



Dolday Warehouse

Rear of 29 Broad street, Worcester

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A programme of archaeological work

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SUMMARY

In July and September 2013 historic building recording was carried out at the Warehouse, 29 Broad Street, Worcester in advance of a development for change of use from multi-use storage facility to an 18 bedroomed house of multiple occupancy including internal and external alterations to facilitate change of use.

During the 18th and 19th centuries the timber framed buildings along the Dolday were rebuilt or refurbished in brick, the 1795 map, albeit schematic clearly shows a ribbon of buildings running west along both sides of the Dolday, in the 18th century this road was a 'back' lane to Newport Street itself a main route from the city's upper quay.

The OS First Edition (1886) clearly shows the warehouse as an individual building. Large malt-houses, lying about two hundred feet to the west of the warehouse, stand out against a background of the humble dwellings crowded around numerous small courts, court number 13 is adjacent to the west of the warehouse.

The warehouse is first mentioned in the trade directory of 1837, when 29 Broad Street was recorded as being occupied by bakers and flour dealers named Homes, Robert Pritchard. It is safe to assume that by this time the warehouse which is probably of a Georgian date, was already an established business meeting an increased demand for corn brought about by a steadily increasing urban population.

By 1900 the prosperity of the warehouse continued and with some diversification of business, it was occupied by two traders, a corn and seed factor and grocers. The area suffered economic decline and by the beginning of the 20th century it had acquired a reputation for squalor and crime. The buildings were mostly demolished in the 1930s, and the old topography lost when All Saints Road cut the Dolday in two. The ware-house, presently attached to a retail outlet on Broad Street (no.29) is all that survives above ground of this ancient street.

INTRODUCTION (figs. 1 & 2)

Location and scope of project

This document sets out the results of a programme of historic building recording carried out at the Warehouse, 29 Broad Street, Worcester in July and September 2013 at the request of Ed Deacon from Principal Design Architectural Services acting on behalf of the owner Mr Andrew Underwood. The development is for change of use from multi-use storage facility to an 18 bedroomed house of multiple occupancy including internal and external alterations to facilitate change of use. The development was carried out under planning permission granted by Worcester City Council (planning ref: P13D0050/L13D0010) conditional on a programme of approved archaeological work in accordance with a brief (Dinn, 13/2, 14th March 2013) issued by Worcester City Heritage & Design Archive (Archaeology). The brief required the implementation of a programme of archaeological building investigation and recording prior to the conversion of the existing buildings as outlined in this document.

The warehouse and the site topography

The site is located in the centre of the city of Worcester on the north side of Broad Street. The warehouse at the rear of no.29 is currently disused. The building is registered on the Worcester City Historic Environment Record (WCM 99339) as of historic and architectural significance. The planning authority was advised therefore that a programme of historic building recording and interpretation was required as a condition of consent.

THE DOLDAY; HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Derived from the old Saxon Dolda, Good Meadow, The Dolday originally formed the back lane to the medieval suburb from the Saxon town along Broad Street to the river bridge formerly at the end of Newport Street.

In the 13th century the tower of the 12th century St. Clement's Church, at the north-west end, was built into the city wall and rebuilt in timber after its destruction in the civil war. The church was partly demolished in 1823 and the ruins survived well into the 19th century (the replacement was sited on the opposite bank where most of the parishioners lived anyway). In 1859 the old graveyard was used as a site for an iron church in the attempt to end Sunday working on the rivers and canals.

During the medieval period the Dolday developed into a proper street, lined with timber-framed houses and became the centre of Worcester's clothing industry, the river end most suitable for the dyers and weavers and the cloth being dried to the east, on the site of the Blackfriars, between the city wall and Broad Street.

During the 18th and 19th centuries the timber framed buildings were rebuilt or refurbished in brick but after the construction of the existing bridge in the late 18th century, at Bridge Street, the area suffered economic decline and by the beginning of the 20th century it had acquired a reputation for squalor and crime. The buildings were mostly demolished in the 1930s, and the old topography lost when All Saints Road cut the Dolday in two. The ware-house, presently attached to a retail outlet on Broad Street (no.29) is all that survives above ground of this ancient street.

THE WAREHOUSE (figs. 3 & 4)

The warehouse faces north-east and consists of two ranges parallel to the street with the rear range offset to the south east, probably to increase the amount of exterior wall available for fenestration. There are three full storeys above two large and lofty brick-vaulted half-basements, and the size of the roof-joists suggests that this space, hipped at the south-east ends, was also used originally. Most of the hand-made bricks tend to darker reds, mauves and greys, and a feature is made of the darkest alternating with the brightest reds in the soldiers of the segmental arches over the openings.

The north-west end of the building is presently rendered over obscuring evidence of the building once adjoining the front-range but original window openings have been uncovered since the demolition of the late 20th century room built in the angle of the two ranges at this end. The faint remains of an old painted shop sign can be seen high up on the rendered end of the front-range. Each floor was provided with a door in the centre of the façade flanked by windows and the basement was entered through a doorway, now blocked, toward the south-east.

Continued use, recently as furniture showrooms, has ensured that internally the plastered walls and paintwork have been well maintained and little of historic interest is visible except for the massive chamfered floor-beams throughout and the dated cast-iron column on the principal floor associated with the insertion of a staircase at the back of the rear range. The current replacement and addition of staircases, on the top floor, has exposed an area of original (1/4 inch) render at the north-west end of the front-range, facing the windows, with evidence of two different and repeated foliate motifs (stencilled?).

Access, via an inserted stair, to the south-east end of the rear basement, from the retail outlet on Broad Street has recently been floored over but nearby and next to a large block of brickwork in the south corner is the lime-wash print of an earlier stair (Plate 31). A number of in-filled features in the floor and vault suggest that a this space has been used as a boiler room. The regularly spaced sockets around the north corner for shelving are an original feature.

The basements are connected by a wide opening under an intersecting vault directly opposite the steps down from the street, the timbers which formed the front of the treads are lost. The blocked feature in the brick floor immediately in front of the stair may have accommodated the lower end of timbers to facilitate

the moving of goods. There are other features in the floor of unknown purpose and also a drainage channel.

The building was originally provided with fireplaces in each of the upper rooms. These were located at the back of the front-range and the west corner of the rear-range, where the ground floor fireplace was removed and replaced by the existing main access opposite the inserted staircase (1883?). Both stacks have been completely removed and the fireplaces blocked, the brick grate survives on the top floor of the rear range.

The roofs are of a traditional construction with evidence of some re-used fabric and the joists between the tie-beams have bare-faced-soffit tenons with diminished-haunches. The rafter couples meet in open mortice and tenon joints.

Large additional timbers and the sawn off remains of others together with associated bolts are all that survives of a superstructure holding the hoist mechanism in the middle of the front roof. When this was removed, presumably at the same time as the stacks were taken down, this section of roof was rebuilt with a ridge board.

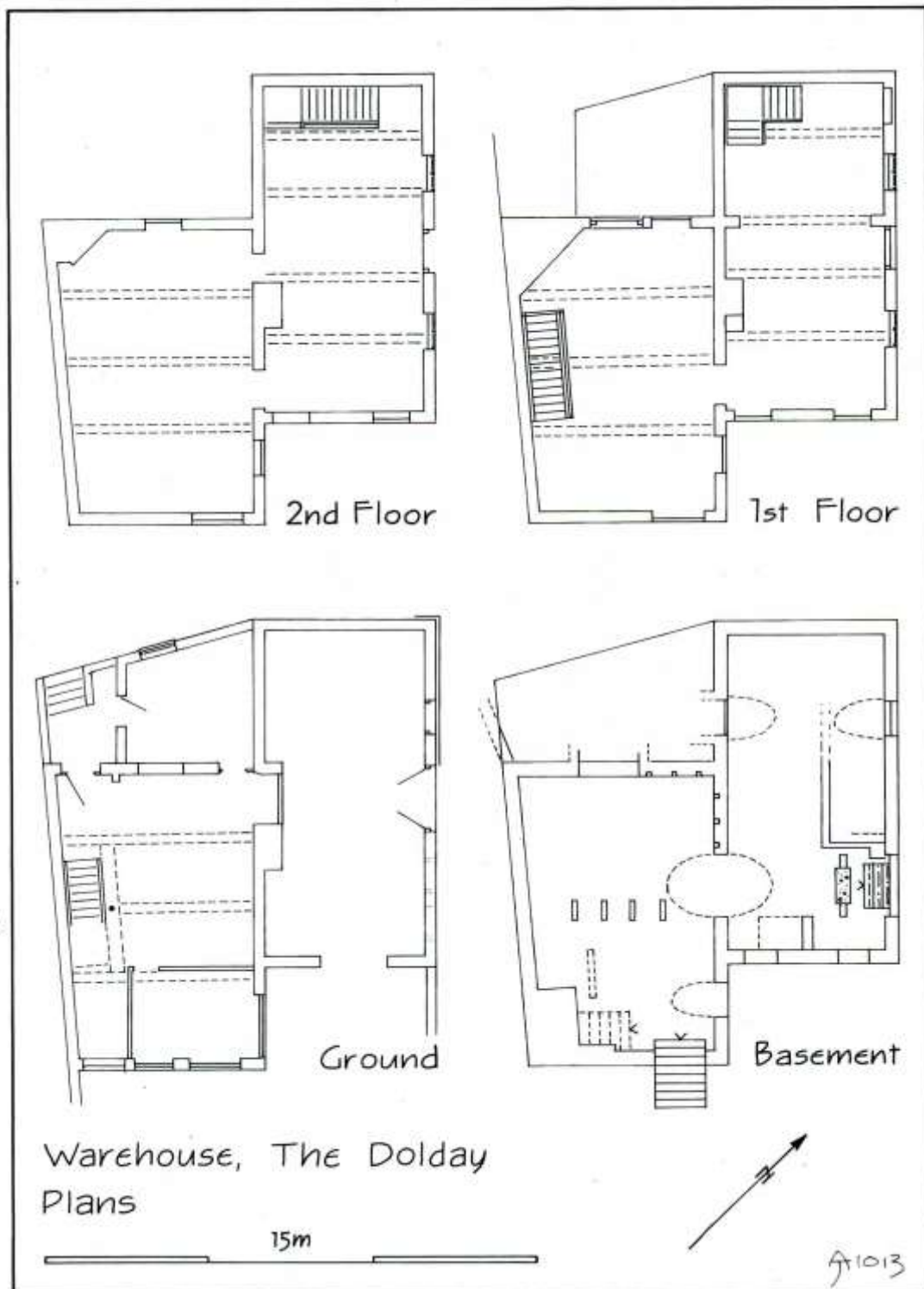


Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Plate 1; upper part of front elevation.



Plate 2; lower part of front elevation.



Plate 3; central goods door on principal floor.



Plate 4; central goods door on the first floor.



Plate 5; central goods door on the second floor.



Plate 6; first floor window on front elevation.



Plate 7; view of the warehouse from the west prior to 2013 works.



Plate 8; view of warehouse from the west during 2013 works.



Plate 9; view to the south on the principal floor of rear range.



Plate 10; view of stopped-chamfer on beam over principal floor.



Plate 11; view to the north-west at first floor level within the rear-range.



Plate 12; detail within the north corner at first floor level of front range.



Plate 13; view to the north at second floor within the rear range.



Plate 14; remains of second floor fireplace in the west corner of the rear range.



Plate 15; stencilled decoration(1) on the second floor of the front range.



Plate 16; stencilled decoration (2) on the second floor of the front range.



Plate 17; view within the front roof to the north.



Plate 18; view within the front roof to the north during construction.



Plate 19; view within the rear roof to the south-east during construction.



Plate 20; roof detail at north-west end of front roof.



Plate 21; remains of hoist structure within the front roof.



Plate 22; detail of carpenter's number within the front roof.



Plate 23; detail of carpenter's numbers within the rear roof.



Plate 24; another detail of carpenter's numbers within the rear roof.



Plate 25; and another detail of carpenter's numbers within the rear roof.



Plate 26; view of the front basement to the north-west.



Plate 27; view of the front basement to the south-east.



Plate 28; view of the front basement to the north.



Plate 29; view to the west showing the front and rear basements.



Plate 30; view of the rear basement to the north-west.



Plate 31; view within the rear basement to the south-east.



Plate 32; view within the rear basement to the north.



Plate 33; view of the rear basement floor to the west.



Fig. 5; Dolday 1886, sketch reconstruction from the west

DISCUSSION (figs. 5, 6 & 7)

As mentioned earlier, during the 18th and 19th centuries the timber framed buildings along the Dolday were rebuilt or refurbished in brick, the 1795 map, albeit schematic clearly shows a ribbon of buildings running west along both sides of the Dolday, in the 18th century this road was a 'back' lane to Newport Street itself a main route from the city's upper quay.

The OS First Edition (1886) is the earliest reliable mapping evidence and clearly shows the warehouse as an individual building. Large malt-houses, lying about two hundred feet to the west of the warehouse, stand out against a background of the humble dwellings crowded around numerous small courts, court number 13 is adjacent to the west of the warehouse.

The warehouse is first mentioned in the trade directory of 1837, when 29 Broad Street was recorded as being occupied by bakers and flour dealers named Homes, Robert Pritchard. It is safe to assume that by this time the warehouse which is probably of a Georgian date, was already an established business meeting an increased demand for corn brought about by a steadily increasing urban population in Britain's cities as a result of industrial expansion in during the first half of the 19th century.

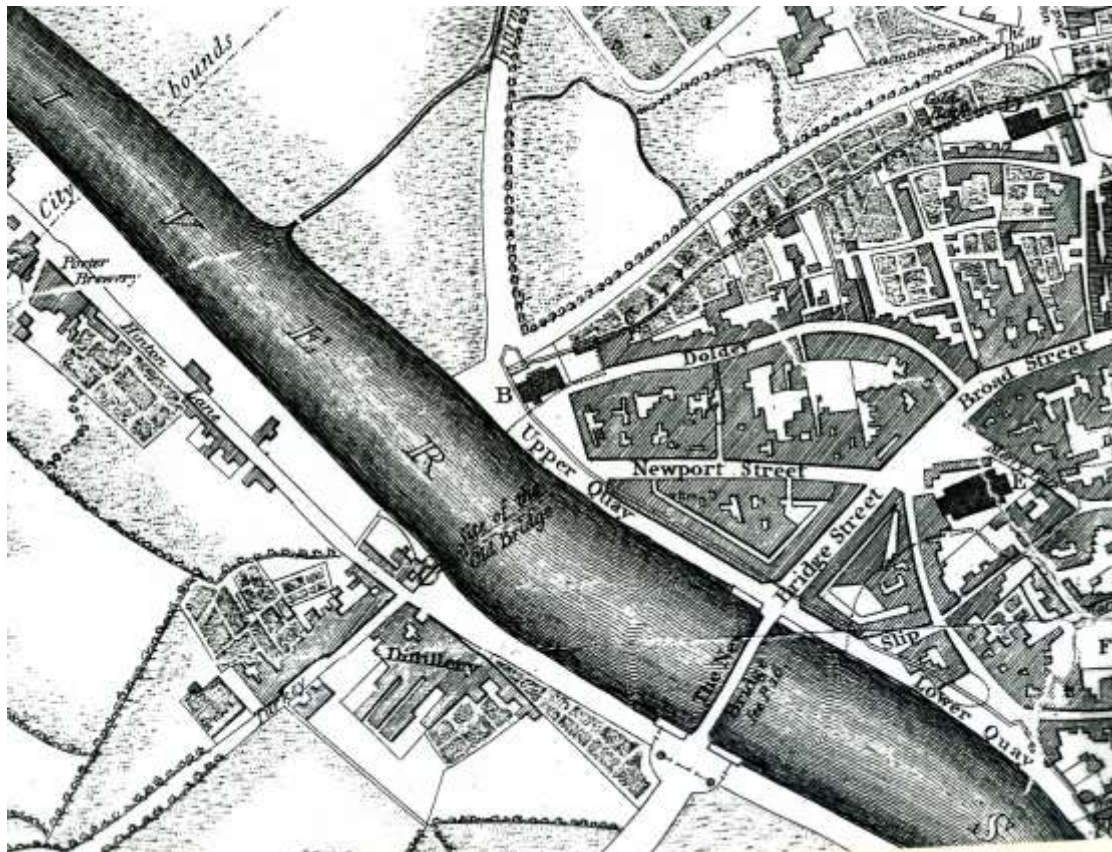


Fig. 6; Dolday 1795

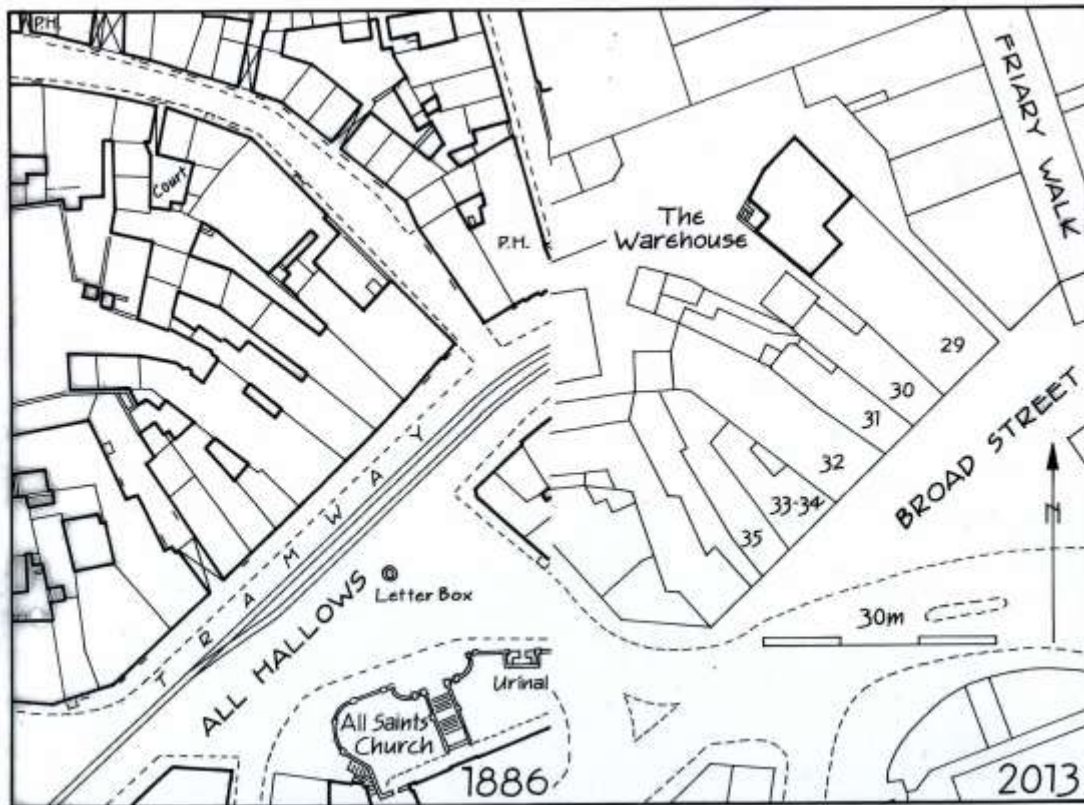


Fig 7; Topographical changes 1886-2013

No doubt its siting will have been prompted by having direct access to the River Severn and construction of the existing bridge in the late 18th century, at Bridge Street would have resulted in an increased amount of trade including corn. Evidence for some domestic occupation of the warehouse by perhaps a caretaker was discovered in the top floor where stencilling survives on parts of a wall. Former fireplaces will have kept the corn dry.

By 1900 the prosperity of the warehouse continued and with some diversification of business, it was occupied by two traders, a corn and seed factor and grocers Spreckley E and Co. Ltd. This situation continued in 1910 and 1915 and although ownership changed hands to Anderson Henry Partington corn and seed merchant and Pratt & Hind Grocers, the corn and grocers trade continued to flourish in the Dolday during this period. The new grocers occupied the building up until 1955-6, although by 1937 ownership was solely in the name of the grocer Frank William Pratt suggesting that by this time the corn business was no longer profitable.

The area suffered economic decline and by the beginning of the 20th century it had acquired a reputation for squalor and crime. The buildings were mostly demolished in the 1930s, and the old topography lost when All Saints

Road cut the Dolday in two. The ware-house, presently attached to a retail outlet on Broad Street (no.29) is all that survives above ground of this ancient street.



Plate 34; warehouse 1950s, view from the north, the two-storey building with double doors inserted into the east angle has been replaced by a single storey structure (courtesy of Worcester City Council).



Plate 35; Pratt grocers shop front on Broad Street, view from the east



Plate 36; the junction of Dolday and Broad Street in the 1960s, view from the south-east.



Plate 37; north-west elevation in the 1950s, the sign F.W Pratt Ltd in the picture is now gone, the paintwork having weathered away to reveal an earlier sign the lettering of which is consistent with that on the front and shown in plate 34. The lowest floor of the three-storey flat roofed infill of the west angle, probably built following the demolition of adjacent properties in the 1930s. survived until the present study.



Plate 38; old photograph showing Pratt Stores van which would have spent the night in the garage shown on Plate 37 opposite.

METHODOLOGY

Aims and objectives

The objective of the historic building recording was to obtain a detailed analysis and description of the history, character, and date, techniques of construction, phasing and significance of the structure. Primary and secondary sources relating to the building were consulted and relevant information included in this report.

Documentary search, fieldwork & recording

The Worcester Historic Environment Record (HER) was consulted with a search carried out over a 500m radius centred on the site. Significant aspects of the data within the HER that is relevant to the site, including an analysis of historical mapping was used in this report.

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