



Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd

Modern living in an historic environment

A Level 2 building record of the former Monk and Minstrel Public House, Isham, Northamptonshire 2017

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Summary

This building is of 18th-century origin and was adopted by 1762 as The Red Lion, a public house which remained as such under different names until it closed in 2015. The building began as a small single-room structure, later with numerous, undated extensions to meet the changing needs of the licensing trade. Its ground floor interior was subsequently opened out and most early fabric, but the remaining shell, was lost when the pub was overhauled in around 2006.

Introduction

The former Monk and Minstrel Public House (previously the Old Red Lion) closed around 2006, was then upgraded, reopened and closed again in 2015, before a short period as a coffee house known as The Bear and Beignet. It closed finally in 2017. It lies fronting the west side of the A509 Kettering Road between Kettering to the north and Wellingborough to the south and is in a Conservation Area. Various proposals have been tabled by Seagrave Developments for its conversion to apartments or for its demolition, while its wider plot is set to become the site of a number of new houses. The site lies at 5 Kettering Road, Isham, NN14 1HQ; NGR: SP 8839 7403 (Fig 1).

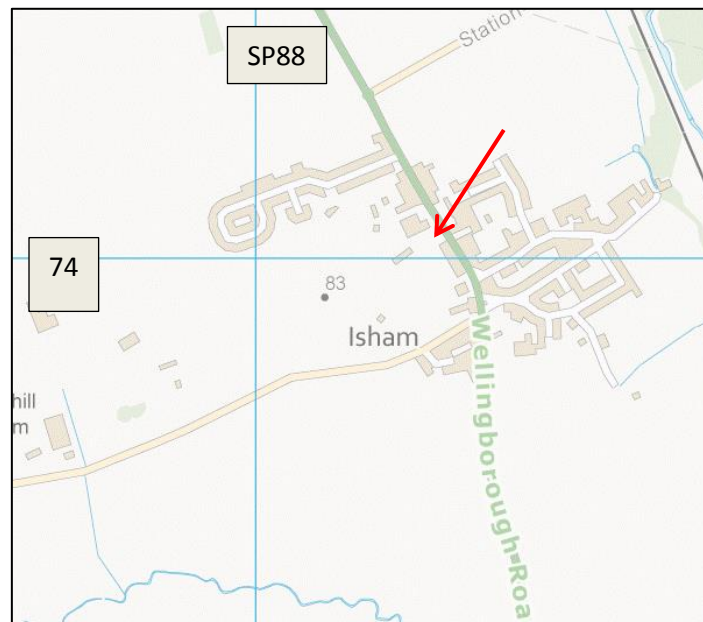


Fig 1: Site location (arrowed).

Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright and database right 2017

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Proposals elicited a Brief for Archaeological Recording from the Assistant Archaeological Advisor of Northamptonshire County Council, dated 6 June 2016, reflected in an approved Written Scheme of Investigation by Iain Soden Heritage Services of 8 June 2016. Fieldwork was put on hold during the last year of tenancy of the building as a coffee shop. Fieldwork took place on 3-7 July 2017, by Iain Soden assisted by Thomas and William Soden. Historical research was by Joe Prentice.

Historical background

Origins and running of the pub

The Red Lion is mentioned in 18th-century documents, particularly as the place where the old baronial court met on a number of occasions as early as 1762 (ex inf privately provided). It was the meeting place for the foundation of a Friendly Society in 1779. Clearly the building was already a focal place in the third quarter of the 18th century.

The Northamptonshire Record Office holds a set of documents for Northamptonshire called the 'Alehouse Recognizances'. Much of this is un-catalogued and efforts to unravel its data have for the moment ceased. Once thought to be of inestimable value, these cannot currently deliver the promise they once offered.

However, three recognizances were noted for 1822, 1824 and 1828, all listed as in Wellingborough Division. 1822 however, turned out to be 1821. They are each single vellum sheets, much like an indenture with simple lists of villages, names of licensees, 'sums' – presumably rents or legal fees- and a name of a person as surety. Only the last (1828) names the pub. There were no others for Wellingborough Division after that date.

1821

Name of person licensed-James Reynolds. Sum £10.

Name of sureties and place of residence-Joseph Reynolds, Isham. Sum £10.

Pub not named.

1824

Name of person licensed-James Reynolds. Sum £30.

Name of sureties and place of residence-Joseph Reynolds, Isham. Sum £20.

Pub not named.

1828

Name of person licensed-Edwards Reynolds . Sum £30.

Name of sureties and place of residence –John Maples, Isham. Sum £20.

Pub named as **Red Lion**.

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Edward Reynolds seems to have been a long-serving publican, since it is his name which takes up at the commencement of issue of Kelly's Commercial Directories in 1847. Thus Edward, who seems to have taken the pub over from a relative, James, was publican from at least 1828 to 1847.

At this point, as the Wellingborough Division Alehouse Recognizances drop off, Kelly's Directories take up.

1847 Edward Reynolds -Red Lion PH

1854 Mrs Sarah Reynolds –Red Lion PH (in the same edition William Bayes listed as boot and shoe maker, see next vol).

1869 William Bayes- Old Red Lion PH.

From this date onwards the pub was called the **Old Red Lion** without exception until at least 1940.

1877-98 John Ayer Roughton.

1903-6 George Johnson.

1910-24 John Lewis.

1928-40 George Frederick Abbott.

c1950-78 Fred Nobles (living memory)

c1978- P Sandbrook (living memory)

Historic maps

The Isham Inclosure map of 1779 (NRO) shows no buildings other than the church so is of no value in this case. However, the buildings of the pub and its plot, together with the wider plot to side and rear, can all be discerned (if only just) on the Ordnance Surveyors drawing of c1810. It is not possible to suggest which parts of the pub may have been built and which had not by that date.



Fig 2: Ordnance Survey, Surveyors edition c1810. The Red Lion is arrowed, where it is clearly the most northerly building of the village which lies on the west side of the main road.

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The First Edition of the Ordnance Survey national coverage shows the pub, but it is in insufficient detail to suggest the exact shape of the pub plan or any detail of its layout at that date (1886). In a plan of 1910 the exact layout is much more reliable, and it is clear that it was once accompanied by a whole range of outbuildings, of which only a vestige now remains, replaced by modern timber sheds. These would probably have comprised principally stables and which appear to have extended across the boundary of the adjacent property to the south. This remains consistent in a plan of 1937 (both below) although the outbuildings have begun to disappear.



Fig 3: Lying almost on a map fold of OS 1886 Sheet 32NE, the pub is marked (arrowed). However, it is perhaps too small to use as a guide to phasing, however tentative. It also held an OS benchmark, now gone, presumably lost in the re-fronting of the building.

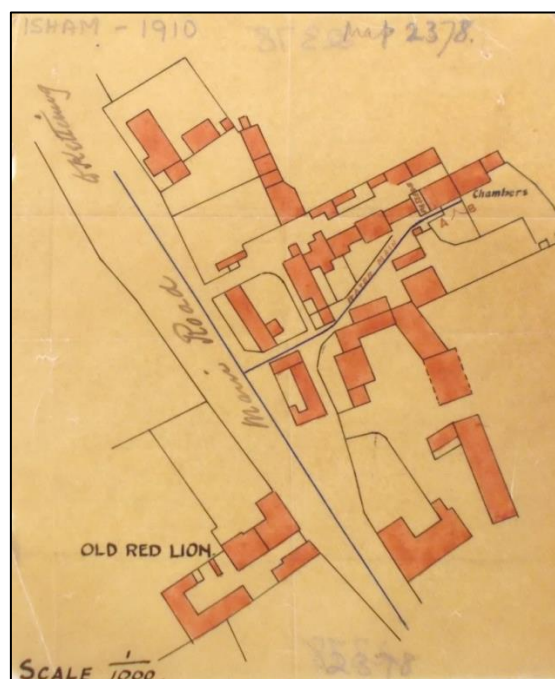


Fig 4: Plan of 1910 showing the pub (bottom left) with outbuildings (NRO: Map 2378). At this date the pub, the Old Red Lion, remains the most northerly building in the village on the west side of the main road.

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Fig 5: Extract from a plan for public street lighting of 1937 showing the pub (centre) and outbuildings.

Other sources

There are very few photographs of the pub in the public domain, which is perhaps due to its less than picturesque location on the extremely busy A509. One in the Francis Frith collection online c1950 does show the earthen bank alongside the pub where the car park now is. This may be the rose garden which remains in local public memory. The bank and the garden were totally removed to create the expansive modern car park for the pub. The photograph can be found at: <http://www.francisfrith.com/isham/photos>

A British Pathé news report from the 1950s joyfully relates how an eccentric zoo keeper from Wellingborough Zoo would take home a lion from work which would visit the pub and drink at the bar with the locals. The film does show the front and the unaltered south side of the pub (no longer visible) but in no great detail. Little of the interior is shown, even by accidental inclusion.

The clip can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7cnchljaCec>

The building exterior

The front of this former pub is of roughly coursed Northamptonshire Sand with Ironstone, the first floor being rendered. Two mullioned windows, part stone and part modern coad-type stone, lie either side of a redundant entrance. At the first floor are three 20th-century metal-framed windows. Brick chimneys protrude at the centre of the end gables above a roof which is of Welsh slate. A break in the slope indicates where the right-hand third (when viewed from the road) forms part of a separate, slightly smaller building. There is no further indication of this division, which has been lost in a re-fronting of the building to present the current façade.

At the south (left hand side viewed from the road) is a low single-storey building, partly of limestone and partly of brick under a low slate roof, which is clearly an addition and unbalances the road-side façade of the building. Internally this extension holds toilets for the former pub and a separate catering kitchen. Little of the former south side of the building is visible, except above this addition.

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What can be seen, however, is a butt-joint in the stonework, showing that that the rear wing is itself secondary to the building.



Fig 6: The roadside frontage of the pub, unbalanced by the addition of the toilets to the left. The stonework of the main frontage differs from all other faces and the fenestration reflects a 'completed' frontage.

The accessible north side of the pub faces its former car park and here is the modern entrance, via a modern brick porch. Visible historic materials show that the rear of the front range was originally predominantly of limestone with occasional inclusions of ironstone blocks. However the introduction of six courses of ironstone show where the roof was once raised to create the modern kitchen F2. This cannot be seen at the front or side due to render.

Twentieth-century additions mean that little of the older side fabric can be seen from the outside, but the rearmost wing which includes a modern concrete tile outshut-roof is predominantly of limestone. In this rearmost wing there is a reduced ground floor window, and underneath it the blocked remains of what may be a cellar light.

A concentration of brick at the apex of the rear-most gable is all that is left of a truncated former chimney. There appears to have never been any attempt to tie the front and rear roofs together and both stand independently.

Around the rear wrap a number of single-storey modern brick extensions, mainly flat asphalt-roofed stores, which are built of Fletton-type brick of c1940-80 and blockwork and relate to the changing needs of catering in a pub.

To the side and rear of the pub, the exterior ground level is noticeably higher, by about 1m. Only at the frontage (and formerly on the south) was level access always seemingly possible. Thus the building sits in a deliberately-shaped cut-out within rising ground to the north and west.

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Fig 7: The northern side and rear of the pub; scale 2m. Note the modern brick porch. The blocked cellar light can be seen (but see below for detail).



Fig 8: Stonework changes on the rear of the front wing, showing where the roof of the extension was heightened to create a first floor (F2). Stonework of the rear wing too shows differences and a butt joint. Note the independence of the two main roofs.

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Fig 9: External evidence for a cellar – note the blocked low cellar light. Also the narrowed ground floor window; scale 2m

The building interiors

Ground Floor

Although in recent times the door has been fixed shut, the traditional entrance into the pub was formerly by the central doorway in the frontage, into what was the main public bar (G1). Latterly this has been a coffee-shop seating area and the room contains nothing which might relate to the former public house, neither fixture nor fitting. It has been extensively opened-out and refurbished in modern times, and even the principal, load-bearing walls have been punctuated by doorways, viewing ports and table-nooks. A former axial beam location is preserved in the ceiling, while a second one (now probably an RSJ in the ceiling) may mark a former inglenook location at one end where the last coffee-shop counter still stands. Here might have been the original stair winding tightly up at the side of the inglenook. A fireplace has been added at the other end.

A rear seating area leads off the frontage space, but the modern, upgraded décor is carried through without break (G2). Here a former fireplace has been successively narrowed during the 20th century, but the fireplace surround, presumably once a period-piece, has been torn out. The pattern of former beams, now probably RSJs, in the ceiling suggest that a service stair once ascended here to the first floor.

Beyond this lies the rearmost portion of the historic property (G3), which again, bears the same modern décor and finishes throughout. An uneven floor suggests that two walls have been taken down, possibly either side of a set of stairs, and the majority of the room it is suggested once stood over a cellar, now probably filled-in. The wall between G2 and G3 is exceptionally thick and this appears to be modern boxing-in on the G3 side, probably to hide some unsightly finishing. A blocked doorway lies in the back wall, but is best seen from the outside where it is very visible in a modern extension (store) to the rear of the property.

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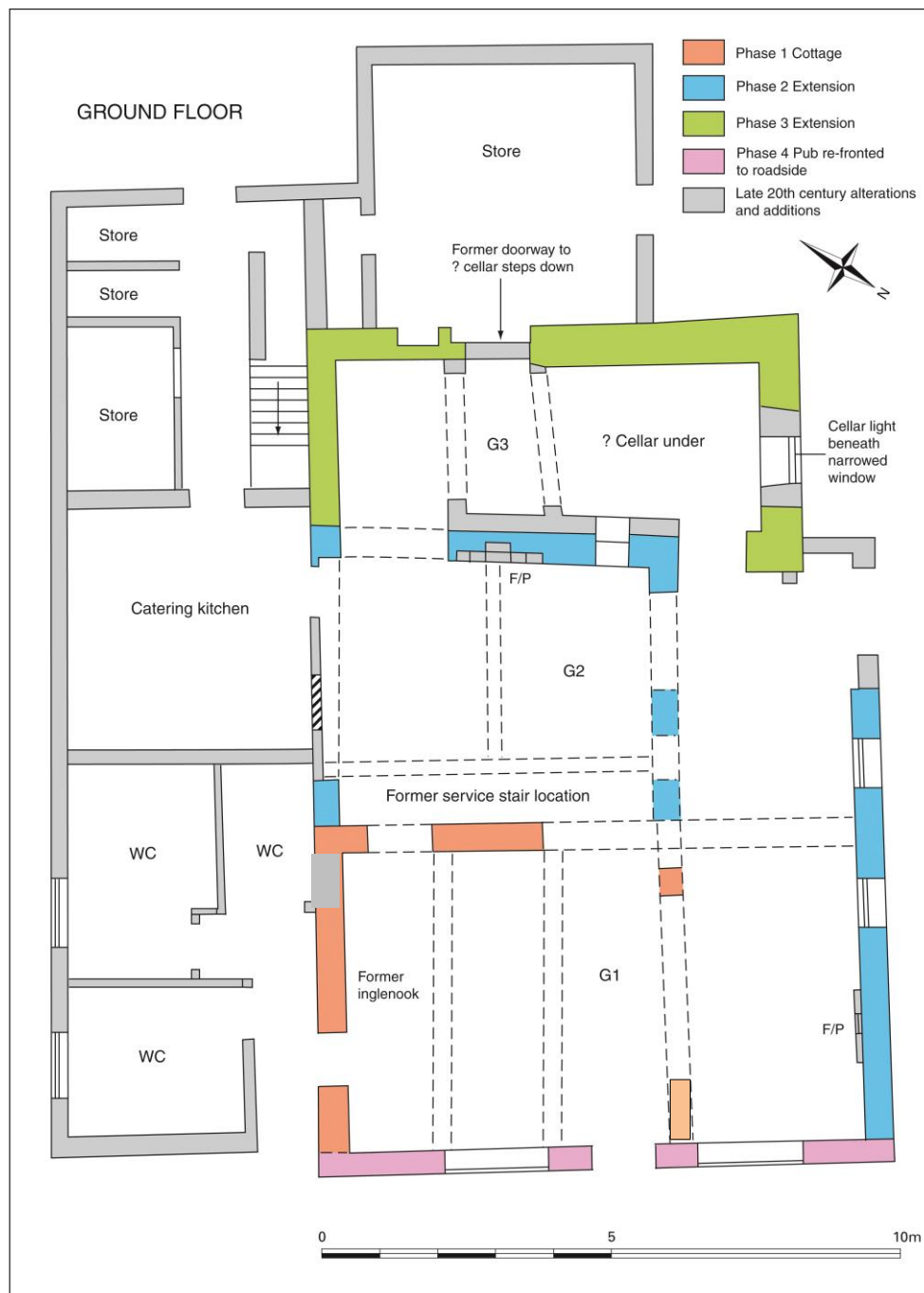


Fig 10: The former Monk and Minstrel, ground floor plan, phased (Andy Isham). The first three phases appear to be fully those mapped in 1910 (Fig 4).

A range of modern brick and blockwork single-storey extensions wrap around the rear and one side of the property. These are all lacking in any architectural interest and have been built and fitted out as modern catering conveniences, WCs and other stores all serving the modern public house and premises when cooking and serving food and drink.

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Fig 11: View looking south along G1 to the food counter, the former inglenook, marked by an RSJ above. To extreme left and right in this view are the truncated ends of the original first (north) gable.



Fig 12: View looking north across G1, fully opened out. Note the former axial beam above. To left, the original rear wall has been all but totally removed, leaving just an RSJ to support the fabric above.

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Fig 13: Former fireplace in the west gable of the old rear service wing (G2). The fireplace had been successively reduced during the 20th century, blocked with Fletton bricks



Fig 14: The extension furthest to the rear (G3), looking towards the reduced window. There may be a cellar underneath with steps down in the foreground. To left is a blocked doorway (d).

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First Floor

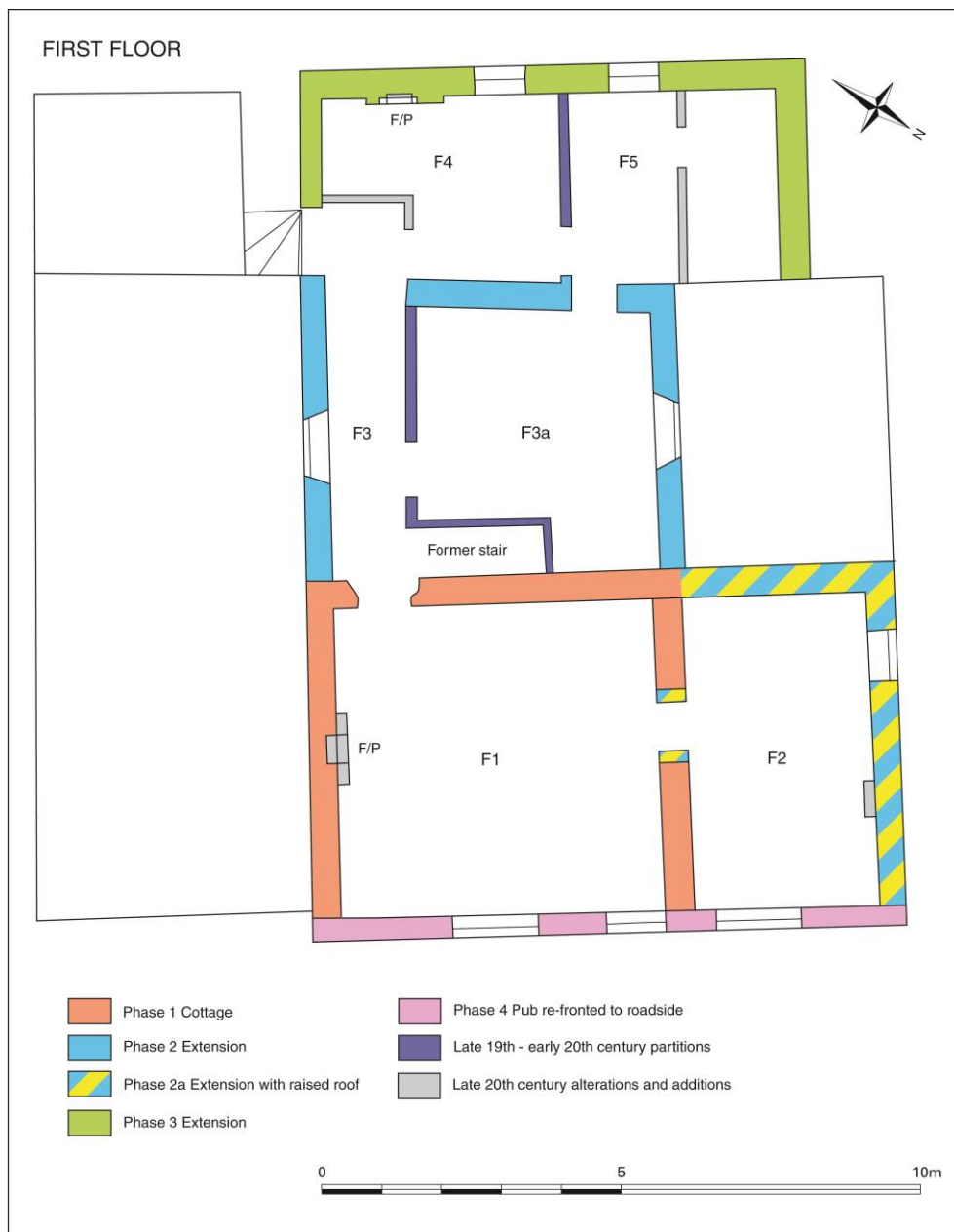


Fig 15: The former Monk and Minstrel, first floor plan, phased (Andy Isham).

Above the former public bar lies a bedroom (F1) and a small kitchenette (F2). These may once have been two bedrooms but the conversion allowed the publican more recently to inhabit a self-contained flat. The three windows are 20th-century steel-framed which have been formed in modern embrasures with tiled sills; there is no sign of earlier reveals.

The external evidence that F2 includes a roof that has been raised suggests that that room may not once have existed (initially when built it would probably have been a simple roof space), meaning that the door linking F1 and F2 must have been punched through the original gable.

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Fig 16: The bedroom in the front (F1), looking south. There may have been an old fireplace here or the top of an inglenook in G1 below, but the surviving evidence is all modern



Fig 17: Secondary brick chimney added to the interior of F2. This served an added fireplace at the north end of G1.

When the second phase structure was added to the rear, any early winding stair was replaced by one in the rear wing. Although evidence on the ground floor is preserved only in the ceiling beam-arrangement, at first floor the stair is boxed in with tongue-and groove match-boarding. This has been preserved only as a cupboard accessed from the landing/corridor F3.

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Bedroom F4 and bathroom F5 have been created out of a single former room with a fireplace. The chimney to this has been lost and the room compromised by the creation of the most recent landing and set of stairs, which rise on the outside of the older core, put in to create a separately-accessed flat/apartment. This effected total separation of public consumption/entertainment space and private home above the pub business. None of the business-related single storey extensions crossed over in any way with this apartment.

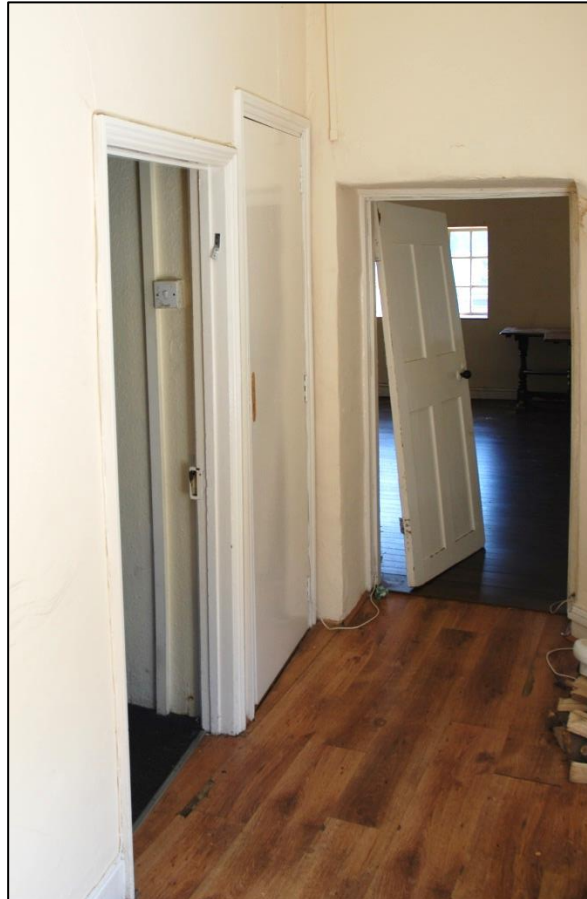


Fig 18: Former boxed-in stair doorway between the doorways to F1 (right) and F3a (left), viewed from corridor F3. It was retained as a walk-in cupboard



Fig 19: Blocked fireplace in F4. The chimney on the end of the gable has been previously removed.

Conclusions

This former 18th-century single-cell building has been successively extended to form a pub which was planned for the first time in any detail when by 1910 it had reached its apogee. Modern catering, hygiene and welfare requirements, combined with modern tastes in décor and finishes, have resulted in the interiors being sterilised of anything with any age and character. Many of the load-bearing walls have been removed, leaving virtually just an outer shell. Modern extensions for catering etc have smothered the historic plan further.

There is little on the ground which can be related to the history of this long-lived former pub, other than the basic plan, which still preserves some simple phasing. Nothing is closely datable.

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Appendix

OASIS data

Project Name	The former Monk and Minstrel PH, Isham
OASIS ID	iainsode1-290492
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 (unoccupied)
Development type	Residential
Reason for investigation	Planning Condition
National grid reference	SP 8839 7403
Start/end dates of fieldwork	4-7 July 2017
Archive recipient	Northamptonshire Archive
Study area	c250 sq m



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19 July 2017