



HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING OF THE OLD POST OFFICE, THE STREET, SHORNE, GRAVESEND, KENT

Date of Report: 22nd October 2022

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Front cover: Postcard. The Old Post Office c.1910

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In October 2022 Dr Paul Wilkinson of SWAT Archaeology carried out a historic building recording and photographic and orthometric survey of the building known as the Old Post Office, The Street, Shorne, Gravesend in Kent (Figures 1, 2 & Plates (Views) 1-20). The building is presently occupied.

1.2 The building recording was carried out on the 4th October 2022 in accordance with a Level 3 survey as detailed in the Historic England publication 'Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice' (2016). And *The Chartered Institute of Field Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* (2017) and the *KCC Historic Building Recording Requirements Part C*.

1.3 This is essentially a photographic record. Historic England specifications suggest that written information should be to identify the building's location, age, type, materials, use and when and whom compiled the report.

General photographs of the exterior as well as any specific architectural or historic features (both internal and external) should be taken.

The Historic England guidelines for a Level 3 are:

*Level 3 is an **analytical record**, and will comprise an introductory description followed by a systematic account of the building's origins, development and use. The record will include an account of the evidence on which the analysis has been based, allowing the validity of the record to be re-examined in detail. It will also include all drawn and photographic records that may be required to illustrate the building's appearance and structure and to support an historical analysis. A Level 3 record may also be appropriate when the fabric of a building is under threat, but time or resources are insufficient to allow for detailed documentary research, or where the scope for such research is limited.*

1.4 In summary the work consists of a descriptive report accompanied by digital photographs.

1.5 The principal elements of the survey involved the creation of a record and description of the historic fabric of the front of the building together with an analysis and interpretation of the buildings origins and historic development.

1.6 A review of Historic OS mapping has been made (Map 1-8) and the Pevsner Architectural Guide (*Kent, North & North East 2013*) was consulted as was the National Heritage Register for England.

1.7 This report consists of a descriptive report accompanied by digital photographs and annotated plans.

2.0 HISTORICAL/ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Location

The proposed development site is situated in the northern area of the village of Shorne and to the west of The Street, the road that runs north/south through the village of Shorne and located to south but adjoining a row of terraced houses called 'Hayes Terrace' which front on to Crown Lane a spur road to the west of The Street. The OD height in the rear garden of The Old Post Office is 73.8m aOD.

2.2 Monument details for the site are as follows:

HER Number TQ 67 SE. Grid Reference NGR 569111 171255

TQ 67 SE SHORNE THE STREET 2/145 21.11.66 Nos 2 and 4 (Harmony Hill and The Post Office)

II

C18. Timber-framed, all elevations cement rendered, clay roofing tiles.

Rectangular with roof hipped at both ends. Front of 2 storeys with attic storey above. Double shop front to Post Office with glazing bars intact. One door and one window to Harmony Hill. Three casement windows to first floor. Two dormer windows with hipped tiled roofs. Painted moulded timber eaves

cornice. String course on first floor level.

Original timber structure substantially exposed on Post Office.

Traditionally the Post Office used by Dickens to post his manuscripts. Formerly one house.

Listing NGR: TQ6912471102

3.0 Setting

The site sits within a conservation area with a number of Listed Buildings in the vicinity of the site.

The Bedrock Geology is said to be by the British Geological Survey to be Thanet Formation- Sand, Silt and Clay.

4.0 Planning history

A condition of archaeological works is attached to Listed Building Consent No: 20220446 for Listed Building Consent for the removal of cement render, inspect lateral movement, repair, re-render in lime and is:

4) Prior to any works commencing a programme of historic building recording of the front elevation of the building in accordance with Historic England Recording Level 3 shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. After approval by the Local Planning Authority a copy of the report shall be sent to the Heritage Conservation Team, Kent County Council, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent for inclusion in the Kent Historic Environment Record.

Reason: *To ensure and safeguard the recording and inspection of matters of archaeological/historical importance associated with the building in accordance with Policies CS19 and CS20 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) and saved Policies TC2 and TC3 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994).*

5.0 Historic Background

A rapid map assessment of historic mapping shows that in 1863 OS mapping shows the building but not as a Post Office (MAP 1) or by 1872 (MAP 2) but by 1895 it is labelled as a Post Office (MAP 3). Postcards show that by 1910 (below)



the Post Office was a separate but attached enterprise with an entrance door to the front and shop windows to either side.

6. DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDING/EXTERIOR

6.1 The rectangular building seems to be a timber framed Wealden type house with a hipped roof with gablet, later brick chimney and jetty line still apparent on the right side of the rendered façade. The roof is tiled with Kent pegged tiles and with two wooden hipped dormer casement windows. The façade of the

building is rendered in a cream coloured cement render with three black painted casement windows in the upper storey and on the ground floor a central doorway with a cat slide tiled porch and a wooden panelled door painted black. Either side of the doorway is a black painted wooden casement window. The façade is early 20th century at best and not part of the original build.

6.2 The Post Office to the right but attached is a later building with a pitched roof and two bay windows framing the central doorway to the Post Office.

7. INTERIOR

7.1 Internally the building was not inspected or recorded.

8.0 DISCUSSION

8.1 A review of the proposed repairs to the façade suggest the building works are not going to impact on the structure of the building. Specialist advice has been sought and the opinion is that:

A number of structural engineers have reviewed the project and the following is quoted from a report by William Bray of AKS Ward, Lister Beare, Construction Consultants report in 2015.

Justin McAteer from MOYO & McATEER consulting engineers is in agreement and notes that the movement has increased since this time:

3.1 There had clearly been some movement of the front wall relative to the timber framed structure ie the internal timber posts. Movement appeared to have occurred in the area from ground to first floor level between the window

to the right (viewed from the outside) of the front door and the internal wall between sitting room and lounge.

3.2 Looking through the gaps between wall and timber posts it appeared that there had also been movement of the brickwork of the front wall relative to the inside wall face. The distances between the back of the brickwork and the internal elements appeared to be excessive and beyond what is likely to have been the original construction.

3.3 This outward movement appeared to have started some time ago but the evidence suggests that movement may have increased in recent years.

3.4 There could be a number of reasons for the movement but the most likely is separation between brickwork and the timber frame. The original timber framed building would have been rendered. At a later date the building has been faced with brickwork following the current fashion. This is a fairly common phenomena. Unfortunately this new brick facing was often not very well tied back to the timber frame. Over the years under the effects of weathering, temperature and general decay the brickwork can move away from the frame and become relatively unstable.

3.5 The exterior may have been rendered subsequently for reasons of fashion or taste but it may also have been rendered to cover up and improve the weather resistance of deteriorating brickwork. The addition of a hard cementitious render to replace, repair or as an over coating to the original render has possibly exacerbated a bad situation.

3.6 The situation is now such that we consider repair and remedial works should be should be undertaken within the next twelve months before more serious deterioration occurs to the structure in this area.

3.7 It is difficult to determine the exact nature and extent of work required until the render is removed and the underlying brickwork is exposed. The remedial

work is likely to consist of strapping the wall into the first floor structure by means of metal straps fixed to the floor joists and brickwork together with some rebuilding of the affected brickwork.

3.8 The first step is to remove the render so that the state of the brickwork can be assessed.

9.0 PARAMETERS

9.1 The photographic survey was conducted using digital photography and as the exterior of the building was available drone coverage of the exterior of the building was undertaken- see the orthometric views- Plates 21-22. The use of drones for capturing important buildings is now an acknowledged part of historic building recording. For drone footage of other building and archaeological sites recorded by SWAT Archaeology access here: www.swatarchaeology.co.uk and go to "Building Recording".

9.2 This work did not include any investigation of below ground archaeology. Such work is administered separately by SWAT Archaeology to a WSI prepared for the Local Planning Authority.

9.3 The site survey took place in October 2022 and photographs can be seen in the following Plates.

Report compiled by Dr Paul Wilkinson BA (Hons), MA., PhD., MCIfA., FRSA., IHBC and dated 21st October 2022.

10. References

Historic England, 2019 *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice*

The National Heritage List for England (accessed 12th March 2020)

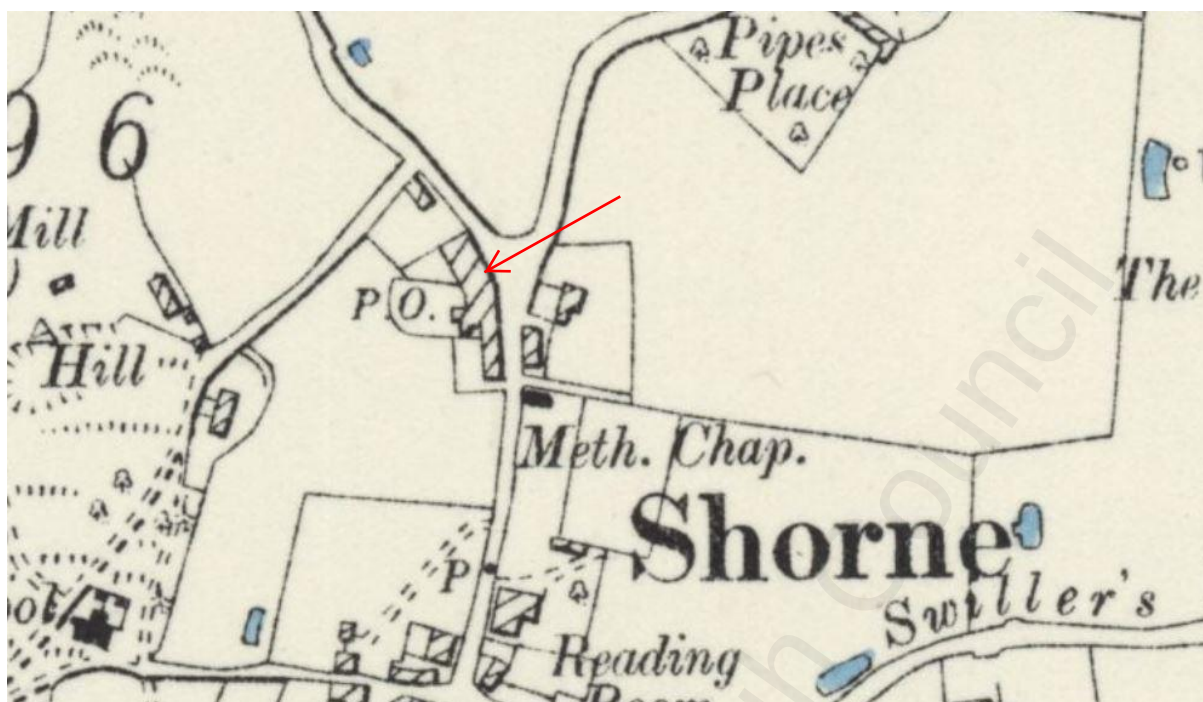
Chartered Institute of Field Archaeologists, *Standard and Guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* (2017).



MAP 1. OS 1863



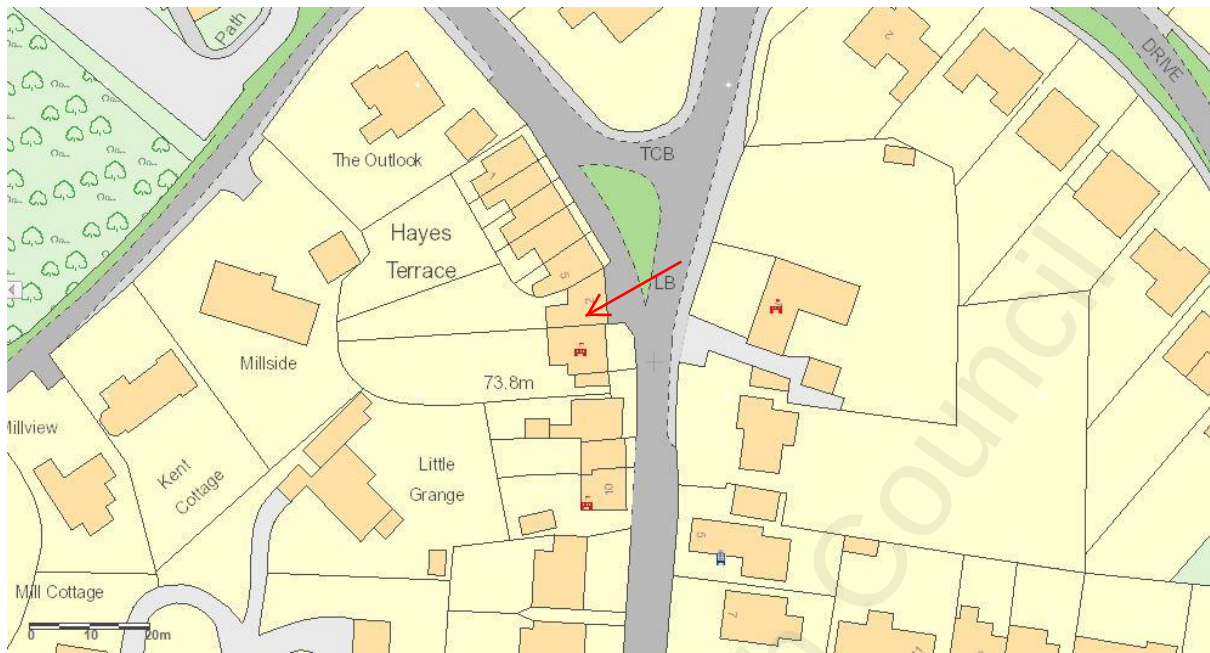
MAP 2. OS 1872



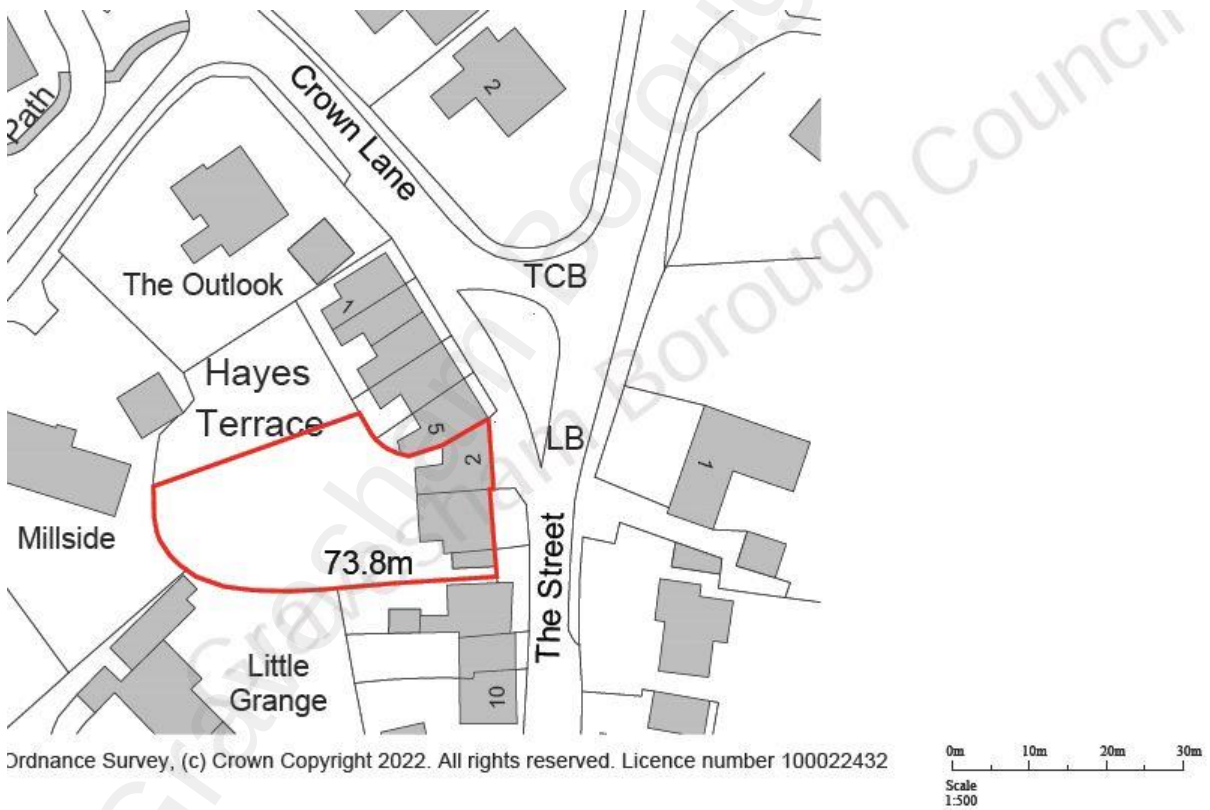
MAP 3. OS 1895



MAP 4. OS 1907



MAP 5. KCCHER map



MAP 6. OS map of site



Plate 1. Francis Frith historical postcard (1955)



Plate 2. Historical postcard



Plate 3. Historical view of frontage of Post Office



Plate 4. Historical view of frontage of Post Office



Plate 5. Frontage of the Old Post Office (looking West)



Plate 6. Frontage of the Old Post Office (looking NNW)



Plate 7. Frontage of the Old Post Office (looking SSW)



Plate 8. Frontage of the Old Post Office (detail 1m scale)



Plate 9. Frontage of the Old Post Office (detail 1m scale)



Plate 10. Frontage of the Old Post Office (detail looking NNW)



Plate 11. Frontage of the Old Post Office (looking NW)



Plate 12. Front door (1m scale)



Plate 13. Frontage of the Old Post Office (looking NW)



Plate 14. Signboard on frontage



Plate 15. View of Post Office (looking West)



Plate 16. View from above (looking West)



Plate 17. View from above



Plate 18. View of roof (looking NNW)



Plate 19. View from above (looking South)



Plate 20. View of roof (looking South)



0 5
scale 1:100 metres