

NORTH PROSPECT, PLYMOUTH, PHASE 2 REGENERATION AREA

(NGR SX 45811 57078)

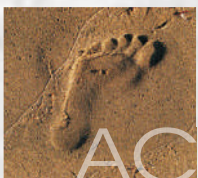
Results of historic building recording

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On behalf of:
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AC archaeology

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Summary

Historic building recording of a group of 1930s council houses within the North Prospect estate, Plymouth was carried out by AC archaeology in February 2014. The houses form part of a larger group that will be demolished and replaced with new residential accommodation.

A record of four house types present within the Phase 2 Regeneration Area was made – the styles differed from those previously recorded in the Phase 1 area. Most types are semi-detached, although rows of three and four houses were also constructed, and examples of these were recorded. The exteriors have a basic style with variations in the design and fenestration. The interior layout is different in most properties, with only types 1 and 7 being identical. The properties have front and rear gardens. The surviving historic fittings give some idea of the quality of the internal detail. Observation of the ground beneath one house confirmed the results of a previous evaluation that concluded the area had been extensively landscaped when the estate was constructed.

1. INTRODUCTION (Fig. 1)

1.1 This report presents the results of the historic building recording of a group of 1930s council houses in the Phase 2 Regeneration Area of North Prospect, Plymouth (NGR SX 45811 57078; Fig. 1), carried out by AC archaeology on 12 February 2014. The recording was commissioned by Barratt David Wilson Homes and required by Plymouth City Council prior to their demolition and replacement with new residential properties.

1.2 The Phase 2 Redevelopment Area is situated within the northwest corner of the North Prospect estate to the west of North Prospect Road, and encompasses Overdale Road, Foliot Road, Woodville Road, Ash Grove, Grassendale Avenue, Floyd Close, and parts of North Prospect Road and Cookworthy Road. All houses within this area will be demolished, although those on the north side of Grassendale Avenue and Floyd Close lie outside the scheme and will be retained.

2. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 North Prospect is a council estate that was constructed to provide 'homes for heroes' after the First World War. The first turf was cut by the Prince of Wales in 1919. The first two houses were occupied by the end of 1920 and a total of 802 had been built by the end of 1924 (Passmore and Manning 2011, 4). The north end of the estate was constructed in the 1930s (<http://www.northprospecthistory.co.uk/information.php?s=History§ion=4>). The history of the area has been outlined in archaeological desk-based assessments of the Phase 1 (*ibid.*) and Phase 2 areas (Jones and Passmore 2012).

2.2 In the Phase 1 area four types of council house were identified (along with earlier cottages and some later houses). A sample record of these was subsequently prepared prior to their demolition (Passmore and Young 2011). In the Phase 2 area, three of the four types (nos 1, 2 and 4) of house identified in the Phase 1 were noted, along with a further four types (nos 5-8).

3. AIMS

- 3.1 The aim of the work was to prepare a basic archaeological record of house types 5-8 prior to their demolition and record the general character of the area.

4. METHODOLOGY (Fig. 2)

- 4.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by AC archaeology (Passmore 2014).

- 4.2 A representative example of each of the house types 5-8 (within in Ash Grove) was recorded to English Heritage level 2 specification (as set out in *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice*). This record comprised:

- A comprehensive internal and external photographic record using a high-quality digital camera (minimum 10 megapixels),
- Sketched floor plans, and
- A written description.

5. BUILDING SURVEY (Figs 3-4; Plates 1-8)

5.1 General description of the houses

A large number of house types were utilised within the North Prospect estate. A basic description and classification of some of these was given in the assessment report (Jones and Passmore 2012). All the houses have front and rear gardens. The houses were not provided with garages as they were constructed in a time of low car ownership. Many have adapted front gardens to provide parking spaces. The elevations of all the houses on Ash Grove were rendered, and have air vents in the external walls. All the properties displayed a plat band delineating the ground and first floors on all elevations with the exception of type 8 where it was only present on the rear elevation. The external windows and doors were originally wooden, although all have been replaced in modern UPVC. All the properties have slate roofs; types 5-7 have hipped roofs and type 8 has a mansard roof.

Internally all the bathroom and kitchen fittings have been replaced with modern units. The buildings were originally heated using boilers housed behind ground floor fireplaces set within chimney stacks (c.f. Passmore and Young 2011). These had been replaced with combination boilers located in the kitchens, but many of the houses retained later 20th-century electric fires. All the boilers and radiators had been stripped out prior to the survey. The stacks on the first floor incorporate vents, and the presence of hearth plates set into the first floors, and four chimney pots per stack, indicate that these vents were inserted after fireplaces (only provided in the master bedrooms) were removed. The hot water tanks for the original boilers were housed in first floor cupboards (again usually located within the master bedrooms) that would have served as airing cupboards. These tanks were removed when the combination boilers were inserted but some of the pipework remains in some properties. All the houses had access to the loft area via hatches on the landings on the first floor. All the h had the sides of the treads painted white, with the central part left plain for a line of carpet.

5.2 Type 5 House (No. 5 Ash Grove; Plates 1-2)

This type of house is variously positioned throughout the area including corner plots, a crescent and straight sections of roads. The type was constructed as rectangular, paired semi-detached units (Jones and Passmore 2012).

External description

The building type, although fairly simple in design, combines a modified neo-Georgian appearance that includes a slate tiled hipped roof with a slightly overhanging eaves cornice and plain horizontal plat band delineating the ground and first floors. The elevations have been rendered with a pebbledash finish. The front elevation has an off centre door with a pair of vertical projections either side of it. These indicate an inclusion by the architect of a watered down 'moderne' element to the building. There are two windows on the ground floor and two on the first floor. The side elevation has a door leading from the kitchen to the rear garden and a window on the ground floor. The rear elevation has two windows on the ground floor and two windows on the first floor. The varying size of the windows indicates that both casement and sash variants in timber were originally used (Jones and Passmore 2012). However these have all been replaced.

No. 5 has a front garden area, with a driveway and lawn. There is a path leading around the side of the house to a rear garden. This has a raised patio area and the rest has been covered with concrete.

Internal description

A small hallway gives access to the living room, kitchen and two cupboards under the stairs – a small one under the first rise and a full height one with a window under the second rise. The stairs have wooden treads and balustrading. The balusters are a simple square shape set at an angle, and ball finials to the newel posts. The living room has an electric fire in the chimney breast. Some of the floorboards were missing and the depths of the foundations were visible in the void of about 1m below the floorboards. This is a new observation, and is consistent with the results of an archaeological trench evaluation in Phase 1 area where it was concluded that the construction of the estate had involved extensive landscaping and truncation of existing soils (Passmore 2011). The room contains a dado rail. The kitchen is accessed through a wooden door with 15 glass panels. It contained modern kitchen fittings.

On the first floor a small landing gives access to two bedrooms and a bathroom. The bathroom has modern fittings and a folding plastic door. The master bedroom has a picture rail, a cupboard, and a chimney breast with a hearth plate in front of it. The doors to the bedrooms are the original 4-panel doors, with the top panels being smaller than the lower panels.

5.3 Type 6 House (No. 11 Ash Grove; Plates 3-4)

These houses are arranged as three-unit terraces with the principal symmetrical elevation consisting of two projecting gable bays to either end, each containing individual properties, with, to the centre of the building, a large property (Jones and Passmore 2012). An end house was recorded.

External description

The building has a plat band delineating the ground and first floors, which is interrupted by a shallow projecting area incorporating the main doorway of the central property. Within the central part of the principal elevation is a passageway accessing a rear communal pathway. This opening and the side doorways to the end properties have the same vertical projections either side of them as noted in the type 5 house. In some properties these have been obscured by the addition of single-storey flat-roofed porches. The building has a slate tiled hipped roof. The elevations have been rendered with a pebbledash finish.

In no .11 there is a window on the first floor above the front door. On the central front elevation there is a window on the ground floor and one on the first floor. On the front gable elevation there are two windows on the ground floor and one on the first floor. The side elevation has a door leading from a utility room to the rear garden and a window on the ground floor. The rear elevation has two windows on the ground floor and two windows on the first floor.

No. 11 has a front garden area, which has been covered with concrete. There is a path leading around the side of the house to a rear garden. This has a patio area, a lawn and a concrete base for a shed.

Internal description

A small hallway gives access to the living room, bathroom and a cupboard under the stairs. The kitchen is entered through the living room, from which there is a doorway into a rear utility room. The living room has an electric fire in the chimney breast. The room also contains a dado rail. The bathroom contains modern fittings. The cupboard under the stairs retains its original 4-panel door and catch. The kitchen contains modern fittings. All the doors, except the one to the cupboard under the stairs, are modern. The stairs have wooden treads and balustrading. The balusters are a simple square shape set at an angle, and ball finials to the newel posts.

On the first floor a small landing gives access to three bedrooms (two large and one box cupboard) and a cupboard over the stairs. The master bedroom has an airing cupboard, and a chimney breast with a hearth plate in front of it. Two of the bedrooms have the original 4 -panel doors.

5.4 Type 7 House (No. 23 Ash Grove; Plates 5-6)

This type of house combines an appearance of both house types 1 and 3, arranged as two-unit semi-detached properties (Jones and Passmore 2012).

External description

The individual entrances have shallow angled porches set to the centre of the elevation (Jones and Passmore 2012). The elevations have been rendered with a pebbledash finish. On the front elevation there are two windows on the ground floor and two on the first floor. The side elevation has a window on the ground floor. The rear elevation has a door from the kitchen with steps leading down to the rear garden with one window on the ground floor and two windows on the first floor. The building has a slate tiled hipped roof.

No. 23 has a front garden area, which has been covered with concrete. There is a path leading around the side of the house to a rear garden. This has a patio area, a lawn and a shed built out of breeze blocks with a flat felt roof.

Internal description

The internal layout is identical to type 1 houses (Passmore and Young 2011, 4, fig. 4). A small hallway gives access to the living room, a bathroom, and a separate toilet under the stairs. The kitchen is entered from the living room. The living room has an electric fire in the chimney breast, and adjacent to this there is a brick-built corner unit next. The bathroom and toilet contain modern fittings. No fittings survive within the kitchen, nor are there any remaining internal doors. The stairs have wooden treads and balustrading. The balusters are a simple square shape set at an angle, and ball finials to the newel posts.

On the first floor a small landing gives access to three bedrooms and a cupboard. There are no internal doors remaining, except that on the cupboard which is wooden with 20 glass panels. One of the bedrooms has a chimney breast with a hearth plate in front of it.

5.5 Type 8 House (No. 38 Ash Grove; Plates 7-8)

This house type appears to have been designed as a precursor to the post-war prefabricated 'type 1 Cornish unit' and combines both semi-detached properties and three unit terraces with the latter having projecting gable bays (Jones and Passmore 2012). A central unit with a terrace was recorded.

External description

Within the central part of the principal elevation is a passageway accessing a rear communal pathway. This opening and the doorways to the properties have the same vertical projections either side of them as noted in type 5 and 6 houses. The building has a slate tiled mansard roof. The elevations have been rendered with a pebbledash finish.

On the front elevation of no. 38 there is a window on the ground floor and the front door, which is accessed via a flight of concrete steps with a metal handrail. There are two dormer windows on the first floor. The rear elevation has a door from the kitchen with steps leading down to the rear garden. There are two windows on the ground floor and three dormer windows on the first floor. There is a plat band delineating the ground and first floors, which is not present on the front elevation.

No. 38 has a front garden area, which is at a higher level than the road. This is laid out with a lawn. There is a path adjacent to the house leading through the terrace to a rear garden. This has a patio area, a lawn and a concrete base for a shed.

Internal description

A small hall gives access to the living room and stairs. The door to the living room is wooden with 15 glass panels. The living room has an electric fire in the chimney breast. The room contains a dado rail. There is access to a cupboard under the stairs in the living room. There is a sliding wooden door with 15 glass panels leading from the living room to a small corridor. Off this corridor are a cupboard, bathroom and kitchen. The cupboard has a 6-panel door, with the four lower panels being larger than the upper two. The bathroom contains modern fittings and has polystyrene ceiling tiles. The door is wooden with 15 glass panels. The kitchen contains modern fittings, but also retains an original dado rail. The stairs have wooden treads and handrail. At the bottom of the stairs there is the original box to house the fusebox (the one it now contains is modern).

On the first floor a small landing gives access to four bedrooms and a toilet. The bedroom at the top of the stairs has two cupboards built over the stairwell. The other bedroom at the front of the house contains a chimney breast with a hearth plate in front of it. Three of the bedrooms have the original 4-panel doors. All the bedrooms have wooden floorboards exposed. The toilet contains modern fittings.

6. Discussion

6.1 The assessments and surveys within the North Prospect estate have demonstrated that a wide variety of house styles are present, internally containing between two and four bedrooms. Most are semi-detached, although rows of three and four houses were also constructed. In respect of the layout, size and overall style, the house

styles were intermixed both around the estate and within areas of the estate. The exteriors have a basic architectural style with variations in the design and fenestration within each type. The interior layout is generally different within every property, although the present survey has identified that the same internal layout was used for types 1 and 7. The properties were provided with front and rear gardens, and where topography allowed, many of the front gardens were converted for use as parking spaces.

- 6.2** Although the buildings were erected quickly, and were updated during the later 20th century, and have subsequently been partially stripped out, the surviving historic fittings such as doors, dado rails and stairs give some idea of the quality of the internal detail. The buildings were originally heated using boilers housed behind ground-floor fireplaces set within chimney stacks. These have been replaced with combination boilers located in the kitchens, but many of the houses retained later 20th-century electric fires.
- 6.3** The observations in No. 5 Ash Grove confirm the results of an earlier archaeological evaluation that concluded that the area was heavily landscaped when the estate was constructed.

7. ARCHIVE AND OASIS ENTRY

- 7.1** 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 Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery under an allocated accession number.
- 7.2** An online OASIS entry has been completed, using the unique identifier 175448, which includes a digital copy of this report.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 8.1** This report was commissioned by Barratt David Wilson Homes, and managed for them by Graham Shaw. The project was managed for AC archaeology by Andrew Passmore and carried out by Stella de-Villiers. The report was written by Stella de-Villiers, with the illustrations prepared by Sarnia Blackmore and Elisabeth Patkai.

9. REFERENCES

Jones, P., and Passmore, A., 2012, *North Prospect (Phase 2), Plymouth, NGR SX 45811 57078, Results of an archaeological desk-based assessment*, AC archaeology document no. **ACD459/1/0**.

Passmore, A., 2014, *North Prospect, Plymouth, Phase 2 (NGR SX 45811 57078), Written Scheme of Investigation for historic building recording*, AC archaeology document no. **ACD844/1/0**.

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Passmore, A.J., and Young, G., 2011, *Historic Building Recording of Council Houses at North Prospect Phase 1a Development Area, Plymouth*, Exeter archaeology report number **11.38**.



PROJECT

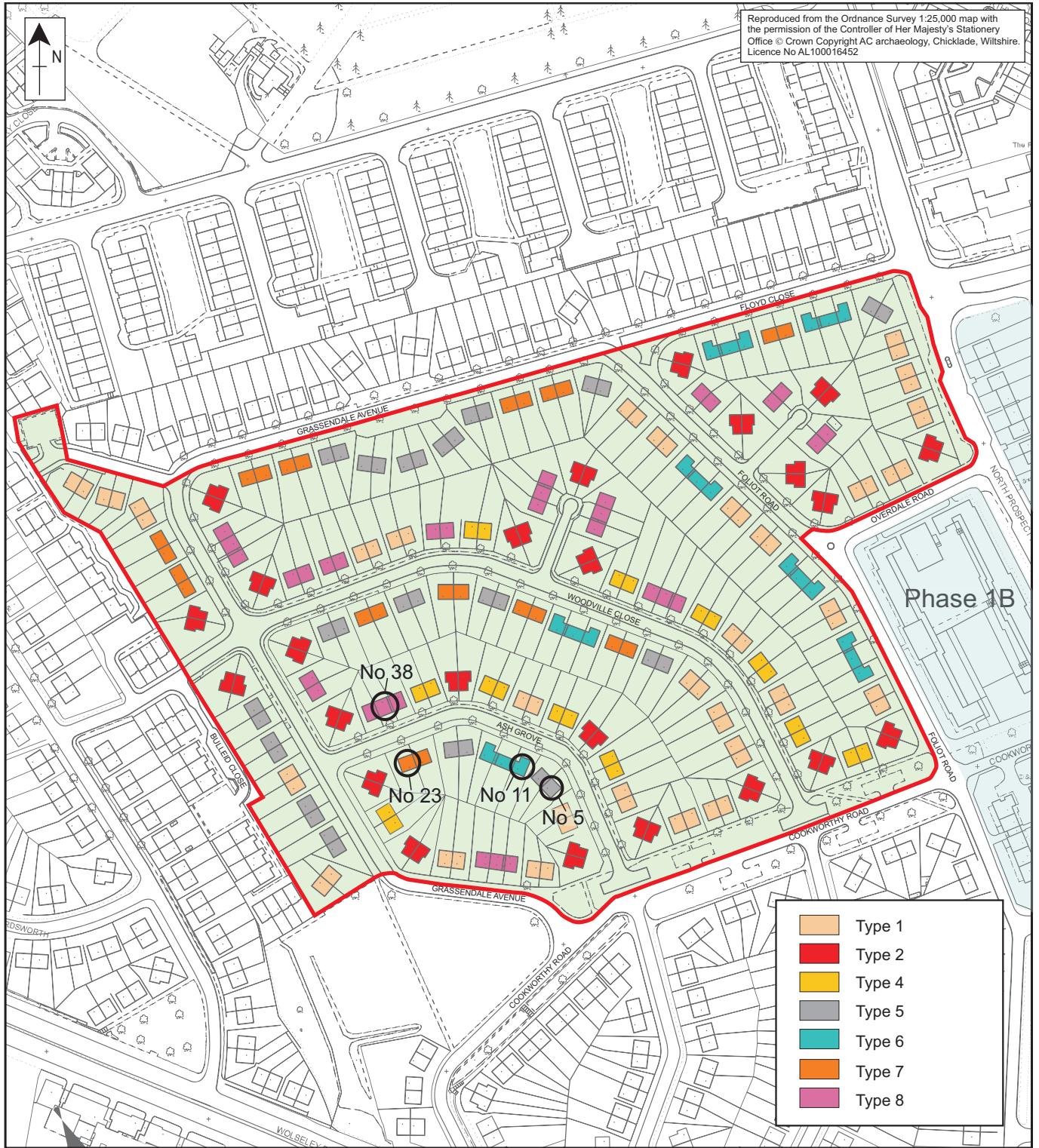
North Prospect Phase 2 Regeneration Area

TITLE

Fig.1: Location of site



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Phase 1B

No 38

No 23

No 11

No 5

- Type 1
- Type 2
- Type 4
- Type 5
- Type 6
- Type 7
- Type 8



PROJECT

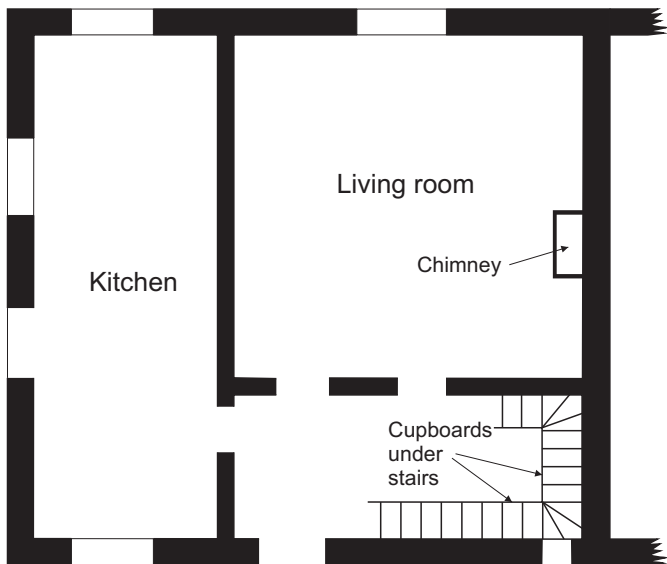
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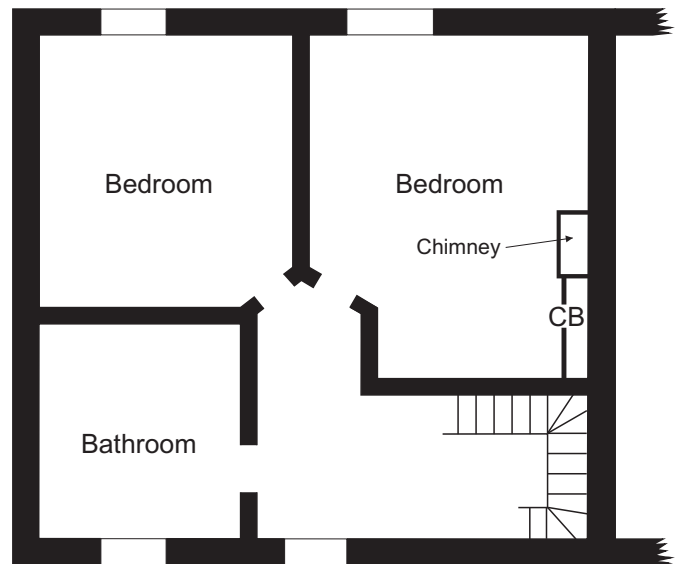
Fig. 2: Location of houses recorded



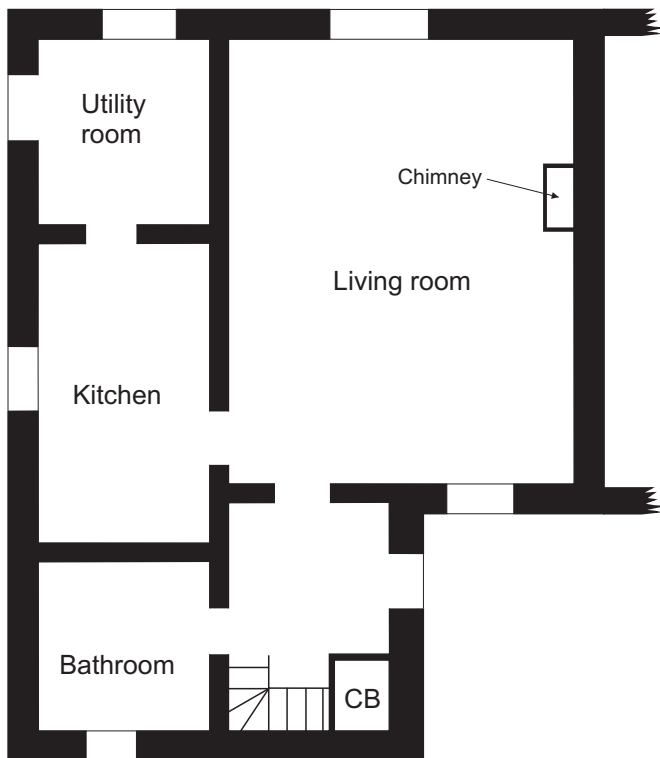
c) Type 5, Ground floor



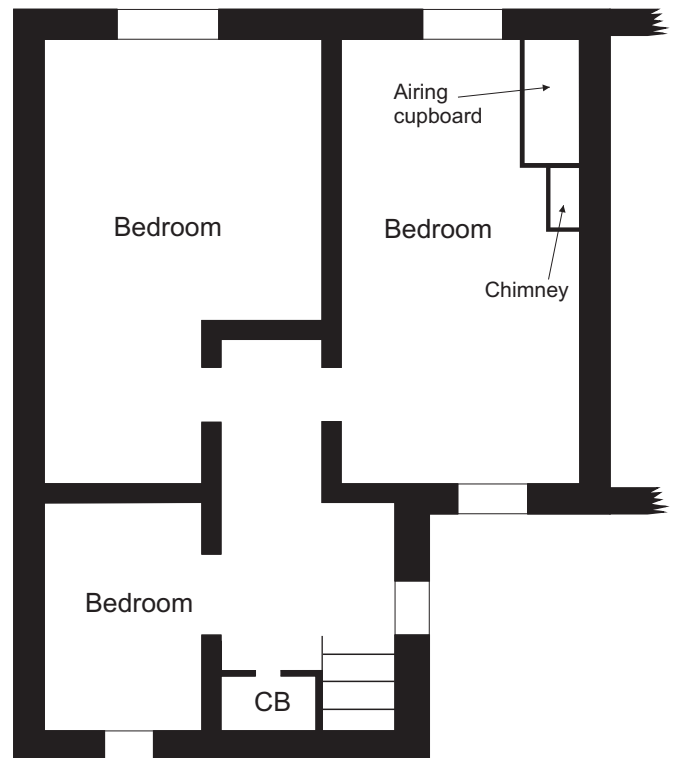
d) Type 5, First floor



a) Type 6, Ground floor



b) Type 6, first floor



Drawings not to scale

CB - Cupboard

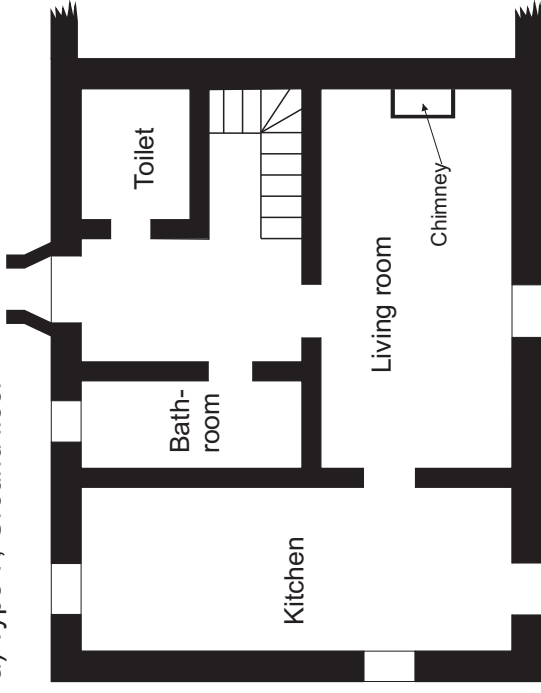
PROJECT

North Prospect Phase 2 Regeneration Area

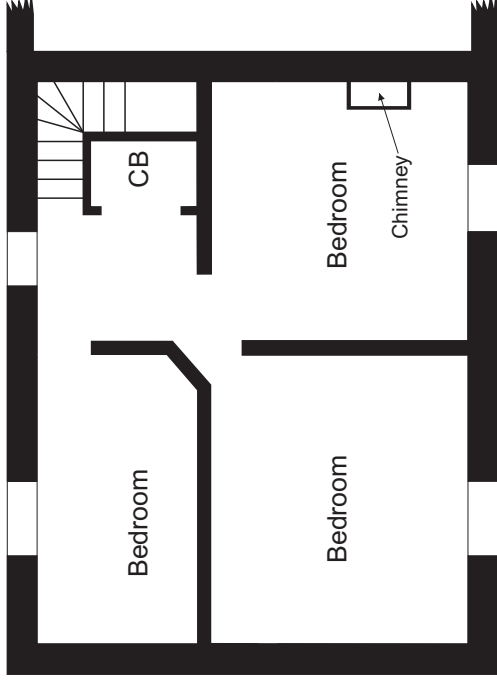
TITLE

Fig. 3: Floor plans of house types 5 and 6

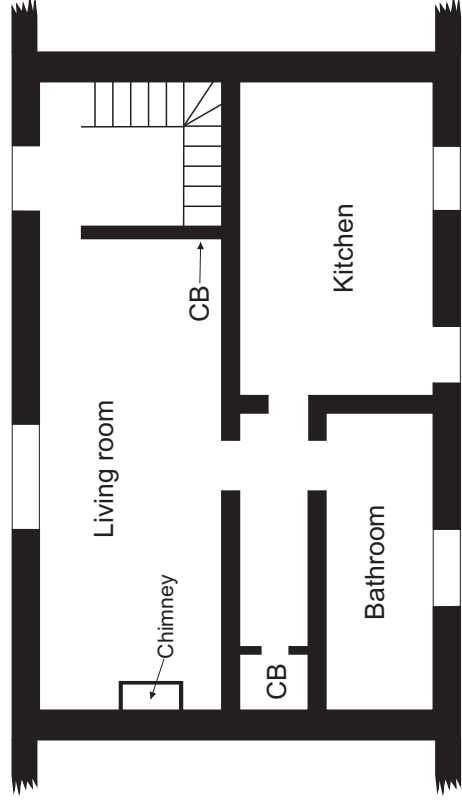
a) Type 7, Ground floor



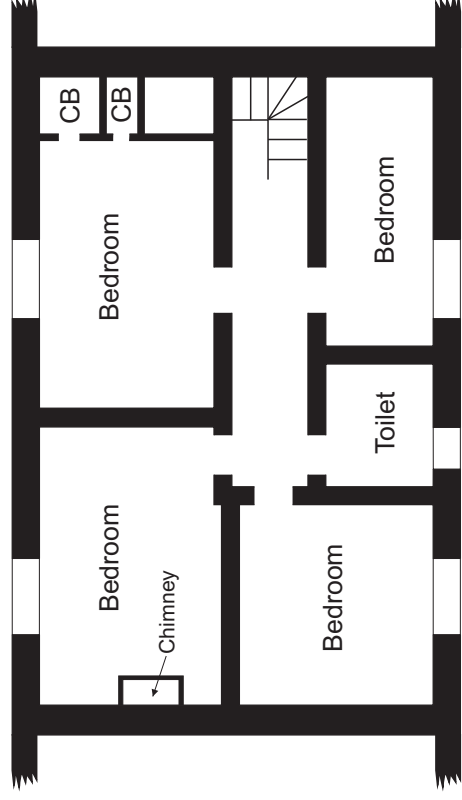
b) Type 7, first floor



c) Type 8, Ground floor



d) Type 8, First floor



Drawings not to scale



Plate 1: No. 5 Ash Grove, front elevation viewed from the northeast. 1m scale.



Plate 2: No. 5 Ash Grove the hall showing stairs and a typical original door, viewed from the southeast. 1m scale.



Plate 3: No. 11 Ash Grove, front elevation also showing the attached properties, viewed from the northeast.



Plate 4: No. 11 Ash Grove, the airing cupboard in the master bedroom, viewed from the southeast. 1m scale.



Plate 5: No. 23 Ash Grove, front elevation viewed from the north. 1m scale.



Plate 6: No. 23 Ash Grove, the hall and stairs, viewed from the east. 1m scale.



Plate 7: No. 38 Ash Grove, front elevation also showing the attached properties, viewed from the south.



Plate 8: No. 38 Ash Grove, the ground-floor corridor showing the arched opening from the kitchen, viewed from the west. 1m scale.

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