

Discovery, Innovation and Science in the Historic Environment

RESEARCH



Historic England

ISSUE 23 • HIGH STREETS
HERITAGE ACTION ZONES SPECIAL 2023



...to this High Streets Heritage Action Zones special issue of Research.

Historic England is working with partners in 67 places in England to deliver a £95m Government-funded programme of heritage-led regeneration focused on high streets. Through targeting both the historic fabric of the place and its cultural life we are shifting how people see their high street, not as tired and dated places, but as somewhere that is vibrant and rich with character. The programme began in 2019 and is due to end in 2024. So far we have invested £54m, with an additional £55m attracted from other sources.

To better understand the heritage in these areas our teams are carrying out research at different levels of detail, engaging owners and communities, telling the rich story of much-loved local places. In this issue, after introducing the value of this type of investigation, we focus on some of the key individual buildings within some High Streets Heritage Action Zones. We also cover an archive collection of images of England's streets mainly from the mid-20th century.

- 'Researching the High Streets Heritage Action Zones'. Rebecca Lane explains the context of research work that is underway in support of the programme and introduces the articles in more depth.
- 'The Commercial Buildings of Redruth, Cornwall'. Johanna Roethe describes research into the Buttermarket and the historic banks of the town.
- 'The Fleece Hotel, Westgate Street, Gloucester'. Rebecca Lane reports on this historic inn.
- 'The Guildhall, Newport, Isle of Wight'. Johanna Roethe unpacks new research into this civic building by the eminent architect John Nash.
- 'The Cedars, North Walsham, Norfolk'. Emily Cole investigates the journey of a building from Georgian residence to council offices.
- 'Victorian Commercial Buildings in the Middlesbrough High Street Heritage Action Zone'. Lucy Jessop sheds light on an imposing Victorian commercial and civic legacy.
- 'Victorian Development in the Huddersfield High Street Heritage Action Zone'. Lucy focuses here on the George Hotel and Ramsden Estate Office.
- 'The Empire Theatre, Burnley'. Elain Harwood's research helps to unearth a hidden gem among historic entertainment venues.
- 'A Judge on the High Street: The Sir John Pennycuik Collection'. Gary Winter introduces a remarkable photographic record of streets in early and mid-20th century England.

In addition, we present our regular round up of recent additions to our Research Reports database.

Claudia Kenyatta
Director of Regions
with Historic England.

Front cover image: View of Chatham House, the former Lion Brewery mansion at Chatham Intra, following restoration as part of the High Street Heritage Action Zone there. © Historic England Archive, DP413835

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care for, enjoy and **celebrate**

England's **spectacular**
historic environment

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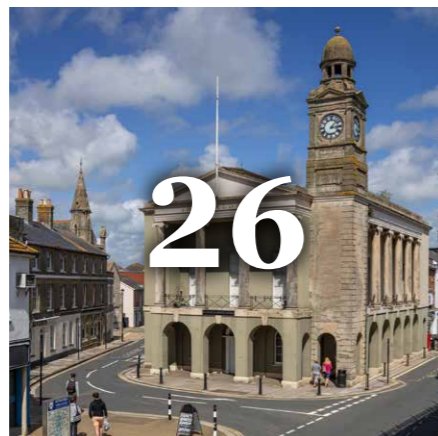
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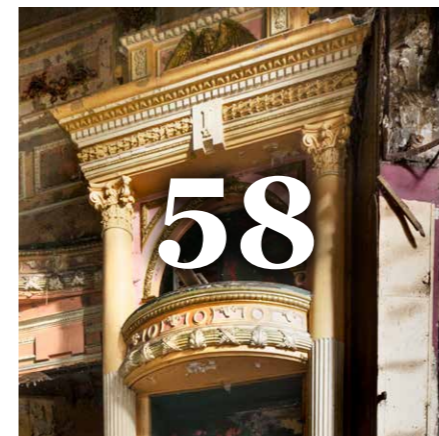
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Research Reports
 An overview of recent additions to the series, November 2022 to January 2023.

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Editor
 Colum Giles

Designer
 Vincent Griffin

Web design
 Robin Page

Managing Editor
 Robin Page

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For any further information and questions please email:
Research@HistoricEngland.org.uk

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Researching High Streets Heritage Action Zones

This government-funded £95 million programme is designed to ‘unlock the potential of high streets across England, fuelling economic, social and cultural recovery’.

Historic England is working with local partners, including local authorities, to deliver schemes in over 60 high streets in England. As part of this work targeted research is being undertaken by Historic England’s research teams, focused on places where heritage is poorly understood. This programme of work has been devised in partnership with the local communities involved, to ensure it meets the needs of each high street. This research ranges from large-scale Historic Area Assessments which look at whole areas of a town, to detailed study of individual buildings and sites.

Historic Area Assessments are useful where there is a need to consider areas holistically, for example to inform conservation area assessments or planned improvements to a street or whole town. Studies of individual buildings can be targeted at specific properties which are likely to undergo significant changes – for example as part of a programme of conservation – or at buildings which are likely to play a significant role in revitalising a high street. It can be particularly valuable where the buildings are complicated with many phases of building and alterations in evidence – as is often the case in towns and cities.



Above: Coventry High Street Heritage Action Zone. Burges, Coventry, West Midlands. Portrait of craftsman who worked on the High Street restoration programme. © Historic England Archive, DP275806

The research work focused on delivering new understanding which Historic England and its local partners can use to underpin conservation programmes, to assess the significance of buildings and areas, and to work with local communities to celebrate the heritage of their high street. Much of this will eventually be available to the wider public via the Research Report Series database, and through the publication of associated articles and other public engagement activity in local areas.

This issue of the magazine highlights some of the individual sites which have

been investigated as part of High Streets Heritage Action Zones schemes across the country.

In the South West an article by Johanna Roethe outlines two projects in Redruth; one looking at an important 19th-century site, The Buttermarket, and the other a wider study of the early bank buildings in the town. And in Gloucester Rebecca Lane looks at the history of The Fleece Hotel, a 15th-century set of buildings which served as an important inn in the town from at least the 17th century. >>



Above left & right: Shopfront before and after restoration, Hales Street, Coventry. © Historic England Archive, DP249142

In the South East Johanna Roethe examines the history of The Guildhall in Newport, Isle of Wight – an important building by the architect John Nash. And in the East, Emily Cole outlines a study of an individual building called The Cedars which forms a key site of the North Walsham High Street Heritage Action Zone.

In the North East and Yorkshire Lucy Jessop introduces many of the fine Victorian buildings in Middlesbrough and Huddersfield which form part of the High Streets Heritage Action Zones in those towns. And in the North West Elain Harwood outlines the history of The Empire Theatre, Burnley.

As an associated project, Gary Winter also highlights the contents of the Pennycuik Collection, and the history of the man who created it, held in the Historic England Archive. This contains many images of high streets across the country from the decades around the middle of the 20th century, reminding us of the time when high streets still had their traditional role within towns.

The results of the research presented here has highlighted the importance of individual buildings, both locally and nationally. It has also been used to emphasise what is unique and distinctive about the wider town-centre areas – from the quality of the commercial buildings of Middlesbrough to the long and complex history of the buildings of Westgate Street,



Above left & right: Shopfront before and after restoration, Hales Street, Coventry. © Historic England Archive, DP276227

Gloucester. Often it is the local character and significance which is central to the various initiatives under the High Streets Heritage Action Zones programme, as it emphasises the key role such buildings can play in establishing a sense of place, and encouraging people to engage with heritage on the high street.

In the build-up to the end of the High Streets Heritage Action Zones programme in March 2024, the research done so far will be used to celebrate the history and heritage of high streets up and down the country. It is hoped that these publications and events will leave a legacy which, together with the physical improvements to high streets, will long outlast the programme itself ■

The author

Rebecca Lane
Senior Architectural Investigator with Historic England.

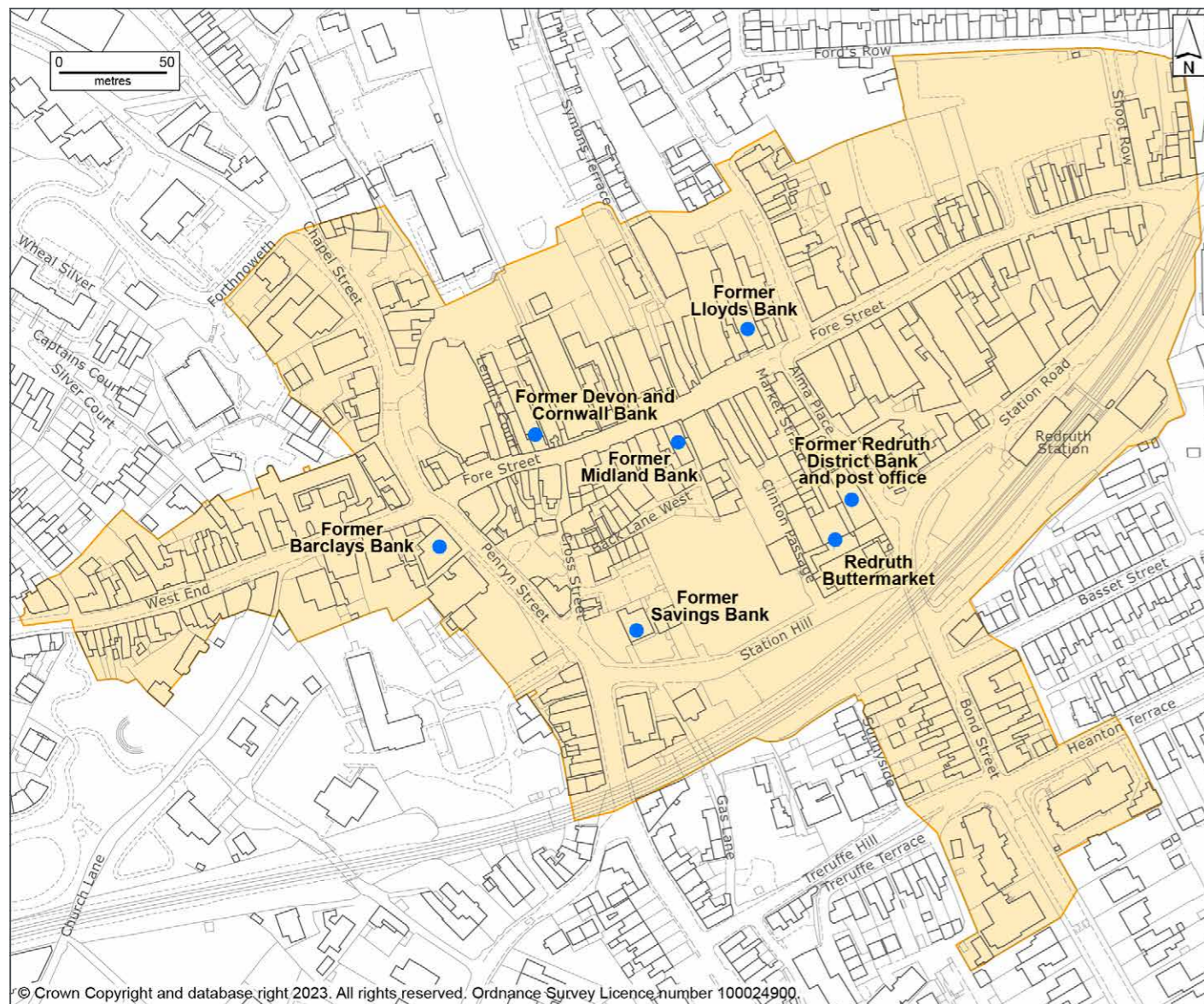


Rebecca worked in the commercial sector for six years as a buildings archaeologist, and latterly as a historic buildings consultant

before joining the Architectural Investigation team at English Heritage in 2010. Rebecca drafted the Historic England guidance on **Understanding Historic Buildings**.

The commercial buildings of Redruth, Cornwall

New research to inform the work of the Redruth High Street Heritage Action Zone.



During the 18th and 19th centuries, Redruth in West Cornwall was a major regional centre for the mining industry and a thriving market town. This heyday is still evident in the architecture of Fore Street, the main commercial street in the town. However, like many other high streets across the country, it has been suffering from vacant buildings and underused upper floors. The Historic England-funded High Streets Heritage Action Zones programme has been seeking to revitalise the town centre by investing in historic buildings and celebrating Redruth's heritage and creative potential through an associated [cultural programme](#).

The High Streets Heritage Action Zones programme has been seeking to revitalise the town centre by investing in historic buildings and celebrating Redruth's heritage and creative potential through an associated cultural programme.

Left: Map of the High Street Heritage Action Zone for Redruth.

Right: Map labelled with the main parts of the market complex. [Base map © Crown Copyright and database rights 2023. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100024900]

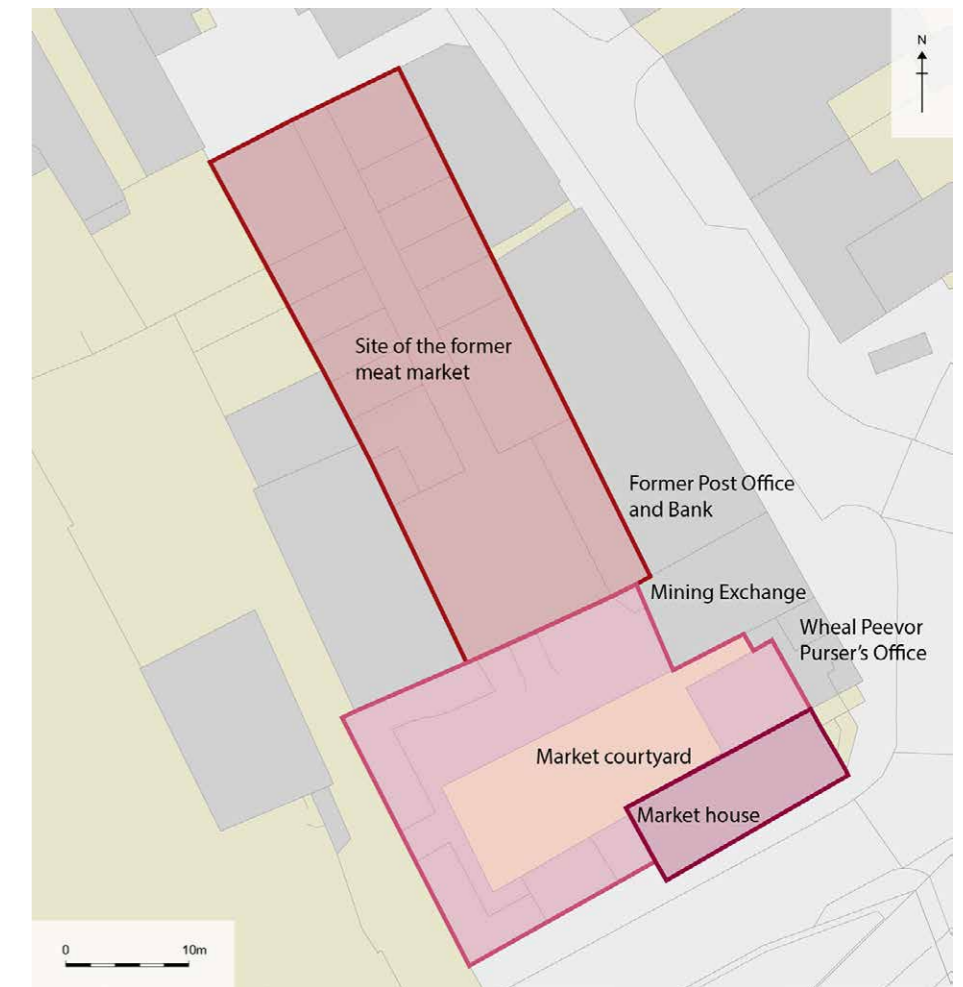
The Buttermarket

A particular focus of the High Street Heritage Action Zone initiative is the Buttermarket, just off Fore Street. Initially a general market, the name 'Buttermarket' was only widely used from the late 20th century. Redruth received its first market charter in 1333 and for centuries the market was held in Fore Street. In the 1820s, the lord of the manor, Sir Francis Basset, 1st Baron de Dunstanville and Basset, provided a new space for the market, freeing up Fore Street for traffic.

Between 1825 and 1826, he built a colonnaded courtyard with a two-storey market house set back from the south side of Fore Street. It was approached from Fore Street

via a lane (now Market Way) which led to single-storey colonnades either side of a narrow alleyway. Market stalls were located within the covered colonnades and in the small courtyard in front of the market house. The market house originally had open arcades on the ground floor for trading and the upper floor was used for meetings and administrative business.

Architecturally, the market as first built in the 1820s and as perpetuated by later extensions was an example of a loggia market, a transitional form between an open-air market and a market hall. Few examples of this type survive today; another one is the Pannier Market of 1828 in Dartmouth, Devon. >>



The High Street Heritage Action Zone for Redruth identified the Buttermarket as a priority building for the initiative, the revival of which would have a positive impact on the whole of the town centre.

The market in Redruth proved successful and soon required additional accommodation, largely due to the increase in market activity following the construction in the 1850s of a more central railway station and a new connection to the national railway network, enabling trade between Redruth and a larger area. At some point between 1855 and 1874 the courtyard was extended to the south-west with matching open colonnades. Fixed stall divisions were created within the perimeter colonnades, with the butchers' stalls concentrated to the north of

the courtyard within the earlier colonnades. In the 1870s, these butchers' stalls were replaced by a purpose-built Victorian market hall, housing the meat market.

In the 20th century the buildings gradually fell out of market use, due to competition from butcher's shops and supermarkets. The market house was the first to be converted to new uses, followed by the meat market in the 1950s. Some limited commercial activity continued in the market courtyard into the late 1980s. In 1982, the former meat market hall was gutted by a fire,

although its historic walls survived and a new building was constructed inside them in 2000-1. In 2017, the buildings around the Buttermarket courtyard were bought by the Redruth Revival Community Interest Company (CIC), with the aim of bringing them back into sustainable use.

The High Street Heritage Action Zone for Redruth identified the Buttermarket as a priority building for the initiative, the revival of which would have a positive impact on the whole of the town centre. Historic England's

research and investigation of the building informed a designation assessment which resulted in its [listing at Grade II in May 2021](#). The research report also supported the design work by the architects Thread and a successful grant application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, which awarded £2.7m to the Buttermarket's restoration. Work is currently underway to create a new food hall, workspaces for local businesses and creatives, and shop units for local food providers. >>



Left: Aerial photograph of 2021 showing the Buttermarket complex with the courtyard and market house at centre right, the new building inside the walls of the Victorian meat market, and the entrance from Fore Street beside the clocktower at the top left. © Historic England Archive, HEA35078_053

Above right top: The market house of 1825-6 in the corner of the courtyard. © Historic England Archive, DP275873

Right centre: The mid-19th-century west extension to the courtyard. © Historic England Archive, DP275876

Right bottom: The north elevation of the former meat market hall. © Historic England Archive, DP275881



Six historic bank buildings survive in central Redruth and their architectural ambition is evidence of the importance of banking facilities in a flourishing industrial market town.

Redruth's historic banks

Another building type that demonstrates Redruth's commercial success in the 19th century are banks. Six historic bank buildings survive in central Redruth and their architectural ambition is evidence of the importance of banking facilities in a flourishing industrial market town. Three of them are listed, but none is still in its original use; the last purpose-built bank closed in October 2022. A better understanding of their history and significance was urgently needed to inform options for the sustainable reuse of the buildings.

The earliest surviving purpose-built bank in the town is the former [Redruth Savings Bank](#) (now the Redruth Albany RFC Clubhouse) in Station Hill, built in about 1827 and listed Grade II. The bank had been founded in 1818, in the wake of the Savings Banks (England) Act of 1817, which encouraged the establishment of savings banks to give working people a measure of financial independence. Many of Redruth's miners and their families opened accounts at the new Savings Bank. As was typical for 19th-century banks the upper floor was used as living accommodation for the bank manager. The new research suggests that this building is one of the earliest purpose-built



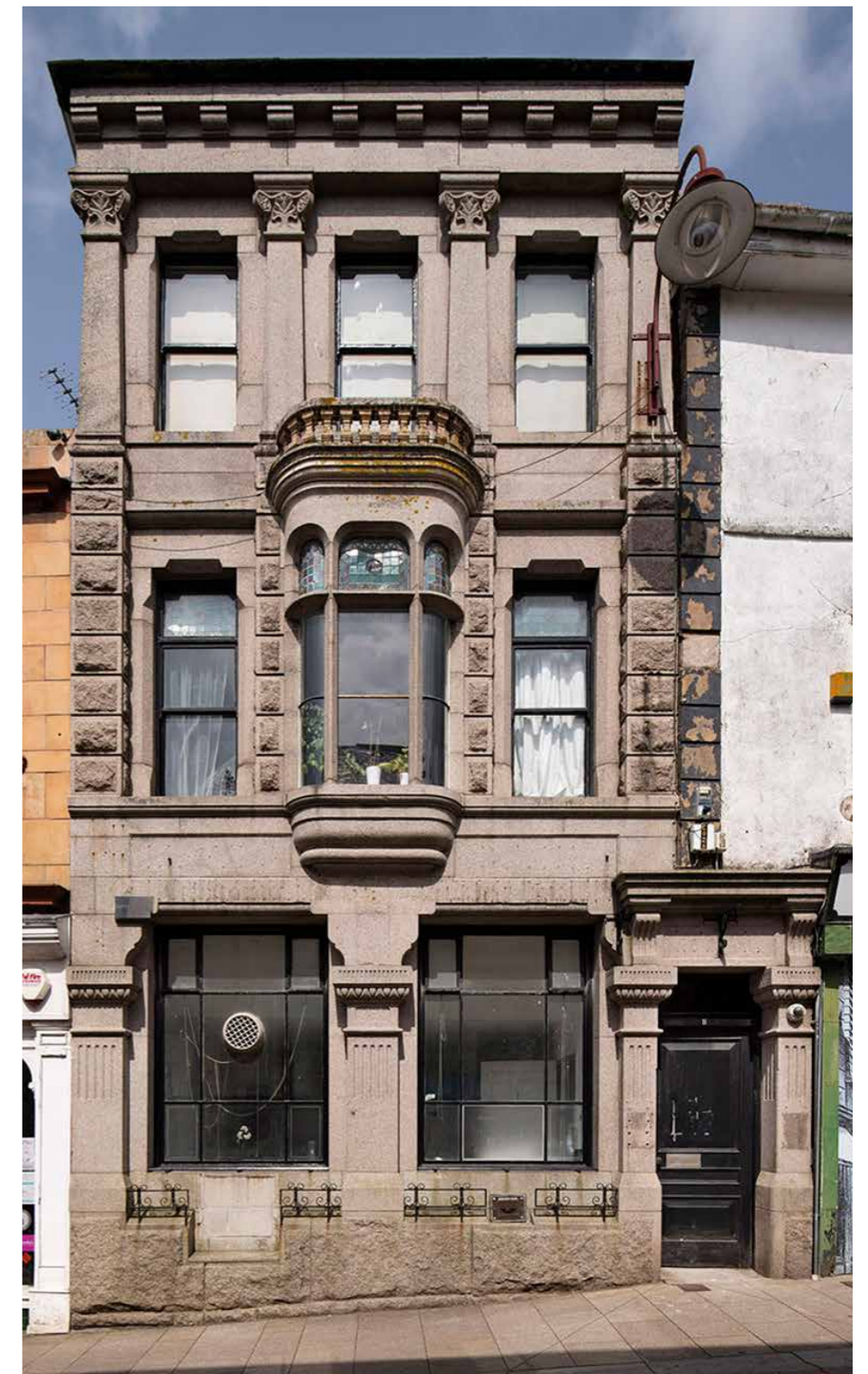
savings banks in England and a rare surviving example from the 1820s.

Two Victorian bank buildings were designed by the local architect James Hicks (1846-96): the [Redruth District Bank](#) in Alma Place of 1879-80 and the [Devon & Cornwall Bank](#) at

11 Fore Street of 1886-7. Both are Grade II listed. Typical of his work elsewhere, the banks display a mixture of architectural styles. This is particularly evident in the front elevation of 11 Fore Street which combines classical features like Ionic pilasters with a small oriel window, more characteristic of medieval architectural styles. >>

Above left: The Redruth Savings Bank of about 1827 in Station Hill. © Historic England Archive, DP276704

Above right: The Devon & Cornwall Bank of 1886-7 at 11 Fore Street. © Historic England Archive, DP276700



Historic England’s research into the banks has informed the updating of the list entries for the three listed banks.



The largest bank building in Redruth is the former Barclays bank of 1906-7, designed by the Penzance architect Oliver Caldwell (1861-1910). His design used the same details and materials which he employed for several branches of the Consolidated Bank of Cornwall, which was taken over by Barclays in 1905. Barclays were clearly keen to continue to use this style for their Cornish branches – an early example of a bank using architectural design to express corporate branding and local

identity. At least part of the upper floors of the building was initially used as the manager’s living accommodation but from the 1930s the upper floors were rented out.

Two further banks were built in the 1920s, when the main high street banks established and expanded their branch networks. The Midland Bank (later HSBC) was erected at 81 Fore Street in about 1920. It was probably designed by the architects T. B. Whinney, Son & Austen Hall, a firm that had worked for the

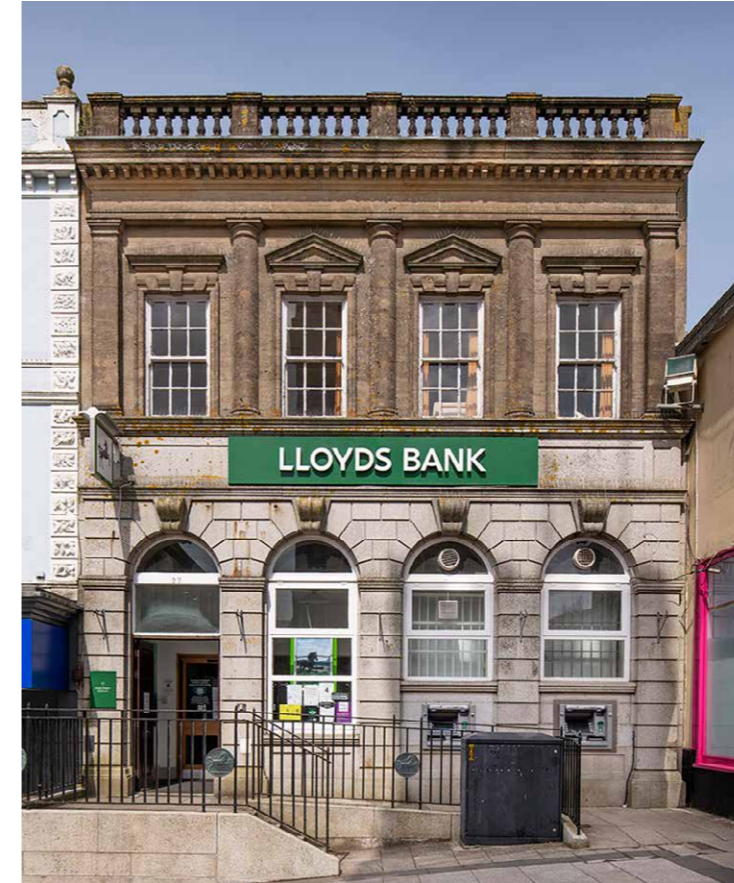


Midland Bank since the 1890s and who designed a very similar branch in St Ives. The Lloyds Bank at 27 Fore Street was built in about 1922-4 and has a particularly fine interior with a glazed dome and decorative plasterwork.

The impact of our research

Historic England’s research into the banks has informed the updating of the list entries for the three listed banks. By establishing the significance of the former Midland Bank, it has also supported the

This initiative aims to restore the Buttermarket and the bank buildings to their place at the commercial heart of Redruth.



building’s acquisition as part of the High Street Heritage Action Zone programme. The bank had been vacant for five years and now houses some of the tenants of the Buttermarket, while work is underway there. Working in partnership with Cornwall Council, Redruth Revival and other partners, Historic England’s Redruth High Street Heritage Action Zone initiative aims to restore the Buttermarket and the bank buildings to their place at the commercial heart of Redruth ■

Above left: The Barclays bank of 1906-7 in Penryn Street. © Historic England Archive, DP276701

Above centre: The Midland Bank of about 1920 at 81 Fore Street. © Historic England Archive, DP276699

Above right: The Lloyds Bank of about 1922-4 at 27 Fore Street. © Historic England Archive, DP276703

The author

Johanna Roethe
Architectural Investigator with
Historic England.



Johanna joined Historic England in 2017. She has been working on several Heritage

Action Zones and High Streets Heritage Action Zones and is the co-author of the book *Weston-super-Mare: The Town and its Seaside Heritage*, which was published by Historic England in 2019.

ORCID: [Johanna Roethe](https://orcid.org/JohannaRoethe)

Further information

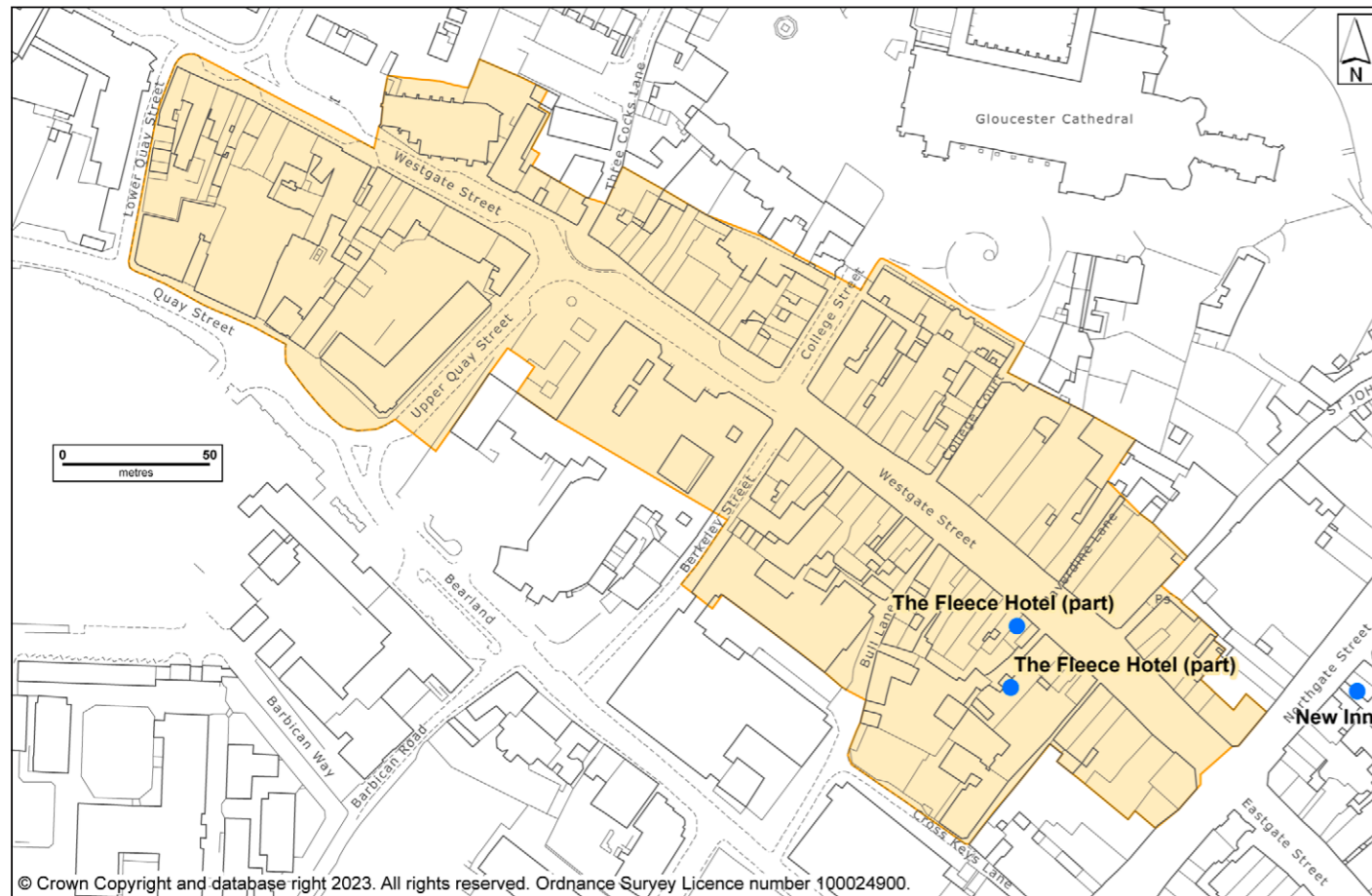
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Historic England Redruth High Street Heritage Action Zone <https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/heritage-action-zones/redruth/>

The Fleece Hotel, Westgate Street, Gloucester

Researching an historic inn to support its conservation and reuse.



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The Fleece Hotel occupies a large site on the south side of Westgate Street, Gloucester. Westgate Street is one of the four original Roman streets in Gloucester and now links the spectacular medieval cathedral to the rest of the city. It has a wide array of surviving historic buildings including the 15th century timber-framed Fleece Hotel, the Folk Museum and the Judges' Lodgings.

Since 2020 the street has been the Cathedral Quarter High Street Heritage Action Zone. Gloucester City Council is looking to begin conservation work on the site, which has been out of use since 2002 and on the Historic England [Heritage at Risk Register](#) since 2013.

A detailed investigation of the three main ranges has been carried out by Historic England, in conjunction with survey work undertaken by Gary Butler of Butler Hegarty Architects. This will result in a Historic England Research Report which will provide a baseline of information to inform ongoing works.

The main 'great inn range' is listed Grade I, and the associated ranges listed at Grade II.

As part of the High Streets Heritage Action Zones programme, Historic England funded the initial stripping out of the building in early 2022. This has provided the opportunity to study the original timber framing of the building in much greater detail than was previously possible, as well as assessing the cost of repair. A detailed investigation of the three main ranges has been carried out by Historic England, in conjunction with survey work undertaken by Gary Butler of Butler Hegarty Architects. This will result in a Historic England Research Report which will provide a baseline of information to inform ongoing works. >>



Above left: Map of the High Street Heritage Action Zone for Gloucester.

Below left: The Fleece Hotel viewed from Westgate Street, with the main entrance to the courtyard visible on the left-hand side.
© Historic England Archive, DP325614



Above left: The Fleece Hotel from the courtyard, with the larger east range on the right, and the smaller detached kitchen range on the left. © Historic England Archive, DP325657

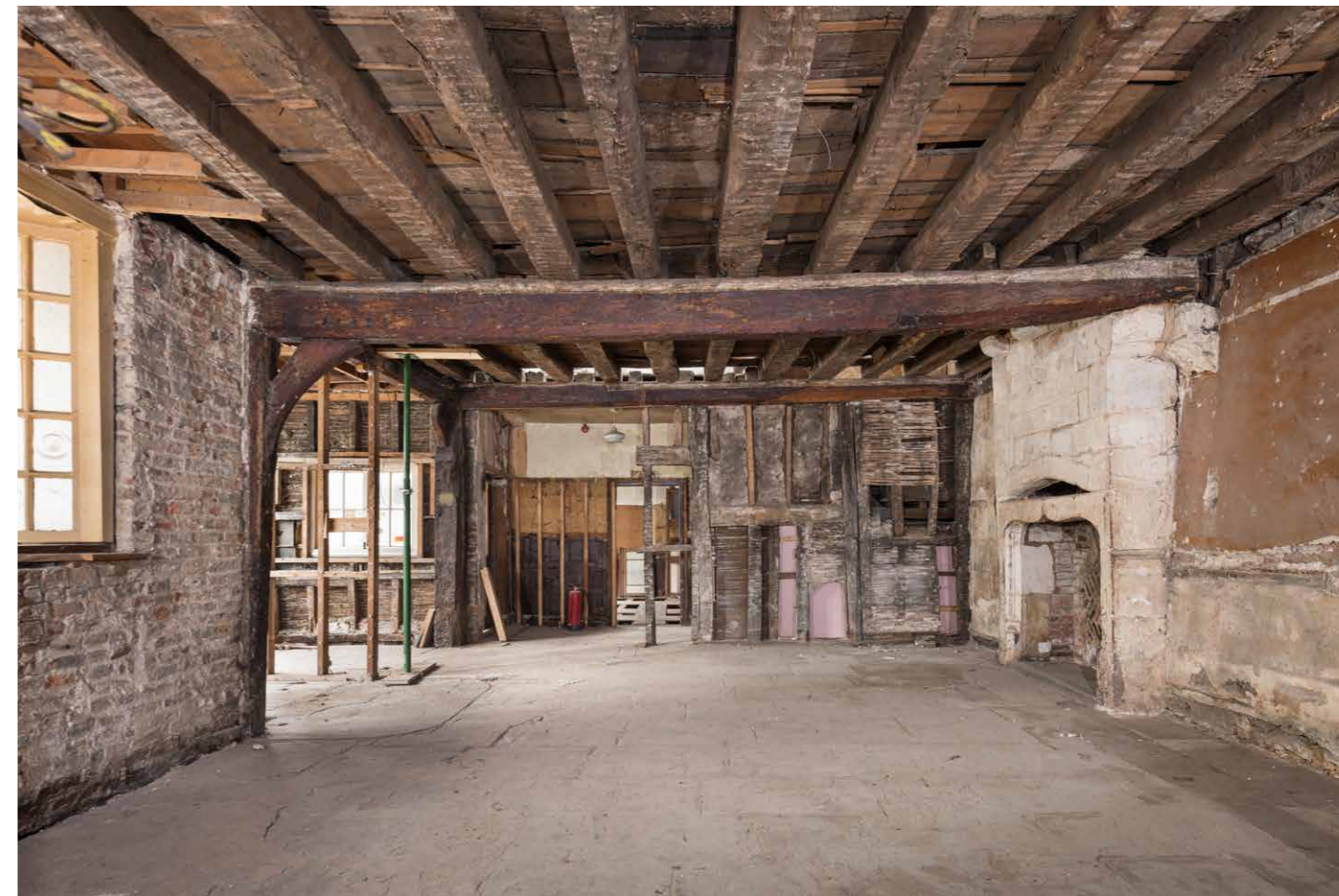
Was the Fleece originally built as an inn?

The Fleece has been used as an example of a pilgrim inn, built by Gloucester Abbey to provide accommodation for those visiting the city and the abbey in the late medieval period. It has often been compared to the [New Inn on Northgate Street](#), also built by the abbey in the 15th century. The New Inn is one of the country's best examples of a late-medieval timber-framed galleried inn, with four ranges sitting around a central courtyard and galleries leading to the lodging rooms.

Initial survey work and dendrochronology on The Fleece in 2017 confirmed that it was built around 1476, the year after the abbey purchased the site. However, documentary research in the last ten years has cast doubt on the interpretation of the site as a medieval inn.

The survey of the building in 2022 has confirmed that the 15th-century structures of the Fleece do not have the typical features of a late-medieval inn. Its three ranges are arranged around a courtyard, but the documentary and structural evidence suggests that the street-front range was rented out and used separately from the rear ranges, forming a set of shops with accommodation for the shopkeepers above. Through this range ran a passageway which gave access to the courtyard and the two ranges to the rear. The larger range, on the east side of the courtyard, incorporated a 12th-century vaulted undercroft, or cellar. The date of the cellar is suggested by the form of the columns which support the vault. At ground-floor level it provided two large high-status rooms and a smaller service bay at the southern end. The high status of the northernmost room is indicated by

Initial survey work and dendrochronology on The Fleece in 2017 confirmed that it was built around 1476, the year after the abbey purchased the site.



Above right: One of the large ground-floor rooms in the main range (the fireplace on the right is a 20th century insertion). © Historic England Archive, DP325601

an elaborate moulded finish to the posts and ceiling beams in this area. At first-floor level it had a series of large, interconnecting rooms. These led one into the other rather than having separate access in a gallery arrangement as is seen in the lodging ranges at the New Inn.

On the opposite side of the courtyard, the smaller west range appears to have functioned as a detached kitchen block. This had a smoke bay at its southern end, that is, a narrow bay which was open to the roof, to accommodate a fire. The soot from the fire is still visible on the sides of the bay and in the roof structure. The smoke bay would have been open to the kitchen, for use as a cooking hearth, with further rooms probably used for storage and accommodation.

However, documentary research in the last ten years has cast doubt on the interpretation of the site as a medieval inn.

This arrangement of structures with buildings around a rear courtyard was common for many houses in late medieval English cities. But the layout of the larger east range is not typical for a private high-status town house of the period, for it lacks a room which can clearly be identified as the hall: none of the ground-floor rooms, for example, appears to have been heated by an open hearth or a chimney. It seems likely that the ranges were used for a variety of functions, depending on the needs of the various tenants over the years. The documentary evidence seems to confirm this, with the lease sometimes belonging to relatively high-status local citizens, who may have been using their site for their private household, and at other times being let to brewers or vintners who may well have been using the site as an inn and perhaps taking advantage of the large storage capacity offered by the undercroft. >>

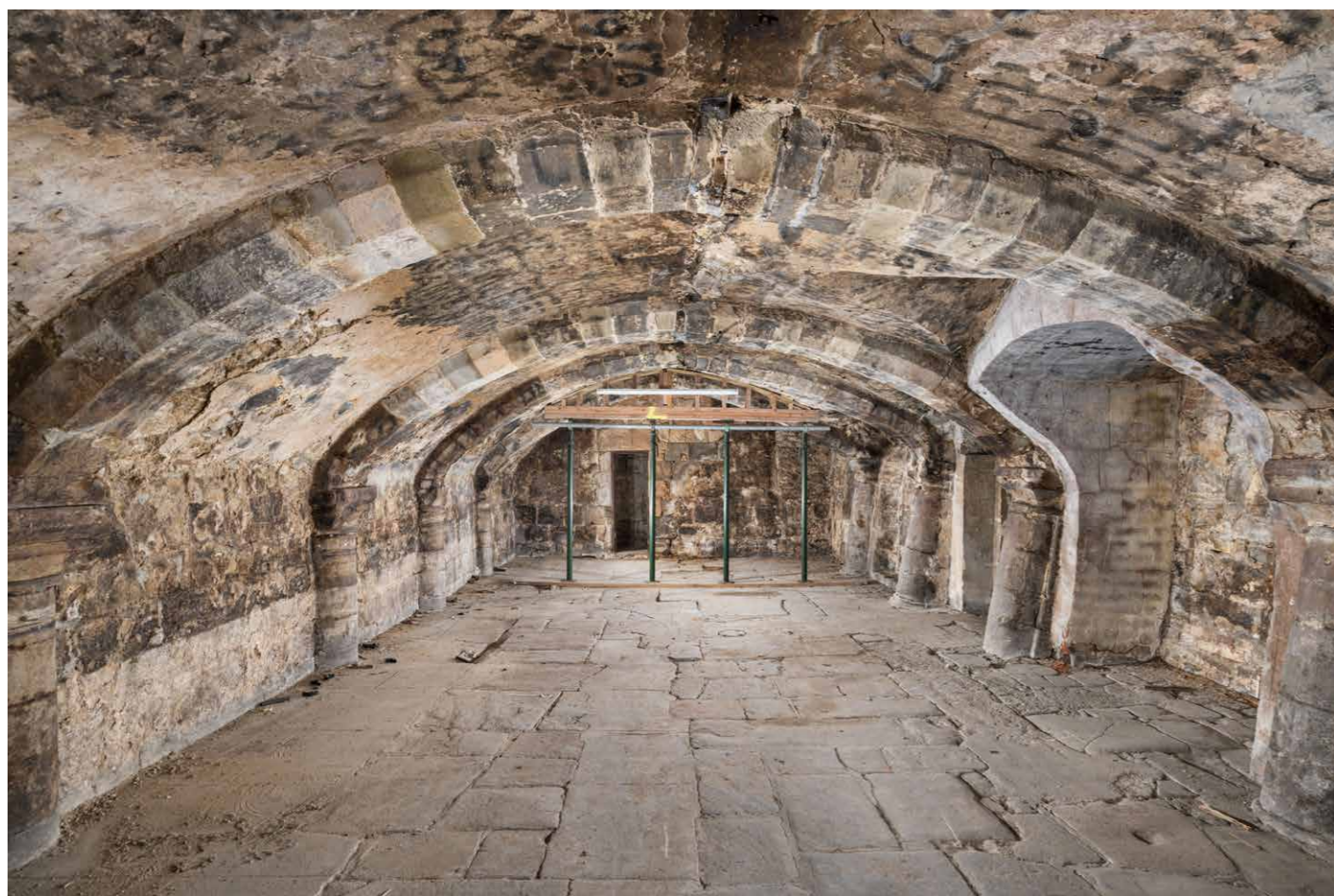
It is first given a name in the rentals of the Dean and Chapter of Gloucester Cathedral in the 1670s, when it was called the ‘Golden Fleece’.

Later alterations

From the mid-17th century the Fleece appears to have functioned purely as an inn, a use that then continued uninterrupted until the start of the 21st century. As part of this permanent change alterations were made to the two rear ranges, including the construction of a short wing on the south end of the main range, and the insertion of ceilings over the upper rooms to create attics to provide additional accommodation. It is first given a name in the rentals of the Dean and Chapter of Gloucester Cathedral in the 1670s, when it was called the ‘Golden Fleece’. The street-front range continued to be separately let as shops well into the 19th century, although this arrangement was fluid, with the building evidence

suggesting that at times the shops may have rented space in the upper parts of the inn, or vice versa.

Further extensive changes were made soon after 1799, when most of the site was sold off by the Dean and Chapter. It was bought by a local businessman, Samuel Jones, who also owned the plot next door, and he appears to have used the Fleece’s land to extend his brush factory. The main ranges continued to be used as an inn, however. In the early 19th century the Westgate Street elevation was updated by giving it a brick front, removing the original double-jetty arrangement. By this date there was also extensive stabling in the southern part of the site, which could be separately accessed from Bull Lane to the west. This was rebuilt following a fire in 1874.



Above left: The 12th-century undercroft of the main range. © Historic England Archive, DP325616

The current work will support the initial conservation of the historic ranges while a viable commercial use for the buildings is identified.

In the 20th century the main buildings were updated further, and the upper parts of the street-front range were brought into use by the hotel. In the 1920s the buildings were given a makeover to look more like a historic inn, with a fake gallery applied to the main elevation of the larger rear range, and fake timber framing applied to the Westgate Street elevation. The undercroft became a bar known as the ‘Monk’s Retreat’.

In the later 20th century the site progressively went out of use and in 2002 the undercroft bar, the last remaining business, closed. The site came into the ownership of Gloucester City Council in 2011.

Looking to the future

Investigation is still underway at the site, with further research being done into surviving historic decorative features including evidence for early paint schemes and wallpaper. The current work will support the initial conservation of the historic ranges while a viable commercial use for the buildings is identified. It is important for the Fleece, and for the wider High Street Heritage Action Zone, that a sustainable new use, relevant for a revitalised Westgate Street, secures the future of this special building, allowing it to take its place once again as a valued feature at the heart of the city ■



Above right: Soot from the fire still visible in the roof structure of the smoke bay in the detached kitchen range. © Historic England, IMG_6686

The author

Rebecca Lane

Senior Architectural Investigator for South West region with Historic England.



Rebecca worked in the commercial sector for six years as a buildings archaeologist, and latterly as a historic buildings consultant before joining the Architectural Investigation team at English

Heritage in 2010. Rebecca drafted the Historic England guidance on [Understanding Historic Buildings](#).

Further information

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Lane, R Forthcoming: The Fleece Hotel, Westgate Street, Gloucester. Historic Building Assessment.

Gloucester Cathedral Quarter High Street Heritage Action Zone <https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/heritage-action-zones/gloucester/>

List entries

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1245447?section=official-list-entry>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1245448?section=official-list-entry>

Right: The 17th century range added at around the time the site became permanently used as an inn. © Historic England Archive, DP325653



The Guildhall, Newport, Isle of Wight

New research on John Nash's civic building.

The [Guildhall in Newport](#) is a little-known civic building designed by John Nash, an eminent architect of the Georgian period. Under-utilised for many years, it is now a priority building for the town's [High Street Heritage Action Zone](#). Architectural Investigators researched the history and development of the building to inform proposals for its future. This research has been drawn together in a report, which is available from the [Historic England website](#).

The history of the site

Newport originated in the late 12th century when Richard de Redvers, Lord of Carisbrook Castle, founded the town at the head of the river

Medina. It was initially governed by bailiffs elected by the burgesses. There has been a succession of civic buildings, all on the same site near the Cornmarket (later St Thomas's Square). The earliest was the audit house erected in 1405-6, which included a court room above two shops. In 1608 the town was incorporated as a borough, with a mayor, eleven aldermen and twelve chief burgesses. About 30 years later, the audit house was rebuilt in Portland stone with an open, colonnaded ground floor for market use; the building was completed in 1639.

In 1813 the borough decided to replace the 17th-century audit house with a new mixed-use building for the market, the town

hall and the courts. The reasons for the rebuilding are not entirely clear but probably included the desire to have a civic building which adequately reflected Newport's status as the island's social and commercial centre. Several adjoining sites were acquired and the architect John Nash (1752-1835) was commissioned to prepare designs. Nash had a long-standing connection with the Isle of Wight, where he had built himself a marine villa called East Cowes Castle in the late 1790s. For the Guildhall project, Nash waived his fees and was elected a free burgess in recognition. His designs for the building and some of the administrative documents relating to its construction survive in the Isle of Wight Record Office. >>



Above: Map of the High Street Heritage Action Zone for Newport.

For the Guildhall project, Nash waived his fees and was elected a free burgess in recognition.

As completed in 1816, the Guildhall consisted of a market hall on the ground floor with open colonnades to the west and south.



Above left: The Guildhall in 2021.
© Historic England Archive, DP301377

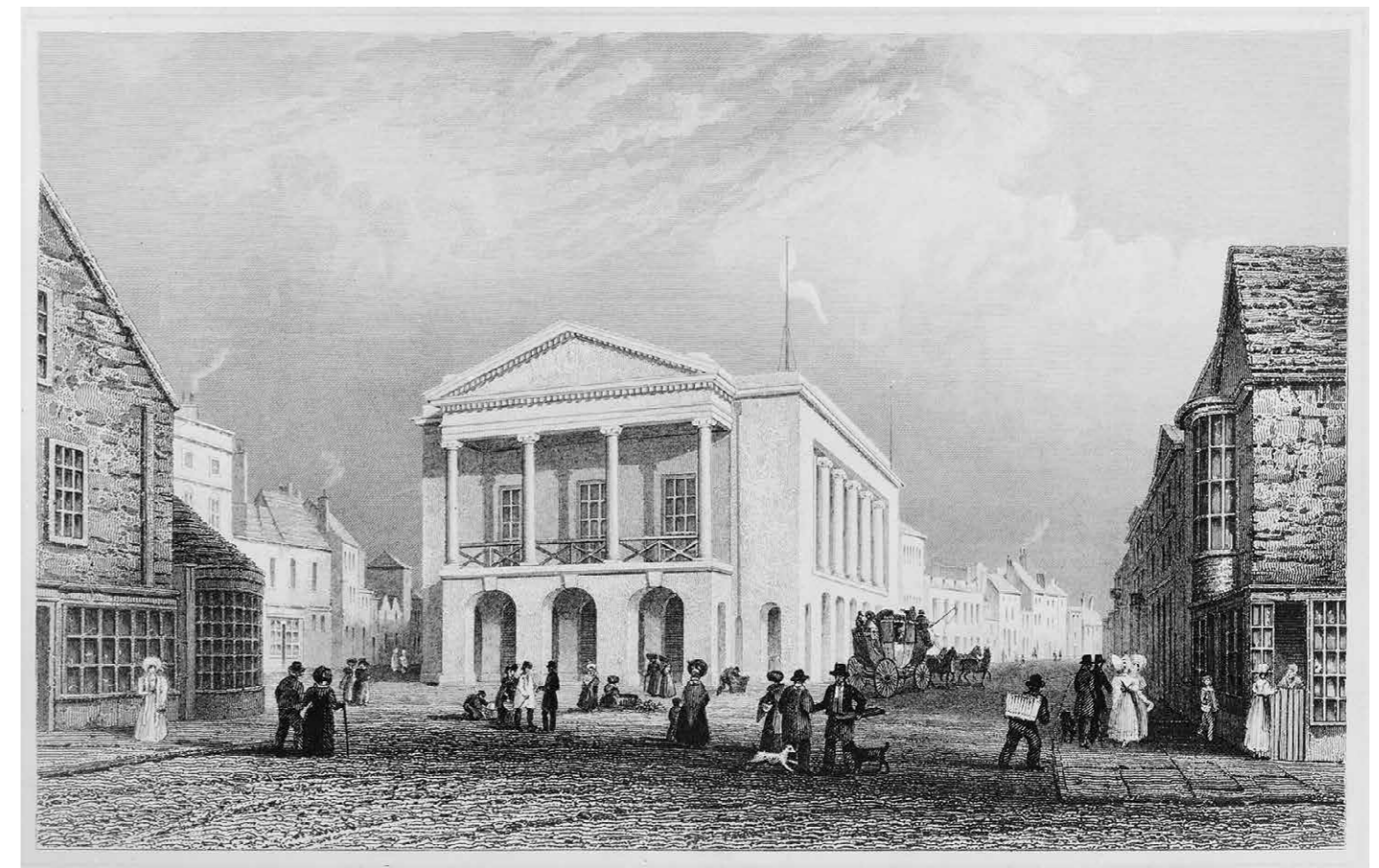
Construction of the Guildhall

In early 1814 the contractors Richard Read Tayler and Richard Hall Moorey were appointed, with the local architect and builder William Mortimer acting as works supervisor. The foundation stone was laid on 20 March 1814 and the building was completed in March 1816. It was named the Guildhall, probably to reflect its grander appearance, compared with its more modest predecessors. To commemorate its completion, a portrait of Sir Leonard Worsley

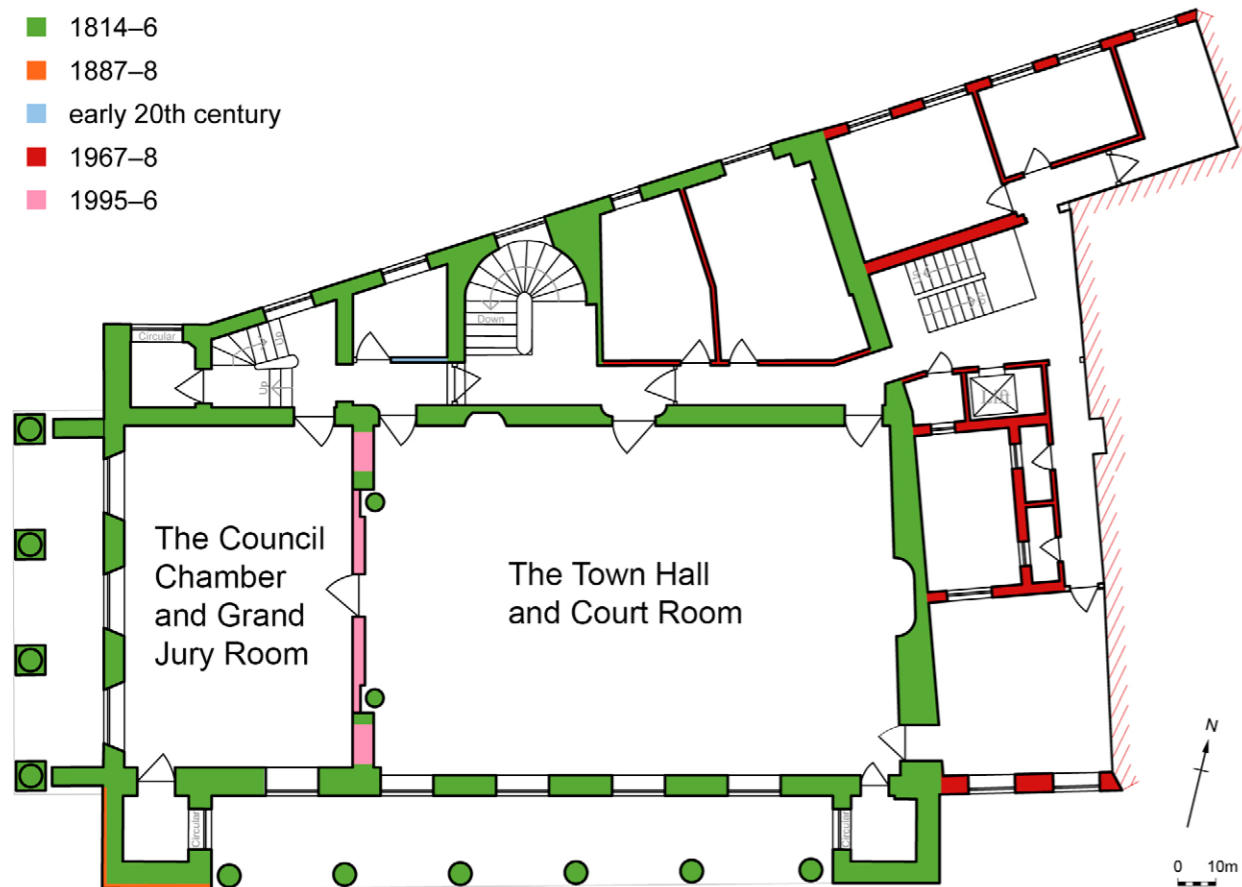
Holmes, MP for Newport and the Recorder of the Borough of Newport, was funded by public subscription and presented to the Corporation. The painting still hangs in the building today.

As completed in 1816, the Guildhall consisted of a market hall on the ground floor with open colonnades to the west and south. Inside, twelve hollow cast-iron columns supported the floor above. Two enclosed staircases, one reserved for the magistrates, led to the

first floor. Here there were two main spaces: a smaller Council Chamber and Grand Jury Room to the west and a larger Town Hall and Court Room to the east. These rooms could be thrown into one by opening a folding partition which ran between two scagliola (marble effect) columns. Other first-floor rooms included the town clerk's office and a room for the jury. As the main first-floor rooms were double height, there was only a partial second floor to the north with two small rooms. >>



Above right: Early 19th-century print of the Guildhall, published in 1834, showing the building as designed by Nash. Source: Historic England Archive, BB65/02594



Left: Phasing plan of the first floor of the Guildhall. © Historic England



Right: The former Town Hall and Court Room on the first floor, with the two scagliola columns at the far end. © Historic England Archive, DP301388

The main courts that used the building were the Quarter Sessions, the Petty Sessions and the Borough Court. When in use as a court, the Town Hall and Court Room were set out with removable fittings: the bench and a 'gallery' (probably a raised bench) behind it for magistrates and burgesses, the grand jury box and the petty jury box, as well as boxes for a witness, a prisoner and the court crier. Such moveable furnishings were common in the

early 19th century, particularly in multi-purpose buildings like the Guildhall, although fixed court room furnishings were being used more in specialist court buildings.

Later alterations

From the 1840s there were a number of alterations and two extensions. In 1843 a bracket clock was installed facing the High Street and probably at the same time a small cupola was added to the south-west corner. This provided

a precedent for the addition of a grander clock tower on this corner in 1887-8. Designed by the local architect Robert Braxton Perres (1843-1915), it commemorated Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. Partitions were gradually inserted in the market hall, which by the end of the century housed the town's fire station, and its arcades were enclosed with windows and doors. In 1909, part of the ground floor towards the High Street was converted to public lavatories. By

1930, the ground floor also housed the town's ambulance station.

In over 150 years of civic use, the Guildhall played host to many notable occasions, including welcoming the Italian patriot Giuseppe Garibaldi on 7 April 1864. A 'déjeuner' with speeches by local dignitaries was held at the Guildhall and the waiting crowds in the High Street cheered when Garibaldi appeared on the balcony. >>

In over 150 years of civic use, the Guildhall played host to many notable occasions, including welcoming the Italian patriot Giuseppe Garibaldi on 7 April 1864.



Right: Photograph taken in the winter of 1943-4, showing war damage to the adjoining properties. © Historic England Archive, AA53/04334

In the 1960s the Guildhall was radically remodelled to provide more convenient and modern accommodation for the administration of justice, housing the island's Crown, Magistrates' and County Courts. In preparation for the building's new use a major programme of extension and alterations, to plans by the County Architect, Frederick Harry Booth (1910-2002), was undertaken in 1967-8. Major changes included the insertion of a court room on the ground floor, for which eight of Nash's cast-iron columns were removed in favour of a steel frame to support the floor above. Four detention cells were inserted on

the ground floor, as well as a spiral staircase to bring defendants to the court rooms in the two main rooms on the first floor. The scagliola columns were restored by Mr A. Philips of Messrs Bellman, Ivey, Carter & Co. of London, the great-great-grandson of the original craftsman who made them for Nash. A sympathetically designed extension to the east provided retiring rooms for magistrates, justices and juries, an interview room and further offices. The extended and altered Guildhall was opened on 21 September 1968 by the Rt. Hon. The Lord Denning, the Master of the Rolls.

However, the building's life as a courthouse only lasted to 1994, when purpose-built law courts opened nearby. In 1995-6 the Guildhall was altered to house the Museum of Island History. Most of the court fittings, except the detention cells, were removed and new exhibition spaces were created on the ground floor. Further exhibition rooms on the first floor were planned as part of a second phase but this was never implemented due to concerns over floor loads. Instead, the two main rooms have been used for museum and archive storage.

Looking to the future

Having served a wide variety of civic, legal and public functions over the last 200 years, the Guildhall is once again the subject of discussions about possible future uses, as it is currently under-used and in poor condition. In November 2022 it was added to Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register, which will enable targeted support and funding. The new research has already informed the revision of the [Guildhall's list entry](#) to clarify its special architectural and historic interest. In future, the research report will be an invaluable tool to guide any forthcoming proposals for the building's restoration and conversion to a new use ■

The author

Johanna Roethe
Architectural Investigator with Historic England.



Johanna joined Historic England in 2017. She has been working on several

Heritage Action Zones and High Streets Heritage Action Zones and is the co-author of the book *Weston-super-Mare: The Town and its Seaside Heritage*, which was published by Historic England in 2019.

[ORCID: Johanna Roethe](#)

Further reading

Roethe, J and Barson, S 2022: The Guildhall, High Street, Newport, Isle of Wight: Historic Building Investigation (Historic England Research Report Series 44-2022), <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/results/reports/44-2022>

Newport High Street Heritage Action Zone <https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/heritage-action-zones/newport>



The new research has already informed the revision of the Guildhall's list entry to clarify its special architectural and historic interest.

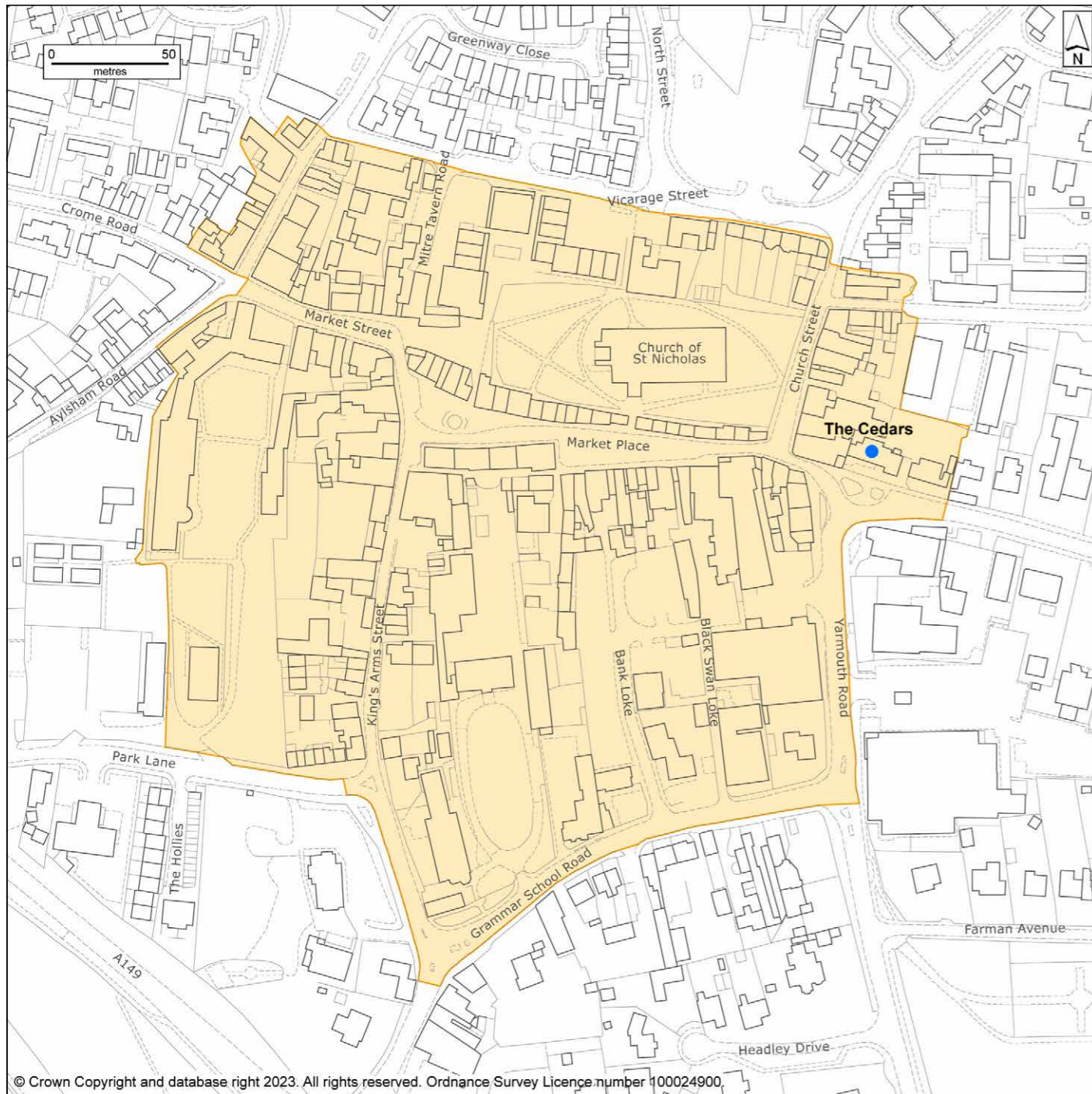
Opposite page left: The south elevation with the two-bay extension of the 1960s to the right. © Historic England Archive, DP301379

Above centre: The north-west elevation with the five-bay extension of the 1960s at the centre of the image. © Historic England Archive, DP301380

Above right: The former detention cells on the ground floor. © Historic England

The Cedars, North Walsham, Norfolk

Investigating the journey of a building from
Georgian residence to council offices.



The Cedars and the North Walsham High Street Heritage Action Zone

In 2020, North Walsham was awarded £975,000 by the government-funded High Streets Heritage Action Zones project delivered by Historic England, with additional funding invested by the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership and North Norfolk District Council – a total package of £3.2 million.

North Walsham's High Street Heritage Action Zone scheme, due to run until 2024, is focused on renewing and reviving the historic town centre, including public realm and building improvements. As part of the programme, Historic England has begun a Historic Area Assessment: a research project looking at the history and development of the town centre's buildings. >>

This HSHAZ scheme, due to run until 2024, is focused on renewing and reviving the historic town centre.



Opposite page left: Map of the High Street Heritage Action Zone for North Walsham.

Above right: The heart of the North Walsham High Street Heritage Action Zone – the Market Place, with the Elizabethan Market Cross in the foreground. © Historic England Archive, DP278210

A key component of the HSHAZ scheme is The Cedars, located just to the east of the Market Place.

A key component of the High Street Heritage Action Zone is [The Cedars](#), located just to the east of the Market Place, in the heart of North Walsham. Constructed as a private residence in the late 18th century, this building was altered in the Victorian period and following the Second World War was converted as offices for North Walsham Urban District Council. The Cedars, listed Grade II in 1972, remained in use as council offices until 2016, when the building was vacated. Thanks to the High Street Heritage Action Zone scheme, works to fully restore The Cedars are well underway, and our partners at North Norfolk District Council are presently considering the best future use for the building, along with the former agricultural outbuildings on the adjacent plot.

Early history of The Cedars – home to a naval hero

Research into the history of The Cedars has shown that it was built around the 1790s and then formed one of a series of substantial houses on the fringes of North Walsham. Information about the building's original occupants has not been uncovered, but by 1824 The Cedars was home to a notable figure in naval history – Captain Thomas Withers (1769-1843). Born in nearby Knapton, Withers was 'the companion in arms and friend' of Horatio, Lord Nelson, who attended Paston Grammar School in North Walsham in 1768-71. Withers served under Nelson on the HMS *Agamemnon* between 1793 and 1796 during the Napoleonic Wars. He went on to serve under the naval officer Sir Richard Bickerton and was promoted to Post Captain in 1809. It was later stated that 'Such was the confidence reposed

By 1824 The Cedars was home to a notable figure in naval history, Captain Thomas Withers, 'companion in arms and friend' of Horatio, Lord Nelson.

in' Withers that he was at one point responsible for ships amounting to no less than 50,000 tons.

Withers retired from active service in 1816, settled in North Walsham and was certainly in residence as a tenant at The Cedars in 1824, by which year he had married and was expecting a child. The house at that time – described by a local newspaper as 'fit for the residence of a genteel family' – had three sitting rooms, five bedrooms, a detached stable building and a walled garden, with 'choice fruit trees'. It can be imagined that, during his time at the house, Withers entertained friends and neighbours with stories of his naval exploits. On his death, the 'Naval and Military Gazette' stated that 'few men were better versed in all the stirring events of that great contest in which he had borne a part'.

The Shipleys at The Cedars

After Withers came the Shipleys. William Shipley (1799-1877), veterinary surgeon, rented The Cedars from around the late 1830s, using the building both as a home and a workplace: the surgery was probably located between the entrance hall and the kitchen. Shipley lived at The Cedars with his family, which included his wife Eliza and their sons William (1833-1904) and Joshua (1834-91), both of whom qualified as vets. The Shipleys also ran a branch of their veterinary practice in Great Yarmouth, and that became a permanent home after The Cedars was sold in September 1869. By that point, the building was described as a 'spacious and decidedly valuable Brick and Tiled Dwelling-House' which was in 'excellent repair', having been refurbished during that year. >>



Left: The Cedars from the south-east in 2020. The section of the house on the right is believed to date from the early 1870s. © Historic England Archive, DP278235



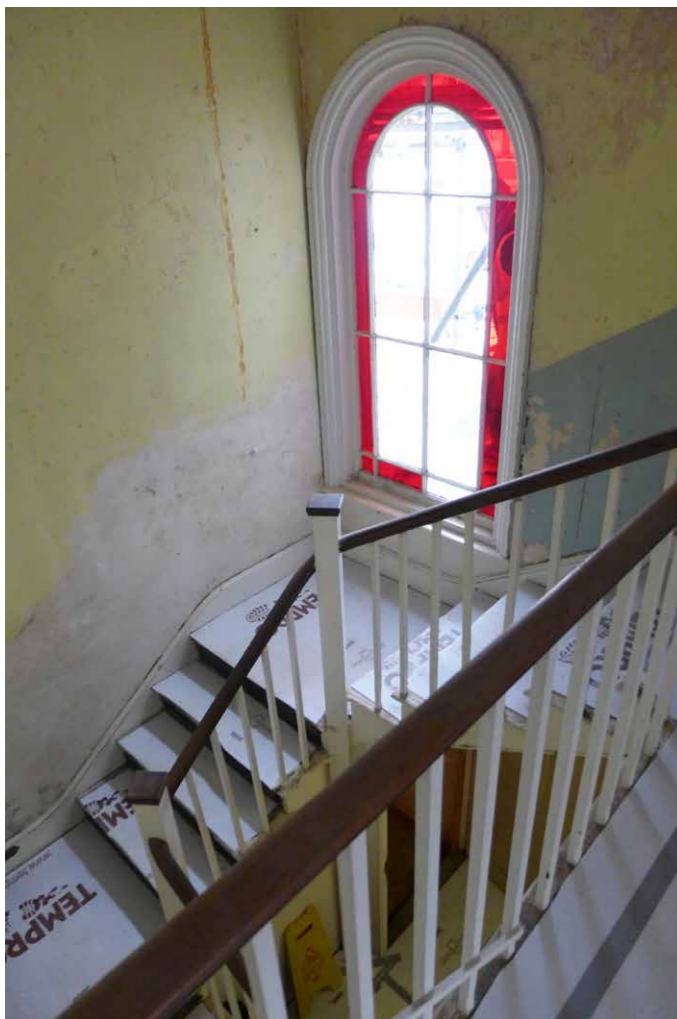
Right: Detail from the tithe map of 1842. The large black-shaded building is the church and The Cedars is plot 120, at the bottom right. All rights reserved by Norfolk Record Office. Catalogue reference DN/TA 663



Above left: Detail of aerial photograph of The Cedars, showing the Victorian additions at the rear (north) and east.
© Historic England Archive, ref. 33932_006



Above right: Photograph of 1912 showing the corner building 2-4 Church Street, occupied and owned by the Smiths for many decades. Beyond (on the right) are 1 New Road and The Cedars. Courtesy of North Walsham & District Community Archive



Rebuilding by the Smiths

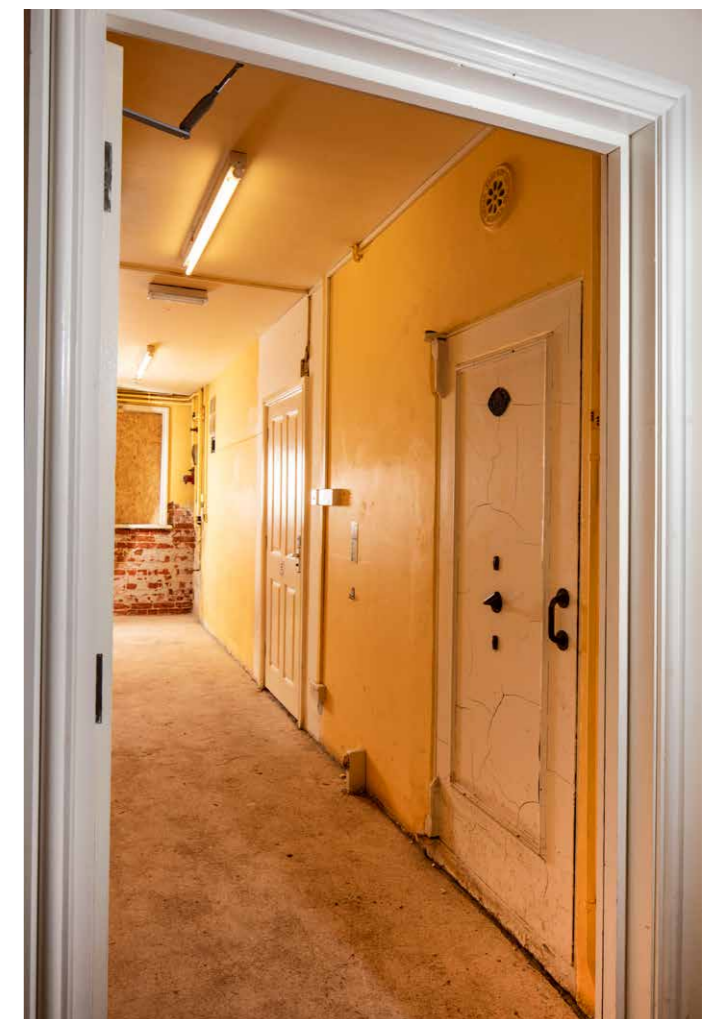
The purchaser of The Cedars in 1869 was George Smith (1812-86), who had lived and worked in adjacent Church Street since at least 1841. Smith was a grocer, draper, banker and insurance agent who became a well-known figure in the town. By the 1870s if not earlier, the area around Smith's residence and workplace at 2-4 Church Street had become known as 'Smith's Corner'.

By 1879, Smith had moved into The Cedars, which he seems to have rebuilt fairly comprehensively and awarded it its current name. Works undertaken during this period included the building of an east extension containing a new dining room and bedroom suite, as well as a rear hall and new staircase. Smith, who lived at The Cedars with his wife Martha (1816-91) and their children, died at the property in 1886, a moment which must have represented the end of an era for the town.

Left: The staircase of The Cedars. This seems to have formed part of work undertaken by George Smith in the early 1870s.
© Historic England

However, Smith's home and business were taken on by his son and namesake, George William Smith (1849-1933), continuing the family connection with The Cedars. George junior worked at 2-4 Church Street from at least the 1870s, became the owner of The Cedars on his mother's death in 1891, moving in with his wife Madeline (1860-1946), and transferred his workplace to the adjacent premises at 1 New Road around that time. Interesting changes from George junior's time at the house include the installation of a safe or strong room for the storage of ledgers and other valuable documents. Madeline was a keen gardener, developing the walled garden. The Smiths' daughter Gladys (1884-1962) subsequently took on the family business, working as manager of the savings bank until her retirement. >>

Right: The Victorian service corridor with the door to the safe on the right. This was made by Chubb and has been dated to 1911/13. © Historic England Archive, DP346284





Above left: The family of George and Madeline Smith in the walled garden of The Cedars in about 1930. Courtesy of Nick Groves, North Walsham & District Community Archive

Conversion as council offices

Following the death of Madeline Smith in 1946, The Cedars was rented to North Walsham Council for use as offices and was subsequently sold to the council, together with surrounding land. During these years – right up until 2016 – the building was in public use and therefore a focal point of North Walsham.

Naturally, this change of function affected the building's interior and grounds. The former dining room became the council chamber, for instance, while the council's health inspectors were accommodated in the former bedroom suite above. Outside, the walled garden was converted to a car park, and around 1986 the former stable building – probably dating from the late 18th century – was demolished.

The setting of The Cedars also changed. The year 1934 saw the demolition of The Oaks, a nearby house set in substantial grounds on the south side of New Road. From the mid-1960s, this site was redeveloped as a public services 'hub', including post office, library and fire station – changing forever the semi-rural character of this quarter of North Walsham.

In 1946, The Cedars was rented to North Walsham Council for use as offices and was subsequently sold to the council.

Restoration and reuse

In 2021, a programme of refurbishment was initiated at The Cedars, which had been vacated by North Norfolk District Council five years earlier and had lain unused since that time. The restoration work, overseen by Kings & Dunne Architects, has helped to breathe new life into this historic house. A detailed Historic England Research Report on the building was issued in December 2022, with the aim of informing ongoing site works and plans for the building's future, as well as promoting North Walsham and its heritage more generally. The site's future now looks bright – while the character of the architecture of The Cedars has been sensitively brought back to life. The restored building, which should be seen alongside the ongoing regeneration work in and around Market



Above right: Conversion of The Cedars as council offices involved various changes, undertaken around the late 1950s/early 1960s. The post-war features in this image have recently been removed and the area opened up as part of the adjacent room. © Historic England

Place, will now form a more unified part of the town centre of North Walsham. It will create a landmark of the High Street Heritage Action Zone scheme at the east entrance to the town, and will contribute to the sense of pride in and ownership of North Walsham as a place to live, learn, work and visit ■

The site's future now looks bright – while the character of its architecture has been sensitively brought back to life.

The author

Dr Emily Cole FSA
Senior Architectural Investigator with Historic England and (joint) Lead Professional for Architectural Investigation.



Emily joined English Heritage as a historian in 1999 and was Head of the Blue Plaques Team from 2003 until 2013. Recent work, alongside that on North Walsham, includes a book on Stevenage new town (Historic England/Liverpool University Press, 2021) and research into 20th-century pubs.

Further information

Emily Cole and James Shemmonds, 'The Cedars, 1A and 3 New Road, North Walsham, Norfolk: Historic Building Report', [Historic England Research Report Series, no. 64-2022](#).

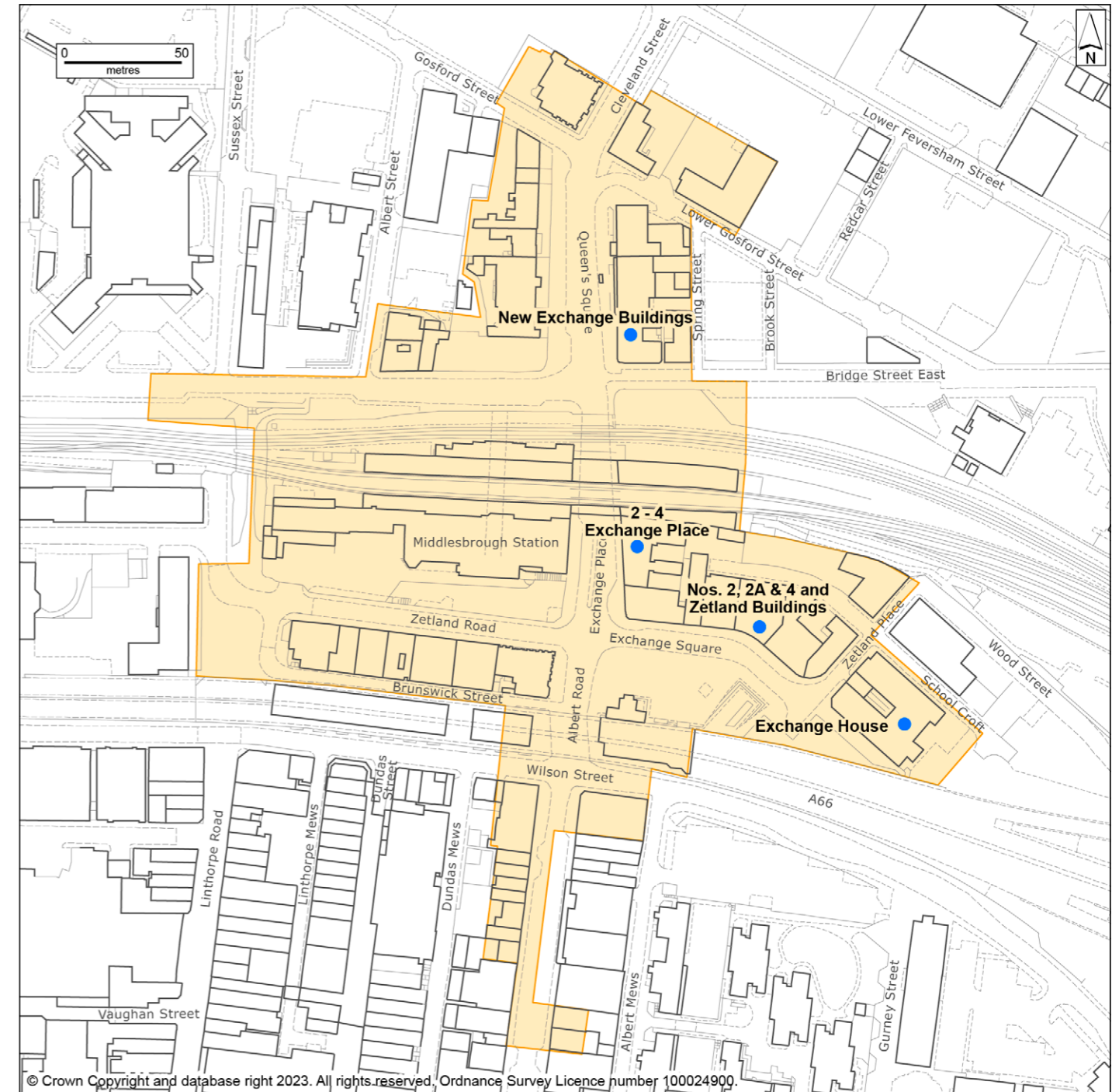
[Historic England: North Walsham High Street Heritage Action Zone](#)
<https://historicengland.org.uk/research/results/reports/24-2022>

Victorian commercial buildings in the Middlesbrough High Street Heritage Action Zone

Researching an imposing Victorian commercial and civic legacy.

One of the High Streets Heritage Action Zones in Historic England's North East and Yorkshire region is in the centre of Middlesbrough, a town which was historically part of the North Riding of Yorkshire, then Cleveland. Its position on the river Tees brought immense prosperity and swift development in the 19th and 20th centuries, leaving a legacy

of imposing Victorian buildings in the vicinity of the railway station which are at the heart of the High Street Heritage Action Zone. In 2021-22 architectural investigators researched a number of key buildings as part of Historic England's contribution to the planned revitalisation of this important part of the town centre. >>



Above: Map of the High Street Heritage Action Zone for Middlesbrough.



Above left: Exchange Square, Middlesbrough, the heart of the High Street Heritage Action Zone, seen from Exchange House in June 2022 when the square was being renovated. The building under the A66 flyover has now been removed and Blessley's curvaceous Zetland Buildings are on the right. © Historic England

The High Street Heritage Action Zone in Middlesbrough

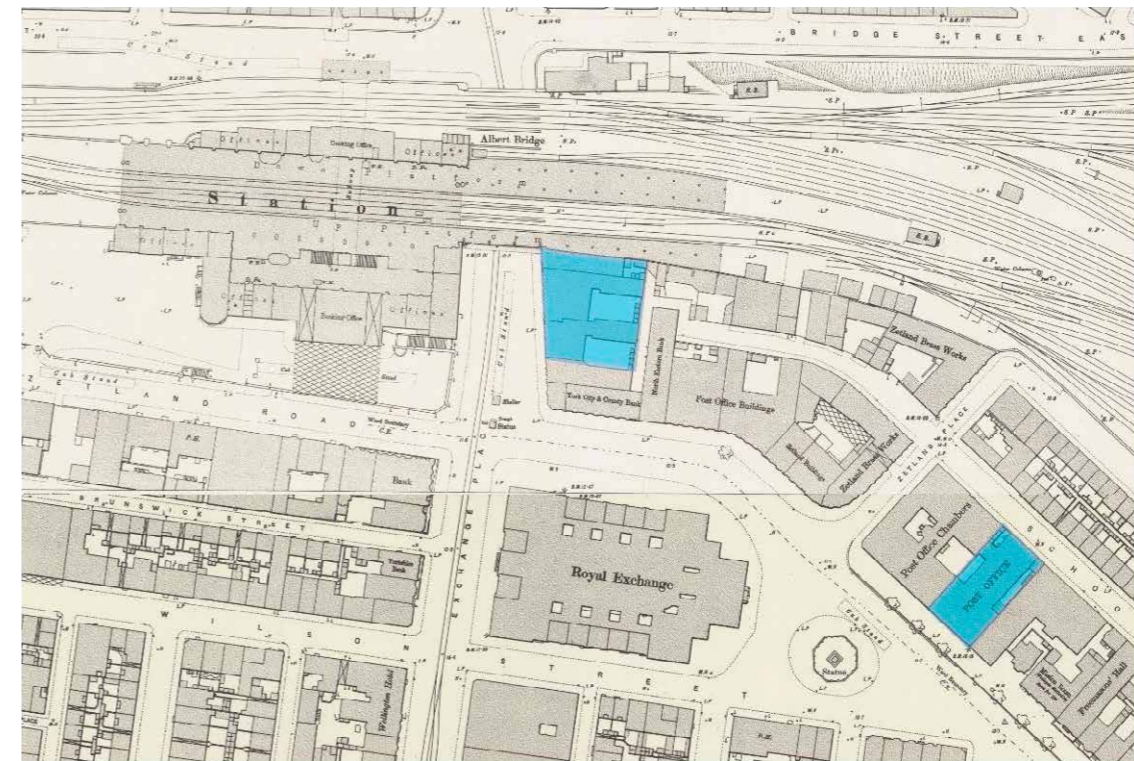
The [Middlesbrough High Street Heritage Action Zone](#) is part of a designated Conservation Area at Risk. Funding is supporting the regeneration of heritage assets and the wider public realm, and the development of community-based cultural activities designed to develop high streets as hubs for local cultural, retail and commercial engagement. Substantial work has already been carried out within the area, with Exchange Square relaid to provide accessible access and to create an inviting meeting space. Some of the carved keystones from the demolished Royal Exchange have been cleaned, repaired and relocated. External building repairs are

being carried out at four properties to make the buildings weathertight and to allow for internal reuse and conversion.

Developing a Victorian new town

Middlesbrough was an entirely new town, founded in 1829 and built on farmland bought and divided up into plots by the Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate, which was formed by Joseph Pease (1799-1872), a major initiator and investor in the Stockton & Darlington Railway, coal mining, quarrying and textile production. Middlesbrough was created to support the coal trade of County Durham, the coal being transported by the Stockton & Darlington Railway (its branch line opened in 1830) and then loaded onto ships at a new port on

Middlesbrough was created to support the coal trade of County Durham, the coal being transported by the Stockton & Darlington Railway (its branch line opened in 1830) and then loaded onto ships at a new port on the River Tees.



Left: The 1:500 Ordnance Survey town plan of Middlesbrough, surveyed in 1892 and published in 1894. Nos 2-4 Exchange Place and Exchange House (former post office) are highlighted. © and database right Crown Copyrights and Landmark Information Group Ltd, Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024.

the River Tees. The town swiftly grew in importance as coal, then the iron and steel industry, brought prosperity and further expansion. The first part of Middlesbrough was built to the north of the station: it consisted of a small grid of streets between the railway and the Tees, arranged around a market place containing the town hall and surrounded by places of worship and market buildings (now mostly cleared).

By the 1870s, the area around and south of the station became the town's commercial and civic centre, due to the construction of the Royal Exchange, designed by Charles John Adams (around 1838-1879) of Stockton-on-Tees. It opened in 1868, housing shops, a public dining room and

a large space for the trading of iron, which could also be used by the public for events. It stood in a triangular space, later named Exchange Square, the western boundary of which was formed by the southern end of Exchange Place; it was demolished in the 1980s for the construction of the A66 flyover. Exchange Place was a key road which linked the old town to the north with the expanding new town to the south. The station was rebuilt in 1873-77 to face the new town. Exchange Place and Exchange Square were, from the start, designed more for business rather than shopping, providing banks and offices to support the iron trading at the Royal Exchange and capitalising on the proximity of the railway station. >>

Exchange Place and Exchange Square were, from the start, designed more for business rather than shopping, providing banks and offices to support the iron trading at the Royal Exchange and capitalising on the proximity of the railway station.

Designer of commercial Middlesbrough: William Henry Blesley

W. H. Blesley (1841-1936) was responsible for many of Middlesbrough's key commercial buildings of the 1870s. Though London-born, Blesley lived and worked in Middlesbrough by the time of the 1871 census, remaining until retirement. His designs for the rows of offices in Exchange Place opposite the eastern elevation of the station and on the northern side of Exchange Square set the tone for this part of the town.

Blesley designed nos 2-4, Exchange Place around 1870 as offices with a number of different businesses operating from there, including a photographer at no. 4. Around 1870-72 he also designed 2, 2a and 4, Zetland Buildings facing both Exchange Square and Zetland Place followed by New Exchange Buildings on Exchange Place north of the railway line in 1874; they are all listed at Grade II. The Zetland name refers to Thomas Dundas (1795-1873), 2nd Earl of Zetland, Lord Lieutenant of the North Riding of Yorkshire from 1838 until his death. He was a key regional magnate and landowner at nearby Marske and Redcar when this part of Middlesbrough was laid out.

Other Middlesbrough buildings by Blesley include further offices on Zetland Place, churches, a Quaker meeting house and schools. He used a variety of eclectic styles, but he favoured the Venetian Gothic revival for his designs in Exchange Place, New Exchange Buildings and Zetland Buildings. Zetland Buildings, also known as 'New Post-Office Buildings', were built to house a post office room with the telegraphic department on the ground floor, while the rest of the building was let as offices and also accommodated Jordison's printing and stationery business ('Northern Echo', 21 May 1870, 4).



These long ranges of commercial buildings by Blesley cover many urban plots and their three-storey elevations are eye-catching and colourful, with triangular gables sometimes adding interest to the roofline. Though most are on straight streets, the curvaceousness of Zetland Buildings particularly adds value to Exchange Square, with a rounded corner facing Zetland Place. Exchange Buildings similarly has a curved corner,

Above: Nos 2-4, Exchange Place, Middlesbrough, typical of the Venetian Gothic work of W. H. Blesley. © Historic England

allowing the repetition of the arched windows to flow across two elevations.

Blesley used constructional polychromy by combining red brick walls with white brick, stone and terracotta accents. This use of colour was inspired by John Ruskin (1819-1900), a leading light in the promotion of the Gothic style in the mid-19th century and author of 'The Stones of Venice' (1851-3).

And while the choice of a Gothic revival style was not unusual for the period, the prolific use of Venetian detailing – paired or longer runs of windows divided by stone colonettes or brick piers, a variety of arch shapes for window heads and relieving arches, all emphasised by polychromy – makes this part of Middlesbrough a homogenous and colourful place. >>



Above left: South elevation of the original part of Exchange House, Exchange Square, Middlesbrough, once the post office. © Historic England

A new post office for a growing town

The Post Office soon outgrew its space in Zetland Buildings as Middlesbrough expanded, the town's population and businesses outstripping the organisation's ability to deal with the resulting increase in correspondence. Consequently, the town's worthies met the Postmaster General in London in 1877 and the construction of a dedicated post office building for Middlesbrough was agreed. A site was found further east on Exchange Square, cementing the commercial success of the area, and the new post office opened in 1879.

Now known as [Exchange House](#) (listed Grade II), the post office was not designed locally but by the Office of Works in London, as was usual for this government-run institution. The architect responsible was James Williams (1824-92), designer of head post offices all over the country during the 1860s-80s; he also designed some county court buildings. The choice of red brick was unsurprising, bearing in mind the Middlesbrough context, but the three-storey elevation facing Exchange Square was considerably grander although perhaps more conventional than Blessley's work. Williams used elements of classical Italianate design which are typical of his Post-Office style – rustication, vast cornices, pediments, moulded doorcases and window surrounds, all in stone – to set this building apart from its Venetian Gothic neighbours. In addition, its basement and raised ground floor made the building substantially taller than Zetland Buildings.

It contained all the functions one would expect in an up-to-date Post Office building of the period. The ground floor housed the

main public post office, with a smaller room for the post-master. The sorting office lay behind, with access from School Croft to the rear. The basement contained the batteries required for telegraphy. On the first floor was a 'telegraphists room' for transmitting messages, with two retiring rooms for the superintendents and the clerks; the second floor housed the 'instrument room' containing much of the technical apparatus for the telegraph. The building and its layout were described in an article in the 'Daily Gazette for Middlesbrough', published on 17 September 1879 during the week of its opening, as a 'lofty, handsome, and substantially-built edifice'.

The Post Office soon outgrew this building too. An addition was made at the rear, along School Croft, around 1913, perhaps to increase space for sorting and parcels, providing more room for the loading and unloading of vehicles and possibly also housing the telephone system which had become a Post Office function in 1912. The third, and final, addition was built in 1926: a three-storey neo-Georgian wing to the west replaced the earlier Post Office Chambers of the late 19th century, with elevations facing Exchange Square and Zetland Place. But in 1984, the Post Office departed to new premises, Exchange House became Teesside Archives, and since their relocation to the Dorman Museum a new use is being found for this part of the building.

The buildings around Exchange Square and the adjoining streets are individually important, as recognised in their listed status. But they are more than individual structures, for together they give a distinct

character to the area and strongly reflect Middlesbrough's emergence as a town of regional and national significance. Along with the railway station and the offices and hotels lying within the High Street Heritage Action Zone, they define the nature of the nineteenth-century town – thriving, commercial, modern – and their lively architecture is an adornment to the contemporary scene. Targeted building research will underpin a listing review, for the time is right to reassess their significance within the town's history. Within the wider High Street Heritage Action Zone, grants, redevelopment of the railway station and private sector investment will combine with Historic England's architectural research to revitalise this distinguished part of Middlesbrough and, with a new purpose, help it to become a destination for residents and visitors ■

The author

Dr Lucy Jessop
Senior Architectural Investigator for North East and Yorkshire region with Historic England.



Lucy has worked for Historic England and its predecessor for over 15 years, researching and investigating buildings and places.

Her research interests are wide-ranging, but they include the design and construction of 17th- and 18th-century houses, and architectural patronage.

Further information

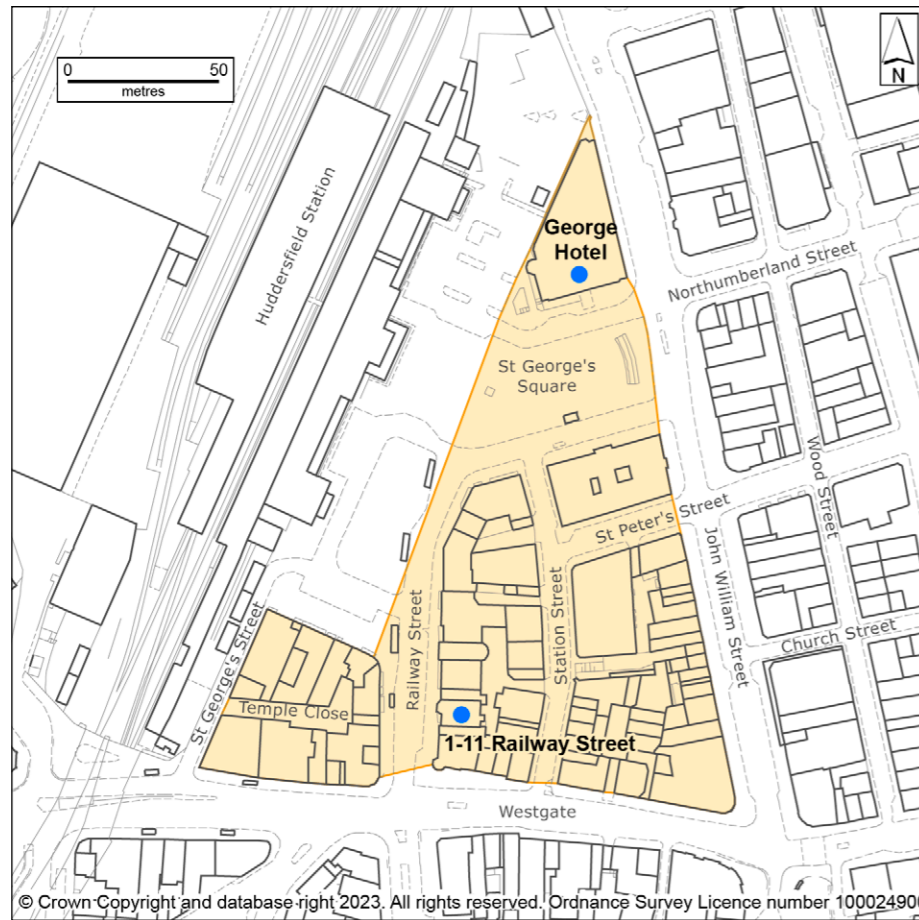
Johnson, M., *Ironopolis: The Architecture of Middlesbrough* (Stroud, 2020).

The expansion of the post office mirrored the growth of the town, by then a renowned centre for iron and steel production.

Targeted building research will underpin a listing review, for the time is right to reassess their significance within the town's history.

Victorian development in the Huddersfield High Street Heritage Action Zone

19th-century development by the Ramsden Estate.



The Huddersfield High Street Heritage Action Zone is a triangular area of mid-19th-century commercial buildings, bounded by the town's station, John William Street and Westgate. Almost all of Huddersfield's centre, within the A62 ring road, is part of the Huddersfield Town Centre Conservation Area, designated in 1981 and at risk since 2020. The High Street Heritage Action Zone forms part of Historic England and Kirklees Council's work to improve the condition of the conservation

area and its historic buildings, and to bring new uses to empty spaces. Architectural investigators researched two key buildings within the HSHAZ in 2020 and 2021 – the George Hotel and the Estate Buildings – to increase understanding of their history before redevelopment.

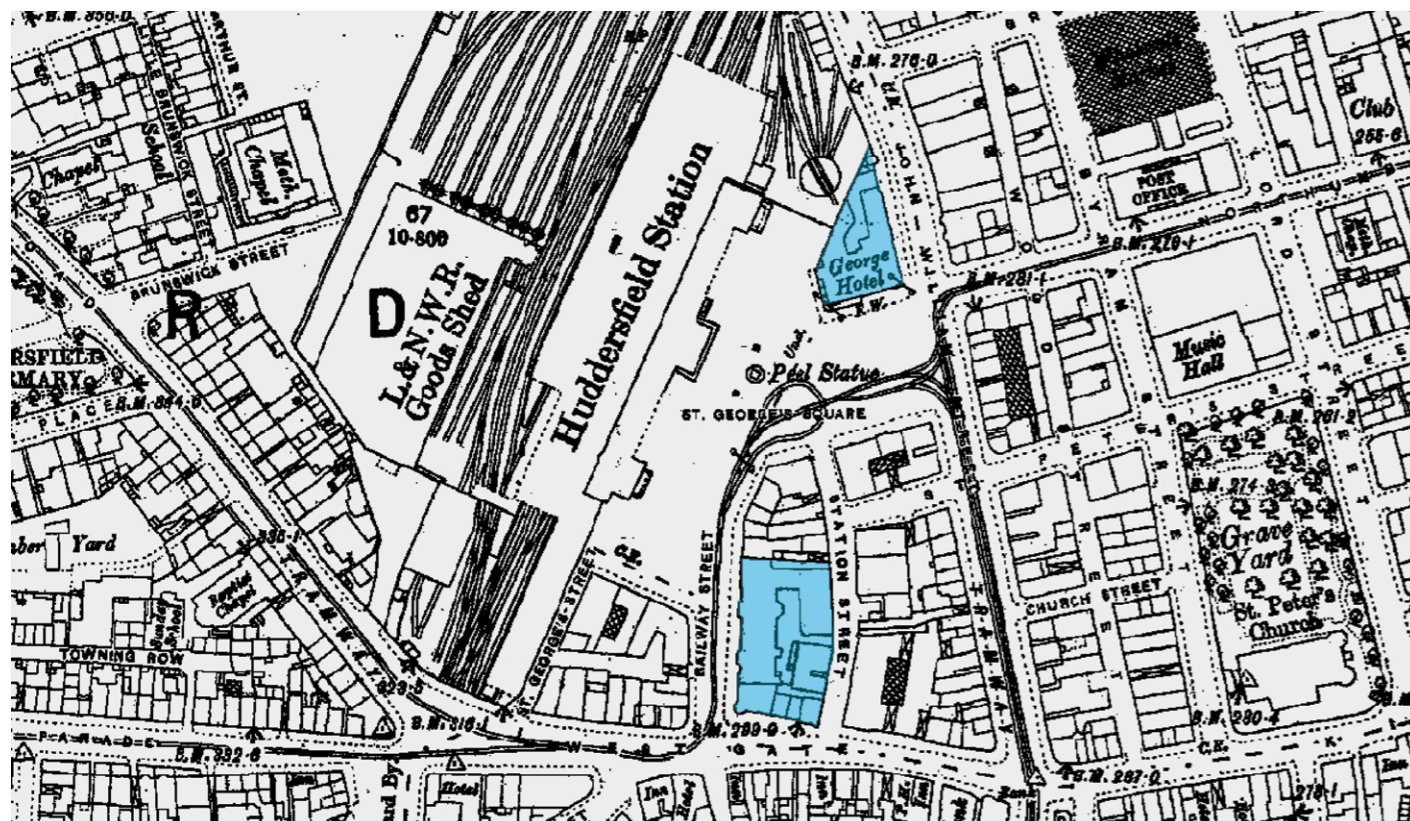
Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, was a small but historic market town until the 18th century when – encouraged by the Ramsden family who owned much of the town and the surrounding land

– the textile industry brought trade and manufacturing. Its rich legacy of 19th-century buildings represents the town's prosperity. The valleys which converged at Huddersfield were home to textile mills, with associated industry such as dye and iron works. The Huddersfield Broad Canal (opened 1779) connected the town via the canal network to the North Sea; the Huddersfield Narrow Canal (completed in 1811) then linked it westwards, creating a trans-Pennine route with onward links to Manchester and Liverpool. >>

Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, was a small but historic market town until the 18th century when the textile industry brought trade and manufacturing. Its rich legacy of 19th-century buildings represents the town's prosperity.

Above left: Map of the High Street Heritage Action Zone for Huddersfield.

Below left: The 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map of Huddersfield, surveyed 1887-8 and published 1893, with the George Hotel and the Estate Buildings highlighted. © and database right Crown Copyrights and Landmark Information Group Ltd, Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024.

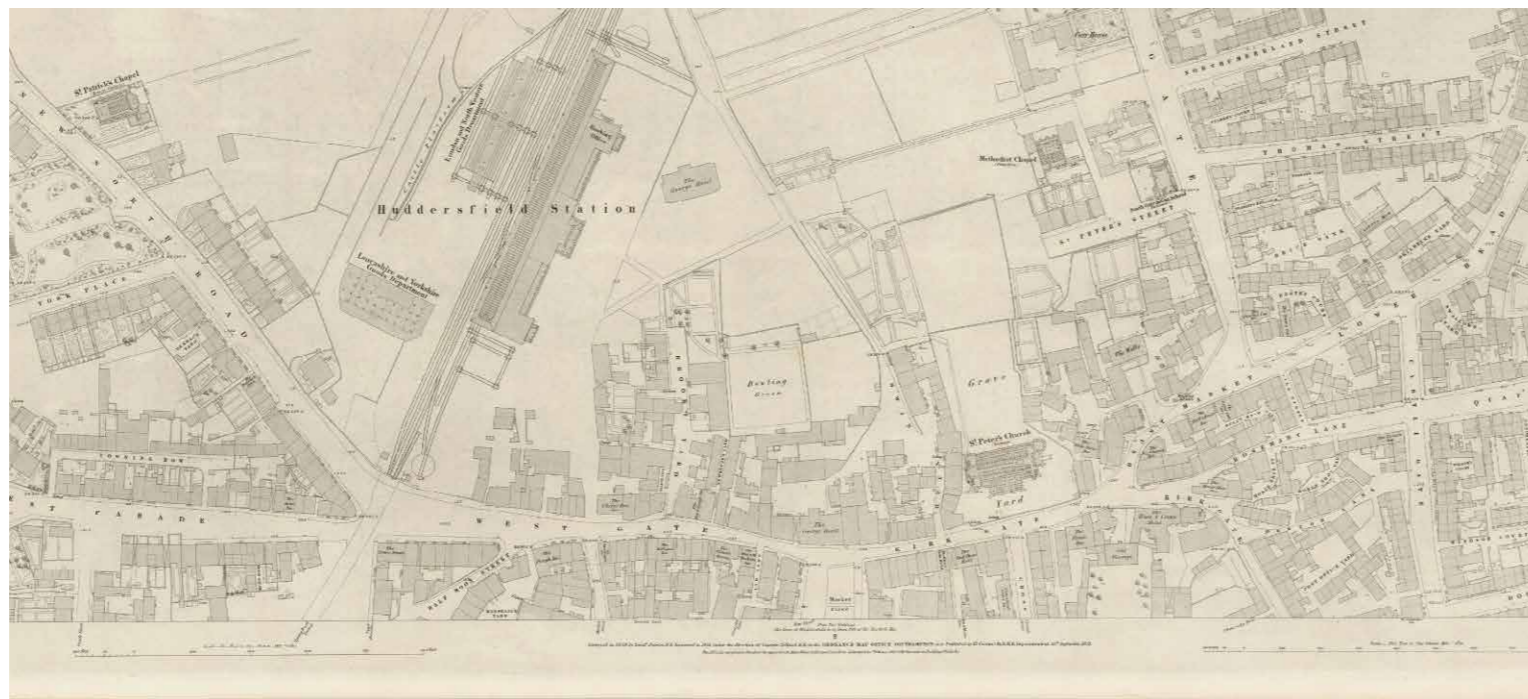


Building Victorian Huddersfield

The arrival of the railway in 1846-50 significantly accelerated the rate at which the town grew, connecting it to its markets and sources of supply. The station was constructed north of medieval Westgate, and the Ramsden estate sold leases of many large plots to the east of the railway station, including many along John William Street and within St George's Square, to developers. The estate retained design control over what was built, employing the London architect Sir William Tite (1798-1873) to scrutinise the plans. Importantly, though, it built several complexes itself to maximise its investment, including a hotel, offices and a shopping arcade.

The George Hotel

The George Hotel (a Grade II* listed building) was built in 1848-50 next to the station, the two together forming two sides of an irregular but impressive open space, St George's Square. Further buildings were added during the 1850s, including Lion Buildings (1853), Britannia Buildings (about 1858) and no. 7, St George's Square (also probably 1850s). The newly-created John William Street – named for Sir John William Ramsden, 5th Baronet (1831-1914) – formed the eastern side of St George's Square, connecting it with Huddersfield's historic market place. The old George Hotel on the north side of the market place had to be demolished to build this street, so its replacement was given a prestigious new site near the station. It became a favoured meeting place and the charter founding Rugby League was signed there in 1895.



Top: The 1:500 Ordnance Survey town plan of Huddersfield, surveyed 1848 and published 1851, showing the newly-built station, the new George Hotel and the older George Hotel still standing on the north side of the market place. © and database right Crown Copyrights and Landmark Information Group Ltd, Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024.



Above: View of the George Hotel, Huddersfield, in 2020 from the south west. © Historic England Archive DP262001

The new George was commissioned and funded by the Ramsden estate, and designed in 1848 by William Wallen (1803-88) of London and Huddersfield, who worked for the estate in the 1840s. His Italianate, classical design was typical of Huddersfield's expansion in the late 1840s and 50s, using high-quality ashlar for the wall surface and the architectural details. The George has an imposing and symmetrical four-storey elevation facing the square, with quoins marking the corners of projections and a decreasing level of architectural detailing from elaborately rusticated ground floor to cornice. The west elevation once contained an entrance directly opposite the station and this side of the building is decorative in contrast with the plainer east elevation. The basement housed the cellars, laundry, tap room and two parlours; the kitchen, large parlour, bars and two large meeting rooms (the Market and George Rooms) were on the ground floor; the large coffee room and Commercial Room were on the first floor with four named letting rooms. Bedrooms and bathrooms were on the second, third and fourth floors.

The hotel was enlarged at a date unknown, but before 1874: an east wing, at the rear of the hotel and evident on the 1893 map, was perhaps constructed very soon after the main building went up. Its plainer three-storey elevation faces John William Street. This east wing provided a large ground-floor room (probably for dining, as the original hotel lacked one), cellarge, a bar and a kitchen in the basement, three substantial rooms on the first

floor and bedrooms off a central corridor on the second floor. A west wing, again at the rear, was added around 1874, with the bow window replacing the doorway opposite the station and a new kitchen on the first floor. The glass and iron south entrance porch was built in 1926.

The hotel was remodelled in the 1930s and this arrangement largely survives today. A grander entrance lobby was fashioned out of smaller spaces on the ground floor, and a substantial ballroom was added in the north yard to flank the east wing's dining room. The Ionic pilasters and piers in the hotel's interior are a feature of this phase. The west wing was replaced by one with three storeys and a flat roof; this contained staff accommodation and a laundry, with a single-storey kitchen in the northern corner of the plot. Further additions and internal rearrangements of the upper floors were made in the 1960s. The building has been vacant for a number of years and its fabric was deteriorating before the current investment by Kirklees Council and Historic England. >>

The new George was commissioned and funded by the Ramsden estate, and designed in 1848 by William Wallen (1803-88) of London and Huddersfield, who worked for the estate in the 1840s.



Above left: Interior of the dining room of the George Hotel in 2021, a 1930s design within the Victorian east wing. © Historic England

A new office for the Ramsden Estate

The Ramsden Estate was also responsible for constructing the [Estate Buildings \(listed at Grade II\)](#), which has elevations for nos 20-26, Westgate, nos 1-11, Railway Street and nos 9-13, Station Street. In 1868, Huddersfield became a borough with its own council, and the estate required a formal and town-centre location to replace their previous office at the Ramsdens' Longley Hall. The new building was perhaps the estate's attempt to stamp the family's authority over an increasingly independent town and it required a substantial amount of demolition of older buildings on Westgate, Brook's Yard (later Station Street) and Railway Street.

A local architect was chosen, Huddersfield-born William Henry

Crossland (1835-1908). He became a favourite with the Ramsden estate, designing the neighbouring Byram Buildings and Arcade on Westgate in the 1870s and 80s. The Estate Buildings' Gothic style was a break with the classicism used elsewhere in mid-19th-century Huddersfield, referring perhaps to the ancient bond between the Ramsden Estate and the town. Four storeys (three facing Station Street) of sash windows are given variation by the shape of their heads while visual interest is given by bays, pinnacles, turrets, gables and colonettes, slender columns acting as mullions in the windows.

The vast courtyard complex of 1868-74 has three principal parts with limited or no communication between them. The Westgate range has shops on the ground floor – a nod to historic Westgate and its

proximity to the market place – with accommodation for a club above. The Railway Street range contained the Ramsden estate office (with its own entrance) and suites of offices to be let out. The Station Street range linked back to Railway Street, containing woollen warehouses and some office accommodation. An older building, nos 3-7, Station Street, was incorporated into the complex, [the only survivor of the earlier warehouses and commercial buildings in this block](#). An arched gateway links this building to nos 9-13 Station Street: this was for carts to enter the central courtyard of the complex from which doorways led into the basement of all parts of the building. A further yard between nos 13 and 15 Station Street contained a loading door on the raised ground floor. >>



Above right: West elevation of the Estate Buildings, Railway Street, Huddersfield. The shields above the ground-floor windows and the balustrade over the arched doorways denote the part of the building occupied by the Ramsden estate office. © Historic England Archive, DP262023

The estate office, entered from no. 7, Railway Street, was externally marked out by the row of armorial shields displaying the heraldry of the Ramsden family and its connections. It also has a grander entrance through a pair of arched openings, rather than a single one, in a canted projecting bay. The doors lead into a deep lobby with steps into an imposing hall. Designed to make an impression, it has a screen of pointed arches and a semi-circular staircase lit by grisaille windows featuring grey designs on clear glass with stained glass borders. The stair leads to the main rooms on the first floor, including waiting rooms, a first-floor strong room, and spaces for cashiers, the surveyor and the agent. The Corporation of Huddersfield used this building when the estate sold its Huddersfield property to them in 1920, and it continued to be used as council offices until recently.

The High Street Heritage Action Zone in Huddersfield

The area covered by the High Street Heritage Action Zone is one of the principal areas in Kirklees Council's Huddersfield Blueprint, their ten-year plan to create a thriving, modern town centre. The station remains one of the town's most important buildings as well as being a key transport hub; it forms the entrance for many people into the town who walk through its grand portico into the showpiece St George's Square. Its close neighbour, the George Hotel, closed in 2013 but is now being restored and refurbished. It will remain a hotel, with a prestigious operator agreed. New uses will



Above: Entrance hall and stair into the Ramsden estate office, Estate Buildings.
© Historic England Archive, DP262020

be found for the Estate Buildings after essential repair work, part-funded by the High Street Heritage Action Zone, is carried out. Its Westgate range continues to be occupied by retail, leisure and domestic accommodation, and further domestic conversion could be considered for the other ranges. Its listed status is currently

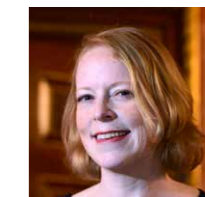
The High Street Heritage Action Zone is one of the principal areas in Kirklees Council's Huddersfield Blueprint.

being assessed for upgrade. Historic England is also funding a Conservation Area Management Plan for the extensive town centre conservation area. The importance of St George's Square and the wider High Street Heritage Action Zone lies not just in the quality of its individual listed buildings, but also in how together the handsome

stone buildings form an impressive ensemble, expressing both Huddersfield's status as one of the great West Riding textile towns and how the area can be redefined with a new purpose within an historic context ■

The author

Dr Lucy Jessop
Senior Architectural Investigator for North East and Yorkshire region with Historic England.



She has worked for Historic England and its predecessor for over 15 years, researching

and investigating buildings and places. Her research interests are wide-ranging, but they include the design and construction of 17th- and 18th-century houses, and architectural patronage.

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Wyles, D.J., 'Architectural Design in Nineteenth Century Huddersfield', in Haigh, E.H. (ed.) *Huddersfield: A Most Handsome Town* (Kirklees Cultural Services, Huddersfield, 1992), 341-64

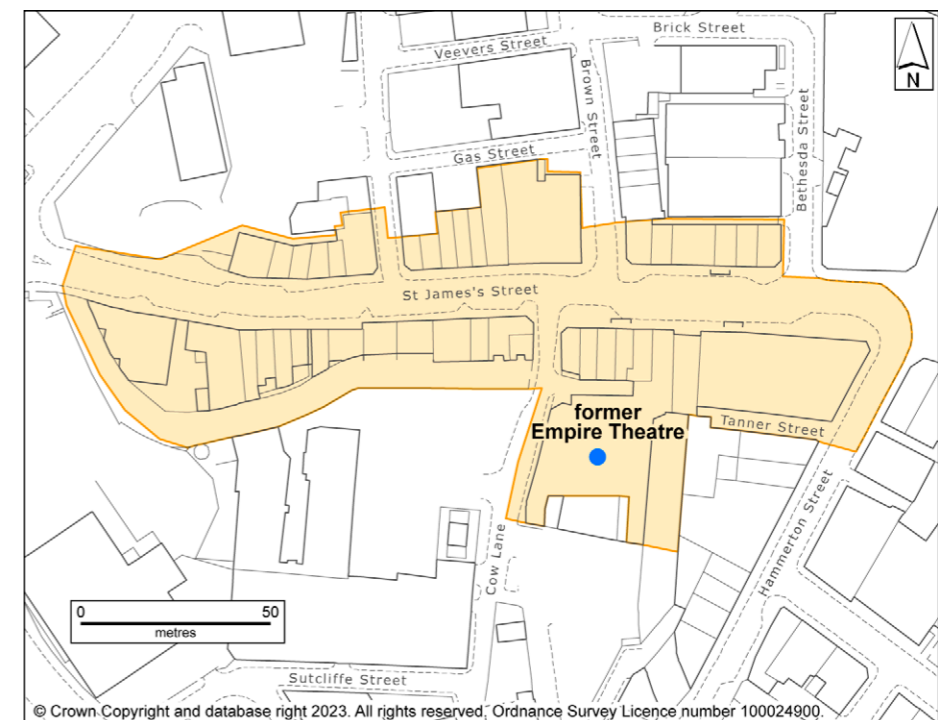


The Empire Theatre, Burnley: Unearthing a hidden gem

New research improves our understanding of the building.

In the 1900s, Lancashire's northern cotton towns had about 20 purpose-built theatres and variety halls. Today just one survives, the Burnley Empire, built in 1894 on the site of a spinning mill and significantly remodelled in 1911 and 1938. It closed as a bingo hall in 1995 and has since lain empty and became derelict. The Burnley Empire (Theatre) Trust was formed in

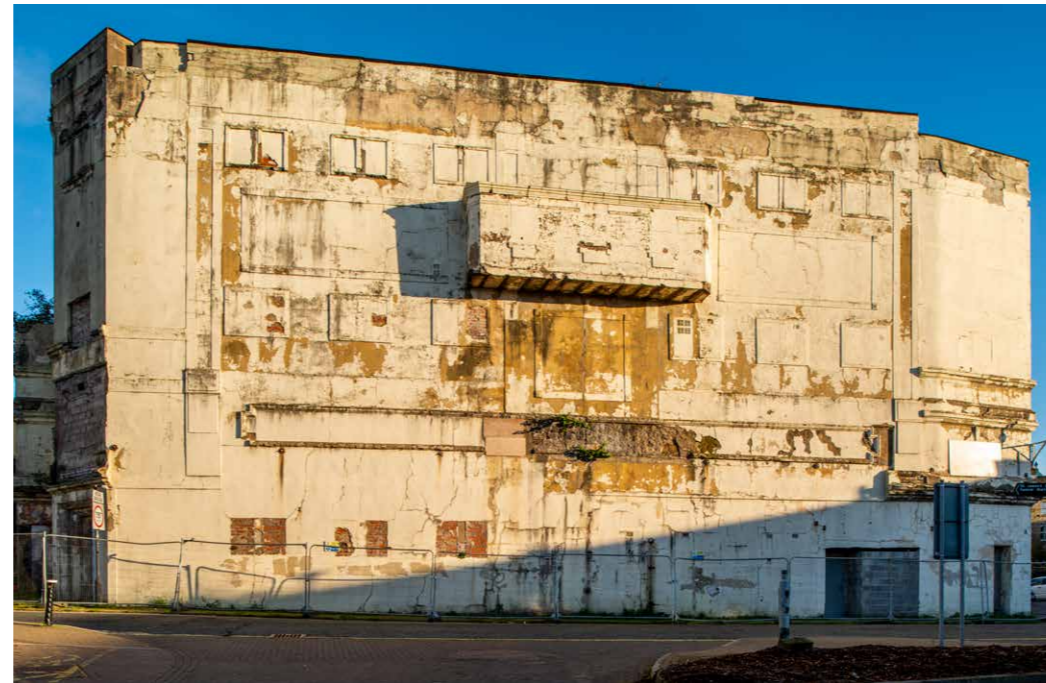
2015 and acquired the site in 2018. The Empire is part of the [High Street Heritage Action Zone on St James's Street](#), and has also received Heritage Lottery Funding, but despite stabilisation work it remains in a distressing condition. New research improves our understanding of the building, raises its profile and will inform a more detailed [list description](#). >>



Above right: Map of the High Street Heritage Action Zone for Burnley.



Above left: Balcony Front. © Historic England Archive, DP290516



Centre: The exterior in 2021. © Elain Harwood



Right: View of the stage from the dress circle, showing the cinema seats. © Elain Harwood

The First Theatre 1894

The development of live entertainment in Burnley owes much to William Horner (1841-1922), a local stationer. He organised concerts at the [Mechanics Institute](#) before taking over the Victoria Assembly Rooms in 1886, which he renamed the Victoria Opera House, as a centre for drama and pantomime. Then in 1894 he opened the much larger Empire Theatre for variety shows, set behind the earlier Victoria Opera House and entered from a narrow foyer to its side. The architect was George Birkbeck Rawcliffe (1847-1919), a local surveyor and himself a popular lecturer and amateur thespian. The substantial stonework around the base of the auditorium, visible internally, suggests that a large amount of Tunstall's early 19th-century mill was incorporated in the new building.

The new theatre had a large stage and electric lighting. However, it was plainly decorated in anaglypta (a textured wall covering) save for plasterwork pilasters around the proscenium (the frame to the stage). There were two balconies, each with a concourse rather than foyers, and the staircase arrangement was also novel, the 'Burnley Express' describing two sets of stairs within a single space rather like a double helix.

More impressive was the array of talent gathered by Horner, who secured stars from London as his headline acts. They included singers Marie Lloyd, Florrie Forde, Vesta Victoria and escapologist Harry Houdini, who on 9 December 1902 staged a breakout from the local police cells to advertise his show that week. The Empire also exhibited the first films in Burnley, in December 1897, and many of the variety programmes ended with short films.

The Rebuilding of 1911

On its backland site, access was at a premium and Rawcliffe's plan with an innovative double helix staircase may not have been entirely successful. Moreover, by 1910 more variety theatres had been built in Burnley and the plain Empire would have seemed outdated. In 1910 Horner brought in the celebrated London architect William Robert 'Bertie' Crewe to prepare new plans. Crewe remodelled the elevations, which were rendered and rusticated with large areas for signage and the date '1910', and entirely rebuilt the auditorium and access stairs.

The new theatre was larger, with 1,808 seats. The auditorium was enlarged by digging out the basement and rebuilding the staircases, while a new scene dock for accessing stage sets was built on the south side of the building. A new proscenium was installed

with behind it a grid from which to fly scenery, and a basement was formed under the stage to permit traps. The proscenium, balcony fronts and box fronts were redecorated with new plasterwork, painted mainly in cream and gold, with a warm dull red towards the back of the auditorium. This is the decoration we see today, save for the balcony front to the dress circle; Crewe's balcony was set back so there were originally two boxes to either side on each level. The smaller spaces all gained new floors, skirtings and tiling, and a proper projection box for showing films was installed with teak shutters. The absence of circulation space between the auditorium and the side entrances and exits on Cow Lane remained striking, a testament to the tight site. An advertisement for the opening night on Monday, 13 September 1911 was suitably fulsome, declaring it 'undoubtedly

the most beautiful and up to date theatre in the north of England'.

Bertie Crewe (1864-1937) was a specialist designer of theatres and later cinemas, who spent his career in London. His training was unusual, however, for in the 1880s he spent three years in Paris, studying Beaux Arts planning and its elaborate decoration. He later claimed that it was meeting French theatre designers that led him to his specialisation. Returning to London in 1888, Crewe joined the practice of Walter Emden, an engineer and West End surveyor who specialised in theatres and hotels. Crewe brought a rare understanding of French classical styles, then fashionable, and a baroque panache to his plasterwork, quite unlike the delicate tastes of his contemporary William G. R. Sprague (1863-1933), with whom he formed a partnership from 1889 to 1895. These two rank second

only to [Frank Matcham](#) as Britain's leading theatre architects, but their surviving work is far less extensive.

Crewe established his career with the Hippodrome, Liverpool, built for 3000 people in 1902 and leading to work in Paris and Brussels. He also remodelled the interior of the prestigious Lyceum, London, in 1903, which survives. His few other surviving theatres include the Shaftesbury Theatre and Golders Green Hippodrome in London, the Victoria Theatre in Salford and (re-fronted) Palace Theatre in Redditch, all built between 1900 and 1913. The fruity Baroque patterns give way to a stricter Neoclassicism at the later Golders Green and Redditch theatres and in his cinemas of the 1920s. The Burnley Empire is not only a rare survivor, but important since it shows Crewe on the cusp of this change in style. >>

Later Years

In March 1930, the 'Burnley Express' reported that the live theatres in Accrington and Nelson were set to be converted to cinemas, along with the Burnley Empire. This was blamed by the management on 'hard times', but more important was the popularity of the 'Talkies', which reached Britain in 1928. Large crowds gathered when the Empire reopened after just nine days on Monday 19 May. It was only in 1938 that extensive alterations made it more suitable for showing films, when the circle was enlarged and reseated, taking out two boxes on each side. No architect was recorded for this work, and the decoration on the balcony front is much simpler than that elsewhere.

The Victoria Theatre, situated in front of the Empire, closed in March 1955 and was quickly demolished. The Empire closed briefly while a simple single-storey entrance was made on St James's Street, the old one having been part of the Victoria. It continued showing films, with occasional performances by the Burnley Light Opera Company, until July 1970 when it was superseded by a two-screen cinema in the new shopping centre. It survived because the Silver Dollar Bingo Club transferred its operation from the much larger Palace-Hippodrome by Horsfall & Son of 1907, which was demolished in 1973.

It seems almost miraculous that the Empire should have survived, often by a knife-edge, when every other historic theatre and cinema in Burnley has gone. The website 'Cinema Treasures' records that there have been 19 cinemas in the town; today it is served only by the nine-screen former Apollo (now Reel) Cinema built in 1997 inside a former DIY store.

When the theatre was listed Grade II in February 1996, the description emphasised that 'the principal feature of interest is the interior, which retains most of the structure and decoration of 1911'. The Burnley Empire Theatre Trust (now Burnley Empire Trust) was founded in 2015 to campaign for the building's restoration and reuse. It acquired the Empire in 2018 with the support of an anonymous donor, the Theatres Trust and the consultant David Wilmore. The National Lottery has provided grants for a condition survey and asbestos removal, and work to the roof has begun. Through the High Streets Heritage Action Zone Historic England has also funded essential stabilising works. Though not actually on the High Street (the old foyer is now a bar in separate ownership), restoration would bring new life to the area outside shopping hours ■

Right: A recent photograph in Cow Lane of Burnley Empire Theatre as it is today.
© Historic England Archive, DP290501



The author

Dr Elain Harwood
*Senior Investigator with
Historic England.*



Elain joined the predecessor organisation to Historic England in 1984. She has

published extensively and won the Art Book Award and Alice Davis Hitchcock Medallion (the Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain's annual award), for 'Space, Hope and Brutalism: English Architecture 1945-75' (published by Yale University Press in 2015).

Further information

Burnley Empire Trust <https://www.burnleyempiretrust.co.uk/>

Burnley High Street Heritage Action Zone <https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/heritage-action-zones/burnley/>

Historic England, 2017: Culture and Entertainment Buildings Listing Selection Guide <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/dlsg-culture-entertainment>

National Heritage List for England Entry for Burnley Empire <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1244976?section=official-list-entry>

Theatres Trust <http://www.theatrust.org.uk/how-we-help/theatres-at-risk/179-burnley-empire>

A Judge on the High Street:

The Sir John Pennycuick Collection

The Historic England Archive's Sir John Pennycuick Collection is a remarkable record of the ordinary, providing a photographic record of streets in early and mid-20th-century England.



A display of albums from the Sir John Pennycuick Collection.
© Historic England Archive

From bustling street markets to peaceful village lanes. From residential streets, with their corner pubs and local shops, to portraits of churches and the occasional modernist insertion. The Sir John Pennycuick Collection is an eclectic mix of over 60,000 views that show a wealth of detail about everyday life in English towns. The street scenes record terraces of houses, businesses, cobbled roads, transport, signs and advertisements for Woodbine cigarettes, Smarties sweets and Bisto gravy.

Sir John Pennycuick

Sir John Pennycuick, a former High Court Judge and Wimbledon Championships competitor, was an enthusiastic amateur photographer who bequeathed his collection of photographs to the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England in 1981.

Sir John was born in Camberley, Surrey, on 6 November 1899. He was educated at Winchester College and New College, Oxford. Following service in the Coldstream Guards, Sir John entered the

legal profession and qualified as a barrister in 1925.

As well as being adept in the law court, Sir John was a talent on the tennis court. Between 1925 and 1931, he competed six times at the Wimbledon Championships in the men's singles competition. In 1930 he also competed in the mixed doubles with his future wife, Lucy Johnstone.

Sir John's legal career progressed after the Second World War. In 1947 he became a King's Council

As well as being adept in the law court, Sir John was a talent on the tennis court. Between 1925 and 1931, he competed six times at the Wimbledon Championships.

and in 1954 he was elected a Bencher at the Inner Temple. Six years later, he was appointed a

High Court Judge in the Chancery Division and received the customary knighthood. Despite retiring from full-time court work in 1974, Sir John continued to sit in the Court of Appeal and was appointed a Privy Councillor.

Sir John Pennycuick died on 14 January 1982 at the age of eighty-two. The following March a service of thanksgiving for his life was given at Temple Church, the ceremonial chapel of the Inner Temple and Middle Temple Inns of Court in London. >>

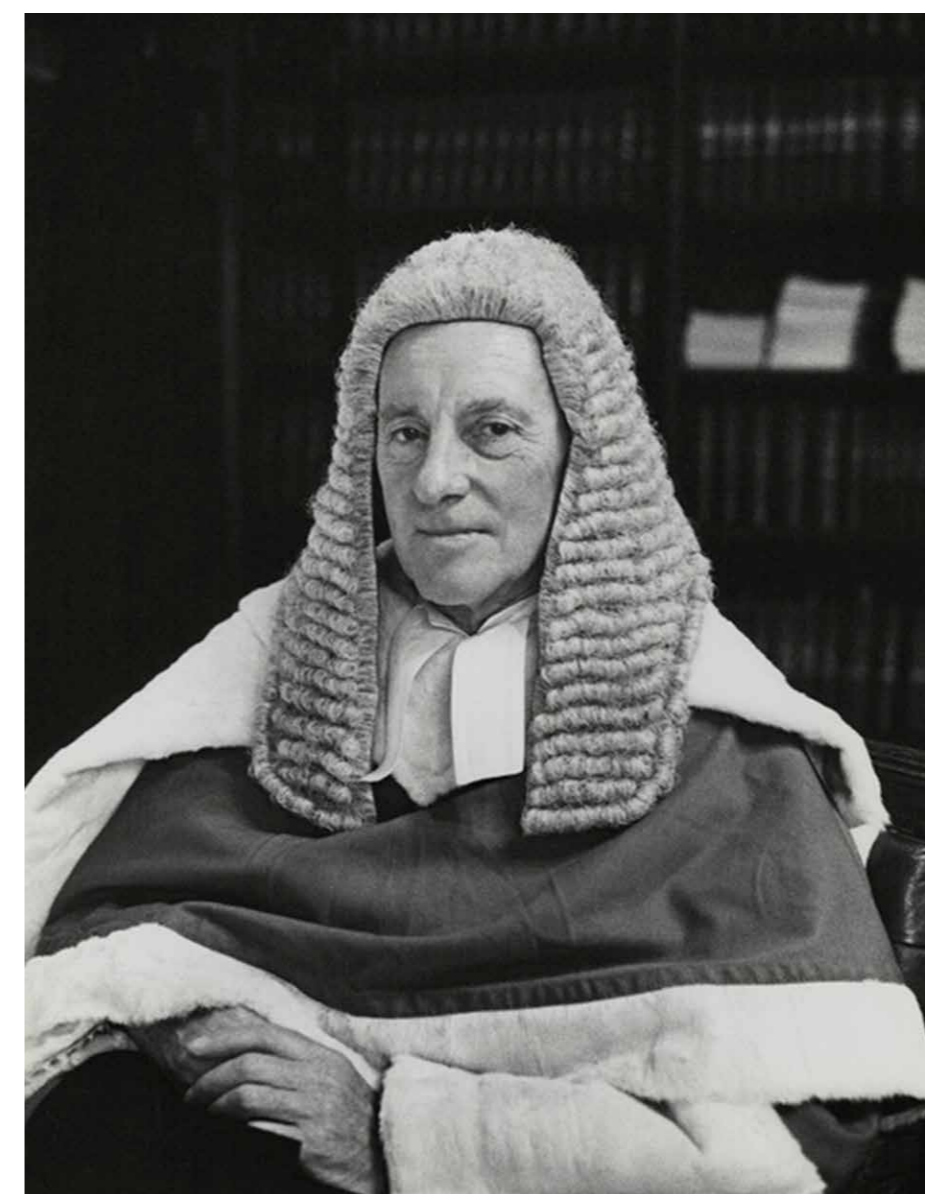
“Deceptively diffident in manner, he was possessed of a wit and an insight into human nature which made him not only a fine judge but a delightful and entertaining companion. ... He deserves to be remembered as the very archetype of an English Judge and gentleman.” Lord Scarman, ‘The Times’, 22 January 1982.



Above left: The modernist-style shop stands out in this view of Edward Street in the Wiltshire town of Westbury. The lettering on the shop asks shoppers ‘Had Your Hovis Today?’ Edward Street marks a boundary of medieval Westbury and formed part of the main road from Trowbridge to Warminster. In 1939, Edward Street was rich with a variety of commercial establishments, including a fancy repository, coal merchant, draper, saddler, bakers, printer, hairdresser, boot maker, grocer and fried fish dealer. © Historic England Archive, PEN01/32/02/55776



Below left: A woman using a pedestrian crossing on Sherlock Street, Birmingham, in the 1940s or 1950s. Whilst the street exists today, post-war redevelopment has altered its character dramatically, making it almost unrecognisable. In the inter-war years, the vast majority of buildings along Sherlock Road accommodated shops, manufacturers, dealerships and services, from tobacconists to pawnbrokers. The tram lines and overhead cables suggest that the photograph was taken before the Birmingham Corporation trams finished running in July 1953. Sherlock Street was named after Thomas Sherlock, Bishop of London, who purchased land here in 1730. The land was developed by his successor, Sir Thomas Gooch, who inherited the estate in 1766. © Historic England Archive, PEN01/28/11/54371



Left: Portrait of High Court Judge Sir John Pennycuick by Godfrey Argent, 1 October 1969. © National Portrait Gallery, London (CC BY-NC-ND 3.0)



EVERTON, Whitefield Road



HIGH STREET, WALLINGFORD



STALYBRIDGE, Old St George's Church



HEATON NORRIS, Belmont Street

Photography and the 'vols'

Sir John Pennycuick was a passionate amateur photographer and collector of picture postcards. He used a German-made Rolleiflex camera, renowned for its ease of use and its durability.

Sir John travelled extensively in Britain and Continental Europe. He collected postcards of towns and buildings and took his own photographs of buildings and streets, many of which were away from main thoroughfares and town centres, and therefore unfamiliar to the everyday traveller or tourist. Both the collected postcards and his own photographs were given simple printed labels to identify the location and were inserted into albums that Sir John arranged by [place](#).

Each of the albums, or 'vols' as they were known, were named and

numbered and were enhanced by a hand-drawn map showing the rural and urban districts featured within the album. For example, the first Wiltshire album includes postcards and photographs of some of the county's municipal boroughs, such as Salisbury, Malmesbury, Wilton, Devizes, Marlborough and Calne. Those boroughs that contain distinct settlements or areas are subdivided, so Salisbury, for example, has separate groupings for New Sarum, Fisherton, Bemerton, West Harnham and East Harnham.

A total of 387 albums and around 60,000 images were bequeathed to the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, a predecessor of Historic England, in 1981. These 'vols' comprise the English portion of the collection. The albums of places beyond England were acquired by the Courtauld Institute of Art.

Above far left: This view of Whitefield Road in the Everton district of Liverpool includes street advertisement boards for products such as Smarties sweets, Heinz Salad Cream and Hovis sliced bread. Post-war redevelopment has completely transformed the character of this street. In the 18th century Everton was a select residential area, favoured for its high ground and views. The following century it became a densely populated area full of terraced streets, many of which were demolished in the 1960s. This view shows some of the 18 residential streets that once joined on to either side of Whitefield Road. Today there are 10, none of which reflect the high-density terraces of earlier times. © Historic England Archive, PEN01/16/22/34887

Above centre left: An early 20th-century photographic postcard of High Street, Wallingford, collected by Sir John Pennycuick and inserted into an album documenting towns and villages in Berkshire. Situated on the east bank of the River Thames, Wallingford is a Saxon burh, founded to defend Wessex from the Danes. High Street runs westward from the bridge over the Thames and includes buildings with evidence of construction from the medieval period. The George Inn, which features prominently in the postcard, dates to the 16th century. © Historic England Archive, PEN01/01/01/11613

Above centre right: A view up Cocker Hill towards Old St George's Church, Stalybridge, Tameside. A chapel of ease was built on Cocker Hill in 1776. It was replaced by an octagonal, stone church in 1887, under the direction of Manchester architect John Low. The church closed in 1967 and was soon demolished. The street's cobbled road and pavement are extant. © Historic England Archive, PEN01/04/01/14398

Above far right: This view of Belmont Street in the Heaton Norris suburb of Stockport, Greater Manchester, features in Sir John's Album 15 of postcards and photographs of towns and villages in Cheshire. Since this photograph was taken, tarmac has covered cobbles and the number of commercial premises with distinctive corner entrances has declined. Kelly's Directory of 1924 reveals that among the commercial premises in Belmont Street were 3 confectioners, 2 dairymen, 2 fruiterers, 2 grocers, a fishmonger, a butcher, a hairdresser, a coal dealer, 2 fried fish dealers, a beer retailer, a leather factor and a draper. © Historic England Archive, PEN01/04/15/15843

What's in the collection?

The carefully compiled albums in the collection offer an intriguing view of English streets and buildings, recorded from the viewpoint of a widely travelled and passionate amateur photographer.

The postcards in the albums date from around 1910. Sir John's own photographs were taken in the 1940s, 1950s, 1960s and possibly into the early 1970s; unfortunately, the photographs are not individually dated. Regardless of the absence of specific dates, the content and breadth of coverage make for an enjoyable and useful resource for anyone interested in social history and the built environment of the early and mid-20th century.

Many of the individual buildings featured in the collection show Christian places of worship, from grand cathedrals to rural parish

churches and urban chapels. There are also historic bridges, market crosses and medieval city gates. Many of these are well known and are included in the [National Heritage List for England](#), whilst others have since been demolished.

Perhaps most interesting and nostalgic are the general views of streets, many of which appear to have been taken by Sir John standing in the middle of the road. The street scenes show major and minor roads, the buildings that lined them, the vehicles that drove along them and the people who lived, worked, shopped and walked on them. Some views are relatively quiet, lacking people and traffic. Others are busier, showing the bustling nature of local high streets and marketplaces, populated with pedestrians, vehicles, road markings, signs and advertisements. >>

Sir John travelled extensively in Britain and Continental Europe. He collected postcards of towns and buildings and took his own photographs of buildings and streets.

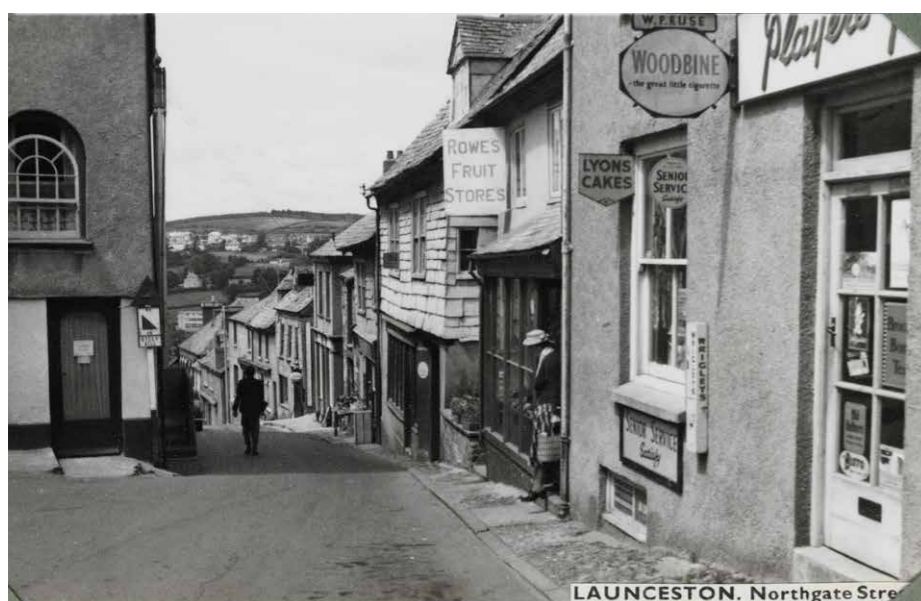
The content and breadth of coverage make for an enjoyable and useful resource for anyone interested in social history and the built environment of the early and mid-20th century.



Above left: Street traders display their goods on Watney Street, St George-in-the-East, Tower Hamlets, Greater London. In the 1920s there were 200 market pitches and in 1957 no less than 8 poulterers, meat salesmen and butchers occupied premises in the street. Whilst the buildings of Watney Street have changed considerably since this photograph was taken, with multi-storey blocks of flats now a feature, a street market continues to operate. © Historic England Archive, PEN01/18/09/43140



Centre left: Acorn Road, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne, probably photographed in the 1950s. Whilst some streets photographed by Sir John Pennycuik have been massively transformed over the years, this street in Jesmond is still very much recognisable in 2023. Situated to the north of the city centre, between the Jesmond Dene valley and the Town Moor, Jesmond evolved from a small township into a wealthy 19th century suburb. Acorn Road is one of the three main commercial streets in Jesmond and connects the other two at either end. © Historic England Archive, PEN01/21/19/46533



Below left: Signs and advertisements adorn the shops in Northgate Street, Launceston, Cornwall. Many of the buildings in the street were demolished for redevelopment of the area in the 1960s. As the name suggests, Northgate Street was the main route through the town to and from the north. The redevelopment demolished 'slum' houses and replaced them with blocks of flats, and turned part of the historic thoroughfare into a pathway. © Historic England Archive, PEN01/05/01/15984

A revealing collection

Viewing the photographs alongside modern, online street views is revealing. Many places have changed greatly since Sir John recorded them in the decades following the Second World War. Reconstruction and redevelopment, often motivated by motor transport and housing needs, have altered their appearance, changed their character and, in some cases, fragmented them or demolished them completely. However, other streets have changed relatively little since Sir John recorded them. The photographs in the collection offer insights into both subtle and comprehensive change in the urban environment.

As well as reigniting memories of an earlier way of life, the street scene photographs reveal a wealth of historical information and stimulate questions about urban change and progress, including around the consequences of 'slum' clearance to communities and perceptions of the historic environment. They provide evidence of loss and retention, show how streets were occupied and used, and illustrate buildings styles, from the vernacular to the international.

The incidental details within the photographs are interesting and informative. Those featuring motor vehicles hint at an increase in domestic and commercial use, although the absence of road signs and road markings suggest that road traffic proliferation is still on the horizon. Domestic premises mix with industrial and commercial buildings; shop signs and billboard

advertisement reveal brands, marketing techniques and consumer targets; and those photographs and postcards that feature people show the fashion trends of workers, residents, shoppers and tourists.

The streetscape photography in the collection offers a view into a recent past that currently still resides in the memory of living generations. However, it will not be too long before this changes, and Sir John's photographs will then depict a time beyond our collective memories.

The Sir John Pennycuik Collection is a collection of the ordinary. It portrays the streets and buildings that were used and occupied by scores of local communities throughout England. They are streets that were familiar to many and were passed through briefly by others on their way to somewhere else. However, its scope, content and its creator make the collection quite extraordinary.

Viewing the collection

The Sir John Pennycuik Collection can be viewed by arrangement at the Historic England Archive in Swindon. Contact details are listed below. The collection has yet to be fully catalogued, and so researchers will have to enjoy looking through the albums to find places of interest. However, details of the series within the collection and a selection of digitised images can be investigated on our [website](#). Any requests to reproduce images will be considered on a case-by-case basis ■

The Historic England Archive would like to thank Mr Mark McConnell for kindly sharing information about the life and career of his maternal grandfather.

The author

Gary Winter
Archive Engagement & Content
Officer with Historic England.



Gary has worked for Historic England and its predecessors for over twenty

years. Working in various teams and departments, Gary has worked on projects to record prisons, law courts and the seaside, and to create exhibitions based on Archive collections. Gary has recently returned to the Historic England Archive to promote its collections and create content for a variety of audiences.

Further information

Lord Scarman, 1982, 'Sir John Pennycuik', *The Times*, 22 January 1982, Issue 61138, p10

To view the Sir John Pennycuik Collection please contact Archive Services:
Email archive@HistoricEngland.org.uk
Phone number 01793 414600

You can browse a selection of images from the collection via our online catalogue.
[Sir John Pennycuik Collection](#)

Research Reports 2022-23

An overview of the recent additions to the series between November 2022 and January 2023.

Climate Change

We are researching and promoting how the historic environment can positively contribute to overall global sustainability through adapting and mitigating measures.

The Historic Landscape: Assessing Opportunity for Change
Pete Herring, Sam Turner, Chris Sevara

This report presents a pilot project to develop an approach that utilises Historic Landscape Characterisation to help assess how heritage can be 'part of the solution' to the climate change challenge.

[Read the Report](#)

Adaptive Release: Guidance Framework for Sites Affected by Coastal Erosion and Flood Management

Sefryn Penrose, Nadia Bartolini

This report presents a case study of a heritage asset at risk and proposes a framework to guide stakeholders in delivering Adaptive Release in areas affected by erosion and flood defence management.

[Read the Report](#)

Maritime/Marine Heritage

Research into shipwrecks and other forms of heritage in the marine environment.

Coconut Shells Recovered from the Goodwin Sands in the Vicinity of the Wreck of the Rooswijk: Radiocarbon Dating

A Bayliss, Serena Cant, Sanne Palstra, Ruth Pelling

Study of 5 coconuts recovered during excavation at the wreck site of the Rooswijk, an eighteenth-century ship of the Dutch East India Company, wrecked in AD 1740.

[Read the Report](#)

Strategic Support for Marine Development Management: Palaeolithic archaeology and landscape reconstruction offshore

Rachel Bynoe, Michael J Grant, Justin K Dix

Analysis of Palaeolithic tools and animal remains found in sand used for beach replenishment.

[Read the Report](#)

Industrial Heritage

Reports about the physical remains of historic technology and industry.

Stockton and Darlington Railway Locomotive-Coaling Stage, Shildon, Co. Durham: Historic Building Investigation and Assessment of Significance

Marcus Jecock, Elizabeth Stephens, Gary Young, Matthew Bristow

This report discusses the significance and place in railway history of the Shildon locomotive-coaling stage, built by the Stockton & Darlington Railway in 1847 to improve the re-fuelling times of steam locomotives.

[Read the Report](#)

Planning/Managing Change

Reports focusing on methods for managing change in the historic environment.

Strategically Assessing the Historic Landscape's Sensitivity and Capacity in Relation to Change: A Discussion Document to Inform Preparation of Advice

Pete Herring

Historic England commissioned this review of approaches to modelling the sensitivity to or capacity for change of the historic landscape and seascape.

[Read the Report](#)

Built Heritage

Our reports cover investigations into the built historic environment at different levels of detail. Particular focus points of this research is to support heritage-led regeneration and to inform heritage at risk cases.

A Study of the Roof Environment in Four Domestic Buildings

Brian Ridout, Iain McCaig, Soki Rhee-Duverne

The aim of the project was to better understand the factors affecting the risk of condensation and moisture accumulation, the influence of roofing underlays and air and vapour control layers on roof environments, and the role of ventilation in managing the risk of condensation.

[Read the Report](#)

A Comparative Evaluation of Methods to Monitor Moisture in Historic Porous Masonry Materials

Heather Viles, Hong Zhang, Scott Orr

The project aimed to develop a methodology to compare the performance of a range of invasive and non-invasive moisture measurement methods used to assess moisture in porous masonry.

[Read the Report](#)

The Cedars, 1A and 3 New Road, North Walsham: Historic Building Report

Emily Cole, James Shemmonds

This report focuses on The Cedars, a house constructed in the late 18th century and enlarged and altered in the 1860s/70s and in the 20th century.

[Read the Report](#)

Scientific Dating

Our reports on scientific dating, including dendrochronology and radiocarbon methods, add new insights to understanding the chronology of buildings and sites.

Old Manor House (Remains of), Manor Road, Portslade-by-Sea, Brighton, East Sussex: Dendrochronological Investigation of an ex situ Oak Lintel
Dr Martin Bridge

The timber proved not to be suitable for dendrochronology, but a sample was taken in case of future interest in pursuing other dating techniques.

[Read the Report](#)

Borley Church, Hall Road, Borley, Essex: Dendrochronological Investigation and Radiocarbon Wiggle-matching of Oak Timbers from the Nave and Chancel Roofs

Dr Martin Bridge, Cathy Tyers, A Bayliss, Michael Dee, Sanne Palstra

Radiocarbon wiggle-matching of one of the two cross-matching cores suggests that these were felled in 1464–1485 cal AD.

[Read the Report](#)

Church of St Michael Coslany, Oak Street, Norwich, Norfolk: Tree-Ring Analysis and Radiocarbon Wiggle-Matching of Oak Timbers from the Chancel

Dr Martin Bridge, A Bayliss, Michael Dee, Sanne Palstra

The three timbers represented in this site master chronology were likely felled in the period of AD 1434–1466DR.

[Read the Report](#)

Scientific Dating (cont.)

Kings Farm, Livery Road, West Winterslow, Wiltshire: Tree-ring Analysis of Oak Timbers

Alison Arnold, Robert Howard, Cathy Tyers

Dendrochronological analysis was undertaken on cores from 23 of the 25 timbers sampled in this building.

[Read the Report](#)

Thaxted Guildhall, Town Street, Thaxted, Essex: Tree-ring Analysis of Oak Timbers

Dr Martin Bridge, Cathy Tyers

The likely felling date range of AD 1421–53, modified to AD 1428–53 in light of one sample retaining the ring for AD 1428, can be applied to most of the dated timbers.

[Read the Report](#)

Aerial Investigation

These reports cover interpretation and mapping of sites, bringing together information on buried features revealed as cropmarks, soilmarks, parchmarks or features visible on the surface such as earthworks and structures, or features identified through Lidar.

The South East Northumberland Air Photo and Lidar Mapping Project

Alison Deegan

This project generated a detailed map and records of archaeological and historical features that are visible on aerial photographs and lidar imagery.

[Read the Report](#) ■



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