



# Hardy's Cottage, Higher Bockhampton, Dorset

Observations and Recording during underpinning works



Report No. 53405/3/1

November 2014



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Archaeological Observations & Recording during underpinning  
works, January–February 2014

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November 2014

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## Project Report Summary Page

Project Details			
OASIS Reference	terraina1-195318		
Project Title	Hardy's Cottage underpinning works, Higher Bockhampton, Dorset		
Short Description of Project	<p>Terrain Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological observations and recording during underpinning works for the east wall of Hardy's Cottage in January-February 2014. This work revealed details of the footings of the cottage. The cob wall of the original cottage was built on a brick plinth. The later southern part of the cottage had mortared flint base to the cob wall. In both parts, the floor level inside the cottage was lower than the base of the wall, so the gap was bridged by inserting a single skin of bricks set flush with the internal face of the wall, except in the pantry at the south end of the building where the gap was sealed by a row of upright slates.</p>		
Project Dates	Start: 27-01-2014	End: 24-02-2014	
Previous/Future Work	No/no		
Project Code	53405		
Monument Type and Period	House (Post-medieval)		
Significant Finds	None		
Project Location			
County/District/Parish	Dorset/ West Dorset/Stinsford		
Site Address	Hardy's Cottage, Higher Bockhampton, Stinsford, Dorset, DT2 8QJ		
Site Coordinates	SY 7283 9249		
Site Area	c. 25 m <sup>2</sup>		
Height OD	89.5 m aOD		
Project Creators			
Organisation	Terrain Archaeology		
Project Brief Originator	None		
Project Design Originator	Terrain Archaeology		
Project Supervisor	Peter Bellamy		
Project Manager	Peter Bellamy		
Sponsor or Funding Body	The National Trust		
Project Archive			
Archive Type	Physical	Digital	Paper
Location/Accession No		Terrain Archaeology offices, pending deposition with the National Trust.	Terrain Archaeology offices, pending deposition with the National Trust.
	None	Digital photography	context sheets, photographs, plans, report

# Hardy's Cottage, Higher Bockhampton, Dorset

## Archaeological Observations & Recording during underpinning works, January–February 2014

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 Project introduction

Terrain Archaeology was commissioned by Neil Johnson (National Trust South West Building Surveyor) to undertake a programme of archaeological observations and recording during underpinning works at Hardy's Cottage, Higher Bockhampton, Dorset.

'Archaeological observations and recording', also more colloquially known as an archaeological watching brief, is defined by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) as *"a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons. This will be within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed. The programme will result in the preparation of a report and ordered archive"* (IfA 2008). Its purposes are: *"to allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works "* and *"to provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard."*

Fieldwork was carried out between the 27th January and 24th February 2014 by Peter Bellamy.

Terrain Archaeology wishes to acknowledge the cooperation and assistance of Neil Johnson, Martin Papworth and Richard Hann (National Trust) and also the site workers, Martin and the two Deans.

#### 1.2 Brief

A written brief for the archaeological works was written by Martin Papworth (National Trust Archaeologist), dated 13th November 2013.

#### 1.3 Site Location and Topography

Hardy's Cottage lies on the edge of Puddletown Forest and Bhomepston Heath, to the northeast of Higher Bockhampton, at OS NGR SY 7283 9250 (Figure 1). It lies on the south west side of the junction of a track running from Higher Bockhampton along Black Bottom towards Puddletown and another track running across Duddle Heath to Yellowham. The cottage lies near the bottom of a small valley, with the ground sloping down to the north west, at a height of about 89.5 m above OD.

The works were located along and beneath the rear (east) wall of the cottage (Figure 2).

#### 1.4 Geology

Bedrock geology is mapped as chalk of the Portsdown Chalk Formation, with superficial deposits of Head (Clay, Silt, Sand And Gravel) (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

## 1.5 Archaeological and Historical Background

Hardy's Cottage was built in 1800-1801 by John Hardy, apparently on previously undeveloped land on the edge of the heath. The cottage had cob walls and a thatched roof. Originally, the building consisted of the northern part of the present building, as shown on the 1839 Stinsford Tithe Map (DHC T/STF). In the 19th century, a two-storey addition was made to the south, as witnessed by the lower roof line south of the central chimney. The date of this extension is not known precisely, but it was constructed after 1839 and before 1884 when a watercolour by the Rev. Henry Moule shows the enlarged cottage (Winchcombe 1990, 6). It is likely that it was constructed about 1840 for Thomas Hardy's grandmother. Following her death in 1857, the two parts were joined together by a connecting entrance lobby and the original two front doors blocked. The front (west) elevation was faced with brick, flint and limestone at some date before the late 19th century. The central porch was added between 1889 and 1902, on the evidence of the historic Ordnance Survey maps. A lean-to washhouse was built on the southern end and is shown on an 1897 watercolour by Moule. The present southern extension was added sometime after 1897, but the precise date is not known (Treasure 1998).

The National Trust acquired the property in 1940. It was listed as Grade II in 1956 (National Heritage List Entry No. 1119859).

The cob walls on the east and north sides of the cottage were rendered in cement in the 1960s. The roof was rethatched in 1976 with Norfolk Reed (Skilling 1977, 3). The west wall was underpinned in the 1980s.

## 1.6 Previous Archaeological fieldwork

There has been no previously recorded archaeological fieldwork at Hardy's Cottage.

## 1.7 Aims and Objectives

The aim of the archaeological programme was to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on the site.

Its objectives were:

- To observe and record the all the *in situ* archaeological deposits and features revealed during the groundworks to an appropriate archaeological standard.
- To present the results in a report to the appropriate standard.

## 1.8 Groundworks

The groundworks comprised the machine excavation along the rear (east) side of the property down to a depth of about 1 m, cutting in under the wall to enable underpinning with concrete. The underpinning was done in a series of c. 1 m wide sections, dug up to about 1.0 – 1.8 m out from the rear wall, which were then backfilled. The bulk of the excavation for underpinning was done by machine, with the area underneath the wall removed by hand.

Following the completion of the underpinning, a trench was dug along the edge of the rear wall to construct a new retaining wall, to form a 400 mm 'air drain' to aid the damp problems in the cottage.

A number of temporary drain channels were dug by machine to manage surface water run-off during the works.

## 1.9 Methods

The methodology, scope, aims and objectives of the works were set out in a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by Terrain Archaeology in December 2013 (Terrain Archaeology document no. 3405/0/1).

All archaeological works were carried out in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (IfA 2008).

The observations and recording were defined as intensive, and a qualified, experienced archaeologist was present on-site during initial clearance works and the excavations for underpinning the east wall of the cottage. The observations of the base of the building was undertaken in a series of c. 1 m wide pits dug along the length of the



east wall of the cottage and numbered 1–14 from north to south (Figure 2). No two adjacent pits were open at the same time except for pits 13 and 14 at the south end, which were both excavated together.

All features and deposits, regardless of their perceived date and archaeological significance, were recorded using components of Terrain Archaeology's system of complementary written, drawn and photographic records. These have been compiled in a stable, cross-referenced and fully indexed archive in accordance with current guidelines (AAF 2007) and the requirements of the receiving museum. A photographic record of the works was maintained in digital and black and white print format, and includes aspects of their setting, conduct and technical detail.

## 1.10 Archive and Dissemination

The project archive, comprising written, graphic and photographic records, and appropriate background documentation, is currently stored by Terrain Archaeology under the project code **53405**. In due course the archive will be accessioned for long-term curation and storage by the National Trust. Deposition of the archive will place it in the public domain.

A paper copy of this report will be lodged with Dorset County Council's Historic Environment Record (HER). The HER is a publicly funded and accessible resource, and deposition of the report will place it, and the project results, in the public domain.

A digital summary of the archive will be placed with the OASIS project ([www.oasis.ac.uk](http://www.oasis.ac.uk)) under the reference code *terrains1-195318*. A digital copy of this report will be uploaded for inclusion in the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) online 'grey literature' library.

A brief report of the project will be published by Terrain Archaeology in the *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society*. No detailed publication of the projects results is proposed.

## 2. Results

### 2.1 Natural Deposits

Natural deposits were encountered at about 0.3 m below present ground level. These comprised dark yellowish-brown clayey sand (102) and reddish-brown clayey sand with frequent flint gravel (103), with areas of clay at about 0.8 m below present ground level.

### 2.2 Construction Details of Cottage

The underpinning works exposed the full depth of the base of the east wall of the cottage (Figure 3). It also exposed some detail of the relationship between the floor and the east wall. The wall base of the original northern end of the cottage and the later extension to the south are different and are described separately below.

#### 2.2.1 Northern end (Original Cottage)

The cob wall of the northern part of the cottage was constructed on a brick footing wall (104). This footing gradually stepped up to the south, following the general topography of the site. This footing wall was at least 0.43 m high (6 courses) and penetrated to a depth between 0.1–0.4 m below present ground level: the full height of the footing was not exposed and was obscured by the existing render, but is likely to be marked by the slight plinth visible in the north end of the east wall and the north wall of the cottage (Plates 2-4). This would indicate the footing wall was about 0.75 m high at the north end. The footing wall was of solid brick construction bonded with yellowish-brown lime mortar and was built in an irregular bond with some bricks set on edge in the lower part of the footing.

The bottom of the northern part of the footing wall (the northernmost 4.2 m) was at the same level as the floor, except in the area that corresponds to the staircase in the office, where it was slightly shallower (Figure 3). Further to the south, the base of the footing is stepped up to follow the general topography and at the south end is about 0.25 m above floor level. The gap between the floor (107) in the parlour and the base of the wall footing is filled by a

single skin of bricks (106) added flush with the inside face of the wall and bonded with grey lime mortar (Figure 3; Plate 5). There is no deeper inner face of the wall in the area of the fireplace and oven.

At the north east corner of the cottage there was a brick pad (108) with cement mortar inserted under the brick footing. This appears to be an attempt to protect this corner where the base of the footing wall became exposed due to erosion.

### 2.2.2 Southern end (Later Part)

The footing wall at the southern end of the cottage is of mortared flint construction (105) with a straight joint with the brick footings to the north (Figure 3; Plate 4). The flint nodules are largely undressed but were laid in rough 'courses' with up to five 'courses' recorded. The lowest part (c. 0.15–0.3 m) has more mortar on the face of the footing, while above the flint nodules stand slightly proud of the bonding mortar (Plate 6). A number of large ironstones up to 500 mm across were used in the base of the wall and also at the southern end (Plates 6-7). To the north, there were a number of bricks used in its construction and other brick fragments were present elsewhere in its upper part (Figure 3; Plate 4). The northern end of the flint footings was at the same depth as the original brick footing wall (104) but they are deeper further to the south. At the north end, the base of the footing wall was at about 0.28 m above floor level and at the south end about 0.23 m above floor level.

The gap between the base of the flint footing wall and the floor of the old kitchen was sealed by a single skin brick construction (109) between 3 – 5 courses of brick laid flush with the inner face of the wall (Figure 3; Plate 8). The exterior face was covered in grey sandy lime mortar 25 mm thick, which covers most of the bricks, suggesting the bricks were laid from inside the building against a vertical edge cut in the natural sand. The southern end of this lower brick structure butted against the footing of the partition wall between the old kitchen and the former pantry (110). To the south of this wall in the area of the pantry, the gap between the base of the wall footing and the floor was sealed by a layer of upright slates (111) set flush with the inner face of the wall and plastered over (Plates 8-9).

### 2.2.3 Southern Extension

Only a very small part of the north east corner of the southern extension was observed. This revealed the bricks of the extension continued down to about 0.4 m below present ground level. Below this was modern brick down to 1.2 m below ground level, founded on a poured concrete foundation 0.15 m thick (Figure 3; Plate 7).

## 2.3 Other Observations

The clearance work associated with the underpinning works entailed the removal of a number of deposits against the east wall of the cottage, the adjacent track and a small part of the area east of the track. A number of temporary drainage trenches were dug to try to divert the surface water run off away from the working area next to the wall.

At the start of the works, there was a layer of gravel (100) 0.5 m wide and 0.15 m thick along the edge of the east wall. It was retained by timber boards. Below the gravel layer was a deposit of cemented brick and stone rubble (101) against the external face of the footings of the east wall, on top of the natural sand (103). It measured about 0.3 m wide and up to 0.3 m thick. This may have been the remains of an earlier attempt to stabilise the wall and stop water penetration.

The temporary drainage trenches exposed a number of dark sandy soil patches (102) in the top of the natural sand. None of these were investigated in detail, but they appeared to be irregular and about 0.15 m thick. Some contained fragments of slate, brick, and 19th century pottery. It is likely they are the result of root action or the former presence of small trees or shrubs, or are the remains of potholes within the track.

Beneath the track running along the east side of the cottage were two drains. About 1.25 m out from the wall face was a gravel-filled French drain (113) and 1.45 m further east was a trench containing a large plastic land drain (114) (Figure 2).

### 3. Finds

#### 3.1 Finds Assemblage

A small number of modern finds were noted in the topsoil but were not collected. No finds were made during the underpinning works.

### 4. Discussion and Conclusions

#### 4.1 Discussion

No evidence for any activity pre-dating the construction of Hardy's Cottage was revealed. This confirms the historical evidence that the cottage was built on a previously undeveloped plot of heathland (Winchcombe 1990, 6).

The underpinning works have revealed a number of details of the construction of the cottage, in particular the form of the base of the east wall and its relationship with the floor. The works have confirmed that the main part of the cottage was constructed in two phases, with a brick footing to the cob wall in the original cottage and a mortared flint footing wall in the later enlargement.

No trace of a construction trench was noted during the observations, but disturbance in front of the east wall may have removed any traces of it. The base of the east wall of both phases of construction were built directly on clean natural sand and it seems most likely that in both phases of construction, a construction trench was first and the wall constructed in the trench. It is unclear where the original ground level was, so the original depth of the construction trench is not known, but it appears to have followed the general slope of the ground, so the north end is at a lower level than the south.

The base of the mortared brick plinth for the cob wall of the original cottage was at internal floor level at the north end, but to the south was at a higher level. The gap between the floor and the base of the wall was bridged by building a single skin brick wall underneath the internal face of the brick plinth. Although it could not be proved conclusively, it appears that this lower internal face was added after the initial construction of the brick plinth. Most likely the plinth and internal wall footings were built first, then the ground level in the interior of the cottage was reduced down to floor level, followed by the insertion of the lower internal brick face.

A similar arrangement was noted in the construction of the second phase of the cottage. The cob wall was constructed on a mortared flint footing wall, which again was at a higher level than the floor. The lower 0.3 m of the flint footing had the appearance of being laid within a trench, as there is mortar against the face of the flints, in contrast to the upper part where the flints stand slightly proud of the mortar. It is unclear whether this difference is because the lower part was constructed below ground level in a trench and the upper part was built above ground, or whether the upper part had been exposed at some time in the past and had become more weathered.

A similar method to that used in the original cottage was used for bridging the gap between the floor and the base of the wall of the old kitchen in the second phase, namely the construction of a single skin of bricks underneath the internal face of the wall. In the pantry, the gap between wall and floor was sealed by a line of upright slates. It is unclear why this difference — could it be simply a cost-cutting measure? The finish of the east and south internal walls of the pantry was not as good as in the other rooms of the cottage. They had a very rough limewashed surface up to a level of 0.78 m above the floor (Plate 9), which corresponds to the height of the flint base and suggests that there was only a very thin skim of plaster on the pantry walls, with no attempt to produce a smooth finish. As this room would not normally be visible, was it thought not worthwhile to finish it to the same standard as the rest of the cottage?

#### 4.2 Conclusions

The observations have provided some more details on the method of construction of the cottage, in particular in the arrangement of the base for the cob wall and its relationship to the floor. The workmanship is not of particularly high

quality, but entirely appropriate for a small Dorset rural cottage. No evidence of activity pre-dating the cottage was found.

## 5. References

- |                          |       |   |
|--------------------------|-------|---|
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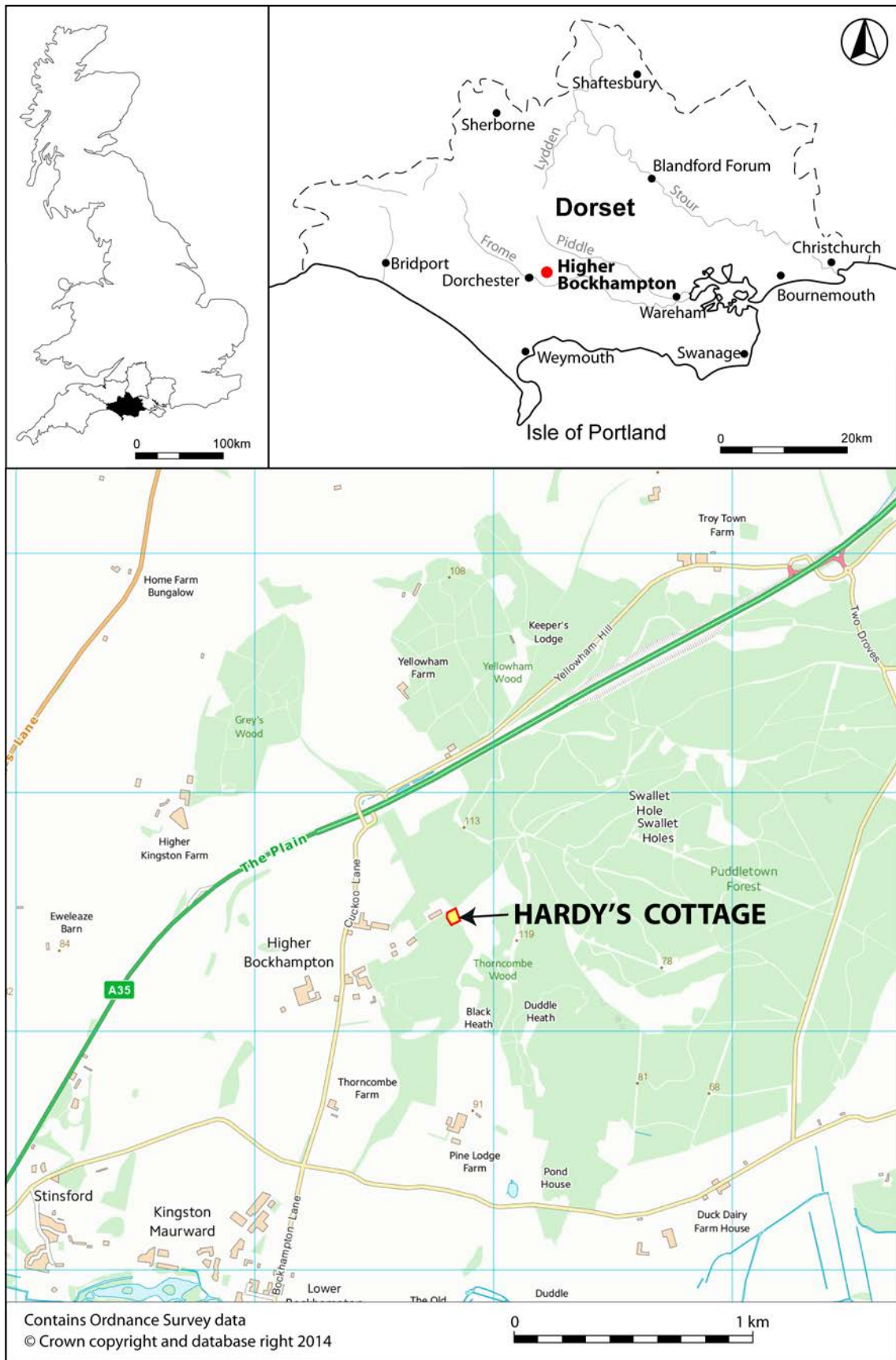


Figure 1 Location map.

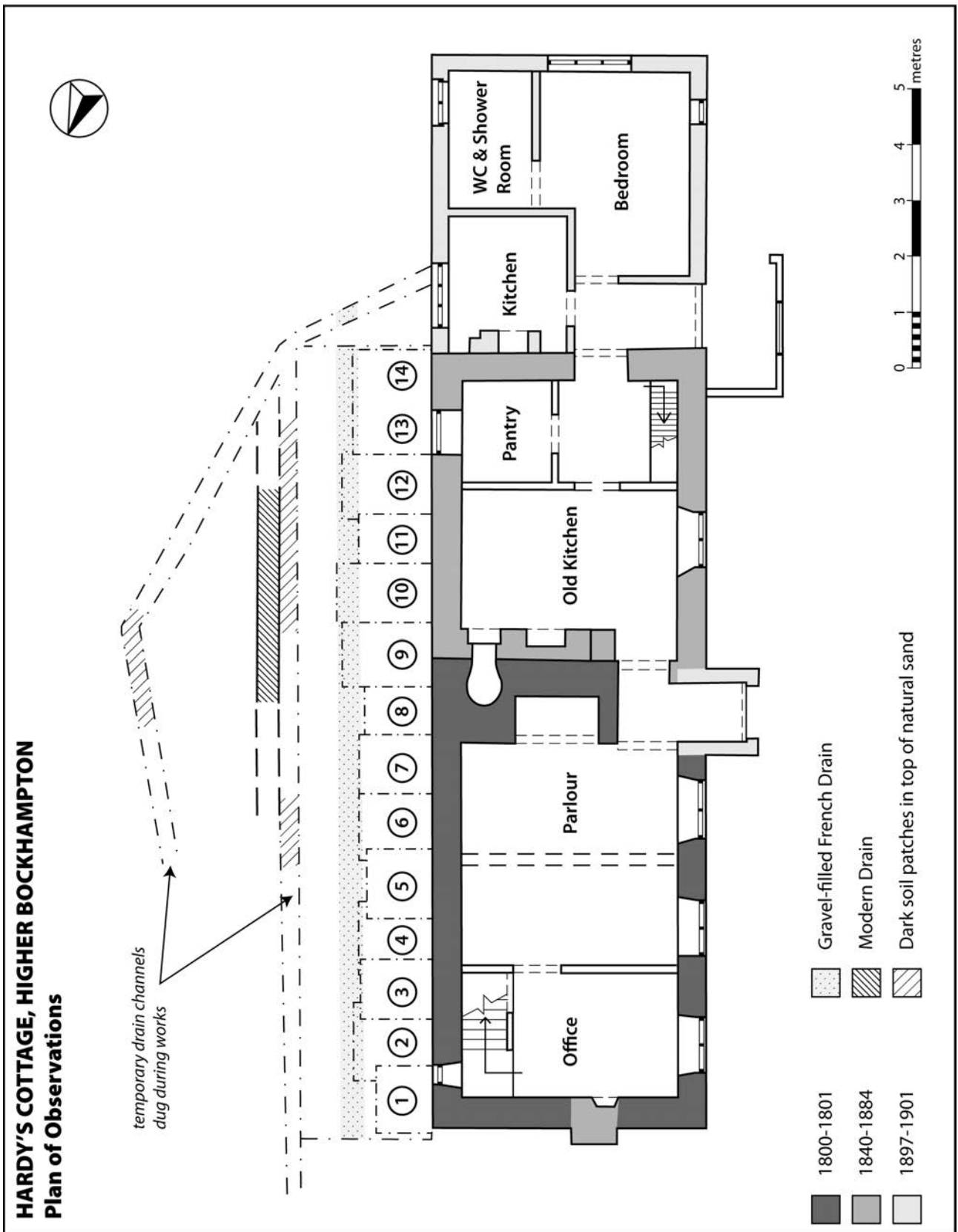


Figure 2: Plan of observations and simplified phase plan of Hardy's Cottage.

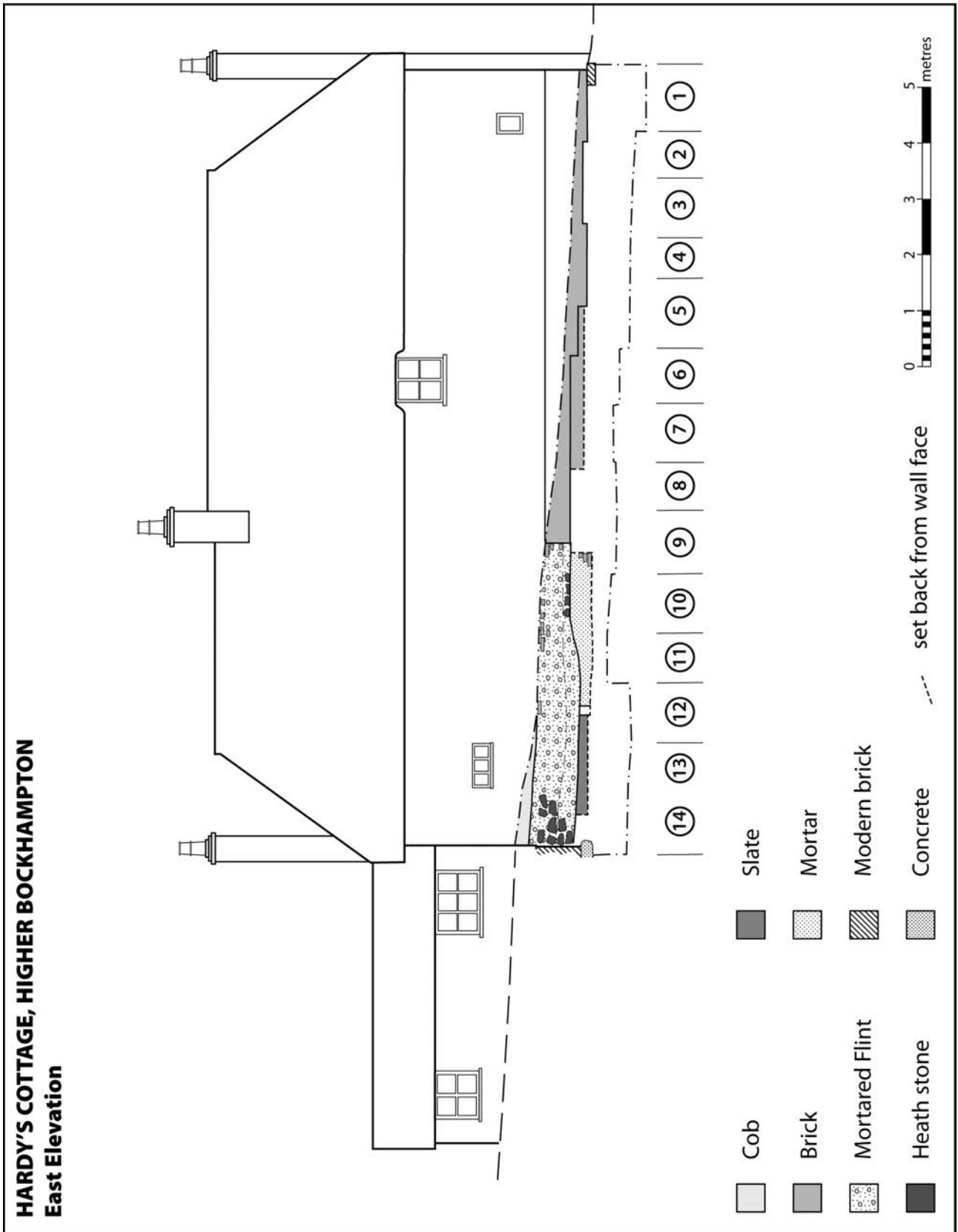


Figure 3: East Elevation of Hardy's Cottage showing details exposed during underpinning works.





*Plate 1: General view of site during underpinning works, looking south.*



*Plate 2: East wall of cottage showing the brick plinth to the north and flint base to the south, below the level of the render, looking SSW. 2m scale.*



*Plate 3: Detail of brick plinth of original cottage east wall. 2m scale.*





*Plate 4: Junction between base of walls in original cottage (right) and later extension (left) in underpinning pit 9. 2m and 1m scale.*



*Plate 5: Detail beneath brick plinth 103 in underpinning pit 7, showing relationship with floor.*



*Plate 6: Detail of flint footings 105 in underpinning pit 12.*

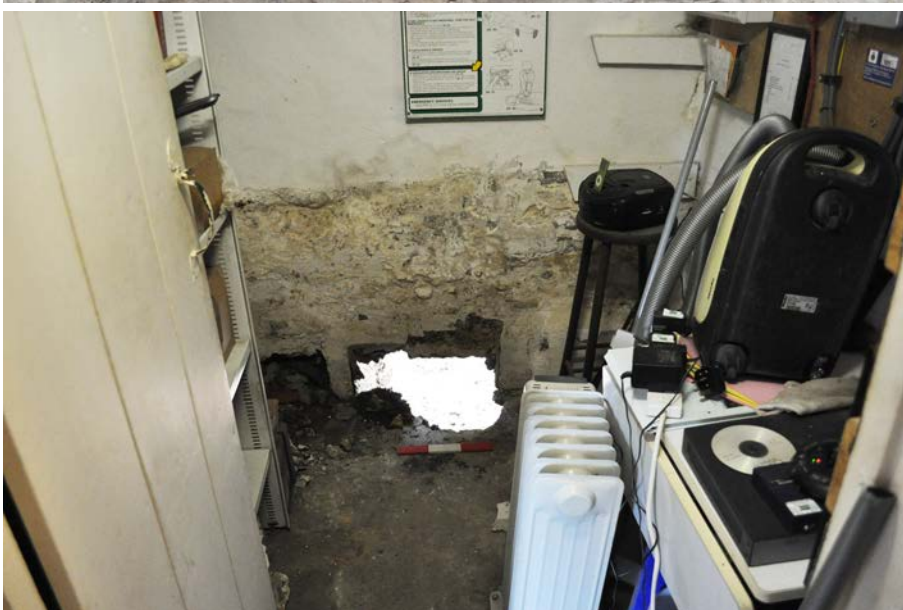




*Plate 7: Footings 105 at south end of cottage and junction with the south extension in underpinning pit 13/14. 2m & 1m scales.*



*Plate 8: Detail of base of footing 105, with bricks of structure 109 to right and gap formed by removal of slate (111) to left, exposed in underpinning pit 12.*



*Plate 9: View of internal face of east wall of the pantry.*