

Archaeological Building Recording of Cheney's  
Care Home and extensions to Ronald Simson  
House at 24 Sutton Avenue, Seaford, East  
Sussex BN25 4LG



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1.0 INTRODUCTION.....PAGE 2  
2.0 HISTORICAL/ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND.....PAGE 2  
3.0 PARAMETERS.....PAGE 3  
4.0 PROJECTS OBJECTIVES.....PAGE 4  
5.0 SUMMARY OF SITE.....PAGE 4  
6.0 SUMMARY OF STANDING BUILDINGS.....PAGE 9  
7.0 DISCUSSION.....PAGE 15

Figure 1 Development site in 1927

Figure 2 Development site in 1963

Figure 3 Development site in 1987

Figure 4 View of Ronald Simson House

Figure 5 Ronald Simson House

Figure 6 Ground plan of Cheneys

Figure 7 Ronald Simson north elevation

Figure 8 Ground plan of Cheneys

Figure 9 Cheneys north facing facade

Figure 10 Cheneys south facing facade

Figure 11 Cheneys Lounge area

Figure 12 Cheneys Kitchens

Figure 13 Cheneys plans

Figure 14 Cheneys west facade

Figure 15 Cheneys Common room

Figure 16 Cheneys Walk-in bath

Figure 17 Location plan

Appendix 1 View point of photographs and original plans

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Following granting of planning permission (LW/11/0407) for demolition of Cheneys Care Home and the later extensions to Ronald Simson House to provide extra care accommodation a condition has been attached to the planning permission requiring that a programme of building recording be undertaken in advance of any site works.

1.2 The building recording was conducted in accordance with a SWAT specification issued in November 2012 and was carried out in December 2012 in accordance with a Level 2 survey as detailed in the English Heritage publication 'Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice' (2006) and the Institute of Field Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures (2008).

**1.3 In summary the work consists of a basic descriptive report accompanied by digital images and annotated plans as appropriate.**

## 2.0 HISTORICAL/ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1 The development site

The site is a large plot, prominent in the locality as it fronts Sutton Avenue to the north, Links Road to the east and Rother Road to the south. The site is located within a residential area, characterised by detached dwellings set in spacious gardens which gives a low density character to the area. On site at present are three distinct elements of development. To the north east corner of the site is a three storey detached property, Falfield that accommodates 9 residential flats. To the north-west corner, is Ronald Simson House, which was built around 1900 and is used as offices for Sussex Housing and Care Company.

Between these two buildings and running on a south axis across the site is the Cheneys residential home, which is a two storey 55-bed care home.

Planning permission was sought to demolish the existing Cheneys care home and erect a new development which would provide 35 self contained extra care apartments and one staff flat. The new development would include a 2.5 storey block as an infill between Ronald Simson House and Falfield, thus creating a frontage along Sutton Avenue. The development would then extend at 2.5 storeys to the south of the site, in approximately the same location as the existing Cheneys development, thus providing a frontage to Links Road and Rother Road as currently exists.

This block would contain 35 independent units, consisting of 25 one bedroom flats and 10 two bedroom flats, with associated facilities such as communal lounge and garden, new vehicular access from Rother Road, and on-site parking for 28 cars.

Of the units proposed, 20 are to be for affordable housing, which equates to 57% of the overall number of units. As part of the site redevelopment, it is proposed to demolish an existing side extension to Ronald Simson House to allow vehicular access to the rear of the building for staff parking. A new 2 storey flat roofed extension is proposed to the rear (south) of the building.

This building would then be retained as the Headquarters of Sussex Housing and Care.

2.2. There are a number of structures within the site which appear to be historic and are proposed for demolition as part of this application. These include Cheneys Care Home and the extensions to Ronald Simson House both built in the 1963-87's.

The structures to be demolished have historic significance as remnants of the historic use of care home facilities in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### 3.0 PARAMETERS

3.1 The recording was restricted to the structures on site to be demolished; however some consideration was given to historical context.

3.2 The photographic survey was conducted using digital photography.

3.3 This work did not include any investigation of below ground archaeology. Such work is administered separately by SWAT Archaeology to a WSI prepared for ESCC.

#### 4.0 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

4.1 A Level 2 recording has been requested in line with English Heritage published guidance, 'Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice' (English Heritage -2006). A Level 2 recording is described as a 'descriptive record' to include inspection and description of the exterior and interior of the buildings. The report should establish identification of the building's location, age and type, and also some analysis of the building's development and use. This information should in the first instance be guided by external photographs of elevations and internal photographs of areas and significant features if appropriate. The study should also include copies of measured survey drawings of plans and elevations and detailed survey drawings (annotated or otherwise) and sketches of specific details of elements of interest where appropriate.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY OF SITE

5.1 SWAT Archaeology were commissioned by Denne Construction Ltd in November 2012 to undertake a programme of archaeological building recording and monitoring at the site of Cheneys Care Home, Sutton Avenue, Seaford, East Sussex.

The archive and documentary research was carried out using resources offered by the Internet and Ordnance Survey Historical mapping, and historical maps retained by The East Sussex Record Office (ESRO). Maps studied at the ESRO included the Yeakell and Gardner 1778 map, the Ordnance Survey Surveyors draft map c.1805 and the Seaford Tithe map of 1839.

It is noteworthy that the ten available historical Ordnance Survey maps 1873-2012 show that urban development starts late in the area of Sutton Avenue. The only feature in the vicinity of 24 Sutton Avenue in 1873 is an 'old chalk pit'. By 1899 the first road appears-Southdown Road west of the development site,

and by 1927 Sutton Avenue is built with six plots laid out and houses built including 24, 25 Sutton Avenue



Figure 1. Development site in 1927

By 1938 the landscape has been transformed with the area in the locality of Sutton Avenue fully developed.

In 1963 both 24 and 25 Sutton Avenue had been bought , amalgamated into one property and the care home extension -Cheneys- built.



Figure 2. Development site in 1963

In 1987 the rest of the extension was built, both parts destined to be demolished under the present Planning Permission.



Figure 3, Development site in 1987 with buildings to be demolished shaded green

Throughout its historical development three main phases of structural development have been identified.

- The 1927 development of 24 and 25 Sutton Avenue
- The 1963 'joining' of 24 and 25 on the same plot and the first phase of care home accommodation built
- The 1987 care home extension built in the south east area of the site

Modern development within the development area has been limited to domestic housing. The development site itself is dominated by two splendid buildings constructed about 1900 in the red brick Edwardian style. One, called Ronald Simson House is particularly splendid. The styles and structural forms of these Edwardian houses did not just appear overnight, and it should be seen as a continuation of those which were built in the last decade of the 19th century in the Sussex area. The greatest influence came from revivalist architects working in the 1870s and 80s, who, rather than just copying details directly from historic buildings, took the spirit of old timber framed and brick manor and farm houses and created new forms, which reflected rather than mimicked



Figure 4. View of Ronald Simson House (looking west)

them. The Queen Anne style, with its upright buildings of fine red brick, Dutch gables and white framed windows, as well as the revival of vernacular forms with black and white timber, hanging wall tiles, weatherboarding and rough finish renders used to clad houses, which today are generally referred to as ‘arts and crafts’, were both popular. By the 1890s speculative builders were providing many of these details on the terraces and larger detached houses for the more fashion conscious middle classes. The Edwardians also had a love for white painted woodwork with delicate fretwork and turned balusters featured on porches and balconies. Richly coloured patterned glass in the upper part of windows continued the cheerful theme with Art Nouveau designs of stylised foliage a distinctive form.

Figure 5. Ronald Simson House



Behind these facades the structure of a building like Ronald Simson (above Figure 5) had changed from those produced fifty years earlier. Houses were taller with higher ceilings. Basements and cellars had fallen from favour and two storey rear extensions with bathrooms in the upper room on better class housing (an additional bedroom in others) provided a better working environment for servants (even a modest middle class family would expect to have a live-in maid). Large bay windows, the full height of the facade, were a prominent display designed to impress and lighten the interior. Terraces were now stepped back from the pavement with a small front garden and brick wall proudly marking the limits of the property. Doorways could be recessed a couple of feet into the house or set under a porch, which ran the full length of the facade, with black and white, terracotta or beige ceramic tiles fitted on the step and along the hall within.



Figure 6. Cheneys extension –looking west

By contrast the 1963-87's extension called Cheneys, which is the subject of demolition and a EH Level 2 survey has little in the way of architectural

pretensions with its white UPVC windows, its half-timbered facade in black-painted plywood, and its false 'thirty-style' chimneys.

## 6.0 SUMMARY OF STANDING BUILDINGS



Elevation 1-North

Figure 7

6.1 Ronald Simson House (Figure 7) is not to be demolished and its current use is as the offices of Sussex Housing and Care Company. Adjoining it at the rear (south side) and to the east is the first of the care home extensions to be built in 1963 and called Cheneys (Figure 8).

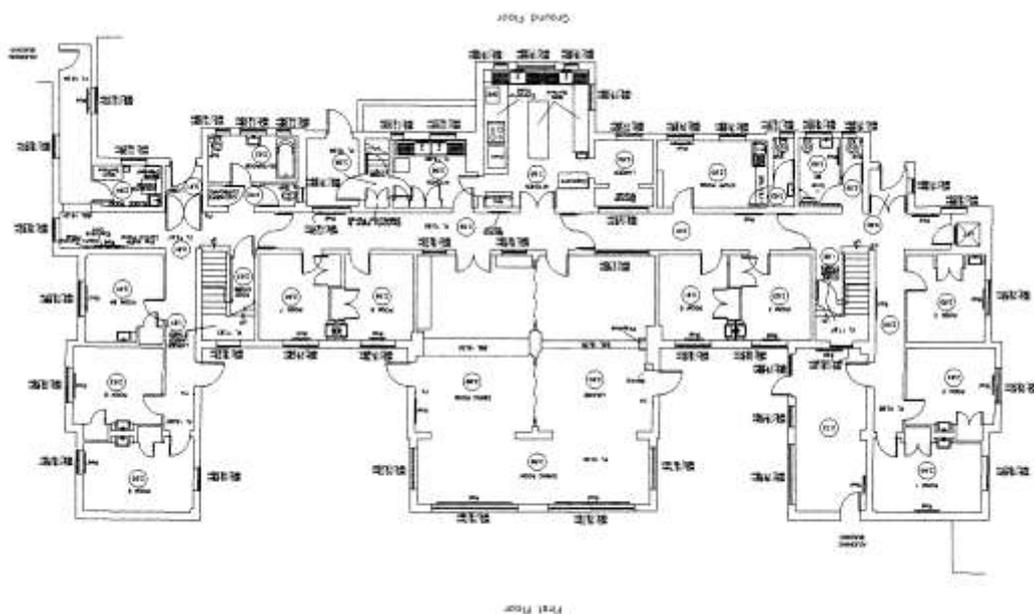


Figure 8 Ground plan of Cheneys (north at top)

Detailed photographs of this building are to be found in Appendix 1. In essence the two-storey building is centered round the communal area of Dining Room and lounge which face south (Figure 8). To the north is situated the Kitchens which are of a commercial nature with attached Larder and Staff Room. There are Bedrooms situated on both floors, none of which have Bathrooms and these are located on the north side of the building. Access to the first floor is by two staircases situated at either end of the building and a small lift.

The build is of cavity wall brick with a double pitched roof covered by concrete peg tiles. The fenestration is predominantly four pane double-hung UPVC windows of a type known as TYPE TF and TYPE STSF, both types date to no earlier than 1980 and obviously replaced the 1963 wooden construct windows.



Figure 9 Cheneys north facing facade

To the south the Lounge Area projected out from the main building and overlooked the gardens. The symmetry of the design was enhanced by two south facing wings which contained Bedrooms.



Figure 10 Cheneys south facing facade

Large UPVC windows overlooked the gardens (Figure 10) and could be shaded by canvas blinds which were attached to the single storey Lounge Area. There is little architectural merit in this facade or indeed the building as a whole.

Internal decoration can at best be described as 1960's institutional with plastered walls painted a variety of pastel colours and floor surfaces of vinyl tiles or carpet squares.



Figure 11 Cheneys Lounge Area



Figure 12 Cheneys Kitchens

6.2 The 1987 Care Home extension was built to connect to the original Cheney's building through the east wing and was built on two storeys with an additional 24 bedrooms. Its location (pink) is shown below in this annotated plan (Figure 13) which is overlaid with the proposed 2013 development.



Figure 13

Architects plans both for the 1963 and 1987 build are to found in Appendix 1.

The 1987 extension is built to a similar layout as the 1963 Cheney's with a Dining Room and Common Room situated in the centre of the building on the west side and overlooking the garden (below).



Figure 14 looking at the west face of the 1987 extension



Figure 15. Common Room with fireplace

Detailed photographs of this 1987 building are to be found in Appendix 1. In essence the two-storey building is centred round the communal area of Dining Room and Common Room which face west (Figure 15). To the east is situated the Kitchens which are of a commercial nature with attached Larder and Staff Room. There are Bedrooms situated on both floors, none of which have Bathrooms and these are located on both sides of the building. Access to the first floor is by two staircases situated at either end of the building.

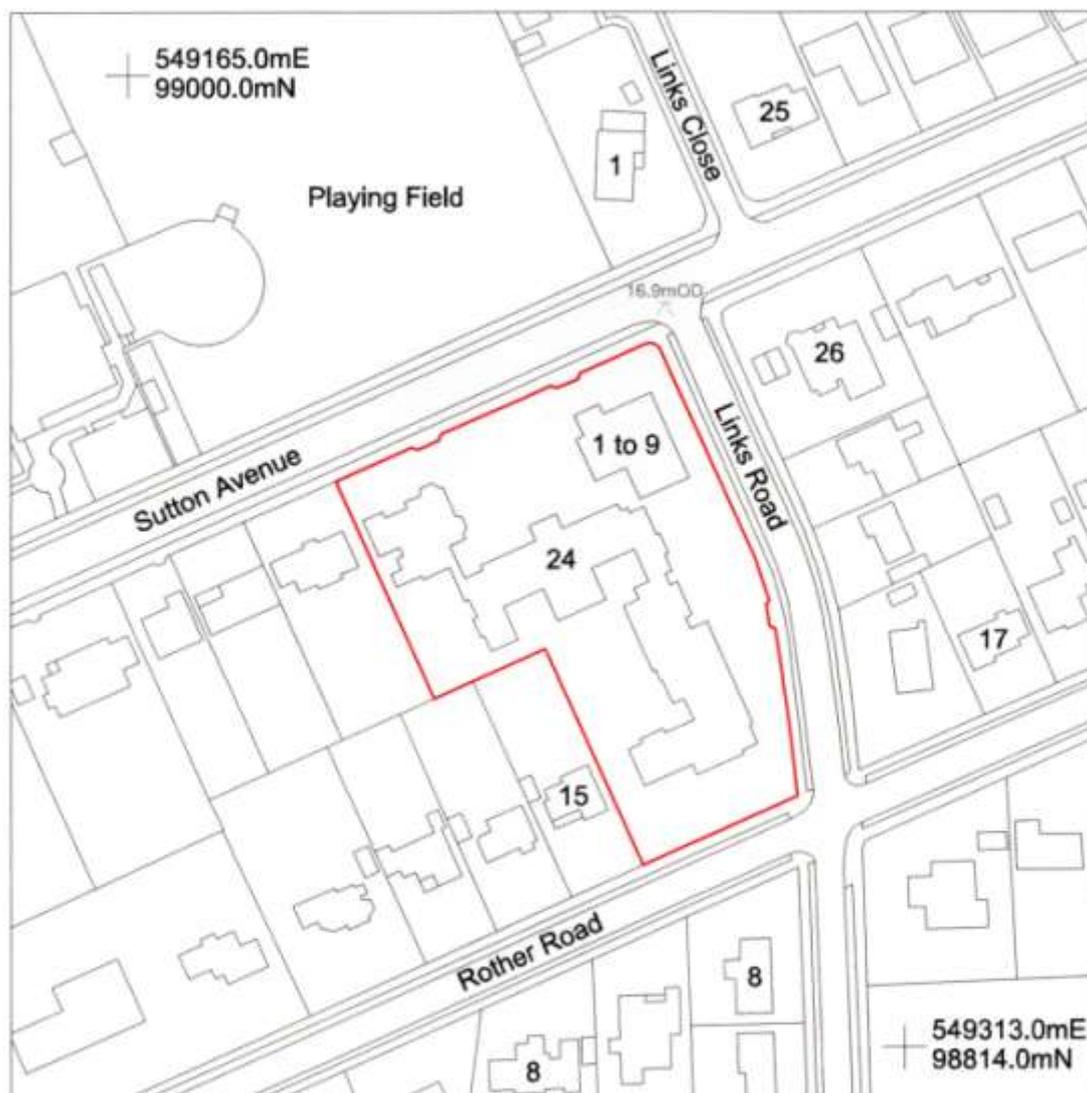
The build is of cavity wall brick with a double pitched roof covered by concrete peg tiles. The fenestration is predominantly four pane double-hung UPVC windows of a type known as TYPE TF and TYPE STSF, both types date to no earlier than 1980 and were probably part of the original build.

## 7.0 DISCUSSION

The extensions built in 1963 and 1987 are of little architectural merit but are an important social record of care home development in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is of particular interest to social historians how care home space was organised in what was in the 1960's a new problem to be faced of an older generation of people divorced from family ties and who had reached a stage in their lives that either they or their families were not able to continue with homecare. The change in environment must have been a shock to most inmates. All of the bedrooms are for single occupancy without toilet facilities apart from a hand basin. For the 26 occupants in the 1963 extension there were only three bathrooms and five separate toilets. In the 1987 extension of 23 occupants each room had its own toilet and hand basin but only three baths (see below).



Figure 16. Walk-in bath in the 1987 extension



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Figure 17 Location plan

# Appendix 1

Viewpoints of additional photographs of 1963 build (2m scale)

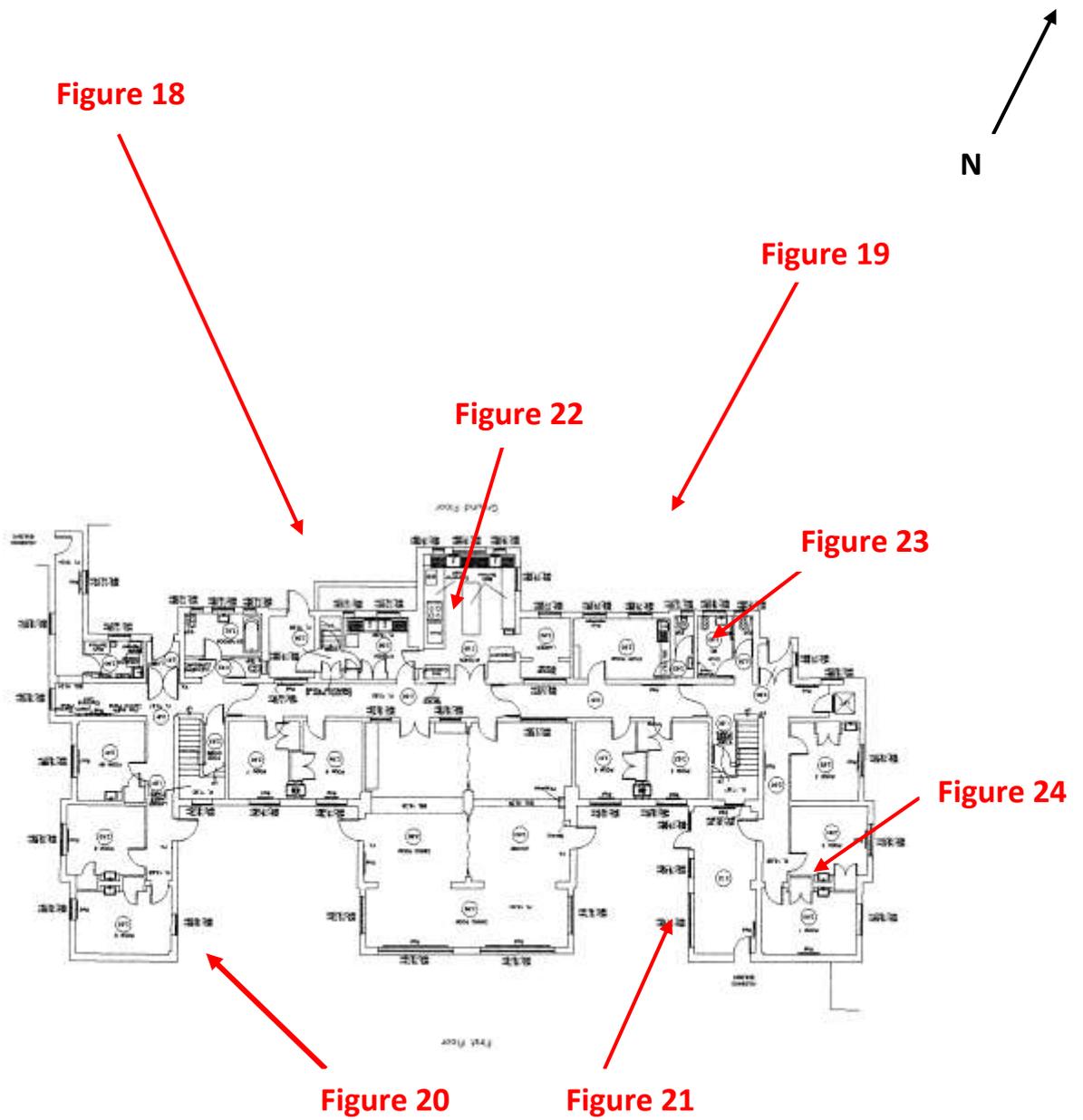




Figure 18. Looking south-east



Figure 19. Looking south-west at kitchens in north range



Figure 20 (above) Looking north-west at south wing

Figure 21 (below) looking north at east wing





Figure 22 Kitchens

Figure 23 Toilets and Figure 24 hand basins



View point of additional photographs of the 1987 build

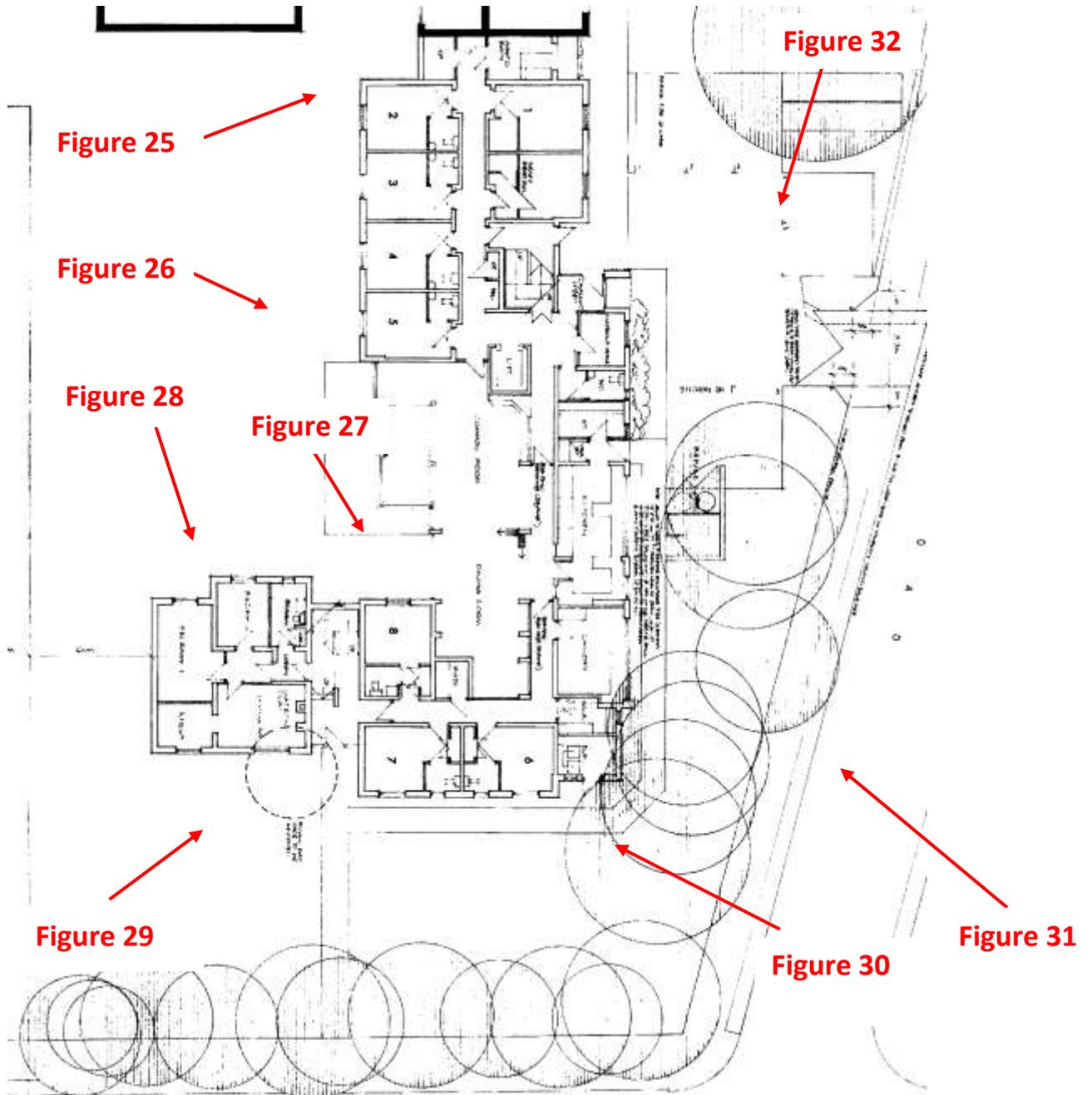




Figure 25 Looking north-east



Figure 26 Looking south-east



Figure 27 Looking south south-east



Figure 28 Looking south



Figure 29 Looking north



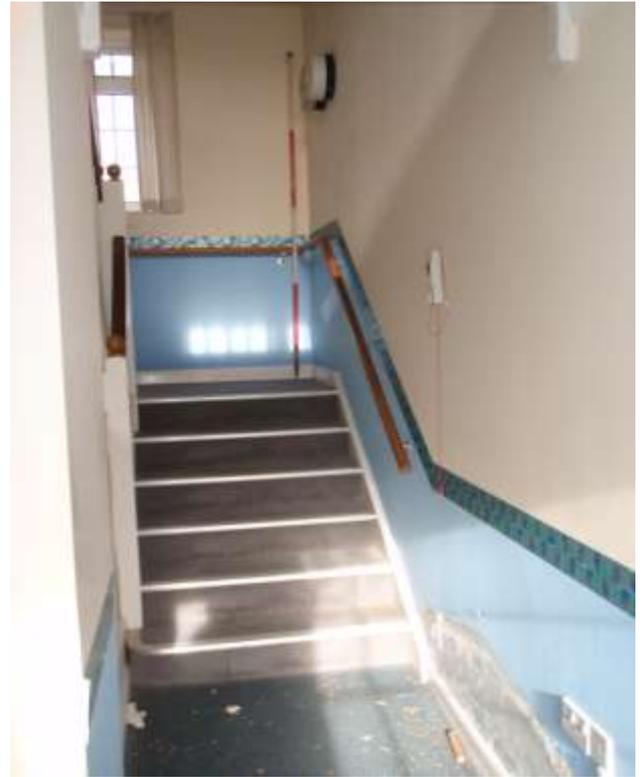
Figure 30 Looking west



Figure 31 Looking north-west



Figure 32 Looking south-west



Figures 33, 34 staircases



Figures 35 Typical bedrooms



**NOTES**

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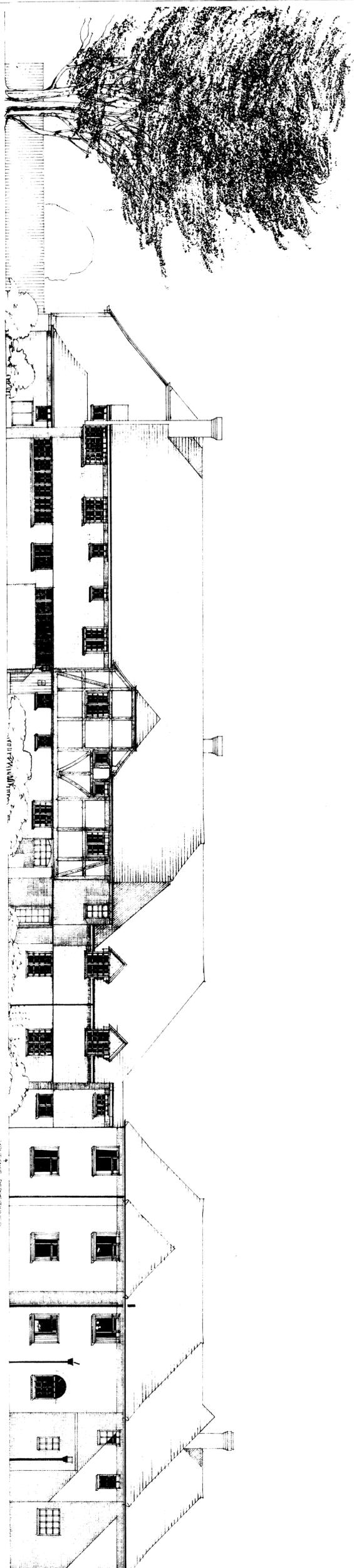
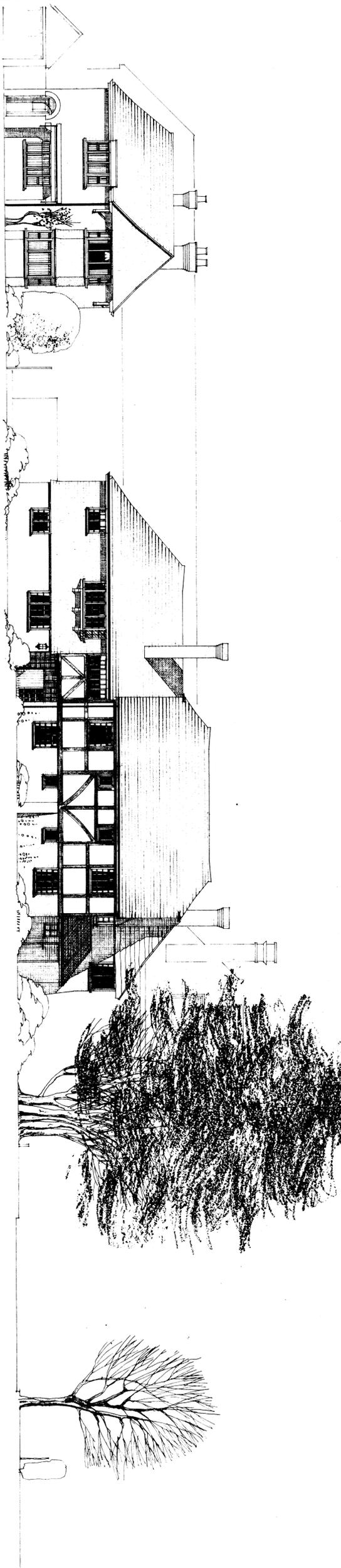
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It is the contractor's responsibility to check dimensions on site.

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<b>SCHEME</b>	EXTRA CARE ACCOMMODATION FOR THE ELDERLY CHARITY SEAFORD
<b>TITLE</b>	ELEVATIONS
<b>SCALE</b>	1 : 100
<b>DATE</b>	12 MARCH 1994
<b>DRAWN</b>	A. CLAYTON
<b>No.</b>	8299/01

**WHITTAM COX ELLIS CLAYTON PARTNERSHIP**  
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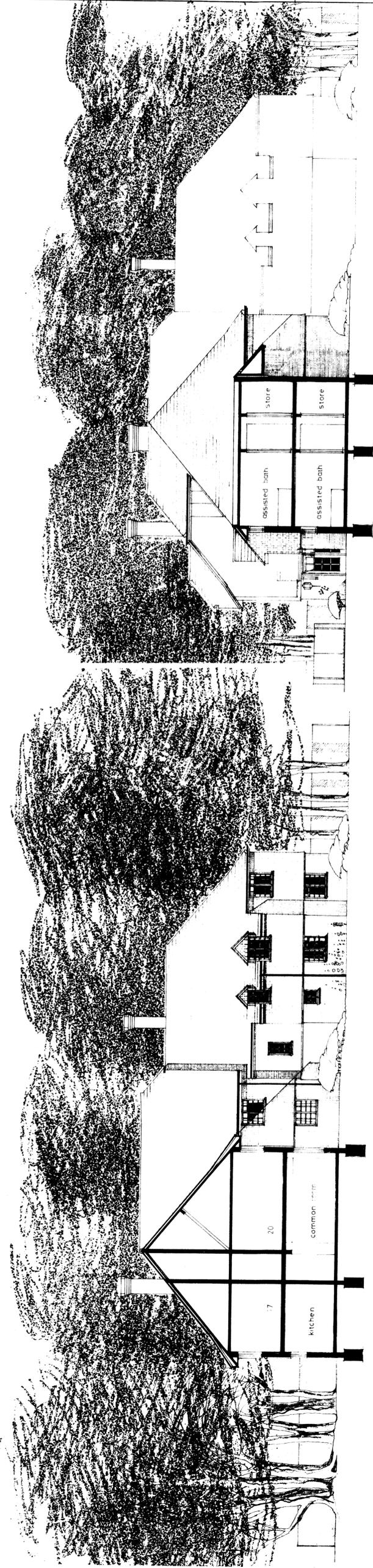
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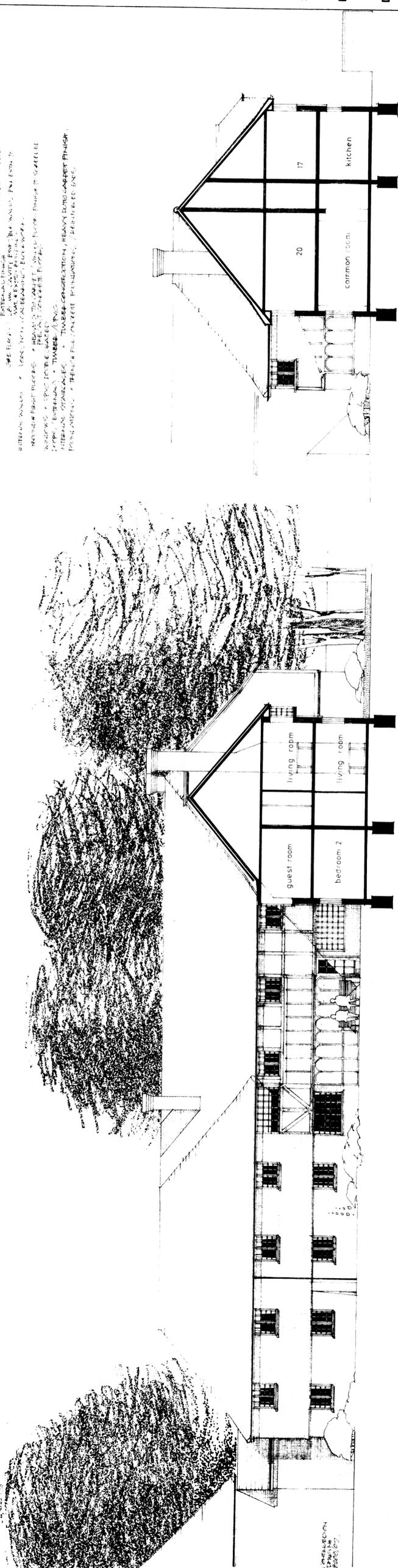
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B	REVISIONS TO THIS DRAWING.
C	REVISIONS TO THIS DRAWING.



SECTION & NORTH ELEVATION

SECTION & ENTRANCE ELEVATION

CONSTRUCTION NOTES:  
 FITTED ROOFING: CLAY TILE WITH TIMBER FRAME LATHING.  
 INSULATION: MINIMUM 100MM EPS INSULATION TO ALL EXTERIOR WALLS.  
 EXTERIOR WALLS: 100MM EPS INSULATION TO ALL EXTERIOR WALLS.  
 INTERIOR WALLS: 100MM EPS INSULATION TO ALL INTERIOR WALLS.  
 FLOORING: 100MM EPS INSULATION TO ALL FLOORS.  
 ROOFING: 100MM EPS INSULATION TO ALL ROOFS.  
 WINDOWS: 100MM EPS INSULATION TO ALL WINDOWS.  
 DOORS: 100MM EPS INSULATION TO ALL DOORS.  
 CEILING: 100MM EPS INSULATION TO ALL CEILING.  
 FINISHES: 100MM EPS INSULATION TO ALL FINISHES.



WEST ELEVATION & SECTION

PART SOUTH ELEVATION & SECTION

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<b>SCHEME</b>	EXTRA CARE ACCOMMODATION FOR THE AGED
<b>TITLE</b>	SECTIONS/ELEVATIONS
<b>SCALE</b>	1 : 100
<b>DATE</b>	APRIL 1986
<b>DRAWN</b>	A. GUNTON
<b>No.</b>	8299/05



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FOR THE AGED

PROJECT  
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ELDERLY  
CHENEYS SEAFORD

TITLE

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

SCALE 1:100

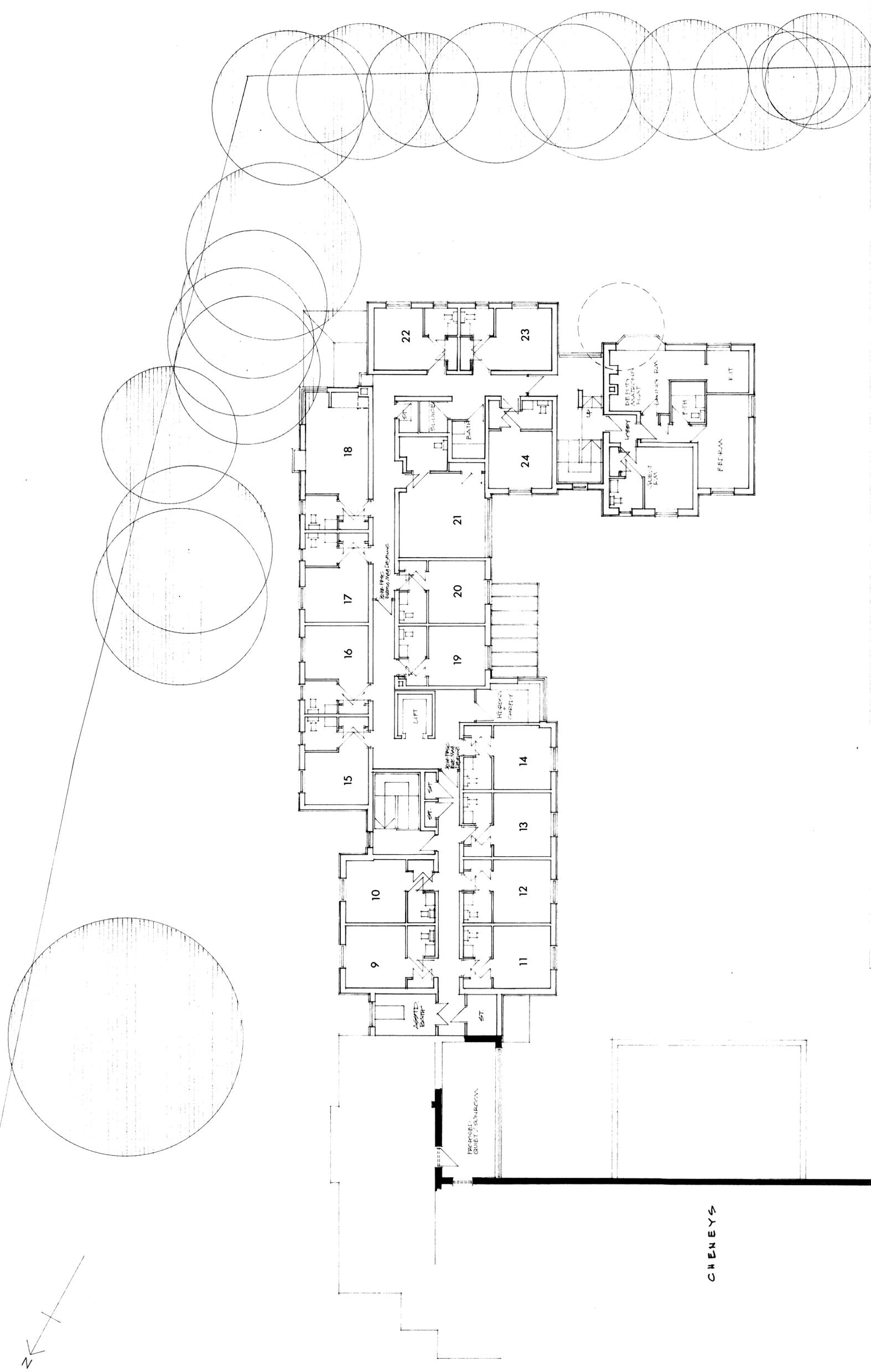
DATE 2 FEB 1987

DRAWN *W. W. SPIKE*

DRAWING N°

8299/02

CHILTON WATERS & STUTCHBURY  
39 FRIARS WALK LEWES BN7 2LG  
TELEPHONE LEWES 474115



CHENEYS

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SUSSEX HOUSING ASSOCIATION  
FOR THE AGED

PROJECT  
EXTRA CARE ACCOMMODATION FOR THE  
ELDERLY  
CHENEYS SEAFORD

TITLE  
GROUND FLOOR PLAN

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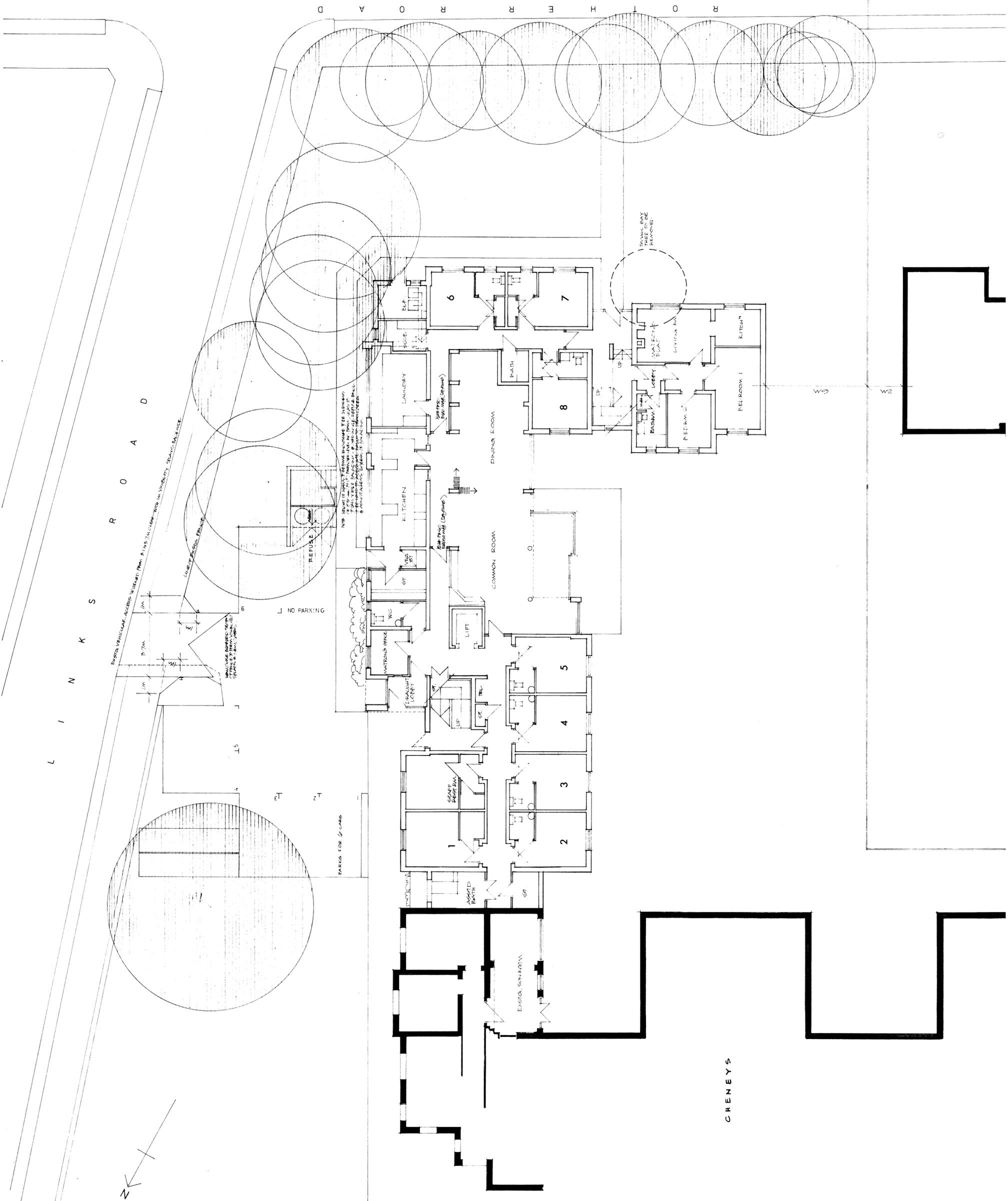
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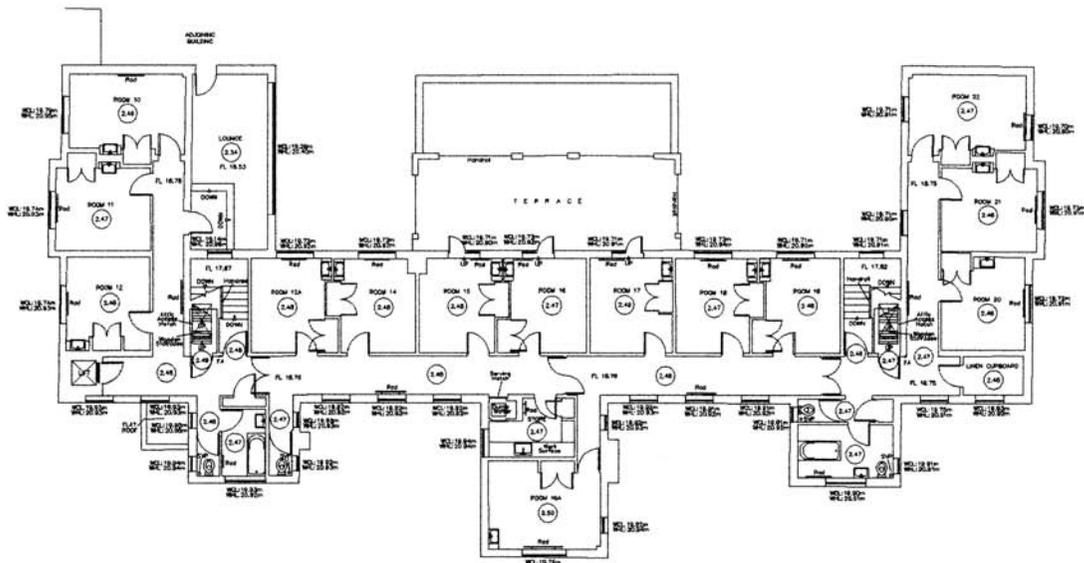
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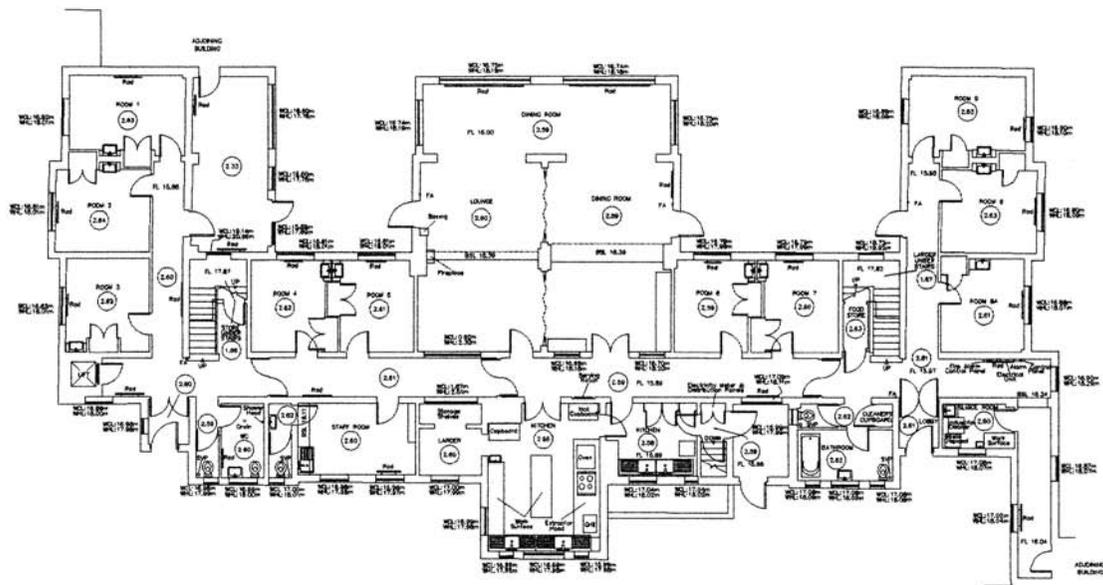
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First Floor



Ground Floor