

The Old Bakery, 1 Huntingdon Road, Chatteris

Historic Building Recording



Alison Dickens

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With photography by Dave Webb

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Summary

The Old Bakery on Huntingdon Road, Chatteris is to be converted to a dwelling. Prior to its conversion an historic building record has been made in order to record what remains of the original structure and its fixtures and fittings.

Introduction

This report presents the results of a historic building survey that was conducted by the Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) at the Old Bakery, 1 Huntingdon Road, Chatteris (NGR TL3917 8583; figures 1 & 2), on the 12th of March 2019. The site is subsequently to be redeveloped as a dwelling by the owner. In response to a brief issued by the Cambridge Historic Environment Team (Stewart 2017) a written scheme of investigation was prepared (Dickens 2019). This specified that a Level 2 building survey was required. A Level 2 survey consists of an illustrated record in which both the exterior and interior will be viewed, described and illustrated; conclusions will be presented, but detailed descriptions will not be provided (Historic England 2016; Bedford and Papworth 2010, 31). Throughout the following account, architectural terminology follows Lever and Harris (1993).

The archive consists of drawings, CAD files and digital photographs and will be deposited with the County Council within three months. A copy of this report will be uploaded to the OASIS website.

Historic building record

As specified for a Level 2 survey, the record is primarily illustrative; it includes measured plans and elevations (figures 3-22) plus a detailed photographic archive from which the images shown have been selected. The following text provides a brief overview of the most salient points of interest.

Layout

The structure(s) consisted of two main parts: a larger two story building to the north with a smaller one storey structure to the south, fronting on to Huntingdon Road. The larger building housed the bakery itself on the ground floor, the smaller structure operated as a shop. As shown on figure 5 the two will be referred henceforth as 'the bakery' and 'the shop'.

The Bakery

The bakery has one large main room and two smaller areas to the west and north on the ground floor, and a larger open space and a single smaller area at the north end on the first floor (figure 5).

The main ground floor bakery room measures 4.80m N-S and 3.99m W-E, however a large brick built oven occupies the northern end. Including the oven, the space measures 7.57m N-S. The space has two casement windows in the west wall, and doors to the 'plant room' (north), the outside (west) and the shop (south).

To the south of the oven is a small space (internally 2.57m N-S x 0.78m W-E) described as a 'plant room'. This space is accessible both by a door from the bakery area and an external doorway.

At the north end a narrow space (internally 1.69m N-S x 3.99m W-E) currently houses a large oil tank. This space is only accessible via an external door in the west wall.

On the first floor, accessed by a steep wooden staircase from the bakery, is a large open space measuring 7.57m N-S x 3.99m W-E. This has two fixed single pane windows in the west wall and an external door, also in the west wall.

To the west of this, but not accessible from it, is the space above the oil tank room (internally 1.69m N-S x 3.99m W-E). This is accessible via a hatch in the floor with the aid of a ladder. When observed it was full of cans and barrels formerly containing bakery comestibles. It also has an external door in the west wall but no other openings.

Shop

The shop space is a single room measuring 5.21m N-S x 3.68m W-E. As described below it contains both the oldest and the newest construction materials. It has a large window and the shop door (neither original) to the street, and a wooden door on the west to the outside and on the north to the bakery area.

Materials and construction

As is typical for buildings of their date and status, No. 1 Huntingdon Road is largely constructed from fletton bricks, the bakery building entirely so.

Bakery

The bakery building appears to be of a single build phase with fletton bricks. On the east face (figures 6 & 7) up to 32 courses from the ground these are laid in Flemish garden Wall bond (one header to three stretchers in each course with the header centred over the stretcher in the middle of a group of three in the course below). Above this level up to the roof the pattern is repeated, but offset to the lower build, so the pattern is not complete to the top.

Towards the southern end the pattern is interrupted in the lower part of the wall, and it appears that a section of the build has been removed and rebuilt rather irregularly with patches of Flemish garden wall bond interspersed with stretcher bond and irregular bond with little apparent attempt to match the previous build. It is likely that this occurred when the internal bakery oven was inserted.

There are no openings in the east face other than a later inserted vent.

The west face is also built in Flemish garden wall bond up to 42 courses high, above which point it broadly continues but again offset to the lower build (figures 8 & 9). There are three door and two window openings on the ground floor, two door and two window openings on the first floor. All appear to be consistent and contemporary with the build.

Immediately below the southernmost door on the first floor is a small area that appears to have been altered. The ends of four wooden beams are visible and a rough brick packing around them has impacted upon the arch of the doorway beneath somewhat compromising it. It is possible that at some stage there was a gantry platform here to assist with the hauling of goods to the first floor.

The threshold of the three doors is marked by a single course of black 'engineering' bricks, the thresholds being slightly raised by three courses from the ground. Although overgrown when observed, an older picture in the Design and Access Statement (Fox-AD nd; figure 4) show that the area to the west of the building was a paved or cobbled yard although no trace of this was visible.

The north gable wall is blind; the south has a single ground floor doorway to the shop. Both are built in flettons in broadly Flemish garden wall bond.

Shop

The shop part of the structure has been both damaged and altered, particularly at the south end facing onto the road, which has been rebuilt in breeze block at some point (figures 10-12).

The east wall of the shop has at least two distinct builds evident: There is an older build in plain red and yellow bricks rather than flettons, although they were only visible in the wall, they appear older and slightly smaller than the surrounding fletton bricks. The bond is something approaching Flemish garden wall, but is irregular. Occasional flettons have been inserted, presumably later as repairs, but broadly much of this part of the building wall is a different build to the rest. It is bonded into the bakery build by about two stretchers at the west end and two courses have been added above the older build to bring the level up to the height needed for the roof. The eastern end has been rebuilt rather more recently.

The western wall is not bonded into the main bakery building and indeed the meeting of the two is crude and roughly constructed. To the left of the west wall door the wall is fairly well built from flettons in broadly Flemish garden

wall bond, but it is not consistent throughout the build. To the right of the door the build is rougher, and the façade has clearly been rebuilt at some later stage, this is very poorly constructed with poor jointing and rough cement work. Similarly, to the east wall two courses, one of headers, one of stretchers has been added to bring the eaves height up slightly.

A likely interpretation is that the older build of the shop east wall represents what remains of an older boundary wall incorporated into the bakery build at a later date. Without white bricks being visible it is tricky to date precisely, but is likely to belong to the earlier 19th century or a little earlier still.

Original features

Other than the structure nothing original is retained in the shop end so that is not discussed further.

In main room of the bakery a number of items and fittings belonging to its work life remained (figures 13 & 14). The main feature is the oven at the north end of the room. When observed this had been partially dismantled, but all the component parts were present (figures 15-18). The room is entirely lined with white glazed bricks, with the oven build inserted in the north end of the room. This was a triple oven supplied and no doubt fitted by Alfred Hunt, Bakery Engineers of Leicester, likely warranting the hole in the east wall to bring the parts in to the building. These ovens were originally coke fired, this one has been converted to run on oil and possibly gas though the latter could not be fully determined. The internal dimensions of the ovens were 1.86m W-E and 2.28m N-S, the former much smaller than the space occupied, suggesting that the unseen area was where the heating fire would have been located. On two sides, visible both in the main room and on the wall in the 'plant room' were iron braces. Towards the top is two courses of decorated tiles the lower course in green, the upper in brown. The tiles and the braces, again, are characteristic of Alfred Hunt's ovens and identical features are seen at other locations such as the still operating Colston bakery in Malvern (Iles 2013). The Alfred Hunt Company was founded in 1880 and was certainly still flourishing in the 1920s (Sears 1922).

Along the west wall beneath the windows is a large wooden trough, presumably the original dough trough in which the bread would have been mixed and kneaded. In later years this has been superseded by a variety of large pieces of electric machinery including a "Vortex" dough mixer, some 1.60m in diameter, made by Cruikshank of Edinburgh, a floor mounted cake mixer of the "Peerless" brand and a slightly smaller one by the same company set on a chest of drawers against the north wall. Hanging above are a set of oversize dough and pastry hooks which presumably fit one or the other of these.

The room on the first floor, presumably a storage area, was empty other than for two work benches under the west wall windows and an old till. Also present was a box branding iron marked “S & T” (figure 20).

Documentary sources

Other than references on the Cambridgeshire Community Archive Network “Chatteris” website (<http://chatteris.ccan.co.uk>) and information from the owner, it has proved difficult to find information about the business(es) which ran from the building. The bakery was apparently first run by a Mr Creek and latterly as B.A Summers “the Hygenic Bakery” (sic).

The Ordnance Survey 1:2,500 map sequence (figure 22) indicates that there is a building on this location in 1888, but it appears to be differently configured to the one that stands now. By 1902 a second building has appeared to the east which remains on the the 1926 map, but has gone by 1987 (and indeed by at least 1972). Photographs from the 1950s also show no second building so that has gone by the middle years of the 20th century.

Inside the chest of drawers, a number of cash and account books were found (figure 21), along with other paperwork, the first entries for which dated to 1919, however these appear to relate to the operation of an automotive garage and end in 1922. The book is reused then from 1951 onwards with entries relating to a shop and a bakery. It is not clear whether these refer to various businesses on this site, or whether the garage is the one known to operate on the opposite side of the road but which has since been demolished. The latest dated entry is from 1980 which may be around the time the bakery ceased to operate, though this is not confirmed.

Discussion

The building at 1 Huntingdon Road likely dates from the early years of the 20th century, although at least one part of the east wall is older. The main build is constructed from fletton bricks, manufactured by the London Brick Company from 1900 onwards. Originally the bricks were formed in a two press method, however later there was a four press method after which the bricks are marked “Phorpres” as are bricks observed under the floor of the upper room. Combined with the account book starting in 1919 this would tend to put the business, and likely the building, into the period immediately after the First World War. Further research may be able to narrow that date but is beyond the scope of this report.

The cash and account books give an interesting insight into the running of a small business in this market town, in a series of books, notebooks and eventually individual pieces of paper. There has not been time for a detailed

analysis of the papers in this study but they do have the potential to contribute to aspects of social history in the town.

Other than use as a store the bakery part appears to have been abandoned around 1980, although the front shop likely continued in use, possibly as a hairdresser according to a passing towns person, this likely accounts for the later changes in the appearance of the street front.

Whilst in essence 'ordinary' the Old Bakery provides a glimpse into the configuration and operation of a business of which very few now remain in their original form, left behind by the increasing demands of the modern food production industry.

Acknowledgements

This project was commissioned by Mark Bristowe, the building's owner in advance of the redevelopment. It was managed for the CAU by Alison Dickens, who also conducted the on-site recording. A detailed photographic archive was compiled by Dave Webb and the graphics for this report were prepared by Alison Dickens.

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Figure 1: Site Location within Chatteris (pink = Chatteris Conservation Area)

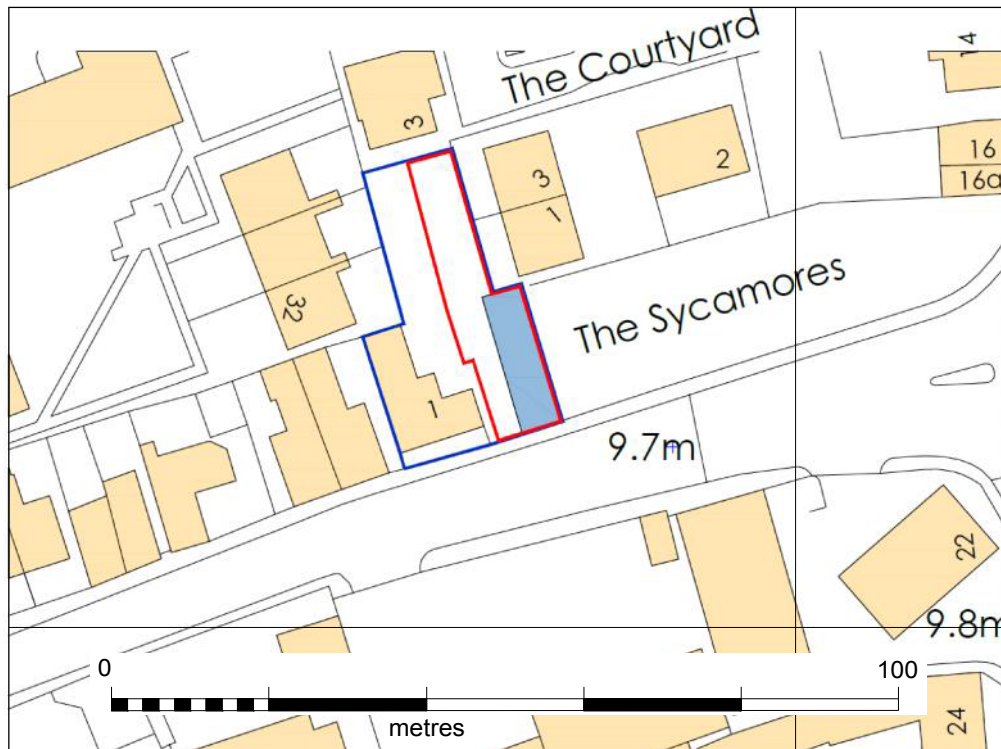


Figure 2: Site Location on Huntingdon Road (contains Crown Copyright Data)



Figure 3: South and east faces in current setting



Figure 4: West face prior to restoration of adjacent cottage (from FOX-AD Design & Access Statement)

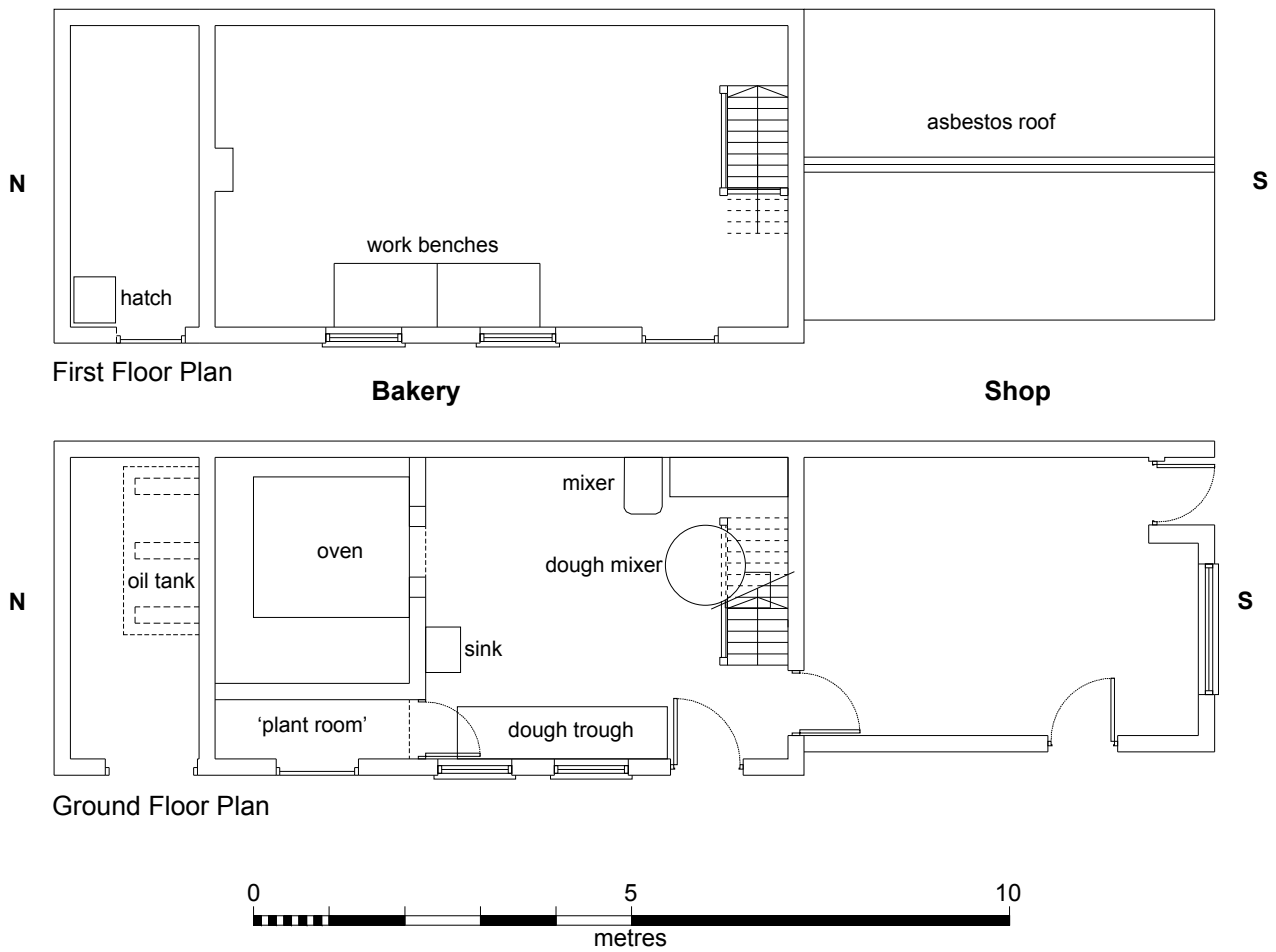


Figure 5: Floor plans and features (1:100 at A4)

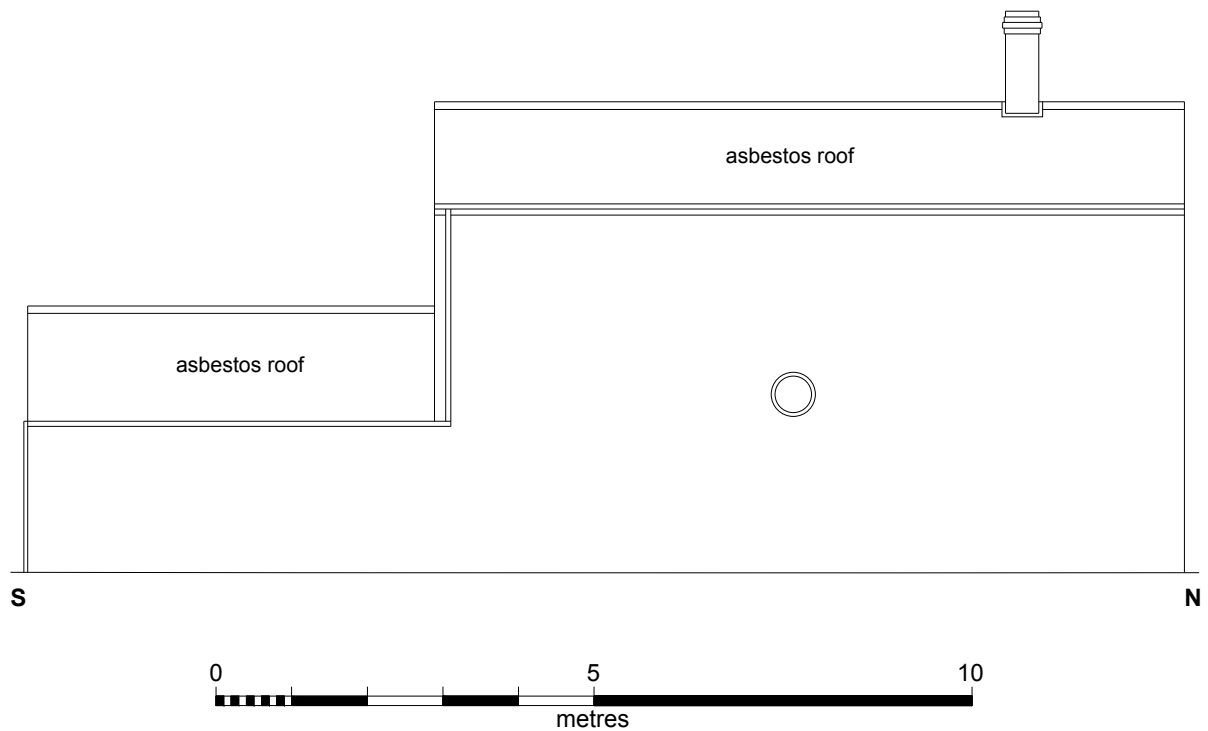


Figure 6: East elevation (1:100 at A4)



Figure 7: East elevation, lower image shows areas of older build (left) and rebuild (right). *Composite image*



Figure 8: West elevation of bakery building (*composite image*)



Figure 9: West elevation (1:100 at A4)



Figure 10: West wall of shop

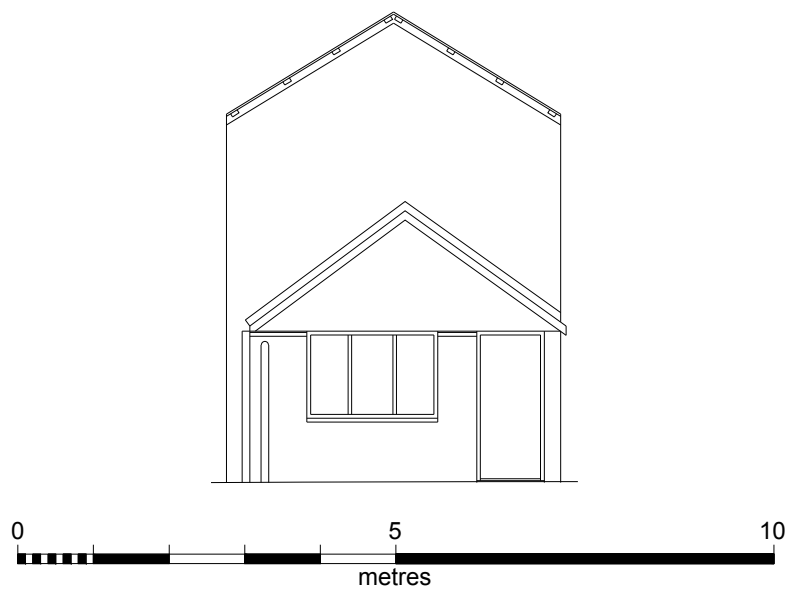


Figure 11: South elevation (1:100 at A4)



North (to bakery)



East



South (to street)



West

Figure 12: Interior of shop area



Figure 13: Interior of bakery looking north



Figure 14: Interior of bakery looking south



Figure 15: Front of oven



Figure 16: Oven pieces



Figure 17: Front of oven as recorded (left) and photographic reconstruction using removed pieces (right)

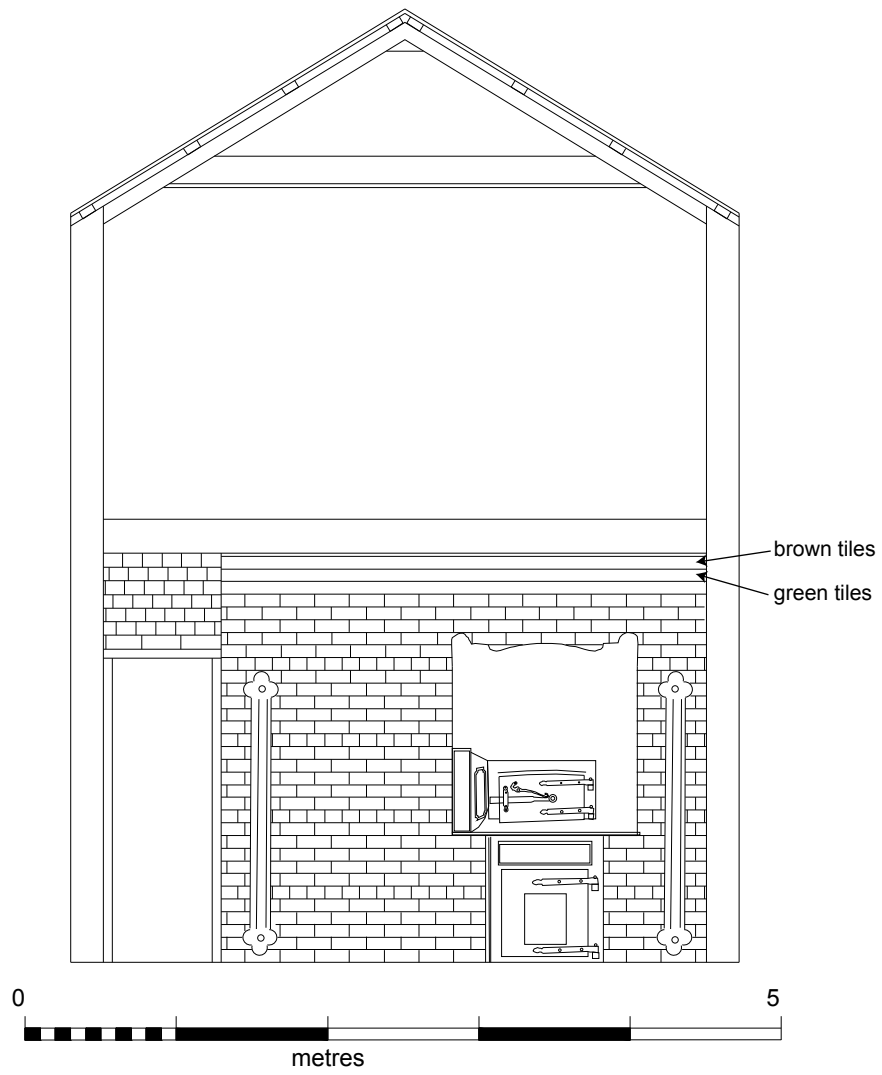


Figure18: Oven face as recorded (1:50 at A4)

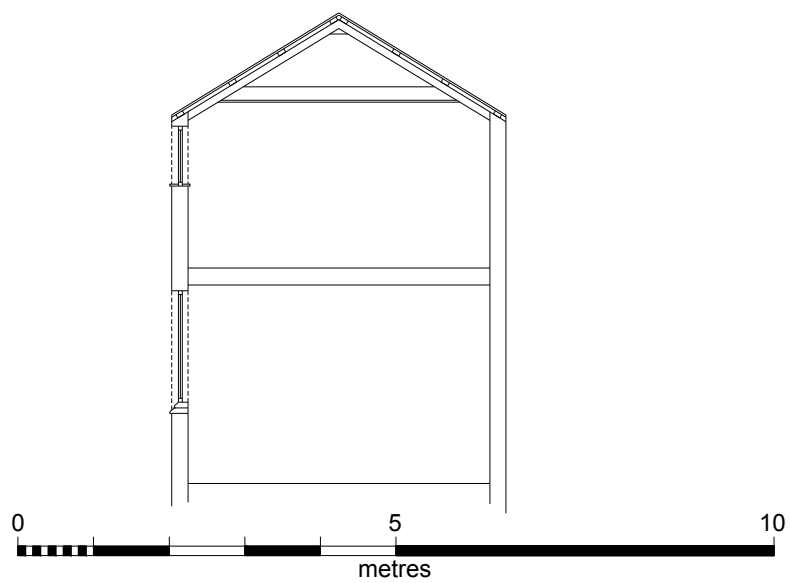


Figure 19: Cross section through bakery (1:100 at A4)



West



Old cash register



North



South

Figure 20: First floor room above bakery



Bakery sign



Assorted dough and mixer beaters



Barrels and food cans in the upper store room



Account books and keys

Figure 21: Details



1888



1902



1926



1987

Figure 22: OS 1:2,500 Scale Map Sequence

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OASIS ID: cambridg3-347154

Project details

Project name	The Old Bakery, Chatteris, Cambridgeshire
Short description of the project	Level 2 historic building recording at the Old Bakery, 1 Huntingdon Road, Chatteris, Cambridgeshire.
Project dates	Start: 19-03-2019 End: 28-03-2019
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	ECB5811 - HER event no.
Type of project	Building Recording
Site status	Conservation Area
Current Land use	Other 2 - In use as a building
Monument type	BAKERY Post Medieval
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	"Annotated Sketch", "Measured Survey", "Photographic Survey", "Survey/Recording Of Fabric/Structure"
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

Project location

Country	England
Site location	CAMBRIDGESHIRE FENLAND CHATTERIS The Old Bakery, 1 Huntingdon Road, Chatteris
Postcode	PE16 6AX
Study area	108 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 3917 8583 52.452278627079 0.048236907096 52 27 08 N 000 02 53 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 9.7m Max: 9.7m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
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Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Alison Dickens
Project director/manager	Alison Dickens
Project supervisor	Alison Dickens
Type of sponsor/funding body	Landowner
Name of sponsor/funding body	Mr Mark Bristowe

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Cambridgeshire County Archaeology Store
Digital Archive ID	ECB5811
Digital Contents	"other"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Images vector"
Paper Archive recipient	Cambridgeshire County Archaeology Store
Paper Archive ID	ECB5811
Paper Contents	"other"
Paper Media available	"Drawing","Photograph","Report"

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