

*An Historic Building Recording
at Pool House, Fernhill
Heath, Worcestershire*

A report for David Payne Homes

March 2005

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Project: PJ 130

WSM 34245

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1. Project Background

1.1. Location of the Site

Fernhill is located around 4.5 kilometres to the north of central Worcester. The main A38 Worcester to Droitwich road passes through the village, as does the Worcester to Birmingham rail line. Pool House is located off Hurst Lane, which runs off the A38 close to the railway bridge (Figure 1). Fernhill Heath is laid out along the A38 and is a mixture old and new buildings, with development still underway between existing plots.

1.2. Development Details

A planning application has been made to Wychavon District Council by David Payne Homes, to demolish the existing buildings on the site and erect residential dwellings (reference unknown). The planning process determined that the proposed development was likely to affect a building of historic interest, although not listed on the County Historic Environment Record. As a result, the Planning Archaeologist, Worcestershire County Council, placed a 'Programme of Building Recording' planning condition on the application, for which a brief of work was written (WHEAS 2005).

1.3. Reasons for the Historic Building Recording

The building was suggested for recording as it shown on the 1st edition of the Ordnance Survey map and therefore, is over 100 years old. In such circumstances a programme of archaeological work is attached to planning conditions for any development. In this instance, an historic building recording was suggested to record the building prior to its demolition.

2. Methods and Process

2.1. Project Specification

- ❑ The project conforms to the Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures (IFA 1999).
- ❑ The buildings were recorded to at least Level 1 as defined by the Royal Commission for Historic Monuments of England (RCHME 1996).
- ❑ The project conforms to a brief prepared by the Planning Advisory Section, Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Section, Worcestershire County Council (WHEAS 2005) and for which a project proposal and detailed specification was produced (Mercian Archaeology 2003).
- ❑ The project conforms to the service practice and health and safety policy as contained within the Mercian Archaeology Service Manual (Williams 2003)

2.2. Aims of the Project

The aims of the historic building recording were to compile an archive of the building within its topographical setting. This was to consist of both written and photographic records. The results of the fieldwork were to be used to produce a report chronicling changes and development within the building and where possible, to attach relative dates to individual phases of building. The documentary survey was to be used to assist the chronological phasing of the building(s).

2.3. Background Research

Prior to the commencement of fieldwork all the relevant available cartographic sources were consulted and a search of the data available at the County Historic Environment Record was made. However, the HER search produced no useful results.

Documentary research was carried out at Worcestershire Record Office (WRO) and the following sources were specifically consulted and were of use:

Cartographic Sources

Source	Reference Number
Tithe Map and Apportionment of the Parish of North Claines (1840)	WRO: BA1572 f760/612 and x760/184
Ordnance Survey 1st Edition 25". Worcestershire Sheet XXVII 12 (1886)	

XXVII.12 (1886)	
Ordnance Survey 2nd Edition 25". Worcestershire Sheet XXVII.12 (1903)	

The following documents were consulted at Worcester Records Office but proved to be of no use: Assets and liabilities of the Hindlip Estate; tradesman's bills; insurance policies; and the rent roll for Hindlip Estate dated 1897 (BA 9875/parcels 5-12 reference 705:1081).

Other sources used are referenced within the report.

2.4. The Fieldwork Methodology

The building recording was undertaken on 15th February 2005 prior to any development work being carried out at the site.

The photographic survey was carried out using digital photography. A 2-metre scale was used where possible.

Proforma Building Record Forms were used to record the structure in tandem with site notes and reference to site photographs, to produce the final record contained within this report.

The methodology adopted and the favourable working conditions meant that the aims and objectives of the brief could be fully met and the fieldwork was successfully concluded.

3. The Documentary Research

3.1. Background

Pool House lies at around 49 metres above sea level at the top of a gentle slope adjacent to Hurst Road. The name 'Pool House' is modern and refers to a large pool at the southern side of the grounds of the house. The area of water was once a clay pit, which has been landscaped and integrated into the garden design of the property. The house is in good condition and was lived in until December 2004.

The present house dates from the Victorian period with extensions from the late 20th century. There are modern stable blocks and a large workshop to the west of the house, these do not form part of the building recording and all date to the late 20th century.

3.2. Cartographic Evidence

In 1836 the Tithe Commutation Act was passed by Parliament, resulting in an extensive survey of land across England in order to produce a series of Tithe Apportionment Maps that relayed information about land ownership and use, aimed at converting the commutation of tithe in kind to land taxation (Hoskins 1972, 37) for which a map and apportionment was

produced in 1840 (Figure 2). Fernhill Heath came under the auspices of North Claines in Oswaldslow hundred (VCH III, 1913, 300). Claines parish was split into North and South Claines in 1885 and the development site was within the former.

The 1840 map shows the boundaries of the grounds of Pool House to be in place by this time. And a building is shown centrally on the northern side (Figure 2). This is not Pool House, which had not yet been built. The tithe apportionment lists the plot (number 288 on the map) as a cottage and gardens owned by Francis and Thomas Hollington and occupied by Joseph Hollington. The clay pit is not shown on the map either. Hurst Lane, which is on the eastern side of the property, is likely to be on the line of an antiquated routeway. The prefix 'Hurst' derives from the Old English *hyrst*, meaning 'a wooded knoll' (Foxall, 1980).

The 1886 1st edition Ordnance Survey 25" map of the area shows a pair of symmetrical houses and outbuildings on the site (Figure 3). As outlined below, these were later amalgamated and form the basis of Pool House. The cottage shown on the tithe map has now gone. The Oxford, Worcester and Wolverhampton railway (later Great Western) branch line is shown on the map; this stretch opened on 18th February 1852 (Boynton 2000). The clay pit (now the pool) is shown as 'old clay pit', indicating it was dug out between 1840 and 1886. A pond is shown adjacent to the east of the clay pit.

The 1903 Ordnance Survey map shows no significant changes in detail, although there is a small outbuilding shown on the northern boundary of the site. The pool adjacent to the old clay pit had gone by this time. (Figure 4).

A copy of the 1960 revision of the Ordnance Survey map (supplied by the client) shows the houses as numbers 2 and 4, indicating they were still in use as two properties. An 'epitome of the title' for the property, kindly supplied by David Payne Homes, variously refers to the building(s) as Hurst Lane Gardens, number 4 Hurst Lane, Brickyard Cottage and number 5 Hurst Lane, which leads to confusion when consulting documents. This highlights a difficulty associated with conducting background research into a smaller vernacular building(s) such as this

3.3. The Historic Background

As outlined above, at the time of the tithe map production in 1840, there was another cottage to the north of the present house. This and the plot of land (the site) belonged to Francis and Thomas Hollington and was occupied by Joseph Hollington. By 1884 Hollington was declared bankrupt and was removed of his holdings (WRO: BA9600 705:1059). The stone plaque on the wall of the current Pool House shows the letters 'H H', the emblem of the Hindlip Hall estate and it maybe that it was at this time that the Hindlip Hall estate acquired the plot, demolished the existing building and built a pair of estate workers cottages, although there was no specific documentary reference located.

The deeds to the property indicate that Pool House was two properties until 1972, when the property is described as 'one dwelling house, formerly two'.

3. The Results

The Fabric Survey

The subject building is a mass built brick construction below a handmade clay tile roof covering. The building was once a pair of cottages, but has been amalgamated to form one larger house. The original house plans were symmetrical with a double-pile central element and wings projecting to either side below half-hipped roofs. There is a central chimneystack with eight flues, four for each house. The outbuilding block, to the north of the main structure, has now been incorporated within the building by the insertion of an infill section between. Further detailed description is included below and plates are included at the end of the report.

The House

External:

The building is constructed of 3" red bricks, with a slightly sandy mortar in a Flemish bond. The fabric of the bricks indicates that they came from several firings, some being reduced and some oxidised. The window and door lintels, plinth and central stringcourse are of light greyish-yellow sandstone. There is a moulded plaque in the same stone on the southern elevation of the western house (originally). There would also have been one on the eastern house; however, this has been lost to the insertion of some French doors during the late 20th century. The windows are six light wooden casements at first storey and larger nine light casements at ground floor level; these appear to be original. The original entrance to the western house has been fitted with a later door; the entrance to the eastern house is now within the modern extension and provides access to the stairs.

There is a central brick chimneystack topped with eight Halifax terra cotta chimneypots.

Internal

Internally, the house retains little in the way of original fixtures and fittings or features of architectural merit.

The Outbuilding

As outlined above, the former outbuilding to the north of the house is now incorporated into the amalgamated single building. The building was originally rectangular and constructed of

3” red bricks, with a slightly sandy mortar in a Flemish bond. The bricks appear to be from the same batch as the house construction, although mature climbing plants obscured the majority of the structure. The roof is hipped, with a lead capped central turret topped by an ornamental pheasant weathervane crowning the roofline. The turret at one time, provided the bird-entrance to a small pigeon loft, which would have been housed in the roof void. The outhouses would have been an important space for the Victorian, Edwardian and perhaps to a lesser extent, later occupiers of the two-houses. The buildings would have contained the washhouses and may also have provided space for privies, making pigswill, and possibly housing animals. It may be that there was originally a pair of central hearths and a chimney, which has been replaced by the ornamental turret, probably when the main houses were provided with a water system, although there was no definitive evidence for this.

4. Phasing of the Buildings and Dating

Discussion of the Fabric and Dating Evidence

The houses were seemingly well appointed for workers cottages as is variably the case with estate property. The outbuildings, one per cottage, were afforded a pigeon (or dove) loft, pigeons eggs being a useful commodity but over and above the minimal requirement to be provided by an employer. The space may also been used for boiling up pigswill if, as was common, a pig was kept; as a bake house; a kitchen; a privy; brew house or/and a cool house, although as outlined above, some of these uses would only have been possible if a chimney were included in the building. Water was supplied from a well topped with a pump to the rear of the outbuildings. Such rural development did not suffer the problems of housing and public health associated with our in Victorian cities and towns.

The phasing of the building is straightforward with the two cottages and symmetrical outbuildings being contemporary and dating to around 1885 (based on map evidence and style). The map evidence indicates that the houses were two separate properties, each with an outbuilding, at least until the 1970’s, as they are shown as numbers 2 and 4 Hurst Lane. It is likely that the building was remodelled at this time, incorporating all the standing elements into one house. The internal arrangement also appears to have been altered at this time.

PHASE	FABRIC of BUILDING	DATE
I	Two symmetrical cottages with detached outbuildings to the rear (north)	From c. 1885
II	Buildings amalgamated to form one large house, later called Pool House	mid 1970’s

5. Conclusion

The results of the historic building recording at Pool House, Fernhill Heath determined that the structure was originally two symmetrical estate workers cottages tied to the Hindlip Hall estate, which were built around 1885. The cottages and the pair of outbuildings to the north were amalgamated to form Pool House in 1972. Internally, no architectural features survive from the original build.

6. Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank John Huggins of David Payne Homes for his co-operation and supplying a copy of deed documents for Pool House. Thanks are also due to Mike Glyde, Planning Archaeologist, Worcestershire County Council, and the staff of Worcester Records Office.

REFERENCES

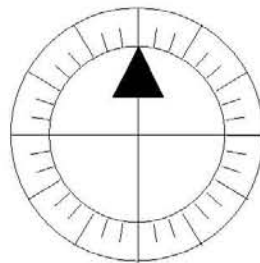
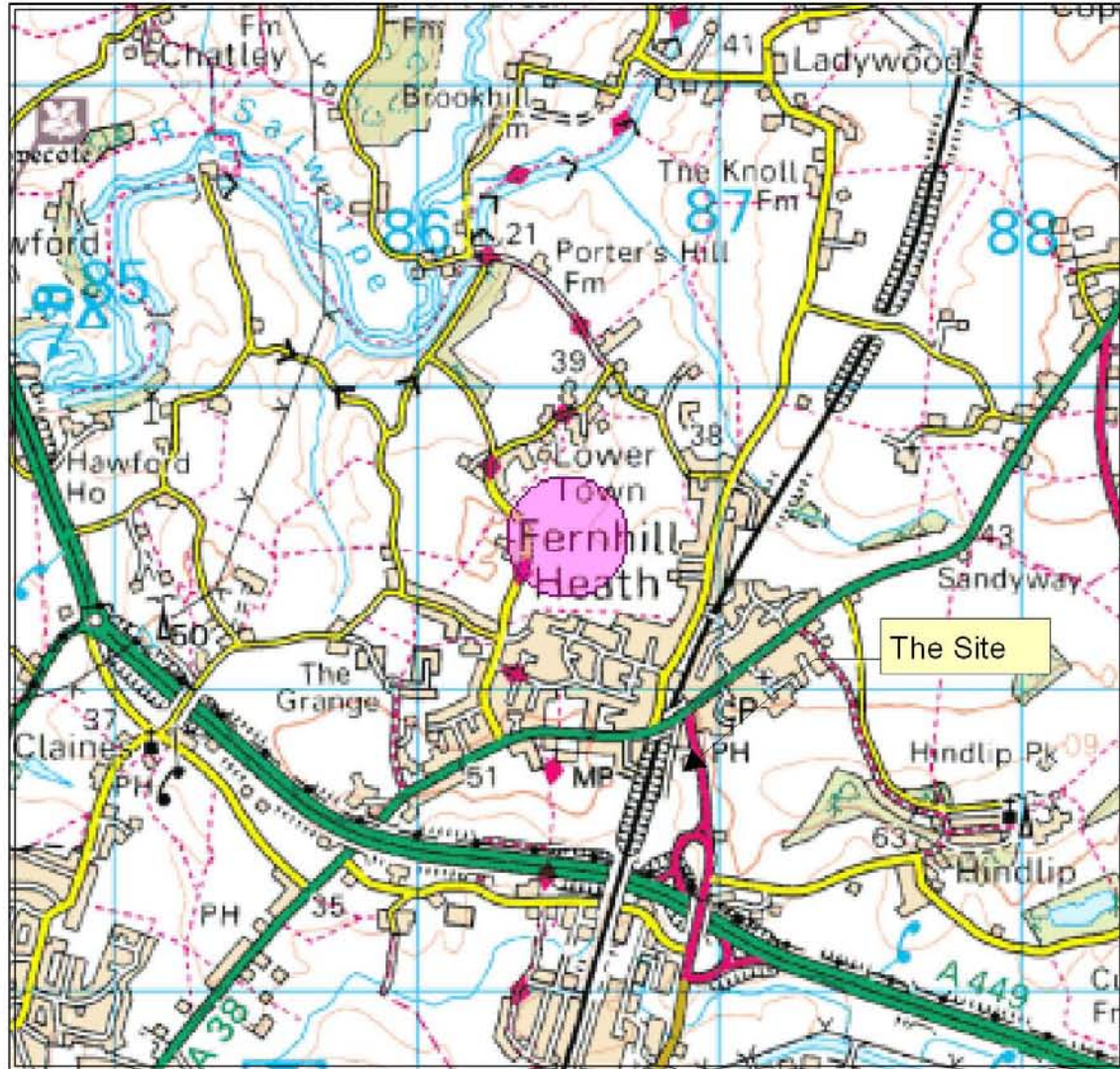
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Figure 1: Location of the Site

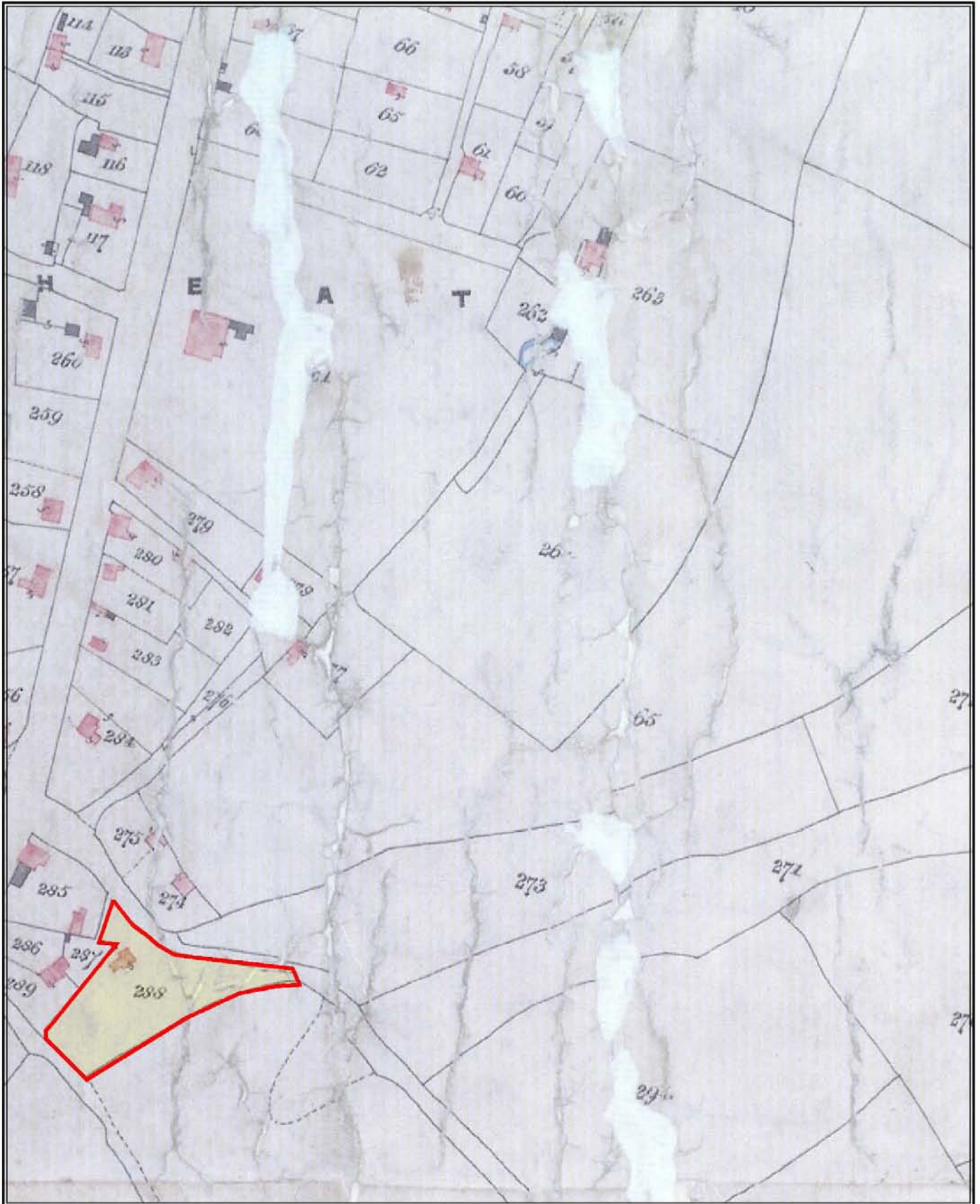


Location of the Site at Fernhill Heath

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Figure 2: Extract of the Tithe Apportionment Map of Claines North (1840)

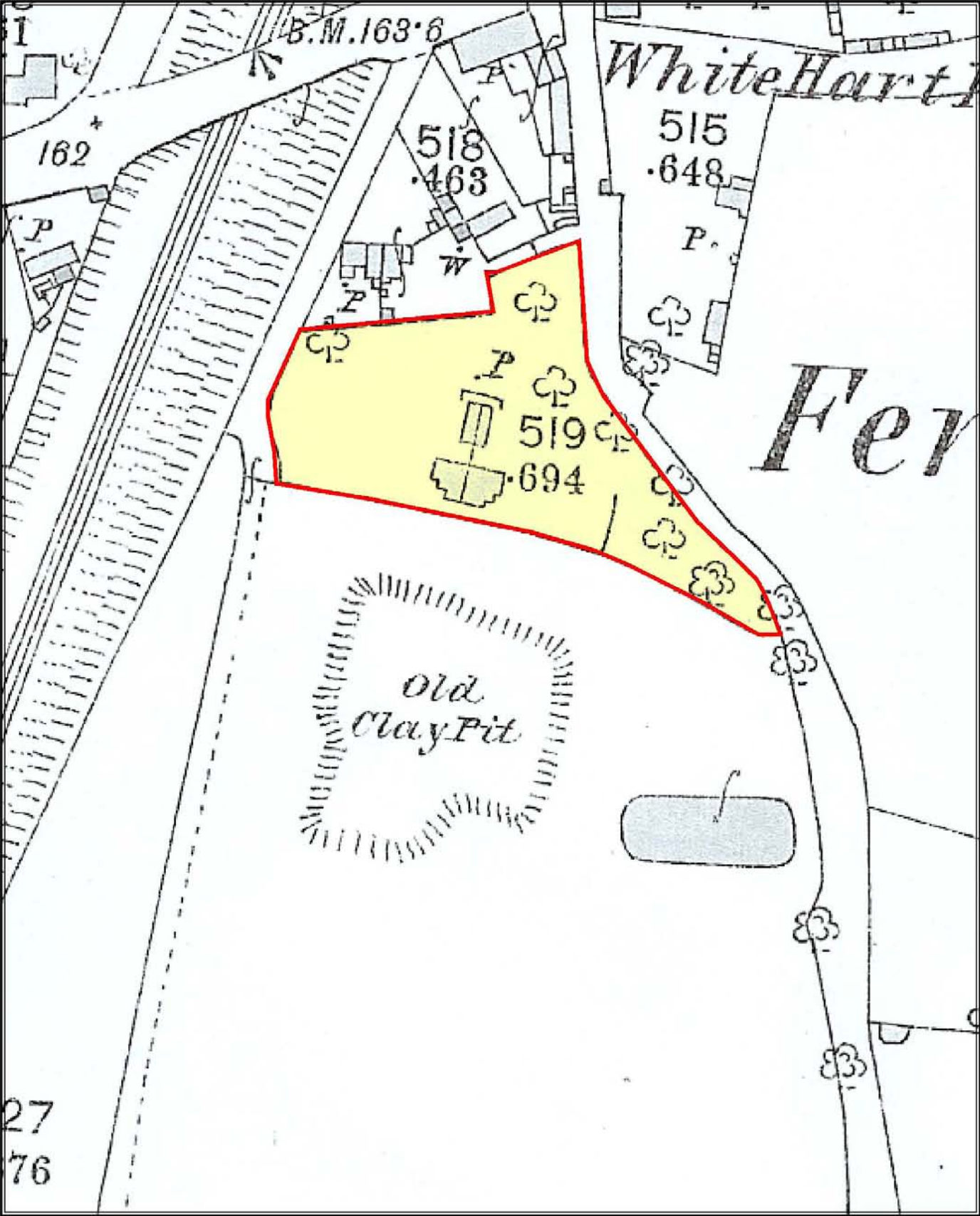


The tithe map shows the site before Pool House was constructed. North is approximately to the top left hand corner of the map.

Scale unknown

Reproduced with kind permission from Worcester Records Office

Figure 3: 1st Edition Ordnance Survey (1886)



The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map with the site highlighted.

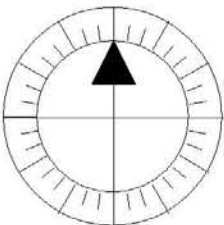
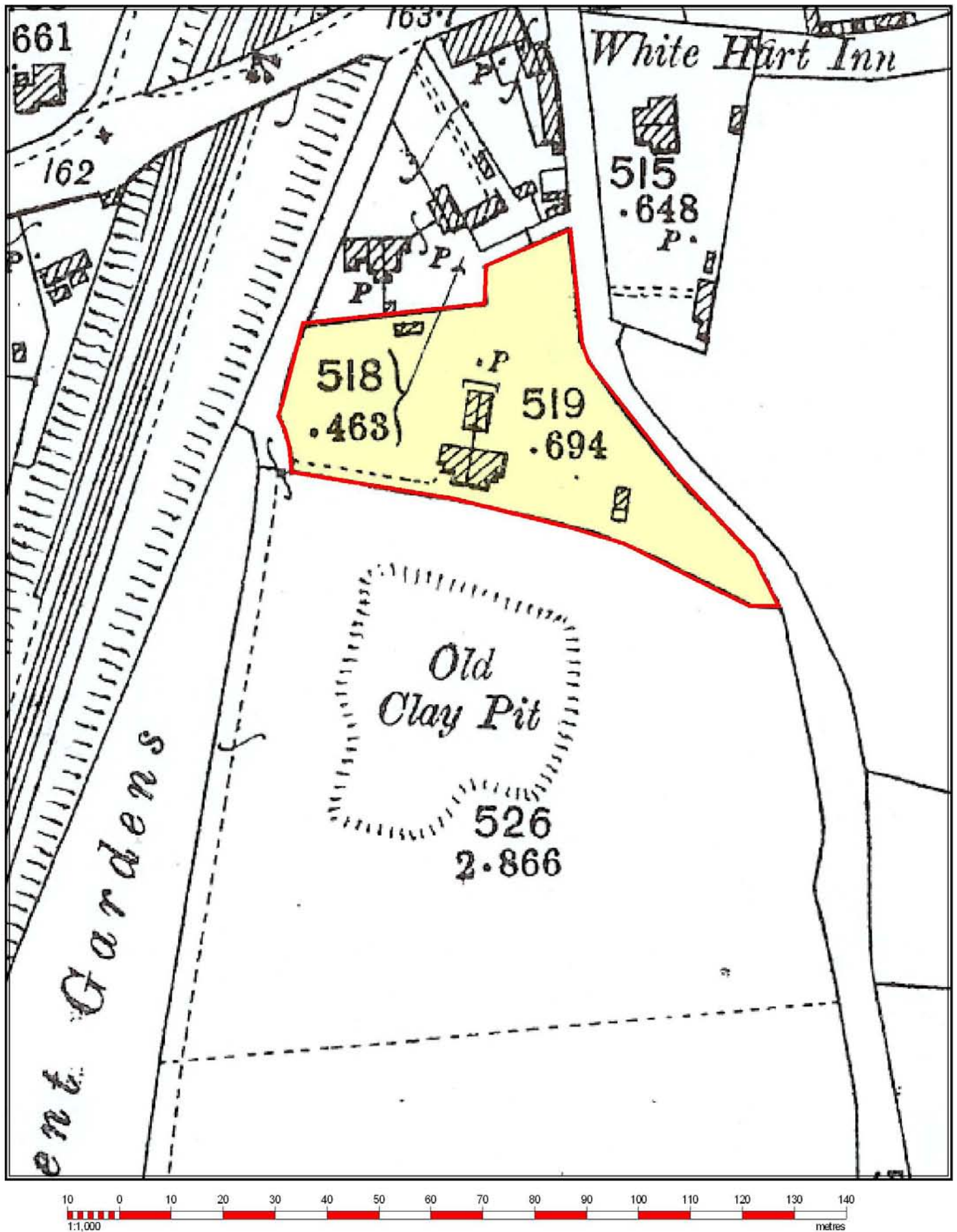
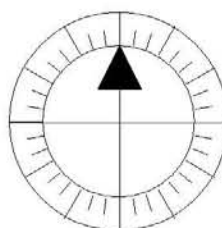
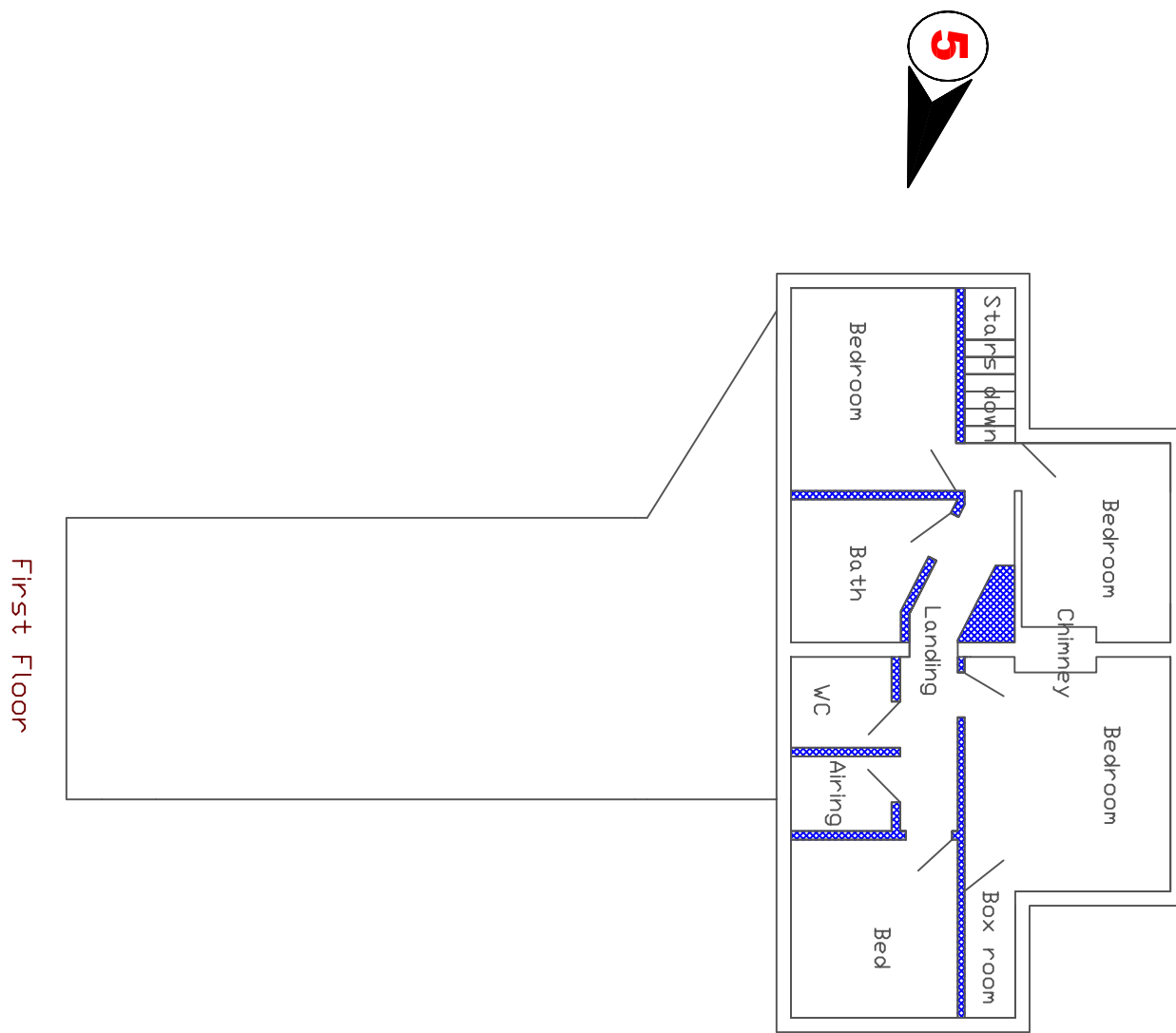
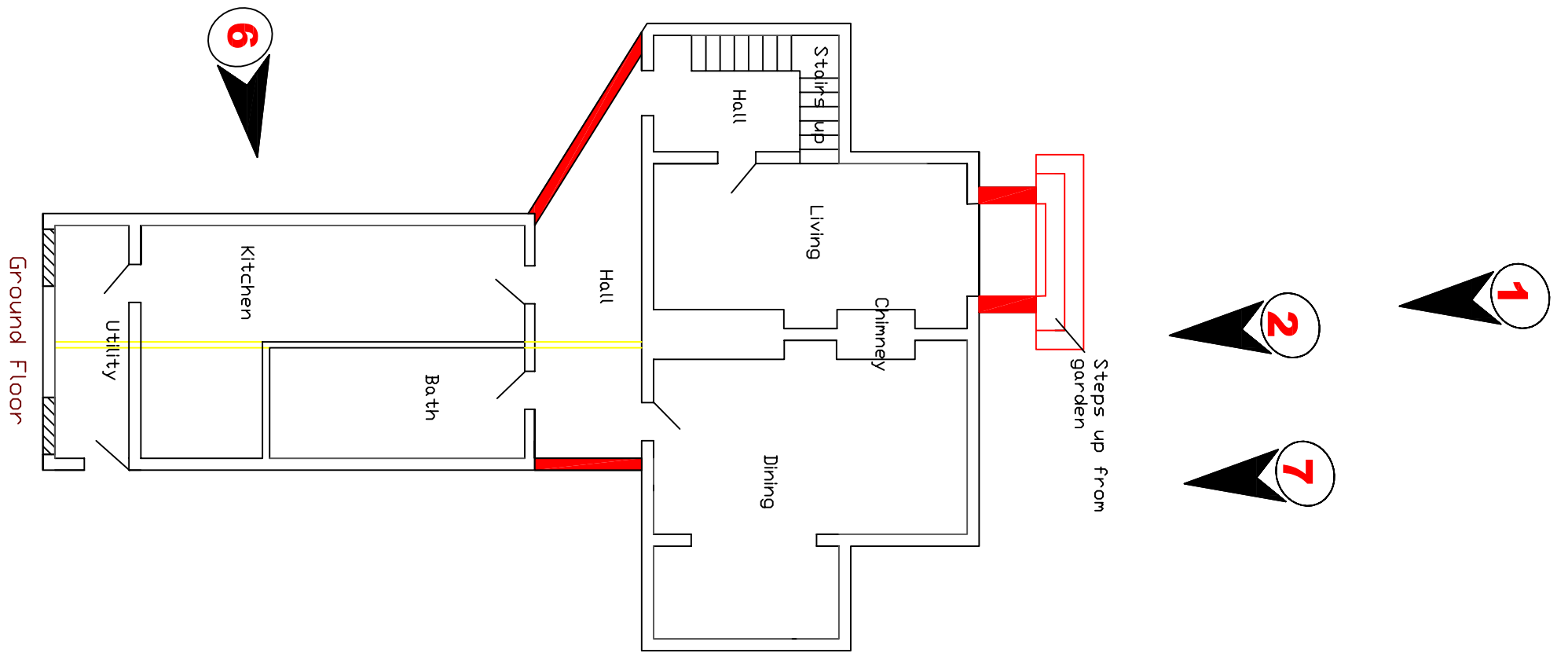


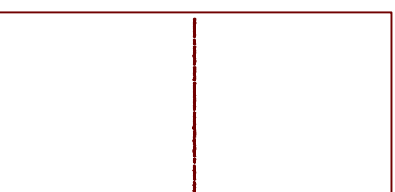




Figure 4: 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey (1903)



The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map with the site highlighted.





	Removed walls		Blocked doors
	Stud walls		Direction of photograph in report
	Later 1970's fabric		

All fabric circa 1885 unless stated

Figure 6: Plan of Pool House, Fernhill Heath

Plates

Plate 1



Pool House looking north

Plates

Plate 2



The former two cottages looking north (scale 2 metres)

Plate 3



The Building viewed to the south-east (scale 2 metres)

Plates

Plate 4



The former outbuilding (right) now connected to the house by a flat roofed extension (scale 2 metres)

Plate 5



Central eight-flue chimneystack topped with Halifax style pots

Plates

Plate 6



The pheasant weathervane and central roof turret on the former outbuildings

Plate 7



The plaque depicting the 'HH' emblem of Hindlip Hall

Plates

Plate 8



The pheasant weathervane and central roof turret on the former outbuildings

Plate 9



The plaque depicting the HH emblem of Hindlip Hall