



**Archaeological Building Recording and Archaeological
Observation, Investigation, Recording and Analysis
At The Oak Inn, Easton on the Hill
Northamptonshire**

Report No. 14/42

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Illustrator: Amir Bassir



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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS	OASIS No: molanort1-172088
Project title	Archaeological Building Recording and Archaeological Observation, Investigation, Analysis and Recording at The Oak Inn, Easton on the Hill, Northamptonshire.
Short description	Northamptonshire Archaeology (now trading as MOLA) was commissioned to undertake a program of Archaeological Building Recording and Archaeological Observation, Investigation and Analysis at The Oak Inn, Easton on the Hill, prior to development of the site. The Oak Inn is a 19th-century structure, initially constructed as a private residence and converted to a Public House in the early – mid 20th century. The alterations relating to this conversion have removed most of the earlier layout and features of the building.
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Previous work	Unknown
Future work	Unknown
Monument type and period	19th-century house converted to a public house and B and B
PROJECT LOCATION	
County	Northamptonshire
Site address	48 Stamford Road, Easton on the Hill
NGR	TF 01115 04000
Area	0.15 hectares
PROJECT CREATORS	
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology (now trading as MOLA)
Project brief originator	Mr Andrew Pick
Project design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology
Director/Supervisor	Amir Bassir
Project Manager	Steve Parry
Sponsor or funding body	Mr Andrew Pick, Future Plan Ltd
PROJECT DATE	
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End date	February 2014
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Archaeological Building Recording and Archaeological Observation, Investigation, Recording and Analysis At The Oak Inn, Easton on the Hill Northamptonshire

Abstract

Northamptonshire Archaeology (now trading as MOLA) was commissioned to undertake a program of archaeological building recording and archaeological observation, investigation and analysis at The Oak Inn, Easton on the Hill, Northamptonshire, prior to development of the site. The Oak Inn is a 19th-century structure initially constructed as a private residence and converted to a Public House in the early – mid 20th century. The alterations relating to this conversion have removed most of the earlier layout and features of the building.

1 INTRODUCTION

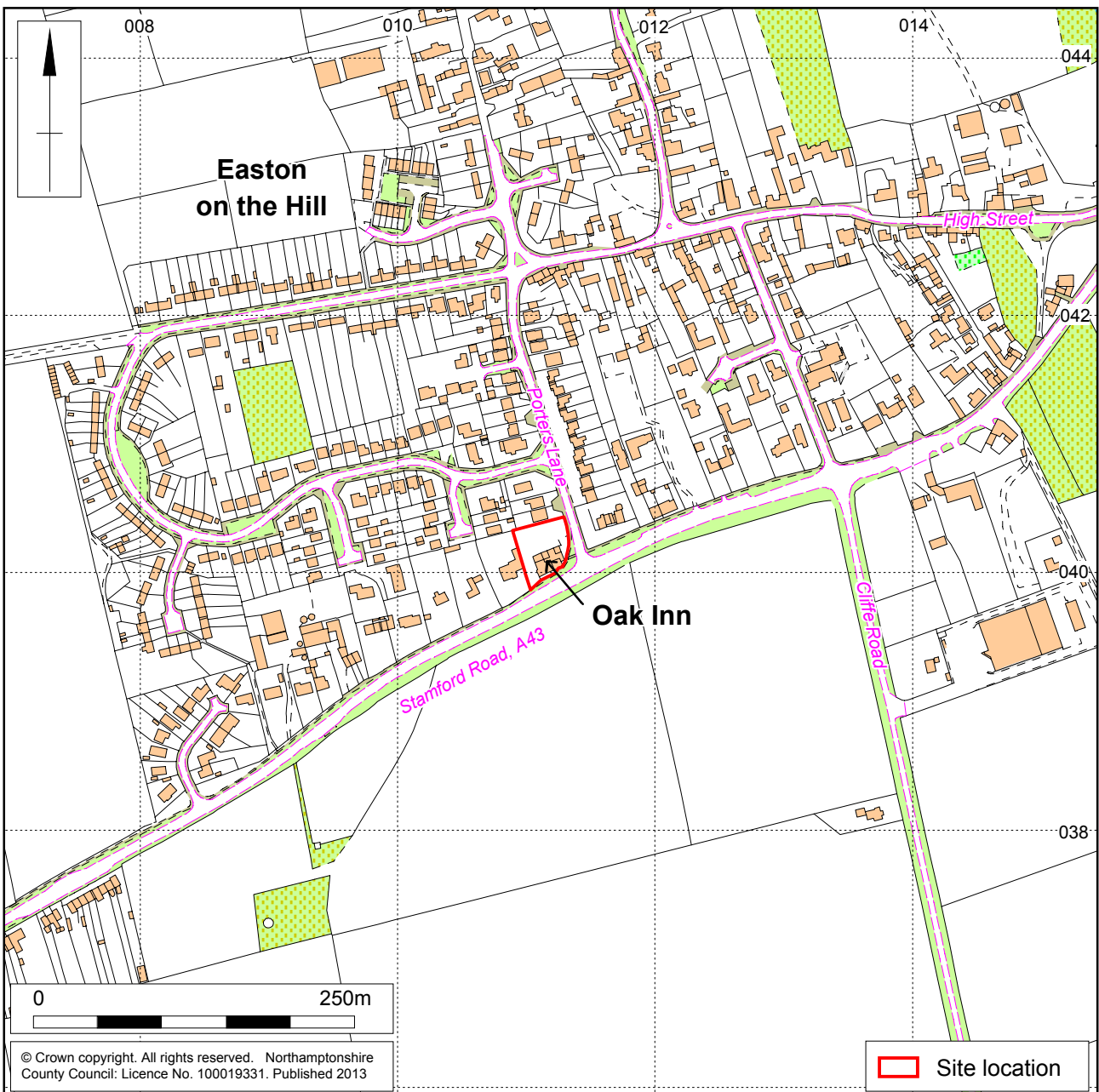
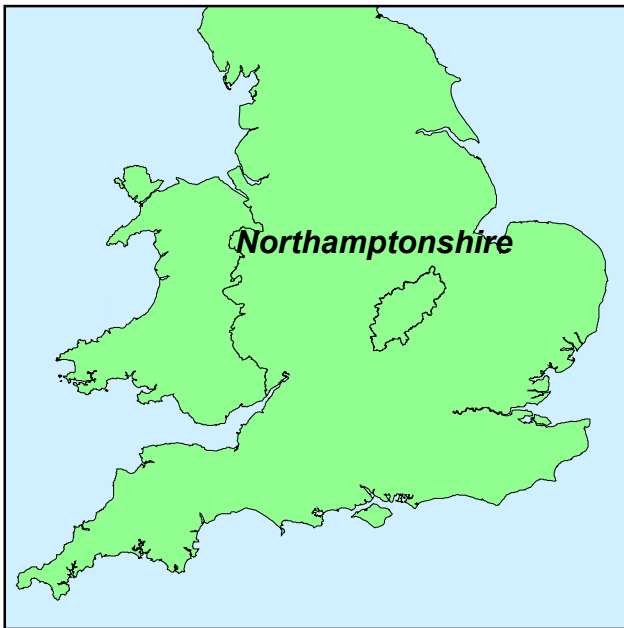
MOLA (formerly trading as Northamptonshire Archaeology) were commissioned by Mr Andrew Pick of Future Plan Ltd to undertake an archaeological building recording and archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis at The Oak Inn, Easton on the Hill, Northamptonshire, ahead of a scheme of development to convert the existing structure to housing and to construct new dwellings to the rear of the existing property (NGR TF 01115 04000, Fig 1 & Fig 2).

The development area comprised a 19th-century house with later extensions with a car park, formerly a garden, to rear of the building. The property was operated as a public house and B and B until recent closure.

The development area containing the surveyed structures lies within the parish of Easton on the Hill, at the southern edge of the village. It is bound by the A43, Stamford Road, to the south and Porters Lane to the east. The rear of the property is bound by neighbouring gardens and housing to the north and west. The site slopes down from north to south and sits at a higher level than Stamford Road and Porters Lane. The ground surface is at approximately 90m aOD. The Oak Inn presents a long elevation to Stamford Road and access to the building was originally from here. A curving boundary wall runs along the eastern limit of the site, following the curve of the junction between Stamford Road and Porters Lane.

The underlying geology of the area is of Lower Lincolnshire Limestone or Collyweston Slate (<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/data/mapViewers/home.html>).

At the time of this survey, the building was disused and empty. Piping had been removed throughout the structure to prevent theft. Radiators had likewise been removed throughout. Very little of the original character of the building survived internally due to 20th-century remodelling which created bedrooms and en-suite bathrooms to serve the B and B.



Scale 1:5000

Site location Fig 1

2 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The level of recording was specified as Level 2 – a descriptive and analytical record (English Heritage 2006, 14).

This is defined by English Heritage as consisting of:

- A written account of the building's origins, development and use
- An account of the evidence on which the analysis is based
- A drawn and photographic record to illustrate the building's appearance and structure.

A site visit was made in September 2013, when the principal exterior elevations were photographed. The interiors were photographically recorded to include structural details that might be lost during the development and notes were made of any features and alterations. Measured plans and elevations were annotated to include any relevant features and alterations.

A further site visit was made in January 2014 after the demolition of the modern extensions to the north of the Inn in order to undertake a Watching Brief during groundworks at the rear car park area ahead of the construction of new dwellings.

The aim of the Watching Brief was to:

- *Determine and understand the nature function and character of the archaeological site in its cultural and environmental setting.*

3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE

Evidence for human activity dating back to the Prehistoric period can be found in and around Easton on the Hill. A pair of prehistoric ring ditches have been revealed as cropmarks west of the settlement, approximately 1km north-west of the site. Cropmarks have also revealed prehistoric square enclosures to the west of the site. Post-medieval trackways and ditches, aligned east to west, can be seen as cropmarks, south of the A43, approximately 50 – 100m south of the site.

1820 Inclosure map (Fig 3)

The general layout of the village and its main road system is recognisable and fairly unchanged compared to the modern layout. This map shows the site located at the extreme south-west edge of the village in an area of open field systems. The quarrying seen on the later 1886 and 1900 Ordnance Survey maps is not seen here. The development area is located in the corner of a field belonging to "James F Newman".

1827 A. Bryant map (Fig 4)

Here too the development area is located in an area of open field systems with no development to the west of Porters Lane. "Stone pits" are marked to the south-west of the village adjacent to Stamford Road.

1886 25" Ordnance Survey map (Figs 5 & 6)

Widespread quarrying for Collyweston Slate took place in the medieval to post-medieval periods around Easton on the Hill and nearby villages such as Colyweston. A lime kiln and quarrying are shown approximately 200m to the south-west of the site on the south side of Stamford road. The development area is shown fully formed with extensions and

an outbuilding to the rear. A small porch or steps is depicted on the front elevation, in line with the original front entrance. Two additional structures are shown abutting the main building to the east, in the space currently occupied by the bar and kitchen. Evidence for these can be seen in the gable scar which is present on the west wall of the bar, below roof height. The lower portion of the south wall of the bar which incorporates a door down to the cellar and is of a different construction to the wall above, is likely to be a remnant of these earlier structures, rebuilt above the cellar door level. This would mean that the eastern half of the cellar is contemporary with these earlier structures rather than the current, modern buildings.

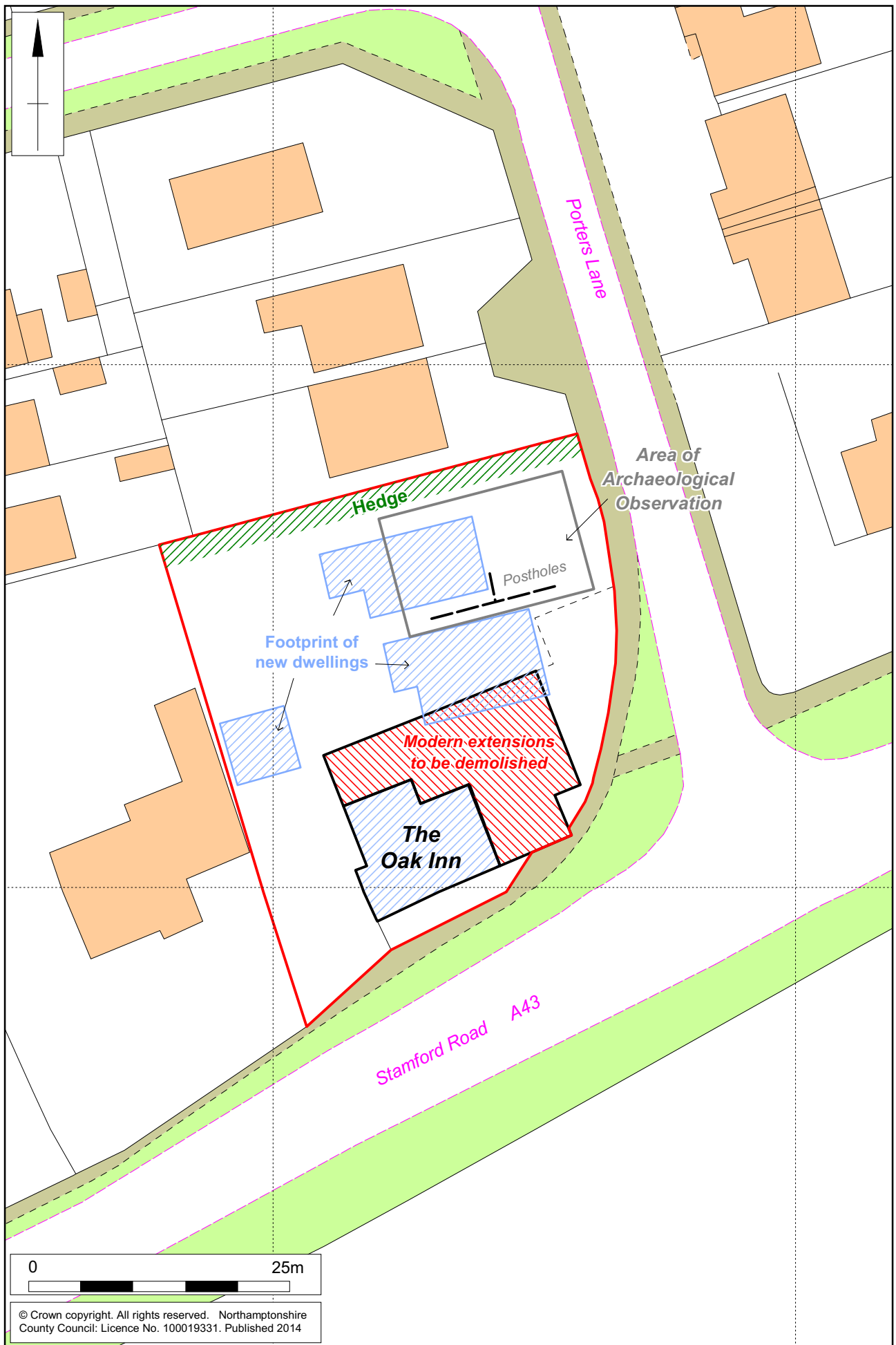
Interestingly, the east-west ridge running the full span of the main building from the east to west gables is not shown on this map. Instead, a north-south divide is shown partway along the building, to the east of the main entrance with a north-south roof from this point. Evidence for re-roofing and alterations can be seen in the roof space.

1900 25" Ordnance Survey map (Fig 7)

The development area has changed very little compared with the 1886 map, retaining all the structures present on the earlier map. The limekiln and area of quarrying shown on the 1886 map are now referred to as "Old Limekiln" and "Old Quarry" indicating that they are disused by this time.

Kelly's Directory, 1924 & 1940

It is clear from both map and documentary evidence that The Oak Inn did not initially operate as a public house or inn and was instead a private residence. It is not labelled as a public house on either the 1886 or 1900 Ordnance Survey maps which do label nearby inns as such. The earliest reference to a public house named The Oak Inn in Easton on the Hill which could be found during research for this work was found in the 1940 directory. No mention of it was found in the 1924 edition, placing the first conversion of the site to a public house between these two dates.



Scale 1:500 (A4)

The development area showing The Oak Inn and area of archaeological observation

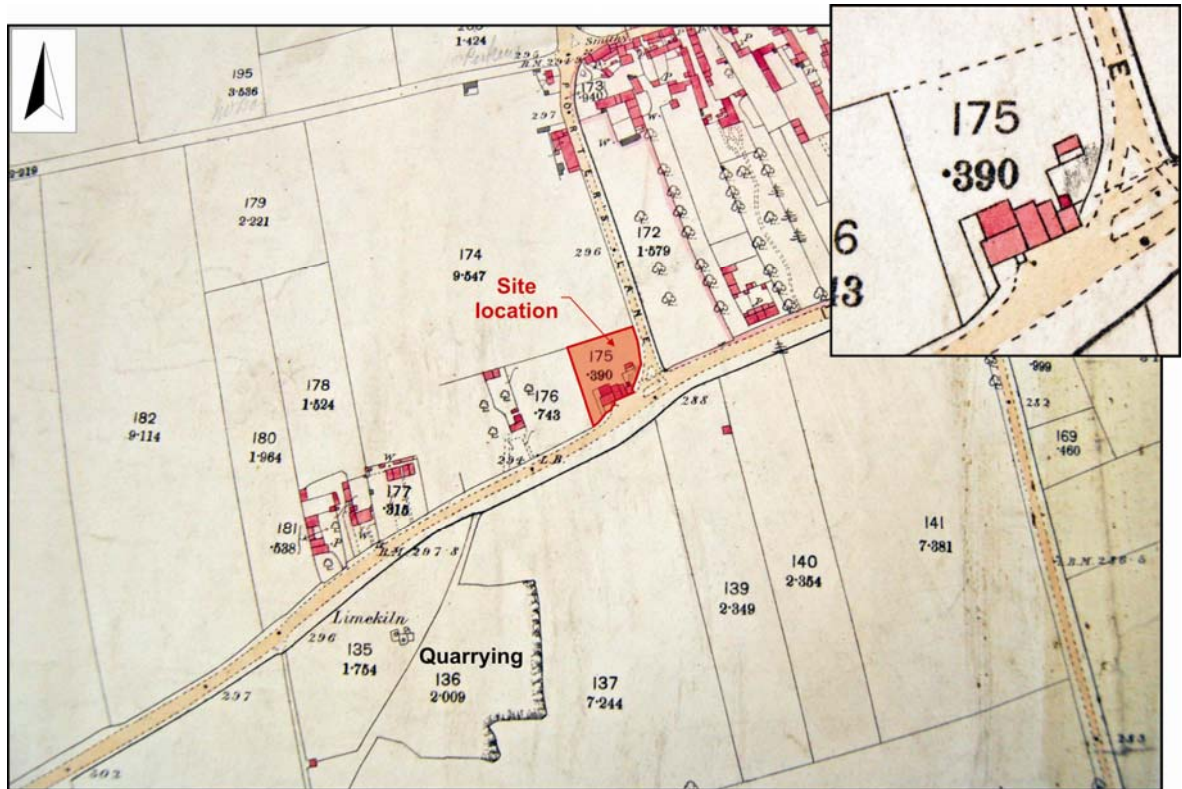
Fig 2



1820 Inclosure plan Fig 3



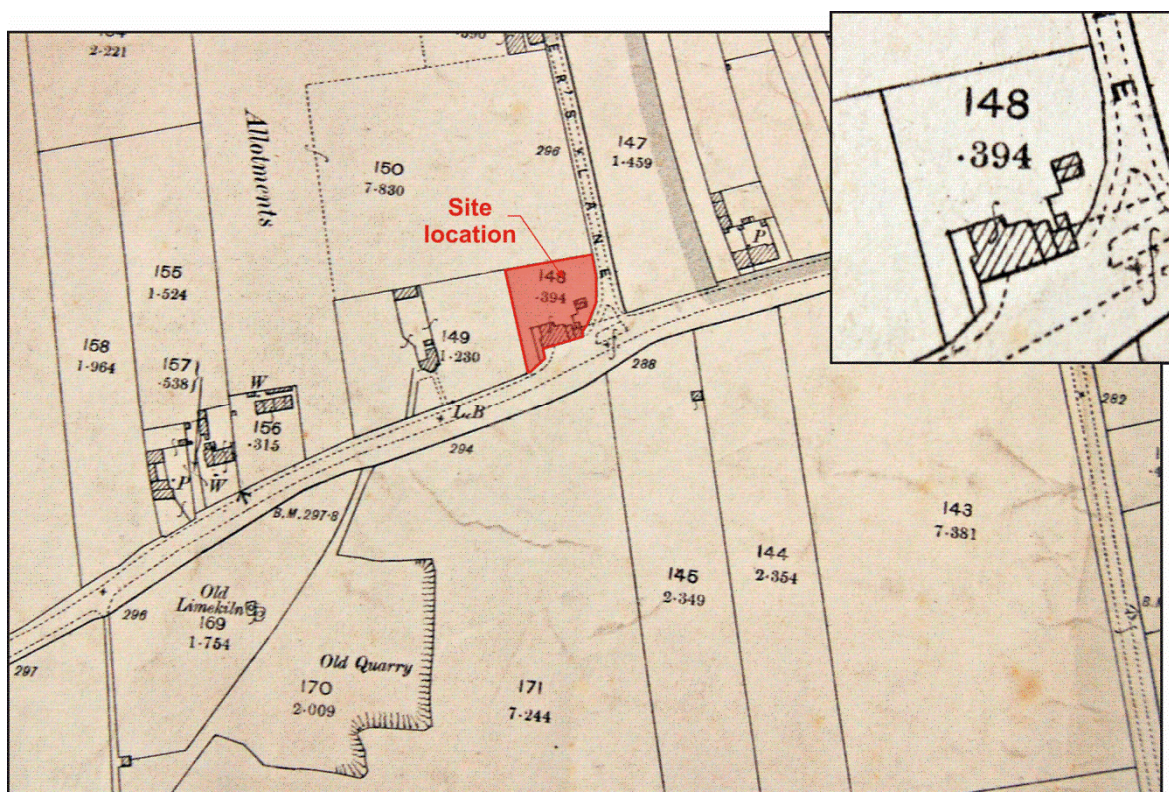
1827 Bryant map Fig 4



1886 25" Ordnance Survey map Fig 5



The 1886 layout overlain onto the current building plan Fig 6



1900 25" Ordnance Survey map Fig 7

4 BUILDING RECORDING

4.1 Exterior

The Oak Inn and associated car park / former garden are raised above the level of the roads and pavements to the east and south (Fig 8). A ramp leads up from Stamford Road to the west of the building into the car park area (Fig 10). A grassy mound raises the ground level from the pavement to the foot of the south frontage. The mound drops down at the eastern extent of the main structure to allow access to the cellar at pavement level (Fig 11). An external wall carries the ground floor level of the main structure around the corner of Porters Lane, becoming a retaining wall with the car park raised above the road and pavement level (Fig 13).

The building fronts onto Stamford Road, presenting a two storey, three bay elevation of coursed limestone with ashlar quoins (Fig 10). These materials are sourced locally and are typical of contemporary architecture in the region. A central doorway raised above ground level, formerly with steps leading up, has been blocked and a modern window inserted (Fig 12). The door opening is arched with ashlar surround. A fanlight, formerly over the door, was retained. The ground and first floor windows all have ashlar surrounds with flat arches and keystones. Modern double-glazed replacements have been fitted into the original window openings. The roof is of Collyweston slate and is hipped at the east and west ends (Figs 8 & 10). A pair of chimneys at the east and west ends of the building are flush with the gable walls (Figs 8 & 10). They are constructed in the same style as the main structure with ashlar quoins. Rainwater goods are of cast iron and polyurethane.

The main building has been extended eastwards along the Stamford Road (Figs 9 & 11). The lower portion of the extension is of an earlier construction than the upper (Fig 8). A door, c1.5m high leads into the cellar. The top of this door is level with the change in build (Fig 11). The 1886 and 1900 Ordnance Survey maps (Figs 6 & 7) show structures in this

area which are on a different layout to those currently present. It is probable that the lower portion of the extension is a remnant of these earlier structures. A course of chamfered limestone blocks separates the two phases. The modern portion of the elevation is constructed of larger, coursed limestone than that below. A pair of steel-framed windows are present at ground floor level looking south from the kitchen. The openings for these windows are dressed to resemble the older style of surround in the main structure.

Viewed from the east, The Oak Inn presents a cascading roof line from the main structure down to the smaller extensions (Figs 8 & 13). A stone retaining wall picks up the ground floor level of the Inn and carries it around the corner of Porters Lane.

To the west of the Inn, an incline provides access from Stamford Road to the rear car park (Fig 14). The western elevation is plain with no windows (Fig 8). A square vent with iron mesh provides ventilation to Store 2. The elevation steps back 0.7m to continue north. Two small windows without dressings are at ground floor level looking out of Bedroom 4 and En-suite 4. At first floor level, a modern replacement window with original surround looks out from the Landing. A chimney once protruded from the roof, to the right of the first floor window. This chimney linked to the fireplace in Bedroom 4. A patch of slightly different roof tiles mark its former location. The roof here is also of collyweston slate, hipped to the north. A modern extension continues the elevation around the rear to the car park.

The north elevation of the Inn, viewed from the car park, presents a series of single storey, modern extensions, largely obscuring the main structure with the roofline cascading down from the west (Figs 8 & 15). The ground surface drops slightly from the car park to the structures with steps down. Originally, access to the building was through the Stamford Road entrance. After conversion to a Public House, access was moved to the south via the car park.

4.2 The modern extensions and alterations

The extensions to the north and east of the main structure are 20th century in date with modern fixtures and fittings (Fig 16). They comprise a bar, kitchen, restaurant with conservatory, two additional bedrooms and a toilet. The bar, kitchen and restaurant occupy the space where 19th-century structures previously stood (Fig 17). It is unknown if these structures were demolished to allow the construction of the modern extensions or if the demolition was carried out in a separate phase of work.

The conversion of the building to a Public House in the early 20th century was accompanied by a phase of widespread alteration to the ground and first floor layouts. The purpose of this alteration was largely to accommodate the creation of bedrooms and en-suite bathrooms along with associated plumbing and electrical fittings. These alterations largely removed all existing internal partitions at ground and first floor levels. A decorative scheme of moulded plaster present throughout the ground floor relates to this phase.

4.3 The Cellar

The cellar is divided into two equal sized rooms, C1 & C2, each measuring c5.2m x 3.7m (Fig 9). Stairs lead into the cellar at the north of room C1 and east of room C2 (Figs 18 and 23). Room C2 also has access to Stamford Road to the south. A fireplace, now blocked is located central to the east wall of room C1 (Fig 19). It is flanked to the north by a small rectangular window, now blocked (Fig 20). A low, square opening has been created to the right of the fireplace, allowing passage between rooms C1 and C2 (Figs 19 and 21).

The blocked window in room C1 previously acted as a light well before the construction of room C2. The 25" Ordnance Survey map of 1886 shows a structure to the east of the main building which would have prevented the light well from functioning. This indicates that the structure was built after the main building. It is therefore probable that the eastern half of the cellar, room C2, was created contemporary with that structure. As previously noted, when viewed externally, the south wall of room C2 is of an earlier construction than that seen at ground floor level. With the creation of the kitchen and bar, a new stair was inserted to the east of room C2 to provide internal access between ground floor and cellar (Fig 23).

4.4 The Inn: Ground Floor

With access formerly to the south, entry to the ground floor is now through the north via an arched opening between the conservatory and western extension (Fig 15). This passage dog-legs to join the main structure. A door here opens onto a north-south corridor (Corridor 1) flanked by toilets. Toilet 1 is outside the limit of the original structure and is a later addition. Toilet 2 is within the extent of the earlier building. Turning right at the end of Corridor 1, a reception joins the bar and restaurant from the B and B. An arched opening to the east allows entry to the Bar (Figs 26 and 27).

The ground floor contains four bedrooms with en-suites. These are accessed via a U-shaped arrangement of corridors (Fig 9). Bedrooms 1, 2 & 3 are south facing with modern double-glazed window replacements set within full height, splayed, recessed openings (Figs 32 and 38). It is likely that these windows would originally have had window seats and box shutters. In contrast to the dressed limestone construction seen outside the building, the internal face of the walls is of coursed limestone rubble, largely plastered over, but has latterly been exposed on the south walls of Bedrooms 1, 2 & 3 (Figs 32 and 38). This stonework would originally been plastered throughout. The fireplaces in Bedrooms 1 and 3 have been blocked and plaster moulding continued over the blocked openings (Fig 34). Bedroom 4 also contains a fireplace, constructed of limestone rubble with a brick header and stone back hearth. This fireplace was blocked and the chimney breast removed at first floor level. A large, square, blocked window was recorded in Bedroom 4 (Fig 43). This would have originally opened out into the car park area but was blocked when the modern extension was built. In the corridor outside Bedroom 4, a blocked doorway formerly allowed access to the car park / garden (Fig 40). Again, this was blocked due to the construction of the modern extension.

The partitions making up the rooms and en-suite bathrooms are entirely modern and no original fixtures or fittings survived.

Access to the cellar, C1, is through Store 1, with a trapdoor covered stair leading down. A stair between Store 2 and Bedroom 4, leads to the first floor (Fig 44).

4.5 The Inn: First Floor

The stair up opens out onto a landing which is lit by a window in the west wall, directly opposite the stair (Figs 44 & 45). Steps to the right of the stair lead into Bedroom 9. A modern, double glazed window overlooks the car park to the north. The west wall would have had a chimney breast leading up from the fireplace in Bedroom 4 but this was demolished at an unknown date, though presumably during conversion to a public house. En-suite 9 is accessed through Bedroom 9 and contains modern fixtures and fittings. A small rectangular window looks east over the roofs of the extensions (Fig 59).

An east – west corridor (Corridor 4, Fig 9) adjoins the landing, leading to a small room, used as an office at the time of this survey. This room is plain, with modern fittings. A small rectangular window looks east (Fig 57). A wide but shallow cupboard with outward

opening double doors is built into the space between the office, landing and stair. Three doorways with wooden panelling lead to the Bedrooms and Store room from the corridor and landing (Fig 9).

Bedroom 7 is the largest room, measuring c5.2m x 3.7m. The chimney breast on the eastern wall is less prominent than in at ground floor level and contains a square fireplace with wooden surround. The fireplace opening has been blocked with green tiles. Bedroom 8, to the west is a smaller room which is accessed via the landing (Fig 48). The chimney breast has been reduced to accommodate the en-suite bathroom and a cupboard (Figs 54-56). The space between the two bedrooms is taken up by a store room and an en-suite bathroom serving Bedroom 7. No original fixtures or fittings survive in any room. Modern, double glazed replacement windows in full height, splayed openings are in Bedrooms 7, 8 and en-suite 7. These are smaller than those at ground floor level and feature wooden window sills.

4.6 The Inn: Attic

The attic was accessed through a hatch in Bedroom 7 though it was not entered due to safety concerns. Only the space above Bedrooms 7 and 8 was visible from here.

The roof is carried on rafters supported by collar beams. Upright posts resting on longitudinal timbers that span the length of the roof are nailed to the collar beams for additional support (Figs 60 & 61). Clapsed purlins also span the length of the roof supported in purlin trenches in the collar beams (Fig 62). Occasional angled braces are also present.

The roof structure shows signs of alterations to its structure. Each collar beam has a defunct purlin trench further outward from the existing purlins. Several of the rafters have been replaced or newer rafters have been added beside the earlier rafters for additional support. The rafters on the south side of the roof pitch are generally of an earlier date than those on the north side. The roof lends weight to the idea that the northern part of the building is of a slightly later date than the main building since it appears to have been modified to accommodate the southern structure.

4.7 Phasing and development

By examining the fabric of the buildings and map evidence, four phases of building and alteration can be extrapolated. The initial three phases took place in a fairly short time in the mid to late 19th century. The final and most invasive phase took place with the conversion of the building to a Public House in the 20th century.

The initial construction of the building in the early – mid 19th century created the main structure of three bays, aligned east - west. This had a small cellar under its eastern half with a small light well in the eastern wall. It is possible that access to the cellar would have been in its present location but external to the main structure. Modern alterations have removed any evidence for the position of the stair that served this building. Soon after, prior to 1886, a larger structure was built against the northern wall of the building and the roof was altered to accommodate it. The north wall of the original building was altered at ground and first floor levels to allow access between the two buildings. The new openings were panelled at first floor level.

The third phase of alterations, also prior to 1886 saw the construction of outbuildings to the east of the main structures. The cellar was doubled in size and the light well blocked. A new cellar access was built opening onto Stamford Road. The scar of the gable for one of these outbuildings can be seen in the roof space over the modern bar on the former eastern external wall.

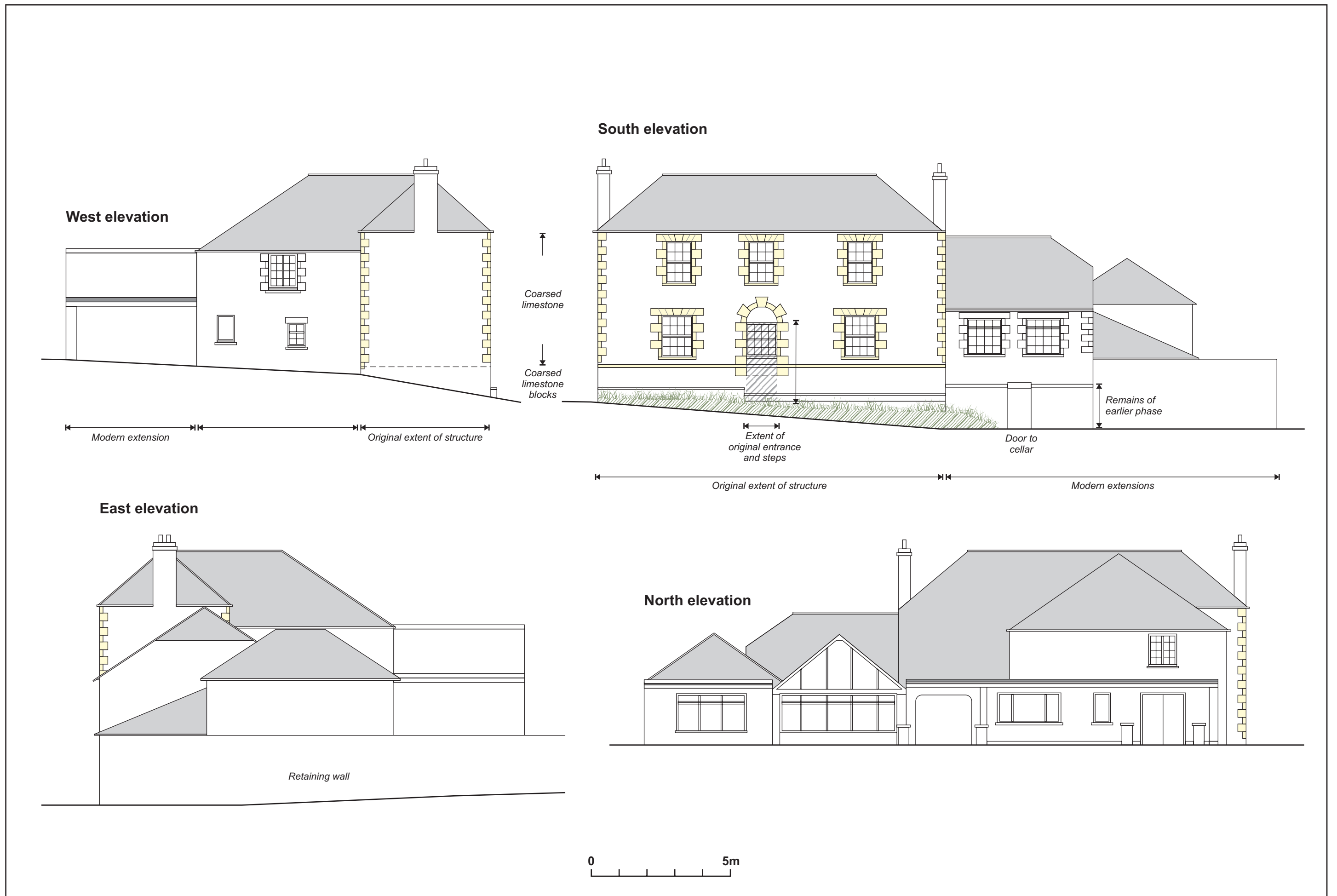
The final and most invasive series of alterations took place in the 20th century with the conversion of the building to a Public House. The ground floor and first floors were almost

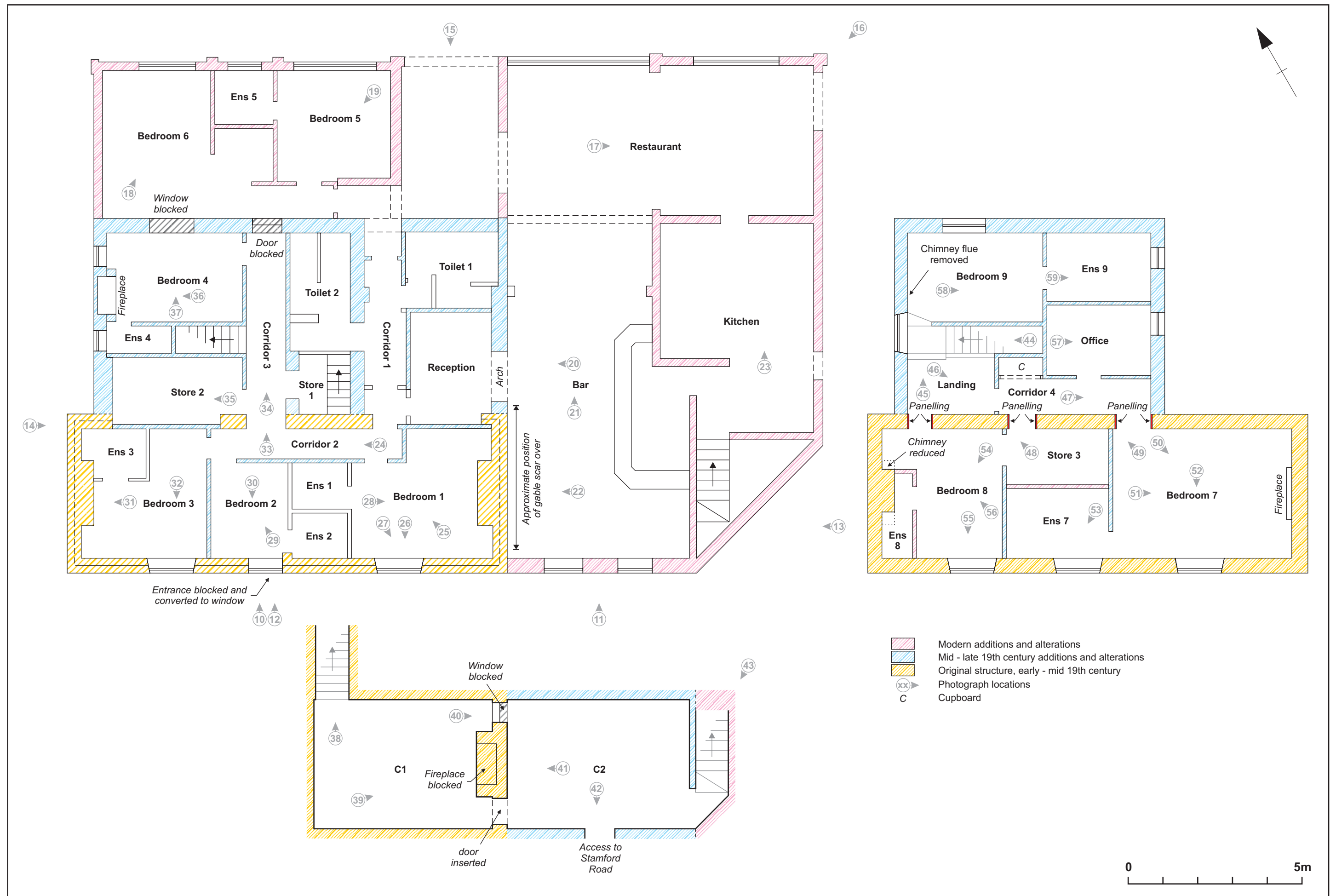
entirely remodelled to accommodate new rooms and the outbuildings demolished. All original windows were replaced with double-glazed ones throughout.

5 DISCUSSION

The original construction of The Oak Inn dates to the early-mid 19th century. Originally, a three bay structure, aligned east – west and fronting onto Stamford Road, the site was subject to perhaps three or four phases of alteration up to modern times. These alterations took the form of interior rearrangements and remodelling of layout and the construction and demolition of additional structures abutting the original building. The final phase of alterations which saw the conversion of the building to a Public House and B and B, almost entirely remodelled the layout throughout the structure. The proposed scheme of works will see the demolition of the modern extensions to the rear of the property and restore the building to its original footprint.

The Oak Inn is typical of the contemporary architectural style in the region, utilising locally available materials such as Collyweston slate. Very similar structures can be seen both in Easton on the Hill, nearby Collyweston and Stamford.







The south elevation from Stamford Road Fig 10



The modern extension with change in phase, level with the top of the cellar door Fig 11



Detail of the blocked door with replacement window and fanlight over Fig 12



The east elevation from Porters Lane Fig 13



The west elevation, looking east Fig 14



The south elevation viewed from the car park Fig 15



The modern extensions, looking south-west Fig 16



View within the Restaurant, looking east Fig 17



The Cellar, the stairs down from Store 1, looking north Fig 18



The Cellar, Room C1, the blocked fireplace, looking north-east Fig 19



The Cellar, Room C1, the blocked window, looking east Fig 20



The Cellar, Room C2, looking west Fig 21



The Cellar, Room C2, the door to Stamford Road, looking south Fig 22



The Cellar, the stair from the Kitchen Fig 23



Bedroom 6, looking north-east Fig 24



Bedroom 5, looking south-west Fig 25



The west wall of the Bar with arched opening to Reception Fig 26



The Bar, looking north Fig 27



The scar of a former gable visible in the roof space over the Bar Fig 28



View of the Kitchen, looking north Fig 29



Corridor 2, looking west Fig 30



Bedroom 1, doorways to Corridor 1 and En-suite 1 Fig 31



Bedroom 1, the south elevation, looking south Fig 32



Bedroom 1, detail of the base of the window Fig 33



Bedroom 1, view of the fireplace, looking east Fig 34



Bedroom 2, looking north-west Fig 35



Bedroom 2, looking south Fig 36



Bedroom 3, looking west Fig 37



Bedroom 3, the south elevation, looking south Fig 38



Decorative moulding over the junction of Corridors 2 and 3, looking north Fig 39



Corridor 3 with blocked door at the north end Fig 40



Store 2, looking west Fig 41



Bedroom 4, the fireplace, looking west Fig 42



Bedroom 4, the blocked window, looking north Fig 43



The stair leading up to the First Floor Fig 44



The First Floor landing, looking west Fig 45



The First Floor Landing, looking south-east Fig 46



Corridor 4, looking west Fig 47



Store 3, showing the panelling between Corridor 4 and Bedroom 8, looking north-west
Fig 48



The doorway to Bedroom 7, showing panelling Fig 49



Bedroom 7, looking south-east Fig 50



Bedroom 7, the fireplace, looking east Fig 51



Bedroom 7, the south elevation, looking south Fig 52



En-suite 7, looking south-west Fig 53



Bedroom 8, looking south-west Fig 54



Bedroom 8, looking south Fig 55



Bedroom 8, showing En-suite 8, looking north-west Fig 56



The Office, looking east Fig 57



Bedroom 9, looking east Fig 58



En-suite 9, looking east Fig 59



The Attic, looking north-west from Bedroom 7 (note the difference in timbers on either side of the ridge) Fig 60



The Attic, looking east from Bedroom 7 Fig 61



Detail of the collar beams and clasped purlins Fig 62



Detail of the clasped purlins and collar beams (note the differences in timbers) Fig 63

The archaeological observation by Anne Foard

The eastern side of the car park to the rear of The Oak Inn, Easton on the Hill was stripped of overburden ready for the digging of footings for two dwellings (Figs 2, 64 & 67).

The natural substrate consisted of mid orange-brown sandy clay with frequent fragments of ironstone at a depth of approximately 0.50m below the tarmac surface. This was overlain by a natural light to mid orange-brown sandy clay with few ironstone fragments and rounded gravel, 0.10-0.15m thick. A thin layer of mid to dark, grey-brown clayey loam subsoil with gravel and limestone fragments overlay the sandy clay and was 0.08m thick. Dark grey-brown topsoil was present over the whole stripped area. It was 0.26m thick but may have been truncated during the preparation for the laying of the car park. The topsoil was overlain by a thin layer of gravel which may have been an original car park surface. This in turn was overlain by a thin layer of tarmac and remained the car park surface up until the stripping for the house footings.

Two lines of modern postholes, some retaining the remains of wooden posts, were observed (Figs 2 and 65). These were likely the remains of a modern garden fence which divided the rear garden from the house. Scattered modern rubbish pits containing pieces of asbestos sheeting and bicycle and pushchair parts were also observed. Pieces of ceramic roof tile and glass bottles could be seen within the topsoil and subsoil.

Three pet burials, most likely cats, were uncovered approximately central to the area of stripping.

No artefacts of an early provenance were discovered.



The Watching Brief area, looking west Fig 64



The Watching Brief area, looking north, showing postholes Fig 65



The Watching Brief area, looking south Fig 66



The Watching Brief area, looking east Fig 67

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