

Hastings CBD Heritage Inventory Project



ST MATTHEW'S PARISH CENTRE

OTHER NAMES: St Matthew's Parish Hall



Photo: K Pascall, 2012

LOCATION:

Street and Number: 200 King St South (Council) 204 Eastbourne Street West (Street address)

City / Town: Hastings

Region: Hawke's Bay

LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

Legal Description: Lots 267-270 DDP SAINT MATTHEWS

Certificate of Title: HB 458556

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Architectural Value:

The building has architectural value for its well-balanced and carefully proportioned composition, enhanced by its simple palette of materials. This value is enhanced by the successful integration of the remains of the old hall with the new building.

Historic Value:

The building (and its predecessor) has had a long history with the St Matthew's Parish community. Many members of this community, as well as the wider community are likely to have used the hall over the years, meaning that it will be held in high esteem by many of the people of Hastings.

Aesthetic Value:

The building has a commanding presence in the local townscape due to its distinctive form and scale and the adjoining open spaces. It makes a strong contribution to the townscape of this part of Eastbourne Street.

HISTORY:

This is likely to be at least the third version of a hall building on this site. The first known building was an interesting-looking timber-framed octagonal hall with a steep hipped roof and classrooms at the back. The earliest drawing on HDCs files is a scheme, with a specification dated 9 February 1925, by architect H G Davies that shows the addition of a substantial block to that hall in concrete construction, to the Eastbourne St East frontage. The new block provided a formal entrance and further classrooms, and the work also included a bicycle shelter and latrines at the back.

A fire on the first of January 1941 substantially damaged the hall¹. The greater part of the building was then demolished, but for the 1925 front section, which appears to have survived the fire in relatively intact condition. The building was constructed, reusing the 1925 frontage, with an entirely new and much larger hall built behind.

The new Parish Centre was designed by the well-known local practice of Davies and Phillips; the building that stands today is the second version of their design, after their original plan was returned by the parish for a re-think.² It was built by T. G Cleary at a cost of £6,850, and opened on the 9th of April 1942.³ The building was known as the St Matthew's Parish Hall until 1995, when it underwent a name change to St Matthew's Parish Centre.⁴ The Centre is presently owned by the Waiapu Board of Diocesan Trustees Church, and is occupied by the St Matthew's Op Shop and the Parish office, with the meeting room (known as the Guild Room) and hall still in use by the parish, school and others, including community groups.

¹ Carding, B 1995 *Hang on a minute: a history of St Matthew's Parish, Hastings*, Hanton & Anderson Limited, Wanganui.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

Architect: Davies and Phillips

Builder: T. G Cleary

Date of construction: 1942

Construction details: Concrete primary structure to Eastbourne St East section with steel windows; stucco on timber frame for balance of building, with timber external joinery; trussed timber roof, corrugated galvanised steel roofing.

Description:

The Parish Centre building is part of the St Matthew's Parish complex, which occupies the greater part of the city block between Lyndon Road, Eastbourne St East and King St South; the buildings of the complex include the eponymous church, which is a 19th century timber building with a distinctive 1915 addition, by Clere, in concrete, a primary school and early childhood centre, and the Parish Centre, amongst others.

The Parish Centre building faces Eastbourne Street East, where, due to its rather formidable appearance, comparatively large scale, and the open space on the flanks of the building, it has a commanding presence in the local townscape.

The style of the building is difficult to categorise. It is a building of two well-integrated but quite distinct parts, arising from it incorporating the remains of the 1925 addition to the earlier hall at the Eastbourne Street East end. Its principal architectural influence, most visible at this end, is an abstracted Gothic that harmonises well with the 1915 part of the church, set against a rather plain Moderne that characterises the body of the rest of the building.

The main elevation of the building has a distinctive symmetrical composition, made up of a two-storey central section flanked by short single-storey wings. A rhythmic series of partly engaged piers, with truncated abstracted pinnacles, mark the external corners of the building and flank the central entrance; the entrance door is recessed in a porch beneath a shallow pointed arch, surmounted with a multi-light steel window at the first floor. This front part of the building has a reinforced concrete structure, finished with multi-light steel windows and a stout timber entrance door, and, taken as a whole, has a somewhat fortress-like appearance. It is simpler in detail than shown on the 1925 drawings; it is not currently known whether it was simplified in the 1941/42 work, or simply built in a less-ornate fashion in 1925. The interior of this part of the building is occupied by the church op-shop and administration offices; a modern dropped ceiling can be seen crossing the top part of the windows.

The main body of the building, behind the front section, is constructed in stucco on a timber structural frame, and is almost entirely devoid of ornament, bar a slightly recessed trim around the parapet. Despite this basic plainness, the elevations are carefully proportioned and well-balanced, with an orderly rhythmic composition of tall multi-light timber windows set high in the walls, rain-heads and down-pipes creating visual interest on all three sides. The form of the elevations clearly shows the central two-storey main hall and single-storey wings. The hall has a shallow-pitch Dutch gabled roof, and the wings have shallow hipped roofs. One wing was for the stage store, the other for the Guild Room. These main spaces survive today in largely intact form.

ELEMENTS OF ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE:

Element	Significance
Eastbourne St East frontage	Architectural, aesthetic, townscape
Other elevations	Architectural

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES:

Carding, B 1995 *Hang on a minute: a history of St Matthew's Parish, Hastings*, Hanton & Anderson Limited, Wanganui.

OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION:

NZHPT Register: Not registered.

District Plan: St Matthew's Parish Centre is not specifically listed as a Heritage item in the Hastings District Plan, and is not located within the Central Character Precinct.

OTHER PHOTOS:



West Elevation (2012)



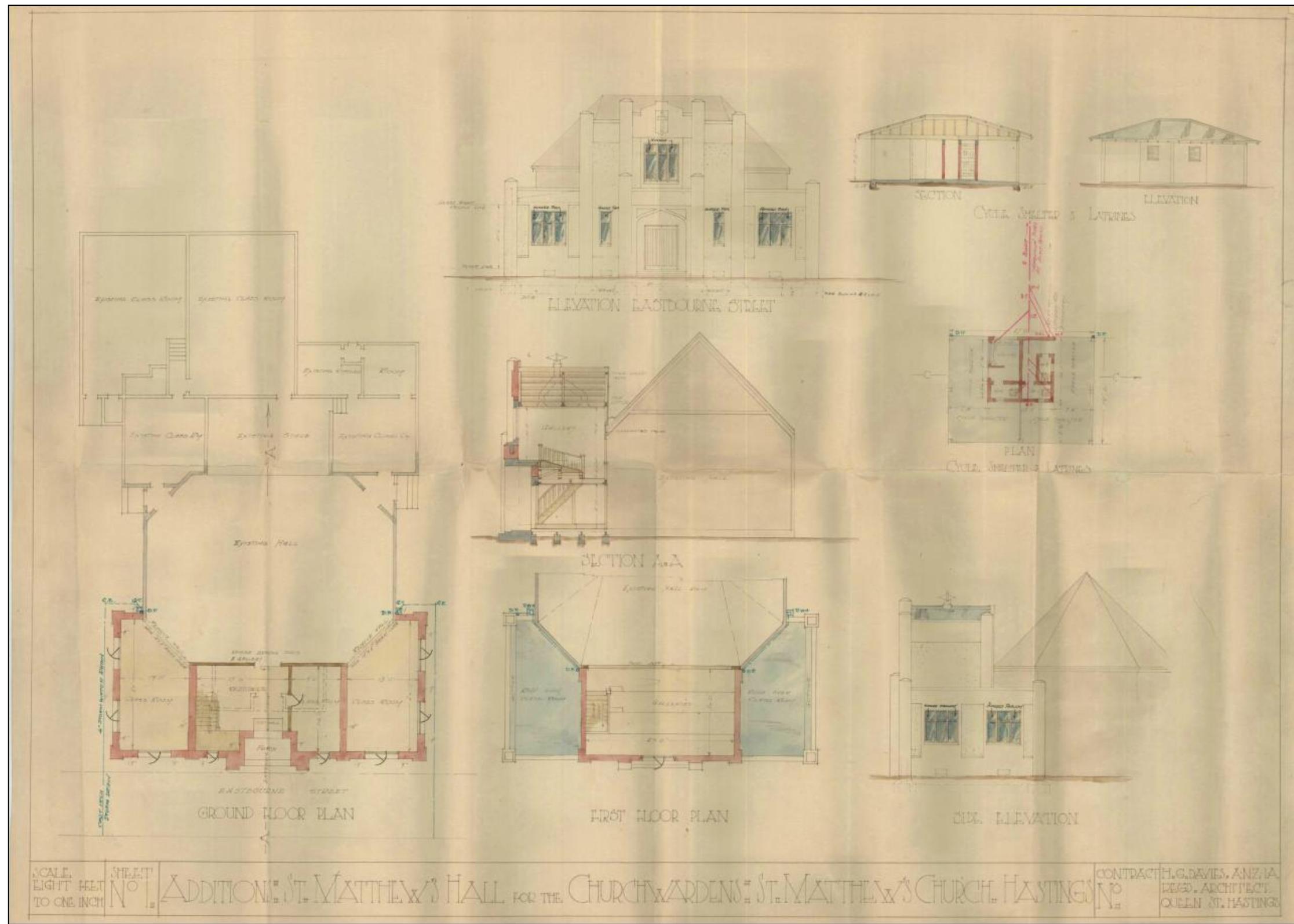
East Elevation (2012)

St Matthew's Parish Centre, 204 Eastbourne Street East

Inventory Number: 89; Property ID: 21191; TRIM Reference:
Report by Cochran & Murray Conservation Architects
Final Report: October 2012

ARCHIVE PLAN(S):

Addition, St Matthews Hall for the Church Wardens, St Matthews Church (TRIM Ref: 21191#0103)

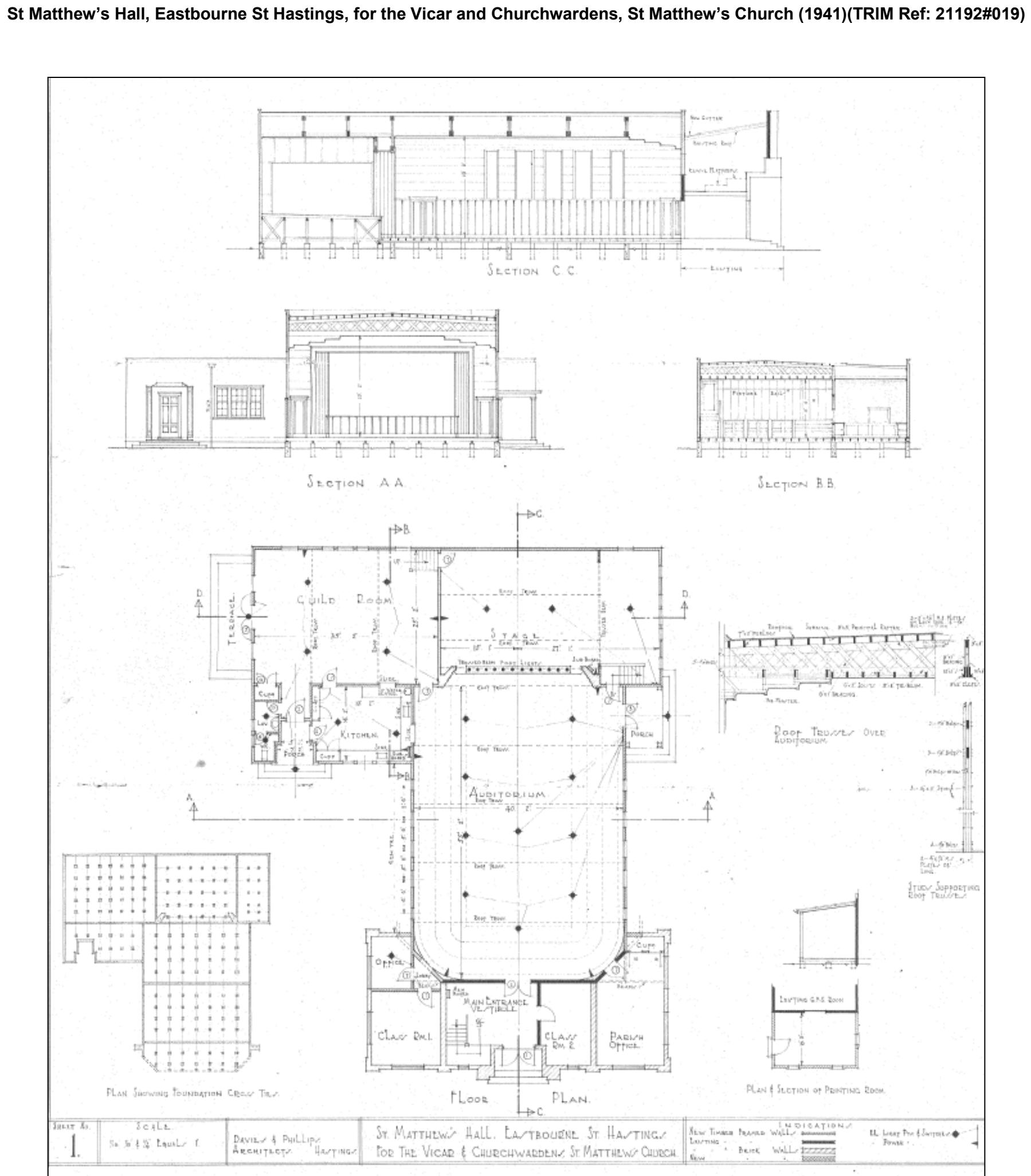


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