

SCOTTISH & NEWCASTLE

**ROYAL VICTORIA & BULL HOTEL, DARTFORD**  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD DURING REFURBISHMENT



DARTFORD HIGH STREET

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT  
SEPTEMBER 1998

SCOTTISH & NEWCASTLE

**ROYAL VICTORIA & BULL HOTEL, DARTFORD**  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD DURING REFURBISHMENT

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT  
SEPTEMBER 1998

SCOTTISH & NEWCASTLE

**ROYAL VICTORIA & BULL HOTEL, DARTFORD**  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD DURING REFURBISHMENT

NMR DATA	
SITE NAME	ROYAL VICTORIA & BULL HOTEL
ADDRESS	HIGH STREET
TOWN	DARTFORD
COUNTY	KENT
NGR	TQ 5415 7402
LISTED STATUS	GRADE II *
VISIT/SURVEY DATE	AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 1996
OAU SITE CODE	DARVB 96

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT  
SEPTEMBER 1998

**ROYAL VICTORIA & BULL HOTEL, DARTFORD**  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEY DURING REFURBISHMENT

---

**LIST OF CONTENTS**

---

	<i>Summary</i>	
1	Introduction .....	
2	Historical Background .....	
3	Architectural Description .....	
4	Discussion .....	
5	Conclusions .....	
	<b>Appendix A</b> List of Sources Consulted .....	
	<b>Appendix B</b> DoE List Description .....	
	<b>Appendix C</b> The 1703 Contract .....	
	<b>Appendix D</b> The 1911 Opinion .....	
	<b>Appendix E</b> Description of the Painted panels .....	

---

**LIST OF FIGURES**

---

1	Location map based on the Ordnance Survey map of 1933
2	Ground Floor Plan
3	First Floor Plan
4	Second Floor Plan
5	East facing elevation of the 1920's glazed screen to the 'Bottle Bar'
6	Elevation of the historic bay in the courtyard
7	Section through the bay in the courtyard
8-10	Elevation, section and plan of the horizontal sliding sash, west wall of the 'Back bar'

---

## LIST OF PLATES

---

Front cover Dartford High Street – date unknown (RCHME, NMR, Swindon), ‘Bull & Vic’ not pictured but many other inns are.

### HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS

- 1 Front elevation, c.1880, (Keyes, 1938)
- 2 Front elevation, c1900, (Baker & Hinkley, 1990)
- 3 Front elevation prior to refurbishment, (RCHME, NMR, Swindon)
- 4 Courtyard in use as the corn exchange, with portable corn dealers stands, c 1890, (Keyes, 1938)
- 5 Courtyard, c1920’s, (Dartford Library)
- 6 Courtyard, c1900, (RCHME, NMR, Swindon)
- 7 Galleries, c 1900, (Dartford Library)
- 8 Courtyard, c 1900, (Dartford Library)

### PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN DURING THE INVESTIGATION

- 9 Unblocked door, ‘Bottle Bar’
- 10 Horizontal sliding sash, ‘Back Bar’
- 11 1703 diagonally-set corner fireplace, ‘West Bar’
- 12 1703 stair
- 13 Stair in the SE corner of the courtyard, removed during refurbishment
- 14 Sawn off column, north gallery
- 15 Surviving column, NE corner of gallery
- 16 Stud partition in the east attic
- 17 Attic area over bedrooms 25-27
- 18 Attic area over bedrooms 25-27, after stripping of tongue-and-groove panelling



# ROYAL VICTORIA & BULL HOTEL, DARTFORD

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL & PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEY DURING REFURBISHMENT

---

### Summary

*A building investigation and photographic record was carried out at the Grade II\* listed Royal Victoria and Bull Hotel, Dartford during the refurbishment work in August and September 1996. The building has been subject to continual alteration, with 20<sup>th</sup> century additions having the most impact on the historic fabric. However, much historic fabric survives and the building is a good example of a courtyard inn which has retained its plan. Remarkably the 1703 construction contract for the building survives amongst the deeds. Much of the original 1703 building survives and was seen to be characterised by red-pink brickwork and diagonally-set corner fireplaces. The structural carpentry observed demonstrated that the gallery was an integral part of the first-floor framing. The changing use of the courtyard has affected the way the building was used with the double carriage way entrance, that dominated the front elevation, being partially blocked in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Features of interest noted during the investigation include two surviving examples of the columns originally supporting the gallery roofs, the heavy turned balusters both around the galleries and of the original stair and most importantly the painted panels of the principal public room of the inn.*

---

### 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) was commissioned by Scottish and Newcastle Breweries to undertake a programme of archaeological recording at the Royal Victoria & Bull Hotel, Dartford during the refurbishment of the Grade II\* Listed building. The archaeological record was required as a condition of planning consent in accordance with the provisions laid down in PPG15/16. This investigation followed an earlier, non-intrusive survey and appraisal carried out by the OAU in advance of Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent (OAU, February 1996). A number of site visits were made during August and September 1996.
- 1.2 The refurbishment work allowed fabric observations to be made throughout the building. These observations were recorded using floor plans provided by Pembroke design, the architects, as a base for annotation. These 1:100 plans cover the ground floor, first floor and attic levels of the building and are reproduced here as Figures 2-4. In addition to this details were drawn at 1:10 and 1:20 and a series of dimensioned sketches were made, a selection of these are reproduced in this report as Figures 5-10. A full black and white negative and colour slide photographic record was made.
- 1.3 This report discusses the existing building and the fabric observations made during the refurbishment. The historical background section (§2) is taken from the preliminary 'Historic Building Appraisal', OAU, February 1996. The report then goes on to detail the fabric observations made during the refurbishment work and is illustrated by plans of all three floors, a selection of the detail drawings and a selection of plates including historic photographs and some taken from the photographic record of the investigation. The findings are discussed in light of the documentary and historic photographic evidence and a final paragraph outlines the conclusions that can be drawn from the investigation and restates the significance of the building.

- 1.4 The current building comprises of a 'U' shaped courtyard building of two stories with attics. A large double carriageway originally dominated the front elevation and gave access to the central courtyard. The eastern side of the entrance way is now blocked. The central yard is now roofed over and has a galleried first floor leading off to bedrooms. The ground floor of the building is occupied by bars with the first floor holding the principle hotel public room and bedrooms. This principal public room, and the most significant feature of the building, is situated to the front of the first floor and is completely panelled and painted with mid-18<sup>th</sup> century capriccio scenes of classical landscapes with ruined and imaginary buildings. Another significant feature of the building is the survival of the original building contract of 1703.

## 2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Royal Victoria and Bull Hotel lies on the London to Canterbury road at the centre of historic Dartford, and was the principal coaching inn on a main stage of the route to and from the Channel ports (Figure 1). The medieval urban inn seems to originate in the mid-fourteenth century, when named inns appear for the first time (e.g. in London, Winchester, and Oxford), and from the first many inns occupied large town houses of courtyard plan on prominent sites in the town centre. In providing food and accommodation they were distinct from taverns which sold wine, and other retail outlets for drink. Later they were places of resort for news, business and entertainment, and often played an important part in local government in the provision of meeting rooms.
- 2.2 The early history of the Bull Inn is not well documented, but there was certainly a medieval Bull Inn, thought to have belonged to Dartford Priory. The connection with the Priory may account for the name of the inn with 'Bull' coming from the Latin '*bullā*' (Papal seal) rather than the latter proximity to the cattle market. The 'Victoria' was added in 1839, and a bill of 1856 is headed 'Bull Inn and Royal Victoria Hotel', so the change in name may perhaps belong to the occasion when the premises next door were taken on to provide extra accommodation. A 19<sup>th</sup>-century landlord, Mr Bray, declared that the inn had been founded in 1360, although this statement does not appear to be founded on any surviving archaeological or documentary evidence. Amongst the deeds formerly in Dartford Museum, and now in the County Record Office, is a contract of 1703 to rebuild the inn, reproduced here as Appendix C. The inn occurs repeatedly in historical accounts of the town, as a place where important people stayed or visited. Pastor Moritz was charmed, George IV insulted as the murderer of his Queen, while Prince Albert was exhorted to look after his future bride, and Richard Trevithick, pioneer of the use of high pressure steam, died there. The inn was a place of meeting for the Overseers of the Poor and Turnpike Trustees, and the corn market was held in the courtyard, which was a thoroughfare leading to the cattle market. An assembly room (now demolished) was the scene of balls, dinners and entertainment's. Famous incidents repeated in all accounts of the building include the accidental shooting of a debtor in 1777 (the bullet holes being visible in panelling) and the discovery of a body in 1899 claimed as the victim of an otherwise unreported murder in 1773.
- 2.3 References to buildings of the inn commence with the building contract of 1703 mentioned above, and are continued in a series of newspaper cuttings at the Dartford Library which can be taken as representative if not comprehensive. Some are little more than advertisements for a change of landlord, as in 1821 when the inn was noted as 'recently fitted up with every convenience' (*Morning Post* 6.6.21). The origins of the former assembly room are noted in February 1839, when 'a fire that occurred at the Bull Inn some months since, has caused on the site of the old destroyed stabling, a large room to be built'. But it was replaced more than once, and the opening of the Victoria Assembly Room in March 1860 was an occasion to

praise the proprietor Mr Bray, and mention is made of his provision of the Corn Exchange some four or five years previously (*Maidstone Jnl*, Mar. 1860). An account published in 1876 says the roofing in of the courtyard for a sheltered Corn Exchange cost about £1500 'some score years back'; incidentally noting that the gallery was only on three sides of the courtyard (*Dartford & W Kent Adv.* 1.4.76). A change of proprietorship in 1897 was the occasion for an historical account of the inn, which refers to the 300-year old 'poker drawings', and mentions that the Bull is 'well known for its Weekly Cattle Market' (*D & D Ill. Monthly*, Mar 1897). Building works followed this change, for early in 1899 there were reports of the discovery of old documents at the Bull (including the death warrant of an Irish rebel in 1798), and a skeleton (*Mail* 31.3.99).

- 2.4 The present century opened with another refurbishment of bedrooms and provision of a 'luxurious new coffee room' and billiard room (May 1905). But the building came close to being lost in 1911 when the Dartford Urban District Council almost bought the Inn to build a Town Hall. This they decided on advice not to do (Appendix D), and in September 1911 plans for extensive alterations to the building were submitted (1.9.11). Yet another new Assembly Hall which 'replaced the older building at the rear of the Bull Hotel' was opened in September 1924 (*Chron.* 19.9.1924). Other 20th-century changes observed from historic photographs include decorative changes such as the cladding of walls with reproduction panelling and fake timber framing and brick infill. In 1965 the imminent demolition of the Wedgwood Hall by Anchor Inns was claimed as part of a forthcoming renovation (*Reporter*, 17.9.65). However these did not take place immediately, for in February 1972 demolition of the Hall was again predicted as Courage initiated a £100,000 facelift that included new restaurant and lounge bar, new courtyard staircase and 20 bedroom extension (*Chron.* 25.2.72); in January 1973 the completion was promised 'this year' (*Chron.* 26.1.73).

### 3 ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

#### 3.1 GENERAL

Although the building has been much altered and added to during its continual use as a hotel the basic 'U' shaped courtyard building described in the contract of 1703 can still be identified, see plans Figures 2-4. Throughout the refurbishment work the original build was seen to be characterised by the use of hand made red bricks in lime mortar. Diagonally-set corner fireplaces in both wings were also recognisable features of the original plan. The use of the floors largely follows the historical pattern with the ground floor being used as bars with restaurant to the rear of the east wing and the first floor holding bedrooms and principal function rooms. The attics hold a mixture of staff and guest accommodation, again possibly consistent with the historic use. This section presents the observations made throughout the building. Names of the rooms refer to plans of the ground, first and attic floors (Figures 2-4).

#### 3.2 FRONT ELEVATION

The front range of the inn is of two storeys with attics behind a parapet (Plates 1-3). The upper part of the symmetrical façade is of yellow brick laid to a Flemish bond (alternate headers and stretchers in the same course) with window dressings and western quoin of the building of red brick. The lower half of the elevation is of painted brick on a tiled base. The most prominent feature is the central carriage way with tuscan columns. Historic photographs show that this was originally a double carriage way with the columns making the 'in and out' division. Currently the eastern half of this entrance way is blocked and this change is thought to date to the early 20<sup>th</sup>-century. The facade is symmetrical: at ground level it currently has 3 + 3 sash windows on either side of the former entranceway. Historic photographs, however, show that the window to the west of the carriage entrance was formerly a door, and fabric observations and the Royal cartouche on the street front suggest that there was a similar



arrangement in the window to the east of the double entrance. These doors would have provided direct access to the bars from the street for non-hotel guests. The royal arms, incidentally, are those of George I-III (prior to 1800), and Queen Adelaide respectively. On the first floor the fenestration continues the symmetry with 9 sash windows and three dormers behind the parapet lighting the front attics. A heavy wooden modillion cornice runs along the head of the first floor sashes.

### 3.3 THE GROUND FLOOR

#### 3.3.1.1 *Front Range, east side – ‘The Bottle Bar’*

The front bar to the east of the main entrance has been extended into the area previously used as the east side of the double carriage entrance. The room retains remnants of Victorian fittings in its tiled floor and bar mirror on the south wall as well as fragments of plain fielded panelling, thought to be as early as the 18<sup>th</sup>-century. All other panelling was seen to be modern during the refurbishment work. Primary red-pink handmade brick (0.24x0.07m) was seen to the front wall and east wall of this room. Evidence to support the belief that the west window had originally been a door was seen in the brick fabric between the west and middle windows where yellow stock bricks were recorded bedded in cement. The chimney breast on the east wall was of a mixture of yellow and some pink bricks thought to be handmade, with modern wire cut bricks and cement forming the current fireplace and repair to the south.

3.3.1.2 The partitions used to enclose the area of the former entrance way to the north and west are of tile to the lower half, now painted over, and sash windows to the upper part of the wall. The sash windows do not match with those of the rest of the facade. This screen was seen to be fixed into lead spots cut into the tiled floor. The tiled floor covering did not respect the screen and extended to the north and west of it. During the refurbishment work part of the screen was removed exposing modern brick, breeze block and cement fabric.

3.3.1.3 On removal of the modern panelling in the SE corner of the bar a classic, aediculated, Victorian door with acanthus brackets and glazed panelled architrave was uncovered (Plate 9). The door had been blocked to the south with modern 20<sup>th</sup>-century wire cut bricks and cement. It was framed by a pilaster to the east and the central column of the former carriage way to the west. The door formed part of the blocking of the abandoned eastern side of the main entrance, with further brick blocking to the east. The partition wall to the west of the room was seen to post date the uncovered door as it was built against its west panel (Figure 5).

#### 3.3.2 *Ante-room*

To the east of the stair between the ‘*Bottle Bar*’ and the ‘*Back Bar*’ is a small ante-room. The modern cupboard partitioning was removed showing the west wall be of a stud framework with lath and lime plaster. In this wall to the south a square window (0.9x0.9m) was discovered through to the stair. The window retained frosted glass in a softwood surround and had bars fitted on the east side.

#### 3.3.3 *The staircase*

The main staircase, situated in the north-east corner of the courtyard and leading to the first floor gallery and on to the attic storey, is a fine piece of joinery. It has all the appearance of being original work of 1703, with its heavy turned balusters and newel posts (Plate 12). From ground floor to first floor it is of dogleg type and from first floor to attic level the stair spirals around a newel post. The bottom flight of stairs has clearly been altered during the 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and currently projects beyond the line of the blocked eastern carriageway suggesting that it replaced an original steeper pitched flight.

#### 3.3.4 *East Wing - The Back Bar*

The 'Back Bar' is situated to the south of the main stair. Prior to the refurbishment the room was fitted with modern reproduction panelling and the south wall had been previously knocked through to the adjacent restaurant and was fitted with an iron grill. The room has an original 1703 diagonal corner fireplace of primary red-pink hand made bricks to the south-east corner of the room. This phase 1 brick type was also observed in the east wall. Within this wall, roughly centrally to the room, a blocked door and window were uncovered (see Figure 2 for plan location). The features, the door to the south, had been blocked with yellow stocks and breeze blocks suggesting 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century blocking. The blocked door still retained a timber step to the east, 0.1m below current floor level. Presumably the door originally provided access to the back kitchen to the east. A further blocked window was uncovered in the west wall of the room facing the courtyard. It is a horizontal sliding sash, located roughly centrally along the wall, (see Figures 2, 8-10, Plate 10), and measures 1.26x1.2m. The timber frame of the window is plain with no moulding but is painted with a wood grain effect. The glass appears to be the original crown glass. The bar's floor is 0.75m above that of the courtyard and a cursory examination of the south end of the structure and its covering of chip board suggests that it was relayed in the 20th century (see below §3.3.7.2 for bay window).

#### 3.3.5 *East wing - The Restaurant*

The restaurant area is situated to the south end of the east wing and extends beyond the extent of the 1703 courtyard building into a later block at the south of the plot which has a fireplace and much exposed timber work of uncertain age, although thought to be modern. The main restaurant, within the 1703 courtyard building, is believed to be the original location of the kitchens. The wide fireplace in the east wall with side seats is thought likely to be the location of the cooking ranges. During the works the fireplace was seen to be of the primary red-pink handmade brick with some modern patching. Further phase 1 brick work was seen in the north wall.

#### 3.3.6.1 *West side of Front Range and West wing - The West Bars*

The west bar runs the full length of the western arm of the 1703 three sided courtyard building and occupies the west room of the front range. From plan evidence the area appears to have originally been divided into four rooms although now all the dividing walls have been totally removed or knocked through to create an open plan area. The street front room would have extended back as far south as the 'Bottle bar' and historic photographs show that the eastern window was previously a door providing street access. It is thought the street door was blocked in the 1920's. At the same time the green tiles were added to the front façade and the 'Bottle Bar's' glazed screen was erected. A door to the courtyard is situated in the south-east corner of the room and there is an end wall fireplace on the west wall. The other three rooms are indicated by the original 1703 diagonal corner fireplaces, of which only the far south was still open with exposed brickwork and timber lintel (Plate 11). The panelling of the area is modern as is the fake timber framing and brick noggin infill, although most of the ceiling beams are authentic.

3.3.6.2 Limited intrusive work was carried out in the west bar. While cables were being run between the ground and first floors a cursory examination behind the panels of the east wall to the carriage way in the front bar suggested that the wall was of breeze blocks. The central area was stripped out revealing the two blocked corner fireplaces and scarring of two partitions, the position of which is marked on Figure 2. The wall plaster applied to a wall of the same pink-red hand made bricks as seen in the 'Bottle bar' stops at the partition scars suggesting that the two rooms served by the corner fireplaces were separated by a corridor formed between the partitions. The ceiling was seen to be carried on joists fixed

to the soffits of the first floor beams with hearth supports noted at the diagonal corner stacks. No sign of the original partition wall between the two southern most diagonal fireplaces was observed, possibly suggesting that it was of lath and stud construction rather than brick. The primary red-pink handmade brick was also observed in the east and south walls of the bar. However, the east wall was seen to be substantially altered to provide access to the 20<sup>th</sup>-century screened extension in the courtyard area. Historic photographs of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century show the east wall to the courtyard as having windows and doors of a similar arrangement and fittings as those surviving at gallery level.

### 3.3.7 *The courtyard – ground floor*

3.3.7.1 The courtyard still forms a semi-open area at the heart of the building, surrounded at first floor level with a balustraded gallery. This area has undergone many changes but some features of the original galleried inn survive. Originally the courtyard was open to the south giving access to stables and other ancillary buildings and this was still the case in the 1860 OS plan and in early photographs (see Plates 4-8 & 13). The gallery, stair (removed in the refurbishment work) and service buildings at this end of the area are therefore later 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>-century alterations. The ground floor of the courtyard has been encroached upon with glazed screening extensions and ante-rooms to the surrounding bars. Historic photographs show that there had been earlier screening arrangements of which one bay has been retained (the 'Regency Bay' of the listing description (Figure 6 & 7)). One of the photographs shows a brick paved floor, with wide spaces below the east gallery showing similar window and door openings and fittings lighting the ground floor of the west wing as those currently seen at first floor level. To the east the photograph shows a bay window with four sashes, and a screen (glazed and possibly removable) in front of it. This arrangement is also seen on the 1860 OS map. A photograph of c.1920 shows a doorcase or porch attached to the south end of the window (i.e. a wooden frame with a door and large window), while the screen in front of the window at the north end has a lean-to glass roof. In c.1920 there was a further glazed screen south of the porch, also with a lean-to glass roof. By 1966 the bay window was again exposed, while the porch and further screen still survived. In the subsequent refitting of the yard the porch and screen were removed leaving the bay window and using it as a pattern for the replacement glazed screens built on both sides of the courtyard. The new screen incorporated the first four sashes of the bay, and the break between the old and new work was easily seen.

3.3.7.2 During the 1996 refurbishment work the modern screens were entirely removed leaving the historic bay and enabling some structural observations. The sleeper wall of the historic bay is built of a combination of primary phase brick and a wire cut yellow brick with dark inclusions. The fenestration is made up of 4 six-paned vertical sash windows with a door in the north end of the bay (Figures 6 & 7). The door opening retains fittings and a pulley wheel indicating that it was previously a sash window. The architraves, flanking the door and windows, are in the form of fluted pilasters topped with a simple Doric capital. The bay was obviously intended to light the bar and is likely to date to the first half of the 19th century, and may have been contemporary with the fitting out for the Corn Market in c1820, though it could also be older. Cast-iron brackets supporting the tongue and groove clad soffits of the galleries are shown in the photographs and during the refurbishments were uncovered. Within the area created by the historic bay a horizontal sliding sash window was uncovered, as reported on above (§3.3.4). Under this window a small cupboard of uncertain date, but lined with softwood tongue and groove was built into the wall (Plate 10). Various patches of repair work in yellow brick was also noted and recorded around the door to the south of the bay. During the course of the works no evidence of the original courtyard surface was observed. In the mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century photographs the floor is paved with bricks, replaced by a screed concrete floor by the Edwardian period. Small excavations in the yard at the time of the survey indicate that the earlier flooring materials

have been stripped out, rather than covered.

### 3.4 THE FIRST FLOOR

#### 3.4.1 *General*

The first floor historically and currently holds the principal public rooms of the hotel and the guest rooms (Figure 3).

#### 3.4.2 *The courtyard - first floor*

3.4.2.1 The first floor has galleries overlooking the courtyard around all four sides. The southern side is of 20<sup>th</sup>-century date as demonstrated by historic photographs. The northern side is walled off from the courtyard area with a mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century gothic window lighting the enclosed corridor. The current roof was constructed in 1826 by the incumbent landlord W.T. Bray. The glazed covering is supported on timber queen post trusses. The building of this roof has almost certainly truncated the earlier roofs of the side wings, which would have come forward to cover the gallery on the first floor, leaving the courtyard below open to the elements. The earlier roof would have been supported on columns rising from the hand rail of the surviving balustrade. The sawn-off footings for the columns are visible spaced at approximately 2.5m intervals with two complete examples remaining in situ in the NE and NW corners of the gallery (Plate 15). In the centre of the north side the upper section of a third column survives above the head of the window, supporting the soffit of the second floor gallery (Plate 14). The window presumably was cut through the column at a later date, and it is unclear whether this covered walkway was open at the side to the elements or glazed. The balustrade itself has the same heavy turned balusters as the original stair in the front of the building, which fit with the 1703 date of construction. The balustrades of the south gallery are modern lathe-turned copies.

3.4.2.2 During the refurbishment work the modern floor was lifted enabling observations of the historic floor structure to be made. The historic three sided gallery has a floor structure carried on hardwood cantilevered principle beams with an average sectional dimension of 0.2x0.2m. Each beam spans the entire width of each wing, resting within the build of the external walls. The beams appear to be spaced at 3.5m centres, which would suggest that the gallery floor will also contain binders, although these were not located. Hardwood joists, with sectional dimension c 0.2x 0.08m run in N-S direction in the east and west galleries and E-W direction on the front north wing. They are spaced at 0.2m centres, and are fitted to the beams with haunched mortise and tenon joints. Original hardwood floor boards are still found in this gallery area. The 20<sup>th</sup>-century south gallery has a floor structure of softwood joists, c0.1x0.1m, cantilevered from the wall plate of the south wall and spaced at 0.4m centres. Other observations along the eastern wing include a handmade brick and timber lintel, with a carpenter's mark 'III', which was exposed over the door to bedroom 24. A blocked window was noted in the external wall of bedroom 25, suggesting that the partition between bedrooms 25 and 26 behind this window is modern.

#### 3.4.3.1 *Front Range: Function Room & Meeting Room*

The first floor front room was clearly the principal public room of the inn (it was a dining room, now a Function Room). It is completely panelled, the north wall with one panel between each window, the south wall in one run with two doorways. The panelling is plain and with no elaborate mouldings, but the remarkable feature of the room is that it is completely painted with mid-18th century architectural capriccio scenes: classical landscapes with ruined and imaginary buildings (Plates 20-24). The paintwork, evidently in oil on panel, is dark brown with accumulated varnish and smoke, and has often in the past inexplicably been described as 'pokerwork'. Although previously recognised for what it was (letter from Borough Librarian in 1969, reporting visit of Mr Ritson the Museum Assistant) it is not



mentioned in the List entry, and is apparently not known in the literature on the subject. It is of exceptional importance as an example of 18th-century interior decoration, and is possibly unique as a complete painted room of the generation before the Adam interior made a different kind of painted decoration fashionable. It was entirely appropriate for an important inn to have decorations of country house quality, for it was precisely that better class of traveller whom they wished to accommodate or entertain

3.4.3.2 At the time of survey some cleaning test panels had been attempted. Test panels on the south wall suggested that the scenes had been executed in a weak blue colour with dark outline; a test panel above the fireplace on the west wall showed the use of richer stronger colours. The subject matter on the East and South walls were architectural, a hunting scene was painted above the fireplace; the scenes on the North wall were illegible. The dado panels were composed musical instruments, weaponry and hunting paraphernalia. (A more detailed list of the subject matter of the capriccio scenes can be found in Appendix E). Some panels to the east of the North wall were badly damaged water, probably from a failed parapet gutter on the principle elevation. Examination behind the panels showed that the window reveals were detailed with modern wirecut brick and cement, suggesting that the panels have been removed from the wall within the last 150 years and that the windows may have been subject to alteration. A blocked door centrally placed in the east wall has been painted closed but it may relate to the acquisition of the neighbouring property in 1839, although this is difficult to confirm. The adjacent meeting room to the west has similar panelling, with later paintwork, and modern cupboards. No test panels were attempted in this room to explore the possibility of an early decorative finish.

#### 3.4.4 *West Wing*

3.4.4.1 The first floor of the west wing is relatively unaltered. It has largely retained its original floor plan of three bedrooms each served by a diagonal corner fireplace. Although the fireplaces are now blocked and 20th-century bathrooms have been built within each room the original layout can still be seen (Figure 3). Only limited observations were possible in these rooms during the refurbishment work. The walls were replastered allowing some building fabric to be observed. The blocked fireplaces are of the primary red-pink brick. The blocked openings had softwood boarding covering them. Some floor boards were lifted and a principal beam (0.2x0.2m) was recorded 0.1m to the south of the door reveal of room 19 running east-west. The joists, running north-south, measured 0.2x0.08m and are fixed to the beam with a mortice and tenon joint. Some tenons are housed and because the north face of the beam is waney, the mortices are plain without haunches. Original floor boards (east-west) survive in Room 19. Fragments of the original lath and plaster ceiling of the ground floor bar was noted fixed to the soffit of the beam.

#### 3.4.5 *The East range*

3.4.5.1 The first floor of the east range has seen more development to its plan than that of the west. The northern bedroom, next to the main stair, has been converted during the 20<sup>th</sup> century to form a kitchen area serving the front function and meeting rooms. No clear signs of past heating arrangements are visible from the plan, making the reconstruction of room divisions more difficult. A diagonal corner fireplace would be expected in room 24 but it is not clear from the existing plan if it exists: it may be in the block of walling in the north-east corner of the room. It also appears that the partition wall expected to the south of the fireplace has been removed although the current room partition walls fits with the west wall fenestration. However in the west wall a blocked window was observed, behind which is the modern brick partition wall dividing bedrooms 25 & 26 more clear evidence of the changes in plan layout of this area of the building.

3.4.5.2 During the refurbishment no significant detail came to light in rooms 25 and 27. The floor



of room 26 was 0.1m lower than room 27. A large rectangular structure as wide as the room, built of primary phase brick bedded in lime mortar was noted beneath the floor of room 26; this has been interpreted as the chimney stack or additional hearth using the same stack as the original kitchen stoves. Handmade brick recorded in the east wall of the bathroom of room 24. Original lime plaster on hard was also noted in this area. A single strip of modern flooring was lifted to confirm that the cantilevered principle beam ran through the room to the external wall (Figure 3). Examination of further floor details was not possible.

### 3.5 SECOND FLOOR

#### 3.5.1 *Front Range*

3.5.1.1 The second floor of the front range has attic rooms within the pitch of the roof to the street front. This was clearly an original arrangement with the heavy balustraded stair leading to a corridor enclosed beneath the roof and glazed to the south providing access to the rooms on the north. The corridor has timber panels on the internal face with weather boarding to the exterior, and it seems very unlikely that it was ever open to the elements and ballustraded as is thought possible with the first floor gallery. The north wall of the corridor rakes out to the south by 0.2m due to the roof load it is carrying. The doors leading to the bedrooms are replacements, being fixed vertically in the raking wall. The original layout of the front range is not clear but the garret lighting suggests three rooms. The plan has been subsequently altered to provide bathroom facilities and a linen cupboard using modern stud partitioning.

3.5.1.2 During the refurbishment work primary phase handmade bricks were observed in the front and back walls of all bedrooms, the partition wall of rooms 33 and 34 and the gable ends. Two blocked doors were located in the front range of the second floor; one at the south end of the wall between the linen cupboard and bedroom 34 and the other in the south-east corner of bedroom 34. In both cases the blocking material was handmade bricks and lime mortar, suggesting that the changes in layout occurred at an early stage in the building's history. The partition wall between the store cupboard and bedroom 33 is of original or early studwork, with a later diagonal brace supporting the front roof. Of the floor construction a single principal cantilevered beam, running north-south, was located 0.7m to the south of the door to room 33. Joists 0.1x0.16m, running east-west were recorded in the gallery spaced at 0.45m centres. In the bathroom of bedroom 32 north-south joists of 0.08x0.2m were observed at 0.35m centres.

#### 3.4.1.3 *The roof structure*

The front range has three "A" Frame Roof trusses with staggered butt-purlins on the north side of the roof void; there are no purlins on the south side of the roof. Some of the timbers are visible in the rooms. The rafter of truss 1 forms part of the dormer cheek in room 33, it sits on the timber wall plate in the front elevation. The letter "J" is printed into the face of its support strut in nail heads. The purlins are joined to the rafter by a haunched mortice and tenon joint fixed with wooden pegs. The ceiling to the bedrooms are fixed to the soffit of the collars. The common rafters are tenoned to the upper and lower face of each purlin at 0.4m centres, the ceiling joists are spaced at similar intervals. There is no evidence of a ridge pole in the roof, suggesting that the roof is the original early-18<sup>th</sup> century one. The roof is asymmetrical. The principle rafter on the north side of the void sits on a wall plate on the principle elevation 0.57m above floor level, the south side rafter sits on a plate 0.18m above the floor on the back wall. This has resulted in considerable raking of the wall and structural problems. In an attempt to strengthen the wall and hold up the roof structure a raking support strut, 0.11x0.15m, has been inserted in room 33, running from the soffit of roof truss 2 to the upper face of the principle beam. Along the

length of the roof raking queen struts, occasional collars and furring assist in maintaining the roof's integrity. Many of the timbers are reused with carpenter's and import marks. Most of the timbers are saw cut, although the southern rafter on Truss 1 has axe-marks.

### 3.4.2 *The West wing*

3.4.2.1 The original plan of the west range has been largely lost through subsequent developments. Prior to the refurbishment work this wing of the attic storey was in use as a staff flat and the majority of the subdivisions were of a modern date. Some elements of the historic building do however survive and were recorded during the stripping out of the modern accretions. From the evidence of the diagonal corner fireplaces on the ground and first floors it could be postulated that the original attic layout consisted of three rooms. However, only two of the fireplaces are visible in plan, although the third may have been partially removed by the installation of the 20<sup>th</sup> century bathroom at the north end of the range. In the south-west corner of the northern room of the wing it was confirmed that the fireplace had indeed at one time been open at this level and had subsequently been blocked.

3.4.2.2 Removal of the partitions exposed a dropped tie-beam roof arrangement 3m to the north of the fireplace, which would have probably served as an early partition. Unfortunately the partition was removed without record. Handmade primary bricks were noted in the south wall and around the fireplace and lime plaster identified on the brick on the South wall of what had previously been used as a staff lounge. Only a cursory examination of the floor structure was possible. The dropped tie-beam, 0.15m wide, acts as principle beam. A binder 0.2x0.2m, running north-south, is fixed to this tie-beam 0.15m west of the external wall. Joists of varying sizes on 0.34m centres run parallel to the tie-beam. The rooms were re-floored in the 20th century with softwood boards, although the original hardwood floor was left *in situ* over much of the room and run north-south.

3.4.2.3 The roof of the west garret appears to be of the original 1703 date with running repairs. It is formed by a single dropped tie-beam roof truss, with butt purlins. The ends of the purlins are carried on the gable ends. Common rafters and ceiling joists spaced at average 0.4m centres. The dropped tie-beam forms the principle beam of the garret, allowing for adequate headroom, a collar serves as a fixing point for the ceiling.

### 3.4.3 *The East Wing*

3.4.3.1 The southern end of roof space of the east wing was converted in the late 19th century or possibly early 20th century in to an attic or store (Plates 17-19). The original roof trusses have been drastically altered to the south of the attic and the truss in the middle of the void is a Victorian replacement. The southern half of the attic was lined with softwood tongue-and-groove and electric light fittings were put in; a large lead water tank was also inserted. The north end of the wing was seen to contain some original partitions, including a closed truss stud and lath partition which was partially demolished (Plate 16).

3.4.3.2 During the refurbishment work the modern partitions that had been sub-dividing the area into two rooms were removed. The alterations within this wing uncovered similar features as seen in the west wing. A dropped tie-beam truss was located 4m to the south of the north wall at the point where the wall steps. Unfortunately it was removed without record. However fragments of the truss were still apparent. A beam 0.15x0.2m with a waney edge on its north face, acting as a principle beam, was left *in situ* and the sawn off remains of the intermediate tie was noted at the wall plate of the east wall c0.89m above ground. A mortice for the upright member was noted c3m to the east of the external wall (Figure 3). A second truss (Truss 2) was located 4m to the south of truss 1 built into a plaster and lath partition. This was recognised by its collar in the ceiling 1.9m above floor level and at the west by a rafter in the dormer of the west wall. An iron raking support bar runs from the

tie-beam to the wall plate which rests on a wall of primary brick raking out to the west. The rafter sits on ashlar, which is in turn tenoned to the upper face of the tie-beam. A moulded edge, associated with the edge of a dormer cheek can be seen running from a point 0.44m to the east, along the collar down to a point on the rafter 1m above the wall plate. It appears to be a different, shallower roof profile. Two binders 0.25x0.18m, running in a N-S direction, fit into the beam of Truss 1. They do not project through on the same line but are off-set by 0.8m. Joists 0.5x 0.17m and spaced at 0.4m centres run from the binders in an east-west direction to the wall heads. A hearth, partially obscured by modern dummy wall, located 1m south of Truss 1. The trimmer and joist ends adjacent to it show clear evidence of fire damage.

3.4.3.2 Further details were uncovered in the roof void beyond the plaster and lath partition at the south end of the garret. A third roof truss of a plain 'A' frame type with rafters and steel 'I' beam collar was positioned c 4m to the south of Truss 2. Modern, softwood ceiling joists at 0.35-0.4m centres positioned between Truss 2 and 3. Beneath the tongue-and-groove cladding in the area beyond Truss 3 it was possible to see the butt purlin arrangement of an earlier roof built into the southern gable end of the attic space. There was also evidence of repair work to the head of the wall on the west side of the roof void. Plate 18 shows evidence for the original roof line which was replaced by the current shallower pitched roof. This roof, shown in plate 19, has a short king post with struts above a collar. The southern end of this wing has therefore, clearly been replaced, possibly in the later 18<sup>th</sup> century.

## 4 DISCUSSION

### 4.1 *General*

The building has clearly been altered continually throughout its history with each new proprietor making their own mark. The 20<sup>th</sup>-century additions have had the most impact on the historic fabric and have altered the character of the building with fake timber framing and brick noggin cladding applied throughout the interior. No evidence of the earlier medieval 'Bull Inn' was observed during the building work suggesting that the demolition commissioned in the 1703 agreement was carried out effectively. Some reused timbers were observed in the roof and floor structures and the possibility exists that they may have come from this previous building. Despite the changes many historic features, some of the original building, survive; the remnants of the double carriageway entrance, the original stair in the front wing with heavily turned balusters, the galleried courtyard with two surviving examples of the columns once holding up the roof structure covering the landings, the diagonal corner fireplaces and most importantly the painted panels of the principal function room.

### 4.2 *The 1703 Contract – (transcribed as Appendix C)*

4.2.1 This is an unusual survival of a building contract for the status of building involved. The first paragraph states that annexed with the contract was a 'Modell or platt Forme' which may be taken to suggest that a scale model, or more likely a drawing showing the design of the building had been produced for the client John Twisleton, presumably by William Wingham the builder-architect. This document or model is lost. The contract undoubtedly describes the current 'U' shaped building – '*a Capitall Bricke Messuage..*', 'to be 2 storeys high with garrets...', sash windows with 'rubed and gaged' brick dressings and so on. The timber described in the document is generally nearly square in dimension: 'Principall Rafters 8" by 6" at the Butt, 6" by 5" at the Topp;....Purloynes 8" by 6½"; Small rafters 4½" by 3". The timbers seen during the investigation were generally of this squared nature, for example the principal joists on the galleries 0.2 x 0.2m (8 x 8 ins). The joists observed measured on average 0.2 x 0.08m and are close to the contracts given measurements of 8½" x 2½".

Payment for the work detailed in the contract is put at £950 to be paid in 9 instalments, the receipts of which are also held with the deeds. The length of time given for the building work is not long, as the contract is dated 2 June 1703, and the expected completion date was 'Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> next', allowing six months. The payments were made in stages from September 1703 to July 1704, so the work perhaps took a little longer than anticipated.

4.2.2 The development was clearly designed to be of high status with good quality materials used throughout the building including the service areas, with floors of purbeck stone, 'two good stoves in the kitchen with good iron frames & grates....', good stock locks of a more than ordinary sort on the kitchen vault & cellar doors & all outside doors'. The document also provides details of the original décor of the property. It makes no mention of the painted panel room which suggests that it is a later development, and indeed the reference to the 'Dyning Room', which is thought to refer to the current painted room on the first floor, shows that the original finish there was intended to be plain panels to wainscott level with decorative moulding which was finished with two coats of oil paint. The 'best rooms' were to be decorated with '10 handsome Chinese prints'. To the ground floor the balusters, presumably of the courtyard galleries were finished in white lead paint. A reference to 'the room behind the bar with a stove and grate' may refer to the current 'Back Bar' area and describes two dressers, one of beech planks under the window with cupboards and the other by the stoves with six shelves for pewter.

4.2.3 The contract also provides information on the outhouses and ancillary buildings which presumably stood to the south of the courtyard. It seems that these buildings may have been in existence with the medieval Bull building and that they were just being altered and modernised during the course of the rebuilding of the inn. The contract mentions a wash house, stables, buttery and 'house of office'. In addition to these existing service buildings the document also alludes to 'nine little tenements or almshouses' which were clearly being newly built. It does not go into the specification of the materials as it explains this can be found 'described on the reverse of the modell'. This suggests that the 'modell' was in fact plan and elevation drawings of the commissioned inn. It does give some details of these tenements suggesting that the buildings were of brick and timber, possible timber framed and of more shoddy work as the exterior of all the buildings was to be rendered and painted black and white. A stone inscription was to be mounted on 'the most convenient pair next to the road'. This possibly suggests the buildings were semi-detached properties. The buildings were to be served by a double house-of-office (lavatory) with '2 wholes in each'.

#### 4.3 *Building fabric*

The stripping out during the refurbishment allowed a substantial amount of historic fabric to be observed throughout the building. The structural carpentry was observed to include the gallery as an integral part of the first-floor framing, and the use of dropped ties in the roof. The majority of the walling, including the diagonal fireplaces, within the 'U' shaped courtyard plan is of primary 1703 material characterised as red-pink brick (c0.24 x 0.07m) bonded in lime mortar. A variety of other brick types, including yellow stocks, were also seen and interpreted as largely 19<sup>th</sup>-century events such as additional fireplaces (*Bottle Bar*), blocking of windows and doors (*Back Bar*) and general repairs. Some 20<sup>th</sup>-century repairs and blockings were also observed, such as along the front windows in the painted panel room. Internally partitions within the building included both brick and stud and lath walls.

4.4 A number of lost features came to light during the refurbishment works. A decorative and aediculated Victorian door was uncovered in the '*Bottle bar*', an early horizontal sliding sash window located in the courtyard, and evidence of demolished partitions subdividing the '*West bar*' area.



#### 4.5 *Carriage entrance*

The changing use of the courtyard has had a large bearing on the function of the rest of the building and has been the stimulus for much of the change that was observed during the investigation. Apart from the use as a Corn Exchange, with the decline in the use of carriages and the growth in rail transportation, the large dominating double entrance way was no longer needed, and so was presumably converted into a bar extension furnished with the Victorian fittings that currently survive. This includes the tiled floor which does not fit with the later c1920 glazed screen that still in use, but no evidence for an earlier screen was found during the investigation. Photographs dating from 1880 and early this century show that the double entrance was still open to the front. This makes it rather difficult to work out what the tiled floor relates to, but suggests that at some point between 1880 and the 1920's an earlier enclosing wall was constructed and subsequently demolished to be replaced by the current glazed screen. The south side of the entrance way was partially bricked up and partially fitted with a doorway linking the bar with the courtyard and replacement extended stair.

#### 4.6 *The courtyard*

4.6.1 Also linked to the decline in carriage use is the encroachment of the courtyard. This general sequence of conversion may be stimulated by the accommodation of the Corn Market in the courtyard from c1820. The courtyard would have originally been open to the elements, and used for arrivals and departures, with through access to the stables and coach houses via the open south end. The horizontal sliding sash unblocked during the building work in the west wall of the 'Back Bar' may have been used as a servery linking the bar and the courtyard. This arrangement has parallels with the George Inn at Southwark, another good example of an early courtyard inn with similar heavily turned balustered balcony overlooking a courtyard. The current roof over the courtyard was erected c1826 by W.T. Bray and again is thought to be linked to the start of the Corn Market being held in the courtyard. Early photographs show the courtyard with movable benches used by the Corn Market. Later these movable fittings were replaced with partitions and screens (§3.3.7.1&2). One surviving piece of these former partitions survives in the form of the four-panelled sash bay window with door to the north, thought to date to the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. More permanent alterations were carried out in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (possibly c1922 when the last version of the Assembly Rooms was opened) with the creation of a south side of the gallery and access stair. In more recent times the historic partitions were replaced with new ones based on the design of the surviving sashed bay.

4.6.2 Historic photographs show that the ground floor fenestration matched that of the current first floor at the beginning of the century. The nearly square shape windows with segmental heads and projecting key stones and the unplastered brickwork of the gallery is interesting if all of the 1703 build, but is presumably original unless there was a wholesale rebuilding in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. More likely it was only the windows, and door fittings were altered – possibly to let in more light when the glazed roof went on. However the tongue-and groove boarding on the soffits of the galleries, the cast iron brackets and the replacement floor all suggest a 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup>-century intervention of some magnitude.

#### 4.7 *The bedrooms*

Although both wings of the historic 'U' shaped plan have been effected by the growing trend of *en-suite* accommodation the basic original three bedroom plan of the west wing can be defined by the survival of the three diagonally-set corner fireplaces. To the east, however, the plan appears to have been more drastically altered. The original diagonal fireplace expected in room 24 is not obviously apparent, nor is any other hearth in rooms 25-27. A blocked window was visible from the gallery between doors to bedroom 25 and 26. Behind it runs the partition wall between the two rooms proving that this division is of a later date than the window.



## 5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The survey of the Royal Victoria and Bull Hotel has demonstrated a complex structural history, not all of which can readily be attributed to known phases of alteration. It is clear that the original building was a brick-built three-sided courtyard inn. Parallels with the George at Southwark, another example of a courtyard inn of the same period, can be made with both courtyards overlooked by roofed galleries with heavily turned balusters. The original building was dominated by the double carriage way entrance, leading to the courtyard and on through the open south end to stables and coach houses. It can be imagined that carriages would have pulled in through the east side of the entrance, drawn up opposite the stair with its heavy turned balusters and let the guests alight and go up to their rooms on the first floor with the carriage unloading and then moving on to the stables and ancillary buildings. Flanking the entrance to the front range were bars that were accessed direct from the street and presumably catered for non-residents. The original kitchens are likely to have been situated to the rear of the east wing. The west wing is thought to have been sub-divided into three rooms each served by a diagonal corner fireplace. These rooms would have been suitable private rooms, fit for guests and general meetings. The first floor held the principal public room of the inn at the front, with its impressive painted panels, and the majority of bedrooms on the sides of the courtyard. The attics presumably held more bedrooms for travelling servants and inn staff. The original building was characterised by red-pink brick fabric and lime mortar.
- 5.2 As is common with urban inns, the building has been reorganised and altered on numerous occasions, and it is suspected that the some of the visible brickwork of the rear part may be a rebuild later than the documented date of 1703, though the chimney stacks and possibly other features would be original, and the general character of the courtyard can still be appreciated. The mid 19th-century roof is good work of its period, and not unattractive. The outstanding feature of the building is the painted room on the first-floor street front, which is not mentioned in the Listing description, but alone makes the building worthy of its Grade II\* status. Conservation attempts have met with practical difficulties in revealing all of the original paintwork, but some cleaning has been undertaken. The paintings merit close examination and publication as an important survival of such interior décor. The remainder of the building is chiefly of interest for the survival of the galleried plan rather than any individual feature and for the remarkable survival of the original contract of 1703.

Phil Wallace & Kate Newell  
Oxford Archaeological Unit  
September 1998

[Server 1: C:\oadata\personal\katen\dartford]

**Appendix A**  
**List of Sources Consulted**

---

*Archival Sources*

*Dartford Library*

- Newspaper clippings in 'Local Pubs' file

*National Building Record, RCHME, Swindon*

- Various photographs – both historic and modern

*Published Historical Sources*

- Baker C & Hinkley G 1990 *Cheers: A hundred years, A hundred Dartford pubs*
- Dartford Historical & Antiquarian Society 1992 *Dartford Town Trails*
- Dunkin J 1844 *The History & Antiquity of Dartford*
- Keynes S K 1933 *Dartford: Some historical notes*
- Keynes S K 1938 *Dartford: Further historical notes*
- OAU February 1996 'Royal Victoria & Bull Hotel, Dartford: Historic Building Appraisal' Unpublished client report
- 'Bygone Kent'. Vol 16. No 8.

*Cartographic Sources*

- Ordnance Survey 1st Edition 1:2500 map
- Ordnance Survey 2nd Edition 1:2500 map

Appendix B  
Copies of DoE List Entries

---

1.  
5274

HIGH STREET  
(South Side)

-----  
The Royal Victoria  
and Bull Inn

TQ 5474 2/1

22.12.53.

II\*

2.

Formerly a large coaching inn on the London to Canterbury and Dover road. Built in 1703. 2 storeys and attics. The ground floor is of painted brick on a tiled base. Above the building is faced with grey bricks, which have been renewed, with red brick window dressings and quoins. Tiled roof with 3 dormers. Parapet of grey bricks. Wooden modillion cornice. 9 sashes with glazing bars intact. In the centre of the ground floor is the carriage entrance leading to the hotel yard with a royal cartouche on each side of it. Tuscan columns on the left hand side of the carriage entrance and C18 pub front. The building runs back into 2 long wings behind separated by the hotel yard with galleries on each side on the 1st floor. The yard is now glazed over. It has a galleried courtyard and the saloon bar has a Regency bay window.

Appendix C  
The 1703 Contract

---

**Agreement between William Wingham & John Twisleton to rebuild the Bull Inn in Dartford, 2 June 1703 [K.R.O. Dartford Deeds 161(87)]**

WW agrees to *demolish and take down* the Bull Inn as far as and agreed and intended to be rebuilt by the Modell hereunto annexed and in the room sted and place thereof shall make Erect build and sett up a Capitall Bricke Messuage or Inne as described in the Modell or platt Forme hereunto annexed

To be 2 storeys high with *garretts*; the 1st storey 10 ft high in the cleare; the 2nd storey 12 ft high in the cleare; the Crowne of the vault 9" thick; the side wall in the Cellar & vault 2 bricks thick; the Back Front and Fore Front of the Great House 2 bricks thick to the 2nd floor and 1½ brick thick to the Raising; the Flank walls 1½ bricks thick to the Topp; 2 party walls in the Gateway to 1½ bricks thick to the 2nd floor

*Principall Rafters* 8" by 6" at the Butt, 6" by 5" at the Topp; *Plates on the walls* 8" by 5"; *Purloynes* 8" by 6½"; *Small rafters* 4½" by 3"; *Ceiling Joyce* 4½" by 3"; *Girders* 12½" by 9"; *The Joyce* 8½ by 2½"; *Brest Summer* 12" by 10"; *The Gateposts of Oak* 10" by 8"; *The plates of Oak* 11" by 6"; The 2 door posts Backwards belonging to the Gateposts 8" by 6"; *Lintells* 7" by 5"; *Posts in the Quarter partitions* 5" by 4"; *Enterdises* the same; *Quarters* 4" by 2"; *Sash frames* 5" by 4½"; *Sash lights* 1½ thick

Gates to be yellow draw deale Battened with whole deale and lyned with half an inch deale with a wickett in itt; to be hanged with large hinges quite across each gate rivetted through and an Iron Bar quite across with other good fastenings; A good handsome Mundilion Eaves to project 18" with Leaden Gutter of it with 2 leaden spouts 4 ft long each; Iron Brace to each

Floors to be laid with newell seasoned yellow Christiana Deals except Garretts which are to be laid with old bourds sound and good; Great Room to be layd with strait Joynts; Sielling Lathes and plaster and with all quarter partitions the same; Render the Bricke walls; Make sashes in all the front well Glazed with the best sort of Newcastle Glass; Rubbed Returnes against the sides of all the windows with faire rubb and gaged; Frame shutters on 1st storey in the windows next the Street; The upper storey to be divided into three garretts brick faced to the front rubed and gaged

The Dyning Rome to be wainscotted with plane pannells with double Cornish super base Moulding; pannells to be full half with this when wrought to be printed twice in Oyle and a faire wainscott Collour reveiled; A siding partition in the Great Roome painted as the Great Roome is

[In the Back Part]

Roof made so that ceiling of 1st storey leavell with that in the front; 2nd storey 9 ft high; garretts 7 ft high - plates 3 ft from floor; walls in 1st & 2nd storey 1½ bricks thick; ½ storey 9" thick

*Principall rafters 7" by 6" at Butt; 6" by 5" at Topp; Plates 7" by 5"; Purlins 8" by 6"; rafters 4" by 3"; Girder 11" by 8"; Joyce 7" by 2½"; Lintels 7" by 4"; Quarter partition posts 6" by 4" between each Collumns; The Rayles whereof 5" by 5"; Ballisters 3" by 3"; single cornish and shash under itt; 1st paire of stayres to be 2" planks, 2nd paire 1½" dealle*

*All outside doors glewed and battened; inside doors frames deals doors; garrett doors open doors of slitt deales and whole deale; window frame all of oak except the sash frames, sills of which to be of oak 4" square; 1 Casement in each window; 1 Dormer window in each garrett; all windows to be glazed with square glass except the garretts and them to be Quarries*

*Lead for gutters not less than 7lbs to the ft; Tiling not more than 7" gage; Good heart oak laths to be counter lathed; Oaken cant steps to the vault and cellar and well spiked with iron spikes to good oak strings*

*Pave the kitchen and washe house with purbeck stones; All floor parts of the chimneys of 1st & 2nd storey laid with rubbed purbeck stone; Hearth with 4" tyles; Floor parts of all garretts with 10" tiles & hearths with brick*

*Two good stoves in kitchen with good iron frames & grates to be covered with good floor tiles; cellar floors bricke on edge; Convenient house or Office 6 ft deep 6 ft square with bricke funnell tarred within and rendered without up to the stairs to be covered with good oak joyce and boards; shutters to the kitchen windows; Room behind the Barr with a stove and grate there; Beach plank dresser enclosed with cupboards under window; 1 dresser by the stoves with 6 shelves for pewter*

*10 handsome Chinese prints in 10 of the best rooms where directed to be well painted in Different Colours; a Compass Barr with convenient shelves and draws with rings; Latches and catches to all doors; Good stock locks of a more than ordinary sort on the kitchen vault & cellar doors & all outside doors; All balisters, rayles to be coloured 3 times in oyles and finished of White lead colour; Pave the way under the galleries round the yard with good headed stones & rest round the front etc with Ragg and flint stone*

*Wash house roof to be even with stables; sash window to Buttery; neither joyce no rafter to be above fourteen inches asunder; little pair of stayres to be carried up to the gallery next the house of office out of the yard with an inclosure to the same*

*Nine little tenements or almshouses in such as described on the reverse of the modell [... brickwork and timbering specified]; stone inscription on the most convenient pair next to the road; double house of office of brick 8 ft long 6 ft wide 7 ft deep, 2 wholes in each; rendered all houses outside; plastering to be finished black and white; closet by chimney of each with 2 shelves.*

All work to be completed by Feb 2nd next; JT top pay WW £950 in 9 payments.

[Endorsed with receipts for payments:-]

2.9.1703	£100;	21.10.1703	£100;	22.12.1703	£100;	15. 2.1703/4	£15;
19.4.1704	£171 3s;	2. 5.1704	£100;	15. 7.1704	£50;	no date	£140;
30.9.1703	£160					G. Soffe	17/2/96



**Appendix D**  
The 1911 Opinion

*An opinion on the historic interest of the building, obtained by the Council in 1911 is a period piece not without relevance, from a contemporary newspaper cutting, source unknown (Dartford Library). Apparently the Council after lengthy deliberations 'decided to pay £15 15s to an architect for his opinion of the building and as to whether the hotel was worthy of preservation on account of its historical association' (Wide Awake Dartford, Jan. 1937).*

THE BULL HOTEL. COUNCIL NOT TO PURCHASE  
Important Improvement Suggested

At their meeting last night the Dartford Urban Council decided not to purchase the Bull. Their decision was largely influenced by the report of Mr. E.J. May of Hart street, Bloomsbury Square, who had been instructed to give his opinion upon the architectural and historic value of the Bull. The report was as follows:

'Having carefully examined these premises, according to your instructions, I beg to offer the following remarks: The general plan is quite typical of the old coaching inns and is somewhat exceptional in the amplexness of its entrance and main staircase. The existing building dates not further back than about the middle Georgian time and does not, as far as I can discover, contain any evidence of its undoubted much older existence, and has since its erection suffered alterations and some mutilations. The side galleries of the courtyard had been deprived of the columns which stood upon the newels, or posts, of the balustrades, the angle columns at the north end being the only two that now remain in situ. These columns, no doubt, supported the main roof which once continued over these galleries and was removed, presumably to give more light to the rooms, when the courtyard was covered in by the present inappropriate glass roof; thus spoiling this part of the building of much of its old character. The wood-work of the galleries, stairs etc., seems only to be of deal, now being heavily painted. A blemish specially to be regretted as being very difficult to remedy, is the painting of the brickwork in the courtyard and of the ground floor of the street front. The windows of the street front seem later than Georgian as they lack the fine wide sash bars of that period. The present state of repair throughout leaves much to be desired, both structurally, and as to details. Of the historical associations of the existing house, it is more difficult to speak, and although I venture to think that the present architectural interest of the building is not of the highest order and would not of itself be of sufficient weight to demand its preservation, yet the hostelry has been associated with the town for centuries, and, as similar old places in the country disappear, its interest will increase, and I therefore on the whole am of the opinion that its demolition would be a considerable loss to the town.'

PROTECTION OF ANCIENT BUILDINGS

Mr. Thackeray Turner, secretary to the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, with offices in Buckingham-street, Adelphi, sent the following letter:- 'Sir, - A rumour has reached the committee of this society to the effect that the Dartford Urban District Council have decided to demolish the valuable building known as the Bull Inn, Dartford, and the committee at its meeting held here yesterday, desired me to write to you and express an earnest hope that, in the event of the rumour being accurate, your council may see their way to reconsider the question. The Bull Inn is one of the few remaining interesting buildings in Dartford, and its destruction would be a serious loss to the town. The committee feel sure that were the council to decide in favour of the preservation of the building, their action, would, in a few years time, be highly appreciated not only by the inhabitants, but by those visiting the town who take an intelligent interest in the art and history of the past, and to whom such buildings are an attraction. - P.S.: Inns with courts and galleries - a common form at one time - are now becoming very rare, and consequently the interest of this inn is greatly increased.'

## Appendix E

### Royal Victoria & Bull Hotel, Dartford

#### Description of the Painted Panels in the front function room, first floor

*The main panels are here numbered clockwise from the north-east corner: nos. 1-8 on the east wall, nos. 9 - 19 on the south wall, nos. 20-26 on the west wall, and nos. 27-39 on the north wall; the dado panel is signified thus: 6A.*

#### EAST WALL

*Panel nos. 1-6 appear to be later and very inferior attempts to match the other walls of the room.*

1.	Unclear (narrow panel)	1A	ditto
2.	Column and landscape	2A	Wreath
3.	Domed building and ruins	3A	Helmet and sword
4.	?Halberd and flintlock (double panel above door)		
4A	?Architecture and weapons (4-panel door)		
5.	Vague architectural/landscape	5A	Shield
6.	Column and landscape	6A	?
7.	Part of panel with ?landscape (narrow panel on return)	7A	same
8.	As no. 7	8A	No panel

#### SOUTH WALL

9.	Statue and urn (panel is truncated by door)	-	no dado panel)
10.	Bridge and river (part lost to door)	10A	Musical instruments
11.	Pool and steps	11A	Flintlock and bag
12.	Landscape and ruins	12A	Horn and trumpet
13.	Large round ruined temple	13A	Bucranium (skull)
14.	Two cupids with barrel and tankard (panel is above modern door)		
15.	Grotto with monument/temple	15A	Dog ?Talbot
16.	Cupids with glass and grapes (panel is above modern door)		
17.	Round ruined temple	17A	Bow and arrow, head
18.	Ruins in a landscape	18A	Eagle/falcon on a glove
19.	Ruins	19A.	Bagpipes

#### WEST WALL

20.	?Rocky landscape	20A	?Swag
21.	Not clear (panel is over door)		
22.	Not clear (flanking fireplace)	22A	Same
23.	Hunting scene with mounted hunters, dogs etc. (panel is above fireplace)		
24.	?Drapery/landscape (flanking fireplace)	24A	Drapery (later imitation)
25.	Monument with figure in landscape	25A	Swag
26.	Grotto	26A	Swag

NORTH WALL

*The panels on the north wall are very dark and mostly illegible, especially when seen with daylight coming through the windows, but it appears that most have original paintwork on them, including the dado panels below the windows.*

27.	?Grotto	27A	Not clear
28.	Window with dark panel below		
29.	?Wreath	29A	Not clear
30.	Window with dark panel below		
31.	Not clear	31A	?Swag
32.	Window with dark panel below		
33.	Not clear (two part panel)	33A	Not clear
34.	Window with dark panel below		
35.	[Modern hardboard]	35A	[Composition board]
36.	Window with dark panel below		
37.	Not clear	37A	[Radiator]
38.	Window with dark panel below		
39.	Not clear (narrow panel in corner)	39A	Not clear.

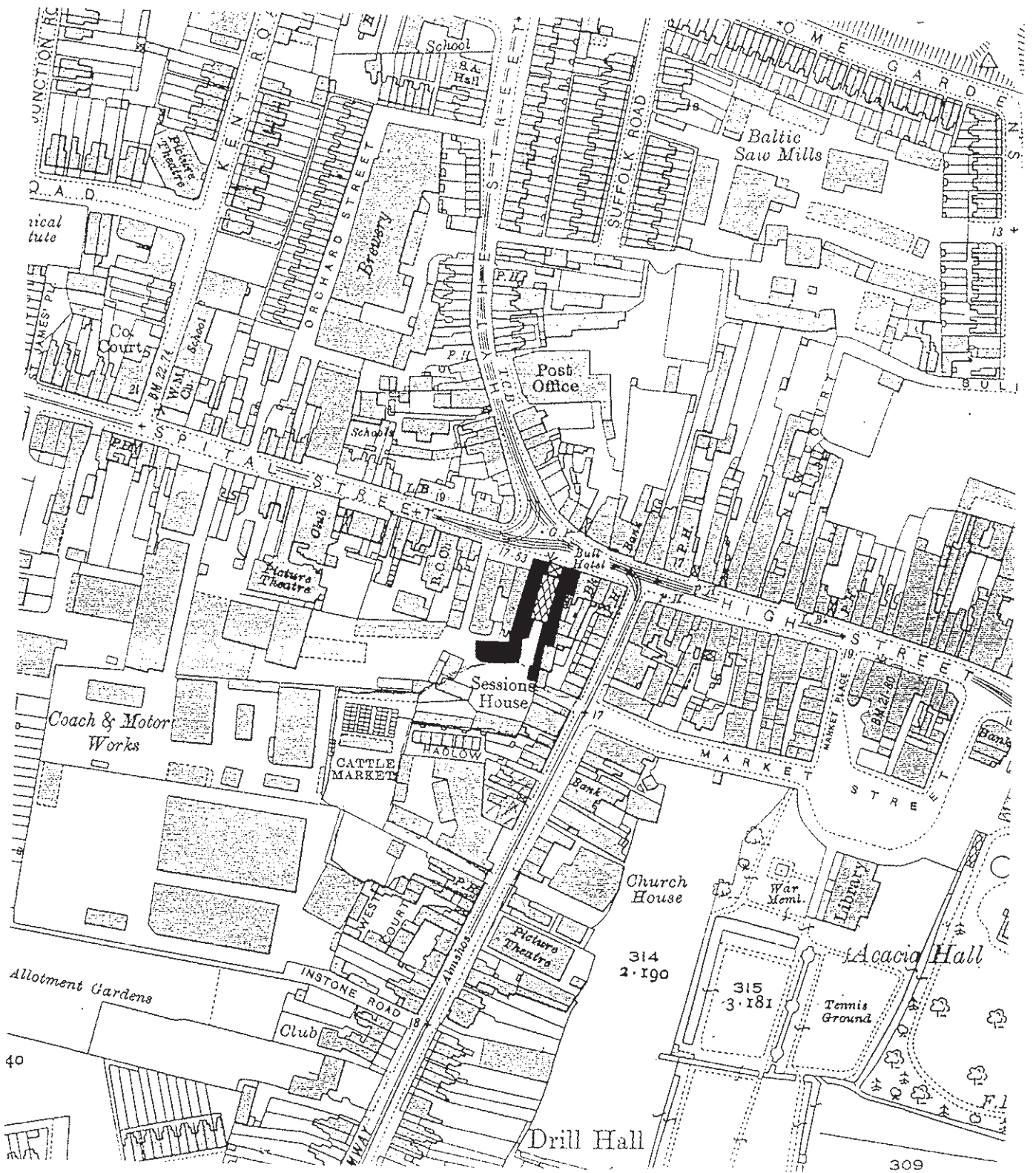


Figure 1: Location Map (Based on Ordnance Survey map of 1933)

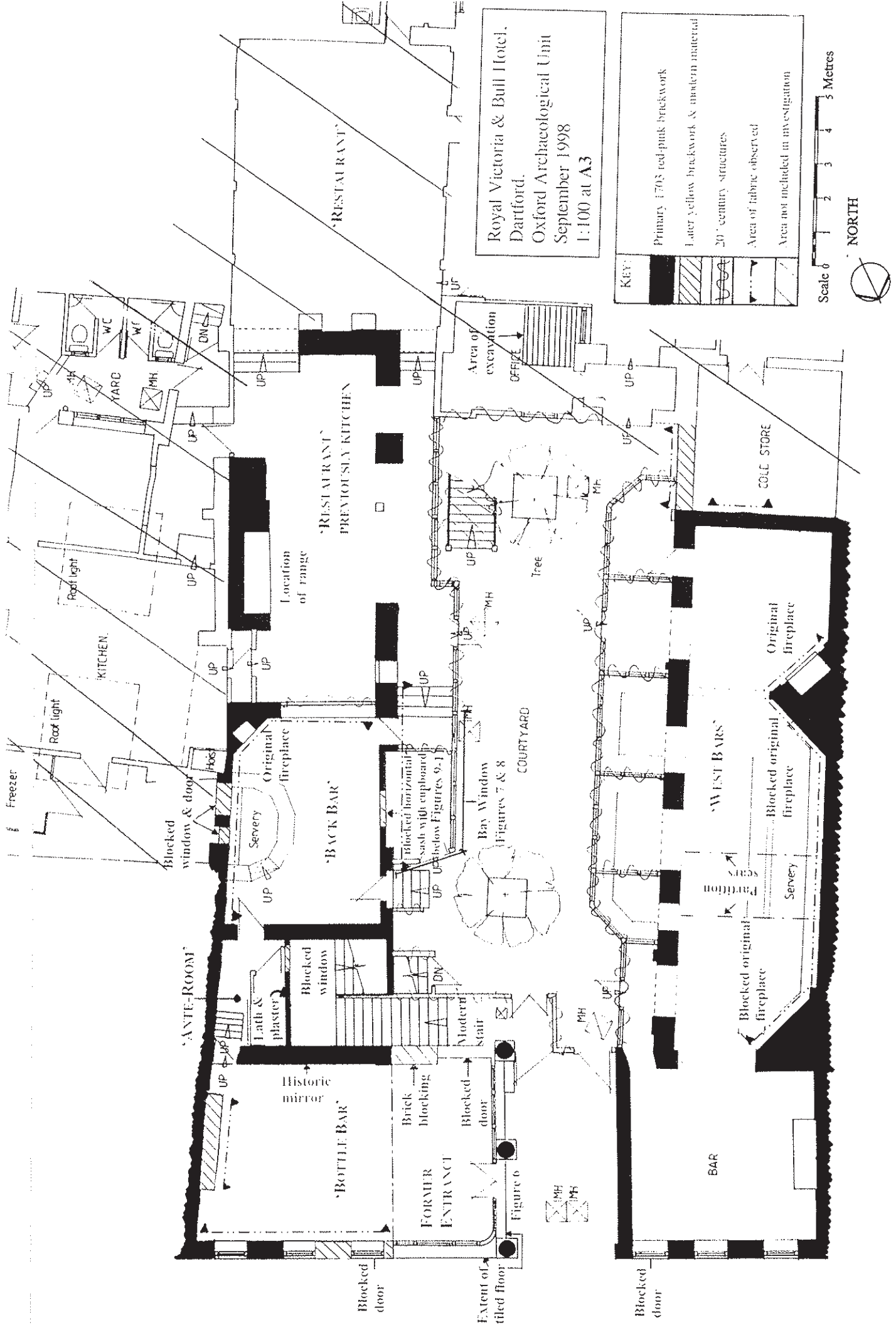
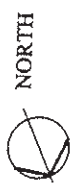


Figure 2: Ground floor plan





Royal Victoria & Bull Hotel,  
 Dartford.  
 Oxford Archaeological Unit  
 September 1998  
 1:100 at A3



**KEY:**

- Primary 1703 red-pink brickwork
- Later yellow brickwork & modern material
- Area of fabric observed
- Principal beams
- Joist direction

Scale 0 1 2 3 4 5 Metres

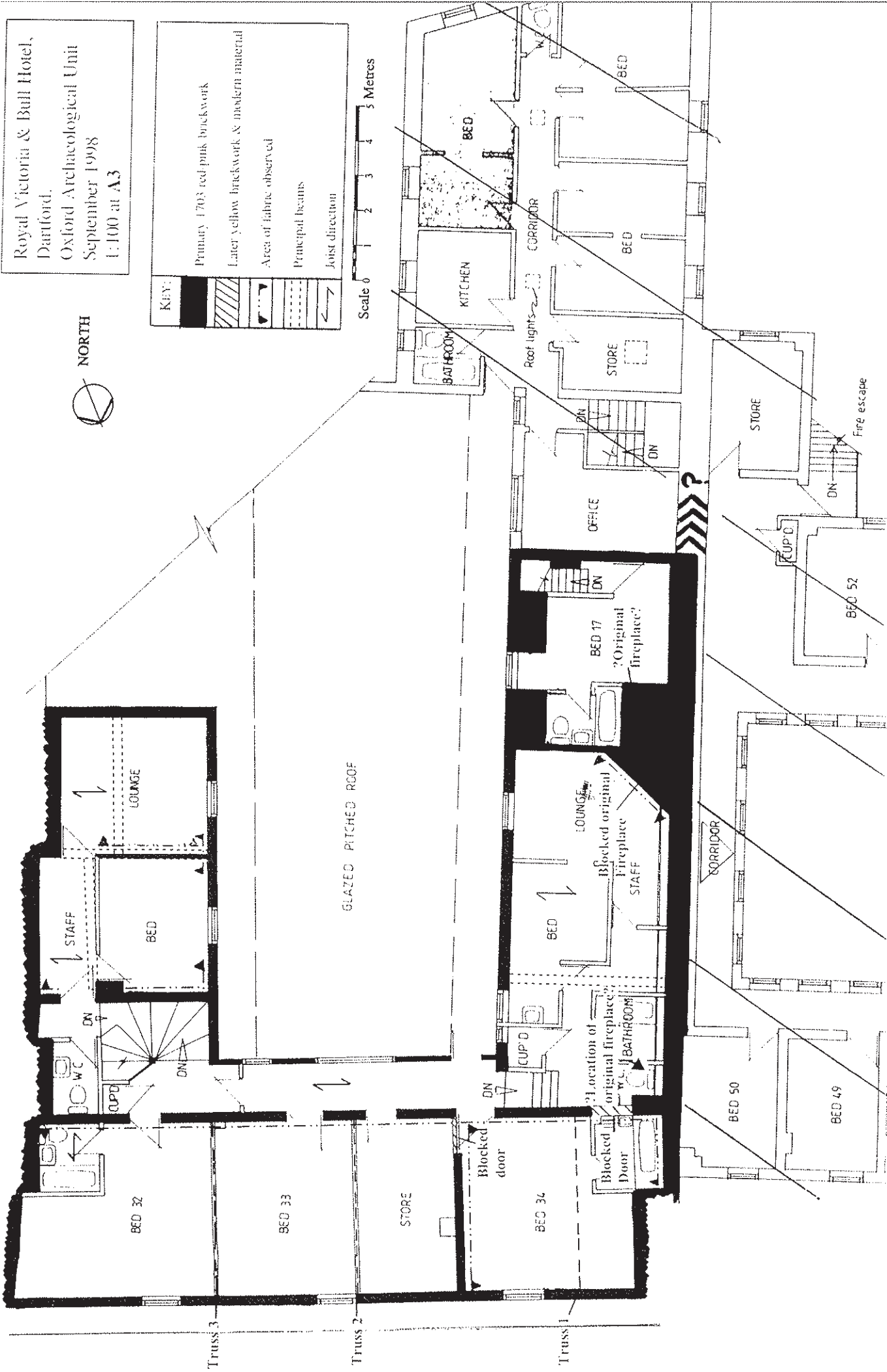


Figure 4: Second floor plan

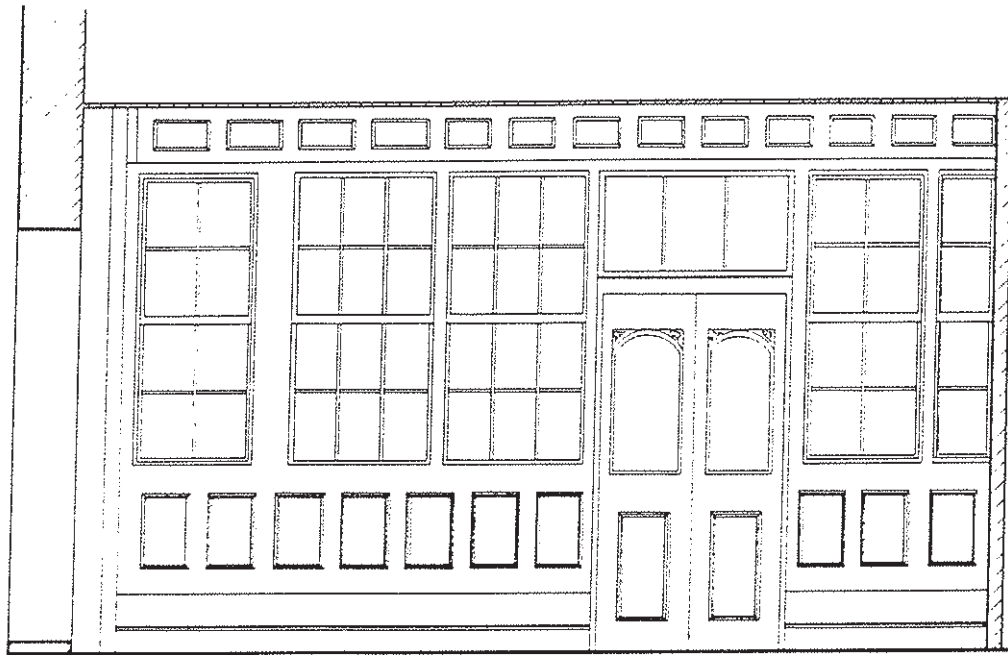


Figure 5 1920's glazed screen, 'Bottle bar', east facing elevation, (1:50)

Figure 6 Elevation of historic bay, east side of the courtyard, (1:50)

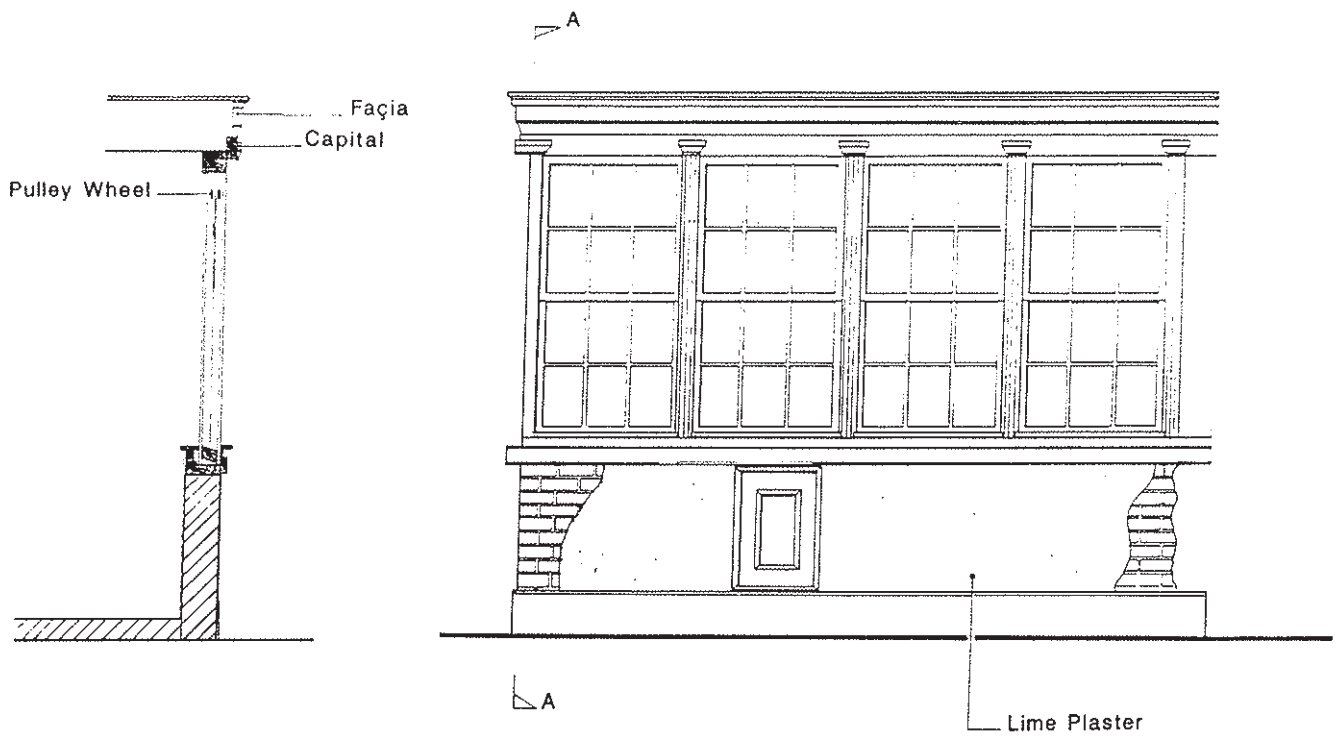
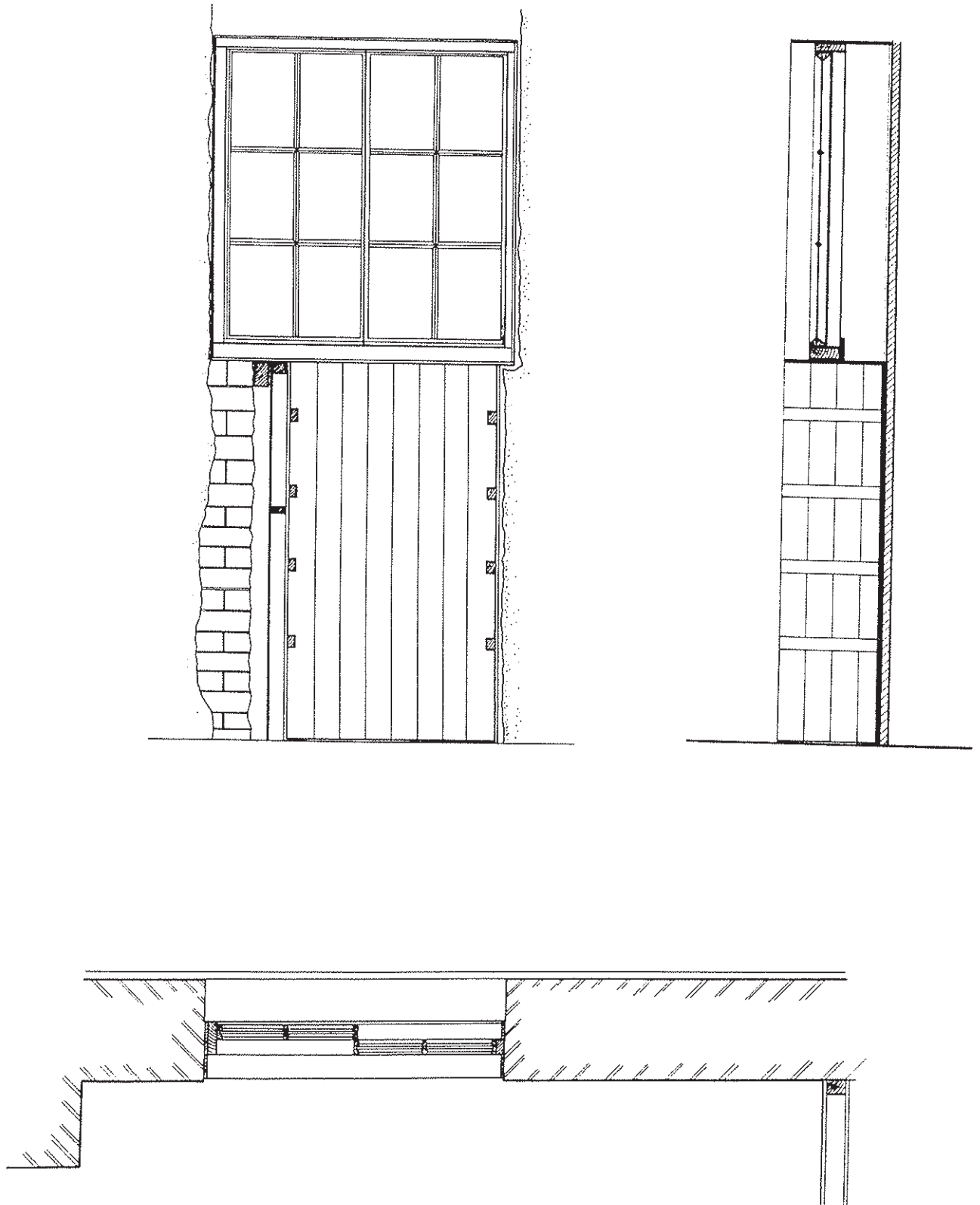


Figure 7 Section A-A, through the historic bay, showing evidence of previous window fittings, (1:50)



Figures 8-10: Elevation, section and plan of the horizontal sliding sash, west wall of 'Back bar', (1:50)





Plate 1: Front elevation, c.1880



Plate 2: Front elevation, c. turn of the century



Plate 3: Front elevation, before refurbishment (RCHME, Swindon)

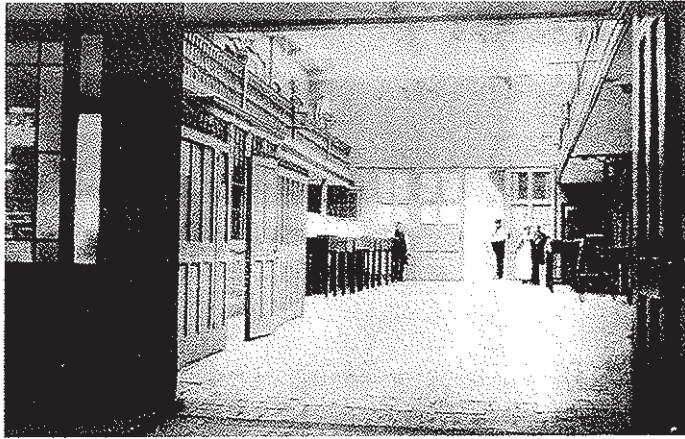


Plate 4: Corn Exchange with  
corn dealers' stands, c1890

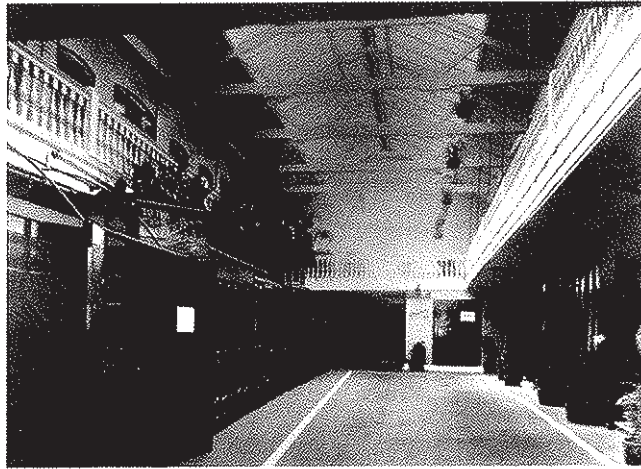


Plate 5: Courtyard, c1920's

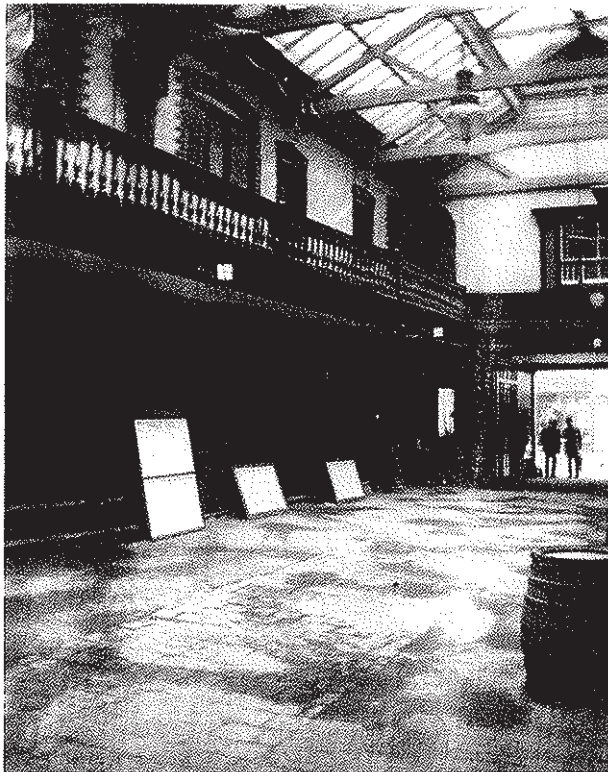


Plate 6: Courtyard c1900



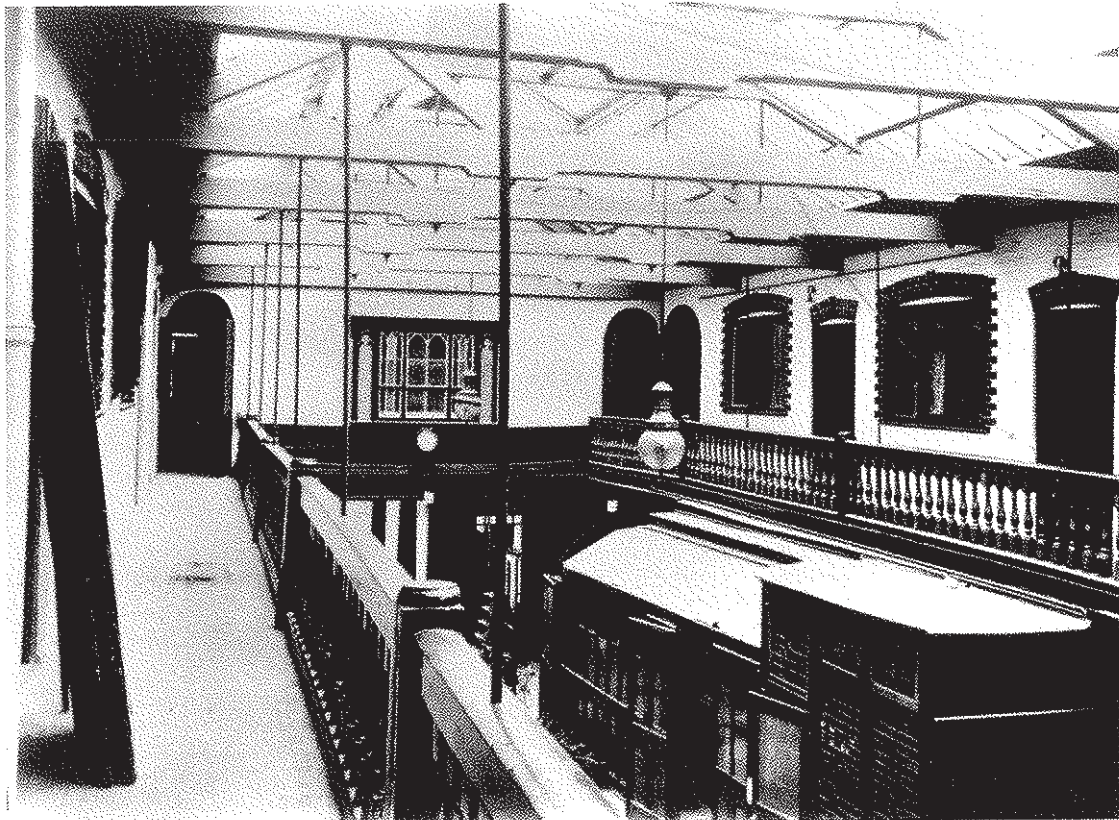


Plate 7: Galleries, c1900



Plate 8: Courtyard, c1900





Plate 9: Unblocked door, 'Bottle Bar'



Plate 10: Horizontal sliding sash, 'Back bar'

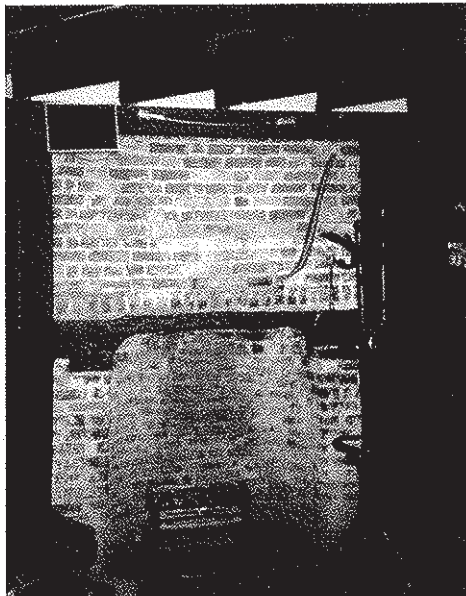


Plate 11: Original 1703 diagonally-set corner fireplace, West bar

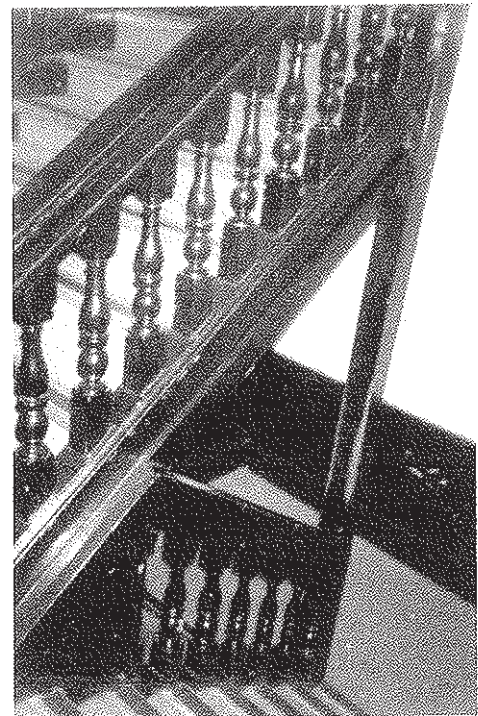


Plate 12: Original 1703 stair





Plate 13: Stair in south-east corner of courtyard removed during refurbishment



Plate 14: Sawn off column,  
north gallery



Plate 15: Surviving column,  
NE corner of gallery



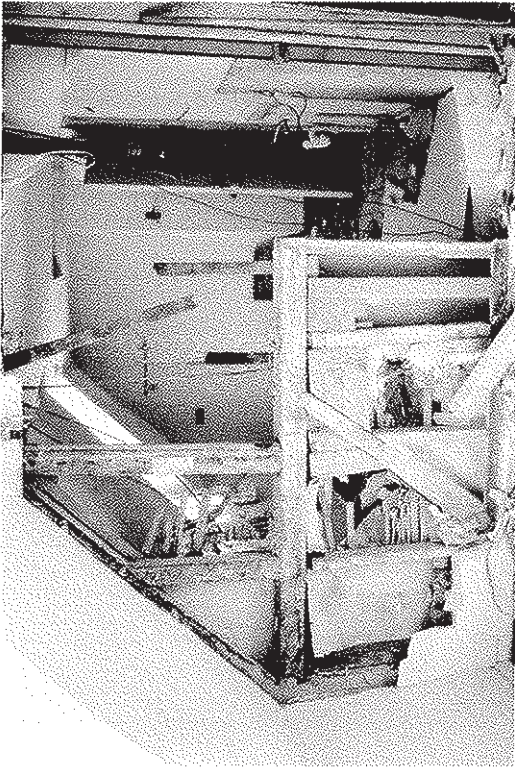


Plate 16: Stud partition in east attic

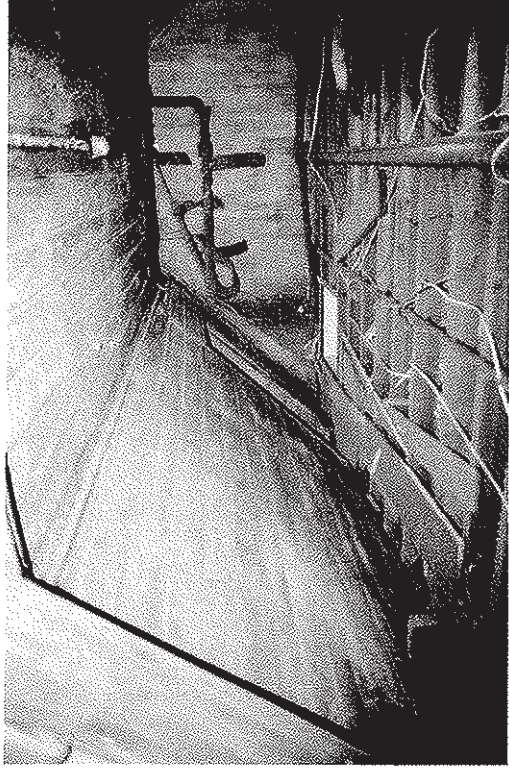


Plate 17: Attic area over bedrooms 25-27

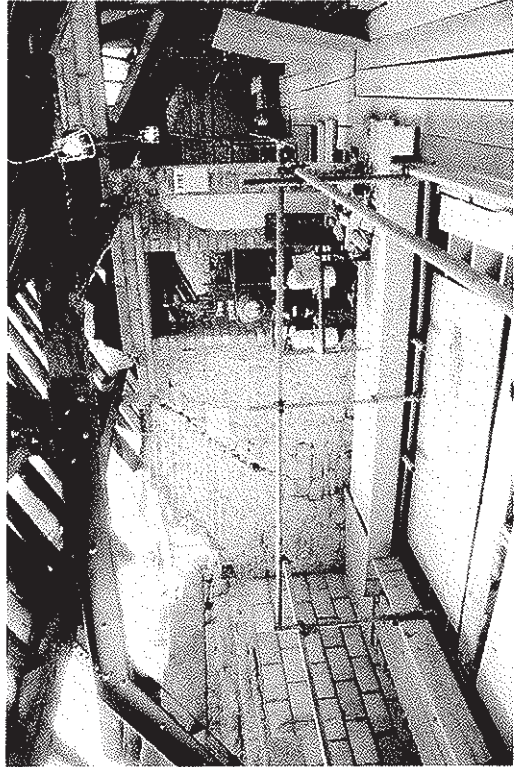


Plate 18: Attic area over bedrooms 25-27 after stripping



Plate 19: Roof structure in attics over bedrooms 25-27





Plate 20: Panel 13



Plate 21: Panel 18



Plate 22: Panel 15a

Plate 23: Panels 12a & 13a

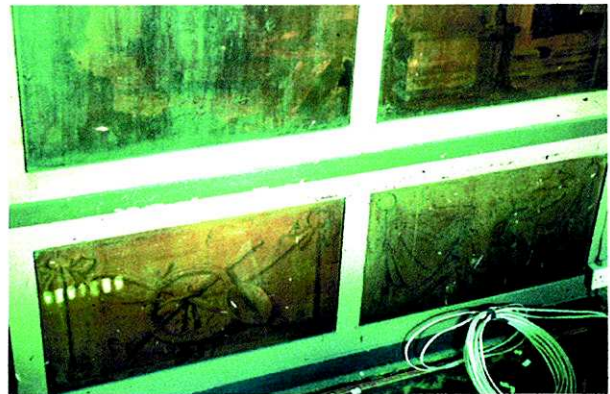


Plate 24: Panel 3

**Painted Panels in the first floor  
function room – (see Appendix E)**



## OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES

Tel: 01865 263800 Fax: 01865 793496

email: [postmaster@oau-oxford.demon.co.uk](mailto:postmaster@oau-oxford.demon.co.uk)



---

Director: David Miles B.A., F.S.A. M.I.F.A. Oxford Archaeological Unit Limited.  
Private Limited Company Number: 1618597 Registered Charity Number: 285627.  
Registered Office: Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES