

# DOWN HOUSE, BROMLEY (INTERIM REPORT No. 4)

*Notes on the Inventory Made Following the Death of  
Charles Darwin, in 1882, and How it Relates  
to the House Today*

*by*

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## Introduction

Charles Darwin died on the 19th of April 1882. An inventory of his possessions was drawn up a month later. This document survives in the Darwin Museum collection, titled *Inventory & Valuation of Furniture Pictures Books Linen &c at "Down House" Beckenham, Kent the property of the late C. R. Darwin Esq, made for the purpose of Administration, May 1882, T & W Banting, 27 St James's Street S.W.* It provides a very complete picture of the furnishing of the house and a useful insight into its management.

The house, however, has undergone a long sequence of alterations before, during and after Darwin's occupation and this has made it difficult to correlate rooms mentioned in the text with the surviving fabric.

Solene Morris, the museum's curator, identified the rooms on the first floor but did not attempt an interpretation for the whole house (see Solene Morris's notes of 27 June 1996). Solene pointed out that the room descriptions could be related to the room plans both by the references to window blinds which give the number of windows for each room and the references to fireplace furniture which indicate whether or not the room had a fireplace.

As some stripping out has now taken place, the history of alteration to the room layouts has already become clearer. In this report I have tried to integrate the recent findings with the inventory to present a coherent picture for the whole house as it was in 1882.

The newly discovered alterations relate to the subdivision of the second floor projecting bay, Room S1, subdivision of the south-east room in the main block on the first floor, Room F14, the closet or dressing room at the top of the main stair, Room F18, and subdivision of the basement.

The inventory lists the contents of the house room by room, starting at the top of the house, the second floor, and working downwards. Solene Morris also makes the reasonable assumption that the adopted circuit of rooms on each floor followed a rational scheme, clockwise or anti-clockwise.

The following report follows the tour of the house as described in the inventory and presumably taken by Mr Banting in his evaluation of the contents of the property. The suggested interpretation appears to fit most of the evidence. However, there remain a few anomalies and hence, uncertainties. The interpretation is therefore still tentative and is offered only as scheme which can be tested through further analysis. The room numbering system adopted in this report is that currently used by the architects Donald Insall and Assocs. I have not included the lists of books, linen and clothing which appear to have been distributed about the house.

The long axis of the house runs north-west, south-east. This causes some confusion in the application of the terms of the compass to the house. The front of the house facing the lane can be described as either the east or the north front. According to its actual orientation, east would be more correct.

The inventory appears to have been checked or edited after it was drafted in ink. These amendments were made with a pencil. In this report, where the inventory text is reproduced, the pencil amendments are shown in italics and ink text which was crossed out in pencil is shown with strikeout lines.

## The Second Floor

The inventory starts on the 'top floor.' At first sight, this does not appear to include the attic or second floor, of the service wing to the south. However, the room numbering scheme adopted in the inventory suggests that at least ten rooms were seen on this floor and even if their contents were not described, this must surely include the three attic rooms in the south wing. The numbering sequence appears not be a continuation of the first floor scheme since that also includes a 'No 6 Room.' It is therefore suggested that the adopted scheme follows a clockwise perambulation which began at the south-east corner of the house, beginning with the attic rooms in the service wing. The 'Mens' Room' appears to have been located here although in the inventory it is cited in the list at the end of the first floor rooms. So S3 and S4 were probably Room No.1, S2 No. 2, S6 as No. 3 and continuing with the divided room S1 as Nos. 4 and 5, etc. The list of contents appears to start with the higher status room S10 as No 6. The Housekeeper's Room and the Housemaid's Room clearly of lesser status are listed without reference to room numbers.

### No. 6 Room: S10

This bed room clearly had two windows, a fireplace. This fits the present description of room S10. Starting with S10 fits with the listed sequence of rooms as part of a clockwise circuit of the second floor of the main block of the house, starting in the north-west corner.

Cut plate fender, Set of fire irons, Iron scuttle  
2 Holland roller blinds, 2 Laths rods & 2 pairs lined chintz window curtains  
Kidderminster carpet as laid, Worsted hearth rug  
4ft Mahogany Arabian bedstead, 2 Wool mattresses, Feather bed - bolster & pillow, 3 Blankets, White quilt,  
Lined chintz bed furniture to match window curtains  
4ft Mahogany chest of 5 drawers  
6ft 6 Polished deal wing wardrobe 5 drawers & cupboard in centre part  
3ft Ditto washstand, 6 Pieces ware, Water bottle & tumbler, Japanned slop vase, Ditto 4 rail tower airer, Ditto  
sponging bath  
Japanned square night convenience  
Kamptulicon mat  
Square polished deal pedestal cupboard  
3ft 6 Ditto dressing table 2 drawers  
Mahogany swing dressing glass  
3ft Mahogany pembroke table  
Set of 5 tier japanned bookshelves  
Mahogany pole fire screen  
Stained frame sofa covered velvet & chintz cover (old)  
Birch folding chair 2 cushions  
4 Cane seat chairs

### No 7 Room: S12

This is the second room described on the second floor, again with two windows and a fireplace. There is no reference to a bed, was it used as a dressing room?

Cut plate fender, Set of fire irons, Japanned coal scuttle & scoop  
 2 Holland roller blinds, 2 Stained cornice poles ends & rings  
 Kidder carpet as laid, Piece India matting  
 4ft Mahogany washstand 2 drawer, Set of green & white fittings, Water bottle & tumbler, Wine glass, Japanned  
 slop vase, Ditto sponge bath, Wicker linen basket & lid, Mahogany, 4 rail tower airer  
 Mahogany bidet & Liner  
 3ft Mahogany dressing table 2 drawer  
 Mahogany swing frame dressing glass  
 3ft 6 Mahogany & satinwood bow front chest of 5 drawers  
 Mahogany bedside pedestal marble top  
 4ft Japanned hanging wardrobe 2 doors  
 2ft 9 Mahogany pembroke table & cloth cover  
 Walnut elbow chair seat & back in utrecht velvet  
 Rocking chair stuffed & covered damask & chintz cover  
 4 Willow seat chairs  
 2 Cane seat d°  
 2 Engravings framed & glazed  
 1 Photo d° d°  
 1 Small oil painting in gilt frame

### **No 8 Room: S11**

The third room described apparently had one window, a bed and no fireplace. This fits with the small room in the centre of the east side of the second floor, room S11. The panelling on the east wall of room S12 to the north is covered in hessian. Both the hessian and the panelling continue behind the junction with the present north wall of room S11. Orde Solomon, an historic wallpaper consultant, has suggested that the hessian is of this century. If this is the case, the north wall of room S11 must also date from this century. This does not however preclude the possibility that this wall was only slightly relocated.

Holland roller blind  
 Kidder carpet as laid  
 Beech cross frame bedstead, Wool mattress, Hair ditto, Feather bed bolster & pillow, 3 Blankets, White knotted counterpane  
 3ft 6 Japanned chest of 5 drawers  
 24" Japanned washstand, 5 Pieces ware, Japanned sponge bath, Ditto foot d°, Water bottle & tumbler, Japanned 4 rail towel airer  
~~Old mahogany circular table~~  
 3ft Japanned dressing table/drawer  
~~Mahogany box~~ Birch frame dressing glass  
~~Mahogany bidet and liner~~  
~~Mahogany chairseat in haircloth~~  
 3 Cane seat chairs  
*Rush seat d°*  
*Pedestal cupboard 1 grained*  
*Wicker linen basket*  
*Hassock*

### No 9 Room: S7

A room with two windows, a bed and a fireplace. In the sequence, this fits with room S7 in the south-east corner of the main block.

~~Cast iron fender, Set of fire irons, Iron scuttle~~

2 Holland roller blinds, 2 Laths rods & 4 ~~damask cloth~~ curtains

Kidder carpet as laid

3ft 6 Iron bedstead & chintz furniture, *Spring mattress*, 2 mattresses, *Hair d°*, Feather bolster & pillow, 3 4 Blankets, Marseilles quilt

3ft 6 Mahogany *shaped front* chest of 5 drawers

2ft 6 Japanned washstand, Set white ware, ~~Japanned slop vase stet, Ditto sponge bath stet~~, *Wicker splash screen*, 2 ~~Painted~~ folding towel airers, *Linoleum mat*

~~4ft 6 Wainscot writing table 4 drawers on turned legs~~

3ft ~~Japanned~~ Mahog dressing table

Mahogany swing dressing glass

Mahogany reading table (small)

24" Rosewood circular table on pillar & block

Japanned set of 5 tier bookshelves

Easy chair in canvas & loose cover

3 Cane seat chairs

### No 10 Room: S8

The description fits with room S8 as a room with one window. However the present room does not include a fireplace. Is it possible that the west wall of the room stood further to west and incorporated the fireplace now in room S1?

Cut plate fender, Set of fire irons

Holland roller blind

Brussels carpet as laid

Length India matting

3ft 6 Painted french bedstead & chintz throwover furniture, 3 Wool mattresses, Feather *bed* bolster & pillow, 3

Blankets, White knotted counterpane

Mahogany chamber cupboard

2ft 6 Japanned washstand, 5 Pieces ware, Water bottle & tumbler, Japanned sponge bath, Ditto slop vase, ditto

4 rail towel airer

2ft 6 Mahogany chest 4 drawers

3ft 6 Mahogany d° 5 ditto

Birch swing frame dressing glass

Set 5 tier painted shelves

Mahogany chair stuffed seat & back in velvet

2 Cane seat chairs

Small easy chair stuffed & covered canvas

### Housekeeper's Room: S1A

The second floor bay room S1 appears to have been divided into two rooms by an east-west wall running down the centre of the room. This is indicated by the two fireplaces, one in the south wall and one in the north, and the centre window in the bay which appears to have been blind. This appears to be the case in the early photographs and is

confirmed by the unmoulded glazing bars to the sash window (although the actual sashes appear to be modern, they are probably replicas of the original). It was converted to a functional window, probably in this century. The two rather long and narrow rooms would each have been lit by a single window and heated by a fireplace, unless the fireplace referred to in the description of No 10 Room was that at the east end of the southern bay room. The housekeeper's room apparently had one window and a bed.

Holland roller blind  
Old Brussels carpet  
4ft 6 Wood tent bedstead, Wool mattress, 2 Feather beds, Bolster & pillow, 3 Blankets, White knotted counterpane  
2ft Japanned washstand, 4 Pieces ware, Water bottle & tumbler, Japanned 4 rail towel airer  
3 ft Japanned dressing table  
3ft 4 Japanned press 1 door  
3ft 6 Japanned chest 4 long drawers  
Mahogany swing frame dressing glass  
3 Cane seat chairs

### **Housemaid's Room: S1B**

This room clearly had one window and enough room for two beds but there is no mention of any fireplace furniture. Perhaps the fireplace did not have a fender and fire irons or were they the property of the Housemaid?

Brussels carpet as laid  
Holland roller blind  
4ft 6 Wood tent bedstead, 2 Mattresses, Feather bed bolster & 2 pillows, 3 Blankets, White knotted counterpane  
3ft Wood stump bedstead, 2 Mattresses, Feather bed bolster & pillow, 3 Blankets, White knotted counterpane  
Two 3ft 6 japanned chests 5 drawers  
3ft Ditto dressing table  
Mahogany swing frame dressing glass  
Birch ditto  
2ft 6 Japanned washstand, 4 Pieces ware, Japanned water can, Ditto 4 rail towel airer  
American clock in mahogany case  
4 Rush seat chairs

### **Landing & Stairs to 1st Floor: S9**

At this point Mr Banting appears to have made his descent to the first floor.

Twill carpet on landing  
Brussels carpet to Stairs & brass rods  
Patent hand fire engine & 3 fire buckets

## The First Floor

On this floor, Mr Banting used two sequences of room numbers. Rooms '1' to '6' appear to conform to a clockwise perambulation starting at the south-east corner. However the reference to a 'No 4 North Room' suggests a second sequence of numbers for the rooms on the north side of the house. This room is the fourth in the list after 'No 6 Room' in the sequence of rooms for the south side of the house. The inference is therefore that the 'Housemaid's Closet' was No 1 in the sequence for the north side of the house, the 'Large North Room' No 2, and the 'Small North Room' No 3. Continuing in this vein, the 'Dressing Room adjoining' would have been No 5 and 'Dr Darwin's Study' No 6.

### No 1 Dr Darwin's Room: F12

Only the carpet is mentioned in this room, probably because the other contents were the property of Dr Francis Darwin, Charles Darwin's son. No mention of fireplace furniture or window fittings leaves the identification of this room in some doubt. However, its position first in the list of first floor rooms suggests F12, if the following sequence is correct and a clockwise route around the first floor was adopted.

Crimson Brussels carpet as laid

### No 2 Ladysmaid's Room: F6

A fireplace, a bed and one window is implied for this room. Again the identification is correct if the route was clockwise.

Cast iron fender, Set of fire irons  
Holland roller blind  
Cornice lath rod & pair green damask window curtains  
Brussels carpet-as laid  
Iron folding bedstead, 2 Wool mattresses, Feather bed bolster & pillow, 3 Blankets, Knotted counterpanes  
2ft 6 Japanned washstand, 5 Pieces ware, Japanned slop vase, D° hot water can, 5 Rail towel airer  
3ft 6 Japanned chest 5 drawers  
4ft 9 Mahogany wardrobe fitted trays & drawers  
3ft Grained wardrobe with 1 door  
American clock in maple case  
4ft 6 Deal table 1 flap  
3 Cane seat chairs  
American folding chair  
Mahogany swing framed dressing glass

### No 3 Nursery: F1

This room is identified as the nursery by Gwen Raverat in *Period Piece*, 1952 in the drawing of the mulberry tree on page 143. Again this fits with the clockwise route through the first floor.

3ft 6 Mahogany loo table on pillar & block  
3ft Mahogany chest of 5 drawers

#### **No 4 Mr Darwin's Room & Dressing Closet: F2 and F18**

There were three windows and a fireplace in this room. The quantity of furniture and the size of the bed also fit with the identification of this room with the first floor bay room F2. The dressing closet room is presumably the small room F18 recorded in plans of the first floor dating from 1961 between the top of the main stairs and the room F2.

Cast iron fender, Set of fire irons  
3 Holland roller blinds  
3 Laths rods & 3 pairs of lined chintz window curtains  
Bordered Brussels carpet as laid, The felt surround to d°, Persian hearth rug  
6ft Mahogany 4 post bedstead & lined chintz furniture, 2 Hair mattresses, Wool d°, Feather bolster & pillow, 3 Blankets, Marseilles quilt  
3ft 6 Mahogany chest 5 drawers  
24" Polished deal pedestal nest of 8 drawers  
27" Wainscot nest 5 drawers  
Set of wainscot 4 tier hanging shelves  
4ft Japanned maple hanging wardrobe fitted drawers of trays  
Mahogany chamber cupboard on legs  
2ft 6 Japanned dressing table 1 drawer  
4ft Ditto 4 drawers  
Mahogany swing frame dressing glass  
3ft Mahogany dressing table 2 drawers  
18" Circular rosewood coffee table on pillar & block  
2 Japanned washstands, 10 Pieces of ware, Water bottle & tumbler, Japanned sponge bath, Wicker linen basket & lid  
2 Mahogany 4 rail towel airers  
Rosewood pole fire screen  
Mahogany d° d°  
Mahogany sofa table on standards  
Mahogany set 3 tread bedsteps  
2 Stained frame Nelson couches in canvas & loose chintz cases  
High frame easy chair cushions in velvet  
Mahogany frame easy chair stuffed & covered American cloth  
2 Mahogany frame elbow chairs seats & backs in velvet  
6 Cane seat chairs (odd)  
Set of japanned 8 tier bookshelves  
Walnut inkstand 2 liners  
Leather envelope box  
2 Pairs of pillar candlesticks (odd)  
10 Engravings, photos &c some framed  
40 Vols bound books  
4 Folios containing Sundry maps &c

#### **No 5 Dressing Room: F4**

One window, no fireplace and a bed. This fits with room F4 and the clockwise perambulation about the first floor. This room with F5 was built in 1858. Darwin wrote

to Hooker on the 24th of December 1858 and referred to 'My room (28x19) with divided room above...'

Holland roller blind

Lath rod & pair lined chintz curtains

Crimson Brussels carpet as laid

Set of lined chintz bed furniture, Hair mattress, Wool ditto, Feather bolster & pillow, 3 Blankets, White knotted counterpane

3ft Mahogany chest of 5 drawers

2ft 6 Mahogany washstand, Green of white basin, Ewer, Chamber, Brush, tray, Odd soap box, Water bottle & tumbler, Japanned slop vase, Mahogany 5 rail towel airer

Mahogany swing dressing glass

2ft 9 Mahogany table on pillar & claw & cloth cover

Mahogany portmanteau stand top in leather

2 Wicker seat chairs

3 Photos framed & glazed

## No 6 Room: F5

Two windows and a fireplace and a large bed fits in the clockwise perambulation with the room F5.

Cast iron fender standards, Set of fire irons, Japanned & gilt perdonium & scoop

2 Holland roller blinds, 2 Cornice laths rods & 2 pairs of lined chintz window curtains & valances

Crimson bordered Brussels carpet as laid

Fender footstool in needlework

6ft Iron 4 post bedstead & lined chintz furniture complete, Hair mattress, Wool ditto, Feather bed bolster & 2 pillows, 3 Blankets, Marseilles quilt

6ft 6 Mahogany wing wardrobe with tray & drawers in centre part

Mahogany cheval dressing glass

2ft 6 Rosewood circular table on pillar & block

3ft 9 Mahogany dressing table 2 drawer

Mahogany swing frame dressing glass

3ft 3 Mahogany washstand 2 drawers, Chintz pattern basin, Ewer, Chamber, Sponge dish, Brush tray, Soap box, Water bottle tumbler & wine glass, Japanned slop vase, Kamptulicon mat

2ft 6 Mahogany washstand 2 drawers, Chintz pattern basin, Ewer, Chamber, Sponge dish, Brush tray, Soap box, Water bottle & tumbler, Wicker linen basket & lid

Mahogany 5 rail towel airer

Mahogany bedside stand on legs

Square mahogany night convenience

18" Mahogany circular coffee table

6ft Walnut dwarf open bookcase

Nelson couch on walnut legs spring stuffed in canvas & loose chintz case

Circular seat easy chair stuffed of covered chintz

Mahogany elbow chair seat & back in velvet

4 Beech cane seat chairs

Pair china spill vases

2 Pairs d° pillar candlesticks

China tray with 3 cups & covers

4 Hand Screens

Ebonized inkstand & liner

Leather envelope case

Ditto blotting book

2 Water color drawings in gilt frames glazed

2 Photos in gilt frames glazed  
50 Vols bound books  
Sundry unbound d°

### **Housemaid's Closet: F3B**

The north end of the corridor between F5 and F17 is shown on the plans of the house dating from 1961 as a separate room. From the contents it would appear that this was a small room of low status, possibly a store room. This appears to be the first room in the sequence of 'North Rooms.'

The present window in this room dates from 1971 when the opening was enlarged. Before this date the window was very small and apparently located just above floor level. This arrangement is shown in the cork model of the house reputedly made before 1882.

Chimney glass in gilt frame unfixed  
Japanned hip bath  
Brass wire guard  
3 Cocoa mats, 7 Bordered d°  
7 Ware foot warmers

### **Large North Room: F17**

Two windows, a reasonably large bed and a fireplace fits with the size and location of room F17. Presumed to be No 2 in the sequence of 'North Rooms.' From his letter to Mr Marshall in September 1876, Darwin intended this room and F16 to be a 'bedroom and drawing room.' According to Desmond and Moore, p624 the two rooms were built as a bedroom and dressing room for Francis Darwin.

Set of fire irons, Japanned perdonium & scoop  
2 Holland roller blinds, 2 Cornice poles laths & 2 pairs of line chintz window curtains  
Kidder carpet as laid  
5ft Mahogany 4 post bedstead & chintz furniture complete, 2 Wool mattresses, 1 Hair ditto, Feather bolster & 2 pillows, 3 Blankets, Marseilles quilt  
2ft 6 Wainscot writing table on standard  
10" Mahogany circular table on pillar & block  
24" Walnut circular table on pillar & claws  
Chaise lounge on walnut legs stuffed & covered damask  
Easy chair on walnut legs in coburg & chintz cover  
2 Seat cushions in window recesses  
Mahogany pedestal bedside stand on legs  
4 Birch wicker seat chairs  
2 Arundel drawings in gilt frames glazed  
Water color drawing in d° d° "Cathedral"  
2 Photos framed & glazed

### **Small North Room: F16**

One window, a single bed and apparently no fireplace. There was a small fireplace in room S16 but it is now blocked up. At this stage in our understanding of the development of the house, it is not clear whether it was in use in 1882. Presumed to be No 3 in the sequence of 'North Rooms.'

Kidder carpet as laid  
Holland roller blind  
3ft 6 Brass Arabian bedstead, 2 Mattresses, Feather bed, Bolster & pillow, 3 Blankets, Marseilles quilt  
Folding chair  
Small japanned pedestal wardrobe  
3ft Mahogany chest of 4 drawers

### **No 4 North Room: F15**

Two windows, a reasonably large bed and a fireplace are implied for this room.

Cut plate fender, Set of fire irons, Japanned & gilt perdonium & scoop  
2 Holland roller blinds, 2 Laths rods & 2 pairs damask window curtains  
The bordered Brussels carpet as laid & felt surround, Scinde hearth rug  
5ft Mahogany 4 post bedstead of damask furniture, 2 Wool mattresses, Feather bolster 2 pillows, 3 Blankets, Marseilles quilt  
Mahogany square night convenience  
3ft Mahogany washstand 2 drawers Chintz pattern basin, Ewer, Chamber, Sponge dish, Brush tray, Soap box, Water bottle & tumbler Wine glass, Japanned sponge bath, Ditto slop vase, Wicker linen basket & lid  
Mahogany 4 rail towel ailer  
3ft 6 Mahogany dressing table 3 drawers  
Mahogany box frame dressing glass  
18" Circular mahogany coffee table on pillar & claws  
20" Ditto  
3ft Mahogany pembroke table & damask cover  
3ft 6 Mahogany chest 5 drawers  
4ft Japanned hanging wardrobe 2 doors  
Nelson couch on walnut legs stuffed & covered canvas & loose chintz case  
Easy chair on walnut legs stuffed & covered d° & loose chintz case  
Walnut frame elbow easy chair stuffed & covered damask  
2 Mahogany chairs stuffed seats covered damask  
1 Cane seat chair  
3 Water color drawings in gilt frames glazed  
1 Photo in ditto

### **Dressing Room adjoining [No 4 North Room]: F14A**

In the plans of the house from 1961, the room F14 is shown subdivided by a partition wall between the second and third windows from the south end of the room. This evidence is supported by the outline of the partition in the paint applied to the panelling on the north wall. That this was not the only earlier arrangement in room F14 is indicated by the use of raised and fielded as opposed to plain panelling. In the south-east corner of the room, around the fireplace and the southern window, the panelling is plain, elsewhere it is raised and fielded. This implies that there was a partition wall between

the first and second windows in room F14. The panelling on the south wall of the room, next to the fireplace, appears, because of the width of the stiles, to have been rehung. At this stage in the present research project, it seems reasonable to assume that the room layout shown on the 1961 plans had been established by 1882 and that the 'Dressing Room adjoining' was in the northern half of the room F14. It is hoped that this can be confirmed through paint analysis.

Holland roller blind  
3 Odd chairs  
3ft Mahogany chest 4 drawers  
Set of green & white fittings for washstand  
Japanned sponge bath

### **Dr Darwin's Study: F14**

There are no contents listed for this room, presumably because they were the property of Francis Darwin.

### **Landing & Stairs to Ground Floor: F3A**

Again, as is the case for the second floor, the stairs appear to be at the end of the sequence of rooms described for the first floor.

Dutch carpet as laid  
Patent hand fire engine & 3 fire buckets  
Weighing machine & weights  
3 Fold paper screen  
Floorcloth on end landing  
8 Bordered cocoa mats  
3ft Painted chest 4 drawers  
5ft Painted press 2 doors & drawers  
2ft 6 Japanned tier bookcase  
8ft 6 Polished deal open bookcase fitted shelves  
243 Vols bound books  
Sundry unbound d° pamphlets  
The Velvet pile carpet to best stairs & Brass rods  
Oil painting "Flowers" in gilt frame

### **Men's Room: S3 & S4**

At this point in the inventory it would seem logical to progress to the ground floor. However, there is no reference to the ground floor either in the body of the text or in the table of contents. This may be due to the inclusion of the 'Men's Room' at this point which appears to have been on the second floor of the service wing. Its omission from the description of the 'Top Floor' is probably due to its separate access from the first floor.

From the contents description, the room had one window and no fireplace. It contained two beds a washing facilities which suggest that it was used as a bedroom. That the Mens Room was contained within the attic of the service wing is given by Gwen Raverat, *Period Piece*, on p 152, where she described it as 'a long dark attic, with a board floor, and three beds, and hardly anything else at all. Here John the coachman, and Price the butler, and the footman all slept together. It did not seem very comfortable, I thought it was very clean.'

Square of Kidder carpet

Holland roller blind

3ft Wood stump bedstead, 3ft 6 Japanned press bedstead, 5 Mattresses, 2 Feather beds, 3 Bolsters, 3 Pillows, 9 Blankets, 3 Colored counterpanes

3ft 3 Old walnut chest 5 drawers

3ft Wainscot dressing table 2 drawers

Large japanned sponge bath, Hip bath, 2ft 3 Japanned washstand, 4 Pieces ware, Japanned 3 rail towel airer

4 Cane seat chairs

2 Small mahogany ~~swing~~ dressing glasses

## The Ground Floor

In the entries for the ground floor we have no room numbering sequence to guide us through the perambulation and it would appear that the route through the house did not follow a strictly logical plan.

### Library: G16

Three windows and a fireplace. From Darwin's letter to Mr Marshall in September 1876, this was to be built as a 'billiard room (25ft x 21ft).' However, it appears from a photograph of c 1882 and an engraving published in the Century Magazine in 1882, that Darwin had adopted it as his study before his death.

Set of fire irons, Iron scuttle  
3 Holland roller blinds, Brass cornice pole ends rings & 1 pair of figured damask curtains  
Brussels carpet as laid  
Fender footstool  
2 Large grained skeleton bookcases  
2 Sets japanned open bookcases  
3ft 6 Mahogany table on turned legs  
4ft 3 Mahogany pembroke table  
4ft Mahogany table with 5 drawers  
3ft 3 Mahogany dressing table  
3ft 6 Mahogany circular writing table on pillar & claws  
19" Rosewood pedestal nest of 9 drawers  
An iron safe  
18" Circular walnut table on pillar & block  
Hanging glass in ebonized frame  
Nelson couch on mahogany legs stuffed & covered damask  
Easy chair in canvas & loose cretonne case  
High back easy chair stuffed & covered in haircloth  
Semicircular seat top stuffed & covered haircloth  
Mahogany elbow chair seat in haircloth  
Rosewood frame chair seat in utrecht velvet  
24" Japanned washstand, Basin, Chamber, White jug, Japanned sponge bath, Ditto slop vase  
Japanned 5 tier set of shelves  
Mahogany bidet & liner  
Small mahogany hanging glass  
2 Metal candlesticks  
Aneroid barometer  
4 Engravings in gilt frames glazed "Portraits"  
3 Photographs

### Smoking Room: G15

The reference to two windows and a fireplace fits G15. This had been Darwin's study before he relocated to G16 after 1876. Darwin referred to the room as a study 18' x 18' in his letter to his sister Catherine, on the 24th of July 1842. According to Desmond and Moore, p 339, in 1846 his study was freshly painted.

Cast iron fender, Set of fire irons, Wainscot perdonium & scoop  
Chimney glass in gilt frame

2 Holland roller blinds, 2 Brass cornice poles ends rings & 2 pairs of figured damask  
 Bordered velvet pile carpet as laid, Drugget surround to d°, Black skin mat  
 15ft Maplewood bookcase upper part fitted shelves pair of panel doors under  
 Stained rosewood frame couch with squab & bolster covered serge  
 5ft 6 side ottoman covered green utrecht velvet  
 Ebonized elbow easy chair stuffed & covered green damask  
 Elbow chair covered green utrecht velvet  
 2 Stained rosewood frame chairs seats in crimson velvet  
 Small rosewood elizabethan chair in chintz  
 Wicker work elbow chair  
 Ditto paper basket  
 Large size easy chair in canvas & chintz cover  
 Deal easel  
 4ft Rosewood writing table on standards with brass gallery  
 22" Ebonized octagon top table  
 12" Circular walnut table on turned supports  
 15" Ditto carved table on pillar & claws  
 4ft Walnut writing table on turned support & stretcher  
 8 Day ormolu mantel clock stand & glass shade  
 Pair 9" blue & white china vases  
 3 Metal candlesticks  
 Large Palmer's candle lamp & shade  
 Wainscot inkstand & liner  
 Ormolu circular inkstand  
 Lacjapan tray  
 Brass letter weigher  
 7 Water color drawings in gilt frames glazed "Views, Landscapes etc", 4 Photos, Small oil painting in gilt  
 frame, "Landscape with bridge"  
 About 710 bound books  
 Sundry unbound d° etc

### **Mrs Darwin's Sitting Room on N Blue Paint: G14**

There are no contents described for this room, presumably they were the property of Mrs Darwin. G14 was the dining room in 1842. Darwin referred to the Dining Room as measuring 21' x 18' in his letter to his sister Catherine of 24th July that year. It appears to remained the dining room until G5 was added to the north west corner of the building in 1858. According to Desmond and Moore, p 461, the new addition of 1858 was built as a 'huge dining room with a bedroom above.' However, later it appears that the Dining room was housed in G2. Again according to Desmond and Moore, G14 was the billiard room until 1876 when following the construction of the two storey north-east addition, G16 etc, it became Francis Darwin's study.

### **Drawing Room: G5**

Three windows and a fireplace are implied by the list entry. Some of the items of furniture can be recognised in a photograph of the room dating from the 1870's.

From Darwin's letter to Hooker of the 24th December 1858 this room was built in that year. According to Desmond and Moore, p 461, it was built as a 'huge dining room with a bedroom above.'

Steel mounted fender, Set of fire irons, Wainscot perdonium ormolu mounted & scoop  
 Chimney glass in carved & gilt frame  
 3 Holland spring roller blinds, Carved & gilt cornice laths rods & 3 pairs lined challies window curtains  
 The bordered Brussels carpet as laid, Marone drugget surround to d°  
 8ft 6 Rosewood bookcase upper part fitted shelves 4 doors under  
 4ft Rosewood pedestal writing table with 9 drawers & brass handles & gallery  
 4ft Walnut writing table on carved standards & stretcher  
 24" Rosewood circular table on pillar & block  
 4ft 6 Walnut oval inlaid loo table on carved pillars & block & damask cover  
 3ft Rosewood occasional table on turned pillars & stretcher  
 6ft Cedar dwarf bookcase fitted shelves  
 14" Circular walnut table on turned supports  
 Walnut worktable on pillar & claws  
 Small oak shaped top table  
 Circular wicker work table  
 Pair bronze & ormolu reading candlesticks  
 26" Walnut 3 tier whatnot silvered glass back  
 18" Rosewood 3 tier whatnot  
 18" Ditto d° d°  
 4ft D° 3 tier dinner waggon on canted claws  
 4 Small brackets (3 & 1)  
 Grand pianoforte in rosewood case by "Erard"  
 Rosewood canterbury with drawer  
 Mahogany music stool top in leather  
 Small maple 2 tier whatnot  
 Pair of carved oak fire screens cloth banners  
 Nelson couch on walnut legs spring stuffed & covered blue Algerine  
 Square frame easy chair stuffed & covered ensuite  
 Prie dieu chair stuffed & covered en suite  
 Double ended settee on carved legs and cretonne cover  
 3 Easy chairs in canvas & cretonne covers  
 Small d° d° stuffed & covered algerine  
 Ebonized frame elbow chair & loose seat cushion  
 Walnut & gilt folding chair  
 Rosewood frame chair seat in crimson velvet  
 Papiermache chair with wicker seat  
 8 Day mantel clock in chased ormolu case stand & shade  
 Pair of chased ormolu & china pillar candlesticks  
 Pair 9" blue & painted china vases (1 broken)  
 Pair of oriental china spill vases  
 2 Small plates  
 13" Circular oriental china dish  
 15" Ditto ditto ditto  
 16" Ditto ditto ditto  
 15" Ditto ditto ditto  
 12 Ditto d° plates various  
 10" Blue & gilt china bowl  
 9" Ditto d° (broken)  
 9 Various basins  
 16" Blue & white Nankin china vase  
 Etruscan 2 handle vase  
 Large water color drawing in gilt frame glazed "View in Winchester", 2 Smaller d° Sketches in Patagonia in d°  
 d°, Small oil painting in gilt frame "Shipping" "The Mumbles", ~~Ditto ditto Gentleman in .....~~  
 2 Miniatures "Ladies" in gilt frames, 24 Small miniatures in black frames  
 Water color drawing in gilt frame glazed "Landscape with Cedar tree",  
 Water color drawing in gilt frame "Boating Scene", 2 Small ditto ditto in ditto ditto

Coromandel wood inkstand & liner  
 Chased metal d°  
 Set letter Scales & weights  
 Letter clip  
 Stamp box  
 5 Lacjapan boxes & covers  
 China inkstand with liner & taper stick  
 2 Blotting books  
 Walnut book carrier

## Dining Room: G2

The list entry implies three windows and a fireplace. From Darwin's letter to his sister Catherine, 24th July 1842, this room measured 21' x 15'. This was before the addition of the octagonal bay which appears to date from 1843, although I have not found a specific reference to its construction in the correspondence. The main source for this date is Hedley Atkins, p 25. In 1842, from Darwin's letter, G2 was the drawing room. It appears to been used a Dining Room after the construction of the north-west block, G5 etc.

Cast iron fender with standards, Set of fire irons, Copper coal scuttle & scoop  
 3 Painted venetian blinds & lines, 3 Outside blinds & cases  
 Japanned plate warmer  
 Chimney glass in carved & gilt frame  
 3 Carved & gilt cornices laths rods & 3 pairs bordered crimson reps curtains & fringe valances  
 Turkey carpet as laid, Crimson felt surround to d°  
 Rosewood card table on pillar & block  
 4ft Mahogany pembroke table  
 4ft 6 Wide set of mahogany extending dining tables & loose leaves & cover  
 4ft 6 Rosewood writing table on carved standards  
 Mahogany cheval screen panel in velvet  
 2 Dwarf seats in windows covered in chintz  
 Square frame sofa squab bolsters & pillow & chintz covers  
 2 Walnut folding chairs with cushions in velvet  
 14 Mahogany frame chairs seats stuffed & covered green morocco  
 2 Elbow chairs backs & seats in velvet  
 8ft Mahogany enclosed pedestal sideboard with 5 drawers in frieze  
 16" Mahogany cabinet fitted drawers  
 19" Ditto ditto  
 Rosewood tea caddy & fittings  
 8 Day mantel clock by Payne in ebonized case  
 Pair bronze pillar candlesticks  
 2 Small china vases  
 1 Basin  
 Terrestrial globe & stand  
 2 Imitation blue & white Wedgwood lamp stands  
 Carved wainscot revolving dinner waggon  
 Small wedgwood pen tray  
 Coromandel envelope case  
 Walnut inkstand 2 liners  
~~Sculptured marble bust of the late Mr C Darwin on polished marble pedestal~~  
~~Oil portrait of late "C Darwin Esq." in gilt frame~~  
~~Ditto ditto "Mr W Darwin" in d°~~  
~~Ditto ditto "I Wedgwood Esq." in d°~~

~~Ditto ditto "Dr E Darwin" in d<sup>o</sup>~~  
~~Ditto ditto "Dr R Darwin" in d<sup>o</sup>~~  
~~Ditto ditto "Dr E Darwin" in d<sup>o</sup>~~

### **Entrance & Inner Halls: G11**

There are no references to window blinds which suggests that the windows to the garden only had shutters. This seems reasonable, especially in view of the panelling beneath the stairs shown in the photograph of the hall in the Downe House School Prospectus. The reference to a scuttle and a 'Small fender' suggest that in 1882 the hall was heated by a fire. This indicates that the conversion of the fireplace opening to a round arched recess did not occur before 1882.

In a letter to Susan Darwin, 27-8 April 1843, Darwin wrote 'Vinson .... is going to make me plan and agreement for the passage to the new Hall Door.' Does this mean that the front door was moved to its present location in 1843? If so this could be the date of the door shown in the photograph of Darwin on his horse. According to Desmond and Moore, p 624, in 1876 'the workmen made a new front door.'

2 Cocoa mats, 3 Bordered ditto, Floorcloth as laid throughout  
4 Iron door porters  
6ft Cedarwood dwarf open bookcase  
Bronze lamp as suspended  
4ft 6 Mahogany hall table  
Wainscot umbrella stand  
2 Mahogany hall chairs  
4 Hand bells  
30" Circular iron table  
Iron scuttle, Small fender  
2 small lacjapan trays  
String box  
Earthen vase & cover  
8 Arundel drawings in gift frames glazed  
2 Engravings framed & glazed  
~~2 Bronze medallions in walnut frames~~  
3 Maps on rollers  
About 180 old vols of books

### **Housekeeper's Room: G12**

One window and a fireplace.

Cast iron fender, Set of fire irons  
Striped holland roller blind  
Brussels carpet as laid, Worsted hearth rug  
Small chimney glass in rosewood frame  
3ft 6 Mahogany pembroke table & cover  
Nelson couch stuffed & covered canvas & chintz case  
Mahogany elbow chair seat in american cloth  
5 cane seat chairs

*To be specially priced, Blue & Gilt Dinner Service, Soup tureen stand & cover, 4 Vegetable dishes & covers, 11 Meat dishes, 48 Meat plates, 18 Soup plates, 18 Pie plates*  
*To be specially priced, Pink gilt & painted Dessert Service, 2 High compotiers, 4 Low ditto, 16 Plates*

## **Pantry: G8**

The entry implies a fireplace but not necessarily the absence of a window, since the pantry probably had shutters without curtains or roller blinds.

Cast iron fender, Strip of carpet  
Small hanging glass  
8 day dial in mahogany case & bracket  
Iron umbrella stand  
Carriage foot warmer  
3 Lacjapan trays  
6ft Japanised press 2 sliding doors to upper part  
Oval tub  
2 wood pails  
Draining board  
2 Bronze tea urns  
2 Chairs  
1 Elbow ditto  
2 Butler's mahogany trays & stands

## **Kitchen: G1**

This room was identified by Hedley Atkins in his plan of the house. There is no mention of a range. Presumably this was regarded as part of the fabric of the house.

9ft Deal table on square legs  
4 Odd chairs  
Chopping block  
8 Day dial in mahogany case  
Metal hot water plate  
Pair brass candlesticks  
Tins, Turbot kettle plate & cover, 3 Fish kettles ditto ditto, Milk Saucepan, Large kettle, Cheese toaster, 6 Moulds, Colander, Steamer, 3 Round moulds, 2 Square ditto, Three ½ gallon cans, 5 Gravy strainers, Funnel, Flour dredger, Dripping pan & ladle, 2 Wine baskets, Churn, Whisk, 2 Coffee pots, Sundry store canisters, Sundry small cutters etc  
Coppers, 6 Stewpans & covers, 1 Saucepan & cover, 3 Moulds, Circular carriage warmer, Warming pan, 2 Brass roasting jacks, 4 Metal dishes, Omelette pan, 6 Darioles  
Irons, Sliding bar fender, Poker & shovel, 12 Saucepans & lids, 2 Oval boilers & covers  
Set scales tin dish & 7 weights, 3 Cooks knives, Coffee mill, Sausage machine, 4 Spoons, 12 Skewers, Meat Saw, Chopper, 2 Beef forks, Peppermill, 2 Stew pans, 8 Iron Scuttles, 6 Wood spoons, Pair lemon squeezers, Salt box, Paste board, Chopping board, Flour bin scoop & sieve, 4 Sieves  
Camelia pattern Dinner Service, Salad bowl, 3 Vegetable dishes & covers, 8 Meat dishes, 12 Soup plates, 30 Meat ditto  
Common Service odd, 6 Meat dishes, 24 Plates,  
Sundry odd crockery for kitchen use

**Scullery: demolished in 1962**

Square trough

3 Round tubs

2 Oval ditto, Window chair, 2 zinc pails

## **The Basement Floor**

It is not made specific in the inventory when the description of the basement begins. It is possible that the Servants Hall was located in an out house but I have suggested that it was located in rooms B2, 3 & 4, partly on the basis of size. The existing partition walls subdividing this room appear to date from this century.

### **The servants' Hall: B2, 3 & 4**

The servants' hall clearly had a fireplace. The size of the room B2, 3 & 4, is large enough to accommodate the 10' table cited in the inventory.

Cast iron fender, Set of fire irons  
Floorcloth as laid, 2 Pieces cocoa matting  
10ft Deal table & 2 forms  
3ft Japanned chest 4 drawers  
4 Window chairs  
1 Elbow ditto  
2 Cane seat ditto  
12 Black handle knives  
12 ditto forks  
1 ditto carver & fork  
Bead knife  
Bread tray  
Tea tray

### **Lower Passages: B5**

The title of this entry implies the basement. The sizes of the tables etc. suggest that the room was of a reasonable size.

Large refrigerator  
3 Wood tubs  
Salting trough  
Deal bench  
Hanging Safe  
Beer stand  
3ft Deal table  
4ft 9 Deal table  
Stone filter & stand  
4 Red ware pans  
2 Sunderland ditto  
6 Cream crocks  
2 Pairs 8 tread steps  
Knife machine

### **Larder: B5 or G7?**

The equipment listed here would not require much floor space. Was it included in room B5 logically in the inventory sequence or was it on the ground floor in the structure now known as the wood shed, G7. The woodshed was included in the cork model which reputedly dates from before 1882.

8 Milk tins, 3 ditto pails, Round tub, 2 Milk pails, 2 White jugs, 2 Cream crocks

### **Wine store: B6**

The inventory does not refer to a wine store as such. However, the shelving in room B6 is clearly typical of wine stores and the quantity of wine listed indicates that a separate room was needed.

|                     |                |
|---------------------|----------------|
| <u>Wine</u>         |                |
| Champagne           | quarts 14      |
| Ditto               | pints 15       |
| Best Sherry         | 33             |
| Port                | 33             |
| Ditto               | pints 42       |
| Ditto from London   | 25             |
| Cheap ditto         | 11             |
| Burgundy            | quarts 22      |
| Ditto               | pints 19       |
| Best Claret         | 22             |
| Claret from London  | 20             |
| Common Claret       | 6              |
| Ditto               | pints 11       |
| Hock                | quarts 35      |
| Ditto               | pints 12       |
| Marsala             | 61             |
| Quarter cask Sherry | Say 10 gallons |

### **Passage by Servants Offices: G9**

The servants' offices were presumably the pantry, and housekeepers room. So at this point it appears Mr Banting returned to the ground floor to complete his tour of the house.

Large Deal chest & cover  
4 Cocoa mats  
3 Fire buckets

## The Outbuildings

The only buildings mentioned in the inventory were the stables, laundry and greenhouse. If the laboratory was already in existence why was it not cited. Was it and its contents the property of Francis Darwin?

### Stables

2 Sets double harness plated mounts  
2 ditto single ditto  
5 Saddles (2 & 3)  
4 Bridles  
1 Watering ditto  
3 Sets horse clothing  
A brown mare "Lady Florence"  
A bay horse "Druid"  
A chestnut horse "Sailor"  
An old grey mare  
A double Brougham  
A Landau  
A Waggonette  
A Dog cart  
1 Alderney Cow  
4 Other - ditto (3 in milk)  
Farm Cart & set of harness  
A rick of hay  
Part of a ditto  
Sundry garden seats chairs etc

### Garden Tools

Garden roller, 2 Picks, 2 Shovels, 4 Forks, 4 Rakes, 6 Dutch hoes, 2 Pairs edging shears, 3 Bill hooks, 3 Scythes, 2 Hammers, 2 Spades, Edging iron, Sundry baskets etc, Mowing Machine, 12 Hay rakes, 12 ditto forks, 3 Long ladders, Mowing Machine, Shaking ditto, Raker,

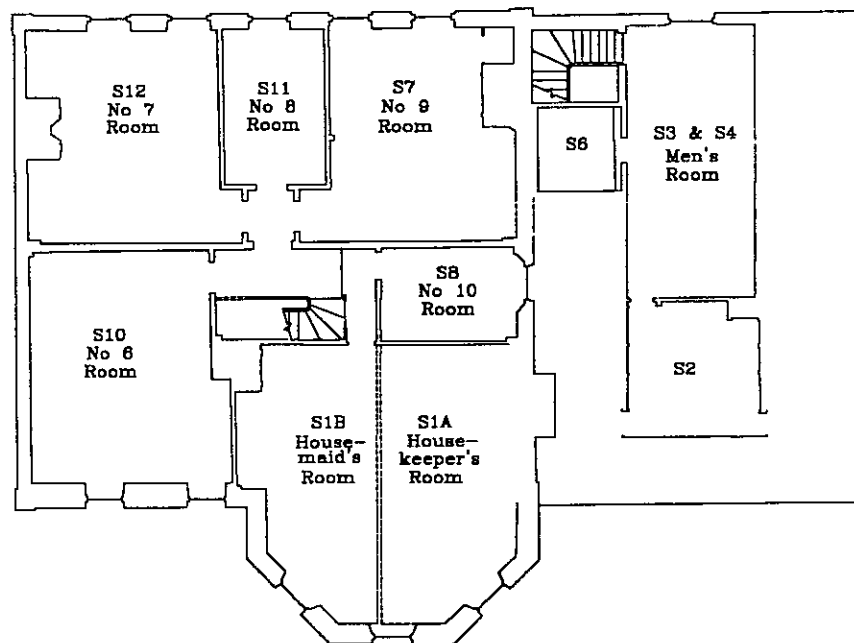
### Plants in greenhouse

### Laundry

Wringing machine

## Reconstruction plans

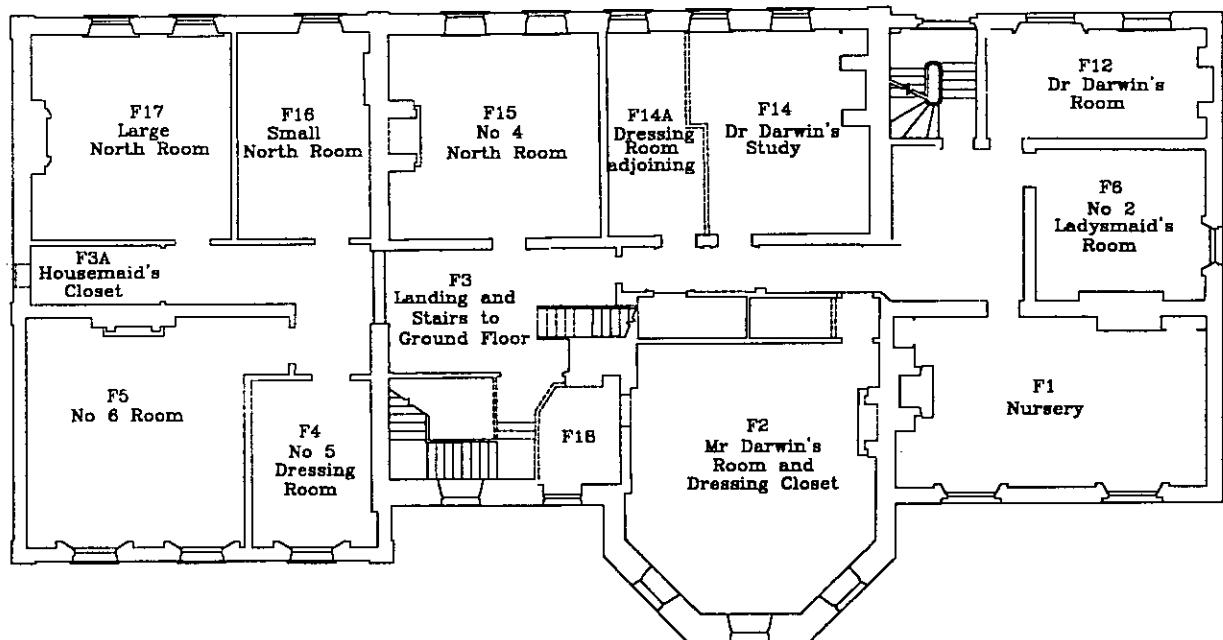
Down House: reconstructed plan of the second floor as it was in 1882



0 10m

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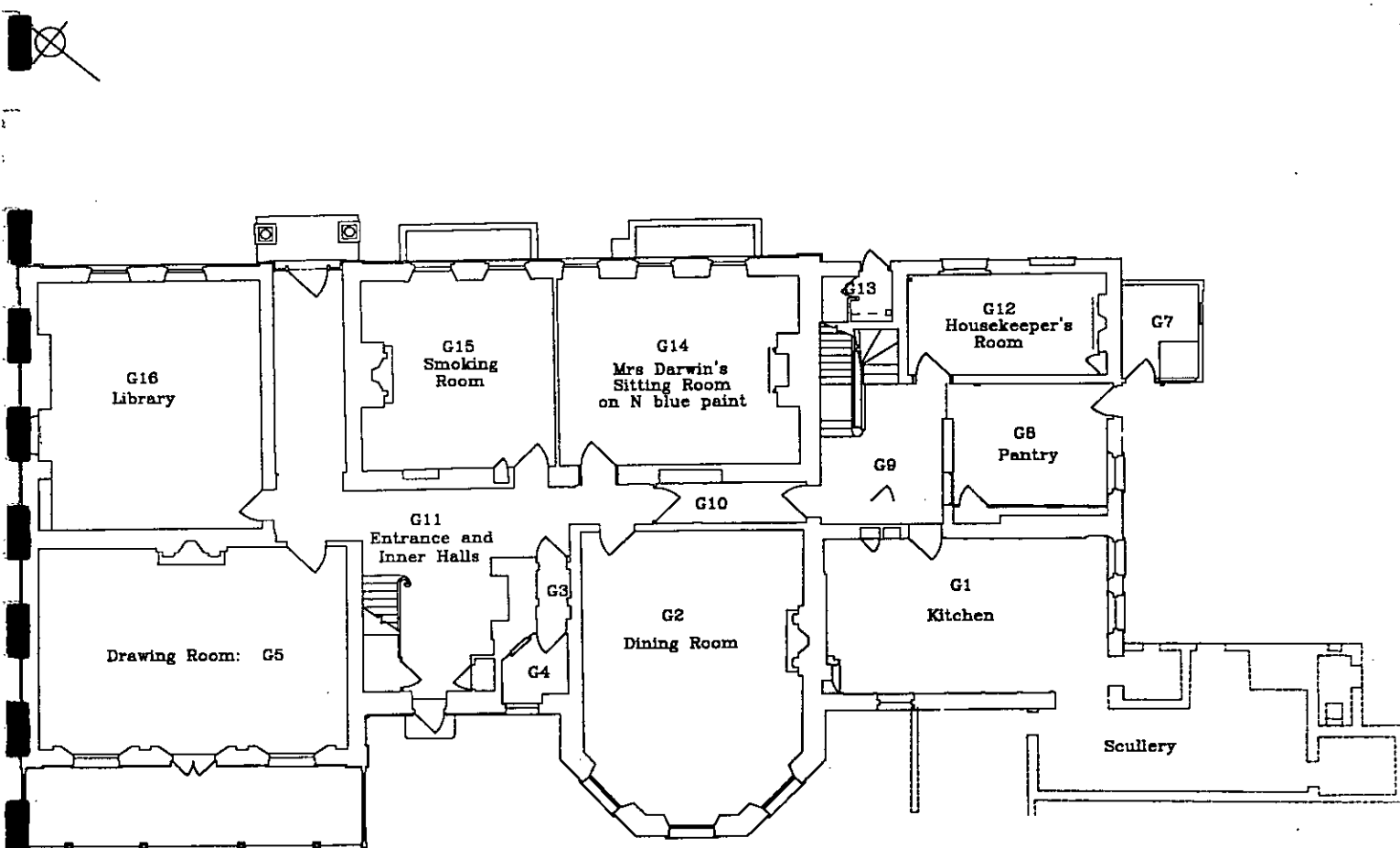
Down House: reconstructed plan of the first floor as it was in 1882



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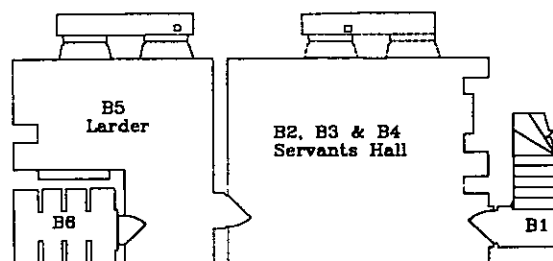
Down House: reconstructed plan of the ground floor as it was in 1882



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10m

Down House: reconstructed plan of the basement floor as it was in 1882



0 10m

