

THOMAS WHITTY HOUSE, AXMINSTER, DEVON

SY 29691 98468

Results of archaeological recording

Prepared by:
Stella De-Villiers and Andrew Passmore

On behalf of:
Devon County Council

Document No: ACD1176/1/1

Date: August 2015



AC archaeology

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: Axminster, East Devon	National Grid Reference SY 29691 98468	Number: (Leave blank for HES to fill in)
Subject: Thomas Whitty House, Axminster; results of archaeological recording		Photo attached? Y
Planning Application no: N/A	Recipient museum: N/A	
OASIS ID: 220984	Museum Accession no: N/A	
Contractor's reference number/code: ACD1176	Dates fieldwork undertaken: 8 July 2015	
<p>Description of works.</p> <p><i>Introduction</i> Archaeological recording was carried out by AC archaeology during renovation works to the front range of Thomas Whitty House, Axminster. The work took place at the southeast end of the former factory building; the northwest end is occupied by the Conservative Club. The building is Grade II listed (National Heritage List No. 1309926), with the following description:</p> <p>C18 factory building. Once the Axminster Carpet Factory established in 1755 and closed in 1835. Large dressed stone building. Tarred slate roof with stone coping to gable ends. Situated on corner site with curved angle. Three storeys. Ten window range. Segmental arched openings mostly with three-light multi-pane windows with small central opening lights. All of second floor windows replaced with modern ones. The first floor six right hand windows are large sashes complete with glazing bars and in segmental arch openings. Three doorways with large entablatures and Tuscan pilasters, the centre and right hand retain original flush panel doors. Right hand segmental arched carriageway.</p> <p><i>Results (Fig. 1; Plates 1-6)</i> The ground floor plan of the building comprises part of the original mid 18th-century factory containing a large front room, a lobby and an enclosed passageway leading to the rear of the site – all on the Silver Street frontage. Behind is a full length mid 20th-century drill hall extension, and beyond this a small yard with various outbuildings including an early, probable 18th-century, dye house.</p> <p>The recording took place in the front range, where the current suspended floor and piers had been removed, and the walls stripped of finishes. The floor had consisted of floor boards laid on wooden joists supported on two dwarf walls aligned northwest-southeast. The floorboards and beams were modern. The exposed soil below this floor was firm yellow-brown clay. This contained no evidence of earlier floor, and had been reduced in level when the former wooden floor was inserted. Two upstands of soil above the general level probably supported dwarf walls.</p> <p>The front and rear walls of the large room are primary to the mid 18th-century factory, and have arched openings, with the openings at the northwest end abutted by the northwest wall indicating that this is a later insertion, added when the factory building was subdivided. The walls are constructed of stonework laid in rough courses with rare patches of brickwork. The doorway at the northwest end of the front wall was blocked with stonework when the partition wall was inserted. In the rear wall the central two openings contain windows whilst those at each end are doorways. The northeast doorway was reduced in width when the northwest wall was inserted. The masonry between the two windows has been almost entirely rebuilt in brickwork to accommodate a fireplace that has since been blocked.</p> <p>The southeast partition wall between this large room and the lobby also a late 18th-century partition. It is slightly curved on the northeast side. The central part is still rendered, probably over studwork, and contains a modern door, whilst the remainder of the wall is stonework.</p> <p>The inserted northwest partition wall displays several phases of development. The earliest (late 18th-century) phase is stone masonry incorporating a central brick chimney stack with a brick arch over the fireplace. The wall's edges are marked by larger rectangular blocks that represent quoins for adjacent (former) openings. On the southwest side is an area of roughly coursed stonework, which probably represents the next (19th-century) phase of alterations, and is an infilling of the opening. On the northeast side of the fireplace a former narrower has been</p>		

infilled with brickwork in panels divided by timbers; this may date to the early 20th century.

The drill hall is a brick extension with its internal elevation rendered and/or painted black. It is open to the roof, and has exposed steel trusses with diagonal struts supporting wooden battens onto which closely-spaced wooden rafters are laid.

Comments

The front range formed part of the original mid 18th-century Axminster Carpets factory building, and comprised part of longer room with an enclosed passageway at the southeast end leading into the rear yard. The room also had doorways into this yard. The range was soon altered, probably in the late 18th century, with the subdivision into smaller rooms, and a lobby. The recorded part of the building may have been one or more offices or showrooms, served by a new lobby that also contained a staircase to the first floor. At this date there was still access to the remainder of the factory to the north, although these doorways were progressively blocked. The area appears to have changed little, even into the mid 20th century when the drill hall was constructed.

This report and the associated OASIS entry represent the archive for the project.

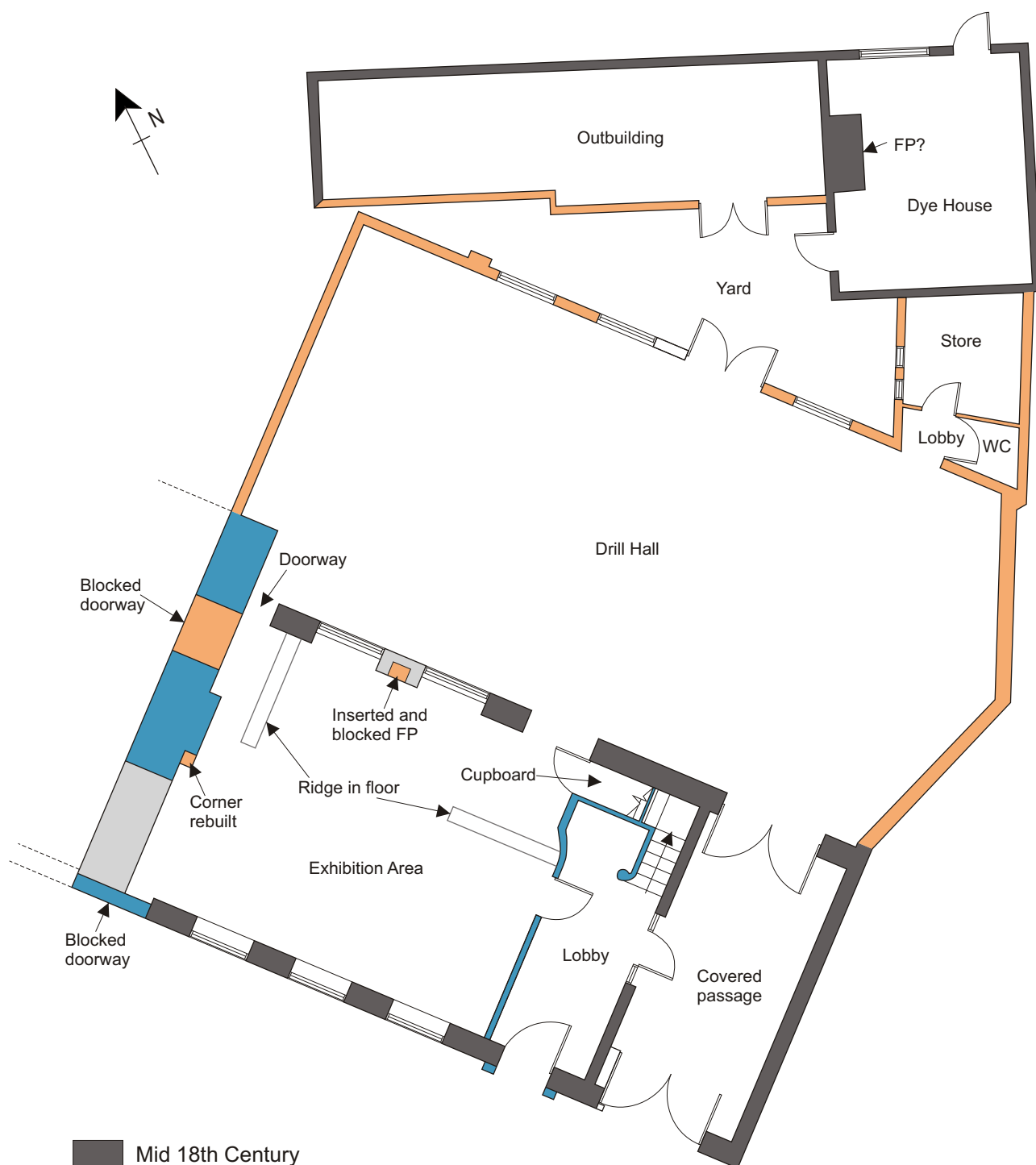
A plan as well as any other relevant drawings must be attached showing the location and extent of site, areas investigated and features exposed.

Recorder:

Stella De-Villiers, AC archaeology

Date sent to HER:

20 August 2015



- Mid 18th Century
- Late 18th Century
- 19th Century
- 20th Century

0 10m

Scale 1:150@A4

PROJECT

Thomas Whitty House, Axminster, Devon

TITLE

Fig. 1: Phased ground-floor plan



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Plate 1: General view of Thomas Whitty House, looking north



Plate 2: General view of the Conservative Club and Thomas Whitty House, looking southeast



Plate 3: Southeast and northeast walls within the large ground floor room, looking east



Plate 4: Northeast wall within the large ground floor room, looking north



Plate 5: Northwest wall within the large ground floor room, showing the phases of development, looking northwest



Plate 6: General view of the drill hall, looking northwest

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