



# Darganfod Hen Dai Cymreig

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North West Wales Dendrochronology Project  
DATING OLD WELSH HOUSES

The Red Boat  
34, Castle Street,  
Beaumaris,  
Anglesey  
C15th, C16th and later town house



In partnership with  
RCAHMW



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Report No. 922  
prepared by  
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Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd  
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# Red Boat, 34, Castle Street Beaumaris

## Introduction and summary

Number 34 Castle Street (the Red Boat) is a 2 ½ storey house on the corner of the north side of Castle Street and the west side of Church Street. The façade on Castle Street and the east gable on Church Street present as a Victorian style. The ground floor is a commercial premises with a shop window frontage. In 1920 the house was used as an office of the London and North Western Railway parcel shipment and enquiries. The house had previously been used as a draper's shop, owned by William Hughes, but in 1911 Mr Hughes' premises was recorded as a private house. The façade has changed little over the past 100 years.

In 1829 No. 34 was occupied by Mr G Roberts, a tenant of Sir Richard Bulkley Williams Bulkley. A stable attached to the tenancy probably occupied a part of the perpendicular range extending from the back of both No. 34 and the adjacent premises.

A significant part of the present structure has survived on the original footprint of that of the 15th century. The early elements include two collar-beam trusses which support the roof. The eastern truss is more elaborate, with chamfered arched-braces and a central foliated boss on the underside of the collar. The westernmost truss is plainer. It originally rested on a horizontal tie beam. The difference in style of the trusses differentiates the status of the use of space within the three bays, so formed. It is unlikely that a fireplace and chimney stack had been inserted in the early phase of construction. A lateral stack in the north wall, towards the west end, might have warmed a parlour in that position.

Through purlins, chamfered and stopped, jointed by scarf joints, rest on the trusses and are strengthened by wind braces.

The ground floor has a shallow cellar beneath and probably served a commercial storage function. The first floor was supported by transverse beams but these are no longer visible. The living accommodation was likely to have been on the first floor in the style of a first floor hall.

Around 1708 (Bridge and Miles, 2011) the floor was inserted in the previously open hall. A fireplace and stack was added to the east gable, if not before.

## Bibliography and Acknowledgements

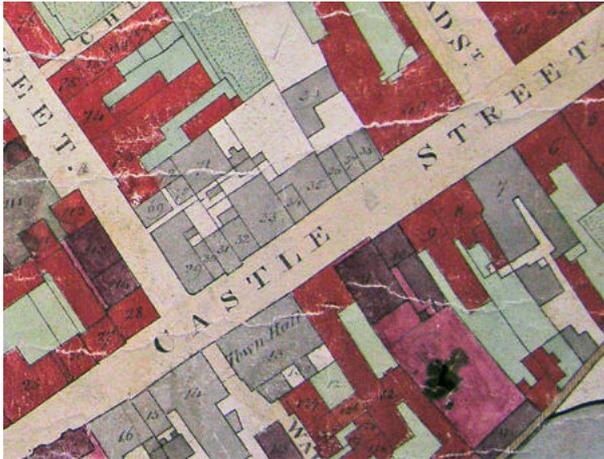
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The Red Boat, 34 Castle Street, Beaumaris

Location

34, Castle Street, Beaumaris, Anglesey

Grid Reference: 260530 376053



Red Boat, 34 Castle Street, is identified as No.28 in the Baron Hill schedule and map of 1829



Red Boat, 34 Castle Street, 2011

## Methodology

The survey was made with pencil on paper using calipers, hand tapes and hand held laser measuring tools. Laser plumb lines and levels were used to project horizontal and vertical baselines and rectilinear grids.

## Report

### Context

Beaumaris was a new town of the Middle Ages. It was conceived and began to be built between 1295 and 1300 in the aftermath of the Madog revolt, an uprising generated by the frustration and grievances of the people of Gwynedd following the conquest of Gwynedd by Edward I in 1283. A castle was built on flat ground with access to the sea. The town was laid out alongside the castle across land of the former township of Cerrig y Gwyddyl and received its charter in 1296. Following the demise of the adjacent township of Llanfaes, Beaumaris took control of the ferry at the north end of the Menai Straits and began to benefit from the seaborne trade that had formerly been a considerable asset of Llanfaes.

A pressing concern was to populate the new town with settlers willing to take up tenancies in Beaumaris. One incentive was the offer of rent-free land for the first ten years of the developing town and a shilling a year rent thereafter, for each burgage. A majority of tenants came from the north-west of England and, in the course of time, the Lancashire and Cheshire contingent would become a major influence in the town. During the first quarter of the fourteenth century over 150 burgages were taken-up, some tenants holding more than one burgage. Beaumaris was intended to be an exclusively English borough. Nevertheless, there were always Welshmen in the town and some held positions of importance and influence.

The plan of the settlement would have been laid out from the beginning, disposed around the crossing of the two main streets, Castle Street and Church Street, with its southerly extension, Wall Street, to the shore. The central streets were lined with burgages 80ft by 40ft (approximately 24.4m by 12.2m or 300 sq m).

Thirteen or more burgages were lost to the storm and sea in the fourteenth century and thirty burgages were destroyed in digging and building the town ditch and wall in the early fifteenth century. By the early seventeenth century, settlement had expanded north-west along Wexham (or Wrexham) Street, past Henllys Lane and south-east into Townsend. A lane, immediately outside the walls of the town on the west side, led to the shore at the Watergate. This is shown on Speed's 1610 map. Beaumaris survived the Civil War intact, structurally, if not financially, nor without harm to certain reputations.

Beaumaris includes a good survival of 16th and 17th century buildings, albeit part hidden beneath later treatments. Beaumaris is one of the few timber towns in north-west Wales and it might be expected that timber framed structures or the evidence for them, might be found in Beaumaris.

At No. 34 Castle Street, at the south-west corner of Castle Street and Church Street, a pivotal and prestigious location, has recently been seen to display collar beam trusses, (one dated c.1483, Bridge and Miles, 2011 ) one with arched braces, a floriated motif below the collar, and wind braces to the purlins. This house is the subject of the present survey. The George and Dragon, adjacent on Church Street, provides further evidence of timber framing with later detail of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

A short distance along Castle Street, number 32, the Tudor Rose, provides comparable examples. The Tudor Rose is a winged hall of which a part of the hall and a south wing survive (recently also dated to c.1480. Diagnostic features include arch-braced collar beam trusses with wind braces. Floriated moulded bosses, including the Tudor Rose motif, are visible underneath the collar and on the arched braces.

A few metres up Church Street from no. 34, once stood Henblas, before its demolition in 1869. Its original core was an open hall, flanked by two wings on two floors and incorporating a significant amount of timber framing. It was, for a long time, the Bulkeley residence in Beaumaris.

At No. 8-10 Castle Street, square headed windows with chamfered jambs and mullions were recorded as were stop-chamfered beams, considered to be of the sixteenth century.

Hafotty, a short distance away from Beaumaris in the parish of Llansadwrn, is a particularly instructive point of comparison. The hall and east wing retain elements of its timber-framed origin in the wall posts which have survived, encased and not removed, when the house was remodelled in stone during the second half of the fifteenth century. The trusses in the hall and east wing, the demonstrably earlier elements of the structure, are king-post trusses with arch braces and quarter-round moulding on the underside of a tie-beam. It has been suggested that the moulding detail displays influence from the South Lancashire/Cheshire area, which is appropriate in the context of so many incomers from those counties..

After 1600 we might expect more of a Renaissance feel if any major works were to be put in train at a property already in Bulkeley hands. Sir Richard died in 1572 and was succeeded by the third Sir Richard who built Baron Hill in 1618. The first house at Baron Hill was completely rebuilt in the early nineteenth century. However, it was probably the third Sir Richard Bulkeley that added a Renaissance style house in the late sixteenth century, adjacent, and at right angles, to Henblas, the Bulkeley family home in Beaumaris.

Eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century buildings are well represented. Wexham Street is characterised by late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century cottages of single storey or one and a half storey with dormer types on both sides of the road leading out of Beaumaris towards Llansadwrn. Rotten Row in this period, was less well populated than might be expected but nevertheless comprises a row of early nineteenth-century cottages, on the north side. Church Street and Castle Street were the hub of activity in Beaumaris. Two very important buildings stood to the north and south of the parish church on the west side. Plas Coch to the north of the church, was a large property, divided in its later years into eight apartments. To the south of the church stood Hen Blas, for long the Beaumaris home of the Bulkeley family. This part timber-framed winged hall of the fifteenth century was demolished in 1869. At that time the old house had accommodated fifteen apartments under its roof. Elements of two other timber, or part-timbered, houses survive close to the site of Hen Blas on the same side of the street, near the corner with Castle Street and mentioned above.

Castle Street and, formerly Watergate Street, was an axial road, parallel with the Straits and aligned on the gates of the castle. There were several inns, hotels and public houses on Castle Street and Watergate Street in the early nineteenth century, of which the Bull's Head with its stable yard was the foremost. The town hall stood opposite the junction with Church Street, with the Crown Inn and stables adjacent. Along the sea front there was a news and billiard room at Green Edge next to the Court House and private and public bathing houses on the shore. In the 1830s Beaumaris was given a boost with Joseph Hansom's development of the impressive classical Victoria Terrace and the Williams Bulkeley Arms Hotel, consciously presenting a monumental façade towards the Straits.

During the mid-nineteenth century new streets were laid out towards the Straits at Alma Street and Raglan Street, joined along Castle Street by Bulkeley Terrace.

## The survey

### Details

#### The ground floor and first floor

The ground floor was not surveyed. It had been extensively repaired and remodelled as an ice cream parlour. It is likely that during most periods of its existence the ground floor would have served a commercial function.

There is, or was, a shallow cellar under the ground floor. Some elements of the cellar had been removed for structural safety. In an earlier period the ground floors of several buildings in Beaumaris were at a slightly lower level than at present. Where cellars were built (there were several in the Castle Street/Church Street area) there is some evidence for the ground floor to have been raised artificially on timber beams.

The first floor is likely to have been the main area of accommodation from the period of its construction. During the late 15th century and (it would seem) during the 16th century, the main first floor area remained open to the roof timbers. It would be likely, however, that an upper storey at, perhaps, the west end provided private accommodation.

It would be probable that an enclosed fireplace, or fireplaces, with chimney stacks, would be provided during the second half of the 16th century. The external stack on the north side at the west end would have warmed the west end room, or rooms, and a chimney stack on the east gable, heating the hall.

The present arrangements on the first floor comprise:

- A corridor against the north wall.
- Towards the west end of the corridor there is a prominent bulge the wall at the point where the external questions that meets the north wall.
- A small climb of four steps at the west end of the corridor giving access to a stair at the south end of a later kitchen wing.
- An attractive flight of stairs at the east end, doubling back from a half-landing to the attic floor.
- There are two relatively large windows in the east gable which lighted the staircase, one of which has been truncated by the first floor. The windows are offset from the main run of windows and are clearly inserted to light a stairwell.
- The partitions which separate the corridor from the main first floor rooms and separate the rooms themselves, have been modernised with Victorian architraves and skirting boards but, nevertheless, reflect the arrangement of the original partitions of the attic room of around 1708.
- The windows which look out over Castle Street and Church Street have also been attractively enhanced in Victorian style but may have used the openings of original lights.
- The attic ceiling of 1708 (Bridge and Miles, 2011) are supported by two large beams, 250 mm x 260 mm deep which span 6 m north - south and take no account of the partitions on the board they support.

#### The attic

There are two large collar-beam trusses in the attic space of late 15th century date (dendro date c. 1482 - 84, Bridge and Miles, 2011). Truss 1 is an elegant truss with raking struts springing from the cranked profile of the collar.

- The struts are pegged (two pegs at each end)
- The collar is jointed to the principals (three pegs on the north side, four pegs on the south)
- The collar is supported by arched braces, at the angle of the collar and principals and two further braces on the lower part of the principals where the braces meet the walls,. There are six pegs at each

joint with the braces. (One of the braces is lost – see elevation).

- The underside of the collar and the braces are heavily chamfered. The upper edge of the collar and inner edges of the principals above the collar are also chamfered.
- There is a foliated boss, central to the underside of the collar.
- The timber staircase shown in the first floor plan rises under arch of the truss to the 1708 floor level.

#### **Truss No. 2.**

The second, western, collar-beam truss is more rudimentary but incorporates interesting detail.

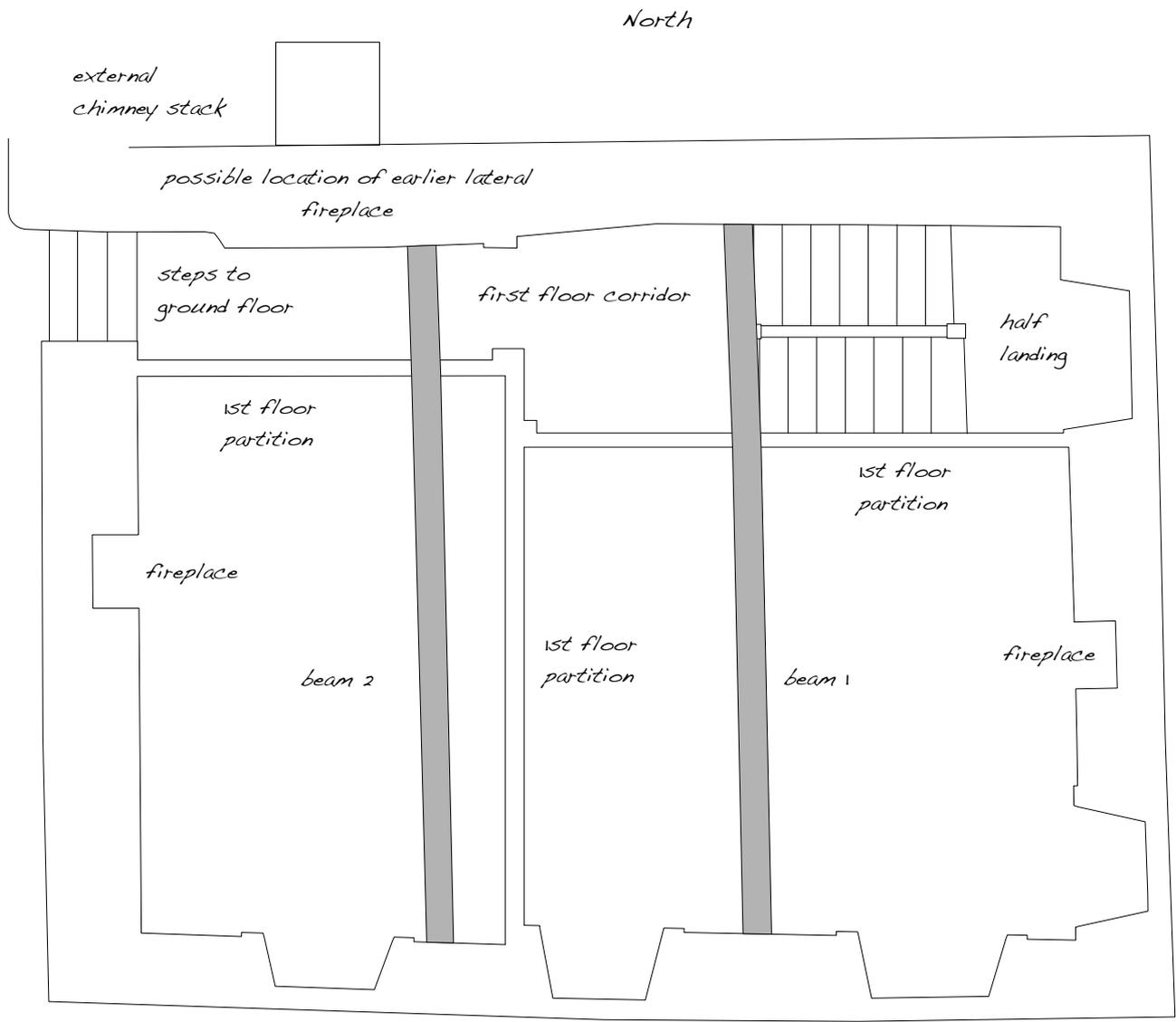
- The principals are plain with irregular edges and rest on horizontal tie-beams. There are short lengths of chamfering on the underside of the upper part of the principals.
- The tie beam and base of the principals are partly obscured by wall plaster. The tie-beam most probably rests on the wall plate of the north and south walls.
- The tie-beam is truncated, most probably to accommodate the 1708 partition within the frame of the truss.
- The diagonal laths above the collar and the vertical laths below the collar are probably part of the 18th century partition.
- The collar is pegged and jointed (two pegs at each end) and pegged, mortise- and-tenoned to the tie-beam.
- There are two peg-holes at the south end of the collar which may suggest an original stud partition separating private rooms, on two storeys, from the open first floor hall. The evidence for an earlier partition is mostly obscured by the later lath and plaster work
- The inserted floor of the early 18th century and the probable earlier first floor, both rise slightly at the western end.

#### **The purlins and wind brace**

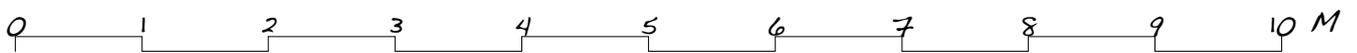
- There is an almost complete run of wind braces, pegged to the trusses and the purlins.
- There are two rows of purlins on each side of the trusses. The purlins are chamfered and stopped close to each side of each truss.
- The chamfers stop at about 700 mm from the west wall on the north side. None of these stops at the eastern end of the purlin runs are visible, obscured by plaster walls.
- The purlins are scarf jointed, a little offset, rather than directly over of the principals.



Base of trusses: lower purlin row on north side: Truss 2 partition and attic corridor

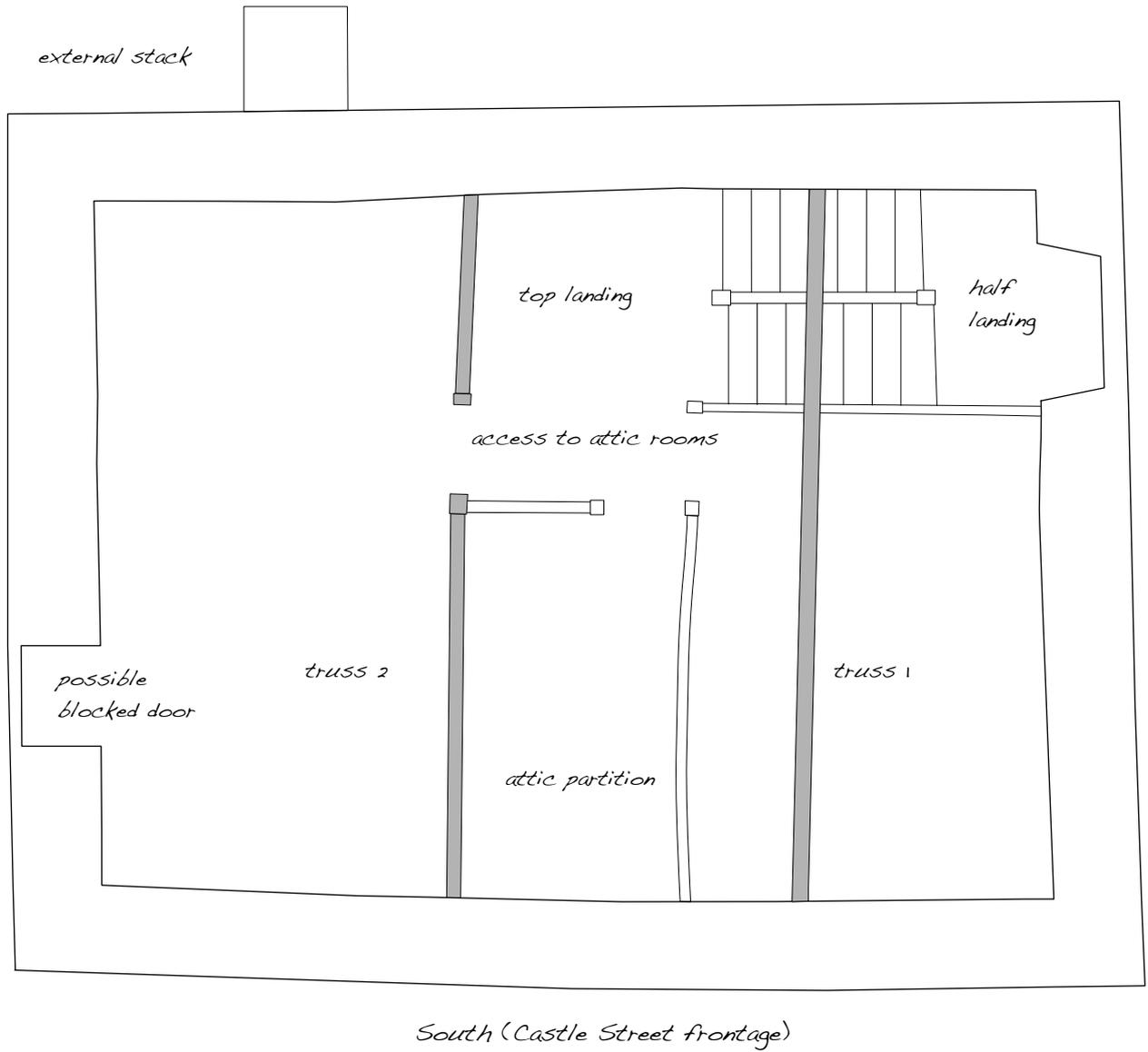


South (Castle Street frontage)



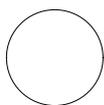
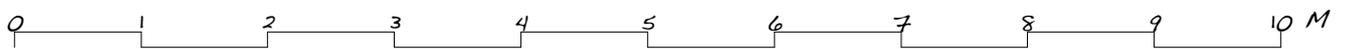
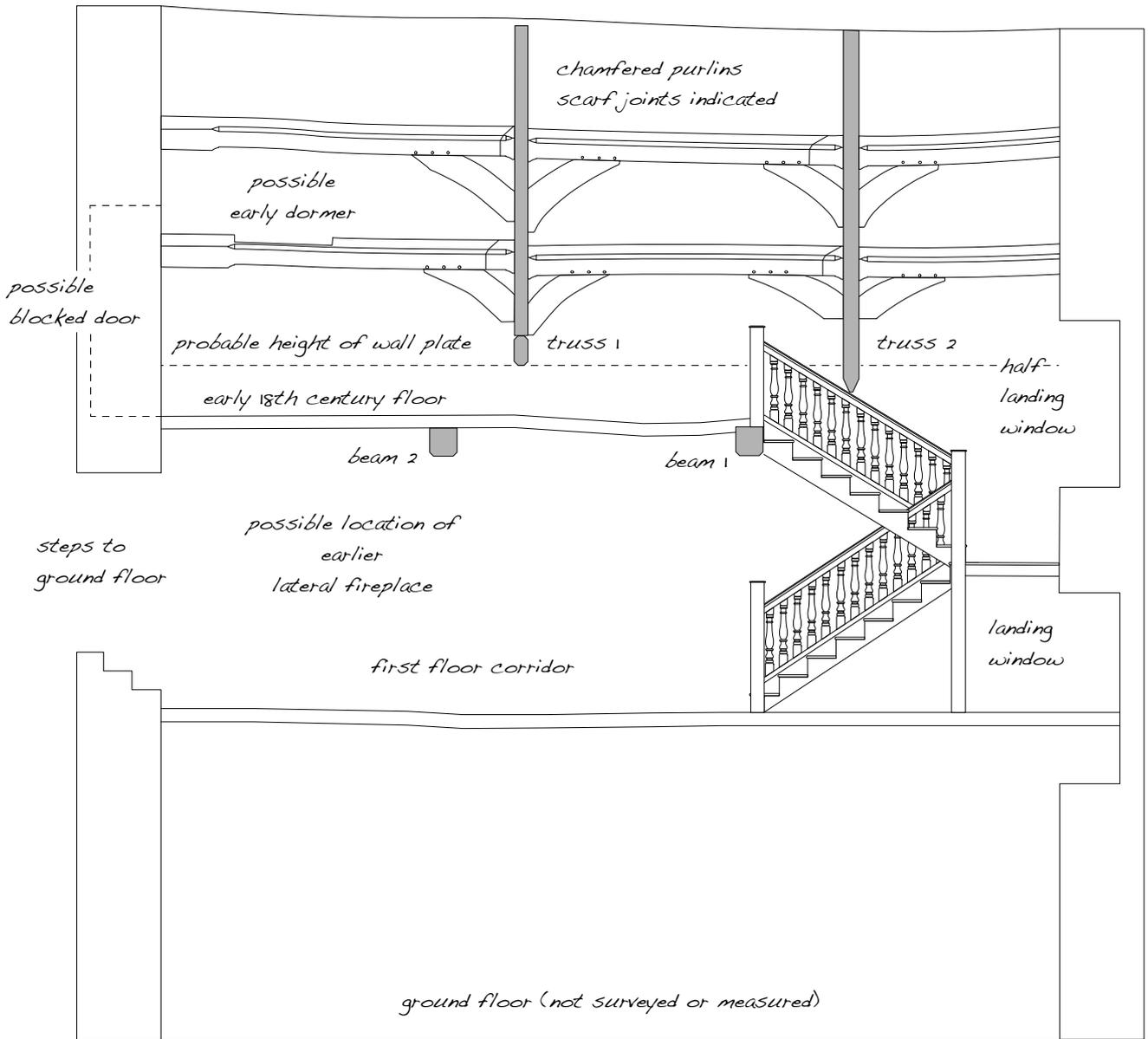
34 Castle Street 1st floor plan  
 Scale: 1:60

North



34 Castle Street 2nd floor plan  
Scale: 1:60

north internal elevation

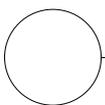
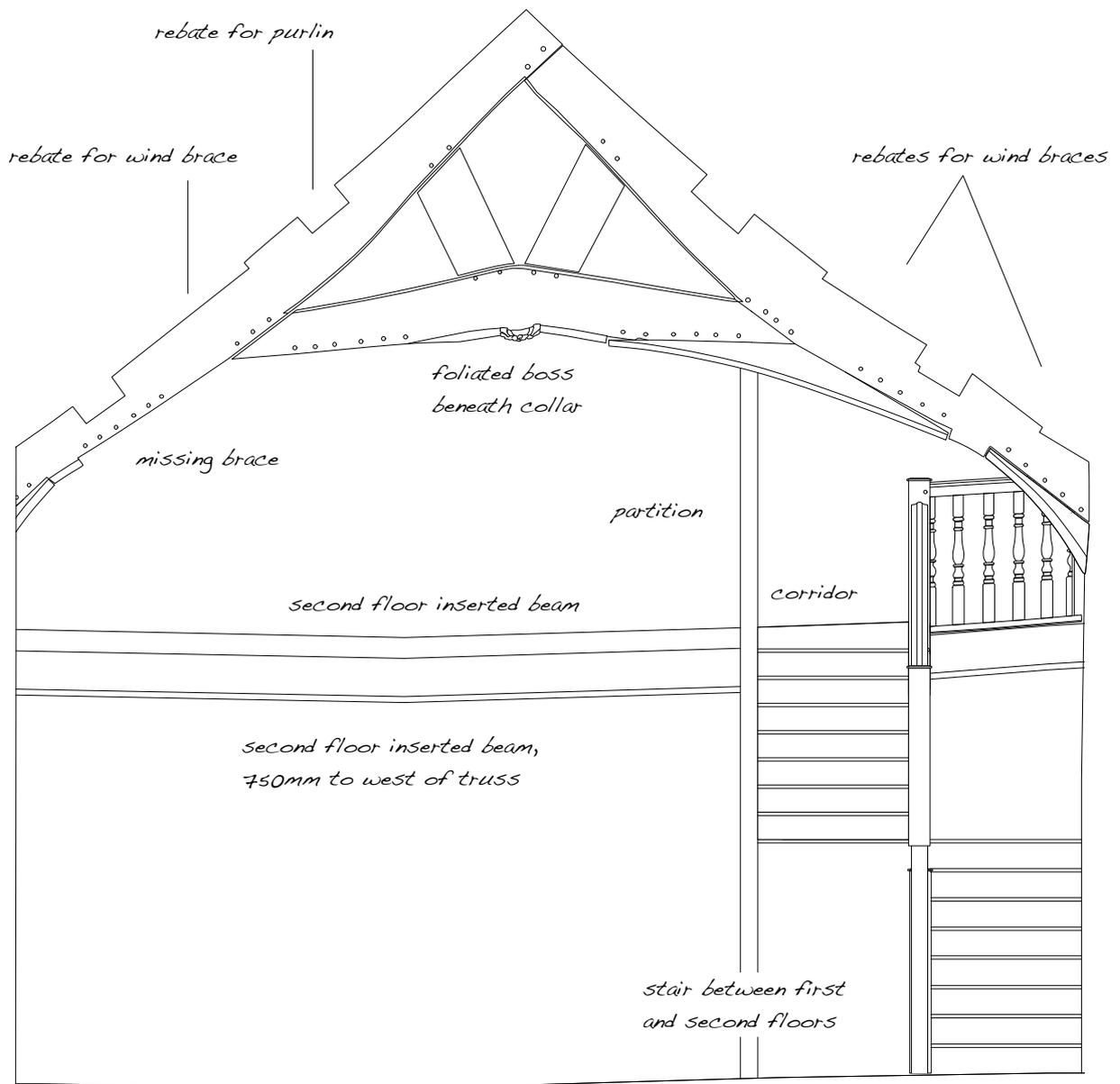


34 Castle Street, north elevation, showing wind braces

Scale: 1:60

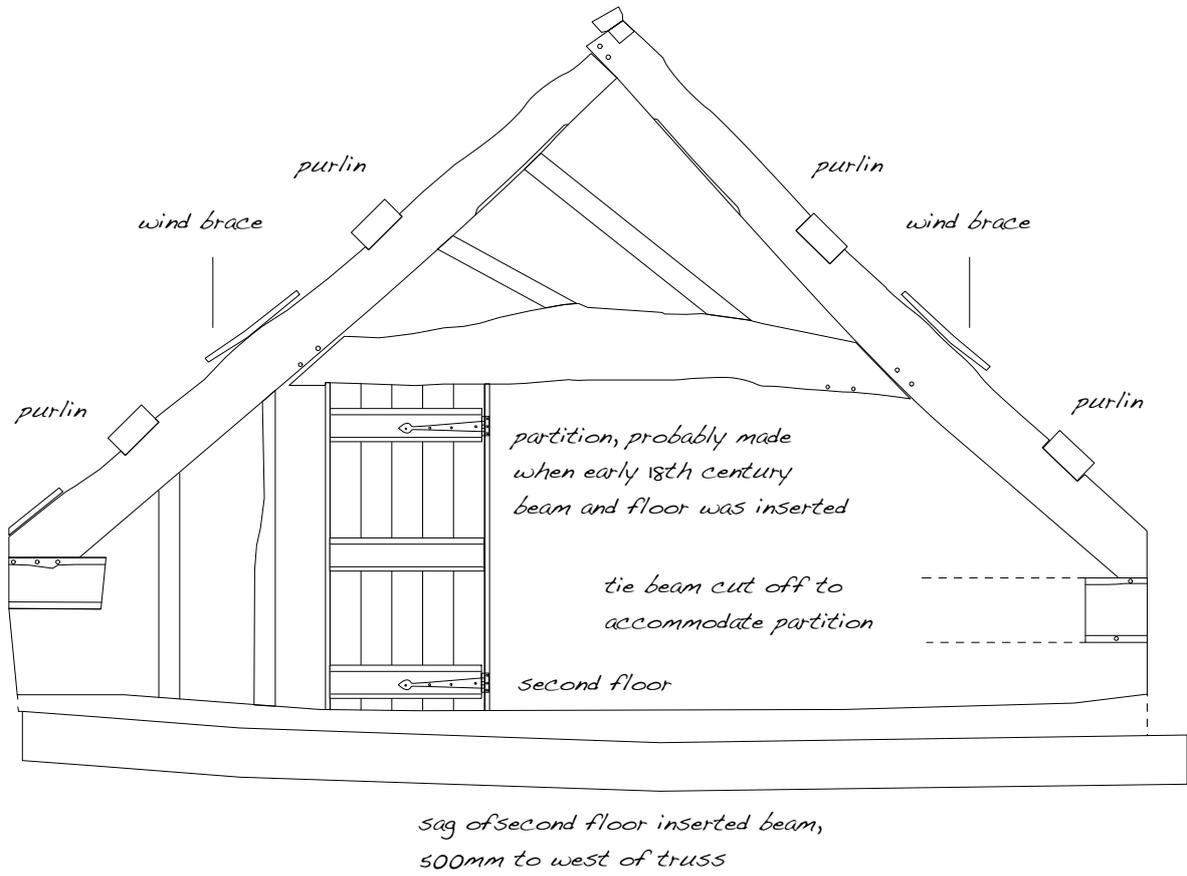


34 Castle Street, south internal elevation, showing wind braces  
 Scale: 1:60



34 Castle Street, truss 1, view from east

Scale: 1:40



○ 34 Castle Street, truss 2, view from west  
 Scale: 1:40



scarf joint



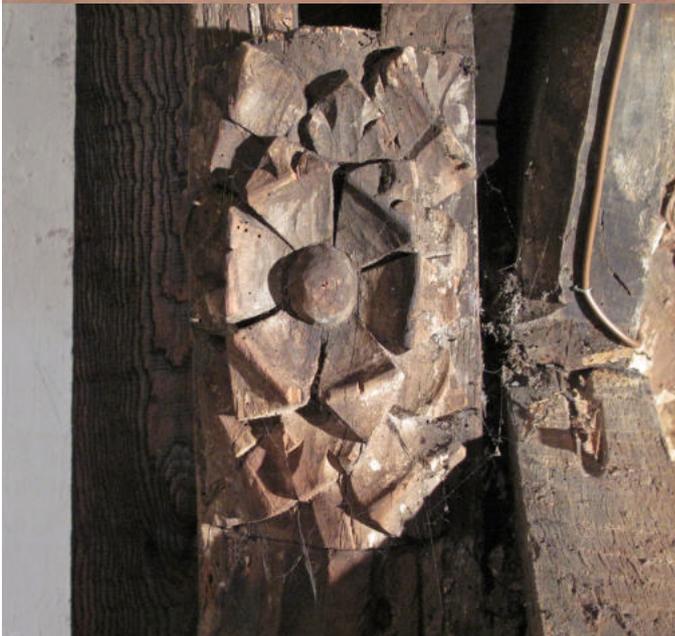
Wind-brace



Truss 1: No.34 central foliated boss for comparison with Tudor Rose



Tudor Rose Truss 2: west rose



Tudor Rose Truss 3: east rose