

Archaeological Watching Brief on works at Wye Mill House, Bridge Street, Wye, Ashford, Kent

Site Code MILL/WB/17



Report for Mr N. Munro
Date of report 04/01/2018

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Site Code MILL/WB/18
NGR 604878 146884

Date of report: 04/01/2018



Plate 1. View of site showing the site prior to development.

1.0 Abstract

1.1. From the 20th to the 27th September 2017 Dr Paul Wilkinson MCIfA and B. Cichy of Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) carried out an Archaeological Watching Brief on ground works involved in the conversion of a ground floor store/machinery room to create a kitchen/breakfast area on part of the ground floor of Wye Mill House, Wye in Kent. (Fig. 1 & Plates 1-22).

1.2. The works were carried out on behalf of the land owner.

1.3. An Archaeological Watch was kept during the floor reduction (Plates 5-8).

The archaeological work was undertaken in two phases.

Phase 1: Ground floor reduction to create a kitchen with removal of the concrete slab of the former floor on the site (20th-24th September & Plates 5-8).

Phase 2: Recording of mill machinery (25th- 27th September & Plates 5-21).

1.4. The Archaeological Watching Brief was to watch for any signs of archaeological activity. In particular, any evidence of archaeological activity associated with the known archaeological sites in the area including the nearby findings of Roman buildings and/or any earlier mill remains.

1.5. The Planning Application Number for the development is 16/01822/AS.

1.6. The archaeological potential had been highlighted by KCC Heritage Conservation and the Archaeological Watching Brief revealed evidence of earlier mill activity on the site which was recorded.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 The site is located on land to the east of the Wye Railway station and SSW of the Public House, The Tickled Trout. The property fronts onto Bridge Street and is to the west of Dennes Mill Close. The site itself is level at about 32.50m aOD (Figure 1).

2.2 Planning Background

Planning application 16/01822/AS was submitted to Ashford Borough Council the Local Planning Authority (LPA). Kent County Council Heritage and Conservation (KCCHC), on behalf of the LPA requested that an Archaeological Watching Brief be undertaken in order to record any archaeological remains uncovered during the development work. The following condition (1) was attached to the planning consent:

No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a watching brief to be undertaken by an archaeologist approved by the Local Planning Authority so that the excavation is observed and items of interest and finds are recorded. The watching brief shall be in accordance with a written programme and specification which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded.

3.0 Schedule of Visits

An archaeologist suitably experienced attended the site (Paul Wilkinson SWAT Archaeology) and monitored the excavation works from 20th -27th September 2017.

4.0 Aims and Objectives

4.1. The reason for the monitoring and recording, were to:

“The objectives of the archaeological watching brief are to contribute to knowledge of the archaeological landscapes of Bobbing area; to record and investigate remains of archaeological significance that may be exposed as a result of excavations in connection with the groundworks” (SWAT 2017).

4.2. The ground works were to reduce the level for access (Plates 2-6).

4.3. A full programme of proposed works by the contractor were made available to SWAT Archaeology before the on-site monitoring took place.

4.4. Confidence Rating

No factors hindered the recognition of archaeological and deposits during the monitoring and recording exercise.

5.0 Archaeological and Geological Background

5.1. The underlying geology at the site according to the British Geological Survey (BGS) is bedrock of Gault Formation- Mudstone with Superficial geology of Alluvium- Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel.

5.2. The application site consisted of an area of known important archaeological remains.

To the south is a known Roman building situated on the west bank of the River Stour (TR 04 NW 19) and 60m to the east a ditch produced Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery (TR 04 NW 42).

The Mill House and Water Mill are located on the east bank of the River Stour between Wye village centre and the railway station. It is a Grade II listed building with an interesting history.

The multi-phase building was originally a 15th century medieval open hall house. There were later additions to this structure in the 17th and 18th century and a large Georgian house was built around the building in the 18th century.

The mill was built against the earlier ancillary building in the 19th century and is marked on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of c.1861.

It is also depicted on the 4th edition map of c.1931-40 indicating it was still in use at this time.

The full description from Historic England is:

Mill, mill house and mill race. Mid C18. Red brick house, timber framed mill, weatherboarded, and stone and red brick mill race. Plain tiled roof.

House. Two storeys on plinth with plat band and moulded modillion eaves cornice to hipped roof with stacks to rear centre right and projecting at end left.

Regular fenestration of 2 tripartite glazing bar sashes with gauged heads on each floor, with central glazing bar sash on 1st floor, and central door of 6 raised and fielded panels on ground floor with traceried rectangular fanlight and doorcase with Ionic pilasters, enriched frieze and modillioned pediment.

Boarded door to end right. Mill building to right, 3 storeys, ground floor of painted brick, weather boarded over, with hipped tiled roof.

One wooden casement on each floor, with boarded doors to centre left on ground and 1st floors.

Attached to right the mill race, with masonry walls, some 50 yards long, with a hatch and walkway, and a second hatch beyond controlling the flow of the main stream, both with wood and iron gates and railed walkways.

Listing NGR: TR0487846884

6.0 Methodology

6.1. The Watching Brief was conducted in accordance with the Archaeological Specification compiled by SWAT Archaeology and it also complied with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (CIfA: Dec 2017).

6.2. The works comprised the observation of all ground works, including the inspection of subsoil and natural deposits for archaeological features and finds.

6.3. The Watching Brief was carried out according to the needs of the building contractors from 20th-27th September 2017.

6.4. Excavation of the area was carried out by contractors who hand dug to remove the soil down to formation level (Plates 2-6).

6.5. All excavation was carried out under the constant supervision of an experienced archaeologist (Dr Paul Wilkinson MCifA).

6.6. The areas of excavation were subsequently hand-cleaned with the intention of revealing any observed features in plan and section.

6.7. If found archaeological features under threat were to be excavated to enable sufficient information about form, development date and stratigraphic relationships to be recorded without prejudice to more extensive investigations, should these prove to be necessary.

6.8. The archaeological watching brief was carried out in accordance with current IfA Standards and Guidance, (CIfA: 2017), and methodology discussed on a number of occasions with the Principal Archaeological Officer KCC.

7.0 Results

7.1 General

No archaeological features or finds were revealed or recovered. However elements of relict mill machinery were revealed and recorded on 27th September 2017 by Bartosz Cichy (SWAT Archaeology).

Building works had taken place in a room located on ground floor in NW corner of the Mill House, called a storeroom.

The room measuring 4.01m by 4.94m is reduced part of originally larger room measuring 5m by 4.94m which was divided into the room and narrow passage by W-E aligned plasterboard wall installed above a concrete floor.

Prior to recording a concrete floor and rubble levelling deposits were removed by hand (under archaeological supervision) exposing brick foundations, fragments of the brick floor with attached iron plate harbouring a socket for watershaft and watershaft itself where pitwheel was removed sometime in the past.

An iron rim measuring 0.45m in diameter fastening pitwheel was left hanging on the shaft. The watershaft is attached to the breastshot waterwheel located on the other side of the western wall in the wheel room. The water buckets were removed from the waterwheel sometime ago.

Breastshot water wheels was used to extract as much power as possible from a stream which provided a head of water insufficient to power an overshot wheel.

The water was fed in at about axle height and a breast of masonry was constructed to help retain the water in the wheel as it descended to its lowest point.

Exposed foundations are shown with clarity in Figure 2 and the detailed drawing are numbered on the plan with accompanying text:

1. Measuring 0.45m by 2m fragment of brick floor with attached iron plate supporting watershaft. The floor originally extended up to the N-S aligned wall foundations 2 located 0.5m to the east. On the north and south side the floor was abutted to E-W aligned walls 3 and 4 of the wheel pit.
2. N-S aligned, two bricks thick (0.45m) wall was 3.1m long. On the north side the wall was forming corner with wall 3. On the south side the wall was joined with wall 4 and 5. On the east side two parallel, located one metre apart, walls 8 and 9 were joined.
3. E-W aligned, 0.35m wide and 1.61m long, brick northern wall of the pit of the Pit Wheel.
4. E-W aligned, 0.35m wide and 1.61m long, brick southern wall of the pit of the Pit Wheel. Shallow gully visible at the top of the wall with one edge defined by higher wall 5 located to the south. 0.03 m deep gully runs into slot in western wall of the room.
5. Southern foundation wall running alongside and under present southern wall of the room. There was 0.2m offset between edge of the foundation wall and edge of wall. The wall associated with this foundation wall was removed. Present day southern wall was build on top of concrete floor.
6. Northern foundation wall running alongside and under northern wall of the room. There was 0.2m offset between edge of the foundation wall and edge of wall. The foundations are supporting existing wall.
7. Eastern foundation wall running alongside and under eastern wall of the room. There was 0.1m offset between edge of the foundation wall and edge of wall. The foundations are

supporting existing wall. Two walls 8 and 9 were located to the east and joined with the wall.

8. E-W aligned 0.24m wide and 2.6m long brick wall

9. E-W aligned 0.24m wide and 2.6m long brick wall

To preserve in situ the Iron components will be over built with frame and boards. The exposed foundations will be preserved in situ by installing a new floor which will comprise 40-50mm sand, 50mm membrane – insulation, 100mm concrete slabs topped by 50mm York stone flags

8.0 Finds

No archaeological finds as such were retrieved but the exposed water mill machinery was exposed and recorded.

9.0 Discussion

The development site is in an area of archaeological potential. However, no archaeology was revealed on the development site but the building works revealed elements of the mill water machinery which were recorded and preserved in situ.

10.0 Conclusion

The Archaeological Monitoring has fulfilled the primary aims and objectives of the SWAT Archaeological Specification. As far as it is known no buried archaeological features have been affected as a result of the development.

11.0 Acknowledgments

SWAT Archaeology would like to thank Neil Munro for commissioning the project. Fieldwork was undertaken by Paul Wilkinson and Bartosz Cichy and report written by Dr Paul Wilkinson MCIfA.

References

HER data (Historic England 2017)

CIfA (2017) Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs

SWAT Archaeological Watching Brief (2017)

Appendix 1

Kent County Council HER Summary Form

Site Name: Development of land at Wye Mill House, Bridge Street, Wye, Kent

SWAT Site Code: MILL/WB/17

Site Address: As above

Summary:

Swale and Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out Archaeological Monitoring on the development site above. The site has planning permission for a new kitchen whereby Kent County Council Heritage and Conservation (KCCHC) requested that an Archaeological Watching Brief be undertaken to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains.

The Archaeological Monitoring consisted of site visits which encountered no buried archaeological features or artefacts but revealed the water mill machinery which was recorded and preserved in situ.

District/Unitary: Ashford Borough Council

Period(s):

NGR (centre of site to eight figures) 604878 146884

Type of Archaeological work: Archaeological Watching Brief

Date of recording: September 2017

Unit undertaking recording: Swale and Thames Survey Company (SWAT. Archaeology)

Geology: Bedrock geology is Gault Formation

Title and author of accompanying report: Wilkinson P. (2017) Archaeological Watching Brief at Wye Mill House, Bridge Street, Wye, Kent

Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate)

See above

Location of archive/finds: SWAT. Archaeology. Graveney Rd, Faversham, Kent. ME13 8UP

Contact at Unit: Paul Wilkinson

Date: 04/01/18

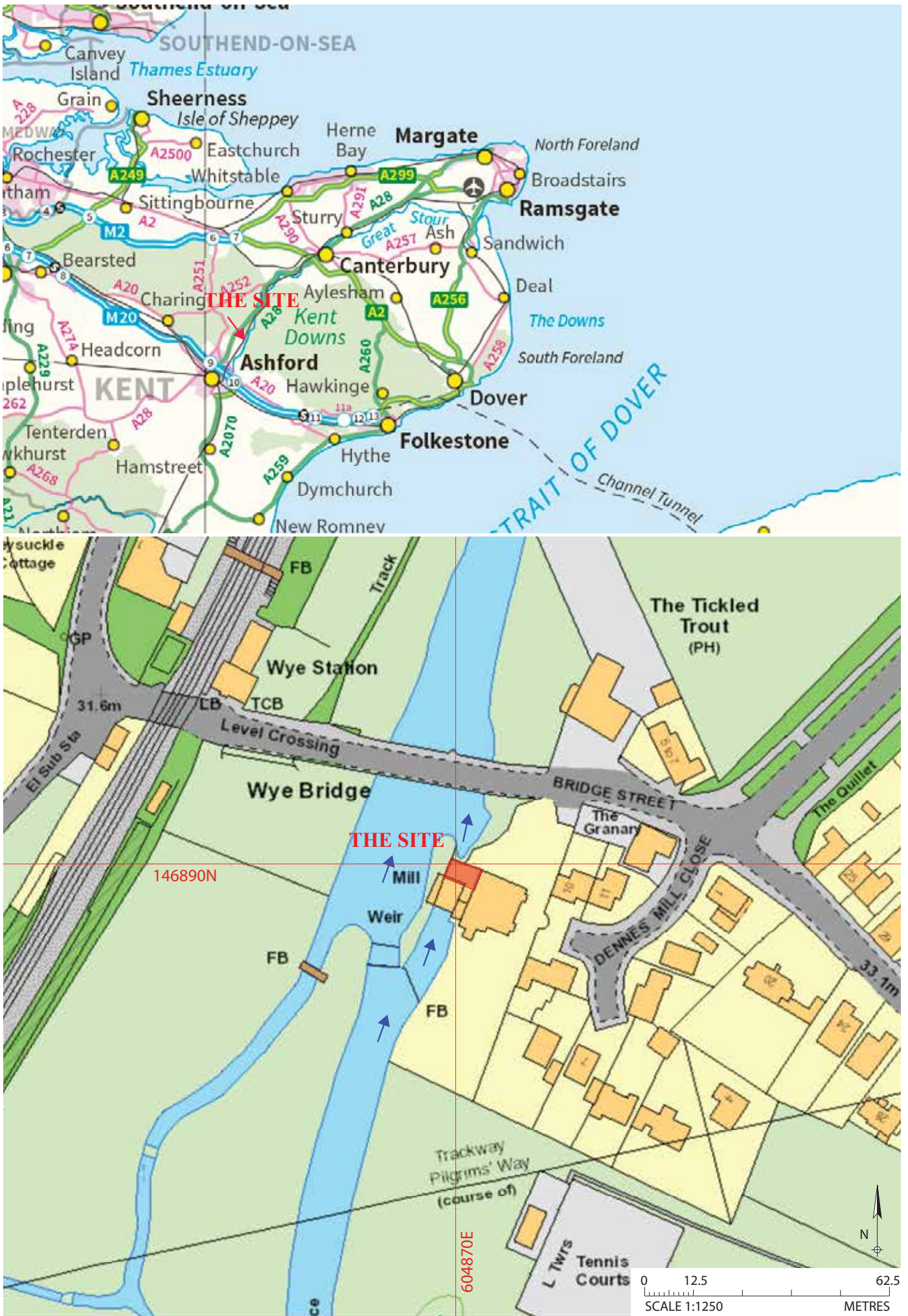


Figure 1: Site location map

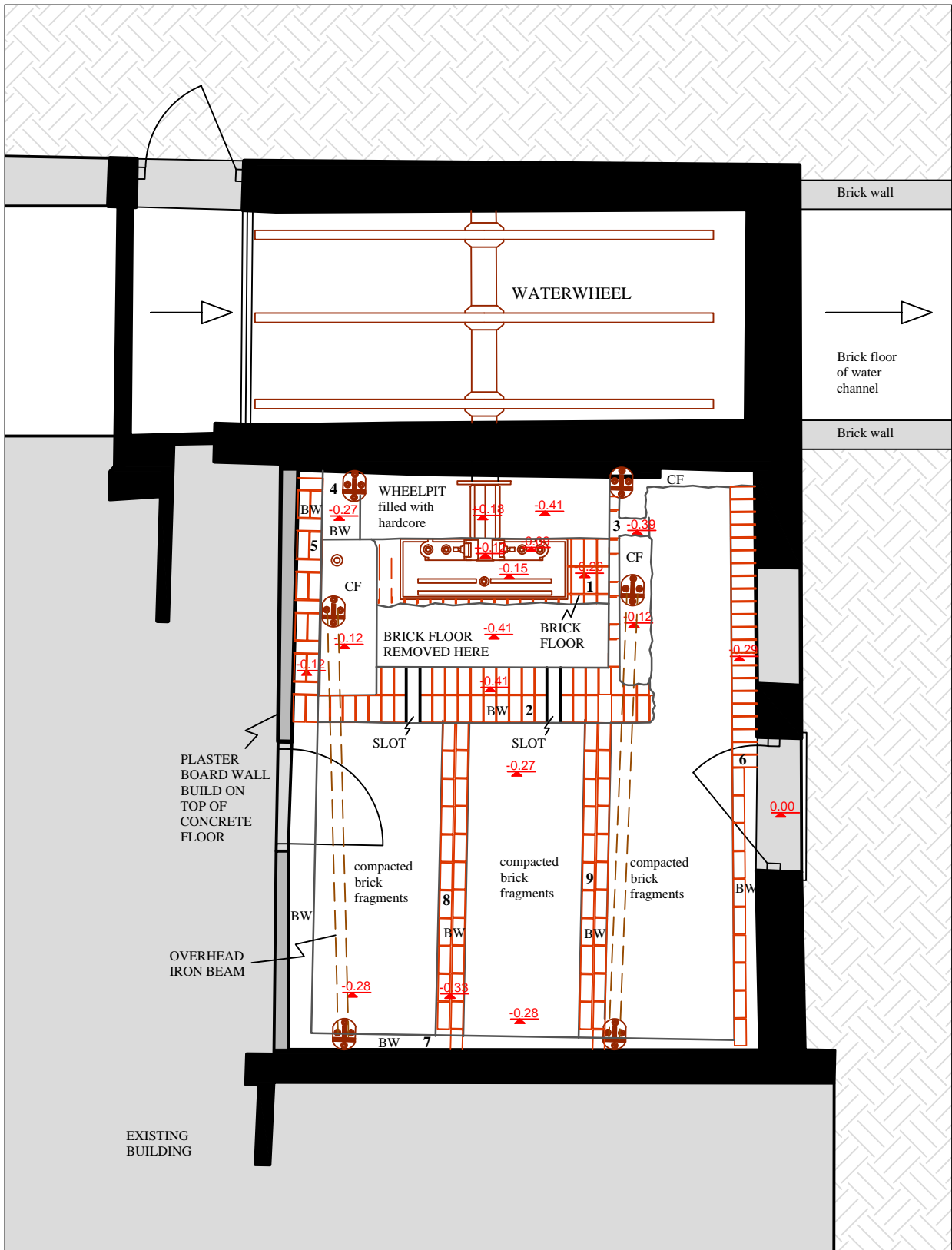


Figure 2: Plan of exposed foundation walls, iron frame and fittings of iron mechanism.

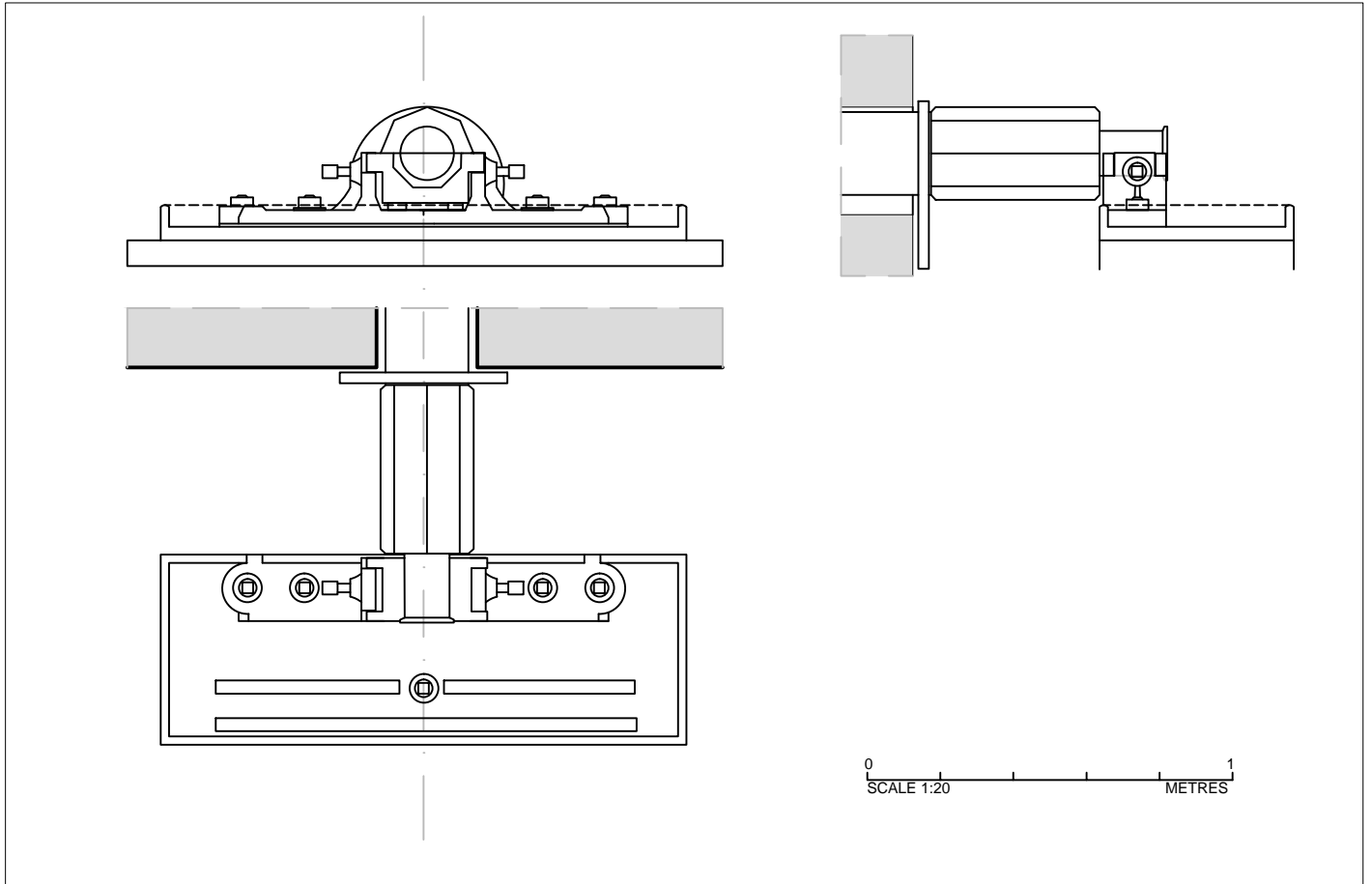


Figure 3: Views of the pitwheel section of watershaft and its fittings

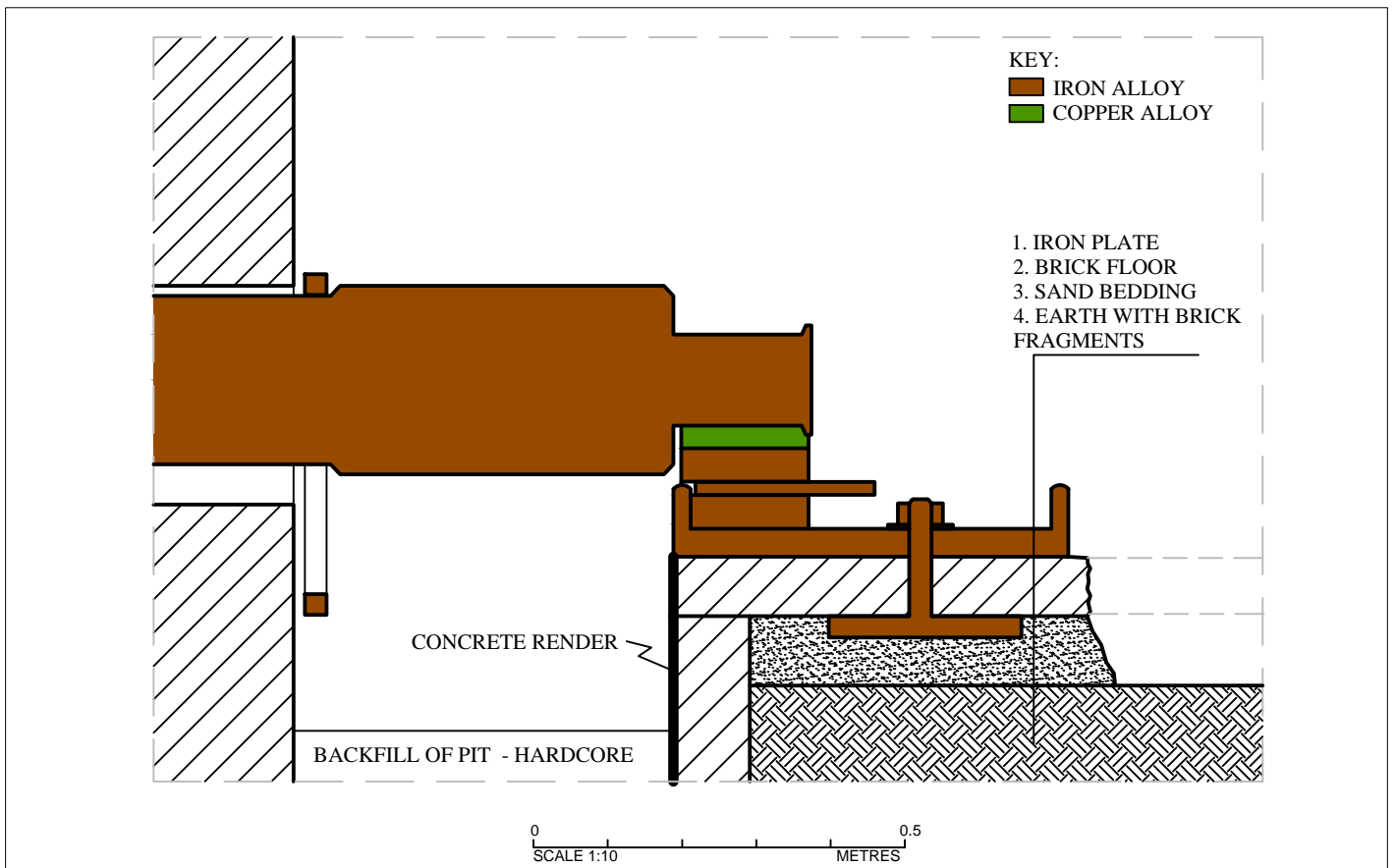


Figure 4: Pitwheel section of watershaft and a socket

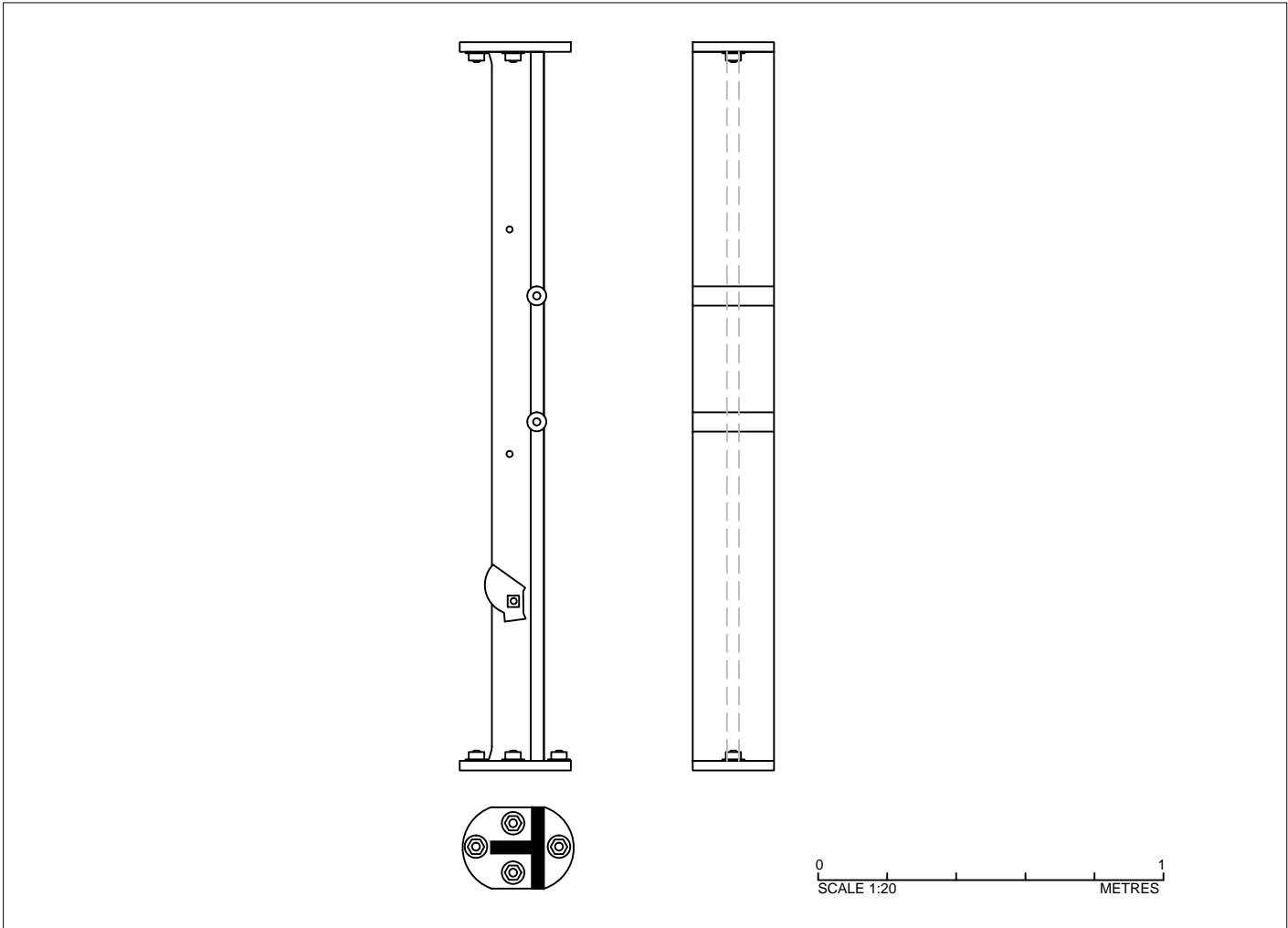


Figure 5: Steel post



Plate 1: Looking south west at the Mill house.



Plate 2: Looking south at the Mill house.



Plate 3: Looking north east back of the Mill house



Plate 4: Looking west at the corner of the Mill house



Plate 5: Looking south west at iron frame and wheel shaft.



Plate 6: Looking west at the iron posts and beam supporting wooden beams and joists of upper floor. The Iron frame was harbouring gear mechanisms of the mill.



Plate 7: Looking south at the iron posts and beam supporting wooden beams and joists of upper floor.



Plate 8: Looking south at the section through concrete floor overlaying levelling rubble deposit and wall remains.



Plate 9: Looking east at N-S aligned, brick thick, brick – English bond walls. Visible in the foreground N-S aligned two bricks thick wall



Plate 10: Looking east at brick wall foundation.



Plate 11: Looking east at the brick – thick brick wall.



Plate 12: Looking north at surviving fragment of the brick floor which was removed to the right. Wheelpit is visible on the left.



Plate 13: Looking west at iron post supporting beams and joist of upper floor. The iron posts were harbouring gear mechanisms of the mill



Plate 14: Looking north west at iron plate with watershaft socket and watershaft.



Plate 15: looking west at iron plate with watershaft socket and watershaft.



Plate 16: Pitwheel end of watershaft



Plate 17: Side view of watershaft socket



Plate 18: Front view of watershaft socket



Plate 19: Bolt and nuts fixing iron plate with watershaft socket to the brick floor underneath



Plate 20: Looking east at remains of dam mechanism at the end of pentrough visible to the right.



Plate 21: Looking north east at Water wheel. The water buckets were removed some time ago.



Plate 22: Looking south at water channel exit from Wheel room.