

WEARY PLOUGHMAN INN, BRXHAM ROAD, CHURSTON
FERRERS, TORBAY

(NGR SX 89490 56320)

An architectural assessment

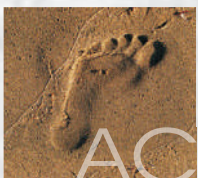
Torbay Council planning references 2014/0696PA
and 2014/0697LB

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On behalf of:
Christmas and Brugge

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AC archaeology

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Summary

An architectural assessment of the Weary Ploughman Inn, Brixham Road, Churston, Torbay was prepared by AC archaeology in September 2014 to accompany a planning application for the part demolition of the standing fabric and subsequent extension.

The inn was erected in 1861 when the adjacent Brixham Road (now Churston) Station was constructed; at this time it comprised two, probably near contemporary, blocks and a rear extension. During the late 19th century a rear outbuilding was added, which partially survives. Further extant structures were added to the rear during the mid 20th century.

The main architectural interest in the building is its exterior elevations; few internal historic fixtures or fittings survive. The significance of the building is derived mainly from its aesthetic and communal value, along with its setting with a lesser contribution from its historical and evidential values.

1. INTRODUCTION (Fig. 1)

1.1 This document presents the results of an architectural assessment of the Weary Ploughman Inn, Brixham Road, Churston, Torbay (NGR SX 89490 56320) carried out by AC archaeology in September 2014. The assessment was commissioned by Christmas and Brugge on behalf of Enterprise Inns, and has been requested by Torbay Council to inform proposals (Torbay Council references 2014/0696PA and 2014/0697LB) for the part demolition of the standing fabric and subsequent extension. Guidance on the scope of the assessment has been outlined in a specification provided by the Torbay Council Senior Historic Environment Officer (SHEO; Bishop 2014).

1.2 The inn is located on the west side of the A379 (Brixham Road), between the road and Churston Station located on the Dartmouth Steam Railway. It is set back from, and below, the A379 and is served by a road that also provides access to the railway station and White Horse Hotel beyond. The principal (northwest) façade faces north onto the access road to the station. The property consists of east and west blocks with extensions to the rear (southeast), along with an outside dining area and car park covering an overall area of c.435m².

1.3 The inn is Grade II Listed (National Heritage List no. 1195176). The list description, prepared in October 1993, is as follows:

Formerly known as: Churston Links Hotel BRIXHAM ROAD Churston Ferrers. Shown on OS map as Churston Links Hotel. Public house. Probably early 1860s. Solid rendered walls. Hipped slated roof. Rendered chimneys with prominent flat caps. Double-fronted, double-depth plan with secondary block set back to left. 2 storeys. 3 windows wide with 2 further windows in secondary block. Doorway flanked by Doric pilasters supporting entablature. Windows have moulded architraves, those in ground storey with friezes and cornices that reach to the sills of the windows above. Barred sashes: 6 over 6 panes in ground storey, 3 over 6 panes in second storey. Raised band at cornice-level in ground storey. Deep flat eaves-cornice. Right side wall is similar; centre doorway with raised moulded surround and entablature. Barred sashes in left-hand window of each storey. Left side wall has 1 window of the same design per storey; also with barred sashes, except for the upper sash in ground storey. Secondary block (which lies nearest Brixham Road) is similar to the main building, but with plain window surrounds; barred sashes in front and left side walls. INTERIOR: only public rooms in ground storey inspected; these have been considerably altered. The building

adjoins Churston Station and was presumably the Station Hotel mentioned in directories from 1866 onwards. The station, originally known as Brixham Road, was on the Dartmouth and Torbay Railway and was opened in 1861. The Torbay and Brixham Railway, which ran from here to Brixham, was opened in 1868.

2. AIM

- 2.1** The principal aim of the assessment was to evaluate the historic building to allow the local planning authority to determine the impact of any permitted development upon its historic fabric and if necessary the appropriate archaeological works required in mitigation for this impact.

3. METHODOLOGY

- 3.1** The assessment was undertaken in accordance with the specification for architectural assessment provided by Torbay Council SHEO (Bishop 2014) and the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* (revised 2008). Reference was also made to English Heritage's 2006 document *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice*, as well as AC archaeology's *General Site Recording Manual, Version 2*.
- 3.2** A rapid desk-based appraisal, comprising an assessment of the relevant historic maps and easily available printed documentary sources, was undertaken.
- 3.3** A site inspection was carried out on 9th September 2014, and included:
- A written description of the building;
 - Annotated architect's drawings of existing floor plans, showing builds of different date and architectural fittings and features; and
 - A basic photographic record including the overall character of the building, as well as detailed views of any architectural features and fixtures and fittings as necessary to illustrate the report.

4. DOCUMENTARY BACKGROUND (Figs 2-3)

- 4.1** The inn had not been constructed when the 1840 Churston Ferrers tithe map was drawn up. The plot within which it was later built (no. 314) was a large arable field called Pitt Park, owned by Sir John Yarde Buller and occupied by John Pitts. The inn is first depicted, but not named, on the first edition Ordnance Survey county series map of 1862. It is shown as consisting of two blocks with a small extension on the southeast side along with a long detached block further to the south east which may be a stable or coach house (see Fig. 2 which reproduces the identical c.1890s 25-inch map). The inn was established following the opening on 2 August 1861 of the South Devon Railway's line which terminated at Churston, then known as Brixham Road Station (St John Thomas 1988, 85). It appears to have been initially called the Station Hotel, a name that appears in White's and Kelly's directories of 1878, 1883, 1889 and 1893, when it was owned by John Harris and Elizabeth Wreyford Harris (1889 and 1893).
- 4.2** When the Ordnance Survey mapping was revised in 1904 the detached block had extended now adjoined the southeast side of the inn (Fig. 3). It was described as

the Railway Hotel, although Kelly's directories still list the building as the Station Hotel until 1926. The proprietors were John Henry R Harris (1897 and 1902), George Bentley (1906), William Henry Lockyer (1910), and William Henry Tunkin (1923 and 1926). The railway line was extended to Kingswear in 1864 and renamed the Dartmouth and Kingwear Railway, and with a branch to Brixham opened in 1868 (St John Thomas 1988, 85, 98).

- 4.3 By the 1930s the earlier rear range had been demolished, and replaced with a detached ancillary building which fronted onto the access road. The grounds to the south of the inn had been extended into the former adjacent field. It was described as the Railway Hotel and proprietors during this period were Gertrude Mary Tunkin (1930) and A Pearse (1935 and 1939).
- 4.4 Between 1954 and 1962 the attached rear range had been slightly reduced in length. A small rear extension had been added to the west end of the south elevation. Two further rear extensions had been added by 1969.

5. BUILDING APPRAISAL (Fig. 4; Plates 1-10)

- 5.1 The inn is formed from several blocks. The west block has its principal (northwest) façade facing the station to receive passengers departing the trains. The east block attached to the northeast elevation and is set back from the main façade; most of the exterior walls of these blocks are rendered. The east block is not as tall as the west block, although both are covered with hipped slate roofs. Attached to the southeast elevations of the blocks is a single-storey extension, with a flat felt roof. There is also a single-storey modern beer store attached to the southeast side of the west block.

5.2 The west block

Exterior (Plates 1-4)

The principal (northwest) façade has symmetrical fenestration with single sash windows either side of a central doorway on the ground floor. The northeast window appears to be earlier and has 6 panes over 6 panes with flattened glazing bars; it is hornless. One of the panes has been replaced in the 20th century with a vent. The southwest window has 6 panes over 6 panes with chunky window bars and short horns. The central doorway is flanked by doric pilasters constructed of limestone blocks that support an entablature. The door itself is a modern wooden replacement. On the first floor there are three 3 panes over 6 panes hornless sash windows. All the windows are set within the wide moulded architraves; on the ground floor these have straight edges, whilst on the first floor the moulding is rounded. A tall plat band defines the level of the first floor, and this supports narrow projecting applied cills under the first-floor windows.

The southwest elevation also has a symmetrical façade with single sash windows either side of a central doorway on the ground floor. The northwest sash window has 6 panes over 6 panes with thin window bars and long horns. The southeast window is a smaller replacement casement within a larger aperture for a sash window. The central doorway has a moulded surround and entablature, with a modern glass panelled door. On the first floor there are three windows, which are shallower than those on the northwest and northeast elevations. The northwest sash window has 3 panes over six with rounded horns, whilst the other two windows are modern fixed and top-opening pane replacements. The external treatment to the window openings and plat bands are identical to the northwest façade.

The northeast elevation incorporates a single sash window on each floor, set towards the front of the building in front of the east block. The ground floor window has one pane with a modern vent over 6 panes with flattened glazing bars and without horns. The first-floor window has 3 panes over 6 panes without horns. They are both set within surrounds as found on the southeast and southwest elevations, again divided by a plat band.

The southeast elevation has a modern entrance door on the ground floor leading to a partially covered terrace, above which there is a roof scar from the demolished 1950s/1960s extensions. On the first floor there are three modern windows and a low fire escape door with a staircase to the ground floor.

Interior (Plate 5)

Due to the use of the first floor as guest accommodation, only the ground floor and cellar were examined. The ground floor has modern decoration and contains very little visible historic fixtures or fittings; modern finishes are not described. Elements of its original layout can be discerned. It contained four heated principal rooms on the ground floor. The two front rooms may have been smaller than present and separated by an entrance and reception lobby. The northeast room was heated by a fireplace in the dividing wall with the southeast room, now broken through and serving a woodburning stove. The southeast room was probably heated by an off-central fireplace in the northeast elevation, evidence for which takes the form of the projecting internal masonry of the stack on both floors. The fireplace in the northwest room was located within the angle of the northwest corner, whilst the southwest room had its fireplace in the southeast elevation. No evidence for a staircase to the first floor was noted. The northwest room has a raised floor, and retains its cornice. The dividing wall between the eastern walls is partially exposed, and comprises painted as well as rendered rubble masonry.

The cellar is accessed from behind the central bar. It is constructed of brick laid in stretcher bond and has a concrete floor. Against the long elevations are brick stands to store barrels. They are finished with industrial bullnose bricks forming a lip to the stand. The use of such rounded bricks would have eased movement of the barrels onto the stands. The south wall incorporates a barrel chute.

5.3 The east block

Exterior (Plate 6)

This block is lower than the west block, although it has a taller hipped roof with an apex at the same level as the west block. It features a flat plat band and a cornice under the eaves; due to the difference in heights, the former does not line up with the plat band on the west block. The plat band is present on the northwest and northeast elevations and continues a short distance around the south elevation. Beyond this the wall is not rendered but the rubble masonry is painted. The ground-floor windows are all sash windows of 6 panes over 6 panes with thin glazing bars and without horns; there is one window in the northwest elevation and two in the northeast elevation. There is a single modern wooden door in the northwest elevation forming the present main entrance to the inn. The first-floor windows are all hornless sash windows of 3 panes over 6 panes, with two in the northwest elevation and two in the northeast elevation. All of the windows within this block are within plain openings without the moulded architraves present on the west block.

Interior

Only the ground floor was examined. The block originally comprised two rooms heated by fireplaces in the partition wall. The northern room has been subdivided including an

entrance lobby containing a staircase to the first floor. The southern room is currently used as the restaurant kitchen. All rooms have modern decoration and no historic fixtures or fittings are visible.

5.4 The rear extension

Exterior (Plates 7-9)

The extension comprises two main elements and the southwest elevation is stepped. The northwest part projects to the southwest, and is lower than the rest of the structure, under a flat roof. Most of its walls are rendered although the east face of the northeast elevation is painted rubble stonework. This structure has a modern door and two blocked openings in the southwest elevation.

The southwest and northwest walls of the southern area are constructed of painted sub-angular stone laid in rough courses. There is a break in the northwest wall, which has been utilised for a doorway in the secondary masonry. The southwest wall incorporates a blocked opening below a wooden lintel. The southeast elevation is constructed of brick laid in a stretcher bond, and contains both a single and a double doorway with modern wooden doors. The northeast elevation is constructed of brick in a Flemish bond and is not keyed into the southeast wall. It contains two blocked windows with brick arches and a wide doorway at the northwest end set below a brick arch. The door itself is a modern replacement.

Interior

The extension has modern decoration and contains no visible historic fixtures or fittings. The southern area has been subdivided into stores and contains the kitchen freezers.

5.5 Gate post (Plate 10)

Attached to the southeast corner of the west block are the remains of an old gate post that stands approximately 1.60m high. This is constructed of painted sub-angular stone laid in rough courses; its top is crudely crenelated. Attached to the northeast side of the pier is a metal fitting with a metal loop. The gate pier is associated with the enclosure of a plot of land beside the access road depicted on the second edition Ordnance Survey mapping.

6. DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF THE INN (Fig. 4)

6.1 The west and east blocks are broadly contemporary, although, on the basis of the architectural treatments to the external elevations, and the differences in floor heights, it is considered that the west block is slightly earlier than the east block. The inn was probably constructed as a hotel in 1861 shortly after Brixham Road station was constructed. At that date the railway from Exeter (through Torquay and Paignton) terminated here and the provision of a hotel with stabling could have initially been a profitable venture. Until the mid and late 1860s respectively, transport to both Kingswear (and beyond via ferry to Dartmouth) and Brixham would have been via road by horse and carriage. It is clear from the architectural treatment of the elevations that the building was intended to serve visitors using Brixham Road station, and that its principal elevations faced the railway and its access road. Until the mid-20th century the property comprised the inn and a strip of land to the southeast on which outbuildings – probably including stables – were constructed. The rear (southwest) boundary wall of this plot has been incorporated within the rear extension.

- 6.2** By 1904 a new outbuilding had been constructed, and the northeast side of the plot formalised with the construction of a new wall of which only a single gate post survives.
- 6.3** More recent alterations have included the internal reordering of the inn, and the construction of extensions, including a cellar, to its rear. The southern outbuilding was demolished and the southwest wall of the retained but shortened outbuilding rebuilt. A walled-off area was constructed on the northeast side of the extension as a bin store.

7. ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

- 7.1** Guidance on the assessment of significance has been taken from English Heritage's 2008 document *Conservation Principles*, and the property is assessed according to the heritage values outlined in the document.

7.2 Evidential value

Evidential value derives from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity, and includes both architectural and archaeological evidence.

The building provides evidence of past human activity in the form of a mid-19th century public house and hotel erected in response to the construction of the South Devon Railway's line to, and the station of, Brixham Road (Churston). The exterior of the inn has been little altered since its construction and its principal (northwest) façade faces the station to greet departing passengers (see also Aesthetic value below). Internally, very few historic fixtures or fittings survive, although the basic original layout of the ground floor can be deduced.

The building is therefore of limited architectural merit, as the exterior is the only aspect of the inn that expresses its historic nature. This is reflected in its designation at Grade II, a level that encompasses 92% of Listed buildings that are "nationally important and of special interest".

From this evidence, overall it can be concluded that the building has low evidential value, although this forms part of the building's significance.

7.3 Historical value

Historical value derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. It tends to be illustrative or associative.

As far as has been determined, there are no specific significant historical associations attached to the building. The inn's historic value mainly derives from its relationship with the adjacent railway, i.e. that it was erected in response to the construction of the railway and that it specifically targeted rail passengers rather than users of the adjacent highway. The building also has historical value through its continual and current use as a hotel and public house.

It can be therefore concluded that the building has low historical value, and that this forms part of the building's significance.

7.4 Aesthetic value

Aesthetic value derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.

The building has aesthetic value, which mainly derives from the classically inspired detailing on the west block, for example the moulded architraves around the windows and the detailing and entablature over the doors. This detailing was clearly an important part of the building's design to attract railway travellers to frequent the hotel. The detailing is not only present on both the principal front (northwest) elevation but also the southwest elevation that also faced the station, but for which there was no direct access. The inn is a far more dominating building than Churston station, which whilst not architecturally insignificant, is small, typical of a rural station in the region.

This value has been diminished slightly by the 20th-century additions. This has become more prominent in the face of the move away from railway travel to motor transport, with the northeast elevation, and in particular the east block, now being the most visible elevation to passing traffic. An engine shed has been constructed to the north of the inn, and whilst this partially blocks views to and from the inn (in particular from the incoming railway line from Paignton) this is not considered to have a significant detrimental impact on the aesthetic value of the building.

The building has medium aesthetic value, which has been diminished by the modern alterations, although this still forms a large part of the building's significance.

7.5 Communal value

Communal value derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory. Communal values are closely bound up with historical (particularly associative) and aesthetic values, but tend to have additional and specific aspects.

The building may be considered to have a communal value as it was and is a public house and hotel where both members of the local community and visitors have spent their social time and will have memories of being there. The building in its current form and use reflects this value.

From this evidence it can be concluded that the building has medium communal value, and therefore this forms a part of the building's significance.

7.6 Setting

The inn's location is directly related to the presence of Churston station, which following closure is now preserved on the Dartmouth Steam Railway. Despite a name change away from this association, inn could be considered to be a remnant from the golden age of railway travel. Its setting forms a large part of its significance.

7.7 Assessment of value

In summary, it is considered that the significance of the building is derived mainly from its aesthetic and communal values, along with its setting, as well as to a lesser extent its evidential value.

The inn is therefore considered to have a medium level of significance.

8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The Weary Ploughman was constructed as a hotel in 1861 in response to the construction of Brixham Road station. The main elements of the inn date from this period, along with remains of a later, probably late 19th-century, rear extension, and more recent additions.
- 8.2 The significance of the building is mainly derived from its aesthetic and communal values, along with its setting.
- 8.3 The architectural appraisal has identified elements of historic fabric within the rear extensions. Most of this will be retained within the proposed new extensions although some fabric would be lost mainly through the creation of new openings. This would be compensated for by the improved quality of the finish when viewed from the A379, removing the present elements that are detrimental to the setting and character of the property.

9. SOURCES CONSULTED

Devon Heritage Centre

Churston Ferrers tithe map (1840) and apportionment (1839)

First edition Ordnance Survey 25-inch Devonshire map sheet 128.1, c.1890

Second edition Ordnance Survey 25-inch Devonshire map sheet 128.1, surveyed 1862, revised 1904, published 1906

Printed Sources

Bishop, H., 2014, *Specification for Architectural Assessment, Weary Ploughman Inn, Brixham Road, Churston, Torbay Council application no. 2014/0696 PA & 0697 LB*

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St John Thomas, D., 1988, *A Regional History of the Railways of Great Britain: Volume 1 The West Country*, (David and Charles, Newton Abbot)

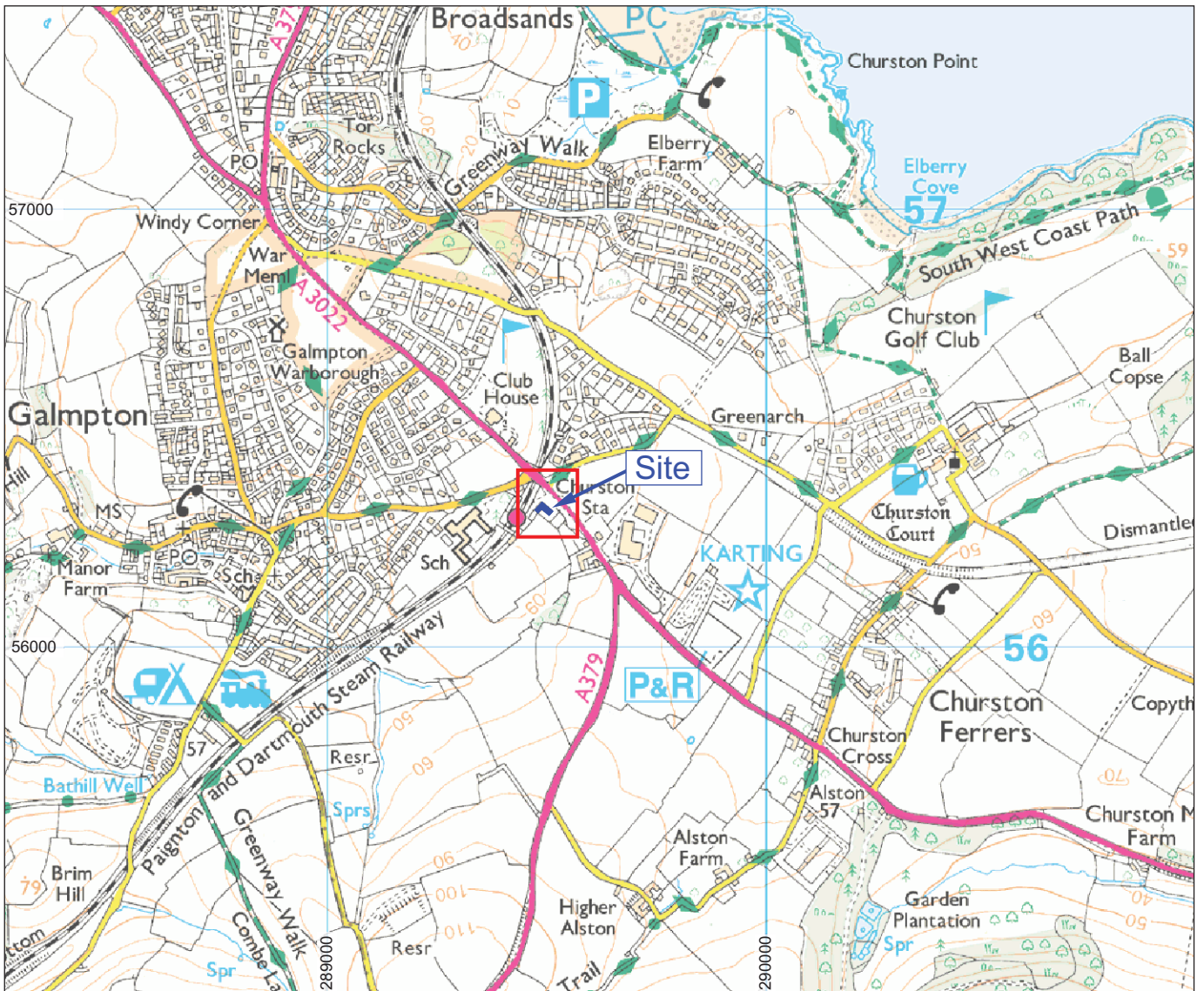
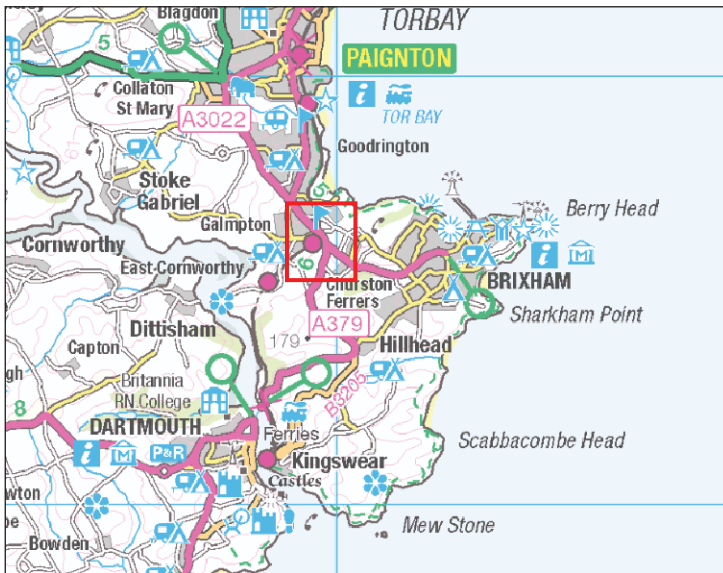
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National Heritage List for England

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

Old-maps.co.uk, <http://www.old-maps.co.uk/maps.html>



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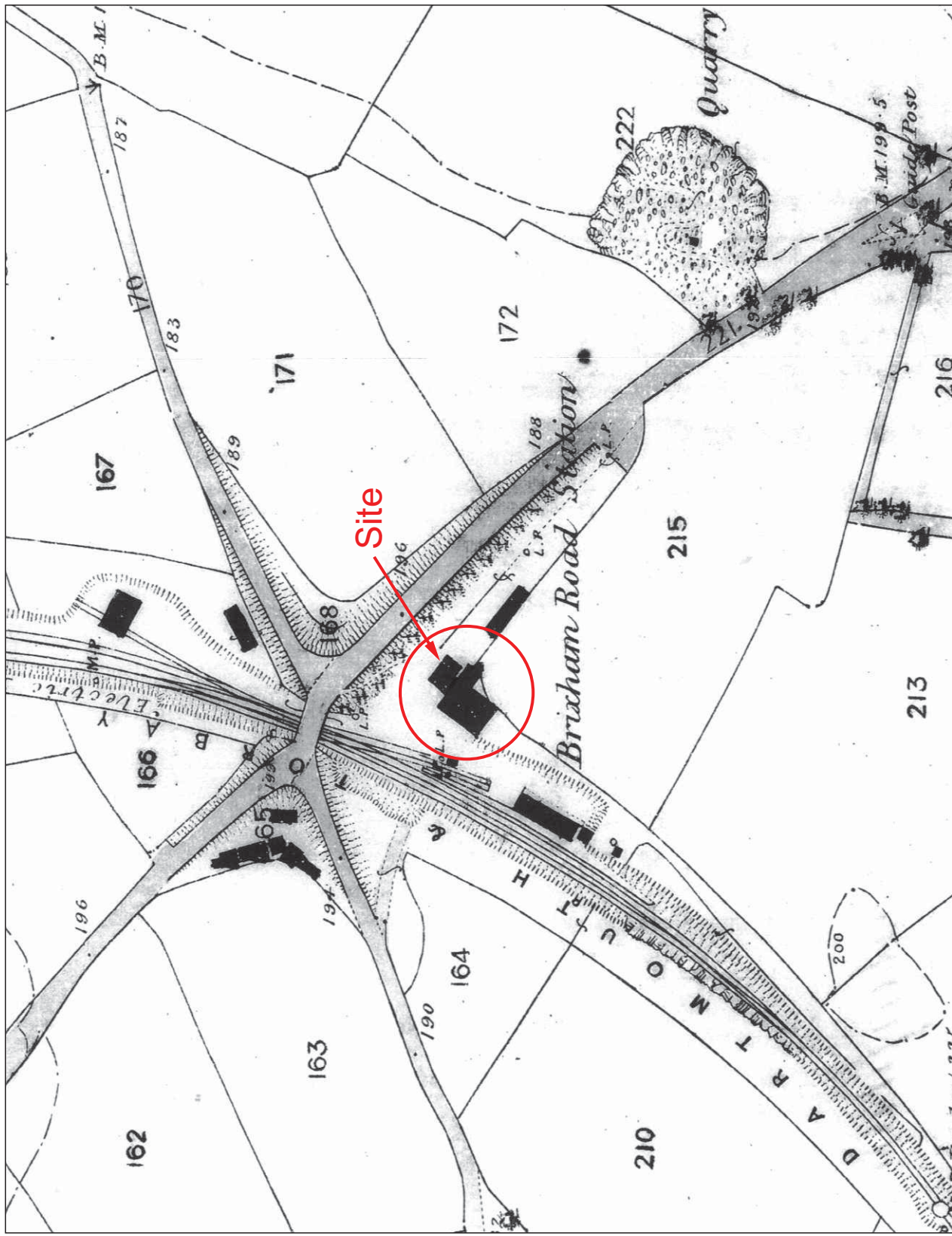
PROJECT

Weary Ploughman Inn, Churston Ferrers, Torbay

TITLE

Fig. 1: Location of site





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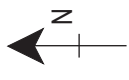
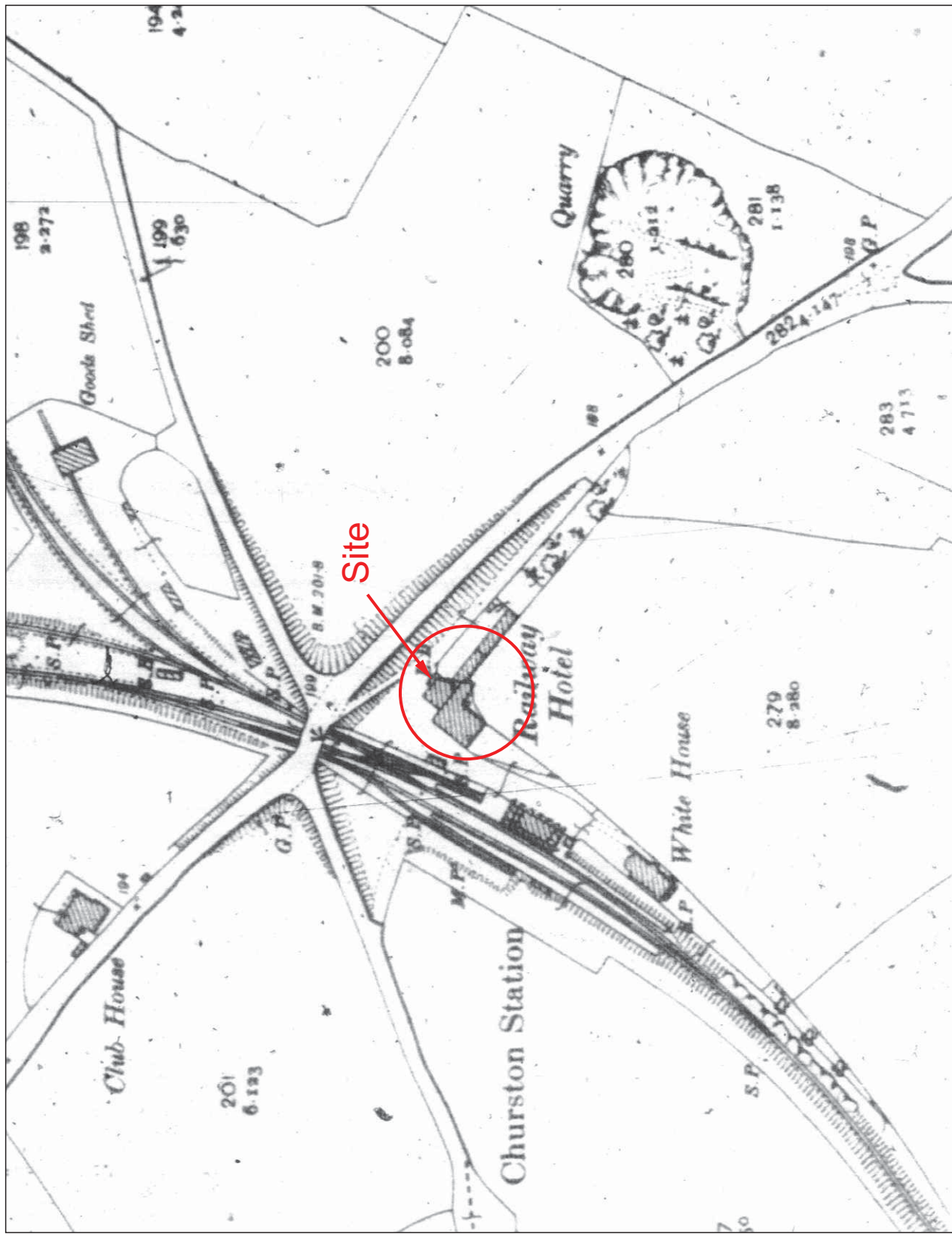
Weary Ploughman Inn,
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TITLE

Fig. 2: Extract from the first
edition 25-inch Ordnance Survey
map, c.1890

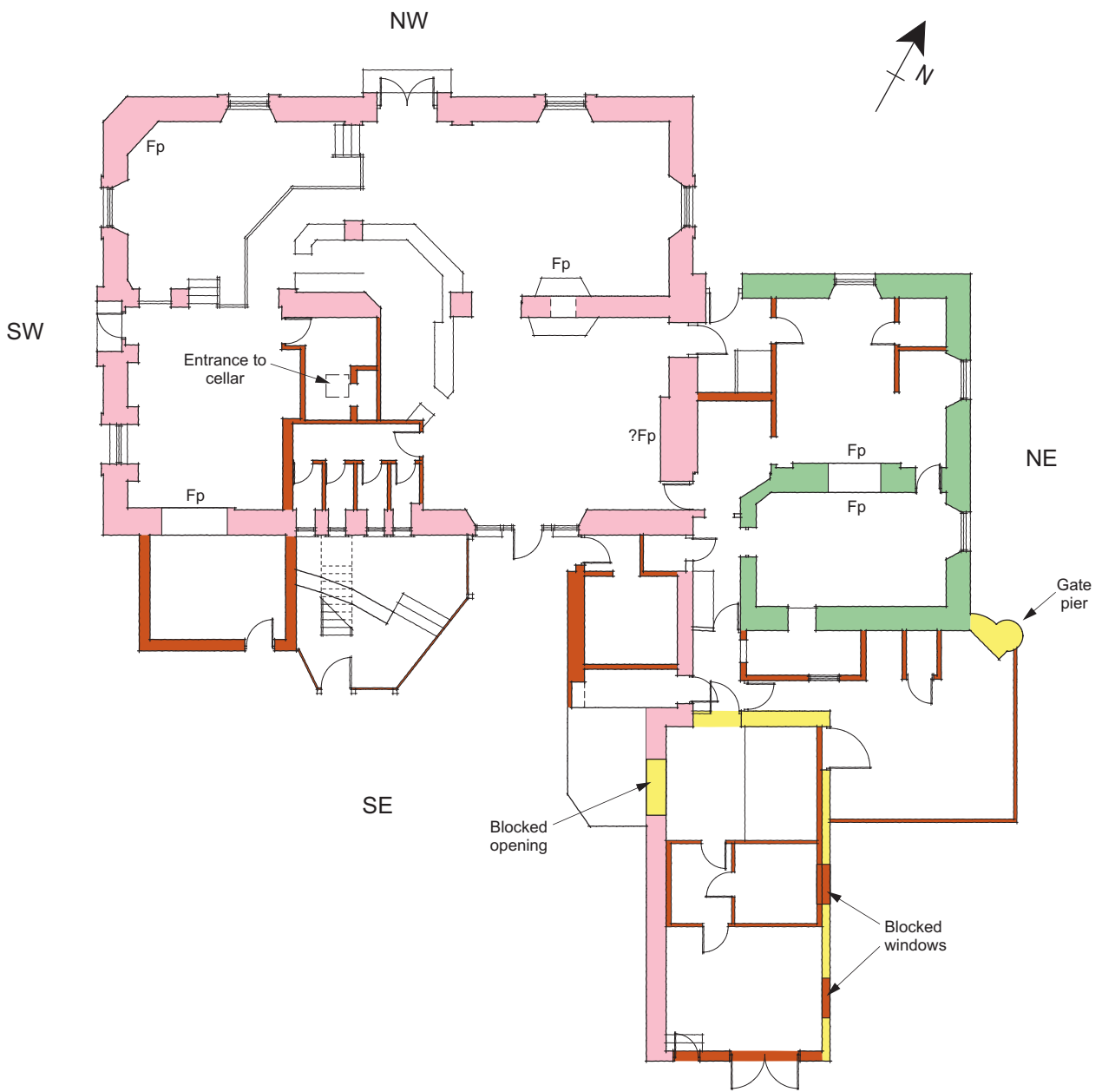


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Weary Ploughman Inn,
Churston Ferrers, Torbay

TITLE
Fig. 3: Extract from the second
edition 25-inch Ordnance Survey
map, revised 1904, published 1906



EXISTING GROUND FLOOR PLAN

Key

- Primary - 1861
- Probable secondary elements - 1861
- By 1904
- Post-1950s

PROJECT

Weary Ploughman Inn, Churston Ferrers,
Torbay

TITLE

Fig. 4: Phased ground-floor plan





Plate 1: The principal northwest elevation viewed from the north



Plate 2: The southwest elevation viewed from the southwest



Plate 3: The northeast elevation of the west block viewed from the northeast



Plate 4: The rear southeast elevation showing the extensions viewed from the southeast



Plate 5: The interior of the west block showing the cornice in the northwest room viewed from the south



Plate 6: The northeast elevation of the east block showing the gate post to the left viewed from the northeast

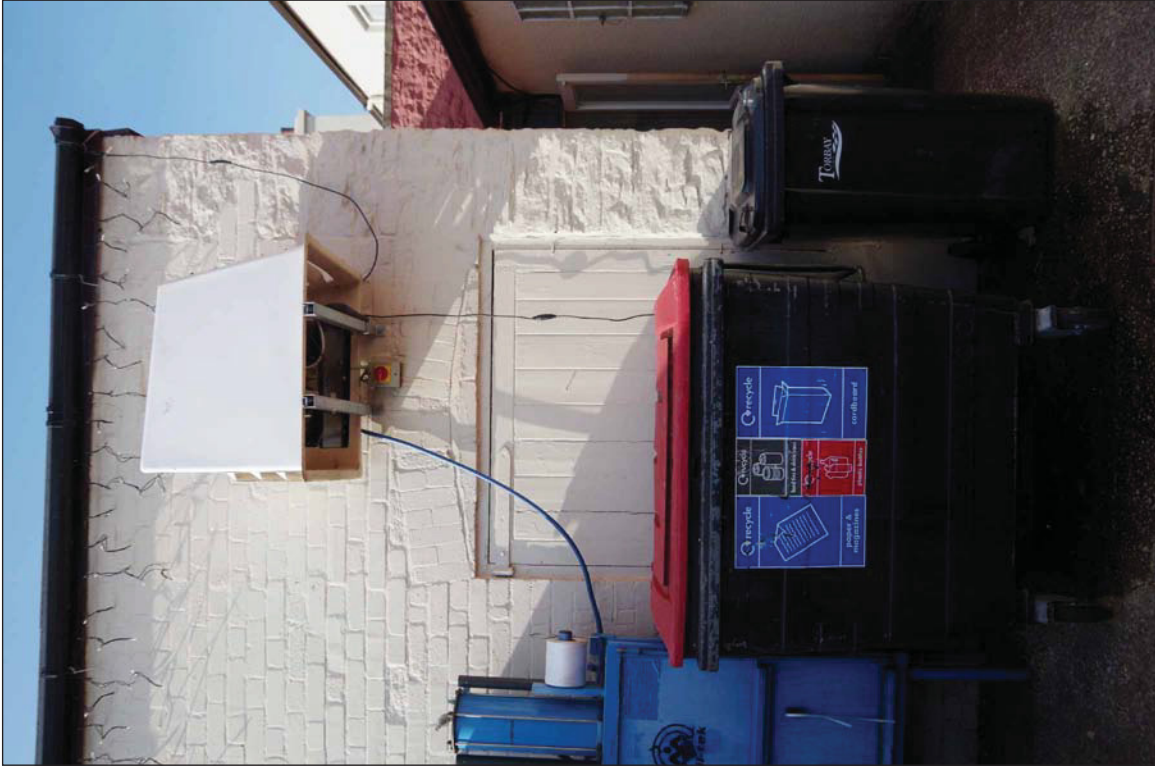


Plate 7: The north end of the northeast elevation of the rear extension showing stone masonry with further stone masonry beyond viewed from the northeast

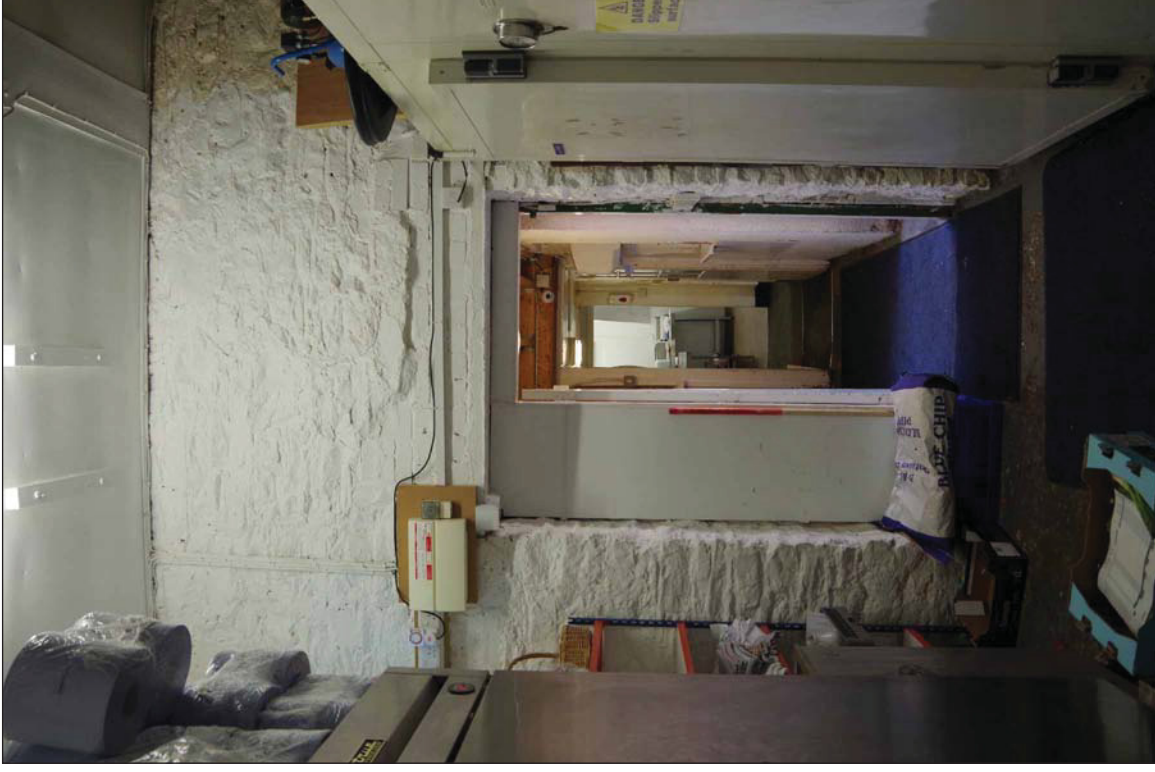


Plate 8: The northwest wall of the rear extension showing the break in stone masonry to the left of the door viewed from the southeast



Plate 9: The southwest wall of the rear extension showing the blocked window viewed from the northeast



Plate 10: The gate pier viewed from the northeast

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