

Building recording at 69 Rock Hill, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire



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Building recording at 69 Rock Hill, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire

Tim Cornah

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

Summary

Building recording was required to meet a planning condition relating to the redevelopment of 69 Rock Hill, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire.

The planning condition specified that the building should be recorded and to Historic England specified standards. This required photographing the exterior and interior of the building and producing survey drawings. This produced an archive of the building before any changes were made.

An element of historical research and synthesis was also a condition planning approval. Original mapping relating to 69 Rock Hill was studied at Worcestershire Archives along with digitised historic maps.

Analysis of the building was based upon the recorded fabric and cartographic research. The development of the building was reconstructed and illustrated on phased ground plans and elevations. These have been reproduced at the end of the report along with relevant photographs.

The building at 69 Rock Hill, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire was outwardly a brick built structure of a broadly 19th century character with low arch headed windows, dentilled eaves and tile roof. The main cottage was of two bays which extended over ground and first floors. A small lean to structure was added in the 20th century.

Closer inspection of the building revealed a significantly earlier origin, possibly as early as the 17th century, as shown by the presence of stone foundations and walls. The cottage probably started as a two bay structure that underwent six successive phases of rebuilding and remodelling, ending with the remaining cottage.

Report

1 Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

Recording of a historic building was undertaken at 69 Rock Hill, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire (NGR SO 94928 69428). It was commissioned by J Sproule (the Client), who intends the demolition of the detached dwelling and garage and erection of two detached houses on the site, for which a planning application has been submitted to Bromsgrove District Council (reference 16/0329).

The building is an undesignated heritage asset within the terms used by the *National Planning Policy Framework*. The building is also registered with the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record (HER; WSM68088).

Permission for the development was granted subject to conditions including the provision of Historic Building Recording. A brief setting out the requirements of the record was prepared by Adrian Scruby of the Planning Advisory Service of Worcestershire County Council (WCC 2017). A Written Scheme of Investigation setting out the proposed methodology was produced by Worcestershire Archaeology and approved by the Planning Advisory Service.

The project conforms to the *Standard and guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* (ClfA 2014) and *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (WCC 2010).

The event reference for this project, given by the HER is WSM68509.

2 Aims

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists defines the aims of building recording as 'a programme of work intended to establish the character, history, dating, form and archaeological development of a specified building' (Standard and guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures, ClfA 2014a).

The aim of the survey, as detailed in the Brief (Section 2), is to:

- Provide a descriptive and illustrative account and interpretation of the building including discussion of its local, regional and national significance.

3 Methods

3.1 Personnel

The project was undertaken by Timothy Cornah (BA (hons.), MSc) who joined Worcestershire Archaeology in 2006. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Rogers (BA (hons.); MSc). Illustrations were prepared by Carolyn Hunt (BSc (hons.); PG Cert; MCIfA).

3.2 Documentary research

Prior to fieldwork commencing a search was made of the Historic Environment Record (HER).

3.3 List of sources consulted

Cartographic sources

- 1841 Tithe Map (WRO x760-46)
- 1883 First Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1:10,560 (Figure 5)
- 1903 Ordnance Survey Map 1:10,560
- 1930 Ordnance Survey Map 1:10,560
- 1948 Ordnance Survey Map 1:10,560

Documentary sources

Published and grey literature sources are listed in the bibliography.

3.4 Fieldwork strategy

A detailed specification has been prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2017).

Fieldwork was undertaken on 6th March 2017. The site reference number and site code is WSM68509.

Building recording consisted of a photographic survey of the interior and exterior of the buildings, analysis of their development and measured survey. All photographs were taken with photographic scales visible in each shot. The photographic survey was carried out with a Sony α350 digital SLR camera. All photographs were recorded on a pro-forma Photographic Record Sheet. Completion of pro-forma Building Record sheets complemented the photographic record along with measured drawings completed to scale on drawing film at 1:50 scale.

The project conformed to the specification for a level 2 survey as defined in the Historic England document *Understanding historic buildings: a guide to good recording practice* (HE 2016).

A level 2 record is a descriptive record. This is a visual record supplemented by the minimum of information needed to identify the building's location, age and type. The record will produce enough information to produce conclusions about the buildings development and use.

The record will include the following elements of survey:

- Photography
 - General view or views of the building in its wider setting or landscape
 - External appearance of the building, using oblique and right angle shots
 - Overall appearance of the principal rooms and circulation areas
- Drawings
 - Roughly dimensioned sketched plan, section, or elevation
 - Measured plans as existing
 - Measured drawings recording the form or location of other significant detail (when required)
 - Measured cross-sections, long sections or elevational sections illustrating the vertical relationships within the building (when required)
 - Measured drawings showing the form of any architectural decoration (when required)
 - Measured elevations (when required)
- Written account
 - A summary of the building's form, function, date and sequence of development, including builders, architects, owners or patrons names where known

3.5 Building analysis

Analysis of the building was based on the study of the photographic record, building recording forms and measured drawings. It was also informed by the documentary sources listed above. This allowed plans to be drawn up showing the structural development of the building.

The building as recorded is depicted in Plates 1-17. Ground plans, phase plans, elevations and sections have been reproduced as Figures 2-4.

3.6 Statement of confidence in the methods and results

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved.

4 Context

69 Rock Hill is located on an elevated position on the south side of the town of Bromsgrove, on south-east of the road from Bromsgrove to Droitwich which is itself cut into the red sandstone bedrock. The building overlooks the road by a height of about 5 metres.

A search of the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record within a 250m search of the building contained only five records. The earliest of these was the possible line of a Roman road running from Worcester to Lickey (WSM30529). The area is known to have been part of Feckenham Forest within the medieval era, but this was largely cleared by the 17th century (WSM42160).

Three buildings other than 69 Rock Hill are recorded in the area, 71 Rock Hill is recorded as post-medieval (WSM24849) and The Forelands Hospital as 19th century (WSM24851) along with its associated lodge (WSM24850). The cottage known as 69 Rock Hill (WSM68088) is recorded as follows.

Mid 19th century brick built, two storey house with tile roof and several segmented arched windows on each floor. The outside is whitewashed This property is seen from the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map, but is not seen on the tithe map for this area, therefore, a mid 19th century date is more probable.

5 The building

5.1 Building description

The building currently comprises a north-west to south-east aligned two bay structure, located on the south-east side of, and overlooking, the Bromsgrove to Droitwich Road. The building outwardly comprises of a brick built house with dentilled eaves details, segmental arch headed windows and ceramic tile covered roof, in total typical of a 19th century date. On the south east corner is a lean-to brick extension.

The structure includes a number of stone and earlier brick work phases which suggest the building originates significantly before the 19th century.

5.2 Historical information

The 1841 tithe map shows the plot in which this 69 Rock hill is situated, but does not illustrate any buildings. The accompanying apportionment states that the plot contained two houses and a garden, with William Tandy being the owner and Richard Guest and John York the occupiers. The first known representation of the building is on the 1883 first edition Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 5) which shows a north-west to south-east aligned building, with a small extension on its north-east side. The plot in which the building is located is extended on the south-west side as compared to later mapping a fence line is shown running from the building to the north-east, possibly implying it was in use as two properties. The plot is reduced on the south-west side on the 1903 map, but the fence towards the north-east remains. The extension to north-east had been removed, leaving a rectangular structure. A faint line through the centre of the building again suggests to building was two properties. The 1930 and 1948 maps show the same details as in 1903.

5.3 Building development

Seven phases were identified during the investigation of the building which are described as follows:-

- Phase 1: 17th to 18th century
- Phase 2: Later 17th to 18th century

- Phase 3: 18th to early 19th century
- Phase 4: 19th century
- Phase 5: Late 19th to early 20th centuries
- Phase 5: Mid 20th century
- Phase 5: Late 20th century

5.4 Phase 1: 17th to 18th century

The exact form and date of the building at this time is difficult to determine, but is suggested from the presence of red sandstone block elements. Some of these are only present at foundation level and may represent reuse, but more substantial elements survive at to a height of about 2.10m (Plate 4 and Plate 5). These clearly do not relate to foundations alone but to an earlier stone built structure.

It is likely that this building had a two bay layout as existed by the end of Phase 5. The larger bay probably had a fireplace on the north-east elevation, as suggested by protruding stonework at this point (*Plate 6*). It is probable that the Phase 2 blocking on the south-west side is a former external doorway position. No indication of a former first floor was present.

Nothing specific can be stated for the dating of this structure, other than that as the 18th century progressed, few entirely stone built structures continued to be built in Worcestershire with brick being the preferred material.

5.5 Phase 2: Later 17th to 18th century

This consisted of a single stone addition on the south-western elevation of the building and abutting the Phase 1 structure (*Plate 7*). This may be filling an earlier doorway.

5.6 Phase 3: 18th to early 19th century

The south-eastern larger bay of the Phase 1 structure was rebuilt, presumably making a single bay house incorporating the earlier fireplace. What was left of the northern bay is unclear but the straight building break (*Plate 8*) demonstrates that the structure did not continue over the north-western bay. The structure had a door on both side elevations and a window on the south-eastern elevation. Internal floor joist holes and a ledge within the gable walls internally confirm the building had a first floor (*Plate 9*). Little detail can be given as to the date of this structure, but its brick were relatively thin, being two and a half inch in width. Such bricks are most commonly dated to before the 1784 brick tax and did continue to be used after.

5.7 Phase 4: 19th century

The smaller north-western bay of the Phase 1 structure was rebuilt in brick with a door on the north-east side and a segmental arch headed window on the north-west gable (*Plate 10*). This room did not have a fireplace and it is likely that the remaining floor joists within the room are original to this phase.

5.8 Phase 5: Late 19th – early 20th centuries

The whole of the structure was rebuilt, being broadly reduced about ten brick courses below the current wall plate level. This rebuild had the dentilled eaves and dentilled gable details which largely made up the character of the extant building (Plate 1 and Plate 2). A corner fireplace was added into the smaller bay (Plate 11) with a further one in the room above and the large sandstone fireplace bricked in to make a smaller fireplace (Plate 12). The externally visible chimney stacks are also of this phase as are the roof timbers and stud divides visible internally (Plate 13 and Plate 14). The internal first floor doorway (Plate 15) suggests that the building was being used as a single property.

5.9 Phase 6: Mid 20th century

A small single pitch lean to structure was added on the south-east corner of the building, made up of two small rooms, one of which was later used as a toilet (Plate 16 and Plate 17). This was probably accessed from the exterior originally.

5.10 Phase 7: Late 20th century

A small flat felt roofed extension was added onto the Phase 6 lean to (Plate 16). It was probably at this time that the entrance through the earlier fireplaces into the lean to structure was cut. A number of doorway and window blockings are attributed to this phase as well as additional damp proofing on the south east gable end.

6 Discussion

The fabric of this building and the earliest cartographic evidence are at odds, with no building being visible on the 1841 tithe map of the area, though the related apportionment data states the plot was occupied and had two houses and gardens. The fabric suggest that a two bay stone built house existed in the 18th century or earlier, being replaced and rebuilt within three later phases. The 1883 map shows a rectangular building which could relate to Phase 4 or later. It is noticeable that the Phase 6 lean to structure is not shown on the 1948 map so probably post-dates this. The mapping suggests that the building was two properties. How this was resolved internally was unclear given its recent alterations.

7 Publication summary

Worcestershire Archaeology has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, Worcestershire Archaeology 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.

Recording of a historic building was undertaken on behalf of J Sproule at 69 Rock Hill, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire (NGR SO 94928 69428 HER ref WSM68509).

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Closer inspection of the building revealed a significantly earlier origin, possibly as early as the 17th century, as shown by the presence of stone foundations and walls. The cottage probably started as a two bay structure that underwent six successive phases of rebuilding and remodelling, ending with the remaining cottage.

8 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, J Sproule and Adrian Scruby.

9 Bibliography

CIfA 2014 *Standard and guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures*, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

DCLG 2012 *National Planning Policy Framework*, Department for Communities and Local Government

Historic England 2015 *The Setting of Heritage Assets* Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3

Historic England 2016 *Understanding historic buildings: a guide to good recording practice*, Historic England

VCH I, Page, W (ed), 1913 *Victoria History of the County of Worcestershire*, I

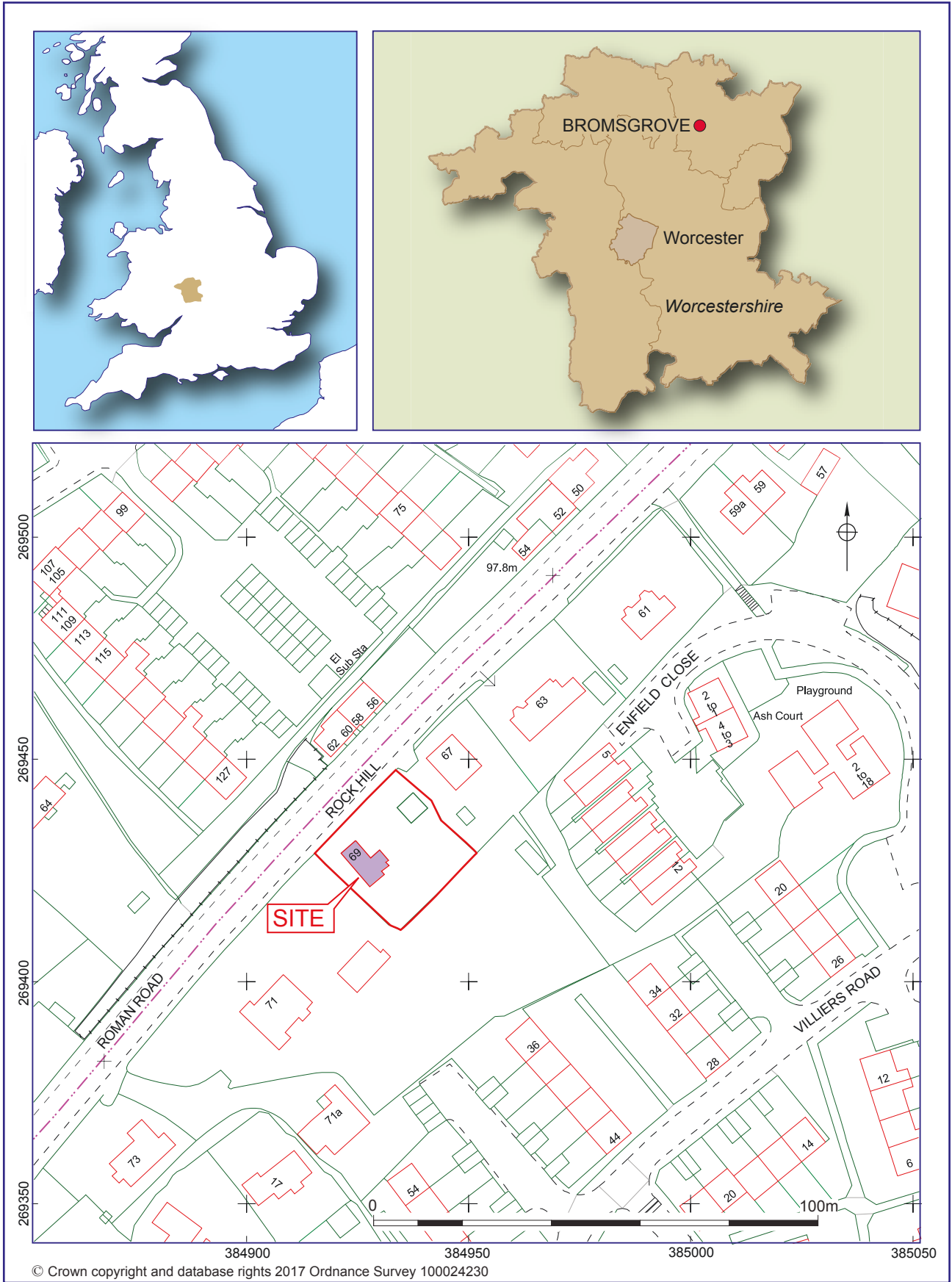
WA 2012 Manual of service practice, recording manual, Worcestershire Archaeology, Worcestershire County Council, report **1842**

WA 2017 *Written Scheme of Investigation for recording of an historic building at 69 Rock Hill, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire*, Worcestershire Archaeology, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished document dated 28 February 2017, P5058

WCC 2010 *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire*, Planning Advisory Section, Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service, Worcestershire County Council unpublished report **604**, amended July 2012

WCC 2017 *Brief for an Archaeological Building Investigation and Recording: 69 Rock Hill, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire* B617LN, Information and Advisory Section, Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service, Worcestershire County Council unpublished document dated February 2017

Figures



Location of the site

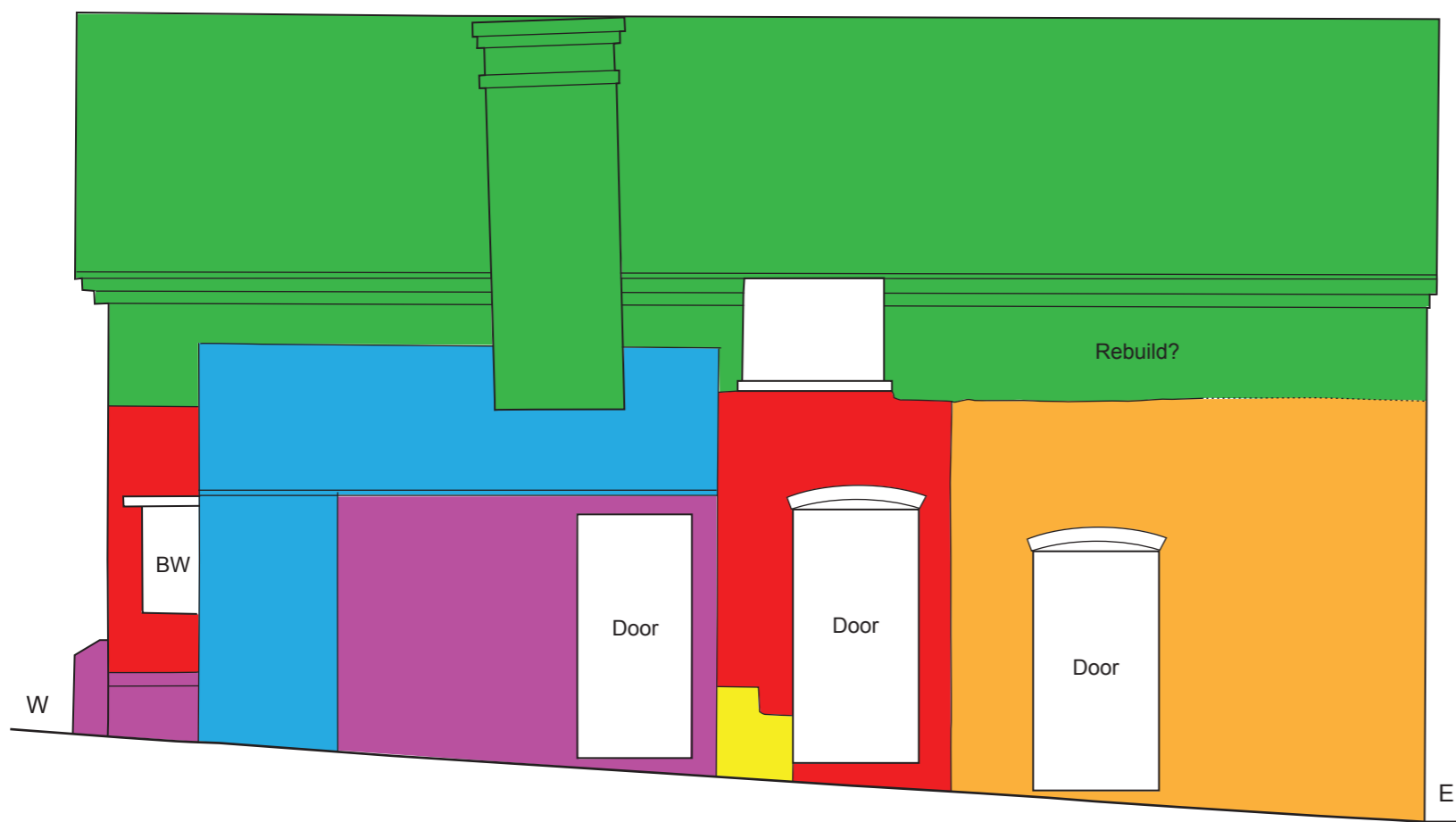
Figure 1



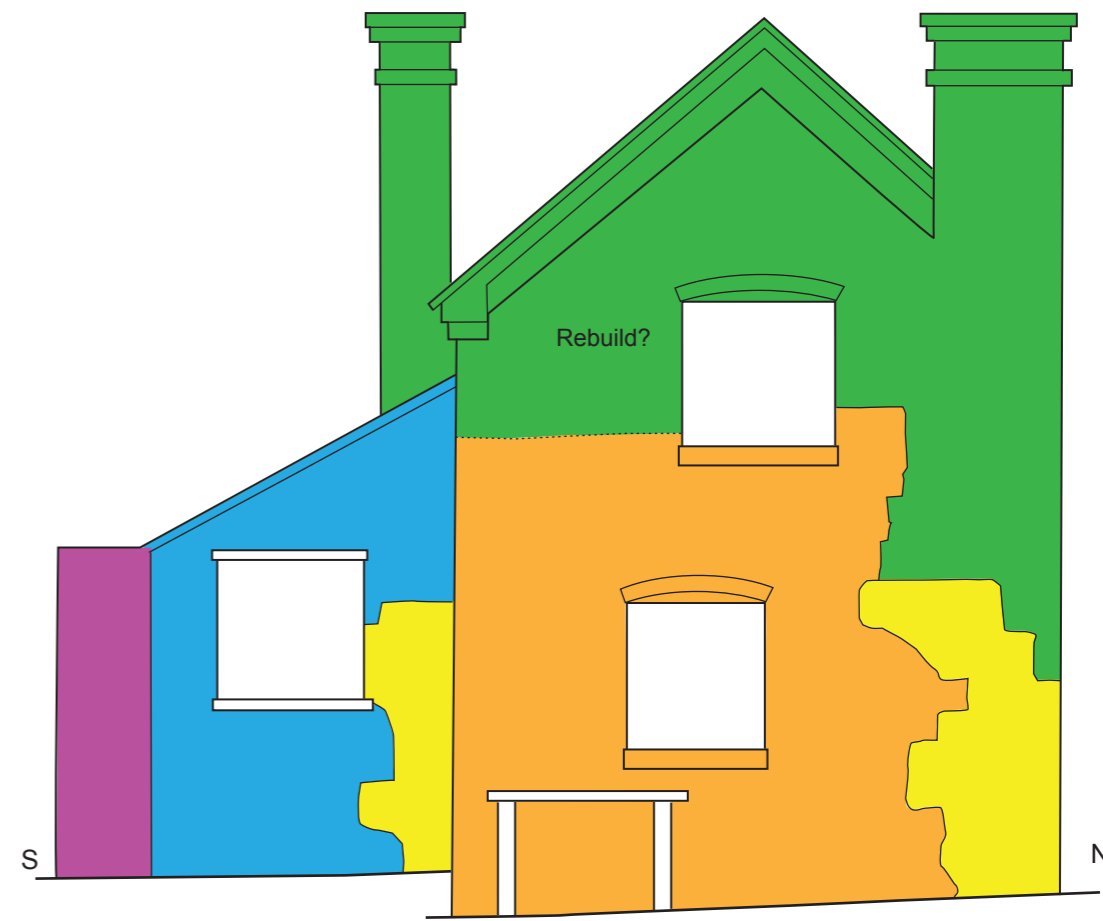
Ground floor plan and First floor plan with phasing and photolocations

Figure 2

NORTH-FACING ELEVATION



EAST-FACING ELEVATION

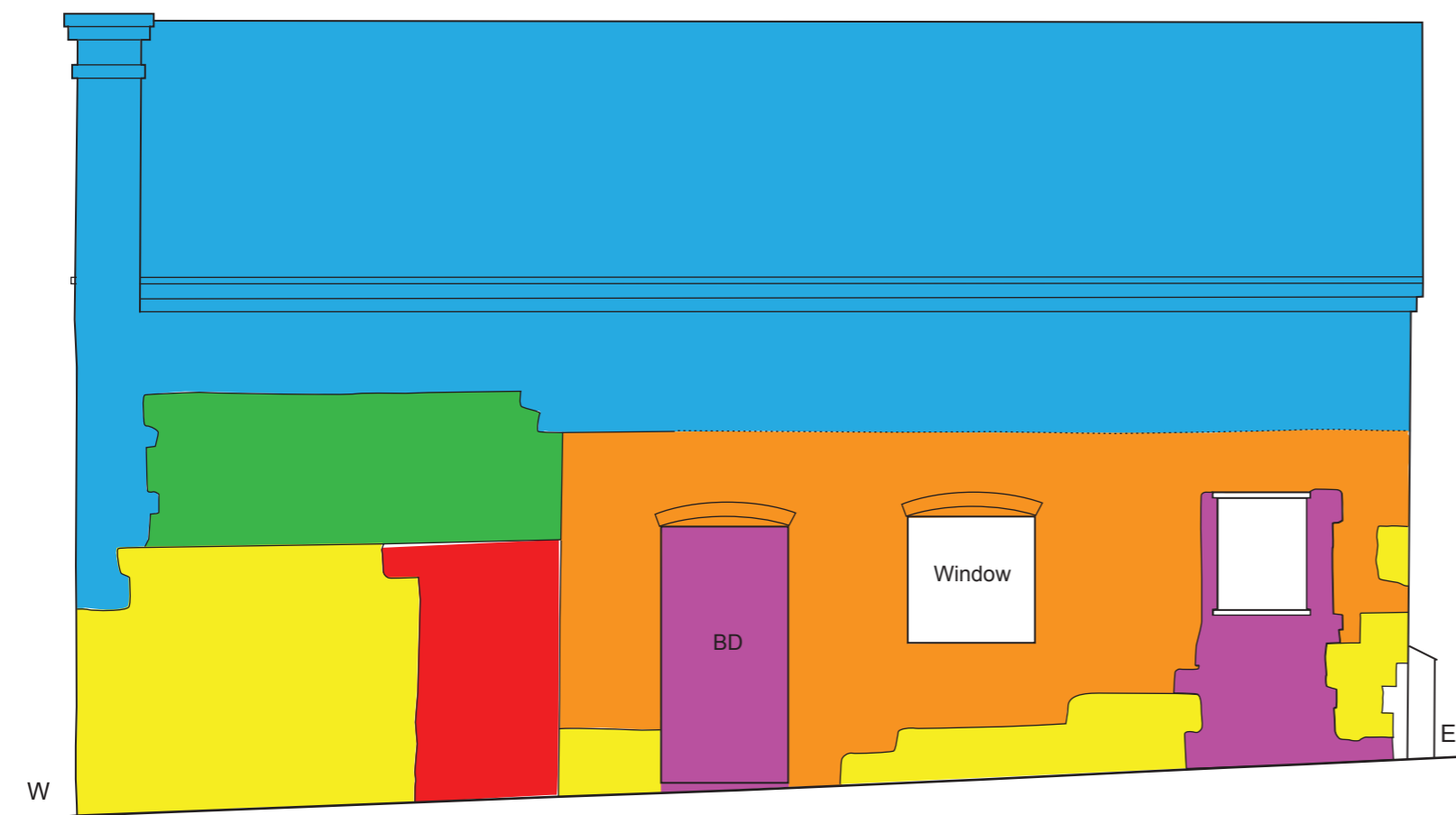


KEY	
 Phase 1	 Phase 6
 Phase 2	 Phase 7
 Phase 3	BD Blocked Doorway
 Phase 4	BW Blocked Window
 Phase 5	

North-facing elevation and East-facing elevations with phasing

Figure 3

SOUTH-FACING ELEVATION



WEST-FACING ELEVATION



KEY	
 Phase 1	 Phase 6
 Phase 2	 Phase 7
 Phase 3	BD Blocked Doorway
 Phase 4	BW Blocked Window
 Phase 5	

South-facing elevation and West-facing elevations with phasing

Figure 4



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Extract of the 1883 Ordnance Survey map

Figure 5

Plates



Plate 1 The building, looking west



Plate 2 The building, looking north



Plate 3 The building, looking north-east



Plate 4 Phase 1 stonework, looking east



Plate 5 Phase 1 stonework, looking south-east



Plate 6 Phase 1 stonework, looking south-east



Plate 7 Phase 1 stonework with Phase 2 blocking stonework, looking south-west



Plate 8 Phase 3 brickwork, looking south-west



Plate 9 Phase 3 brickwork, looking north-east



Plate 10 Phase 3 gable window, looking east



Plate 11 Phase 4 brickwork with Phase 5 fireplace, looking north-west



Plate 12 Phase 5 fireplace, looking north-east



Plate 13 Phase 5 stud division, looking south



Plate 14 Phase 5 first floor room and roof structure, looking north-west



Plate 15 Phase 5 first floor doorway, looking north-west



Plate 16 Phases 6 and 7 extension, looking east



Plate 17 Phases 6 and 7 extension, looking south

Appendix 1 Technical information

The archive (site code: WSM68509)

The archive consists of:

- 1 Building record form
- 1 Field progress reports AS2
- 2 Photographic records AS3
- 105 Digital photographs
- 1 Drawing number catalogues AS4
- 5 Scale drawings
- 1 CD-Rom/DVDs
- 1 Copy of this report (bound hard copy)

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Worcestershire County Museum
Museums Worcestershire
Hartlebury Castle
Hartlebury
Near Kidderminster
Worcestershire DY11 7XZ
Tel Hartlebury (01299) 250416
