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Land to the Rear of The Habit, 30 - 32 East Castle Street,
Bridgnorth

Heritage Statement:
survey of wall sections, analysis and historic mapping
along Castle Terrace and Bank Street

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1.0 LAND TO THE REAR OF THE HABIT, BRIDGNORTH: ANALYSIS OF CASTLE TERRACE AND BANK STREET WALL SECTIONS

1.1 Introduction

This report has been commissioned to support a planning application for a residential property scheme within the courtyard area to the rear of The Habit, 30 – 32 East Castle Street¹. Two walls help to enclose this area from the north and east, and their exterior facades form part of the existing street scene within a conservation area. The interior is over 2.5m higher than the street level, and the brick and sandstone walls clearly represent a complex process of repair and rebuild over several generations. The survey has been undertaken to plot these various historic phases, and subsequent analysis has been used to assist in achieving an enhanced understanding of the heritage significance of these walls, and to identify the threats and opportunities that the proposed scheme brings to them.

1.2 Brickwork Descriptions

Brick and stonework incorporated into two wall sections located at the junction of Castle Terrace² and Bank Street³ constitutes an important addition to the historic street scene. The two wall sections are physically connected and converge at the junction of both streets. Based on the historic mapping, the walling has been in place since at least the early 19th century. It is probable that the lower fabric of the wall within Castle Terrace dates to the late medieval/early post-medieval period and belongs to the north-eastern section of the curtain wall of Bridgnorth Castle. According to Rutter and Dent (1998)⁴, a corner tower belonging to the castle and probably incorporated into the curtain wall was located at the junction between the two streets; the north-eastern corner of the two current walls formed the outer part of a tower. The curtain wall of the castle appears to have been physically-linked with the town wall, which would have extended to a town gate known as Cow Gate. The current line of Bank Street would have been a ditch which divided the castle grounds from the southern defences of the town. In terms of chronology, this ditch may be earlier than the curtain and town walls.

Castle Terrace and Bank Street, along with other interconnected narrow streets form part of the post-medieval street plan and much of the brickwork incorporated into the Castle Terrace wall forms part of the later post-medieval development.

1.3 Wall Section A (Figure 1)

The Castle Terrace wall section (Figure 1) measures c. 13m in length and stands around 4.6m in height. It comprises mainly of unfrogged brick types that sit on a stone plinth (once forming a complete wall section). Identified within this wall section were ten construction phases (see Table 1; Phase 1 to 10), the earliest probably dating to the late medieval/early post-medieval period and comprising stone rubble coursing and forming the north-eastern section of a curtain wall belonging to Bridgnorth Castle (Phase 1). Laid onto this phase is a further nine construction phases (Phases 2-10) including a number of rebuilding phases (e.g. Phase 3) and a phase that involved raising the height of the wall (Phase 2/7).

¹ Site location is presented in the sequence of historic mapping, figures 5 – 9 below.

² Once known as Castle Walk

³ Once known as Back Lane

⁴ Rutter M., and Dent H. 1998 *Bridgnorth: A Pictorial History* Bridgnorth Historical Research Group Phillimore Press

The earliest brickwork (Phase 2), comprising unfrogged 18th/19th century imperial size 3" brick is located in two areas; the most intact area is within the southern section of the wall (Figure 1). Originally both areas may have formed one continuous section, extending from the junction between Castle Terrace and Bank Street south to a sandstone-block arched entrance with ogee-type head. This medieval-style entrance with castellated brick capping, once provided access to the former Ball Hotel from Castle Terrace (Figure 3). Despite the medieval appearance of this entrance, this structure probably dates to the mid-19th century.

At some point within the late 19th or early 20th century history of the wall, the northern section appears to have become unstable, resulting in the insertion of a cast-iron cross-tie into Phase 3. Within the same brickwork phase there is a clear interface between Phase 3 and Phases 2/7, 6 and 4, (shown as a vertical red line on Figure 1) suggesting the convergence of two buildings, as seen on a photograph dated c. 1900 where there is evidence that the wall section represented three buildings, possibly dwellings (Figure 4)⁵.

1.4 Wall Section B (Figure 2)

The wall section in Bank Street extends c. 12m in length and abuts the eastern elevation of No. 5 Bank Street. The earliest phase within this wall section (Phase 2) is identical to brickwork located on the Castle Terrace wall section (and is physically connected). The western section of the wall is constructed of a 20th century frogged rustic-type brick (Phase 11). This phase, the latest in the brick sequencing, probably represents a recent blocked-in entrance or a complete rebuild of this section of the wall. A clear vertical line exists between this wall section and the earlier wall phasing (Phases 2 and 7). The rustic brickwork sits on top of the earlier Phase 2 brick coursing. Along the entire Bank Street wall section, both the earlier and modern brickwork has been finished with mounded curvilinear brick capping, using conventional terracotta red brick sets and blue engineering brick (Phases 12 and 13).



Figure 1
The Castle Terrace wall section, looking west

⁵ Photograph published in Brew A., and Gwilt C. F. 2005 *Images of England: Bridgnorth Revisited*, p.52 Tempus Publishing

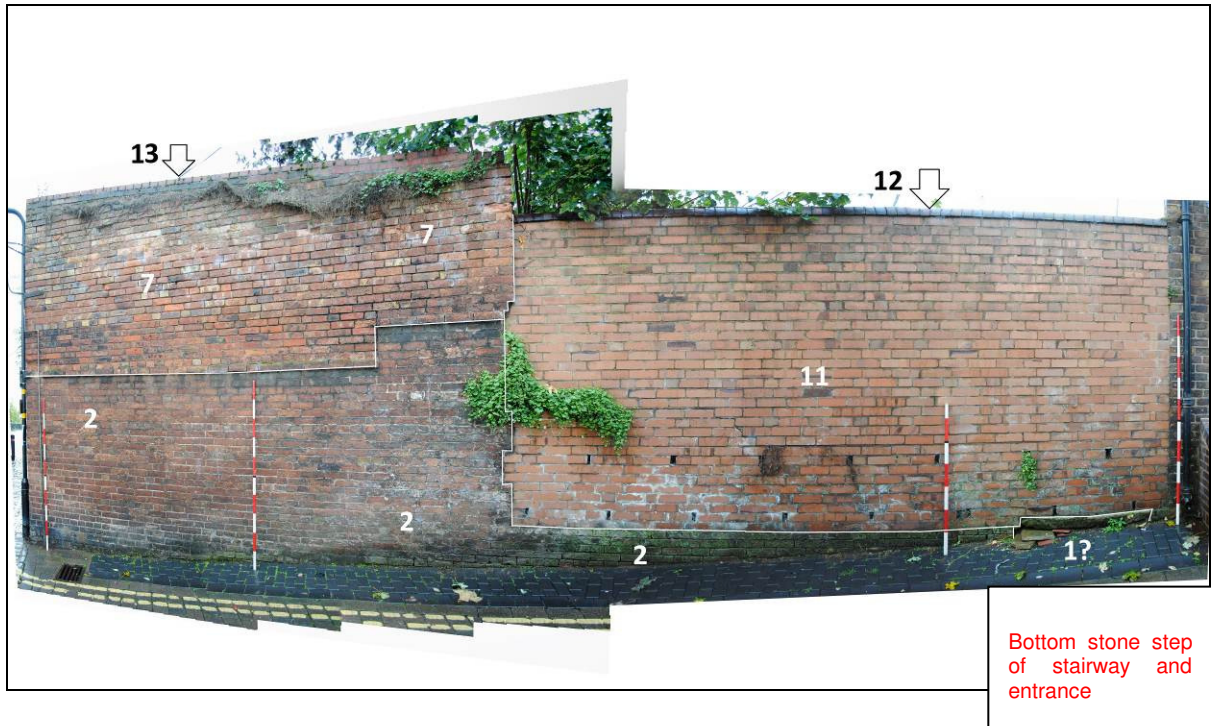


Figure 2
The Bank Street wall section, looking south, and detail of western end with step (below)



Table 1
Summary of phasing

Phase	Material	Description
CASTLE TERRACE WALL SECTION A		
1	stone	Stone wall section laid at pavement level and extending to a maximum height of c. 1m. Stone phase extends to c. 10m and has been subjected to a number of successive pointing regimes. Phase 1 stone section probably represents the north-eastern section of the curtain wall of Bridgnorth Castle.
2	brick	Unfroged 18 th century brick phase, located within the southernmost, and northern section of the wall (extending into the eastern section of the Bank Street wall). Probably locally-made brick; various colours indicating different clay sources and kiln temperatures.
3	brick	Reused unfroged 19 th century brickwork phase located within the central and southern section of the wall. Whilst the central section has been repointed with a cement mortar, the southern area has not, retaining its degenerated lime mortar.
4	brick	Small section of stone walling (possibly same as Phase 1).
5	brick	Identical to Phase 3 brickwork.
6	Brick	Unfroged 20 th century brick; this section probably represents localised infilling or a repair.
7	Brick	Identical to Phase 2 brickwork: - used bricks after demolition of 19 th century structures.
8	Brick	Unfroged 19 th century brickwork; similar in form to Phases 2/7).
9	Brick	Squared single-coursed brickwork used as facing.
10	cement	Cement repair, located within the northern section of the wall.
13	brick	Brick capping, laid end-on (headers).
BANK STREET WALL SECTION B		
1(?)	stone	Single stone slab; same geology as stone within the Castle Terrace wall section. This stone appears to be the bottom step of a stairway and entrance to the application site shown on the 1884 OS map.

2	Brick	Unfrogged 18 th century brick phase, identical to brickwork within the Castle Terrace wall section.
7	Brick	Identical to Phase 2 brickwork (reused brick).
11	brick	Frogged 20 th century brickwork section located within the western section of the wall, possibly representing a vehicle opening or a complete rebuilding phase.
12	brick	Capping.
13	brick	Brick capping, laid end-on (headers).

2.0 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE

2.1 Earliest map evidence

Based on the historic mapping and a photographic image dating to c. 1900, both walls have undergone a number of significant changes, mainly as the result of rebuild and repair. The earliest mapping consulted dates to 1835 and the publication of the Leith and Smith plan of Bridgnorth (BB/E/1/5/2/13). Shown on this map are the two walls; the Bank Street wall being divided into two sections. The western section of the Bank Street (then known as Back Lane) walling appears to abut No. 5 Bank Street. The land enclosed by this wall section forms part of an irregular-shaped courtyard with access via East Castle Street, whilst the walling within the Castle Terrace (Castle Walk) part encloses a small rectangular plot which probably belongs to a sub-rectangular building standing immediately west (Figure 5).

2.2 1st edition Ordnance Survey map 1884

By the time of the publication of the Ordnance Survey map of 1884 (scale 1: 2500), the area behind both walls was probably developed as a terrace of three buildings, forming the eastern section of the enclosed Ball Inn courtyard (later to become the Ball Hotel – see Figure 6). Close scrutiny of the features shown adjacent to No. 5 Bank Street show a flight of steps (Figure 6a), which must have descended into Bank Street, as the ground level within the application site is c.2m above the street level. This demonstrates that an entranceway must have existed through the Bank Street wall in the late Victorian period, and the stone visible at the base of the modern brickwork (Figure 2) is in fact the bottom step of this stairway. Examination of the centre of the stone shows a depression, presumably caused by usage. There are six steps shown on the map, and if on average each was 0.4m, then the full depth of the stairwell would be 2.4m, which would accord well with the height above Bank Street of the existing ground surface within the application site.

2.3 2nd edition OS map 1903

By the time the Ordnance Survey map of 1903 was published (scale 1:10560), three interconnected buildings are clearly delineated (Figure 7). The photograph dating to c. 1900 showing the upper winding house of the funicular railway also shows the Castle Terrace wall section, which at this time appears to have formed the eastern elevations and a gable end of three buildings; the two buildings to the north have their pitched roofs sloping towards Castle Terrace, whilst the southern building has the pitch perpendicular (Figure 4). The gable end of this building (fronting Castle Terrace) and neighbouring range appear to show window casements inserted into their upper sections (Figure 4). Based on height and individual character of each bay, this range was probably dwellings or workshops rather than stables.

2.4 1926 and later 20th century OS mapping

The Ordnance Survey map of 1926 shows that the building range has been demolished, thus opening the courtyard area further. The plot appears to have remained open until the early 1960s when a range of four individual cells, probably garages, are constructed along the Castle Terrace wall section (Figure 8). This innocuous development is also shown on Ordnance Survey maps between 1968 and 1978. However, three of the cells appear to have been demolished sometime around the publication of the 1991 Ordnance Survey map (scale 1:10,000). On this map the northern cell, connected to both wall sections, remains standing (Figure 9).⁶ The footprint of this cell may replicate the footprint of the medieval corner tower that was part of the castle curtain wall.

⁶ Based on a site visit by SLR Consulting in 2013, this building remains standing.

3.0 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Summary of historical significance

The wall sections that form the street vistas of Castle Terrace and Bank Street can be considered as important non-designated heritage assets. Both walls sections stand within the Bridgnorth Conservation Area and are therefore afforded statutory protection. The wall phasing along Castle Terrace is complex, providing an interesting narrative of the later post-medieval development of the property boundary wall; to some extent, the less complex wall phasing in Bank Street plays a similar role. The Castle Terrace wall section possibly contains late medieval or early post-medieval fabric in the form of stone coursing, possibly belonging to the north-east section of the castle curtain wall (Phase 1). The brickwork above this is probably associated with three buildings shown on a photograph of Castle Terrace in c. 1900. After this time, it appears that the wall section has subjected to a number of rebuilding and repair phases from the early 20th century until present. Further south along Castle Terrace the wall is entirely composed of stone coursing (Figure 10), which demonstrates that the application site wall is not original and has seen frequent rebuilds in brick during the 19th and 20th centuries.

3.2 Opportunities and threats

Given the complex phasing of both walls, it is the view of SLR Consulting that the Castle Terrace wall section should not be demolished, although cracking is visible internally (Figure 11) and the wall will definitely require remediation works to ensure its continued stability. The photograph also shows buttresses which have been added in the past to retain the wall internally, whilst externally the poor state of repair is also evident. The complexity of the phasing is a result of the three different buildings that were in existence c.1900, with abutting brickwork and windows onto Castle Terrace. The wall is an important addition to the historic street scene, although the Bank Street wall phasing has, within its recent history, been radically altered with a later rebuilding phase occurring within its western section (Phase 11), of probable mid- to late-20th century date, which has blocked up an historic entranceway and stairwell to the application site. A possible new access point could be incorporated into this 20th century brickwork. This proposed access point would not interfere with the historic character or vista of Bank Street, especially if the development was to use suitable historic brick types. The development proposals could also consider replacing the complete brickwork of Phase 11 with a more suitable historic brick and finished with a suitable lime mortar. Such works would considerably enhance the character of the Conservation Area and would help replace original access points through the wall which have been bricked up in more modern times.



Figure 3
Entrance leading to the former Ball Hotel, located along Castle Terrace, looking west

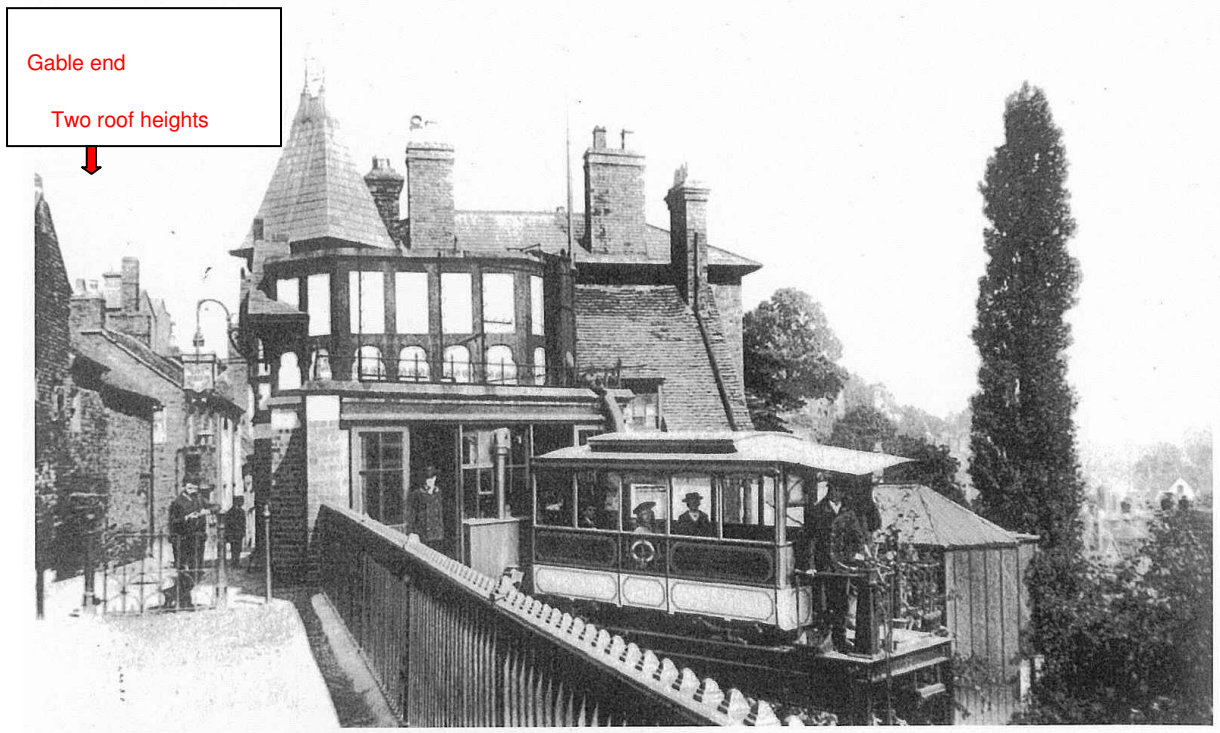


Figure 4 Castle Terrace c.1900 looking north (adapted from Brew and Gwilt 2005, P.52)
(note gable and two roof levels at left of photograph, and window in wall)

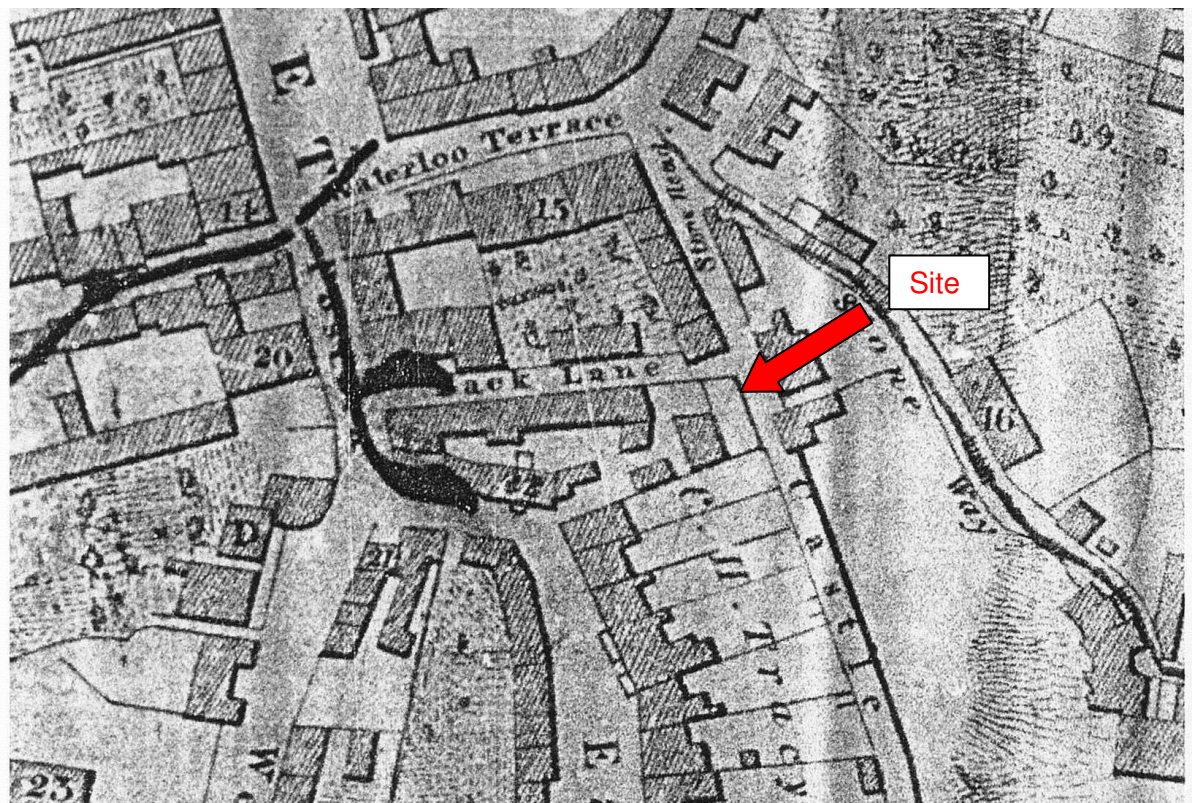


Figure 5 1835 Leith and Smith map (compare to Figures 6 – 9)

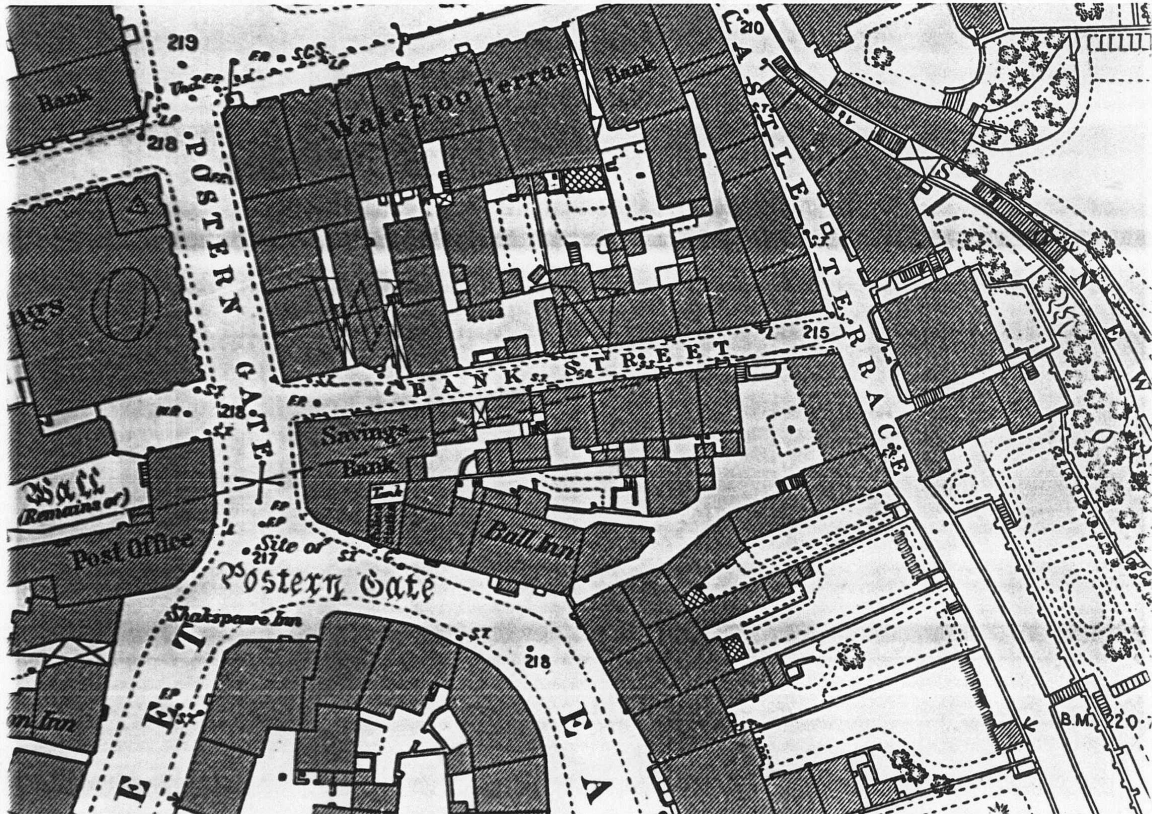


Figure 6 1884 1st edition Ordnance Survey map

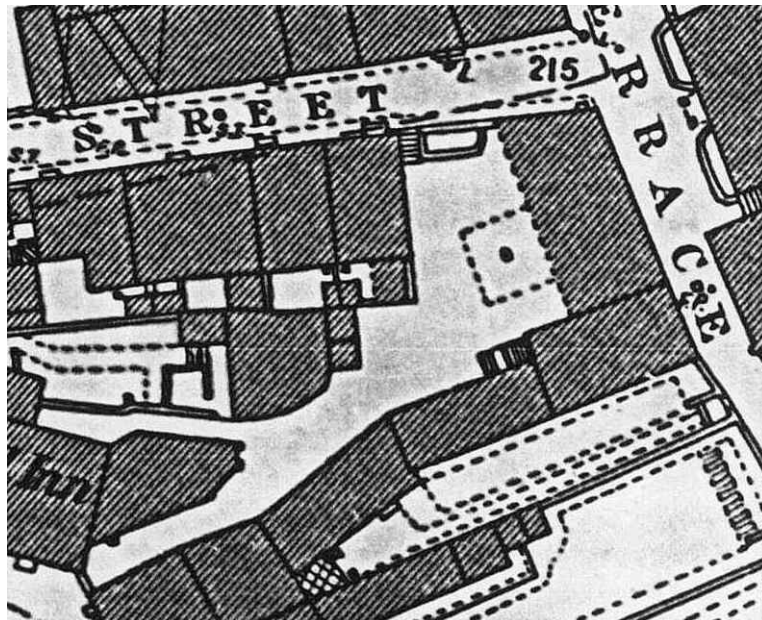


Figure 6a detail of 1884 1st edition Ordnance Survey map showing steps into Bank Street

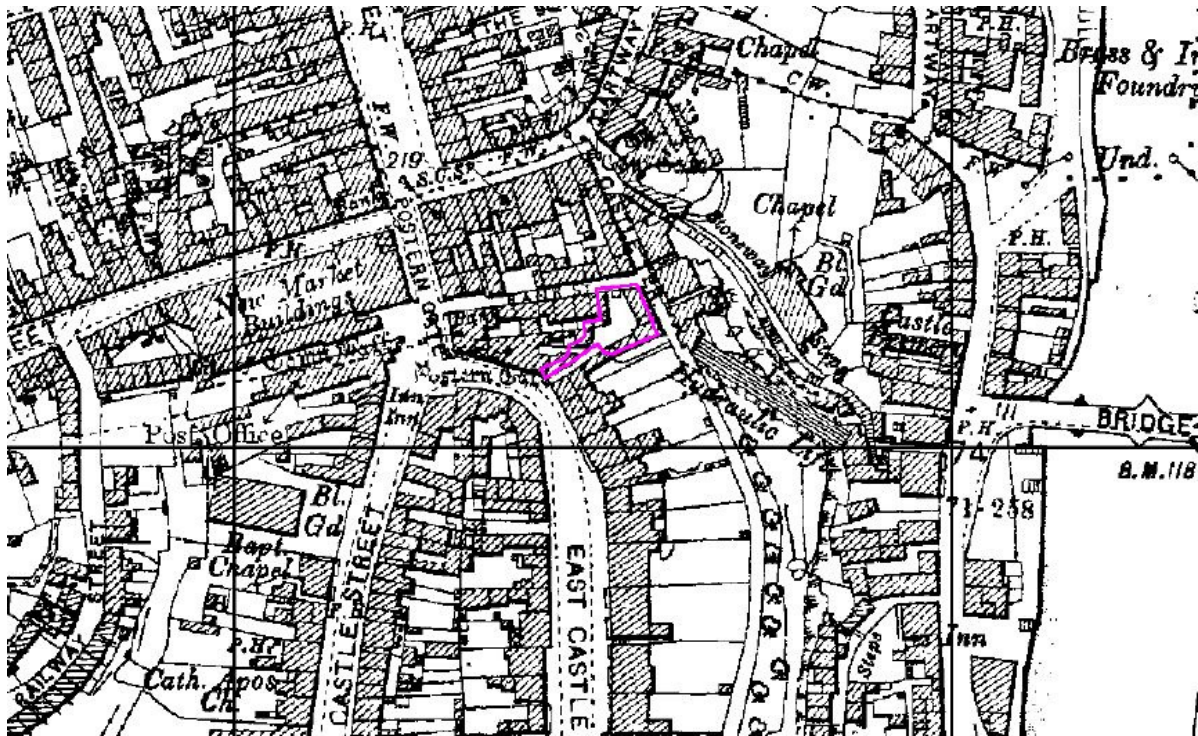


Figure 7 1903 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map

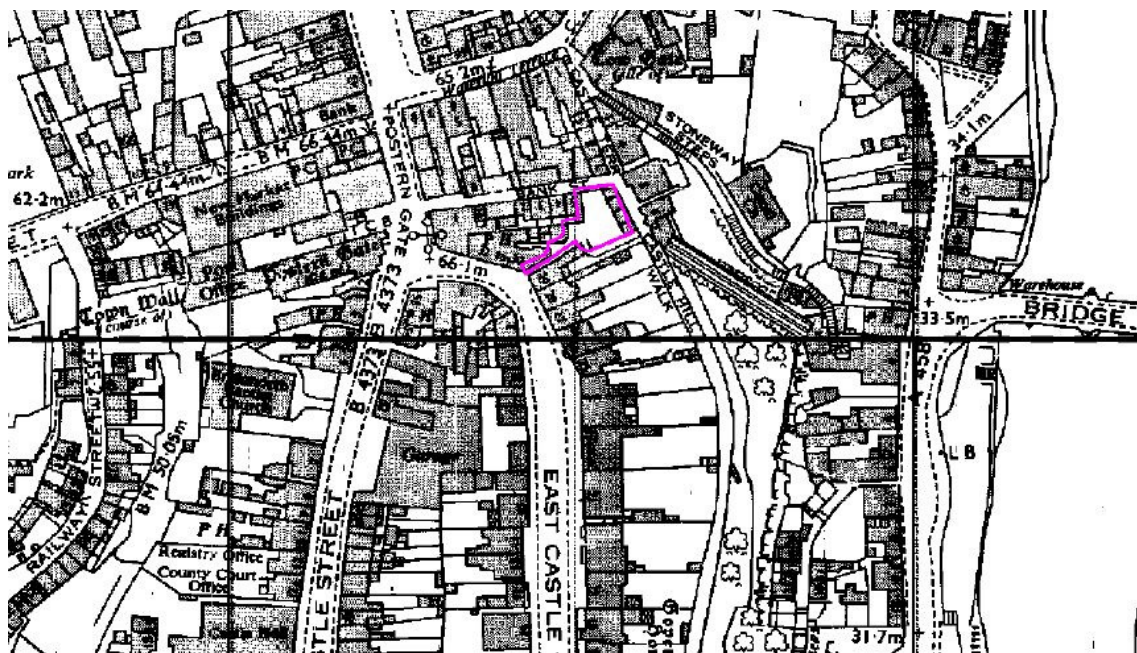


Figure 8 1967-78 OS map showing garages along east wall of application site

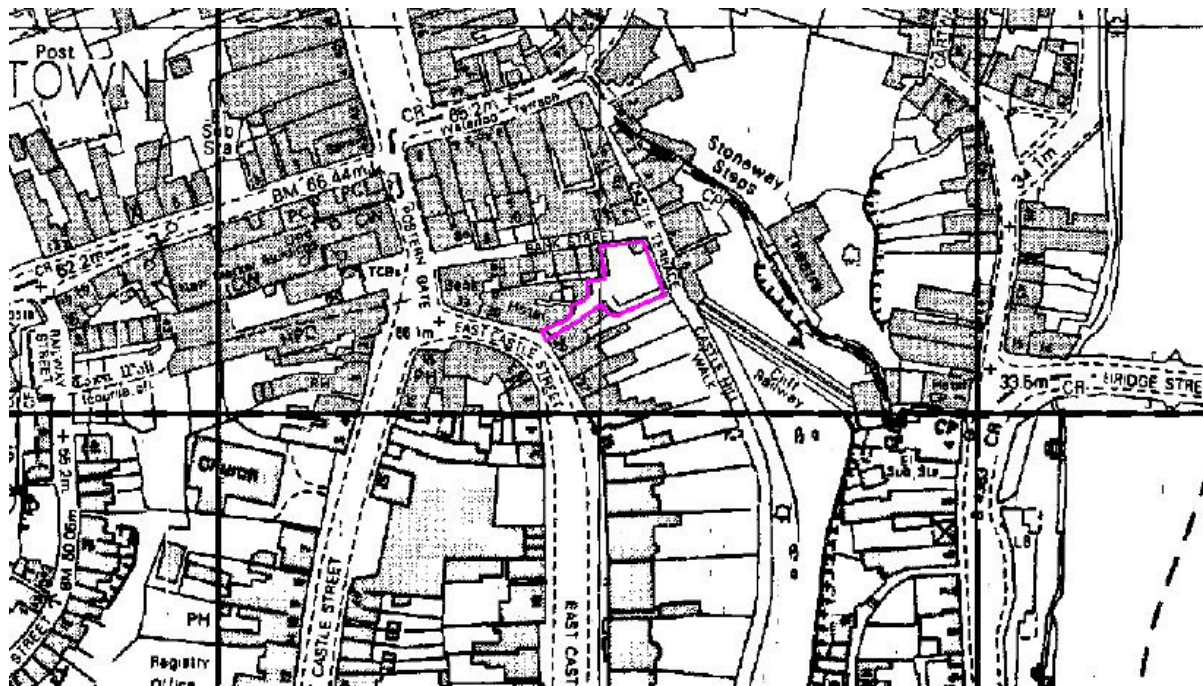


Figure 9 1991 OS map showing demolition of garages except northern-most one



Figure 10 Looking north along Castle Terrace showing original stone coursed wall, with brick rebuilds at the northern end forming the boundary of the application site



Figure 11 interior view of Castle Terrace wall showing cracking and buttresses to wall

4.0 CLOSURE

This report has been prepared by SLR Consulting Limited with all reasonable skill, care and diligence, and taking account of the manpower and resources devoted to it by agreement with the client. Information reported herein is based on the interpretation of data collected and has been accepted in good faith as being accurate and valid.

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