

Archaeological Building Recording OAKHILL MALTINGS, HIGH STREET, OAKHILL, SOMERSET.

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Report No. 2574/2013 SHER No. 32146

OASIS: bristola1-145714





Archaeological Building Recording of OAKHILL MALTINGS, HIGH STREET, OAKHILL, SOMERSET.

Centred on NGR 63205 47250

Prepared for Coxley Developments Ltd

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Date Issued: 16 July 2013

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Adopted Chronology

Prehistoric Before AD43
Roman AD43-410
Anglo Saxon/Early Medieval AD410-1066
Medieval AD1066-1540
Post-medieval AD1540-present

Abbreviations

AD Anno Domini HER Historic Environment Record aOD Above Ordnance Datum Km Kilometre

aOD Above Ordnance Datum Km Kilometre
BaRAS Bristol & Region Archaeological Services m Metre

BC Before Christ NGR National Grid Reference c. OS Ordnance Survey

EHA English Heritage Archive

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, 2013

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SUMMARY

Bristol and Region Archaeological Services (BaRAS) were commissioned by Coxley Developments Ltd to undertake a building survey of the surviving structures of the former maltings buildings in the village of Oakhill, prior to their conversion to residential units. The buildings are Listed Grade II and are located in the centre of Oakhill village (NGR ST 63205 47250), c 5km north of Shepton Mallet, within the Oakhill Conservation Area. It comprises the principal maltings building, and the malt house located to the south. The building recording was commissioned to comply with English Heritage Level 2 archaeological recording of the existing structures.

The survey of the extant buildings at the Oakhill Maltings site revealed a number of features relating to the sequence of development on the site. These in conjunction with the historic research and the map evidence have allowed a very basic phasing of the site to be produced. The largest and earliest of the buildings dates to the mid-19th century with all of the other significant construction phases having occurred by 1903. Alterations to these structures were carried out throughout the 20th century and into the 21st.

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 It is proposed to redevelop the former Oakhill Maltings buildings in the village of Oakhill, Somerset (planning application 2010/2064). The proposal is to convert the Grade II listed buildings into 25 residential units with ancillary parking and leisure facilities. This will result in extensive alteration of the existing structures. Bristol and Region Archaeological Services (BaRAS) were commissioned by Coxley Developments Ltd to undertake a building survey of the buildings prior to the conversion taking place.
- 1.2 The building recording was commissioned to comply with English Heritage Level 2 archaeological recording of the existing structure. This was in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Bristol and Region Archaeological Services (BaRAS 2013) and approved by the Senior Historic Environment Officer at Somerset County Council.
- 1.3 The fieldwork was undertaken between the 9th and 16th April 2013 under the supervision of Simon Roper who also compiled this report.
- 1.4 The project archive will be deposited with the Somerset's Museums Service under the Accession Number TTNCM 26/2013. The OASIS number for this project is bristola1-145714 and the project is recorded on the Somerset HER under number 32146.

2. THE SITE

- 2.1 The site is located in the centre of Oakhill village (NGR ST 63205 47250), c. 5km north of Shepton Mallet (**Fig. 1**). It comprises the principal maltings building, and the malt house located to the south. To the south and east is a modern housing estate built upon land that once formed part of Oakhill Brewery along with the maltings. The side of the principal building sits on the main road through the village (**Fig. 2**).
- 2.2 According to the British Geological Survey the solid geology of the site comprises Black Rock Limestone Subgroup of the Carboniferous Period, with no superficial deposits (BGS 2013). The site rises gently to the south and sits at about 210m aOD.
- 2.3 The site lies within the Oakhill Conservation Area, and the maltings buildings are Grade II listed. There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments on the site or nearby.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 No desk-based assessment has been carried out on the history of the site, therefore a short summary of historical research carried out by other groups is produced below. A number of historic maps were also examined.
- 3.2 The Oakhill Brewery was founded in 1767 by James Jordon and John Billingsley (Hobhouse, 23-24). Mr Jordan left at an unknown date, however Mr Billingsley died in 1811 and Mr W. P. Jillard then ran the business until 1835 when Mr John Spencer joined as junior partner at which time the business was known as Jillard, Spencer and Co. The earliest map examined was an early Ordnance Survey drawing produced by E. Crocker in 1808. This depicts three buildings in the approximate location of the principal building along the main road through the village. To the east of these is a larger building, presumably the main brewery site.
- In about 1864 the Jillards left the business, and in the November issue of the same year the Shepton Mallet Journal recorded the building of a new malthouse on the site (Ashwick Parish website). This is probably the existing principal building that lies alongside the main road through the village. The Ordnance Survey 1:2500 plan of 1886 shows this building on the site with no other buildings near to it. An old insurance document of 1899 refers to this building as 'old but in good repair' (Miles 1987, 13).
- In 1889 the company went public, and the following year a second malthouse block was built to the south of the first, as can be seen on the 1903 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 plan. The company was at its height in the early 20th century when it was producing 2000-2500 barrels per week, with depots in Bath, Bristol, Cardiff, Devonport, Manchester and London. Some time after 1904 a 3' gauge railway was constructed to transport the beer to Binegar main line station (Miles 1987, 13).
- 3.5 Following a fire in 1915 at the brewery site and the impact of the First World War, the company was taken over first by Bristol United Breweries, then Georges and then Courages. In 1924 another fire occurred, this time at the maltings site causing huge damage, however the maltings were rebuilt along traditional lines. Brewing ceased at Oakhill in 1938, although the maltings continued in use (Ashwick Parish website). In 1961 the site was modernized with the introduction of Saladin box kilns at the west end of the principal building (**Plates 40-42**). This greatly increased the efficiency of the malting process (Miles 1987, 13-15), however by the 1980s the restrictions of the 19th century buildings and size of the site meant it could not compete with modern developments, and the site closed at the end of 1986.
- 3.6 In 1997 New Oakhill Brewery moved its operation to the maltings site in order to expand, having been brewing at the original brewery buildings since 1984. The brewery closed in 2004 with the retirement of the owner and the malthouse buildings have been unused since this time (Ashwick Parish website).

4. AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The fieldwork complied with the methodology contained within the Written Scheme of Investigation (BaRAS 2013) approved by the Senior Historic Environment Officer at Somerset County Council. The survey was conducted to English Heritage level 2 standard, outlined in their 2006 publication "Understanding Historic Buildings, A guide To Good Recording Practice".
- 4.2 The survey comprised comprehensive photographic recording of the buildings with notes and annotated floor plans and elevations. 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 16 mega-pixels. All details of the photographs taken were recorded on a standard BaRAS photographic record sheet.
- 4.3 The drawn record comprised a series annotations and ammendments made to existing floor plans and elevations of the two building blocks provided by Pointcloud Ltd.. The written record comprised detailed notes on the form, construction, probable function of the buildings as a whole and elements within it. The aim of the survey was to create a visual record of the building prior to the alterations resulting from the proposed development. The survey sought to provide information that will help understand the development history of the buildings, and where possible phase structural changes according to date.

5. RESULTS

- 5.1 The principal purpose of the recording was to provide information that would aid in the dating and phasing of the buildings on site. This was to be gained from examination of the form and, where visible, the fabric of the building.
- The earliest element on the site is the large principal building, which sits on the main road through the village. As detailed above (para 3.3) this probably dates from 1864 and is formed from two parts. The east facing front elevations of these two parts comprise one narrow and tall and the other much wider, with each forming a gable end (Fig. 3, Plate 1). Both are constructed from dressed limestone blocks that decrease in size up the elevation, bonded with a buff ash mortar, and repointed in places with grey and cream ash mortars. The upper section of the southern part has been extended upwards at some point in the past, with larger blocks again used at the bottom of this extension and decreasing in size upwards, bonded with a dark grey mortar. The roof above this extension is asymmetrical, with the southern pitch longer than the northern pitch (Plate 2). The other significant alteration made to this elevation is the blocking beneath each of the ground floor windows (Plate 4), which with the interruption in the foundation course suggests these may all have been doorways in the past. One of the foundation course stones has '6Ft T' carved into it (Plate 5).
- 5.3 The construction of the north facing elevation is similar, but the limestone blocks are roughly worked and the resulting coursing is less regular, however the same buff ash mortar appears to have been used (Plate 6). The upper courses appear to be a modern rebuild probably associated with the modern roof structure, with concrete or stone blocks indicating the positions of the roof trusses. The ground and first floor windows alternate the length of the elevation between single light wooden casements in block surrounds and two-light stone mullion windows (Plate 7). This alternation can still be seen in the middle and west sections of the elevation where the windows have been blocked with stone blocks in a cement mortar, based on the shape of the blockings (Plate 8). At the far west end an arched opening has been altered to form a squared doorway (Plate 9), with the blocked opening above it bonded with a dark grey mortar.
- The west facing elevation was constructed from rubble bonded with the same buff ash mortar with numerous areas of repointing and blockings (**Plate 10**). The upper section of the elevation is bonded with a dark grey mortar, and this change in build can be seen extending upwards in the photographs from the 1960s, which show this end of the building with the newly constructed Saladin box kilns in place (**Plates 40-42**). Also visible in these photographs is the lean-to building, the roof scar of which is visible on the elevation.
- 5.5 The south facing elevation was constructed in the same manner as the north facing elevation with roughly worked limestone blocks bonded in irregular courses, with the ground and first floor level windows alternating between those with mullions and those without (Plates 11 & 12). Immediately below the sill level of the ground floor windows the build changes to rubble construction (Plate 13), suggesting that this may be the foundations of the building and that the ground level has subsequently been reduced on this side of the building. Another significant alteration, which was indicated by the frontage, is the upward extension with the stonework bonded with the dark grey mortar seen in other parts of the building (Plate 14). At the eastern end of the elevation the bridge which links this building to the 1890s block (Plate 16) indicates that this extension was constructed either before or at the same time as this later block. The bridge and the new block are both shown on the 1903 Ordnance Survey plan. Cutoff iron beams are present within the elevation either side of the bridge at two heights. At a lower level are smaller beams aligned along a steeply pitched roof scar (Plates 17 & 18), some of them with blue bricks around them that indicate they probably date to a similar period as some major alterations carried out on the 1890's block using those materials. Above these are larger beams at a much gentler pitch extending further along the elevation in both directions (Plates 12 & 14). All of the cut-off beams are mirrored on the opposite elevations of the 1890's block and the malt house, with either similar cut-off beams or a blocking. Just above this former roofline at the east end of the elevation is a blocked opening and bearings box (Plate 19). The large double doors and surrounding area of rebuild located at the west end of the elevation (Plate 15) were a late 20th/early 21st century addition.

- Internally other than the internal face of the walls little of the original structure or features of the principal building survive. The rubble construction of all four external walls can be seen in places (Plates 20 & 21), regardless of the quality of the external stonework. A late 20th century raised floor has been removed (Plate 22), however this sat upon a concrete floor itself. In the south-east corner of the building a number of cut-off iron beams are present in the floor, indicating some sort of heavy plant was used in this area (Plate 23). All of the upper floors of the northern part of the building have been removed, whilst a modern first floor is present in the west half of the southern part of the building (Plates 24 & 25). Above this is the second floor which is unsafe to access.
- 5.7 The remnant of the 1890s block was originally the east end of a much larger building as can be seen from the 1960s photograph of the building (**Plate 43**). The north elevation, as discussed above (para 5.5), is linked to the principal building via a bridge at second floor level, the corbels of which appear to be part of the original build. Roughly squared off rubble blocks laid in irregular courses and bonded with dark grey mortar is the principal construction. The two doorways on first floor level appear to have originally been windows based on the half height stone block surrounds (**Plate 26**). As noted above, cut-off iron beams are present in this elevation on either side of the bridge.
- 5.8 Much of the east-facing elevation is obscured by the addition of the malt house on this side, however sections to the north and south are visible, with both displaying the same build as the north elevation, rubble blocks laid in irregular courses. On the north side some of the stonework displays signs of discoloration which may be evidence of burning, while on the south side a former roofline and two small blockings are present.
- The south-facing elevation appears to be the least altered with large deliberately rough blocks used in its construction. By contrast the west-facing elevation is the most heavily altered, with the lower half largely open apart from three sets of columns and associated beams, and the upper half composed of blue and red brickwork, while the original stonework is limited to the two edges of the elevation (**Plate 27**). The open-columned area would originally have adjoined the middle range part of the 1890's block (**Plate 43**), the roofline of which is preserved by the cement render covering most of the red brickwork. The blue brickwork would always have been an external face. The reason for, and date of, these alterations is unknown, however the fire of 1924 is one possibility.
- 5.10 Internally the first floor is missing altogether (**Plate 28**), while the second and third floors are missing most of their floorboards, making safe access to much of these floors impossible. Two small blockings in the red brickwork, not visible externally due to the cement render, were identified at second floor level below each of the existing windows (**Plate 29**). No makers marks or other identification are visible on the ironwork (**Plate 30**), however an number of the beams rest either on brickwork or inserted stones (**Plate 31**) suggesting they may not have been part of the original build.
- Abutting the 1890s block to the east is the former kiln building or malt house (**Plate 32**). The construction of this building differs significantly from the larger building suggesting it was a later addition, however it is depicted on the 1903 Ordnance Survey plan. It is constructed from large unworked rubble blocks bonded with a very dark grey mortar. Both the north and south elevations have original central openings at ground level and an original central window at the upper level with inserted windows either side of them. On the east elevation all of the existing windows are inserted, with an original window opening blocked up at ground floor level (**Plate 33**). Wall plates or their circular cement scars are present on each of the elevations (**Plate 34**), and as discussed above a number of holes in the stonework (**Plate 35**), are explained by the cut-off iron beams in the south elevation of the principal building opposite. Internally almost no original features are visible, with the walls largely plastered, some concrete block work added and the roof has recently been replaced.
- Marking the edge of the site at the east end is a rubble wall with a clear break in the build (Plates 36 & 37), however this is not present on the historic maps until the late 20th century and is probably associated with the surrounding housing estate. At the western end of the site is a gatepost which may be early 20th century, with curved groove decoration at the top (Plate 38). Similar decoration is seen on a number of stones sat at the foundations of the east elevations of the malt house and principal building (Plate 39).

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The survey of the extant buildings at the Oakhill Maltings site revealed a number of features relating to the sequence of development on the site. These, in conjunction with the historic research and the map evidence, have allowed a very basic phasing of the site to be produced.
- 6.2 The earliest phase is represented by what is the largest and most complete building on the site. The majority of this building is of one build, with rubble wall construction bonded with a buff ash mortar, and faced in varying levels of dressed stone depending on the elevation. The historic research indicates that his principal building dates from 1864. The southern portion of this building was subsequently extended upwards at either the same time or before the second maltings block was constructed in the 1890s. Both this extension and the new block are of similar construction with rubble walls again faced in dressed stone blocks, bonded in this case with a dark grey mortar. A bridge extending between the second maltings block and the upward extension of the first appears to be part of the original build of the second block. therefore the extension of the first must have already been in place or been constructed concurrently with it. The last major development was the construction of the kiln building or malt house, which abuts the east side of the second maltings block. Significant differences in the construction suggest this was added latter. All of these main phases (Principal building, second maltings block, bridge, and eastern kiln building) are depicted on the 1903 Ordnance Survey plan.
- Subsequent more minor phases took place during the 20th century. Alterations to the second 1890s maltings block with the rebuilding in brick may be related to the fire of 1924, and were certainly in place by the 1960s. The blocking of many of the windows of the north and south elevations of the principal building occurred in the later 20th century since the windows are still visible in the photos from the 1960s. The demolition of the majority of the 1890s block occurred after 1970 when it is still depicted on the ordnance survey plan.
- The largest and earliest of the buildings therefore dates to the mid-19th century with all of the other significant construction phases having occurred by 1903. Alterations to these structures were carried out throughout the 20th century, continuing into the 21st century.

7. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES CONSULTED

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Maps and Plans

1808	Ordnance Survey drawing, E. Crocker
1886	Ordnance Survey plan (1:2500).
1903	Ordnance Survey plan (1:2500).
1970	Ordnance Survey plan (1:2500).

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8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Bristol and Region Archaeological Services wish to thank the following for their help and advice: Lee Wright of Pointcloud Limited, Glen Graham of Graham Construction Ltd., and Steve Membury of Somerset County Council. BaRAS would also like to thank Geoff Fitton of the Somerset Industrial Archaeology Society, for providing BaRAS with a copy of an article from their bulletin. The fieldwork was undertaken by Simon Roper and Tracey Smith, 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 (i.e. Bristol Core Strategy) 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.

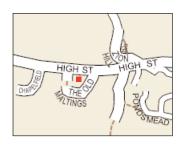
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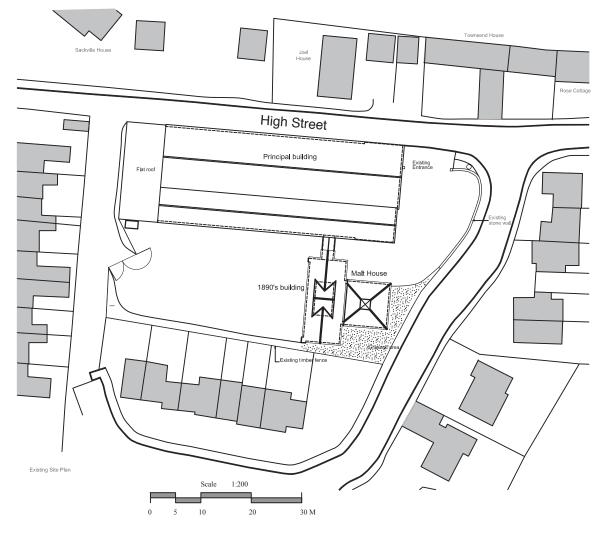
(Policy ECH/6 Archaeology):

Development will not be permitted where it would involve significant alteration or cause damage to nationally-important archaeological remains (whether Scheduled or not), or would have a significant impact on the setting of such remains.

Where there is good reason to believe that development proposals could affect locally-important archaeological remains, the Council will seek a field evaluation and assessment, or may formally require the submission of further information, to establish the extent and importance of the remains before the planning application is determined. Where such assessment indicates the development would affect locally-important archaeological remains and the Council considers preservation in-situ is not justified it will seek before permission is granted a formal voluntary agreement by the developer to excavate and record the remains and to publish the results, or may grant permission subject to conditions requiring an approved programme of archaeological work to be undertaken before development commences.



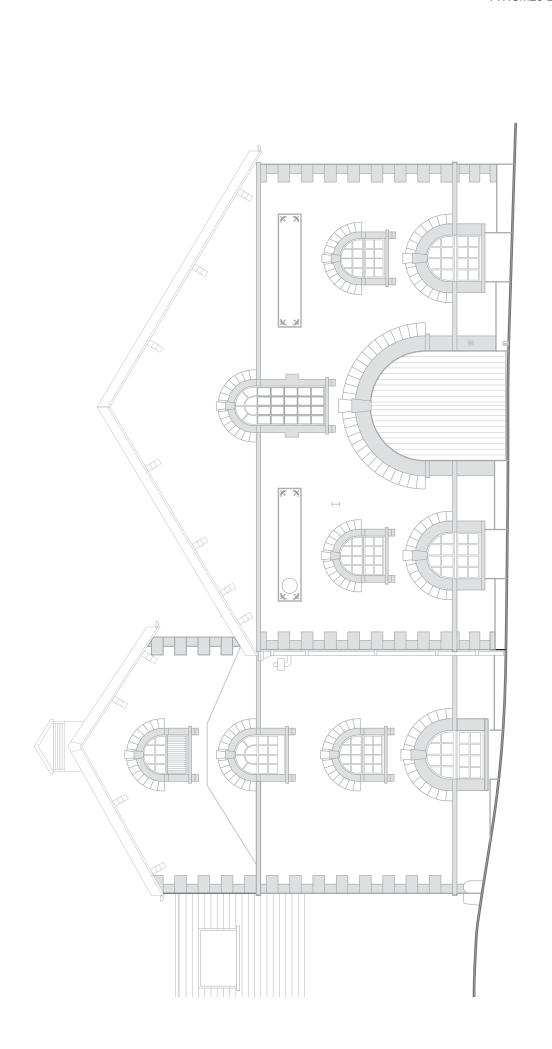




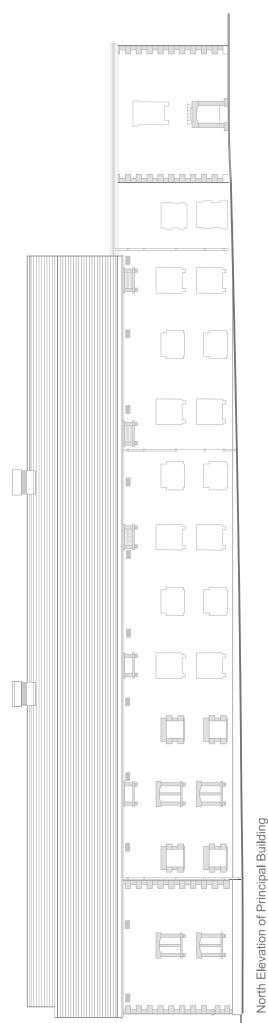
Plan of the site, scale 1:300

Fig.2

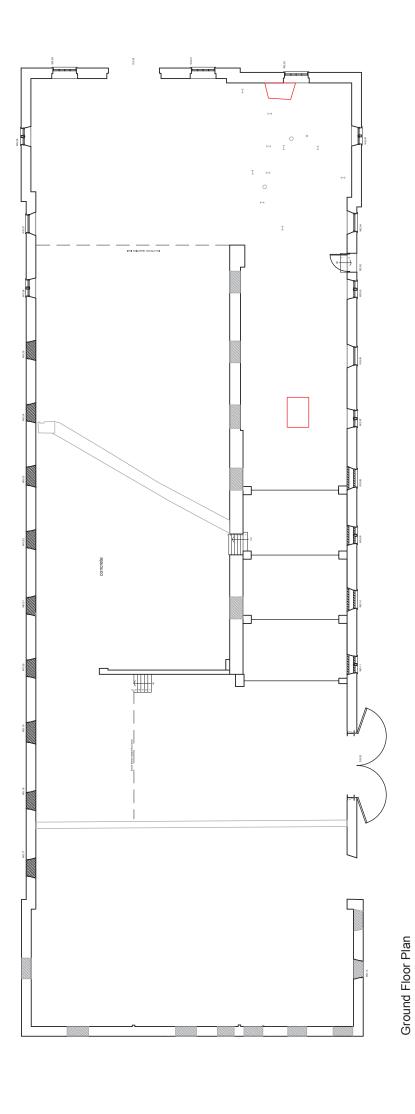
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Oakhill Maltings, High Street, Oakhill, Somerset. SHER 32146



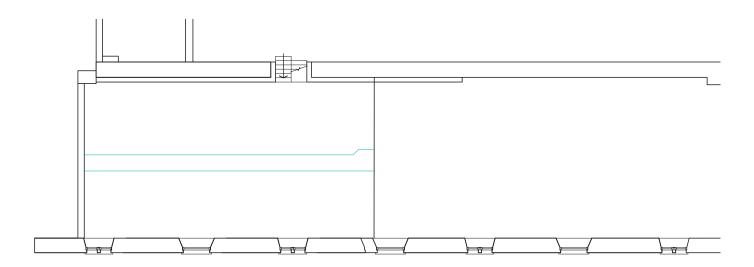
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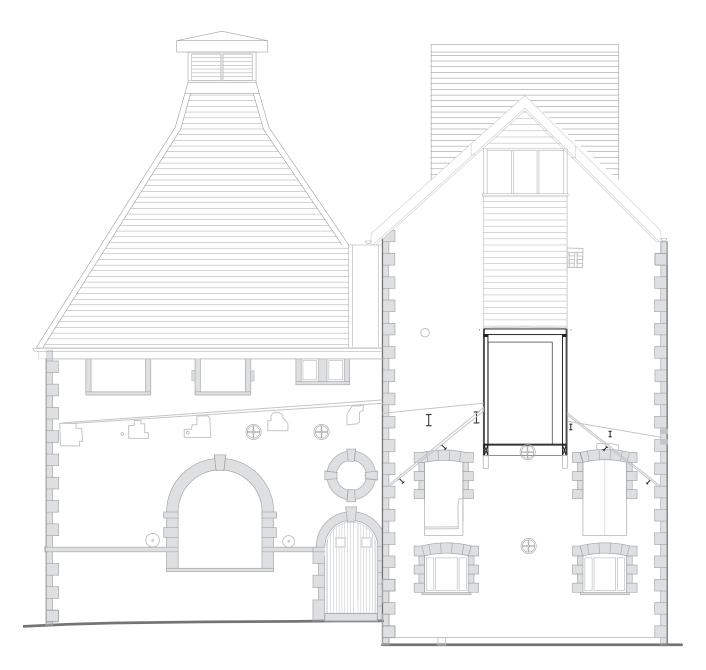
Ground floor plan of the principal building

Principal Building



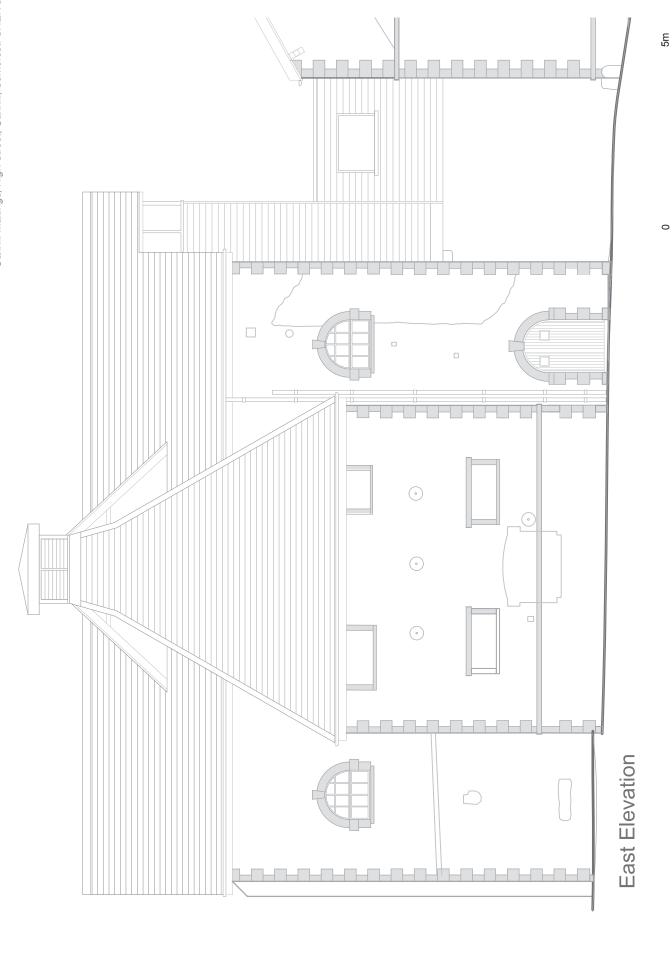


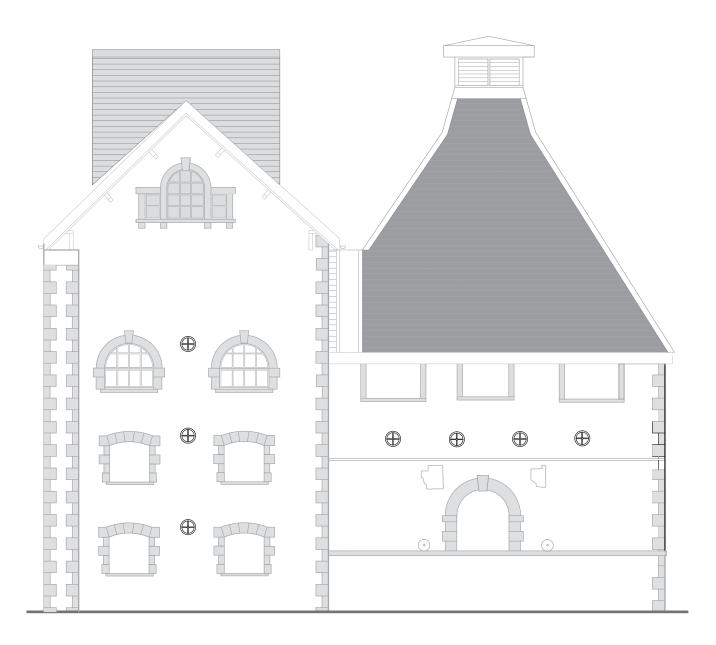




North Elevation of Malt House

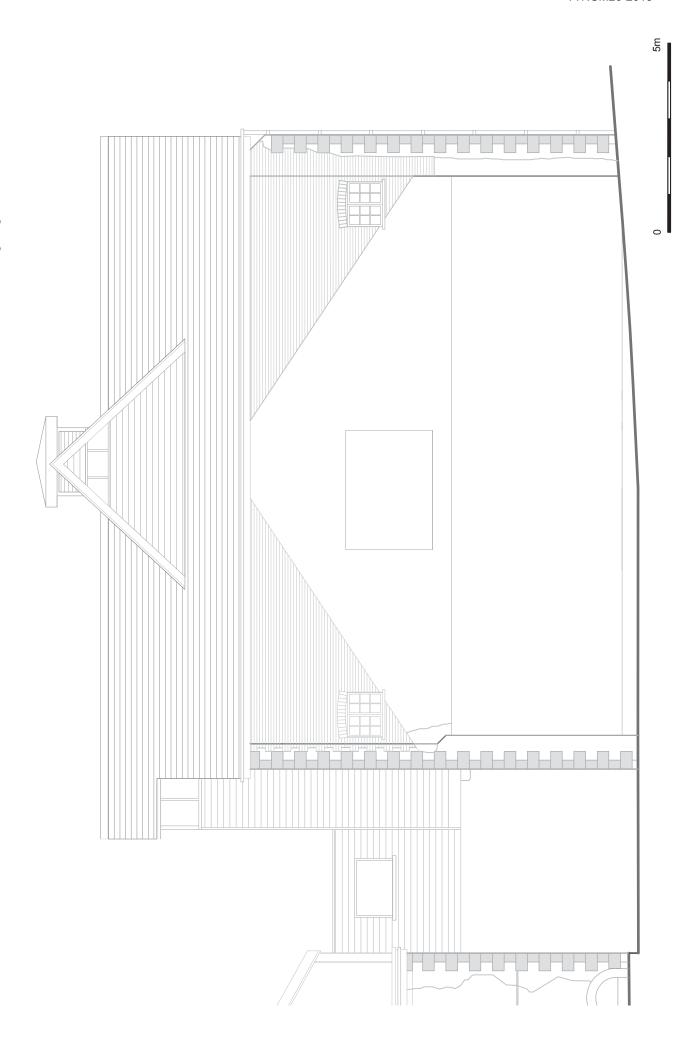


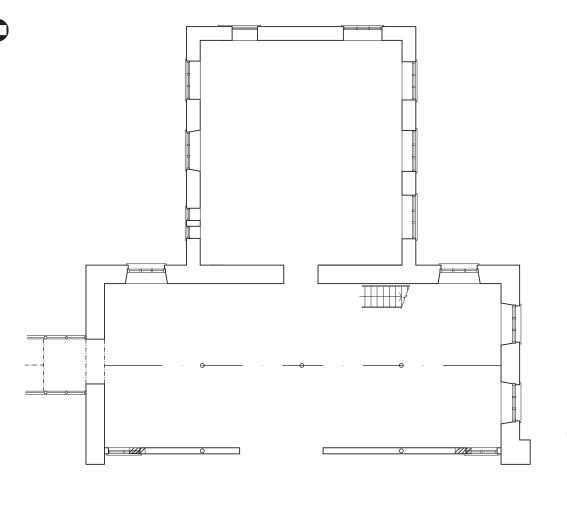




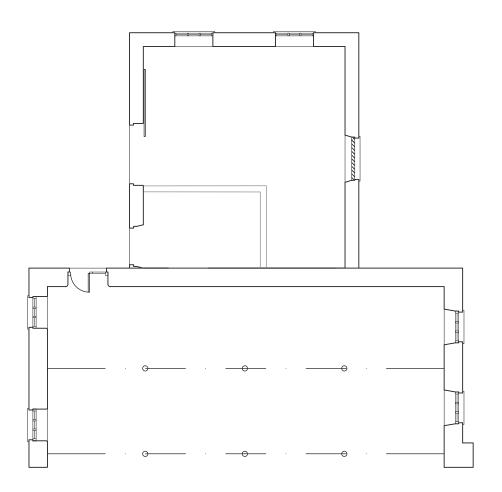
South Elevation of Malt House







Second Floor Plan



Ground Floor Plan

Malt House



East elevation of the principal building, looking south-west Plate 1



Plate 2
East elevation of
the south part of the
principal building,
looking west

East elevation of the north part of the principal building, looking west

Plate 3



Foundation course of the east elevation of the principal building with a carving upon it, looking west Plate 5

Ground floor window of the east elevation of the principal building, looking west

Plate 4

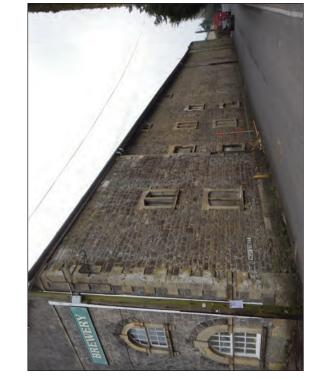


Plate 6 North elevation of the principal building, looking south-west



Plate 7 North elevation of the principal building, east end, looking south

North elevation of the principal building, altered archway at the west end, looking south

Plate 9



Plate 8
North elevation
of the principal
building, middle
section, looking
south





Plate 12 South elevation of the principal building, middle section, looking north



Plate 10 West elevation of the principal building, looking south-east



Plate 13 Exposed foundation course of the principal building south elevation, looking north-east



Plate 14
Cut-off iron beams in the south-facing elevation of the principal building, looking north



Plate 15 Modern opening and rebuild at the west end of the south elevation of the principal building, looking north



Plate 17 Cut-off iron beams at different heights in the south-facing elevation of the principal building, to the west of the bridge, looking north

Plate 16 Bridge between buildings, looking west



Plate 18 Cut-off iron beams at different heights in the south-facing elevation of the principal building, to the east of the bridge, looking north







Plate 20 Internal face of the north elevation of the principal building, looking north-east



Plate 21 Internal dividing wall of the principal building, looking south-west



Plate 23 Cut-off iron beams in the floor of the principal building, looking east



Plate 24 Underside of the modern mezzanine floor in the principal building, looking south-west

Plate 22 Remnant of raised floor, looking south



Plate 25 Modern mezzanine floor in the principal building, looking west



Plate 26
North elevation of the 1890s block, looking south

Plate 27 West elevation of the 1890s block, looking east



Plate 29 Internal face of the west elevation of the 2nd floor of the 1890s block, looking south-west

Plate 28 Internal face of the east elevation of the 1890s block, looking south-east



Plate 30 Column on the 2nd floor of the 1890s block, looking south-east



Plate 31 Iron beam set into north wall of the 1890s block, looking north



Plate 32 Malt house building, looking south-west

Blocked window opening in the east elevation of the malt house, looking south-west

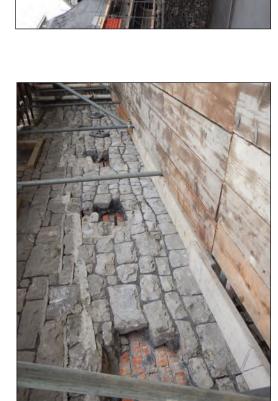


Plate 35 Blocked holes in the north elevation of the malt house where iron beams sat previously, looking south-west

Plate 34 Cement 'scar' of a wall plate on the east elevation of the malt house, looking west



Plate 36 East end boundary wall, looking west

Plate 37 Break in boundary wall, looking southeast



Plate 38 Gatepost at west end of the site, looking south

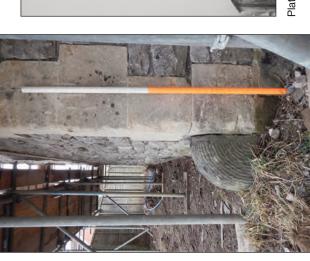


Plate 39 Decorated stone at the foundations of the malt house, looking south



Plate 40 1960s photograph of the west end of the principal building and the new saladin box kilns



Plate 42 1960s photograph of the west end of the principal building and the 1890s block with the new saladin box kilns and traditional kilns next to each other

Plate 41 1960s photograph of the west end of the principal building and the new saladin box kilns being constructed



Plate 43 1960s photograph of the mid section and east end of the 1890s block