

BUILDING RECORDING  
AT  
ABBAY GATE, EVESHAM,  
WORCESTERSHIRE

Shona Robson-Glyde BA (Hons), Dip Arch

Illustrated by Shona Robson-Glyde

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Project 2401  
Report 1186  
WSM 32957



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## Building recording at Abbey Gate, Evesham, Worcestershire

**Shona Robson-Glyde**

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### Background information

<i>Client</i>	Cox Homes
<i>Site address</i>	Abbey House, Abbey Road, Evesham Worcestershire, WR11 4BQ
<i>National Grid reference</i>	SP 0360 4365
<i>Sites and Monuments Record reference</i>	WSM 32957
<i>Brief</i>	HEAS 2003a
<i>Project design</i>	HEAS 2003b
<i>Project parameters</i>	IFA 1999a IFA 1999b

### *Topographical and historical context*

Abbey Gate lies in the centre of Evesham (Fig 1) and was an integral part of Evesham Abbey whose origins date to the 8<sup>th</sup> century. The abbey was rebuilt in the 11<sup>th</sup> century (Dalwood 1996) and was further extended throughout the medieval period until its dissolution in 1540. Soon after the dissolution, the majority of the abbey was demolished although some buildings were altered and became private dwellings. Abbey Gate was one of these and it is now a grade I listed building.

### *Previous archaeological work on the site*

Previous archaeological work consists of excavations around the abbey precincts revealing deposits relating to the abbey and dating to the medieval and post-medieval periods.

### *Previous archaeological work on associated sites*

Evesham has been the subject of a recent survey undertaken as part of the Central Marches Historic Towns Survey (Dalwood 1996) and contains a summary of previous archaeological work in the town.

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### Aims

The aim of the building recording was to establish the presence and significance of architectural and structural features, and potentially of artefactual assemblages.

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### Methods

General specification for building recording	CAS 1995, RCHME 1996
Sources consulted	SMR
Date(s) of fieldwork	6-13 <sup>th</sup> June 2003
Fieldwork carried out by	Anna Deeks and Shona Robson-Glyde
Area of deposits observed	Indicated on Figs 2 and 3
Investigation holes observed	Floors surfaces and fabric Roof fabric

### *Access to and visibility of structures*

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Observation of the investigated areas was undertaken during and after being opened by hand by the client's staff. The exposed surfaces were sufficiently clean to observe well-differentiated floor surfaces and fabric.

### *Statement of confidence*

Access to, and visibility of the investigated holes allowed a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved.

## **Description**

For location of investigation holes on the ground floor see Figure 2 and for those on the first and second floors see Figure 3.

Investigation hole	Fig no	Type	Information	Description
G2	4	Floor	Floor boards and lath plaster resting on joists	Accessed from below in the cellar. The floor boards are covered by a lath and plaster ceiling, which is lime washed. The joists, which measure 8" deep have herring bone struts and both have lime washed surfaces indicating that they would have been visible.
G3	5	Floor	Floor boards on joists	Accessed from below in the cellar. The floor boards are 7" wide by ¾" deep and rest on joists that are 5 ¾" deep by 2 ¾" wide. These joists run into a main beam
G6	6	Floor	Floor boards on top of beam and joists with lath and plaster below	Oak boards run along the room east-west and measure 6" wide by ¾" deep. There is a principal beam in the centre of the room and oak joists that measure 7" deep. These rest on a lath and plaster ceiling
G8 a	7	Floor	Half floor boards on joists standing on brick on soil fill. Half concrete.	Floor boards measuring 6 ¾" wide and 1" deep on top of joists that are 2 ¼" deep. The joists are standing on narrow handmade bricks on top of a mixed gravelly subsoil with a large amount of lime mortar. This occurs in the south half of the room only the rest of the floor is concrete.
G8 b	8	Roof	Suspended ceiling	Suspended ceiling is hiding an open space that still has the original moulded cornice in place
F1	9	Floor	Chipboard above floor boards on joists with void below then second floor	Chipboard surface on top of oak floor boards measuring 6" wide by ¾" deep standing on joists 8" deep and 2 ¼" deep. The void below this is 3' 8" deep and then another floor of boards. These are on the same level as rooms F12 and F13
F2	-	Borescope	Looking behind panelling through ventilation hatch	Revealed that panelling was attached to original timber, could see peg holes but most of it has been removed. New wall behind panelling and original timbers. New wall has been added from adjacent room and can be seen by blocked door in wall only visible from within room F2
F5	10	Floor	Floor boards and chipboard on floor joists and floor beam with	Chip board and modern floor boards, measuring 9 ½" wide and ¾" deep,

			ceiling joists below and lath and plaster	are sitting on top of a large floor beam measuring 10" wide by 12" deep. The floor is also resting on floor joists that have mortice and tenon joints into the beam. These probably date from the 17 <sup>th</sup> century. The ceiling joists below measure 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide by 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ " deep and are probably of a later date as they are attached to the beam with nails.
F10 a	11	Floor	Wooden floor boards on joists with lath and plaster below that abuts a floor beam	8 $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide by $\frac{3}{4}$ " deep floor boards sitting on top of 7" deep joists. These joists have peg holes that shows that they have been reused from elsewhere and the lath and plaster is of 19 <sup>th</sup> century date. The floor beam that can be seen from the floor below this measures 10" wide
F10 b	-	Roof	Suspended ceiling covering lintels and stonework	The suspended ceiling is 1.1m below the original ceiling. The windows have original lintels and stonework above.
F13	12	Floor	Chipboard boards onto joists above lath and plaster	Tongue and groove chipboard boards measuring 4" wide by $\frac{7}{8}$ " deep and running across the room north-south. These are attached to joists that are 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ " deep and are above a lath and plaster ceiling.
F15 a	13	Floor	Plywood surface onto floor boards onto joists above a second floor also on joists with lath and plaster below	Plywood above modern tongue and groove boards measuring 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ " wide sitting on joists $\frac{1}{2}$ " wide. The second floor is older and the boards measure 6" wide by $\frac{3}{4}$ " deep sitting on top of joists 5" deep above lath and plaster. Both floors run along the room east-west.
F15 b	-	Roof	Two plain trusses and brick chimney	Two plain triangular roof trusses held up by steel due to failure as a result of insect attack. Roof c300-400 years old with original trusses and purlins. Bricks chimney has been built off the north stone wall.
F18	14	Floor	Floor boards sitting on joists above an MDF ceiling	c1940s tongue and groove pine boards measuring 6" wide by 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ " deep on joists 7" deep with herring bone struts. The joists run into the second skin of the exterior (west) wall and are sitting on top of the barrel arch MDF ceiling from the floor below.
F19 a	15	Roof	Plaster board ceiling opening into roof space.	The plaster board ceiling has glass fibre insulation. This is suspended above a roof space formed by king post trusses and purlins with modern plaster board panels between. The trusses are possibly of late 18 <sup>th</sup> century date although the beams are older and have unused mortices.
F19 b	16	Floor	Floor boards sitting on joists above lath and plaster.	The floor boards measure 6" wide by $\frac{3}{4}$ " deep and run across the room at an angle east-west. The joists are 5" deep above the lath and plaster and this cavity is filled with a large amount of sawdust probably from the original use of the room.
F20 a	-	Floor	Floor boards onto joists then	Floor boards run across room east-

			second floor with joists and plywood surface below	west and measure 4 ½" wide by ¾" deep. They sit on joists that measure 2" wide and 5" deep. The second floor has boards running along the room north-north-east to south-south-west and measure 6" wide and ¾" deep. These are sitting on 7" joists with herring bone struts and have 1" of packing onto the plywood surface
F20 b	-	Roof	Plaster board ceiling with wood wool above	The wood wool ceiling formed the roof of the room, which was flat roofed.
F21	17	Floor	Floor boards onto joists above two further layers of boards on joists with lath and plaster below	Floor boards, 4 ½" wide by ¾" deep, run along the room east-west. The joists are ¾" wide by 6" deep. The second floor is of boards running across the room north-north-east to south-south-west. The third floor is of boards 12" wide by 1" deep running along the room east-west. This sits on joists 7 ½" deep with herring bone struts between the joists
F22 a	18	Floor	Wooden floor boards sitting on joists with lath and plaster below	Boards are narrow, 4 ½" wide and ¾" deep, and run across the room north-north-east to south-south-west
F22 b	19	Floor	Wooden floor boards sitting on joists with lath and plaster below	Boards are narrow, 4 ½" wide and ¾" deep, and run across the room north-north-east to south-south-west
S2	20	Floor	Chipboard onto floor boards on top of joists. Second floor below with lath and plaster below that	Chip board stapled down on to floor boards measuring 8 ½" wide by ¾" deep. These are sitting on floor joists that are 7" deep and have another floor below them. This second floor has boards running across the room north-north-east to south-south-west. These boards measure 10 ½" wide by 1" deep and a lath and plaster surface 7" below this.
S4	21	Floor	Two floor board surfaces sitting on joists and truss with suspended ceiling below and wide laths	Modern tongue and groove floor planks measuring 4 ¼" wide by ¾" deep. These are on top of an earlier floor with boards measuring 8 ½" wide sitting on top of a truss and joists measuring 10" in depth. Immediate below floor is a wide lath ceiling but a suspended ceiling covers the rest of the area.
S5	22  23	Floor	Chipboard on top of plywood sitting on joists and main beam. Lath and plaster below	Chipboard is on top of plywood sheets measuring 6' by 4'. These are directly on top of joists and a main beam. The joists measure 2 ¼" wide and 9 ¼" deep and the beam measures 8" wide by 10" deep. The joists run into the main beam and the beam runs into the truss. Every joist is bored with holes, and have carpenters marks, to hold something attached from above. Below the joists and beam is a lath and plaster ceiling.
S6	24	Floor	Plywood on to floor boards sitting on joists above lath and plaster	Plywood sitting on top of oak boards measuring 8 ½" wide by ¾" deep. These are sitting on joists 9 ¾" deep and 2 ½" wide above a lath plaster ceiling.
A		Bulkhead	Hole put through lath and	The floor boards behind stud wall are

	25		plaster in room S7. Showing ends of 3 trusses, wall plate and masonry wall, cantilever eaves and guttering timbers.	13 7/8" wide. Truss 1 is oak and has brown rot, death-watch beetle, fungus and dry rot. Peg securing principal rafter has split beam due to slippage caused by overloading of floor and their remedy of this in room S2. Truss 2 is also oak but of different age. Truss 3 has been weakened by woodworm. Some timbers of cantilever eaves and common rafters have been replaced, as has section of wall plate between trusses 1 and 2. Trusses possibly original to gatehouse 17 <sup>th</sup> century phase.
	26			
	27			
	28			
B	29	Bulkhead	Hole through lath and plaster in room S3. Truss exposed.	Truss is supported by wall plate. Void in wall over opening and wall plate is supported by a prop. Rather than rebuild wall to height of wall plate when inserting window, the lintel is a wood board and the wall plate is propped up.
	30			
C	31	Bulkhead	Hole through lath and plaster in room S6. Dragon tie and beam and truss exposed.	Dragon tie is below beam from hipped roof, inverse from usual. Death-watch beetles present. The truss has slipped by 2" and tenon joint has pushed through the mortice. Several of the rafters have fractured.

## Discussion

The recording of the floor boards and roof spaces was expected to reveal more evidence of the original building than was actually found. Even so, a number of boards and timbers were revealed covered by numerous later layers of building. It is possible that these could date from the 17<sup>th</sup> century and whilst it is very difficult to date floor boards with dendrochronology, because they formed from a small section of wood, it may be possible to date some of the timbers uncovered. In particular the floor beams revealed in G6, F5, F19a, S5 and in the ceiling of G10. The trusses that were revealed in the roofs of F15, F19, S4 S5, A B and C could also be dated and may reveal which timbers belong to the original phase of the beam.

## Publication summary

The Service has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, the Service intends to use this summary as the basis for publication through local or regional journals. The client is requested to consider the content of this section as being acceptable for such publication.

*Building recording was undertaken on behalf of Cox Homes at Abbey Gate, Evesham, Worcestershire (NGR ref SP 0360 4365; SMR ref WSM 32957). Recording consisted of watching holes being inserted in the floors, ceiling and walls to inspect the condition of the timbers. The investigations revealed a number of timbers that could be used for dendrochronology dating and that may be part of the original phases of the gatehouse construction and use as a domestic dwelling following the dissolution.*

## Archive

Fieldwork progress records AS2	2
Drawings	3
Computer disks	1

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## Acknowledgements

The Service would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Cox Homes, Eastabrook Architects, Mike Glyde and Martin Hewitt.

## Bibliography

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*Figure 4: Investigation hole G2*



*Figure 5: Investigation hole G3*





*Figure 6: Investigation hole G6*



*Figure 7: Investigation hole G8a*





*Figure 8: Investigation hole G8b*

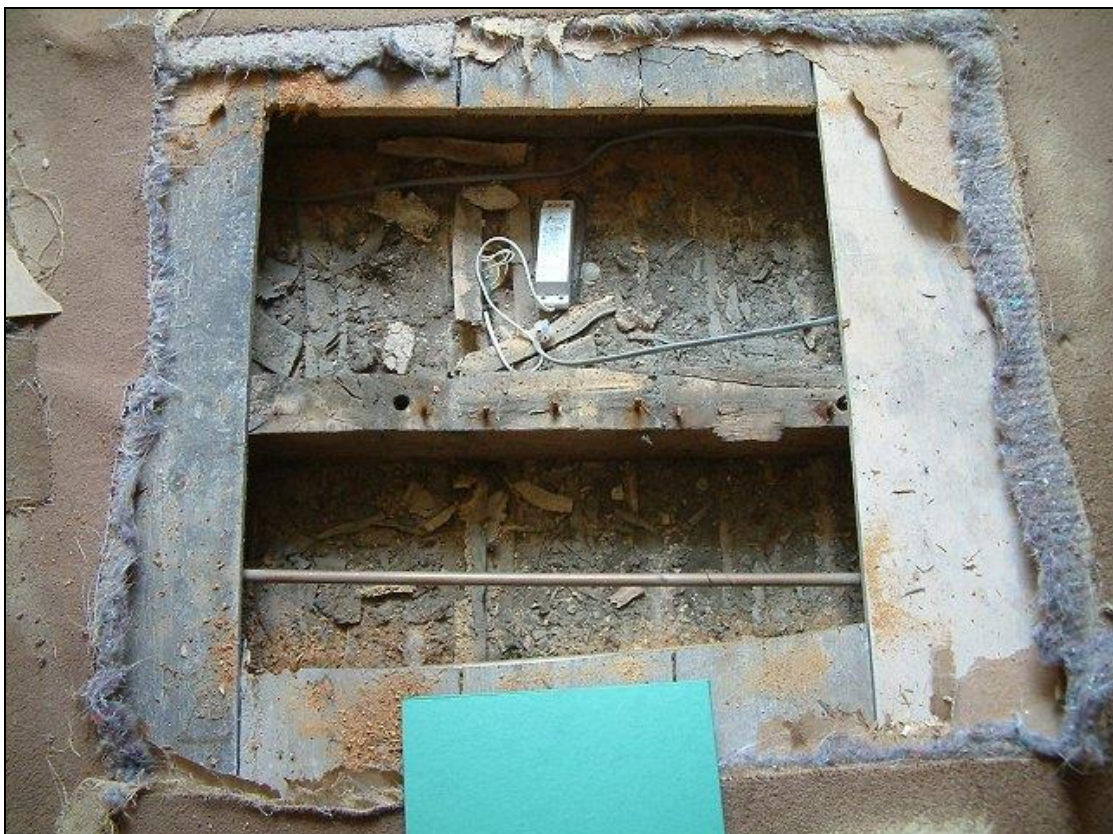


*Figure 9: Investigation hole F1*



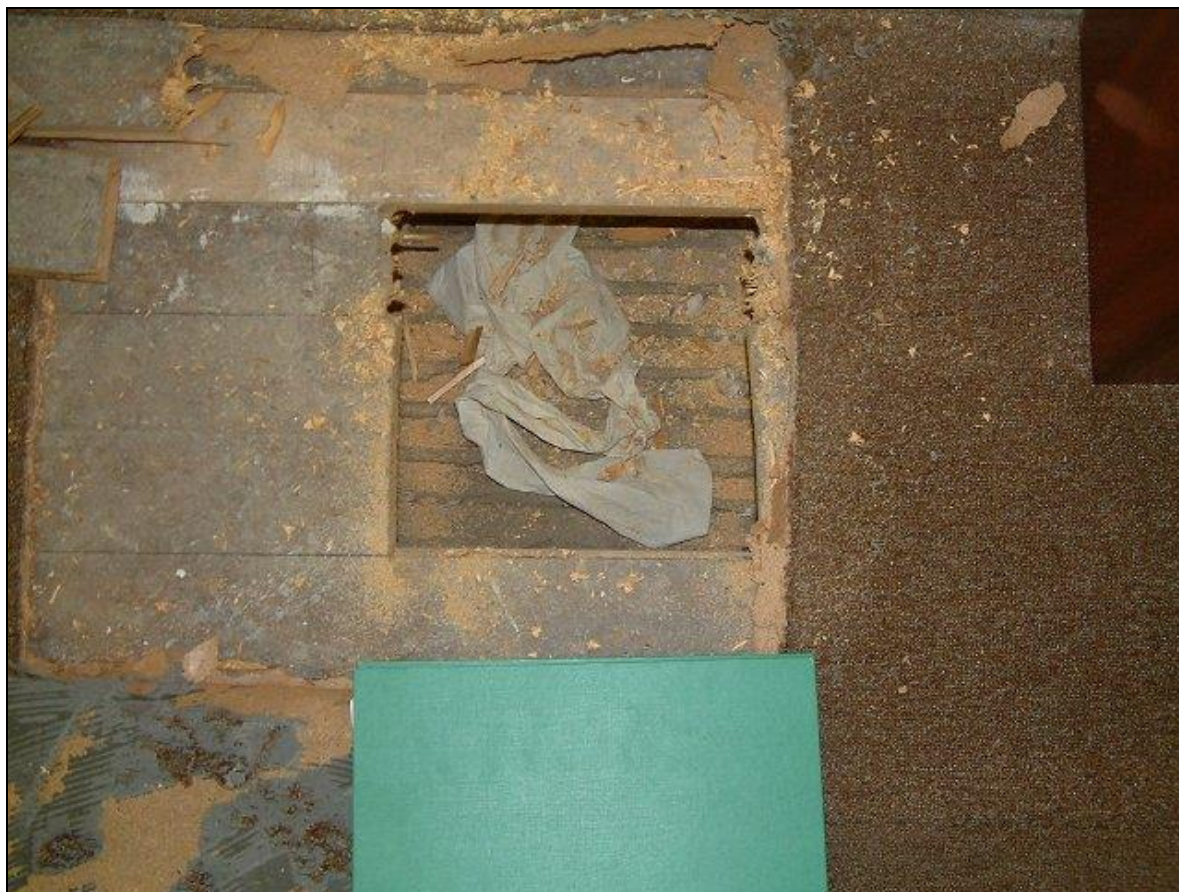


*Figure 10: Investigation hole F5*

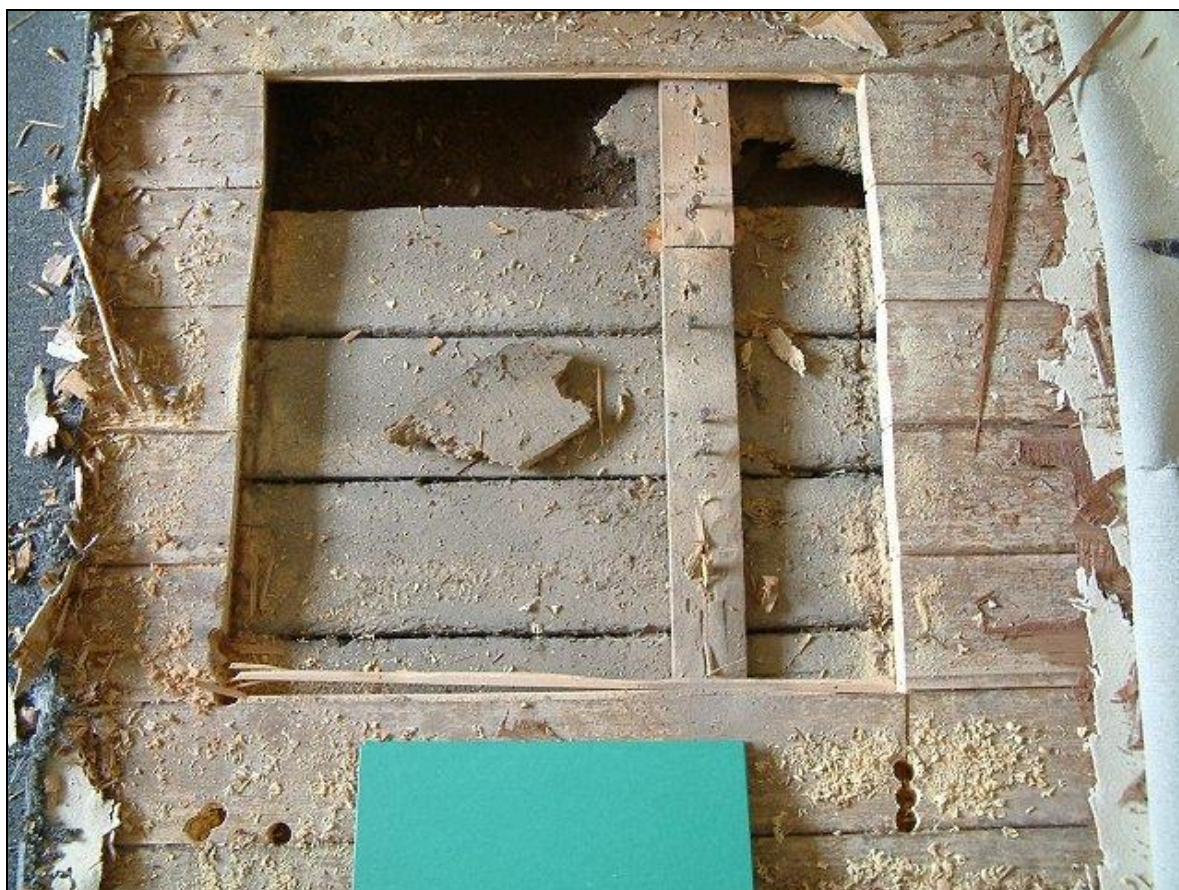


*Figure 11: Investigation hole F10a*



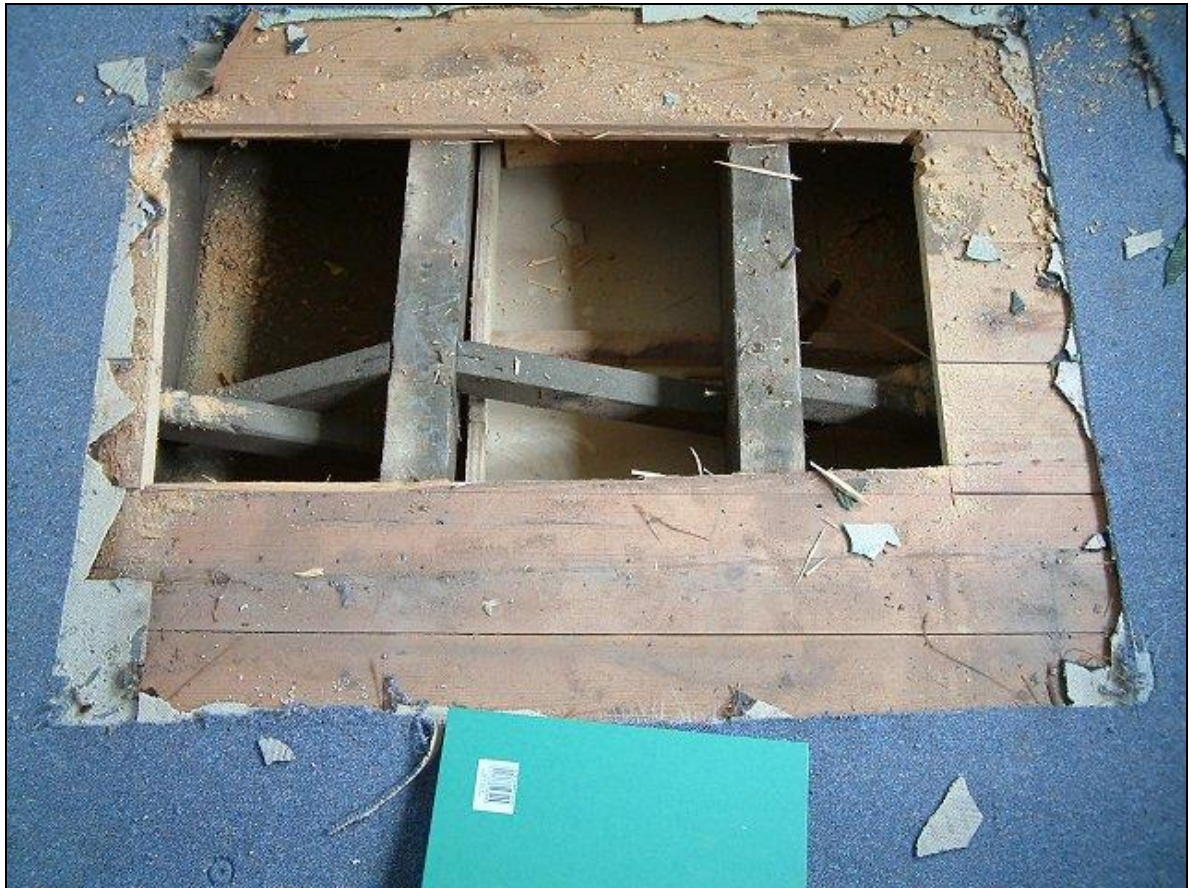


*Figure 12: Investigation hole F13*



*Figure 13: Investigation hole F15a*





*Figure 14: Investigation hole F18*

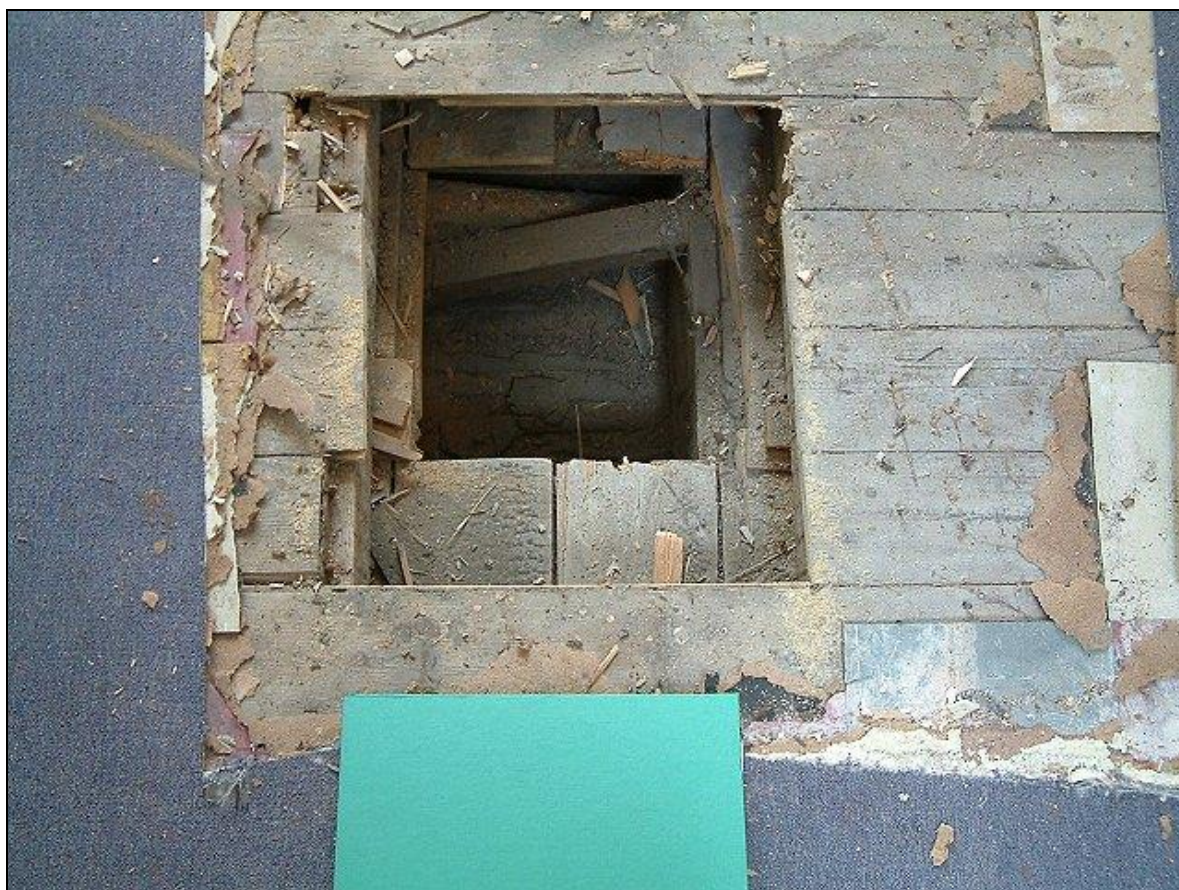


*Figure 15: Investigation hole F19a*





*Figure 16: Investigation hole F19b*



*Figure 17: Investigation hole F21*



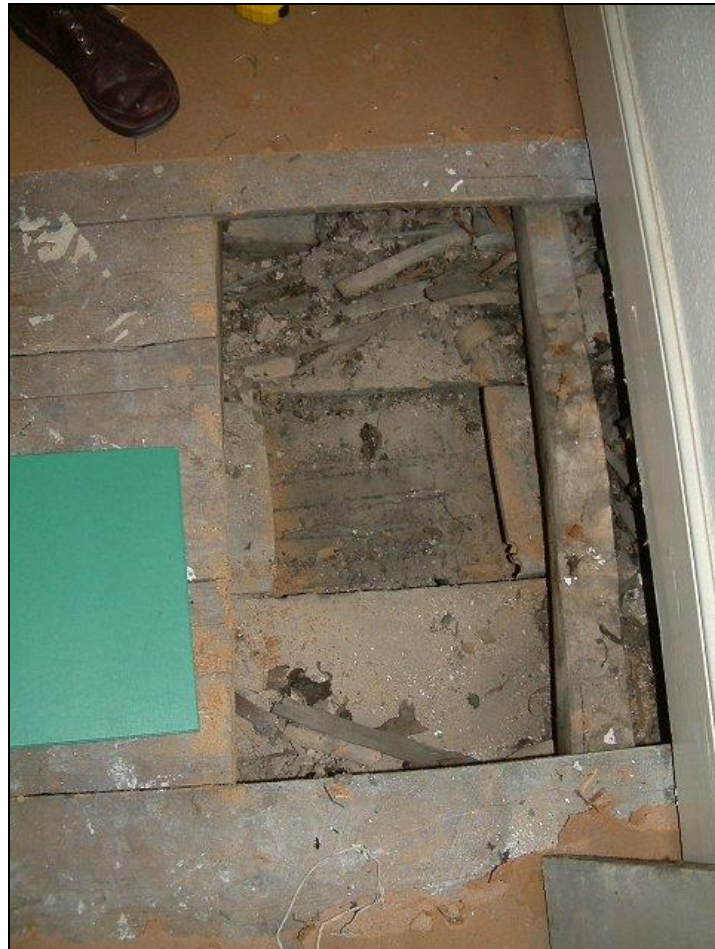


*Figure 18: Investigation hole F22a*



*Figure 19: Investigation hole F22b*





*Figure 20: Investigation hole S2*



*Figure 21: Investigation hole S4*



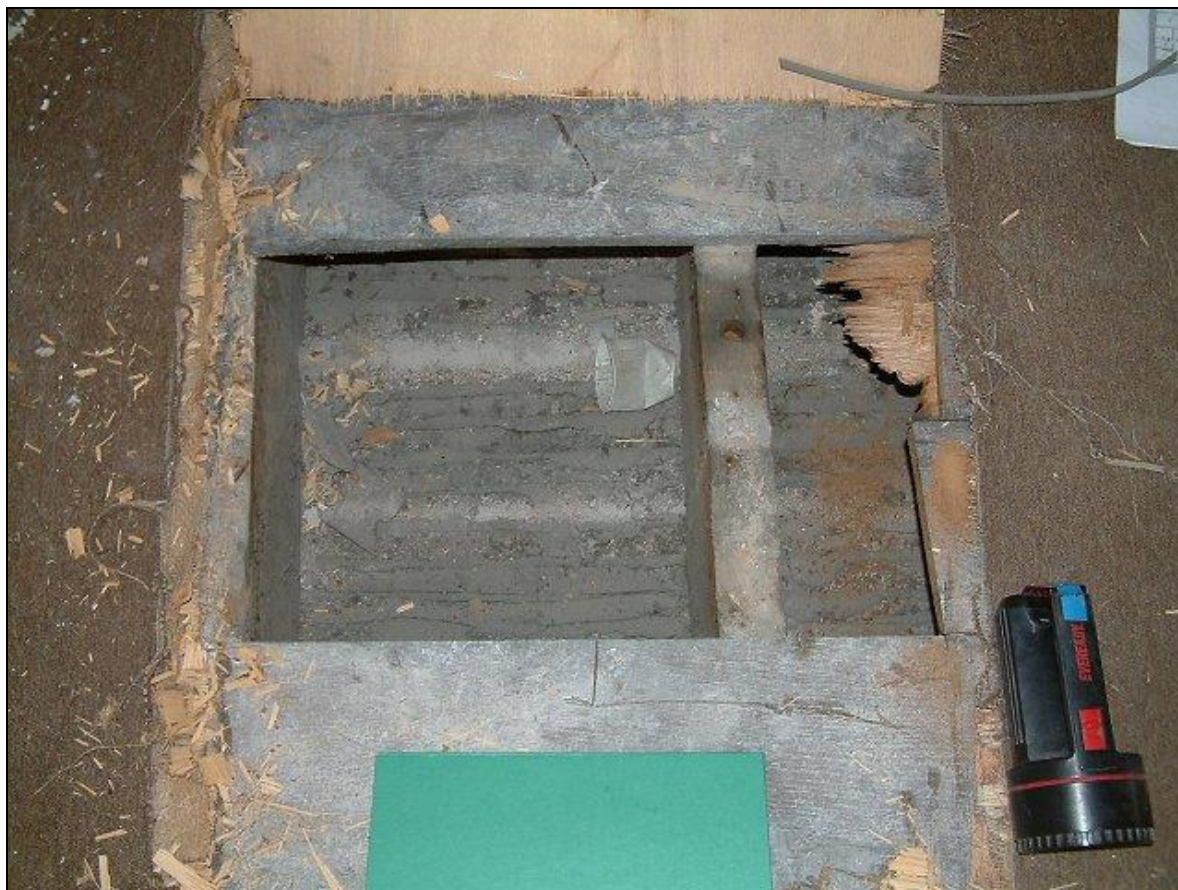


*Figure 22: Investigation hole S5*



*Figure 23: Investigation hole S5*



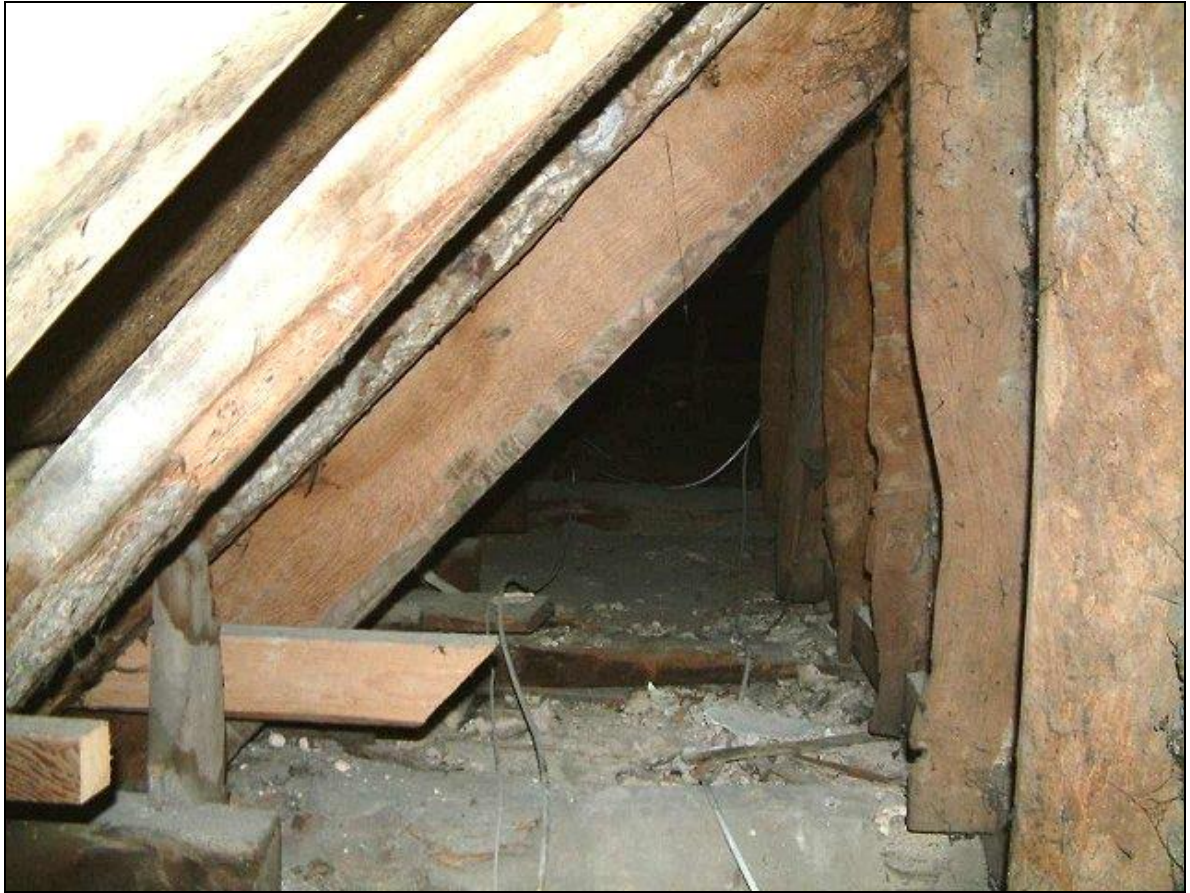


*Figure 24: Investigation hole S6*



*Figure 25: Investigation hole A, truss 1*



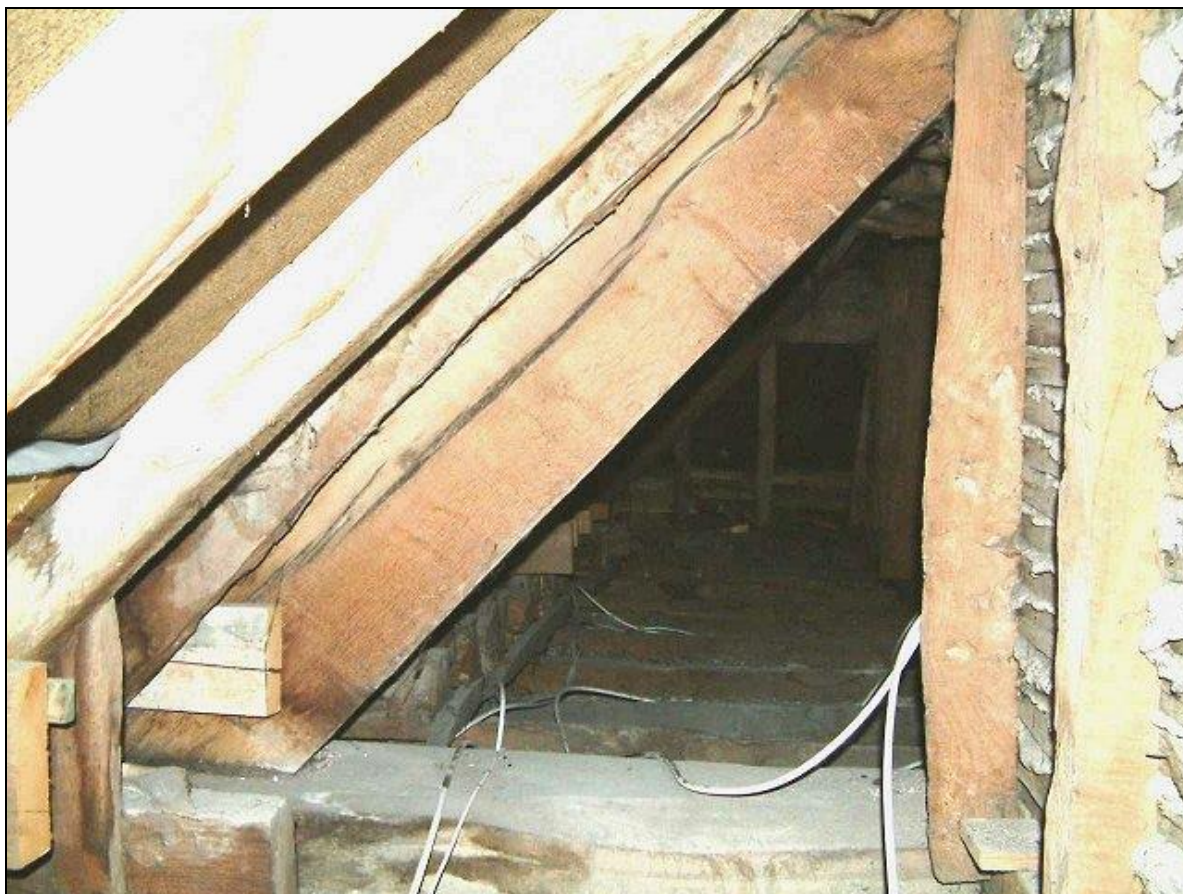


*Figure 26: Investigation hole A, truss 2*



*Figure 27: Investigation hole A, truss 3*





*Figure 28: Investigation hole A, cantilever eaves*



*Figure 29: Investigation hole B, truss supported by wall plate*





*Figure 30: Investigation hole B, window lintel from exterior*



*Figure 31: Investigation hole C, dragon tie beam and truss*