

**POLICE CELLS  
4 HIGHLAND STREET  
IVYBRIDGE  
DEVON**

**HISTORIC BUILDING APPRAISAL**

**6 December 2015**

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Author Note

*Whilst every effort has been taken to accurately record dimensions, these were done manually and may not be as precise as those from a laser beam device*

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## **4 HIGHLAND STREET, IVYBRIDGE, PL21 9AG HERITAGE BUILDING APPRAISAL**

### **SOUTH HAMS APPLICATION No 27/2033/15/F CONVERSION OF EXISTING ANNEXE PRISON CELLS TO ANCILLARY ACCOMMODATION**

#### **Brief:**

This report has been prepared in response to the proposed conversion of the annexe, originally used as prison cells, at the rear of 4 Highland Street, Ivybridge.

The report has been undertaken by Ivybridge Mill Archives Group (IMAG) with advice from Abi Gray, Consultant Archaeologist, Devon Rural Archive in order to research and record both the physical and heritage details of the existing structure before it is converted, subject to the necessary approval of the planning authority.

The report has been completed with the agreement of Ben Gilpin, Planning Officer, South Hams District Council and Stephen Reed, Historic Environment Team, Devon County Council.

Background and other information has been compiled from a range of sources including historical information provided by Devon and Cornwall Police, web-based searches and archival material from IMAG resources. No dedicated archival research was undertaken for this appraisal.

The site was inspected on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2015. The methodology was non-intrusive and investigated the exterior structure, recorded the interior dimensions and measurements were taken of the various structures where possible. Photographs were taken of all identifiable items of interest.

#### **Disclaimer:**

The report collected information available at the time of survey but some parts of the structure were obscured by the storage of the owner's belongings (internally) and later garden development (externally). It is anticipated that the proposed works may reveal further information which change or refine the conclusions within this appraisal. **It is recommended that the recording of previously concealed features continues once development begins.**

## Location

4 Highland Street is a terraced property located in the centre of Ivybridge (NGR: SX 63447 56310). Approximate height of the dwelling above sea level is 67 meters with the top garden terrace rising to 69 meters.

The annexe is located within the garden at the rear of the property. There is no separate access to the garden and the annexe is only accessible via the main front door and through a more recent kitchen extension at the rear of the property. The annexe was historically used as two prison cells.

## Historic Background

House building in Ivybridge started in earnest in 1777, leading to the creation of the village in 1780.

The built environment in and around Ivybridge is characterised by its suburban streets and houses, although the centre of Ivybridge is dominated by terraced Victorian buildings.

One early property, Highlands House, is a large, white, non-listed Victorian villa set in extensive grounds. "Built in 1790 by Mr Webber, it is one of the finest and most historic houses in Ivybridge" (*Bob Mann, 1996*) with gardens approaching three-quarters of an acre (0.3ha). The Highlands Estate was also created at this time.

The properties in Highland Street were probably built around 1816 and, as the name suggests, are reputed to be associated with the Highlands House Estate, possibly as dwellings for their staff.

In 1816 there were 477 people living in Ivybridge.

No individual residents at 4 Highland Street are shown in either the 1841 or 1851 census records but in 1861 George Wyatt, a horse keeper, lived in the house with his sister and nephew.

## Police

The history of the police in Ivybridge must be looked at from the perspective of the Devon Constabulary, a large county police force formed in 1857 following the passing of the County and Borough Police Act in 1856. In 1857 Ivybridge came under the jurisdiction of Devon Constabulary G Division. At this time the population of Ivybridge would have been less than 1400.

The Western Times reported in 1874 that £5,000 had been applied for to fund the construction of police stations in Ilfracombe, Ivybridge and Torquay. A newspaper report in the Exeter Flying Post of 1874 describes the arrangements being made to alter 4 Highland Street, Ivybridge for the lock-up and policeman's residence. The Surveyor-General of Prisons

required that 'there shall be a brick arch over the cells for security' which was a greater outlay. The owner of the house requested a further £1.15s per annum to the amount of rent already granted and this was agreed.

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### **LOCK-UPS**

*Often built near a river or over a stream for drainage purposes, these lock-ups were usually very tiny, cold and damp, often there was no light and the ventilation was poor which, together with a smelly earth closet or drain in the corner and maybe a stone or wooden bed with straw, and sometimes an iron ring on the wall to further restrain violent offenders, were not intended to be comfortable. In some cases, especially in larger communities, the lock-up was incorporated into an existing building maybe belonging to the local authority or even by adapting an existing building.*

*(Roys Blogspot, 2013)*

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The first recorded Ivybridge Constable in Charge was Henry Bastin. He appears on the 1881 census as living at 4 Highland Street.

The next record is of Thomas Chubb on the 1891 census. On the day of the census, Louis Mate was a prisoner in the cells at 4 Highland Street. He was a 37-year-old stonemason from Jersey and may well have been working on rebuilding the viaduct at this date. Thomas Chubb was a popular policeman and on his retirement in January 1898, received a silver pocket with the inscription:

*'Presented to Police Constable Chubb as a mark of esteem on his retirement, from the inhabitants of Ivybridge. January 1898.'*

The watch was purchased from Samuel Edgcumbe of 11 Cornwall Street, Plymouth.

In the [1911 Census](#) the building was referred to as the Police Station and lists PC Pile (37) in residence with his wife and daughter, PC Fishleigh (21) as a boarder and Thomas Carrington (38) a shoemaker from London, in the cells.

There are further records of police officers based at 4 Highland Street until 1926.

This building has not been used for its original purpose for many years but, nevertheless, it is one of the few remaining structures in Ivybridge directly connected to its historic past and for which some heritage information can be gleaned. Although small, it has sufficient significance to warrant being recognised as an important heritage site within the Town.

## Summary Description of Buildings

The rectangular building is a single story stone construction with granite quoin stones to the corners and surrounding the window openings, a brick chimney at the north end and a slate roof. It appears to be in sound condition.

### 1. The Exterior

The exterior shows evidence of repointing in places and an area of the stonework to the south elevation is uneven in appearance with disturbance to the stonework and pointing on this face. It is possible that this disturbance may have occurred during the later installation of the large interior water tank in the roof. Below this is a concrete seal running the length of the sloping roof of the modern linked kitchen with an additional small area of repointing above.

The roof is covered with grey slate tiles topped with terracotta ridge tiles, with exposed rafter feet and slate barge tiles. There is an original brick chimney central to the north elevation and a round ventilation pipe just below the ridge tiles about mid-way along the roof length on the east elevation. Most of the slates appear to be in good condition and there should be sufficient remaining with the introduction of the two roof light to facilitate any necessary repairs and enable the original tiles to be reused and replaced<sup>1</sup>.

Externally, the building measures 4.85m wide by 7.45m long by 5.20. high at the ridge tiles. The windows on the west elevation have top arched shaped stone lintels and stone sills with granite quoin stones at the sides although the left hand window arch is cracked and in poor condition. Both windows externally have three original dog-legged metal bars attached. Each cell window measures 762mm wide by 743mm high. There are two or three old nails in the wall, along with a curved metal loop attached to one of the rafter feet at the north end.

Parallel to the rear of the building is an attractive, more recent, granite wall abutting the north elevation. This later addition faces a breeze block supporting wall for the upper terrace garden and is constructed of matching granite stone, possibly originating from the damaged interior cell walls. In front of this are three large granite blocks forming the boundary to a small gravel bed which may have come from the original (now missing) entrance.

The upper garden terrace covers the north elevation of the annexe almost to roof height and also the original four barred window on this wall. This window can now be evidenced only from inside the structure.

Above the upper garden terrace is another terrace area reached by a further set of wooden steps. Set into the base of the ground are two distinctive flagstones which may be slate slabs from part of the ceiling in the building.

<sup>1</sup> The application describes the roof 'in a poor state of repair' but the slate tiles appear original and undamaged.

## 2. The Interior

The interior of the building has been substantially altered, with walls partly knocked down and parts of the ceilings removed. Access to the perimeter of the inside walls was restricted as the building is currently used as a store with items along the walls and piled on the floor. However, the original configuration is still substantially visible.

Inside, the building comprises two cells and a passageway running the length of the east wall. The passageway flares slightly at the north end and measures 6.22m long by 1.19m wide at rear and 1.05m wide by the entrance doorway. At the back of the passageway is a window with four bars remaining but the window frame and glass are no longer there and the opening has been blocked by a newer breeze block retaining wall for the upper garden. This opening measures 609mm by 711mm, situated centrally 2.45m above the passageway floor. A new plastic pipe leads from the window void up to the alcove in the upper garden terrace.

Below the back window is a cast metal plate covering a flue venting into the chimney.

The internal walls have been substantially destroyed but show a solid stone and mortar construction topped by a thick render. Measurements were taken of the position and length of the original cell walls and windows.

Each cell measures 2.46m by 3.06m, with 43mm thick walls. The two cell doorways are evidenced by granite sills and are 1.092m wide from the central dividing wall. Each cell has an individual window with what appears to be a vertical integrated fitted metal opening system allowing the inmate to open and close the window, thus adjusting the ventilation without actually being able to reach the window itself. These barred windows are placed 2.31m above the floor level and measure 0.762m by 0.743m. D. Thorn (2015) records that each cell had a substantial wooden door with a hinged wooden flap, secured by a large bolt. In each cell was a brass bell with a pull out lever.

The internal ceiling is no longer fully intact. What remains is of solid construction, with large slate slabs (1.52m by 1.22m est.) supported by metal beams which appear to be shaped like railway lines. One beam rests along the passageway wall and the other midway over each cell so the ceiling is actually divided into thirds with slabs on each section. Covering all the slabs is a thick concrete and rubble scree between 300mm and 400mm thick (not measured).

### Fixtures and Fittings

The roof void contains a water tank situated above and to the left of the entrance door in the south facade, one side resting on the remains of the cell wall. The tank appears to be supported by a slate slab levelled on a brick plinth at this point although the opposite side and back are hidden from view so it is not possible to comment on the whole set up. The tank is rectangular, estimated at about 380mm high with a pipe visible along the bottom edge directed towards the downpipe in the first cell.

Each cell contains a sanitary (?) fitting in the opposite corner to the window, along the same south wall. There is a brick/stone base into which is sunk a deep bowl with evident handles. Alongside this is a later bowl, not inset, with a pre-moulded 'spout' at rim height. It is possible that the lower bowl was the original fitting, allowing for 'slopping out' and the second fitting is contemporary with the introduction of the water tank and allows running water to be introduced to the bowl. The base to this feature measures 889mm by 508mm.

Oral records (D Thorn 2015) record that each cell was also fitted with a wooden bed under the window and provided with a wooden pillow. The toilets were fitted with wooden boards on top.

It is also known that the entrance to the cell block was previously via a covered doorway set at right angles to the present entrance from the kitchen (D. Thorn 2015)

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*It is known that the village had running water in the centre from an early date obtained from the Erme at a weir in Henlake Down Woods via a leat cut in 1813. The leat ran along Station Road and through the rear gardens.*

*(C F Hankin 1994).*

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## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The Prison Cells at 4 Highland Street, Ivybridge are a unique remnant of the early development of both the town and Devon & Cornwall Constabulary and a heritage asset. Unfortunately, their location at the rear of a terraced dwelling makes them both invisible and inaccessible to the public.

The proposed conversion would ultimately preserve the fabric of this historic building which, although seemingly sound at present, would benefit from development which ensures its long term survival, albeit substantially altered and with a different function.

It has not been possible to find any evidence of similar buildings in any research medium. This building could be of national/significant importance as an unique example of its kind and function and therefore every effort should be made to protect the external fabric, where possible, and to record in detail the deconstruction of the interior before any redevelopment work commences. This would be more easily facilitated if the cells were first cleared of all the owner's stored items.

Externally the building appears to be in reasonable condition but internally the building exists in a poor state of repair with substantial internal damage to walls and ceiling.



Therefore, it is recommended that:

1. Detailed measurements and a thorough photographic record should be taken of the existing structure, fixtures and fittings once the ground floor has been cleared and before any work begins. At present access is restricted and there may well be further items of interest to record. This record will need to be done in two stages; firstly, when the owner's belongings are removed and secondly during an agreed staged removal of the rubble which may itself be of interest.
2. Efforts should be made to ascertain whether the building has any foundations before any work commences.
3. If the roof is to be raised from 4.632m high to 5.20m high from ground level, then the thick (handmade?) slate tiles should be retained and reused to retain the character and integrity of the building. The specification of the new trusses and rafters should be reviewed to ensure they are sufficiently robust for the reuse of the original tiles
4. It is possible that the present construction of the ceiling with slate slabs and thick concrete scree may contribute to the rigidity of the building and its removal, along with the internal walls, may materially weaken the strength of the building.
5. It is unclear how the new floor for the upstairs will be supported. If the existing walls are not sufficiently robust then the possibility of a suspended floor should be considered.
6. A full written and photographic record of the cells sanitary facilities should be undertaken, taking note of the construction and possible use of the items found. Care should be taken not to damage the bowls which should be carefully dismantled and offered to the Policing Past Community Present team at the Police Museum in Okehampton<sup>2</sup>. These structures may well be historically unique now as no reference can be found to any similar fittings still in existence nationally.
7. Where possible, the floor and ceiling slabs should be carefully removed and reused on the downstairs floor.
8. In order to preserve the history of the building it is hoped that the positions of the internal walls could be marked by some small bricks at ceiling height in the proposed snug and shower room.
9. For historic record and conservation, the external bars to the two cell windows should be carefully cut out and repositioned above the relocated windows in approximately their present position when the windows are lowered to accommodate the introduction of the upper floor.
10. The unusual cell window opening mechanism should be carefully recorded/ removed and offered to the Policing Past Community Present team at the Police Museum in Okehampton.
11. The chimney flue plate should be set in the wall in a visible location as close to its original position as possible.

<sup>2</sup> *Already contacted and will take items if possible*

## Still to be investigated

- Cells
  - Firstly, it is recommended that the cells are cleared of all owner's stored items and then measured and photographed in detail.
  - Secondly, it is recommended that the cells are cleared of rubble and other features after consultation so that any additional artefacts may be identified and recorded.
- Sanitary Fittings in Cells
  - These need to be carefully measured and photographed and then deconstructed. If the bowl inserts are in good condition they should be donated as specified above.
- Ceiling:
  - The purpose of the scree still needs to be established. Possibilities include structural and insulation.
  - How is existing ceiling supported at walls?
- Fireplace:
  - Not yet identified or surveyed. Possible location – cell two.
- Chimney Flue Plate:
  - Record measurements and take pictures. Check for foundry mark/inscriptions.
- Chimney:
  - Viability of retaining this structure to be ascertained.
  - Repointed if possible.
- Cells Doors
  - These may be in cell two – measure and detail and donate to Police Archives, Okehampton.

## Additional Information

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### **VILLAGE LOCK-UPS**

*Village lock-ups have a variety of names: guard house, watch house, gaol, roundhouse, blind-house, bone-house, black hole, kitty, cage, jug, lobby, slammer, klink, jail and most commonly lock up according to the area, and there are probably about 200 or so dotted around the country, usually close by the village pub or on the green.*

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## REFERENCES

### Articles

*Exeter & Plymouth Gazette 20 August 1891*

*Exeter Flying Post 1850*

*Exeter Flying Post 1st July 1874*

*Exeter Flying Post 15 January 1879*

*Kelly's Directory of Devonshire 1889*

*Kelly's Directory of Devonshire 1902*

*Kelly's Directory of Devonshire 1910*

*Kelly's Directory of Devonshire 1923*

*Kelly's Directory of Devonshire 1926*

*North Devon Journal 9 November 1905*

*Western Morning News 22 January 1907*

*Western Morning News 3 July 1935*

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Paul Beaken – *The Lock Up* (2012.)

[http://www.oldpolicecellsmuseum.org.uk/page\\_id\\_485.aspx](http://www.oldpolicecellsmuseum.org.uk/page_id_485.aspx)

C. F. Hankin - *Ivybridge, A Short History* (1994).

Ivybridge Mill Archives Group (2015) – unpublished research.

Bob Mann - *Ivybridge* (1996) Obelisk Publications

Ivybridge Map:

<https://geolocation.ws/v/W/File%3AHighland%20Street,%20Ivybridge%20-%20geograph.org.uk%20-%201410943.jpg/-/en#>

Mark Rothwell - Devon & Cornwall Police (2015) – various research.

Village Lock-ups (2013)

<http://roys-roy.blogspot.co.uk/2013/03/village-lock-ups.html>

D. Thorn - *Oral History* (2015) from the IMAG Archives.

### UK Census Records

1861 - *England Census* - Devon, Ermington, District 17, Image 22

1881 - *England Census* - Devon, Ermington, District 17, Image 29

1891 - *England Census* - Devon, Ermington, District 17, Image 8

1911 - *England Census* - Devon, Ivybridge, District 16, Image 320

## POLICE CELLS, 4 HIGHLAND STREET



Highland Street, Ivybridge



4 Highland Street



Cell windows showing dog-legged bars



Slate tiles – west elevation



Metal support under eaves



Chimney



Unidentified markings under tiles



Cell doors?



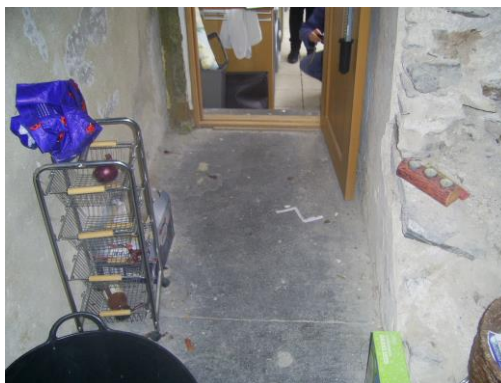
Rear window



Cell window showing opening mechanism



Water tank



Slate slabs floor in corridor



Thickness of slate slabs.



Cell sanitary fitting



Cell sanitary fitting