

GARAGE/STORE ADJACENT TO OWL MEWS, BACK LANE, ULVERSTON, CUMBRIA

Archaeological Building Recording



Client:
Jonny Briggs Joinery Ltd

Planning ref.: SL/2007/1391

NGR: 328653 478592

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February 2014



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Contents

Non-Technical Summary	3
Acknowledgements	3
1. Introduction	4
2. Methodology	6
3. Desk-Based Assessment.....	7
4. Building Recording.....	11
5. Discussion.....	22
6. Bibliography	24

Illustrations

List of Figures

Figure 1: Site location	5
Figure 2: North and east external elevations.....	14
Figure 3: South and west external elevations.....	15
Figure 4: Ground floor plan	20
Figure 5: Cross-section A-A1.....	21

List of Plates

Plate 1: Extract from Wood's map of 1832	7
Plate 2: Extract from the Ordnance Survey map, 1850.....	7
Plate 3: Extract from the Ordnance Survey map, 1852.....	8
Plate 4: Extract from the Ordnance Survey map, 1894.....	8
Plate 5: Extract from the Ordnance Survey map, 1913.....	9
Plate 6: Extract from the Ordnance Survey map, 1933.....	9
Plate 7 (left): North external elevation	11
Plate 8 (right): Detail of double door on the north elevation	11
Plate 9: East external elevation	12
Plate 10 (left): East end of the south external elevation.....	13
Plate 11 (centre): General view of the south external elevation.....	13
Plate 12 (right): Doorway at the west end of the south external elevation	13
Plate 13: West external elevation	13
Plate 14 (left): Floor at the west end of Room 1	16
Plate 15 (right): East truss in Room 1	16
Plate 16 (left): West truss in Room 1	17
Plate 17 (right): Wagon door in the north elevation of Room 1	17
Plate 18 (left): East elevation of Room 1	17
Plate 19 (right): South elevation of Room 1.....	17
Plate 20: West elevation of Room 1	17

Plate 21 (left): Truss in Room 2	18
Plate 22 (right): Large doorway in the east elevation of Room 2	18
Plate 23 (left): Doorway at the east end of the south elevation of Room 2	18
Plate 24 (right): Alcove at the west end of the south elevation of Room 2.....	18
Plate 25: Opening in the west elevation below the half loft.....	19

Non-Technical Summary

An archaeological building recording was requested by South Lakeland District Council, on the advice of the Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service, as a planning condition for the conversion of a garage/store adjacent to Owl Mews, Back Lane, Ulverston, into a domestic dwelling. Following approval of a project design Greenlane Archaeology was commissioned to carry out the building recording in January 2014.

The building is first shown on Wood's map of 1832, which is the earliest detailed map of the town. The footprint of the building is clearly recognisable on subsequent Ordnance Survey maps and appears to have been relatively unchanged since then.

The earliest phase of the building comprises a small threshing barn, perhaps a bank barn, with lower floor at the east end, and probably of 18th century date. Its original function soon changed and a number of openings were blocked or modified and in the later 19th or perhaps early 20th century it was subdivided by the addition of a brick wall, facilitating its use as a smithy and workshop, as recorded in 1910. Various alterations have taken place since then, including the insertion of a large doorway in the east end and reorganisation of the floors.

Acknowledgements

Greenlane Archaeology would like to thank Jonny Briggs Joinery Ltd for commissioning the project and providing the 'as existing' drawings of the building. Additional thanks are due to the staff of the Cumbria Archive Centre in Barrow-in-Furness (CAC(B)) for their help in accessing the records. Special thanks are also due to Bernard and Elizabeth Ellis of 34 Soutergate for allowing access to their garden to view the west end of the building, and also providing information about the property.

The desk-based assessment and building recording was carried out by Dan Elsworth, who wrote the report with Tom Mace. The illustrations were produced by Tom Mace, the report was edited by Jo Dawson, and the project was managed by Dan Elsworth.

1. Introduction

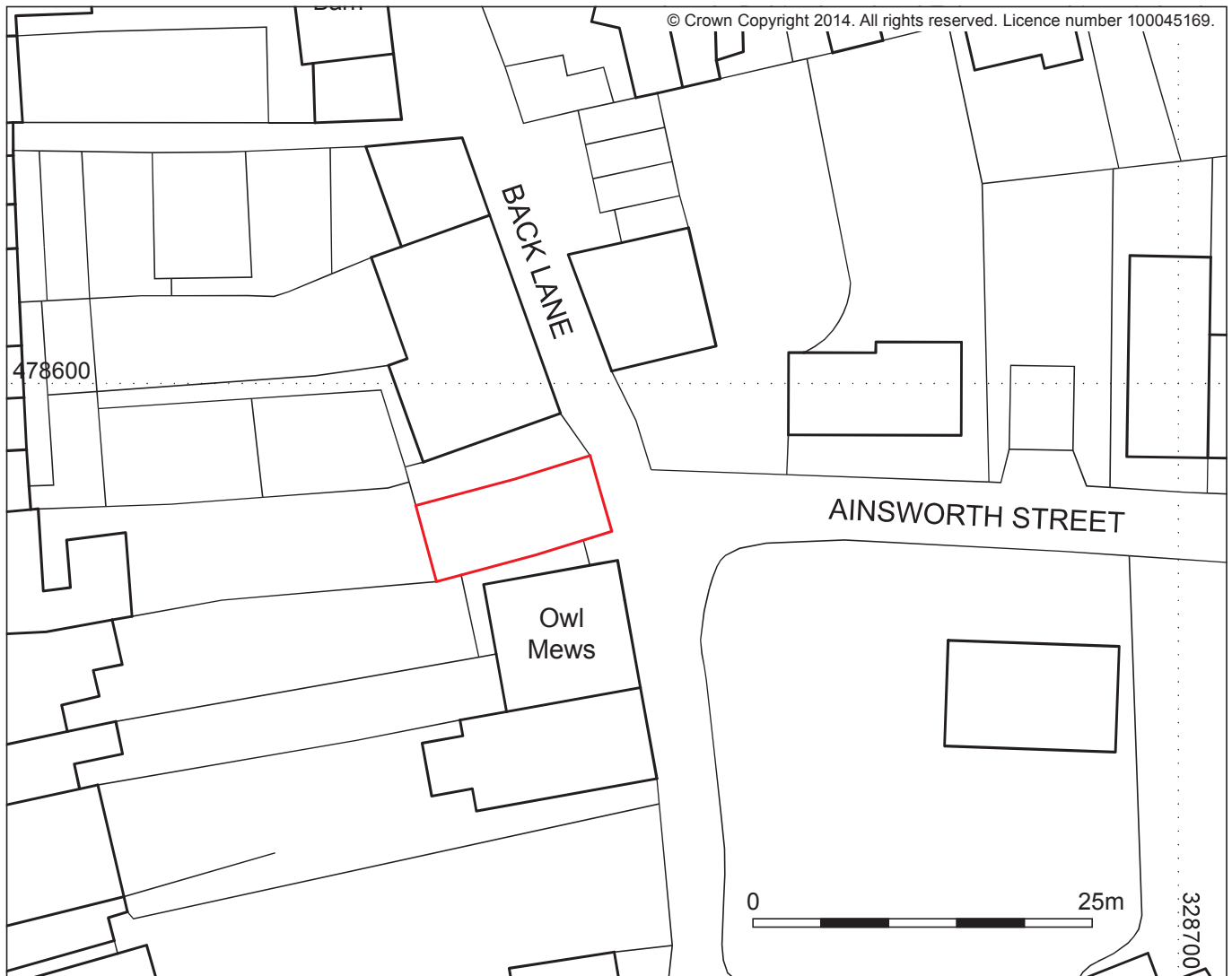
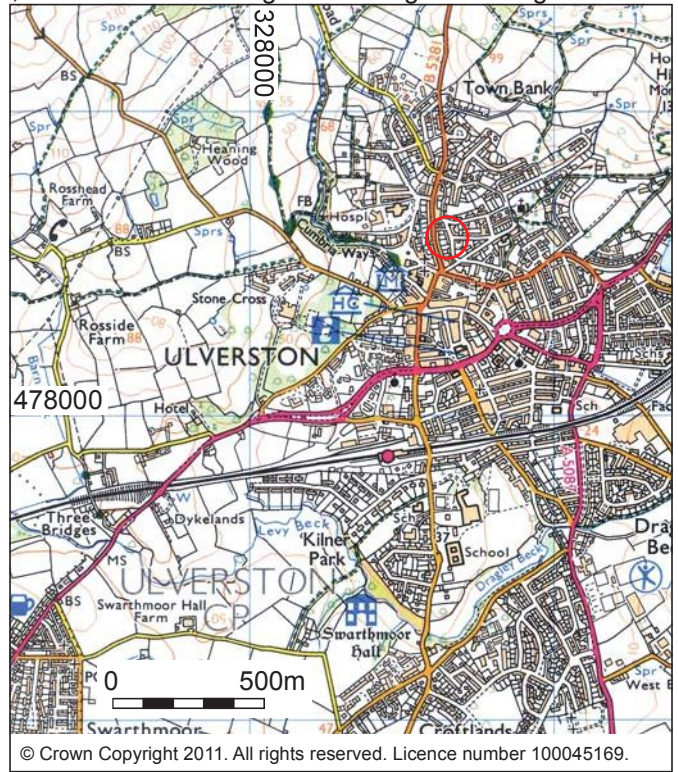
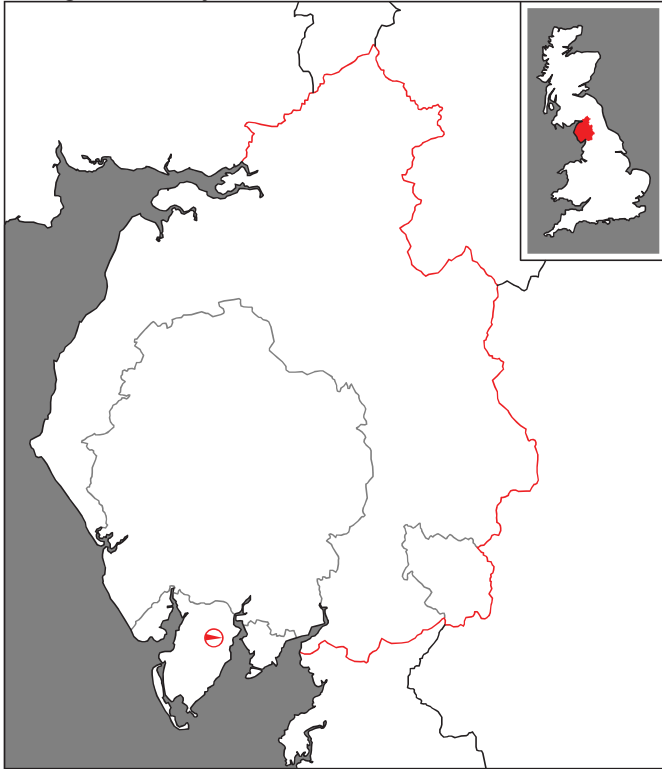
1.1 Circumstances of the Project

1.1.1 Following the submission of a planning application (ref. SL/2007/1391, which was subsequently extended: ref. SL/2011/0072) to convert a garage/store adjacent to Owl Mews, Back Lane, Ulverston, Cumbria (NGR 328653 478592) into a domestic dwelling, a condition (No. 7) was placed on the planning consent by South Lakeland District Council, following advice from the Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service, requiring a programme of archaeological investigation comprising an English Heritage Level 2-type building recording. Greenlane Archaeology was appointed by Jonny Briggs Joinery Ltd (hereafter 'the client') to carry out an archaeological building recording in order to fulfil the planning condition and a project design was produced in response. Following its approval the building recording was carried out in January 2014.

1.2 Location, Geology, and Topography

1.2.1 The site is situated to the north side of Ulverston, at the junction of Back Lane and Ainsworth Street (Figure 1). Back Lane is to the east of Soutergate which connects Ulverston to villages to the north. The site is situated at approximately 30m above sea level (Ordnance Survey 2011).

1.2.2 Ulverston is on the boundary between the West Cumbria coastal plain and the higher ground of the Furness Fells to the north; the solid geology is typically made up of Bannisdale slates (Taylor *et al* 1971, plate XIII; Moseley 1978, plate 1), and this is overlain by a drift geology made up of glacially-derived tills comprising gravels and clays (Countryside Commission 1998, 66). The local landscape is dominated by fields used for grazing and bounded by drystone boundaries (*op cit*, 73), although the site is within the urban area of Ulverston.



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Figure 1: Site location

2. Methodology

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The building investigation comprised three separate elements intended to provide a suitable record of the structure, in line with English Heritage standards (English Heritage 2006) and the guidelines of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2008a). A desk-based assessment was carried out in accordance with the project design and IfA guidelines (IfA 2008b) prior to the building recording, and a suitable archive was compiled to provide a permanent record of the project and its results in accordance with English Heritage and IfA guidelines (English Heritage 1991; Brown 2007).

2.2 Desk-Based Assessment

2.2.1 Information was gathered from the following locations:

- **Cumbria Archive Centre, Barrow-in-Furness (CAC(B))**: this was visited in order to examine early maps of the site and other primary sources as well as secondary sources such as trade directories in order to identify information about the development and use of the building;
- **Greenlane Archaeology library**: additional secondary sources were used to provide information for the site background.

2.3 Building Recording

2.3.1 The building recording was carried out to English Heritage Level-2 type standards (English Heritage 2006), which is a relatively low level of investigation intended to record the form, function and phasing of the building, without incorporating the results of the desk-based assessment in detail. The recording comprised the following elements:

- **Written record**: descriptive records of all parts of the building were made using Greenlane Archaeology *pro forma* record sheets;
- **Photographs**: photographs in both 35mm colour print and colour digital format were taken of the main features of the building, its general surroundings, and any features of architectural or archaeological interest. A selection of the colour digital photographs is included in this report, and the remaining photographs are in the project archive;
- **Drawings**: drawings were produced by hand-annotating printed plots of 'as existing' architect's drawings. The drawings produced ultimately comprised:
 - i. external elevations at a scale of 1:100;
 - ii. a floor plan at a scale of 1:100;
 - iii. a cross-section at a scale of 1:50.

2.4 Archive

2.4.1 A comprehensive archive of the project has been produced in accordance with the project design and current IfA and English Heritage guidelines (Brown 2007; English Heritage 1991). The paper and digital archive and a copy of this report will be deposited in the Cumbria Archive Centre in Barrow-in-Furness on completion of the project. A paper and digital copy of the report be provided to the client, and one will be retained by Greenlane Archaeology. In addition a paper and digital copy of the report will also be supplied to the Cumbria Historic Environment Record (HER) in Kendal, via the Historic Environment Officer, and a digital record of the project will be made on the *Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations* (OASIS) scheme.

3. Desk-Based Assessment

3.1 Map and Image Regression

3.1.1 **Introduction:** early maps of the area tend to be relatively lacking in detail and are certainly not specific enough to be useful in understanding the development of the property. The earliest useful maps therefore date from 1832 onwards.

3.1.2 **Wood's map, 1832:** an L-shaped block, which includes the site, is shown facing the junction of Back Lane and Ainsworth Street by 1832 (Plate 1). It is probable that the east/west section relates to the current building and is perhaps butted by adjacent properties.

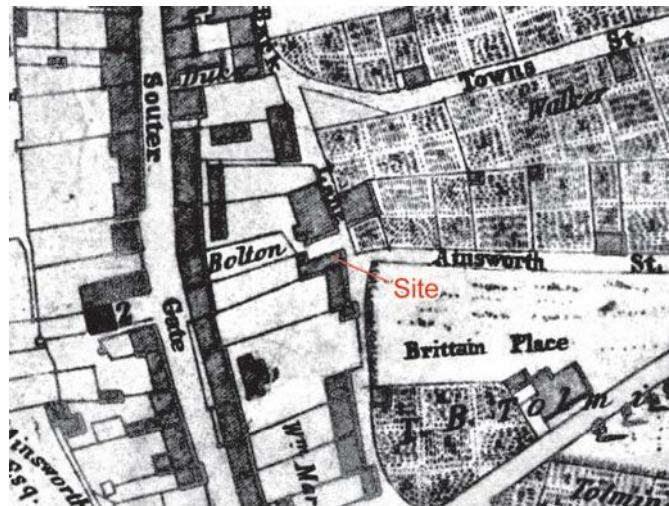


Plate 1: Extract from Wood's map of 1832

3.1.3 **Ordnance Survey, 1850:** the first 1:10,560 edition of the Ordnance Survey shows a detached rectangular building on the site (Plate 2). There appears to be a small square structure butting the south end of the west elevation.

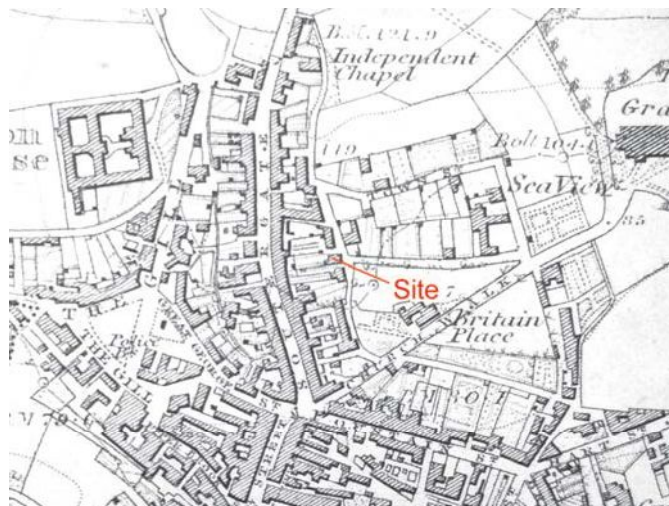


Plate 2: Extract from the Ordnance Survey map, 1850

3.1.4 **Ordnance Survey, 1852:** this edition of the Ordnance Survey map is at a more useful scale for our purposes (1:2,500). It shows a similar arrangement of the building to the 1:10,560 edition with a small jutting section at the south-west corner (Plate 3; cf. Plate 2). The side facing Back Lane is slightly skew to the north and south elevations of the building making it appear slightly trapezoidal in plan.

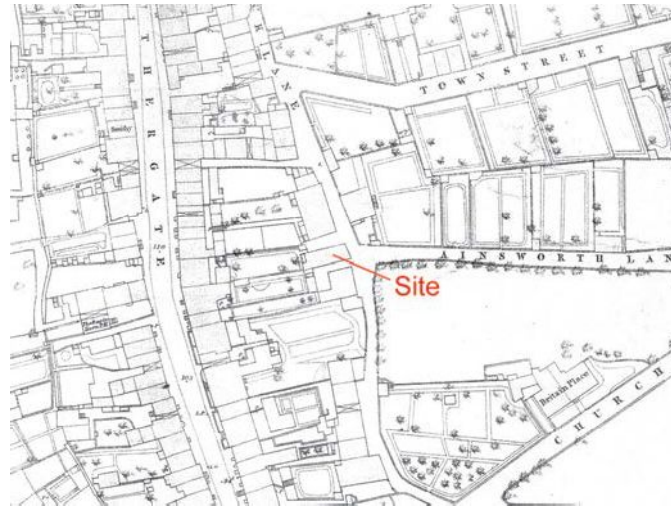


Plate 3: Extract from the Ordnance Survey map, 1852

3.1.5 **Ordnance Survey, 1894:** a similar arrangement to the 1850s editions is shown on the 1894 Ordnance Survey map although a dividing line separates the block (or possibly blocks) to the west side of the main building (Plate 4).

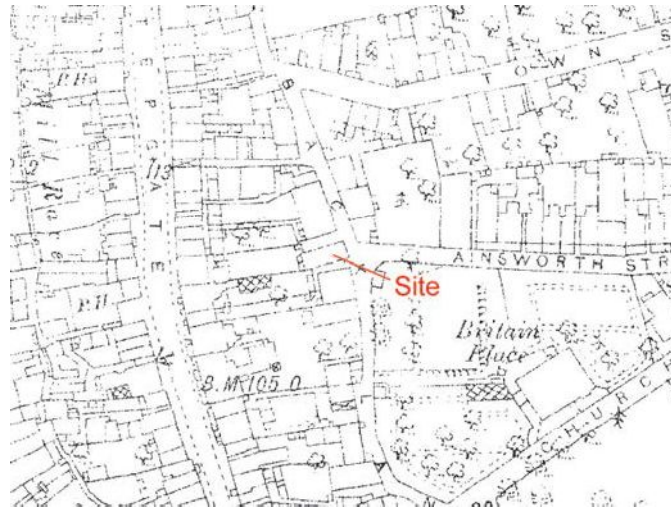


Plate 4: Extract from the Ordnance Survey map, 1894

3.1.6 **Ordnance Survey, 1913:** the block (or possibly former blocks) attached to the west end stretches almost the full north/south width of the main section of the building and a glass structure has been built in the garden behind (Plate 5). The building is evidently subdivided at this time; the west half numbered 2039 and the east 2040, which relates to the *Record of Valuations* by the Inland Revenue in 1910 (CAC(B) BT/IR 1/28 1910; see Section 3.2.2 and Table 1 below).

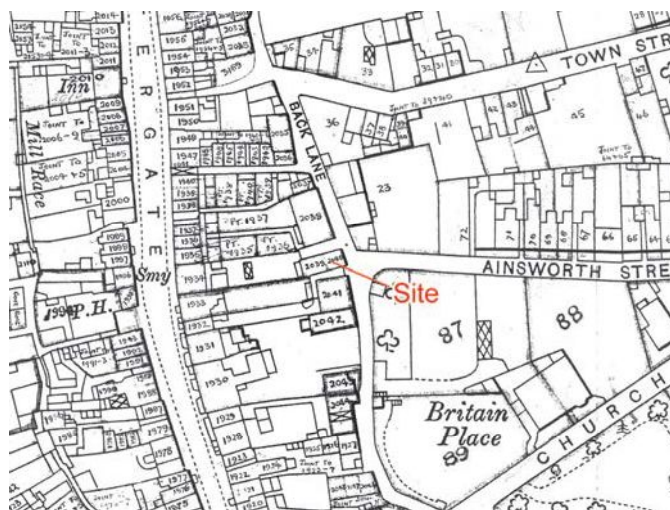


Plate 5: Extract from the Ordnance Survey map, 1913

3.1.7 **Ordnance Survey, 1933:** the site is essentially unchanged, although the subdivision evident on the previous map is not apparent (Plate 6).

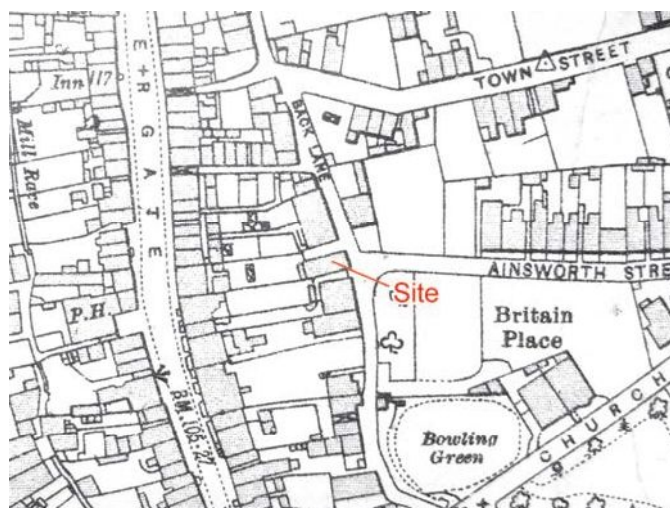


Plate 6: Extract from the Ordnance Survey map, 1933

3.2 Site History

3.2.1 No. 34 Soutergate and Back Lane: Soutergate is a medieval street, known to have existed from at least the early 15th century (CAC(K) WD RY/Box 92/80 1425; CAC(K); WD RT/Box 92/96 1465). The meaning of the name is uncertain, but it potentially means ‘boot-maker street’, as per the Soutergate in Kirkby Ireleth (Ekwall 1922, 221), although it has alternatively been suggested as meaning ‘sheep road’ (Lee 1998, 79). Soutergate in Ulverston is specifically named in the parish registers a number of times, from as early as 1596 (Bardsley and Ayre 1886, 115), and there is a record from 1641 of a serious fire on the street that burned six houses and five barns and workhouses (LRO QSB/1/252/16 1641). The building under investigation originally formed part of the property belonging to No. 34 Soutergate, which is thought to have at least 17th century origins (Bernard and Elizabeth Ellis pers comm.) but the extant structure is primarily mid-18th century in date (English Heritage 2007). The area to the east, on the other side of Back Lane, was seemingly still open fields until as late as 1825, when the former foot way known as Church Walk was made into a proper road and the land was divided as a result (Park 1932, 27-29).

3.2.2 Owners and Occupiers: details of the early owners and occupiers and what use the building initially had are scarce in the available documentary sources. As outlined above, it is known that the building originally belonged with what is now No. 34 Soutergate, and was split off from it in 1879, at which time it was granted to John Harrison Barrow who lived at No. 32 Soutergate, and was described as a barn, smithy, and middenstead (Bernard and Elizabeth Ellis pers comm.). The valuation made by the Inland Revenue in 1910 partially confirms this description, recording that the building was a smithy but also a workshop (see Table 1), at which time it was clearly subdivided (see Plate 5).

Assessment Number	Description of property	Owner	Occupier
2039	Smithy	Mrs GM Farmer (c/o E Hadall, Soapery Bridge)	-
2040	Workshop	Ditto	William Myers

Table 1: Summary of details recorded by the 1910 valuation

3.2.3 Discussion: a building of the same form as is now present is shown on the site on Wood’s map of 1832, which shows that it had been constructed by at least that date. The approximately rectangular block of the current building is certainly recognisable from the earliest editions of the Ordnance Survey c1850 (Plate 3). The building is noticeably trapezoid in shape on the 1852 map but drawn more squarely in the later maps, which possibly simplify the true shape of the building. Various changes to smaller structures butting the west side of the building have clearly taken place, but the main section of the building remains largely unchanged since then.

3.2.4 Previous Archaeological Work: while no previous archaeological work has been carried out on the building itself, although it is recorded on the Cumbria Historic Environment Record (HER; No. 19979), two pieces of previous archaeological work carried out nearby are of relevance. The nearest is the excavation in 2005 of two small test pits or evaluation trenches on the land immediately north of the building; it was hoped these would reveal the presence of medieval rubbish deposits placed in the back of the burgage plots running off Soutergate, but in the end only post-medieval features including drainage pipes were revealed (Elsworth and Dawson forthcoming). The second piece of work is the recording of a former workshop or store to the north, at the point where Back Lane meets Town Street, which started out as a threshing barn before being converted to house animals and then used as a workshop (Elsworth and Dawson 2005a).

4. Building Recording

4.1 Arrangement and Fabric

4.1.1 The building comprises a roughly rectangular block aligned approximately east/west with the east end facing on to Back Lane (Figure 1). The west end faces on to gardens and properties along Soutergate. Internally there are two square rooms, the one to the east (Room 2) being slightly shorter than the other (Room 1) (see Figure 4).

4.1.2 The building is constructed from irregular courses of mostly water worn local slate. Internally, it is divided in two by a brick wall in a stretcher bond. The roof is local grey slate over the eastern end and corrugated metal to the west (Figure 2 and Figure 3). Internally, it mostly has a concrete floor. The timber roof structure is original and hand finished (Figure 5).

4.2 External Detail

4.2.1 **North elevation:** this forms one of the side elevations (Figure 2) and noticeably bends to the north at the east end. The east end is plain apart from a timber board with a plastic “NO PARKING” sign attached (Plate 7). The central wagon doorway has a rough timber lintel, formed from two scarf-jointed pieces, with another thinner piece of timber placed above that (Plate 7). The door is a double tongue and groove plank and batten door, the door to the east side being slightly smaller than the one to the west. To the west of this is what may have been a small window, with a rough timber lintel, although it is now blocked and covered with concrete (Plate 7). The north-west corner of the building is quite rounded and there is a gate to the garden to the west attached.



Plate 7 (left): North external elevation



Plate 8 (right): Detail of double door on the north elevation

4.2.2 **East elevation:** the east external elevation is largely covered by ivy (Plate 9). It forms the gable end of the building (Figure 2) and some larger stones have been used at the corners and for footings. The large central doorway with a timber sheet folding/rolling door and iron I-beam lintel is probably inserted.



Plate 9: East external elevation

4.2.3 **South elevation:** there is a doorway to the lower level at the east end with a rough timber lintel and a concrete step on top of machine made bricks (Plate 10). The doorway houses a beaded tongue and groove door with a chamfered surround but this does not quite fit the space as there are bricks in the space between the frame and the lintel. Above the doorway a window has been inserted and machine made bricks have been used in the west jamb. The east side is obscured by ivy but part of the stone sill and at least two lights are visible to the west. There is a smaller opening to the west of this, with a stone lintel and filled with timber slats but the lower part is blocked with stone. There is a doorway near the centre of the elevation opposite the one on the north side with a voussoir limestone arch but this has been partially blocked with stone, leaving a window with eight lights in a fixed timber casement in a very basic machine sawn timber frame (Plate 11 and Plate 12). The timber casement has probably been reused from a sash window. The west end of the elevation has a line of rebuild extending the full height (Figure 3).



Plate 10 (left): East end of the south external elevation

Plate 11 (centre): General view of the south external elevation

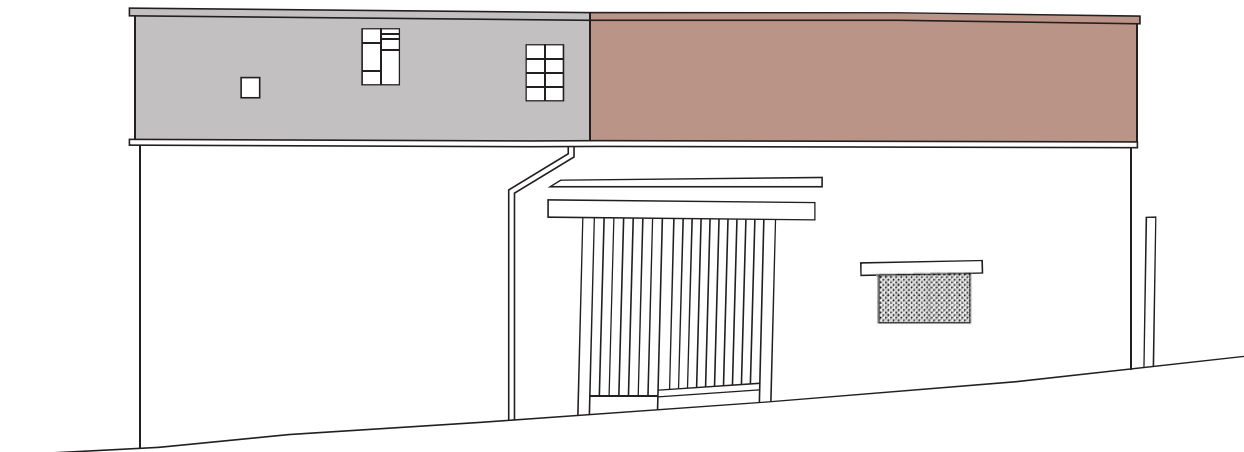
Plate 12 (right): Doorway at the west end of the south external elevation

4.2.4 **West elevation:** this elevation is essentially plain although the upper part has been rebuilt and there are patches of plaster on the south side suggesting a lean-to was attached here once. The ground of the garden is built up against it on the south side (Plate 13; Figure 3).






Plate 13: West external elevation

NORTH EXTERNAL ELEVATION



Key:

-  blocked feature
-  slate roof
-  metal roof

EAST EXTERNAL ELEVATION

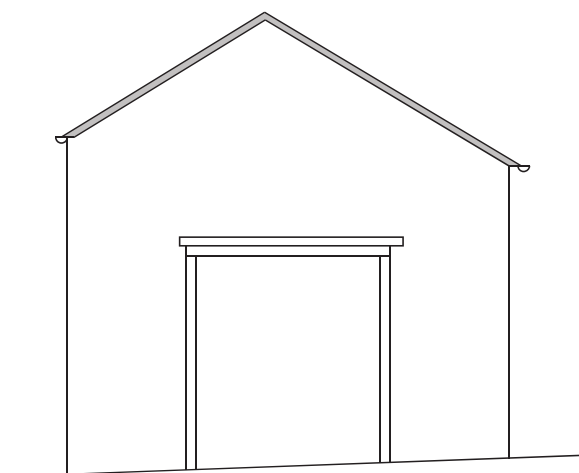
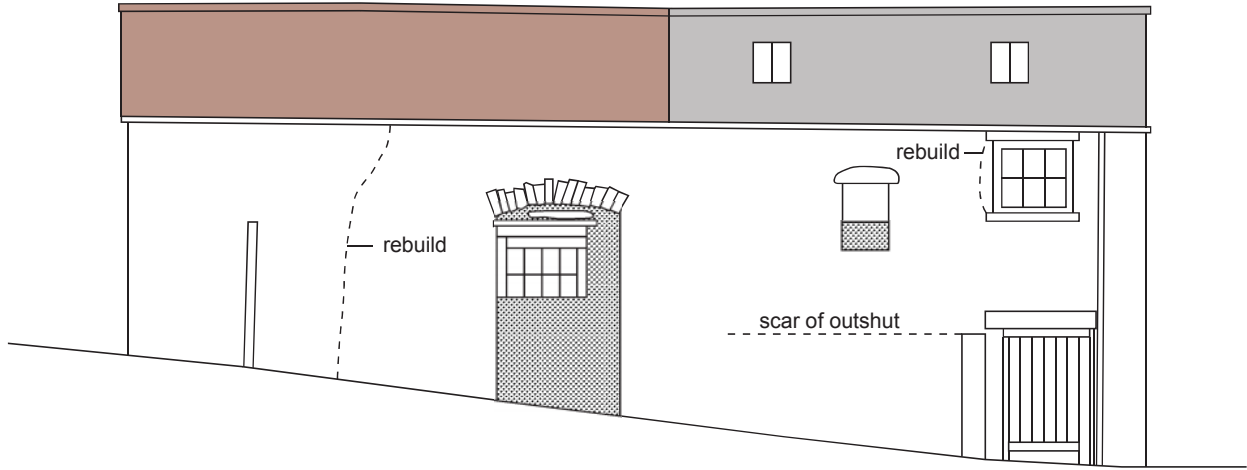






Figure 2: North and east external elevations

SOUTH EXTERNAL ELEVATION



Key:

-  blocked feature
-  slate roof
-  metal roof
-  cross-sectional wall

WEST EXTERNAL ELEVATION

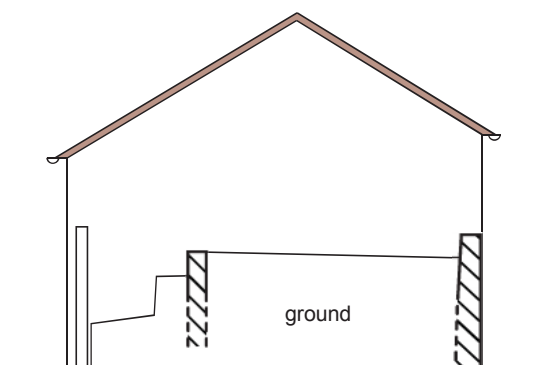


Figure 3: South and west external elevations

4.3 Internal Detail

4.3.1 Ground floor Room 1: Room 1 occupies the west end of the building (Figure 4). All the walls are stone, finished with rough plaster and lime wash, apart from the dividing wall to the east, which is brick. The floor is mostly poured concrete with some concrete slabs and stone flags on the west side and open patches on the north and south sides and an area of bricks on the south (Plate 14). The north patch is covered by green roof slates and there is thick concrete in the north-west corner. The room is open to the roof. There are two basic tie beam type trusses and a skylight on the south side (Plate 15 and Plate 16). The western truss comprises reused cruck fragments and the beam is supported on additional iron I-beam corbels set in the wall (Figure 5; Plate 16). There are two purlins per pitch between the trusses, but only one to the west, and a diagonally set ridge purlin. All of the timber is hand finished. There is a corrugated metal roof on top of the adze finished rafters, which are possibly Baltic timber. At the east end of the building there is a half loft constructed entirely from machine-cut timber, with a random selection of planks forming the floor including one piece of packing crate with a stamped label: 'FOR EXPORT PACKED IN BORAX EST. 2 B'. The north elevation has a chamfered timber board attached on the west side with a plate, perhaps for a gas light, to the east and mortar lines marking the position of a formerly attached structure corresponding with the concrete base in the north-west corner. There is a blocked window to the east with a sawn timber lintel and a wagon door to the east of that with a plank and batten door and hand finished chamfered lintel (Plate 17). Attached to the door is a piece of timber with the letters 'RSTON' stamped or printed on, presumably originally part of a label saying 'ULVERSTON'. The east elevation comprises the dividing brick wall and butts the outer stone build to the north and south (Plate 18). There is a recess in the lower part with a timber lintel, which appears to be round in section, and the resulting gap is covered by planks attached on the east side to short timber posts. The south elevation is plain apart from the eight-light timber casement window on the east side with a timber sill and a rough reused timber lintel, with a slot on its east side (Plate 19). The west elevation is plain apart from two slot vents, which are blocked externally; the one to the south has a rough timber lintel and both have later plank sills (Plate 20). The upper north side of the elevation has been rebuilt.



Plate 14 (left): Floor at the west end of Room 1

Plate 15 (right): East truss in Room 1



Plate 16 (left): West truss in Room 1



Plate 17 (right): Wagon door in the north elevation of Room 1



Plate 18 (left): East elevation of Room 1



Plate 19 (right): South elevation of Room 1



Plate 20: West elevation of Room 1

4.3.2 **Ground floor Room 2:** this room has a concrete floor and is lower than Room 1 to the west. Again it is open to the roof. It has a single truss with two purlins per pitch and a diagonal ridge purlin like

those in Room 1 (Plate 21). The backs of the slates used in the roof are finished with plaster and there are three skylights in the north side in various arrangements and one in the south. The rafters are machine cut and the walls are finished with plaster and lime wash. A half loft has been added on the west side using machine cut timber and sheets (visible in Plate 24 and Plate 25). The north elevation is plain. The east elevation is dominated by a large folding doorway constructed from timber panels and battens (Plate 22). An additional section of an earlier plank door is attached on the south side. Machine made brick is visible in the north jamb, so the doorway is evidently inserted. There is a doorway on the east side of the south elevation with a tongue and groove plank and batten door with an enamelled letter box, electrical fuse box, and four meters above (Plate 23). Above is a six-light fixed casement window with splayed jambs and a timber lintel. To the west is a small alcove with a timber sill and possibly a timber frame (Plate 24). This was perhaps a blocked aperture although if it was then it was not visible externally. The west elevation is built from brick laid in a stretcher bond with planks fixed over the lower part and a large opening in the base which cuts under the floor of Room 1 (Plate 25). This area is supported with corrugated metal sheets and rough battens made from reused beaded pieces and modern veneered pieces.



Plate 21 (left): Truss in Room 2



Plate 22 (right): Large doorway in the east elevation of Room 2



Plate 23 (left): Doorway at the east end of the south elevation of Room 2



Plate 24 (right): Alcove at the west end of the south elevation of Room 2



Plate 25: Opening in the west elevation below the half loft

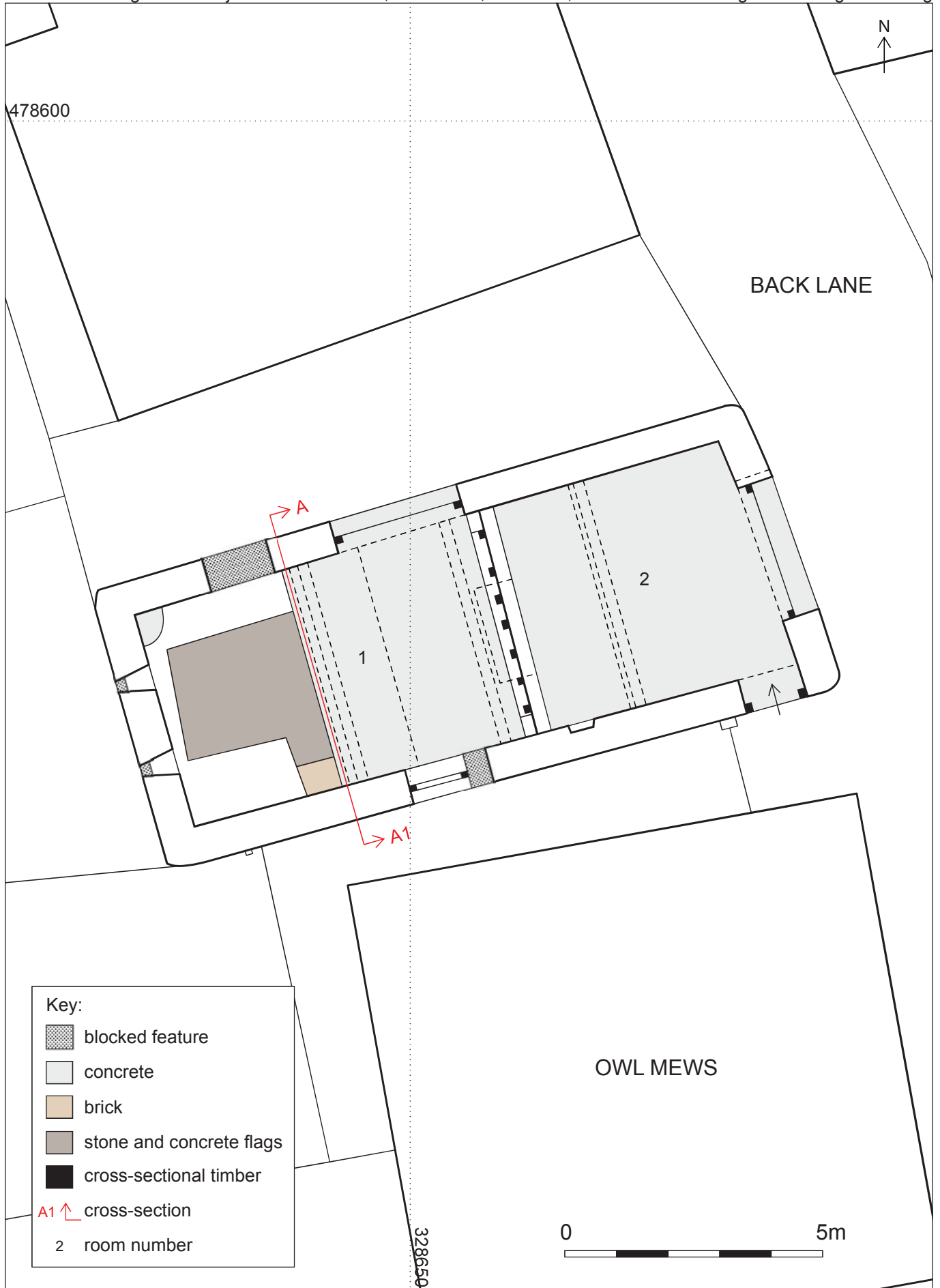
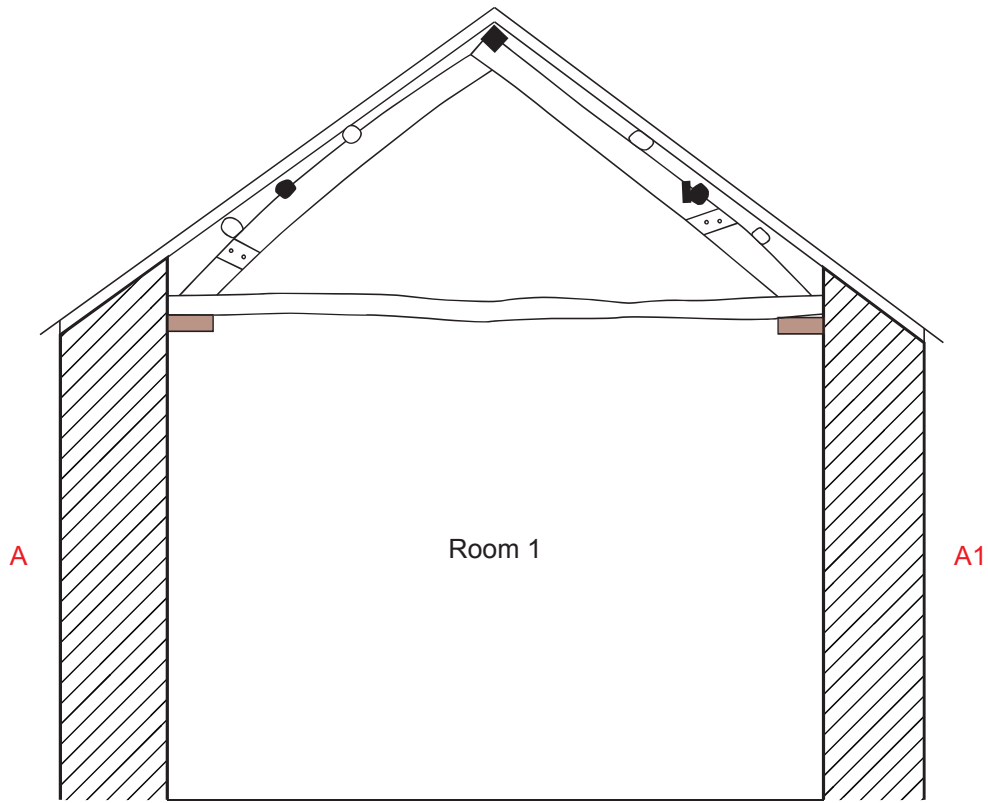


Figure 4: Ground floor plan

CROSS-SECTION A-A1



Key:

- cross-sectional timber
- ▨ cross-sectional wall
- iron beam



Figure 5: Cross-section A-A1

5. Discussion

5.1 Phasing

5.1.1 **Introduction:** unfortunately the available mapping of the area is insufficient to closely date when various alterations and additions were made to the building, although evidence visible within building add considerably to the understanding. Four main phases of construction are suggested here.

5.1.2 **Phase 1 (18th – early 19th century):** the building is undoubtedly that first shown on Wood's map of 1832, at which time it was apparently attached to the neighbouring building to the south. The map evidence is only able to reveal that it was in existence by this date, but the style of the building, in particular the trusses, is indicative of a likely 18th century date (Brunskill 2002, 153). However, the presence of what are evidently re-used sections of crucks and the rebuild line visible in the south elevation, might indicate that the present building replaced an earlier cruck-framed one on the same footprint. The form of the extant building, with opposing wide doorways and ventilation slots, indicates that it was built as a threshing barn. The presence of a wagon doorway on the north side would also suggest that it was constructed before the neighbouring building to the north as there would not have been enough room for access once it had been constructed. The difference in floor levels also suggests that it was constructed as a bank barn, with an upper threshing floor above and lower animal housing below at the east end; in order for this to be the case, however, the floor level in Room 2 must have been raised, hence the step from the door to the south. The small partially blocked opening high on the east side of the south elevation was perhaps a pitching door for a hay loft in the east end, while the aperture on the west side of the north elevation is of uncertain purpose but may have simply been a window. The building clearly formed one of a range of barns along this section of Back Lane, all no doubt originally belonging to properties on Soutergate (one of which has previously been recorded; Elsworth and Dawson 2005a) several of which survive, albeit much altered in some cases. These represent a relatively unusual survival, and presumably all relate to the period when the land to the east was still essentially agricultural.

5.1.3 **Phase 2 (mid to late 19th century):** it is likely that the construction of the building to the north and development of the former agricultural land to the east essentially removed the original purpose of the building. It is likely that the wide doorway in the south side was blocked at this time and a window inserted, the small opening in the east end of the south elevation was partially blocked, and the window on the west side of the north elevation was fully blocked. The winnowing slots in the west end would also have gone out of use by this time and were probably also blocked. It is not clear what the building was used for at this time, but it had perhaps already been converted for use as a workshop (see Phase 3 below).

5.1.4 **Phase 3 (late 19th – early 20th century):** at a later date the building was subdivided by the addition of the central brick wall. It was recorded as a smithy and workshop from at least 1879, and clearly subdivide by 1910, which suggests this alteration had already been carried out by then. It is not clear why there was an opening in the base of the wall, although it might have been connected to an original upper floor over the east end that was later removed. It is not clear where the hearth for the smithy was, but the concrete platform and potentially associated mortar lines on the wall in the north-west corner might indicate where it was, the wall above having been rebuilt relatively recently (Bernard Ellis pers comm.). The later use of the building as a workshop is a trend observed in the other building previously recorded along this section of Back Lane (Elsworth and Dawson 2005a), while this and others were probably also utilised as small warehouses (Elsworth and Dawson 2005b; Elsworth 2006).

5.1.5 **Phase 4 (late 20th century):** most recently the building has been used for storage before becoming essentially disused and gradually derelict. Alterations belonging to this period probably also include the addition of the large roller door in the east end, which corresponds to the slightly raised concrete floor in Room 2, which suggests that any upper floor at this end had to have been removed by this time. The 'alcove' running from Room 2 underneath the floor of Room 1 must also have been added in this period; it is not clear what purpose this had, but it may have simply been to enable the storage of a long trailer or similar. The corrugated metal roof at the west end of the building, over Room 1, was probably also added in this period.

5.2 Conclusion

5.2.1 The building represents one of what were a remarkable number of former barns or barn-like structures surviving along this section of Back Lane, which probably relate to the period before the land to the east was developed for housing in the mid-19th century. This building is perhaps one of the earliest of these, although those that have also been recorded show a similar range of features and development, from essentially agricultural style to later conversion for use as workshops and storage.

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