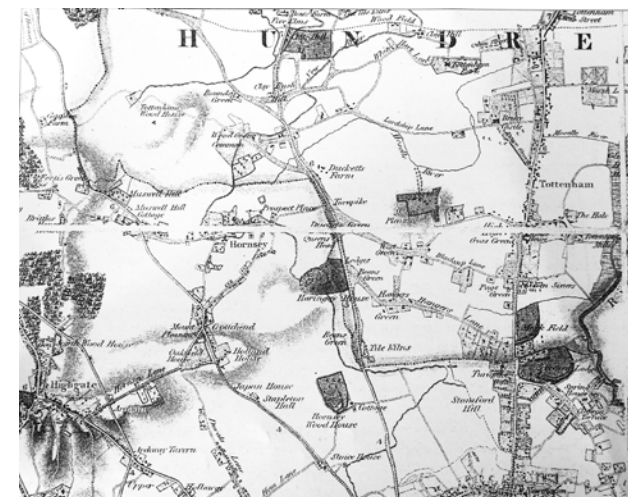


2.0 Historical Background

2.1 The Area: Hornsey and Crouch End

2.1.1 Early Development in the 19th Century

The village of Crouch End, together with Hornsey village, Muswell Hill and Highgate, formed part of the Middlesex parish of Hornsey, which remained predominantly rural until the late-19th century after previously serving as hunting grounds for the Bishop of London. Pringle and Greenwood's map of 1819 illustrates the spatial relationship of the separate villages, connected by a sparse network of roads west of Tottenham [plate 1]. Crouch End was so named by 1375, taking its name from a cross used to mark the boundary between two large local estates, Rowledge Farm and Topsfield, placed at the intersection of five important roads where a number of farmsteads were established.¹ By the 19th century the village comprised several large villas and houses occupied by the families of upper-middle class Londoners seeking convenient respite from the city; several of these houses including Topsfield House, rebuilt in 1791 within extensive grounds at the northern end of Crouch End Broadway, remained at the time of the Ordnance Survey map of 1863-9 [plate 2]. A number of smaller houses, cottages and shops also populated the area, housing craftsmen, tradesmen and those appointed to look after the area's larger estates and pastures. To the southeast of The Broadway was Haringey Park, initially laid out in 1861 as a private 'gated' street.



1 Pringle and Greenwood's 1819 map (Haringey Archives)



2 1863-9 Ordnance Survey map (National Library of Scotland)

¹ Denford, 2008, p. 10.

2.1.2 Industrialisation and Urbanisation

Industrialisation in London brought change to its outlying rural areas as the demand for housing quickly escalated.² Local growth was accelerated by the arrival of the Great Northern Railway's main line north from London in 1850, initially with a link to Hornsey and a later station opening at Crouch End Hill in 1867.³ The parish soon took the form of a late-Victorian suburb, with the first streets laid out in the period after the construction of Alexandra Palace in the 1860s. In Crouch End, the majority of the larger country estates had been sold by the late-1860s and built over with new streets lined with terraces and modest two-storey villas, the latter particularly popular with the middle classes. Catering to a growing market, The Broadway began to develop as a suburban shopping centre from the 1850s, and Christ Church by Arthur William Blomfield was erected at Crouch End Hill in 1861-62.

The village's most intensive period of development, however, began in the 1880s, when approximately 400 new houses were erected between 1882 and 1892.⁴ The population rocketed from 11,082 in 1861 to 72,056 by 1901.⁵ The Ordnance Survey of 1894 illustrates this expansion, which retained The Broadway as its focal point with parades of shops in place along either side **[plate 3]**. Broadway Hall along the eastern side of the street, a former chapel, was also clearly demarcated. Following the demolition of Old Crouch Hall and Linslade House, more residential streets were built

including Weston Park and Elder Avenue, laid out in 1889 and lined by large, semi-detached houses to the designs of architect J. Farrer.⁶ The prominent Clock Tower at the northern end of The Broadway followed soon after in 1895, depicted in a c. 1905 photograph of The Broadway, with the site of the present town hall forecourt to the right **[plate 4]**.

2 Gay, 1998, p. 8.

3 ibid

4 Haringey Council, 2010, p. 16.

5 ibid

6 Gay, 1998, p. 92.



3 1894 Ordnance Survey map (Haringey Archives)



4 Crouch End Broadway, c. 1905 (Haringey Archives)

2.1.3 Early-20th Century Development

Hornsey parish became the Municipal Borough of Hornsey in 1903, by which time Crouch End Broadway was firmly established as an important suburban commercial thoroughfare. Housing development continued to target middle-class families, as the local authority was keen to promote the idea of a 'healthy Hornsey' encircled by open spaces which civic leaders and campaigners had fought hard to protect.⁷ By 1915 some of the smaller shops had been replaced by larger commercial premises along The Broadway and a telephone exchange had been erected to the rear of Broadway Hall, though the area to the east remained open ground [plate 5].

By the 1920s the Municipal Council had outgrown its offices in Highgate. In 1920 and 1923 it bought up Nos. 12-24 Crouch End Broadway and land to the rear. This was a long, wedge-shaped site containing one of Hornsey's oldest timber-framed buildings – Broadway Hall – flanked by shops, hoardings and back gardens, and constrained by a telephone exchange that could not be compulsorily purchased. After fire destroyed Broadway Hall in 1923, the land was laid out as a public park. In 1929 the Council suggested building new shops that could have subsidised municipal offices above, then recognised that some off-street parking was essential. The Council built a clinic on the rear part of the site in 1931-2 and in 1933 decided to hold an architectural competition for a new town hall on the Broadway site. Historic photos show the site in 1934 [plates 6A-6C], before the buildings were cleared.



5 1915 Ordnance Survey map (Haringey Archives)

The population of Hornsey continued to grow well into the 20th century, peaking in 1951 at 98,159,⁸ and in 1965 the boroughs of Hornsey, Wood Green and Tottenham were combined under the new London Borough of Haringey. Hornsey Town Hall became redundant as a civic centre in 1965, as ceremonial and democratic functions moved to Wood Green, although it continued in use as offices until around 2004.

7 Denford, 2008, p. 6.

8 Gay, 1998, p. 8.



6A Lake Villa, c. mid-19th century (Haringey Archives)



6B Cottages present on site in 1934 (Haringey Archives)



6C Forecourt area, 1934 (Haringey Archives)

2.2 The Buildings: Hornsey Town Hall

2.2.1 The Development of the English Town Hall

From the end of the 19th century through the early decades of the 20th century, local government in England gained a considerable amount of authority and responsibility. The Local Government Acts of 1888 and 1894 created a system of localised councils to better-organise an extant and dense network of parish vestries and local boards in place nationwide. The newly-empowered authorities were responsible for a good deal of new civic architecture generated throughout England, including county offices, power stations, public housing, welfare centres, libraries, transport building and, perhaps the most prestigious typology, town halls. The design of the latter gave architectural expression to municipal pride and provided a setting for civic ceremonies, as well as fulfilling the more pragmatic need for efficient, modern office space where the expanding functions of the local authority could be carried out.⁹

An elaborate Edwardian Baroque style pervaded much of Britain's municipal architecture for a number of years following the turn of the 20th century. However, the 26 new town hall complexes erected throughout London during the inter-war period expressed a shift in architectural taste. Some were at the forefront of the Modern Movement in England (among them Hornsey and Greenwich in London) but most emphasised a more reserved monumentality, with stripped classical architecture and careful planning of civic, community and administrative functions within, although some interiors could be no less lavish than their Edwardian

counterparts, with marble-lined foyers, panelled committee rooms and council chambers with fixed seating.¹⁰ The council chamber was often the principal feature of the interior design, usually situated near the centre of the building and back from the street, while entrances (often separate for the building's different purposes) were set back from the street behind a forecourt to give a civic dignity to the composition.

2.2.2 Hornsey Town Hall

Hornsey Town Hall, built in 1933-35 to the designs of architect Reginald H. Uren, reflected Hornsey's status at that time as a prosperous, solidly Conservative, middle-class suburb of London. Uren's design was the product of an architectural competition chaired by C. Cowles Voysey, architect of the celebrated Worthing Town Hall. The brief was for a council chamber, committee rooms and administrative offices alongside an assembly hall with seating for 800 to 1,000 people.

Uren's proposal was selected from a pool of 218 entries and satisfied the requirements included in the competition brief:

...that the character of the buildings shall be dignified and they rely on good proportions and a fitting architectural setting rather than elaborate decoration and detail, which is not required. Stress is laid on straightforward planning, with rooms and corridors well lighted and ventilated.¹¹

The *Architect and Building News* condemned the competition on the grounds of that the site was unsuitable: '*In all, 218 highly trained brains have exerted themselves to the full to find the solution to a problem which should never have been set.*' But Uren had vindicated the Council's course of action. His plan was an ingenious solution; as the chair of the judges remarked, Uren had grasped '*that ceremonial areas did not expand but offices did*'. Uren dispensed with traditional symmetry and drew a compact plan set back from The Broadway at the widest part of the site. The assembly hall was accessed directly from three doors facing the Broadway forecourt, and there was a separate door at the foot of the tower for the civic and ceremonial areas (committee rooms and a council chamber were arranged on the first floor and accessed via a marble-lined imperial staircase); corridors of offices ran E-W along the southern part of the site where the aspect and levels of daylight were greatest. At the pivot of the plan was the tall, slender tower which brought a measure of civic dignity to what was essentially a narrow gap in an Edwardian suburban high street.

Hornsey Town Hall was modelled on Willem Dudok's Hilversum Town Hall of 1928-30, a Dutch civic building celebrated internationally for its pioneering Modernist design. The design also shows the influence of Ragnar Östberg's Stockholm Town Hall of 1911-1923. Hornsey's detail and planning, however, was Uren's own and the perfect solution for a difficult brief that stipulated a budget of no more than £100,000.

9 English Heritage, 1999.

10 English Heritage, 1999, p. 26.

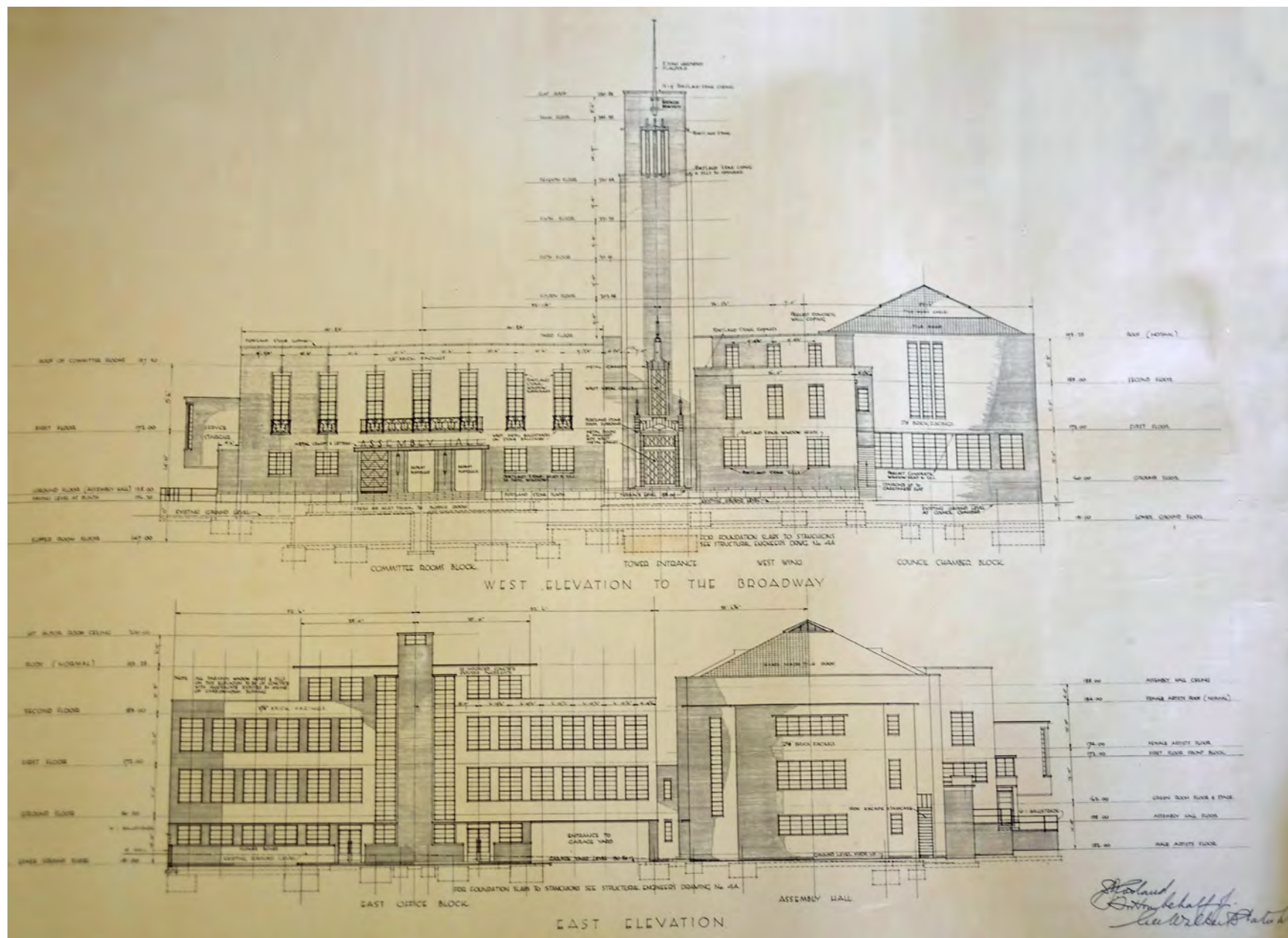
11 English Heritage, 1999, p. 50.

Horsey Town Hall was awarded the RIBA London Architecture Bronze Medal in 1936. The building was described in an article in *The Times* on 12 May 1936 thus:

Gracious and rather slim in its lines, and faced with pinkish-grey bricks of a beautiful colour and texture, Hornsey Town Hall is the sort of building that is come upon with an exclamation of pleasure...That the building has both Dutch and Swedish flavours is true, but they are digested to the local scene.

Certainly, Uren's attention to artistic detail softened the austere massing of the Hilversum precedent. Hornsey's tall tower was decorated with carving in Portland stone by sculptor Arthur J. Ayers and its main entrance door was decorated with a bronze grille featuring woodland birds and animals; such touches place the building firmly in the English Arts and Crafts tradition, despite the modernity of its overall planning and form. Also of Arts and Crafts inspiration were the materials, including the hand-made bricks of the exterior, marble floor and wall surfaces inside, and Australian walnut and Indian laurel panelling in the important rooms. Etched glass, bronze fittings and furniture, clocks and curtains from Heal's (many to Uren's personal designs) make for a complete and unified work of art. The *Times* article described the interiors as '*extremely simple, with the emphasis on beauty of surface*'.

A 1934 series of Uren's working drawings on file at the Haringey Archives illustrates his detailed plans. The asymmetrical principal west and rear east elevations were illustrated in detail, with careful attention paid to fenestration **[plate 7]**. The northern section of the principal elevation was labelled as the 'committee rooms block', with a service staircase projecting further northward toward the rear of the building; while the balconettes at the first floor were implemented in construction, the metalwork details to the ground floor were modified as built. The 'west wing' and 'council chamber block' to the south were simpler and without additional decoration, though annotation called for Portland stone window sills and heads at the ground floor, as well as copings at the roofline. The rear elevation is also illustrated, clearly dividing the building into administrative and assembly hall blocks, separated by a service court at the lower ground floor level. A c.1936 photograph shows the rear elevation to the southern office block, including the delicately curved glazing to the rear stairwell and planting scheme **[plate 8]**.



7 West and east elevations, 1934 (Haringey Archives)



8a Rear elevation, c. 1936 (*RIBA*)



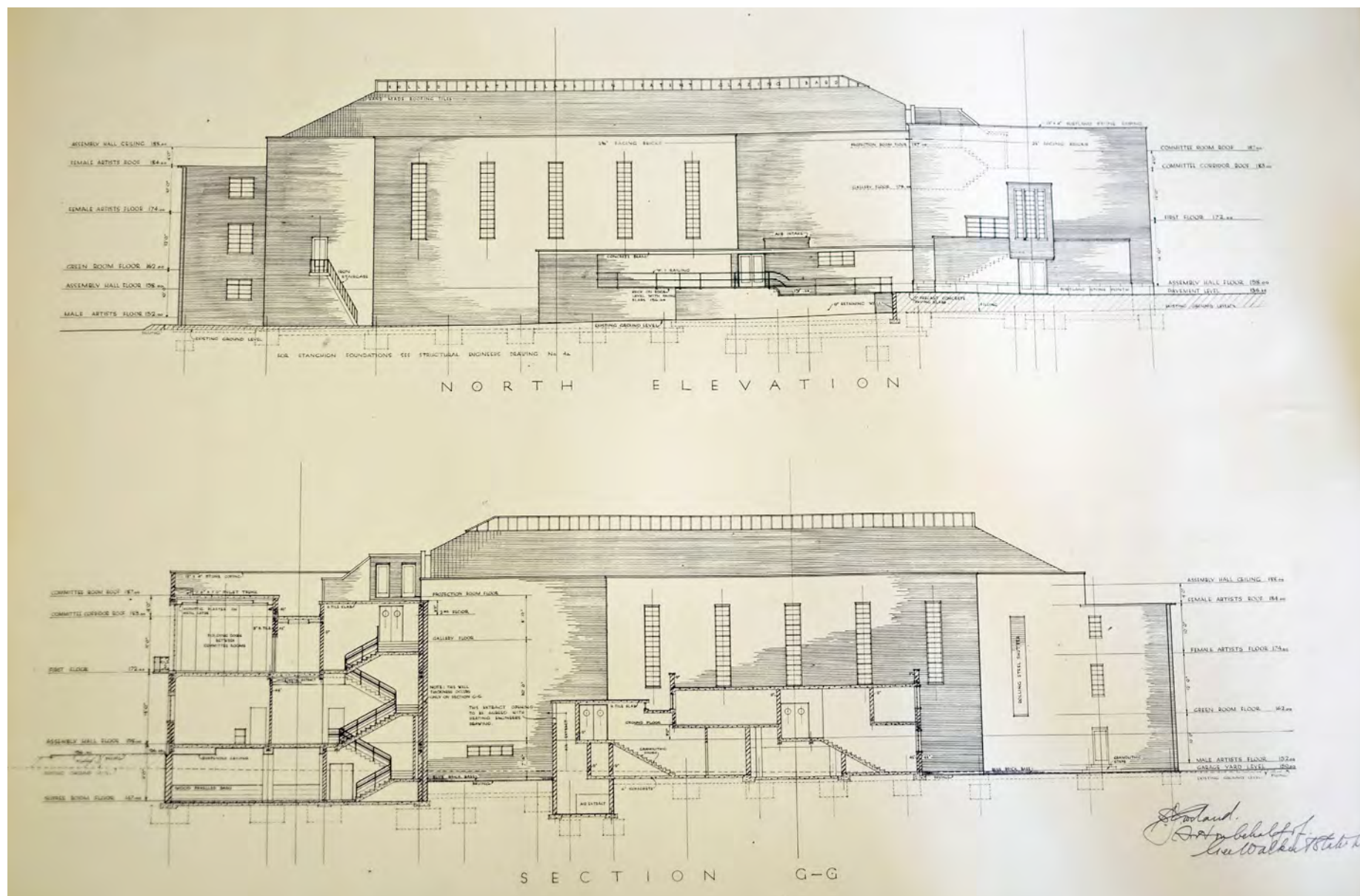
8b Office block rear elevation, 1935 (*The Builder*)

The north elevation of the building and its section drawing indicate a similarly modernist approach, in brick with Portland stone coping and plinths **[plate 9]**. A rooflight running the length of the space above the assembly hall is illustrated, as well as its elongated and narrow fenestration. Additional section drawings provide a view of Uren's proposed internal arrangement, clearly divided into blocks **[plates 10A-10C]**. These drawings also indicate the intended use of the internal spaces, while Section B-B **[plate 10B]** also provides a view of the small upper floor plans in place within the tower, principally used for plant and storage with an iron staircase running between its fourth and seventh floor levels.

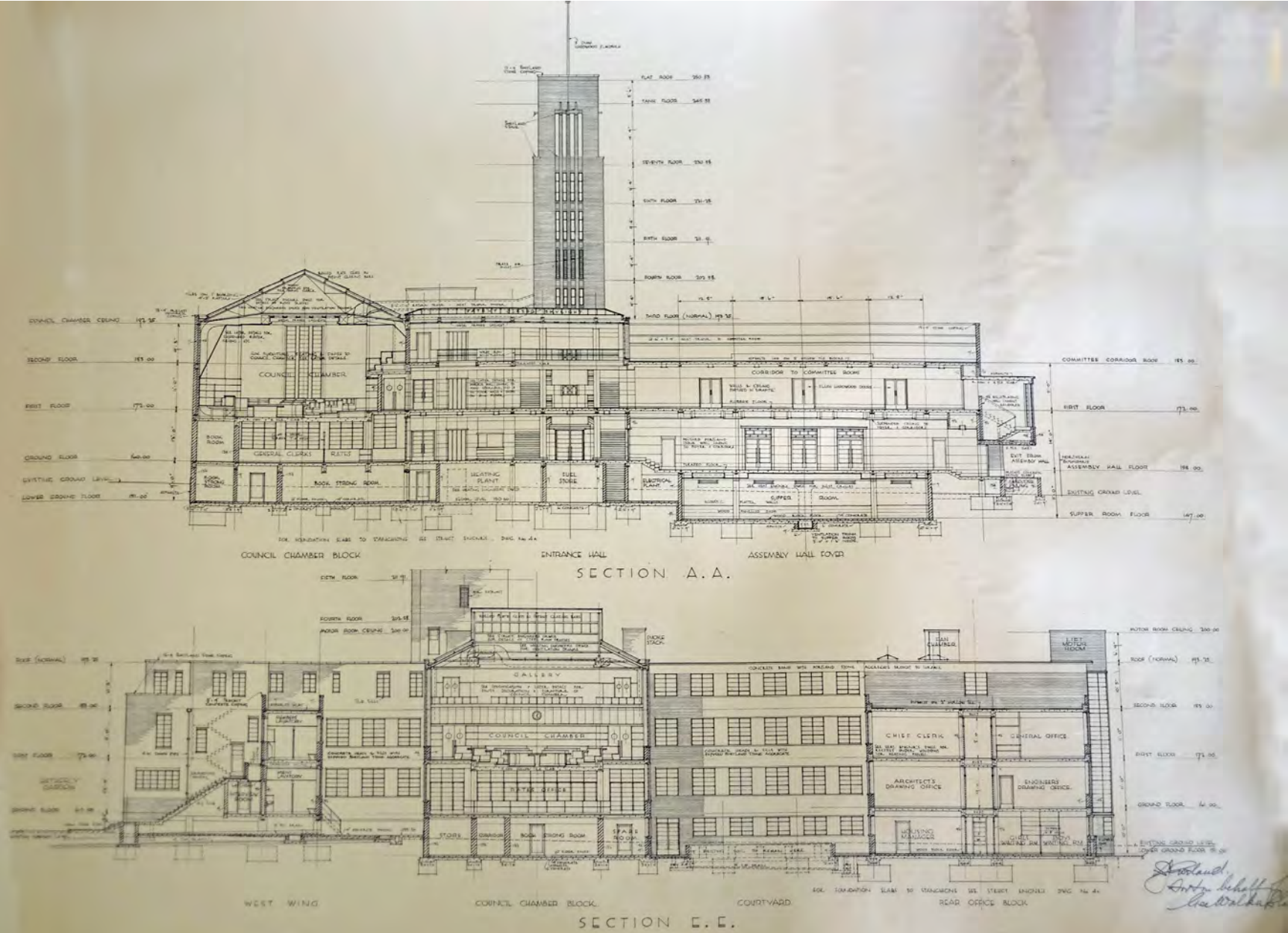
Uren's lower ground floor plan provides a view of the basement laid out to either side of a central service court **[plate 11]**. Toward the north end of the building this included a supper room flanked by terrazzo staircases leading to the ground floor, a service bay and kitchen, and plant and store rooms further east. A men's dressing room and lavatory was located at the eastern end with stairs to the stage above. The southern end of the floor included a number of plant, storage and safe rooms linked by corridors and accessible from the ground floor by both a lift and narrow staircase. Garage rooms faced the service court, while a number of offices were located toward the southeast corner of the floor between a southern garden courtyard and the rear elevation of the building; the eastward slope of the ground allowed these rooms to feature large windows. Another lift and staircase connected the lower ground floor to upper floors along the rear elevation.

At the ground floor a separate entrance vestibule for the assembly hall block led into a foyer with corridors leading to cloak rooms and lavatories to either side **[plate 12]**. This foyer entrance was specifically designated to provide access from the forecourt for assembly hall events; a c. 1935 photograph reveals the original fenestration of its doors with marble surrounds, floor pattern and original pendant lighting **[plate 13A]**. The expansive assembly hall was just east of the foyer beyond a small box office, with a large stage and green room at the eastern end of the building; a 1935 photograph offers a view of this grand space and its seating and interior rooflight arrangement **[plate 13B]**. Stairs led up to the stage from the assembly hall floor, and the hall itself had two additional exits to either side.

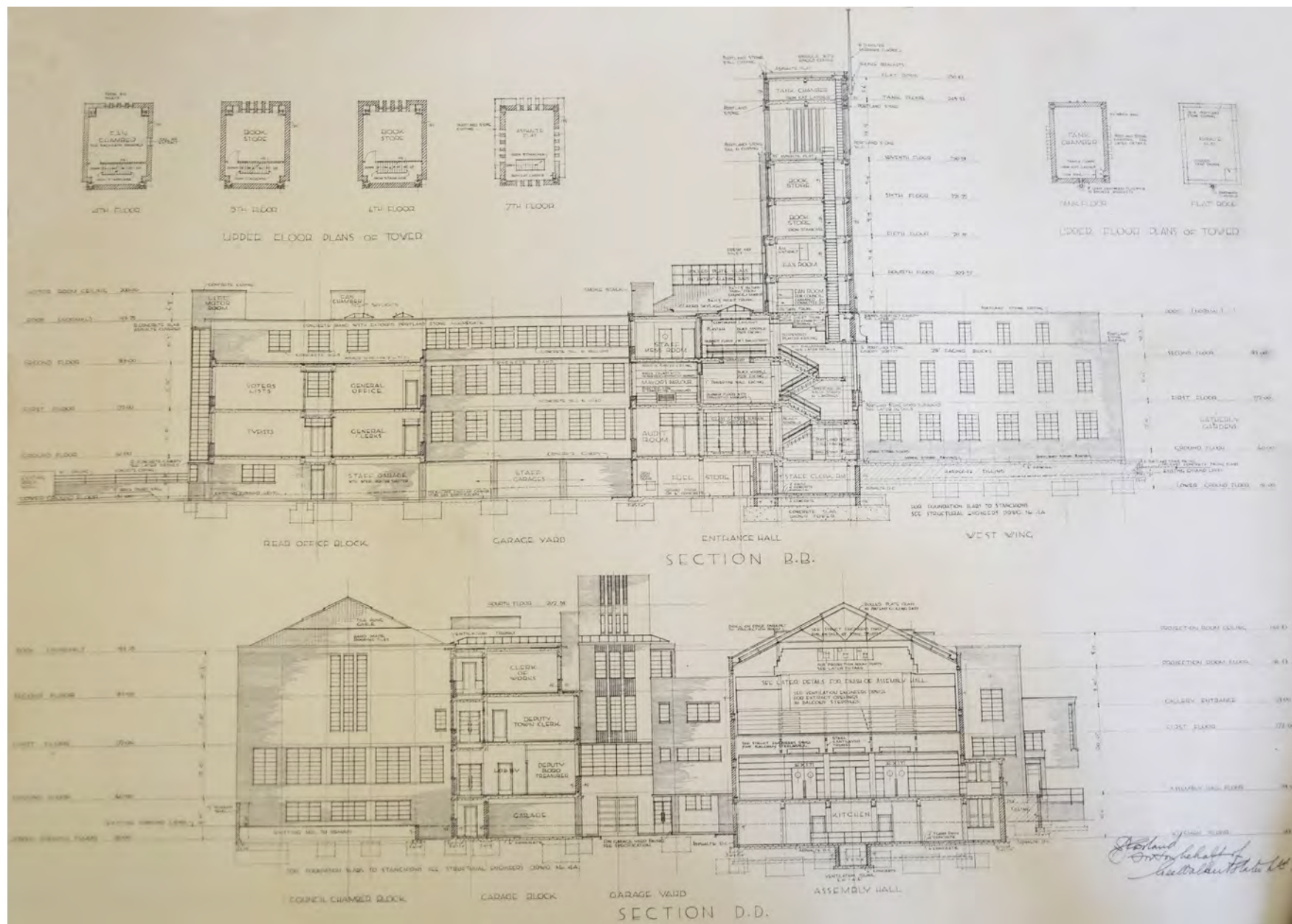
The principal entrance of the building led from an exterior terrace paved in York stone through a small lobby into the main entrance hall; this featured a marble imperial stair to the first floor, etched glazed entrance doors and cylindrical ceiling lighting, as illustrated in a c. 1935 photograph **[plate 13C]**. This section of the ground floor was reserved for civic purposes, including clerks' offices, the office of the borough treasurer, and a number of drawing offices for borough architects and engineers, all well-lit by windows to courtyards and the front and rear of the building. A c. 1935 photograph provides a view of the borough engineer's office with nearly full-height panelling, and above, globe pendants, ventilation vent, glazing above the panelling to the corridor and ceiling panels **[plate 13D]**.



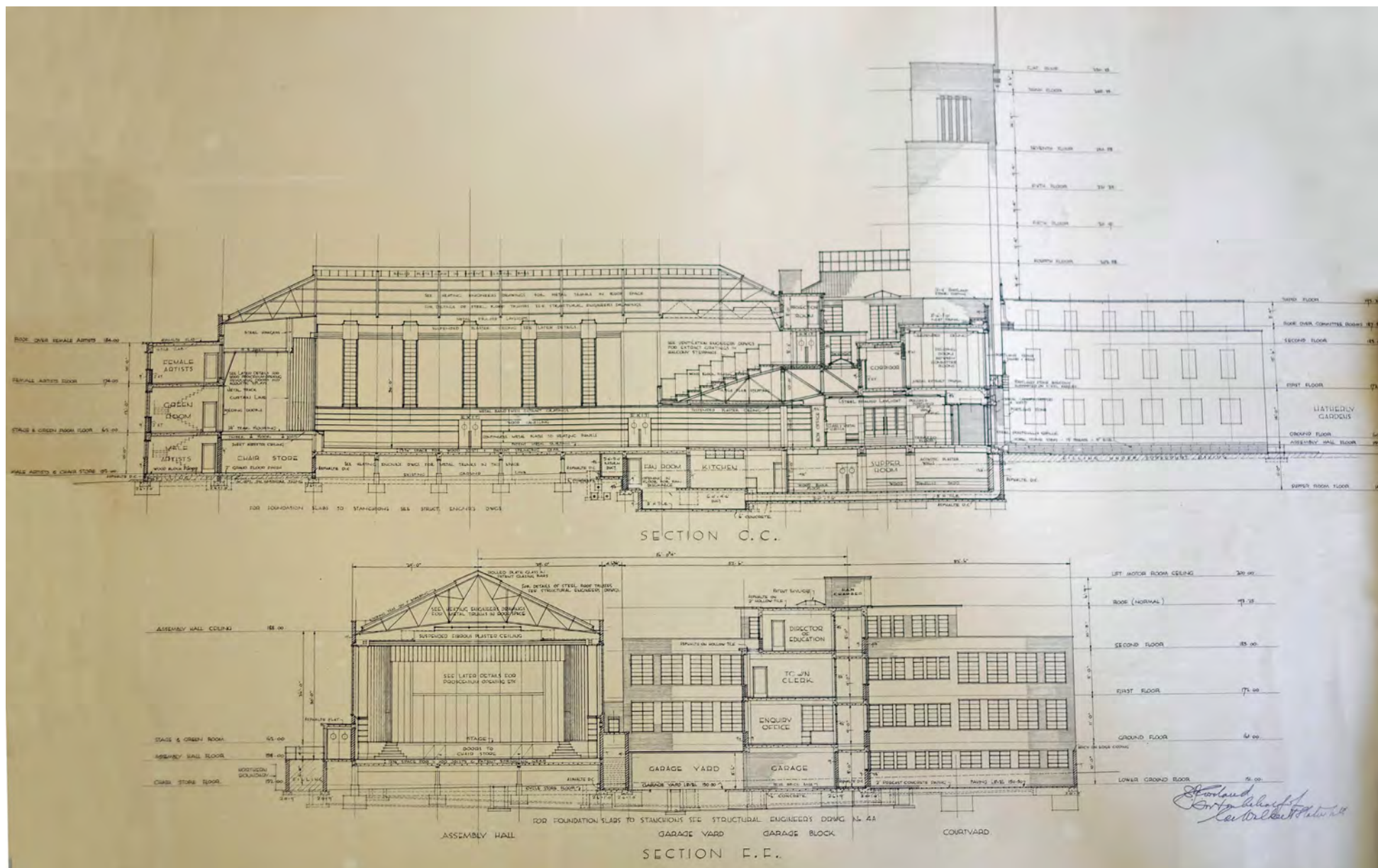
9 North elevation and section G-G, 1934 (Haringey Archives)



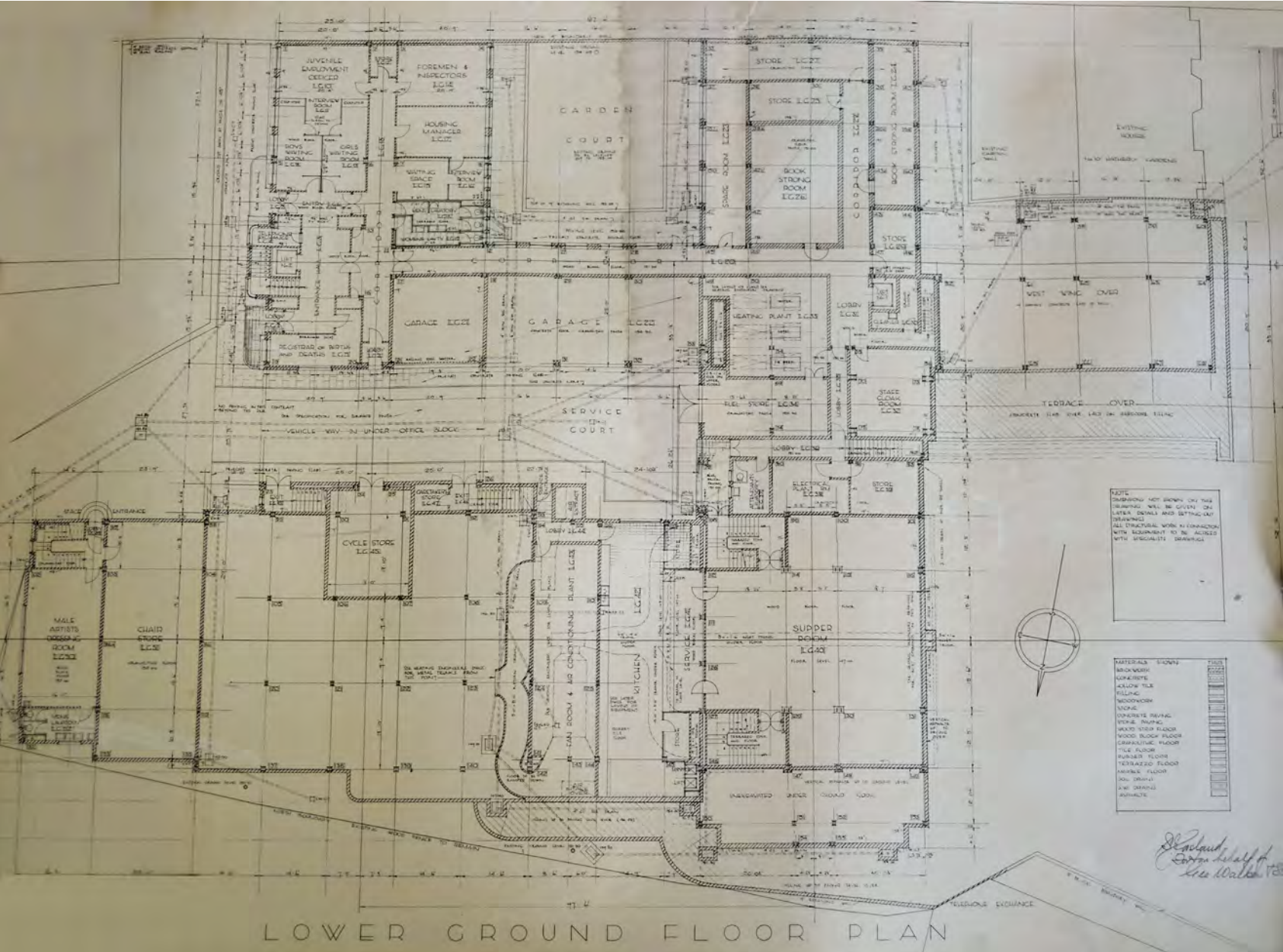
10A Sections A-A and E-E, 1934 (Haringey Archives)



10B Section B-B and D-D, 1934 (Haringey Archives) photoshop



10C Sections C-C and F-F, 1934 (Haringey Archives)



11 Lower ground floor plan, 1934 (Haringey Archives) photoshop



13A Assembly Hall foyer, c. 1935 (RIBA)



13B Assembly Hall, 1935 (RIBA)



13C *Main entrance hall, c. 1935 (RIBA)*

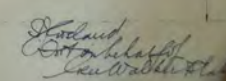


13D *Borough engineer's office, c. 1935 (RIBA)*

The first floor of the north end of the building included gallery seating over the assembly hall and a female dressing room and lavatory to the rear of the stage **[plate 14]**. The approach to the first floor from the main staircase is illustrated in a c. 1935 photograph **[plate 15A]**; this space was originally open to the north, presenting an elegant, linear view with a continuous range globe ceiling lights, further enhanced by natural light from the second floor landing. A long committee room ran the full width of the assembly hall block at the front of the building, able to be separated into smaller rooms by folding door partitions, illustrated in a 1935 photograph **[plate 15B]**. A mayor's parlour and small lavatory were opposite the main imperial staircase; a c. 1935 photograph provides detail of its original walnut panelling, furnishings and pendant lighting **[plate 15C]**. The borough council chamber dominated the southern section of this floor, accessed via two small lobbies with seats arranged in a semi-circular pattern. A historic photograph depicts the interior design and furnishings of this room in 1935 **[plate 16A]**. The rooms at west of the chamber were intended for use by council members, including robing rooms and lavatories, while rooms to the east included offices, waiting rooms and storage rooms; a c. 1935 photograph of the Members' Room shows a number of original details, including panelling, cabinetry, pendant lighting, carpeting and ceiling pattern **[plate 16B]**.

The second floor of the building was considerably smaller **[plate 17]**. A small projection room for the assembly hall was included at the north end, while the south end was designated for local education offices to the east and a caretaker's flat within the west wing. The principal second floor landing featured two open wells looking down to the first floor, and provided access to a public gallery above the council chamber. A roof plan indicates the position of the building's rooflights **[plate 18]**.

Though bombs fell in The Broadway, Weston Park and Haringey Park, the town hall was spared wartime damage, and was in fact used as premises by the Civil Defence Department. Hornsey Council ceased its municipal use of the building following the London Government Act of 1963, when the borough was absorbed by the newly-created London Borough of Haringey with offices in Wood Green. Other than permission granted in 1972 for a small extension at the fourth floor, the building's planning history (outlined in Section 2.3) indicates little change to the building since its construction, aside from minor alterations for plant, services and disabled access, and interior modernisation and refurbishment.



14 *First floor plan, 1934 (Haringey Archives) photoshop*



15A First floor staircase hall, c. 1935 (RIBA)



15B Committee Room, 1935 (RIBA)



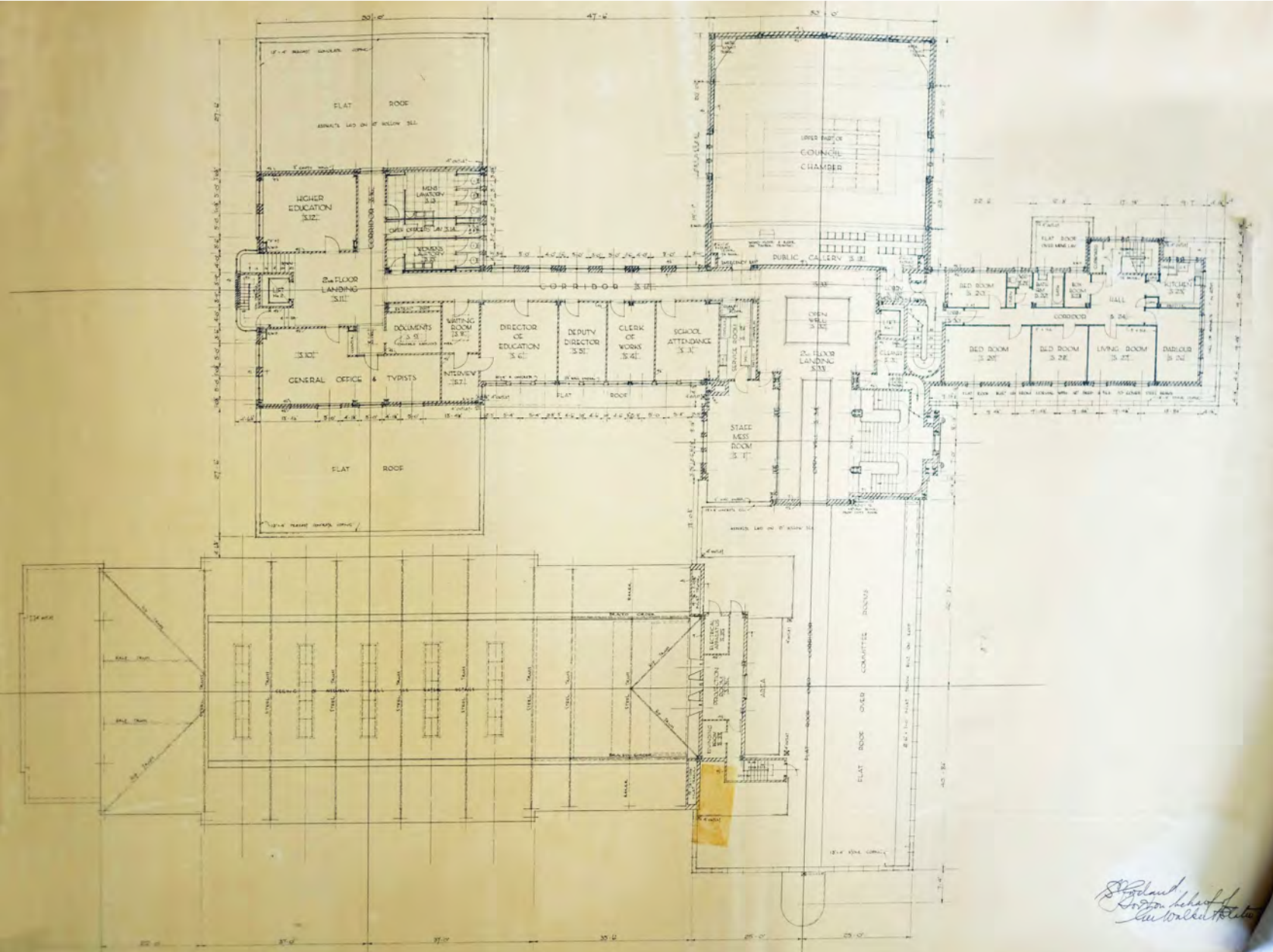
15C Mayor's parlour, c. 1935 (RIBA)



16B Members' Room, c. 1935 (RIBA)



16A Council Chamber, 1935 (RIBA)



17 Second floor plan, 1934 (Haringey Archives)

2.4 Settings and Views: The Forecourt and Rear of the Site

The setting of the town hall was also a key feature of Uren's initial design, which elegantly set the building back from The Broadway and provided for parking and a lane for one-way traffic when the assembly hall was in use. A series of historic photographs taken of the forecourt provides a view of its early layout and subsequent evolution [plates 22A-22G]. A c.1936 photograph of the town hall provides a view of its relationship to the early forecourt, including the latter's faceted bollards, fountain and closely-cropped lawn with maturing trees. The curve of the vehicular access lane is also visible, with a broad pavement to the north. A brick wall with stone coping was lined with greenery and bench seating, just south of the site of the future Broadway Annexe building, framing the view of the town hall from The Broadway. Images of the c. early-1940s depict the forecourt and what were most likely its original globe-and-crescent lamp standards, as well as a depiction of an early planting scheme; the brick wall north of the forecourt appears to have been removed following the completion of the Broadway Annexe building in 1939. A municipal signboard facing The Broadway which appears to be part of the original design is depicted in the c. 1950s. By the 1960s the street lighting had been replaced by sturdier lamp standards topped by elongated lanterns with mature trees in the central lawn area. A 1985 photograph of the forecourt shows the lawn and its mature trees enclosed by simple iron railings, with slightly different faceted lanterns to the lamp standards, as well as changes to the parking scheme.



22A Principal elevation and forecourt, c. 1936 (RIBA)

The buildings together form a set piece, a modernist composition in the mainly Victorian and Edwardian High Street. The key view is the principal front elevation of Hornsey Town Hall, flanked by the Gas and Electricity showrooms.



22B Hornsey Town Hall and forecourt, c. 1940s
(Haringey Archives)

22D Forecourt signage, c. 1950s (Haringey Archives)

22C Hornsey Town Hall, c. 1940s (Haringey Archives)





22E Hornsey Town Hall and forecourt, c. 1960s (Haringey Archives)



22F Forecourt and fountain, c. 1960s (Haringey Archives)



22G Hornsey Town Hall and forecourt, 1985 (Haringey Archives)

2.5 The Architect: Reginald Uren FRIBA FNZIA, Architect (1906-1988)

Reginald Harold Uren was born at Petone, North Island, New Zealand in 1906. After being articled in Wellington and qualifying there in 1929, he travelled to London in 1930 where he studied briefly at the Bartlett School of Architecture from 1931-32 while gaining experience at a number of London firms, including Adams, Holden and Pearson. He quickly garnered attention for his work, winning the Manchester Trades Exhibition competition in 1933. After winning the open competition for Hornsey Town Hall and practicing independently for a number of years, he entered partnership with J. Alan Slater and Arthur Moberly by 1936. He served with the Royal Engineers during wartime from 1941-46, after which he was demobilized with the rank of Captain.

Noted for his inclination toward modernist design and work for public authorities, Uren once explained:

*Buildings are vital organisms, they contain people who are doing something and it is the people that matter, not the buildings. Buildings should be designed as environments to make the lives of people more enjoyable against a pleasant background.*¹²

His career was marked by several awards and professional recognitions, including the RIBA London Architecture Bronze Medal in 1936 for Hornsey Town Hall at age 29 (the youngest to ever win the award),

the Gold Medal of the Worshipful Company of Tylers and Bricklayers in 1937, election to the RIBA Council in 1946, membership in the Architects' Registration Council of the United Kingdom from 1950-66, membership in the Council of the Architectural Association in 1954 and the London Region Housing Medal in 1954, as well as fellowship in the Royal Institute of British Architects, the New Zealand Institute of Architects and the Royal Society of Arts. In addition, he was the first recipient of the New Zealand Award of Merit for Architecture in 1965.

His work was particularly prolific in the 1930s and included the extension to the Hospital for Nervous Diseases in Queen Square, Bloomsbury, the Granada Cinema in Greenwich (1936-37, listed Grade II*), the Rayners Lane Underground Station (1938, listed Grade II), as well as town halls, underground stations, department stores, swimming pools and housing schemes. Later notable buildings include the John Lewis department store in Oxford Street (1960-66), the Sanderson Building (now hotel) in Berners Street (1957-61, Grade II*), and Norfolk County Hall, opened by H.M the Queen in 1968.¹³

Reginald Uren returned to New Zealand upon his retirement in 1967, where he died on 17 March 1988.

2.6 Arthur J.J. Ayers, Sculptor (1902-1985)

Arthur J. Ayers trained at the South Kensington School of Woodcarvers and at the Royal Academy Schools, after which he was awarded the Prix de Rome in 1931 and studied in Italy until 1933. Upon his return, Ayers was commissioned by Reginald Uren to execute the carved work on Hornsey Town Hall at the beginning of his career; as such the town hall sculptures were his first major works. He was noted for his technique in low-relief stone carving, particularly popular during the inter-war period following more flamboyant Edwardian methods. This aptitude is clearly demonstrated by the carved stone panels of the Gas Showrooms adjacent to the town hall building, which feature shallow yet delicate naturalistic detail. Later works include an ambitious carved figure on the new Adelphi, later commissions for Dawe and Carter, architects of the Gas Showrooms, a wooden crucifix for the Convent of Tyburn Martyrs, Bayswater Road, and a mural for Mitchell Engineering, Peterborough, in addition to a good deal of restoration work to historic buildings in wood and stone.¹⁴

¹² Harrow Observer, 1965.

¹³ The Times, 1988.

¹⁴ Cherry, 1995, p. 11.