

22 Broad Street, Penryn, Cornwall – Heritage Statement

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Introduction

South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) was commissioned by Andrew Robertson of the Robertson partnership (the Agent) on behalf of a private client to undertake a produce a heritage statement for a former commercial premises at 22 Broad Street, Penryn, Cornwall; this structure is Listed Grade II. Planning application PA19/10468 concerns “Alteration of the dwelling frontage from the appearance of a shop to that of a dwelling”.

Method Statement

The work was undertaken in accordance with Historic England and ClfA guidelines and conforms to best practice. However, it is a purely desk-based assessment, carried out for the following reasons:

- The principal impact of the property is on its exterior appearance; the Listing makes clear the building was designated for its external appearance and its association with other historic structures in Broad Street;
- The application is therefore likely to be determined by the LPA on impact to external appearance;
- To minimise initial costs, it was therefore judged reasonable and proportionate to undertake this as a desk-based exercise.

Description

The property was Listed on the 22nd September 1971. The List description states:

Town house with later shop. Probably C18, remodelled later C19. Render replacing stucco on studwork, steep dry slate roof; cast-iron ogee gutter. Double-depth plan. 2 storeys; 2-window range. Mid C19 hornless sashes with margin panes; house doorway on left with traceried overlight and C20 door; full-width moulded entablature with consoles and fascia over mid/late C19 two-light shop front with 2-pane horned sashes and doorway on its left. INTERIOR not inspected.

(Historic England legacy data number 365709).



FIGURE 1: GENERAL VIEW OF THE BUILDINGS ALONG BROAD STREET; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-EAST. NO.22 IS INDICATED. NOTE THE PRESENCE OF OTHER BUILDINGS WITH LOW EAVES AND SHOP FRONTS, BOTH INTACT (CENTRE LEFT) AND INFILLED (FAR LEFT), INDICATING A MIX OF RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL PREMISES IN THE 19TH CENTURY (©GOOGLE STREETVIEW).

This is a brief description and omits many of the details of the shop frontage; a more detailed description is therefore presented below:

Overview

A two-storeyed two bay frontage to a building of double-pile plan, apparently of early-mid 19th century origins with mid and late 19th century modifications. A ridged slate roof is parallel with the street, rising at c.40° pitch from low eaves, plain tile ridge and no visible stacks; abuts taller mid-late 19th century buildings to right and left. The front façade is probably entirely of timber construction, as the first-floor windows are flush with their stuccoed wall face; the ground floor is visibly of timber construction.



FIGURE 2: FRONT ELEVATION OF 22 BROAD STREET; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH (©GOOGLE STREETVIEW).

Ground Floor

To the left-hand end of the elevation there is a side door with a slightly raised granite step providing access to the domestic accommodation. The doorway is filled by a 20th century replacement door of vertical painted planks with thumb-latch, skirt and small glass pane at top, in an older opening with a fine late Georgian rectangular toplight with lightweight glazing bars forming a saltire cross, pleasingly interlaced with convex-radiused corner divisions to form concave-edged lozenges. All painted, so not possible to tell if this was a true glazed toplight or a faux toplight with decorative ribs on a painted board. A projecting horizontal rib beneath forms the door head. The date range for a toplight of this design could be 1810s-1830s.

The shop doorway adjoining to the right has a bead-moulded frame with a pierced cast iron toplight, containing a later 19th century panelled and glazed door. Its opening, however, is older, integrally designed with an adjoining timber framed two-bay shop frontage, continuous to the right-hand end of the façade.



FIGURE 3: DETAIL OF EAST END OF FRONTAGE; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-WEST. NOTE THE EARLIER 19TH CENTURY INTERLACED TOPLIGHT OVER THE HOUSE DOOR TO LEFT, AND MID-19TH CENTURY HORNLESS SASH WITH VERGE LIGHTS ABOVE. CAST IRON GRILLE OVER LATER 19TH CENTURY SHOP DOOR FORMERLY CONTINUED ACROSS THE SHOP WINDOWS, NOW GLAZED (©GOOGLE STREETVIEW).

The shop frontage and both doors are crossed by a shallow boarded fascia, abutting the slightly projecting house to the left and projecting slightly beyond the right end. This fascia is broken into two wide bays above the shop windows and two narrow bays over the doors by curved timber brackets, supporting a deep, projecting multiple-moulded cornice with leaded cap, built up from moulded planks and painted.

The shop windows and door are framed by four flat pilasters with projecting cartouches, stepped and radiused to top and bottom with tall chamfered plinths, rising to just under shop windowsills. The left jamb of the side door is of the same design, but there is no room for a cartouche here. The pilaster caps have bead and cavetto mouldings, returning to beaded doorframe and plain shop window frames. The fascia is on the same plane as the pilasters, with a narrow bead and cavetto projecting moulding continuous along its bottom. The projecting cornice above has a complex stepped ovolo, cavetto and bead moulded coving, supporting a deep bolection moulding to the rear of the flat soffit, supported by convex curved brackets with cylindrical bases and stepped and radiused caps; fronted with a bead and ogee moulded strip. The upper face of the cornice slopes gently downwards and is sheathed in lead sheet, wrapped over the upper edge of the fronting strip.



FIGURE 4: DETAIL OF THE 19TH CENTURY CORNICE WITH SUPPORT BRACKET AND SURVIVING CAST IRON GRILLE ABOVE SHOP DOOR.

The general design of this shop frontage would fit a date in the 1840s-1860s, but the curved brackets especially evoke an Italianate feel, one which became common in South-West England from the mid-1830s after its adoption by IK Brunel in railway architecture and by Queen Victoria at Osborne House on the Isle of Wight, built from 1845-1851.

Evidence for a later 19th century renovation of the shop frontage is present in the form of wide plate-glass sashes in the shop windows and two large panes in the shop door, whose plate glass panes are unlikely to predate c.1847, when James Hartley invented his 'rolled plate' manufacturing technique. The presence of small radiused horns on the shop window sash leaves, and decorative carved versions (possibly the Prince of Wales' feathers?) in the upper corners of these and the shop door would tend to suggest a post-1840s date anyway; horns becoming necessary when improvements in glass manufacture reduced the number of glazing bars, thus weakening sash leaves. The sashes are interesting as the lower leaves have recessed handles in them to enable them to be lifted from the outside. The presence of a continuous slot in the windowsills suggests that a lightweight shop counter could be fixed outside the open window during opening hours. Above each sash are two narrow panes of frosted glass; the glazing is likely to have replaced pierced cast iron toplights similar or identical to that over the front door. This form of continuous ventilation is characteristic of butcher's shops.

Both shop windows have a modern shallow glazed panel above them, divided by simple upright strips. It is evident that these replace a decorative cast iron ventilation plate, which survives above the shop door to their left. This suggests that the premises were a butcher's shop, which would have required ventilation for practical and public health reasons. By the later 19th century, provision of adequate ventilation was a legal requirement for butcher's premises.

First Floor

A painted stucco elevation with two widely spaced sash windows, topped with a plain bargeboard. An ogee-section cast iron gutter of later 19th century date feeds a flared cast iron hopper at the right-

hand end, at the head of a small-diameter cast iron downpipe. This discharges onto the pavement just beyond the ground floor shop front and its wooden cornice.

Both first floor windows have plain timber surrounds and steeped projecting stucco sills, hornless leaves with clear glass verge lights. These probably belong with the earlier, mid-19th century phase of the shop front, although the sills could be older, and it is interesting to note that they do not line up with the shop-front below. This does not necessarily prove that the house was previously fully residential, as they may relate to an earlier shop frontage with different entry arrangements.

Interpretation of the Building and its Street Elevation

The low eaves and steep roof pitch of the building imply a pre-18th century structure. Other examples of such buildings in Penryn date from the 17th or even the 16th century, but without more detailed examination of the interior of this building and roof structure it is impossible to be certain. While there is evidence for at least three phases of development in the façade of this building, its thin timber and stucco construction certainly suggests that all are of 19th century date, despite the low eaves. This would imply the present façade represents an early 19th century refronting of an older building. It has been suggested (client, *pers. comm.*) that the façade has been reworked in the early 20th century, and that the shop door was once central to the windows. This study was not able to locate any historic photographs of the building to determine whether this is correct, but it should be noted that the shop door frame is beaded but the window frames are plain, which might provide some evidence for this.

The Conservation Area Appraisal notes that the town, founded as a borough c.1259, developed in an easterly direction along Broad Street in the 14th and 15th centuries (Penryn CA Appraisal, 7). Historic and modern mapping clearly shows long narrow and closely-packed burgage plots on both sides of Broad Street, implying pressure on land, some subdivision of plots, and the street having had a long history of commercial importance.

A sequence of historic maps (Penryn CA Appraisal, 8) clearly show both sides of Broad Street fully built-up as early as 1580, while an earlier map of 1539-40 appears to show a similar picture. Later maps of 1840 and 1880 show Broad Street as one of the two most built-up streets in the town. It is therefore highly likely that the low eaves of No.22 imply that its 19th century façade hides earlier origins.

Proposals

Reference to Figure 6 shows that the present proposal will remove and infill the entirety of the shopfront but would retain the positions of the two existing doorways. A short length of cornice is proposed to be retained over the former shop doorway but removed over the former shop frontage to its right and the side door to its left. A single new sash window matching those of the first floor would be inserted into the blocked shop front, changing the appearance of the façade to a wholly domestic form. In this context it should be noted that other buildings along Broad Street were once shops with larger windows and these have also been infilled in the 20th century, some retaining the cornices and pilasters that framed their former shopfronts.

Conclusions

This is a good example of a 19th century shopfront within a building which is likely to have earlier commercial and residential origins. It contains a later 19th century butcher's shop window with characteristic pierced ventilation grille within a mid-19th century timber surround with a deep moulded cornice on curved brackets.

The low eaves of the façade in comparison with neighbouring buildings in the street, may suggest rather earlier, perhaps even 16th-17th century origins, while historical and archaeological evidence

suggests that the plot had a building on it by the middle of the 16th century and quite possibly as early as the 14th-15th centuries.

References

History of Glass: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_glass
 Listed Buildings Description: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1187613>
 Newell, K. 2005: *Cornwall & Scilly Urban Survey: Penryn*. Cornwall County Council, Truro.
 Cornwall Council 2010: *Penryn Conservation Area Appraisal*.



FIGURE 5: ELEVATION AND VISUAL, AS EXISTING (SUPPLIED BY ARCHITECT).



FIGURE 6: ELEVATION AND VISUALS, AS PROPOSED (SUPPLIED BY ARCHITECT).