

**Wellesley Court,
Wellington, Somerset**

**Built Heritage
Assessment**

Checked by	
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**Wellesley Court, Wellington, Somerset
Built Heritage Assessment**

By

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For

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Wellesley Court, Wellington, Somerset

Built Heritage Assessment

Summary

A built heritage assessment was undertaken of standing remains within an area of proposed development amongst the backplots of Fore Street and Cornhill, part of a conservation area in Wellington, Somerset. Twenty structures were assessed including former and existing boundary divisions. Seven structures are considered to have no special architectural or historic interest. The others have varying degrees of local interest including a number of structures that incorporate local a local vernacular form of construction that utilises chert rubble. Several of these chert structures are the boundary walls that delineate the backplots, apparently derived from medieval burgage plots. Dating is problematic, but there is no obviously early material, and the technique was certainly in use up to the mid-19th century. While the proposed development will provide an opportunity for the revitalisation of what is now an unused and derelict area, the proposals as they stand will result in the demolition of a number of these structures of local interest. In this event mitigation is recommended in the form of preservation by record.

Wellesley Court, Wellington, Somerset

Built Heritage Assessment

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Scope and Methods

A built heritage assessment was undertaken of standing remains within the study area including former and existing boundary divisions, in order to evaluate their historical and archaeological significance, and to make recommendations for mitigation in the event of their being affected by the proposed development. The assessment is intended to be read in conjunction with a desk-based assessment carried out by Archaeology and Planning Solutions (2007), which this report is intended to complement.

The assessment comprised a site visit in order to compile analytical descriptions, documentary research to provide back up evidence of date and function, and an evaluation of architectural and historic significance based on the existence or non-existence of statutory and non-statutory designations and also on the author's professional judgement formulated by 25 years experience of historic building analysis.

1.2 Planning Status

None of the structures is statutorily or locally listed, and although they fall within the Wellington Conservation Area none is highlighted in the Conservation Area Appraisal Document (Taunton Deane Borough Council 2007) as an important unlisted building. Indeed only one (Structure 9, most of which lies outside the study area) receives any emphasis, being included as a "neutral building". No individual building, then, has so far been recognised as having any special historical or architectural significance.

On the other hand, the appraisal draws attention to the characteristic "high stone or brick walls (that) provide enclosure to backplots", which has a pertinence to the study area, lying as it does within the former backplots of properties fronting Fore Street (Nos 5-27) and Cornhill (No. 6). There is, therefore, a presumption that the backplot divisions are a significant factor in determining the character of the conservation area.

1.3 Historical Overview

The tithe map of 1842 shows a strong correlation between the divisions of the Fore Street properties and the arrangement of the backplots, and it is to be presumed that at least some of the plots were divided by walls by this time. More tangible is the evidence that a number of outbuildings and rear extensions were in existence within the study area by this time. The tithe apportionment suggests that ownership of the backplots did not always correspond with that of the street front properties, and if the morphology of this block of land is based on the medieval burghage pattern, then it is evident that some alienation had taken place by the mid-19th century.

Thus, whereas No. 39 in the apportionment (21 Fore Street) seems to have retained its backplot, No. 40 (19 Fore Street) appears to have taken over the property to the rear of No. 41 (17 Fore Street). By time of the 1890 Ordnance Survey map the morphological correlation between backplots and street front properties had weakened. Notably, the plot currently occupied by No. 27 Fore

Street (Lloyds Bank), was redeveloped in 1885,¹ and an alleyway created on its west side separating the two parts of the study area.

All these walls seem to have been built between the appearance of the tithe (1842) and the Ordnance Survey (1890) maps as part of the rearrangement of the backplots in this area that accompanied the construction of the present No. 27 Fore Street (Lloyds Bank) as the headquarters of the banking firm Fox, Fowler and Co. The Ordnance Survey map is uninformative as to the relationship of this area with the bank itself although it shows a division between the back yard of the bank and the area to the rear, which seems to have been given over to an orchard.

The demolition of buildings to the rear of No. 27 and some reconfiguration of property boundaries resulted in an enlarged backplot that stepped out towards the east to annexe the northern ends of the backplots of Nos 25 and 23. To the rear of No. 6 Cornhill, the northern boundary of the plot had been straightened and the east end of the southern boundary had been removed to open the plot out to an arm of land sandwiched between the Cornhill and Fore Street properties. In respect of buildings other than boundary walls, only one (Structure 9a and b) appears on the tithe map, and it is to be assumed on the cartographic evidence that none of the others is earlier in date than the mid-19th century.

2.0 Assessment

2.1 Structure 1 (Fig. 2)

Description

Mid-20th-century single-storey shed. Timber framed with corrugated asbestos wall cladding and roof. Aligned northwest-southeast facing southwest and open fronted.

Historical Notes

In the tithe apportionment the plot within which Structure 1 stands (plot 50), despite being directly behind No. 6 Cornhill (plot 59 in the apportionment), was owned and occupied by Daniel Brock, whose house and workshop fronted Fore Street (plot 49). It is described as 'garden'.

Significance

Building 1 has no special architectural or historic significance.

2.2 Structure 2 (Fig. 3)

Description

Row of early to mid-20th-century single-storey lean-to outbuildings aligned northeast-southwest facing northwest and set within the angle formed by two garden walls. Timber framed with corrugated iron wall cladding.

Historical Notes

Like Structure 1 (qv), Structure 2 also lies within the plot designated 50 and described as 'garden' in the tithe apportionment. Buildings appear in this position

¹ The date is given on a commemorative plate fixed to the front wall of the building.

from the time of the Ordnance Survey 1890 map, onwards, although the present buildings do not seem to be quite so early.

Significance

Building 2 has no special architectural or historic significance.

2.3 Structure 3 (Fig. 4)

Description

Boundary wall defining the north, west and part of the south sides of a plot of land to the rear of No. 6 Cornhill. The whole plot, including the walls was very overgrown at the time of the survey and access to parts of the walls was not possible. The south and west sides, however, are probably late 18th or early 19th century in date. They have chert rubble plinths with 9 in x 4½ in x 2½ in red brick above laid in Flemish bond. At the south end of the east wall is a small blocked oval opening. Only the south side was visible, so it is not entirely certain whether this represents a niche or a loop giving a (restricted) view of, or providing communication with, the adjacent property. Until the other side of the wall can be examined (it was obscured at the time of the survey) no definitive answer can be given. It is possible that further features await discovery beneath the undergrowth.

Historical Notes

The west and south boundaries of the plot were in existence in 1842, when the tithe map was drawn up, but comparison with the 1890 map suggests a mid to late 19th-century alteration to the line of the northern boundary. In general, the awkward placing of this plot in relation to the boundaries of the Fore Street properties has the appearance of an encroachment on the medieval pattern, which may suggest that the current walls do not preserve the outline of a very ancient layout.

Significance

The use of chert rubble in the plinth is an interesting use of a local vernacular material, and the oval feature in the west wall suggests that this wall may have a greater architectural distinction than can be recognised in its present obscured state. Further investigation is required before a definitive assessment can be made.

2.4 Structure 4 (not illustrated)

Description

Boundary wall defining the northeast side of the plot to the rear of No. 7 Fore Street and the edge of the study area. Not accessible at the time of the survey but could be seen from a short distance. Probably 18th or 19th century. The northwest end is built of red brick laid in Flemish bond, while the remainder is of chert rubble.

Historical Notes

This wall follows the line of the boundary that was in existence in 1842 being shown on the tithe map.

Assessment

Of local historical interest in helping to preserve the historic character of the townscape shaped by the former burgage plots of Fore Street. Its architectural interest lies in the use of chert, a local vernacular material.

2.5 Structure 5 (Fig. 5)

Description

Boundary wall defining the southwest side of the plot to the rear of No. 7 Fore Street and the edge of the study area. Probably 18th or 19th century. The wall was covered in ivy at the time of the survey and fenced off, so could not be examined in detail, but the north end was of red brick.

Historical Notes

This wall follows the line of the boundary that was in existence in 1842 being shown on the tithe map.

Assessment

Of local historical interest in helping to preserve the historic character of the townscape shaped by the former burgage plots of Fore Street. It is possible that, like Structure 4, it may be part built of chert, which, if this were the case would give it a local architectural interest.

2.6 Structure 6 (not illustrated)

Description

Boundary wall defining the southwest side of the plot to the rear of No. 9a Fore Street. The northeast side of the wall is covered in ivy and could not be inspected in detail, whereas the southwest side was obscured by Structure 7 (qv) which had been built in front of it. However, the northwest end of the wall was of red brick on a chert rubble plinth.

Historical Notes

The boundary defined by Structure 6 was in existence in 1842, being shown on the tithe map.

Assessment

Of local historical interest in helping to preserve the historic character of the townscape shaped by the former burgage plots of Fore Street. Its architectural interest lies in it being part built of chert, a local vernacular material.

2.7 Structure 7

Description

Later 20th-century outbuildings of brick laid in stretcher bond, with corrugated iron roof and extension wing. The principal alignment is northwest-southeast facing southwest. Central brick-fronted section with central 6-panel door and a pair of flanking casement windows is framed by a pair of wide bays the left-hand one now open and the other partially closed with corrugated iron sheeting. At the

left-hand end of the range a corrugated iron clad wing breaks forward from the main frontage.

Historical Notes

The footprint of this building is shown on the 1964 Ordnance Survey map, although it is not shaded as other buildings are, perhaps denoting a building in the course of construction. The date would certainly suit the historic character of the structure.

Significance

Structure 7 has no special architectural or historic significance.

2.8 Structure 8 (Figs 7-8)

Description

Boundary wall to rear of Nos 11-15 Fore Street defining the edge of the study area (Fig. 7). Aligned northeast-southwest. Covered in ivy and difficult to discern much detail, but the lower part, at least, appears to be built of chert rubble (Fig. 8).

Historical Notes

According to the historic map evidence, this boundary appears to have come into existence between 1842 and 1890, when a block of buildings was built across the width of this plot.

Assessment

This wall has a local interest in being built (at least in part) of chert rubble, a characteristic vernacular feature.

2.9 Structure 9

Structure 9 comprises three elements of which only one (9c) is within the study area. The main walls of the other elements (9a and 9b) are coterminal with the border of the study area and are therefore included in this assessment. The main block (9a) is aligned northwest-southeast to the rear of No. 17 Fore Street, 9a is attached to its northwest end and 9c to the northeast side.

Structure 9a (Fig. 9)

Description

Probably early 19th century with later alterations, built largely of chert rubble and some red brick with a corrugated iron roof. 19th-century brick segmental-arched windows to the southwest. There is a 20th-century doorway in the southeast end within a low segmental-arched former carriage entrance, and a blocked doorway, now a window, to the southeast end of the northeast front.

Historical Notes

Shown on the 1842 tithe map, Structure 9a formed part of a block of land owned by John Gay (plots 40, 41 and 42), and although it lay directly behind plot 41, it is not entirely certain to which of the three divisions it belonged in 1842. Gay,

who occupied plot 40 (now No.19 Fore Street) was a carrier with a house and garden, John Gardiner at plot 41 (now No.17 Fore Street) had stables, and William Sparkes, at plot 42, a house and garden. The carriage entrance suggests that at least part of the building was used as accommodation for vehicles, in which case stabling would be the natural accompanying function.

Assessment

This building, which is unlikely to be much earlier than *c.* 1800, is highlighted in the Wellington Conservation Area Appraisal Document (February 2007) as a "neutral building", although given that in its use of chert rubble it represents a local vernacular tradition that is much in evidence in Wellington, this seems a little too dismissive. In fact this is probably one of the most significant buildings in this assessment, helping to preserve and define the historic character of this part of the town, which is very much a product of the layout of the former burgage plots. The side walls appear to perpetuate the boundaries of the plot to the rear of No. 17.

Structure 9b (Figs 10-12)

Description

Dating from the mid-19th century, Structure 9b is a single-storey, single-cell structure northeast built of red brick (9ins x 4¼ins x 2¾ins) on a chert rubble plinth, and a roof covering of clay double Roman tiles. The building is aligned northwest-southeast, now facing northeast, although there was originally a southwest front too.

The entrance is to the right (northeast), and there is a central wooden-framed four-light chamfer mullioned window (Fig. 10). Anomalies in the brickwork suggest that both these openings may be inserted. The southwest front (now inside Structure 10) is similar, with a central 4-light chamfer mullioned window and a doorway to the right (southeast) (Fig. 11).

Inside, the floor is of poured concrete, and the lower parts of the front and rear walls of rubblestone (Fig. 12). In the southeast wall is a blocked doorway to the parent building. Plain machine-cut floor joists carry the floor boards of a loft.

Historical Notes

A building was in existence here in 1842, appearing on the tithe map as part of Structure 9a to which it is attached. The tithe apportionment shows that it was on land owned by John Gay, although it isn't certain whether it was part of plot 40, 41 or 42. It was accessible from southwest via the still largely extant alleyway that extended between plots 40 and 41, but could also be entered from plot 42 to the northeast

Significance

Structure 9b has a degree of local interest in that it incorporates vestiges of vernacular building traditions to be found within the region, e.g. the chert walling, double Roman tile roof (probably from Bridgwater), and wood mullioned windows (17th-century examples of wood, as opposed to stone, mullions survive in Morse's House, Norton Fitzwarren). It also continues the lines and character of Structure 9a, and should therefore be considered in concert with it. Mitigating factors are the late date of the structure, its generally plain and uncomplicated character, and the degree of alteration it has been subjected to.

Structure 9c (Fig 13)

Description

Structure 9c comprises a row of mid-20th-century single-storey lean-to outbuildings, aligned northwest-southeast facing northeast, with a red brick section to the northwest, and a corrugated iron section to the southeast, both roofed in corrugated iron. The red brick section of Structure 9c is to the right (northwest) and has a left-hand boarded door and right-hand casement window. At the rear rising high above the roof, in order to clear the ridge of Structure 9a, is a brick chimney stack. To the left of this is a blind corrugated iron wall. The interior of the northwest section contains a single room with chimney breast against, and a blocked entrance in, the rear (southwest) wall. It is not immediately obvious that the chimney breast contained a fireplace on this side, and it is possible that one has been skilfully blocked, but the stack is closely integrated with the fabric of Structure 9a and may have served that part of the building. Access to the southeast section is from here, and from the southeast end. It contains no features of interest.

Historical Notes

Structure 9c does not appear on the Ordnance Survey map of 1932 and probably dates from the 1940s. Its function is unknown, but it has something of the nature of a potting shed or other outhouse that might be expected in a garden.

Significance

This building has no particular architectural or historic merit in its own right, although it may be of marginal local interest as part of the structural history of Structure 9a to the southwest with which it was connected, but which falls outside the study area.

2.10 Structure 10 (Fig. 11)

Description

Structure 10 represents a yard roofed over in the mid-20th century. It has a concrete floor, a wooden boarded wall to the northwest, full height sliding door to the southeast, and a roof of corrugated iron and corrugated asbestos sheeting.

Historical Notes

The area was still open by the time of 1932 map, and the roof probably dates from the 1940s.

Significance

Structure 10 has no special architectural or historic interest.

2.11 Structure 11 (Fig. 14)

Description

Boundary wall defining the northeast side of the plot to the rear of No.19 Fore Street.

Historical Notes

The boundary defined by Structure 11 was in existence by the time of the tithe map of 1842. It formed part of the land owned by John Gay

Assessment

Structure 11 has a local interest in helping to preserve the historic character of this part of the town, shaped by the former burgage plots fronting Fore Street.

2.12 Structure 12 (Fig. 14)

Description

Structure 12 is located towards the northwest end of the plot to the rear of Nos 19/19a Fore Street, and forms part of the northeast boundary wall and study area boundary. It could be glimpsed from the alleyway on the southwest side of No 17 Fore Street, but was otherwise inaccessible at the time of the survey. 19th-century in character and built of brick.

Historical Notes

A building is shown in this position on the 1842 tithe map, when it formed part of the plot (No. 40) owned and occupied by John Gay, carrier, comprising house and garden.

Significance

Structure 12 has a local historical significance in helping to preserve the historic character of the townscape shaped by the former burgage plots fronting Fore Street in that its northeast wall forms part of the boundary wall for this plot with Structure 11 (qv).

2.13 Structure 13 (Figs 15-18)

Description

Structure 13 comprises a complex of ruined structures aligned northwest-southeast, facing southwest (Fig. 15). This is divided longitudinally into two main components of which the southwestern element is the better preserved. This element dates from the later 19th century and is built of red brick (8¾ins x 4¼ins x 2½ins). Those parts of the side wall that have survived to a sufficient height both contain windows with flat brick arches, suggesting that this part of structure 13 formed an independent entity (Fig. 16). Although the centre of the block has been largely destroyed, the northwest end survives to two storeys in height (Fig. 17). The northwest face retains a wide ground-level doorway with pronounced segmental arch, and a first-floor doorway with a sliding door. The space in front of this end seems to have formed a yard, but the southwest wall of Structure 13 continued towards the northwest as far as the study area boundary. It may have contained an access point, but if so, this has been obliterated by the breaking through of this wall.

The second main element of Structure 13 lay to the northeast, the principal survival being a late 19th-century 7-bay blind arcade (Fig. 18), the niches having bullnose brick jambs and semi-circular arches. This is built of red brick (9ins x 4¼ins x 2⅞ins) laid in English garden wall bond (two rows of stretchers to one of headers) and has been constructed in front of a pre-existing (early 19th-century)

wall of red brick (9ins x 4½ins x 2½ins) laid in Flemish bond. Joist sockets above the arcade denote the former existence of an upper storey.

Historical Notes

Structure 13 occupies what was the backplot of No. 21 Fore Street, which equates with plot 39 on the tithe map. A building was in existence in 1842 at the north end of the footprint. By the time of the 1890 map, Structure 13 had been built, its west wall having been sited on the plot boundary. Access was apparently from the south end towards Fore Street. It hasn't proved possible to pin down the origins of this building any more accurately. The present numbering system seems to have its origins in the 1890s, and although some continuity of occupancy for Fore Street can be traced between the 1891 census returns and Kelly's Directory for 1897, difficulties arise from the fact that the Directory entries are listed by name rather than consecutively by street. Thus, it is not possible to pinpoint No. 21 Fore Street in the census returns for the crucial period, and it is unfortunate that although the present numbering system had come into being by 1897, No. 21 does not seem to appear in Kelly's Directory for that year, nor in the 1904 edition. The edition 1914 lists two occupants of No. 21 Fore Street: Achille Serre Ltd, dyer and W. H. Smith and sons, booksellers. Neither gives much of a clue to the function of Structure 13.

Significance

Structure 13 contains no material earlier than the 19th century; this late date, the building's uncertain function, and its ruinous state mean that there are no real grounds for considering it to have any special architectural or historic significance. Its main interest is that its side walls perpetuate the former backplot boundaries to No. 21 Fore Street.

2.14 Structure 14 (Figs 19-23)

Description

The main component of Structure 14 is a late 19th-century stable and small carriage house. Aligned northeast/southwest facing northwest, the rear (southeast) and right-hand (southwest) walls are built of roughly coursed rubble (Fig. 19), while the front (northwest) and left-hand (northeast) walls are constructed of red brick laid in Flemish garden wall bond; the half hipped roof covering is of Welsh slate. The two-cell plan contains the stable to the northeast and the carriage house to the southwest. Only the front elevation contains any architectural features (Fig. 20): a boarded stable-type door to the left (northeast) of centre and a casement window to the left (northeast), both opening with flat brick arches forming wedge-shaped lintels. Both the door and window are original. To the right (southwest) is a large opening to the carriage house, but the doors are gone.

Inside, the brick floor has been retained, complete with drainage channel in the stable. The stable has also kept its boarded wooden partition dividing the space into two stalls; this has a ramped top and octagonal section newel post with acorn finial (Fig. 21). The back (southeast) wall of the northeast stall is boarded with some evidence for fittings including one bracket for a hay rack. The southwest wall of the southwest stall is also boarded and carries three tack hooks and two semi-circular arched blocks. There is also a fixed wooden ladder against this wall leading to the loft which is carried over both cells, the boards of the upper floor being carried on plain machine-cut joists. At loft level an opening in the central partition gives access to the room over the carriage house, which was

also formerly accessible via an entrance, now blocked, in the southwest wall. The roof is carried on a single pair of purlins and a plank ridge.

The area between the main block described above and the northwest boundary wall has been roofed over in the mid-20th century to form an annexe, apparently a garage, with a weather boarded front (southwest) wall (Fig. 22). Inside, the concreted floor incorporates an inspection pit. A second annexe has been attached to the south corner of the main block, also during the mid-20th century. This building is timber framed with corrugated iron cladding (Fig. 23).

Historical Notes

Does not appear on the 1842 map but is depicted on the 1890 map and is probably to be associated with the redevelopment of this part of the study area in the later 19th century.

Significance

The nucleus of Structure 14 is a good example of a small later 19th-century stable and small carriage house, perhaps intended for a Brougham. The interest lies in the high degree of preservation, particularly the stable fittings. On the other hand, it is late in date and unexceptional in character, and therefore of local significance only. Neither of the two later additions has any special architectural or historic significance.

2.15 Structure 15 (Fig. 24)

Description

Boundary wall delineating the northwestern edge of the study area, comprising two 19th-century phases, separated by a vertical joint. The earlier phase, probably early to mid-19th century in date, to the east, is of 9in x 4¼ - 4½ in x 2½ hand made red brick laid in English bond. The later, late 19th-century, phase is constructed of machine-cut 9in x 4¼ - 4½ in x 2½ red brick of no discernible bond but with a very high proportion of headers and half bricks. Both phases are finished with late 19th-century triangular section coping bricks.

Historical Notes

The map evidence suggests that this section of wall was rebuilt between 1842 and 1890. The later phase probably dates from around the time that the Fox, Fowler Co. (now Lloyds) Bank was constructed.

Significance

The wall has no particular architectural merit, and its main historical significance is that it marks the approximate, though not exact, position of the rear boundary to the former Fore Street backplots.

2.16 Structure 16 (Figs 25-27)

Description

Boundary wall and gate piers delineating the southwest side of the plot to the rear of No. 27 Fore Street (Fig. 25), built of 9in x 4¼ - 4½ in x 2½ red brick. At the northwest end is a gateway flanked by square sectioned brick piers with

square ashlar caps (Fig. 26). The internal (northeast) side is articulated by brick buttresses set at 15ft centres (Fig. 27).

Historical Notes

Apparently part of the re-developments of c. 1885 associated with the construction of the Fox, Fowler & Co. (now Lloyds) Bank at No. 27 Fore Street, this boundary first appears on the 1890 Ordnance Survey map.

Significance

Architecturally, this wall has no special significance, but defines the northeast side of a public footway whose elongated form has been shaped by the character of the former burgage plots. The route itself, however, seems to be a creation of the late 19th century with only the southwest side (Structure 19 qv) being on the line of an older property boundary.

2.17 Structure 17 (Fig. 28)

Description

Boundary wall delineating the present extent of the rear plot of No. 25 Fore Street. Currently covered in ivy and difficult to see but apparently built of chert rubble with red brick quoins. The brickwork suggests a 19th-century date.

Historical Notes

The tithe apportionment suggests that these walls may have been in existence in 1842, although owing to the late 19th-century redevelopment of this area, it is difficult to be certain. More than likely they do represent the extent of the small open space shown on the tithe map at the northeast corner of Plot 34. Confusingly, this plot which appears to have been largely built over is described as 'garden' and was tenanted by Frederick Sharland, wine merchant, whose main premises were to be found at plot 33, to the west, separated by an alley. If so, then the east wall may well lie on a burgage plot division.

Significance

Although the date is unlikely to be early, this wall has a local architectural significance in being built of chert, a traditional south Somerset material, and a local historical interest in marking the line of a former burgage plot.

2.18 Structure 18 (Fig 29)

Description

Boundary wall defining east side of plot to rear of No. 29 Fore Street and the edge of the study area. Probably 18th or 19th century. Built of chert rubble with brick coping and quoins. Constructed in three separate sections, the central section having a pronounced curve.

Historical Notes

This wall appears to have been in existence when the tithe map was drawn up in 1842, as defining the northeast side of plot 31, described in the apportionment as five cottages and gardens the property of Elizabeth Mullet, occupied by Charlotte

Greenslade and others. The wall of this boundary seems to have formed the rear wall of the cottages (now gone) which faced towards the southwest.

Assessment

Of local historical interest in maintaining the historic character of this part of Wellington which has been shaped by the former burgage plots fronting Fore Street.

2.19 Structure 19 (Fig. 30)

Description

Boundary wall defining the north side of the plot to the rear of Nos 29-33 Fore Street, and the edge of the study area. This wall is in three sections denoting the former division into three rear plots. The northeastern section has recently been rebuilt (late 20th/early 21st century) with chert rubble and red brick quoins and coping. The middle section is of 9in x 4¼-4½in x 2½in red brick laid in Flemish bond. The southwestern section, which was covered in ivy is chert rubble with brick quoins.

Historical Notes

The tithe map shows that this boundary existed in 1842, the three sections being clearly defined. It delineated the northeastern ends of plots 29, 30 and 31. By 1890, the western section had been truncated by redevelopment of the Fore Street properties.

Assessment

The wall has a historical significance in perpetuating the rear boundary of the Fore Street burgage plots. Its architectural significance lies in the use of local vernacular material chert, although this value is somewhat diminished in the central section where brick was used, and in the northeastern section which seems to have been completely rebuilt.

2.20 Structure 20 (Fig. 31)

Description

Boundary wall defining the southwest side of the plot to the rear of No. 33 Fore Street, and the edge of the study area. Later 19th century. Red brick (9in x 4¼-4½in x 2½in). Originally ramped up towards the south, but now raised to a uniform height.

Historical Notes

This wall came into existence between 1842 and 1890 when there was some redevelopment of the Fore Street properties in this area. It was raised to create a new subdivision of a larger plot.

Assessment

Structure 20 has a limited local historical interest, and a limited local architectural interest in that it is a well built relatively high class structure, albeit somewhat plain, eschewing the vernacular tradition of building in chert rubble.

3.0 Conclusions

3.1 Summary of Significance

As noted in the introduction above, statutory and non-statutory designations have failed to make a mark within the study area. While it can be confirmed that none of the buildings reviewed as part of this assessment is of national architectural or historic significance, it is nevertheless true that several have a local significance, although that significance varies in degree from building to building.

Those with the greatest architectural interest are Structure 9(a and b) which lies immediately outside the study area, and Structure 14. The former has a local vernacular quality that makes a strong contribution to the historic character of this part of Wellington, while the latter is an unusually well-preserved example of a specific building type, which also incorporates local vernacular materials.

Next is a group of boundary walls, all of which are in some measure related to the historic landscape pattern that has evolved from the medieval burgage plots fronting Fore Street. Their consequence, then, is twofold; their historical value residing in the fact that they preserve elements of the backplot arrangement as they survived in 1842, and perhaps at an earlier date; their architectural value is largely dependent upon the use of the local chert that has influenced the historic character of Wellington. Their chronology is difficult to pin down with any degree of certainty; the chert rubble technique was probably still current in the latter half of the 19th century, and the associated brickwork is unlikely to be earlier than the 18th century. Included in this category are structures 4, 5, 6, 11, 17, 18, and 19.

A number of other walls are of lesser significance. Structure 3, probably of 19th-century date, also contains chert rubble, but, as it seems to intrude upon the pattern derived from the burgage plots, it does not have the same degree of historic interest. The interest of Structure 8 lies solely in it being constructed of chert rubble, but its later 19th-century date, and the fact that similar structures exist within the study area with greater historic value (see above) tends to lessen its significance. Structure 20 is of similar date, but, although its former ramped profile gives it a certain amount of architectural character, it lacks the historic significance of some of the boundary walls, nor does it have their local vernacular interest being of straightforward brick construction. Structure 13 is insufficiently well-preserved to be of architectural interest although it has some historical value in preserving the lines of one of the backplots.

A number of buildings have no special architectural nor historic interest. These are structures 1, 2, 7, 9c, 10, 15 and 16.

3.2 Impact

In considering the impact of the proposed development on the structures assessed here the most important consideration is the effect that it might have on the character of the conservation area. To iterate, the conservation area appraisal draws attention to the backplot walls as a significant factor in the character of the conservation area, a conclusion with which the present assessment concurs and elaborates upon by laying stress on the use of chert rubble as an additional contributory factor, and by considering that Building 9 (a and b), which lies on the edge of the study area, also plays an important part in defining the personality of this particular zone within the conservation area in that it is constructed of chert rubble and preserves the essential disposition of the burgage plot-derived layout.

It seems clear from the proposed positions of the new buildings (Fig.1) that some of these structures will be affected. In particular the demolition of parts or all of structures 6, 7, 13 and 17 seems to be assured, and it seems likely that structures 11 and 18 will be affected in some measure.

Other significant buildings that would be affected by the proposals by demolition are structures 12 and 14.

3.3 Mitigation

Mitigating factors include the fact that the study area is largely inaccessible at present so that most of the anticipated demolitions are unlikely to be visible from outside it, thereby not affecting the public appreciation of the conservation area; also the derelict nature of the site means that the proposed development provides an opportunity to enhance the conservation area and bring this part of the town back to life.

However, it is recommended that any loss of structures identified here as being of local architectural or historic interest should be the subject of mitigation through preservation by record at an appropriate level based on English Heritage standards (English Heritage 2006). Generally this should be at level 2, although structures 9 (a & b) and 14 would deserve a level 3 record. As most of the walls are obscured by vegetation clearance would have to take place before recording could usefully take place.

4.0 Sources

4.1 Primary Sources

Kelly's Directory of Somerset and Devonshire: 1875

Kelly's Directory of Somerset: 1889, 1897, 1902, 1914

Morris & Co. Directory of Somerset and Bristol: 1872

Wellington Census Returns: 1841, 1861, 1871, 1891

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4.2 Secondary Sources

Archaeology and Planning Solutions 2007, Wellesley Court, Wellington, Somerset: Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment.

Clifton-Taylor, A. 1972, *The Pattern of English Building.*

English Heritage 2006, *Understanding Historic Buildings: a Guide to Good Recording Practice.*

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Penoyre, J. 2005, *Traditional Houses of Somerset.*

Taunton Deane Borough Council 2007, *Wellington Conservation Area Appraisal Document.*

4.3 Cartographic Sources

1842 Tithe map 1842

1890 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 1890

1904 Ordnance Survey 1:2500

1930 Ordnance Survey 1:2500

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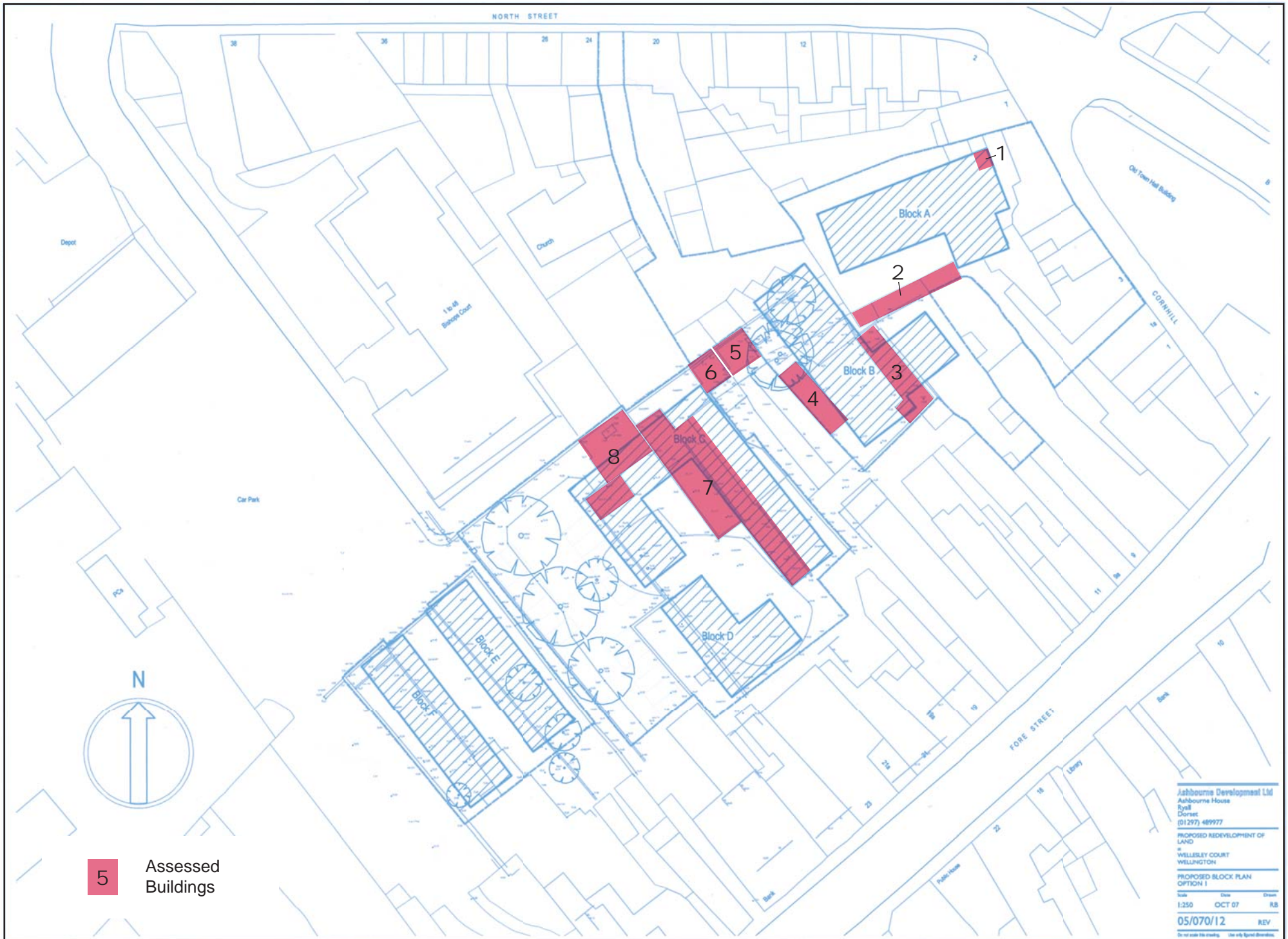


Fig.1



Fig.2



Fig.3



Fig.4



Fig.5



Fig.6



Fig.7



Fig.8



Fig.9



Fig.10



Fig.11



Fig.12



Fig.13



Fig.14



Fig.15



Fig.16



Fig.17