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LEVEL 2 HISTORIC BUILDING RECORD

In respect of

The Toll House, Folly Bridge, Oxford, OX1 4LB

On behalf of

John Salter

AHC REF: PM/9815

Date: October 2019

www.assetheritage.co.uk

Wolfson College, Linton Road, Oxford, OX2 6UD T: 01865 310563

Registration No: 07502061

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FIGURES

Fig.1. Site location plan

1.0 INTRODUCTION, SUMMARY, AND SCOPE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report has been prepared and written by Patrick Christopher Maguire, Associate Director at Asset Heritage Consulting Ltd., on behalf of John Salter, the owner of the Toll House, Folly Bridge.
- 1.2 The Toll House was erected in 1844 by the Oxford-based builder James Gardiner. It is located on Folly Bridge, which was rebuilt in its current location in 1825-7.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to discharge Condition 6 of listed building consent 18/03326/LBC, which involves the conversion of the Toll House for use as a café. This condition notes that:

The development hereby approved shall only take place when the applicant has secured a programme of architectural recording of the interior and exterior by measurement, drawing and photography before work commences on site. The recording shall be in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The record shall be to level 2 recording level as set out in Historic England's 'Understanding Historic Buildings, A Guide to Good Recording Practice', revised edition.

One bound copy shall be submitted to the City Archaeologist for the Heritage Environment Record to a format set out by the City Archaeologist; please contact David Radford, dradford@oxford.gov.uk.

Reason: To preserve by record the that will be affected by the works hereby granted consent/permission in accordance with policies HE2 and HE4 of the Adopted Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016 and policy CS18 of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026.

-
- 1.4 To that end, Asset Heritage produced a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) in September 2019 for a Level 2 record. This was informally approved by the relevant Council officers in the same month and forms the brief for this record.
- 1.5 This analysis and photographic record is based on a site inspection carried out in early October 2019. The written record contained in this report is based on the site visit and subsequent documentary research.

Location and designation details

- 1.6 The Toll House is located at SP 51427 05588. The site's street address is: Old Toll House, Folly Bridge, Oxford, Oxfordshire, OX1 4LB.
- 1.7 The Toll House, along with the adjacent Folly Bridge, was added to the statutory list at Grade II in 1954 (list entry: 1319913). The Historic England list entry is included as **Appendix 4**. The site also falls within Oxford City Council's Central (University & City) Conservation Area.

Authorship and archive

- 1.8 This record has been written by Patrick Maguire, Associate Director at Asset Heritage Consulting Ltd. in October 2019. As per the WSI, a bound, printed copy will be deposited with Oxfordshire History Centre, St. Luke's Church, Temple Road, Cowley, and another with the City Council HER. A digital copy of this record alongside separate digital copies of the constituent photographs will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (<https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk>).

2.0 SUMMARY HISTORICAL BACKGROUND & DESCRIPTION

Historical Background

- 2.1 Folly Bridge is situated in the location of the medieval Grand Pont. Sherwood & Pevsner (1974, 19) note how that causeway was built in the early 12th century but the list description for the bridge (**Appendix 4**) correctly notes how there was actually a Saxon causeway here, discovered in 1971 (despite the 1974 publication date for Sherwood & Pevsner, Pevsner wrote the section on the city of Oxford in 1968), which was bridged by the Normans in the late 11th century. As noted in the list description, the medieval bridge was also known as 'Friar Bacon's Bridge'.
- 2.2 By the 16th century, the causeway contained more than 40 arches and stretched along most of Abingdon Road. Folly Bridge crossed the main stream of the river on four narrow arches (Chance *et al.*, 1979, 284-95).
- 2.3 The location of the bridge, until 1889 wholly within Berkshire and partly within the city, led to various disputes over the responsibility for its repair that ran over several centuries. Resolution came in a lawsuit of 1813, when Berkshire agreed to pay half the cost of the repairs then needed, while the city accepted all future liability (*Ibid.*).
- 2.4 However, the medieval bridge proved to be beyond repair and in 1815 an Act was obtained for its rebuilding. The existing stone bridge, with its three arches, was erected in 1825-7 by Ebenezer Perry (Sherwood & Pevsner, 1974, 327).
- 2.5 The replacement bridge, alongside a new river channel cut through Meadow Island, cost over £16,000 and this was to be paid through tolls, with the Folly Bridge trustees authorised to share tolls with the Hinksey Hill turnpike trust (Chance *et al.*, *op. cit.*).
- 2.6 Indeed, the road from Folly Bridge to Abingdon and from Hinksey Hill to Foxcombe Hill had been turnpiked in 1755-6 and it was from 1815 that the Hinksey Hill trust shared its toll-gate near the bridge with the Folly Bridge trustees. (*Ibid.*).

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- 2.7 The toll gate originally sat at the southern end of the causeway but it was moved to the northern end of the bridge in 1844 in order, '*to intercept traffic from the new railway station off Abingdon Road*' (*Ibid.*).
- 2.8 This resulted in the erection of the existing Toll House that year. The Toll House was built by James Gardiner (1798-1882) (Sherwood & Pevsner, *op. cit.*), an Oxford-based builder also responsible for Edward Blore's 1838 replacement cupola at the Sheldonian Theatre and George Gilbert Scott's 1861 restoration of the University Church of St. Mary.
- 2.9 The building's original function was short-lived, as the Folly Bridge trustees' loan was almost paid off by 1850 and the bridge freed of tolls that year, with the Abingdon Road disturnpiked in 1867 (Chance *et al.*, *op. cit.*).
- 2.10 It seems that following the end of the toll on the bridge, the old Toll House was used as a shop. Travelling southwards from the city, *Kelly's* for 1907 lists the first two occupants of the western side of Folly Bridge as John G. Pickett, a music seller, and George Harris, a boat builder. This could relate to the upper floor being used as a shop and the lower as a boat store or workshop, as was the case later in the 20th century, but it seems more likely that the Toll House was in a single use.
- 2.11 A late 19th-/early 20th-century drawing (**Appendix 3**) of the building which was included in the recent applications 18/03325/FUL & 18/03326/LBC indicates that the external character of the building by that stage was largely as existing, including the form of the timber shop frontage (although this has clearly been renewed since).
- 2.12 The main exceptions are on the southern side of the building, where there are now steps down to the yard, with a timber-built boatshed here. The drawing at **Appendix 3** shows this as an open garden, presumably accessed from the basement of the Toll House itself, suggesting that there would have been internal stairs at that point (if so, no elements of these remain). The drawing suggests no access to the garden from either the yard to the west or the street to the east, making it unlikely that the lower and upper parts of the building were in separate use at that stage.

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- 2.13 As will be clear from the architectural description below, the building has been the subject of substantial alteration internally, with its structure incorporating several steel beams and only the majority of the outer shell and parts of the roof structure pre-dating the late 20th-century.
- 2.14 Much of this alteration likely relates to a series of 1983 planning applications for '*alterations and refurbishment* (83/00544/L) and for a '*New west elevation and new double doors at basement level to south elevation*' (83/00545/NFH). As discussed below, differences between the eaves brackets and windows on the west elevation and those elsewhere on the building favour the proposition that the rebuilding of that elevation allowed under this consent was, indeed, implemented.
- 2.15 The steel lintel to the double-door opening on the southern elevation (now contained within the boatshed at basement level) is of the same character as the steels found within the main portion of the building, suggesting that they are contemporary with the creation of this opening and presumably relate to the rebuilding of the western elevation.
- 2.16 The basement had been in use as a boat store by the late 1990s, as indicated by a 1998 planning application for, '*Change of use of basement from disused boat store to mixed use as tea-room*'.
- 2.17 The ground floor (i.e. at street level) has recently been in use as a convenience store. This use has since ceased and consent was recently granted for the conversion of the building for use as a café (18/03325/FUL & 18/03326/LBC).

Description

- 2.18 The Toll House is constructed in an Italianate style, with round-headed windows, bracketed eaves, and stucco facing. It reads as single storey from the street but is built into the slope, incorporating a basement floor.
- 2.19 The building is arranged simply as a single range running north-south, parallel with the bridge, but a bracketed gable on the eastern elevation gives the impression of a 'cross-wing' at the southern end.

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- 2.20 The building is largely constructed in brick, faced in stucco, although elements of the basement are constructed in stone (see below).
- 2.21 The principal, eastern elevation incorporates the aforementioned gable, which is built out in timber with moulded brackets and a recessed tympanum. There are three round-headed windows, which are fixed timber casements with marginal glazing. Engaged piers at the outer edges of the pedimented bay incorporate sloping bases.
- 2.22 The bracketed eaves continue around the building and the bay to the south incorporates a timber shop frontage. This is a canted bay with round-headed windows and a central door. As noted above (and as shown on **Appendix 3**), this shop frontage was in place by the late 19th-/early 20th-century but it has clearly been renewed since.
- 2.23 Indeed, the lintel is visible internally and appears to be a boxed-in steel (although it has not been possible to verify this, as it is only visible looking up from the basement), suggesting that the whole shop frontage may have been rebuilt in the late 20th century.
- 2.24 The northern elevation also incorporates a projecting gable and the paired, round-headed windows here retain their original un-horned sashes (some of the glass has been replaced with Georgian-wired glass) with marginal lights. Note the deep, stepped reveals to these windows and the plat-band that continues onto the jamb between the two.
- 2.25 Compare this with the windows on the eastern elevation, where the deep reveals remain but the plat-band does not continue across the jambs, suggesting this has been rebuilt or refaced at some point.
- 2.26 Also, note the western elevation, which the planning history indicates was rebuilt in the early 1980s (see paragraph 2.14 above), where the windows are set within very shallow reveals (and are boarded internally), with modern timber cills, and the moulded brackets to the eaves have a deeper profile than those elsewhere on the building.

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- 2.27 The southern elevation is now only visible at ground-floor level, due to the construction of the boatshed against the lower level, almost certainly in the 1980s. The upper part of this elevation was likely originally identical to the northern elevation but now retains only a single window and a door.
- 2.28 The original, unhorned sash window with marginal glazing remains in place and the location of an adjacent blocked window can clearly be seen in the stucco. The blocking of this window presumably relates to the insertion of the adjacent doorway, which must relate to the formation of the steps and boatshed in the late 20th century. The iron railings at the top of the stairs, shown on the late 19th-/early 20th-century plan at **Appendix 3**, have been adapted to incorporate a gateway but are otherwise identical to those found on the other side of the bridge.
- 2.29 The steps are constructed in brick with concrete treads and are built against the stone wall of the bridge. The boatshed is constructed in match-boarded timber built onto the brick balustrade.
- 2.30 There is a small yard at the base of the steps, with metal railings blocking access to the river. A modern, 'Fletton-type' brick wall marks the western boundary of the yard and provides the western wall of the boatshed.
- 2.31 Moving into the building, the boatshed is a simple, late 20th-century timber structure erected in the gap between the stairs and boundary wall. It has a concrete screed floor and an internal ramp to the entrance.
- 2.32 There is access into the area beneath the stairs from the main basement. This appears to have been used as a storage area but has an unmade, dirt floor. Access between the boatshed and the basement of the Toll House is provided by a double door opening, supported by a steel lintel.
- 2.33 The boathouse has been recently stripped out, including the floorboards and there is therefore no access to the (upper) ground floor, although it is visible from the basement.

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- 2.34 The basement is currently a single, open space, although 'existing' plans accompanying the recent planning application (**Appendix 2**) indicate that there were recently partitions on its northern side. Examination of the walls shows that the basement is constructed of brick (with a central timber rail) on the southern side but rubblestone on the northern side, raising the possibility that the building incorporates the basement of an earlier structure on the northern side.
- 2.35 Although floorboards have been removed, the joists to the ground floor remain and are all modern, circular-sawn timbers resting on late 20th-century brickwork. The remaining ground-floor partition, which is constructed in concrete blockwork, is supported on a steel beam and no doubt dates from the 1980s' alterations.
- 2.36 The ground floor is now divided into two spaces by this partition (although the existing plans accompanying the recent planning application – **Appendix 2** – indicate that until recently there was a further partition on the southern side of the building). The dividing partition blocks the original chimney, which, although it remains externally, has been truncated and sealed on its underside with blockwork resting atop the central partition and an inserted steel tie beam to the south. This suggests that there was likely originally a partition on the line of the modern blockwork partition, incorporating a chimneybreast/fireplaces.
- 2.37 There is nothing of interest remaining at ground-floor level. The ceiling above has been removed and joists on the eastern side of the building appear to be of 19th-century date while those on the western side are modern, presumably relating to the rebuilding of the western elevation in the 1980s. The earlier timbers show lath marks. As mentioned at paragraph 2.36 above, there is a further steel at tie-beam level, to the south of the central partition.
- 2.38 Other than this steel, the roof structure incorporates a mix of 19th-century and late 20th-century timbers, the latter of which have been 'bodged' around the retained element of the stack. Trusses are 'king posts' of the type commonly found from the late 18th-century onwards, with raking struts resting on a splayed base.

3.0 REFERENCES

Chance, E., Colvin, C., Cooper, J., Day, C.J., Hassall, T.G., Jessup, M., & Selwyn, N., 'Communications' in Crossley, A., & Elrington, C.R., (eds.), *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 4, the City of Oxford* (London, 1979) 284-95.

Sherwood, J., & Pevsner, N., *The Buildings of England: Oxfordshire* (Harmondsworth, 1974).

Original documentary sources and planning records are fully referenced in the text.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Photographic Record

20cm & 40cm ranging poles are used where both feasible and helpful

External Shots in Context

Please see Plates 11 & 13 for general views from the west

- Plate 1: The Toll House from the southern end of Folly Bridge
- Plate 2: The Toll House from the south
- Plate 3: The Toll House from the south-east
- Plate 4: The Toll House from the eastern side of Folly Bridge
- Plate 5: The Toll House from the north

Elevations

Northern elevation

- Plate 6: The northern elevation of the Toll House (detail)
- Plate 7: Detail of window on northern elevation

Eastern elevation

Please see Plate 4 for general view of the eastern elevation

- Plate 8: Detail of windows on eastern elevation
- Plate 9: Detail of brackets/soffit to eaves and gable on eastern elevation
- Plate 10: Detail of shop frontage on eastern elevation

Western elevation

- Plate 11: General view of western elevation. Note the eaves brackets have a deeper profile than on the other elevations
- Plate 12: Detail of modern windows with shallow reveals on western elevation

Southern elevation, yard, and stairs

- Plate 13: The southern elevation from the south-west. The roof of the boatshed is to the right
- Plate 14: The southern elevation from the south
- Plate 15: Detail of window on southern elevation
- Plate 16: Blocked window opening on southern elevation
- Plate 17: The bridge railings have been converted into a gateway, presumably when the steps were erected
- Plate 18: Late 20th-century steps in the yard with boathouse to the left

Plate 19: The boatshed and yard

Plate 20: The boatshed and steps

Internal photographs

Boatshed

Plate 21: The boatshed looking southwards

Plate 22: The boatshed looking northwards towards the Toll House basement

Under-stair area

Plate 23: General view looking southwards

Toll House basement

Plate 24: General view looking northwards, note the transition to stone construction level with change in wall thickness to the left

Plate 25: General view looking southwards. Note the steel lintel to the boatshed opening and, to the left of this, access to the under-stair area

Plate 26: Detail of brickwork, with central timber rail, at southern end of basement

Plate 27: Detail of rubblestone construction at the northern end of the basement. Note the modern joists above resting on a course of late 20th-century brickwork

Views of ground floor from basement

Plate 28: Modern joists to ground floor

Plate 29: Steel beam supporting blockwork partition to ground floor

Plate 30: Blockwork partition to ground floor, from south. Note the steel beam above. The concrete slats to the north of the beam (bottom of image) support the truncated stack

Plate 31: General view of roof structure and ceiling joists from northern side of partition. Note the 'bodged' timbers around the truncated stack

Plate 32: General view of the southern room. Note the ceiling joists have been replaced on the western side of this area (right of image)

Plate 33: View of shop frontage on northern side of the eastern elevation from inside. What appears to be a boxed-in steel lintel suggests that the whole shop frontage may have been replaced in the 20th century

Plate 34: Detail of truss

External Shots in Context

Please see Plates 11 & 13 for general views from the west



Plate 1. The Toll House from the southern end of Folly Bridge



Plate 2. The Toll House from the south



Plate 3. The Toll House from the south-east



Plate 4. The Toll House from the eastern side of Folly Bridge



Plate 5. The Toll House from the north

Elevations

Northern elevation



Plate 6. The northern elevation of the Toll House (detail)



Plate 7. Detail of window on northern elevation

Eastern elevation

Please see Plate 4 for general view of the eastern elevation



Plate 8. Detail of windows on eastern elevation



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Western elevation



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Southern elevation, yard, and stairs



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Plate 16. Blocked window opening on southern elevation



Plate 17. The bridge railings have been converted into a gateway, presumably when the steps were erected



Plate 18. Late 20th-century steps in the yard with boathouse to the left



Plate 19. The boatshed and yard



Plate 20. The boatshed and steps

Internal photographs

Boatshed

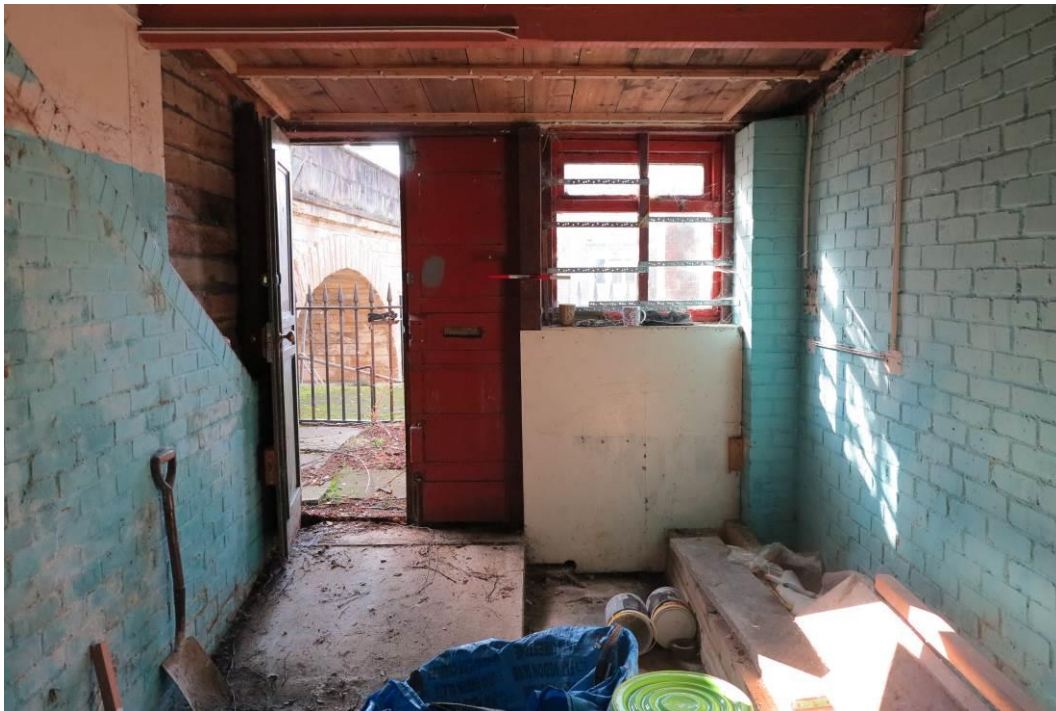


Plate 21. The boatshed looking southwards



Plate 22. The boatshed looking northwards towards the Toll House basement

Under-stair area



Plate 23. General view looking southwards

Toll House basement



Plate 24. General view looking northwards, note the transition to stone construction level with change in wall thickness to the left



Plate 25. General view looking southwards. Note the steel lintel to the boatshed opening and, to the left of this, access to the under-stair area



Plate 26. Detail of brickwork, with central timber rail, at southern end of basement



Plate 27. Detail of rubblestone construction at the northern end of the basement. Note the modern joists above resting on a course of late 20th-century brickwork

Views of ground floor from basement



Plate 28. Modern joists to ground floor



Plate 29. Steel beam supporting blockwork partition to ground floor



Plate 30. Blockwork partition to ground floor, from south. Note the steel beam above. The concrete slats to the north of the beam (bottom of image) support the truncated stack



Plate 31. General view of roof structure and ceiling joists from northern side of partition. Note the 'bodged' timbers around the truncated stack



Plate 32. General view of the southern room. Note the ceiling joists have been replaced on the western side of this area (right of image)



Plate 33. View of shop frontage on northern side of the eastern elevation from inside. What appears to be a boxed-in steel lintel suggests that the whole shop frontage may have been replaced in the 20th century



Plate 34. Detail of truss

Appendix 2

Survey Drawings

Note that these plans show the building in January 2018, some time prior to the creation of the photographic record. At the time of the photographic survey (early October 2019), the floor-boards to the ground floor had been removed, as had the internal partitions at the rear (north) of the basement and at the WC partition at the south of the ground floor. The building had been stripped of internal fittings and finishes and only the central dividing partition remained on the ground floor



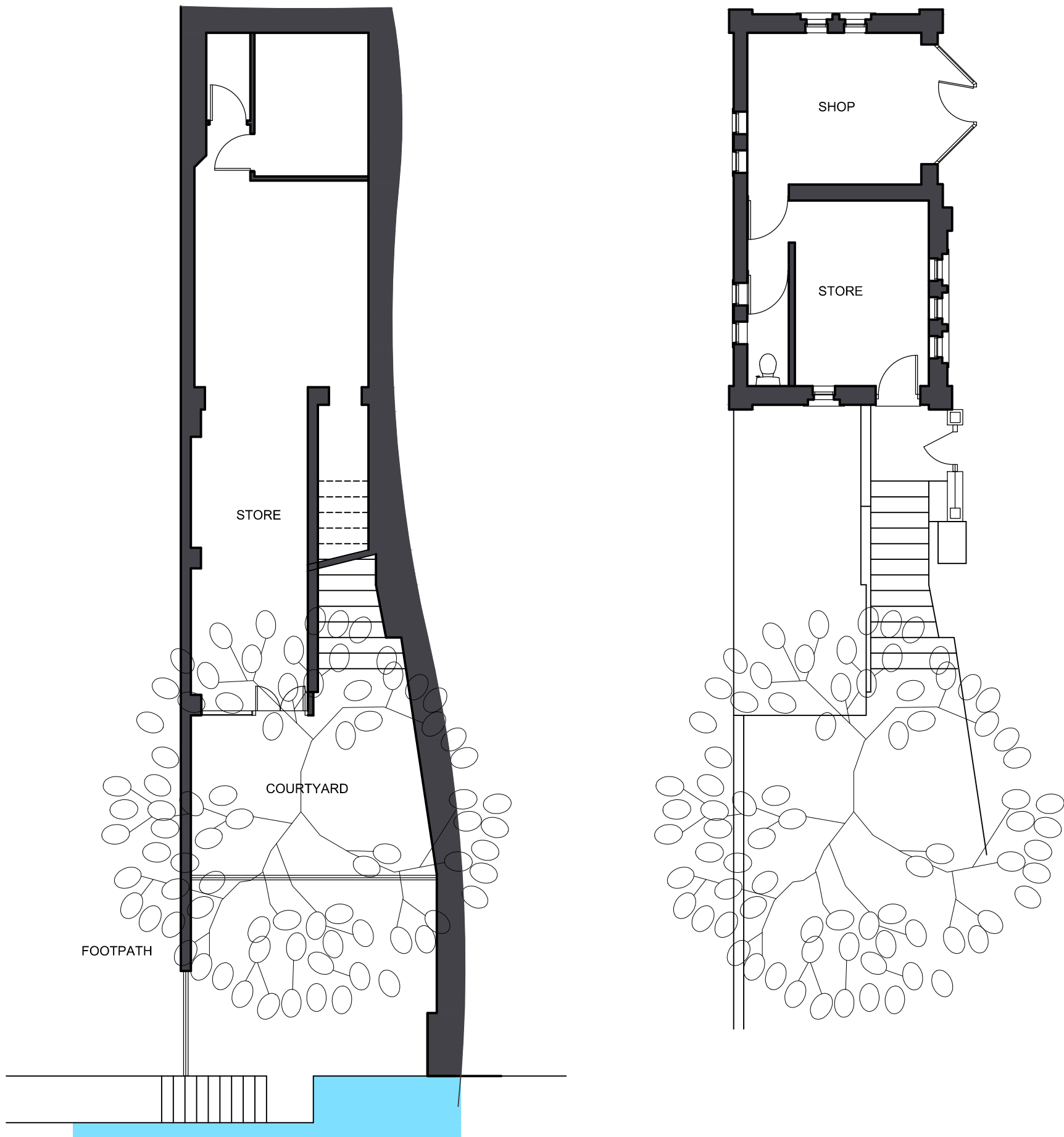
STREET ELEVATION



SIDE ELEVATION



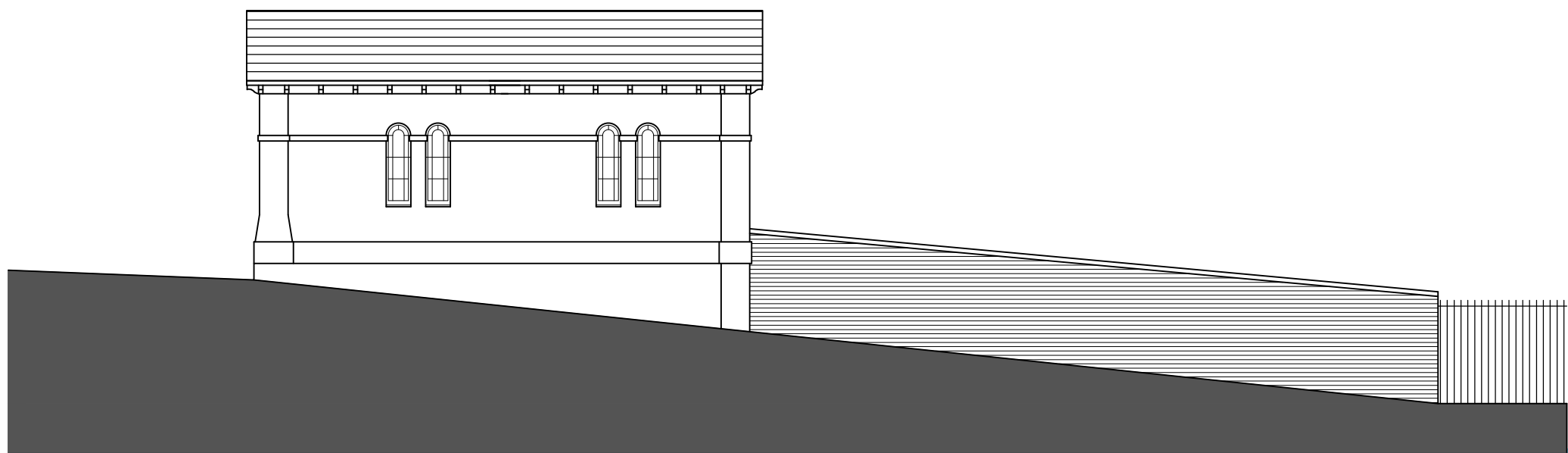
SIDE ELEVATION



GROUND FLOOR
PLANS AS EXISTING @ 1:100

FIRST FLOOR

0 1 2 3 4 5 10
Scale (metres)



REAR ELEVATION



FRONT ELEVATION

0 Scale (metres) 5

Revisions

Project.

Conversion of
Folly Bridge Tollhouse
into Cafe

Drawing title.

Existing Plans & Elevations

Scale: 1:100

Date: January 2018

Drawn: DW

Drawing No.

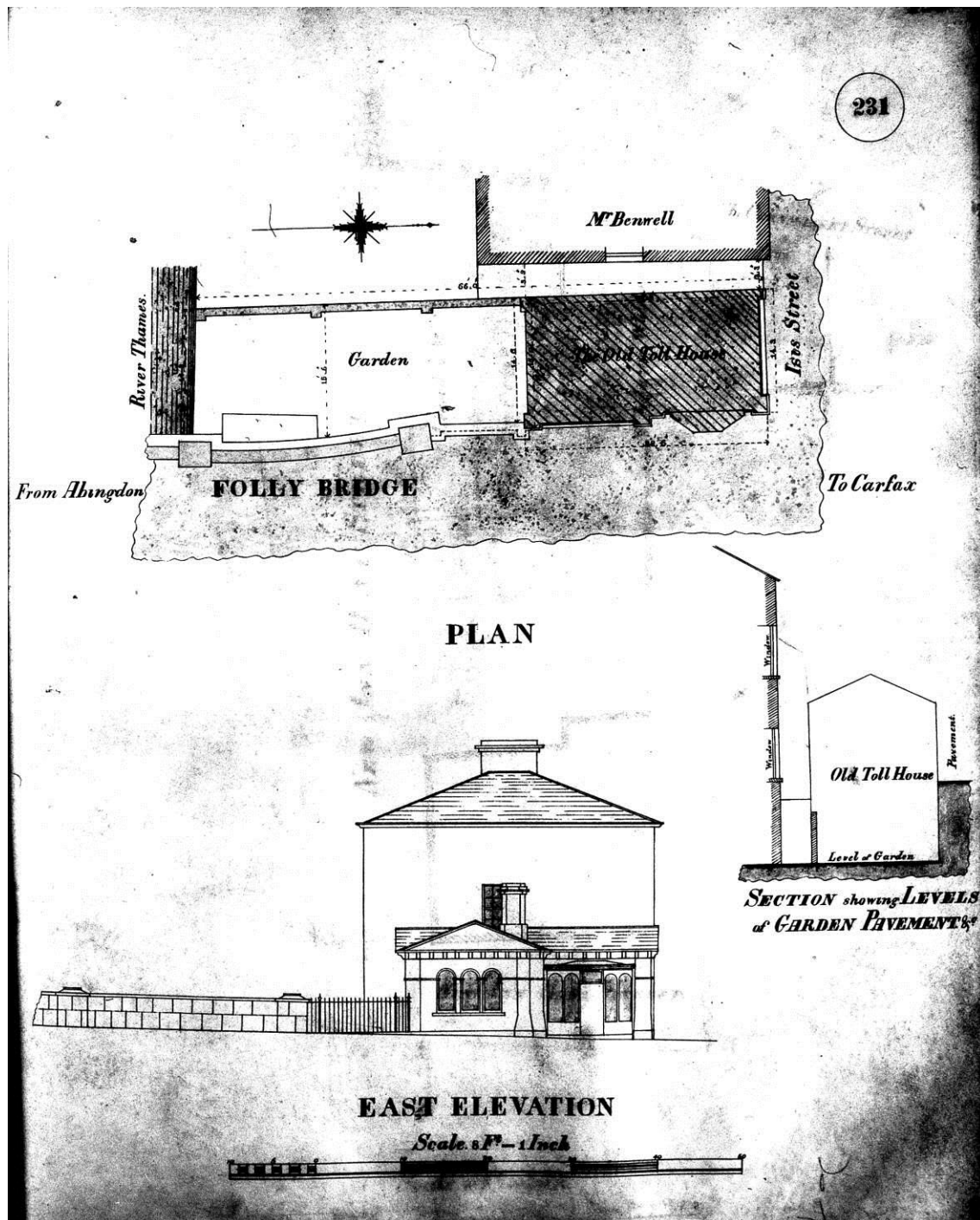
Revision

A

FLL.P02

Appendix 3

Late 19th-/ early 20th-century drawing of the Toll House



Appendix 4

Historic England list entry

FOLLY BRIDGE WITH FORMER TOLL HOUSE

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Overview

Heritage Category:

Listed Building

Grade:

II

List Entry Number:

1319913

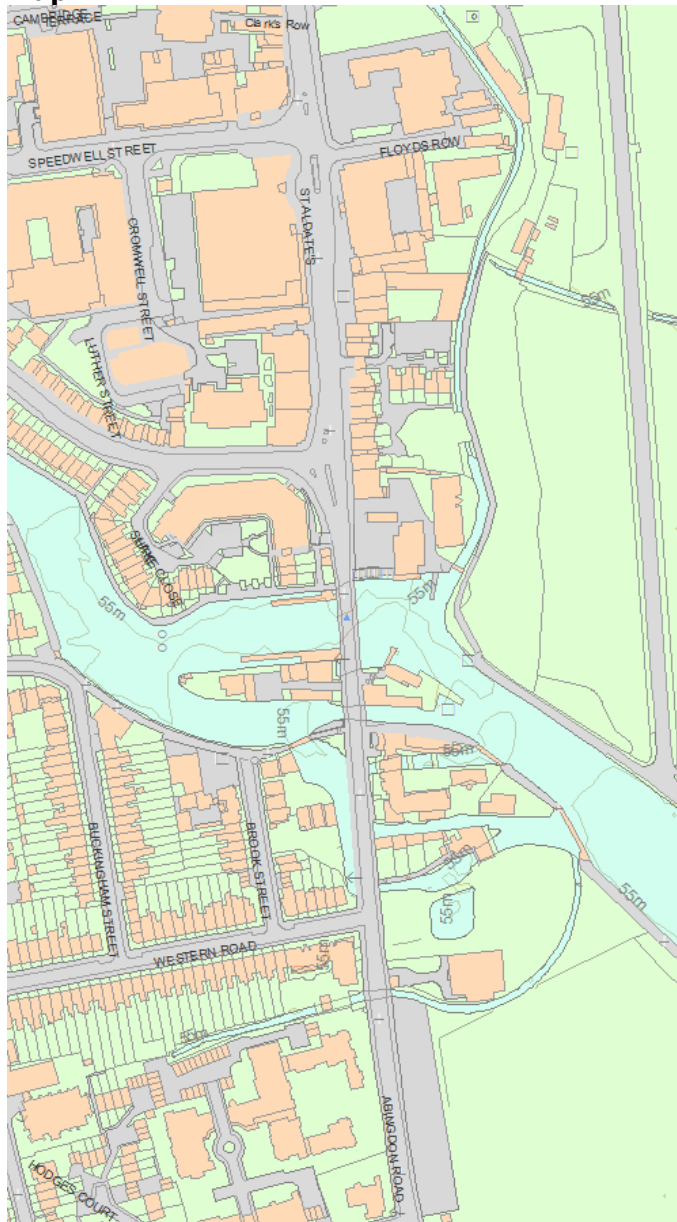
Date first listed:

12-Jan-1954

Statutory Address:

FOLLY BRIDGE WITH FORMER TOLL HOUSE, FOLLY BRIDGE

Map



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The above map is for quick reference purposes only and may not be to scale. For a copy
of the full scale map, please see the attached PDF - [1319913 .pdf \(opens in a new
window\)](#)

The PDF will be generated from our live systems and may take a few minutes to
download depending on how busy our servers are. We apologise for this delay.

This copy shows the entry on 02-Oct-2019 at 13:40:32.

Location

Statutory Address:

FOLLY BRIDGE WITH FORMER TOLL HOUSE, FOLLY BRIDGE

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County:

Oxfordshire

District:

Oxford (District Authority)

National Grid Reference:

SP 51438 05559

Details

FOLLY BRIDGE 1. 1485 Folly Bridge, with Former Toll-house SP 5105 NW 12/598

12.1.54. II 2. Rebuilt in 1826; on the North West corner is a contemporary I-storeyed
stuccoed toll house. An iron girder bridge was made over the South stream in 1888. A
very early river crossing, used by the Saxons and bridged by the Normans in the late
C11. The Saxon causeway has been discovered (1971) under St Aldate's Street. The
present bridge has a main span with 3 arches, and a single subsidiary span to the South.
Rusticated stone. The medieval bridge was also known as "Friar Bacon's Bridge".

Listing NGR: SP5143805559

Legacy

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System number:

245442

Legacy System:

LBS

Legal

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act
1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

End of official listing