



Figure 53: Room G4, axial beam detail
Looking south-east



Figure 54: Room G4, bresumer beam detail
Looking north-east



Figure 55: Room G4, underside of reed and gypsum floor detail behind bresumer beam
Looking north-east up towards the ceiling



Figure 56: Room G4, doorway to Room G6 and flat-roofed extension
The door is made of three wide planks. Left picture: Looking north-west. Right picture shows the northern face of the door. 1m scale

Room G5

Room G5 is the southernmost room of the building and forms a large single open space with a small step down into a narrow space on the eastern side of the room. A wide archway separates the two spaces with the narrow space being the same width as the cellar which is located to the north. In the main part of the room a large axial beam runs from north-west to south-east with reused ceiling joists resting on it. Beyond the archway the ceiling is also supported by reused joists along with a substantial beam set at an angle across the south-east corner of the room. The reason for this is unclear although there may have been a corner doorway in this location. Within the arched area there is a wider wall base up to around 0.5m above floor level. There is no clear reason for this thicker base. There is also a gap in this thicker section at the northern end which might suggest an earlier entrance down to the cellar. Alternatively, it may relate to the underpinning of this wall in the 1950s. Above this thicker section of wall a definite kink in the wall line corresponds with that seen outside on the north-east facing elevation.

The fireplace opening is small and modern. The exterior wall, as discussed, has a wide chimney breast and base so there is, presumably, a wider opening hidden behind the wall plaster. The floor in the main room is red brick. From the investigation work in Room G1 the brick is likely to rest on a clay base.



Figure 57: Room G5, fireplace
Looking south. Note the archway on the left. 1m scale



Figure 58: Room G5 archway
Looking north-east. Note the step down in floor level beyond the arch. 1m scale



Figure 59: Room G5, general view
Looking north-west. Doorway into Room G4. 1m scale



Figure 60: Room G5 door detail
1m scale



Figure 61: Room G5, window detail
Looking south-west. 1m scale



Figure 62: Room G5, axial beam detail
Looking south-east



Figure 63: Room G5, axial beam detail
Looking north-west



Figure 64: Room G5, brick floor detail
2 x 0.5m scales



Figure 65: Room G5, within arched area

Looking south-east. Note the substantial beam across the corner and the thickened wall base to the left. The floor steps up from this area into the main part of the room. The change in wall angle can be seen in a slight shadow on the extreme left. 1m scale



Figure 66: Room G5, within arched area
Looking north-west. Note the thickened wall base and where it stops. Also the reused ceiling rafters. 2 x 0.5m scales



Figure 67: Room G5 within arched area, corner timber detail
Looking east. The redundant sockets indicate reuse from elsewhere

Rooms G6 and G7

Room G6 forms a corridor and storage area beneath the stairs to the first floor. It seems likely that this part of the building, along with the flat-roofed extension, always formed part of Number 37 although there is a thinner section of wall in the north-west which may be a possible blocked doorway leading into Number 2A in this area.

Passing through a wooden three-plank door the floor level steps up at this point following the slight rise in land up towards the north. The painted brick walls to the north and west are irregular and possibly of a number of phases. The eastern part of G6 is formed by an enclosed space which sits above the cellar and beneath the first floor stairs and landing. A doorway with a substantial frame along with brackets and sockets for holding security bars to hold the door shut leads out into the flat-roofed extension Room G7. The presence of the brackets suggests that this was once an outside door.

Room G7 fills most of the flat-roofed extension with the exception of G2 at the northern end which belongs to Number 2A. At the southern end of G7 is a small pantry-like room with a small window. The rest of the room contains modern kitchen fittings and a large wooden casement window.



Figure 68: Room G6 and doorway to G4

Looking south. Note the step down to the doorway to G4 and the possible blocked doorway to G1 behind the mirror. 1m scale



Figure 69: Room G6, space above the cellar and beneath the first floor landing
Looking south-east. Note the narrow sloping section which is the underside of the stairs. 1m scale



Figure 70: Room G6 looking towards doorway to G7
Looking north. Note the brackets on the door frame. 1m scale



Figure 71: Room G6, doorframe detail
Left: north side, right: south side. Both pictures looking north-east from G6



Figure 72: Room G7, general view
Looking north-west. Doorway to G6 on the far left. 1m scale



Figure 73: Room G7, general view
Looking south-east towards the pantry. Doorway to G6 on the right. 1m scale

First Floor

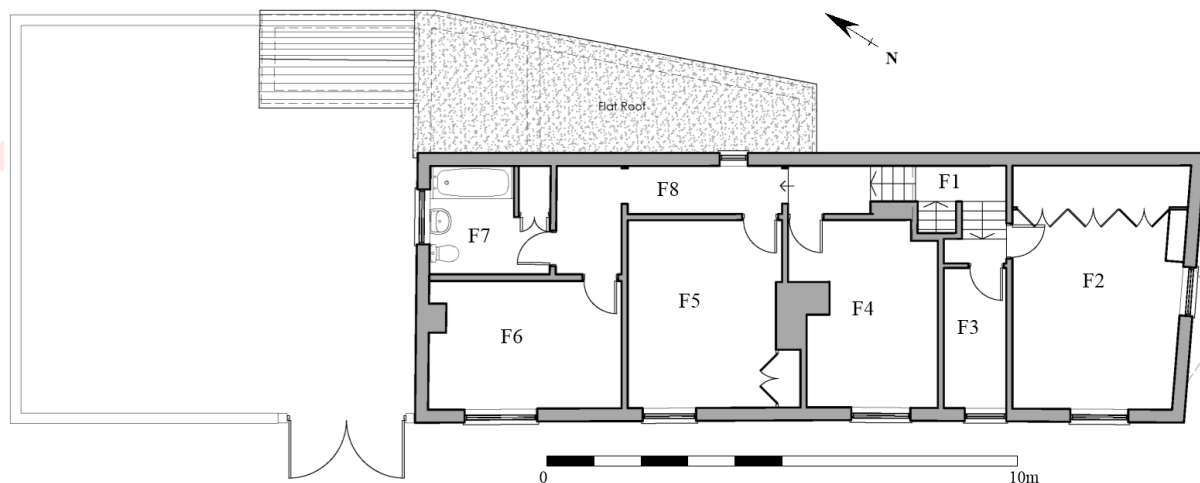


Figure 74: First floor plan

Modified from plan supplied by client. Room reference letters refer to this survey and do not relate to any previous uses. Note that this plan does not show alterations and steps in wall lines etc.

As noted the whole of the first floor is used by Number 37 with no access from Number 2A. For the purposes of this survey the rooms have been allocated reference numbers F1 to F8 as shown in the plan above. This is for ease of identification and does not refer to any earlier uses or designations.

The stairs to the first floor are located in ground floor room G4 where a set of five very steep steps leads up to a small and narrow landing F1 with further steps leading up steps in both directions. Most internal walls are timber and plaster partition walls but a number of exposed beams are visible within the wall structure, especially around Rooms F1 to F4 which hint at a timber-framed origin to this part of the building. With the exception of one small area all of the floors are gypsum laid on a bed of reeds.

Although there were loft hatches in some of the rooms all except one had been sealed over preventing any inspection of the roof timbers. Only the hatch at the northern end, in Room F7, could be opened.



Figure 75: First flight of steps up to first floor
Looking north-east. 2 x 0.5m scales

Room F1

Room F1 is a small intermediate landing leading to F2 and F3 to the south and landing F8 to the north. Two half sets of stairs lead up from this area. In the wall is a large upright supporting timber resembling part of a box-frame set into the wall. A further horizontal timber extends westwards through Room F3 and across the full width of the building.



Figure 76: Room F1 timbers in the wall
Looking north-east. Steps up to F8 on the left. 2 x 0.5m scales



Figure 77: Room F1, timber frame

Looking north. The horizontal timber on the left continues through Room F3 and across the width of the building. Steps to F8 centre right



Figure 78: Room F1, steps up to F2 and F3
Looking south. Doorway to F2 in centre. 1m scale



Figure 79: Room F1, steps up to F8
Looking north-west. Door down to ground floor on the left. 1m scale

Room F2

Room F2 is the southernmost room of the building and is reached via a half set of stairs from F1. As with all first floor rooms it is set partially into the roofline with the ceiling sloping in on the front and rear sides. The walls and ceiling are plastered with no evidence of any structural timbers except for a continuation of the box-frame along the eastern side of the room. These timbers continue from F1 and are hidden within a set of built-in wardrobes. The door into the room is a 20th century paneled door. The floor is gypsum and the window on the west wall is a leaded casement whilst the window on the south has a similar style of casement but is not leaded and does not have chamfered woodwork.



Figure 80: Room F2, general view
Looking south-west. 1m scale



Figure 81: Room F2, general view
Looking north-east. Note the timber frame within the wardrobe. 1m scale



Figure 82: Room F2, timber frame on eastern wall
Looking north-east. This continues through to Room F1. 1m scale



Figure 83: Room F1, western window detail
Looking south-west. 1m scale



Figure 84: Room F2, southern window detail
Looking south-east. 1m scale

Room F3

Room F3 is reached by the same half set of stairs leading up to F2. This room is unusually narrow and has a single offset casement window at its western end. The northern wall has a continuation of the timber frame seen in F1. Here a single timber can be seen sitting on top of a thickened and slightly irregular masonry wall. This is masonry rather than a plaster and lath internal wall which is seen elsewhere in the building. It is possible therefore that at one time this may have been an external wall although there is no corresponding wall in the ground floor room below (G4). The floor is gypsum.



Figure 85: Room F3, general view
Looking west. Note the top of the timber beam just above the tip of the 1m scale



Figure 86: Room F3, general view out to F1
Looking north-east. 1m scale

Room F4

Room F4 is located at the top of the half set of stairs leading up from F1 and is accessed from the landing corridor F8. The southern wall of this room is formed by the timber and masonry wall seen in Room F3. The horizontal timber in this room is fully exposed and has a number of sawn-off wooden pegs. These may be redundant from use elsewhere or they may be pegs holding bracing timbers which are hidden behind the plaster within the wall structure.

Although the chimney breast impinges into this room there is no evidence of a blocked fireplace and it seems more likely that the double-flue chimney served the ground floor room and adjacent room F5.

The window in this room is a casement window with leaded lights as seen in the other first floor rooms. The door is a four-paneled door and may be late 19th or, more likely, 20th century in date. The floor is gypsum.



Figure 87: Room F4, general view

Looking south. The timber beam forms part of the wall with Room F3. See next figure. 1m scale



Figure 88: Room F4, detail of wooden pegs in the timber beam



Figure 89: Room F4, general view
Looking north. Note chimney breast on the left. 1m scale



Figure 90: Room F4, window detail
Looking south-west. 1m scale



Figure 91: Room F4 door detail
Left: landing facing side, right: internal face. 1m scale

Room F5

Room F5 is a fairly large room with no structural details on view. It has a leaded casement window and a replacement modern door leading out to the landing. There is evidence in the plasterwork of a small blocked fireplace. The floor is gypsum.



Figure 92: Room F5, general view
Looking west. 1m scale



Figure 93: Room F5, general view
Looking east. Note the mark on the chimney breast of a former blocked fireplace. 1m scale

Room F6

Room F6 is the northernmost first floor room of the building and lies above the ground floor room belonging to Number 2A. Although lacking in any original features or structural construction evidence it retains the single-flue chimney breast which has been truncated in the ground floor room below. There is no evidence of a blocked hearth and it is more likely that the hearth was on the ground floor. It has a leaded casement window as seen in the other rooms on this floor. The door is a modern replacement. The surround to the door has two large panes of obscured glass which have been painted over. The reason for this glasswork is not clear. It seems likely that the eastern wall, which divides this from F7 bathroom is a later inserted wall and that the north-eastern corner of the building has been re-jigged. This is further discussed in the section on Room F8 below. The room has a gypsum floor.



Figure 94: Room F6, general view
Looking north-west. 1m scale



Figure 95: Room F6, general view
Looking south-east. 1m scale.



Figure 96: Room F6, doorway detail
Looking north-east. The two recessed panels are painted-over glass. 2 x 0.5m scales

Rooms F7 and F8

Room F7 is a modern inserted bathroom with a modern door and bathroom fittings. The window is a modern casement window and may be a late insertion. An open loft hatch in this room shows that the roof structure, in this part of the building at least, has a simple common rafter construction.

It seems likely that this room has been altered significantly as the landing, which is part of F8, has a wooden floor and would have been where the stairs came up from Room G1. This is the only wooden floor in the building. Although the original layout is unclear it is probable that there was a small landing either side of the stairs and that the wall of F7 would have been located slightly further east than it is at present.

Room F8 is a long corridor or landing running from the stairs northwards to Rooms F7 and 8. It uses the same wall line as the cellar. It is unclear if the landing would have stopped before reaching the removed staircase down to G1. Part of the timber frame seen around the stairs in F1 continues in the outer wall of F8 as far as the northern wall of Room F4. This corresponds with the step in wall and roofline seen on the north-west facing elevation. There is a single casement window looking out over the roof of the single storey extension with no other openings on this wall on either the ground or first floors.



Figure 97: Room F7, general view
Looking north-west. 1m scale



Figure 98: Room F7, general view
Looking south-east out of the room towards F6 doorway



Figure 99: Room F7, roof space
Looking south-west through loft hatch in F7



Figure 100: Room F8, location of former stairs from G1
Looking north-east from the doorway of F6. The doorway to bathroom F7 is on the left. 2 x 0.5m scales



Figure 101: Room F8, general view
Looking south-east. Stairs down to ground floor in the distance. Door to F5 to the right. 1m scale



Figure 102: Stairs up to Room F8

Looking north-west. Note the timber framing continuing along the wall. 2 x 0.5m scales

Discussion

The historical building recording undertaken by ULAS at Numbers 2A High Street and 37 Main Street in March 2025 has provided a permanent record of the building prior to any works being undertaken.

Although the initial heritage statement suggests that the building is of Victorian origin the opportunity to make an internal inspection indicates that parts of it are likely to be significantly older and of a number of phases. The presence of visible timber framework and brick infill within part of the building, notably most of Number 37 but possibly elsewhere suggests a possible 17th century origin. The full extent of the timber framing is unclear as it is possible that the external render coating masks more framework to both the front and rear of the building. The fact that the building appears to have brickwork down to its foundations rather than a stone base indicates a post-medieval 17th century date rather than a medieval date.

The results of this level 2 survey allow for a tentative general outline of the probable building phases as shown in Figure 103 below. The earliest phase of the building is that containing clear evidence of box framing which includes the central part of the building along with the rear south-eastern corner of Number 37. Further exploratory work may include the south-western corner of Number 37 (i.e., all of 37) but at present no box framing is visible beneath the internal plaster and the external render. The next key phase includes most of Number 2A and the first floor above it. There is no box framing apparent in this part of the building and, as such this may be as late as the early to mid-19th century. No bricks were visible to measure

and estimate a more precise date. This phase was followed by the addition of the flat-roofed extension and then the addition of the pitched roof extension. From their general style both appear to be later 19th century in date but both were present by the time of the 1886 Ordnance Survey map.

The presence of the cement render on the external walls prevents the investigation of any possible earlier windows and doors which, given its age and number of phases, are likely to be present. It seems likely that there could be blocked openings on all elevations but most especially the rear, north-east facing, elevation where only a single doorway and a first floor window are present.

The use of timber box frame and brick infill construction in Desford is not unusual with a number of houses showing evidence of this construction method. Many earlier examples are built on a medieval stone base but later structures are built in the same fashion as Numbers 37 and 2A are. In this case however the use of render has hidden the origins of this building.

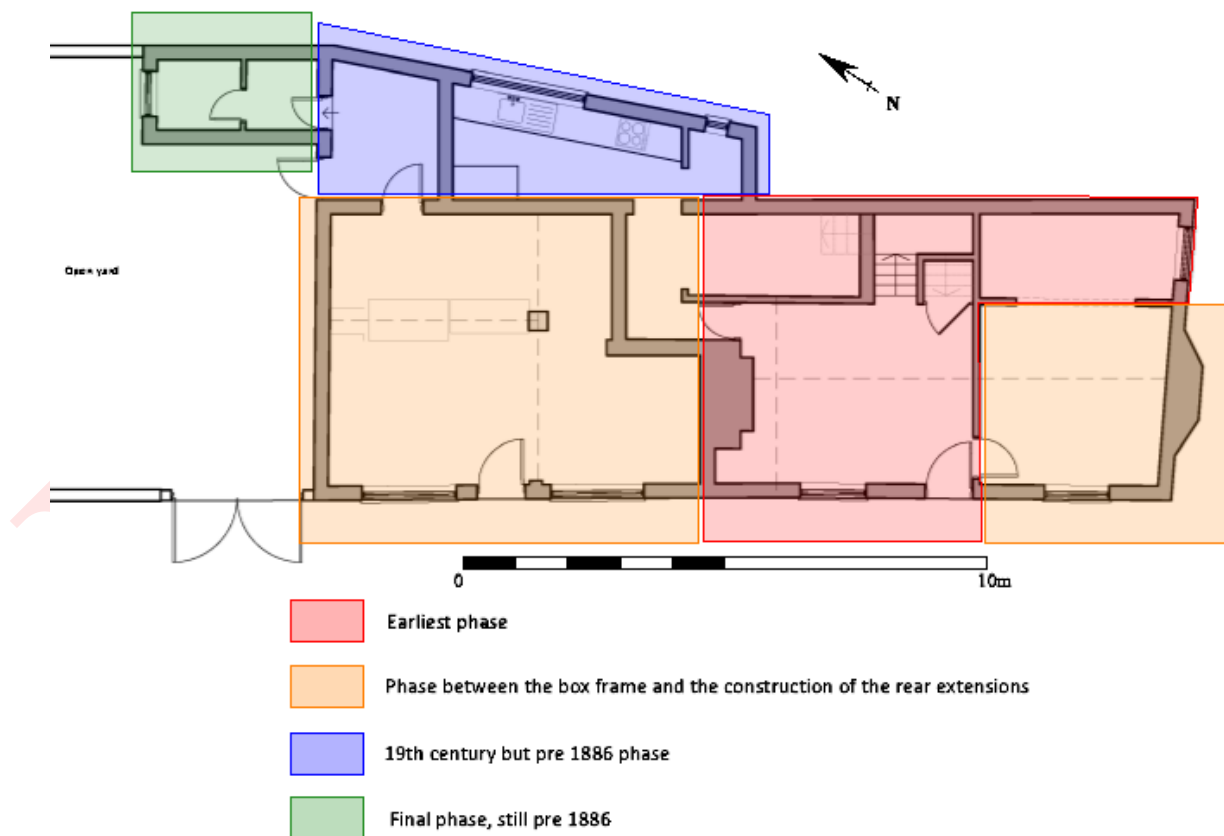


Figure 103: Probable general building phases

This is a tentative phase plan and is open to adjustment if further box framing is revealed, most especially in the southern corner



Figure 104: Example of a box framed house on Kirkby Road, Desford

Archive & Publication

The digital archive will be deposited with the Archaeological Data Service (ADS): <https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/>).

The online OASIS data entry has been completed detailing the results of the project and the report will be digitally accessible through The Archaeological Data Service (www.archaeologydataservice.ac.uk) with universi1-532565 as the identifier.

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork and post-excavation reporting was undertaken by A Hyam and project managed by A Clapton for ULAS.

Bibliography

(All websites accessed March 2025)

Abrams, J. 2023. *Archaeological desk Based Assessment: Land at the Blue Bell Inn, comprising its associated car park and Nos 37 High Street and 2A main Street, Desford, Leicester*. Abrams Archaeology Project 00334 report 1.3

British Geological Survey: <https://www.bgs.ac.uk/map-viewers/bgs-geology-viewer/>

CIfA (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists) (Rev. 2020), *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures*.

CIfA (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists) (Rev. 2022), *Code of Conduct: Professional Ethics in Archaeology*

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2023, (Rev.), *National Planning Policy Framework*

Froneman, I. 2022. *Heritage Statement: Land at The Blue Bell, 37 High Street, Desford, Leicester*. Cogent Heritage. Report ref 0480.

Historic England, 2016. *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to Good Recording Practice*.

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, 2010. *Desford Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan*. March 2010

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, 2010. *Desford Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan: Photographic Record of Desford Conservation Area*. March 2010

OASIS <https://www.oasis.ac.uk/>

Soilscapes: <http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/>

ULAS 2023 *ULAS Recording Manual*.

ULAS 2025 *Written Scheme of Investigation for Historic Building Recording, Level 2: Land at The Blue Bell Inn, (39 High Street), and No's 37 High Street and 2A Main Street, Desford, Leicestershire*. ULAS Ref: 25-336

Appendix 1: Digital Photos taken during the survey



XA14 2025 (1)



XA14 2025 (2)



XA14 2025 (3)



XA14 2025 (4)



XA14 2025 (5)



XA14 2025 (6)



XA14 2025 (7)



XA14 2025 (8)



XA14 2025 (9)



XA14 2025 (10)



XA14 2025 (11)



XA14 2025 (12)



XA14 2025 (13)



XA14 2025 (14)



XA14 2025 (15)



XA14 2025 (16)



XA14 2025 (17)



XA14 2025 (18)



XA14 2025 (19)



XA14 2025 (20)



XA14 2025 (21)



XA14 2025 (22)



XA14 2025 (23)



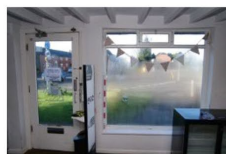
XA14 2025 (24)



XA14 2025 (25)



XA14 2025 (26)



XA14 2025 (27)



XA14 2025 (28)



XA14 2025 (29)



XA14 2025 (30)



XA14 2025 (31)



XA14 2025 (32)



XA14 2025 (33)



XA14 2025 (34)



XA14 2025 (35)



XA14 2025 (36)



XA14 2025 (37)



XA14 2025 (38)



XA14 2025 (39)



XA14 2025 (40)



XA14 2025 (41)



XA14 2025 (42)



XA14 2025 (43)



XA14 2025 (44)



XA14 2025 (45)



XA14 2025 (46)



XA14 2025 (47)



XA14 2025 (48)



XA14 2025 (49)



XA14 2025 (50)



XA14 2025 (51)



XA14 2025 (52)



XA14 2025 (53)



XA14 2025 (54)



XA14 2025 (55)



XA14 2025 (56)



XA14 2025 (57)



XA14 2025 (58)



XA14 2025 (59)



XA14 2025 (60)



XA14 2025 (61)



XA14 2025 (62)



XA14 2025 (63)



XA14 2025 (64)



XA14 2025 (65)



XA14 2025 (66)



XA14 2025 (67)



XA14 2025 (68)



XA14 2025 (69)



XA14 2025 (70)



XA14 2025 (71)



XA14 2025 (72)



XA14 2025 (73)



XA14 2025 (74)



XA14 2025 (75)



XA14 2025 (76)



XA14 2025 (77)



XA14 2025 (78)



XA14 2025 (79)



XA14 2025 (80)



XA14 2025 (81)



XA14 2025 (82)



XA14 2025 (83)



XA14 2025 (84)



XA14 2025 (85)



XA14 2025 (86)



XA14 2025 (87)



XA14 2025 (88)



XA14 2025 (89)



XA14 2025 (90)



XA14 2025 (91)



XA14 2025 (92)



XA14 2025 (93)



XA14 2025 (94)



XA14 2025 (95)



XA14 2025 (96)



XA14 2025 (97)



XA14 2025 (98)



XA14 2025 (99)



XA14 2025 (100)



XA14 2025 (101)



XA14 2025 (102)



XA14 2025 (103)



XA14 2025 (104)



XA14 2025 (105)



XA14 2025 (106)



XA14 2025 (107)



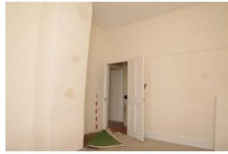
XA14 2025 (108)



XA14 2025 (109)



XA14 2025 (110)



XA14 2025 (111)



XA14 2025 (112)



XA14 2025 (113)



XA14 2025 (114)



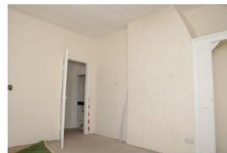
XA14 2025 (115)



XA14 2025 (116)



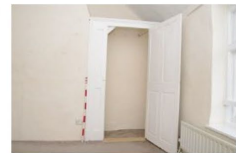
XA14 2025 (117)



XA14 2025 (118)



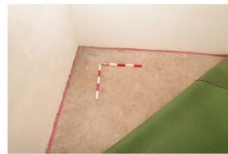
XA14 2025 (119)



XA14 2025 (120)



XA14 2025 (121)



XA14 2025 (122)



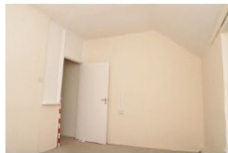
XA14 2025 (123)



XA14 2025 (124)



XA14 2025 (125)



XA14 2025 (126)



XA14 2025 (127)



XA14 2025 (128)



XA14 2025 (129)



XA14 2025 (130)



XA14 2025 (131)



XA14 2025 (132)



XA14 2025 (133)



XA14 2025 (134)



XA14 2025 (135)



XA14 2025 (136)



XA14 2025 (137)



XA14 2025 (138)



XA14 2025 (139)



XA14 2025 (140)



XA14 2025 (141)



XA14 2025 (142)



XA14 2025 (143)



XA14 2025 (144)



XA14 2025 (145)



XA14 2025 (146)



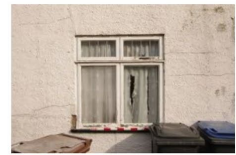
XA14 2025 (147)



XA14 2025 (148)



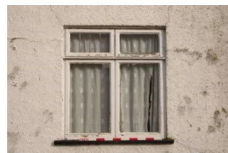
XA14 2025 (149)



XA14 2025 (150)



XA14 2025 (151)



XA14 2025 (152)



XA14 2025 (153)



XA14 2025 (154)



XA14 2025 (155)



XA14 2025 (156)



XA14 2025 (157)



XA14 2025 (158)



XA14 2025 (159)



XA14 2025 (160)



XA14 2025 (161)



XA14 2025 (162)



XA14 2025 (163)



XA14 2025 (164)



XA14 2025 (165)



XA14 2025 (166)



XA14 2025 (167)



XA14 2025 (168)



XA14 2025 (169)



XA14 2025 (170)



XA14 2025 (171)



XA14 2025 (172)



XA14 2025 (173)



XA14 2025 (174)



XA14 2025 (175)



XA14 2025 (176)



XA14 2025 (177)



XA14 2025 (178)



XA14 2025 (179)



XA14 2025 (180)



XA14 2025 (181)



XA14 2025 (182)



XA14 2025 (183)



XA14 2025 (184)



XA14 2025 (185)



XA14 2025 (186)



XA14 2025 (187)



XA14 2025 (188)



XA14 2025 (189)



XA14 2025 (190)



XA14 2025 (191)



XA14 2025 (192)



XA14 2025 (193)

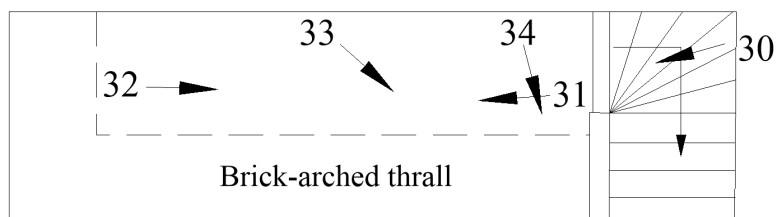
Appendix 2: Photo locations taken during the survey

The numbers refer to those pictures shown in Appendix 1 above.

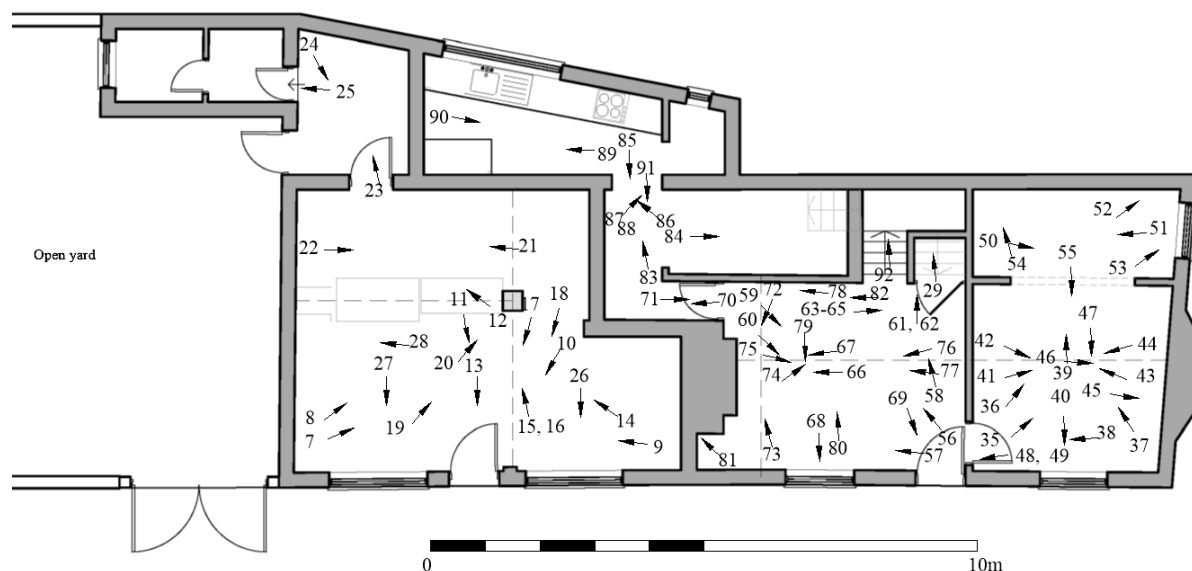
External photographs:



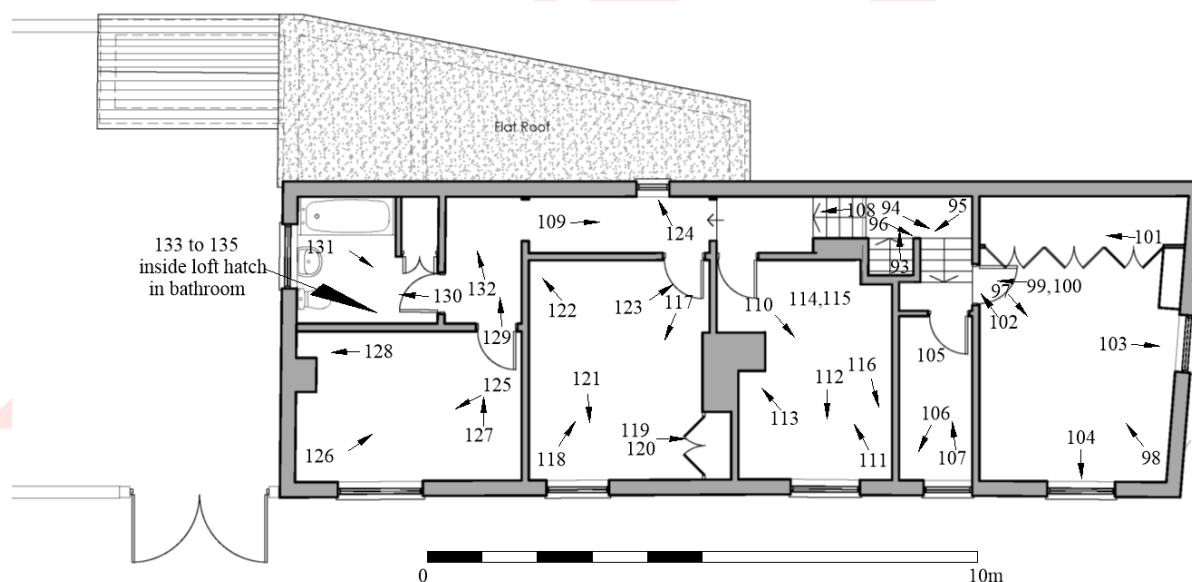
The Cellar:



Ground floor:



First floor:





UNIVERSITY OF
LEICESTER

Archaeological Services

University of Leicester
University Road
Leicester LE1 7RH
UK

t: +44 (0)116 252 2848

f: +44 (0)116 252 2614

e: ulas@le.ac.uk



FAME

