

# Archaeological Building Recording Services

## **An Archaeological Standing Building Survey. The George Hotel, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire. (NGR SK 75123 19185)**

**On Behalf of Queensbridge Homes Ltd**



ABRS Report No 2014-GHML

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**The George Hotel,**

**Melton Mowbray,**

**Leicestershire.**

**(NGR SK 75123 19185)**

**On Behalf of Queensbridge Homes Ltd**

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## An Archaeological Standing Building Survey of the Former George Hotel, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire (NGR SK 75123 19185).

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## **An Archaeological Standing Building Survey of the Former George Hotel, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire (NGR SK 75123 19185).**

Gerwyn Richards

### **Summary**

*This document is an archaeological standing building survey of the former George Hotel, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire (SK 75123 19185), commissioned from Archaeological Building Recording Services (ABRS) by Queensbridge Homes Ltd in advance of the proposed conversion of the building to residential and commercial use.*

*The George Hotel is an 18th century coaching inn it was extended in the mid 19th century and became one of the most prestigious hotels in the town. There are three clear phases; the westernmost bay is 18th century with potentially earlier features, most notably chamfered and stopped beams and a stone-built cellar. In the mid 19th century the hotel was extended to the east and the characteristic carriage arch was built. In the late 19th or early 20th century this eastern bay was extended to the north following the demolition of earlier stabling. The eastern range also contains faint traces of a potentially early 19th century building, possibly the building absorbed during the extension.*

*Repeated modernisation, re-modelling and extensions has left a disjointed building which is difficult to accurately date based upon the physical evidence alone.*

*The archaeological building recording survey provides a permanent visual (drawn & photographic) and descriptive record of the building in its current state. The archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council Museums Service, under the accession number X.A74.2014.*

### **1. Introduction**

Archaeological Building Recording Services (ABRS) were commissioned by Queensbridge Homes Ltd to undertake an archaeological standing building survey of the former George Hotel, High Street, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire (SK 75123 19185 (*Figures 1 & 2*)). Planning permission has been granted for the conversion of the building to residential and commercial use. The building is a traditional coaching inn, believed to date from the mid to late 18th century, and located within the historic core of the town. The Principal Planning Archaeologist of Leicestershire County Council, as advisor to Melton District Council, has recommended that an archaeological standing building survey to English Heritage Level 2 as defined in *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (English Heritage 2006) be carried out prior to the commencement of any proposed works. The building is Grade II listed and located within the Melton Mowbray Conservation Area.

The archaeological building recording survey addressed the requirements detailed in the letter of advice (attached to planning application No 12/00145/FUL) and followed the Written Scheme of Investigation for Historic Building Inspection & Recording (2014-GHML\_WSI). The project followed the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct*, and adhered to

their *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures* (2008).



**Figure 1**  
Site Location

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The George Hotel dates from the mid 18th century with 19th and 20th century alterations. The building was listed in 1950 (ID No 426195). The listed building description describes it thus:

*Late C18. Facade rendered white. Slate roof. 3 storeys. 5 windows, sashes with glazing bars. Ground floor has reproduction leaded casements. Centre carriageway arch to rear with modern canopy above. Notice about post horses painted on the beam across this entrance dates from coaching period. No 4, Nos 6 and 8 The George Hotel) Nos 10 and 12 form a group with No 5, Nos 9 to 21 (odd), Nos 11A, Coach House at No 19 and No 1 Wilton Place.*

Melton Mowbray has Saxon origins and contains significant medieval occupation, including Anne of Cleves House, built originally in the 14th century as a dwelling house for the town parsons. Following the Dissolution of the Monasteries the building passed to Henry VIII who granted the property to Thomas Cromwell. It is thought Cromwell lived only briefly in the house at around 1540. Following the divorce of Anne and Henry, the King granted her



properties and the title Lady Anne, the building now known as Anne of Cleves House was one of these. However, it is unlikely that Anne ever stayed at the house. The parish church of St Mary's is largely 13th to 15th century in date, however, the stonework on the lowest sections of the tower which includes Norman windows, dates from c. 1170. There was almost certainly an Anglo-Saxon church on the site before the Norman church. Hoskins describes St Mary's as the "*largest and stateliest parish church in Leicestershire*".

The George Hotel was built in the mid to late 18th century as a coaching inn; such inns became common from the mid 17th century. Coaching Inns were an integral part of the transport network of the period, the inns stabled horses for the stagecoaches and mail coaches as well as providing food and lodging for passengers. Coaching Inns were, by and large located on the newly established Turnpikes either within established settlements or at junctions, the 18th century alone saw the passing of more than 1,007 Turnpike Acts. Prior to the Acts the upkeep of the roads were the business of local parishes, the Turnpikes Acts allowed them to raise tolls on users of the roads, the money was then to be used for the maintenance and upkeep of the roads. The Leicester to Melton Mowbray Turnpike was in operation by 1764 and the first post coach to Leicester ran in 1792. The current A607 follows the route of the original Turnpike, prior to 1764 the Melton road followed the Wreake valley, a route prone to flooding, and the Turnpike was built on higher ground to avoid this risk. Although not directly on the Turnpike, The George Hotel, with its prominent location on the High Street would have been the first inn coaches travelling north from Leicester would have reached. Further Turnpikes left Melton, heading north west towards Nottingham and south east towards Uppingham, in all there were four toll gates in Melton Mowbray.

The late 18th century saw a period of intensive development and rebuilding within the town, it is almost certain that the George Hotel was built at this time, it is not clear, however, whether the Hotel was a new build or an enlargement and aggrandisement of an existing inn. The earliest reference to the George Hotel appears in the Universal Directory, Leicestershire and Rutland 1791 where a Robert Skerrit is listed as the inn keeper. During the early 19th century the George was briefly known as the George & Talbot Coaching Inn (Willis 2009). Pigot's Leicestershire Directory (1822-23) also lists the George Hotel as the George & Talbot. Peter Geesing was the inn keeper. The earliest map to record the inn is John Wood's Plan of Melton Mowbray, drawn in 1839 (*Figure 2*). The building is identified with the number 6; the associated map key identifies number 6 as the George Hotel, suggesting by 1839, Talbot had been dropped from the title.

Wood's Plan clearly records the George Hotel as fronting High Street to the south, the outline of the inn is drawn in a thicker line (as are all the other inns & taverns on the map). The George occupies the south westernmost corner of the current plot, to the east is an alley leading to a yard surrounded by a range of outbuildings, it is unclear whether these buildings belong to the George Hotel, however, it is likely that these buildings are stabling and store rooms for the inn. Also it is unclear as to whether the building immediately to the east of the alley is part of the George or a separate building all together. It is clear, however, that the carriage arch has yet to be built.

White's Directory of Leicestershire 1846 lists the George Hotel as "*George Hotel & Posting House*", the landlord was Thomas Watson. It is clear, therefore, that by 1839 the George housed the mail coaches. The Post Office Directory of 1848 again lists the George as a hotel and posting house, Thomas Watson was still the landlord. In Slater's Directory of

Leicestershire and Rutland published in 1850, the George is described as “*George Hotel, Commercial and Posting*”.



**Figure 2**  
John Wood's Plan of Melton Mowbray (1839).

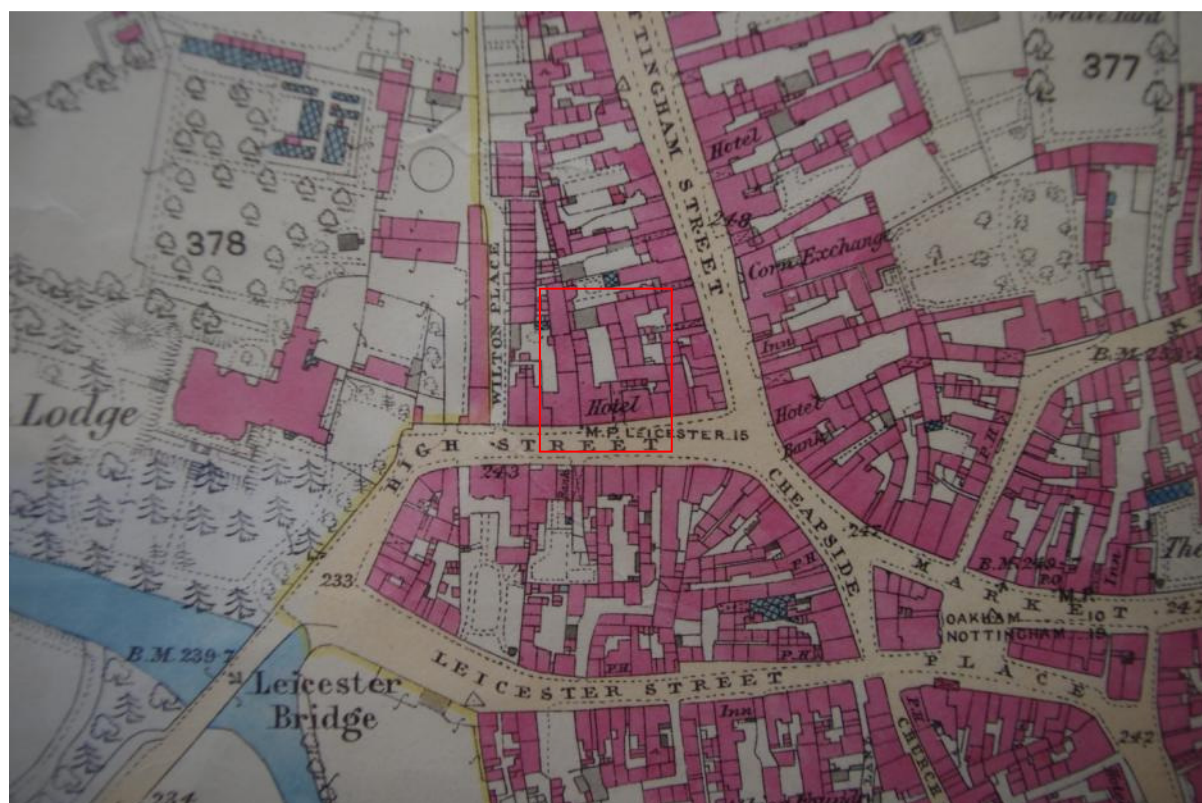
Kelly's Directory of Leicestershire published in 1876 again lists the George Hotel as a posting house. By this time the landlord was an Alfred Childs. Childs is also recorded as keeping the Bell & Swan public house on Cornhill, suggesting he was a man of some substance at the time. Childs was again listed as the landlord at both the George Hotel and the Bell & Swan in 1881.

In 1884 the first edition Ordnance Survey covering Melton Mowbray was published (ROLLR Ref XX.5 (*Figure 3*)). The George Hotel is clearly recorded as “*Hotel*”, but not named. The hotel is similar in appearance to that recorded in 1839, but there are, however some significant differences. The carriage arch is clearly recorded, so it is clear that the arch dates to the early 19th century, it is also likely that the building to the east of the alley is now part of the hotel. The map suggests that the hotel had undergone significant alteration and expansion between 1839 and 1884. By the 1880s Melton was thriving due to its association with hunting and the new railways brought in large numbers of paying visitors and the town had a large number of other hotels, a further five hotels and inns are recorded in figure 3 alone. At the time Melton was also famous for horse racing, the most famous meeting was probably the Croxton Park Races which began in the early 19th century and remained a permanent fixture in the hunting calendar until the outbreak of World war One. The Croxton Park Jockey Club held its annual meetings at the George Hotel; these meetings were described as the height of fashion at the time. The 1846 Croxton Park Races was reported as being one of the largest crowds ever. Thousands of people arrived in Melton, and records show the hotels, clubs and houses were full to bursting. It is reported that goods traffic was



banned from the railways allowing more passenger coaches to arrive and drays laden with beer were “*piling into town*”. It was likely that given its status as well as its prominent location the George was thriving and had the capital to carry out these works.

There are a number of alterations apparent with the outbuildings to the rear of the hotel, most notably the rear east-west aligned range. In the previous map this is a single large building; by 1884 it is two smaller buildings with a possible open yard between. There is also an unusual range of four rectangular bays to the north east of the carriage arch; it is unclear whether these are domestic or outbuildings, or even possibly privies.



**Figure 3**  
First Edition Ordnance Survey XX.5 (1888).  
1:2500

By 1888 the George hotel had changed hands and was now kept by John Selby, in Kelly's Directory he is listed as John Selby – “*Farmer and George Commercial Hotel and Posting House*”. Selby is again listed in the 1891 edition; however, he is no longer listed as a farmer.

By 1904 the hotel had again changed hands and was now kept by William Henry Sampey, the hotel is now simply described as “*The George Hotel*”, the hotel is no longer a posting house. Also in 1904 the second edition Ordnance Survey was published (ROLLR Ref XX.5 (*Figure 4*)). The hotel itself remains largely as it was recorded by the first edition, with only limited changes, most notably the unusual range of four outbuildings to the north east of the coach arch appear to have been replaced by a single range.

The outbuildings to the north have also undergone some change, the northernmost east – west range is now, once again a single building, but at least part of the smaller building to the west

recorded in figure 3 still remains. The north – south aligned ranges can, based upon their appearance in figure 4, be identified with certainty as stabling.



**Figure 4**  
Second Edition Ordnance Survey XX.5 (1904).  
1:2500

By 1912 the George Hotel was kept by Henry E. Rippin, who was also listed as a spirit merchant at 21 High Street. By 1916, Rippin had moved to the Black Horse public house and there is no mention of the George Hotel. It is possible that by this time the social changes brought about by World War One were beginning to be felt in Melton and the George Hotel had lost some of its previous status.

Following World War One, the George Hotel is again listed by Kelly's Directories; in both 1922 and 1925 the hotel was kept by Mrs W.E Goddard. By 1932 the hotel had changed hands; an "R.t McClelland" is listed as being the manager. The listing of a manager suggests the hotel was now owned by a third party, probably a brewery and McClelland was employed as a manager.

The third edition Ordnance Survey published in 1930 (ROLLR Ref XX.5 (*Figure 5*)) records the hotel largely as it currently stands. Again, the only significant alterations have occurred to the rear outbuildings. At least one bay of the westernmost north – south range has been demolished creating access to Wilton Place, probably reflecting the growth of motor cars rendering the carriage arch obsolete as a vehicle entrance. This has also created a single isolated building in the north westernmost corner of the plot. The easternmost north – south range has also been significantly truncated, leaving at most two bays of the original buildings.





**Figure 5**  
Third Edition Ordnance Survey XX.5 (1930).  
1:2500

By 1941, the George Hotel was again under new management; Kelly's Directory lists a Mr and Mrs Alec C. Maher at the hotel. Given the number of airfields in the vicinity of Melton during World War Two it is likely that the George was again busy. The final historic reference to the hotel comes in the Leicestershire Trades Directory for 1953-54. The proprietess is a Mrs D.M and the hotel is listed as being AA and HRA, fully licensed, with garage and accommodation. Meals were also provided for non-residents.

During the later years of the 20th century the hotel became part of the Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries (W&DB) estate. An amalgamation of three local Wolverhampton businesses: Banks & Company, George Thompson & Sons of The Dudley and Victoria Breweries, and Charles Colonel Smith's brewery at the Fox Brewery, Wolverhampton formed in 1890. Through a series of acquisitions and mergers W&DB became Marstons Inns & Taverns in 2007. The hotel was closed in 2011.



**Figure 6**  
Plan of the proposed development area in Red.  
(Provided by client. Not to Scale).

## 2. Aims and Methodology

The specific objectives of the standing building survey were as follows:

- To provide a written, drawn and photographic record of the building prior to its permitted conversion.
- To ensure the long term preservation of the information through deposition of the record and a summary written report with an appropriate depository.
- The site based element of the Historic Building Recording programme involved the production of measured survey drawings and the completion of photographic and written records.
- Desk-based research included the analysis of readily available documentary and cartographic sources including Leicestershire Records Office (ROLLR).

*Orientation:* The axis of the building is orientated approximately east to west (*Figure 6*), with the principal elevation, facing the High Street to the south. Where the terms 'left', 'right', 'front' and 'back' etc are used in the report, this is in relation to this principal elevation as viewed from the High Street. The building consists of three principal elements, a letter prefix has been allocated to each building as part of the historic building recording and a number prefix has been added for significant partitions where required.

All historic maps are reproduced with north to top of page, following Ordnance Survey standard unless indicated otherwise with appropriate north arrow and key.

As far as is known, no previous historic building recording has been undertaken of the building.

The site visits were carried out by Gerwyn Richards on May 14th, 15th and 16th 2014.



**Figure 7**  
Principal Phases & Divisions.  
(Not to Scale)

### 3. Description of the Buildings

The George Hotel is located on the north side of the High Street; it consists of the hotel building itself, the principal elevation of which fronts High Street. To the rear (north) are two further buildings.

#### 3.1 *Building A*

Building A is located in the north westernmost corner of the proposed development area (*Figure 38*), it is a painted brick-built single storey building with a monopitch corrugated concrete asbestos roof. There are multiple phases of brickwork visible on the external elevations indicating multiple building phases. The lowest courses consist of 2 ½ inch



handmade bricks suggesting these courses are early 19th century in date, the upper courses, although painted appear to be Fletton bricks and likely to be mid 20th century in date.

Internally the building consist of two un-equal bays, the partition wall consists of two clear phases. Again the lower courses are 2 ½ inch handmade bricks, almost certainly early 19th or possibly even late 18th century in date, the upper courses are late 19th or early 20th century machine made bricks. There is a blocked arch (*Figures 37 & 20*), approximately 1030mm high (above current floor level) in the partition wall, the infill bricks are again 2 ½ inch bricks, these bricks could have been reused or the arch could have been blocked in the early 19th century. The westernmost wall of the southern bay is built of the same 2 ½ inch bricks seen in the partition wall, there are a further two blocked openings (*Figure 37*), again low level approximately 1100mm above the current floor level. These openings have timber lintels and are again blocked with 2 ½ inch bricks. There is no discernible bond visible in the brickwork.

The northernmost bay is rendered internally with modern cement render concealing any potential historical or architectural features; the roof is carried on modern deal joists and is of no historical significance.

Early cartographic sources, especially the first edition Ordnance Survey (*Fig. 3*) appear to show a small narrow linear range occupying the westernmost part of the current footprint of building A, there is no clear indication as to what this building was, however, and it does have the appearance of a pig sty. The physical evidence including the three low level openings in the southern bay appear to confirm this. There is no clear evidence of the origins of the northernmost bay, however the shallow step up towards the centre of the floor along with the two wide openings creating a passage along the east wall is similar in appearance to a cow hovel, it is possible that the building may have been used for this purpose in the late 19th or early 20th century. An 1888 trade directory lists the landlord of the George Hotel as a farmer.

### **3.2 Building B**

Building B forms the westernmost boundary of the George Hotel, although attached to the main element of the hotel, there is no ground floor access between the two and only limited, modern first floor access (*Figures 38 & 39*); this along with cartographic sources indicates the building was originally a separate element and possibly under separate ownership.

Building B is a two storey painted brick building with a Welsh slate roof, there is a gable stack to the north. There are a number of phases of brickwork apparent, clearest of which is visible on the northern gable, the ground floor is built of 9 ½ x 2 ¼ x 4 inch handmade bricks, as is the western wall, the gable wall at first floor level is built of 3 inch machine made bricks, clearly later in date (*Figure 12*). Early cartographic sources (*Figs. 3 & 4*) indicate the building originally extended to the north and buildings A and B were originally part of the same range. There is a blocked door in the easternmost corner of the gable wall as well as a number of projecting joists (*Figure 12*). The joists indicate the missing bay originally had a first floor. The west facing long elevation is unpainted and has a number of small rectangular window openings, including some blocked openings. The windows have blue cant brick sills and soldier brick heads, the style and regimented layout of the openings gives the elevation an almost industrial appearance.

The east facing long elevation is painted brick and is much altered (*Figures 10 & 43*), the ground floor is open fronted, the lintel is a steel rolled steel joist (RSJ), confirming the opening is a later insertion, probably added in the mid 20th century as cars were replacing horse drawn vehicles and the hotel offered garaging. The first floor has two inserted window openings, probably enlargements of earlier windows with modern timber casement windows. The brickwork is 9 ½ x 2 ¼ x 4 inch handmade bricks laid in an English Garden Wall Bond (one course of header bricks to four courses of stretcher bricks). There are two probable bridging beams visible in the external walls as well as repaired brickwork suggesting the location of other removed bridging beams.

Internally building B was originally a single bay building, the current partition wall is modern, and there is no evidence of fireplaces on the ground floor confirming a non-domestic use. Within the northernmost bay the ceiling timbers are exposed; the floor is gypsum carried on two chamfered bridging beams with stepped stops and a deal axial beam, probably inserted, there are two further bridging beams, both deal; the scantling is similar to the axial beam, the three are likely to be contemporary. The stepped stop was common throughout the 17th century especially in rooms of lesser importance and there are few dated examples from the early 18th century (Hall). It is possible, that if not re-used this part of the George Hotel may date to this era, the earliest cartographic sources (*Fig. 2*) confirms that this western bay is likely to be the earliest part of the hotel. The southernmost bay has been further subdivided into two smaller rooms; the southernmost brick-built wall partially blocks one of the windows on the west wall indicating it is a later insertion, although the brickwork itself may be early 19th century (*Figure 38*). Above the modern suspended ceiling is the original ceiling structure, it is identical in both material and appearance to that of the northern bay.

Access to the second floor is via a modern staircase rising from left of centre of the building. The second floor has three modern partition walls as well as a shallow chimney breast on the northernmost gable. Modern decoration conceals any potentially significant historical or architectural features. A limited view through the modern suspended ceiling indicates that the second floor was originally open to above the eaves with tongued and grooved cladding; there is a circular vent as well as a glazed loft hatch.

### **3.3 Building C**

Building C is the main body of the George Hotel and consists of three distinct elements; C1, the westernmost bay, C2, the easternmost bay and C3, the north westernmost wing, to the rear of C2 (*Figure 7*).

Externally the principal High Street elevation is rendered with a pediment and a rendered plinth (*Figures 8 & 40*). The rear elevations are all painted brick. The roofs are Welsh slate with a number of hips; there are also a number of brick-built chimneys including two large chimneys above C1. There is a central carriage arch over which there is a modern, although not un-attractive canopy (*Figure 13*). To the right is a pedestrian door with an attractive arched hood carried on simple geometric consoles, a design common to the mid 18th century. The door itself was concealed by security shutters, but its height suggests the presence of an over-door light or fanlight. The large ground floor window between the carriage arch and door also has a flat hood with the same consoles. The windows of the western bay contain no such flourishes and may reflect the origin of the two bays as separate buildings as shown in figure 2.

## C1

C1 is likely to be the earliest element of the George Hotel and occupies the south westernmost corner of the current building. It is L shaped with two bays fronting the High Street and a projecting rear wing consisting of two bays to the north of the westernmost bay (*Figure 38*). As expected with a recently closed public house there is extensive modern decor which is likely to be concealing earlier features. There are, however a number of exposed features still remaining. Most significantly are the number of exposed beams, the majority of which have the same stepped stops seen in building B, one of which is in the front servery (*Figure 17*) indicating that C1 and B are contemporary and likely to be 17th or 18th century in date. There are two further, chamfered, but un-stopped beams in the rear wing. Also within the rear wing there is a projecting chamfered beam visible above the servery denoting the possible location of a removed wall. The rear wing also contains a large bow window overlooking the yard, possibly an original feature.

There is a fireplace on the east wall of the front servery, although much altered the size of the fireplace suggests it may have originally been an inglenook, there is a fire window on each side of the current fireplace. This fireplace vents to the large off centre chimney seen externally. There is a second chimney breast, but without any sign of a fireplace forming the partition between the front and rear serverys.

There is a range of four cellars below C1, three below the frontage, and a fourth to the rear (*Figure 36*). Two of the cellars have extensive stone elements, the easternmost frontage cellar is exclusively stone-built and has an unusual arch in the north east corner (*Figures 14 & 15*), the origin of which is unclear; however it is likely to have originally served some structural purpose within the earlier building. The rearmost cellar has brick vault (*Figure 16*), the others have timber-built ceilings. Access is via a central staircase and there is also a barrel ramp off the carriage arch.

First floor access is via a dog leg stair with half landing in the centre of the bay. There are two principal bays with a number of modern and potentially 19th century partitions (*Figure 38*). There are two large fireplaces within the frontage rooms; the westernmost is parallel with the High Street, while the easternmost is perpendicular to the High Street. There is a full width underdrawn bridging beam within both frontage rooms and a second, exposed chamfered and stopped beam in the north west room. This beam has the same stepped stops seen on beams on the ground floor. The rooms have been altered and upgraded in the modern era, leaving little of historical or architectural significance.

The second floor is similar in layout as the first (*Figure 39*), there are a number of features indicating changes in use including a blocked door between the two principal frontage rooms and no modern access to the north easternmost room. There is also a blocked window visible externally on the rear wall of the north westernmost room.

There are two underdrawn beams visible in the westernmost frontage room, it is likely that at least one of which is a tie beam for a roof truss, being only 1350mm apart, it would be unlikely that both are tie beams. The floors are gypsum, no doubt reflecting the lower status of these second floor rooms. The frontage windows are recessed six over six sash windows, the thickness of the glazing bars suggests a mid 19th century date; the windows were probably added when the hotel was, according to cartographic sources enlarged in the mid 19th century. Further evidence of which could be seen with the exposed quoins in the south

west corner (*Figure 30*). The quoins were originally external features of number 10 High Street, the presence of the quoins inside the George indicates the second floor was most likely a later edition after number 10 was built.

There was only limited access to the attic space available, the roof appeared to be a simple construction of coupled rafters (*Figures 33 & 34*). The uniformity of the rafters suggests the roof is a more recent element of the building, probably mid 19th century in date.

## C2

The ground floor of C2 is much altered leaving very little of historical or architectural significance. C2 does, however contain the carriage arch which is the defining feature of the George Hotel. Within the carriage arch are four chamfered and stopped beams, the rearmost of which is sign written with “*Licensed To Let Post Horses*”, a clear link to the hotel’s past (*Figure 19*). The stops are not uniform; one beam has run out stops while another has scroll stop or lamb’s tongue stop. This lack of uniformity may indicate the beams are reused, cartographic sources already confirm the carriage arch is a mid 19th century addition to the hotel.

Also within the carriage arch is a board mounted on the west wall, although not obvious the board may also be a remnant of the hotel’s coaching past.

The easternmost bay is entirely modernised, having, until closure been the modern hotel’s main bar and servery. Only limited remains of mid to late 19th century plaster cornice survive on the front wall and west wall. There is also a likely chimney breast on this west wall.

Again there is a cellar below C2, it consists of single brick vault perpendicular to the High Street (*Figure 36*), access is via modern timber stair off the carriage arch.

First floor access is via a central open well staircase; the first floor consists of three frontage rooms and two rear rooms and the stairwell, all off a central spine corridor (*Figure 38*). To the north of the stair well is a light well. Off the first landing of the staircase is a WC, missing plaster on the northern wall shows a blocked opening, indicating this was originally a passage to one of the earlier rear ranges.

The frontage rooms appear to be the main residential rooms and were originally finished to a high standard with arched alcoves, deep skirting boards (*Figure 21*) and large fireplaces (now blocked). The broomhandle beading on the chimney breast indicates the finish is original. The frontage windows are recessed eight over eight sash windows. Interestingly, there is no evidence of a fire in the westernmost frontage room, although there is an adjacent chimney in the west wall. Immediately to the north there is another room, the southern and eastern walls are modern studwork indicating this room has been re-modelled in order to accommodate the corridor to the more recent rear wing. The room does however contain a chimney breast indicating there was originally a domestic room here.

In the north easternmost room there are two underdrawn bridging beams as well as a chimney breast on the east wall, indicating this was originally a domestic room also. On the north wall there is a blocked Tudor arch window opening (*Figure 38*); exposed bricks below the arch

are 2 ½ inch handmade bricks suggesting this wall is early 19th century in date. The blocked window also indicates the wall was originally an exterior wall.

The second floor is similar in layout to the first floor; three frontage rooms, but only a single rear room and the stairwell. The two eastern front rooms are accessed via two steps from the spine corridor, this change in levels suggests the two may not be contemporary, a fact supported by the frontage windows which are at floor level in both the east rooms (*Figure 29*). It is likely that these rooms were added later, most likely in the mid 19th century when the building was extended and probably re-roofed. The floors are gypsum, perhaps reflecting the lower status of these top floor rooms.

Again there was limited access to the attic space. The roof was again uniform coupled rafters. There was however a single earlier tie beam still *in-situ*, the empty mortise for a principal rafter (*Figure 35*) confirms this was originally a tie pie for a truss, and most likely part of the original roof structure.

### C3

C3 is the north easternmost wing of the George Hotel, abutting the rear of C2 (*Figure 37*). Cartographic evidence indicates the wing is late 19th or possibly early 20th century in date. Externally the visible elevations of the wing are built of 3 inch x 9 inch x 4 inch machine made bricks, supporting the cartographic sources.

The ground floor contains modern kitchens, toilets and a plant room, as a result there is nothing of historical or architectural significance to be seen.

First floor access is via the staircase in C2 and two corridors from the spine corridor. The floor consists of three principal rooms in an L shape. The north westernmost room was until closure another kitchen and as such contains nothing of historical or architectural significance. The north easternmost room contains a rusticated modern exposed beam ceiling, this however is modern, the original early 20th century ceiling can be seen in the ceiling void above the suspended ceiling.

The southernmost room however does contain a number of significant features and is possibly a remnant of an earlier phase. There are two chimney breasts, one on the east wall and a second, awkwardly located on the north wall (*Figure 38*). The easternmost chimney has a partially concealed fire surround, the lintel of which is exquisitely carved with rural scenes and cherubs (*Figures 22 & 23*), almost certainly Arts & Crafts inspired. This however is a later feature, probably late 19th or early 20th century in date.

Potentially early 19th century features include the door on the south wall (currently the modern fire escape). The door case is wide with corner squares of concentric rings (*Figure 24*); such a design was common in the early 19th century and was frequently used in entrance halls of first floor landings (Hall). There are also two eight over eight sash windows (one on the north wall & the second on the west gable), both of which have the same moulded surround and corner squares the eastern window case has retained the plain square block at its base (*Figures 25 & 26*). An external examination of both windows reveal that both have flush sash boxes (*Figure 28*), although not accurate flush sash boxes are normally considered to be early 19th century, this along with the apparently early 19th century window case suggests a tentative date for both the windows and the bay as a whole.



Second floor access is again via the staircase in C2. The second floor consists of a single east - west bay, the partitions are modern, the floor is gypsum and there is a chimney breast on the east wall. There is a vaulted ceiling built of plaster and timber as well as a second arched ceiling along the southern wall (*Figures 31 & 32*). The vaulted ceiling has clearly been used to maximise headroom within the hipped roof, however choosing to vault the ceiling along with the use of plaster and timber seems excessively complicated, further complicated by the second arch to the south, underdrawing the roof would have been a much simpler undertaking. The complicated vaulting may be another example of the aggrandisement of the hotel in the 19th century.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The George Hotel began as an 18th century coaching inn and has undergone numerous phases of remodelling and extension. By the 19th century the inn was one of the most prestigious in Melton and hosted the annual meetings of the Croxton Park Jockey Club, meetings described as the height of fashion. The hotel was also licensed for post horses and mail passed through there. Following the demise of horse-based pursuits and horse-drawn vehicles the hotel underwent a transformation and began catering for those touring and travelling by car and remained a key public building in the town until its demise and eventual closure in the early years of the 21st century.

Both the physical evidence and cartographic sources indicate that the westernmost bay is likely to be the earliest part of the building. Some of the beams within this part of the building may be earlier – dating from the 17th century. The hotel was later expanded to the east incorporating at least parts of the building already standing here and during which time the characteristic carriage arch was built. The uniform frontage was also most likely built at this time. The building was again extended to the north, probably replacing now redundant stables in the late 19th century.

The numerous extensions and remodelling has resulted in a somewhat confused building with isolated features of various periods, it is therefore difficult to ascertain with any certainty the true age of some parts of the building.

## 5. Archive & Publication

The site archive consists of

- 2 A1 paper sheets containing annotated plans & notes
- 1 A3 permatrace sheet containing annotated plans, profile & notes
- DVD containing 164 digital images
- 5 A4 contact sheets
- 164 Black & White negatives and contact prints
- 5 A4 photo record sheets
- 1 Unbound copy of this report

The archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council under the Accession Number X.A74. 2014.

A version of the summary (above) will be submitted to the editor of the local journal *Transactions of Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* for inclusion in the next edition.

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## 7. Colour Plates



**Figure 8**  
High Street Elevation (Looking North West).



**Figure 9**  
North Facing Elevation (Looking South).



**Figure 10**  
East Facing Elevation (Looking South West).



**Figure 11**  
West Facing Elevation (Looking South East).



**Figure 12**  
North Facing Gable of B Showing New Brickwork.



**Figure 14**  
Stone-Built Cellar Below C1.



**Figure 13**  
Carriage Arch & Canopy on High Street Elevation.



**Figure 15**  
Arch in North East Corner of Cellar.

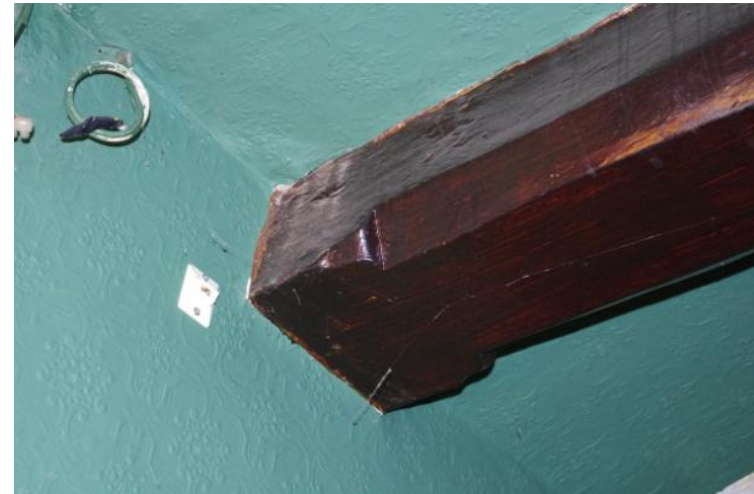




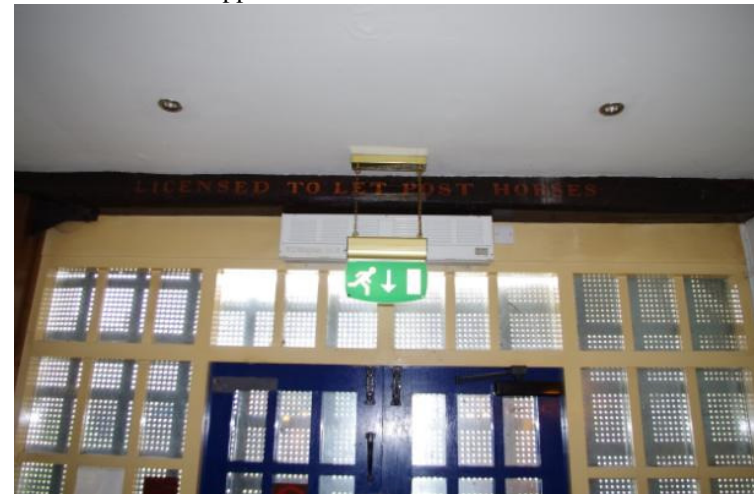
**Figure 16**  
Brick Vaulted Rear Cellar.



**Figure 18**  
Exposed Beams in Rear Range of C1.



**Figure 17**  
Chamfered and Stopped Beam in Westernmost Ground Floor Room.



**Figure 19**  
Sign Written Beam in Carriage Arch.





**Figure 20**  
Blocked Arch in Partition Wall of Building A.



**Figure 21**  
Higher Status Room, First Floor East.



**Figure 22**  
Carved Fire Surround.



**Figure 23**  
Detail of Carved Fire Surround.



**Figure 24**  
Early 19th Century Door Case.



**Figure 25**  
Sash Window With Early 19th Century Case.



**Figure 26**  
Detail of Early 19th Century Window Surround.



**Figure 27**  
Skirting Board Detail First Floor East.



**Figure 28**  
Flush Sash Window Box First Floor Rear.



**Figure 29**  
C2 Second Floor Showing Window & Floor Level.



**Figure 30**  
C1 Exposed Quoins in South Westernmost Room, Second Floor.



**Figure 31**  
C3 Vaulted Ceiling, Second Floor.





**Figure 32**  
Attic Space Showing Construction of Vaulted Ceiling.



**Figure 34**  
C2 Coupled Rafters.



**Figure 33**  
C2 Hipped Roof Showing Uniform Rafters.



**Figure 35**  
C2 Original Tie Beam Showing Empty Mortise.



**Figure 36** Cellar.



**Figure 37** Ground Floor Plan.



**Figure 38** First Floor Plan.



**Figure 39** Second Floor Plan.







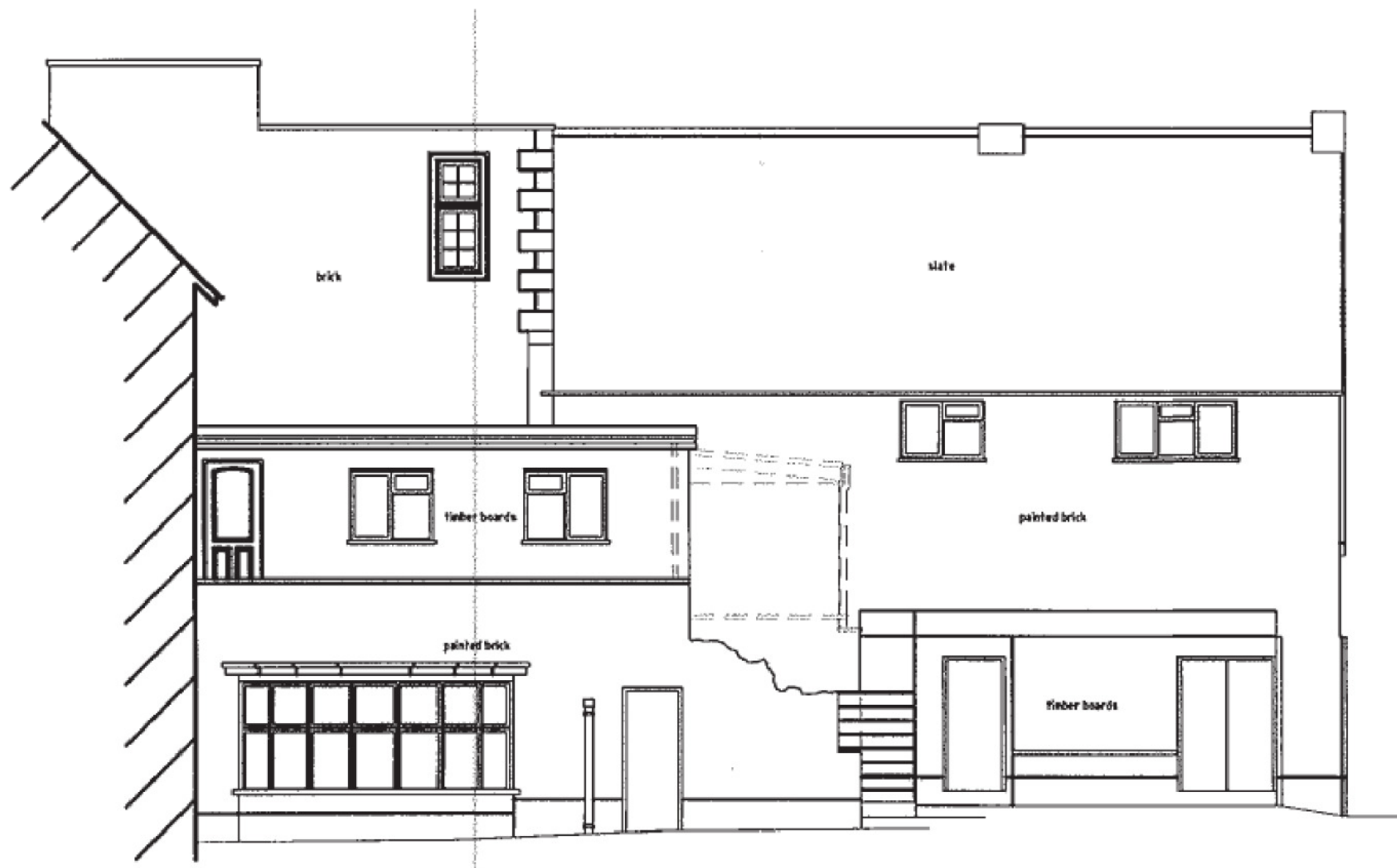
**Figure 40** High Street Elevation.  
(As Supplied by Client & Verified on Site, Not to Scale)



**Figure 41** North Facing Elevation.  
(As Supplied by Client & Verified on Site, Not to Scale)



**Figure 42** West Facing Elevation.  
(As Supplied by Client & Verified on Site, Not to Scale)



**Figure 43** East Facing Elevation.  
(As Supplied by Client & Verified on Site, Not to Scale)



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