



**'SERVICE ROOM', WALNUT FARM HOUSE, COWGROVE,
PAMPHILL, DORSET
Building Survey and Recording**



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‘Service Room’, Walnut Farm House, Cowgrove, Pamphill, Dorset

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Report written by John Taylor

Prepared for:

The National Trust
Eastleigh Court
Bishopstrow
Warminster
BA12 9HW

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1 INTRODUCTION

Project Background

An initial site visit to Walnut Farm was undertaken in September 2000 by Martin Papworth (National Trust Wessex Regional Archaeologist) and Peter Bellamy (Terrain Archaeology) to discuss the scope of the works. Following this, a brief for the recording work was issued by the National Trust in November 2000 (Appendix 1).

The works were planned to take place in February/March 2001 but had to be postponed because of the Foot and Mouth outbreak.

Agreement for the works to go ahead was finally obtained from the tenant farmer Mr John Galpin in March 2002. An inspection of the site was carried out by Peter Bellamy and John Taylor of Terrain Archaeology on 18th March 2002. The site was subject to an archaeological building recording survey on the 19th and 20th March. The archaeological recording works were undertaken by John Taylor and Joanne Best.

The Site

Walnut Farm lies within the Kingston Lacy Estate at Ordnance Survey NGR ST 9900 0009. Walnut Farm House is constructed on a gentle south-facing slope, on the northern side of the Cowgrove Road, overlooking the floodplain of the River Stour to the south.

The Farm House is aligned east-west and faces south. It may be 16th century with possible 17th century additions to the west end. The front elevation is late 18th century with west end alterations of a similar date. There is a 20th century east end extension.

Historical Background

The history of the building is recorded in some detail by the Vernacular Buildings Survey completed by the National Trust in 1991 (Brebner 1991), and the following brief history is based on the information presented in that report.

The 1552 written record of the estate names the tenant of the farm as Elizabeth Londyar, a widow. The house is named as Londyar's and rented for 8s. 4d. The records refer to a house, buildings, a backside and a small orchard, two closes, 4 acres of arable and 1.5 acres of meadow. It is not clear if Walnut Farm was in fact part of Cowgrove Farm. There is no explicit evidence that the house referred to in the survey of 1552 is the same as the current house.

The Woodward survey of 1774 (D/BKL) names the tenant as a Mrs Susanna Green, again a widow. Although the house itself is not named, it appears on the map in the same position as the current building. The ancestors of the present tenant Mr E. Galpin are recorded on the estate from 1408 with a Richard Galpine referred to in the estate musters. The Galpins have held the tenancy of Walnut Farm since the early part of the 20th century.



2 AIMS OF THE RECORDING

The Vernacular Buildings Survey of 1991 listed several points to be clarified by any further archaeological building recording work. The following features specifically relating to the service room were suggested for identification:

- the position of the original stairs
- the position of door in frame to west wall of the sitting room
- smoke blackening to timbers
- empty mortice pockets to all timbers especially at the west end under the tiles for evidence of previous structures relative to existing gable wall
- evidence of windows to all timbers

3 METHODS

The building recording works were carried out in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings and other structures* (1996, rev. 1999).

The archaeological recording works comprising a measured hand-drawn survey and photographic survey of the internal and external elevations of the building known as the 'service room' which extends from the west of Walnut Farmhouse. The results of this survey are detailed in this report.

The numbers for doors and windows are those used in the Vernacular Building Survey 1991.

4 SITE CONDITIONS AND ACCESSIBILITY

On entry the room was in a fairly mediocre condition, a considerable amount of household detritus including a mattress had accumulated since the Vernacular Building Survey and the initial site visit by Terrain Archaeology. It also became clear during the recording process that the fabric of the building had deteriorated since the completion of the Vernacular Building Survey. The debris was removed or rearranged and the elevations cleaned in order to conduct the photographic and drawn record.

Of the external elevations the south wall was overgrown and virtually inaccessible for recording, fortunately a high level of recording was available on the internal face of this wall. A brief inspection of the first floor level was made but activity in this area was kept to a minimum due to the unstable nature of the stair access.

The north window [W12] had been boarded over, the glazing being almost completely missing and the south window [W1] was badly overgrown. Light was provided in the form of spotlighting with power being supplied from the main house by agreement with the Galpins for which they are duly acknowledged.

5 STRUCTURAL DESCRIPTION

Initial Description of Building

The entrance to the service room is at the north of the building through an open doorway [D4], which leads into a through passage (Figure 1). The entrance was floored in large red quarry tiles. At the threshold the tiles were either missing or damaged. Made up ground could be seen below the tiles to a depth of c. 0.5 m. The passage was blocked to the north by modern concrete block



work, which formed a lobby to the south door [D1] of the main house. The passage was formed by the external west wall of the main house and the external east wall of the service room. The external eastern elevation of the service room was formed by a modern stud partition with doorway [D13], clad in modern T&G boards and the remains of a plank and muntin partition built from 10" boards. Only part of the plank and muntin partition remained with a gap between it and the modern concrete block wall.

Part of a modern partition and door frame [D12], also boarded in T&G, ran across the centre of the passage, this presumably formed the long cupboard mentioned in the Vernacular Building Survey.

The eastern elevation of the main house had evidence of various different builds in brick the most recent being the 'wraparound' finish to the brickwork dated to 1991 by the Vernacular Building survey. There was clear evidence of a blocked door towards the north end of the wall.

The ceiling of the through passage was plastered and damage to the ceiling exposed reed laths.

The floor to the service room had been concreted. The north and south elevations have been largely rebuilt in brick, probably dating to the 19th century refurbishments to the house; remnants of the timber framing could be identified in both elevations. The sill was particularly clear in the south wall. A large white butler sink on a rendered plinth could be seen under the window of the north wall.

A staircase [S3] to the first floor was contained behind a door [D15] and partition in the SW corner of the room

The west wall was lined with roughly constructed shelves. The tenant Mr Galpin has indicated that these shelves were used for the storage of cheese. At the time of the building recording the shelves contained a mixture of poisons, motor spares and light bulbs.

There was some evidence of the timber framing in the west wall behind the staircase partition, the position of the sill beam could also be detected in this wall and the girding beam could be seen at present ceiling level.

The ceiling of the service room was plastered on reed laths and was painted. At ceiling level two large beams ran longitudinally. Both beams were flat chamfered with quirk and tongue stops and both had been painted.

The external west wall contained the best preservation of the timber frame, which had been largely infilled with 19th century brickwork.

The external north wall was clad mainly in modern brickwork and the main window [W12] had been boarded, there had been considerable damage in this area of the farm caused by a whirlwind earlier in the year.

The external south wall has been mainly rebuilt in brick and the portion of it forming the service room was inaccessible.

The Service Room in Detail

West Wall, External Elevation (Figure 2; Plate 2)

This elevation currently provides the best view of the timber frame. The assembly marks could be seen in several places and the lower portions of the angle braces could be seen towards the existing roof level. The sill beam was in a poor state and sits upon a heavily damaged beam, which may indicate a double sill arrangement. It is possible that this arrangement was necessary to overcome the natural slope in the ground at this end of the building. Such a slope would have been advantageous for drainage should this end of the building been used for livestock.

The frame had a brick infill and was supported on a brick plinth. The brickwork, which probably dates to the early 19th century, was red brick set in a lime mortar and was constructed from 9 x 4 x 2 inch bricks and was bonded in stretcher bond with occasional headers. The brickwork had been limewashed and subsequently rendered, most of the render had peeled away from the brickwork. Modern brickwork could be seen in the upper courses, probably dating to the removal of the first floor and subsequent re-roofing.

Unusually the upper face of the main post at the north end of the west elevation had an empty mortice, which would suggest that the building continued west in some form although nothing similar was recorded in the main post at the south.

The rails were in a fairly poor state but some of the assembly marks (approx 50%) were noted. There were several peg holes indicating empty mortices. It is not clear, due to the brick infill, if these peg holes represent the positions of studs or braces within the frame. It is, however, possible that the damage to the rails had removed further peg holes in some places thus concealing evidence of possible other timber framing elements.

The ends of the chamfered axial beams seen inside the service room could be clearly seen projecting through the east elevation. The beams were a later addition and may well have been moved from their original position when the 19th century works were undertaken.

North Wall, External Elevation (Figure 3; Plate 5)

The elevation was constructed mainly of rendered brick and had a brick plinth. A main post at the west end and elements of a post and doorway [D4] are all that remained of the timber framing in this elevation. The door frame had evidently deteriorated since the Vernacular Building Survey, the remaining door jamb now leaning at a slight angle. The head of the door frame remained but was in very poor condition. The post supporting the door frame had a peg hole indicating the position of a cross rail. The main post is in poor condition and the depth of the mortice (see west external) was not clear due to the damage. Peg holes for a cross rail remained in this post. The area above the door was clad in modern tongue and grooved panels. The tiling at the door entrance was partly damaged. The main window [W12] had been completely boarded over (see internal details). A small rectangular metal window [W11] was seen between the doorway and the larger window.

West Wall, Internal Elevation (Figure 4)

The internal elevation of the west wall contains a later staircase [S3] and is lined with shelving. The staircase was accessed through a beaded T&G plank door on ledge and braces [D15]. The door had strap hinges and a thumb latch. The staircase rises to the replaced first floor from a quarter turn. The stair risers were 0.24 m (9 in) in height and the treads were 0.22 m (8 in) deep and both were constructed of softwood. Behind the staircase door damage to the render revealed part of the timber framing (though this is seen better on the external face). The under stairs are backed with lath and plaster.

The wall was lined with roughly constructed shelving (Plate 6). Although the tenant Mr Galpin has indicated that these shelves were used for the storage of cheese, the building surveyors found them to contain a mixture of poisons, motor spares and light bulbs.

The construction details are as the external face of the wall.

Plank and Muntin Screen (Figure 5; Plate 7)

A plank and muntin screen survived within the service room. Such a screen is a rare survival, especially given the condition of this part of the building. The screen was not without damage;



there were some areas of damage toward the foot of the screen and a square opening at the top of the screen, which was covered by a metal grille. The full extent of the screen is uncertain; it may have extended to the south wall. An empty mortice approximately 0.3 m to the south of the current end of the screen would seem to indicate the presence of a post and by association the possible position of a door. The screen was constructed from 10" planks in a grooved tie beam. The planks were pegged into the top. The sill of the screen is hidden by render.

South Wall, Internal Elevation (Figure 6; Plate 7)

The elevation was basically timber framed with a lath and plaster infill. There were also areas of render and brickwork. The main post at the east end could be observed beneath peeling plaster and render. The sill beam could also be seen but was in poor condition. The sill sat on a brick plinth. Another post to the west of the main post could be seen with empty peg holes, a possible indication of cross rails. A stud and rail above the current window may have been an indication of an earlier window. Some small areas of lath and plaster were exposed on this elevation.

A cross rail was identified 1.68 m above the sill. Evidence of another rail could also be seen at the west end of the elevation where a rendered main post was also identified.

The wall had a two light window [W1] with 12 panes per light. The window had ovolo glazing bars, which were largely missing in one of the lights. The window had been badly damaged and was overgrown on entry to the site.

The elevation had been replaced above first floor level with modern brickwork and new wall plate appeared to have been added.

North Wall, Internal Elevation (Figure 7)

The elevation was constructed from brick. The north wall window [W12] was boarded over externally and very little remained when the building recording was undertaken. The Vernacular Building Survey describes the window as a three light window with central casement, four panes per light. The window had a wide cambered brick arch with wooden infill under. At the time of the Vernacular Building Survey the window had two arched T&G plank wooden shutters. The north wall was rendered over and little can be seen of the original building. At the head of the large window in the position of a lintel could be seen a damaged timber beam. This may have been a rail belonging to the original timber frame.

A large white butler sink sat beneath the remains of the window (Plate 8). A narrow modern casement window [W11] was at the east of the elevation.

Ceiling

The ceiling was constructed from lath and plaster, there were several damaged areas through the first floor floorboards could be seen.

The ceiling was supported by two axial beams support the ceiling. For a variety of reasons these beams are of interest. They have almost certainly been moved from their original position. The beams are chamfered and have quirk and tongue chamfer stops. One of the beams had recesses cut for two studs on its north face, suggesting a partition. As the beams had been moved the position of the partition cannot be accurately identified. The upper faces of the beams could not be seen and joist positions were not identified. One beam had been cut so that it butted the plank and muntin screen (Plate 9).

First Floor Remains

The first floor was constructed from nominal 7" x 1" planks butted together; this would be typical of late 19th or early 20th century construction. The top 0.4–0.5 m of the existing building had been



reconstructed after the removal of the first floor in the 1960s in order to support the current corrugated iron roof.

6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The service room despite possible appearances to the contrary may well be contemporary to the rest of the building. The position of the frame seems to correspond with the frame of the rest of the building. All differences can be attributed to later manipulation of the building fabric. The original timbers where they can be identified are generally in a poor condition and any subsequent work should be sensitive to this situation

It may well be that the original room extended to the height of the current main house. The lack of access through to the service room area at loft level would not necessarily be a problem.

There was no evidence to suggest the position of a staircase and no areas of smoke blackened timber.

Some of the arguments might be resolved by further investigation into the west gable of the main house, especially at first floor level and, of course, further investigation of the service room should any consolidation or renovation take place.

The service room is insecure and has open access, which might pose a threat to the plank and muntin screen within it.

7 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Terrain Archaeology would like to acknowledge the Galpin family, in particular, Mr John Galpin for allowing access to the property and for supplying power for the lighting. Martin Papworth (National Trust, Wessex Regional Archaeologist) and Andrew Bruce (National Trust, Area Building Surveyor) are also acknowledged for their help in setting up this project.

7 REFERENCES

Brebner, P., 1991 Walnut Farmhouse and Buildings, Cowgrove, Wimborne, unpublished report National Trust Vernacular Building Survey NT SMR no. 110057.

Papworth, M., 1998 'Pamphill, Walnut Farmhouse' *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society* **120**, 112–3.



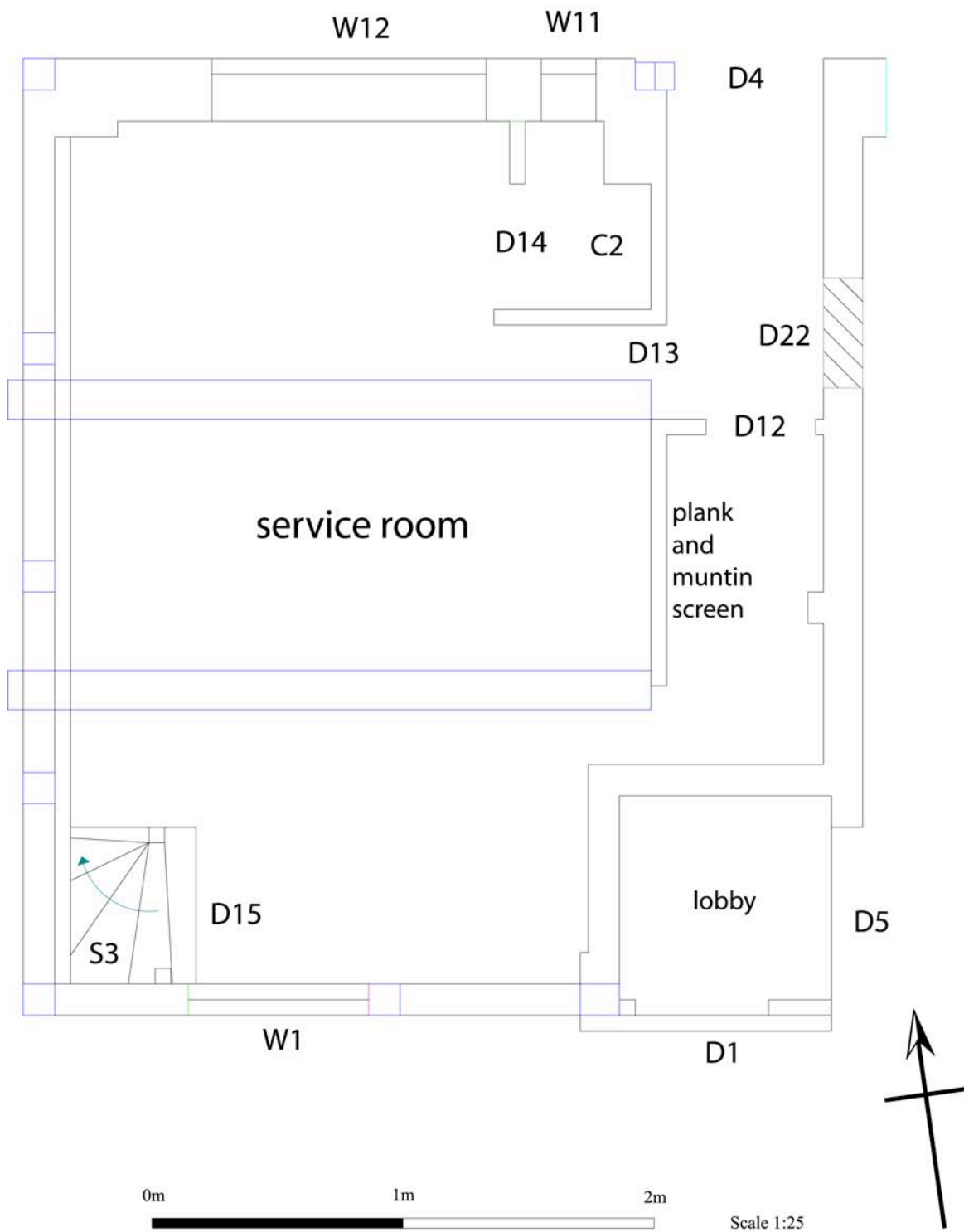


Figure 1: Plan of Service Room

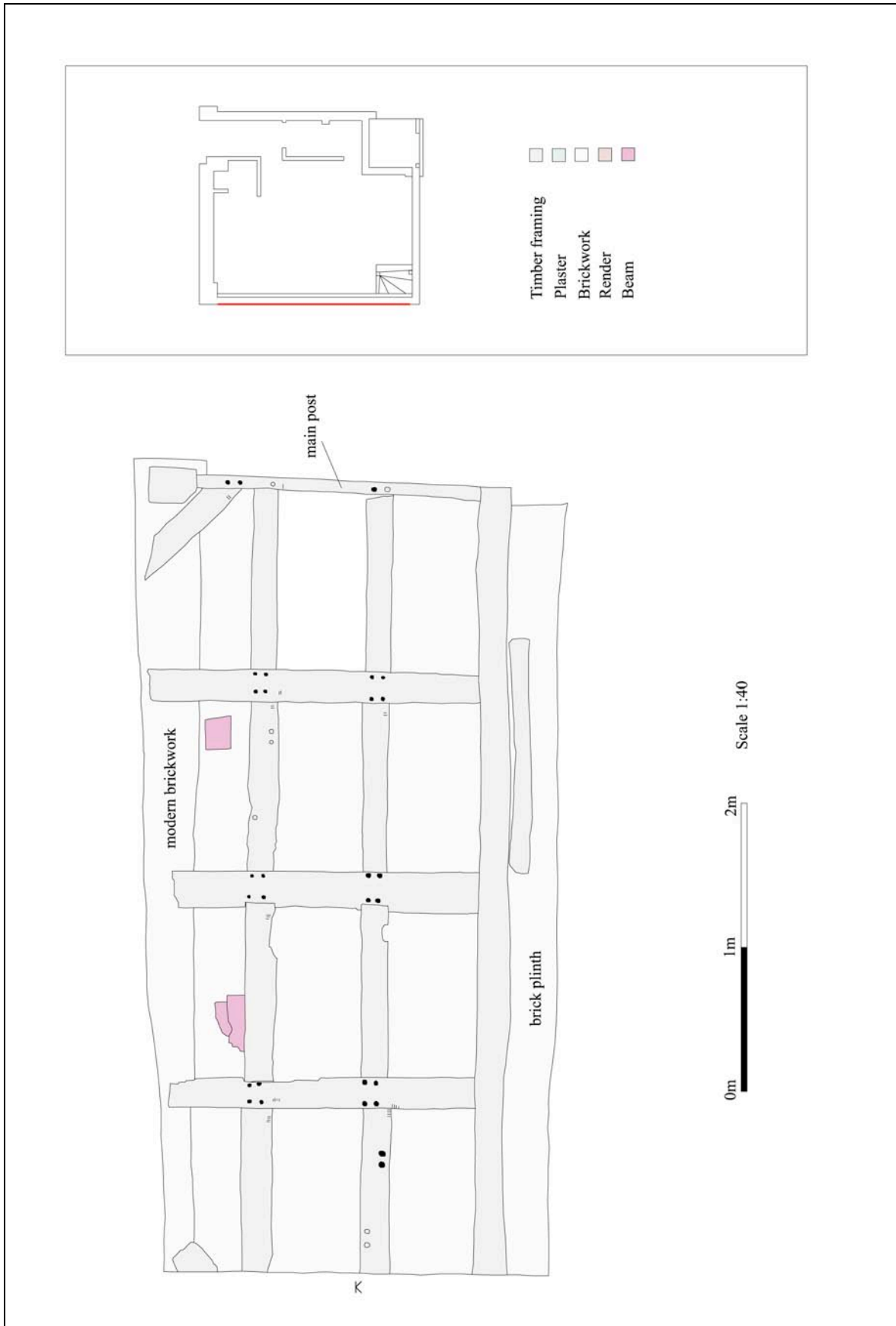


Figure 2: West Wall, External Elevation

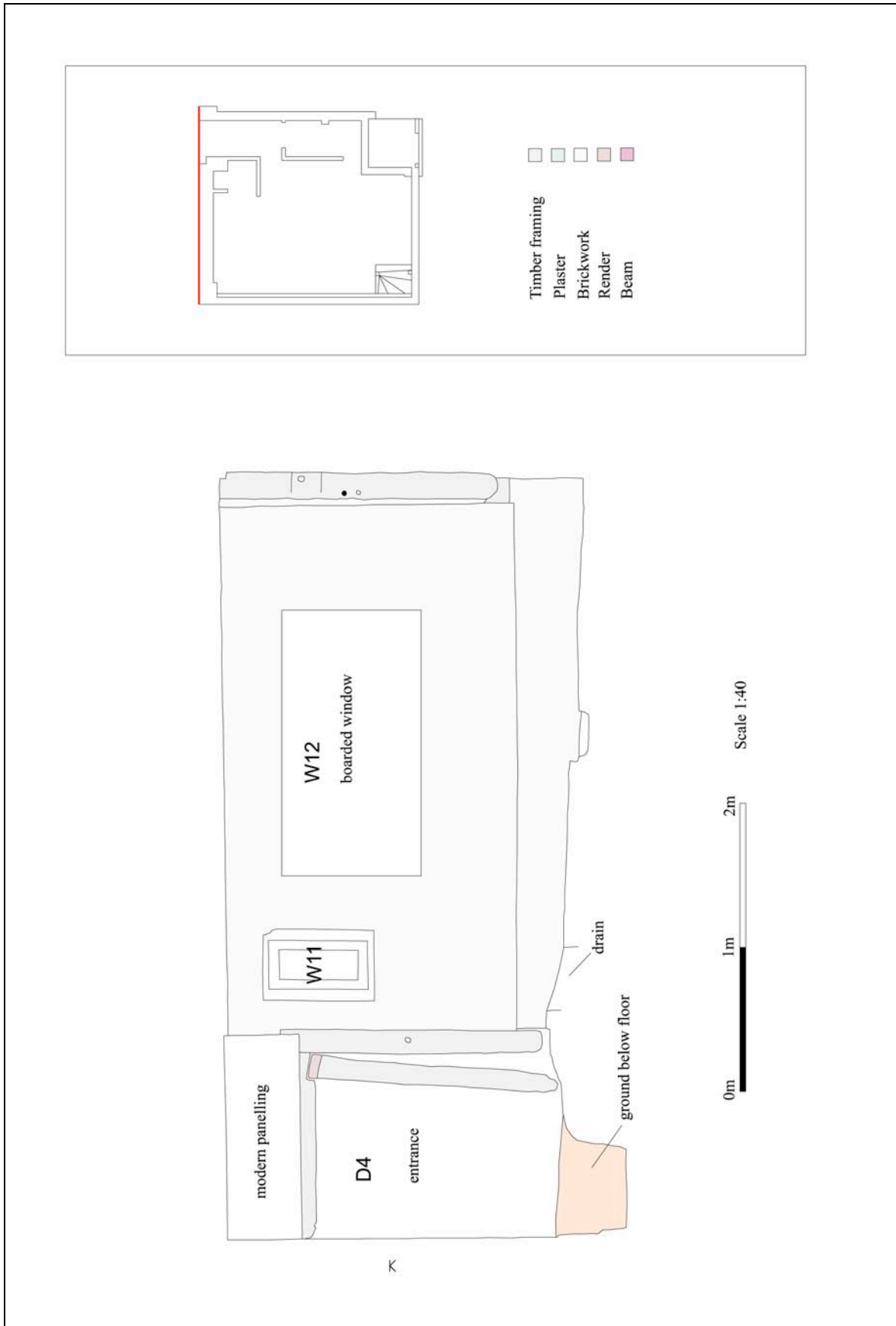


Figure 3: North Wall, External Elevation

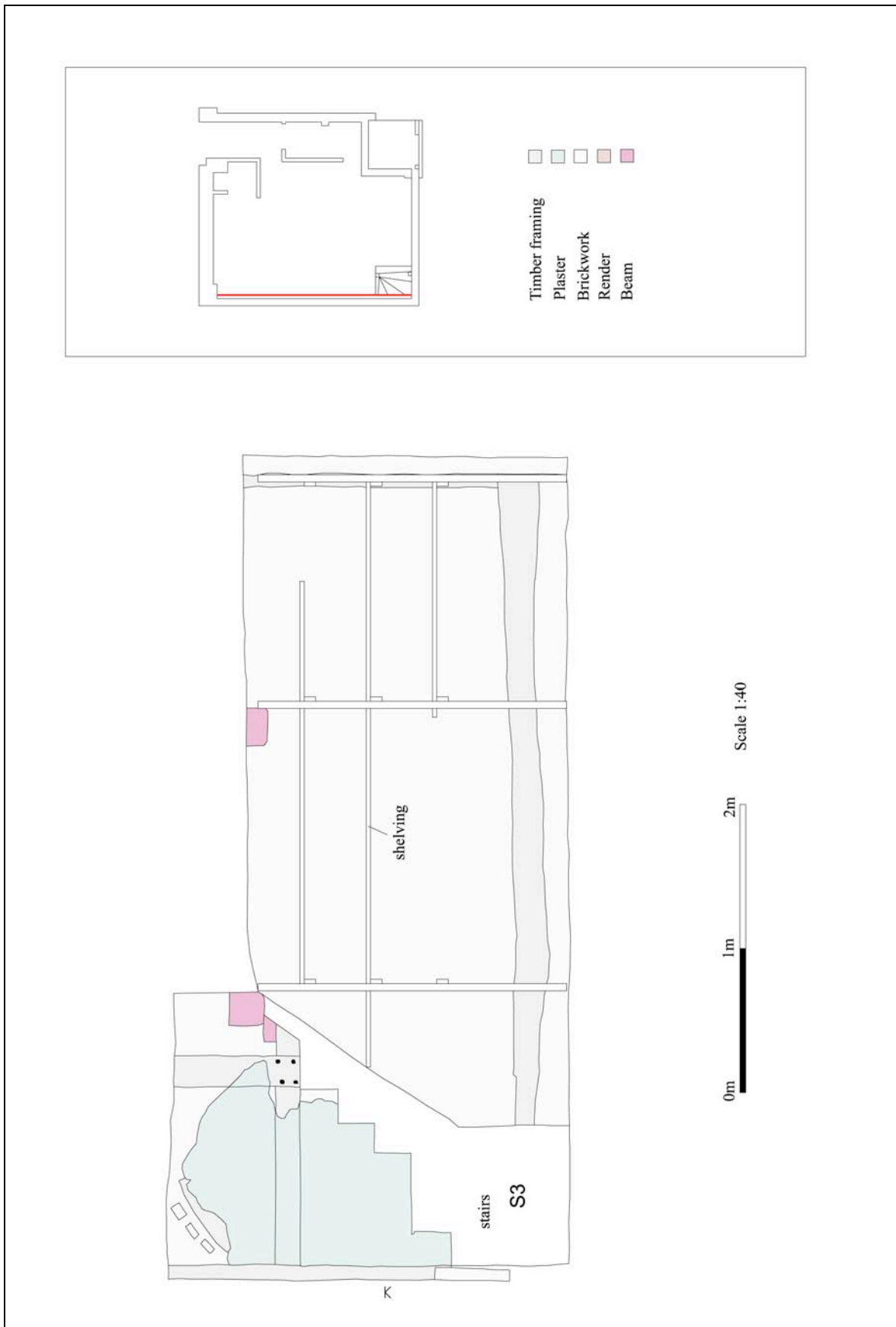


Figure 4: West Wall, Internal Elevation

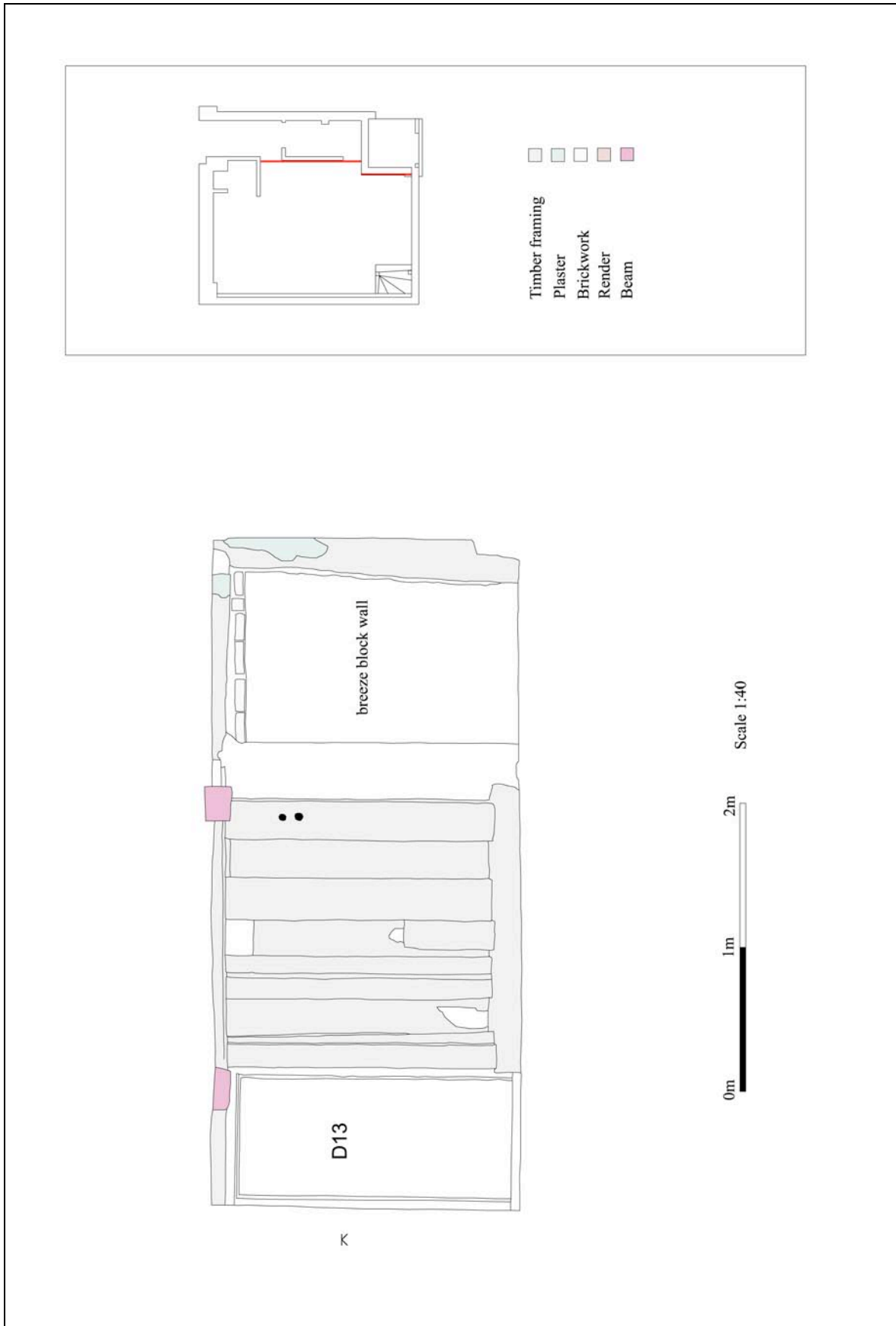


Figure 5: Plank and Muntin Screen, Internal Elevation

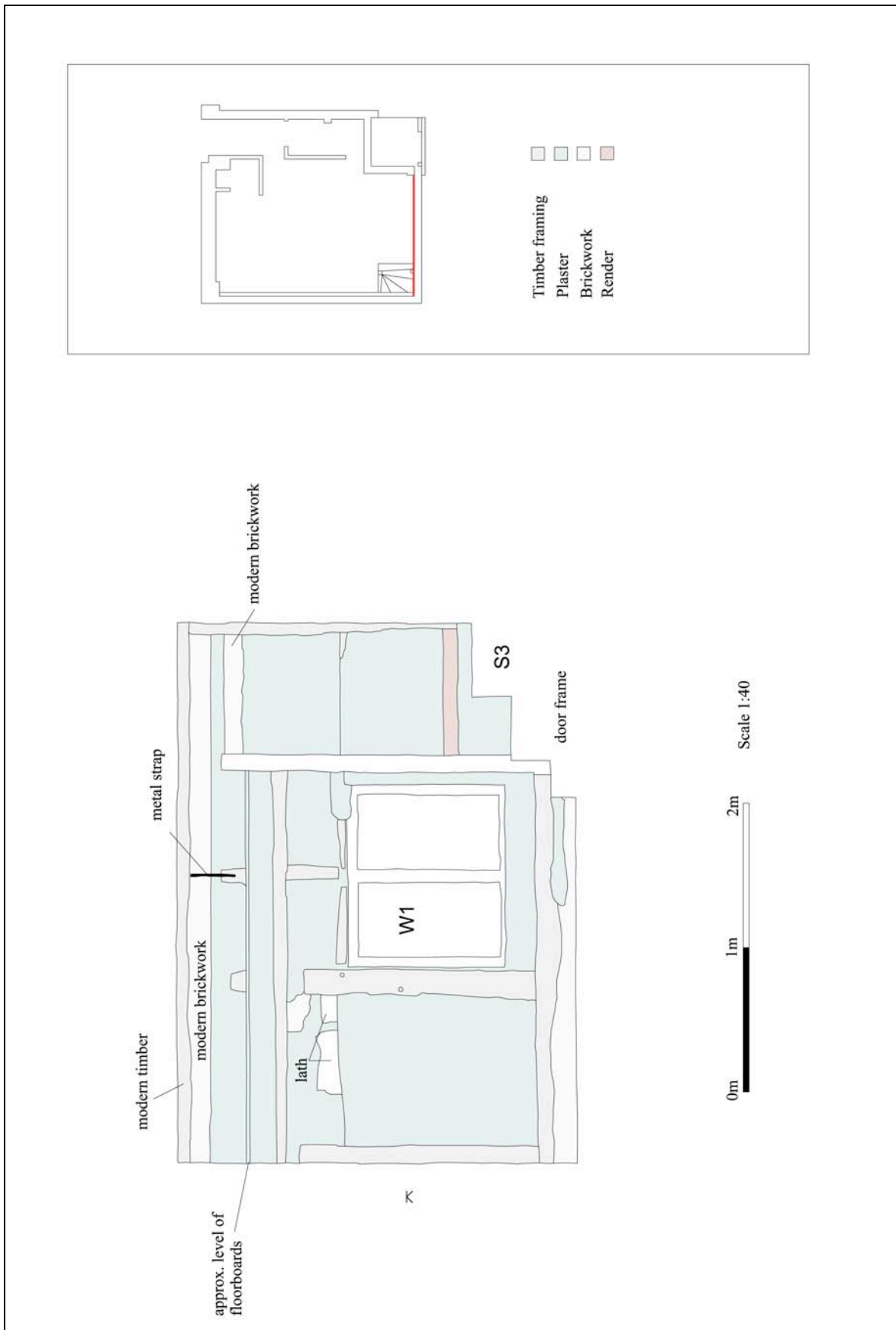


Figure 6: South Wall, Internal Elevation

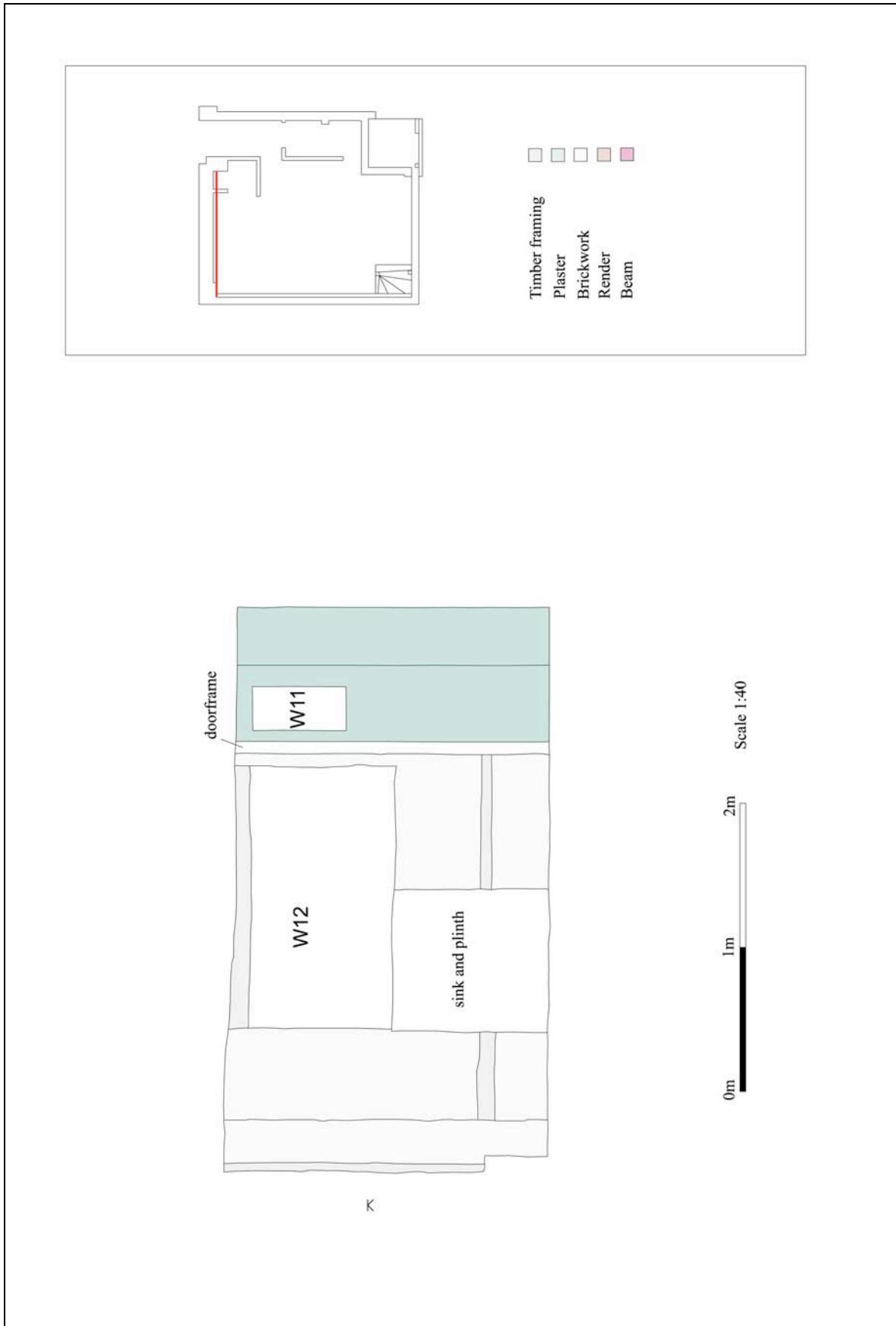


Figure 7: North Wall, Internal Elevation

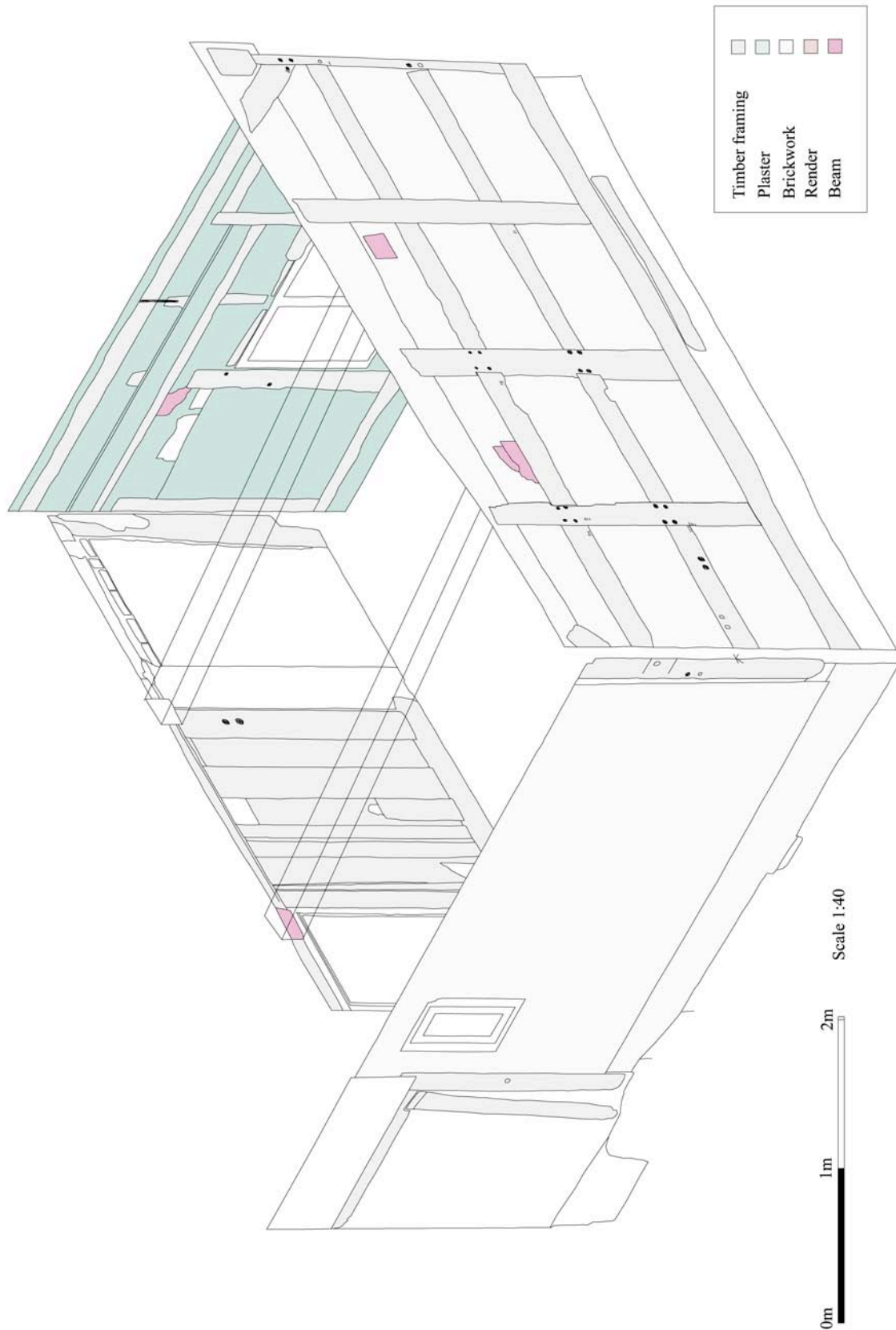


Figure 8: Isometric View from northwest



Plate 1: General view of Walnut Farmhouse from northwest with Service Room on the right



Plate 2: West wall, external elevation.



Plate 3: Detail of timber framing of west external elevation showing assembly marks.



Plate 4: Detail of timber framing of west external elevation showing assembly marks



Plate 5: North wall, external elevation.



Plate 6: West wall, internal elevation



Plate 7: Plank and Muntin screen.



Plate 8: South wall, internal elevation



Plate 9: Butler sink on north wall, internal elevation.



Plate 10: Detail of ceiling beam.

APPENDIX 1: THE BRIEF

