

Brookdale Hotel, Tregollis Road, Truro, Cornwall

(NGR SW 83246 45045)

Results of historic building recording

Appeal Ref. APP/D0840/A/12/2174957

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Prepared by:  
Andrew Passmore BSc MIfA

On behalf of:  
CgMs

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archaeology

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#### CONTENTS

	<i>Summary</i>	1
1.	Introduction	1
2.	Aim	1
3.	Methodology	1
4.	The hotel	2
5.	Comments	4
6.	Archive and OASIS entry	4
7.	Acknowledgements	4
8.	Reference	4

#### List of illustrations

Fig. 1: Location of site

#### List of plates

Plate 1: The front elevation of the hotel viewed from the southwest.

Plate 2: The side and rear elevations, viewed from the south, showing the flat-roofed ground-floor rear rooms.

Plate 3: Exposure of original tiled wall in the servery, viewed from the southeast.

Plate 4: Original windows in the dining room, viewed from the southeast. 1m scale.

Plate 5: An original bedroom window showing secondary aluminium-framed glazing, viewed from the southeast. 1m scale.

Plate 6: The entrance hall showing the main stairs, viewed from the northwest. 1m scale.

Plate 7: The lounge showing the modern decoration and exposed fireplace, viewed from the northeast. 1m scale.

Plate 8: The dining room viewed from the southwest, showing the angled northeast corner and suspended ceiling.

## Summary

*An historic building record of the Brookdale Hotel, Tregollis Road, Truro, Cornwall (SW 83246 45045) was prepared by AC archaeology in December 2012 prior to its demolition and redevelopment to form 45 retirement apartments.*

*The hotel is situated alongside one of the main routes into Truro and is believed to have been constructed in 1936. The exterior of the building displays some art deco features.*

*The facilities had been upgraded during the 20th century, and although the building had been comprehensively stripped prior to the survey taking place, evidence of the upgrading of utilities, bedrooms and the general character of the interior could be observed.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION (Fig. 1)

1.1 An historic building record of the Brookdale Hotel, Tregolls Road, Truro, Cornwall (SW 83246 45045; Fig. 1) was prepared by AC archaeology in December 2012. The site has planning permission (Planning Appeal ref. APP/D0840/A/12/2174957) for the demolition of the existing hotel and redevelopment to form 45 retirement apartments for older persons, including communal facilities and associated car parking and landscaping. The work was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd on behalf of McCarthy and Stone.

1.2 The site is situated on the eastern side of Truro, adjacent to Tregolls Road, one of the main routes into the city. It comprises an irregular plot of land currently occupied by the Brookdale Hotel and associated grounds. The site lies at around 30m AOD, with the underlying solid geology comprising interbedded Sandstone and Argillaceous Rocks of the Portscatho Formation.

### 2. AIM

2.1 The aim of the investigation was to preserve by record the hotel before it is demolished.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by AC archaeology (Passmore 2012) and the Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* (revised 2008). The recording was carried out to level 2 as set out in English Heritage's 2006 document *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice*.

3.2 The survey comprised a written and photographic record of the building that was prepared in accordance with AC archaeology's *General Site Recording Manual, Version 2*.

In line with standard Cornwall Council requirements, the recording considered the following:

- construction methods used,
- details of any subsequent alterations,

- date of construction and subsequent alterations;
- fixtures and fittings, and
- functions/use of rooms and changes to function throughout the life of the building.

#### **4. THE HOTEL (Plates 1-8)**

**4.1** The hotel is a tall, narrow three-storey structure set back from, and above, Tregollis Road, with gardens to the front and parking to the rear (Plates 1 and 2). In addition to the main hotel, the property includes a smaller detached building to the southwest and a row of garages constructed against the southern boundary. The ground floor projects out from the main building, and is set into the hillside; they are lit by low windows set high in the rear elevation. Projecting from these rear rooms is a tall, slender range that incorporates bedrooms on the upper floors.

**4.2** The hotel is rendered and painted white, which obscures the building material/s used. Very little masonry was observed. An arch constructed of local slates frames a window between the front entrance steps, whilst stone and brick masonry is present within a chimney stack in the lounge. Where visible, the partitions between the bedrooms are plasterboard attached to timber frames. Externally, the render has different treatments including smooth and rough finishes, as well as at basement level a smooth finish but with deep incised bands, which to an extent reflects the historic architecture in the centre of Truro. Internally, the walls are finished with paint and wallpaper, although possibly original large ceramic tiles or glazed bricks are present within the servery under later cladding (Plate 3).

**4.3** The slate roof is hipped at both ends, and close to the apexes of these are two chimney stacks. The hip at the southwest end is stepped. The north end of the building has a two-storey projection under a separate hipped slate roof. At the rear of the buildings is a three-storey flat-roofed extension, with further flat roofs covering the rear ground-floor rooms to either side.

**4.4** Most of the doors have been removed. However, several original examples survived. The main entrance has a door with two rows of panels. The lower row has two fixed panels with moulded edges, whilst the upper panel is fully glazed and divided into 9 panes. The upper part of the doorway is flanked by windows matching the height of the door glazing. Other original doors were of two designs – one with 8 panels of two sizes, again with mouldings to the sides of the panels, the other being plainer with two panels.

The building is well lit, with windows of varying sizes fitted to most rooms. They comprise small panes set into metal frames, divided into two or three lights by thicker glazing bars (Plate 4). In general, at least two of the panes are framed with top-hung hinges allowing them to be opened. The public rooms on the ground floor have larger windows than the upper floor bedrooms and are provided with projecting keystones and flat drip moulds above. The dining room has an angled glazed window in the northwest corner, whilst the sitting room above has a long window spanning the length of the room. Internally, secondary, aluminium-framed windows have been inserted within the bedrooms (Plate 5).

**4.5** The building has been stripped of many fixtures and fittings, as well as portable items, prior to the survey visit. Removed items included most of the carpets, the doors, radiators, and all of the kitchen fittings. The surviving fixtures are all of modern date and include bathroom fittings, electric lights, switches and sockets.

#### **4.6 The basement**

The basement is situated along the front of the hotel and comprises a single row of rooms. The only public space is a television room located at the north end, which is accessed via a staircase from the dining room above. The remainder of the basement is used for storage and a night porter's flat.

#### **4.7 The ground floor**

The main entrance is reached via two flights of stairs that terminate under a porch, and opens into a reception area. Opposite the doorway are stairs to the basement and the first floor, as well as the reception desk that is formed from inlaid wooden panelling (Plate 6). Between each floor the stairs have two flights separated by a small landing. The lower flights have enclosed handrails whereas the flights to the second floor are open with slender stick balusters and a thick ramped handrail.

The main public spaces are situated to either side of the reception hall, at the front of the building. On the southwest side are the lounge and the bar. The dividing wall between these rooms incorporates projecting chimney stacks. These have been blocked and the grates removed (Plate 7). The lounge has a wooden floor with a brick hearth. The walls and ceiling are finished with crude mock-Tudor panelling comprising largely plain straight batons fixed to wooden boards laid onto a frame.

The dining room also retains its original floorboards, as well as a skirting board and dado rail. The ceiling is a modern replacement and incorporates inset lights (Plate 8).

At the rear of the building, under the flat roofed projections are offices, stores and a kitchen and servery. Here, all of the fixtures and fittings have been removed. The walls and floors of the latter are covered in ceramic tiles, as well as plasterboard that has also been used to line the ceilings.

#### **4.8 The first floor**

The layout of the first floor comprises a central spine corridor accessed via the main staircase, and with a further spiral staircase to the second floor. On either side of the corridor are nine large en-suite bedrooms, with a further en-suite bedroom in the rear wing. The floor also includes a sitting room at its northeast end. The bedrooms are plainly finished with no historic fittings. The skirting boards, for example, are continuous with the en-suite bathrooms that have been inserted into the bedrooms.

#### **4.9 The second floor**

The second floor has a similar layout to the first floor, but with a room of undefined use at the northeast end rather than a sitting room present on the first floor. This may have been a further bedroom without an en-suite since there is an adjacent separate bathroom. There are 10 en-suite bedrooms with a further en-suite bedroom in the rear wing.

### **5. COMMENTS**

- 5.1** The building was a purpose-built hotel that is believed to have been constructed in 1936. It has a little of the prevailing art deco style, in particular the windows and the fenestration of the northwest corner including the first-floor sitting room, as well as the hotel sign on the front elevation. Although upgraded (see below), the layout of the hotel has not been substantially altered, and the functions of rooms were clearly visible. Externally, the difference between the ground floor public rooms and the 'back rooms' as well as bedrooms on the upper floors could be differentiated through the use of large windows lighting the public spaces.

- 5.2** The hotel had been extensively stripped of most fixed fittings, as well as portable furniture. Photographs of the hotel prior to closure show up-to-date bedrooms, but with more traditionally-finished public rooms. The upgrading of the hotel to late 20th-century standards was visible internally, for example through the provision of en-suite bathrooms, and the relining of the walls and ceilings in the ground-floor rooms incorporating the necessary services (electric, air conditioning, etc.). Externally, fire escapes have been provided from the first floor corridors over the roofs of the rear ground floor rooms.

## **6. ARCHIVE AND OASIS ENTRY**

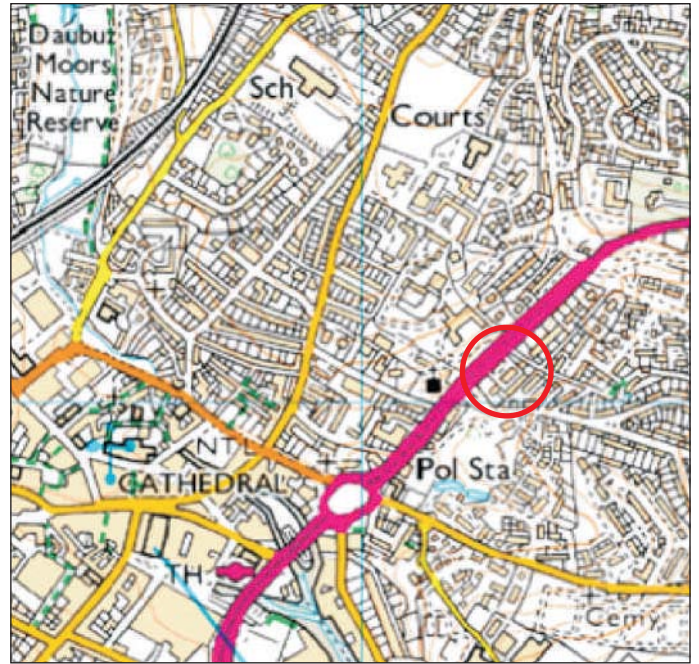
- 6.1** The paper and digital archive is currently held at the offices of AC archaeology Ltd, at 4 Halthaies Workshops, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ. It will be deposited at the Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro under an allocated accession number, along with the archive from a watching brief to take place after the hotel has been demolished.
- 6.2** An OASIS entry has been completed under the unique identifier 141986.

## **7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

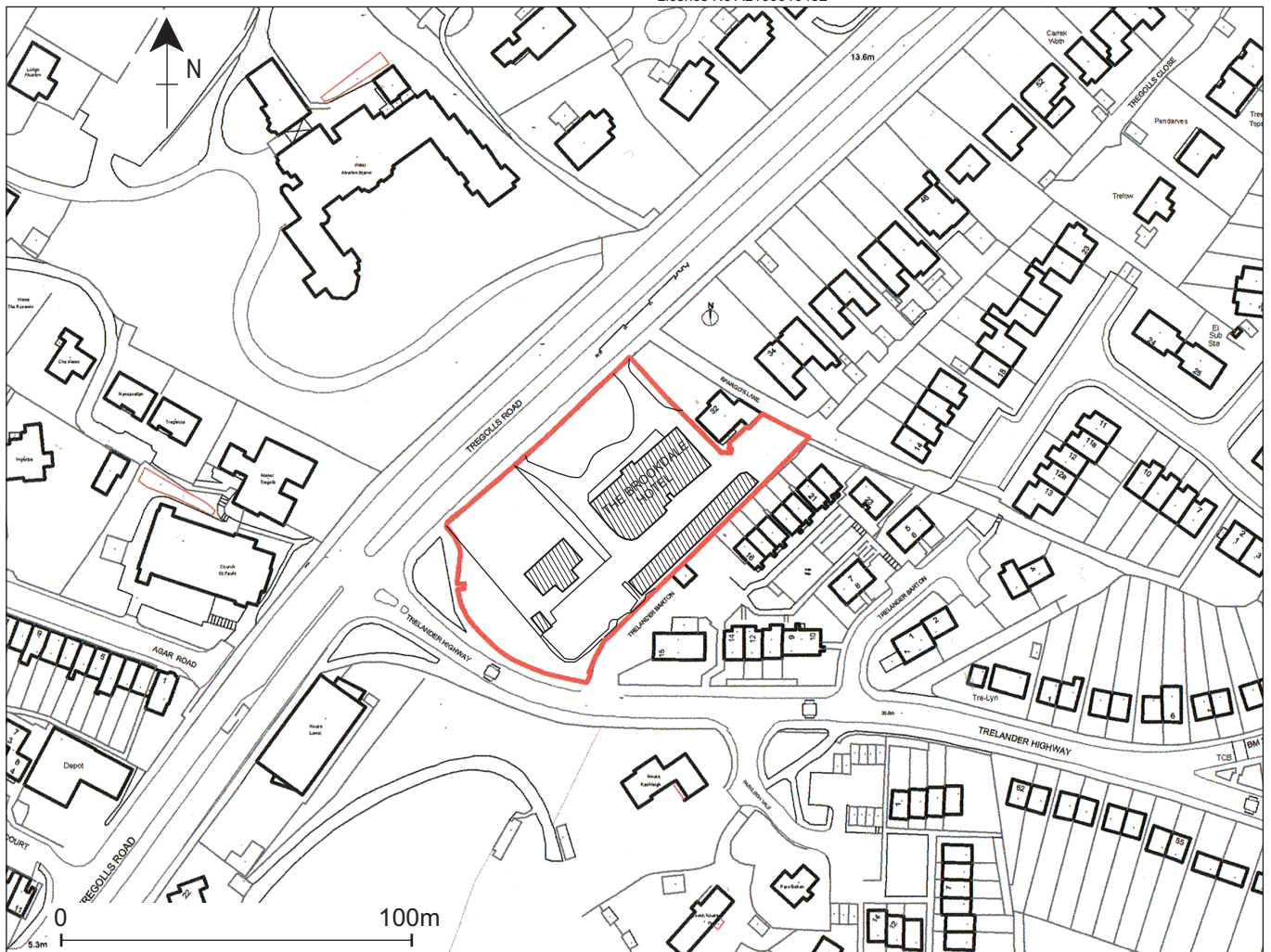
- 7.1** This report was commissioned by CgMs on behalf of McCarthy and Stone. The project was managed for CgMs by James Gidman and AC archaeology by John Valentin. The survey was carried out by Paul Jones, the report written by Andrew Passmore, with the illustrations prepared by Sarnia Blackmore.

## **8. REFERENCE**

Passmore, A., 2012, *Brookdale Hotel, Tregolls Road, Truro, Cornwall, (centred on SW 83246 45045), Written Scheme of Investigation for historic building recording*, Planning Appeal ref. APP/D0840/A/12/2174957, AC archaeology Document No. ACD612/2/1.



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 Site boundary

PROJECT

The Brookdale Hotel, Truro, Cornwall

TITLE

Fig. 1: Location of site



Plate 1: The front elevation of the hotel viewed from the southwest



Plate 2: The side and rear elevations, viewed from the south, showing the flat-roofed ground-floor rear rooms



Plate 3: Exposure of original tiled wall in the servery, viewed from the southeast



Plate 4: Original windows in the dining room, viewed from the southeast. 1m scale



Plate 5: An original bedroom window showing secondary aluminium-framed glazing, viewed from the southeast. 1m scale



Plate 6: The entrance hall showing the main stairs, viewed from the northwest. 1m scale



Plate 7: The lounge showing the modern decoration and exposed fireplace, viewed from the northeast. 1m scale



Plate 8: The dining room viewed from the southwest, showing the angled northeast corner and suspended ceiling

### Devon Office

AC archaeology Ltd  
Unit 4, Halthaies Workshops  
Bradninch  
Nr Exeter  
Devon  
EX5 4LQ

Telephone/Fax: 01392 882410

### Wiltshire Office

AC archaeology Ltd  
Manor Farm Stables  
Chicklade  
Hindon  
Nr Salisbury  
Wiltshire  
SP3 5SU

Telephone: 01747 820581  
Fax: 01747 820440

[www.acarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.acarchaeology.co.uk)