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VE Day celebrations outside the De Grey Rooms – image © Yorkshire Evening Press

The De Grey Rooms & De Grey House

St Leonard's Place, York

Statement of Significance

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1 Introduction

1.1 Report Context

The site's tenant, the York Theatre Royal (YTR), has commissioned Maybank Buildings Conservation (MBC) to prepare a 'Statement of Significance' for the De Grey Rooms & De Grey House, St Leonard's Pl, York. De Grey House, built in 1835, and the De Grey Rooms, built 1841-2, are both Grade II* designated buildings. The report was commissioned in preparation for a Listed Building Consent application for minor roof repairs and minor internal alterations and redecoration. This document is intended to feed into a forthcoming conservation plan for the Theatre Royal estate. As works intended for De Grey House constitute like-for-like repairs rather than alterations, this report focussed primarily on the De Grey Rooms.

- The De Grey Rooms is located at National Grid Reference SE6011652202.
- De Grey House is located at National Grid Reference SE6011652185.
- The local planning authority is the City of York Council.

1.2 Designations

The site incorporates or is affected by a range of heritage designations, including:

- The De Grey Rooms is a **Grade II*** listed building (UID #464567: see Appendix A).
- De Grey House is a **Grade II*** listed building (UID #464565: see Appendix A).
- Located within the **York Central Core Conservation Area**.
- Located within the '**Museum Gardens and Exhibition Square**' **Character Area** and within an area broadly defined as 'Cultural'.
- Located within the **Central Area of Archaeological Importance**.
- Immediately adjacent to the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Bootham Bar and the City Walls (UID: 13280 as 'York Minster cathedral precinct: including Bootham Bar and the length of City Walls extending round the precinct up to Monk Bar').

1.3 Legislative Context

As required by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in March 2012, applications concerning proposals affecting a designated heritage asset must be accompanied by a statement that describes;

'the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary' (para. 128).

1.4 Authorship

This report has been prepared by Dr Dav Smith, Director of Maybank Buildings Conservation LLP. Dr Smith is an experienced buildings archaeologist, and an Associate Lecturer in the Archaeology Department at the University of York. He is Deputy Director of the MA Archaeology of Buildings programme at the University of York.

1.5 Methodology

This report provides a summary of the understood history of the site and its immediate context, followed by an assessment of significance against Historic England's (2009) *Conservation Principles*.

The report is based on a combination of fabric analysis and documentary research, incorporating earlier studies of the structure. The De Grey Rooms was visited in December 2017 to undertake visual analysis. The fabric analysis involved close examination of the materials, architectural style, and construction of the standing building, including evidence of use and later change. Documentary research was largely limited to secondary sources, but includes primary documentary evidence, a map regression exercise, and the use of pictorial sources.

2 History of the Site and its Setting

2.1 Site History and Context

The De Grey Rooms & De Grey House are located on St Leonard's Place, York, on the north side of the city's inner ring road and near York Minster (see figs. 1 & 2). Forming part of York's cultural district, the De Grey Rooms lies between De Grey House (Grade II*) and the Theatre Royal (Grade II* and SAM) on one side, and Bootham Bar (SAM) on the other. Opposite the site are Exhibition Square, the York Art Gallery (Grade II) and the King's Manor (Grade I and SAM).

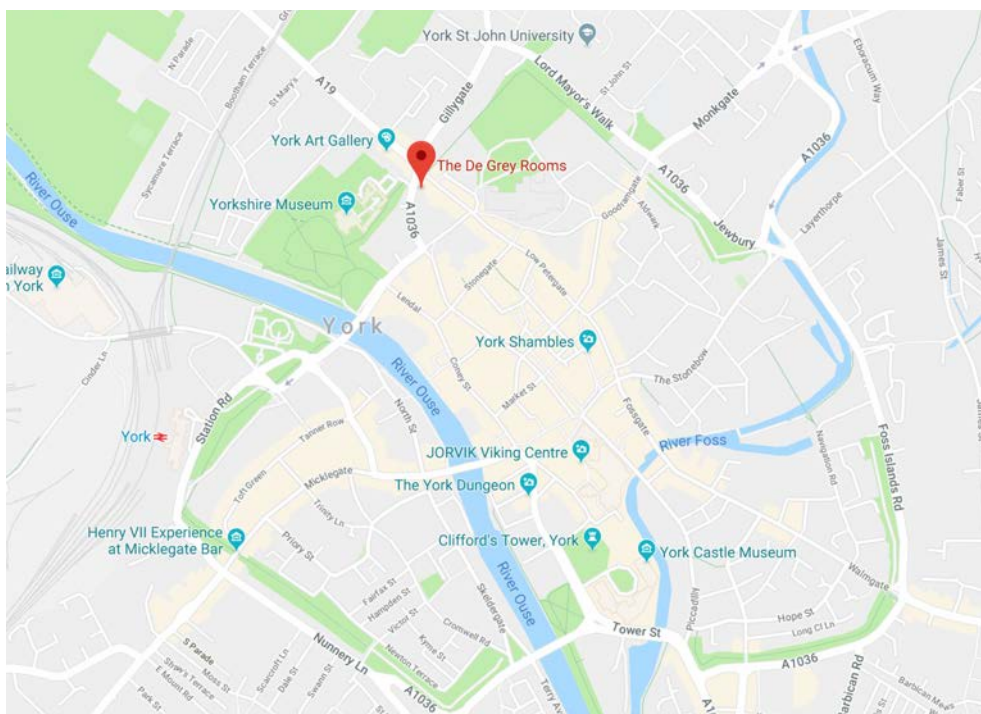


Figure 1 Location Map of the De Grey Rooms within the historic core of York © Google Maps



Figure 2 De Grey Rooms (yellow pin) with De Grey House and the Theatre Royal (immediately below) and Exhibition Square and the Art Gallery (upper left) © Google Earth.

2.1.1 Early Site History

Excavation has revealed some evidence for Iron Age settlement in this part of York through. However, the first significant development was the formation of a Roman legionary fortress for the Legio IX Hispana in c.71 AD. The original timber and earthwork structure was replaced by a stone fortress and permanent buildings from c.120 AD. The fort remained occupied until c.400AD, with substantial evidence of rebuilding and modification in the fourth century. The site lies partially over the Roman fortress wall and partially within the praetentura of the fortress, the forward area that contained the tribunes' houses and the barracks of the leading cohorts. Significant late-Roman and sub-Roman levels are likely to survive, on the evidence of excavation at 8 Blake Street to the south, at c.2 to 2.5 m. below current street level (Hall 1997).

2.1.2 Early Medieval Site History

While there is little direct evidence for Anglo-Saxon occupation within the fortress area, it cannot be discounted. The discovery of two fragments of Middle Anglo-Saxon cross-shafts from St Leonard's Place close to the Theatre Royal, dated to the late seventh and ninth century, suggest a Middle Anglo-Saxon church nearby, in an area which has been suggested to be an elite or religious space (RCHME 1981, 85). By the early seventh century, the city, now called Eoforwic and developing around the enclosure of the Roman fortress, had become an important royal settlement in the Kingdom of Northumbria. Settlement began to spread into the fortress area, including the vicinity of the Theatre Royal, by the beginning of the tenth century.

During drainage works associated with the construction of the De Grey Rooms in 1842, workmen uncovered a "large quantity of ancient coins, within about a yard of the foundations of the old Roman wall, which runs near to the building" (*Hull Packet* 06/05/1842). Reportedly found around 5 ½ feet below street level, near the base of the Roman wall foundation, the hoard contained approximately 10,000 styca (late 8th or 9th century pre-Viking Northumbrian coins) buried within a pot (Hargroves, quoted in Smith 1847, 230).

2.1.3 St Peter's / St Leonard's Hospital

The present site of the De Grey Rooms sits across the medieval northern boundary wall of St Peter's Hospital (later rededicated to St Peter). In c.937, a hospital was supposedly founded by King Athelstan on a site to the west of the contemporary cathedral (the site of which is currently unlocated) and associated with the Culdees who served that church. Patricia Cullum (1991 & 1993) suggests that this was a preserved memory of a tenth century foundation, known only from a

thirteenth century source. Nicolas Orme (Orme and Webster 1995), however, has clearly demonstrated that no firm documentary evidence exists for the establishment of any hospital in England as a freestanding independent organisation before the Norman Conquest, and suggests that the apparent endowment by Athelstan should be seen as a source of income used to support the needy informally. The existence of this endowment was confirmed without mention of a hospital by William I (Dugdale et. al. 1831, 601).

William II Rufus granted a site for a new hospital in York before 1100, an area of about 4 acres, and built a chapel of St Peter there from which it took its dedication, and to which he transferred the endowment held by the Chapter of St Peter of York. The hospital was to be served by Augustinian canons and sisters. Excavation has revealed two or more phases of major timber buildings along the south-west fortress wall that indicate its development in the late 11th and early 12th century and which might suggest similar development elsewhere. The boundaries of this hospital are known from later documents (see fig. 3). The north-west and south-east boundaries were the surviving walls of the Roman fortress to either side of the Multangular Tower, the south - east boundary lies below the present Museum Street (originally Footless Lane, more recently Finkle Lane) with the hospital's principal gate opposite the end of Blake Street, with the north - eastern boundary returning along the north-eastern boundary of the Theatre Royal, turning west on the north side of a road immediately north of the twelfth century undercroft within the Theatre Royal and continuing to the midline line of the present St Leonard's Place and following the curve of that road towards Bootham Bar. This area is shown to be extra-parochial on the 1852 Ordnance Survey map of York, and includes the ditch outside the city wall.

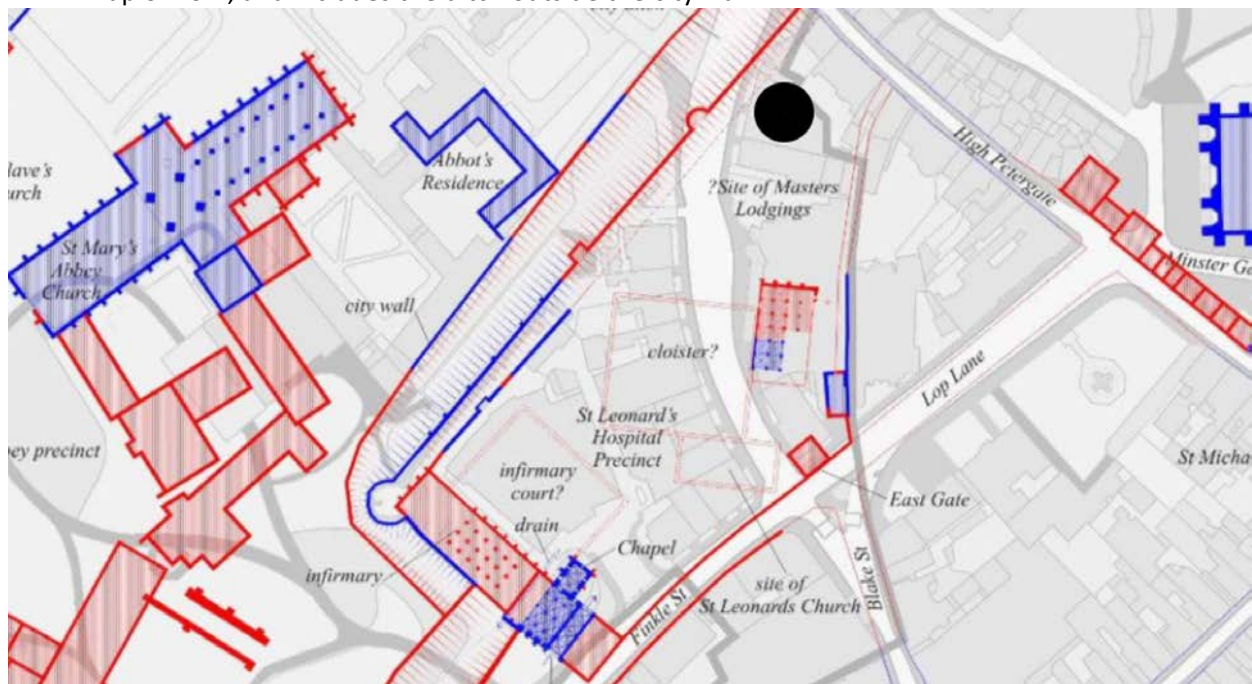


Figure 3 Known and conjectured buildings of St Leonard's Hospital and surrounding medieval structures (blue=existing, red=known). The black circle indicates to location of the De Grey Rooms, showing its location against the grey boundary wall of the hospital (from Simpson & Brown with Addyman Archaeology 2012)

King Stephen built a church dedicated to St Leonard 'in the high street adjoining the hospital' (Calendar of Patent Rolls 1542-47, 405), in the mid C12, from which the hospital was renamed as St Leonard's Hospital. Addyman's (2012) plan (see Fig. 3 above) suggests the possible location of the Master's Lodgings near the present site of De Grey House.

2.1.4 Post-Reformation History

There is evidence that the hospital was in decline in the later Middle Ages. In 1350 its buildings were in great disrepair (Calendar of Patent Rolls 1348-50, 518), and in 1515 the church and other buildings were again dilapidated (Page 1913, 343). By 1462 the number of patients had declined to 127 (from a peak of 270) (Clay 1909, 222), and by the 1530s it had collapsed to 44 patients (Orme and Webster 1995, 163). The hospital was surrendered on 1 December 1539, and was held by its last master Thomas Magnus as part of his pension until 1544, when it was granted to Sir George Darcy (Page 1913, 343).

Later the mint was built on a site lying south-west of St. Leonard's Place, after which the area becomes known as Mint Yard (see Map Regression in Appendix B). The site was granted to Robert, Lord Dudley, in 1564, and was sold to Sir Henry Savile by 1566. There was an attempt to turn the area into a market in 1637 but the Corporation took legal action to crush the idea. During the 17th and 18th centuries the site was occupied by houses, gardens, wood-yards, stables (with a capacity of 200 horses for local public houses) and the Hawker and Pedlars Office. Some of the undercrofts of the former hospital (some surviving as the Keregan Room in the Theatre Royal) were used as wine vaults and stables in the early C18. This confirms the at least partial survival of a C12 hospital structure in the location of the present Theatre Royal. A theatre was developed on the site from 1744 by the widow of Thomas Keregan.

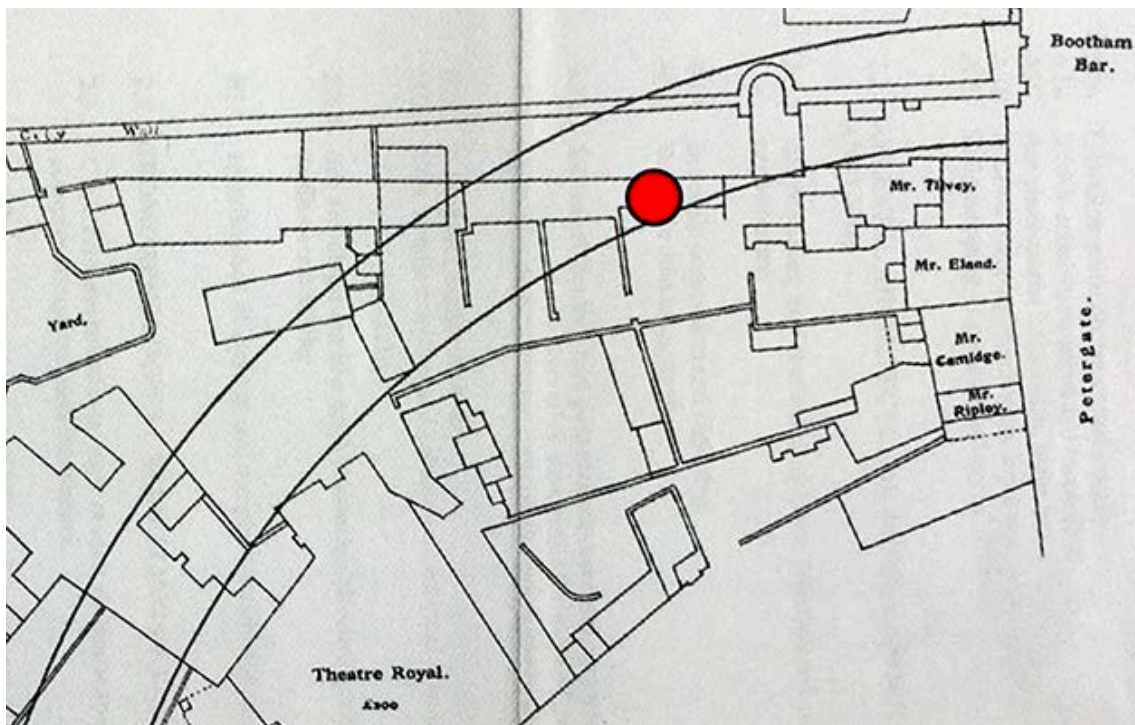


Figure 4 Detail from an 1831 Plan of the Mint Yard showing a proposed route for St Leonard's Place. The red dot marks the approximate location of the De Grey Rooms (Private Collection reproduced in Addyman 2015).

There is little evidence for the later history of the specific site of the De Grey Rooms. An 1831 plan of Mint Yard (fig. 4) shows the surviving city wall (including a semicircular tower) and a number of structures on the site, likely outbuildings developed at the rear of the houses of Mr Tilvey (stonemason) and Mr Eland on High Petergate.

In February 1830 the Corporation of York mooted a proposal for a new street through Mint Yard connecting the top of Blake Street to Bootham Bar. Opened in 1834 and named St Leonard's Place, the new street provided new carriage access to the Theatre Royal, opening up the comparatively unproductive Mint Yard and providing a new thoroughfare for development and gentrification.

2.2 History of De Grey House and the De Grey Rooms

- 2.2.1 In the 1830s the officers of the Yorkshire Hussars held their mess in the Black Swan Inn on Peasholme Green, but were increasingly unhappy with the size and quality of the space. After unsuccessfully attempting to secure space in the Assembly Rooms, it was decided to construct new premises through subscription.
- 2.2.2 Initial plans for a building of three bays on the present site were drawn up by the architects P.F. Robinson and G.T. Andrews in 1835, but only a single bay was constructed, which today forms De Grey House. Built for William Blanchard, the lease stated that any building constructed next to De Grey House must be in a uniform architectural style with the house. This stipulation presented some issue for the design of the De Grey Rooms, but was resolved by rendering the principal exterior while designing a highly decorative façade otherwise at odds with that of De Grey House.
- 2.2.3 The De Grey Rooms were designed by the renowned railway architect G. T. Andrews in 1841. The building's footprint is the result of a site constrained by adjacent properties and, in particular, the carriageway to the rear of De Grey House. The site was secured from the Corporation on a 75-year lease for 20s per annum.
- 2.2.4 Built in 1841-2, the De Grey Rooms (see fig. 5) were principally constructed as the Officer's Mess of the Yorkshire Hussars. It was owned by a Joint Stock Company with a capital of £5000 in £25 shared (Whellan 1857, 623). Officers of the regiment and local gentry chiefly held many of these shares, including the 2nd Earl De Grey himself, who commanded the regiment.

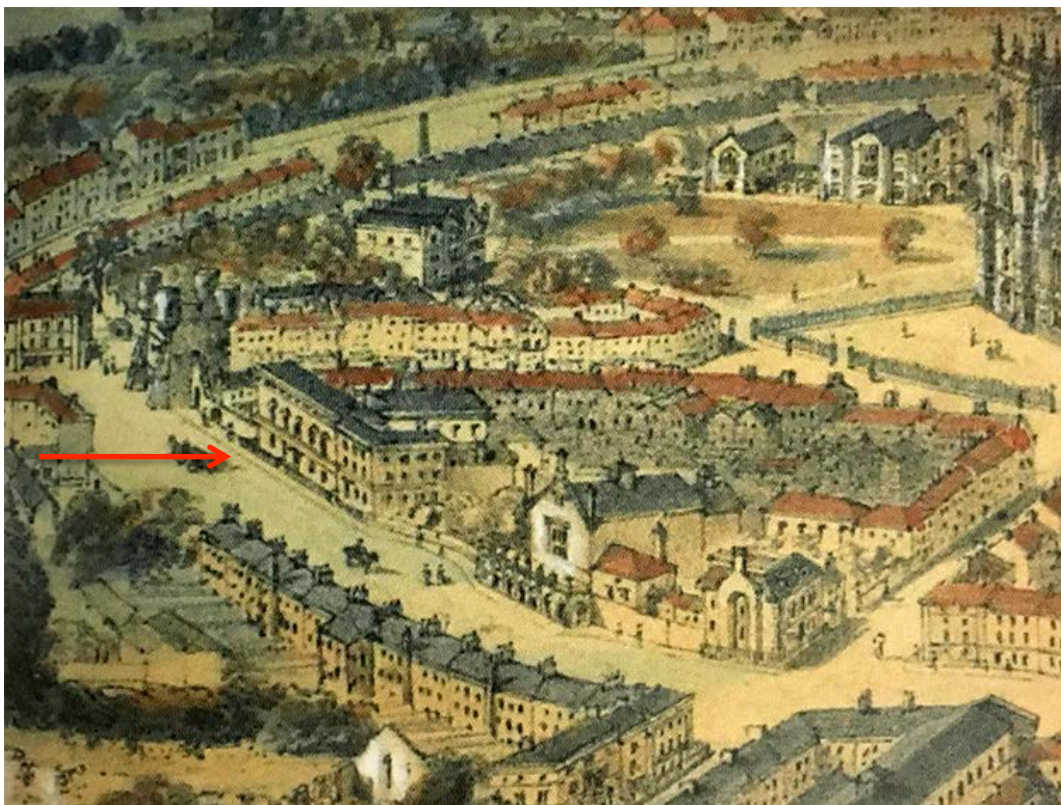


Figure 5 Detail from Whittock's 1865 Bird's Eye View of York, showing the De Grey Rooms (red arrow) and De Grey House with the earlier facade of the Theatre Royal (Brown 2012, 175).

- 2.2.5 The prospectus for the new De Grey Rooms stated "it has long been the subject of complaint in York that amongst the numerous public buildings in the city, it does not possess a commodious suite of rooms adapted for various purpose for which the magnitude of the Burlington and Festive Concert Room render them wholly unsuitable" (reproduced in the RCHME notes).

- 2.2.6 This highlights that outside of its official use as an officer's mess, the De Grey Rooms were intended as an additional public space. Indeed they were extensively used from the outset as meeting rooms and an events space. This included both corporate and civic use, including for company meetings, folk dances, auctions, and events by the Archbishop of York. As early as 1843 the De Grey Rooms was regularly used for meetings of the York & North Midland Railway Company (*Morning Post* 21/08/1848, 6). The railway connection being maintained through the architect, G T Andrews, who also held shares in the De Grey Rooms, as did his friend, the railway baron, George Hudson.
- 2.27 The De Grey Rooms were also used by the barristers of the northern circuit during the Assizes. Alongside the Assembly Rooms, the De Grey Rooms served as a large meeting space for local elite society. In 1865 the city's gentry requisitioned the De Grey rooms to discuss proposals for a memorial to the late Earl of Carlisle (*Morning Post* 01/12/1865, 6).

2.3 Modern History of De Grey House

- 2.3.1 De Grey House remained as a wealthy domestic residence from its c.1835 construction through to the end of 1908, with newspapers recording it as the residence of the Draper family (William Draper was Surgeon to the York Dispensary) from at least 1878 to 1895 (e.g. *York Herald* 30/12/1878 & *Yorkshire Herald* 03/08/1895). In 1908 a 'Mr Henry Jameson' is listed as residing at De Grey House (*The Times* 21/12/1908)

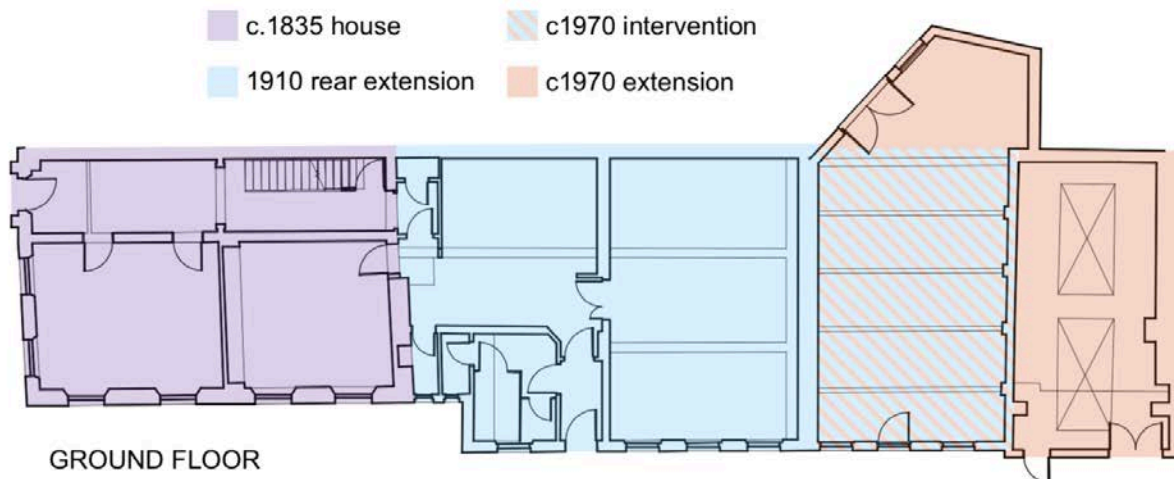


Figure 6 Basic phased ground floor plan of De Grey House. Note – c.1970s extensions (orange) in separate ownerships.

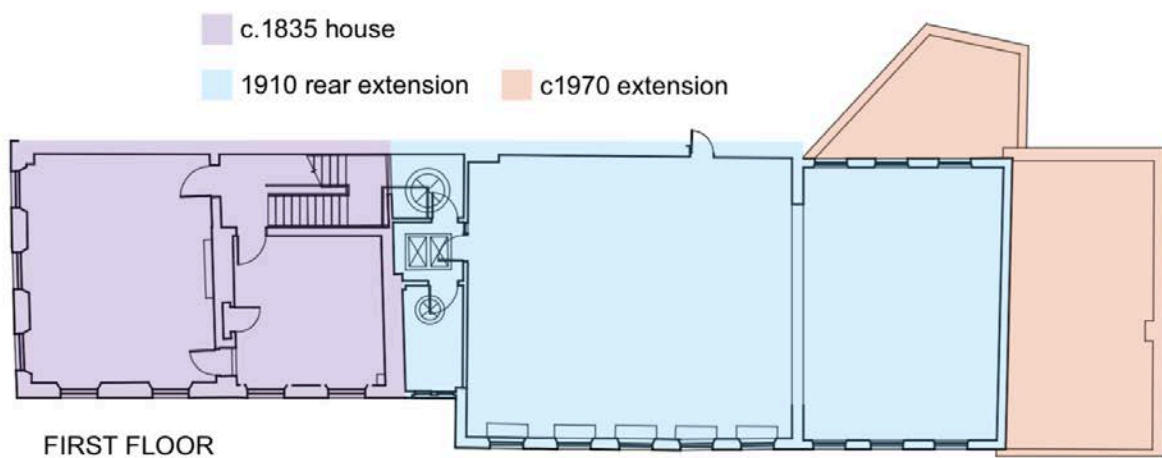


Figure 7 Basic phased first floor plan of De Grey House. Note - c.1970s extensions (orange) in separate ownerships.

- 2.3.2 In 1909 De Grey House was purchased by The York Central Conservative Club as their headquarters, and an extension was built to the rear in 1910, replacing the original single-bay two-storey wing (see Map Regression in Appendix B). The rear extension was reputedly added to provide a billiards hall. De Grey House remained in the ownership of the Conservative Club into the 1960s.
- 2.3.3 By the 1970s De Grey House is listed as the office of the York Department of Tourism (The Times 26/06/1976), and serves as various City Council offices, mostly tourism/events related, throughout the late C20.
- 2.3.4 There was significant further development to the rear of De Grey House during the early 1970s. On the ground floor, the rear portion of the 1910 extension was converted into an electrical substation by Yorkshire Electricity (now Northern Powergrid). As part of this conversion a single-storey angled extension was added to the north, infilling part of the original carriageway.
- 2.3.5 A final extension was added to the rear of De Grey House in the 1970s, when a joinery workshop for the York Theatre Royal was constructed behind the converted electrical substation.
- 2.3.6 In December 2004 De Grey House and the De Grey Rooms were purchased by the present owners, the York Conservation Trust (YCT) (York Press 30/12/2004) and it is leased to York Theatre Royal.

2.4 Modern History of the De Grey Rooms

- 2.4.1 The lease for the De Grey Rooms expired in 1917 and the building came into City Council ownership. The De Grey Rooms are noted as housing the city treasurer's offices in 1925 (RCHME 1961, 533).
- 2.4.2 The military authorities requisitioned the De Grey Rooms during WWII, where they were utilised extensively for dances and events. During the war, WAAFs (Women's Auxiliary Air Force) based at Squadron 4 Bomber Command at Heslington Hall regularly snuck out after curfew to walk into York to attend the dances in the De Grey Rooms (pers. comm. Mrs Doreen Russell 26/06/2013).
- 2.4.3 The military association of the De Grey Rooms presumably explains why they became a focal point for Victory in Europe celebrations in 1945, as seen in a contemporary photograph from the Yorkshire Evening Press (fig. 6).



Figure 8 People gathered outside the De Grey Rooms to celebrate VE Day in 1945. The facade of the building is decked out with bunting and a largely V for victory. From the Yorkshire Evening Press (reproduced in the York Press 04/05/2015).

- 2.4.4 The De Grey Rooms continued to be used for entertainment throughout the century, and the basement kitchens were converted into the 'Oak Room' restaurant around the 1930s.
- 2.4.5 A 1965 newspaper advert for the De Grey Rooms Ltd. notes that the site offered "a remarkable range of wining and dining facilities against a modern yet elegant background", including a "banqueting hall, reception room, three bars and two restaurants, lavishly and sumptuously decorated" (York Press 20/01/2015).
- 2.4.6 From the late C20 the ground floor of the De Grey Rooms hosted York's main Tourist Information Centre (TIC) and its associated call centre, receiving up to 240,000 visitors annually (York Press 28/05/2011).
- 2.4.7 The De Grey Rooms continued to host various events and services, including the Blood Transfusion Service donor sessions, the York Arts Arena, and the York Model Railway Society annual show. The basements were utilised as a secure store for the Trading Standards Department, and a first floor office provided a base for the York Voluntary Guides.
- 2.4.8 In 2003 it was announced that the Tourist Information Centre in the De Grey Rooms was to be moved to a new location, with the Rooms being offered for sale by the City of York Council (York Press 27/08/2003).
- 2.4.9 The York Conservation Trust (YCT) purchased the De Grey Rooms and De Grey House from the City of York Council in December 2004 (York Press 30/12/2004). The Tourist Information Centre remained in the ground floor until 2010, with the remaining space largely occupied by the York Theatre Royal.
- 2.4.10 Between July 2010 and September 2011, the YCT undertook a £400,000 refurbishment and restoration of the building, including the replacement of heavy decorative finishes, such as patterned carpets and wallpapers (York Press 30/01/2013). Work also included the addition of a new mezzanine floor in the basement, and the insertion of a lift shaft within the well of the secondary staircase to provide disabled access through the building (10/01089/LBC).
- 2.4.11 Following the move of the TIC in 2010 the De Grey Rooms were fully occupied by the York Theatre Royal, expanding their partial use of the site since 2005. The York Theatre Royal remains the current tenants.
- 2.4.12 In December 2012, the restored De Grey Rooms won the 'people's choice' award in the York Design Awards 2012, in recognition of the restoration campaign (York Press 30/01/2013).

3 Description of The De Grey Rooms

Externally the De Grey Rooms appear to retain their original design and decoration, particularly to the principal, western, façade. The plan form is heavily constrained by a carriageway that curves around the north and east (rear) sides of the site, and which originally provided access to the rear of De Grey House. There is a surprising lack of pictorial and cartographic information for the De Grey Rooms, although the first floor plan is visible in the 1852 OS map of York (see Map Regression in Appendix B).

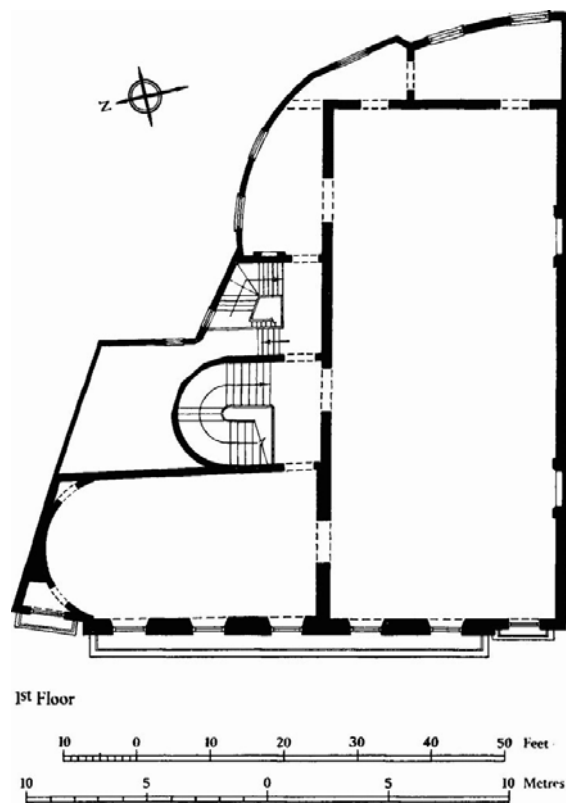


Figure 9 Modern first floor plan showing the constrained footprint of the site and principal rooms, staircases and rear service rooms. (c) RCHME

3.1 Exterior Description

The De Grey Rooms is constructed in brick beneath a white-painted cement render (fig. 10), with a shuttered timber projection to the rear. The roofs are flat and lead covered, while the hipped lantern roof is covered with slates. The principal west elevation sits on St Leonard's Place, overlooking Exhibition Square and the Art Gallery. The basement well is divided from the footpath by original cast-iron railings that incorporate a lamp standard to either side of the central entrance. The elevation comprises 7 bays, the central five of which project slightly forward and feature more elaborate decoration, including a bracket cornice, bracketed pediments over the windows and ground floor horizontal rustication. The first floor windows are tall and round-headed, and a cast-iron balcony runs across the projected central section. The ground floor windows are unadorned rectangular sashes with later glazing. The side bays each are comparatively plain, with a simple moulded cornice, matching first floor windows without the bracketed pediments but with small cast-iron balconies, and there is no ground floor rustication. The off-centre doorway is located within the 5th bay from the north, and contains later doors below a plain fanlight. The northernmost bay contains a gated carriageway providing access to the rear of the building. The six-bay basement contains four-over-eight rectangular sash windows, plain walls, and a plain door beneath the main entrance.

The north and east elevations (being the side and rear elevation) form a continuous curving elevation at ground level (fig. 11). Constructed in brick in English garden wall bond, the ground

floor contains a number of windows including three large eighteen-over-twenty four sash windows on the eastern elevation. Other windows are eight-over-eight sashes, and all the windows have flat brick lintels and sandstone sills. A doorway with a flat brick lintel provides access to the service stair, and a low door provides hatch access to the basement. At first floor level is a shuttered-timber curved projection. The first and second floor windows are mostly ten-over-ten sashes, with the exception of a six-over-six window lighting the service stair.

3.2 Interior Description

As a result of its varied uses, the Ground Floor has been substantially altered from its original plan, with the insertion and removal of walls, fireplaces and suspended ceilings. A central hall leads into the building, with single rooms flanking it to either side. None of these rooms retain their original cornices or skirting boards. The hall leads to the principal stair (fig. 12) that is accessed through a wide moulded archway to the north. This area features a moulded cornice and 15-inch moulded skirting boards. The stair sits within an apsidal space with cantilevered treads and cast-iron vine pattern balusters below a moulded mahogany rail terminating on a turned and moulded newel. The stair is lit from above by a modern lantern. The adjacent service stair is accessed through a fielded and panelled door and runs the full height of the building with quarter landings and with a square timber balustrade. A modern passenger lift runs through the well of the service stair. Towards the rear of the building are modern lavatories (fig. 13), which contain traces of original coved cornices (fig. 14) and 9.5-inch moulded skirting. At the rear is a modern mezzanine floor over the original basement kitchens, which today house the Theatre's costume department. Despite traces of original features, the original plan form and decoration of the ground floor is difficult to read. The principal stair, with its higher level of decoration, appears to be the only ground floor space to retain most of its original design and decoration.

The First Floor of the De Grey Rooms is accessed by either of the staircases and via the lift shaft within the service staircase. The first floor is dominated by the two principal entertaining rooms, being the Hall/Ballroom and the Cocktail Room. Both are accessed from the landing at the top of the main staircase, through large panelled and fielded doors. Immediately facing the stair double doors lead directly into the Hall (fig. 15). A large rectangular room rising to 2 storeys, it runs almost the full depth of the building and features 2 grey marble fireplaces within the south wall. Two single doors in the east wall, lead to service rooms, while another single door in the north wall leads to a service room and the secondary stair. The room is lit by 3 large round-headed windows rising from the floor in the west wall, and by a large lantern above. Running nearly the full length of the room, the lantern is divided into three rectangles by two beams, with further beams surrounding the opening. All of the beams contain Greek key mouldings, with large brackets supporting those on the north and south walls. The apsidal cocktail room runs across the west face of the building, being lit by the remaining 3 round-headed windows of the principal façade. Within the northern apse, panelled and fielded doors on either side lead to small storage cupboards, the western of which is lit by a further round-headed window. With decorated skirting, egg and dart-moulded cornices, ceiling roses, and wall panels, these highly decorative early Victorian interiors are little altered from their 1840s design. The C20 replacement of the lighting being the main alteration to the spaces. The service rooms at the rear of the building (east) follow the curve of the carriageway-derived footprint, creating unusual room shapes. The two rooms to the east contain C20 lavatories and storage, while the single room to the north contains modern catering facilities. A final room is located behind the principal stair, which is currently used as an office. With the exception of stud walls forming the lavatories, the first floor appears to retain its original plan form and most of its original decoration.

The Basements contain a complex of small service rooms, largely occupied today by the Theatre's costume collection. With the exception of the mezzanine floor in the original double-height kitchen at the rear, the basement appears to retain much of its original plan, including cupboards. It retains areas of flag flooring and 6.5-inch moulded skirting boards.

3.3 Phased Building Development of the De Grey Rooms

No early plans of the basement or ground floor are known, with the 1852 OS map showing the first floor plan. The majority of later changes to the buildings layout can be found on the ground floor, where numerous inserted walls have significantly altered the space. Below is a list of known alterations to the building, with specific dates where known, and general dates given based on analysis of the standing fabric. For more details, see phased floor plans below (figs. 6 & 7).

- 1841-2 Construction of the De Grey Rooms to the design of G T Andrews.
- c.1930 Conversion of the basement kitchens into the Oak Room restaurant.
- 1952 The current chandeliers were installed; replacing the original candelabra that hung from the ceiling roses. The winding mechanisms for the original lighting remain on the exterior of the lantern.
- Later C20 Major alterations to the ground floor spaces, including the addition of numerous stud walls, and removal of fireplaces, cornices and skirting boards. Other alterations include the addition of an internal glass vestibule to the principal entrance, replacement of doors with Georgian-wired glass, and the insertion of wide archways. These changes were largely confined to the ground floor, with the exception of the insertion of lavatories into two of the first floor service rooms.
- 2010 Restoration and refurbishment by York Conservation Trust. Works included: installation of a passenger lift within the service stair, including rebuilding of the original staircase with a reduced width and reinstating missing sections of balustrade. Other works included the removal of later partitions in the first floor eastern office, removal of the plastic panels from the ballroom lantern, and the insertion of a mezzanine floor into the rear kitchen.

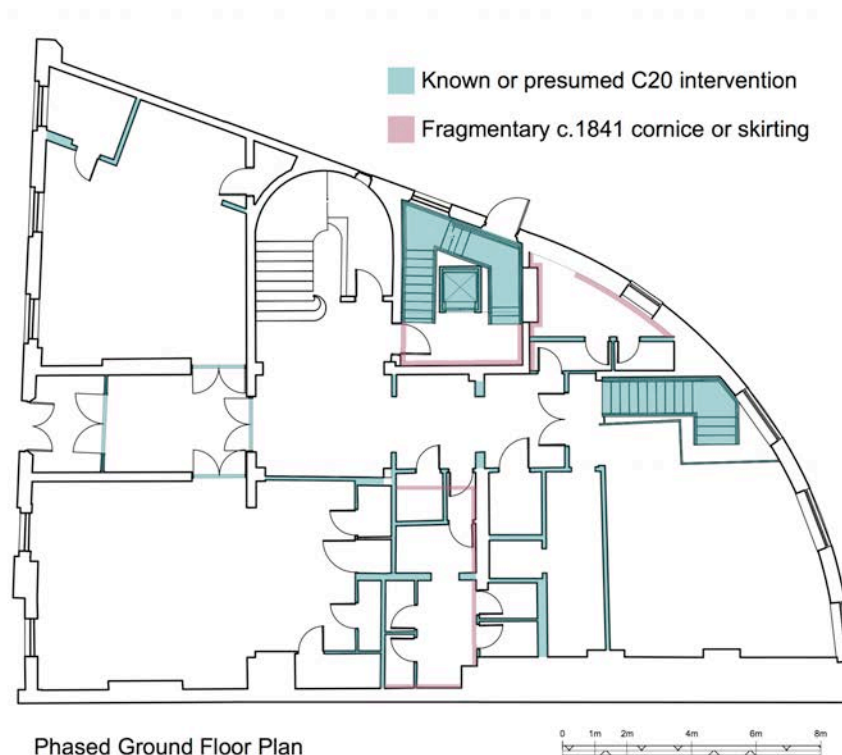


Figure 10 Phased Ground Floor Plan, based on visual analysis and documentary research; original plan by Cloud Conversion Ltd.

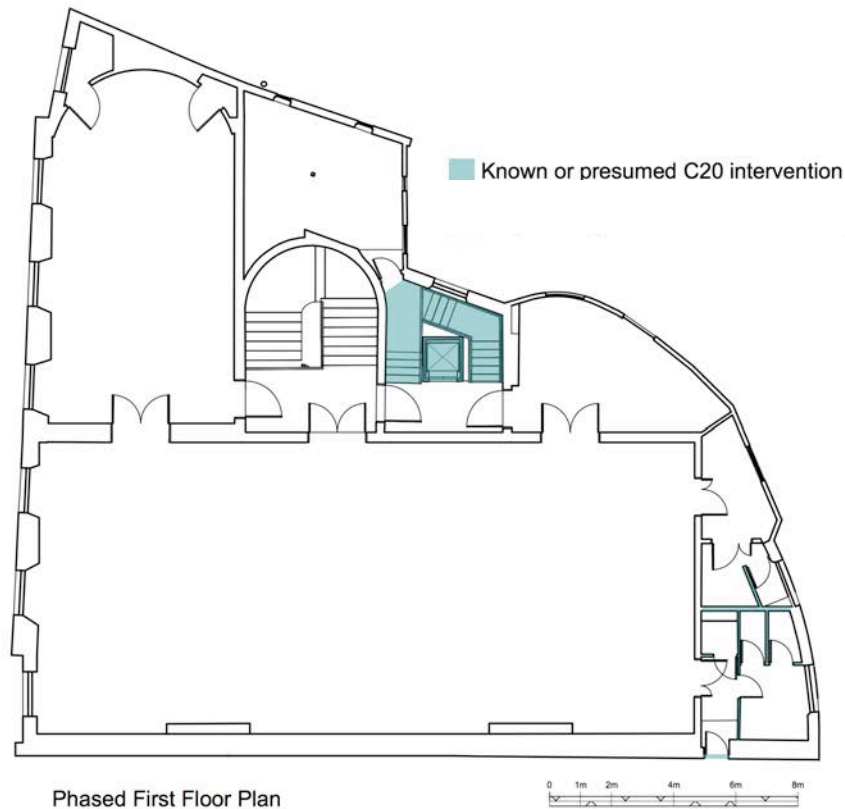


Figure 11 Phased First Floor Plan, based on visual analysis and documentary research; original plan by Cloud Conservation Ltd.

4 Assessment of Significance

This section provides an assessment of the significance of the De Grey Rooms and De Grey House through the values outlined in Historic England’s Conservation Principles (2008). Using the metric of evidential, historic, aesthetic, and communal value, this assessment will have particular focus on those areas affected by the proposed works, in particular the ground floor and roof of the De Grey Rooms.

4.1 Evidential Value

HIGH

- De Grey House and the De Grey Rooms represent important examples of Regency and Early Victorian architecture in York. Together with the other C19 buildings of St Leonard’s Place, they have evidential group value as an elite designed streetscape within the historic centre of York. Together these buildings (including the nearby Assembly Rooms) form the core of York’s C18 and C19 cultural quarter, contributing to our understanding of polite society and sociability.
- The Regency and Early Victorian buildings of St Leonards Place demonstrate the rare use of rendered facades in York, with both De Grey House and the De Grey Rooms utilising ‘Roman Cement’ over brick.
- Both buildings also contain cast-iron staircase balustrades, likely manufactured on Walmgate, demonstrating their rising popularity in the early C19, and providing examples of pattern book designs used in higher-status buildings at the time, including in St Leonard’s Terrace. These provide important evidential value of changing fashion and technology, and for York’s early C19 light industrial and design heritage.

- The De Grey Rooms has evidential value as an example of an early Victorian (1841-2) assembly room built by private subscription, contributing to our understanding of public buildings.
- The De Grey Rooms are also an example of urban military architecture, and a comparatively rare example of a high status military entertainment building. This value is highlighted by recent research interest in military buildings and function/sociability buildings, particularly in light of the MOD's shedding of buildings and Historic England's (Dec 2017) recent guidance on military structures.
- The De Grey Rooms has evidential value as an example of architectural design within a constrained urban site, and in response to design constraints (through conditions on the lease of De Grey House – see 2.2.2).
- The De Grey Rooms preserve evidential value through the clear decorative hierarchy of the internal spaces. This has been partially obscured through unsympathetic C20 changes, primarily to the ground floor. The richer decoration to the principal stair and the grand decoration of the hall and cocktail room reveal a clear high status procession route through the building, with lower status decoration utilised (and largely lost or obscured) in the other rooms.

4.2 Historical Value

HIGH

- The construction of the De Grey Rooms has high associative historical value through its connection with the military regiment, the Yorkshire Hussars, who held an annual assembly in York. A unit of the British Army, the Yorkshire Hussars was founded in 1794, and served in the Second Boer War, and both World Wars. In 1956 the regiment was amalgamated into the Queen's Own Yorkshire Yeomanry, and is currently part of the Queen's Own Yeomanry.
- The building is named for the Col Rt Hon Earl De Grey KG, commander of the Yorkshire Hussars at the time of construction. During a long career Thomas Phillip de Grey, 2nd Earl de Grey, 3rd Baron Grantham and 6th Baron Lucas, served as a Privy Councillor, First Lord of the Admiralty, and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, as well as being the first president of the Institute of British Architects (later R.I.B.A.). He was the elder brother of Frederick Robinson, who briefly served as Prime Minister of the UK between August 1827 and January 1828.
- De Grey House (with PF Robinson) and the De Grey Rooms were designed by G.T. Andrews, a prolific architect working for the York and North Midland Railway in the 1840s. Andrews designed over sixty railway stations, including those in York, Scarborough, Filey, Whitby, and Hull. His non-railway architecture in York included both domestic and civic structures, such as the religious college now forming the core of York St John University, and Driffield Terrace, York. Much of Andrew's work survives and, including the De Grey Rooms, forms an important element of the Victorian architectural landscape of York as a nineteenth-century industrial city.
- The De Grey Rooms have strong associative historical value with life in York during and immediately after World War II. Requisitioned by the War Office, the De Grey Rooms were used as an entertainment venue throughout the war. Providing an important counterpoint to the trials of war, the dances at the De Grey Rooms represented a significant element of life in the city for both locals and military personnel stationed in the city. The significance of the De Grey Rooms was demonstrated when the building became a focus for the VE Day celebrations in the city on 8 May 1945.

- Through its association with both locally and nationally significant figures and events, the De Grey Rooms demonstrates high historical value. The associative historical value is further demonstrated through the building's connection to the Yorkshire Hussars, who were important military presence within York, particularly in the nineteenth-century. Their association with the city was preserved in the name of the Yorkshire Hussar Inn on North Street, until its renaming 2013.

4.3 Aesthetic Value

HIGH

- De Grey House and the De Grey Rooms have high aesthetic value as fine examples of early-nineteenth-century polite architecture. Further they have high group value as part of the Regency and Victorian development of St Leonard's Place. In combination with St Leonard's Terrace, the Theatre Royal, and the Art Gallery (Exhibition Building) the De Grey Rooms forms a suite of early to mid nineteenth-century buildings presenting an uncommonly uniform streetscape in York.
- The c.1835 De Grey House represents a fine example of a dual aspect Regency townhouse, which overlooks St Leonard's Place and the open space / gardens of the York Theatre Royal. Through this open space, De Grey House and the Theatre buildings frame the west front and three tower of York Minster. The C20 accretions to the rear of De Grey House have some detrimental impact on the site's aesthetic value.
- Despite later alterations (both sympathetic and less so), internally the De Grey Rooms retains a suite of grand rooms, reflecting high design value. These rooms include a grand processional route demonstrated through the richer decoration of the stair lobby and the grand principal staircase with its cast-iron balusters and moulded mahogany rail. These lead to grand double doors into the highly decorated hall. It is likely that the ground floor entry hall once contained a similarly distinct level of decoration, creating a processional route from the street to the principal entertaining space. The double height spaces and apsidal ends of these principal spaces, including the staircase and cocktail room, further contribute to the high aesthetic value of the building.
- Through both its interior and exterior design, the De Grey Rooms has a high aesthetic value, and makes a positive contribution to the York Central Core Conservation Area. This aesthetic value is demonstrated through its highly decorative Victorian façade on St Leonard's Place, and by its collection of grand interior spaces.

4.4 Communal Value

MEDIUM

- The De Grey Rooms has strong associations with entertainment and sociability in York across the social spectrum, contributing to its communal value. Together with the Assembly Rooms, Theatre Royal and Art Gallery, it forms part of York's historic and current cultural quarter.
- Throughout the C19 and C20 the De Grey Rooms was a venue for meetings and events for both Victorian gentry and the wider C20 social spectrum, hosting everything from the first meeting of the Yorkshire Architectural and Archaeological Society in 1842 (Hull Packet 14/10/1842) to regular Beer Festivals in the late C20. As such it has communal value as a hub for social gatherings and events over a considerable timespan. This is continued today through the York Theatre Royal's use of space for diverse activities, including Youth Theatre, events, weddings, and costume hire.
- Through its association with both military history and as a dance venue during the war years, the De Grey Rooms have communal value as a focal point for VE Day celebrations in York in 1945.

4.5 Conclusion

- As demonstrated above the De Grey Rooms and De Grey House have high evidential, historical and aesthetic value, and make an important contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- Beyond like for like repairs, the currently proposed works represent an opportunity to better reveal the significance of the aesthetic and evidential value of the De Grey Rooms through the removal of unsympathetic later works and the reinforcement of the internal decorative hierarchy. The proposed like-for-like repairs to the roof towards the rear of De Grey House will have negligible impact on its significance.

Images



Figure 12 The principal (west) elevation of the De Grey Rooms with De Grey House on the right. Note the proximity to York Minster and the City Walls.



Figure 13 Rear (east) elevation of the De Grey Rooms, showing the large ground floor windows, and shuttered timber projection at first floor level.

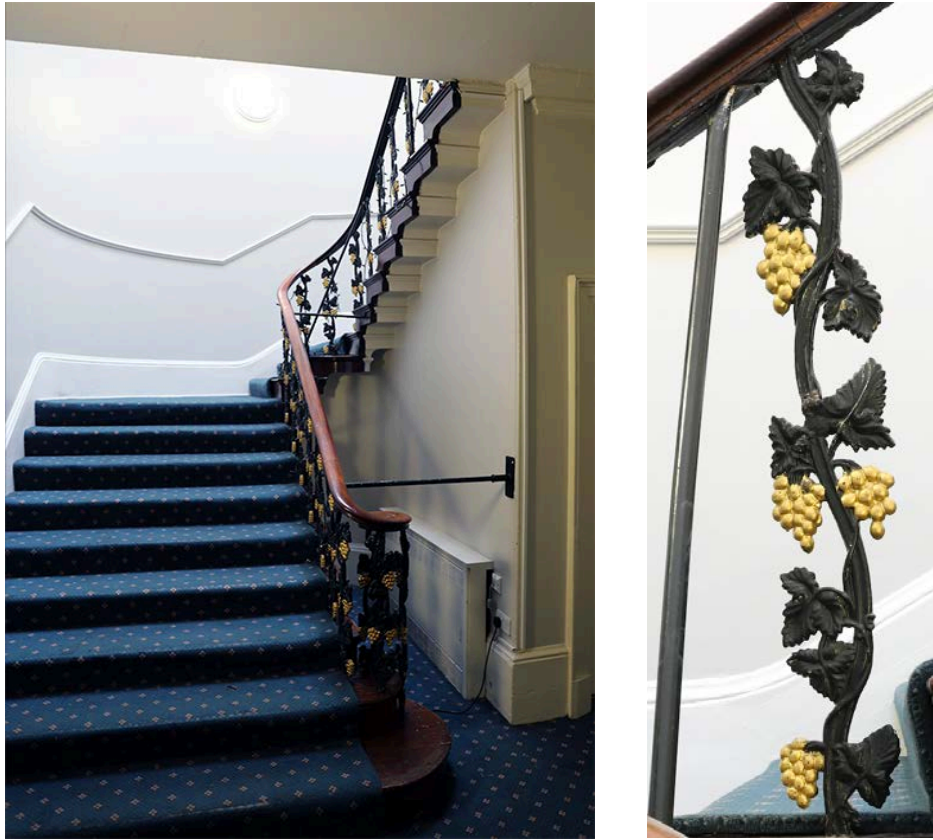


Figure 14 Principal Staircase with detail of the cast-iron vine balusters and later bracing rods.

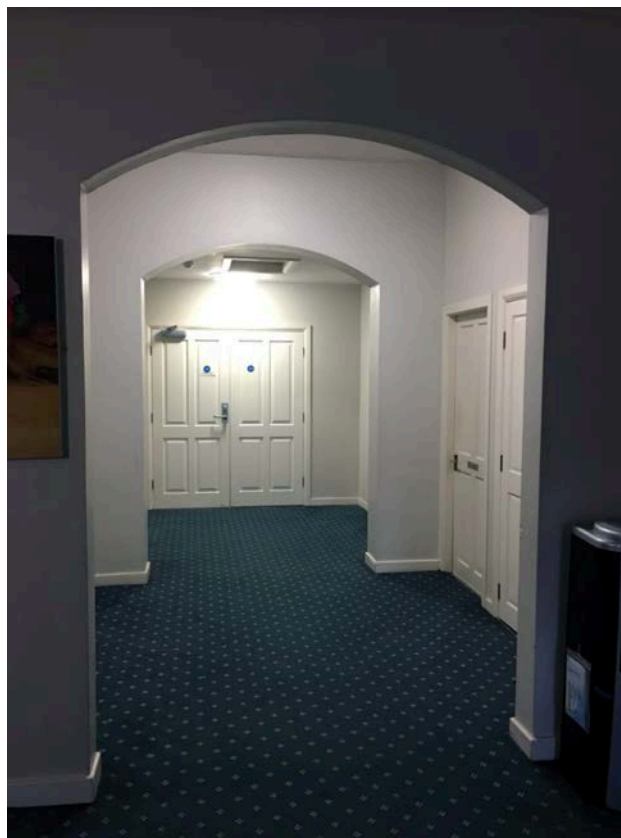


Figure 15 Looking east from the base of the principal stairs, showing the inserted C20 walls, arched openings and later doors.

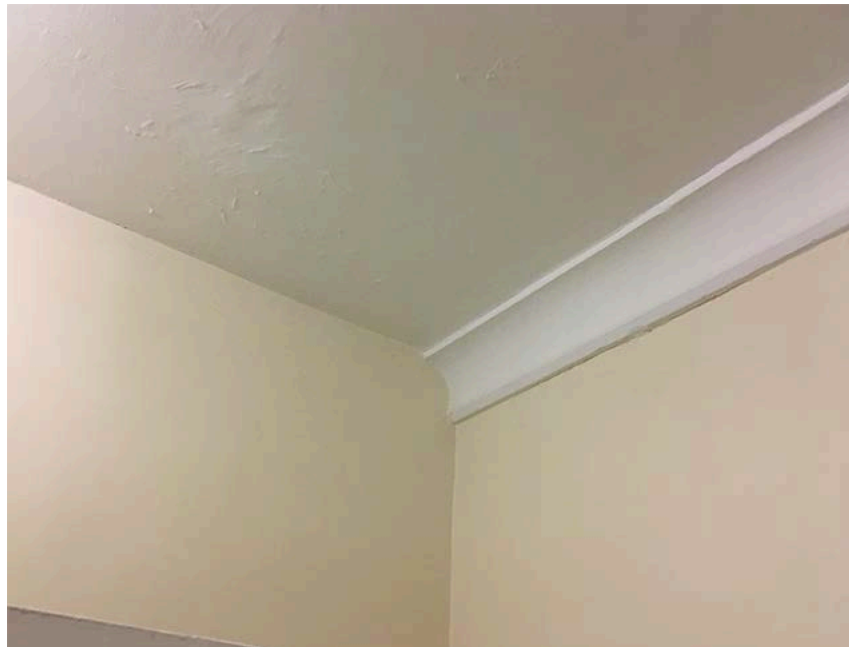


Figure 16 Detail of original covered cornice interrupted by a later partition wall in the Ladies lavatories.

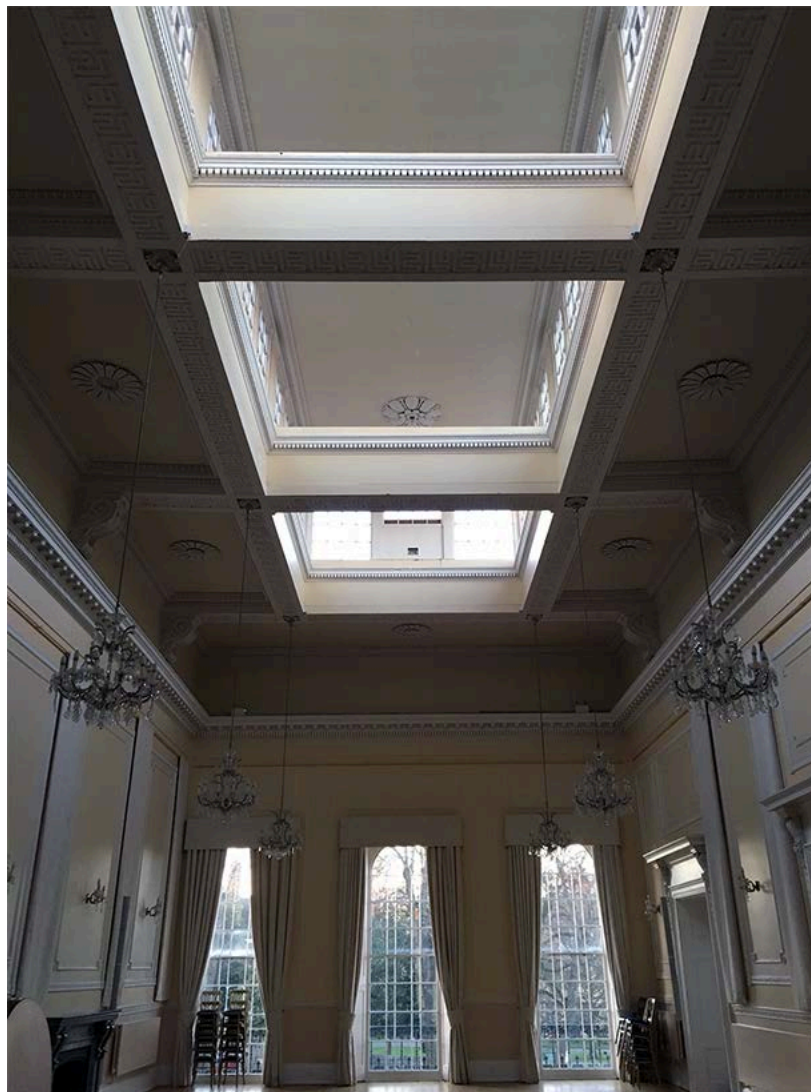


Figure 17 Interior of the first floor hall/ballroom, looking west to the full height windows, with lantern above.

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Appendices

Appendix A List Description

DE GREY ROOMS AND ATTACHED GATES, RAILINGS AND LAMP STANDARDS

List Entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: DE GREY ROOMS AND ATTACHED GATES, RAILINGS AND LAMP STANDARDS

List entry Number: 1256766

Location

DE GREY ROOMS AND ATTACHED GATES, RAILINGS AND LAMP STANDARDS, ST LEONARDS PLACE

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

District: York

District Type: Unitary Authority

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II*

Date first listed: 14-Jun-1954

Date of most recent amendment: 14-Mar-1997

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 464567

Asset Groupings

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List entry Description

SE6052SW ST LEONARD'S PLACE 1112-1/27/945 (East side) 14/06/54 De Grey Rooms and attached gates, railings and lamp standards (Formerly Listed as: ST LEONARD'S PLACE De Grey Rooms, De Grey House and railings)

GV II*

Formerly known as: De Grey Rooms, including railings and The Conservative Club ST LEONARD'S PLACE. Subscription rooms with attached front railings, carriage gates and lamp standards; now municipal rooms. 1841-42. By GT Andrews. MATERIALS: white painted Roman cement at front, rusticated on ground floor: rear of orange-grey brick in English garden-wall bond, first floor partly weatherboarded; slate roof with hipped clerestory to part, and brick stacks. Cast-iron gates, railings and lamp standards on low stone plinth. EXTERIOR: 2 storeys and basement; 7-bay front, 5 centre bays project between recessed end bays: at left end, square-arched carriageway and double gates. Unequal 12-pane sash windows to basement area. Flat bridge spanning area leads to right of centre entrance with double doors of raised and fielded panelling. Ground floor windows are inset 1-pane sashes with sills. On first floor, tall round-headed windows have continuously moulded architraves, centre ones with pediment hoods on scroll consoles. Heavy moulded cornice on massive grooved brackets over centre bays, moulded cornices over fasciated friezes to end bays. 5 centre windows fronted by continuous balcony with cast-iron balustrade: outer bays have similar balconies. Rear: 2- and 3-storey curving front, 2-storey weatherboarded part jettied. On ground floor windows are unequal 42-pane sashes, on first and second floors 20-pane sashes; all have stone sills and flat arches of brick. Weatherboarded part has 20-pane sashes with timber sills. INTERIOR: open string staircase to first floor has cast-iron grapevine balustrade and serpentine handrail wreathed at foot on shaped curtail step. First floor: landing has moulded cornice. Large room has three doorcases with panelled double doors in architraves with panelled reveals and moulded cornice overdoors on enriched consoles with wheatear pendants. Panelled window shutters. Two fireplaces, now blocked, have plain surrounds with cornice shelves on paired consoles. Dado rail enriched with Greek key and flower mouldings: panel surrounds above similarly enriched, with paterae at the corners. Enriched cornice to coffered ceiling carried on massive scrolled corbels; beam soffits moulded with Greek key, central panels are glazed, outer ones enclose chrysanthemum mouldings. Small room has apsidal end, moulded dado rail and moulded panel walls: main doorcase repeats those in large room: panelled window shutters: ceiling enriched with 3 bands of mouldings. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: railings have mushroom finials, mace-head standards and bracing to ground floor walls: carriage gates of same railings, strengthened with curved braces. Gate posts square-section with panelled sides and foliate finials. Similar piers support tapered hexagonal gas lamps on fluted shafts with crossbar. HISTORICAL NOTE: rooms were built by public subscription at the instigation of the Earl de Grey, Commanding Officer of the Yorkshire Hussars, to provide a place for the Regiment's Annual Mess and to supplement accommodation at The Assembly Rooms, Blake Street (qv). (City of York: RCHME: The Central Area: HMSO: 1981-: 103).

DE GREY HOUSE AND ATTACHED FRONT RAILINGS, GATE AND LAMP STANDARD

List Entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: DE GREY HOUSE AND ATTACHED FRONT RAILINGS, GATE AND LAMP STANDARD

List entry Number: 1256764

Location

DE GREY HOUSE AND ATTACHED FRONT RAILINGS, GATE AND LAMP STANDARD, ST LEONARDS PLACE

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County:

District: York

District Type: Unitary Authority

Parish:

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II*

Date first listed: 01-Jul-1968

Date of most recent amendment: 14-Mar-1997

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 464565

Asset Groupings

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List entry Description

SE6052SW ST LEONARD'S PLACE 1112-1/27/944 (East side) 01/07/68 De Grey House and attached front railings, gate and lamp standard (Formerly Listed as: ST LEONARD'S PLACE De Grey Rooms, de Grey House and railings)

GV II*

Formerly known as: De Grey Rooms, including railings and The Conservative Club ST LEONARD'S PLACE. House with attached area railings, gate and gas lamp standard; now offices. 1835 with extension of 1910. By PF Robinson and GT Andrews for William Blanshard. MATERIALS: front and right side in white painted Roman cement with slate mansard roof, painted stacks and flat dormer with 2-light Yorkshire sash: extension of orange-cream brick in English garden-wall bond with faience dressings, pantile roof and brick stacks. Cast-iron railings on low stone coping. EXTERIOR: 3 storeys, basement and attics; 3-bay front. Basement has one blocked window and one 12-pane sash with painted sill. Area spanned by flat bridge to pilaster and entablature doorcase with moulded cornice and front door of 4 sunk panels beneath bordered overhead. On first floor, 12-pane sash windows have moulded sill band, on second floor squatter windows have moulded sills. Broad first floor band and heavy moulded cornice over fasciated eaves frieze, returned across right side. Right side: 3-storey 4-bay return front: 2-storey 8-bay extension to right. Right return detailed as main front. Extension has glazed and panelled door with small-pane overhead and 12-pane sash windows. All openings have cambered arches with keyblocks; windows on ground floor have moulded sills, on first floor moulded sillstring. INTERIOR: not inspected. RCHM record original fittings including first floor front room with enriched cornice and sunk-panelled fireplace; other fireplaces of marble; moulded cornices on ground and first floors, coved cornices on second floor; and staircase with cast-iron balustrade. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: railings have mushroom finials, mace standards and bracing to ground floor wall. Gas lamp standard has openwork shaft, crossbar and 4-sided tapered lantern. (City of York: RCHME: The Central Area: HMSO: 1981-: 204).

Listing NGR: SE6011652185

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National Grid Reference: SE 60116 52185

Appendix B Map Regression