

**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 any adjacent heritage assets or the character, setting or significance of the conservation area.

1. Introduction

The Old Maltings was begun in 1834 and altered in the mid and late 20th century as its use changed; it was recently converted into offices, 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 planning law and the NPPF (Sections 2-3) and an outline history of the site (Section 4). Section 5 is a description of the building, and Section 6 an outline discussion of its development and phasing including a heritage statement.

Section 7 outlines the proposals and Section 8 is the heritage impact assessment. Section 9 is a short conclusion and Section 10 is a list of the references used in the compilation of this report. Section 12 is an appendix containing much reduced survey drawings.

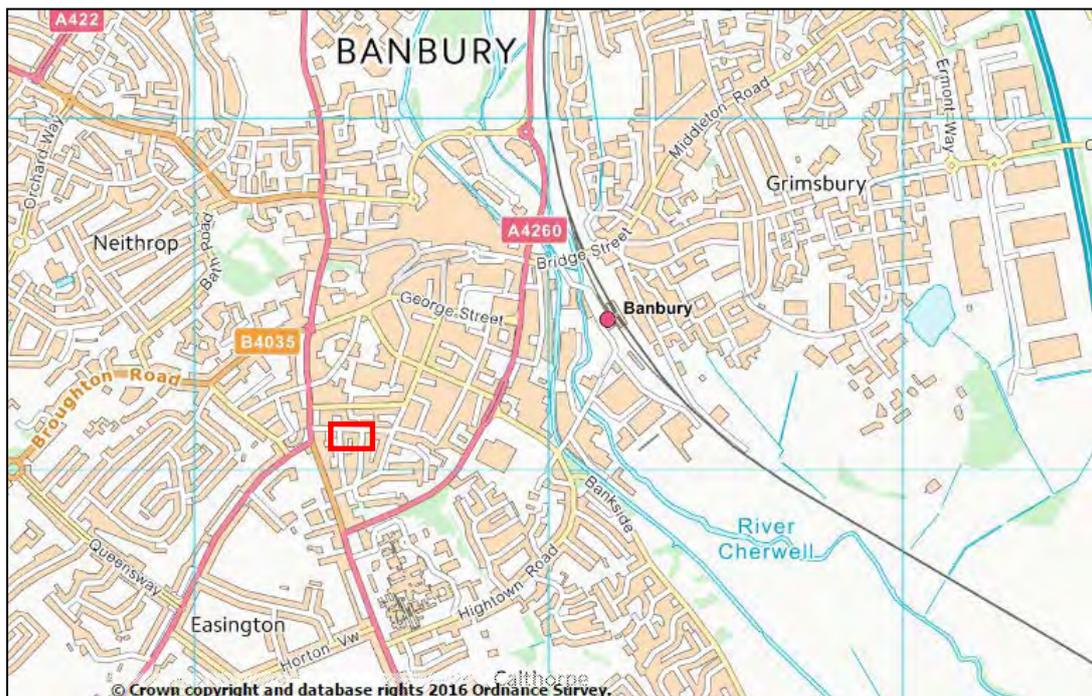


Fig.1: The location of the study area (OS Open Data).

2. National Planning Policy Framework Guidelines

Planning law relating to listed buildings and conservation areas is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 66 of the Act deals with the responsibilities of local planning authorities – the decision makers - when dealing with planning applications that could impact on heritage assets. The first part of Section 66 states that:

'In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses'.¹

Government guidelines regarding listed buildings and conservation areas recently changed twice in two years. In March 2010 the long-lasting *Planning Policy Guidelines Nos.15 and 16* (PPG15 and PPG16) – relating respectively to archaeology and buildings – were amalgamated into a new set of guidelines - *Planning Policy Statement No.5* (PPS5).² This introduced a new term in planning legislation – the 'heritage asset'. This was identified in the guidance as:

'A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. Heritage assets are the valued components of the historic environment'.³

Parts of PPS5, much condensed, were incorporated and regurgitated into a new *précis* of planning guidance published in March 2012 – the *National Planning Policy Framework* – which replaced all other separate Planning Policy Guidelines and Planning Policy Statements.⁴

¹ Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 c.9 section 66 (1), 41

² Department for Communities & Local Government, 2010, *Planning Policy Statement No.5: Planning for the Historic Environment*

³ *op. cit.*, 13, Annex 2

⁴ Department for Communities & Local Government, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, para. 128.

The main relevant paragraph in the NPPF states that local planning authorities should require applicants:

'...to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposals on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary'.⁵

3. Heritage Impact Assessments

3.1 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.⁶

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ 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*

3.2 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'.⁷

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'.⁸

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'.⁹

3.3 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'.

⁷ English Heritage, 2011, *The Setting of Heritage Assets: English Heritage Guidance*, 7, para. 2.4

⁸ PPG Guidance para.113

⁹ *Op. cit.*, para.114

3.4 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*’.

4. Outline History

4.1 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 20th 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 20th century the new M4. In 1850 two different railway companies opened lines to the town, further stimulating its growth – and in the late 20th century the new 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.

4.2 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-13th century by the main road leading south to Oxford.

The area seems to have remained fairly undeveloped until the early-19th 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*'.¹⁰

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.¹¹ 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.¹²

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.¹³

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.¹⁴

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

¹¹ Trinder, B, 1982, *Victorian Banbury*, 35

¹² *Op. cit.*, 8

¹³ *Op. cit.*, 59

¹⁴ *Op. cit.*, 58



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

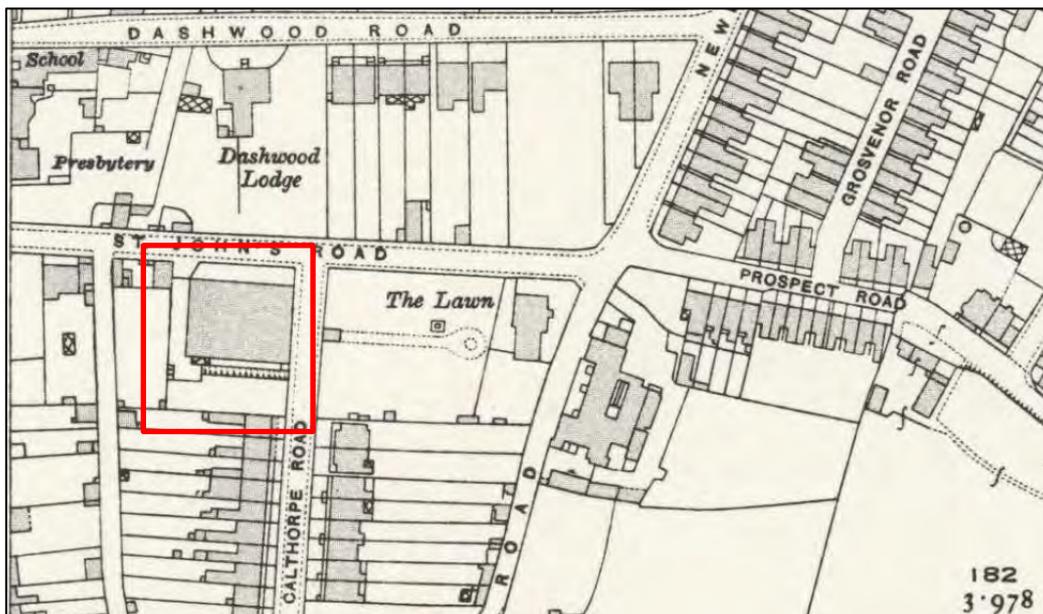


Fig.6: Extract from the 1920's edition of the 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map.

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. The works telephone number was Banbury 186.

Ten years later the company was listed in the local *Directory* as a 'fancy hosiery manufacturer'; there had been a great growth in the development of the local phone system – the work's number now being Banbury 2586.

By the 1960's, the Ordnance Survey maps label the site as 'Engineering Works', indicating another change of use. Towards the end of the 20th century the works were converted into office accommodation; it remained in this use until 2017.



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

5. Description

5.1 The Main Building

5.1.1 The Exterior

5.1.1.01 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.

5.1.1.02 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-20th 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.

5.1.1.03 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-20th 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.

5.1.1.04 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-20th century. Centrally positioned at the top of the brickwork is a small stone panel with a floral carving within it.

5.1.2 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 visible at first-floor level; the tie-beams are in two sections.

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 that is jointed to the principal rafter. 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 20th 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. The situation is further complicated by the evidence of the early-20th 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 and recently inserted rafters.

5.1.3 The Interior

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

The present first-floor structure is supported of RSJ stanchion and girders and the floor itself is of concrete. These all seem to be typical of the mid-20th 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.

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 have also been introduced to support the westernmost truss.

It is at present unclear to what extent any earlier column supports for the truss ties elsewhere in the roof structure have been replaced in the same manner – but it seems highly likely that any original columns were replaced when the first floor was rebuilt.

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 internal divisions and decoration date mainly to the later-20th 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-20th 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-20th 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.

6. 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-20th 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 20th 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.

7. The Proposals

The proposals are to convert the property from office use into 25 one and two-bedroom flats. This 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.

8. Heritage Impact Assessment of the Proposals

8.1 Impact on the Listed Building

The proposals are mainly internal and will impact mainly on the partitions created within the building in the very recent past. 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.

On the rear elevation four remodelled primary windows towards the western end will be restored to their earlier form and a fifth added to match on the ground floor. At the extreme western end of the ground floor an original doorway will be restored to its original purpose.

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. In addition, a new central window of the same design will be added at second-floor level in an area of possibly disturbed brickwork.

The main external changes will be difficult to see – as they involve the alteration to and addition of roof lights. The present arrangement of rooflights is of fairly recent date but there is evidence of an earlier campaign in which there was a greater number of such rooflights (*see* Pl.1).

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-20th century floor structure and the partitions that are to be removed are mainly those added at the end of the 20th century.

The rest of the work is essentially additive – apart from the loss of some of the inserted ceiling on the first floor which will allow more of the adjacent roof trusses in the central ‘atrium’ to be seen and experienced.

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. 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, it is suggested if the sections of purlins to either side of the proposed openings are retained in the design, 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 proposals will also allow the roof trusses to be properly experienced within the building as they would have been before being hidden behind ceilings.

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

The external changes to the building 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 have at worst a very negligible impact on the character, setting and significance of any adjacent listed buildings and the conservation area – and that such impact will be offset by the improvements to the condition and appearance of the building and its surroundings.



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.

9. 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.

The planning and heritage balance to the very limited loss of historic fabric is straightforward. 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.

In the recent past, planning guidance has recognised that change to historic buildings is part of their history and that buildings are not and should not be fossilised in time and allowed to become ruins; it thus follows the basic ideology put forward by Viollet-le-Duc in the 19th century that that *'the best way to preserve a building is to find a use for it'* rather than the well-meaning but unrealistic philosophy of the likes of John Ruskin or William Morris who were completely set against any such changes.

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.

The prospect of change, even to listed buildings, is anticipated in the government's *National Planning Policy Framework* but was more clearly outlined in earlier guidance from 1996, *Planning Policy Guideline No.15* (PPG 15), which stated – in relation to listed buildings that:

'Many listed buildings can sustain some degree of sensitive alteration or extension to accommodate continuing or new uses. Indeed, cumulative changes reflecting the history of use and ownership are themselves an aspect of the special interest of some buildings, and the merit of some new alterations or additions, especially where they are generated within a secure and committed long-term ownership, should not be discounted.'

10. References

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11. 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.

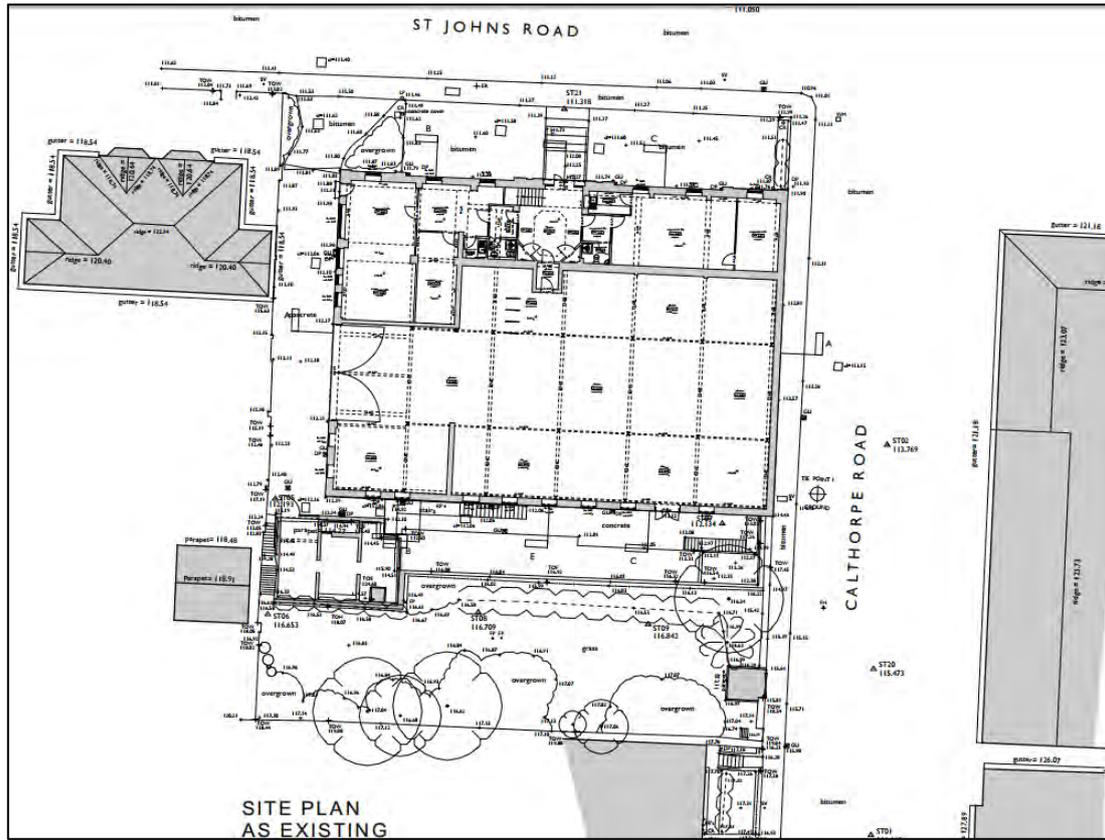


Fig.7: Site Plan.

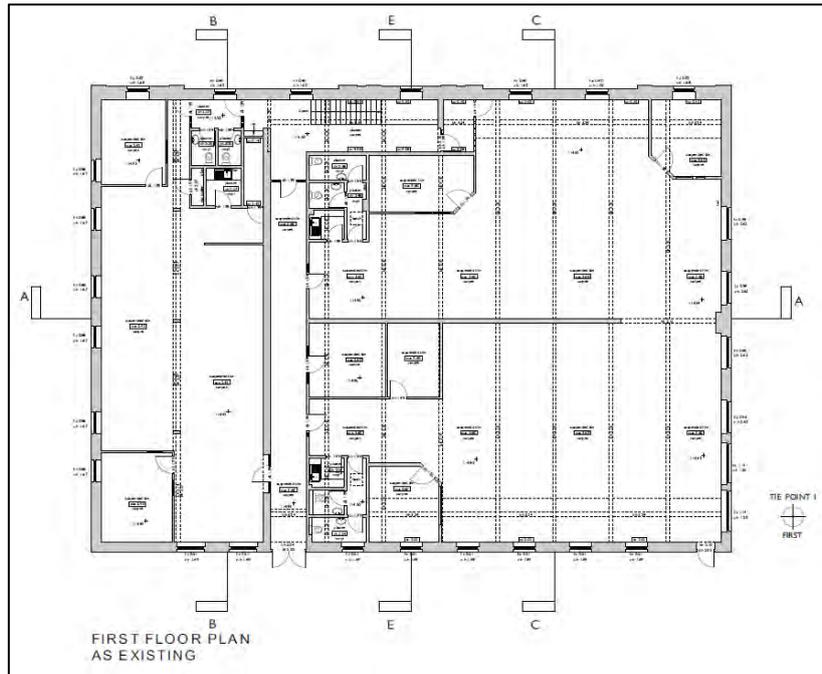


Fig.8: First-floor plan.

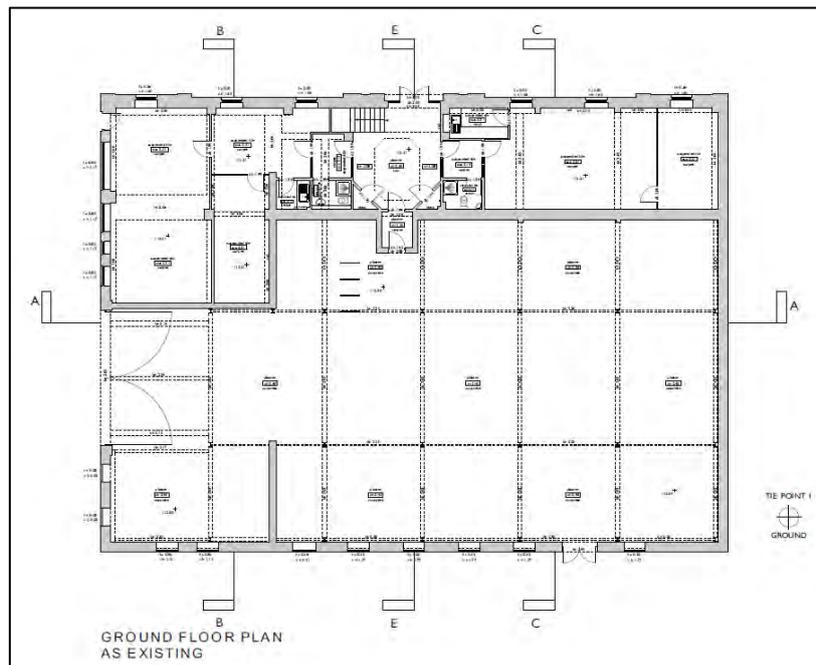


Fig.9: Ground-floor plan.

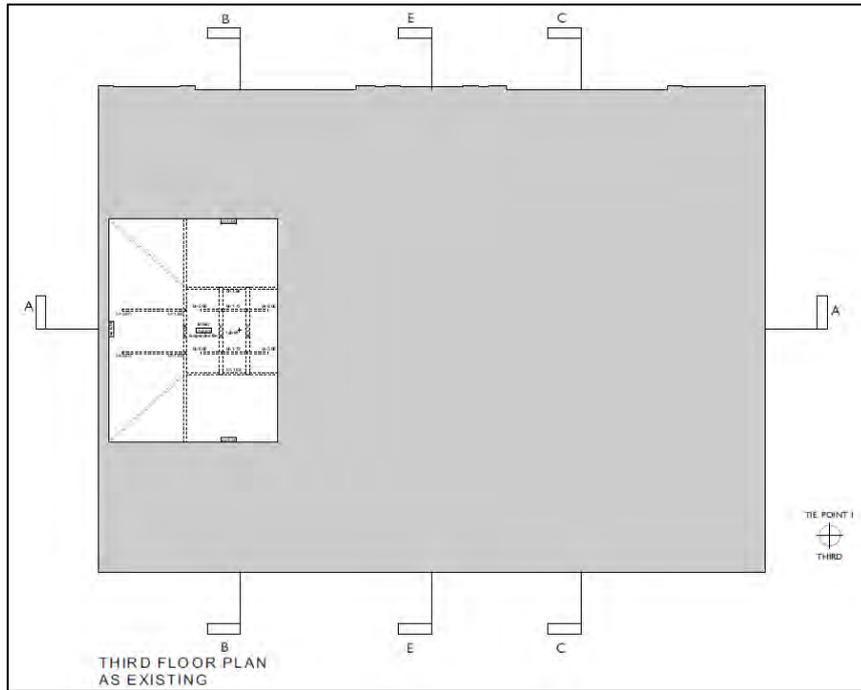


Fig.10: Third-floor plan.

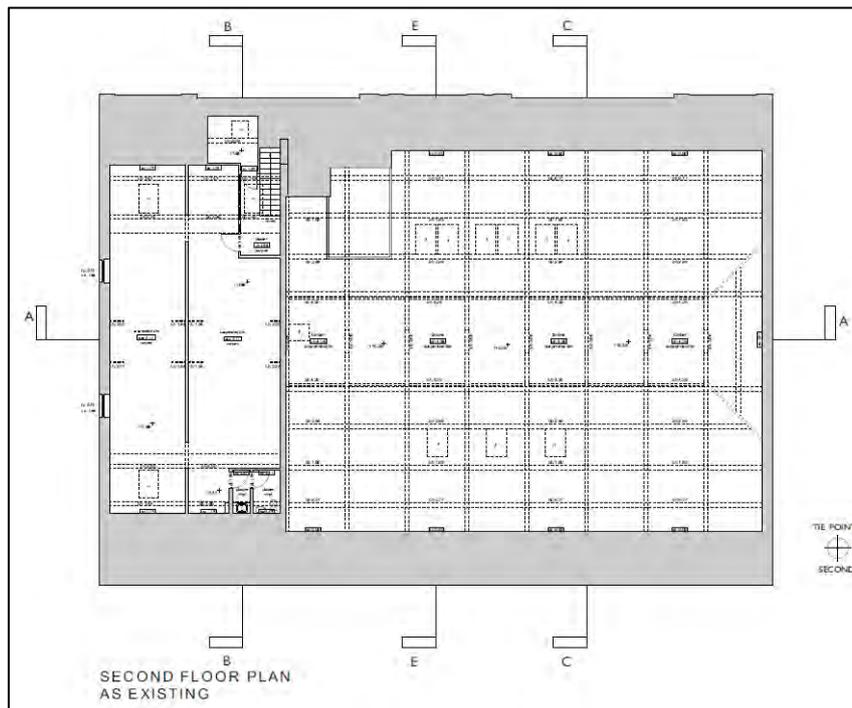


Fig.11: Second-floor plan.



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

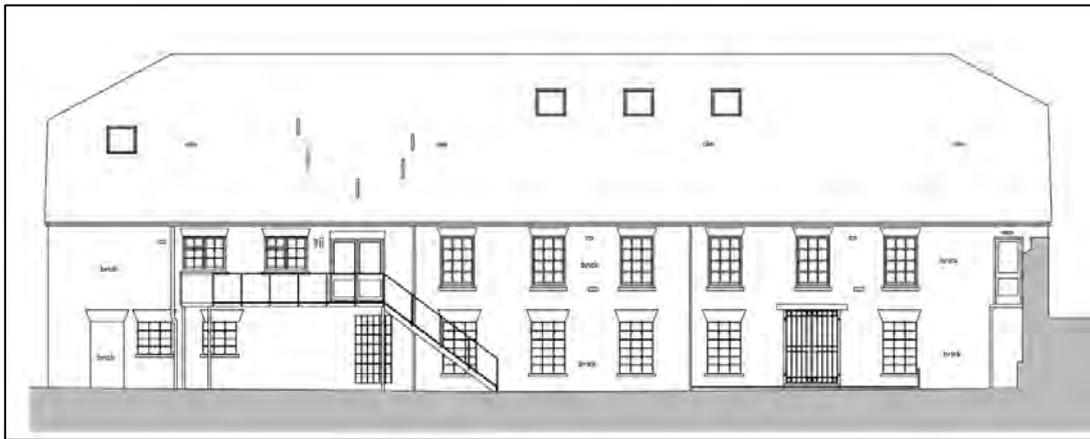


Fig.13: The rear, or south, elevation.

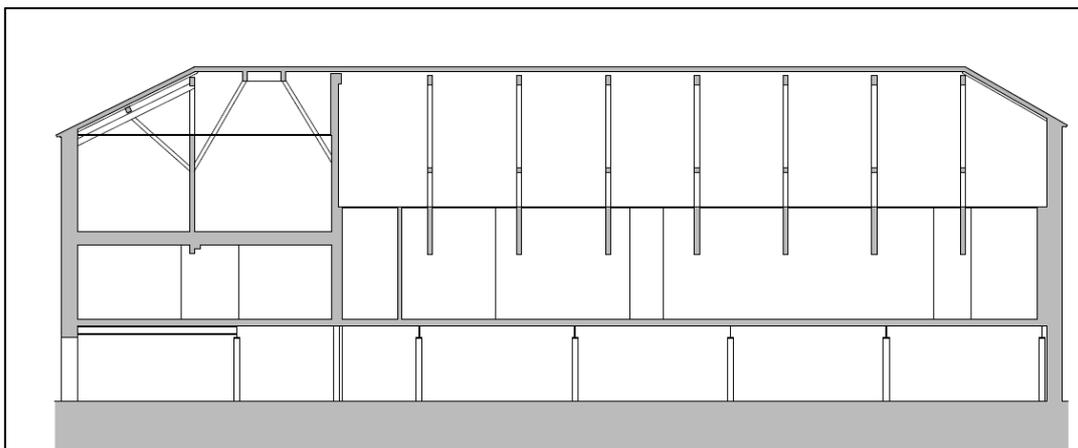


Fig.14: West-east cross-section.

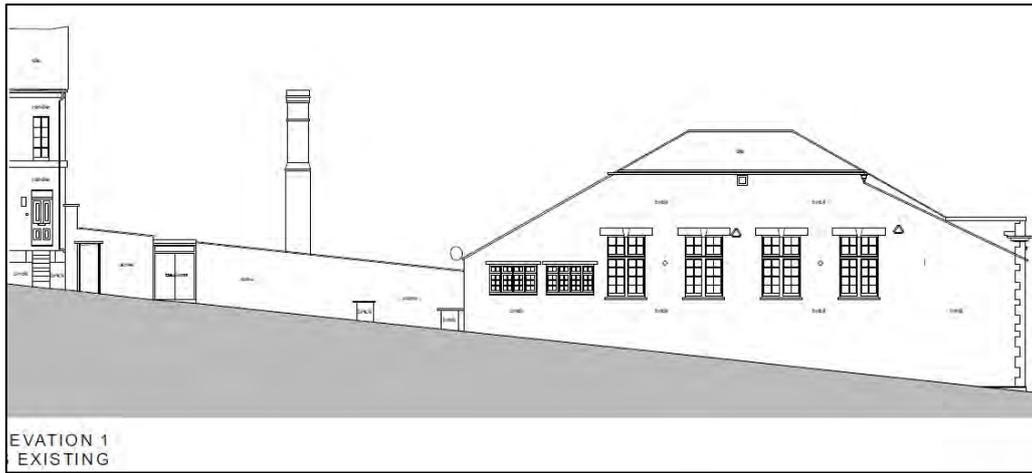


Fig.15: The east elevations.

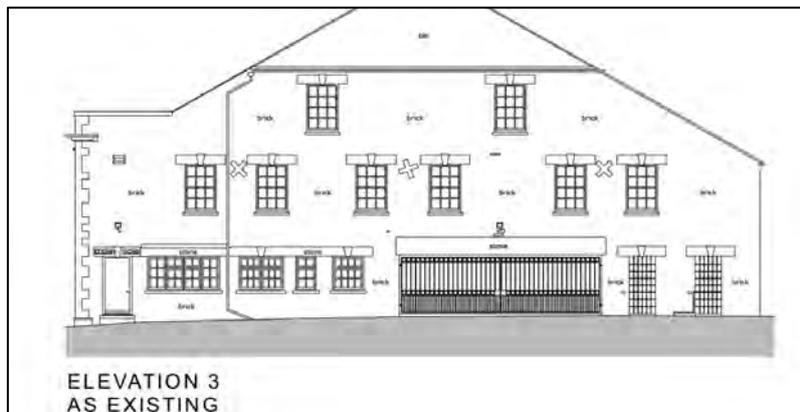


Fig.16: The west elevation.

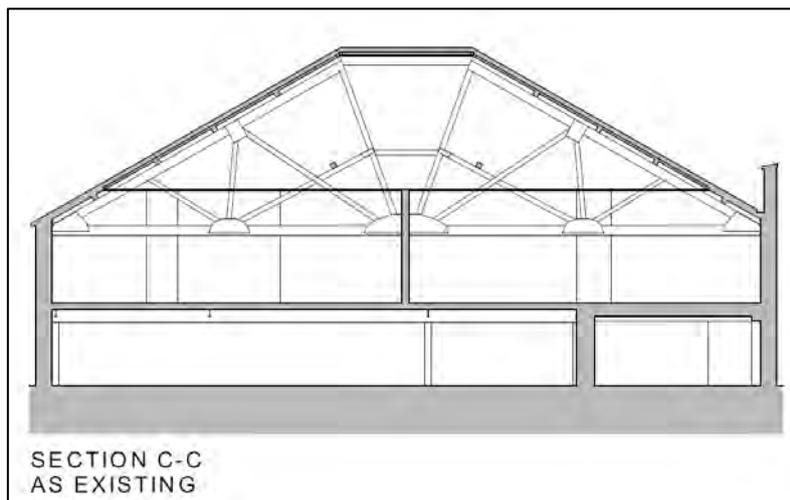


Fig.17: South-north cross-section.



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). He was a member of the project team responsible for the restoration of Astley Castle, Warwickshire, winner of the 2013 RIBA Stirling Prize.*