

**Survey of buildings  
behind the North Hill Hotel,  
51 North Hill, Colchester, Essex  
June 2010**



**report prepared by  
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and Richard Shackle**

**on behalf of  
R Brown  
of the North Hill Hotel**

CAT project ref.: 10/5c



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**CAT Report 522**  
June 2010

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## 1 Summary

A timber-framed building at the rear of the North Hill Hotel (formerly the Peveril Hotel) was surveyed in advance of planned alterations to provide more accommodation and communal space for its residents. The survey revealed the presence of a previously unrecognised hall-house and documentary research showed when and why part of this building had been converted into a 'warehouse'. The building originated as a 15th- or early 16th-century open hall-house of at least two bays with a cross-passage and (presumably) a two-storeyed service end of uncertain shape and plan. The hall-house appears to have been converted into a lobby-entrance house in the 17th century when a floor was inserted into the hall to create a two-storey block and a brick chimney stack was built in the cross-passage to heat the new rooms in the old lobby and service end. The latter was replaced, perhaps at the same time, by the present three-bayed crosswing which has a jettied south gable wall. Two extensions were added later: a small two-storeyed extension perhaps of the 18th century and a single-storeyed 19th-century building which was probably a stable. Around 1876-7, the crosswing was adapted with the insertion of large windows and double doors on both floors to create a warehouse-cum-workshop for upholsterer Charles Day. A few years later, Day had to sell up because of debt and his warehouse became a workshop for the manufacturing of boots and shoes, firstly by George Pung Hazel, then by G P Halls, and finally by Rose and Co Boot and Shoe Manufacturers, a company which primarily produced (and still produces) advertising calendars.

## 2 Historic building record

This report provides a written and photographic record at English Heritage (2006) Level 3 of two buildings behind the North Hill Hotel. It has been prepared to a brief written by Andrew Rudd (dated June 2010) and is intended to fulfil a condition of planning permission for redevelopment (application pending).

## 3 Introduction (Figs 1-2)

**3.1** This survey was commissioned by Rob Brown who is the owner of the North Hill Hotel. The commission was as a response to a request by the Colchester Borough Council for a Level 3-type building record to assist in the determination of a planning application to upgrade the yard and buildings at the rear of the hotel to provide more bedrooms and communal space for guests. The purpose of the survey was to record the main elements of the parts of the hotel which would be affected by the proposed works and to carry out some limited historical research in the hope of reaching a better understanding of the various structural elements which form the rear part of it.

The North Hill Hotel is made up of a complicated accumulation of buildings which has evolved over a number of years. To sequence and interpret the various elements which comprise the hotel today, it is necessary not only to study the buildings themselves but to determine, as far as reasonably possible, the sequence of ownership in the late Victorian and early Edwardian periods. For this reason, then, this report is in two parts. Firstly there is a description with interpretation of the buildings in question and, secondly, there is an overview of the historical and tenurial background to the more relevant aspects of the development of the present-day hotel.

Two different but physically connected structures are of primary interest. One is what we are calling here 'Day's Warehouse', for reasons to be explained below, and the other the so-called 'cottage' which is currently used mainly as a store and by hotel staff. As will become clear, both structures form a small hall-house apparently of 15th- or 16th-century origin with Day's Warehouse being a remodelled version of a 17th-century crosswing which was itself a replacement for an earlier wing in that house.

- 3.2** The report is accompanied by a DVD containing a photographic record in the form of 29 digital images, but also includes 5 selected printed photographs of key features to illustrate the text. The buildings were inspected over a period of days in June 2010.

## **4 Structural report** (Figs 3-9)

### **4.1 The hall-house**

*by Richard Shackle*

The building is built of oak with a clay tile roof. It is basically in two parts, ie two bays of a medieval 15th- or early 16th-century open hall-house with cross-passage and a 17th-century three-bay jettied crosswing. There is also a small two-storeyed extension perhaps of the 18th century and a single-storeyed 19th-century building which was probably a stable.

The open hall now consists of a cross-passage, the lower end bay of the hall and part of the upper end bay of the hall. The front wall of the hall facing south consists of a storey-post pegged into the top-plate and two middle girts double pegged into the flanks of the storey-post. The tie beam, which one would expect to be over the storey-post, is now 29 inches to the west. The rear wall consists of a truncated storey-post, and parts of two middle girts with studs pegged into them. Part of the other hall bay can be seen in a cupboard which is now a flying freehold over the adjacent property. The tie beam separating the hall from the cross-passage is dovetailed into the rear top-plate. It is thought that the original hall-house consisted of a two bay hall, a cross-passage and service end which has now been replaced by the 17th-century crosswing.

I think that the hall-house was converted into a lobby entrance house in the 17th century. A brick chimney was built in the cross-passage, completely blocking it. It had four fireplaces, two facing west into the hall-house (which had, by now, been converted into two rooms by an inserted floor) with a heated room on each floor and two facing east into a new crosswing also with a heated room on each floor. The new house was still entered by the same front door facing south but now, instead of entering a cross-passage, one entered a small lobby to the side of the chimney. If one turned west, one would have entered a service room/kitchen with fireplace. The mantle beam to this fireplace has a hole in it to support a fireplace jack, that is, a metal arm on a pivot which could be used to swing cooking pots or cauldrons over the fire. In the former cross-passage to the north of the new chimney there was a new staircase to give access to the new upper service room and possibly to the new upper room to the east. If one turned east from the entrance lobby, one would have entered the parlour of a new crosswing. This parlour was heated by a brick fireplace. The room above this parlour was also a heated parlour, exactly the same as the one below in shape except that it was slightly wider as it was jettied to the south. This jetty was probably to impress people coming up the small lane from North Hill.

The framing of this crosswing had a storey-post in the middle of the east and west walls. The ground floor and attic floors are supported by two large bridging joists with lamb's tongue chamfers. The top-plates of the east and west walls have face halved and bladed joints which are thought to date either from 1525-1575 or 1575-1850. There is a side purlin roof with clasped purlins. Most of the collars are slightly cambered. When the former open hall had an inserted floor put in, a new window was put in upper floor of the rear wall. This window is now fragmentary, but it was probably 38 inches wide with a central mullion having two beads on the inside and almost certainly rebates for glass on the outside. This type of window may date to *circa* 1570-1600. The roof of the former open hall is of the side purlin type; this is unlikely to be the original roof which was probably a crown post roof. The side purlin roof could have been put in when the 17th-century crosswing was added or at any time after 1600.

A small two-storeyed extension was built in the angle between the new crosswing and the former open hall. This extension is timber-framed and has its own tiled roof. Partly covering the jettied south front of the new crosswing is a single-storeyed brick



extension, which was probably a stable as it has two half-round windows; these are often found in stables. Attached to the south end of this building was another extension of which there only remains one wall.

#### **4.2 'Day's Warehouse' (Fig 10)**

The 17th-century crosswing was extensively remodelled almost certainly around 1876-7 by Charles Day, presumably to further his upholstery business (see below section 5.3). Although the existing timber-frame and roof were retained, the modifications were very significant and radically changed the building visually and functionally. Day's Warehouse stands at the rear of the hotel (the part once Nos 49 and 50), overlooking a small yard which separates the two buildings.

The focus of Day's modifications was on the east wall of the crosswing, ie the one which overlooked the yard and rear of the hotel. The whole wall was stripped out to leave the corner and central storey posts (ie the main structural frame) fully exposed. Six large windows and two pairs of double doors were then inserted into the wall and the rest of it made good with lath and plaster finished off with a cement render. The double doors were glazed in the same way and to the same depth as the windows. Each window had five vertical glazing bars to form six lights, each of which contained three panes of thin, rather fragile glass. There were no horizontal glazing bars but, instead, the panes were simply overlapped to prevent the ingress of water. Plainly these are low-cost, functional windows of a sort appropriate to an industrial or agricultural context. Each window had a large iron hinge at each upper corner to allow the bottoms of the windows to open outwards, and there is a projecting beam with hook over the upper double-doors showing how heavy goods and materials could be moved around the building.

The south gable wall was also modified, but not to the same extent as the east wall. Another one of the large windows was inserted into the gable wall at ground-floor level. There is a double-hung six-pane sash window at first-floor level and a similar one, but with three-pane sashes, lighting the attic. The frames of these windows are flush with the outer face of the wall, which suggests that both are earlier (perhaps 1800-50) than the windows installed in the building by Charles Day.

The effect of Day's conversion of the building was to allow much more light into the ground and first floors (but not the attic since this remained unchanged). The size and layout of the windows and doors meant that almost all of the upper half of the east wall in each of the two rooms was glazed, and the hinges and double doors meant that the rooms could be well ventilated as needed.

## **5 Tenorial history**

- 5.1** The following conclusions are based almost entirely on: (1) the deeds to Nos 50 and 51 North Hill; (2) the street and trade directories of c 1870-1920 (in Local Studies, Colchester Central Library); (3) the Ordnance Survey maps of 1876, 1897 and 1922; and (4) a downloadable pdf file of the 'History of Rose Calendars' ([http://www.rosecalendars.com/File/Rose\\_Centenary\\_Booklet.pdf](http://www.rosecalendars.com/File/Rose_Centenary_Booklet.pdf)).

### **5.2 A W H Frost and Frost's Yard**

The immediate area around No 51 (especially on the south side) saw much change, between c 1866 when Tilney House was acquired by Mr A W H Frost, and c 1913 and when the Technical College was built (Fig 11). (The Technical College was later to become the Gilbert School and is now the Sixth Form College.) Tilney House stood at the west end of a large plot of land which included some buildings along the north side which faced southwards onto a private lane which became known as Frost's Yard. These buildings were owned by Mr A W H Frost and were later sold off with rights of access through Frost's Yard and then a covered passage to North Hill. The construction of the Technical College resulted in the demolition of some properties to the south of No 51 and the effective disappearance of Frost's Yard, although the latter still survives as a right of way for the other properties behind the street frontage.

### 5.3 Charles Day

The year 1876 was a busy one for upholsterer Charles Day. In April of that year, he bought for £250 a 'messuage' on North Hill, 'now divided into two tenements', from a man called Bytham Hewes. The messuage appears on the contemporary Ordnance Survey map of 1876 subdivided into two properties numbered 49 and 50. No 51 North Hill, the future Peveril Hotel, was next door (Fig 12). Day financed the deal with a loan (£280) from another man, Isaac Green, for which he used the premises as security. (In other words Green provided the mortgage.) Four months later, Day borrowed another £200 from Green and then, two months after that, presumably with the aid of the second loan, bought 'two tenements and outbuildings' immediately behind the house from his neighbour Mr A W H Frost for £100. This purchase included the right of access to North Hill via a passage behind the neighbouring house up the hill (later to become the Peveril Hotel) and a private lane owned by Mr Frost (Frost's Yard). The plan attached to the deed for this purchase (Fig 13) makes it clear that the property in question is the one which was to become 'Day's Warehouse'. It also shows that the right of access still survives today.

Over the following year, Charles Day borrowed a string of sums from Isaac Green, all secured on his two new properties, namely £220 (Dec 1876), £100 (Dec 1876), £100 (May 1877), and £100 (Oct 1877). An additional £100 in March 1880 brought the total obtained from Isaac Green to £1,100. Unfortunately for Charles Day, he defaulted on the loans with the result that Isaac Green took possession of the properties and then sold them on as one property in June 1882 for the sum of £950.

The deeds for this sale helpfully distinguish between the two properties originally purchased by Charles Day, ie the messuage divided into two properties and the Frost building behind it, and tell us something about their histories. The messuage is described as 'recently been rebuilt by... Charles Day' and the other building as a 'warehouse', 'which has recently been erected by the said Charles Day'.

Presumably, although there is no direct evidence to this effect, the money which Charles Day borrowed must have been used to pay for these works. Although the indenture implies that both buildings were new, what must be meant is that each of the existing buildings was extensively remodelled to the extent that the resulting product was, in effect, new.

The original footprint of the messuage with its two occupants appears in the Ordnance Survey 1:500 map of 1876 (Fig 11), when they were known as Nos 49 and 50. However, the building today must retain much of the original house. It still has the same basic shape with a projection at the rear on the north side and a passage on the ground floor along the south side giving access to the yard at the rear. On the other hand, there is evidence of major changes. The configuration of windows at first and second floor-levels as they appear today does not sit easily with a vertical split of the building. Also the Ordnance Survey map shows a bay window on the front of No 49 and a pair of steps presumably leading to the front doors of the two properties. The present facade, then, is likely to be the work of Charles Day and to date to around 1876-7 when he must have altered the building considerably to return it to its original single-property state. All of this would, presumably, have been paid for from the money he borrowed from Isaac Green. Similarly, Charles Day's conversion of the 17th-century crosswing into the well-lit and well-ventilated warehouse described would also have cost money and involved more borrowing from Isaac Green.

Being an upholsterer, the new warehouse was where Charles Day must have practised his trade and stored the furniture and the necessary materials. The new owner - the man who bought the premises from Isaac Green in 1882 - was George Pung Hazel, a boot and shoe manufacturer who presumably was able to make good use of the warehouse as a work-place and store while living in the front in No 50. The street directories of the time show that the premises changed hands in 1894 when they came into the occupation of another boot and shoemaker, G P Halls, who worked there until around 1900. The business was then taken over by George and Elizabeth Rose who ran the adjacent Peveril Hotel. The new company was called the Rose and Co Boot and Shoe Manufacturers. It lasted until at least 1906. Although no documentary evidence exists directly linking the warehouse with boot

and shoemaking, Rob Brown, the present owner of the North Hill Hotel, reports that he found some shoe heels in the building when they cleared it out some months ago. The find might be coincidental, of course, considering how long ago boots and shoes must have been made in the building.

#### **5.4 George and Elizabeth Rose**

The association of George and Elizabeth Rose with the North Hill Hotel is an important and relevant one here. The couple arrived in Colchester in 1892 and set up the Peveril Hotel at No 51 North Hill, in which they were tenants. They billed the establishment as a commercial and temperance hotel and ran it for twenty years. During this time, George Rose started his own printing business, making and selling advertising calendars. At first the calendars were printed by Cullingfords, presumably in their printshop in West Stockwell Street, but soon he was printing them himself somewhere in Frost's Yard. The precise location of his printshop does not seem to have been recorded, but it can be worked out to a degree, nevertheless. During the course of this study, it had seemed that Day's Warehouse might have been used as his printshop but it has become apparent that it wasn't. However, as we have seen, the Roses do appear to have run a boot and shoemaking business there for a short while.

An indenture dated 1908 shows a block of land at the west end of Frost's Yard (Fig 14) which it records was in the occupancy of George Rose and Mr Dowman at that time. The street directories show a Mr A J Dowman living in No 2 Frost's Yard in 1912. Plainly this must be the Dowman referred to in the 1908 indenture. A deed of sale dated 1951 for No 52a (Fig 15) shows not only what must have been the extent of Mr Dowman's property but also No 53 which, by deduction, must have been formerly occupied, at least in part, by George Rose for his calendar-printing business.

## **6 Condition and significance**

Day's Warehouse, the hall-house and its small extensions to the south have not been changed significantly in structural terms since the 1870s. Day's Warehouse is in a poor condition but the basic integrity of the building, as it was left by Day, remains sound. The hall-house is a rare survival in Colchester town-centre as is the Victorian warehouse.

## **7 Acknowledgements**

The Colchester Archaeological Trust would like to thank the Rob Brown of the North Hill Hotel for commissioning and funding the work and Steve Nevard, architect of Hurley Porte and Duell Ltd, for his support and help. Photographic recording, survey and building analysis by Richard Shackle and Figures 3-9 drawn by Richard Shackle. Figure 1 is based on a plan provided by Hurley Porte and Duell Ltd; Figure 10 used as a starting point another plan provided by Hurley Porte and Duell Ltd. Additional photographs by Darius Laws including the front cover picture. Emma Spurgeon prepared drawings for the report. Gillian Adams produced Figures 1-2 and 10 and edited the report.

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## 8 Appendices

### Appendix 1 (on accompanying DVD): photographic record

#### Descriptions of photographs

Photograph nos 1-29

- 1 West elevation of 17th-century crosswing, showing 19th-century workshop windows and loading door.
- 2 17th-century crosswing, showing jetty at south end with window of later stable behind.
- 3 West elevation of 17th-century crosswing, ground floor, showing 19th-century workshop window with overlapping glass panes.
- 4 West elevation of 17th century crosswing, upper floor, showing 19th-century loading door with loading beam and hook.
- 5 South elevation of 17th-century crosswing, ground floor, showing 19th-century workshop windows and weather boarding.
- 6 West wall of 19th-century brick extension, showing half-round stable window.
- 7 17th-century crosswing, ground-floor interior, showing workshop windows and 17th-century joists.
- 8 17th-century crosswing, ground-floor interior, showing detail of lambs tongue chamfer stop on bridging joist.
- 9 17th-century crosswing, ground-floor interior, showing bridging joist and storey post in east wall.
- 10 17th-century crosswing, ground-floor interior, showing bridging joists and blocked 17th-century fireplace.
- 11 17th-century crosswing, upper-floor interior, showing workshop windows and loading door.
- 12 17th-century crosswing, upper-floor interior, showing lath and plaster.
- 13 17th-century crosswing, upper-floor interior, showing west wall with partly exposed 17th-century fireplace.
- 14 17th-century crosswing, upper-floor interior, showing loading beam over door.
- 15 17th-century crosswing, upper-floor interior, showing ceiling joists.
- 16 17th-century crosswing, upper-floor interior, showing exposed brick of chimney.
- 17 17th-century crosswing, upper-floor interior, showing oak mantle beam of 17th-century fireplace.
- 18 17th-century crosswing, upper-floor interior, showing 19th-century staircase to attic.
- 19 17th-century crosswing, attic floor, showing rafters, collars and side purlins.
- 20 17th-century crosswing, south elevation with 19th-century sash windows.
- 21 Medieval open hall-house, south elevation, showing medieval timber framing.
- 22 Medieval open hall-house, south elevation, showing detail of medieval framing with storey post, stud and peg holes.
- 23 Later timber-framed extension, perhaps 18th century.
- 24 Brick chimney in cross-passage, showing fireplace in ground-floor room of former open hall.
- 25 Fireplace in former open hall, ground floor, mantle beam, showing holes for support of fire jack.

- 26 Timber framing in north wall of open hall, showing truncated post, midplate and pegged stud.
- 27 Former open hall, showing inserted bridging joist to support new upper floor.
- 28 Former cross-passage, showing staircase from upper floor to attic; note inserted window to light staircase now blocked.
- 29 Former open hall, upper floor, north wall, showing inserted glazed window, now blocked.

## Appendix 2: selected printed photographs

Photograph nos 30-34



- 30 View of the east elevation of Day's Warehouse from the roof of the North Hill Hotel, taken with the kind permission of the manager.





31 East elevation of Day's Warehouse.



32 Surviving part of the lifting gear on the east elevation of Day's Warehouse.



33 Hall-house and extensions, viewed from the south.



34 Hall-house and extensions, viewed from the south.





Fig 1 Location plan (based on a plan provided by Hurley Porte and Duell Ltd).

North Hill



Fig 2 Site plan.

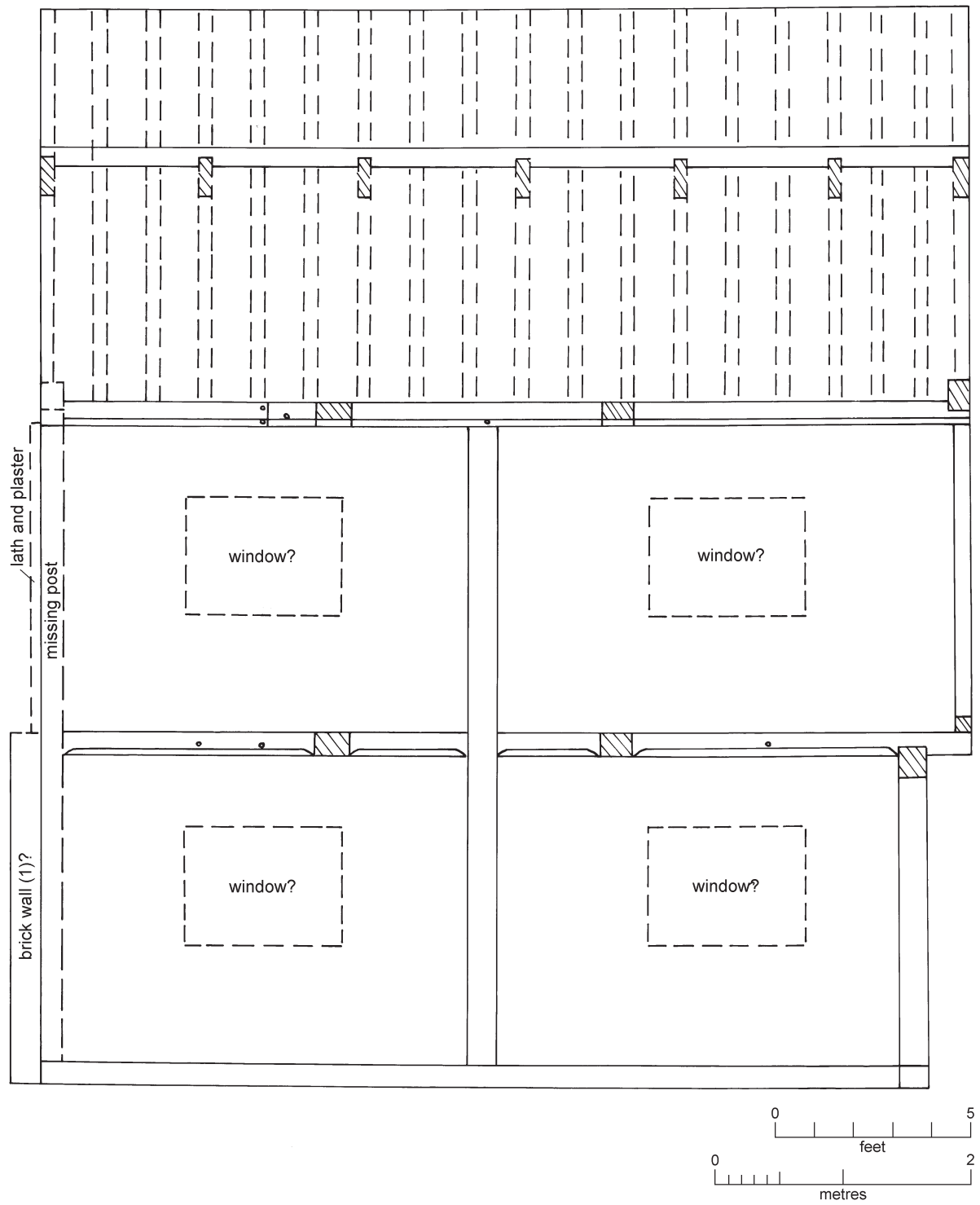


Fig 3 17th-century crossing: east wall, internal view.

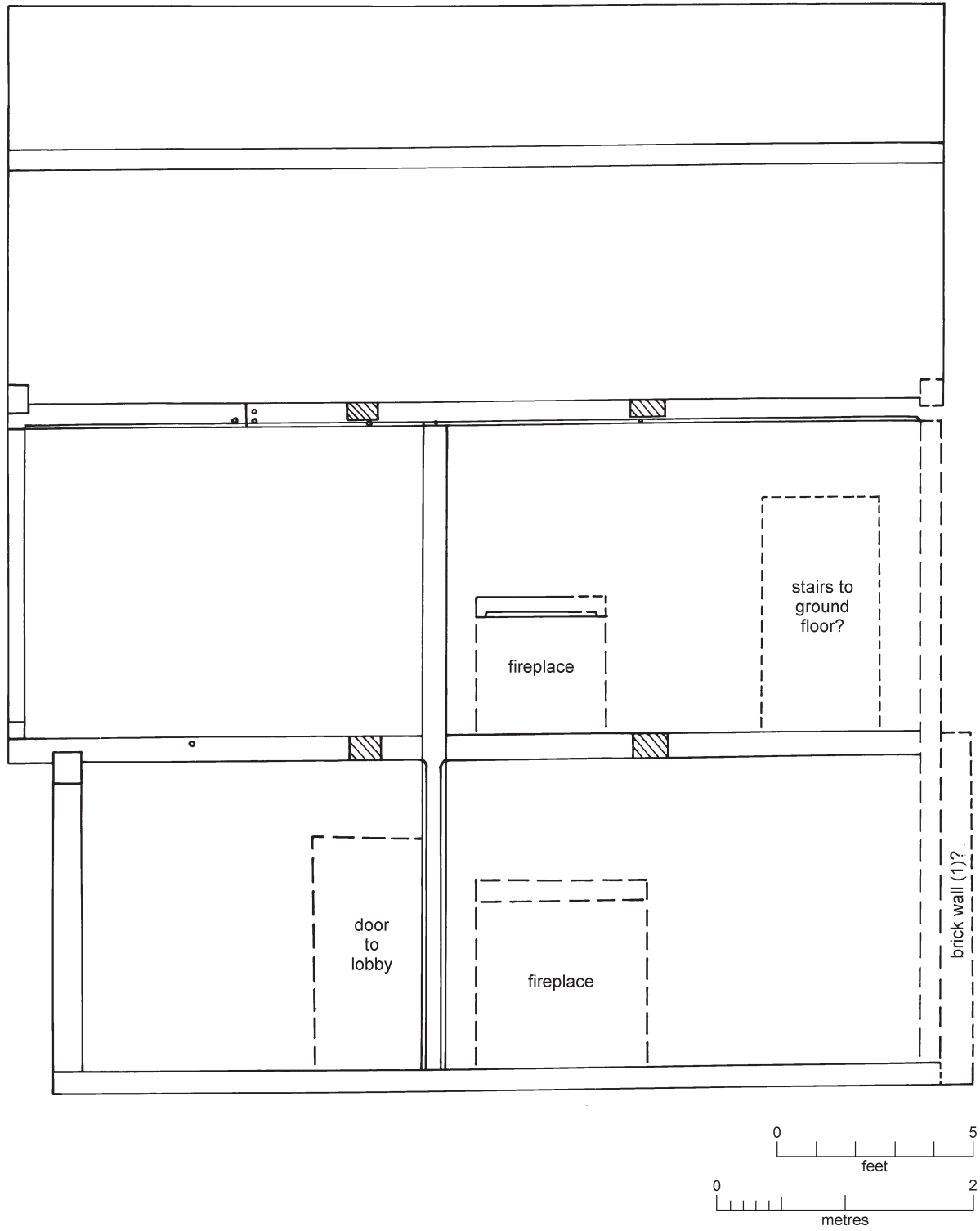


Fig 4 17th-century crossing: west wall, internal view.

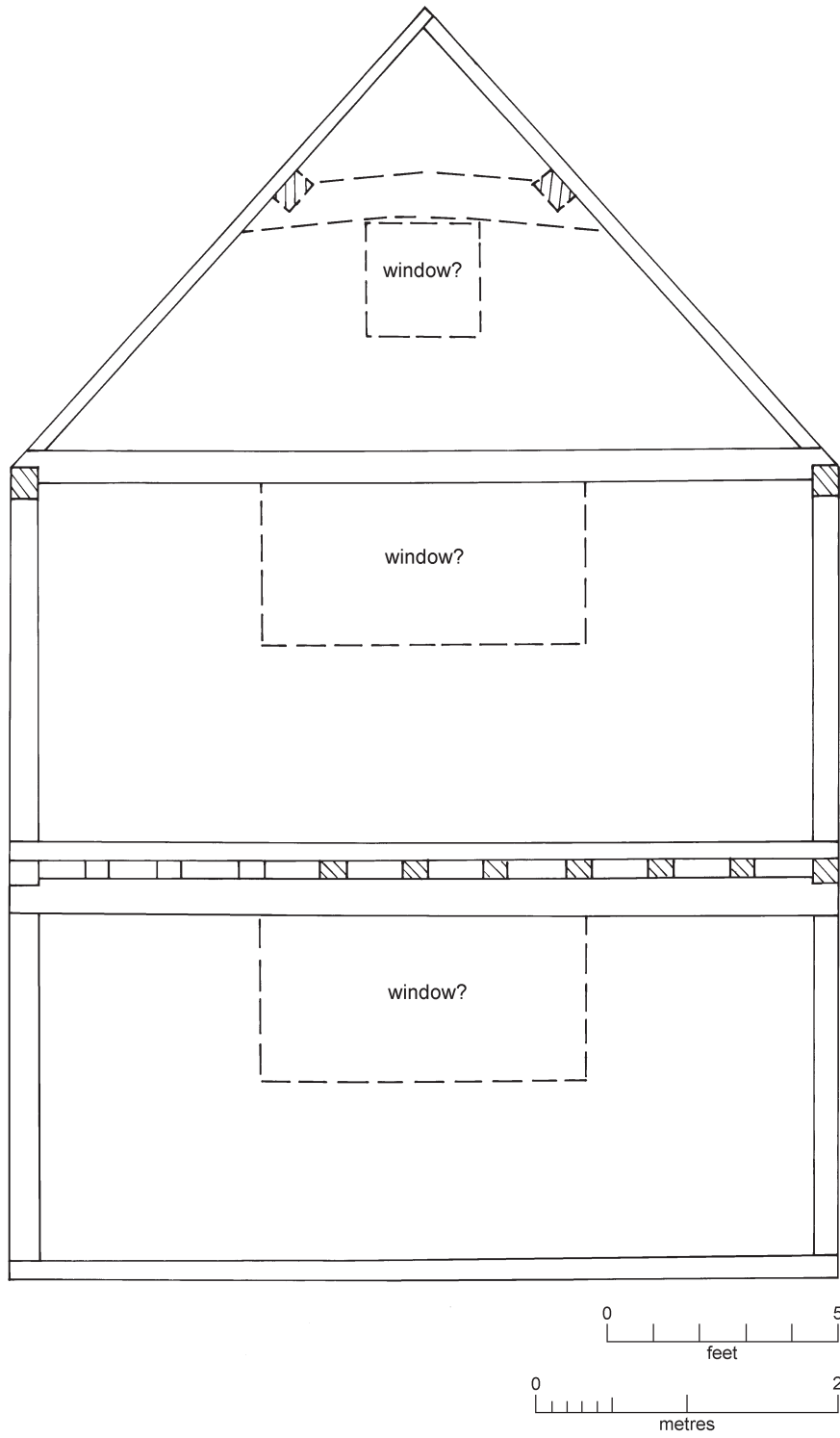


Fig 5 17th-century crossing: south wall, internal view.

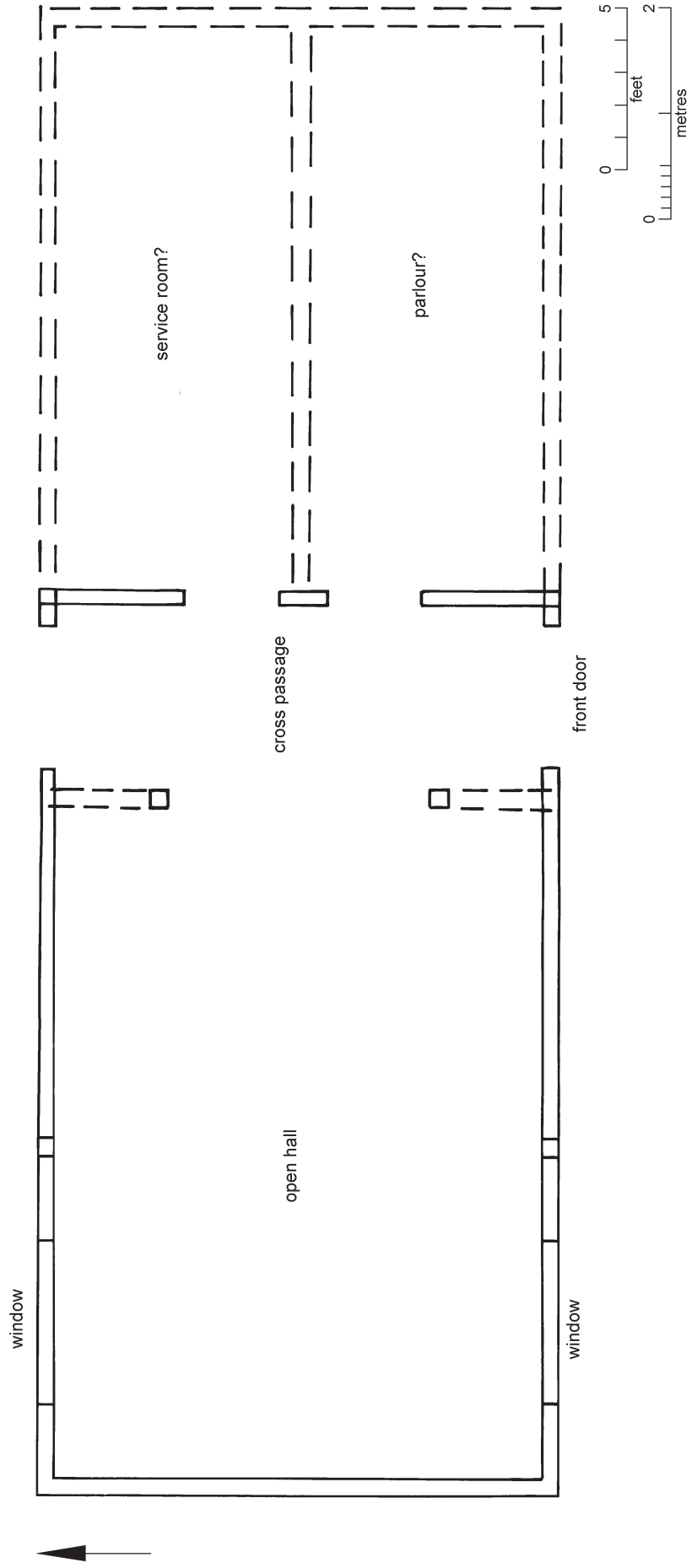


Fig 6 Conjectural plan of original hall-house.

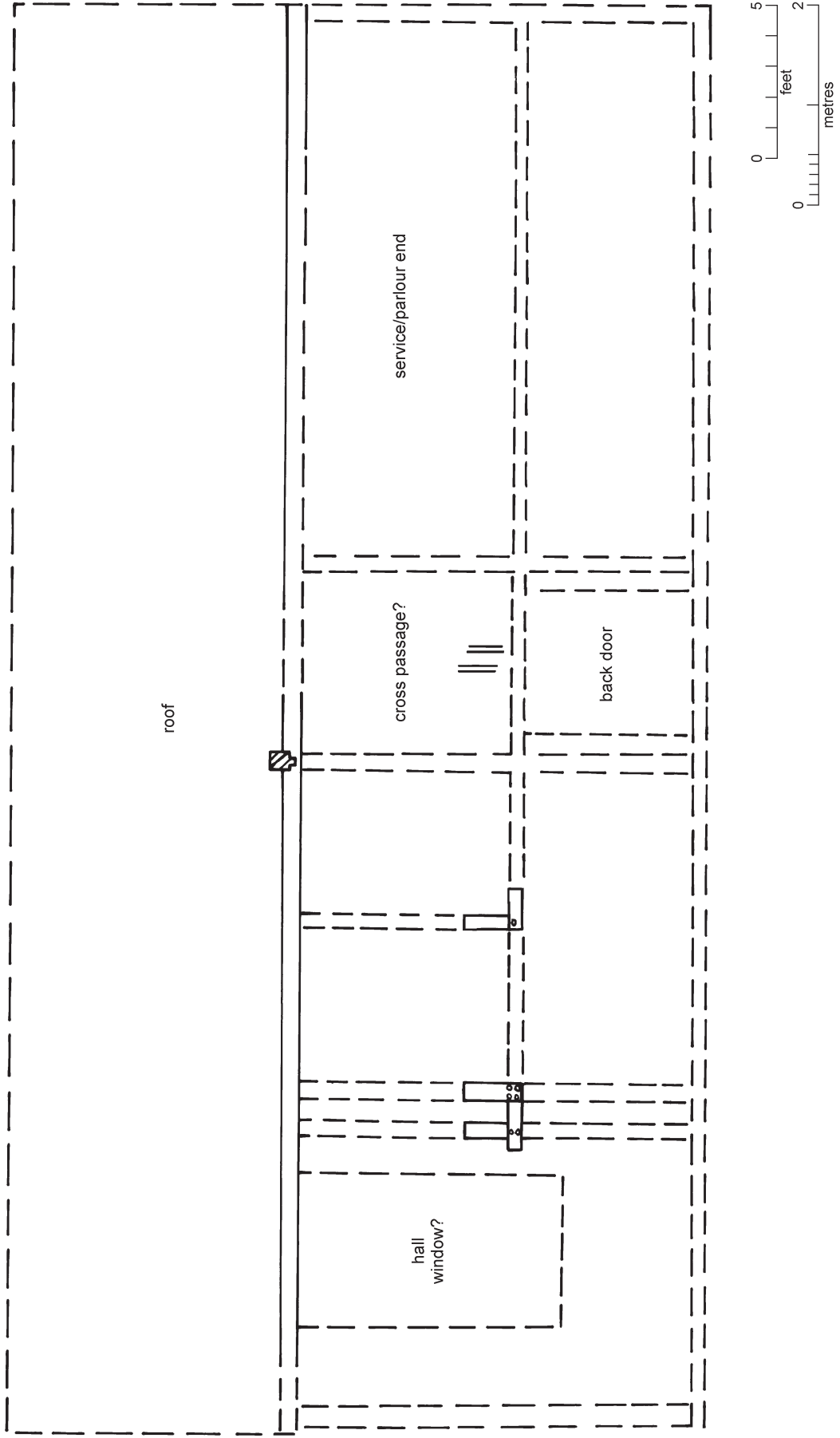


Fig 7 Hall-house: north wall, internal view (rear elevation).

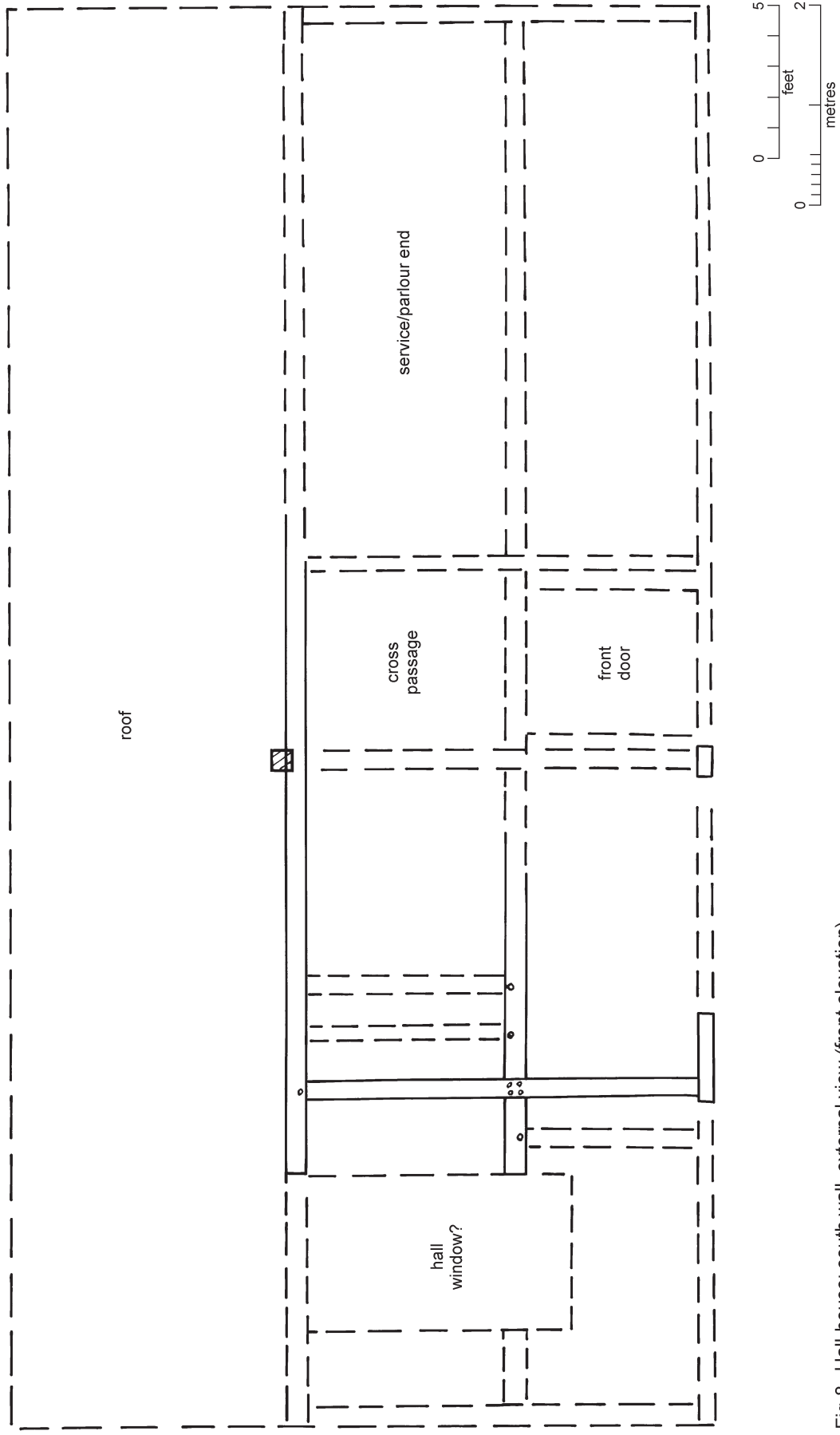


Fig 8 Hall-house: south wall, external view (front elevation).



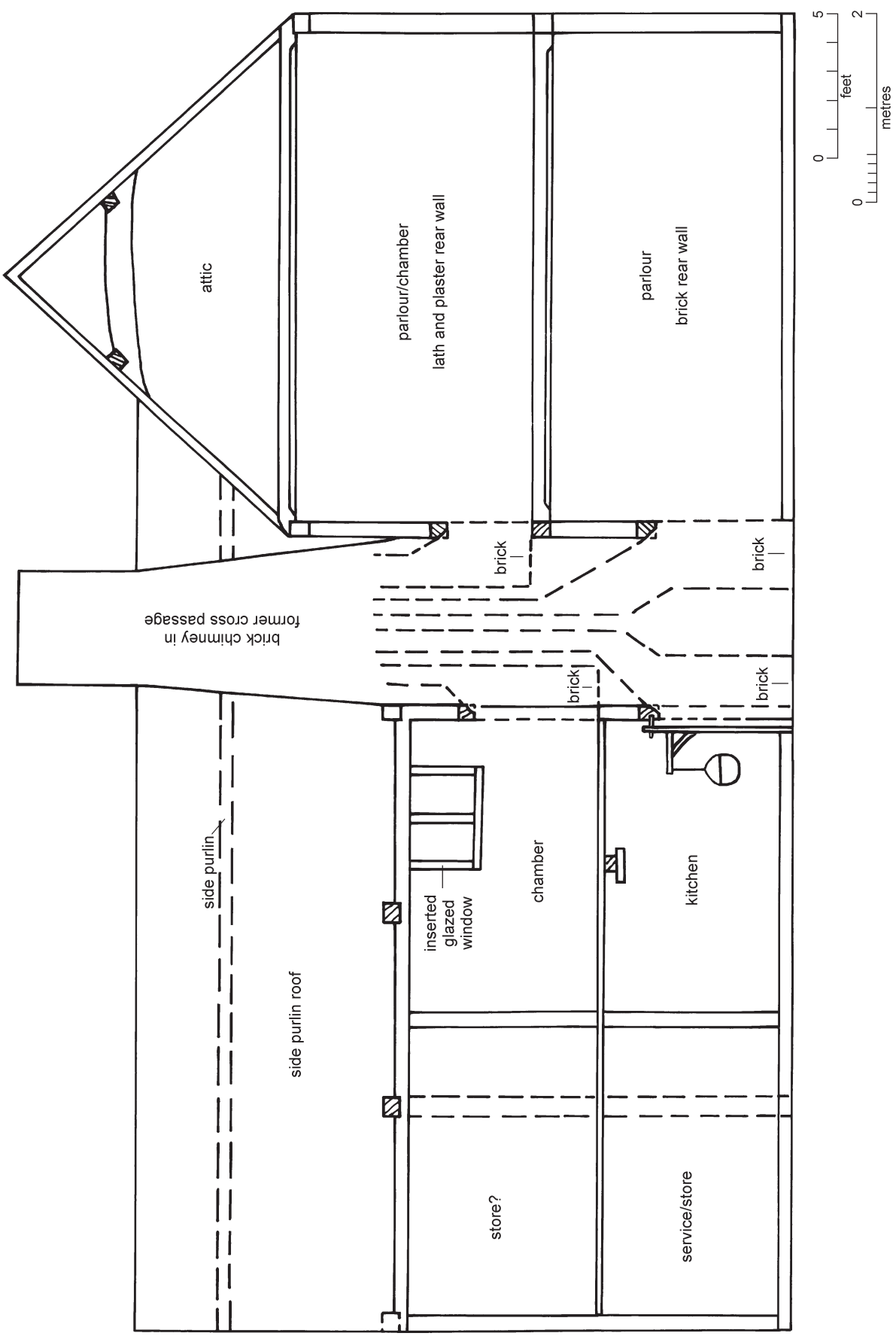


Fig 9 Hall-house, showing inserted floor, chimney and window and rebuilt crossing (later converted into Day's warehouse).



Fig 10 East elevation of Day's Warehouse: sketch plan (based on a plan provided by Hurley Porte and Duell Ltd).



Fig 11 Ordnance Survey 1:500 map (not to scale) of 1876, showing the relationships between Nos 50 and 51 North Hill, Charles Day's Warehouse and Frost's Yard. The buildings in this area were renumbered (as shown in red and blue) after the construction of the Technical College in 1913.

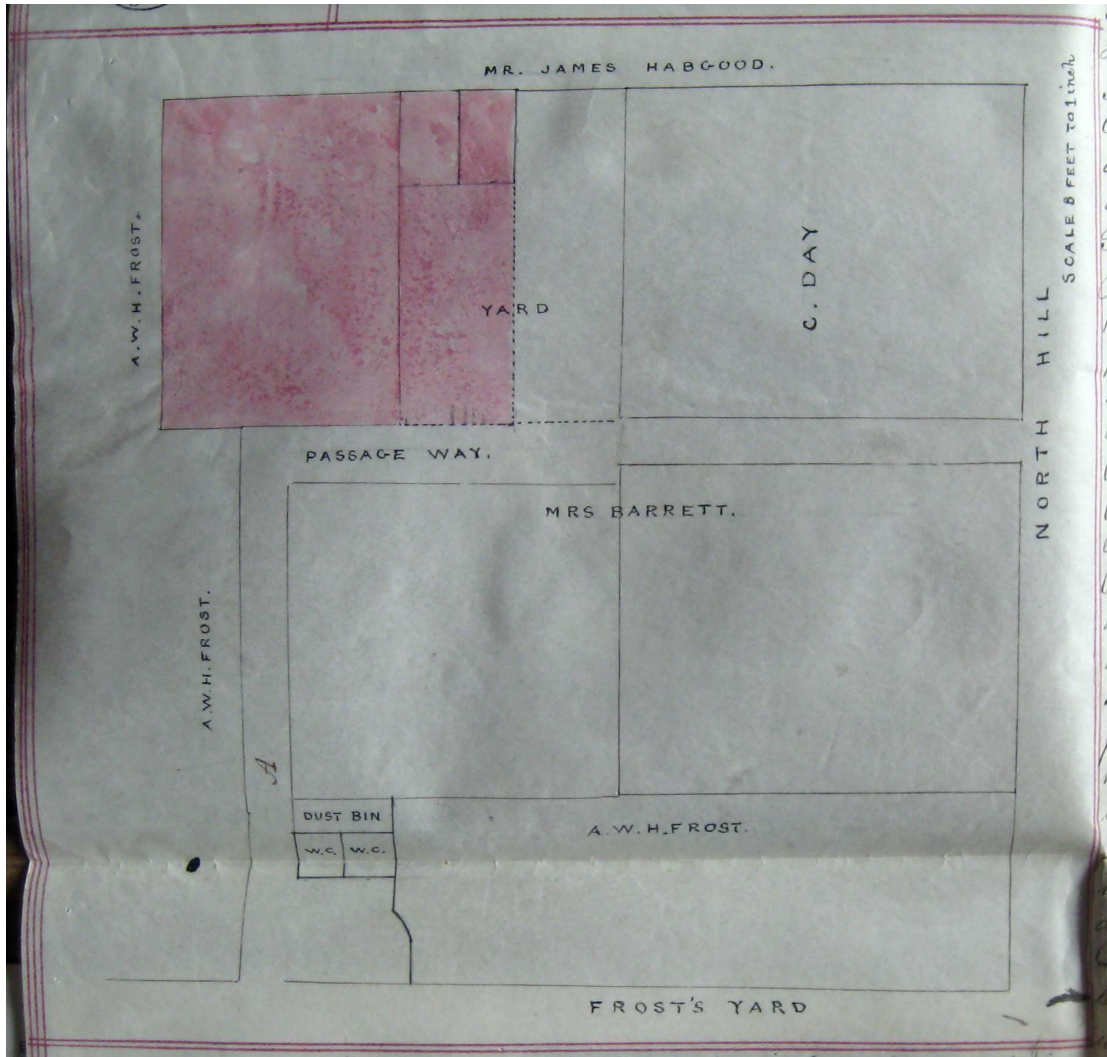


Fig 12 Plan included in an indenture drawn up in 1876 to record the sale by A W H Frost to Charles Day of the building which was to become Day's Warehouse (coloured pink on the plan along with half the open yard between it and Day's house (Nos 49 and 50) on the right).



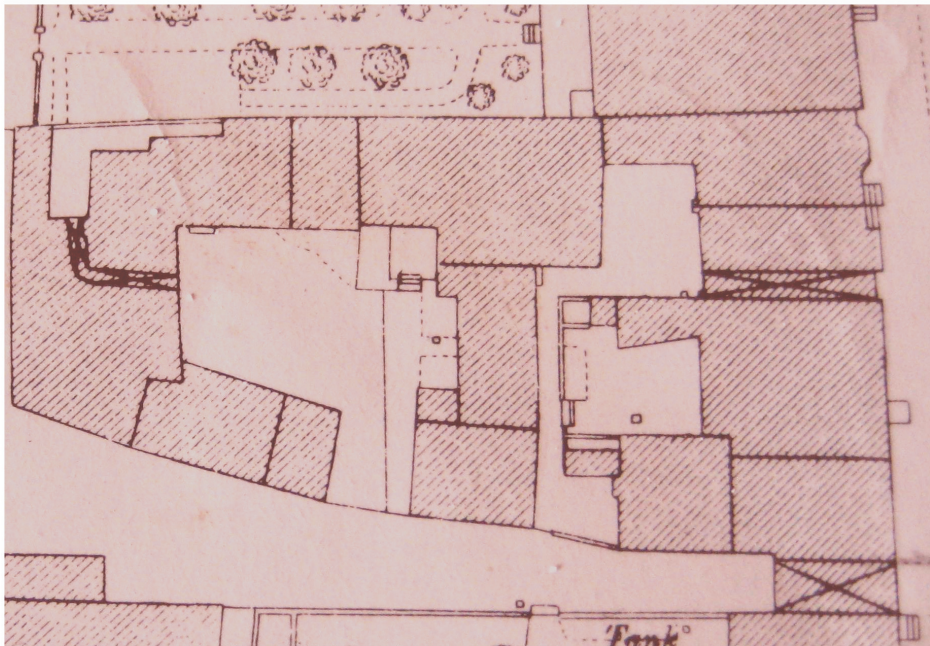


Fig 13 1876 plan shown in Figure 12 superimposed after distortion on the Ordnance Survey 1:500 map of the same year.



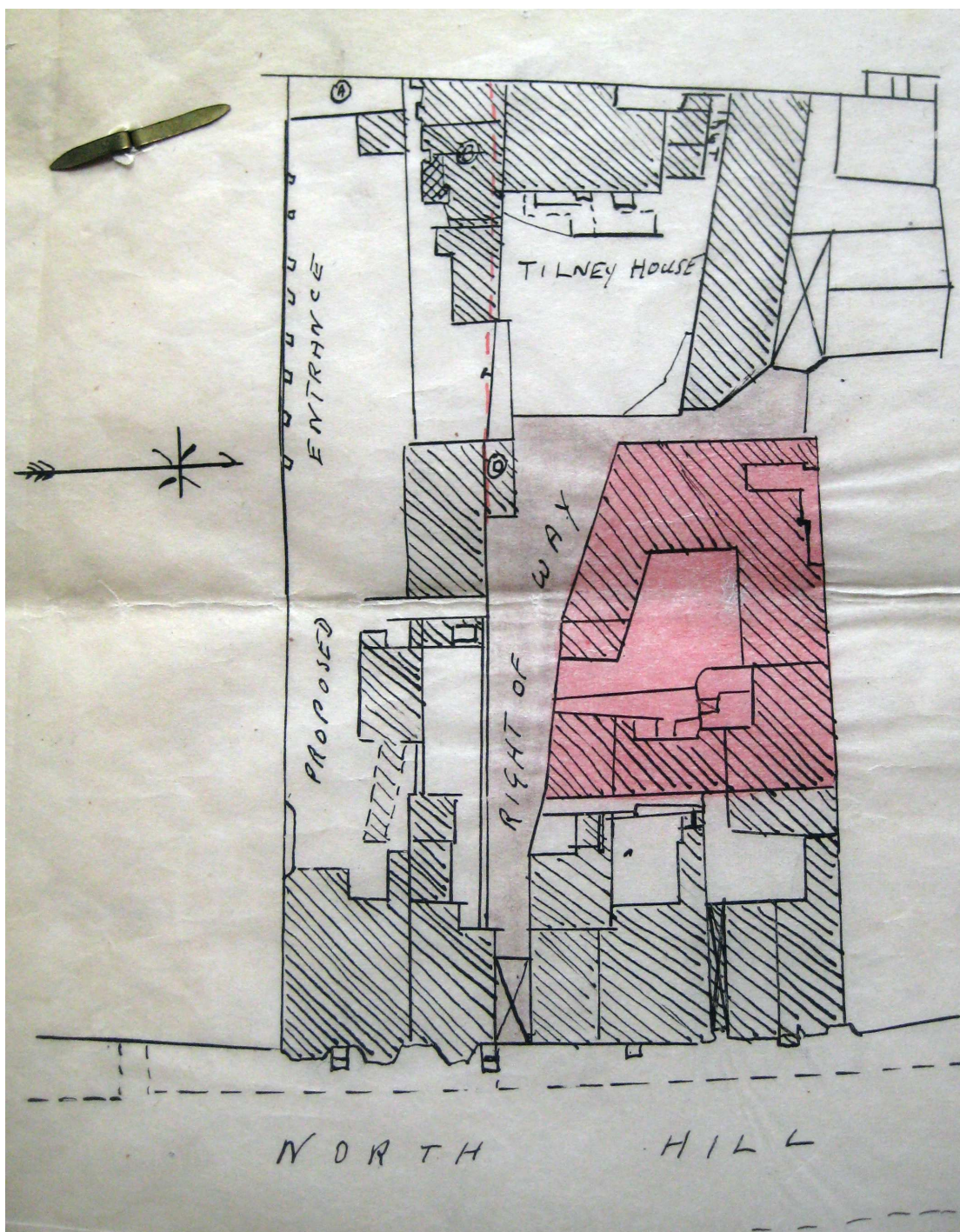


Fig 14 Plan included in an indenture of 1908, showing the properties occupied at the time by E Rose and Mr Dowman.

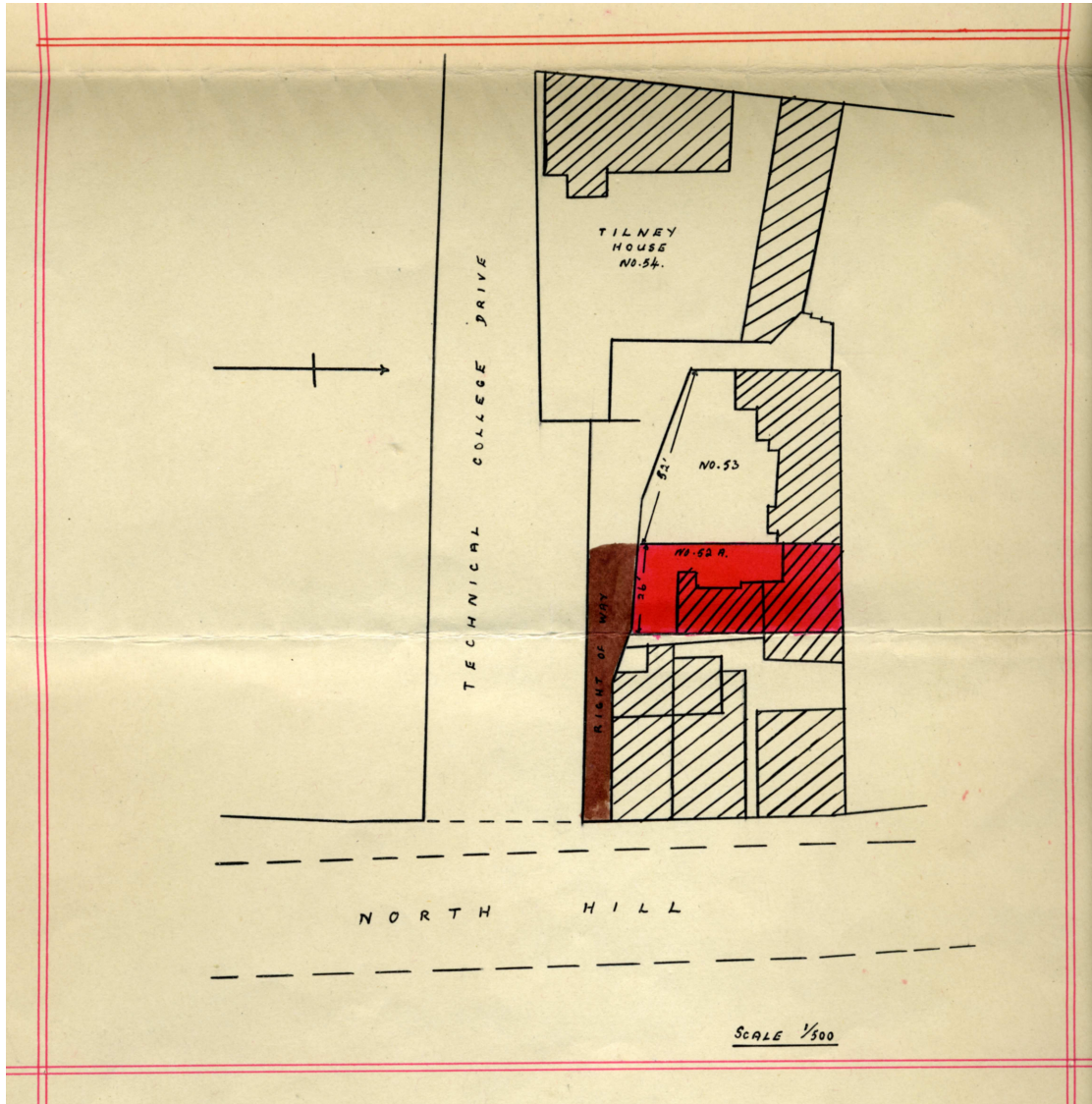


Fig 15 Plan included in a deed of sale dated 1951, showing the location of No 51b North Hill.



## Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

### Summary sheet

<b>Site address:</b> buildings behind the North Hill Hotel, 49-51 North Hill, Colchester, Essex	
<b>Parish:</b> Colchester	<b>District:</b> Colchester
<b>NGR:</b>	<b>Site codes:</b> CAT project code - 10/5c
<b>Type of work:</b> Building survey	<b>Site director/group:</b> Colchester Archaeological Trust
<b>Date of work:</b> June 2010	<b>Size of area investigated:</b>
<b>Curating museum:</b> Colchester and Ipswich Museums	<b>Funding source:</b> North Hill Hotel
<b>Further seasons anticipated?</b> No	<b>Related UAD nos:</b> -
<b>Final report:</b> CAT Report 522 and summary in <i>EAH</i>	
<b>Periods represented:</b> medieval, post-medieval, modern	
<p><b>Summary of survey results:</b>  <i>A timber-framed building at the rear of the North Hill Hotel (formerly the Peveril Hotel) was surveyed in advance of planned alterations to provide more accommodation and communal space for its residents. The survey revealed the presence of a previously unrecognised hall-house, and documentary research showed when and why part of this building had been converted into a 'warehouse'. The building originated as a 15th- or early 16th-century open hall-house of at least two bays with a cross-passage and (presumably) a two-storeyed service end of uncertain shape and plan. The hall-house appears to have been converted into a lobby-entrance house in the 17th century when a floor was inserted into the hall to create a two-storey block and a brick chimney-stack was built in the cross-passage to heat the new rooms in the old lobby and service end. The latter was replaced, perhaps at the same time, by the present three-bayed crosswing which has a jettied south gable wall. Two extensions were added later: a small two-storeyed building perhaps of the 18th century and a single-storeyed 19th-century building which was probably a stable. Around 1876-7, the crosswing was adapted with the insertion of large windows and double doors on both floors to create a warehouse-cum-workshop for upholsterer Charles Day. A few years later, Day had to sell up because of debt and his warehouse became a workshop for the manufacturing of boots and shoes, at first by</i></p>	



*George Pung Hazel, then by G P Halls, and finally by Rose and Co Boot and Shoe Manufacturers, a company which primarily produced (and still produces) advertising calendars.*

**Previous summaries/reports:** None

**Keywords:** timber-framed,  
hall-house, warehouse,  
Rose, boots, shoes,  
Peveril Hotel

**Significance:** \*\*

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