

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**HISTORIC BUILDING ASSESSMENT:
BRASS SHOP
FR BOSTON LODGE WORKS
MINFFORDD
GWYNEDD**

NGR: SH 58486 37893

*on behalf of Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways Heritage Ltd
and the Festiniog Railway Company*



Bob Zeepvat BA FSA MIFA

December 2013

ASC: 1388/FRC/3




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Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	FRC/3	<i>ASC Project No:</i>	1388
<i>OASIS ref:</i>	tbc	<i>Event/Accession no:</i>	n/a
<i>County:</i>	Merioneth		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Minffordd		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Penrhyndeudraeth		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	SH 58486 37893		
<i>Present use:</i>	Storage		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Repair & refurbishment		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Gwynedd Council		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	Pre-planning		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	September 2012		
<i>Commissioned by:</i>	Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways Heritage Ltd, and the Ffestiniog Railway Company Harbour Station Porthmadog Gwynedd LL49 9NF		
<i>Contact name:</i>	John Alexander (Secretary, FWHRHL)		

Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Bob Zeepvat	<i>Date:</i>	26 th November 2013
<i>Revisions:</i>	Bob Zeepvat	<i>Date:</i>	8 th December 2013
<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	8 th December 2013

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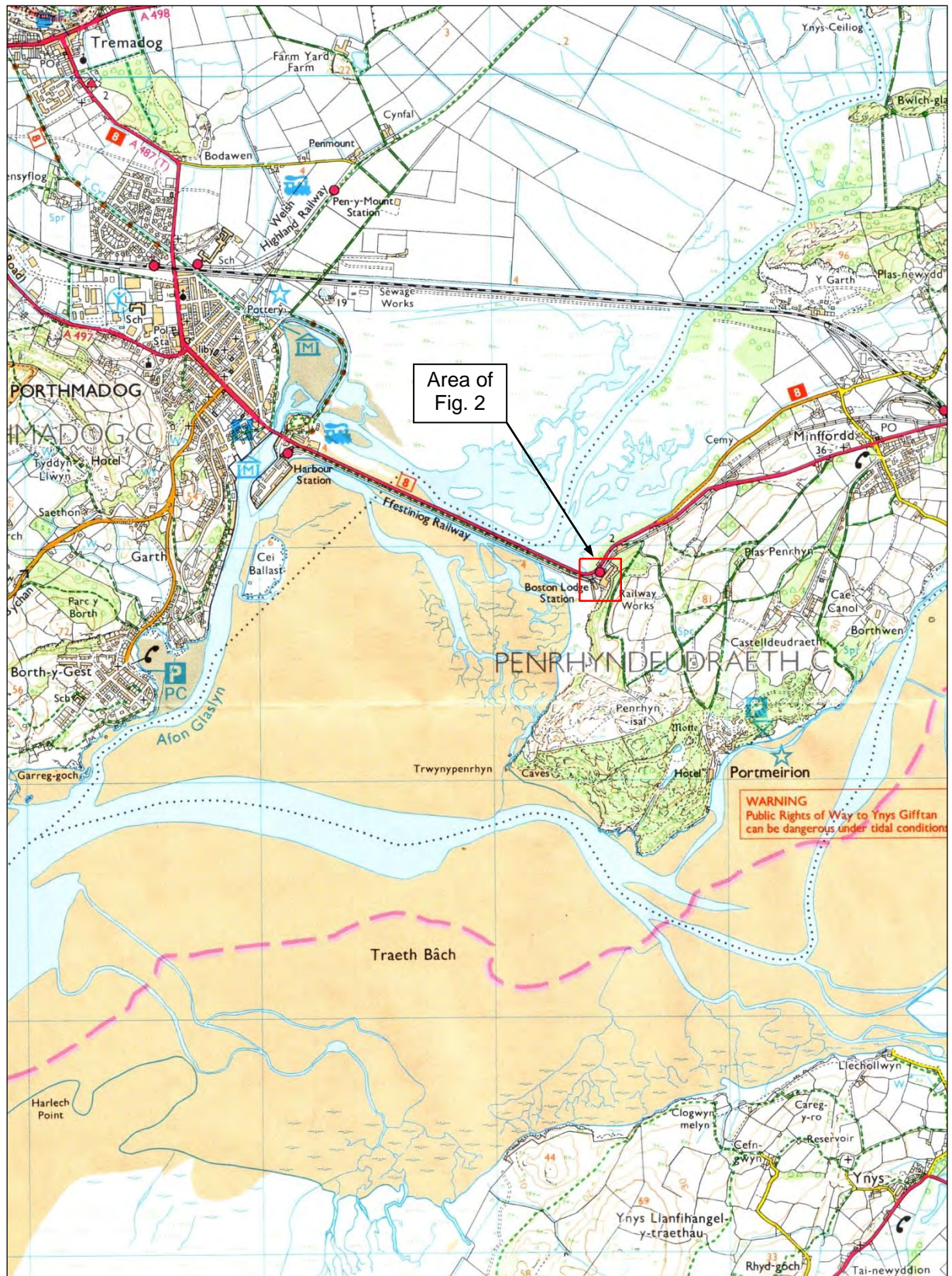


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

In September 2012 a historic building assessment of the Brass Shop, Boston Lodge Works, Minffordd, Gwynedd was carried out to inform proposals for refurbishment/conversion of this Grade II listed building.

The Brass Shop was probably constructed in 1837 or 1838, and may be the earliest of the Works buildings. The building was constructed as a smithy, probably becoming the brass foundry in the 1870s, though the precise date for this change of use remains unknown. Little information was found relating to the building's subsequent use or development: structurally it appears to have remained unchanged until the 1960s. In 1962 it was subject to major repairs, which involved dismantling of its original chimney, and stabilisation of the rear wall. More recently, a mezzanine floor supported on a frame of old rails was installed, and the building has since been used as a store.

The Brass Shop has a neglected air, though it appears sound. The roof shows few obvious signs of water ingress. The main concern is the low level of the floor, which facilitates the ingress of water, and consequently encourages dampness within the building.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 In September 2012 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out historic building assessment of the Brass Shop, Boston Lodge Works, Minffordd, Gwynedd. The project was commissioned on behalf of the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways Heritage Limited (FWHRHL) and the Festiniog Railway Company (FRC), and was carried out according to a standard method statement (Appendix 1).

1.2 *Planning Background*

This building assessment has been requested in order to inform proposals for the refurbishment/conversion of the Brass Shop, a Grade II listed building.

1.3 *Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd*

ASC is an independent archaeological practice providing a full range of archaeological services including consultancy, field evaluation, mitigation and post-excavation studies, historic building recording and analysis. ASC is recognised as a *Registered Organisation* by the Institute for Archaeologists and is also accredited ISO 9001, in recognition of its high standards and working practices.

1.4 *Management*

The project was carried out under the overall direction of Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA.

1.5 *The Site*

1.5.1 *Location & Description*

Boston Lodge Works is located in the administrative county of Gwynedd, and the civil parish of Penrhyndeudraeth, centred at NGR SH 5846 3784. It lies at the south-eastern end of the *Cob* embankment, which carries the FR and the A487 road across the Glaslyn estuary to Porthmadog (Fig. 1). The Works

occupies the former quarry site that provided material for the east end of the Cob: the FR main line and the road pass to the west before turning sharply onto the Cob. Road access to the site is from the north.

The Works comprises a number of buildings, grouped around three yard areas. The *Brass Shop* is a single-storey building located at the south end of the *Top* or *East Yard* at NGR SH 58486 37893. It is bounded to the west by No. 2 Boston Lodge Cottages, to the north by the former Oil Store and the Telephone Exchange, to the east by the south end of the Top Yard, and to the south by the modern Canteen (Den), built on the site of the former Saw Mill.

1.5.2 *Orientation*

Notwithstanding the orientations in the above site description (which relate to Fig. 2), the author has been requested to follow the long-standing descriptive conventions relating to Boston Lodge, in that the Works are generally referred to as lying east-west (in reality, north-east to south-west), with the road to the north (in reality, north-west). Compass roses shown on drawings point to 'true' north, with a red line indicating 'site' north.

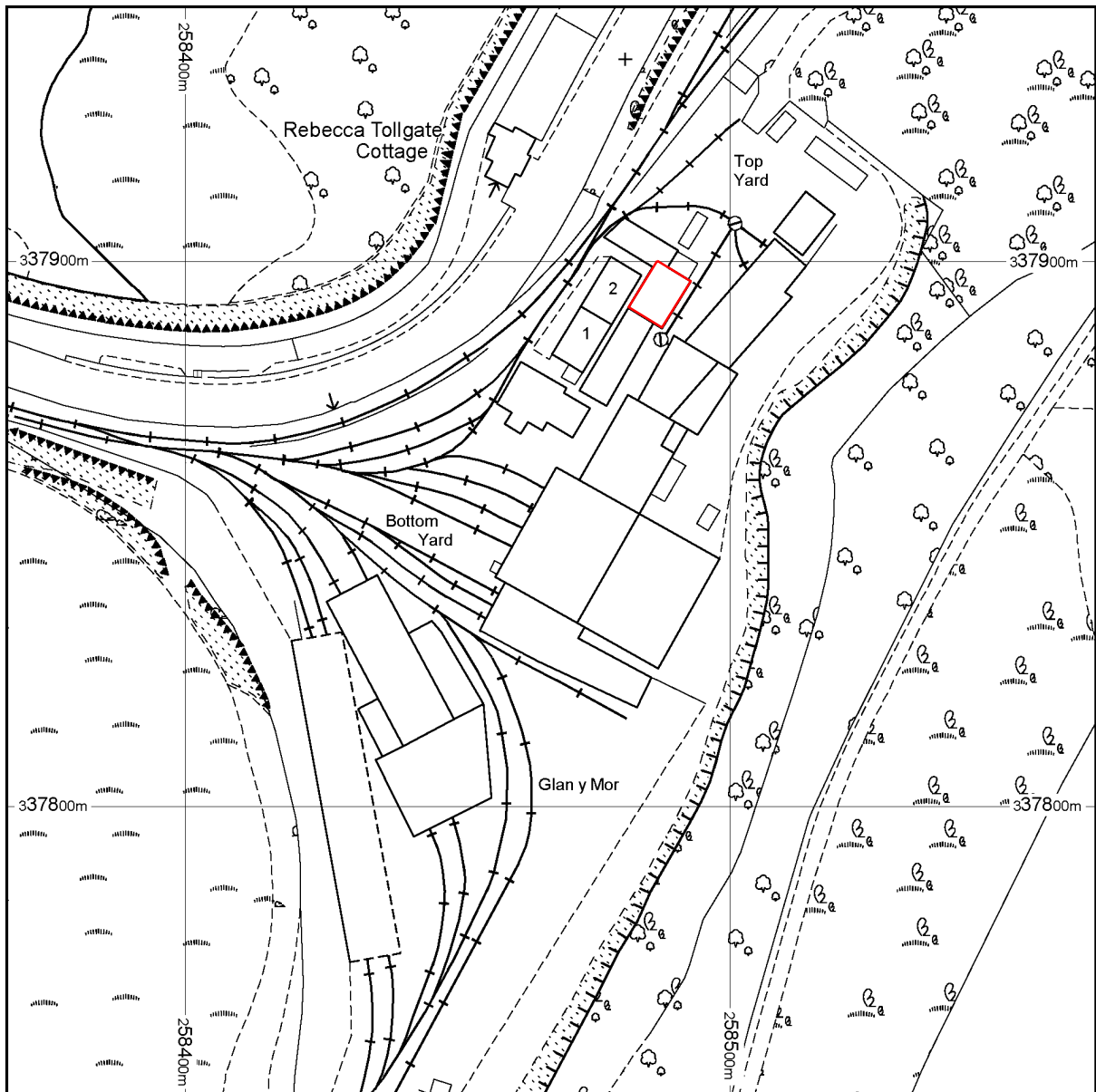


Figure 2: Boston Lodge Works, 2010: *Brass Shop* highlighted (scale 1:1250)

2 Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

As described in the method statement (Appendix 1), the aims of the building assessment were:

- To compile a basic record of the structure concerned, prior to refurbishment
- To ascertain the structural history and development of the building within its local context
- To provide sufficient information on the historic and architectural significance of the building to inform proposals relating to its refurbishment and maintenance.

In addition to the above, comment on the structural condition of the building was requested.

2.2 Standards

The work conforms to the method statement, to the relevant sections of the Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000) and *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001), to current English Heritage guidelines (EH 2006), and to the relevant sections of ASC's *Operations Manual*.

2.3 Methods

The work was carried out according to ASC's standard method statement (Appendix 1), which describes a historic building assessment, with recording to English Heritage Level 2 (EH 2006).

2.4 Constraints

At the time of the site visit the Brass Shop was used for the storage of parts for locomotives. Shelving and parts filled most of the interior, providing less than ideal conditions for examination of the building's fabric, and for photographic recording.

3 Historical Background

- 3.1 The following section provides a summary of the readily available historical background to the site and its environs. This section has been compiled from published sources relating to the FR, augmented with information provided by John Alexander (JLA), Secretary of FWHRL.
- 3.2 The Top Yard was levelled c.1836 (Lewis 1965, 32). The Brass Shop was probably constructed in 1837 or 1838 (JLA notes). Boyd (1975, 264) notes that the yard 'was completely built up as at present' in 1848. The earliest indication of the building's function appears on an insurance plan of Boston Lodge (FR Archives XD97/20010), drawn up in 1856, which labels it 'Smithy' (Fig. 3).
- 3.3 Steam locomotives were introduced to the FR in 1863. Their impact on traffic was so significant that in 1869 the company presented to Parliament a bill to double the main line throughout. The deposited plan (Fig. 4), prepared in 1868, provides a picture of Boston Lodge at that time: the Brass Shop is shown (though not labelled) at the centre of the complex. The precise date for the change in use from smithy to Brass Shop is not known.
- 3.4 Subsequent plans of Boston Lodge provide little evidence of development or change to the Brass Shop. The 1889 Ordnance Survey 25" sheet (Fig. 5) shows the Works more or less at the full extent of its development during the 19th century. This layout survived, more or less unchanged, until the 1950s.
- 3.5 Two recorded features of the Brass Shop which no longer survive are the two square-section chimneys rising above the north wall of the building, shown on photographs of the site until the late 1950s / early 1960s (Fig. 6). One chimney rises from the north-east corner of the building, behind the Oil Store, and is wholly constructed in brick. The second chimney is roughly in the centre of the north wall: its lower part was built in stone, while the upper part (which leans towards No. 2 Cottage in the photograph) is shown rendered, and could be of brick construction like the first chimney. Also shown on the centre of the roof is a large 'pigeon box' ventilator: this too no longer survives. One other feature of the building worth noting on Fig. 6 is the east-facing window, which was blocked when the Telephone Exchange was constructed in the angle between the Brass Shop and Oil Store in 1970.
- 3.6 The Brass Shop was subject to major repairs in 1962 (FRM 22, 1963), which comprised rebuilding of part of the rear (north) wall and the roof, at the same time as the stairs to the top floor of Cottage No. 2 and the rubble fill below them was removed. It was probably following these repairs that the present upper floor was inserted into the building. The Brass Shop is now used as a store for locomotive parts.

3.7 *Listed Building Description*

The Brass Shop is listed Grade II (CADW ref. 14417). Salient points of the listing description are as follows:

Single-storey, built of local slatey rubble with slate roof and wide eaves, bracketed to gable end. 3-bay front with central boarded door flanked by 4-light transomed windows. 1970's extension to right now links with Oil Store.

Listed as part of this especially complete example of a C19 railway engineering works which has important historical associations with the Ffestiniog Railway. Group value with other listed items at Boston Lodge.

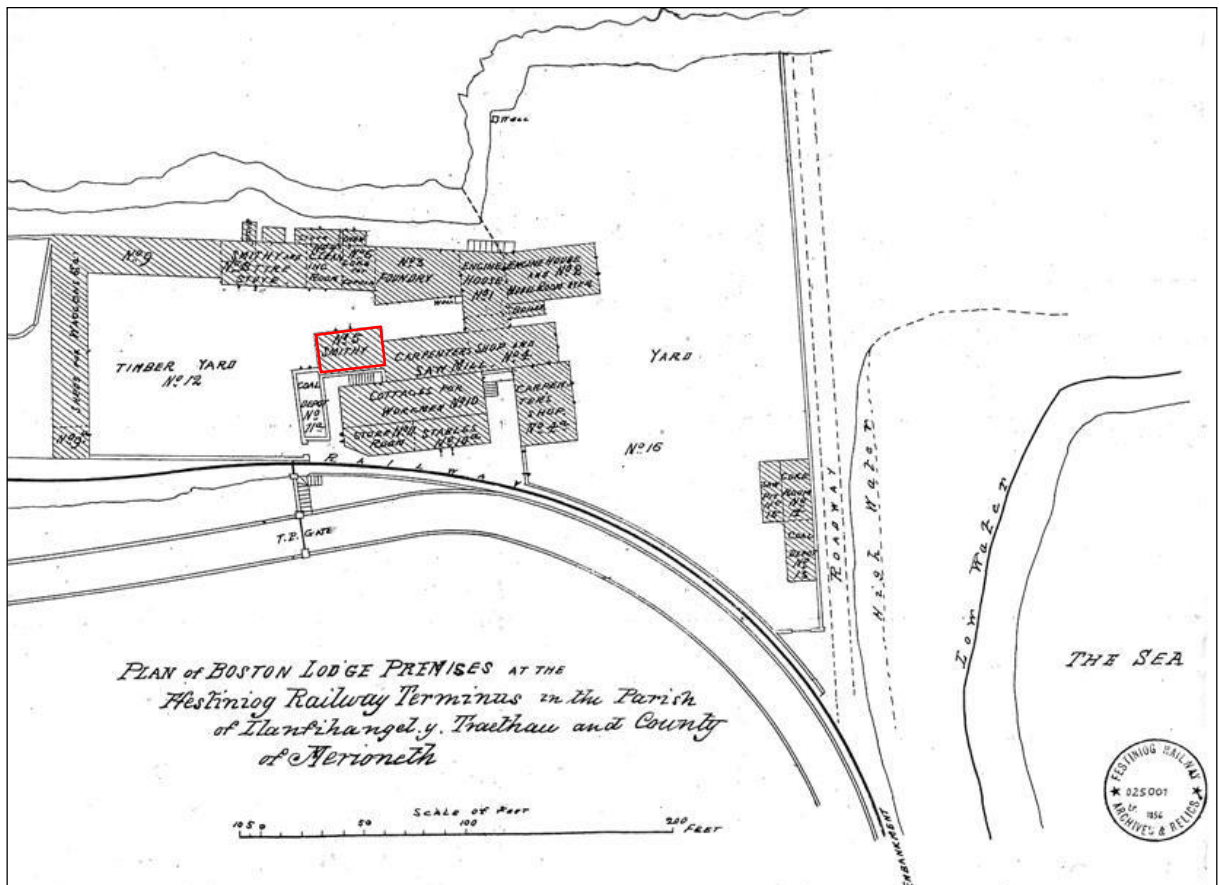


Figure 3: Boston Lodge insurance plan, 1856 (FR Archives XD97/20010)

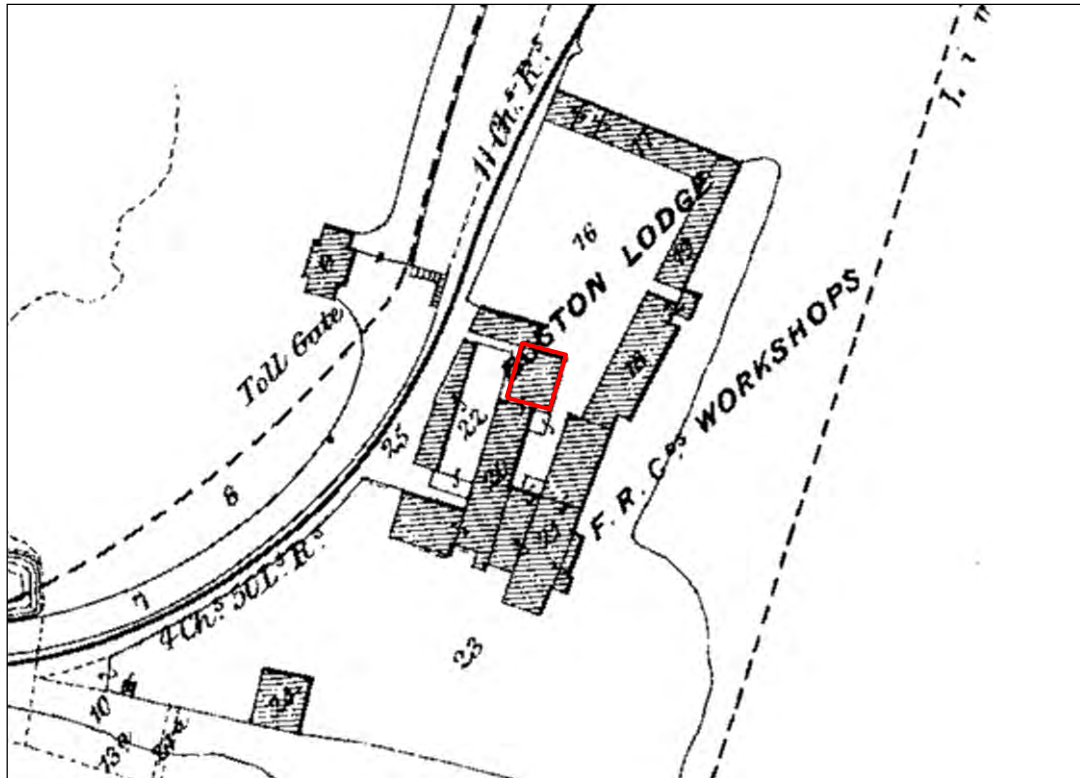


Figure 4: Boston Lodge in 1868: Brass Shop highlighted (*not to scale*)

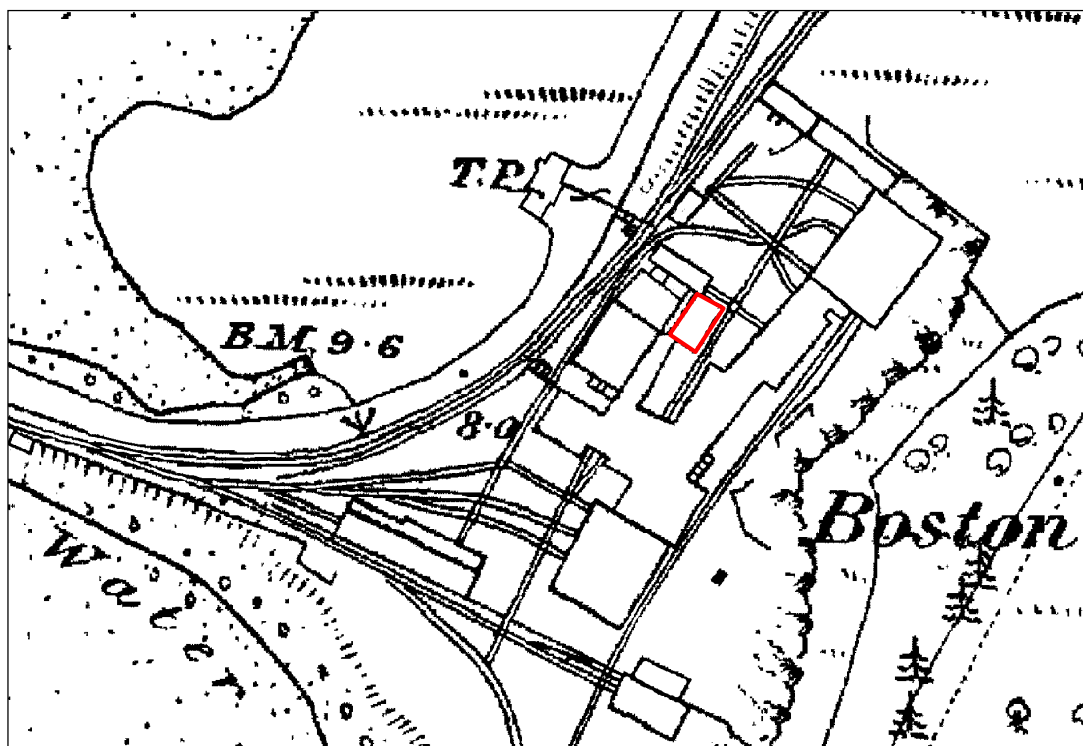


Figure 5: Boston Lodge in 1889: extract from Ordnance Survey First Edition 25" sheet
(*not to scale*)



Figure 6: Brass Shop from the east, 1952 (*J.B. Snell*)

4 Description

4.1 *Exterior* (Figs 7 - 10)

The Brass Shop is a rectangular structure of three bays, $9.85 \times 7.2\text{m}$ (32' 4" \times 23' 7") overall, aligned NE-SW, rising to a height of 3.7m (12' 2") at the eaves, and c.6.0m (19' 7") at the roof apex (Fig. 7). Its walls are constructed of coursed slate rubble with lime mortar bonding, c.0.6m (2') thick, with slate slab lintels and window sills.

The south-east elevation (Fig. 8) forms the front of the building, facing onto the alley linking the East and West Yards of the Works. Entrance to the building is gained by a central plank and batten door, 1.8m (5' 11") high, flanked by identical 4 \times 2-light fixed timber-framed windows.

The south-west elevation is partly obscured by the modern amenity block: only the upper part is visible, and this is cement rendered and pebble-dashed, so no significant features are visible (Fig. 9).

The north-east elevation is largely obscured by the Telephone Exchange: only the upper part of the gable is visible (Fig. 10). No significant features are visible in this area. Figure 6, which predates the construction of the Telephone Exchange, shows a window in this elevation, similar to those in the south-east elevation.

The north-west side of the building backs onto the rear of No. 2 Boston Lodge Cottages, and is not readily accessible. Based on internal examination, this elevation has no significant features or openings.

4.2 *Interior* (Figs 11-13)

Internally, the Brass Shop measures $8.6 \times 6.0\text{m}$ (28' 2" \times 19' 7") overall. The floor appears to be concrete, slightly lower than the external ground level at the door. The walls are stone, painted white (Figs 11, 12). The entrance to the building is flanked by timber screens, 0.75m (2' 5½") wide, rising almost to the eaves (Fig. 13). Two brick buttresses rise up the north-west wall, supporting the roof trusses. In the north-east wall is the blocked opening for the window shown in Fig. 5. A narrower bricked-up opening in the south-west wall, now containing shelving, could have been a second external doorway or window.

The other significant feature noted on the ground floor of the Brass Shop is the remains of a brick-lined flue, running up the north-west wall, close to the north corner of the building. This appears to align with the former chimney, shown on Fig. 6, and probably indicates the location of the furnace. This feature is behind shelving, and consequently could not be properly examined or recorded. Its approximate location is shown on Fig. 7.

An upper floor has been inserted into the building, presumably when it became a store. The floor is supported on old double-head rails set vertically into the floor, carrying a horizontal framework of rails on which a timber floor has been laid. This floor is accessed by a steep set of stairs, rising immediately inside the door.

4.3 *Roof* (Figs 14, 15)

The roof structure is supported by two substantial king-post trusses (Figs 14, 15), both fitted with angled bracing struts. The trusses support purlins (2 each side) and a ridge

board, on which the rafters are carried. The slates are nailed direct to battens, without felt or boarding. There are two skylights of different sizes in the south-east face of the roof: both are shown in Fig. 6.

4.4 *Condition*

While it appears sound on the whole, the Brass Shop gives the impression of being neglected, like many of the older buildings at Boston Lodge. Although probably untouched since before WWII, the roof appears sound, with few obvious signs of water ingress. There is evidence of historic outward movement in the rear (north-west) wall, and the weight of the roof on that side is supported by the two brick buttresses, though this should probably be regarded as a short-term solution to the problem, particularly if the building is to be used for purposes necessitating a more frequent human presence. The present low level of the ground floor must also give some cause for concern because it facilitates the ingress of water, and encourages dampness within the structure.

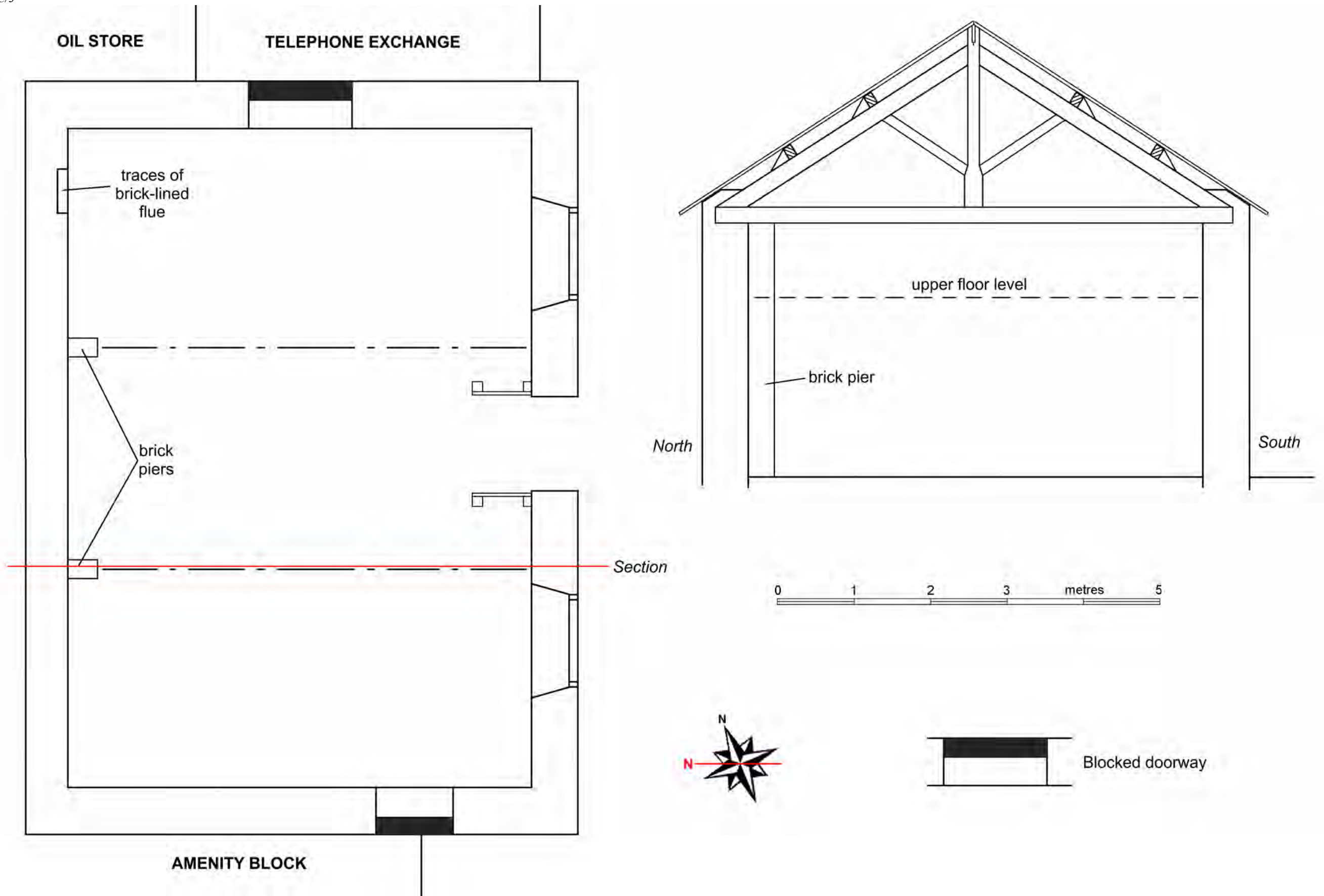


Figure 7: Brass Shop, plan and section (scale 1:50)



Figure 8: Brass Shop, south elevation from south-east



Figure 9: Brass Shop, west elevation from south-west



Figure 10: Brass Shop, east elevation from south-east



Figure 11: Brass Shop interior, looking east



Figure 12: Brass Shop interior, looking west



Figure 13: Door screen and stairs to upper floor



Figure 14: Upper floor, looking west



Figure 15: Upper floor, looking east

5 Conclusions

The Brass Shop was probably constructed in 1837 or 1838, following levelling of the Top Yard. It is suggested that it may be the earliest of the Works buildings. The building appears to have been constructed as a smithy, probably becoming the brass foundry in the 1870s, when the FR had need of this facility to manufacture bearing brasses and small brass fittings for its locomotives and rolling stock. However, the precise date for this change of use remains unknown.

Neither subsequent plans of Boston Lodge nor the historic record provide much evidence of further development or change to the Brass Shop prior to 1954. From Fig. 6 the building appears to have survived in a reasonable condition into the preservation era. However, it was subject to major repairs in 1962. From the available structural evidence it is likely that these repairs were necessary because of movement in the rear wall and probably also the chimney, and that at this time the chimney was taken down, brick piers were added to the rear wall and the 'pigeon box' ventilator on the roof was removed. The structure of old rails supporting the inserted upper floor could date from this time, or later. In 1970 the east-facing window was blocked when the Telephone Exchange was built, and the doorway to the west was blocked by the time the present amenity block was constructed in 1977. The Brass Shop is now used as a store for locomotive parts.

Like many of the older less well used buildings at Boston Lodge, the Brass Shop has a neglected air, though it appears generally sound. The roof, though not felted, shows few obvious signs of water ingress. The main concerns are the rear wall, which has moved outward in the past and was partly rebuilt in 1962 and reinforced with internal brick piers supporting that side of the roof, and the floor, which is lower than the surrounding yard level, facilitating the ingress of water, and encouraging dampness within the structure.

6 Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned on behalf of Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways Heritage Ltd and the Festiniog Railway Company. The writer is grateful to John Alexander for his assistance. The project was managed for ASC by Bob Zeepvat BA FSA MIFA, who also undertook the on-site recording and prepared the report. The report was edited by Jonathan Hunn BA PhD FSA MIFA.

7 Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Report
2. Survey notes
3. Survey drawings
4. List of photographs
5. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited initially with FWHRHL, and will ultimately be deposited with the FR's modern archives as FRC/3.

8 References

Standards & Specifications

EH 2006 *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice*. English Heritage (London).

IFA 2010 Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*.

IFA (various dates) Institute for Archaeologists' *Standards & Guidance* documents (*Desk-Based Assessments 2011, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings 2008*).

Books and Historical Sources:

Boyd J I C 1975 *The Festiniog Railway*. 2 vols. Oakwood Press (Lingfield)

FRHG 2003 *The Spooner Album – Seymour Memorial Edition*. Festiniog Railway Heritage Group/RCL Publications (Garndolbenmaen)

FRM – Festiniog Railway Magazine

Johnson P 2007 *An Illustrated History of the Festiniog Railway, 1832-1954*. Oxford Publishing Company.

Lewis M J T 1965 *How Festiniog Got Its Railway*. Railway & Canal Historical Society.

Maps

1856 Insurance Plan of Boston Lodge (*FR Archives XD97/20010*)

1869 Festiniog Railway Bill; deposited plans

1889 Ordnance Survey First Edition 25" sheet

1917 Ordnance Survey Third Edition 25" sheet

2010 Ordnance Survey 1:1250 digital mapping

Other Sources

Historical notes and photographs provided by J Alexander, FRHL

Appendix 1: Method Statement

Aims

- To compile a basic record of the structure(s) concerned, prior to refurbishment, conversion or demolition
- To ascertain the structural history and development of the building, within its local context
- To provide sufficient information on the historic and architectural significance of the building to inform proposals relating to its refurbishment / conversion / development.

Standards

The work will conform to the relevant sections of the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance Notes* (2001) and *Code of Conduct* (2000), to current English Heritage guidelines (EH 1991, EH 2006), and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

Methods

- A programme of historical research, using readily available sources (eg. Historic Environment Record, County Record Office, local libraries, planning records)
- A survey of the building, normally to EH Level 2.
- Preparation of an assessment report, based on the results of the above.

Historic building assessment involves a combination of historical research, written description, measured survey and photography. It may lead to a requirement for more detailed survey and analysis prior to refurbishment, conversion or demolition. As such, it is essential that unrestricted access to the structure being recorded is given to the surveyors, subject to current health and safety requirements and site security.

Historical Research

Background historical research will follow current IFA standards and guidelines for desk-based assessment (IFA 2001). All sources consulted will be listed in the final report.

Written Description

The written description will be prepared from detailed notes and sketches taken on site, augmented by a study of the drawings and photographs, where appropriate. Depending on the nature of the building, the written description will be presented in a logical and consistent format (e.g. overall structure: external details, roof and walls: internal layout: internal description by room), supported by relevant drawings and photographs.

Measured Survey

Measured surveys will normally be carried out using tapes or LDM (laser distance measurement) for vertical and horizontal measurement throughout. A surveyor's level or Total Station EDM may be used to establish floor levels. Where appropriate, reference may be made to available architects' or engineers' drawings, either on paper or in an appropriate CAD format. Plastic film will be used for all field drawings. Scales used will be appropriate to the size and complexity of the structures or features being recorded: generally 1:50 or 1:100 for floor plans, 1:20 or 1:50 for elevations and sections, and 1:20 or 1:10 for architectural details, plant and machinery, etc.

Photographic Survey

The primary photographic record will normally be compiled in 35mm black & white print format, supplemented by digital photography. A photographic register will be maintained on ASC's *Photographic Record Sheet*, fully cross-referenced. Digital photographs may be used to illustrate the report. Metric scales will be used in photographs where appropriate. Photography will employ natural light wherever possible, but artificial light, flash or floodlighting will be used where necessary.

Reporting

Upon completion of the survey and research stages the assessment report will be prepared, based on the results obtained by the work described above. This will typically include:

- a concise non-technical summary of the results
- information relating to the circumstances of the project
- a summary of the aims of the project and the methods used
- background information about the site, including any desk-based studies

- a description of the results, supported by appropriate illustrative material
- a conclusion, summarising the results and examining their significance
- appendices (copies of record sheets, reference works etc.)
- an HER summary sheet, if required

Copies of the report will be provided as required to the Client, the Planning Archaeologist, the National Monuments Record, the Local Planning Authority, and any other bodies designated by the Planning Archaeologist or client. Eight copies are normally produced: a charge is indicated for providing additional copies.

In accordance with ASC's normal reporting procedures, interim reports on any significant discoveries made during the project will be submitted to the relevant period journals (e.g. *Britannia*, *Medieval Archaeology*) and to any relevant regional journals (e.g. *CBA Mid-Anglia Bulletin*, *South Midlands Archaeology*) within one year of the project's completion.

Once the final report has been accepted by the Planning Archaeologist, an OASIS fieldwork summary form will be completed and submitted to the Archaeology Data Service.

Archiving

All archaeological projects generate a quantity of records and related material (paper, photographic and electronic records, etc). Together, these constitute the *project archive*. While the report may describe the project's findings in some detail, the archive contains the evidence on which the report is based, and its importance cannot be too highly stressed. By their nature, building surveys cannot always be repeated, so the archive often constitutes the only surviving evidence of the building prior to conversion, etc, and arrangements must therefore be made for its deposition and long-term storage.

On completion of the reporting stages of the project, the archive will be prepared for long-term storage, to an appropriate standard and in a format agreed in advance with the relevant local depository. This will be in accordance with guidelines prepared by the UK Institute of Conservation (Walker 1990) and the Museums & Galleries Commission (MGC 1992).

Unless otherwise instructed, ASC will make arrangements to deposit the archive with the relevant local museum, Record Office or library. Provision has been indicated in the project estimates for the likely costs of deposition.

Staffing

The project will be carried out under the overall direction of Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA. Bob is an established archaeologist with extensive experience in managing archaeological projects, and of work on a wide range of historic buildings and structures. He holds a first degree from the University of Leicester, and has been a validated Member of the Institute for Archaeologists since 1986. He has been involved in the management of archaeological projects since the late 1970s, formerly as Senior Field Archaeologist for the *Milton Keynes Archaeology Unit*, and as Project Manager for the *Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust*.

Other staff assigned to the project will normally have appropriate experience of historic building recording and research. Any staff undergoing training on the project will be fully supervised by experienced staff.

Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NO/CODE: 1388/FRC/3		Site Name: Brass Shop, FR Boston Lodge Works	
Shot	Subject		Fig.
1	South-east elevation from north-east		8
2	South-east elevation, between Canteen (left) and Telephone Exchange (right)		cover
3	South-west elevation from south		9
4	North-east elevation from north-east		10
5	View south-westwards through door		
6	Interior, looking north-east		11
7	Interior, looking south-west		12
8	Interior, south corner looking south-west		
9	Interior, shelving against north-west wall		
10	Upper floor, looking south-west		14
11	Door screen and stairs to upper floor		13
12	Upper floor, looking north-east		15

Appendix 3: OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	Brass Shop, FR Boston Lodge	OASIS reference:	tbc
Short Description:	<p>In September 2012 a historic building assessment of the Brass Shop, Boston Lodge Works, Minffordd, Gwynedd was carried out to inform proposals for refurbishment/conversion of this Grade II listed building.</p> <p>The Brass Shop was probably constructed in 1837 or 1838, and may be the earliest of the Works buildings. The building was constructed as a smithy, probably becoming the brass foundry in the 1870s, though the precise date for this change of use remains unknown. Little information was found relating to the building's subsequent use or development: structurally it appears to have remained unchanged until the 1960s. In 1962 it was subject to major repairs, which involved dismantling of its original chimneys, and stabilisation of the rear wall. More recently, an upper floor set on a frame of old rails was installed, and the building has since been used as a store.</p>		
Project Type:	Building Assessment		
Previous work:	none	Site status:	Grade II listed
Current land use:	Engineering works (railway)	Future work:	unknown
Monument type:	Transport/Engineering	Monument period:	19 th century
Significant finds:	none		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Gwynedd	OS reference: (8 figs min)	SH 58486 37893
Site address:	Boston Lodge Works, Minffordd, Gwynedd		
Study area: (sq. m.)	71	Height OD: (metres)	c.7m
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	FR&WHRHL / ASC	Project design originator:	n/a
Project Manager:	Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA	Sponsor / funding body:	FR&WHRHL / FR Co
PROJECT DATES			
Start date:	September 2012	End date:	November 2012
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (e.g. photographs, files/sheets)	
Paper:	FR Archives	Survey notes, photos, report	
Digital:		CD with all digital files	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Historic Building Assessment: Brass Shop, FR Boston Lodge Works, Minffordd, Gwynedd		
Serial title & volume:	ASC Ltd Report ref. 1388/FRC/3		
Author(s):	Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA		
Page nos	25	Date:	26 November 2013