
Historic Building Record & Analysis

68 St Peters Street, St Albans, Hertfordshire. AL1 3HG.

INSTALLATION OF ROOFLIGHT & TILE VENT



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Historic Building Record & Analysis

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1. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

In September 2014, a programme of historic building observation and recording was undertaken at 68 St Peters Street, St Albans, Hertfordshire, as a condition of a Listed Building Consent. The approved work comprised the installation of a rooflight and an extractor tile vent in the internal bathroom, through the internal pitch of the rear roof. The property is Statutorily Listed, Grade II, as part of a group listing, and is a mid-terraced, timber frame and brick building, containing a number of phases of construction and alteration dating from approximately the 15th century to the 20th century. Following initial opening up of the ceiling, it was found that some of the timber rafters were decayed. The lath and plaster ceiling above the bathroom was therefore removed to enable a wider assessment of the roof structure. The roof is formed of a variety of different timbers from an older building that have been modified for re-use as the roof structure. The position of each of the rafters above the bathroom was recorded. The older roof timbers have been subsequently overlaid with modern rafters when the property was re-roofed, probably in the mid to late 20th century. One older rafter was fractured in two, and was therefore removed, along with a section of ceiling joist, to allow the rooflight to be inserted. The removed rafter and ceiling joist were recorded and analysed in more detail. There were a lack of definitive identifiable features on both timbers, making their original use difficult to conclusively establish. However, from its sectional dimension and the rebates and angled peg holes of the rafter timber, it is felt that this was most likely to be a trimming timber from a ceiling or a wall stud.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1. Introduction

2.1.1. In September 2014 a programme of historic building observation and recording was undertaken by ARCH Building Consultancy Ltd, in conjunction with the supervision of alteration works to the internal bathroom, at 68 St Peters Street, St Albans, Hertfordshire.

2.2. Project Background

2.2.1. The alteration works were located in the internal first floor bathroom, within the rear two storey addition of the property. The project involved:-

- The installation of a new roof-light within a newly formed light well, located on the inner face of the rear roof; and
- The provision of a mechanical extract fan to the bathroom, with roof tile vent.

2.2.2. The work received Conditional Listed Building Consent Approval (Ref. 5/2013/1903) for St Albans District Council on 3 September 2013. As a result of the property's location within an area of the City subject to Recording Conditions (AS.R.25 Saxon Kingsbury, Saxon & medieval town & Sopwell N), Condition 2 of the approval required "the implementation of a programme of building recording and analysis/ watching brief to be maintained during the course of the works affecting the historic fabric."

2.2.3. This report is based on a Written Scheme of Investigation (Condition 2) previously submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority on 28 August 2014.

2.3. Site Description, Location and Historical Context

2.3.1. The site is located towards the north end of St Peter's Street and fronts a small access road around Church Green. The property comprises a

small two-storey, mid-terrace building, with a single storey rear extension and a small enclosed garden to the rear of the property.

2.3.2. The property is a Designated Heritage Asset and is Statutorily Listed Grade II, as part of a group Listing with the adjacent properties (Nos. 62 to 70 consecutively). A copy of the relevant listing description is appended to this report for reference (Appendix C). The site is also located in the St Albans Conservation Area (Area 4–City Centre) and is also within the boundary of the Area of Archaeological Significance.

2.3.3. The property is within the boundary of the old ‘Tonman ditch’ and thus lies within the historic mediaeval area of the City.

2.3.4. The property has undergone previous analysis of its historical development. This identified three key phases:

- i. A mediaeval (15C) timber frame building to the front, which has been subsequently altered and infilled with masonry;
- ii. A 18th/19th century masonry two storey rear extension;
- iii. A 20th century masonry single storey rear extension.

3. OBJECTIVES

3.1. Building Recording & Analysis

3.1.1. The programme of building recording and analysis aims to provide additional evidence to assist in establishing the character, history, dating, form and historical development of the property.

3.1.2. In this instance its purpose is to provide a better understanding and a lasting record of the rear roof void, that was inaccessible prior to the alteration works.

3.1.3. The objectives of the building recording and analysis are:-

- To produce a record of those areas of the property affected by the development;
- To record the building's current form, prior to development, in a format suitable for longterm archive deposition.

3.2. Monitoring of Building Works Affecting the Historic Fabric

3.2.1. A formal programme of observation and investigation was undertaken during the works, a report prepared and archive produced.

3.2.2. The objectives of the monitoring of building works affecting the historic fabric were:

- To record any architectural elements revealed during the development works, that may, in themselves, be significant or enhance the overall significance of the property, as a building of special architectural and historic interest.
- To record the alterations made to the property as a result of the development.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. Monitoring of Building Works Affecting the Historic Fabric During Alteration Works

4.1.1. The monitoring of the building works focused on the formation of a new opening at ceiling level and roof level, above the existing bathroom.

4.1.2. Under the Written Scheme of Investigation, the monitoring of the works was due to be undertaken on an intermittent basis, at the following stages:

- Removal of the modern ceiling;
- Creation of new opening into the rear roof void;
- Creation of new opening for roof light.

4.1.3. However, following the removal of the modern ceiling, the timber rafters were found to be decayed and had rotted away from their bearing. The LPA allowed the remaining sections of the lath and plaster ceiling above the bathroom to be removed, to enable a wider assessment of the roof timbers.

4.1.4. This assessment identified 1No. rafter that was fractured. This was removed along with a section of ceiling joist to allow the rooflight to be inserted. The position of each of the rafters above the bathroom was recorded. The removed rafter and ceiling joist were recorded and analysed in more detail.

5. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

5.1. Roof Structure

- 5.1.1. Prior to commencement of the works the ceiling in the bathroom was formed of a modern (20C.) plasterboard ceiling, fixed to softwood battens. This was fixed to a lath and plaster ceiling.
- 5.1.2. Following removal of the modern plasterboard ceiling, 2No areas of the lath and plaster ceiling were found to be missing and 3No rafter feet had rotted away from the wall plate. By agreement with the LPA the lath and plaster ceiling above the bathroom was removed to enable a wider assessment of the condition of the roof timbers.
- 5.1.3. The roof was found to be formed of a variety of hardwood structural timbers, from a older building, that have been modified for re-use. The timbers used as rafters had been birds-mouthed and nailed over the rear face of the main wall plate of the front timber frame.
- 5.1.4. Between the front and rear roof rafters are curved timber bearers, which support the central valley gutter valley boards.
- 5.1.5. The older roof structure had been subsequently overlaid with more modern softwood rafters and packing timbers, and covered with a bituminous sarking membrane. This indicates that the property was re-roofed, probably in the mid to late 20th century.

5.2. Timber used as joist

- 5.2.1. The removed section of ceiling joist was a quartered section, with flat faces.
- 5.2.2. The timber was irregular in section shape along its length and, by inspection, it would appear that only heartwood timber remains.
- 5.2.3. The joist was fixed into the rafter with 2No. hand forged iron nails. There were no other features or markings on it.

5.3. Timber used as rafter

5.3.1. The nominal scantling and spacing of each of the re-used timber 'rafters' above the bathroom is as follows:-

| Rafter No. | Nominal Scantling (DxW) | Spacing to next rafter (c/c) |
|------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | 90 x 40mm | 330mm |
| 2 | 90 x 70mm | 260mm |
| 3 | 70 x 70mm | 270mm |
| 4 | 100 x 50mm | 150mm |
| 5 | 75 x 90mm | 225mm |
| 6 | 90 x 70mm | 240mm |
| 7 | 50 x 125mm | |

5.3.2. Rafter 3 was fractured mid-span and by agreement with the LPA, was removed, along with a section of ceiling joist, to allow the rooflight to be inserted. The removed rafter was recorded and analysed in more detail.

5.3.3. The timber was irregular in section shape along its length and had localised areas of fungal decay and beetle infestation.

5.3.4. It had 3No. notches spaced along its length at the corner. These each had a peg or peg-hole (18mm square/dia.) running diagonally across its section to a corresponding chamfer.

5.3.5. It is most likely that the notches would have received separate perpendicular timbers, with the diagonal pegs providing a stronger fixing.

5.3.6. There were also a series of 6No. nail holes to top face of the timber. Their spacing ranged 100-125mm, most likely to be from the tile battens.

5.3.7. To one end of the timber was a splayed notch across the full width of the timber section, which may have housed a diagonal timber, possibly a brace. To one side, a further short section of timber had been nailed on. Its position suggests that it was probably added to provide space for additional fixings for the laths forming the sloping ceiling soffit.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1. Conclusions

- 6.1.1. The analysis of the roof timbers is of local archaeological interest and provides some additional understanding in terms of the development of the range of properties at the site.
- 6.1.2. Historically, it was fairly common place to re-use timbers from disused or demolished structures and buildings. The removed timbers may indicate that a previous timber frame structure or outbuilding on the site was demolished to enable the properties to be extended.
- 6.1.3. There were a lack of definitive identifiable features on both timbers, making their original use difficult to conclusively establish.
- 6.1.4. From its sectional dimension and the rebates and angled peg holes of the rafter timber, it is felt that this was most likely to be a trimming timber from a ceiling or a wall stud.
- 6.1.5. As a result of the works there is now access to the roof void above No 68. However, any further wider assessment of the other timbers in the roof would be restricted by access to adjacent roof voids; loft insulation; and the lower section of the roof forming a sloping ceiling soffit.

APPENDIX A – PHOTOGRAPHIC SCHEDULE



Plate 1 - Modern ceiling prior to works (towards party wall)



Plate 2 - Modern ceiling prior to works (towards bathroom door)



Plate 3 - Lath and plaster ceiling following removal of plasterboard ceiling (towards party wall)



Plate 4 - Lath and plaster ceiling following removal of plasterboard ceiling (towards door)



Plate 5 - Roof structure following removal of lath and plaster ceiling (towards party wall)



Plate 6 - Roof structure following removal of lath and plaster ceiling (towards door)



Plate 7 - Example of other timbers with roof void



Plate 8 - Rafter and ceiling joist (No 3) prior to removal



Plate 9 - Reinstated lath and lime plaster ceiling



Plate 10 - Reinstated lath and lime plaster ceiling

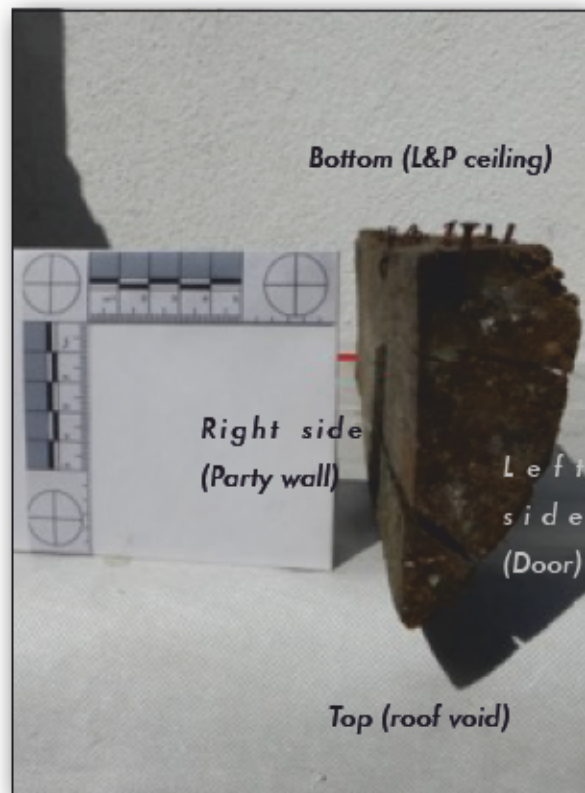


Plate 11 - Removed ceiling joist timber (bedroom/bathroom partition end)

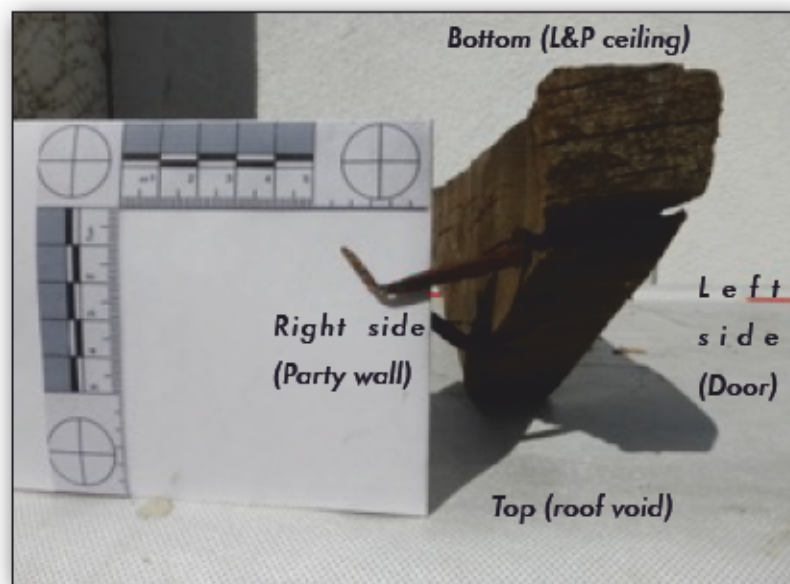


Plate 12 - Removed ceiling joist timber (wall plate end)



Plate 13 - Removed ceiling joist timber: Right side view (party wall)



Plate 14 - Removed ceiling joist timber: Top view (roof void)



Plate 15 - Removed ceiling joist timber: Left side view (door)



Plate 16 - Removed ceiling joist timber: Bottom view (lath and plaster ceiling)

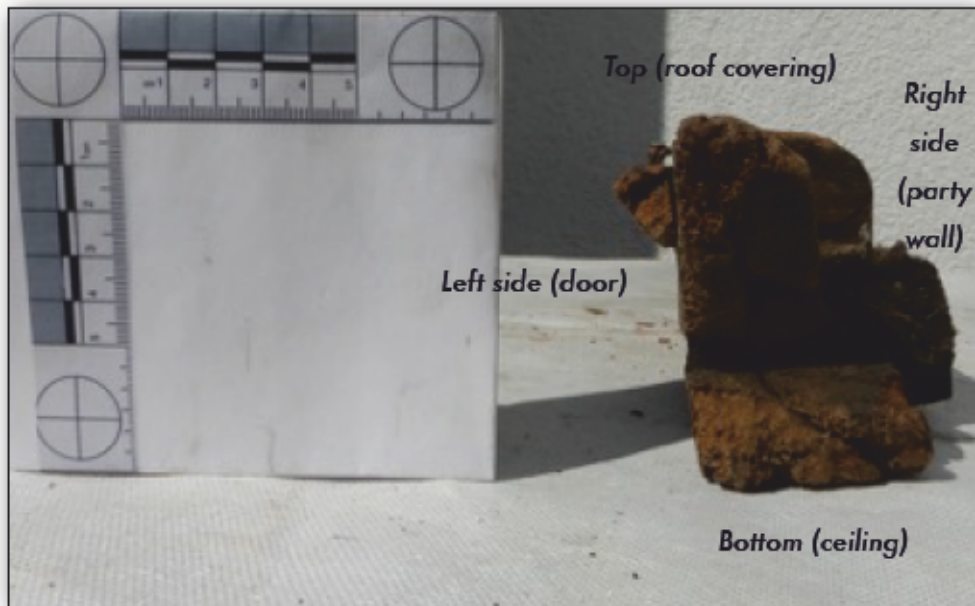


Plate 17 - Removed rafter timber: Wall plate end

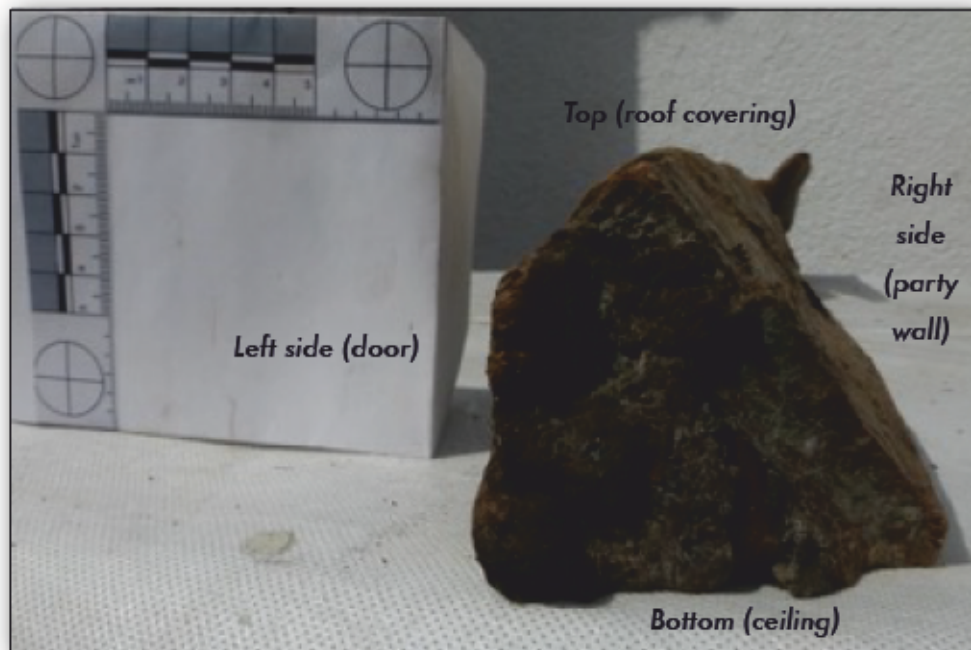


Plate 18 - Removed rafter timber: Fracture end



Plate 19 - Removed rafter timber: Bottom view (ceiling)



Plate 20 - Removed rafter timber: Right side view (party wall)



Plate 21 - Removed rafter timber: Left side view (door)



Plate 22 - Removed rafter timber: Top view (roof covering)

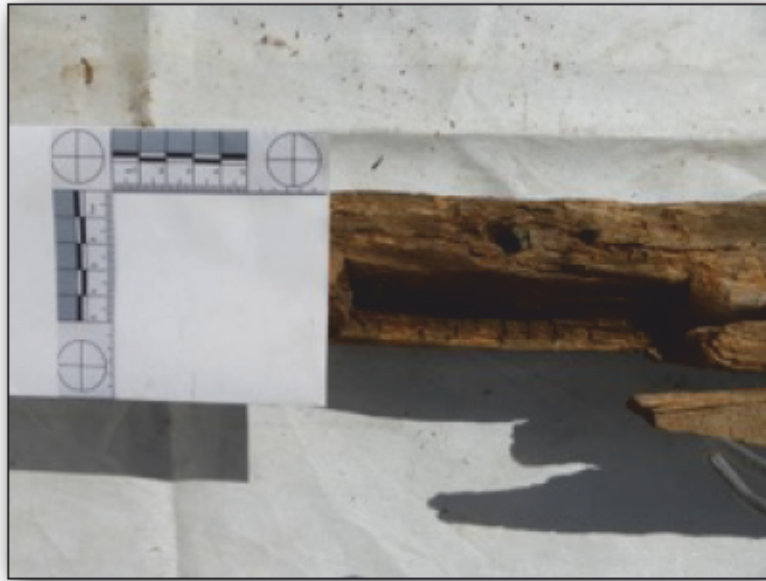


Plate 23 - Removed rafter timber: Fracture end, bottom notch



Plate 24 - Removed rafter timber: Wall plate end, bottom notch



Plate 25 - Removed rafter timber: Wall plate end, top, notch & peg



Plate 26 - Removed rafter timber: Fracture end, top, peg hole

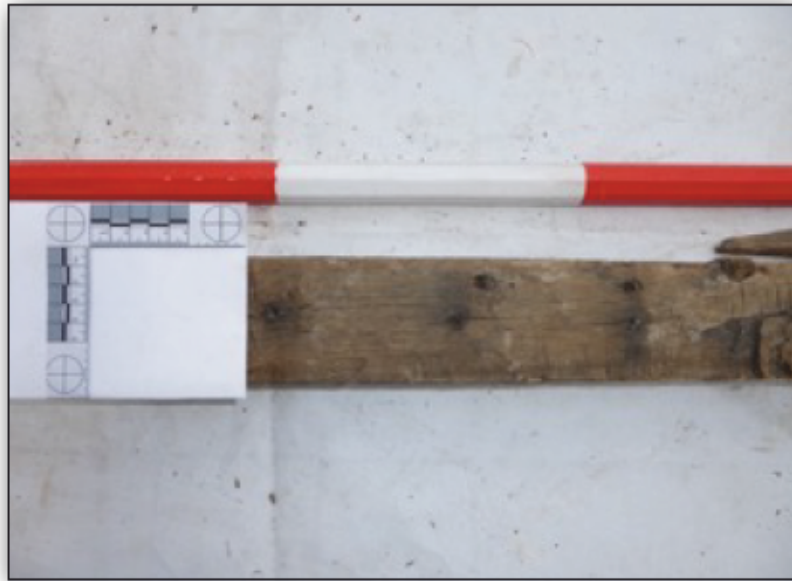
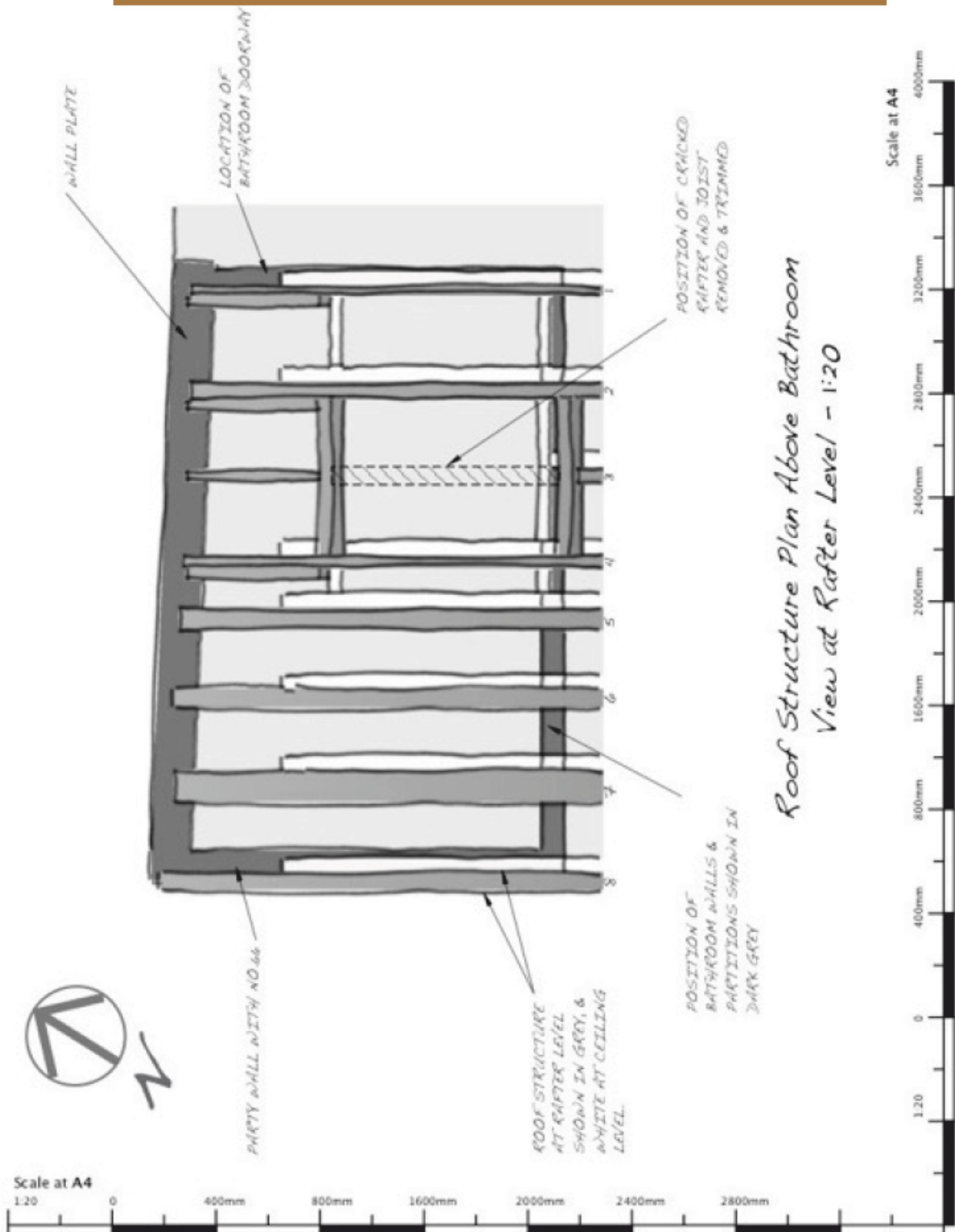


Plate 27 - Removed rafter timber: Fracture end, top, nail holes



Plate 28 - Removed rafter timber: Wall plate end, top, nail holes

APPENDIX B – PLAN VIEW



APPENDIX C – LISTING DESCRIPTION

IoE Number: 163437
Location: 62–70 ST PETER'S STREET (east side)
ST ALBANS, ST ALBANS, HERTFORDSHIRE
Photographer: Mr John Riley
Date Photographed: 21 April 2006
Date listed: 27 August 1971
Date of last amendment: 27 August 1971

Grade II

ST PETER'S STREET 1. (East Side) 1582 Nos. 62 to 70 (consec.) TL 1407 NE 4/27 II GV 2. Early C18 row of cottages. Nos. 62, 64: each 2 storeys, one window. Red brick with diaper of blue headers, tiled roof. 1st floor sash windows with glazing bars in flush, moulded frames, directly under eaves. Ground floor sash windows with glazing bars in flush box frames under gauged, segmental, brick arches. Tiny, bracketed hoods to doors. Nos. 66, 68: circa 1700. 2 storeys, one window each. High pitched, tiled roof with simple eaves cornice. Now pebbledashed but shows trace of jettied front. Modern casement windows with glazing bars in plain frames. Gabled, bracketed hoods to doors. No 70. 2 storeys, 2 windows. Moderately high pitched, tiled roof with simple wood eaves cornice. Walls now pebbledashed main windows on both floors are modern casements with glazing bars in plain wood frames; but 1st floor windows at outer sides over doors, are oval with rhomboid glazing bars laid horizontally. Nos. 58 to 78 (even) form a group.

APPENDIX D – HER SUMMARY

| | | |
|--|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Site name and address: 68 St Peters Street | | |
| County: Hertfordshire | District: St Albans | |
| Village/Town: St Albans. | Parish: St Albans | |
| Planning application reference: 5/2013/1903 | | |
| Client's name, address: Ms C Cartwright, 68 St Peters Street, St Albans | | |
| Nature of application: Installation of rooflight and extractor fan | | |
| Present land use: Residential dwelling | | |
| Size of application area: N/A | Size of area investigated: N/A | |
| NGR (to 8 figures): TL 14992 07564 | Project Ref No.:111 | |
| Site director/Organisation: ARCH Building Consultancy Ltd | | |
| Type of work: Historic Building Watching Brief | | |
| Date of work: | Start: 08/09/2014 | Finish: 29/10/2014 |
| Curating museum: HALS | | |
| Related HER nos: N/A | Periods represented: Post-medieval | |
| Relevant previous summaries/reports: N/A | | |
| <p>Summary of fieldwork results:</p> <p>In September 2014, a programme of historic building observation and recording was undertaken at 68 St Peters Street, St Albans, Hertfordshire, as a condition of a Listed Building Consent. The approved work comprised the installation of a rooflight and an extractor tile vent in the internal bathroom, through the internal pitch of the rear roof. The property is Statutorily Listed, Grade II, as part of a group listing, and is a mid-terraced, timber frame and brick building, containing a number of phases of construction and alteration dating from approximately the 15th century to the 20th century. Following initial opening up of the ceiling, it was found that some of the timber rafters were decayed. The lath and plaster ceiling above the bathroom was therefore removed to enable a wider assessment of the roof structure. The roof is formed of a variety of different timbers from an older building that have been modified for re-use as the roof structure. The position of each of the rafters above the bathroom was recorded. The older roof timbers have been subsequently overlaid with modern rafters when the property was re-roofed, probably in the mid to late 20th century. One older rafter was fractured in two, and was therefore removed, along with a section of ceiling joist, to allow the rooflight to be inserted. The removed rafter and ceiling joist were recorded and analysed in more detail. There were a lack of definitive identifiable features on both timbers, making their original use difficult to conclusively establish. However, from its sectional dimension and the rebates and angled peg holes of the rafter timber, it is felt that this was most likely to be a trimming timber from a ceiling or a wall stud.</p> | | |
| Author: Mr P Hayes | | Date: 28/04/15 |

APPENDIX E – OASIS SUMMARY

| | |
|--|---|
| Project details | |
| Project name | 68 St Peters Street |
| Short description of the project | This Historic Building Record and Analysis focusses on alterations works to an internal bathroom, undertaken between September and October 2014. It provides a record of the works, as they progressed, and also records and analyses roof timbers, that were removed to accommodate a rooflight. |
| Project dates | Start: 08-09-2014 End: 29-10-2014 |
| Previous/future work | Yes / No |
| Any associated project reference codes | archbuil1-196282 – OASIS form ID |
| Any associated project reference codes | 5/13/1903 – Planning Application No. |
| Type of project | Building Recording |
| Site status | Listed Building |
| Current Land use | Residential 1 – General Residential |
| Monument type | HOUSE Medieval |
| Monument type | HOUSE Post Medieval |
| Monument type | HOUSE Modern |
| Significant Finds | NONE None |
| Methods & techniques | 'Measured Survey', 'Photographic Survey', 'Survey/Recording Of Fabric/Structure' |
| Prompt | Listed Building Consent |

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Project location | |
| Country | England |
| Site location | HERTFORDSHIRE ST ALBANS ST ALBANS 68 St Peters Street |
| Study area | 50.00 Square metres |
| Site coordinates | NGR: TL 14992 07564; LL: 51.7544840985 -0.333848852836 (decimal); LL: 51 45 16 N 000 20 01 W Point (degrees) |

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Project creators | |
| Name of Organisation | ARCH Building Consultancy Ltd |
| Project brief originator | Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body |
| Project design originator | ARCH Building Consultancy Ltd |
| Project director/ manager | Peter Hayes |
| Project supervisor | Peter Hayes |

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Project archives | |
| Physical Archive Exists? | No |
| Digital Archive recipient | ARCH Building Consultancy Ltd |
| Digital Contents | 'Survey' |
| Digital Media available | 'Images raster / digital photography' |
| Paper Archive recipient | St Albans HER |
| Paper Contents | 'Survey' |
| Paper Media available | 'Drawing', 'Report' |

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Project bibliography 1 | |
| Publication type | Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript) |
| Title | Historic Building Record and Analysis – 68 St Peters Street, St Albans, Hertfordshire. |
| Author(s)/Editor(s) | Hayes, P. |
| Date | 29 October 2015 |
| Issuer or publisher | ARCH Building Consultancy Ltd |
| Place of issue or publication | Wareside |