

GLYNDWR UNIVERSITY

PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORDING REPORT



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CONTENTS

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	1
Summary	2
Author	3
Site Location	4
1. Introduction	7
2. Historical background	9
2.1. Background	9
2.2. Background maps	10
3. Building Description	12
3.1. Exterior description	12
3.2. Interior Description	38
4. Discussion and Conclusion	143
5. Bibliography	146

CONTENTS

Table of Figures

Figure 1 Glyndwr University location (Contains OS data © Crown copyright, 2023Source OS OpenData)	4
Figure 2 Glyndwr University regional location map (Contains OS data © Crown copyright, 2023 Source OS OpenData)	5
Figure 3 Glyndwr University location in Wrexham	6
Figure 4 Detailed plan of Plas Coch campus	6
Figure 5 Masterplan showing proposals for buildings	11
Figure 6 Demolition Plan	11
Figure 7 Refectory North-eastern elevation from E	12
Figure 8 E Wing North-eastern entrance from NE, refectory on R.	13
Figure 9 Refectory, kitchen main northeaster elevation from NW.....	13
Figure 10 NE elevation Kitchen cold stores	14
Figure 11 NE elevation Kitchen cold stores and storerooms	14
Figure 12 Link entrance between Refectory on L and D Block on R	15
Figure 13 D block NE elevation Rooms D10 and D 12.	15
Figure 14 D block NE elevation R 14 - R16.....	16
Figure 15 NE elevation D Block window and concrete panel detail	16
Figure 16 D block R 24 - R 28 from NW	17
Figure 17 NE elevation D Block R 18 – R 20	17
Figure 18 NE elevation D block R 24 - R 28	18
Figure 19 NE Elevation D block corner detailing	18
Figure 20 NE elevation D Block corner detailing	19
Figure 21 D Block R 30 - R 32 on L, NW elevation and entrance on R	20
Figure 22 D Block R 30 - R 32 on L, NW elevation and entrance on R	20
Figure 23 D Block NW elevation steps to entrance from NE	21
Figure 24 D Block NW elevation steps and ramp to entrance door.....	22
Figure 25 D Block SW elevation ramp to entrance door in NW elevation	22
Figure 26 D Block SW elevation from NW.....	23
Figure 27 D Block SW elevation from W across quadrangle.	23
Figure 28 D Block SW elevation R 27 - R23	24
Figure 29 D Block from SW across quadrangle	24
Figure 30 D Block SW elevation R 21 - R 17.....	25
Figure 31 D Block from central doorway in NE elevation of front (SW) range of main building	25
Figure 32 D Block SW elevation R 15 - R 9	26
Figure 33 Refectory dining room, SW elevation.	26
Figure 34 Refectory dining room SW elevation and patio seating area.	27
Figure 35 Door to link between Refectory (R) and D Block (L)	27
Figure 36 Refectory block and patio from NW, the tall, multipane, stair windows, as shown centre, are a feature of the first phase buildings on the campus	28
Figure 37 SE elevation of Refectory, covered walkway to Students Union Building on right	28
Figure 38 Refectory and D Block Photo viewpoints.	29

Figure 39 Walkway between Refectory (R) and SU building (L).	30
Figure 40 SU NW elevation from NW.	30
Figure 41 View of SU from W	31
Figure 42 SU SW elevation from SW	31
Figure 43 View of SU from S Detail	32
Figure 44 SU SW elevation middle windows detail	32
Figure 45 SU SW elevation R window detail.....	33
Figure 46 SU SE elevation from E.	33
Figure 47 SU SE elevation, centre section with entrance doorway	34
Figure 48 SU SE elevation rainwater goods, downpipe and hopper detail	34
Figure 49 SU NE Elevation view from NE	35
Figure 50 SU NE elevation, former shower block at SE end.....	35
Figure 51 SU NE elevation, southern goods loading bay.	36
Figure 52 SU NE elevation Northern goods loading bay and northern section of elevation.	36
Figure 53 Students Union Building external photo viewpoints	37
Figure 54 Glyndwr University Refectory Room identifier plan	38
Figure 55 Refectory Entrance from main corridor.	39
Figure 56 Main building corridor, view to NE entrance, Refectory main entrance on left.....	39
Figure 57 Main corridor, window opposite Refectory main entrance, detail.	40
Figure 58 Refectory dining room looking SE from NW end	41
Figure 59 Opening between two parts of dining area, stub walls are light wells view SE	41
Figure 60 Refectory dining room NW section View S from N corner	42
Figure 61 Refectory restaurant, NW section roof beam details, view SE	42
Figure 62 Refectory restaurant, NW section skylight details view SE.	43
Figure 63 Refectory SE section rooflight detail from NW.	43
Figure 64 Skylight end beam detail, view SE.	44
Figure 65 Ceiling beam end details, view SE	44
Figure 66 Refectory restaurant, NW area, NE elevation	45
Figure 67 Refectory restaurant, NW area, NE elevation	45
Figure 68 Refectory restaurant, NW area, SW elevation	46
Figure 69 Restaurant NW area SW elevation window detail.	46
Figure 70 Restaurant, SW stub divide between SE and NW sections	47
Figure 71 NE stub dividing areas of restaurant, window in NW elevation.	47
Figure 72 Refectory SE section of dining room from NW.	48
Figure 73 SW stub dividing areas of restaurant, window in SE elevation	48
Figure 74 Refectory, servery from W	49
Figure 75 Refectory SE elevation with main entrance.....	49
Figure 76 Main entrance doors, detail	50
Figure 77 Servery area from S	50
Figure 78 Northern area of servery from S.....	51
Figure 79 View of servery from SE.....	51
Figure 80 View of servery from northern end, view to SE.	52
Figure 81 Restaurant, SE elevation from SE.	52
Figure 82 Restaurant windows on SW elevation of SE section. Note window on R, on stub that divides parts of restaurant.	53

Figure 83 Window and emergency exit doors on SW elevation, detail	53
Figure 84 Restaurant SE section, ceiling with grooved decorative details in tiles, from SE.....	54
Figure 85 Restaurant SE section ceiling with grooved decorative detailing, from NW.....	54
Figure 86 Restaurant SE section light fiĸ ings.....	55
Figure 87 Restaurant SE section light fiĸ ing detail.	55
Figure 88 Restaurant SE section light fiĸ ing detail.	56
Figure 89 Restaurant SE section light fiĸ ing detail.	56
Figure 90 View NE from NW Restaurant section through wash up to service corridor.	57
Figure 91 NW elevation of wash up	57
Figure 92 Wash up, light, and former skylight or vent.	58
Figure 93 Wash up SW elevation (with permission of staff member)	58
Figure 94 Door from NW section of restaurant to Service Corrido	59
Figure 95 Service Corridor view from kitchen to SE door and link to D Block	59
Figure 96 Service corridor NW end ceiling detail view to SE	60
Figure 97 Service corridor NW end ceiling detail view to NW	60
Figure 98 Kitchen, view up kitchen passage, cooking and preparation on L, prep and hatch to servery on R	61
Figure 99 View E across Kitchen (with permission of staff)	61
Figure 100 Kitchen NE elevation windows (see Fig. 34 for exterior)	62
Figure 101 Kitchen SE storage area, store rooms on L.	62
Figure 102 Kitchen Store in E corner.	63
Figure 103 Kitchen, view N across kitchen to NE elevation.	63
Figure 104 Kitchen SE elevation window detail, alternate top panes have extractor fans.	64
Figure 105 Kitchen SW elevation. Hatch to Servery area	64
Figure 106 Kitchen, SW elevation Door to north end of servery area	65
Figure 107 Kitchen SW elevation, door to wash up room.....	65
Figure 108 Kitchen service corridor, view to NW, cold store door on R	66
Figure 109 Kitchen service corridor, store rooms on NE side, original signage for Crockery store ...	66
Figure 110 Service corridor, store room on NE side.....	67
Figure 111 Service Corridor store room, suspended ceiling and light fiĸ ings detail.	67
Figure 112 Service corridor, Managers office, N end of corridor, NE elevation	68
Figure 113 Service corridor, NE side Manager's office, N end of NE side of corridor, ceiling detail....	68
Figure 114 Refectory Interior Photo viewpoints	69
Figure 115 D Block R9 electrical distribution board in store room.	70
Figure 116 D Block R10 Property manager's office NE elevation (with permission of staff member). 71	
Figure 117 D Block R10 Property manager's office SW elevation.....	71
Figure 118 D Block R 11 View SW from corridor doorway into entry room.	72
Figure 119 D Block R 11 Entry room, view SE from main room doorway	73
Figure 120 D Block R 11 View W across main room from doorway in E corner	73
Figure 121 D block R11 SE elevation	74
Figure 122 D block R11 view to E from W corner.	74
Figure 123 R 11 SW elevation window detail.	75
Figure 124 R 11 SW elevation window detail	75
Figure 125 R 11 SW elevation wall top windows (covered) and ceiling with light fiĸ ing detail.....	76
Figure 126 D block Room 12 NE elevation.	76

Figure 127 R 12 View to S from N corner	77
Figure 128 D Block R 12 Typical D block door	77
Figure 129 R 12 NW elevation Door to R 14	78
Figure 130 R 13 View SW from doorway	78
Figure 131 R 13 SW elevation window. Strip window panes at top is a regular design feature	79
Figure 132 R 13 Oblique view down SE elevation	79
Figure 133 R 13 NE elevation	80
Figure 134 D Block R 14 view from doorway from R 12 in SE elevation. Door to R 16a in centre of NW elevation	81
Figure 135 R 14 from NW, Door to R 12 in centre of SE elevation	81
Figure 136 R 14 View from N corner, door to main corridor on R	82
Figure 137 R 14 view along NE elevation from NW	82
Figure 138 R 14 NE elevation window detail	83
Figure 139 R 14 Viewed from E corner.	83
Figure 140 R 14 SW elevation, door to corridor	84
Figure 141 R 16a View from NE	84
Figure 142 R 16a View to NE.....	85
Figure 143 R 16 sign	85
Figure 144 R 16NE elevation with door to R 16b.	86
Figure 145 R 16b NE elevation	86
Figure 146 R 16c Ladies WCs NE elevation.....	87
Figure 147 D block R 16C View to SW	87
Figure 148 R 18 view NE from door.....	88
Figure 149 R 18 View NW	88
Figure 150 D Block, R 18 Translucent tiles for rooflight in WCs	89
Figure 151 D block Exit at mid point of NE elevation (see Fig. 17 above)	89
Figure 152 Corridor NE elevation outside R 26, recess in wall.	90
Figure 153 Small sample of equipment and materials found in stores and corners of offices.	90
Figure 154 Typical cupboard debris	91
Figure 155 R 30 SW elevation.....	91
Figure 156 D block View SE down main corridor.	92
Figure 157 D block NW end of main corridor, R 32 on R, R29 on L.	92
Figure 158 R 29 Door and glass panels in wall looking into corridor, from NE	93
Figure 159 R 29 Door and glass panels in wall looking into corridor, from E.....	93
Figure 160 R 29 NE elevation Painted over glass panels	94
Figure 161 R 31 NW elevation	94
Figure 162 R33 View NW	95
Figure 163 R 33View SE	95
Figure 164 R33 SW elevation window.	96
Figure 165 R 33 Translucent ceiling tiles for natural light from roof light.	97
Figure 166 R 27 View S from N corner.....	97
Figure 167 R 27 SW elevation.....	98
Figure 168 R 27 View from E towards W corner.....	98
Figure 169 R 27 Door from corridor, sign showing changing circulation patterns.	99
Figure 170 R 23 'No Unauthorised Access' sign	99

Figure 171 R 21 NW elevation with projector and screen.	100
Figure 172 R 21 View from S corner looking N.	100
Figure 173 R 21 NE elevation	101
Figure 174 R21 SE elevation.	101
Figure 175 R21 SW elevation.....	102
Figure 176 R 17 SW elevation.	102
Figure 177 R 17 SW elevation.	103
Figure 178 R 15a View to SW.....	103
Figure 179 R 15a View to SW.....	104
Figure 180 R 15a SW elevation window detail, oblique view, note covered horizontal strip window above main window	104
Figure 181 R 15a SW elevation window detail, note covered horizontal strip window above main window	105
Figure 182 Vertical recess SW side of corridor, S end of exterior of R 15	105
Figure 183 D block photo viewpoints.	106
Figure 184 Glyndwr Students Union plan (room numbered for survey as functions were not always those marked)	107
Figure 185 Students Union. Original gymnasium and Music Dept plans (copied from HIA)	107
Figure 186 U R1 Security rest room NW elevation (originally w.cs.)	108
Figure 187 SU R1 Skylight	108
Figure 188 SU R1 Over-painted tiles on wall.	109
Figure 189 SU R2 Security office SE elevation.	109
Figure 190 SU R2 SE elevation.	110
Figure 191 SU R2 SW elevation window (over-painted tiled wall surround)	110
Figure 192 SU Main corridor View SE from NW end	111
Figure 193 SU Reception and shop (originally deputy head's office) from door (view SW)	111
Figure 194 SU Reception and shop SW elevation window	112
Figure 195 Passage outside Rooms 4, 5 & 6, view to SE	112
Figure 196 Cleaner's stores Rs 4	113
Figure 197 Roof light in passage	113
Figure 198 SU R7 SU Officers' room NE elevation.....	114
Figure 199 SU R7 SU Officers' room view to S from N corner	114
Figure 200 SU R7 SU Officers' room SE elevation	115
Figure 201 SU R7 SU Officers' room SW elevation	115
Figure 202 SU R7 SU Officers' room NW elevation, door leads to passage outside Rs 4-6.	116
Figure 203 Passage between R7 and R3 from R7 (view to NW).	116
Figure 204 SU R7 Rooflight.	117
Figure 205 SU Access passageway to R8 - R11 (door to R11 at far end) View SE.....	117
Figure 206 SU R11 View to W from E corner	118
Figure 207 SU R11 NE elevation	118
Figure 208 SU R11 SW elevation	119
Figure 209 SU R10 SW elevation	119
Figure 210 SU R9 NE elevation	120
Figure 211 SU Rooms typical door furniture detail with closer, copper alloy door knob, mortice lock keyhole and modern lock	120

Figure 212 SU R9 SW Elevation	121
Figure 213 Passage, original door to R7	121
Figure 214 SU South east end of main corridor	122
Figure 215 R14 View NE from main corridor	122
Figure 216 SU R15 NE elevation	123
Figure 217 R13 Office accommodation SW elevation.	123
Figure 218 SU R13 Office accommodation from doorway at NE corner.	124
Figure 219 SU R15 View SW. Door to bar R28 on L.	124
Figure 220 View NW to R17 doorway from R15.	125
Figure 221 SU R16 View to S from N corner. Doorway to R 15 to L of view.	125
Figure 222 SU R16 View W from doorway to R15 in NE corner	126
Figure 223 SU R16 Windows in NE elevation	126
Figure 224 SU R16 Rooflight.	127
Figure 225 SU R17 View NW through doorway	127
Figure 226 SU R17 View to SW from NE end	128
Figure 227 SU R17 View to NE from SW end	128
Figure 228 SU R17 Central partition with doorways at both ends	129
Figure 229 SU R17 former shower area NW of partition, from NE	129
Figure 230 R17 skylight.	130
Figure 231 SU R18 Beer store from SW.	130
Figure 232 SU R18 Beer store from NE	131
Figure 233 SE corridor to offices (R20 - R26). View NE from main corridor.....	131
Figure 234 SU R24 NE elevation from SE.....	132
Figure 235 SU R24 View NW from SE end of room.	132
Figure 236 SU R24 Rooflight.	133
Figure 237 SU R26 from NW	133
Figure 238 SU R23 partitioned from SE corner of R22	134
Figure 239 SU R22 Rooflight.	134
Figure 240 SU R21 View to SE elevation.	135
Figure 241 SU R21 view to NW.	135
Figure 242 Window ledge detail, composite material	136
Figure 243 SU R 28 Former gymnasium, now SU bar, from NW	136
Figure 244 SU R28 NE elevation from S.	137
Figure 245 R28 NE elevation windows	137
Figure 246 SU R28 NE elevation, southern end High level window above emergency exit.	138
Figure 247 SU R28 NE elevation, southern end Emergency exit, opens into R27 with exit to exterior.	138
Figure 248 SU R28 View across room from E corner	139
Figure 249 SU R 28 View into back of Bar at NW end of room	139
Figure 250 Students Union photo viewpoints	140
Figure 251 Engineering Building NE of D block (Fig. 6 Building 1) from SW	140
Figure 252 Engineering Building Wall and roof girder details.	141
Figure 253 Building 3 on Fig.6 Medical Centre NW elevation	141
Figure 254 Medical Centre SE elevation.	142
Figure 255 Building 10 in quadrangle, Refectory behind, D block on L	142

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Summary

Glyndwr University in Wrexham is one of the “new” universities created during the 1990s. The main Plas Coch campus is located on the northwestern side of the town of Wrexham with the campus at NGR 332 351. The campus is based on the buildings of the Denbighshire Technical College Institute, built in 1953 to provide further education facilities for Northeast Wales. That institution had evolved from the original Wrexham School of Science and Art, founded in 1887 through the Denbighshire Technical College which was originally housed in the Regent Street Campus of what is now Glyndwr University, where it took on the 19th century buildings vacated when the Infirmary moved to its new premises on Rhosddu Road. Demand for further education led to plans for expansion which were put “on hold” by the Second World War and re-activated in the 1950s. with a 30-acre site on the Mold Road designated as the site for the new buildings. The main buildings of the campus were constructed to the designs of Saxon, Smith and Partners of Chester and the design was awarded a bronze medal in the Liverpool Architectural Society’s area in 1956. They were Listed for their architectural interest as an example of an “excellent, little altered example of the 1950s” that was “considered outstanding at the time”, with several other unlisted buildings for a range of purposes making up the remainder of the campus. The buildings are arranged around a central rectangular courtyard with the main frontage facing south-west onto the Mold Road. The university is planning on refurbishing parts of the building and demolishing others, including the listed kitchen and students’ union buildings. Planning Permission has been granted, with a condition requiring a photographic record to current national standard be made of the listed parts of the buildings due to be demolished to create a record of the buildings in their last phase of use.

Mae Prifysgol Glyndŵr yn Wrecsam yn un o'r prifysgolion “newydd” a grëwyd yn ystod y 1990au. Mae prif gampws Plas Coch ar ochr ogledd-orllewinol tref Wrecsam, ar ochr NGR 332 351. Mae'r campws wedi'i leoli ar adeiladau Sefydliad Coleg Technegol Sir Ddinbych, a adeiladwyd yn 1953 i ddarparu cyfleusterau addysg bellach ar gyfer Gogledd-ddwyrain Cymru. Roeddy sefydliad hwnnw wedi esblygu o Ysgol Wyddoniaeth a Chelf Wrecsam wreiddiol, a sefydlwyd ym 1887 trwy Goleg Technegol Sir Ddinbych a oedd yn gartref yn wreiddiol ar Gampws Stryt y Rhaglaw, yr hyn sydd bellach yn Brifysgol Glyndŵr, lle cymerodd adeiladau o'r 19eg ganrif a oedd yn wag pan oedd y Clafdy, wedi symud i'w adeilad newydd ar Ffordd Rhosddu. Arweiniodd y galw am addysg bellach at gynlluniau ehangu a gafodd eu gohirio gan yr Ail Ryfel Byd a'u hail-ysgogi yn y 1950au. gyda safle 30 erw ar Ffordd yr Wyddgrug wedi ei ddynodi fel safle ar gyfer yr adeiladau newydd. Adeiladwyd prif adeiladau'r campws i ddyluniadau Saxon, Smith a Partners of Chester a dyfarnwyd medal efydd i'r cynllun yn ardal Cymdeithas Bensaernïol Lerpwl ym 1956. Cawsant eu rhestru oherwydd eu diddordeb pensaernïol fel enghraifft o “ardderchog, enghraifft o'r 1950au wedi'i newid fawr ddim” a oedd “yn cael ei hystyried yn eithriadol ar y pryd”, gyda nifer o adeiladau anrhestredig eraill at ystod o ddibenion yn ffurfio gweddill y campws. Mae'r adeiladau wedi'u trefnu o amgylch cwrt hirsgwar canolog gyda'r prif ffryntiad yn wynebu'r de-orllewin i Ffordd yr Wyddgrug. Mae'r brifysgol yn bwriadu adnewyddu rhannau o'r adeilad a dymchwel eraill, gan gynnwys y gegin restredig ac adeiladau undeb y myfyrwyr. Caniatwyd Caniatâd Cynllunio, gydag amod yn mynnu bod cofnod ffotograffig i safon genedlaethol gyfredol yn cael ei wneud o'r rhannau rhestredig o'r adeiladau sydd i'w dymchwel i greu cofnod o'r adeiladau yn eu cyfnod olaf o ddefnydd.

Author

This Building Record was prepared by Peter McCrone of McCrone Archaeology, Consultancy and Contracting Services. The author is a Member of the Chartered Institute for Archaeology (MCIfA) and holds, amongst other qualifications, a Postgraduate Diploma in Buildings and Heritage Conservation. The author has many years of experience of the historic environment of Great Britain having worked widely in England and Wales and has a long- standing interest in buildings, their development and technology.

Site Location

The Plas Coch campus of the Glyndwr University sits in the northwestern suburbs of the town of Wrexham. The site is bounded by the A541, the Mold Road on the southern side, the B5101 Plas Coch Road on the western side, sports pitches on the northern side and the Wrexham Football Club and Crispin Lane on the eastern side. The buildings which are the subject of this record are located in the southern part of the campus and are the rear wing of the main building of the university and the Students Union building (formerly a gymnasium and sports centre) attached to southeastern corner of the main block by a covered walkway (Figures 1 – 4).



Figure 1 Glyndwr University location (Contains OS data © Crown copyright, 2023Source OS OpenData)

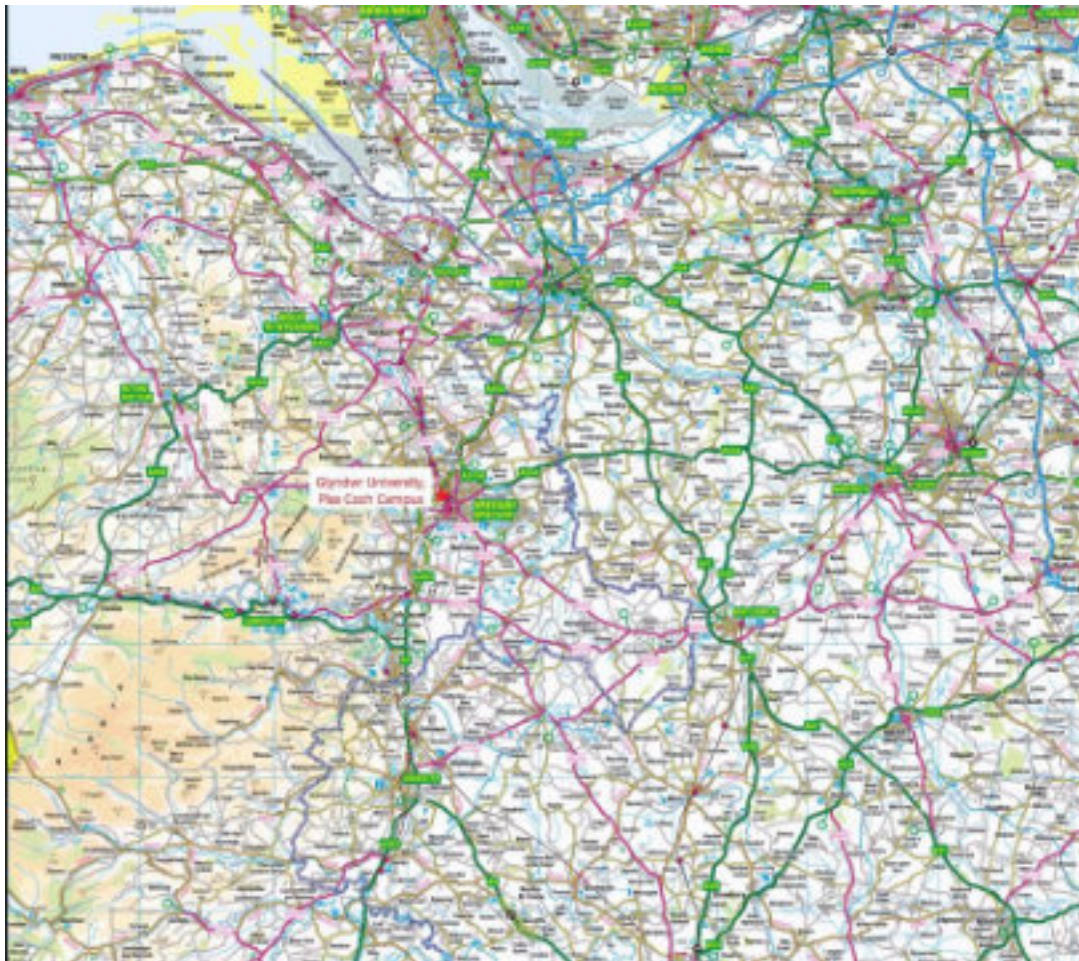


Figure 2 Glyndwr University regional location map (Contains OS data © Crown copyright, 2023 Source OS OpenData)

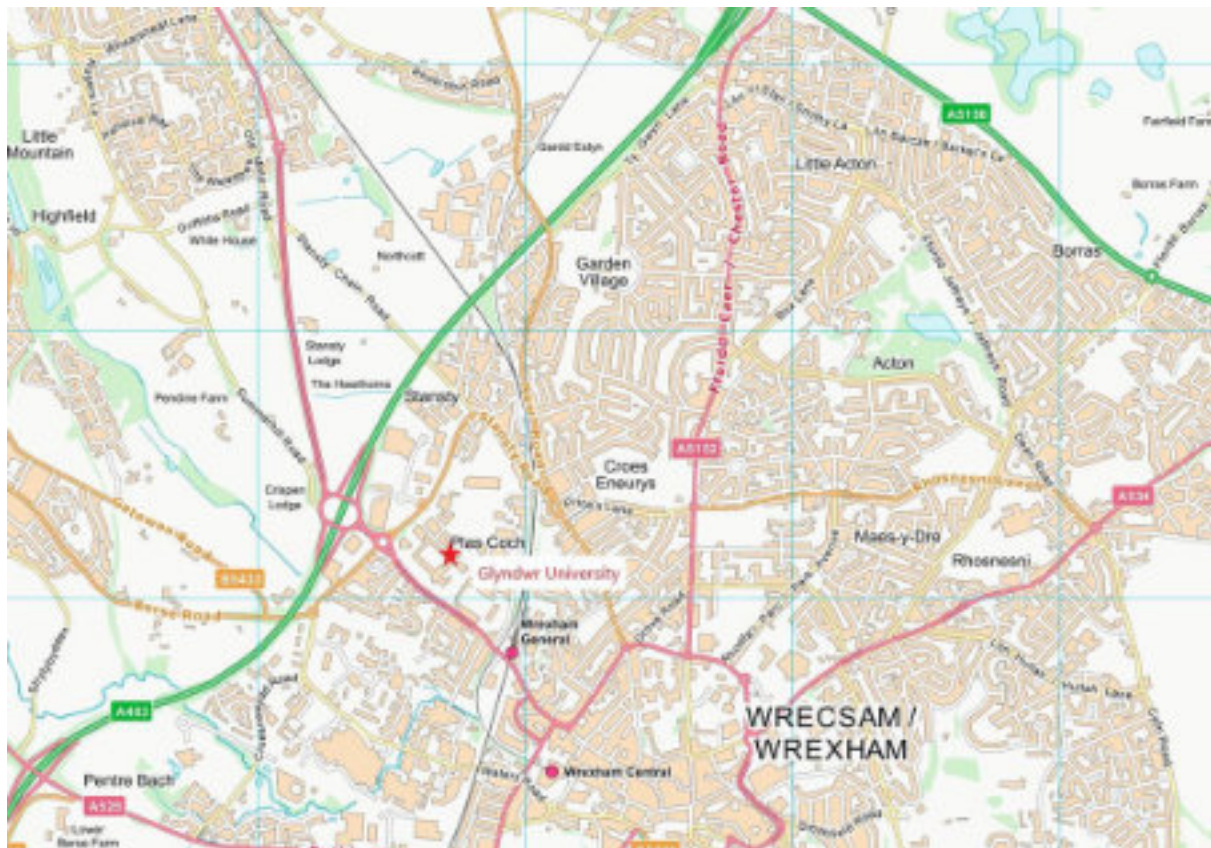


Figure 3 Glyndwr University location in Wrexham



Figure 4 Detailed plan of Plas Coch campus

1. Introduction

1.1. CIRCUMSTANCES OF PROJECT

1.1.1. The local planning authority (LPA) is Wrexham County Borough Council. Glyndwr University is proposing large scale redevelopment and expansion of facilities on the Plas Coch campus. As some of the buildings are Listed, or are curtilage Listed Buildings (not listed in their own right but attached to Listed Buildings, the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) who provide archaeological advice to the LPA has advised that a photographic record should be made of the Listed Buildings which are proposed for demolition to enable the development. Two applications were submitted, for planning permission and Listed Building Consent for the proposals, Application nos. P/2018/0666 and P/2028/0667. Glyndwr University, Mold Road, Wrexham, LL11 2AW. Demolition of student union, refectory and other redundant buildings, and redevelopment of academic campus to provide new learning gateway building, engineering building, new sports hall extension, redevelopment of multi-use games area.

1.1.2. These were granted on 31st July 2019, Reference WRR P/2018/0666 and 0667 with the following as one of the conditions:

“14. No works shall commence until an appropriate photographic survey, equivalent to an English Heritage Level 1 study, of the existing building/s has been carried out in accordance with details to be submitted to, and approved by, the Local Planning Authority. The resulting digital photographs should be forwarded on a CD to the Local Planning Authority and the Development Control Archaeologist, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust, 41 Broad Street, Welshpool, Powys, SY21 7RR. Email: markwalters@cpat.otg.uk Tel: 01938 553670. After approval by the Local Planning Authority, a copy of the photographs should also be sent to the Historic Environment Record Officer, Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust for inclusion in the regional Historic Environment Record.”

1.2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.2.1. The aim of the project was to create a photographic record of the relevant buildings to the equivalent of an Historic England Photographic Record as outlined in *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (HE, 2016) with the objective of fulfilling the requirements of the planning conditions placed on the permission for the proposed development.

1.3. METHODOLOGY

1.3.1. The buildings were photographed using a Nikon 3300 DSLR camera with a Nikor 18-55 mm lens. Selected photos which illustrated general views and details of the architecture of the buildings along with details of any significant fixtures and fittings, were edited using Microsoft Photos software and are reproduced as .jpegs. A copy of

the entire photographic archive with the original high definition .nef images (Nikon version of .raw) with copies saved as .tiffs will be submitted to the HER.

2. Historical background

2.1. BACKGROUND

2.1.1. The buildings are mid-20th century with later alterations and conversions of some areas. The University archives possess significant collection of original plans, drawings and photographs and the approved WSI did not include a significant historical research element.

2.1.2. The written description of the Listed Buildings from CADW is:

History

Built as the Denbighshire Technical Collage in 1950-53, to designs of Saxon, Smith and Partners of Chester, with R R Jennings and Partners as consulting engineers and Holland, Hanner and Cubitt as contractors. In 1956, the architects were awarded the RIBA architectural bronze medal in the Liverpool Architectural Society's area for this building. At the time, the building was said to include many new features in its design and engineering, and particular attention was drawn to its planning, heating, lighting and acoustics.

Exterior

Welsh sand-faced brick with artificial stone dressings over concrete frame with steel frame to assembly hall, gymnasium, workshops and tower; flat (concrete) and low pitched roofs. The design set out to clearly separate and articulate different areas especially with a view to noise limitation, and so divided administrative and teaching areas, and provided accommodation for the building department, and the gymnasium and music department in separate blocks. The building encloses 3 sides of a courtyard, with the separate blocks located outside the main area. The entrance is towards the east of the building, in a long advanced 2-storyed wing of rusticated brickwork. Alongside but of less height, to the SE is the projecting block of the main lecture theatre and former exhibition hall. This block has a shallow curve to its southern elevation, which is decorated with Portland stone low relief panels representing the crafts, by Darsie Rawlins. Running at right angles to the east of the entrance range (and set back from the lecture theatre wing) is the William Aston Hall (a 5-window range) with lower ancillary blocks (green room, dressing rooms etc) to the east; low reliefs (also by Darsie Rawlins) on its blind eastern elevation represent music and the dramatic arts. Rear range continuing the line of the entrance hall originally housed student common rooms with offices and library to first floor. Internal layout modified c1992, when the single storyed rear range was also raised in height in similar style (the original design had allowed for such an addition). Refectory and canteen in short wing running west of this range. Gymnasium and music department off-set to NE, linked to the main building by a covered way. Main teaching block in long SW wing, with rooms opening off a central corridor on each floor, terminating in clock tower off-set over subsidiary entrance and stair hall. Running north of this is the science wing, with single storeyed laboratory block projecting to west. Construction department housed in separate block to NW beyond. The building is characterised by continuous bands of fenestration on each floor, with simple projecting concrete

cornices, thrown forward as canopies over entrances, and with glass-brick lights to stairs, and as side and overlights to side and rear entrances.

Interior

Decorative finishes are largely confined to the entrance hall, which has tiled walls with stylised dragons, leeks and abstract representations of Welsh countryside, designed by Peggy Angus. William Aston Hall retains its original fittings with sloping floor and adjustable seating, and walls panelled in European ash and African walnut, to give resonance. Elsewhere, the building originally relied on the use of colour as decoration. Main corridors in teaching areas have built-in lockers, provided as part of the original design, as were the suspended ceilings concealing service ducts, and the use of acoustic tiles. Other internal details (the iron staircase balustrades, for example), are characteristic of their period.

Reason for Designation

The building represents a landmark both in the provision of technical education in Wrexham (the college was built to serve the wider N-Wales region) and in design for education, providing a highly functional plan, articulated for a precise use, together with innovative services. It is an excellent, little-altered example of the architecture of the early 1950's, and was considered outstanding at the time.

- 2.1.3. The historical background to the site and the development of the campus is set out in the Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd, dated 2018.

2.2. BACKGROUND MAPS

- 2.2.1. A Masterplan document for the proposed development of the campus has been produced and Figure 5 shows the proposals for the buildings (Figure 5). Figure 6 is the demolition plan as of autumn 2022 (Figure 6). The buildings recorded for this project are designated as on the Masterplan Map (Fig 5) as D Block, the Students Union, and the Refectory which occupies the site labelled as “Proposed Learning Gateway Building” at the northeastern end of the east wing of the main building.



Figure 5 Masterplan showing proposals for buildings (courtesy Day Architectural Ltd.)

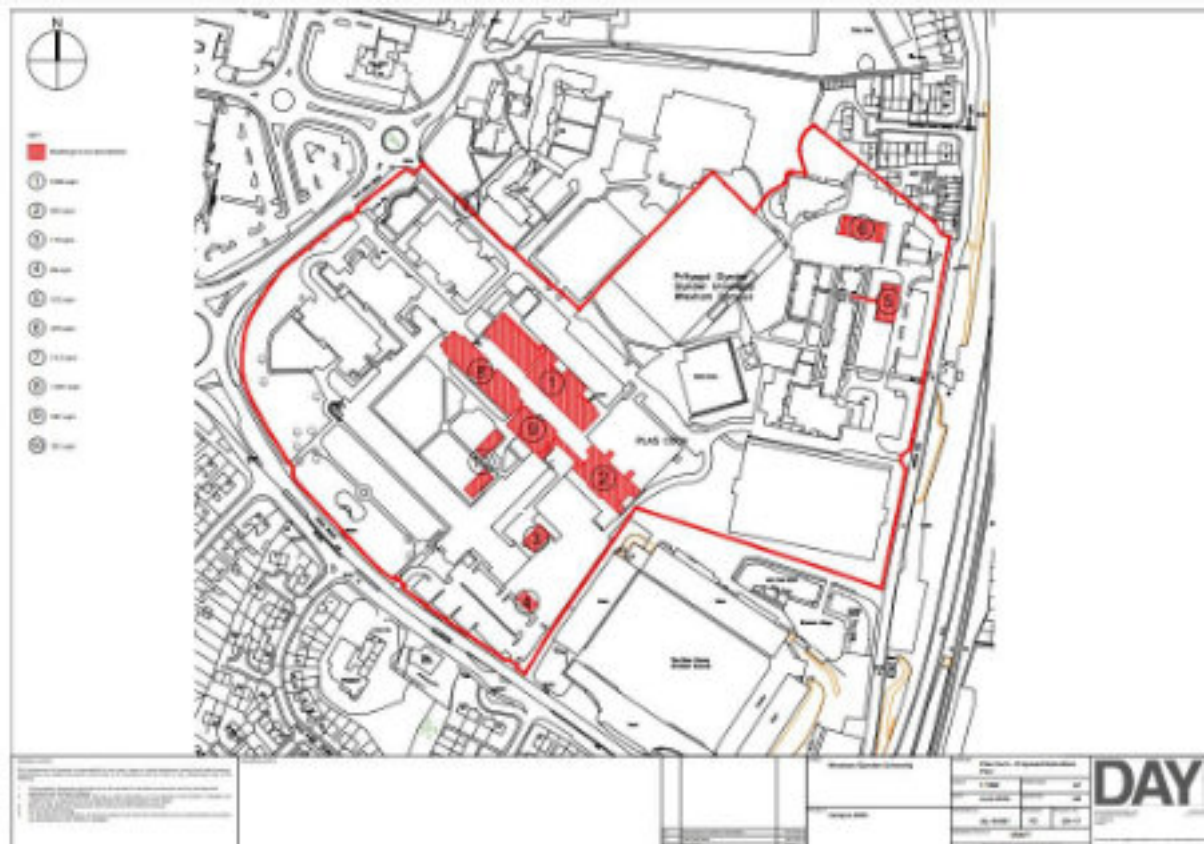


Figure 6 Demolition Plan (courtesy Day Architectural Ltd.)

3. Building Description

3.1. EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION

3.1.1. The long axis of D Block and the Refectory runs South East to North West. For the purposes of the report the main elevations are the frontages on the North East and South West with the narrow ends of the block being at the NW and at the SE (where D Block joins the Refectory). The abbreviations N, S, E and W will be used for the principal points, L and R for Left and Right as when facing the features. R XX is also used for Room numbers as indicated on plans supplied by the Properties Management Department. Photo viewpoints are based on the Demolition Plan Maps, where D Block is Building 8 and the Refectory, Building 9 (See Figure 38 Below). The Students Union Building is Building 2 (See Figure 53)

3.1.2. Refectory and D Block, Northern elevation (see Fig. XX for Room Numbers)



Figure 7 Refectory North-eastern elevation from E.



Figure 8 E Wing North-eastern entrance from NE, refectory on R.



Figure 9 Refectory, kitchen main northeaster elevation from NW.



Figure 10 NE elevation Kitchen cold stores.



Figure 11 NE elevation Kitchen cold stores and storerooms.



Figure 12 Link entrance between Refectory on L and D Block on R.



Figure 13 D block NE elevation Rooms D10 and D 12.



Figure 14 D block NE elevation R 14 - R16.



Figure 15 NE elevation D Block window and concrete panel detail.



Figure 16 D block R 24 - R 28 from NW.



Figure 17 NE elevation D Block R 18 – R 20



Figure 18 NE elevation D block R 24 - R 28.

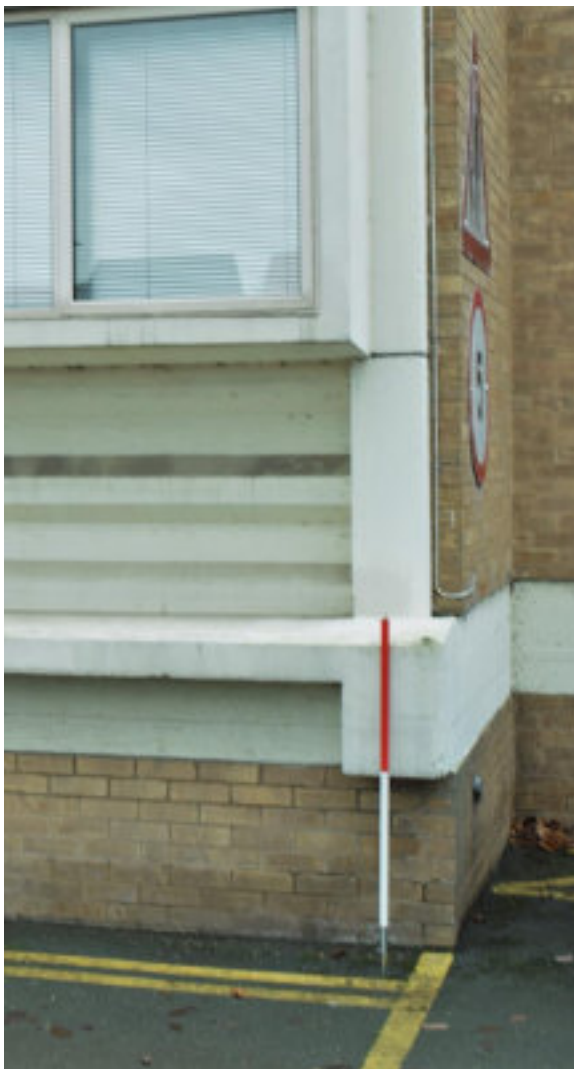


Figure 19 NE Elevation D block corner detailing.



Figure 20 NE elevation D Block corner detailing.



Figure 21 D Block R 30 - R 32 on L, NW elevation and entrance on R.



Figure 22 D Block R 30 - R 32 on L, NW elevation and entrance on R.



Figure 23 D Block NW elevation steps to entrance from NE.



Figure 24 D Block NW elevation steps and ramp to entrance door.



Figure 25 D Block SW elevation ramp to entrance door in NW elevation.



Figure 26 D Block SW elevation from NW.



Figure 27 D Block SW elevation from W across quadrangle.



Figure 28 D Block SW elevation R 27 - R23.



Figure 29 D Block from SW across quadrangle.



Figure 30 D Block SW elevation R 21 - R 17.



Figure 31 D Block from central doorway in NE elevation of front (SW) range of main building.



Figure 32 D Block SW elevation R 15 - R 9.



Figure 33 Refectory dining room, SW elevation.



Figure 34 Refectory dining room SW elevation and patio seating area.



Figure 35 Door to link between Refectory (R) and D Block (L).



Figure 36 Refectory block and patio from NW, the tall, multipane, stair windows, as shown centre, are a feature of the first phase buildings on the campus.



Figure 37 SE elevation of Refectory, covered walkway to Students Union Building on right.

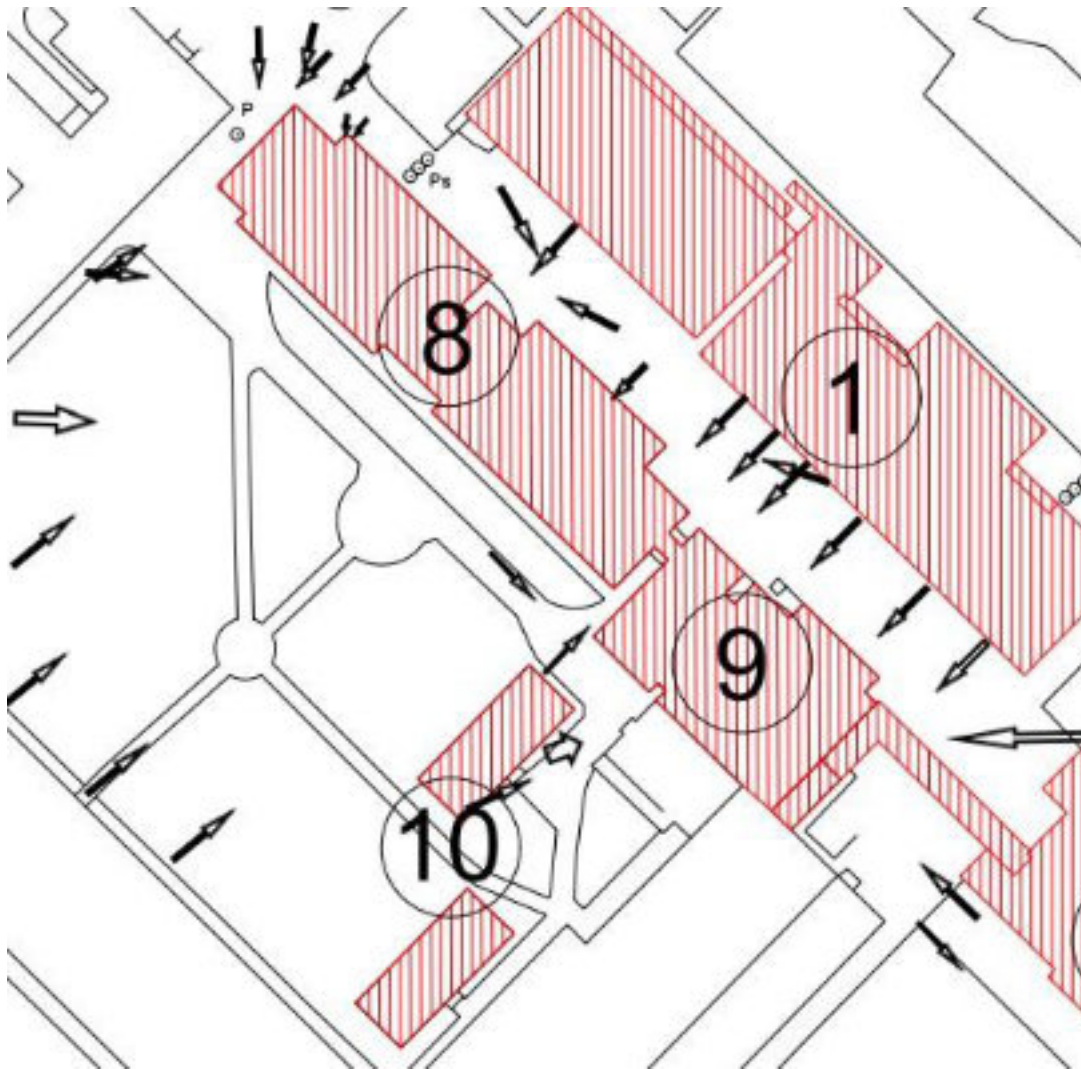


Figure 38 Refectory and D Block Photo viewpoints (based on plan courtesy Day Architectural).

3.1.3. Students Union (SU) Building



Figure 39 Walkway between Refectory (R) and SU building (L).



Figure 40 SU NW elevation from NW.



Figure 41 View of SU from W.



Figure 42 SU SW elevation from SW.



Figure 43 View of SU from S Detail.



Figure 44 SU SW elevation middle windows detail.



Figure 45 SU SW elevation R window detail.



Figure 46 SU SE elevation from E.



Figure 47 SU SE elevation, centre section with entrance doorway.



Figure 48 SU SE elevation rainwater goods, downpipe and hopper detail.



Figure 49 SU NE Elevation view from NE.



Figure 50 SU NE elevation, former shower block at SE end.



Figure 51 SU NE elevation, southern goods loading bay.



Figure 52 SU NE elevation Northern goods loading bay and northern section of elevation.

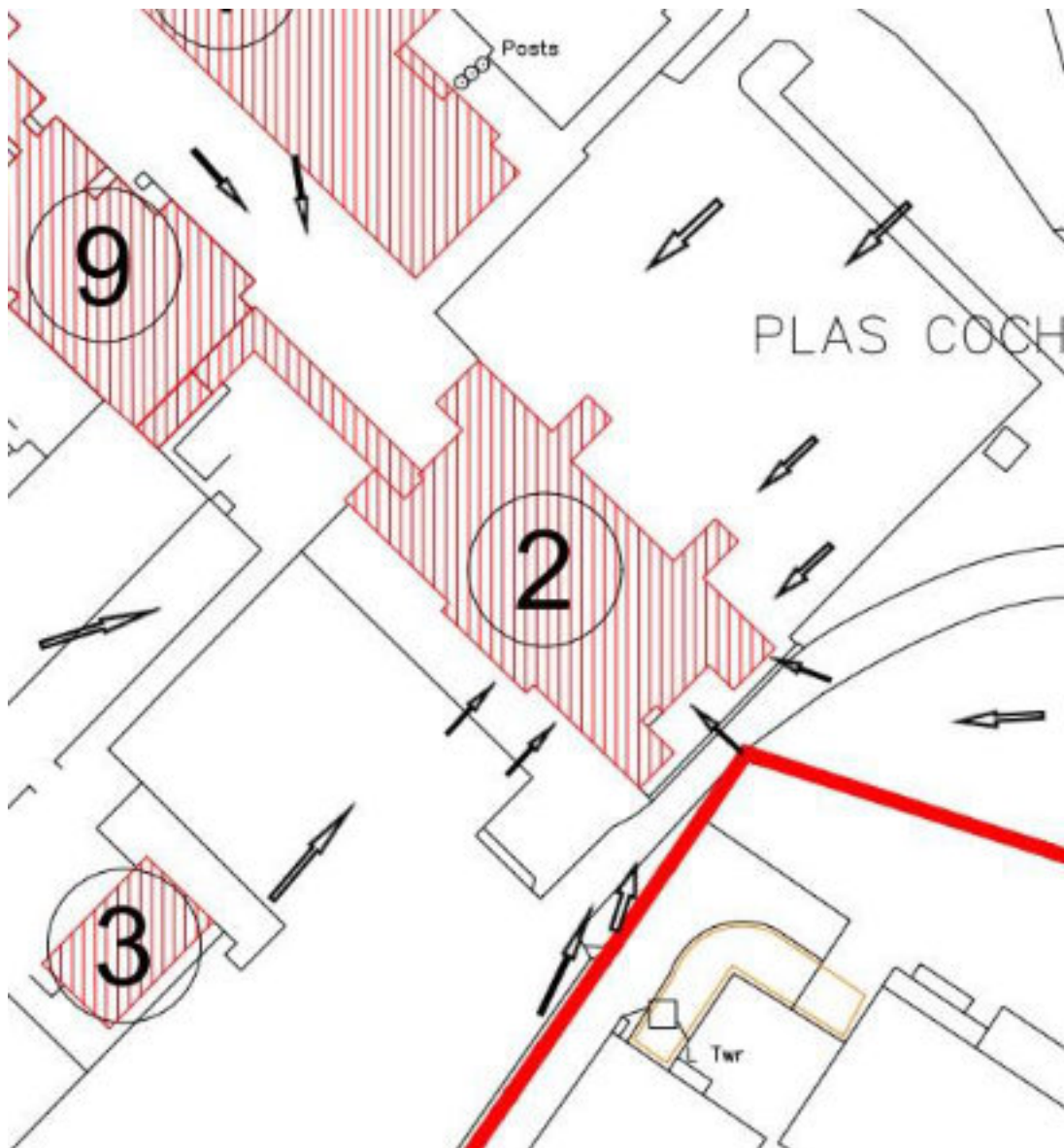


Figure 53 Students Union Building external photo viewpoints (based on plan courtesy Day Architectural Ltd).

3.2. INTERIOR DESCRIPTION

3.2.1. Refectory

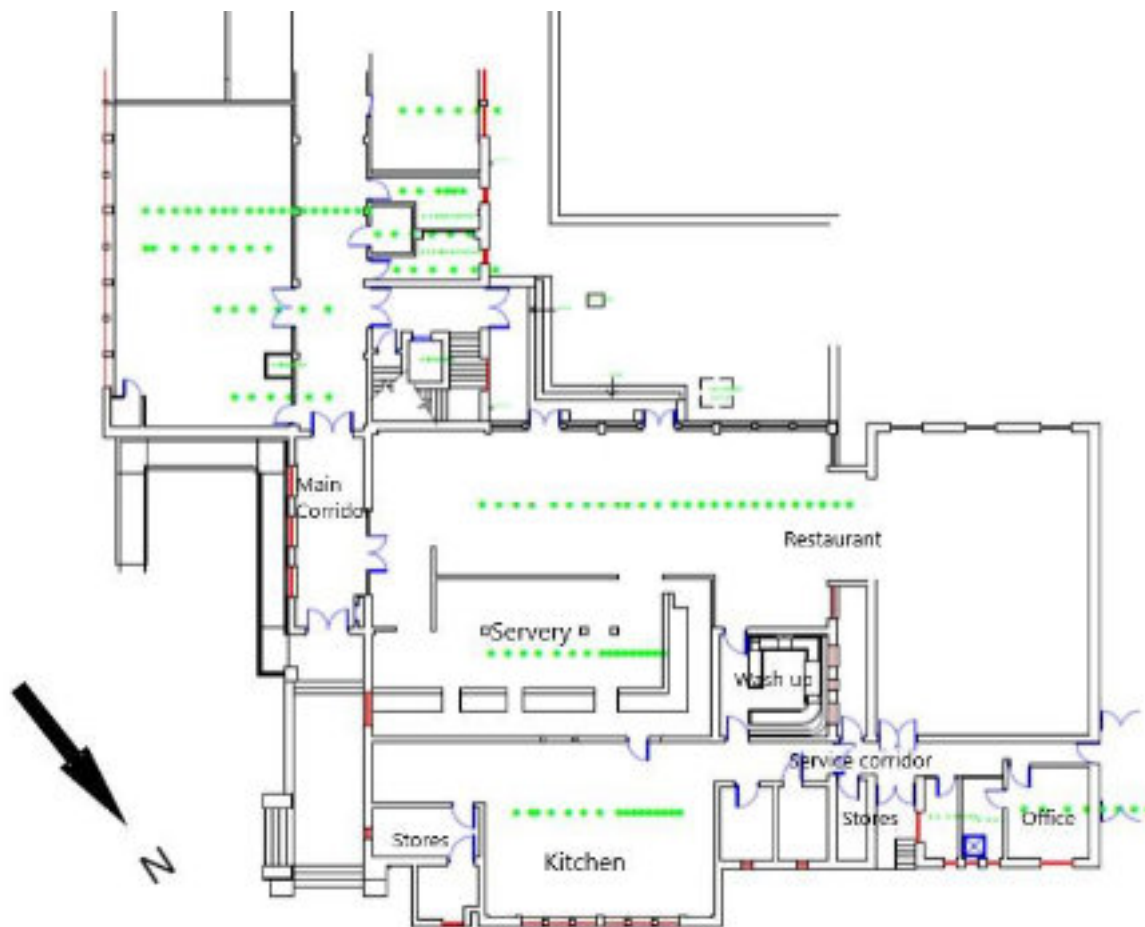


Figure 54 Glyndwr University Refectory Room identifier plan (plan courtesy Glyndwr University).



Figure 55 Refectory Entrance from main corridor.



Figure 56 Main building corridor, view to NE entrance, Refectory main entrance on left.



Figure 57 Main corridor, window opposite Refectory main entrance, detail.



Figure 58 Refectory dining room looking SE from NW end.



Figure 59 Opening between two parts of dining area, stub walls are light wells view SE.

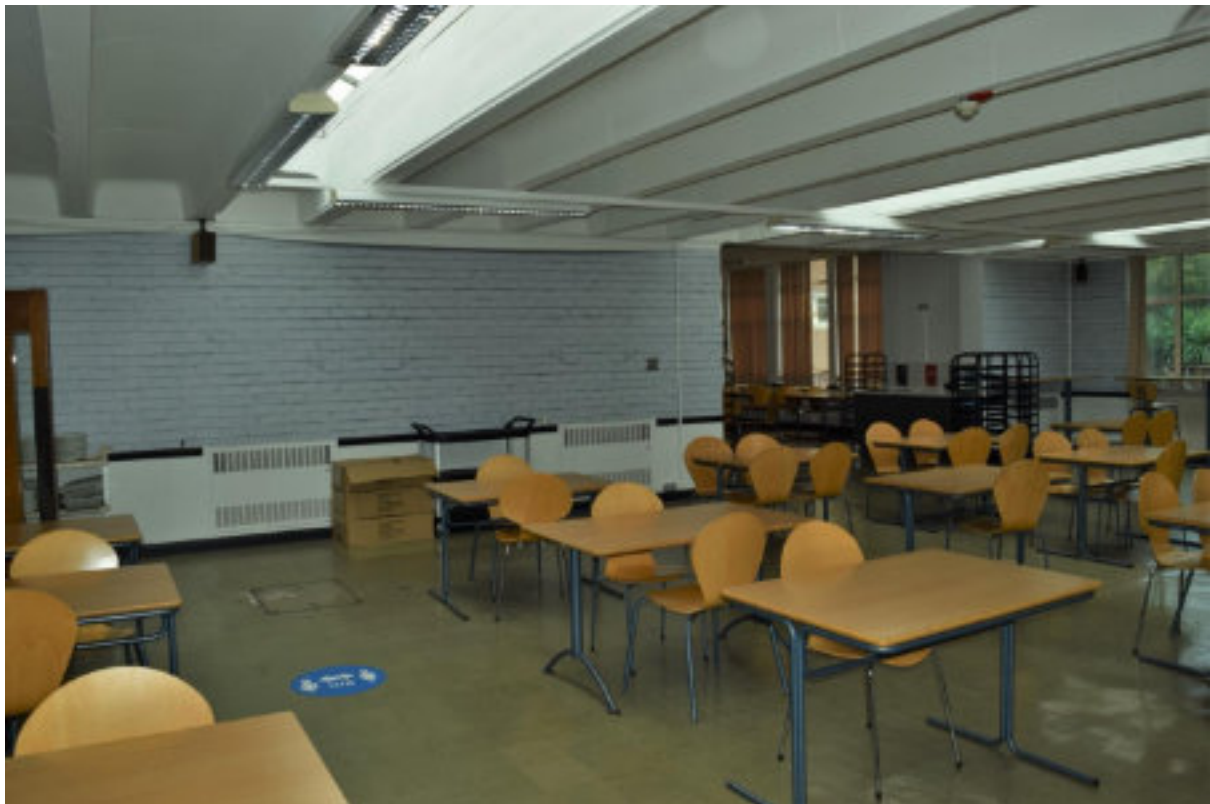


Figure 60 Refectory dining room NW section View S from N corner.



Figure 61 Refectory restaurant, NW section roof beam details, view SE.



Figure 62 Refectory restaurant, NW section skylight details view SE.



Figure 63 Refectory SE section rooflight detail from NW.



Figure 64 Skylight end beam detail, view SE.



Figure 65 Ceiling beam end details, view SE.



Figure 66 Refectory restaurant, NW area, NE elevation.



Figure 67 Refectory restaurant, NW area, NE elevation.



Figure 68 Refectory restaurant, NW area, SW elevation.



Figure 69 Restaurant NW area SW elevation window detail.



Figure 70 Restaurant, SW stub divide between SE and NW sections.



Figure 71 NE stub dividing areas of restaurant, window in NW elevation.



Figure 72 Refectory SE section of dining room from NW.



Figure 73 SW stub dividing areas of restaurant, window in SE elevation.



Figure 74 Refectory, servery from W.



Figure 75 Refectory SE elevation with main entrance.



Figure 76 Main entrance doors, detail.



Figure 77 Servery area from S.



Figure 78 Northern area of servery from S.



Figure 79 View of servery from SE.



Figure 80 View of servery from northern end, view to SE.



Figure 81 Restaurant, SE elevation from SE.



Figure 82 Restaurant windows on SW elevation of SE section. Note window on R, on stub that divides parts of restaurant.



Figure 83 Window and emergency exit doors on SW elevation, detail.



Figure 84 Restaurant SE section, ceiling with grooved decorative details in tiles, from SE.



Figure 85 Restaurant SE section ceiling with grooved decorative detailing, from NW.



Figure 86 Restaurant SE section light fittings.



Figure 87 Restaurant SE section light fitting detail.



Figure 88 Restaurant SE section light fitting detail.



Figure 89 Restaurant SE section light fitting detail.



Figure 90 View NE from NW Restaurant section through wash up to service corridor.



Figure 91 NW elevation of wash up.



Figure 92 Wash up, light, and former skylight or vent.



Figure 93 Wash up SW elevation (with permission of staff member).



Figure 94 Door from NW section of restaurant to Service Corrido.



Figure 95 Service Corridor view from kitchen to SE door and link to D Block.



Figure 96 Service corridor NW end ceiling detail view to SE.



Figure 97 Service corridor NW end ceiling detail view to NW.



Figure 98 Kitchen, view up kitchen passage, cooking and preparation on L, prep and hatch to servery on R.



Figure 99 View E across Kitchen (with permission of staff).

For the use of the Cassidy and Ashton

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Figure 100 Kitchen NE elevation windows (see Fig. 34 for exterior).



Figure 101 Kitchen SE storage area, store rooms on L.



Figure 102 Kitchen Store in E corner.



Figure 103 Kitchen, view N across kitchen to NE elevation.



Figure 104 Kitchen SE elevation window detail, alternate top panes have extractor fans.



Figure 105 Kitchen SW elevation. Hatch to Servery area.



Figure 106 Kitchen, SW elevation Door to north end of servery area.



Figure 107 Kitchen SW elevation, door to wash up room.



Figure 108 Kitchen service corridor, view to NW, cold store door on R.

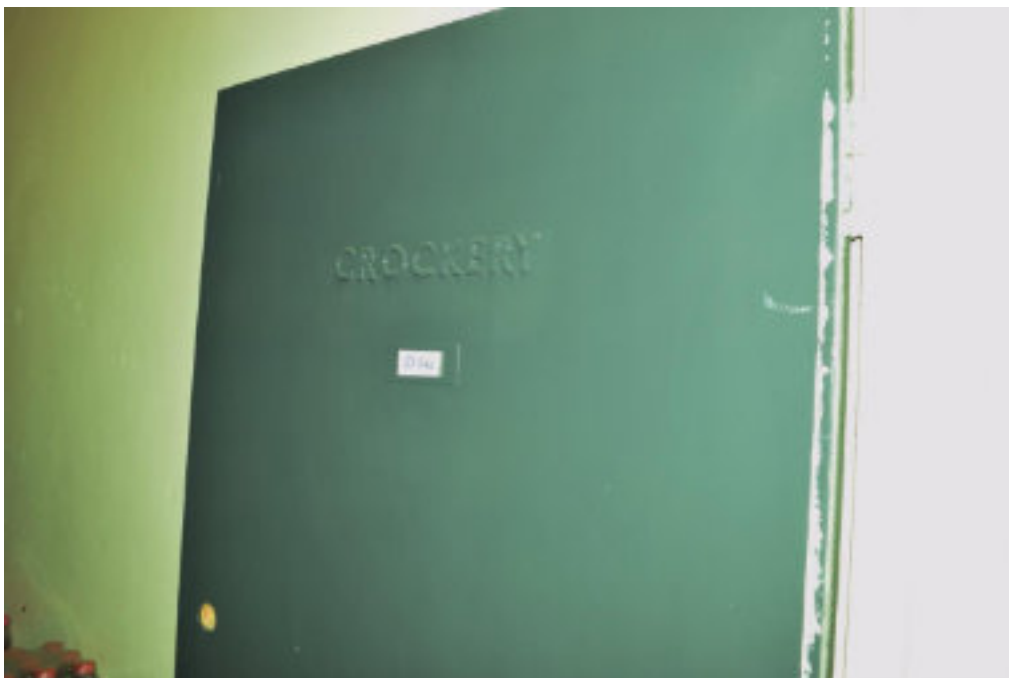


Figure 109 Kitchen service corridor, store rooms on NE side, original signage for Crockery store.



Figure 110 Service corridor, store room on NE side.



Figure 111 Service Corridor store room, suspended ceiling and light fittings detail.



Figure 112 Service corridor, Managers office, N end of corridor, NE elevation.



Figure 113 Service corridor, NE side Manager's office, N end of NE side of corridor, ceiling detail.

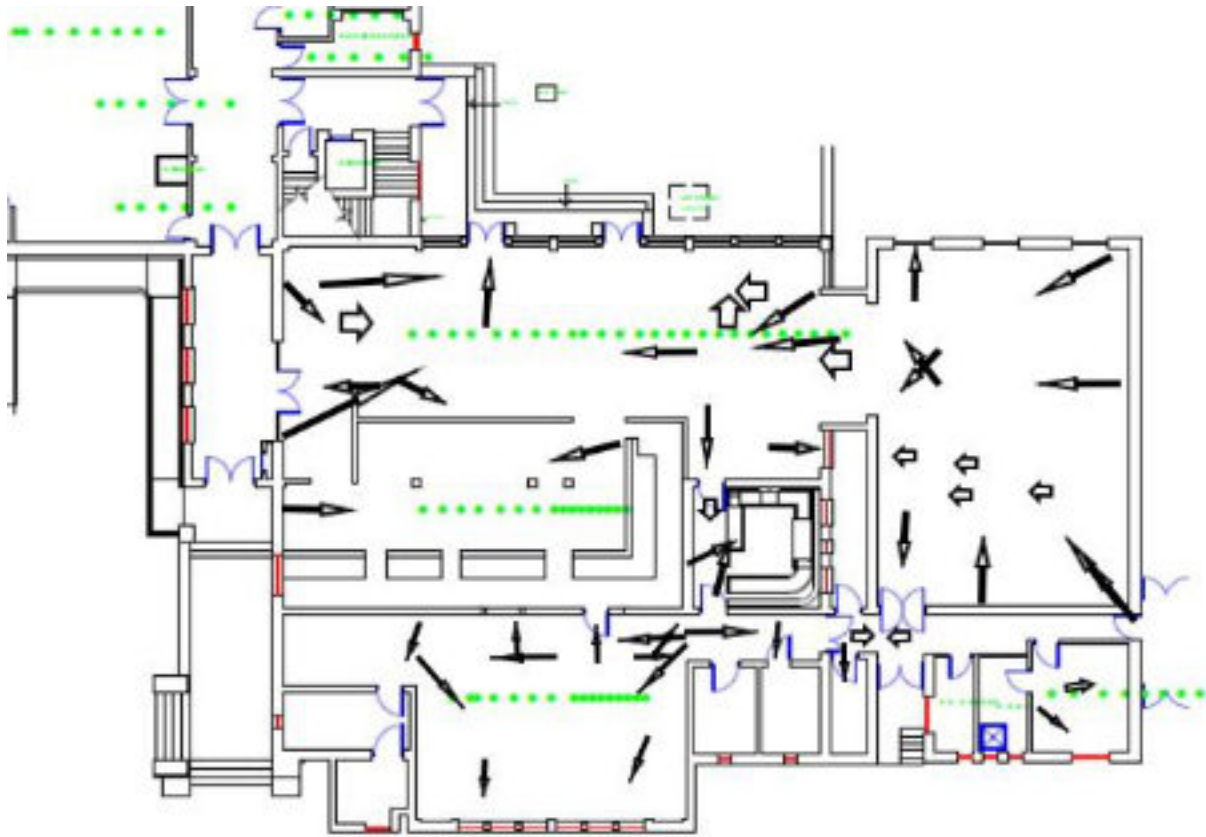


Figure 114 Refectory Interior Photo viewpoints (plan courtesy Glyndwr University)

3.2.2.D Block

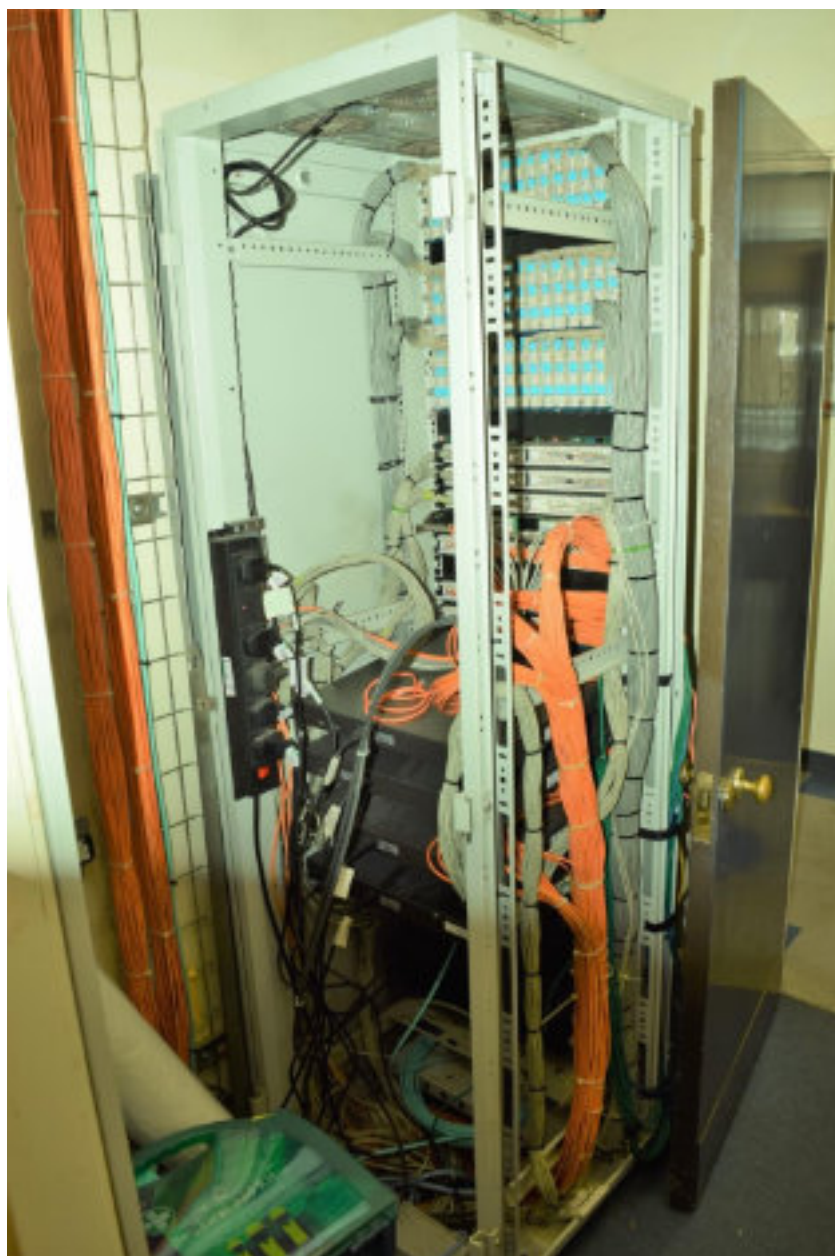


Figure 115 D Block R9 electrical distribution board in store room.



Figure 116 D Block R10 Property manager's office NE elevation (with permission of staff member).



Figure 117 D Block R10 Property manager's office SW elevation.