

**The Old Malthouse  
St. John's Road  
Banbury  
Oxfordshire  
NGR: SP 454 400**

**A  
Heritage Impact Assessment  
of  
Proposed Development**

**Text**

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*Summary*

*Proposals have been to convert the Grade II listed Old Malthouse on St. John's Road, just to the south of the centre of Banbury, from office to residential use. The building, near to the site of the medieval hospital of St. John, dates back to the mid-1830's as a maltings but has also been used as a hosiery manufactory and an engineering works. This consultancy was commissioned to get a better understanding of the evolution of the property and to assess the heritage impact of the proposed works. It concludes that the impact will be negligible and that several of the proposals will enhance the character and significance of the building; there would also be no impact on the character, setting or significance of any adjacent heritage assets, other than a general enhancement of the significance of the conservation area through the external improvements of the building..*

## **1. Introduction**

The Old Maltings was begun in 1834 and altered in the mid and late 20<sup>th</sup> century as its use changed; its last use was as offices, the conversion resulting in considerable internal alterations. Proposals have been developed to convert it into residential use with apartments of various sizes.

The building is Grade II listed and within the extensive Banbury Conservation Area. This Consultancy was commissioned to undertake a heritage statement and heritage impact assessment of the proposals under the guidelines of the *National Planning Policy Framework*. The initial work on the heritage statement element of the report was carried out in June 2017.

### **1.1 Report Format**

The report format is quite simple. After this brief introduction there is an outline section on the requirements of a heritage impact assessment under the guidance of the NPPF (Sections 2) and an outline history of the site (Section 3). Section 4 is a description of the building, and Section 5 an outline discussion of its development and phasing including a heritage statement.

Section 6 outlines the proposals and Section 7 is the heritage impact assessment. Section 8 is a short conclusion and Section 9 is a list of the references used in the compilation of this report. Section 10 is an appendix containing much reduced survey drawings.

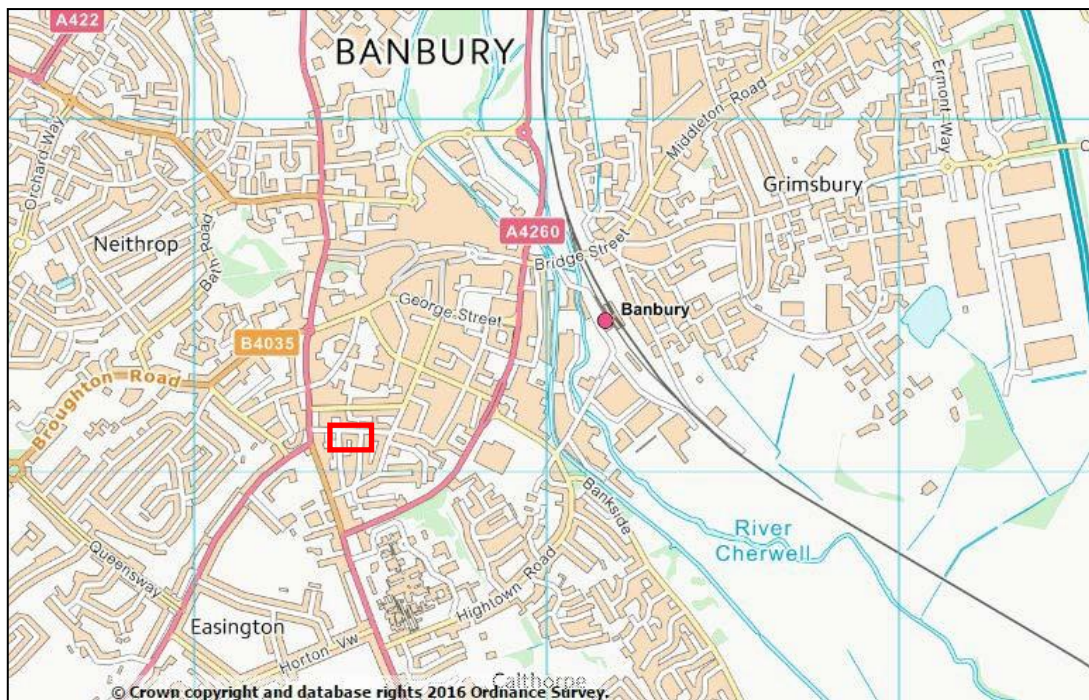


Fig.1: The location of the study area (OS Open Data).

## **2. Heritage Impact Assessments**

### **2.1 General Introduction**

The purpose of a heritage impact assessment (HIA) is to meet the relevant guidance given in the NPPF. This outlines the need to appropriately inform the planning decisions that need to be made when considering proposals that have the potential to have some impact on the character or setting of a designated or non-designated heritage asset. It is not concerned with other planning issues.

The nature of the heritage assets and the potential impact upon them through development are both very varied. The heritage assets include both designated heritage assets – such as listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments and conservation area – and non-designated heritage assets, a rather uncomfortable and sometimes subjective category that includes locally listed buildings, field systems, views and buried archaeological remains.

The degree of impact a proposed development could have on such assets is variable and can sometimes be positive rather than negative. The wide range of possible impacts can include loss of historic fabric, loss of historic character, damage to historic setting, and damage to significant views.

Under the requirements of the NPPF, the still current advice in the notes that accompanied PPS5, and of other useful relevant guidance, such as English Heritage's *Conservation Principles* and *Informed Conservation*, it is necessary to assess the significance of the designated and non-designated heritage assets involved, to understand the nature and extent of the proposed developments, and then to make an objective judgement on the impact that the proposals may have.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> English Heritage, 2008, *Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment*; Clark, K, 2001, *Informed Conservation: Understanding Historic Buildings and Their Landscapes for Conservation*

## **2.2 Definition of Setting**

The latest English Heritage guidance on the setting of heritage assets points out that:

*'Setting is not a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation. Its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of a heritage asset. This depends on a wide range of physical elements within, as well as perceptual and associational attributes, pertaining to the heritage asset's surroundings'.<sup>7</sup>*

Setting, as a concept, was clearly defined in PPS5 and in the accompanying Guidance notes which state:

*'Setting is the surroundings in which an asset is experienced. All heritage assets have a setting, irrespective of the form in which they survive and whether they are designated or not. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance, or may be neutral'.<sup>8</sup>*

The same guidance states that setting is not confined entirely to visible elements and views but includes other aspects including environmental considerations and historical relationships between assets:

*'The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by references to visual considerations. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part, the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust and vibration; by spatial associations and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places'.<sup>9</sup>*

## **2.3 Definition of Significance**

In the glossary of the recently issued (March 2014) new *Planning Practice Guidance* to the NPPF, significance is defined as:

*'The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting'.*

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<sup>7</sup> English Heritage, 2011, *The Setting of Heritage Assets: English Heritage Guidance*, 7, para. 2.4

<sup>8</sup> PPG Guidance para.113

<sup>9</sup> *Op. cit.*, para.114

## **2.4 Definition of Harm**

The NPPF and its accompanying Planning Practice Guidance effectively distinguish between two degrees of harm to heritage assets – *substantial* and *less than substantial*. Substantial harm is considered to be a degree of harm so serious to the significance of the heritage asset, usually involving total or partial destruction of a listed building, for example, or radical changes to its setting.

As the term suggests, *less than substantial harm* is not as serious and varies in its impact – but it still is an important consideration in assessing planning applications. However, recent High Court rulings have emphasised the primacy of the 1990 Planning Act – and the fact that it is up to the decision makers in the planning system to ‘*have special regard to the desirability of preserving the [listed] building or its setting*’.

### **3. Outline History**

#### **3.1 Banbury**

Banbury is an ancient market town in the valley of the River Cherwell in northern Oxfordshire. Whilst there is evidence of both Iron Age and Roman settlement in the area, the town's name is of Saxon origin and could be derived from 'Banna's burgh or defended settlement'; in the later Saxon period it was generally spelt *Banesbyrig*. By the time of the Domesday Survey of 1086 *Banesberie* was a fairly prosperous settlement owned by the Bishop of Lincoln.

A later bishop established a castle in the town, close to the parish church. The town developed as a market town in the medieval period, thanks in no small part to its good natural position as a transport hub.

As a result it also boasted several fine inns serving the main roads passing through it – and this helped in the development of a malting and brewing industry that remained an important part of the local economy well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In 1628 it suffered a destructive fire and had scarcely recovered before the outbreak of the English Civil War in 1642. The town's population seem to have been largely sympathetic to the Parliament, but the castle was quickly taken and held by the Crown. An accidental fire in 1643 and two long sieges resulted in more damage to the town and its buildings.

Industrial development was spurred by the opening of the Oxford Canal in 1778, which belatedly reached Oxford in 1790; when it did so the canal became part of a national 'cross' of canals linking the navigable rivers Thames, Severn, Trent and Mersey.

In 1850 two different railway companies opened lines to the town, further stimulating its growth – and in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century the M40 motorway between London and Birmingham was built close to its eastern boundaries.





Fig.2: Extract from Richard Davis' 1797 map of Oxfordshire.

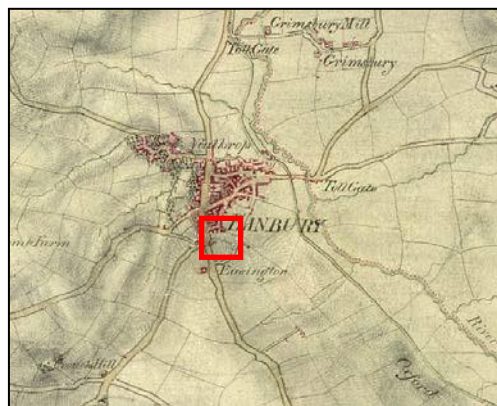


Fig.3: Extract from the original Ordnance Survey drawings begun in 1811.



Fig.4: Extract from the first published edition of the 1" Ordnance Survey map of 1833.

### 3.2 The Old Maltings

The Old Maltings, formerly called the St. John's Works, lies on the south side of St. John's road just to the south of the town centre. Just to the west of the site are the fragmentary remains of the medieval Hospital of St. John. This had been founded in the early-13<sup>th</sup> century by the main road leading south to Oxford.

The area seems to have remained fairly undeveloped until the early-19<sup>th</sup> century, much of it becoming part of the estate of Calthorpe House. However, in the mid-1830's much of that estate was sold off for development – resulting in the construction of some quite large villas and streets of mainly middle-class housing.

One by then elderly local, T W Boss, stated in a lecture in 1903 that in 1834 '*the Calthorpe Estate was sold for building purposes. St John's Road was cut through, and Austin's great malthouse was begun*'.<sup>10</sup>

The Austin in question was Richard Austin; he had married the daughter of James Barnes, a canal engineer who had started up a maltings business at the North Bar in the town.

By 1808 Austin was a partner in the firm and by 1814 he had bought Barnes out completely.<sup>11</sup> The new maltings on St. John's Road are labelled 'Austin's Malthouse' on a *circa* 1838 map of the town; to the east was another large building, labelled Barrett's Malthouse.<sup>12</sup>

Richard Austin named his son Barnes Austin, in honour of his father-in-law and erstwhile partner. In 1840 Barnes Austin succeeded to the business which had nine public houses as well as the maltings; his head brewer was Frederick Fleet and his chief clerk, Joseph Osborn.<sup>13</sup>

Barnes Austin seems not to have been a good businessman and was also involved in local politics. In 1841 he helped the Chartist-sympathiser Henry Vincent, of the Banbury Working Mens' Association, to a creditable result in the general election – though he was, inevitably, defeated.

Despite that defeat, after the result Vincent's election committee held a festival in a malthouse belonging to Barnes Austin '*who had supported Mr. Vincent with his vote and interest*'; 800 sat down to tea – presumably in the extensive new malthouse on St. John's Road.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Trinder, B (ed.), 2013, 'Victorian Banburyshire: Three Memoirs', *TBHS Vol.33*, 191

<sup>11</sup> Trinder, B, 1982, *Victorian Banbury*, 35

<sup>12</sup> *Op. cit.*, 8

<sup>13</sup> *Op. cit.*, 59

<sup>14</sup> *Op. cit.*, 58

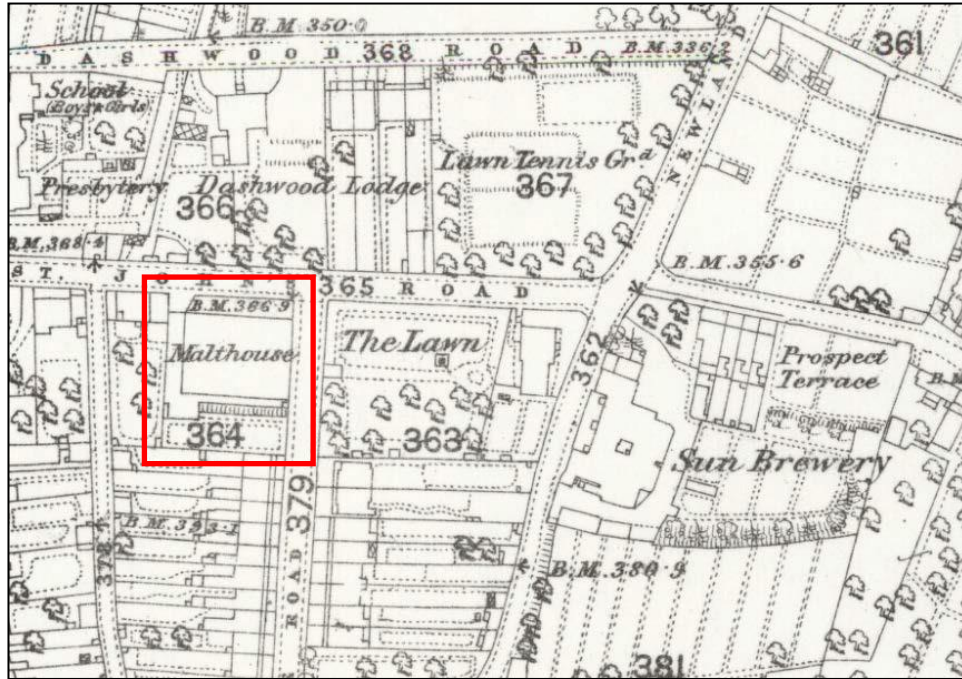


Fig.5: Extract from the 1<sup>st</sup> edition of the 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map of 1885.

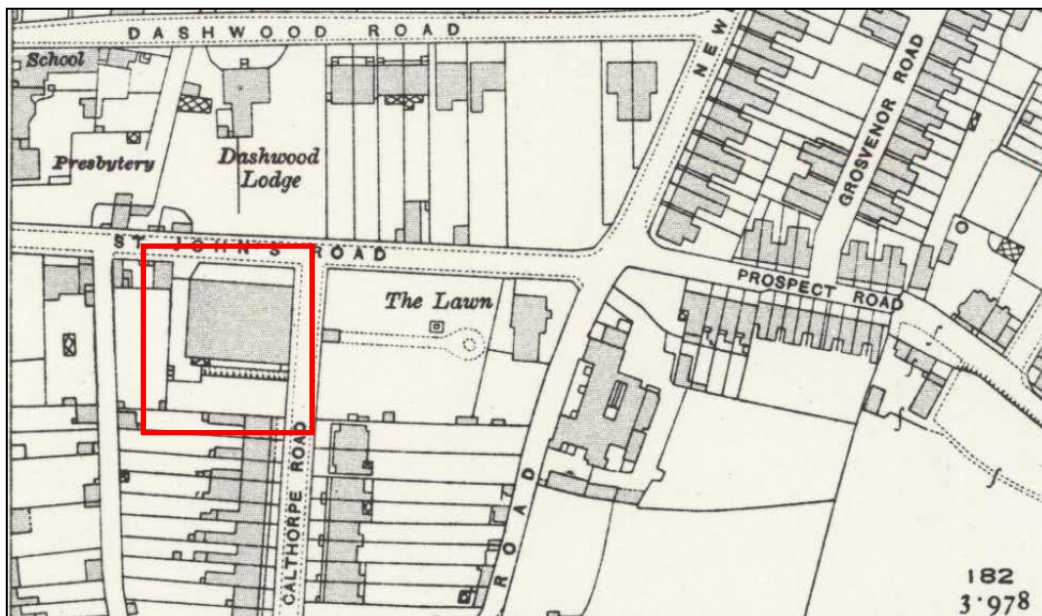


Fig.6: Extract from the 1920's edition of the 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map.

A few years later, in 1848-9, Austin went into partnership with John Nixon Hardman and by 1850 his name no longer appeared in association with the business; Hardman had a new partner, William Bryden, by 1857 and in 1875 Hardman & Bryden were taken over by Robert Dunnell before Hunt Edwards took over in 1918. The company's Bridge Street brewery was modernised in the early-1920's and it may be at this point that the St. John's Road malthouse was sold off.

By 1929 the St. John's Works were operated by Henry Owen Bennett, 'manufacturers of Ladies Knitted Outerwear'; the company had a London showroom in Regent Street. Ten years later the company was listed in the local *Directory* as a 'fancy hosiery manufacturer'. In the 1960's, the Ordnance Survey maps label the site as 'Engineering Works', indicating another change of use; it was operated by Improved Hinges Ltd. but was part became a special libraries book service store. Towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the works were converted into office accommodation; it remained in this use until 2017.

Recent investigative works and strip out demonstrated clearly that the earlier assessment of the date and significance of the features and partitions concerned was accurate – and that they were all associated with the recent conversion of the building to offices. All of the fabric removed had been added long after the building was first listed in 1969 and even after the listing was reviewed in 1986.

The investigations also demonstrated the unsympathetic nature of the insertion of these new partitions and ceilings – specifically the way in which an axial partition beneath a series of RSJs had been inserted into the building; the way the new ceilings took little care in respecting the roof structure – and hid the trusses from view; the addition of additional timbers in the trusses which confused their interpretation; and the wholesale addition of cut steel fish-plates at the main jointing in the trusses.



Pl.1: Extract from a 1929 aerial photograph of the works from the south-east.

## **4. Description**

### **4.1 The Main Building**

#### **4.1.1 The Exterior**

##### **4.1.1.01 The Front, or North, Elevation**

The principal elevation, facing St. John's Road, is a two-storey symmetrical composition of seven bays. Above a low, simply-moulded, stone plinth it is faced in regular hand-made red bricks laid to a simple Flemish bond and is articulated by plain pilasters of painted stone or stucco.

The central and end bays break forward slightly; the former is flanked by pairs of pilasters, the latter by single pilasters – the outer ones returning as rather crude quoins on the gable ends.

At the wall head is a simple painted stone entablature and above that, a solid brick parapet. This is, oddly, made of cruder bricks than the rest of the wall beneath. It was capped by a painted stone coping – as shown on the older aerial photographs – but it is unclear how much of that survives beneath the modern lean or zinc overhang that now tops the parapet.

Above the central bay is a rather limp triangular pediment which presumably has lost its original coping; the 1929 aerial photograph suggests that it was topped by a finial (*see Pl.1*).

The tall and glazed central doorway and main entrance, and the stepped approach to it, have obviously been modernised in the recent past. Above is a small window with modern balanced sash; the brickwork beneath its sill has been disturbed and made good.

The rest of the fenestration on the two floors is regular; the closers in the brickwork adjacent to their jambs suggests that the window openings are primary. These have square heads of painted stone incorporating a central key-stone, and thin stone sill. The windows are modern balanced sashes of 3x2 pattern.

Between the heads of the first-floor windows and the entablature are long attenuated framed painted stone panels – one above the centre and end bays and a longer one above the pairs of windows in between.



Pl.2: The front, or north, elevation from the north-west.



Pl.3: The front elevation from the north-east.

#### **4.1.1.02 The Rear, or South, Elevation**

The rear elevation is simpler and less regular than the principal façade; because of the lack of a parapet it is also not as tall. The bricks used are similar but laid to a mainly English Garden Wall bond; there is no articulation by pilasters and no plinth or cornice to the brickwork.

The original window and doorway openings had rubbed brick flat arched heads – the windows with projecting stone sills. The window pattern on the two floors did not match throughout. Six of the ground floor windows have windows directly above them on the first floor; the rest of the pattern is much looser.

On the ground floor, there are now nine openings and evidence for a blocked one at either end – so eleven in all. At the left-hand, or western, end is a blocked doorway – the blocking being in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century machine-made brick; the original rubbed brick head remains. At the opposite, right-hand, end of the elevation, a window opening has been more thoroughly obliterated and then blocked – the head not surviving.

In between there have been two modern doorways inserted, a wider one towards the right-hand end with a concrete lintel, the other, towards the left-hand end, with a soldier arch brick lintel.

The two left-hand windows at ground-floor level have higher sills than the others; the one at the very left-hand end could be a primary opening of this shape and size. The one next to it has been altered; the present window does not quite fit beneath an original flat-arched brick head. It appears that an original window was replaced by a doorway – and then that was blocked and replaced by the present window.

The window pattern on the first floor is more regular; the two left-hand windows have been reduced in size by the raising of their sills and what was presumably another window just east of them has been removed and replaced by a double fire escape doorway under a soldier course of brick. At the extreme right-hand end of the elevation a window has been replaced by another, single, fire door – though the original flat arch head has survived.

The glazing of all the windows has been replaced. There are modern horned sashes in most of the first-floor windows and some of the ground-floor ones have iron barred openings to match.



Pl.4: The rear elevation from the south-east.



Pl.5: The eastern end of the rear elevation.



#### **4.1.1.03 The West Gable Elevation**

The west gable wall is built of hand-made red brick laid to an English Garden Wall bond. Assessment is made difficult by the fact that the jambs of all of the window openings seem to have been re-pointed, making it difficult to assess if they are primary or not.

The upper portion of the wall is symmetrical, with three pairs of windows on the first floor and two windows lighting the loft. The windows are virtually identical, with stone lintels incorporating key stones and projecting stone sills. The two central ones on the first floor look to be inserted fairly recently but none of the windows fit that neatly into the brickwork – though could still be original. The balanced sashes, however, are all quite recent. In between the two loft windows is an area of disturbance in the brickwork that could be the result of repair, or the infilling of a blocked opening.

The ground floor is much less regular. The widest opening – with folding timber doors under a broad rendered lintel – is probably of later-20<sup>th</sup> century date. Immediately to the right, or south, is a pair of doorways infilled with modern iron grills; the openings have key-stoned flat stone lintels and could be primary.

In the left-hand section of the elevation at this level is a sequence of much altered openings. At the extreme left-hand end is a doorway beneath a stone key-stoned lintel inscribed with the name 'St. John's Works'; this could be original, but the term 'works' seems more in keeping with a manufactory and the lettering could have been added when it became a hosiery works.

Of the four windows between this doorway and the large inserted one, only the right-hand one seems primary – and has a keystoned lintel. The other window with a key-stoned lintel could be a widened primary opening – but the other two are evidently inserted – though at an unknown date. The glazing is all of fairly modern date.



Pl.6: Lintel of the left-hand doorway of the west gable.



Pl.7: The Old Maltings from the south-west, the west gable to the left.



Pl.8: The east gable.

#### **4.1.1.04 The East Gable**

The east gable, facing Calthorpe Road, is almost symmetrical, apart from the difference in height of the front and rear elevation that its upper part has to accommodate. At the extreme right-hand end are the quoined return of the end pilaster on the façade. The bricks are the same regular hand-made reds as used on the other elevations, laid to an English Garden Wall bond.

There are four windows lighting the first floor and none below. The windows have the usual stone lintels with projecting keystones and stone sills. As on the other gable elevation, the jambs have been repointed or re-set making assessment of their date difficult – though there is little to suggest that they have been inserted. They have modern cross-mullioned glazing.

At the left-hand end are two longer but lower windows beneath concrete lintels that have obviously been inserted – probably in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Centrally positioned at the top of the brickwork is a small stone panel with a floral carving within it.

#### **4.1.2 The Roof**

The slate covered roof is the most unusual part of the Old Maltings. It is a variant on a single pile half-hipped structure but with a flat top – though the end hip at the western end is slightly longer and of shallower angle than the one to the east.

The span, across the entire width of the building, is considerable but the trusses are of machine-sawn timber, possibly imported pitch pine. The roof is of ten bays in all; the trusses are standard distances apart, except at the western end when the last two bays are slightly longer (*see below*).

The trusses are of unusual design to cater for the width of the roof. Each has a tie-beam of two sections simply half-lapped at the centre of the building – and presumably supported at that point by a column originally; there is a modern plaster-boarded spine wall throughout the building that presently hides the structural solution posed by the scarf jointed tie-beam.

The jointing of the roof timbers seems to be of simple shouldered mortice and tenons with no indication of pegging. The joints are, however, mostly hidden by modern steel reinforcing plates presumably added in the recent past.

From the centre of the combined tie-beam a pair of 'V-braces' rises up to the purlins forming the edges of the flat central section of the roof. Their heads are linked by a straining beam which supports that flat section and there is a second straining beam or collar lower down.



Pl.9: The exposed section of the westernmost truss, viewed from the second floor.



Pl.10: Some of the trusses exposed recently; the tie-beams are in two sections and the vertical studs are recent additions.

To each side, there is an additional pair of asymmetric 'V-braces' rising from the tie-beams, at a much shallower angle. The outer strut rises to the principal rafter whilst the inner strut rises to the adjacent member of the central pair of 'V-braces' – meeting it at the height of the lower bracing collar.

Rising between the struts of these outer braces is a near vertical strut but in each case this is a modern insert consisting of two machine-sawn planks bolted together and probably no older than the late-20<sup>th</sup> century remodeling of the building. The final timbers are a pair of lower 'V-struts' rising from the centre of the tie-beam to the principal rafters just above the top of the vertical struts. These are both in two pieces, interrupted by the inner strut of the outer pair of 'V-braces'.

Incorporated into all but the western end truss is an interrupted row of timbers that support the joists of the loft floor; these are possibly secondary. Towards the outward ends of all but the western truss are simple vertical tie-rods with square bolted bases rising from the tie-beam.

In the penultimate bay at the western end – which, as noted above, is longer than those to the east of it – there is a pair of axial purlins supported by straight up-braces from the western truss. It is possible that this was associated with the original position of the kiln.

The trusses support five tiers of purlins – the upper ones being at the edges of the flat apex of the roof structure. These are all of fairly thin scantling. The pattern of common rafters has been disrupted by changes to roof lights and to more recent repairs. The present pattern of rooflights is mainly of recent date. Earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century aerial photographs show a more consistent pattern of roof lights on each side slope (*see* Pl.1).

There were then two rows of roof-lights to each side slope. On both sides there seem to have been five large two-light roof-lights in the bottom row and four in the upper row. In addition, there was a small hatch low down towards the right-hand, or western, end of the front slope and, at the left-hand end of the rear slope, a long flat-roofed dormer arrangement at the roof foot.

The complexity of the changes in the roof-lights is reflected in the complexity of the existing common rafters and trimmers. Some sections have 'ladder' cross-pieces, some have single trimmers and other rafters have been completely replaced.

It is, however, possible to identify the precise positions of the most of the former rooflights in the fabric, several trimmings retaining a grey paint colour (*see* Fig.18). The situation is further complicated by the evidence of the early-20<sup>th</sup> century aerial photographs which shows a row of cowled vents rising from the flat section of the roof top.

There is evidence in some original rafters to show that they were once covered by lath-and-plaster; this, coupled with the existence of the roof lights, clearly indicates that the first floor was either open to the roof or, more likely, that there was a loft throughout the building.



Pl.11: The tops of trusses visible above the ceiling in the main body of the building.



Pl.12: Evidence of lath-and-plaster in the roof space as well as trimmers between rafters indicating an original rooflight position and recently inserted rafters.

### **4.1.3 The Interior**

The interior was gutted during the original office conversion of the later-20<sup>th</sup> century and appears to have been altered again early in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. However, it had already been gutted sometime before that – perhaps when it became an engineering works in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

The present first-floor structure is supported on RSJ stanchion and girders and the floor itself is of concrete. These all seem to be typical of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century rather than any earlier.

They also relate to the axial blockwork wall that runs at ground floor parallel to the front wall, separating a narrow section along the front of the building used for offices and other facilities from the wider car-park section to the rear.

It is just possible that the remains of a painted brick cross-wall towards the western end of the building could relate to an earlier or even original division of the interior – perhaps associated with the position of the malting kiln. However it lacks any specific character or evidence of earlier use.

It is assumed that the original first-floor structure would have been of timber, possibly with cast-iron columns supporting the main bridging beams. Cast iron columns at first-floor level have also been introduced to support the westernmost truss.

If there were any other cast-iron columns at this level beneath the trusses, these have been removed. The trusses are now supported midway in most of the building by a rather *ad hoc* axial sequence of RSJs supported on RSJ stanchions; these were boxed and formed the top of a plaster-boarded axial partition.

Throughout most of the first floor the ceiling height is about a quarter of the way up the roof trusses. However, in the western sections the ceiling is lower and there is room for a modern second floor.

As outlined above, the evidence of roof lights and lath-and-plaster to the common rafters suggest that there could have been a loft throughout the building. There is a row of joist sockets on the second truss from the west which further supports such a hypothesis.

The present internal divisions and decoration date mainly to the later-20<sup>th</sup> century and later and are of little interest or significance in heritage terms. There is little or no trace of any of the original character of the building in its original phase as a maltings.



Pl.13: The modern entrance foyer.

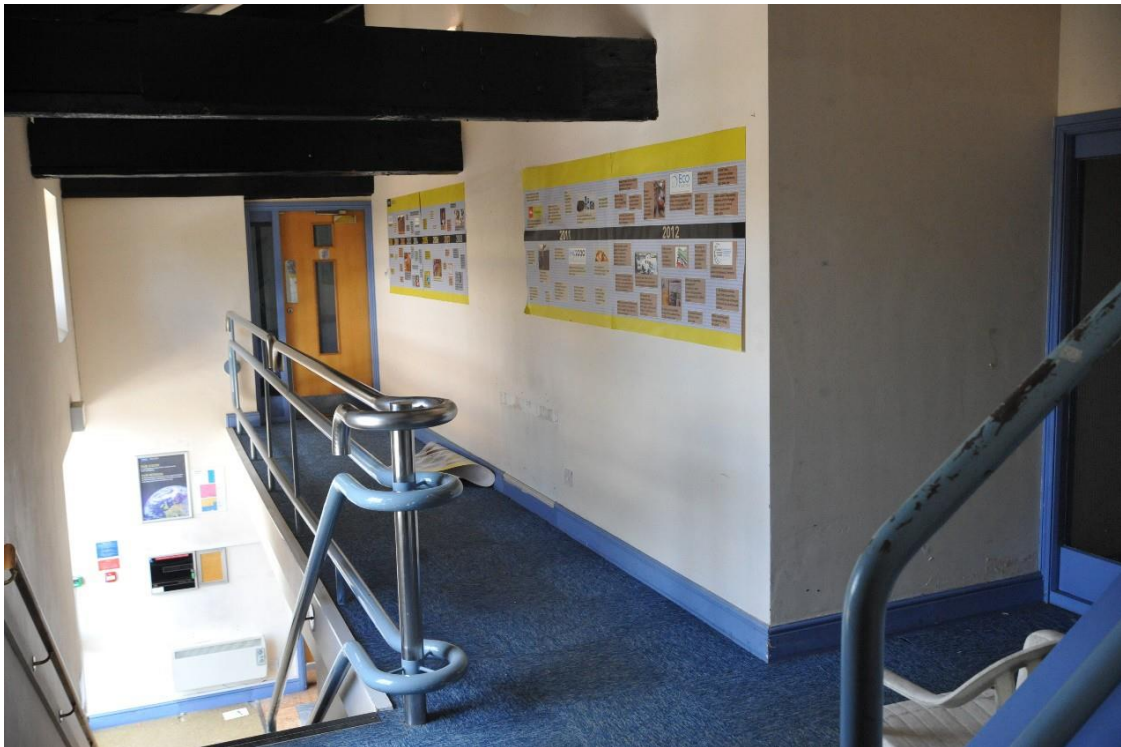


Pl.14: The bulk of the ground floor of the building is a covered car park; note the RSJ stanchions and concrete first floor, presumably dating to the engineering works phase.





Pl.15: Another modernised portion of the ground floor.



Pl.16: The first-floor landing, modern stairs and partitions.

## 5.2 The Rear Vault & Terrace

To the rear of, and parallel to, the main building is a man-made terrace partly cut into the prevailing slope. Most of this has a battered brick wall but the western section seems to have been rebuilt in later brickwork. In between the terrace and the main building is a narrow yard area; at the eastern end there is clear evidence for an infill building with a shallow lean-to roof.

There is a long brick-vaulted chamber under most of the terrace, accessed by some later steep brick steps through a doorway cut through a rubblestone stone wall on Calthorpe Road. On either side of the interior are brick-built 'carrels' or storage shelves – the bricks being machine-made and of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century – like the steps. There appears to be a vent in the apex of the vault towards the western end and there is also a large diameter cast-iron pipe in the north wall towards the eastern end, the purpose of which is unclear.

The western section beneath the terrace seems to have been rebuilt mainly in machine-made brick and lacks a vault. It has two 'baffle' entrances to the narrow yard and concrete ceilings. The initial impression is that of an air-raid shelter. However, there is also a tall tapering brick chimney stack in this section – which is not shown on the 1929 or 1950 aerial photographs of the site and is presumably associated with a hearth of some sort in the engineering works period of the site. The top of the terrace is set to lawn.



Pl.17: Main building from terrace, looking north-east; note mid-20<sup>th</sup> century chimney.



Pl.18: The eastern end of the rear yard with the brick wall and revetment of the terrace to the right. The area beyond the sloping section was once infilled with a building.



Pl.19: Below the terrace; the brick walls of the shelving is quite modern.

## **5. Discussion & Heritage Statement**

The Old Maltings was built as a floor maltings in about 1834 for Richard Austin – though was fairly unusual in having just the two floors. Typically there would be separate floors for the various processes involved in the malting process – the storage of the grain, the seeping or ‘wetting’ of the grain, the sprouting of the grain and, finally, the drying of the grain within the malt kiln.

In this building it seems the width of the building mean that the different processes could take place on the same floor. It is not clear how the vaulted chamber in the rear terrace fitted into the complex, but it presumably did. It could have been used for wetting or simply for storage – for fuel for the kiln, for example.

It seems likely that the malt kiln was at the western end of the main building, as there is no clear evidence in the mapping of a kiln attached to the south of the building – and no room for any such structure attached to either gable end.

There are also certain oddities in the roof structure that could suggest that this was where the kiln containing the drying floor was – and the remnant of a brick cross-wall in the ground floor could also relate to it.

The façade of the building was a surprisingly grand design in the very late Georgian style and the amount of large windows would also have been unusual for a maltings. However, whilst there have been some changes in the fenestration there is no reason to think that many new windows have been inserted into the fabric, except in the west gable.

The replacement of an original internal first floor and its replacement with a concrete floor on RSJ stanchion and girder support probably occurred in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century when the building was converted into an engineering works.

This probably swept away any of the earlier changes introduced when the building was converted from a maltings to a hosiery workshop earlier in the century – including the loss of the malt kiln.

More recently there has been another radical change of use for the building and consequently of its interior – the conversion into offices at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the resulting internal partitioning, new stairs, car-park, etc. and the renewal of the windows.

As a result of the several phases of quite radical internal changes to the building, its key elements in heritage terms of the building are the external shell – particularly the façade to St. John's Road – and the broad roof structure with its very unusual, and ambitious, trusses. The rest of the interior is not considered to be of any great heritage value.

## **6. The Proposals**

The proposals are to convert the property from office use into one and two-bedroom flats and are set out in the planning application documentation and explained in the Design & Access Statement produced by Acanthus Clews of Banbury. Overall they will result in relatively little change to the external shell of the building or to the roof structure. Most changes are to the already much altered interior of the building in order to create the necessary units and the access to them.

## **7. Heritage Impact Assessment of the Proposals**

### **7.1 Impact on the Listed Building**

#### **7.1.1 Changes to the Exterior**

The proposals are mainly internal and will impact mainly on the surviving partitions created within the building in the very recent past, many of these having already been removed as part of the investigative works. The exterior brick walls of the building will be little altered, but there will be improvements to the altered primary openings on the rear wall in particular, which can only enhance the elevation in heritage terms.

##### **7.1.1.01 The Front Elevation**

No major changes are proposed for the front elevation other than remodeling the modern central doors and, more importantly, rebuilding the presently degraded parapet and central pediment. This will be a significant enhancement of the listed building.

##### **7.1.1.02 The Rear Elevation**

Towards the west end of the rear elevation, two of the windows on the ground floor and one on the first floor will be restored to their earlier form and another new window of identical design will be added towards the eastern end at ground-floor level. At the extreme western end of the ground floor an original doorway will be restored to its original purpose. These proposals are considered to enhance the significance of the listed building, restoring primary features to the elevation; the creation of a new, matching, window at the eastern end is considered to be proportionate.

##### **7.1.1.03 The West Gable**

On the west gable the two existing doorway openings at the right-hand, or southern, end of the ground floor will be converted back into windows to match the prevailing pattern on this elevation – but the openings will remain full height.

In addition, a new central window of the same design as the others will be added at second-floor level in an area of what appears to be disturbed brickwork – and possibly an earlier opening.

These changes are considered to be an enhancement of the existing situation and the new upper window a proportionate change echoing the historic character of the building – and possibly marking the re-opening of an earlier blocked opening.

#### **7.1.1.04 The East Gable**

Two new windows at the northern, or right-hand, end of the first-floor level are proposed, to match the inserted windows at the left-hand end. Beneath the new pair a new window of the same design as the four original first-floor windows is proposed on the ground floor.

The addition of the two new first-floor windows will have some impact on fabric and appearance but it is considered that it will also have the benefit of reintroducing the original symmetrical design of the first-floor fenestration; the addition of the ground floor window is considered to be proportionate.

Given the sloping ground level, this would not impact adversely on the new symmetry restored to the upper part of the elevation. On balance the impact of the proposals is considered to be neutral.

#### **7.1.1.05 The Exterior of the Roof**

The main external changes will be difficult to see – as they involve the alteration to and addition of roof lights. There are limited views from Calthorpe Road but from the other adjacent streets the sheer height of the building and, on the front elevation, the parapet, mean that it is difficult to clearly see the roof slopes – or the roof lights.

The present arrangement of rooflights is of fairly recent date but there is both historical and archaeological evidence of an earlier phase of regularly spaced rooflights, unlike the present *ad hoc* arrangement (see Pl.1).

The proposed new roof lights are deliberately set out to restore regularity to the roofscape and many will occupy the positions of the earlier rooflights. It is considered that the proposal to restore a greater degree of regularity to the pattern and size of the rooflights will be an enhancement of the appearance and significance of the building.

## **7.1.2 The Interior**

### **7.1.2.01 Impact on the Internal Floor Layouts**

Internally, virtually no historic fabric will be impacted on the ground and first floor levels. The new stairs to the first floor will be cut through a mid-20<sup>th</sup> century floor structure and the partitions that are to be removed are mainly those added at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – many of which on the first floor have already been removed as part of the investigative works.

The rest of the work is additive – apart from the loss of the inserted ceiling on the first floor which has allowed more of the adjacent roof trusses in the central ‘atrium’ to be seen and experienced. None of these changes are considered to constitute ‘harm’ under the auspices of the NPPF as they do not impact on the significance of the interior.

### **7.1.2.02 Impact on the Roof Structure**

The creation of apartments within the roof space around the ‘atrium’ could echo the earlier internal loft arrangements of the building and the impact on historic fabric is minimal. The recreation of a series of roof lights in the roof slopes to light these apartments reflects the earlier roof form (*see above*).

There will be minor loss of some sections of the lower purlins to allow access to the back of the parapet on the front of the building through the roof lights. However, sections of purlins to either side of the proposed openings are retained in the design, and they will still be read as part of the building’s design and development and the overall loss is minimal in the context of the building as a whole.

Similarly, there are what appear to be added ‘purlins’ threaded through the roof and bolted in place – possible as a later attempt to minimise the potential for racking. A few sections of these will need to be removed but again, providing that their stubs are retained in place these, along with the rest of the sections kept in place, will still allow for a reading of this later phase of the development of the roof structure.

The main loss in the trusses will be the near upright studs to either side rising from between braces. Investigations have shown clearly that these are not part of the original truss design but very recent additions, probably dating from the late-20<sup>th</sup> century works. They are not considered to be of historical or archaeological significance.

The proposals will also allow the roof trusses to be more visible than they are at present. Even where they form part of partitions between spaces, they will be left expressed and thus visible from one side of a partition.

If there is any ‘harm’ it is at the lowest end of the ‘less-than-substantial’ spectrum. However, the trusses will be far better experienced within the building than they are now and, given the fact that, internally, they are the only feature of note, this is of benefit in the public appreciation of the building.

## **7.2 Impact on Adjacent Heritage Assets**

Close to the Old Malthouse are several listed buildings and it is within the extensive and extremely varied Banbury Conservation Area – though none have direct reciprocal views to it.

The flat-roofed apartments immediately opposite the site on the east side of Calthorpe Road and other new builds on the opposite side of St. John's Road to the north demonstrate that not everything within a conservation area contributes positively to its significance.

The external changes to the Old Malthouse are minimal. The main brick shell will be virtually untouched and will therefore not impact on the streetscape around the building or on the adjacent listed buildings and others that could be considered as non-designated heritage assets.

The slight changes to the roof include the re-introduction of a sequence of larger roof lights of a type known to have existed in the past; not only do these restore an element of the design, but they are also difficult to see from street level and the public domain.

It is considered that the proposals will cause no harm to the character, setting and significance of any adjacent listed buildings and the conservation area as a whole – and, instead, that the improvements to the condition and appearance of the building and its surroundings will enhance the appearance of the conservation area.





Pl.20: The view up Calthorpe Road will not be altered.



Pl.21: The view east along St. John's Road, with the Old Malthouse in the distance.

## **8. Conclusions**

For the reasons outlined above it is considered that the Old Malthouse is a much-altered building whose main significance lies in its external shell, its unusual roof structure, its position within the streetscape, and its role in the industrial and commercial development of Banbury.

The proposed conversion to residential units will not seriously impact on any aspects of what makes the building important in heritage terms and most changes are confined to an interior that has been considerably altered on several occasions.

As a result, the impact of the proposals in heritage terms is extremely limited and more than offset by the visual improvements to be made to the building and the assurance given to the long term future of the listed building.

If there is any 'harm' to the fabric of the building through minor changes to the roof trusses and some added windows, this is considered to be at the 'negligible' end of the 'less than substantial harm' spectrum of the NPPF and in terms of the overall impact on the building, offset by several elements of the scheme that clearly enhance the building's significance – including the restoration of former window openings and the improvements and repairs to the parapets and pediment on the main facade.

These sympathetic and proportionate changes have been well thought out and will ensure the long-term future of the listed building. They are also part of the continuing evolution of the building and this part of the conservation area.

It is likely that the only reason that the Old Malthouse has survived is because of the several phases of adaptive re-use – the hosiery works, the engineering works and then the office conversion - once its original purpose became redundant. The present proposals for residential use can be viewed as a continuation of this process.

## **9. References**

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## **10. Appendix: Plans**

*The following plans are much reduced versions of the originals produced by Acanthus Clews Architects of Banbury and are included solely for information.*

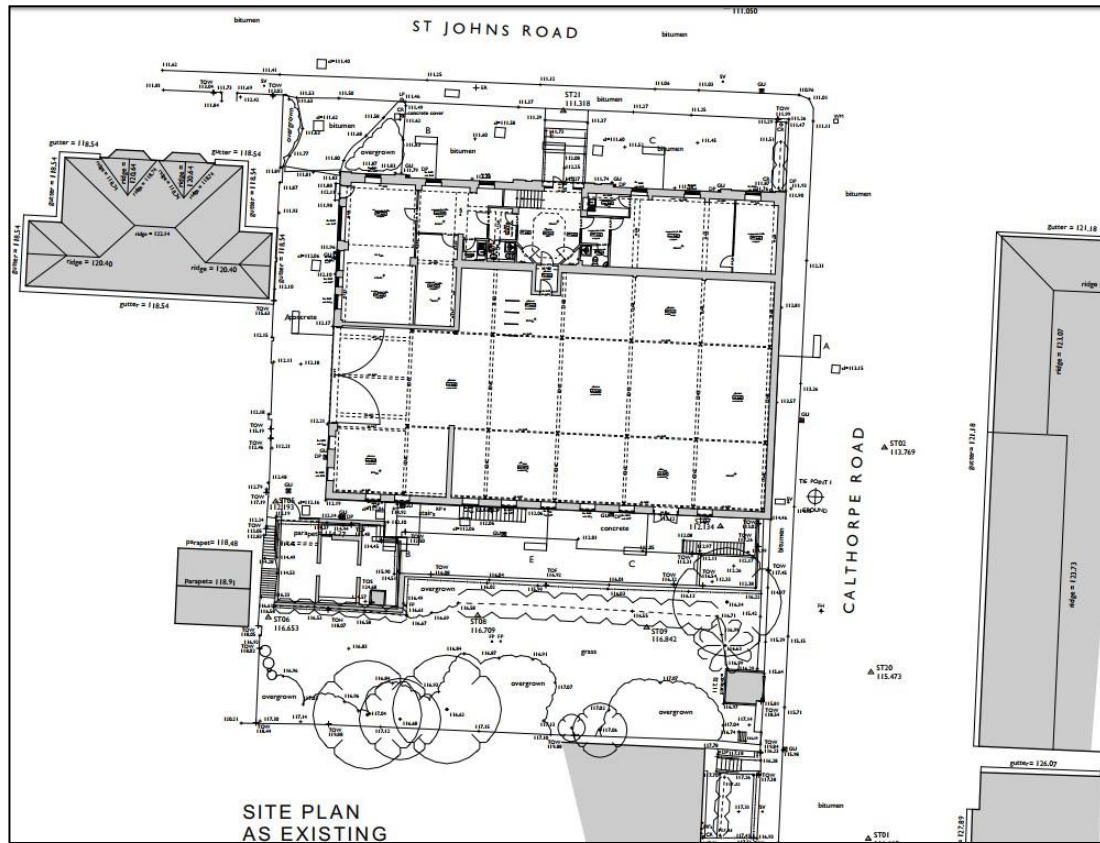


Fig.7: Site Plan.

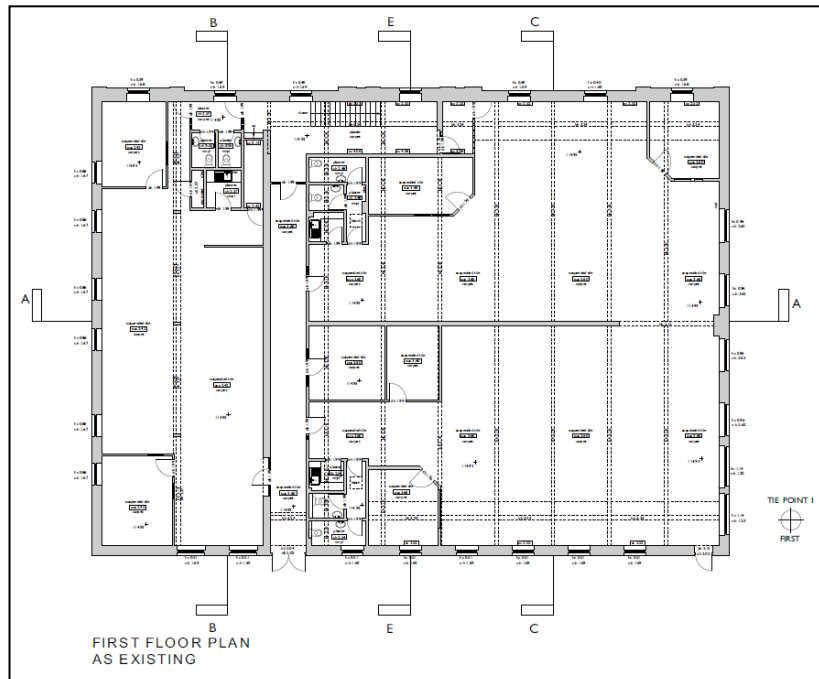


Fig.8: First-floor plan.

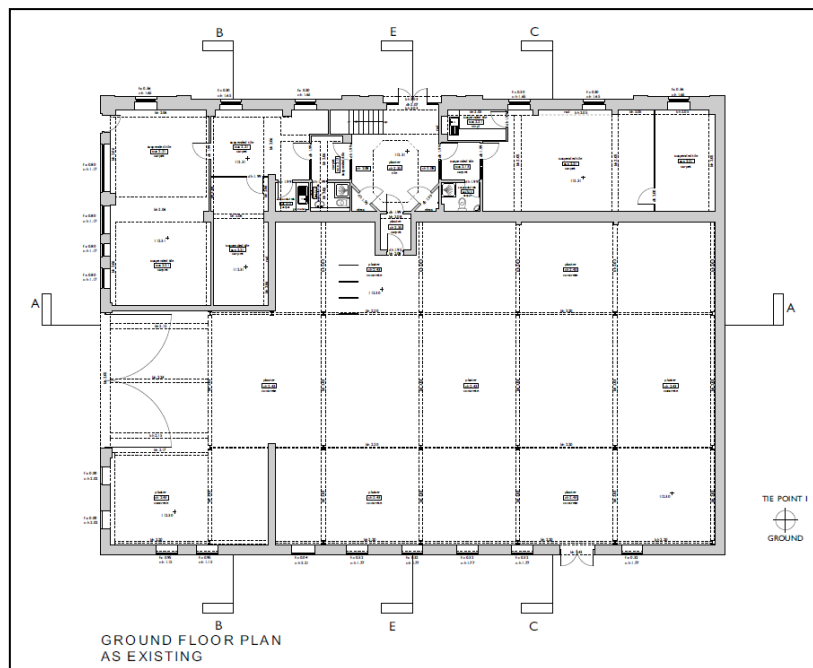


Fig.9: Ground-floor plan.

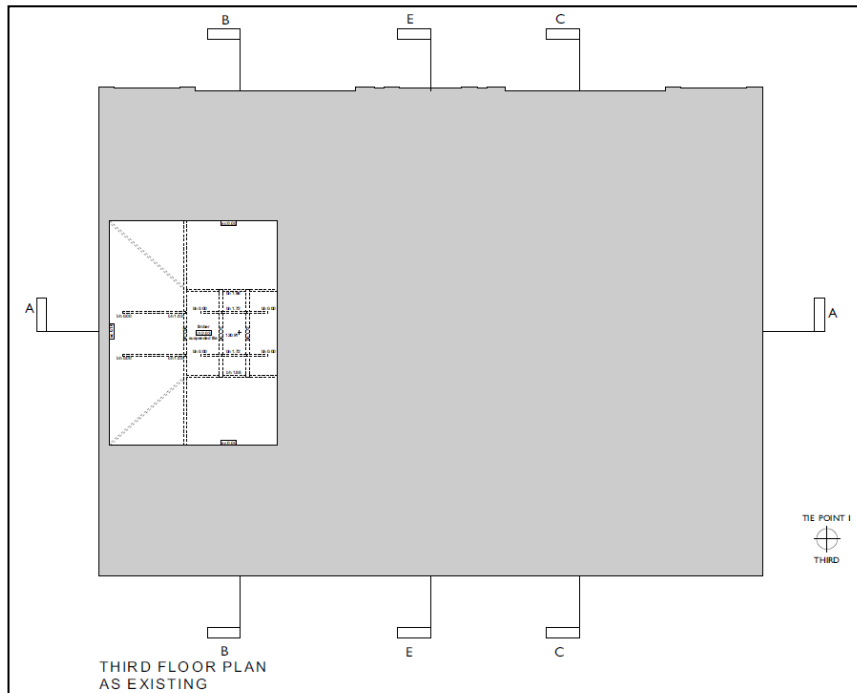


Fig.10: Third-floor plan.

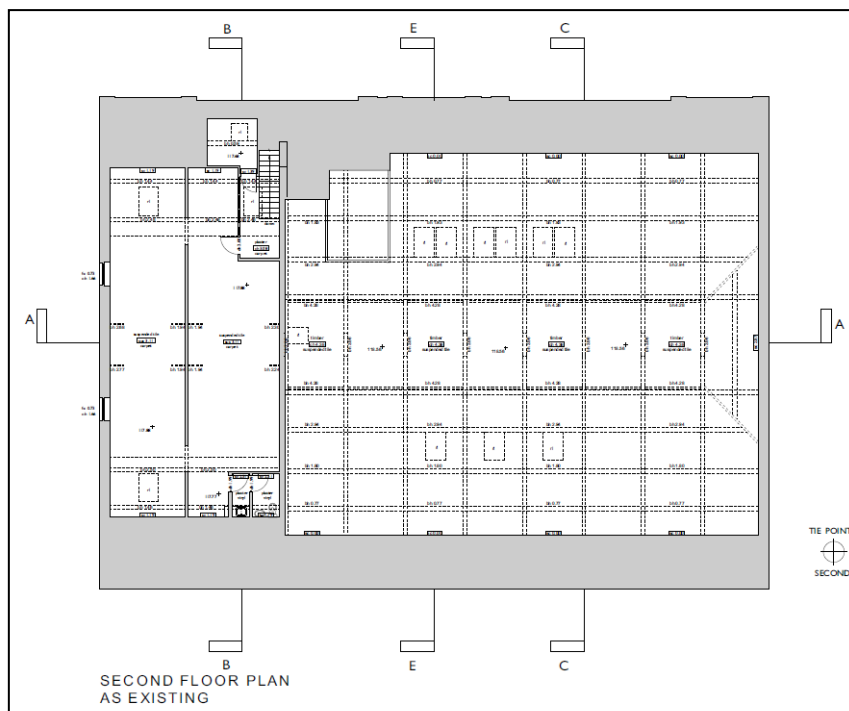


Fig.11: Second-floor plan.



Fig.12: The front, or north, elevation.



Fig.13: The rear, or south, elevation.

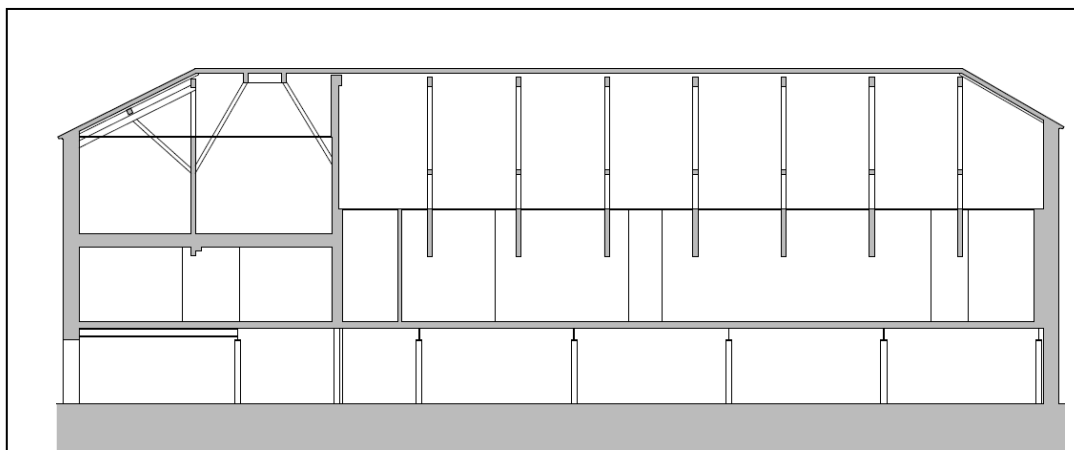


Fig.14: West-east cross-section.



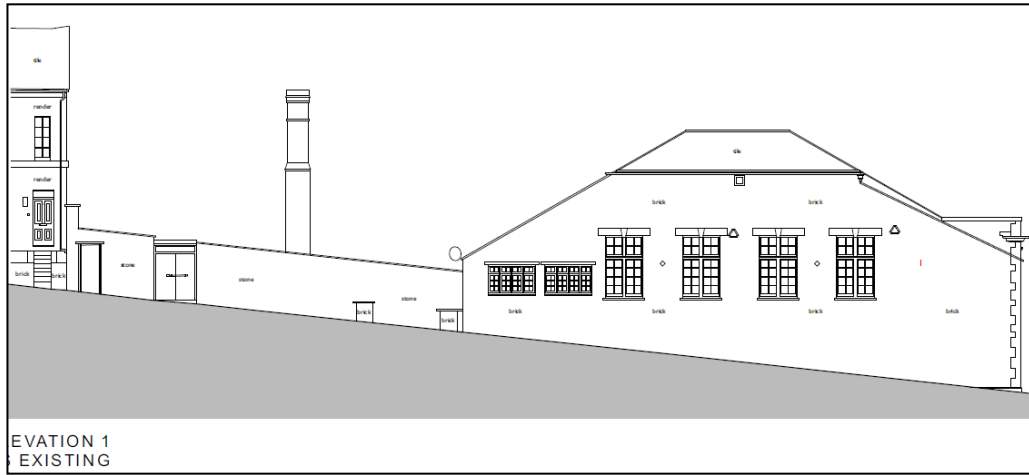


Fig.15: The east elevations.



Fig.16: The west elevation.

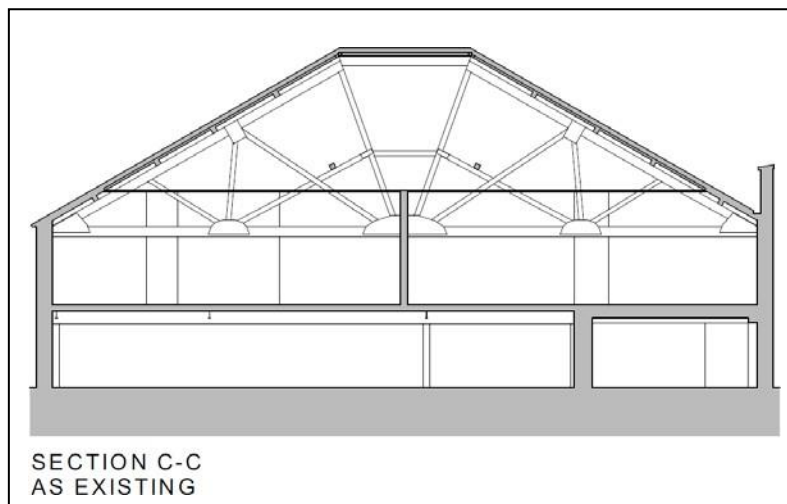


Fig.17: South-north cross-section.

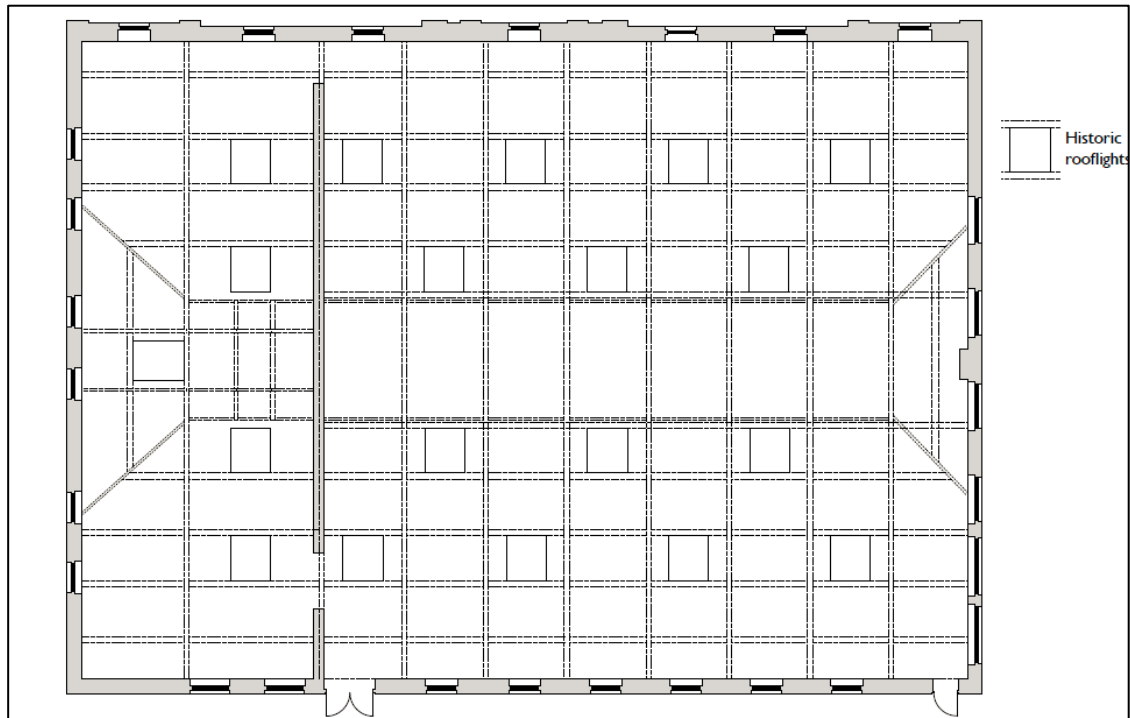


Fig.18: Reflective ceiling plan showing the positions of original rooflights.  
(Acanthus Clews).



### *The Consultancy*

*Richard K Morriss founded this Consultancy in 1995 after previously working for English Heritage and the Ironbridge Institute of the University of Birmingham and spending eight years as Assistant Director of the Hereford Archaeology Unit. Although Shropshire-based the Consultancy works throughout the UK on a wide variety of historic buildings for clients that include the National Trust, the Landmark Trust, English Heritage, the Crown Estates, owners, architects, planning consultants and developers. It specialises in the archaeological and architectural analysis of historic buildings of all periods and planning advice related to them. It also undertakes broader area appraisals and Conservation Plans.*

*Richard Morriss is a former Member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, a Member of the Association of Diocesan and Cathedral Archaeologists, archaeological advisor to four cathedrals, occasional lecturer at Bristol and Birmingham universities, and author of many academic papers and of 20 books, mainly on architecture and archaeology, including *The Archaeology of Buildings* (Tempus 2000), *The Archaeology of Railways* (Tempus 1999); *Roads: Archaeology & Architecture* (Tempus 2006) and ten in the *Buildings of series: Bath, Chester, Ludlow, Salisbury, Shrewsbury, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwick, Winchester, Windsor, Worcester* (Sutton 1993-1994). The latest publication is an *Historic England funded joint-authored monograph, Hereford Houses 1200-1700* (Oxbow 2018). He was a member of the project team responsible for the restoration of Astley Castle, Warwickshire, winner of the 2013 RIBA Stirling Prize.*