

Heritage Assessment

Ludlow Hospital, Gravel Hill, Ludlow

Introduction

1. HCUK Group was commissioned by NHS Property Services Ltd to review the Grade II Listed Ludlow Hospital, Gravel Hill, Ludlow, Shropshire in respect of the current listing criteria set out by Historic England for Health and Welfare Buildings¹.
2. This report follows on from a Heritage Statement prepared by Cotswold Archaeology in 2017 which presented the findings of desk-based research and assessed the significance of the buildings at Ludlow Hospital. At the time of the assessment by Cotswold Archaeology access to the upper floors of the Grade II Listed building was not possible and therefore the a full site inspection did not take place.
3. Access was granted to all areas of the main building as part of this assessment, which seeks to now assess the validity of that early assessment, and provide a consideration of the building's values against the listing criteria, including a review of the specific guidelines prepared by Historic England for health and welfare buildings.
4. The significance of the building is restated for completeness. There are no proposals for the future use of the site at the present time but this report seeks to aid the owners in understanding heritage values in order to determine options for the future of the site.

Ludlow Hospital

5. Ludlow Hospital (referred to as East Hamlet Hospital in the Listing, and Ludlow Community Hospital on modern mapping) was listed as Grade II in 1993. The list description provided by Historic England is as follows:

¹ *Health and Welfare Buildings, Listing Selection Guide*, Historic England, December 2017

Formerly known as: The Ludlow Poor Law Workhouse GRAVEL HILL. Workhouse, now hospital. c1833. Dressed stone; Welsh slate roof; reduced stone ridge stacks. U-shaped plan with projecting gable wings. 3-storeys; 5-window range: 6/6 sashes (two C20 to right) under combed ashlar segmental arches; 4/8 sashes over; stone-coped pedimented gables, with corbelled kneelers, and mutilated finials. Central single-storey porch-bay with C20 glazing to chamfered ashlar pillars with span-arch lintels, leading to C20 door flanked by C19, 6/6 casements, all under ashlar segmental arches; flanked by C20 fenestration and to left, C19, 8/8 sash. C20 conservatory over porch. Stone rubble gables to rear, with C19, 6/6 and 4/8 sashes, and horizontal casements; further 2-storey range.

INTERIOR: retains some 6 panel doors with panelled reveals; 2nd (dormitory) floor intact, with stick-framing; 2 winder staircases with simple wrought-iron balusters.

6. The list description and associated mapping incorrectly indicates the building described above, which is instead outlined in blue below for clarification purposes. It should be noted, however, that the building described above and the structure indicated on the listing map are interconnected, though the above description is focussed on one portion through connection and attachment the listed building extends much beyond this front section.



Figure 1: Aerial view showing the location of the main Grade II Listed Building at Ludlow Hospital. The red triangle indicates the position of the identifier on the listing map, the buildings are interconnected.

7. The list description suggests that the building was constructed in c. 1833, however documentary sources reproduced in the Heritage Statement by CA in 2017 show that the plans for the workhouse were only approved in 1836 (see Figures 2 and 3 below). These plans for the building were produced by Matthew Stead, a local architect, who also went on to oversee the construction of institutional buildings in Canada (specifically the Provincial Lunatic Asylum in Saint Johns, New Brunswick in the late 1940s).

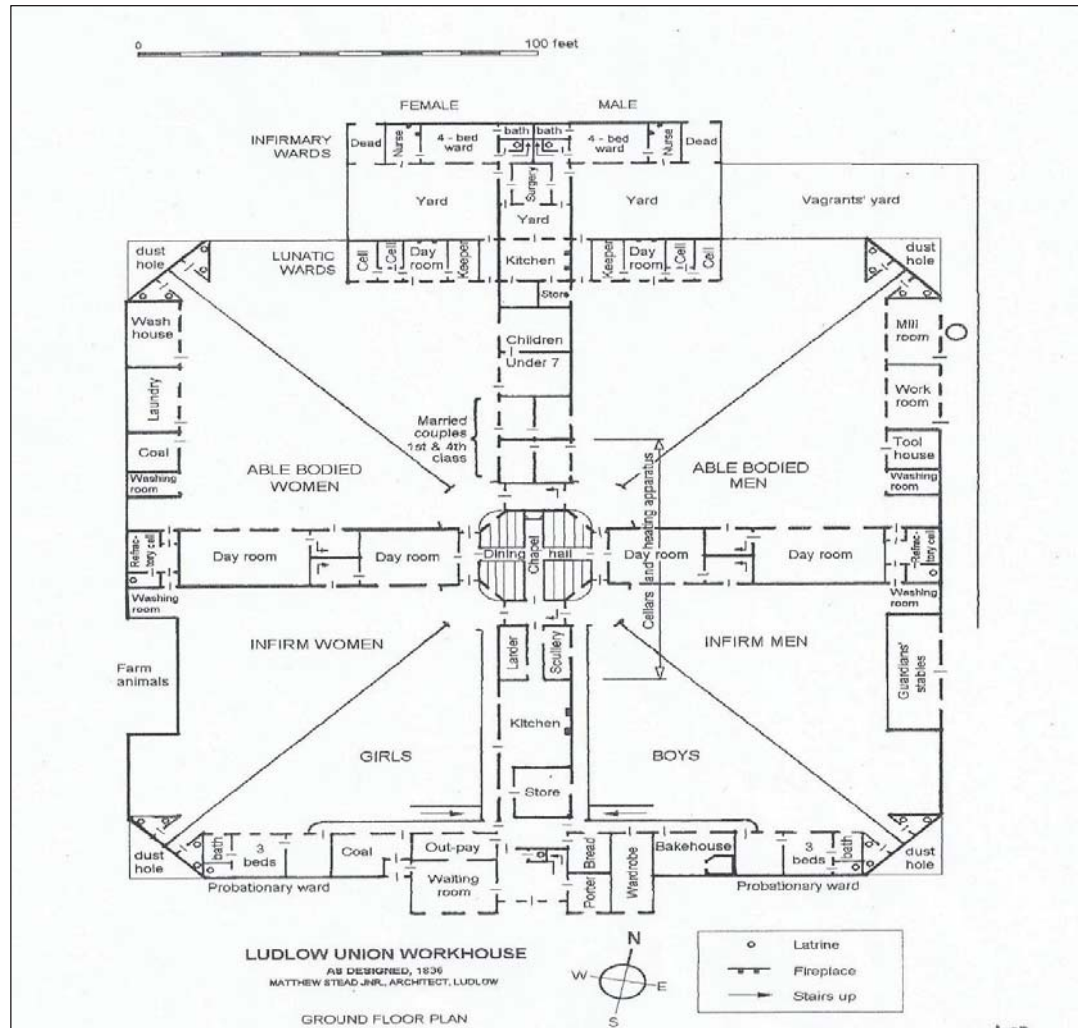


Figure 2: Ground Floor plans for Ludlow Union Workhouse by Matthew Stead, 1836 (after Sumbler, 2016)

8. Sumbler (2016)² conducted extensive archival research on the Ludlow Workhouse as part of a doctoral thesis at Keele University. He notes, with regard to the design of the workhouse, that Ludlow was based on a panopticon, which was an institutional building originally designed by Jeremy Bentham. This was replicated in various scenarios where the desire was to form a central watch tower and 'spokes' which formed yards to enable the segregation of inmates. Ludlow appears almost identical to the model plans for workhouses produced by Sampson Kempthorne, and it is likely Stead did not deviate far from this design.

² Sumbler, Jeffrey Peter (2016) *Child poverty in Victorian Shropshire: children and the Shropshire Poor Law Unions 1834-1870*. Doctoral thesis, Keele University.

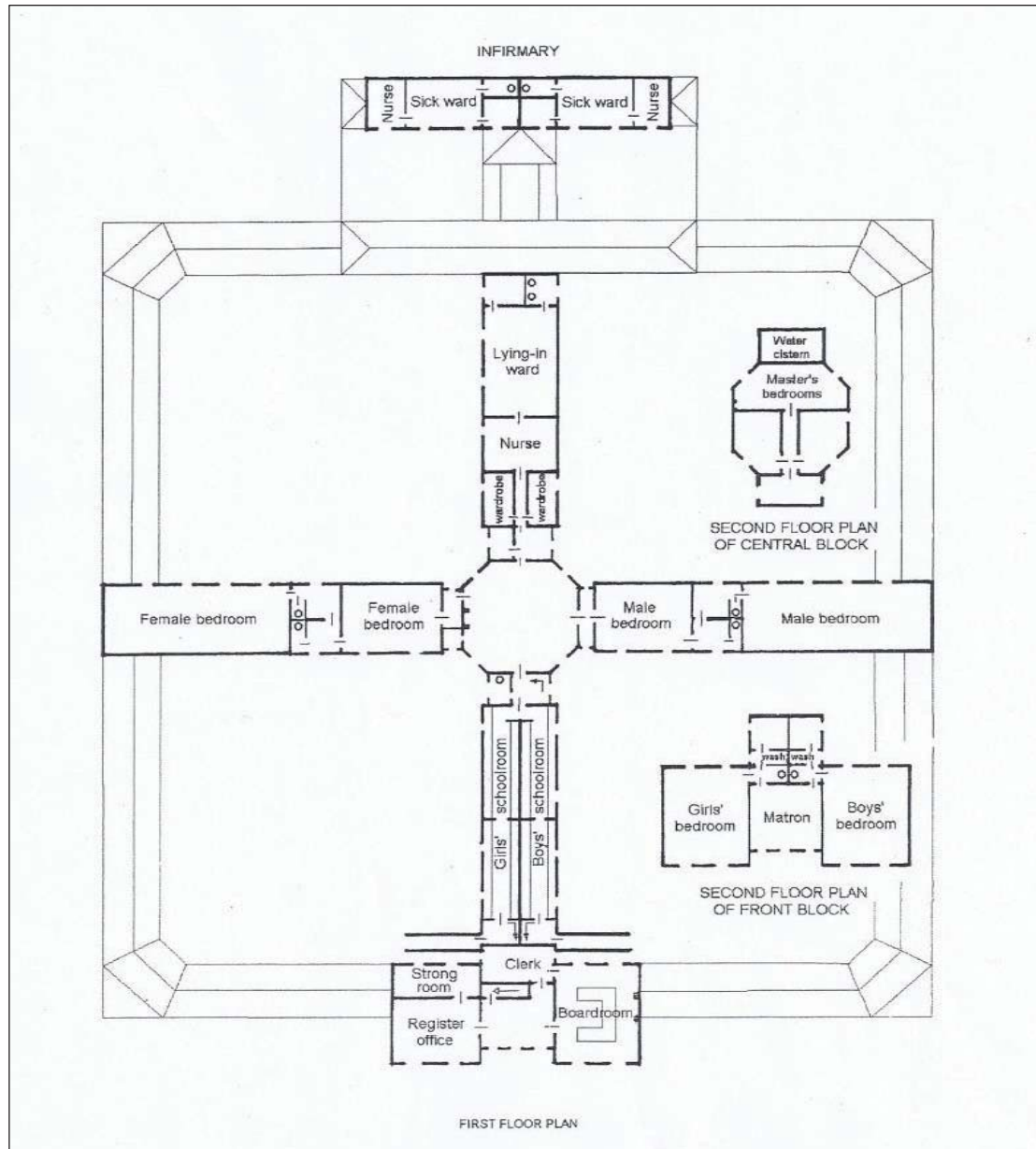


Figure 3: First Floor plans for Ludlow Union Workhouse by Matthew Stead, 1836 (after Sumbler, 2016)

9. Stead had competed with thirteen other architects to win the commission, and had most likely achieved this success because of the appeal of the incorporated medical facilities within the workhouse to one of the guardians was Dr. Stocker, a leading medical practitioner in Ludlow Smith (2007)³.

³ L. Smith, 'Refuges of Last Resort', *Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society*, Vol. LXXXII, 2007, pp. 104 – 105.

10. While the Guardians of the Ludlow Workhouse could have been influenced by the changing social role of workhouses and the ‘softer’ appearance of workhouses that had been constructed just prior, such as those in Amersham which were designed to look like almshouses, they clearly opted for this more austere and spatially restrictive layout. A later 19th Century photograph shows the main elevation of the southern reception building and adjacent eastern wing with narrow windows beneath the eaves, covered in ivy and with gardens to the front, and prior to the 20th century alteration of the entrance way (Figure 4).

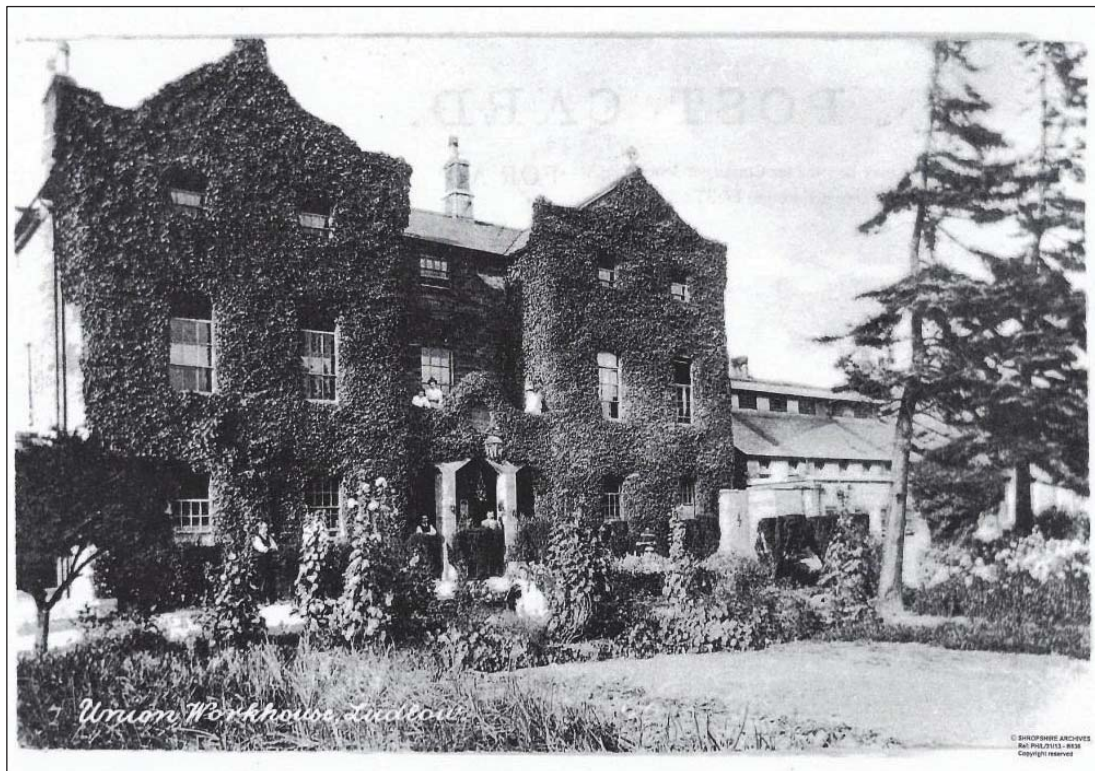


Figure 4: Later 19th Century postcard image of Ludlow Union Workhouse (after Sumbler 2016)

11. The historic maps indicate that the plans drawn by Stead were fully implemented (Figures 5 and 6), and there appears to be only minor alteration to the overall form and layout of the buildings up until c.1924. Sumbler states that:

“despite the original cost estimate for the building being too low, and a consequent overspend, the building was constructed according to the plans and, unusual for Shropshire workhouses, did not later have to be altered except for the building for vagrants’ accommodation” (2016, 118).

12. Apart from the vagrants accommodation, the extension of which can be seen on the Ordnance Survey map published in 1926, the mapping demonstrates that the majority of the building complex remained remarkably unaltered until after the 1960s.



Figure 5: Extract from the Ordnance Survey Map Shropshire LXXVIII.NE, Surveyed: 1884, Published: 1884



Figure 6: Extract from the Ordnance Survey Map Shropshire LXXVIII.NE, Revised: 1902, Published: 1904



Figure 7: Extract from the Ordnance Survey Map Shropshire LXXVIII.8, Revised: 1924, Published: 1926 This shows the expansion of the eastern wing and addition of the Vagrants Hospital (Circled)



Figure 8: Extract from the Ordnance Survey Map Shropshire LXXVIII.NE, Revised: 1949, Published: ca. 1953

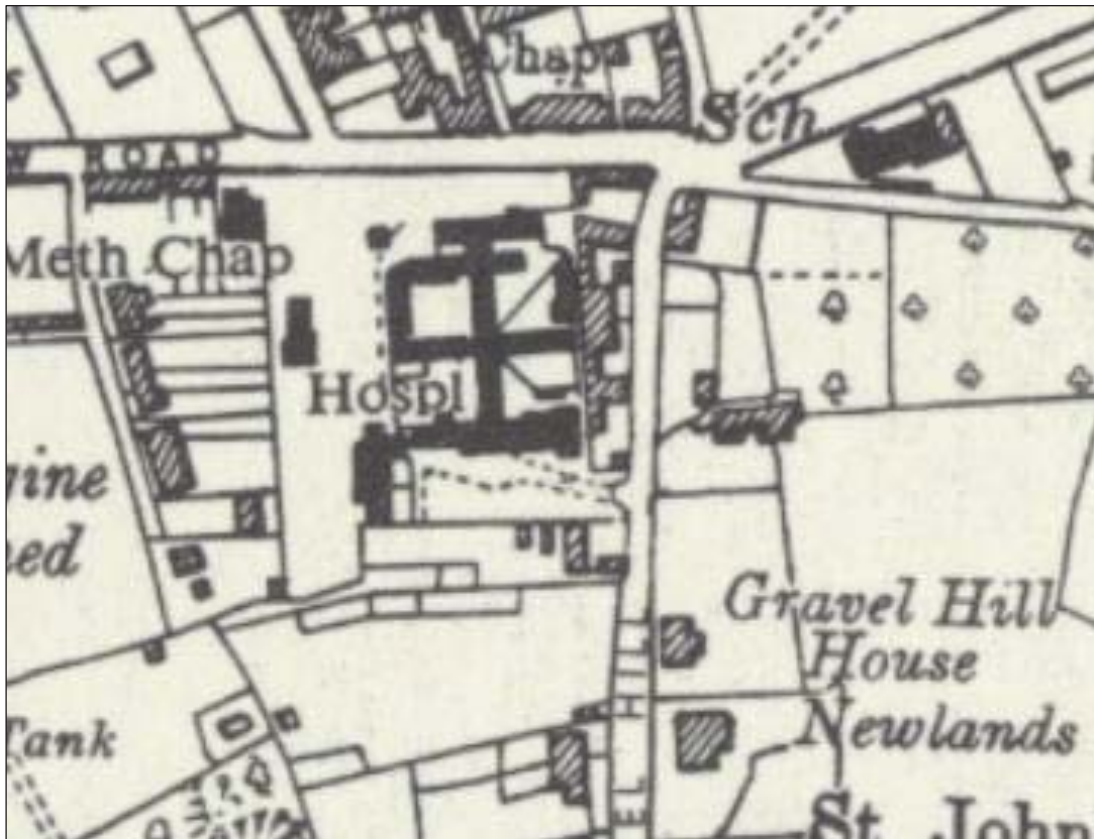


Figure 9: Extract from the Shropshire OS Map SO57NW – A, Published: 1964

13. After 1930, the workhouse became a Public Assistance Institution then, in 1948, joined the National Health Service as East Hamlet Hospital, now known and Ludlow Community Hospital.



Figure 10: Photograph of the master and matron of the Ludlow Workhouse, Frank and Martha Davies, their two children, Reg and Doris Davies, and members of the workhouse staff c. 1910 to 1918 (after Ludlow and Tenbury Wells Advertiser, 30th July 2015)

Site Inspection



Figure 11: Ludlow Community Hospital – view of entrance block (southern façade)

14. The site was visited in September 2020, however due to Covid19 restrictions in place only the areas of the buildings unoccupied by patients could be inspected. This restriction did not prevent access to key areas or to the principal historic buildings, the majority of which are no longer in use for the provision of medical care.
15. The only surviving buildings that appear to relate to the 19th century workhouse building are the south reception (main building and the southern section of its northern 'spoke'), the (exterior) of the vagrants accommodation/infirmary (now the Holly Suite), as well as the detached infirmary to the south west, built in c.1874.

16. Mapping indicates that the majority of the original buildings that made up the iconic cruciform building plan north of the entrance range were demolished between the later the 1970s and 1985, some time prior to the listing of the remaining buildings in 1993.

17. While the list description refers solely to the southern reception building, which was part of the original workhouse, the adjoining buildings are also considered to be covered within the extent of the listing through the provisions of Section 1.5 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and conservation Areas) Act, 1990. No inspection was made of any of the 20th century hospital buildings, which remain in use and were not possible to inspect. By virtue of direct internal attachment (for many areas) it is considered that they are also part of the listed building. As buildings dating to the last quarter of the 20th century and of entirely utilitarian appearance they do not play a role in the heritage values of the listed buildings though they reflect ongoing hospital use.



Figure 12: View of the later porch and glazed balcony and original and replacement fenestration

Entrance Block/ Southern range

18. The southern entrance and its single radial block to the north are the only surviving buildings from the 1830s. The western part of the southern range was removed in the 20th century, and the eastern wing comprises the remaining shell of the vagrants infirmary from 1874 and the block extension from c. 1924. These buildings forming the eastern wing have undergone substantial internal alteration and have been reconfigured since their original construction.



Figure 13: Western elevation of the entrance block, showing truncated western wing and brick chimney replacement

19. Externally, the entrance block of the workhouse is typically plain and utilitarian in character, with cut ashlar used only on the southern façade and squared coursed rubble utilised for the remainder of the building. Much of the fenestration appears to be original (wooden six-over-six sashes), with replacements evident on the ground floor and rear. The chimney stacks, built in brick, appear to be

replacements. The porch to the front of the building and glazing of balcony over the entrance are 20th century alterations.



Figure 14: Vagrants infirmary (louvered clerestory roof visible), 1960s wooden shed at forefront, and range added prior to 1924 (right).



Figure 15: rear elevation of the range (left) showing brick construction, 20th century brick store at forefront, and vagrants infirmary behind.



Figure 16: rear elevation of the entrance block showing original fenestration to upper floors, scaffolded and cordoned stairwell to access.



Figure 17: Rear range (radial 'spoke') western elevation adjoining the later 20th century hospital building to its north, and showing brick replacement chimney stack, replacement windows and inserted ventilation and ducting.



Figure 18: Rear range (radial 'spoke') eastern elevation adjoining the entrance block to the south, hospital building to its north, and showing replacement windows and doorway alteration.



Figure 19: Rear view of the upper floors of the entrance block to the south (scaffolded).

20. Given the large number of alterations and additions, particularly to the rear elevations of the southern range of buildings, they are no longer readable as part of the original radial plan and have been crowded by 20th century additions and extensions. Alterations to doorways and replacement windows and chimney stacks are evident here (Figures 13 – 19).
21. The interior of the entrance block contains few distinctive historic features, and has also undergone significant alteration throughout its use. The ground floor remains in use as offices, and a number of the original reception rooms (what was the waiting hall) have been sub-divided – noticeable in comparison to the historic plans (figures x-y). To the right of the entrance hall the rooms have also been sub-divided by partition walls.

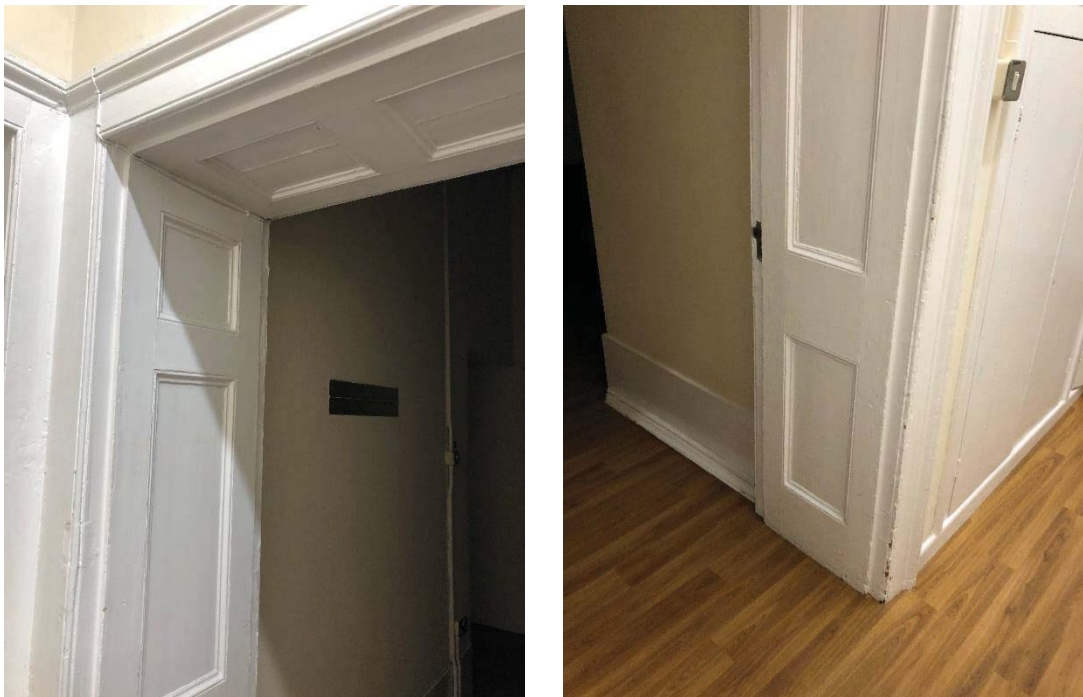


Figure 20: Panelled doorway reveal on ground floor of entrance block

22. With the exception of some panelled doorway reveals (mentioned in the list description) the ground floor possesses few indications of its original interiors (Figure 20). The panelled reveals are examples of historic joinery but are no longer an element of a complete interior treatment and are not of particular note in terms of 19th century joinery.

23. The first floor provides an example of an arched doorways (Figure 21, below), which may date to the rebuilding/alteration of the western range. The 'Strong Room' and Register office' have been subdivided into a corridor and are not readable in accordance with the original layout. There is no access to the second floor or to the rear range or 'spoke' from the first floor of the building.

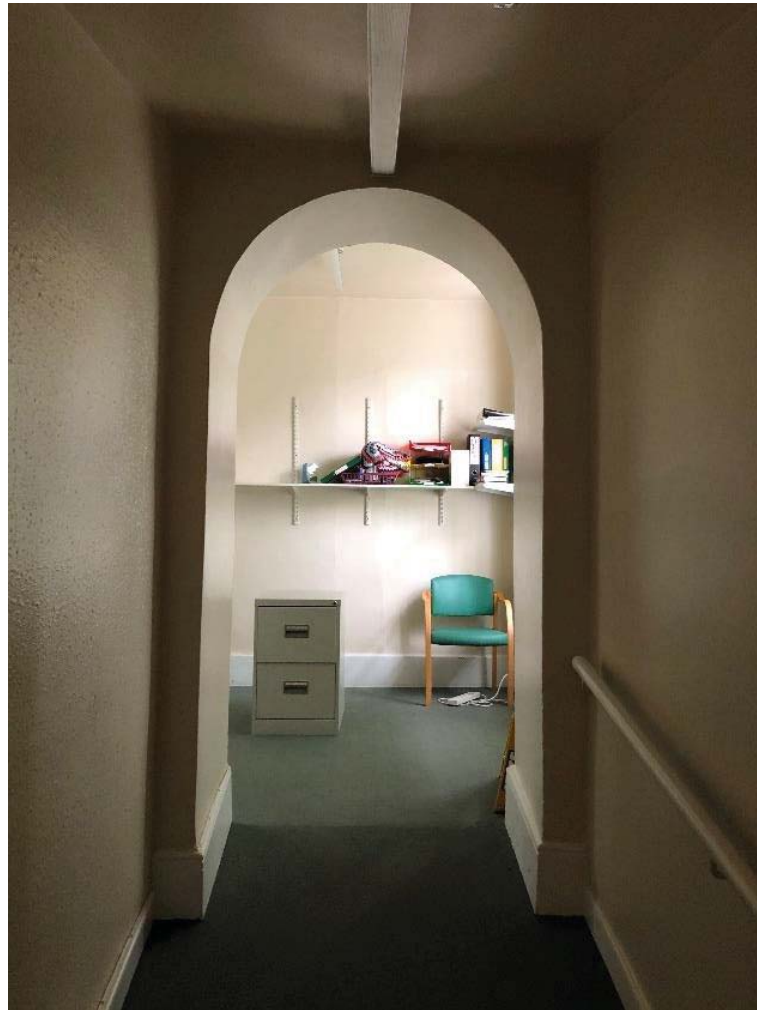


Figure 21: Arched doorway on ground floor of entrance block

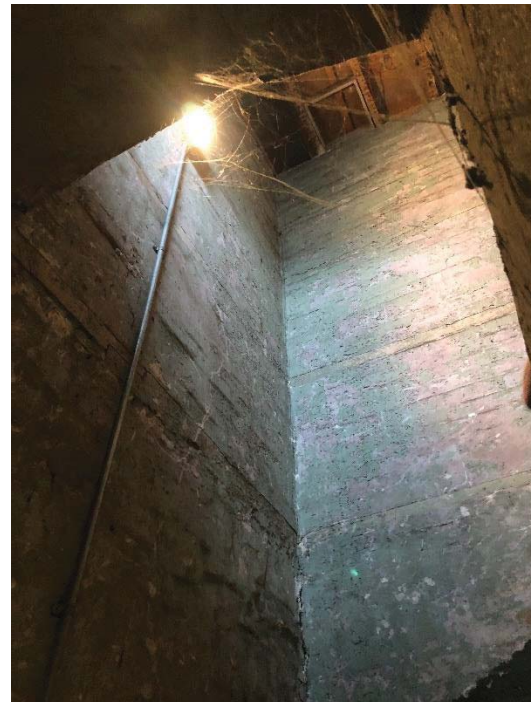


Figure 22: Stairway to the second floor of the entrance block

24. The second floor is accessed via a separate external stair to the north of the building (currently under scaffold and boarding, see Figure 16 above and 22 below).
25. The second floor is currently cordoned off due to safety concerns and is in very poor condition. The photographs below (Figures 23 – 39) document the interiors.
26. Original plans of the second floor are not available and therefore the original use of these rooms and their layout has not been identified.



Figures 23 and 24: The stairwell accessing the second floor of the entrance block



Figures 25 and 26: The stairwell accessing the second floor of the entrance block, detail of iron handrail



Figure 27 and 28: View down the stairwell and view of the stairwell ceiling, rear of entrance block access to second floor



Figures 29 and 30: room at rear of the second floor, showing doorway to western room and condition of roof beams



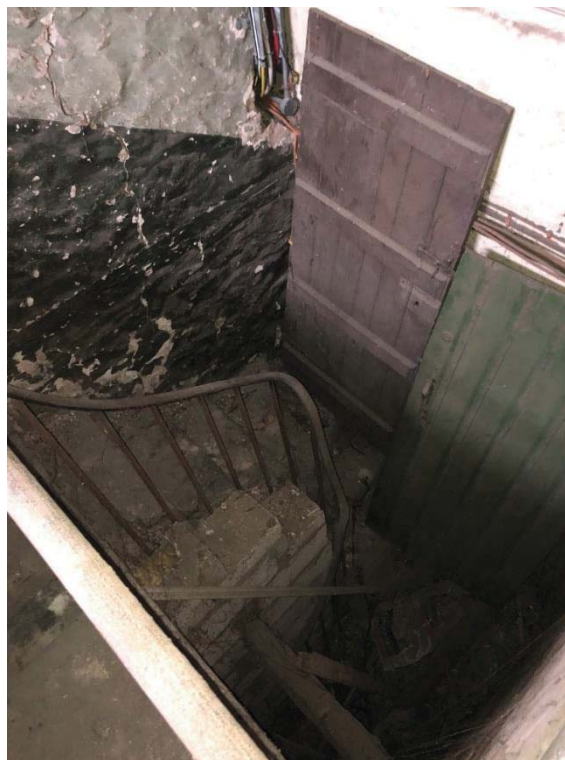
Figures 31 and 32: room at rear of the second floor, showing doorway to front room and entrance into western room



Figures 33-34: Western room on second floor, collapsed roof beams and replacements and window detail



Figures 35 and 36: Western room on second floor window detail, and below, blocked stairwell from the central rear room of the second floor (leading to first floor, not accessible)





Figures 37 and 38: front central room of second floor (repaired roof structure)





Figure 39: Eastern room of second floor, mirroring the western room in layout

27. The original purpose of the second floor is unknown, however the main rooms appear to have been largely unaltered in terms of their layout. The eastern and western rooms are of equal size and proportions. The smaller front central room has two doorways into the rear central room, and it is unclear whether it was previously divided. The stairwell leading down to the first floor remains in place, but is blocked and structurally unsound. These spaces are markedly simpler and starker in their character with walls only of painted brick, bare floors and plank doors. There is no ostentation of treatment to these spaces.

28. The ground floor level of the radial block which adjoins the entrance block appears to have retained some of its original layout and structure. The most notable feature is the barrel-vaulted ceiling, which extends throughout the ground floor and only appears to be concealed by a suspended ceiling and fittings in one of the rooms. Steel girder supports have been used where the vault over one of the rooms has become unsound.

29. A large fireplace remains in the kitchen, however this area was in use and could not be accessed. It is likely this is an original feature of the kitchen (one of few

rooms which has also retained its function). The kitchen adjoins a 1980s brick block range, which could not be accessed but functions as a dining area.

30. The vagrants infirmary (now Holly Suite) replaced the earlier bakehouse and male reception. The building was constructed at the same width as the entrance block (substantially wider than the original wing) and at one storey but with a high clerestory roof affording greater ventilation. The evidence on site suggests that the roof is a later replacement rather than a late 19th Century structure.
31. The interior of the old vagrants infirmary was in use and could not be accessed, however this building has been entirely renovated and rearranged in the later 20th century and the original layout of the wards lost.
32. The N-S aligned building which adjoins the infirmary to its east has most recently been used as a laundry. It is a brick built building with a stone façade which visually references the adjacent 1830s buildings. The interior of the building contains no historic features and has been much altered since its construction (doorways bricked up, partitions removed/ added). The interior is white painted brickwork.

The 1874 Infirmary (disused Maternity Unit)

33. This building is detached from the rest of the buildings on site, and although it did not form part of the plans for the original workhouse, it has been present as part of the complex since c. 1874 and was built to increase the capacity of the in-house infirmary for the inmates. Like the vagrants infirmary this increase in facilities also allowed for a greater degree of segregation and the creation of 'fever wards' and it is most likely that its spatial separation from the rest of the buildings reflects its purpose for the isolation of inmates suffering infectious diseases.
34. Additional bathrooms and WCs were added to the upper floor of the building in c. 1897, and can be seen externally as brick built additions supported over the doorways by steel columns. Iron fire escapes were also added to the front elevation in the early 20th century.
35. It has most recently been utilised as a maternity unit, however it is no longer considered suitable for modern medical purposes and is now disused.



Figure 40: External view of the south-western infirmary building (disused maternity unit)

36. Externally the building does not visually link to or reference the entrance block and southern range in style or character, being constructed of red brick and of far less imposing design, it sits within the site as a visually subservient and ancillary building.

37. Internal inspection of the building confirmed that like other historic buildings on site it has undergone alterations according to its changing use and the requirements of medical facilities. The interior is plain, but spacious and well-lit by its double aspect, in contrast to the earlier buildings on the site. Apart from the windows (some of which appear to be original sash windows) and a few boarded up fireplaces, there are very few identifiable historic features.



Figure 41: Example of the one of the larger second floor rooms



Figure 42: Blocked stairwell within the building



Figure 43: Rear room on first floor, original wooden frame sash windows and modern fire escape



Figure 44: Corridor extending along the front of the building with wards off to rear

Summary of Significance

38. The surviving historic workhouse and infirmary buildings at Ludlow Hospital currently adjoin a series of modern hospital buildings. The vast majority of the workhouse buildings were demolished in the latter part of the 20th century, and their distinctive layout and design, which was fundamental to both their function and the ideological inclination of the period, can now only be appreciated through documentary sources.
39. The southern entrance block and radial block to its rear are the only remnants of the original 1830s workhouse, and have since been surrounded by later structures.
40. The significance of these buildings stems primarily from their historic value, which is retained not only by the buildings themselves (which are now disjointed and much altered) but through supporting archival evidence such as original plans and layouts, as well as Guardians minutes. The entrance block and attached radial block possess a low level of architectural interest when viewed as they now stand, without their corresponding wings and ranges.
41. The interiors of the buildings contain limited historic features, the majority of which have been compromised or removed during the alterations and renovations of the buildings throughout the 20th century in particular. The second (uppermost) floor of the entrance block has remained largely unaltered, however it does not contain any features which are of exceptional interest.
42. The archaeological value of the buildings is considered to be restricted to the earliest remaining structures on the site (namely the entrance block and its radial block to the rear), where surviving historic fabric may be considered of value in the understanding of construction methods.
43. Many of the historic buildings are in poor condition and contain areas which are structurally unsound. While this has no bearing on their significance, it is of relevance to their continued use and sustainability, and in some instances reflects the quality of their construction.