

**JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES**

**AN  
HISTORIC BUILDING RECORD  
OF  
THE FORMER SMITHY,  
SMITHY COTTAGE,  
8 OTMOOR LANE,  
BECKLEY  
OX3 9UX**

*On behalf of  
Mr P. Sims*

**MARCH 2005**

**REPORT FOR:** Mr P. Sims  
Smithy Cottage  
8 Otmoor Lane  
Beckley  
OX3 9UX

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**Site Code:** BESC 05  
**JMHS Project Number:** 1526

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## **1 Introduction**

### **1.1 Planning Background (Application No. P04/W1161)**

South Oxfordshire District Council has granted consent for the demolition of the former Smithy, currently in use as garage accommodation at Smithy Cottage, 8 Otmoor Lane, Beckley (NGR 456642 211376). A new garage will be constructed in its place, making use of the existing building materials.

As part of the permission, a condition was attached requiring a scheme of building recording to be carried out prior to the demolition. A *written scheme of investigation* was prepared by John Moore Heritage Services detailing the method by which the works would be carried out in order to preserve by record the existing fabric, form and features of the Smithy. This report is the results of the work carried out in accordance with the written scheme as approved by South Oxfordshire District Council.

## **2 Aims of the Investigation**

- 2.1 To record by annotated plans and elevations the building as it stands.
- 2.2 To supplement the drawn record with photographic detail of the building and any surviving fixtures and fittings.
- 2.3 To produce an archive of the building record to be stored at the Oxfordshire Record Office.

## **3 Strategy**

- 3.1 Existing plans and elevations of the building were annotated to show the location of features, fixtures and fittings. Results of which are included in this report.
- 3.2 A photographic record, subject to accessibility, was made of the external and internal elevations and layout of the building that is to be demolished
- 3.3 A plan of the structure has been prepared showing the locations of the photographs.
- 3.4 In addition, research into the history of the building was carried out by the owner of the property, Mr P. Sims. Mr Sims also provided historic map extracts. The results of his research are included in this report.

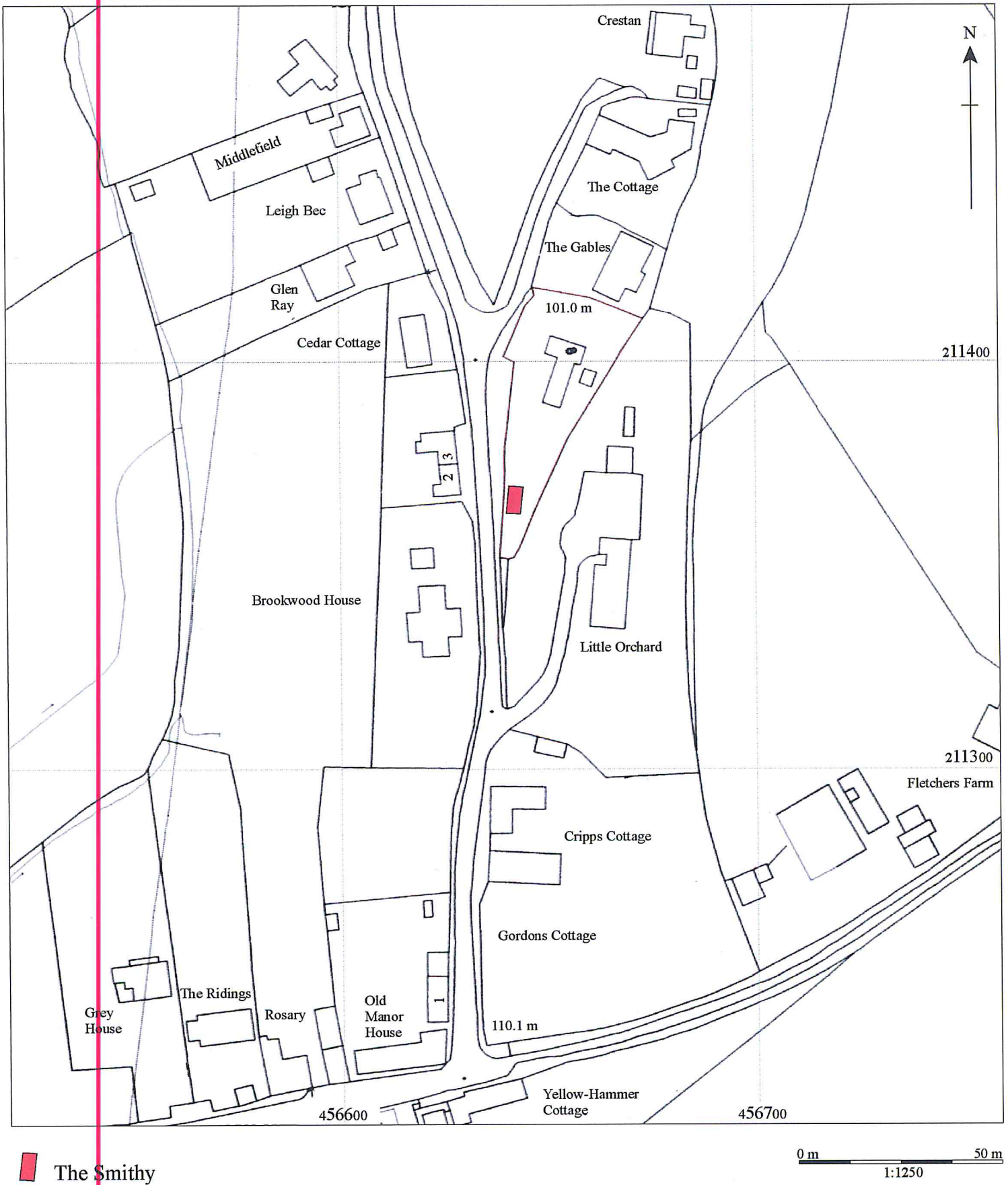


Figure 1: Site Location

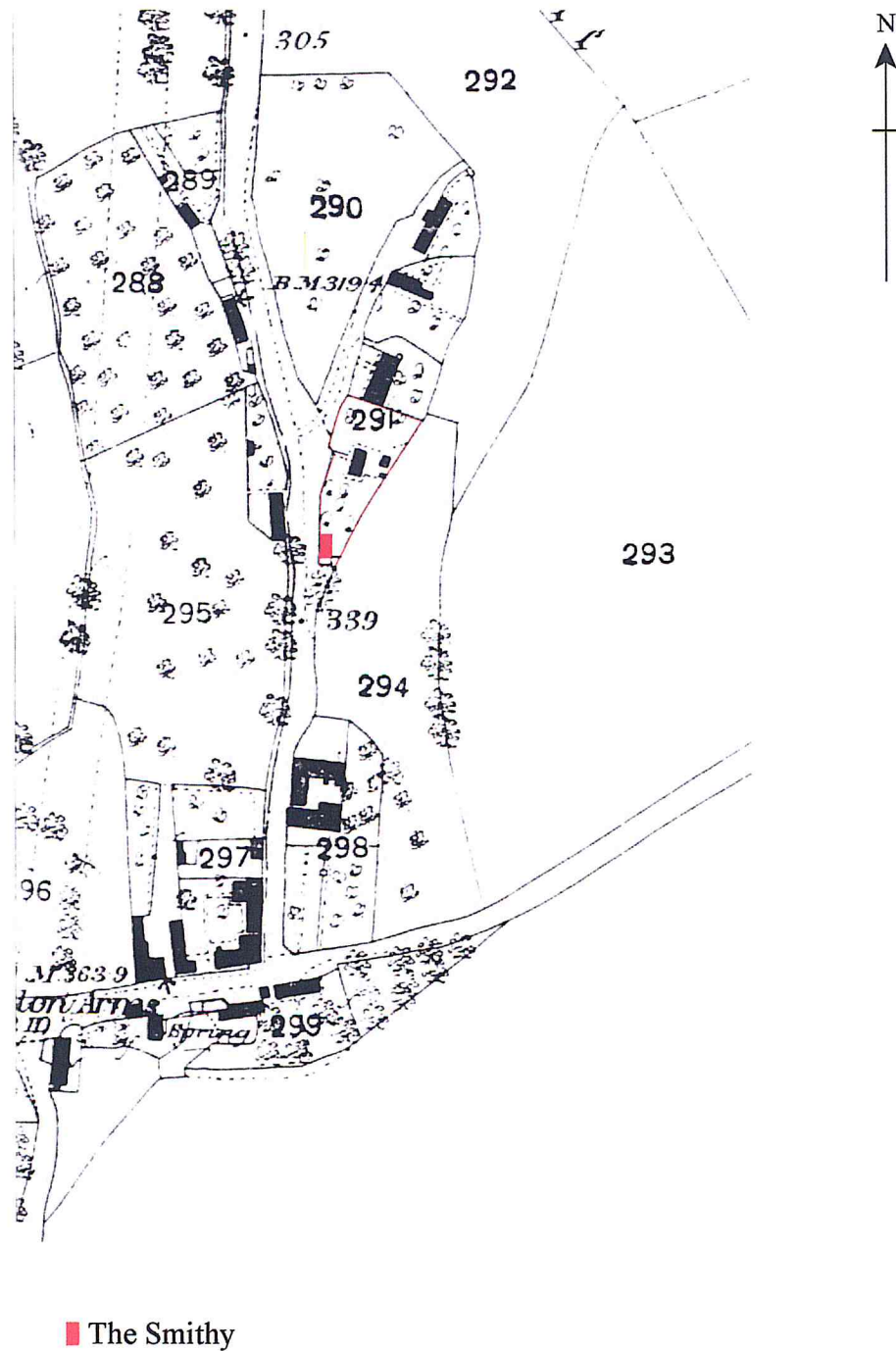


Figure 2: The First Edition Ordnance Survey (1876) map  
Scale 1:2500



#### 4 Background and Cartographic Evidence (Figure 2)

The building is shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1876. Structures abutting the southern side of the building were pigsties (now demolished). Indications of the former location of the sties can be seen on the fabric of the gable (Plate 1, Figure 3).



Plate 1: Southern gable showing iron-work associated with pigsties

The current condition of the building has been affected by modifications over time, in addition to structural damage caused by groundworks carried out in 1956 to the property situated to the east. The groundworks comprised landscaping of the natural slope to provide platforms for the location of Little Orchard bungalow (Figure 1).

However, no provision was made for the revetment of the newly created earth bank and by 1981, the earth had slipped down slope coming to rest on the east face of the Smithy, reaching the rafters and severely distorting the structure (Plate 2). Partial repairs were carried out 1977, with additional works involving the removal of the slipped earth against the east wall, creation of a concrete floor in the interior of the building, and reinforcement to the internal face of the south wall completed by 1985.



Plate 2: The distorted east wall

The village residents remember sledging down the gentle slope to the rear of the Smithy prior to the extensive landscaping of the 1950s, in addition to horses being led into the Smithy from the lane, and following shoeing, out of the opposing doorway and up the hill (Mr P. Sims, *Pers. Comm*). Traces of the edge of the blocked doorway can be seen in the fabric of the east elevation, at the southern end (Plates 2 and 5, location also shown on east elevation in Figure 3).

#### 5 Discussion (Figure 3)

- 5.1 The Smithy is a single storey rectangular structure of red brick (bricks measure 110 x 237 x 60 mm) in an irregular bond, with flush pointing. The building dimensions are 7.80 m by 4.20 m, standing to a height of 4.50 m.



There are two windows *in situ* on the western elevation, both 19<sup>th</sup> century casements within original openings; the window ledges to the exterior face are of bull-nose bricks (Plate 3).

The doorway situated south of centre is a later insertion into part of an original wider opening; later brick infill reducing the size of the doorway from 1.50 m to 1.00 m can clearly be seen in the building fabric (Plate 4). A doorway opposite (1.3 m wide) and adjacent window opening (1.10 m wide by 0.80 m in height), situated in the eastern wall of the building, had also been filled in but was still visible in the current fabric (Plate 5, Figure 3). A further ‘step’ (Figure 3) was recorded adjacent to the window opening, measuring 0.46 m wide by 0.40 m in height. The function of the ‘step’ is unknown, although it may have derived from ventilation and lighting requirements of the later repair and re-building of this area.



Plate 3: The casement window showing bull-nose bricks in window ledge



Plate 4: The west elevations showing brick infill in reduced doorway.



Plate 5: The southern end of the east elevation showing blocked former doorway and window locations



Plate 6: The 1980s breeze-block reinforcement of the southern gable wall



5.2 The roof is of plain tile but is a replacement, constructed during the 1970s programme of repairs and modifications. Additional repairs in the 1980s included the replacement of a tie beam to the truss.

5.3 The floor is of concrete laid down in the 1980s. Internal features are few due to the re-use as garage accommodation and to the extensive repairs required due to the distortion caused by the land slippage. Of original features, a brick plinth survives to the foot of the internal face of the east wall, some 230 mm in height and 70 mm width (Plate 7). A brick column (0.40 x 0.46 m) can also be seen abutting the interior face, but no function was discernable, and it may have been reinforcement or support rather than a surviving early feature (Plate 7). The southern internal face below the gable was reinforced with a wall of breezeblock by the current owner as part of the programme of repairs carried out in the 1980s (Plate 6).



The Brick Plinth

The Brick Column

Plate 7: The interior of the east elevation

## 6 Conclusions

6.1 The Smithy is early 19<sup>th</sup> century in origin. The survival of original internal features is very low due to the re-use and repair of the building. The original fabric survives on the external southern wall and to some extent on the three other walls, although successive modifications can clearly be seen. No associated features have survived the developments to the building over time.

## 7 Bibliography

RCHME, 1996, *Recording Historic Buildings A Descriptive Specification*

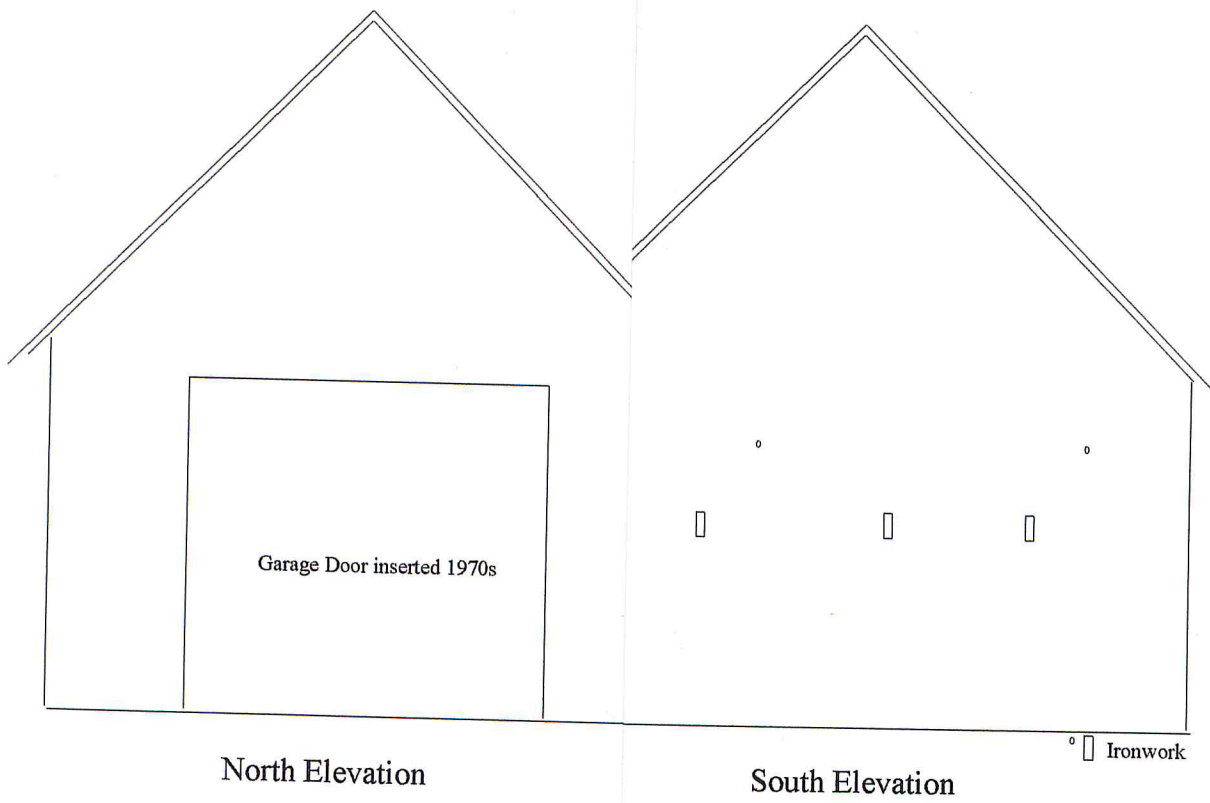
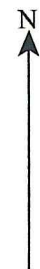
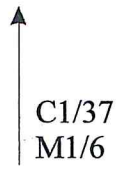
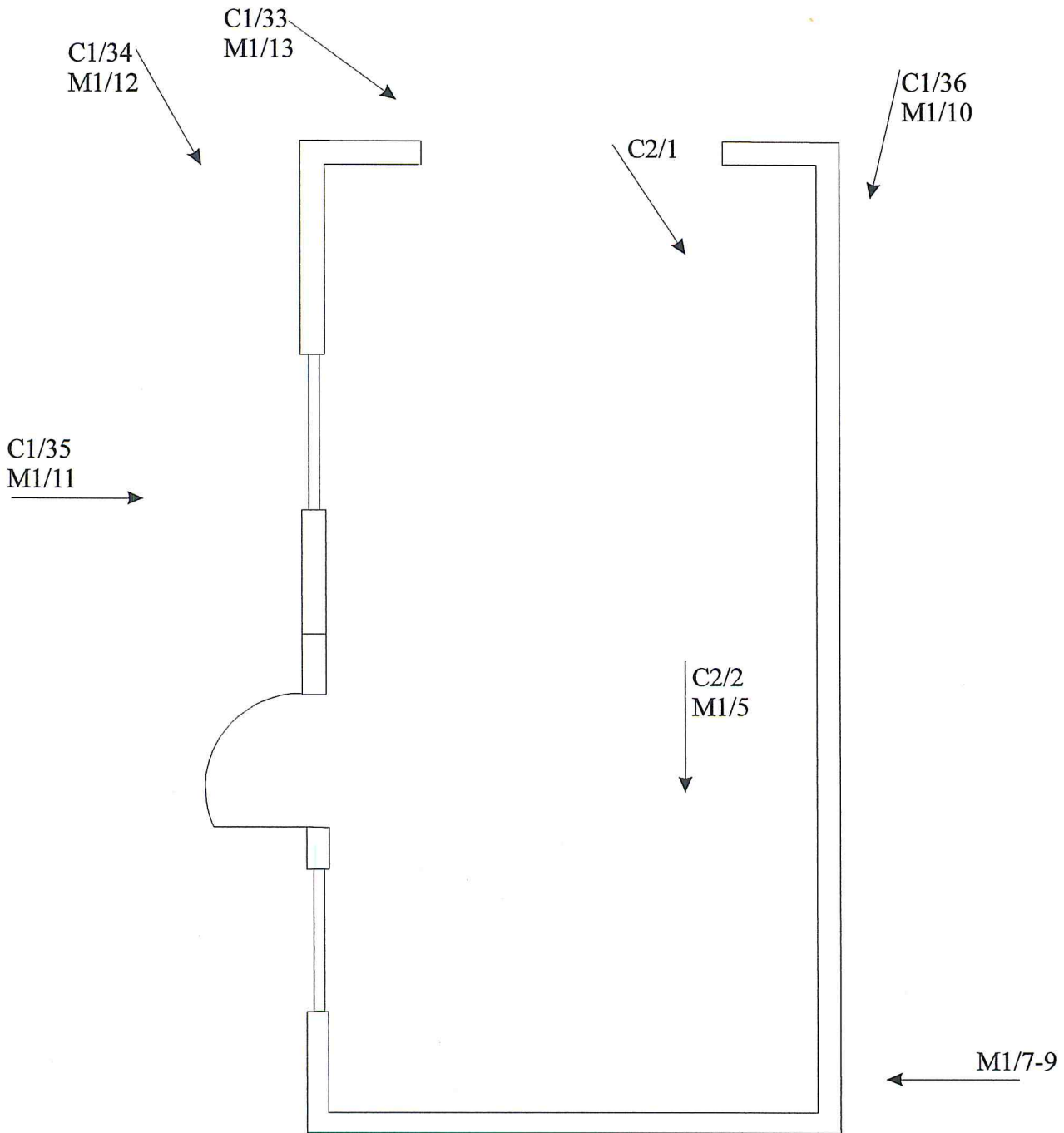


Figure 3: Site Plans and Elevations



Appendix 1: Photographic Locations



APPENDIX 1  
Photographic Locations.  
C = Colour Slide  
M= Mono-print