



RAMSBURY MANOR HOUSE INTERIORS

FURTHER OPENING UP, LIFTING OF ALL FLOORBOARDS, FURTHER TRIAL HOLES,
AND ASBESTOS REMOVAL

Design & Access Statement
April 2026

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Conservation | Architecture | Planning

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1. INTRODUCTION

Project Overview and Vision

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Ramsbury Manor Estate is owned by a charitable foundation, The Ramsbury Manor Foundation, which is charged with its conservation and presentation to the public. This Design and Access Statement concerns further opening up works in the Ramsbury Manor House and removal of asbestos found within floor voids and in lower ground floor floor coverings and elsewhere to enable designs to be prepared to make the building safe to open to the public.

Ramsbury Manor House is a Grade I listed 1680s Manor House located within a Grade II registered Park and Garden, in the North Wessex Downs National Landscape and next to the River Kennet. Within the Estate there is a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Opening Ramsbury Manor House to the public is part of the vision of The Ramsbury Manor Foundation and is inextricably linked to its charitable objectives, which are:

1. to preserve and conserve for the public benefit Ramsbury Manor, Ramsbury, its architectural heritage, gardens, surrounding grounds and park land and its contents being of artistic, historical, architectural or constructional merit; and
2. to advance the arts or education, in particular by preserving and making available Ramsbury Manor and its contents to the public for their academic study, educational purposes and appreciation.

The Manor House is viewed by the Foundation as part of Harry Hyams' collection. By opening it to the public it will be given a long-term future, which will justify its conservation as a building of exceptional interest.

The Manor House has remained uninhabited since 2015 and cannot be currently opened to the public because its electrical services have been assessed as unsafe and in need of replacement. Initial assessment has also raised concerns about the structural stability and load bearing capacity of the building. More generally, the Manor House is in decorative decline.

To enable works necessary to open the Manor House to the public, the collection has been decanted into secure storage. Opening up of selected areas of the Manor House was undertaken in 2025 and revealed complexities of structure and asbestos within the floor voids and elsewhere. Additionally, although the Manor House has been described as barely altered, findings of the investigations to date suggest that the house has been more extensively worked on than previously realised.

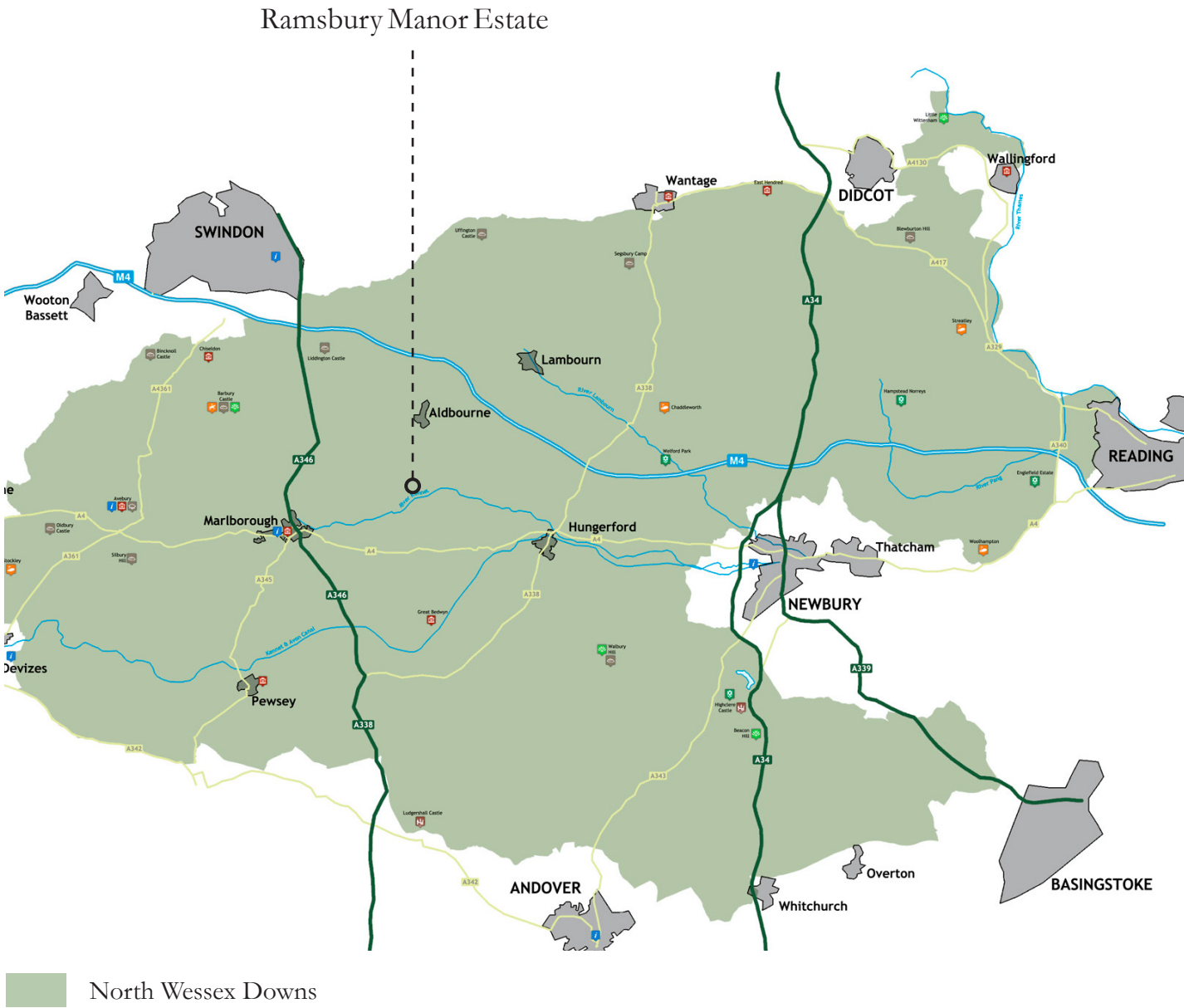
Due to these findings, further opening up as well as asbestos removal, are necessary to allow for a thorough understanding of the building's structure, as well as the safety of people carrying out investigations within the floor voids. Removal of asbestos will also facilitate future re-servicing and strengthening works in the Manor House.

This Design and Access Statement must be read in conjunction with the Heritage Statement "Further opening-up works required to Ramsbury Manor House to facilitate repair, reservicing and asbestos removal", prepared by PBA and dated 29.04.26; the report "Asbestos Management Survey, Interim Report to Manor House Only" prepared by Asbestos 2Go Limited and dated 11.07.2025; and the report "Asbestos Refurbishment and Demolition Survey to Specific Locations Only" prepared by Asbestos 2Go Limited and dated 28.07.2025



2. LOCATION
National Landscape and SSSI

Ramsbury Manor Estate is located in Wiltshire, on the river Kennet, within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape. The Grade I listed Manor House sits within a Grade II Registered Park and Garden. The River Kennet Site of Special Scientific Interest runs through the site.



3. HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Ramsbury Manor

The development of Ramsbury Manor House is briefly analysed here for context. Further details can be found in the Heritage Statement and The History of Ramsbury Manor (Document No: 177-HE-RE-History - V5 (22/10/2019)) the latter was prepared by Peregrine Bryant Architects and submitted to Wiltshire Council with the planning and listed building consent applications for the Exhibition Centre and Estate Yard (PL/2022/04972 and PL/2022/05380).

EARLY HISTORY

Ramsbury, throughout the Middle Ages, was one of the Bishop of Salisbury's principal palaces. It later passed to the Seymour Family, Dukes of Somerset. Following that, the house was granted to William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke who had the house substantially reworked between 1544 and 1563. The revised house had a main symmetrical east front of two storeys with attics and nine gables above.

PRESENT MANOR HOUSE

In 1680 the Manor House with its surrounding land was sold to Sir William Jones for whom Robert Hooke designed the present Ramsbury Manor between 1681 and 1685.

18TH CENTURY ALTERATIONS

Decorative modifications were later done to the house by Langham-Jones with likely Robert Mitchell employed for architectural work. The Saloon fireplace and ceiling, modifications within the Dining Room, the Chinese bedroom and its ceiling, and rooms to the basement are of that era. Likely, many of the manor house windows were also reworked at this date.

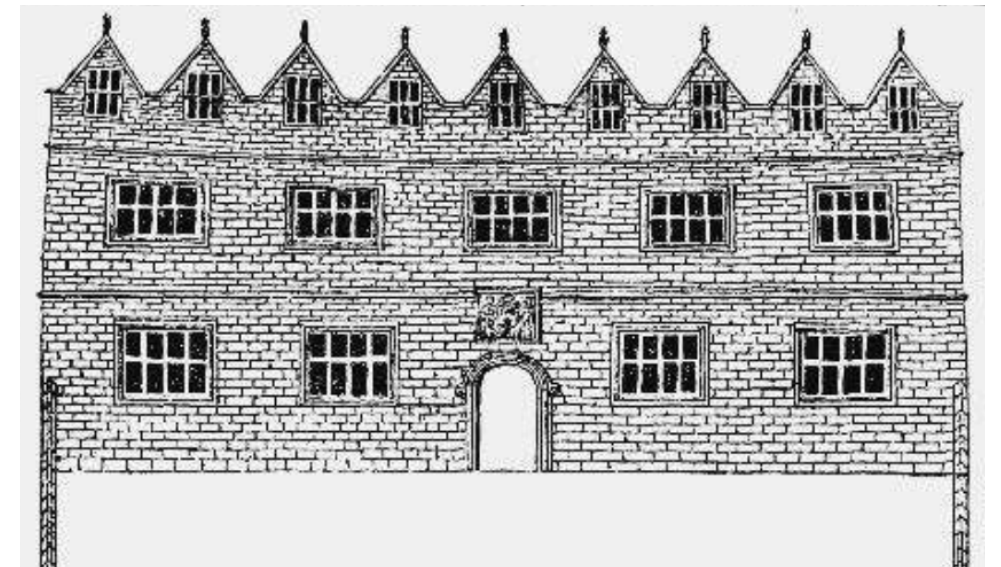
LATE 19TH CENTURY ALTERATIONS

In 1800 Ramsbury passed to the Burdett family. The Seventh Baronet introduced new extension to the kitchen including scullery and larder. Facilities were updated after Earl of Wilton purchased the Estate in 1951.

HARRY HYAMS

In 1964 the Estate was sold to a distinguished collector Harry Hyams. Between 1965 and 1977 Mr Hyams had the house repaired and modernised. The house was redecorated by Colefax and Fowler. Harry Hyams also had works undertaken to the Manor House by Dennis Crump, Jeremy Benson and Peregrine Bryant Architects.

Mr Hyams passed away in 2015 leaving his collection and historic Estate to the nation, with a substantial endowment to maintain it and to make it available to the public. The Ramsbury Manor Foundation - a charitable trust was established. The Trustees commenced a major 'long cycle' repair campaign while continuing the Estate's traditional management. At the same time they were preparing plans for the conservation and repair of the Manor House interiors so it can be opened to the public in accordance with Mr Hyams' wishes.



The east front of the Earl of Pembroke's House, Ramsbury Manor c.1567 (Stranton, 1909)



Engraving of the north elevation of Ramsbury Manor, 1826 (The Mirror , 1826)



Current view of the north elevation of Ramsbury Manor, 2019

4. PROJECT CONTEXT

Plans for the Estate

Works have been in progress since the establishment of the Foundation to facilitate opening of the Ramsbury Manor Estate to the public. When all building works are completed, they will allow visitors to see and learn about Harry Hyams’ collection, as well as provide facilities for the functioning and management of the Estate.

MANOR HOUSE

The subject of this Design and Access Statement is the Manor House, which is a building of exceptional significance and the setting for Harry Hyams’ collection.

COURTYARD BUILDINGS

(conservation and adaptation completed in 2021)

Provide office facilities for the management of the estate, accommodation for visitors from the Foundation as well as workshop spaces for school children.

OLD WALLED GARDEN

(project currently on site)

Restored gardens with new greenhouses will be open to visitors before other projects on site are completed.

EXHIBITION CENTRE

(planning permission received 2023)

Will provide a high-quality facility for members of the public and educational institutions to gain an insight into the life of Harry Hyams, to view his collection and to facilitate access to the Manor House and Swimming Pool. The later includes a significant surviving example of an interior by Colfax and Fowler. The Exhibition Centre will also accommodate spaces for caring for and loaning the collection.

NEW ESTATE YARD

(planning permission received 2023)

Will provide areas for the storage of materials and equipment as well as facilities for workshops and their users to enable the upkeep and future running of the estate as a whole.



4. PROJECT CONTEXT

Buildings within the Estate



1. Ramsbury Manor (Grade I listed)



2. Courtyard Buildings (curtilage listed)



3. Orangery-part of Courtyard Buildings (curtilage listed)



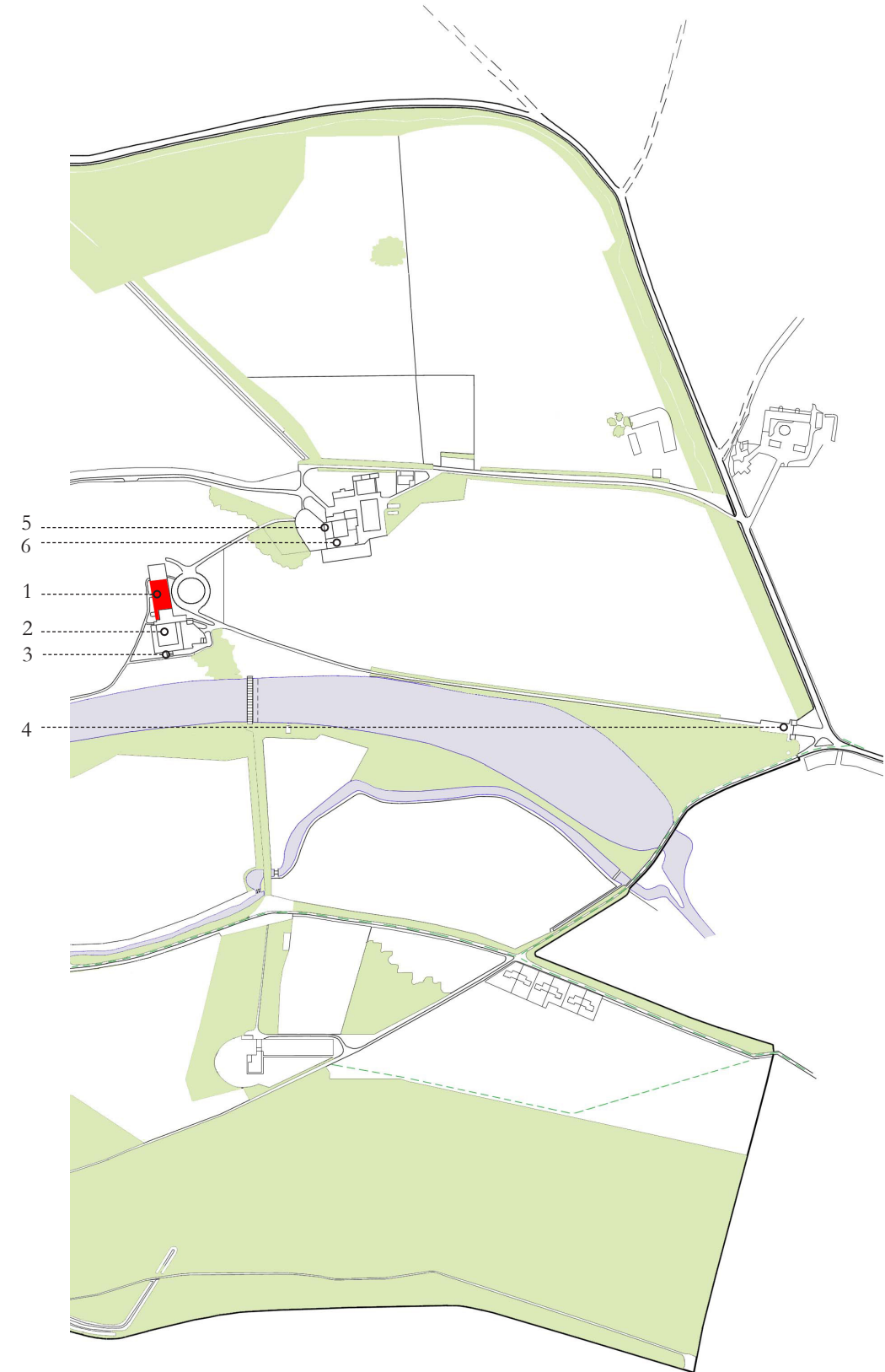
4. East Gate and Lodges (Grade II* listed)



5. Stables (Grade II listed)



6. Pool House - adjacent to Stables



5. CHANGES TO RAMSBURY MANOR

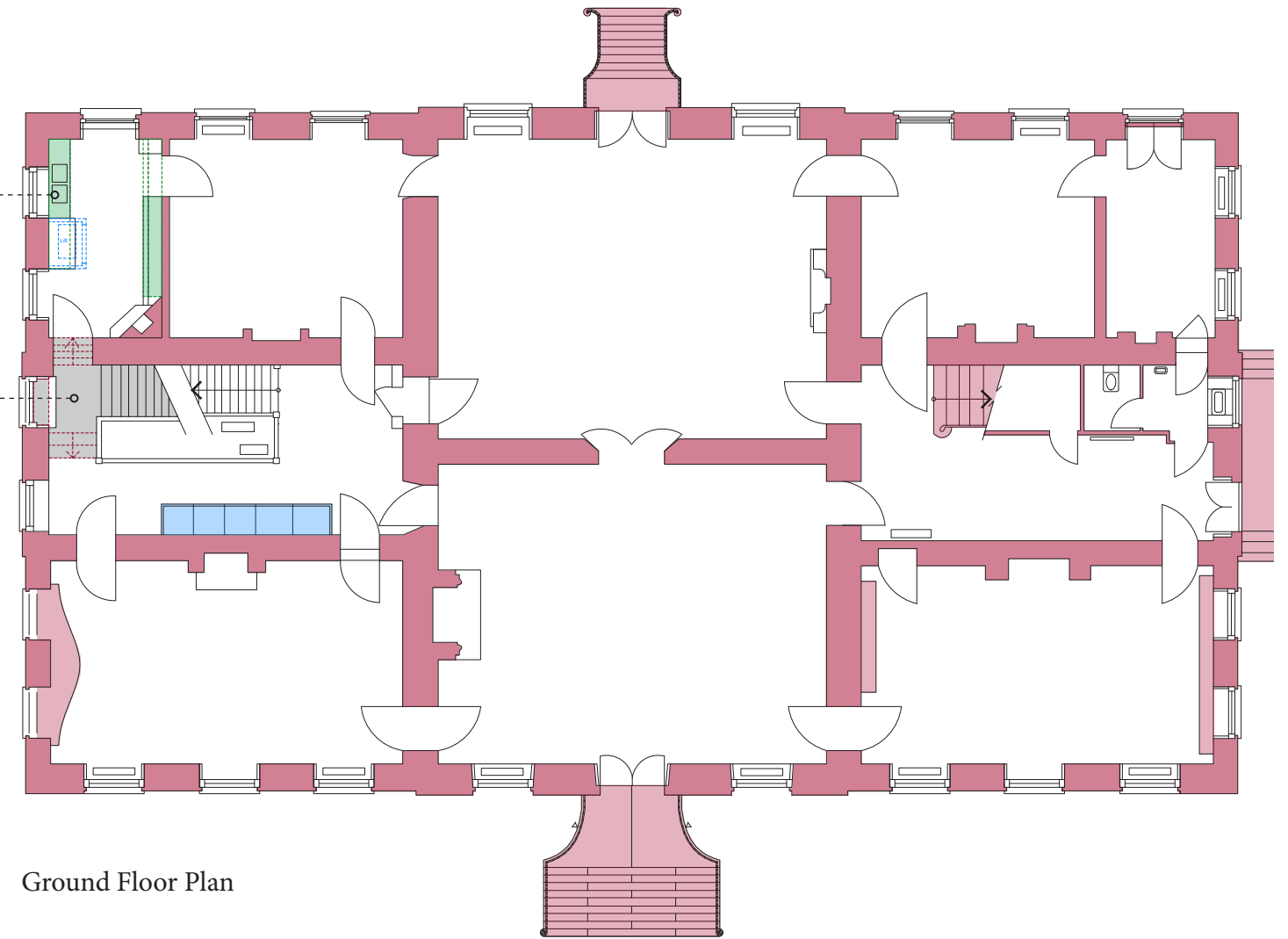
Building morphology

As the first set of measured plans of Ramsbury Manor comes from 1953 (nearly 300 years after the Manor was built), it is difficult to establish the Manor House's morphology. However the proposals done by Marshall Sisson Architects in that year for Earl of Wilton, cast light on what changes took place between 1953 and the present day.

- Drawn as existing in 1953 (May) - still present
- Drawn as existing in 1953 (May) - since demolished
- 1953 (Sept) proposed plans for Earl of Wilton - existing today
- 1953 (Sept) proposed plans for Earl of Wilton - not present today (demolished or not built)
- 1953 (Nov) proposed plans for Earl of Wilton - existing today
- 1953 (Nov) proposed plans for Earl of Wilton - not present today (demolished or not built)
- Built after 1953

Present Butler's pantry appears to be a modified version of the design proposed for the Earl of Wilton by Marshall Sisson Architects in 1953

Floor level raised after 1953

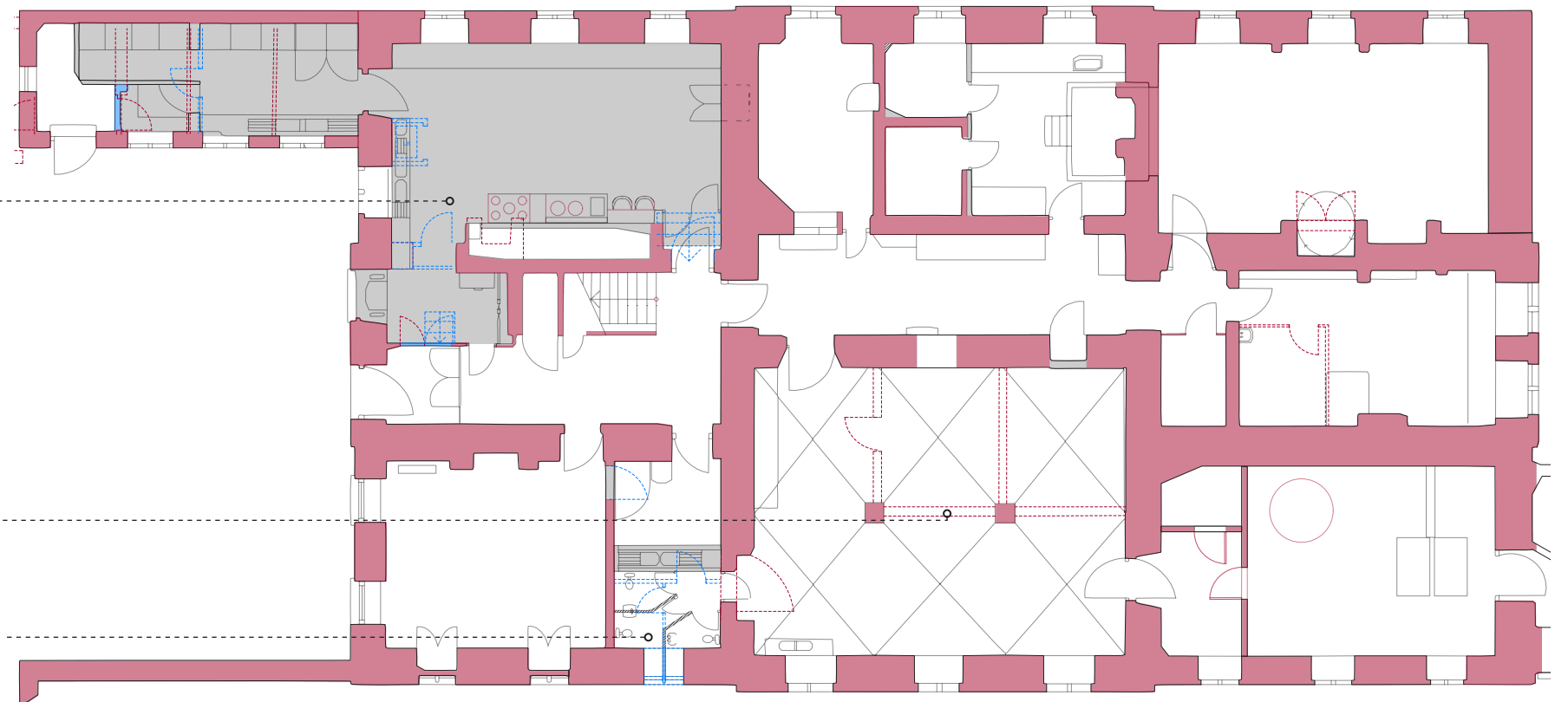


Ground Floor Plan

Floor level of the kitchen raised after 1953

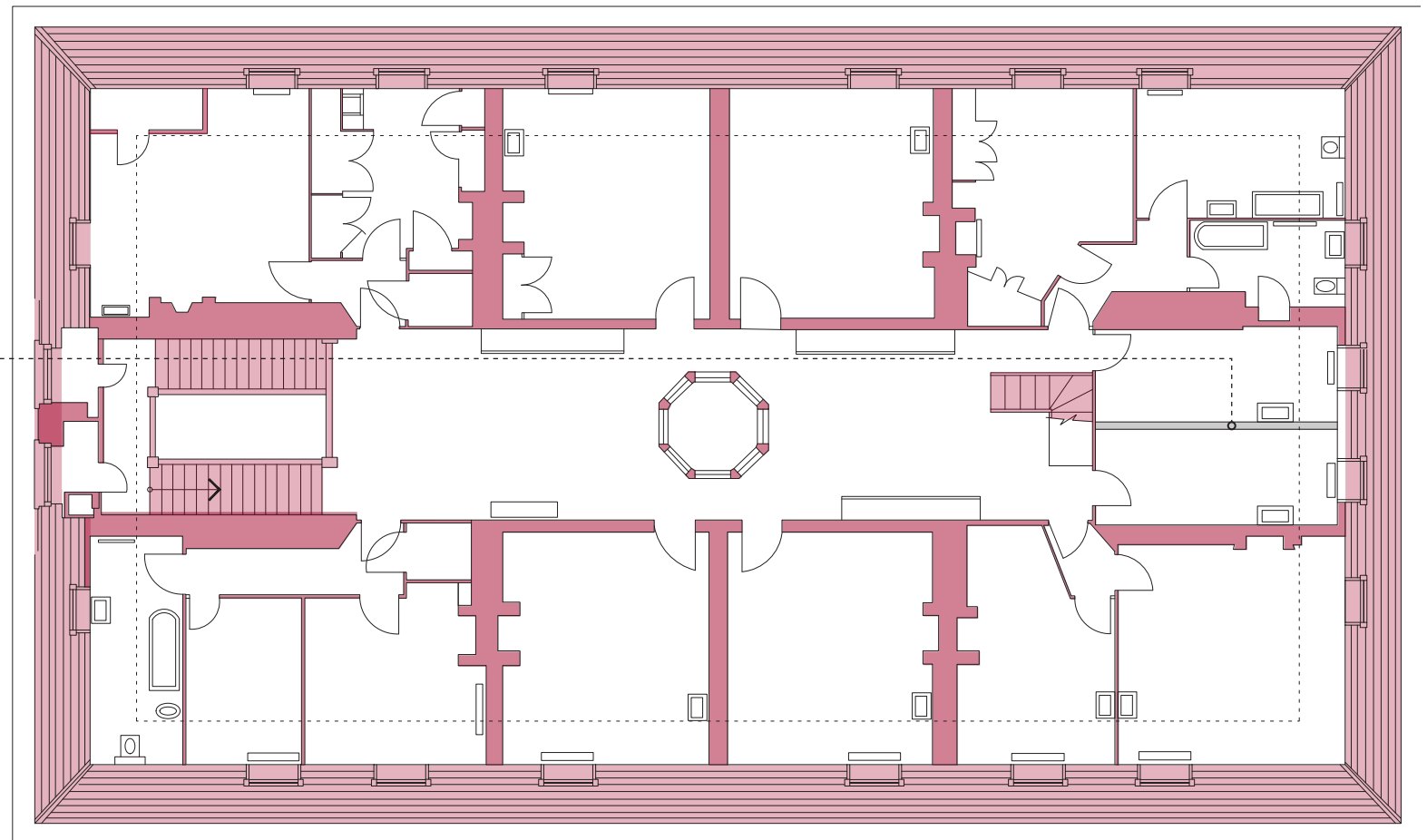
Partitions removed after 1953

Room proposed to be used as cloakroom by Marshall Sisson Architects in 1953



Lower Ground Floor Plan

Second Floor remained mostly unchanged except for the reintroduction of a partition wall proposed to be demolished in 1953 by Marshall Sisson Architects



Second Floor

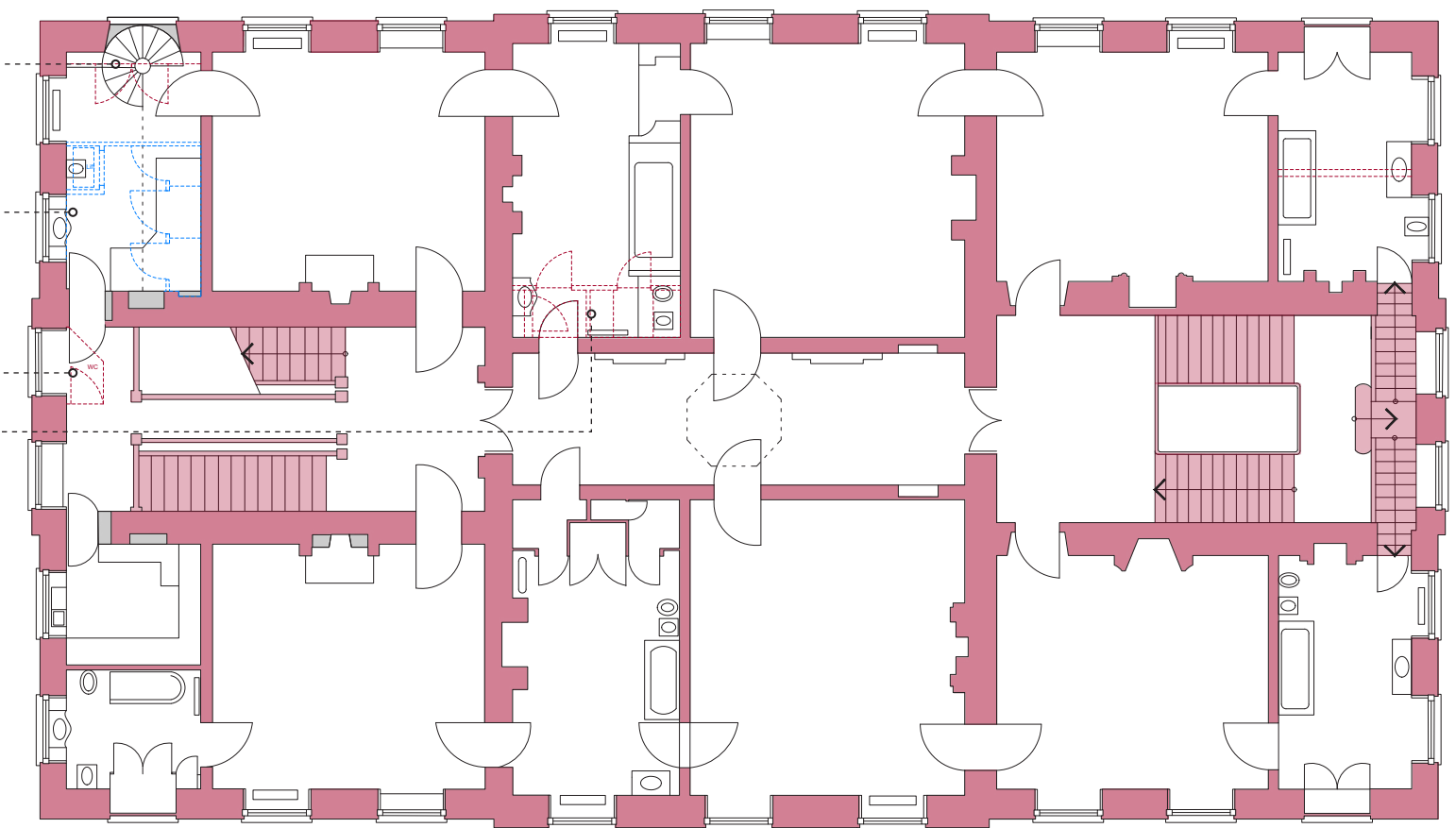
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Spiral stair introduced after 1953

Room proposed to be a service room by Marshall Sisson Architects, with a lift connected to the kitchen

WC removed after 1953

Entrance through the cupboard to the dressing room used to mirror the one still present in Chinese Bathroom



First Floor

6. LIFTED FLOORBOARDS

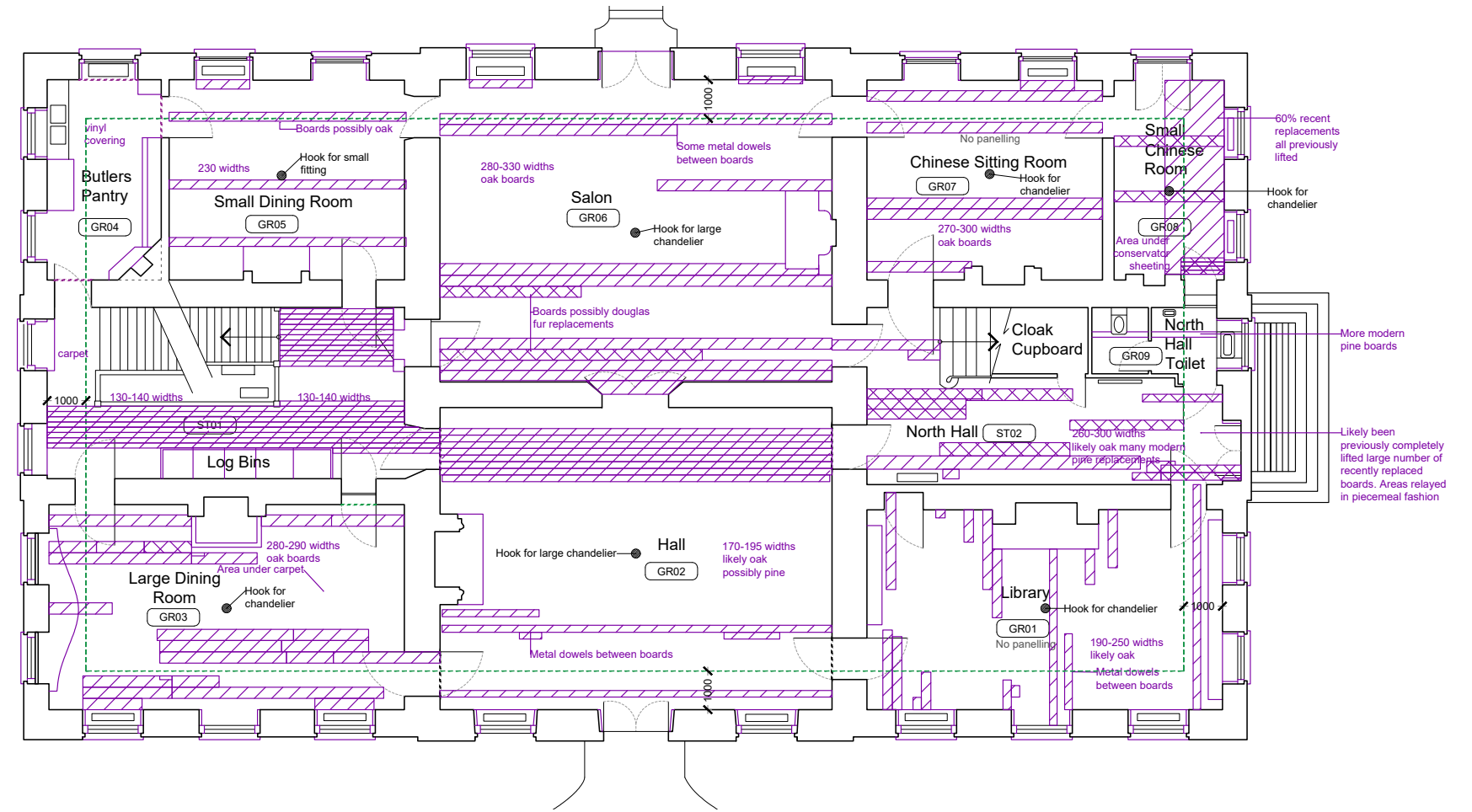
Approved application PL/2024/11184

Peregrine Bryant Architects previously applied for permission to open up selected floorboards and areas of walls in order to facilitate specification of proposed repairs to the Manor House.

Lifting of floorboards was to:

- confirm that proposed service routes within floor voids are possible with minimal impact on the fabric;
- inspect timber structures where they pass into external masonry walls
- inspect ceiling pendant pattresses;
- inspect lath and plaster ceilings; and
- gain a better understanding of the fabric and structure within the floor voids.

The application (PL/2024/11184) was approved on 06.06.25 and opening up was carried out later that year.



Ground Floor

Floorboards highlighted in purple had obvious signs of having been refixed and were strongly suspected to had been lifted before.



Evidence of board lifted and screwed back down



Newer/replacement board



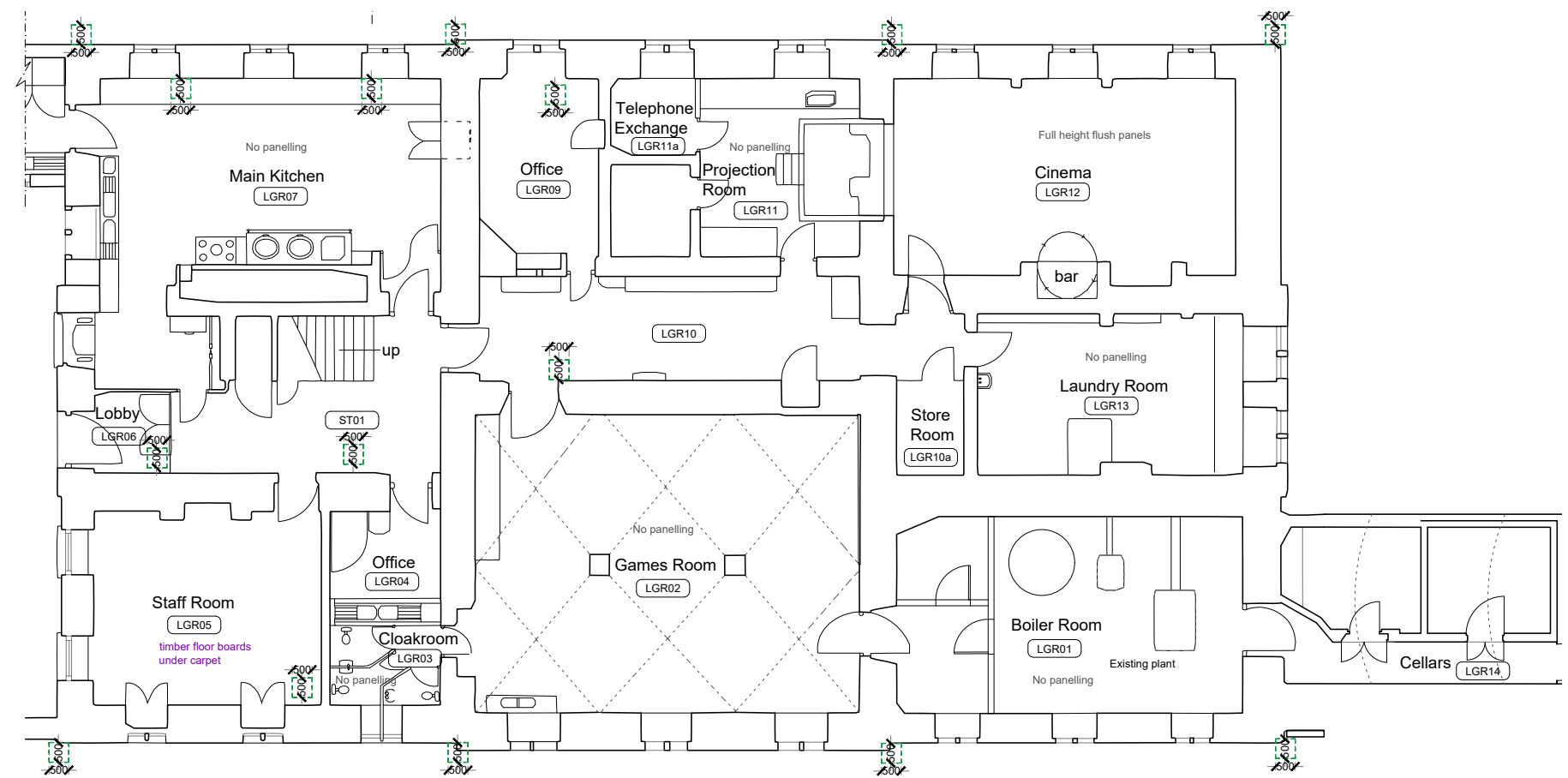
Floorboards within 1m of external wall to be lifted



Floorboards to be lifted



Area of floor above chandelier to be opened up and structure inspected

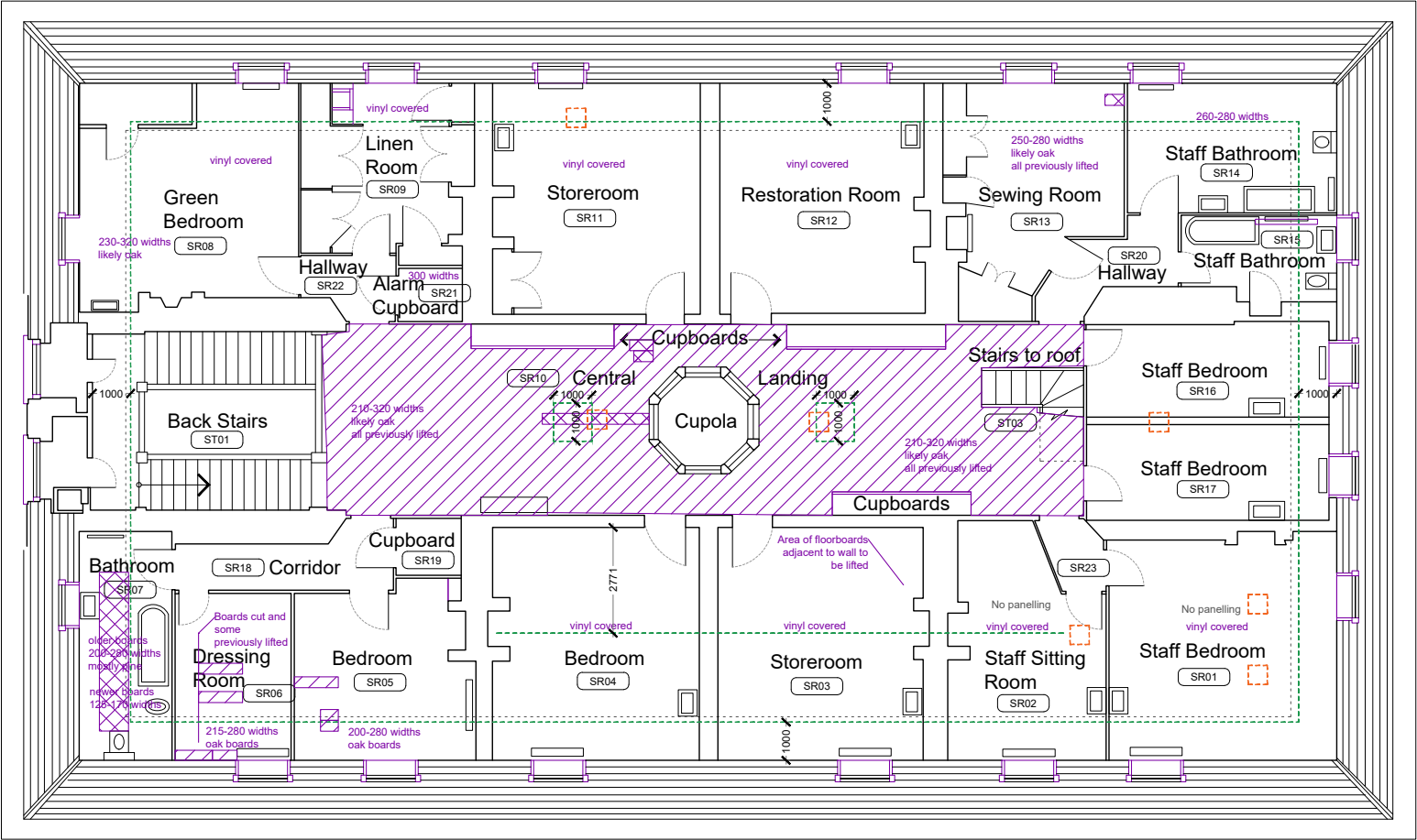


Lower Ground Floor

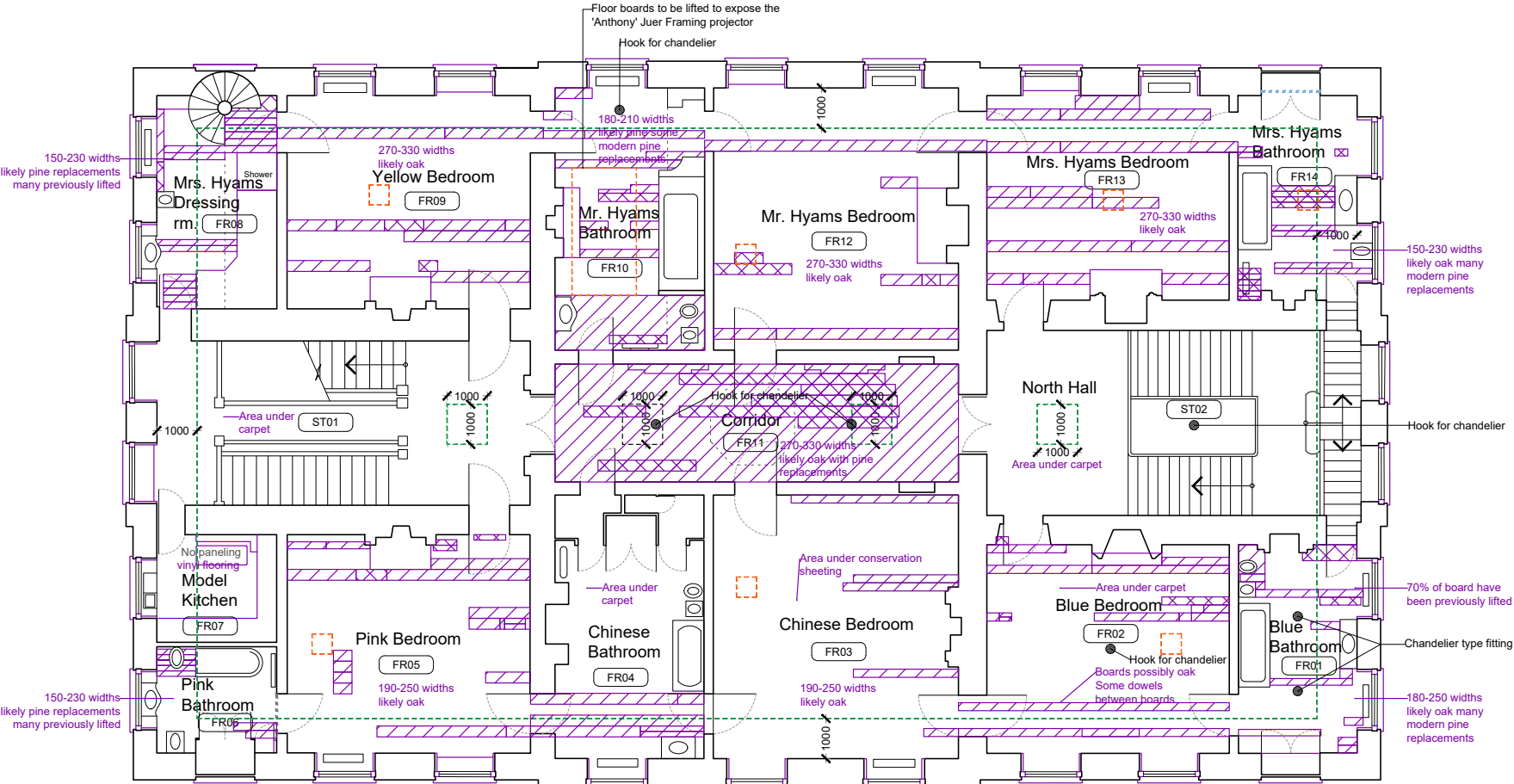
6.

LIFTED FLOORBOARDS

Approved application PL/2024/11184



Second Floor



Floorboards highlighted in purple had obvious signs of having been refixed and were strongly suspected to had been lifted before.

Evidence of board lifted and screwed back down

Floorboards within 1m of external wall to be lifted

Newer/replacement board

Floorboards to be lifted

Area of floor above chandelier to be opened up and structure inspected

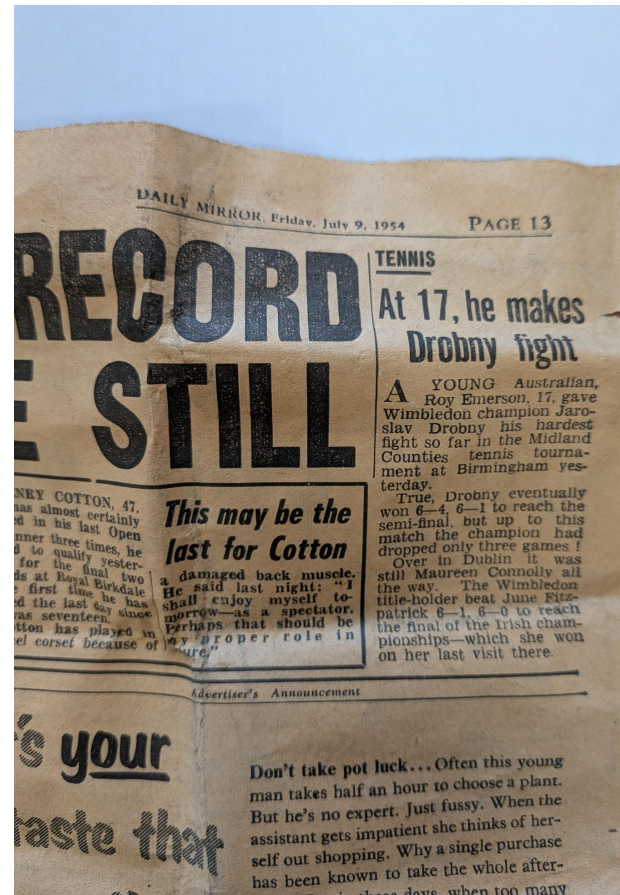
First Floor

6. LIFTED FLOORBOARDS

Findings

Lifting of floorboards revealed a complex floor structure which is not consistent throughout the building with beam and joist sizes and centres varying from room to room. Steel beams and brackets were found during the investigation, as well as areas where furrings were installed to try to level the exiting floor. During opening up, fragments of modern newspaper and asbestos were also found within the floor voids. Together with extensive plumbing and wiring, this confirms that there have been significant interventions within the floor structure.

Because of the complexity of the building's structure - its irregularity, complicated load paths, as well as signs of previous interventions, the limited opening up that took place was not sufficient to fully understand the building's structure and its condition.



Newspaper from 1954 found in floor void (Second Floor)



Steel beam (First Floor)



Furrings to level out floor (Ground Floor)



Extensive services (Ground Floor)



Concealed dropped ceiling void below the ceiling void (First Floor)

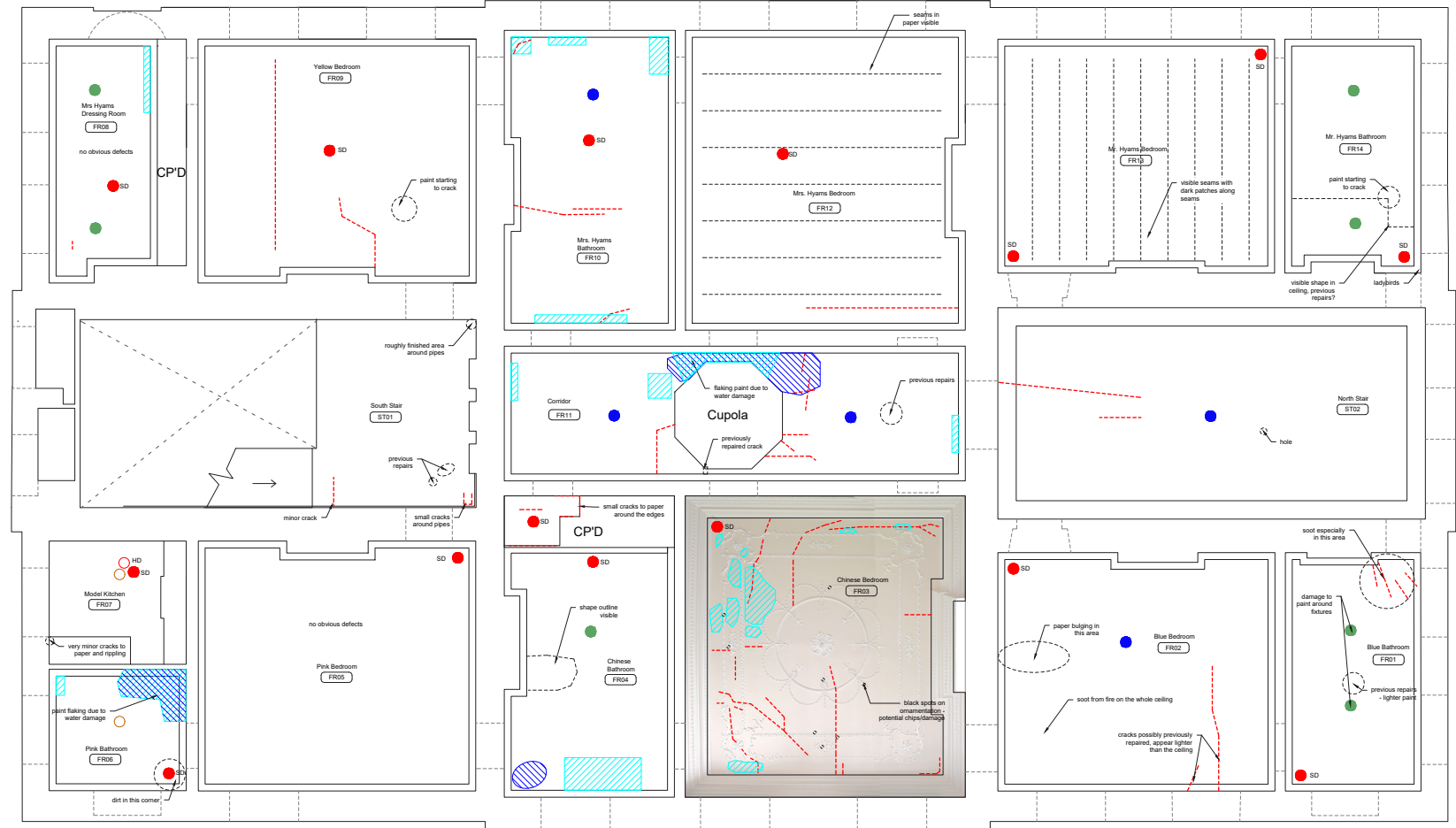


Lining panels containing asbestos (Ground Floor)

7. CONDITION SURVEY Findings

It was noticed from taking floor-to-ceiling heights that the Saloon and Hall differed compared to other rooms on the ground floor. The limited opening up revealed that there are false ceilings below the floor voids above these spaces. Limitations on opening-up mean we are unable to interpret why this is so or the condition of these ceilings, their structure, or any chandelier pattresses/support structure. To allow access to these voids to test for asbestos and to understand their purpose and significance, the laths and plaster to the ceiling separating the voids will need to be cut away locally. The minimum number of holes will be made and it is anticipated that holes will be no larger than the spacing of the joists.

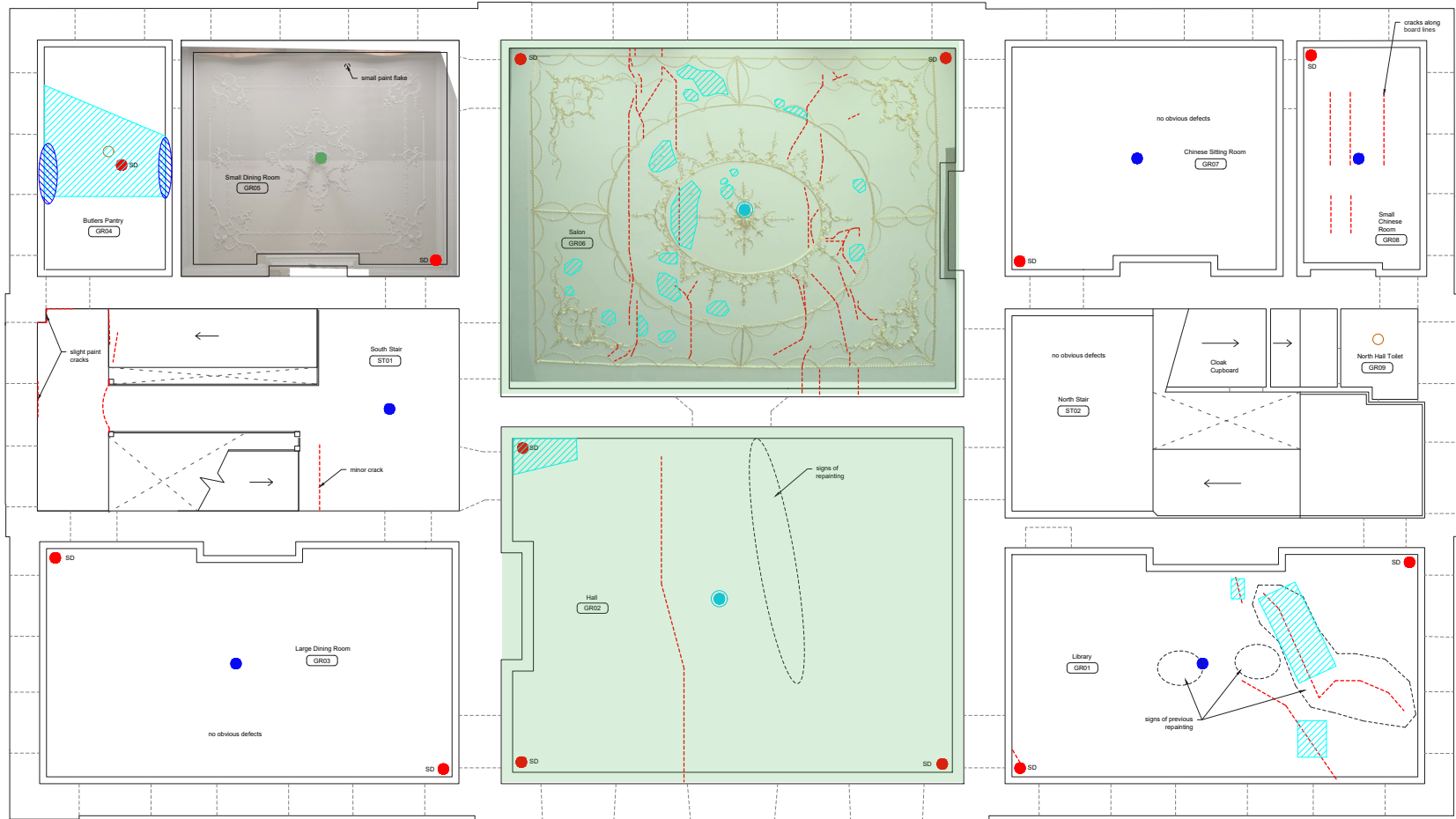
Further inspection of the condition of the building has also highlighted water staining, flaking paint and cracking of plaster to a number of ceilings below where bathrooms are located. Opening up has currently limited the ability to inspect the condition of these areas further to understand the true extent of this water damage and condition of the plaster ceilings themselves.



First Floor Reflected Ceiling Plan Showing Condition

- Existing elements:
- Light fixture
 - Hook for chandelier
 - Hook for large chandelier
 - Chandelier type fitting
 - Ceiling slope direction (up)
 - Smoke detector
 - Heat detector
 - Services

- Damage:
- flaking
 - water damage
 - cracks
 - other damage
 - false ceiling below floor void
- *lower void to be opened form above by removing top layer of lath and paster



Ground Floor Reflected Ceiling Plan Showing Condition

8. ASBESTOS
Asbestos survey findings

The asbestos survey has revealed asbestos within the floor voids at all levels of the building and asbestos in the ground floor floor finishes and elsewhere. As only selected areas could be opened up, much of the floor voids were uninspected. Within the floors, asbestos boards were used for boxings, and as the asbestos surveyors suggest, it is not uncommon for materials to be cut adjacent to where they will be installed and therefore dust/debris is presumed to be present in voids adjacent to all boxings. Asbestos surveyors strongly presume all floor voids to be contaminated.

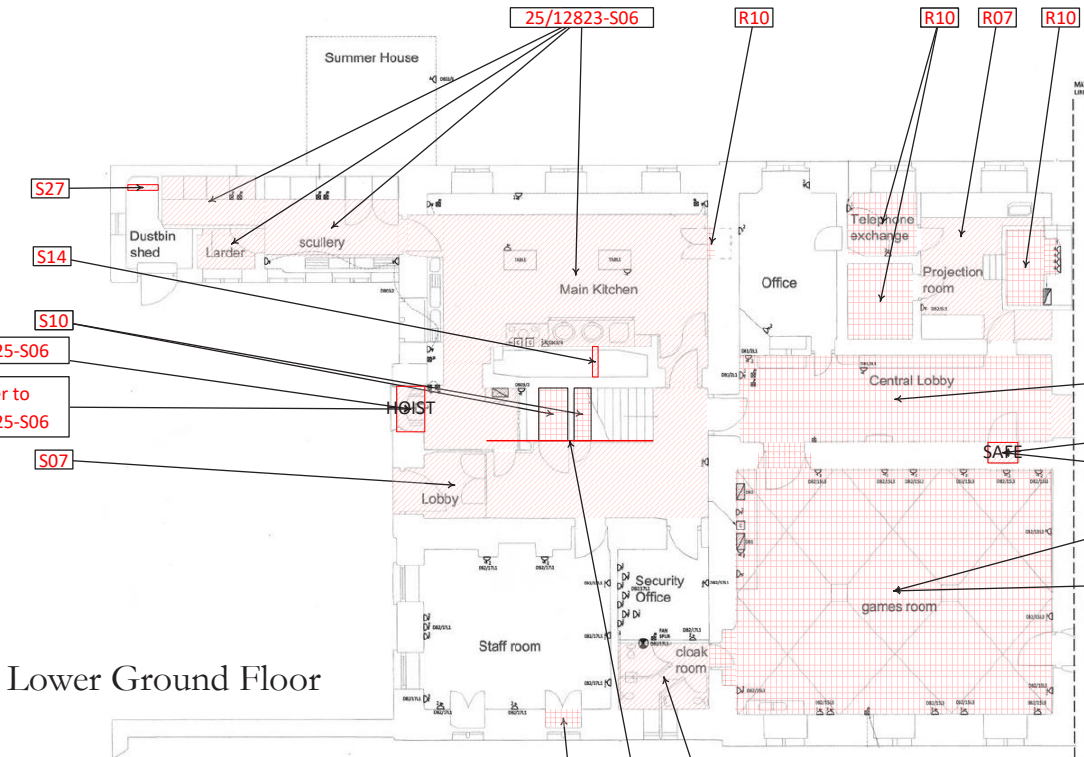
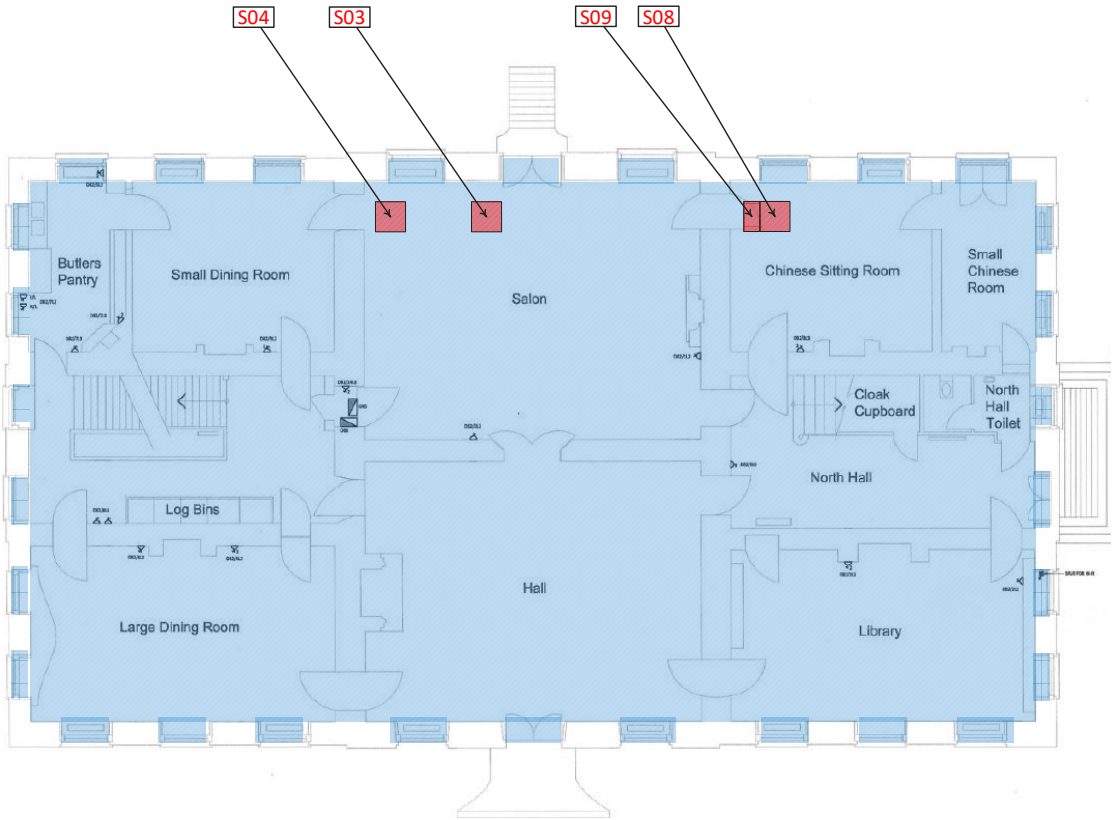


Asbestos containing tile used as packers below floor joists

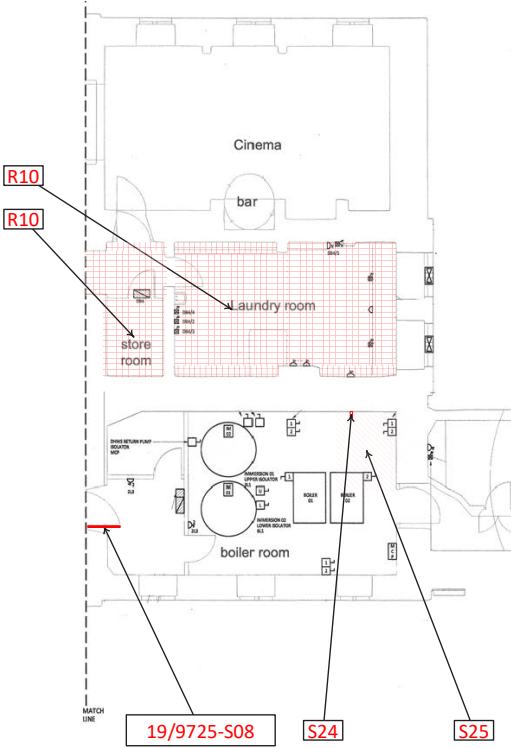


Board dust/debris containing asbestos

Ground Floor



Lower Ground Floor



Drawings from Asbestos Refurbishment and Demolition Survey To Specific Locations Only by Asbestos 2Go Limited 25/12948 & 25 12866

- Confirmed asbestos location
- strongly presumed asbestos location

8. ASBESTOS

Asbestos survey findings

Asbestos was also found within flue vent pipes, lining panels, radiator casings, vinyl flooring, adhesive and around M&E equipment and to the hoist shaft.

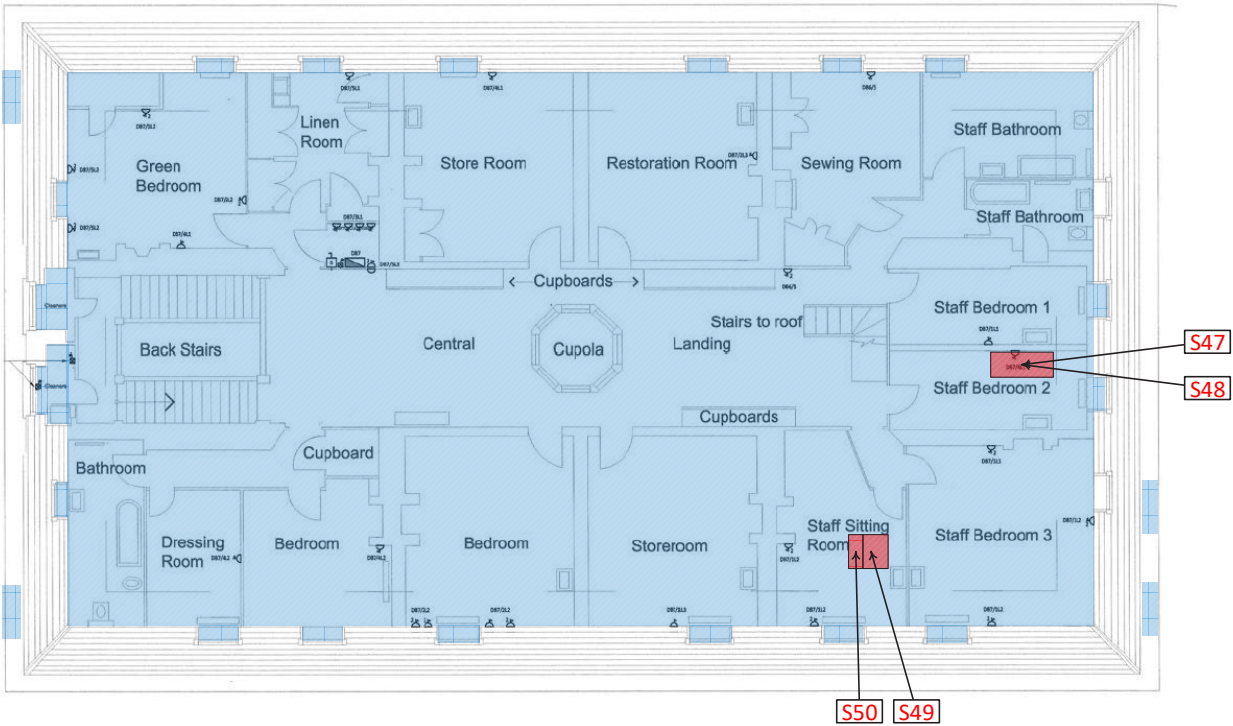


Lining panels containing asbestos used for boxing

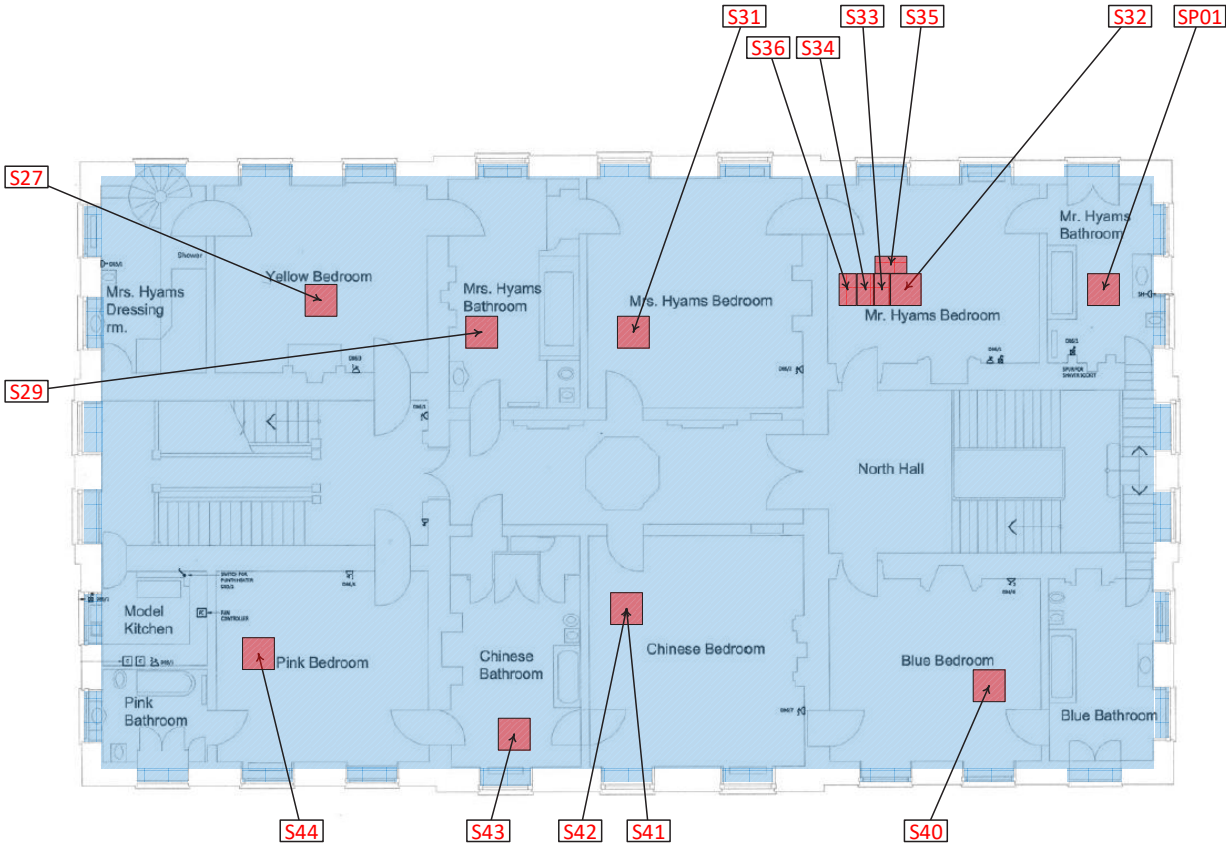


Damaged textile paper to boxing, joist cladding & top of dropped ceiling to Salon

Second Floor



First Floor



Drawings from Asbestos Refurbishment and Demolition Survey To Specific Locations Only by Asbestos 2Go Limited 25/12948

- Confirmed asbestos location
- strongly presumed asbestos location

9. FURTHER OPENING UP AND ASBESTOS REMOVAL
Proposal

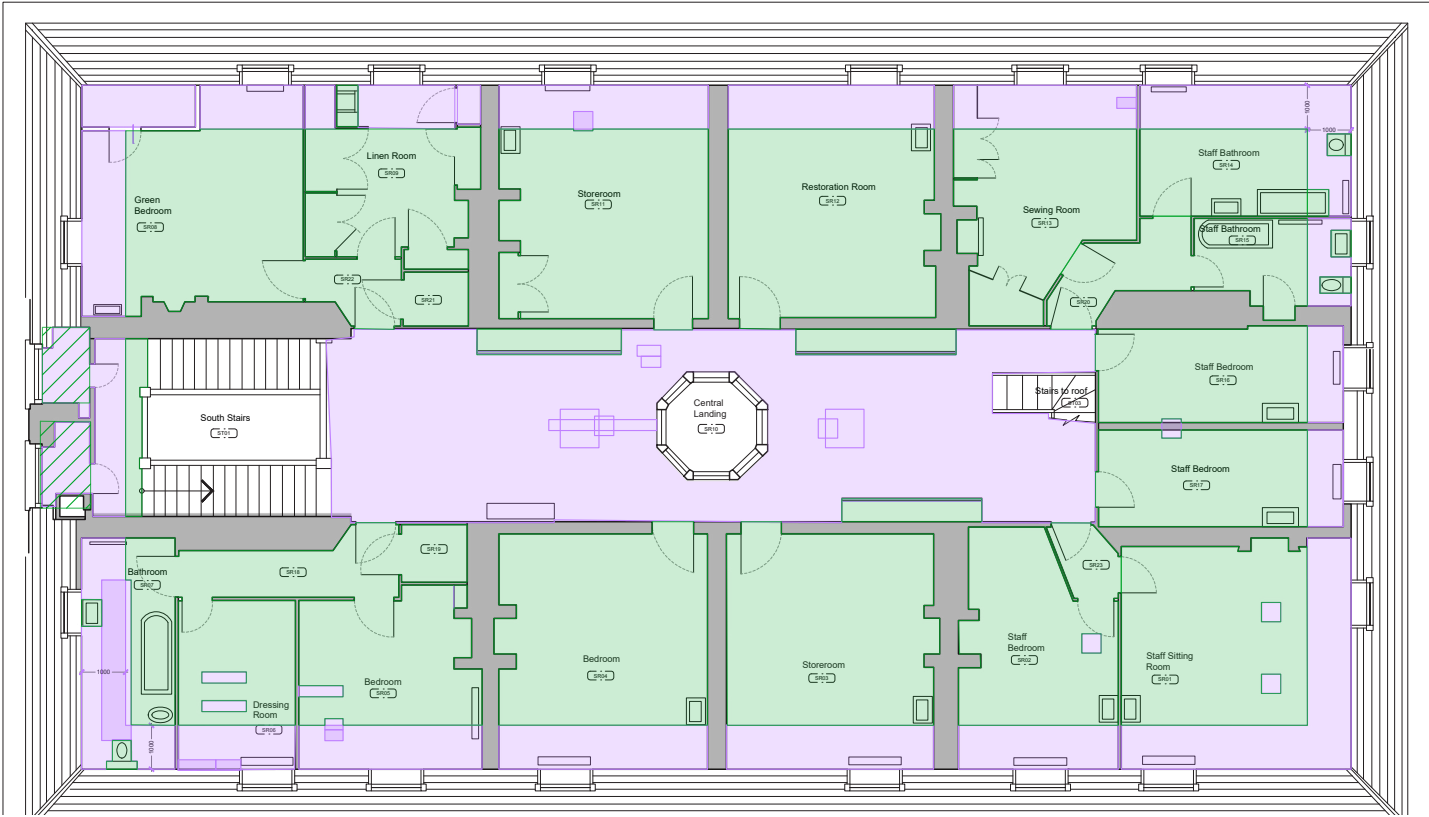
To progress with a repairs specification, including relating to structural elements, further opening up is required. Room conditions survey revealed water damage underneath bathrooms and sinks, and investigation is needed to determine if rot is present in the floors in these areas.

The asbestos survey revealed that all floor voids are strongly presumed to be contaminated with asbestos, which poses a continual health and safety risk. As a duty holder under the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012, the Ramsbury Manor Foundation has a responsibility to actively manage asbestos risk. The limited survey undertaken has highlighted the presence of asbestos but limitations on the scope of the survey has restricted the ability to completely define its extent and effectively manage that risk.

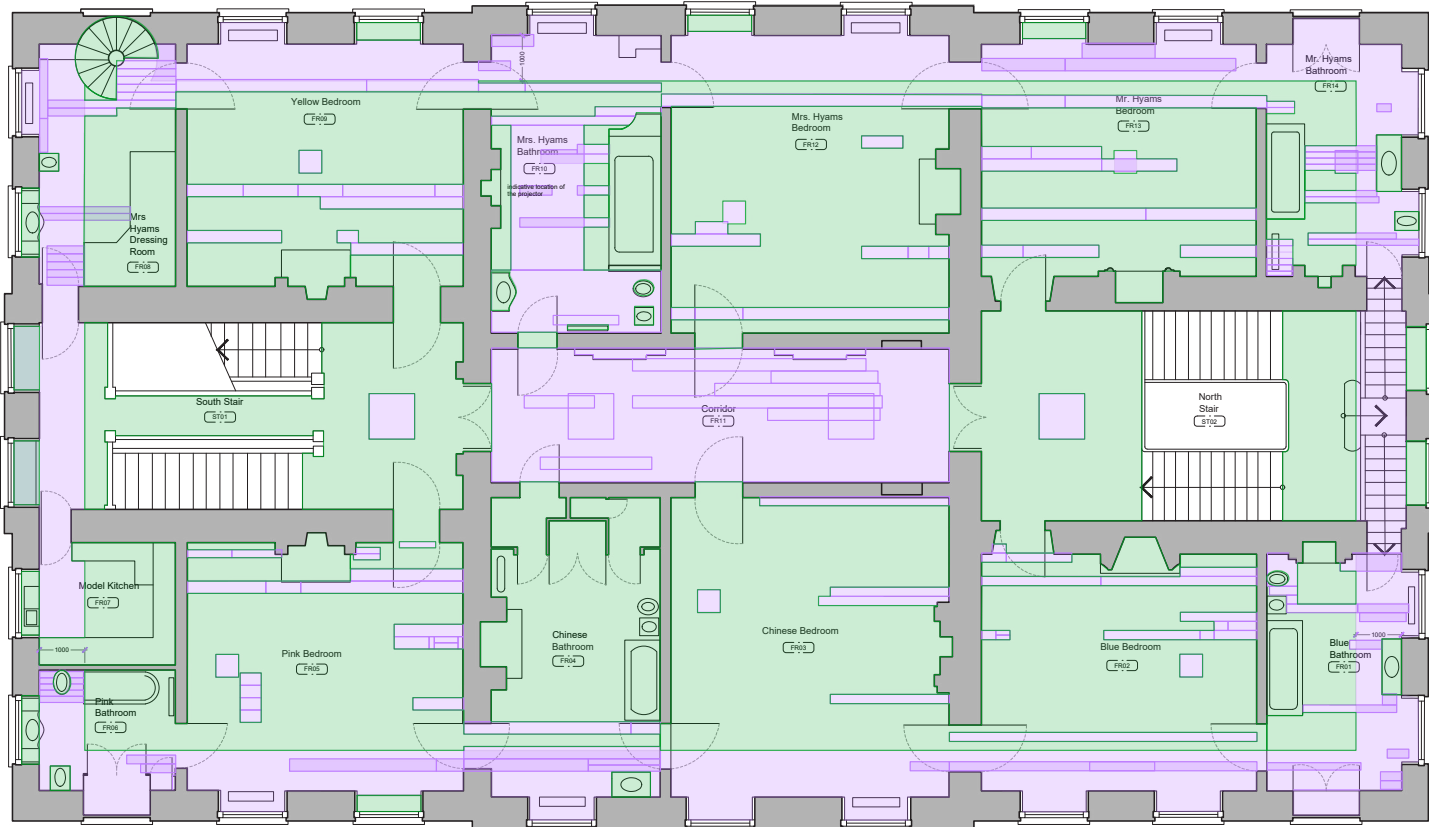
With access required to floor voids to allow inspection and recording, and future access required to update services and carry-out repairs, the full extent of asbestos needs to be known and asbestos needs to be removed. Any asbestos containing material (ACM) will need to be removed before any works within the floor voids can be carried out. Careful lifting up of all floorboards to enable the removal of known asbestos and comprehensive survey and removal of further ACM will be undertaken as identified in the Heritage Statement.

Removal of asbestos from all floor voids will also allow to safely carry out the necessary structural and services investigations ensuring that appropriate repairs are scheduled for the Manor House. It will also facilitate re-servicing and strengthening works in the future to allow the building to be safely opened to the public.

Although requesting permission to lift all floorboards, as part of this application, we will only lift what is required i.e. to manage the asbestos risk (through survey and removal) and to understand the building’s complex structure.



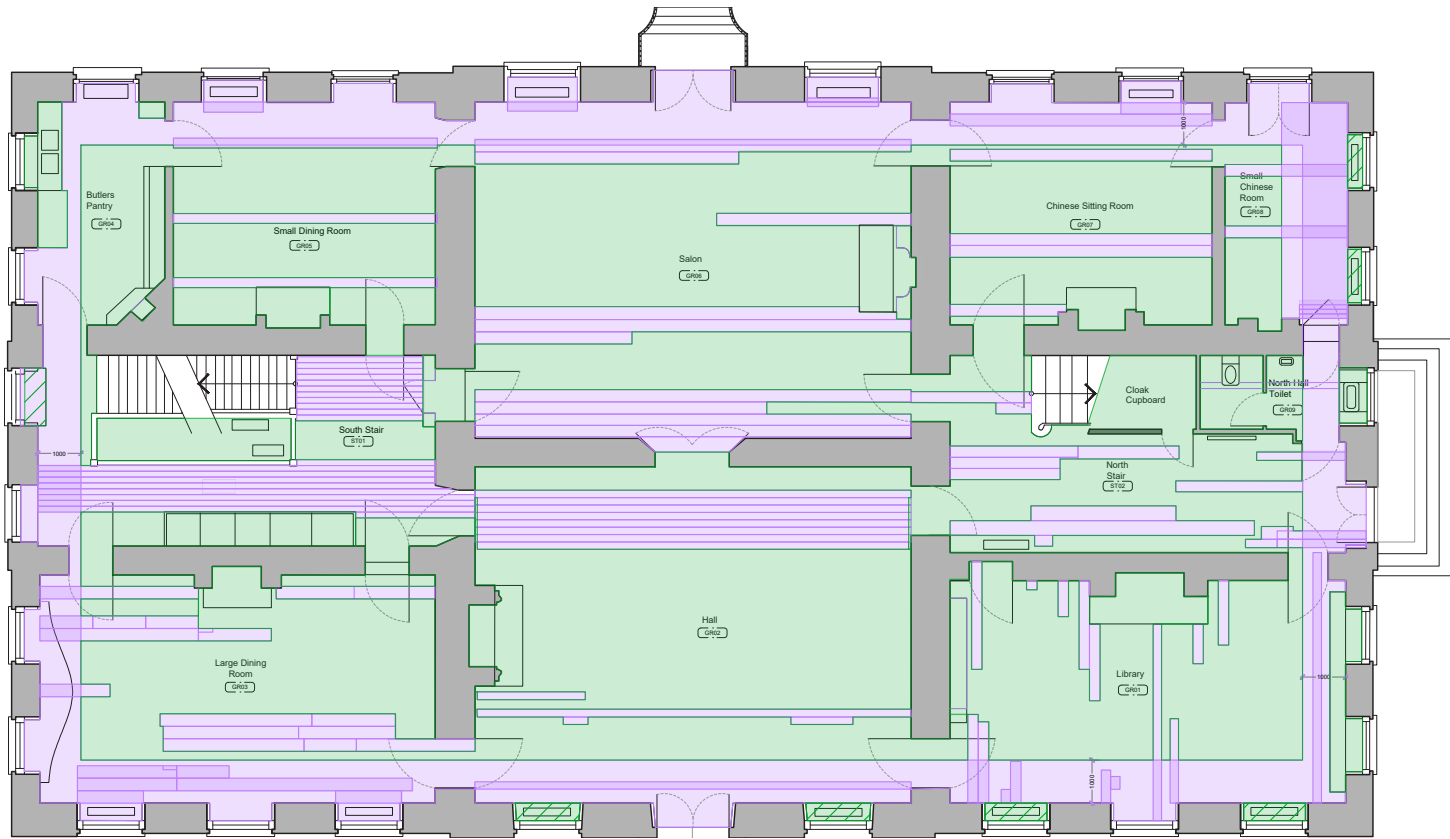
Second Floor



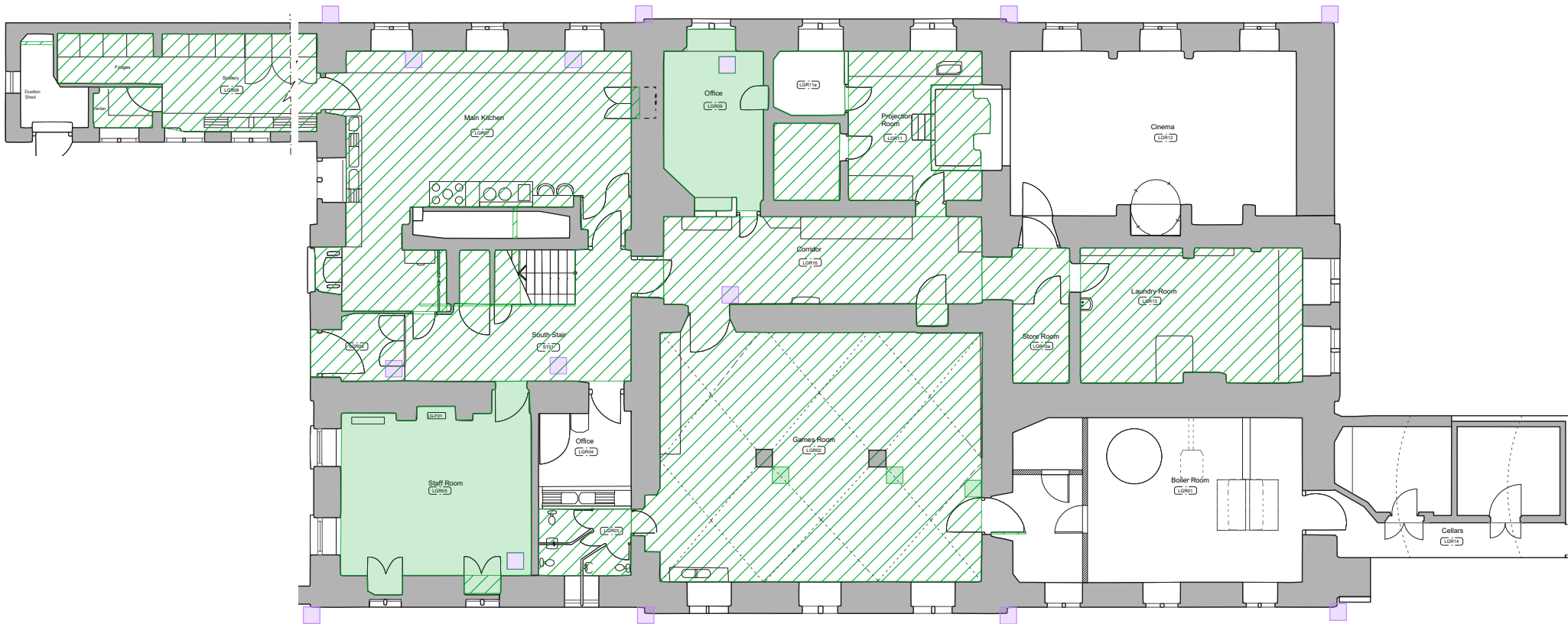
First Floor

-  Floorboards with permission to lift (PL/2024/11184)
-  Requested further opening up and asbestos removal

ACMs found on the Lower Ground Floor are contained within the floor finishes (vinyl floor tiles with asbestos bitumen and sheet vinyl with asbestos paper). No opening-up is required to facilitate this removal; however methods to remove the bitumen will require specialist grinding to the surface of the concrete base. Also, due to the backing paper likely heavily adhered to the concrete base, this will be removed as far as practical and then a latex coating will be applied to encapsulate anything that remains and a note included on the future asbestos management plan.



Ground Floor



Lower Ground Floor

-  Floorboards with permission to lift (PL/2024/11184)
-  Requested further opening up and asbestos removal