

Nos. 5 & 6 Kingsdown Parade  
&  
15 Marlborough Hill, Kingsdown, Bristol

Archaeological Evaluation & Recording Project  
(NGR ST 518 736)

HER 24865  
BRSMG 2010/23



On Behalf of  
The University of Bristol Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Kevin Potter BA (Hons)

**Avon Archaeological Unit** Limited

Bristol: April 2010



Nos. 5 & 6 KINGSDOWN PARADE  
&  
No. 15 MARLBOROUGH HILL, KINGSDOWN, BRISTOL

NGR ST 5857 7369

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On behalf of:

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Report Prepared by:  
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## CONTENTS

SUMMARY  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS  
NOTES  
COPYRIGHT  
ABBREVIATIONS

1. INTRODUCTION
2. METHODOLOGY
3. THE SITE & HISTORIC BACKGROUND
4. THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
5. THE STANDING BUILDING SURVEY
6. CONCLUSIONS
7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

### FIGURES & PLATES

- Cover: No. 15 Marlborough Hill, looking north-west.  
Plate 1 Detail of cut 124 in section looking NW. Trench 1.  
Plate 2 Detail of wall 115 looking SW. Trench 1.  
Plate 3 Detail of wall paper attached to wall 115.  
Plate 4 Looking SW along trench 1.  
Plate 5 Looking SE along Trench 2.  
Plate 6 Looking SE along Trench 3.  
Plate 7 Detail of structure 311. Looking SE.
- Figure 1 Site Location Plan, Extracted from 1: 25,000 scale OS plan.  
Reproduced at 1: 15,000 scale.  
Figure 2 Plan of the study area with trench locations & the location of 15  
Marlborough Hill.  
Figure 3 Extract from Roques 1750 Plan of Bristol.  
Figure 4 Extract from Plumley & Ashmeads 1828 Plan of Bristol.  
Figure 5 1:50 plans of the Evaluation Trenches.  
Figure 6 1:20 Section Drawings, Trenches 1 & 3.  
Figure 7 Ground Plan of 15 Marlborough Hill with selected views. 1:100 scale.  
Figure 8 East-south-east facing elevation of 15 Marlborough Hill with details  
and views. 1:50 scale.  
Figure 9 North-east, south-west and frontage elevations of 15 Marlborough Hill  
with details and views. 1:50 scale.  
Figure 10 Phased elevations of Number 15 Marlborough Hill.

## SUMMARY

Avon Archaeological Unit Limited were commissioned by the University of Bristol Hospital NHS Foundation Trust to undertake a programme of archaeological recording works, comprising three archaeological evaluation trenches, in the grounds of Nos. 5 and 6 Kingsdown Parade, and a standing building survey of No. 15 Marlborough Hill. The project was commissioned to inform a future planning application for the proposed development works on the site.

The archaeological evaluation revealed partial remains of a 19<sup>th</sup> century brick building that fronted Kingsdown Parade, within the grounds of No. 5 and a deeper sequence of modern deposits sealing a red brick wall and possible mortar surface, of unclear provenance, within the grounds of No. 6 Kingsdown Parade. Trench 1 (located at the front of the grounds of No. 5) produced the most conclusive data and determined that there is some limited preservation of structures and cut features, which correlate well with features recorded on Plumley and Ashmeads 1828 plan, but that preservation is greatly reduced by the presence of 20<sup>th</sup> century pipes and fuel tanks related to the filling station, which formerly occupied the site.

The standing building recording made a record of the surviving, above ground, fabric of No. 15 Marlborough Hill. Particular attention was paid to establish the earliest fabrics of the structure and to understand its development. Three phases of construction were identified, comprising late 18<sup>th</sup> century remnants within a largely 19<sup>th</sup> century building plus later 20<sup>th</sup> century and modern alterations. The survey data appears to support the developmental narrative for the building suggested by Dr R. Leech in his 1998 study of the area, in particular the assertion that the building had its origins as a small square building (probably a late 18<sup>th</sup> century summerhouse) located in the west corner of the property. It is concluded that there is some potential for the preservation of subterranean structures and deposits associated with No. 15 Marlborough Hill though further archaeological evaluation would be required to establish the presence, extent and quality of any such remains.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## NOTES

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AAU	Avon Archaeological Unit Limited
aOD	Above Ordnance Datum
BRSMG	Bristol City Museum & Art Gallery
HER	Historic Environments Record
OS	Ordnance Survey



Figure 1

Site Location Plan. Extracted from 1:25,000 OS plan. Reproduced at 1:15,000 scale



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0 750m



Figure 2

Boundary of the study area with Location of the Building recording at 15 Marlborough Hill & the Evaluation Trench Locations





Figure 3

An Extract from a Facsimile of the 1750 *Plan of the City of Bristol* by John Rocque

Approximate Location of the Study Area indicated in red

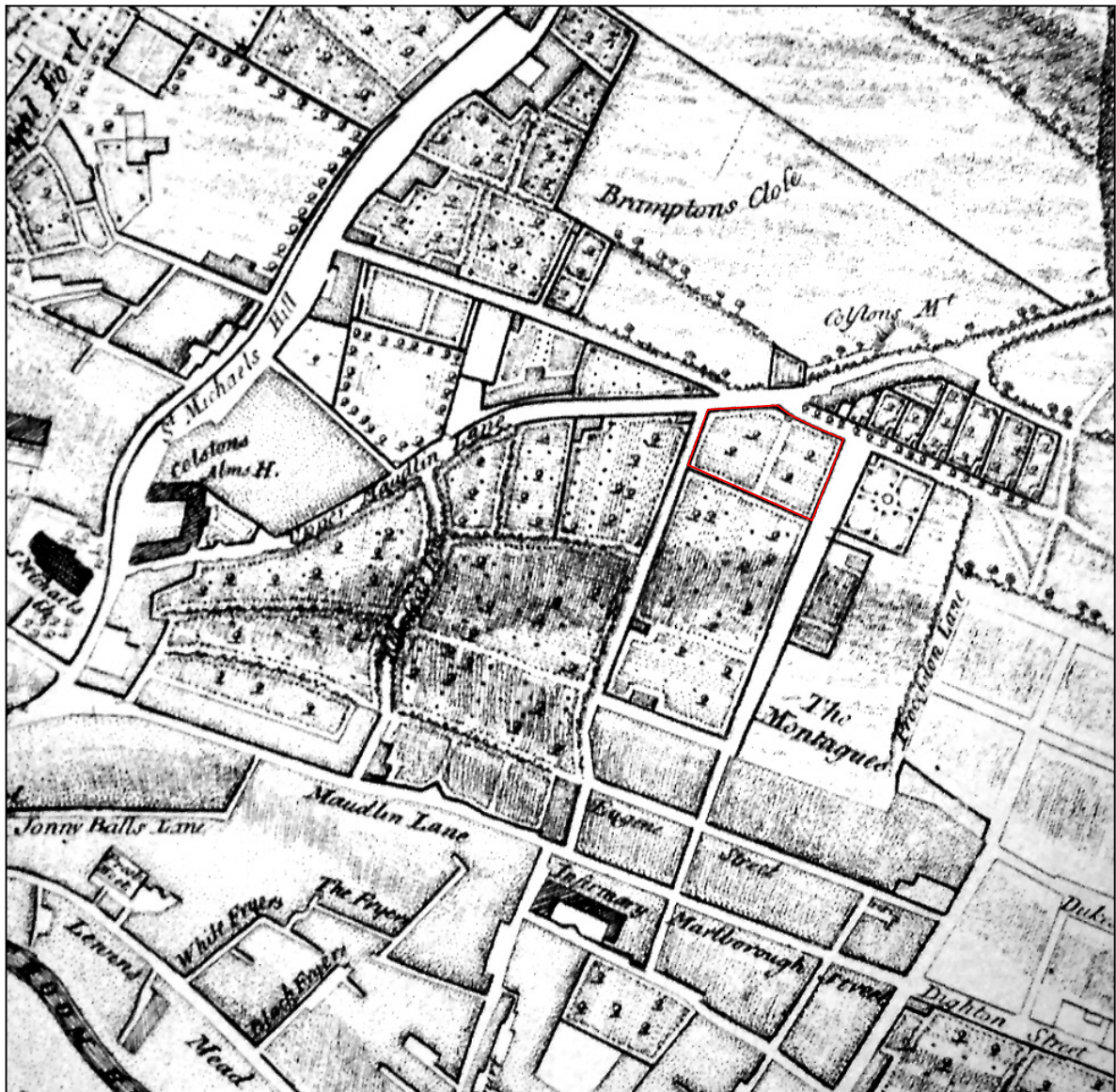
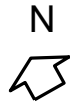
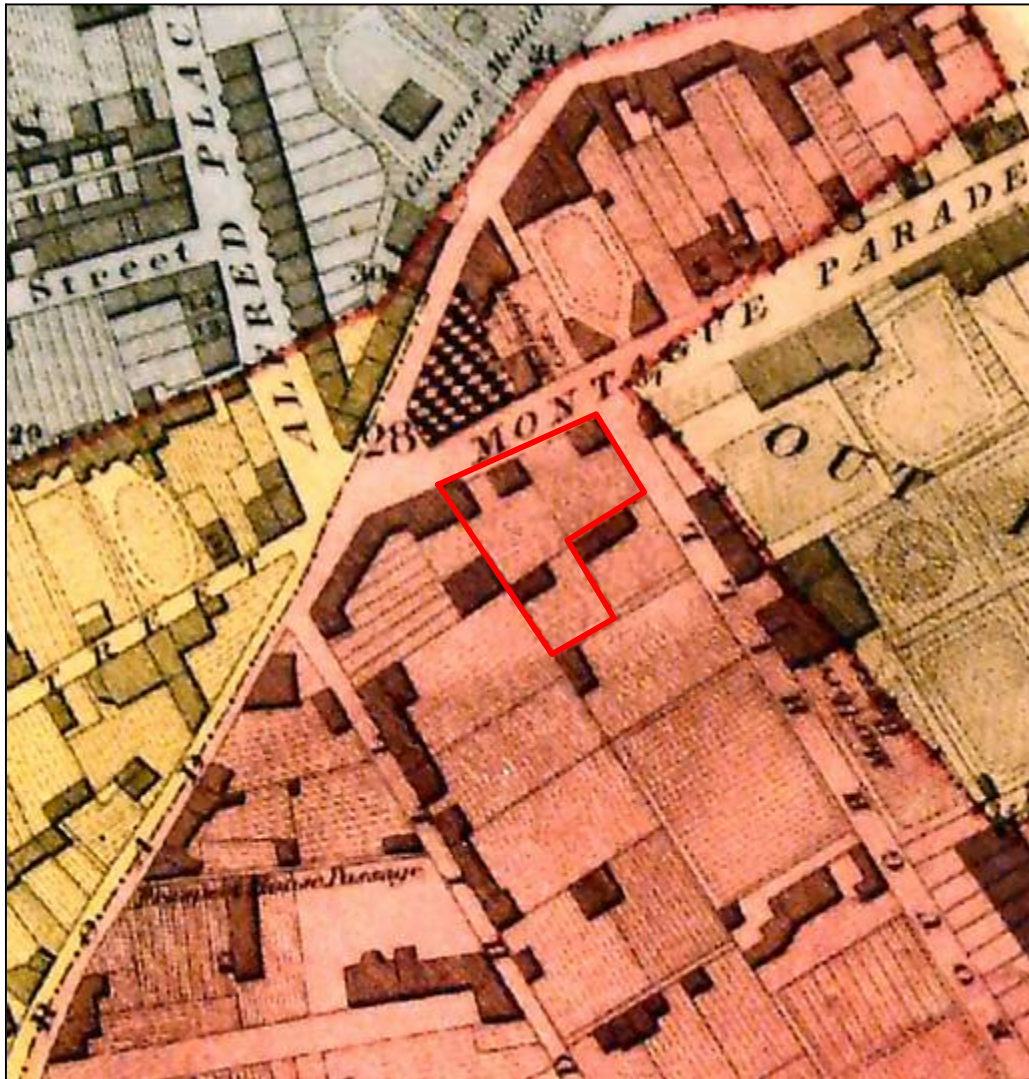




Figure 4

An Extract from the 1828 Plan of the City of Bristol and its Suburbs  
by G. Ashmead and J. Plumley, BRO/04481/North Sheet (facsimile)

Approximate Boundary of the Study Area outlined in red



No set scale

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The University of Bristol Hospital Foundation NHS Trust intend to submit a planning application for redevelopment of the site; this project was commissioned to inform any such application.
- 1.2 The site (centred on NGR ST 5857 7369) covers an area of c.1004 m<sup>2</sup> located on the south-eastern side of Kingsdown Parade. It is bounded by No. 4 Kingsdown Parade to the west, by Kingsdown Parade to the North, Marlborough Hill to the east and by the house and gardens of No. 17 Marlborough Hill to the south.
- 1.3 The study area spans three plots of land, the archaeological evaluation trenches were located within the grounds of Nos. 5 and 6 Kingsdown Parade and the building survey recorded the remains of No. 15 Marlborough Hill. The hill has been terraced and each of the plots comprising the site were at different heights. Levels were taken from a local benchmark at No. 18 Kingsdown Parade which has a recorded value of 65.34m aOD. The underlying geology of the study area comprises Mercian Mudstone of the Triassic system.
- 1.4 The project was conducted between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of March 2010 under the supervision of Kevin Potter who subsequently compiled this report.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 The project was conducted in accordance with an agreed written scheme of investigation (AAU 2010) produced by Andrew Young of Avon Archaeological Unit Limited in response to a Brief specified by Mr Bob Jones, Archaeological Officer for Bristol City Council.
- 2.2 The archaeological evaluation trenching was conducted in accordance with the project brief and guidelines issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists, English Heritage and the standard recording methods and procedures of Avon Archaeological Unit Limited. With the exception of Trench 3 (**Figure 2**) the trenches were excavated using a mechanical excavator to the first archaeological feature or deposit, after which further excavation was conducted by hand. Trench 3 was excavated entirely by hand. All stratigraphic units were recorded photographically and in detailed scale plans.
- 2.3 A fourth evaluation trench, identified in the Brief and located within the grounds of No. 15 Marlborough Hill was not undertaken due to practical constraints but is programmed for excavation at a later date.
- 2.4 The building survey was conducted to English Heritage (English Heritage 2006) level 2 specification with additional detailed surveys, of the standing elevations, using an Electronic Total Station. Photographs were taken in digital format and, though no dedicated rectified recording was required, rectified techniques were used for certain areas where deemed appropriate.
- 2.5 The project archive will be deposited with Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery under the accession number BRSMG 2010/23 and an entry for the project will be made in the Bristol City HER under the reference 24865.

### 3 THE SITE & HISTORIC BACKGROUND

- 3.1 An archaeological desk-based assessment by Dr Roger Leech in 1998 (Bristol HER 1342M) encompassed the study area and a more detailed history of the site can be found in that document, details and other relevant information are summarised below.
- 3.2 The site lies within the historic parish of St James and within the early boundaries of Bristol as defined in the charter of 1373. Prior to the dissolution in 1539 the study area was owned by St James's Priory and lay within two closes of pasture called the Upper Montagues. The land then passed through a variety of hands but appears to have remained undeveloped until the early 18<sup>th</sup> century.
- 3.3 The historic character of the study area is largely defined by the land use in the late 18<sup>th</sup> – early 19<sup>th</sup> century as leased gardens. Leech's 1998 study includes a 1740 plan by Rocque, which clearly depicts a single plot of formal gardens encompassing the site. The earliest of Rocques plans that could be found during research for this project dated from 1750 (Figure 3). Whilst it does not depict the formal gardens illustrated in the 1740 plan from Leech's study it does show that the site was contained within a single walled garden, probably of agricultural nature. In either case the documentary evidence suggests this plot was later subdivided "*..assessments made for Land Tax show that by the 1760s Greville's garden had been subdivided...*" (Leech, 1998). The gardens created by the subdivision of Greville's plot were leased to wealthy Bristol citizens, Ashmeads 1828 plan (**Figure 4**) depicts the new plots, and it is here that the layout of property boundaries as they currently exist can first be seen. The plan shows that buildings, most likely summerhouses, had been erected in the upper north-east corners of the plots now called Nos. 5 and 6 Kingsdown Parade and that No. 15 Marlborough Hill may already have been extant. Despite the lack of supporting cartographic evidence, it is most likely that No. 15 Marlborough Hill also had its origins as a summerhouse and the standing remains (**Figures 7-10**) suggest that it was at the south-western end of the building. None of the historic structures recorded cartographically survive within the grounds of No. 5 whilst the standing building within the grounds of No. 6 is in the exact location of the preceding summerhouse and likely encompasses parts of its structure.
- 3.4 No. 5 Kingsdown Parade has undergone the most substantial changes in the modern period, until recently it was the site of a petrol station and has seen the construction of a concrete building in its southern corner, which abuts the rear elevation of No. 15 Marlborough Hill, and the installation of a concrete surface, which forms the current ground level. No. 15 Marlborough Hill has fallen into severe disrepair and the building is now derelict.



## 4. THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Note: Levels are not, for ease of reading, generally included in the text but can be taken from the scale plans at the back of this report.

- 4.1 Three trenches (**Figure 2**) were excavated and a fourth is programmed for excavation at a later date. Trenches 1 and 2 were located in the former garage forecourt of No. 5: Trench 1 was at the front of the site, aligned NE - SW, parallel with the street; Trench 2 was aligned NW - SE located towards the rear of the site and Trench 3 was located in the rear garden of No. 6, aligned NW - SE, alongside the boundary wall between Nos. 5 and 6. Each trench measured approximately 5 m by 2 m.

### Trench 1 (Figures 2 and 5)

- 4.2 The natural, a weathered pink-orange sandy clay (**126**) was reached at 66.72m aOD within a sondage excavated at the south west end of the trench.

- 4.3 The natural was cut (**Figure 5**) by a linear feature (**124**) running SE-NW across the trench. Excavation of feature **124** showed that it had a vertical edge on its south western side and was roughly 0.44m deep, though its complete width could not be excavated as it was truncated by modern concrete tank 105. The fill (**123**) was a mid grey ash rich deposit containing occasional angular stones, up to 0.1 m diameter, frequent charcoal flecks and pieces of light coloured mortar. Unfortunately no dating evidence was recovered from the deposit though its composition and stratigraphic position suggest it was likely to be of 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century date.



- 4.4 Running parallel with Cut **124**, on its SW side, were the lower courses of a red brick wall, (**115, Plate 2**) with mid grey ash mortar and clad with a grey ash render. The bonding material and render, suggest that the original parts of the wall (it had been partially re-built) were of c.19th century origin. A small section of embossed wallpaper (**Plate 3**) was visible, attached to the render. Its presence indicates that the rendered, NE facing, side of the wall was an internal elevation and that the building was likely to have been a dwelling. There is a strong correlation between the location of wall 115 and



the NE-SW wall of a building depicted on Plumley & Ashmeads plan of 1828, suggesting that **115** may be remains of that building. (**Figure 3**).



- 4.5 Sealing both the natural and Cut **124**, and abutting wall **115**, was a sequence of late 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century deposits (**Figure 6**), the earliest (**120**) was a thin layer of light brown ash rich sandy mortar, which had three large sandstone flags placed on its surface in a linear row. Finds retrieved suggest a late 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup>-century date. Above **120** the deposits were all of recent 20<sup>th</sup>-century origin comprising a second band of sandy mortar (**119**), this time dark brown, sealing **120**. Above **119** was a layer (**111**) of re-deposited natural marl containing patches of mid brown silt, occasional stones and charcoal. Layer **111** was in turn overlain by a layer/surface (**109**) comprising large stone blocks, within a matrix of dark grey ash and mortar rich silt, which had been roughly compacted to form a flat surface.

- 4.6 Most of the trench was occupied by 20<sup>th</sup> century structures and deposits (**Figures 5 & 6**) related to the former petrol garage which occupied the site. Most significantly the NW half of the trench was taken up entirely by a concrete tank (**105**, **Plate 4**) containing a metal petrol tank (**103**) filled with modern rubble (**102**). The SE end of the trench, abutting the SE facing side of **115**, was also occupied by a modern concrete structure (**117**) and a modern deposit of heavy rubble (**116**). It is worth noting that within the structure of concrete tank **105** was a stack of carefully cut and finished rectangular bath stone blocks (**110**, **Figure 5**). Whilst obviously re-used it would be fair to speculate that they were taken from a nearby structure, and could relate to a building that had previously stood on the site.



- 4.7 The baulk, removed by machine, comprised layers (**101 & 106**) of stone chippings below the concrete yard surface (**100**).

## Trench 2 (Figures 4 and 5)

- 4.8 Due to safety considerations, related to the depth of excavation, and the presence of asbestos within the trench the underlying natural was not uncovered and all of the deposits excavated were of 20<sup>th</sup> century origin. The trench was bisected by the south-western wall (**205**) of a red brick structure.



The structure comprised two parallel walls **205**, which, as indicated above, ran across the centre of the trench and a second (**206**) crossing the NE end of the trench. Both walls were bonded with black ash mortar and were not constructed with much care. It is possible that they are the remains of an air raid shelter, indicated by the presence of corrugated metal roofing, which had been reinforced with thick concrete, within the backfill surrounding the walls.



- 4.9 The bisection of the trench by Wall **205** created two distinct areas filled with a different sequence of deposits. The SW end of the trench lay on the outside of the brick structure and contained a single mixed rubble and re-deposited marl deposit (**202**), which contained asbestos. It abutted a concrete retaining wall which formed the SW end of the trench. The deposit filling the NE half of the trench (**203**) comprised dark-brown gritty silt laden with mixed rubble and waste including concrete, brick, glass, plastic and metal, backfilled within the brick structure. The trench was sealed by a layer of stone chippings and broken concrete (**201**), bedding the concrete yard surface (**200**).

### Trench 3 (Figures 4, 5 & 6)

- 4.10 Due to the presence of a large pit containing asbestos (303) only a small area of the trench, comprising two sondages: sondage A at the NW end of the trench and sondage B at the SE end, could be excavated.

- 4.11 The natural (**309**), was found in sondage A (**Figures 5 & 6**) at approximately 1 m below current ground level but was not reached in sondage B, which was excavated to a depth of 1.6 m.

- 4.12 Natural **309** was sealed by a 0.2m thick deposit (**308**) of re-deposited natural mudstone, containing occasional small angular stones, charcoal flecks and pieces of red brick. This deposit was, in turn, sealed by a layer (**307**) of very hard, compacted light brown gravel. Directly overlying the natural, within deposit **308**, was a thin lens of very light grey mortar which may possibly have been evidence of a former surface, however there was insufficient evidence to determine.



- 4.13 Deposit **307** was overlain by a grey brown, friable sandy silt (**306**) containing frequent poorly sorted flecks of charcoal with occasional small pebbles which produced no dating evidence.
- 4.14 Deposit **306** was sealed, in turn, by deposit (**304**), which consisted of very dark brown friable sandy silt, containing occasional flecks of charcoal, pieces of mortar (of various types) and occasional poorly sorted stones of varying size and shape. A broad variety of materials including: red brick, ceramic roof tile, small pieces of worked stone, glass, metals, animal bones and a large amount of pottery, ranging in date from early 19<sup>th</sup> to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century were recovered.
- 4.15 A large deposit (**304**) of silt mixed with rubble including red brick, ceramic roof tile, stone and 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century pot, formed the bulk of the material excavated in sondage B (**Figure 5**). Sealed by deposit **304**, which was roughly 1.6m thick, were the remains of a possible structure (**311**), in the form of a line of three red bricks and 2 pieces of roughly hewn stone. They were orientated NE-SW and were very loosely bonded with a light grey ashy mortar. Structure **311** sat atop a buried soil layer (**313**) which was a red-brown silt with some mortar content. Unfortunately the depth of the sondage made it impractical, and unsafe to excavate further and no dating evidence was retrieved from the deposit.
- 4.16 There was a possible post-hole (**312**, **Figure 5**) cut through deposits **304** and **306**, which makes it a late, probably 20<sup>th</sup> century, feature, likely related to some kind of gardening activity, possibly a wooden fence.
- 4.17 Roughly half of the trench was taken up by a large pit (**303**, **Figure 5**), filled with a rubble laden dark brown silt deposit (**302**), which contained asbestos and could not be excavated. It was cut from the level of deposit **301**, which was a modern garden soil.
- 4.18 The trench was sealed by topsoil and turf (**300**).





## 5. THE STANDING BUILDING SURVEY

- 5.1 The survey recorded all of the above ground remains of No. 15 Marlborough Hill. Dimensions can be taken from the scale plans and elevations at the back of the report. (**Figures 7-10**)

### General

- 5.2 The building, as it stood at the time of the survey, comprised the rear wall and partial remains of the two end walls of what had been a detached two storey sandstone block and red brick house. Aside from a single line of red ceramic pan tiles the roof was gone and insufficient remains of either end wall remained to determine its style, though the neighbouring properties of similar date have either Gable ends or Mansard roofs. The frontage was almost completely collapsed with the exception of two small patches at either end.

### Phasing (Figure 10)

- 5.3 A limited phasing of the building has been possible though should not be viewed as exclusive or comprehensive.

### Phase 1 (late 18<sup>th</sup> – early 19<sup>th</sup> century)

- 5.4 The documentary (see Leech 1998) and physical evidence, in the form of joist sockets and scaring in the rear internal (south-east facing) elevation, suggest an original two storey structure. It was suggested by Dr Leech (1998) that the building began its life as summerhouse and the two storey structure identified is likely to reflect remnants of that building.
- 5.5 The earliest parts of the building are constructed from unevenly coursed sandstone blocks bonded in a pinkish grey lime and sand mortar. Sandstone block remains comprised not just the possible summerhouse at the south-east end of the building (Area A. **Figure 10**) but also the lower courses, up to the first floor, of the entire rear elevation (Area B. **Figure 10**). Given that the cartographic evidence, and surviving example visible in neighbouring Blenheim House, suggest the summerhouse would have been a small, roughly square shaped structure, it seems unlikely that Area B, would have been part of the original late 18<sup>th</sup> century summerhouse structure. However the only physical evidence to suggest that Areas A and B were not built at the same time is the render applied to their surfaces, which within Area A was a white, lime rich, render whilst Area B was clad in a mid grey ash and lime based render.
- 5.6 It is possible that Area B represents the remains of a boundary/garden wall which extended north-east from the summerhouse and was contemporary with it. However this could not be determined and all that can be said for sure is that the areas are closely contemporary.

### Phase 2 (Later 19<sup>th</sup> century)

- 5.7 The documentary evidence suggests that in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century the summerhouse was extended to become the two storey house still partially extant. The extension was constructed from red brick and cream coloured sandy mortar, in a slightly irregular bond that most closely resembles English

garden wall bond. The layout of the extension did not pay respect to the existing structure, most notably the height of the first floor, as evident from the joist sockets, which did not correlate with the height of the first floor in the existing portion of the building, being considerably higher. (**Figure 8**).

### **Phase 3 (20<sup>th</sup> century-present)**

- 5.8 Various minor repairs and alterations, made in more recent years, were evident throughout the remains. Typically they comprised small patches where re-pointing or rendering had been undertaken. The most substantial alterations were the blocking of the fireplace in the south-west facing elevation and the cutting of two openings at the top of the rear elevation, to accommodate windows in the concrete building occupying No. 5 Kingsdown Parade, which abuts the north-west side of No. 15.

### **Details**

- 5.9 In accordance with the criteria of a level 2 building survey, detailed descriptions of features within the building have been kept to a minimum. However a small number of features are worth highlighting.
- 5.10 The north-east facing elevation (**Figure 10**) had a central flu housing a fireplace on both the first and second floors. A blocked fireplace was also visible at the ground floor of the south-east facing elevation (**Figure 10**). One side of a splayed window/opening was found within the above ground remains, of the frontage at both the SW and NE ends of the building respectively. Foundations and features were found, at ground level, along the route of the collapsed frontage (**Figure 7**) and comprised: remains of a red brick bay window at the south-west end of the building, stone steps in the centre of the frontage, and sections of stone foundations at various points.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The focus of the recording project was to establish the presence or absence of buried archaeological deposits within the footprint of Nos. 5 & 6 Kingsdown Parade and to record the extant remains of a multi phased building at No. 15 Marlborough Hill. Particular attention was paid to identify features which may relate to the site's past as rented gardens in the late 18<sup>th</sup>- early 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 6.2 The historic research conducted for the project indicate that the present layout of the three plots comprising the study area reflect the layout depicted on Plumley and Ashmeads 1828 plan. Rocques plan of 1750 (**Figure 3**) indicates that prior to this the site was contained within a single large walled garden. It is worth noting that the considerable difference in the heights of the three plots, demonstrable in the difference (3.5 m) in the heights of the brick structures found within trenches 1 and 3, indicate that, in addition to the natural slope of Marlborough Hill, the ground may have been terraced. Though not depicted by Rocque, it would be fair to speculate that some such works/divisions may have been extant within the large garden he depicts.
- 6.3 The archaeological evaluation determined that there is potential for limited preservation of features related to the rented gardens within the grounds of Nos. 5 & 6 Kingsdown Parade, including remains within Trench 1 that correlate well with a building featured on Plumley & Ashmeads 1828 plan, (**Figure 4**). Trenches 2 and 3 were less conclusive, Trench 2 was excavated to a maximum depth of, roughly, 1.4m, beyond which further excavation would have been unsafe and no pre 20<sup>th</sup> -century remains or deposits were identified. Trench 3 recorded a similar depth of modern deposits below which a small red brick structure (**311**), was found at the east end of the trench. However there was insufficient evidence to determine its date and it was not in the location of any cartographically recorded structures. It seems that preservation of garden soils and deposits related to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century gardens is inconsistent within the evaluation areas, with the grounds of No. 5 having been heavily disturbed and truncated by tanks and pipes related to the former filling station and the deposits comprising the first 1.2 m of ground within No. 6 comprising modern garden soils.
- 6.4 Broadly the dating evidence retrieved comprised residual late post medieval pottery sherds (including sherds of stoneware and Bristol/Staffordshire slipware), glass sherds, clay tobacco pipe fragments and fragments of red ceramic pipe and tile. Unfortunately no dating evidence was retrieved from the stratified features within Trench 1, but the materials used to build wall **115** are typical of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The grey ash mortar deposit (**123**) filling cut **124** is also typical of the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries.
- 6.5 In addition to recording the above ground remains of No. 15 Marlborough Hill the building survey has added to the evidence for preservation of late 18<sup>th</sup>-century remains, as it was apparent there are likely to be foundations buried below ground. Given the presence within the structure of No. 15 of late 18<sup>th</sup> century elements related to a possible summerhouse, associated with the late 18<sup>th</sup> century rented gardens, it is fair to say that, both the building itself and its grounds have perhaps the best archaeological potential of the three plots comprising the study area. A trial trench is scheduled to be excavated within the grounds of No. 15 at a later date and more conclusive evidence for the archaeological potential of the plot will be obtained.

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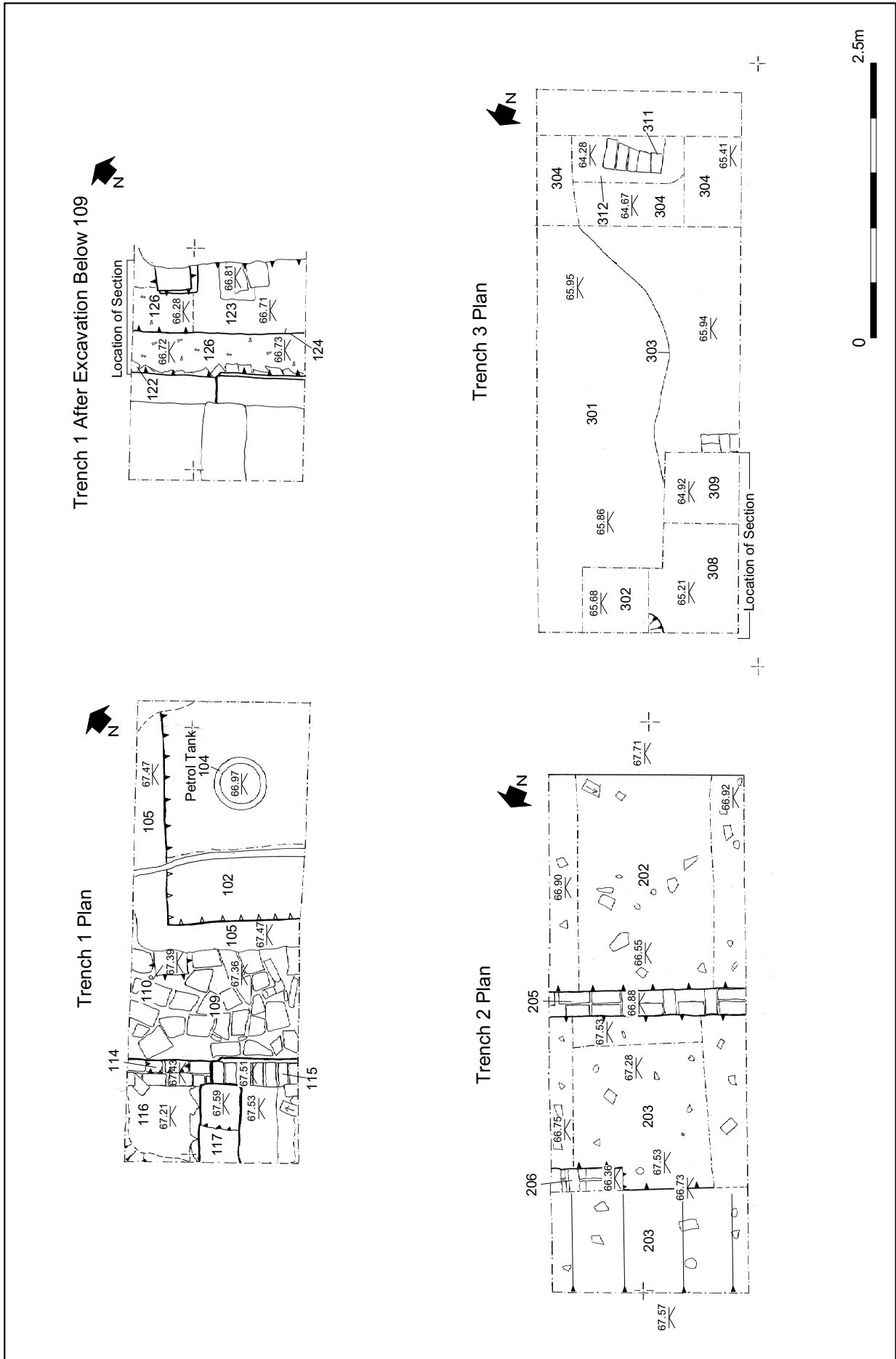
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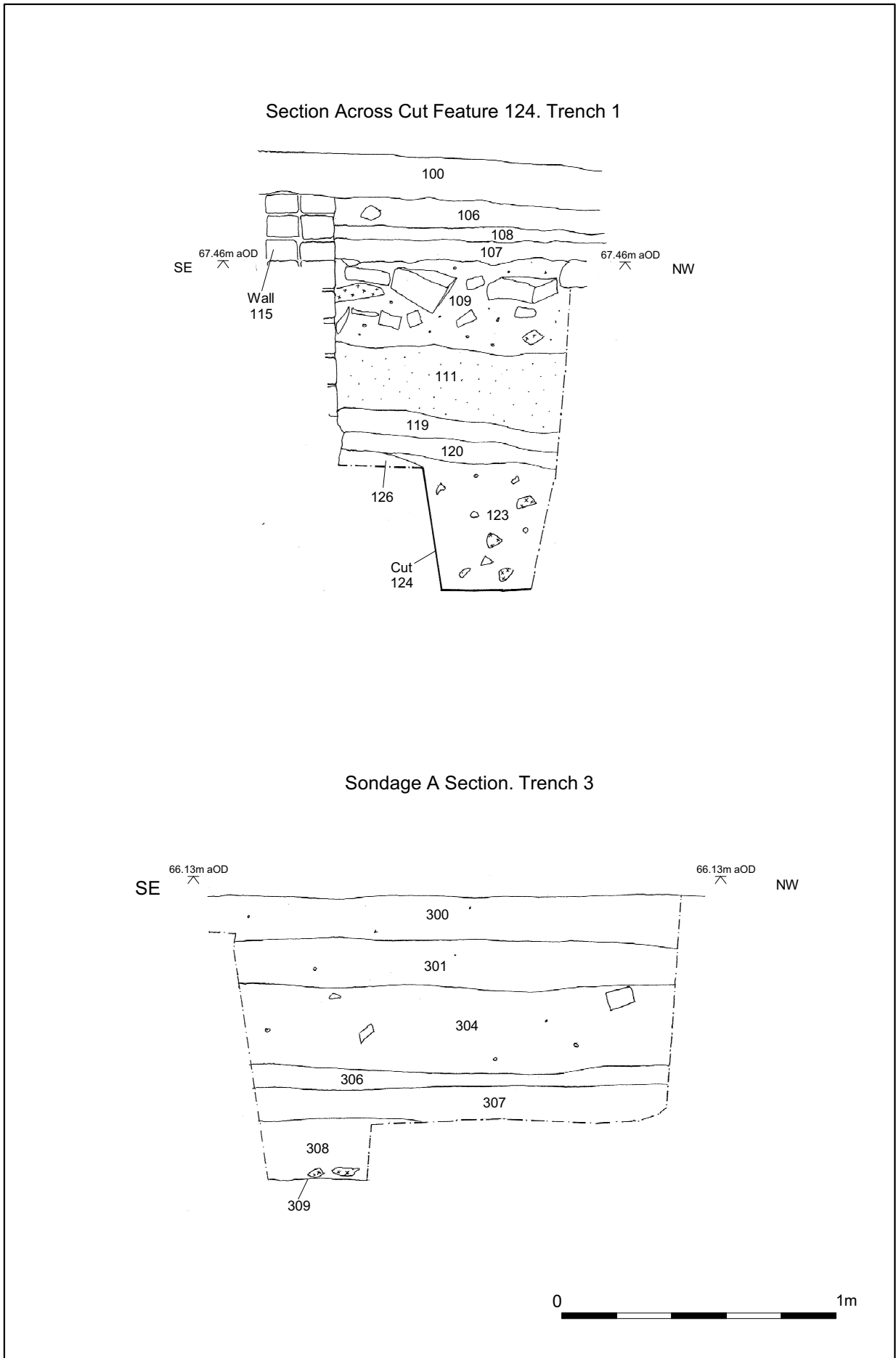
1:50 Plans of the evaluation Trenches

Figure 5



1:20 Section Drawings. Trenches 1 & 3

Figure 6



Ground Plan of No. 15 Marlborough Hill with Selected Views

Figure 7



1: 100 scale

Figure 8

ESE Facing Internal (Rear) Elevation of No. 15 Marlborough Hill. 1:50 scale

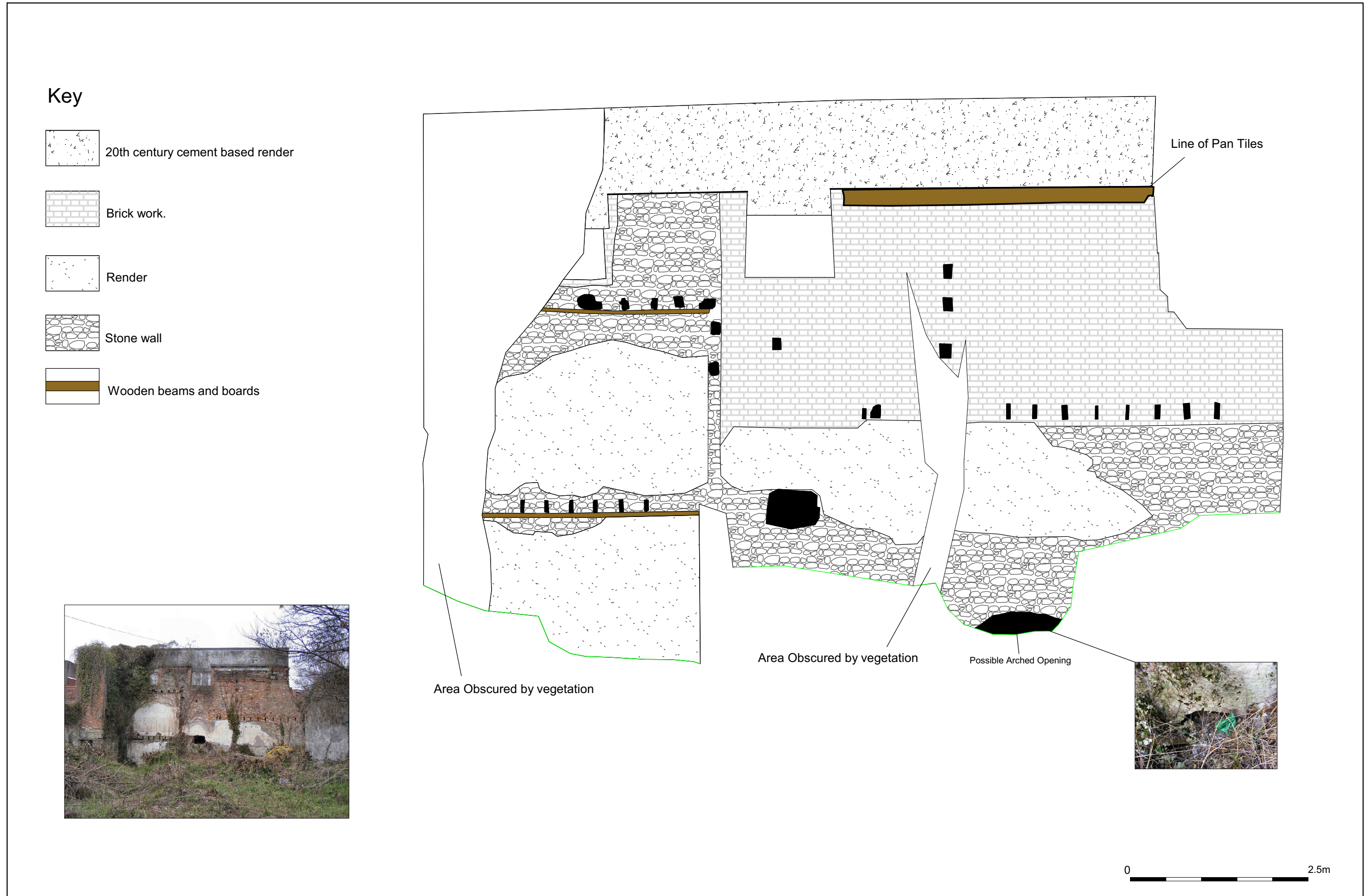




Figure 9

Side and Frontage Elevations of No. 15 Marlborough Hill. 1:50 scale



Elevations with Phasing. 1: 100 scale

Figure 10

