



# Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd

Modern living in an historic environment

**The former Fox and Hounds Public House,  
32 Gold Street, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire**

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# The Fox and Hounds, Wellingborough

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## The former Fox and Hounds Public House, 32 Gold Street, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire

Joe Prentice and Iain Soden

### Summary

This 18<sup>th</sup>-century house became the home of a successful beer-retailer between 1894 and 1898, and eventually, by 1940 had become a pub, the Fox and Hounds. Little remains but the basic fabric of the early house.

### Introduction

Listed Building Consent was granted for the conversion of a former public house known as 'The Fox and Hounds' located at 32 Gold Street, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, NN8 4QY to a domestic residence (NGR: SP 88898 68411; Fig 1).

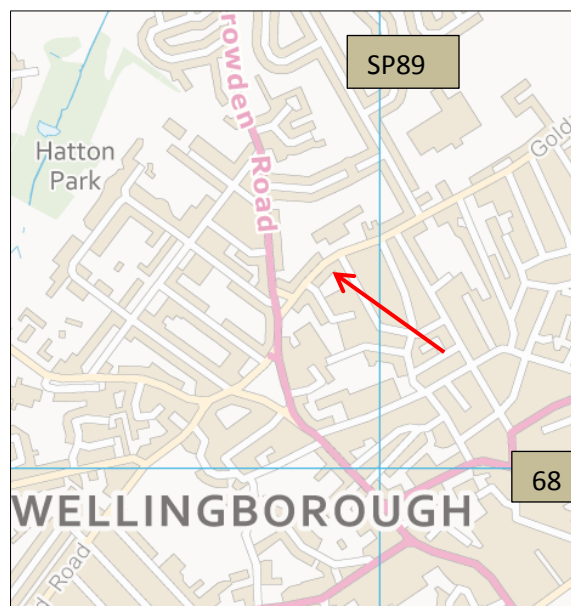


Fig 1: Site location (arrowed). Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright and database right 2016

A condition (3) was attached to the Listed Building Consent requiring a programme of archaeological building recording to be undertaken as part of the works of conversion (WP/16/00067/LBC). This recording was specified as compliant with Level 2 as set out in the guidelines published by Historic England (HE 2016).

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Level 2 is a Descriptive Record requiring that the exterior and interior of the building be seen, photographed and described. The examination should produce an analysis of its development and use but need not discuss in detail the evidence on which that analysis is based. Any plan will not normally be comprehensive.

The former Fox and Hounds is Listed, Grade II. The description is as follows:

Grade II

Date Listed 12 March 1986

Grid Ref: SP8889868411

Listing ID: 233756

Public House. Early C18. Regular coursed and banded limestone and ironstone with slate roof. Originally 2-unit plan. 2-storey, 2-window range of C20 casements at ground floor and C19 casements with glazing bars at first floor, all under wood lintels. 4-panelled door to left of centre under wood lintel. Ashlar gable parapet and kneeler to left and brick gable parapet to right. Brick and stone stack at ends. C19 extensions to rear. Interior has chamfered beams and rafters (*joists?*) and open fireplace with bressumer.

## Background

Historic research regarding the development of the town of Wellingborough has been undertaken previously but no specific references have been found regarding the Fox and Hounds prior to the twentieth century apart from the listing description.

The street on which the building is located is understood to have been known variously as Common Town Street, Townsend and its current form, Gold Street from at least the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Palmer and Palmer 1972, 263). A map of Wellingborough of 1803 indicates buildings on both the north and south sides of the street at that time but the shortcomings of the depiction mean that none are easily comparable to the existing building in its earliest form (see below, Fig 2).

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Fig 2: 1803 map of Wellingborough by William James (extract in NRO). The probable Fox and Hounds is arrowed.

By the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1886 the area has undergone extensive development with the street frontages much altered and the areas of open ground to the south and east of the site becoming infilled with streets of terraced houses. The area to the rear of the building is shown to have had further additions which correspond with the areas indicated on Fig 3, labelled as C19th buildings (see below).

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Fig 3: 1886 first edition Ordnance Survey; sheet 39 NE. Fox and Hounds arrowed

During subsequent map revisions little changed until the 1966/67 editions of the OS when the small porch is shown added to the narrow west range and a further small block added to the rear, or south, side bringing the outline of the building to its present shape. These mid 1960's maps are also the first to identify the building as a public house with the site marked *PH* though not named.

Searches of trade directories in the Northamptonshire Record Office and Northampton Central Library supplied limited information. None of the nineteenth-century Kelly's Trade Directories list any public house named the Fox and Hounds as existing in Wellingborough and it is not until the 1940 edition that one is listed with that name. Its proprietor/landlord is named as George Herbert Turnell. This name allowed searches backwards through time under Commercial listings and the same name appears in all previous Kelly's directories as far back as 1898 although at that date George Turnell is listed simply as *Beer Retailer, 32 Gold Street*. In the 1894 edition however, George Turnell, even then a beer retailer, was to be found further along the road at 59 Gold Street. The 1891 census was therefore cross-checked as the closest definitive record and at 32 Gold Street in that year was found John Perkins, a Boot Upper Closer, with his wife Mary (1891 census: Wellingborough RG12/1212). Seemingly therefore, 32 Gold Street acquired its beer-retail association between 1894 and 1898 when George Turnell moved there from no 59. Acknowledgement of the name Fox and Hounds is only present from 1940.

Turnell is missing from only one Kelly's Directory during this long 46 year period, that for 1918, suggesting that the beer-retail business might have been on-hold during the First World War, when so many men were away fighting at the front. It had resumed by 1924.



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In the book *Wellingborough Album* (Palmer and Palmer 1975, 101) which comprises re-prints of historic photographs there is one which is listed as 'Pension day at the Fox and Hounds' and dated 1 July 1904. The photo-location within the site cannot be reconciled with the current layout and its identification remains a puzzle since there is no pub of this name listed at that time so its attribution may be regarded with some doubt.

Since Gerorge Turnell and Geroge Herbert Turnell appear in entries from 1894-1940, it is possible that these are two different men, perhaps father and son, running the same business, perhaps only with a break during the First World War.

No later references were found until the very recent past when internet searches revealed the recent application for change of use reported in local newspapers.

## **Building recording**

The site was visited on 7 July 2016. The weather conditions were overcast and mostly fine with light rain at times. Access to the building was granted freely and with goodwill by contractors undertaking works, though the presence of the workmen, their tools and materials along with dust and limited lighting mitigated against entirely unhampered examination of all areas. Interior photography, especially where flash had to be used, was significantly affected by the amount of dust in the atmosphere.

The upper floor rooms (F1, F2, F3) had recently been entirely refitted with plasterboard and all wall and ceiling surfaces were covered up. In light of this no historic fabric was visible at all at first floor level. Phasing at this floor was projected from the Ground Floor (Fig 4).

The building recording was therefore largely limited to the ground floor area only and the development of the building confined to that area along with the single cellar.

Visual inspection of the exterior was unhampered from the (north) street frontage apart from a stubbornly un-moved parked car (see Fig 5).

The west side elevation was largely visible but revealed little since the exterior is pebble-dashed.

The rear elevations were obscured by the later pub additions and fencing.

None of the east elevation could be observed due to the presence of an adjoining property.

### *The eighteenth-century building (Exterior)*

This constitutes the first phase of standing building on the site and comprises an L-shaped structure with its long axis placed parallel to Gold Street and a short range projecting southwards to the rear (Fig 4).

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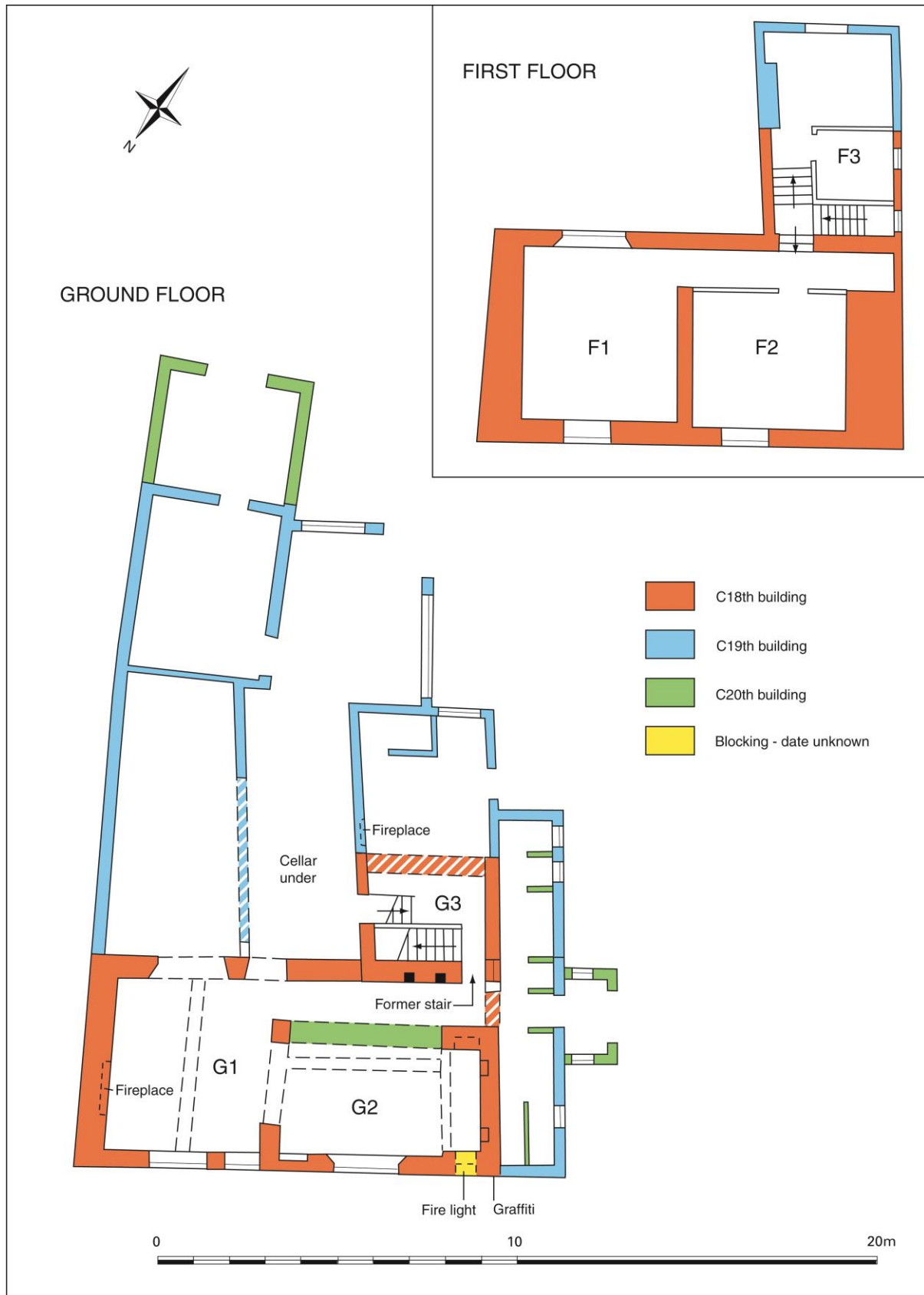


Fig 4: Plan of the building showing the phases of building development. Ground and first floor, location of cellar indicated (Andy Isham).



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The street frontage shows most clearly the method of construction which comprises alternating bands of varying thicknesses of local limestone and ironstone, each comprising several courses bonded in lime mortar with extensive later re-pointing (Fig 4).



Fig 5: The north (Gold Street) elevation, looking south.

This form of construction is common in this area of the county and is well represented in the northern part of Wellingborough. The banding is made of squared blocks with dressed, but not ashlar, surfaces. At the north-eastern corner of the building are large ashlar quoins though curiously these do not occur at the north-west corner. This variation suggests that when built the west side was adjacent to another building whilst the north-east corner might have been free-standing. This would seem to be borne out by the 1803 map (Fig 2).

This type of *bichrome* banding is a common feature of vernacular architecture in Northamptonshire from the late medieval period though to the seventeenth-century, with a later revival in the nineteenth (Sutherland 2003). Most often seen where two types of stone were found in the same location, it is a relatively common feature in Wellingborough where Upper Estuarine Limestone, now known as Wellingborough Limestone and Northampton Sand with Ironstone were found close together and was used decoratively to provide contrast in various architectural elements as well as the simple banding seen here.

The ground floor contains two broad window openings set either side of a slightly off-centre doorway. The window openings have both been widened as evidenced by pieces of chopped-through stone to each side of the openings which in some cases remain as shallow slips where larger pieces would be expected. This widening indicates that each of the timber lintels has also been replaced. The eastern window (left side in Fig 5) contains six panes of fixed glazing and is modern. The western also contains six panes but one of the lower three is an opening casement with the centre one of the upper three being a hinged top light.

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The doorway appears to be in its original size and location and retains another timber lintel. It is fitted with a four panel door of probably nineteenth-century date. The height of the doorway may indicate the original height of the ground floor windows since it is set slightly lower and the lintel of the eastern window now oversails it.

At first floor level the windows appear to be un-altered and most likely indicate the size and positioning of the ground floor originals. Each is set beneath a timber lintel and contains eighteen panes; there is a central opening casement with a further opening top light.

On a piece of ironstone at the north-west corner of the building a very faint incised graffiti appears to record J M 1770. Though very faint this appears to be more than just passing scratching although it is neither well executed enough nor in the usual location to suggest that it is a deliberate date-stone.

The only other fittings are modern rainwater goods, air vents, lighting, window boxes and the name of the former pub.

Of the east gable wall only the upper section could be seen above the roofline of the adjacent property. It too is constructed of banded limestone and ironstone. The north parapet coping is of limestone and the present blue slate roofline is set below that indicating that the original roof was steeply pitched and covered with thatch. The chimney stack at this end is largely constructed of ironstone with a string and coping topped with modern brick. It appears to be a single stack suggesting only one fireplace ever lay at this end of the building.

The west gable, though largely visible, has been covered with pebble-dash (Fig 6).



Fig 6: The west elevation, looking east. Later additions at ground level foreground and to both storeys to the right.

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Of the original building only the upper part of the gable can be seen now from this side along with part of the upper storey of the south range, also pebble-dashed. It is known that some, at least, of this side of the building was constructed with limestone and ironstone banding (see below, Fig 10).

Nothing else can now be said of this elevation due to the later covering apart from the fact that the gable parapet has been replaced in brick. The double chimney stack is rendered so it is not clear if it remains in stone or is re-built in brick, which is present in the upper portion.

Of the original south elevation of the eighteenth-century building nothing now can be seen since it is entirely obscured by later additions at ground level and it was not possible to get a view of the first floor level to see if that too had been pebble-dashed.

### *The eighteenth-century building - Interior*

This had been much altered during its life as a pub, and partially gutted with on-going renovation work being undertaken at the time of survey. Observation of the interiors was limited.

Downstairs the frontage building comprises two principal rooms on Gold Street and a further single room in the south range; the floor plan on both floors is much the same (Fig 4). Though now replaced, there appears to be surviving evidence for the original staircase situated between the north and south range towards the west end. The rooms have been numbered for ease of reference at ground floor level only.

### *Room G1*

Located at the east end of the north range this room at the time of survey retained almost nothing of historic value having been extensively gutted when in use as a pub and partially stripped during the current renovation (Fig 7).



Fig 7: Room G1 looking east from room G2; 1m scale.

Where revealed beneath modern plaster, the stone construction of the north wall could be observed. In the east gable wall patching with Fletton brickwork suggests that there was a fireplace on the level but since much of the modern plaster remained *in-situ* the jambs and lintel were not visible. No other features were visible apart from the painted underside of the ceiling and the timber axial ceiling beam (aligned north-south) with joists to either side. A large portion of the original south and east walls had been removed during the time as a pub allowing access through to the spaces beyond. All surfaces were plastered. The floor of this end of the building is what appear to be modern narrow pine floorboards.

The inner surface of the front door had been boarded over indicating that during its latter period as a pub this entrance had not been used for access.

### *Room G2*

Located at the west end of the frontage range this room retains a large inglenook against the west gable wall (Figs 4 and 8).



Fig 8: The inglenook looking west; 1m scale.

The fireplace retains its large oak bressumer which extends across the opening; its lower edge is chamfered and at each end are ogee run-out stops typical of early eighteenth-century design. In the south side of the inglenook is a built-in seat within the thickness of the wall on that side (Fig 9).





Fig 9: The built-in seat in the south wall of the inglenook looking south-west; 1m scale. Note also the recess in the west wall.

The seat was constructed with a pointed, corbelled top and integral shelves to either side made of stone. The seat, much degraded, is of timber, perhaps elm. In the west wall adjacent to the niche is a shallow recess perhaps for a lamp, though its location here is unusual as it would have been situated next to the fire.

In the opposite (north) side of the inglenook is another seat recess though this was originally a fire-light window facing onto the street (Fig 4). That was subsequently blocked and the window recess made into another in-built seat. Externally the banding of the stonework has been well matched.

The floor/hearth of the inglenook was of modern 'crazy paving' stonework and a modern copper hood covered the central fire-basket. The flue was fitted with a register plate obscuring the inner faces of the chimney above head height.

The remainder of the room had a modern concrete floor.

The north wall contains the window onto Gold Street (previously described) and a shallow recess within the thickness of the wall to the west of the spine wall (see Fig 6). This appears to have been intended for use as an in-built cupboard.

As noted above, much of the dividing wall between this room and G1 had been removed in modern times with only a small stub of what is assumed to be original stonework at the southern end (Fig 4).



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It is thought that originally this spine wall extended to the south external wall but subsequently a breeze block wall was inserted to make a narrow corridor along the south side of the room, narrowing it to its present size. The location of the east-west principal oak beam indicates that originally the room covered the full width of this range.

When this room was one large space there was a staircase located to the south of the inglenook utilising a recess created there (Fig 4). Though much altered now by the creation of a doorway in the original west wall and another doorway to the later addition to the south, two oak posts, one retaining its lintel, survive in the dividing wall between the north and south range (Fig 10).

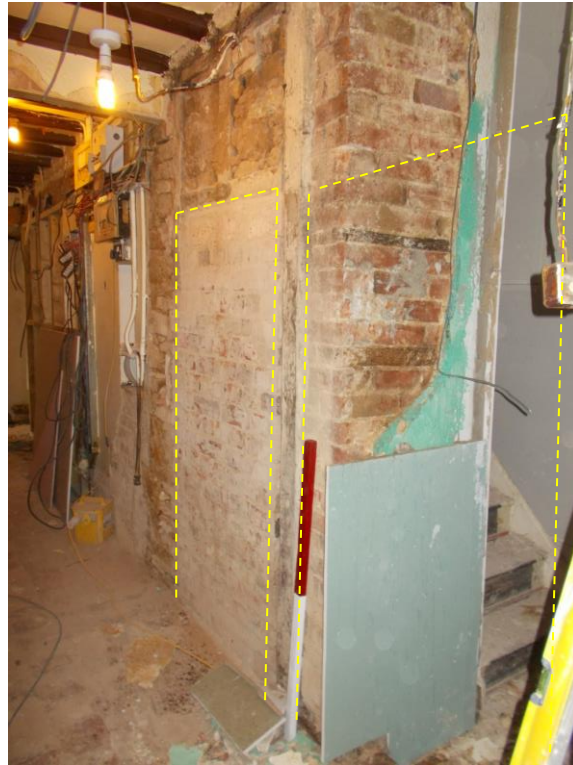


Fig 10: Oak frame of doorway connecting rooms G2 and G3 infilled with brickwork below lintel (left). Staircase newel (near side chamfered) immediately behind scale bar (right); 1m scale, looking south-east.

Due to the narrowness of the corridor created along this side of the building photographic recording was difficult however, on plan this arrangement becomes clear (Fig 4). The former (left-hand) doorway which retains its oak lintel within the wall infill is located central to the small room (G3) which fills the small south range. This was the original access from front to rear.

The eastern of the two posts forms the east side of the former doorway. To its West, and partly within the recess created to the south of the inglenook is room for a comfortable winding stair around the newel which survives with a chamfered east side. This chamfered newel also forms the west side of the door opening. The chamfered edge extends from top to bottom even above the height of the lintel which indicates that the space was open from floor to ceiling as would be necessary for a staircase. Part of the staircase must have projected into G3, but that was lost when the room was extended southwards and the current staircase added during the nineteenth century. A shallow scoop hollowed out of the thickness of the west wall also supports the idea that the

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staircase was located here. Similar examples have been observed and recorded elsewhere in houses of this period (Wood-Jones 1963, 206 & 210).

### *Room G3*

Of this room, once the small south projecting range, almost nothing now remains apart from some of the east and most of the west walls (Fig 4). The whole of the south wall has been removed when the space was extended during the nineteenth century. That wall was almost certainly gabled. It is possible, but not now provable, that there may have been a fireplace against that wall.

Of interest is a small section of the original external wall surface exposed during the current works when the false ceiling of the nineteenth-century range was added along the west side of the building, most recently housing pub toilets (Fig 4). Above the false ceiling and covered by the section of pitched roof above, the original external wall surface reveals that that side was also constructed using the limestone and ironstone banding (Fig 11).



Fig 11: Original west wall of the eighteenth-century building showing banding at first floor level. Note also blocked window placed to light the original stairwell. Looking east (and upward).

Situated between ground floor and first floor level a small window was also revealed in the roof space of the toilets addition (Fig 11). It is not clear how tall that window was originally as the lower part has been infilled with Fletton brickwork, and nothing of it could be seen from the interior of the original eighteenth-century range. As it survives it contains four panes within what appears to be a fixed frame beneath a timber lintel. The glass has been overpainted indicating that it was retained, but had gone out of use, before the west addition was added.

As has been noted above, the whole of the first floor had been re-fitted as part of the ongoing renovation and nothing could be seen of any original fabric. There would have been three rooms, basically reflecting the size and shape of those on the ground floor with the exception of that above G2 which would have been smaller due to the large flue of the inglenook rising through it against the west gable wall. There was a fireplace in this room, indicated by the survival of a hearth slab in the boarded floor. G3 would also have had part of the north-west corner occupied by the upper part of the stairwell.

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It is not known if there was occupation of the attic during this period, though it seems likely. The current roof appears to be an entirely replaced structure since it displays a shallower pitch as indicated by the surviving original steep gable parapet (see Fig 5). That the roof was not just re-covered with the present slate is indicated by the fact that the present eaves overhang the wall plane but lies beneath the original ridge line. This is visible only on the east gable, the west gable having been re-built. This indicates a re-built roof structure at a shallower angle rather than one simply re-covered. Any dormers would have been lost during this re-building.

### *The nineteenth-century additions*

Little can be said about the agglomeration of structures against the south side of the original building. Most appear on the First Edition Ordnance survey map of 1886 so must pre-date that period (Fig 3). All are built of red brick, by that period the most common building material in this area. All have slate roof coverings and either contemporary or later windows (Fig 12).



Fig 12: The nineteenth-century additions against the south side of the original building, looking north-east.

Internally all of the rooms have been significantly altered and most retain very flat modern plastered wall surfaces. The only internal feature observed was within the room added to the south of G3 (Fig 4). Against the east wall it was evident that there had been a fireplace since an area of sooting remained indicating the former position of the flue. Both of the cheeks to the fireplace had been subsequently removed and the hearth slab with it when the floor was re-tiled.

When the building was converted to use as a pub a beer cellar was built (Fig 4). Given its location, part of the south wall of the original north range and east wall of the south range had to be underpinned; this was done using brick (Fig 13).



Fig 13: The nineteenth-century cellar, looking south towards beer barrel chute. 1m scale.

The cellar was accessed via a steep flight of timber stairs located in the east side of room G3, enlarged by that date, with the staircase descending through a low doorway cut into to original east stone wall of the south range.

The cellar is a single rectangular space with a beer barrel chute located at the south end with an integral flight of engineering blue brick steps incorporated into it between the sloping timber rails down which the barrels would be rolled.

In the south-west corner is a contemporary drain to accommodate spillage and there are scars of racking along the east wall (Fig 13, at left). The floor is now of concrete.

Apart from a single room at first floor level above the addition on the south side of G3 all of the nineteenth-century additions are single storey.

### Conclusion

The former public house, The Fox and Hounds, began its life as a simple domestic building. As originally built it had three comfortable rooms on each floor. Three retain evidence indicating that they were provided with fireplaces. The larger of these, the inglenook, survives largely intact with only minor alterations. Of the other two, the one located against the east gable wall (G1) and that in the bedroom above, nothing now remains of the fireplace openings. It is possible that the small south range room also had a fireplace against its southern gable, but since that whole wall has been removed this cannot now be determined.

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Evidence for the location of the original connecting doorway between rooms G2 and G3 survives in the form of the complete door frame and adjacent to it the chamfered newel post for the staircase. Associated with the latter is a shallow scoop with the thickness of the west wall to accommodate the winding stair treads and a blocked window set between the ground and first floors which would have lit that space.

There remains nothing of other internal fixtures or fittings which relate to the early phase of the building.

Between 1894 and 1898 the building changed use to become partly a commercial property and was occupied by a beer seller, though it was not apparently a fully licensed public house. It is presumably to accommodate stock, customers and perhaps a larger family and staff that the building was enlarged with a series of brick-built rooms being added against the south side.

By 1940 the building is listed as The Fox and Hounds, a name which it retained until its recent closure. During at least seventy five years as a public house, extensive alterations have been made, robbing the earlier spaces of some, or all, of their earlier features. Some have been retained, such as the inglenook, since that feature provided a traditional focal point.

Elsewhere within the building, function has prevailed and little now remains to indicate the former or original use of any of the other spaces.

### **Bibliography**

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## Glossary of architectural terms

Ashlar – Masonry cut into square blocks, hewn to a smooth finish and generally laid in regular courses with tight joints.

Bichrome – Two coloured.

Bressumer (also sometimes breastsummer) – Horizontal beam or lintel supporting a wall, e.g. above a fireplace.

Casement - A window hinged on one side to allow opening.

Flettons – Common bricks made from the Oxford clays of the Peterborough area and widely used in the London and Midlands areas.

Gable – The triangular upper part of a wall supporting the end of a ridged roof.

Gable coping or parapet – A coping to a gable wall projecting above the roof.

Inglenook – Originally 'ingle' simply meant a fire burning on an open hearth. Erroneously (since c1840) used to describe large fireplace openings often also containing integral seats and sometimes bread ovens (The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, 1950).

Lintel – A horizontal stone or timber beam spanning an opening and supporting the wall above.

Newel – The central column or post around which a spiral or winding stair climbs.

Quoin – The external angle of a wall or building, quoins or quoin stones are the dressed stones forming the angle.



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## Appendix

### *OASIS data*

Project Name	Fox and Hounds, 32 Gold Street, Wellingborough
OASIS ID	Iainsode1-258033
Project Type	Building Recording
Originator	Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd
Project Manager	Iain Soden
Previous/future work	No
Current land use	In use as a building
Development type	Change of use
Reason for investigation	Planning condition
National grid reference	SP 88898 68411
Start/end dates of fieldwork	7 July 2016
Archive recipient	Northamptonshire Archive
Study area	100 sq m



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19 July 2016