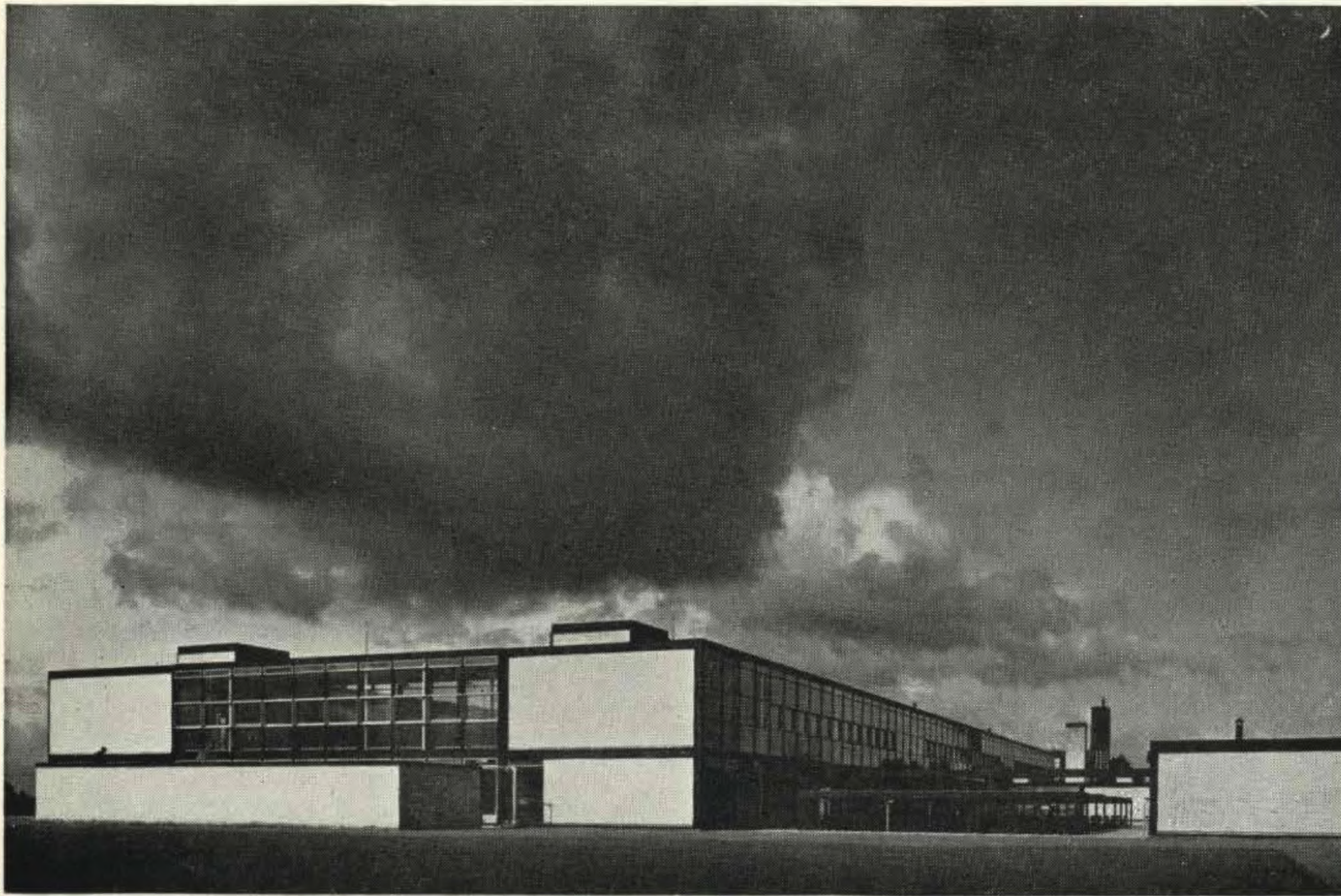
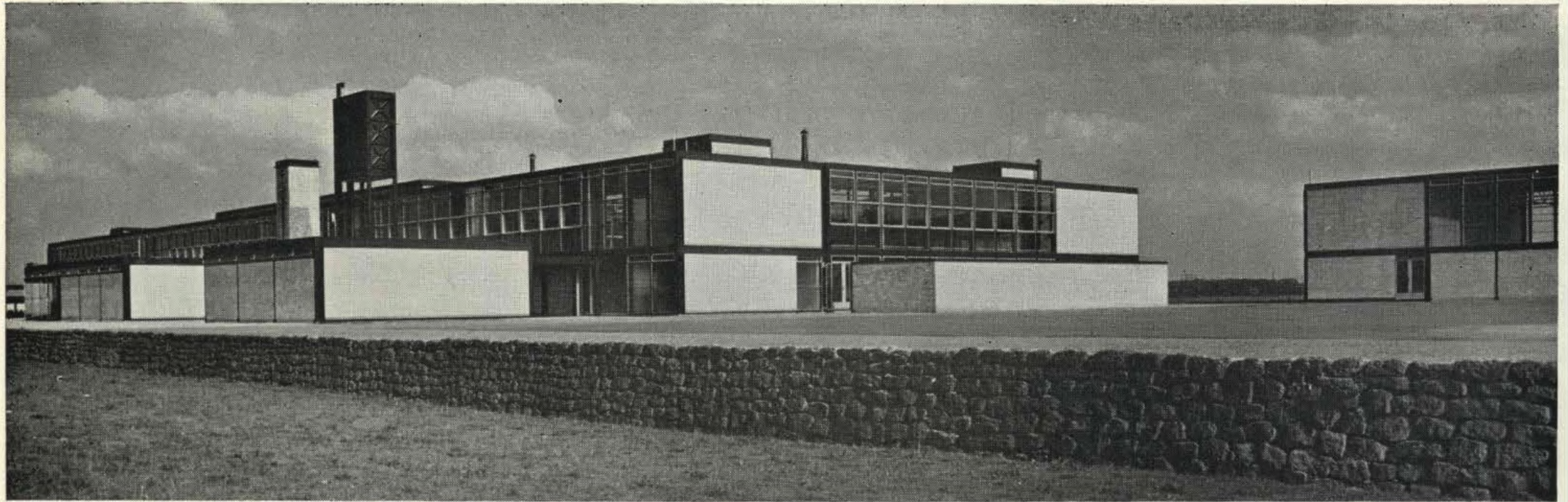


Secondary Modern School

Hunstanton, Norfolk



Architects: Alison and Peter Smithson

This three-form entry Secondary Modern School, on a 22-acre site just outside the town on the King's Lynn road, was won by the architects in an open competition held in the summer of 1950. It is of interest to note that the assessor of the competition was Denis Clarke Hall—himself the author of a highly significant pre-1939 school competition winning design. The contract was signed in February 1951 and work on site started in the following month, but shortly afterwards the job was delayed for some 14 months by a shortage of steel.

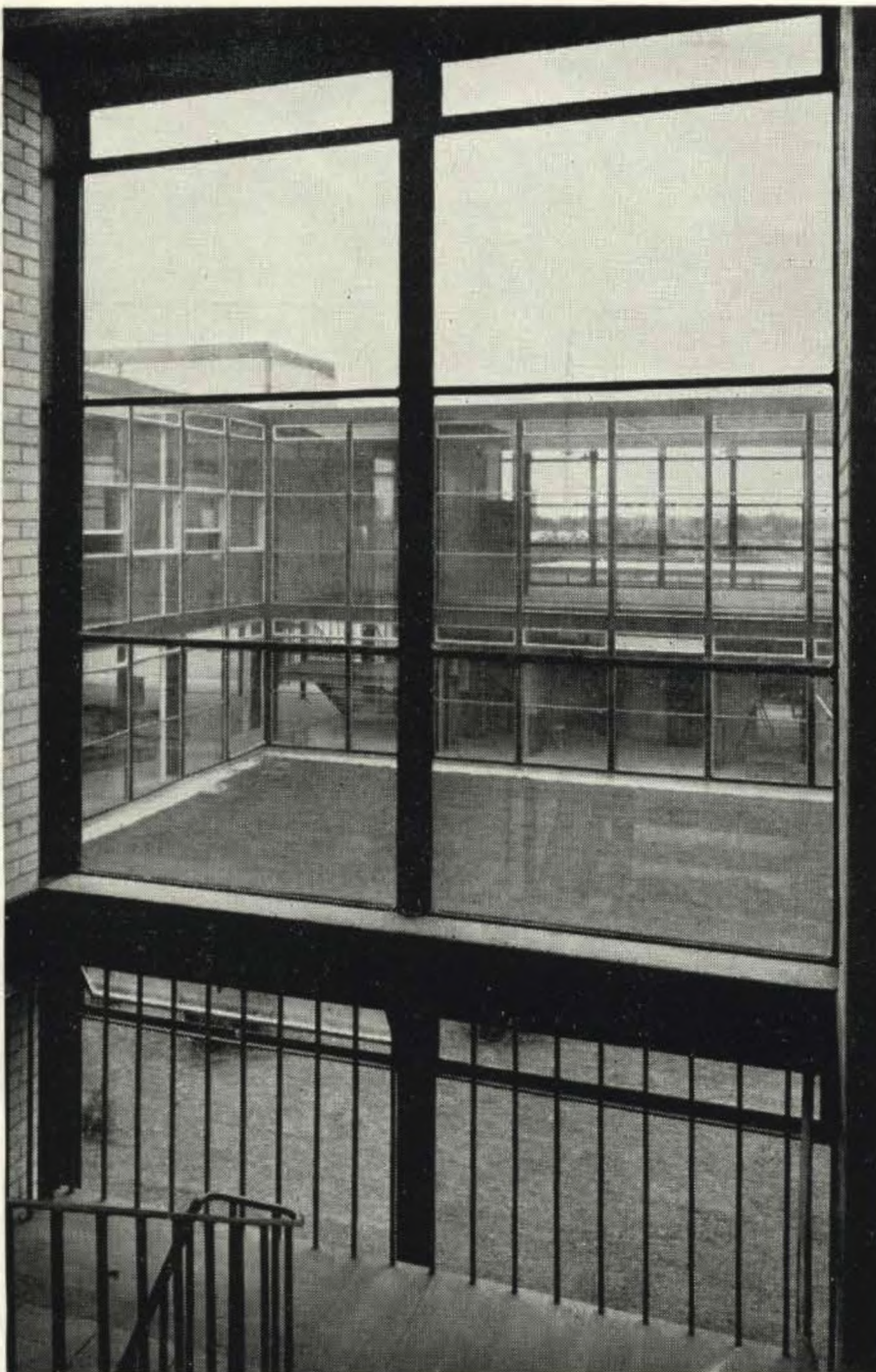
The buildings with their surrounding paths and play pitches are raised on a level podium 240 feet by 600 feet, which starts at ground level at its western edge and runs out to + 2 feet 3 inches along the eastern edge. The main block is 290 feet by 103 feet, with two internal courts each 72 feet by 52 feet. This block contains all the accommodation with the exception of the gymnasium/changing rooms; the wood/metal workshops, kitchen, adult housecraft room and the boiler house.

"For it is Mies who has codified the exposed-steel-glass and brick filled frame grammar for the rest of us to use if we wish. Since designing this school the Smithsons no longer wish to use it; therefore all the more credit to them for mastering and using the language so well—in my opinion as well as anyone on either side of the ocean, not excluding the mid-westerners who have worked directly with Mies."

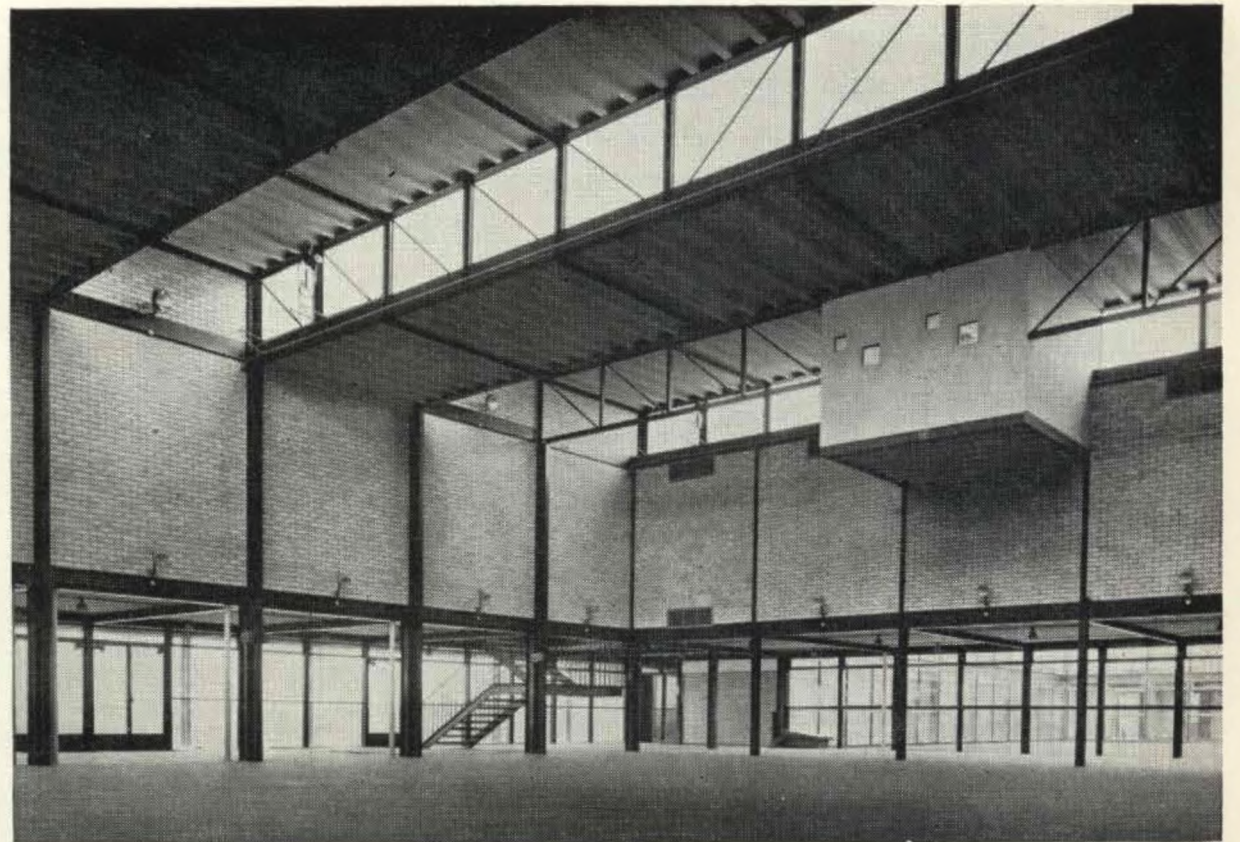
Philip Johnson—*Architectural Review*, September 1954

"One of the most interesting features of the philosophy of the school's design is the location of the classrooms: by having them all on the second floor, grouped in pairs and reached by small flights of stairs—not by long corridors—each room could be completely glazed from floor to ceiling on both its north and its south side. This provides a maximum of controllable natural light. Indeed the lively transparency that runs through the building is its strongest feature. Technically the school is beautifully put together . . . although hard almost to the point of brittleness, and with inner-looking design (enclosed courts) when views over the flatlands of Norfolk are all around, this distinguished school has many provocative elements."

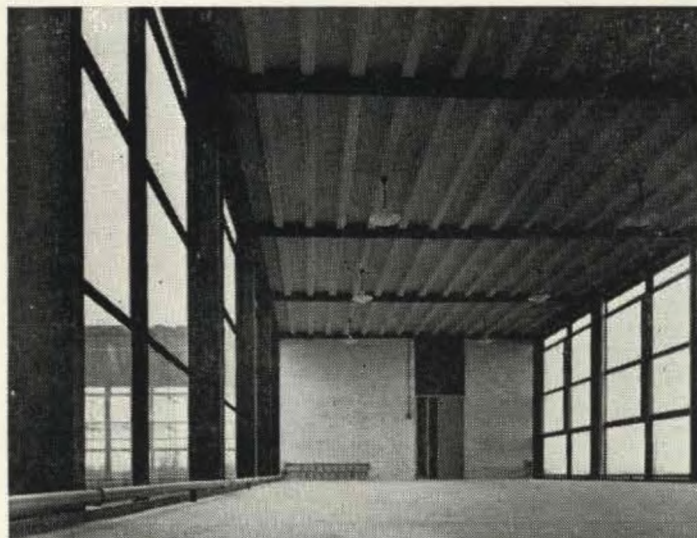
G. E. Kidder Smith—*The New Architecture of Europe*



4



5

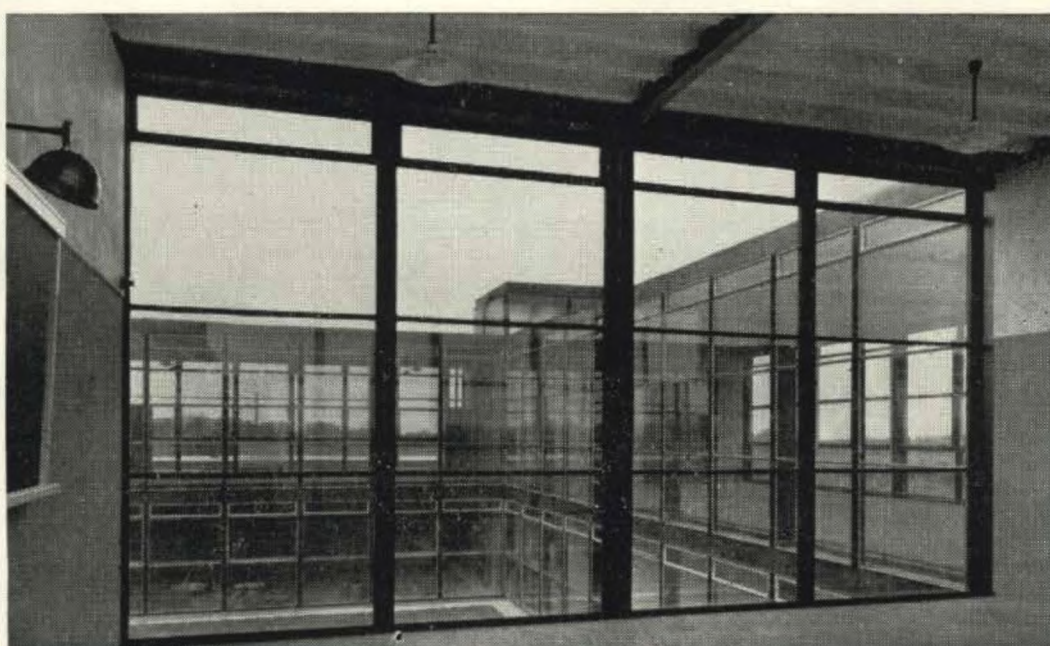
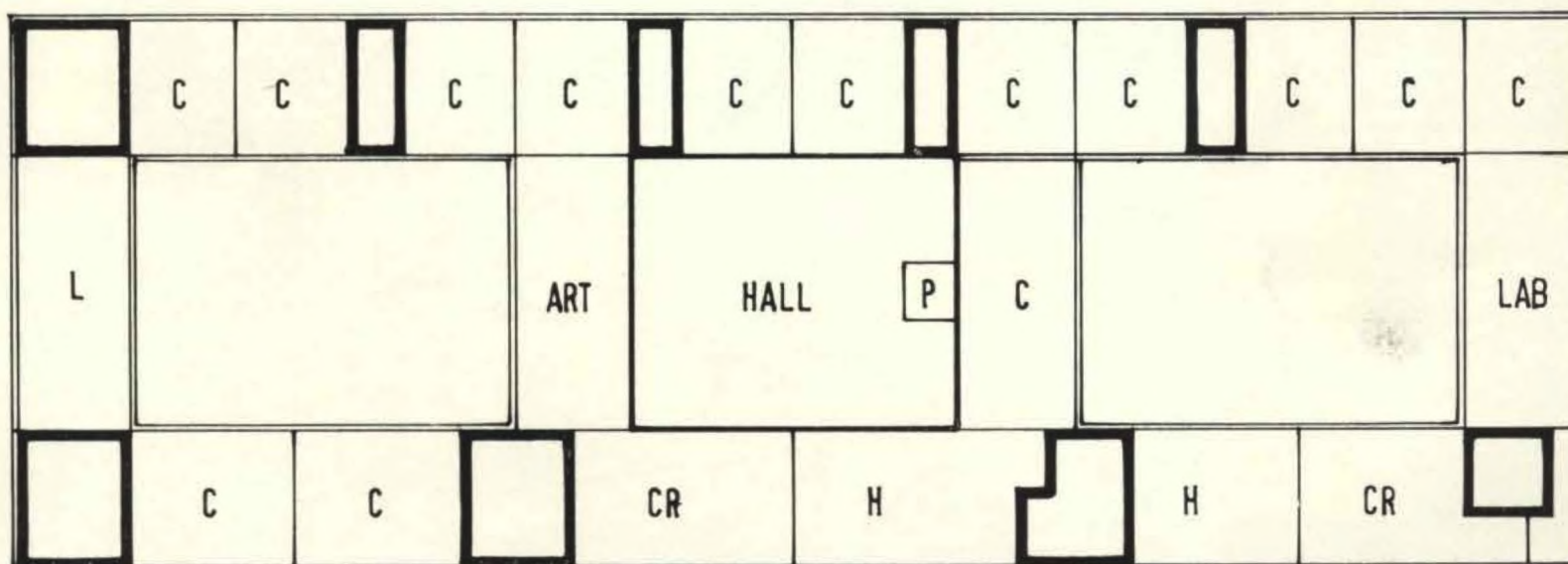


6

"In the school at Hunstanton, the first true Brutalist building, not only are the steel and brick expressed with an honesty that goes beyond the acceptable subterfuges of Mies, but pipe runs, electrical conduits, and other services are exposed to view. The austerity of the design was so remarkable that it attracted world-wide attention."
Reyner Banham—*Encyclopaedia of Modern Architecture*

1, The school from the west looking across the main road, with the gymnasium on the right; 2, The school from the east; 3, Looking towards the main block from alongside the gymnasium; 4, Looking into one of the internal courtyards; 5, The assembly hall showing the suspended projection box and one of the green room areas on the far side; 6, A general interior view; 7, Looking west alongside the main block towards the gymnasium; 8, The classroom glazing on a courtyard side

Left: The first floor plan. Key: C, classroom; L, library; CR, craft room; H, housecraft; P, projection room. Staircase and ancillary room areas are indicated by heavy line



7



8