

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING

ON

28-32 SAINT MICHAEL'S STREET, OXFORD

NGR SP 514 063

On behalf of

Bike Zone



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REPORT FOR Bike Zone
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CONTENTS

<i>SUMMARY</i>	1
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Location	1
1.2 Commission	1
1.3 Aims of Investigation	1
2 BACKGROUND	1
2.1 Designation	1
2.2 History of Development (Archaeology and Texts)	3
2.3 History of Development (Archaeology and Cartography)	5
3 DESCRIPTION OF 28-32 SAINT MICHAEL'S STREET	7
3.1 Introduction and General Description	7
3.2 The City Wall (Exterior), Wall A and part of Wall B	8
3.3 The City Wall (Interior)	8
3.4 The West Wall of no.32 (Interior), Wall C	9
3.5 Saint Michael's Street Front and East Wall (Exterior), Walls E and F	10
3.6 The Roofline (Exterior)	10
3.7 The Brick Structure (Interior), Walls B, D, and E	10
3.8 The Roofline (Interior), Cross-Section G	11
4 ASSESSMENT	11
4.1 Dating and Phasing Part A: The Earth Rampart	11
4.2 Dating and Phasing Part B: The Stone Revetment Wall and West Boundary Wall	12
4.3 Dating and Phasing Part C: The Brick Building	12
4.4 Listed Status	14
4.5 Historical and Architectural Assessment	15
5 THE CURRENT PROPOSAL	15
6 CONCLUSIONS	15
7 BIBLIOGRAPHY	16

FIGURES AND PLATES

Figure 1	Location Map	2
Figure 2	Rear Elevation, curtain wall and bastion 2	17
Figure 3	Internal walls of no. 32 Saint Michael's Street	18
Figure 4	Internal walls of no. 28 Saint Michael's Street	19
Figure 5	Front Elevation and cross section showing truss formation	20
Figure 6	Phased plans of nos. 28-32 Saint Michael's Street	21
Plate 1:	Rear of no. 28 Saint Michael's Street showing the two different window phases (Wall A)	22
Plate 2:	General view of Bastion 2 rear of 32 Saint Michael's Street (Walls A and B)	22
Plate 3:	General view of the surviving city wall at the rear of nos. 28 and 30 Saint Michael's Street (Wall A)	22
Plate 4:	The west wall of no.32 Saint Michael's Street showing the wooden frame to support the boarding of no. 32's wall and also the timber frame wall onto which it is built of no. 34 (Wall C)	22
Plate 5:	Insertion of window and building of gable at the rear of no. 30 Saint Michael's Street(Wall A)	22
Plate 6:	The lathe covered wall and brickwork of nos.34 and 32 Saint Michael's Street evident in the roof space of no. 32 (Wall C)	23
Plate 7:	The west wall of Saint Michael's Street showing the frame for boarding and the wall of no. 34 built of timber with stone and mortar infill. Two windows have been blocked (Wall C)	23
Plate 8:	The roof space of no. 32 showing the tie beams and queen beam Supports (Cross-Section G)	23
Plate 9:	The late 19 th century fire place and chimneybreast butting up against the existing east wall of no. 28 Saint Michael's Street (Wall E)	23
Plate 10:	General view of nos. 28-32 Saint Michael's Street. The front of the building may have been replaced wholly or partially (Wall F)	23

Bike Zone, 28-32 Saint Michael's Street

Building Report

SUMMARY

The renovation of 28-32 Saint Michael's Street, Oxford (NGR SP 514 063) enabled an assessment of the present buildings on the site and a consideration of their phasing. Here it is suggested that some seven different phases can be recognised on the site, although two of the phases are inferred rather than physically proven.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location (Figure 1)

1.1.1 The premises are to be the new Bike Zone shop located on what is currently Saint Michael's Street in the City of Oxford (NGR SP 514 063). Oxford was founded as a defended Burh in the 9th-10th century AD, though the date at which the ramparts were constructed is not supported archaeologically. Later defensive rebuilds are considered to follow the line of the earlier structure, while the street was constructed as an intramural road. The plot of land includes part of these structures and the intermediate land between them.

1.2 Commission

1.2.1 Stuart Meanwell, of Bike Zone, requested the compilation of this historic building report.

1.2.2 The premises are to be converted into a bike shop (planning application ref. 10/00055/FUL and 10/00056/LBC). This will involve alterations to the building, the insertion of a door through a 19th century wall and supports for RSJ for the widening of the stairwell, and a timber in the remains of Bastion 2.

1.3 Aims of Investigation

1.3.1 The aim of the investigation is to produce a level 3 recording of this listed building. This has entailed the identification and recording of significant structural features and key relationships of the building. The chronology of the construction has been defined. Further to this the former use of the building has to be identified, if possible.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Designations

2.1.1 The premises are a listed building, due primarily to the property backing onto the city wall.

2.1.2 The building lies within the medieval city walls. Much investigation has occurred on the development of the city wall. The bastion at the rear of the premises numbered 32 Saint Michael's Street is referred to as Bastion no.2.

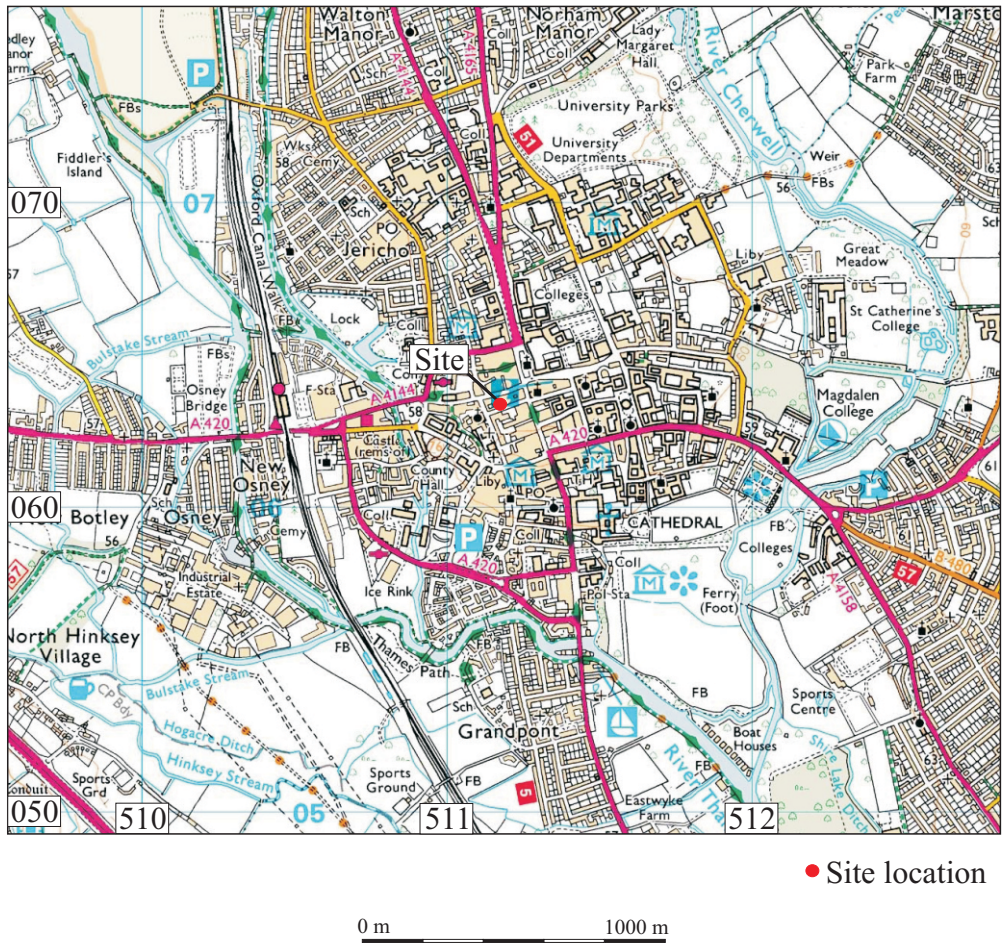


Figure 1. Site location

2.2 History of Development (Archaeology and Texts)

- 2.2.1 Archaeologically the gravel terraces on which Oxford stand have evidence of earlier activity. The oldest finds are of the Stone Age. Of most interest are the group of late Neolithic to early Bronze Age barrows located on the terrace, the nearest of which has been identified in excavations along Saint Michael's Street.
- 2.2.2 Iron Age and Roman material has been found to the north of the city centre (Dodd 2003, 8, fig.2.1). The Iron Age material comes from the University Parks. The proposed Roman road routes for the crossing of the Thames (Dodd 2003, 8, fig.2.1) are indicative of the area having a possible nucleated settlement and a number of Roman finds have been made near the University Parks and to the north of that area. The intense cropmarks on University Parks may indicate that this is the outer parts of settlement along the Banbury Road. A scatter of Roman material has been recovered from various locations in East Oxford (Iffley, Blackbird Leys, Temple Cowley and Lye Valley), but none of these lie on the proposed line of the Roman roads. The Roman material from Temple Cowley and Lye Valley appear to be on a straight alignment.
- 2.2.3 The archaeology and historical record show that a settlement existed at Oxford from the 7th to the 11th century. Archaeological investigation of the South Gate crossing of the Thames has produced evidence for a Middle Saxon crossing of the river (Robinson and Wilkinson 2003, 65-134). The evidence included the revetting of islands to create a firmer ground, which is considered consistent with the creation of a bridge. Once the banks of the river had been secure settlement developed on the floodplain.
- 2.2.4 Oxford's name was first recorded in the early medieval period variously dated 911-2 AD in the form of *Oxnaforda*, the etymology of which is Old English *Oxenaford*, oxen ford (Gelling 1953, 19). Exactly which crossing of the river this referred to is not abundantly clear, it could have applied to that at the South Gate or West Gate across the Thames or at the East Gate across the Cherwell. The suggestions so far tend to indicate a crossing by the West Gate over the Thames, where it is believed that a Roman road crossed the Thames heading from the Roman temple complex at Marcham/Frillford towards a probable sizable Roman settlement in the north of Oxford (Blair 1994, 87-9).
- 2.2.5 The first historical reference to the Burh (VCH 1979, 300), a fortified town, will be discussed in the following paragraph. Though only mentioned at the beginning of the 10th century, Saint Frideswide's founded an important minster at Oxford earlier (Blair 1994, 111-116). The church was probably only re-founded at that time as the vita of Saint Frideswide placed her life some three centuries before that date. Fragments of Anglo-Saxon architecture have been recovered from Oxford, Anglo-Saxon graves identified around Saint Frideswide's, while churches such as Saint Peter of the East Gate, and Saint Michael of the North Gate have remains of the 11th century or before. That the church at Saint Frideswide is recognised as the site of a minster church from the early 7th century is significant as it raises certain fundamental problems with the known development of Oxford. Blair (1994, 61-63) has suggested that there was a line of three churches along the southern edge of the Oxford terrace. A V-shaped ditch, containing 7th and 8th century pottery has been recognised under Saint Ebbe's Street, which is considered to mark the west boundary of the precinct. However, the extent of the precinct is not fully defined. In respect to other minsters sites such as that of Kempsey and Fladbury, both Worcestershire, the minsters were established in the remains of hill-forts (Yeates 2006, ii.752-60, iii. 927-33). It has been postulated that a major mother church was founded at Warwick and Winchcombe within earlier prehistoric boundaries (Yeates 2008, 68-72), both of these were turned into late Saxon Burghs. The site of Malmesbury is significant in that the town is recognised as the location of an early minster site (Yeates 2006, iii.1022-30), the Iron Age enclosure has been confirmed as existing, and the site was also established as a Burh of the Burghal Hidage. In some of these cases the later medieval reworking of the city

walls has almost obliterated any earlier features. There are, however, also other examples where the defences are still considered to be of a 10th century date.

- 2.2.6 The defences at Oxford have been designated a 10th century date, due to the reference to Oxford as one of the forts of the Burghal Hidage. Above it was noted that many of these locations reuse earlier monuments. Excavations at 24A Saint Michael's Street identified the remains of a Bronze Age ring ditch overlain by a rampart of earth (Munby and Wilkinson 2003, 135-200). The problem with the dating of the rampart here is that phase 2 of the report is classed as Roman to early 10th century followed by a question mark, phase 3 is classed as early 10th century, followed by a question mark, while phase 4 is also classed as 10th century with a question mark. In essence the earth-rampart to the north of Saint Michael's Street is undated. Phase 4 saw the insertion of a stone face to the earth rampart. The excavations showed that the earth rampart had over 20 identifiable levels of dumping. Phase 2 also had problems with its interpretation as initially it was interpreted as being the fill of a recut, and only later interpreted as a layer below the rampart. Such uncertainty again makes the sequencing questionable. The primary reason for reconfiguring the cut or deposit of phase 2 is to conform to the perceived historical development of Oxford, which has been determined by the textual sources and not the archaeology.
- 2.2.7 Further evidence for the line of the north rampart has come from work investigating the church of Saint Michael by the North Gate (Munby and Wilkinson 2003, 135-200, 399-400). Here the remains of a gravel and turf bank were also identified along with a cut for the insertion of a stone rampart, which was faced only on its outer side. A parallel ditch was also noted, which extended under the church of Saint Michael of the North Gate. The church is later, but was the tower also inserted into the rampart. The dating of the church relies on the architectural studies of the tower, and the most probable date suggested for this is AD 1010-60. Due to the insertion of an arch into the nave in the 15th century the relationship between the church and tower are obliterated by later work, and also the true relationship between the tower and the rampart.
- 2.2.8 The *Domesday Book* of 1086 gives a description of Oxford as a town with 243 houses that paid tax and a further 500 houses less 22 that do not pay tax (Morris 1978, B.3-11). There is a description of some 20 wall-dwellings of the king, which belonged to Earl Algar before 1066. The reason given for the name of these houses is that they were located in the town but for which the residence had a responsibility for the repair of the wall. They paid an annual amount of 14s less 2d. A list is subsequently given of the houses and holders of the wall-dwellings. Three churches are specifically named: Saint Mary's, Saint Frideswide's and Saint Michael's (of the North Gate). It is perhaps of interest that Saint Mary's is mentioned first as this is an old name used for early churches.
- 2.2.9 The wall enclosure is considered to have been increased in size with an extension to the east and west in the 11th century (VCH 1979, 301). The expansion of the east part of the Burh is demonstrated by archaeology, but the west is circumstantial with no known wall line recognised. It was suggested by the VCH that the west rampart lay to the west of New Inn Hall Street and Saint Ebbe's Street taking advantage of a fall in the ground level. The castle, which lies on the west side of the town, was constructed in 1071. This led to modifications of the city wall in the west.
- 2.2.10 The ramparts are described as of earth with stone revetments in 1142, and deep water is described as lying on either side (VCH 1979, 301). The walls of Oxford were overhauled in 1226-40 with the remaining earth rampart were replaced by stone. Accounts of 1226-32 mention firewood to create the lime for mortar and gifts of wood for joists and planks to construct the turrets and bastions in 1233. The surviving parts of the wall are believed to date mainly to the 13th century. This is recognised as being a stone wall built of a local rubble stone.

- 2.2.11 There are records of the repair of the wall throughout the 13th and 14th centuries (VCH 1979, 301-2). The earliest account of this is in 1264-6 when Osbert Gifford, keeper of the tower, ordered repairs to the crenulations and rampart walls. Further repairs are mentioned in 1285, 1301, 1321, 1326 and 1347. A number of 14th century leases or grants survive that indicate that tenants who repair the wall, should also carry out this practice outside the wall. Accounts from the second half of the 14th century for example in 1371 refer to the walls being undermined and cracked, and by 1378 Richard II had the ruinous wall repaired. Repairs were made to a turret in 1423-4.
- 2.2.12 The sixteenth century has a further group of references to the repair of the wall in 1555, 1557 and 1558 (VCH 1979, 301-2). An account of 1583 suggests that the wall had fallen into decay. The start of the 17th century, 1612, an Oxford tenant is allowed to pull down 7yds of the city wall to replace with a timber structure. By 1675 it is considered that much of the wall had disappeared.
- 2.2.13 The earliest recorded postern (a small doorway) through the defences was constructed between 1136/40 and 1378 (VCH 1979, 303). The only precise date recorded is for the postern at Bulwark's Lane in 1460-1. The north ditch remained a formidable obstacle all the way through the medieval period, with George Street, Broad Street and Holywell Street lying along the northern edge.
- 2.2.14 Saint Michael's Street (named after Saint Michael of the North Gate) is only a late name. Earlier names include Wood Street recorded in 1405, Bocardo Lane in 1548 and as an extension to New Inn Hall Street in 1751 and 1850 (VCH 1979, 477). The name Bocardo referred to a prison building that once formed part of the North Gate complex.

2.3 History of Development (Archaeology and Cartography)

- 2.3.1 From 1578 there are a series of maps that produce some detail of the city. The earliest of these was by Ager, which was drawn in an oblique style as were a number of subsequent maps until 1729 when vertical plans are produced. The map shows the line of the wall between the North Gate and Oxford Castle. There are three bastions marked along this stretch with semi-circular designs. Between Bastion 1 and the castle there is a break in the wall, while there is a further break for the castle ditch. Saint Michael's Street here goes under the name of *Whode Streate*. The only buildings that are shown in the area between the intervallum road and the wall are two or three buildings clustered next to the North Gate. No development is shown next to Bastion 2 and also very little on the south side of that street.
- 2.3.2 Hollar's map of 1643 shows houses behind the second bastion, of which a circular representation can be interpreted, although this may simply be style of the cartographer. The lack of accuracy of the map can be noted in a number of aspects, primarily in the area of New Inn Hall Lane that the bastion is drawn in line with that street, and we know from the ground today it is not. A building is shown directly behind the bastion.
- 2.3.3 In 1644 Wood produced a further representation of the City of Oxford. This shows no building on the intervallum area, but does place the bastion in a more accurate location. The map undoubtedly focuses on relevant military aspects as a product of the Civil War era. The map shows four mounds used as canon emplacements to the north of the city wall. The likelihood is that these may be upstanding barrows, two of which may be identified as ring ditches (under the Sackler Library and in Beaumont Street). The other two barrows, if that is what they were would have been under Worcester College or Gloucester Green.
- 2.3.4 Loggan's map of 1675 shows that much of the land between what became Saint Michael's Street had houses along its length. However, they were not packed tightly together as they are now and there are probably intervening gardens. One of the houses is shown to the rear of Bastion 2, though the two do not seem to be physically joined. This may be due to style

rather than physical reality at that time. The building could be house number 32, although it is impossible to confirm this and it may equally be number 34.

- 2.3.5 The map of Van Der Aa shows the sweep of the wall, with buildings located only on the north side of Saint Michael's Street at the east end.
- 2.3.6 Williams drew the earliest vertical plan, which shows the line of the wall with a distinct kink at bastion 2. Both bastions 2 and 3 are shown as rounded. Houses are shown in the land between Saint Michael's Street and the wall, but they are not shown as butting the wall. The problem with this map is one of accuracy as there is too much space between the wall and the street.
- 2.3.7 The Taylor map of 1751 sets the building outlines for a considerable time. Here we see that the street name is not defined, and is generally treated as if it is a continuation of New Inn Hall Street by academics. The drawing of the eastern plots along Saint Michael's Street shows them crossing the line of the city wall, it is only at the west end that the line of the earlier wall still defines the outline of the back of the building plots. The map shows Bastion 1, but the outline of bastion 2 is not recorded (which physically did survive), unless buildings have been constructed along the front of the city wall to diminish the shape of the bastion. This map shows building 26 (with a chequered Flemish brick bond front) as extending to the line of Saint Michael's Street. On style grounds this would appear to be a Georgian in design (18th century). Number 34 has mullion windows with sash windows. It would appear to be a style between the 17th century and 18th century, and would again be expected on Taylor's map. There are buildings between these but they do not reach the present street frontage in Saint Michael's Street.
- 2.3.8 Rocque's map of 1761 marks the line of the wall but is less detailed than that of Taylor, showing the buildings in this area as a block that omits most of the detailed outline evident on Taylor's map.
- 2.3.9 The Jeffreys map of 1768 shows the outline as displayed by Taylor. The same design is used on other later maps, so it is either the case that Taylor's map is simply being used as an accurate base from which the other maps were drawn, or that these maps rather than Rocque's is producing the more accurate plan at this time.
- 2.3.10 Longmate's map of 1773 classed Saint Michael's Street as part of Ship Street, in contradiction to the assumptions made by academics about other maps. The present course of these roads has a slight stagger, which may mean that the alignment has been altered slightly. The buildings follow the design first marked out by Taylor. The map of Faden in 1789 also follows the example set by Taylor.
- 2.3.11 The map of Richard and Davis of 1793-4 follows the line taken by Rocque in drawing all of the buildings as a block. Cole on his map of 1808 seems to show the buildings conforming to that presented on Taylor's map of 1751. However, a later plan of the mid-19th century (see below) shows the internal buildings with a different arrangement. In some of the general Oxford maps it is not apparent how the bastion is represented if at all. In 1817 Pearson does not appear to draw the bastion, but does show an area let in between the buildings of Saint Michael's Street probably between numbers 26 and 28. The other map of 1817 shows no specific detail of the buildings.
- 2.3.12 In 1842 the map by Barclay shows the outline of the whole block more or less in the form that it is today. That of Hoggar in 1850 follows Barclay's plan, with a gap between houses 26 and 28. Le Keux produced a similar arrangement in 1856.
- 2.3.13 A plan of the individual tenements of the mid-19th century (Hassall 1973, plate C, Anon. 2010) shows the tenements of Saint Michael's Street. This shows Bastion 2 as containing its original semi-circular arrangement. The writing across the later location of 28-32 contains the phrase '*The ruins of the Workshops and Stables, agreed to be taken down, and new buildings erected on the sale thereof*'. The writing on the bastion implies that this has

been converted into a tenement. That this plan is imprecisely dated is a problem, as the city plans may suggest an earlier phasing, with alterations of the site between 1808 and 1817.

- 2.3.14 A plan of Gassell, Petter and Graplin show the line of the buildings conforming to what is there today with the previously uncovered gap between houses 26 and 28 now built over. Significantly the first edition OS map also conforms to the present plan and street line. The bastion is represented with other structures around the wall, but is evidently drawn linked to building number 32. The buildings 28 and 30 are shown as a single unit. The map of Jackson of 1889 has insufficient detail. The later OS map of 1939 is shown with a building against the back wall. The walls of the bastion have been squared up to suit the construction of buildings on the north side of the wall.
- 2.3.15 A description of the city wall described the construction of a postern gate along the line of New Inn Hall Street and suggested that Bastion 2 had been fully destroyed (RCHME 1939, 159) with the line between the postern gate and north gate considerably altered. There is a further statement that medieval parts may still exist at the base, but the top has been completely re-altered. One could conclude from this that the bastion on the earlier maps if ruinous may not have been inserted onto the maps.
- 2.3.16 Excavations at the Reform Club in 1972 exposed the rear wall at number 32 showed that the semi-circular bastion survived in its original form below ground level. The original bastion projected a full 5.41m and was placed on the line of the Anglo-Saxon berm (Hassall 1973, 285-6). The footings on the north end of the bastion are 1.75 m deeper than those on the end adjoining the wall. The outshot as it is referred to is here classed as a work of the mid 19th century as the plan in the City Vellum Book shows the half rounded tower still in existence. On the berm beneath the wall two sherds of undateable medieval pottery were recovered. The edge of the ditch was noted in George Street.
- 2.3.17 Excavations were carried out at this time in the bastion, but no mention is given to them in the recorded accounts.

3 DESCRIPTION OF 28-32 SAINT MICHAEL'S STREET (SEE FIGURES 2-6)

3.1 Introduction and general description

- 3.1.1 There are probably three distinct construction processes ascertainable from assessing the historical and archaeological material relating to the development of the site, categorised later into 7 probable phases (Fig. 6). The first of these could date from prehistory or the early medieval period and saw the construction of the earth rampart. This at present has to be implied if not specifically observed at this location during the initial survey work. The buildings lie adjacent to excavations through the rampart at number 24 Saint Michael's Street. The buildings at numbers 28 to 32 are as yet not known to have had any cellars, so these deposits may be intact. The second major period of construction has to be the building of the stone city wall from its earliest phase as the stone revetment and then later insertion of a more formidable wall and buttress. It is apparent that this structure has undergone major alterations both in textual sources and also visibly. The last major period of development saw the construction and development of residential housing on the land between the intramural road and the wall.
- 3.1.2 The walls have been designated letters to indicate which Wall is being discussed at any one time. Wall A consists of the north facing curtain wall and north wall of bastion 2 (Fig. 2). Wall B is the east wall of no.32 Saint Michael's Street, which also includes the east-facing wall of the bastion (Fig. 3). Wall C is the west wall of no.32 (Fig. 3). Wall D is the west wall of no.28 Saint Michael's Street (Fig. 4), while Wall E is the east wall of no.28 (Fig. 4). The front façade of the building is Wall F (Fig. 5), while elevation G shows a cross section through all three buildings (Fig. 5).

3.2 The city wall (Exterior), Wall A and part of Wall B

- 3.2.1 The external City Wall at 28-32 consists of a stretch of the circuit (Wall A), plus two walls of what has been described as Bastion 2. The curtain wall here and Bastion 2 have seen major periods of alteration. The wall is built of rubble, but has dressed stone on the corner of the bastion. The city wall faces north, as does the end wall of the bastion, while the side wall of the bastion faces east (see plates 1-3, 5).
- 3.2.2 The curtain wall splays out visibly on the external side, and the ground level outside the wall is far lower than inside (as judged from the relationship of the floor level to the lower windows). There are presumably relatively intact layers of the rampart behind the wall. The wall is splayed at the base, suggesting that at here at least the dimensions of the original wall may be preserved.
- 3.2.3 There is evidence that this wall has seen several window insertions over time that has drastically altered the configuration and original fabric of the city wall (Wall A and B). Only one window light may be part of an early feature, which is the small light near the junction of the bastion wall. Internally it would appear that this was long and narrow in shape and has been reduced in size with the bottom being blocked (Plates 2, and 5). Below this there is a further blocked window/entrance, which has pale bricks blocking internally and also below, alongside which are the remains of a roofline. The remaining windows have red brick surrounds with which they have been reset. The windows here have two types of characteristics, one group wooden frames with numerous small window lights, which are probably the earliest set of insertions. There is definitely one of these inserted into the curtain wall. A further window of this type may well have been inserted initially in the lower back wall of number 28, where only part of the brick surround and lintel survive. The second group of windows have large window panels and metal frames. There are two of these in the rear of number 28.
- 3.2.4 Below the lower windows in the back wall there are brick infilling of repair or even locations where wooden features from a lean-to building could have been inserted (plates 2 and 3).
- 3.2.5 Bastion 2, see Walls A, B and C, has been changed in shape above ground from a semi-circular design to that of a polygonal one. The structure is sometimes referred to as an outshot and is claimed in some accounts to have been rebuilt in the 19th century (Hassall 1973, 285-6). The corner of the building was rebuilt, possibly at least twice, and the quoins look as though they are a new insertion. The lower window has a brick surround, though may be based around an original window, possibly the outer wall was taken away to use the original splayed window of the bastion (see Williams 2008). The upper window and door are part of a later insertion (Plate 2). The door is part of an access to the upper floor, it is rather of a late date, and means that the large panelled window insertions must date to a period post the removal of the lean to.
- 3.2.6 The end wall of Bastion 2, Wall A, shows similar alterations to the corner of the bastion. Both the windows have brick surrounds and a series of small window lights (Plate 2). These are probably alterations of earlier window positions, but have seen considerable alteration, with the narrowing of the wall.
- 3.2.7 The west wall of Bastion 2 has later buildings butted against it to the west fronting onto the extension of New Inn Hall Street.

3.3 The City Wall (Interior)

- 3.3.1 The interior walls are often covered with plaster in number 28, restricted by the construction of the toilet facilities in number 30, or extensively whitewashed as in number 32.

- 3.3.2 The earliest features of the curtain Wall A are the remains of a small window in the curtain wall, which was once a long narrow window, which has now been blocked in its lower part. On the east side of the internal part of the window a long vertically set piece of worked stone remains, which has a curved outer edge. It could be part of a mullion (if so suggestive that the feature has been reworked).
- 3.3.3 The upper part of the curtain Wall A has been replaced with a brick wall along most of its course, all except at its west end where it butts against the bastion. Here the wall still survives to a width of 0.8m, though this is probably considerably reduced in width.
- 3.3.4 The interior of the bastion shows signs of wall movement, with evidence of cracking in the north Wall A and east Wall B. This suggests rebuild. In the ground floor it is probable that the windows here have been reset in their original positions of the bastions narrow arrow slits, though they have been considerably altered. The window in the east wall of the bastion has no brickwork showing internally. It may even be the case that the front of the wall was altered and the window may be the remains of an embrasure. The north window is also altered but this was considerably widened (see plate 2).
- 3.3.5 The first floor windows also have signs of alteration, the north wall probably has a window reworked in its original place, and the east window has seen major removal of part of the wall and the insertion of a metal window frame with large window panels. The north wall is of a width of some 0.8m and contains the remains of a beam. The wall is extended upwards to the roofline by a narrower stonewall.
- 3.3.6 The west wall of the bastion, Wall C, at ground level is whitewashed like the other ground floor stonewalls; no features are visible other than the cracks from movement. The whitewash covers the whole wall. The first floor has some features to note in its construction, one of which is the remains of wooden beams in the wall (also continues along the east wall) and that the stone wall ends and is extended with a narrower wall on which the roof supports are set.
- 3.3.7 The removal of the wooden panelling in the roof area enabled it to be confirmed that the city wall continues above the first floor level at a width of approximately 2m wide. How far this continues at this rate of survival behind number 34 is not known.

3.4 The west wall of no. 32 (Interior), Wall C

- 3.4.1 The west wall of Bastion 2 is joined to the west wall of neighbouring building no.34, of which the initial part of the wall runs at an angle of some twenty to thirty degrees and runs across the line of the curtain wall. This is Wall C. Downstairs the wall was covered with plasterboard, but this has been taken away to reveal stonework. The angle of the wall and the apparent length of the wall here may be determined by the original width of the city's curtain wall.
- 3.4.2 The continuation of the west Wall C to the south, was also initially of stone rubble, this is evident in the first floor where some of the boarding has been taken away from the wall. The removal of boarding has revealed the earlier wall of number 34, which had a wooden framework with stone rubble infill. This continues to a height two thirds of the way up the first floor wall. Above this the wall has lathe work covered in render/plaster. Two earlier windows are probably blocked and rendered (plates 4, 6 and 7). During the construction of number 32 a single course of bricks were constructed a third of the way up the wall. The upper two thirds of this wall had a wooden frame onto which borders were attached.
- 3.4.3 There are the remains of a fireplace and a chimney for a boiler fitted against Wall C. The wall line at an angle as it runs across the line of the city wall looks as if it contained a fireplace, which was subsequently bricked up and a sink inserted. It may be that the city wall was hollowed out here to create a chimney. A later chimney is then butted up against the west wall, which continues up through the present roofline.

3.4.4 The removal of panelling in the roof space means that it is now possible to see a wall of brick 2m wide continue above the first floor ceiling behind number 34. It is also possible to see that there is also a structure of wood covered in lathes or that another form of walling is coated in lathes. A plan produced of the buildings along the line of Saint Michael's Street shows a block drawn across the diagonal section of wall in the bastion (Anon 2010) probably represents the last section of full sized wall between the New Inn Lane postern gate and the North Gate, though possibly hollowed for a chimney (see plate 6).

3.5 Saint Michael's Street Front and East Wall (Exterior), Wall E and Wall F

3.5.1 Wall E east wall of the later brick construction may be three bricks width. Part of the exterior of this wall can be seen above the low one story building of number 26. The wall is built in a Flemish Brick design. The bricks on the southeast corner of the building look as though they may have been reset.

3.5.2 Wall F forms the front of the building has been divided into three units, of which much of the face of each part has extensive areas of window and door area. The front of all the buildings is painted yellowish orange. Common features along the front of all buildings include a stylobate feature, probably created from rendering, along the base of the wall, which is painted black. This feature is cut by single doors that extend to the floor, with number 28 the door is offset to the right (east), while with number 32 the door is central with equal sided windows to the east and west. The central area of the building number 30 has a central door, but is flanked by two similarly designed doors. Numbers 30 and 32 have large lintels above, but this is not so evident as that on number 28 (see plate 10).

3.5.3 Numbers 28 and 32 have similarly designed upper fronts in that two windows flank a central window panel that extends internally to floor level. Number 30 has windows of a similar design but, due to its narrower size has no central panel arranged to reach the ground.

3.6 The roof lines (Exterior)

3.6.1 The roof is constructed of a wooden frame with three hipped slate roofs fronting onto Saint Michael's Street, see cross-section G (Fig. 5). On numbers 28 and 30 the rear part of the building is hipped. The roof on number 30 has a small dormer with gable extending from the hipped part of the roof to incorporate a large window inserted into the wall. In the case of number 32 the rear of the roofline has to line up with the bastion, thus there is a gable, which butts up against a further gable. The roof of the bastion is also hipped.

3.7 The interior of brick structure (Exterior), Walls B, D, and E

3.7.1 The ground floor of the interior is divided into three parts, of which numbers 28 and 30 back on to the remains of the city curtain wall, while number 32 backs into Bastion 2. The flooring in these two parts varies. In number 32 there are floorboards and in some places concrete. Wall B between numbers 30 and 32 is also a double brick wall, but in this case there are at least three insertions into the wall. The current door is a later insertion as can be seen with the two brick courses left. Towards the north end of this wall, are the remains of another blocked doorway, of which the brick infill looks late. Between these two insertions are the remains of another blocked feature, possibly a door, but almost certainly a window at least.

3.7.2 Wall B butts the City wall (Wall A) where stonework survives, thus indicating that the wall was re-shaped before the construction of the brick wall. Where the brick infill exists in the wall these parts are keyed together. This means the stonewall was altered when the present 19th century buildings were constructed.

- 3.7.3 Wall D between numbers 28 and 30 has the remains of a doorway with a segmental arch. This as far as can be ascertained at present is the earliest doorway. The downstairs of number 28 are divided into three with wooden and glass partitions. The top of the wall around the stairwell looks as though it may have been rebuilt. This wall is a double brick width.
- 3.7.4 Building number 30 had at its rear against the curtain wall of the city a privy inserted both on the ground floor and on the first floor. It is not overly apparent on the ground floor which walls butt to which, but this wall continues to the upper floor, where the remaining cubicle is finished with wooden panelling. This building also has the remains of a stairwell, which is placed against the wall of number 28 and also of the privy walls both on the ground and first floors. The floor of number 30 is of rectangular cobbles, which have been removed in one location and replaced by concrete. The cobbles have a measurement of 220mm x 110mm, the depth is unknown. It is not apparent from the present evidence if the cobbles extend under the staircase or if they have been removed.
- 3.7.5 On the first floor there are few internal walls (apart from the privy), and the surrounding wooden walling. Modern partitioning has been inserted to separate or create a small room at the rear of number 28 and a passageway around the first floor privy. Wooden posts spaced initially at equi-distance and brick pilasters against the front wall support the roof beams, thus providing the open planning.
- 3.7.6 The east Wall E contains the remains of a blocked chimney, but the remains of this are not visible on the external wall. There is a further chimneybreast constructed against this wall, this has subsequently been taken down, with the hipped roof being constructed over it (see plate 9).

3.8 The roof lines (Interior), cross-section G

- 3.8.1 The internal roof spaces were initially enclosed over numbers 28 and 30, but remain open over number 32. The roof truss has a tie beam and a collar beam, which are connected by two large struts at both ends. A slender kingpost (probably recent), which seems to be for show rather than strength helps support the wooden panelling. Perlins are visible running between the trusses. The space above the collar beam has been enclosed with lathes and plaster at the Saint Michael's Street end and have boards in other part of the roof (see plate 8).

4 ASSESSMENT (SEE FIGURE 6)

4.1 Date and Phasing part A: the earth rampart

- 4.1.1 **Phase 1:** The earliest phasing on the site is hypothetical for numbers 28 to 32, but has been shown to exist at number 24 Saint Michael's Street. Here the remains of an earth rampart were excavated. It was this that was later fronted by the curtain wall, initially as revetting. The rampart has not been dated by archaeological finds and there are admissions of altering the sequence of cuts by Oxford Archaeology after the excavation in their publication, and this subsequently enabled the date to be determined conveniently by the textual references of the 10th century (Munby and Wilkinson 2003, 140-52). The removal of the floor in no.28 revealed a layer of wood chippings above any surviving archaeological deposits.
- 4.1.2 Problems exist with the phasing and it is apparent that there were a number of dump episodes noted in the construction of the rampart. The rampart was also claimed as being constructed of two materials: gravel and loam deposits. It is quite feasible that the gravel deposits at the rear of the rampart may belong to an earlier phase. One that is essentially nearly destroyed. The front part of the rampart with evidence of timber revetting and

layers of loam and clay, which lies above the gravel deposits, may be a second build of the 10th century.

- 4.1.3 The rampart at New College is considered to be part of an eastern extension to the rampart, here again it is speculated that the rampart is primarily of an Anglo-Saxon date, but this also has not been dated categorically. Three sherds of 3rd-4th century Roman pottery were recovered from the rampart, while the feature was cut by a posthole of a 13th century date (Munby and Wilkinson 2003, 184-5). There is no way of determining if the material in the bank here is either residual or *in situ*.

4.2 Date and Phasing part B: the stone revetment wall and west boundary wall

- 4.2.1 **Phase 2:** The second recognisable phasing on the site saw the construction of a stone revetment to face the earth rampart (Walls A, B and C, Figs. 2-3). This is considered to have started piecemeal as a smaller stone revetment, followed by the later construction of the curtain wall. Numerous dates for refurbishment and re-construction are mentioned in textual sources. The present wall circuit where it survives, as at New College, is given a 13th century date (Munby and Wilkinson 2003, 185). This wall would have been built with the bastions as an integral part.
- 4.2.2 Excavations at the Reform Club (later the Southern Electric Showroom) identified that the foundation of the complete bastion survived below ground level, but suggested that the outshot may have been rebuilt (Walls A, B, and C). If this were the case then one would have expected the later brick build to be more fully integrated structurally, which it is not. As this is not the case it is more reasonable to assume that the upper part of the stonewall has been remodelled around an older core, with some areas of rebuild.
- 4.2.3 **Phase 3:** The map produced by Agas in 1578 showed the rear of the wall to what became Saint Michael's Street as being clear of material. A wall runs to the south of the bastion but is in line with the west side of New Inn Hall Street. This wall is one possible explanation of the rough stonewall forming the west boundary of property number 32. However, for this to be the case the alignment of New Inn Hall Street would presumably have to alter (which is unlikely). Later maps such as Loggan's show a building behind Bastion 2 in the 17th century. This stonewall is either part of an earlier feature of medieval date joined to the wall or, more likely, it is the earliest part of the phase of encroachment onto the line of the rampart (16th-17th century).
- 4.2.4 The lower part of the boundary Wall C between numbers 32-34 is all of stone (Fig. 3), and must be a substantial rubble wall. This wall must have been the earliest build with the structures of number 32 butted against it. The removal of the boards in the internal roof space and wall revealed the remains of a first floor wall, which had a timber frame with stone infill wall. Above this the wall was fronted by lathe work covered in render. There were two windows that had been blocked. This building has to have been constructed due to the map evidence and the house remains between 1578 and 1643. The exact process of construction of that structure has not been determined, and is not part of the aims of this report.

4.3 Date and Phasing part C: the brick building

- 4.3.1 **Phase 4:** Many of the plans from the 18th and 19th century onward have no indication of the bastion surviving, yet from the physical evidence this is indeed the case. With a plan of the mid-19th century marking Bastion 2 a tenement (Hassall 1973, plate C). The plans of the 18th century show the front part of numbers 28-32 as being primarily open. They seem to show a building or structure along the back of the three premises, perhaps a lean-to along the city wall only a few metres wide. In the front of the plot there are also indications of a smaller building for which one of the sides runs along the line of Saint Michael's Street. On the present evidence it is unlikely that any of these structures survive

in the present building (being demolished in the 18th century). The building material, either of stone or timber, however, may leave a footprint below.

- 4.3.2 **Phase 4a:** Pearson's map of 1817 shows the whole area covered with buildings, although no specific details are shown until 1842. Cole's map of 1808 shows the same building imprint as that of Taylor's map. One can only assume that there was renovation on the site between 1808 and 1817. A plan of the mid-19th century in the Vellum Book I (Hassall 1973, plate c) show a different arrangement of the buildings. It confirms that the buildings are due for demolition. The date of this illustration is crucial as we have to consider two possibilities that the 17th century buildings were added to and infilling took place, or that the mid-19th century date is too late and it should be dated to 1817 at the latest. This is the reason for an insertion of 4a as it is not totally apparent on the evidence available, which scenario is correct.
- 4.3.3 **Phase 5:** The date of Barclays' map of 1842 and that in the Vellum Book I of the mid-19th century could be considered to fall roughly in the same time frame. Thus suggesting that numbers 28-32 were constructed by at least *c.* 1840 at the latest. This would have seen the construction of the walls on the east, south and west side of number 28, and on the east and south side of number 32. The walls around the first floor were built on the east and south side. What is not known at this stage is if the internal west wall of number 28 initially continued up separating the upper floor.
- 4.3.4 The remains of a wooden frame are located in the city wall, the bricks around it at first seem light, but they appear red on inspection with a discoloured surface (Wall A, Fig. 2, plates 2-3, 5). The surviving 19th century wall of phase 5 butts up to the stone wall but keys into the brick infill indicating that the inserted frame, which was later blocked up, are part of phase 5.
- 4.3.5 The post-office was responsible for the numbering of properties and naming streets. The earliest directory for Oxford is 1880 (Valters 1880). The number sequence is even and consecutive suggesting the properties were all in place by this date.
- 4.3.6 The east Wall E shows signs of possible reconstruction at the Saint Michael Street (south) end and also has a blocked fireplace or opening upstairs. The internal wall has a doorway with a segmental arch, which on present visible evidence (though the walls are plastered and white washed) would seem to be original (1808-42). The bricks in this wall are 230mm x 70mm, with the width not determined. Where the stair case has been inserted the top of this wall looks as if it has been rebuilt for the new floor suggesting that it may possibly have extended upwards (as part of an earlier wall) or that the height of the wall has been lowered.
- 4.3.7 The ground floor of number 30 was probably cobbled at this early stage, and designed with the trapdoor over the cobbled road to hoist machinery or other objects into the first floor.
- 4.3.8 The wall on the ground floor between numbers 30 and 32 has a number of recognisable alterations (Wall B, Fig. 3). The bricks making up the majority of the wall at the south and north ends are 225mm x 65mm, with the width not determinable. The wall probably contained a window and a door, however, on the surviving evidence for which door is not conclusive, as the present one has been reset. In considering the location of the toilet and stairs it is highly likely that the door at the northern end was the original and that the location had to be removed at this time.
- 4.3.9 Internally upstairs pilasters are constructed on the dividing line of the internal boundary walls between the properties. The bricks in these builds are 225mm x 70mm x 110mm.
- 4.3.10 A number of the reworked windows on the city wall could probably be assigned to this reconstruction of the premises (Wall A, Fig. 2). These would include the two windows (ground and first floor of the bastion), and also the ground floor window on the east wall

of the bastion. In the main city wall the blocked window in the rear of number 28, and the upper window in the rear of number 30, where there is a dormer with gable would also look as though it is an alteration of this period. These windows all have a similar style, wooden lintels, and small window glass panels. The insertion of these windows at this date would also imply that by this early date in the 19th century the bastion had taken on its polygonal form as opposed to its earlier semi-circular form.

- 4.3.11 **Phase 6:** There was a fashion for coloured bricks between the 1840s to the latter part of the 19th century (Hammond 1998, 31). The two chimneybreasts (Walls C and E, Figs. 3 and 4) are made of a pale yellow cream brick; they presumably are of this date. Though houses can have a mixture of coloured bricks (and quite often do in the mid to late 19th centuries) the combination is to achieve an effect. This is not apparently the case here, while it is evident that the chimneybreast and boiler chimney are butted onto the earlier walls.
- 4.3.12 **Phase 7:** The Saint Michael's Street façade show signs of being replaced at least once (Wall F and Fig. 5). The reason for thinking this is that the front of number 28 looks as though it has been reset or reworked at a later date, due to the possible signs of rebuild internally and externally, but that its rebuild does not seem to correspond to the rebuild evident in the facades of numbers 30 and 32. The designs of the fronts of numbers 30 and 32 match in that they contain the remains of a large lintel above the ground floor windows and doors, a feature not apparent at number 28. Bricks in this build measure 230mm x 72mm x 105mm.
- 4.3.13 The large windows in the rear of the building (curtain Wall A) also probably date to this period. The second window inserted in the ground floor, rear of number 28, and the large window inserted in the first floor at the rear of number 28. The window and door in the east wall of the upper floor of the bastion may also be of this date. These windows all have a similar size and panelling.
- 4.3.14 The present hipped roof has to be of a later date, post c. 1880, as the chimneybreast in number 28 has been removed. A 20th century date for this phase of the building is probable, though one should note here that the supporting beams running along the wall line look considerably older, and are presumably part of the original roof.
- 4.3.15 The nature of any butting between the privies' walls and the other internal walls are not apparent. Sewage and drainage systems were built in Oxford from 1771 (VCH 1979). However, the sewerage systems as we know them did not come into existence until plumbers, for example Thomas Crapper established his sanitary businesses in 1861 (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Crapper). London had its sewerage system upgraded in 1858 by the civil engineer Bazalgette (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_Sewerage_System). Sludge technology was introduced in 1914 (<http://www.waterengineering.co.uk/fbda-history.wp>) with Manchester and Worcester being the first to adapt the technology at that time. This insertion, and the present stairs would presumably be post 1860 and could feasibly be quite a lot later.
- 4.3.16 The interior of number 28 contains wooden and glass panelling dividing the downstairs into three rooms. The date at which this was carried out has not been confirmed.

4.4 Listed status

- 4.4.1 The houses of 28-32 Saint Michael's Street are part of a listed building, primarily because they contain part of the circuit of the City Wall and the remains of Bastion 2.

4.5 Historic and Architectural Assessment

- 4.5.1 Phase 1 included the construction of the rampart; no date has been categorically determined for this. There may in reality be more than one phase here. If there is more than one phase, it is the last phase that probably corresponds to the 10th century.
- 4.5.2 Phase 2 like the previous period of development may also contain more than one event. The initial stone revetting followed by the replacement of this by the bastioned wall in the 13th century. How many of these intricate phases exist on this site is not yet apparent.
- 4.5.3 Phase 3 probably saw the construction of the west wall of property number 32, which formed part of a structure now known as number 34. This may be a wide wall constructed of rough rubble. One is inclined to think that this wall is of the 16th century.
- 4.5.4 Phase 4 saw the construction of two buildings on the site (as evident on Taylor's map) before 1751. The outline of these buildings is shown on the maps until 1808. The exact nature of these buildings is unknown.
- 4.5.5 Between 1808 and 1842 phase 5 must have been constructed according to the plans that survive of the city of Oxford.
- 4.5.6 Phase 6 saw alterations with coloured yellow bricks; these were fashionable from 1840-80 approximately.
- 4.5.7 Phase 7 includes the alterations carried out in the 20th century.

5 THE CURRENT PROPOSAL

- 5.1.1 The current proposal is to renovate and restore the print binders under planning applications 10/00055/FUL and 100056/LBC into premises called Bike Zone. The proviso was that a historical building survey and archaeological work should be carried out on the site.

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1.1 The site has a number of recognisable phases, although it should be noted that due to the available evidence on site, some of these cannot be defined or dated adequately enough. The rampart must underlie the floors of 28-32 Saint Michael's Street, which will hopefully be encountered when the watching briefs are carried out. The stone revetment on the rampart has numerous sub-phases, but the visible remains here probably date to the later 13th century. The west wall of number 32 (phase 3) has here been treated as part of a building construction of the 16th century, but the size and design of the rubble wall may indicate something totally different, perhaps part of a feature not generally placed on the maps that survive of Oxford. This stonewall still stands to the top of the first floor ceiling.
- 6.1.2 The buildings on the plots marked out in 1751 cannot be identified in the present building, so it is possible that these buildings were demolished.
- 6.1.3 The present buildings were erected between 1808 and 1842. The east wall of number 28 and the internal walls on the plot probably date to this build. Windows were inserted through the city wall at this time. In the mid to later 19th century AD alterations were made to the property in a yellow cream brick. The front of the building has been remodelled or rebuilt at sometime (presumed here to be in the 20th century).

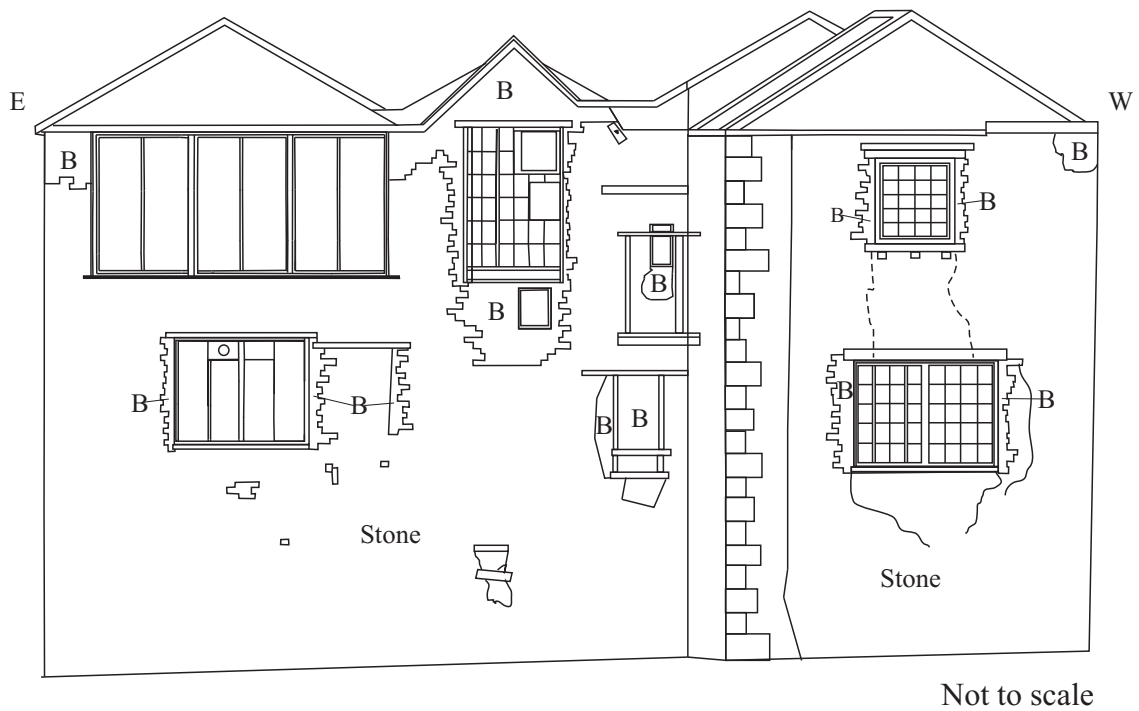
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Stephen Yeates

John Moore Heritage Services

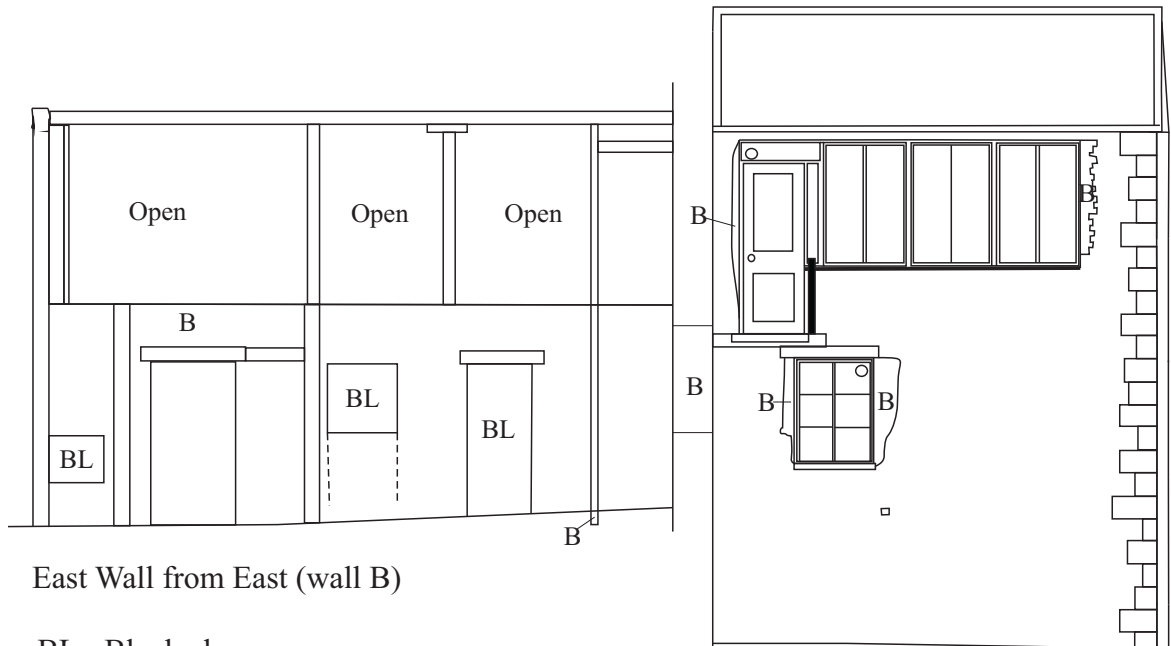
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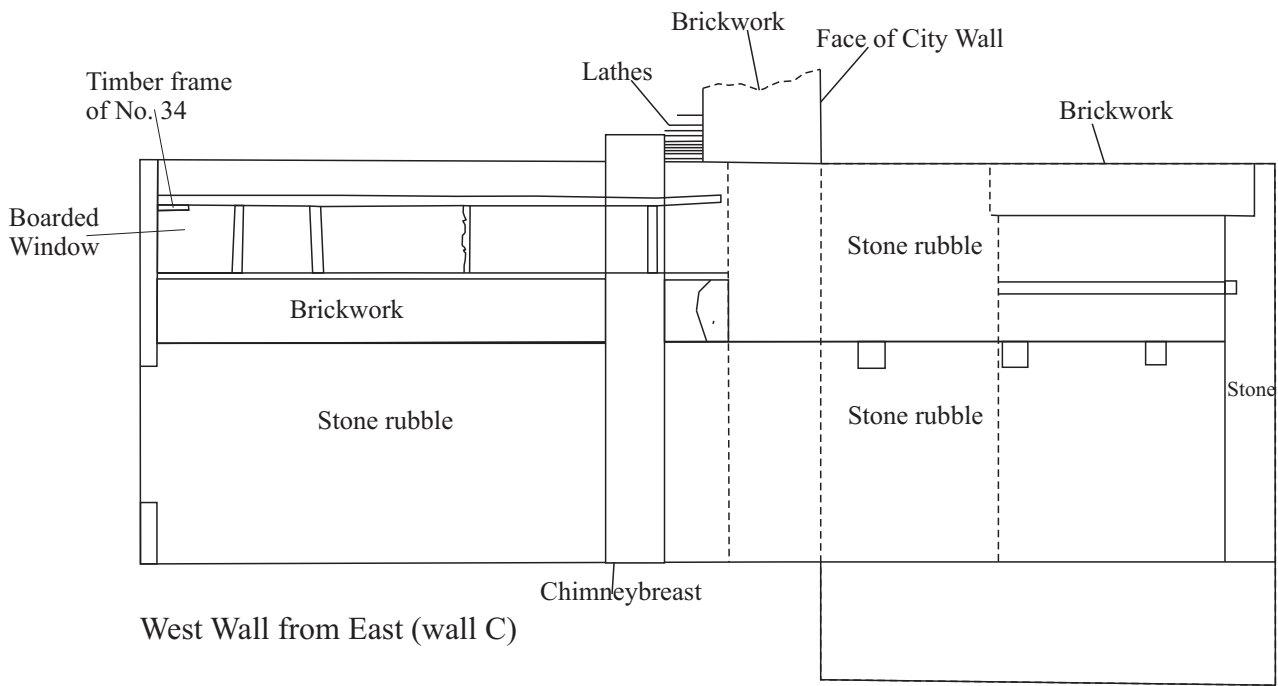
North wall (curtain wall and north wall of bastion)

B= Brick

Figure 2. Rear Elevation, curtain wall & bastion 2 (Wall A)

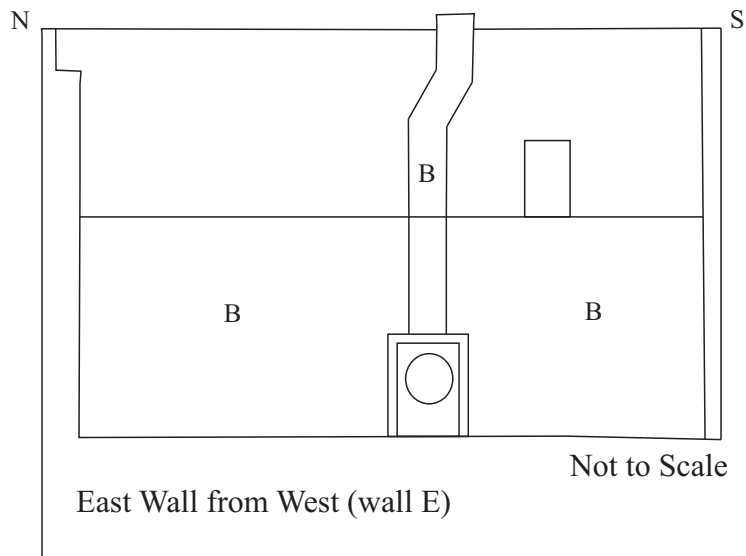
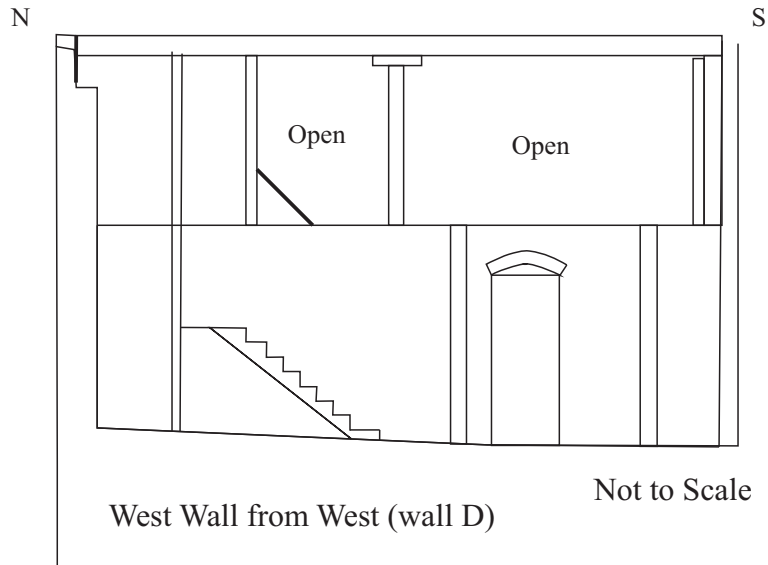


BL= Blocked
B= Bricked



Not to Scale

Figure 3. Internal walls of No. 32 Saint Michael's Street (walls B & C)



B= Brick

Figure 4. Internal walls of No. 28 Saint Michael's Street (walls D & E)

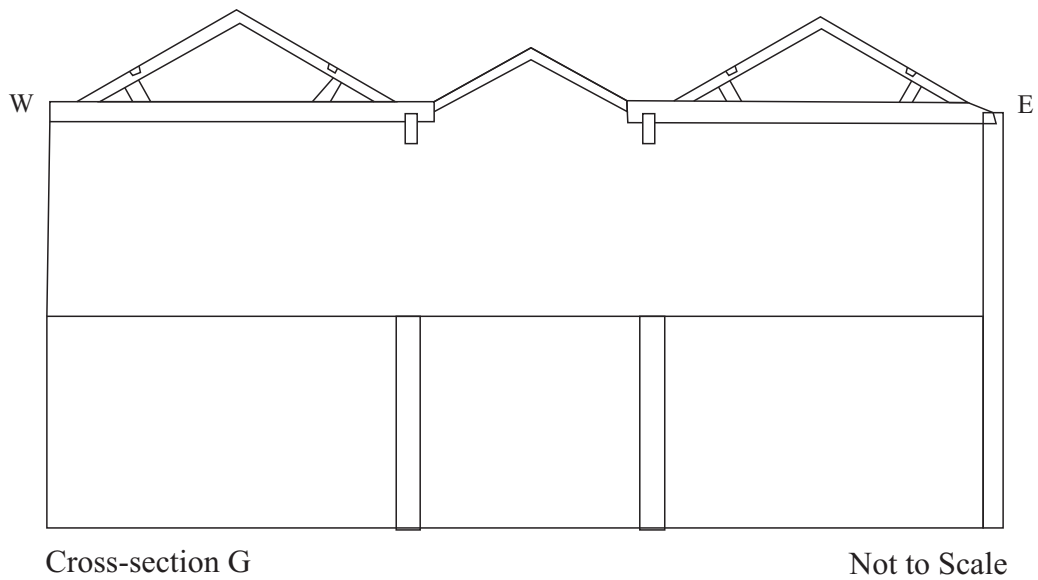


Figure 5. Front elevation and cross section showing truss formation (wall F & cross-section G)

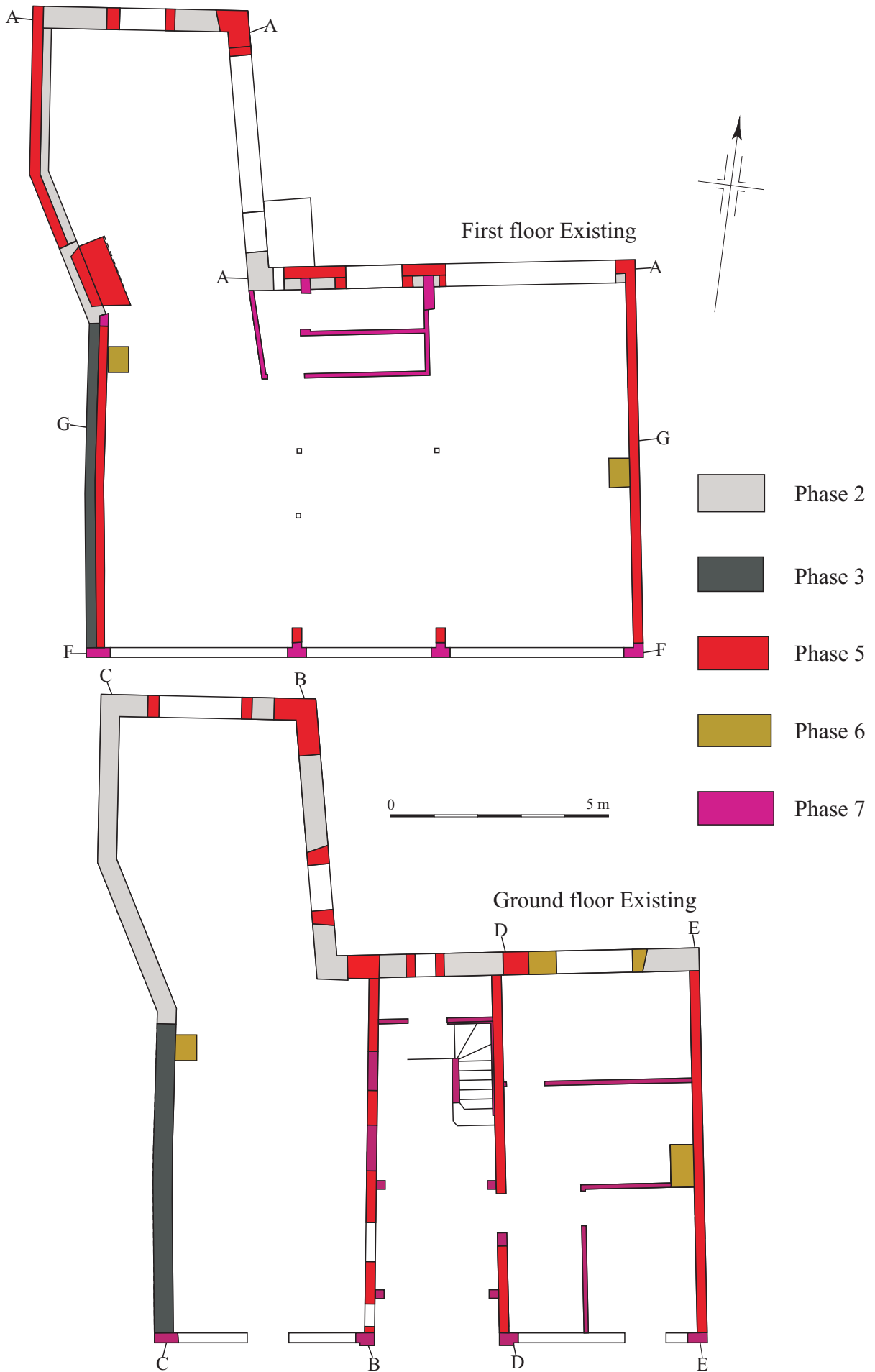


Figure 6. Phased plans of Nos. 28-32 Saint Michael's Street



Plate 1. Rear of No. 28 St Michael's Street showing the two different window phases (wall A)



Plate 2. General view of Bastion 2 rear of 32 St Michael's Street (walls A & B)



Plate 3. General view of the surviving city wall at the rear of No. 28 and No. 30 St Michael's Street (wall A)



Plate 4. The west wall of No. 32 St Michael's Street showing the wooden frame to support boarding at No. 32's wall and also the timber frame wall onto which it is built of No. 34 (wall C)



Plate 5. Insertion of window and building at the rear of No. 30 St Michael's Street (wall A)



Plate 6. The lathe covered wall and brickwork of No. 32& 34 St Michael's Street evident in the roof space of No. 32 (wall C)



Plate 7. The west wall of St Michael's Street showing the frame for boarding and the wall of No. 34 built of timber with stone and mortar infill. Two windows have been blocked (wall C)



Plate 8. The roof space of No. 32 showing the tie beams and Queen Beam supports (cross-section G)



Plate 9. The mid - late 19th Century fire place and chimney breast butting up against the existing east wall (wall E)



Plate 10. General view of No's. 28-32 St Michaels Street. The front of the building may have been replaced wholly or partially (Phase 7), (wall F)