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ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD

**THE GROVE, WHEATHAMPSTEAD,  
HERTFORDSHIRE**

**HISTORIC BUILDING MONITORING & RECORDING**

Authors: Tansy Collins Bsc	
NGR: TL 1542 1332	Report No. 3639
District: St. Albans	Site Code: AS 1352
Approved: Claire Halpin MIFA	Project No. 3988
Signed:	Date: September 2010

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**OASIS SUMMARY SHEET**

<b>Project details</b>			
Project name	<i>The Grove, Wheathampstead, Hertfordshire</i>		
Project description (250 words)	<p><i>In August 2010, Archaeological Solutions Ltd conducted a programme of historic building monitoring and recording at The Grove, near Wheathampstead, Hertfordshire. The programme was carried out in order to comply with a condition attached to planning consent for the creation of a boot room / cloakroom and first floor study area.</i></p> <p><i>The development included the removal of an earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century staircase and associated partitions at first floor level. The removal of these elements had little impact into earlier fabric although where such fabric was uncovered this allowed an opportunity to record further information relating to the development of the house.</i></p> <p><i>There was no evidence for any 18<sup>th</sup> century internal features, although the removal of the staircase reveals the formerly external brickwork of the main house. The presence of a plinth along with tuck-pointing of the brickwork provides evidence that the stair turret was a later addition to the pre-existing rear wall of the house, albeit what appears to be a short time later, suggested by the similarities in fabric used.</i></p> <p><i>The brickwork of the north-west extension to the stair turret, along with the sash window preserved at first floor level, retaining delicately moulded glazing bars and no horns, suggests a date for this addition somewhere in the early-mid 19<sup>th</sup> century.</i></p>		
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>16<sup>th</sup> August 2010</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>	Future work (Y/N/?)	<i>?</i>
P. number	<i>3988</i>	Site code	<i>AS 1352</i>
Type of project	<i>Historic building monitoring and recording</i>		
Site status	<i>Listed Grade II</i>		
Current land use	<i>Lobby and staircase with bathroom</i>		
Planned development	<i>Conversion to boot / cloak room</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>Early 18<sup>th</sup> century stair turret with later alterations</i>		
Significant finds (+dates)	<i>-</i>		
<b>Project location</b>			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Herts</i>	<i>St Albans</i>	<i>Wheathampstead</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>HCC HER</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>-</i>		
Area of site	<i>-</i>		
NGR	<i>TL 1542 1332</i>		
Height AOD (max/ min)	<i>c. 110m AOD</i>		
<b>Project creators</b>			
Brief issued by	<i>Advice St Albans District Council</i>		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	<i>Tansy Collins</i>		
Funded by	<i>Mr &amp; Mrs Bowman</i>		
Full title	<i>The Grove, Wheathampstead, Hertfordshire. Historic Building Monitoring and Recording</i>		
Authors	<i>T Collins</i>		
Report no.	<i>3639</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>September 2010</i>		

# THE GROVE, WHEATHAMPSTEAD, HERTFORDSHIRE HISTORIC BUILDING MONITORING AND RECORDING

## SUMMARY

*In August 2010, Archaeological Solutions Ltd conducted a programme of historic building monitoring and recording at The Grove near Wheathampstead, Hertfordshire. The programme was carried out in order to comply with a condition attached to planning consent for the creation of a boot room / cloakroom and first floor study area.*

*The development included the removal of an earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century staircase and associated partitions at first floor level. The removal of these elements had little impact into earlier fabric although where such fabric was uncovered this allowed an opportunity to record further information relating to the development of the house.*

*There was no evidence for any 18<sup>th</sup> century internal features, although the removal of the staircase reveals the formerly external brickwork of the main house. The presence of a plinth along with tuck-pointing of the brickwork provides evidence that the stair turret was a later addition to the pre-existing rear wall of the house, albeit what appears to be a short time later, suggested by the similarities in fabric used.*

*The brickwork of the north-west extension to the stair turret, along with the sash window preserved at first floor level, retaining delicately moulded glazing bars and no horns, suggests a date for this addition somewhere in the early-mid 19<sup>th</sup> century.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In August 2010, Archaeological Solutions Ltd conducted a programme of historic building monitoring and recording at The Grove, Pipers Lane, near Wheathampstead, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 1542 1332) (Fig. 1). The monitoring and recording was carried out in order to comply with a condition attached to planning consent for the creation of a boot room / cloakroom and first floor study area (St Albans Planning/Listed Building Consent Ref. 5/2010/0987LB).

1.2 The programme was conducted in accordance with a specification compiled by AS (dated 9<sup>th</sup> July 2010) and advice from St Albans District Council (SADC). The project aimed to identify and record additional evidence for the development of the building and was carried out in accordance with the English Heritage document *Understanding historic buildings: a guide to good recording practice* (2006). It also adhered to the *IfA Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (revised 2008) and the *IfA Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures* (revised 2008).

## 2 METHOD OF WORK

2.1 The site was visited on the 16<sup>th</sup> August 2010 in order to undertake the monitoring and photographic work. Tansy Collins compiled any written descriptions and carried out the photographic recording. The photographic recording was conducted using medium format (4.5cm x 6cm) black and white film and included all external views and general internal shots relevant to the monitoring. This utilised a Zenza Bronica ETRS camera and Ilford HP5 IOS 400 120mm film. Colour photographs were taken using a Canon 1000D (10 megapixels) digital camera, duplicating the black and white photography. External lighting and weather conditions were good at the time of the survey. A scale was used wherever possible, and a flash was employed for internal shots. A pictorial index of the digital photography and selected colour plates are included below together with location plots (Fig. 2)

### **3 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE**

3.1 The site lies on the south-east side of the town of Harpenden in an area of land which clearly comprised dispersed settlement for much of recorded history, which persists to the east towards Wheathampstead although has been largely lost with urban development to the north-west. Historically, The Grove was one of a small number of prosperous estates situated between Harpenden and Wheathampstead (Thompson 2002).

3.2 A driveway, extending from Pipers Lane to the south, gives access to the main façade which fronts to the north-east onto an area of lawn and gravel. The grounds immediately surrounding the house comprise gravelled car parks with areas of lawn and shrubs. Further buildings lie to the east.

3.3 The house generally consists of an L-shaped plan, which has clearly been extended and altered on a number of occasions. A separate report produced by A D Practice Ltd. outlines the general phasing of the building (ADP 2010). Both the plan form of the historic core along with documentary evidence suggests a date for this element within the earlier 17<sup>th</sup> century, although this does not preclude the possibility of earlier origins. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century the building must have been fairly substantial as hearth tax was paid on four hearths. Thomas Seare carried out substantial alterations to the house in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century including rebuilding a number of elevations, of note being the principal façade which is built of red brick with panels of over-burnt headers punctuated with further red brick to incorporate the date and Thomas Seare's initials (Plate 1). Elsewhere, further alteration and extension was carried out at this time, while the main façade clearly saw later reworking with the elevation raised at eaves level and the central doorway here blocked. The later extension to the north-west is constructed of a similar fabric to the 1712 elements, although with a simpler chequerboard effect created by the over-burnt headers, and it is suggested was added only a short time after.

3.4 The early 19<sup>th</sup> century saw further alterations to the house creating the layout predominantly as it is today.

### **4 ASSESSMENT AREA**

## *Exterior*

4.1 The area which was subject to monitoring and recording projects from the western side of the main range, off-centre to the northern end, and comprises a brick-built stair turret with access given to the interior at low level (Plate 2). This was later extended to the north, continuing the pitch of the roof, and adding a further window at first floor level. The roof is covered with peg-tiles. The southern side has been obscured by the addition of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century range.

4.2 The brick of the earlier element is very similar to that of the rear façade of the main range. The bricks are orange, fairly creased, with very occasional diagonal skintles, laid in Flemish bond with over-fired headers forming a chequerboard pattern. The bricks measure an average of 8¼" x 4" x 2½" (210mm x 102mm x 64mm) with a ½" (13mm) lime mortar joint, all tuck pointed. Areas of disturbance are visible and the doorway may be inserted as it displays no queen closers as would be expected. Above the doorway a six-over-six sash, with horns, gives light to the interior, with an adjoining six-pane side-hung casement with a two-pane overlight. This window has no queen closers and appears to have been inserted into the pre-existing fabric.

4.3 The stair turret has been extended to the north-west, demonstrated by a straight joint in the brickwork on the south-west side. This element is perhaps mid 19<sup>th</sup> century in date with the brickwork of this element constructed in sympathetic style of red / purple stock bricks interspersed with over-fired headers. A few bricks display straight skintles. A six-over-six sash window with no horns lies at first floor level. The north elevation of the stair turret is visible above the single storey addition to the north-west, where a blocked window has been bisected by the later pent-roof.

## *Interior*

4.4 Internally, the area had been entirely reworked and, from the elements surviving, this appears to have been carried out in the earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century, perhaps with the addition of a small low linking unit immediately to the north-west, as the staircase crosses the junction of the two areas, where a half-archway marks the divide.

4.5 The doorway on the south-west gives access from the exterior to the ground floor and a small lobby area with a further doorway on the north-east giving access to the main range. The staircase extended to first floor level on the north side of the building against the wall of the main range. The flanking walls are plain plastered and little of interest is visible. The staircase was of simple form with plain newels and stick balusters on a closed string with a plain handrail. A cupboard occupying the space below the stair was enclosed by a simple panelled partition and a door with two plain panels.

4.6 At first floor level the area was divided into a staircase landing with a bathroom on the south-west side, although little of interest was visible apart from three windows on the south-west side as noted from the exterior. The south-east example is a 19<sup>th</sup> century six-pane casement with a two-pane over light and delicately moulded glazing bars. The central window is a six-over-six sash, with fairly robust glazing bars with an ovolo-moulding and fillet, which has been replaced, perhaps in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The final window to the north-west is a further six-over-six sash with no

horns and delicately moulded glazing bars, of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century date. In every window the lower panes have been replaced with obscured glass.

### *Monitoring*

4.7 Removal of the staircase and under stair cupboard has resulted in the exposed of a strip of brickwork of the wall of the south-west wall of the main range (Plate 3). This is of identical form to that seen on the remainder of the elevation with the original mortar and tuck-pointing surviving (Plate 4). Also of note is a low plinth on this side, all plastered apart from where the staircase has been removed revealing that a portion of the plinth was hacked away with the insertion of the staircase. Both the presence of the plinth and the survival of the tuck-pointing on the wall of the main range indicates that the wall of the main range was formerly external and that the earlier element of the stair turret must have been constructed after the rebuilding of the elevations in 1712. The similarity in brickwork and form, however, suggests this occurred a relatively short time later.

4.8 At first floor level a number of partitions were removed along with the fixtures and fitting for the bathroom. The partitions were revealed to comprise plaster or gypsum blockwork containing straw. Little else has been revealed apart from where the partitions abutted the wall surface, the fabric behind is now visible. The only feature is a timber bearer set into the brickwork of the south-east wall.

## **5 DISCUSSION**

5.1 Observations during works to a rear stair turret determined that the fabric removed belonged predominantly to an earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century phase of working, and has little impact onto any earlier historic fabric. The development included the removal of the existing staircase, along with two partitions at first floor level. Particular attention was paid to areas where historic fabric has been uncovered by the removal of the later material, and information relating to the development of the building was recorded

5.2 In the areas inspected, no evidence survives for any internal fixtures and fittings of 18<sup>th</sup> century date and the staircase itself was earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century in date, while the form of the partitions at first floor level suggest they are contemporary and the whole area was reworked at this time. The construction of the partitions, comprising plaster or gypsum blocks containing straw, is a popular technique in France, and although fairly common during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in England the tradition has not continued with any prevalence.

5.3 The only historic fabric exposed at ground floor level during the removal of the staircase included a strip of brickwork extending from ground level up the wall to first floor level, which revealed the formerly external brickwork of the principal range with a low-level plinth. This indicates that the 18<sup>th</sup> century stair turret was constructed after the early 18<sup>th</sup> century brickwork of the rear elevation. However, the similarity in form and construction suggests the stair turret was added only a short time later.

5.4 At first floor level, the removal of the partitions has provided little further information about the construction of the stair turret apart from on the southern wall where a timber bearer is visible set into the brickwork.

5.5 As with the earlier element, the only visible historic fabric for the north-west extension to the stair turret is the external wall fabric. This brickwork, along with the sash window preserved at first floor level, with delicately moulded glazing bars and no horns, suggests a date for this addition somewhere in the early-mid 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank Mr & Mrs Bowman for funding the works, and their architects, AD Practice Ltd for their assistance (in particular Mr Peter Hayes).

AS would also like to acknowledge the assistance of the main contractor, Mr Stuart Chapman.

AS would also like to acknowledge the advice and input received from Mr Simon West of SADC

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

English Heritage. 2006. *Understanding historic buildings; a guide to good recording practice*. English Heritage Publishing

Smith, J.T. 1993 *Hertfordshire houses: selective inventory*. Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, London.

Thompson, I. 2002 *Wheathampstead & Harpenden: Extensive Urban Survey Project Assessment Report*. Hertfordshire County Council

### Websites

Listed Buildings Online;  
<http://lbonline.english-heritage.org.uk>



## APPENDIX 1

## HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY SHEET

<b>Site name and address:</b>	The Grove, Wheathampstead, Hertfordshire
<b>County:</b> Herts	<b>District:</b> St Albans
<b>Village/Town:</b> Wheathampstead	<b>Parish:</b> <i>Wheathampstead</i>
<b>Planning application reference:</b>	5/2010/0987/LB
<b>Client name/address/tel:</b>	Mr & Mrs Bowman, The Grove, Nr Harpenden
<b>Nature of application:</b>	Conversion to boot / cloak room
<b>Present land use:</b>	Lobby and stair case with bathroom
<b>Size of application area:</b>	<b>Size of area investigated</b>
<b>NGR (8 figures):</b>	TL 1542 1332
<b>Site Code:</b>	AS 1352
<b>Site director/Organization:</b>	Archaeological Solutions Ltd
<b>Type of work:</b>	Historic building monitoring and recording
<b>Date of work:</b>	August 2010
<b>Location of finds/Curating museum:</b>	St Albans
<b>Related SMR Nos:</b>	<b>Periods represented:</b> - Early 18 <sup>th</sup> century
<b>Relevant previous summaries/reports: -</b>	
<b>Summary of fieldwork results:</b>	<p>In August 2010, Archaeological Solutions Ltd conducted a programme of historic building monitoring and recording at The Grove near Wheathampstead. The work was carried out in order to comply with a condition imposed on planning consent for the creation of a boot room / cloakroom and first floor study area. The development included the removal of an earlier 20th century staircase and associated partitions at first floor level. The removal of these elements had little impact into earlier fabric although where such fabric was uncovered this allowed an opportunity to record further information relating to the development of the house.</p> <p>There was no evidence for any 18th century internal features, although the removal of the staircase reveals the formerly external brickwork of the main house. The presence of a plinth along with tuck-pointing of the brickwork provides evidence that the stair turret was a later addition to the pre-existing rear wall of the house, albeit what appears to be a short time later, suggested by the similarities in fabric used.</p> <p>The brickwork of the north-west extension to the stair turret, along with the sash window preserved at first floor level, retaining delicately moulded glazing bars and no horns, suggests a date for this addition somewhere in the early-mid 19th century.</p>
<b>Author of summary:</b> T Collins	<b>Date of Summary:</b> 27.09.2010

## APPENDIX 2 ARCHIVE CONTENTS FORM

<b>Site Details</b>							
<b>Site Name:</b> The Grove, Wheathampstead, Hertfordshire					<b>NGR:</b> TL 1542 1332		
<b>County:</b> Hertfordshire				<b>Museum Collecting Area:</b> St Albans			
<b>Site Code:</b> AS 1352				<b>Project Number:</b> 3988			
<b>Date of Work:</b> September 2010				<b>Related Work:</b>			
<b>Brief/s</b>				<b>Specification/s</b>			
<b>Date</b>		<b>Present</b>		<b>Date</b>		<b>Present</b>	
Advice letter to client		No		09.07.2010		Yes	
<b>Site Records (Description)</b>							
Notes (3 sheets A4)							
<b>Site Drawings (Give Details of Formats &amp; Size)</b>							
Drawn Plans & Sections:							
<b>Architect's Drawings:</b> 2 sheets A3 print-outs – annotated							
<b>Digital Drawings</b>							
<b>Printouts of Drawings</b>			<b>Printouts of Data</b>			<b>Digital Data</b>	
In report						Digital photographs and drawings on CD	
<b>Reports</b>							
<b>Report No</b>		<b>Report Type</b>				<b>Present</b>	
3639		Historic building monitoring and recording				Yes	
<b>Site Photographs</b>							
Black & White Contact Prints					Colour Slides		
<b>Film No</b>	<b>Film Type</b>	<b>Negs</b>	<b>Negs Present</b>	<b>Contacts Present</b>	<b>Film No</b>	<b>Negs</b>	<b>Present</b>
1	120mm	6-15	Yes	Yes			
<b>Photographic Location Plans Present? (Give Details)</b>							
In report and separate printout in archive folder							
<b>Digital Photographs (Give Details):</b>							
Digital photography duplicates black and white photography. Index and selected plates printed in report. Separate printout of index included in archive folder and digitally on CD.							

COLOUR PLATES



Plate 1 Principal north-east façade of the house, taken from the east (11)



Plate 2 View of the stair turret on the south-west side of the main range of the house, taken from the south-west (2)



Plate 3 North-east side of the ground floor area showing exposed brickwork where staircase removed, taken from the west (3)



Plate 4 Detail of formerly external brickwork of the main range, taken from the south-west (5)

PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



1

*Rear side of the house with later additions to the right, taken from the west*



2

*View of the stair turret on the south-west side of the main range of the house, taken from the south-west*



3

*North-east side of the ground floor area showing exposed brickwork where staircase removed, taken from the west*



4

*Archway on the north-west side of the stair turret, ground floor, taken from the south*



5

*Detail of formerly external brickwork of the main range, exposed after removal of the staircase, taken from the south-west*



6

*North-west side of stair turret at first floor level showing removed partition, taken from the south-east*



7

*North-east side of stair turret at first floor level showing exposed brickwork after the removal of the stair case, taken from the south*



8

*South-east wall of stair turret at first floor level showing removed partition, taken from the north-west*



9

*Central window on the south-west wall of the stair turret, first floor, taken from the north-east*



10

*North-west window on the south-west wall of the stair turret, taken from the east*



11

*Principal north-east façade of the house, taken from the east*



12

*North-west elevation of the stair turret at first floor level showing blocked window (indicated), taken from the west*



13

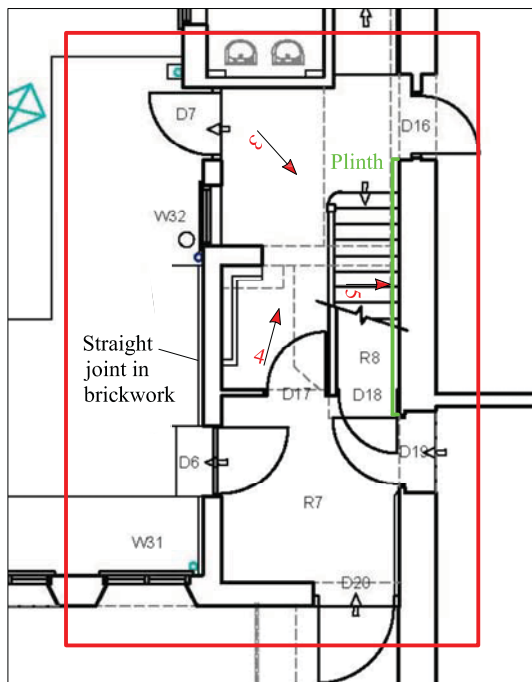
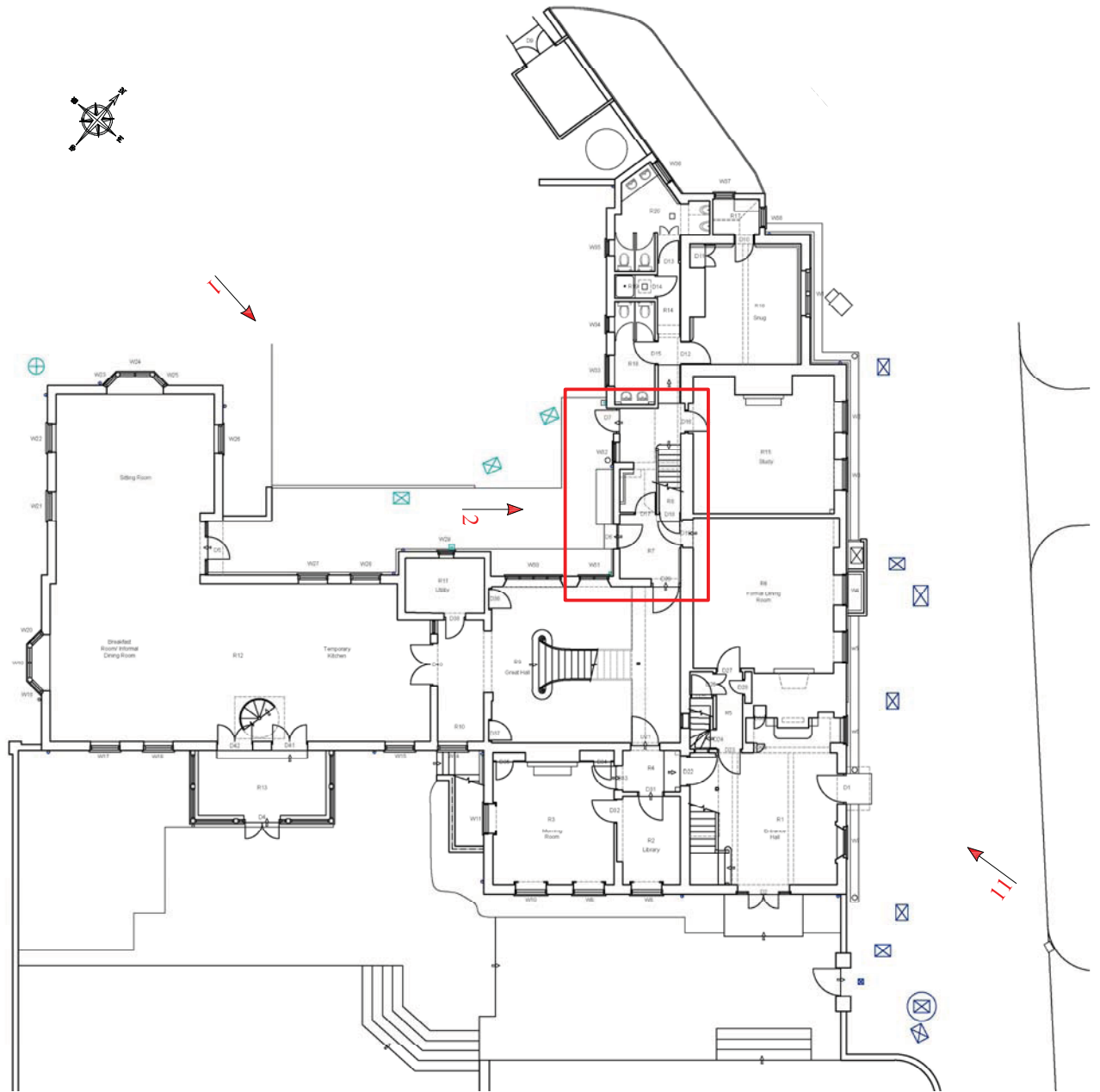
*Detail of the fabric comprising the partitions at first floor level, taken from the east*



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*Archaeological Solutions Ltd*  
**Fig. 1 Site location plan**  
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4



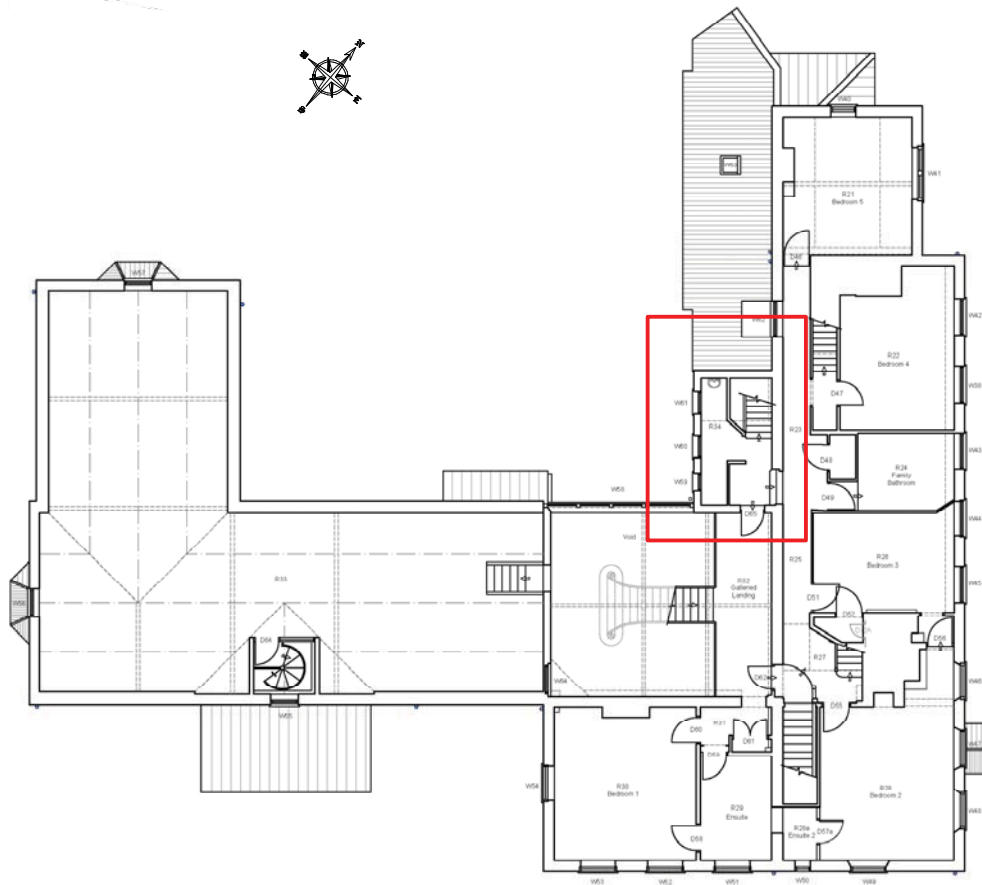


0 Ground floor plan 1:250 10m

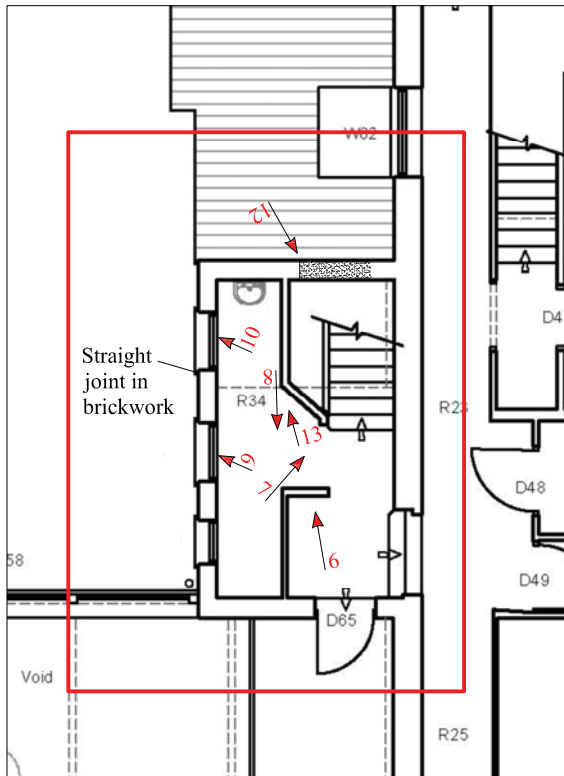
Photographic location

0 Insert 1:100 5m

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**Fig. 2 Ground floor plan**  
 Scale 1:250 & 1:100 at A4



0 First floor plan 1:250 10m



Blocked window

Photographic location

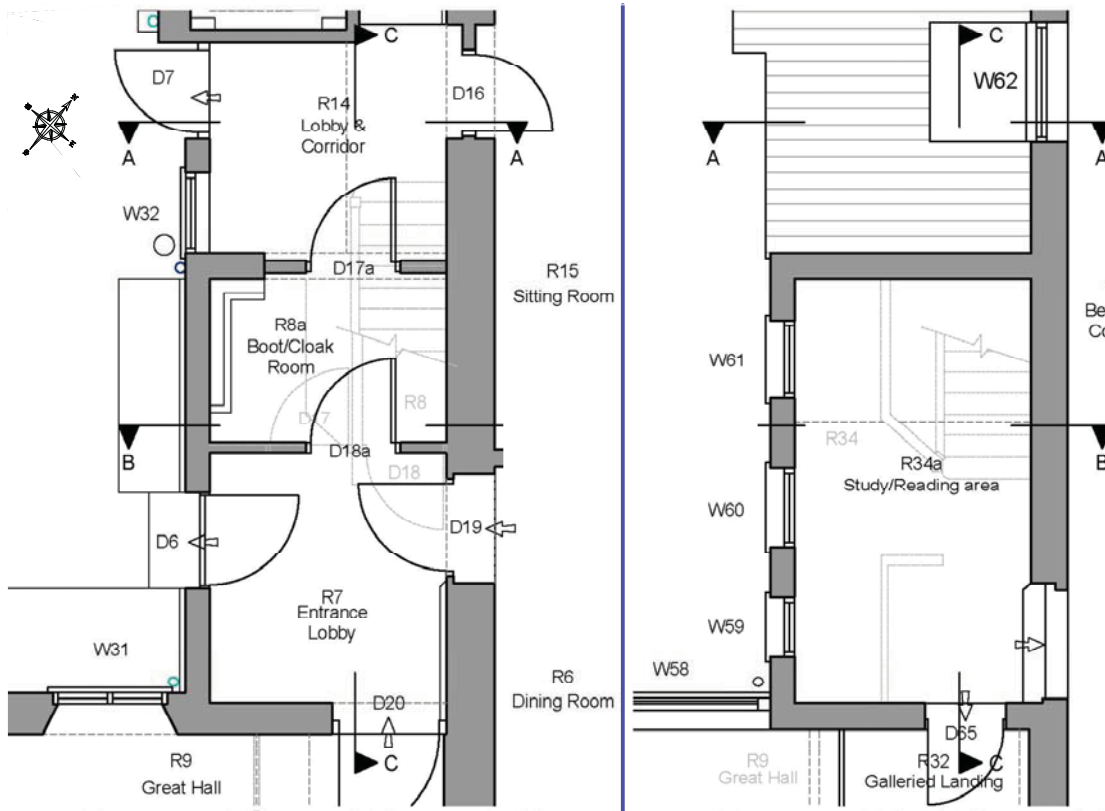
0 Insert 1:100 5m



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**Fig. 3 First floor plan**

Scale 1:250 & 1:100 at A4



Proposed ground floor

Proposed first floor

