

# **BERNARD GOODWIN**

PELL WALL HALL, PELL WALL, MARKET DRAYTON, SHROPSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BUILDING RECORDING REPORT

**NOVEMBER 2021** 



#### **Wardell Armstrong**

Sir Henry Doulton House, Forge Lane, Etruria, Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 5BD, United Kingdom Telephone: +44 (0)1782 276 700 www.wardell-armstrong.com



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ARCHAEOLOGICAL BUILDING RECORDING REPORT

PREPARED BY:

L Podbury Senior Heritage Consultant

**CHECKED BY:** 

L Goring Associate Director (Heritage)

**APPROVED BY:** 

C Mellor Technical Director

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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In October 2021, Wardell Armstrong LLP (WA) undertook an archaeological building recording equivalent to Historic England Level 3 of the former south-eastern basement and extant vaulted cellar of Pell Wall Hall (Centred on NGR 6799 3317; Fig.1). This was undertaken in advance of the erection of a two storey Soanian style balcony on the south-east facing elevation and the removal of the vaulted basement to provide landscaped amphitheatre courtyard.

Pell Wall Hall is deemed to be of significant historical interest and is a Grade II\* Listed Building (NHLE 1190426). It was designed by prominent architect Sir John Soane and is situated within the Grade II registered park and garden of the same name (NHLE 1001402). Pell Wall Hall represents the last completed domestic house designed by Sir John Soane.

The extent of alteration to the basement has been extensive since the construction of Soane's design between 1822 and 1828 and discerning the chronological development of this area from the extant remains is challenging. It is evident that the alterations to Pell Wall Hall between 1861 and 1880 demolished almost all of the original basement fabric. Of the exposed fabric of the south-eastern elevation, only small patches of original brickwork and potentially the head of the original central segmentally arched entrance survive.

Soane's original vaulted cellar survives as the only remnant of the former range of domestic offices.



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Wardell Armstrong thanks Bernard Goodwin, who commissioned the project and facilitated access to the building and Hawkes Edwards architects for sharing their drawings.

Wardell Armstrong also thanks staff at the Shropshire Archives and Giles Carey of the Shropshire HER for their assistance in researching the building.

The building survey and the documentary research was undertaken by Lorna Goring and Liam Podbury. The report was written by Liam Podbury and edited by Lorna Goring. The figures were produced by Kathren Henry.

The project was managed by Lorna Goring.



## 1 INTRODUCTION

# 1.1 Project Circumstances and Planning Background

- 1.1.1 In October 2021, Wardell Armstrong LLP (WA) undertook an archaeological building recording equivalent to Historic England Level 3 of the former south-eastern basement and extant vaulted cellar of Pell Wall Hall (Centred on NGR SJ 6799 3317; Fig.1). This was undertaken in advance of the erection of a two storey Soanian style balcony on the south-east facing elevation; removal of the vaulted basement to provide landscaped amphitheatre courtyard; and the construction of a garage for four vehicles, incorporating a garden store and workshop (Planning Application Ref: 11/00804/LBC).
- 1.1.2 The programme of recording was commissioned by Bernard Goodwin, owner of the Site, in respect to Condition 5 of the associated planning approval (Shropshire Council 2020). Condition 5 specified that:
  - No development approved by this permission shall commence until a Level 3 survey, as defined in English Heritage's guidance 'Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice') of the interior and exterior of the structure that is to be removed to make way for the new landscaping feature on the south side of the Hall has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Reason: This information is required before development commences to record the historic fabric of the building prior to development.
- 1.1.3 Pell Wall Hall is deemed to be of significant historical interest and is a Grade II\* Listed Building (NHLE 1190426), which was designed by Sir John Soane and situated within the Grade II registered park and garden of the same name (NHLE 1001402).
- 1.1.4 This report outlines the survey undertaken on site and the results of this archaeological building survey.

## 1.2 Planning Context

- 1.2.1 National planning policies on the conservation of the historic environment are set out in the updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which was published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in July 2021. This is supported by National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) which was published in March 2014 (DCLG 2014 & 2019).
- 1.2.2 The policy and guidance documents emphasize that all heritage assets should be conserved 'in a manner appropriate to their significance' (NPPF para 184). Sites of archaeological or cultural heritage significance that are valued components of the



historic environment and merit consideration in planning decisions are grouped as 'heritage assets' and goes on to advise that 'heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource' (NPPF para 189), the conservation of which should be in a manner appropriate to their significance 'so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations' NPPF para 189).

- 1.2.3 The NPPF draws a distinction between designated heritage assets and other remains considered to be of lesser significance; 'great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be; substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, including scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II\* listed buildings and grade I and II\* registered parks and gardens and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional' (NPPF para 200). Therefore, preservation in-situ is the preferred course in relation to such sites unless exceptional circumstances exist.
- 1.2.4 It is normally accepted that non-designated assets will be preserved by record, in accordance with their significance and the magnitude of the harm to or loss of the site as a result of the proposals, to 'avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposals' (NPPF para 195).
- 1.2.5 The purpose of the building recording is to comply with requirements of paragraph 205 of the NPPF (2021) which requires 'developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact' (NPPF, 2021).



## 2 METHODOLOGY

## 2.1 Standards and guidance

- 2.1.1 The Archaeological Building Recording of the south-eastern structure of Pell Wall Hall was undertaken following the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures (CIfA 2019).
- 2.1.2 A Level 3 Archaeological Building Recording, as described by Historic England, is an analytical record, and will comprise an introductory description followed by a systematic account of the building's origins, development and use. The record will include an account of the evidence on which the analysis has been based, allowing the validity of the record to be re-examined in detail. It will also include all drawn and photographic records that may be required to illustrate the building's appearance and structure and to support historical analysis (Historic England 2016: 26).

# 2.2 **Documentary Research**

- 2.2.1 Documentary Research on the Site was undertaken in October 2021 by Lorna Goring. The primary and secondary sources were derived from the Shropshire Historic Environment Record (HER), Shropshire Archives, as well as from online sources including the Sir John Soane's Museum Collection, the Archaeology Data Service, and the National Heritage List for England (NHLE).
- 2.2.2 The aims of research were to provide a context to and understanding of the historical development of Pell Wall Hall, with particular attention to those areas to be affected by development.

## 2.3 Level 3 Building Recording

- 2.3.1 The purpose of the building recording is to comply with requirements of condition 5 of listed building consent approval reference 11/00804/LBC and paragraph 205 of the NPPF (2019) which requires 'developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact' (NPPF, 2021).
- 2.3.2 The building recording comprised an internal and external observation of the areas of Pell Wall Hall that are to be subjected to development to produce a photographic, drawn and written record. Photographs were taken, with a graduated scale, in digital format, of all external elevations and internal rooms (where safe to access), including structural architectural details, details of fixtures and fittings, and more general views showing the structure in its existing context. In summary, the photographic survey



## includes:

- A general view or views of Pell Wall Hall (in its wider setting or landscape);
- The external appearance of the former basement and extant vaulted cellar;
- Where possible, the overall appearance of the extant vaulted cellar;
- Any external or internal detail, structural or decorative, which is relevant to the building's design, development and use with scale where appropriate.

## 2.3.3 The written record comprises:

- A contents list and a list of illustrations or figures;
- A site location plan, related to the national grid;
- The dates on which the project was undertaken;
- A description of the methodology employed;
- A note on the statutory designation;
- Written description of the area to be developed, including form and development;
- The project OASIS reference number;
- Copies of historic maps, drawings, views or photographs illustrating the development of the building (with permission of owners or copyright holders where relevant);
- Plans at appropriate scales and inclusive of co-ordinates;
- Full bibliographic and other references, or a list of the sources consulted.

## 2.4 Reporting and Project Archive

- 2.4.1 A digital copy of the report will be provided to the client and the Conservation Officer within the Historic Environment Team of Shropshire Council. A digital copy will be deposited with the Shropshire HER.
- 2.4.2 Wardell Armstrong LLP supports the **O**nline **A**cces**S** to the **I**ndex of Archaeological Investigation**S** (OASIS) project (http://www.oasis.ac.uk). This project aims to provide an on-line index and access to the extensive and expanding body of grey literature, created as a result of developer-funded archaeological work. As a result, details of the results of this project will be made available by WA as a part of this national project. The OASIS reference for the project is: **wardella2-502831.**



## 3 BACKGROUND

### 3.1 Location and Modern Context

- 3.1.1 In October 2021 WA undertook an archaeological building recording equivalent to Historic England Level 3 of the former south-eastern basement and extant vaulted cellar of Pell Wall Hall (Centred on NGR 6799 3317; Fig.1 & 2). The building currently functions as a single private residence. Pell Wall Hall is Grade II\* listed and was first granted this status in 1962 (NHLE 1190426).
- 3.1.2 Pell Wall Hall is located approximately 850m to the south-east of the southern edge of Market Drayton, beyond the River Tern, and is situated immediately to the west of Newport Road (A529).
- 3.1.3 The Site comprises a well-proportioned neo-classical country house, to the rear of which is the shell of the former south-eastern basement and an extant vaulted cellar (Fig.3-5). It is situated in the south-eastern corner of the expansive (*c*.60ha) early 19<sup>th</sup> century gardens, pleasure grounds, kitchen gardens and park of the Pell Wall estate. Parkland and gardens envelop Pell Wall Hall (Fig.6), with the northern elevation of the building looking down upon an open area of parkland, with views of Market Drayton beyond.
- 3.1.4 Above the extant vaulted cellar at ground level is a relatively sizable concrete-surfaced area, which extends to a hedgerow that bounds the site to the south. Beyond the southern hedgerow is the independently Grade II Listed stable block and coach house (NHLE 1366843), formerly named the Court House, which was likewise designed by Sir John Soane and is contemporaneous with Pell Wall Hall.

### 3.2 Sir John Soane

- 3.2.1 Soane's idiosyncratic style makes his work distinctive and has earned him enduring admiration. At the age of fifteen he began working for George Dance Junior in London, who was himself a city surveyor, and three years later attended the Royal Academy Schools, where he received a number of awards for his work (Darley 1999). He travelled in the late 1770s to Rome, there meeting a number of influential people, including Frederick Harvey, the Bishop of Derry and laid the foundations of his later success.
- 3.2.2 It was not until Soane worked on William Pitt's house that his career began in earnest. With Pitt's backing he subsequently gained the Bank of England surveying contract and before long added a number of prestigious commissions including works at Buckingham Palace, the Dulwich Picture Gallery and Wimpole Hall (Darley 1999).



3.2.3 Pell Wall Hall represents the last completed domestic house designed by Sir John Soane. As noted by the Pell Wall Hall Preservation Trust (hereafter PWPT), Pell Wall Hall is uniquely significant as the architect deliberately set out to design and record the building as his 'swan song' (Shropshire Council 2020: 3). Indeed, Soane wrote that "in composing the plans for this villa, my best energies have been exerted intending that when it was completed, my professional labours should cease" (Soane 1828).

### 3.3 Pell Wall Hall: Historic Context

3.3.1 The history of Pell Wall Hall broadly comprises four distinct phases of development: the original structure designed by Soane and constructed between 1822 and 1828; the Victorian extension and redevelopment between 1861 and 1880; the Edwardian extension and redevelopment between 1901 and 1917; and the subsequent period of decay and reconstitution thereafter.

# 3.4 Soane's Original Design: 1822-1828

- In 1820, iron merchant Purney Sillitoe purchased the then 338-acre Pell Wall estate for £5005 from his father-in-law (Jenkins 2003). Sillitoe approached Soane in early 1822 about designing a country villa to be constructed on the estate, and Soane produced preliminary drawings for Pell Wall Hall in early March (Helmer 2011). Soane had originally estimated that, not including the outbuildings and the service wing, the project would cost £10,000. Work on site began in August 1822 and was carried out by John and John Jr Carline of Shrewsbury. The materials used in the construction, according to Soane (1828: 43), "...are of the best and most durable kind, the construction as substantial as possible and the interior finishings and fittings keep pace with the exterior". Construction eventually amounted to £20,976 due to costs related to the service wing attached to the south-east, in the area subject to the building recording, as well as the various outbuildings built across the estate.
- 3.4.2 The appearance of the building as it emerged throughout the construction and design process to 1828 is recorded in a series of plans, elevations and watercolour views that were commissioned by Soane. The service wing or 'domestic offices', particularly those rooms within the basement, however, are somewhat underrepresented in the documentary sources and within later accounts or analyses of the building. This underrepresentation may reflect the overall lower status of this this part of the building.
- 3.4.3 The prospective plans created by Soane in 1822 do not depict the southern domestic offices, but do depict the principal basement and alludes to the potential for a southeastern domestic range (Appx.1.1). By 1828 Soane's plans depict the addition of a



large wing of domestic offices, which likely meant the arrangement and function of the basement rooms of the principal structure changed in response to the additional service accommodation (Appx.1.2).

- 3.4.4 Topographical drawings of the site in October of 1824 by draughtsman J.M.Gandy depict the view from the northeast, showing the entrance façade, an office chimney, and the outline of the southern service wing behind some shrubbery (Fig.A). Detailed drawings of the house's exterior dated to September of 1828 show the completed villa and its relatively substantial domestic offices, from the northeast (Fig.B) and the southwest (Fig.C). An early photograph of Pell Wall Hall, dating to before 1872, also gives us a small glimpse of the former service wing and large chimney from the southwest (Fig.D).
- 3.4.5 The plans and drawings record a large wing of domestic offices that was separate from the main house, with a small link providing access at the eastern corner. The wing comprised a pair of single-storey offices, with basements below, in addition to a tall, central, chimney stack. The southern element of the office visible on the sketches would have been situated above the vaulted cellar, while the northern element occupied much of the area above the extant 'void' of the former basement.
- 3.4.6 The offices on the ground floor consisted of three primary rooms, the southernmost of which had two large hearths and probably served as a kitchen (Appx.1.3). The rooms were separated by internal walls and linked, with the links arranged around the top of a staircase that led down to the basement and to a covered passage leading to the kitchen entrance. The parts of the principal floor of the southern wing painted with feint wash on an 1828 plan depict retaining walls that surround areas open to the basement.





Fig. A: Topographical drawing dated to October 1824 (© Sir John Soane's Museum)

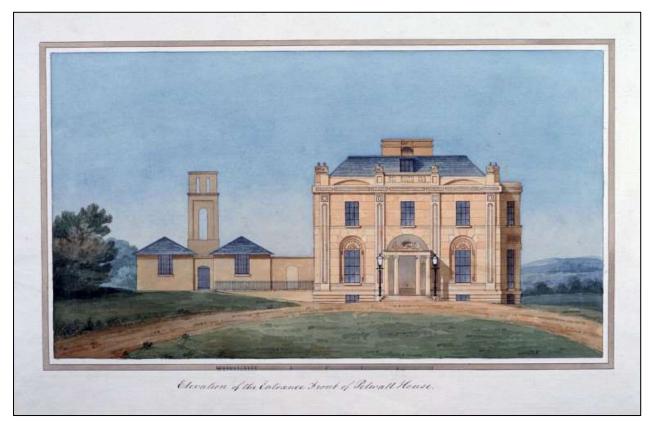


Fig. B: Record drawing dated to September 1828, view from the northeast (© Sir John Soane's Museum)



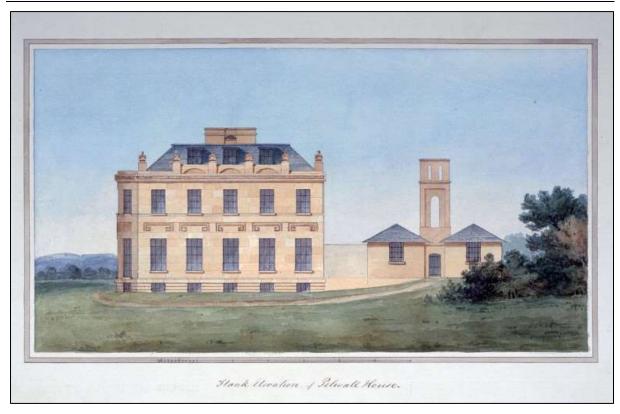


Fig. C: Record drawing dated to September 1828, view from the southwest (© Sir John Soane's Museum)



Fig. D: Pre-1872 photograph of Pell Wall Hall (PWPT 1993: Vol.1)



# 3.5 Victorian Extension and Redevelopment: 1861-1880

- 3.5.1 In the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century, predominantly between 1861 and 1880, Pell Wall Hall was extensively modified by Martin Harcourt Griffin. The extent of this phase of development is clear when observing the plans associated with 1891 sales particulars (Appx.1.4). Significantly, in addition to considerable alteration to the original structure, the original service wing and chimney were demolished. A considerable extension was built southwards replacing the service wing to create to large dining and drawing rooms, with bedrooms at upper level and services below. The building was likewise extended eastwards, where a sizable and somewhat incongruous wing was added, encompassing a billiard room and conservatory. Photographs prior to subsequent Edwardian works depict the Victorian southern extension, which although somewhat axial, extended beyond the original plan form of the principal hall structure (Fig.E and F). While a photograph of the south-east elevation prior to its demolition shows the congruence of design details, though in a highly dilapidated state (Fig.G).
- 3.5.2 Close examination of the historic photographs also suggest that a passage was present at basement level which may have provided access to the original vaulted cellar; originally beyond a shrubbery border (Fig.E) and then a stone barrier (Fig.F), before eventually being covered over (Fig.G). A photograph taken during the demolition of the Victorian extension, looking towards the northeast, appears to show that the passage was accessed via an arched door from the basement of the Victorian eastern wing (Fig.H). Later surveys also appear to confirm this (Appx.1.6). The photograph depicts the demolished external wall of the Victorian extension, beyond which was the passageway and the northern wall of Soane's original vaulted cellar.
- 3.5.3 The walls of the southern extension were built of brick with a Grinshill stone facing, which was consistent with Soane's work, though with frogged bricks and a lime mortar of differing colour and quality (PWPT 1993). External masonry from the former service wing and southern elevation were likely re-used in the external masonry walls of the Victorian extension. A 1993 historic building recording of the southern extension identified that the primary spans between the south-eastern wall of Soane's original structure and the Victorian façade utilised riveted iron beams in their construction; timber joists were used to span between the iron beams (PWPT 1993).





Fig. E: Pre-1912 photograph of the Victorian extension (Pitt 1977)



Fig. F: Pre demolition photograph of the Victorian extension (Shropshire Archives PH/P/3/4)





Fig.G: A 1992 photograph of the derilict Victorian extension (Shropshire SMR Slide Storage) - showng the south east elevation and later Edwardian wing adjoing perpendicular. Evidence of the covered passageway (*Confer para 3.5.2*)



Fig.H: A 1997 photograph of the demolition programme (PWPT 1993), with the probable access to the passageway highlighted by the author.



## 3.6 Edwardian Extension and Redevelopment: 1901-1917

- 3.6.1 Further alterations to the site took place between 1901 and 1917 under the direction of James Munro Walker. During this period, as recorded within the sales particulars of 1920, the billiards room was converted to a smoking room and the conservatory demolished and replaced with a swimming pool (Appx.1.5). Although the Edwardian alterations to Soane's original building were relatively limited compared to those commissioned by Martin Harcourt Griffin, the construction of extensions to the east and a 'canopy' to the west of the southern Victorian extension (Fig.I), disrupted Soane's strongly axial layout. If they occurred to any extent, alterations in the basement of the southern Victorian extension, were not recorded.
- 3.6.2 A historic building survey plan of the structure in the 1990's, prior to demolition, produced a schematic plan of the basement level during the Edwardian period (Appx.1.6). The area of the southern extension comprised a laundry and a partly tiled kitchen divided by a passageway, mirroring the drawing and dining room on the ground floor. Appended to the laundry was an external sunken yard which, according to the later demolition plans, was accessed via Victorian or Edwardian external steps (Appx.1.7). It also notes that Soane's original vaulted cellar functioned as a wine cellar, accessed via a roof-lit passage linked to the eastern wing.

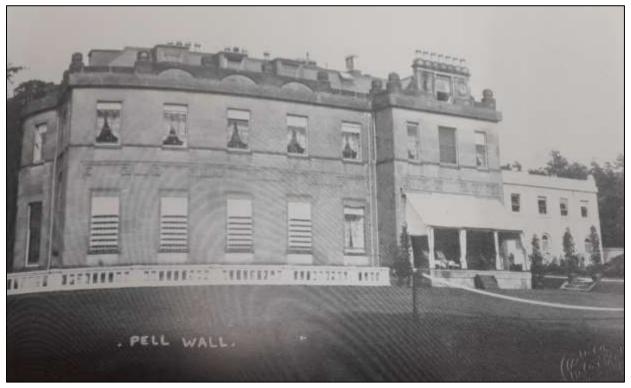


Fig.I: A c.1930 photograph of the western elevation following Edwardian alteration (Morris and Morris 1989)



# 3.7 Later Decay and Reconstitution

- 3.7.1 James Munro Walker lived at Pell Wall Hall until 1917, and the property remained in private ownership until it was purchased by The Brothers of Christian Instruction in 1928. The building functioned as a school until 1962 and subsequently housed the Silhouette underwear and swimwear company for a year while its factory roof was repaired. The hall was then purchased by Ronald Rolf in 1965 and fell into disrepair, with a public inquiry finding that it was occupied for only six weeks across a twenty-three year period (Worsley 1988). Successive applications to demolish Pell Wall Hall by the owner were rejected by North Shropshire District Council. In 1986 Pell Wall Hall was severely damaged by a fire that burned for some three days, leaving the structure as a roofless shell.
- 3.7.2 Following the fire, North Shropshire District Council issued a compulsory purchase order after a repairs notice was rejected, and it was subsequently sold it to the PWPT. During the 1990's the PWPT was responsible for the spending of over one million pounds of public money on Pell Wall Hall. All post-1828 additions and alterations were removed, and the building was restored, as far as possible, to Soane's original design (Fig.J). Plans of the basement dated to 1995, associated with the restoration of the building by the Pell Wall Hall Preservation, shows what structural remains were demolished or retained during the associated restoration and the period to which they belonged (Appx.1.7).

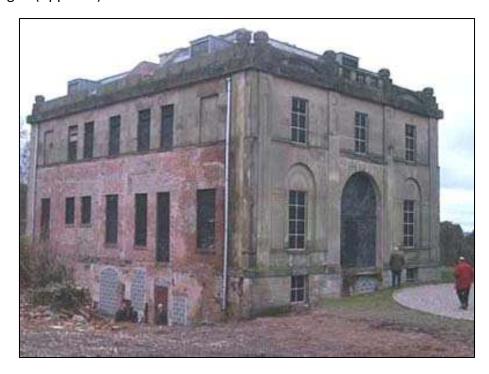


Fig.J: The south-eastern elevation c.2000 (TSCHR 2018).



### 4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BUILDING SURVEY RESULTS

### 4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The archaeological building recording was undertaken on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2021. The parts of Pell Wall Hall that were subject to the programme of recording are identified within Figs.3-4. The descriptions should be read alongside the photographic record included as Appendix 2 and Figs.6-8. A phased elevation of existing fabric and plan of the cellar are produced in Fig.9 and Fig.10, respectively.

# 4.2 **Principal Structure**

- 4.2.1 Pell Wall Hall, which sits upon a slightly raised terrace overlooking parkland and the town of Market Drayton, is a relatively small country house or 'villa' of neo-classical design (Plate 1). It is a square villa with two storeys, in addition to an attic and basement. All of the elevations, excepting the southern elevation, which is subject to the recording, are faced with grey sandstone ashlar from the local Grinshill quarries. It has a mansard roof with a decorative and urned parapet. The north-eastern elevation is surrounded by incised pilaster strips and adorned with moulded cornice and frieze with incised Greek key decoration. The ground floor windows have incised and recessed arches that surround and flank either side of the lonic portico.
- 4.2.2 The principal elevation is of 3 bays. The north-western elevation is similar to that to the east, except for a central and full-height bow, and is of 1:3:1 bays. The southwestern elevation looks over the garden and is of 5 bays.
- 4.2.3 The south-eastern elevation will be described in more detail below.



Plate 1: The north-eastern elevation of Pell Wall Hall (DP 1).



### 4.3 The Former Basement

- 4.3.1 The area subject to the archaeological building recording comprises the former southeastern basement; an area that has witnessed extensive redevelopment since the construction of Soane's original range of domestic offices (Plate 2).
- 4.3.2 The south-eastern external wall of the principal structure attests to the extent of these redevelopments, with a relatively limited amount of original material surviving.
- 4.3.3 The basement area is bound to the north-east and south-west by a modern retaining wall of blockwork construction, which imitate Soane's original curved retaining wall design (Appx.1.2) and may be situated in the same location. The south-eastern side of the former basement is bounded by a wall of mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century brickwork. The wall is pierced by an arched doorway positioned towards the eastern corner that gives access to a vaulted cellar structure.



Plate 2: The former southern basement (DP 8).

### 4.4 The Southern Elevation

4.4.1 Below the parapet, the uppermost level of the southern elevation, like the remainder of the building, is faced with sandstone ashlar (Plate 3). It is pierced by four symmetrically arranged six-over-six sash windows, which are flanked by two further blocked-up windows of similar size. The former windows have been infilled with stone congruent with the ashlar used elsewhere.



- 4.4.2 Below, at ground floor level, the elevation is of redbrick in Flemish bond. The brickwork has, however, been painted in a colour similar to the stone at upper level.
- 4.4.3 The elevation is pierced by a central doorway, which is currently accessed via a raised walkway supported by scaffolding over the basement void. Either side of the door is a pair of modern six-over-six sliding sash windows, which appear to have been installed to reinstate the symmetrical aesthetic of the elevation. A photograph taken following the demolition of the southern Victorian range shows the former arrangement of the fenestrations (Fig.J). This demonstrates that the central door was previously a window, and that the second window from the east replaced a doorway that provided access at ground floor level. The two windows immediately to the west of the central door have been enlarged, while the easternmost and westernmost windows do not appear to have been altered since the 1990s.



Plate 3: The south-eastern elevation (DP 4).

4.4.4 At upper level and ground floor level, the elevation is framed by decorated pilasters that do not extend to basement level. Dividing the ground floor level and basement level is a mixed string course of headers and stretchers of varying types of brick, likely representing several late or modern phases of alteration. This brickwork course post-dates surviving elements of stone supports for ceiling/floor joists which, in places, appear to have damaged the original brickwork above during installation. This evidence is in concurrance with the description provided by PWPT (1993) of timber joists being used to span the southern Victorian extension.



- 4.4.5 Below, the extent of alteration is extensive, and discerning the chronological development of this area from the extant remains is challenging. At the time of surveying, the elevation was pierced by a central arched doorway that was flanked by two modern windows on either side.
- 4.4.6 To the west of the central arched doorway the two windows have been installed in areas of former fenestrations. The blocked-up areas below the windows are of brickwork and cement mortar (Plate 4). The infilling brickwork, which is made up of bricks evidently of 19<sup>th</sup> century date, is set in a grey cement mortar. The westernmost window appears to correlate with a doorway that formerly gave access to an enclosed cupboard or small pantry from the original kitchen, as shown on the 1828 basement plan (Appx.1.2). It is probable that the original doorway was first infilled during the construction of the Victorian extension or during the Edwardian alteration, though it is probable that this section of brickwork had been re-built relatively recently. The window immediately to the east, like its western counterpart, retained a similar blocked-up area below. The blocked-up fenestration likewise corresponds with a doorway recorded on Soane's plans dating to 1828 (Appx.1.2), though the function of the room it gave access to from the original kitchen is unclear.
- 4.4.7 Remnants of a brick wall that once extended to the south, forming the probable cupboard of small pantry, is also evident in-between the two modern windows (Plate 5). The floor in the western part of the basement has been concreted over however, meaning that any surviving footings or lower sections of demolished walls are no longer visible.
- 4.4.8 Immediately to the west of the central arched doorway, straight joints in the brickwork are evident which correlate with a slight recess in the wall noted within Soane's plans of the basement (Plate 6). The bricks utilised to block-up the recess are not like those used to infill the former doors to the west and were likely laid during the Victorian phase of development. The bricks were set in a lime mortar in a common or American bond, and exhibited evidence for skintling which is typical of bricks produced in the early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The recessed area was partially disturbed by a further fenestration that was likely blocked with modern materials during the works to Pell Wall Hall in the 1990s. It may have had an extractive function related to the kitchen that once lay beyond.





Plate 4: The western section of the south-eastern elevation (DP 11).





Plate 5: Remnants of an original demolished wall – left (DP 16).

Plate 6: The infilled brick recess of the south-eastern elevation – right (DP 14).



- 4.4.9 The elevation is pierced centrally by a brick segmental arch that leads to a recessed entrance via four heavily worn stone steps (Plate 7). Sections of plaster adhering to the brickwork of the arch survive, and at lower level, a formed skirting that was once painted is preserved in parts extending up the steps.
- 4.4.10 The recessed area has been largely modernised, though Flemish bond brickwork is exposed on its north-eastern side. The stud wall dividing the recessed area and the principal building is a modern addition; Soane's original 1828 basement plans, and later plans, do not depict this partition.

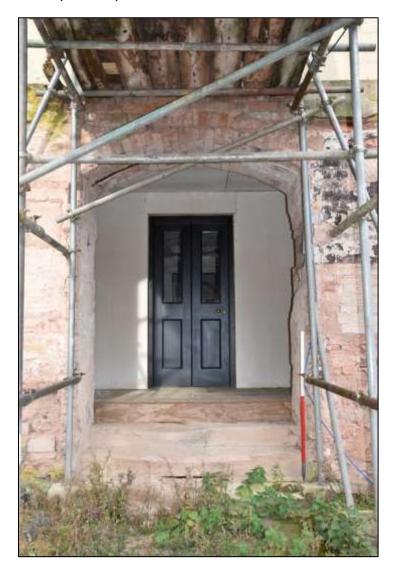


Plate 7: The central segmentally arched entrance (DP 19).

4.4.11 Extending to the south from the arched entrance at ground level are linear arrangements of brickwork, which may represent the demolished walls of the Victorian or Edwardian passageway between the former kitchen and laundry room.



4.4.12 To the east of the central entrance further infilled fenestrations are evident (Plate 8). Notably, a small section of likely original Flemish brickwork survives, though now heavily scarred to receive render, immediately to the east of the central entrance. Further to the east is a blocked-up doorway with a segmental brick head, which has been infilled with modern cement blocks. Soane's original plans of the basement record this fenestration as a window. The pre-demolition plans appear to suggest that the doorway provided direct access to the staircase constructed during the Victorian period, which led to the ground floor corridor.



Plate 8: The eastern section of the south-eastern elevation (DP 25).

4.4.13 To the east of the aforementioned blocked-up door is a modern window, beneath which is a further cement block infilled area (Plate 9). This infilled doorway, significantly, appears to correlate with the linkage between the main villa and the original service wing at basement level. This doorway was positioned to provide access to Soane's original laundry room and to the domestic staircase up to the ground floor. According to records produced prior to the demolition of the southern Victorian wing, this doorway continued to be used into the Edwardian period to provide access to the servery. This doorway appears to once have had a segmental arch, like that to the west, and was clearly still in use following the demolition of the southern Victorian wing (Fig.J).







Plate 9: The infilled door of the demolished linkage at basement level – left (DP 27).

Plate 10: Remnants of an original wall at ground level – right (DP 31).

- 4.4.14 Between the two modern windows a relatively short blocked-up doorway with a stone lintel was also present. This doorway was not recorded on any of Soane's plans and, due to the lack of plans of the basement dating to the Victorian and Edwardian periods, it is not clear to which phase of activity it belonged.
- 4.4.15 The easternmost window correlates to that which lit the basement laundry room on Soane's original plan. The installation of the modern window and the amalgamation of materials used in this area mean that a clear infilled area is not visible. It is however probable that Soane's original window was blocked-up during the construction of the Victorian range. The brickwork immediately beneath the modern window, although now heavily scarred, is of Flemish bond and appears to be original.
- 4.4.16 Significantly, above the short, infilled doorway are the remnants of a demolished wall that corresponds with the eastern wall of the domestic linkage at lower level. Remnants of a wall survive at floor level in this area and appear to be aligned with the former wall evident along the southern elevation (Plate 10). Further preserved brickwork at ground level may also correlate with the north-eastern corner of the northern service range, though it is possible that it is of later date.



4.4.17 The remnants of the original western retaining wall may underly a section of scored rendering in the north-western corner of the basement area, which was likely applied to provide a relatively flat surface for subsequent layers of render. The proposed location of the original retaining wall also aligns with the end of the plinth. Overlying the square-scored render at lower level was a further layer of render that appears to have been whitewashed. A significant portion of the potentially original brickwork has been keyed so that render could be directly applied to the surface. This indicates that the entire western section of the southern elevation was rendered during the Victorian and Edwardian periods, when this area was utilised as a laundry or utility room.



Plate 11: Potential remnants of the original retaining wall and later render (DP 15)

4.4.18 The brickwork in the east has also been keyed and was likewise rendered at upper level. At lower level, however, the eastern section of this elevation was tiled. A small section of glazed cream wall tile, with reddish brown tiled skirting below, survives (Plate 12). Although most of the tiles are lost, the extant tiles adhere to a horizontally scratched cement adhesive that survives at lower level elsewhere. The tiles, which would have adorned the former kitchen, are typical of those produced in the late 19th to early 20th century.





Plate 12: The surviving tiles of the former kitchen (DP 34)

### 4.5 The Vaulted Cellar

- 4.5.1 As noted above, the south-eastern side of the former basement is bounded by a wall of mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century brickwork. The brickwork is set in lime using an 'American' or English garden wall bond, with six courses of stretchers for every course of headers (Plate 13). This wall was built during the construction of the southern Victorian range and formed the southern side of a passageway leading from the eastern wing (Fig.L). Interestingly, this wall was built as a brick 'skin' appended to the northern wall of the passageway linking the two ranges of Soane's original domestic offices. This formation is evident from ground floor level (Plate 14) and can be seen through a missing air vent grille. The construction of the wall has created a significant cavity area, measuring approximately 3.50m in width. The passageway linking Soane's two domestic ranges, in addition to a relatively slim area of unknown function, is now completely enclosed. A series of ornamental, metal vents along the Victorian wall facilitate air circulation of the cavity.
- 4.5.2 The wall is pierced by a segmentally arched, and recessed, entrance with three stone steps that lead to a pair of double doors. It appears to have been constructed to emulate the original arched entrance of the south-eastern elevation.





Plate 13: The Victorian wall of the vaulted cellar (DP 36)



Plate 14: The Victorian wall and Soane's original (DP 41)



- 4.5.3 The recessed entrance dates to the Victorian phase of activity, with its eastern and western walls enclosing Soane's passageway. Beyond the Victorian recessed area, where the passage widens slightly, the brickwork changes and is set in Flemish bond. This change delineates where Soane's original cellar structure begins (Plate 15). The widening of the passage, and the change in brickwork, also coincides with the northern edge of one of the barrelled vaults.
- 4.5.4 Two brick barrel vaults, orientated on a north-east to south-west alignment, form the cellar corridor at ceiling level. The edges of the vaults have been reinforced with I-Beam metal girders throughout the cellar. A heavily corroded metal bar of unclear function hangs from the ceiling and extends along the entire length of the corridor. At the southern end of the cellar corridor is a small chute-like structure, which may have actually functioned as a light well; the feature is lined on all sides with cream glazed bricks which would have enhanced light reflection into the area.

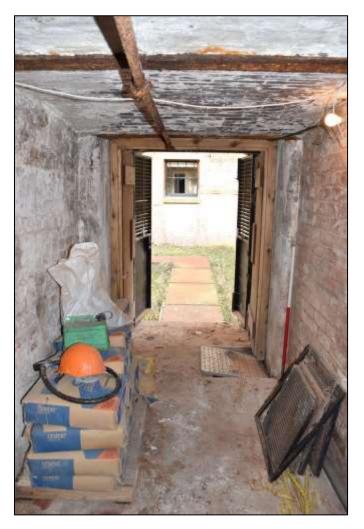


Plate 15: The corridor of the vaulted cellar (DP 45)



- 4.5.5 Leading off of the corridor is a short and narrow linkage, the northern side of which is formed by bullnose brickwork. The brickwork of the southern side, which likely once also utilised bullnose bricks, appears to have been latterly re-built, or possibly bolstered with new bricks to give additional structural support. Within the linkage a pegged and chamfered door frame survives, though the associated door is no longer present.
- 4.5.6 Beyond the short linkage is the primary vaulted cellar unit. Five brick barrel vaults, orientated on a contrasting north-west to south-east alignment to that of the access passage, form the ceiling. I-Beam metal girders have likewise been used in this unit, though they appear to have been adorned with hooks of unclear function in places. The bricks used in the construction of the vault appear vitrified and are somewhat covered in efflorescence. Differing from the brickwork of the corridor and perhaps to better counteract the considerable lateral forces, the walls of the main cellar unit are laid in stretcher bond.

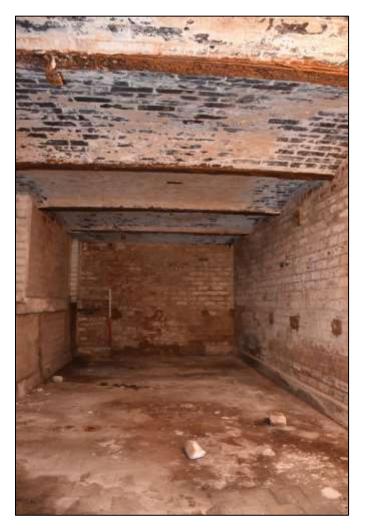


Plate 16: The barrel-vaulted cellar (DP 50)



- 4.5.7 Three further chutes or light wells, like that described above, are present along the southern wall (Plate 17). A wood based light fixture survives centrally along the northern wall. Several bricks have also been inserted with incongruent mortar along the same course of the northern wall, potentially infilling former grated vents.
- 4.5.8 Two protruding brickwork features are present at either end of the southern window that may have been supported shelving. This interpretation is also evidenced by marks alluding to the former presence of horizontal timbers, which may have supported the shelving along the span of the southern wall (Plate 18).
- 4.5.9 The main cellar unit is floored with square quarry tiles. Similar tiles appear to have adorned the southern wall above the hypothesised shelf, perhaps functioning as a 'splashback'. The evidence suggests the tiles were used solely as skirting along the northern wall.



Plate 17: The cellar chutes or light wells – left (DP 52)

Plate 18: Remnants of the former cellar shelf – right (DP 53)



### 5 DISCUSSION

- 5.1.1 The extent of alteration to the basement has been extensive since the construction of Soane's design and discerning the chronological development of this area from the extant remains is challenging. It is evident that the alterations to Pell Wall Hall between 1861 and 1880 demolished almost all of the original fabric of the basement. Of the exposed fabric of the south-eastern elevation, only small patches of original brickwork and potentially the central segmentally arched entrance appear to survive.
- 5.1.2 Soane's vaulted cellar survives as the only discernible remnant of the former range of domestic offices. It is also possible that the passageway enclosing the vaulted cellar along its north west survives although this has been enclosed by the later Victorian brickwall.
- 5.1.3 The demolition of Soane's original domestic offices, and subsequent expansion during the Victorian and Edwardian periods, are consistent with architectural developments in relation to layout. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century the early emphasis on architectural symmetry and axial plans diminished. New ranges were added that, while architecturally harmonising with the main house, disturbed the original layouts. The later Victorian and Edwardian extensions certainly disturbed Soane's axial layout, which were so typical of his neoclassical designs.
- 5.1.4 The identification of the original doorway and former wall of the servants' linkage at basement level is particularly noteworthy. The 'circulation' of servants was particularly important within the Victorian country house, with back staircases, servant corridors, bell systems, and 'links between house and [servant] wing' being commonplace (Franklin 1981). These spatial forms have the potential to further our understanding of household dynamics and social relations in the past.
- 5.1.5 A series of highly detailed plans, elevations and watercolours were commissioned by Sloane to record his 'swan song'; nonetheless, there is a notable paucity of records detailing the domestic offices at basement level. Victorian and Edwardian records concerning the domestic offices were likewise limited, even within the sales particulars of 1891 and of 1920. Subsequent investigations and surveys of Pell Wall Hall similarly under-represent the basement in their analysis and narrative.
- 5.1.6 This lack of information on the servant quarters of Pell Wall Hall is perhaps unsurprising. As Franklin (1975: 211) noted, 19<sup>th</sup> century architectural periodicals detailed newly built country houses with comprehensive ground plans and sketches. One was not, however, meant to see the servants' wing or working part of the house, which were either invisible or positioned inconspicuously behind bushes much like



in J.M.Gandy's 1826 paintings of Pell Wall Hall. Contrastingly however, the large central chimney appears to have been designed to have an aesthetic presence, although still clearly subservient. Such country houses were an important symbol of status but also something of a stage, concerned with how they appeared to visitors (Christie 2009: 29). The lack of information on the domestic offices in subsequent investigations of Pell Wall Hall is likewise not wholly unexpected; the field of country house research is vast and varied, however studies of servants' quarters are only rarely and selectively included (Keithan 2020).

5.1.7 The survival of sections of wall tile and skirting tile and rendering provide evidence as to the later functions of the cellar space.



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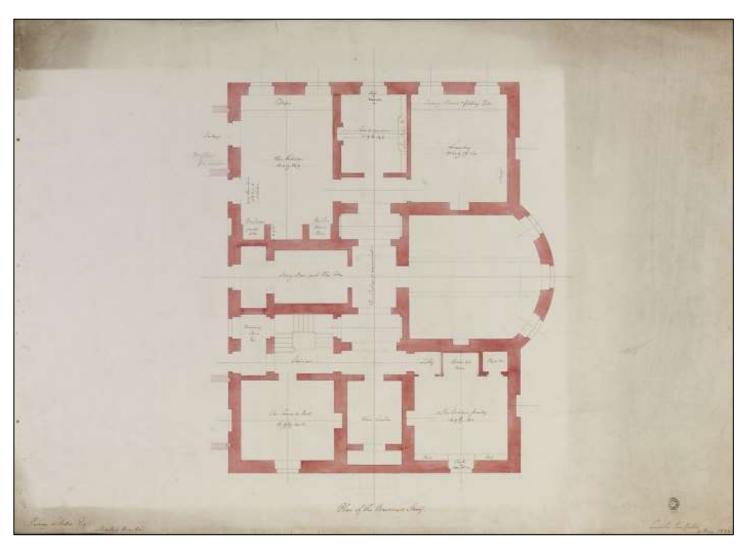
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# **APPENDICES**

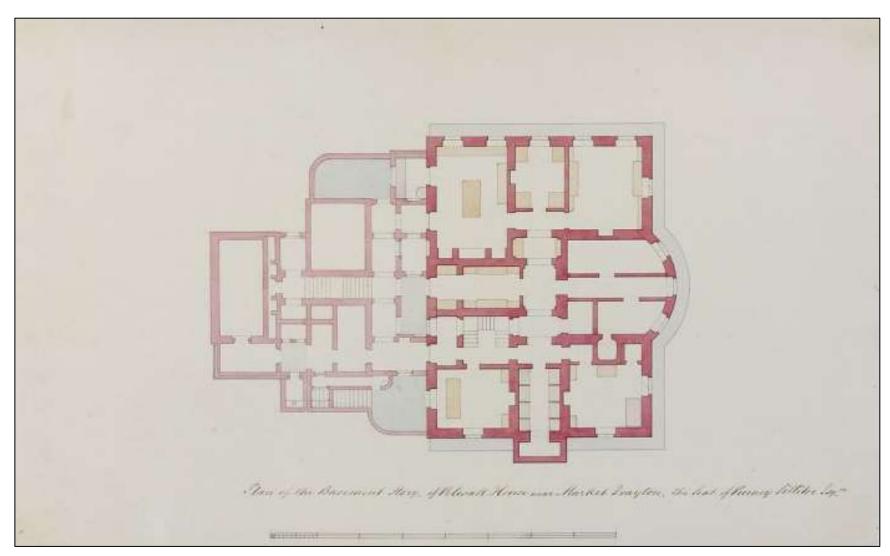


# **APPENDIX 1: HISTORIC PLANS**



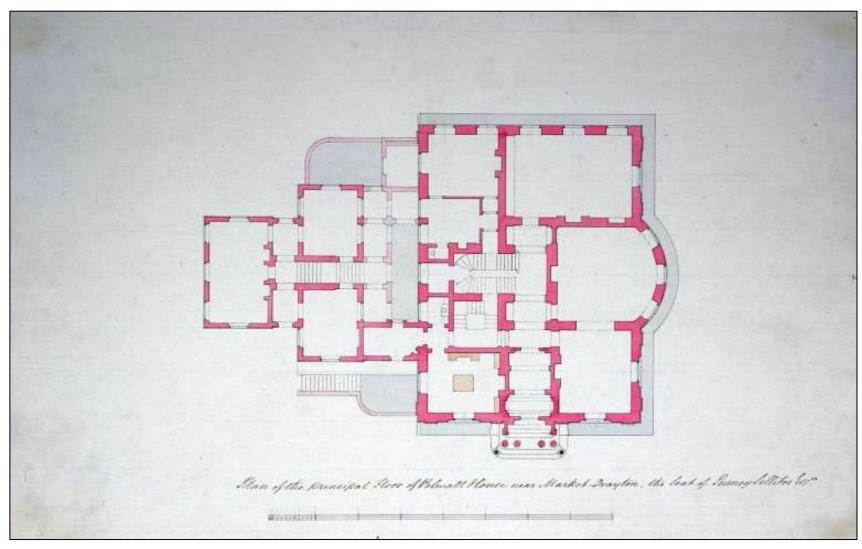
1. Presentation drawing dated to 31st May 1822 (© Sir John Soane's Museum)





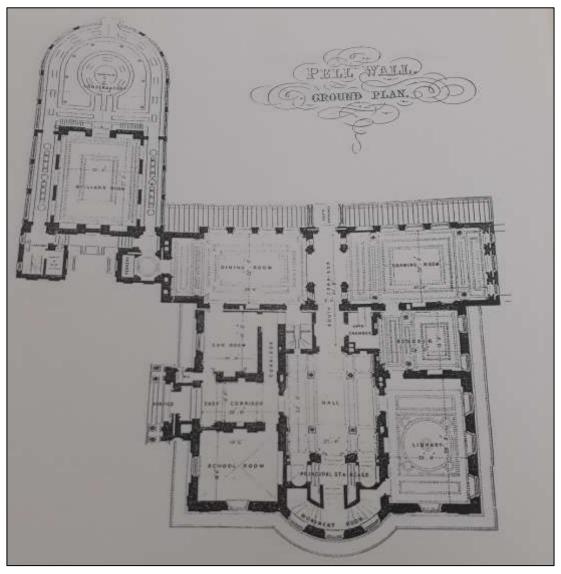
2. Presentation drawing of the basement dated to September 1828 (© Sir John Soane's Museum)





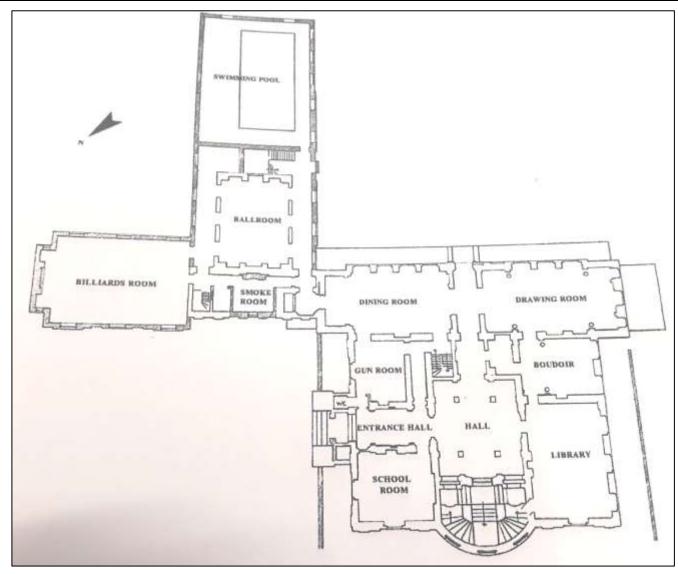
3. Presentation drawing of the principal floor dated to September 1828 (© Sir John Soane's Museum)





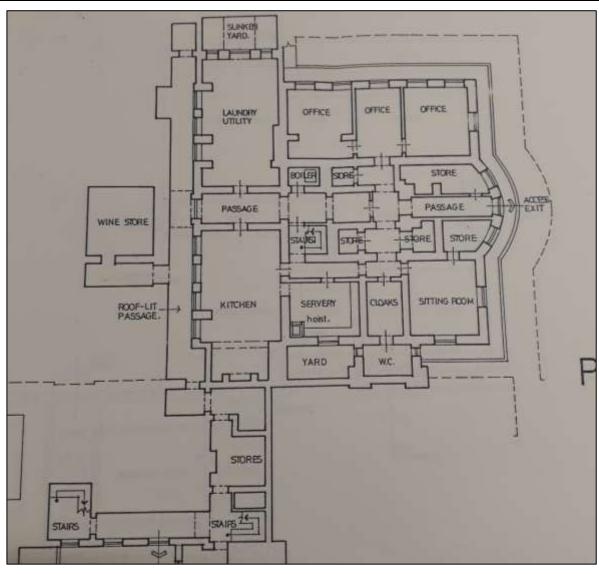
4. The 1891 sales particulars, showing the ground floor (Shropshire Archives SC/50/15)





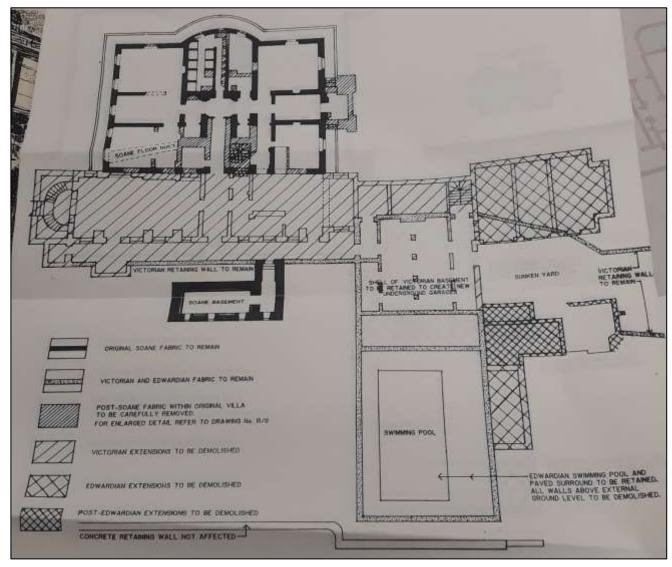
5. The 1920 sales particulars, showing the ground floor (Shropshire Archives SC/32/55)





6. A schematic plan of the basement at basement level during the Edwardian period (PWPT 1993: Vol.1)





7. A 1995 pre-demolition plan at basement level (PWPT 1998: Vol 2)



# **APPENDIX 2: PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD**



DP 1:
The north-eastern elevation, taken from the north-east.



The north-western elevation, taken from the north-west.



DP 3:
The south-western elevation, taken from the south-west.



The south-eastern elevation, taken from the south-east.



DP 5:
The concrete-surfaced yard, taken from the south.



DP 6: General view of the former basement from ground floor level, taken from the east.





DP 7:
General view of the former basement from ground floor level, taken from the south-west.



DP 9:
The modern retaining wall to the west, taken from the north-east.



DP 11:
The western section of the south-eastern elevation, taken from the south-east.



DP 8: General view of the former basement, taken from the west.



The modern retaining wall to the east, taken from the south-west.



The westernmost modern window in the position of original doorway, with infilled area below, taken from the south-east.





DP 13:

Modern window in the position of an original doorway,
with infilled area below, taken from the south-east.



DP 14:
Infilled area of original recess in brickwork, taken from the south-east.



DP 15:
Potential remnants of the original retaining wall and remains of former render, taken from the south-east.



DP 16: The demolished wall of a storage room accessed via the original kitchen, taken from the south-east.



DP 17:
Remnants of stonework upon which joists were supported, taken from the south-east.



DP 18:
General view of the central arched entrance, taken from the south-east.





DP 19:
Detail view of the central segmentally arched and recessed entrance, taken from the south-east.



DP 20: The worn stone steps up to the recessed area, taken from the south-east.



DP 21:
Detail of the formed skirting that line the stone steps, taken from the south-west.



DP 22: Interior of the recessed entrance, taken from the southwest.



DP 23: Interior of the recessed entrance, taken from the northeast.



DP 24:
Potential remnants of original walls in line with the recessed entrance, taken from the north-west.





DP 25:
The eastern section of the south-eastern elevation, taken from the south-east.



DP 26: Detail of an infilled doorway, where there originally was a window, taken from the south-east.



DP 27:
Detail of the infilled doorway, likely of the servants' linkage, taken from the south-east.



DP 28: Detail of the short fenestration with its stone lintel, taken from the south-east.



DP 29:
Detail of the easternmost modern window, in the same location as Soane's original, taken from the south-east.



DP 30: View of the remnants of the demolished wall, showing the extent of redevelopment, taken from the south-east.





DP 31:
Possible remnants of the demolished wall at basement floor level, taken from the south-east.



DP 32: Sample of original brickwork identified immediately to the east of central entrance, taken from the south-east.



DP 33: Sample of the original brickwork identified below the easternmost window, taken from the south-east.



DP 34: Sample of the tiles that once lined the eastern section of the elevation, taken from the south-east.



DP 35: Sample of the cement adhesive of the tiles, taken from the south-east.



DP 36: The eastern section of the Victorian wall and entrance to Soane's vaulted cellar, taken from the north-west.





DP 37:
The central section of the Victorian wall, taken from the



DP 39: The arched and recessed entrance to the vaulted cellar, taken from the north-west.



DP 41: The Victorian brick 'skin' at ground level, appended an original wall, taken from the west.



DP 38: The western section of the Victorian wall, taken from the north-west.



DP 40: The stone steps leading to the vaulted cellar, taken from the north-west.



DP 42: An example of the grated vents along the Victorian wall, taken from the north-west.





DP 43:
An example of the brickwork of the Victorian wall, taken from the north-west.



DP 44: Internal view of the cellar corridor, taken from the northwest.



DP 45: Internal view of the cellar corridor, taken from the southeast.



DP 46: The bullnose brickwork of the short linkage to the principal vaulted unit, taken from the east.



DP 47: The latterly added brickwork, potentially installed for structural strength, taken from the



DP 48: The chamfered doorframe of the short linkage, taken from the north-east.





DP 49: Internal view of the vaulted cellar, taken from the northeast.



DP 50: Internal view of the vaulted cellar, taken from the northeast.



DP 51:
Detail of the northern wall of the vaulted cellar, taken from the south-east.



DP 52:
Detail of one of the four chutes or light wells, taken from the north-west.



DP 53:
Detail of the possible remnants of a shelf, with the tile 'splashback', taken from the north-west.



DP 54:
Detail of the brickwork of the possible shelf, taken from the west.





DP 55:

Detail of one of the steel I-Beams with an additional hook, taken from the north-east.



DP 56:
Detail of the redundant central light fixture, taken from the south-east.



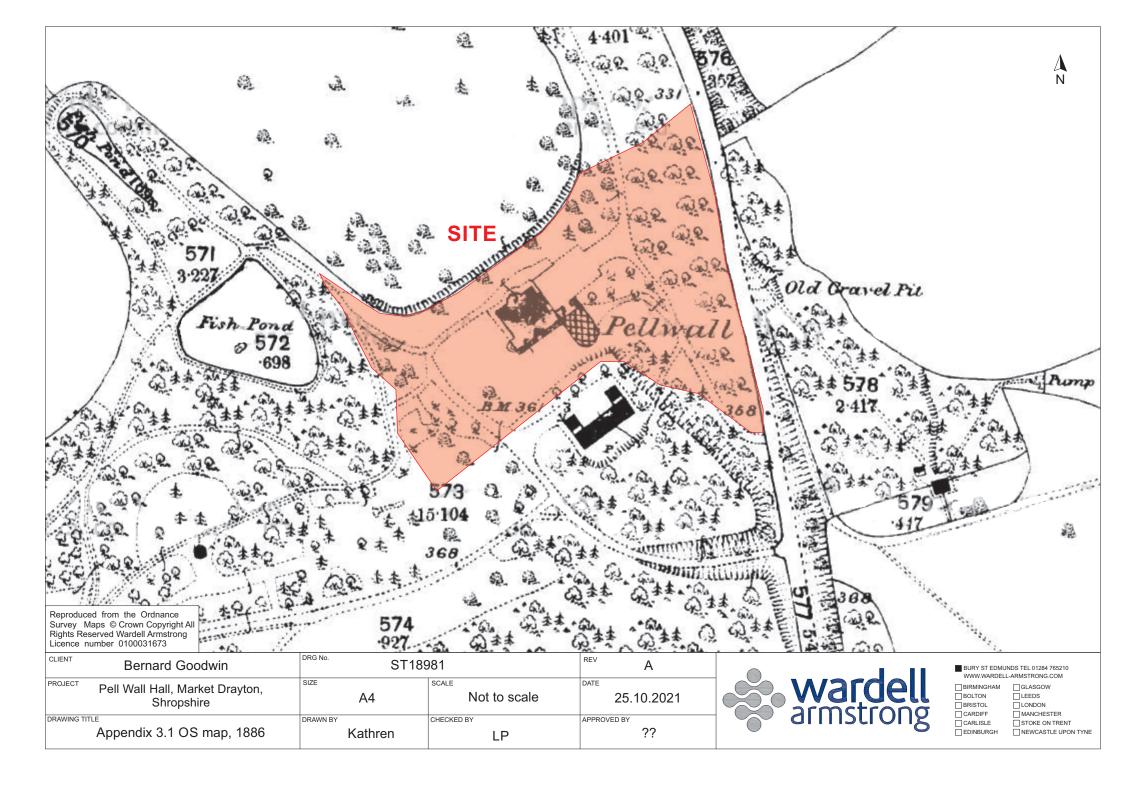
DP 57:
Detail of the tile skirting along the northern wall of the vaulted cellar, taken from the south-east.

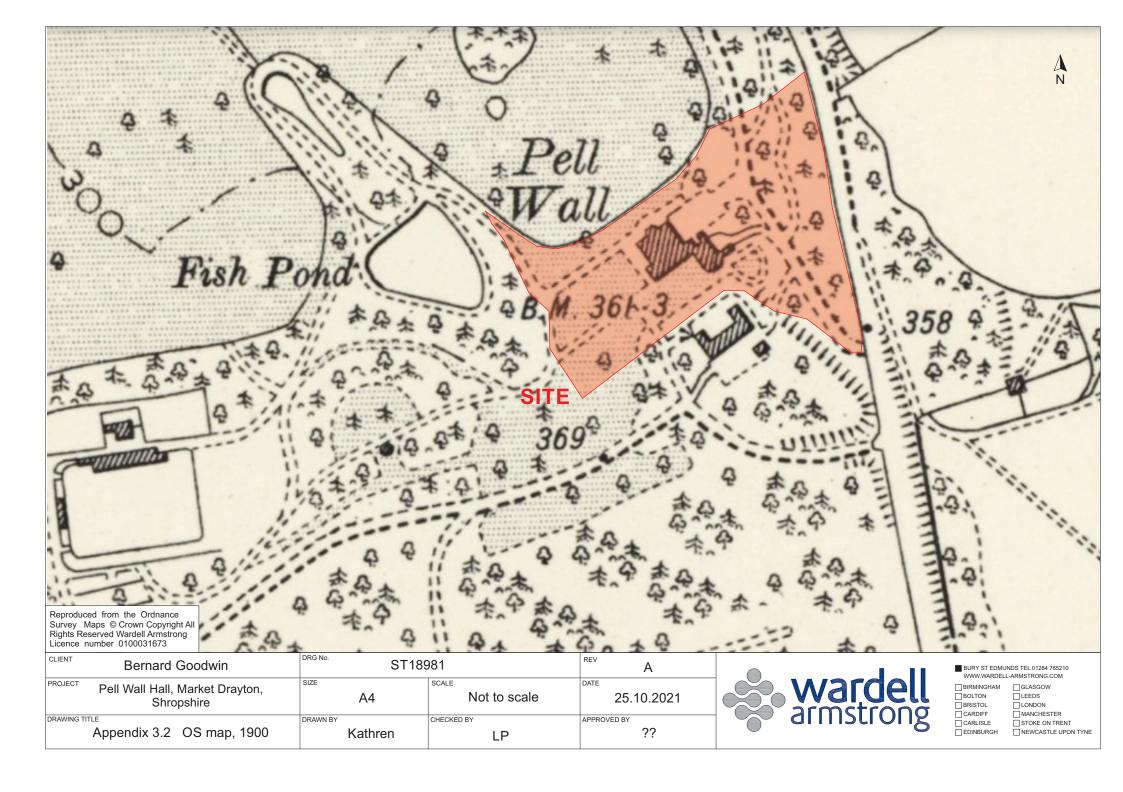


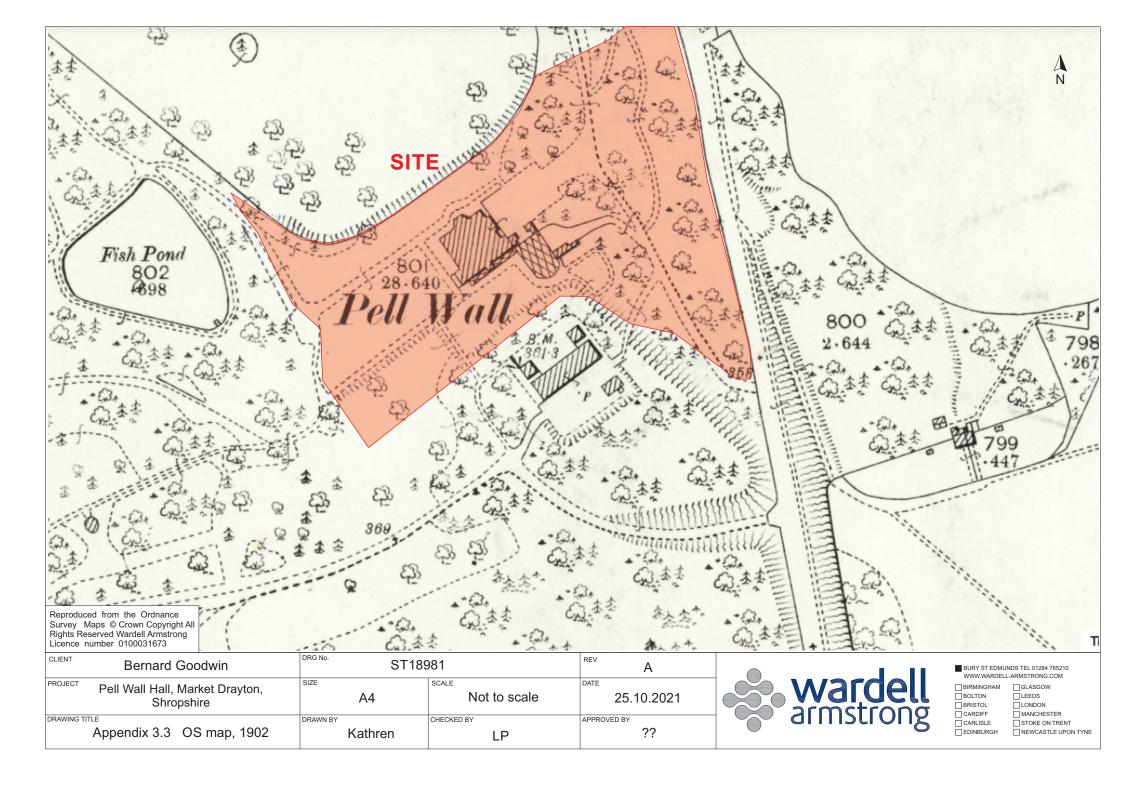
DP 58:
Detail of the tiled flooring in the vaulted cellar, taken from the south-east.

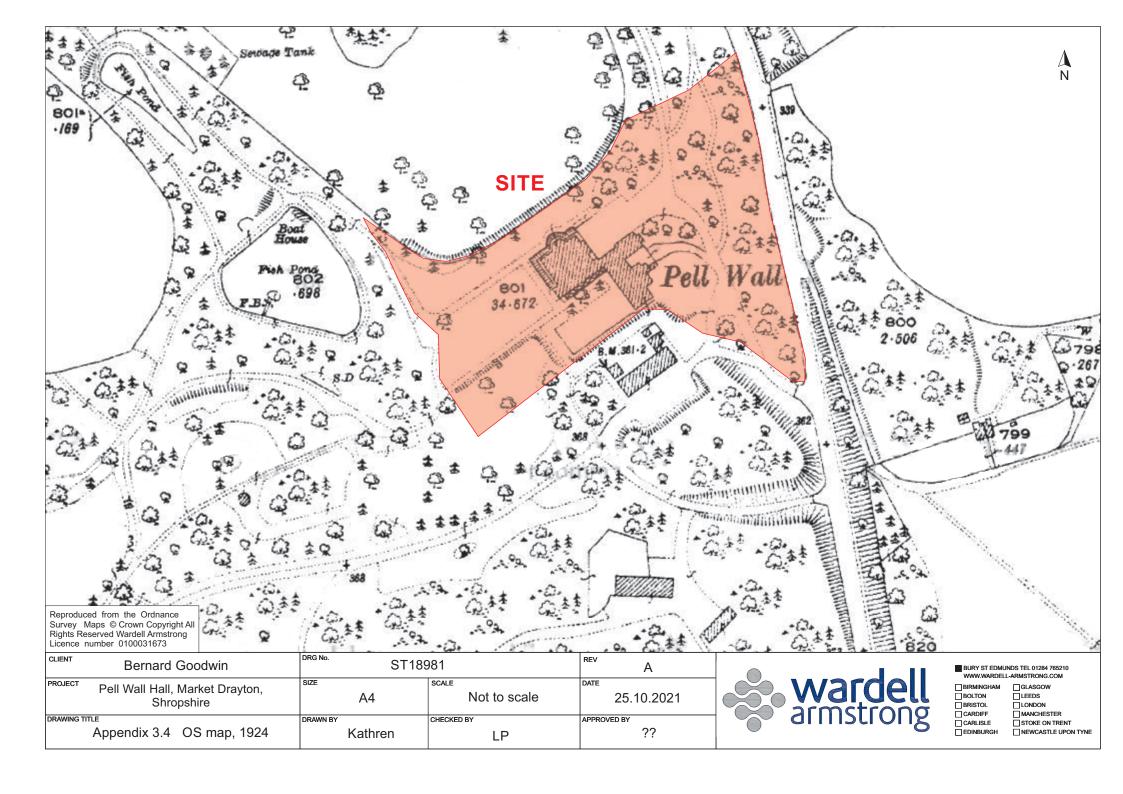


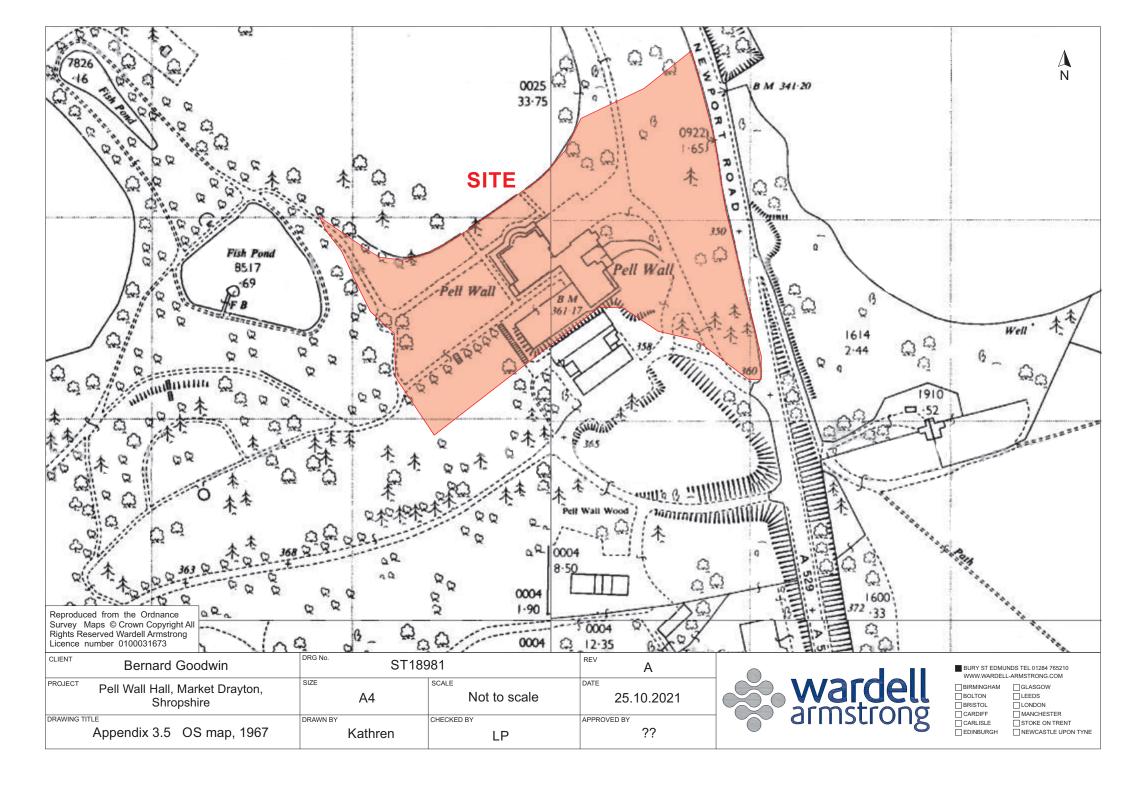
**APPENDIX 3: HISTORIC MAPS** 





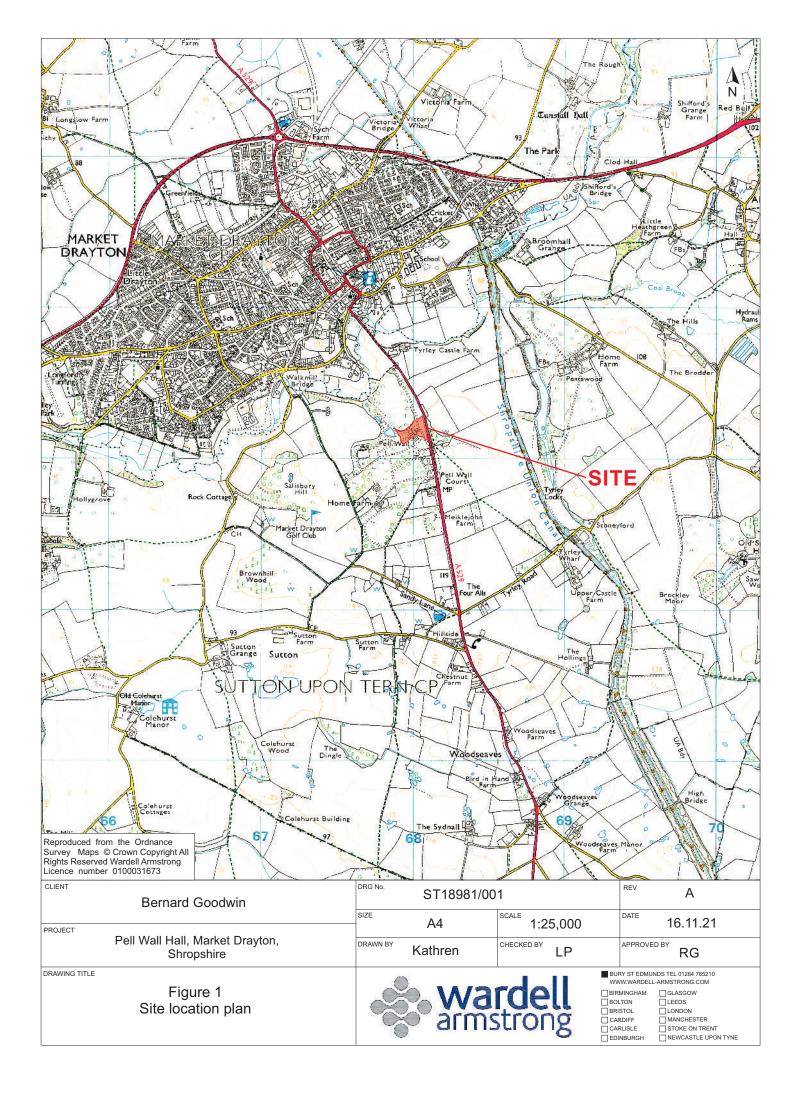


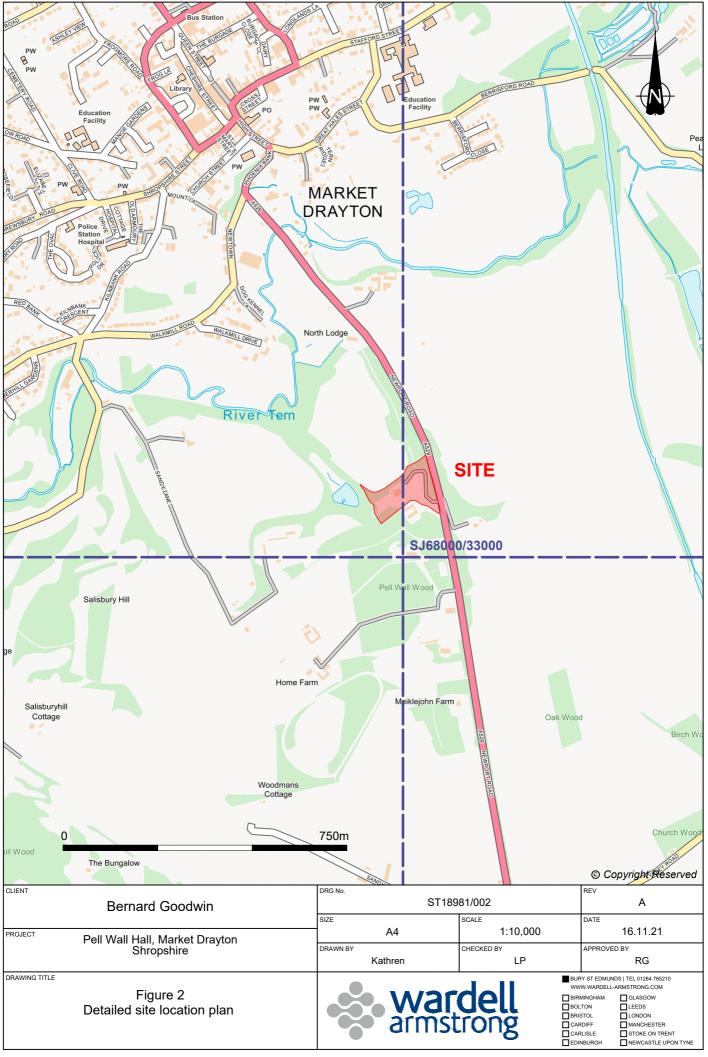


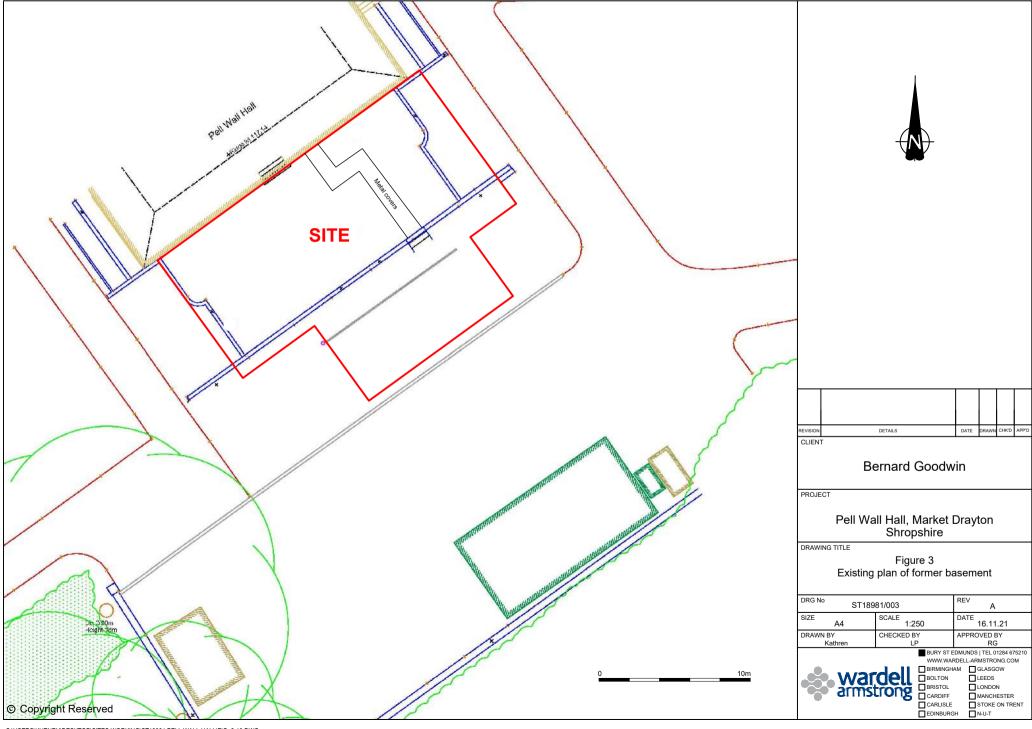


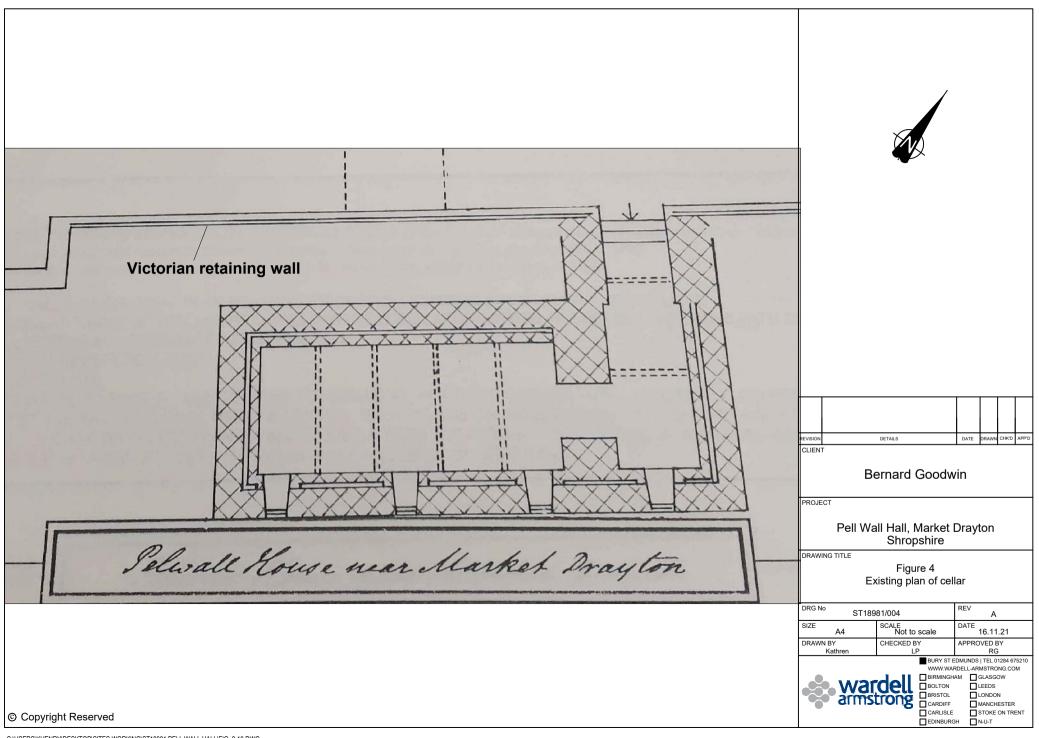


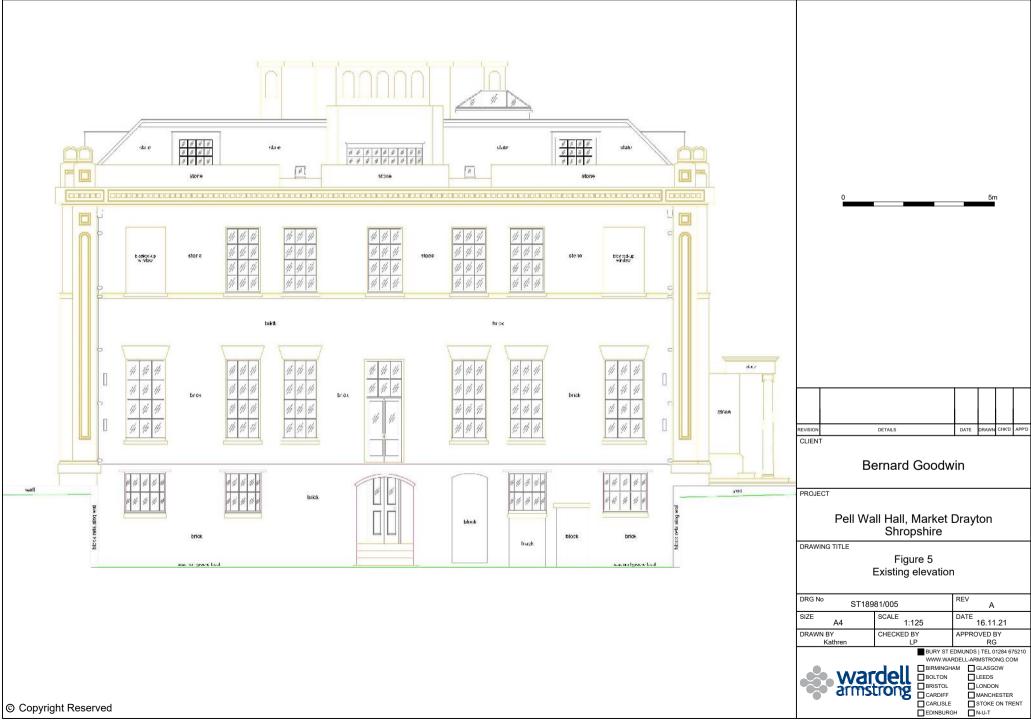
**APPENDIX 4: FIGURES** 



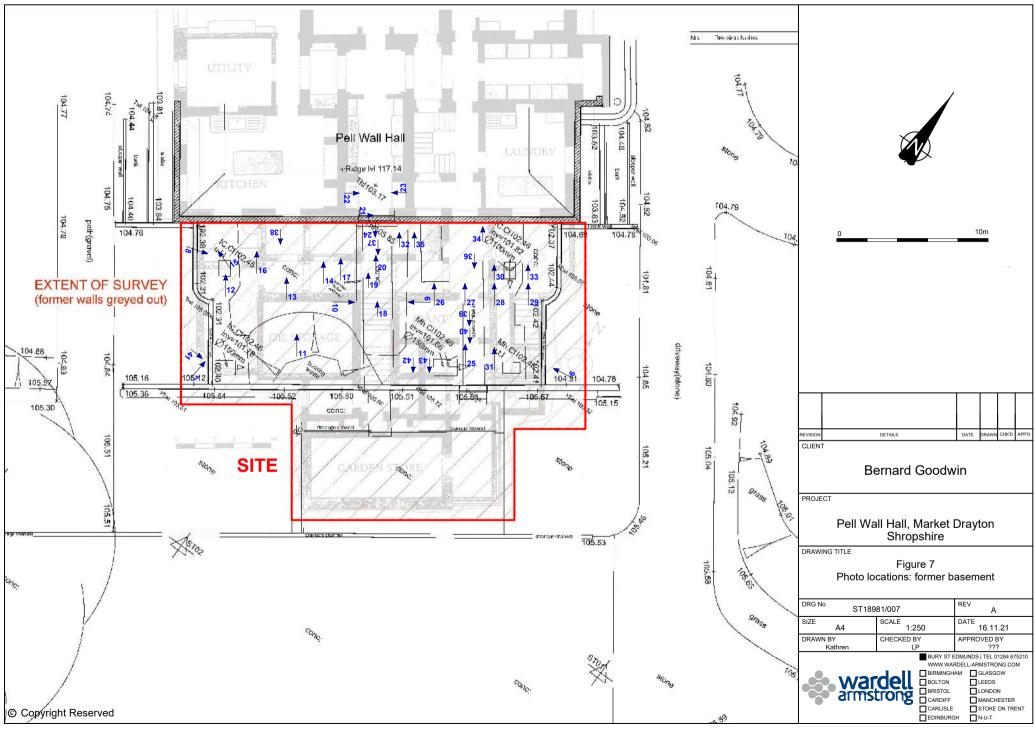


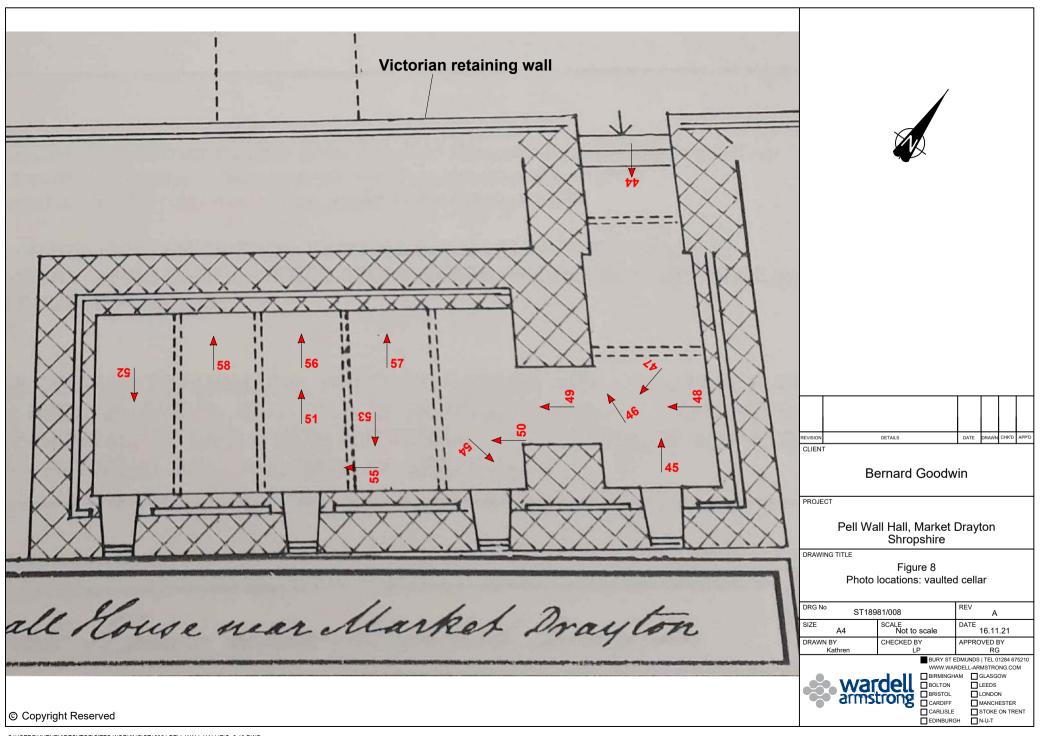


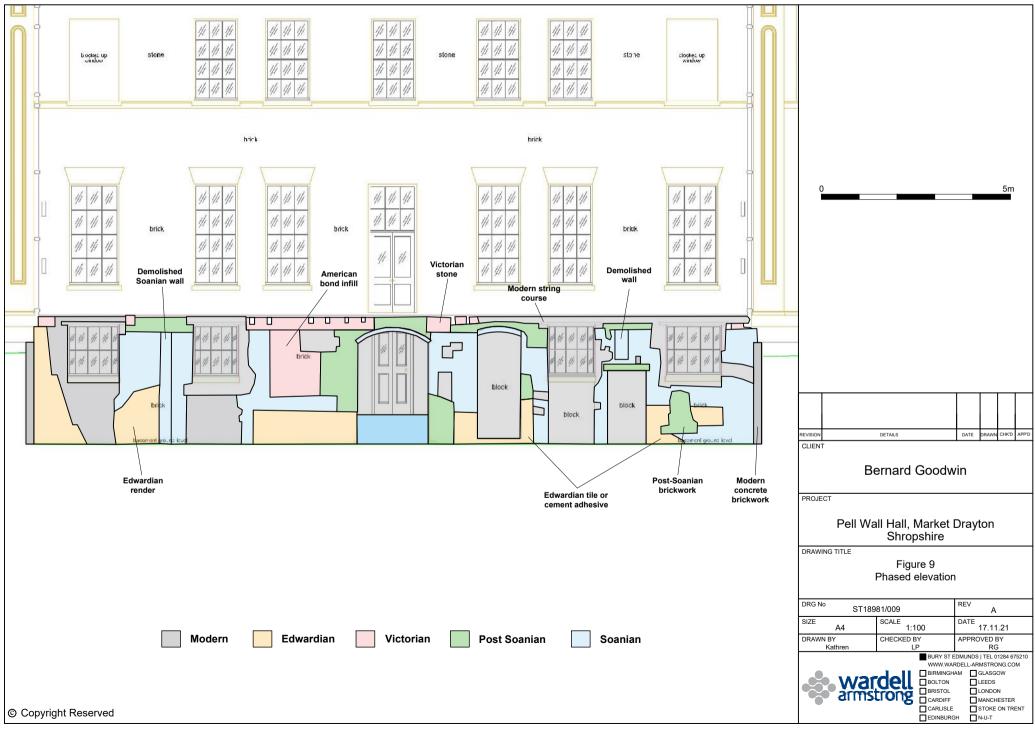


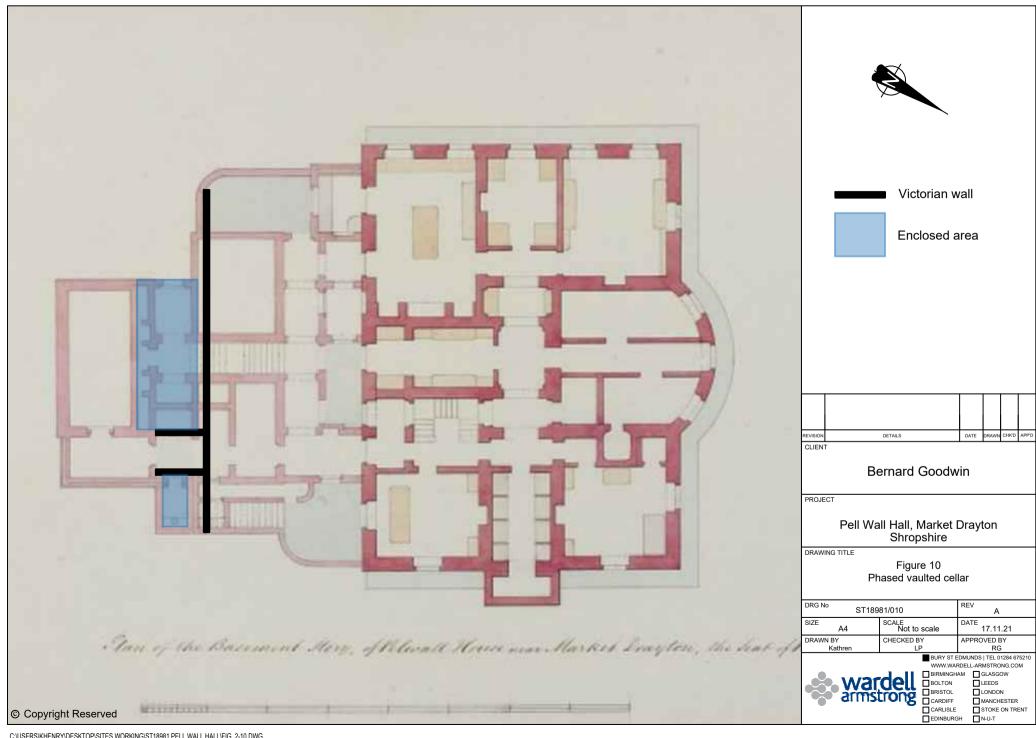












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Sir Henry Doulton House Forge Lane Etruria Stoke-on-Trent ST1 SBD Tel: +44 (0)1782 276 700

## **BIRMINGHAM**

Two Devon Way Longbridge Technology Park Longbridge Birmingham B31 2TS Tel: +44 (0)121 580 0909

BOLTON 41-50 Futura Park Aspinall Way Middlebrook Bolton BL6 6SU Tel: +44 (0)1204 227 227

## BRISTOL

Desklodge 2 Redcliffe Way Bristol BS1 6NL

#### **BURY ST EDMUNDS**

9 Lamdin Road **Bury St Edmunds** Suffolk IP32 6NU Tel: +44 (0)1284 765 210

#### CARDIFF

Tudor House 16 Cathedral Road Cardiff CF11 9LJ Tel: +44 (0)292 072 9191

#### CARLISLE

Marconi Road **Burgh Road Industrial** Estate Carlisle Cumbria CA2 7NA Tel: +44 (0)1228 550 575

# **EDINBURGH**

Great Michael House 14 Links Place Edinburgh EH6 7EZ Tel: +44 (0)131 555 3311

## **GLASGOW**

24 St Vincent Place Glasgow G1 2EU Tel: +44 (0)141 428 449

#### LEEDS

36 Park Row Leeds LS1 5JL Tel: +44 (0)113 831 5533 LONDON

Third Floor 46 Chancery Lane London WC2A 1JE Tel: +44 (0)207 242 3243

#### **NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE**

City Quadrant 11 Waterloo Square Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4DP Tel: +44 (0)191 232 0943

### TRURO

Baldhu House Wheal Jane Earth Science Park Baldhu Truro TR3 6EH Tel: +44 (0)187 256 0738

#### International offices:

#### ALMATY

29/6 Satpaev Avenue Hyatt Regency Hotel Office Tower Almaty Kazakhstan 050040 Tel: +7(727) 334 1310

# MOSCOW

21/5 Kuznetskiy Most St. Moscow Russia Tel: +7(495) 626 07 67

