

Nos. 34–38 BARNET HIGH STREET
BARNET, LB BARNET

*Brief Assessment of the Surviving Fabric of the Terrace
of Shops in Advance of an Application for Demolition*

by

A. R. Wittrick

Historical Analysis & Research Team
Reports and Papers (First Series, 31)
(1997)



ENGLISH HERITAGE

34-38, BARNET HIGH STREET LB Barnet.

INTRODUCTION

I visited this site recently and met the current tenant/occupant of the ground floor accommodation of No.34, following a request from CON:L&NE team to assess the importance and value of the extant surviving fabric. Advice was also sought as to whether the structure merits inclusion on the statutory list. This was in advance of an application, to the LB Barnet, by the current owners for demolition.

The structure, currently unlisted, is sited to the south of Barnet High Street, on its eastern side adjacent to the Divisional Police Headquarters building, 1976 by *M L Belchamber*. It is included within the Wood Street Chipping Barnet Conservation Area and at the time of the inspection was occupied by commercial concerns.

The inspection was limited to those areas of the structure that were accessible whilst the premises were open. This involved mainly a visual inspection of internal and external surfaces. No areas were opened up for examination.

BRIEF SITE HISTORY

Stylistically, the origins of this terrace would appear to date from around the early 1820s. The known and available documentary sources would tend to confirm this date.

A map of Barnet Manor of 1817 indicates the site as two separate freehold properties, in different ownership, the 1815 inclosure recording a house with grounds on each plot. By 1840 much redevelopment has occurred, these buildings have been lost and we have the earliest known record of the terrace, which appears on the Tithe Apportionment map of this date.

By 1896 the (2nd Ed) OS map indicates more or less the current arrangement. Interestingly it also gives the trade of No.34 as a Smithy. Early photographic evidence c.1890 onwards also shows the basic form of the terrace little changed.

ASSESSMENT

34-38, High Street Barnet is a terrace of three separate shop units, with accommodation over. No.34 is currently used as a motor spares shop (with basement storage) with access through to a detached workshop at the rear. No.36 is a music shop and No.38 vacant. The terrace is of two storeys with accommodation also provided in a continuous mansard roof, which spans the whole range. Load-bearing external walls, constructed using a uniform gault clay brick, offer support to the floors and mansard roof.

With the exception of the roof covering, formerly of slate as the rest of the terrace but now of inappropriate concrete tiles, No.38 has been little altered. Its original two-room deep plan

form, staircase with balusters and newel posts of the early 19th century, original joinery to the rear, fibrous plasterwork and a late 19th century shopfront all survive in good condition.

No.34 & 36 have suffered from considerable internal alteration and adaption with successive trades. However, some original joinery survives to the rear and both shopfronts retain 19thC decorative elements, although with subsequent alteration are now mainly modern.

The independent, two-storey range to the rear of No.34 is of three bays with a hipped slate roof and constructed with a purple coloured stock brick on three sides. The roof is supported by two framed trusses of timber, strapped with iron which were originally exposed internally. No evidence exists for former internal finishes and the brickwork seems to have been simply left exposed. It would appear to have been used as part workshop and part stable and almost certainly connected with the use of the site as a blacksmiths. The main front northern, elevation of the building has been largely constructed with timber-framing. At an early stage this framing was adapted to form a large glazed screen wall and the building possibly converted for use as a studio. The structure is not recorded on the 1896 OS (2nd Ed).

SIGNIFICANCE

The extant terrace appears to have been raised as a commercial development in the early 1820s and is the sole surviving structure, of the period, at this southern end of the High Street, which still retains something of the character of a village street.

Although the mansard roof arrangement is of interest and comparatively rare for its date, in this part of London (a similar and good example survives at 8-18, Church Street, Edmonton, London N9. LB Enfield), the terrace is rather plain and modest with no ornament. It has undergone numerous alterations and been adapted and modernised to suit the changing trades of its occupants, which has resulted in the loss of much original fabric

However, the terrace forms part of an historic street scape which includes buildings of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries on Barnet High Street, which has largely survived since the early part of this century. It also provides a propitious contribution to the character and appearance of the local conservation area.

RECOMMENDATION

The current knowledge of this terrace can be judged to lack sufficient architectural interest to merit inclusion on the Secretary of State's statutory list; it ought however, to be included in any local list.

If consent for demolition is granted, consideration should be given to attaching a condition of consent that the applicants arrange a suitable programme of recording of the structure, prior to demolition.

Sources:

Information from LB Barnet Local Studies and Archives Centre
(the archival records are very complete and easily accessible)

VCH - A History of the County of Hertford, Vol II - Cashio Hundred. pgs.329-342.

Andy Wittrick
HART
210SR
May/June 1997.



Plate. 1
34-38, Barnet High Street (with awning) c1895



Plate. 2
34-38, Barnet High Street (with awnings) 1920



Plate.3

34-38, Barnet High Street, looking north c1890



Plate. 4
34-38, Barnet High Street, looking north 1905



Plate.5

34-38, Barnet High Street, enlargement of Plate.4, showing bow fronted shop 1905



Plate.6
34-38, Barnet High Street, 1997



Plate.7

34-38, Barnet High Street, rear of building showing original joinery 1997



Plate.8

34-38, Barnet High Street, rear ancillary workshop/stables 1997