

**1-3 Regent Street,
Hinckley, Leicestershire:
Historic Building Record**

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For Alliance Traders Limited

Checked by Project Manager

Signed: **Date:**.....

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University of Leicester Archaeological Services

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1-3 Regent Street, Hinckley: Historic Building Record

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1-3 Regent Street, Hinckley: Historic Building Record

Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services carried out an historic building survey of numbers 1-3 Regent Street, Hinckley, Leicestershire during alterations to convert the property into a public bar and restaurant. The frontage range of number 1 contained substantial fragments of a jettied, close-studded, timber-framed building constructed after 1586. The frontage ranges of number 1 and number 3 were both remodelled in the late 18th or early 19th century and apparently constituted two separate properties by that time. The range immediately behind the number 3 frontage was a brick and timber-framed structure attributable to the late 17th or early 18th century. Beyond this were a series of 18th and 19th century cottages and/or workshops. Both properties were in use as commercial premises by the late 19th century and may have functioned as shops long before this. Most of the timber framing within the frontage range of number 1 was removed in the course of the alterations.

1. Introduction

Numbers 1-3 Regent Street, Hinckley, Leicestershire (SP 4255 9389) were converted into a public bar and restaurant (the 'café bar') by Alliance Traders Ltd in 2003. Historic building recording in respect of this work was a condition of planning and conservation area consent. This report presents the results of that investigation undertaken by University of Leicester Archaeological Services' Historic Buildings Team (ULAS).

2. Background to the Project

Following submission of development proposals an archaeological assessment of the site and buildings was carried out in 2001 (ULAS report 2001-125). This established that the frontage range, ostensibly of late 18th - early 19th century date, included elements of an earlier timber-framed structure; behind the frontage range of number 3 there was a brick and timber-framed building of late 17th or early 18th century date and beyond this various brick-built cottages and/or workshops. To the rear of number 1 was a single-storey brick-built range. For ease of description the various ranges are nominally identified by letter codes **A-G** in the following account, as illustrated on Figure 2.

Limited intrusive investigation was undertaken to provide further information on range **C**, behind the number 3 frontage, which was initially proposed for demolition. This confirmed the likely date and transitional form of the structure, which consisted of a brick-built shell with timber-framed internal walls and roof structure (ULAS report 2001-150). Subsequently the development plans were modified in order to retain this range of building.

A *Brief for Archaeological Recording Work* was issued in August 2002 by the Senior Planning Archaeologist, Heritage and Resources Team, Department of Planning and Transportation, Leicestershire County Council, in her capacity as archaeological advisor to Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, in consultation with the Conservation Officer at Hinckley and Bosworth. This stipulated that a Historic Building Survey should be carried out, in accordance with standards set down in the RCHME guidelines *Recording Historic Buildings: A Descriptive Specification* (1996, 3rd edition). Where the development work entailed total loss of historic fabric a Level 3 record was required, otherwise the record would be to Level 2 standard.

In September 2002 ULAS produced a *Design Specification*, on behalf of the client, setting out the proposed methods of working, standards of recording, etc. necessary to meet the requirements of the Brief, which was approved by the Senior Planning Archaeologist.

Related reports are listed below:

1-3 Regent Street, Hinckley, Leicestershire: An Archaeological Assessment. ULAS report 2001/125.

1-3 Regent Street, Hinckley, Leicestershire: Report on further investigation of the range to the rear of no.3. ULAS report 2001/150.

Hinckley, 1-3 Regent Street: Brief for Archaeological Recording Work Heritage and Resources Team, Department of Planning and Transportation, Leicestershire County Council, August 2002.

Design Specification for Historic Building Recording: 1-3 Regent Street, Hinckley, Leicestershire. ULAS dated 05/09/2002.

‘Hinckley, 1&3 Regent Street (SP 4255 9389)’ in ‘Archaeology in Leicestershire and Rutland 2003’, *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* Vol. 78 (2004), 165-166.

See also: *Hinckley Town Centre Conservation Area: Historic Buildings Appraisal* (2000) Peter F. Ryder.

3. Fieldwork 2003

Site visits were made between January and June 2003 during the initial strip out and principal structural works. Historic building survey drawings were prepared, based on architectural survey drawings produced by Isherwood McCann (drawing numbers 22078-EX-01 & 22078-EX-02), with additional hand-measured survey as necessary. Field notes and a photographic record were made. Groundwork in advance of the construction of a new building in the yard area to the rear of number 1 was monitored but no buried archaeological remains were observed; considerable disturbance had occurred as a result of the installation of buried services at various times in the past.

4. Report and Archive

Preparation of this report has involved the collation of primary survey data with information derived from historical sources in order to arrive at an understanding of the form, function, age and development sequence of the various buildings on the site. Presentation of the survey drawings follows the conventions defined by the RCHME/EH in *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (English Heritage 2006). The project archive will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums Service under accession code: X.A10 2007.

5. General Description of the Site and Buildings

The property at 1-3 Regent Street, Hinckley, is a long, narrow plot on the west side of Regent Street, opposite the Market Place (Figure 1; Photo. 1). Before the late 19th century numbers 1-7 Regent Street were considered to be part of Market Place (Knight and Knight 1993, 16). The narrow plots on the west side of Regent Street, typically c.11m wide, appear to reflect the

arrangement of medieval burgage plots. Occupying the street frontage position at number 1 (range **A**) and number 3 (range **B**) are 3-storey rendered brick buildings of late Georgian type, now known to have been built as separate structures, indicating that the plot had been subdivided by the late 18th century, if not earlier. At ground floor level both properties had late 20th century shop fronts and interiors (Photo. 2). On the north side of the plot, a passageway provided access from the street to a yard at the rear of the property. Elements of a timber-framed structure were apparent in the passageway wall (Photo. 13), indicating an earlier origin to the frontage range of number 1 (range **A**). Behind the number 3 frontage, a series of 18th and 19th century brick buildings occupied the southern half of the plot (ranges **C-E**), overlooking a yard area to the north (Photo. 3). The fragmentary remains of a further building (range **F**), lay to the west of range **E**. A small, single-storey brick building (range **G**) stood to the rear of the number 1 frontage.

6. Description and Interpretation of the Buildings

Technical terminology used in the description of the buildings follows Alcock *et al* 1996 *Recording Timber-Framed Buildings: An Illustrated Glossary*. A glossary of selected terms is included at the end of this report (section 9).

6.1 Range A

Number 1 Regent Street frontage range: the jettied timber-framed structure

Elements of a jettied timber-framed structure, attributable to the late 16th or more likely the early 17th century, were located within the frontage range of number 1. The most complete section of wall framing was that forming the south side of the passageway giving access to the rear of the property from the street, at the north end of the building (Figure 6; Photo. 7). The timbers defined a series of square panels with a doorway into the ground floor room from the passageway. A similar arrangement of square panels in the first floor north wall frame was indicated by a series of empty joints in the surviving tiebeam and girding beam. All of the original infill, presumably wattle and daub, had been replaced with brick. Joint evidence in a surviving section of girding beam indicated a similar square-panelled arrangement in the cross-frame at the junction of number 1 and 3 (Figure 5).

Both front and rear wall frames originally had close-studding. The front wall was jettied with a series of close-set mortices in the top of the surviving jetty bressumer, providing evidence of the missing first floor wall frame. A section of the jetty plate remained *in situ* over the passageway, joint evidence in this indicated close-studding on the ground floor also (Photo. 8). The jetty was modest in proportion, with the upper storey projecting out over the lower by approximately 0.3m (1 foot) (Figure 7). The jetty bressumer was decorated externally, with an ovolo (quarter-round) moulding to its lower arris. Empty mortices in the two girding beams suggest that the lower storey posts had external jowls, or else applied brackets, possibly decorated, though these had not survived. The evidence suggests that the jetty was of Harris's Group 1a type, which is usual for continuous jetties running parallel with the ridge of the roof (1990, 33-6).

Remaining evidence of the rear wall frame was limited to a single beam at first floor level (Photo. 6), which had mortices for close-studding on both its upper and lower faces. This beam was again decorated with ovolo moulding (Figure 8). There was also evidence for a ground floor opening in the rear wall, most likely a window, which appears to have had an applied frame.

The first floor frame was largely intact (Figure 5). This consisted of an axial beam with ovolo mouldings and scroll stops, supporting chamfered joists also with scroll stops. Towards the frontage this decoration was stopped short of the joist ends, in line with the (largely truncated) jetty plate. The missing section of the jetty plate appears to have been reused as a purlin in the roof structure of range **D** - see below and Figure 3. The first floor covering consisted of wide, butted oak boards.

Nothing of the original roof structure remained, this having been removed when the building was raised in height to 3 storeys. Joint evidence in the tiebeam embedded in the north wall provides some indication of the roof form, however (Figure 7). A section of tiebeam on the party wall line between numbers 1 and 3 included comparable joint evidence, though this had been moved slightly from its original location. The relatively shallow roof pitch of about 47° shown in the reconstruction drawing (Figure 7) is based on evidence recorded next door at 5-7 Regent Street and on photographs of a 16th century timber-framed building in The Borough, demolished in 1866 to make way for the Congregational Chapel (now United Reformed Church). The roof pitch of these and other buildings in the town appears to have been dictated by the use of ceramic nib tiles as a covering. Roof tiles of this type were found in a pit deposited along with pottery of the 15th - mid 16th century, in the rear yard of 5-7 Regent Street in 1999 (ULAS report 1999/118, 17).

The remnant of a substantial stone chimneystack was recorded within number 1 Regent Street. This was composed of large, well-finished sandstone blocks (typically 660 x 260 x 170mm) and originally supported one end of the first floor axial beam (Figure 5). Alterations to the stack, in brick, were made at various times, the earliest brickwork being of late 17th or early 18th century type (Photo 14). As part of the 2003 development work the ground floor section of the stack was removed entirely.

Other than the section of girding beam adjacent to the chimneystack, close to the party line, there was no framing associated with the jettied building within number 3 Regent Street. It is uncertain whether the jettied structure was originally of two bays, extending into number 3, or whether it was built as a single bay structure; certainly it did not extend any further to the north. Evidence of this included the fact that all of the joints in the surviving tiebeam in the north wall of number 1 were offset towards the outer (north) face of the beam, indicating that this was an end wall rather than an internal division.

Decorative and structural details provided some indication of the construction date of the timber-framed building. Scroll stops and ovolo mouldings occur from the second half of the 16th century and are common throughout the 17th century (Hall 2005, 158; 161). Close studding is typical of the last quarter of the 15th century until the third quarter of the 16th century, according to Wood (1965, 224). The latest dated example of close studding within Leicestershire known to the writer is at Kingscote, Walton on the Wolds, with a felling date range of 1584-1619 and estimated felling date of c.1599 (Tarver 1999; Howard 1991); generally this form of wall framing is not considered to be a characteristic of buildings of the 17th century in this region.

Sections from two principal structural members of the timber frame were recovered at the time of the survey and have recently been examined by Robert Howard of Nottingham Tree-ring Dating Laboratory. The first timber, from the girding beam of the truss illustrated in Figure 6, had 45 rings - too few to permit satisfactory analysis. The second timber was the moulded girding beam of the rear wall frame of number 1, illustrated in Figure 8. This had 84 rings which gave a last ring date of 1586. There was no sapwood on the timber meaning that the actual felling date cannot be determined, though it must be after 1586. The usual 95%

confidence limit for the amount of sapwood on mature oaks for this part of England is in the range 15-40 rings; this would suggest that the tree was not felled until 1601 at the earliest. It would be surprising if the building was as late as 1626, the date arrived at by applying the upper figure of the sapwood estimate, given that both the front and rear elevations were close-studded. As the tree-ring dating evidence is based on a single sample this must be treated with caution, but does narrow down the date range arrived at on stylistic grounds. Broadly it is suggested that the building was erected in the last few years of the 16th century or more likely the early years of the 17th century.

Number 1 Regent Street frontage range: late 18th - early 19th century alterations

The original roof was removed, the walls raised in height by a storey and a new roof constructed some time in the late 18th - early 19th century (Figure 6). Differences in the brickwork of the frontage elevation at first and second floor levels suggests that the timber wall frame may have been replaced with brick some time before the building was raised in height, probably in second half of the 18th century. (First floor: brick dimensions 8 $\frac{7}{8}$ - 9 x 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ - 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 2 $\frac{5}{8}$ - 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches (225 - 229 x 108 - 114 x 67 - 70mm) laid in Flemish bond; second floor: brick dimensions 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches (235 x 114 x 70mm) laid in Flemish bond. To create a uniform appearance during the 2003 development the outer leaf of the 9 inch wall was taken down and rebuilt using bricks from the back of the building). The first floor window opening on the front elevation was formerly wider. Prior to 2003 the street frontage elevation was rendered and lined to imitate ashlar masonry.

Joists for the second floor were supported on a transverse beam over the centre of the room and their outer ends carried by the retained late 16th/early 17th century tiebeams (Photo. 10). Internal walls were of timber studwork infilled with bricks laid on edge (brick dimensions: 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 2 $\frac{5}{8}$ inches (235 x 114 x 67mm)). The ground to first floor staircase against the west (rear) wall was probably of this phase, as was the first to second floor quarter-turn stair, which had a plain square-section newel, stick balusters and simple handrail (Photo. 11). A small internal leaded-light window lit the staircase on the second floor. Both of the staircases and all of the internal walls were removed in 2003.

The trussed rafter roof employed a series of suspended queen post trusses (Figure 6; Photo. 12). Most of the timbers in this roof were reused from earlier structure(s), though not obviously from the jettied late 16th/early 17th century structure. The queen posts were bolted to the tiebeam and iron straps reinforced the queen post/principal/strainer beam junction (see Campbell 2000 for an explanation of terminology relating to post-medieval roof structures). In his study of post-medieval roof trusses in Staffordshire farm buildings, J.E.C. Peters found that bolts used to secure queen posts (and king posts) to the tiebeam were introduced around 1820 (1988, 29). The roof pitch was approximately 33° and the covering was Welsh slate, replaced on the rear slope with modern concrete tiles.

6.2 Range B

Number 3 Regent Street frontage range

The frontage range at number 3 Regent Street was a rendered 3-storey brick building of generally similar style and proportions to that of number 1 (Photo. 2). If a second bay of the jettied timber-framed structure formerly occupied the site of number 3, this was removed in its entirety when the present building was constructed, probably in the late 18th century. There are indications that the rebuilding of number 3 may have pre-dated the remodelling of number 1 Regent Street.

On the ground floor the interior had been substantially altered in the 20th century, with the back wall removed to create an open-plan showroom (Photo. 17). The first floor frame survived substantially intact and consisted of an oak axial beam, chamfered but not stopped, the north end of which was supported on a brick skin built up against the back of the stone chimneystack of number 1. The joists were also oak and the floor covering wide, butted oak boards. Framed between the joists in the front half of the room were a series of round-section timbers with grooves worn into them (Figure 5; Photos. 15 & 16); these were evidently inserted and had been used at one time to suspend heavy items. Documentary sources indicate that number 3 Regent Street was occupied by a butcher, George Hall, between 1884 and 1895: perhaps carcasses were hung from the ceiling of his shop for display or butchery (Knight and Knight 1993, 16).

A trimmer and inserted joists indicated the former position of a staircase at the north-west corner of the room, providing access to the first floor (Figure 5). The upper flight of this staircase, between the first and second floors, was *in situ*. With a turned newel and ramped handrail, this was of better quality than the equivalent staircase in number 1.

The first floor had been subdivided in the 20th century with the insertion of stud partition walls creating two offices. The window opening in the frontage elevation was enlarged, presumably at the same time, to light both rooms. Early photographs of c.1900 show a window of similar width to that on the second floor, with a 6 over 6 pane sash (Knight and Knight 1993, 22).

The second floor frame was of similar construction to the first floor, having an exposed axial beam with chamfers and square cut (45°) stops, oak joists and wide oak floorboards. The roof structure was contemporary with that of number 1 Regent Street, with a similar queen post truss over the centre of the building (Photo. 12). It has been suggested above that number 3 was rebuilt some time before number 1 was remodelled, in which case it appears that number 3 was then re-roofed when the alterations to number 1 were undertaken. The roof covering was Welsh slate with decorative ceramic ridge tiles.

6.3 Range C

It was initially proposed to demolish this range and some time was spent examining the structure in detail at the assessment stage (ULAS report 2001/125). Subsequently a programme of intrusive investigation was carried out in order to clarify aspects of the building's construction (ULAS report 2001/150). It was finally determined that this range should be retained, although it was much altered during the development.

Range C is of two storeys and three bays, the central bay being very narrow. The external walls are of brick (typical dimensions: 9¼ x 4 ⅝ - 4 ¾ x 2¼ inches (234 x 117-120 x 57mm), laid in (occasionally irregular) Flemish bond pattern), with timber-framed internal walls and roof structure. The roof is covered in ceramic nib tiles. The principal elevation faces north, overlooking the yard area (Photo. 4). The west end of this building was altered in the latter part of the 20th century when the angled section linking it to range D was constructed; various alterations to the principal elevation have also been made over time. Despite these and other changes to the interior, the building survived substantially intact and retained various early structural and decorative features. Various details suggest a late 17th or early 18th century date for its construction.

The building appears originally to have conformed to a two-unit lobby-entrance plan, with a door in the centre of the north elevation opening into a small lobby formed by one side a substantial brick chimneystack. Brunskill gives a date range of c.1600-1730 for the two-unit lobby-entrance plan type (1997, 62, 64-5). The stack occupied the narrow central bay of the building, with a timber cross-frame/roof truss hard against either side of it (Figure 9). The ground floor section of the stack had been removed, probably in the second half of the 20th century, creating a small room that was utilised as a kitchen prior to the re-development.

Decorative treatment of exposed ceiling beams indicates that the rooms occupying the east bay, closest to the street frontage, constituted the principal accommodation. The underside of the first floor axial beam in this bay had ovolo mouldings with concave stops, compared with chamfers and run-outs on the equivalent member in the west bay (Photo. 18). Floor joists were oak throughout, all being chamfered with run-out stops. On the first floor, the east room was ceiled, the exposed ceiling beam having chamfers and scroll stops (the stud partition walls which subdivided this bay at the time of the survey were later insertions). In contrast, the first floor room in the west bay was open, at least to collar level and possibly to the rafters. All four principal rooms appear to have been heated. In the first floor west bay the original fireplace had a round-headed opening which was subsequently modified (Figure 9). A 19th century fire surround on the ground floor in the west bay was removed in the course of the alterations (Figure 9).

It may be reasonably supposed that, on the ground floor, the west bay was a living kitchen and the east bay a heated parlour, whilst on the first floor the principal chamber was in the east bay. The original staircase position is likely to have been between the stack and the south (rear) wall, though no trace of this remained.

The structure of one of the internal cross-frames, between the central and western bays, was examined in part during the earlier stage of investigation (ULAS report 2001/150, 3). More of this was exposed (and removed) during the redevelopment (Figure 9; Photos. 19 & 20). The softwood studwork noted in the earlier report was non-original. A series of stave holes in the underside of the tiebeam indicated that the original structure consisted of close-set studs; a couple of these remained, adjacent to the chimneystack, both were oak (Photo. 22). Infill was of mud applied over split oak laths that were nailed to the studs, sections which survived, prior to re-development, are illustrated on Figure 9. Mud render with chopped straw temper covered the internal faces of the brick walls, with a finishing coat of hair-tempered lime plaster. The ground floor ceilings, between the exposed first floor joists, were treated in a similar manner.

The roof structure of this range was largely unaffected by the development. The form of the principal roof trusses is illustrated in Figure 9. In this illustration the horizontal member at mid height, nailed in position, was associated with the mud on lath infill, rather than being a collar, and was absent in the other three roof trusses (Photos. 24 & 25).

Early fixtures and fittings recorded within this range included two doors on the first floor. One of these was a variant of the two-panelled form dateable to c.1670-1730 (Hall 2005, 40; Fig. 2.49); this had apparently been re-sited (Photo. 23). The other was a door with false panelling of a type which became common from the last quarter of the 17th century; Hall provides an exact parallel dated 1743 (2005, 37-8; Fig. 2.46). Both of these doors were removed in the course of the development. One of the early windows identified in the assessment report, a four light casement, was retained *in situ* but covered over.

6.4 Range D

Range **D** is a two-storey brick structure on the west side of **C**, roofed in Welsh slate (Photo. 5). The brickwork is laid in Flemish bond at ground floor level with Flemish garden wall bond above (brick dimensions: $9\frac{3}{8} \times 4\frac{5}{8} \times 2\frac{3}{4}$ inches). Original ground floor door and window openings in the north elevation, overlooking the yard, are blocked; there is one small inserted window. The original first floor window has a modern frame and there is a second, smaller inserted window. The interior has been altered, with the fireplace and chimneystack against the west wall removed on the ground floor (Photo. 26). The straight flight staircase against the south wall is modern. The first floor structure is of gypsum plaster type. The first floor interior has been altered and subdivided. There is a blocked fireplace and stack against the west wall. The purlins are reused timbers, one of them moulded with a series of mortices for close-studs, possibly the missing section of jetty plate from the frontage range of number 1 (see above).

This range is attributable to the second half of the 18th century and is likely to have been a small cottage. It was substantially altered in the latter part of the 20th century when the angled section linking it to range **C** was constructed.

6.5 Range E

This is a two-storey brick structure roofed in Welsh slate. Internally the building measures just 3.71m (12'2") x 2.74m (9'0"), with a single room on each floor. All openings – a window and door on the ground floor and a first floor window – and are in the north elevation, overlooking the yard (Photos. 5 & 27). Both windows have segmental arch heads and the doorway a flat arch head. Window frames and door are modern replacements. The brickwork of the north elevation may be of more than one phase with a distinct colour change at first floor level. Brick dimensions are consistently $9\frac{1}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{2} \times 2\frac{3}{4}$ inches (234 x 114 x 70mm), laid in Flemish bond pattern, though somewhat irregular at first floor level. Internally, on the ground floor, the walls are bare brick and the floor is brick-paved. Access to the first floor is now through an inserted doorway in the east wall from the adjacent range **D**, but was originally via a staircase located against the inside of the west wall. First floor wall coverings and ceiling are modern. There is no evidence for this building having been heated: the brick stack on the external face of the west wall (Photo. 5) served an adjacent single-storey structure, **F**, now demolished (see below).

Range **D** probably dates to the first half of the 19th century and is likely to have functioned as a workshop or store, perhaps a framework knitting workshop given the context. Framework knitting shops are often characterised by oversize windows providing a maximum amount of light to the interior. In a building of this size, however, window proportions would necessarily be limited. The absence of a hearth indicates that it was not a domestic building.

6.6 Range F

On the west side of range **E** was the remains of a brick building **F**, demolished some time before the survey was made. A scar on the external face of the west wall of **E** demonstrates that **F** was a single-storey structure (Photo. 5). A surviving chimneystack indicates that the building was heated. This range was certainly later in date than **E** and is broadly attributable to the 19th century; it was extant by 1889 as it appears on the first edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map sheet XLII.8, published in that year. It presumably functioned as a workshop of some kind.

6.7 Range G

Range G was a single-storey brick structure, roofed in clay tiles, to the rear of number 1 Regent Street (range A). It was demolished shortly before the survey was made, however photographs of the exterior taken in 2001 provide some details of the building (Photos. 3 & 6). There was a blocked window in the east wall and a chimneystack serving a fireplace in the south wall. The north-west corner was rounded, improving access to the side passage leading from the yard to the street. A brick-vaulted cellar beneath this range was the only cellar located on the site (Photo. 6). In the absence of more detailed recording this range is broadly attributable to the 19th century; it was certainly extant by 1889 as it appears on the first edition Ordnance Survey map.

7. Discussion

In 1887 the local historian Thomas Harrold wrote: ‘Numbers of houses, the fronts rebuilt with brick, have come under my notice, the division or party walls, still existing of timber framing and “wattle,” plastered over’ (*TLAAS* 1888, 333). Today we might add that: where such timber-framed party walls exist there is a strong likelihood that other elements of these early buildings also survive.

Detailed recording of even relatively fragmentary timber-framed structures can provide a considerable amount of information on the form, function, age and status of the building. The remaining framing within number 1 Regent Street indicated that this was a jettied building with close-studded front and rear wall frames and square-panelled cross-walls. It was two storeys high (possibly with attic rooms in the roof space). Decorative and structural details and limited tree-ring dating evidence indicate a construction date in the late 16th century (after 1586) or early 17th century. Details such as close-studding, ovolo mouldings to both the interior and exterior timberwork, chamfered and stopped ceiling joists as well as beams, and the general quality of the timbers used in the frame, indicate that this was a building of quality.

It was not clear, however, whether the building originally extended to the south by another bay. Certainly the property at 1-3 Regent Street had been subdivided into two separate holdings by the late 18th century, but did this subdivision occur as early as the late 16th/early 17th century? Hinckley was a prosperous market town at that time and Burton, writing in 1622, describes the market as:

‘exceeding good; and for trading in corn, cattle, horses, swine, and all things vendable in a dry town, inferior to none in the county.’

Plots fronting on to the Market Place would have been in high demand, possibly resulting in the subdivision of properties; this certainly occurred at a later date. Before about 1880 properties at 1-7 Regent Street were regarded as being part of Market Place (Knight and Knight 1993, 16). If this property had been subdivided by the late 16th/early 17th century then the timber-framed building at number 1 would have been a single bay structure, its interior dominated by the massive stone chimneystack.

Alternatively (and perhaps more likely) this may originally have been a two-bay structure with the bay occupying the site of number 3 Regent Street removed when the frontage range of this property was rebuilt in the late 18th century. If this was the case, it is perhaps surprising that none of the late 16th/early 17th century timbers appeared to have been reused in the construction of the 18th century building. The frontage range of the adjacent property at 5-7 Regent Street was a two-bay jettied structure of early 17th century date (1625), remodelled in

the late 18th century (Finn 2000). In contrast with 1-3 Regent Street this property does not appear to have been subdivided until the last decade of the 19th century (Knight and Knight 1993, 16).

Most of the timber framing within number 1 was stripped out during the 2003 redevelopment, what wasn't sold for salvage was burnt on a bonfire in the back yard.

The late 17th - early 18th century range **C**, behind the number 3 frontage, appears to have been a domestic building. This structure is notable for its transitional form, occupying an intermediate stage between full timber framing and conventional brick building. The use of brick for the outer walls was allied to a roof structure and internal walls still in the timber-framed tradition. Subsequently, developments in constructional practice would see all of the cross-walls raised in brick up to the apex, precluding the need for a trussed roof structure.

The development of 1-3 Regent Street in the 18th - 19th century saw a succession of buildings added to the rear of the property along the south side of the plot; in addition the frontage ranges were updated in contemporary Georgian style. This sequence is paralleled in other properties along Regent Street and elsewhere in Hinckley, as well as more broadly in other market towns in the region where long narrow plots flank the principal streets. Improvements in agricultural practice in the 18th century led to increased production and market towns such as Hinckley prospered. According to Graf, of the 11 market towns in Leicestershire, Hinckley was second only in size to Loughborough in the late 18th century (1994, 112). The name Regent Street was presumably adopted during the period 1810-1820. Formerly this street was known as the Duck Paddle or Coventry Street; it is named as such on the 1782 Town Plan. The town celebrated royal events with enthusiasm. To mark the 50th anniversary of the accession of George III in 1809 the church bells were rung, money was distributed to the poor and inmates of the workhouse were served roast beef and plum pudding. Free beer was distributed to the populace and there was a dinner, ball and supper for the town's elite. Festivities to mark the coronation of George IV in 1820 included a procession, church service and a feast for the working classes, who consumed an ox and 25 sheep (Francis 1930, 129-130).

Framework knitting became the dominant trade in Hinckley during the 18th century. The population increased dramatically: in 1717 there were some 350 families resident in the town; by 1782 this had increased to around 750 households (Knight 1993, 22). Towards the end of the 18th century 74% of craftsmen in Hinckley were engaged in the textile trade, by the 1820s 83% of Hinckley's population depended on framework knitting for their livelihoods (Graf 1984, 102). Much new building occurred during this period to accommodate the growing population. Nichols records that:

‘in 1786 the number [of houses] was 697; which have since been augmented by new erections, and by out-buildings in yards having been converted into dwelling-houses’ (Knight 1993, 22 footnote §).

The cottage, range **D**, and workshop ranges, **E** & **F**, are presumably the sort of ‘new erections’ that Nichols was referring to.

Following the end of the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815) orders for military hose were not renewed. Around the same time changing fashions of dress led to a decline in the popularity of long hose (Royle 1978-9, 53) and the framework-knitting industry fell into a severe decline (Wykes 1992; Graf 1994, 115). The situation was only exacerbated by technological advances including the perfection of the wide frame system of stocking making which was adopted in

Leicester and rivalled the narrow frames of the Hinckley hosiers. By the middle of the 19th century Hinckley had become one of the poorest areas of Leicestershire (Royle 1978-9).

No major alterations appear to have been made to the buildings in the second half of the 19th century. Documentary sources indicate that both number 1 and number 3 were in use as shops by the late 19th century; they may well have been retail or commercial premises long before this date. The appearance of the number 1 shop front in about 1900 is illustrated in Knight and Knight (1993, 22). John Wright, a baker, grocer and flour dealer is recorded at number 1 Regent Street between 1862 and 1895. Wright was succeeded by Emma Reynolds, baker and shopkeeper, recorded in 1899 and 1901-2 (Knight and Knight 1993, 16; Historical Directories website). George Hall, butcher, is recorded at 3 Regent Street between 1884 and 1895. As noted above, it is possible that the timbers framed between the first floor joists related to Hall's period of occupation, being used to hang carcasses for display or butchery. Leonard Smith, painter and plumber was recorded at number 3 in 1900 (Knight and Knight 1993, 16). Charles L. Lenton, grocer is listed at number 3 in 1908, 1912 and 1916 (Historical Directories website). Directory evidence after 1916 has not been searched, but it is probable that both properties continued to function as commercial premises throughout the 20th century. Prior to re-development in 2003 the ground floor of number 1 was The Pine Furniture Company; the ground floor of number 3 had been vacant for some time. Range C and the upper floors of A & B were occupied by Hale, Randle & Stevenson solicitors. Principal changes to the fabric of the buildings in the 20th century included the replacement of shop fronts and some windows, in addition to interior alterations.

8. Acknowledgements

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10. Glossary of Selected Terms

(based on Alcock *et al* 1996)

Axial beam: A large timber which supports the end of common joists, along the length of a house.

Bay: The portion of a framed building between principal supporting timbers.

Box frame: Form of construction where roof trusses are carried on a frame of posts, tie beams and wall plates.

Brace: Curved or straight timber running between vertical and horizontal frame members.

Bressumer: Horizontal beam over a fireplace opening.

Chamfer: The small face made by cutting away the angle of a timber along its length. Usually flat and at 45 degrees.

Close studding: subsidiary members, usually vertical, in a framed wall or partition, the spaces between studs being approximately the same width as the studs.

Collar: Transverse timber connecting rafters or cruck blades at a point above their feet and below the apex of the roof.

Cross-frame: see *Truss*

Girding beam: Horizontal beam in a wall frame, at the level of an upper floor.

Jetty: Cantilevered overhang of one storey, or of a gable, over the storey below it.

Jetty bressumer: Sill beam of the jettied upper floor resting on projecting ends of joists or on jetty brackets.

Jetty plate: Wall plate of the lower storey on which the joists rest.

Joist: One of a series of horizontal timbers supporting a floor or carrying a ceiling.

Jowl: Expansion of the inner face of the top of a wall post to accommodate housings for wall plate and tie-beam

Mid rail: Intermediate horizontal timber in a wall or cross frame.

Panel: Subdivision of a bay of a framed wall defined by studs or rails.

Plate: Longitudinal timber set square to the ground, on the top of a wall or in a roof truss.

Principal: An inclined timber in a roof truss which supports a purlin but does not itself serve as a common rafter.

Purlin: Longitudinal timber in the plane of a roof.

Queen post: paired posts set on a tiebeam and directly supporting plates or purlins.

Rail: Horizontal member of wall frame between posts or studs.

Stud: Subsidiary member, usually vertical, in a framed wall or partition.

Tiebeam: Main transverse timber connecting the tops of walls or arcade posts and plates.

Transverse beam: ceiling beam across the width of a house.

Truss: Rigid transverse framework constructed across a roof at bay intervals. Also used to describe a complete cross-frame from ground level to ridge in a box-framed or cruck building.

Wall plate: The plate on top of a wall frame or a masonry wall, on which roof trusses rest.



Photo. 1. Regent Street, Hinckley, numbers 1-3 on right of frame (looking SW)



Photo. 2. 1-3 Regent Street, Hinckley: frontage ranges, painted white (looking W)



Photo. 3. 1-3 Regent Street, Hinckley: buildings and yard to rear of property (looking E)



Photo. 4. Range C exterior (looking SE)



Photo. 5. Ranges D (painted) and E to right, with remnant of demolished Range F (looking SE)



Photo. 6. Site of recently demolished range G, note 16th/17th century timber in rear wall of Range A (looking E)



Photo. 7. Timber-framing within passageway wall of number 1 (Range A), see Figure 6 (looking N)



Photo. 8. Jetty bressumer *in situ* over number 1 (Range A) passageway, with mortices for close studding



Photo. 9. First floor interior of number 1 (Range A) prior to development (looking N)



Photo. 10. First floor interior Range A after strip-out, 16th/17thC tiebeam supporting 2nd floor joists (looking NE)



Photo 11. First floor interior of number 1 (Range A) during strip-out, prior to removal of staircase (looking SE)



Photo 12. Queen post roof structure of frontage building (Ranges A & B), (looking S).



Photo. 13. 16th/17th century timber framing in passageway wall (Range A) and moulded axial beam (looking SE)



Photo. 14. Remains of stone chimneystack in number 1 frontage (Range A), prior to removal (looking SW)



Photo. 15. Underside of Range B first floor frame with timbers framed between joists (see Figure 5)



Photo. 16. Detail of timber framed between joists in Range B first floor frame with grooves worn into it



Photo. 17. Ground floor interior of number 3, Range C east bay open onto frontage Range B (looking E)



Photo. 18. Ground floor west bay of Range C with exposed first floor frame (looking SE)



Photo. 19. First floor west bay of Range C showing internal timber cross-frame, see Figure 9 (looking E)



Photo. 20. Interior of Range C following removal of internal wall and floor framing (looking NW)



Photo. 21. Original brick stack and timber-framed internal wall to Range C, prior to development (looking NE)



Photo. 22. Remnant of original mud on lath infill to internal timber wall frame in Range C (looking E)



Photo. 23. Late 17th/early 18th century paneled door in Range C, prior to re-development (looking E)



Photo. 24. Roof structure of Range C west bay, mud on lath infill to collar level, cf. Figure 9 (looking W)



Photo. 25. Roof structure of Range C, east bay (looking E)



Photo. 26. Ground floor interior of Range D showing scar of removed stack on far wall (looking W)



Photo. 27. North elevation of two-storey workshop Range D (looking S)

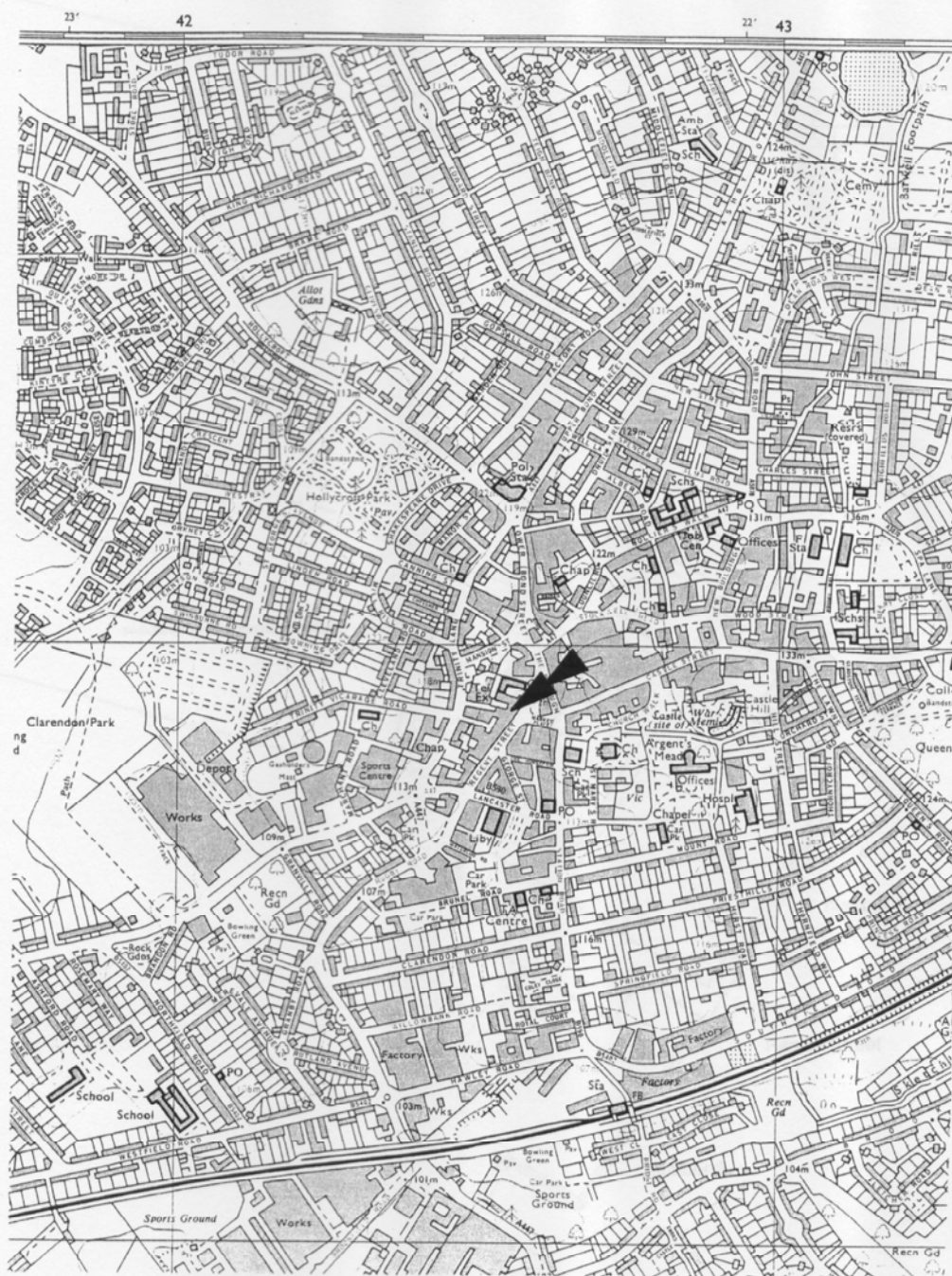


Figure 1. Location Plan. 1-3 Regent Street, Hinckley arrowed.
 Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey 1:10 000 map sheet SP 49 SW
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Figure 2. 1-3 Regent Street, Hinckley.

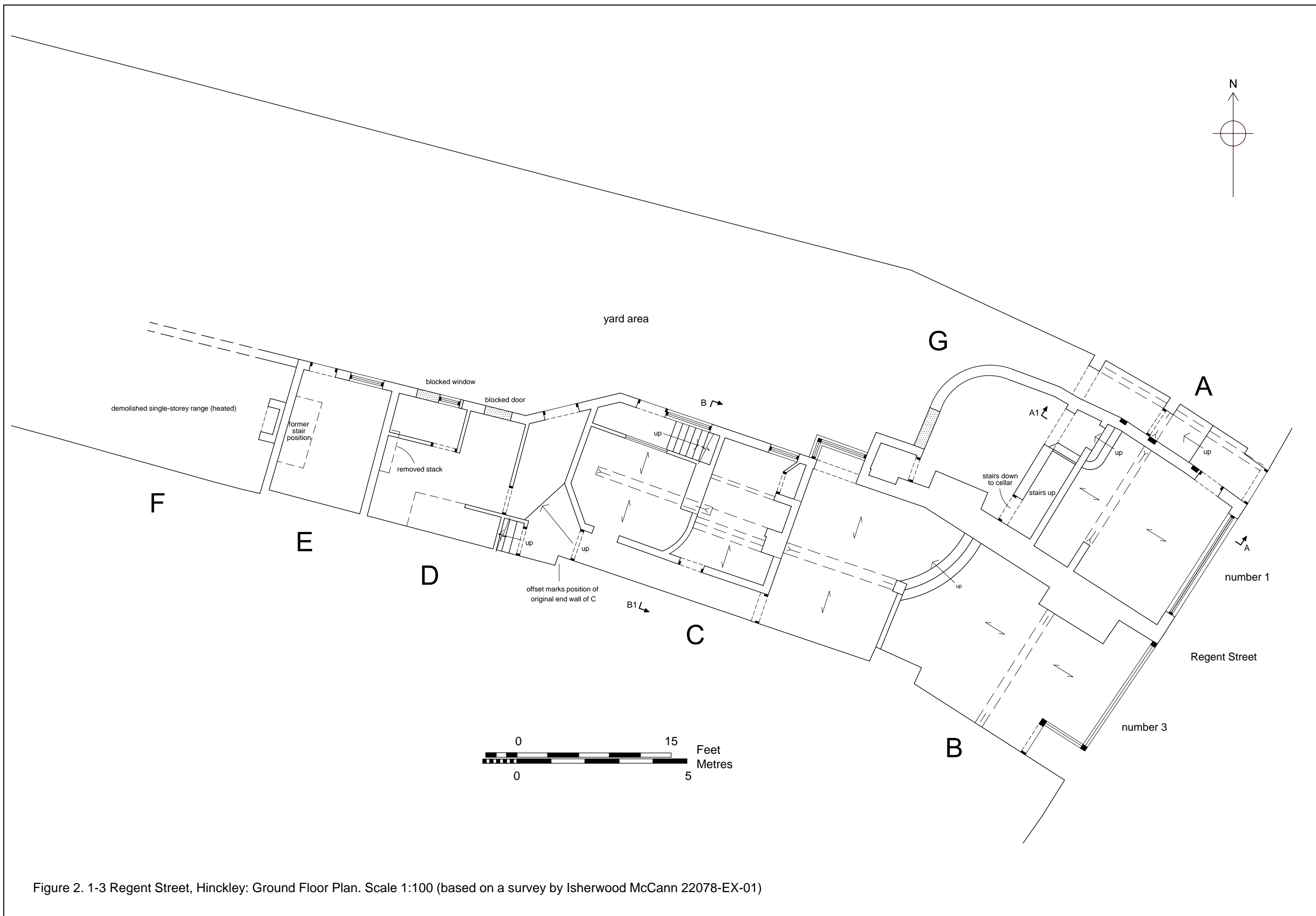
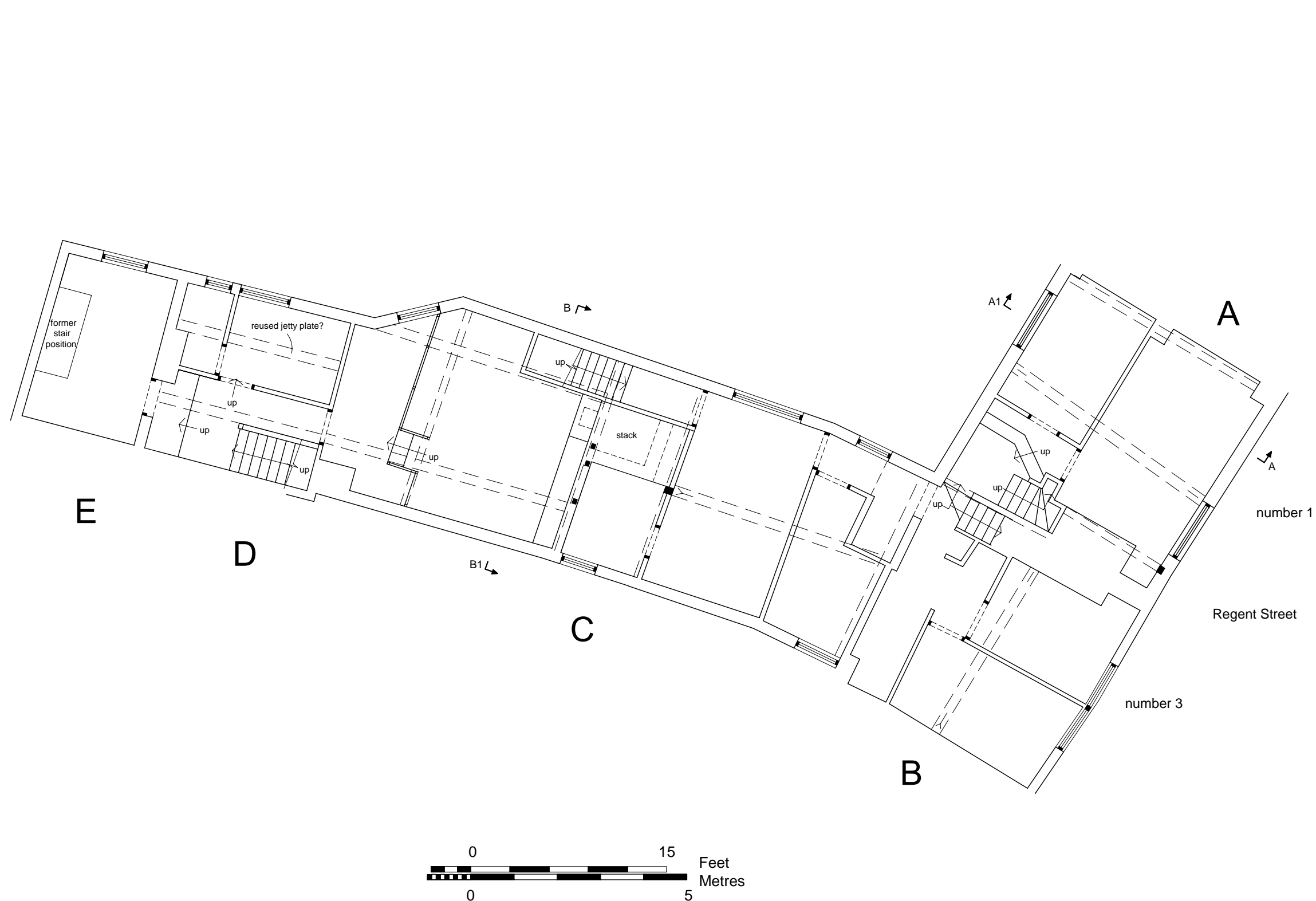


Figure 2. 1-3 Regent Street, Hinckley: Ground Floor Plan. Scale 1:100 (based on a survey by Isherwood McCann 22078-EX-01)



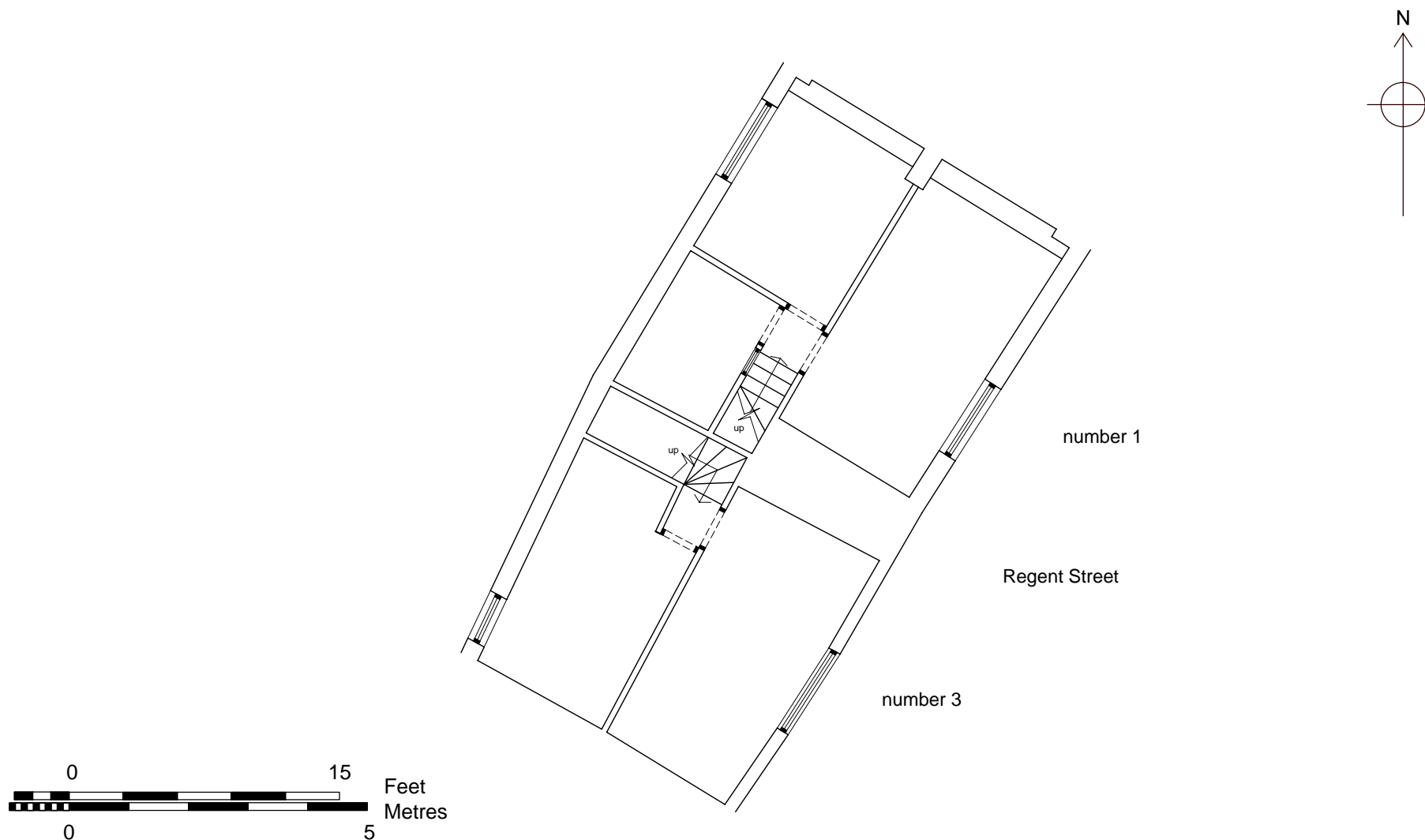


Figure 4. 1-3 Regent Street, Hinckley: Second Floor Plan. Scale 1:100 (based on a survey by Isherwood McCann 22078-EX-02)

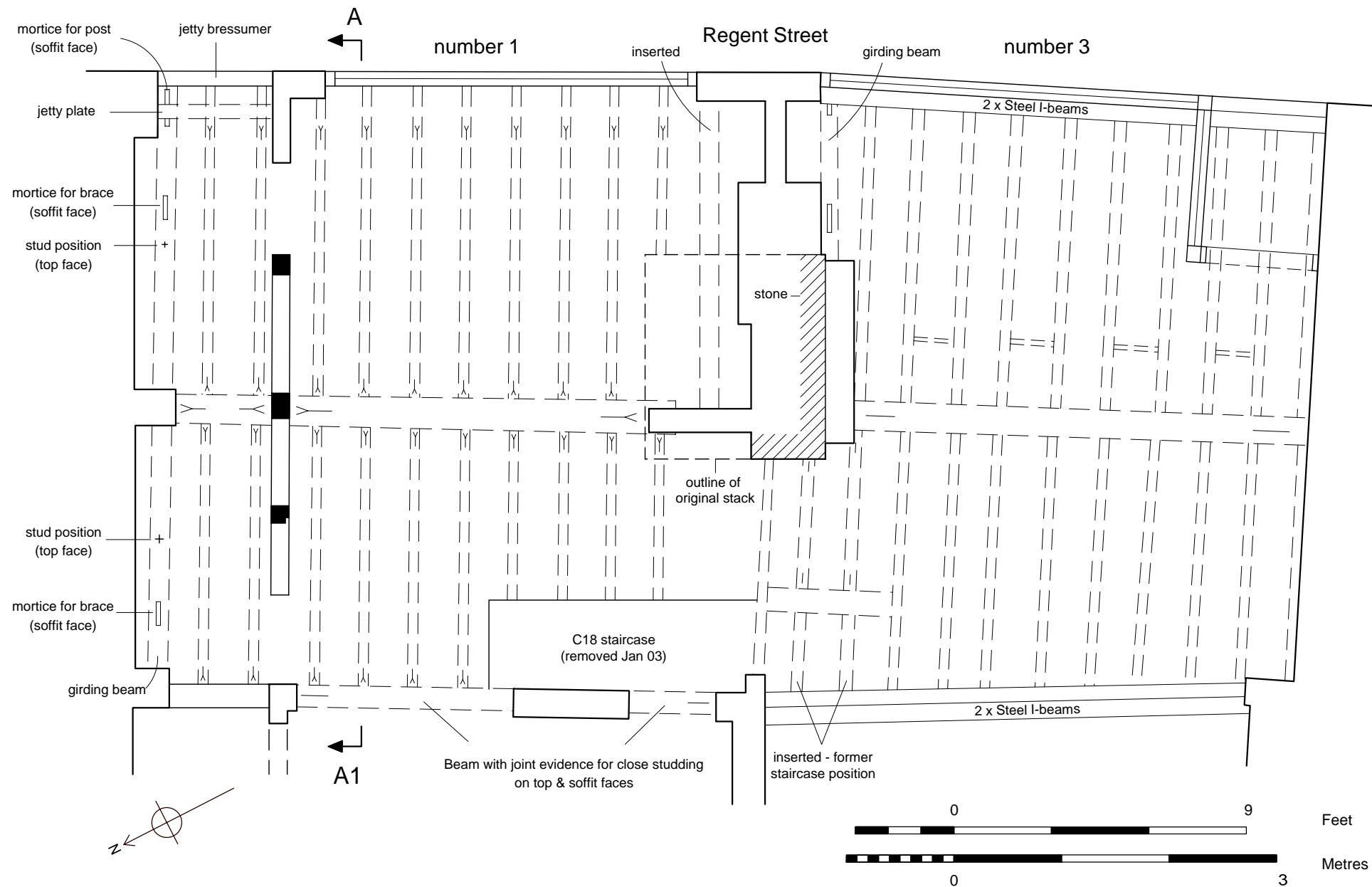


Figure 5. 1-3 Regent Street, Hinckley: Ground floor plan. Detail of frontage range. Scale 1:50

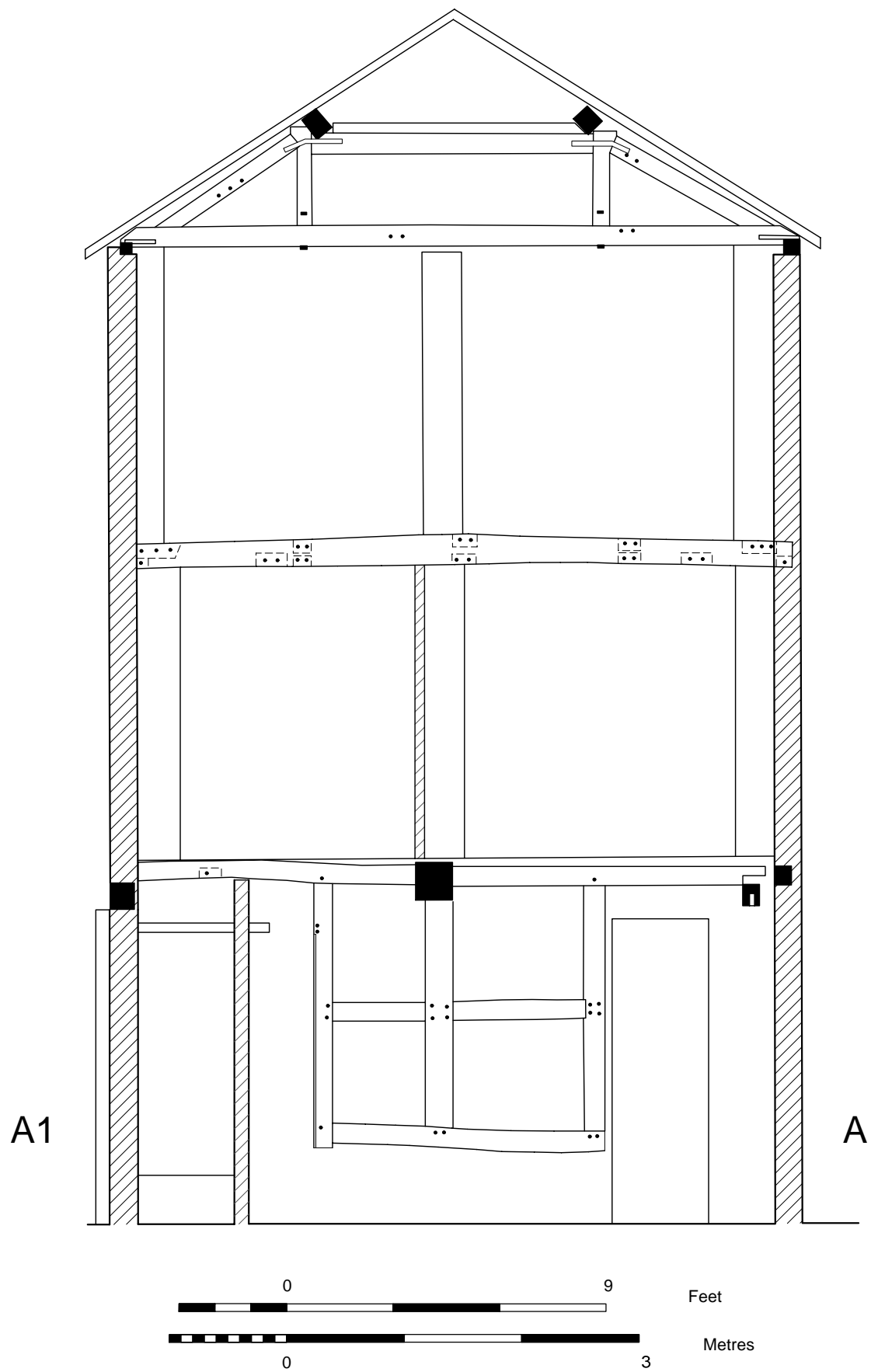


Figure 6. 1-3 Regent Street, Hinckley: Section A - A1. Scale 1:50

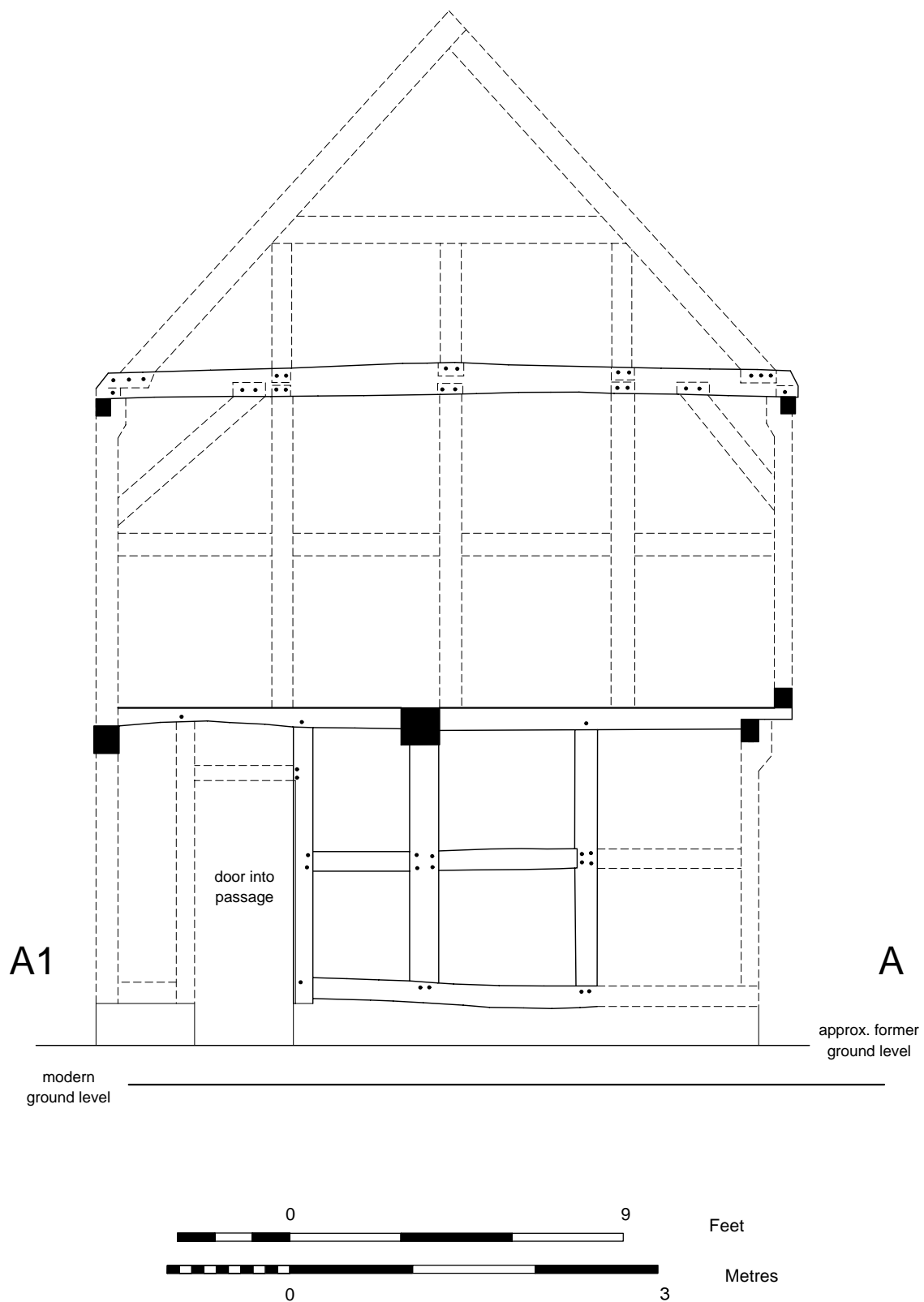


Figure 7. 1-3 Regent Street, Hinckley: Reconstruction of timber frame at A - A1. Scale 1:50

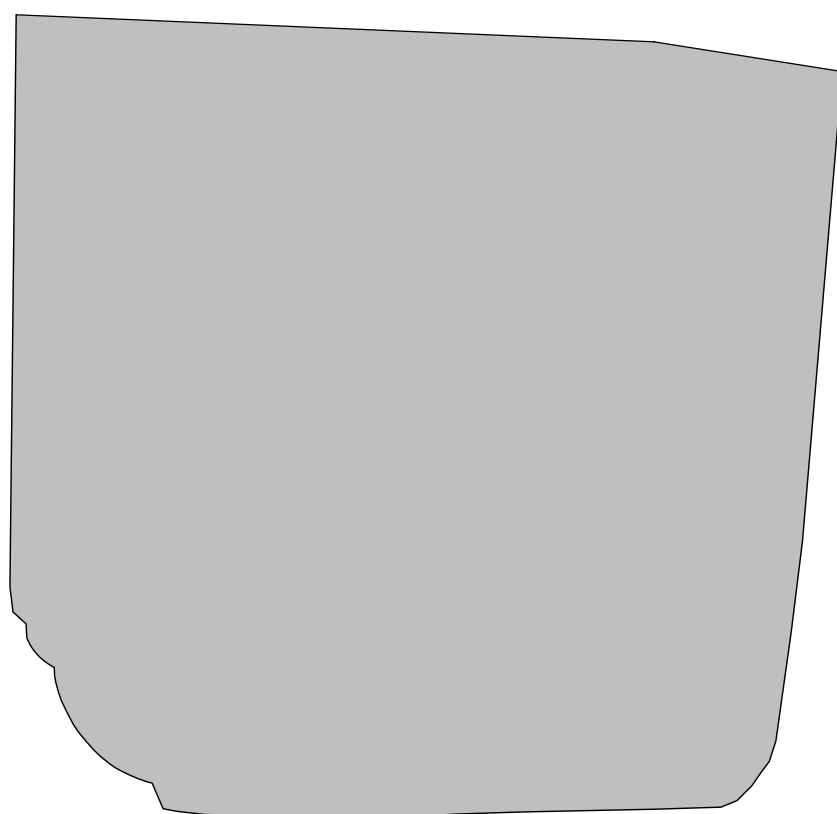


Figure 8. Profile of girding beam in rear wall frame of number 1. Scale 1:2

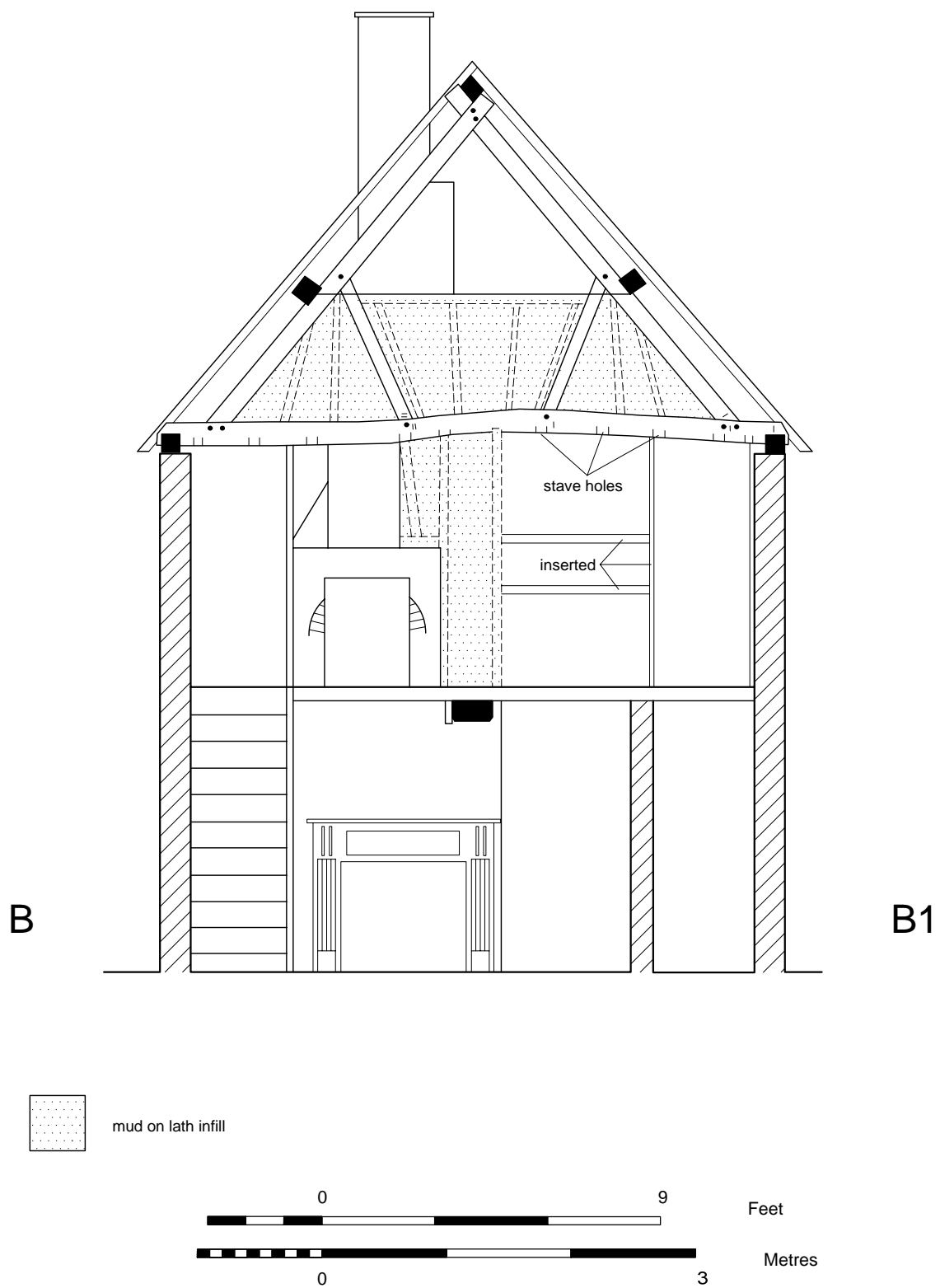


Figure 9. 1-3 Regent Street, Hinckley: Section B - B1. Scale 1:50