

1 CHURCH LANE, TAVISTOCK, DEVON

(NGR SX 48097 74385)

Results of historic building recording

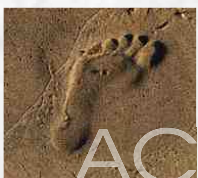
West Devon Borough Council planning ref. 01203/2015
(condition 9)

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On behalf of:
Ward Chowen Commercial Ltd

Document No: ACD1807/2/0

Date: April 2018



AC archaeology

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Client	Ward Chowen Commercial Ltd
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Checked by	Paul Rainbird
Approved by	Andrew Passmore

The recording was commissioned by Ward Chowen Commercial Ltd and managed for them by Neil Woolcock and for AC archaeology by Simon Hughes. The site visit was carried out by Andrew Passmore, and report illustrations were prepared by Leon Cauchois.

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.

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Summary

Historic building recording of a 1940s document store at 1 Church Lane, Tavistock Devon (SX 48097 74385) was carried out by AC archaeology in March 2018 prior to demolition of the building.

The store was constructed in the early years of the Second World War to house documents held by Ward and Chowen Chartered Surveyors and Estate Agents. This move was taken as a protection against the threat of incendiary bombs. The building was designed with a ventilation system to allow an air flow into the building, but to prevent water ingress. Most of the original shelves survived intact.

1. INTRODUCTION (Fig. 1)

1.1 This document sets out the results of historic building recording carried out by AC archaeology on 29 March 2018 prior to the demolition of an outbuilding at 1 Church Lane, Tavistock, Devon (SX 48097 74385). The recording was commissioned by Ward Chowen Commercial Ltd, and was required under condition 9 of Listed Building Consent granted by West Devon Borough Council (reference 01203/2015) for 'internal and external alterations' to 1 Church Lane. Guidance on the scope of works was provided by the Devon County Council Historic Environment Team (hereafter DCCHE).

1.2 The property is located in the centre of Tavistock, bounded by properties fronting Plymouth Road to the south and the curtilage of St Eustachius's Church to the east. 1 Church Lane is Listed Grade II (National Heritage List for England entry 1326180) and was constructed in c. 1825, possibly being designed by John Foulston. The outbuilding is situated within the yard to the south of the main building on flat ground at 84m aOD.

1.3 The consented works include the demolition of the above-ground elements to the outbuilding followed by the overlaying of its foundation and the wider yard area with gravel.

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The property lies within the historic core of the town and is situated in the northeast extent of the former precinct of Tavistock Abbey (Devon County Council Historic Environment Record entry MDV3919). 1 Church Lane comprises a Greek Revival Style two-storey house whose construction forms part of the wider replanning of Tavistock by the landowners, the Dukes of Bedford. During the 19th century the family gained from the local mining industry in the Tamar Valley, and they remodelled and gentrified the town. This area now forms part of the Tavistock district of the Cornwall and West Devon Mining landscape World Heritage Site, with the house at 1 Church Lane forming a visible reminder of this period.

2.2 The outbuilding forming the focus of this report comprises a concrete structure dating to the 1940s. It is considered to have been built sometime between the beginning of the Second World War and 1943 as a secure store to house documents held by Ward and Chowen Chartered Surveyors and Estate Agents. This was needed as a protection against the threat of incendiary bombs (Neil Woodcock, Ward Chowen, *pers. comm.*). The structure is depicted on Ordnance

Survey mapping dating to 1954 and is visible on a 1947 RAF aerial photograph (Bill Horner, DCCHET, *pers. comm.*).

3. AIM

- 3.1 The scheme will comprise the demolition of the outbuilding. Therefore, the aim of the survey was to preserve by record information on the construction of the structure and any fixtures and fittings of historic architectural interest.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The recording was undertaken in accordance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by AC archaeology (Hughes 2018), the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* (revised 2014), and the AC archaeology *General Site Recording Manual, Version 2*.

- 4.2 The historic building recording was carried out to levels 1/2 as set out in *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (Historic England 2016), and comprised the following elements:

- A written description comprising a basic description of the fabric of the building and evidence for its date and original use, and any surviving *in situ* historic or more recent architectural features and fixtures and fittings;
- A basic photographic record, including a general record, both internally and externally, along with a more detailed record of surviving *in situ* historic architectural features and fixtures and fittings; and
- A measured survey of the outbuilding at 1:50 comprising a floor plan, along with elevations to show the location of architectural features.

5. THE OUTBUILDING (Figs 1 and 2; Plates 1-9)

Introduction

- 5.1 The outbuilding is situated towards the southwest corner of the yard, and is freestanding, but located close to the western boundary (Fig. 1; Plate 1). It is rectangular and aligned northeast to southwest broadly following the orientation of the adjacent, earlier buildings.

Description

- 5.2 The structure measures 3.7m by 3.2m externally, and 2.9m by 2.6m internally, and is constructed of two skins of concrete blocks separated by a cavity. This cavity forms part of a ventilation system, with offset vents in the two skins of walls allowing air circulation into the store, without water ingress that would damage the contents. There are three vents both internally and externally in the northwest and southeast elevations (Plates 2-4). The outer vents have metal grills flush with the elevations whilst the inner vents are open. In the southwest elevation there is a single central internal vent; the exterior is covered with ivy and due to the proximity of the building to the boundary wall is not accessible. The external elevations are finished with a cement render.

- 5.3** The building is entered via a door in the northeast elevation (Plates 5 and 6). This is set within a wooden frame that incorporates a slatted open vent above the opening. Internally this vent is fitted with a galvanised steel mesh to prevent insects entering the building. The door itself is a reused 19th-century 6-panel door, whose outer face has been boarded over.
- 5.4** The floor is concrete and abuts the walls; the foundations (or foundation slab) of the building are not visible. The structure has a slightly pitched roof that overhangs the external elevations (Plate 5). Internally this is flat with scars of wooden shuttering, and along with the internal elevations is painted white.
- 5.5** Internally the store has been fitted out with four rows of shelves, which are attached to tall vertical brackets that support all four rows (Plates 7-9). The shelves have been removed from the northwest wall, but all the brackets remain. The quality of the woodwork is high, and is typical of a trained carpenter. The only other fittings are a light attached to the ceiling, and an associated switch and a socket attached to the northwest wall adjacent to the door. These have a mixture of plastic and Bakelite fittings, and are post-war additions.

6. COMMENTS

- 6.1** There is reliable oral evidence that the outbuilding was constructed sometime between the beginning of the Second World War and 1943 as a secure store to house documents held by Ward and Chowen Chartered Surveyors and Estate Agents. This move was taken as a protection measure against the threat of incendiary bombs.
- 6.2** Locally, there are accounts that the outbuilding had other uses, namely as a Second World War telephone exchange or an air raid shelter associated with an exchange located in 1 Church Lane (information provided to Bill Horner, DCHET).
- 6.3** The current survey has confirmed the first interpretation, that the outbuilding was constructed as a secure store to house documents. The design of the building was clearly as a store, the clearest evidence being the primary fitted shelves (originally) around all four walls. These display high quality carpentry, indicative of 'old-fashioned' skills, i.e., they are not later 20th-century additions. A second strand of evidence is the vent above the door, and the ventilation system utilising a cavity within the two skins of the walls. This is a technique used, usually in military buildings such as explosives magazines, to allow a free flow of air into and around a store but preventing the ingress of water or dust/debris that would be harmful to the stored contents.
- 6.4** The other suggested uses can be discarded on the basis of additional evidence. Firstly, as noted above, the shelves are primary features, and there is no evidence for other removed fittings, such as benches, tables, or communications equipment, that would be associated with a telephone exchange. Secondly, the store is constructed to a local design, specific to its purpose (as discussed in Section 6.3 above). The building does not conform to standard (or government recommended) designs of an air raid shelter that would be expected if the building had this function and was associated with a telephone exchange.

7. ARCHIVE AND OASIS ENTRY

- 7.1 An OASIS entry has been completed using the unique identifier 314168, and this includes a digital copy of this report.
- 7.2 This report along with the OASIS entry represent the archive for the project. Copies of the report have been distributed to the client, the Devon County Historic Environment Record, Tavistock Museum and Tavistock Library.

8. SOURCES CONSULTED

Printed source

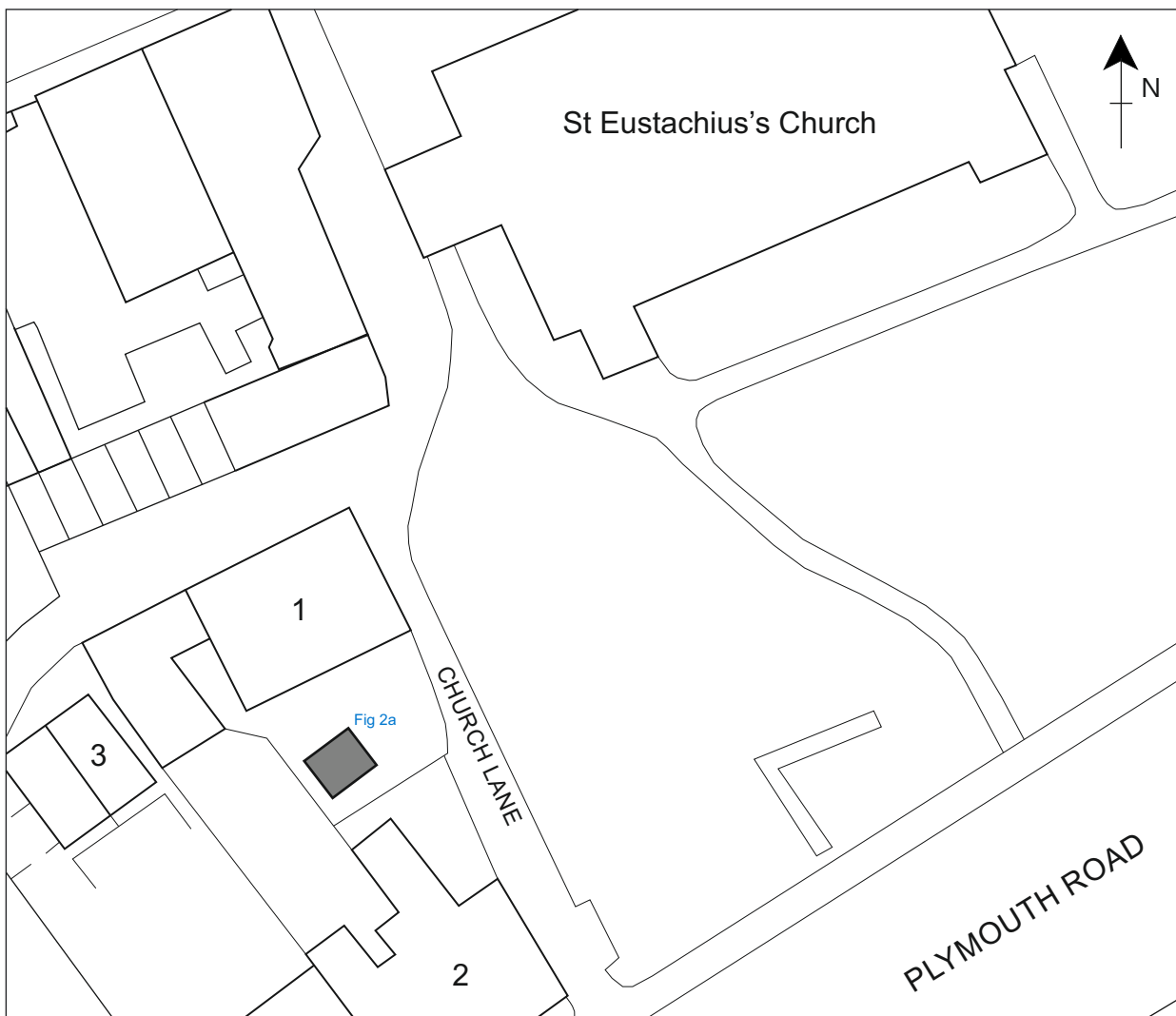
Hughes, S., 2018. *1 Church Lane, Tavistock, Devon, (NGR SX 48097 74385), Written Scheme of Investigation for historic building recording*, West Devon Borough Council planning ref. 01203/2015 (condition 9), AC archaeology document no. **ACD1807/1/1**

Website (accessed April 2018)

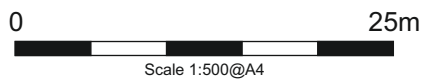
National Heritage List for England
<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>



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Based on drawing provided by the client

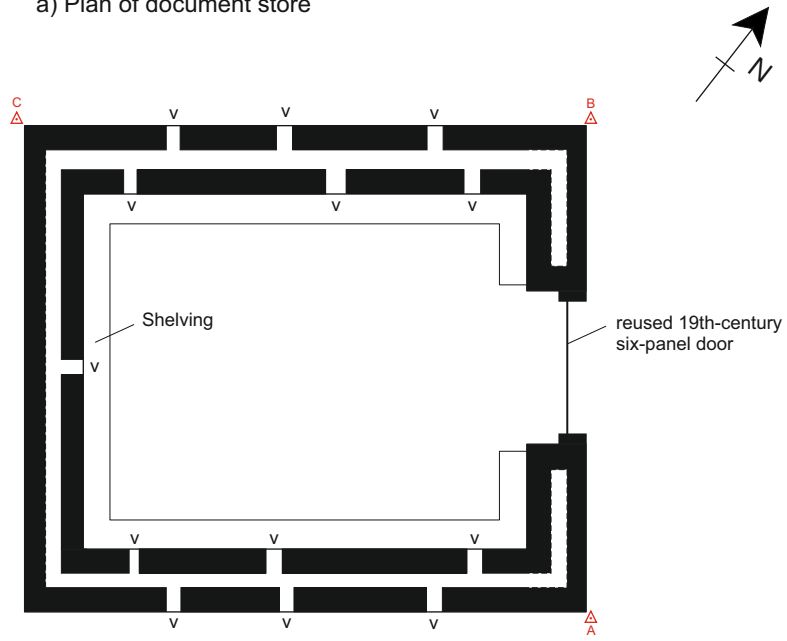


PROJECT
1 Church Lane, Tavistock, Devon

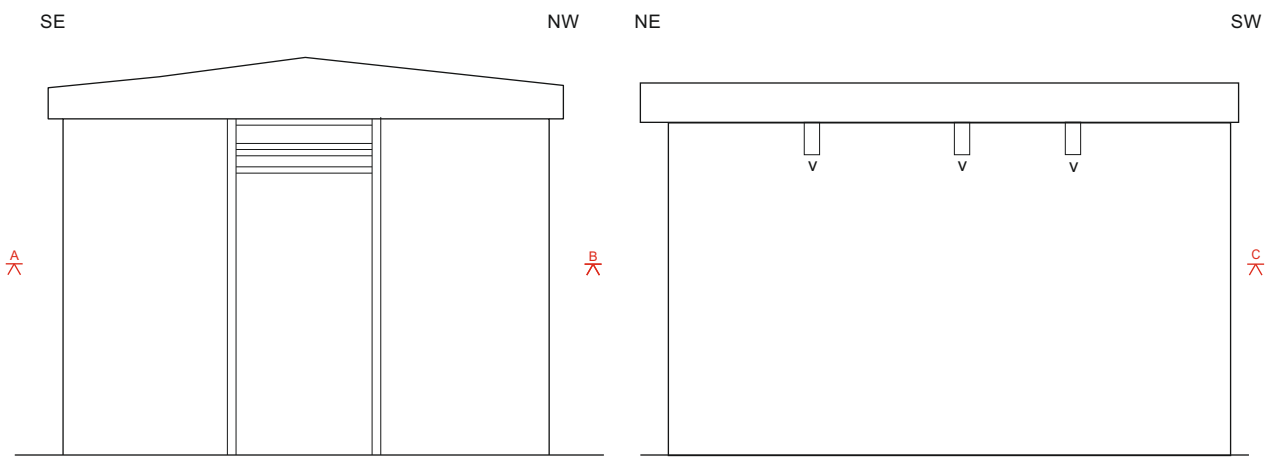
TITLE
Fig. 1: Site location



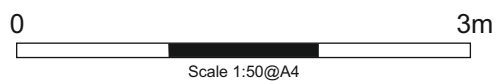
a) Plan of document store



b) Elevations of document store



v vent



PROJECT

1 Church Lane, Tavistock, Devon

TITLE

Fig. 2: Outbuilding, plan and elevations





Plate 1: 1 Church Lane showing the outbuilding within the yard, looking northwest



Plate 2: The outbuilding showing the vents in the southeast elevation, looking northwest (1m scale)



Plate 3: The outbuilding showing the vents in the northwest elevation, looking southeast (1m scale)



Plate 4: The northwest internal elevation showing vents, looking north



Plate 5: The northeast elevation showing the doorway with slatted vent above, looking southwest (1m scale)



Plate 6: The reused six-panel door, looking east (1m scale)



Plate 7: The shelves attached to the north end of the northeast elevation, looking north (1m scale)



Plate 8: The shelves attached to the north end of the southwest elevation, looking southwest (1m scale)



Plate 9: The shelves attached to the southwest and southeast elevations, looking south (1m scale)

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