

# Eagle House Port Talbot

## Level 2 Historic Building Recording



Richard Hayman

for

Castell Group

June 2022

## **Crynodeb**

Comisiynwyd Richard Hayman i wneud gwaith cofnodi adeilad hanesyddol o Eagle House, Port Talbot, ym mis Mehefin 2022. Mae Caniatâd Cynllunio wedi'i gymeradwyo i'w ddymchwel, gyda rhai amodau. Un o'r amodau hyn yw y dylid gwneud cofnod adeiladu hanesyddol, sy'n cyfateb i Lefel 2 Historic England, o'r adeilad cyn i'r gwaith ddechrau. Mae'r cofnod yn cynnwys cynllun tir, cofnod ffotograffig o'r tu allan a thu mewn i'r adeilad, ac ymchwil hanesyddol ar-lein.

Adeiladwyd Eagle House fel tafarn ar ôl agor yr orsaf reilffordd ar Reilffordd De Cymru ym Mhort Talbot ym 1850. Cafodd ei ymestyn erbyn diwedd y ganrif, mae'n debyg pan agorodd Gorsaf Ganolog Port Talbot ym 1897 gan y Port Talbot Cwmni Rheilffordd a Dociau a safai yn union y tu ôl i'r adeilad. Gwesty Dirwestol oedd Eagle House ar ddechrau'r ugeinfed ganrif, a bu'n safle masnachol wedi hynny.

Mae'r adroddiad hwn yn egluro hanes yr adeilad trwy gyfeirio at yr adeiladwaith sydd wedi goroesi a thystiolaeth mapiau Arolwg Ordnans a mapiau hanesyddol eraill. Mae datganiad o arwyddocâd yn gosod yr adeilad mewn cyd-destun pensaernïol a hanesyddol rhanbarthol. Mae Eagle House yn un o'r adeiladau hynaf ym Mhort Talbot ac mae'n gysylltiedig â datblygiad y rheilffyrdd yn Ne Cymru. Mae ei phensaerniaeth, gyda manylion Gothig, yn nodweddiadol o adeiladau masnachol o ddiwedd y bedwaredd ganrif ar bymtheg a oedd yn gysylltiedig â'r rheilffyrdd.

## **Summary**

Richard Hayman was commissioned to undertake historic-building recording of Eagle House, Port Talbot, in June 2022. Planning Permission has been approved for its demolition, with certain conditions. One of these conditions is that a historic building record, equivalent to Historic England's Level 2, should be made of the building before work commenced. The record consists of a ground plan, a photographic record of the exterior and interior of the building, and online historical research.

Eagle House was built as a public house after the opening of the railway station on the South Wales Railway at Port Talbot in 1850. It was extended by the end of the century, probably when the Port Talbot Central Station opened in 1897 by the Port Talbot Railway and Docks Company which stood immediately behind the building. Eagle House was a Temperance Hotel in the early twentieth century, subsequent to which it was a commercial premises.

This report explains the history of the building by reference to the surviving fabric and the evidence of Ordnance Survey and other historic maps. A statement of significance places the building in a regional architectural and historical context. Eagle House is one of the oldest buildings in port Talbot and is linked with the development of the railways in South Wales. Its architecture, with Gothic detail, is typical of commercial buildings of the late-nineteenth century that were associated with the railways.

Eagle House, Port Talbot  
Level 2 Historic Building Recording

Richard Hayman

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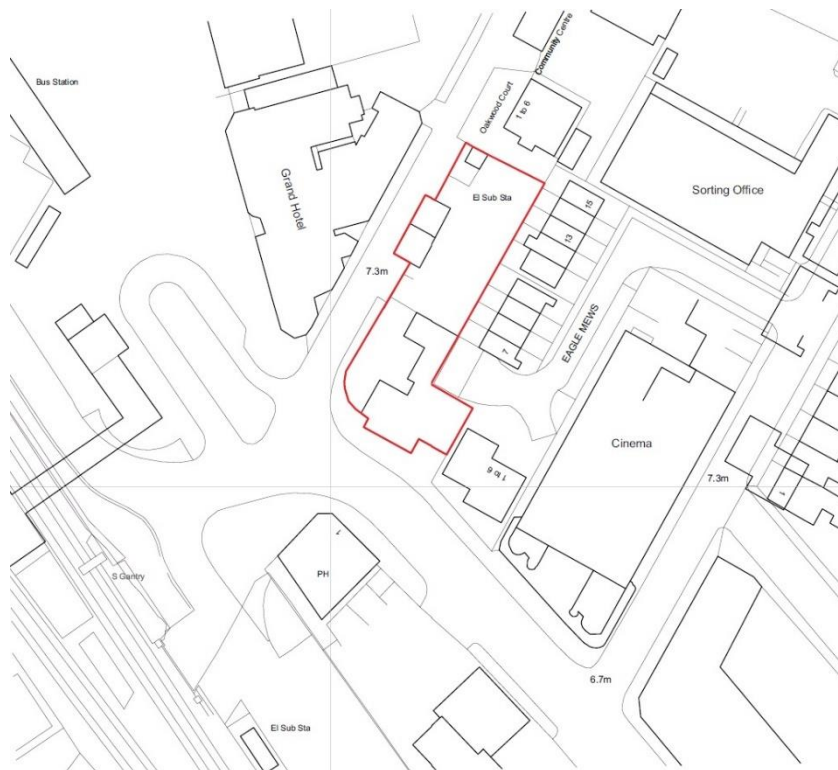
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## I Introduction

Eagle House is on the corner of Oakwood Lane and Talbot Road (A48), Port Talbot, at SS 7681 8961. Planning permission has been given for the demolition of the existing building and the redevelopment of the site to provide eighteen apartments and four commercial units (Planning reference P2021/0856). A condition attached to planning permission is that an historic building record, equivalent to Historic England's Level 2, is made of the existing building before its demolition. This report, together with accompanying photographs and survey drawing, and the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) that preceded it, discharges that condition. It takes the form of archaeological building recording equivalent to Historic England's Level 2 and was undertaken before commencement of building work.



*Figure 1 Location plan.*

The building faces directly to the pavement on Talbot Road and is set back behind modern railings and small car park on Oakwood Lane. The car park, which is laid with tarmac, extends on the north side of the building, where there is another building, a disused brick public toilet block.

The building is not a designated heritage asset and has not previously been recorded in the regional Historic Environment Record or the National Monuments Record. It has been included in Neath Port Talbot Council's Schedule of Buildings of Local Importance (reference POR021), the justification for which is that it is 'a long established former roadside Inn, one of the first buildings in the locality, having an important place in the early development of Port Talbot.'

## 2 Aims and Objectives

The purpose of the historic building record is to provide a written, drawn and photographic record of the building that is to be taken down. Level 2 is a 'descriptive' record and Historic England's guidelines specify that:

Both the exterior and interior of the building will be seen, described and photographed. The examination of the building will produce an analysis of its development and use and the record will include the conclusions reached, but it will not discuss in detail the evidence on which this analysis is based. A plan and sometimes other drawings may be made but the drawn record will normally not be comprehensive.

The other primary objective is to preserve by record what is to be lost, securing the long-term preservation of the information through deposition of the record and a summary written report with an appropriate depository.

## 3 Methodology and Standards

The work has followed the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) Code of Conduct and adheres to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures* (CIfA 2016).

Historic England's guidelines, *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (2016), have been used as a basis for defining levels of recording. The Historic Building Record for this project is at Level 2.

A ground plan of the building was undertaken by dlp Surveyors. Site inspection, including written descriptions and interpretation, and photographic record were undertaken by Richard Hayman on 13 June 2022, at which time the building was unoccupied. The historical background material relating to the site was derived from online sources which are listed below in the references.

## 4 Historical Background

Originally known as the Eagle Inn, the building is first shown on the 1884 Ordnance Survey map (fig 2). It was probably built soon after the railway station on the South Wales Railway, now known as Port Talbot Parkway, opened in 1850. By the time of the 1900 Ordnance Survey map the building had been extended and is labelled as a hotel (fig 3). This extension may have coincided with the building of Port Talbot Central Station, immediately behind the hotel, which was opened in 1897 by the Port Talbot Railway and Docks Company (it closed in 1933). The hotel was described as a Temperance Hotel in 1917 but on the 1947 is shown without annotation. In latter years it was a commercial premises (figs 4, 5).

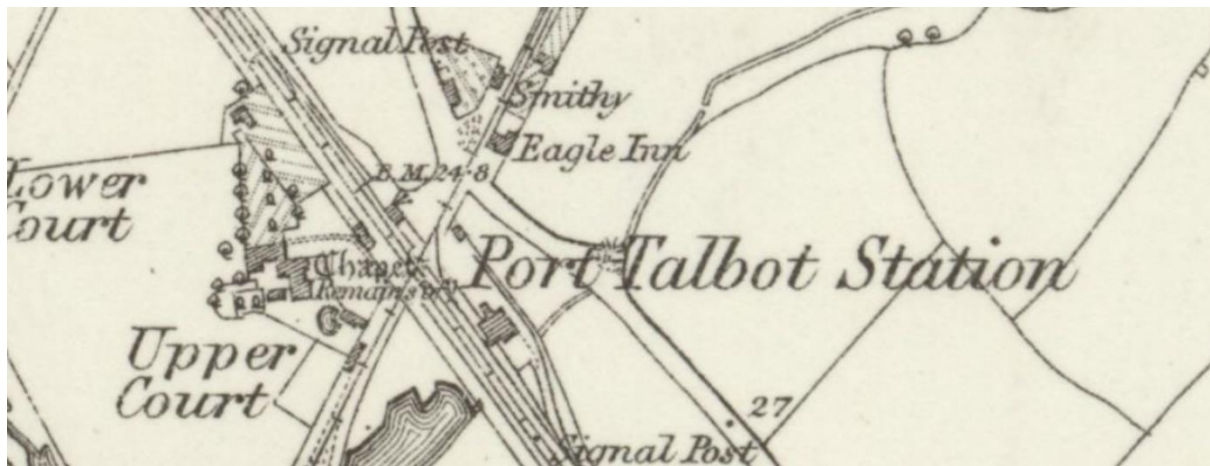


Figure 2. Detail of 1884 Ordnance Survey map.



Figure 3. Detail of 1900 Ordnance Survey map.

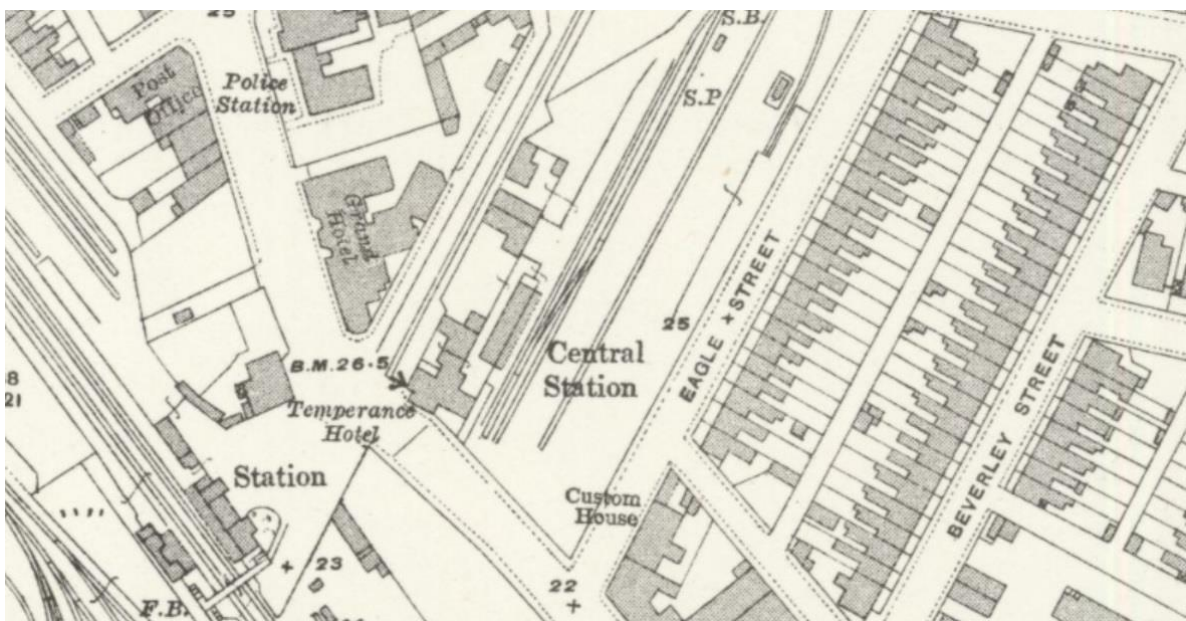
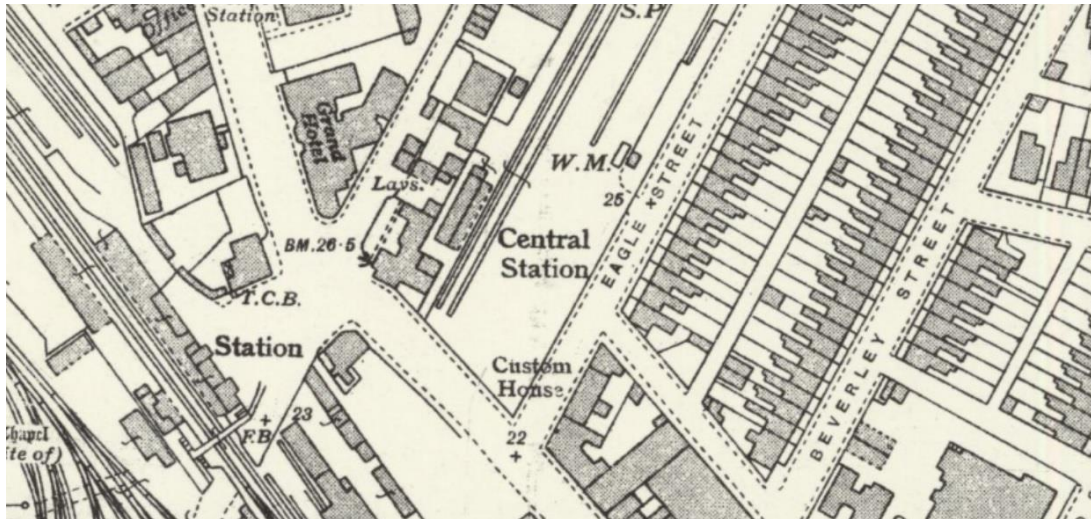


Figure 4. Detail of 1917 Ordnance Survey map.



*Figure 5. Detail of 1947 Ordnance Survey map.*

## 5 Building Description

### 5.1 Exterior

Eagle House has front and rear ranges, the earlier of which faces Talbot Road. It is two storeys, with Gothic detail, built of rock-faced stone with painted freestone dressings, and a steep slate roof behind coped gables. There is an external stack against the right-hand gable end (but no chimney), and a round stone stack on the gable to the south front. Corbels support the rainwater goods at eaves level.



*Figure 6. The south-west front facing Talbot Road.*

In the Talbot Road (south-west) front the lower storey is cement rendered and has wide modern windows (fig 6). There is a projecting gabled bay left of centre, set back from the angle. In its upper storey is a blind cusped window to the left side, and enlarged modern window in the centre. There is a ventilation strip in the gable. Further right the eaves level is slightly lower. In the angle with the gabled projection is a modern two-storey lean-to incorporating the main entrance to the building, with glazed doors, modern windows in both storeys and double-height window in the return wall. Further right is a wide, six-light modern window in the first floor.



*Figure 7. North-west front facing Oakwood Lane.*

The right-hand (south-east) gable end is obscured by the proximity of Eagle Mews. However, it has blocked pointed windows either side of the stack in both storeys, all with relieving arches. The left-hand (west) gable end faces the junction with Oakwood Lane and is cement-rendered in the lower storey (fig 7). It has wide modern windows in both storeys offset to the left side, and two ventilation strips in the gable. There is an Ordnance Survey bench mark on the angle with the Talbot Road front. The rear of this original range is of rubble stone. It has two windows in dressed surrounds in the lower storey, one in the upper storey, all with replacement glazing in the original windows. There is an offset gable above the link to the rear range.

Front and rear ranges are connected by a short link, which is lower than the front and rear ranges and has been significantly altered. In its north-west wall to Oakwood Lane it is now two storeys with door and window in the lower storey and spanned by a single window in the upper storey, under a flat roof (fig 7).

The L-plan rear range is also two storeys, of coursed rock-faced with painted freestone dressings, and a roof of concrete tiles behind coped gables. Its ridge line is lower than the front range. The north-west front to Oakwood Lane has a cross window in the lower storey and two two-light windows above, under hood moulds (fig 7). The angle to the right is splayed in the lower storey. On the left side is a projecting gable bay, the side wall of which has two narrow, transomed lights in the lower storey and a two-light window above, again with hood moulds. In the gable end are two narrow first-floor windows, cusped and transomed, with a ventilation strip in the gable.

The north side is rendered. A modern door right of centre is in an original chamfered stone surround, right of which is a modern window. On the left side are escape stairs to a modern first-floor doorway. There is also an original window opening to the right in the upper storey, retaining most of its original hood mould, but with replacement modern glazing.



*Figure 8. South-east (rear) front facing Eagle Mews.*

The rear (south-east) front of the rear range faces Eagle Mews (fig 8). It is spar-dashed but retains significant original detail. On the right-hand side is a gable with cross window, above a window in a stone surround, but with its mullions removed and replaced by modern glazing. Further left are two two-light windows in the upper storey and one cross window in the lower storey, with its mullions cement-rendered. Behind the link is a narrow extension under a pitched roof.

The boundary wall facing Oakwood Lane is a twentieth-century addition, first shown on the 1947 Ordnance Survey map (fig 5). It has railings on a dwarf wall and divided into bays by intermediate piers (fig 7). The dwarf wall and piers are of coursed, rock-faced stone, with lighter-grey freestone quoins and copings. The railings themselves are modern replacements (the original railings may have been removed during the 1939-45 war).

## 5.2 Interior

The interior, including the room plan, has been significantly modernised. In the front range the partitions are all modern, and in the upper storey they are later than and do not respect the arrangement of the (modern) windows. The stairs here is also modern, housed within the lean-to at the entrance. No evidence of former stairs was seen. The two fireplaces suggested by the presence of chimney stacks in the front range have been removed (figs 9, 10).



*Figure 9. Blocked windows and fireplace in the ground floor of the front range.*



*Figure 10. Position of first-floor fireplace in front range.*

An original external doorway, with simple chamfered surround, has been preserved as the doorway between the front range and the link to the rear range (fig 11). In the rear range the plan on both floors is a corridor along the spine of the building with rooms either side of it. These rooms have modern doors and no features of historic interest were noticed.



*Figure 11. Original external doorway between front range and link to rear range.*

## **6 Conclusion and Statement of Significance**

Eagle House has significant historical interest. It is one of the earliest buildings in Port Talbot, and owes its origin to the presence of the railway station on the South Wales Railway, now the main line in South Wales. Its extension was probably associated with the construction of the Central Station in 1898, the site of which is now occupied by Eagle Mews. It was a Temperance Hotel, and therefore a physical reminder of an important social movement in industrial South Wales.

The architectural interest of the building is limited to its choice and treatment of materials and to its Gothic detailing. Rock-faced stone combined with freestone dressings is characteristic of industrial South Wales in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, while Gothic was a favoured style of commercial premises of the period.

## **7 Bibliography and References**

### **7.1 Cartographic sources**

Ordnance Survey, Glamorgan county series maps, 1884, 1900, 1917, 1947.

## 7.2 Printed sources

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Welsh Archaeological Trusts, 2018, *Guidance for Submission of Data to the Welsh Historic Environment Records.*

Welsh Government, 2021, *Planning Policy Wales, Edition 11.*

## 8 Archive

Written Scheme of Investigation (pdf)

Report (pdf)

44 Digital photographs (tif format)

Catalogue of Photographs (Excel format)

1 Survey drawing (pdf format)

## Appendix I: Digital Photographs



EagleHousePortTalbot.01.tif



EagleHousePortTalbot.02.tif



EagleHousePortTalbot.03.tif



EagleHousePortTalbot.04.tif



EagleHousePortTalbot.05.tif



EagleHousePortTalbot.06.tif



EagleHousePortTalbot.07.tif



EagleHousePortTalbot.08.tif



EagleHousePortTalbot.09.tif



EagleHousePortTalbot.10.tif



EagleHousePortTalbot.11.tif



EagleHousePortTalbot.12.tif



EagleHousePortTalbot.13.tif



EagleHousePortTalbot.14.tif



EagleHousePortTalbot.15.tif



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EagleHousePortTalbot.25.tif



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EagleHousePortTalbot.33.tif



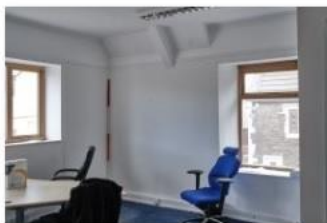
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EagleHousePortTalbot.43.tif



EagleHousePortTalbot.44.tif

| Image number            | date       | description                                         | photographer   |
|-------------------------|------------|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| EagleHousePortTalbot.01 | 13/06/2022 | SW (Talbot Road) front, looking N                   | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.02 | 13/06/2022 | chimney stack on Talbot Road front                  | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.03 | 13/06/2022 | blind window on Talbot Road front, 1st floor        | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.04 | 13/06/2022 | Oakwood Lane front (NW), looking E                  | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.05 | 13/06/2022 | Oakwood Lane front (NW), looking SE                 | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.06 | 13/06/2022 | NW gable end front range, looking E                 | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.07 | 13/06/2022 | NW gable end and NE wall of front range, looking S  | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.08 | 13/06/2022 | rear range NW front, looking NE                     | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.09 | 13/06/2022 | 1st floor window, rear range NW front               | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.10 | 13/06/2022 | 1st floor windows, rear range gable end in NW front | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.11 | 13/06/2022 | NE wall of rear range looking S                     | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.12 | 13/06/2022 | Rear (SE) wall of rear range                        | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.13 | 13/06/2022 | SE gable end of front range, looking S              | Richard Hayman |

|                         |            |                                                                          |                |
|-------------------------|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| EagleHousePortTalbot.14 | 13/06/2022 | setting on Oakwood Lane, looking S                                       | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.15 | 13/06/2022 | setting at junction of Oakwood Lane and Talbot Road, looking E           | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.16 | 13/06/2022 | setting on Talbot Road, with Plaza Cinema, looking NW                    | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.17 | 13/06/2022 | OS bench mark on angle of front range.                                   | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.18 | 13/06/2022 | stair, looking N                                                         | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.19 | 13/06/2022 | ground floor, front range, looking SE                                    | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.20 | 13/06/2022 | ground floor, front range, looking N                                     | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.21 | 13/06/2022 | ground floor, front range, looking NE                                    | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.22 | 13/06/2022 | ground floor, front range looking SE                                     | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.23 | 13/06/2022 | ground floor, front range looking NE                                     | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.24 | 13/06/2022 | ground floor, link, looking NE to rear range                             | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.25 | 13/06/2022 | ground floor, link, looking SW to former external doorway in front range | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.26 | 13/06/2022 | ground floor, rear range looking N                                       | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.27 | 13/06/2022 | ground floor, rear range looking S                                       | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.28 | 13/06/2022 | ground floor, rear range window looking E                                | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.29 | 13/06/2022 | ground floor, rear range corridor looking NE                             | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.30 | 13/06/2022 | ground floor, rear range looking W                                       | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.31 | 13/06/2022 | ground floor, rear range looking W                                       | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.32 | 13/06/2022 | ground floor, rear range looking NW                                      | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.33 | 13/06/2022 | first floor, front range looking NW                                      | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.34 | 13/06/2022 | first floor, front range looking S                                       | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.35 | 13/06/2022 | first floor, front range looking SE                                      | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.36 | 13/06/2022 | first floor, front range, position of former fireplace, looking W        | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.37 | 13/06/2022 | first floor, front range, looking N                                      | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.38 | 13/06/2022 | first floor, front range, looking E                                      | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.39 | 13/06/2022 | first floor, rear range, looking N                                       | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.40 | 13/06/2022 | first floor, rear range, looking E                                       | Richard Hayman |

|                         |            |                                                 |                |
|-------------------------|------------|-------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| EagleHousePortTalbot.41 | 13/06/2022 | first floor, rear range corridor,<br>looking SW | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.42 | 13/06/2022 | first floor, rear range, looking E              | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.43 | 13/06/2022 | first floor, rear range, looking N              | Richard Hayman |
| EagleHousePortTalbot.44 | 13/06/2022 | first floor, rear range corridor,<br>looking NE | Richard Hayman |

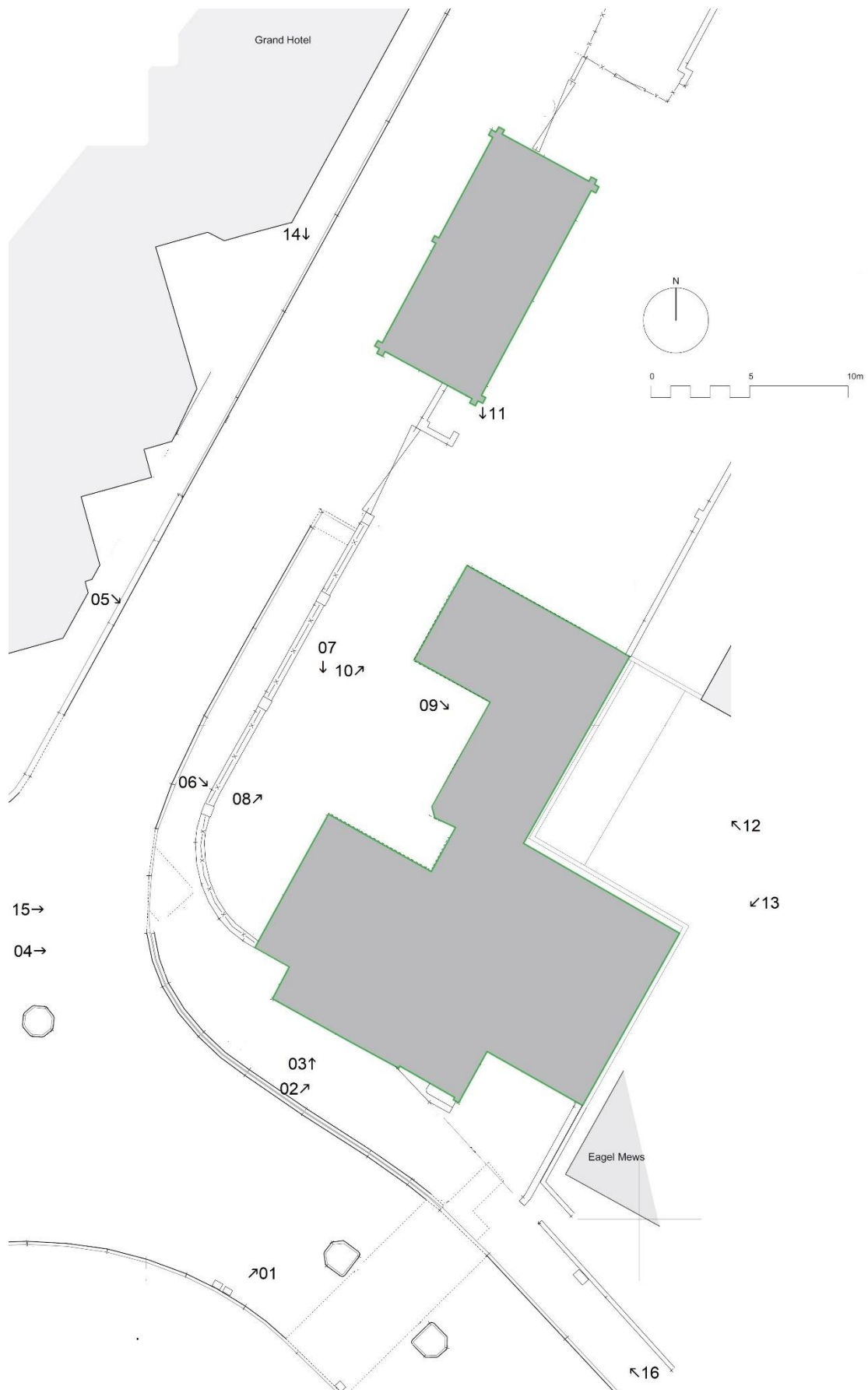


Figure 12. Direction of exterior photographs.

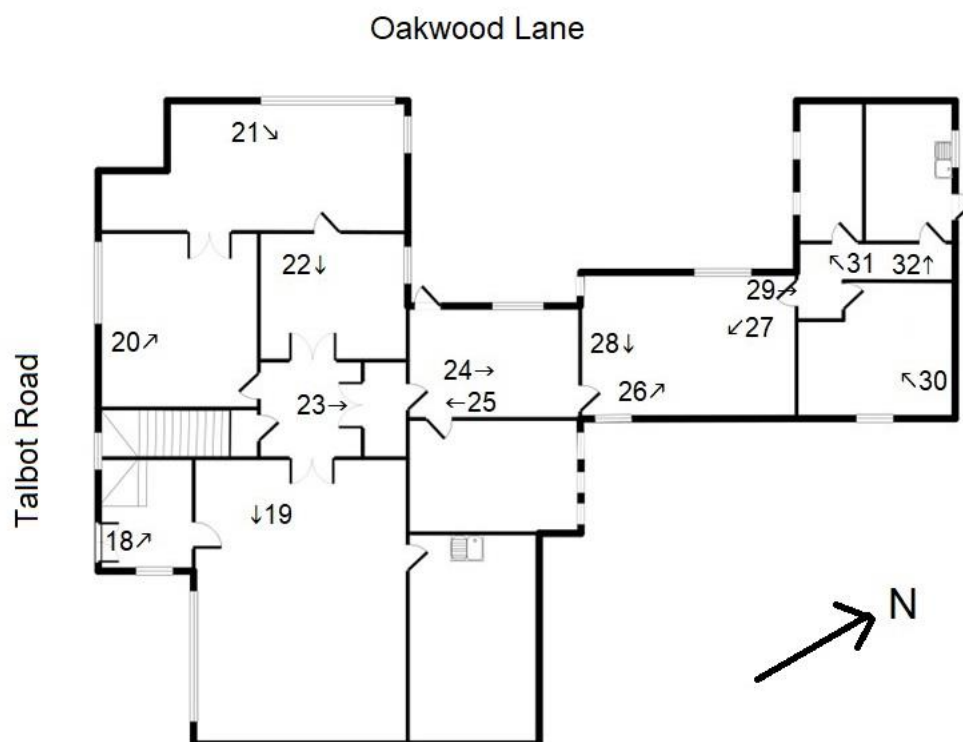


Figure 13. Direction of ground-floor photographs.

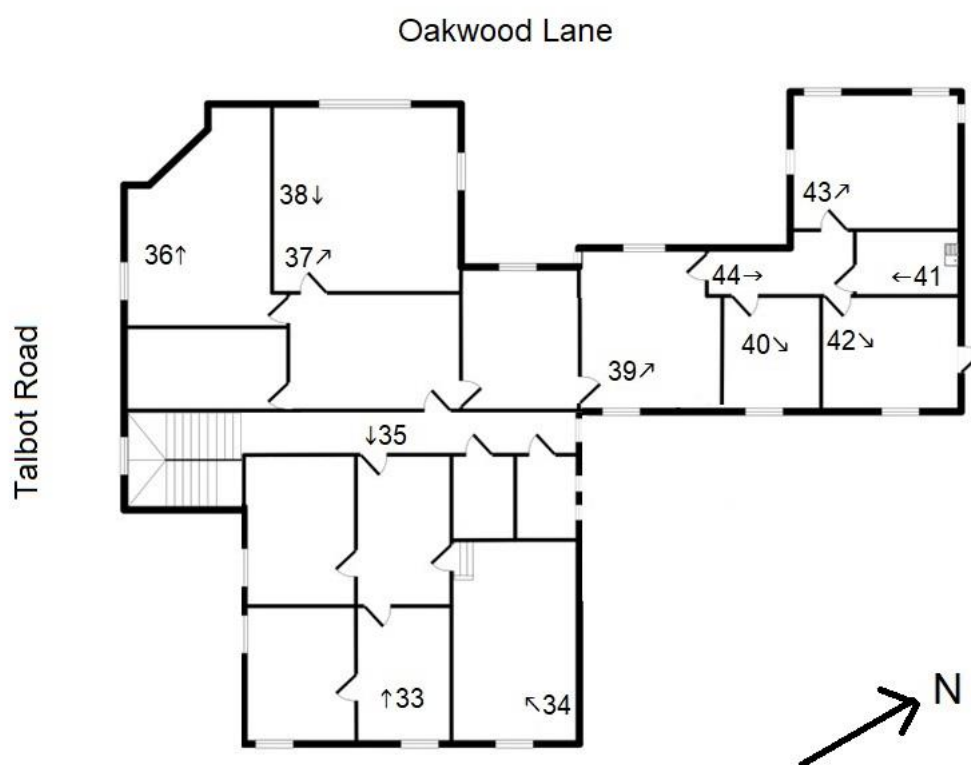


Figure 14. Direction of first-floor photographs.