

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**BUILDING ASSESSMENT**

**ON**

**54 NEW STREET,**

**HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE**

**NGR SU 76189 82816**

*On behalf of*

*Mr & Mrs D Thomson*

**SEPTEMBER 2014**

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<b>REPORT ISSUED</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> September 2014
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<b>JMHS Project No:</b>	3030

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## 54 New Street, Henley-on-Thames

### *Building Assessment*

#### **SUMMARY**

*John Moore Heritage Services were requested to carry out a building assessment of the structure at No 54 New Street, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire (NGR SU 76189 82816). The building is deteriorating due to lack of maintenance from the previous owner. The back of the building is suffering from damp.*

*The structure is a grade II listed building located on the south side of New Street, with buildings adjoining either side. The front of the building is of a later 18<sup>th</sup> century origin, maps of 1767 and 1797 show the street frontage as in-filled. The rear of the premises is of a probable early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century addition. It is suggested here that the building is of three phases of which the earliest part is the front of the building. The date of a late 18<sup>th</sup> century construction has been maintained here for the front of the building, although it is noted here that there is some problem with the dating. This problem is that the structure appears to be butted up to the neighbouring property, No 52, but that that structure has a suggested date of c 1820. These factors make it appear that there is some error in the assessment of the dates of these structures. The rear two and three storey part of the building had been added by 1879, and the single storey extension was probably part of a third phase as it was constructed using the remains of the garden wall.*

*Planned alterations are primarily to renovate the building and make the structure inhabitable again. Alterations proposed to the ground floor include those to room G3, the back passage, which will see the rebuilding of the north wall around the toilet. The rear of the building will see the dismantling of the phase 3 single storey addition rooms G5-G8, necessitated due to damp and decay, and its replacement. On the first floor the proposals include the opening up of the wall between rooms F2 and F3, and alterations to room F5 with the removal of a cupboard and the insertion of a new roof light. On the second floor it is proposed that in stairwell and landing S1 that the sky light is replaced. The door between rooms S2 and S3 is blocked up. That in room S4 a new partition is inserted and a bathroom created. The dismantling of the rear extension is the principal alteration, with the majority of other alterations relatively minor in nature.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Location**

The development site is located at 54 New Street, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire (NGR SU 76189 82816). Henley is the location of a medieval borough and post-medieval market town and historic parish located in historic Oxfordshire. Historically the parish was located in the Chiltern Hundred of Binfield, but is now in the modern District of South Oxfordshire.

To the west and east of 54 New Street there are dwellings. Gardens lie to the south of the property and to the north it fronts onto New Street.

The site is located on the west bank of the River Thames which lies between 31m and 35m OD.

The underlying geology is considered to be Holywell Nodular Chalk Formation and New Pit Chalk Formation, which comprises of chalk laid down 89-100 million years ago in the Cretaceous. This is in places covered by deposits of Head formed 3 million years ago.

### **1.2 Commission**

The report was commissioned by the owner Don and Karen Thomson.

### **1.3 Aim of Investigation**

The aim of the assessment is to provide an understanding of how the building developed and is phased and to assess what impact the proposed refurbishment and proposed alterations will have on the building.

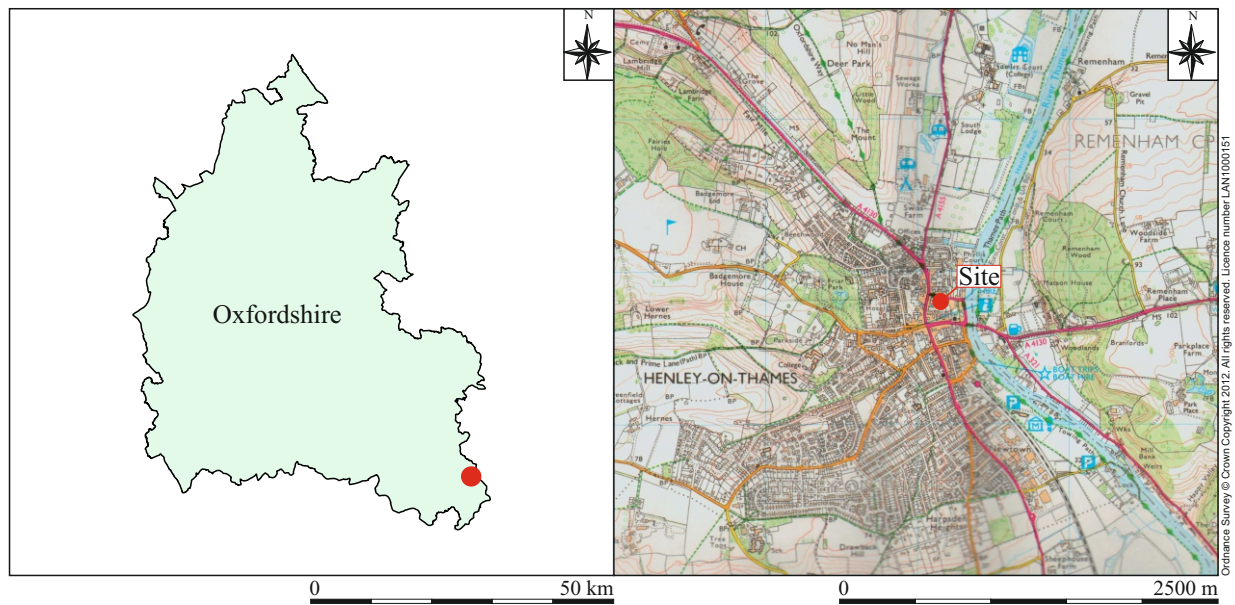
## **2 BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Designations**

The building is a grade II listed structure (EHID 246280: SU 76189 82816), which was designated in 1951. The legacy description is simply of the front part of the building.

*Late C18. Brick facade Flemish band with silver grey stretchers alternating with red stretchers. Old tiled roof. 3 storeys, 2 windows including late C18/early C19 2 storey canted bay on ground and 1st floor. Sash windows with glazing bars. Small round arched door with radial fanlight and reeded lintel.*

The Buildings of England Series (Sherwood and Pevsner 1974, 644) does not mention No 54, but does describe No 52 which it dates to c 1820. The two buildings are joined and there is detail of this structure in the roof space. The current dating means that there is a discrepancy here about the origins of both buildings.



Key ■ Study building

Figure 1: Site location

## 2.2 History of Development

In the 8<sup>th</sup> century it is generally assumed but not confirmed that Henley was part of a Royal Estate centred on Benson. Isolated pottery sherds of the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries and the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries have been recovered from near the modern town. The name Henley is first documented in 1136-45 as Henleiam or Henle(g)a for example (Gelling 1953, 74-5), which has an etymology of hēan lē(a)ge, at the high wood in a reference to the Chiltern woodland. Phyllis Court is considered to be the location of a royal lodge or homestead (VCH 2011, 31-2). The manorial enclosure at this time is considered to incorporate Countess Garden and Phyllis Court.

The manor was farmed out from 1189-96 (VCH 2011, 73), and was granted by King John to Robert de Harcourt. These events mark Henley out as a distinct manorial entity. In c. 1244 Henry III gave the manor of Benson, to which Henley formed a distinct part, to his brother Richard, Earl of Cornwall, and by 1272 this had passed to Edmund, the son of Richard. By 1340 the manor of Benson had passed to the Black Prince. Henley Manor became held directly from the crown 1337 (VCH 2011, 74).

It is considered that early in the 7<sup>th</sup> century Henley was in the parochia of Benson or Bensington Church (VCH 2011, 159), but this is considered problematic for various reasons as some evidence exists for Benson royal manor trading sub-estates with another important centre at Pyrton.



Figure 2 Jefferys' Map of 1767

The medieval town was laid out in the southeast corner of an ancient parish; the street plan is believed to have been established by 1260-70 (VCH 2011, 21, 31). There is circumstantial evidence that the site was laid out the same time as Woodstock. The line of High Street / Hart Street is part of the medieval settlement on the road to the crossing of the Thames. Houses in this area have been dated to the 15<sup>th</sup> century, for example 22 Hart Street to c. 1400



and the White Hart Inn to 1428-9 (VCH 2011, 32). Near the bridge a chapel was constructed and dedicated to Saint Anne, which was demolished in the Reformation (VCH 2011, 36). The older houses are of timber with chalk lined stone cellars (VCH 2011, 49). Bricks were not used until the 15<sup>th</sup> century, where they are first dated locally in large manorial buildings at Stonor in 1416-7 and Ewelme in 1437. The first known use in Henley is from the 17<sup>th</sup> century and early 18<sup>th</sup> century. Longlands House at 39 Hart Street was built c. 1740 and the bricks were believed to be imported from Kent (VCH 2011, 56).



Figure 3 Davis of Lewknor's Map of 1797

The property is located in New Street, a name that suggests either a secondary expansion of the borough or perhaps destruction and a relaying out of the road system. The name is first recorded in 1698-9 (Gelling 1953, 75). Presumably some of the properties along New Street must date to the late 17<sup>th</sup> century according to the documentation. The physical evidence indicates that structures in the street date to the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Sherwood and Pevsner 1974, 644), thus implying an older date for the street.

The earliest map evidence of the 18<sup>th</sup> century includes Jefferys' Map of 1767 (Fig. 2) and Davis of Lewknor's Map of 1797 (Fig. 3). They show Henley as a series of roads forming a series of squares, with properties lining the street. Thus it can be assumed on both maps that there is a property in the present location. The map of Bryant dated 1824 (Fig. 4) shows a similar arrangement.

The Tithe Map of Henley-on-Thames c 1840 shows parts of the town only (Fig. 5). This is common in town areas, where exempt properties are often omitted. The map shows all of the properties on New Street and the Street omitted.

The First Edition Ordnance Survey Map of 1879 (Fig. 6) shows the building in its current form with the rear wing or extension added. The second phase of the building can thus be placed prior to that date. The Second Edition Map of 1899 (Fig. 7) shows the building as it

is but with a small addition, perhaps a conservatory between the two back doors. This external feature is still there in 1913 (Fig. 8), but has gone on the map of 1962. All of these maps were at a scale of 1: 2,500.



### Figure 4 Bryant's Map of 1824

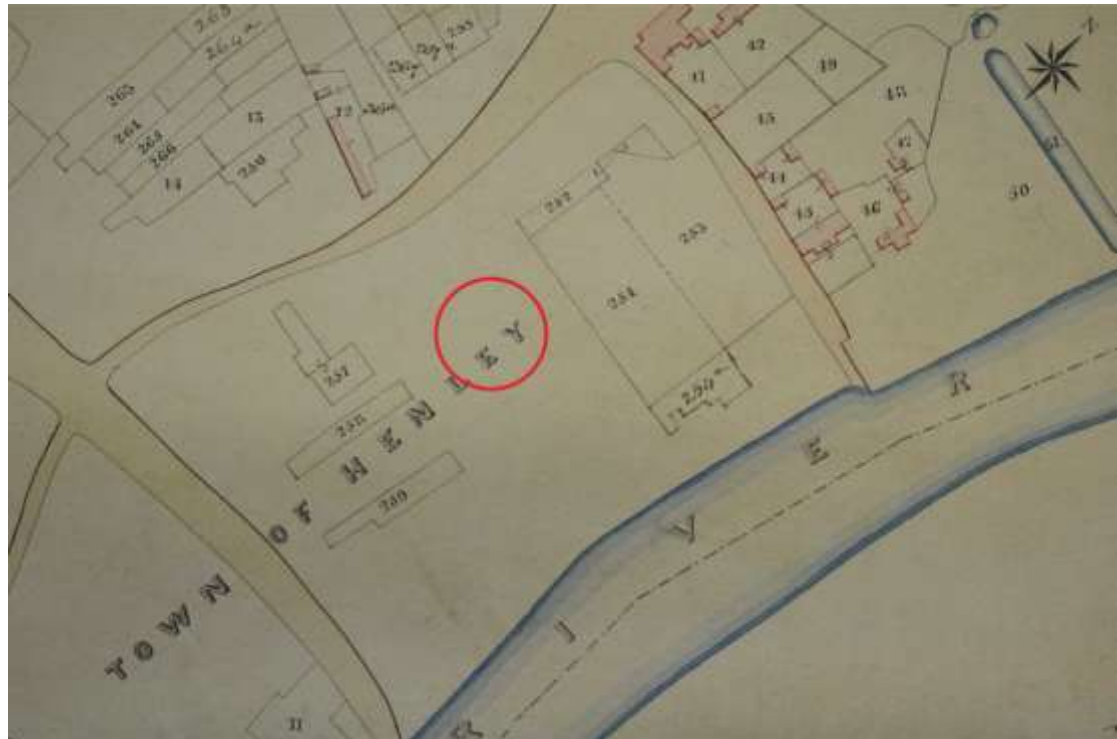


Figure 5 Tithe Map of Henley-on-Thames



Figure 6 Ordnance Survey Map of 1879



Figure 7 Map derived from Ordnance Survey Second Edition 1899





Figure 8 Ordnance Survey Map of 1913

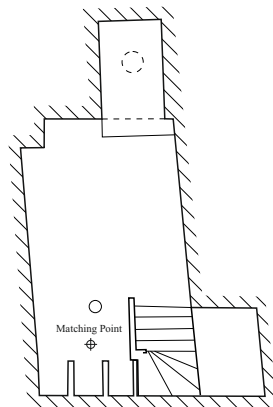
### 3 DESCRIPTION OF 54 NEW STREET, HENLEY-ON-THAMES

#### 3.1 Introduction and General Description

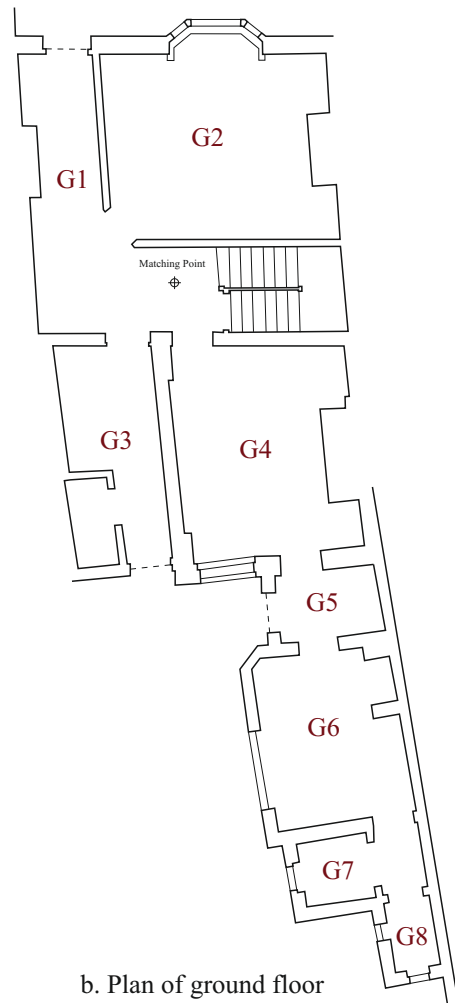
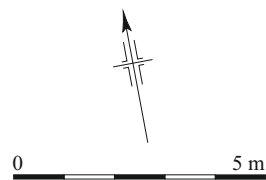
The building is in a terrace on the south side of New Street. The front of the building is in chequered brick pattern with two bays. There is a cellar, ground, first and second floors (Fig. 9). The roof is of red clay tiles and is hipped on the east side with a shallow pitch. A chimney is visible on the right hand side. The back of the building is also in brick but has no pattern, and the structure has a southeast wing or rear range at right angle. The remains of five brick chimney stacks can be identified from the rear of the building.

#### 3.2 Front Façade

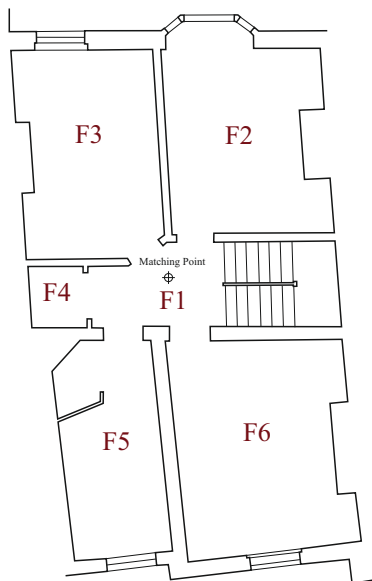
The front or north façade of the building is of chequered brick with two bays (plate 1). There is a plinth at the base up against which stone steps are placed along with railings running up to a front door on the right hand side. The ground floor front door is a panelled door in a round headed arch with a radial fanlight above. Onto the upright glass panel the number is inserted. The door contains a letter box and a lion knocker painted black. On the left hand side is a two storey canted bay window, of which the part on the ground floor contains a composite window with a sash forming the main and central part. The shape of the bay window is carried down into the plinth of the building and in the lower part of this there is an opening with a segmental window. The first floor also contains a bay window of composite parts that replicates the form of the window below. The upper bay window is capped with a flat lead roof. On the right hand side of the first floor is a sash window with a soldier lintel. The second floor contains two smaller sash windows that contain smaller soldier lintels that reach up under the over-hanging eaves. The roof is a red clay tile and is hipped on the east side. On the right hand side the roof is butted up to a neighbouring Georgian/Regency style building.



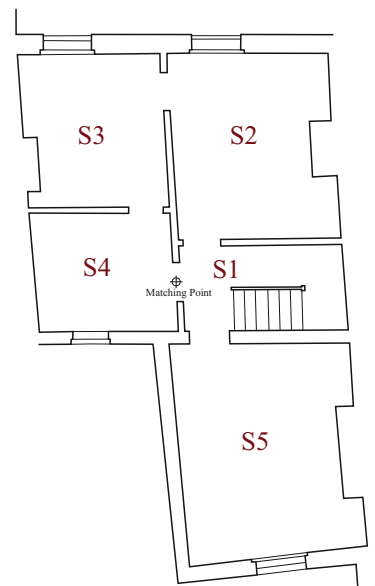
a. Plan of basement



b. Plan of ground floor



c. Plan of first floor



d. Plan of second floor

Figure 9: Floor plans



Plate 1 Front Facade

On the east side the building butts up to the Rose and Crown, but there is a small area of blank wall over which the eaves of the hipped roof lean. At the rear of the property a blank wall forms the façade with two visible chimneys. A blank wall, formerly a garden wall forms the east façade of a single storey extension. Between the chimneys there is a roof light, which sits over the stairwell internally.

### 3.3 Rear Façade

The rear façade is dominated by a gable on the right-hand or east side (plate 2). On the right hand corner of this gable there is a chimney with water tablet at the top that extends above the line of the gable ridge. The first floor and second floor have sash windows centrally placed with segmental arched lintels. The ground floor has a further extension placed against it, but which has a narrow sash window in the remaining external wall of the large gable. This also has a segmental arch. The extension also has a gable end with lean-to and further extension at the south end. There are two small segmental windows located in these southern lean-to structures. On the east side this rear extension uses an earlier brick wall, which formed a boundary between plots. On the west side the inserted window is later with a concrete lintel; there is also a door, panelled, with a light above under a segmental arch.

To the west of the large rear gable there is a two storey section of the building with a flat leaded roof. The ground floor has a panelled door with window light above and a segmental arch. To the left of this is a small window with a lintel above. The size of the window makes that differentiation between a segmental arched lintel or soldiered lintel semantic. On the first floor there is a mullioned window with segmental arch. Rising above the flat leaded roof are two chimney stacks. On the north wall above the flat roof there is a small sash

window with extruding timber surround.



Plate 2 Rear Façade

The roof on the main building is clay tile, while on the lower single storey extension and lean-to structures the roof is slate.

### **3.4 Ground Floor and Cellar**

The front panel door under its round headed-arch with light opens up into an L-shaped hall (Fig. 7, G1). There is a chimneybreast in the west wall. Three further doors lead out from the hall including a panel door with moulded surround on the inner angle of the L. A door is located in the south wall of the room on the east side of an opening without a door, although the opening has a surround a window light above. The further door is a plank door and located under the dogleg staircase. The room contains a moulded skirting board, possibly not original, and a moulding around the edge of the ceiling. The floor has large planking of a probable pre 19<sup>th</sup> century date.

The panel door in the inner angle of the L-shape leads into room (G2) a rectangular room with a fireplace and chimneybreast in the east wall. The fireplace surround is probably original (plate 3), but the shelving either side are not original fireside cupboards. A bay window in the north wall has a timber surround (plate 4). The room has moulding around the ceiling, and also skirting board possibly not original.

The opening in the south wall of room G1 leads into a long narrow room or passage G3. There is an external panel door at the south end with window light above. On the west side there are two built in spaces between which a boiler is located. The south built-in feature is for a toilet reached through a panel door, while the northern one is a cupboard with panel

doors. The panelled doors on the cupboard are simple and may be reused from elsewhere.



Plate 3 Fireplace G2



Plate 4 Bay window G2



The panel door, with obscured glass, in the south wall of room G1 leads into room G4 a rectangular space with a large chimneybreast in the east wall with two original built in cupboards either side (plate 5). The fireplace contains a simple surround, but is large and of a simple style seen elsewhere in Regency or Victorian kitchens. The south wall contains a doorway with panel door and a sash window with a timber surround. The west wall contains a large recess with central dado. On the north wall there is a ring of servants' bells (plate 6), some of which still work.



Plate 5 Fireplace G4



Plate 6 Ring of bells G4

The south door leads into room G5 a small lobby area which has an external door on the west wall with window light above. On the east wall there is a built in cupboard (plate 7), which backs onto a wall riddled with damp, causing the cupboard to show signs of rot. An opening in the south wall leads into room G6. The west wall has a modern window inserted. The west wall has a built-in cupboard, which also backs onto a wet wall. The damp wall is an old garden wall onto which the rear extension was constructed. In the southeast corner there is a small passageway with a small square room G8 at its end entered through a doorway with a panel door and a window in its south wall. There is a further door in the

west wall leading into a further small square room G7 with a small window in the west wall.



Plate 7 Cupboard G5



Plate 8 Cellar

The panel door under the dogleg stairs leads from room G1 to a brick staircase, curving at the top and straight at the base, which descends into the cellar. There is a small rectangular space off the side of the stairs. The cellar has a round brick post adjacent to the stairs that stands in front of a brick bench in the south wall (plate 8), under which are a series of alcoves with segmental arched openings. In the north wall there is an extension out under the road with a segmental arch over the entrance. The whitewashed walls in the cellar are a mixture of brick and flint.

The lower staircase (G1) is interconnected with the wooden panelling and door leading into the cellar, these pieces are probably original and would only be replaced if the material had deteriorated. A window light is located above the cellar door and there is a segmental arch above the lower flight of stairs on the dogleg staircase.



Plate 9 Stairs G1

### 3.5 First Floor

The dogleg stairs have a moulded banister main post at each end, but the intervening balustrade rails are simple and square cut. These stairs lead up to a landing F1 of an irregular shape (plate 9). Two doors lie on the north side, one at an angle, two on the south, with one on the west side; the majority are panel doors. On the east side there is a further dogleg stairs.

An original panel door leads into room F2. This has a fireplace and chimneybreast in the east wall (plate 10). The alcove to the left has a built-in cupboard, but the design is not suggestive of it being original. The timber mantle could be original but the fireplace and grate are modern. In the north wall there is a bay window. In the west wall are the remains of a blocked opening (plate 11), which means that rooms F2 and F3 were previously joined, but as there is a slight moulding around this opening. This may have been to provide bearing for the wall above on the second floor. The skirting is not original, and no crown moulding exists as such, but there is a rail running around the wall a foot or so from the ceiling.

Room F3 is entered through a doorway with an original panel door. In the east wall there is a blocked-in opening. The north wall contains a sash window with timber surround. In the west wall is a chimneybreast with no fireplace or mantel; as the rooms were joined it is difficult to know if there was one originally. The skirting is not original, there is no crown

moulding as such just a rail down from the ceiling.



Plate 10 Fireplace F2



Plate 11 Blocked opening between rooms F2 and F3

On the west side of the landing is a fire door which leads into a small square room F4, which used to contain a lift.

The right-hand panel door leads into a bathroom F5. The window casement has a mullion, with spiral handle latches. There is a built-in cupboard against the west wall with panelled doors and the bath, toilet and basin are modern.



Plate 12 Fireplace F6

The left-hand door in the south wall of the landing leads to room F6. There is a fireplace and chimneybreast in the east wall (plate 12). The fireplace is decorative and original. In the south wall is a sash window with moulded timber surround. The skirting board is relatively undecorated, while there is a beading for the crown rail, with a rail set below this.

### 3.6 Second Floor and Attic



Plate 13 Cupboards and fireplace S2

The passage up to the second floor is made by an upper dogleg staircase with similar design to that below. There is a roof-light above the stairwell. The second floor landing (S1) is

smaller than the one below, with a single door in the north wall, one in the south and an opening with moulding in the west wall.



Plate 14 Fireplace S5

A panel door on the north side of the landing leads to room S2. This has a chimneybreast in the east wall, there are two built-in cupboards either side which match and probably are original (plate 13). In the north wall there is a sash window. The skirting board is plain and there is a rail down from the ceiling. Offset in the west wall is a doorway with a panel door that leads to room S3. There is a sash window in the north wall of room S3, and a chimneybreast in the west wall. The south door has a doorway with a step at its base. The doorway is unconventional and may indicate that it is a later insertion. Room S4 into which this doorway leads has a sash window in the south wall and an opening with a moulded surround in the east wall.

The south door from the landing S1 enters a large room S5 with a fireplace in the west wall. The fireplace is original and matches that in F6 (plate 14). There is a sash window in the south wall with a built in cupboard between the window and fireplace. The skirting board is not elaborate and there is a bead used for a crown rail with a rail placed down from the ceiling.

The front attic contains trusses with a single king post. It is possible to see a blocked segmental arch in the brick wall of the building to the west (plate 15).





Plate 15 Blocked segmental arch, attic

## **4 ASSESSMENT**

### **4.1 Phases**

The building is essentially a structure of three builds. The front part of the building was apparently butted up to the neighbouring property as there is evidence of a blocked segmental arched opening in the attic space. It is easy to understand how this structure was catalogued as a later 18<sup>th</sup> century building as it has that style. However, there is a problem in dating No 54 as this is butted up to the No 52, and the latter structure is dated to later than c 1820. This indicates that the neighbouring property either has a façade that masks an older building or that No 54 was constructed later than that date and is purely 19<sup>th</sup> century. At present I am inclined to believe that the façade of No 52 masks an older building. Thus we shall keep the first phase as later 18<sup>th</sup> century, if not mid-18<sup>th</sup> century as that space is shown as filled on the two 18<sup>th</sup> century maps.

The remainder of the structure can probably be inferred as being of two further phases. The first of these would have seen the addition of the two and three storey parts of the structure. Phase 2 of the structure had been completed by 1879 the date of the First Edition Ordnance Survey Map of a 1: 2,500 scale.

Though the east façade of the building has not been viewed it is apparent from the removal of plaster internally that the single storey rear extension has to be part of a third phase as it appears to use the garden wall for its rear wall. This process of construction would work for the development of a single storey building, but would not work for a structure of three storeys, which would require a more significant foundation. This phase 3 development is also on the Ordnance Survey map of 1879, and this feature again is part of a probable mid-19<sup>th</sup> century development.

### **4.2 Listed Status**

The building is a listed structure and is thus considered to be of national importance.

### **4.3 Historic and Architectural Assessment**

The building is considered to be a Georgian and Victorian building of national importance. The attic of the building shows specific problems in that No 54, which is dated to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century or earlier, butts up against No.52 which is a later structure dated to c. 1820. The dating evidence is thus contrary to the physical evidence in the buildings. It is assumed here, though not confirmed, that the façade of No 52 masks an older building. The blocked window in the attic also implies that there was a far lower building on the site of No 54 or that the plot was empty and the building represents infill between No 52 and the Rose and Crown.

## **5 THE CURRENT PROPOSAL**

The current proposals are to renovate the building and make some alterations to the structure, which has been left in an apparent dilapidated state. The list of alterations as followed is based on proposed alterations from architectural plans. These alterations will have a physical impact upon the listed building. The listing only includes a description of the front façade which does not appear to have any proposed alterations, thus implying that the visual impact on New Street will be negligible.

On the Ground Floor it is proposed that alterations will include modifications to room G3, where a partition wall around the toilet space will be rebuilt. It is proposed that the rear single storey extension, which has damp and structural problems, rooms G5-G8, is removed and that a new extension is inserted.

On the first floor it is proposed that the opening between the two rooms F2-F3 is reinstated, but that it is widened. In room F5, the bathroom, it is proposed that the existing cupboard be removed and that a new roof light be inserted. The flat lead roof to this part of the building will be replaced, the previous roof was leaking.

Alterations on the second floor include in room S4 a new partition will be inserted creating a passageway and a space for a bathroom on this level. In the wall between rooms S2-S3 the existing door will be blocked. Above the landing and stairwell S1 the roof light over the stairs will be replaced.

In the garden a new terrace is being inserted thus indicating the reduction of some ground levels.

## **6 CONCLUSIONS**

The proposed development is to a listed building No 54 New Street in Henley-on-Thames, which is a listed building in a dilapidated state. Parts of the single storey addition at the rear is extremely damp and the bricks rotten.

The structure is of three phases with the front part being of an 18<sup>th</sup> century date. The listing suggests a later 18<sup>th</sup> century date, but the maps of the 18<sup>th</sup> century indicate that the street frontage is perhaps already filled in. The rear of the building had been constructed by 1879, which is apparent on an Ordnance Survey Map of that date.



Alterations are being proposed on all floor levels. On the ground floor it is proposed that alterations are made to room G3 with the removal of a boiler and the insertion of a new partition wall around the ground floor toilet. The rear extension that is unsound, rooms G5-G8, it is proposed that it is removed and replaced with a new construction. On the first floor it is proposed that the wall is removed between rooms F2 and F3. Alterations are proposed to be made to room F5, the bathroom, which include the removal of the existing cupboard and the insertion of a new roof light. The lead roof over the bathroom, which leaks, is to be replaced at the same time. On the second floor a new roof light is to be inserted above the stairwell. The door between rooms S2 and S3 will be blocked. Room S4 will have a new partition wall inserted.

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1<sup>st</sup> September 2014