

# The Castle Hotel Outbuildings, Taunton, Somerset

ST 22631 24591

## Results of historic building recording

Taunton Deane Borough Council references 38/09/0388  
and 38/09/0389LB

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AC archaeology

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## Summary

*Historic building recording of the outbuildings at the Castle Hotel, Taunton was carried out by AC Archaeology in January 2012 prior to and during their construction. The buildings were in a poor state of repair, and the opportunity was taken to demolish them to open up views of the adjacent medieval castle, and to provide further car parking space for the hotel.*

*A preliminary survey of the buildings by Somerset County Council in 2006 had indicated that they were probably initially constructed in the early 19th century and expanded during the next 100 or so years. The present survey has concluded that there are six main phases of development, with the last major expansion and refurbishment having taken place by 1930. The earliest building was constructed using stone, the remainder in brick. The buildings were originally used as coach houses and for recreation, including a billiard room, associated with the adjacent hotel (the present Castle Hotel). A fire engine house is documented as occupying part of the site in the 19th century, but there no surviving archaeological evidence for such a use.*

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

- 1.1** A programme of historic building recording was carried out by AC archaeology in advance of and during the demolition of outbuildings at the Castle Hotel, Taunton, Somerset (NGR ST 22631 24591; Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by The Castle Hotel (Taunton) Ltd and was undertaken in January 2012 to satisfy condition 20 of planning permission 38/09/0388 and conditions 4 and 5 of the grant of listed building consent (38/09/0389/LB). The outbuildings were in a poor state of structural repair and only partially used for storage. The opportunity for their demolition was prompted by the Castle Green enhancement scheme, which is to open up views of the medieval castle, and replace the boundary wall of the hotel car park. The footprint of the former outbuildings will be used as an extended car park for the hotel.

### **2. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** The history of the area and the archaeological background has been presented in the archaeological assessment of the enhancement scheme prepared by Exeter Archaeology (Manning 2008, 3-6). A more detailed account of the medieval castle has also been published (Bush and Meek 1984). A summary is presented below.
- 3.2** Taunton is known to have Saxon origins, although the exact location of the main settlement has yet to be established. The Saxon cemetery, which lies beneath the central Castle Green area, is thought to have gone out of use by the early 12th century when the castle was constructed. The cemetery is believed to have been associated with a minster, the location of which is thought to lie inside the castle precinct, possibly within the present grounds of the Castle Hotel. Burials have been exposed on numerous occasions from the 19th-century onwards and have been radiocarbon dated to the late Saxon period.
- 2.3** Taunton Castle was constructed in the early 12th century, with the position of the outer bailey being represented by the area now known as Castle green. The outer bailey ceased to have a defensive function from at least the 15th century, although the castle was briefly refortified during the Civil War in the mid 17th century. Part of the moat around the western side of the outer bailey was observed in 1933 when the

building now occupied by the bingo hall was constructed, and observations during more recent geotechnical investigations have amended the known position of the infilled moat around the inner bailey (Passmore 2011). This section of moat extends under the northern part of the outbuildings, and may account for some of their structural weaknesses.

- 2.4 During the 19th and 20th centuries, buildings were constructed within the outer bailey, although many of these have since been demolished. At this time part of Castle Green was also used as a cattle market.
- 2.5 A report on the outbuildings was prepared by the Somerset County Council Historic Environment Service in 2006 (Webster and Lillford 2006). A description of the rooms was presented along with a sequence of plans showing the development of the site based on both archaeological and historical evidence. The rooms numbers used in that report are retained here. A statement of significance of the outbuildings was prepared by Exeter Archaeology in 2009 (Passmore 2009).
- 2.6 The earliest elements of the garages were the eastern and middle part of the structure. These were constructed by 1832 but are unlikely to have been built before the 19th century. At this date (SRO Q/AC) the eastern part of the structure (that has been retained) appeared to form part of the hotel complex, whereas the middle section (and a yard to the west) were in the ownership of a Mr Mattock whose main property was located on the western side of the green. A sales plan of 1836 depicts the buildings as part of Sweets Hotel (now the Castle hotel). Sale particulars of 1861 (SRO DD/SAS/C/795) describe the middle section of the building, along with a garden (the former yard) as being in the possession of Mrs Clarke. Mrs Clarke also owned the adjacent Hotel, but this land was included for sale within the lot comprising the Assize Courts and Judge's Lodgings reflecting the earlier division of land ownership within the green. The Castle Green Estate was put up again for sale in 1866 (SRO DD/SSAS/G/755/S), and the lot comprising the hotel now included the land to the west (i.e. the middle and western parts of the present garages). This area included a coach house, billiard room and an engine house. A print of the engine house shows two tall, narrow doors flanked by columns topped by a stepped pediment. By 1881 the western part of the building had been partially constructed, and further alterations and additions were made during the late 19th and 20th centuries.
- 2.7 It is recorded that in 1839 the West of England Fire Insurance Company installed its own fire engines on Castle Green (Somerset Historic Environment Record (HER), number 27276 quoting Robin Bush's *A Taunton Diary 1787-1987*). The engine house is referred to in the 1861 sale particulars, although such a building is not marked on the accompanying plan. However, the 1866 plan of the Castle Green Estate identifies the engine house in the southwest corner of the hotel property.

### 3. STATUTORY PROTECTION

- 3.1 The outbuildings lay within the Taunton Castle Scheduled Monument (no. 22851) that includes:

a shell keep castle, part of the associated outer bailey, associated features including a Civil War siegework on the northwest side of the castle, an earlier, ninth century cemetery, which underlies the northern part of the castle, all situated on the southern river terrace of the River Tone at Taunton

**3.2** The Castle Bow (that has been incorporated into the Castle Hotel) is Grade I listed, whilst the remainder of the Hotel is Grade II listed. The outbuildings fell within the curtilage of the Hotel and were therefore deemed to be listed.

**3.3** The outbuildings were also within the Taunton Conservation Area.

#### **4. AIMS**

**4.1** The aims were to prepare a historic building record of the outbuildings prior to demolition, and to monitor their demolition to ensure no damage to below-ground archaeological deposits occurred and to record any archaeological deposits exposed during removal of the floor surfaces.

#### **5. METHODOLOGY**

**5.1** The recording was undertaken in accordance with a method statement prepared by AC archaeology required to discharge the conditions attached to the grant of planning permission for the Castle Green enhancement scheme (James 2011). A level 2-3 record (as set out in *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practices* (English Heritage 2006) was prepared, and comprised:

- A written descriptive record of the building and outline of the development of the building;
- Annotated plans and elevations based on mid-20th-century architect's plan, converted to metric and updated and phased as appropriate;
- A photographic record in black-and-white print, supplemented a colour digital record of reporting and publicity purposes. A record of photographs taken was maintained on *pro forma* sheets including description, location of shot, date and photographer.
- An inspection of the building to identify the presence of reused dressed stones from earlier structures.

The room numbers used by Webster and Lillford were used during the survey and are retained within this report.

**5.2** The recording considered:

- Site layout and function;
- Function;
- Material and method of construction;
- Fenestration;
- Internal arrangements;
- Original and subsequent fixtures and fittings;
- Evidence for use and status;
- Date/period of initial build and subsequent alterations; and
- Associated structures.

**5.3** During demolition, only a limited area of 20th-century concrete and tile flooring was removed from the east end of the building. This exposed further concrete and mortar and slate make-up layers respectively. No earlier archaeological deposits were exposed. A photographic record of the below-ground boiler house was also prepared during demolition.

## **6. THE OUTBUILDINGS (Fig. 2; Plates 1-14)**

### **6.1 External elevations – main garages**

#### **6.1.1 South elevation (Plates 1-2)**

The principal south elevation fronting Castle Green comprised a series of different masonry buildings and features. A photograph of c. 1910 (Bush 1988, 6) shows that the majority of the recorded façade was a refacing that comprised coursed fine sandstone blocks incorporating a window. This had three lights with the upper sections divided into two panes, the lower of which opened. This masonry survived in the eastern side of the elevation, and had been covered with a cement render. Internally, an area to the east of the window had been rebuilt in concrete blocks. The earlier masonry comprised irregularly laid stone and brick fragments bonded in loose grey-brown stony silty clay. A print of 1866 depicts an unfenestrated elevation. To the west, a large sliding door had been inserted creating access to room 5, along with an adjacent contemporary pedestrian door. The opening had a boxed-in RSJ faced externally in concrete, supported on piers of lias, granite and shale masonry. During demolition, patches of brickwork were exposed behind the external face. The c. 1910 photograph shows a doorway into room 5 with a large sign attached to the adjacent wall.

Above the inserted openings was a straight gable forming the end of a first-floor room in the roof space. This incorporated a three-light window, with 12 leaded panes. The gable was clad in slates attached to a wooden frame. This replaced an earlier narrower gable, again incorporating a window, with the top formed by a pediment.

At the east end of the elevation was a projecting bay window with Hamstone jambs. This was set within an opening flanked by oolitic limestone jambs. One window opening had been blocked. The glass had been removed but the windows appeared to have had two casements of differing sizes.

#### **6.1.2 West elevation**

This elevation was constructed from red bricks laid in Flemish Garden Wall bond in dark grey cement. It contained two windows lighting room 1 divided by a projecting chimney stack. The windows formerly had two casements, the top one being bottom opening. The glass had been replaced with wooden slats. The wall included further windows lighting rooms 2 and 3. The window in room 3 incorporated steel security bars. The north end of this wall projected to the west representing the addition of room 4 to the building. The south-facing part of this wall incorporated a doorway.

#### **6.1.3 North Elevation**

Externally, this elevation is low reflecting the build-up of material within the garden of the castle to the north (see the results of the enhancement scheme test pit here). It is constructed of red bricks laid in Flemish Garden Wall Bond in black mortar, and incorporates four internal piers constructed using bullnose-bricks. Other than internal rows of timbers, the only feature is a projecting lean-to at its west end. This had a wooden north wall and a pitched corrugated iron roof. The feature was last used as a cupboard. The eastern end of the wall, forming the side of room 9, had been reduced in height by 11 courses.

#### **6.1.4 East elevation (Plate 3)**

This was constructed of red brick laid in English bond in hard black cement, painted cream. It incorporated a doorway into 7 room set under a wooden hood with pitched

slate roof, and a pair of wooden-framed two casement leaded windows lighting the same room. The windows had stepped brick cills. To the north was a modern sliding doorway giving vehicular access into room 8. The insides of this opening were formed from bullnose bricks, whilst the masonry to the north was laid in English bond.

## **6.2 External elevations – room 10**

### **6.2.1 North elevation**

The main stretch of this elevation divides the garages from the hotel garden west of the present castle. A further, western, length of wall separates the garage from the small garden south of the castle. The lowest courses of the main wall were constructed of rubble sandstone and flint that continues around the corner as part of the east elevation. The wall above has been rebuilt three times. The earliest fabric comprises the ground-floor masonry and is constructed of rubble flint. The second floor fabric comprises bricks laid in Flemish bond. The upper nine courses of this have been replaced by bricks laid mostly in stretcher bond, but with some headers.

The western part of the wall could only be partially inspected; a garden to the east of the castle was not accessible. As far as could be determined, the wall comprises the same lower stone and brick masonry to the west, although the latter was only present as a lower band of masonry. It incorporates a corner fireplace for a now-demolished building within the garden, as well as an arched opening to the west. Above this, the wall has been stepped; this and the upper part of the chimney are constructed of red and white sandstone blocks.

### **6.2.2 East and south elevations**

A small area of early stone masonry is present at the northeast corner and has been described above. The remainder of these walls, fronting onto the Castle Hotel, are a single build of bricks laid in various courses and painted cream. The external elevations incorporate a series of shallow blind openings for which chamfered bricks are utilised. A large opening in the south elevation provides vehicular access and a doorway in the east elevation allows pedestrian access. The former has a modern roller door, but the opening is primary.

### **6.2.3 West elevation**

A small area of masonry fronting the garden south of the castle forms the west external elevation. The masonry comprises the end of the north elevation and infilling of a large opening.

## **6.3 Room 1 (Plates 4-5)**

This room was situated at the southwest corner of the building. The floorboards were rotten and its ceiling was collapsing and therefore pre-demolition recording was limited. Similarly the adjacent room 2 could not be entered due to rotten floorboards (over a basement boiler room). Its east wall was constructed of red bricks mostly laid in stretcher course, but with some rows of header course. It incorporated a blocked doorway, and a fireplace opening. The latter had been broken through to create the present entrance, and it is unclear whether it heated room 1 or 5; the latter seems likely. Alternatively it may have formed the chimney stack from the boiler in the cellar, but it is situated to the south of the boiler room, not directly over it. The walls had been covered in render and supported an original tall skirting board. The north wall had been demolished and replaced by a rendered brick wall when the adjacent room 2 was added. It supported a lower skirting board than the other walls.

The floor was suspended and supported on beams set into the east and west walls. The only visible underfloor feature was the brick hearth for the fireplace in the west wall.

The room had a lath and plaster ceiling fixed to the top of the truss collars. The three A-frame trusses sat on stepped brick corbels. The roof was covered with slates, and these appeared to be attached directly onto a layer of tongue-and-groove boards supported by secondary rafters.

#### **6.4 Rooms 2 and 3**

This pair of rooms was added to the rear (north) of room 1. They were constructed of red brick laid in English bond. There were doorways in the east elevation and between the two rooms, as well as between room 2 and room 1. In addition to the external windows in the west elevation there was a former external window in the north elevation. This had a stepped cill as found in the east elevation of the building. The partition between the rooms was formed from lath and plaster on a wooden frame, whilst the east wall of room 3 was formed from a wooden frame with tongue-and-grooved panelling.

Both rooms had rotten wooden floorboards and could not be entered. They had been used as stores and room 2 contained extensive shelving whilst room 3 had racking set up against the west wall. Both rooms had lath and plaster ceilings.

#### **6.5 Rooms 4 and 5 (Plates 6-7)**

Room 5 reflected the infilling of the open ground between rooms 1, 6 and 8; it was subsequently extended to the north when flanking rooms 4 and 9 were added. The east wall of room 5 was formed from several builds. The division with room 6 was a modern stud partition; above this was a beam that supported a tongue and grooved partition of the loft. To the north, the division with room 8 was formed by a red brick wall laid in English garden wall bonded in dark grey cement. This was painted white and had applied wooden panelling (to mid height) attached to its central section. The division with room 9 was a wooden partition set on a brick footing; the latter was exposed in room 9 where the floor was lower. The later north wall has been described under section 6.1.3 above. The division with room 4 was wooden panelling, and incorporated a door opening with two lights above. Attached to the west wall (against room 2) was an area of wooden tongue and groove panelling. This was partially obscured by stairs to the first floor. Above the panelling, the wall had been rendered and painted brown. At ceiling level, in the opening for the stairs, was a plaster cornice. This had a central band of leaves interspersed with beads. To the south, a new wall had been constructed against the existing wall of room 1; it was constructed using bricks laid in header bond that had been covered in plaster. On the masonry of the chimney stack, this plaster incorporated a thick ovolo moulding. The room had a concrete floor.

The upper floor and roof of this building had been altered. On the east elevation was a scar of a pitched rear roof. The present first floor was supported on R.S.J.s that rested on brick piers. These had been inserted into the earlier side walls of the room.

Room 4 was added to the northwest corner of room 5 when this was extended to the north. In addition to the cupboard, described in section 6.1.3 above, the only feature was a bench seat attached to the north wall and adjacent panelling. The room had a catslide roof, contemporary with and of the same pitch as the roof over the north end of room 5. Its inside was covered with asbestos boards. Both this roof and that over



the north end of room 5 were covered in corrugated iron sheets and incorporated skylights.

#### **6.6 Room 6 (Plates 8-9)**

The north wall of this room was constructed from small roughly coursed sandstone, which on this elevation was rendered and painted white. The east elevation was probably of the same material. At ground-floor level it incorporated a brick blocked doorway and a wide, infilled arched central opening. The room had a concrete floor. It was opened to the roof, but its structure was obscured by lath and plaster. Below the collar level there was a ceiling of 8x2 intersecting panelled beams infilled with tongue and grooved boards. The primary rafters were chamfered and sat on projecting corbels. Between the trusses was an ovolo-moulded cornice. This was not present on the gable elevations. The north pitch incorporated two roof lights. Modern tie beams had been added to provide support and provide a base for storage.

#### **6.7 Room 7**

This room was a small store divided into three compartments, each with their own four-panel door within a moulded architrave. The northern doorway had a two-light opening above, covered with wire mesh. All three compartments had a continuous red and yellow tiled floor. These had been laid on a levelling later of crushed mortar and slate. Stone masonry was visible in the southeast corner, and had been refaced externally. The walls were plastered, and the middle room had tongue and grooved wooden boards attached to the door frames, partially obscuring the walls. Fittings comprised shelves in the north and middle rooms.

#### **6.8 Room 8 (Plates 10-11)**

This was a large garage/store entered via a wide, modern garage door opening in the east elevation. A doorway in the north elevation, with an open light above, led into room 9 and thence into room 10. The north and west walls were constructed from brick laid in English garden wall bond in grey cement that incorporated buttresses for the roof trusses. A further buttress had been added to the earlier south wall; whilst a second had been replaced in the later 20th century.

The roof was supported on three trusses with boxed in tie beams. The principal rafters rose from the tie beam, but were obscured by tongue and grooved ceiling boards and were only visible during demolition. Pairs of scissor braces were attached to the sides of the rafters, the lower sections remaining visible below the ceiling boards. The rafters supported two rows of side purlins supporting closely-spaced thick secondary rafters. The roof was covered in ceramic tiles.

The room had a brick floor. There were no historic fixtures or fittings present.

#### **6.9 Room 9**

Room 9 was a narrow addition to the north of room 8, and was contemporary with the extension of room 5. The walls have been described elsewhere (section 6.1.3, 6.5 and 6.8 above). The east elevation was formed by a large inserted opening into room 10 that had jambs of bullnose bricks. The masonry over the doorway abutted the west wall of room 10 and may have been an addition. The room had a concrete floor. The single pitched roof comprised rafters with purlins set between them, and was covered in modern corrugated iron sheets, incorporating two skylights, lined with plywood boards. This had partially collapsed.

## 6.10 Room 10

This room is used as a garage/store and was not demolished. Its elevations have been described in section 6.2 above, and were lined internally with tongue and grooved boards. The building has a concrete floor. The majority of the interior is occupied by a modern two-storey store. The roof is supported on three trusses comprising slender L-shaped steel elements, and incorporate hips on its northern and southern sides. It is covered externally in corrugated iron sheets and internally with tongue and grooved boards.

## 6.11 First floor over room 5 (Plates 12-13)

The stairs in room 10 led to an L-shaped first floor room within the roofspace, which was used as a store. No fixture and fittings were present.

The recorded roof structure was the product of at least three phases of activity. The primary, lower section comprised a slate covering laid onto thin batons nailed to the back of closely-set primary rafters. It incorporated inserted single skylights in each pitch. Disused hip rafters at its north end related to this first structure, and a contemporary scar of the roof below was observed at ground floor level. The ceiling of the stairwell preserved earlier lath and white-painted plaster, set within black-painted wooden batons creating a mock-Tudor effect. At floor level were curved braces attached to the rafters. The lower parts of these timbers displayed scars of laths and plaster and it is likely that the primary ceiling was a pointed arch or mock barrel-vaulting.

A c. 1910 photograph (Bush 1988, 6) shows a different upper roof structure to that recorded in 2011, which must represent the second phase structure, and was presumably replaced soon after the photograph was taken when the south elevation was refaced. The top of the primary rafters were supported on beams sat on vertical posts set into pads that rested on the floor. The latter observation indicates that this structure was inserted into the roof, and that the primary roof probably continued to an apex. The beams were braced by further crossbeams. This structure incorporated much recycled timber of varying sizes, including thin joists displaying scars of lath and plaster, floor joists and a painted timber. Set into this was a former side-opening window laid flat, possibly to give access to a storage area. The earlier lath and plaster and batons were replaced with tongue and grooved boards that covered the lower half of the roof and base of the mid-height beams. A stairwell was added, providing access from room 10, and this was also lined with tongue and grooved boards. At the top of the stairwell was a reused four-panel door.

Above this, the roof originally comprised narrow rows of windows, with a further pitched roof above, behind a pediment. This was replaced (the phase 3 roof) with a lower pitched slate covered roof of the same design as the earlier structure below. The north gable was straight and incorporated a large window opening set within a timber frame. Beyond, the pitched roof structure over the north end of room 5 was visible, and comprised closely-set rafters supporting wooden panelling.

The southeastern part of the roof was unlined with all roof timbers exposed. This incorporated a dormer window in its north pitch. The junction of the roof with that over room 6 was partially divided by panelling and double doors. Beyond, the roof space was smaller due to the higher ceiling of room 5 below, and was used for storage. The east end of this loft was panelled and incorporated a doorway into the roof space over room 7.

## **6.12 The boiler room (Plates 14)**

This was situated under room 2 and was entered by an external flight of steps, set within a brick-lined well, on the east side of the building. This was open, but had formerly been enclosed with an arched roof. Adjacent to the doorway was a small, high-level, bottom-opening window. The north, south and west walls were constructed of brick, with the north and south walls built into an earlier north-south aligned rubble stone wall. The ceiling was vaulted and constructed using drilled red bricks. Inside, a water boiler survived. Within a pier in the southeast corner were two iron pipes, an iron box, and a sawn-off pipe. There was a further lagged pipe attached to the north wall.

## **7. COMMENTS**

### **7.1 Development of the garages**

A basic chronology of the development of the garages has been established through cartographic research (see section 2.6 above), and this phasing has also been outlined by Webster and Lillford.

The earliest detailed drawing is Carver's map of 1832 (SRO Q/AC) that shows the buildings represented by rooms 6-8 and 10. These were described as a billiard room (rooms 6 and 7), and coach houses (rooms 8 and 10). The latter was much smaller than the present room 10 and adjoined a stable that divided the hotel from the present hotel gardens to the north. The archaeological evidence indicates that the billiard room was the earliest structure to have been built, and the adjacent coach house was attached to this building. The earliest fabric of the present north wall of room 10 was clearly earlier than the remainder of the present structure and may have derived as a boundary wall as well as walls of now-demolished structures to the north.

Plans accompanying the sale particulars of 1861 and 1866 (SRO DD/SAS/C/795 and DD/SSAS/G/755/S) closely resemble the earlier buildings and the layout (for example the division between walls 6 and 7) of the garages as recorded. They also, for example, shows the entrance into the coach house (room 8) that recently had a modern garage door. A new shed had been erected to west of room 10, for which there is no archaeological evidence. These plans and a lease of 1864 (SRO 31/5/5,6) depict a "structure" within the southeast corner of the site (i.e. room 1). It is described on the 1866 plan as an engine house, which must relate to that established by the West of England Fire Insurance Company in 1839.

The 1888 Ordnance Survey (OS) map shows the structure in the southwest corner of the site as a building, with projecting piers (but no bay window). By 1888, room 5 had also been added between room 1 and rooms 6, 8 and 9, and this is confirmed by the archaeological evidence of its west wall abutting the earlier room 1. At this date the roof of rooms 6 and 7 must have been modified and replaced.

By 1904, rooms 2 and 3 had been added, which was observed during the survey through the replacement of the north wall of room 1. It is unclear whether the west wall was also rebuilt at this time, although this remains a distinct possibility. The stone wall forming the east side of the basement boiler house may represent a foundation for these rooms, its deep depth being necessitated by the construction of the building over the infilled medieval castle moat. The OS map of this date also shows a building occupying the western part of what was later room 4. No archaeological evidence for this structure was observed.

The final alterations had been completed by the mid 1930s, and included the extension of room 5, the additions of rooms 4 and 9, alterations to the fenestration of room 7, and the construction of room 10 in its present form. Here the earlier buildings had been removed, and the stables to the east (replaced or reconfigured). The OS 1930 revision shows the presence of rooms 4, 5 and 9 (which were depicted as structures). However, a photograph of 1932-3 shows a stepped north wall of room 4, but no roofline, perhaps suggesting that by this date a low, flat-roofed extension had been added. The photograph also shows a tall roof to room 5 with a hipped north gable, covered in corrugated iron sheets. There is no archaeological evidence for this roof, which must have been altered shortly after (see below) when room 4 was extended and a first floor room added to room 5. The Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society committee minutes record works to the building in 1935-6 (Chris Webster, in litt. 3 June 2013). These are likely to relate to the rebuilding of room 4 in its present form, and the associated changes to the first floor and roofs of room 5. References to a curved wall are likely to refer to room 10, although this room had been constructed in its present form by that date. They may therefore relate to the blocking of the doorway in the west wall of room 10, or the lowering of the north wall of the adjacent room 9.

## **7.2 Use of the garages**

The 1832 sale particulars helpfully describe the buildings standing at that time as a billiard room (rooms 6 and 7), and coach houses (room 8 and the building now occupied by room 10) associated with the hotel, whilst the undeveloped land to the east was described as a yard, but in different ownership. The ceiling of the billiard room (replicating those found in 16th-century houses) reflects the recreational use of the room, whilst the plain interior of the coach house and its main façade fronting the hotel yard confirms such as use. However, the boarding infilling the panels of the billiard room ceiling may be secondary since a print on the 1866 sale plan depicts a taller, glazed central section to the roof. Webster and Lillford suggest that room 7 could have been cloakrooms associated with the billiard room, and whilst there is no archaeological evidence for this, such an interpretation seems plausible.

During the mid 19th century the partial use of the site for recreational activities appears to have continued, with both rooms 1 and 5 probably having such a use. Both rooms were constructed with fireplaces, and room 5 was furnished with (at least some) panelling and other decoration such as the cornice. There is no archaeological evidence for either having being used storage of vehicles or coaches. Room 5 did not have a vehicular entrance, and whilst in room 1 such an opening as depicted on the 1866 sale plan (as two tall, narrow doors) has been lost by the later insertion of a bay window. It is likely that by the late 19th century/early 20th century the fire engines had been moved elsewhere, and the room converted into recreational or domestic use for the hotel. The presence of the fireplace and the timber suspended floor strengthen such an interpretation.

By the early-mid 20th century the whole complex was used as ancillary service accommodation for the hotel. Rooms 5, 8 and 10 were used as garages (and later) storage; an undated post 1930 aerial photograph shows a delivery lorry backed up outside the entrance to room 5. Architects drawings of 1948 provide further use for some of the rooms: room 2 – fruit store, room 3 – carpenter's store, part of room 7 as a jam store, whilst rooms 4 and 6 were shown as part of the garage, and the first floor was described as a store. These uses are in part borne out by the fittings such as shelves in the various store rooms.

## 8. OASIS ENTRY AND ARCHIVE

- 8.1 An entry to the OASIS (Online Access to the Index of Archaeological investigations) database has been completed, and has the identifying code 137952.
- 8.2 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 Somerset Heritage Centre, Taunton under the accession number 12/2010, PRN 29333.

## 9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 9.1 The project was commissioned by The Castle Hotel (Taunton) Ltd, and managed Stuart Carter (Castle Hotel) and Tanya James (AC archaeology). The fieldwork was carried out by Andrew Passmore and Fiona Pink, and the report illustrations prepared by Elisabeth Patkai and Sarnia Blackmore. Thanks are due to Stuart Carter as well as the staff of Towns Of Weston Ltd for their assistance on site.

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Ordnance Survey maps

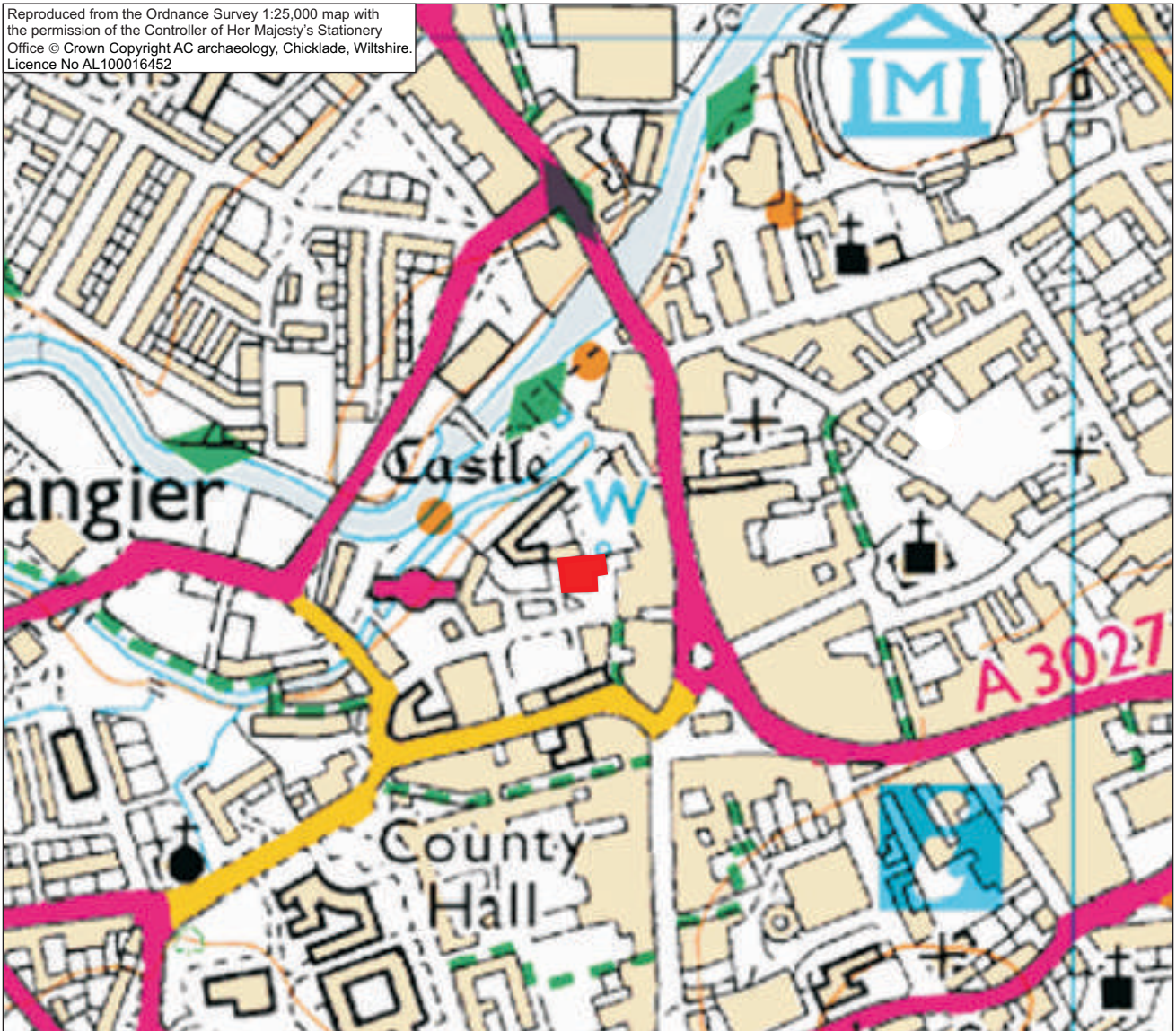
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1930 1:2500 sheet 70.12



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 Site location

PROJECT

Taunton Castle, Somerset

TITLE

Fig. 1: Location of site

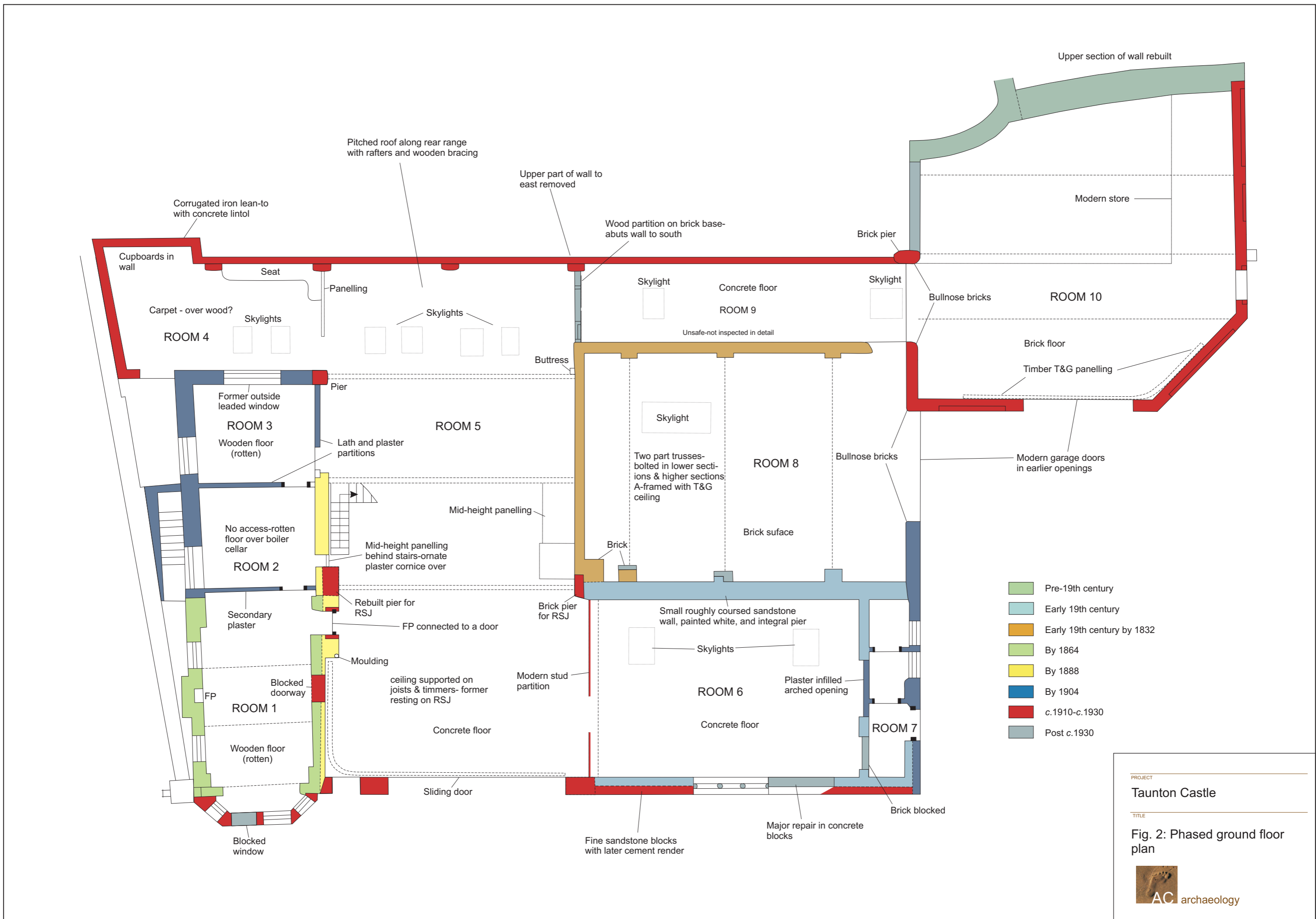




Plate 1: South elevation, viewed from the southwest. 1m scale.



Plate 2: South elevation, west end, viewed from the southwest. 1m scale.



Plate 3: East elevation of the garages, viewed from the east. 1m scale.



Plate 4: Room 1, west elevation showing fireplace and windows, viewed from the northeast.





Plate 5: Room 1, bay window in south elevation, viewed from the northeast.



Plate 6: Room 5, cornice in the stairwell to the first floor, viewed from the east.



Plate 7: Room 5, east elevation showing panelling with scar of former roofline above, viewed from the east. 1m scale.



Plate 8: Room 6 showing east elevation with openings, viewed from the west, 1m scale.



Plate 9: Room 6, the panelled ceiling, viewed from the west.



Plate 10: Room 8, the stone piers in the south elevation during demolition, viewed from the north. 1m scale.



Plate 11: Room 8, the roof as exposed during the demolition, viewed from the east.



Plate 12: The first floor over room 5, viewed from the south. 1m scale.



Plate 13: The panelling in the stairwell to the first floor, viewed from the south.



Plate 14: The cellar showing the features in the east elevation, viewed from the west.

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