
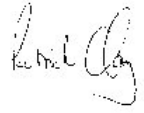


**An Archaeological Building Survey and
Recording Exercise at The Pine Studio,
Talbot Yard, Market Harborough,
Leicestershire.**

NGR: SP 733 873

Andrew Hyam

For: BJC Properties

Checked by	
Signed: ... 	..Date: .27.03.2008.
Name: ... Nicholas J. Cooper....	
Approved by	
Signed: 	...Date: . 27.03.2008.
Name: ..Patrick Clay.....	

**University of Leicester
Archaeological Services**
University Rd., Leicester, LE1 7RH
Tel: (0116) 2522848 Fax: (0116) 2522614
www.le.ac.uk/ulas

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Summary

An archaeological survey and recording exercise of the floor surfaces within the former Pine Studio, Talbot Yard, Market Harborough was undertaken for BJC Properties by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on the 18th of January 2008. The former stable and Pine Studio is of probable 18th century origin and is currently undergoing redevelopment and conversion to offices and flats. As part of the programme of work the present floor surface was to be altered and needed to be recorded prior to this work taking place. Much of the floor was of red and blue brick blocks from the late 19th century with possible earlier areas of river-washed cobbles surviving in places.

Records will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council under Accession Number X.A.23.2008

1. Introduction

In accordance with Planning Policy Guidelines 16 (PPG 16, Archaeology and Planning), para 30, this document forms the report for an archaeological survey and recording exercise within the former Pine Studio, Talbot Yard, Market Harborough, Leicestershire (NGR: SP 731 873). BJC Properties are currently converting the building to create a small complex of offices and a flat.

The development site lies on the eastern side of Main Street, Market Harborough near to the parish church of St. Dionysius (Figs 1 and 2). The building undergoing redevelopment is at the south-western end of a row of service buildings running from Main Street and lies on the northern side of Talbot Yard which is accessed from School Lane. Many of the surrounding properties have been demolished to make way for small car parks and modern constructions.

As the building is of probable 18th century origin the Conservation Officer for Leicestershire County Council has been involved as advisor to the conversion project. The present condition of the floor meant that it will have to be removed in order to create a suitable surface for the new development, therefore the Conservation Officer requested that an archaeological survey and recording exercise take place before this work commenced.

2. Background

The building being converted originally formed part of the stable block for the Talbot Hotel which fronts onto High Street as shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1854-1901 (fig. 3), hence the name of Talbot Yard. The Talbot Hotel has now changed its name to the Sun Inn but access from High Street for a coach and horses is still technically possible. More recently, the brick-built building has been used as a pine furniture workshop although this does not appear to have affected the external fabric of the building to any great extent (fig. 4). The building has two entrances fronting onto Talbot Yard, the south-western doorway being of double width. The north-eastern half of the building appears to have had two single width doors although one of the doorways at the eastern end has since been blocked to create a single entrance. Internal access between the two halves of the building is via an open door that appears to have been knocked through. A small office built of plywood on a raised platform presently occupies the eastern corner of the north-eastern room.

3. Objectives

The objectives of the survey work were:

To create a written account of the floor plan, its form and development sequence.

To create a photographic record of the floor and its internal setting.

To create a drawn record of the floor surface.

To produce an archive and report of all results to allow future interpretation of the floor within its current and original use.

4. Methodology

Colour digital photographs and 35mm black and white photographs were taken throughout the work. Plans were drawn at a scale of 1:50.

All work followed the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) Code of Conduct and adhered to the *Guidelines for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland* (LMARS).

5. Results

See figure 5 for a plan of the floor surface.

The north-eastern room

Measuring 6.75m x 6.9m (fig. 6).

Leading in from the doorway is a 1.33m x 4.5m area of blue brick stable paviours measuring 220mm long x 80mm wide each with two raised panels on the upper face (fig. 7). These hard-fired bricks appear to be quite worn but are otherwise in a reasonable condition. Around these, and covering most of the floor, are red bricks, with slightly raised and rounded upper surfaces, measuring 220mm long x 80mm wide (upper surface) and 110mm deep. They are laid on edge in a stretcher bond style with two 250mm wide gullies, three bricks wide, running north-west to south-east cutting across them. A flat iron plate 220mm square covers the drain hole leading from the eastern gully.

Fitted into the angle of the north-western corner of the room is an L-shaped patch of river-washed cobble generally laid in a random pattern but with some attempts to create straight lines where similar sized stones have been available (fig. 8). The cobbles vary in size from approximately 70mm in diameter down to 20mm in diameter and appear to be bedded in clay. The red bricks surrounding the cobbles are laid in straight lines up against them making it difficult to state whether the cobbles are the original surface which were tidied and straightened before the bricks were laid, or whether a hole was made in the brick surface to make space for the cobbles. It is also possible that the two surfaces are contemporary. A patch of modern concrete partially obscures the cobbles and part of the bricks.

A small hole cutting through the surface in the northern corner shows that the bricks are laid on a mixed layer of sandy clay. As the hole was only 0.2m deep it is not known how thick this layer is.

Overall the floor surface in this room is quite worn but reasonably complete. It has however sunk and distorted in a number of places leading to a very irregular profile.

The south-western room

6.65m x 6.9m (fig. 9)

A similar area of blue brick stable paviours measuring 1.38m x 4.33m leads in from the entranceway. However, instead of terminating with a flat end, this area ends in a point with red bricks deliberately fitted around it (fig. 10). A single line of red bricks leads from the tip of this point towards the north-east wall. A line of blue bricks 220mm x 80mm has been used between the end of the pavers and the threshold of the building. Two stone or concrete circles may mark the original location of the doors.

The rest of the room is covered with the red brick blocks seen in the north-eastern room which are laid in the same pattern and orientation. The surface is relatively level unlike the adjacent room although there are areas of distortion and heavy wear. Similarly two gullies run from north-west to south-east across the room. However, in this case they are four bricks wide and are offset half way across the room. A flat iron plate 220mm square covers the drainage point of each gully.

A number of small holes dug through the floor during construction work show that the bricks are laid on a layer of sandy clay. However, as in the case of the north-eastern room the thickness of this layer is not known but is at least 0.25m thick (fig. 11).

6. Discussion

The uneven nature of the floor in the north-eastern room indicates that it has experienced a great deal of wear and heavy weight and is in a relatively poor state of repair. The blue brick paviours have clearly been used to limit the amount of damage in the area of greatest wear at the entrance, but it is not clear whether this is a repaired patch or is contemporary with the red bricks. The fact that the red bricks are fitted so accurately around them would seem to point to a contemporary date which is likely to be within the second half of the 19th century.

The presence of the cobbles in the corner could be a remnant of an earlier phase of flooring which has survived beneath a, now lost, internal structure. They appear to be laid on a much cleaner clay bedding than the bricks.

The floor surface in the south-western room shows much less damage although is still quite worn. Because the red bricks have been fitted so carefully around the blues it again seems more likely that they are contemporary with each other. It may also be expected that the bricks used for the floor would be of the same dimensions as the wall if they were of the same age. This is not the case as the wall bricks are thinner.

7. Archive

The archive consists of:

This report,

1 A2 drawing sheet,

2 contact sheets of digital photographs,

1 index sheet of the digital photographs,

1 contact sheet of 35mm black and white photographs,

35mm black and white negatives,

1 index sheet of the black and white photographs,

1 cd of this report and the digital photographs.

The archive is to be held by Leicestershire County Council, under Accession Number X.A.23.2008.

8. Publication

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* in due course. A record of the project will also be submitted to the OASIS project. Oasis is an online index to archaeological grey literature reports.

9. Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was undertaken by A R Hyam. The project was managed by N Finn.

10. Bibliography

Hammond, M. 1981 *Bricks and Brickmaking*. Shire Publications Ltd. Princes Risborough.

Andrew Hyam

University of Leicester Archaeological Services

University of Leicester

Tel: 0116 252 2848

Fax: 0116 252 2614

ah58@le.ac.uk

27.03.2008

Appendix 1. Figures

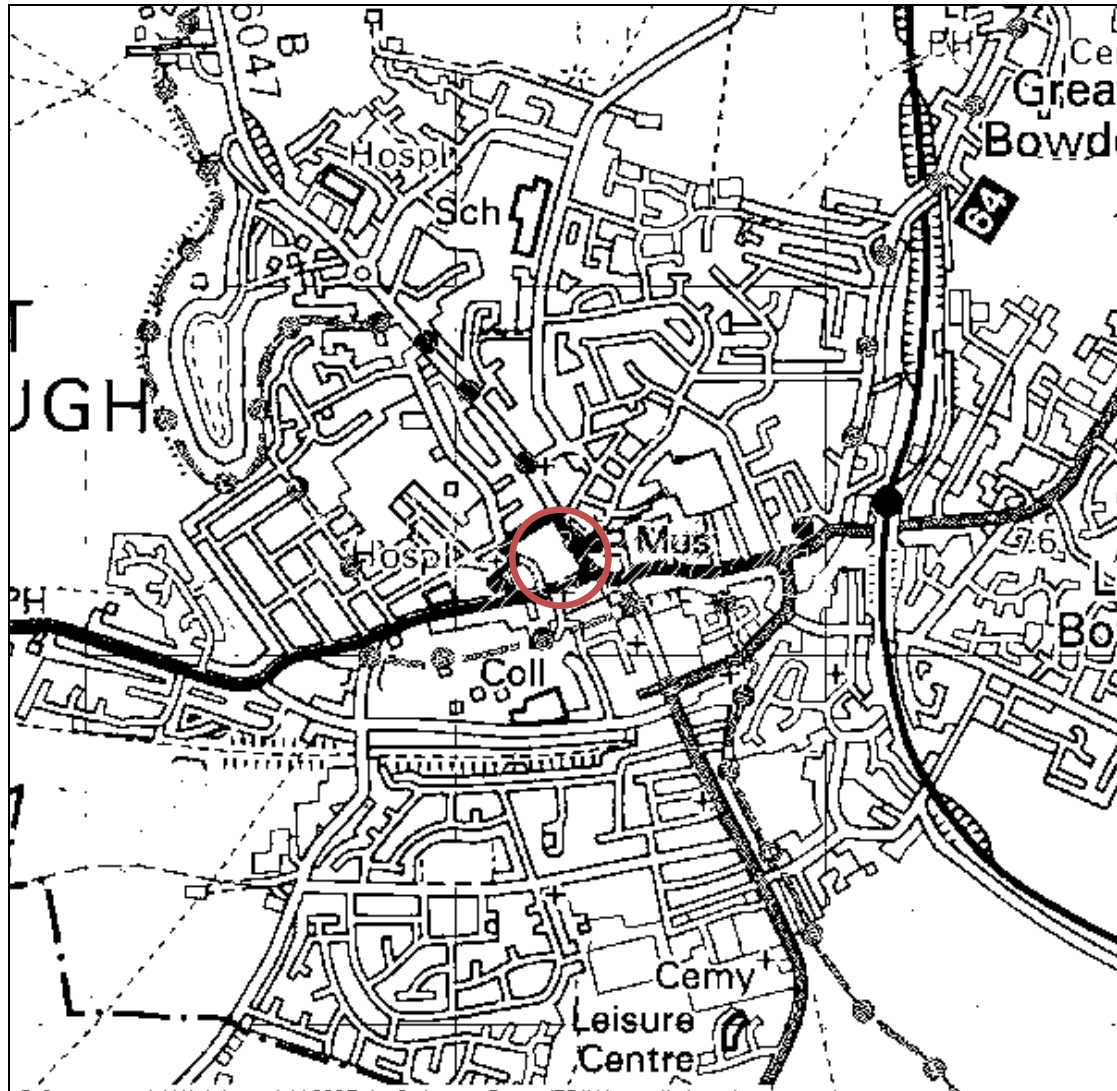


Figure 1. Site location within Market Harborough.

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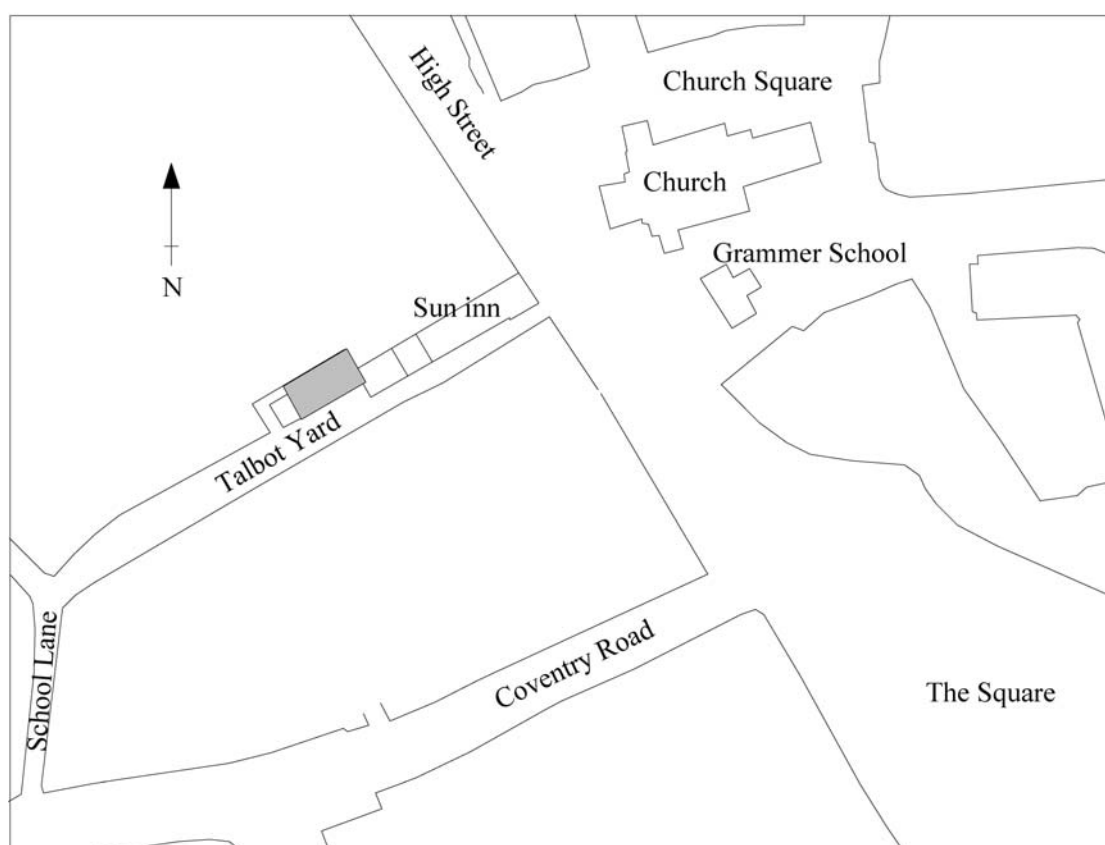


Figure 2. Site location highlighted.

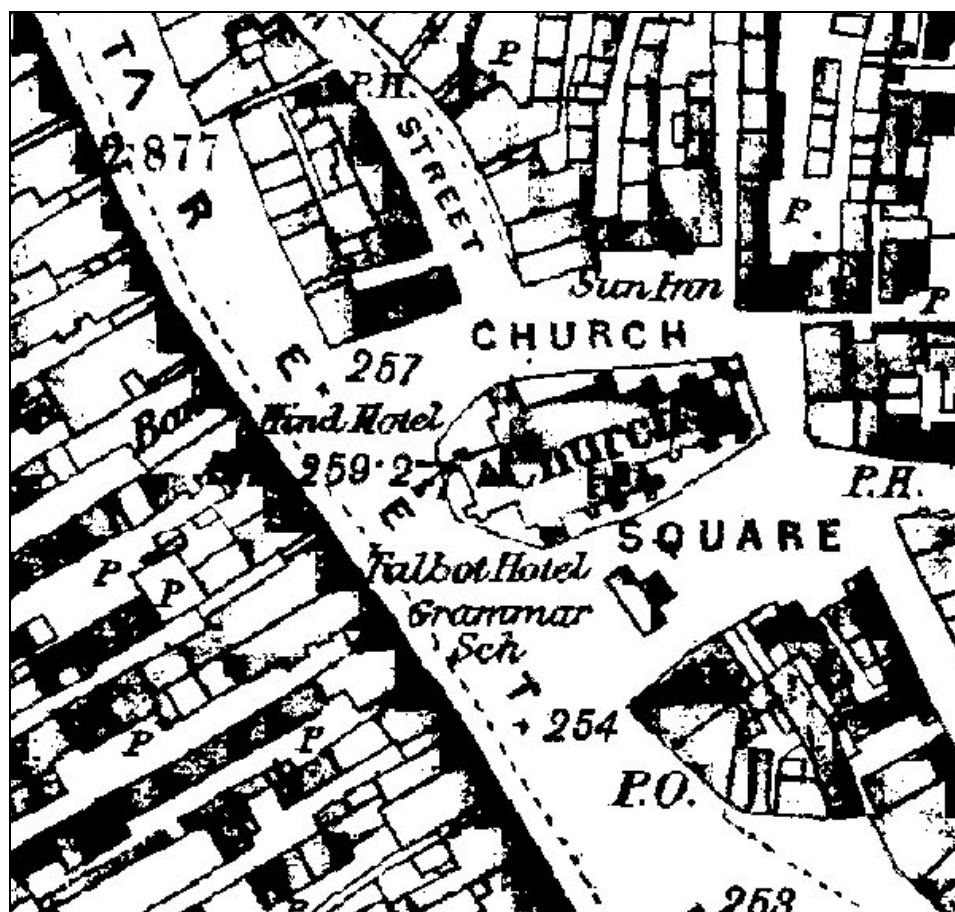


Figure 3. First edition OS map showing Talbot Hotel.



Figure 4. South face of building looking north.

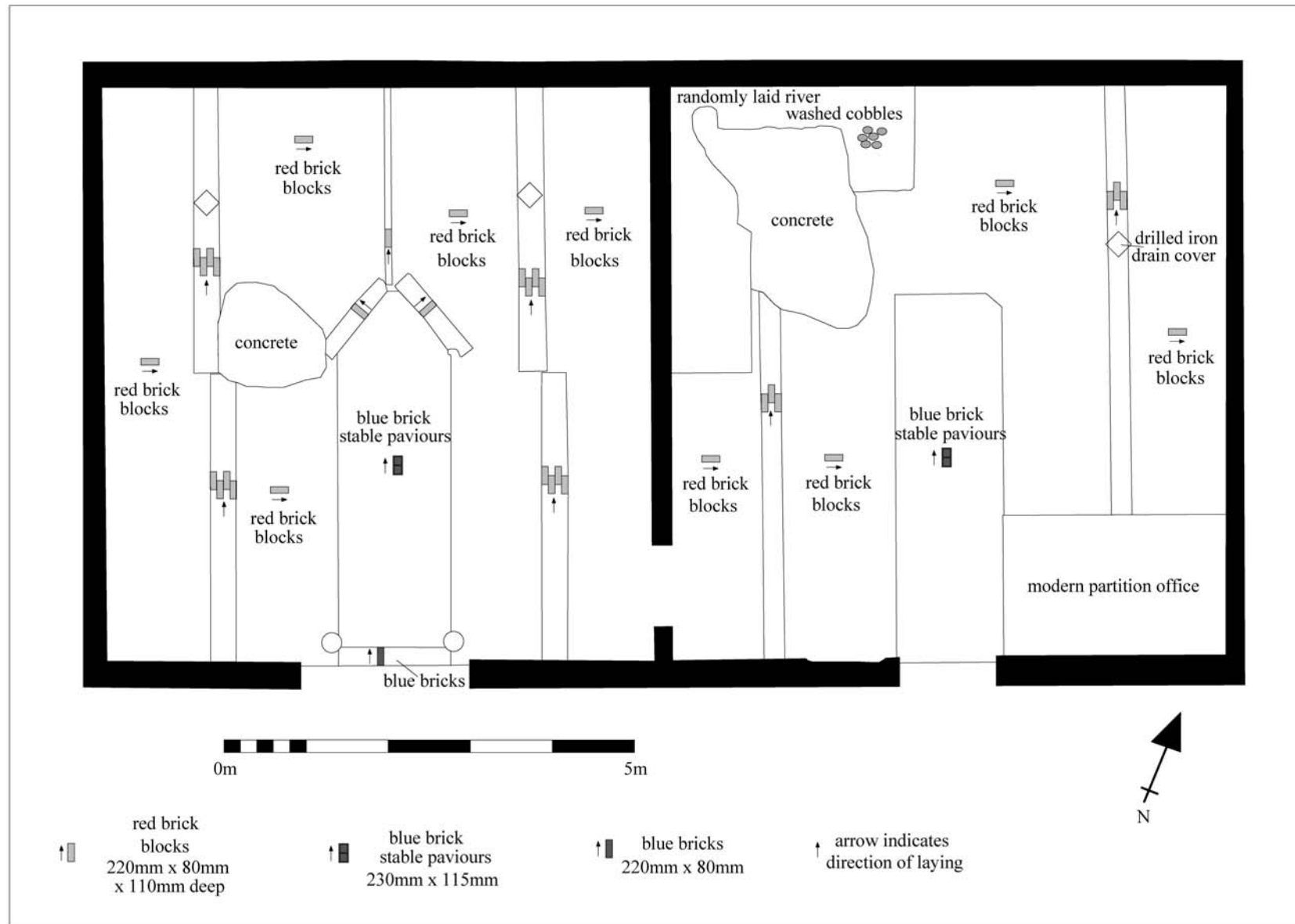


Figure 5. Floorplan.

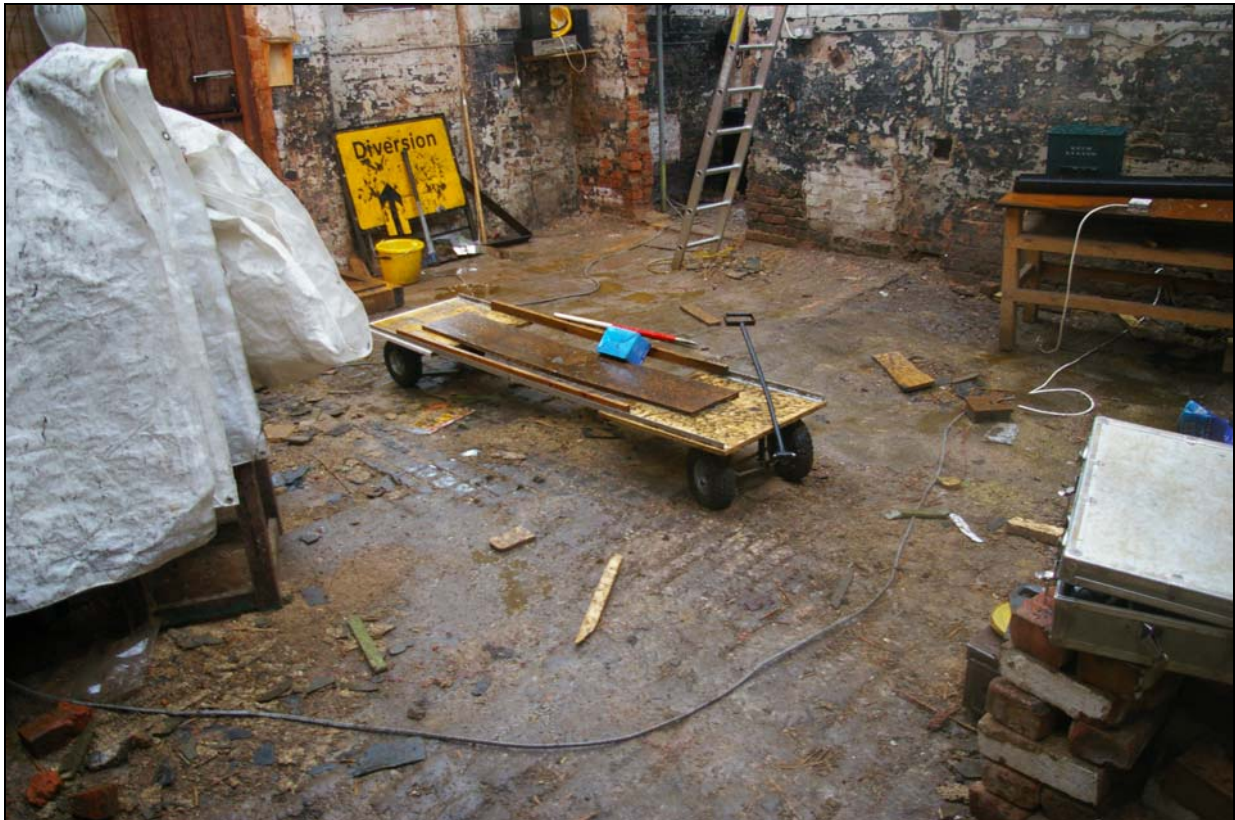


Figure 6. North-eastern room, looking south.

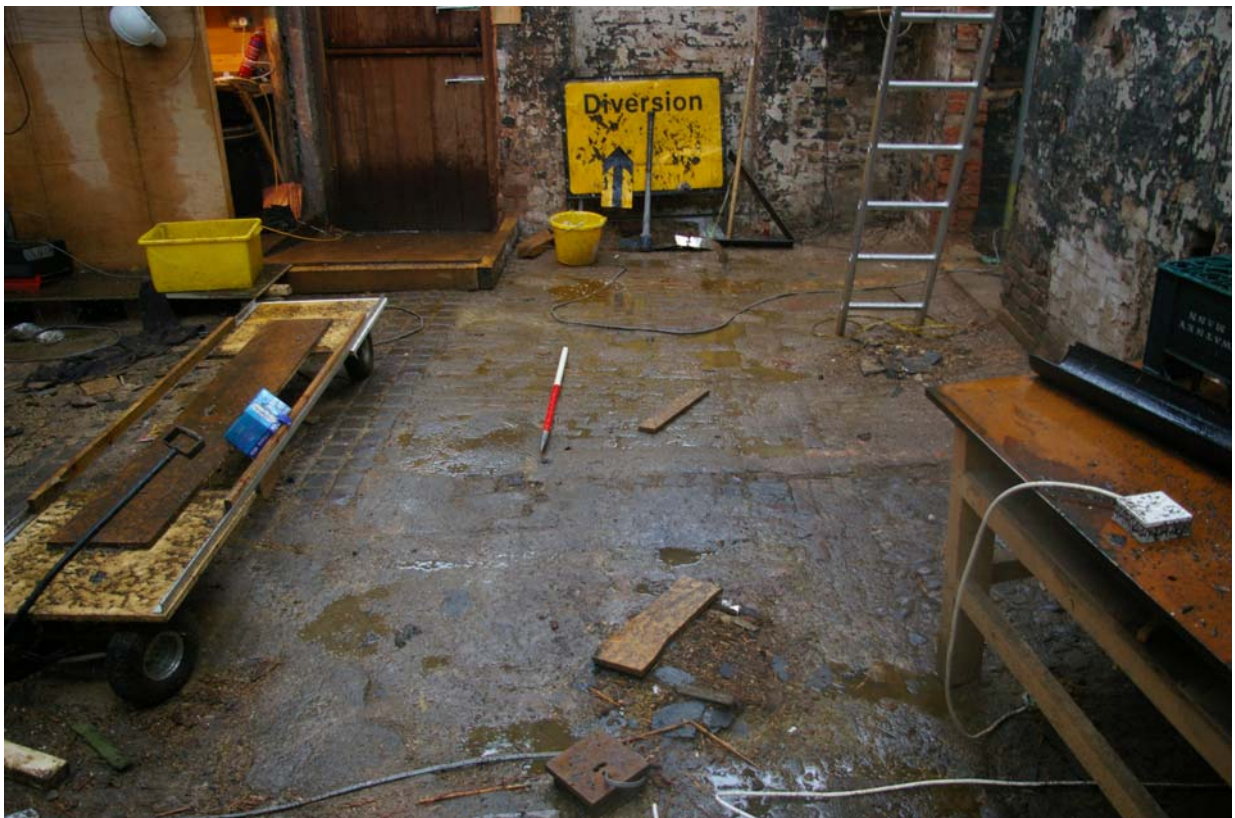


Figure 7. North-eastern room, looking south-east.
Pavours beneath trolley.



Figure 8. Cobbles in north-eastern corner.



Figure 9. South-western room, looking east.

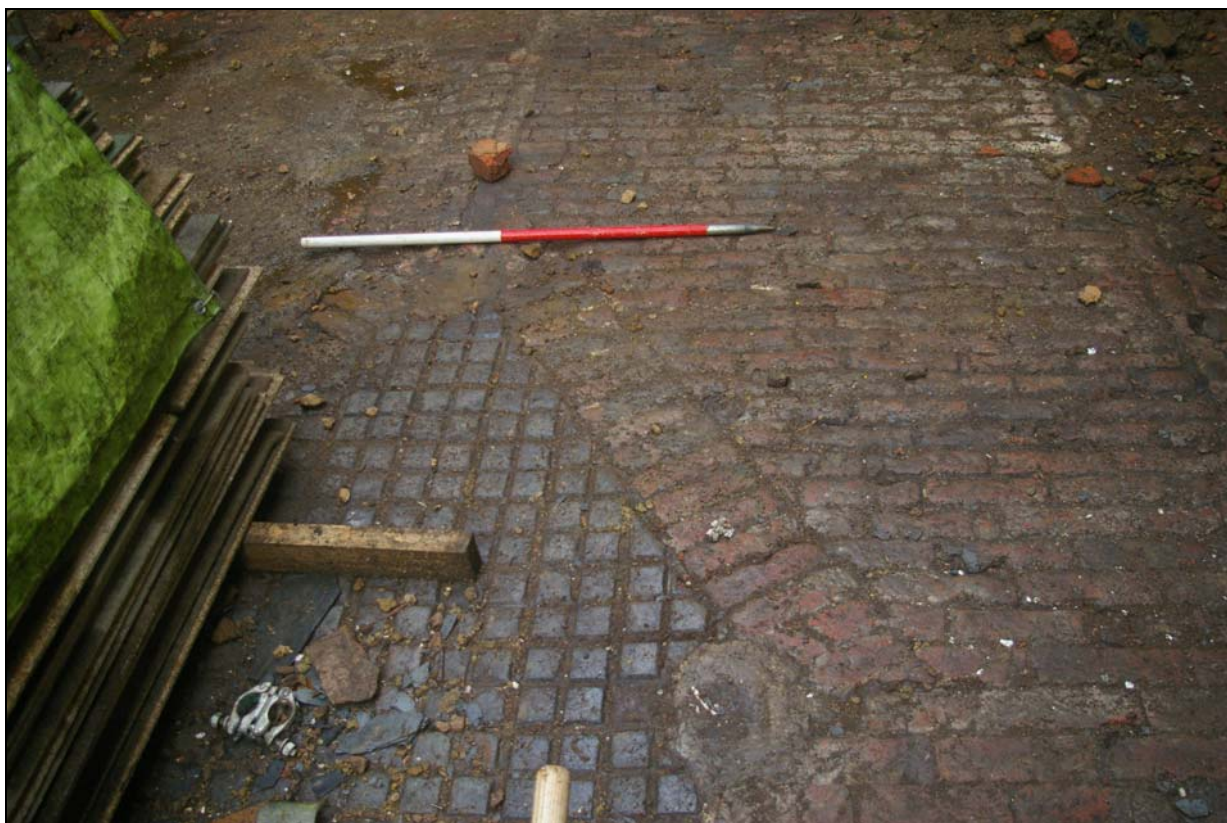


Figure 10. South-western room. Red bricks fitted around paviours.



Figure 11. Hole through floor in south-western room.