

The Old Barracks



By Lucy Williams

A notable eye-catcher of historical interest within the Grantham community, is arguably the Old Barracks that sits directly opposite Kesteven and

Grantham Girls' School, a building that through online archives, such as the Francis Firth Collection, can be seen to have stood by Grantham through numerous changing times. Likened to its countenance, standing a Grade II listed building amongst many modern builds, its history can be demonstrative of the vast military history that Grantham holds, and even more broadly that Lincolnshire holds.

Barracks as buildings are meant to serve as accommodation for military personnel, serving to separate them from society and be used as 'discipline factories for soldiers' as defined by historian Jeremy Black. The Old Barracks of Grantham, therefore, was initially built by architect Henry Goddard. Upon its creation in 1858, it was intended for the South Lincoln Militia, a line infantry regiment for the British Army; now, known

as the Royal Lincolnshire Regiment. Although it's difficult to say how much it was valued by the regiment, it was certainly valued in later decades by other military groups such as the Lincolnshire Yeomanry, a voluntary squadron present within the Second Boer War and the first World War at the barracks. It was also further utilised during World War I as an Auxiliary Military hospital. These were hospitals for military personnel who were in a state of recovery rather than suffering, before being taken out of military use in 1950.

Upon its conversion into offices in the 1990s, its grounds now serve as the location for numerous businesses and services across the wings of the building; none in relation to its historical countenance.

The Old Barracks can be seen as a little melancholy to some; it's not a place of historical interest that can be admired or understood as other places may be, but instead is a building that serves the town and holds no other ultimate purpose. However, this may only be seen as melancholy if you care for military history. For others, simply, the building of the Old Barracks can serve as a gentle reminder of the role that Grantham has played throughout history in aiding the army, as well as how it's been utilised during times of struggle for the services it can offer.