

Ambrey Archaeology Ltd

Historic building recording of 31-33 High Street, Pershore, Worcestershire

Project AMB321

Event no: WSM81846

Planning ref. 25/00085/FUL; 25/00086/LB

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Summary

Ambrey Archaeology carried out an historic building recording of 31-33 High Street, Pershore, Worcestershire. The works were commissioned by Michael Hodges of Broadway Heritage Ltd whose clients have been granted planning permission by Wychavon District Council for commercial and residential re-use of 31 and 33 High Street to create 2 no. retail units and 4 no. flats and erection of 3 no. new build cottages on land to the rear, with associated landscaping.

The application was accompanied by a Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by Elmwood Heritage. This noted that 31-33 High Street is Grade II listed with the earliest fabric dating to the 16th century. The building stands within the medieval core of Pershore.

In line with local and national guidance permission was granted subject to conditions including a programme of archaeological work. Consultation with Wychavon District Council established that this should comprise a Level 3 historic building recording and a programme of trial trenching. This document describes the results of the Historic Building Recording. The results of the trial trenching will be set out in a separate document.

The building is located on the eastern side of the High Street about 100m north of Broad Street and 150m east of Pershore Abbey. It stands in a row of buildings, of differing styles and heights, the majority of which are also listed and function as shops or offices. The ground to the rear is a narrow L shaped plot stretching about 45m to the east, to the rear of which is a Youth Centre and beyond that, the River Avon. The long narrow shape of this holding reflects its origin as a burgrave plot.

Medieval Pershore was divided into the two parishes of Holy Cross and St Andrew's, a division which reflected the manorial holdings of the Abbey of Pershore and the Abbey of Westminster. The right to establish a borough was granted by King Edward to the abbot of Westminster in 1065, and in The Domesday Book a total of 28 burgesses are recorded. The Abbot of Pershore's part of the town was High Street, where excavation shows occupation commenced in the late 11th or 12th century.

The frontage of the building is of brick with two large shop windows to the ground floor, however to the rear of this the majority of the building is formed of box timber framing. The initial phase of the building was a 16th century three bay rectangular structure about 10m long and 5m wide, built with a jetty to the front. Soon after construction two extensions were built to the rear perpendicular to the road forming east facing gables. This extended the main body of the building about 3.5m to the rear. Following this a lower range was built abutting the northernmost gable extending along the northern boundary of the plot. This was probably an ancillary structure to the house and may have housed a laundry or pantry.

It was probably in the 19th century that building was divided into two holdings and became two shops and at this juncture the frontage was refaced with brick with sash windows installed to the first floor. For much of the 20th century the building housed a tobacconist and fruiterers.

In the 1980s a new brick range was added to the rear with shops and accommodation. The older northern range was also adapted for commercial use. This required adaption of the ground floor of the house and a central sloping passage was formed to provide access to the rear.

1. Introduction

This document describes the results of a historic building recording carried out by Ambrey Archaeology at 31-33 High Street, Pershore, Worcestershire. It was commissioned by Michael Hodges of Broadway Heritage Ltd whose clients have been granted planning permission from Wychavon District Council (WDC) for commercial and residential re-use of 31 and 33 High Street to create 2 no. retail units and 4 no. flats and erection of 3 no. new build cottages on land to the rear, with associated landscaping, planning reference [25/00085/FUL; 25/00086/LB].

The application was accompanied by a Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by Elmwood Heritage. This noted that 31-33 High Street is Grade II listed with the earliest fabric dating to the 16th century and which stands within the medieval core of Pershore.

In line with local and national guidance, permission was granted subject to conditions including a programme of archaeological work.

Consultation with Aidan Smyth, Archaeology and Planning Advisor to WDC (dated 12th February 2025), established that this should comprise a Level 3 historic building recording and a programme of trial trenching. This document describes the results of the historic building recording. The results of the trial trenching will be set out in a separate document.

Prior to works a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) setting out a methodology and framework for the proposed works was produced by Ambrey Archaeology (Ambrey Archaeology 2025) and approved by WDC.

2. Objectives

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists defines the aims of building recording as 'a programme of work intended to establish the character, history, dating, form and archaeological development of a specified building' (Standard and guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures, CIfA 2014).

3. Methodology

The survey takes the form of a Level 3 building recording as defined by Historic England's *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice* (HE 2016) which describes this as an analytical record which will contain a systematic account of the building's origins, heritage and use and will include drawn and photographic records to support an historical analysis.

The building recording was undertaken by Tom Rogers of Ambrey Archaeology on 2nd June 2025.

Prior to fieldwork, a search of historic assets within 250m of the site was provided by Worcestershire Historic Environment Record (HER), referred to here as the Search Area. Archives and online sources including TheGenealogist.com were also accessed.

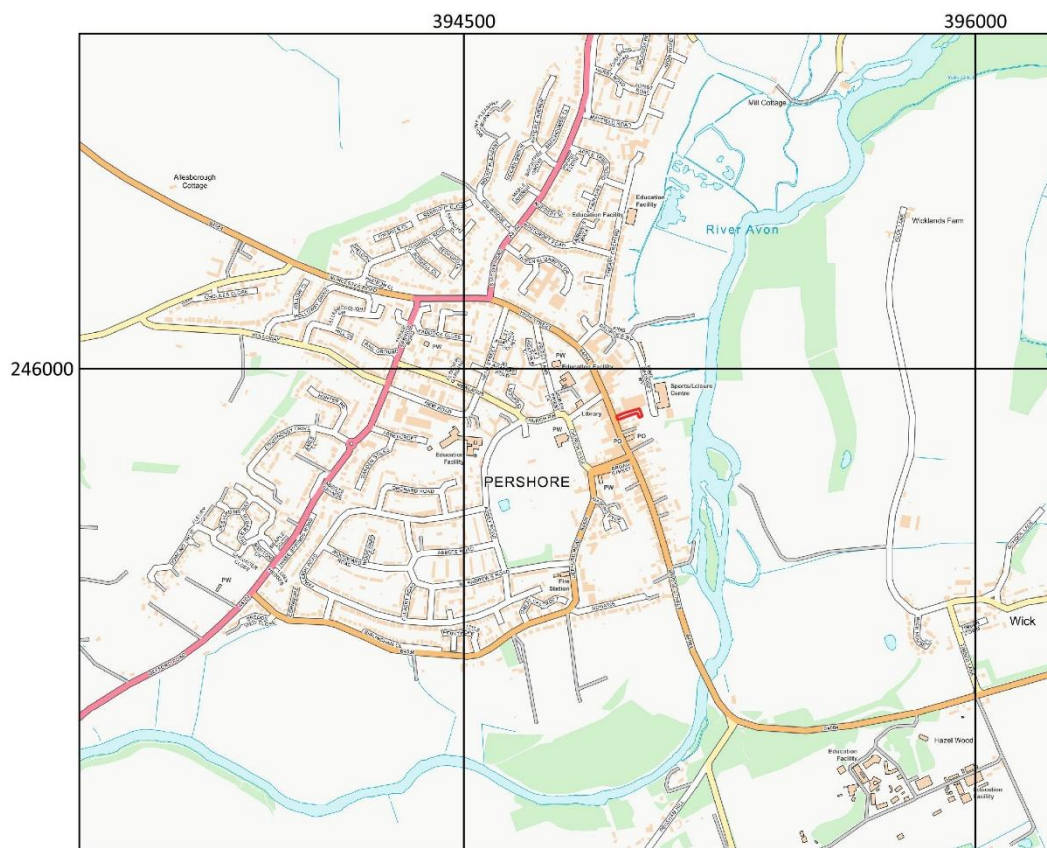
Recording was undertaken using pro-forma recording sheets and photographs were taken with a Nikon D3200 SLR camera and a DJI Osmo mobile 6 camera. Additional aerial images were taken with a Mavic Mini 2 UAV.

Provision has been made to upload the report to the OASIS database (OASIS Id: ambreyar2-536009).

Access to the building was generally good although the ground floor of one wing to the rear was not open on the day of the site visit. However, as this is not a significant part of the building and the rooms could be viewed through windows this is not considered to have been problematic.

4. Location, topography and geology

The site, comprising the buildings 31 and 33 High Street and plot to the rear, is located at NGR 394954 245857 on the eastern side of High Street about 100m north of the Broad Street and 150m east of Pershore Abbey (Figures 1 and 2). The building stands in a row of buildings, of differing styles and heights, the majority of which function as shops or offices. The ground to the rear is a narrow L shaped plot stretching about 45m to the east to the rear of which is a Youth Centre and beyond that, the River Avon.



*Figure 1. Site location
(base mapping (2025) Ordnance Survey Open Map)*

The site, including the existing buildings and the yard to the rear, comprises an area of about 940m².

Bedrock at the site is Charmouth mudstone formation with superficial deposits of Wasperton sand and gravel mapped (BGS, 2025).

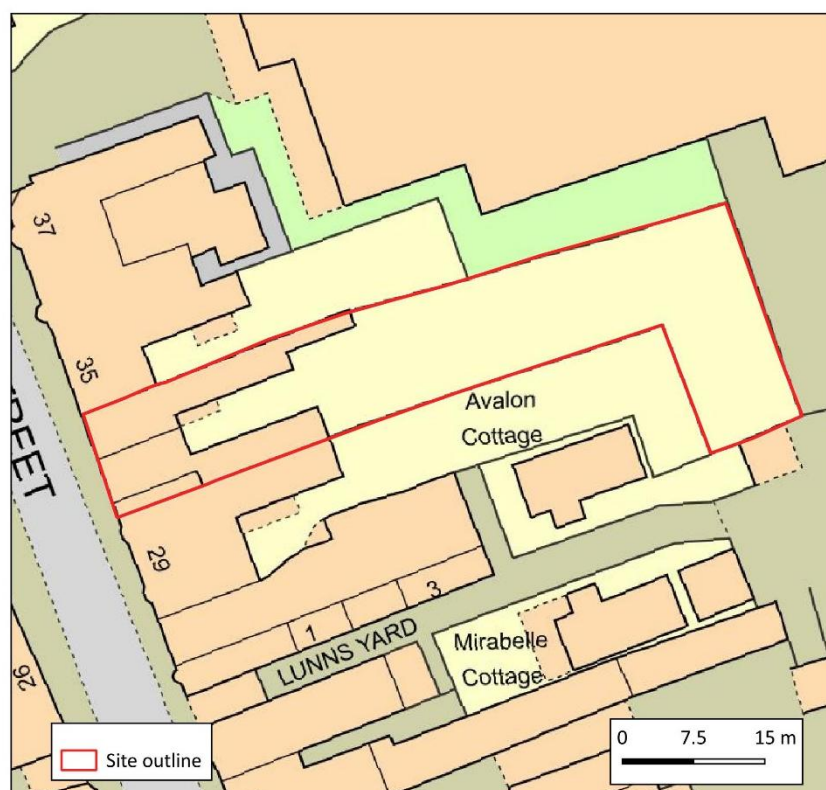


Figure 2. Site outline

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5. Background

5.1. Designated assets in the vicinity

Nos 31 and 33 High Street are listed together as a grade II listed building (List entry no. 1387073).

The listing information gives the following description of the buildings: *'House, now shop and offices. Probably C16, much altered and refronted early C19, with further C20 alterations. Timber-framed, C19 work of painted brick in Flemish bond. Steeply-pitched Welsh-slate roof with brick dentilled eaves; no visible stacks.*

EXTERIOR: 2-storey 3-window range with rear wing at right angles. Main range: 8/8sashes. Ground floor: C20 plate-glass shop windows to outer bays, that on left with central door; at centre, C20 doorway giving access to passage between the two present properties with remains of gauged brick flat arch above. Rear: wing has timber-framed gable and old tile roof. INTERIOR: not inspected, but noted as having square-panelled timber-framing, one post, exposed joists, and beams, some chamfered' (HE 2023).

In addition, there are 120 listed buildings within the search area. These largely comprise the buildings fronting both sides of High Street and the market place, Broad Street and are mainly Grade II listed with 17th -19th century origins. To the immediate north of the site, Lincoln House (Grade II,

list entry 1387074) is an early - mid C18, brick house and shop with rendered lined stucco, much altered in the 19th and 20th centuries.

To the south, 29 High Street (list entry 1387072) is an early 19th century former house of brick with stucco. It once housed the Pershore District Council Offices (WSM06588).

The search area also includes the Grade I listed Abbey church of Holy Cross with St Edburgha (more commonly referred to as Pershore Abbey, list entry 1387027), a church cross to the south, (list entry 1387028), a number of important tombs (list entries 1387030, 1387031, 1387030, 1387035) and the former church of St Andrew on Church Walk 115m west of the site (list entry 1387033).

A single scheduled area within the search area is the site of Pershore Abbey (ref 1005303) 200m to the west of the site.

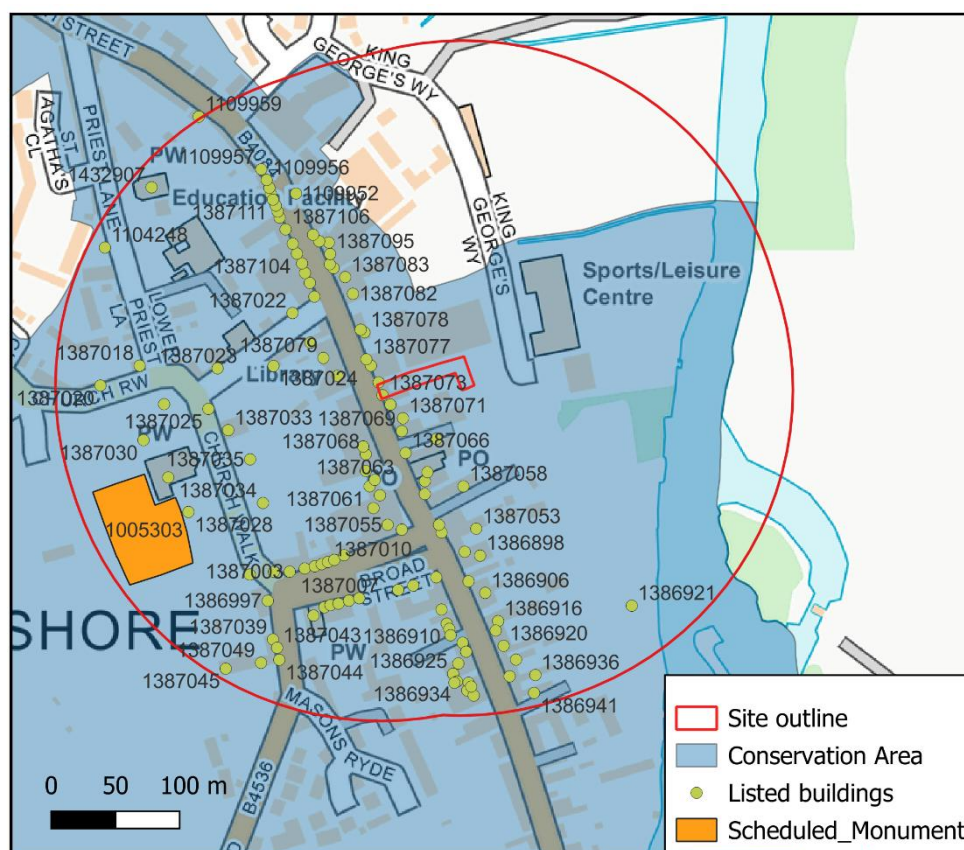


Figure 3. Designated assets within the search area

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5.2. Archaeological and historic background (including non-designated heritage assets)

The site lies within an area of Palaeolithic potential (WSM56946) as it lies on Wasperton sands and gravels from which artefacts and ecofacts dating to Marione Isotope stages 04-02 have been recovered.

A Flandrian River channel was excavated in 1978 ahead of the development of central Pershore (WSM11870). A series of deposits up to 4m thick were recorded, which included mammal remains from Marione Isotope Stages 3-2, Neolithic, Iron Age, Roman, Medieval and post medieval artefacts.

Apart from that found in the river channel, there is no evidence of Roman occupation within the search area, although Dalwood and Buteaux (1995) record that buried deposits containing Roman ceramics of this date have been excavated in Newlands, to the north-west of the site.

The location of the site on gravels close to the River Avon is likely to have attracted settlement in the late prehistoric and Roman periods as activity from these periods is well attested along the line of the river including at Three Springs Road in Pershore where Iron Age and Romano-British activity was recorded in an excavation ahead of residential development in 2011 (Worcestershire Archaeology 2013).

A minster church was founded in the town c689 but there is little evidence of the life of the community until it was reconstituted as the Benedictine abbey of St Mary and St Eadburga in c 970 (WSM05407). It is probable that a rural settlement grew up at the gate of the abbey, north of the church (WSM16050). It has also been suggested that there was a mint at Pershore in the mid-11th century (WSM15710).

In 1065 King Edward granted many of the estates of Pershore abbey to the new abbey of Westminster, including half the estate of Pershore itself (Dalwood and Buteaux 1995). The right to establish a borough was granted by King Edward to the abbot of Westminster in 1065, and in the Domesday Book a total of 28 burgesses are recorded. The Abbot of Pershore's part of the town was High Street, where excavation shows occupation commenced in the late 11th or 12th century and Newlands where a new suburb was laid out by the 13th century. This area probably includes the site and likely comprised a series of long narrow burgage plots with frontages to the High Street. Tenement blocks to the east of High Street are recorded on the HER as WSM16060. Stone built vaults are recorded as surviving beneath 21 to 23 High Street (WSM15294) that include a late 13th century piscina and are believed to be part of the chapel of St Michael.

Documentary evidence indicates that Pershore was a moderately prosperous medieval town, and its bridge and routeways gave it a certain economic importance. There was a wool trade in the town, although not on a large scale. The site of a wool barn is marked on the HER to the south of the site (WSM58519). The town was burnt down twice in the 13th century which may have led to replanning of large areas of the town including the laying out of Broad Street (*ibid*).

The town was in decline towards the end of the medieval period. Following its dissolution in 1539 most of the abbey precinct became a private house and Pershore grounds.

Recorded trades in the 17th century included gloving (probably the major industry), other leatherworking crafts, tanning, and silkweaving. Orchard and market-garden cultivation were a feature of the 19th century economy. The railway reached Defford in 1840, and Pershore in 1853.

World War II assets recorded in the search area comprise two three air raid shelters (WSM27358, WSM27359 and WSM22892) although Robson-Glyde (2023) notes that the High Street was used as the headquarters of the Evesham Battalion LDV and later by the 4th Worcestershire Battalion Home Guard.

The Plaza Cinema (WSM71553) which operated from the 1920s to demolition in 1969 was located on the High Street some 50m south of the site.

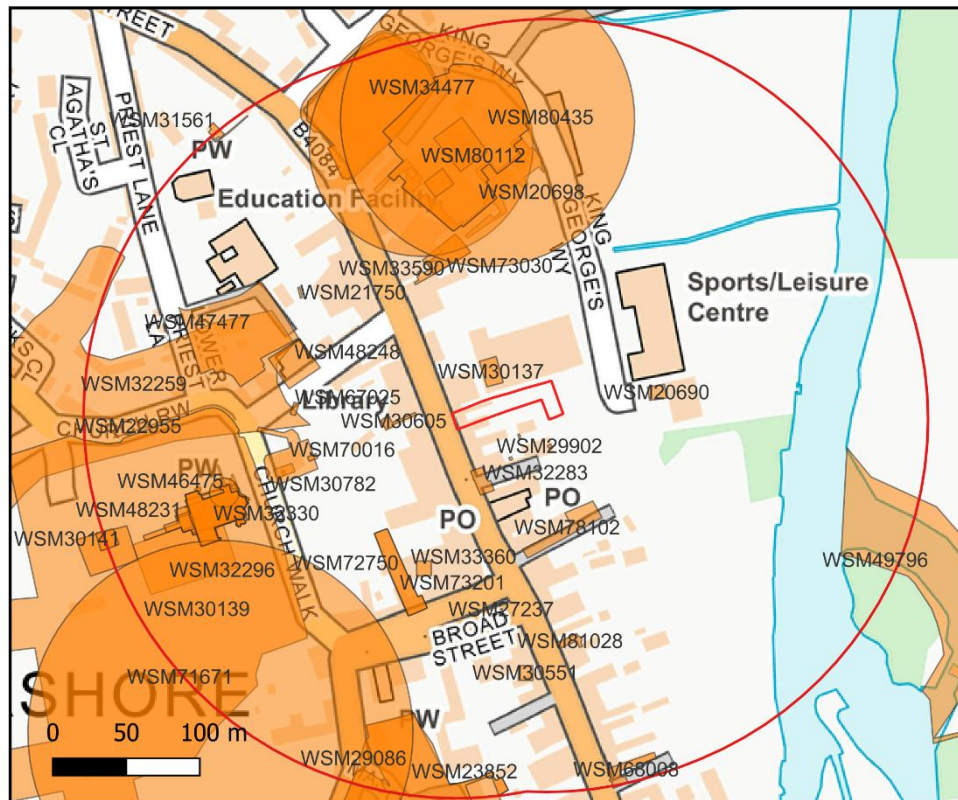


Figure 4. Selected monuments within the search area

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5.3. Archaeological events in the vicinity

A total of 61 archaeological interventions are recorded within the Study Area. Those most relevant to the site and proposed works are described below.

An excavation was undertaken to the Rear of 37 High Street immediately to the north of the site in 1992 by Birmingham Archaeology (WSM30137). Here a number of intercutting medieval and early post-medieval pits were exposed. Several of the features may have been post-holes associated with early timber structures and several of the pits were sealed by the remnants of a wall composed of stone slabs possibly of late medieval - early post-medieval date. Evidence of post medieval tanning comprised two brick-built basements, to the west of which were a series of clay-lined tanning pits.

An evaluation was undertaken in advance of the proposed construction of a new shopping arcade and flats by Worcestershire County Council Archaeology Service in 1994 (WSM29902). The proposed works lay immediately to the east of the surviving undercroft of a suspected medieval chapel (WSM15293). The site encompassed a substantial area including parts of at least four medieval burgrave plots. The earliest deposits identified dated to the 13th-14th centuries and occupation has been continuous since that time. The deposits were typical of back-plot locations, being principally associated with waste disposal, but also including evidence of commercial activity in the form of a substantial medieval oven.

An archaeological excavation was undertaken at 34 (The Old Post Office) High Street, Pershore on the west side of High Street by Marches Archaeology in 2003 (WSM30605).

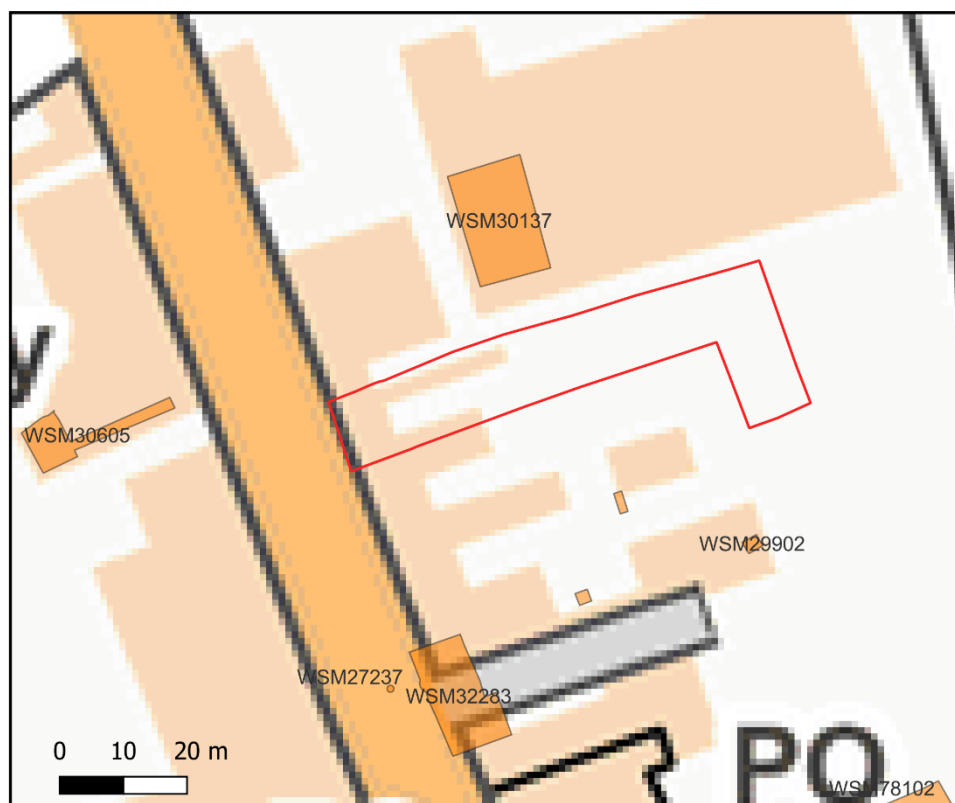


Figure 5. Archaeological events in the vicinity to the site

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The earliest features consisted mainly of pits and postholes which were either cutting the natural or layers that directly overlay the natural subsoil. Medieval features included two probable gullies, pits, potholes and a stone lined well. The post-medieval phase was characterised by domestic and industrial features. These included a possible well and a small building complex housing a hearth.

Assessment of proposed re sewerage works, Pershore (WSM27237) was undertaken in The High Street and Bridge Street in 1998. The fieldwork consisted of the observation of four boreholes of which one demonstrated that undated, waterlogged, organic-rich deposits survive beneath the High Street.

5.4. Documentary evidence relating to the building

With the kind agreement of Shona Robson-Glyde, this section (*italics*) is reproduced directly from the Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by Elmwood Heritage. The figure numbers have been changed.

Historic documentation for 31 to 33 High Street is limited. Whilst there is information available within censuses and trade directories about the residents and traders on High Street, none of the documents prior to 1932 include numbering. It has been possible to trace the residents back from the latest trade directory of 1940 to the 1916 directory but no earlier.

The 1916 directory (Kelly 1916, p217) lists Frank Butt as a tobacconist on High Street. From the 1921 census (NRO Worcs. RG15/13715/14/2 p192) we can see that Mr Butt is 75 years old and a widower. He runs his tobacconist business from home and is living with his son, an out of work painter, and daughter-in-law. The 1921 directory still lists Frank Butt as a tobacconist on High Street (Kelly 1921, p219). It only lists Albert G Simpkin as a fruiterer on the High Street (ibid. p220) although he is not included in the census. Both Frank Butt, tobacconist, and Albert G Simpkin, fruiterer, are included in the 1924 directory

(Kelly 1924, p230-231). The 1928 directory, however, shows a change. Albert G Simpkins is still recorded as a fruiterer on High Street (Kelly 1928, p226) but the tobacconist is now Frank M Butt (ibid. p225), son of the elder Frank Butt recorded in the census. From 1932, the trade directories record that Frank M S Butt was a tobacconist at 31 High Street whilst Albert G Simpkins is a fruiterer at 33 High Street (Kelly 1932, 226-227).

The 1933 trade directory lists F H Simpkins on the High Street under 'Fruiters and Grocers' with F M S Butt under 'Tobacconists' (Cope 1933, p122 and 124). Soon after this the electoral register for 1935 lists Frank M S Butt at 31 High Street and George and Hannah Hill and Thomas Alfred Simpkins at 33 High Street. It seems that 33 High Street was a residence for two families at this time. In the 1936 directory, Frank M S Butt is still listed as tobacconist at 31 High Street with Alfred Simpkins as a fruiterer at 33 High Street (Kelly 1936, p228-229). Frank M S Butt is also shown in the 1940 directory (Kelly 1940, p229) as a tobacconist however, 33 High Street is now listed as the location of the fruiterer Albert Henry Leach (ibid).

An aerial photograph of 1930 (Figure 6) shows the back plots of Pershore High Street. The rear of the 31 to 33 High Street building is visible, and the rest of the plot contains a lot of vegetation. The timber-frame gable on the back of 33 High Street can be seen along with the range of buildings attached to it. It is possible that some of the vegetation on the plot was crops by the fruiterer resident at 33 High Street, Albert G Simpkins. A small number of possible garden buildings within the plot are visible and are likely to have been used for gardening equipment.



Figure 6. Aerial view showing the site indicated by a red arrow (added by Ambrey Archaeology)

A 1969 photograph of 31 and 33 High Street (Figure 7) shows that the High Street frontage of the two buildings has been considerably altered. The image has 31 High Street as the larger of the two structures, with large, probably late 19th century, plate-glass shop windows and an inset doorway. To the right is another doorway which provided access to the rear of the properties. Over the ground floor is a large fascia sign that says 'Don Fawcett'. The frontage of 33 High Street has a large, multipaned window, probably of late 1830s to 1840s date. To the left of the window is the doorway into the shop. The trade directories identified 33 High Street as a fruiterer. With the boxes shown outside the shop and in the doorway in the photograph, along with the awning over the window, it seems that this function continued into the 1960s. The first floor has three, multi-pane, sash windows with the one over 33 High Street having 16 lights and those over 31 High Street having six lights.



Figure 7. The frontage of the building in 1969

The planning applications of the 1980s for 31 and 33 High Street revealed the layout of the buildings prior to later alterations (Figure 8). It is clear from the 1980 application (ref W/80/00813) that the buildings had already been altered from their original layout. The 1980 existing floor plans show that the rear range adjoining 33 High Street had been converted to residential use. It was probably previously storage for the shop. The layout of the shops appears to have been altered with doorways created between the shops of 31 and 33 High Street. The proposals that were approved at this time were to block the doorways between the properties on the ground floor recreating the two shops whilst converting the ground floor of the rear range for shop use. This would have involved the removal of the 33 High Street staircase and the walls between the main building and the rear range. The first floor of both 31 and 33 High Street, including the rear range, was to be converted into offices. Whilst the 1980 proposals were approved, the only changes that were actually made was to

separate 31 and 33 High Street again on the ground floor recreating the two shops. The existing floor plans from the 1984 planning application (ref W/84/01246 and W/84/01247) show that the proposed changes never happened. The 1984 application shows the layout of the buildings prior to the changes that were made to convert the structures to a shopping arcade. The changes included the demolition of a lean-to to the rear of 31 High Street with it being replaced by the south wing extension housing a shop and toilets on the ground floor and a bedsit on the first floor.

Although the 1984 proposals were approved and carried out, once 31 to 33 High Street was altered the buildings were left vacant. A dispute with the then owners resulted in the flats and shop spaces being locked up and abandoned until the present day.



Figure 8. 1980s proposals for the buildings

5.5. Map regression

The 1811 Ordnance Survey Drawing of Pershore (Figure 9) depicts the town in some detail, but little more than to show that the High Street was built up on both sides with gardens to the rear and an orchard between the these and the river.



Figure 9. Extract of 1812 Ordnance Survey drawing 217 showing approximate site location in red

The 1831 one inch map (Figure 10) shows a little more detail in that ranges to the rear and outbuildings are now depicted. Although it is not possible to identify exactly which plot relates to 31-33 High Street, a building extending from the rear of the houses fronting the High Street is depicted in the approximate location and may well represent the northern range to the rear of no. 33.



Figure 10. Extract of 1830 Ordnance Survey sheet Worcester LIV SW at one inch to the mile scale

The tithe plan and apportionment of Pershore (Figure 11) is divided between the two parishes of St Andrews and Holy Cross and only the St Andrew's tithe map is available. The map which shows the buildings in unusually high detail for a plan of this date, has a gap in the section around the site as it lies within Holy Cross.

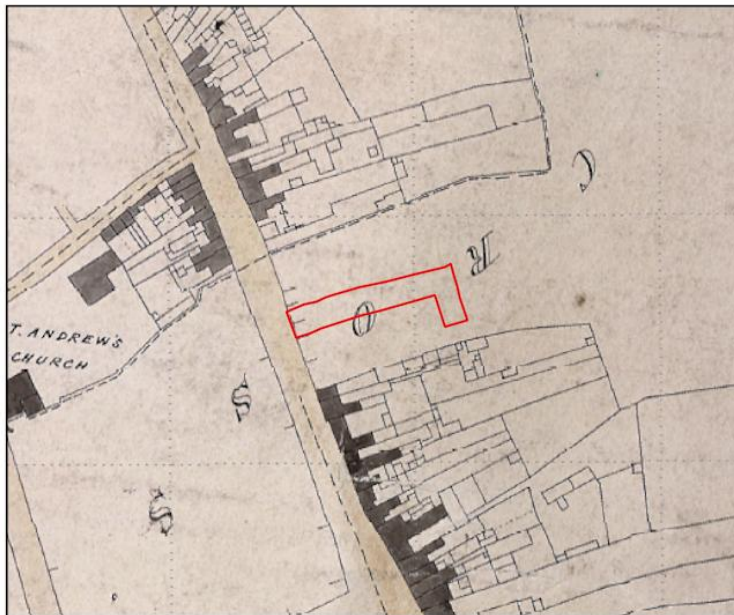


Figure 11. Extract of the tithe map of the Church of Holy Cross, St Andrew's Pershore, showing site outlined in red

The 1884 six inch Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 12) shows less detail although the L shaped site is discernible with the northern range and two small structures on the boundary with the plot to the south.



Figure 12. Extract of 1884 Ordnance Survey Worcestershire Sheet XLI.SE at scale 6 inches to the mile, showing the site outlined in red

More detail can be found on the 1904 25 inch map (Figure 13) and here the two small structures have been built against a range projecting from the property to the south and a narrow outhouse (extant until recently) is shown adjoining the eastern end of the northern range. The letter P in the courtyard denotes a pump. The land between the site and the river, in two parcels, are set to orchard. This map also shows divisions within the property. The main part of the building is divided into two and in addition, a narrow passageway is shown to the south.



*Figure 13. Extract of
1903 Ordnance
Survey sheet
Worcestershire
XLI.12 at scale 25
inches to the mile*

There is little change on the 1945 edition map (not reproduced) except that the two small buildings to the south have been joined.

6. Building survey

Photograph directions are shown on Figures 15 (External), 16 (Ground Floor) and 17 (First Floor).

Exterior

The **West Elevation** is of painted brick in Flemish bond with a slate roof (Plate 1, Figure 14). The street level on this section of High Street slopes to the south so the building is marginally shorter at its northern end. The ridge line of the building is lower than the buildings to each side which are both of three storeys. No 31 is to the south (right in Plate 1) and no 33 is to the north (left in Plate 1)

To the ground floor is a central doorway with side panels under a basket arch and there are wide shop windows to each side, that to the north being larger. The southern shop window is divided by a brick pillar. The brickwork beneath the windows is unpainted and there is a stone base to the brick panel to the north of the doorway (Plate 2). All the openings on the ground floor are beneath concrete lintels, although a flat segmental arch is visible above the doorway. At first floor level there are three 8/8 sash windows which project into the dentilled eaves.



Figure 14. Front (west facing) elevation of the building

At the east elevation, the building has a plain tile roof. Both 31 and 32 have rear extensions with pitched roofs perpendicular to the main section of the building and east facing gables. Abutting the gables are two pitched roof ranges extending eastwards into the plot with a paved area between (Plates 3 and 4), referred to here as the northern range and the southern range.

The extension to the rear of no 31 has a ridge line lower than that of the main section of the building. The gable end is brick faced with inserted windows and a glass door which formerly led onto a, now decrepit, balcony. The gable is largely obscured by the southern range which is of brick and was built in the 1980s (Plate 5). The north elevation of this range has three bow windows at ground floor level each with a canopy roof of plain tiles and four panel doors accessing former boutique shops. To the first floor there are four wooden casements. The east facing gable is entirely plain.

The east facing gable of the extension to No 33 is timber framed with brick infill and a ridge line at the same height as the main structure of the building (Plate 6). This gable is largely obscured by the northern range on this side which adjoins at a slight angle, but the visible timber framing reveals that the end tie beam is supported on a jowl post from ground level (Plate 7). Above this is box framing though with raking struts above the collar beam. Below the tie beam, a metal casement window overlooks the balcony.

This south facing wall of this range, facing the paved area, is rendered and the roof is of modern plain clay tiles (Plate 8). There are two pitched dormers with metal casement windows with weatherboarding between and at the sides. To the ground floor there are three modern bow windows with tiled canopies above, interspersed with doors.

The east facing gable of the range is of brick in stretcher bond with occasional headers bonded by lime mortar. There is a central metal casement window at first floor level.

Interior

Room 1 is the central passage to the building at ground floor (Plate 9), which was created to allow access from the street frontage to shops in the ranges to the rear by the insertion of the wall to the south which is of modern brick with four large, fixed windows. The floor is of concrete, rising to the east to meet the level of the ground to the rear which is at a higher level than the street frontage. The wall to the north is divided. To the west is a modern hardboard partition with a central hatch and door forming a former kiosk (Plate 10) in which some elements of box timber framing are exposed in the north wall. A scored carpenters' mark is visible on one pegged joint (Plate 11). To the east is a panel of box framing (Plate 12).

Sections of four axial beams are exposed in the ceiling supporting widely spaced joists and a curious angled strut (Plate 13). The beam to the west is roughly hewn and chamfered while the third from the street is the widest at 0.45m. The beam to the east is also chamfered.

Room 2 is on the ground floor of No 31 (Plate 14). It is rectangular, stretching from the front to the rear of the main building with a large shop window to the street frontage. The floor is of concrete at two levels and accessed by two steps.

Box timber framing exposed in the south wall is pegged (Plate 15) and there is a carpenters' mark ('V'; Plate 16). The sawmarks are a combination of vertical, implying the use of a saw pit, and circular (Plate 17) which would suggest that some of the elements are replacements.

Four axial beams crossing the ceiling, extending from Room 1, have been boxed in and are supported by boxed-in posts on the inside of the northern wall. Furthermore, the second beam from the east is also supported by a free standing post on the line of the steps between the two levels of the room (Plate 18). This is roughly hewn with empty mortices on both the northern and southern sides. To the north on the line of the break between the two levels is a low wall formed of two horizontal members bowed upwards.

In the rear wall is a projecting corner fireplace which has been blocked and plastered over (Plate 19).

Room 3 is to the rear of no 33. It is rectangular with a chimney breast to the south-west, now blocked with a round headed alcove inserted to one side. The room is accessed by metal framed French windows to the yard to the rear and a double doorway (Plate 21) to the west leading to the frontage (Room 4). Adjacent to the French window is a blocked doorway and there is another

blocked door in the south wall which formerly led into the passage (Room 1). Some elements of box framing are visible in all four walls (Plate 22). The axial beams which are exposed in Room 1 are not apparent although the suspended ceiling here is lower. A roughly hewn and chamfered beam crosses the ceiling east-west. The floor is concrete with a linoleum covering.

Room 4 is the former shop to the frontage of no 33 (Plate 23). The room is lower than that to the rear and accessed by two steps from Room 3 (Plate 24). To the west is a large shop window with a central door, either side of which is a low plinth for shop displays. Pegged box framing is exposed in the north, east and south walls and a large boxed-in axial beam supported on boxed-in posts at each end supports widely spaced joists. The posts to the west are set back from the current wall, to which the joists extend implying the former presence of a jetty to the frontage (Plate 25).

Room 5 is an L shaped hallway to the rear and north of Room 3. The eastern section is formed of the narrow gap between the northern range and the main body of the house. Pegged box framing is visible in the west wall of the passageway section (Plate 26) and the north wall while the south wall is plain with modern panelling. A plain wooden staircase with cupboard beneath provides access to the first floor (Plate 27) and more box framing and a brace in the north wall are visible within the stairwell (Plates 28 and 29).

Room 6 on the first floor to the rear of no. 33 (Plate 30) is rectangular apart from the north-west corner where modern panelling surrounding the staircase intrudes and a chimney breast to the south-west (Plate 31). Box framing is exposed in the north, east and west walls and a chamfered beam crosses from east to west with plaster scores, although no stops are apparent. The floorboards are of softwood and narrow.

A metal casement window in the east wall overlooks the former balcony and yard to the rear while to the north there is a mullioned wooden casement. In the east wall a door leads to the first floor of the northern range, adjacent to which a jowl post supports the tie beam of the truss which forms the east facing gable (i.e. the interior of the framing visible in Plates 6 and 7). The door is flush, of modern hardboard.

Room 7 is at the frontage of no 33 (Plate 32). Here pegged framing is visible in all walls, although covered by a panel to the south-west. A substantial, chamfered axial beam with plaster scars crosses the ceiling north to south (Plate 33). The floor is of narrow floorboards with plain skirting. The wall in the west wall is the sash overlooking High Street. Adjacent to the door in the east wall is a very substantial post 0.4m wide (Plate 34).

Room 8 is a former kitchen to the rear of no. 31. There is a blocked corner fireplace in the south-east corner (above that in Room 1), adjacent to which in the east wall are a metal framed door and window which formerly led onto the balcony (Plate 35). Box framing is exposed in the western (Plate 36) and northern walls and the ends of joists are exposed above the upper horizontal member in the latter (Plate 37) reflecting differing floor heights in each side of the building.

Room 9 is a lobby to the south of Room 8 from which this side of the first floor of the building is accessed from stairs in the southern (1980s) range. Here close studded posts, some bowed, are present in the north and west walls and these are likely to continue behind an inserted airing cupboard to the north-east (Plates 38 and 39). The door to the west is ledged and braced with a thumb latch.

Room 9a is a small corridor created by the insertion of a bathroom to the south. In this section a jowl post is visible supporting the tie beam of the first truss from the south in the front (north-south orientated) section of the building (Plate 40).

Room 10 is an inserted bathroom, defined to the north and west by inserted stud walls. It is lit by a light tunnel and has box framing exposed in the south wall, including a brace supporting the tie beam in this wall (Plate 41). The timbers have a series of curious circular markings as if cut by a hole saw which seem to serve no purpose other than decoration.

Room 11 is the former bedroom at the frontage of no 31 (Plate 42). Timber elements are exposed in the south wall with stave holes. Two closely set posts are exposed in the north wall (Plate 43) and there is a jowl post to the north-west (opposite to that visible in Room 10). There is a sash window in the west wall.

Room 12, the central room on the frontage is rectangular apart from a chimney breast (Plate 44) with Victorian grate and surround to the north-west (Plate 45). Timber posts are exposed in the south, west and north walls (Plate 46) except for a panel in the latter matching that in Room 7 which was presumably a former access between these two rooms (Plate 46).

There is a sash window in the west wall and a moulded panel door in the south wall.

The Northern Range

Room 13 is the ground floor of the northern range, comprising a rectangular room with a stairwell in the south-east corner (Plates 47 and 48). It has plain plaster walls except to the north where there is a boxed in post. The ceiling is crossed by three transverse beams supporting widely spaced joists. The western of these is boxed in and an axial beam stretches from this to the west wall of the range while the two exposed beams are regular and chamfered.

There was no access to **Room 14** on the day of the survey but it is a very plain room with a transverse beam supporting widely spaced joists, essentially a continuation of Room 13.

Room 15, the western room of the northern range on the first floor, is a former kitchen with a metal casement window in the south wall and box framing in the west wall (Plate 49) from which a post with a pegged jowl supports a purlin extending along the north wall (Plate 50). Box framing is also exposed in the north wall below the wall plate (Plate 51). Tally marks are visible on one joint in the west wall adjacent to the door (Plate 52). These are wide and likely to have been made with a chisel whereas another V shaped mark in a panel to the south (Plate 53) is thinner and V shaped in profile perhaps made with a race knife (see James 2018).

Room 16 is an inserted lobby formed of stud walls with a former airing cupboard.

Room 17 is a former bathroom in which a rough and bowed purlin is exposed as well as the tie beam, principal rafter and collar beam of the truss between the central and western bays (Plate 54).

The opposite side of this truss is more visible from **Room 18**, a rectangular room formed of the central bay of this range (Plate 55). This comprises a tie beam and collar with two straight posts, one central and another to the north. This is in contrast to the truss to the east in which the collar beam is supported by two raking struts, one of which, with the tie beam, has been cut into to create a doorway (Plate 56). The purlins, exposed on both pitches are unusually rough and bowed upwards (Plate 57).

The room is lit by two relatively recent dormer windows in the south wall.

Room 19 is a former bathroom with purlin exposed (Plate 58).

Room 20, the easternmost in the northern range, is a former kitchen with purlins exposed in both pitches and a metal casement window in the east wall (Plate 59).

The Southern Range

Room 21 is the ground floor of the 1980s range; a plain, rectangular room with plaster walls with three bow windows to the west, built as a shop. Toilets to the west were not accessible. The upper floor of the southern range is accessed by a long corridor to the south (Plate 60).

Room 22 is a former bathroom with wooden casement window in the north wall (Plate 61).

Room 23 is a former kitchen with wooden casement window in the north wall (Plate 62).

Room 24 is a plain rectangular room with a casement window with a central fixed panel in the north wall (Plate 63).

The Attics

The two attic spaces are reached from hatches above the stairwell between Rooms 5 and 6 (the northern space) and above Room 9 (the southern space). The northern space comprises a single bay on the axis of the main building with the space above the northern gabled extension.

The trusses to north and south have a collar and horizontal member below supported from the tie beam by a central vertical post with raking posts to each side. The principal rafter is also supported by posts from the tie beam (Plate 64). They are infilled with lath and plaster. There are two purlins to the eastern gable, the upper of which are propped from the purlin in the main axis by notched posts set at an angle (Plates 65 and 66) suggesting that this section of the building is an addition.

The western truss of the gable is also infilled with lath and plaster and there is a central doorway and door (Plate 67) accessing a bay in which walls beneath the lower purlins have also been plastered (Plate 68). The truss to the east (the opposite side of the gable visible in Plate 6) has been infilled with relatively modern brick (Plate 69).

The space to the south is of two bays in the main axis of the house and here the central truss is also infilled with lath and plaster and there is a central doorway (Plate 70) with the lintel formed of the upper collar while the lower is cut but supported by raking struts either side of the doorway.

The southern truss has a horizontal member or collar supported by raking struts with a king post (Plate 71). The common rafters of the main axis of the building are preserved at the point where the gable joins, leaving the roof line here preserved *in situ* (Plate 72). The purlins here are joined by a bridled scarf joint whereas within the gable two sections of the purlin to the north are joined by a pegged scarf joint (Plate 73).

7. Discussion and phasing

Phase diagrams of the ground and first floor are presented in Figures 19 and 20.

The initial phase (**Phase 1**) of the building appears to have been a single rectangular three bay building with a jettied frontage. The presence of a jetty would suggest a construction date prior to 1620. The frontage of this original building was located as remaining, but the rear wall has largely been lost in later additions, the only section remaining being the wall between Rooms 8 and 12 and the beam crossing Room 6 which may have been a wall plate although as it rests on a beam running east west, this part must have been remodelled. The location of the wall is suggested by the jowl posts on this side of the building visible in Rooms 9a, 10 and the stairwell above Room 5. On the ground floor this line is represented by the isolated post in Room 2 at the point where the level rises.

This building was approximately 10m long and 5m wide, inhabiting the frontage of a single burgage plot, 10 or 11 yards being a standard width. Archaeological evidence suggests that this part of the High Street, which belonged to the Abbot of Pershore, was laid out and first occupied in the 11th or 12th centuries and it is therefore unlikely to have been the first building on the plot.

At a later date, two gabled extensions with rooflines perpendicular were added to the rear to expand the building another 3.5m to the east (**Phase 2**). These each occupied an equal share of the width of the plot, with the result that the wall which later divided the properties is offset either side of the central chimney breast, the western (front) section frontage being set northwards by about 1.3m, representing the division between the central and northern bays whilst to the rear the wall was central. At a later date this anomaly was utilised to form a kiosk at the entrance to the passageway.

That the southern of the two extensions is an addition is clear from the attic space where the fossilised line of the former roof pitch survives. The addition is not as clear to the north but the rather *ad hoc* arrangement by which the purlins in the gable are supported would certainly suggest that this is a later addition. There is no fabric which sheds light on the order in which these were added or whether it was at the same time although this seems unlikely as the ridge lines are at different heights, the gable to the south being lower. For this reason both extensions are included within Phase 2. This is considered likely to have happened in the century following the construction of the main building.

The close set studs in Room 9 which stand within the southern extension are enigmatic. The western section of the wall in Room 9 was once the back wall of the house, so it is possible that this is a surviving section of the external wall, although there is no evidence that any other part of the house was close studded. The northern wall of Room 9 could not have been an outside wall, so it is possible that these were reset from another location in the house or a different building.

It appears that the attics were once used as some form of accommodation as there are lath and plaster partitions with door frames between the central and northern bays and into the attic spaces above the gables where the walls beneath the purlins are also plastered.

Phase 3 is the addition of a long range projecting at a slight angle from the northern extension along the northern boundary of the burgage plot. The ridge line is considerably lower than that of the northern gable extension and offset, the northern pitch being almost in line with the northern pitch of the gable it is set against, but the ridge line offset to the north.

It is of three bays with two internal trusses with a simple arrangement of collars supported by posts to the tie beam. The purlins, which are remarkably rough and bowed in the central section, are staggered, which would imply an 18th century date. Plate 50 shows how a jowl was pegged to the former exterior of the building to take the northern purlin. This range is likely to have functioned as ancillary to the main building, possibly housing a laundry and pantry or to house animals. It is likely that it was originally open to the roof structure and of a single storey.

It was probably in the 19th century that the street frontage was lined with brick, infilling the jetty and sash windows were set in at the first floor (**Phase 4**). It may have been at this time that the shop windows were installed and the timber framing removed at this level, however, at first floor level the framing survives internally (see Plate 46). The brick corner fireplaces are also likely to date from this period.

By 1904, but possibly long before, the building was divided into two, nos 31 and 33. No 33, the smaller, appears to have occupied the northern bay and no 31 the southern two and this unequal division is reflected in the attic spaces. No 31 had a passageway to the south with a door to the street which led to the courtyard at the back where external stairs accessed the first floor, in roughly the location in which they were later built in the 1980s range but entering Room 8 rather than Room 9.

All 20th century alterations have been assigned to **Phase 5**; it was probably in the early part of the century that metal windows were installed including French windows to the courtyard.

In the 1980s the southern wing to the rear was built to form a shop with accommodation on the first floor and bow windows fronting the courtyard between the two ranges. At the same time, bow windows were added to the southern side of the northern range to create a shop at ground level and dormer windows to the first floor. The external stairs were replaced with internal stairs accessing Room 9 instead of the former kitchen, Room 8.

This arrangement blocked the eastern end of the passage which was removed, extending Room 2 southwards, while at the same time forming a central passage with sloped concrete replacing steps to provide easy access to the shops to the rear. The removal of the passageway left what had formerly been a corner fireplace projecting awkwardly into Room 2.

31 and 33 High Street is a well preserved building with much of the frame of the original 16th century building and early additions surviving and legible despite refacing and adaptation to commercial use.

8. Acknowledgements

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9.1. Cartography

1812 Ordnance Survey Drawings: Pershore, Worcestershire (OSD 217) Draughtsman, Robert Dawson

1830 Ordnance Survey Sheet LIV SW Worcester Surveyed: at one inch to the mile scale

1842 Tithe map of the parish of St Andrew's, Pershore

1884 Ordnance Survey Worcestershire Sheet XLI.SE at scale 6 inches to the mile

1903 Ordnance Survey sheet Worcestershire XLI.12 at scale 25 inches to the mile

1945 Ordnance Survey sheet Worcestershire XLI.12 at scale 25 inches to the mile

Figures 15 - 20



Figure 15. External photograph directions

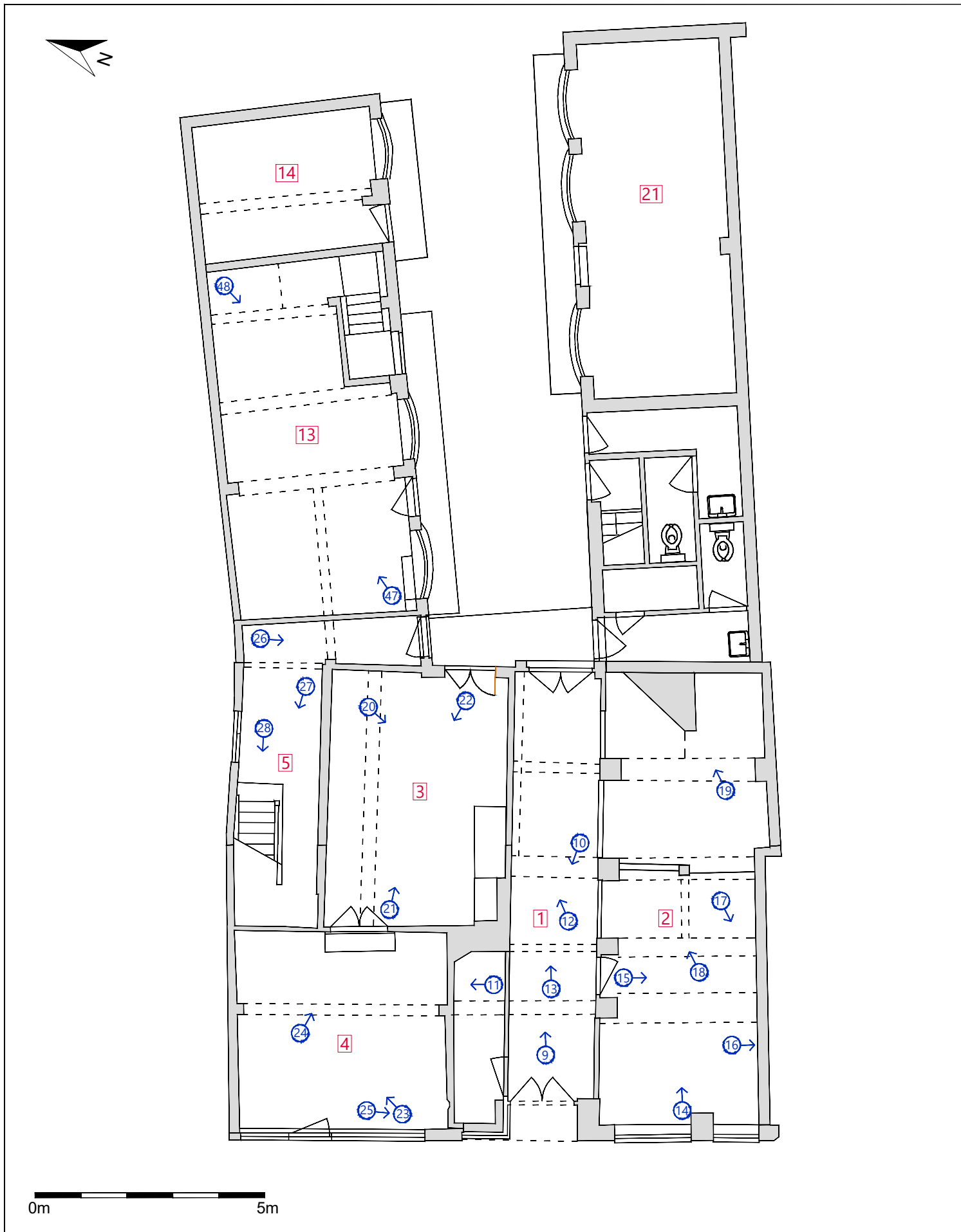


Figure 16. Ground floor photograph directions



Figure 17. First floor photograph directions

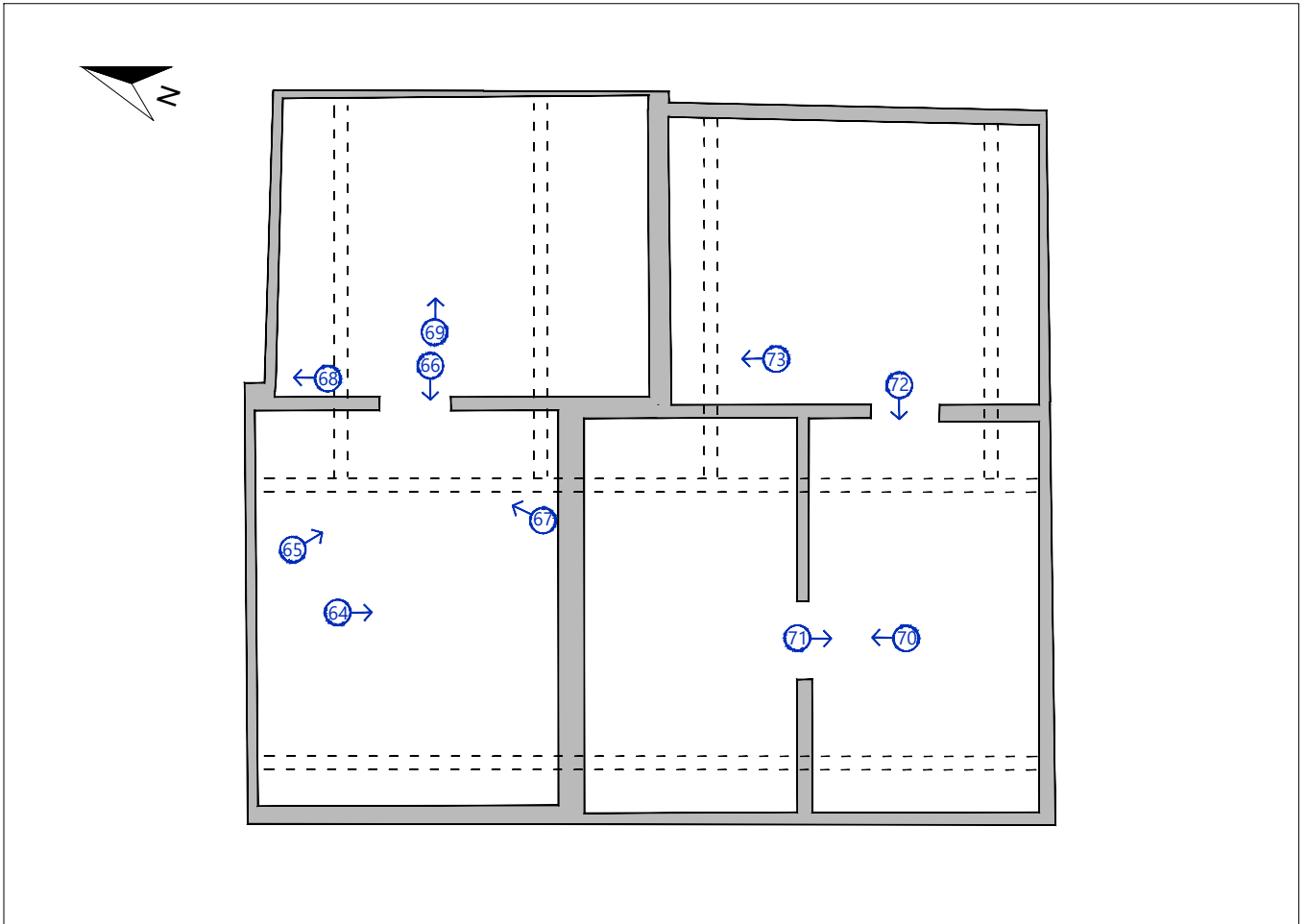


Figure 18. Sketch plan showing photograph directions in attic spaces



Figure 19. Phase plan of ground floor

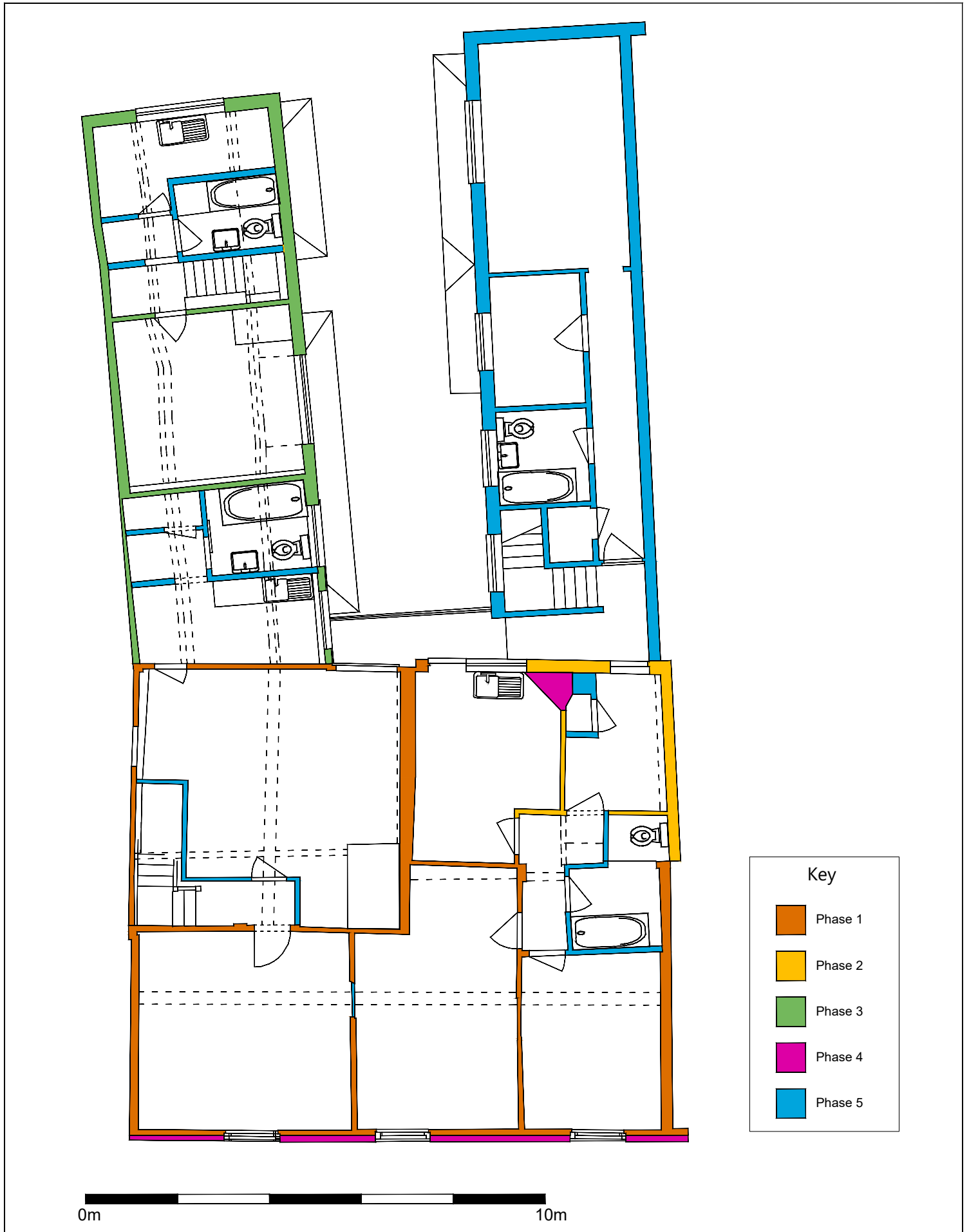


Figure 20. Phase plan of first floor

Plates



Plate 1. Street frontage, view east



Plate 2. Stone base to brick pillar, view east, scale 0.30m



Plate 3. Low level aerial view of the property view west

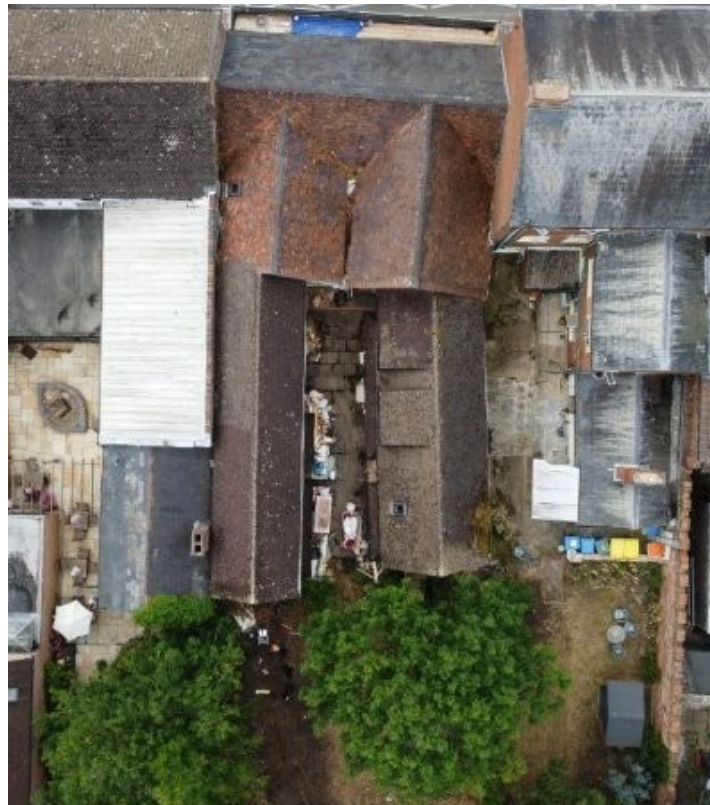


Plate 4. Low level vertical view of roofs



Plate 5. North and east elevations of the 1980s southern range, view WSW



Plate 6. East facing gable end of northern extension



Plate 7. View west in courtyard between rear ranges



Plate 8. South elevation of northern range



Plate 9. Central corridor, Room 1, view east



Plate 10. Central corridor, Room 2, view WNW to kiosk

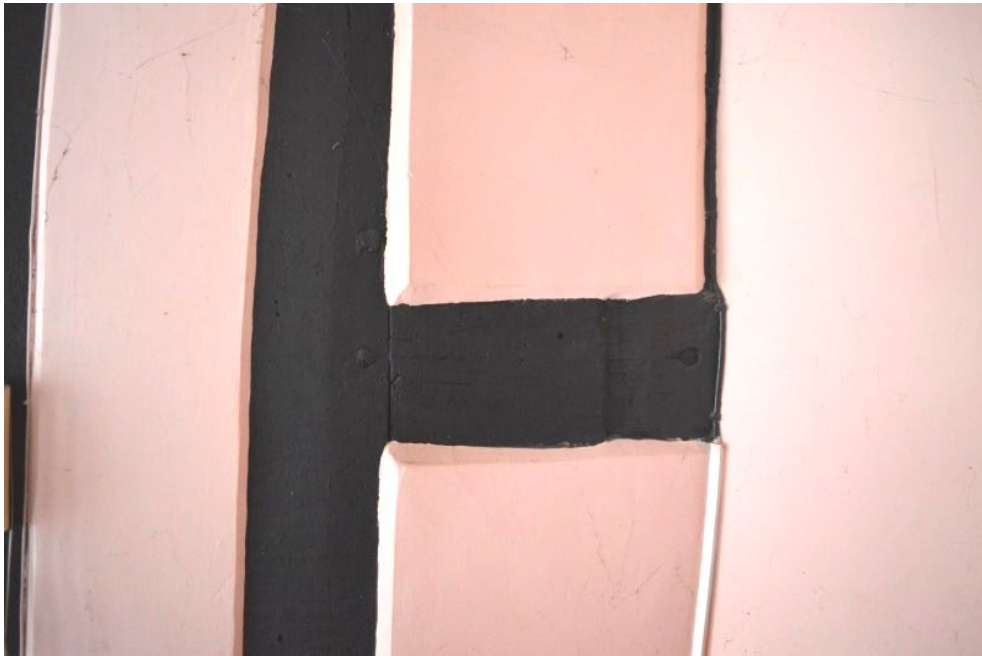


Plate 11. Scored carpenters' marks in north wall of kiosk, view north



Plate 12. box framing in north wall of Room 1, View ENE

Plate 13. Axial beams crossing Room 1, view west



Plate 14. Room 2, view east



Plate 15. Box framing in south wall of Room 2, view south

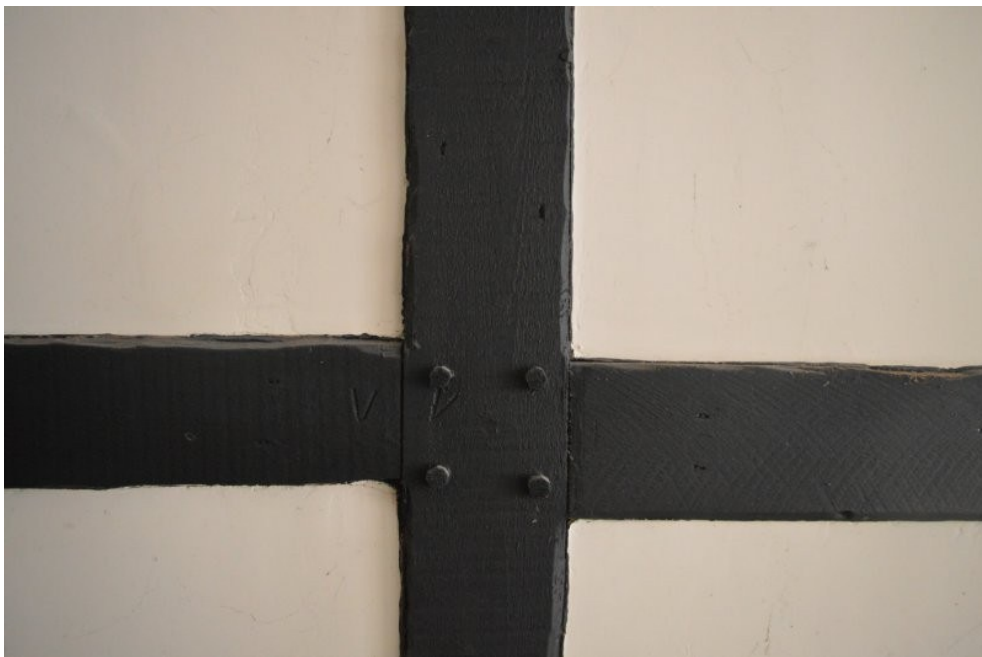


Plate 16. Carpenters' marks in box framing, south wall of Room 2



Plate 17. Differing saw marks in horizontal and vertical members

Plate 18. Room 2, view north-east



*Plate 19. Former corner fire-
place, north end of Room 2,
view north-east*



Plate 20. Room 3, view south-west



Plate 21. Room 3, view south-east



Plate 22. Room 3, view north-west



Plate 23. Room 4, view north-east



Plate 24. Room 4, view south-east



Plate 25. Jowl post indicating former jetty, view south-west

Plate 26. Eastern part of Room 5, view south

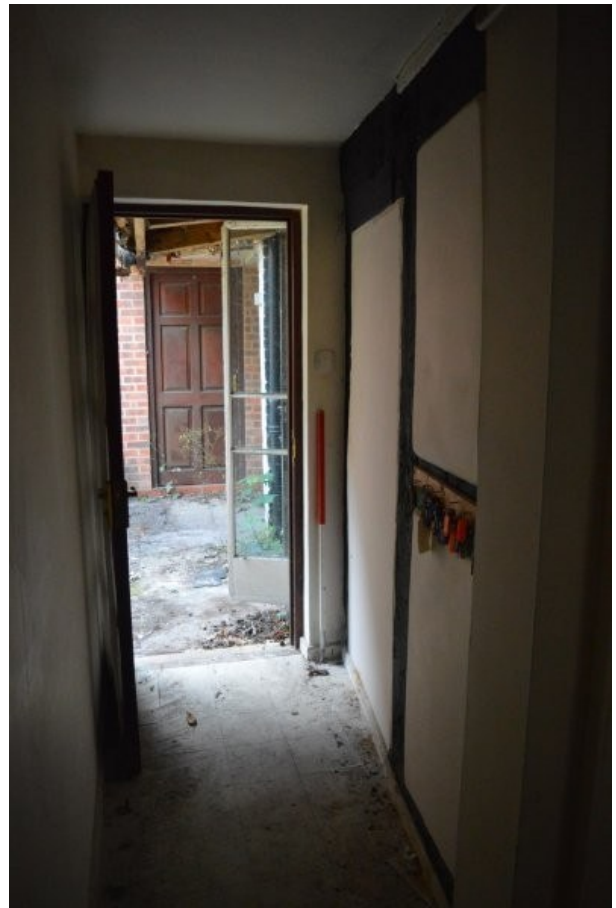
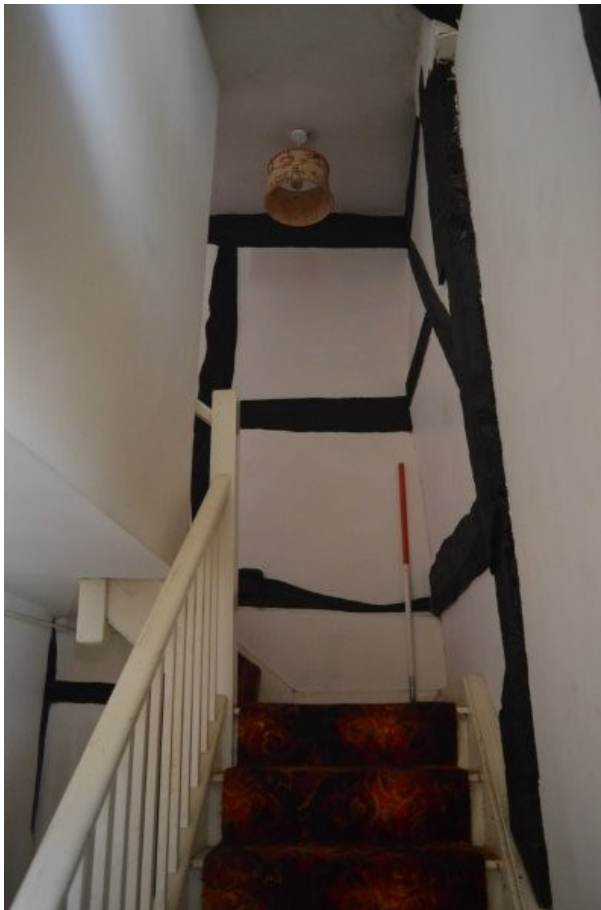




Plate 27. Room 5, view WNW



*Plate 28. Stairwell in Room 5, view west,
jowl post to right*



Plate 29. Top of stairwell, view north



Plate 30. Room 6, view south-east



Plate 31. Room 6, view north-west



Plate 32. Room 7, view north-west



Plate 33. Axial beam crossing Room 7, view NNE



Plate 34. Large post in east wall of Room 7



Plate 35. Room 8, view east toward balcony



Plate 36. Room 8, view west



Plate 37. North wall of Room 8, view NNW



Plate 38. West wall of Room 9, view west



Plate 39. Room 9, view WNW

Plate 40. Jowl post in Room 9A, view NNW. This marks the line of the original rear wall of the house





Plate 41. Room 10, view south



Plate 42. Room 11, view south-west



Plate 43. Room 11, view north-east



Plate 44. Room 12, view north-east

Plate 45. Victorian fireplace in north-west corner of Room 12, view north



Plate 46. Room 12, view south-west



Plate 47. Room 13, view ENE



Plate 48. Room 13, view WSW



Plate 49. Room 15, view south



Plate 50. Pegged jowl, west wall of Room 15, supporting purlin for northern range



Plate 51. Room 15, view WNW



Plate 52. Carpenters' marks, west wall of Room 15, view west



Plate 53. Carpenters' marks, west wall of Room 15

Plate 54. Room 17, view south-east





Plate 55. West wall of Room 18, view west



Plate 56. East wall of Room 15, view ESE



Plate 57. Bowed purlin in northern pitch of Room 18, view WNW



Plate 58. Room 19, view south



Plate 59. Room 20, view south

Plate 60. Corridor, upper floor of Southern range



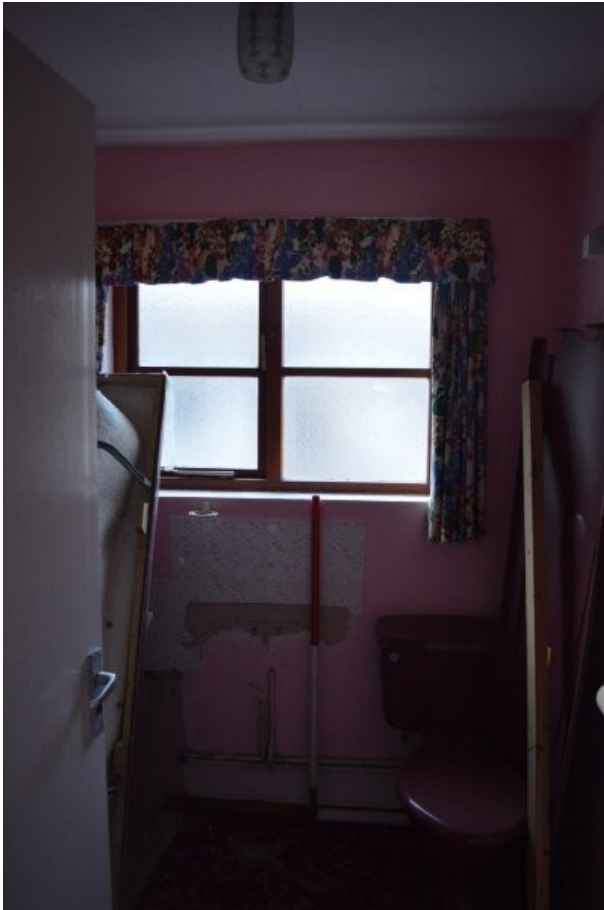


Plate 61. Room 22, view north

Plate 62. Room 23, view north-east





Plate 63. Room 24, view north-west



Plate 64. View south in northern attic space



Plate 65. View south-east toward rear extension in northern attic space



Plate 66. View west from rear extension into main axis of attic space. Note the angled struts supporting the purlins of the extension



Plate 67. Partition to space above northern rear extension, view north-east



Plate 68. Lath and plastered section beneath lower purlin in space over northern rear extension



Plate 69. Interior of northern gable, view east (exterior shown in Plate 6)



Plate 70. Central partition in southern attic space



Plate 71. Southern truss in main axis of building, view south



Plate 72. Roof structure of original house preserved within southern rear extension



Plate 73. Pegged scarf joint in area over southern rear extension