



1-3 Golden Cross Oxford

Historic Building Investigation and Recording

March 2020

Client: Devonshire Metro Limited

Issue No: 1

OA Reference No: 7415

NGR: SP 51350 06228



Client Name: Devonshire Metro Limited
Document Title: 1-3 Golden Cross, Oxford
Document Type: Historic Building Investigation and Recording
Grid Reference: SP 51350 06228
Planning ref: 18/03184/FUL; 18/03185/LBC
Site Code: OXGOX19
Invoice Code: OXGOXBS

OA Document File Location: <\\10.0.10.86\buildings\Projects Ongoing\Oxford Golden Cross>

OA Graphics File Location:

Issue No: Issue 1
Date: March 2020
Prepared by: Jon Gill (Project Manager, Buildings Archaeology)
Checked by: Julian Munby (Senior Project Manager, Buildings Archaeology)
Approved for Issue by: Julian Munby (Head of Buildings Archaeology)
Signature:

.....

Disclaimer:

This document has been prepared for the titled project or named part thereof and should not be relied upon or used for any other project without an independent check being carried out as to its suitability and prior written authority of Oxford Archaeology being obtained. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for the consequences of this document being used for a purpose other than the purposes for which it was commissioned. Any person/party using or relying on the document for such other purposes agrees and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm their agreement to indemnify Oxford Archaeology for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the person/party by whom it was commissioned.

OA South

Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford
OX2 0ES

t. +44 (0)1865 263 800

OA East

15 Trafalgar Way
Bar Hill
Cambridge
CB23 8SG

t. +44 (0)1223 850 500

OA North

Mill 3
Moor Lane Mills
Moor Lane
Lancaster
LA1 1QD

t. +44 (0)1524 880 250

e. info@oxfordarch.co.uk

w. oxfordarchaeology.com

Oxford Archaeology is a registered Charity: No. 285627



Director and Chief Executive
Gill Hey, BA PhD FSA MCIFA
Private Limited Company, No: 1618597
Registered Charity, No: 285627
Registered Office: Oxford Archaeology Ltd
Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES

1-3 Golden Cross, Oxford

Historic Building Investigation and Recording

Contents

Summary	1
1 INTRODUCTION.....	3
1.1 Project Background	3
1.2 Aims and Objectives	4
1.3 The overall aims of the building recording project were:	4
1.4 Methodology.....	4
2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.....	5
2.1 Development of The Golden Cross Hotel.....	5
2.2 The South Range	5
3 RESULTS OF INVESTIGATIONS.....	7
3.1 Introduction	7
3.2 General description of South Range	7
3.3 Internal description and observations	7
4 CONCLUSION	12
APPENDIX A BIBLIOGRAPHY	14
APPENDIX B SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS.....	15

List of Figures

Figure 1: Site Location

Figure 2: Extract from David Loggan's 1675 view

Figure 3: Extract from 1878 OS Town Plan

Figure 4: Ground and first floor plans in 1955, from article by WA Pantin in Oxoniensia XX

Figure 5: Ground floor plan

Figure 6: First floor plan

List of Plates

Plate 1: Central section of the north elevation facing the courtyard

Plate 2: Western section of the north elevation facing the courtyard

Plate 3: Eastern section of the north elevation facing the courtyard

Plate 4: Ground floor Room 27B looking west

Plate 5: Ground floor Room 27C looking east

Plate 6: Ground floor Room 27B looking south

Plate 7: Angled fireplace at SW corner of 27B

Plate 8: Brick paved hearth to fireplace at SW corner of 27B

Plate 9: Exposed fireplace and chimney breast in 27C

Plate 10: West jamb to fireplace in 27C

Plate 11: West jamb to fireplace in 27C

Plate 12: blocking above fireplace void in 27C

Plate 13: Detail of beam at SE corner of 27B

Plate 14: Underside of joists exposed in 27B, looking SE

Plate 15: Underside of joists exposed in 27B, looking S

Plate 16: View in 27B-27C looking NE

Plate 17: Detail of secondary bracing in 27C

Plate 18: Exposed plinth to bay window in 27C.

Plate 19: Window in 27B

Plate 20: General view in first floor Room D looking west

Plate 21: General view in first floor Room D & E looking east

Plate 22: Oriel window in first floor Room D

Plate 23: East side of oriel window in first floor Room D

Plate 24: NW corner of Room D after removal of modern lobby

Plate 25: NW corner of Room D after removal of modern lobby

Plate 26: Exposed floor joists in Room D looking south

Plate 27: Exposed floor joists in Room D looking south

Plate 28: Exposed floor joists in Room D looking north

Plate 29: First floor room C looking south after removal of partitions

Plate 30: Chimney breast at SE corner of Room C after plaster removal

Plate 31: Detail of east wall in Room C after plaster removal

Plate 32: Detail of east wall in Room C after plaster removal

Plate 33: Detail of west wall in Room C after plaster removal

Plate 34: Exposed timber rail in west wall of Room C after plaster removal

Plate 35: General view looking north in Room C after removal of partitions

Summary

The Golden Cross in Oxford now comprises a group of retail units set around a small courtyard and a thoroughfare into the covered market but historically it formed an inn, close to the very centre of the medieval town, which went through various incarnations from the 12th century until the 20th. The basic form of the inn complex followed a commonly found pattern of a line of small shops along the street front and an inn to the rear, arranged around a courtyard and accessed from the street through a covered archway. The oldest and most significant elements of the Golden Cross are the archway from Cornmarket and the North Range which retains much timber framing, early hand-painted wallpapers and 16th and 17th-century wall paintings.

The South Range was constructed in the third quarter of the 17th century and Oxford Archaeology (OA) has recently undertaken historic building recording here on behalf of Devonshire Metro Limited as a condition of planning approval relating to a refurbishment of the property. The recording was undertaken in the form of an historic building watching brief at ground and first floor levels to record any elements of previously hidden historic fabric which were exposed during the strip out or refurbishment.

Although the scope of the investigation was relatively limited some areas of ceiling were removed in the ground and first floor rooms to expose primary joists and elements of several fireplaces and chimney breasts were also exposed. The building includes a pair of angled chimney breasts in the western half and here the current project exposed areas of brickwork which may well be primary although the character of the bricks is more suggestive of a later 18th or 19th-century date than one from the 17th. Elements of stonework were exposed in the jambs of the ground floor fireplace in the eastern half of the building.

A number of timbers were also exposed from what appears to have been a secondary (possibly early 20th-century) refurbishment involving the addition of elements of 'mock' timber framing. This attempt to historicise the building would also fit with panelling that was inserted into the western ground floor room (but not recorded in the current project) and decorative framing that is known to have been added to the exterior, probably in the early 20th century, but subsequently removed.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was appointed by the applicant, Devonshire Metro Limited, to undertake a programme of historic building recording and watching brief during a programme of refurbishment works in No.1-3 Golden Cross in Oxford (refs: 18/03184/FUL; 18/03185/LBC). These units were last used as a café but this closed in December 2017 and planning permission was granted for a development for the conversion of the first floor to an apartment. This will be accessed via the existing staircase.

1.1.2 The Golden Cross is a small group of retail and commercial units around an historic courtyard on the east side of Cornmarket in central Oxford. The units form part of a Grade I listed group of buildings which originated in the 15th century as a courtyard inn and hotel on the east side of Cornmarket. The south side of this group (including units 1-3) dates from the third quarter of the 17th century.

1.1.3 Condition 5 of the Listed Building Consent (18/03185/LBC) states that:

- *'The relevant works shall not take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of targeted historic building recording work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Local Planning Authority. All works shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the approved written scheme of investigation, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.'*
- *The historic building recording work shall consist of a targeted watching brief and photographic recording of exposed fabric from the creation of the opening into the chimney breast, removal of modern floor finishes and lifting of floorboards, formatted into a Level II report (Historic England 2016 'Understanding Historic Buildings'). The works should be undertaken by a professionally qualified archaeologist working to a brief issued by the Local Planning Authority'.*

1.1.4 A brief for the work required was produced by David Radford (Oxford City Council Urban Design and Heritage) on 25 April 2019.

1.1.5 As a building of considerable historic interest, the Golden Cross Hotel has been subject to a number of investigations and studies. Foremost amongst these is WA Pantin's 1955 article in *Oxoniensia* although John Steane also undertook further investigations during the building's renovation in 1986 and published the results of this in *South Midlands Archaeology* 17 (1987). Steane's work concentrated largely on the North Range. In 2018, RPS CgMs produced a Heritage Statement on the building and the potential impact of the current proposals as part of the original planning and listed building application. The current project was intended to add to the existing understanding of the building rather than replicating the previous studies.

1.1.6 Proposed refurbishment

1.1.7 The proposed refurbishment works comprise the conversion of the first floor of Units 1-3 Golden Cross into a one bedroom apartment. The ground floor entrance and stairs to the first floor also form part of the development. The proposals have been designed to minimise physical impact on historic fabric but previously hidden areas and features were exposed by the soft strip out works. The refurbishment works include:

- Permanent closure of the internal door to the café
- Removal of partition and WC
- Introduction of separate internal door at ground floor
- Permanent closure of internal door (first floor)
- Replacement door
- New WC, shower facilities, kitchen, plumbing, ventilation services etc

1.2 Aims and Objectives

1.3 The overall aims of the building recording project were:

- to investigate and record for posterity elements of the Golden Cross that will be lost or temporarily exposed during the current works;
- to enhance understanding of this part of the group and how it related to the overall complex;
- to make the record publicly accessible through a report (a public document) and a project archive deposited with a public institution.
- To determine or confirm the approximate date or date range of any remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence.

1.3.1 To disseminate the results through the production of a site archive for deposition with an appropriate museum and to provide information for accession to the Oxfordshire HER.

1.4 Methodology

1.4.1 The recording at Golden Cross has been undertaken in the form of an historic buildings watching brief during the soft strip works prior to the main refurbishment of the building. As indicated above the planning condition required this work to be undertaken at Level 2 as defined by Historic England (*Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice (2016)*).

1.4.2 The Historic England guidelines states that a Level 2 is: '*... a descriptive record, made in similar circumstances to Level 1 but when more information is needed. It may be made of a building which is judged not to require a more detailed record, or it may serve to gather data for a wider project. Both the exterior and interior of the building will be seen, described and photographed. The examination of the building will produce an analysis of its development and use and the record will include the conclusions reached, but it will not discuss in detail the evidence on which this analysis is based. A plan and sometimes other drawings may be made but the drawn record will normally not be comprehensive and may be tailored to the scope of a wider project.*'

1.4.3 The site work comprised three principal elements: a photographic, a drawn and a written record. The investigation was complemented by historical research based on previous studies and the principal secondary sources.

1.4.4 The watching brief was undertaken intermittently with several site visits during January 2020.

2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Development of The Golden Cross Hotel

- 2.1.1 The overall Golden Cross Hotel complex is formed by a series of ranges around a long narrow courtyard which now forms a passage from Cornmarket through to the covered market. As the history of the complex has been well researched and published in a number of previous articles it is not necessary to re-state this at length here although a short summary would be of value.
- 2.1.2 The Golden Cross complex has encompassed elements of three long east-to-west tenement plots on the east side of Cornmarket: No 3-4 (to the south of the courtyard), No 5 (to the north of the courtyard) and No.7 the adjacent plot to the north. The main focus of the hotel has been No 5 Cornmarket. The site is described in early records as *in foro* (or in the market place) and in c.1188 it was acquired by Osney Abbey who constructed a series of shops on the street front and a house behind (No.5). This form is similar to numerous other medieval houses in Oxford with the house at the rear accessed via a passage. In c.1193 the house and rooms above the shops were granted to a vintner called Mauger for use as an inn. Ownership of the ground floor shops and the cellars beneath remained with Osney Abbey. The inn was known by different names in different periods including Mauger's Hall, Gingiver's Inn and the Cross Inn.
- 2.1.3 The South Range of the Golden Cross, the subject of the current study, was constructed on 3-4 Cornmarket (or The Bull Inn) the tenement immediately to the south of the Cross Inn. This long plot which was known from the 17th century as the Crown Tavern was substantially rebuilt in c.1496-1500. Between 1500 and 1555 the tenement was divided in two: No.4 Cornmarket, a small house to the north which was in the same ownership or use as the Cross Inn, and No.3 a much larger house to the south. The house at the front of No.4 facing the street was rebuilt in the first half of the 20th century while the space behind is where the southern range of the courtyard was built in the third quarter of the 17th century. This is the range in the current study and is discussed further below.
- 2.1.4 The oldest elements of the Golden Cross date from the 15th century. These include the archway off Cornmarket and the North Range which is of exceptional significance due to its extensive timber framing and well preserved wall paintings that were uncovered in the first half of the 20th century. It has been frequently been said that William Shakespeare performed here in the 16th century although the evidence for this is circumstantial rather than conclusive. In the 18th and early 19th centuries the complex served as a coaching inn and the east range was rebuilt in the 19th century.
- 2.1.5 In the later 1960s the hotel closed, and it was converted into the Golden Cross restaurant. In 1986-7 extensive alterations were undertaken to create a series of new retail units as well as a Pizza Express restaurant and a passage was formed through into the covered market. During these works further wall paintings, probably dating from the mid-16th century, were uncovered.

2.2 The South Range

- 2.2.1 The South Range of the Golden Cross, the subject of the current project, appears to have been constructed in the third quarter of the 17th century; as outlined in Pantin's 1955 article in *Oxoniensia* it does not appear to be listed in a 1656 survey of the complex but it does appear to be shown on Loggan's view of 1675 (Fig 2).

- 2.2.2 The range is long and narrow with two equal elements which may have been constructed as two dwelling houses (it is listed as 'dwelling houses' on a plan of 1797), each with a staircase flanked by a room on either side at each floor level. This is similar to the arrangement commonly found at Oxford colleges and some Oxford passage houses. It is a timber framed structure with historic bay windows to the front and had angled fireplaces (now lost) which is a late 17th century feature.
- 2.2.3 The western unit retains an historic central winding staircase with semi-circular back and 17th-century panelling at ground floor level. It has however been suggested that the panelling is probably a 20th-century import from elsewhere due to it blocking the site of a fireplace. The staircase in the eastern unit is considerably plainer than that to the west but it is shown on the 1955 survey and is probably historic. The building has few other visible historic features or finishes.
- 2.2.4 Although Pantin suggests that the range may have been constructed as a pair of dwelling houses he also suggests that a list of rooms included in an inventory of the Crown Inn from 1697 probably relates to the South Range. The names of these rooms include the Temple, the Star, the Wiltshire, the Maiden Head, the Angel, the King's Head, Lowse Hall, the London, Gloucester Hall and the Dovehouse. Giving such names to rooms at an inn was a common practice in the 17th century.
- 2.2.5 A referred to above the South Range appears to be shown on David Logan's 1675 view of Oxford; this is shown as a distinct structure, taller than its immediately adjacent structures and with three gables facing into the courtyard. The Golden Cross complex is shown on a number of early maps although it is only in the 19th century that the level of detail is sufficient to reliably be able to pick out specific details on the South Range. Robert Hoggar's map of 1850 shows a projecting bay just to the east of the centre of the range (similar to today) and with the elevation slightly further forward to the west of this bay than to the east of it. The Ordnance Survey Town Plan of 1878 (surveyed 1873-4) shows a similar arrangement (Fig 3). Another useful 19th-century source is JC Buckler's 1824 view of The Golden Cross which shows the exterior of the South Range very similar to today and the ground floor bays of the western half of the building set slightly in front of the upper floors.
- 2.2.6 Photographs show that in the early 20th century the front elevation had exposed timber framing although this was probably a 20th-century addition as older views show the walls plastered. The ground floor projects slightly beyond the line of the floors above and this was probably an early 19th-century modification.
- 2.2.7 The South Range is described in the RCHM (1948) as: *'The 17th-century S Range is of three storeys partly with attics and is of four gabled bays. The ground floor has been largely covered by modern additions. The two upper floors have in the three W. bays an original bay window of three lights on the face and one on each return; the middle light has an arched head but the others are transomed. Inside the range, the Coffee Room has a dado of reused 17th-century panelling. The late 17th-century W. staircase has turned balusters, close strings and square newels.'*

3 RESULTS OF INVESTIGATIONS

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The Golden Cross courtyard is located on the east side of Cornmarket and since its phased refurbishment in the second half of the 20th century it has formed a small retail arcade and a route into the Covered Market. It is accessed from Cornmarket through a surviving 15th-century archway.
- 3.1.2 As detailed above the north side of the courtyard dates from the 15th century but the south side, comprising the buildings in the current study are of 17th-century date from a phase when the courtyard was reduced in size. The east range is of 19th-century date.

3.2 General description of South Range

- 3.2.1 The building which is covered by the current project forms the four main bays on the southern side of the yard each of which are set beneath three gables with barge boards facing the yard (Pl. 1-3). The eastern two bays are three storied but the western bays are slightly taller with an attic and the full elevation is clad with a roughcast render painted a light blue colour. The main windows to the first and second floor rooms are projecting oriels with semi-circular centre lights and some original iron casements while those at ground floor are late 18th or 19th century sashes.
- 3.2.2 Immediately to the east, also forming part of the South Range is a further narrower bay which forms part of the unified roughcast elevation with barge-boarded gable; historically this was part of the same building as the focus of the current project although it is not part of the current development (or current recording). Beyond this, at the eastern end of the South Range is a later two storey infill block while at the western end of the South Range is a taller building (No.3 Cornmarket) which dates from the 1930s and is again not part of the current project.
- 3.2.3 The possibility has been suggested that the four bays of the main South Range (including the eastern bay which is not part of the current project) were constructed in two closely dated phases, originally with two staircases and single room apartments to each side at each floor level, similarly to the pattern at Oxford colleges. Evidence revealed in the current project does not suggest this (detailed further below).
- 3.2.4 The exterior of the building is not being altered in the current works so a more detailed description is not required.

3.3 Internal description and observations

3.3.1 INTRODUCTION

- 3.3.2 The current investigation of the interior just covers the ground and first floor of 1-3 Golden Cross; it does not include the second floor, attic or the basement. At each floor level there are now two main rooms: a smaller one to the west and a larger one to the east extending across two bays. This is believed to be an alteration from the historic layout; the larger rooms would each originally have been separated into two smaller ones accessed from the entrance hall and staircases on opposite sides.
- 3.3.3 The interior of the South Range was last remodelled in 1986 and there are now very few surviving internal historic features or finishes. The room numbers shown below are taken from Pantin's 1955 article in *Oxoniensia* which covered the entire Golden Cross complex.

3.3.4 **ENTRANCE HALL AND STAIRCASE.**

3.3.5 The main entrance into the building is via the western doorway and hallway with a primary winding staircase towards the rear. As this staircase survives from the original building it is a key area of the building's significance and it was entirely hidden by a protective cover during the current project (including during the recording). No works were undertaken on the stairs during the refurbishment, or indeed in the hallway although the doorway to the east is being blocked as part of the proposals.

3.3.6 At ground floor level the doorway to the east from the hall retains its original doorcase and is adjacent to the foot of the stairs, set back from the entrance. In contrast the door to the west is adjacent to the front wall and is within a part of the building that was stepped forward in the late 18th or early 19th century. Presumably the original western door would have been immediately opposite the door to the east but these areas have not been uncovered in the current project.

3.3.7 **GROUND FLOOR EASTERN ROOM (ROOMS 27B AND 27C)**

3.3.8 As stated above it is believed that the large eastern room at ground floor level would originally have been divided into two separate rooms, to east and west with each one accessed from separate staircases. In Pantin's 1955 *Oxoniensia* article the two halves are numbered 27B (to W) and 27C (to E) although at this date the rooms had already been combined into a single space. It is believed that the room was also enlarged slightly in the late 18th or early 19th century when the north wall was rebuilt and pushed forward beyond the line of the upper storeys. The windows are sashes which survive from these works (Pl. 19).

3.3.9 The room has most recently formed a kitchen, servery and small eating area with the surfaces largely clad in modern boarding. The underside of a large north-to-south beam with chamfered edges is visible in the ceiling, dividing 27B from 27C; this beam is covered by old lath and plaster which has not been removed in the current project. This beam, particularly with its chamfered lower edges is suggestive of the room being a single open space rather than subdivided into two (27B & C) so it may have been inserted when the space was unified, although the lath and plaster that covers at least some of it suggests that this probably happened at a relatively early date.

3.3.10 At its southern end this is supported by a plastered pier, also with a chamfered edge. The date or construction of this pier has not been exposed in the current work.

3.3.11 Extensive mid or later 20th-century floral flock wallpaper was exposed to the south wall, continuing across the pier and across the two rooms.

3.3.12 **Underside of first floor structure:** The ceiling in this room is a patchwork of phases with extensive areas of modern plaster but some surviving areas of historic lath and plaster. Much of the ceiling in the southern half of 27B was removed to allow it to be reformed and this exposed seven primary joists (c.15 cm tall x 10 cm wide) spanning north-to-south with large modern plywood boards above (Pl. 14-15). At the south end the joists sit on an east-to-west joist that is set immediately in front of the wall.

3.3.13 In the east room (27C) the removal of a patch of the ceiling exposed a small part of the underside of a brick hearth immediately in front of the chimney breast (detailed further below).

- 3.3.14 **Fireplace in 27B.** The removal of modern plaster from the angled wall at the south-west corner of the room exposed the void (74 cm wide by 82 cm tall and 36 cm deep) of a small former fireplace beneath a timber lintel (Pl. 6-7). The void was rendered and painted so the bricks were not visible and there is a hearth projecting from the wall formed from pavers (probably early 20th-century in date). The floor within the void is formed from concrete and the imprint was visible of what was probably three frogged bricks set together as a base for a small stove or fire surround.
- 3.3.15 The angled section of wall is framed by two timber posts, one at each end together with a mid-height horizontal beam resting on notches cut into the posts. These timbers are each set immediately in front of the wall rather than being within it and their high-gloss lacquered finish was more suggestive of a secondary (possibly early 20th century) addition rather than being part of the primary structure.
- 3.3.16 The smoke-covered flue remained open although it was not possible to closely investigate this.
- 3.3.17 **Fireplace in 27C:** The fireplace and chimney breast in the south wall of the eastern room (27C) was also partially exposed by the removal of modern boarding, plaster on chicken wire and kitchen equipment (oven, extractor fan etc). The chimney breast is framed by a timber post at each outer edge together with a horizontal member supported on notches formed within the sides of each post (Pl. 9). Similarly to the posts framing the angled chimney breast in 27B the position and character of these timbers is suggestive of them being a secondary addition rather than part of the primary structure. It can be seen in the west jamb of the recess that the timbers are set immediately in front of stonework which presumably lined the fireplace (Pl. 10-11). There are several patches of brickwork within the stone jamb including three courses at the front of the wall which could indicate the location of a former lintel over the opening although the bricks and stones are all bonded with a very similar soft beige mortar. At the same height at the rear of the jamb is an opening to the smoke lined flue.
- 3.3.18 The plaster has not been removed from the east jamb so the construction of this wall has not been exposed.
- 3.3.19 Directly above the fireplace recess is a simple secondary frame formed from reused timbers with a fibre-type board (Pl. 12) which was probably added in the 20th century after the fireplace had been removed, although the flue may have continued to be used by a stove/oven.
- 3.3.20 The bay window on the north side of 27C is framed by two posts as well as a horizontal and raking braces at the two upper corners (Pl. 16-17). Similarly to the timberwork around fireplaces the character and position of these timbers is suggestive of them being part of a secondary refurbishment intended to give the building an historical character rather than primary features.
- 3.3.21 **Floorboards and plinth to bay window:** Where they were exposed the floorboards in this room were found to be of 20th century date and some were lifted around the base of the bay window (Pl. 18). This exposed a small brick plinth immediately above floor level set on what appeared to be crude concrete underpinning.

3.3.22 GROUND FLOOR WESTERN ROOM (27A)

3.3.23 The walls of the westernmost ground floor room are clad in panelling that is suggestive of a 17th-century date, although at the time of the current recording it was hidden behind a protective covering. The Heritage Statement (RPS, 2018) states that this panelling blocks the site of a fireplace in this room so it has probably been relocated to this room from elsewhere and was probably installed in this room at some point in the early 20th century. No works have been undertaken to the panelling in the current project, or indeed to the room more generally.

3.3.24 FIRST FLOOR EASTERN ROOM (ROOMS D & E)

3.3.25 As at ground floor level it is believed that the large eastern room at first floor would originally have been divided into two single-room apartments, each accessed from the staircases to east and west. This arrangement was still intact at the time of the 1955 survey but the rooms were subsequently combined, presumably in either the 1968 works or those from 1986-7. In the established room numbering system the eastern half is Room E and the western half is Room D. The most recent use of this area has been as a café overflow space. Each room has an original projecting oriel window facing the courtyard.

3.3.26 **Underside of second floor:** a large area of lath and plaster was removed from the central part of the ceiling, principally due to severe damp and a leak from above (Pl. 26-28). This exposed part of the principal joist (N-S) as well as stepped or staggered binders (E-W) and common joists (N-S). The various joists were all tenoned and strongly appeared to be from a single phase of construction. This would appear to discount the suggestion that has previously been tentatively made that the two halves of the South Range could have been constructed in two separate but closely dated phases.

3.3.27 The principal joist and binders were most recently encased in boxing (1980s) but the removal of this confirmed that they were previously covered in lath and plaster (albeit with areas of modern plastered repair on chicken wire. The lath marks and traces of plaster partially obscured the underside of the principal joist but there were no clear mortices from a former north-to-south partition or any other evidence of a former wall along this line.

3.3.28 At the north-western corner of Room D a set of modern partitions were removed that had formed a small fire lobby and this exposed three primary north-to-south joists resting on a primary rail to the north (Pl. 24-25). This rail continues eastwards across the oriel window and was visible prior to the current project. The section of stud wall above the door to the hallway was modern (1980s?) and similarly the north wall within the lobby was also modern.

3.3.29 The floorboards in this room are regular and suggestive of a possible early 20th-century date. At the centre of the south wall of Room E there is a small void in the floor which has exposed part of the brick hearth of a former fireplace in this location. This void was created to allow for an extractor duct to serve the cooker below at ground floor level. This duct has now been removed and it is clear that floorboards continued over the hearth; the floor boards therefore either post-date the removal of the fireplace or they were laid at the same time as the removal.

3.3.30 FIRST FLOOR WESTERN ROOM (ROOM C)

3.3.31 The western room at first floor (Room C in established room numbering) would originally have been a mirror image of Room D, a single-room apartment with a corner fireplace adjacent to the shared central staircase. In the second half of the 20th century, almost

certainly the 1986 refurbishment, a series of modern stud partitions were inserted into this area to create WC cubicles and a utility area.

- 3.3.32 All of the 1980s stud partitions have been removed from this area in the current project and this has exposed some fragments of earlier fabric. Plaster was removed from much of the angled chimney breast at the south-east corner of the room and this confirmed that this part of the wall was formed from brick (Pl. 29-31). The bricks were discoloured by the removed plaster but they were largely red, c.7.5 cm tall and bonded with a hard mortar; the plaster on top is softer and sandy.
- 3.3.33 It has been assumed that the chimney breast is part of the original c.1650-70s building although it should be noted that the nature of the mortar and the character of the exposed bricks are more suggestive of an 18th or 19th-century date than one from the 17th century. This impression may be misleading, especially because the removed plaster has left a residue that covers the bricks, but the possibility cannot be discounted that the chimney breast is a secondary alteration.
- 3.3.34 The brickwork in the angled wall continues north in the east wall for c.50 cm up to a point where it abuts a primary timber post (still largely covered with historic lath and plaster) and presumably this wall continues northwards as a primary framed partition (Pl. 32). This post is immediately to the south of the location of the historic east-to-west joist visible in the underside of the ceiling (20 cm wide) and also at the approximate same location as the point where the modern stud partition abutted. The removal of this partition exposed textured cream coloured wallpaper (mid 20th century) on historic lath and plaster (crumbly light brown plaster with hair mixed in).
- 3.3.35 The southern wall of the room was covered with a modern plaster and the vertical line where the stud partition was removed was painted a very light yellowy cream colour.
- 3.3.36 The removal of the two east-to-west partitions which divided the WC cubicles partially exposed an historic timber rail (27 x 14 cm), potentially surviving from the 17th century building, at c.1.2 m above the floor (Pl. 33-34). Fragments of primary lath and plaster survive above this rail (light brown, earthy and with hair mixed in) but below the rail the plaster all appears to be modern and held on chicken wire. This modern plaster does not continue behind the line of the removed partitions suggesting that it dates from the 1986 phase of work and this is confirmed by the fact that the outline of the removed WC cisterns is visible as bare plaster.
- 3.3.37 The two vertical gaps in the lower half of the wall created by the removal of the partitions exposed the narrow void within the stud wall as well as the rear of the surface which faces into the adjacent property. In the southern gap this was formed by relatively modern brickwork but in the northern gap the rear side of lath and plaster was visible.
- 3.3.38 Above the rail vertical lines of a cream coloured textured wallpaper were exposed on the historic lath and plaster within Room C. One possible explanation for why there was only historic lath and plaster above the rail could be that there was formerly boarding or panelling beneath it.
- 3.3.39 The walls were painted yellow after the 1986 work and behind one of the cisterns a page from a 1980s pornographic magazine was exposed, clearly deliberately sealed here as a joke by the plumber who fitted the WC.

4 CONCLUSION

- 4.1.1 The Golden Cross in Oxford is an historic inn complex which follows a commonly found form with ranges set around a courtyard to the rear of a fringe of shops on the street front and with the courtyard accessed via a covered archway. The complex is set on the east side of Cornmarket within the medieval town centre and the oldest elements survive from the 15th century. These are the entrance archway from Cornmarket and the North Range.
- 4.1.2 Oxford Archaeology has recently undertaken historic building recording on the South Range (No. 1-3 Golden Cross) which dates from the third quarter of the 17th century. This recording took the form of an historic building watching brief looking at the ground and first floor, and it was undertaken as a condition of listed building consent during the refurbishment of this range.
- 4.1.3 The watching brief investigation comprised recording features or elements of the structure which were previously hidden but which were exposed during the works. The scope of the work has been relatively limited but various elements of the structure have been exposed including the underside of floor joists and several chimney breasts.
- 4.1.4 Several posts and other timbers have been exposed whose character and locations are more suggestive of them being decorative features added as part of secondary refurbishments rather than being primary. They may be contemporary with the 'mock' timber framing that is known to have been added to the exterior of this range, probably in the early 20th century and shown on photographs although now removed. The walls of one room are also clad in timber panelling (historic but relocated here from elsewhere) which may also have been added in this phase in a conscious attempt to historicise the building.
- 4.1.5 The suggestion has previously been made that the building may have been constructed in two closely dated phases but the current work suggests that this was not the case. In the areas exposed the floor construction strongly appears to be single phased between the two halves (east and west).
- 4.1.6 The limited scope of the project has meant that few other firm conclusions on the history of the building have been reached and to some extent it has raised more questions than answers. From previous studies one of the central assumptions of the building has been that its original form was similar to that of a college building with single room apartments to either side of two staircases (ie four independent rooms at each floor level). This would mean that historically the large room that now survives at each floor level was subdivided in two but no evidence of former dividing walls or partitions have come to light. At ground floor the principal joist between the two halves of the room has chamfered corners suggestive of a large open room (although the plaster has not been removed from the joist) while at first floor no mortices were visible in the underside of the joist from a former partition. It still may be that each room was subdivided as previously supposed but this has not been confirmed in the works as may have been expected.
- 4.1.7 Another assumption regarding the building has been that the two angled corner fireplaces in the western half of the building are primary features, partly because such corner fireplaces are a common feature of 17th-century buildings. Plaster was extensively removed from the westernmost fireplace at first floor and the character of this was more suggestive of a late 18th or 19th-century date rather than one from the 17th century. This may be misleading, particularly because the bricks still had a residue from the recently

removed plaster, but again the work did not conclusively confirm that these chimney breasts were primary.

APPENDIX A **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Hibbert C (ed) *The Encyclopedia of Oxford*, 1988

RCHME,, *City of Oxford - A Survey and Inventory by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments* (1939)

Pantin WA 'The Golden Cross, Oxford' *Oxoniensia* XX, 1955

Steane J *Oxford Golden Cross, Cornmarket*, *South Midlands Archaeology* 17, 1987 (p56-61)

RPS CgMs *Heritage Statement in respect of 1-3 The Golden Cross, Oxford*, 2018

Historic England *Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice* (2016)
Oxfordshire Museums Service and Oxfordshire County Council *Requirements for Transferring Archaeological Archives: 2017/18* (February 2017)

APPENDIX B SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: 1-3 Golden Cross, Oxford

Site code: OXGOX19

Grid reference: SP 51350 06228

Type of project: Historic building recording (watching brief)

Date and duration of project: Main site work undertaken January 2020.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES. It will be deposited with the County Museums Service.

Contents of Archive:

The archive will consist of:

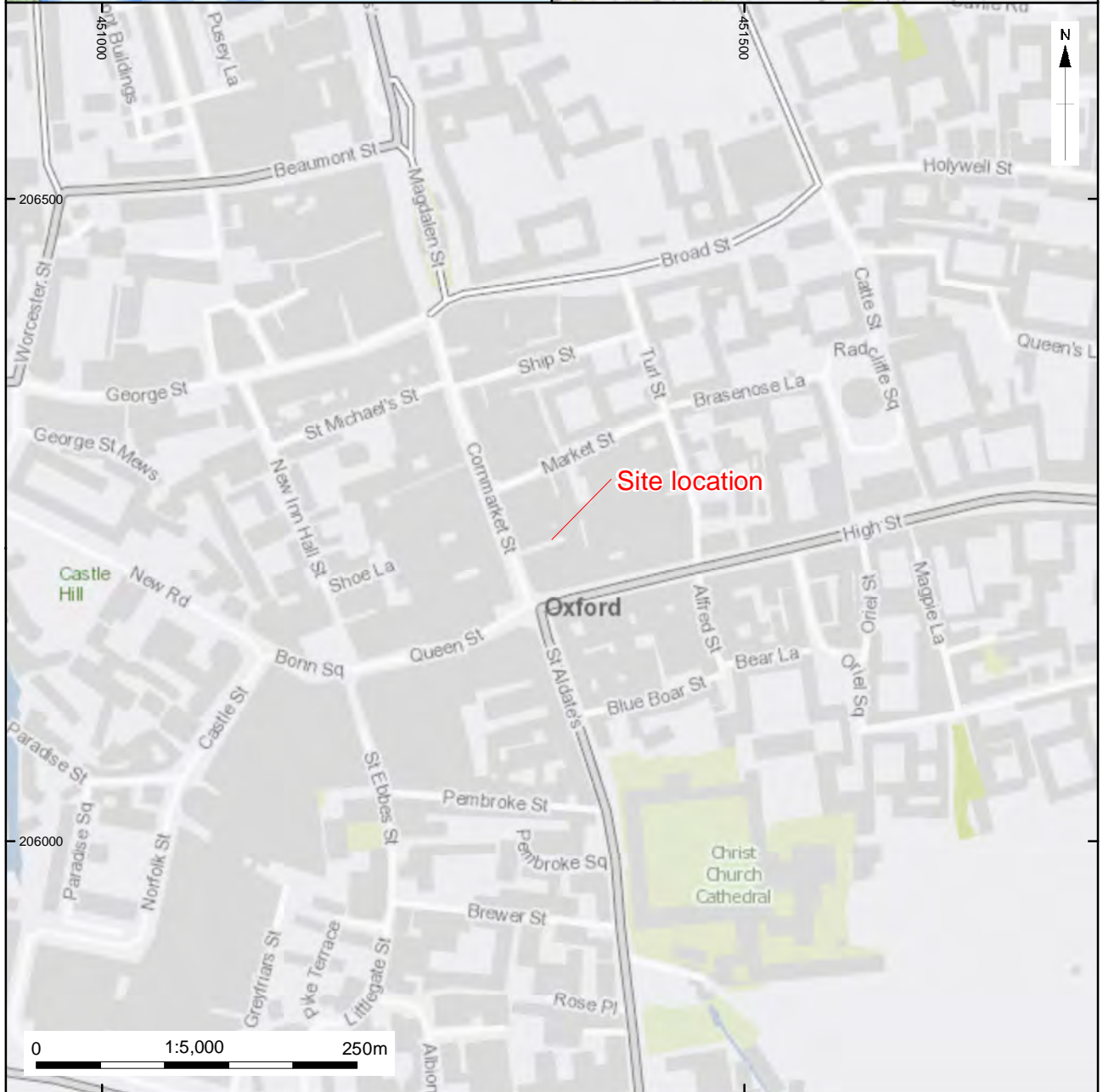
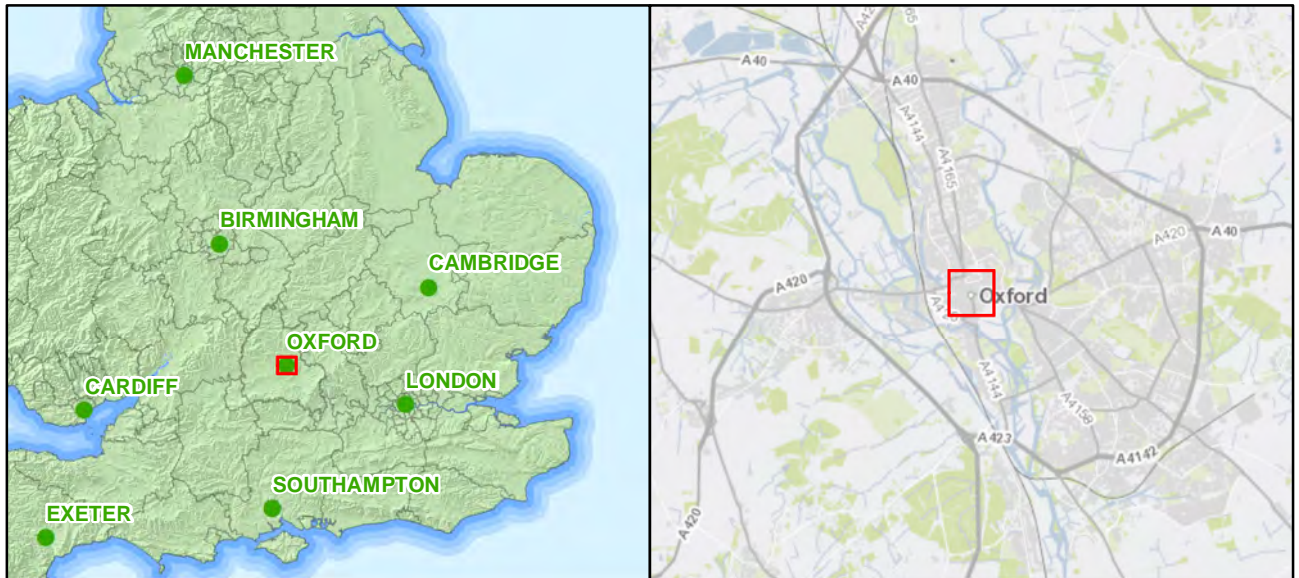
- Digital photographs
- photographic record sheets
- a copy of the full report
- Descriptive site notes
- A copy of the City of Oxford brief for the work

Short Summary:

Oxford Archaeology (OA) has undertaken an historic building watching brief at 1-3 Golden Cross in Oxford, as a condition of listed building consent for the refurbishment of the South Range. The Golden Cross was an historic inn with the common form of a courtyard located to the rear of a series of shops on the street front (Cornmarket). The inn was accessed via a covered archway within this line of shops.

The first documented use of the site as an inn appears to have been from 1193 although the oldest surviving elements date from the 15th century: these are the gateway from Cornmarket and the North Range.

The South Range, which forms the focus of the current project, was constructed in the third quarter of the 17th century and it has undergone various changes and refurbishments since then. The current work has comprised a watching brief to record previously hidden elements of the structure which have been exposed during the works. This has included elements of several fireplaces, the underside of part of the first floor structure and timber framing (albeit apparently secondary 'mock' framing).



Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2016

Figure 1: Site location



Figure 2: Extract from David Loggan's 1675 view of Oxford with south range of Golden Cross highlighted

\\110.0.10.86\buildings\Projects_Ongoing\Oxford_Golden_Cross\geomatics\OXGOXBS_Figures_2020-03-12.mxd\mat\bradley\12/03/2020



Figure 3: Extract from 1878 OS Town Plan

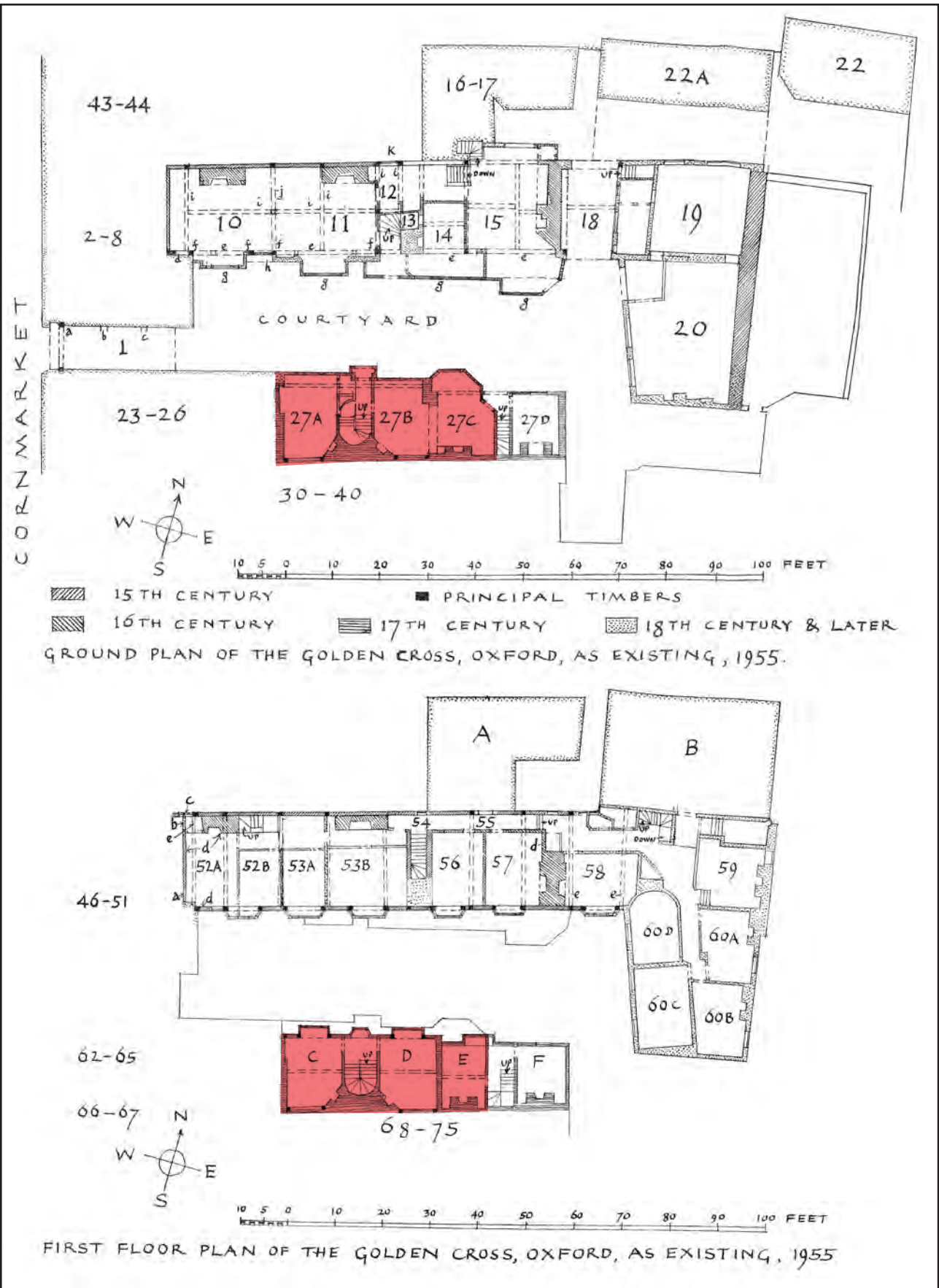
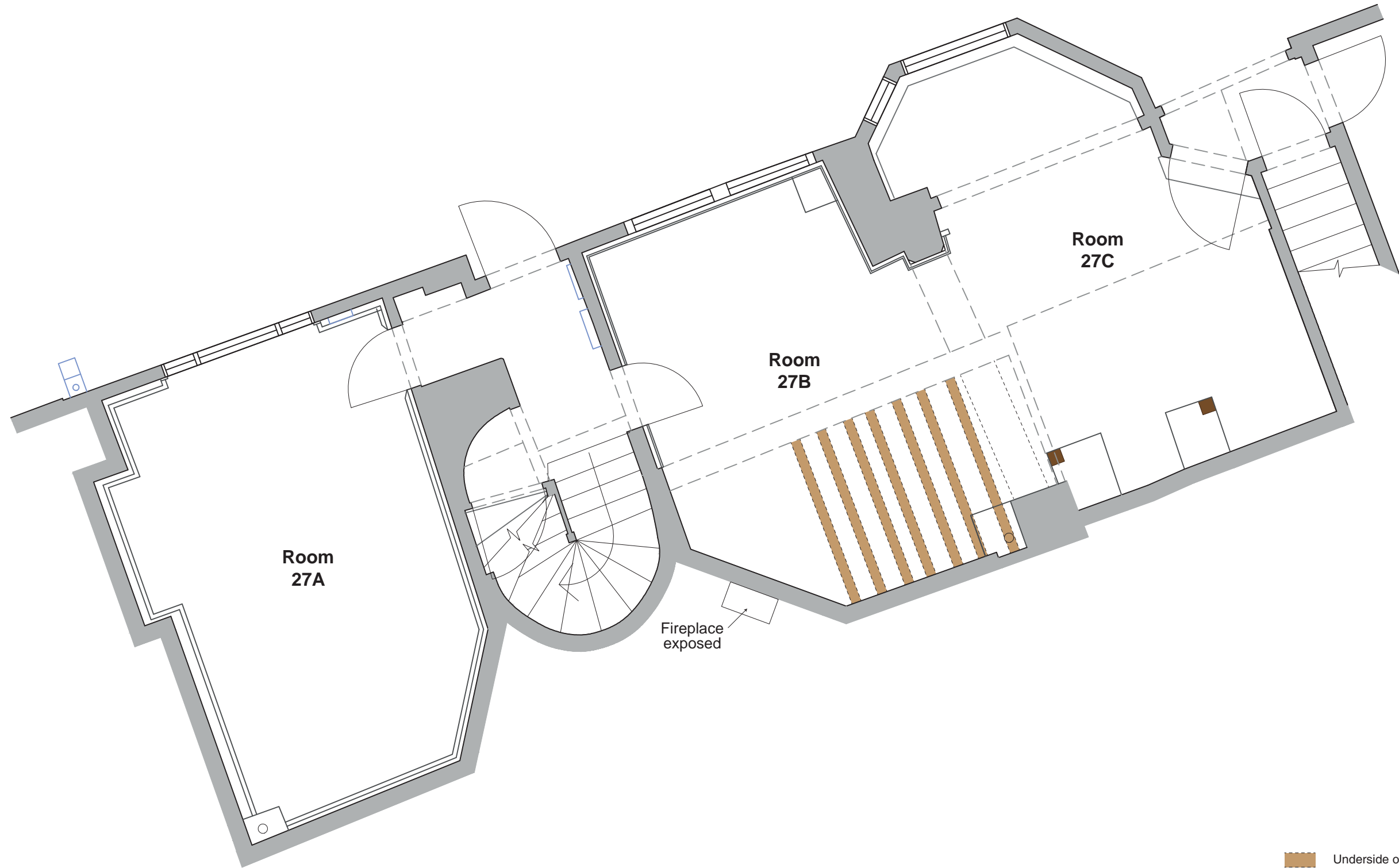


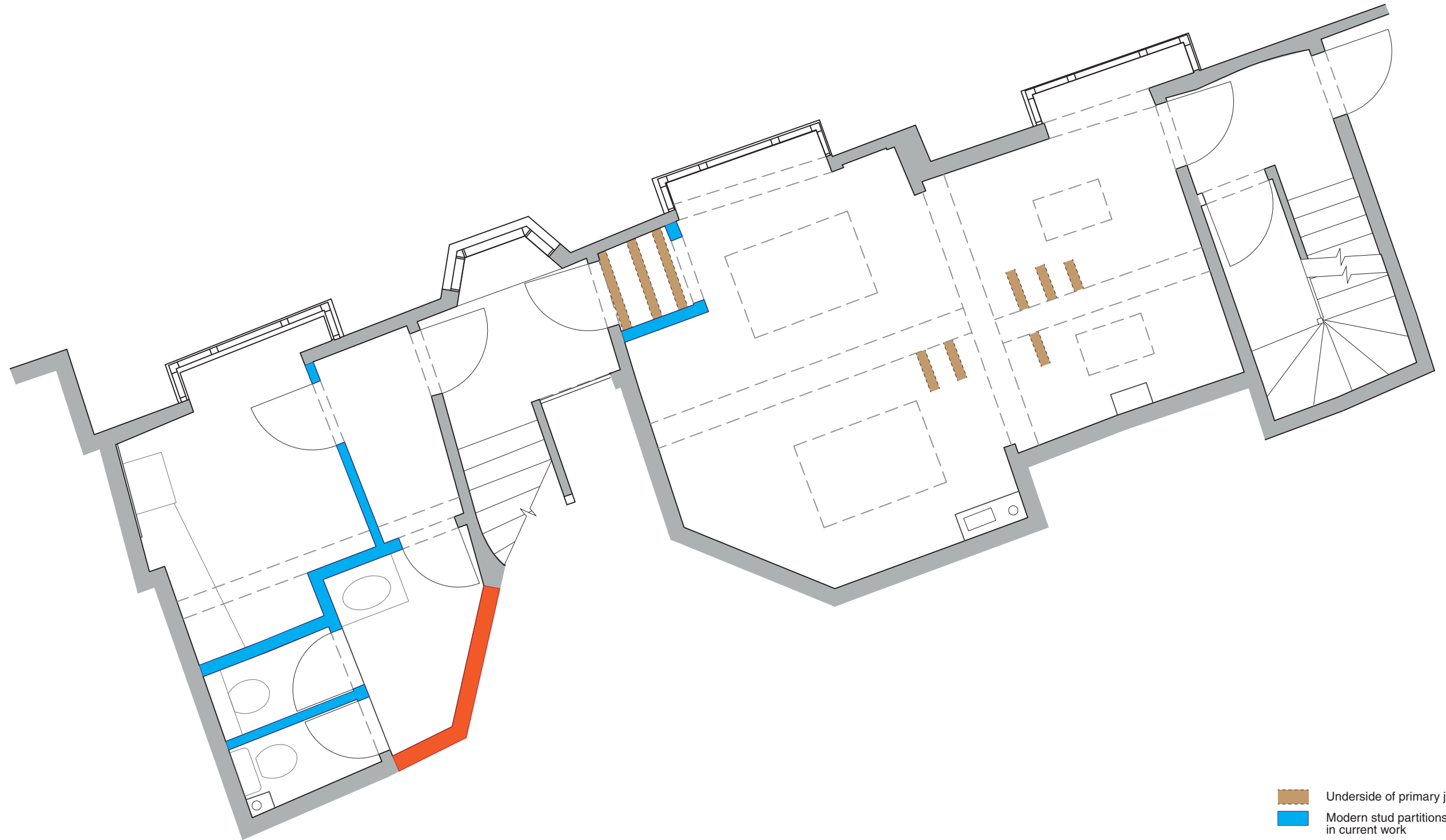
Figure 4: Ground and first floor plans in 1955, from article by WA Pantin in Oxoniensia XX






- Underside of primary joist exposed
- Timber post

0 2m
1:50

Figure 5: Ground floor plan



-  Underside of primary joist exposed
-  Modern stud partitions removed in current work
-  Brickwork exposed

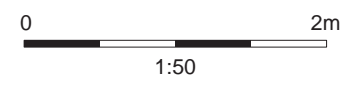


Figure 6: First floor plan



Plate 1: Central section of the north elevation facing the courtyard



Plate 2: Western section of the north elevation facing the courtyard



Plate 3: Eastern section of the north elevation facing the courtyard



Plate 4: Ground floor Room 27B looking west



Plate 5: Ground floor Room 27C looking east



Plate 6: Ground floor Room 27B looking south



Plate 7: Angled fireplace at SW corner of 27B



Plate 8: Brick paved hearth to fireplace at SW corner of 27B



Plate 9: Exposed fireplace and chimney breast in
27C



Plate 10: West jamb to fireplace in 27C



Plate 11: West jamb to fireplace in 27C



Plate 12: Blocking above fireplace void in 27C



Plate 13: Detail of beam at SE corner of 27B



Plate 14: Underside of joists exposed in 27B, looking SE



Plate 15: Underside of joists exposed in 27B, looking S



Plate 16: View in 27B-27C looking NE



Plate 17: Detail of secondary bracing in 27C



Plate 18: Exposed plinth to bay window in 27C.



Plate 19: Window in 27B



Plate 20: General view in first floor Room D looking west



Plate 21: General view in first floor Room D & E looking east



Plate 22: Oriel window in first floor Room D



Plate 23: East side of oriel window in first floor Room D



Plate 24: NW corner of Room D after removal of modern lobby



Plate 25: NW corner of Room D after removal of modern lobby



Plate 26: Exposed floor joists in Room D looking south



Plate 27: Exposed floor joists in Room D looking south



Plate 28: Exposed floor joists in Room D looking north



Plate 29: First floor room C looking south after removal of partitions



Plate 30: Chimney breast at SE corner of Room C after plaster removal



Plate 31: Detail of east wall in Room C after plaster removal



Plate 32: Detail of east wall in Room C after plaster removal



Plate 33: Detail of west wall in Room C after plaster removal



Plate 34: Exposed timber rail in west wall of Room C after plaster removal



Plate 35: General view looking north in Room C after removal of partitions



**Head Office/Registered Office/
OA South**

Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford OX2 0ES

t: +44 (0) 1865 263 800
f: +44 (0) 1865 793 496
e: info@oxfordarchaeology.com
w: <http://oxfordarchaeology.com>

OA North

Mill 3
Moor Lane
Lancaster LA1 1QD

t: +44 (0) 1524 541 000
f: +44 (0) 1524 848 606
e: [oanorth@oxfordarchaeology.com](mailto: oanorth@oxfordarchaeology.com)
w: <http://oxfordarchaeology.com>

OA East

15 Trafalgar Way
Bar Hill
Cambridgeshire
CB23 8SQ

t: +44 (0) 1223 850500
e: [oaeast@oxfordarchaeology.com](mailto: oaeast@oxfordarchaeology.com)
w: <http://oxfordarchaeology.com>



Director: Gill Hey, BA PhD FSA MCIfA
*Oxford Archaeology Ltd is a
Private Limited Company, N^o: 1618597
and a Registered Charity, N^o: 285627*