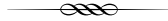# Introduction

Introducing the Workhouse

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That large loud Clock, which rolls each dreaded Hour,
Those Gates and Locks, and all those Signs of Power:
It is a Prison, with a milder name,
Which few inhabit without dread or shame
—George Crabbe, *The Borough: A Poem*

The workhouse has a notorious historical reputation. They were called prisons 'with a milder name' or 'Bastilles for the Poor' by their contemporaries, and considered to be an escalation of the problem of poverty, rather than a solution to it. As with their material representatives, the laws that surrounded the workhouse are equally infamous. The eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Poor Laws left a built and material legacy of over two centuries of legislative provision for the poor and infirm. Workhouses represent the first centralised, state-organised system for welfare, though that legacy is somewhat lost behind their notorious historical reputation. This reputation is drawn from the work of contemporaries like the poet and surgeon George Crabbe, and later critics of the system of poor relief such as the Fabians Sidney and Beatrice Webb, whose scathing history of the Poor Laws (1929) led to their repeal in England and Wales in 1930. Workhouses were intended to be specialised institutions, with dedicated subdivisions for the management of different categories of inmate. An inmate is anyone who was resident in the workhouse, and this broad definition includes both staff and patient. The term inmate is used here primarily

to refer to the poor whose management was the subject of the mission of the Poor Laws, except where explicitly stated. Among the varied missions of New Poor Law workhouses – constructed after the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act – were the management of the long-term ill and infirm, the containment of contagious disease and the care and treatment of inmates who could not be catered for in other institutional contexts, like children and mentally ill who were considered incurable.

The workhouse as an idea and the workhouse as a material individual institution are very different. Since the late 1990s, archaeologists approaching institutions for the management of poverty (such as Lucas 1999; Piddock 2001) have clearly identified the idiosyncratic nature of these institutions, which vary in form and mission according to where they were built, who they were built by and the frameworks that shaped their make-up. To say that a workhouse constructed for a city, a town or a rural area will vary in architecture and management practice is almost a truism. Despite this, workhouses are relatively homogenised in their historical reputation, much of which is also bound up with press coverage of scandals in the 1840s and 1850s. Press coverage and anti-Poor Law supporters called for welfare reform in the interwar period. The reason behind the uniformity and relative formlessness of the historic workhouse in scholarship and in the popular imagination is probably the scale of the workhouse system. Workhouses were built in every region and locale of England and Wales in the mid-nineteenth century alone. In our previous work we have both attempted to address regionality in public institutions for welfare and the management of poverty (Newman 2015; Fennelly and Newman 2017; Fennelly 2019), and will apply a regional, critical means analysis to the architecture of individual institutions to account for wider practice here. Like our predecessors, we are also limited by the scale of examples available and will thus focus solely on the north of England to address our questions on spatial organisation and material management.

In 1834, the Poor Law Amendment Act, which provided formally for a standardised system of poor relief in England and Wales, dictated that workhouses be constructed 20 miles apart, so that a network of closely linked institutions could cater to an increasingly populous landscape. As such, workhouse buildings were to be found in every major village and hamlet, and they have left a significant legacy of built heritage (Morrison 1999, 1). It is probably for this reason that the workhouse as a built institution has been generalised, the experience of individuals in one workhouse equated with the experience of others in workhouses, despite significant variation in management practice on an almost case-by-case basis. The conditions uncovered during the much-publicised Andover Scandal of the 1840s (described later in this chapter), for example, where inmates were

reported to be gnawing on bones they were tasked with crushing, contributing to an overhaul of workhouse management from the top down in the 1840s (Shave 2018, 340), has come to popularly typify the experience of workhouse inmates, even as Andover was considered in its own time as an exceptional case. This book aims to build a social archaeology of poverty and health in workhouses in just three English counties, illustrating the diversity of experience and the heterogeneous nature of these buildings, even as they shared architects, plans and a common legislative framework.

This book will be an archaeologically informed examination of the historic workhouse – a singular institution in writing on poverty and welfare in the nineteenth century, but one with nearly two thousand individual sites before the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834. After this Act, commonly referred to as the New Poor Law, 583 individual Poor Law Unions were established to manage their workhouses, each Union catering to several parishes (Fowler 2007, 28). The workhouses serving the Unions catered for large numbers of people with many varying needs, including poor relief, as well as medical care or other kinds of care. An increasing number of sick and infirm inmates over the course of the nineteenth century led to the establishment of dedicated infirmaries and medical facilities, which gave former workhouses purpose after the abolition of the workhouse system in 1930. Many workhouses became hospitals. Looking specifically at the groups involved in driving the need for increasingly specialised medical care in workhouses, leading ultimately to the conversion of many into hospitals, this book will address the heterogeneous nature and regional needs of different workhouses. The situation of 'the inmate' in the workhouse site is the central theme of this work. In his work on the 'total institution' – an institution to cater to all aspects of life without much contact with the outside world, such as a workhouse – sociologist Erving Goffman (1961, 18) draws a distinction between the inmate and staff: the inmates as a 'large managed group' and staff whose job it is to supervise. However, his designation of staff as separate is contingent on the idea that staff leave the institution and are integrated into the wider world. In a nineteenth-century workhouse, this distinction is less clear, as staff of all hierarchical levels lived on site. As such, the inmate here is both the recipient of the management strategies laid down in the New Poor Laws of 1834, and the staff who are responsible for that management.

Before tackling the nuances of the workhouse system, it is first necessary to outline the background to poverty and welfare reform in England and Wales in 1834. Workhouses as institutions are often discussed in the same context as prisons and asylums (see, for example, discussions of almshouses and destitute asylums in the 2001 special issue of the *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* on institutions). Like prisons and asylums,

workhouses formed part of a wider drive towards social and civic improvement that underpinned significant changes in law, in architecture and in the organisation of the English economy in the late Georgian period. The similarities between these institutions architecturally are largely superficial, however (Morrison 1999, 53), as the architecture of workhouses was so varied that the ideologies of the period that informed other institutions had less impact on the day-to-day running of workhouses than the management strategies of individual Boards of Guardians. Historical archaeologists have identified the drive towards civic improvement, materially articulated in institutions like workhouses, as part of a consolidation of a capitalist economy, both driving and driven by the Industrial Revolution and an expansion of mercantile trade in the Atlantic World in the late modern period (Leone 1995; Johnson 1996). The 'non-productive body' that could not or would not contribute to an increasingly industrialising economy became a problem (Lucas 1999, 135). French historian Michel Foucault (1989, 46) refers to the exclusion of the non-productive body and its institutionalisation as being driven by the 'imperative of labour' inherent in the capitalist economy of the industrial West. Sarah Tarlow (2007, 16) goes further to suggest that this drive was part of the 'improvement' and rationalisation of English society, identifying improvement as a 'cross-cutting ethic, directed not only at the improvement of agricultural production . . . but also at the moral, intellectual and physical improvement of the self, of the labouring people, of society, of production and of the human environment'. Part of this all-encompassing drive towards improving the people was on the one hand a consolidation of a messy and disparate network of charity and welfare institutions and sources – dubbed by historian Olwen Hufton (1974) the 'economy of makeshifts' – and the execution of the ideals of utilitarian reformers like Jeremy Bentham by imposing improvement on people through their material environment on the other. Unfortunately, much archaeological scholarship on the management of poverty during the emergence of a global capitalist economy (including this book) is focused on the anglophone world. Even so, workhouses are still generalised as expressions of an idea and rarely examined critically as individual or regional institutions.

Much of the historical reputation of workhouses comes from sensationalist and fictional accounts of workhouse life penned by authors like Charles Dickens, most notably in books like *Oliver Twist*, and from anti-Poor Law reportage in the popular press after a series of scandals in the 1840s. While much of this reputation is unearned or limited to a number of notable examples, workhouses at the end of the eighteenth century were not pleasant places. Privation was a general order in workhouse management, and cost-cutting measures were commonplace. A notable example

that reads as particularly offensive to the late modern reader is the burial of an illegitimate child with another unrelated dead inmate at the parish workhouse of St Paul, Covent Garden in 1791 (Richardson 2012, 79). The idea of *improvement* in the New Poor Law workhouse extended to not just people, therefore, but the buildings themselves. By the third decade of the nineteenth century the mishmash of old parish buildings, charitable institutions, almshouses and other buildings that made up provision for the poor in England were deemed unacceptable by a Whig government under Earl Grey, riding a wave of reform after their success with parliamentary reform in 1832. As such, the New Poor Law had the material effect of transforming the built environment of poverty and redefining institutional provision for welfare. For the people for whom the reform of the Poor Laws was intended to benefit, however, the New Poor Laws changed their social and material landscape irrevocably.

It is important to point out that at the start of the nineteenth century, most people in England were poor. Those suffering under serious poverty were the target of reformers and institutions, but even then, serious poverty was not always constant, as some people were only significantly worse off for a season or in light of circumstances such as the death of a breadwinner. From the establishment of the first Elizabethan Poor Laws in 1601, the business of welfare and charity was shared among many different groups and institutions. The workhouse – such as it was – was a last resort for most. People *got by* through the charity of their neighbours, on out-relief (alms, charitable donations, goods) distributed by their local parish Poor Law overseers, or through religious groups such as the Society of Friends. These 'patchy, desperate and sometimes failing strategies of the poor for material survival' (King and Tomkins 2003, 1) often involved multiple institutions and charitable groups. Engagement with varying levels of welfare could be seasonal or year-round. Workhouses in which the able-bodied could be put to work sprang up around England and Wales throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with varying degrees of success, and often dependent on the resources of whichever parish built them. This drove some parishes to bond together in 'Unions', the first notably successful example of which was the Bristol Corporation of the Poor in 1696 (Brundage 2002, 11). Subsequent Acts and Poor Laws encouraged Unions to share the burden of institutional poor relief. The idea was codified into law with Gilbert's Act in 1782, which proposed a 'system' of workhouses, in which the vulnerable could be housed and the idle put to work. Gilbert's Act was written and championed by Member of Parliament Thomas Gilbert, whose various Bills on the employment and relief of the poor brought the problem of an unconsolidated Poor Law system to the frequent attention of parliament throughout the 1770s and 1780s. Workhouses established

during this period are referred to in this book as Gilbert Unions. Despite its popularity, Gilbert's Act was not universally taken up, and there is some discussion among historians as to what kinds of parishes adopted the policy. Uptake of the Union system in the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century was inconsistent, varying from area to area. Historians debate the extent to which the Unions were taken up; social geographer Samantha Shave has pointed out that the early twentieth-century economists Sidney and Beatrice Webb, whose retrospectives and reports on workhouses contributed to a reform of the system in the 1930s, argued that the Unions were primarily rural, while historian Peter Mandler (1987, 133) has conversely argued that the Unions were taken up primarily in urban areas. This confusion among historians makes it difficult to pin down a historiographical consensus on the issue.

Regardless of its de facto success, Gilbert's Act succeeded in establishing the idea of the Union as a means of reforming the whole system, and in 1834 the Poor Law Amendment Act (known henceforth as the New Poor Law) made the establishment of dedicated Unions compulsory. One of the aims of the new system, as built around the workhouses, was to tackle the number of able-bodied men and women who applied for relief. The workhouses would be able to address the needs of the destitute elderly, children without parents and the infirm, while the able-bodied could seek help from charities and friendly societies (Boyer 2019, 38). The small rural workhouses and other smaller institutions such as almshouses were superseded by new, dedicated institutions – large, purpose-built workhouses – into which the ideas of the New Poor Law were to be codified. The architecture of the new workhouses, unlike their predecessors, was centrally imposed by the New Poor Law Commission, a body based in Somerset House in London whose Inspectors and Assistant Inspectors witnessed first-hand (and in some cases, contributed to) the turmoil of establishing the new system, until their replacement by the more centralised Poor Law Board in 1847.

The architecture of the New Poor Law workhouse marked a significant material departure from Poor Law workhouses of old. The new workhouses constructed after the 1834 Act conformed to plans and ideas set out by reformers such as Sampson Kempthorne, whose radial-plan institutions bore closer resemblance to prisons and asylums of the early nineteenth century than to the almshouses and Houses of Industry that they were replacing or supplementing. The New Poor Law stipulated that 'no Parish, Township, Hamlet, or Place … shall be situated more than Ten Miles from any Poorhouse or Workhouse' (Poor Law Amendment Act 1834, chapter 31). Within the workhouses themselves, the experience of being a dependant of the institution changed fundamentally, as the industrialised

means of processing increasing numbers of pauper admissions led to a level of uniformity of practice that had no precedent in workhouses of old. The inmates' bodies themselves were subject to the mortification of poverty, as their clothes were removed on entry and stored until their discharge, their bodies washed and hair shorn (Longmate 2003, 93) to prevent the spread of lice and disease.

Conditions in workhouses varied by institution. Urban workhouses, workhouses just outside of urban centres and rural workhouses were very different, though their architectural forms were similar (as discussed later in this chapter). Workhouses under the New Poor Law were intended to support *deserving* poor, those for whom poverty was an unfortunate circumstance about which they could do nothing. This included the sick, the elderly, children, widows and the mentally ill. The workhouses were also designed to deter able-bodied, *undeserving* poor from taking advantage of the system. The 'workhouse test' was one of the underpinning ideas behind the new system, that paupers entered a workhouse as a last resort, and that the institution was a deterrent to poverty and not an incentive (Fowler 2007, 17). As such, conditions were not supposed to be comfortable for the general inmate population (with a few exceptions, discussed later in this book). In the 1840s, a scandal of particular note brought conditions within workhouses to the attention of the public. Andover Union Workhouse in Hampshire, regarded early in the New Poor Law era as a well-run institution, was the subject of an inquiry under the New Poor Law Commission due to a report of inmates there resorting to gnawing old bones to extract marrow and gristle (Brundage 2002, 88). This reportedly took place while the paupers were engaged in bone-crushing, a common activity in workhouses in which animal bones were crushed for fertiliser. The management of the workhouse came under scrutiny, as inmates were found to have insufficient food according to government guidelines. For opponents of the New Poor Law, scandals like Andover only proved that the system did not work. Even so, the system still proliferated and workhouses were constructed across the country.

The English landscape was to be materially changed to accommodate a new network of workhouses. In practice, the process of constructing workhouses was much more gradual. Out of a number of idealised designs for workhouses, several variations on plan emerged in the 1830s and 1840s that proliferated across England and Wales. The designs of the architect Sampson Kempthorne are frequently held up as a paragon of the New Poor Law workhouse model, so vaunted were they in the reports of the Commissioners of Lunacy. '[They] appear to us, from a cursory inspection', they said, 'excellently arranged; it is most gratifying to see the attention that has been paid by the architect to the principles of separation and

classification, to cleanliness, to ventilation, and to general convenience' (Annual Report of the Poor Law Commissioners for England 1835). This kind of praise evidences the priorities of the Commissioners: maximum classification and separation, cleanliness and utility. Though Kempthorne himself emigrated to New Zealand in 1840 after constructing just a few workhouses, his much-lauded designs were applied as a base model by many architects who followed in the construction of workhouses throughout England (Markus 1993, 142). So, what did Kempthorne's designs look like? According to the Poor Law Commissioners' First Annual Report (1835), there were to be accommodations for seven classes of inmate in a workhouse, and each was to have indoor and outdoor space. These classes were aged or infirm men, able-bodied men and youths (over 13), boys aged 7–13, aged or infirm women, able-bodied women and girls (over 16), girls aged 7–16 and children under 7 years. In practice, these classes were frequently mixed and another class – the mad – was soon added to this; gender was the only consistent separation criteria. Kempthorne's Hexagonal Plan, which proved an ideologically popular choice, if not as readily adopted as his more practical cruciform plan, provided for six separate inmate classes within the workhouse and in yards without, as well as cross-ventilation of wards to promote fresh air (an increasing concern), and the situation of officers at the centre of the structure to allow for maximum supervision. Twenty-six of these hexagonal workhouses were constructed in the 1830s (Morrison 1999, 74).

After Kempthorne, his one-time apprentice George Gilbert Scott is the other architect whose name is associated with workhouse architecture. Gilbert Scott and his partner William Bonython Moffatt designed a workhouse that departed from the single-structure plan, dividing the workhouse into three: an entrance block, a main building and an infirmary, surrounded by a wall within which separate yards were drawn to maintain inmate separation outdoors (Morrison 1999, 71). Each section of the building was connected, but it departed from an earlier model of institutional construction that had seen its height during the grand designs of prison architects like William Blackburn at the end of the eighteenth century and the first of the big public lunatic asylums in the 1810s. By the 1830s, the problems with these monolithic structures were becoming apparent, as more and more inmate classes and an increasing demand on services exposed the limitations of an institution that radiated from a central spoke (Evans 2010, 309). Though Kempthorne and his fellow architect Francis Head's hexagonal plans were visually pleasing on paper, the expense and inconvenience of expanding a site that was already built to its limitations would soon become known. Scott and Moffatt's more loosely arranged collection of connected structures proved more practical. How-

ever, these plans and the ideal designs that informed them are just starting points, and do not reflect the reality of how workhouses operated day-to-day, or the sometimes highly regional challenges that informed their expansion over time.

An archaeology of these kinds of institutions requires an interdisciplinary approach, an engagement with both the documentary and the material (Piddock 2007, 17) to understand how the architecture was understood and engaged with. This book employs an interdisciplinary toolkit to explore historic workhouses from both a material and archival perspective. Workhouse buildings after 1834 were constructed to an ideal plan of how a workhouse *should* look. As such, it is tempting to consider them as homogeneous institutions, whose distinguishing or individualising factors were the activities that took place within their walls. However, there is a danger in this approach of assuming that workhouse buildings *worked*, and that the use of space was not influenced by human agency and the architecture not also influenced by regionality. Administration reform in England in the middle of the nineteenth century meant that pro forma overtook more nuanced means of reporting to central government (Fennelly 2019, 113). As such, regional differences, factors and influences are harder to discern from the historical record. With the exception of instances of scandal at Andover in the 1840s, or political unrest, as in the North of England in the late 1830s, significant regional differences are only accounted for in scholarship through micro-studies of individual geographic areas. L.A. Botelho's (2004) excellent work on the elderly and the Old Poor Law in Suffolk, from which Chapter 3 of this book will draw, and Frank Crompton's (1997) detailed exploration of children in workhouses in Worcestershire, discussed in Chapter 4, are examples of this kind of scholarship. As such, English workhouses are on one hand treated as both highly regional and fragmented, while on the other, discussions on architecture are necessarily general due to the scale of the workhouse system after the 1830s. This book is subject to the same limitations of scale and is not an exception to the published scholarship, taking as examples of regional practice the workhouses of Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, and aiming to demonstrate regional difference through the case studies presented. England is a highly regional country, however, both now and in the nineteenth century. While central government and national legislation dominated welfare provision throughout the island, local identity and regional pressures still impacted individual institutions. The benefit of a materially focused approach to workhouses is in the potential for empirical comparison of building features and architecture, and aids in the identification of features that are distinctive to individual institutions.

Building on the work of historians such as Brundage (2002) to set workhouses within their wider social and legislative context, this work also contributes to archaeological approaches to institutions. Building surveys and architectural analysis are employed to identify areas of activity and discuss the division of space in workhouse buildings. This builds on both academic and commercial approaches to institutional buildings. Significant research has been carried out on institutional buildings in the context of development-led (sometimes commercial; cultural resource management in North America) archaeology. The previously mentioned special issue of the *International Journal for Historical Archaeology* showcased the potential of cultural resource management projects to inform interesting avenues of research with regards to institutional buildings (Spencer-Wood and Baugher 2001, 15). We have previously shown how development-led archaeology contributes to the study of institutional buildings in the United Kingdom (Fennelly and Newman 2017), and recent scholarship (such as Shapland 2020) has further explored the potential for non-invasive, archaeologically informed examinations of buildings that are still standing but are inaccessible or are now demolished and survive only in their plans and records. Archaeologists are well situated to inform on both the material and historical facets of a historical institution. In her work on lunatic asylums in Australia and Britain, Australian archaeologist Susan Piddock (2007, 5) has argued that buildings and spaces reflect ideas that are not always explicitly written about in documentary evidence. As such, an interdisciplinary archaeological approach to the study of workhouses, incorporating archival research, standing building surveys, comparison with grey (unpublished, commercially focused) literature, and spatial analysis, can identify issues and narratives that lie between disciplinary boundaries.

Overview

Traditional archaeological approaches to institutional buildings in the United Kingdom are not always possible. While building surveys are sometimes feasible where the buildings survive and are open to be investigated, many former workhouses have been demolished or redeveloped, or continue to operate as general medical facilities. As such, this book begins with a short methodological overview of the ways in which we approach workhouse buildings here. This chapter outlines the methods employed in this study for examining workhouse architecture from a distinctively archaeological perspective. The application of a broad disciplinary toolkit is described in detail, with a note on how these methods could be applied in the study of problematic buildings beyond workhouses and other institutions.

Most workhouses that continued to operate as institutions in England after the abolition of the Poor Laws in the mid-twentieth century became hospitals. As such, the first discussion chapter focuses on sick inmates, as a significant and increasing portion of the workhouse population. Workhouses of the New Poor Law were part of a wider institutional drive towards the confinement of those elements of society that could not contribute meaningfully to the industrial economy, which included criminals, the sick and the insane. Even as lunatic asylums were constructed en masse following the Lunacy Acts of 1808 and 1845, workhouses still housed lunatics throughout the nineteenth century in dedicated spaces or separate buildings. The nature of this provision and the extent to which each workhouse related to nearby lunatic asylums were regionally dependent and often closely connected. The needs of specific local populations and regions were reflected in the material construction and built environment of the workhouse.

The old and infirm were traditionally the largest user groups before the New Poor Laws, and a significant proportion of the population after. Chapter 3 will focus on the elderly as a specific classification of inmate in the nineteenth-century workhouse. Taking Michel Foucault's idea of the institution for confinement as a solution to the problem of unproductive populations, this chapter will broadly explore the idea of what it means to be 'elderly' in the nineteenth century, and how the New Poor Law supported that idea. The workhouse as a site for housing and managing the elderly and infirm will be explored through spatial analysis, using architectural plans, material interiors and cartographic evidence. This chapter will focus on the concerns of workhouse Guardians as reflected in minute books for specific workhouses. Employing census data and workhouse records for admission, the idea of 'old age' will be addressed. The elderly will be examined through architectural provision for their management, the permeability of the institution (ostensibly an institution for confinement) for this class of inmate, and the activities they engaged in, such as leisure activities and social interactions within and outside the workhouse.

Children formed a marginal and contentious group in the New Poor Law workhouse, though they were ubiquitous. Their care contrasts significantly with that of other inmates, and could include education, industrial training and sometimes even forced migration. Leisure activities often formed part of their management. Unlike the elderly or the infirm, emphasis in the management of children was on moving them on from the institution as soon as they were fit to contribute meaningfully to society. Chapter 4 will explore the dedicated spaces for children in individual workhouses, as part of the landscape or the workhouse buildings proper. How this provision altered over time in response to changes in national

legislation such as the Elementary Education Act of 1870 will be examined in relation to education provision and apprenticing before and after 1870. This chapter will link to the previous chapters on the sick and the elderly by exploring dedicated spaces for inmate provision (in this case, the schoolhouse, dormitory or infirmary), which was also changed in response to public health concerns and social issues. Significantly, the divisions between these more *deserving* inmate classes were more permeable than the division between able-bodied adults and the rest of the workhouse population. This chapter contributes to the expanding published literature on the history of childhood, and more recently, archaeological approaches to children and childhood in the past. Chapter 5 examines specialised provision for lunatics in the regional workhouse, comparing the landscapes and material fabric of spaces for lunatics in the workhouse with those of local lunatic asylums. The mentally ill was a broad category in these non-specialised institutions, so we will use the phrase 'lunatic inmate' to refer to any inmate who was not explicitly categorised otherwise. This language reflects the language of the sources of the period. This term, used throughout the primary source material, further reflects the lack of classification on anything but the broadest of terms in most workhouses in this period, which were very adamant for the most part that their mission was not the care of the mentally ill or disabled. Even so, paying to accommodate a pauper at an asylum or other specialised institution at the expense of the Union was sometimes more expensive than housing them in the workhouse, such that there are often very broad classifications of patients that fall under the category of 'mad', 'lunatic' and 'insane'. From a terminological perspective, this makes it difficult to account for what exactly each inmate under these categories would have been categorised as in a more specialised facility. To reflect this ambiguity, this class of inmate is referred to in this book as 'lunatic' or 'insane' as per the terminology of the records (unless specified as otherwise). This chapter will refer to published scholarship on the history and archaeology of medicine and lunatic asylums and contribute to literature on the archaeology of institutions.

Although primarily an architectural form designed for the institutionalisation of the poor, the workhouse became a home for employees supporting the workhouse system. Over the course of the New Poor Law, the number of workhouse employees increased and diversified. Chapter 6 will explore the varied roles and professions that developed to support the workhouse system and how they manifested themselves within the workhouse architecture, as well as the role of the workhouse as a dwelling space or home. The built form developed alongside staff specialism and training as one informed the other, resulting in a hierarchical system that prompted staff institutionalisation. This chapter examines how regional

needs directly impacted the development of staff roles in rural workhouses where employment was limited and varied. Each workhouse provided for their staff in different ways, and in many cases accommodated them. As a kind of hidden class of inmate, mid-level workhouse staff occupied an interesting position in the workhouse spatial hierarchy. Their movements were managed and dictated by the manager at the top and other actors like the porter, while inmates worked alongside staff to manage the sick and the infirm. This final chapter will spatialise their experience.

The book will conclude with a summary of workhouse provision for the sick, infirm or otherwise unemployable. This chapter builds on the idea of the workhouse as a varied and highly regional institution, as evidenced by the examinations of medical provision as a single aspect of their remit in the preceding four chapters. Regionality will be put forward as a natural consequence of the expansion of urban centres and the development of the English landscape in light of the agricultural and industrial revolutions. As such, local workhouses became embedded in the state-sponsored provision of welfare and healthcare at a regional level. Following the different uses to which workhouses were put during the First World War and in the interwar period (as hospitals, prisoner of war camps or schools), workhouses underwent a significant transformation in the mid-twentieth century, with many ending up as hospitals.