

Archaeological Building Survey
of
**THE FORMER RED COW PUBLIC HOUSE,
NO.113 WEST STREET, BEDMINSTER,
BRISTOL.**
for
Mr Gordon Page



Report No. 2155/2009
BHER No. 24791



Bristol and Region Archaeological Services

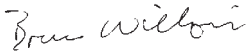

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**THE FORMER RED COW PUBLIC HOUSE,
NO.113 WEST STREET, BEDMINSTER,
BRISTOL.**

Centred on
N.G.R. ST 58080 71060

Client: Mr Gordon Page

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<i>Date Issued:</i>	

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Abbreviations

AD	Anno Domini	BHER	Historic Environment Record
aOD	Above Ordnance Datum	Km	Kilometre
BaRAS	Bristol & Region Archaeological Services	m	Metre
BC	Before Christ	MoB	Museum of Bristol
BCC	Bristol City Council	NGR	National Grid Reference
BCL	Bristol Central Library	NMR	National Monuments Record
BCMAG	Bristol City Museum & Art Gallery	OS	Ordnance Survey
BHER	Bristol Historic Environment Record		
BRO	Bristol Record Office		
BSMR	Bristol Sites & Monuments Record		
c.	Circa		

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, 2009.

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SUMMARY

The former Red Cow public house, No. 113 West Street, Bedminster was recorded to English Heritage level 2 standard prior to proposed demolition. Photographic recording was accompanied by annotation of existing architects' drawings. This two-storey Lias limestone-built structure is probably of 18th century and later date, with single storey rear blocks added in the 19th century. Partial cellarge survived at basement level. Internal alterations were undertaken in 1932 with further works following later, including the installation of what was reputedly Bristol's shortest skittle alley in the former scullery. In the rear yard a brick-built stable and coach house were erected in the second half of the 19th century.

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Bristol and Region Archaeological Services (BaRAS) were commissioned by Mr Gordon Page to undertake a Level 2 building survey of the former Red Cow public house, 113 West Street, Bedminster, Bristol. The building survey was commissioned as a condition of planning consent for re-development of the site, which would involve demolition of the building. It was understood that English Heritage staff had decided not to recommend the building for Listed status following a site visit.
- 1.2 The project was designed to comply with a brief prepared by BCC archaeological officer Mr R H Jones (planning ref 09/00197/F) and was conducted in accordance with the methodology outlined in a Written Scheme of Investigation produced by BaRAS 2009.
- 1.3 Recording of the building was undertaken on 26th June 2009 by John Bryant and Raymond Ducker. The report was written by John Bryant.
- 1.4 The project archive will be deposited with Bristol City Museum & Art Gallery under the Accession Number BRSMG 2009/38 and a paper and digital copy of the report will be sent to the National Monuments Record maintained by English Heritage. The project has been entered in the Bristol Historic Environment Record as: BHER 24791 and in the OASIS Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations as: bristola1- 61102.

2. THE SITE

- 2.1 The site lies on the south-eastern side of West Street, Bedminster, at No. 113, on the opposite side of the street to South Road and Rowley Street, at NGR ST 58080 71060 (**Cover & Fig. 1**). No. 111 West Street bounds the property to the north-east and No. 119 and its forecourt to the south-west; No. 2 Argus Road forms the south-eastern boundary. There is a car park between the main building and No. 111, and a smaller yard between the principal structure and outbuildings abutting No. 2.
- 2.2 According to the British Geological Survey, the site lies on Redcliffe Sandstone of the Triassic period. The site is level, with an OS spot height of 25.9m aOD in the street outside No. 111.
- 2.3 No buildings on the site are listed, nor is the site within a conservation area. However, No. 119, about 20m to the south-west, is listed Grade II. There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments on or near the site.

3. SURVEY OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The principle objectives of the survey were to make a complete photographic record of the building prior to its demolition and to record structural changes and developments made to the building since its construction.
- 3.2 This survey was conducted to English Heritage level 2 which comprised of photographic recording of the building with written notes and amendments to existing floor plans and elevations where needed.

4. GENERAL BACKGROUND

- 4.1 No previous archaeological study of this site has been produced, although there have been several archaeological interventions in the area in the last decade. In 2007 a desk-based assessment was undertaken for the south-western end of No. 119 West Street, formerly Hampton House (BaRAS report 1905/2007).
- 4.2 This site lies within what was the ancient parish of Bedminster. The medieval parish church lay about 500m to the north-east. The placename suggests that there was a minster or major church in the village in later Saxon times. Settlement in the vicinity is known to go back further, however, with Romano-British occupation recorded not far to the north-east during recent archaeological fieldwork. Until 1835 Bedminster, including this site, lay within the County of Somerset, but was then absorbed into the City and County of Bristol.
- 4.3 West Street is an ancient thoroughfare, thought by some to have at least Roman origins. In the medieval period it was part of the route linking Bristol with Taunton and the South West, and was also on the old route to Wells. The street remains part of the modern A38 long distance road. A late 18th-century plan of Bedminster shows, on this site, a block running alongside the street, but the more detailed 1827 plan records a building whose shape is very similar to that still existing today.
- 4.4 An undated, but late 18th-century, manorial survey, listed the property as a House Garden & Barton, 3 roods and 16 perches in extent (BRO AC/M 11/35). This, parcel 591, was the first in a list of a number of parcels totalling 26 acres occupied by Mr Young. It was shown on a contemporary map as a rectangular block against, and running parallel to, the street (AC/PL 92, **Fig. 2**). However, the public house was operating soon afterwards, as according to the Somerset sessions rolls, William Morgan employed James Sanford as an ostler at the Red Cow public house in 1796 (SRO Q/SR/364/4/20). Morgan was still at the inn in 1808 when three men were accused of burglary there (SRO DD\DP/60/22). At the time of the parish survey in 1826 John Acraman was the landowner but occupied by Isaac Williams, who also had several fields of pasture and an orchard (AC/E 21). The premises were described as “Red cow Inn Yard and outbuildings” and occupied 1 rood and 24 perches land area. A virtually contemporary map showed the present main building including the front extension, but excluding the rear outbuildings (BRO AC/PL 107/1, **Fig. 3**). Pigot’s 1830 directory of Gloucestershire also listed Williams at the Red Cow. Six years later, on the 12th April 1836, the new Bedminster Board of Guardians held their first meeting at the inn. Benjamin Luxton was landlord in 1836 and James Stone by 1840, the latter being the occupant at the time of the tithe award in 1843 (**Fig. 4**), the property being described similarly to the 1820s. Stone kept sheep in a field, one being recorded as killed and butchered in 1842.
- 4.5 Ashmead’s 1854 1:600 survey of the city showed that the block later to contain the skittle alley was already standing (**Fig. 5**). The 1883-surveyed 1:500 OS plan showed the site very much as today, including the bay window to the street frontage and chimney breast on the north-east wall, although the main building seemed to continue south-eastwards a little further in what was latterly the skittle alley area (**Fig. 6**). By this time the brick-built stable and coach house had been erected. At this time the open area immediately north-east of the public house led to the gates of the Malago Vale Colliery, the major part of which was a short distance to the east. Little appeared to have changed before the turn of the 20th century, but by the time of the First World War the now disused colliery had given way to Argus Road, and the public house was shown as extending even further to the south-east by the OS 1:2500 plan (this was possibly an error). The area beside and behind the public house became known as Red Cow Yard and was utilised for events such as funfairs; one person was killed in Red Cow Yard during the Blitz.
- 4.6 Drawings were submitted in summer 1932 for new lavatory accommodation at the Red Cow (BRO Building Plan Book 118, fol. 18). They showed the existing and proposed ground floor plans together with a small area of the first floor (**Figs. 7-10**). The main differences in early 1932

from the later public house layout were smaller bar areas, a separate staircase at the south-west end of the building, an outside lavatory for males only and the lack of a skittle alley. Many lesser differences also may be noticed by comparing the 1932 and 2009 floor plans. Business continued at the Red Cow until some time in 2008, when the building was closed.

5. THE BUILDING SURVEY (Figs. 11-13)

- 5.1 The Red Cow public house comprises a double depth two-storey building with a forward extension at its south-western end, and single-storey rear extension and outbuildings around two further sides of a yard (**Fig. 1; Cover & Plates 1-5**). Cellarage exists beneath the rear part of the main building and the nearer end of the skittle alley. A pair of parallel pitched roofs cover the larger part of the main building, the south-eastern roof being of wider span and hipped at its south-west end. A third pitched roof covers 75% of the south-western part of the building, but the remainder nearest the street (i.e. that part that projects forward of the main building line) is hipped and at a slightly lower level. The southern corner of the main building is single storey only, with a flat roof, but the high south-west wall suggests that this may once have had a second storey, a fact confirmed by the 1932 drawings (BRO Building Plan Book 118, fol. 18). Today all pitched roofs are covered with Double Roman tiles, some of modern manufacture.
- 5.2 Only the street elevations are bare, all other walls being rendered. The Red Cow is the second of a group of three buildings in this part of West Street that are constructed of Liassic Limestone, a material that readily cleaves to produce slab-like blocks somewhat akin in size and shape to Pennant sandstone or brickwork. Lias stonework is easily laid in courses, as here, and also produces conveniently sized voussoirs for window and doorway arches. The principal entrance is in the centre of the longer part of the frontage, which is set back a little from the inside of the pavement, with a secondary doorway in the short length of return wall (**Plate 2**). Between the two entrances is a shallow canted bay window with brick base, the timberwork only recently removed. Either side of the two-leaf outer door in the main entrance are plain jambs above which until recently scrolled brackets supported a broken pediment (**Plate 1**). Most of the windows in the front elevation have been refenestrated within older embrasures in modern times, the remaining opening boarded up. Guttering along the front of the roof is concealed behind a rubble parapet.
- 5.3 An open space always seems to have existed at the north-east end of the building. Facing onto this space are two gable ends, that nearest the street slightly narrower and therefore with an increased roof pitch, and this gable only has a projecting chimney breast, with two pots (**Plate 3**). The other gable is a capped with a stack now shorn of its pots, but apparently containing two flues. All three windows in this elevation have modern frames. At low level against the south-east end of this elevation are a pair of wooden cellar doors, providing the sole external access to this facility; alongside hatch on its south-east side only is a short, very low length of Pennant rubble wall. Continuing the line of this elevation is the yard wall, pierced by a pair of large gates, beyond which is the end wall of an outbuilding with a single pitch roof. At the opposite end of the main elevation, a boundary wall abuts the north corner of the public house.
- 5.4 Despite having long been unobstructed, the south-west elevation of the building only appears to have had a single opening, a first-floor window, now with a blockwork infill (**Plate 4**). Nearer to the street, two parallel cracks in the render mark the location of a now- removed buttress, while above, a clean vertical line indicates a straight joint behind. The 1932 plan records second buttress, also since removed. There is a single chimney stack in relatively modern brickwork. The wall changes angle as it runs further back, and must have been considered unstable since it is supported by three modern steeply inclined brick buttresses, the westernmost of which replaces one recorded in 1932.
- 5.5 The south-eastern elevation of the main building mostly faces directly onto the yard and includes a doorway and a number of windows, most of the latter probably not original (**Plate 5**). To the left of the entrance, the two ground-floor windows are barred on the outside. In the angle with the south-western yard wall is a low box containing vents serving the cellar below (**Plate 6**). The south-west wall itself includes double doors leading to the skittle alley with a window to either side, and a larger window at the northern end of the wall, all windows again barred on the outside (**Plates 6 & 7**). Projecting beyond the wall face, the single pitch or catslide roof above the centre and south-east end of the skittle alley provides shelter at that end of the yard (in 1932 it was

supported at its outside corner by a post). Brick walls delineate most of the south-east side of the yard, with a doorway leading into the former stable near the north-east end and large wooden double doors for the coach house adjoining to the south-west (**Plate 8**). A narrow passage between the coach house and skittle alley now contains a ladies' toilet at its far end but originally provided the sole facility for (male) customers.

- 5.6 Inside the main entrance a large bar (**Plate 9**) opens to left and right, with straight ahead a door into a short passage that leads to the male lavatory, the door to the yard and access to the skittle alley (the latter is labelled as 'Club Room' on internal doors). In earlier times the left-hand side of the bar was a separate tap room, extended rearwards when the male lavatory was installed in the former store room at the eastern corner of the building; the fireplace on the north-east wall has been blocked up (**Plate 10**). Inside the other part of this bar there is a wide opening in the front wall for the bay window and the lintel for this is supported at each end by a slim iron or steel column (**Plate 11**): the present owner says that the timberwork for the window is modern, although the bay itself is much older, having been shown on the early 1880s OS plan. The secondary entrance in the forward extension of the building now leads directly into a second, smaller bar (**Plate 12**), but in 1932 there was a small lobby giving access into the smoke room, straight ahead, and the outdoor department (off licence) to the left. Heating for the smoke room was provided by a fireplace and breast on the end wall; a staircase beside the fireplace climbed up to the then Club Room at first floor level above.
- 5.7 Much reorganisation has taken place in the ground floor area between the bars and skittle alley. The old store room south-east of the smoke room was reduced in size in 1932 when a ladies' lavatory was inserted alongside the main south-west wall: the remainder was later converted into a kitchen (**Plate 13**). Behind the old bar was a living room, with a small office squeezed between the two: a trapdoor in the floor provided internal access to the cellar, as it still does today (**Plate 14**). Stone winders lead into the western corner of a barrel-vaulted cellar that runs north-east as far as the outside flaps in Red Cow Yard (**Plate 15**). A short passage leads into another cellar room beneath what is now the north-west end of the skittle alley (**Plate 16**). Ventilation is provided through the passage wall from the box in the corner of the yard. Back at ground-floor level, a short passage leads past the bottom of the staircase and the small kitchen created out of the old living room, providing access to the skittle alley. The south-east wall of this passage together with that of the rear lobby comprises two segmental arches with flattened heads, infilled on their outer sides, features that originally may have been open to the yard (**Plate 17**).
- 5.8 Today a short skittle alley (reputedly the shortest in Bristol) occupies the southern corner of the site (**Plates 18 & 19**). The alley itself runs parallel to the south-west wall. Short, shouldered, stub walls to either side at about 3m into the room represent the remains of a once continuous wall that separated the old kitchen (to the north-west) from a scullery. The kitchen was equipped with a range in its north-west wall; a cupboard set within the opposite wall may have once been a window in an external wall. Against the south-west wall of the scullery was a staircase, underneath which, in the west corner of the room, was a copper, with a large sink in the north corner of the same room.
- 5.9 The outbuilding with the double doors almost next to the skittle alley, now a store (**Plate 20**), has a brick floor and a small blocked-up window in its rear wall; there is a hatch to the roofspace above in the east corner of the room. Described as a stable in 1932, this may have been a coach house earlier. There is a small window towards the front end of the north-east wall (**Plate 21**). Close to the west corner is a thin iron or steel post supporting a joist or beam. Next door to the north-east is another store, also with a brick floor, accessed through a stable door. A small window opening in the north-east wall, now blocked in, matches that already mentioned opposite. This space is divided by a modern blockwork wall but was probably originally a stable, possibly partitioned into two stalls; several heavy-duty wooden pegs in the front wall may have been used for hanging horse harness or saddlery (**Plate 22**).
- 5.10 Sole access to the first floor of the main building is today provided by a straight flight of stairs approached by a short passage from the rear lobby. This staircase appears to date from no earlier

than the late 19th century, and this is almost certainly not the site of the original stairs. The landing (**Plate 23**) extends south-westwards as far as a short flight leading to the raised south-west end of the building, entered through a doorway that was inserted after the 1932 plan was drawn. The remains of what was probably a chimney breast survive against the south-east side of this passage. Beside the top of the main staircase, the landing runs south-east for a short distance before rising one step, after which it turns south-westwards.

- 5.11 Generally on this upper storey it appears that the rooms have been rearranged and no longer represent the original layout, although the eastern bedroom may be an exception. Thin partitions divide the two front bedrooms from the landing. Whereas the northern room (**Plate 24**) has a shallow chimney breast but no visible fireplace, with a small cupboard in the wall to its right (possibly a former window), the central bedroom is devoid of interest apart from a shallow beam running out of the front wall. Cupboards have been built into two angles of the eastern bedroom (**Plate 25**); the fireplace has been blocked up. In one corner of the windowless room the bottom of a hip rafter is visible where the ceiling is built into the bottom of the roofspace, which latter feature continues into one side of the adjoining bathroom. Removal of wall plaster in the external wall of the kitchen has exposed a small area of the original Lias limestone rubble walling. Through a hatch in the bathroom ceiling may be seen the hip end of the rear roof, showing a structure that is pegged together and includes butt purlins (**Plates 26 & 27**).
- 5.12 At the time of the 1932 drawing the south-western end of this floor comprised a single room, the Club Room, separately accessed from the ground floor smoke room only. A new rear wall was built after the room was reduced in length in order to install a flat roof with lights above the store and new female lavatory behind the smoke room. At that time the room was lit by skylights plus a small window in the south-west wall but the front window already appears to have been blocked. Subsequently, the side window has been blocked in and the area partitioned into two bedrooms, although the chimney breast survives, albeit with the chimneypiece removed (**Plates 28 & 29**). This area is four steps above the main first floor landing, and consequently the ceiling is partly set within the lower roofspace: the bottom of a pair of principal rafters is visible, the south-western rafter consisting of a pair of machine-cut timbers bolted together. A hatch high in the north-east wall of the front bedroom provides access into the front roof of the double-pile part of the building: the roof is constructed with A-frame trusses that look to be of a good age, although the common rafters are machine-cut and relatively modern (**Plate 30**).

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The survey made a photographic record of the building, inside and outside. No part of the structure was found to be earlier than perhaps the 18th century. At least some of the present structure was recorded on a late 18th-century map, while the present building (including the front extension but excluding the rear outbuildings) was accurately shown on another map of 1827. The block now containing the skittle alley was in existence by 1854 and the stable/coach house block by 1883. It was determined that substantial internal change had occurred since construction, even since the alterations of 1932. The Red Cow was seen to be not too different to the older buildings in this part of West Street, and indeed forms a local group with the nearby Nos. 109 and 119, in that all are constructed primarily from local limestone of the Liassic period.

7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Maps and Drawings

Anon	nd, late C18	<i>Plan of the Manor of Bedminster</i>
Anon	1828	Plan of Bedminster (BRO AC/PL/107/1)
Ashmead, G	1854	<i>Plan of Bristol and its Suburbs</i>
Ordnance Survey	1883	1:500 plan
Ordnance Survey	1902	1:2500 plan
Ordnance Survey	c1913	1:2500 plan
Georges Brewery	1932	"Red Cow", <i>West Street, Bedminster shewing Proposed New Lavatories</i> (BRO, Building Plan Book 118, fol. 18)
Ordnance Survey	2007	1:1250 plan
Amasia Architects	2009	<i>The Red Cow, 113 West Street, Bedminster</i>

Bristol Record Office (also see above)

AC/E 8	<i>A Survey of Bedminster Whitchurch & Foxcote Manor, 1789</i>
AC/E 21	<i>Terrier of the Parish of Bedminster in the County of Somerset, 1826</i>
AC/M 11/35	Survey of Bedminster [nd, late C18]

Unpublished material

BaRAS 2007	<i>Archaeological Desk-based Assessment of Nos. 115-119 West Street, Bedminster, Bristol</i> (BaRAS report no. 1905/2007).
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Electronic sources

Somerset Record Office On-line Catalogue

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BaRAS would like to thank Mr Gordon Page for arranging access to the building.

APPENDIX 1: Policy Statement

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

NATIONAL POLICIES

Statutory protection for archaeology is enshrined in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979), amended by the National Heritage Act, 1983. Nationally important sites are listed in the Schedule of Ancient Monuments (SAM). Scheduled Monument consent is required for any work which would affect a SAM.

ODPM PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE

The Planning Policy Guidance of Archaeology and Planning (PPG 16) consolidates advice to planning authorities. The Guidance stresses the non-renewable nature of the archaeological resource, details the role of the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), encourages early consultation with county and district archaeological officers and sets out the requirement for developers to provide sufficient information on the archaeological impact of development to enable a reasonable planning decision to be made.

PPG 16 also indicates the circumstances where further work would be necessary and outlines the use of agreements and conditions to protect the archaeological resource.

DISTRICT POLICY

Bristol City Council Adopted Local Plan Written Statement (1997) states (policy B22):

- (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.

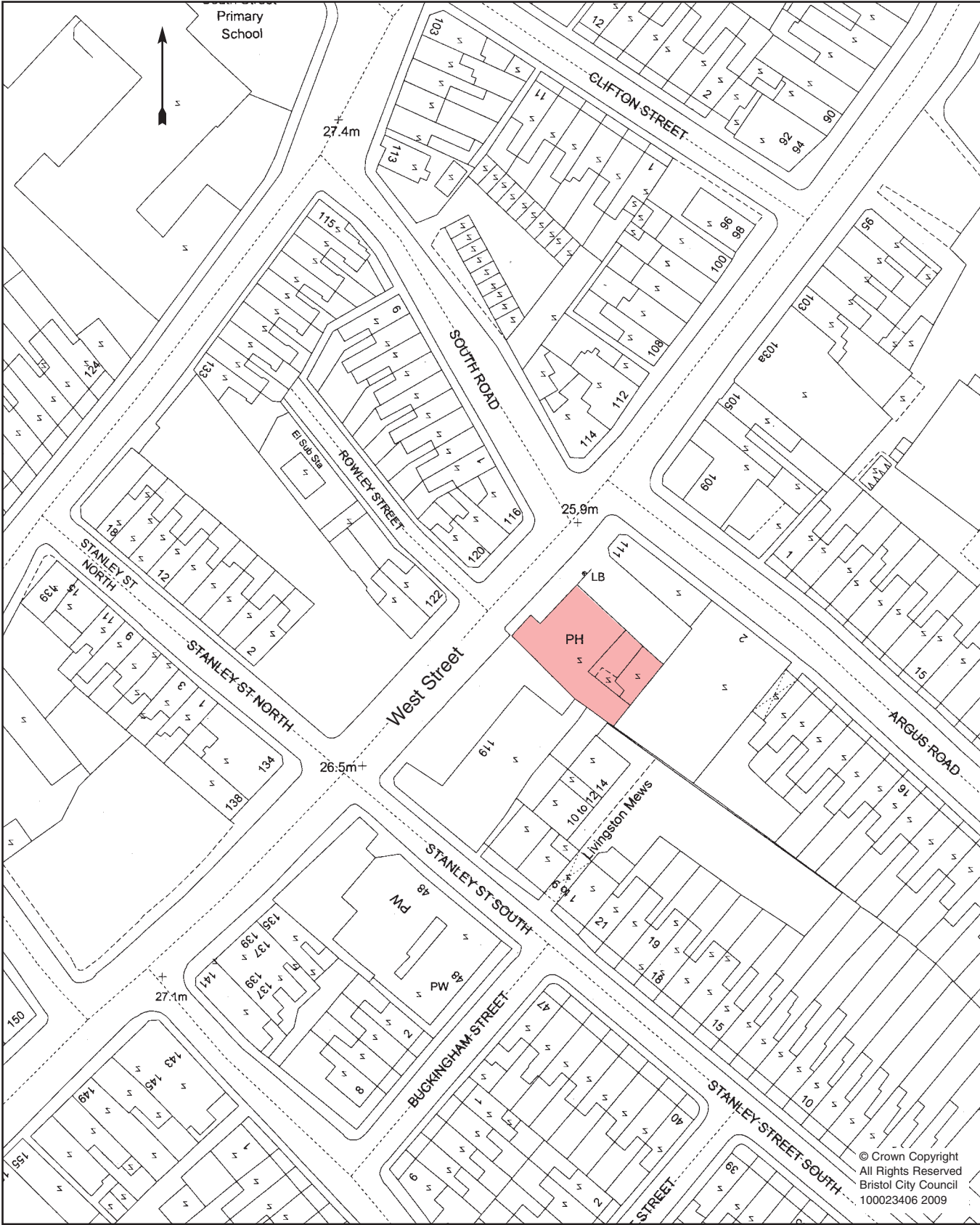


Fig.1 Site location plan

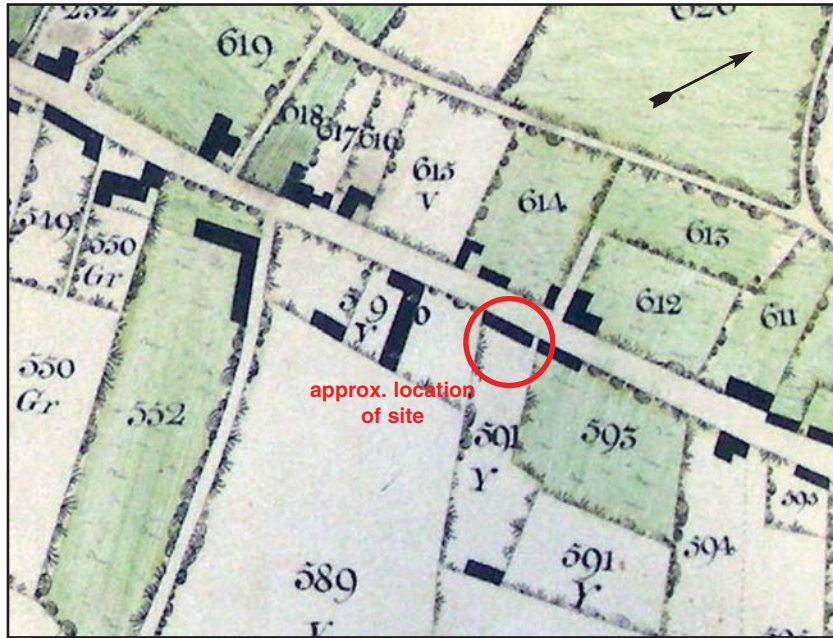


Fig.2 Extract from late 18th-century Bedminster map



Fig.3 Extract from 1828 Bedminster map

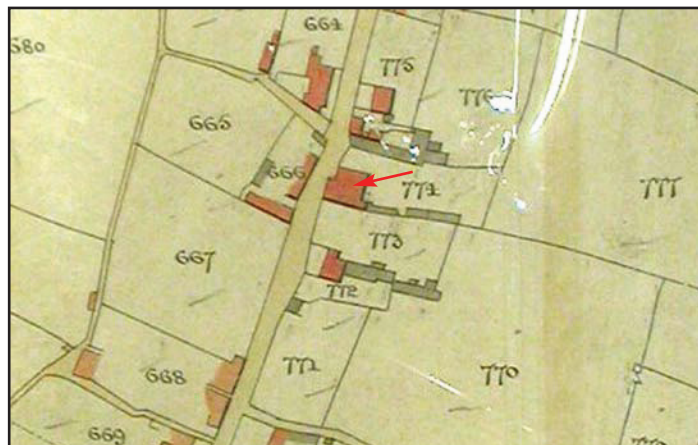


Fig.4 Extract from the 1841 tithe map



Fig.5 Ashmead survey of 1854

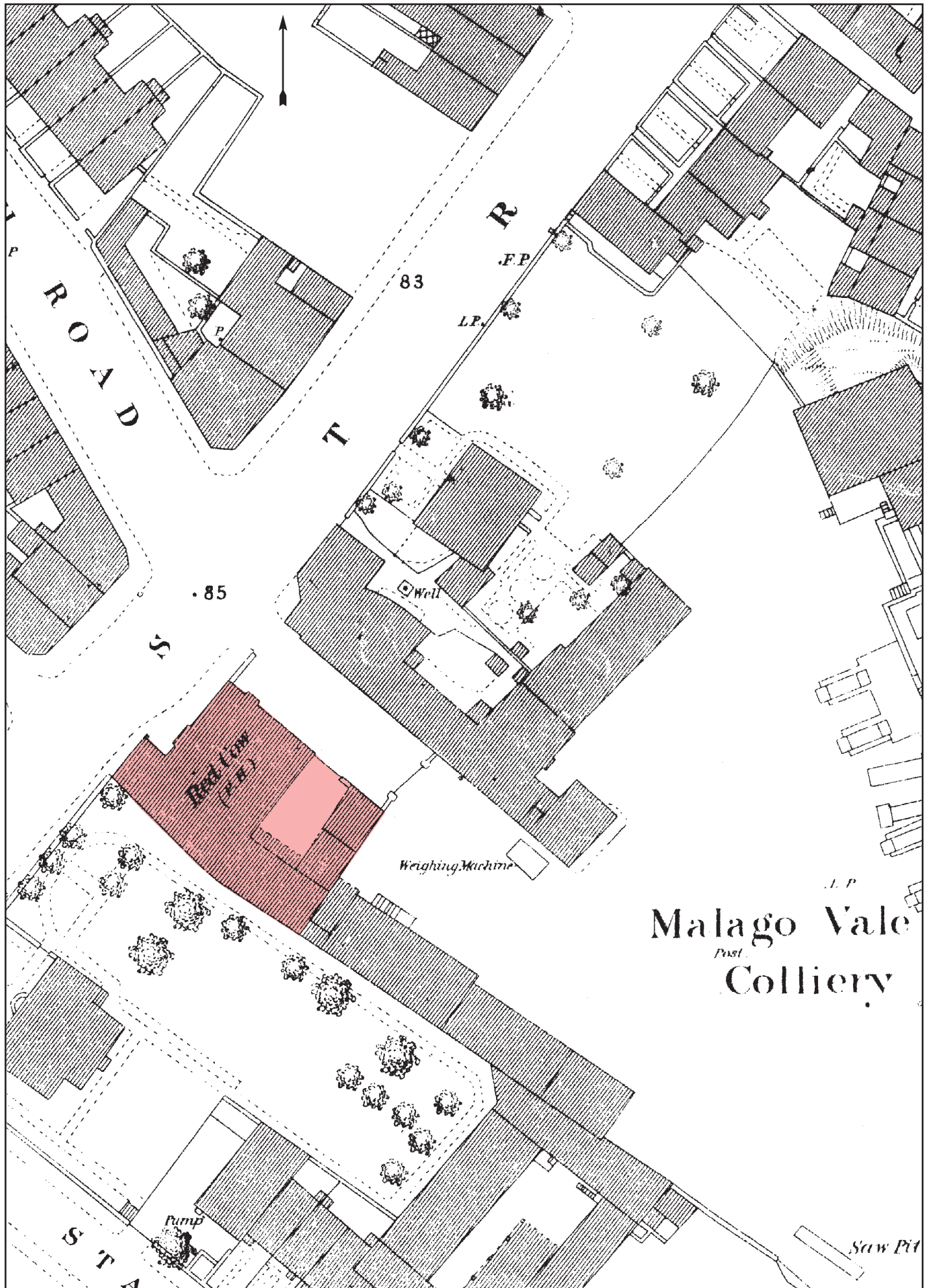


Fig.6 Ordnance Survey 1:500 plan, 1883

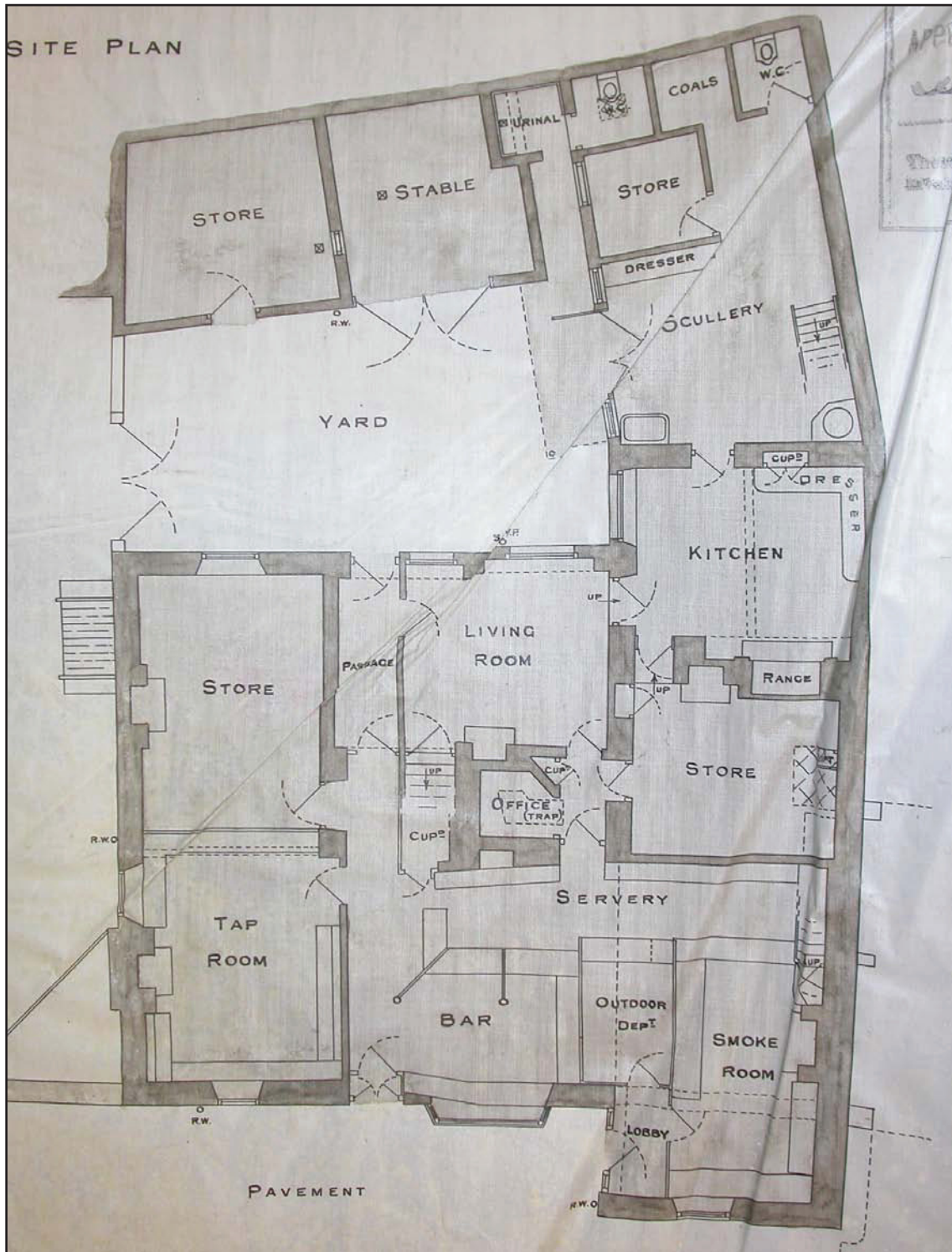


Fig.7 Ground floor plan, 1932

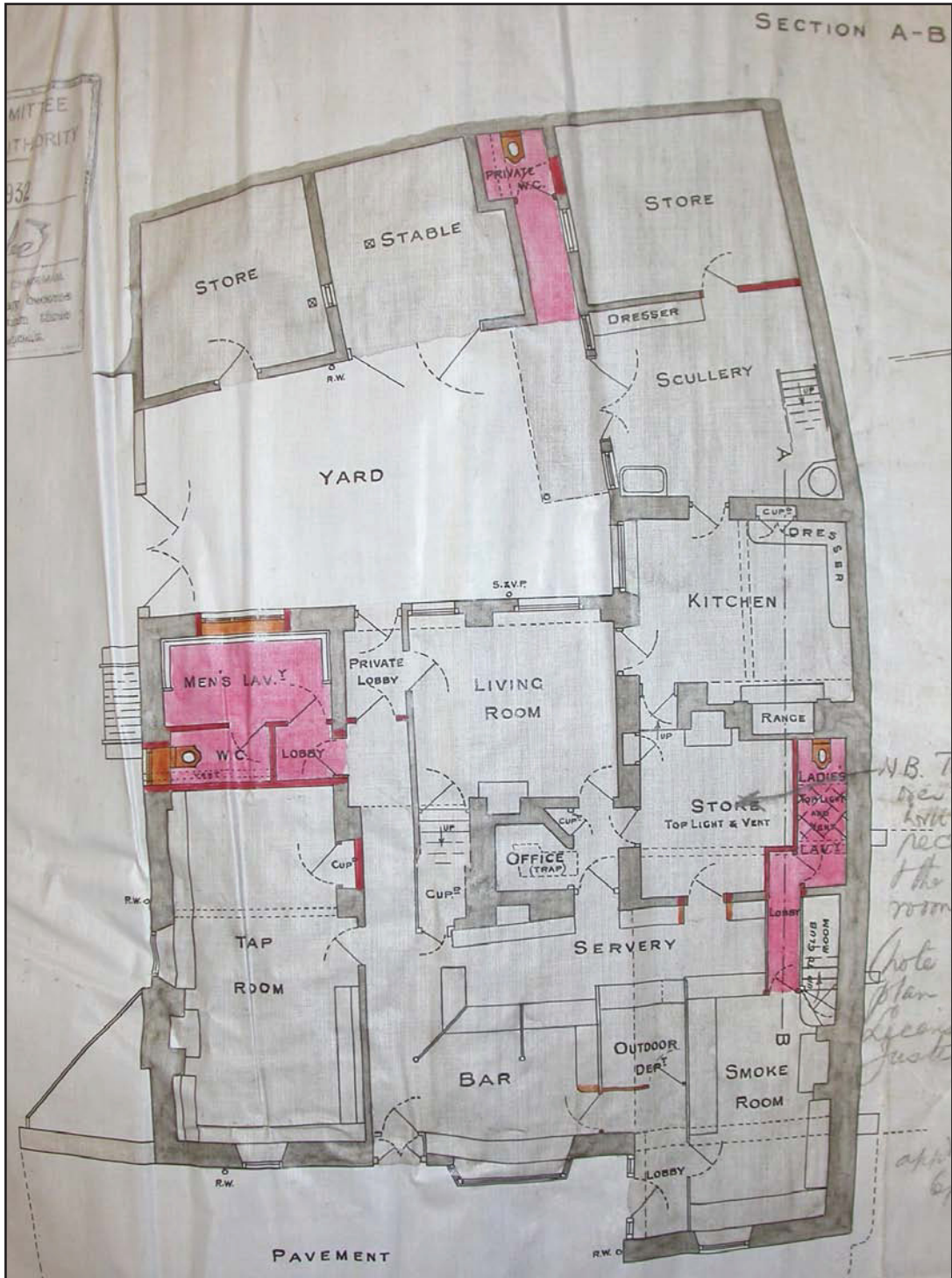


Fig.8 Ground floor plan with proposed alterations, 1932

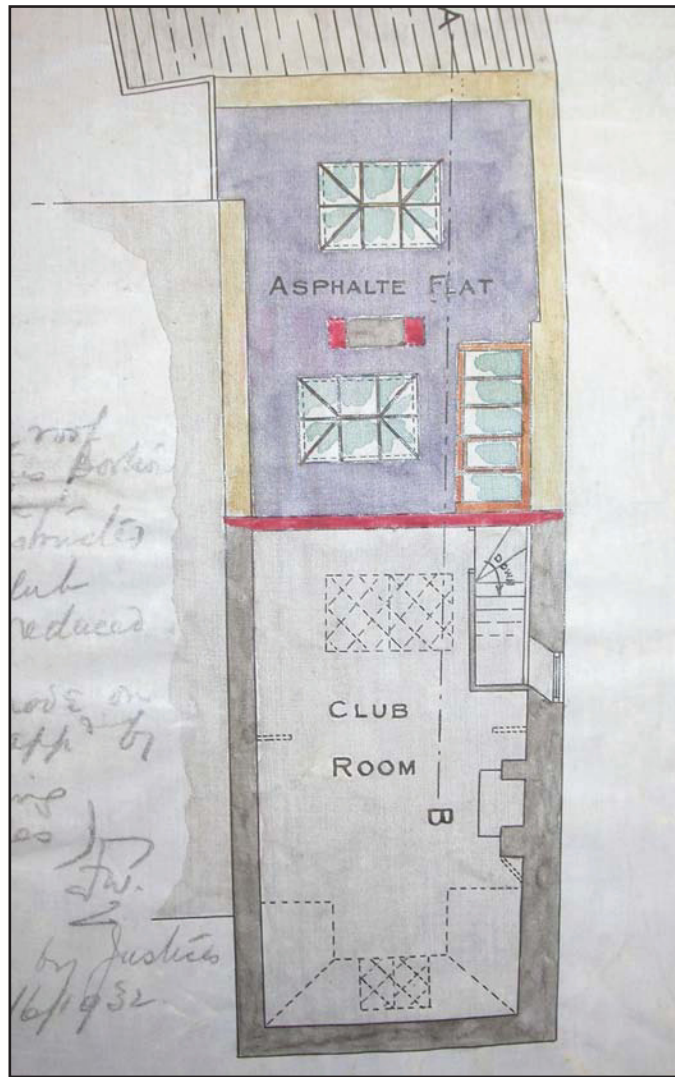


Fig.9 Club Room plan, 1932

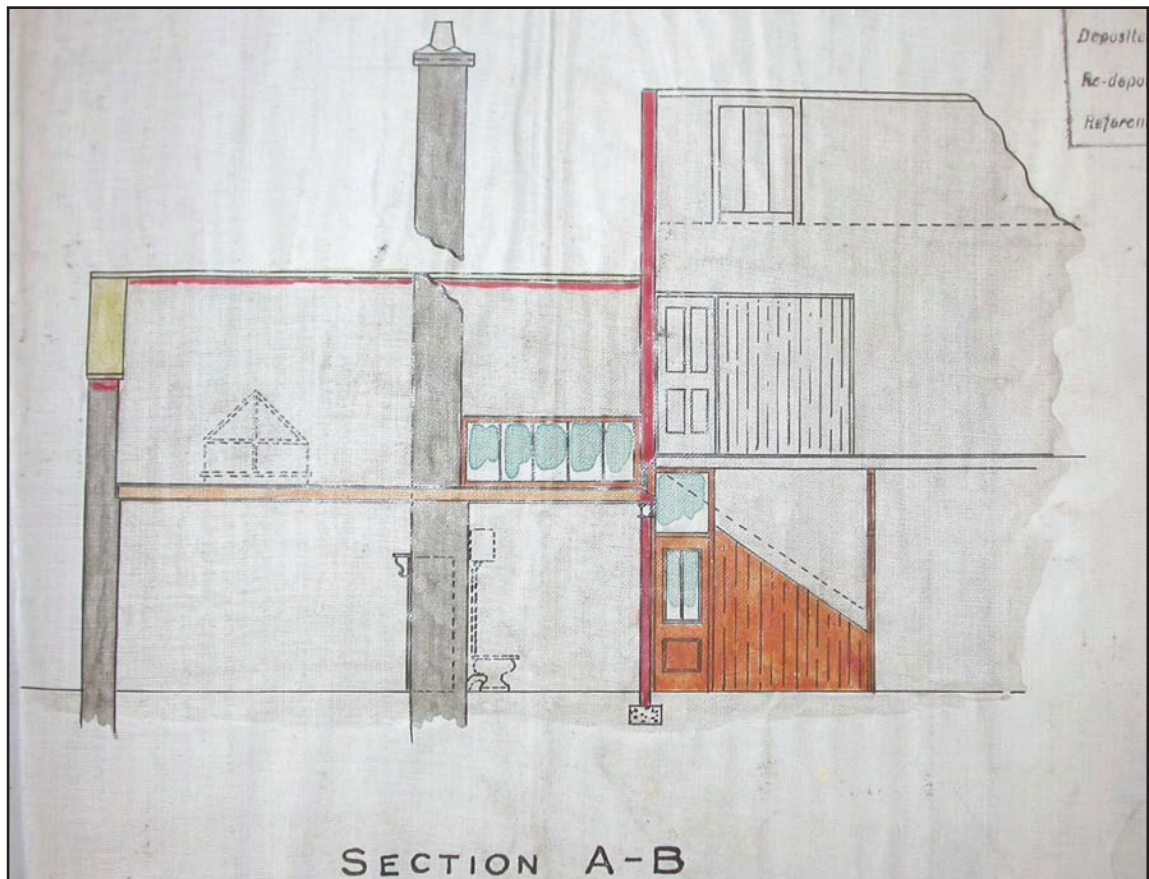


Fig.10 Section through truncated Club Room and new flat roof

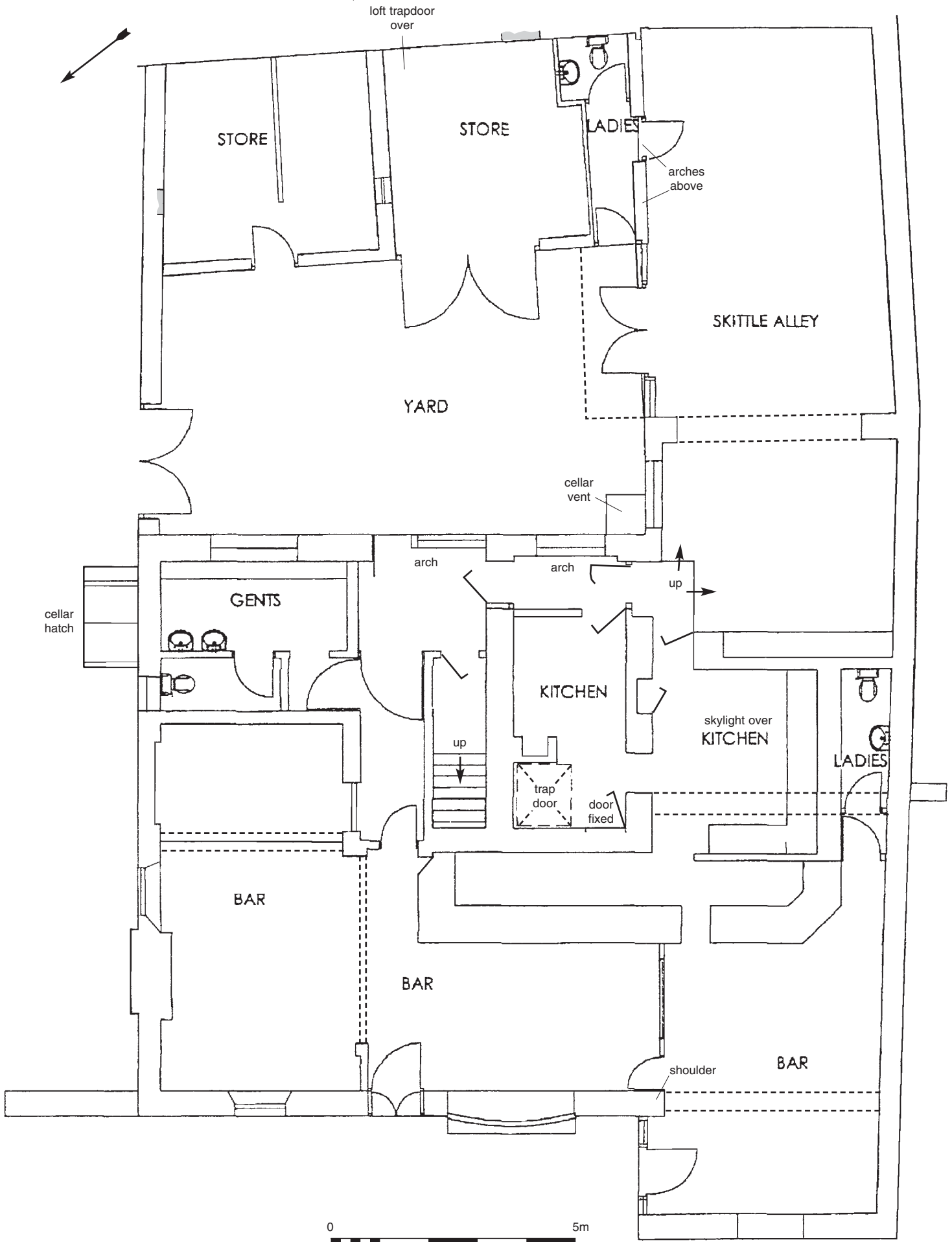


Fig.11 Ground floor plan, 2009, scale 1:100

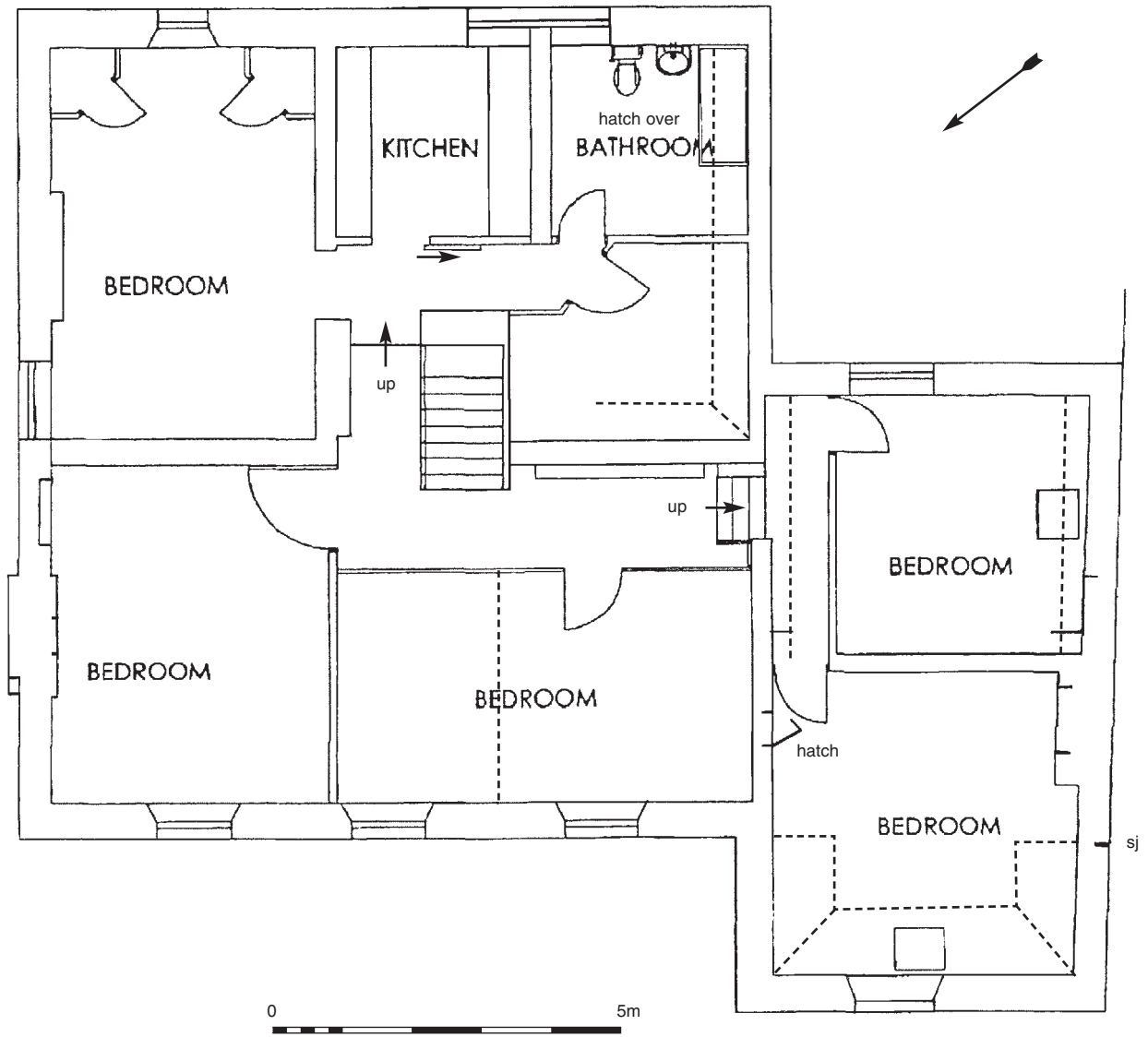
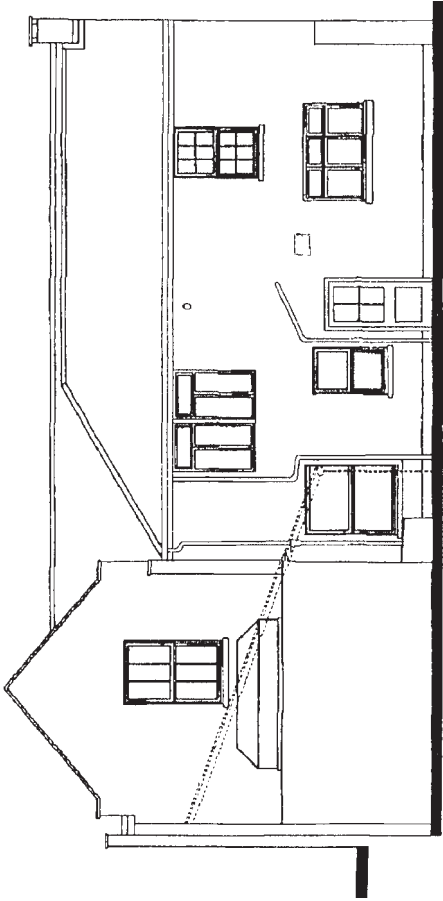
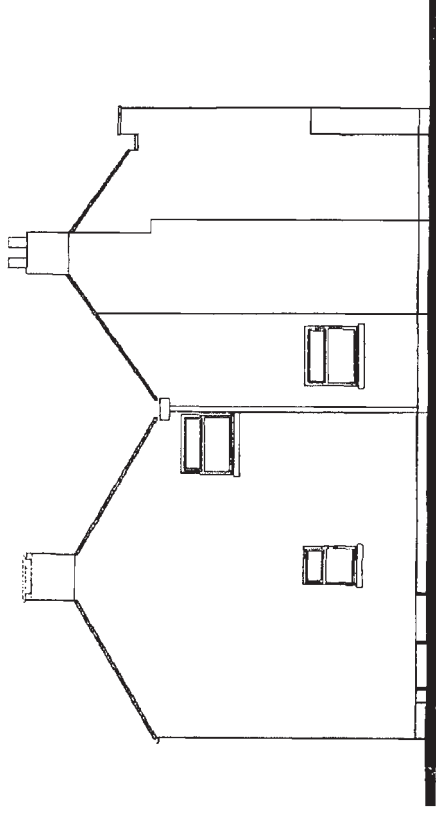


Fig.12 First floor plan, 2009, scale 1:100



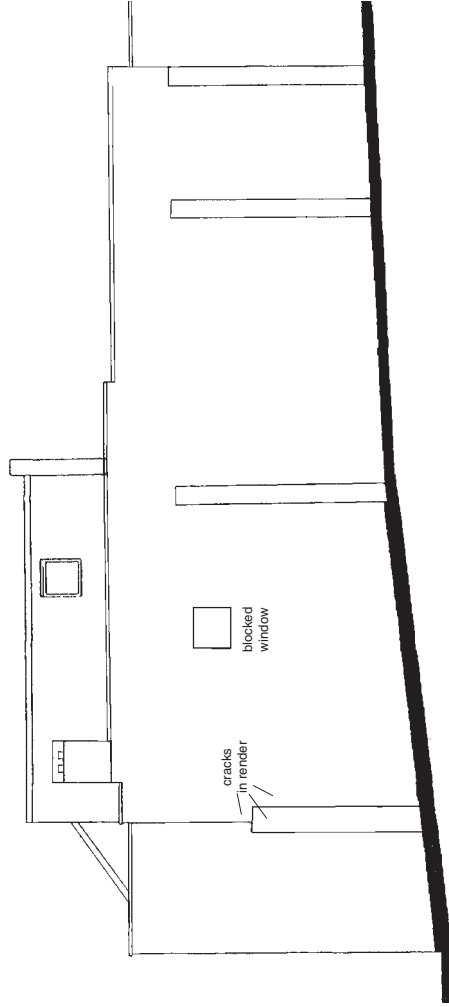
REAR ELEVATION



SIDE ELEVATION



FRONT ELEVATION



SIDE ELEVATION



Plate 1 Street elevation in 2007



Plate 3 North-east elevation



Plate 2 Short return wall in front extension



Plate 4 South-west elevation, seen from west



Plate 5 South-east elevation and yard



Plate 7 South corner of yard, showing skittle alley doors (right)



Plate 6 West corner of yard, showing cellar ventilator box

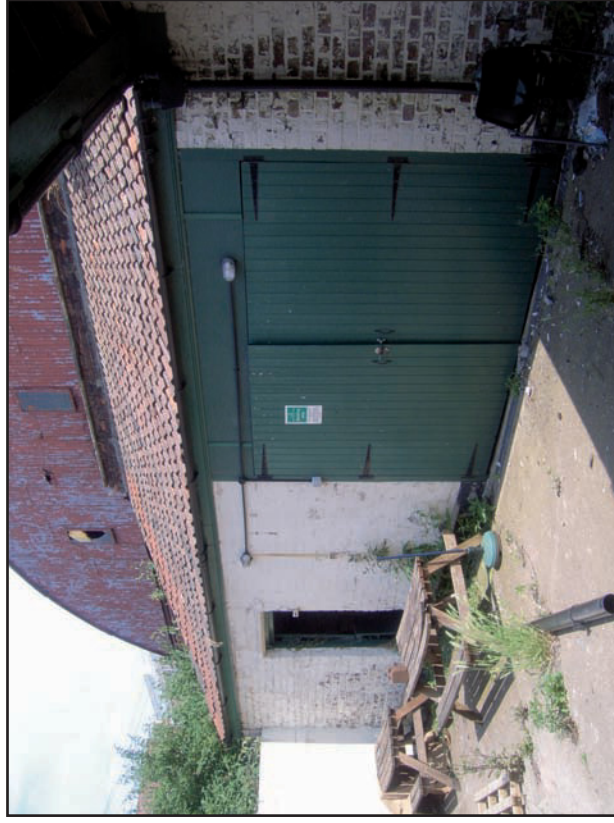


Plate 8 Stable and coach house on south-east side of yard



Plate 9 Larger bar looking north-east to former tap room



Plate 11 Larger bar looking south-west, with inside of bay window on right



Plate 10 Former tap room, looking north-west



Plate 12 Smaller bar in former smoke room, looking north-west



Plate 13 Kitchen, looking north-west – note higher ceiling to right



Plate 14 Smaller kitchen looking north-west: cellar trap in centre



Plate 15 Main cellar looking north-east towards outside entrance



Plate 16 Cellar passage looking south-west, with vent on left

Plate 17
Inside of arch in south-
east wall of rear lobby



Plate 19 Skittle alley looking south-east towards pins end



Plate 18 Skittle alley looking north-west from pins end



Plate 20 Interior of former coach house, looking south

Plate 21

Inside of window in south-west wall of former stable



Plate 23

First floor long passage, looking north-east, with breast on right



Plate 22 Wooden pegs in stable wall



Plate 24 North bedroom: north-east wall showing breast and cupboard



Plate 25 East bedroom looking east, showing cupboards



Plate 27 Detail of rear roof, as seen from bathroom hatch



Plate 26 Hip end of rear roof, as seen from bathroom hatch



Plate 28 Front part of former club room, looking north-west



Plate 29 Chimney breast in former club room



Plate 30 Roof above front part of building, looking east from hatch in former club room