



Archaeological Recording of former Coach House to the rear of No. 16 Vyvyan Terrace, Clifton, Bristol.

NGR ST 57202 73345

Archaeological Standing Building Survey Report

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Abstract

This report sets out the methodology and results of a programme of archaeological recording (Standing Building Survey) on a structure at the rear of No. 16 Vyvyan Terrace, Clifton, Bristol BS8 3DG. The study area lies within the Clifton Conservation Area and is a Grade II* listed building. The site (**Figures 1 and 2**) has been granted listed building consent for repairs (ref: 07/03659/LA) and a standard planning condition SC83 (Condition 3) has been attached to the permission as the floor joists and boards are thought to be the originals, and the present application is to repair or replace these as appropriate.

The Watching Brief was undertaken for Catherine Coats to satisfy the listed building consent and was designed to record all features likely to be affected by the proposed works, and place them in their proper context. Archaeological recording took place on the 25th February 2009, during which written notes, a surveyed ground floor plan and digital still photographs were taken.

Introduction

A programme of Archaeological Recording has been requested by the Archaeology Officer, of the Local Planning Authority as a standard requirement of Listed Building Consent and in accordance with the guidelines set out in PPG 15 (DoE 1994. *Planning and the Historic Environment*). The study area (**Figure 2**) is a residential terraced house and garden situated on the south side of Vyvyan Terrace, Clifton, Bristol. To the rear (south) of the study area runs Vyvyan Road, a cul-de-sac. The survey was required to create a permanent record of all features of a building in the grounds of No. 16 Vyvyan Terrace likely to be disturbed or destroyed by repairs, in particular the ground floor ceiling and first floor timbers.

Avon Archaeological Unit Limited (The Unit) were commissioned by Catherine Coates to carry out the work as above and in accordance with the Relevant Guidelines of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, English Heritage's "Management of Archaeological Projects (2)" and the standard procedures of Avon Archaeological Unit Limited.

Geology and Topography

The underlying geology of the Study Area is comprised of Mercia Mudstone Marginal Fascias (Dolomitic Conglomerate) of the Triassic Era (BGS 2004). The Study Area is located on the south side of Vyvyan Terrace, off Clifton Park. A spot height of 75.0 m at the junction between Vyvyan Terrace and Landsdown Road, is shown on the accompanying Ordnance Survey map (see **Figure 2**). The Study Area and surrounding land is generally flat.

The Recording (see **Figure 3** and **Plates**)

Recording at site was undertaken on the 25th February 2009. Access to the study area was gained via Vyvyan Road, to the rear of No. 16. Weather conditions at the time of recording were overcast, with intermittent drizzle, none of which had any detrimental affect on the standard of recording. Survey was undertaken using a combination of hand tapes and a Leica Disto laser measuring instrument; an Olympus digital SLR was used for all photography.

The subject of the recording exercise is a two-storey structure, a former coach house at the rear of No. 16 Vyvyan Terrace. This is a completely separate building from the main house, divided from it by the back garden. The property is aligned roughly north to south, with the house at the northern end of the property and the former coach house at the southern end. The long axis of the coach house is aligned roughly east to west, occupying the entire width of the property at that location. The southern wall of the former coach house forms the southern boundary of the property with Vyvyan Road.

Although the former coach house appears rectangular, on closer inspection it is in fact an irregular four-sided polygon (see **Figure 3**). As recorded this structure measured c. 7.10 m long east to west, c. 5.85 m wide at the western end and c. 4.90 m wide at the eastern end. While the eastern and western walls are roughly parallel, the northern and southern walls are not.

Where measurable external wall thickness was found to be around 500 mm at ground floor level, this narrowed significantly above internal first floor level, but the condition of the first floor prevented accurate recording of this feature.

As exposed the majority of the external walling appears to be of rough-coursed rough-hewn or unhewn stone, bonded with lime mortar. The south face was the easiest to record as this is completely accessible from Vyvyan Road (see **Plate a**). Here the majority of the stone appears to be the locally occurring dolomite conglomerate, with occasional slabs of pennant sandstone and more frequently occurring use of (presumably reused) Bath stone ashlars. From approximately head height up the corners are in stressed Bath stone quoins. The height of this face measured 4.72 m from street level to guttering.

In the south face there are two entrances. The eastern is a segmental arched wooden double doorway opening outwards on wrought iron hinges. The arch is executed in

brick. This appears to be an original feature of the structure. The western entrance is a folding double door beneath a reinforced steel joist (RSJ) that indicates this doorway was a later insertion. Between the two entrances stands a pier of material, the western side of which is composed of Bath stone ashlars, while the eastern side of which is in hand-made house bricks laid to a pattern that suggests it was formerly one side to an earlier entrance. It is surmised the earlier entrance (for a horse) was replaced with a wider entrance for a car.

There is a low first floor single wooden doorway located centrally in the south face. Mortared hand-made bricks define both sides of the door. A moulded concrete threshold appears to be a later replacement. The lintel is in wood. Although no pulley apparatus or fixings were visible it is suggested this doorway was for loading hay and other goods from the street directly onto the first floor.

The north wall was harder to record as it is partially obscured by ivy and other garden shrubs and bushes. This face is also rendered and painted white (see **Plate b**). There is a single ground floor entrance at the western side, a pointed gothic arch at variance with the architecture of both the house and the south face of the coach house. There is a single 330 mm step down from the garden into the doorway. On the eastern side of this wall are four blind pointed arches, two at ground floor level and two at first floor level. There is no internal indication these were ever windows. There is a pilaster strip above first floor level and the wall ends in a low parapet. It was not possible to measure the height of the north face.

There is a first floor single wooden doorway above the ground floor entrance with wooden lintel and threshold. A vacant slot beneath the threshold indicates where a porch was once located (Catherine Coates, personal communication). In the eastern side of the wall is a first floor wooden sash window with six lights.

As exposed the eastern wall is of similar construction to the southern wall, up to the height of the southern wall (see **Plate c**). From that level an extension in machine made brick rising upwards towards the north is evident. The same is also true on the west side of the building.

Internally the ground floor is divided into two rooms, the longer but narrower western room measuring 4.85 m north to south by c. 2.40 m wide (see **Figure 3** and **Plate d**), and the larger eastern room, measuring up to c. 4.45 m north to south by up to 3.70 m wide (see **Plate e**). As exposed the western room is floored with flagstones, while the eastern room is floored with a mixture of flagstones and cobbling. In the eastern room a single drain is evident near the foot of the steps to the first floor. A lime-plastered brick built wall 180 mm thick forms the partition between the two rooms, with a single standard doorway between the two at the southern end. There is no artificial lighting in either room.

The ground floor rooms are rendered with painted lime plaster, in some locations traces of an earlier blue paint are exposed. What appears to be a single blocked fireplace is evident in the southern half of the west wall. There are two wooden shelves, one on either side of the western room. On the western shelf are three metal fixtures, one of which appears to be for the suspension of a bridle, while another appears to be for a saddle (Amy Willis, Avon Archaeological Unit Limited, personal communication).

On either side of the eastern room are the remains of wooden stalling for a horse or horses. The western side appears to be complete, while on the eastern side several planks have been missing since before the present owner took up occupancy (Catherine Coates, personal communication). There was no observable trace of a central stall, though the appropriate place where traces of one might be found against the north wall was obscured. It is possible this area was intended as stalling for one horse only, with more room for the horse (Amy Willis, Avon Archaeological Unit Limited, personal communication).

Although the principal subject of this recording exercise is the flooring of the first floor, in practice this was rendered almost impossible by the condition of the floor and the access to it. The only access was an internal wooden stepladder, a semi-permanent fixture of 14 steps, located in the southeast corner. Step no. 6 was broken and care was required on some of the others. The steps ran in a single flight up from north to south, leading to a closable rectangular hatchway that measured c. 1.16 m north to south and c. 600 mm wide. The wooden hatch opened upwards and was hinged on the eastern side. As the steps and the eastern stall furniture overlapped it is possible the steps were added at a later date, after the stabling function had gone out of use.

The first floor (see **Plate f**), as examined from the hatchway and from the underside is clearly in a parlous state and in the opinion of the author is unfit to bear any significant weight. In places, particularly towards the western side, the floor is broken. Where portions of the ceiling material (late 20th century boarding) have been removed/dislodged, the rotten condition of the joists can clearly be seen from below. Therefore only photographic recording from the upper steps of the ladder was possible at first floor level.

There are no internal divisions on the first floor.

Where not repaired or replaced, the majority of the flooring is of short lengths of solid wood (probably pine, but not determined on site) planks or 'deals', of varying widths, laid from south to north across the width of the building. The homogenous appearance of the timber suggests the majority of it had been laid at the same time, with very little later replacement. The varying widths and lengths give the impression that economy had been a major factor in the choice of flooring material, with offcuts used wherever practicable in preference to long lengths of timber.

Where exposed the joists appear to be standard pine planks laid edge down on an east to west alignment and set into the fabric of each wall and the brick built dividing wall that separates the stables from the coach housing. It could not be determined whether the joists are short and come to and end at the dividing wall, or whether they extended the full length of the building, but in the opinion of the author the latter seems most probable. The exact frequency and number of joists could not be ascertained, but in the brick dividing wall they appeared to be spaced approximately a brick and a half apart.

There is only one surviving part of the ceiling that is not of plasterboard or similar material. This is a rectangular area inside the garden door of the property, composed of painted or stained wooden strips or lathes (again, probably pine), fastened to the joists with nails and moulded wooden rails. Above, and projecting back from either side of the doorway were two rectangular wooden boxes, apparently to accommodate the supports for a first floor balcony no longer extant (Catherine Coates, personal communication). The balcony and first floor doorway probably date from a time when the building was occupied as a home. Apparently a family were still living there after World War 2 (Catherine Coates, personal communication).

As exposed, the present roof does not appear to be an original part of the coach house. It is a single pitch wooden structure sloping down to the south, with wall plates and a single central purlin supporting rafters spaced approximately two brick lengths apart. The rafters are overlain with what appears to be reused planks. Externally the roof is surfaced with an unidentified corrugated material. No metal flashing is visible. Two rectangular holes in the roof indicate the former location of skylights recently removed (Catherine Coates, personal communication).

Summary and Conclusions

A standing building at the rear of No. 16 Vyvyan Terrace, Clifton, Bristol has been surveyed and recorded prior to proposed replacement of the single pitch roof and proposed repair and replacement of the first floor joists and floorboards. This project was undertaken in response to a condition attached to listed building consent for the above works.

The structure was found to be a former coach house fronting a back lane, with egress for coach and horse(s) onto the lane. There was a single entrance on the north side for access to the main house via the garden.

Where practicable and safe all pertinent features were recorded in context. While the majority of the building fabric may date from the time of the construction of the main house (1836, Catherine Coates, personal communication), the roof is clearly a later (20th century) replacement. As far as could be ascertained the joists and timbers of the first floor are original, but on visual inspection the author considered them to be unsafe to walk upon or to support any significant weight. There are already several holes in the floor. Most of the ground floor ceiling material is in modern board and has suffered water damage where it has not already been removed. There is one area of wooden panelled ceiling with locating boxes for the former porch supports, inside the northern entrance. It is not clear whether this is an original feature but it does relate to the historic use of the building as a family home.

Several other features of the building were noted for the historic record in case of accidental damage or future decay.

The project archive will in due course be deposited with the Bristol Museum and Art Gallery.
The OASIS entry for this project will be updated and completed.

General References

British Geological Survey 2004

Bristol. England and Wales Sheet 264, 1:50,000. Nottingham.

DoE 1994

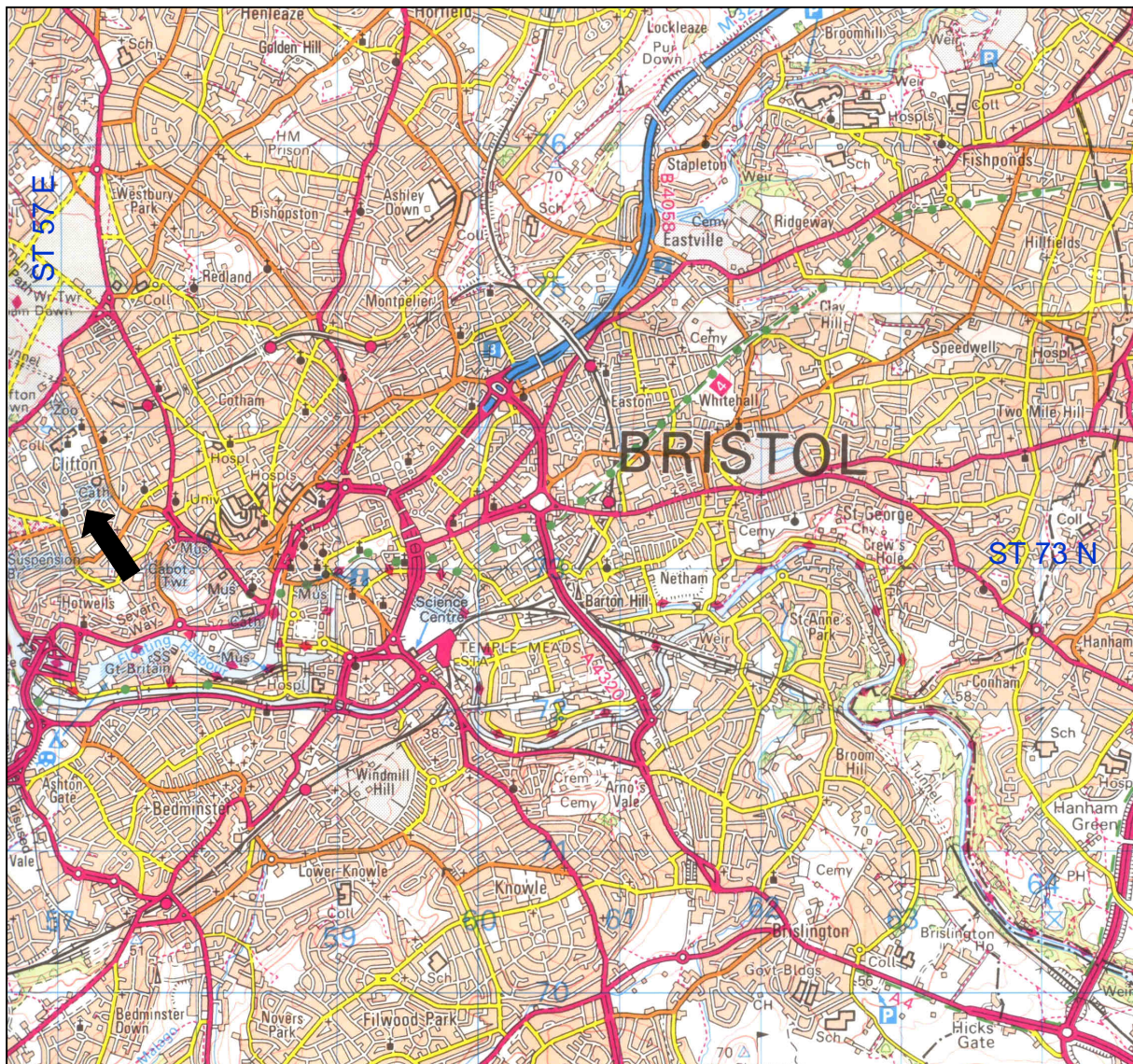
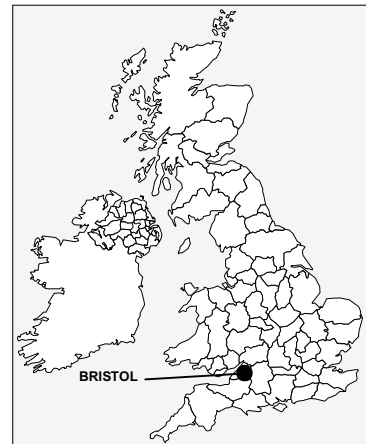
Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 *Planning and the Historic Environment*
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Figure 1

Location of the Study Area ←



Scale 1:50,000

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Figure 2

Boundary of the Study Area (outlined in Red)

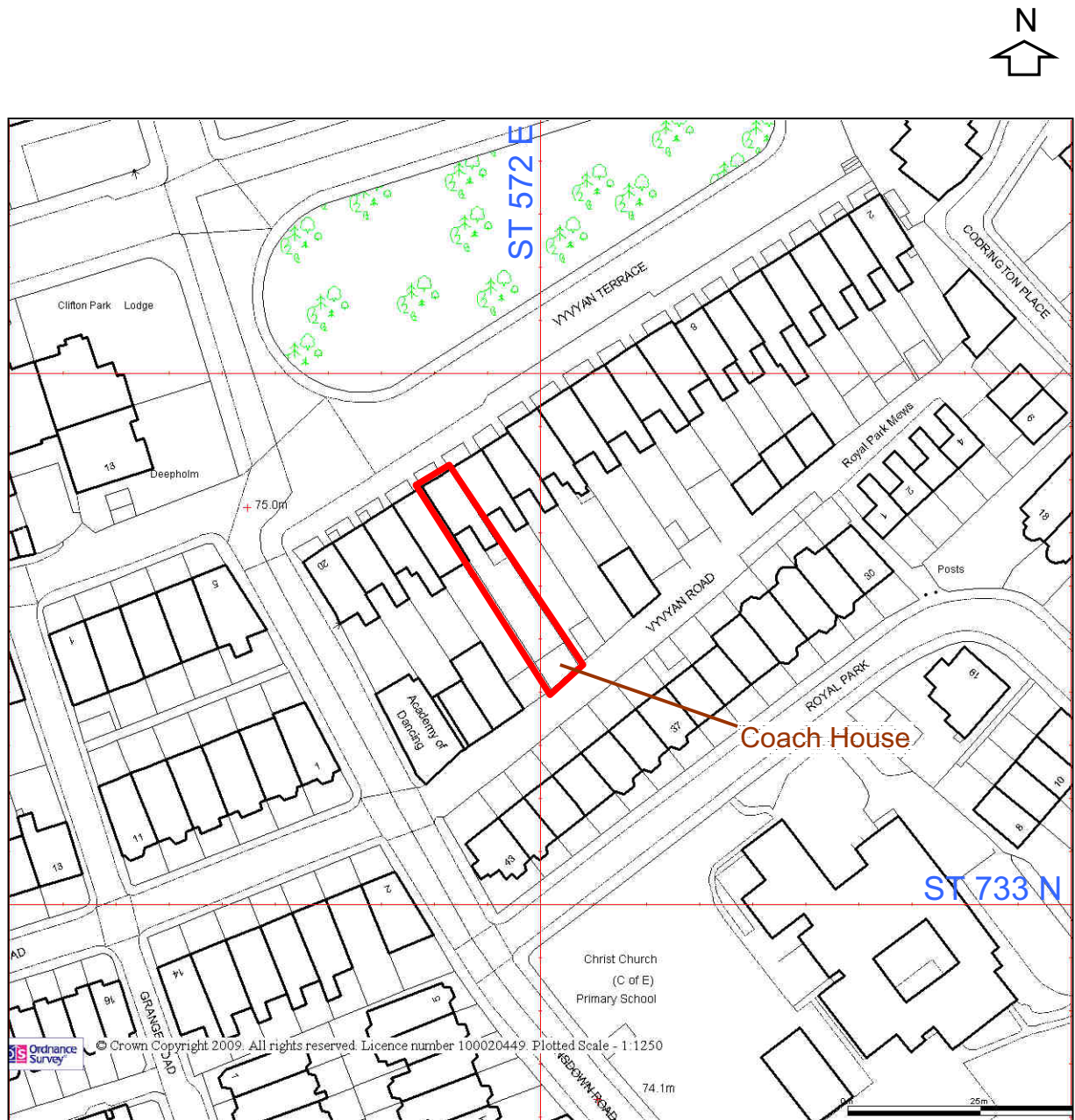
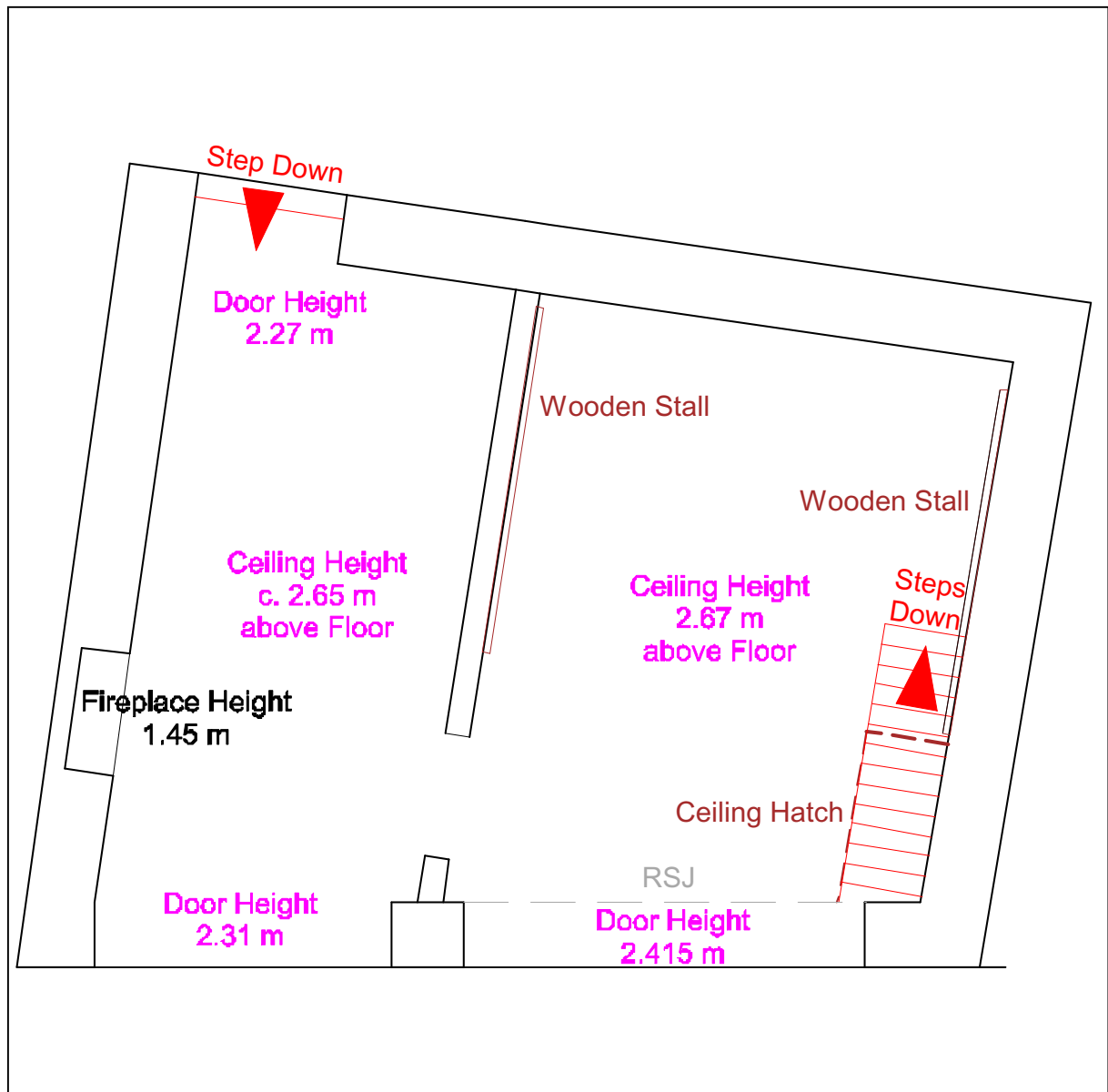


Figure 3

Ground Floor survey of the Coach House (scale 1:50)



Plates



a. The southern face of the Coach House fronting Vyvyan Road, looking north. Scales 2 m by 2 m.



b. The northern face of the Coach House, looking south from the garden of No. 16. Scale 2 m.



c. Detail of the east face of the Coach House, looking northwest. No scale.



d. Ground floor interior view showing ceiling and former balcony supports over garden door, looking north. Scale 2 m.



e. View of the former stables area, showing stalls and water damaged ceiling boards, looking northwest. Scale 2 m.



f. Interior view of the first floor of the Coach House, looking west. No scale.