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**1 - 2 GEORGE STREET
St Albans, Herts.**

HN1021

***ARCHAEOLOGICAL
MONITORING REPORT***

THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

1 – 2 GEORGE STREET
St Albans, Hertfordshire

Project ref.: HN1021
Planning Ref.: 5/2012/1782 LB

Archaeological Monitoring Report

Prepared on behalf of Christopher Wharton

by

David Hillelson BA (HONS) MIFA

Report no. 809

August 2013

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11 FURMSTON COURT, ICKNIELD WAY, LETCHWORTH SG6 1UJ
TEL: (01462) 685991 FAX: (01462) 685998

Contents

	Acknowledgements	Page i
	Summary.....	Page i
Section 1	Introduction.....	Page 1
Section 2	Fieldwork	Page 2
Section 3	Discussion.....	Page 3
Section 4	Schedule of Site Visits.....	Page 5
Section 5	Bibliography.....	Page 5
Section 6	Illustrations	<i>following</i> Page 6
Appendix	OASIS data entry form	Page 7

*The front cover shows the south side of George Street,
looking west from its junction with High Street*

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by David Hillelson who also prepared the report text and illustrations.

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to Christopher and Sam Wharton, and to Simon West, St Albans District Archaeologist, for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

Summary

Site name and address:	1-2 George Street, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL3 4ER		
County:	Hertfordshire	District:	St Albans
Village/town:	St Albans	Parish:	St Albans
Planning reference:	5/12/1782 LB	NGR:	TL 14577 07139
Client name and address:	Christopher Wharton, 1-2 George Street, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL3 4ER		
Nature of work:	Building alterations to link shops	Former use:	Separate shops
Site status:	Listed buildings	Reason for investigation:	Direction of LPA (NPPF)
Position in planning process:	After full determination	Project brief originator:	Local Authority
Site Code:	HN1021	Other reference:	n/a
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Project type, methods etc.:	Watching Brief	Archive recipient:	St Albans Museums
Start of work	28 January 2013	Finish of work	7 June 2013
Related HER Nos:	n/a	Periods represented:	Post-medieval
Oasis UID	heritage1-135329	Significant finds:	None
Monument types:	n/a		
Physical archive:	n/a		
Previous summaries/reports:	n/a		

Synopsis:

In response to a condition placed on the listed building consent for alterations to the fabric of the listed buildings located at 1 – 2 George Street, St Albans, the Heritage Network was commissioned to undertake a programme of archaeological monitoring.

The monitoring of the alteration works, and the associated background research, has established that the rear wall of the no.2 George Street is of later 19th century date. The window in this elevation was blocked using Fletton bricks, which are common throughout the 20th century. Restoring the opening exposed no new or unexpected features.

Removal of the modern plaster facing around the new opening between nos. 2 and 1 George Street revealed an earlier opening that had been blocked by brickwork that dates to the late 19th or early 20th century. A timber storey-plate was observed running north-south above the brickwork, and a vertical stud could be seen in situ beyond the opening. It is possible that the observed timber framing predates the late 17th century date for no.2 given in the listing description, but no definitive dating was possible.

No historic fabric was disturbed in the course of the alterations.

1 Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared on behalf of Mr Christopher Wharton, to cover a programme of archaeological work carried out during alterations to the fabric of the existing Grade II listed buildings at 1 – 2 George Street, St Albans, Hertfordshire.

1.2 The listed building consent for the development (ref. 5/12/1782 LB), granted by St Albans City and District Council (SADC), was subject to a standard archaeological condition (Condition 3) issued in line with the Department of Communities and Local Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

1.3 The scope of the archaeological work was defined in correspondence from the St Albans District Archaeologist (SADA), acting as archaeological adviser to SADC. A full specification for the work carried out is contained in the Heritage Network's approved Project Design, dated October 2012.

1.4 George Street lies to the north of the St Albans Abbey within the historic core of the City. Nos.1 & 2 George Street are located on the southern side of the street, at its eastern end, close to the junction between George Street, Verulam Road and High Street, centred on NGR TL 14577 07139 (Figure 1). The properties are bounded to the north by George Street, to the west by No.3 George Street, to the east by No.33 High Street and to the south by Osborne House. Nos.1 & 2 George Street are Grade II Listed Buildings (List Entry Nos. 1103119 & 1296390, respectively) together forming part of a consecutive group including nos. 1 – 77 George Street. Both properties lie within the St Albans Conservation Area.

1.5 The study area lies within Area of Archaeological Significance no. 25 as identified on the District Local Plan, which encompasses the historic town, including Kingsbury, the Saxon and medieval town and Sopwell Nunnery. It also lies immediately adjacent to Area of Archaeological Significance no.18, which covers the area of the Abbey and the conventual buildings.

1.6 The development has entailed a number of modifications and alterations to the fabric of the two buildings, including the creation of a new doorway in the partition wall between them and the insertion of a new sash window in a blocked opening in the rear wall to no.2 George Street (Figure 2).

1.7 The present report completes the requirements of Stages 1 and 2 of the project, as defined in the Project Design. No further stages of work are proposed.

2 Fieldwork

METHODOLOGY

2.1 A programme of site visits was undertaken to record the areas of the historic buildings proposed for alteration, to monitor the ongoing alteration works, and to record any previously hidden elements of the building that were exposed in the course of the works.

2.2 All such elements were recorded by written description, using measured sketches, and by photography using digital media, following the principles set out in *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice* (English Heritage 2006).

2.3 All fieldwork was carried out in accordance with the approved Project Design, current health and safety legislation, and the appropriate IfA and ALGAO guidance documents.

2.4 The timetable for the fieldwork followed the client's work schedule.

FIELDWORK

2.5 A preliminary site visit was made on 28 January 2013 to inspect the location of the proposed alterations in both buildings.

- Within no.1, the location of the proposed opening in the party wall was entirely masked by modern wall panelling (Plate 1). Within no.2, the location of the proposed opening in the party wall was plastered with a modern plaster on a wire armature supported by battens attached to studs (observed through a small test-hole opened by others) (Plates 2 and 3).
- In the rear elevation of the back room of no.2, a blocked window was intended to be re-opened. The blocking is of modern date and has been carried out using Fletton bricks (Plate 4). This part of the building forms a single-storey extension to the frontage, which, on the basis of the brickwork, is likely to be 19th century in date (Plate 5).

2.6 A further site visit was made on 7 June 2013, once the plaster had been stripped for the opening in the party wall.

- A blocked opening was observed behind the plaster, infilled with regular lightly frogged red bricks measuring 9¼" x 4¾" x 2½" that had been partially removed before the inspection was made (Plate 6). These appear to be late 19th or early 20th century in date. A report by Terence Paul Smith, a building materials specialist formerly employed by the Museum of London and commissioned independently by the client, supports this date.
- The opening was topped by a substantial oak beam (or storey plate) with mortice holes cut into the lower face indicating that original studwork had been removed, probably at the time that the opening was made (Plate 7). In situ studwork could be observed behind the remaining plaster to the south, and the remains of a sole plate truncated on the same line (Plate 8).
- Behind the brickwork, the rear side of a wooden panel facing into no.1 was observed (see Plate 6). This was formed of narrow planks, 13cm (5") in width linked by three horizontal battens.

3 Discussion

Archaeological and Historical Background

3.1 The present site lies in the core of the medieval town, approximately 200m to the north of the medieval Abbey. The county Historic Environment Record (HER) notes a number of significant sites within a 100m radius of the study area, including the Benedictine Abbey of St Alban (HER 4074), reputedly founded by Offa of Mercia in AD793 on the site of St Alban's martyrdom, and the associated chapels and conventual buildings (HER 2715) (www.heritagegateway.org.uk). The medieval lay cemetery (HER 14050), for parishioners of St Andrew's chapel, lies to the north of the Abbey church, behind High Street and George Street. The cemetery was closed in the early 15th century.

3.2 George Street lies on the northern edge of the Abbey precinct. Excavations in 1982 revealed the line of the northern precinct wall, running west from Waxhouse Lane to Romeland, to the rear of no.1A George Street.

3.3 Evidence from archaeological excavations suggests that, whilst the medieval town developed in the 10th century focused around the Market Place, development in the area of George Street occurred during the 13th century, presumably providing services for the Monastery and Abbey and to its visitors. A number of inns were established on George Street by the late medieval period which catered for important guests of the Abbey, including the George Inn at no.26 (HER 14620) which had a chapel licensed by the abbot for the use of such guests in 1484 and the neighbouring Tudor Tavern (HER 14618), located directly opposite the present site at nos.27-28.

3.4 No.1 George Street is Grade II listed (List Entry No. 1103119) and is described as a 17th century house, re-fronted and re-roofed in the early 19th century (www.heritagegateway.org.uk). It is three storeys high, built of red brick with a very low pitched, hipped, slate roof. The sash windows have gauged, shallow segmental brick arches, with glazing bars in stucco lined reveals. There is a mid 19th century shop front on the ground floor, with slender, wood pilaster mullions, panelled soffit and a trellised frieze.

3.5 No.2 George Street is also Grade II listed (List Entry No. 1296390) and is described as a late 17th century house of two storeys with a high pitched tiled roof. The rendered first floor has sash windows with glazing bars in projecting box frames. A modern shop occupies the ground floor.

3.6 Benjamin Hare's Map of St Albans, dated 1634, shows that there were buildings on the site in 1634, with gardens to the rear leading down to the abbey. At this period George Street was named Cook Row. Benjamin Godman's map of 1818, is a detailed survey of actual buildings that shows two square buildings, numbered 19 and 20, along the street frontage with long narrow gardens to the rear (Figure 3). No.1 appears to have been slightly larger than no.2. Outbuildings are marked along the rear boundary behind no. 2. The Tithe Map of 1847 shows that both buildings had extensions added along their western boundaries, with that to no.2 extending the full length of the rear garden to meet the outbuildings on the rear boundary (Figure 4). The first and second edition Ordnance Survey maps show nos.1 and 2 extending further into their rear gardens and the addition of an outbuilding on the rear boundary of no.1 (Figures 5 & 6). The Ordnance Survey maps for 1924 and 1939 show a broadly similar arrangement (Figures 7 & 8).

Research Design

3.7 The aim of the archaeological monitoring has been to record any architectural and historical features exposed in the course of the alteration works, and to undertake additional research, as necessary, to place these findings in their local and regional archaeological and historical context. Such recording is intended to preserve by record the present characteristics of the building, and to identify and record any previously hidden elements that have the potential to contribute to a better understanding of the development of the building and of George Street in the post-medieval period.

Recorded Data

3.8 The monitoring of the alteration works, and the associated background research, has established that the rear wall of the no.2 George Street is of later 19th century date. The brickwork used in its construction is typical of the period and the date has been confirmed by the cartographic evidence. The window in this elevation was blocked using Fletton bricks, which are common throughout the 20th century. Restoring the opening exposed no new or unexpected features.

3.9 Removal of the modern plaster facing around the new opening between nos. 2 and 1 George Street revealed an opening that had been blocked by brickwork that dates to the late 19th or early 20th century. A timber storey-plate was observed running north-south above the brickwork, and this had rectangular mortice holes in its bottom face showing where vertical studs had been removed to establish the opening. A similar stud could be seen in situ beyond the opening and it was apparent that the sole plate had been cut on the same line. It is possible that the observed timber framing predates the late 17th century date for no.2 given in the listing, but no definitive dating was possible.

Conclusions

3.10 No historic fabric was disturbed in the course of the present alterations but timber framing was revealed in the party wall between nos.1 and 2 George Street, which may indicate an earlier date for the building than previously thought.

Confidence Rating

3.11 The recording of the building and the monitoring of the alteration works was largely undertaken indoors at appropriate intervals in the contractor's schedule. Conditions were acceptable for recording the exposed architectural elements and identifying features of potential significance.

3.12 There are no circumstances that would lead to a confidence rating for the work which was less than High.

4 Schedule of Site Visits

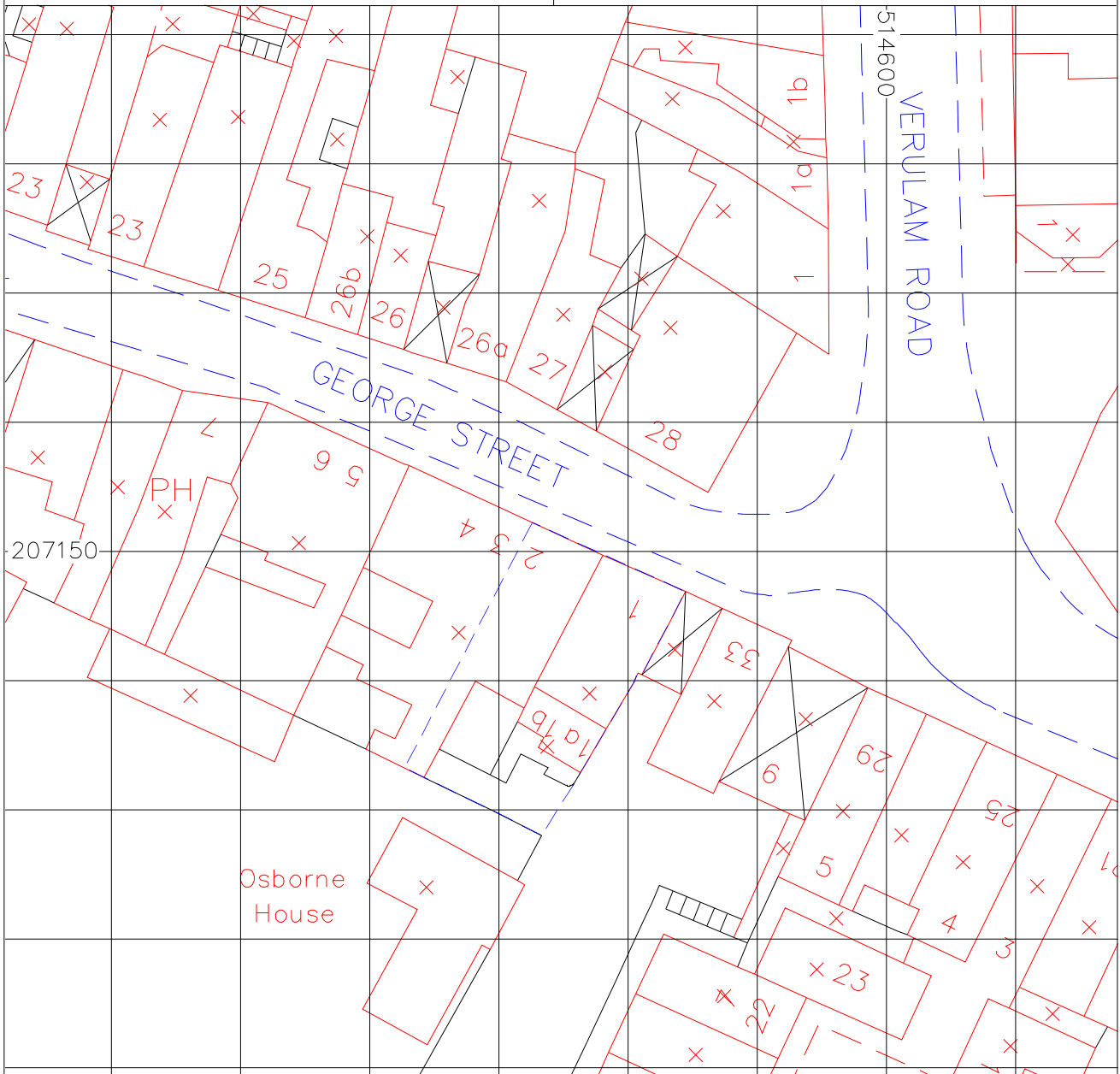
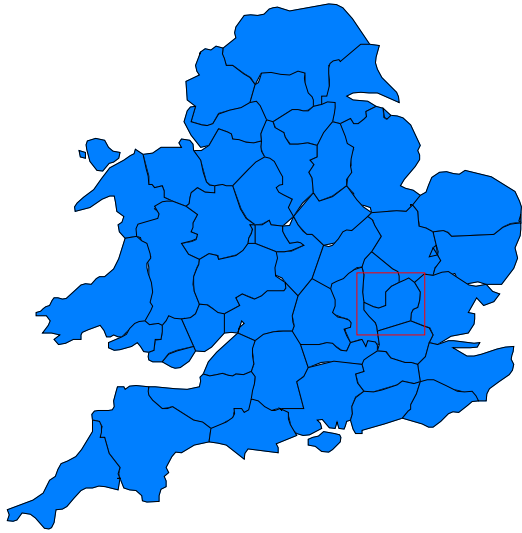
Date	Staff	Hours	Comments
28/01/2013	DJH	1	Preliminary visit
07/06/2013	DJH	2	Inspect opening in party wall

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6 Illustrations

Figure 1.....	Site location
Figure 2.....	Site layout
Figure 3.....	Benjamin Godman's map, 1818
Figure 4.....	Tithe Map, 1847
Figure 5.....	Ordnance Survey, 1884
Figure 6.....	Ordnance Survey, 1898
Figure 7.....	Ordnance Survey, 1924
Figure 8.....	Ordnance Survey, 1939
Plate 1.....	Location of proposed opening in W elevation of No1
Plate 2.....	Location of proposed opening in E elevation of No2
Plate 3.....	Test-hole in plaster showing studwork behind
Plate 4.....	Blocked window opening in S elevation of No2
Plate 5.....	Rear exterior elevation of No2
Plate 6.....	Blocked opening in E elevation of No2
Plate 7.....	Storey plate in E elevation of No2, showing mortice holes
Plate 8.....	In situ studwork adjacent to opening in E elevation of No2

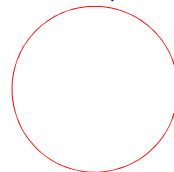


Site Location

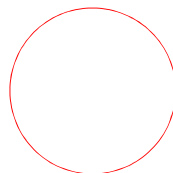
Scale 1:500

Figure 1

*Restored
window opening*



New wall opening

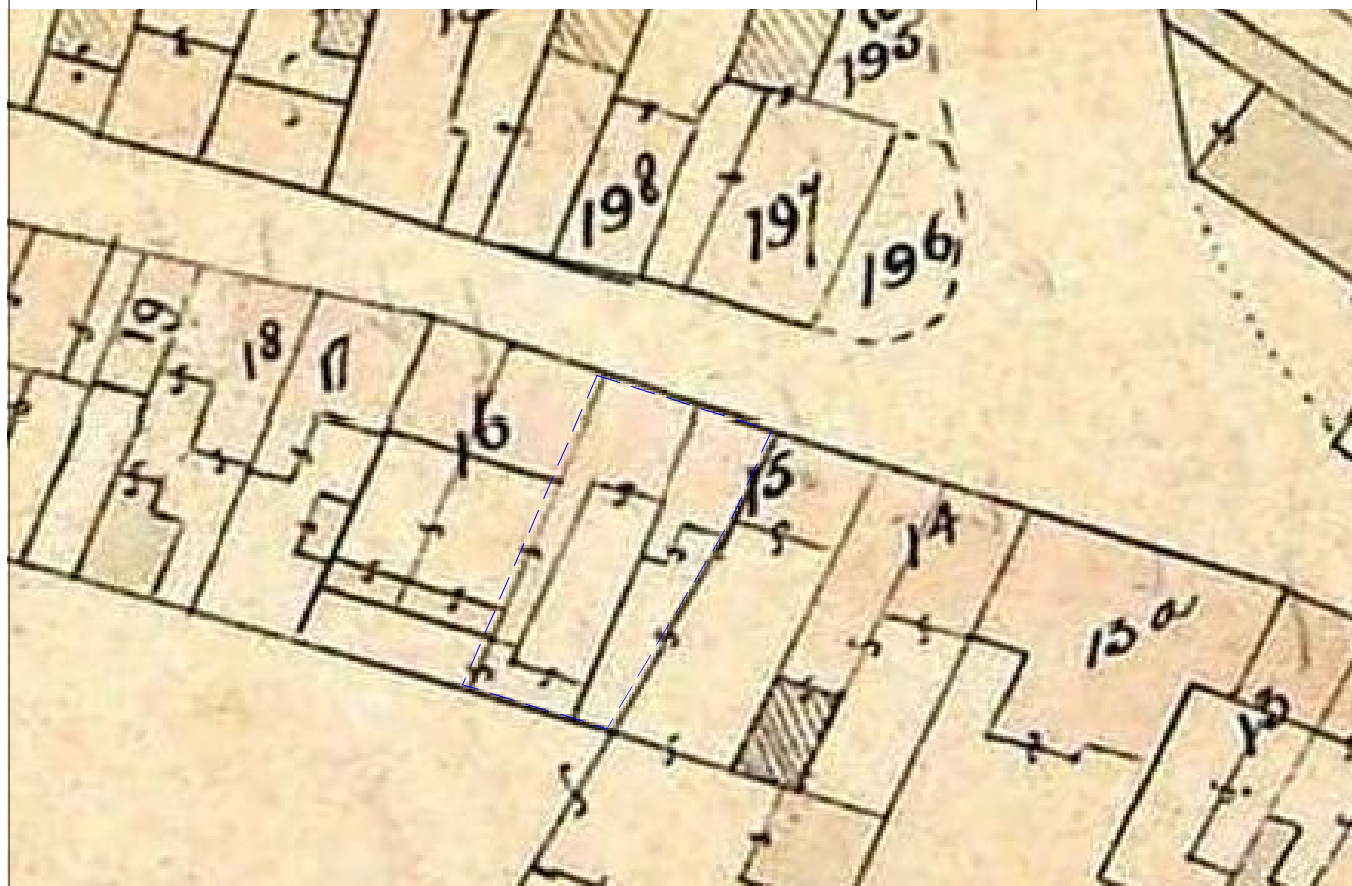




Benjamin Godman's map, 1818
(Courtesy of the Cathedral and Abbey Church of St Albans)

Scale 1:500

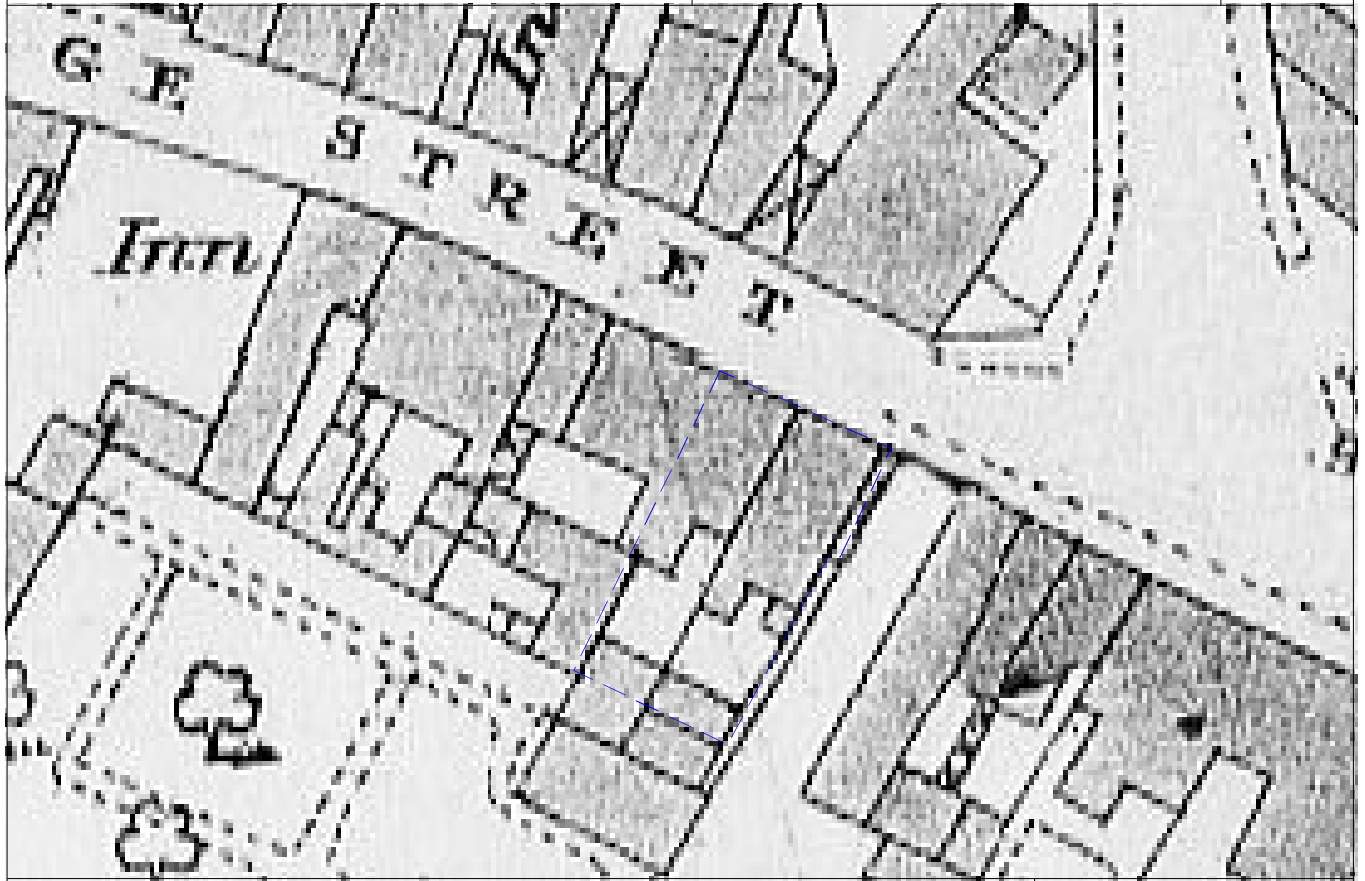
Figure 3



Tithe map, 1847
(HALS DSA 4/85/2)

Scale 1:500

Figure 4

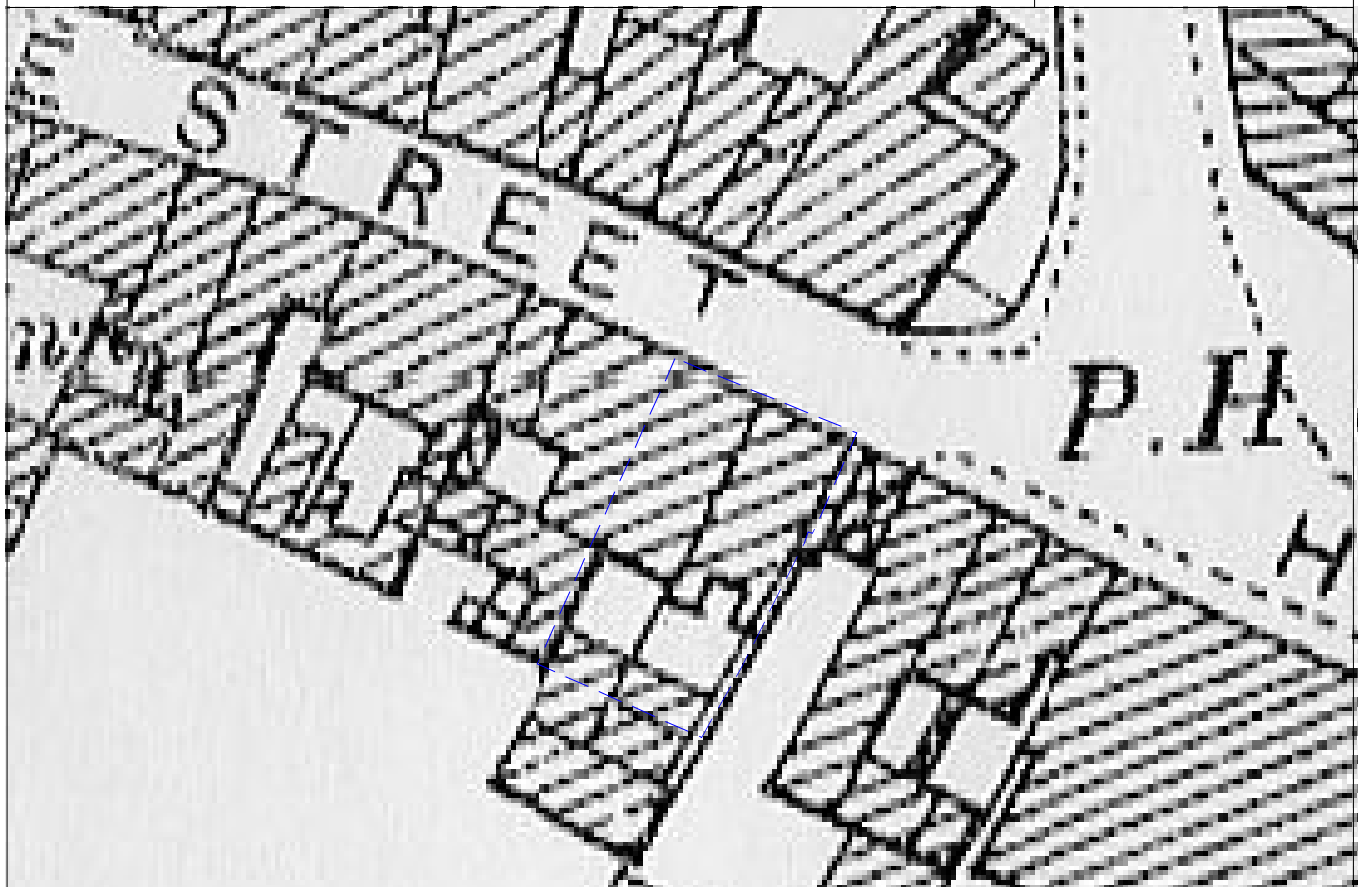


Ordnance Survey map, 1st edition, 1884

Scale 1:500

Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Licence no.AL100014861

Figure 5

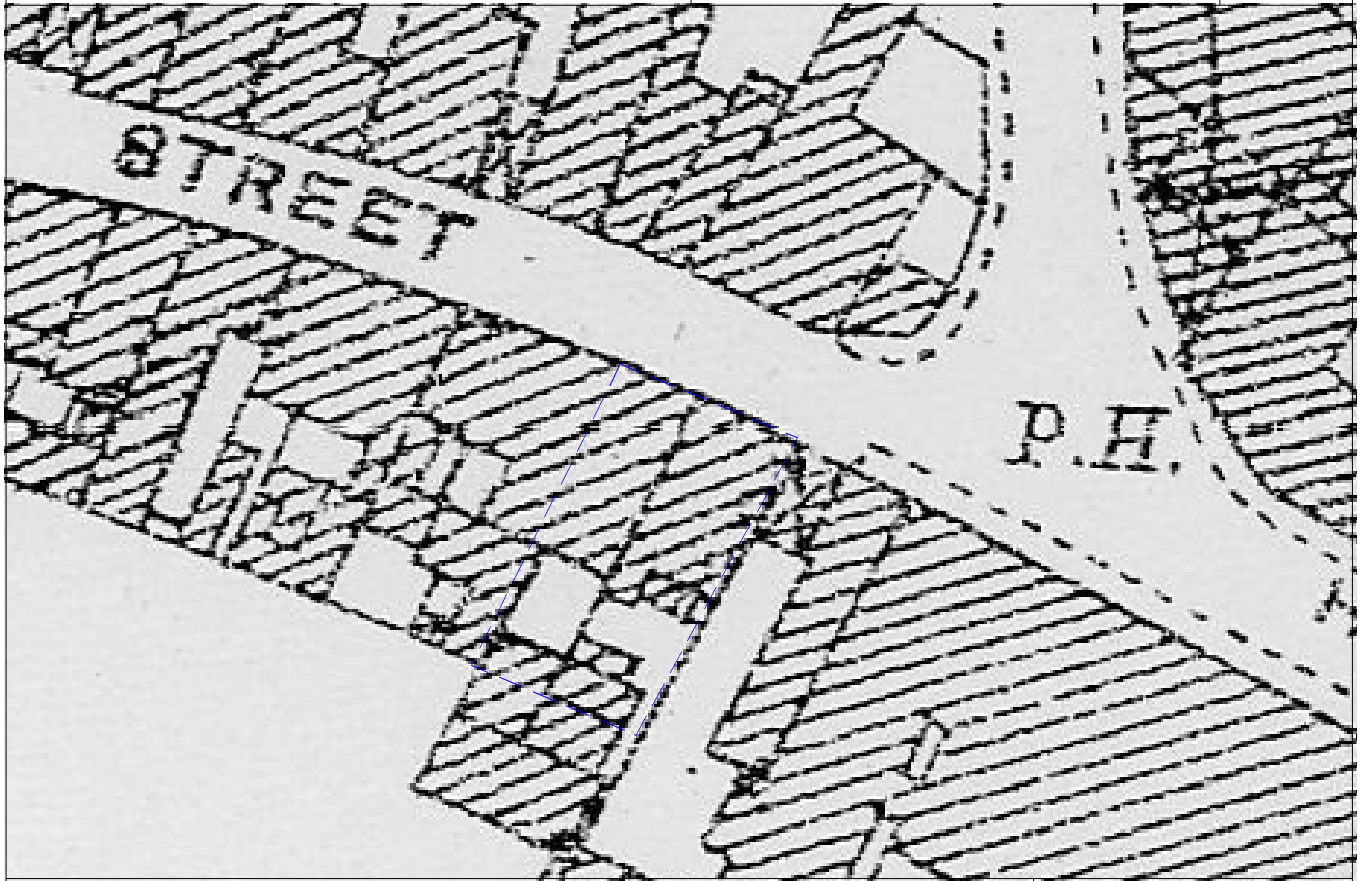


Ordnance Survey map, 2nd edition, 1898

Scale 1:500

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Figure 6



Ordnance Survey map, 1924

Scale 1:500

Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Licence no.AL100014861

Figure 7



Ordnance Survey map, 1939

Scale 1:500

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Figure 8

HN1021: 1 - 2 George Street, St Albans



Plate 01 - Location of proposed opening in W elevation of No1



Plate 02 - Location of proposed opening in E elevation of No2



Plate 03 - Test-hole in plaster showing studwork behind

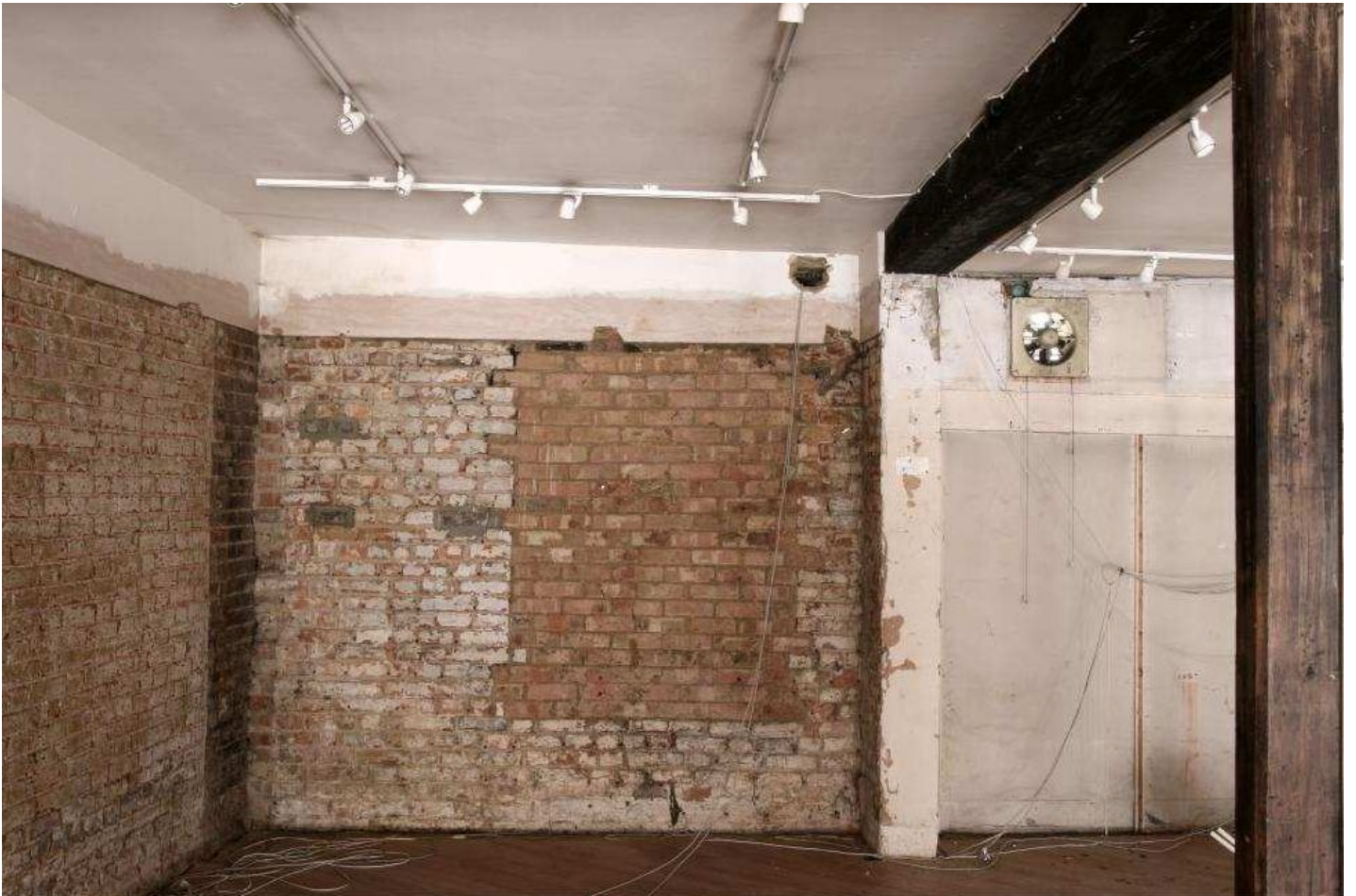


Plate 04 - Blocked window opening in S elevation of No2



Plate 05 - Rear exterior elevation of No2 showing blocked window opening



Plate 06 - Blocked opening in E elevation of No2



Plate 07 - Storey plate in E elevation of No2, showing mortice holes



Plate 08 - In situ studwork adjacent to opening in E elevation of No2

Appendix

Oasis Summary Sheet

OASIS ID: heritage1-135329	
Project details	
Project name	St. Albans, 1 and 2 George Street
Short description of the project	In response to a condition placed on the listed building consent for alterations to the fabric of the listed buildings located at 1 - 2 George Street, St Albans, the Heritage Network was commissioned to undertake a programme of archaeological monitoring. The monitoring of the alteration works, and the associated background research, has established that the rear wall of the no.2 George Street is of later 19th century date. The window in this elevation was blocked using Fletton bricks, which are common throughout the 20th century. Restoring the opening exposed no new or unexpected features. Removal of the modern plaster facing around the new opening between nos. 2 and 1 George Street revealed an earlier opening that had been blocked by brickwork that dates to the late 19th or early 20th century. A timber storey-plate was observed running north-south above the brickwork, and a vertical stud could be seen in situ beyond the opening. It is possible that the observed timber framing predates the late 17th century date for no.2 given in the listing description, but no definitive dating was possible. No historic fabric was disturbed in the course of the alterations.
Project dates	Start: 28-01-2013 End: 07-06-2013
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	HN1021 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Listed Building
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 3 - Retailing
Monument type	SHOP Post Medieval
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	HERTFORDSHIRE ST ALBANS ST ALBANS 1 and 2 George Street
Postcode	AL3 4ER
Study area	100.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 14577 07139 51 0 51 45 02 N 000 20 24 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 0m Max: 0m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Heritage Network
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist
Project design originator	Helen Ashworth
Project director/manager	David Hillelson
Project supervisor	David Hillelson

Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Christopher Wharton Jeweller
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	St Albans Museum Service
Digital Archive ID	HN1021
Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	St Albans Museum Service
Paper Archive ID	HN1021
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Diary","Report","Unpublished Text"
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	1-2 George Street, St Albans, Herts.: Archaeological Monitoring Report
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Hillelson, D.
Other bibliographic details	Report no.809
Date	2013
Issuer or publisher	The Heritage Network Ltd
Place of issue or publication	Letchworth
Description	Comb-bound A4 booklet, green cover, 8 pages, 8 figures, 8 plates