

HIDDEN HOUSE, BEAUMARIS, ANGLESEY

Archaeological Building Record (Level 2) v2.0



Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

Hidden House, Beaumaris, Anglesey

Archaeological Building Record (Level 2)

Project No. G2205

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL BUILDING RECORDING AT HIDDEN HOUSE, BEAUMARIS, ISEL OF ANGLESEY.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Rhys Llwyd Davies (architect) commissioned the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust to carry out a building survey in advance of, and during, the refurbishment and renovation of the grade II listed (ref **5602**) property known as Hidden House, Beaumaris, Isle of Anglesey. The building is located at NGR **SH 60567610** and is located through a passageway on the north side of Castle Street, Beaumaris (see figs.1 and 2).

The property has been listed for 'its special architectural interest as a 19th century house retaining definite quality and character, and for its contribution to the historical integrity of the Castle Street area' (Cadw Listed Building data).

The archaeological mitigation is being completed as a planning condition (Planning Reference **12C411A/LB**).

The works included the repair and refurbishment of much of the internal fabric of the building and the removal of a derelict structure to the south of the building (the 'shop'). It also included the installation of a bathroom and a new kitchen along with replacement of the roof of the building. A watching brief was maintained during the removal of the shop and attached render on the external house elevations; and during the removal of the roof.

2.0 SPECIFICATION AND PROJECT DESIGN

Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service (GAPS) requested an historic building record commensurate with *English Heritage* equivalent Level 2 of the existing structure in advance of development; to include a written account to provide basic background and historical information; drawings including any existing plans of the site and architect's drawings; and high quality, detailed photographs showing all features, details, room spaces, and elevations to illustrate the setting, appearance, and structure of the building.

A limited desk-top study, involving a visit to The Anglesey Archives, Llangefni and Bangor University Archives to access records of the building was required.

3 METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

The significance, origins and development of the site are discussed with reference to the available historical sources. A detailed floor plan and elevation drawings were provided by the architect.

A photographic record was made recording all features, room spaces and elevations within the building and the outbuildings. The direction of photographs are shown on figures 3 and 4. The report conforms to the requirements for a building record at level 2 as set down in English Heritage's *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice* (2006).

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL RECORD

4.1 Historical Background

Medieval

Beaumaris was the principal medieval port of North Wales, subordinate to that of Chester. It dates from the time of the construction of the castle, started April, 1295. It replaced, however, the former port of Llanfaes, that lay just over a kilometre to the north. The medieval town of Llanfaes, centred on the commotal *llys* and *maerdref* settlement, was the principal urban centre of the Welsh princes. The 1294 extent records a total levy of £1 6s 8d for harbour dues at 4d per ship, which suggests around 80 ships calling during the year (Carr 1982, 232). The nature of the wide bay at Llanfaes, lying protected in the Menai Strait, makes it unlikely any quays or jetties were constructed here, and boats would have discharged straight from the beach. The road leading from the shore and west of the former friary would have connected the town with the harbour. Lewis Morris says that within Friars Bay ‘you may anchor in six fathom, a stiff clay ground, or lie aground on soft mud’.

The construction of Beaumaris castle and town, initiated by the uprising of Madog ap Llywelyn, led to a forced decline of Llanfaes by the English authorities in favour of the new planted borough. This eventually led, in 1302-3, to the wholesale removal of the inhabitants of Llanfaes to Rhosyr, where a new borough was created east of the commotal centre, to be called Newborough. In 1305 132 rented burgage plots in Beaumaris are recorded, which are said to have been 80ft long by 40ft wide, and this rises to 154 by 1322, indicating an expanding town (Lewis 1912, 63). Following attacks by Owain Glyndwr in 1403, the Prince of Wales, later King Henry V, gave £10 towards reconstruction of the town and the building of a town ditch in 1407 (Taylor 1986, 111). A number of buildings along Castle Street have been shown to be late medieval in date; this is a time when the planted borough appears to have been developing significantly and recovering after the Glyndwr depredations (Longley 2009, 2010).

Post Medieval

Speed’s map of 1612 (figure 6) shows a single building situated in the area between Castle Street and Little Lane on the site of where Hidden House now stands. Hidden House is situated on the same plot, and may incorporate parts of that building, or be built later on its footprint. The map appears to depict the principal elevation as being toward Little Lane to the northwest, rather than towards Castle Street which is now the case. Other buildings nearby, including 10 Castle Street, have been shown to be medieval in origin (Longley, 2009), and this may be the case with Hidden House. Against this argument however is the fact that Hidden House appears to have been constructed infilling space behind the main street facing plots. This suggests that it may be a property that has been built encroaching on former property burgage plots of medieval date, so may be somewhat later in date. The medieval burgage plots in the area are clearly shown on a Baron Hill estate map of 1829 (Bangor Archives, Baron Hill MSS 6486) (figure 7). No. 13 Castle Street has been shown to be 17th century in date, so construction was being carried out on the street at that time (Longley, 2010). The relationship between Hidden House and the stable block of the Bull’s Head Inn, a rear wing located to the east of it, shows that Hidden House was built earlier. This stable block is 18th or early 19th century in date, so Hidden House must predate that. This suggests that the early 19th century date given in the Listing description (Grade II; Ref: 5602) is later than the true date of the building.

In 1829 Hidden House, shown on a Baron Hill estate map and schedule of 1829, was the property of Hugh Owen Esq., and occupied by a surgeon, Mr. Henry Evans, and consisted of a house, yard and garden (Bangor Archives, Baron Hill MSS 6486 and 8211a). The house does not appear to have been the property of the Bulkeley’s of Baron Hill at any time, although adjacent to the Bull’s Head Inn to the east. This inn was long before 1829 an established and well known coaching inn, and formed part of the Baron Hill Estate. Works were clearly carried out on Hidden House in 1834, as a hopper head with that date on it can be seen on the building, which may account for the fact that the building appears to have been extended between the map of 1829 and the 1st edition OS plan of 1889. In the 1841 Census

the house is shown to have been occupied by another Surgeon, Griffith Roberts, with two servants (National Archives; HO 107/1364/1). The fact that the property was occupied by two apparently unrelated Surgeons over the twelve years suggests that it may have been a business premises at this time. This would appear to be a reasonable suggestion since the property had access off the north side of Castle Street, the main commercial street in the town, and the medical activities would have been hidden from view.

4.2 Hidden House general description

The direction of photographs are shown on figures 3 to 5.

4.2.1 External description

(see plates 1 to 8)

Hidden House is primarily an 'L' shaped range, the principal range is aligned east west and faces Castle Street to the south, there is a second range perpendicular to the rear of the principal bay aligned north south at the eastern end. There is also a smaller brick-built, lean to range abutting the front elevation of the principal range, again at the eastern end. There is a single, tall and square, rendered chimney straddling the north and south roof pitches positioned over the eastern gable. A second shorter, square chimney rendered and painted white with a single ceramic pot straddles the east and west roof pitches over the northern gable of the northern range.

During initial visits all of the external elevations were rendered. The main entrance is offset to the east of the principal range in order to line up with the access off Castle Street, it, itself is a rather fancy round arched doorway with timber columns, the easternmost of which is missing, carrying the deeply moulded arched hood (plates 1 and 2). Over the door there is a blank fanlight, possibly in cast iron. Such fanlights became popular during the 18th century in double pile houses with long central entrance halls, being both decorative externally the fanlight provided additional lighting to the hallway. At Hidden House the fanlight is clearly a later addition, no doubt mimicking the grander styles and houses of the period as it is purely decorative having been added to the external face of the wall. By the early 19th century it was common for fanlights to incorporate a central lantern glazed as an integral part of the design, the example at Hidden House appears to be following this design, suggesting a possible date. The popularity of fanlights waned from the 1840s onwards but may have persisted in more provincial areas, such as Beaumaris. The door itself is a timber two panelled door, apparently with chamfered stops rather than moulded. Although rather difficult to date, it too appears to be late 18th, but is more likely to be early to mid-19th century in date.

The windows on the principal elevation are a mix of 12 and 16 light sash windows. The exposed sash boxes and rather large glazing bars would suggest an early date for the windows, however it is likely that the sashes were inserted into existing openings and the rubble walls prevented the box from being recessed. The lights themselves also vary in size between windows, again making accurate dating difficult.

Attached to the principal elevation of Hidden House is a brick built lean-to structure against the garden wall of the property located to the west, referred to as an old 'shop' (plate 3). The mono-pitch roof has mostly collapsed and only the northern most end has some sawn wooden rafters and joists still attached, although these are ready to fall. The roof was of slate, many of which now lay stacked against the eastern elevation. The western elevation is formed by the garden wall of the adjacent property, the northern elevation is of the external wall of the southern elevation of Hidden house, and the southern elevation is the northern external elevation of The Pet Owners Store. The western elevation (shop front) has been constructed from red brick bonded by mortar, with the external face rendered and painted white. There is an opening for a door and large window in the shop front elevation but these are now missing.

The internal walls are plastered and painted white and the floor is of stone flags, although very little is visible due to the collapse of the roof structure into the building.

The rear elevations of Hidden House follow a similar pattern to the principal elevation, with a single doorway adjacent to the angle between the two ranges, the door itself is a recent replacement. The windows mirror those recorded on the front elevation, but this time includes a triple sash in the westernmost room (dining room) suggesting that this may have originally been a room of some status (plate 4).

The most striking feature of the rear elevation is the gable of the north south range (plates 5 and 6). To the left are three sash windows matching those seen in the rest of the building. Mirroring these are three blank windows, creating a symmetrical gable. All of the windows have architrave surrounds, the simplicity of these architraves are difficult to date, but they are likely to be contemporary with the cast iron rain-hopper on this elevation which is inscribed with the year 1834 (plate 8).

Further site visits were carried out during and after the removal of the external render. With the removal of the render the different phases of the building were easily identified. The principal east west range is rubble built while the north south range is brick-built, as is the smaller lean to range.

The removal of the render on the principal elevation revealed a number of blocked openings and evidence of at least one inserted doorway, the westernmost. Although difficult to establish with any certainty, the central first floor window may also be a later insertion as there appears to be a very slight change in the stonework to the east of the window. The use of inserted brickwork below an adjacent window means it is difficult to establish whether the existing door is original, however it does seem to follow the general arrangement of the other openings, and is likely, therefore to be original.

The general arrangement of the groundfloor openings, both blocked and open has the appearance of stabling, with three stalls, the westernmost being slightly larger. It is likely, given the buildings location and its relatively small original footprint that Hidden House was built as stabling, possibly for the adjacent Bull Inn.

The rear elevation of the principal range contains no information regarding the phasing and dating of the building, having been rebuilt, as shown by the roof structure, probably in the mid to late 19th century. The only significant feature is an unusual arrangement of both a flat cambered brick arch and a timber lintel on the first floor window. The exact purpose of the lintel is unclear as the arch is carrying the wall above the window and its dimensions match those of the window opening strongly suggesting the two are contemporary. The lintel itself projects some considerable distance beyond the window opening to the west suggesting the window may have originally been much larger, although there is no evidence of this in the stonework. It is possible that the window has been altered after insertion, although the “how’s and why’s” of this is impossible to establish.

The exposed elevations of the north south range confirm that it is brick-built, and probably later in date than the principal elevation. The bricks themselves appear to be early to mid-19th century handmade bricks, possibly with lime mortar pointing. There does not appear to be a continuous discernible bond used throughout the exposed brickwork; it is possible to identify areas of both English Garden Wall bond (one course of header to three or five courses of stretchers, but in this example, three, four courses of stretchers) and also areas of English Bond (alternating courses of headers and stretchers), but these areas could simply be poorly laid English Garden Wall bond. It appears as if the whole range had either been constructed in haste without due care and attention or by in-experienced bricklayers.

4.2.2 Internal description – Ground Floor

(see plates 9 to 16, 27 and 30)

Hallway

The front door gives on to a rectangular hallway measuring 3.5m in length by 2.5m in width orientated southeast to northwest. The ceiling is plastered white with the remnants of an orange coloured paper over it, now mostly removed. A white painted, moulded wood cornice runs around the top of the wall. The walls are of white painted plaster with the remnants of a yellow-orange coloured paper overlying an earlier plain dark-blue coloured paper in places. The northeast and southwest walls are internal stud partitions, and the northwest and southeast elevations are load bearing stone walls, rendered and papered.

On the southeast wall the internal face of the main entrance is painted white. The door is of a thick panelled hard-wood with hinged opening upper panel (stable door) and an ornate brass lock case incorporating lock, latch and handle in one unit. It is etched with acanthus leaves, and a brass door-plate with moulded pigeon and sunflower motif is located above. The north-eastern and south-western elevations have internal doors framed with white-painted, wood moulded door frames with white-painted, six-panelled wooden doors with brass locks and handles. The north-western elevation has a doorway into the rear garden, although the door frame has been removed. The door is wooden and painted white and would have originally had six-panels although these have now been boarded up. The door has a brass lock and handle of the same style as the internal door fixtures.

In the south-western corner is an ornate straight flight with winder staircase, with mahogany handrail, curtain step, decorated open-string, and stick balusters. The lower part of the wall has a white-painted moulded wooden skirting-board, above a dark-stained wood panel floor.

Dining Room

The Dining Room is accessed from the northeast via the Hallway. The room is rectangular measuring 2.7m in width by 3.5m in length orientated southeast to northwest. The ceiling is plastered and painted white and the walls are decorated with a plain paper which has also been painted white. The cornice is of moulded plaster decorated with acanthus leaves. The corners of the walls have been decorated with a white painted, moulded wooden beading.

The south-eastern wall has a white painted, six-panel wooden door hung in a white painted, wooden moulded frame leading to the front of the property. A recessed cupboard, almost ceiling height, is situated to the east of the door with vaulted ceiling and wooden beading decorated with acanthus leaves. The majority of the northwest elevation is of a large twelve-pane, white painted wooden framed bay sash window, with a four-pane fixed sash window to either side. It has white painted, three-panel wooden shutters with brass handles. The southwest elevation has a fireplace with white painted wooden mantle with a soot blackened cast-iron hearth with formal acanthus decoration. The floor is of dark-stained wooden boards.

Parlour

The parlour is accessed from the southeast via the hallway. The room is rectangular measuring 4.3m in width and 4.7m in length orientated on a southwest to northeast axis. The ceiling is plastered and painted white with a large and ornate roundel, with formal foliage decoration surrounding a brass candelabra style electric light with central finial. The roundel is surrounded by a quatrefoil shaped design of folded acanthus leaves with projecting finials from the angles. A large and ornate white painted plaster moulded cornice with formal foliage motif runs around the top of all four walls. Beneath this is a beige painted moulded wooden dado rail, the walls being decorated with white paper above the rail and brown-green paper beneath.

The northwest elevation has two large twelve-pane sash windows with white-painted wooden frames. They have white painted, four panel wooden shutters with brass handles. The northeast elevation has a fireplace with a wide and moulded, white painted wooden mantel with informal acanthus and foliage design flanking a central, formal acanthus design. The fire place and hearth is of orange coloured marble, with the fireplace now covered over with orange coloured ribbed ceramic tiles. There is a large, white painted moulded skirting board and the floor of dark-stained wooden boards.

Kitchen

The kitchen is accessed from the northwest via the hallway. The room is rectangular measuring 2.3m in width and 3.8m in length and orientated on a northwest to southeast axis. The ceiling is plastered and covered in plain yellow coloured paper. A roughly hewn beam with chamfers and stops runs northwest to southeast across the southwest side of the ceiling. It has been sawn and modified to rest upon a later wooden beam above the window on the southeast wall, and likewise above a recessed cupboard in the northwest elevation.

The south-eastern wall is an internal stud partition, plastered and with the remnants of a yellow coloured paper. The north-western and south-eastern walls are built of stone rubble with the remnants of a white coloured plaster. The north-western wall has two recessed cupboards, the left of which has a structural beam. The south-eastern wall has a recessed bay window with a sixteen-pane sash window with white-painted wooden frame and window seat.

The northeast wall is built of red-brick with a centralised vaulted arch for a hearth, in which a modern agar now stands. A second and smaller vaulted arch is located to the immediate left and almost certainly functioned as a bread oven, in which the coarse rubble of the original external wall can be seen. A recessed cupboard to the right of the central arch now holds the boiler.

A doorway is positioned in the southeast elevation which would have originally led into the front courtyard but which now leads into a utility room extension. The door is a beige painted wood, four-panel door with simple wooden frame. The floor is of orange terracotta tiles.

Utility Room

The utility room is accessed from the northwest via the kitchen. The room is rectangular and measures 2.3m in length by 1.8m in width orientated on a northeast to southwest axis. The room forms two-thirds of a later red-brick built extension butting on to the southeast elevation of the kitchen. The ceiling is plastered and has the remnants of a white paper, and the walls are rendered and plastered. Some of the plaster on the northwest elevation has fallen away revealing the coarse rubble of the outer kitchen wall.

A doorway is located in the southeast wall which leads into the rear porch. The door is a wooden boarded door with simple wooden frame painted beige. A twelve-pane, white-painted wooden sash window is located in the south-western wall, above a modern stainless steel sink with wooden cabinets. More modern utility cabinets are located against the north-eastern wall. At the base of the wall is a simple, beige painted wooden skirting board above a floor of orange coloured terracotta tiles.

Rear Porch

The rear porch is accessed from the northwest elevation via the utility room. The rear porch is rectangular in shape and measures 2.3m in length by 1.2m in width orientated southwest to northeast. The room forms one-third of the modern brick-built extension attached on to the southeast elevation of the kitchen. The ceiling is plastered and painted white, and all the walls are plastered and painted bright orange with the exception of the southeast wall which is painted white. An eight-pane with four panes boarded over door is located in the southwest

wall and leads into the front courtyard. There is a simple skirting board painted white above a floor of light-grey coloured linoleum squares.

4.2.3 Internal description – First Floor (plates 17 to 20)

Staircase and Landing

The ceiling is plastered and has the remnants of a yellow-orange coloured paper. The base of a white-painted roof truss can be seen on the south-eastern wall which continues through the ceiling and into the roof space. There are doors in the southwest, northwest, and northeast walls which lead into bedroom 1, the bathroom, and bedroom 2 respectively. All three doors are hung in large, white-painted, wooden moulded frames with thick six-panel hard-wood doors with brass handles. A twelve-pane, white-painted, wooden bay sash window with moulded surround and wooden sill is located in the main stairwell in the southeast elevation.

An arch orientated on an east to west axis permits access to the northern part of the landing which has a doorway in the northeast wall with a stairwell into the roof space. The door is a white-painted, six-panel door with brass handle. To the immediate left of this doorway and also in the northeast wall is a four-panel, white-painted door with brass lock and handle permitting access to a cupboard beneath the stairwell. Inside this cupboard the base of a roof truss can be seen which provides clear evidence that the building has been extended to the northwest.

The landing raises a level via four steps to an upper cross-passage landing orientated northeast to southwest. In the southwest wall is a boarded up, wooden framed, white-painted window. In the northwest and northeast walls white-painted, moulded wooden door-frames permit access to bedrooms 3 and 4 respectively. The doors are hung in large, white-painted, wooden moulded frames with thick six-panel hard-wood doors with brass handles. There are white, moulded skirting-boards with dark-stained wooden floorboards throughout.

Bedroom 1

This bedroom is accessed from the northeast via the first floor landing. The room is rectangular measuring 2.9m in width and 3.2m in length orientated on a northwest to southeast axis. The ceiling is plastered but all trace of paper has been removed. The walls are plastered and have the very slight remnants of a yellow coloured paper on the southwest elevation. The base of a roof truss can be seen on the southeast elevation which continues into the roof space. The southeast elevation also has some graffiti on it saying 'E.J. Turner Dec 3/1971', presumably the date in which the room was papered.

The southwest elevation has a wide chimney breast which has had the fireplace blocked and plastered. In the northwest wall is a twelve-pane, white-painted, wooden sash window with moulded surround. The wooden skirting board is large and white-painted, above dark-stained wooden floorboards.

Bedroom 2

This bedroom is accessed from the southwest via the first floor landing. The room is rectangular in shape measuring 3.2m in width and 3.1m in length orientated on a northwest to southeast axis. The ceiling is plastered and papered with white plain paper, now partially removed. There is a curving wall on the southwest elevation due to the stairwell to the roof space accessed from the landing. The walls are plastered but the paper has been removed. A chimney breast is located on the northeast wall but the fireplace has been blocked and plastered. Either side of the chimney breast the recesses have been vaulted.

The southeast wall has a recessed twelve-pane, bay sash window with white-painted wooden frame. There is a white-painted, wooden moulded skirting board above dark-stained floor boards.

Bathroom

The bathroom is accessed from the southeast via the upstairs landing. The room is square in shape and measures 1.3m square. The ceiling is plastered and painted white and the northeast wall has been tiled for a small shower and bath combination. The remaining walls are rendered but the plaster has been removed. A white porcelain sink is located against the northwest wall with a boarded window above it. The skirting board is fairly simple and painted white and the floor is of dark-stained boards.

Bedroom 3

This bedroom is accessed from the southeast via the upstairs landing. The room is rectangular and measures 2.0m in width by 2.3m in length and orientated on a northwest to southeast axis. The ceiling is decorated with white coloured paper, and a moulded, white-painted wooden cornice runs around the top of the walls. The walls are plastered and painted bright yellow. There is a twelve-pane sash window with white-painted wooden frame in the southwest wall, now smashed and boarded over.

There is a chimney breast on the northwest wall which has been blocked and plastered over. A white, free-standing terracotta sink is located on the northeast wall. The skirting board is simple and painted white beneath which are dark-stained floorboards.

Bedroom 4

This bedroom is accessed from the southwest via the upstairs landing. The room is rectangular in shape and measures 2.0m in width by 3.3m in length and orientated on a northwest to southeast axis. The ceiling is plastered and painted white, with a moulded and white-painted cornice. The walls are plastered and painted yellow, with evidence that wall paper had previously been removed. On the southwest wall is some graffiti depicting a face in profile with 'E.J. Turner 1969' written alongside.

The northwest wall has a twelve-pane sash window with white-painted wooden frame, moulded surround and sill. A white, ceramic, free-standing sink is located against the southwest wall and the northeast wall has a chimney breast with blocked up fireplace. There is a fairly large, but plain white skirting board under which the floor is of dark-stained floorboards.

4.2.4 Internal description – Second floor (plates 21 to 23, and 28)

Bedroom 5

This bedroom is accessed from the west via a stairwell which leads down to the first floor landing. The room is set in the eaves and is square in shape measuring 2.3m square. The ceiling is plastered and painted white with a roof light inserted in the southeast roof pitch. The original and steeper roof pitch can be seen in the northeast elevation, and it is clear that the building has been widened to the northwest. A twisted, dark-stained purlin runs from northeast to southwest and continues into the roof space to the southwest. The purlin appears to have twisted due to the apparent removal of a roof truss, most likely to accommodate an extra bedroom.

The walls are plastered and painted white and a simple two-panel door with plain frame is in the eastern wall to permit access to the stairwell. There is a simple white-painted skirting board and the floor is dark-stained floorboards.

Roof Space

The roof structure of Hidden House consists of two separate elements. The north-south bay has a simple open truss roof with raking struts carrying two purlins. All the timber is softwood deal and the simple bead moulding on the purlins suggest a mid to late 19th century

date. The only significant feature of the roof is the unusual collar immediately below the bridled apex. The collar is adze finished suggesting that it may be a salvaged piece of hardwood re-used as a collar. The collar is an unusual design in an unusual location, its exact purpose is unclear, but it may have been added as additional strengthening taking the load of the ridge piece. The poor finish on the principal rafter suggests that it has been sawn back *in-situ* removing the ridge piece and to some extent removing some of the integrity of the truss.

The east west bay has by far the more interesting roof structure; it contains evidence of at least two phases of rebuilding. The roof is carried on three open trusses bridled at the apex with later tie beams and collars on the central and western trusses; the easternmost truss appears original and un-molested. All appear to be pegged oak.

The earlier trusses indicate the original size of the bay (approximately 3metres north to south); the original roof line can also be seen in the west gable. The bay was then extended to the north by approximately 850mm, which necessitated the enlargement of the roof. This was carried out with the addition of two deal rafters bolted to the central and western trusses, extending the roof to the north. New deal tie beams were also added. The use of softwood deal suggests this alteration was carried out in the mid to late 19th century. The inscribed rase marks on the tie beam on the western truss suggests that this may have been added as additional strengthening at this time too. An upright strut has also been added to carry the northern purlin, all in all creating a rather untidy looking roof structure, which does carry out what is required.

The ceiling joists are numbered with short, chisel cut Roman numerals on a small axial beam adjacent to the central truss. Closer inspection indicate that the trusses are in fact incorrectly numbered; starting from the north II (2), III (3), V (5), inverted V (5), VI (6) VIII (8) and finally IX (9) (plate 29). The uniformity of the cuts suggests that this is a genuine mistake rather than the re-used timbers used out of sequence.

Bedroom 6

This bedroom is accessed from the southeast via a stairwell leading down to the first floor landing. The room is rectangular in shape and measures 2.4m in width by 3.6m in length and orientated on a southeast to northwest axis. The room is set in the eaves with two purlins and a truss visible. The northwest wall has a nine-pane sash window and curving chimney breast. The walls are plastered and painted pink. A window is located in the southwest wall but has been boarded over. The skirting board is simple and also painted pink, and floor is covered in a light-brown coloured linoleum.

4.3 Watching Brief

4.3.1 Demolition of the collapsed shop (plate 24)

The removal of the collapsed shop attached to the southeast elevation of the main house revealed two blocked doorways, leading into the rear of number 22 Castle Street through the south-eastern yard wall. The door on the right had originally been through a stone-built garden wall dividing Hidden House from what is now number 22, and had been blocked up with red-brick (1).

Approximately 1.5m to the right of this and built into a red-brick outside toilet, a second door had also been blocked. This part of the wall had several clear phases of construction. It appears that an outside toilet (2) had been constructed of red-brick in the southeast corner of the courtyard to Hidden House, at approximately the same time as a wall of red-brick (2) was constructed perpendicular to the stone garden wall mentioned above. This appears to have created an alleyway between the rear wall of the toilet and the newly constructed red-brick wall. At a later point in time the alleyway was narrowed and turned into an arched doorway

(3) with wooden lintel, which appears to be contemporary with the blocking up of the first doorway. At a later date, possibly in the mid-twentieth century, the arched doorway was blocked with red-brick (4) and sometime after this a second perpendicular wall was constructed against the stone built wall (5).

The blocked doorways suggest an historic link between Hidden House and the area which is now the backyard of 22 Castle Street. The 1829 schedule to accompany the Baron Hill estate map lists Hidden House as having been a house, yard and garden, and the map depicts an open and undeveloped area to the southeast, southwest, and northeast. Currently the southeast part of the property is occupied by a small yard and there is a garden to the northeast. It is possible that the blocked doorways led into the undeveloped part depicted on the map as lying to the southwest. If so, this area may have originally formed part of a larger yard or garden on the south-western side of the property, which is now occupied by the backyard of 24 Castle Street.

4.3.2 Removal of render on the southeast elevation (plate 25)

The removal of render on the south-eastern elevation of the main house revealed two blocked doorways. The first was located approximately 0.5m to the left of the main entrance into the property. This doorway was rectangular and had been blocked with stone rubble and mortar of the same type used on the construction of the main house. The blocked doorway was of similar dimension to the current main entrance and a twelve-pane sash window was positioned immediately above it. The close proximity of the window suggests that it is not an original feature and had been inserted once the door had been blocked. The blocked doorway would have led into the part of the hall which is now occupied by the staircase, suggesting that it, also, is not an original feature of the property and was possibly added at the same time that the doorway was blocked.

The second blocked doorway was located approximately 1.0m to the left of the blocked doorway mentioned above. This doorway was rectangular in shape and of similar dimension to the main entrance, and would have originally led into what is now the dining room. The door had a wooden lintel and had been blocked with red-brick. This entrance into the property clearly post-dates the blocked doorway mentioned above as well as the shop, whose wall ran perpendicular to the blocked doorway. It is likely that the current entrance into the dining room, located towards the southwest side of the south-eastern elevation, was added to permit access to the shop once this doorway had gone out of use.

4.3.3 Removal of render on the northwest elevation and rear extension (plate 26)

The removal of render on the northwest elevation revealed that the wall, like the southeast elevation, was constructed from coarse stone rubble bonded by mortar. The ground floor dining room window and first floor bedroom 1 window had red-brick radiating voussoirs, with the latter also having red-brick either side of the window. Above both windows was a wooden lintel, although the first floor one was oversized. This evidence and the addition of red-brick either side of the window suggests that the first floor window had originally been of the same dimension and positioning as the dining room window beneath it, and had been replaced with a smaller sash window.

The removal of the render on the elevation showed that, unlike the main part of the house, the extension was constructed entirely from red-brick and clearly dates to a much later phase than the rest of Hidden House, with the exception of the utility extension and outside toilet attached to the southeast elevation.

5 CONCLUSION

The name Hidden House may be a fitting name for 18 Castle Street in its current form, however there is evidence to suggest that the house may not have always been quite so hidden away. If the interpretation of Speed's map of 1612 is correct, the house may have originally had its principal elevation towards Little Lane, and what is now the rear garden of the property. The map appears to depict the house as being set back from Little Lane away from the rest of the houses on both Little Lane and Castle Street, singling the property out as being of importance and prominence. The house is depicted as being of rectangular in shape and orientated on a northeast to southwest axis. The information obtained during the building record and during the watching brief has shown that the original building was indeed rectangular in shape prior to the construction of the brick-built extensions. Furthermore, the identification of a blocked entranceway on the southern elevation would have created an opposing door to the rear hall entrance. This could be indicative of a cross-passage, which may have originally separated the hall from what is now the dining room. The rectangular shape of the original building coupled with the potential cross-passage and suggestion of a tripartite arrangement with the hall in the centre and with rooms (current dining room and kitchen) either side, may suggest medieval origins.

Typically, the larger medieval house consisted of three elements: a hall which functioned as the principal living room; a service end often separated from the hall via a cross-passage or opposing doorways; and at the other end a wing of private dwelling rooms. The hall was single-storeyed and open to the roof, but the two wings could be storeyed, with upper levels being accessed via stairs or ladders. It is possible that Hidden House was first constructed to conform to this tripartite arrangement, and the roughly hewn beam with chamfers and stops in the kitchen may indicate the original eastern limit of the hall. If this was the case then the eastern half of the current kitchen may have been part of the eastern wing, although its current dimensions would suggest that it was too small to function as such. It is a possibility that the eastern wing continued eastward beyond the current limits of the house into what is the original stable block of the Bull Inn, although the observation of what appears to be original rubble masonry in the old bread oven on the north-eastern internal kitchen elevation suggests that the house did not extend any further eastward originally. This suggestion is supported by the positioning of the chimney stack over the current eastern gable, although this feature may not be original. It is recommended that if the opportunity ever presents itself then inspection of the stable block of the Bull Inn may provide further evidence of stratigraphic phasing. It would also be useful for the kitchen beam to be dated using dendrochronology and it is recommended that the Dating Old Welsh Houses Group are informed.

The later Baron Hill estate map of 1829 depicts Hidden House as being 'L' shaped, presumably depicting the addition of the 'shop' on to the southeast elevation. The associated schedule names the occupier as Hugh Owen esq and his occupation as a surgeon. The later census of 1841 lists the property as being occupied by Gruffydd Roberts, also a surgeon. It is clear from these two sources that in the first half of the 19th century the property had a tradition of being a surgeon's house, a position of importance, and raises the possibility that the house had been constructed to function as the house of a surgeon. This would perhaps explain not only the apparent prominence of the building in Speed's map of 1612, but also the fact that the house is set apart from the surrounding properties, thus adding an element of privacy. Moreover, the large garden wall and ornate entrance suggests that it is a part of the property that was intended to be seen. It seems likely therefore, that as the 'shop' was in existence during a time that we know the house was occupied by a surgeon it is possible that it was in fact a waiting or consultation room, rather than a shop as it has been traditionally known.

The watching brief element of the project has shown that prior to the construction of the 'shop' there was a link between the yard of the property and the area which is now occupied by the backyards of 20 and 22 Castle Street. The 1829 estate map suggests this area was undeveloped and it is possible that the blocked doorways observed in the yard wall were in

fact gateways into a private yard or garden to the northwest of Hidden House, perhaps being a continuation of what is now the rear garden. Two other blocked doorways were observed in the southeast elevation of the house, both of which predate the 'shop' and are thus earlier than the 1829 map. The earlier doorway blocked with stone may have been one of the original entrances into the building, and its centralised position suggests it may even predate the current main entrance. The blocked doorway certainly led into the area which is now occupied by the staircase and thus clearly predates it, although the original location of the staircase, if indeed there was a first floor, is currently unknown. Moreover, the general arrangement of the groundfloor openings, both blocked and open has the appearance of stabling, with three stalls, the westernmost being slightly larger. It is possible therefore, given the buildings location and its relatively small original footprint, that Hidden House was originally built as stabling, possibly for the adjacent Bull Inn.

The rear of the property has clearly been significantly altered, with the removal and replacement of the first floor window using a smaller sash window, and the addition of a large brick-built extension, which if the rain water hopper is correct, was added in 1834. This may well have coincided with the switch of the principal elevation from the northwest to the southeast.

6 FURTHER RESEARCH

The archaeological building record and watching brief provided an in-depth historical narrative for Hidden House, however it also highlighted the potential for further research which could add to the understanding of the historical development of the building. The following is a list of recommendations which could build on the current knowledge:

- It is recommended that if any further substantial renovation work occurs at Hidden House (in areas currently unobserved) then an archaeological watching brief is maintained.
- It is recommended that if any renovation/refurbishment work is proposed in the stable block of the Bull Inn then an archaeological watching brief is maintained.
- It is recommended that the Dating Old Welsh Houses Group are informed of the roughly hewn beam in the kitchen with view to obtaining possible dates via dendrochronology.

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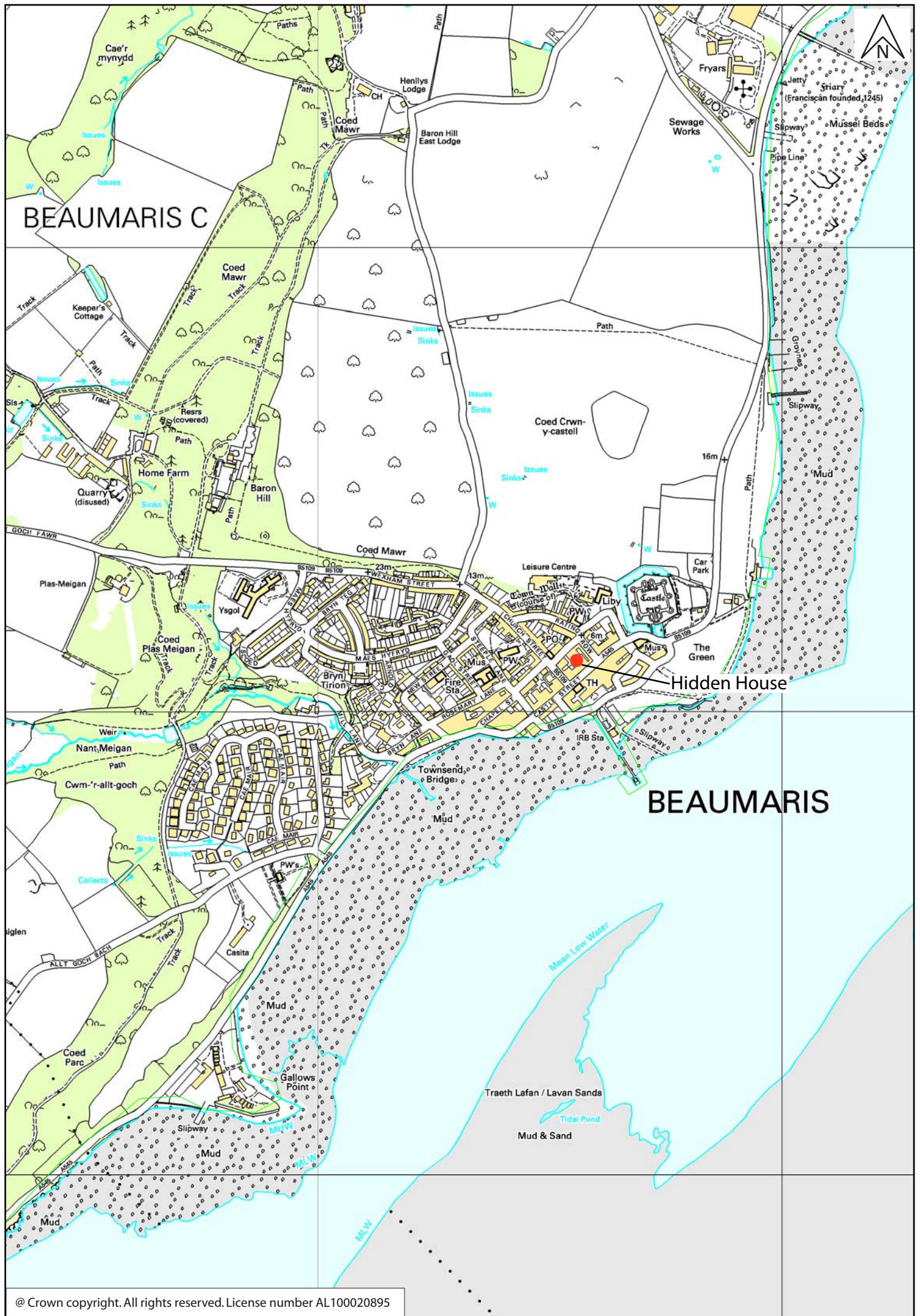


Figure 1: Location of Hidden House, 1:10,000 at A4

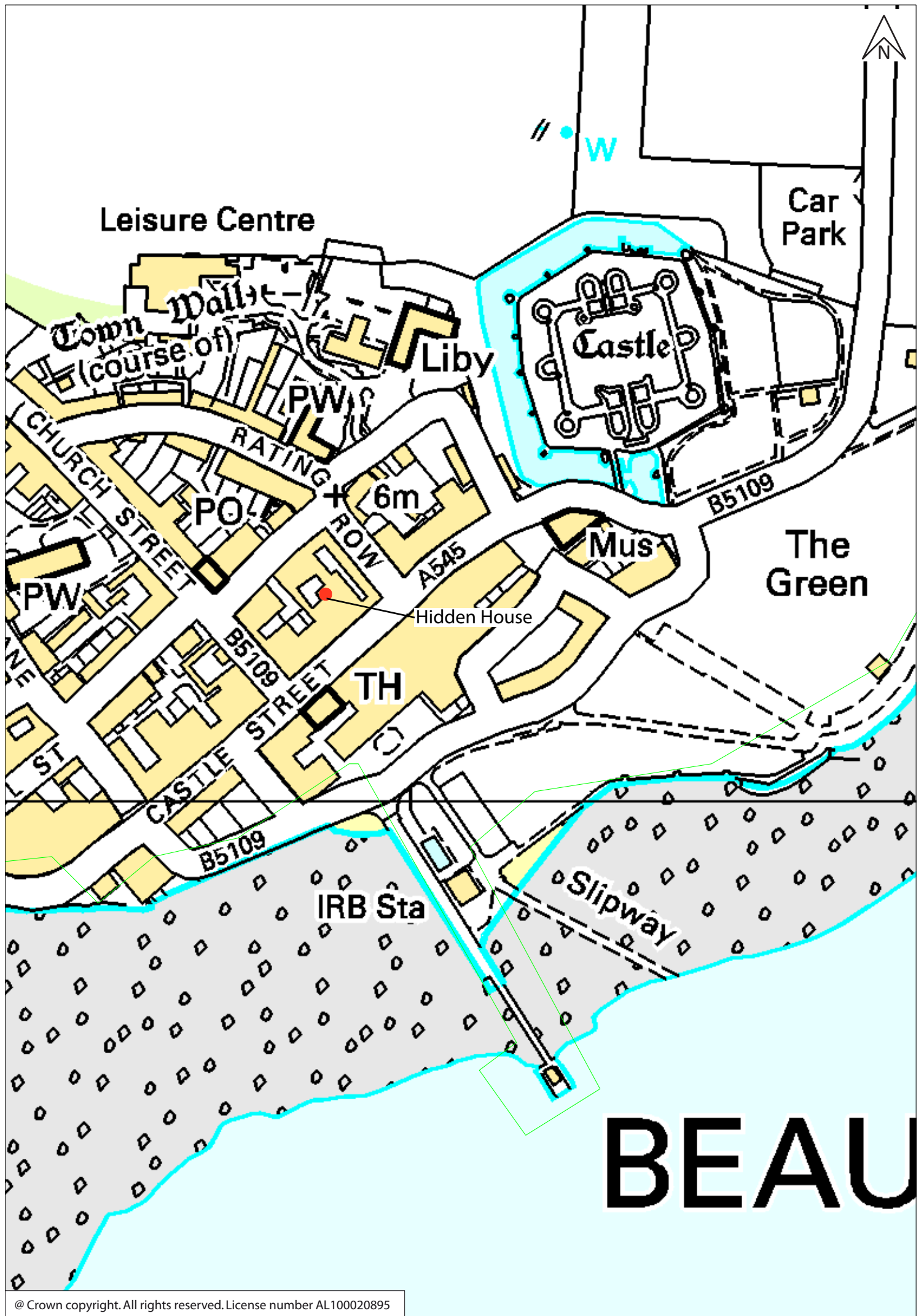


Figure 2: Location of Hidden House, 1:2,500 at A4

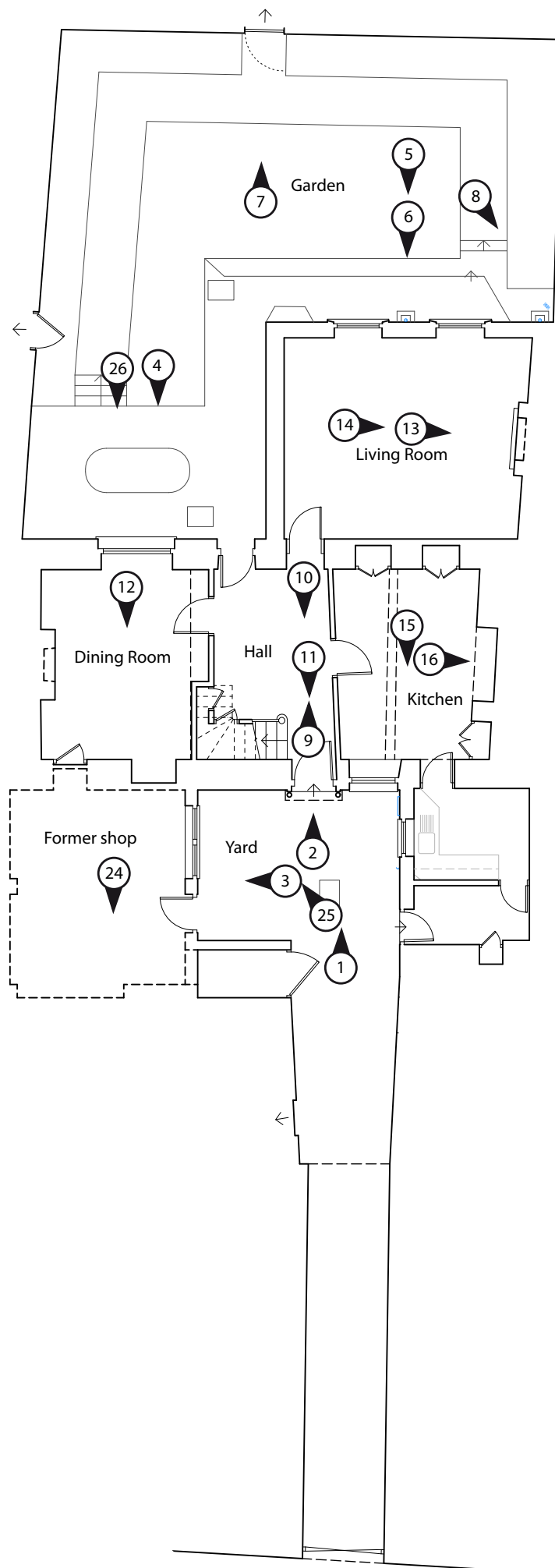


Figure 3: Direction of photographs, ground floor (reproduced from client dwg 157 D (02))

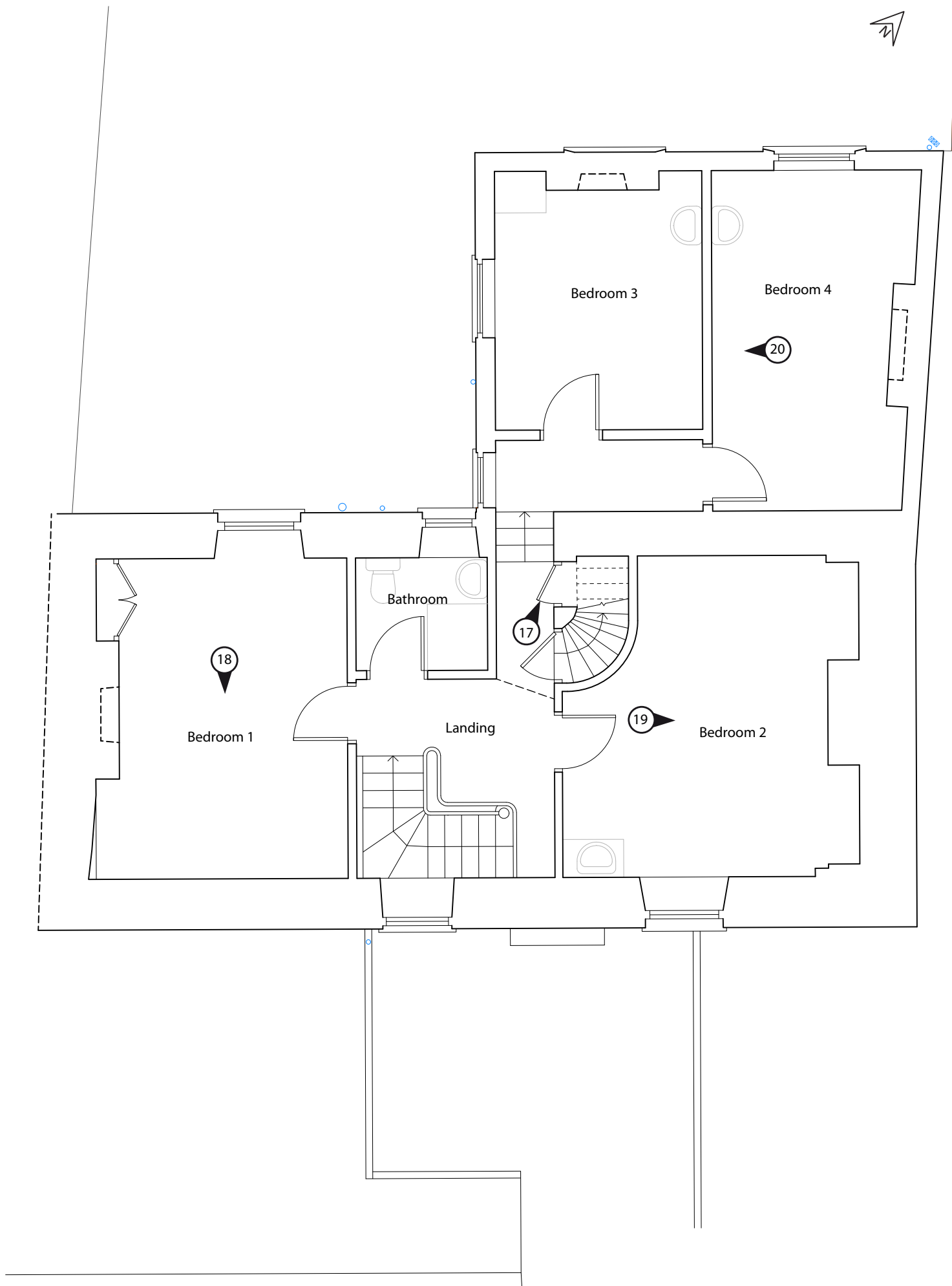


Figure 4: Direction of photographs, first floor (reproduced from client dwg 157 D (04))

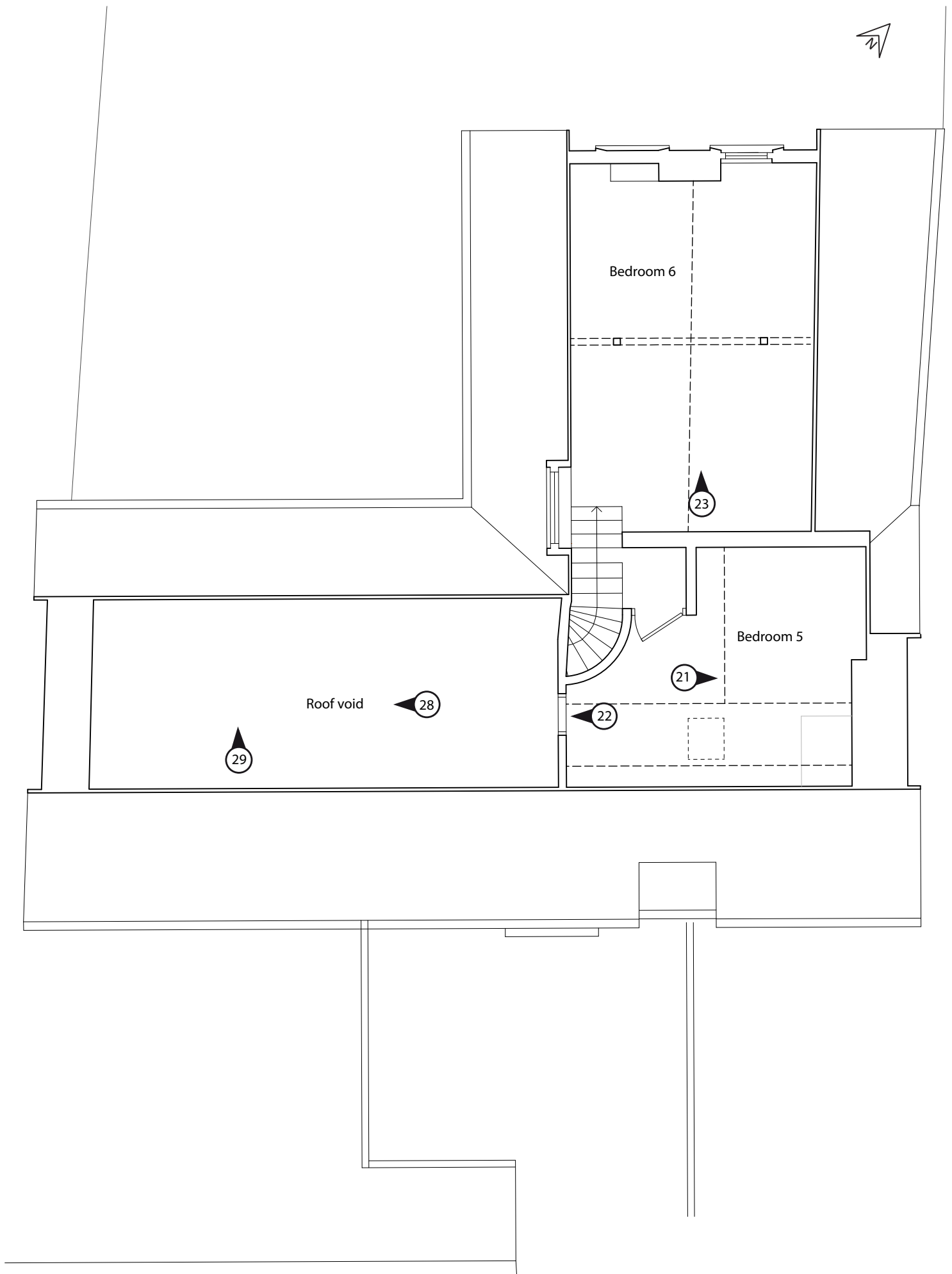


Figure 5: Direction of photographs, second floor (reproduced from client dwg 157 D (05))

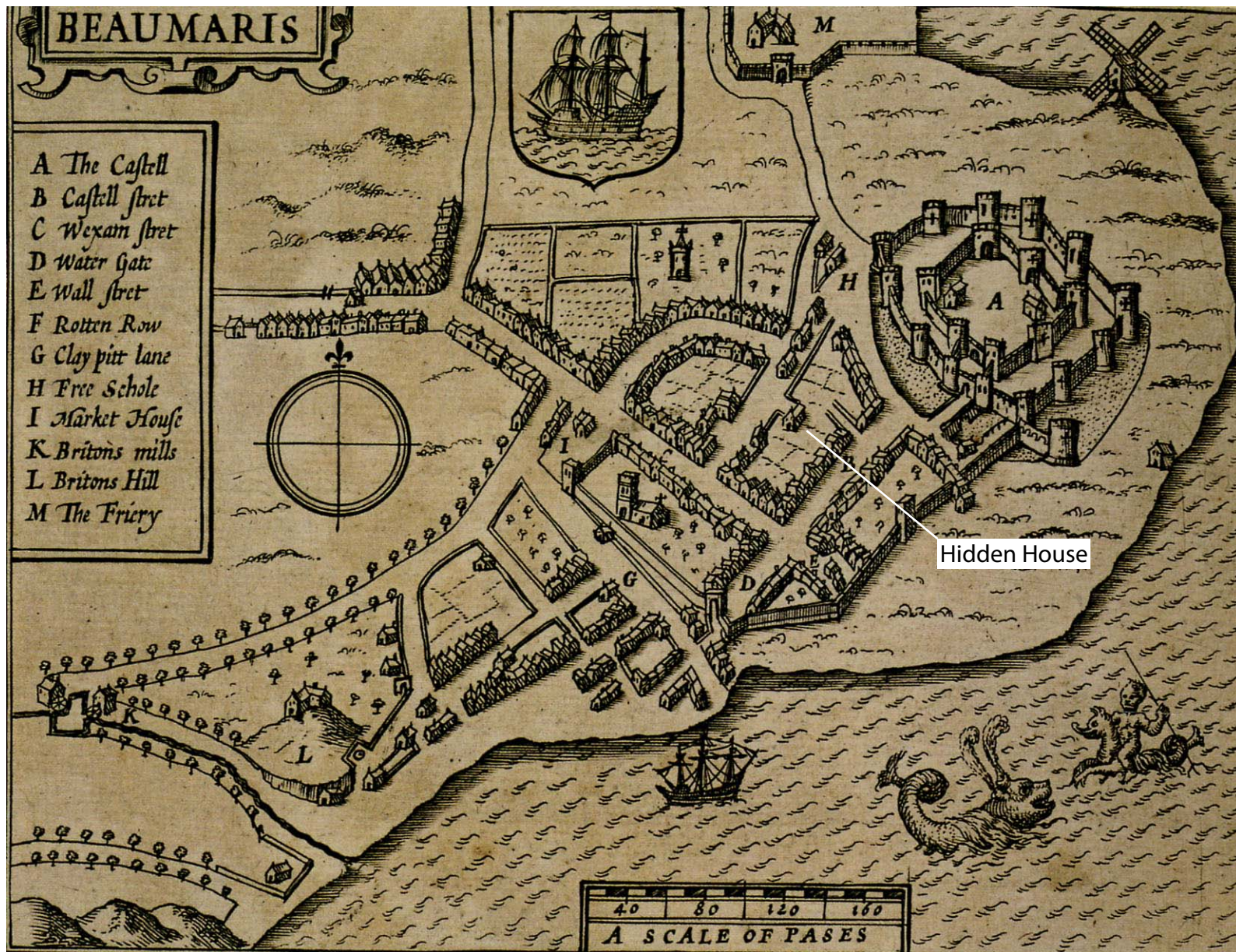


Figure 6: John Speed's map of 1612 showing Hidden House

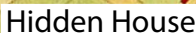


Figure 7: Baron Hill Estate map of Beaumaris 1829



Plate 01: Southeast external elevation, 1.0m scale.



Plate 02: Southeast external elevation, main entrance, 1.0m scale.



Plate 03: Northeast external elevation of collapsed shop, 1.0m scale.



Plate 04: Northwest external elevation.



Plate 05: Northwest external elevation, first floor.



Plate 06: Northwest external elevation, ground floor.



Plate 07: Rear external courtyard garden from the southeast.



Plate 08: Rain hopper on the northwest external elevation, showing the date 1834.



Plate 09: Hallway from the southeast, 1.0m scale.



Plate 10: Hallway from the northwest showing staircase, 1.0m scale.



Plate 11: Main entrance ornate lockplate.



Plate 12: Dining Room from the northwest, 1.0m scale.



Plate 13: Parlour from the southwest, 1.0m scale.



Plate 14: Parlour from the southwest showing roundel.



Plate 15: Kitchen from the northwest showing beam, 1.0m scale.



Plate 16: Kitchen from the southwest, 1.0m scale.



Plate 17: Landing cupboard showing original truss.



Plate 18: Bedroom 1 from the northwest showing base of truss, 1.0m scale.



Plate 19: Bedroom 2 from the southwest, 1.0m scale.



Plate 20: Bedroom 4 graffiti from the northeast.



Plate 21: Bedroom 5 from the southwest showing original roof pitch, 1.0m scale.



Plate 22: Roof Void from the northeast showing truss and raised roof pitch.



Plate 23: Bedroom 6 from the southeast showing truss, 1.0m scale.

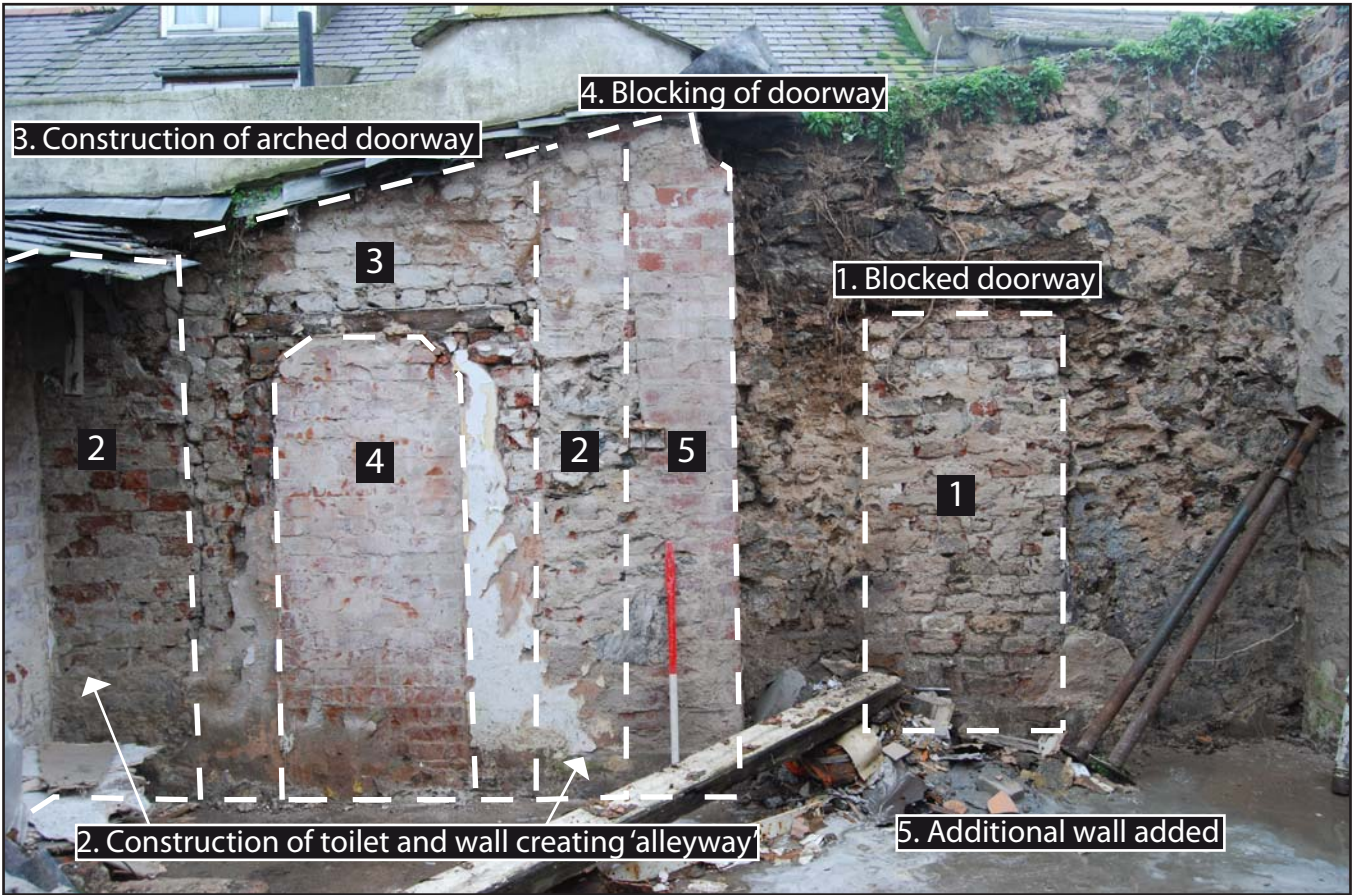


Plate 24: Phases of construction in demolished shop.



Plate 25: Southeast elevation from the east showing two blocked entrances, 1.0m scale.



Plate 26: Removal of render on the northwest elevation showing replaced first floor window.



Plate 27: Kitchen showing roof beam from the northwest, 1.0m scale.



Plate 28: Exposed roof trusses showing roof extension from the northeast.



Plate 29: Ceiling joists carpenter mark, from the southeast



Plate 30: Roughly hewn beam with chamfers and stops in the kitchen, from the northwest



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