



KDK ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

Historic Building Impact Assessment

37a Market Place
St Albans
Hertfordshire



Quality Check

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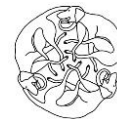
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Summary

In August 2018 KDK Archaeology Ltd carried out Historic Building Impact Assessment of 37a Market Place, St Albans, Hertfordshire to provide the heritage related information required by NPPF. The shop is part of a larger brick building that has been subdivided to provide two separate units and a restaurant at ground floor level with offices above.

The building was originally a timber framed structure, erected in the late 16th century that was subsequently refaced and reconfigured c. 1700 with further alterations in the 19th and 20th centuries. All that remains of the original fabric in 37a is the lath and plaster ceiling and south wall of the shop, and the brick north wall with blocked window within the passage leading to the rear yard.

The development proposals have been designed to impact on the historic fabric as little as possible, and will prove beneficial to the general appearance and use of the space. The reconfiguration of the entry into the rear office, which involves the creation of a door within some of the space occupied by the blocked window in the north wall will result in some loss of historic fabric. However, this would be a small percentage of the total in a space that is not accessible to the general public and the historical narrative of the wall will not be lost. Overall, it is considered that this particular proposal would have a neutral effect on the significance and setting of the building, whereas the proposals as a whole would have a positive impact.

1 Introduction

1.1 In August 2018 KDK Archaeology Ltd carried out Historic Building Impact Assessment of 37a Market Place, St Albans, Hertfordshire. The project was commissioned by Amanda May of Ampersand Associates on behalf of Molton Brown, and was carried out in response to the Archaeological Consultees comments to the application for Listed Building Consent. The relevant application reference is 5/18/1695LB.

1.2 *Planning Background*

This report has been required under the terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2018; para 189), which states:

In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. 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. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. 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.

The site is located in Archaeological Site AS.R. 52, where planning permissions may be subject to a Recording Condition as defined in the St Albans District Local Plan Review (1994).



1.3 *The Site*

Location & Description

The building is located to the west of the Old Town Hall, in the medieval core of St Albans. It is within an unparished area that lies within the administrative area of St Albans City and District Council at National Grid Reference TL14724 07262 (Fig. 1).

The building is a Grade II listed structure, which is described as follows (NHLE Number: 1103070):

All one house of earlier C18. Two storeys and attic, six windows. The high-pitched, tiled roof, which rises in the centre, has two square-headed dormers. Blue and red brick walls, part panelled and part diapered, and brick parapet. Gauged, flat red brick arches and red brick jambs to renewed sash windows in near-flush, moulded frames. Modern shop fronts on ground floor, but entrance to no. 35 has doorcase with open pediment with modillioned and dentil cornice over modified Doric order with similarly enriched cornice and fluted necking to attached columns. Fluted cornice head and patterned fanlight to door. (Fig. 2).

Proposed Development

The proposed alterations are as follows (Fig. 3):

- Replace the window to the right of the entrance with a single light
- Provide new wall linings to the shop that is then to be tiled
- Provide new ceiling to the shop
- Install new flooring to the shop
- Install new lighting, heating and plumbing to the shop
- Create a new door between the present manager's office and the passage to the right of it
- Redirect the soil pipe to facilitate the above
- Block up of the existing door to the manager's office from the shop
- Install new shelving to the manager's office
- Redecorate the tea point and the WC
- Provide air conditioning unit to the shop (future application)



Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)



Figure 2: Site location (scale 1:1250)

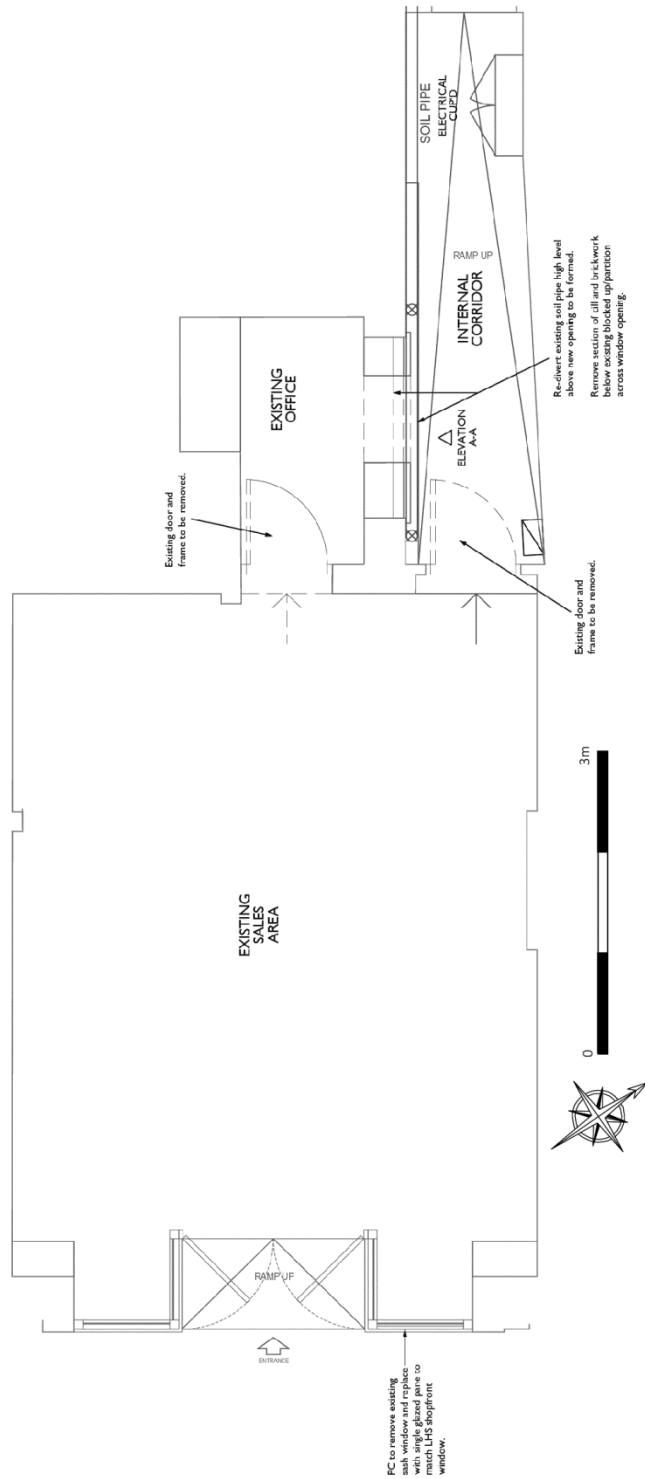


Figure 3: Proposed development plan (scale 1:75)

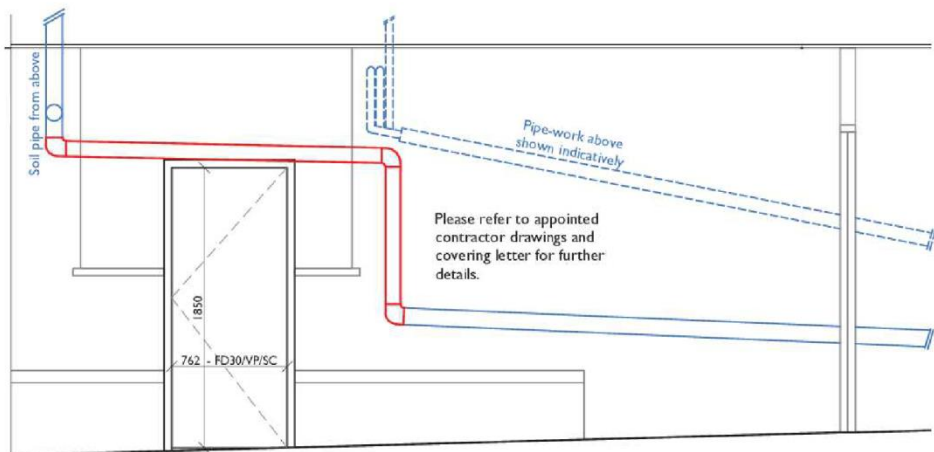
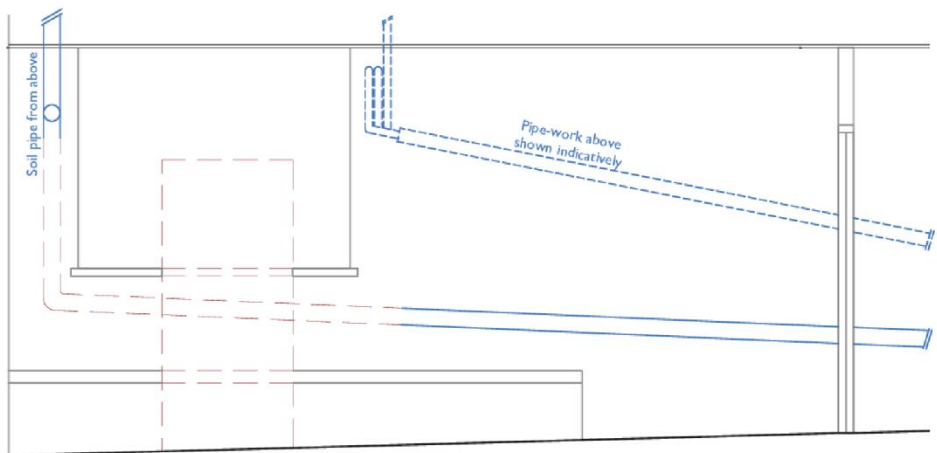


Figure 4: Proposed new opening in north wall of the office (scale 1:75)



2 Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

The aims of the study were:

- To assess the significance of the part of the building to be affected by the proposed alterations
- To assess the overall significance of the building in relation to the proposed alterations
- To assess the potential impacts on the historic fabric
- To consider the potential impact on the significance and setting of the building

2.2 Standards

The work conforms to the relevant sections of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2014) and *Standard & Guidance Notes* (CIfA 2014), to current Historic England guidelines (HE 2015, HE 2016), and to the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers East of England Region *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (ALGAO 2003).

2.3 Methods

The shop and the back of house areas were photographed and inspected to ascertain the extent of the original historic fabric and later alterations.

2.4 Constraints

The shop was recorded during business hours, which restricted what could be photographed and how. In addition, the shop forms only one part of a larger building, which could not be surveyed as a whole. However, the shop on the other side of the main entrance into the former house was also visited to assess the level of historic fabric that may have been exposed and/or impacted when alterations were recently made there.



3 Historical Background

3.1 The following section provides a summary of the readily available historical background to the site. This section has been compiled with information from the St Albans and Hertfordshire Architectural and Archaeological Society (SAHAAS) Library, the St Albans town library and KDK’s own library. The Historic Environment Record was also consulted (HER search reference 120/18).

3.2 General Background

Number 37a Market Place is located on the western side of the market, in an area which was laid out at the end of the 12th century (Niblett & Thompson 2005:275). The burgage plots on either side of the market square are still evident on present day mapping (Fig. 2), although considerable alterations have occurred within the plots themselves. Nonetheless, there are a considerable number of listed buildings within the immediate vicinity of Number 37 as can be seen in Figure 5 and Table 1 below.



Figure 5: Listed and other historic buildings in the Historic Environment Record (scale 1:2500)
Number 37 is marked by a red star

**Table 1:** Historic Buildings recorded in the HER within 250m of the site

NGR (TL)	HER No.	Period	Type	Description	Proximity to site (m)
14714 07240	15368	Medieval	BLD	'The Moot Hall', 25 Market Place, St Albans	22
14798 07272	15938	Post medieval	BLD	6 St Peter's Street, St Albans	75
14723 07220	16378	Post medieval	BLD	30-32 Market Place, St Albans	41
14752 07245	16380	Post medieval	BLD	The Town Hall, St Peter's Street, St Albans	33
14749 07185	17730	Medieval to Post medieval	BLD	The Bell, 22 Chequer Street, St Albans	80
14644 07300	30687	Post medieval	BLD	Dagnall Street Baptist Church, Upper Dagnall Street, St Albans	88
14724 07261	31213	Post medieval	BLD	31-37a Market Place, St Albans	1
Listed Buildings					
NGR (TL)	HER No.	Period	Grade	Description	Proximity to site (m)
14821 07291	1103052		II	National Westminster Bank Limited	102
14736 07290	1103045		II	No Name For This Entry	31
14689 07228	1103067		II	No Name For This Entry	47
14698 07236	1103068		II	The Kings Head	35
14731 07216	1103062		II	Premises Occupied By Uptons Ltd	45
14682 07345	1103063		II	No Name For This Entry	93
14717 07209	1103072		II	No Name For This Entry	52
14683 07189	1103111		II	No Name For This Entry	82
14713 07238	1103069		II	The Old Moot House	25
14723 07261	1103070		II	Town Hall Chambers	0
14671 07347	1174513		II	No Name For This Entry	100
14752 07246	1296135		II*	Court House (Town Hall)	32
14687 07224	1103112		II	Wellington Public House	51
14668 07198	1397581		DL	No Name For This Entry	83
14723 07216	1347172		II	No Name For This Entry	45
14705 07246	1347191		II	No Name For This Entry	23



NGR (TL)	HER No.	Period	Type	Description	Proximity to site (m)
14810 07270	1347161		II	No Name For This Entry	87
14716 07245	1347170		II	No Name For This Entry	17
14800 07270	1103051	Medieval	II	Waterend Barn	77

3.3 Structural and Historical Background

The building as a whole was inspected by JT Smith on 7th January 1988 (JT Smith Collection, Lower Dagnall St, Market Place). The following is a summary of his findings:

The building was originally timber framed and probably of late 16th century date. All that is visible of this phase of work is the brickwork on the north side of the lateral chimney stack. The original building would have consisted of a range parallel to the street and probably divided into two rooms of which the southern one had the lateral chimney stack. There is no evidence for a rear wing although there may have been one at the southern end.

The building was considerably altered c. 1700 when it was re-fronted in blue headers with red dressings. A wing was added with a central corridor that was lit from the west and a large room to the south with simple panelling and fireplace. To the west of this was a smaller room that either served as a drawing room or closet for the adjoining bed chamber. A new staircase was built to the north of the main stack. There were at this time three rooms on the street frontage with a corner fireplace heating the northernmost room.

The building was altered again in the 18th century when the parapet was built on the street frontage, replacing the original eaves. Minor alterations took place in the mid 19th century including reeded surrounds to some of the windows. The north side of the west wing may have been added c. 1900 along with the present staircase from the ground floor and a room to the north of the attic staircase.

No historical features survived in the ground floor rooms other than the entrance hall in 1988.

In addition, when work was being undertaken on the façade in 2015 it was revealed that the southern three bays are part of a 16th century timber framed house. The framing survives on the first floor as does the chimney stack and original roof. The northern two bays are also timber framed and appear to have been added in the 17th century. It was also found that the panelling of the upper floor front rooms which was subsequently papered over dated from c. 1700 when the brick façade was added (HER 31213).

The building was sold to SADC in 1963 at which time it had already been converted into three shops with offices above (Gerrard McSweeney Collection D8).

3.4 Cartographic Evidence

Although shown on maps as early as 1634, the building is only clearly depicted from the early 19th century. The 1822 town map in Clutterbuck's county history shows the building as being free standing with an entrance to the rear gardens to the south and the gardens of Number 1 St Peter's Street to the north (Fig. 6). By 1880 the entrance to the south had been formalised into a covered carriageway and a series of buildings had been constructed along the northern boundary of the property to form one side of the newly created Spencer Street (Fig. 7). By



1924 the extensive gardens to the rear of Number 37 had been built on leaving only a small yard within which the outside WCs were built by c.1962 (Figs. 8-9).

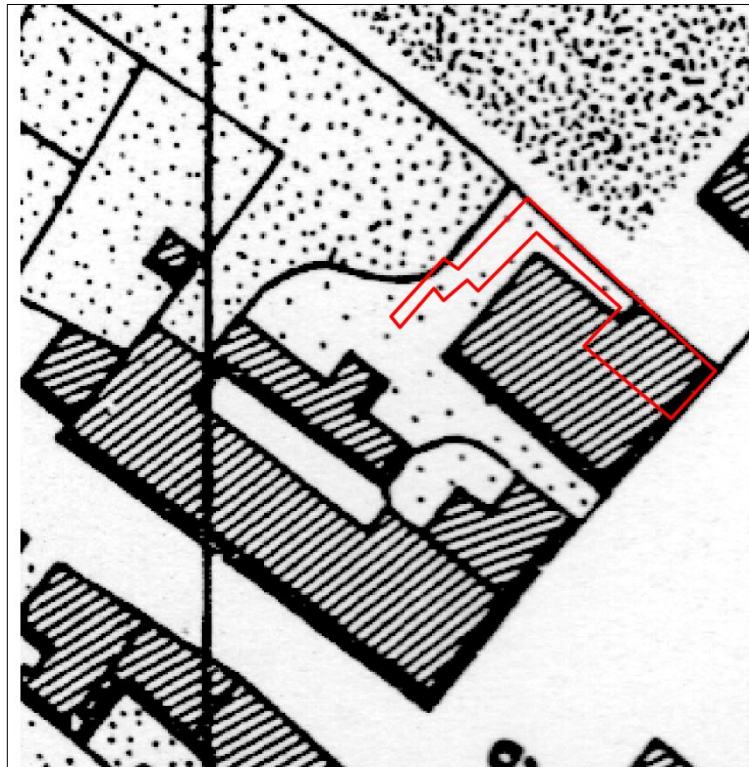


Figure 6: Extract from the 1822 town plan (scale 1:1000)

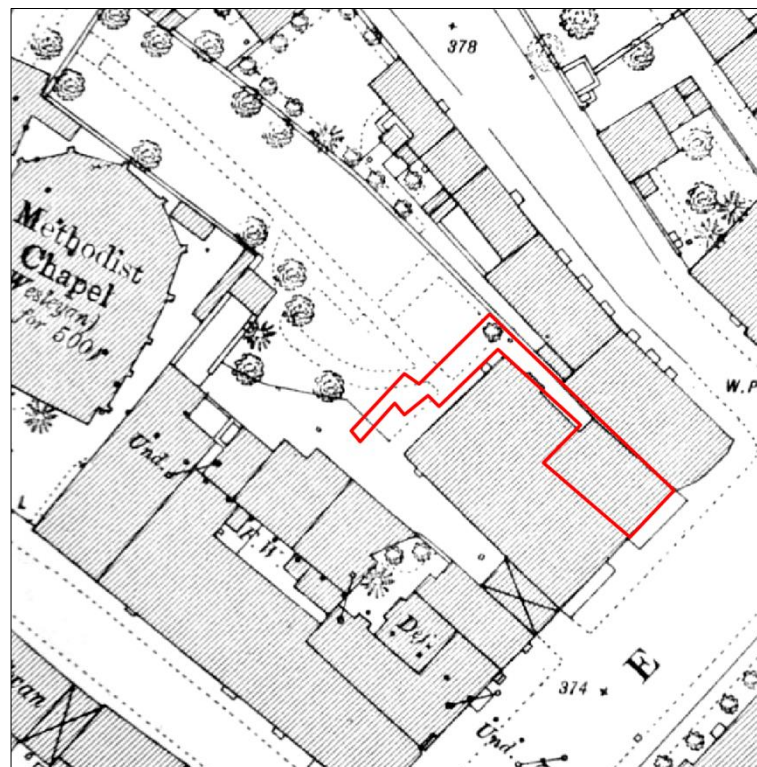


Figure 7: Extract from the 1880 Ordnance Survey map (scale 1:1000)

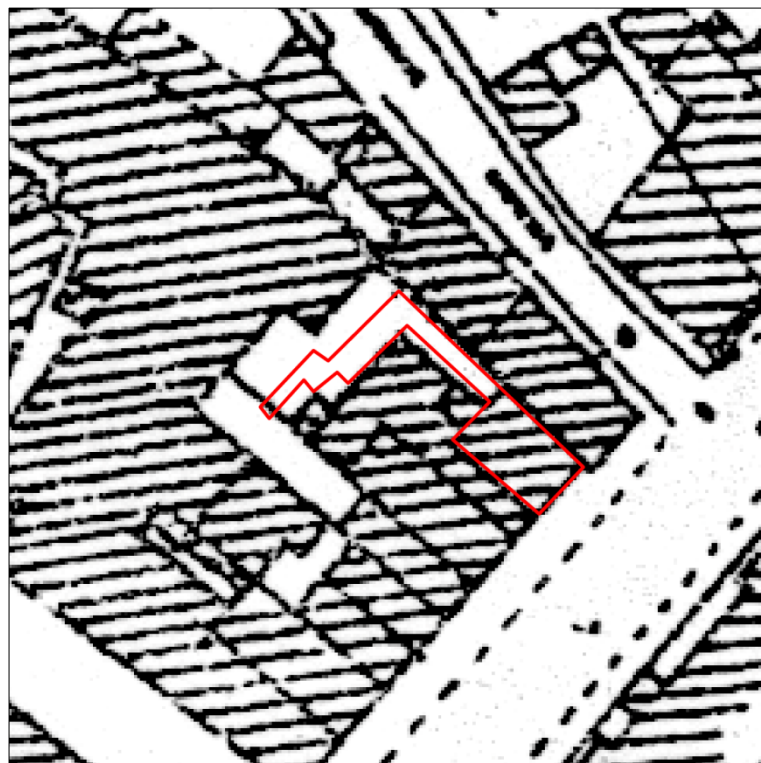


Figure 8: Extract from the 1924 Ordnance Survey map (scale 1:1000)

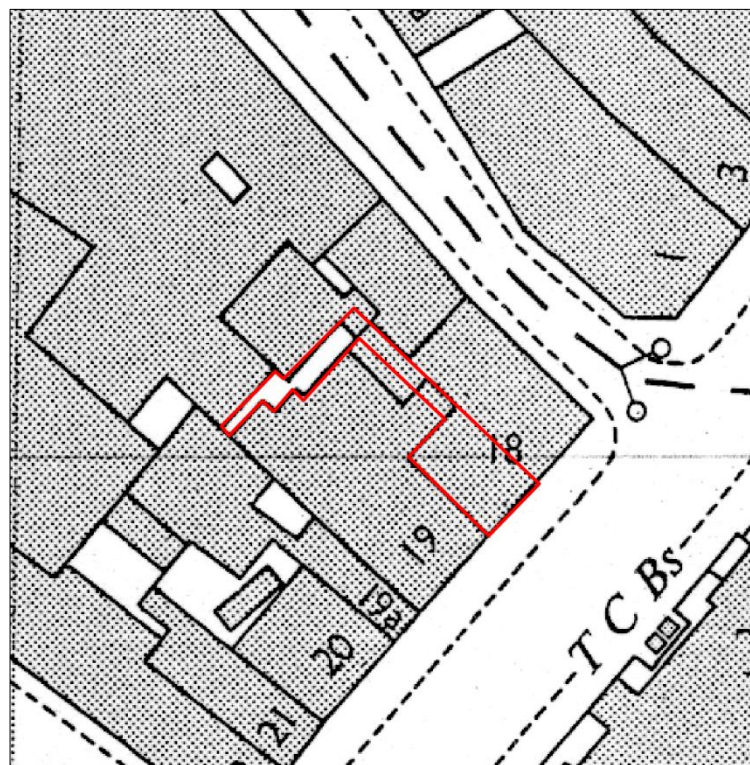


Figure 9: Extract from the 1962 Ordnance Survey map (scale 1:1000)



4 Description

4.1 General

Number 37a is located on the ground floor in the northern part of a large 17th century building. The property as a whole consists of the shop with a small office to the rear and a long passage running alongside the manager's office and beyond and that opens into an enclosed yard (Plates 1-4). At the far end of the yard is a WC. For the purposes of this report the building is considered to be aligned east-west.

4.2 Exterior

The shop front is a very rudimentary early – mid 20th century feature with a three light sash to the right of the recessed doorway and a single pane to the left (Plate 2). The fascia above the door is unadorned, but the entire architrave is likely to have once been the same as that to the left of the main door into the building. The brickwork above is typical of late 17th and early 18th century work with rubbed bricks surrounding the windows, a brick plat band above the first floor windows and, in this instance, a flat topped parapet obscuring the double pitch of the structure beyond.

4.3 Ground Floor

The interior of the shop has been completely lined so no original features are exposed (Plates 5-9). That there may be some historical fabric left of the ceiling is hinted at by the small extent of cornice that has not been covered by the lining and the hooks that would have supported lights or cables for lights (Plate 9).

The shop front has been described above and has no further details of interest on the interior aspect. It is clear, however, that it is in need of some attention.

There are two doors in the rear wall of the shop. The centrally located one opens into the manager's office, which is a very small space with shelving set into a recess to the left and another recess, albeit higher, to the right (Plates 10-11).

The door to the right opens into a passage that extends the full length of the building and opens into the enclosed yard to the rear (Plates 12-13). At the far end of the passage is a sink and tea making station. The wall to the left is clearly part of the original house as an original window with queen closers to either side survives at the eastern end although it has now been blocked (Plates 13-14). The bricks in the south wall are similar in size and form to those in the front and rear walls and some have diagonal skintlings (Plate 15).

Whereas most of the brickwork to the left of the passage is in a Flemish Bond with minor variations in places, there is a modern plinth at the base. The wall to the right is entirely modern.

4.5 Outbuilding

The WC is in a separate building at the far end of the enclosed yard, built in the late 20th century in Fletton Brick (Plates 16-17).



Plate 1: Front elevation of the building



Plate 2: Detail of shop frontage



Plate 3: Rear passage from the yard



Plate 4: View into the yard from the passage

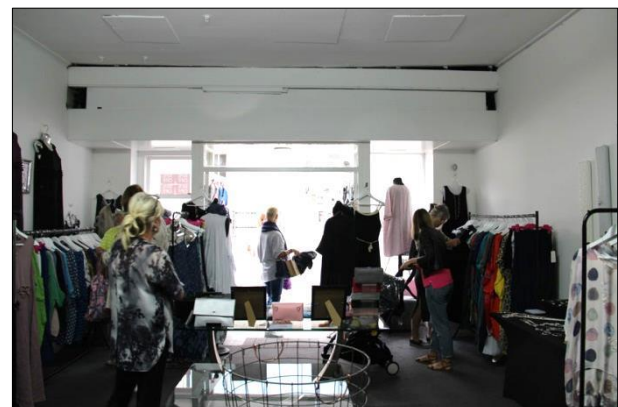


Plate 5: View towards the shop front



Plate 6: View towards the rear of the shop

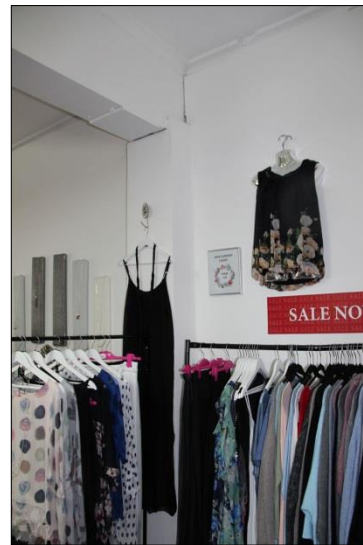


Plate 7: South wall of the shop

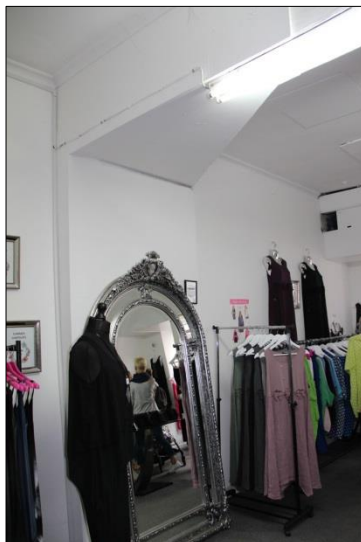


Plate 8: North wall of the shop



Plate 9: Ceiling detail

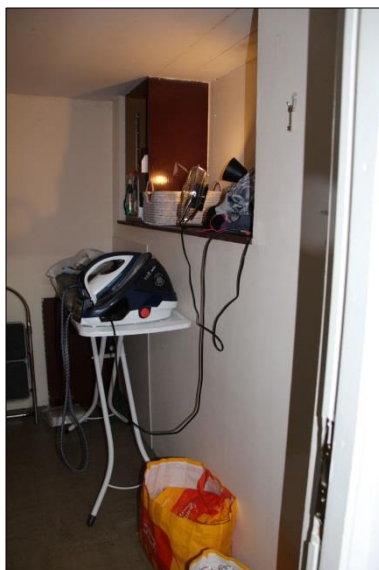


Plate 10: Rear office looking north

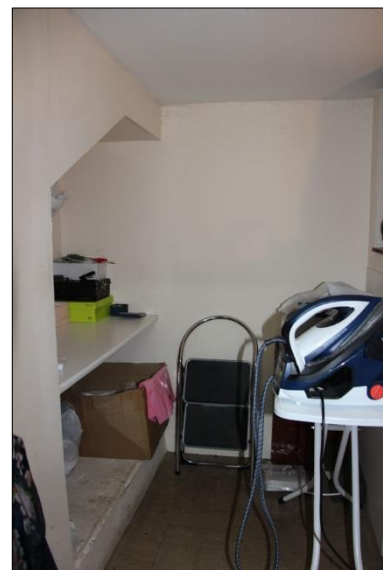


Plate 11: Rear office looking south

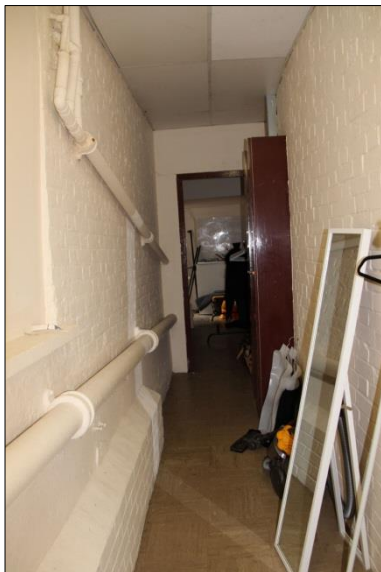


Plate 12: View west towards the tea station



Plate 13: View east towards the shop



Plate 14: Blocked window detail

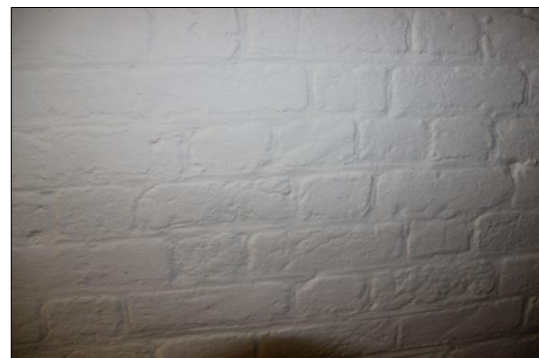


Plate 15: Detail of the brickwork in the south wall



Plate 16: WC in the rear yard



Plate 17: Interior of WC



5 Statutory Constraints on Development

5.1 A range of planning constraints are in place in the area of the site. These constraints relate both to the area as a whole, and to individual buildings and sites. These constraints are taken into consideration when assessing the implications of planning and other proposals made to the local authority and to other local and national bodies.

5.2 *Conservation and Archaeological Notification Areas*

The property lies within the St Albans Conservation Area and within area AS.R.25 on the Local Plan which includes Saxon Kingsbury, the Saxon and medieval town of St Albans and Sopwell Nunnery.

5.3 *Scheduled Ancient Monuments*

There are no Scheduled Monuments in the immediate vicinity.

5.4 *Listed Buildings*

There are some 20 historic buildings within 250m of the property, which are shown on Figure 5 and detailed in Table 1.

5.5 *Heritage & Planning*

Policy 86 iii a of the St Albans District Local Plan Review (1994) states:

Alterations involving the addition of new features (including openings) which would be detrimental to the internal or external character or appearance of the building, or to the context of features or interest, will be permitted only in exceptional circumstances

Policy 86 iii e includes the following:

Painting or covering of the exterior or interior will not be permitted where it will obliterate features of interest, alter the proportions or balance of a building or unity of a group, make unsuitable emphasis of features or be inappropriate or detrimental in terms of chemical composition, colour or texture.

The draft SADC Local Plan Publication (2018) reiterates the above in Section C of Policy L30, which states:

Listed Buildings: Development will only be supported where the significance of the listed building, including any gained from its setting, is protected and respected, and, where relevant, better revealed. Proposals must not have a harmful impact on the building's historic fabric and features and special architectural and historic interest, including its setting.

Proposals should not involve the removal, obliteration or encasing of features which are considered to contribute to an assets significance, or be detrimental to their context or integrity. Proposals which involve the addition of new features, including openings and walls, should appropriately respond to the character of the existing building and should not have a harmful impact on any features of interest or their context.

The framework for the management of heritage issues in the planning system is currently set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (MHC&LG 2018). Decisions relating to archaeological matters within the area of the site are taken by the local planning authority, acting on the advice of District Archaeologist.



6 Assessment of Heritage Potential

6.1 *The Significance and Setting of the Building*

The building as a whole is a Grade II listed structure that is located within the medieval core of St Albans. Although it was re-faced in the 18th century and the interior of the building has lost many if not most of its internal features, the historic core is believed to date from the late 16th century and therefore provides a strong element of historic continuity to the built environment. It is also a successful building in that it houses retail and other commercial units serving both the local community and the large numbers of visitors to St Albans. It is therefore clear that the building is of considerable architectural, historical and community significance and provides a strong and positive element to the overall setting.

6.2 *Potential Impact of the Proposed Developments*

The proposed alterations have been designed to have a minimal impact on the historic fabric. The recessed shop entrance will be retained but the window to the north of the door will be replaced with a single light to match the other shop windows within the building as a whole. This will have minimum impact on historic fabric as the shop frontage is no earlier than the first half of the 20th century and is currently in poor repair. The proposal can therefore be considered to have a neutral or even positive impact

The present floor covering is laid directly over concrete as a result of which any proposals impacting the floor are of no consequence to the historic fabric and likely to have a positive impact on the overall appearance of the unit.

The interior of the shop will be relined to allow for new tiling, lighting, heating, plumbing and air conditioning. In order to assess the impact of these proposals inspection areas were opened within the present lining to the walls and the ceiling. It was found that the northern wall is simply plastered brickwork whereas the wall to the south has lath and plaster behind the modern plasterwork (Plates 18-19). The means of fixing the new lining has been described as follows:

The timber sole plate to each section will be placed onto the structural floor, once it is exactly located it will be mechanically fixed to the concrete floor using a masonry drill and fixing with 100mm woodscrews into brown rawl plugs at approx. 600mm centres.

The section of stud wall, constructed as "ladder frames" will be placed on the sole plate and screwed to the timber with 70mm wood screws at approx. 600mm centres. Each ladder frame will be approx. 2.5m high and will be braced back to the structure by means of mechanical fixing using wood screws back into the existing wall linings. The head of the wall linings will be level and will be formed by a double thickness to form a "wall plate"

This should therefore not affect the historic fabric and will have an overall positive impact on the building in that it will improve the interior of the shop considerably.

Localised inspection undertaken by SADC suggests that the original lath and plaster ceiling survives as do the original joists above (Plates 20-21). The new ceiling would therefore be constructed as an independent structure as described below (Fig. 10):

The wall linings will be installed first to the exact level required to form a wallplate. Lattice beams will be placed onto the wallplate, to suit the lighting layout and relevant positions of the A/C unit and over door air curtain. The lattice beams are single span and will be fixed to the



wall plate by means of an angled cleat. The area around the A/C unit and air curtain will be trimmed with SC3 grade timber.

The historic fabric will remain totally unaffected.

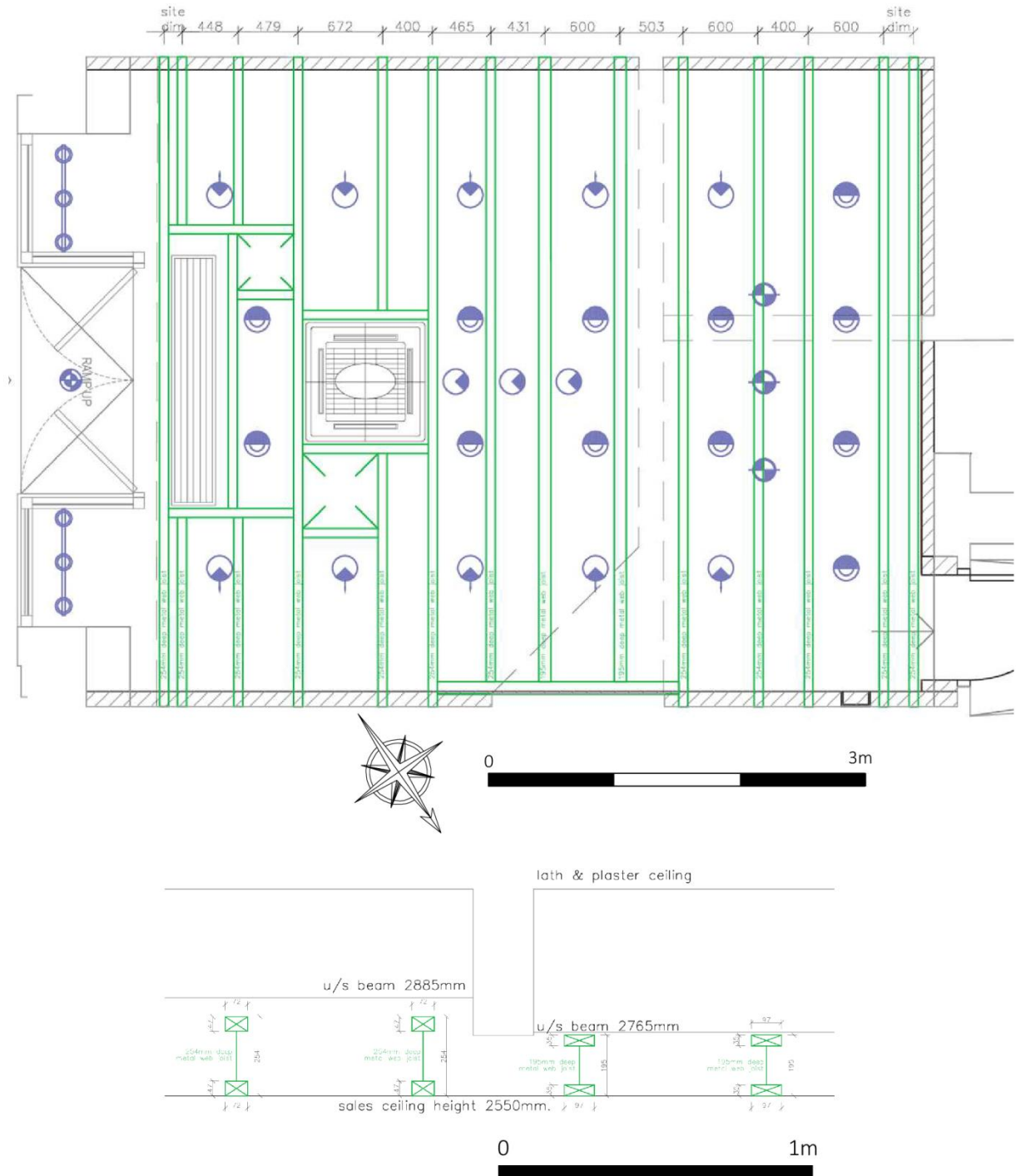


Figure 10: Proposed ceiling, plan and section (scale 1:50 & 1:20)

The intention of blocking the existing doorway into the rear office would not impact on the historic fabric, nor will it significantly affect the integrity of the ground floor as it has been considerably altered since first constructed.



The most significant alteration would be the creation of a door within the blocked window in the wall between the office and the passage (Fig. 3). This would entail the redirection of a soil pipe that currently crosses the top of the window and the removal of both modern and historic fabric within and below the window. Whilst this would perforce have a negative impact on the historic fabric, the percentage of historic fabric to be lost is small and much of this is already obscured by the modern plinth. The integrity of the wall would also be compromised, but again only to a certain degree as the eastern end of the original window would be left intact and the historical narrative of the wall would still be evident. This wall is also not within view of the general public and therefore has no significance on the setting of the building as a whole. Taking all these points into consideration, it is thought the potential impact of the new door is of minimal.

The tea station and external WC will simply be redecorated, which can only have a positive impact.

An HVAC unit is also intended to be fitted in due course, the associated pipework for which would run along the modern wall in the passage, having avoided historic material within the shop, to the yard where the unit would be attached to the modern wall to the right of the passage door.

6.3 *Minimising Possible Negative Impacts*

The interior has been designed with careful consideration of the impact on the historic building. As a result any possible negative impacts are confined to the creation of a door in the wall between the passage and the office and the percentage loss of historic fabric will be minimal. Given the nature of the alterations and the proposed methodology, it is unlikely that new architectural features would be revealed during the works. However, it would be a wise precaution to ensure that any historic fabric newly exposed during the works is recorded archaeologically.



Plate 18: North wall



Plate 19: South wall



Plate 20: Ceiling to the front of the shop



Plate 21: Ceiling to the rear of the shop



7 Conclusions

Number 37a forms just one part of a Grade II listed building that is located within the medieval core of St Albans. The building appears to date from the late 16th century, was refaced and modified in the 18th century and altered in the 19th and 20th centuries. As a result and the shop frontages notwithstanding, the exterior makes a significant visual contribution to the streetscape and provides a strong historical narrative to the setting. The interior of the shop, in contrast, retains very little historical fabric and that which survives is either obscured or inaccessible to the casual passer-by. The only interesting feature within the unit is the former external wall of the 18th century structure with a blocked window which now forms one side of an internal passage between the shop and the yard to the rear.

The proposed alterations have little impact on the historic fabric, other than to this wall where part of the window and the wall below would be removed to create a door. As a brick plinth was added to this wall in the second half of the 20th century, the loss of exposed historic fabric is very small and the historical narrative of the wall would not be lost as the much of the window would be left *in situ*. Taking these two aspects into consideration, plus the fact that this wall is only visible from within the shop, the overall impact to the significance and setting of the building will be neutral. The impact of the proposed alterations in general would be entirely beneficial to this part of the building, which is in considerable need of attention.



8 Acknowledgements

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