



Highland Archaeology Services Ltd

Bringing the Past and Future Together

Youth Club Grampian Road, Aviemore



Building Recording



7 Duke Street Cromarty Ross-shire IV11 8YH Tel / Fax: 01381 600491
Mobile: 07834 693378 Email: info@hi-arch.co.uk Web: www.hi-arch.co.uk

VAT No. 838 7358 80 Registered in Scotland no. 262144
Registered Office: 10 Knockbreck Street, Tain, Ross-shire IV19 1BJ

Youth Club Grampian Road, Aviemore

Building Recording

Summary

Archaeological building recording was carried out in advance of the demolition of Aviemore Youth Club. Contrary to expectation the building was found not to be of railway sleeper construction. It was however clear that it has played an important part in the story of Aviemore and many local people.

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Acknowledgements

We wish to thank Tom McGougan for commissioning this report. The following have provided invaluable help, and their contributions are much appreciated: Ann Glen, Eilidh McLeod, Bob Powell, Scott Sangster, Anne Wakeling, Anne Weir. The author also wishes to thank the staff of the Highland Council's Archaeology Unit and Archives services for their help. Background mapping has been reproduced by permission of the Ordnance Survey under Licence 100043217.

Location

The site is centred at Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference NH 895 126, at approximately 215m above sea level.

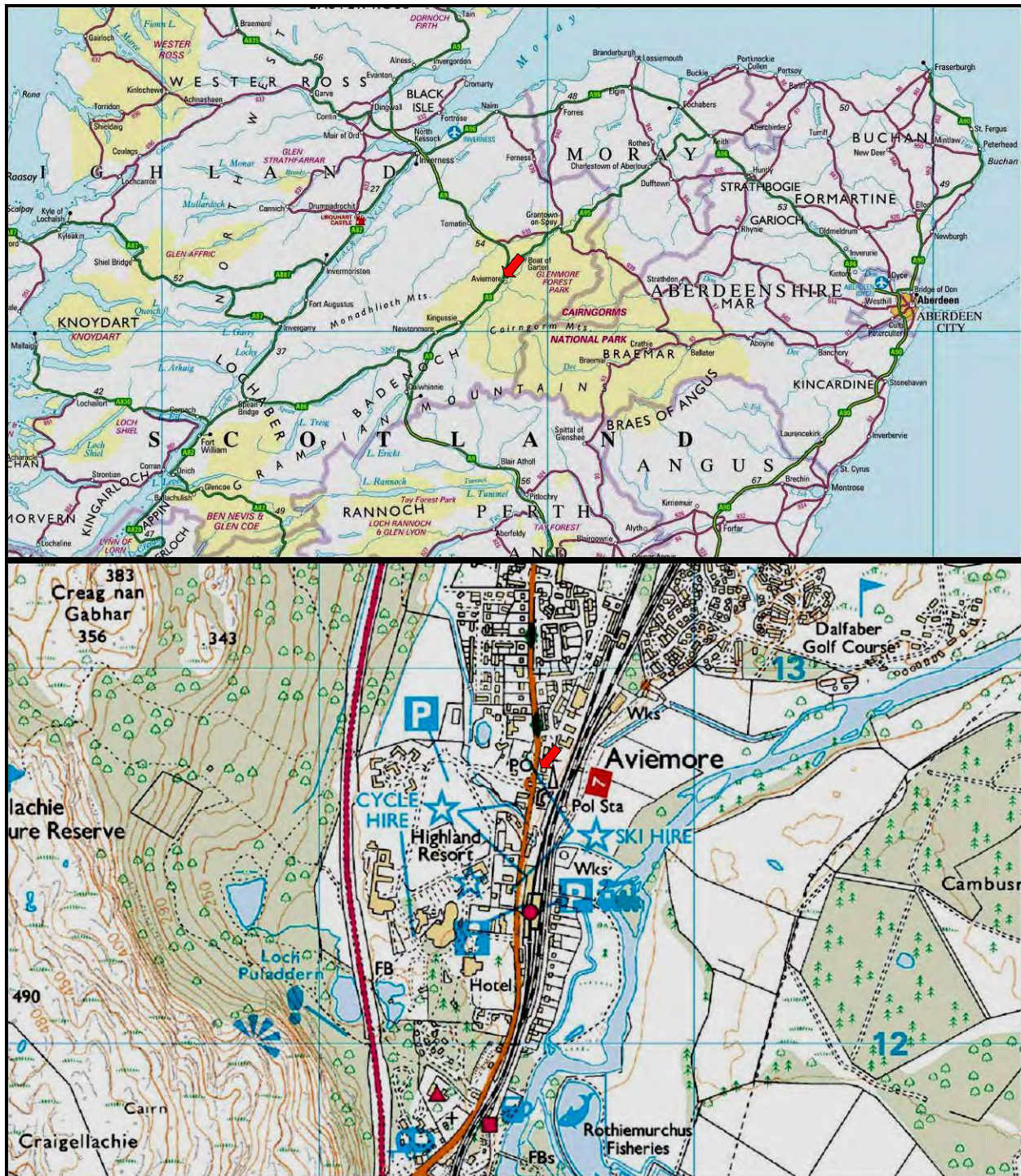


Figure 1 Site location

Introduction

A programme of building recording work was undertaken by John Wood of Highland Archaeology Services Ltd in response to a planning requirement at Aviemore, Inverness-shire. The former church hall, more recently for many years a youth club, was to be demolished and replaced.

Archaeology and policy background

A basic building record was requested in this case because the building was believed to be of railway sleeper construction. Examples of this method are increasingly rare, and a record was therefore requested before demolition takes place.

The planning and policy framework includes the Highland Council's *Structure Plan*¹, and the Scottish Government's *Scottish Planning Policy SPP 23: Planning and the Historic Environment* (2008)². The fundamental principles underpinning the above policies are set out in *Passed to the Future: Historic Scotland's Policy for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment* (2002)³ and the *Burra Charter* (Australia ICOMOS 1999).⁴

Aims and objectives

- To minimise any possible delay or cost to the development by anticipating requirements as far as possible, timetabling and integrating building recording work with the project, and dealing with any issues arising quickly and efficiently.
- To determine as far as possible the character, extent, condition, date and significance of any significant evidence; and to record this as necessary in line with national and local policies and standards.
- To ensure that any artefacts or human remains discovered are dealt with in accordance with legal requirements and current Historic Scotland policy guidance.

¹

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/developmentplans/structureplan/thehighlandstructureplan.htm>

² <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/10/28135841/0>

³ www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/pasttofuture.pdf

⁴ <http://www.icomos.org/australia/burra.html>

Programme

The programme was as proposed in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved by the planning authority in October 2009⁵. The Highland Council specified a ‘basic’ survey, including a desk based study, a general written description, a photographic record, and sketch plans and elevations.

1. Photographic Record

A photographic survey of the site overall as existing was undertaken on 27 October. Further photographs were taken on 26 November following stripping out of the interior. Weather conditions were wet and windy on both occasions, particularly bad in November with low light levels, strong gusts and temperatures of 3° c. All photography was by digital SLR at 6mpx resolution.

2. Desk-based Assessment

A check of all relevant archaeological / historical records, maps and aerial photographs was undertaken as specified. The Highland Historic Environment Record was visited⁶ and the Presbytery and County records were also checked at the Highland Council’s Archives Centre in Inverness⁷

3. Drawings

Sketch plans and elevations were prepared and are included below.

Results

The First Edition Ordnance Survey 1:10560 scale Map, surveyed in 1867-9, shows that at that time Aviemore consisted only of Aviemore House, a railway station and a post office. The Inverness and Perth Junction Railway had arrived in 1863, becoming the Highland Railway two years later. This original line followed the course of the present Strathspey Railway and continued to Inverness via Forres. In 1898 a more direct line between Inverness and Aviemore was opened, which is still the main line. Aviemore then became a junction and a centre for the railway company who built housing for staff and a hotel.

The hotel was destroyed by fire in 1950 and its site was redeveloped as the Aviemore centre, opened in 1966. After the construction of the chair lift in 1960 the village became one of the first ski resorts in the UK. In the late 1960s Aviemore was a popular and fashionable tourist centre but with the advent of cheaper air travel it declined in the face of alpine and other competition.

⁵ Wood J 2009 *Aviemore Grampian Road WSI* Highland Archaeology Services Report No. HAS091001

⁶ HHER MHG33500

⁷ UFC 1/1/1; UFC 1/2//1-2; Inverness-shire County Valuation Rolls 1912-13.

The Second Edition of 1902 shows the beginnings of a settlement round the station, but not the hall itself. In fact the first Ordnance Survey map that does show it is the 1:10000 edition of 1971. It also appears on an RAF vertical aerial photograph of 1949⁸.

The church hall was constructed for the United Free Church (UFC) on land leased from the Highland Railway Company. The UFC had its origins in the Free Church, which opened a church at Rothiemurchus in 1886. In 1900 it joined with the United Presbyterian Church to become the United Free Church of Scotland.

It has not been possible to establish the exact date of erection, but the County Valuation Rolls for 1912-13 include the entry 'Site for Hall' at Aviemore Station, per Rev A M Macleod at a rent of 5s annually. In the same year, the Presbytery accounts include this rent, and in December 1913, 8s 3d was spent on paraffin oil for the church hall⁹. It was probably built as an outreach effort in the railway village¹⁰.



Figure 2 Extract from Ordnance Survey 1st Edition 6'' maps, surveyed 1867-9.

Courtesy of National Library of Scotland. Derived from digital data. Arrow shows approximate position of site.

⁸ Aerial Photo Ref 541-A-483 / 4190

⁹ Highland Archives UFC/1/2/1

¹⁰ Ann Glen, pers.comm. through Anne Weir

It was not a sleeper building, but had a wooden frame, with an infill of mortar and wire mesh (See plates 8 -10 below).. It seems likely that it was a prefabricated building: kits could be bought from catalogues from companies in Glasgow and delivered by rail, and were popular throughout the Empire.

Bob Powell, curator of the Highland Folk Museum at Newtonmore, considers that

Usually the kit buildings were corrugated iron clad. But then, they could still have supplied the frame. Our church, for example, was supplied by Spiers of Glasgow and they always put a maker's plate somewhere on the structure. I also have, personally, a comprehensive catalog for a company in London called 'William Cooper'. The thing is that, I suspect, once the local joiners started to see kit construction, that they emulated it... our School might have been such; our tin cottage certainly was. We've also just taken down another building of indeterminate manufacture but with external weatherboarding that definitely was a numbered kit.

The chicken wire mesh and mortar render is not unknown and I can think of one cottage of a similar date near here done like that. I would think, even bet, that was original to the structure.... The corrugated iron finishes of 100 years ago were too good to be changed¹¹..

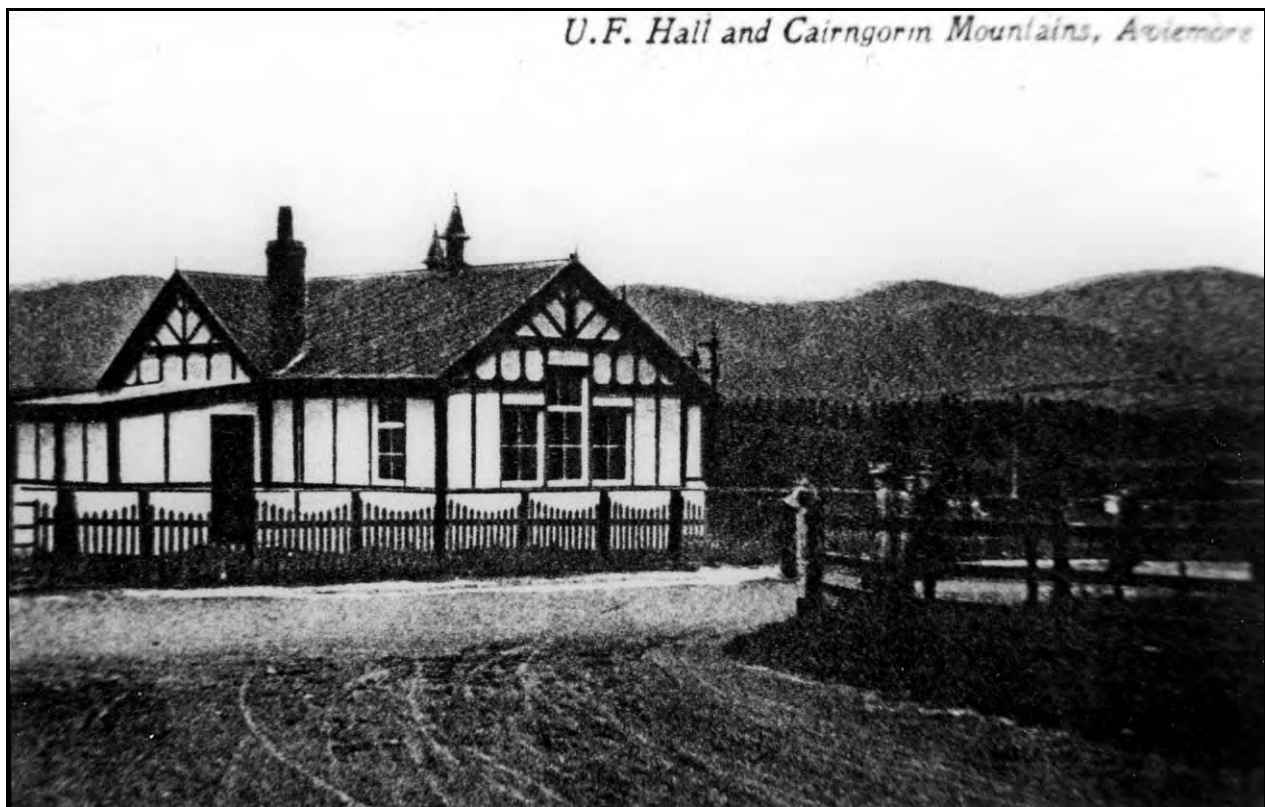


Plate 1 Undated pre-War postcard showing the hall

Courtesy of Ann Glen

No manufacturer's plate has been found here. However Ann Glen has kindly provided an interesting pre-War postcard which shows a sophisticated and decorative building. As she points out,

¹¹ Bob Powell, pers.comm

Although local joiners did construct club houses etc, this hall building is quite decorative and attractive. It has a tiled roof and ventilators are in evidence. You will see that it has a chimney as a stove would be essential to keep the premises warm for winter meetings and other gatherings. It would be a hub of the village at one time¹².

In 1929 the UFC united with the Church of Scotland but in Rothiemurchus its Presbytery minutes continue. On 3 February 1930 these record an agreement to provide a roadway across church hall ground to allow the LMS Railway to build two small cottages on their ground to the rear, on condition the driveway was fenced off¹³. These two cottages, both sleeper buildings, are still present.

The hall must have been an important village facility: there was no community hall in Aviemore until after the First World War when the Comrades' Memorial Hall was constructed at the south entry to the village¹⁴. It is not clear when the hall became the Youth Club, but it has had this role for many years.



Plate 2 SW elevation: October 2009

¹² Ann Glen, pers comm, through Anne Weir

¹³ Highland Archives UFC/1/1/1

¹⁴ Ann Glen, pers.comm., through Anne Weir



Plate 3 E elevation from SE: October 2009



Plate 4 N elevation: October 2009



Plate 5 Kitchen area: October 2009



Plate 6 Interior of main hall before stripping out (from N): October 2009



Plate 7 Interior of main hall, stripped out prior to demolition (from S): November 2009



Plate 8 Railway sleeper cottages next door: October 2009



Plate 9 Chimney and fireplace in kitchen, revealed by stripping out: November 2009

It is odd that the Ordnance Survey show a quite different outline on all their maps from what appears always to have existed on the ground. No explanation has been found for this (see Figure 3 below).

Discussion and conclusions

The hall is clearly built of timber frame construction, not railway sleepers, in contrast to the cottages next door (see Plates above, and Figure 4 below). However it was originally a fine building, as shown in the postcard (Plate 1 above), dating from the early 20th c. when the churches were reaching out to attract the industrial working class population. It was probably the first community facility in Aviemore and reflects the village's origins as a railway settlement.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for further fieldwork in this case, but the building has been important to generations of Aviemore people. Perhaps a local history project might be undertaken to research this further.



Plate 10 Aerial Photograph: early 21st c.

Courtesy of GetMapping.com and Landmark Information group.

Sources

GetMapping Aerial Photo (undated but early 21st c.)

Highland Archives: Presbytery Records: UFC 1/1/1; UFC 1/2//1-2; County Valuation Rolls for Inverness-shire: 1912-1913

Highland Council Historic Environment Record (HHER): MHG33500

National Library of Scotland: online historic map collection

Old and New Statistical accounts for Rothiemurchus (online)

Ordnance Survey 1:10560 / 1:10000 and 1:2500 historic maps sequence, including 1st Edition 6" maps, surveyed 1867-9; 2nd edition 6" maps, 1900; 1:10,000 map, 1971

RAF Aerial Photo Ref 541-A-483 / 4190 (1949)

Personal contributions are acknowledged above.

Table of Photographs

All photographs were taken by John Wood. The weather on both occasions was wet and in November very windy and dark as well.

Photo Number	Camera Point	Direction (facing)	Location	Date
20091027_0001	CP1	NNE	Interior - main hall	27/10/2009
20091027_0002	CP2	NNW	Interior - main hall	27/10/2009
20091027_0003	CP3	SSW	Interior - main hall	27/10/2009
20091027_0004	CP4	SSE	Interior - main hall	27/10/2009
20091027_0005	CP4	ESE	Interior - main hall	27/10/2009
20091027_0006	CP5	S	Interior - main hall	27/10/2009
20091027_0007	CP6	N	Interior - main hall	27/10/2009
20091027_0008	CP7	W	Interior - main hall - cupboard	27/10/2009
20091027_0009	CP8	W	Interior - main hall - doorway	27/10/2009
20091027_0010	CP9	E	Outside	27/10/2009
20091027_0011	CP9	SE	Outside	27/10/2009
20091027_0012	CP10	NE	Outside	27/10/2009
20091027_0013	CP10	N	Outside - SW Elevation	27/10/2009
20091027_0014	CP11	NNW	Outside - Corner: E Elevation	27/10/2009
20091027_0015	CP11	WNW	Outside - S Elevation	27/10/2009
20091027_0016	CP12	S	Outside - N Elevation	27/10/2009
20091027_0017	CP13	SSW	Outside - N Elevation	27/10/2009
20091027_0018	CP14	SW	Outside - E Elevation (Part)	27/10/2009
20091027_0019	CP14	SSW	Outside - E Elevation (Part)	27/10/2009
20091027_0020	CP15	E	Outside - doorway	27/10/2009
20091027_0021	CP16	W	Interior - main hall. View into kitchen	27/10/2009
20091027_0022	CP17	SW	Kitchen	27/10/2009
20091027_0023	CP17	W	Kitchen	27/10/2009
20091027_0024	CP18	SE	Kitchen	27/10/2009
20091027_0025	CP19	NNE	Kitchen	27/10/2009
20091027_0026	CP19	NE	Kitchen. View to main hall	27/10/2009
20091027_0027	CP19	ENE	Kitchen. View to main hall	27/10/2009
20091027_0028	CP19	NE	Kitchen. View to main hall	27/10/2009
20091027_0029	CP20	N	Kitchen	27/10/2009
20091027_0030	CP20	NW	Kitchen	27/10/2009
20091027_0031	CP20	WNW	Kitchen	27/10/2009
20091027_0032	CP20	W	Kitchen	27/10/2009
20091027_0033	CP21	N	Main hall - doorway to lobby	27/10/2009
20091027_0034	CP22	NE	Lobby	27/10/2009
20091027_0035	CP23	S	Lobby - view to main hall	27/10/2009

Photo Number	Camera Point	Direction (facing)	Location	Date
20091027_0036	CP23	N	Lobby	27/10/2009
20091027_0037	CP23	NW	Lobby	27/10/2009
20091027_0038	CP24	W	Lobby	27/10/2009
20091027_0039	CP24	ENE	WC	27/10/2009
20091027_0040	CP24	SSE	WC	27/10/2009
20091027_0041	CP25	E	Broken boards reveal construction	27/10/2009
20091027_0042	CP25	E	Broken boards reveal construction (zoom)	27/10/2009
20091027_0043	CP25	E	Broken boards reveal construction (zoom)	27/10/2009
20091027_0044	CP25	E	Broken boards reveal construction (zoom)	27/10/2009
20091027_0045	CP26	S	Outside - N elevation	27/10/2009
20091027_0046	CP26	ESE	Outside - sleeper built cottages	27/10/2009
20091127_0129	CP26	S	Outside - N elevation	27/11/2009
20091127_0130	CP18	S	Kitchen	27/11/2009
20091127_0131	CP10	NE	Outside - SW elevation	27/11/2009
20091127_0132	CP10	NNE	Outside - SW elevation	27/11/2009
20091127_0133	CP11	NNW	Outside - SE elevation	27/11/2009
20091127_0134	CP27	WNW	Outside - S elevation showing former window opening	27/11/2009
20091127_0135	CP6	N	Interior - main hall showing construction	27/11/2009
20091127_0136	CP6	N	Interior - main hall showing construction	27/11/2009
20091127_0137	CP6	NE	Interior - main hall showing construction	27/11/2009
20091127_0138	CP6	NW	Interior - main hall showing construction	27/11/2009
20091127_0139	CP19	NE	Kitchen, chimney, fireplace revealed	27/11/2009
20091127_0140	CP19	NE	Kitchen, chimney, fireplace revealed	27/11/2009
20091127_0141	CP12 (Approx)	S	Outside - N elevation	27/11/2009
20091127_0142	CP14	SSW	Outside - E elevation	27/11/2009
20091127_0143	CP14	WSW	Outside - E elevation	27/11/2009

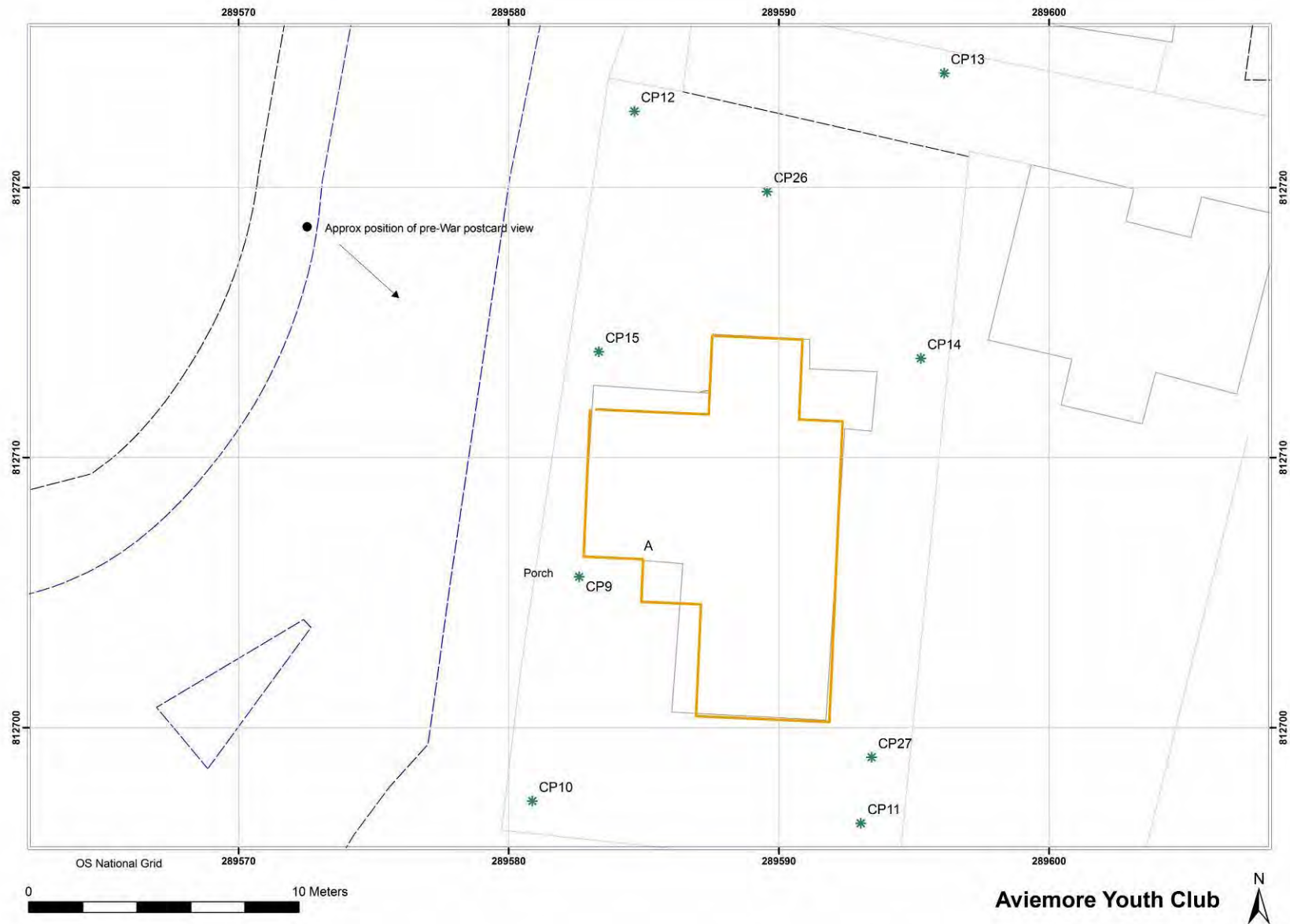


Figure 3 External camera points and actual outline compared to OS

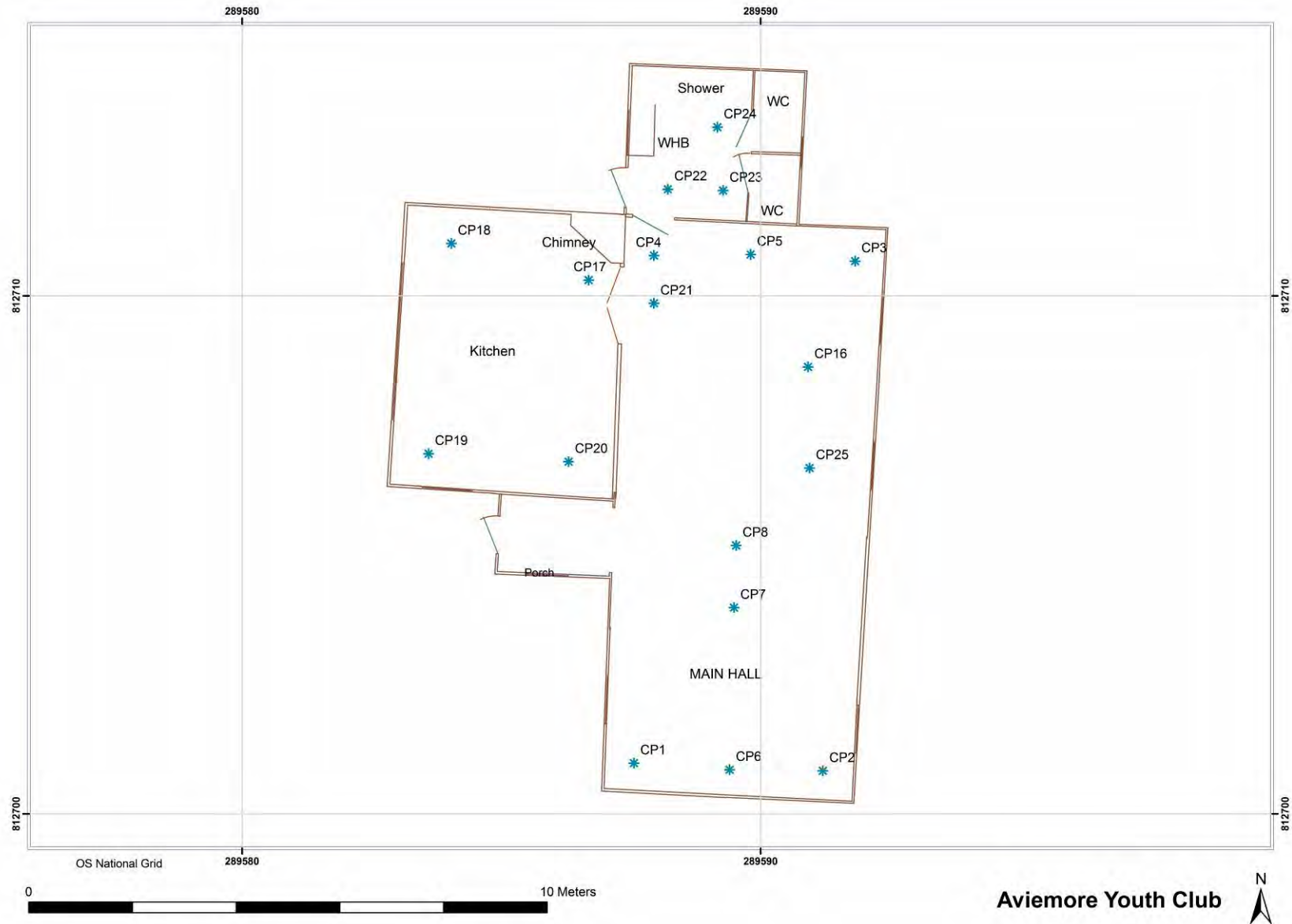


Figure 4 Internal layout and camera points

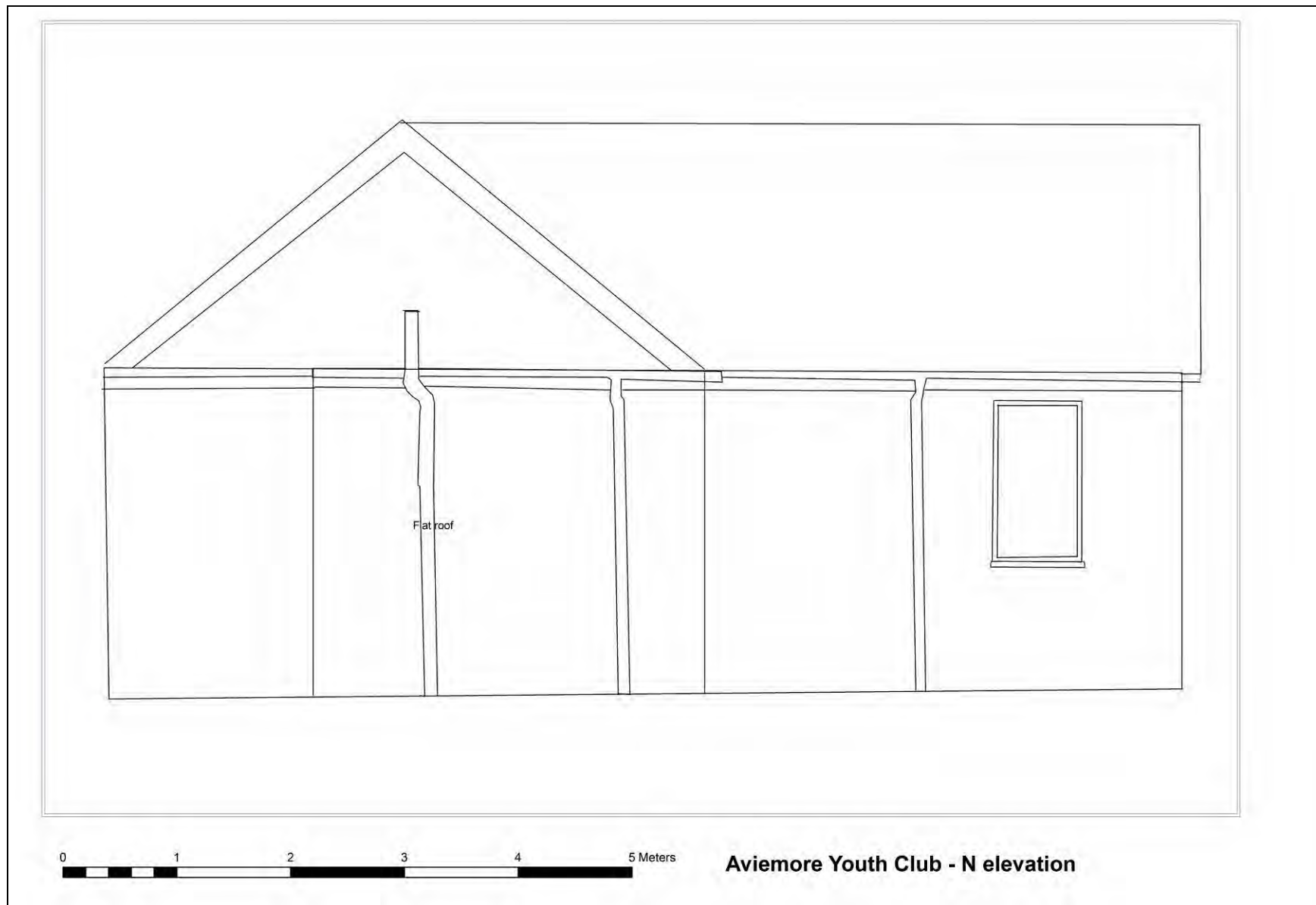


Figure 5 N elevation

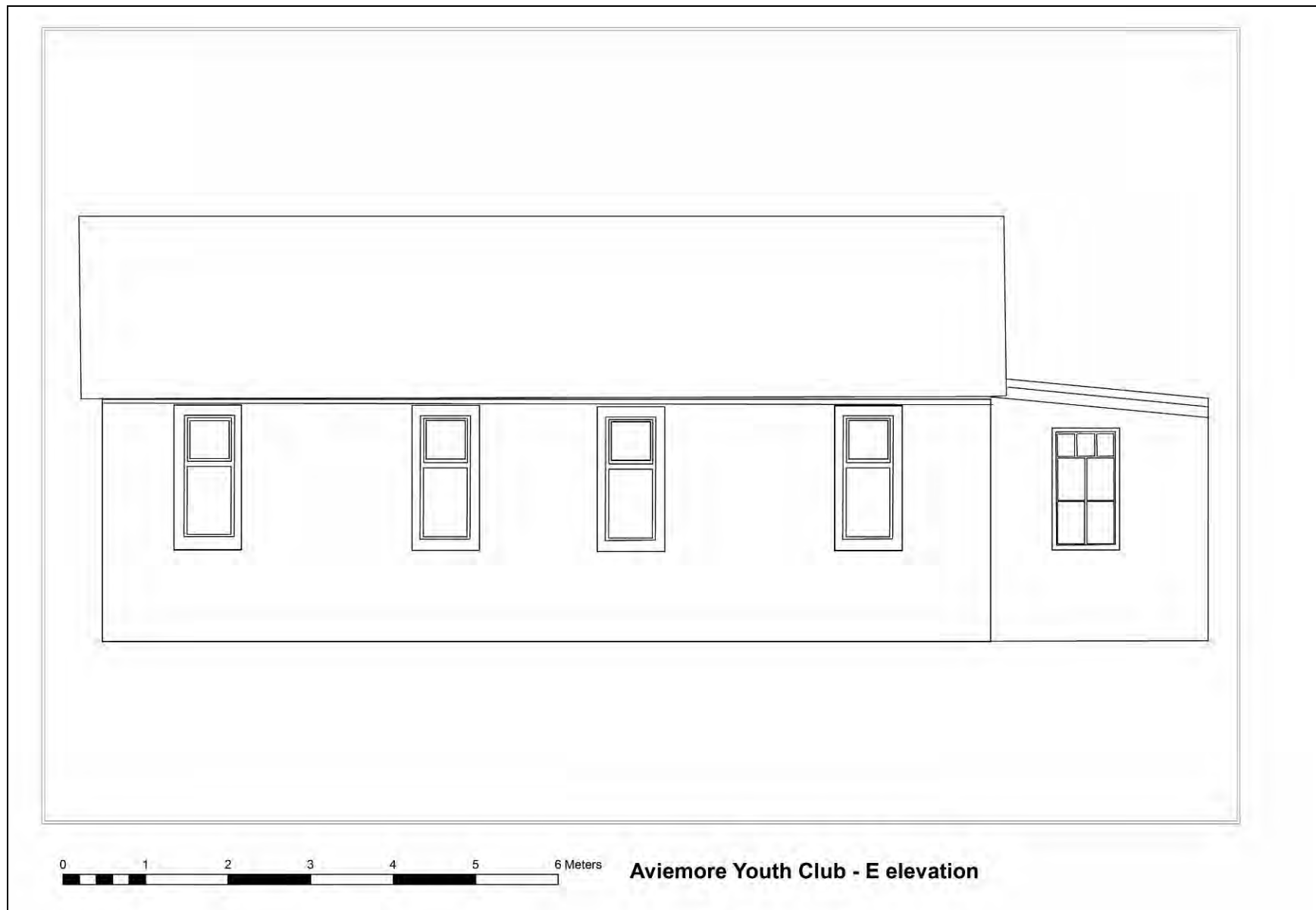


Figure 6 E elevation

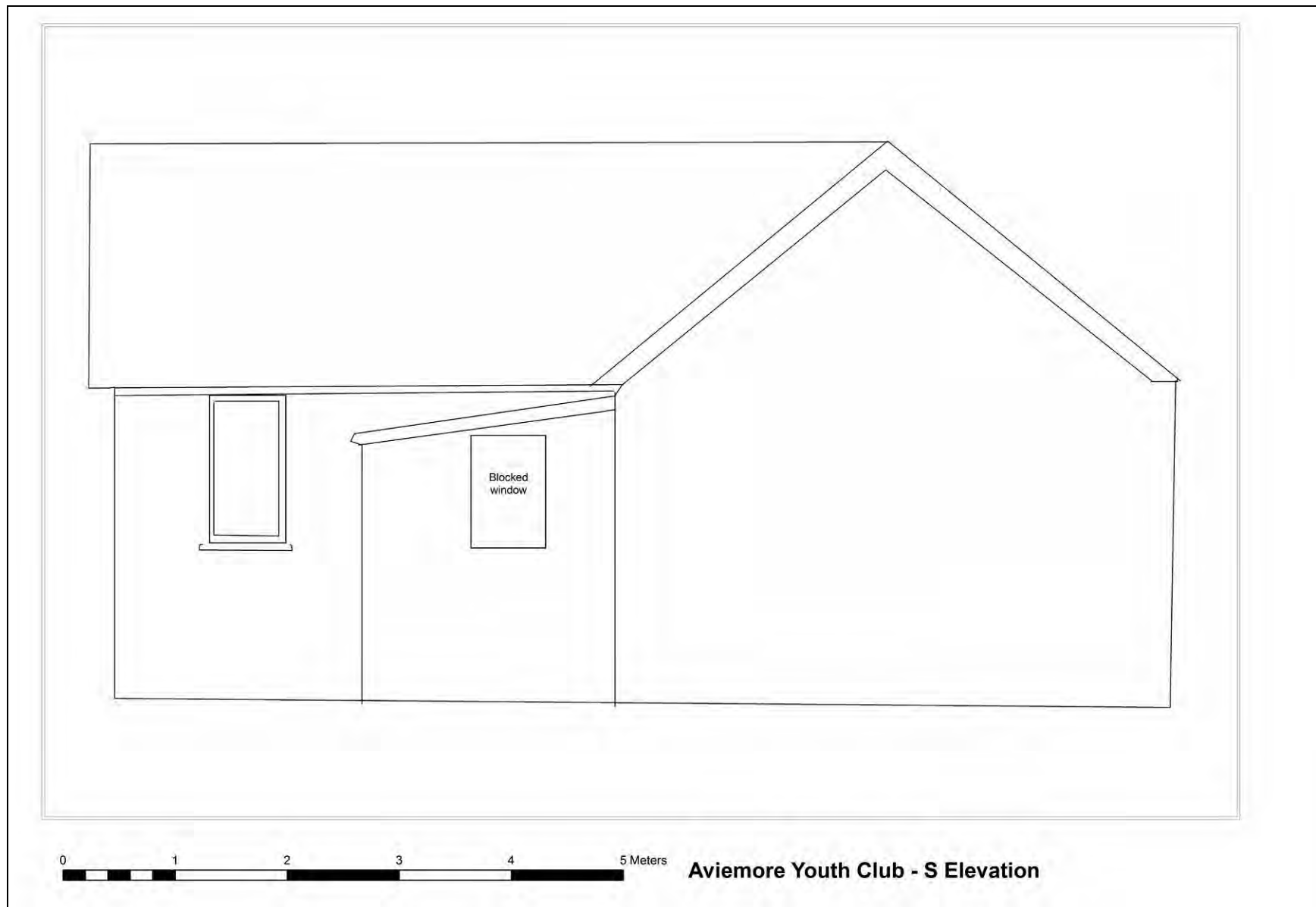


Figure 7 S elevation



Figure 8 W elevation

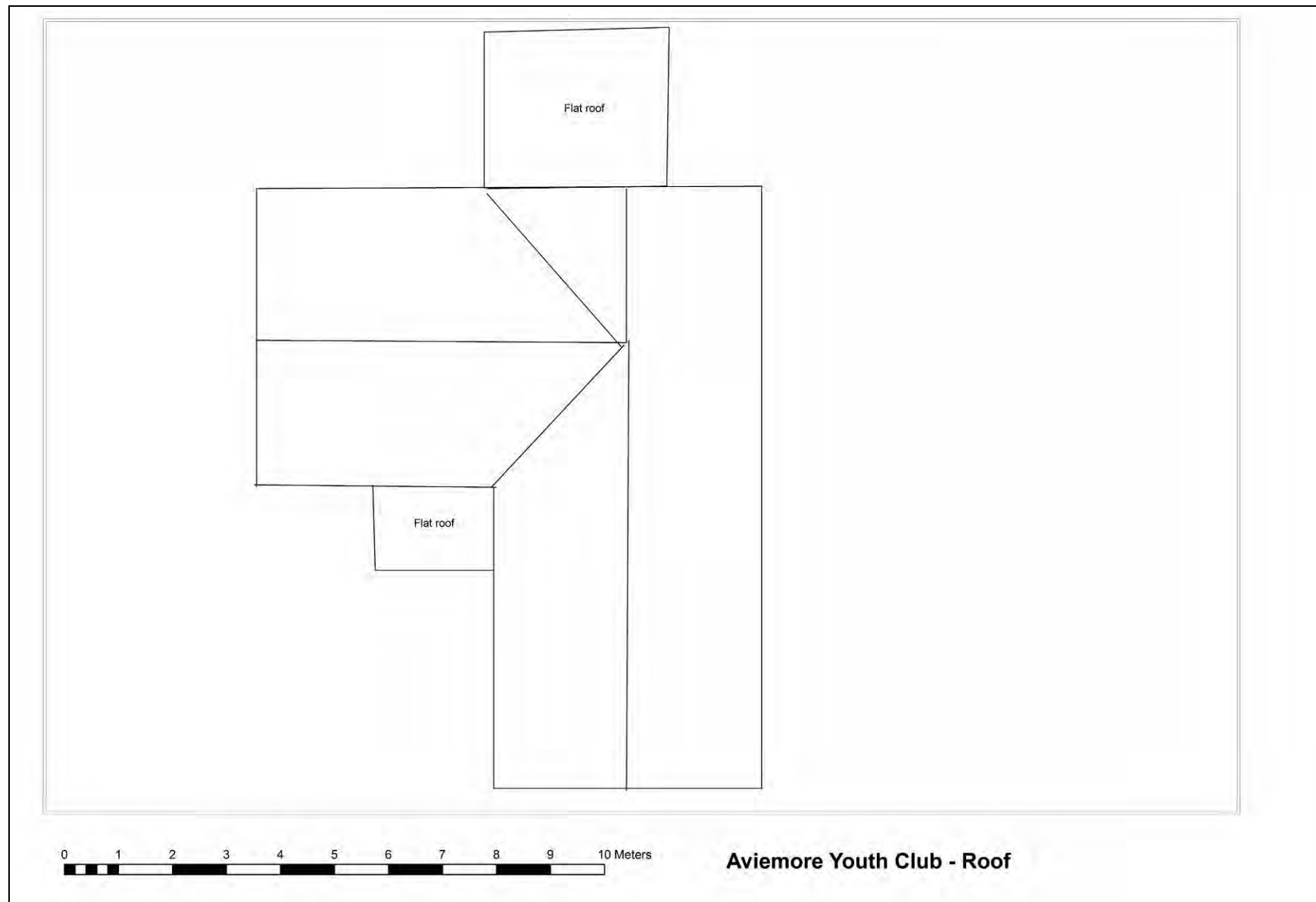


Figure 9 Roof plan

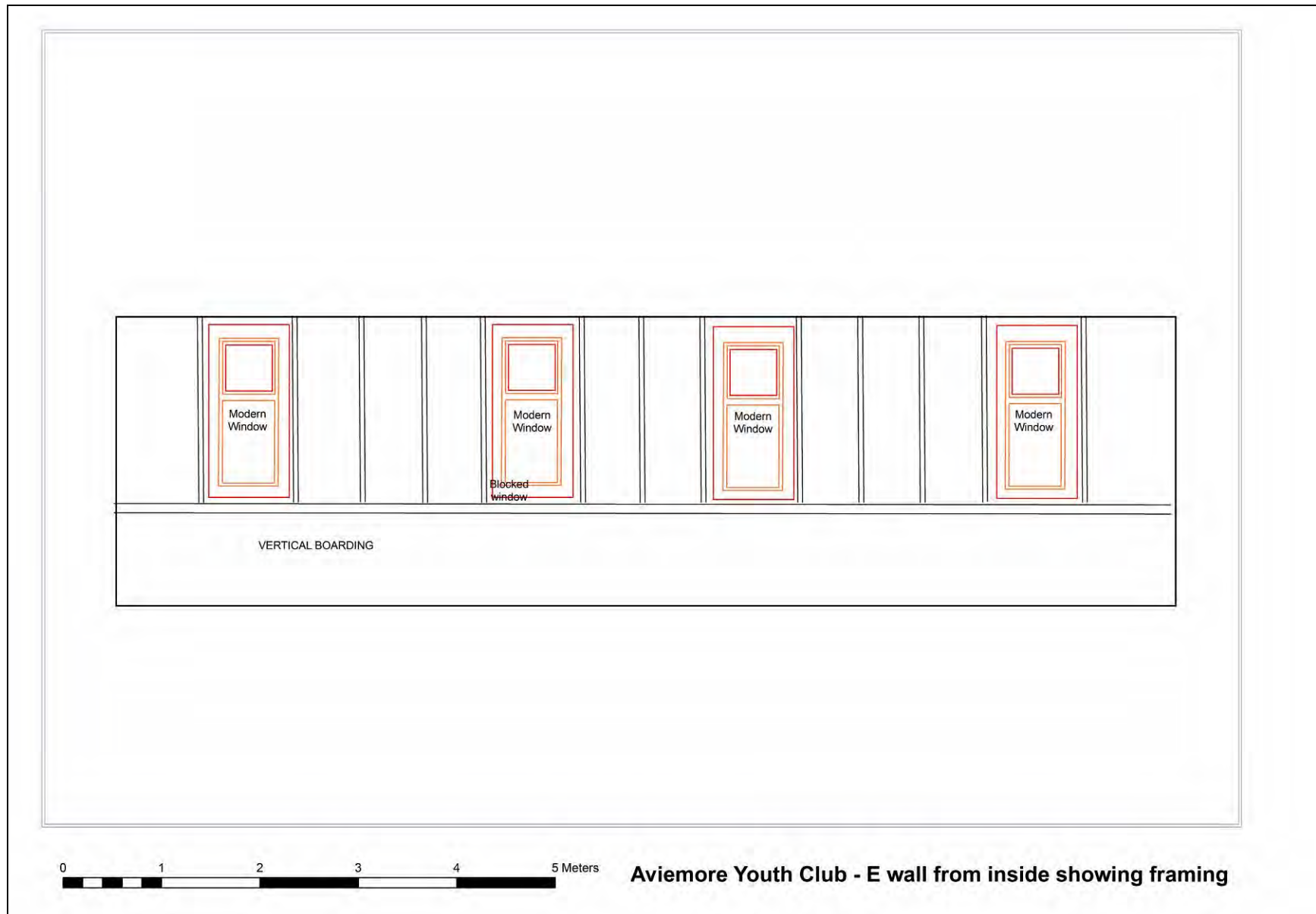


Figure 10 E wall, inside, showing framing