

Lynmouth Pavilion, Lynton and Lynmouth, Devon

NGR SS 7720 4960

## Results of Historic Building Recording

Exmoor National Park Authority planning reference 62/41/11/035

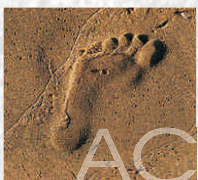
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On behalf of the Exmoor National Park Authority

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archaeology

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## **Summary**

*An historic building record of the Lynmouth Pavilion, Lynton and Lynmouth, Devon (NGR SS 7220 4960) was prepared by AC archaeology in January 2012. The building was constructed in 1932 with an open-fronted waiting room on the ground floor and a theatre/multi-use space on the first floor. Toilets were also provided on the ground floor. These were later extended and further toilets added on the first floor. The Pavilion closed in the 1950s and has had a variety of uses since, which have involved changes to the ground-floor layout and fenestration. The first-floor stage and toilets have been demolished.*

### **1. INTRODUCTION (Fig. 1)**

**1.1** An historic building record of the Lynmouth Pavilion, (NGR SS 7220 4960; Fig. 1) was prepared by AC archaeology on 13 January 2012 prior to its proposed demolition. The pavilion is currently unused and in a poor structural condition. The building's owner, the Exmoor National Park Authority, who commissioned the archaeological survey, intend to demolish the building and replace it with a new visitor interpretation centre.

**1.2** The pavilion is situated on the Esplanade at Lynmouth, to the northwest of the small harbour, and overlooks the English Channel. The site lies at a height of approximately 7m aOD. The underlying geology is slate and sandstone of the Lynton formation overlain by head deposits of clay, sand, silt and gravel (British Geological Society website). The adjacent limekilns, to which a first floor terrace from the pavilion has been attached, are listed grade II (National Heritage List number 1290559). Proposals for listing the pavilion have been put forward on two occasions, but on the recommendation of English Heritage have been turned down.

### **2. HISTORIC BACKGROUND**

**2.1** A desk-based assessment of the building was prepared by South West Archaeology in August 2011 (Green 2011). A summary of the key relevant historical information is summarised below.

**2.2** The adjacent limekilns, which are probably 18th century in date, were situated directly on the rear of the beach. The site of the pavilion was probably unoccupied until the second quarter of the 19th-century; a store is depicted at the rear of the site on the 1840 tithe map. The west end of the esplanade was opened in September 1887 and construction of the cliff railway between Lynton and Lynmouth began soon afterwards (Lynton and Lynmouth Cliff Railway website). An early 20th-century photograph shows a large building towards the rear of the site and a smaller structure on the street frontage.

**2.3** The two-storey pavilion was opened in 1932 for the benefit of the community and summer visitors, and a first-floor hall was to be used for stage performances, dances and community events. The ground floor was originally open fronted. The Pavilion closed in the 1950s, but the building has had a number of uses since, the ground floor most recently being utilised as a store and a visitor centre.

### **3. AIMS**

**3.1** The aim of the project was to prepare an historic building record of the pavilion prior to demolition, which was to be carried out to a level 3 standard as set out in the

English Heritage document *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice*.

#### **4. METHODOLOGY**

- 4.1 The recording comprised three elements: (1) a written description of the building, (2) annotation of and additions to architect's as existing drawings to show features of architectural significance, and (3) the production of a photographic record using a high-quality digital camera.

#### **5. THE PAVILION (Figs 2-5; Plates 1-10)**

##### **5.1 General description**

The building is two storeyed, with the ground floor entered from the Esplanade (Plate 1), and the first floor from a small rear yard. The latter was originally accessed via a sloped path between the pavilion and limekilns that has since been replaced with steps. A number of different building materials were utilised during the building's construction. Much of the fabric is currently visible, although there is photographic and archaeological evidence that all of the walls were originally rendered.

##### **5.2 Ground floor main rooms (Plates 2-4)**

The ground floor walls are constructed of local sandstone and slates bonded in a gravelly, coarse hard cement. Early finishes include paint and painted plaster. The walls were until recently covered in boards attached to batons, but the former has been removed. The esplanade frontage was originally open, with a central square column defining two, wide entrances. The ends of the walls terminate in identical columns. These are constructed of brick, with stone capitals and bases, all finished with plaster onto which wooden beading has been applied to create panels. These columns support either a long wooden beam or enclosed rolled steel joist (RSJ) that extends into the limekiln. This has a thick ovolo moulding with a modillion cornice above.

The interior is divided into two bays by the central column and an internal column that comprises a RSJ infilled with concrete and surrounded by drilled yellow bricks (probably from Peters Marland).

The layout of the ground floor reflects historic alterations, and the more recent use of the building. It originally contained a single large space. This has been divided into two rooms by a central partition of plasterboard and wooden boards attached to a wooden frame. There are ladies' toilets at the east side of the building (see below). The present west room was last used as a visitor centre and contains modern fittings. It has a concrete floor with a lino covering that incorporates a cut-out of the outline of the village's historic lifeboat. The front door leads into a lobby. The adjacent front elevation is formed from sliding concertina doors. At the rear of the room is a raised area containing a store, kitchen and a toilet. Fittings in the latter have been removed, but in the other rooms include shelves and a kitchen unit with sink.

The eastern half of the building is irregularly shaped, and currently divided into two stores by a modern partition. The area was probably originally larger incorporating the rear part of the adjacent ladies toilets. The present east wall of the east room has been abuts the south wall of the pavilion. The eastern store was inaccessible at the time of the survey. It has a modern door from the street frontage. The only visible feature is a high-level slatted vent from the adjacent toilets. The western store has modern sliding doors, and a concrete floor overlain by a thin skim of tarmac, and is

bisected by drains. In the centre of the room is a low concrete block partition beyond which is a slightly raised platform with a tap and drain, probably used for food processing. The east elevation incorporates a window and a slated vent into the toilets. At the south end of this wall is a doorway into a small room that has a slatted vent above. This leads into an L-shaped room, divided from the adjacent toilets by a red brick wall. There is a cupboard in a recess in the east elevation.

### 5.3 Ground floor ladies toilets (Plate 5)

The front wall of the ladies toilets is constructed of coursed sandstone and slate, with pinky-grey concrete quoins and jambs that have tooled margins. This colour and design may be an attempt to reflect the similar architectural in the adjacent building's sandstone masonry.

The entrance door leads into what was a small lobby that has lost its internal door. Beyond is a corridor and six cubicles. Four of the doors are 4-panelled, whilst the southern two have 3 lower panels with a large panel above. The former are set within thin moulded architraves. These open outwards rather than inwards. Attached to each of the doors are signs 'PLEASE BOLT THE DOOR', as well as associated bolts. Each cubicle is tiled to 2/3rds of the partition height, and most retain the pan and cistern. Other walls of the toilets have a waterproof covering with paint above. The floor is concrete.

At the end of the corridor is a further doorway with a slatted wooden vent above. Both the door and the slats have been removed. Beyond the doorway are a further six cubicles with the 3 and 1 panelled, doors that open outwards. Fittings in this area include four sinks and a hand-dryer; mirrors were formerly positioned above the sinks but have been removed. At the end of the toilets is a small store containing shelves. The roof of this part of the toilets is double pitched inwards towards a central gutter and downpipe, and is partially finished with plastic corrugated sheeting laid on a wooden frame. This may replace an earlier, lower flat roof.

### 5.4 First floor

The first floor is formed from mass concrete that displays scars of wooden shuttering on its underside. This is supported on rows of (rolled steel joists) RSJs encased and boxed in concrete (see plate 2). An area of plastered 'masonry' along the central axis of the building may represent an enclosed transverse RSJ. The tops of the ground-floor walls between the RSJs are infilled with concrete. The concrete floor is overlaid with wooden boards bearing badminton court markings. The north and west elevations contain large steel-framed windows, some of which have top- and side-opening panes. These are set into a steel frame of vertical RSJs and horizontal bars encased in rendered concrete. The walls have a moulded skirting board. The north elevation incorporates a wide 'gallery' with dormer above that leads onto two terraces at the along the front of the building (Plate 6). The windows in this gallery originally contained a spiral design, although this has been replaced with steel-frames (Green 2011, fig. 8). The west terrace extends onto the top of the adjacent limekiln. The doorway onto this terrace has been replaced with a modern fire-escape door. Attached to the outside of the gallery had been the 'PAVILION' sign, which has been removed and is currently stored inside the building. Masonry of the east and south elevation is almost entirely rendered, but a small area of brickwork is visible in the latter.

This floor is entered by a doorway in the southwest corner. This formerly contained double door that have been removed. Inside is a wooden panelled lobby with inner 2-pannelled double doors. Adjacent to the lobby is a small ticket booth –

communication between them is via a small opening. The booth retains desk-tops against two walls, one of which has shelves below. The surviving first-floor structure is a large multi-use/theatre space – the stage and men's' toilets have been demolished (see below). Set within the east elevation is a large storage area, defined by a wide shallow arch (Plate 7). This area contains a sink unit and a piano. The ceiling of this area, and the front gallery, has applied moulding imitating 16th-century intersecting ceilings and plasterwork. A wooden staircase leads through a trapdoor up to a lighting box. This area is currently used for storage. The hall elevation of this box has a low side formed from an attached curvy wooden panel with lozenge decoration. A doorway in the south elevation of the theatre leads into the former toilets. It has the same 3- and 1-panel door as in the ladies' toilets. The large central opening of the stage in this elevation has been blocked up.

To the south of the theatre was a stage and men's toilets. These have been demolished, although the east elevation and part of the south elevation survive (Plate 8). The latter forms a revetment for an adjacent path and is rendered, with post-demolition concrete capping. The east elevation incorporates an area of pre-pavilion stone masonry that is abutted by yellow brick walls. The lower two-thirds are faced with white-glazed pale red bricks, whilst the upper third is plastered and painted white. The brick walls incorporate slatted vents and a window. Within the toilets the bases of four cubicles and the urinal are visible, as is the black and white tiled floor. To the rear of the toilets are steps up to a small store. The stage has a concrete floor, and this along with the stubs of the toilet walls are covered in a post-demolition asphalt. The position of the west wall of this stage is defined by a slight change in floor level and the end of a modillion cornice above the first-floor entrance. The angle of the top of the east wall indicates the roof over the toilets and stage sloped slightly downwards.

The front terraces have a pitched tile roof supported on cast-iron columns with curved brackets, all fixed using bolts (Plate 9). Between the posts are railings that also extend across both sides of the west terrace to the limekiln. These have a pattern of diagonal bars, and horizontal bars set between circular spacers. A wooden handrail partially survives on the front railings.

## **5.5 The roof (Plate 10)**

The roof is supported on four-and-a-half trusses. The half truss is over the lighting box, with the adjacent wall having a straight gable. The west end of the roof is hipped, as is the section of the front pitch over lighting box. The trusses are steel frames, formed from L-plates and fixed using bolts. The lower ties are curved and attached to the rafters by diagonal struts. The trusses support thick wooden purlins that are attached using brackets. The inside of the roof is lined with dark brown stained tongue-and-grooved boards. The roof is covered in red tiles with ceramic ridge tiles and finials. At eaves level there is a modillion cornice along the rear elevation above the first-floor door that continues along the west elevation. This was originally painted white and black, but has been repainted in black all over. There is a further length of modillion cornice on the east end of the front elevation above the ladies' toilets. A photograph of the opening ceremony, and a 1983 photograph, shows a further black-and-white painted cornice around the sides of the west terrace (Green 2011, Figs 8 and 10). This has been removed and replaced with plain fascia boards.

Most of the original cast-iron gutters, downpipes and hoppers survive. The front dormer gable over the gallery has decorative barge boards.

## **6. DISCUSSION**

- 6.1** The pavilion was constructed in 1932 as a multi-use building for the benefit of the local community and summer visitors. It was the last of the major works to take place in this part of the village, the Esplanade and the Cliff Railway having been completed at the end of the 19th century. Although the pavilion has fallen out of use, the esplanade and Cliff Railway are still popular with visitors. The building originally comprised two main rooms, one on each floor. The ground floor was open fronted and was probably a waiting room for visitors arriving and departing from steam ferries using the nearby harbour. The first floor was designed as a theatre, with a stage at the rear of the hall, and a lighting box within the roof space. The auditorium did not have fixed seating, and could be used for other events; this flexibility has been demonstrated by the more recent uses of the building. A single, numbered, possibly original seat is in storage in the former lighting box.
- 6.2** The pavilion was a relatively modest structure and was constructed in a late 19th-century chalet style, reflecting the architecture of some other buildings within the village, and a wider use of such architecture in the other late 19th-century public pavilions. The building is relatively plain, but is interesting for the wide use of materials – stone, concrete, brick and steel – although much of this material was originally hidden from public view. The high exposed roof may have been designed to attach theatre lights although there is no evidence for fittings for these or later hall lights. The roof was, however, clearly intended to be viewed by the public. It is probably an early use of full steel trusses, which became more common during the Second World War and afterwards, particularly where larger areas needed to be spanned.
- 6.3** The architecture of the ceiling over the front part of the ladies' toilet, and the provision of the hall above this area indicates they were part of the original design. Some of the cubicle fittings are probably original. There were probably originally four cubicles, with washing facilities beyond (now lost). An early phase of alterations to the ground floor included their extension to the south, and the provision of a store, off the main room. It is not clear whether the former first-floor men's toilets are original. The style of their door from the auditorium, and the provision of slatted vents, is identical to those associated with the extension of the ladies toilets, which probably suggests that the men's toilets are a secondary feature.
- 6.4** More recent uses of the ground floor have entailed the enclosing of the front elevation, and the provision of new services, floor surfaces, wall coverings and staff welfare facilities.

## **7. OASIS ENTRY AND ARCHIVE**

An entry to the OASIS (Online AccesS to the Index of Archaeological investigationS) database has been completed, and has the identifying code 120404.

The paper and digital archive and finds are currently held at the offices of AC archaeology Ltd, in Unit 4 Halthaies Workshops, Bradninch, Nr Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ, and will be deposited at the Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon under the accession number NDDMS 2012.02.

## 8. REFERENCES

Green, T., 2011, *The Pavilion, The Esplanade, Lynmouth, Devon: Results of a Desk-Based Assessment*, report number **110825**

British Geological Survey website

[http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer\\_google/googleviewer.html](http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html)

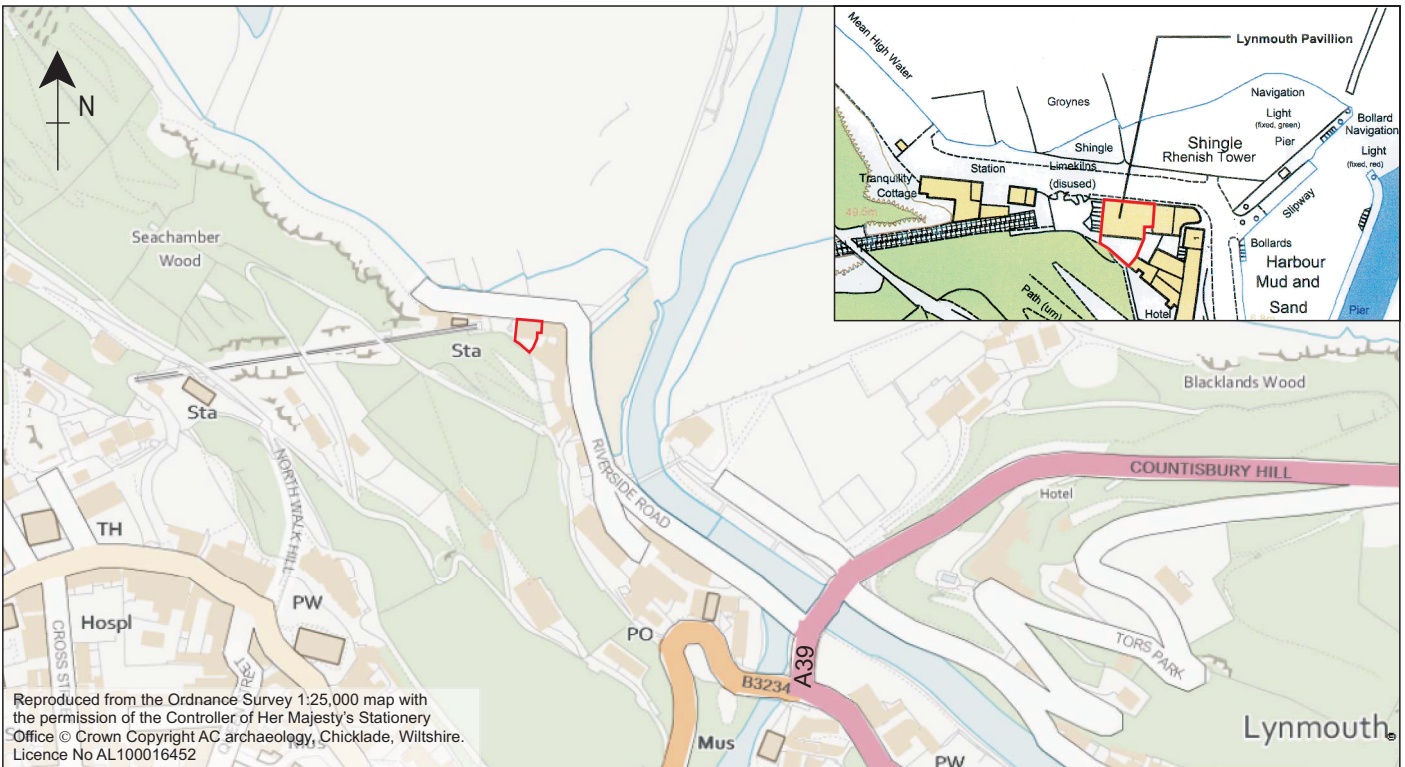
Lynton and Lynmouth Cliff Railway website,

<http://www.cliffrailwaylynton.co.uk/history/>

National Heritage List for England website,

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/protection/process/national-heritage-list-for-england/>





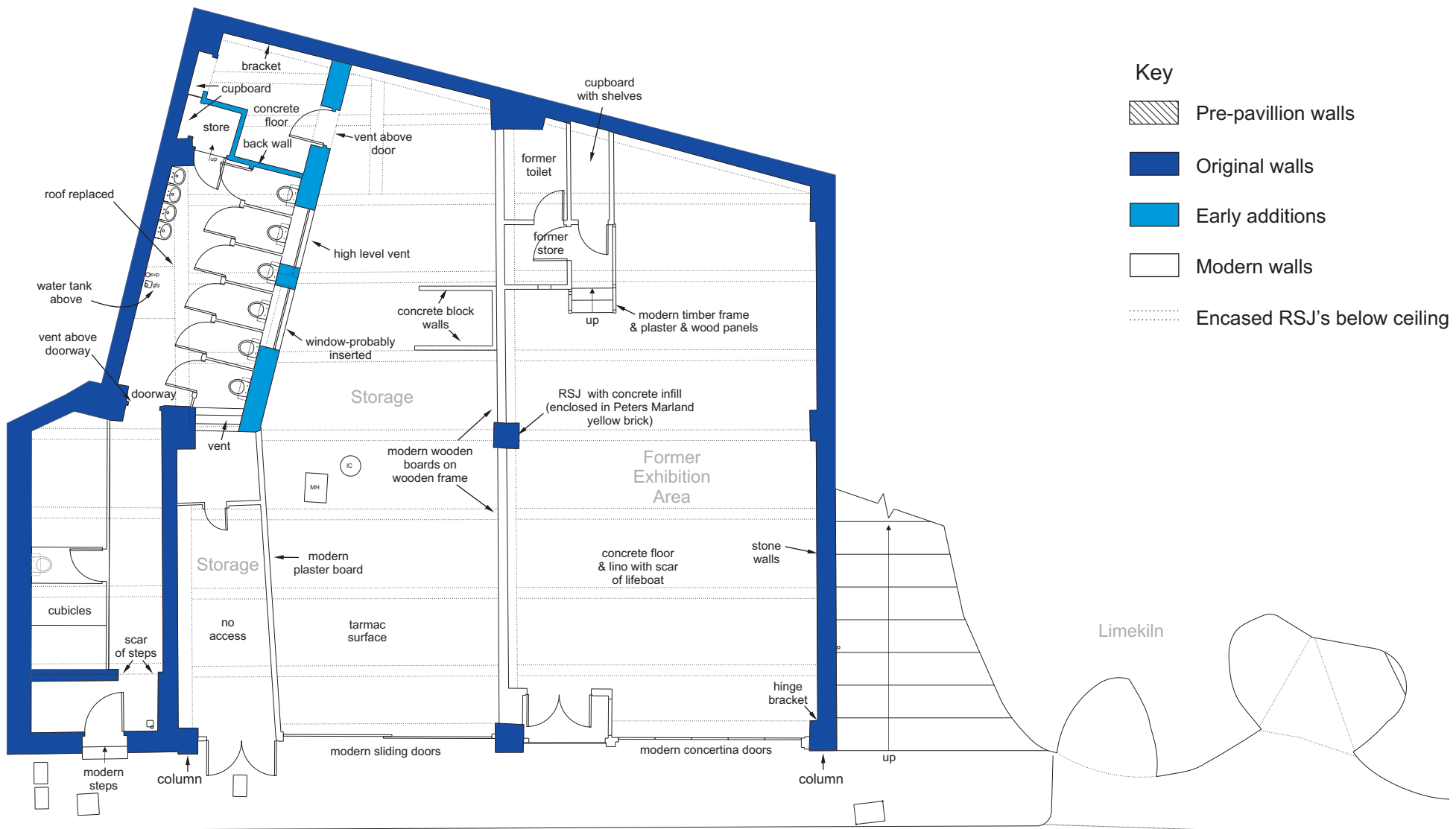
PROJECT

Lynmouth Pavillion, Lynmouth, Devon

TITLE

Fig. 1: Location of site





The Esplanade

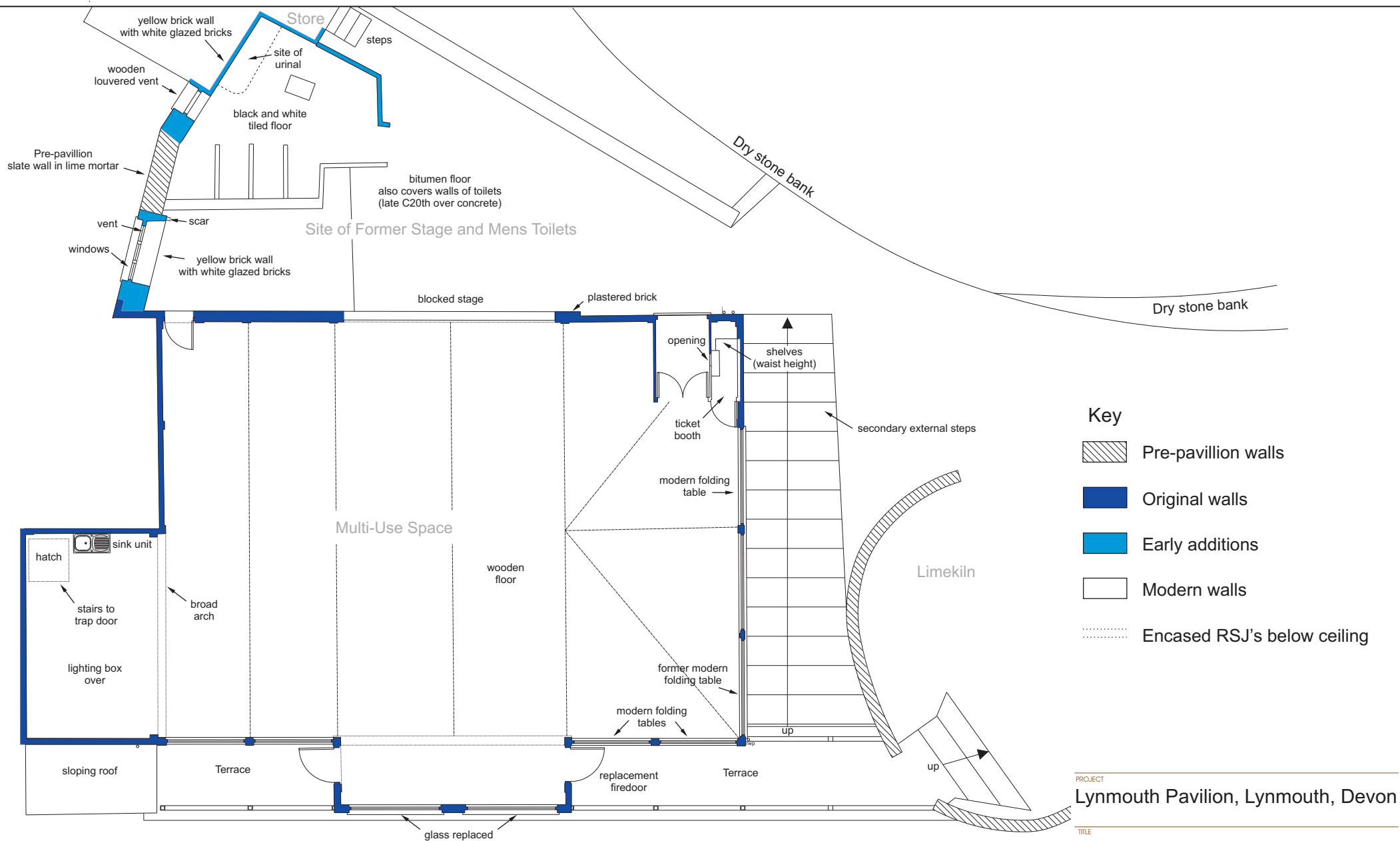
GROUND FLOOR PLAN








PROJECT  
Lynmouth Pavilion, Lynmouth, Devon

TITLE  
Fig. 2: Ground floor plan (based on RGP Architects Ltd drawing No. 10055/S1a)





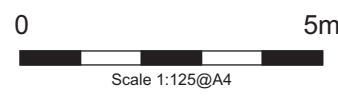
**Key**

-  Pre-pavillion walls
-  Original walls
-  Early additions
-  Modern walls
-  Encased RSJ's below ceiling

PROJECT  
**Lynmouth Pavilion, Lynmouth, Devon**

TITLE  
**Fig. 3: First floor plan (based on RGP Architects Ltd drawing No. 10055/S2)**

FIRST FLOOR PLAN





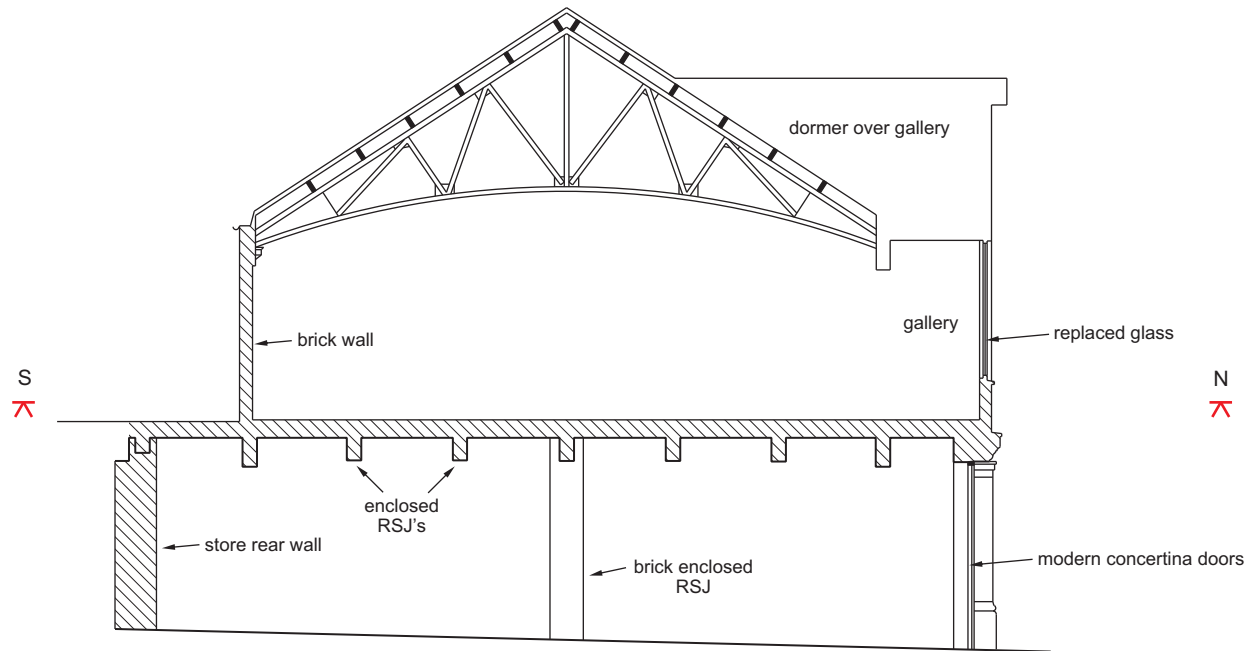
NORTH ELEVATION



PROJECT  
Lynmouth Pavilion, Lynmouth, Devon

TITLE  
Fig. 4: The (north) front elevation  
(based on RGP Architects Ltd  
drawing No. 10055/S1a)





PROFILE



PROJECT  
Lynmouth Pavilion, Lynmouth, Devon

TITLE  
Fig. 5: Profile (based on RGP  
Architects Ltd drawing No. 1005/S2)





Plate 1: The front elevation, viewed from the north. 1m scale.



Plate 2: The ground-floor west room, viewed from the north. 1m scale.



Plate 3: Close-up view of a stone capital in the central front column, viewed from the southwest.



Plate 4: The ground-floor east room, viewed from the south. 1m scale.



Plate 5:  
The ground-floor ladies' toilets showing  
the rear area viewed from the south.  
1m scale.



Plate 6: The first floor showing the replacement glazing in the north elevation,  
viewed from the south. 1m scale.





Plate 7: The first floor showing the store area and lighting box at the east end, viewed from the west. 1m scale.



Plate 8: The former men's toilets and stage, viewed from the west. 1m scale.



Plate 9: The western balcony, viewed from the west.



Plate 10: The roof trusses, viewed from the east.

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