

HISTORIC BUILDING SURVEY REPORT:

15 STATION ROAD, MARCH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

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Report prepared for Ajaks Properties

By
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Document Control

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Cover image: General view of the site from Station Road, looking southwest

Executive Summary

- Allen Archaeology Limited was commissioned by Ajaks Properties to undertake a historic building survey as a condition of planning consent for demolition of existing buildings and a residential development, on land at 15 Station Road, March, Cambridgeshire.
- The existing buildings on the site comprise a row of former cottages of mid/late 19th century date with a 20th century row of shops.
- The survey identified four broad construction phases. The first and second phase is represented by a row of cottages with an extension along the east side, all of which were present by 1840. The cottages are much altered, but original fabric includes the exterior brickwork of the east and west elevations, staircases, interior wall material of reed/rush, plaster and the timber structure of a poorly constructed gabled gambrel Mansard roof.
- Between 1952 and 1971 a shopfront in a 19th century style was added along the Station Road frontage.
- The most recent phase, after 1971, appears to have entailed all the existing properties coming into one ownership and much of the ground floor being opened up into a single open-plan shop floor. The remaining cottages south of the existing ones were demolished around this time
- The survey has allowed the historical structures on the site to be preserved by record prior to demolition.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Allen Archaeology Limited was commissioned by Ajaks Properties to undertake a historic building recording as a condition of planning consent for demolition of existing buildings and construction of a residential development, on land at 15 Station Road, March, Cambridgeshire.
- 1.2 The fieldwork and reporting conforms to current national guidelines, as set out in the Historic England document '*Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice*' (HE 2016), and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists '*Standard and guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures*' (ClfA 2014), a brief for the works prepared by CHET (Cooper-Dunn 2020) and a specification prepared by this company (AAL 2020).
- 1.3 The documentation and records generated by the survey will be assembled in accordance with the local guidelines in '*Archaeological Archives: A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation*' (Brown 2011), and the local guidelines set out in '*Deposition of archaeological archives in Cambridgeshire*' (Cambridge County Council 2019). It will be deposited with CHET within twelve months of completion of the project where it will be stored under event number ECB 6191.
- 1.4 Digital data generated by the project will be submitted to ADS via OASIS Images as it falls within the maximum limit of 150 images for this service.
<https://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/HELP#section-HELP-HowDoISubmitOASISImages>

2.0 Site Location and Description

- 2.1 March is a small town in the Fenland district of Cambridgeshire, located approximately 22km east of central Peterborough. The proposed development area is in the centre of the town, to the south of Station Road, and is currently occupied by a derelict range of cottages and attached single storey shops on the road frontage, with an area of rough ground used as car parking to the rear. The site is centred on NGR TL 41751 96857 (Figure 1).

3.0 Planning Background

- 3.1 Planning permission has been granted for '*Erection of a part 2-storey, part 3 storey and part 4-storey building comprising of: 1 x retail unit (A1) and up to 26 x flats involving demolition of existing building (outline application with matters committed in respect of layout and scale)*' (F/YR18/1108/FDL). Permission was granted subject to a programme of archaeological work, including the undertaking of a programme of historic building recording in accordance with a written scheme of investigation to be submitted by the applicant and approved by the CHET (Cambridge Historic Environment Team) on behalf of the local planning authority.
- 3.2 A written scheme of investigation (AAL 2020) was prepared in response to a design brief for historic building recording from the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team (CHET) at Cambridgeshire County Council (Cooper-Dunn 2020).

- 3.3 The approach adopted is consistent with the recommendations of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), in particular *Section 16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment'* (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2019).

4.0 History and Statutory Designation Background

- 4.1 The site lies in an area of potential archaeological interest, with prehistoric and Roman activity recorded in several areas, to the north, east and west of the site.
- 4.2 The historic core of the settlement was to the south of the site and south of the river, focused around the church of St. Wendreda. However, some evidence for medieval activity has been recorded nearer to the site, on the north side of the river, including a medieval ditch recorded off Grays Lane to the west of the site (CHER Reference CB15693).
- 4.3 Historic mapping shows the area north of the river as intensively developed during the later 19th century, with housing, schools, chapels, workshops, and breweries. An article printed in the local magazine *Discovering March* (Lawler 2017) describes the site plot as empty in 1605, only The White Hart Inn buildings west of Broad Street present. In 1840 the plot of land had been subdivided in 'Johnson's Yard and Row' with the 1841 census describing five dwellings in the row and seven dwellings in Johnson's Yard, with the occupants comprising millwrights, a bricklayer, a carpenter and farm labourers (Lawler 2017). Other than the farm labourers, these are all skilled working class trades, suggesting that the cottages were not for the very lowest tier of the social spectrum.
- 4.4 The name was changed in the 1851 census to Johnson's Square. The current site is occupied by a row of cottages fronting onto a north to south aligned street, with a yard area labelled 'Johnson's Square' to the rear. Occupants were again of a similar status at this time, include a nurse, schoolmistress and railway employee (*ibid.*).
- 4.5 A search was also attempted on British Newspaper Archive online which generated a single result, mentioning the death of a blacksmith in Johnson's Yard in 1875 (*Cambridge Chronicle and Journal* 1875), again a respected working class trade.
- 4.6 An undated postcard made from an aerial photograph, shows Johnson's square as it was before the southern part was demolished (Plate 1). Much of the row of terraces was removed in the 1980s, although the northernmost part survives in the northern part of the site. The remaining buildings to the west comprise a row of single-storey shops, first shown on maps in the later 20th century.

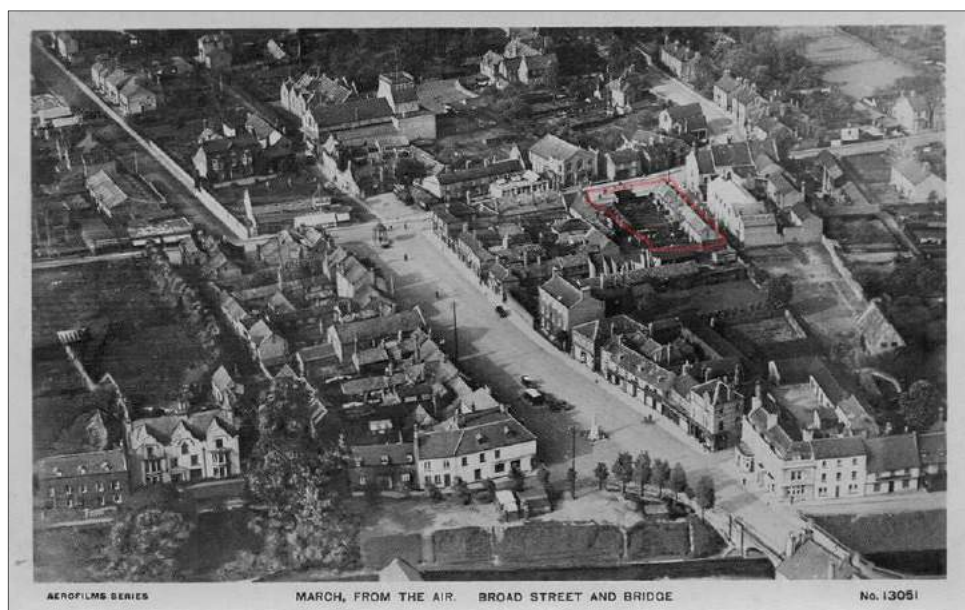


Plate 1: Undated postcard showing March and Johnsons Square in red. Photograph provided with courtesy of March Society who added the red outline

- 4.7 The report has been written during the Covid-19 outbreak limiting access to primary records. A search amongst readily available records on Heritage Gateway, shows that there are 38 listed structures within c.2km of the site. All apart from the Grade I listed Church of St Wendreda on Church Street c.1.6km to the south, are Grade II listed. Only 13 of the structures are within 500m of the site. Although there are some public houses and churches amongst the results, the majority refers to post-medieval houses of largely 18th-19th century date, a handful with the description of being built in red or gault brick in English bond with tumbled parapet gables and dormers.

5.0 Aims and Objectives

- 5.1 The aims and objectives of the project are to create a permanent record of the buildings on the site prior to any alterations or demolitions, to a standard equivalent to Level 3, as set out in the Historic England document: *Understanding Historic Buildings, A Guide to Good Recording Practice* (HE 2016).
- 5.2 The need for this recording is identified in regional research agendas (Medlycott *et al.* 2011), to help inform survival, extent, and to help identify and characterise thematic groups. Historic England guidance on listing criteria also provides useful information on what key aspects of a building should be assessed in order to understand their significance. For low status terraced housing of this period, this includes considering the use of local, or vernacular, as opposed to regional or national construction materials and styles, survival of interior and exterior features, fixtures and fittings, evidence for alterations to the plan form and appearance over time, and evidence for change of use and modernisation (HE 2017).

6.0 Methodology

- 6.1 The works described below are based on the guidance set out for a Level 3 survey in the Historic England document: *Understanding Historic Buildings, A Guide to Good Recording Practice* (HE 2016). The building survey was undertaken by Harvey Tesseyman of AAL on 9th April 2020. He recorded all aspects of the relevant buildings prior to any demolition works (Figure 2-Figure 5).
- 6.2 The weather was bright and sunny with intermittent clouds generating generally good light of exterior shots. A flash was occasionally used for interior shots where there was limited natural light.
- 6.3 Where safely accessible, photographs were taken of the following:
 - All external elevations of the cottages, and of the shops fronting Station Road
 - All internal elevations of the cottages, including internal walls and subdivisions
 - The roof structure of the cottages, internally and externally, where visible
 - The interrelationship of the cottages and shops on the site, and the relationship of the buildings to their surroundings
 - Architectural details, i.e. windows, doors, decorative brickwork, and other significant features, fixtures or fittings. Generally a single representative shot was taken of particular features such as windows or openings of a single type that occurred more than once within the structure
 - A general internal photographic record of the cottages. Photographs were taken of each room/discrete internal space from sufficient points to show the form, general appearance and methods of construction
- 6.4 Metric scales of appropriate length and a tripod were used when required, with all photos annotated and linked to a floor plan (Figure 2-Figure 4), accompanied by descriptions in an archive list (Appendix 1). This report will give a full written description and programme of analysis of the structures. Identified phasing was identified on a block plan (Figure 7), and included in the written narrative.
- 6.5 Map regression (Figure 6) and the study of readily available documentary sources has been included to provide a historical context to the site.

7.0 Results

- 7.1 The surveyed structures comprise a conglomeration of former shops fronting Station Road, with former accommodation to the east, and storage and toilet facilities to the west and rear of the shop. This section will give an exterior description followed by an interior account of each structure.

Structure A and Extension B – Exterior

- 7.2 Structure A measures approximately 13m x 6m and is aligned roughly north-south, on the west side of a pedestrian street running south from Station Road (Plate 2). It is abutted by Structure C to the north and faces a small yard to the west. It is a two-storey structure built in English bond brick, with a lean-to extension built in Stretcher bond, Structure B, to the east (Plate 3, Plate 4). The main structure is covered by a mansard roof extending to form a

single pitched roof over the lean-to. It is covered throughout in Marley concrete tiles, underneath which the roof structure is heavily sagging. A square brick chimney stack with water tabling protrudes through the apex of the roof, it carries a single louvre pot. A parapet has been built using a rowlock, a single row of bricks laid on the stretcher along the south gable.

- 7.3 There are four large and square former openings on the east elevation of Structure B, all of them have been boarded up and the southeast window is partially bricked up (Plate 4).



Plate 2 (Plate 77): General view of south gable and east elevation. Looking north-northwest, 1m scale



Plate 3 (shot 78): View of east elevation showing sagging roof. Looking northwest, 1m scale

- 7.4 The building is accessed from the west elevation, which has two doorways with segmental brick arches, the northernmost of which has been bricked up (Plate 5). There are two large ground floor windows. The northern example has been blocked with breeze blocks but

retains a segmental arch, the southern one has a modern concrete lintel and is fitted with two fixed lights and a top opening casement. The façade is painted white.



Plate 4 (Plate 80): East elevation, showing four boarded up openings on extension B. Looking southwest, 1m scale



Plate 5 (shot 66): West elevation, abutted by later extension, two dormers on first floor. Structure A is abutted by Structure D. Yellow brick Extension E is visible to the left. Looking southeast, 2m scale

- 7.5 On the first floor are two dormer windows, probably original features of the former row of cottages. Dormers on the roof slope are common from the early 18th century (Hall 2005), and although casement windows were more regularly fitted, sash windows were also used. The southernmost has a horizontal sliding (Yorkshire) sash, usually dating between the 18th-early 19th century, and the northern dormer has a bottom sliding vertical sash without horns, with a single sheet of glass to the top and bottom (Plate 5-Plate 7). The vertical sash again could fit an 18th to early 19th century date, but the glass is likely to be of a slightly later date, as sash horns are generally mid-19th century or later and were added to support the

additional weight of the single panes of glass which became more commonly used around this time.



Plate 6 (shot 67): East elevation and representative view of doors and windows. Looking east, 1m scale



Plate 7 (shot 89): General view of the north dormer. Looking southeast

- 7.6 A third dormer was once present to the north, this is obscured by the later roof tiles but the opening is visible from the inside (Plate 18). This means that each of three surviving cottages each had a single dormer on this elevation, and they are likely to be original features.

Structure A and Extension B – Interior

First Floor

- 7.7 The first floor is split into two rooms separated by a partition wall and each accessed by an individual winder staircase, with no access between the two rooms. The southernmost room is accessed via a winder staircase positioned in the southeast corner next to the chimneybreast (Plate 8 and Plate 9). The room is currently used for storage.



Plate 8 (shot 9): General view towards the stairs in southern room. Looking southeast, 1m scale



Plate 9 (shot 11): General view of winder staircase next to the chimneybreast. Looking south-southwest, 0.5m scale

- 7.8 Both the ceiling and walls are plastered and painted. Reeds with laths were visible through an inspection hole in the northeast corner of the ceiling and by the dormer window to the southwest. The plaster has been applied directly onto these rather than to timber laths. Both materials are likely to be original and of 19th century date (Plate 10-Plate 12).



Plate 10 (shot 1): General view of first floor. Looking northeast, 1m scale



Plate 11 (shot 8): View of plastered ceiling and walls, an inspection hole revealing reeds behind the plaster. Looking southeast, scale 1m



Plate 12 (shot 2): General view of boarded up dormer. Looking southeast, scale 1m. Inset shows reeds in situ adjacent to window

- 7.9 The chimney breast on the south wall has been plastered and covered in wallpaper, and there is no gap in the skirting (Plate 13). It seems likely the room would have had a fireplace; however, the uninterrupted skirting and the lack of a hearth may suggest otherwise.



Plate 13 (shot 6): General view of chimney breast in south room. Looking south-southwest, 1m scale



Plate 14 (shot 33): General view of the winder staircase to the north room. Looking west-southwest, 1m scale

- 7.10 The northern room is also accessible via a winder staircase in the southeast corner and positioned east of the chimney-breast (Plate 15). The north room appears to have a boarded-up fireplace (Plate 18).



Plate 15 (shot 28): General view towards the partition wall, arrow points to a boarded-up fireplace. Looking south-southeast, 1m scale

- 7.11 A partition has been removed in this room, and is likely to have separated two earlier cottages. There were no signs of a former chimney stack or staircase to what would have been the northernmost cottage, closest to Structure C. It is likely that these would have been located along the removed north gable, now a partition to C (Plate 16 and Plate 17).



Plate 16 (shot 92): Stump of removed brick partition. Looking south, 1m scale



Plate 17 (shot 93): Scar from removed partition, exposing reeds behind the plaster. Looking west-southwest, 1m scale

- 7.12 Just north of the former partition a presumed former dormer window has been removed. A central 'mullion' of 20th century date has been added to the opening to offer support to the thin wall plate above and the sill below, and the opening has simply been covered by the modern roof tiles (Plate 18). There is a doorway, with two steps up, into Structure C to the north, clearly added after structure C was built.
- 7.13 The poorly constructed roof structure is exposed in the north room. Reeds or rush, probably the former (as the stems are hollow), fixed in place with laths have been used throughout the upper floor of the building as a base to apply the plaster on to. The combination of plaster on top of reeds was common in both Lincolnshire as well as Cambridgeshire in the 19th century as the material was readily available in the fens (Millar 2015).
- 7.14 The dormer window is boarded up and little internal light is provided. The roof purlin appears fragile in comparison to the rafters that it supports. Modern diagonal timber supports have been added to prevent the roof from moving any further (Plate 18-Plate 20). The concrete roof tiles are modern and are likely to have replaced an earlier, and lighter, thatched roof that would have been better suited for the thinner timbers. This hypothesis was also put forward in Jennifer Lawler's recent article, suggesting the cottages were originally thatched, then covered in plain clay tiles, before the current 20th century concrete tiles (Lawler 2017). The timbers appeared to be regular in size and shape, some with visible kerf marks. The marks were parallel with no apparent signs of overlapping/crossing to suggest a manual two-handed pit saw. Instead these appear to have been cut with a

mechanical saw, suggesting a date from the mid-19th century onwards when steam powered mechanical saws became widely available.



Plate 18 (shot 22): General view of the northern room, first floor. Looking north-northwest, 1m scale



Plate 19 (shot 23): General view of later supports. Looking north-northeast, scale 1m



Plate 20 (shot 29): General view of poorly constructed roof. Looking south-southeast

Ground Floor

- 7.15 The ground floor is divided into two rooms of similar proportions to the first floor, with a smaller unit to the south and a larger unit to the north, again indicating that two units are likely to have been combined by removing partitions. The southernmost room has modern stud walls with a doorway to the east between A and B (Plate 21-Plate 23).



Plate 21 (shot 16): General view of the ground floor southern room. Looking west-northwest, 1m scale



Plate 22 (shot 18): Modern stud wall and door. Looking east-southeast, 1m scale

- 7.16 Along the south wall is the winder staircase with under-stairs cupboard. The modern stud wall has been partially removed and this has exposed a modern brick fireplace surround (Plate 23).



Plate 23 (shot 14): Staircase to first floor south room, fireplace behind modern stud and boards. Looking south, 1m scale

- 7.17 Structure B is accessible from the southern room of Structure A. The southern part consists of a room that has been adapted into a storage room or office with curved plyboards masking the original ceiling. The extension originally housed a kitchen and at a later date, a bathroom (Lawler 2017). The original plaster appears to be present beneath the modern wallpaper. The window to the east has been bricked up, and there is a partition with doorway into the northern part of B. This is the only access between Structures A and B (Plate 24-Plate 26). The opening is in all likelihood a later addition, after the property fell under the same ownership.



Plate 24 (shot 19): General view of southern room of Structure B. Looking south, 1m scale



Plate 25 (shot 21): View of Structure B ground floor, looking north-northeast, 1m scale



Plate 26 (shot 45): General view of north part of extension B. Looking east-southeast, 1m scale

- 7.18 To the north, the ground floor of A and B forms a single open plan space, and the original layout has been entirely eradicated (Plate 27-Plate 30). It has been merged with Structure C to the north, and Structure D to the west. Most of the original west brick wall is extant, despite a large opening to the north which allows access into Structure D (Plate 28). The east wall of A has been replaced by two square brick pillars that support the first-floor girder. The ceiling is a modern replacement.



Plate 27 (shot 43): General view of north room merged with Structure C in the background and opening to Structure D to the left. Looking north-northeast, 1m scale



Plate 28 (shot 38): Large and later opening in the former west elevation of A. Looking northwest, 1m scale



Plate 29 (shot 44): General view of the north room of A showing original west wall to the right. Looking south-southwest, 1m scale



Plate 30 (shot 36): General view of northern part of Structure A and B, taken from Structure C. Looking southwest, scale 1m

- 7.19 The only original features that have partially survived are the staircase and fireplace along the partition wall to the south (Plate 31). The fireplace shows a shadow of a former segmental arch. The large, moulded blue painted mantelpiece is of later date.



Plate 31 (shot 35): South partition wall showing original staircase, under-stairs cupboard and bricked-up fireplace behind modern stud wall. Looking southwest, 1m scale

- 7.20 Adjacent to the fireplace on the west wall is a later, enlarged window, blocked with breezeblocks (Plate 32). Directly adjacent to this is the blocked-up doorway which once offered access into this part of the structure. To the north of this is a scar from a removed brick partition wall (Plate 32). The scar aligns with the short partition on the opposing wall. It has been masked by modern boarding and wallpaper, so it is not possible to tell whether this is part of the original partition, but the position corresponds closely with the scar of the removed partition on the floor above (Plate 26).



Plate 32 (shot 37): Blocked window next to a blocked doorway, behind the scale on the west wall, the arrow points to a removed partition where the blue painted plaster ends. Looking northwest, 1m scale

Structure C – Exterior

- 7.21 Structure C is a two-storey yellow brick structure with a 19th century style shopfront with part glazed central doorway and large flanking windows, facing Station Road to the north (Plate 33 and Plate 34). It measures approximately 5.5m x 3m. The brickwork is laid in a Flemish bond and the roof is mono-pitched and covered with slate, sloping down to the south.
- 7.22 The north elevation has a partially boarded-up window with segmental arch on the first floor, with a dentil course below the roof line and red brick quoins to the west.
- 7.23 The west elevation has another window with segmental arch, and on the ground floor of the east elevation is a large window. Both are also boarded-up.



Plate 33 (shot 85): General view of north elevation. Looking southeast, 1m scale



Plate 34 (shot 79): General view of Structure C with Structures A/B to the left and D to the right. Looking south-southwest, 1m scale

Structure C – Interior

Ground Floor

- 7.24 Structure C has two, large, shop windows facing north and positioned on either side of the main entrance. The interior forms part of the open plan space together with parts of Structures A and B (Plate 35).



Plate 35 (shot 41): General view of Structure C ground floor. Looking north-northeast, 1m scale

First Floor

- 7.25 The first floor presumably served as an office for the shop below (Plate 36-Plate 38). An east-west orientated handrail protruding from the west wall would suggest a staircase has recently been removed. Currently, the only way of accessing this room is via the northern first floor room of Structure A.
- 7.26 The room has a large, three-light vertical sash window with typical late 19th century sash horns, facing Station Road, and a smaller boarded up window to the west. There is a tongue and groove plank floor as well as moulded skirting boards and picture rails, all features typical of a 19th century house.



Plate 36 (shot 24): General view of Structure C first floor. Looking west, 1m scale



Plate 37 (shot 27): General view of Structure C first floor. Looking east, 1m scale



Plate 38 (shot 26): Original sash window in Structure C. Looking northwest, 1m scale

Structure D and extensions E and F – Exterior

- 7.27 Structure D is a single-storey structure and abuts Structure C to the west. It measures c.16m x 7m and is an extension to the original shop. The 19th century style frontage matches that on Structure C, but the entire frontage, including the glass, has recently been painted black (Plate 39). It has simple pilasters and console mouldings. The windows vary in size but all have the common large panes with smaller lights at the top. There are two openings towards the west. The roof is flat and felted. The west elevation consists of a brick wall in Monk Bond painted black and white (Plate 40). This structure has two adjoining extensions, E and F, to the rear.



Plate 39 (shot 84): North elevation, shop frontage with black painted fenestration. Looking south, 1m scale



Plate 40 (shot 86): West elevation with extension E visible to the right. Looking south, 1m scale

- 7.28 The south elevation of D is largely hidden behind the later extensions. The original large, segmental arched windows have been boarded-up and a smaller window has been inserted into one of them (Plate 41).



Plate 41 (shot 73): Largely obscured view of the south elevation of Structure D showing large blocked up segmental arched windows behind the tree. Looking north, 1m scale

- 7.29 Another, smaller window and a doorway have been blocked on the southeast corner (Plate 42). The brick stock matches that of the interior and also the bricks used on the south elevation of A.



Plate 42 (shot 71): Blocked window and doorway on the south elevation. Looking north-northeast, 1m scale

- 7.30 Extension E has a west-facing window with segmental arch (Plate 40), and is also built in Monk Bond. The south elevation has no openings (Plate 43-Plate 44). There are two openings into this structure on the east side, one facing east and another facing north (Plate 45).



Plate 43 (shot 87): General view of Structures D, E and F in the background. Looking northeast, 1m scale



Plate 44 (shot 76): South and east-facing elevations of Structure E to the left. Looking north-northwest, 1m scale



Plate 45 (shot 75): Openings facing north and east on Extension E. Looking west, 1m scale

- 7.31 Extension F follows the same style as Structures D and E, built in Monk Bond with a flat roof. There is a window on the east elevation and on the south elevation where the top opening casements have been boarded over. The steel-door entrance is located on the west elevation, but is largely obscured (Plate 47).



Plate 46 (shot 72): Extension F, south elevation. Looking north, 1m scale



Plate 47 (shot 74): Obscured doorway on west elevation of extension F. Looking east, 1m scale

Structure D and Extensions E and F – Interior

- 7.32 Structure D largely comprises a single open space with a brick toilet block towards the south wall (Plate 48-Plate 51). To the rear of the building are two large windows, with top opening casements, one of which is obscured by building material (Plate 49).
- 7.33 An east-west row of steel columns supports an I-beam above. These offer support to the machine sawn timber joists which are fixed directly to the opposing north and south walls. Timber noggins on either side of the steel beam stabilize the joists. The white painted timber ceiling has been removed, displaying nails along the full length of the joists.
- 7.34 The large opening in the brick wall partition midway through the room (Plate 48) is likely to be a later modification of a smaller opening. An uneven break in the brickwork on the southwest buttress (Plate 49), is an indication that the original structure had a further north-south partition, in total Structure D originally comprised three units.



Plate 48 (shot 62): General view of D. Looking east



Plate 49 (shot 57): South wall of D, showing original window to the centre right and access to Extension F to the far right. Arrow points to former partition. Looking west, 1m scale



Plate 50 (shot 48): General view from A/B into D. Looking west, 1m scale



Plate 51 (shot 49): General view of the south wall and entrance to the toilet block and extension F. Looking south-southwest, 1m scale

- 7.35 The access to Extension E is located in the southwest corner of D. It is a small space with bare walls and no evidence of its former use (Plate 52). It has a casement window following the style seen on the south wall. The two top casements open outwards (Plate 53). On the east wall is a doorway leading out to the yard. There is a single toilet abutting this extension to the east, accessed from the yard.



Plate 52 (shot 59): General view of extension E. Looking southwest, 1m scale



Plate 53 (shot 61): Extension E, general view. Looking east, 1m scale

- 7.36 Extension F is accessed from two doorways into two rooms (Plate 54), measuring approximately 3x3m each, both stripped of interior features indicating a former use (Plate 55-Plate 56). The room to the east has a large casement window with fixed four lights below two top casements, opening outwards. A four-leaf door leads out to the yard to the west.



Plate 54 (shot 56): General view of the south wall with access to F and modified north-south partition. Looking south-southeast, 1m scale



Plate 55 (shot 55): General view of Extension F looking west at the doorway leading to the yard. 1m scale

- 7.37 There is a doorway linking the east and west room. In the latter room the brickwork is painted white and on the east wall there is a vertical sash window with horns, and a door leading to the yard (Plate 56).



Plate 56 (shot 54): General view of east room in F. Looking southeast, 1m scale

8.0 Discussion and Conclusions (Figure 6 and Figure 7)

- 8.1 At least four construction phases were identified on site (Figure 6-Figure 7). The first phase and oldest part consists of Structure A, and documentary evidence suggests these were certainly present by 1840 at the latest. Some of the original fabric is still extant, including some of the exterior brickwork (apart from the south and north elevations which have been rebuilt), the staircases, reed walling material, and some plasterwork. Otherwise, modernisation of much of the structure has removed many historic features making more accurate dating difficult. However, features such as the Yorkshire sash and adjacent vertical sash on the west elevation would be consistent with a date in the late 18th to early 19th century. Census records point to the buildings being working class housing, occupied mostly by skilled tradespeople such as nurses and blacksmiths, so were a relatively low status housing but certainly a step above poor quality 'back to back' housing for example.
- 8.2 Structure A is seen on the Ordnance Survey map published in 1887 (Figure 6), and at that point it is part of a row of five houses on the east side of an area known as Johnson's Square, which had housing on the east, south and west sides, with a wide opening onto Station Road to the north. The name is denoted on later maps and not on the 1887 map, however the *March Apportionment* of 1840 (Lawler 2017) clearly show the buildings present at that time under the name 'Johnson's Yard and Row'.
- 8.3 The 1887 map shows enclosed yard areas to the rear of the properties. The surviving cottages consisted at that point of three units, with the three dormers on the west elevation indicating the three units. The two northernmost cottages appear to have separate enclosed yards, and the northernmost also has an outbuilding to the rear of the plot, with a possible small ornamental gardens or paths. The remaining three cottages have a shared yard area, and probably shared use of an outbuilding to the rear of the plots. These slight differences in the layout may suggest a hierarchy in this row of cottages, with the northernmost, fronting onto the main road, being of the higher status.
- 8.4 The start of the second phase, and the construction date of extension B is not clear but it does appear to have been present by the time of the 1887 map. The bricks appear to be of 19th century date and match the weathered bricks exposed on the west wall of A (Plate 28). Much of the pointing is recent. The cement-based mix has caused spalling of some of the brickwork towards the northeast corner. It is possible that the roof structure was also replaced at this time as the building was extended. The roof timbers appear to be regular machine sawn timbers as opposed to axe hewn or hand sawn, but this could easily be the result of late 19th century steam powered sawing.
- 8.5 At some point, the two northern cottages were merged, by removing partitions on the ground and first floor. Exactly when the partitions were removed is unclear, they appear to still be subdivided on the 1927 map, but the two northern cottages do appear to have a shared yard now.
- 8.6 The biggest change came during the third phase, between 1952 and 1971 when the row of shops along the Station Road frontage and the related extensions were built, the north elevation of Structure A was removed and Structure C was added. Although the shopfronts have the appearance of pre-dating the 20th century, the cartographic evidence suggests they are later, and were constructed in a 19th century style. The bricks and roof structures are also of later date than those within Structures A and B. It seems likely that the merging of the two northern cottages occurred at or around this time, but it is not clear from the mapping.

- 8.7 An online search was made in an attempt to establish the true date of Structure C, by looking through planning applications for Station Road between 1st January 1960 and 1st January 2000 on Fenland District Councils planning portal. There were no results generated between these dates for 15 Station Road. The earliest applications found for March dated to 1977 and the earliest application found for the site dates to 2005, as such the construction date cannot be narrowed down any further than 1952-1971.
- 8.8 The 1971 map shows the shops as three units. This would suggest that the interior opening up of the entire ground floor was undertaken later, representing the fourth phase of development on the site. Map evidence suggests that all but the surviving cottages in Johnson's Square were demolished between 1971 and 1985, at which time the south elevation of Structure A was probably rebuilt, and the reroofing with concrete tiles may also have occurred at this time. By 1985, the whole group is shown as a single property, number 15. It seems likely that the buildings came into single ownership, and were opened up to form a large shop floor/sales area on the ground floor, with ancillary offices and stores to the rear and above. When the plan changed, many larger interior openings were created and smaller exterior windows and doorways were blocked, and modern features such as stud walling, plasterboarded ceilings and plywood panelling were added.

9.0 Effectiveness of Methodology

- 9.1 The survey was appropriate to the nature and extent of the proposed development. The survey has allowed for a permanent record to be created of the non-designated and standing historic structures at 15 Station Road prior to demolition. All areas of the building were accessible for inspection and the survey has allowed for a full understanding of the development and phasing of the structures.
- 9.2 The survey was conducted and written up during the Covid-19 outbreak which limited access to primary records. A single article was provided by courtesy of Jennifer Lawler of the March Society. In preparation of the article published in a local magazine, research had been conducted of primary records in Cambridgeshire Archives. It is doubtful an archive visit by AAL would have generated further information than that kindly provided to us.

10.0 Acknowledgements

- 10.1 Allen Archaeology Ltd would like to thank Ajaks Properties for this commission. A special thank you is also offer to Jennifer Lawler of the March Society for helping out with background information of the property and surrounding area.

11.0 References

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The British Newspaper Archive

Cambridge Chronicle and Journal, 1875, 20 February, 4-5

Heritage Gateway

https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/advanced_search.aspx (accessed 29/05/20)

Appendix 1: Photographic Archive List

Photo No	Direction	Structure	Ext/Int	Floor	Description
1	NW	A	Interior	First	General view of south room
2	NW	A	Interior	First	Boarded up window on the east wall, south room
3	SW	A	Interior	First	Boarded up window on the east wall, south room
4	NW	A	Interior	First	Boarded up window on the east wall, south room
5	SW	A	Interior	First	Close up of window, south room
6	SE	A	Interior	First	South wall with chimney breast, south room
7	SE	A	Interior	First	Staircase next to the chimney breast, south room
8	NE	A	Interior	First	Plastered north and east walls with inspection hole
9	SE	A	Interior	First	General view of south-west corner
10	SE	A	Interior	First	Floorboards and staircase, south room
11	SSW	A	Interior	First	Winder staircase, south room
12	WSW	A	Interior	Ground	East wall and entrance to B
13	SW	A	Interior	Ground	South wall and winder staircase, cupboard in south room
14	S	A	Interior	Ground	South wall and winder staircase, cupboard
15	WSW	A	Interior	Ground	South wall, masked fireplace?, window, south room
16	WNW	A	Interior	Ground	West wall, window and door in south room
17	NNE	A	Interior	Ground	North partition, south room
18	ESE	A	Interior	Ground	East wall and entrance to B
19	S	B	Interior	Ground	General view
20	SSE	B	Interior	Ground	General view of blocked window
21	NNE	B	Interior	Ground	General view
22	NNW	A	Interior	First	General view, north room
23	NNE	A	Interior	First	Propped up Mansard structure
24	W	C	Interior	First	General view
25	W	C	Interior	First	General view of west window, north room
26	NW	C	Interior	First	North window
27	E	C	Interior	First	General view
28	SSE	A	Interior	First	General view
29	SSE	A	Interior	First	Roof structure and support
30	SSE	A	Interior	First	Roof structure and support
31	W	A	Interior	First	Dormer on west wall, north room
32	SW	A	Interior	First	Close up of dormer on west wall
33	SE	A	Interior	First	Winder staircase, north room
34	SE	A	Interior	Ground	Winder staircase, north room
35	SW	A	Interior	Ground	South wall, north room
36	SW	A	Interior	Ground	Brick piers between B and A
37	NW	A	Interior	Ground	West wall, north room

Photo No	Direction	Structure	Ext/Int	Floor	Description
38	ENE	A	Interior	Ground	General view and modified west wall
39	S	B	Interior	Ground	Roof structure
40	SW	B	Interior	Ground	Roof Structure
41	NNE	C	Interior	Ground	General view
42	E	C	Interior	Ground	East wall
43	NNE	A, B , C	Interior	Ground	General view
44	SSW	A, B	Interior	Ground	General view
45	SE	A, B	Interior	Ground	East wall
46	SE	D	Interior	Ground	Modified west wall
47	SE	D	Interior	Ground	South wall with toilet block to the right
48	W	D	Interior	Ground	general view
49	SSW	D	Interior	Ground	South wall and toilet block
50	E	D	Interior	Ground	WC
51	W	D	Interior	Ground	WC
52	SW	F	Interior	Ground	General view of partition wall
53	E	F	Interior	Ground	General view of partition wall
54	SE	F	Interior	Ground	East wall, east room
55	W	F	Interior	Ground	West wall, west room
56	SE	D	Interior	Ground	South wall and entrance to F
57	W	D	Interior	Ground	South wall
58	W	D	Interior	Ground	General view and west wall
59	SW	E	Interior	Ground	General view, west wall
60	SE	E	Interior	Ground	General view of the floor
61	E	E	Interior	Ground	General view, east wall
62	E	D	Interior	Ground	General view
63	S	E	Interior	Ground	WC adjoining E
64	NNE	A, F	Exterior		West wall of A, south wall of F
65	NNW	A	Exterior		South and west wall of A, south wall of F
66	SE	A	Exterior		West wall
67	E	A	Exterior		West wall
68	NE	A	Exterior		West wall
69	ENE	A	Exterior		South wall
70	NE	A	Exterior		South wall
71	NNE	A,D,F	Exterior		South wall of D, F and west wall of A
72	N	F	Exterior		South wall
73	N	D,E,F	Exterior		Windows on south wall of C obscured by vegetation, extensions E and F
74	E	F	Exterior		Obscured entrance
75	W	E	Exterior		East-facing entrance
76	NNW	E	Exterior		South and east walls
77	NNW	A,B	Exterior		South and east walls
78	NW	A,B	Exterior		South and east walls
79	SSW	A,B,C	Exterior		East and north walls

Photo No	Direction	Structure	Ext/Int	Floor	Description
80	SW	A,B	Exterior		East wall
81	W	C	Exterior		East wall, blocked window
82	W	C	Exterior		North wall
83	SSE	C,D	Exterior		North wall
84	S	D	Exterior		North all
85	SE	C	Exterior		North wall
86	S	D,E	Exterior		West wall
87	NE	D,E	Exterior		West and south walls
88	SE	A	Exterior		West wall, modified window
89	SE	A	Exterior		West-facing dormer
90	SE	A	Exterior		Modified window
91	SE	A	Exterior		West wall
92	NNE	A	Interior	First	Scar from removed partition, north room
93	NW	A	Interior	First	Scar from removed partition, north room
94	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	frogged brick 'central Whittlesea'
95	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	frogged brick 'central Whittlesea'
96	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	frogged brick '17' 'LBC ' Warboys
97	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	frogged brick 'central Whittlesea'
98	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	frogged brick 'central Whittlesea'
99	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	bricks and laths

Appendix 2: OASIS Form

OASIS ID: allenarc1-393419

Project details

Project name	HISTORIC BUILDING SURVEY REPORT: 15 STATION ROAD, MARCH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE
Short description of the project	Allen Archaeology Limited was commissioned by Ajaks Properties to undertake a historic building survey as a condition of planning consent for demolition of existing buildings and a residential development, on land at 15 Station Road, March, Cambridgeshire. The shops and former accommodation (in total six structure) at 15 Station Road are non-designated heritage assets built in the 19th and mid/late 19th centuries. The survey identified at least four broad construction phases on site. The first and second phase originates from a row of cottages with an extension along the east side. They date from the 19th century, original fabric includes; the exterior brickwork apart from the north and south elevation, partial fireplaces, staircases, interior wall material of reed/rush, plaster and the majority of a poorly constructed Mansard roof. There appear to have been few interventions in the early 20th century and it is not until between 1952-71 that the shopfront in a 19th century style appears to have been constructed, most likely between 1952 and 1960. The latest phase in the 1980s include removal of the southernmost cottages and internal shop partitions and merging all structures into one entity and perhaps ownership. The survey has allowed for the historical structures to be preserved by record.
Project dates	Start: 09-04-2020 End: 09-04-2020
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	MASR 20 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	F/YR18/1108/FDL - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Building Recording
Monument type	SHOP Modern
Monument type	COTTAGE Post Medieval
Significant Finds	N/A None
Methods & techniques	""Survey/Recording Of Fabric/Structure"", ""Measured Survey"", ""Photographic Survey""
Prompt	Planning condition

Project location

Country	England
Site location	CAMBRIDGESHIRE FENLAND MARCH 15 Station Road
Study area	0 Kilometres
Site coordinates	TL 41571 96857 52.550737604501 0.088239874842 52 33 02 N 000 05 17 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Allen Archaeology Ltd
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Chris Clay
Project director/manager	Chris Clay
Project supervisor	Harvey Tesseyman

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Cambridgeshire County Archaeological Store
Digital Archive ID	ECB 6191
Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Cambridgeshire County Archaeological Store
Paper Archive ID	ECB 6191
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Report"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	HISTORIC BUILDING SURVEY REPORT: 15 STATION ROAD, MARCH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Stockdale, M
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Clay, C. (ed)
Date	2020
Issuer or publisher	AAL
Place of issue or publication	Lincoln

Entered by	Maria Stockdale (m.stockdale@allenarchaeology.co.uk)
Entered on	4 May 2020

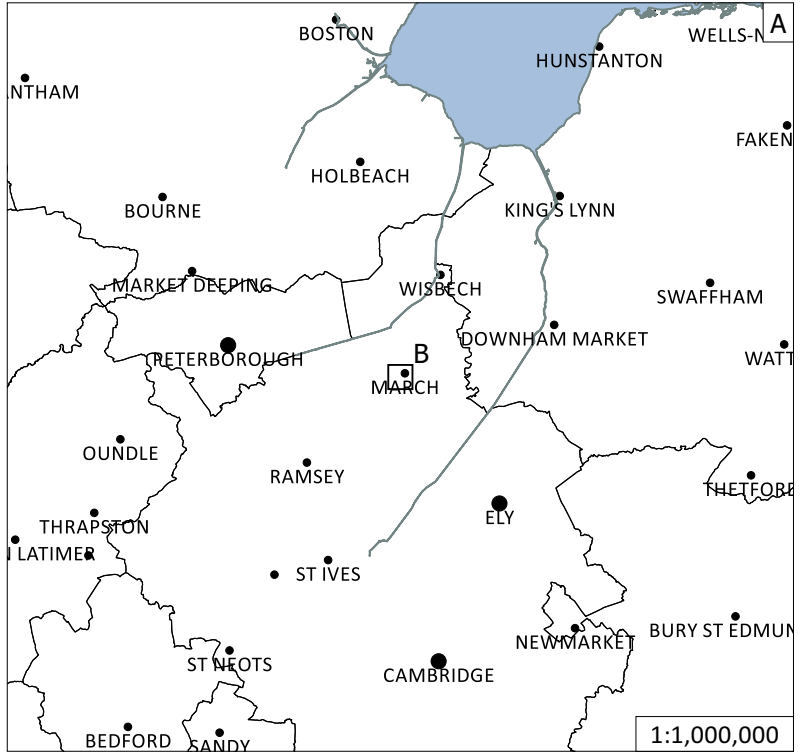


Figure 1: Site location outlined in red

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Site Code	MASR 20
Scale	1:10,000,000 1:1,000,000 1:25,000 @ A4
Drawn by	M Stockdale
Date	04/05/2020

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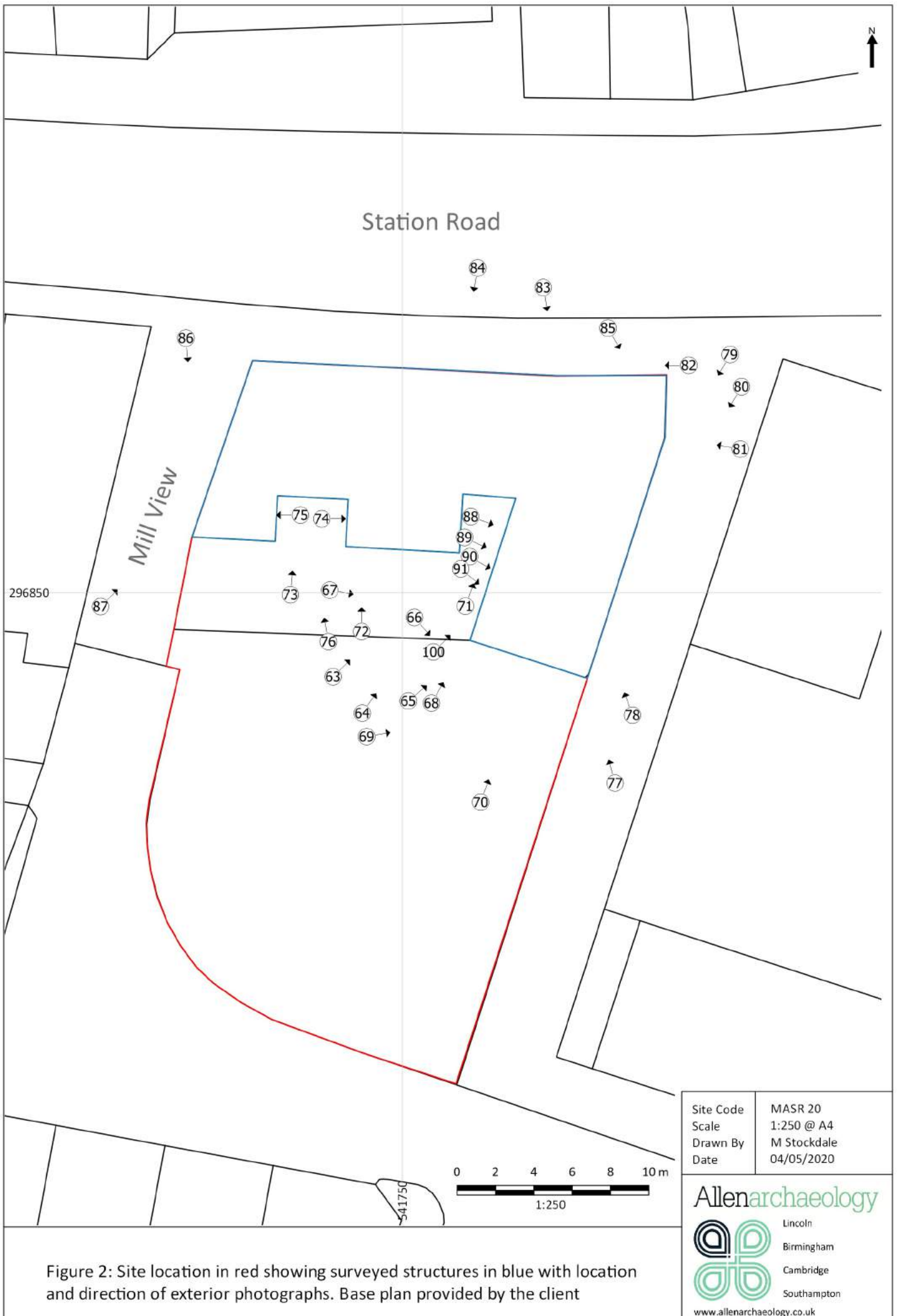


Figure 2: Site location in red showing surveyed structures in blue with location and direction of exterior photographs. Base plan provided by the client

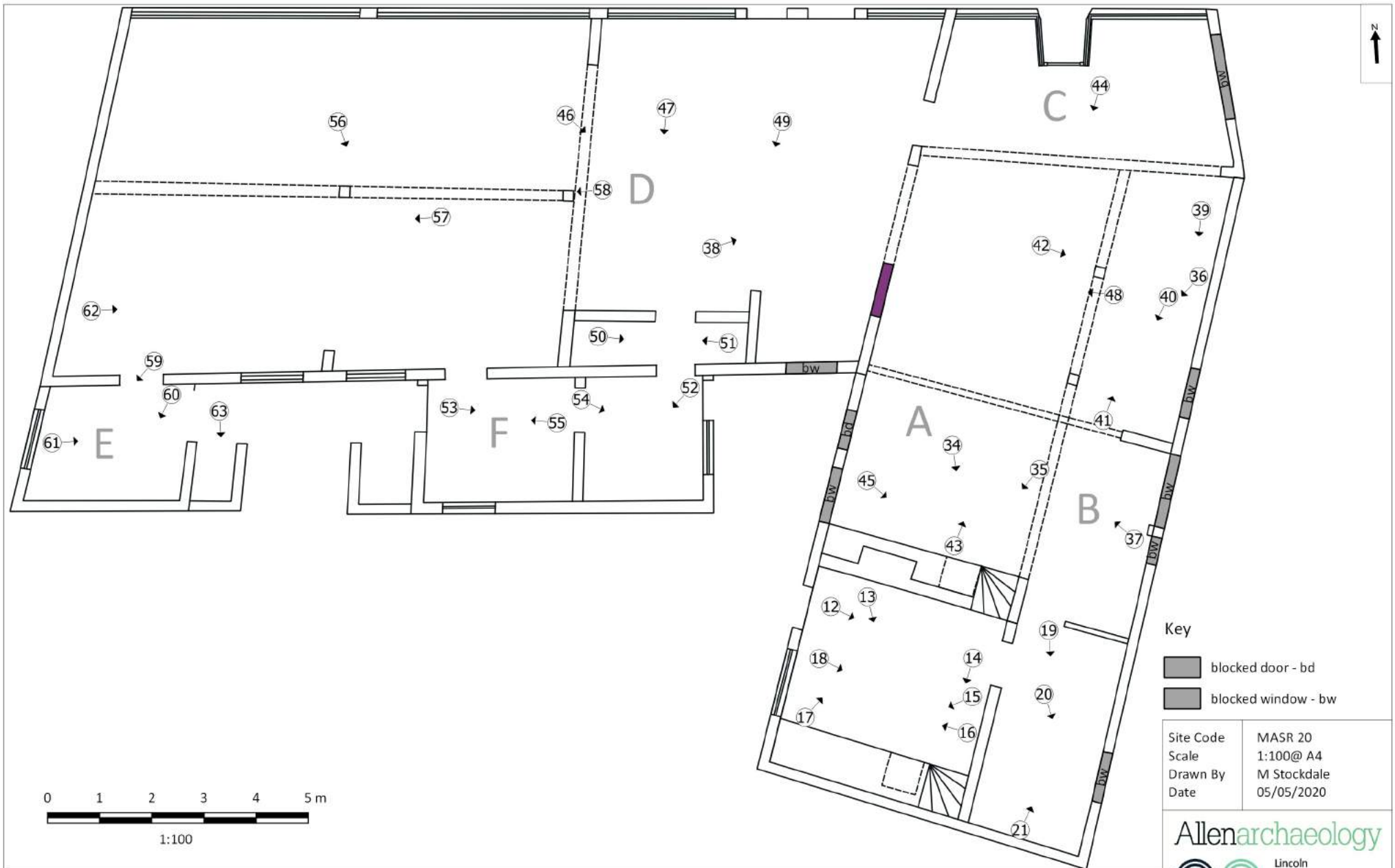
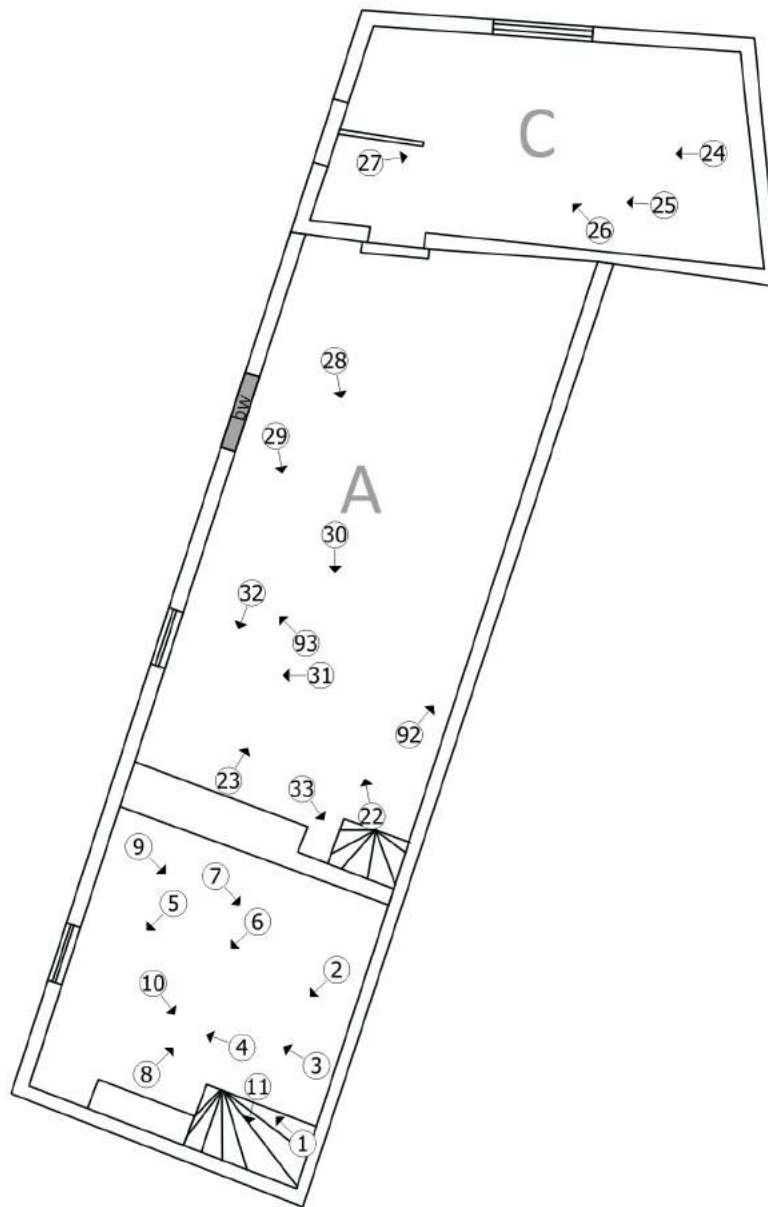

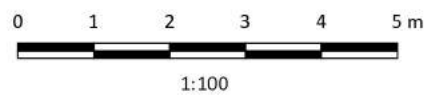


Figure 3: Ground floor showing location and direction of interior photographs



Key

 blocked window - bw



Site Code	MASR 20
Scale	1:100 @ A4
Drawn By	M Stockdale
Date	05/05/2020

Allenarchaeology



Lincoln

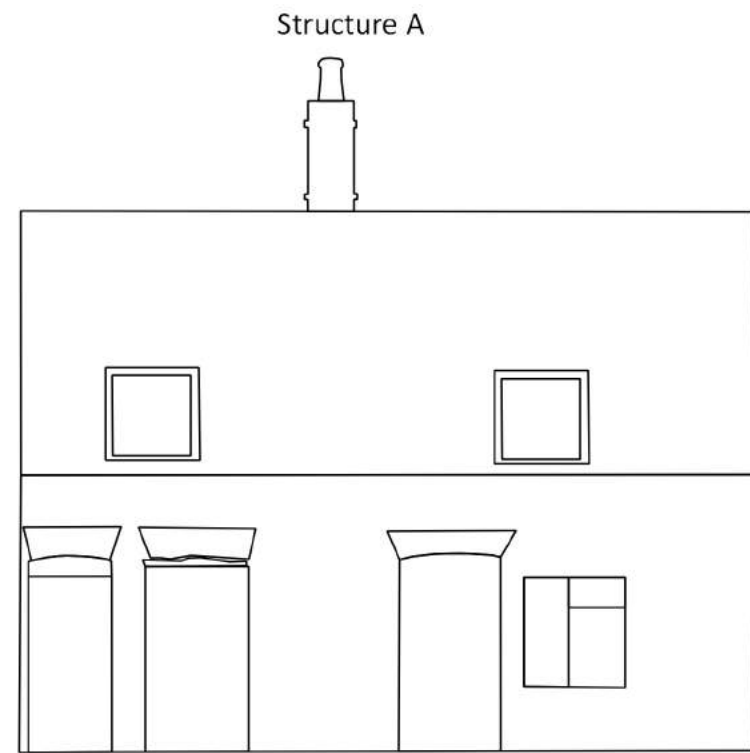
Birmingham

Cambridge

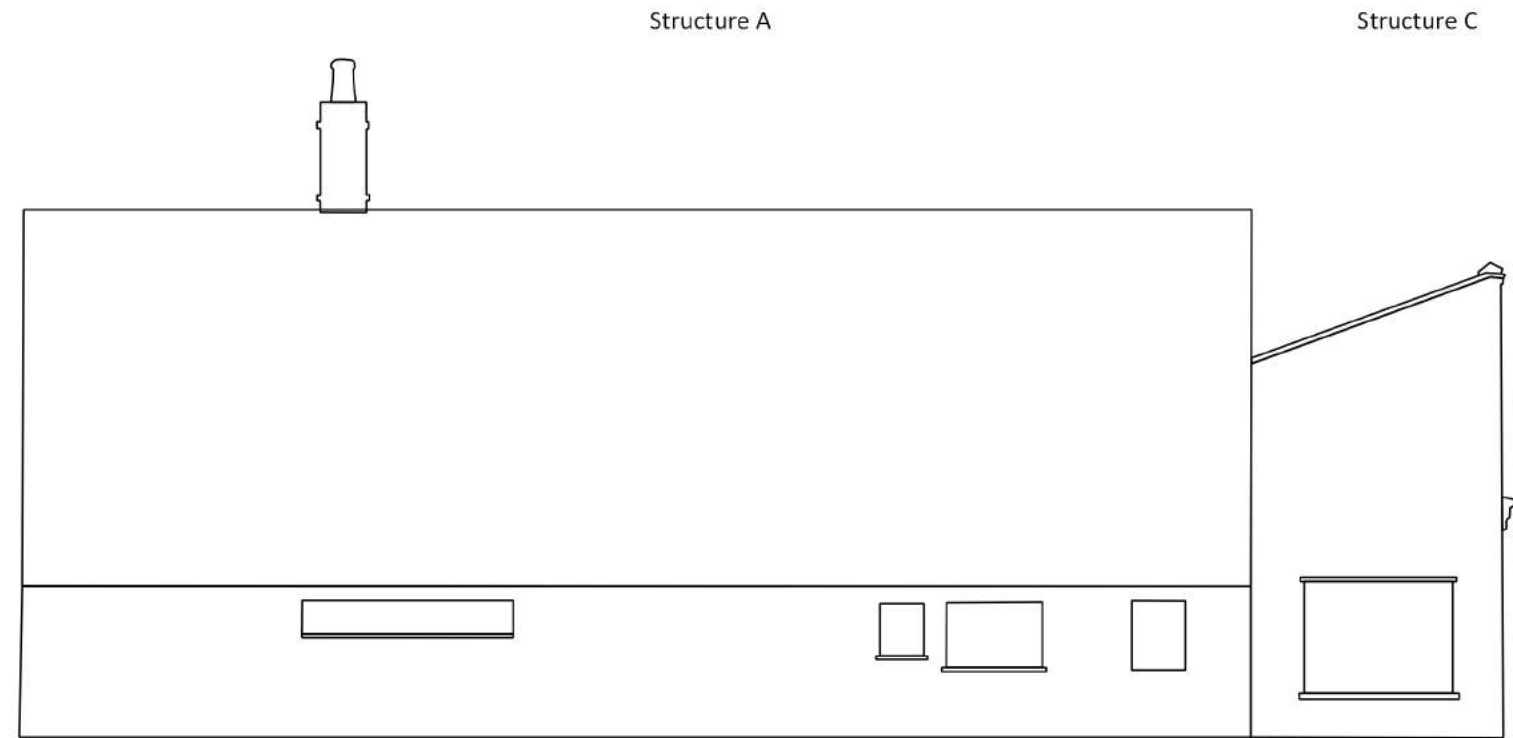
Southampton

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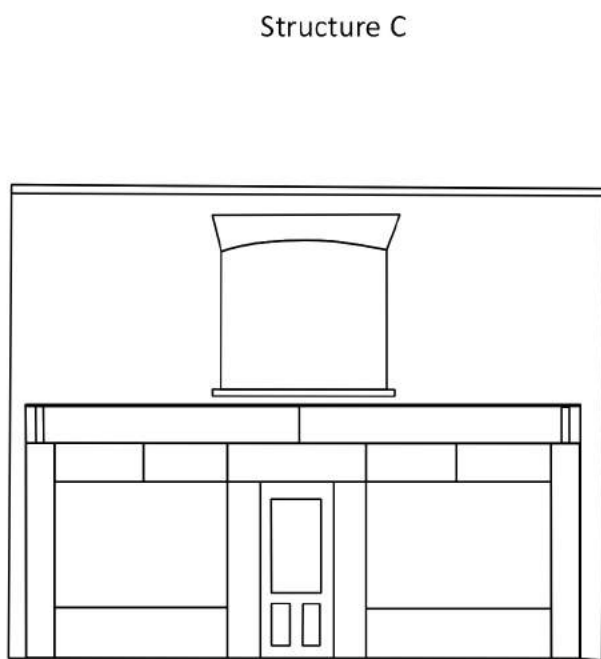
Figure 4: First floor plan showing location and direction of interior photographs



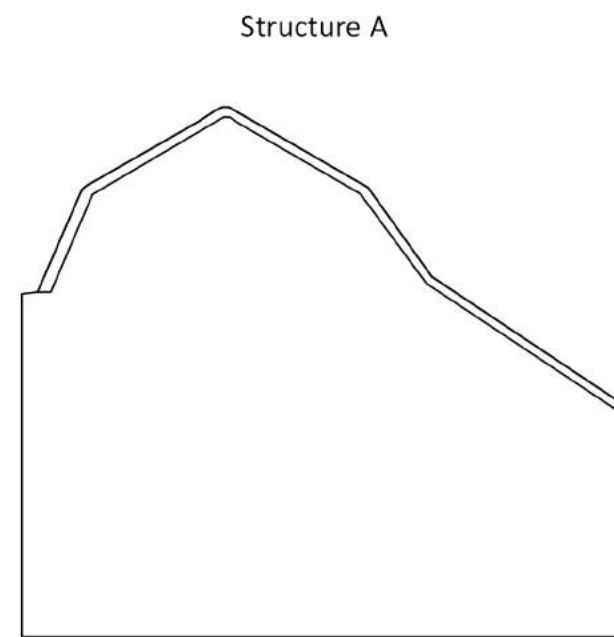
West elevation



East elevation

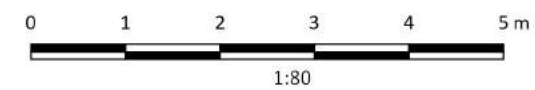


North elevation

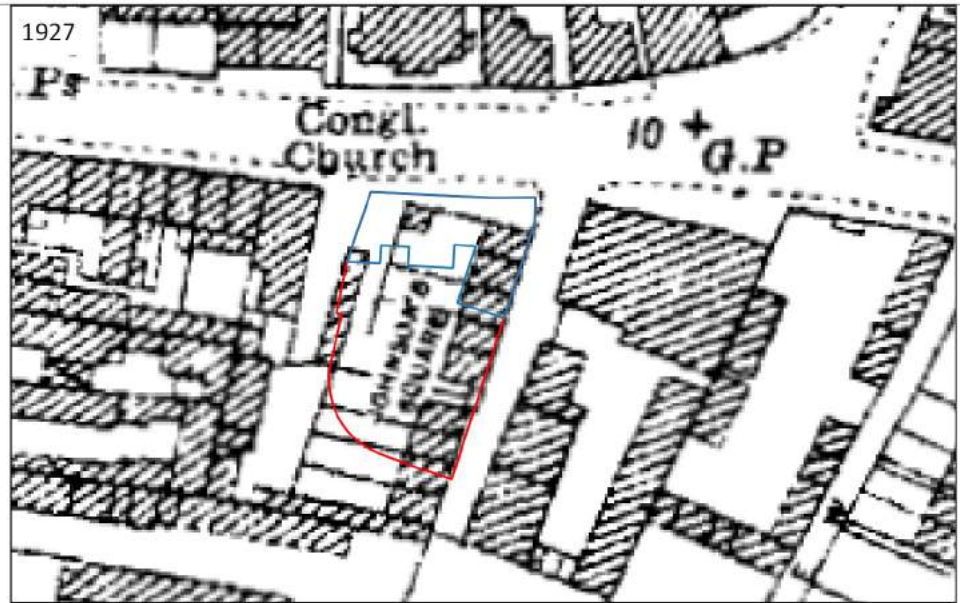
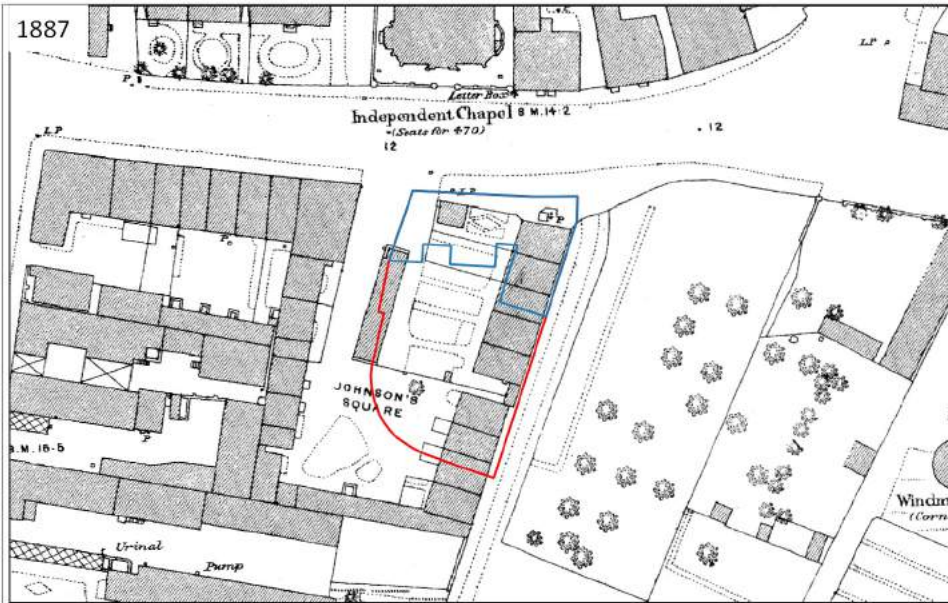


South elevation

Figure 5: Existing elevations of Structures A and C



Site Code	MASR 20
Scale	1:80 @ A3
Drawn by	H Tesseyman
Date	05/05/2020



Site Code	MASR 20
Scale	1:1000 @ A4
Drawn By	M Stockdale
Date	02/06/2020

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Figure 6: Historic Ordnance Survey mapping with surveyed buildings outlined in blue

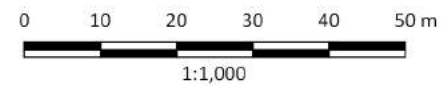




Figure 7: Phased block plans showing broad construction phases

0 4 8 12 16 20 m
1:400

Key

- phase 1 - 19th C
- phase 1 - removed 1971-1985
- phase 2 - mid/late 19th C
- phase 2 - removed 1971-1985
- phase 3 - 1952-1971
- phase 4 - 1971-1985

Site Code MASR 20
Scale 1:400 @ A4
Drawn By M Stockdale
Date 05/05/2020

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