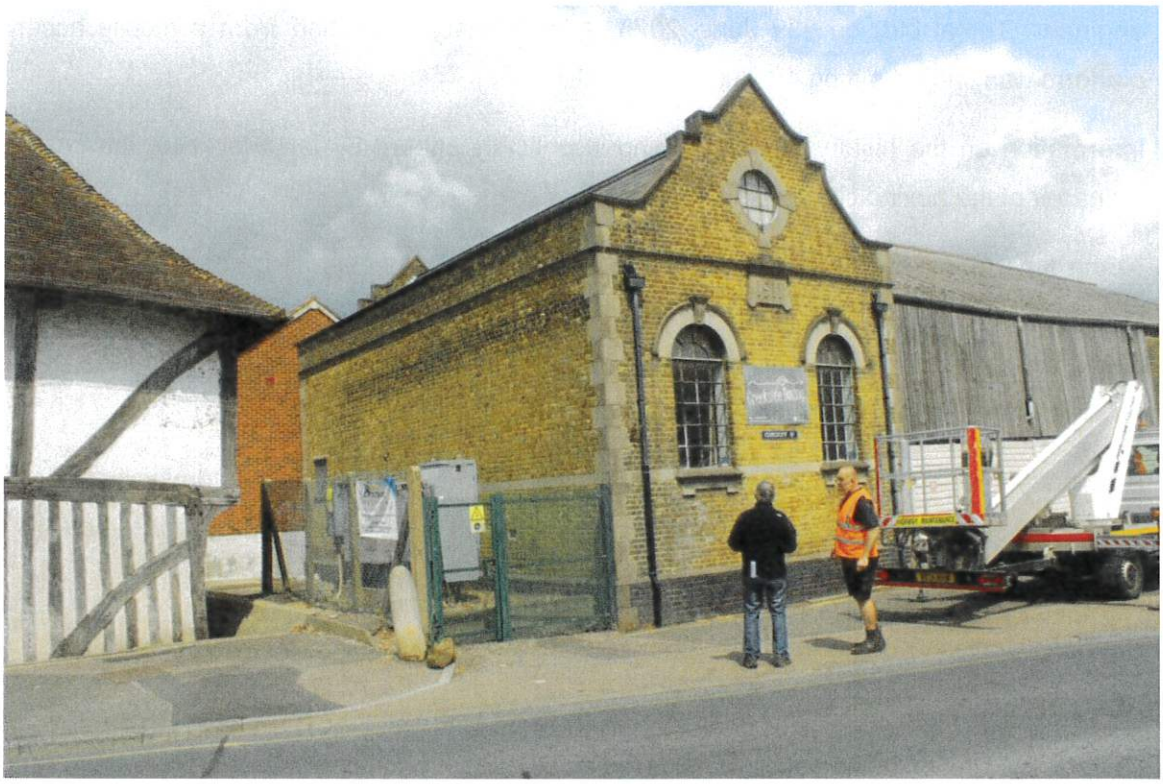
REPORT ON CONDITION
FAVERSHAM CREEK OLD PUMPING STATION HOUSE
KENT ME13 7DF



DANIEL MARTIN

RICS CERTIFIED HISTORIC PROPERTY PROFESSIONAL

Date of Survey **25 July 2025**

INTRODUCTION

Instructions were received from Adrienne Begent on 7th July to undertake a condition survey of the property known as Old Pump House, Conduit Street, Faversham. The building is currently used as a boxing club.

The scope of the inspection was confirmed to you by email on 6th June and the survey undertaken on 25th July 2025. The survey was prompted by concerns over the stability of the copings to the front gable wall. This was examined independently by a consultant structural engineer (Torcal Ltd) on 23rd June 2025. A preliminary inspection from a mobile access platform was carried out on 4th June 2025.

Information on the history of the building was kindly offered by Ian Fleckney, the current manager of the boxing club.

At the time of inspection weather was dry and sunny. I inspected all reasonably accessible internal and external parts of the property. Hidden parts of the building were not opened for inspection, but where this is considered necessary to better understand the condition of the property it is highlighted within the report.

Floorboards were not lifted and service installations including underground drains were not tested. Where specialist surveys or tests are considered necessary to help diagnose the cause of defects they are however included within my recommendations.

Service installations have not been examined. Testing of the electrical system is advised.

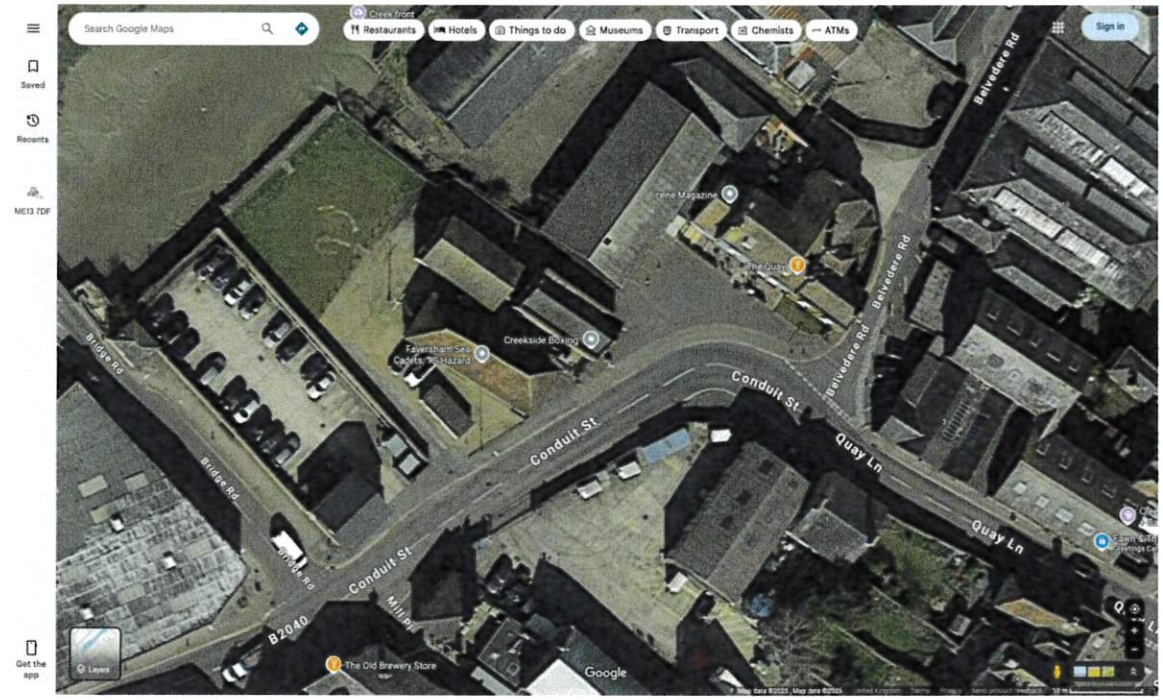
Defects have been prioritised in terms of urgency, but recommendations have not been costed. The report should not be considered as a basis for obtaining prices to undertake works of repair or alteration from a builder. I offer guidance on the need or otherwise for consent from the Planning Authority for any proposed repairs or alterations and a general commentary on the historical development of the building where it has had a bearing on the condition of the property.

The report is prepared exclusively for the benefit of Faversham Town Council, and no liability will be accepted for actions taken by any third party resulting from its content.

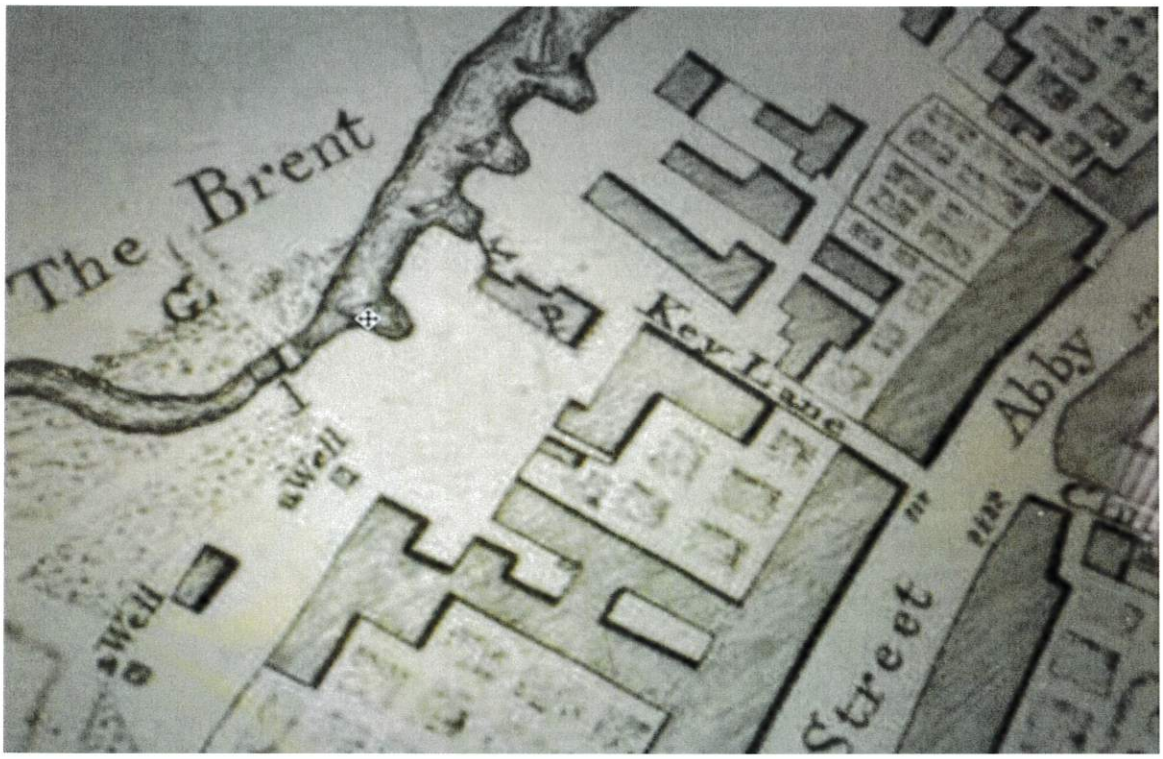
In offering directions, the front of the building facing onto Conduit Street is assumed to face due east.

In a wider context the building is likely to form part of the Development Plan for Faversham Town Quay incorporating the neighbouring Grade II* Listed C15th timber framed 'Training Ship Hazarde'.

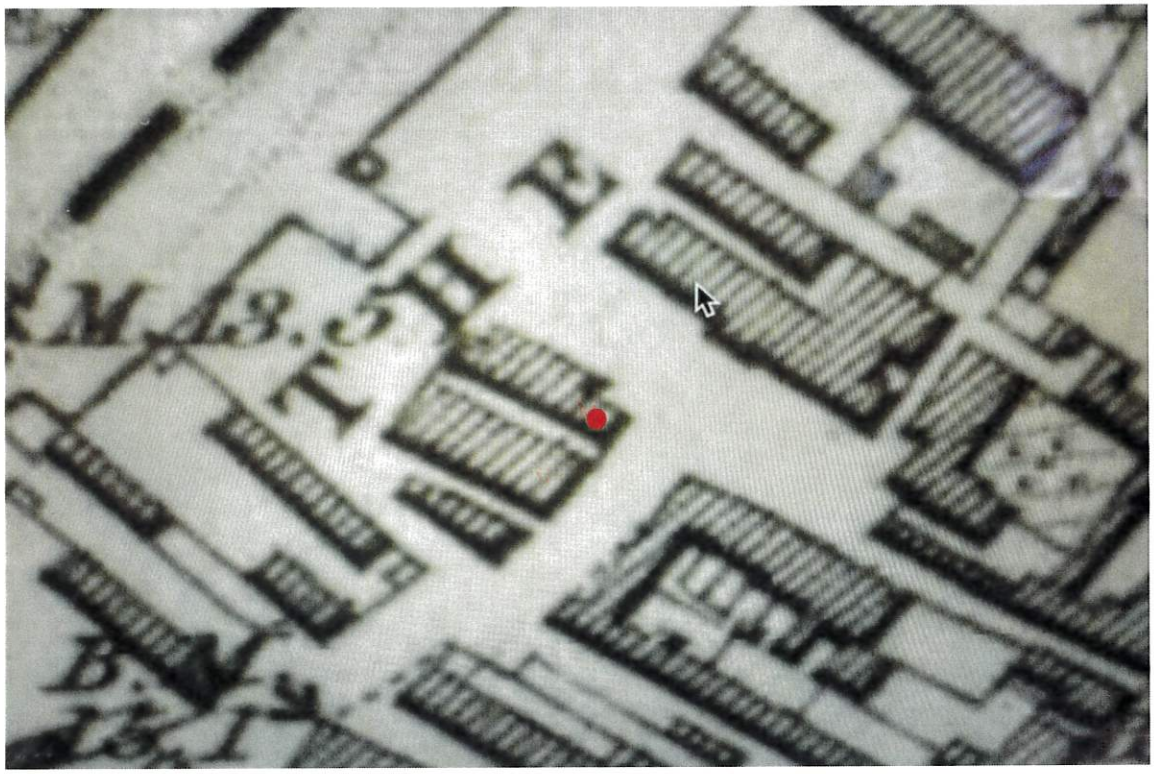
HISTORICAL MAP ANALYSIS



Google map



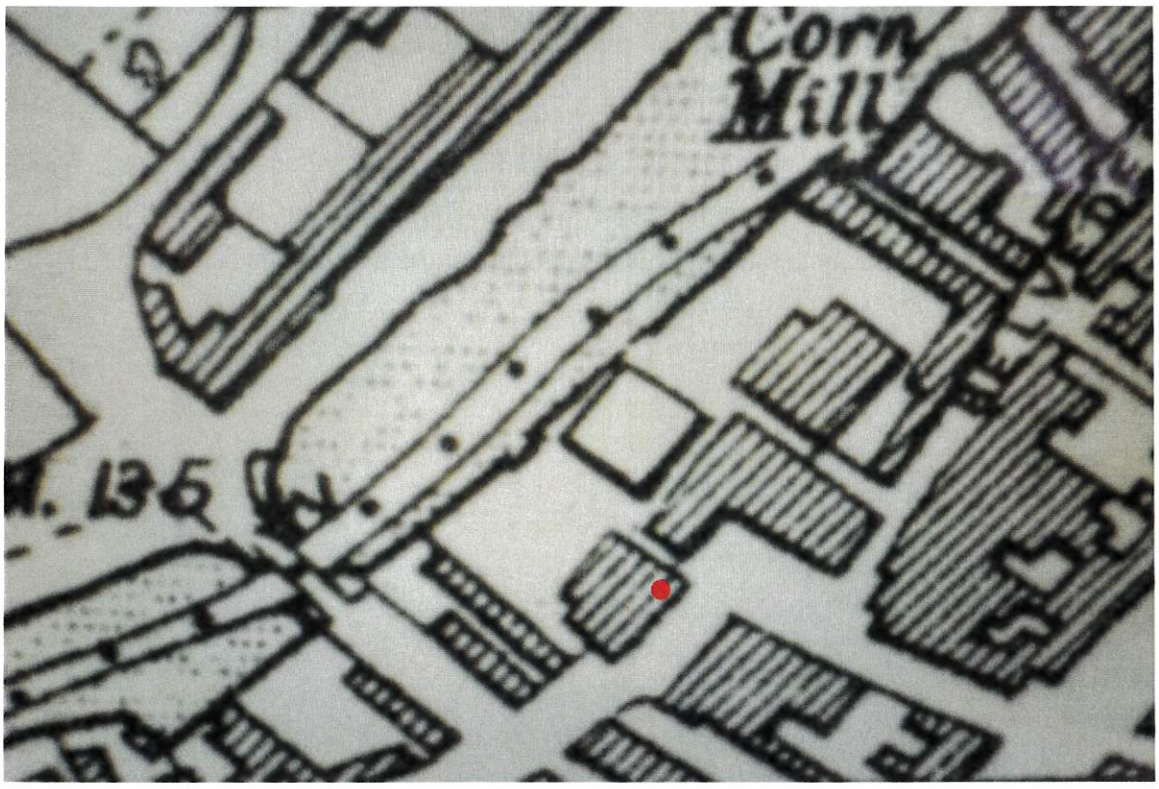
Earliest Map 1797: the position of the bridge to The Brents differs and the C15th building stands alone.



OS Map 1865: a further building has constructed to the north of the Old Town Warehouse.

OS Map 1896. The two buildings are joined.

OS Map 1906: better quality map but minimal change



OS Map 1938: poor quality map with no apparent evidence of the 1911 Pumphouse.

Date of Construction of Pump House

An analysis of historical maps shows a building in the position of the Pump House since the mid C19th. The form of that building has changed over time and appears at one point to be joined to the neighbouring C15th property.

A comparison of maps published in 1906 and 1938 shows no variation in the building. It can be assumed that this is a survey error as the Pump House dates from 1911. Further research needed to clarify this anomaly is outside the scope of this commission.

External wall construction.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDING

The property comprises a single-storey brick building with a pitched slate covered roof. It dates from 1911 and was built as a pumping station. It was converted to a boxing gym in 1965 following construction of a new pumping station to its rear in the 50's.

The building is not Listed but is located in the Faversham Town Conservation Area on a site between Conduit Street and Town Quay. This was the historic town quayside area, a low-lying area of land with a river frontage just to the west of Conduit Street and the Shepherd Neame Brewery and just to the north of Bridge Road, which connects across the river to the Brents.

It is situated to the north of Training Ship Hazard, formerly known as the Old Town Warehouse; a C15th Grade II* Listed timber framed building.

Behind the building sits the replacement 1950s Pump House which continues to function. There is also an electrical substation between the building and the timber framed Listed warehouse in a fenced compound

In the 1970's as commercial shipping withdrew from the port, Faversham turned its back on the creek and much of the neighbouring shoreline was developed for housing.

The front of the building directly faces onto Conduit Street but the current entrance is to the rear several steps above the adjoining ground level. The original entrance which survives sits on the northern elevation.

The concrete external entrance steps lead to a lobby with timber stairs rising to an upper floor storeroom on one side and toilet/shower facilities on the other. A doorway from the lobby leads to the principal space which houses a boxing ring. A further first floor storage area is located at the far end of this room. It is accessible via a hatchway in the wall above the ring. Both storage spaces are later insertions. The building was originally double storey height with the iron roof trusses and timber boarded roof soffits exposed. This form can still be seen in the middle of the room between the two storerooms.

Walls are formed in solid brickwork rendered internally to dado height. Windows are cast iron spanned by brick arches with granite cills and lintels. The exterior of the building is further embellished by granite quoins, copings and string courses.

The roof is pitched and covered in slate draining to lead lined parapet gutters feeding plastic downpipes on the Conduit Street elevation.

The property has mains electrical, water and sewerage connections. There is no gas supply or central heating system.

REPORT ON CONDITION

ROOF COVERINGS AND RAINWATER GOODS

The building has a simple pitched roof covered with natural Welsh slates with parapet gutters to either side stepped and lined in lead and a clay tile ridge. Flashings to the gable ends are stepped and formed in lead. The gutters discharge to the front of the building to plastic downpipes via box section hopper heads that would originally have been formed in cast iron.

The roof structure is formed by iron trusses with softwood purlins and rafters. The underside of the rafters are lined with timber boarding. The slates are fixed to battens with a bitumen felt underlay beneath to catch wind driven rain and snow. The undelay is likely to date from the 1960's or 70's which suggests that the roof coverings have been re-laid at least once in the lifetime of the building. The slates appear to have been salvaged and reused.

The roof structure is examined in detail in the previously referenced structural engineers report which sets out a series of recommendations to offer additional lateral restraint through the installation of new metal straps between the rafters and gable ends. The trusses themselves appear to be performing satisfactorily. There are no signs of deflection or sagging to roof slopes.

There is no evidence of significant dampness through the roof and the gutters were clear and free flowing at the time of my inspection.

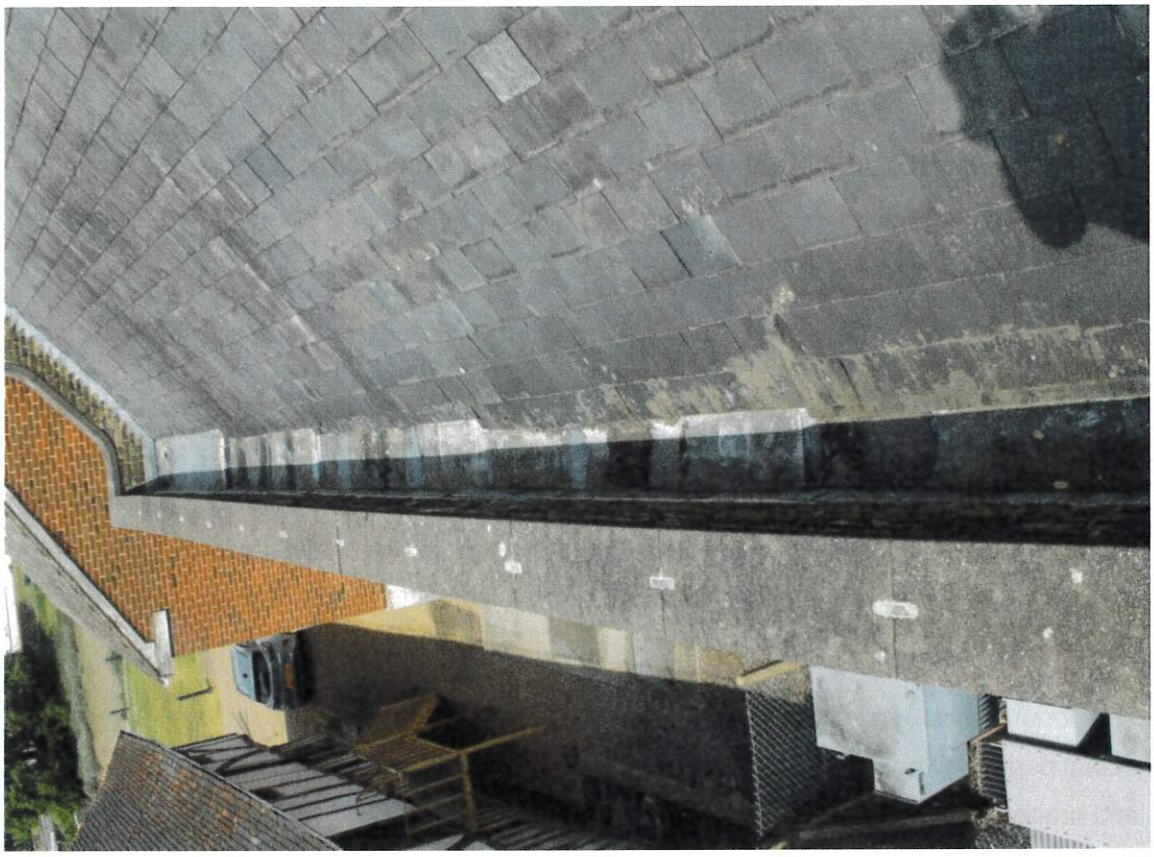
The roof coverings are in a generally satisfactory condition but will require regular ongoing maintenance. Bitumen felt underlays become brittle with age and the life of the slates will largely be determined by the composition of the nail fixings.

There is no insulation or ventilation to the roof. Roofs without ventilation are at greater risk of decay.

The roof will deteriorate over time and at some point, in the future the cost of annual maintenance will be so prohibitive that it will become more economical to strip the coverings and relay them. This is likely to be in 10-15 years. It would be sensible to improve the standards of thermal insulation and ventilation at this point in time. The timber bearers beneath gutters should also be closely inspected for decay and replaced if needed.

The performance of all gutters and downpipes should be checked at least twice a year during periods of heavy rain. The security of fixings should also be periodically examined and brackets adjusted or renewed as needed.

The failure of rainwater goods is the primary cause of damage to buildings.



The lead chute could usefully be redressed.

EXTERNAL WALLS

The external walls are of solid masonry construction and 325mm thick. There is a plinth at the base of the walls formed in durable dense blue engineering bricks which will act as a damp proof course (DPC) limiting rising ground moisture that might otherwise damage interiors. On the side elevations this is supplemented by a layer of bitumen three course above the plinth which is likely to be linked to a damp proof membrane (DPM) within the floor. It is not visible on the end elevations.

Above the plinth the walls are constructed in less durable yellow London stock bricks.

There are granite dressings to projecting quoins, window, doors and parapet copings and to a band course set at the level of window cills.

The external walls appear to be structurally sound other than the movement to the front elevation gable which has been examined in the previously reference structural engineers report. The parapet has moved outwards in the southeast corner of the building and the uppermost quoin and copings above have twisted out of position with wide open joints between adjacent blocks of stone.

The engineer has recommended tying back the gable wall to the roof structure using metal straps to counter a lack of lateral restraint. Once this has been done the open joints between copings and quoins should be repointed. It may also be necessary to remove and reset some of the stones. Lime mortar should be used to bed and repoint the blocks.

There is no evidence of settlement of foundations.

It is understood that the Creek commonly floods leaving the base of the building surrounded by sea water. The salts contained in the water will be retained in the walls and as the flood recedes the salts will crystalise especially within the zone of evaporation which will be slightly higher up the wall. The process of crystallisation will cause the pointing to fail. The extent of failure will be affected by the type of mortar used in the brick joints. It can be seen in places that cement mortar used for repointing the walls has trapped moisture and caused erosion to occur deeper into the joint. The pattern of failure will also be influenced by the ground level surrounding the building which varies by about 500mm. In some areas the flood water will take longer to subside and the problem will be more severe.

Inside the building the base of walls are finished with a render coat to dado level above which the brickwork is exposed and painted. The render is likely to limit evaporation from the inner wall face and increase the damage to the visible exterior.

Moisture readings taken inside the building found that the highest levels of dampness were within the render which conforms this supposition.

The bricks have survived reasonably well and the damage is almost entirely to the pointing. This in many respects is good news. The mortar should always be seen as sacrificial in brick walling.

The form of the floor may also be a contributing factor. It is of solid concrete construction and will as the walls be subject to moisture movements if the site is subject to repeated flooding. If there is a DPM in the floor and it is not properly linked to the DPC in the walls this will provide another pathway for the escape of moisture, evaporation and salt crystallisation.

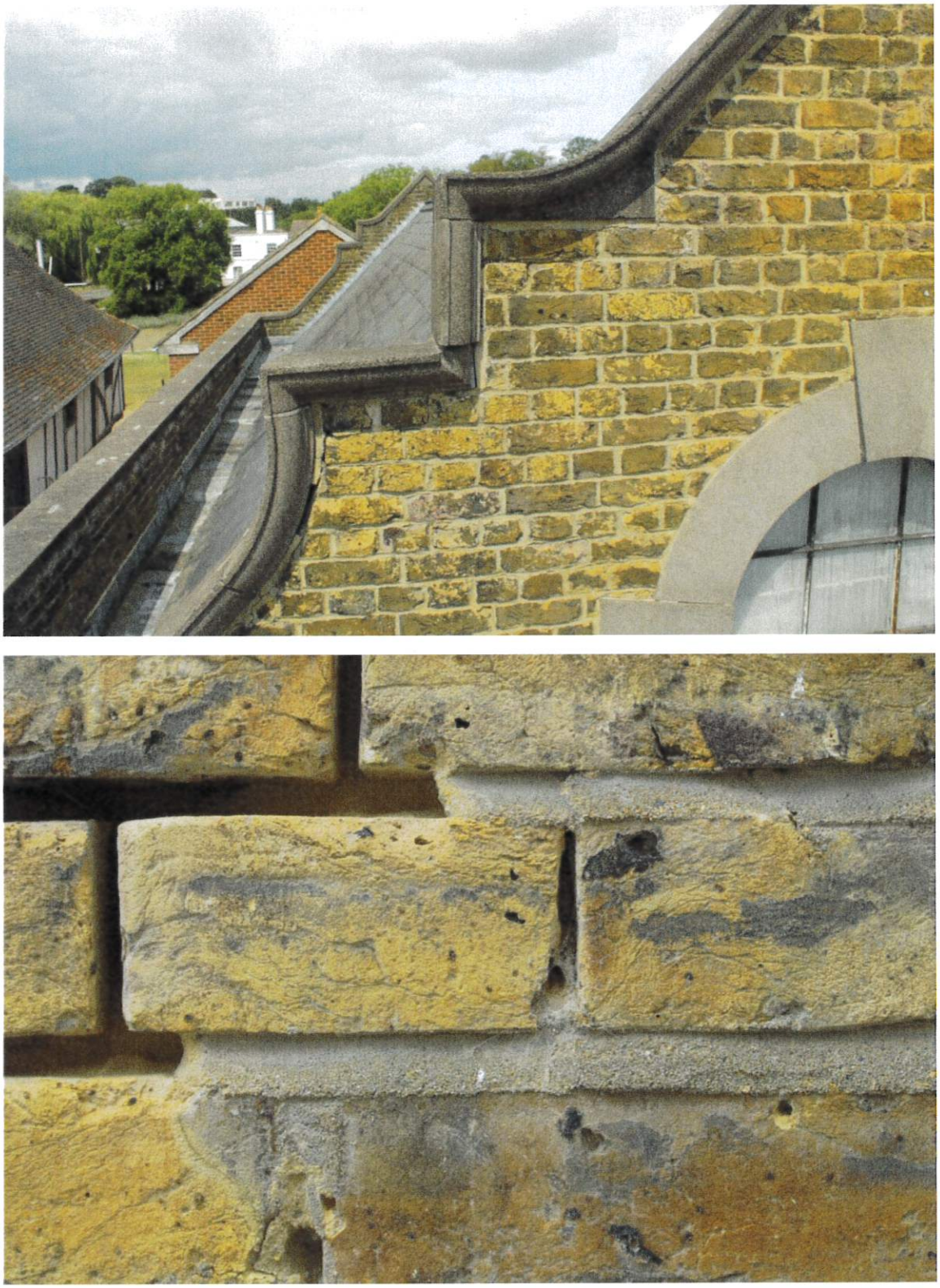
Before any remedial action is taken it will be important to verify the above hypothesis by further investigations which should include analysis of the mortar for salts, determining the nature of the internal render and localised opening up of the floor to check the link between the membranes in the floor and walls.

Whist the flooding continues it will be difficult to prevent future damage occurring. Improvements to the land drainage and landscaping surrounding the building would however be beneficial. Repointing will need to be accepted as an ongoing task as the salts now present will be very difficult if not impossible to remove. The mortar used should be lime based and sacrificial. Consideration might also be given to removing the internal render or replacing it in breathable lime plaster.

The dampness will also reduce the thermal performance of the building and have an adverse effect on the internal environment especially in its current use as a boxing gym which will generate high levels of moisture anyway.

Any treatment of the dampness should ideally be linked to improving the thermal performance of the building, its ventilation and heating. If the the internal face of the walls are to be dry lined there must be provision for evaporation and ventilation of the cavity behind the plasterboard in a similar way to tanking a basement.

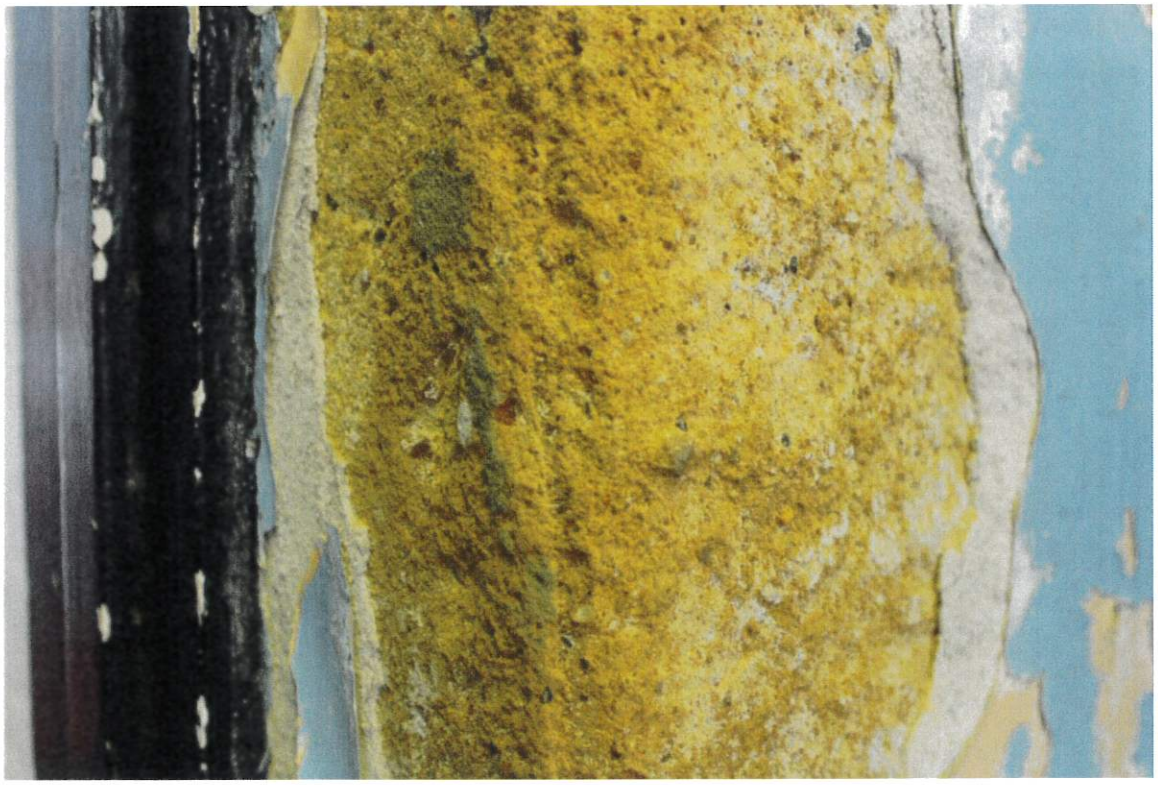
Structural movement to southeast gable.



Erosion behind cement mortar pointing.

Bitumen DPC in flank walls. Is this linked to a DPM in the floor?

Rendered internal dado.



DOORS AND WINDOWS

Windows and made of cast iron with bottom hung opening casements. They have semi-circular heads and projecting cills formed in granite. There are fine red rubbed brick arches behind the granite dressings.

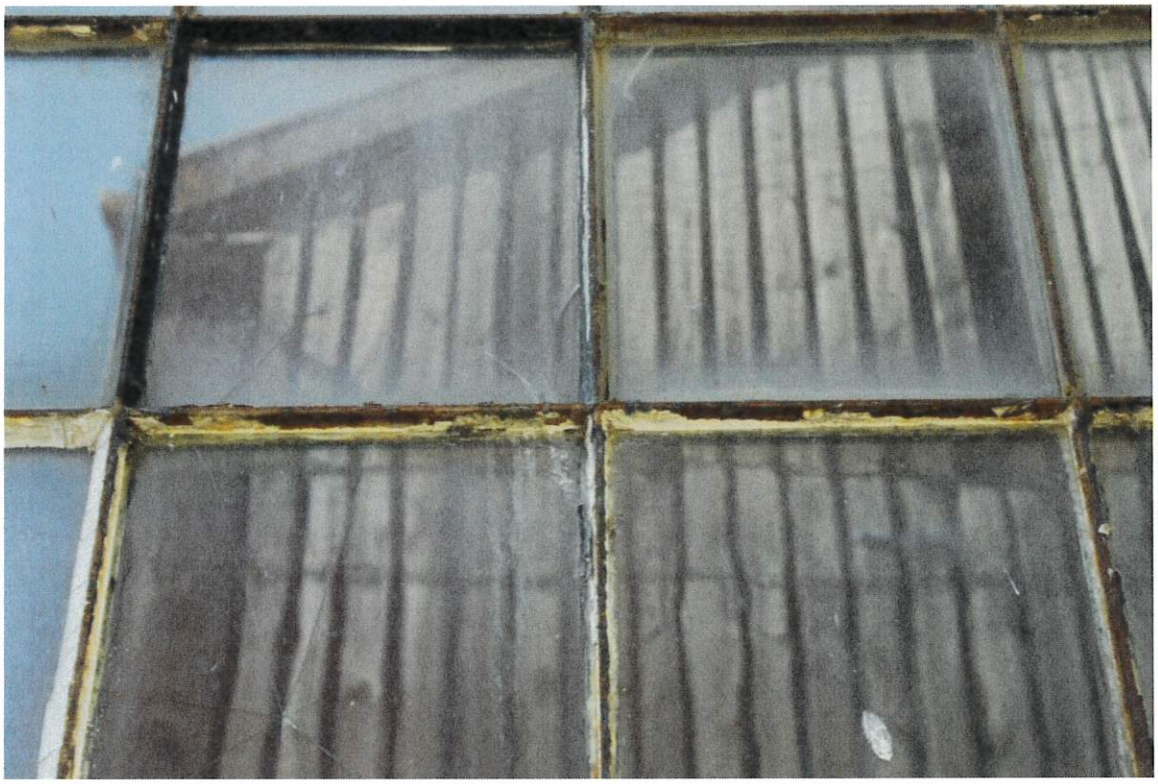
Many of the casements do not open. There are bulls-eye windows in the end elevations that have been infilled.

The original entrance is on the side elevation. This is no longer in use but the vertical boarded timber doors have been retained. A new entrance has been formed in the rear elevation. It has a flush faced modern door. Both doors require localised repairs to decay.

The windows are in generally satisfactory condition although redecoration, replacement of cracked glass and localised replacement of glazing putties is needed. Reinstatement of the bulls eye windows and either reinstating the original entrance or improving the appearance of the new door would be beneficial enhancements to the appearance of the building.

In some locations the collar joints at the abutment of frames to brick reveals need to be reformed either in weak lime mortar or in mastic.

Consideration might be given to installing secondary glazing behind the primary windows to improve the thermal performance of the property. Reveals are sufficiently deep.




Greekside Boating

INTERIORS

The building was originally double storey height with the iron trusses and boarded timber soffits exposed. A 215mm brick wall separated the entrance from a larger space that would have housed the pumps.

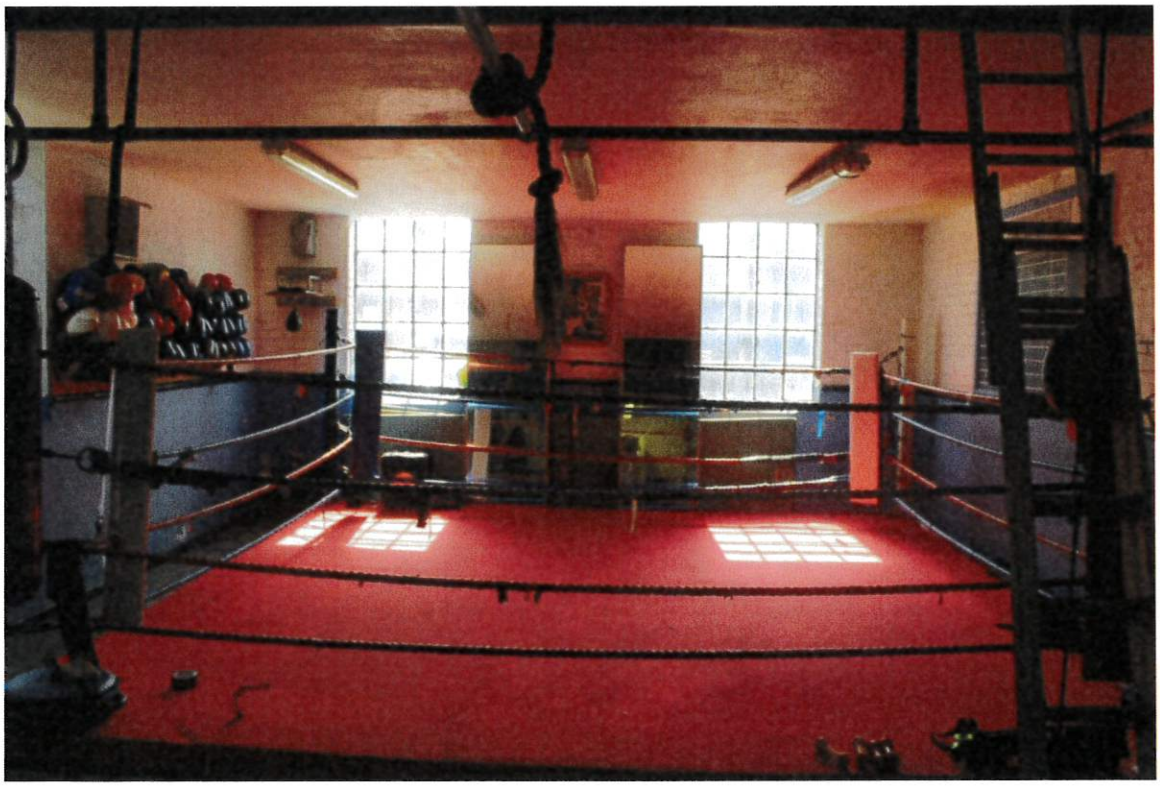
Walls are fair faced and painted or finished with a painted render dado. The dado is likely to be original but has been subject to later repair using gypsum plaster and cement.

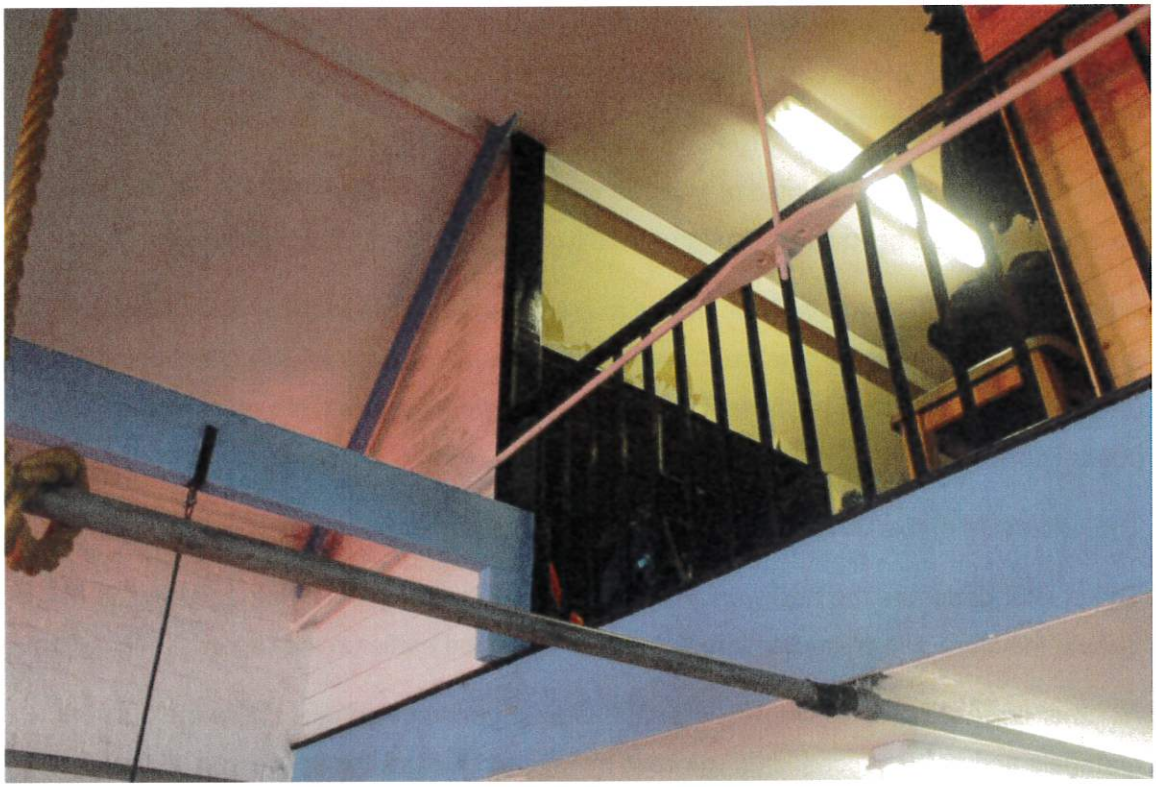
Additional timber floors have been added to create mezzanines at either end of the building that are primarily used for storage. One the mezzanines is accessible by a flight of stairs, the other requires the use of a ladder. There is a shower/toilet beneath the more accessible upper floor.

The underside of the timber floors are lined with plasterboard.

The plaster dado and the brickwork immediately above it have been damaged by the rising ground moisture and crystallisation of salts as described earlier in the report

All other finishes are of average quality and in poor decorative order. There are builders materials and partially completed works in the second mezzanine space and in the other storage area timber boarded soffit is missing in places. Where possible all original fabric should be saved and treated with care.





EXTERNAL AREAS

The line of boundary is unclear and should be confirmed by reference to title deeds.

There are no boundary walls and the ground surrounding the building is finished in tarmac which is in a deteriorated condition.

There is a flight of concrete steps of inferior appearance leading to the new entrance at the rear of the property. It has a simple steel handrail.

There is a road gulley in front of the building which was silted up at time of my inspection.

Improvements to the drainage of the land surrounding the building would be beneficial as explained earlier.

The location of the electrical substation to the side of the building is regrettable. It makes maintenance more difficult and adversely affects its appearance. Its removal should be considered as part of any planned redevelopment of this and the neighbouring Listed timber framed property.

The underground foul drain serving the building runs to its rear and side.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The building is of local significance although not Listed. It's relationship and closeness to the historically and architecturally more important neighbouring old town warehouse is likely to be fundamental to the pump houses long term future and survival.

It is a robust simple building typical of its period that has provided excellent service as a boxing gym since falling out of use almost 75 years ago.

It has not been altered or maintained to particularly high standards but sufficient original fabric survives internally and externally for it to be of historic importance.

The structural engineers recent appraisal has been helpful to determine the urgency of the repairs needed to the unstable gable end and fortunately the defects are more readily resolved than had originally been suspected.

The erosion of the mortar to the external walls appears to primarily be the result of its location next to the Creek. This issue may hence prove more difficult to solve. The consequences of the problem are again however not extremely serious and do not have a major impact on its current use.

Repairs are needed but they are not exceptional. When they are carried out opportunity might be taken to also upgrade the thermal performance, ventilation and heating systems in the property. Improvements to the setting of the building and restoration of lost features would also enhance its appearance.

Further investigations (as outlined below) are needed to decide how to best tackle the damp problems and repointing open joints should be deferred until the causes are better understood. Moreover, it is crucial that the work is done using the right materials by contractors having the appropriate skills.

Replacement of the roof coverings is likely to be a major expenditure in the next 10 to 20 years but is not an urgent requirement. Improvements to ventilation and ongoing routine maintenance of the roof coverings and rainwater goods should however be included in your budget plan together with cyclical external redecorations which should be done every five years.

Grants for enhancing community buildings are available and tend to be directed towards projects that extend community out-reach and/or involve repairs to Listed buildings or buildings in Conservation Areas. Opportunities are likely to also arise through linking the repairs to upgrading the energy performance of the building. Maintenance works will not normally be eligible.

RECOMMENDED FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS

1. Locally remove section of floor to establish presence of DPM.
2. Sample and send mortar and internal render to laboratory for analysis.
3. Test electrical installation.

LIST DESRIPTION FOR NEIGHBOURING BUILDING

Official list entry

Heritage Category:	**Listed Building**
Grade:	**II***
List Entry Number:	**1116391**
Date first listed:	**29-Jul-1950**
List Entry Name:	**THE TRAINING SHIP HASARDE**
Statutory Address 1:	**THE TRAINING SHIP HASARDE, CONDUIT STREET**

Location

Statutory Address:	**THE TRAINING SHIP HASARDE, CONDUIT STREET**

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County:	**Kent**
District:	**Swale (District Authority)**
Parish:	**Faversham**
National Grid Reference:	**TR 01584 61615**

Details

CONDUIT STREET 1. 1103 (West Side) ---------- The Training Ship Hasarde TR 0161 NE 1/98 29.7.50. II*

2. This is a C15 timber-framed structure, originally old town warehouses and now used as a Training Ship. The 1st floor overhangs on the protruding ends of the floor joists and brackets. Close-studding on ground floor and large panels of timber-framing above. Projectig eaves. Tiled roof with pentice on east side. Some original door and window openings and original plaster infilling exposed during recent restoration.

Listing NGR: TR0158461615