



62 -68 LOW PETERGATE YORK

A Report on a Programme of Historic Building Recording

by George Geddes
and Isabel Mason

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BUILDING RECORDING**

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List of Abbreviations

| | |
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| YAT | York Archaeological Trust |
| RCHME | Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England) |

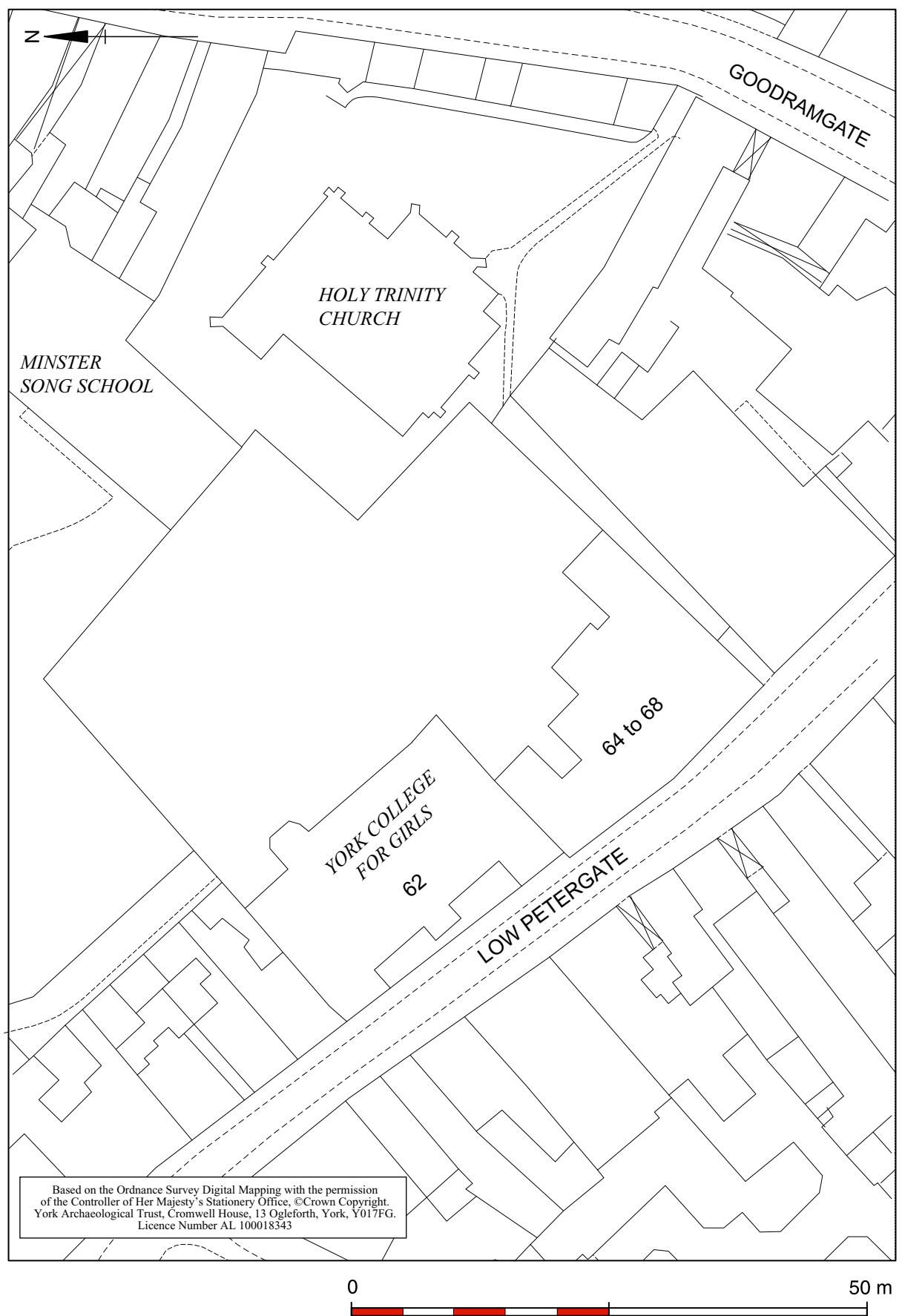


Fig. 1: Site Location Plan

ABSTRACT

In May 2004 York Archaeological Trust (YAT) carried out an Historic Buildings Survey at Nos. 62-68 Low Petergate. The entailed the recording of details revealed during the removal of render and plaster from walls and infill panels of the timber-framing. Evidence of the 15th century buildings on the site was encountered as well as the renovations and extensions throughout the 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th century. The survey has significantly increased our understanding of several important buildings within central York.

1. INTRODUCTION

Between 18th and 28th May 2004 York Archaeological Trust carried out an Historic Building Survey during the refurbishment of the buildings at Nos. 62-68 Low Petergate (NGR SE 6039 5202; Fig. 1). The work was carried out on behalf of George Houlton and Sons in accordance with the specification provided by the York City Archaeologist. The observation and recording were principally focused on the timber-framed buildings at the rear of the properties Nos. 64 and 66 Low Petergate. The primary objective was to record the any details of the historic fabric that were revealed during the removal of the render or plaster. In No. 62 a photographic record was made of a small number of structural features revealed during refurbishment

2. METHOD STATEMENT

This project was conducted under watching brief conditions. Although the majority of the external timber-framing had been visible prior to the current redevelopment, the infill panels had been covered by concrete render. After the concrete had been removed it was anticipated that the original infill panels and some carpentry details would be revealed.

The majority of the recording was therefore focused on the elevations. Elevation drawings were provided by the architects and, although schematic, it was possible to use these as the basis for the hand-drawn survey. The architect's drawings, produced at 1:20 scale, were overlain with permatrace on which the archaeological survey was drawn. Details such as the correct dimensions of the timbers, their irregularity, alignment and any carpentry details such mortise holes, tenons, peg holes and carpenters' marks were added to these elevations.

Internally, a plan was drawn of the ceiling in part of Nos. 64 and 66. This was recorded as the majority of the plaster had been removed to reveal the large ceiling beams and the floor joists. The plan was drawn by hand using the architect's ground floor plan as a guide. This ceiling plan was then incorporated into the floor plans, and was again annotated with the archaeological details.

Only the SE room of Building D had a sufficient amount of plaster removed to warrant a detailed metric survey of the internal elevations. In this case, all of the lath and plaster

was removed, after being photographed and a sample taken, and the timber-framing behind was recorded using computer rectified photography.

These elevations and plans were then digitised and phased into four date ranges, the earliest being 15th century. It was known from documentary research that the earliest phase of the building would be 15th century and during the course of the recording no evidence of earlier extant framing was encountered. The second phase incorporates all of the 16th and 17th century remains, this would include any alterations and additions to the original 15th century fabric thought to have occurred during this second phase. The third phase refers to those alterations and additions made during the 18th and 19th century; it was known prior to the survey that major rebuilding was undertaken during the 18th century. The fourth phase related to any work carried out during the 20th century; this is referred to on the illustrations as Modern. A final category, labelled as Uncertain, was found to be necessary. This has only been used when the dating was found to be ambiguous. All of the phasing was carried out using stratigraphic and typological methods and, as such is subject to refinement in the future.

In order distinguish between the different parts of the building it has been necessary to assign arbitrary numerical and alphabetical sequences to elevations and rooms within the building. The external elevations have been lettered C-F followed by G1-3. This sequence has been taken from the *Condition Survey and Historic Fabric Appraisal* (W.R. Dunn and Co, Jan. 2002) for ease of cross reference between their survey and the archaeological recording. The building has also been spilt into four parts, lettered A-D (Fig. 2). This division has been devised for this report. Although Parts A-D do have some relevance to the arrangement of this building through its various phases this subdivision is not designed to illustrate discrete units. These changing arrangements are described in detail in the Section 5 of this report.

Although it would be ideal to discuss the building as a whole throughout this report, due to the conditions of this survey it has been necessary to discuss the building primarily in terms of its elevations. Every effort has been made to incorporate all evidence visible within the building, but the survey was conducted as a watching brief and, therefore, only those areas that were revealed during the course of the redevelopment have been studied in detail.

The survey was primarily focused on the timber-framed buildings at Nos. 64 and 66 Low Petergate, however a photographic survey was made of the 18th and 19th century buildings at No. 62. The survey was conducted during the renovation work and made up of a combination of manual and digital, colour and black and white prints. The archive of all records and photographs for this building is currently being held at York Archaeological Trust.

3. LOCATION AND TOPOGRAPHY

Petergate follows the line of the Roman *via principalis* which was the main route through the fortress from the north-west to the south-east. The street now lies in the heart of the medieval city north-east of the Ouse. Nos. 62-68 are located to the south-east end of Low Petergate on its north-eastern side. The properties are approximately 100m south-east of

York Minster. Hornpot Lane marks the south-eastern boundary, to the east is Holy Trinity, Goodramgate and the Minster Song School is situated to the north-east.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 Medieval

The street name, Petergate, is taken from St. Peter's Minster, and is first recorded in 1203. Although the distinction between High and Low Petergate was used in 1736, it was not common until around 1800 (RCHMY 5, 180). Hornpot Lane marks the south-eastern boundary of this site and leads from Low Petergate to Holy Trinity, Goodramgate. This lane seems to be medieval in origin and its name is thought to derive from the horners who worked in the vicinity in the late medieval period (Wenham 1972).

There are numerous historical buildings in the immediate area including the church of Holy Trinity Goodramgate situated at the back of the property. The earliest references to it are from the 11th century, however, most of the surviving fabric dates from the 13th-15th centuries (Mee and Wilson 1998, 36). Lady Row, Goodramgate is one of the earliest surviving timber-framed buildings in the country and is situated to the east of the site in the churchyard of Holy Trinity. A deed to build the Row in the Churchyard was granted in 1316 with the rents used to endow a chantry of the Blessed Virgin of the church. The Row is two storeys throughout and eleven bays long. Each bay relates to a single tenement with one room on each floor (RCHMY 5, 144). Petergate itself contains some buildings with surviving medieval timber-framing. For example, No. 67 dates from the late 14th century. It is three storeys with the upper storeys jettied onto the street (*ibid.*, 194). No. 79 is also three storeys and jettied, it thought to have been built in the late 14th century (*ibid.*, 196).

The development of the timber-framed buildings in this area illustrates the evolution of timber-framing through York. The earliest timber-framed houses in the city date from the 14th century and are mostly two-storied. These rows, such as Lady Row, Goodramgate (see above), were built along the street front. There are also some examples of similar buildings in the principal streets of 15th century date. However by the 16th century two-storied rows are only found in the minor streets of the city. The earliest three-storey range identified in York (Nos. 54-60 Stonegate) is believed to date from the 14th century; this date has been assigned to the property because of the similarity of its structural details to Lady Row (RCHMY 5, lix). However the majority of the three-storied ranges in York date from the 15th century onwards and are situated in the main streets of the city.

Nos 62-68 Low Petergate have previously been studied by the RCHME (RCHMY 5, 189-192). In this survey the only extant medieval framing was thought to be visible in No. 66, formerly the Fox Inn, which was built in the second half of the 15th century. Also recognised as medieval were the principal posts on the south-west side of No. 64.

The front block of the property known as the Fox Inn was demolished in 1957. However, prior to its demolition it was surveyed by RCHME (1963, 72). It was concluded that this building was originally built in the 15th century of four unjettied storeys with its gable

facing the street. At the rear was a two-storied block containing a first-floor hall, and a further 17th century extension beyond it. The hall was found to have been divided into two floors in c.1600, and a fireplace was inserted in the early 17th century. The street front was rebuilt in the early 18th century and further additions were undertaken throughout the 19th century.

The Fox Inn was also discussed by Pantin (1962-3, 202-39) in his groundbreaking article on the plan types of medieval English town-houses. The building was used as an example of his 'right-angle' plan. Pantin inferred that the property occupied a narrow plot, which ran at right angles to the street. He believed that the first-floor hall occupied the middle section of the building and spanned the full width of the tenement. The front block was thought to contain a shop and a narrow passage on the ground floor with a solar and chamber above. The rear bay of the building was defined as a service block (*ibid.*, 232).

4.2 Post-medieval

The buildings on Low Petergate are largely post-medieval in date. The majority of the timber-framed buildings on the street were remodelled in the 16th or 17th century. RCHME (RCHMY 5, 191) recognised that No. 64 consisted of part of the property occupied by the Talbots in the 16th century, becoming the Talbot Inn in the 17th century. The south-east wing contains a large staircase, known as the 'Talbot Stairs' dating from the mid-late 17th century. This is the wing mentioned above as containing the 15th century principal posts. The north-west wing of this property was described as being of 17th century origin, though heavily restored in the 18th and 19th century.

There is also a collection of brick buildings dating from the 18th or 19th century found on Low Petergate, of which No. 62 is arguably the finest. It was built c. 1725 by John Shaw, Proctor of the Court of York, and is thought to have replaced part of the Talbot Inn (RCHMY 5, 189). It is a large Georgian building set back from the street with two projecting wings. The single storied projecting porch with Roman Doric columns was added in 1865-6 at the same time as the rear elevation was reconstructed with its corner turrets (Pevsner and Neave 1997).



Fig. 2: 64-66 Low Petergate: ground floor plan of Buildings A-D



Fig. 3: 64-66 Low Petergate: ground floor plan showing periods of construction



Fig. 4: 64-66 Low Petergate: first floor plan showing periods of construction



Fig. 5: 64-66 Low Petergate: second floor plan showing periods of construction

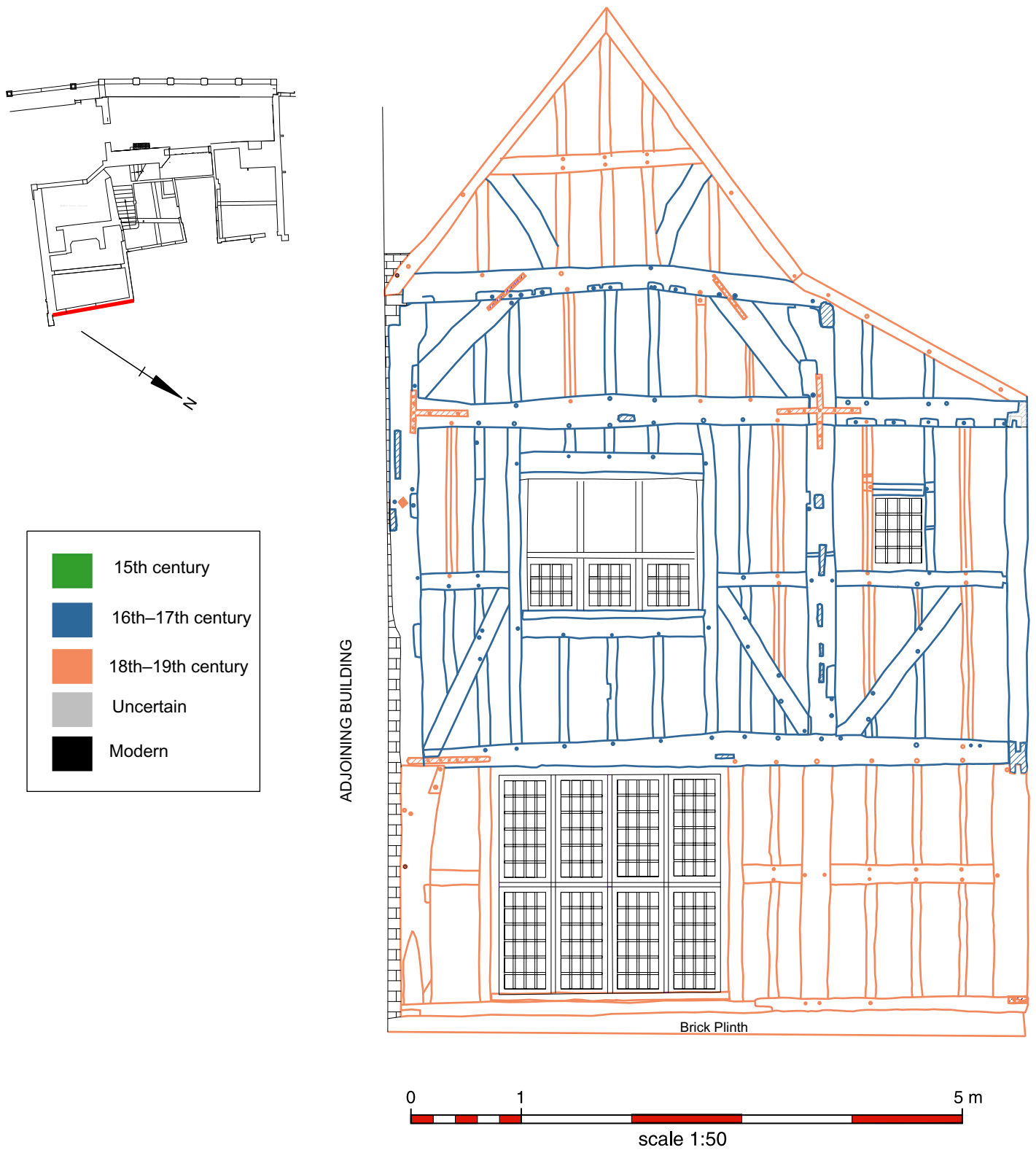


Fig. 6: Building A, Elevation C



Fig. 7: Building A, Elevation D

5. DESCRIPTION, ASSESSMENT AND CONCLUSION

5.1. Building A

5.1.1 Description

Building A occupies the position at the rear of the SE part of No. 66 Low Petergate (Fig. 2). The remains consist of a three storey building of two bays built in multiple phases. Externally, the rearmost elevation (Elevation C, Fig.6) is a gable end with outshot to the NW approximately 5.6m wide. On the ground floor, a brick and concrete plinth, 2.5m in height, supports a sill beam that in turn supports three principal posts with a mid rail and four pairs of extant studs. The eight light window, subdivided by small fixed leaded panes, illuminates the single room inside.

The second storey of 3.2m in height is again constructed of timber framing with three principal posts sitting on the first floor beam below, and supporting the second floor beam above. The second storey features a compound mid rail in three sections. This splits the studs into twelve pairs. Three upward braces support the mid rail. One small single light window is held by framing in the upper part of the outshot above the mid rail. A large six light window dissects the mid rail.

The third storey is situated at the second girding beam where the outshot roof begins and then rises to the tie beam where the normal tie beam lap dovetail assemblies joint the posts and wall plates. The tie beam is supported by jowled main posts which ascend from the first storey girding beam below. The tie beam is further braced by two upward timbers from the principal posts and beam below. Above the tie beam four studs and two upward curved braces support the collar and principal rafters, three studs then rise from the collar to also support the rafters. From the apex to the base of the plinth is approximately 9.2m. The modern infill panels were removed prior to the archaeological analysis.

The NW elevation (Elevation D, Fig. 7) consists of a two storey timber frame, sitting on a brick and concrete plinth. Extending through the outshot roof is a further storey from a separate construction phase (see Elevation D). The lowest storey consists of the plinth supporting a sill beam with a single storey corner post, an adjacent two storey principal post and six studs of various scantlings and a large post at the intersection with Elevation E. The studs have a horizontal timber inserted between the second and fourth stud and cutting a third.

The storey above is supported by a beam, inserted in two sections. The second storey corner post is sitting on the beam, while it has been jointed into the principal post which runs through both storeys. There are seven studs of the same thickness and a large post which has been considerably reduced in size. Both these posts have braces up to the wall plate. The wall beyond the SW post is partly obscured by the roof of the lean-to (seen in Elevation E, Fig. 8) but contains five studs, the first two intersect with the brace and the other three are dissected by a small rail. The wall plate is composite with two scarf joints visible. Above the guttering and the first courses of pantiles a further storey consists of a

large corner post with three studs and a two light rectangular window supporting a two light dormer window and a pantile roof above.

The SE elevation of Building A is obscured by modern debris and is currently inaccessible due to heavy machinery. The SW elevation shall be described with the interior.

The internal room on the ground floor is partly beneath modern ground level and is plastered on all sides apart from the SW where a large brick fireplace has been inserted. Timbers are exposed on both sides of this fireplace (Plate 1).



Plate 1

Fireplace and timber-framing on the ground floor of Building A

The SE and NW walls both contain a large projecting timber post that supports a large timber beam below the ceiling (Plates 2-3). On the first floor a similar arrangement of two projecting timber posts and a large timber beam at the ceiling exists. Otherwise the room is still plastered, apparently over concrete blocks. Access to this room is through the window since the staircase has been demolished. On the third storey, there are two small attic rooms, the larger in the uppermost extension of the building seen coming through the outshot roof in Elevation D and one in the rearmost gable. The former contains the reverse of the framing seen in the uppermost part of Elevations C and D and has two large purlins exposed (Plate 4). The rest of the room is covered with plaster. The smaller room to the rear has no distinguishing features though a hatch provides access to the roof space of this rearmost portion of Building A. The roof is a typical principal rafter roof with simple collars.

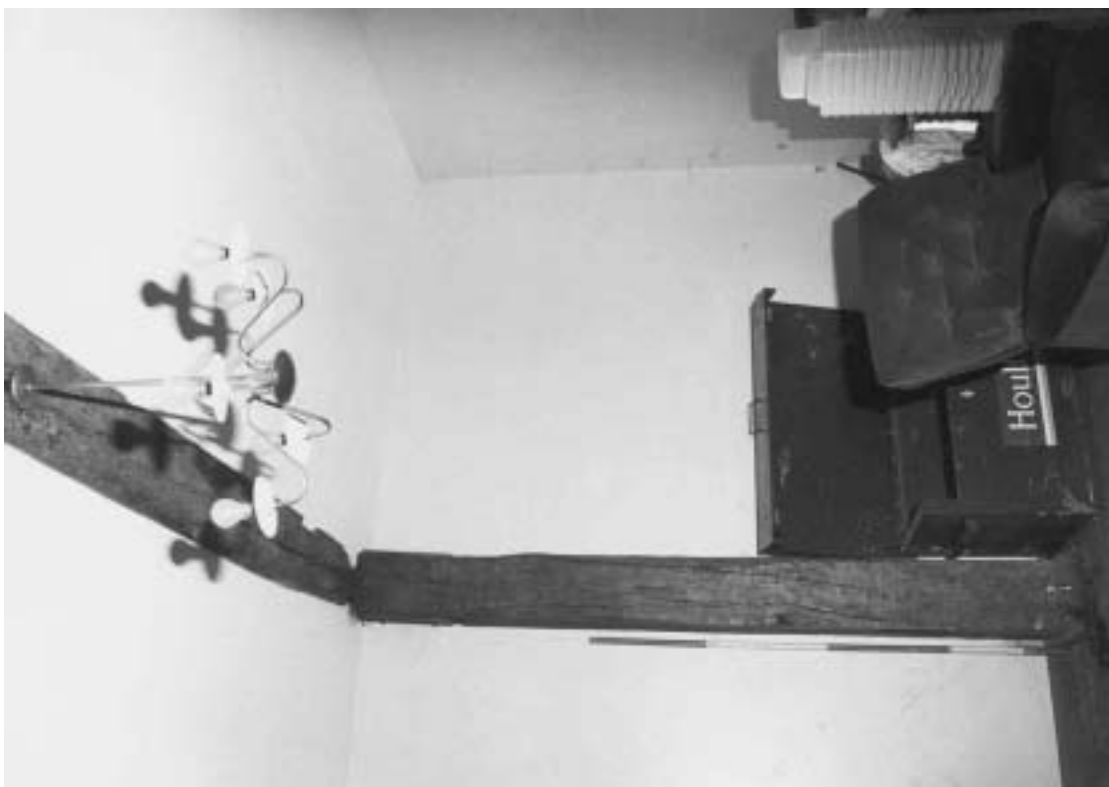


Plate 3
Principal post on the interior of the NW wall of Building A



Plate 2
Principal post on the interior of the SE wall of Building A

5.1.2 Assessment

The building currently consists of an earlier three storey structure seen exposed above the roof of the later rear gable and outshot. These two structures represent the two major phases of the building, though it has had many alterations during a history of more than 500 years.

The earliest parts of the building are the principal structural components exposed in the uppermost gable seen in Elevation C. This is most likely the last remaining remnant of a two bay building described by RCHME (1963; RCHMY 5) as being a rearward extension to a large medieval building on the street front. The remains of this earliest building also include the large posts seen internally on the ground and first floors and the ceiling beams on both floors. It is probable that these are the in-situ principal posts of the 15th century and they are apparently single timbers from the ground floor up to the wall plate. They have been repaired on the ground floor in the 20th century, probably due to the effects of rising damp. As shown in Elevations C and D the main braces, posts and beams exposed in the earlier gable are 15th century though the windows are clearly later as will be discussed below. The top level of studs and the fascia boards covering the rafters of the exposed gable are also considerably later, perhaps 18th or 19th century.

The 15th century date is suggested by RCHME (1963; RCHMY 5) and is apparent due to the massive size of the structural timbers, their state of decay and the style of framing with curved upward braces and a massive curved tie beam. Similar 15th century roof trusses exist in York at No. 2 Coffee Yard and 28-32 Coppergate (RCHMY 5, lxx). The internal posts on the ground and first floor of Building A have large redundant mortise joints that suggest that the floor levels may have been raised during the next major building phase.



Plate 4

Timber-framing within the larger attic room of the uppermost extension of Building A

The second principal phase of Building A includes the extension to the 15th century structure of a single bay building of two and a half storeys with a large outshot to the NW. The outshot, possibly built to house a staircase after the insertion of additional floor levels, and rear gable appears to be contemporary because of the similar character of the framing throughout the second storey of Elevation C and the full length of the first floor girding beam. This extension may also have included the insertion of the large brick fireplace in the ground floor of late 16th or early 17th century date (RCHMY 5, 191). The timber components of this major phase are apparent in Elevation C, those of D appear to be later. In Elevation C the massive jowled posts, the two large beams at first and second floor height and the tie beam all appear to be original to this extension, although the posts and the two upper beams are clearly reused. The upper braces from the tie beam to the rafters are also of the primary construction phase of this extension. No evidence for the 17th century staircase which may have been in the outshot exists.

In repair work of the 18th or 19th century, the lowest storey of Elevation C appears to have been rebuilt, partly with reused timbers such as the massive post in the SE corner. Clearly the original post has been cut and this jowled section inserted to support the post and beam above. Similarly the framing above the tie beam relates to a later phase of repair in the 18th or 19th century, as do the fascia boards of both Elevation C and D. The majority of Elevation D is apparently of this later date as discernible from the condition of the timbers. The principal post of Elevation D is apparently a remedial effort to structurally reinforce the N corner of Building A. Some of the studs in Elevation C are of exactly the same dimension and character as the close studs of Elevation D. In D the studs are set with the broad face outward and have grooves on either sides, presumably to hold the lath and plaster infill panels. These same studs are found set with their edges to the front in Elevation C. It is likely that in alterations to D in the 18th or 19th centuries when some of the close studding was removed, it was used to repair parts of Elevation C, perhaps at the same time that the ground floor was rebuilt.

In the twentieth century a phase of work was instigated by the York College for Girls with Brierley, Leckenby and Keighley as the architects. This work involved the insertion of faux medieval windows in the two outside elevations of Building A including a stained glass window designed by H.J. Stammers in 1960. This lit the first floor chapel used by the school. The interior of the 17th century part of the building was cased in concrete blocks, this was probably also part of the 1950s or 1960s renovations.

5.1.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, Building A consists of four major phases of building probably dating to the 15th, 17th, 19th and 20th centuries. The single bay 15th century fragment of a larger building that stood until the demolitions of the 1950s is abutted by a major 17th century extension that included the rearrangement of floor levels and the insertion of a large fireplace to heat the rooms above. Over the 18th and 19th centuries repair work included the rebuilding of Elevation D and alterations to Elevation C while the renovations in the 1950s altered the fenestration and the insertion of concrete blocks to reinforce and insulate the elevations.

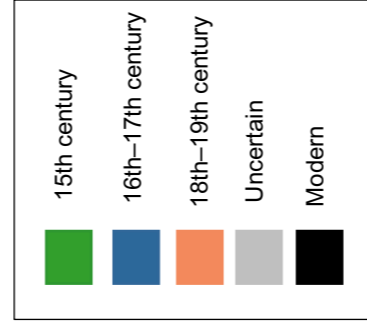
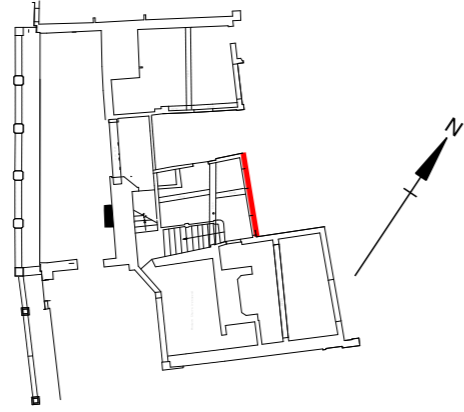
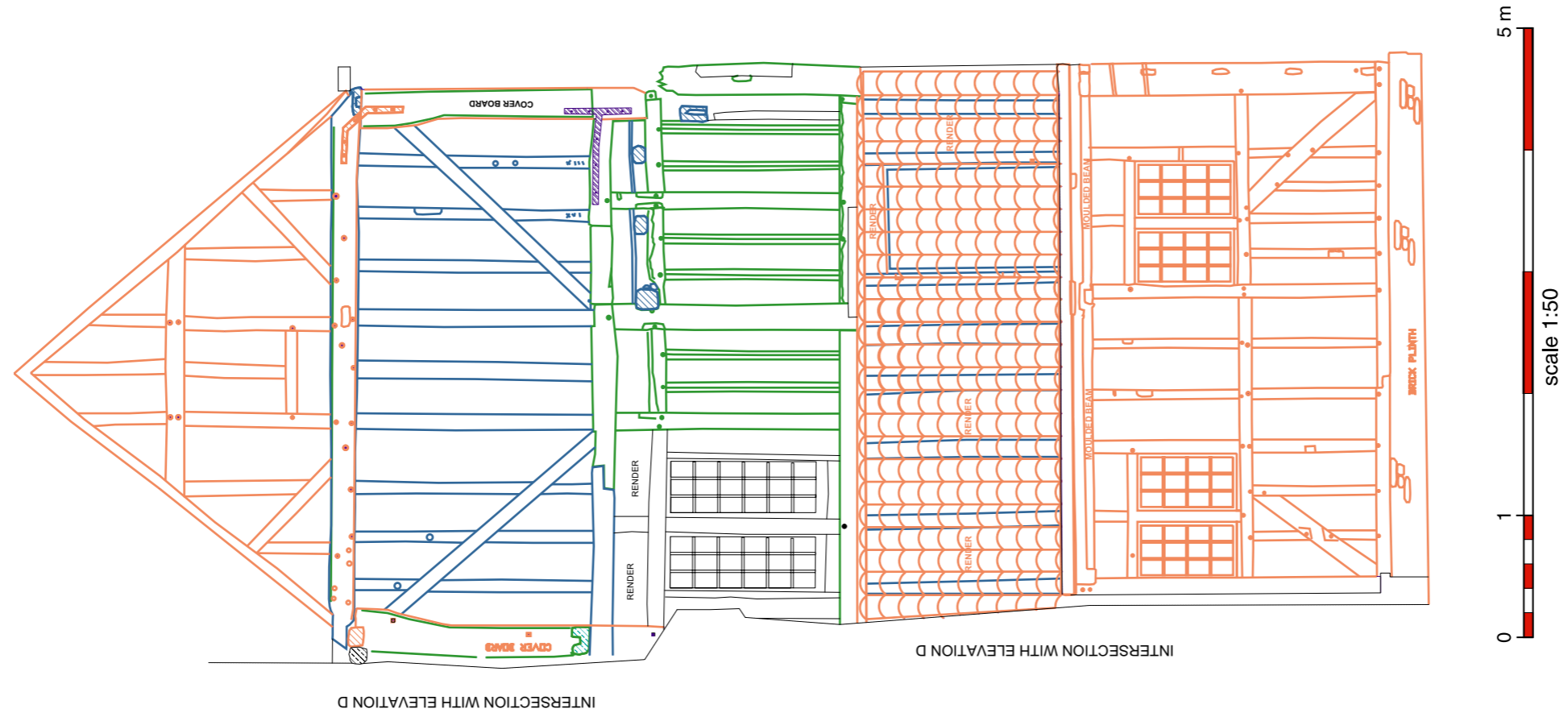


Fig. 8: Building B, Elevation E

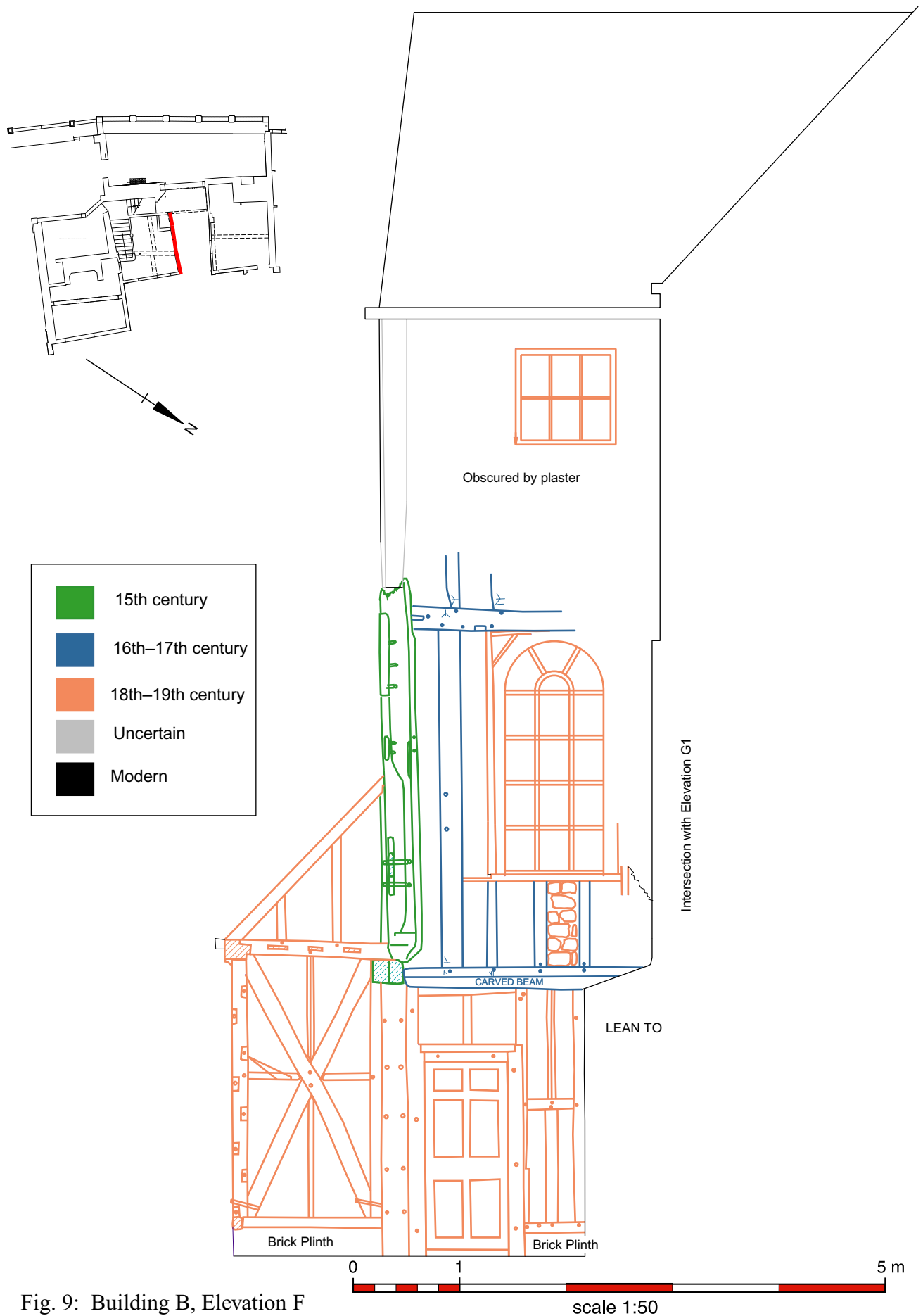


Fig. 9: Building B, Elevation F

5.2 Building B

5.2.1 Description

Building B measures c. 7.5 m front to back, 3.2 m wide and 11.5 m high, and is situated to the rear of the property which occupies the NE half of No. 66 (Fig. 1). It is adjacent to Building A on the SW, a small alley on its NE side, Building D on its SW and has a single storey lean-to at the rear. This area seems to be an individual plot running from the street in the medieval period (Rees Jones 1987) and it is not clear whether it became part of the same property as No.64 in the later medieval period. It may, if so, have been part of the domestic accommodation of the Talbot family in the 16th century and later, part of the Talbot Inn, apparently one of the most respected inns in 17th century York (VCHY, 198). RCHME (RCHMY 5) describes the Talbot Inn as having occupied part of No.62 further to the NW, but since the stairs are known as the ‘Talbot stairs’ it is suggested that the buildings may have been owned by the same family by the mid to late 17th century.

The remains of Building B consist of two external elevations (E and F, Figs. 8 and 9) and two internal elevations where the building abuts Building A to the SE and Building D to the SW. Internally the space is almost entirely taken up by the Talbot stairs and a large chimney stack at the intersection to Building D. The stairs rise around an open trapezoidal well and the irregular angles are reproduced in the solid panelled newel-posts



Plate 5
*The ‘Talbot Stairs’ from the ground
floor (Building B)*



Plate 6
*The ‘Talbot Stairs’ from the first
landing (Building B)*

(Plates 5-6). The stairs provided access to the passageway of Building D at first and second storeys and subsequently accessed an adjacent modern stair in No.68 at their intermediate landings. The internal SE and SW elevations are plastered and contain little architectural or structural detail. To the SE the intersection is modern brick in part.

The external elevations are not of contemporary construction and, therefore, shall be described separately. Elevation E (Fig. 8) is built of timber framing throughout. Externally, the first storey of framing is the lean-to and consists of a composite sill beam with a lapped scarf joint. Above this are two principal posts and an intermediate post supporting the wall-plate of the lean-to. Nine studs are pegged below the mid-rail and six pegged above. The mid rail is braced by two timbers upward from the intersection of the principal posts and the sill beam. The lean-to has two windows both of two lights with small fixed leaded panes separated by wooden studs and positioned above the mid-rail. The infill panels of the lean-to had been removed prior to the archaeological recording.

The wall plate of the lean-to is a moulded beam which supports a pantile roof with lead flashing that rises to intersect the main part of Elevation E (Plate 7).

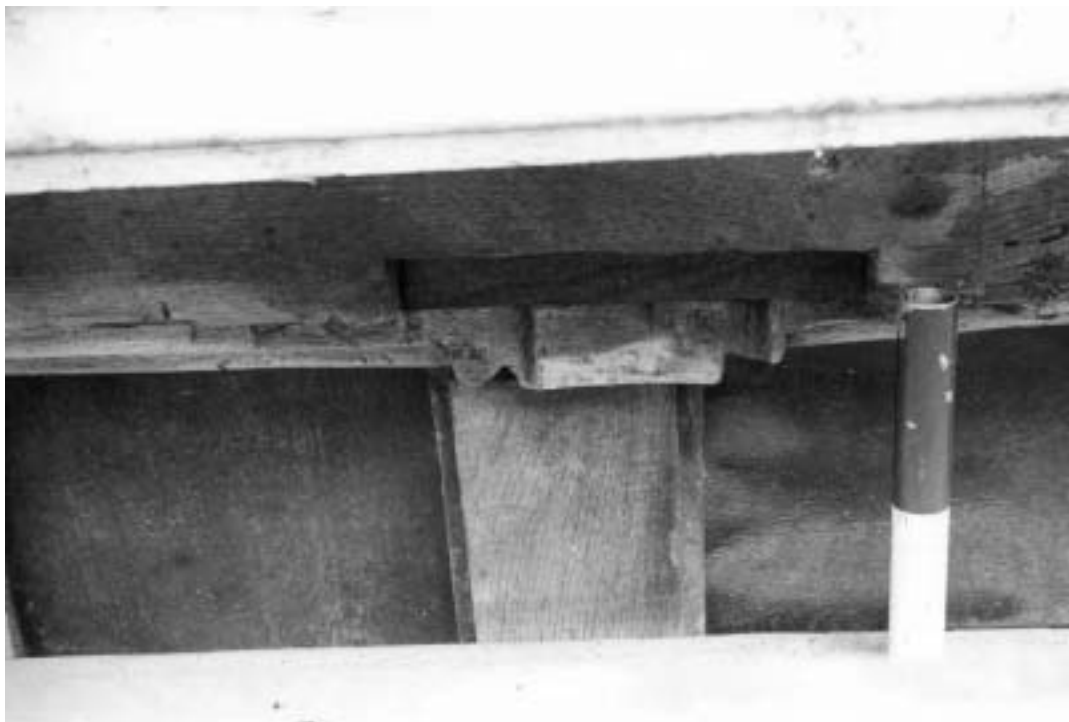


Plate 7

Moulded beam below the roof of the lean-to Elevation E (Building B)



Plate 8

Large beam within the roof space of the lean-to (Building B)

Elevation D of Building A. Above the beam are three windows with three lights each separated by diagonally set mullions. The window heads are supported by three posts that support the third girthing beam above. Adjacent to these unglazed windows are two windows with small leaded panes, the frames have been inserted below the mid rail or window head and are separated by a composite stud. The four infill panels surrounding these two windows were rendered with concrete at the time of recording. Between the window heads and the third storey girthing beam three floor joists and associated floor boards have been crudely inserted (Plate 9).

The third storey girthing beam has three apparently unstructural straight joints and a lapped scarf joint. Above this, on the fourth level of framing, the beam supports nine sets of studs with two downward braces from the principal posts to the beam. The two principal posts are covered by boards bolted together with iron. At the NW the post sits on the girthing beam, where it is reinforced by a steel brace. The SE post, however, is tenoned to the wall-plate, visible in Elevation D, which runs between the post and the beam. These two posts support tie beam lap dovetail assemblies, the normal method for integrating the tie beam, post and wall plate.

The roof space of the lean-to has a ceiling that is supported on the inside by a large beam (Plate 8). This beam also supports the timber framing above, which is obscured by the lean-to roof, these studs are represented on the elevation drawing (Fig. 8) as dashed lines. This framing consists of eight studs with a small doorway providing access from the internal staircase (the 'Talbot Stairs') to the roof space of the lean-to. These studs have been infilled with concrete.

Above these studs where the lean-to roof intersects with the elevation is a substantial girthing beam dissected by a large post in the centre of the elevation and tenoned into another large post at its NW end. This posts rests on the substantial first floor beam below, seen in Elevation F (Fig. 9). At the other end of this second storey the girthing beam intersects with the



Plate 9

*Floor joists inserted between the window heads and the third storey girding beam
Elevation E (Building B)*

The NW assembly is reinforced by an iron bracket. There are two large tie beams, the earlier one set back from the elevation and illustrated on the elevation drawing as a dashed line (Fig. 8). The studs above and below are jointed between these beams. Above the tie beam are two upwards braces to the principal rafters. There are six studs below a collar with three studs above. Below the collar, there is a central stud which is supporting a small vertical timber, this is possibly a window mullion. The infill of the upper two levels had been removed prior to the archaeological recording.

The other external elevation of Building B is to the SW (Elevation F, Fig. 9) and consists of three levels of timber framing. The lowest includes the side of the lean-to described above. The corner posts of the lean-to are supported by a sill beam which rests on top of a brick plinth. The framing between the sill and the tie beam consists of two diagonal braces, one continuous, with two vertical and two horizontal small timbers intersecting the centre. Above the tie beam are two studs and a post supporting the rafters of the lean-to roof.

Adjacent to this a substantial post supports the large first floor girding beam of Elevation E seen as an end grain in the drawing of Elevation F. This in turn supports a massive post, now structurally redundant. On the ground floor an eight-panel door is surrounded by a timber frame, the right hand part of which is supported on a brick plinth.

Above this frame is a beam which extends from the large post below the girding beam through the intersection with Elevation G1 and ends in the ceiling area of Building D. This beam is carved on its lower part with a vine scroll (Plate 10).



Plate 10
Carved beam above the door of Elevation F (Building B)

The upper part of the beam contains carpenter's marks and supports four studs above it, the largest of which contains a carpenter's mark. The second storey of this frame contains a large round headed window and is partially obscured by felt. The infill is brick. The second floor beam also contains carpenter's marks and supports two posts (Plate 11). The remainder of the elevation to the wall plate is obscured by render apart from a small six light sash window.

5.2.2 Assessment

The earliest phase of this building is apparent only in Elevation E. The unglazed windows in the third level of framing are characteristically 15th century (Harris 1999, 37; Grenville pers. comm.) and are securely tenoned into the beam below. This, in turn, is tenoned into the redundant corner post and the central post of this third level. It is likely that all the timbers of this level, excluding those surrounding the glazed windows relate to the earliest 15th century phase of this building due to their massive size, degradation and the relationship between them and the diagnostic windows. On the next level, above this, the two principal posts behind the cover boards and the hidden tie beam are all probably from the primary phase due to their size and condition.



Plate 11

Carpenter's marks on second floor beam of Elevation F (Building B)

The evidence for the original shape of this building comes primarily from the redundant post and suggests one of two options. This post is certainly part of the primary 15th century building and is currently jointed into the second level girding beam. It has twisted and moved by around 10-20 cm from its position and appears to correspond to an empty mortise in the beam on which it currently rests. However, restoring it to its original position would not bring the post in line with the rest of Elevation E and this suggests that either Elevation E continued to the NW or that the NW side of this building was jettied. In support of the former interpretation, the redundant post has empty mortise holes that suggest it may have contained a horizontal beam at the level of the corresponding 15th century beam beneath the windows and further that it may have supported an upward brace to a beam on the next level. The only evidence contradicting this is the lack of an obvious redundant mortise in the beam underneath the post for a post supporting the beam from the ground. The alternative explanation of a jetty would explain this, though the evidence for the return of the 15th century wall is not obvious in the post.

This analysis of this building is hampered by the condition of the post as the end grain has been largely exposed for an extended period. It is likely that the post originally extended up to support the continuation of the third level girding beam. The window head adjacent to this post has a currently unsupported tenon and this would also have been jointed into the redundant post.

The existence of the apparently 15th century tie beam suggests that this building was originally aligned with its gable or gables facing the street before the construction of Building D. Further, the large first floor windows of the 15th century suggest the presence of a large high status room in this period, perhaps a first floor hall as was suggested in the adjacent building (the Fox Inn) in the 15th century.

It appears that in a later reconstruction the principal post on the third storey has been moved in (i.e. to the SE) from its original position, either as part of a jetty or as part of the continuation of Elevation E. This relates to the next major alterations of the building dating to the 16th and 17th century. These focus on the insertion of the large staircase known as the Talbot stairs in the mid to late 17th century. It was probably at this time, or shortly before, that Elevation F was completely rebuilt since the majority of the work is of approximately 17th century date. The framing on the first and second floors is probably of this date as the carpenter's marks begin on the first stud which suggests that the elevation was jointed into the existing Elevation E. The redundant tenon on the second girthing beam at the corner may be for the redundant post and could be explained by the movement and bowing of Elevation F due to later alterations and insertions. Other work of 17th century date includes much of Elevation E. The level both below and above the 15th century windows appears to have been rebuilt in this period, and the studs and braces in these levels probably date from the insertion of the staircase since they are not pegged into the 15th century beams above or below. The three floor joists resting on the 15th century window head in Elevation E partially support one of staircase landings and are therefore of mid to late 17th century date. Given that the area within the lean-to forms the space of the ground floor landing this lean-to is essential to the staircase. This would suggest that the lean-to is contemporary or pre-dates the staircase. It is likely, however that the lean-to standing at present has been almost entirely rebuilt. The brick in the lowest storey of the SW internal wall of Building B is of a characteristic 17th century date, as their dimensions are 230mm by 50mm, suggesting that this wall also dates to the insertion of the staircase (Betts 1985, 540).

The final phases of the building include the insertion of the characteristically 18th century window into Elevation F, further enhancing the effect of the Talbot staircase. The uppermost part of Elevation E above the tie beam also appears to be of this date since the timbers are very regular, in good condition and contain iron nails as part of their construction. The part of the lean-to visible in Elevation E is apparently of 18th or 19th century, again demonstrated by its good condition and regularity.

In the 20th century windows were inserted in Elevation E in both the lean-to and adjacent to the unglazed 15th century windows. These are of a similar character to those in Building A and probably date to the refurbishments of the 1950s and 1960s.

5.2.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, Building B contains major building phases of the 15th century and the late 17th century followed by continued alterations and renovations in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. The 15th century elements exist entirely within Elevation E of Building B and consist of the principal posts and beams above the lean-to. The dating evidence comes from the diagnostic unglazed window, the size and condition of the timbers and their

archaeological relationships. They relate to a large 15th century building whose roof line was probably perpendicular to the street and may have been either jettied or had a second aisle to the NW.

In the mid to late 17th century the insertion of the Talbot stairs resulted in the alteration of much of Elevation E, which may be contemporary or post-date the reconstruction of Elevation F. The lean-to may originally have been contemporary or earlier than the staircase, however it appears to have been rebuilt in the in the 18th or 19th century. It was not possible to confirm the existence of an upper storey as previously postulated by the RCHME.

The 18th and 19th century alterations include the insertion of windows in Elevation F and restoration work in Elevation E while the 20th century saw the insertion of the current fenestration.



Fig. 10: Building C, Elevation G2



Fig. 11: Building C, Elevation G3

5.3 Building C

5.3.1 Description

Building C is described as the NW wing of No.64 by RCHME (RCHMY 5, 191), although the map evidence suggests that this building occupies the whole of No.64 (Fig. 1) which superseded a medieval tenement highlighted as discrete by Rees Jones (1987).

The dimensions of Building C are approximately 5m wide by 7m long. It is of three storeys, each with one room accessed via the Talbot stairs in Building B. On the third floor a small staircase at the intersection between Building C and D provides access to the attic rooms of D. The building abuts No. 62 on its NW side and Building D on its SW and part of the SE side. The remainder of the SE and the NE elevations (Elevations G2 and G3, Figs. 10 and 11) are both external and constructed of brick on the ground floor and timber framing above. The brick forms a regular plinth with a projecting pillar at the corner supporting the corner post.

In Elevation G3 (Fig. 11), the N corner, at the ground floor, has a blocked doorway that provided access to No. 62 through a small lean to-structure, now demolished. This part of the elevation formerly inside the lean-to is obscured by paint and plaster. Above the brick ground floor of this elevation a large timber sill beam supports a timber framing above and is tenoned into the corner post. The first level of framing consists of two intermediate posts, a second corner post, a composite mid rail, seven composite studs and two upward braces from the sill beam to the mid rail. A large twelve pane window is located between the intermediate posts and below the stretcher beam of the next level. A small six pane window is located above the mid-rail in the NW section of the frame.

Above this, the stretcher beam is tenoned into the principal post and continues to dissect the opposite post and intersects No.62. Above this a large bay window (with two sash windows, one four over four and one six over six) dominates the next level and is set between two intermediate posts. On the right of this is a blocked doorway which provided access to No.62. On the left a small mid rail is tenoned to the principal post. The bay window is supported by a frame of irregular timbers between which is insulation. The remainder of the infill panels have been removed. The principal corner post supports the fascia board and rafter of the roof and the wall plate of the adjacent SE elevation. Above the bay window a moulded beam with lead flashing is attached to the tie beam which intersects the rafter on the left, approximately 0.4m above the principal post. To the NW the blocked doorway has a very large timber that is supported by an intermediate post and the corner post. This large lintel in turn supports the end of the tie-beam and the joint with the rafter and wall plate. The upper part of the frame is composed of a collar with seven studs below and two upward braces above. All the non-structural timbers of the elevation are cut in a T-section presenting a wider face to the exterior. The main structural timbers are tenoned and bolted together with iron bolts in countersunk holes plugged with timber.

The adjacent elevation to the SE (Elevation G2, Fig 10) has a brick ground floor with a single window. Above this window is the first floor beam of the timber frame, which is tenoned to the corner post but does not extend fully to the intersection with Elevation G1.

The SE part of the first level is filled by concrete blocks. Above the sill beam a frame of five studs and a large curved upward brace from beam to post is partly cut by a large window composed of three six pane windows. Above this is a large girding beam which runs across the whole level and is tenoned to the corner post. This supports a frame of seven studs and a straight upward brace to the post that in turn supports the wall plate. The studs, braces and sill beam of this frame contain sequential chisel cut carpenter's marks. The infill panels in this elevation are of brick.

Internally on the ground floor is a single room almost completely plastered, although a large beam is visible which runs across the ceiling – the end of this can be seen resting on the first floor beam in Elevation G2. Other notable features in this room are two ventilation ducts high on the NE and SW walls and the lack of a fireplace in the massive chimney block. Small holes in the plaster of the NW wall suggest it may be timber-framed and abutting the brick wall of No.62.

Internally the first floor room has a similar large timber ceiling beam again seen externally in Elevation G2. The studs and girding beam of the timber frame are exposed in the NW elevation, though the infill and plaster remain (Plate 12). Towards the NE end of this internal elevation, a small doorway provided access through to No.62. The ceiling beam which runs through the centre of this room shows evidence of mortise holes possible for an internal partition sub-dividing this space.



Plate 12
Timber-framing on the internal NW wall of the first floor of Building C



Plate 13
Panelled room on the second floor Building C



Plate 14
Decorated plaster ceiling above fireplace of the second floor room of Building C

On the second floor is a room with panelled walls and ceiling (Plate 13). It contains a large marble fireplace with the socket for an electric fire. The bay window has a small window seat on its interior. Above the fireplace the plaster ceiling is decorated with the keys of St Peter's, an inscription which reads '*NON NOBIS SOLUM*' and a date of 1928, surrounded by two roses, a thistle and a daffodil (Plate 14). The ceiling above the fireplace, and to a lesser extent all around the room, is stepped in to cover the substantial beams which support the roof. The roof structure is accessed from the small stair mentioned above and is of a simple truss construction with single collars, supporting the pantile roof.

5.3.2 Assessment

This building, although much altered, retains elements of 16th or 17th century date, visible in Elevation G2, the internal NW wall on the first floor and part of the roof structure. The first and second floor framing of Elevation G2 is certainly of 16th or 17th century date and includes an almost complete set of carpenter's marks. These run from **V** to **XI**, SW to NE and ending on the last stud. This suggests that a frame originally extending by perhaps 3.5m to the SW. The marks on the first floor do not have a tag whereas those found on the second floor contain a single tags. The carpenter's marks found on Elevation F (Fig. 9) have one tag on the first floor beam and two tags on the second floor beam. This may suggest perhaps that the framing seen in Elevation G2 was originally built on a ground floor of masonry or brick. The infill panels of Elevation G2 are currently brick but grooves in the side of the studs where exposed suggest that they may originally have held lath and plaster panels.

The framing on the NW internal wall of the first floor is also early and given its irregular appearance and the orientation of the girding beam which has clearly been part of a building that has subsided to some degree; this may be the earliest exposed framing in Building C. Since the infill panels have not been removed it is difficult to be sure of the nature of the frame but it may perhaps be of 16th century date and appears to pre-date Elevation G2 though they share the same alignment. Inside the roof, earlier timbers include a large tie beam at the front of the building beside the chimney block and a wall plate along the intersection wall with No.62. These both appear to date to an earlier roof structure and lower ceiling of 16th or 17th century date. This shall be further discussed below.

The relationship between Building D and Building C hinges on the date of the large chimney block at their intersection. The proposed extension of the carpenter's marks in Elevation G2 of approximately 3.5m would make the end of the 16/17th century building run through the centre of the chimney block. Further, it is interesting that all the fireplaces in the chimney face the SW and none serve Building C. The fireplace of the first floor room in Building D, that is the SW side of the chimney block, has an apparently pre-18th century fireplace constructed of reused timbers on a herringbone brick plinth similar to the plinth of the large fireplace in Building A. The most likely explanation is that this chimney block pre-dates Building D and actually relates to the earlier building on the street front that abutted Building C. It is possible that the massive size and irregular shape of the chimney block is explained as the stack was serving a fireplace on both sides. This would provide heating for the three rooms of Building C,

clearly extant since at least the 17th century. Dating the primary phase of the stack at present is impossible as it is completely covered in plaster.

The construction of Elevation G2 probably replaced an earlier frame in this position. It is not clear whether the earlier building continued to the rear since early map evidence shows buildings in this area. The building of Elevation E may either have shortened the building or just replaced a frame that was in bad condition. The use of iron bolts in the frame and the incorporation of T-section studs suggest a relatively late date, probably 19th century. However, subsequent to its construction the elevation has been altered considerably. In particular the insertion of the segmental bay window and doorway involved the raising of the tie-beam and internal ceiling. This raised the tie-beam to an unusual position where it is supported by the intermediate posts and is not jointed to the principal corner post. The earlier roof timbers mentioned above further support the hypothesis that the ceiling and tie-beam have been raised and the rafters and wall plate on the NW side of the roof have also been moved. This is unlikely to relate to the building of No.62 since the framing and the brick pillar in the space between the corner post and No.62 is clearly of later date.

As mentioned in the description above, the second floor room is decorated with a date of 1928 and a fixed electric fireplace surround, and it is tempting to date the insertion of the windows and door to this date. Although the window is characteristic of the 19th century, it could be an attempt to make the building look earlier; similar buildings are found in No. 60 Low Petergate. If the window does pre-date this inscription then it is likely that the incumbent ceiling lift happened at the same time as the window insertion in the late 19th century.

5.3.3 Conclusion

As suggested above, it is possible that the chimney block at the front of Building C may be the earliest fragment of a structure on this site. However, the first clear evidence comes from the 16th an 17th centuries in the form of the timber framing in Elevation G2 and the internal NW wall of the first floor room. No evidence exists for the contemporary stairs to this building and it is possible that these phases relate to the construction of the Talbot stairs in the mid to late 1600s, though they are likely to be earlier since the passageway connecting the stairs and Building C is apparently jointed to Elevation G2 and not vice versa.

In the 18th or early 19th centuries the gable end of Building C was completely rebuilt in order to mimic the surrounding medieval elevations and this elevation was further altered by the insertion of a large bay window and the raising of the ceiling in the late 19th or early 20th century.

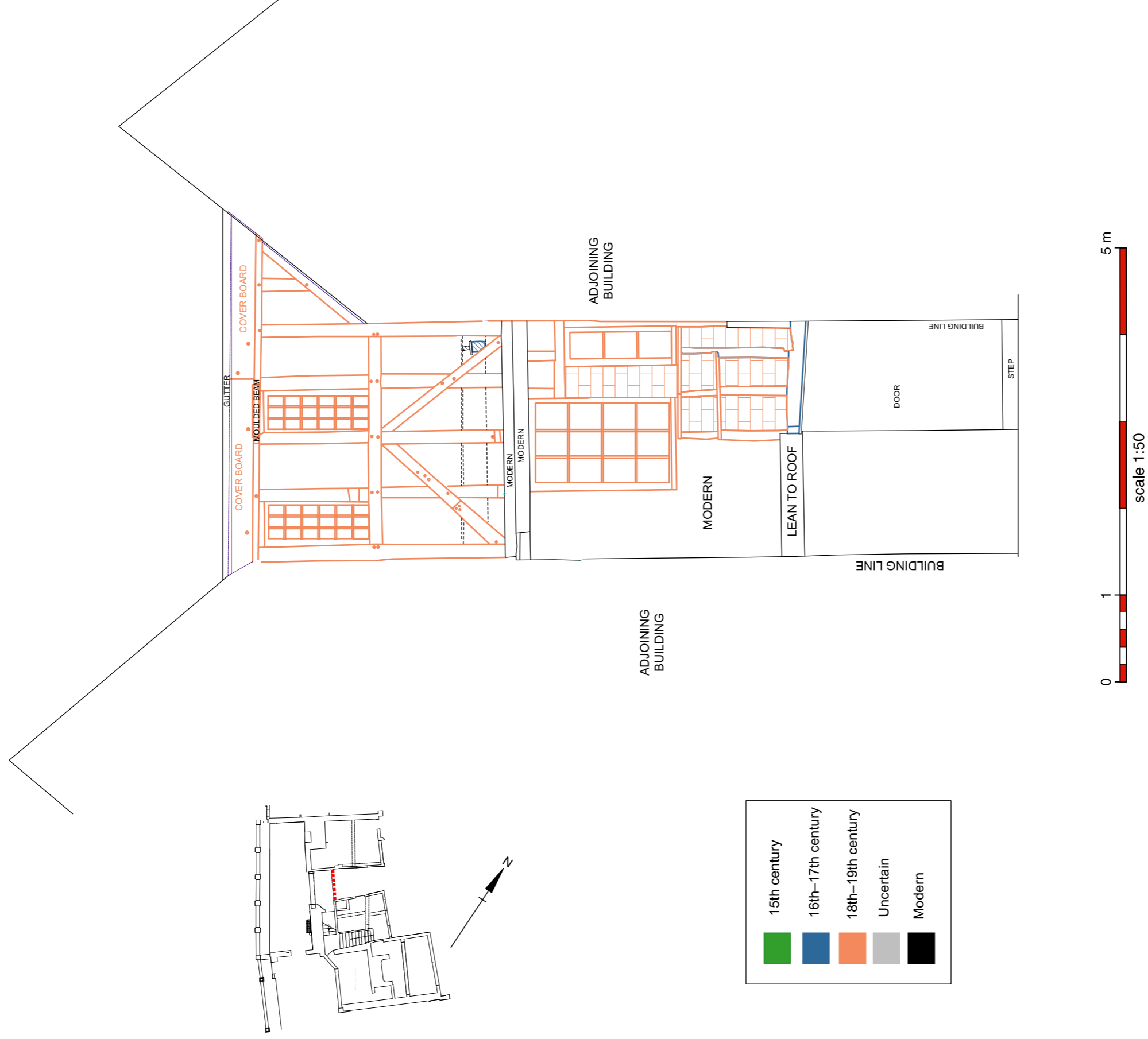


Fig. 12: Building C, Elevation G1

5.4 Building D

5.4.1 Description

Building D includes the street front of Nos. 64 and 66 Low Petergate. It extends for five bays and is approximately 14m along the street front and 5-6m wide. It has three full storeys and an attic. The ground floor contains a large, now open room formerly used for shop space on its ground floor behind now removed modern display windows and a colonnade. Above this the upper storeys are of brick and have hung sash windows with pedimented dormers lighting the attic. There are two rooms both on the first and second floors, each with a fireplace in the back wall. The attic is roughly partitioned and also has small fireplaces. The roof is carried on purlins tusk-tenoned to the principle rafters of simple collar-beam trusses (RCHME 5, lxxi). Behind these two rooms, on the NW is Building C and on the SE is Building B and centrally there is a passage on the first and second floors with Elevation G1 (Fig. 12), behind. All these rooms are accessed by the Talbot stairs and through the passage of Elevation G1.

The walls of the ground floor shop contain little detail and are plastered throughout, however the ceiling is composed of the remnants of a massive timber-framed floor. This included four principal beams running perpendicular to the street and measuring 0.34m by 0.30m. Three bridging beams are double tenoned into these 3m from the street front forming a coffered effect. The floor joists are mostly edge set and tenoned into the bridging beams (Plate 15).



Plate 15
Ceiling on the ground floor of Building D

The lath and plaster has been removed from the first floor room at the SE end of Building D. On the SE wall these revealed a timber frame of two posts, nine studs and two upward straight braces filled with brick. On the NE wall of the room the chimney block is constructed of brick incorporating part of the surrounding timber frame which is very irregular and partly filled with brick. A small niche to the right is now empty and the doorway accesses the Talbot stairs of Building B. The opposite side wall between the two first floor rooms is composed of an irregular frame of studs, rails and braces covered on both sides by lath and plaster (Plates 16 and 17).



Plate 16
Internal SE wall of the SE room in Building D

The walls of the adjacent room were not exposed but the large timber fireplace is constructed of two reused posts and a lintel with a herringbone brick plinth (Plate 18). This room is accessed via a passage in G1 from the Talbot stairs and previously also from No. 62 via Building C. The rooms above these are of the same dimensions and retain their plaster. Each has a fireplace in its back wall. A small staircase behind the NW room provides access to the attic. This is lit by two dormers and divided by a thin timber partition.

On the ground floor there is no partition between the front wall and Elevation G1 but on the first and second floors these are small rooms that act as passages between Building B and C and between the two parts of Building D. On the first floor this passage has a plaster ceiling identical to that above the Talbot stairs in Building B but otherwise it is relatively non-descript.



Plate 17
Internal NE wall of the SE room in Building D

The lowermost part of Elevation G1 has been entirely removed but previously consisted of a lean-to and an entrance from the shops to the back yard. On the first floor a large timber beam supports an irregular timber frame above. The SE end is infilled with foil backed insulation and the NW end is infilled with brick nogging. This level has a six over six light window and a small three light window. Above this two large girding beams support a timber frame of two corner posts, a central post and two studs with upward straight braces.

Floor boards and some joists are visible in this level as the infill has been removed. A girding beam above this supports three studs and is jointed to the continued right hand post. There are two eighteen light windows with small fixed leaded panes set in the studs and above is a moulded beam with a cover board over the wall plate (Plate 19).



Plate 18
Fireplace in the NE wall of NW room in Building D



Plate 19
Moulded beam beneath the wall-plate of Building D (Elevation G1)

5.4.2 Assessment

The front block of Building D has been dated to 1743 by a lead rainwater head bearing the initials JR possibly referring to James Roe or Rowe (RCHMY 5, 191). The style and fenestration of the building suggests that this is very likely accurate.

However, the earliest parts of Building D are the areas that intersect with Buildings B and C. The chimney stack adjacent to Building B has bricks in the first floor that compare well with known medieval dimensions (280mm x 26mm) dating them to between 14th and 16th century (Betts 1985). The brick hood in the ceiling below has bricks dating to the post-medieval period but is not a structural part of the chimney block and is probably a later addition. This chimney block is also on an alignment that is not parallel to the front wall but instead lines up with the position of Building B. Further supporting the suggestion that this area is earlier is the existence of three floor joists in the ground floor ceiling adjacent to the chimney which appear to be earlier than the main part of the ceiling. It is possible, therefore, that this chimney block is a remnant of an earlier medieval building in front of Building B.

The evidence at the other chimney in the rear wall of the NW rooms is more enigmatic. As discussed in paragraph 5.3.2, elements of the first floor fireplace coupled with massive size of the chimney block suggest an earlier date and it may similarly be a remnant of an earlier building on the street front.

Further evidence from the brick dimensions in the exposed first floor SE wall mentioned above suggest a 14th -16th date (Betts, 1985, 454), though the timber framing appears to be of much later date.

The ceiling exposed in the ground floor as described above is probably of 18th century date as it seems to respect the alignment of earlier buildings at B and C. Furthermore, the joists of this floor in the central area rest on a modern steel beam and do not continue to Elevation G1. Instead there are a set of joists of different character that run back from the steel beam to the large timber beam in Elevation G1 suggesting that this part is earlier. The other earlier parts of Elevation G1 are in the first floor level where the 'sill' beam and the stud on the extreme right are of early character. It is likely that this elevation relates to the building of the Talbot stairs since their original landings and entrances access this building, and the first floor room in this part of the building has a plastered ceiling of exactly the same style as those in the staircase ceilings.

As mentioned above, the ceiling in the ground floor of Building D, although including massive timbers, is probably of the same phase as the front elevation. The size of the timbers does not indicate an early date since they are an important structural component in this three storey building and are likely to be large in any example (Brown 1986, 60). Further the joists are edge set, characteristic of the post-medieval period (Harris 1999, 26) and are jointed using a method that is post-medieval (Brown 1986, 59). The ceiling has clearly been plastered, not common till the 17th century (Harris 1999, 27) and shows no evidence for mouldings or chamfers which are almost ubiquitous on earlier open ceilings (Brown 1986, 60). Further, the ceiling does not respect the passageway between Building B and Building C, clearly being used in the late 17th century due to the stairs and the beam with vine scroll carving. It seems that, as is seen at the front of Building D, the ceiling ignores this passageway and the distinction between No 64 and No 66 in-order to present a uniform elevation to the street. Access to the rear of the building likely continued through the base of Building D, but without surviving partitions.

In the major phase of Building D in 1743 the front elevation, the internal floors, the roof, and the perpendicular partitions were all built. The side wall abutting the former Fox Inn may be earlier as mentioned above, but that abutting No.68 is of 18th century date. The rear wall of the building incorporated the chimneys of earlier buildings and the existing alignment of the walls of the Talbot staircase. The roof line took in Elevation G1 as its rear position but parts of the earlier 16th or 17th century structure associated with Elevation G1 were incorporated into the new building.

Other work in the 18th and 19th centuries seems to be limited to the rebuilding of the upper level of Elevation G1 and small changes in the internal fittings of Building D after the initial construction. The lower windows in Elevation G1 also date from the late 18th century.

The upper windows in Elevation G1 appear to date from the mid-20th century and continued retail-related alterations on the ground floor removed the lower part of Elevation G1 and replaced the ground floor of the street front with a colonnade and large glass panes.

5.4.3 Conclusion

The earliest parts of this building exist as components of the framework in Elevation G1 and principally as the chimney stacks that back onto Building B and Building C. They seem to date to earlier than the main part of D due to their alignment, size, the size of bricks, and the nature of some of the fireplaces. Clearly earlier buildings existed on the site of Building D and these fireplaces may relate to these, as the extant part of Elevation G1 and the passages at the rear of the building are parts of the earlier late 17th century building that linked the Talbot stairs with the other buildings.

The main phase of D includes the construction of a large five bay building along the street front probably in 1743 which included the construction of internal floors, partitions, and a new roof structure. This was closely followed by repairs and reconstruction of Elevation G1 in the late 18th or early 19th century.

Finally in the 20th century the alterations of the ground floor removed the majority of the earlier fabric except the ceiling and the chimneys.

6. CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

As far as Building A is concerned, this survey supports the conclusions of the RCHME's survey prior to the demolition of the front block in 1957 (RCHME 1963). This would have originally have occupied a narrow plot at right angles to the street. All that survives today is the rearmost bay of the two storied 15th century building and the 17th century extension beyond it, and both of these have been subject to extensive renovations in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. Due to the fragmentary nature of the evidence in this building it has been impossible to ascertain any room functions to support or reject those put forward by Pantin (1962-3).

More detailed documentary research would certainly increase our knowledge of the origins and development of Building A. It is referred to as the Fox Inn by numerous sources but it would be very useful to ascertain at what stage it became an inn and to attempt to discern the development of the building prior to this. Before its partial demolition this building was referred to a fine example of a medieval town house (Pantin 1962-3, 232), it could therefore be claimed to be important not just in York but England as a whole.

Buildings B, C and D were all at some point part of the Talbot Inn. The results of the survey in this part of the building, for the most part, support those presented by the RCHME although significantly more fabric was revealed during this project than was previously available and as such it has been possible to elaborate on earlier interpretations.

The developments in these parts of building is complex. 15th century fabric has been identified although it is now fragmentary. Elevation E contains the most surviving original framing in the form of the unglazed windows above the lean-to. These windows suggest that there may have been a high status room in this position in the 15th century, possibly a first floor hall as has been suggested for Building A. The structurally redundant post on the corner of Building B demonstrates the amount of alterations that has occurred in this building. The details recorded on this post would suggest that Elevation F was either jettied or that Elevation E continued further to the NW.

The majority of the surviving framing in these parts of the building date from the post-medieval period. From the limited evidence that was available it is assumed that there may have been two or three buildings occupying narrow plots running at right angles to the street. The unified facade of Building D was built in the 18th century.

The addition of the large staircase during the 17th century in Building B and significant subsequent alterations appear to have removed most of the medieval framing. However as this project was conducted under watching brief conditions it was not possible to record the internal framing in any detail. From the evidence that was available it would appear that the arrangement of rooms in the building dated largely from the 18th century. From the framing that was observed it was possible to say that Elevation G2 had 16th or 17th century origins and that it may have run further to the SW. This framing was matched internally by timbers on the NW wall of the first floor room in Building C.

In order to understand this building more work is necessary. The exposed timbers on the elevations alone are not sufficient to understand the development of this building. From the limited evidence available, such as the exposed bricks in the stack of SE room on the first floor of Building D it would appear that there may still be some extant medieval fabric within the building. Likewise the origins of the stack in the NW room of Building D and the SW wall of Building C could only be revealed if the bricks were exposed. Ceiling beams can be identified in all parts this building and if exposed could further enhance our understanding of this building.

More detailed documentary research is also necessary in order to understand the historic fabric. It is known from limited documentary research that parts of this building were occupied by the Talbots in the 16th century and became the Talbot Inn in the 17th century. A more detailed understanding of the location of plots and their occupants as well an understanding as to how a household would use their properties in central York in the post-medieval period would be very useful. The Talbot Inn is regarded as one of the best known inns in York during the seventeenth century, the other being The George on Coney Street. As more fabric survives in this building than in The George this building could also aid in our understanding of this type of building. A greater understanding of inns would provide an interesting insight into the people who visited York and the infrastructure in place to deal with visitors.

Finally it may be noted that all the phasing of the buildings described above was carried out using stratigraphic and typological methods. In order to refine the dating of the components of the buildings further a programme of dendrochronological dating would

be needed. This would involve a targeted sampling of selected timbers in parts of the building critical for understanding the sequence of construction.

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