

# THE OLD COACH HOUSE, BACK STREET, MODBURY, DEVON

(NGR SX 65833 51729)

## Results of Historic Building Recording

South Hams District Council planning reference  
2545/17/FUL, condition 4

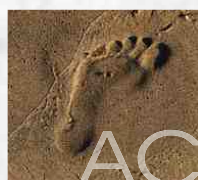
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On behalf of:  
Crayon Architecture

Document No: ACD1906/2/1

Date: October 2018



AC archaeology

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The document was commissioned by Crayon Architecture and managed for them by Daniel Atkins, and for AC archaeology by Andrew Passmore. The site visit was carried out by Andrew Passmore, and facilitated by the site owner. The illustrations for this report were prepared by Sarnia Blackmore.

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**

*An historic building record of the Old Coach House, Back Street, Modbury, Devon was prepared by AC archaeology on behalf of Crayon Architecture in September and October 2018 prior to the conversion of the building into a dwelling. The building was constructed as a combined stables and coach house, probably with accommodation for a stable hand, in the late 18th or early 19th century. Mid or late 19th-century alterations comprised the replacement of some surfaces with brick pavements. Following disuse in the 20th century the building was converted into industrial use, which included alterations to the yard elevations, the interior as well as the replacement of the roof structure.*

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

**1.1** This report has been prepared by AC archaeology in October 2018, and presents the results of historic building recording prior to the conversion of the Old Coach House, Back Street, Modbury, Devon (SX 65833 51729). The survey was commissioned by Crayon Architecture, and was required under condition 4 of the grant of planning permission (South Hams District Council reference 2545/17/FUL) for the "conversion of a redundant stone coach house building into a dwelling". The recording was requested by the Devon County Council Senior Historic Environment Officer in his consultee response to the application (as quoted in the planning officer's report).

**1.2** The property is located on the north side of Back Street, a road that connects Brownston Street and Barracks Road, and is within the Modbury Conservation Area. It is situated at a height of 40m aOD within a south-facing valley. The underlying geology consists of Devonian slate, siltstone and sandstone of the Meadfoot Group, overlain by Quaternary alluvium of clay, silt, sand and gravel (British Geological Survey online viewer 2018).

**1.3** The building comprises three (currently) single-storey ranges set around a small yard that opens onto Back Street. The application area also includes part of the adjacent field to the north and associated access track to the east of the building.

### **2. AIM**

**2.1** The scheme will involve the conversion of the building, which will remove and obscure fixtures and fittings and historic architectural features of interest including masonry and wooden external finishes (of varying dates). The aim of the investigation was therefore to prepare a full survey of the building prior to works commencing.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

**3.1** The recording was undertaken in accordance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation (Passmore 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*.

**3.2** A site visit was carried out on 18 September 2018 and included:

- A written description of the building;
- Annotated architect's as existing drawings showing phases of masonry and the location of surviving historic fixtures and fittings; and
- A 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.

#### **4. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (Figs 2-3)**

**4.1** Modbury, as a manor, certainly dates from the later Saxon period, and in the *Domesday Book* (1086) Modbury is recorded as MOTBERIA. The manor at this time was held by the Norman Valletort family. The manor passed to the Oxton family and in the 14th century to the Champenowes. Modbury Priory was founded in the 12th century; this was probably located close to the current church, but was very small and nothing remains. Two battles took place at Modbury during the English Civil War. Modbury became a relatively wealthy town, largely based on the production of serge, with nearly half the population involved in this trade in 1801. However, a downturn in this trade after the Napoleonic Wars led to a stagnation in the town, probably not helped by poor access to water transport. To a certain extent this has been a benefit in that fine 18th and 19th century buildings front the major streets with older buildings often located in plots behind. Modbury continued as a prosperous market centre during the 19th century and despite the population dropping from 1821 onwards the aspirations of the townsfolk, many of whom were lesser gentry or professional classes, were not diminished as can be seen by the establishment of the Modbury Literary and Scientific Institution which boasted purpose-built premises in a Classical style that were opened in Brownston Street in 1840.

##### **Ordnance Survey surveyor's draft, 1803 (not illustrated)**

**4.2** The earliest maps do not show the area in detail. The building is not recorded on the Ordnance Survey 2 inch to 1 mile map of 1803, but Modbury is placed at the edge of this map and probably does not include the area of the building.

##### **Modbury Tithe Map, 1841 and Apportionment, 1841 (Fig. 2)**

**4.3** The structure is first depicted, as a C-shaped building, on the Modbury tithe map of 1841. It formed part of plot 1188, which also included the field to the north. It is shaded in grey indicating that it is not a dwelling. The map depicts a series of paths within this field, a small, linear building against the east boundary, and what appears to be a pond against the north boundary; the latter two are located outside of the current application area. The 1841 apportionment records that the plot was owned by Servington Savery and occupied by John Thomas Savery. It was under pasture, called Doggapit Meadow, and was not tithed in association with any other land.

**4.4** The Savery family has a long association with Modbury following the purchase in 1614 of Shilston, an estate and large house to the northeast of the town, by Christopher Savery, a wealthy Totnes merchant. Christopher's son was named Servington, and this cannot be same one mentioned in the tithe apportionment, but the name must have continued in the family. A Thomas Savery of the Shilston family who died in 1714 was a military engineer and inventor and aided Thomas Newcomen of Dartmouth in the invention of the steam engine. The Saverys were no longer at Shilston by the time of the tithe survey and Servington Savery ought to be in residence at the country mansion of Fowelscombe, in Ugborough parish, which he

received in 1839 due to the non-payment of a large loan that he had made to previous owner, John King (Lauder 1997). There is no listing for Fowelscombe in the Ugborough tithe apportionment of 1842, but Servington Savery is listed as a landowner, particularly of land at East Peak ('East-Peeke' on the tithe map of 1843), which is located on the edge of Dartmoor to the east of Ugborough Beacon. The 1841 census does, however, list Servington Savery at 'Fowlcombe', with his wife and two daughters and a retinue of 9 staff.

- 4.5 In the 1841 census John T. Savery, a 25-year old solicitor, is listed as residing in Brownston Street, Modbury. He has a household large enough to require three servants and it is probable that he rented the nearby coach house for his horses and trap.

**First Edition 25-inch Ordnance Survey, 1887 (Fig. 3)**

- 4.6 The first edition 25-inch Ordnance Survey map of 1887 records what was plot 1188 on the tithe map with a similar layout, including the building against the east boundary and the pond. The Old Coach House is recorded as four attached structures – an L-shaped north and east range, with a second element forming the west end of the north range, and two elements forming the west range. The east range, opening onto the yard, was open fronted.

**Second Edition 25-inch Ordnance Survey, 1906 (not illustrated)**

- 4.7 The second edition 25-inch map of 1906 records no changes to the Old Coach House, but the building along the east boundary of the field to the north has been demolished. A new boundary subdividing most of the northern third of the field has been constructed and a small paddock now adjoins the west side of the barn and a short boundary has been placed continuing the line of the north wall to the east connecting with the rear boundary of the properties in Brownston Street; this creates a small rectangular enclosed area to the east of the Old Coach house.

**Post-WWII onwards 25-inch OS mapping (not illustrated)**

- 4.8 Post war maps from 1952 onwards record the building as a single structure, with no evidence of subdivision into the four areas as depicted on earlier maps. The paddock adjoining the west side of the building has also been removed by this time as has the boundary continuing the line of the north wall of the structure to the east and removing the small rectangular enclosure.

- 4.9 The building is not recorded on the Devon Historic Environment Record, but is recorded in the Modbury Conservation Area Appraisal as a building that makes a 'positive impact' to the Conservation Area. It is however outside of the Modbury 'area of archaeological potential' (SHDC nd).

**5. THE OLD COACH HOUSE (Fig. 4; Plates 1-16)**

**External description**

- 5.1 The building comprises three single-storied ranges under pitched roofs, and is constructed of roughly coursed local slates bonded in a slightly gravelly lime mortar with granite blocks used for some quoins (Plate 1). Rare fragments of red brick have also been used as a filler material, and the walls have been heavily repointed. The property faces south onto Back Street, and this south elevation incorporates the end gables of the east and west ranges and a central double gate opening. The gables are featureless. The yard walls curve into the gateway and these feature stone merlons – two on east side and three on the west side – with offset brick lined voids

on the inside faces (Plate 2). They are topped with slate, which is also used to fill the crenels. The voids may have functioned as pigeon holes. The jambs forming the central opening have been rebuilt in the second half of the 20th century, and the gates are of the same date.

- 5.2** The east elevation incorporates a primary slight gate pier at the southeast corner, modified in the late twentieth century with the addition of a reinforced steel joist (rsj) (Plate 3). In the centre of the elevation is a doorway, under a slightly arched brick head. It has been blocked in brick in the 20th century. Externally, the remains of a slate surface survive within the adjacent access driveway. To either side of the doorway are concrete block piers. To the north is a window opening, set high into the wall (Plate 4). This has been blocked with the same local stone as the main walls. The top of the wall is finished with cement, which may have replaced some of the upper courses of stones.
- 5.3** Other than a structural tie the north elevation is featureless (Plate 5). The west elevation is also featureless (Plate 6).

#### ***Internal yard elevations***

- 5.4** The west internal elevation to the yard incorporates symmetrical fenestration with a pair of central doorways and windows to either side (Plate 7). All are under brick heads, and the windows have slate fills. The doors are plank and batten types set within slightly moulded frames. The bases of the doors are currently at different levels, with the south doorway higher than the north opening. The south window has two lights each with 10 lower panes and four upper panes. The north window has four larger panes.
- 5.5** The north elevation comprises a central section of stone work incorporating a small wooden four-pane window and the other end of the structural tie present in the north external elevation (Plate 8). To the west is a wide opening featuring a pair of twentieth century doors with weatherboarding above. The eastern half of the wall comprises concrete block masonry incorporating later 20th-century doors and windows, above which is earlier stone masonry incorporating a two-light window, each of six panes. The extreme east end of the wall is finished with large planks of weatherboarding of late 20th century date that extends to the full length of the east elevation (Plate 9). Here this finish incorporates a pair of wide doors and a long window with side opening end panes.

#### **The roof**

- 5.6** The roof covering of all three ranges is a modern replacement of cement tiles. The north range roof is higher and is fully hipped, whilst the east and west ranges have hips to their south ends.

#### **The yard**

- 5.7** The yard is mainly finished with phases of 20th-century concrete, but earlier surfaces survive at the west end. Alongside the west range is a cobbled surface, which has been replaced on its east side by a north to south aligned black brick paviour path edged with granite kerbs (Plate 10).

#### **The interior**

##### ***The west range***

- 5.8** The west range contains two rooms divided by a plastered stone wall. This is structurally separate from but contemporary with, the west wall. The south room floor

is laid with modern boards, and has probably been raised from the lower historic level (as in the adjacent room), with the base of the door cut off to accommodate this. The walls are plastered and feature a slight walk-in reveal for the window (Plate 11). Wooden beading has been added to the reveal and partially survives. There are no other historic fittings, with a modern mezzanine floor (that cuts across the top of the window) and shelving on the south wall being later 20th-century additions. The roof structure above the mezzanine is entirely modern.

- 5.9 The north room has a granite threshold and black brick paviour floor, along with secondary skirting boards. The walls are again plastered, and a modern ceiling has been added at eaves level. The only feature of interest is the remains of a wooden and iron feeding trough attached to the northeast corner of the room (Plate 12).

#### ***The north and east ranges***

- 5.10 The large west room in the north range is divided from adjacent rooms by primary stone walls but all the walls have been entirely lined with boards, a material also used to create a high-level ceiling. The room has a black brick paviour floor incorporating an east to west aligned drain set towards the yard side of the building (Plate 13). Also set within this surface are four sockets for vertical posts associated with partitions between three former stalls. Parts of the floor have been replaced with bricks and concrete.
- 5.11 The remainder of the north range is open plan with the east range (Plates 14 and 15). It has a modern concrete floor with a tiled slope down from the doorway in the east external elevation (Plate 16). Immediately north of this door is a pier of primary masonry that supports an rsj. A further two second rsjs, of differing lengths, span the length of the east range yard frontage supported by a vertical rsj post down to the floor. The stone pier displays a scar of a former doorway, with smooth masonry above where the stone masonry that continued to the west above the opening has been removed. To the south, in the east elevation, there is a row of sawn-off joists at eaves level that presumably supported a ceiling (and possible first-floor loft) rather than being associated with the original roof structure.
- 5.12 Towards the east end of the north elevation is a slightly projecting chimney stack incorporating a fireplace with a brick arched head supported on an iron plate (Plate 17). There are scars in the plaster above and to the west of this stack which appear to define a room, with a ceiling, in the northeast corner of the building. The horizontal scar however conflicts with the window in the east elevation. The scar continues to the west where there are also infilled joist sockets indicating the whole of this area had a ceiling. The western end joist, adjacent to the partition wall, remains *in situ*.
- 5.13 The roof of the north and east ranges is entirely modern, constructed of tie beams with rafters, collars and vertical struts. In the north range a single long plank has been reused as a low level support.

## **6. DEVELOPMENT OF THE BUILDING**

- 6.1 There is little to date the building, although the fittings in the east range would suggest a late eighteenth or early nineteenth century construction date; it has been constructed by 1841 when it is depicted on the Modbury tithe map. Its original uses can be determined from its plan form. The west range contained two individual stables whilst the west room in the north range also contained stables, latterly fitted out with three stalls. The east range is likely to have been the coach house, although the



presence of the tiled ramp to the doorway to the adjacent field may indicate additional stabling or a passage through the range into the adjacent field. The remainder of the north range may have been divided into two spaces, both with a floor over. Ground-floor uses may have included a tack room and accommodation for a stable hand. The surviving masonry in the south elevation indicates that there was a ground-floor window below the surviving first-floor window, and the first-floor masonry extends too low for coach storage. It seems likely that the first floor was a hayloft, perhaps with the blocked opening in the east elevation being a loading door from the slightly higher exterior ground.

- 6.2** Other than the replacement brick paving surfaces, of probable mid to late nineteenth century date, there are no other early changes to the building. The structure has been updated several times in the second half of the 20th century after it went out of use as stables and a coach house. It was converted into commercial use, most recently as a printers. Significant associated alterations included internal changes to the layout of the north and east ranges, changes to the fenestration of the yard elevations, and replacement of the roof structure.

## **7. ARCHIVE AND OASIS ENTRY**

- 7.1** The digital archive has been deposited with the Archaeology Data Service.
- 7.2** An OASIS (Online AccesS to the Index of Archaeological investigationS) entry has been created under the unique identifier 332026, and includes a digital copy of this report.

## **8. SOURCES CONSULTED**

### **Historic maps consulted**

Ordnance Survey surveyor's draft, 1803  
[http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/ordsurvdraw/m/002osd000000001u00013000.html?\\_ga=2.82823766.1140160343.1538561945-1683064763.1526468357](http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/ordsurvdraw/m/002osd000000001u00013000.html?_ga=2.82823766.1140160343.1538561945-1683064763.1526468357)  
[accessed 23 September 2018]  
Modbury tithe map (1841) and apportionment (1841)  
Ordnance Survey 25-inch Devonshire map sheet CXXV.15  
    First Edition, surveyed 1886, published 1887  
    Second Edition, revised 1904, published 1906  
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Passmore, A., 2018. *The Old Coach House, Back Street, Modbury, Devon, (NGR SX 65833 51729), Written Scheme of Investigation for historic building recording, South*

*Hams District Council planning reference 2545/17/FUL, condition 4, AC archaeology document no. 1906/1/0*

SHDC, nd, *Modbury Conservation Area Appraisal*, South Hams District Council.  
[http://modbury.net/downloads/Modbury\\_conservation\\_area\\_appraisal.pdf](http://modbury.net/downloads/Modbury_conservation_area_appraisal.pdf) [accessed 3 October 2018]

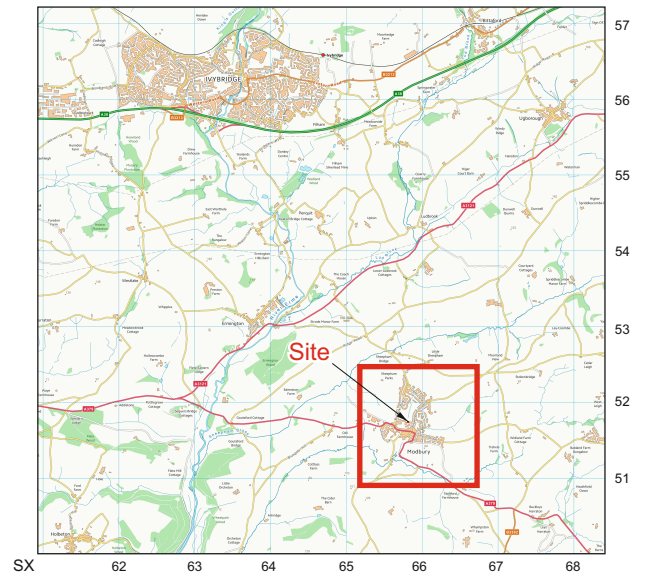
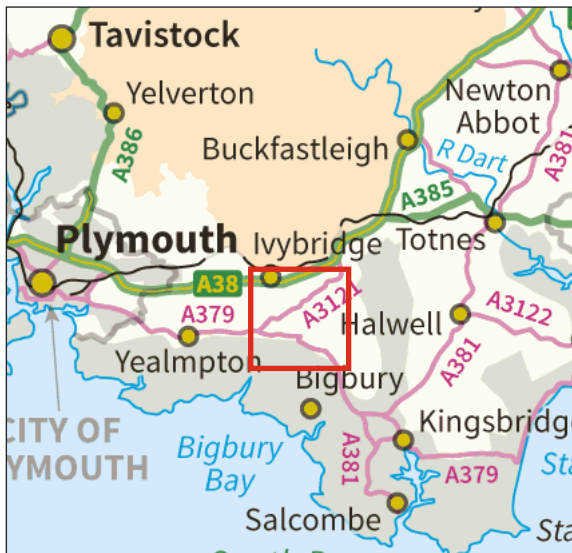
## **Websites**

British Geological Survey on-line viewer  
[www.bgs.ac.uk](http://www.bgs.ac.uk) [Accessed: 23 September 2018]

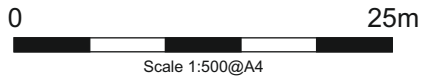
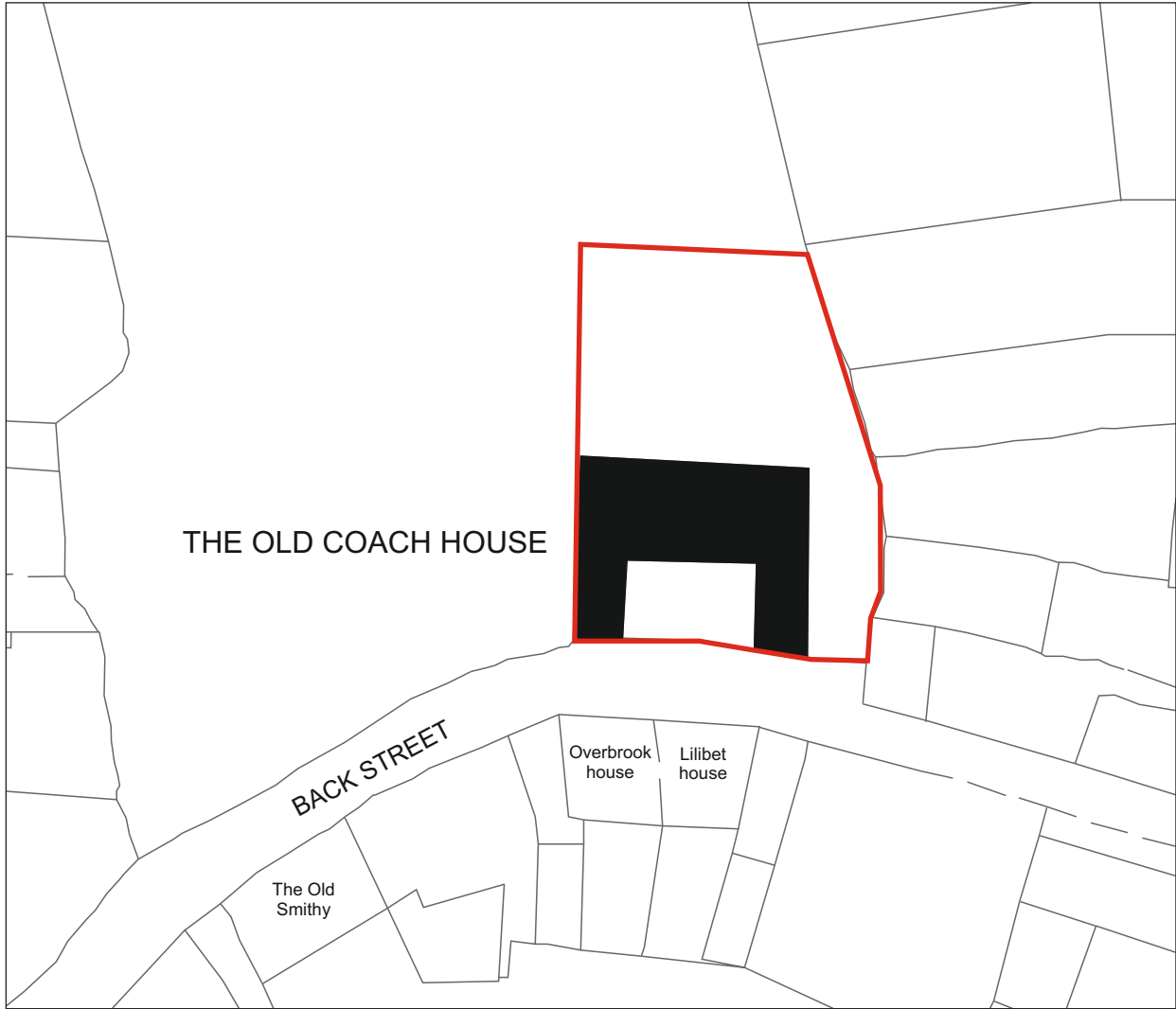
Devon County Council Environment Viewer  
<http://map.devon.gov.uk/DCCviewer/?bm=OSGreyscale&layers=Historic%20Environment;14&activeTab=Historic%20Environment&extent=219402;44202;325104;145934> [Accessed: 23 September 2018]

National Heritage List for England  
<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/> [Accessed: 23 September 2018]

The Unique Heritage of Modbury  
<http://modbury-heritage.co.uk/> [Accessed: 3 October 2018]



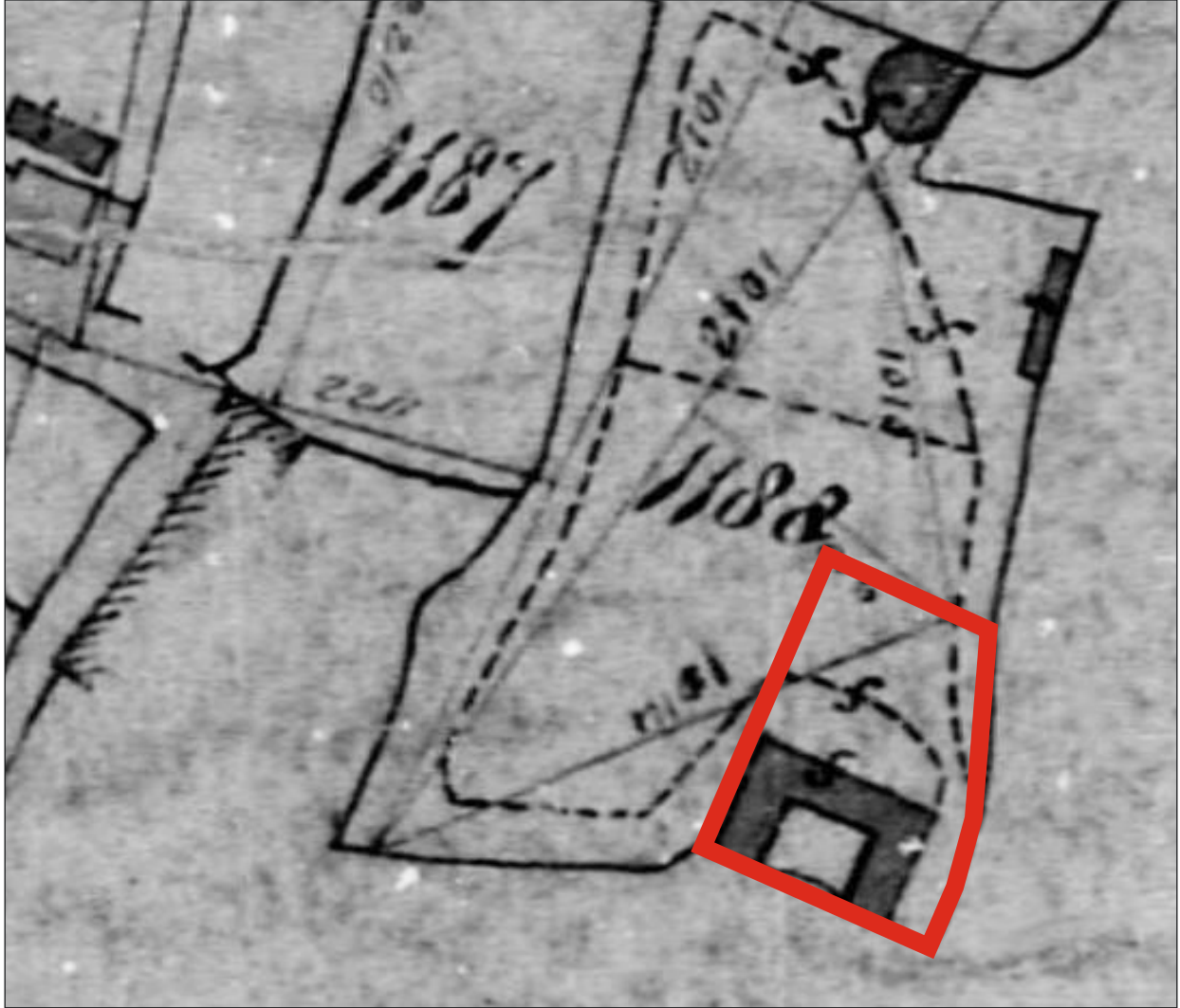
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PROJECT  
**The Old Coach House, Back Street, Modbury, Devon**  
 TITLE

Fig. 1: Site location



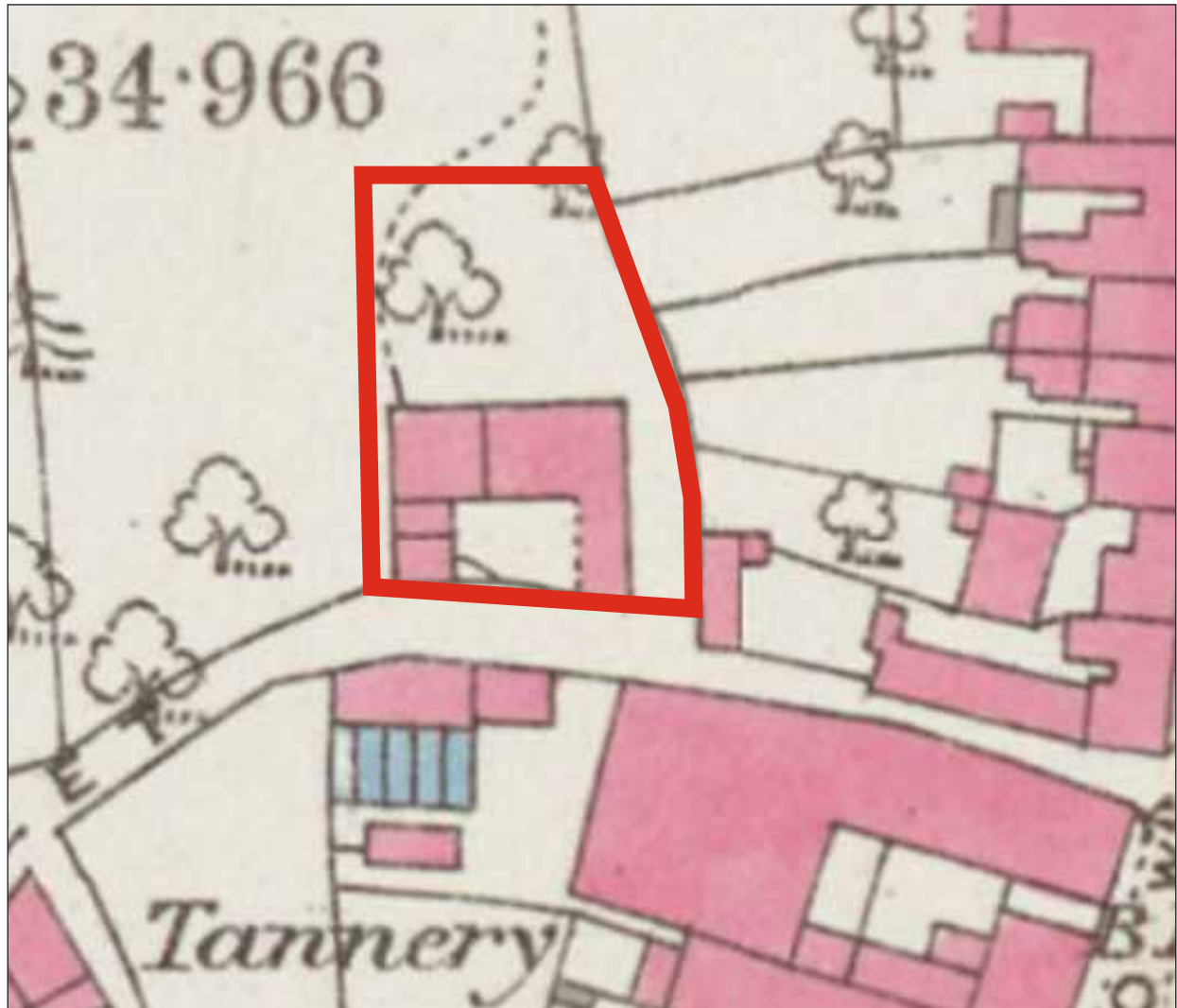


PROJECT

The Old Coach House, Back Street,  
Modbury, Devon

TITLE

Fig. 2: Extract from the Modbury  
tith map, 1841



PROJECT

The Old Coach House, Back Street,  
Modbury, Devon

TITLE

Fig. 3: Extract from the First Edition 25-inch  
Ordnance Survey map, 1887



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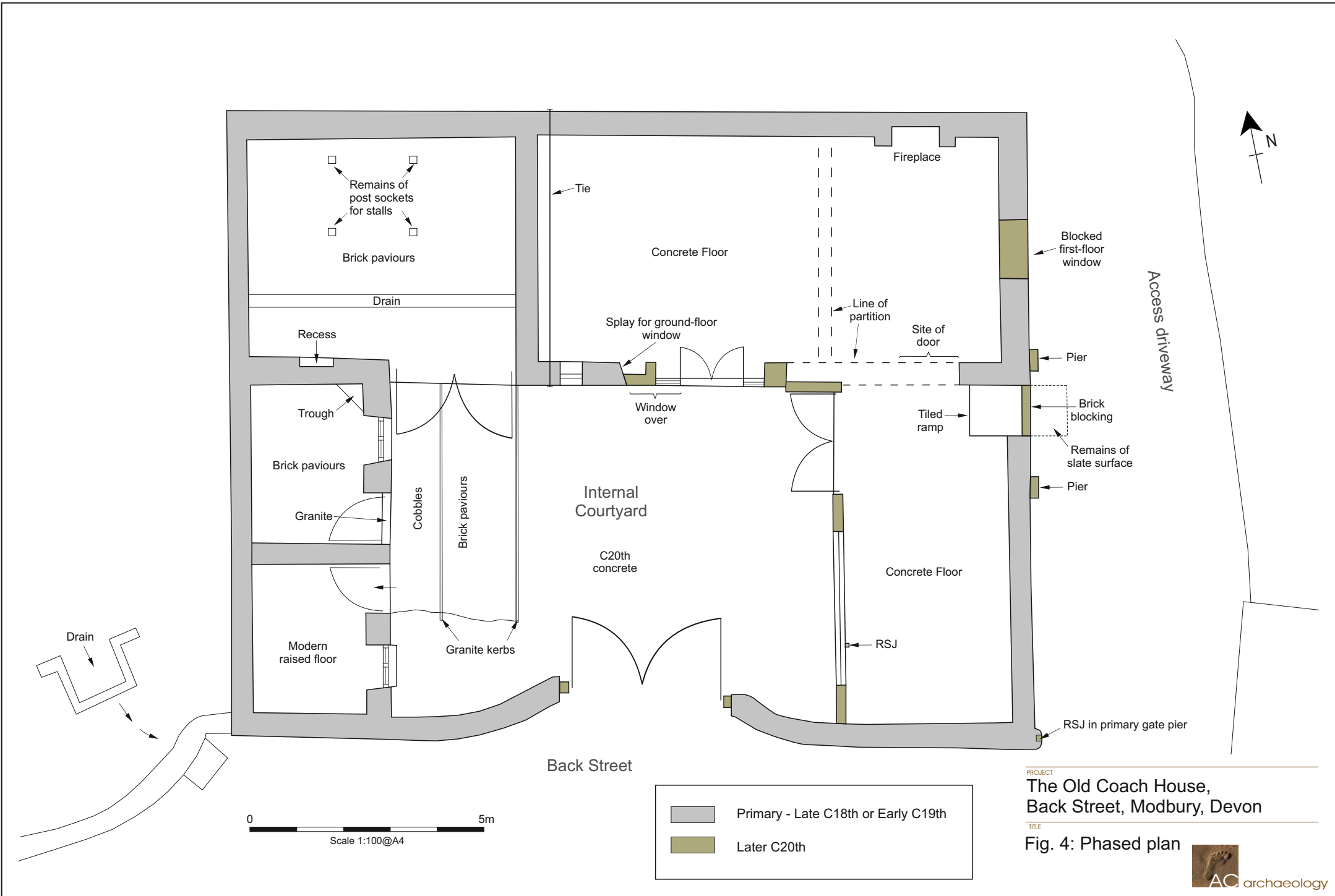




Plate 1: South external elevation, looking northwest. 1m scale



Plate 2: South wall of yard, looking south. 1m scale



Plate 3: East external elevation, looking northwest. 1m scale



Plate 4: East external elevation showing blocked window, looking west. 1m scale





Plate 5: North external elevation, looking south. 1m scale



Plate 6: West external elevation, looking east. 1m scale



Plate 7: West range, east elevation, looking west. 1m scale



Plate 8: North range, south elevation, looking north. 1m scale



Plate 9: East range, west elevation, looking east. 1m scale



Plate 10: Yard surface, looking north. 1m scale



Plate 11: West range, south stable, looking southeast.  
1m scale



Plate 12: West range, north stable showing feeding trough, looking northeast.  
0.30m scale



Plate 13: North range, west room drain, looking west.  
1m and 0.30m scales



Plate 14: North range, general view, looking west



Plate 15: East range, interior, looking south. 1m scale



Plate 16: East range, ramp and remains of partition, looking northeast. 1m scale



Plate 17: North range, fireplace in north elevation, looking north. 1m scale

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