

2 Brook Cottages, Netherton, Devon

(SX 89271 71285)

Results of Historic Building Recording

Prepared by
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On behalf of
Mr Kevin Mutton

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archaeology

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Teignbridge District Council planning references 16/03001/FUL and 16/03002/LBC

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The views and recommendations expressed in this report are those of AC archaeology and are presented in good faith on the basis of professional judgement and on information currently available.

Summary

An historic building record of No. 2 Brook Cottage was prepared by AC archaeology in January 2017 to support planning and Listed Building Consent applications for repair following a fire in August 2016.

No. 2 Brook Cottage and the attached No. 1 represent a subdivided house of mid-late 16th-century date. The building was constructed with two storeys, and a probably two-room plan but without a cross passage. By the early 19th century the building had been divided into two cottages forming part of two small tenements. In No. 2 a probable stair turret had been replaced by a staircase. During the 20th century the building was converted back into a single property, and later subdivided into two cottages. At this time the staircase was replaced, and the first-floor bathroom added.

The property has low-medium architectural, evidential, historical, and aesthetic heritage values, and is considered to be an asset of low-medium significance.

1. INTRODUCTION (Fig. 1; Plate 1)

1.1 Historic building recording was carried out by AC archaeology on 18 January 2017 to support Listed Building Consent and planning applications (Teignbridge District Council ref nos. 16/03001/FUL and 16/03002/LBC) for repairs to, and partial reconstruction of, No. 2 Brook Cottage, Cross Hill, Netherton, Devon (NGR SX 89271 71285; Fig. 1). The recording was requested by Teignbridge District Council, and commissioned by Mr Kevin Mutton. No. 2 Brook Cottage and the attached No. 1 were damaged by fire on 30 August 2016.

1.2 The property is a semi-detached cottage, with No. 1 situated to the north (Plate 1). It is located on the eastern edge of the hamlet of Netherton. The cottage is situated on low ground at a height of around 12m aOD on the east side of a stream that leads into the River Teign. The cottages, and a demolished building to the south, were constructed on a flat terrace cut into a steep hillside to the east. There is a spring directly in front of the property to the west. The underlying solid geology comprises Permian breccia of the Oddicombe Breccia Formation. No superficial geological deposits are present, although in the valley bottom to the west the breccia is overlain by Quaternary tidal flat deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel (British Geological Survey online 2017).

1.3 Nos 1 and 2 Brook Cottages are Grade II Listed under the name Brookside Cottages (National Heritage List no. 1097745). The following description was prepared in 1988:

2 cottages, formerly one house. Probably mid C17 or earlier, C20 internal alterations to left-hand cottage which also has a C20 rear wing. Whitewashed plastered cob and stone; thatched roof, half-hipped at left end, gabled at right end; axial stack with rendered shaft, rear left lateral stack. Plan: Originally a single depth 2 or 3 room plan house: position of original entrance unclear. Exterior: 2 storeys. Asymmetrical 2:2 window front with a front door at the extreme left with a thatched porch canopy, the front door to the right end cottage is flanked by windows. 2- and 1-light small pane C19 or C20 casements with glazing bars. Interior: Left-hand cottage only inspected: interior modernized. Right end cottage known to retain exposed carpentry. Roof: Not inspected but may be of interest. Very attractive externally. An interior inspection of the right hand cottage might necessitate revision of the suggested dating.

2. AIM

- 2.1** The aim of the investigation was to prepare a record of the building to inform the determination of the planning and Listed Building Consent applications.

3. METHODOLOGY

- 3.1** The record was prepared to Level 4 as set out in *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (Historic England 2016), and carried out in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* (revised 2014), as well as the AC archaeology *General Site Recording Manual, Version 2*.

- 3.2** The record comprised the following elements:

- A written description of the building, including the fabric and roof of the cottage (noting any evidence for later alterations), any surviving fixtures and fittings, and graffiti, etc;
- A photographic record, including a general record, both internally and externally, of the cottage along with a more detailed record of surviving *in situ* historic fixtures and fittings. It comprised a colour digital record. Details of photographs taken were made on *pro forma* record sheets. The external record was limited by the presence of scaffolding enclosing both Nos 1 and 2; and,
- Production of scaled floor plans, external elevations and a profile showing the form of the building including evidence for repairs and rebuilding, and surviving extent of external walls, and the form of roof structure. This utilised existing survey drawings updated with new archaeological information.

4. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (Figs 2 and 3)

- 4.1** Netherton is a small hamlet within the civil parish of Haccombe with Combe, located between Newton Abbot and Shaldon. The name 'Netherton' means lower farm, and was part of the district known as the Ten Hide in the Domesday Book (Gover *et. al.* 1932, 459-460). The main settlement of the parish is the village of Combeinteignhead, where the parish church is situated. In addition to Nos 1 and 2 Brook Cottages there are four other early Grade II Listed cottages or houses at Netherton of 17th-century or earlier date: Well Cottage (National Heritage List no. 1333928), Hiller Cottage and Sedgewell Cottage (1168329), Yarner House (1168313), and a cottage immediately north of Yarner (1097746).

- 4.2** The earliest identified map to depict the property is the 1839 tithe map for Combeinteignhead (Fig. 2). The building is recorded as being divided into two properties – plots 149a and 150a – forming part of Blatchfords & Redaway and Webbs Tenements, with each in separate occupation. Both tenements included additional adjacent land – plots 149b and 150b. Fuller details taken from the 1837 apportionment, including 1864 amendments, are set out in Table 1 below. One version of the tithe map shows the cottages as a rectangular building, whilst the version held at the Devon Heritage Centre depicts the present No. 2 as having an extension, presumably a porch, on the west side and a much smaller extension to the east.

Plot number	Tenement	Land Owner	Land Occupier	Name/ Description	State of Cultivation
149a	Blatchfords & Redaway	David William Reynell	John Hill	Dwelling house, Barn, Linhay	Homestead
149b	Blatchfords & Redaway	David William Reynell	John Hill	Orchard	Orchard
150a	Webb's Tenement	David William Reynell	John Tavenor	Cottage & Barn	Cottage & Barn
150b	Webb's Tenement	David William Reynell	John Tavenor	Garden	Garden
152	Burt's Tenement	Sir Walter P Carew	William Rendall	Barnyard & c	Buildings
152 (Amendment made 1864)	--	Trustees of Lady Elizabeth Reynell	William Rendall	Barnyard & c	--

Table 1: Detail from the Combeinteignhead Tithe Apportionment (1837)

4.3 Plot 150a represents the present No. 2 Brook Cottage, and the barn mentioned in the apportionment was the building (now demolished) located to the northwest of the cottage. Within the present property was another barn – in plot 152 – located to the southwest of the cottage. This has also been demolished but its north wall partially survives along with a terrace cut into the bedrock for the east wall. The data presented in the tithe map and apportionment indicates that these tenements were small with few parcels of land, mainly cottages and barns and small adjacent fields (commonly orchards), along with rights to pasture on Milber Down. In the wider landscape the map records Netherton as being located with an area of extensive relict medieval strip fields, which has been picked up by the Devon Historic Landscape Characterisation project.

4.4 By the time of the 25-inch Ordnance Survey map of 1889 the hamlet was called Higher Netherton, with Lower Netherton being located further north around Manor Farm. The building appears to be depicted as a single property with what appears to be an extension at its north end and two possible porches attached to the west elevation, surrounded by large front and rear gardens; plot 150b on the tithe map is now detached from the house. Some adjacent buildings recorded on the tithe map have been demolished, although the barn to the south is still extant. The 1906 revision shows the building divided into three elements, again with possible porches and steps on the west sides (Fig. 4). The barn to the south has been demolished. The 1956 1:2500 map records the well to the west of the cottages, but no changes to the building itself.

5. THE PROPERTY (Figs 4-9; Plates 2-23)

The exterior

West elevation

5.1 The property is a two-storey building that has been constructed on a man-made terrace which cuts into the bedrock on the east side, with the land stepping down towards the northwest. The west elevation is the principle elevation, and looks out over the village (Plate 2). The entrance doorway is higher than the front garden, which itself is raised above the present access driveway and spring to the west. The front door is slightly offset to the right, and is of early 20th-century date with two long lower panels and six upper smaller panels, all glazed and with ovolo moulded beading; the exterior face has been finished with wooden planks and gives the appearance of an

older door. The door is approached by a modern flight of steps lined to the right by reused chimney pots. On the left is a partially rebuilt oval feature with an open top; its date and function is unknown.

- 5.2** The kitchen to the right of the door is lit by a small two-pane, side-opening 20th-century window. The living room to the left has a larger two-light, side-opening 20th-century window, with two panes in each light; internally secondary glazing has been added. The opening has a concrete external cill and tiled inner cill. It is set within a slightly projecting walk-in bay, finished with a slate roof. In the north corner of this bay there is a shallow projection or niche (Plate 3). It gives the impression of a squint window (cf. Wringworthy Farm, Mary Tavy; Parker 2013), but is too small for such a feature and its function is unknown.

- 5.3** The first-floor south bedroom is lit by a 20th-century two-light, side-opening two-pane casement. The larger north bedroom has a 20th century three-light casement, with the central casement opening. All woodwork around these openings is modern and the openings are internally lined with concrete. The north window has a tiled internal cill (as on the ground floor), whilst the southern window has a wooden cill. At eaves level the ends of the south truss and associated secondary rafters are visible (Plate 4). Below and beyond the north window the cob wall has collapsed, partially exposing the core of the wall. At ground-floor level the wall appears to be faced in rubble breccia and limestone blocks. Behind this, within the exposure, the wall is mainly formed from breccia blocks forming the partition wall incorporating a chimney stack (Plate 5). Set within this are battens of varying dates, some of which appear quite fresh and modern. A high-level rebate within the bedroom represents the remains of a cupboard.

South elevation

- 5.4** The south elevation forms the gable end of the cottage. The first 1m of the wall projects off from the remainder of the gable, and is constructed of plastered stone; an opening visible internally (see 5.6 below) cannot be seen on this face. It seems likely that the rest of the gable end (from first-floor level) is constructed of bricks as drilled red bricks are visible in the wall within the former roofspace (Plate 6), but the masonry is mainly obscured below by both the internal and external finishes.

East elevation

- 5.5** The east elevation, to the rear of the property, is rendered, but much of the wall appears to be of cob construction (Plate 7). Due to the topography, the only features are at first-floor level. At the south end of this elevation is a small single-pane, side opening frosted window to the bathroom, whilst at the north end is a similar window to the main bedroom. Both are 20th century in date, with concrete cills and timber lintels; two courses of red bricks survive above the north window. At the northwest corner there is a concrete block repair to the top internal face of the wall, with a cob repair to the exterior. Between this repair and the window there is a section of plaster exposed within the wall, with the outer part of the wall beyond rebuilt in breccia stonework. Below the north window there is a slightly projecting vertical band of cob, which may represent the remains of the south wall of the extension recorded here on the tithe map.

The interior

The ground floor

- 5.6** The front door leads into a small lobby from which the staircase rises to the first floor. Doors from this lobby provide access to a kitchen to the south and the living room to the north. The north and south elevations of the kitchen have been relined with concrete block walls (Plate 8), set away from the earlier walls – the latter are of rubble

stone construction, and the south elevation incorporates a former splayed opening under wooden lintels (Plate 9). It has been infilled with rubble stone. Above the lintel red brick brickwork laid in stretcher bond is visible. The north wall of the kitchen is a modern tongue and grooved partition forming one side of the staircase and under stairs cupboard. The first floor is supported by an off-central bridging beam; this is chamfered but any stops are obscured behind modern finishes to the walls. The joists are 20th-century pine replacements set into original sockets in the top of the beam. At the northwest corner of the room is a small wooden box below the joists. From above, unused original stepped mortices for earlier joists are visible (Plate 10). This probably represents a step associated with a previous staircase.

- 5.7** Set towards the west end of the north wall of the living room is a large fireplace, with the opening under an original timber lintel (Plate 11). This is chamfered with simple stepped stops. The fireplace has been heavily repaired and has a raised hearth with a flagstone surface. The rear corners incorporate stone bread ovens, both of which have also been repaired. Although the west oven retains its original opening arch, there is no evidence for historic metalwork associated with these ovens. To the east of the fireplace a doorway into No. 1 has been infilled using concrete blocks (Plate 12). At the north end of the east elevation is another blocked doorway. The walls to either side of this opening have been altered and partially narrowed; one side now includes a small recess. The south wall is a partition to the stairs and under stairs cupboard, and constructed of painted wooden panels incorporating doors to the entrance lobby and the cupboard (Plate 13). The first floor is supported on two bridging beams, one located at the partition with the stairs, and the other close to the fireplace. All are chamfered with – where visible – stepped stops. All but three of the joists were replaced in the 19th century with square-profiled joists with beaded decoration. The original joists (marked on Figs 4 and 9) have chamfered edges with simple stepped stops (Plate 14).

The first floor

- 5.8** The stairs, which are a later 20th-century replacement, lead to the north bedroom and, up a step, to a corridor leading to a bathroom and the south bedroom (Plate 15). The south wall of the bedroom is lined with cement plaster applied to fibreboard attached to a wooden frame in front of the brick rebuilt gable. The west wall of the bedroom retains old plaster laid onto earlier painted thin plaster. Remains of a lath and plaster ceiling survive, with late 20th-century floor boards in the attic above (Plate 16). The partitions between the bedroom, the stairs and bathroom are all later 20th-century timber frames and finishes. The staircase projects into the bedroom and above this is a small cupboard lined with tongue-and-grooved boards. The internal walls to the bathroom are finished with wooden panelling and wallpaper (Plate 17); this room has a plasterboard ceiling.
- 5.9** The north, east and west walls of the north bedroom are cob, finished with plaster (Plate 18); around the chimney stack in the former, some modern plaster has been applied over the historic finish. The stack itself, exposed above the former ceiling level, is constructed of breccia and features angled weathering stones at the top. The surviving wall of the former cupboard recess in the west side of the stack is lined with plaster. To the east of the stack was a cupboard, which has now lost its doors and shelves (Plate 19). The back of the cupboard was formerly a doorway to No. 1, and the opening has been infilled using concrete blocks laid directly onto the floor boards. The window in the east elevation is set within an irregularly shaped walk-in opening. The south wall forming the partition with the stairs is under a roof truss, and is of lath and plaster construction with modern boxing-in of a lintel over the doorway (Plate 20).

The roof structure

- 5.10** Within this property the roof was supported on two trusses as well as the rebuilt south gable. There were two further trusses within No. 1. Other than the trusses, the rest of the roof structure only survives within the south half of the building on its west side, and all the thatch has been lost (Plates 21-23). The northern truss is located at the north end of the property on the line of the front of the stack. Only the lower part of the eastern principal rafter survives, along with an attached batten that formerly supported the ceiling. The south truss is located on the north side of the stairs, and is open within the former loft space. It comprises principle rafters set into the tops of the walls, with a pegged mortice and tenon joint at the apex. It has a high-level straight collar (allowing for first-floor accommodation), which appears to be fixed to the rafters with mortice and tenon joints, although one face is burnt and the other obscured by additional bracing precluding detailed observation. A second, applied collar, has been added between the original collar and the top of the partition. The ridge purlin was set diagonally within the top of the truss. There was a single pair of through side purlins fixed with pegs, of which only one now partially survives. Secondary rafters were attached to this purlin using pegs; the south pair of secondary rafters were replaced in softwood when the adjacent gable was replaced. Replacement battens fixed to these rafters were nailed. Below the purlin the secondary rafters have also been replaced during the 20th century with softwood, and these incorporate steel tips for thatch.

6. FINDS RECOVERED BY THE OWNER, By Charlotte Coles

- 6.1** A bowl from a clay tobacco pipe was recovered from one of the fireplace bread ovens. This is a Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffalo (RAOB) pipe, The RAOB is a fraternal organisation set up in 1822. Clay pipes specifically manufactured for the RAOB were made in the 1850s but examples produced between 1860 and the 1930s are most common (<http://www.dawnmist.org/gallery.htm>). The bowl has the shape consistent with a 1860-70 date (Ayto 1979).
- 6.2** A key was also recovered. This is relatively plain with an open rectangular tip and a sub-circular bow. It dates to the 18th or early 19th century.

7. DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROPERTY (Figs 4-5)

The original house

- 7.1** Nos 1 and 2 Brook Cottages originally formed part of a single building that was subdivided in the post-medieval period (see below). The original plan form is not entirely clear. The Heritage Statement that accompanied the applications for No. 1 Brook Cottage suggested that that property formed an inner parlour, implying No. 2 contained the hall and service room (at the 'lower end'). The overall plan form, however, gives the impression of just two rooms of almost equal size. If No. 2 were divided into a hall and service room, and perhaps separated by a passage, this would leave the hall unusually small in comparison to the parlour, and with a very small service room. Additionally, there is no evidence for historic ground-floor partitions in the bridging beams within No. 2. A two-room plan without a cross passage – a feature that could not have been achieved due to the topography – is therefore put forward (cf Alcock 2015, 27-29 for discussion of small two-room houses without cross passages, and Hughes and Rainbird 2015 where two-room houses are discussed in the context of a local excavated example at Kingskerswell). In view of the evidence for a probable stair turret (see below) No. 2 may have represented the main hall or principal reception room.

7.2 One version of the 1839 tithe map depicts a small projection at the northeast corner of the property. Evidence for this survives as slightly projecting cob masonry. A blocked ground-floor doorway led into this room; directly above, on the first floor, is a window set within an irregularly-shaped splayed walk-in opening, adjacent to which is an area of altered masonry including a length of narrower wall. Taken together it seems likely that this projection was a stair turret. This position is common in local buildings, both in houses floored over from the start and where stairs have been added to floored-over former medieval open halls. No evidence for the first-floor layout survives but the broad present arrangement of two bedrooms at the front of the house, served by a rear corridor (or simply a door in a partition wall seems likely.

7.3 There is few architectural details to date the house, the main evidence being the roof and plan form. The roof structure with entirely pegged joints, through purlins and an angled ridge purlin is regionally a late medieval style that continues into the early post-medieval period. Two-storey rural houses developed from the mid 16th-century onwards, and a mid-late 16th-century date is suggested for Nos 1 and 2 Brook Cottages.

19th- and 20th-century alterations

7.4 The 1839 tithe map and associated 1837 apportionment indicate that by then the house had been divided into two cottages, each associated with a different tenement within Netherton. The Ordnance Survey mapping records what are probably porches over doors in the west elevation. In No. 2 the rear projection, interpreted as a stair turret, had been removed. The evidence from the joists and associated bridging beams indicates that this was replaced by a staircase located in its current position. The overall layout was probably very similar to the current configuration. Other alterations included the replacement of most of the joists as well as the floorboards above. One or both of the bread ovens may date to this period, assuming they were not retained earlier features.

7.5 It is understood both properties were combined into a single house in the second half of the 20th-century and used as a bed and breakfast establishment. It seems logical that the extensions to No. 1 (including a structure preceding the present dining room) were added at this time, along with the works executed into concrete block. These include the internal refacing of the first-floor walls of No. 1 and the refacing of the kitchen walls in No. 2. The other major 20th-century alterations to No. 2 probably took place when the building was again subdivided, sometime before the 1980s. This reconfiguration included the closing of the ground- and first-floor doorways between Nos 1 and 2 using concrete blocks, the rebuilding of the staircase including new ground-floor partitions, and the addition of the bathroom.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

8.1 The significance of the building derives from its architectural/evidential, historical and aesthetic values. The architectural value of the property is that it forms part of a larger late medieval/early post-medieval house constructed at a time when local architectural styles and plan forms were changing, in particular the evidence that the house appears to have been constructed as a two-storey building with a two-room plan. The property has some potential to yield further evidence about its development, in particular the probable stair turret. The building has historical associative value in that the building can be read as an old house. It also has aesthetic values, through its vernacular style and (before the fire) thatched roof. When considering the Listed Building as a whole, the architectural value has been diminished by the 20th-century

alterations, in particular the insensitive insertion of concrete block linings to walls. The historical associative value is also reduced by the historic loss of associated farm buildings and the change in the local landscape, whereby the collection of small farming tenements documented in the 19th century is now longer apparent in the landscape.

- 8.2** These architectural, historical and aesthetic values can be regarded as being of low-medium importance and overall the property is considered to be of low-medium significance.

9. SOURCES CONSULTED

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Websites

British Geological Survey on-line viewer
www.bgs.ac.uk

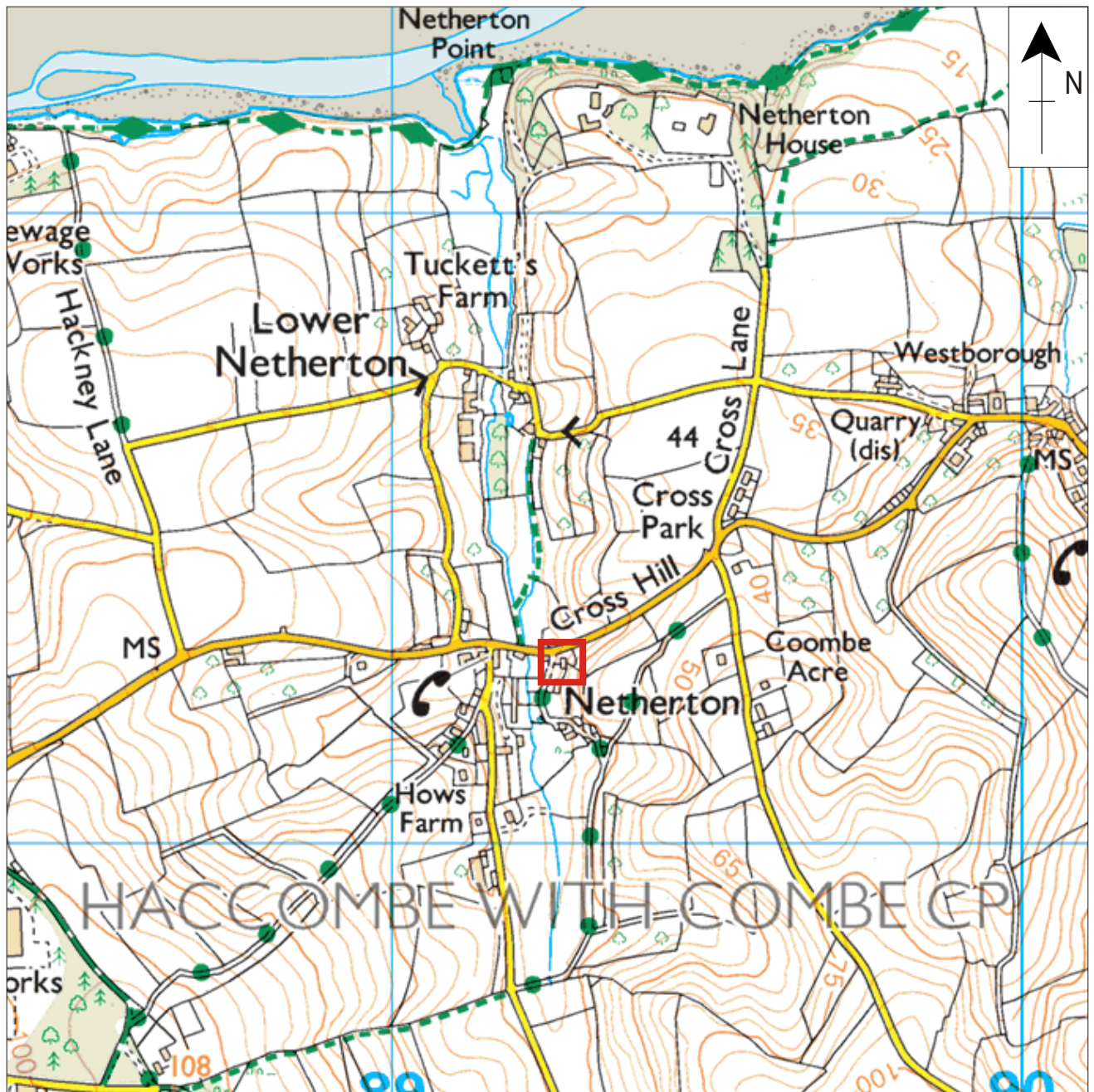
Dawnmist Studio Clay Pipe Gallery (Heather Coleman)
<http://www.dawnmist.org/gallery.htm>

Devon County Council
<http://www.devon.gov.uk/tithemaps.htm>

National Heritage List for England
<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list>

Old Maps repository
<https://www.old-maps.co.uk/#/>

The Genealogist:
<https://www.thegenealogist.co.uk/>



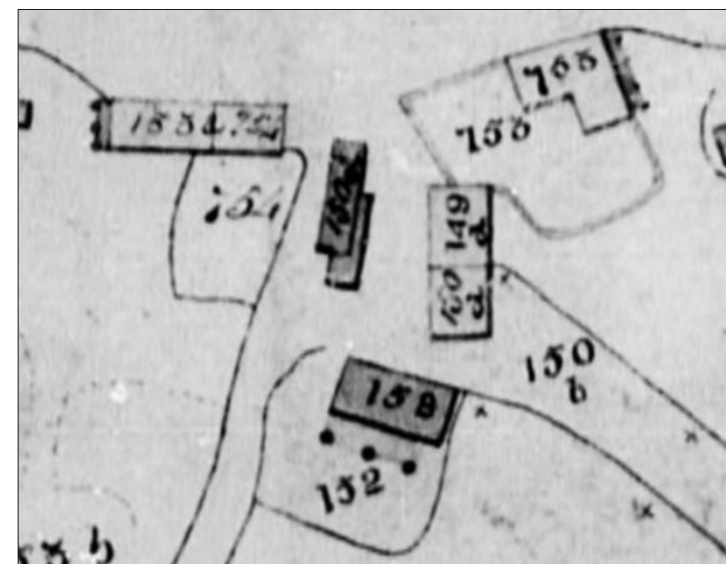
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PROJECT

2 Brook Cottages, Netherton, Devon

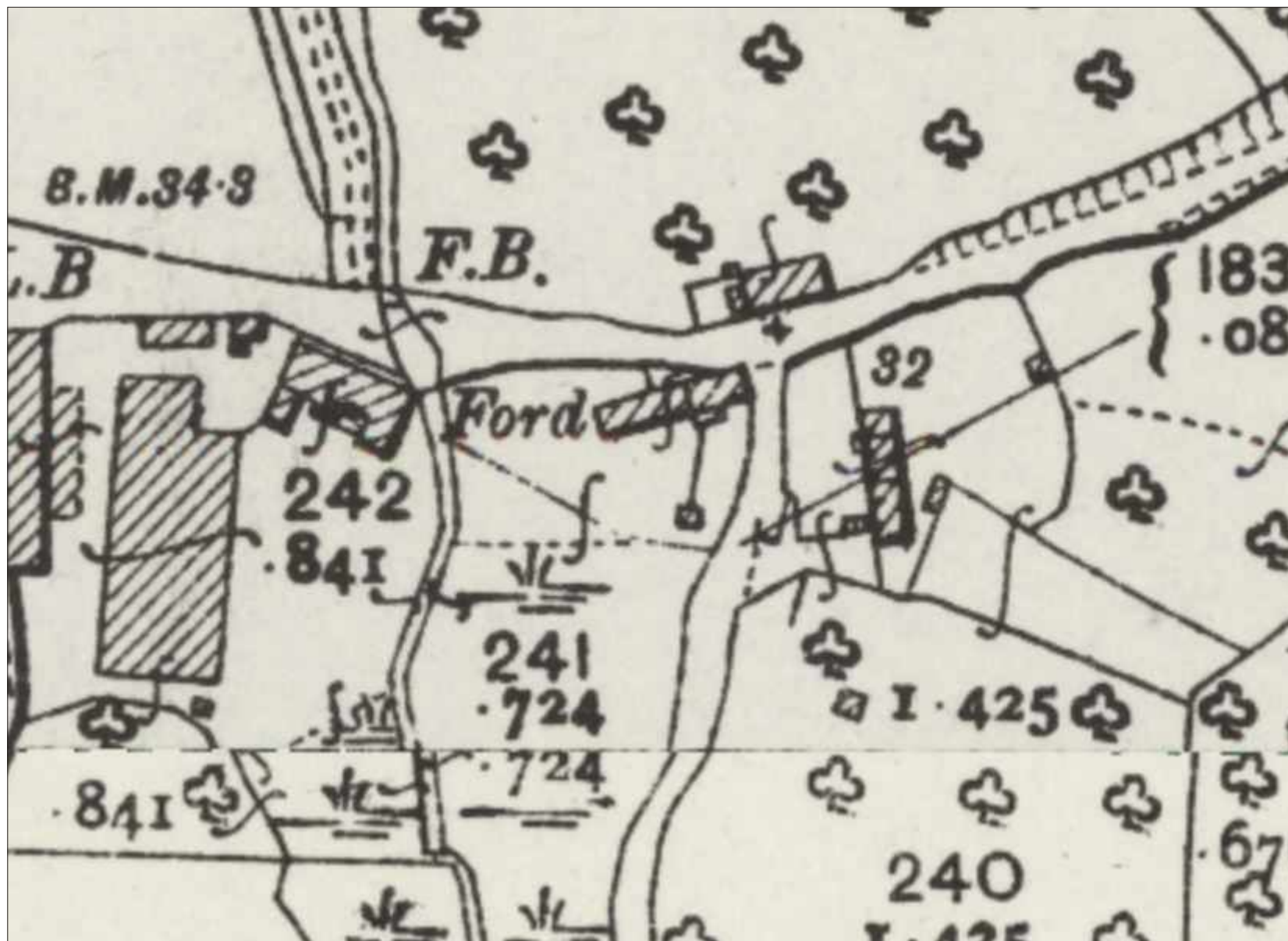
TITLE

Fig. 1: Site location



PROJECT
2 Brook Cottages,
Netherton, Devon

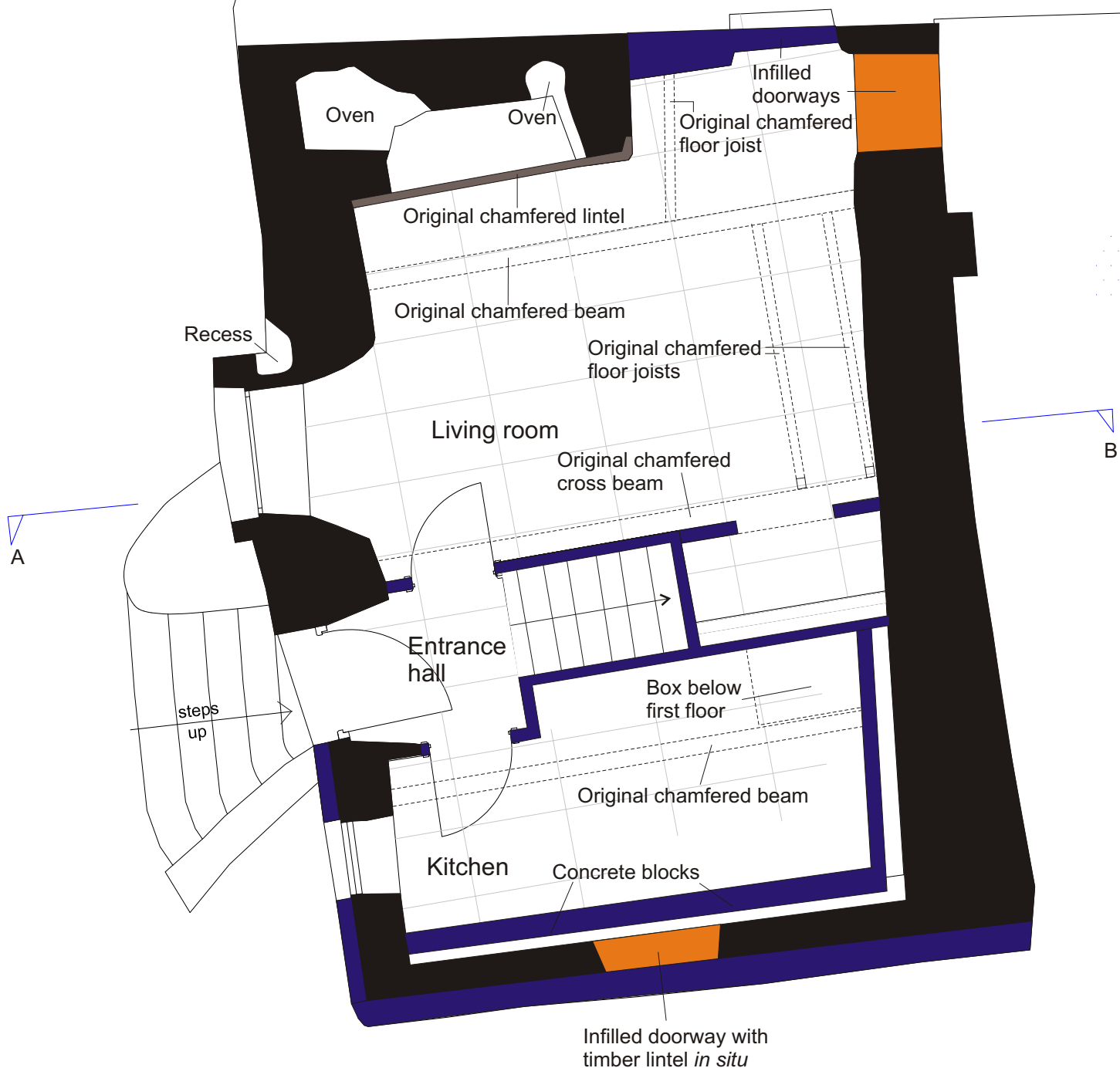
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Fig. 2: Extracts from the
Combeinteignhead tithe
map, 1839



PROJECT
2 Brook Cottages,
Netherton, Devon

TITLE
Fig. 3: Extracts from the
Ordnance Survey 25-inch
maps, 1906

Ground-floor plan



Key

- mid 16th century
- 19th century
- Late 20th century

0 3m
Scale 1:50@A4

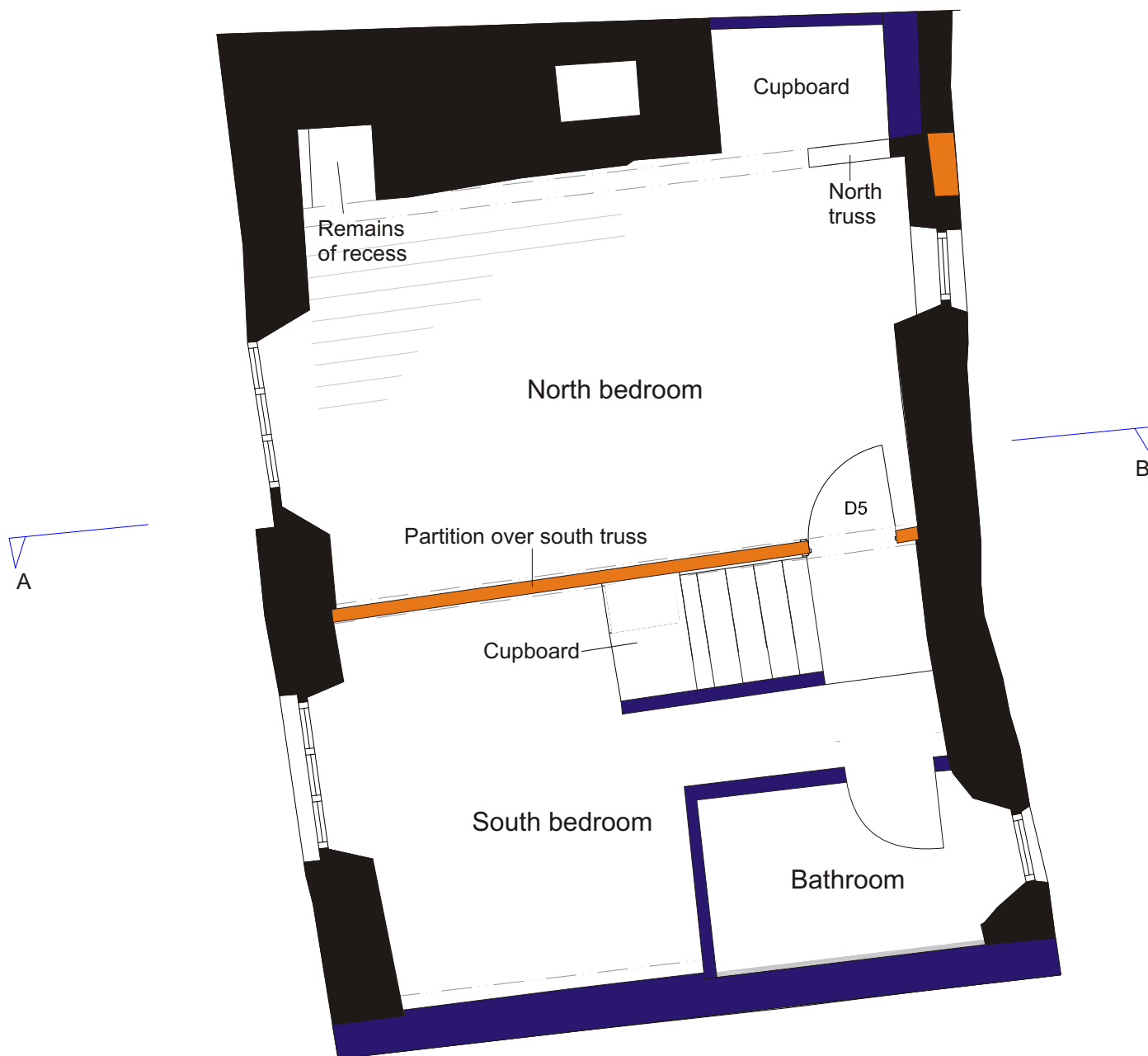
PROJECT

2 Brook Cottages, Netherton, Devon

TITLE

Fig. 4: Ground-floor plan

First-floor plan



Key

- mid 16th century
- 19th century
- Late 20th century

0 3m
Scale 1:50@A4

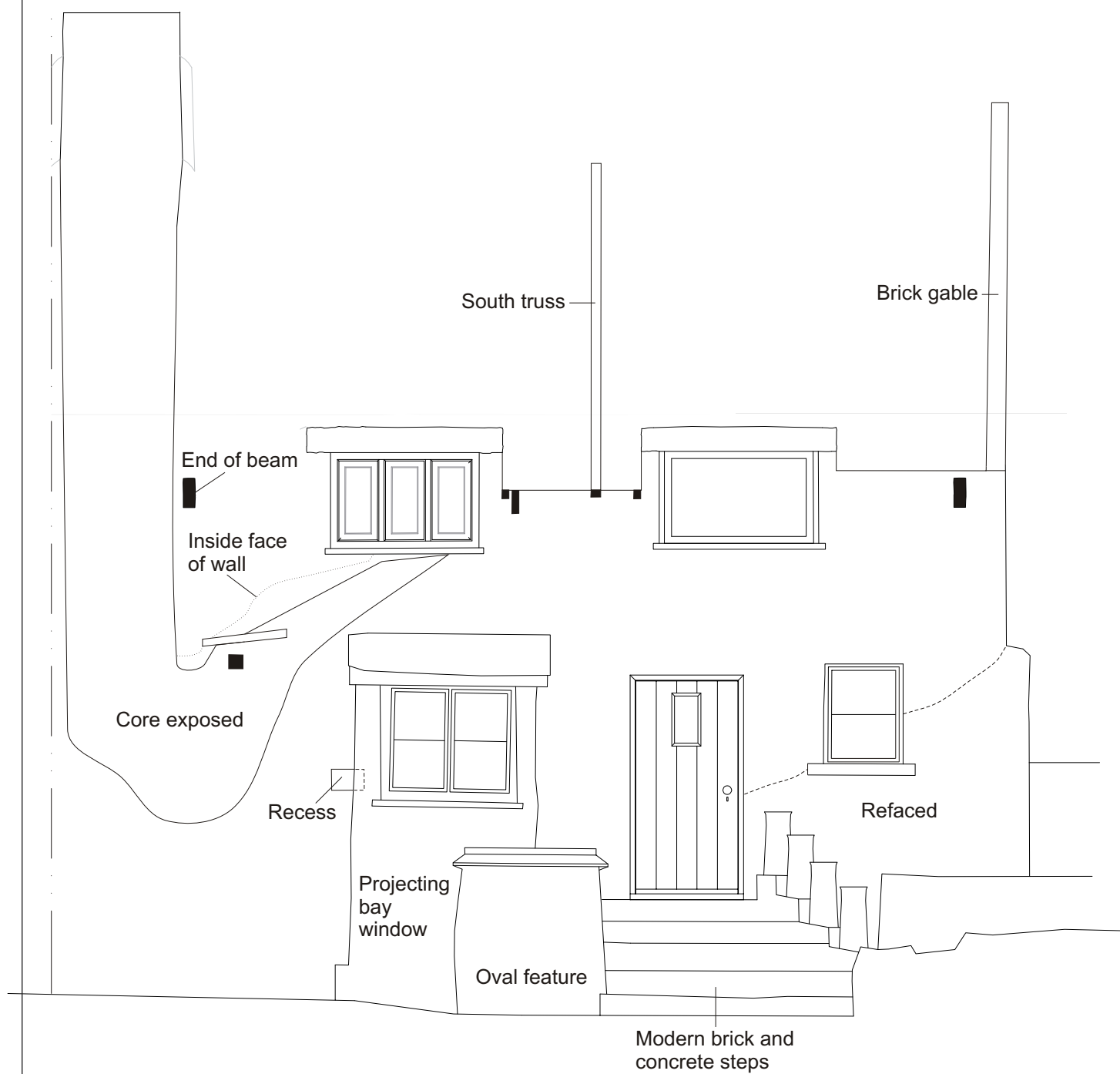
PROJECT

2 Brook Cottages, Netherton, Devon

TITLE

Fig.5: First-floor plan

West elevation



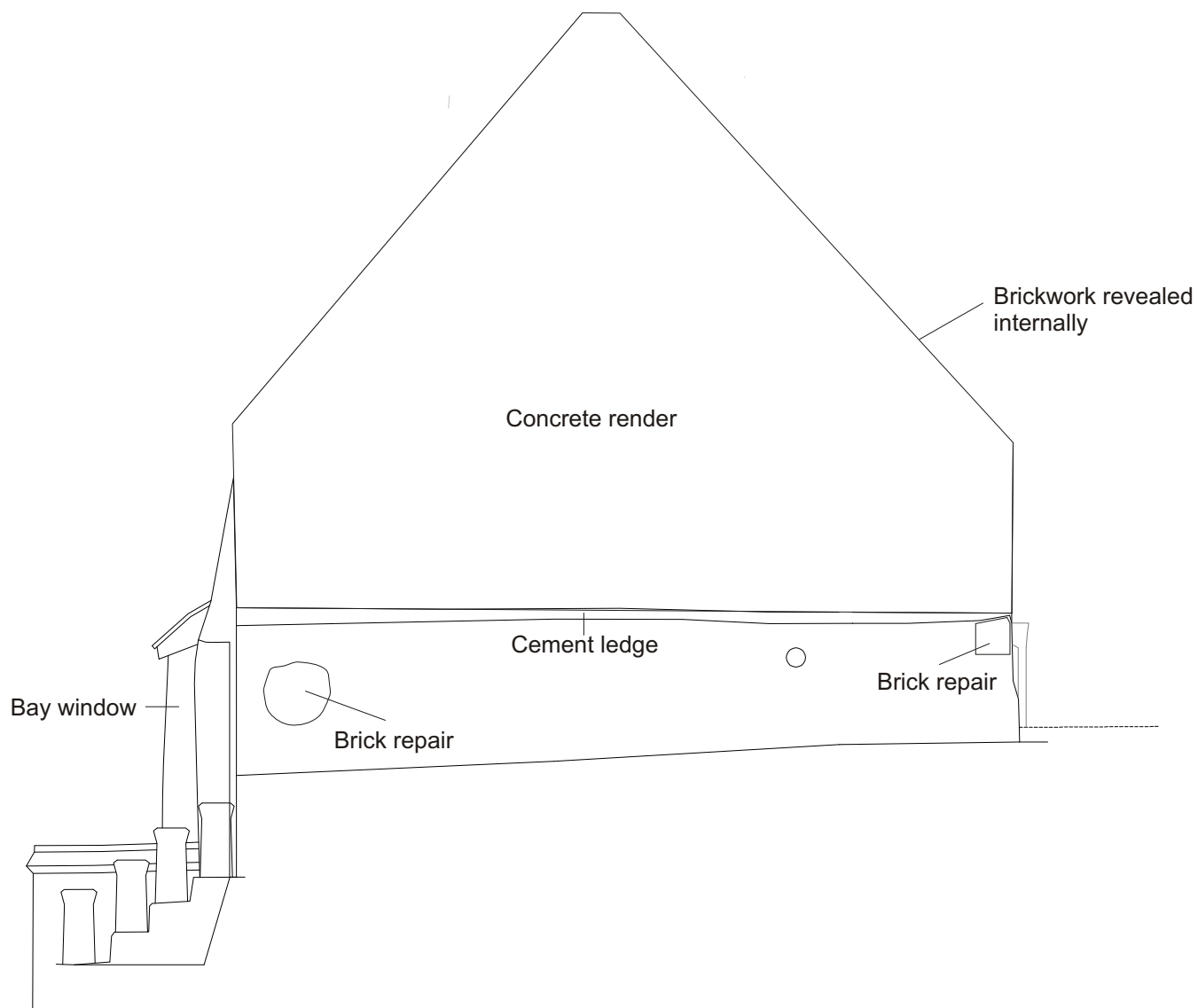
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PROJECT

2 Brook Cottages, Netherton, Devon

TITLE

Fig. 6: West elevation



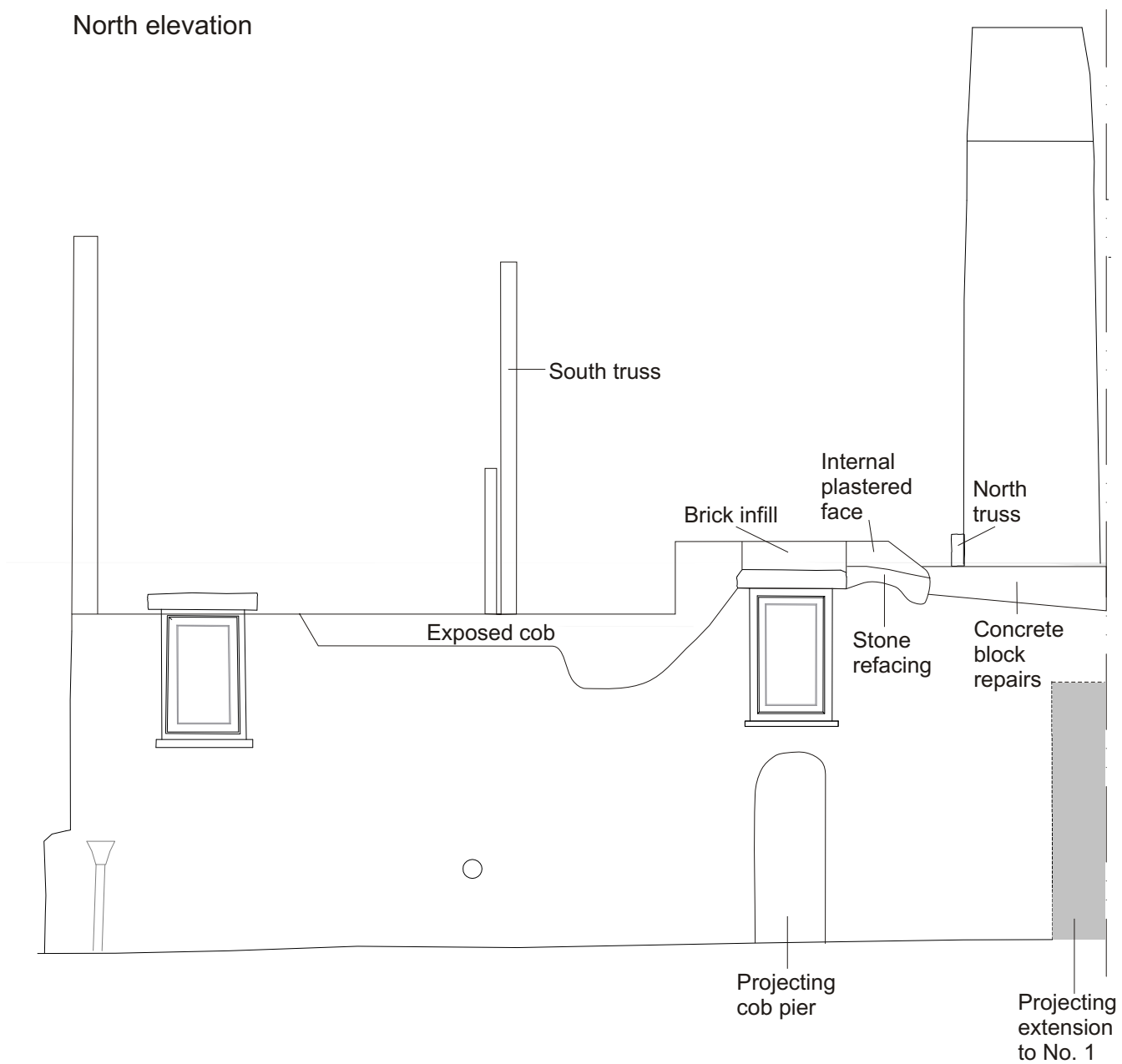
PROJECT

2 Brook Cottages, Netherton, Devon

TITLE

Fig. 7: South elevation

North elevation

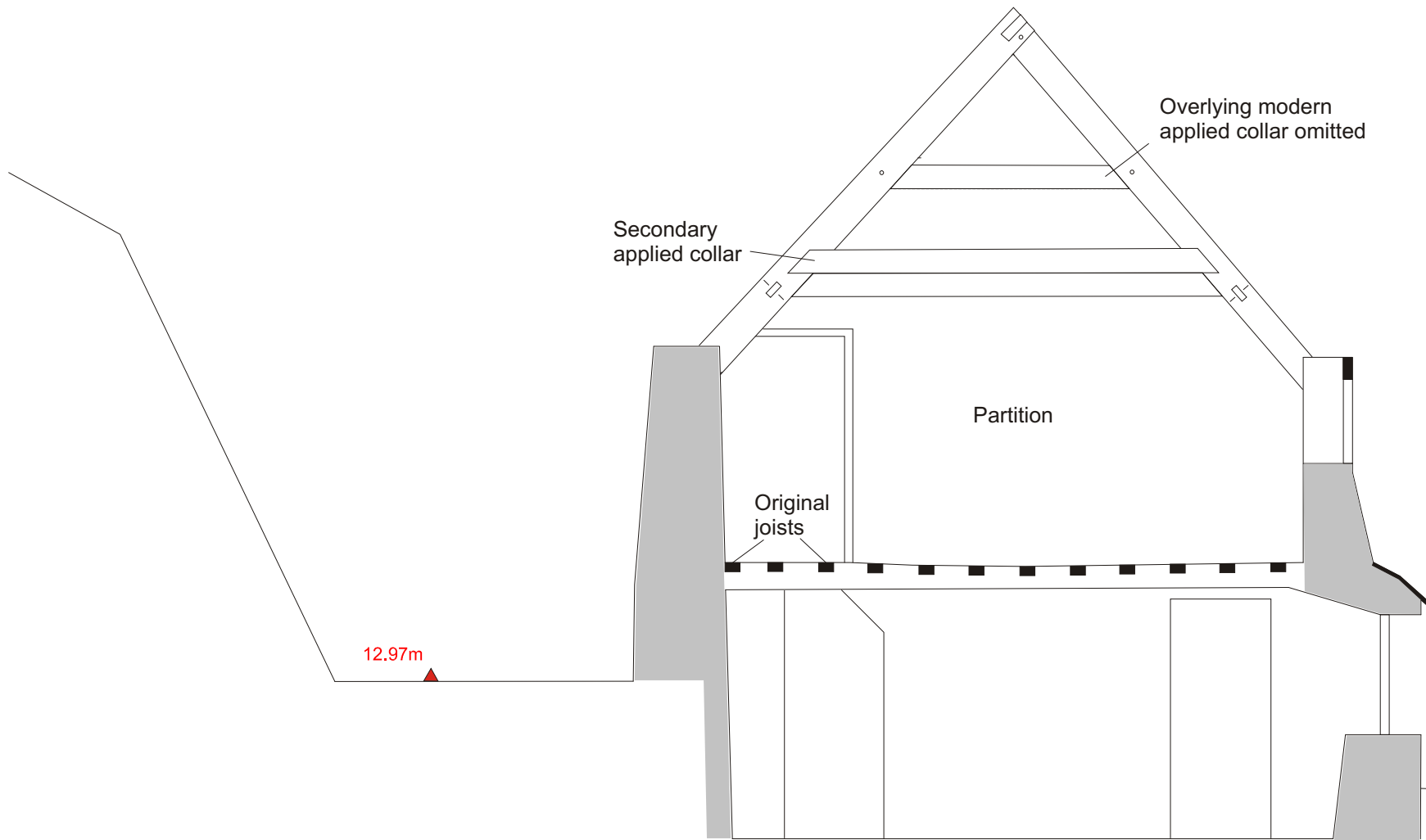


PROJECT

2 Brook Cottages, Netherton, Devon

TITLE

Fig. 8: North elevation



12.97m



PROJECT
2 Brook Cottages,
Netherton, Devon
TITLE
Fig. 9: Profile A-B



Plate 1: Nos 1 and 2 Brook Cottages viewed from the highway, looking southeast



Plate 2: The south elevation, looking east-northeast. 1m scale



Plate 3: The niche in the south elevation, looking east. 0.30m scale



Plate 4: The first-floor masonry of the south elevation showing ends of roof timbers, looking east. 1m scale



Plate 5: The partition wall with No. 1 showing the chimney stack, looking east



Plate 6: The south gable at first-floor level showing bricks of 20th-century rebuild, looking northeast. 1m scale



Plate 7: The north elevation at first-floor level, looking north-northwest. 1m scale.



Plate 8: The kitchen showing the lining to the south wall, looking southeast. 1m scale



Plate 9: The blocked opening in the south wall of the kitchen, looking south.



Plate 10: The top of the bridging beam in the kitchen showing former joist sockets, looking south. 1m scale.



Plate 11: The fireplace in the living room, looking north. 1m scale



Plate 12: The blocked openings in the northeast corner of the living room, looking northeast. 1m scale



Plate 13: The partition between the living room and stairs, looking south. 1m scale



Plate 14: The north end of the bridging beam over the partition showing two of the original joists (to left and right), looking southeast



Plate 15: The south bedroom showing the lath and plaster partition with the north bedroom, and part of the enclosed stairs, looking north. 1m scale



Plate 16: The ceiling of the south bedroom showing the evidence for lath and plaster, with the modern wall lining beyond, looking south



Plate 17: The bathroom showing its modern finishes and window, looking east. 1m scale



Plate 18: The stack in the north bedroom, looking northwest. 1m scale



Plate 19: The east side of the north bedroom showing, from left to right, the blocked opening to No. 1 in the north wall, the remains of the north truss, and the window in a possible door opening, looking east. 1m scale.



Plate 20: The partition between the north bedroom and the stairs, looking south. 1m scale



Plate 21: The surviving roof structure, looking northeast



Plate 22: The south roof truss, looking northeast



Plate 23: The surviving roof structure, looking east

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