

**AN HISTORIC BUILDING
SURVEY OF 124, UTTOXETER ROAD,
LONGTON, STOKE-ON-TRENT,
STAFFORDSHIRE**



Trent & Peak
ARCHAEOLOGY



AN HISTORIC BUILDING
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STAFFORDSHIRE

by
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SUMMARY

- Trent & Peak Archaeology was commissioned by Stoke-on-Trent City Council in 2011 to carry out an historic building survey of a disused building at 124 Uttoxeter Road, Longton (formerly 90, 92 High Street). The building dates from the early 19th century and was long used as a beerhouse. Although not officially listed, it is situated within the Longton (former Short Street) Conservation Area (redesignated 2009) and permission for demolition was granted (following Planning Application SOT/52686), subject to an historic building record being compiled first.
- The survey combined the results of documentary research carried out at Stoke-on-Trent City Archives in Hanley and two site visits. The building was recorded with black and white film and digital photographs, site notes and with measurements taken to produce floor plans and elevation drawings. Several earlier views of the building were provided by outside sources.
- Map evidence shows that 124 Uttoxeter Road was used in part or fully as a beerhouse for probably over a century, at least from 1856 to 1950. Directory evidence might suggest that this use started as early as the 1830s, not long after this part of the High Street in Longton became built-up. A directory of 1834 listed 60 beerhouses in Lane End and Longton, with 14 of these on the High Street alone. The sudden appearance of beer retailing on the high streets of Britain's larger towns followed the 1830 Beer Act. The 1861 census listed William Robinson as beer house keeper at 90 High Street. Later people are listed in directories as beer retailers and beer sellers, the various names showing a fast turnover of tenants. In 1901 Bernard Martin was listed as beer house keeper of the *British Oak*, not long after the two properties (Nos. 90 and 92) were merged and the building remodeled.
- Examination of the building's structure was hampered by external stucco and internally by the presence of added wall panels. The building was originally built two stories high with of 2½-2¾ inch thick bricks, with some stone dressings. A number of changes occurred during the building's history, not least the shortening of the building at its south end and the loss of an external brewhouse. The front elevation in particular was remodeled with windows typical of public houses and various decorative features of Art Nouveau style, typical of the turn of the 19th-20th century period. A possible external staircase to the upper floor was replaced by an internal staircase and several windows and doorways were later infilled. The roof may have been replaced. Few, if any, original features appear to have survived.
- The building was probably originally built for either residential or commercial use, the internal plan showing no great variation from typical workers' housing of the period. Both shops and beerhouses would usually have made use of the front room for trade, with goods and beer stored in the back room or in an extension, whilst the living quarters were concentrated on the upper floor. After about 1900 the ground floor plan was much like one would find in a fully licensed public house, with two distinct areas for lounge and bar to east and west, both possibly heated. An indoor toilet was later added. Partitions separating several rooms may date from the later 20th century later when the ground floor area was used as offices / stores and the first floor used for flats.

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1. Introduction

This report by Trent & Peak Archaeology was commissioned by Stoke-on-Trent City Council and follows both a brief issued by the City's Archaeologist and an approved Written Scheme of Investigation provided by the author. The subject of this report is an isolated disused building at 124 Uttoxeter Road, Longton (Fig. 1) that dates from the early 19th century and which was used as a beerhouse up until at least 1950. From the 1980s it was used as offices by Smithson's Auto Engineers but is now disused and suffering from water penetration. The building is not officially listed but is situated within the Longton (former Short Street) Conservation Area (redesignated 2009). Due to concerns for public safety, permission for demolition has been granted (following Planning Application SOT/52686), subject to an historic building record being compiled first.

The methodology employed here combines elements of both Level 2 and Level 3 historic building recording standards, as specified in English Heritage guidelines (see references). Where specific briefs are supplied by planning authorities with regard to late post-medieval buildings, they often require a mainly descriptive and partly analytical survey of the buildings concerned, together with a record in photographic and accurately measured drawn form, with examples annotated to illustrate salient points. As no architects' plans were available the survey has included the measuring of the building's two floor plans and most of the elevations, although the latter was hindered by the presence of scaffolding around the building (but with no boarding to provide high level access).

The overall study employs the methodology developed by Trent & Peak Archaeology (TPA) for use on similar projects in the region. This methodology is described in detail below and conforms to the standard requirements of planning authorities where consent applications are made for development, re-development or building conversion. These follow guidelines to be found in the conservation planning document *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS 5, Department for Communities and Local Government 2010). The methodology also accords with the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) Codes of Conduct and Standards.

This report combines the results of documentary research, carried out at Stoke-on-Trent City Archives in Hanley and online to the Staffordshire Record Office catalogue, and two site visits made on 22nd December 2011 and 9th January 2012. Black and white film photographs were taken with a 35mm film camera, together with a parallel set of digital photographs. These were taken of both external and internal aspects of the building and several of the digital photographs are shown within this report to illustrate pertinent points. Contact sheets of the film records are included in the Appendix. During the site visits notes were made and measurements taken of various features, brick sizes and other structural

information. Several earlier views of the building included in the report were kindly provided by Ben Williscroft of Stoke-on-Trent City Council.

The site archive will be deposited with the Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent. The archive consists of site records, digital photographs and black and white film negatives and prints, together with plans showing their viewpoints. The allocated reference number is STKMG: 2012.LH.67.

The TPA site code is URL.

2. Longton

Longton lies to the south-east of the Potteries area and straddles the Roman road once known as Rykniel Street that ran between Uttoxeter and Newcastle-under-Lyme (Fig. 1). In the later 18th century when Yates produced a county map of Stafford(shire), Longton was depicted as a small settlement on the south side of the road (then locally called Meer Lane), with nearby Long Lane on the north side; the latter had a church and was probably the earlier village. Several isolated buildings are shown south-east of Longton on Meer Lane in the general area of the subject of this report (Fig. 3).

Following the release of land by the Heathcote and Sutherland estates in the late 18th century and there was a rapid expansion of pottery, coal and iron industries in the early 19th century, assisted by improvements to the transport system. The area between the original core of Longton and its eastern boundary became built up quite quickly and without a set plan (Baker 1991, 37), in particular the area between Uttoxeter Road and Stone Road, running to the south.

Buildings were erected in the Uttoxeter Road area from about 1820 onwards (Young and Jenkins in VCH 1963, 226). By 1832, the time of the first detailed map of the area by Thomas Hargreaves, Longton had extended well to the south and south-east of its core area and Meer Lane had been renamed High Street. From this a series of small streets, all with adjoining properties, ran to a near-parallel street to either side of the main thoroughfare. Longton houses and manufactories were tightly enmeshed but with its warren of side streets these were largely hidden behind the more respectable main street (Baker 1991, 37). No. 124 Uttoxeter Road is probably shown on the Hargreaves map and is indicated on Figure 4. The Church of St. James was built nearby in 1833-34 (www.thepotteries.org/listed/96a.html).

White's Directory of 1851 described Longton in the following terms:

This rapidly improving town is extensively engaged in the china and earthenware manufacture, and is pleasantly situated in the bosom and on the sides of the valley of a small rivulet. It is crossed by the North Staffordshire Railway, which has a station, carried on arches over the lower part of the town, constructed in 1848. The town is in the parish and parliamentary borough of Stoke-upon-Trent. Including its southern suburbs in Blurton and Normicot, it has now about 16,000 inhabitants.

The population of Longton in 1841 was 10,393, and Lane-End, 1,952, so that the chief part of the town is in the manor of Longton, although, until about ten years ago, the town was popularly called Lane-End. The Duke of Sutherland and John E Heathcote, Esq, own a great part of the land in both liberties, and the latter is lord of the manor, and owner of Longton Hall, now occupied by Charles Harvey, Esq.

The town has risen from the rank of an humble village to its present consequence during the last 80 years. It has now many good streets, inns, and well stocked shops, and its market is held every Saturday.

Longton and the nearby township of Long Lane were incorporated into the borough of Longton in 1865. By then the area between Uttoxeter Road and Normacot Road to the south was solidly built-up. The First Edition 25 inch scale Ordnance Survey map of 1882 shows the town densely packed with potteries and other commercial premises, workers' housing, shops, municipal buildings, churches and chapels (Fig. 6). In 1910 Longton was one of the six towns of the Potteries federated as a municipal borough within the county borough of Stoke-on-Trent (Young and Jenkins in VCH 1963, 235).

Many buildings in the area had to be demolished in 1916 due to an underground fire. In more recent times Longton has suffered from the closure of much of the local industry and removal of much of the early housing stock. The area is now the subject of a regeneration initiative resulting from the adopted Longton Masterplan. Remaining buildings of historical interest have been identified in the Longton Conservation Area Appraisal. See:

<http://www.stoke.gov.uk/ccm/content/planning/planning-general/local-development-framework/conservation-and-heritage/conservation-area-documents.en>

3. Historical background to 124 Uttoxeter Road

Apart from maps, another main source for uncovering the documentary history of 124 Uttoxeter Road is its listing in directories, especially during the 19th century. A number of these were consulted and are listed below; also listed are some census entries for residents within the property.

1. Pigot & Co., 1822-23. *London and Provincial Directory*: No beer houses listed
2. William White, 1834. *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Staffordshire*: 60 beer houses listed in Long Lane and Longton; 14 of these on High Street, but no numbers given
3. 1841 and 1851 censuses: no house numbers given
4. 1861 census: 90 High Street, Longton: William Robinson, age 39, beer house keeper; wife Sarah and 5 children, and a relative
5. John Slater, 1862. *Royal National Commercial Directory and Topography of Derbyshire, Northamptonshire, Warwickshire, Leicestershire, Staffordshire and Worcestershire*: John Barker beer retailer High Street (no street number); John Barker, shopkeeper 92, High Street
6. 1871 census: no house numbers given
7. Keates *Gazetteer and Directory of the Staffordshire Potteries, Newcastle & District, 1873-74*: Thomas Shenton, beer retailer
8. Keates *ditto*, 1879: Charles Smith, beerseller
9. 1891 census: Edward Spendilow, 25, beerseller, and wife Harriet and niece
10. Kelly's Directory for 1896: Frederick Rowbotham, beer retailer
11. 1901 census: Bernard Martin, 50, beer house keeper of *British Oak*, wife and 6 children
12. 1911 census: John Henry Bowers, 42, beer house keeper, wife and 4 children and wife's parents

Map evidence alone shows that 124 Uttoxeter Road was used in part or fully as a beerhouse for about a century, at least from 1856 to 1950 (Figs 5-8); directory evidence might suggest that this use started as early as the 1830s. Whites' directory of 1834 made an indirect comment about the proliferation of beer retailers in Lane End and Longton when it headlined the number thus: Beer Houses 60!! With 14 of these on High Street alone, 124 Uttoxeter Road (then incorporating 90 and 92 High Street) was almost certainly amongst their number.

The sudden appearance of beer retailing on the high streets of Britain's larger towns followed the 1830 Beer Act, which allowed any ratepayer to sell beer after paying a relatively small Excise fee. By 1832 over 33,000 beer sellers were in business (Brandwood 2011 *et al*, 28). Liberalising the beer trade was intended to damage the trade in spirits, considered addictive and detrimental to health, as no wine or spirits could be sold on the premises. It would also damage the power of large brewers and their publicans. Reducing the cost of beer, much of it made on the premises, would also earn popular approval for the Government at the time (*ibid.*, 27). Beerhouses were often converted workers' houses and were largely indistinguishable from neighbouring properties. They typically had simple one or two-room interiors with settles and quarry tiled floors. Most beerhouses eventually closed in the first half of the 20th century and the very last beerhouse in Britain, the *Seven Stars Inn* at Halfway House, Shropshire closed in 2005 (*ibid.*, 30).

Number 124 Uttoxeter Street was probably built by a speculative builder and may originally have been built as a pair of shops. Whether there were any purpose-built beerhouses is questionable. An early map of 1856 shows the west half of the property (No. 90 High Street) as a beerhouse, with an attached brewhouse and stores complex to the rear. A directory of 1862 lists John Barker, shopkeeper in the east half of the property (No. 92). This part is shown as L-shaped and with a yard with small outbuildings.

The directories and censuses show that tenants rarely stayed very long. When the two properties were merged into one is unknown but somewhere between 1896-1901 the building was revamped and named the *British Oak*, a change that probably did not impress the nearby *Royal Oak* public house. A rare photograph of the building that shows a landlord with several of his children, together with some smartly dressed customers, may date from c.1906-07 (Plate 1). The landlord is probably John Henry Bowers, the woman to his left his wife Annie and the children Reginald, Martha and Addla, then aged somewhere between about ten and five. From this photograph it is evident that the building's street frontage has not subsequently changed much, apart from the loss of the name in the front gable and in the window glass (Plate 3).

4. Building description

In its present form (at the time of writing) the building is near rectangular in shape, but built at a slight angle to the road in front. Although the building was once longer and ran up to a still existing industrial building to the rear (Plate 9), the front roof section runs parallel to the road, as nearly all buildings in the area did at one time. The building is two stories high, reaching a maximum height to

roof apex estimated at just under 8m at the front and c.6m at the back. The rear section has a lower gabled roof on the west side and a flat roof in the south-east corner. The respective roof heights are shown in Figure 11.

Examination of the building's structure was hampered by much of the external walling having render / stucco and internally by the presence of added wall panels, both of which will have helped to both hide and preserve the underlying brickwork; there were also safety issues due to deteriorating floor timbers. Nevertheless, it was clear that a number of changes had occurred during the building's history, not least the shortening of the building at its south end at some point after 1950. Up until then the brewhouse may have still existed (Fig. 7). The south elevation now is partly rendered but on the west side it is a modern rebuild (Plate 8). Where the former brewhouse block abutted a still existing industrial building to the south, the line of a gable roof still shows (Plate 9).

The building was originally built of 2½-2¾ inch (63-70mm) thick and 8 ½-9 inch (216-229mm) long bricks, with some stone dressings. The north / front elevation was refaced and thickened with 3 x 9 inch bricks. There are slightly projecting brick quoins, a low plinth, a moulded string course and a prominent central gable with bargeboards. The frontage has two entrances set towards the far corners, the east one set at an angle (with traces of a curving step showing) and now blocked off. Two windows typical of public houses are set at ground level, below a long casement window (with taller central section) at first floor level. The decorative features, including tall stacks, are typical Art Nouveau features of the turn of the 19th-20th century period.

The side elevations are plainer and feature a number of boarded-up or reduced windows and blocked-up windows and doorways. The south elevation (east side) has heavy render that probably hides a former ground floor doorway. On the west side there is a remaining window like those on the front side (Plate 6), and beyond this evidence of two blocked-off doorways, one directly above the other at first floor level. Behind these there is an internal staircase which is clearly not original. The blocked-up upper doorway would suggest a former external staircase for access to the first floor level; this is possibly shown on the 1856 map (Fig. 5).

Internally, most of the ground floor area walling are covered by modern panels set on timber studs (Plates 10, 12). The building had clearly once been two properties of equal width (if not length), separated by a north-south brick-thick wall (Fig. 9). The north end of this wall had been removed to create a bigger room from Rooms 1A and 1B; it still showed within the floor, with quarry tiles showing through to either side. Both rooms had had a west-facing fireplace, that in the east wall now lost when the stack was reduced to make way for a new window (Plate 12). The west property's fireplace had probably been set opposite

a once smaller window in the west wall, whilst the east property had been lit by a window to either side of the stack in the east wall, both of which had been blocked off and replaced by a single window. Both properties are bridged by a possibly continuous cross-beam, with other smaller beams with chamfer-ends showing in other parts of the ceiling. A number of the rooms are separated by thinner partition walls.

As mentioned above, the staircase was a later feature and the design of its newel posts and thin balusters suggest a late 19th century date (Plate 11). There was no sign of there having been a second staircase in the east property and the existing staircase was probably introduced when both properties became a single entity. Previous to this, the suggested external staircase may have served both properties, rising to a wide landing. The present upper level is divided into three heated bedrooms (Fig. 10 Rooms 6-8), a box-room and a kitchen (with separate pantry; Plate 14), suggestive of having been adapted into one or more flats.

Few, if any, original features appear to remain. Several four-panelled doors still show (Plate 13), a type commonly used between about 1830-90. The front door has an upper glass panel which is indicative of the later end of this date range. The roof was found to be in good order and may have been replaced at about 1900 when the other alterations occurred (Plate 15).

5. Conclusions

As the first detailed plan of 1856 shows, the adjoining properties of 90, 92 High Street, Longton had differing plans (Fig. 5). This lack of uniformity of plan was not unique and can be seen elsewhere along the High Street on 19th century maps where buildings were built for differing purposes. The block was probably built in the 1820-30s period when a lot of building activity was occurring in the area. The plan suggests that the properties were originally separated from the industrial buildings to the rear, although such buildings of this period were sometimes built up against neighbouring industrial buildings, with little regard for yards or gardens. The shape of the now lost brewhouse block suggests that this was a later infill.

Although the west property (No. 90) is shown as a beer house in 1856, whether it had such a use when first built is unknown. The building will probably have been built as capable of use for both residential and commercial use as the internal plan shows no great variation from typical workers' housing of the period. Both shops and beerhouses would usually have made use of the front room for trade, with goods and beer stored in the back room or in an extension, whilst the living quarters were concentrated on the upper floor. The longevity of

No. 90 as a beerhouse may have been largely due to its capability of brewing its own beer and its independence from outside sources.

The original plan of the building points to the ground floor areas having housed the beerhouse and an adjacent shop at the front, with storage and working space behind, the main difference between the two having been the layout of the latter. An external staircase for access to the upper floor suggests a strict separation between ground floor working areas and residential accommodation above. This might suggest a more complex tenancy arrangement and that the beerhouse and shop keepers may not necessarily have lived on the same premises. Whilst the upper part of the west property was divided by a landing, the property was longer and would have had two similar-sized rooms to either side of the landing. The east property was a more irregular L--shape and had a narrower room running to the south from about where Rooms 8 and 11 were later divided; floor space of the two properties may have been comparable.

The original layout of the building was largely lost when major alterations were made in around 1900, when the two properties were merged and the building was remodelled as the *British Oak* to compete with nearby public houses. Such enlargements often mark a change of licence from beerhouse to a fully licensed public house, but in this instance the *British Oak* continued to be referred to as a beerhouse, both in directories and on Ordnance Survey maps. This may indicate a failure to update information or confusion in terminology based on an assumption that the terms beerhouse and public house were synonymous.

There was subsequent loss of the south annex, shortening of the building and a major alteration to the south-east corner to provide an inside toilet with kitchen above. The most recent ground floor plan is much like one would find in a public house, with two distinct areas for lounge and bar to east and west, both possibly heated, an inside toilet and possible access to a rear yard. Partitions separating Rooms 1B, 2A and 2B may date from the later 20th century later when the ground floor area was used as offices / stores and the first floor used for flats.

6. References and sources consulted

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Maps

Yates, County Map of Stafford 1775

Yates, County Map of Stafford, revised 1798

Hargreaves, T. *Map of Lane End and Longton*, 1832.

Hargreaves, J. *Stoke upon Trent*, 1834.

Ordnance Survey 25 inch scale maps for 1882 (1st Edition), 1900 (2nd Edition), Revision 1937: Sheets XVIII. 1 (SE part); XVIII. 2 (SW part); XVIII. 5 (NE part); XVIII. 6 (NW part)

8. Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the owner for providing ready access, the staff of Stoke-on-Trent City Archives for their assistance and both Miss Pritchard (owner of the furniture shop opposite the property) and Ben Williscroft for providing information and early images of the site.

ILLUSTRATIONS

FIGURES

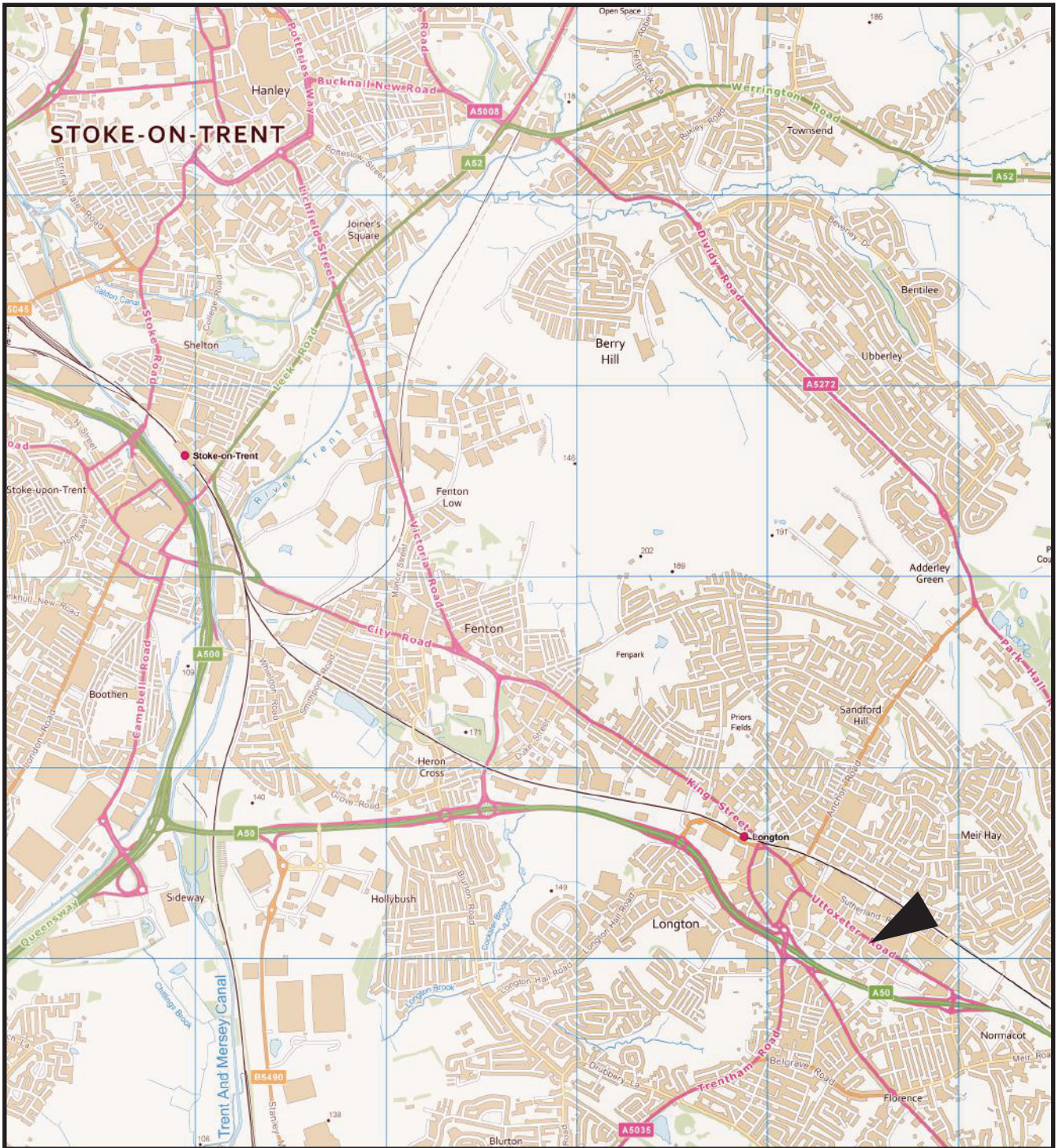


Figure 1: Location of 124 Uttoxeter Road, Longton, south-east of the centre of Stoke-on-Trent. Above at scale of 1:25,000 x 80%; below at scale of 1:20,000. Contains Ordnance Survey data. © Crown Copyright and database right 2011.

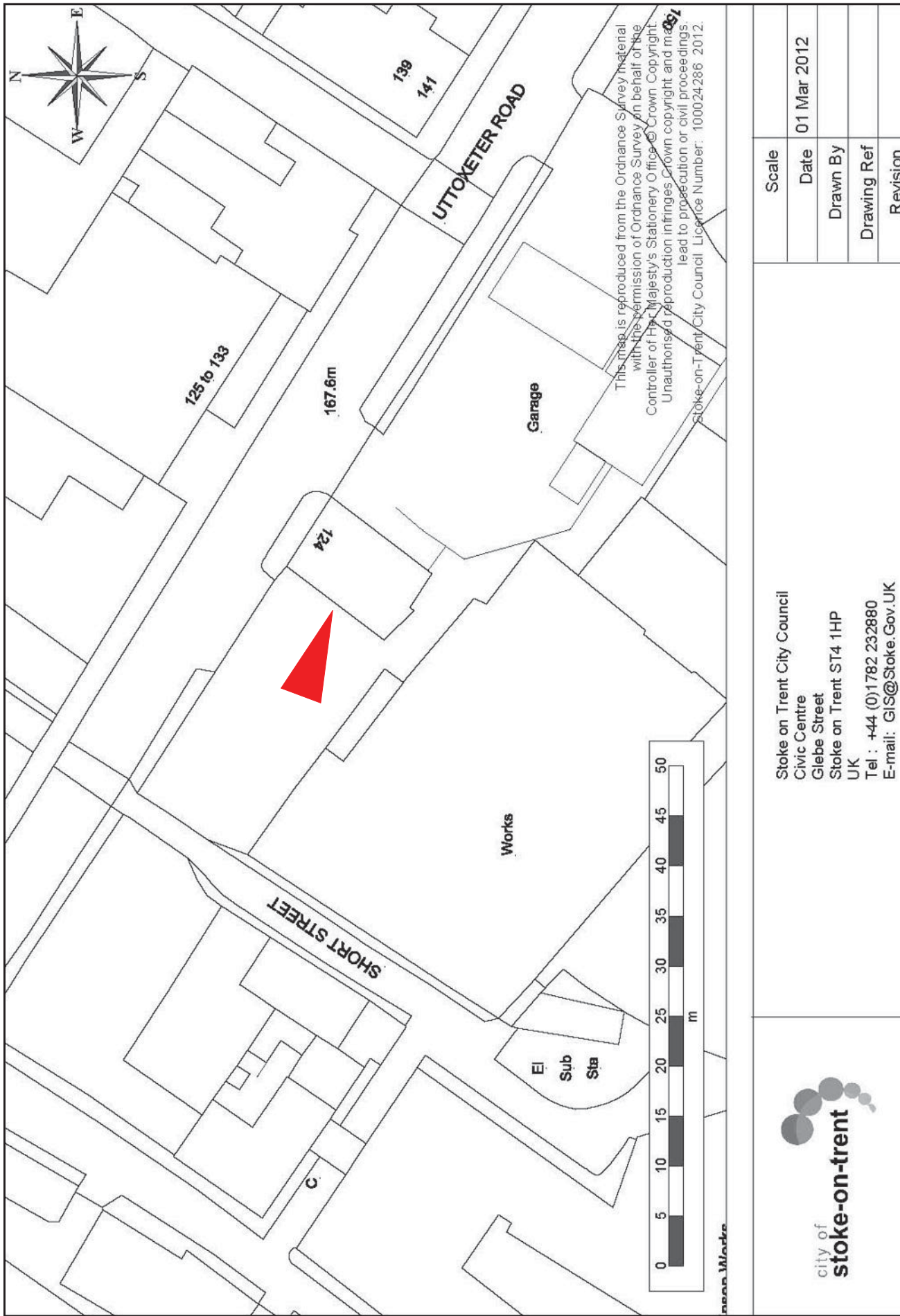


Figure 2: Location and surroundings of 124 Uttoxeter Road, Longton. Scale approximately 1:500. Plan licenced to Stoke-on-Trent City Council (as stated above).



Figure 3: Position of 124 Uttoxeter Road indicated approximately on Yates's revised county map of 1798.

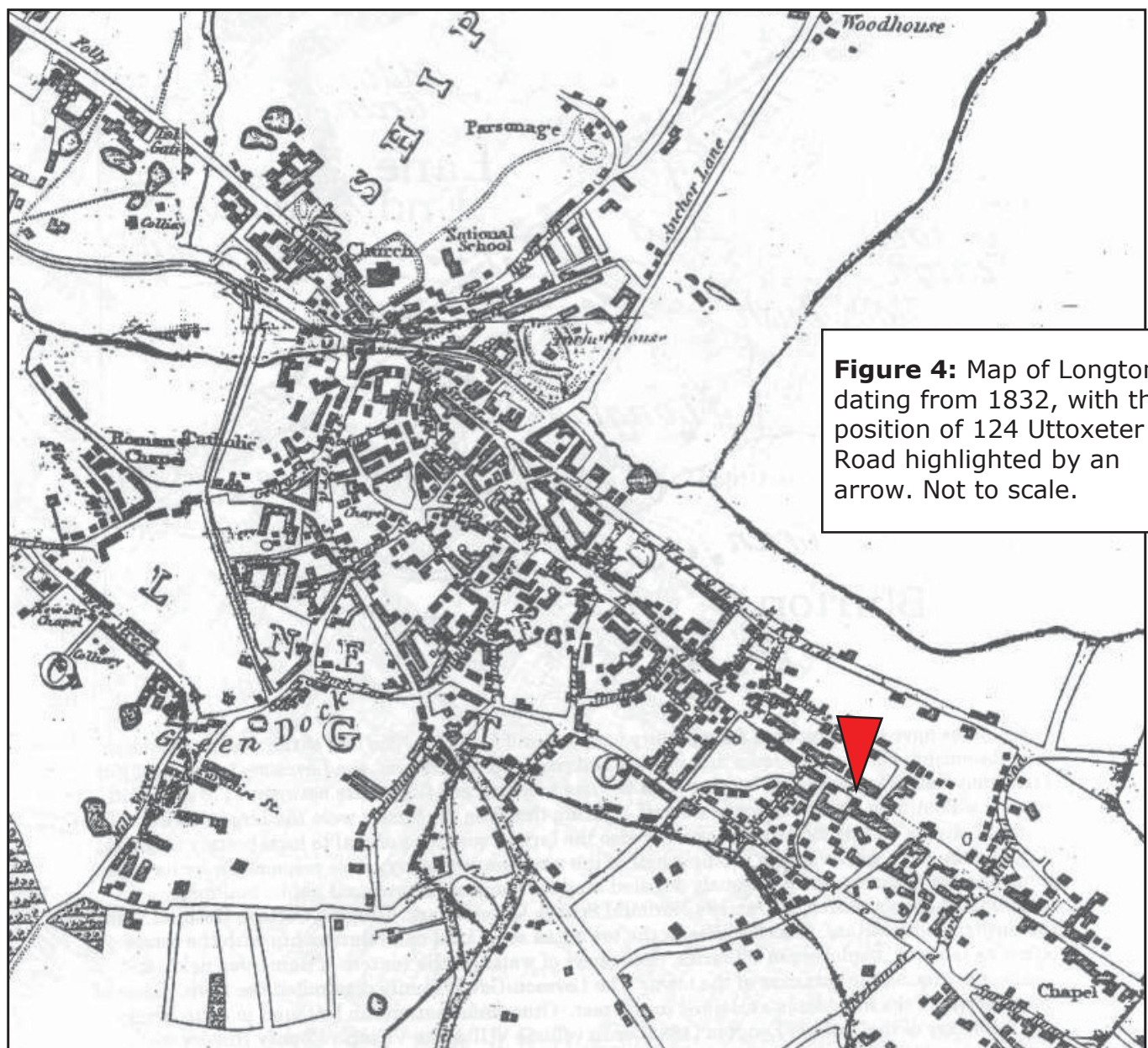


Figure 4: Map of Longton dating from 1832, with the position of 124 Uttoxeter Road highlighted by an arrow. Not to scale.

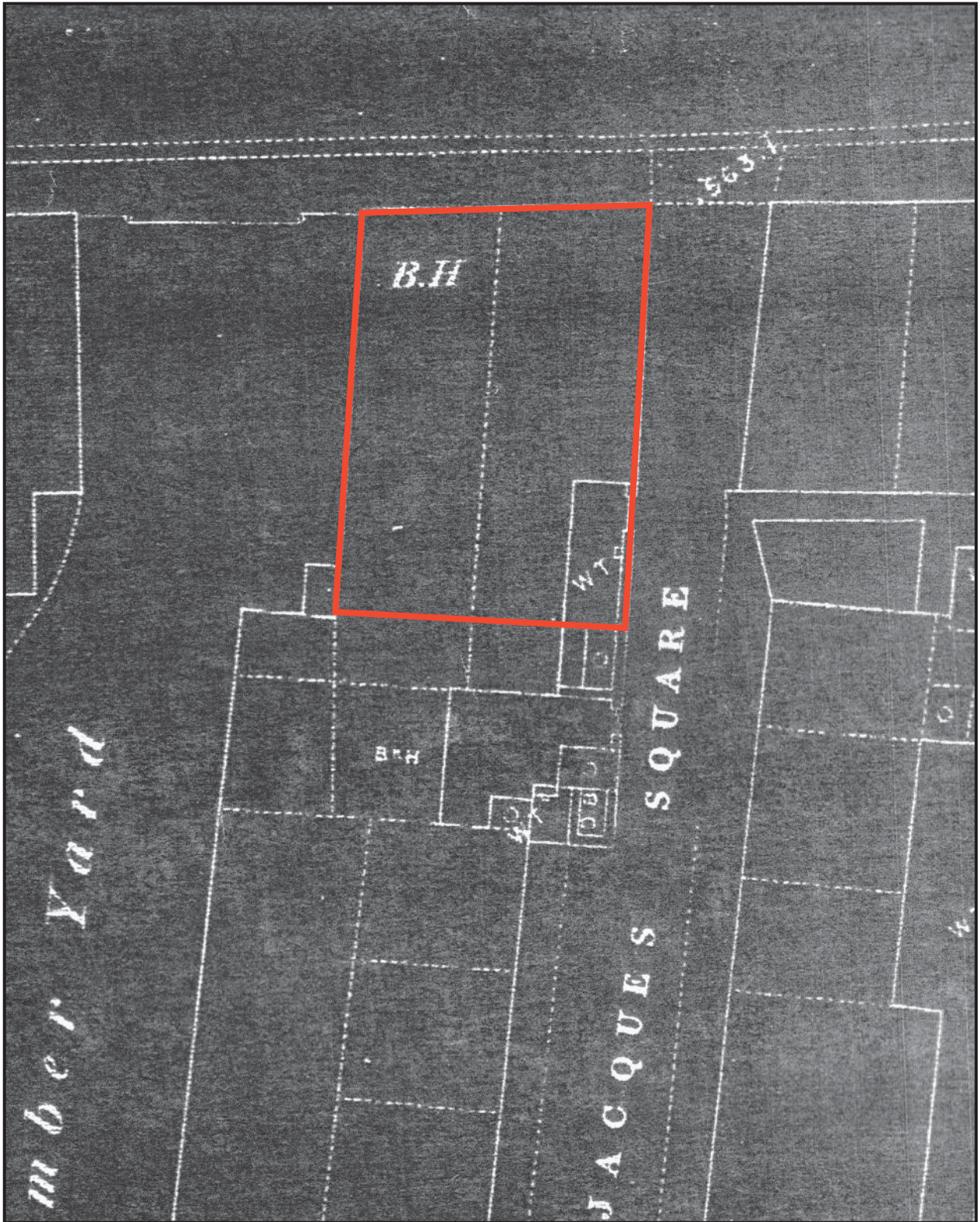


Figure 5: No 124 Uttoxeter Road (then 90, 92 High Street), Longton shown on a map of 1856. The recent footprint of the building is shown in red outline. Not to scale.

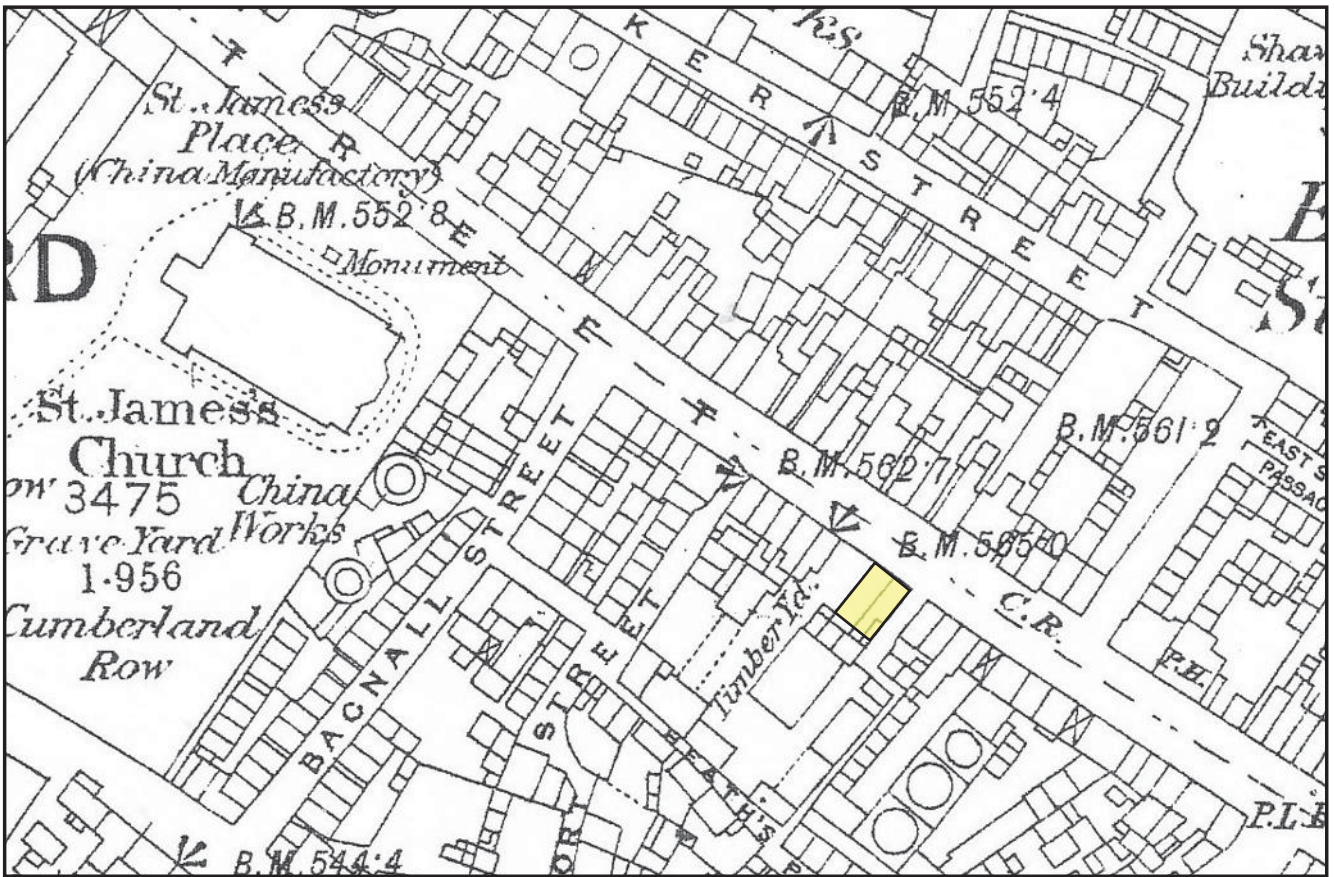


Figure 6: No. 124 Uttoxeter Road (then 90, 92 High Street), Longton shown (as yellow block) on the 25 inch scale Ordnance Survey map of 1882.



Figure 7: No. 124 Uttoxeter Road (then 90, 92 High Street), Longton shown (as yellow block) on the 25 inch scale Ordnance Survey map of 1937.

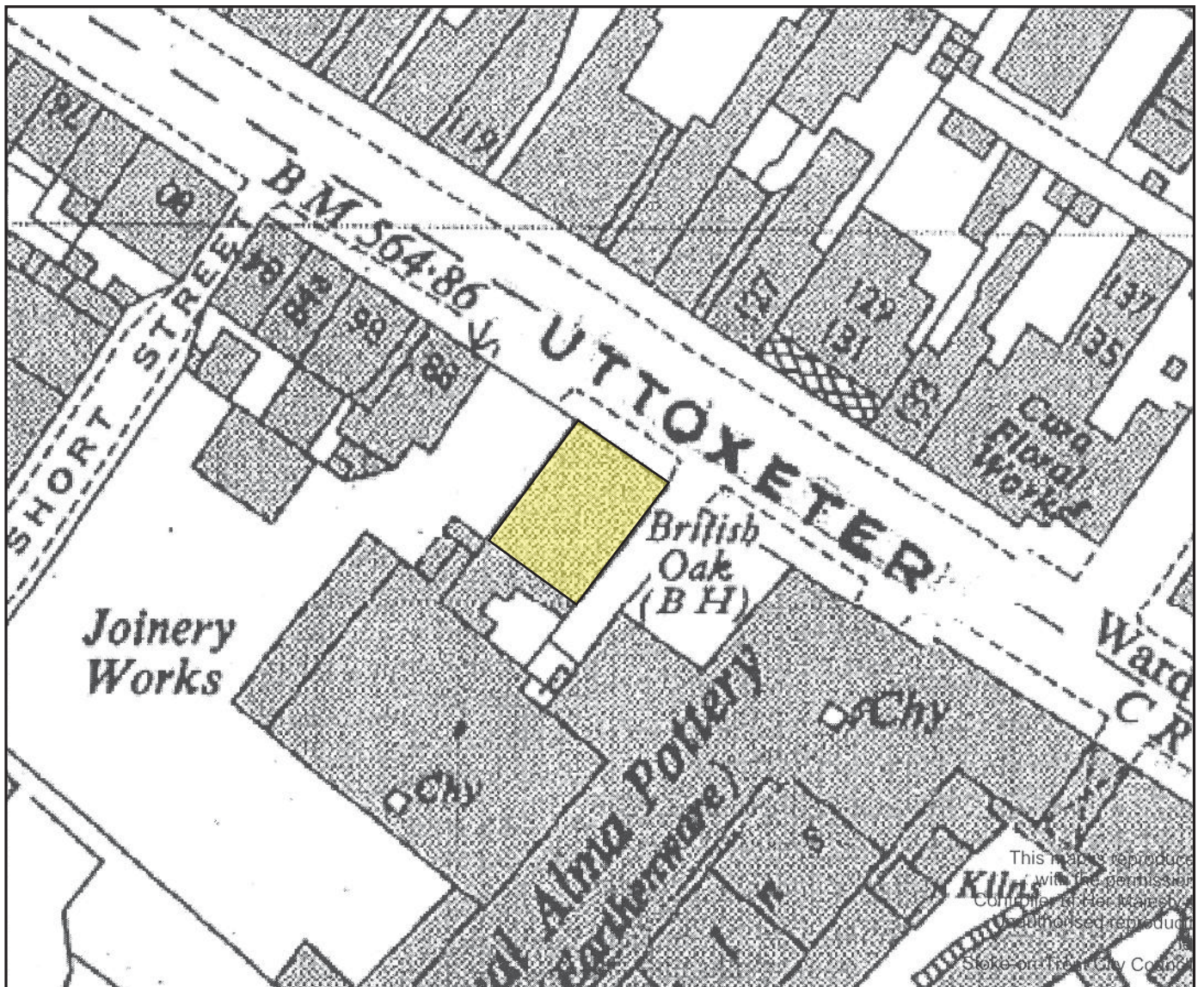


Figure 8: No. 124 Uttoxeter Road (British Oak beerhouse) shown on a 1:2,500 scale Ordnance Survey map of 1950. Not to scale.

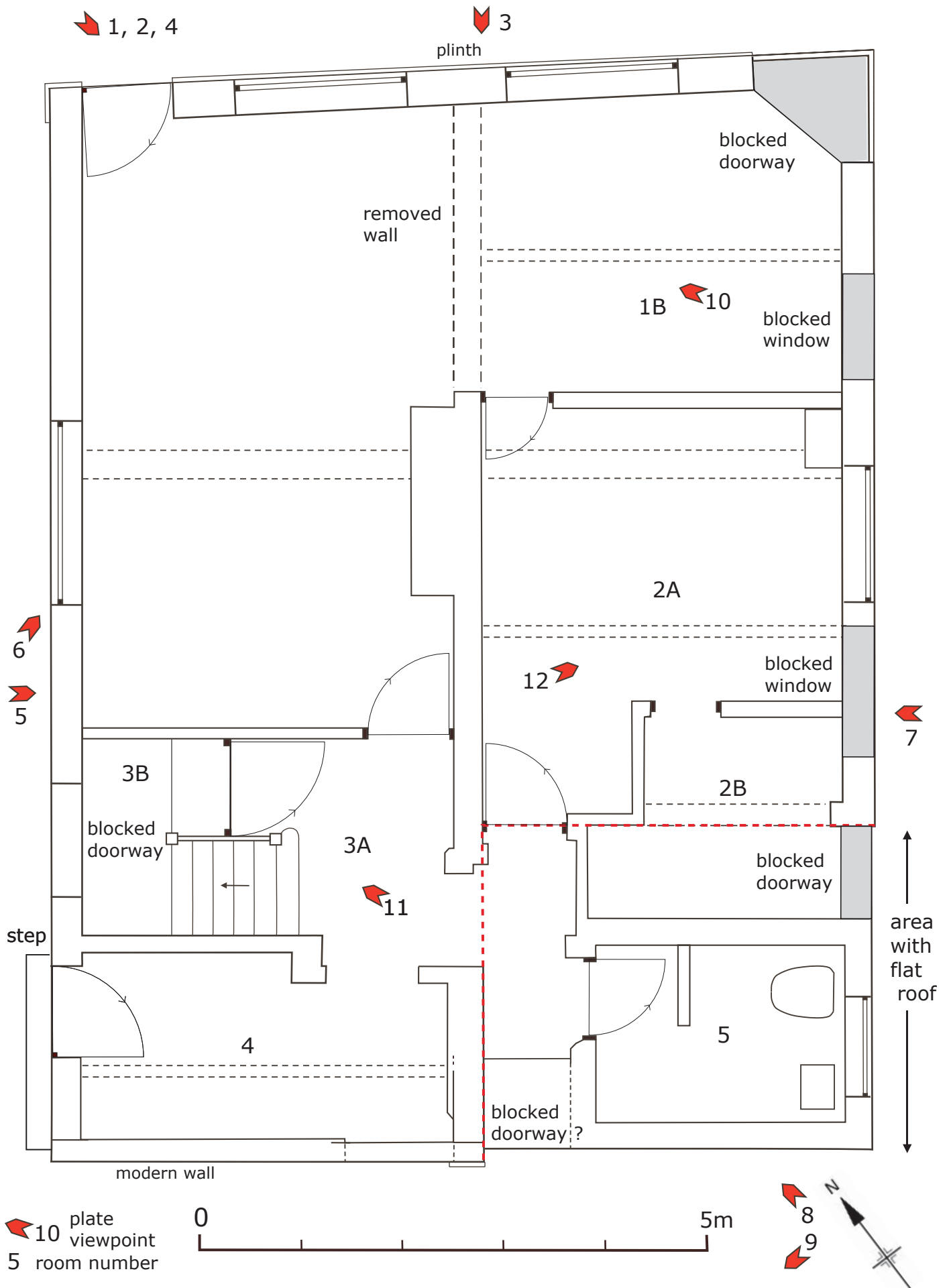


Figure 9: Ground floor plan of 124 Uttoxeter Road, Longton. Drawn scale 1:50.

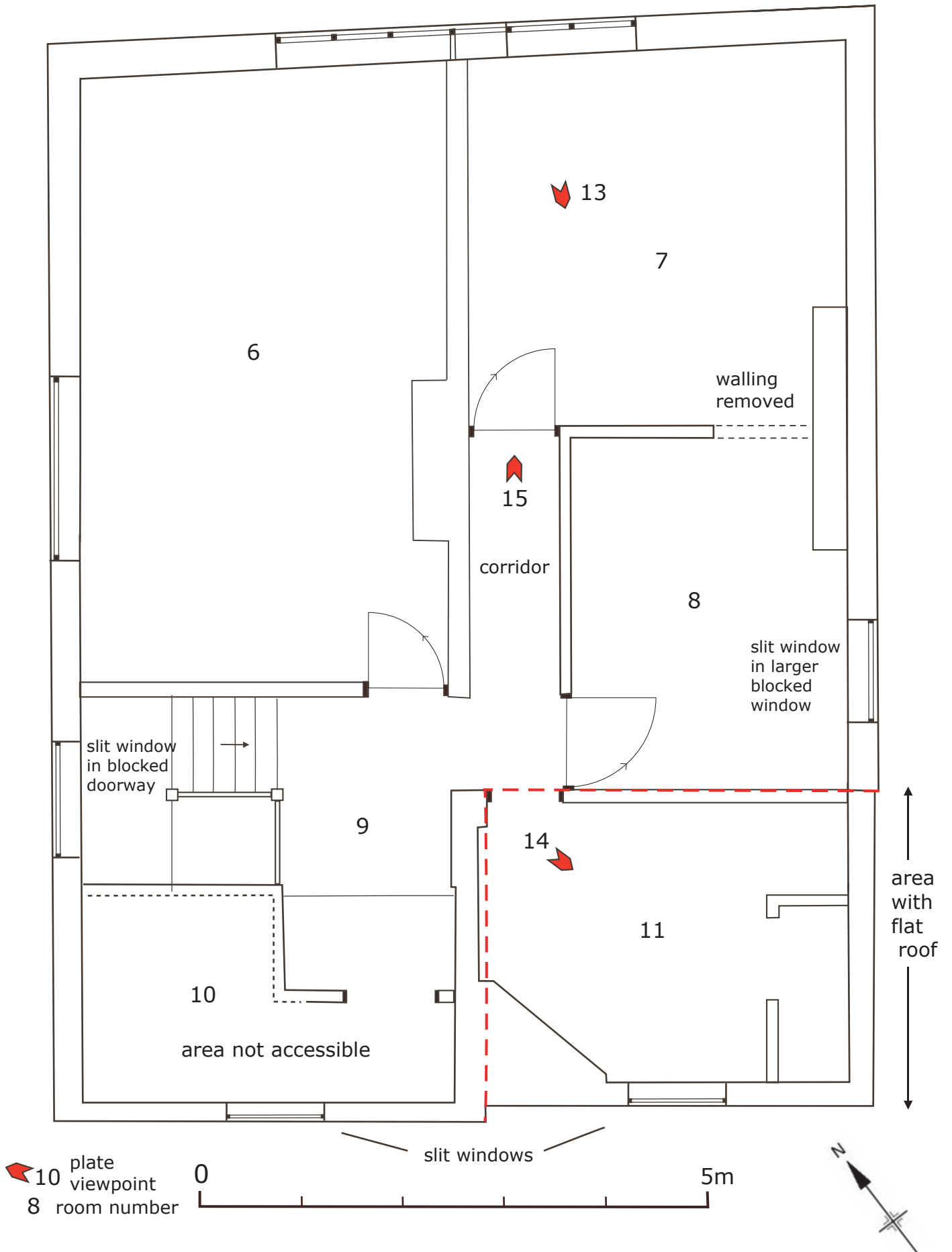


Figure 10: First floor plan of 124 Uttoxeter Road, Longton. Drawn scale 1:50.

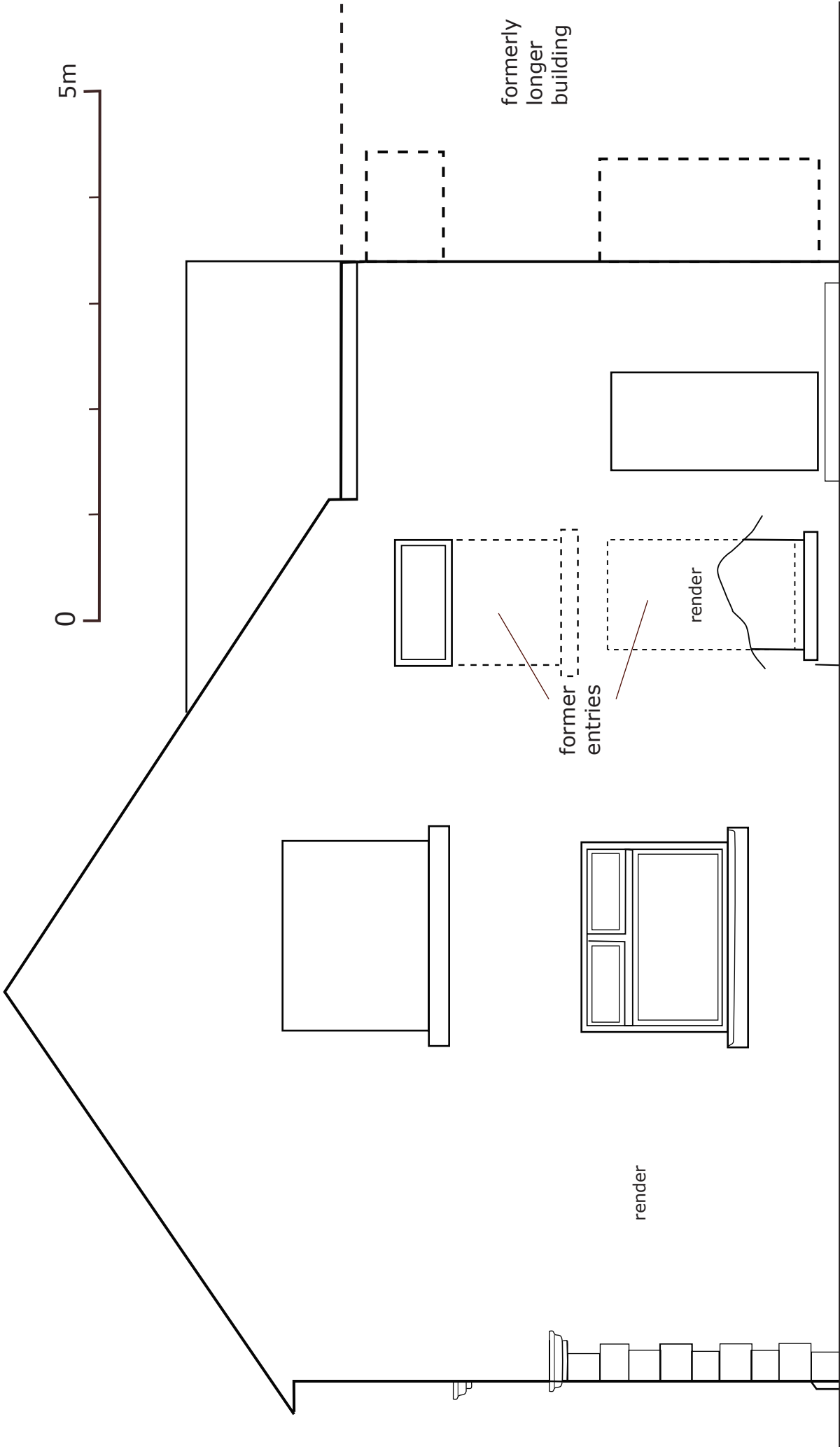


Figure 11: West elevation of 124 Uttoxeter Road, Longton. Drawn scale 1:50.

ILLUSTRATIONS

PLATES



Plates 1 and 2 of 124 Uttoxeter Road, Longton, Staffordshire.

1 (to left) : view of the then named *British Oak* beerhouse, taken at some point during the first decade of the 20th Century.

2 (below): modern view of the same building, when used as an office.





Plate 3: North frontage of 124 Uttoxeter Road, Longton before scaffolding was erected around the building.



Plate 4: North frontage of 124 Uttoxeter Road, Longton with scaffolding obscuring its architectural details.



Plate 5: West elevation of 124 Uttoxeter Road, Longton, with shortened end to right - compare with Plate 2. 1m scale shown.

Plate 6: Detail of window showing to centre in Plate 5. 1m scale shown.



Plate 7: East elevation of 124 Uttoxeter Road, Longton. 1m scale shown.



Plate 8: South elevation of 124 Uttoxeter Road, Longton showing a rebuilt gable end wall to left and a flat-roofed, slightly recessed part to right.



Plate 9: Former industrial building to south, showing to right part of the outline of the gabled roof of the former brew-house at the south end of 124 Uttoxeter Road, Longton.



Plate 10: View looking across Rooms 1A and 1B with panelling on walls showing. 1m scale shown.

Plate 11: Staircase to first floor (Area 3A) and Doorway to space (and a former entry) under the stairs (Area 3B).

Plate 12: Room 2A, showing blocked window (not original) and, to left, remnant of former stack. 1m scale shown.





Plate 13: View on the first floor from Room 7 showing corridor and, to left, where part of the walling was removed for a doorway into Room 8. 1m scale shown.

Plate 14: Room 11, adapted for use as an upstairs kitchen with corner fireplace to right.



Plate 15: View of attic showing stack brickwork and timberwork at the front of the building.

APPENDIX



Appendix: Contact sheets of two black and white films showing views of 124 Uttoxeter Road, Longton, Stoke-on-Trent.