

**No. 2 Magdalene Lane,  
Taunton, Somerset  
Heritage Statement**

Client: GGFF Limited

AB Heritage Project No:60530

Date:26/10/2018

## No. 2 Magdalene Lane, Taunton, Somerset Heritage Statement

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**Project Number** 60530  
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 AB Heritage Limited (hereafter AB Heritage) has been commissioned by GGFF Limited to produce a Heritage Statement to cover a proposed development at the Grade II Listed No. 2 Magdalene Lane, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 1SE (National Heritage List for England (NHLE) List Entry Ref. 1233005).
- 1.1.2 This report has been requested by Tony Garrett (Conservation Officer, Taunton Deane Borough Council), following submission for pre-application advice in October 2017 (*pers. comm.* T. Spurway, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2018).

### 1.2 Statutory Designations

- 1.2.1 No. 2 Magdalene Lane forms part of a terrace of two (of the original five) former almshouses (No. 1 & 2 Magdalene Lane). They were first designated as Grade II on the 4<sup>th</sup> July 1975. The listing description is as follows:

*'2. Former Almshouses erected in 1845. Gothic 2 storey red brick building with ashlar dressings. Left side comes forward slightly. 3 gables with moulded cappings rise into old tile roof. Large central ashlar stack. Linked weathered hoodmoulds run along the front. Original pointed lights to 1st floor (paired to left) and to ground floor on right. 2 moulded pointed doorways under rectangular dripmoulds. Original double doors'* (NHLE, 2018).

- 1.2.2 The site is not located within a Conservation Area.

### 1.3 Site Location & Description

- 1.3.1 Centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) ST 22863 24505, the site is located on the west side of Magdalene Lane, a pedestrianised footpath which leads from the main town centre thoroughfare of East Street in the south, to Church Square in the north (See Figure 1).
- 1.3.2 Modern shops front onto the entire east side of Magdalene Lane. A modern shop forms the northern end of No. 2 Magdalene Lane and adjoins the northern side of the listed building.
- 1.3.3 A small modern extension (1930s) is present on the west side of the property, facing out onto a small concrete rear yard, which is dominated by a large timber shed and bounded mostly by high concrete block walls.

### 1.4 Proposed Development

- 1.4.1 The objectives for redevelopment of the building are to maintain its longevity, by seeking to create a more commercially accessible building, with the long-term view to undertaking a programme of sympathetic maintenance and repair of the historic fabric of the building, in order to ensure its future survival (*pers. comm.* T. Spurway, 26<sup>th</sup> January 2018).
- 1.4.2 The initial draft proposals comprise:

- Suggested removal of the ground floor windows of the former almshouse, to be possibly replaced with windows that better indicate the commercial nature of the property. Or devise an alternative design solution to achieve this.

1.4.3 No alterations are proposed to the layout of the first-floor of the building.

## 2. AIMS & METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Aims

2.1.1 Paragraph 165 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires local planning authorities to request descriptions on the significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposal, including any contribution made by their setting. This states that:

*'The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.'*

2.1.2 The aim of this report is to facilitate such a process by understanding the historical development of the application site and the likely impact upon any surviving heritage assets resulting from the proposed development, devising appropriate mitigation responses where necessary.

### 2.2 Consultation

2.2.1 Initial pre-application contact was made with Taunton Deane Borough Council in October 2017. A response was received from Tony Garrett (Conservation Officer, Taunton Deane Borough Council) in November 2017, in which he indicated that the application 'would require a Heritage Statement and Statement of Significance ahead of any meeting'.

2.2.2 Tony Garrett was contacted via email during January 2018 by Kerry Kerr-Peterson (Senior Heritage Consultant, AB Heritage) to initiate contact about the project. However, no response had been received at the time of the completion of the draft report.

### 2.3 Data Collation

2.3.1 The assessment has been carried out, in regard to the collation of baseline information, in line with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment (January 2017) and the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings and Structures (December 2014).

2.3.2 This assessment includes relevant information contained in various statutory requirements, national, regional and local planning policies and professional good practice guidance, including:

- Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act, 1979
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990
- The National Planning Policy Framework, 2012

2.3.3 The Somerset Historic Environment Record is the primary source of information concerning the current state of archaeological and architectural knowledge in this area. The HER Commercial dataset search for this project does not have a reference number but was issued under the reference 'Taunton, Magdalene Lane for AB Heritage'. For reporting purposes, the HER Primary Reference Number (PRN) has been used (See Figure 2).



2.3.4 This information was supported by examination of data from a wide range of other sources, principally:

- Pastscape and other research resources, including Discovery the National Archives;
- The Historic England website professional pages, particularly the National Heritage List for England;
- A site visit was undertaken on the 26<sup>th</sup> January 2018. During the site visit, an inspection of the building was made, and principal areas of the building, significant architectural details, fixtures and fittings were noted and digitally photographed using a DSLR Nikon D3300 24.2 Megapixel, 18-55mm lens camera, with tripod where necessary. A selective capture method with single shot image capture using a 23.5 x 15.6mm CMOS sensor was used. The images included a photographic scale where appropriate.
- Additional relevant documentary resources at the Somerset Archives & Studies Centre were accessed on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2018, and online historic sources;

2.3.5 Information from these sources was used to understand:

- Information on statutory and non-statutory designated sites
- Readily accessible information on the proposed development site's history from readily available historic maps and photographs
- Any information on the proposed development site contained in published and unpublished archaeological and historical sources, including any previous archaeological investigations undertaken within the study area
- A greater understanding of key cultural heritage issues of the proposed development site and surrounding area, developed through the onsite walkover, including information on areas of past impact within the proposed development site boundary
- The impact of the proposed development on the known and potential cultural heritage resource, resulting in the formulation of a mitigation strategy, where required, which appropriately targets any future works to those required to gain planning consent.

## **2.4 Assessment of the Cultural Heritage Resource**

2.4.1 The importance of identified cultural heritage resources is determined by reference to existing designations (Table 1, below).

Table 1: Assessing the Importance of a Cultural Heritage Site

SCALE OF SITE IMPORTANCE	
<b>NATIONAL</b>	The highest status of site, e.g. Scheduled Monuments (or undesignated assets of schedulable quality and importance). Grade I and Grade II* Listed Buildings. Other listed buildings that can be shown to have exceptional qualities in their fabric or historical associations not adequately reflected in the listing grade. Conservation Areas containing very important buildings. Undesignated structures of clear national importance. Extremely well preserved historic landscape, whether inscribed or not, with exceptional coherence, time depth, or other critical factor(s).
<b>REGIONAL</b>	Grade II Listed Buildings or other designated or undesignated archaeological sites (in addition to those listed above), or assets of a reasonably defined extent and significance, or reasonable evidence of occupation / settlement, ritual, industrial activity etc. Examples may include areas containing buildings that contribute significantly to its historic character, burial sites, deserted medieval villages, Roman roads and dense scatter of finds.
<b>LOCAL</b>	Evidence of human activity more limited in historic value than the examples above, or compromised by poor preservation and/or survival of context associations, though which still have the potential to contribute to local research objectives. Examples include sites such as 'locally designated' buildings or undesignated structures / buildings of limited historic merit, out-of-situ archaeological findspots / ephemeral archaeological evidence and historic field systems and boundaries etc.
<b>NEGLIGIBLE</b>	Assets with very little or no surviving archaeological interest. Examples include destroyed antiquities, structures of almost no architectural / historic merit, buildings of an intrusive character or relatively modern / common landscape features such as quarries, drains and ponds etc.
<b>UNKNOWN</b>	Insufficient information exists to assess the importance of a feature (e.g. unidentified features on aerial photographs).

2.4.2 For some types of finds or remains there is no consistent value and the importance may vary, for example Grade II Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas. For this reason, adjustments are occasionally made, where appropriate, based on professional judgement.

## 2.5 Impact Assessment Criteria

2.5.1 The magnitude of impact upon the archaeological and heritage resource, which can be considered in terms of direct and indirect impacts, is determined by identifying the level of effect from the proposed development upon the baseline conditions of the site and the cultural heritage resource identified. The criteria for assessing the magnitude of impact, whether Beneficial or Adverse, are set out in Table 2 (below).

2.5.2 In certain cases, it is not possible to confirm the magnitude of impact upon a cultural heritage resource, especially where anticipated buried deposits exist. Where possible a professional judgement as to the scale of such impacts is applied to enable the likely 'Significance of Effects' to be established; however, a magnitude level of 'uncertain' is included for situations where it is simply not appropriate to make such a judgement at this stage of works.

**Table 2: Criteria for Determining Beneficial & Adverse Magnitude of Impact**

IMPACT LEVEL	DEFINITION
<b>HIGH</b>	Changes to most or all of the key archaeological or key heritage baseline elements, or comprehensive changes to the setting of such key features that lead to total or almost complete alteration of a features physical structure, dramatic visual alteration to the setting of a heritage asset, or almost comprehensive variation to aspects such as noise, access, or visual amenity of the historic landscape.
<b>MEDIUM</b>	Changes to many key archaeological materials/historic elements, or their setting, such that the baseline resource is clearly modified. This includes considerable visual change to many key aspects of the historic landscape, noticeable differences in noise or sound quality, and considerable changes to use or access changes to key historic landscape elements
<b>LOW</b>	Detectable impacts which alter the baseline condition of an archaeological or heritage receptor to a slight degree – e.g. a small proportion of the surviving heritage resource is altered; slight alterations to the setting or structure, or limited changes to aspects such as noise levels, use or access that results in limited changes to historic landscape character.
<b>NEGLIGIBLE</b>	Barely distinguishable change from baseline conditions, where there would be very little appreciable effect on a known site, possibly because of distance from the development, method of construction or landscape or ecological planting, that are thought to have no long-term effect on the historic value of a resource.
<b>UNCERTAIN</b>	Extent / nature of the resource is unknown and the magnitude of change cannot be ascertained.

2.5.3 The overall Significance of Effects from the proposed development upon the Cultural Heritage Resource is determined by correlating the magnitude of Impact against value of the Cultural Heritage resource. Table 3 highlights the criteria for assessing the overall Significance of Effects. Where effects are moderate or above these are classified as significant.

**Table 3: Significance of Beneficial / Adverse Effects**

IMPORTANCE	MAGNITUDE			
	HIGH	MED	LOW	NEG
<b>NATIONAL</b>	Severe	Major	Mod	Minor
<b>REGIONAL</b>	Major	Mod	Minor	Not Sig.
<b>LOCAL</b>	Mod	Minor	Minor	Not Sig.
<b>NEGLIGIBLE</b>	Minor	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Nt.

Not Sig. = Not Significant; Nt. = Neutral; Mod = Moderate; Ext. = Extensive

## 2.6 Limitations

2.6.1 It should be noted that the report has been prepared under the express instruction and solely for the use of GGFF Limited, and any associated parties they elect to share this information with. Measurements and distances referred to in the report should be taken as approximations only and should not be used for detailed design purposes.

- 2.6.2 All the work carried out in this report is based upon the professional knowledge and understanding of AB Heritage on current (September 2018) and relevant United Kingdom standards and codes, technology and legislation. Changes in these areas may occur in the future and cause changes to the conclusions, advice, recommendations or design given. AB Heritage does not accept responsibility for advising the client's or associated parties of the facts or implications of any such changes in the future.
- 2.6.3 This report has been prepared utilising factual information obtained from third party sources. AB Heritage takes no responsibility for the accuracy of such information. It should also be noted that this report represents an early stage of a phased approach to assessing the archaeological and cultural heritage resource of the application site to allow the development of an appropriate mitigation strategy, should this be required. It does not comprise mitigation of impacts in itself.
- 2.6.4 No intrusive analysis of the building was requested for the purposes of producing this report.

### **3. HERITAGE REVIEW OF THE SITE**

#### **3.1 Overview of the History of Almshouses**

- 3.1.1 Almshouses originated during the Medieval period as shelters for the poor, disabled and infirm. They were usually founded by royalty, church, local dignitaries or merchant guilds, partly as a means to easing their passage to heaven. During the Medieval period, the occupants were devoted to a regime of prayer and provided for by their patrons. Almshouses were usually surrounded by gardens and many leper houses became almshouses as leprosy began to recede during the 14<sup>th</sup> century (Historic England 'Disability in Medieval Hospitals and Almshouses', 2018).
- 3.1.2 From the Medieval period onwards, Taunton had a large number of almshouses that were concentrated mostly, although not exclusively, in the region of East Street to the south of the site and the Grade I listed Church of St Mary Magdalene (PRN 44457), to the north of the site. A limited number of these almshouses now survive in the town. Those that do include, amongst others, the proposed development site (although no longer complete), the Grade I listed 17<sup>th</sup> century Gray's almshouses (PRN 44386), located c. 200m to the south-east of the site. The former site remains in use as almshouses to the present day.
- 3.1.3 One of the numerous lost almshouses of Taunton included the 17<sup>th</sup> century Henley's Almshouses (PRN 44383), formerly located c. 60m to the north-west of the site, demolished in 1788.

#### **3.2 Historic Development of Site**

- 3.2.1 The proposed development site was formerly occupied by an earlier row of almshouses known as the Osborne Almshouses. A translation of a charter from 1435 describes how several patrons, including the vicar of the Church of St Mary Magdalene, conveyed two messuages in Taunton, seven cottages called Osborne Almshouses, with adjoining gardens enclosed by hedges, to Thomas Osborne. These are described as located on the west side of Church Lane (now Magdalene Lane), extending for a length of 112 feet along the lane (South West Heritage Trust (SWHT) Ref.A/DIF/91/1).
- 3.2.2 Late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century maps of the area show that the site was occupied by a row of buildings during this period, likely to be the original Osborne Almshouses, with yards or garden space at the rear (Plate 1).



**Plate 1: Plan of Taunton, 1840. Approx. location of site outlined in red (SWHT Ref. DD/SAS/C212)**

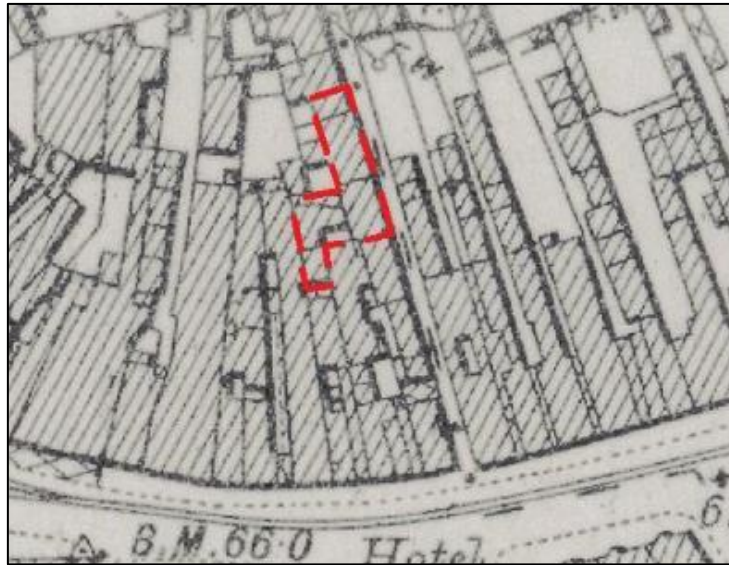
- 3.2.3 The Medieval Osborne Almshouses survived on the site until 1845, when a contract was drawn up for their demolition and rebuilding between William Shawbrooks and William Pritchard, the steward of the feoffees (trustees) of the owners, possibly the Taunton Town Charitable Trust.
- 3.2.4 The new buildings retained the old name and the rebuilding work was carried out by local tradesmen including a Taunton based builders (Samuel Curry the Younger) and ironmonger (Thomas White Aukland) for the sum of £1,419.00. The works were carried out in line with plans and elevations drawn up by the architects (now lost) (SWHT Ref. DD/TAC/5/5/51).
- 3.2.5 The new buildings were designed by the Taunton based architectural firm Carver & Giles. The firm moved to Taunton in 1828, where Richard Carver was the County surveyor until 1857. The firm were prolific ecclesiastical and secular architects. They worked in the Gothic Revival architectural style typical of the period, but their designs were considered by some to be 'of an undistinguishable character' (Dawson Heritage, 2018 & Colvin, 1954).
- 3.2.6 Richard Carver may have been a pupil of Sir Jeffrey Wyattville, famous for the transformation of Windsor Castle for King George IV, as well as works to the houses at Longleat and Chatsworth. Other local buildings designed by Carver & Giles include the Grade II Listed Church of the Holy Trinity (NHLE 1059942) (1842), located c. 650m to the south-east of the site.
- 3.2.7 The 1845 specification for the rebuilding works is highly detailed and includes, amongst other things, details such as the use of the 'very best Bridgwater red brick' and Bath Stone on the front (east facing) elevation (SWHT Ref. DD/TAC/5/5/51).
- 3.2.8 The earliest available historic map to depict the site is the 1<sup>st</sup> edition of the 25" OS map, dated c. 1888 (Plate 2). This shows the site as part of a row of separate buildings occupying the west side of Magdalene Lane, with a rear yard containing several outbuildings, including a feature or structure of wood or iron.
- 3.2.9 This map shows that the wider setting at this date comprised densely packed, narrow plots with buildings facing onto Fore Street and East Street, with yards, outbuildings and linear

gardens at the rear running northwards towards Church Square. Here, the landscape opened out to a degree with the churchyard and the gardens beyond to the north. Buildings lined most of the east side of Magdalene Lane, although a gap was present opposite the site at this date.



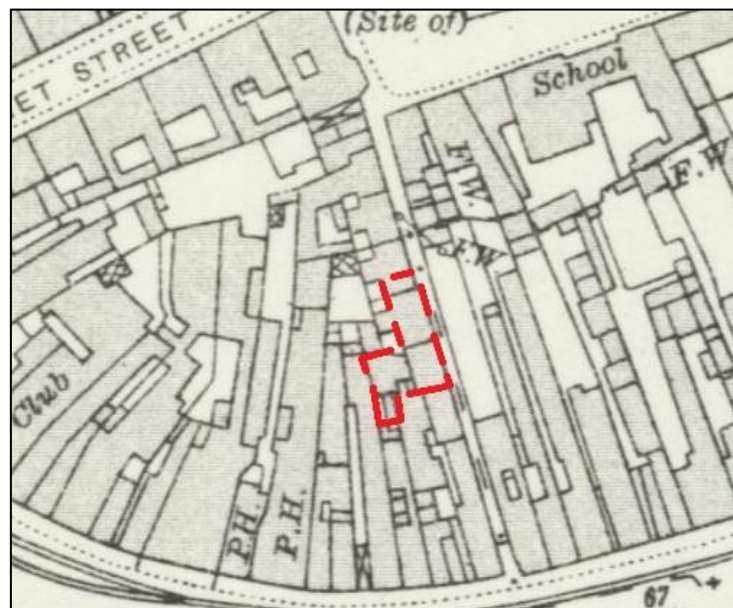
**Plate 2: 1<sup>st</sup> edition 25" OS map, c. 1888. Approx. location of site outlined in red (Know Your Place, 2018)**

- 3.2.10 The almshouses on Magdalene Lane were under the ownership of the Taunton Town Trust by at least 1899, when a reference was made to the Trust owning five houses (the Osborne Almshouses) & four tenements in Magdalene Lane (SWHT Ref.A/DIF/91/1).
- 3.2.11 The 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the OS map of c. 1903 (Plate 3) shows that since c. 1888 a large extension had been added to the rear of No. 2 Magdalene Lane, covering almost the entire area of the rear yard. The wider and immediate setting of Magdalene Lane, had changed little, if all since the previous map.



**Plate 3: 2<sup>nd</sup> edition OS map, c. 1903 (Know Your Place, 2018)**

3.2.12 The 1913 edition of the OS map (Plate 4) shows that the site had changed little since c. 1903. Some of the buildings on the east side of Magdalene Lane had been removed but the wider setting remained largely unchanged.



**Plate 4: OS map, 1913 (Reproduced with permission from the National Library of Scotland)**

3.2.13 The 1930 edition of the OS map (Plate 5) suggests that the large extension at the rear of No. 2 Magdalene Lane has been removed since 1913 but several small outbuildings remained in the area of the present rear yard. The immediate and wider setting had changed little since 1913.



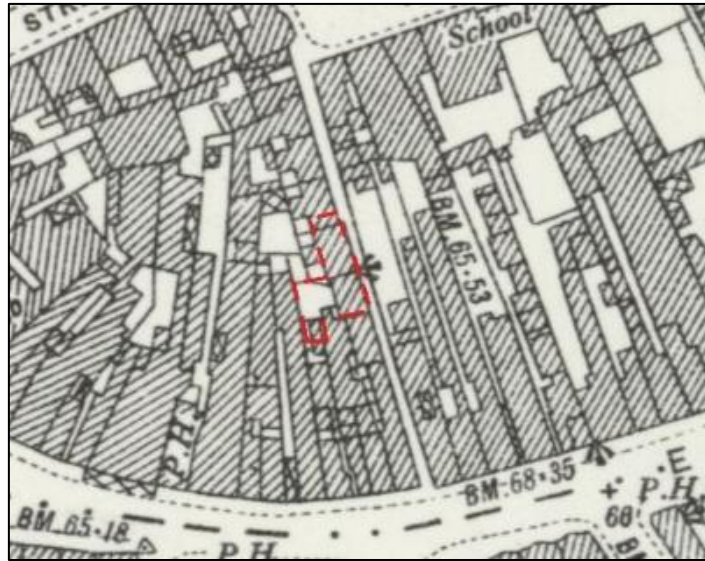


Plate 5: OS Map, 1930 (National Library of Scotland)

- 3.2.14 In 1932, several of the Taunton Town Trust almshouses were sold off or demolished (Taunton Heritage Trust, 2018). These included the Osborne Almshouses, which had plans produced by local architects Stone & Francis approved for the redevelopment of four out of the five almshouses, into individual dwellings (Plate 6).
- 3.2.15 The 1932 plans provide a glimpse of the original layout of the building (Plate 6 & 7). Each floor had two separate apartments, accessed from a communal front entrance, adjacent to the communal staircase leading to the first-floor apartments. The ground floor had a principal front room with a central fireplace in the party wall. Partitions created rooms at the rear of the ground floor and each ground floor apartment had a separate entrance onto the rear yard, where the privy etc. was located (Plate 6).

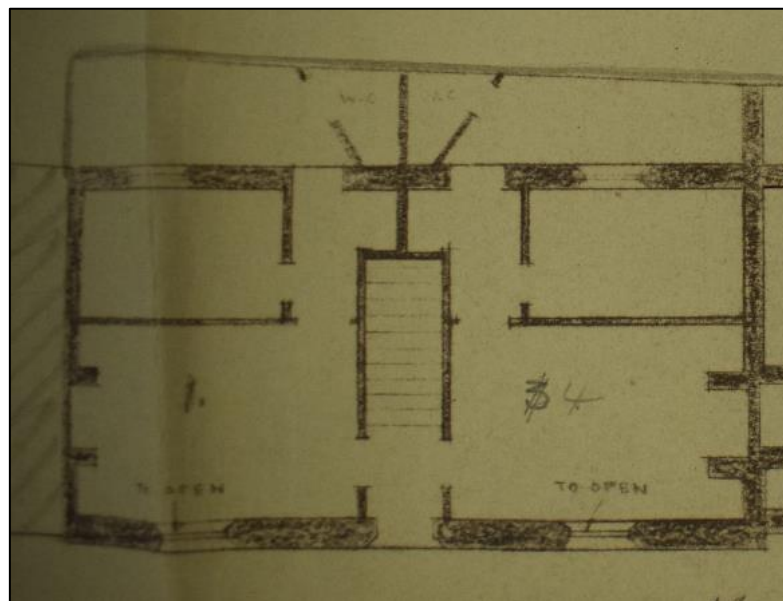
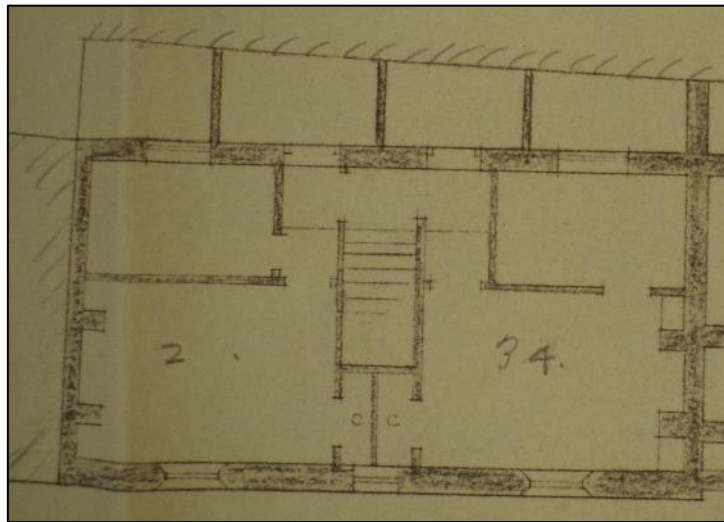


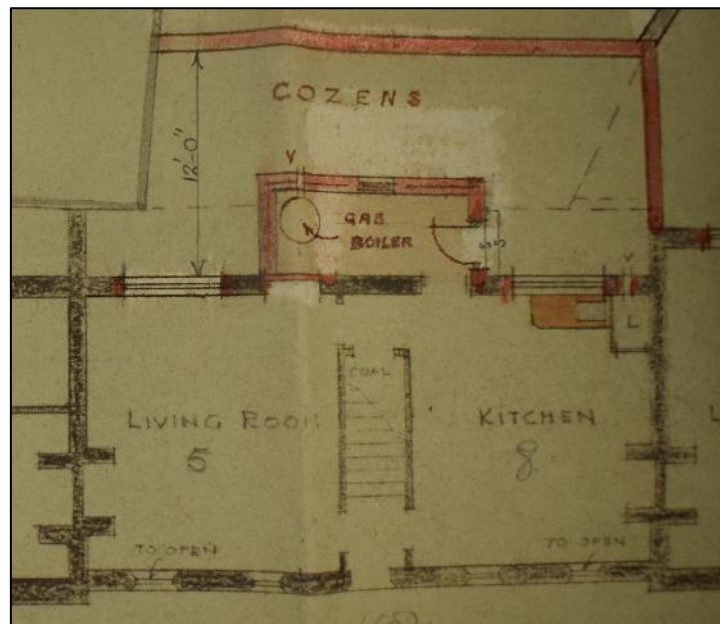
Plate 6: Probable original ground floor layout (No. 1 Magdalene Lane) (SWHT Ref. D/B/ta/24/1/79/1648)

3.2.16 At first-floor level, the building appears to have had a similar layout, accessed from the stair lobby (Plate 7).



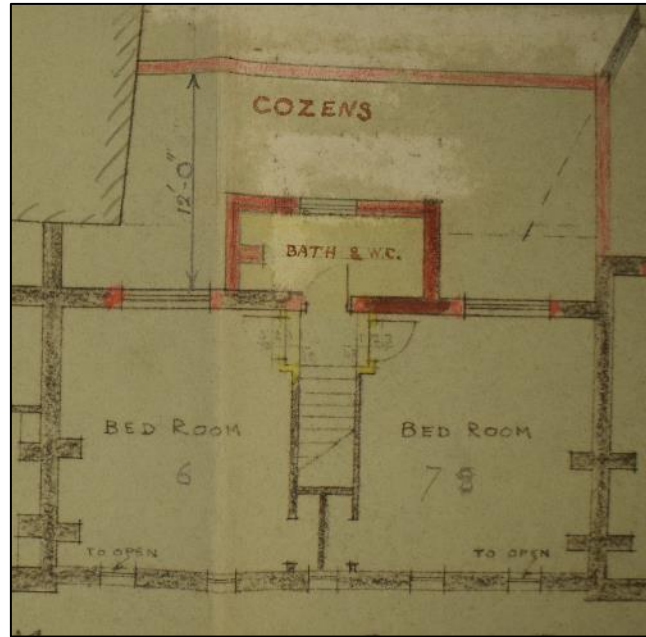
**Plate 7: Probable original 1<sup>st</sup> floor layout (No. 1 Magdalene Lane) (SWHT Ref. D/B/ta/24/1/79/1648)**

3.2.17 The 1932 plans demonstrate that the new layout of the buildings, removed the partitions on the ground floor to create single open plan spaces for a living room and kitchen. At No. 2 this included building the existing rear extension and the replacement and widening the existing rear windows, as well as building a new rear yard boundary wall (Plate 8).



**Plate 8: Proposed 1932 ground floor alterations to No. 2 Magdalene Lane (SWHT Ref. D/B/ta/24/1/79/1648)**

3.2.18 At first-floor level, the creation of two large bedrooms was achieved through the removal of the existing partitions, along with reconfiguring the first-floor landing to create the access to the bedrooms. The first-floor rear windows were also replaced, and the apertures widened (Plate 9).



**Plate 9: Proposed 1932 1<sup>st</sup> floor alterations to No. 2 Magdalene Lane (SWHT Ref. D/B/ta/24/1/79/1648)**

3.2.19 The next available map dates to c. 1960 (Plate 10). This demonstrates that several of the almshouses at the northern end of the row had been demolished since 1932 and replaced with a new linear building on the same footprint (extant Fine Fabrics shop). The existing extension form the 1932 redevelopment is shown and the rear yard appears to be divided between several properties and to contain several outbuildings. The gap on the eastern side of Magdalene Lane had been largely infilled with new buildings and the wider setting remained largely unchanged.



**Plate 10: OS Map, c. 1960 (Know Your Place, 2018)**

3.2.20 Subsequently, the remaining almshouse to the north of the site has been demolished and the area is now part of a service yard for the adjacent shops that front onto Fore Street. The gap on the eastern side of Magdalene Lane has been infilled.

### 3.3 Current Condition of No. 2 Magdalene Lane

- 3.3.1 The principal element of the buildings that occupy the site is the brick built former almshouse at the southern end. The main eastern elevation survives largely as constructed. The original form of elevation survives intact with rows of arched headed windows with label mould above running through the entire length of the elevation.
- 3.3.2 The ground floor windows flank a central entrance. The elevation has the original red brick parapet and moulded Bath Stone dressings including window detailing, a moulded shield on the gable and coping. The original Bath Stone chimneys survive but a moulded ornamental finial is missing from the apex of the gable. The pitched roof appears to be original, with glazed ridge tiles (Photo 1).
- 3.3.3 The front eastern elevation has the original wrought iron framed casement windows although the original leaded diamond glass has been replaced in all of them. The original battened folding double entrance doors also survive (Photo 1).



**Photo 1: The east elevation from the north-east, taken from Magdalene Lane**

- 3.3.4 The rear, west facing elevation has been substantially altered from its original form (Photo 2), which would also have had windows with stone detailing. As a result of the alterations, no architectural features of historic interest are thought to survive on this elevation. A two-storey brick extension is present in the centre of the rear elevation, with square steel framed windows. Further windows of the same construction have been inserted into the positions of the original ground and first-floor windows. Their enlargement is evident from the alterations to the brickwork around the windows. A door has also been inserted into the southern ground floor aperture.



**Photo 2: The rear (west facing) elevation from the rear yard**

- 3.3.5 On the interior, the original layout, room hierarchy and circulation of the building has been substantially altered, due to the removal of original partitions to open up the spaces (See Figure 3). The only elements of the original circulation to remain are the ground floor access to the building from the main front entrance and into the two front principal rooms from the entrance lobby. The original rear entrance survives on the north side of the building as an existing aperture. The original stairs to the first-floor remain in place, with most of the original timber treads and risers (Photo 3).



**Photo 3: The original stairs from the entrance lobby**

- 3.3.6 The fireplaces (now blocked) in the front principal rooms are now off-centre although the chimney breasts remain in-situ, as do alcove cupboards, albeit with missing doors.
- 3.3.7 A partition has been inserted on the northern side of the staircase to create a corridor, which leads to the rear entrance. The area at the rear of the stairs has also been blocked off to form an under stairs cupboard. A doorway has been inserted in the north-east corner of the ground floor, to link it to the Fine Fabrics shop. As a result, this has almost completely altered the original circulation of the building.

- 3.3.8 At first-floor level, the rooms have once again been opened out, removing the original layout, room hierarchy and most of the original circulation of this part of the building (See Figure 3). The original closets survive adjacent to the eastern elevation, although they have been knocked into one. Secondary aluminium glazing has been inserted over some of the first-floor windows.
- 3.3.9 The 1930s rear extension is completely devoid of architectural features of historic interest at both ground and first-floor level (Photo 4).



**Photo 4: Ground floor of the rear extension**

- 3.3.10 Apart from the stairs and original front doors (Photo 6), few historical architectural features survive on the interior of the building. A small amount of original door architrave survives in the ground floor entrance lobby and hallway and most of the original window furniture survives on the front elevation windows (Photo 5).



Photo 5: Original window furniture on the ground floor



Photo 6: Interior of the original front doors

### 3.4 Current Setting of No. 2 Magdalene Lane

- 3.4.1 Magdalene Lane is a pedestrianised footpath which leads from the main thoroughfare of East Street in the south to the quieter open region of Church Square, dominated by the Church of St Mary Magdalene and its open churchyard, in the north. The site occupies part of a row of buildings on the west side of the Lane, with the mid-late 20<sup>th</sup> century brick Fine Fabrics shop to the north and the only other surviving element of the former almshouses, No. 1 Magdalene Lane, adjoins the site to the south (Photo 7).



**Photo 7: The site from the north-east, taken from Magdalene Lane**

- 3.4.2 A length of brick wall is located to the north of Fine Fabrics, adjacent to the lane, which has an open service yard on the western side (Photo 8).



**Photo 8: The service yard to the north of Fine Fabrics**

- 3.4.3 The eastern side of Magdalene Lane, opposite the site, is densely lined with modern two storey buildings with large shop windows at ground floor level (Photo 9).





**Photo 9: View of the east side of Magdalene Lane from the south, with the tower of the Church of St Mary Magdalene in the background**

- 3.4.4 A small concrete yard is located at the rear of the property. This is bounded by a high concrete block wall to the west and north (Photo 8) and a brick wall forms the southern boundary between the site and the rear of the adjacent properties. The yard contains several small elements of brick walling and a large part has been built up into a terrace on the west side. This terrace is dominated by a large timber shed.



**Photo 10: View of part of the rear yard, looking south**

- 3.4.5 There are restricted views into and out of the rear yard, largely due to the height of the boundary walls and dense nature of the surrounding buildings to the south (Photo 10). Only the very top of the roofline of the rear extension is visible beyond the high boundary walls from certain positions within the service yard to the north. There are some limited views of the

top section of the tower of the Church of St Mary Magdalene from the rear yard of the property (Photo 11).



**Photo 11: View of the tower of the Church of St Mary Magdalene, from the rear yard of the site**

3.4.6 The narrow character of Magdalene Lane means that views of the eastern elevation of the former almshouse are only possible from the entrance to Magdalene Lane from the north (Photo 12), resulting in no intervisibility with Church Square at ground level. The views from the north are dominated by the modern buildings that make up the majority of Magdalene Lane (Photo 12).



**Photo 12: View from the northern entrance of Magdalene Lane towards the site**

3.4.7 Likewise, from the south, once again the narrow character of the lane and the set-back position of the site, means that there is no intervisibility from ground level between East Street and the site. The east elevation of the building is the only element visible and only once the lane opens out, directly adjacent to the site (Photo 13).



**Photo 13: View along Magdalene Lane from the south, the site is on the left**

- 3.4.8 The wider and immediate setting of the site has undergone some degree of erosion over time. This is primarily in the form of the redevelopment and modernisation of the streetscape of Magdalene Lane, immediately to the north (with the construction of Fine Fabrics and adjacent service yard) and opposite the site, on the eastern side of Magdalene Lane.
- 3.4.9 The building has not functioned in its originally intended role as an almshouse for close to a century and the other associated almshouses have largely gone (apart from No. 1 Magdalene Lane). The site is no longer appreciated as a secular building associated with the charity it once served or in association with the local Church community, as the original Osborne almshouses on the site had once been.

### **3.5 Significance of No. 2 Magdalene Lane**

- 3.5.1 As a Grade II Listed building, the former almshouse at No. 2 Magdalene Lane is considered to be a heritage asset of Regional Importance, in line with Table 1; Section 2.4. However, given the level of past impacts to both the setting and historic fabric of the building, in line with professional judgement, the building is thought to be more in line with one of Local Importance in this case. The site forms a part of one of the few remaining elements of the rebuilt Osborne Almshouses.
- 3.5.2 The current setting of No. 2 Magdalene Lane is thought to have a negative and detrimental effect upon the building. This is because it is thought to detract from its overall importance due to the overall erosion of the setting and appreciation of the building during the mid-late 20<sup>th</sup> century. This has resulted in the current setting being dominated by the surrounding modern buildings and unattractive concrete yard at the rear of the property. However, the eastern elevation of the building (and that of No. 1 Magdalene Lane, as a group) can be considered to enhance the streetscape of Magdalene Lane, to a degree.
- 3.5.3 There are other factors that are considered to detract from the overall importance of the site as a heritage asset. These comprise the erosion of the original layout, room hierarchy and to a degree, the original circulation of the building, as well as the removal of much of the original architrave and all the original internal doors.
- 3.5.4 The construction of the rear extension and replacement of the original windows on the rear elevation, during the 1930s, is also thought to detract from the overall importance of the

building. This is because they are thought to be relatively unsympathetic and poorly executed additions / alterations to the historic fabric of the building, which have altered the character of this elevation to a substantial degree.

- 3.5.5 The main focus of the importance of the building is thought to be the largely original eastern elevation, which faces out onto Magdalene Lane. This is because a large amount of original surviving architectural features such as the original form of the elevation, the Bath Stone detailing, original wrought iron window frames and front door, represent the evidential and illustrative historic values of the building as a heritage asset. The remaining elements of the original circulation of the building, such as the entrance lobby, stairs and entrances into the two, front principal ground floor rooms, contribute to the heritage values.
- 3.5.6 The associative historic value, in the form of the building's association with the local architectural firm Carver & Giles and the communal value of the building, as an integral part of the streetscape of the busy pedestrian route of Magdalene Lane, are also thought to contribute to its importance, but to a lesser degree.

## 4. IMPACT ASSESSMENT & RECOMMENDATIONS

### 4.1 Predicted Impact of the Proposed Development

#### *Proposed removal of the ground floor windows of the former almshouse – (Fig 5)*

- 4.1.1 The proposal to removal and reconfigure the four ground floor windows would aim to retain the general form of the existing arrangement, including the bath stone detailing and the stone label mould above.
- 4.1.2 This scheme is considered to have a Direct Medium Adverse magnitude of impact upon this locally important building, in-line with Table 2, as it is considered to make a 'considerable visual change to one of the key aspects of this heritage asset.
- 4.1.3 Overall this change would result in a Direct Minor Adverse Significance of Effect, in-line with Table 3. This factors in design changes that seek to maintain the form and symmetry of the windows at the ground floor.

### 4.2 Outline Recommendations

- 4.2.1 No further heritage investigation is recommended for this scheme. However, it should be noted that this recommendation is subject to the approval of the Local Planning Authority.

### 4.3 Conclusion

- The Grade II Listed No. 2 Magdalene Lane is a small surviving part of the row of five former almshouses (only two of which now remain), known as the Osborne Almshouses, rebuilt on the site of Medieval almshouses of the same name, in 1845, by local architects Carver & Giles, probably for the Taunton Town Charity;
- The site is considered to be a heritage asset of Local Importance;
- The main focus of the importance of the building is thought to be the largely original eastern elevation, which faces out onto Magdalene Lane and retains a high level of original features and architectural detailing;
- The perceived adverse impact of the proposed changes will be the removal of the existing ground floor windows on the east elevation, which is considered to result in a Minor Adverse Significance of Effect;
- No further heritage investigation is recommended for this scheme.

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## 5. REFERENCES

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### 5.2 Online Sources

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- Taunton Deane Borough Council Planning Policy, 2018 <https://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/planning-policy/>
- Taunton Heritage Trust, 2018, <http://www.tauntonheritagetrust.org.uk/history/>

### 5.3 Personal Communication

- Personal Communication via email between Kerry Kerr-Peterson (Senior Heritage Consultant, AB Heritage) and Trevor Spurway (Architect, Trevor J Spurway (Architect) Ltd) on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2018.
- Personal Communication via email between Kerry Kerr-Peterson and Trevor Spurway on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2018.

## Appendices



## Appendix 1      Planning Policy

### Introduction

The following section highlights the key planning and legislative framework relevant to this project, including legislative framework, national planning policy and relevant sector guidance.

### Statutory Protection for Heritage Assets

Current legislation, in the form of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, provides for the legal protection of important and well-preserved archaeological sites and monuments through their addition to a list, or 'schedule' of archaeological monuments by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. This necessitates the granting of formal Scheduled Monument Consent for any work undertaken within the designated area of a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Likewise, structures are afforded legal protection in the form of their addition to 'lists' of buildings of special architectural or historical interest. The listing of buildings is carried out by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990. The main purpose of the legislation is to protect buildings and their surroundings from changes that would materially alter the special historic or architectural value of the building or its setting. This necessitates the granting of formal Listed Building Consent for all works undertaken to or within the designated curtilage of a Listed Building. This legislation also allows for the creation and protection of Conservation Areas by local planning authorities to protect areas and groupings of historical significance.

The categories of assets with some form of legal protection have been extended in recent years, and now include Registered Parks and Gardens, and Historic Battlefields. While designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site is not a statutory designation under English planning law, such a designation is regarded as a material consideration in planning decisions, and World Heritage Sites are in practice protected from development that could affect any aspect of their significance including settings within the Site and a buffer zone around it.

### National Planning Policy

The NPPF sets out government policy on the historic environment, which covers all elements, whether designated or not, that are identified as 'having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest'.

One of the over-arching aims is to 'Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations'. To achieve this, local planning authorities can request that the applicant describe "the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting". The level of detail required in the assessment should be "proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance". It goes on to say that "where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation."

A key policy within the NPPF is that “when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be.

With regard to non-designated heritage assets specific policy is provided in that a balanced judgement will be required having due regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset affected.

Paragraph 194 states that ‘Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a Grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional, while substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, should be wholly exceptional’.

Paragraphs 195 & 196 explain that ‘where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss.

It also advises that where a proposal involve less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

### **Taunton Deane Local Plan**

The Taunton Deane Local Plan was adopted in 2004 and comprises several document including the Core Strategy adopted in 2012, which sets out the strategic objectives up to 2028. The Council follows the overarching aims of NPPF to protect and enhance the historic environment in the borough, as set out above.

The following policies or sections of policies are relevant to this project:

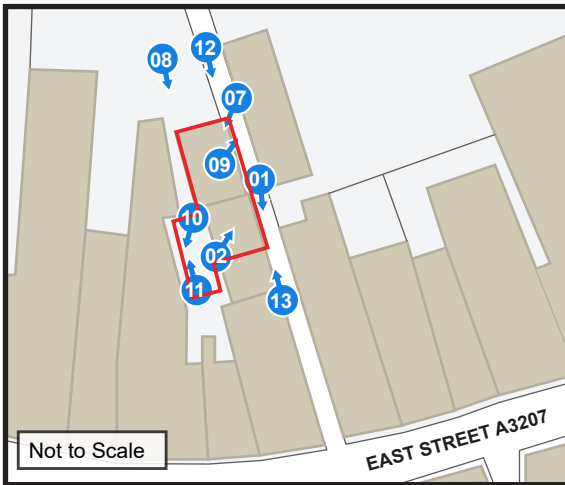
#### **Core Strategy Policy CP8 – Environment**

The Borough Council will conserve and enhance the historic environment and will not permit development proposals that would harm these interests or the settings of the towns unless other material factors are sufficient to override their importance.

#### **Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan - Taunton Town Centre Design Code Supplementary Planning Document, 2008 – Code G006**

Developers should contact a Conservation Officer at the outset to discuss any development proposals affecting the historic environment and agree an appropriate design strategy. This strategy should be set out in detail in the Design and Access Statement accompanying any planning application.

Listed buildings and their setting should be protected. Listed buildings in the town centre are often protected as a group and building of limited individual importance can become important in the contribution they make to the street scene. Any development directly or indirectly affecting a Listed Buildings should be supported by a design rationale stating how the development maintains and/or enhances the historic integrity of the surrounding area.



**KEY**

- Site Location
- ⊙ Photograph Location

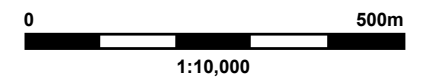


Figure 1: Site Location

Project: 2 Magdalene Lane, Taunton

Date: 3/5/2018

Job No: 60395





**KEY**  
10 Photograph Location

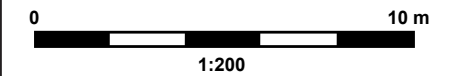


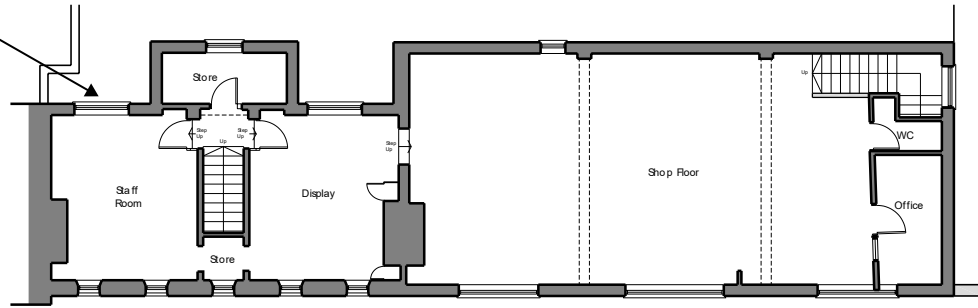
Figure 3: Existing Plans

Project: 2 Magdalene Lane, Taunton

Date: 3/5/2018

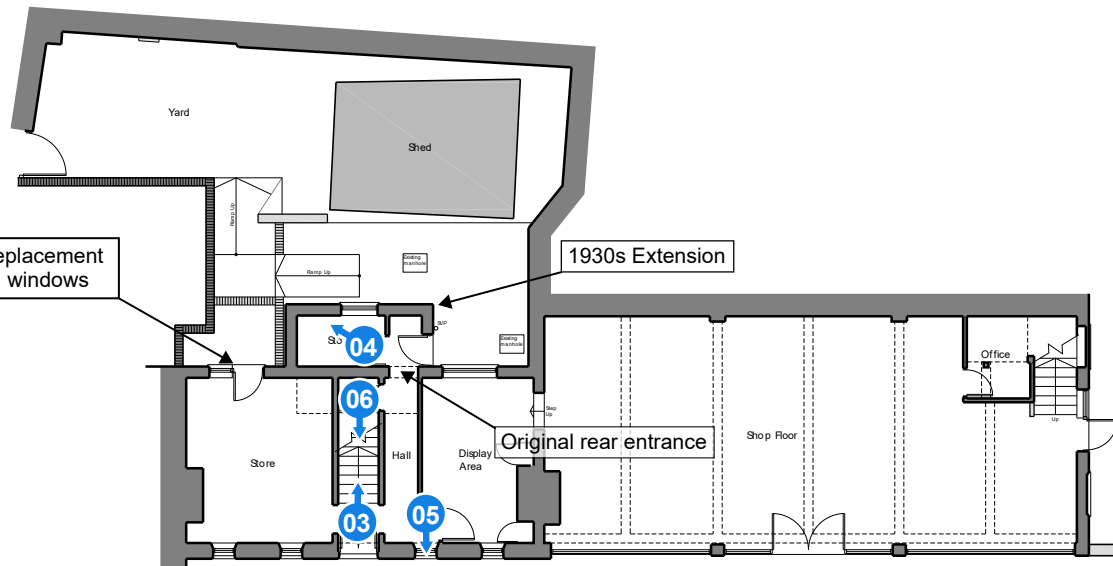
Job No: 60395

1930s Replacement window



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

1930s Replacement / inserted windows

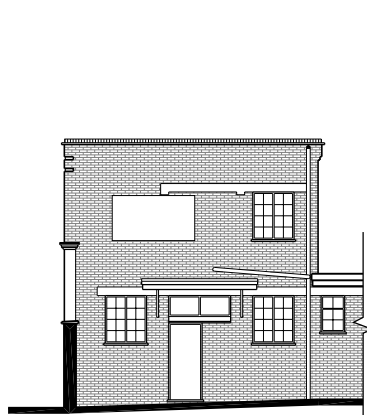


GROUND FLOOR PLAN





EASTERN ELEVATION (MAGDALENELANE)



NORTHERN ELEVATION



WESTERN ELEVATION (COURTYARD)

**KEY**

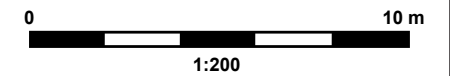


Figure 4: Existing Elevations

Project: 2 Magdalene Lane, Taunton

Date: 3/5/2018

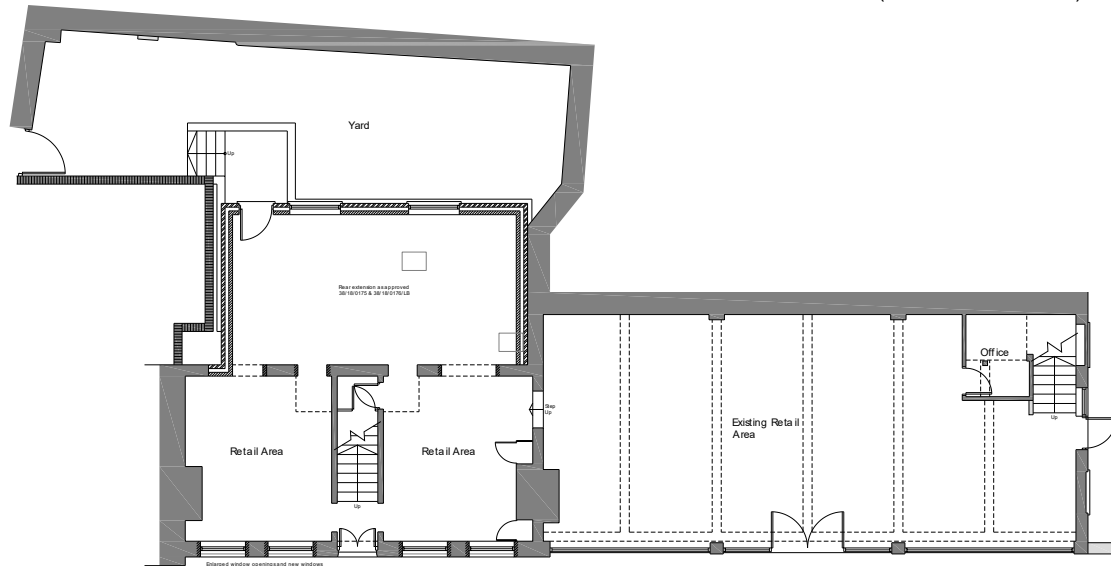
Job No: 60395

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APPLICATION SITE

EASTERN ELEVATION (MAGDALENELANE)



GROUND FLOOR PLAN



**KEY**

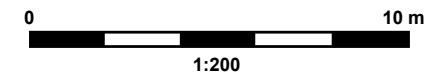


Figure 5: Proposed Ground Floor Plan & Eastern Elevation.

Project: 2 Magdalene Lane, Taunton

Date: 13/09/18

Job No: 60258

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