

WATCHING BRIEF AND
BUILDING RECORDING AT
“COLLEGE GATES”, 106 HIGH STREET,
WORCESTER

WCM 101911
WCM 101912



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1 **Summary**

A programme of archaeological recording was undertaken at 106 High Street Worcester during conversion and extension to form a restaurant. The principal building range on the site consists of a substantial three storey house of five bays along the High Street frontage. The house is known as College Gates. The recording consisted of a watching brief during groundworks and alterations (WCM 101911) and building recording WCM 101912).

The previous (assessment stage) of the project established that the house was built for Charles Cocks, a member of the wealthy Cocks dynasty of prominent Worcestershire landowners. The present house was built in 1691, and Cocks lived there probably until he died in 1727, he was succeeded by his daughter, Lady Williams who owned the house until the 1760s.

The house may be dated on the basis of its form and fabric to the late 17th- very early 18th Century, the principal visible datable features being the early brickwork and the principal staircase, which is a large open-well stair of oak with massive ramped handrails, turned “barley sugar twist” balusters and fine turned pendants. The stair would appear to date to around 1690-1705. The main structure of the house retains most of its original layout, though the ground floor has largely been opened up to form a single space. The rear wing (demolished in late 2011) represented an extensive 1889 rebuilding of an earlier, three storey, rear wing on more or less the same footprint. The present fenestration of the house is almost entirely secondary – the original windows were partially replaced with sliding sashes in 1748, and these windows possibly survived in part up to circa 1970 when all but one (a small early 18th Century window) were replaced with good quality “replica” sashes. There are a number of probably original window reveal linings in the building, but these have all been re-set without consideration of their original positions. A small number of original doors also survive, notably within the cellar and on the second floor.

Test-pits were excavated at an early stage in the development and established that archaeologically significant deposits, including tile-built and stone foundations of structures pre-dating the present house, were present at high levels. Very little artefactual material was recovered due to the small size of the interventions (which terminated at the top of significant deposits, but it appeared that the structures were of probably 16th-17th Century date. The artefactual assemblage included pottery of the 13th-15th Century and the foundations appeared to be cut into deposits of this date..

The present development was designed to have minimal impact on the historic fabric and on below ground deposits of archaeological significance, and as a result there were limited opportunities to discover more about the structure and its development. It was clear that the 1970s renovation of the building had been drastic in its scope, with all internal plaster stripped out, the walls repointed internally (possibly for structural reasons) and much of the joinery replaced. Substantial repairs were made to the roof structure, and some replacement and repair of floor structures undertaken. The

exterior appearance was altered at this time by the replacement of almost all windows, and the substitution of a fibreglass moulding for the original gutters and cornicing.

Within the building stripping out of floor coverings revealed the widespread survival of original wide oak floorboarding, albeit much patched and damaged. The removal of plasterboard ceilings revealed the underside of the floor structures. The floor joists of the first and second floors were effectively planks set on edge, many retaining evidence of bark. The form of the original open fireplaces was also exposed, though these had all suffered some later mutilation as a result of the insertion of inserts (some probably hob-grates of the late 18th-early 19th C). All of the fire surrounds and inserts appear to have been removed in the 1970s when the fireplaces were bricked up. The kitchen fireplace was found to have been a wide inglenook, with moulded timber lintel, and some indications of an original oven to the side.

Removal of partition walls at first floor level revealed that these had been rebuilt (probably in the place of originals) during the latter half of the 20th Century. Only one of the studs in the rebuilt wall appeared to be from the original phase of construction, and this timber was notable in that it carried an inscribed timber-merchant's mark, possibly of Baltic origin.

The external works were designed to have minimal impact on the archaeologically significant deposits that lie close to the surface in this area. Much of the new floor structure was designed to lie above the existing car-park level at the rear of the building. Level reduction therefore only occurred in the peripheral areas of the site, where raised beds were reduced in height, and some deeper excavation was necessary to provide a level disabled access. The principal feature of archaeological interest revealed at this stage was the base of an upstanding wall, of possibly late 17th-early 18th C date, along the boundary with 105 High Street. This wall bore traces of plaster and whitewash and possibly formed part of outbuildings, though no return walls were seen. The wall appears to have formed the boundary prior to the construction of the building presently known as 5 Deansway, (but originally 105 High Street). Other than some reduction of height this wall was retained in situ in the present scheme.

A part of the footprint of the former rear wing was excavated, and this revealed the presence of extensive disturbance of 19th C date beneath the floor level – the use of cement mortar in the foundations of the rear wing indicates that the lower parts of the south wall and foundation had been under-pinned and partially rebuilt, probably in 1889. Archaeologically significant deposits were not encountered in this area, but it is likely that they do survive close to the reduced level, particularly at the eastern end of the rear-wing footprint.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 The present project follows an assessment of Historic and Archaeological Significance for 106 High Street, Worcester prepared by Mike Napthan Archaeology in 2011. The building lies at the southern end of Worcester High Street within the Historic core of the Roman and medieval city Archaeologically Sensitive Area and within the Historic City Conservation Area. (SO 85020 54630; Fig 1).
- 2.2 The project was based on a brief supplied by the City Archaeological Officer ((Worcester City brief 11/5 issued 26 July 2011). The development project is being designed by Glazzards Architects on behalf of Burlton Estates Ltd,. Planning permission has been granted for proposed redevelopment of the existing building as a restaurant with rear extension (P11D0238, L11D0049). The project design has been prepared in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations* issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994), English Heritage's *Understanding historic buildings – a guide to good recording practice* (2006) and Worcester City Council's guidelines on *General Standards and Practices Appropriate for Archaeological Fieldwork in Worcester City*.
- 2.2 The building is recorded on the City HER as WCM96215, and the previous assessment as WCM 101874. The assessment report contains a full summary of the history, development and former functions of the house, as well as a detailed room by room description (WCM 101874; Napthan, 2011).

The present report should be read in conjunction with the assessment report, but naturally supersedes some of the earlier interpretations where more detail has come to light as the result of the exposure of more of the original fabric. The recording covered by the preset report consisted of a watching brief during groundworks and alterations (WCM 101911) and building recording WCM 101912).

3 Aims

3.1 The aims of the watching brief and building recording were to make a full record of deposits and interior features revealed during the course of the building works. Architectural features of intrinsic interest and those which related to the construction and subsequent uses of the building were individually noted and recorded. Below ground interventions were monitored to ensure that any archaeologically significant deposits or features exposed were fully recorded. The project was intended to address the following research objectives;

- *Investigation of the defences and interior of the Iron Age enclosure (or territorial oppidum) (RP2.6)*
- *Roman origins of the High Street (RP3.5)*
- *Area within Roman defences (RP3.6)*
- *Location, identification and definition of middle Anglo-Saxon secular settlement and its relationship to Church institutions, buildings and precincts (RP4.6)*
- *The Anglo-Saxon High Street (RP4.15)*
- *The medieval High Street frontages (RP5.8)*
- *Brick buildings (RP6.18)*

4 Methodology

4.1 The present report consists of the results of a watching brief during demolition, groundworks and internal alterations. A record was also made of the standing building, including a detailed elevation of the staircase (Figs 8 and 9), additional detail drawings of mouldings (Figs 10-12) and a general photographic survey of the building. The photographic survey is enclosed with hard copies of the report as three DVDs.

4.2 The demolition of the rear wing was archaeologically monitored. The demolition comprised the removal of all but the earlier southern wall, the demolished fabric being that portion rebuilt in 1889. No earlier fabric was revealed, and the interior of the southern wall showed no features of interest. Removal of the concrete floor slab revealed the foundations, which appeared to have been rebuilt or underpinned in the later 19th C. Deposits beneath the floor slab were loose, possibly disturbed by the underpinning works.

4.3 The below ground works were limited in their scope, the deepest interventions being small test-pits mechanically excavated down to the top of archaeologically significant deposits. The test pits were recorded in plan and section (Figs 2 and 20). The remaining groundworks comprised of the reduction in height of the "raised bed" along the northern boundary of the rear yard, removal of slabs from the terrace directly behind the house, and localised level reduction in the area of the intended disabled access. A short length of new drainage was installed in the terrace area (Fig 2), but most drainage re-used existing pipe runs. These areas were archaeologically monitored, but in the absence of archaeologically significant horizons the record was primarily photographic.

4.4 The internal works were also limited in scope, the principal alterations being the removal of partitioning dating to the 1970s and later. Fire places on the northern side of the property were re-opened in an attempt to use the flues to house extraction ducts. As the flue configuration was not suitable this intention was not carried through. The removal of plasterboard ceilings exposed the floor structures through most of the building in order to facilitate floor strengthening works, and this provided an opportunity to inspect these areas. Removal of part of the original kitchen chimneybreast was the most substantial intrusion into the original fabric of the main building. A doorway was also created through a ground floor rear window opening, but the other alterations did not greatly impinge on the historic fabric.

- 4.5 Due to the small scale of the artefactual assemblage, and the lack of hand excavated deposits no detailed analysis was attempted. The pottery is quantified in Appendix 1; building materials were not retained, and no ecofacts were observed in the archaeologically significant horizons. Bone and oystershell were observed in more recent (20th C) horizons, and preservation appeared to be good.

5 Description – below ground deposits

- 5.1 The earliest deposits exposed were those revealed within Test-pits 1 and 3 (Figs 2, 18 and 20) where apparently later medieval deposits were present. Due to the limited size of the intervention the character and extent of these deposits could not be ascertained, but the ceramic evidence points to a possible 13th-15th C date for context (307), which lay at a level only just below that of the adjacent car-park surface.
- 5.2 The levels of the top of archaeologically significant deposits were somewhat variable, reflecting probably localised later intrusions, and the presence of probable former out-buildings. Deposits in the area of Test-pit 8 were more deeply disturbed (much of it very recent) and this may reflect the presence of a former outbuilding in this area against the northern boundary wall, though none is recorded on OS mapping. The area anticipated to have the best high-level survival of pre 1690s deposits was that beneath the rear wing, however in the event this area proved to have been deeply disturbed in the late 19th Century and again in the 20th C when the floor was replaced with a thick concrete slab. Deposits beneath the slab included a loose ashy layer with large numbers of oyster shells and occasional clay tobacco pipe stem, which possibly dates to the 18th C, but no earlier floor horizons survived. The foundations of the demolished walls were primarily of late 17th-early 18th C brick with a little sandstone. These foundations had been at least partially rebuilt using cement based mortar, probably in the 1890s. The original northern wall of the rear wing was apparently straight, and would therefore conflict with the present window arrangement on the western elevation of the main house. It is likely that these window openings were enlarged when the rear wing was rebuilt, but subsequent replacement of the windows in the 1970s (with rebuilt window heads) has clouded the evidence.
- 5.3 Test pit 3 produced clear evidence of an earlier building (clearly preceeding the 1691 structure) with a foundation of sandstone blocks, edged with clay and ceramic flat tiles (203) (Figs 2, 18 and 20). The presence of a foundation at this relatively high level (25.29mAOD) indicates that the “raised bed” actually represents a relic of the earlier ground levels, and that the southern end of the car-park area has been substantially lowered (by 500-600mm). As the footing of the (possibly late 18th-early 19th C party wall actually terminates at around 25.35m it is likely that early 19th C surface levels in the rear yard area were between 25.55 and 25.70mAOD, so only slightly lower than the internal ground floor levels of 106. Further indications of the former higher ground level were seen in Test pit 3 where a foundation or structure of tiles bedded in clay [308] survived up to 25.30mAOD. This structure also clearly pre-dated the 1691 house, and possibly represents part of the immediate predecessor to the present building. Whilst only a very short length of [308] was seen it appeared to run obliquely to the High Street alignment, and this suggests that it may be a free-standing structure (such as an oven) rather than a principal wall.
- 5.4 The remaining feature of significance exposed during the present works was the remains of a former boundary wall along the northern side of the property towards the western end of the site (Figs 2 and 18). This wall continues the line of the present party wall with 105 High Street alongside the southern gable end of the building now known as 5 Deansway (in the late 19th Century used as St Andrews Vicarage). The remnants of this wall survive to a high level within the area of the raised bed. The wall appears to be marked on the 1880s Ordnance Survey mapping. The brickwork is of late 17th-early 18th C date, and could well be contemporary with the 1691 construction of 106 High St. The presence of small areas of plasterwork and whitewash are indicative that the wall formerly formed part of an outbuilding, possibly a later structure constructed against the boundary wall. The foundation of 5 Deansway is independant of the former boundary wall, and the use of rough brickwork against the northern side of the boundary wall is indicative that the present 5 Deansway was built later, though there was an earlier building on the site from at least the mid 16th Century (Hughes in Napthan 2011).

- 5.5 A number of later features were observed during the groundworks, including the possible head of a well or soft water tank. This feature was only very briefly observed, in the area to the west of the rear wing. A pump is shown in this area on the 1880s Ordnance Survey mapping. The feature appeared to be circular or sub-circular, and was of 19th C brick. The feature had been loosely backfilled with brick rubble, probably during the 20th C, and there was a slight void as the result of settlement. The feature was not fully exposed, and the diameter could only be roughly estimated as circa 1.5m. The area around this feature contained a number of blue brick pavements (all redeposited) which suggests the former presence of a paved yard. It would appear that the area was disturbed by service trenches and a manhole constructed prior to the construction of the carpark in the 1970s or 1980s.
- 5.6 Possibly associated with the use of the putative well was a length of curving brick wall foundation briefly glimpsed during stripping of recent services. The wall was of 19th C brick, but does not appear on available 19th C mapping. It is likely that this structure represents shared use of the well with the neighbouring property as was often the case where wells stood on or adjacent to property boundaries.
- 5.7 Exposure of the party wall foundations along the boundary with 105 High Street revealed shallow foundations that in places included a little sandstone (Figs 2 and 18). The footing was generally a single brick on edge on a lime mortar bed. The foundations may date to the early 18th C, but the upper parts of the party wall appeared to be later 18th-mid 19th C with later additions. A recently inserted doorway in the party wall was reblocked during the present project, as was an earlier window opening that contained a late 20th C softwood frame. Several buttresses on the southern side of the wall proved to have no foundations, and had been laid on small patches of concrete on top of the soil of the raised bed. Settlement of the bed had left several buttresses hanging from the wall they were intended to support – this shoddy workmanship appeared to be of mid 1980s date.

6 Building recording

- 6.1 The present building recording project represents an enhancement of the photographic and drawn record made at the assessment stage. The present elements of the building record are therefore to be read in conjunction with the detailed description given at the assessment stage. The areas recorded by the present project consist primarily of a detailed drawn record of the staircase, (and other joinery/mouldings not previously recorded in detail) plus a record of additional historic fabric exposed during building works.
- 6.2 *Exterior*
- 6.2.1 The present scheme of alterations to the exterior primarily affected the western and southern elevations. Removal of the rear wing exposed more of the original brickwork of the western elevation. It was clear from the form of the 1st floor linking doorway that this was an original opening, and this seems to confirm the earlier indications that the rear wing was an original and integral part of the 1691 house. Due to later works (including enlargement of the windows) it was not possible to clearly define the line where the original northern wall of the three storey rear wing had joined the western elevation, but the below ground survival of the foundation of this wall indicates that the rear wing footprint (pre 1890s) was almost identical with the 1890s structure excepting the fact that there was no earlier indent to the northern wall-line. The extent of 1890s alterations to the western elevation had previously been obscured by the 1970s partial rebuilding around the window openings. It is now clear that part of the reasoning behind the drastic rebuilding of the rear wing in the 1890s was to facilitate enlargement of the disproportionately narrow earlier windows of the south western corner rooms.
- 6.2.2 The opening up of a ground floor window (Fig 3) to form a doorway in the western elevation of room GF4 revealed that the window reveal linings were, not as previously suspected early 19th C but more probably late 19th C in date. The internal lintels over this window were of re-used oak framing timbers with no distinctive features.
- 6.2.3 Scaffolding of the southern elevation facilitated access to the moulded cornice which had previously not been accessible. As previously suspected this moulding proved to be modern, and consists of a fibreglass cornice moulding with integral gutter trough. It probably dates to the 1970s or 1980s.

- 6.2.4 Areas of loose and decayed render were stripped away from the southern elevation, clarifying the scar of the former building at 107 High Street, which was demolished to make room for Deansway in the 1930s (Fig 7). The demolished building was apparently of two storeys with attic, the front pile only one room deep with a two storey rear wing of slightly greater depth. The front roof ridge line ran parallel with High Street, whilst the rear wing ridge ran at right angles back from the street. As the fabric of 106 was arranged around the outline of 107 (for example the facing brickwork stopped at the building scar, and areas within the scar had been built over-hand very roughly with brick bats and fragments of tile) it was clear that 107 was an earlier building than 106. The brick bonding of 106 was broken wherever it met the outline of its neighbour to the south, and to the west of 107 the line of the southern wall of 106 steps out very slightly. No 107 appears to have been probably of timber-frame construction, though there is no conclusive evidence. A length of framing timber built into the wall of 106 might possibly be part of the top wall-plate of 107, though the positioning is awkward, and the mortices are more reminiscent of a girth-timber. This re-used timber more probably was placed to allow the upper part of the south wall of 106 to be straightened up, slightly encroaching across the roof line of 107.
- 6.2.5 The use of neatly bonded facing brick in the uppermost portion of the southern elevation that was visible from High Street (above the roof line of 107) is significant as it implies that the street frontage was also faced in brick. Had the east facing elevation been originally rendered then it is likely that the render would have been carried round onto the small area of the south elevation originally visible from High Street and the Cathedral Close. It must be strongly suspected that the present rendered facade was added to update the building in the later 18th or early 19th C.
- 6.2.6 An inscribed brick, dating probably to the early 19th C was noted in the southern elevation just above the former roof line of No.107. The inscription (cut after firing) reads W R 18... – the third numeral of the date is probably a “2”, but this is uncertain. The lettering looks to be compatible with a date in the 1820s. The position is such that the inscription was almost certainly made by “W R” as he (or she) sat on the rear roof of No 107.
- 6.3 *Ground floor*
- 6.3.1 Only limited areas of additional original fabric were exposed at this level during the present works. The removal of the hardboard overlays from the floor revealed the floorboarding. The boarding of the NE part of the ground floor was of wide softwood boards and appeared to be a replacement of later 19th C date. The remaining areas retained earlier oak boarding, albeit much mutilated and extensively relaid. Where the east-west spine wall had been removed during the 1970s the floor was patched with narrower softwood boarding.
- 6.3.2 Removal of the window to create a doorway in the western elevation of GF4 exposed the original brickwork of the reveal. It would appear probable that the west facing windows were originally deeper (by 300-350mm, and possibly had a low window seat beneath them. Subsequent replacement of the window joinery has confused the evidence, but it appeared possible that the lower sill levels had been raised in the later 19th C and the putative window seats infilled.
- 6.3.3 Partial removal of the modern plasterboard ceiling beneath the principal beams, and from the staircase soffit exposed the basic layout of the ceiling structure that also forms the underside of the 1st floor (Fig 14). The exposure works were undertaken to enable the addition of joist hangers to the existing floor joints which showed extensive signs of spreading. The exposed bridging beams ran east-to west (except in the SW rear room), and were of unmoulded large scantling squared hardwood. The joists were jointed in with scribed tusk tenon joints, the joists being the full depth of the ceiling void, but fairly narrow in width (40-70mm). The joints were originally secured by small pegs. The removal of the north-south structural brick wall that originally divided the northern ground floor room into two had been achieved by inserting joists at ceiling level, with a larger beam apparently taking the load above the inserted joist. The whole then was strapped together with wrought straps spiked to the bridging beams. This alteration appears to have been of late 19th-early 20th C date. The weak arrangement had subsequently been propped by a vertical steel stanchion (probably inserted in the 1970s). The stanchion has been further braced by horizontal steel joists during the present works.

- 6.3.4 The principal “new” exposure of this stage of works was the opening up of the former fireplace of the SW room (GF3) – Figs 12 and 13. The original kitchen fireplace, a substantial ingle-nook, remained substantially recognisable, but with evidence of several later modifications, apparently relating to the housing of a range-cooker, and its subsequent removal. Of the surviving original features the most notable were the two large flues, that to the north throated to accommodate the smoke from a wide open hearth, and that to the south rather smaller, probably serving a separate oven. The back of the fireplace was partially re-lined in 19th C brick and this may conceal any more conclusive evidence of the form of the putative oven. The hearth lintel (of oak) survived, albeit partially mutilated, and was internally chamfered to form a throat, with a simple external moulding (Fig 12). The internal face of the lintel was lined with thin iron sheets, and two substantial iron braces ran horizontally back from the lintel to the fire back. The southernmost brace supported the skin of brick separating the two chimney flues. The two jambs of the hearth opening survived only in a mutilated and partially re-built condition. It seems probable that the northernmost jamb was re-modelled to accommodate the insertion of the doorway to GF1. The southern jamb had also been altered, possibly relating to the insertion and removal of the postulated oven. The fireplace opening was increased in height (originally 1.49m) during the present works, and the opening is now supported on steel joists. The original lintel is preserved in storage.
- 6.4 *Cellar*
- 6.4.1 No significant alterations were made to the cellar during the present works. Timbers salvaged during the present works are currently stored in the cellar.
- 6.5 *First floor*
- 6.5.1 The principal alterations at 1st floor level were the removal of partitioning between rooms F2 and F3 and between F2 and the lobby area. The plasterboard clad partitions (incorporating earlier door cases) were found to be of mid 20th C date, incorporating only a small amount of earlier timber. It would appear that the partition walls were rebuilt during the 1970s refurbishment. The present line of the partition is slightly north of the bridging beam above, which suggests that the partition was not recreated exactly on its original line during the 1970s alterations. Floor-boarding continued through uninterrupted by the partition, and it is possible that there was no original partition at this level. Modern partitions were also removed from the former washroom/kitchen in the south-western room.
- 6.5.2 The removal of the reproduction fire surround from F3 revealed that it was a hollow fibreglass/fibre reinforced plastic moulding, with a hearth slab of laminate faced chipboard.
- 6.5.3 The floor structure of the first floor was largely obscured by the plasterboard ground floor ceiling and boarding, but is described above (para 6.3.3). The timber sub structures of the two former oblique corner hearths against the northern party wall survive in a mutilated condition. The second floor structure was exposed to view from the 1st floor by the removal of the plasterboard ceiling, and the 2nd floor was seen to be supported by oak joists of circa 310mm deep and circa 50mm wide. The joists of the front part of the building ran parallel with the High Street, and were supported off the E-W spine wall and a bridging beam which lay immediately to the south of the partition wall which separates the middle front room from the southern front room. The bridging beam was of plain square form, and apparently oak. Within the southern front room the ceiling structure provided clear evidence of patching where the former oblique corner chimney had been removed. Within the ceiling void obliquely angled bricks still project where the original chimney was removed. The present chimney breast, centrally placed on the southern wall has a rather hotch-potch hearth arrangement, the second floor hearth being supported on a number of inserted timbers that are themselves carried by battens nailed to the sides of the original joists. This arrangement has contributed significantly to the sagging of the floor.
- 6.5.4 Relaid oak boarding was present across all of the front rooms (Fig 16), and within the stairwell, but had been replaced in the rear rooms. The south-western room had a tongue and groove narrow softwood boarding, whilst the northern room had wider softwood boarding, probably a late 19th C replacement.

6.6 *Second floor*

6.6.1 Works on the second floor were limited in scope, and the major exposures of historic fabric at this level were the result of the removal of recent plasterboard ceilings (Fig 17). Stripping out of floor coverings also exposed some surviving original boarding. Former fireplaces on the northern chimney were also opened up.

6.6.2 Opening up of the northern fireplaces revealed the rear fireplace to survive in near-original condition, the fireplace being bridged by a chamfered timber lintel (a re-used framing timber), and originally floored by a large sandstone slab (Fig 17). The fireback was of plastered brick, and curved round to form the squared jambs of the opening. Part of the fireback had been replaced in re-used 19th C brick, an opening having been made apparently for the purpose of accessing the adjoining flue. The southern fireplace was clearly originally very similar, but much less well preserved as it now contains brickwork relating to a later hearth arrangement, and the opening is bridged by a 19th C brick arch. The secondary hearth arrangement appears to have been for either a large hob-grate, or possibly a small cooking range. Behind the inserted brickwork the curving line of the original fireback is just discernible. The blocking of the fireplaces appears to have occurred in the 1970s.

6.7 *Attic level*

6.7.1 No substantial works were undertaken at attic level during the present project. The attic floor soffit was exposed by removal of the second floor ceiling plasterboard (Fig 17). The floor structure was seen to be mainly original (with square section oak joists mainly 100to120x100to110mm, with half tenon joints into the bridging beams), but much repaired. The recent repairs (of the 1970s-80s?) were of poor quality with smaller scantling softwood joists used in place of oak originals. The half tenoning of some of the softwood joists substantially reduced their bearing ability. Some of the main structural timbers were also replaced in the late 20th C, mainly those beneath the enclosed central roof valley, but the replacements are readily distinguished from the hardwood original timbers. Numerous timbers in the roof and the attic floor show some evidence of re-use, but none appear to be particularly diagnostic.

6.7.2 There is evidence that the attic was formerly partitioned into “rooms” (possibly a room in each corner of the building, and a further division of the roofspace on the front elevation. The partitioning is possibly partially of the early 18th C, but some areas (*eg* in the “rooms” A1 and A7 - Fig 6), the partitions respect 19th C alterations to the chimney. The partitioning consists of very rough studwork with a single layer of lathing plastered both sides. A short vertical plastered stud wall beneath the lower purlin sealed off the eaves, and this stud wall survives in places. Some variation of the workmanship indicates that not all of the partitions were contemporary. The SE corner “room” A1, appears to have had a lath and plaster ceiling, the evidence for ceilings in the other areas is lacking, and it appears probable that these areas did not have lath and plaster ceilings. Later repairs to the roof have removed much of the evidence, and it is likely that some partitioning has also been lost, particularly at the rear of the building. The “doorways” are very rough, and only one (A2, the middle compartment of the front elevation) has evidence of a latch-keep indicating a former door. The other openings may have been simply screened by a piece of cloth or sacking. The presence of substantial structural bridging beams standing proud of the attic floor levels, and the apparent absence of indications of dormer windows suggest that the attic provided only very basic, and fairly inconvenient accommodation if it was used for sleeping quarters. The attic retains evidence that it was boarded through-out (with wide hardwood boards, possibly elm), and it is likely that the majority of the area was used for storage. None of the visible graffiti appears to be particularly old (probably all late 19th-20th C), and the absence of earlier graffiti may indicate that it only rarely served as sleeping accommodation.

6.8 *Stairwell*

6.8.1 Stripping of the plasterboard from the soffit of the stairs and the landings revealed the structure of these areas (Figs 8, 9 and 14). Whilst the stairs are mainly original there appear to have been extensive repairs in the mid-late 20th C, particularly to the structure of the quarter-landings. The first pair of quarter landings has been reinforced with a purpose made steel-box section and a number of replacement softwood timbers. The original joists of the landings are of approximately 100x110mm oak, including some re-used timbers. There are also separate ceiling joists supporting the ceilings of the landing soffits, the majority of the latter have been replaced. The floor joists are extensively notched for pipes and cables.

- 6.8.2 The stair flights are supported on substantial double bearers, the side strings apparently serving a subsidiary non-structural role. A separate packing piece nailed to each bearer supports each step and riser individually. The risers appear to be mainly of re-used floor-boards. The stair bearer and joist soffits bear trace of former lath and plaster underlinings. No evidence was found that would support the hypothesis that the stair might have been located, but as the stairwell wall plaster was not removed it is not possible to rule out an earlier stair position.
- 6.8.3 The attic floor/2nd floor ceiling structure over the stairwell had been extensively re-constructed, the easternmost six joists and diagonal bridging beams having been replaced in softwood, probably during the 1970s (one timber bears the name of the building contractor's "Spicers"). The remaining original joists are of square section oak, some already held in mild steel hangers. Additional hangers are being added to reinforce the attic floor during the present works.
- 6.9 *Rear Wing*
- 6.9.1 The removal of most of the rear wing (excepting part of the southern wall) revealed no additional fabric pre-dating the late 19th C re-building (Fig 19). The south wall appeared to be of very late 17th or more probably early 18th C in date (as previously suspected). It contained no distinctive features relating to the earlier arrangement of the original rear wing. It would appear that the south wall was at least partially underpinned or underbuilt during the late 19th C rebuilding, as the lower courses include cement based mortar. The 1st floor doorway between the main building and the rear wing had its original structural oak doorframe, and this has been retained in the present scheme, partially exposed externally above the roofline of the new extension roof.

7 Discussion

- 7.1 The previous building assessment proved to have covered almost all of the significant features of the building, but some areas were unclear prior to stripping out. The present project has provided the opportunity to make a more detailed drawn record of the principal feature of the building (the staircase) and has added to the record of internal joinery mouldings. Some points of detail have been clarified by the exposure of the core fabric, including the form of a number of the original chimney breasts and hearths. The exposure of the core fabric has also revealed that whilst much original structural fabric does survive the building has suffered a near total loss of earlier internal plasterwork, and substantial loss and disruption/relocation of the internal joinery. The earlier phases of alteration appear to have occurred in the 19th C, and these included the partial removal of the "old fashioned" corner chimney breasts from the northern end of the ground floor, and the southern end of the first floor (Figs 4, 5, 13, 16 and 21). Possibly the removal of the wall dividing rooms GF4 and GF5 occurred at the same time that the northern chimney breasts were removed at this level. The use of timber beams and wrought iron straps to achieve these alterations suggest a date no later than the very early 20th C, and a mid-late 19th C date is perhaps more probable for these works. There is little evidence surviving for any alterations of the mid 20th C, and it is likely that the building remained generally unchanged whilst it was a doctor's surgery. The 1970s refurbishment appears to have been drastic in its scope, with the internal walls stripped to bare brick and then pointed and replastered with a cement based base coat, possibly with an intent to stiffen the walls. All of the fire-places were blocked, with any fire-surrounds and firebacks removed. The internal partition walls were dismantled and re-created on largely new studwork. The floor structures throughout were partially replaced, patched and strengthened, and substantial alterations made to the groundfloor layout. The present exterior finishes and appearance are largely a product of the 1970s "refurbishment", the roof having been re clad in tile, the windows almost entirely replaced, and the render widely repaired. The rear elevation was heavily repointed, and window heads rebuilt. At the rear of the building ground levels were reduced across most of the rear yard to create a car-parking area, and this clearly truncated the archaeological horizons, removing some deposits of the post medieval period, and also cutting into medieval horizons.
- 7.2 The present works have, by contrast to the 1970s "refurbishment", been extremely sympathetic to the historic structure and the below ground archaeology. As a result of the low-impact design there has been relatively little disturbance of historic fabric. The most informative exposures of historic fabric occurred at a late stage in the watching brief when the decision was made to remove most of the plasterboard ceilings to remove a perceived asbestos risk from "artex" coatings, and facilitate

strengthening of the floor structures. The exposed floor structures have clarified the former existence of oblique corner chimneys at the southern end of the structure, at least from the 1st floor upwards. This has enabled the putative floorplan of the original layout to be revised (Fig 21). It would still appear probable that the fireplace of GF1 was originally set flush into the western wall of this room, though the hearth-base (at cellar level) is probably secondary. The original form of the kitchen fireplace in GF3 has, to a certain extent, also been clarified despite various secondary modifications (Figs 12 and 13). The scale of the “inglenook” indicates that the house was designed with a view for catering on a relatively grand scale, though the exact catering arrangements are now unclear. The circulation from the kitchen is also uncertain. The doorway to GF1 is certainly secondary (and recent), and therefore the kitchen GF3 can only have communicated with the ground floor of the main house via a doorway near the foot of the main stairs. Recent finishes obscure this area, and there is no perceptible difference in solidity that would indicate a former doorway. Communication from the kitchen to/from the cellar would also be expected (and by a route avoiding the main stairwell), but evidence for this is also lacking. The demolition of the earlier rear wing in the late 19th C leaves a marked lack of evidence for the circulation of the service areas, though it is clear that the rear wing almost certainly contained a service stair, and probably also a scullery.

- 7.3 Other than confirming the anticipated probability that archaeologically significant horizons survive very close to current ground levels at the rear of the property, very little could be deduced about the precise nature and extent of the archaeological resource from the limited observations during the present scheme. Medieval deposits clearly survived within the raised beds and patio area that surrounded the carpark, and therefore it is highly probable that medieval deposits are also present immediately below the carpark/Deansway level, though locally disturbed by post-medieval and later intrusions. At the highest points (circa 25.30mAOD) potentially medieval deposits of circa 15-16th C date survived to within 0.5m of the internal ground floor level. This high level of survival suggests that the deeper, and earlier deposits within the site may be exceptionally well preserved. The position of the site is at the heart of the historic settlement of Worcester, and also lies within the postulated iron age defended enclosure recognised by Philip Barker as the precursor to the Roman settlement. Deposits here are likely to represent a full sequence of backplot-type deposits extending back to Roman times, with a possibility of evidence of the prehistoric settlement where not truncated by later activity.

8 Conclusions

- 8.1 The site and building of 106 High Street together represent one of the City's most valuable heritage assets. Whilst the building has suffered much past inappropriate “renovation” it retains much of its original late 17th Century form, character and fabric. Unfortunately almost all of the original fabric is concealed behind later finishes, and there has been an almost total loss of the interior and exterior decorative schemes and finishes, but the building remains as a readable entity. The staircase, although structurally patched and strengthened retains much of its original grandeur, and remains as one of the finest and largest domestic stairs in the City.
- 8.2 The various stages of assessment and recording have revealed most of the historical development of the house, and established the extent of the surviving original fabric. Some of the original internal arrangements remain unclear, and there must be uncertainties about the functions of some rooms. It is possible that this information might be gleaned from probate inventories, but pursuit of these lies beyond the scope of the present project. It is clear that the house was once one of the grandest private residences in the City, and in its heyday it must have been one of the landmarks of the early 18th C social scene. The building today remains as one of the most significant and distinctive buildings in central Worcester, and makes a very positive contribution to the High Street, College Street and College Yard, as well as to the setting of the Cathedral.

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Appendix 1: Quantification of recovered artefacts

Material recovered from test-pits:

Context no.(307)

Medieval pottery - 5 sherds totalling 189g

2 joining sherds (134g) from shallow spouted dish, internally speckled green glazed, exterior unglazed redware with grey reduced core (Worcester type fabric 64.1) very similar to that illustrated as Type 7 “dripping dish” pp291-295, Fig 182:10 in Deansway report (Bryant, V in Dalwood et al, 2004) – and dated there as 14th Century, though late 13th C examples reported elsewhere.

1 bodysherd (29g) of possible jar externally speckled green glazed, exterior unglazed redware with grey reduced core (Worcester type fabric 64.1). 13th-14th Century

1 bodysherd (8g) orange brown exterior surface, grey core and interior (Malvernian glazed ware fabric 53.1) 13th Century

1 bodysherd (17g) orange brown exterior surface, patchy greenish glaze, grey core and interior (Malvernian glazed ware fabric 53.1) 13th Century

Material recovered during groundworks

Context no. – all unstratified from machining

Roman pottery – 1 sherd totalling 15g

1 body sherd, abraded, from small-medium jar, burnished greyware (Fabric 14) possibly 2nd Century

Medieval pottery – 1 sherd totalling 9g

1 body sherd pale orangey fabric with coarse grits, internal brown glazed. Not identified, but appears late medieval

Post medieval pottery – 3 sherds totalling 69g

2 base sherds (40g) purply red hard fired fabric with dark brown-purply black glaze internally and externally – (Midlands purple fabric 108) 16th-18th Century

1 sherd (29g) Staffordshire slipware, possibly from platter (17th-18th Century)