated. The keystone of the entrance arch is continued into the cornice. The rounded terminals of the two pediment segments

are carved with the eight-pointed Star of the Order of the Garter. Three stone figures emblematic of the charity originally stood at the angles and apex of the main pediment, but together with the stone urns at each corner of the parapet they had disappeared before 1770. Early in the nineteenth century the original parapet of short sections of balustrade separated by brickwork was replaced by a solid brick parapet. The original south elevation repeated both in form and ornament the north (main) elevation, the only variations being the absence of the three stone figures on the pediment and an additional two-windows length which in the north front was taken up by the wings. During major alterations to the building in the twenties of the nineteenth century the present segmental south front replaced the original front.

A broader critique of the building's architectural qualities is provided in the *Significance* section (Section 3.0) of this study.

In his paper, Harris proceeds to consider the question of the identity of the architect. In so doing, he presents a detailed account of his researches into the early records of the School Account Book and provides an understanding of the main personages who it is either known, or were highly likely, to have been involved in the building's procurement. A copy of this account is included within the source material presented with this Conservation Plan study. The key factual points of his thesis are as follows:

- There is no record of any payment to or the naming of any architect within the original account books.
- The building was designed prior to the architectural handbooks by James Gibbs and others that later became popular and were often used by builders and their patrons. The design of Liverpool's Bluecoat is so confident architecturally that it is almost impossible to conceive that it was designed by a local mason-builder.
- There was no local precedent that could have directly inspired the building. Chester's Bluecoat was under construction and while it has some similarities in its effect and plan it is significantly less interesting architecturally.
- Sir Thomas Johnson is highly likely to have been involved in the procurement of the building. He was a Bluecoat Trustee and Liverpool's MP, and one time Lord Mayor, and had been involved in initiating the creation of Liverpool as a separate parish, the construction of St Peter's Church and the first dock. He was closely associated with influential London Society and moved in the circles of Robert Walpole and his close friend the architect Ripley. It was also Johnson who introduced Thomas Steers to design Liverpool dock and there must be a strong possibility that he was involved in securing the services of an architect for the Bluecoat.
- In 1718 an engraving of the proposed school was prepared by the eminent Henrik Hulsberg from a drawing by the little known local artist Mollineux. Two thousand prints were made. These were sold for the benefit of the School's funds. Hulsberg was a Dutch engraver of international renown and had worked on large architectural compositions including works by Wren. Such an engraver would not normally have been commissioned to illustrate a provincial building unless, that is, those involved were influential in London circles.

Harris conjectures that the architect most likely to be present in all these spheres of influence and coincidence in second decade of the 18th century is Thomas Ripley. In addition to being appointed to posts in the Office of the Kings Works from 1715 onwards and a friend of the Walpoles, he was commissioned to design the new Customs House in Liverpool and was engaged in this work in 1719. Harris notes a number of stylistic similarities between the two buildings:-

- Recessed main front and wings at right angles
- High parapet with clusters of turned balusters over windows
- Urns at corners of parapets.
- Round-headed windows with prominent keystones.
- Long and short quoins at corners and in interior angles. (Quoins at interior angles of buildings are extremely rare.)
- Pedestal aprons under window sills and balustraded sections of parapet resting on cornices, stringcourses and bases.
- Oval windows in basement. These are now shown in the illustration of the Custom House, but appear in numerous eighteenth-century views of the building.

The Customs House is long demolished but an illustration exists.

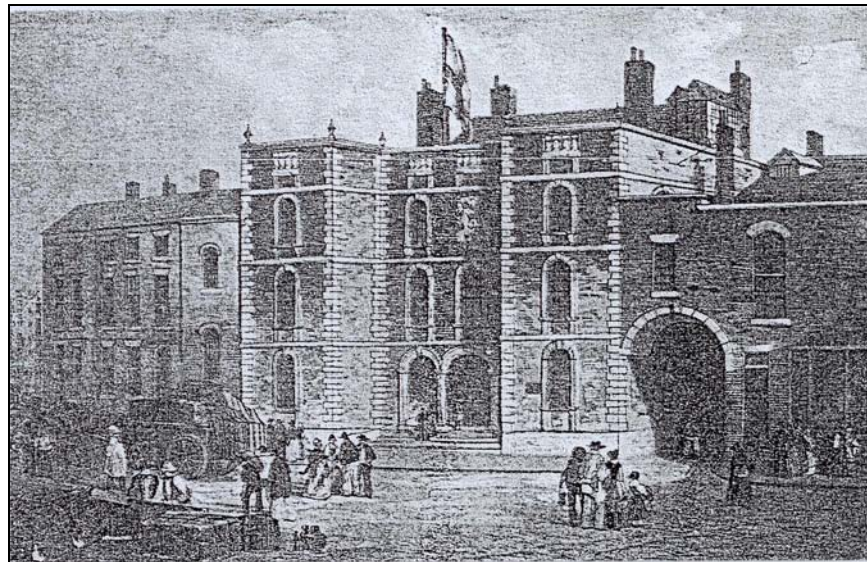
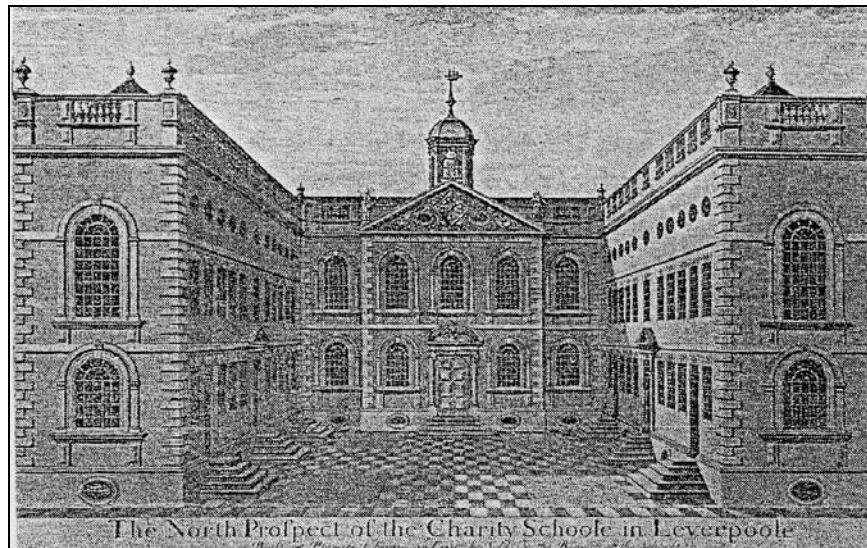
Although Harris was satisfied with the conclusion that Ripley was the architect of the Bluecoat, others have been less convinced. Charles Metcalfe, a present Director of the Bluecoat Arts Centre, has researched the matter further and has been in correspondence with the local architectural historian Janet Gnosspalius and the distinguished Howard Colvin, author of the Dictionary of British Architects. None of this research or correspondence has been published.

The writer of this Conservation Plan summarises the contenders as follows:-

(a) Thomas Ripley (c1683-1758)

The arguments for Ripley are outlined above but there must be doubts about the conclusion. The designs for the Bluecoat will most likely have been completed by 1715 which pre dates Ripley's documented involvement with Liverpool. While the two buildings employ similar architectural details, the Bluecoat appears a much more confident and satisfying design. Comparing the Bluecoat with the illustrations of the Customs House would suggest they were undertaken by different designers. The detailed ingredients of the two buildings may be the same but the composition and effects are very different.

Howard Colvin, in correspondence commenting on the draft of this conservation plan, considers that The Bluecoat school is quite unlike any of Ripley's recorded buildings in London or elsewhere.



Comparison of the Customs House and Bluecoat

(b) Thomas Steers (c1670-1750)

Steers came to Liverpool in 1710 as a result of an invitation to design the town's first wet dock. He was originally a military quartermaster who had experience of the docks being constructed in the Netherlands. He became the first Liverpool Docks Engineer employed by the Town Council and continued in that position while also being active in local politics, rising to Alderman and one time Mayor. He also practiced architecture and designed a house in Hanover Street for a Mr Seel, and between 1726-34 the first St George's Church at the centre of the town near the site of the old castle (both lost). It is recorded that he was paid for works during the building of the Bluecoat. The record is not specific and it could have been for the procurement of specific items of construction. (It is known that Steers owned a foundry in Liverpool, but when?) It is not impossible that he was its architect. The Bluecoat was commenced in 1715 with the building of a brick kiln. Steers was in Liverpool at that time. The Bluecoat is in some senses odd because, while it is somewhat old-fashioned, it is also inventive and its design has considerable life and

energy. This could be an early work of a young designer not involved at the forefront of the very latest architectural thinking.



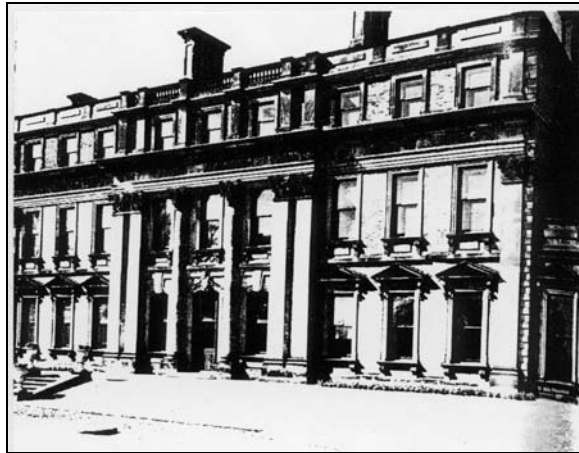
St George's Church, Steers (1726-34)

Steers is known to have designed other buildings in Liverpool, notably St George's Church, which at one time stood on the site of the old castle. For its period this building is also dated but employs an energetic baroque style. It is certainly possible that the designer of this church and the Bluecoat are the same. Local historian, Janet Gnosspalius, submits that the Bluecoat may well be the work of Thomas Steers.

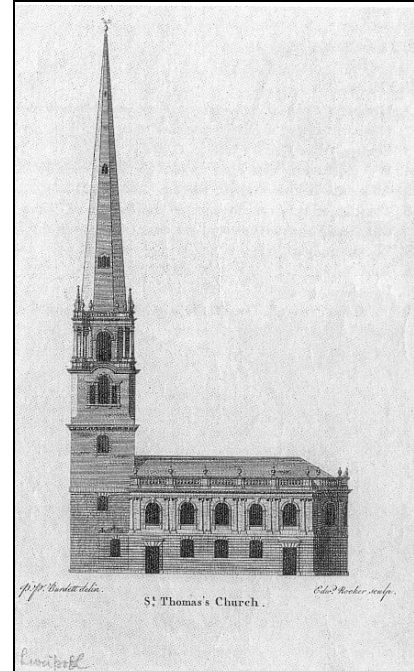
(c) Henry Sephton (1686-1756)

A regionally significant architect, Sephton was responsible for, amongst other buildings, the house of Ince Blundell (1720), Halton Court House (1737) and the chapel at Billinge (1717-18), and also the east wing of Knowsley Hall (1731) [John Martin Robinson, *Country Life* article, 15 April 1999]. He was certainly sufficiently competent to have designed the Bluecoat. Metcalfe notes that there is a link between Knowsley east wing and the Bluecoat in that both buildings were illustrated by the same artist, J Mollineux, who produced an engraving of the proposed Bluecoat and a painting of Knowsley Hall. Sir

Howard Colvin, however, considers that Sephton was unlikely to have designed a ‘Bluecoat’ in what would have been by that date an old fashioned style. However, it is interesting to note the Cruickshank in *Eighteenth Century Building* points out that it was common for charity establishments to have been built in a conservative style.



Ince Blundell



St Thomas's Church, Liverpool
(engraving by Burdett and Rooker)

Two buildings by Sephton are illustrated here. Ince Blundell (1720) is closest to the Bluecoat in date. It is an altogether more self conscious and serious architectural study than either the Bluecoat or St George's Church, and certainly does not employ the same round-arched windows, emphasised keystones and decoration which is similar to the Bluecoat buildings. St Thomas's Church was designed by Sephton in 1748 (demolished 1907) some 30 years after the Bluecoat. It is more restrained than the earlier work but does demonstrate some similar features.

Summary

Of the three architects discussed here, Steers would appear a strong candidate in the search for the designer of the Bluecoat. He was based in Liverpool at the time and operating as the city's dock engineer. He had lived and worked in Holland and London and seen the works of Wren and other baroque designers. Commentators have remarked on the “Wrenish” style of the Bluecoat. Steers' later church, although obviously a very different building, employs similar features and an energetic baroque character. Finally, the Bluecoat's account book shows that he was paid by the Trustees during the Bluecoat's construction.

However, this is by no means conclusive. Sephton is undoubtedly a possibility. Certainly one connection exists. Charles Metcalfe, who was the first to seriously question the Ripley attribution, has noted the existence of an early (undated) engraving of the Blue Coat and an engraving of St Thomas's Church both being

prepared by Burdett and Rooker. He also notes that Sephton was paid £10 for plans for St George's (1720), which although not used, indicates that he was closely involved with developments in Liverpool in the early 18th century. It is evident that there is scope for further study.

There are other well designed buildings within Lancashire and Cheshire from this period that exhibit the same details and style, notably Croxteth Hall, the architect of which is also unknown. Colvin suggests that insufficient is known of local architects at the time to enable the matter of the Blue Coat to be finally resolved. In this discussion it is perhaps fitting to end with the words that Harris used to conclude his paper in 1955:

“of the not inconsiderable number of early 18th century Charity Schools which came under examination in the preparation of this paper, none in architectural merit can surpass it”.

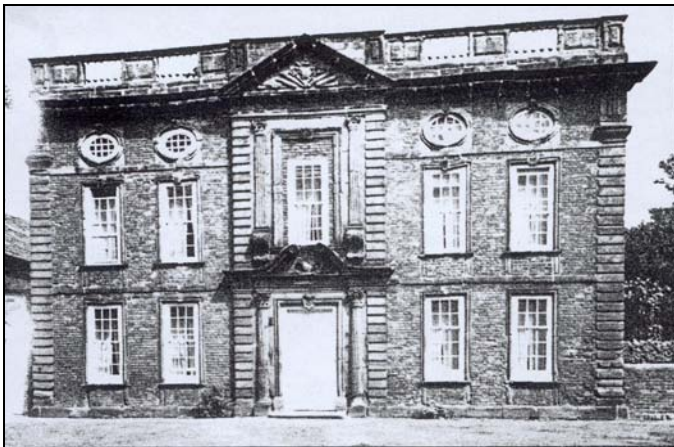
Other local buildings approximately contemporary with the Blue Coat



Croxteth Hall 1702



Chester Blue Coat 1717



*Hale House 1700-10
(Photo: Pevsner)*

2.11 Architecture of Later Constructions

2.11.1 The Central Block rear elevation

The curved reconstruction of the central block's rear elevation undertaken in 1821 is unusual in its form. Perhaps the design was derived from the need for more internal space while at the same time being constrained by the layout of the projecting wings. This would certainly have been the case if, as probable, the south-west wing had only been reconstructed some 20 years earlier. The external façade is restrained but relieved by a projecting central bay. This accommodates the internal recess for the organ at the upper level. On either side of the central feature were originally two round arched windows per floor. The arched windows have the characteristic Bluecoat cherubs decorating the keystones. The facades are terminated at the upper level by a stone cornice with brick parapet above. The reconstruction of this block was most likely designed by John Foster, the elder (1758-1827). He was appointed Architect to the Town Council and of immense influence in Liverpool's civic life. He completed many significant buildings including The Union News Rooms (Duke Street/Slater Street) and St Luke's Church (Berry Street), which still survive. During the early 20th century an additional window was added to each half of the ground floor. A further window was formed together with the projecting balcony following the removal of the organ at first floor level. (It is possible that John Foster jnr. also had a part in designing the later changes at the Bluecoat when he returned to Liverpool in 1816 and joined the family building business. In 1824 he followed his father in becoming an eminent architect and surveyor Corporation.)

2.11.2 North-East Wing Additions (Blocks 4 and 5)

Contemporary with the rear elevation is the square block at the end of the north-east wing which fronts onto both School Lane and the Bluecoat courtyard, Block 4. The courtyard elevation is three bayed with a central recessed doorway. The brick-linteled sash windows and doorway are in a late Georgian style. Possibly this was also designed by John Foster.

Block 5, the rear north-east wing, appears to have been constructed, from the map evidence, by 1835. Always utilitarian, it is a building with no principal frontage and presenting only a side elevation. This has been much altered with metal windows installed following the wartime fire damage and is of no particular architectural merit.

2.11.3 College Lane Buildings (Blocks 8 and 10)

The range of single storey buildings which abut College Lane are mid to late 19th century and still largely in their original form in brick with pitched slate roofs. The main windows face onto the courtyard and have stone sills and brick lintels. Those to the Display Centre have recently been enlarged. Although of no great architectural interest in themselves they are typical of the urban vernacular of the period and contribute to the townscape of College Lane and enclose the Bluecoat's south courtyard.

2.11.4 South-West Wing (Block 9)

To its west side the south courtyard is enclosed by the two storey elevations of the south-west wing. As suggested earlier the lower storey may well date from c1800. The brick coursing indicates that late Georgian style window openings are in their original positions.

The façade is plain but well considered with windows at regular spacing and fine proportion.

3.0 SIGNIFICANCE

3.1 Methodology

The assessment of significance is based on the ‘understanding’ of the history and development of the study site. It is also based on the planning policies guidance for determining heritage merit as provided by the government in the Planning Policy Guidelines PPG 15 and PPG 16 and associated legislation.

Account has been taken of the detailed criteria for Scheduling Ancient Monuments as provided by PPG 16. This indicates that in assessing the importance of an ancient monument weight should be given to period, rarity, documentation, group value, survival/condition, fragility/vulnerability, diversity and potential.

The Bluecoat is listed under the Town and Country Planning Acts as a “Building of Architectural and Historic Interest”. Its designation at Grade I places it within the category that represents the most important 2% of the country’s Listed Building stock (PPG15).

This statutory designation and the protection it provides apply to the entire Bluecoat complex. However, not all the various building components are of equal or similar significance. This section of the Conservation Plan seeks to identify firstly the significance of the Bluecoat as an entity in broad cultural terms. It then focuses on each building block in terms of its architectural significance, attributing to each one of the following classifications (these classifications are referred to in determining conservation policies; see Policy C2, page 66):-

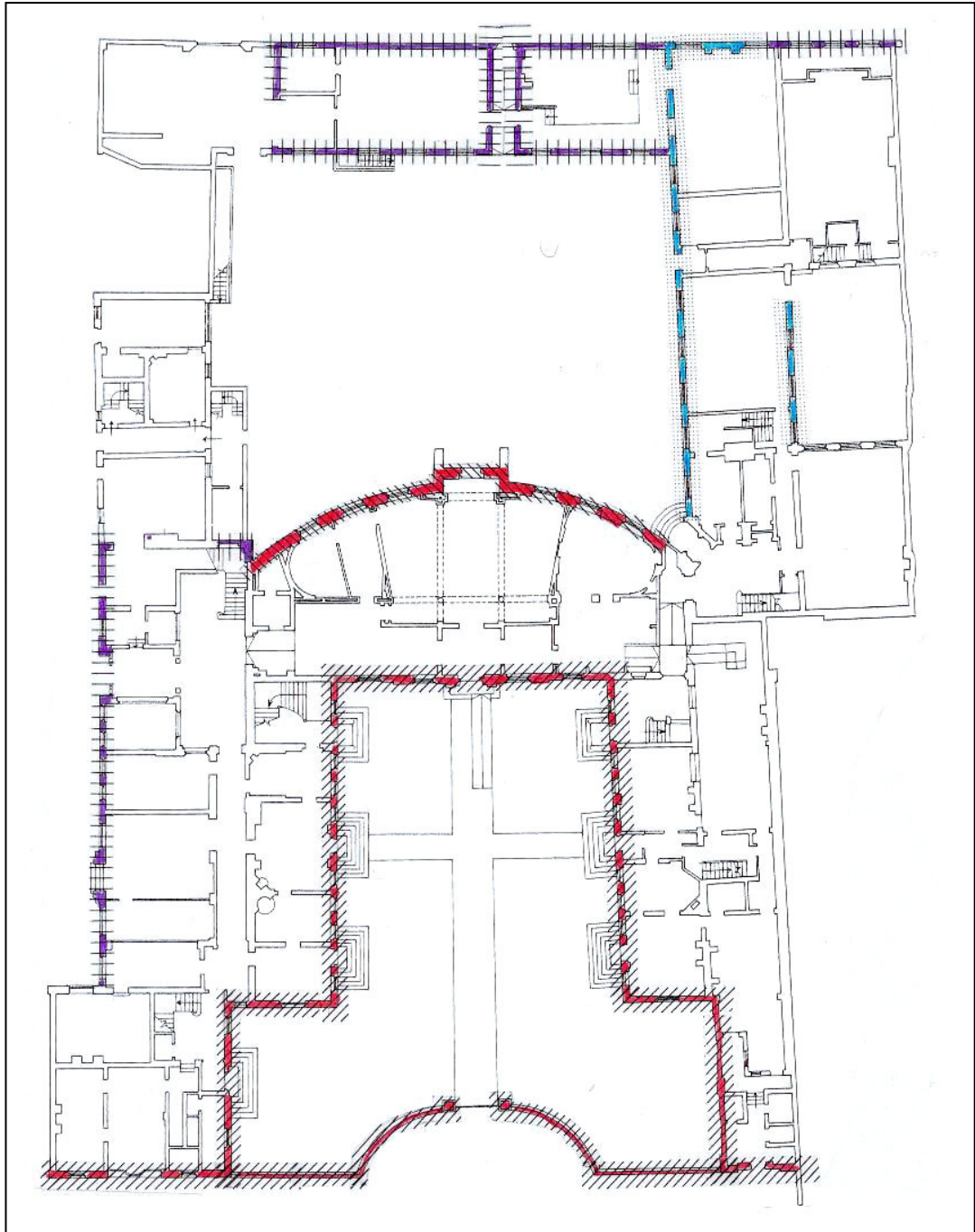
National significance:	Components of exceptional architectural quality or historic interest crucial to the significance of the site
Regional significance:	Components of well considered design and quality that are important to the understanding of the site
Local significance:	Components of modest architectural or interior design interest, or which contribute to the townscape character of the area
Limited significance:	Interiors which, although substantially altered in the past 60 years, still contain room shapes and structures from an earlier period

3.2 The Entity and its Broad Cultural Significance




The *Significance* section commences with a summary of the significance of the Bluecoat complex as an entity under the themes of:

- Architecture and Townscape
- Liverpool’s Development History
- Identity and Conservation
- Education and Philanthropy
- Cultural Development

This review is followed by an examination of the architectural and historic significance of the individual component 'blocks' of the Bluecoat in terms of their exterior façades and any interior features of importance.



External elements of significance: Ground Floor

-  National
-  Regional
-  Local

3.2.1 **Architecture**

The three principal elevations to the north courtyard and the enclosing railings and gateway are an exceptionally fine example of provincial architecture of the Queen Anne period. Such a complete survival is a considerable rarity. In addition to the external elevations that remain from that period, the interior of the north-west wing is also substantially intact in its overall form and layout. In the northeast wing a staircase, although it contains much recent structure, is still in its original form and supports a handrail and carved balusters, and which include much original timberwork.

The Bluecoat complex comprises other building blocks and facades dating from the late Georgian and early Victorian periods. Although these are utilitarian constructions they are well considered and add to the interest of the whole. They provide the enclosure to the south courtyard, which has remained as an external space since the original building plan.

3.2.2 **Liverpool's Development History**

Planned in 1715, the Bluecoat's principal elevations are the oldest in Liverpool to remain intact by some fifty years. The dramatic growth of Liverpool's docks and commerce in the 19th and early 20th centuries resulted in successive phases of redevelopment. This process, together with the Second World War bombing and subsequent clearance and rebuilding, removed virtually all visible trace of the 17th and early 18th century town. Certainly no other building in the city centre pre-dates the Bluecoat. Some remnants of building fabric from the first half of the 18th century no doubt survives very substantially altered and contained within later structures. A notable exception is the Town Hall but even here while the earliest parts of the existing building date from the mid 18th century, the front appearance was dramatically altered in the 1790s and early 19th century. This included the addition of the front portico and the dome. It is not until the 1769 plan of Perry that a very few individual buildings can be identified, that still remain with their main facades as originally designed (for example, 48/50 Duke Street and 64 Mount Pleasant), and none of these is of the scale or architectural prominence of the Bluecoat.

From the early 18th century, with the construction of its first docks, Liverpool grew into one of the country's major cities and a premier exporting port with world wide trading connections. The Bluecoat is the only surviving building representing that crucial period in the development of this internationally important city.

3.2.3 **Identity and Conservation**

That the Bluecoat has survived so completely in its original form is not a mere accident of history. Rather, it is a reflection of its architectural and symbolic qualities to which successive generations have "taken to their hearts". Despite the pressures to adapt the school to accommodate the growing numbers, successive efforts have been made throughout various periods to retain the historic design of its frontage elevations and courtyard. In the radical developments of the early 19th century the entire central block was rebuilt behind the original principal façade. Its retention must have been both costly and a considerable technical problem for the

time. This massive effort was made in order to conserve a design, that at the time was only 100 years old and must have been unfashionable but still highly regarded. This is a very early example of façade retention and conservation. Certainly it must be the earliest in Liverpool.

The beginning of the 20th century saw the threat to the building when the school relocated. It was saved by private donation. Then following the bombing of the 1940s further huge efforts were made by private voluntary and public bodies to ensure that the Bluecoat was saved and restored. All these efforts and many others testify to the significance of the Bluecoat, a popularly cherished building and a symbol of the history and identity of the city. Indeed civic symbolism was part of the original detailed design. The Liver Birds over the pediments above the central entrances of Blocks 2 and 3 appear original and must be the earliest existing examples in the city.

3.2.4 Education and Philanthropy

The Bluecoat is an early example of the Charity School movement of the 18th century. The records that date from the School's first foundation provide a valuable insight into the operation of the school as a charitable enterprise and as an educational establishment. It functioned as one of the city's principal schools for almost 200 years and the development and existing built form of the site testifies to the growth and changes to the institution during that period. N Pevsner (*Buildings of England - South Lancashire*) notes "with its far flung projecting wings it is much bigger than the C17 schools of the county, or indeed the country".

3.2.5 Cultural Development

In 1907 the Bluecoat became the home of the Sandon Studios Society and saw the establishment on the site of one of the country's first arts centres. The fact that the influential post impressionist exhibition of 1910/11 was displayed at the Bluecoat testifies to the building being at the leading edge of the artistic life of the city and the extent to which it was involved in the national and international artistic scene. The Bluecoat was saved from commercial development in the late 1920s when it was acquired by the Bluecoat Society of Arts, since when it has functioned as a key centre in the cultural life of the city, providing studio, exhibition and performance space for all the arts.

3.3 Architectural Significance of Individual Building Components

3.3.1 Blocks 1, 2 and 3: Frontage Elevations and the North Courtyard (*Significance: National*)

The principal frontages on the original buildings together with the north courtyard, enclosure and gateway, form a complete architectural composition and are dealt with here as an entity. The internal features and rear elevation to the central block (B1) are referred to separately.

The three principal elevations to the north courtyard and the enclosing boundary railings and gateway are an exceptionally fine example of provincial urban architecture of the Queen Anne period. They are almost exactly as illustrated in an

engraving published at the time of their construction in the second decade of the 18th century. Such a complete survival is of considerable rarity. Whilst the architecture was not at the forefront of stylistic development of the period, it is very fine and individual work.

The broken segmental pediment above the principal door, the round arched windows and the originally planned parapet detailing and ornamentation concealing the pitched roofs are all indicative of the development of English baroque.

Far from being a two dimensional urban building which presents a single principal frontage to the street, the Bluecoat is a building group creating an architectural hierarchy of building forms, detail and space. It creates a progression of views along the central axis. The distant views, the entry through the gateway into the deep courtyard, the architecturally subordinate side wings which enclose the space, all focus upon and build up to the principal elevation and entrance flanked by ionic columns and surmounted by an ornate pediment. The architectural expression is lively and energetic and the detailing is particularly rich and engaging with Liver Birds inserted within the pediments over the main doorways, and cherubs' heads carved into the keystones above all the windows. Graffiti from 1795 on the north corner of the north-west wing adds human interest.

3.3.2 **Block 1 (Central Block): Rear Elevation** (*Significance: National*)

By John Foster, this elevation results from the rebuilding of the rear of the central block in the early 19th century. Its segmental form is of particular interest and presents a distinctive façade to the south courtyard in a late Georgian style.

3.3.3 **Block 1 (Central Block): Interior** (*Significance: Local*)

The lower floor was totally altered and rebuilt in the early 20th century to accommodate committee lecture rooms and offices for the new arts centre. These, in architectural terms, are arguably of local significance.

The upper floor is a large concert hall that was completely rebuilt internally following war damage in the 1940s. It contains no elements of particular architectural significance other than its overall volume.

3.3.4 **Block 2 (Original north-east wing): Interior** (*Significance: part National, generally Local*)

3.3.4.1 **Staircase adjacent to Block 1** (*Significance: National*)

This stair has been reconstructed following war damage in the 1940s. It is in the same form as the original and still retains parts of the original timber handrail and carved balustrade.

3.3.4.2 **Basement** (*Significance: National*)

The brick vaulted undercroft of the north-east wing is still in its original circa 1717 condition and is very rare in Liverpool.

3.3.4.3 **Interior generally** (*Significance: Local*)

The interior of the north-east wing has been reconstructed following war damage in the 1940s. It has new first and second floors at altered levels to the original. However, some cross walls and corner chimney brickwork remains and in parts a 'memory' of the original remains.

3.3.5 **Block 3 (Original north-west wing): Interior** (*Significance: National*)

This block appears to retain much of the original structure and room layouts as first built in the early 18th century. A particular feature is the corner chimneys. Later changes made during the later 18th and 19th centuries such as the fire places and hearths are all of interest. The survival of the comparatively unaltered interior is of considerable importance to the understanding of the original building.

3.3.6 **Block 4** (*Significance of exterior: National, Significance of interior: Limited*)

Possibly by John Foster this is a well-proportioned early 19th century building in a restrained late Georgian style. It now forms part of the north courtyard composition and on that basis should be regarded as being of National significance. The interior of the upper floor contains original room shapes.

3.3.7 **Block 5** (*Significance of exterior: Limited, Significance of interior: None*)

This utilitarian 19th century structure has been much altered in its external appearance and is of only limited significance in the sense that it forms part of the overall Bluecoat complex.

3.3.8 **Blocks 6 and 7** (*Significance of exterior: None, Significance of interior: None*)

This 20th century addition has no architectural or historic significance.

3.3.9 **Block 8** (*Significance of exterior: Local, Significance of interior: Local*)

These single storey buildings from the second half of the 19th century are representative of the urban vernacular of the period. They contribute to the enclosure of the south courtyard and the townscape of College Lane. The interiors of the Display Centre have been well restored and brought into use.

3.3.10 **Block 9**

(Significance of exterior: Regional, Significance of interior: Limited)

This two storey block, which may originally date from the late 18th or early 19th century, is on the footprint of the original almshouse wing. It is plain but well proportioned and contributes to the enclosure and character of the south courtyard.

The interiors have only very limited interest in terms of the room shapes.

3.3.11 **Block 10**

(Significance of exterior: Local, Significance of interior: Limited)

A mid to late 19th century building, this block presents an elevation to College Lane which is of local significance in respect of its townscape. Internally it is only of limited interest.

3.3.12 **Block 11**

(Significance of exterior: Limited, Significance of interior: Limited)

The external elevation to the small courtyard and the upper floors of the lightwell to the north are 20th century constructions. These and the interiors are of very limited interest.

3.3.13 **Block 12**

(Significance of exterior: Regional (part), Significance of interior: Limited (part))

This block comprises various elements, the only one of which is of some interest is that which overlooks the north courtyard. The north elevation dates from the early 19th century. It was originally two storeys but has had an additional floor and windows added in the 20th century.

3.3.14 **Block 13**

(Significance: National)

The outer wall to this single storey unit dates from the early 19th century and forms an essential component to the enclosure of the North Courtyard.

3.3.15 **The South Courtyard**

(Significance: Regional – in terms of the preservation of the space)

This courtyard was a garden in the 18th century and part of the original layout. It later became a playground and was re-landscaped in the 1960s. It is well maintained and provides a restful green space used by visitors and city centre workers. It is unique in central Liverpool.

3.3.16 The North Courtyard, gates and enclosure to School Lane
(*Significance: National*)

The gateposts, low boundary wall and cast iron railings are part of the original 1716 construction. The cobbles and Yorkstone pavings to the main doors may well reflect the repair/enhancement of this space in the early 19th century.

4.0 VULNERABILITY ISSUES

4.1 Overview

The significance of the Bluecoat falls very broadly into three categories: its architectural quality, its history and its role in the cultural development of Liverpool. In what way are these areas of importance threatened? This section of the Conservation Plan examines the vulnerability of the Bluecoat both as a whole and in terms of its individual components.

Perhaps even more fundamental to the consideration of vulnerability than 'physical condition' is 'use'. 'Use' is critical because buildings that are not in a use that is able to generate sufficient funding for maintenance will often be vulnerable to decay.

4.2 Condition (*refer to Policies B3, C1 and F2*)

Poor physical condition is the most visibly apparent threat to a building and its significance. At the Bluecoat although the majority of blocks are generally in structurally sound condition there are parts that give serious concern. In addition many upper areas are threatened by water ingress from the roof level, and poor electrical service provision is a potentially very serious fire hazard. Remedial action is urgently required to prevent further decay and obviate future risks. A common concern applicable to many old buildings is the vulnerability to poor quality repairs. At the Bluecoat a particular issue has in the past, and will be in the future, the extent to which original partly decayed building fabric is removed and "restored" with new material. The local sandstone used for architectural and decorative features has been prone to weathering and delamination since the original construction.

A recent condition survey of the complex undertaken by Donald Insall Associates (2001) indicates that the full repair of the existing fabric and utilities would cost in the order of £1.5million. The most urgent items concern:-

- Water ingress at roof levels
- Structural deflections, particularly the main first floor of B1
- Electrical services
- Drainage

4.3 Use and Vacancy (*refer to Policies B2 and B3*)

Historic buildings can be threatened by over intensification of inappropriate uses, which demand changes to sensitive historic sites. Equally they can be threatened because they are not fulfilling functions that generate sufficient income or other funds for their proper repair. During the Bluecoat's long history it has suffered at various times from over intensive use, inappropriate use, and uneconomic use (in the sense that uses have not made proper repair and maintenance possible). Achieving a balance between these two extremes will be a perennial challenge for the future.

4.4 Management (*refer generally to Policy area B*)

Ownership and strategic management is crucial to the long-term future of the Bluecoat as a single heritage asset. This was seen to be the case in the early part of the 20th century when it was threatened to be broken up for commercial gain. Although not an immediate issue today the Conservation Plan should address possible long-term threats. Reviewing the history of the past 90 years there have been successive periods when the future of the Bluecoat as an arts centre has hung perilously in the balance. Voluntary sector arts organisations are always prone to funding uncertainties. To overcome such problems by the disposal of leaseholds for inappropriate uses could have a damaging impact on individual buildings, on the complete entity and on the significance of the connection between the Bluecoat and its deeply embedded cultural associations with the city. Its now historic role within Liverpool as an open arts centre to which all have access is certainly one of the important “significances” of the site. Without this link the cultural significance of the site would be diminished.

Maintaining the reality of the arts centre vision while at the same time generating adequate funds for the upkeep of the site will require change. The condition survey of 2001 has identified the need for repairs and maintenance in the order of £1.5m. This is the result of years of under funding and the continuance of such a state of affairs must pose a very real and immediate threat not only to the building but, with its declining condition, to its income generating potential.

This state of affairs is recognised and being urgently addressed by the current management of the Bluecoat Arts Centre Ltd (the Trust). A holistic management and development strategy is being developed to regenerate the arts centre and maintain its position as a key facility not only for Liverpool but also for the region. In particular this effort is being made to complement and reinforce Liverpool’s bid for European Capital of Culture status in 2008. This Conservation Plan has been prepared in order to establish a sound basis for planning for the future of this valuable heritage asset and to guide the physical changes that will be necessary.

4.5 Pressures for Change and New Development

Key physical changes will inevitably have to involve a range of issues, which are discussed below.

4.5.1 Repairing the existing fabric which is significant and which contributes to the economic use and efficiency of the buildings (*refer to Policies A1 and C1*)

The structural movement which is evident in parts of the building is manifested by distorted openings, uneven floors and bulging walls. In some instances structural movement will have long ceased and the distortions are part of the history of the building. ‘Remedial works’ in these locations would be prejudicial to its character. Those areas where distortion is progressive will need to be addressed with urgency.

Severe deterioration of reinforced concrete elements, water penetration from roof levels and adjoining property, drainage and electrical services are all items that require immediate attention.

There has been a lack of resources for both immediate and long term planned maintenance.

4.5.2 Improving accessibility generally both to and within the buildings (*refer generally to Policy area D*)

Horizontal circulation at all levels and between floors is problematic, not to say chaotic. Route finding from one block to another is difficult and at times access from one to another space on the same level can only be accomplished by firstly moving to a different level. Floor levels vary throughout the complex, stairways are in corners or places not immediately obvious or difficult to locate. There are no lifts and, although there are various ramps at ground floor level, facilities for disabled users are generally poor. Addressing these issues while at the same time retaining historic character will be a challenge for future replanning.

4.5.3 Restructuring existing accommodation to provide space more suitable for its existing or future purposes (*refer generally to Policies A1 and C1*)

Some spaces, such as small studios and offices, suit their purpose well; others such as the gallery and concert hall are difficult to manage and certainly do not adequately meet today's requirements. In terms of internal restructuring it will be important not to disturb those parts of the building which are of greatest significance notably the main historic features and spaces of the north-west wing. Possibly the most contentious issue in terms of restructuring of internal space would be the reorganisation of the ground and first floors of the central block. Not only are the gallery and performance spaces inadequate but also this area must hold the key to improving internal circulation generally.

In considering how best to achieve the practical and space standards required, should future proposals be constrained by the need to conserve elements of the existing interior within the central block? This Conservation Plan does not have the benefit of being able to consider and weigh the heritage impact of any firm proposals. However, it is considered that schemes could be brought forward, the quality of which would outweigh the loss of the present interior design. In suggesting this the following aspects of the existing interior layout and detailing has been taken into account.

- All the visible features and indeed the room and corridor layouts are of late 1920s/30s design and construction.
- These designs and layouts are competently handled but their mannered classical style is of no particular architectural or general cultural significance. Furthermore this style tends to confuse the casual observer about the age of the interior spaces.
- The detailing superficially appears early 19th century but it is not truly consistent with this period.
- While these spaces reflect a phase in the building's development, the uses for which they were intended in the 1930s were relatively short lived and relocated to other parts of the building. The gallery function is comparatively recent.

The retention of these 1930's features is not considered to be a high priority in conservation terms. The retention of any cast iron columns, however, which may remain embedded within the existing partitions would be of interest. This would provide a memory of the old school dining hall and the bold alterations of the early 19th century.

4.5.4 **Providing additional functional space** (*refer generally to Policies A1 and C4*)

Based on a detailed analysis of future requirements to continue the Bluecoat as a viable arts centre, today's management team has been guided by a recent feasibility study and is of the clear opinion that additional space is required. No firm proposals have yet been developed but it is appropriate here to consider what possible options are available and the associated issues.

The south courtyard: a new building in this location would very seriously compromise the historic form of the Bluecoat complex and remove a much used and valued open space that within the city centre has a uniquely peaceful character. Any moves to develop in this area would be most strongly and rightly resisted by all statutory authorities, amenity groups and users.

New space could be created by removing and rebuilding one of the College Lane buildings to a larger format. Although not of the highest architectural significance these urban vernacular buildings all contribute to the site and add to the townscape character of the area. While their sensitive adaptation should not be ruled out, any large-scale removal would diminish the site's historic interest and would and should be resisted.

Any alteration or built additions to north courtyard and elevations should quite obviously not be contemplated.

The most obvious area where the new accommodation could be located is the area formerly occupied by the south-east wing. A new build extension in this location, a projection of Block 5 (across the site of Blocks 6 and 7), would reintroduce a building form to replace the original almshouse wing. A new building in this location would not in principle be to the detriment of the site's various significances. However, building height, scale, materials and overall design quality would need very careful consideration. The original design was based on symmetry and balance. To what extent if at all should this be replicated?

Constructing to a height greater than the south-west wing (Block 9) would, in overall block form, begin to create an imbalance and reduce the importance of the central block curved elevation as the principal focus of the south courtyard. Building higher than the central block would introduce a radical change to the building hierarchy. This would be likely to be strongly resisted in conservation terms.

Building style and materials will also inevitably be a much-debated issue. The fundamental question will be: should new building be to a historic style or should it be contemporary? Apart from the internal and limited external work undertaken in the 1930s in a "period" style all previous changes and additions have been

contemporary to the period and of their time. They sit comfortably within the overall entity principally because they defer in terms of scale, siting and mass to the originally intended hierarchy of buildings and space. It must also be recognised however that although not stylistically of their own time the historic changes are all brick constructions with window and door openings of similar proportion. Whether this approach should be continued will no doubt be a matter for debate but such restrictions on new designs often produce an uncomfortable and contrived result. It is the safe way that may avoid a truly poor result but rarely achieves structures of noteworthy quality that are representative of their time.

The new building design must achieve the difficult balance of:

- Not compromising the historic significances of the site.
- Giving expression to the role of the Bluecoat Arts Centre at the forefront of contemporary culture.

Indeed these should be seen as complementary objectives. The Conservation Plan identifies the role of the Bluecoat in the artistic life of Liverpool as one of its principal cultural significances.

4.5.5 **Existing Elements Detrimental to the Whole** (*refer generally to Policy area E*)

Certain components of the building complex are not of historic significance and are detrimental to its setting and the appreciation of the whole namely:

- The 20th century additions on the east side of the rear courtyard
- The external boundary walls and gates to the eastern end of the College Lane frontage, which are of no historic value and poor appearance
- The quality of the temporary landscape and external furniture in the north courtyard
- The obscuring effect of the trees on School Lane

4.6 **Understanding** (*refer generally to Policy area A*)

While the Bluecoat's frontage to School Lane has been long cherished and protected there has been less general awareness of the significance of other areas of the building and of its broader cultural significances. What is not generally appreciated is always vulnerable to inappropriate change or inadequate resource. At present there is an inadequate availability of interpretative material to promote intellectual access to or more general appreciation of the Bluecoat as a whole.

The Conservation Plan has established a good general understanding of the site, its historic development and significance, however, there are some gaps in available knowledge.

The identity of the architect: This will require further research and a greater knowledge of the architects, who operated in the region in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, than is currently available.

The early history of the almshouses and when they were demolished: this may be revealed through further study of the Blue Coat School records.

The internal layout of the original buildings and the original uses of individual room spaces: this would require further plan evidence to come to light, which appears unlikely. Some clues may possibly be revealed in the uncovering of underlying structures during repair and alterations although apart from the northwest wing this appears unlikely.

A detailed understanding of the existing structural fabric of the original north-west wing (Block B3) and the extent to which this dates from the original construction: This would require close examination of the existing fabric during repairs, adaptation or using invasive/non invasive archaeological techniques.

The date of construction of the present southwest wing which faces the courtyard (Block B9): this will require further plan or documentary evidence to come to light.

The existence, or otherwise, in the central block (B1) of the early 19th century cast iron columns being embedded within the 1920/30s ground floor alterations.

4.7 Interpretation and Promotion (*refer to Policy area G*)

There is considerable potential for the further promotion and interpretation of the Bluecoat's architecture, its history as a school and its role in the cultural development of the city and region. The diverse significances of the site need to be brought more vividly to the attention of users, schools and visitors. It should be more closely linked to other tourist and educational attractions to help tell the story of the city. The future survival of the Bluecoat depends on it being fully appreciated by this and future generations.

4.8 Urban Context (*refer generally to Policy area E*)

The Bluecoat's relationship with the town is important to its significance but some past changes have been detrimental to its original planned setting.

The removal of St Peter's Church and grounds in the 1920s radically altered its townscape context and particularly its relationship to Church Street. Now the building frontage can only be viewed axially down Church Alley. In more recent times this approach has been pedestrianised with paving and tree planting that do little to enhance the approach to this historic site. Also in the later 19th century the three storey Georgian frontage to the west of the Bluecoat on School Lane was replaced by a tall warehouse much less sympathetic in terms of scale.

Now major new proposals are being developed to regenerate the area surrounding the Bluecoat and to the rear, as an extension to the City's retail core. It is important that these proposals do not compromise the setting and functioning of or accessibility to this historic site.

4.9 South Courtyard Landscaping

The present hard and soft landscaping within the south courtyard dates from the late 1960s. Its greenery and sense of calm make it a unique space within Liverpool's busy city centre, the character of which should be retained. However, certain issues and problems exist which will have to be addressed in the future:-

- The area is prone to subsidence thought to be caused by the presence of decaying air raid shelters below. This will require further investigation and the filling of voids as appropriate.
- Steps within the paved areas, originally intended to facilitate performances, may present a hazard during crowded events and for disabled users.
- The eastern side of the garden has been used informally for remembrance purposes with ashes having been scattered and possibly caskets having been buried in the raised beds. Any changes to the gardens would have to be respectful of these circumstances.
- The trees, which are protected by a TPO, will continue to require regular surgery if they are not to become over-dominant.

5.0 POLICIES

5.1 Overview

The challenge for the Conservation Plan is firstly to provide policies to guide the process of future management and physical change that will assist in conserving the cultural significance of the site for both this and future generations.

The policy section is structured as follows:-

Policy Objectives: General objectives are identified which provide the main framework and context for the policy section.

Key and Supporting policies: For each policy area a short statement of the principal issues provides the context following which the policy objective is restated. This is followed by the Key Policies together with supporting policies as appropriate.

5.2 Key Policy Objectives

- A** To ensure that all future management strategies and proposals for the site are based on and driven by a comprehensive understanding of its heritage assets. **(Understanding)**
- B** To ensure that the ownership, management and use of the site is such that the future well being of the historic buildings are secured while at the same time maintaining the “arts centre” vision. **(Management and Use)**
- C** To protect and conserve those parts of the building that are of cultural significance and ensure that their value is not diminished by unsympathetic alteration or new development. **(Conservation and Development)**
- D** To ensure that the accessibility and internal and external circulation within the site facilitates its efficient use without diminishing the appreciation of its historic significance or appearance. **(Access and Circulation)**
- E** To protect and enhance the setting of the site. **(Setting)**
- F** To support the understanding, interpretation and conservation of the study site through the sustainable and efficient use of the financial resources of the site owners and grant aid. **(Resources)**
- G** To present and interpret the historic assets of the site so that they can be popularly enjoyed, appreciated and understood. **(Interpretation)**

5.3 Policies

A Understanding

Key Objective: To ensure that all future management strategies and proposals for the site are based on and driven by a comprehensive understanding of its heritage assets.

The site's most important attribute is its cultural and heritage significance. There is a danger that proposals involving physical change that do not take account of this could cause damage to the historic fabric.

While the Bluecoat's frontage to School Lane has been long cherished and protected there has been less general awareness of the significance of other areas of the building and of its broader cultural significances.

The Conservation Plan has established a good general understanding of the site, its historic development and significance, however, there are some gaps in available knowledge.

In the interests of furthering understanding and to inform and influence future management and development proposals further research and investigation should be pursued within the context of a research agenda.

A1 All future strategies and proposals for the site should be based on an understanding of its heritage assets.

A1.1 A research agenda should include the following areas of study as identified within the Conservation Plan and in particular seek to shed more light upon the following issues: -

- a) The identity of the architect: Further research and a greater knowledge of the architects who operated in the region in the late 17th and early 18th centuries will be required than is currently available but this is certainly a fruitful area for further study and debate.
- b) The early history of the almshouses and when they were demolished: this may be revealed through further study of the Bluecoat School records.
- c) The internal layout of the original buildings and the original uses of individual room spaces: This would require further plan evidence to come to light, which appears unlikely. Some clues may possibly be revealed in the uncovering of underlying structures during repair and alterations although apart from the northwest wing this appears unlikely.
- d) A detailed understanding of the existing structural fabric of the original North West wing (Block 3) and the extent to which this dates from the original construction: This would require close examination of the existing fabric during repairs, adaptation or using invasive/non invasive archaeological techniques.

- e) The date of construction of the present southwest wing, which faces the courtyard (Block 9): this will require further plan or documentary evidence to come to light.
- f) The existence, or otherwise, in the central block (Block 1) of the early 19th century cast iron columns being embedded within the 1920/30s ground floor alterations.
- g) Individuals associated with the old School and any written recollections or correspondence, which would illustrate the experience of being educated and boarding at the Bluecoat, and memories of the building.

A2 Recording

<p>All individual buildings, structures identified as having a degree of significance, which become subject to development proposals should be surveyed and recorded in accordance with best practice as advised by English Heritage.</p>
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- A2.1 The level of recording should be in proportion to the impact of the works and the significance of the building, feature, artefact or archaeological deposit.
- A2.2 Historic buildings should be recorded following the guidance of the former Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (now part of English Heritage) *Recording Buildings - A descriptive Specification (RCHME 1996)*
- A2.3 Information provided by such recording should be deposited with the Local Planning Authority, and the Merseyside Sites and Monuments Record.
- A2.4 Recorded information should be held by the building owner in order to guide maintenance and repair programmes and as background information for future reviews of the Conservation Plan.

B Management and Use

Key Objective: To ensure that the ownership, management and use of the site is such that the future well being of the historic buildings is secured while at the same time maintaining the “arts centre” vision.

Ownership and strategic management is crucial to the long-term future of the Bluecoat as a single heritage asset. Although not an immediate issue today the Conservation Plan should address possible long-term threats. Voluntary sector arts organisations are always prone to funding uncertainties. To overcome such problems by the disposal of leaseholds for inappropriate uses or terms could have a damaging impact on individual buildings, on the complete entity and on the significance of the connection between the Bluecoat as a building and its deeply embedded cultural associations with the city. Its now historic role within Liverpool as an open arts centre to which all have access is certainly one of the important “significances” of the site. Without this link the cultural significance of the site would be diminished.

B1 The primary use of the Bluecoat site should continue to be as an arts and cultural centre managed for the benefit of Liverpool and the wider region

B1.1 The centre should continue to accommodate a range of subsidiary commercial and retail businesses, which are complementary to the arts centre vision and which: -

- a) encourage the broadest range of visitors to the Bluecoat
- b) enable the buildings to be appreciated by the widest possible public
- c) enable the Bluecoat’s cultural programmes to be broadly publicised.

B2 The particular uses within the individual parts of the building complex should be compatible with and not threaten the historic and architectural significance of those building blocks (see Policy C2 for the degrees of change that would be acceptable in relation to the various levels of significance ascribed by the Conservation Plan)

B2.1 Special consideration should be given to ensuring that uses within the north-west wing are compatible with the scale and space limitations of the rooms and features of greatest significance.

B3 Within the constraints of the arts centre vision, the complex should be managed so that the income generated through lettings, events and other commercial activities is sufficient to maintain the historic buildings (see also Policies C1 and F2)

C Conservation and Development

Key Objective: To protect and conserve those parts of the building which are of cultural significance and ensure that their value is not diminished by unsympathetic alteration or new development.

Urgent action is essential to save the future well being of significant heritage assets. Repair regimes must follow best practice guidelines, as inappropriate maintenance techniques or poor workmanship can damage sensitive historic buildings and accelerate rather than prevent decay. The scope for new building within the study area without compromising its value is limited and would need to be very carefully considered. Some change to historic building blocks and internal spaces will be necessary to facilitate their beneficial use and to secure the Bluecoat's long-term future. This too will require special consideration.

C1 Maintenance, Repair and Enhancement

The historic building blocks and spaces within the study site should be regularly and appropriately maintained in accordance with current best practice.

- C1.1 All historic building blocks and structures on the site should be subject to periodic inspection, repair, maintenance and audit regimes that will ensure that defects are not ignored for so long that the fabric suffers avoidable damage and decay.
- C1.2 The highest priority should be given to ensuring that the elements of highest historic significance are not allowed to deteriorate. Particular attention should be given to: structural stability, weather proofing, protection from fungal decay and from damage due to faulty electrical, water, gas or drainage services.
- C1.3 Special consideration should be given to the conservation of the Bluecoat's stonework architectural detailing especially in relation to its vulnerability to weathering and delamination. The stonework should continue to be painted, as has been the practice since at least the early 19th century.
- C1.4 The repair of historic structures on the site should follow the best practice guidance contained within:
- *Repair of Historic Buildings, Principles and Methods* by C Brereton published by English Heritage.
 - *The Technical Pamphlets and Guidance Sheets* published by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)
- C1.5 Maintenance strategies and regimes should be reviewed in the light of the Conservation Plan policies and detailed guidelines.

C2 Preservation, alteration and removal

Building blocks and their interiors identified as having a level of significance are all important individually and to the site as a whole. They should be afforded a level of protection from alteration or removal that is commensurate with their level of 'significance' as identified within the Conservation Plan.

- C2.1 Heritage assets identified as being of **national significance** should be afforded the very highest level of protection from any adverse change.
- C2.2 Heritage assets identified as being of **regional significance** should be protected against any change that could adversely affect their essential character or important features. Some very limited alteration to adapt to new uses may be acceptable provided these supported the objectives of the Conservation Plan. Radical alteration or removal of buildings of this status could only be justified in very exceptional circumstances.
- C2.3 Heritage assets which are identified as being of **local significance** could be the subject of alteration provided the proposals were of sufficient townscape or interior design quality and supported the objectives of the Conservation Plan.
- C2.4 The interiors identified as being of limited **significance** have no special importance other than their plan form or room shapes which still provide a 'memory' of the original. These features should be retained provided that other Conservation Plan objectives are not compromised.
- C2.5 Any proposed alterations that affect the historic and architectural character of the site will require Listed Building Consent. The Conservation Plan and its policies may be relevant to the consideration of any such proposals.

C3 New Development and Design

The design and construction of any new structures, alterations to historic buildings or landscaping will involve reconciling the new to the old so that the significance of the old is preserved and enhanced, not diminished

- C3.1 The principles, promoted by English Heritage and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, of minimum necessary intervention, reversibility, and respect for authenticity should be applied. These principles should be balanced against the importance and sensitivity of the buildings and the benefits of the proposal to the conservation of the whole site.
- C3.2 Any new building or extensions should be limited to development which would support the re-use of existing structures or benefit the conservation and appreciation of the site as a whole or otherwise support the policies and objectives of the Conservation Plan.
- C3.3 New buildings should not be erected to accommodate uses that could be housed to optimum effect within vacant historic spaces, which would otherwise lie vacant and at risk.

- C3.4 Any alteration or adaptation of existing buildings and structures must be necessary for their re-use, represent good stewardship and support the conservation of the site as a whole.

C4 All alterations, extensions and new structures should be well designed, of a quality at least commensurate with the historic buildings and the character of the city centre area

- C4.1 Physical proposals for existing building blocks should be informed by the inherent character, form and special qualities of the building.
- C4.2 New work to existing buildings should not imitate original work so closely that new and old become confused. Substantial alterations and insertions might have a strong character of their own while minor works should not draw attention to themselves.
- C4.3 New buildings, additions or alterations should be “of their time” and should not be capable of confusion with the original. They should complement rather than parody existing buildings.
- C4.4 New utilities, mechanical and electrical services should be planned to minimise their impact and to avoid damage to any building fabric, features, artefacts, historic services or below ground archaeology of significance.
- C4.5 The location of any new structures should not conflict with but reinforce the historic layout and respect the existing hierarchy of buildings and spaces that are of significance.
- C4.6 In the interpretation and implementation of regulations which prescribe requirements for the design, construction, health and safety and operation of buildings, due account should be taken of the heritage status and significance of the site. For example: As with all modern codes and standards the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act must be carefully balanced with the conservation objectives. (Helpful guidance is set out in the English Heritage note *Easy Access to Historic Properties*).

C5 Assessment, Evaluation and Recording

All buildings, artefacts, features and areas identified as having a degree of significance, if these are to be subject to change, must be assessed and evaluated and recorded before design decisions for future proposals are made

- C5.1 Detailed record must be made of any part of the site that will be irreversibly altered, lost or demolished prior to the work taking place (see *Understanding*).
- C5.2 As built records must be made following any works of alteration and held in safe keeping by the owner for future reference.

D Access and Circulation

Key Objective: To ensure that the accessibility and internal and external circulation within the site facilitates its efficient use without diminishing the appreciation of its historic significance or appearance.

Access to the principal entrance and rear courtyard has been improved by the recent provision of a ramp. However, access to other parts of the building is less convenient. Vertical circulation within the building and from one building block to another is often tortuous. A particular problem to overcome will be improving accessibility while at the same time not compromising unduly appearance and significance of the building.

D1 Improvements to the horizontal circulation providing for the flexible future use of all parts of the building should be encouraged

- D1.1 Improvements should be made to the internal circulation arrangements to make movement through the complex more legible and easily understood.
- D1.2 Provisions for disabled people (including blind, partly sighted and those with ambulant difficulties) must be considered in the planning of access and pedestrian facilities in accordance with developing statutory requirements

D2 The general public should be enabled to enjoy permissive access to the north and south courtyards during the normal hours of the arts centre operations

- D2.1 Improvements should continue to be made in the south courtyard to make all areas of the garden available to disabled users
- D2.2 In any future replanning of the internal layout of the central block (Block 1) through access from the north to the south courtyards should be facilitated.

E Setting and external spaces

Key Objective: To preserve and enhance the townscape qualities of the site and its setting.

In the 1920s the setting of the Bluecoat was radically altered by the removal of St Peter's Church and the development of that block as part of the Church Street frontage. More recently the main approach to the building, Church Alley, has been pedestrianised and its urban landscape themed to relate to the retail area rather than to the Bluecoat. The plane trees planted in front of the School Lane entrance and railings in the mid 20th century now obscure the building. Future development initiatives and urban landscaping schemes should ensure that the setting of the Bluecoat is not further compromised. The Bluecoat's building blocks that front onto College Lane make an important contribution to the street scene and its urban character, even though they are of lesser architectural status than the northern blocks.

E1 Those building blocks that are of special townscape value to School Lane and College Lane should be protected and enhanced

- E1.1 Historic ground surface materials, particularly those of the north (front) courtyard, should be retained and new enhancement should follow the traditional pattern of construction. Generally, the guidance set out in the English Heritage publication *Street Improvements in Historic Areas* should be followed.
- E1.2 The historic boundary walls, gates and railings should be retained in their historic form and any repairs and maintenance should involve similar materials and construction.
- E1.3 The 20th century walls and gates at the east end of the College Lane frontage are of poor appearance and should be replaced as part of any enhancement proposals for this area.

E2 The existing soft landscape and any new features should be designed and managed to enhance the character of the area and appreciation of its significance

- E2.1 Account should be taken of the need for tree management to exploit near views and distant vistas as key features of the site.
- E2.2 New landscape features and the management regimes for existing landscaping should be carefully designed to be sympathetic to their particular context and reinforce the character of the whole area.
- E2.3 The views of the Bluecoat down Church Alley should not be compromised by new building or inappropriate urban landscaping.
- E2.4 In any redevelopment of adjacent sites, special consideration should be given to enhancing the setting of the Bluecoat.
- E2.5 Any changes to the layout of the south courtyard should maintain its green

character and its function of providing a quiet, secluded space for sitting and relaxation.

- E2.6 The role of the garden for remembrance purposes should be respected. In this regard any proposed changes to the layout of the shrub beds should ensure that the existing soil/earth is retained on site, reused in the new planting scheme and treated with due care.
- E2.7 The problem of subsidence in the south courtyard should be investigated and addressed as necessary.

E3 Close views and long vistas that are important to the character and appreciation of the area should be protected

F Resources

Key Objective: To support the understanding, interpretation and conservation of the study site through the sustainable and efficient use of the financial resources of the site owners and grant aid

Major repairs, maintenance and interpretation all require financial resources. Identifying funding opportunities is a continual challenge and once secured its efficient management is essential. All decisions related to resources should conform to the general requirements and objectives of sustainability.

F1 All potential sources of public sector grant and private funding should be investigated to support major schemes of repair, enhancement and interpretation

F1.1 The diverse significance and roles of the Bluecoat should be recognised by and form the basis of future funding strategies. In particular, assistance should be sought from funding agencies which support:- the arts, heritage, environmental regeneration, the economy and job creation, community development, tourism and urban regeneration generally.

F2 Adequate revenue budget provision should be made for cyclical repair and maintenance, as well as emergency works

F2.1 The income generated by commercial lettings, investments and donations should allow for an annual and long-term maintenance fund to be established.

F3 Capital and revenue provision should be made to regularly update interpretation material promoting the building's current roles and history (published, IT and displays)

G Interpretation and Promotion

Key Objective: To present and interpret the historic assets of the site so that they can be popularly enjoyed, appreciated and understood.

The Bluecoat has had generations of committed supporters of the building itself and its various roles as a school and arts centre; but, ensuring that it continues to be recognised, valued and used by the current and future generations will be an ever present challenge.

G1 The public must be enabled and encouraged to appreciate the various significances of the site

- G1.1 Intellectual access should be facilitated by the production of interpretative, easily accessible material taking account of the latest research.
- G1.2 The knowledge and enthusiasm of people with special knowledge or interest in the site and associated topics should be utilised as a resource.
- G1.3 Advantage should be taken of the potential linkages between various heritage, cultural and tourist assets within Liverpool. Special consideration should be given to how, as the city's oldest building, the Bluecoat could contribute to telling the story of Liverpool's development.
- G1.4 The potential of the Bluecoat for providing an historical resource for schools should be explored.

G2 Interpretative and promotional initiatives should utilise a wide range of media – published documents and leaflets, information technology and on site displays.

- G2.1 The interpretative material should focus on:-

The Building

- (a) Promote an appreciation of the building's architectural quality.
- (b) Enable visitors to understand the form and purpose of the Bluecoat's component parts, how they are used now and how they have been used in the past, and what they reveal about their period.
- (c) Allow the chronological development of the site and its relationship to the history of Liverpool to be understood
- (d) Indicate that learning about the site is an ongoing process.
- (e) Enable extant features to be understood in relation to other features that have now been lost or are not visible.

The Blue Coat School

- (a) The history of the school as an institution should be presented in outline.

(b) Life in the school should be illustrated by personal accounts if possible.

The Development of the Arts Studios and Centre

(a) The significance of the role of the Bluecoat locally and nationally should be presented in an easily accessible form.

6.0 APPENDIX 1
Current photographs



Block 1 (Central Block): from North courtyard
(Significance: National)



Block 1 (Central Block): detail of Door pediment
(Significance: National)



Block 2 (Original north-east wing): from North courtyard
(Significance: part National, generally Local)



Block 2 (Original north-east wing): detail of Door pediment and Keystone
(Significance: part National, generally Local)



Block 4: from School lane & North courtyard
(Significance of exterior: National)

Block 2: End elevation



Block 3 (Original north-west wing): from North courtyard
(Significance: part National, generally Local)



Block 3: End elevation



Block 1 (Central Block): from South courtyard, detail of Keystone
(Significance: National)



Blocks 6 and 7: from South courtyard
(Significance of exterior: None, Significance of interior: None)



Block 9: from South courtyard, detail of window
(Significance of exterior: Regional, Significance of interior: Limited)



Block 10: End elevation
(Significance of exterior: Local, Significance of interior: Limited)



Block 10: from College lane



Block 8: from College lane
(Significance of exterior: Local, Significance of interior: Local)



The North Courtyard, gates and enclosure to School Lane
(Significance: National)

Appendix II

Bluecoat Conservation Plan

Bibliography

WS MacCunn **Bluecoat Chambers: The Origins and Development of an Art Centre** Liverpool University Press 1956

Roderick Bisson **The Sandon Studios Society and the Arts** Parry Books 1965*

GG Watcyn (school headmaster) **The Liverpool Blue Coat School: Past and Present 1708-1967** (booklet) 1967

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Howard Colvin **A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects** Yale University Press 1995

Nikolaus Pevsner **The Buildings of England South Lancashire** Penguin Books

Dan Cruickshank **A Guide to the Georgian Buildings of Britain and Ireland**

Adrian Jarvis **The Liverpool Dock Engineers** Alan Sutton Publishing LTD

Stanley A Harris **The Old Bluecoat Hospital Liverpool** Lancashire and Cheshire Historical Society October 1957

Donald Insall Associates **Bluecoat Condition Survey 2001** (not published)

Other Sources

The Blue Coat School Records (Archive at Liverpool Record Office, contains charity school records and accounts prior to 20th century)

The Bluecoat Arts Centre (Archive located at the Bluecoat requires cataloguing, contains 20th century records, late 19th and 20th century photographs, paintings/drawings from various periods, scale drawings of proposed alterations and repairs from 1928, 1937 and Post WWII reparation works)

Key Maps and Plans

Map of Liverpool by Eyes, 1725

Plan of Blue coat Hospital ground floor 1722 (Liverpool Record Office)

Map of Liverpool by Horwood, 1803

Map of Liverpool by Gage, 1835

Ordnance Survey, Liverpool, 1848

The Bluecoat School Block Plan, 1881-91

Plans of Bluecoat Chambers, 1937 (Shepherd and Bower, Bluecoat Archive)

Bluecoat Chronology, Bluecoat archive, Originally compiled by Charles Metcalf, (present Bluecoat Arts Center Trustee) unpublished, further revision/additions by Donald Insall Associates

Notes for Anniversary Celebrations of 1967, Robin Hewitt Jones, Bluecoat archive, unpublished

The Background and Origins of the Blue Coat Schools of Chester and Liverpool, Robin Hewitt Jones, Liverpool University Library 1974.

Appendix III

Historical Comment and Advice

The following experts have provided detailed comment and advice on the Draft Conservation Plan

Charles Metcalf,	Bluecoat Arts Centre Trustee
Sir Howard Colvin	St John's College Oxford
Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire	Janet Gnospelius
Joseph Sharples	Architectural Historian, Liverpool
Glynn Marsden	Conservation Section Liverpool City Council, Planning Service,

Appendix IV

Adoption, and Endorsement

The Draft Conservation Plan and its policies have been formally adopted by the Trustees of the Bluecoat Arts Society

Comment and formal endorsement of the Draft Conservation Plan has been received from the following organisations:

English Heritage,

Peter de Figueiredo, Historic Buildings
Inspector

Liverpool City Council, Planning Service,

Steve Corbett, Conservation and Urban Design
Team Leader
Glynn Marsden Conservation Section

Liverpool Vision,

JH Gill, Chief Executive

Save Britain's Heritage,

Adam Wilkinson, Secretary

The Bluecoat Arts Centre Liverpool Conservation Plan

Addendum: January 2005 (rev.19.01.05)

Prepared for

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The Bluecoat Arts Centre: Conservation Plan

ADDENDUM JANUARY 2004

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Plans and Illustrations

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1848 Plan

Hulsberg Engraving 1718

19th Century Photographs of Central Block Interior

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Elevation to School Lane: Highlighting Historic and Proposed Changes

Appendix A: Extract From Bluecoat Conservation Scheme Stage D Report 2003

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

Following the commissioning of the Bluecoat Conservation Plan in March 2001, the Bluecoat Arts Centre has developed a major project to expand its facilities and repair its historic fabric. The scheme involves a new south west wing, improved vertical and horizontal accessibility, restructuring the distribution of functional uses throughout the building and conservation repairs. These proposals have been submitted to a range of public funding bodies to seek grant aid including a Stage 1 bid for Heritage Lottery grant. At the time of writing (January 2004) funding has been approved to allow the project to proceed to the detail design and costing stage.

The Heritage Lottery Fund's Stage 1 approval highlighted certain issues that should be addressed during the development of the Stage 2 bid. In relation to the Conservation Plan it advised the 'extension of the Conservation Plan to include interior of building and external areas that may be altered and which do not feature in the current conservation plan'. Subsequently, an extract from the conservation assessors report has been made available. It considered that the document was sound in relation to 'overall history, development and significance of the building and on the principal areas of vulnerability' but advised that the Conservation Plan be expanded to include statements in relation to the following:

- **Facades (Specifically, 18th century front facades with later repair/change to be identified)**
- **Interiors/artefacts of historic significance**

And in relation to issues that emerged during the development of the project following the preparation of the Conservation Plan but prior to the Stage 1 HLF application:

- **Front tree pollarding**
- **Entrance ramp**
- **Safety of courtyard surfaces**
- **South façade porch and balcony**
- **Entrance archway at College Lane**

In addition to the above matters raised by the HLF assessor it will also be appropriate to provide further guidance in this Addendum on issues that have emerged during the development of the design proposals subsequent to the HLF Stage 1 approval.

1.2 Scope and Structure

It should be noted that this Addendum does not provide a comprehensive review of the Conservation Plan. It is likely that, as invasive surveys and as the opening up during construction works proceed, our understanding of the building's historical development will be enhanced. This will be continuously evaluated by the Conservation Architects for the capital works who are also the authors of the Conservation Plan. An appropriate time for a comprehensive review of the findings and a thorough updating of the Conservation Plan would be appropriate at the completion of the forthcoming capital project.

This Addendum provides further ‘understanding’ of the way that various components: building facades, front courtyard, interiors of historic significance, have altered over time and proposes **guidelines** to assist the development of the current Bluecoat scheme and future proposals and maintenance on matters of detail.

The Addendum is grounded upon and refers back to the main Conservation Plan but key plans (the current block plan , the 1848 plan, the Hulsberg engraving and 19th century photographs) are included to enable it to be read as a stand alone document. The building components are identified by both the Block Numbers as used within the Conservation Plan and the Letter Code (in brackets) as per the current development plans. Reference is made to text and illustrations within the Conservation Plan by page number. **guideline** statements are highlighted in bold type.

Section 3 of the Conservation Plan provides a ‘**significance level**’ to each of the buildings principle building components and interiors. The recent investigations have not altered the Conservation Plans these general conclusions although the importance of particular details is highlighted as appropriate.

As a preliminary to developing the detailed guidelines for specific elements, further consideration is given to the extent to which it may be appropriate to remove later modifications and reinstate original architectural detail and an additional Conservation Plan Policy C2.6 is proposed. Modifications are also proposed to the Conservation Plan policy C1.3 in relation to the conservation of the external fabric.

2.0 Conservation Plan Policy Modifications

2.1 Removal and Reinstatement

The Conservation Plan and the further analysis undertaken in preparing this Addendum seek to explain the changes that have taken place to the buildings facades and interiors over time. Some changes may be seen as detrimental, having no historic importance or architectural significance in their own right or are damaging to the original concept. Other changes, while they may not accord with or may even compromise the original architectural design, nevertheless have some historic significance in so far as they ‘document’ a noteworthy phase in the buildings development. Indeed, it is generally the case that being able to ‘read’ the multi period nature of a building adds to its historic interest and opportunities for interpretation.

The following additional Conservation Plan Policy is proposed to provide further context and assistance in developing guidelines for specific building components and features:

C2.6 Assessment criteria in relation to removal of existing fabric to reinstate original architectural components or details:

- (i) Building components/fabric should be removed if they have:
 - no intrinsic architectural value or historic significance
 - and
 - are damaging to the appearance or appreciation of the whole.

- (ii) Components that have historic significance in ‘documenting’ a noteworthy phase of the building’s development should not be removed even if they do not accord with the original architectural design unless there are compelling reasons to the contrary.
- (iii) Existing building components and details should only be removed and original architectural details reinstated:
 - in cases where they relate to a missing crucial component of an architectural composition of exceptional ‘value’.
 - and
 - where there is clear evidence of the original design i.e. the proposed reinstatement is not conjectural.
 - in cases where architectural detail has been lost through poor maintenance.
 - In cases where cost, anticipated life of existing material and practicality indicate that this would be appropriate.
- (iv) The extent of reinstatement should not be such that it compromises the historical authenticity of the whole.

2.2 Condition of the External Envelope

The Conservation Scheme Stage D Report March 2002 (Donald Insall Associates) highlighted issues and proposed repair regimes in relation brickwork, later repointing (cement and ash mortars), stone work, roofing rainwater goods and joinery. A summary extract from this report is included as Appendix A to this Addendum and it is appropriate that policy C1.3 dealing with the condition of the external fabric should be modified accordingly.

- C1.3 (Replacement Policy) Particular consideration should be given to the conservation of the all building elevations and their historic fabric:**
- Repairs Generally:** Repairs should be appropriate to the period of their construction. Later changes in materials that detract from the buildings appearance or historic significance should be replaced in a manner appropriate to the period of surrounding construction.
- Brickwork:** the removal of 20th century cement pointing and replacement with lime mortar to match the original would be to the long term benefit of the historic brickwork provided that this can be removed without undue damage to brick faces. It would be appropriate to retain/repair areas of earlier repointing in ash mortar as being traditional to late 19th century building maintenance technique common to Liverpool.
- Stonework:** The repair of historic stonework should be undertaken by specialists. Consideration should be given to removing oil based paints which seal in moisture and replacement with ‘breathable’ lime wash or mineral based paints. The techniques for the removal of painted surfaces should not damage the stone surface. Repairs should be undertaken with replacement stone of like material. Cement based repairs should not be used.
- Windows:** Windows in historic facades should be retained and repaired/replaced as per their existing pattern unless indicated otherwise by a further specific policy guideline

Rainwater goods: Down pipes and other rainwater goods should be repaired or replaced in lead to the front (north) courtyard elevations which are early 18/19th century and cast iron to the rear (south) courtyards, east elevations and College Lane elevations which are mid 19th century.

Roofs: Roofs coverings should be repaired/replaced as per existing historic materials. Flat roof should be in sheet lead of appropriate gauge unless indicated otherwise by a further specific policy guideline

3.0 Issues and Guidelines for Specific Elements: The Facades

In this section further examination is made and guidelines provided in relation to the changes that have taken place to the principal elevations over time.

3.1 The Courtyard Elevations: NW Wing 3(B), Central Block 1(C) and NE Wing 2(A):

Of the three 18th century illustrations of the building, (the 1718 Hulsberg engraving, the Blundel portrait (with building in background) and the engraving of the rear courtyard) the Hulsberg is the most detailed but all are highly consistent with each other. The front courtyard elevations of today are remarkably similar to the 18th century illustrations but some of ornamentation is absent. It is possible that the Hulsberg (see copy at end of this document) represents a design intention rather than 'as built' but the repetition of same the details by the other artists suggests that especially the ornamentation at roof parapet level once existed but has now been lost. The main differences between what now exists and the 1718 Hulsberg visualisation are as follows:

Parapet: Loss of balustrade which included brick piers embellished at corners with stone blocks and urns. If it was ever constructed, it had been replaced by the mid 19th century with a simple brick parapet. Physical evidence is not apparent but could be revealed during roof repairs. **The brick parapet has existed for at least 180 years. It should be retained and repaired.** Any proposal to reinstate approximately to the Hulsberg engraving would lack authenticity.

Pediment: Loss of two bulls' eye features, low relief decoration, statuary projecting at pediment head and corners. Physical evidence is of roundels not bulls' eyes. No evidence of surface decoration exists and Hulsberg does not provide any detail. **Any proposal to reinstate approximately to the Hulsberg engraving and would be conjectural and would lack authenticity.**

Cupola: Loss of ship weather vane. No on site evidence exists and one is not shown in 19th century illustrations.

Lower window surrounds to central elevation: Loss of stone block detail with pyramidal relief. Physical evidence is apparent as well as clear design intent. **These minor features could be appropriately reinstated.**

Windows: The design of the arched windows is likely to have been altered in the early/mid 19th century with the availability of larger glass sizes. Hulsberg clearly shows smaller panes and a glazing bar design in the round arch more typical of the very early 18th century. No physical evidence is available but Hulsberg is supported by evidence of buildings of similar age. Many buildings prior to the mid 19th century have by now lost their original window patterns due to successive changes in glass technology. Such

changes are usually regarded as being part of the building 'record'. However, the Bluecoat's 1718 façades are rare and **the reinstatement of the original window pattern could be justified on the basis that the documentary evidence is specific, and that they are important to the buildings architectural scale and design. Timing of replacement should take account of their condition and future serviceable life.**

Glazing: Upon the general replacement of windows within a particular elevation, re-glazing should not be in contemporary plate glass but with a glass type appropriate to the period of the window design. One off replacements of historic glass would visually clash with the contemporary glass of nearby windows.

Decoration: Windows and external joinery should be re-painted with a paint type which has the characteristics of the window/elevations period.

Plinth: Loss of Bulls eye features in central block. It is likely that originally the central block had a ground floor level corresponding to the side wings and that this was lowered in the early 19th century at the time of the change to the rear central elevation. The original may have had bulls eye windows opening onto a vaulted brick basement. (The ground floor of the central block is now solid and this change also may date to a lowering of the ground floor of the Central Block in the early 19th century). The bulls eyes have not existed for at least 180 years. **Reinstatement is not recommended.**

Pointing: A notable visual change to the front courtyard facades has been to the pointing. The jointing beds were originally much finer than today with the mortar lime mortar mix being given a light 'golden' colour by the local yellow sandstone aggregate. **(The Stage D summary provides an account of the changes that have take place, the potential damage to the brickwork that may result if the existing cement based mortar was to remain and the recommended approach)**

Rainwater goods: Some early lead down pipes remain. Some sections are in later cast iron. Originally there may have been more down-pipes than at present. The system of channels in the courtyard surface terminate in shallow collecting basins that appear to have been located at the base of down-pipes from the roof parapet. The parapet gutters have a tendency to become blocked and result in internal water penetration. **The present zinc sheet lining is 20th century to the parapet gutters should ideally be replaced in a traditional lead system. The roof drainage system should be reviewed if further down pipes are required they should drop to the courtyard channel ends. All down pipes should be in lead apart from the lower sections which could be in cast iron to prevent damage.**

3.2 NW Wing Block 3 (B) Rear Elevation

The Original NW wing has part of its rear elevation still exposed at 1st and 2nd floor levels. This is a simple utilitarian brick façade with some original and some later windows added. The current development proposals are for this elevation to be enclosed and a new corridor is to run parallel to the wall to provide access to the rooms within the old NW Wing. **The brickwork should remain exposed to provide the sense that this was once an external wall. Door openings could be formed by enlarging former widow openings but should not require the removal of interior room features of historic value such as fire places. Any windows to be removed for functional reasons should have the blocking up set back so as to reveal the shape of the former opening.**

3.3 Block 13 (B) Projecting walled enclosure to NW Wing

This yard enclosed by high walls with blind windows facing onto the front courtyard dates from the early 19th century (appears on Gage plan 1835). The evidence of the fabric itself and suggests that it has remained unaltered the 1851 illustration (p.28). In the current development proposals this space is to be roofed over and converted to café use.

Any roofing over should not visually project above the existing parapet. If a flat roof, the covering should be in a traditional lead system as it could be seen from above, although sections could be glazed. Windows/doors should be limited to 'opening up' the existing blind openings.

3.4 Block 12 (B) to rear of 18th century NW Wing

Constructed early 19th century (illustrated p.28), the front elevation has been altered to its detriment in the early 20th century with the blocking up of the central window and the insertion of a third floor requiring additional windows and further narrow toilet windows. This wing has no exposed side elevations. **Reinstatement of the original façade (especially the removal of the toilet windows) would be visually beneficial but is not a high priority** and would not allow the upper floor to be lit by natural light.

3.5 Block 4 (A) NE Frontage

This early 19th century building was originally joined with other school buildings that fronted School Lane towards Hanover Street (plan. P31). The extended block was demolished in the early 20th century and the present side gable is blank consistent with having been refaced following the adjoining demolition. The remaining building was damaged during WW2 (photo p.37). It was then restored and the upper storey rebuilt consistent with the original. The ground floor shop was formed post WW2. **No changes should be made to the front or courtyard side elevations would not be appropriate apart from possible alterations to the shop front. The blank side gable could be improved by the addition of windows.**

3.6 Central Block 1 (C) Rear Elevation

The changes that have taken place to the curved rear elevation of the central block are well documented within the main conservation plan. The 18th century rear elevation was originally similar to the front but that this was radically altered in the early 19th century by its removal and replacement with the existing curved wall. The main changes to early 19th century rear elevation area as follows:

Balcony: The projecting balcony and supporting piers was added in the first half of the 20th century to the original projection which house the school organ. The later extension may not be particularly sympathetic to the original design but it is not of poor quality and does represent a phase in the buildings history. **In the absence of any compelling functional reason for removal it, should be retained.**

Ground floor Windows: Two windows were inserted into the lower elevation in the early 20th century. These follow the pattern of the original windows and are not particularly disruptive to the original design.

There should be no change to this elevation (Apart from the intervention necessitated by the minor overlap of the proposed new building)

3.7 College Lane Block 8 (F) and archway entrance

This single story structure dates for the later 19th century. The external wall to College lane may well date from earlier that century. The sills of the design centre windows facing the courtyard have been lowered as part of the recent conversion works and a large contemporary window has been inserted to the road frontage together with a decorative grill. Otherwise, the building elevations and narrow archway have remained unaltered. The conservation plan identifies Block D as being of Local Significance and policy C2.3 allows for some alteration with qualifications. The new openings into the College Lane elevations should conform to this policy. There have been concerns that the width of the passage may compromise its use as an entrance for the anticipated increased usage. However, **the widening of this passage would be a significant alteration to the existing structure. The movement from the street through the confined space and into the ‘hidden’ courtyard is a ‘special’ experience that should be maintained**

3.8 NE Rear Block 5 (A)

This elevation dates from the early 19th century. The block is evident on the Gage plan of 1835 (p.24). Parts have been much altered with new window added and existing openings altered particularly at ground floor level with metal windows dating from the 1930s and post war periods and concrete lintels and sills added in various locations. The retention of this façade is not a high priority. The current proposals are for the southern end and the ground floor length of this elevation to be removed and replaced with the new performance and gallery wing. **The remaining section of the 19th century elevation should be reinstated to its 19th century form.**

3.9 Sandon Room Courtyard Elevations (to rear of Block 9 (E)): All the elevations have been heavily altered and/or refaced with new brickwork during the first half of the 20th century. **Further minor changes may be acceptable.**

4.0 Issues and Guidelines for Specific Elements: The Front Courtyard

4.1 Main entrance and Ramp

The 18th century steps were replaced by ramp in the late 20th century. This is a major intervention that has been damaging to the courtyard’s historic significance. However, accessibility for the less mobile through the main entrance is a functional imperative for such a public building. The design approach has been to attempt to ‘blend’ visually with its surroundings using stone surfacing and iron handrails. Although somewhat over-complex it goes some way to achieving this objective. Nevertheless it forms a permanent intrusion into the historic space. A further issue is that it does not meet the latest Part M Building Regulations and in this regard it will have to be considered as part of an access audit. An alternative approach would be to design a structure that was clearly contemporary, removable and beneath which the historic fabric was reinstated. Best conservation practice suggests that alterations to meet a temporary need should be reversible. But, access provision in this case is not a temporary issue. Whether temporary removal is desirable would depend on whether this would be an advantage in the future

use of the courtyard e.g. as a period film set. **Any alternative ramp would have to be considered on its design merits, and its impact on the historic space.**

4.2 Front Courtyard surface

Hulberg illustrates a chequer board design dramatically different to the existing cobbles and york stone. No physical evidence of the Hulberg design is apparent. Initial investigation has involved removing cobbles adjacent to the west wing front elevation to the right of the middle steps. This revealed that the grey stone plinth at the base of the elevations projects some 50mm out from a foundation wall which appears to be in a yellow sandstone. The 'bulls eye' mouldings project below the bottom of plinth. This would suggest that some of the 'bulls eyes' have always been partly covered and that the courtyard surface has always been at its present level, at least in the forward half. Further excavations will be undertaken but it appears unlikely that any evidence of the chequer board pattern surfacing will be found. The Hulsberg print shows that it was a design intention but it may never know if it was ever executed. The existing cobbles themselves are impossible to date, but from the appearance of the stone channels and the hand tooled detailing of the channel heads, they may well date back to the 19th or 18th centuries and must be regarded as having historic interest (late 19th century photo p.30 shows cobbles in the front courtyard). From the location of the channels and heads appears that they were designed to take away roof drainage as well as the courtyard surface water and discharged into School Lane (as opposed to a below ground drainage system). This tends to confirm their historic nature and presents a dilemma, because from the point of view of access, safety and use, the uneven existing cobbles crossed by deep stone channels are undesirable. Two options may be appropriate:

- a) **Modifying the existing surfacing to improve 'accessibility' without loss of the essential historic character:** This could involve relaying cobbles in some areas to a more even level, replacing some areas of increased activity (external chairs/tables associated with café) with reclaimed York Stone, protecting some lengths of the channels on heavily pedestrian desire lines with removable cast iron covers.
- b) **Removal of the existing surfacing and replacement of a design based on the Hulsberg chequer board pattern.** This may be in keeping with the original 'concept' but inevitably would be to some extent conjectural. Such a design solution would be unlikely to be compatible with the retention of the existing ramp. The replacement of the surfacing and the existing ramp would be a major intervention. The practical benefits and the quality of the design and materials would have to be weighed against the loss of the existing historic surfacing.

4.3 Front Courtyard Steps

The steps up to the doorways in the NE and NW wings appear to be late 20th century in terms of the actual stone materials but the design of the steps is consistent with the 18th century illustration. The cast iron hand rails appear to be relatively recent.

4.4 Front Courtyard Trees

The plane trees date from the early 1930s and are not part of any earlier design concept. They now tend to obscure the building and are disrupting courtyard surfacing and contribute to the blocking of parapet gutters. **A specialist report has been**

commissioned establishing their condition and stating their 'value' in arboriculture terms. Further negotiations should be undertaken with the Local Authority to establish a strategy to manage their negative impacts.

5.0 Issues and Guidelines for Specific Elements: Historic Interiors

During the development of the current project issues have been raised in relation to adapting the existing historic interior for new uses. Commercial efficiency often brings pressures to create large 'open plan' rooms. Parts of the Bluecoat, notably the Central Block and the South East wing were originally designed as substantial spaces but other interiors, especially then NW and NE wings are characterised by small 'cellular' rooms. Here, removing interior walls to create open plans would compromise historical significance. The Bluecoat has lost almost all of its 18th century interior details and the preservation of the remaining original early 18th century fabric of walls, plaster finishes, flooring and joists where they still exist is particularly important. The following notes provide expand on the conservation plan guidance in relation to the specific interiors.

5.1 NE Wing Blocks 2(A) ground floor,

This wing was severely damaged by fire during WW2. All the floors were subsequently replaced in reinforced concrete and the joinery replaced. Despite pressure to 'open up' the floor plan, the future conservation objective should be to retain the scale and cellular nature of the historic plan form and the original walls where these still exist. The following analysis indicates the extent of minor change that could take place without undue harm to historic significance.

Rear wall to front rooms: This is the original external wall of the 1718 building running the length of the block. The original wing was only one room deep and maintaining this feature is important in terms of conservation. **Inserting new openings or enlargement of existing openings (other than very minor adjustment) would be detrimental.** The 1722 plan shows a rear door in the approximate location of the present opening at the rear of room A0.03. This led to a structure projecting from the east elevation, possibly a rear access. The wall at the rear of room A0.03 has a greater thickness than that to the rear of room A0.04. It is likely that an additional leaf has been added to A0.03 possibly during the post WWII restoration. **The rear wall supports cross beams and widening the opening to A0.03 to any significant extent would require structural measures which would further disrupt the historic fabric.**

Cross Walls: The historic plans suggest that the existing cross walls may date from the following periods (starting with the School Lane end as wall No.1 to wall 4 between the present security room and the stair) :

Wall No.1 - 20th century. **The wall could be removed** (subject to intrusive investigation confirming the fabric of the wall i.e. brick, mortar, plaster etc. being consistent with that period)

Wall No. 2 – Shown on the 1722 and all subsequent plan. **The wall should not be removed.** The first plan that shows an opening is the 1937 plan. The present opening is uncomfortably close to the corner chimney feature (the 1937 plan shows an opening closer to the front wall). The opening would probably be best

reformed centrally and could be marginally wider than the existing, say 1.1m to ease circulation.

Wall No. 3 – This does not on the 1722 plan but a short stub wall projecting from the rear wall appears on the 1848 plan. This may correspond to the thicker section of the present wall. The thinner part of the wall connecting to the front elevation may date from the 1930s as it first appears of the 1937 plan. **This ‘thinner’ part of the wall could be removed** (subject to intrusive investigation confirming that the fabric of the wall i.e. brick, mortar, plaster etc. being consistent with that period)

Wall No. 4 - Shown on the 1722 and all subsequent plans with the door in its present location. **The wall should not be removed or altered in any way.**

Interior finishes and joinery: This Block was substantially fire damaged during WW2. All timber floor structures and joinery appears to have been replaced and none is of historic value.

Historic Stair: The only surviving historic 18th century joinery is the timber staircase adjacent to the Central Block which although substantially reconstructed after WWII fires contains elements of the original fabric. **This historic stair must be retained without further alteration and repairs should be minimal. Decorative parts of the original stair salvaged from the fires have been located. These fragments should be retained and ideally conserved for display.** A doorway off the old stairways upper quarter landing leads to a mezzanine storage area sandwiched between the ground and first floors. The existing mezzanine floor is 20th century but in the 19th century there were galleries at either end of the main ground floor hall (p.26) and the door opening from the opening may possibly date from that period. **The door should be retained even if the mezzanine is removed.**

The Vaulted Cellar: A ladder beneath the historic stair provides access to a brick vaulted cellar which extends part way beneath the NE Wing. This is clearly part of the original construction. It has three interconnected bays two of which have ‘bulls eye’ windows opening onto the courtyard above. **One of these has a Yorkshire Light (a horizontal slider) which is possibly 19th century protected by metal bars all of which should be repaired.** The other is open and used as a ‘drop’ for materials (e.g. coke fuel) and protected by a temporary board. **This opening should be retained for occasional access and the temporary board replaced with a removable oak shutter.** The third bay has a small square ventilation grill with metal bars. **This should be retained.**

Two of the cellar bays (those towards School Lane) both have openings in the rear wall which are now blocked up. One has steps which are worn and which must have been much used, possibly as a cold store, in the 18th century (the steps are not indicated on the 1848 plan). Its left jamb has stone coins and an iron spigot for a door hinge but the right hand jamb has been altered. **This doorway, steps and surrounds should all remain unchanged.** Above the other blocked doorway is a timber lintel which is badly decayed and should be removed and bricked in.

The cellar floors are in brick and stone slabs which should be repaired as existing.

Generally the vaulted cellars should be repaired as existing and not be ‘improved’ for use by damp proofing.

Access to the Vaulted Cellar: The existing access opening is in the form of a crude break through of the brick vault below the historic staircase. Whether this is an enlargement of an historic opening is not known. The exposed vault edges have not been made good and the brickwork is potentially unstable. Interestingly, the breakthrough shows the original form of construction (the brick vaults were weighted down with sandstone rubble which then formed the base for the stone slab floor above). **The breakthrough should be made good preferably with a brick arch to the existing profile. The recent brick wall constructed to support the existing opening should be removed if structurally viable. The existing partly formed steps could not be continued without a further enlargement of the vault. They should be removed and a permanent ladder/stair installed in treated timber on stainless steel shoes.**

Roof: The present roof to the NW Wing dates from the post WW2 reconstruction and is supported by steel trusses. It has no particular significance.

5.2 NW Wing 3(B)Interior

The NW Wing is the most intact of the original structures. Fabric dating from the 18th and 19th centuries includes: joists, floor boards, walls, lime /hair plaster finishes and lath and plaster ceilings, fire places and corner chimney breasts. The wing still contains the small rooms linked by low doorways central within the cross walls as indicated on the 1722 plan (note absence of corridors). Very little of the surviving joinery doors, architraves, skirting etc. appears to pre date the 20th century. The conservation objectives are to:

- Retain the room plan forms which survive from the 18th century.
- Retain all pre 20th century fabric
- Remove and replace 20th century fabric which has no historic significance with material and detail design consistent and sympathetic to the historic character of the building.

Floor Boards: The majority of floor boards have been replaced late 20th century with narrow boards of poor quality. **Recent soft wood boards should be removed and replaced with wide oak boards. Some wide (approx. 300mm) floor boards remain which are of considerable age (probably deal) and these should be retained/reused.**

Joists: The joists appear to be machined timber, possibly they are not the original early 18th century joists. There is evidence flight holes. **Further investigation is required prior to inform the detailed repair strategy.**

Plaster: All walls identified as likely to be original in the conservation plan appear to be lime hair plaster. This provides support for the documentary dating evidence. **All repairs should be in matching lime/hair plaster.**

Door frames/architraves: Much if not all the joinery appears to be 20th century. None appear to be earlier than later 19th century. The architraves with reed mouldings on the outer edges could be late 19th century. None appear of fire resistant standard. **The plain framed and panelled doors could be late 19th century. They could be retained or**

provide the pattern for new replacements. None of the other doors are of historic value. The remaining brass door furniture is of some interest and should be retained for reuse.

Skirtings: The flat skirtings could be early and should be retained but none of the other forms appear older than late 19th century and many are showing signs of wear. They should be replaced to match the 'flat' type.

Window boards: These may be early and should all be retained

Roof structure: The roof of the NW Wing still retains what appear to be original structural timbers in oak. These should all be retained.

Fire Places: There are ten fireplaces and grates remaining in the NW Wing which appear to date from the 18th to the mid 19th century. **They should all be retained and carefully repaired** (see Illustrations section of this document for photographs and room numbers)

Cellars: The NW Wing originally had a brick vaulted cellar similar to the NE Wing. The main cellar area has been radically altered in the 20th century (as a bar) and in this part little remains of historic value. **Further changes to new uses would be acceptable.** An access leads to a further cellar towards the Central Block. **This appears to retain its early form but is filled with rubble and further investigation is required.**

5.3 Central Block 1 (C)

In the 18th century this block was of similar width to the two wings and a passageway ran through from the front entrance to the rear courtyard. In the early 19th century the rear external wall was replaced with the curved elevation in order to create more interior space as now exists. Both upper and lower floors were originally open plan. The ground floor being a dining hall and the upper the school's chapel. Both floors have been altered during the 20th century.

1st Floor: The 1st floor was completely gutted by fire during WW2. Photographs show that it originally had a queen post truss roof. The timber trusses were replaced with a light steel frame structure and roof lights were formed in the new roof with glazed sections in the ceiling below. (The ceiling glazing has now been painted over). The recess which now opens up to the balcony was previously occupied by an organ. 19th century photographs appear to show that the walls were once panelled. They also suggest that the wall/ceiling junction had a large cove and this has been repeated in the post WW2 restoration. The doors and joinery and floor also date from that period. Whether any of the 19th century floor structure survives will only be known after further intrusive investigation. The Bluecoat's current proposals propose that it should now provide the administrative hub of the complex. **The conservation objective should be to retain the sense of the upper hall as a single space. Accordingly sub divisions to cater for new functions should appear as distinct 'new interventions' and be reversible and reversible. The 20th century joinery details could be retained but this is not a high priority.**

G Floor: In the 19th century the G Floor was also a single space with open galleries at either end. The upper floor was supported on exposed timber beams and cast iron columns now possibly hidden in later partitions. The present mid 20th century 'parquet'

floor is very worn. It is not certain whether the 19th century floor was stone flagged or timber boarded. It appears that the floor was lowered in the early 19th century, as the 18th century illustrations show the main door threshold at the same level as the doors to the side wings. This may also explain why the central block now has no bulls eye openings in the plinth. (The 1848 plan shows fewer main entrance steps than the side wings so any change must have occurred by that date.)

The opening up of the east end mezzanine has revealed what appears to be the Central Block's original 18th century end wall (the brickwork is certainly older than the 19th century curved wall). Interestingly, it contains blocked up arched openings which have traces of plastered reveals. Consideration should be given to retaining and possibly displaying these forms as an 'archaeology' feature.

The present ground floor sub divisions are all 20th century and retention is not a high priority. It is now proposed as the main entrance and reception are for the arts centre **The conservation objective should be to retain the sense of the lower hall as a single space. Accordingly sub divisions to cater for new functions should appear as distinct 'new interventions' and be reversible. The retention of the 20th century features are not a priority and exposing the 19th century structure (if sufficient remains intact) would be desirable (i.e. C.I. columns and timber beams). The floor should be in a historically sympathetic material either timber or stone. The east end wall should be treated in a manner that retains and makes visible its historic significance (possibly expose as an 'archaeological' display)**

5.4 SW Wing Block 9 (E)

The present structure sits on the site of almshouses contemporary with the early 18th century school, which were removed in the late 18th or early 19th century. The ground floor of the present building dates from that period.

The through passage and potters studio: A passage way leads from the main rear courtyard to the inner courtyard overlooked by the Sandon Room. This passage remains as illustrated on the 1848 plan (p31). Leading off this is a small space that is now used as a potter's studio. This now incorporates the lobby space shown in the 1848 plan. Within the studio a mezzanine deck has been inserted (late 20th century) but the lime washed walls with bonding timbers (or former wall plates) remain visible. **The potters studio is of significance in terms the early 19th century construction and as a reminder of the formative 20th century phase of the Arts Centre. It should be retained with minimal alterations.**

The upper floor of the SW wing does not appear as old as the ground floor (note character and degree of ageing of brickwork) It is possible that this was a later 19th century addition. **The king post roof is of interest and should be retained. The interior rooms are utilitarian and contain no details of particular significance. The west wall shows signs of deflection not repeated on the outer face suggesting that the outer wall is a separate skin built later. This should be investigated further.**

5.5 Block 11 (E) Sandon Room (E0.09)

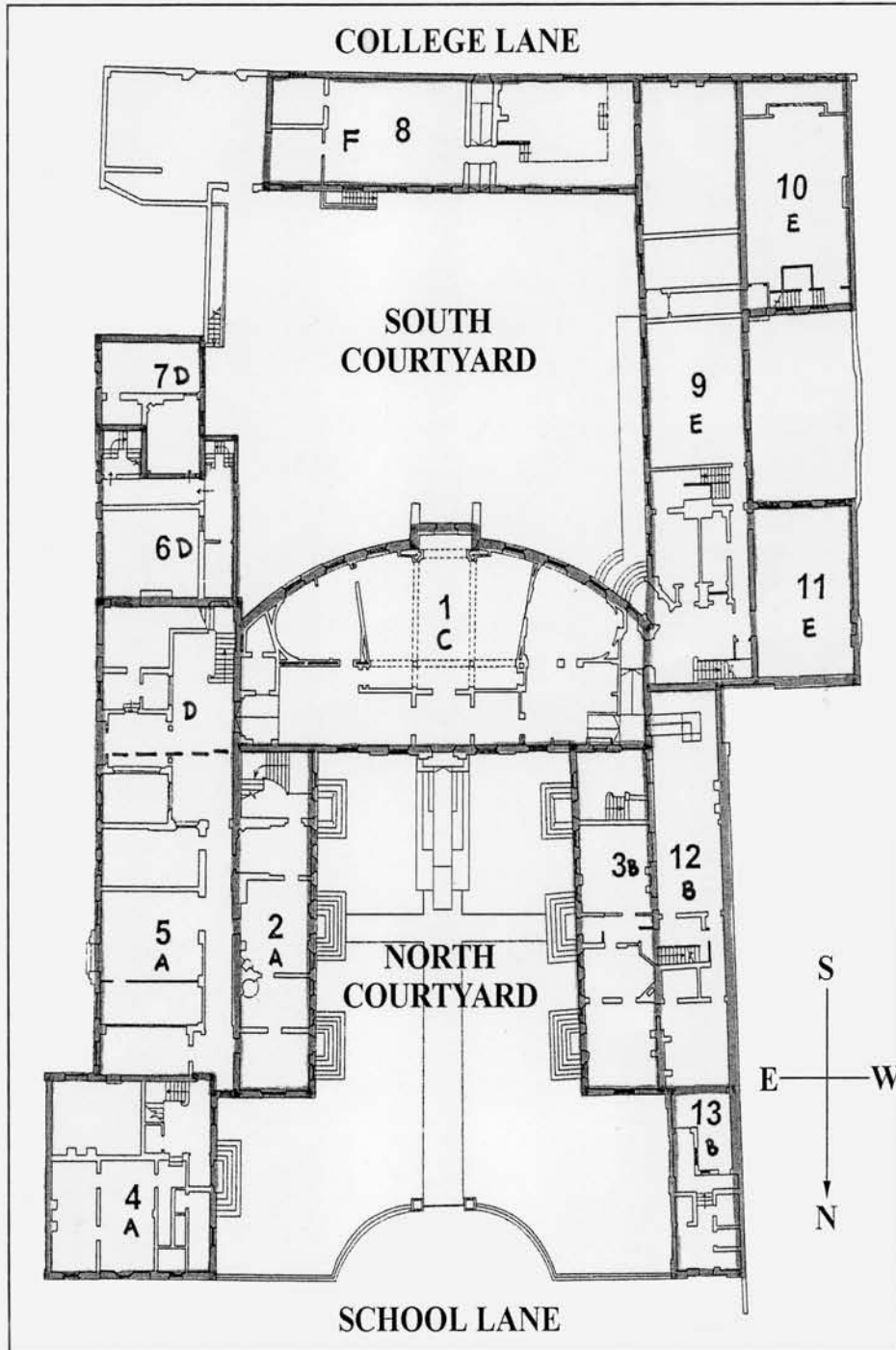
In its current form the Sandon Room was created in the 1930s but the chimney breast may be considerably older. It is shown on the 1848 plan at the end of a rectangular

structure which also may appear on the 1803 Horwood plan. **The fire place is now blocked but the bolection moulded surround is exposed and may possibly predate the present 1930s room. It should be retained.** (see Illustrations section of this document for photographs and room numbers)

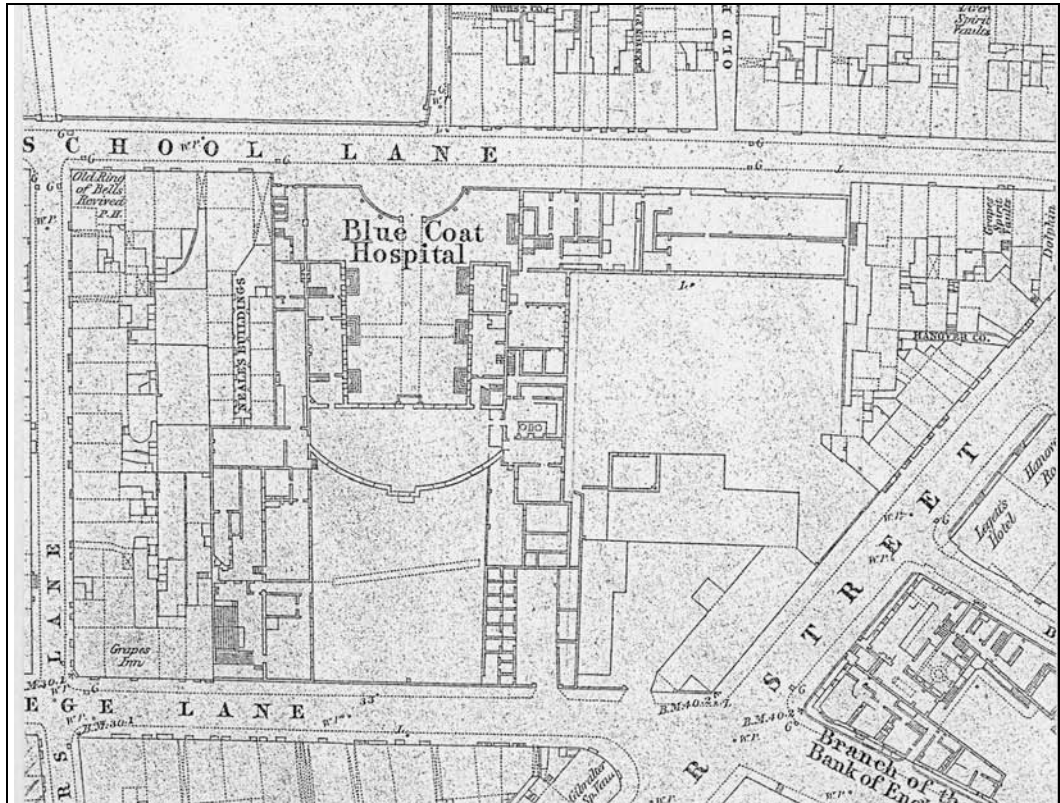
5.6 Block 8(F) /10(E) College Lane Range

The single storey structure containing the 'Design Centre' has been conserved to a high standard retaining its king post trusses and the utilitarian brick finish exposed. **This should set the 'benchmark' for the works to the sculptors studio east of the through passage.**

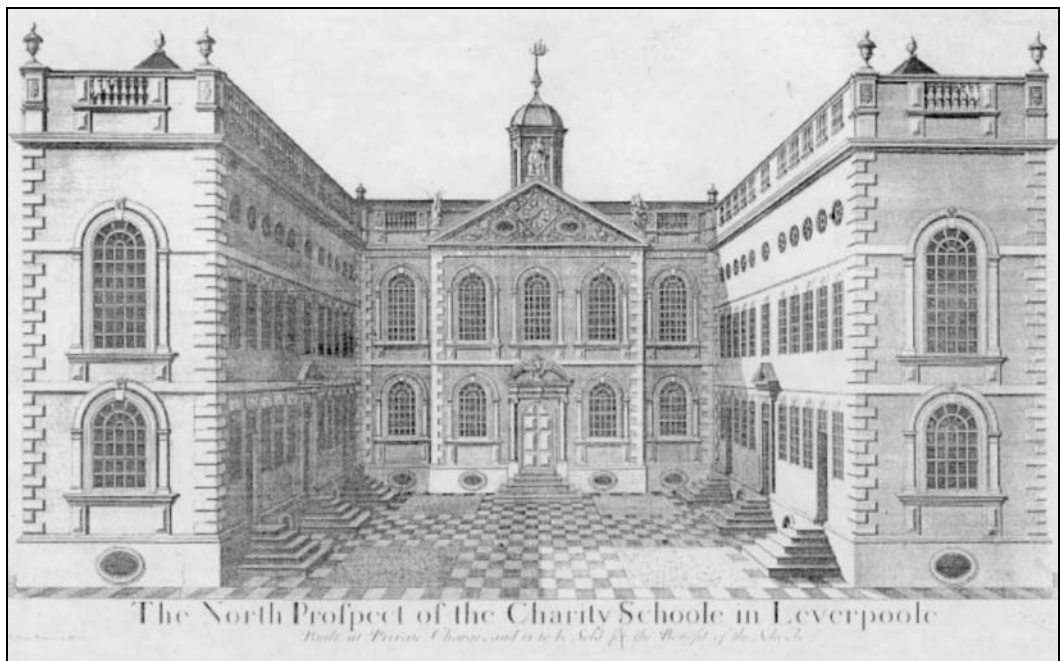
Block 10 is indicated on the 1848 plan. At that time it contained what appears to be tiered seating. No 19th century interior features appears to remain.



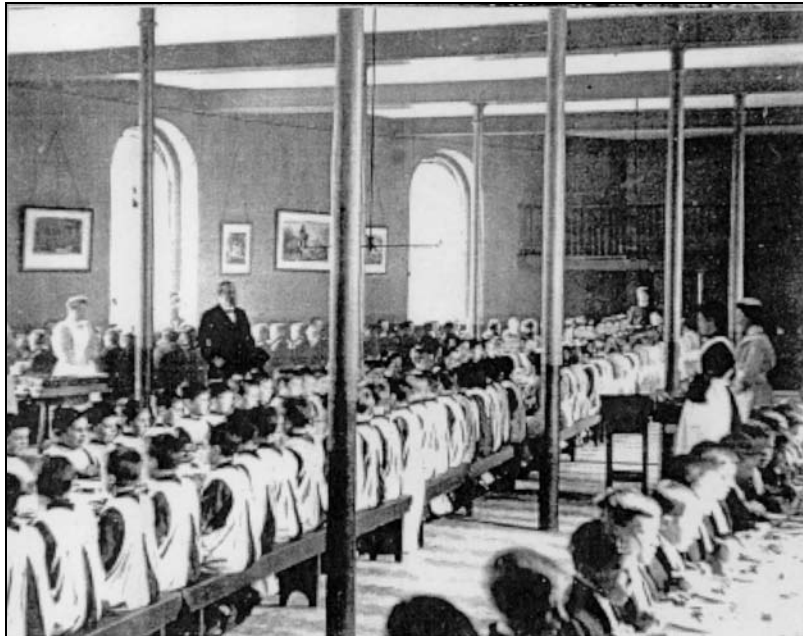
Block Plan (Numbers refer to Conservation Plan, Letters refer to the 2005 development scheme document)



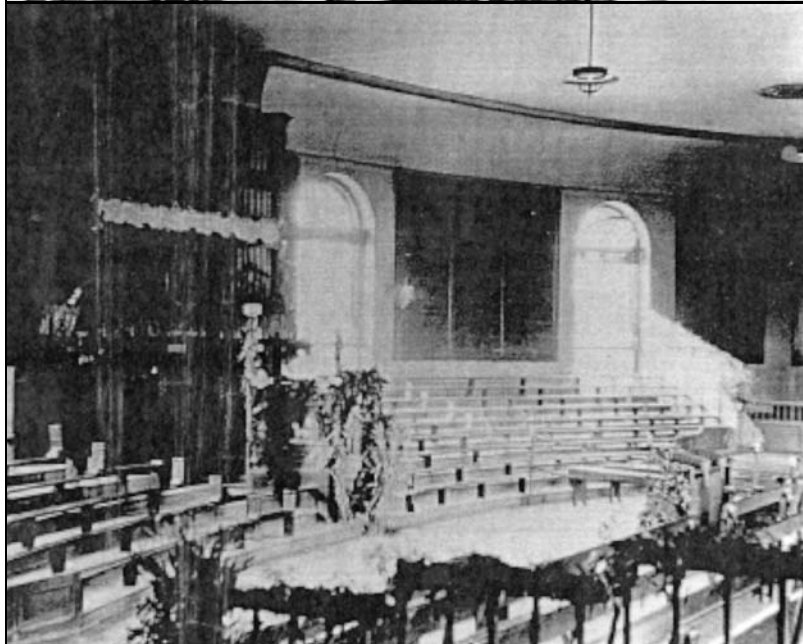
1848 Plan



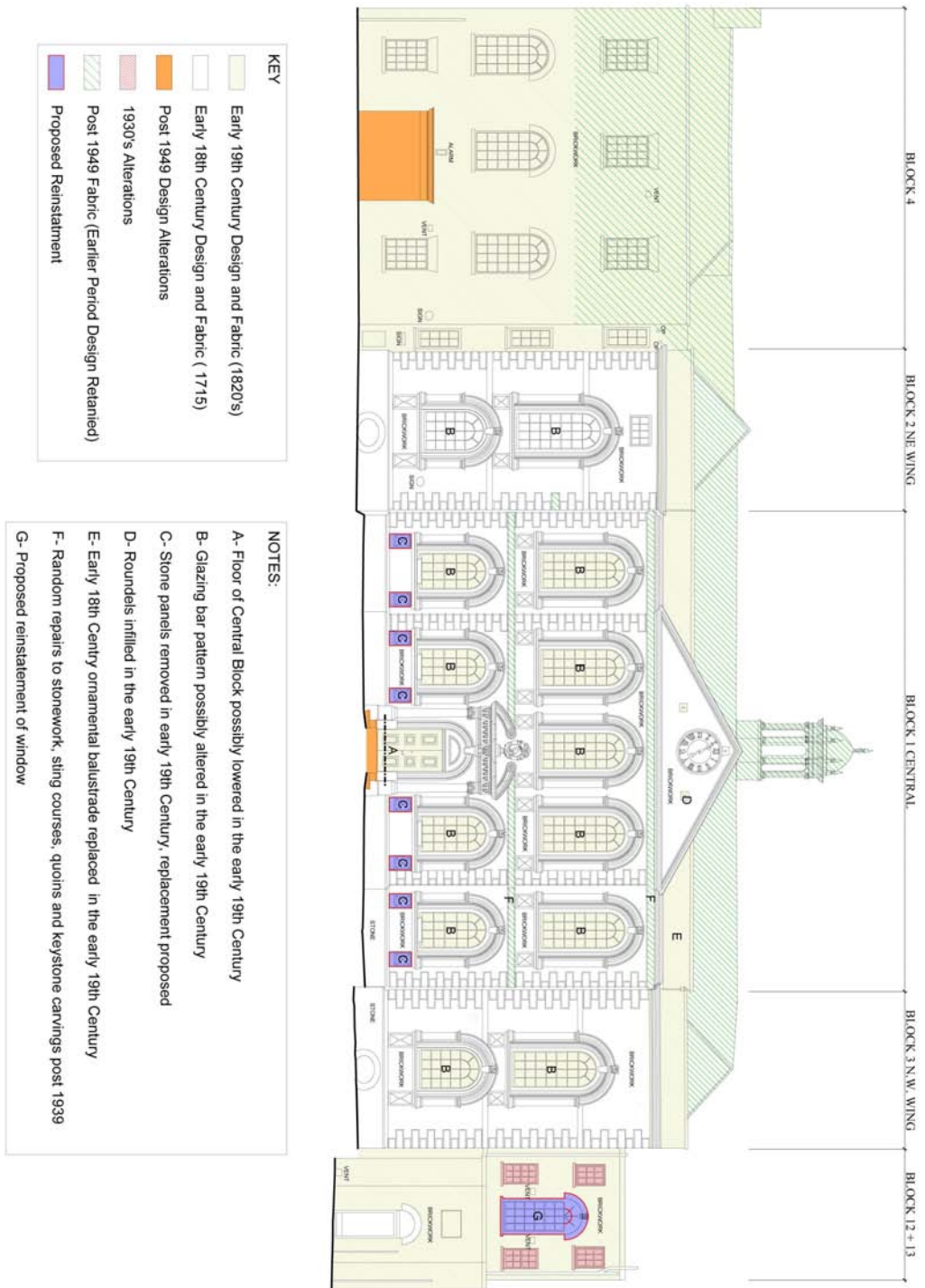
Hulsurg 1718



*The School
Dining Hall
Ground Floor
Central Block
(19th century)*



*The School
Chapel
Upper Floor
Central Block
(19th century)*



Elevation to School Lane: Highlighting Historic and Proposed Changes

**BLUECOAT NW WING: EXISTING C18th/19th FIREPLACES
(To be retained)**

Room No.	Photograph	Photo ref.
B.2.01	 A photograph showing a fireplace with a dark, possibly cast-iron, surround and a wooden mantelpiece. The fireplace is set against a light-colored wall. The room appears to be under renovation, with some debris on the floor.	DSCN4502
B.2.01	 A photograph showing a fireplace in room B.2.01, similar to the one in the previous photo. This view shows more of the room, including a window and some construction materials leaning against the wall.	DSCN4503
B.2.02	 A photograph showing a fireplace in room B.2.02. The fireplace is set against a white wall and appears to be in a state of disrepair or demolition, with debris on the floor.	DSCN4504
B.2.02	 A photograph showing a fireplace in room B.2.02. The fireplace is set against a white wall and appears to be in a state of disrepair or demolition, with debris on the floor.	DSCN4505
B.1.02	 A photograph showing a fireplace in room B.1.02. The fireplace is set against a white wall and appears to be in a state of disrepair or demolition, with debris on the floor.	DSCN4514

B.1.03



DSCN4515

B.1.04



DSCN4516

B.1.04



DSCN4517

B.1.05



DSCN4518

B.1.05



DSCN4520

E.0.09



DSCN4521

E.0.09



DSCN4522

B.0.02



DSCN4528

B.0.02



DSCN4529

B.0.02



DSCN4530

B.0.02



DSCN4531

B.0.02



DSCN4532

B.0.05



DSCN4533

B.0.05



DSCN4534

B.0.05



DSCN4535

B.0.03



DSCN4536

B.0.03



DSCN4537

B.0.03



DSCN4538

B.0.03



DSCN4539

B.0.04



DSCN4540

B.0.04



DSCN4541

B.0.04



DSCN4542

Appendix A

Extract From Bluecoat Conservation Scheme Stage D Report 2003

2.3 Key Issues

The major repairs which are necessary to bring the historic building back to a good state of repair for the long-term include:-

2.3.1 Roofs

Slate coverings nearing the end of economic life. Generally slates are 50 years old. Many are loose with enlarged nail holes and some are slipping. A partial repair would be uneconomic. Specialist advice indicates that because of enlarged nail holes reuse of the existing material would be a short term measure (10-15 years). New slates (North Wales) are being specified.

Many flashings and areas of flat roofs are loose or in non historic materials (e.g. zinc). These are to be replaced in lead as appropriate.

The 1950s roof lights are in aluminium and in poor condition. All seals are perishing. They are located at a low level close to parapet gutters which when become blocked leak through the roof lights. The roof lights are to be replaced to an enhanced specification but still to retain the 1950's concept of artist studio lighting.

2.3.2 External Brickwork

The bricks used for the front elevations were made specifically for the purpose in a kiln built on the construction site in 1715. When first constructed the brick joints were originally very fine (approx. 3mm) and bedded in a thin lime putty mortar of a light cream colour. The effect would have been noticeably different from today's appearance.

At some point between the mid 19th to early 20th century the frontage brickwork was repainted in a lime mortar mixed with ash. In this process the joints will have been widened and the mortar would have had a very dark, almost black, appearance. Major restoration works were undertaken in the early 1950s. Close inspection reveals that the chisels used to remove the dark ash mortar were considerably wider than the brick joints and that many of the edges of the original bricks were damaged. The widened joints were then repainted in a hard cement based mortar. It is now generally accepted that the use of cement mortar can accelerate the decay of historic brickwork. It has the effect of trapping water within the softer brick and original lime mortar. As a result the brick stays wetter longer and so the brick decays more rapidly. In certain areas of the Bluecoat's façade the brickwork is deteriorating. Attempts to rectify spalling brick with a red oil based trowel mastic have been made. Such repairs are rarely successful and can exacerbate the problem.

The long term life of the brick would be best secured by the removal of the cement mortar and repointing with a mix of 'moderately hydraulic lime and sand. Sample have been prepared to establish the best method of raking out the cement mortar and finishing. From the trials undertaken it is evident that the cement mortar can be raked out by hand without undue damage to the brick.

The rear elevation of the Bluecoat's central block and south west wings date from the early part of the 19th century. The pointing is varied, The upper stories of the central block (Block 1) and south west wings have relatively recent dark cement mortar. Lower areas of the central block have the original penny struck mortar still in good condition This has significantly darkened over time. The ground floor of the south west wing has dark ash repointing over the original light lime mortar which is now very decayed. Various trials of pointing mixes, styles and colours have been undertaken in the rear courtyard.

In discussion with English Heritage and Liverpool City Council conservation section it has been agreed to recommend that:

The elevations to the front (courtyard) and School Lane should be repainted with a lime mortar mix

The pointing to the elevations to the rear (south) courtyard should generally remain in their existing condition apart from the ground floor of the south west wing which is to be repainted in a lime mortar

The pointing to the College lane elevations which is varied and poor in place should be removed and replaced with lime mortar with dark colorants/sand added.

2.3.4 External Stonework

Essential components of the original design are the stone plinths, string courses, lintels and the more elaborately carved features of the main entrance and the cherub heads. The stonework was restored in the early 1950s. Although some historic material was removed and replaced, much of the original worked stone still remains. As it now exists, the stonework is covered by many layers of oil paint. Water penetrates through cracks but cannot easily escape through the paint layer. This is detrimental to the life of the stone and its appearance. Stone trials to establish the best techniques for removal have been undertaken. Two types of stone have been identified. A durable limestone was used for the plinth while other elements such as coins are in a very soft yellow sandstone. Removal techniques will vary to the particular stone and degree of carved detail. Following removal the stone will be repainted with a high performance breathable paint system.

2.3.5 Windows

Sash windows are generally in fair condition requiring overhaul and minor replacement of decayed timber rather than renewal.

2.3.6 Structural Issues

The Condition Survey of 2001 highlighted various areas of deflected walls, cracking of brickwork etc and recommended that these be examined in greater detail by a structural engineer. The Parkman and subsequently the Techniker reports dealt with these issues. In general the deflections in walls are long standing with no evidence of ongoing movement. The current recommendations are as follows:

- Distorted north elevation Block 1 (C) :This is considered to be longstanding with no active movement Works required: remedial works to copings and flashings
- Distortions in boundary walls to north west yard wall., Block 13 (B): This is considered to be longstanding with no active movement, however foundations are potentially threatened by tree routes and poor formation strata. Underpinning is likely to be required especially in view of planned increased loadings.
- Distorted east and west elevations of Block 2 (A) and 3 (B):These are considered to be longstanding with no active movement Works required: remedial works to copings and flashings, lateral restraint measures between walls and floors if not already present.
- Distorted internal face of external west wall of Block 9 (E): This is considered to be longstanding with no active movement, however the walls is potentially vulnerable with no apparent foundation to the external skin (which may be a later construction than the internal face), poor formation strata and lateral connection to floor structures. Required remedial works involve further investigation and possible underpinning and local stitching of distorted external wall, ties to floors.

- Uneven floors in Block 3 (B): These are due to historic alterations to the original structure, age and use. This is considered to be longstanding with no active movement: Required remedial works involve introduction of positive wall/floor connections. Strengthening and levelling of floors is not currently proposed.
- Local cracking in brick arches to basement of Block 2 (A): Repairs are required to the brick vaults and to make good the crudely formed access from the ground floor.
- Potential decay in roof timbers and embedded wall timbers: Provisional sums will have to be allowed for further opening up and specialist inspections of structural timbers in which potentially could be subject to or substantially weakened by rot or insect decay.
- Potential damage from tree root: Foundations may be threatened by the further growth or sudden removal of tree roots. A provisional sum is to be allowed for further inspection and specialist advice.
- Deflections to first floor Block 1 (C) caused by overloading is to be dealt with through the 'adaptation and new build' scheme.
- Concrete deterioration in Block 6 (D) and 7 (D) (Flats) will not be addressed as the blocks are proposed for demolition.

2.3.7 North West Wing (Block 3) Internal – Conservation Works to Repair/Reinstate Historic Interior

The north west wing facing the courtyard best represents the internal form, layout and structure of the 18th century phase. The objective will be to repair and reinstate those elements which have the greatest significance and which will enable the early character of the building to be better appreciated. The detailed proposals will be subject to further detailed survey and investigation based on the following general guidelines:

- Reinstate stone ground floor over brick vault basement/solid floor – 66% floor area. Oak over suspended floor 33%
- Repair and reinstate failed lime plaster to walls and replace gypsum-based plaster. Allow 50% of total wall area
- Clean, treat and redecorate existing stone/cast iron fireplaces.
- Repair/reinstate floors by means of piecing in new random width oak boards to the upper floors. Allow 50% of total floor area
- Repair and reinstate lath and plaster ceilings where plaster has become loose from the lath substrate or where the lath and plaster has been replaced with plasterboard and gypsum plaster. Allow 50% of total ceiling area
- Redecorate block in appropriate historic colour scheme following paint analysis – Allow 100% of total area.
- Remove thick layers of oil-based paint from historic joinery, repair and redecorate. Replace modern (20th century) doors with doors and architraves appropriate to period.
- Refer to Structural Engineer's Report for works to repair timber floors and the replacement of decayed built-in timbers (these items not known until opening up)
- Remove cladding and modern paint to expose existing timber downstand beams.

2.3.8 External Works

The external conservation works include repairs to:

- The north courtyard's loose laid cobble surfacing
- The cast iron entrance gates
- The dwarf wall and boundary railings
- Drainage proposals are dealt with in reports related to the the new build adaptation and general refurbishment works

