

Archaeological Building Recording  
at the former  
**LORD RODNEY PUBLIC HOUSE,  
TWO MILE HILL, ST GEORGE,  
BRISTOL.**

for  
LSP Developments



Report No. 2626/2012  
BHER No. 25129

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Archaeological Watching Brief  
at the former  
**LORD RODNEY PUBLIC HOUSE,  
TWO MILE HILL, ST GEORGE,  
BRISTOL.**

Centred on  
N.G.R. ST 63495 73792

Client: LSP Developments

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### Abbreviations

AD	Anno Domini	DCMS	Dept. for Culture, Media & Sport
aOD	Above Ordnance Datum	EH	English Heritage
BaRAS	Bristol & Region Archaeological Services	EHA	English Heritage Archive
BC	Before Christ	HER	Historic Environment Record
BCC	Bristol City Council	IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
BCL	Bristol Central Library	Km	Kilometre
BCMAG	Bristol City Museum & Art Gallery	m	Metre
BHER	Bristol Historic Environment Record	NGR	National Grid Reference
BRO	Bristol Record Office	OS	Ordnance Survey
c.	Circa		
DCLG	Dept. for Communities & Local Government		

### NOTE

Notwithstanding that Bristol and Region Archaeological Services have taken reasonable care to produce a comprehensive summary of the known and recorded archaeological evidence, no responsibility can be accepted for any omissions of fact or opinion, however caused.

July, 2012.

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## **SUMMARY**

Bristol and Region Archaeological Services (BaRAS) were commissioned by LSP Developments to undertake a building survey of the historic core of the Lord Rodney public house, Two Mile Hill Road, St George, prior to its demolition. The site lies on the north side of on the east corner with Brockhurst Road, (NGR ST 63495 73792), fronting on to the main road connecting central Bristol with Kingswood. The building recording was commissioned to comply with English Heritage Level 3 & 4 archaeological recording of the historic core of the existing structures.

The survey of the Lord Rodney public house revealed a number of forms of construction relating to the sequence of the building's development. Elements of the historic core of the building may date back to the 17th century, with the shape of the main building constructed during the 18th century in a lime-based mortar. Significant repairs/rebuilds took place in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Particular attention should be paid during the demolition watching brief to identify, where possible, the extent of the original clay-bonded build and to confirm if the northern half of the main building was constructed in the lime-based mortar.



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Planning permission has been granted to redevelop land in St. George, Bristol currently occupied by the Lord Rodney public house and associated car park. This will result in the demolition of the building and the erection of a food-store (planning application 11/03698/F). Bristol and Region Archaeological Services (BaRAS) were commissioned by LSP Developments to undertake a building survey prior to the demolition taking place.
- 1.2 The building recording was commissioned to comply with English Heritage Level 3/4 archaeological recording of selected areas of the existing structure. This was in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Bristol and Region Archaeological Services (BaRAS 2011) and approved by Mr Bob Jones, Senior Archaeological Officer, Bristol City Council.
- 1.3 The fieldwork was undertaken between the 30th and 31st May 2012 under the supervision of Simon Roper who also compiled this report.
- 1.4 The project archive will be deposited with Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery under the Accession Number BRSMG 2010/57 and a copy of the report will be sent to the Bristol Historic Environment Record (BHER). The project has been entered in the Bristol Historic Environment Record as BHER 25129 and in the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) as bristola1-127539. A digital copy will be made available to the English Heritage Archives.

## 2. THE SITE

- 2.1 The site lies on the north side of Two Mile Hill Road, St George, on the east corner with Brockhurst Road, (NGR ST 63495 73792), fronting on to the main road connecting central Bristol with Kingswood (**Fig. 1**). On the south side of the building is a paved outdoor seating area, with car parking along the eastern edge of the site. A small private garden separates the building from No. 28 Brockhurst Road, while adjoining the site to the east is No. 51 Two Mile Hill Road.
- 2.2 According to the British Geological Survey, the site lies on Pennant Sandstone Measures of the Carboniferous period. The site drops away to the south-west and sits at about 88.36m aOD within the main bar area while the north-east corner of the site is over 89m aOD.
- 2.3 The site does not lie within a Designated Conservation Area. No buildings on the site are Listed, nor are its immediate neighbours. There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments on the site or nearby.

### **3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Previous archaeological work on the site comprises a desk-based assessment of the building (King 2011) and an archaeological building survey (Bryant 2011). The historic background below is summarised from these two documents. Historically the site lay in the Royal estate of Kingswood, in SS. Philip & Jacob parish. In 1751 the parish of St. George was created by an Act of Parliament from the out-parish of SS. Philip & Jacob. The road between Bristol and Marshfield (for Chippenham and Oxford) passed by the site, which was located at the top of the 3 Km-long climb up from Lawrence Hill, making this a good stopping place to rest and water horses.
- 3.2 The public house is named after Admiral George Bridges Rodney, 1st Baron Rodney (1719-1792), an 18th-century naval officer who became famous after his victory at the Battle of the Saints in 1782. From the start of the 19th century it would have been more usual to use the name Lord Nelson, which suggests the building was in use as a public house from at least the late 18th century.
- 3.3 The earliest map that depicts the study area in any detail is Benjamin Donn's 1769 map of the Bristol area, which appears to show a building on the site. The rather larger-scale map by William Maule (1803) certainly shows a building, but only as a narrow rectangle, possibly indicating that the building was only one room deep at this time. Almost four decades later the shape on the tithe map (1842) is recorded in some detail and indicates that much of the present footprint was already occupied, with only the western end then in residential use. Further elements had been added on to the eastern end by the early 1880s (OS 1:2500 plan). A rear extension was added in 1891-2, together with a small privy and a front porch; the earlier rear range was doubled in height to two full storeys. Twenty years later, a larger bar area was created by both absorbing one of the former stables and by extending southwards into the forecourt area. Another doorway is added at the west end of the front elevation and the doorway in the middle of the front elevation moved to the west slightly.
- 3.4 Probably between the World Wars, an extension, semi-subterranean, cellar was added at the rear, possibly at the same time as new ladies toilets replaced the old outside privy in the north-west corner. In 1971-2 the easternmost outbuildings were removed, a large chimney breast between the south-western and southern rooms was taken out at ground floor level, and the bar counter was shortened. The public house remained in active use until relatively recently.

#### **4. AIMS AND METHODOLOGY**

- 4.1 The fieldwork complied with the methodology contained within the Written Scheme of Investigation (BaRAS 2012). The survey was conducted to English Heritage level 3/4 standard, outlined in their 2006 publication “*Understanding Historic Buildings, A guide To Good Recording Practice*”.
- 4.2 The aim of the additional recording was to provide firmer evidence for the dating of the earlier phases of the structure and to examine some specific features in more detail. To facilitate this walls were stripped internally in sample patches in order to establish the materials and method of construction, and to date them where possible. Archaeological personnel using hand tools carried out all stripping of plaster. The first-floor chimney breast was examined in detail. Accessible areas of the roof structure were also recorded, as was evidence of any alterations to the fabric of the building.
- 4.3 The photographic record was created using a conventional SLR camera with monochrome film, supplemented by colour images produced with a digital camera with a resolution of 5 mega-pixels or above. All details of the photographs taken were recorded on a standard BaRAS photographic record sheet. The drawn record comprised a series of annotated floor plans, produced on site, recording the size and location of each stripped area. The written record comprised detailed notes on the form, construction, probable function of the buildings as a whole and elements within it.

## 5. RESULTS

- 5.1 The principle purpose of the recording was to provide information that would aid in the dating and phasing of the historic core of the building. This was to be gained from examination of the fabric of the building, exposed following the removal of plaster.
- 5.2 The earliest masonry exposed by the archaeological works was clay-bonded rubble stonework. Reddish-brown clay with few inclusions was used to bond the irregular sized and shaped blocks of Pennant Sandstone. The wall thickness varied between 0.45m and 0.50m. This form of construction suggests an early post-medieval date is quite likely, possibly late 17th century.
- 5.3 The west bar area had four sample patches of plaster removed, two on the north wall and two on the south wall. A fifth patch on the west wall was abandoned due to the hardness of the cement render, however an area of re-pointing was removed on the external face (**Plate 1**) exposing a light-brown, lime-based mortar. The two patches on the southern wall exposed only modern materials such as concrete blocks and cement render, both being in areas that had undergone significant alteration in the later 20th century. The south-west patch was located where a porch was built in the 1970s, while the south-east patch was located in the area where the chimney breast had been removed in the later 20th century. Opposite these two areas the patches on the north wall exposed some of the original clay-bonded stonework. The north-east patch required the removal of four layers of plaster, a modern upper layer, late 19th/early 20th-century pink layer, 19th-century grey ash layer and finally a white lime-based layer beneath which was the clay-bonded stonework (**Plate 2**). A total of four phases of construction were exposed by the north-west sample patch (**Plate 3**), with the original clay-bonded stonework located at the top of the patch, beneath which was rubble stonework bonded with grey ash mortar from the 19th century surrounding a former opening. This was blocked with red brickwork bonded with hard, mid grey, mortar probably from the early 20th century, to the east of which was modern red brickwork bonded with cement.
- 5.4 In the central bar area the stonework of the north wall was already exposed (**Plate 4**) with a grubby grey ash mortar (that contained lots of inclusions and in places had a slight brown tint), which had been re-pointed in places with a paler, grey ash mortar, both probably 19th-century in date. No earlier mortar was exposed despite investigation in a number of points, suggesting this lower portion of the wall had been substantially rebuilt or repaired in the 19th century. Similarly the south wall of the darts room, which runs on the same alignment as the north wall of the central bar, also appears to be constructed with the same grubby, grey ash mortar (**Plate 5**). Conversely the exposed stonework of the west wall of the darts room was bonded with a light brown lime based mortar (**Plate 6**), which may indicate an earlier date for this part of the building than previously believed, possibly 18th century. This stonework was concealed behind a stud wall, which accounts for the unusual thickness of this wall on the ground plan.
- 5.5 Upstairs the front east-bedroom had four patches stripped, the one on the north wall (**Plate 7**) exposing Pennant Sandstone rubble bonded with light brown, lime-based mortar with lime and charcoal inclusions, similar to the west wall of the darts room. The south wall had two patches stripped from it, the west patch (**Plate 8**) exposing the same construction as the north wall, while the east patch (**Plate 9**) revealed Pennant Sandstone rubble rebuilt or re-pointed with mid grey hard mortar from the early 20th century. A red brick fireplace with the same mortar had been inserted into the east wall, above which was Pennant rubble (**Plate 10**) bonded with the same grey ash mortar, with lots of inclusions, as was found in the central bar area.
- 5.6 Within the upstairs living area the southwest corner appears to have also undergone repair/rebuilding in the early 20th century, with some red brick mixed with Pennant rubble, bonded with hard, mid-grey mortar (**Plate 11**). The patch on the south wall (**Plate 12**) revealed the edge of this rebuild coincided with a slight thickening of the wall from 0.4m to 0.45m, with the earlier build being Pennant rubble bonded with the lime-based, light-brown mortar of

probable 18th-century date. The north wall (**Plate 13**) was constructed of clay-bonded, Pennant rubble and had a former window opening blocked with a similar grubby, grey-ash mortar to that seen in the central bar area. Stripping of the plaster from the chimney breast (**Plate 14**) on the east side of the room revealed the earliest construction phase of clay-bonded Pennant Sandstone rubble with no fireplace opening. In the south-east corner a small red brick fireplace bonded with dark grey, hard mortar was exposed, with glazed tiles forming a small hearth in front of it (**Plate 15**), probably of early 20th-century date.

- 5.7 The roof structure (**Plate 16**) was examined from the two access hatches in the upstairs living area and front east bedroom. All the purlins and approximately half the rafters appear to be original timbers, while the remainder of the rafters and the trusses are machine-cut timbers. Removal of the plaster around the end of the truss on the north wall of the upstairs living area (**Plate 17**), revealed it to be surrounded by brick and Pennant rubble bonded with the same mid grey mortar used in the areas of early 20th century rebuild, suggesting the roof may have been rebuilt at the same time.

## 6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The survey of the historic core of the Lord Rodney public house revealed a number of forms of construction relating to the sequence of development of the building. The earliest phase was represented by a clay-bonded rubble construction, which was found in the western end of the building, possibly dating from as early as the 17th century, with the later phases extending eastwards.
- 6.2 The next phase of construction is represented by a light brown, lime-based mortar bonding that is found upstairs forming part of the front elevation in both rooms, and the north wall in the south-east bedroom. This is likely to be of 18th-century date, which would fit with when this length of building is depicted on Maule's 1803 map. However, this same mortar is also used on the west wall of the darts room, which suggests the northern half of the main building may be earlier than Maule's map seems to indicate. Examination of the west end-elevation's external face indicates that this too was constructed with the light brown, lime-based mortar. This phase of construction appears to produce the shape of the core of the Lord Rodney as we know it today and incorporated an earlier building constructed with clay bonding.
- 6.3 The central wall from the bar area eastwards appears to be repaired or rebuilt with a grubby, grey ash mortar in the 19th century, with the chimney breast in the south-east bedroom and the window blocking in the upstairs living area also constructed with this mortar. A pale, grey ash mortar is used later in the 19th century to repoint the central wall and for the insertion of an opening at the west end of the central wall. In the early 20th century significant areas of the building, particularly the front elevation, are rebuilt/repared with a hard, mid-grey mortar. At the same time the roof of the historic core is rebuilt, with some of the original timbers retained and others replaced with machine-cut timbers. A number of alterations are carried out later in the 20th century using cement-based mortar or render.
- 6.4 Elements of the historic core of the building appear therefore to date back to the 17th century, with the shape of the main building constructed during the 18th century in a lime-based mortar. Significant repairs/rebuilds took place in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Particular attention should be paid during the demolition watching brief to identify, where possible, the extent of the original clay-bonded build and to confirm if the northern half of the main building was constructed in the lime-based mortar. The foundations of the building may provide the best indication of the original phases of construction.



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### Maps and Plans

1769 *This Map of the Country 11 Miles Round the City of Bristol*. B. Donn the Elder. (BRO AC/PL 153).

1803 'Map of St George Parish and Part of Stapleton', by William Maule, (BRO AC/PL/60a); with book of reference (terrier), (BRO AC/PL/60b).

1842 St George Tithe Map (BRO EP/A/32/32)

1880-1 Ordnance Survey plan (1:2500).

1902 Ordnance Survey plan (1:2500).

c1913 Ordnance Survey plan (1:2500).

2010 Ordnance Survey plan (1:1250).

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<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>

## **8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- 8.1 Bristol and Region Archaeological Services wish to thank the following for their help and advice: Mike Orr of CSJ Planning, LSP Developments for commissioning the survey, and Bob Jones of Bristol City Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Simon Roper and Ann Linge, with Simon Roper also producing this report. The illustrations were prepared and the report compiled by Ann Linge. The archive was compiled and prepared for deposition by Simon Roper. The project was managed by John Bryant.

## **APPENDIX 1: Policy Statement**

This report is the result of work carried out in the light of national and local authority policies.

### **NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY (ENGLAND)**

The *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) for England published by the UK Government in March 2012 states that the historic environment, which includes designated and non-designated heritage assets, is an irreplaceable resource and, as such, should be taken into account by Local Planning Authorities when considering and determining planning applications. This is taken to form part of a positive strategy set out in the respective Local Plan to ensure the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. The assigned significance of heritage assets will be key factor in terms of their conservation.

Given their irreplaceable nature, any harm to, or loss of, a heritage asset, or heritage assets, should be clearly and convincingly justified as part of a planning application. As part of this, applicants are required to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposal, including any contribution made by their setting. Where a heritage asset, or assets, are to be harmed or lost as the result of a proposal, the applicant will be required to record and advance the understanding of the significance of that asset or assets, to include making the evidence arising publicly accessible, but this will be in proportion to the significance of the asset/assets in question.

While the NPPF takes into account the historic environment as a whole, additional protection is afforded to designated heritage assets under current English Law. Any proposal that would result in harm or loss of a designated heritage asset is also required to be justified by the applicant in meeting strict criteria set out in the NPPF.

### **DISTRICT POLICY**

Bristol City Council Supplementary Planning Document (2006) states (policy SPD No.7, p4):

- (i) There will be a presumption in favour of preserving any archaeological features or sites of national importance, whether scheduled or not.
- (ii) Development which could adversely affect sites, structures, landscapes or buildings of archaeological interest and their settings will require an assessment of the archaeological resource through a desktop study, and where appropriate a field evaluation. Where there is evidence of archaeological remains, development will not be permitted except where it can be demonstrated that the archaeological features of the site will be satisfactorily preserved in situ, or a suitable strategy has been put forward to mitigate the impact of development proposals upon important archaeological remains and their settings; or, if this is not possible and the sites are not scheduled or of national importance, provision for adequately recording the site prior to destruction is made, preferably by negotiating a planning agreement to ensure that access, time and financial resources are available to allow essential recording and publication to take place.



Fig.1 Site location plan, scale 1:1500

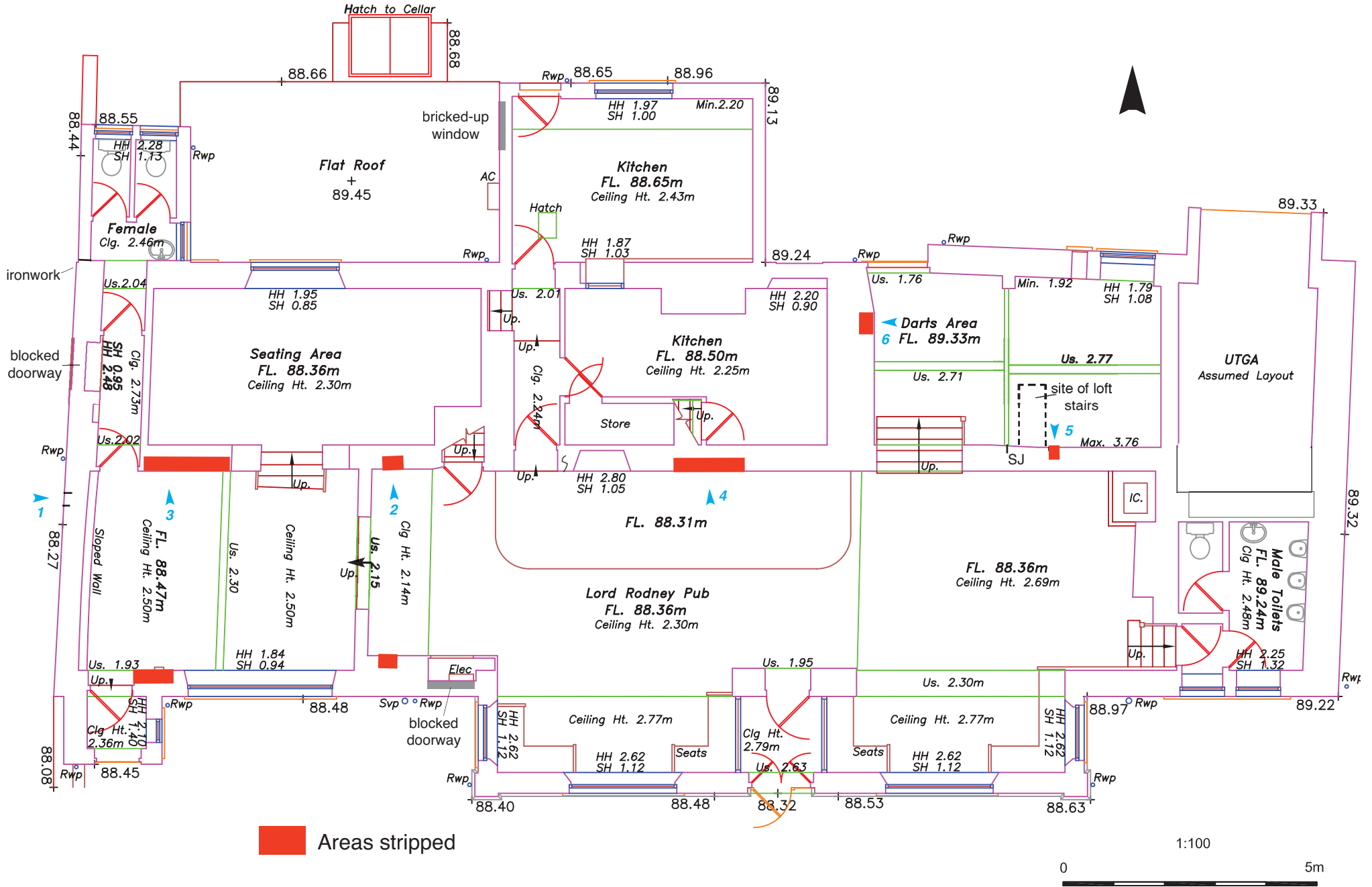


Fig.2 Ground floor plan with sample patches marked, scale 1:100, plate directions in blue

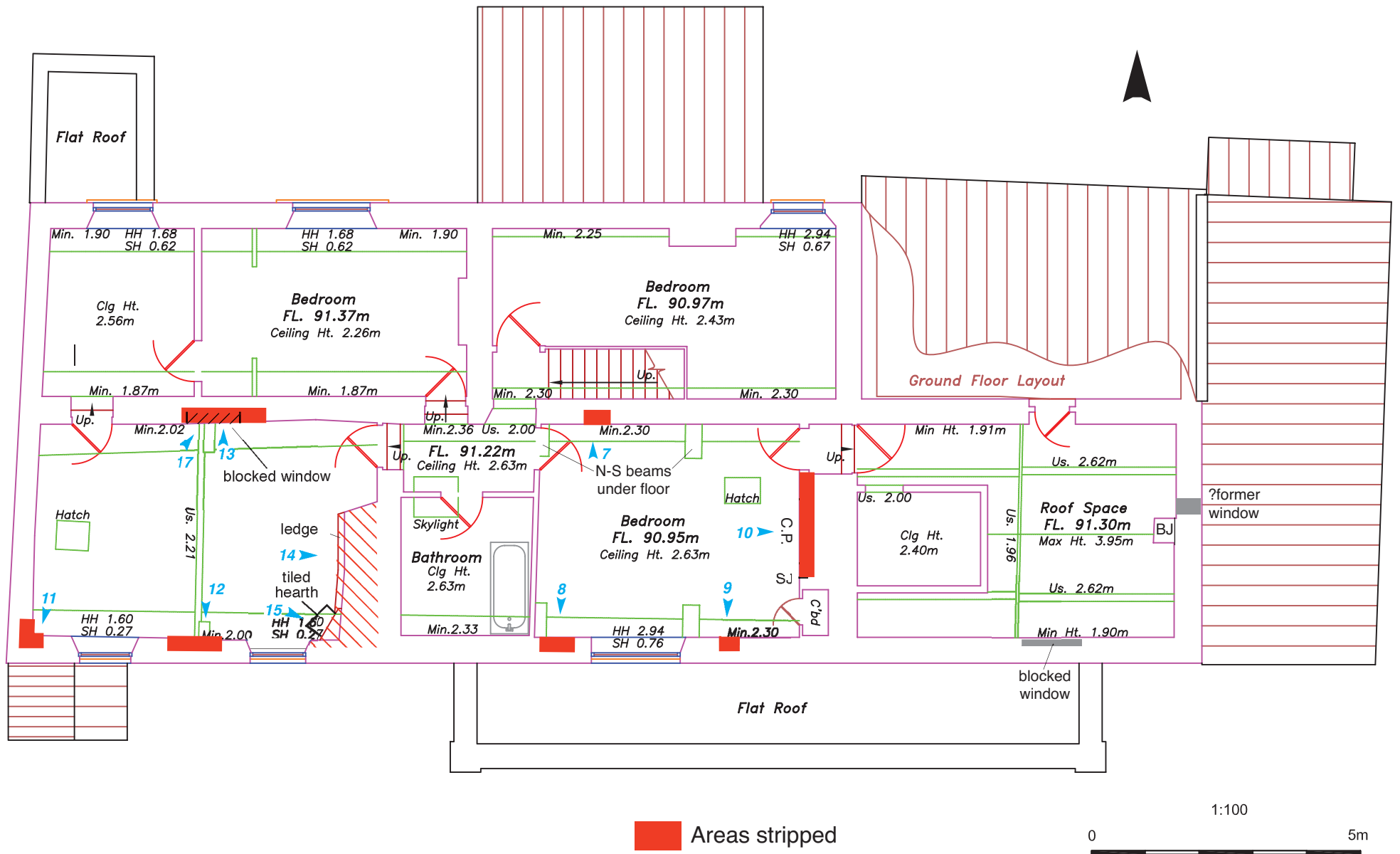


Fig.3 First Floor plan with sample patches marked, scale 1:100





Plate 1 External face of west wall with repointing removed exposing light brown lime-based mortar, looking east



Plate 2 North-east sample patch west bar, looking north



Plate 3 North-west sample patch west bar, looking north



Plate 4 Exposed stonework in the central bar area north wall, looking north



Plate 5 Exposed stonework of the south wall of the darts room, looking south



Plate 6 Exposed stonework of the west wall of the darts room section of stud wall removed, looking west





Plate 7 North wall of the front east bedroom, looking north



Plate 10 Area above the fireplace in the east wall of the front east bedroom, looking east



Plate 8 West sample patch of the south wall of the front east bedroom, looking south



Plate 11 South-west corner of the upstairs living area, looking south

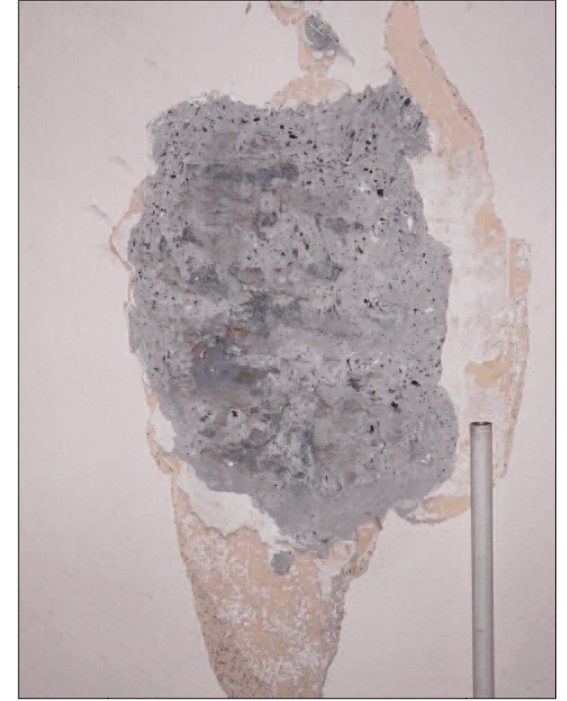


Plate 9 East sample patch of the south wall of the front east bedroom, looking south



Plate 12 South wall of the upstairs living area, looking south





Plate 13 North wall of the upstairs living area, looking north



Plate 14 Stripped chimney breast forming east wall of the upstairs living area, looking east



Plate 15 Glazed tiles forming the small hearth of the small inserted fireplace in the upstairs living area, looking south-east



Plate 16 Purlin and rafters of the south pitch of the roof, looking south



Plate 17 Rebuilt area around the inserted truss in the upstairs living area, looking north