



Historic England

The Royal Hotel, Kettering: Historic Building Assessment

Aimee Henderson

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**THE ROYAL HOTEL
MARKET PLACE, KETTERING
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

Historic Building Assessment

Aimee Henderson

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SUMMARY

The Royal Hotel is a Grade II listed building located at the northern end of Market Place in Kettering. There has been an inn on this site since at least the 18th century but the existing building owes much of its present appearance and character to extensive reordering works in 1878, as identified by a date stone on the northernmost gable. The Royal Hotel was preceded on the same site by a coaching inn known as the White Hart, which changed its name to the Royal Hotel after a visit from Queen Victoria in 1844. The building has been extended and internally altered since the late 19th century but has continually operated as a hotel for over 200 years. The Royal Hotel is part of the Kettering High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) and has been highlighted as a target building within the HSHAZ delivery plan.

This report provides an assessment of the fabric, setting and significance of the building to inform future repair, conservation and development work.

CONTRIBUTORS

Fieldwork and research were undertaken by Aimee Henderson and Dale Dishon. The report was prepared by Aimee Henderson. Dr Jonathan Kewley prepared the summary history section of the report. Unless otherwise indicated, photography is by Aimee Henderson, Stella Fitzgerald and Pat Payne. Unless otherwise stated in the report all images are copyright of the Historic England Archive.

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ARCHIVE LOCATION

Historic England Archive, The Engine House, Fire Fly Avenue, Swindon SN2 2EH

DATE OF SURVEY AND RESEARCH

Fieldwork and research were undertaken by Aimee Henderson and Dale Dishon in July 2021. The draft report was completed in September 2021. Photography was undertaken by Pat Payne in December 2020, by Aimee Henderson and Dale Dishon in July 2021 and by Stella Fitzgerald in 2022.

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INTRODUCTION

This report intends to provide an assessment of the fabric, setting and significance of the Royal Hotel to inform future repair, conservation and development work. It is part of the Kettering High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) and has been highlighted as a target building within the HSHAZ delivery plan.

The hotel comprises an extensive range of buildings and has evidently evolved over a considerable period of time. There seems to be some confusion over the architects for the building which, in its current form, largely dates from 1878. The building has been attributed by Bailey and Pevsner to John Alfred Gotch, a prominent and influential local architect who was also a noted architectural historian and president of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA).¹ However, the source of this attribution is unclear.

The hotel has recently come under new ownership and, while this report is not intended to make specific recommendations with regard to the future management of the building, it is hoped that it will provide valuable historic context and understanding in order to inform its long term care and conservation.

Methodology

The following principal survey aims were identified to guide the investigation:

- To understand the architectural history, former plan form, and development of the hotel;
- To establish the significance of the site, in terms of Conservation Principles and the wider historic context of Kettering;
- To clarify the connection of the building to J A Gotch, if any such connection exists.

Documentary research was undertaken to understand the history and development of the building. Information was collated from primary sources held by the Northamptonshire Record Office, the archives of the Dukes of Buccleuch at Boughton House and the Historic England Archives.

Access to some records was limited by ongoing restrictions related to the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020/21. At the time of writing, the Kettering Museum and the Kettering Library were closed, and as such it was not possible to access records held by these organisations.

Location and context

The Royal Hotel is prominently located at the northern end of Market Place in Kettering, close to its junction with High Street. The building occupies a large corner plot, with a long curving frontage which faces Market Place at its northern end, before turning the corner onto West Street.

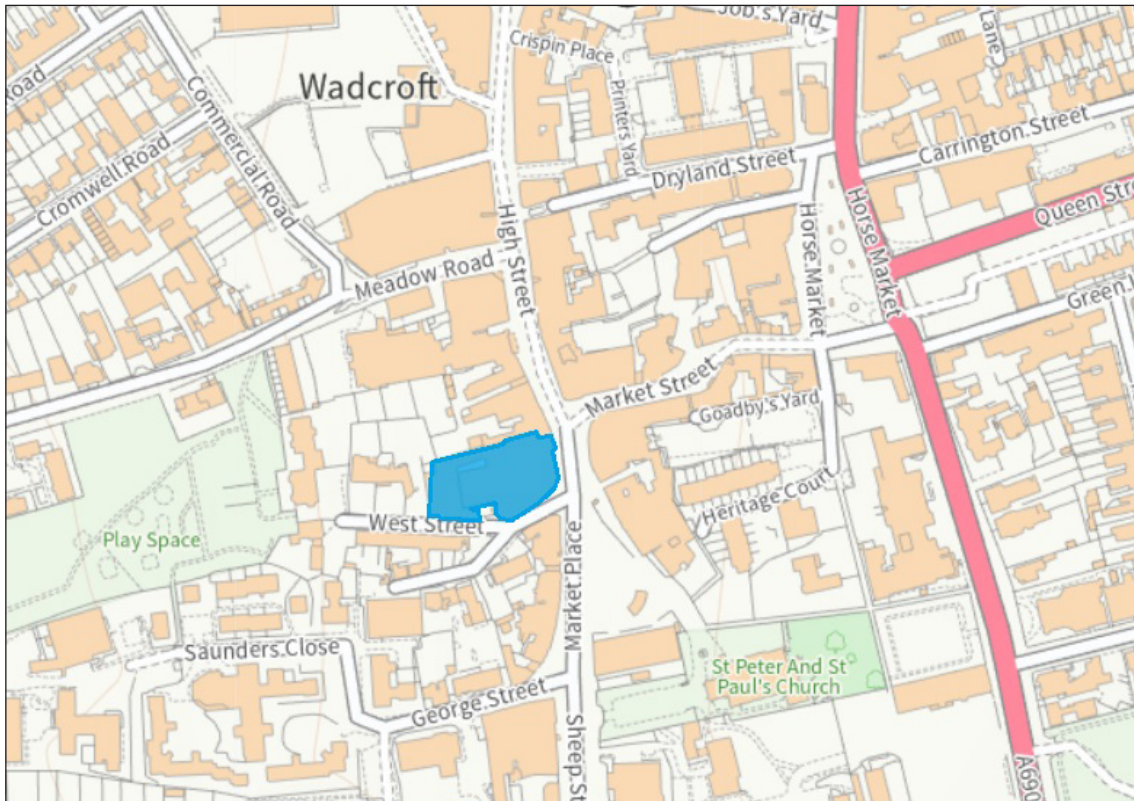


Figure 1: Kettering High Street Heritage Action Zone boundary, note the location of the Royal Hotel is marked in blue. [Crown Copyright and database right 2022. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100024900]

To the rear of the hotel is an extensive stable block which is arranged around a central courtyard and fronts West Street along its southern elevation. Market Place and the surrounding streets contain a rich mix of buildings, including the medieval church of St Peter and St Paul, surviving pre-18th century buildings, and Victorian infrastructure developed to serve this prosperous community. Many of the late 19th- and early 20th-century buildings hold important links to John Alfred Gotch.



Figure 2: The Royal Hotel, viewed from Market Place [DP300956]



Figure 3: Rear stable block (south elevation) and courtyard entrance [© Historic England, Aimee Henderson]



Figure 4: Northern gable with date stone and entrance porch [DP300771]

Existing designations

The Royal Hotel was listed Grade II in 1975. The listing entry is as follows:

List Entry Number: 1051660

Date first listed: 05-Aug-1975

Statutory Address: Royal Hotel, Market Place

National Grid Reference: SP 86628 78518

1878 in Jacobean style. Formerly The White Hart Hotel, where Queen Victoria stayed 1844. Red brick, stone dressings, Dutch gabled Welsh slated roof behind cornice and parapet. Three storeys, rusticated quoins. Semi-circular bow window left of centre. Porch on right with Ionic pilasters.

Charles Dickens stayed in this hotel, 1835, as reporter for the Morning Chronicle covering the Northamptonshire elections. Owned by the Duke of Buccleuch until 1896. Included partly for historical interest.²

Conservation Area

The hotel sits within the Kettering Conservation Area, which was first designated in 1982 and extended in 1985.³ It covers much of the historic core of the town including the market place, parish church and art gallery. Kettering Conservation Area Appraisal summarises the importance of the conservation area for its attractive and cohesive town centre and street plan, which reflects the medieval, market town origin, dominated by the medieval parish church of St Peter and St Paul, and with suburbs still little altered from their creation in the 19th century when Kettering rapidly expanded, particularly in connection with its thriving shoe industries. It also highlights the rich stream of artists and architects connected with the town, in particular, John Alfred Gotch and his brother Thomas Cooper Gotch a leading artist, both sons of the Gotch shoe family.⁴

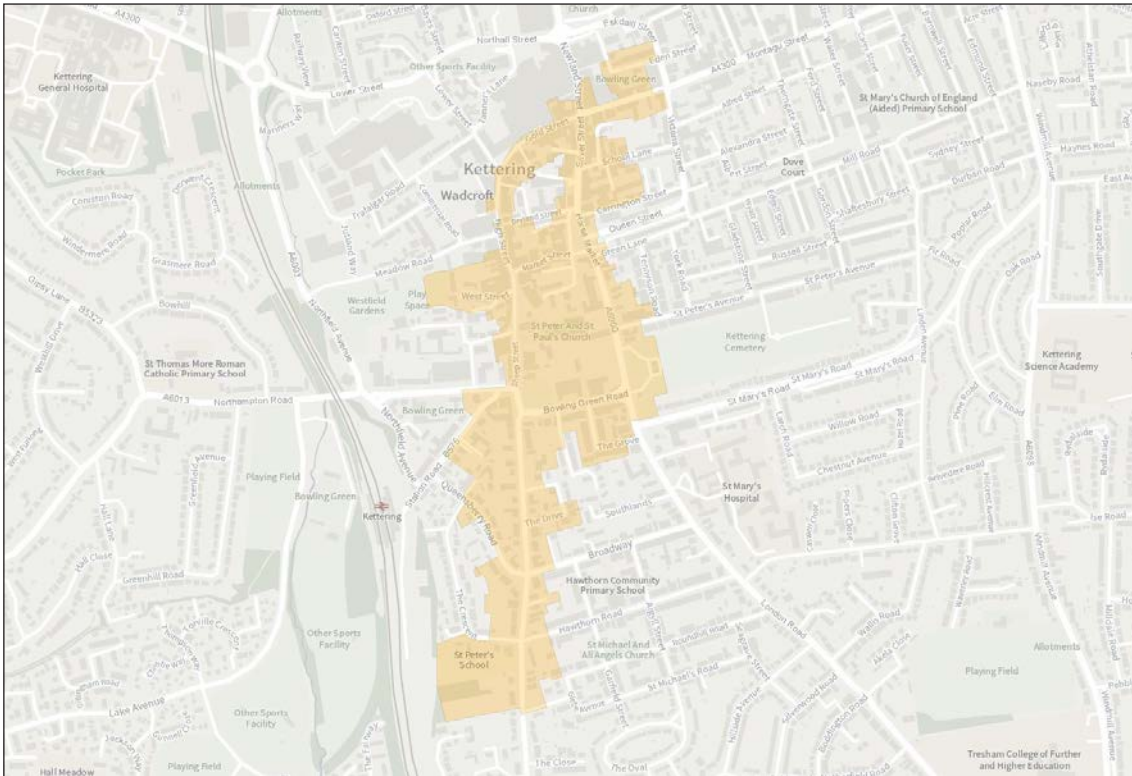


Figure 5: Kettering Conservation Area boundary. [Crown Copyright and database right 2022. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100024900]

Previous assessment

The Royal Hotel has not itself been the subject of detailed study. The building is mentioned quite briefly, by Bailey and Pevsner in the *Northamptonshire Architectural Guide* (new edition), which records the building thus:

...the Royal Hotel, 1878 by Gotch. Brick and stone in the Jacobean manner, and typical of how he (Gotch) turns the corner. Ionic doorcase. Rear and side additions 1925-6 by J.T. Blackwell in association with Gotch & Saunders.⁵

The research carried out during the production of this report has highlighted several inaccuracies in Pevsner's entry for the building. These are discussed in more detail later in the report.

The history of Kettering has been more widely studied and is well established. Frederick William Bull produced an illustrated history of the town in 1891, and this remains one of the principal sources of reference with regards to Kettering's history up to that point. Bull's history includes a sketch plan of Market Place in 1785 which demarcates the buildings that bordered it and their occupants. This plan clearly identifies the White Hart, the precursor to the Royal Hotel.⁶

Kettering is included in the *Victoria County History* for Northamptonshire, which offers a brief summary of the parish; its manors, churches, and charities.⁷ The archaeological history of the town was recorded by the Royal Commission on

the Historic Monuments of England (RCHME) in 1979, though this makes little reference to anything more recent than the 18th century.⁸

R L Greenall, writing in 2003, provides the most recent published comprehensive history of Kettering. In addition to outlining the pre- and post-industrial history of the town, Greenall also discusses the more recent history of Kettering since the collapse of the shoe trade.⁹

The development of the town along with an assessment of its documentary, architectural and archaeological importance was included as part of the Northamptonshire Extensive Urban Survey (EUS), carried out in 2006. The EUS highlighted The Royal Hotel as a listed building associated with the town's strong commercial history but made no further assessment of the building.¹⁰

A Rapid Historic Characterisation Study was undertaken in 2004 by Alan Baxter Associates.¹¹ The Characterisation Study noted the historical importance of Kettering as a centre for trade and industry. The study also noted the influence the town's position within a wider network of settlements and transport routes has had on its growth and development, and thus its character. The town's position at the heart of a burgeoning road network drove the development of several hotels and coaching inns during the 18th century, one of which being the precursor to the Royal Hotel.¹²

Finally, a search of the local HER has revealed a number of archaeological assessments and excavations which have taken place within Market Place and close to the hotel. These have revealed the buried archaeological remains of tenements at the southern end of Market Place (in the locations of numbers 1-12 Market Place) and provided a desk-based assessment of the development of Market Place since the late 18th century.¹³

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT OF KETTERING

Kettering was a modest market town which expanded greatly as a result of the boot and shoe trade in the late 19th century. Historically it was a parish in the Hundred of Huxloe in Northamptonshire. Until 1541 it was in the Diocese of Lincoln but since then has been in Peterborough. It became an Urban District in 1894, a Municipal Borough in 1938 and part of Kettering District in 1974.¹⁴

The town sits on relatively high ground to the west of the River Ise, and the northern part is the site of an Iron Age and Roman settlement covering at least 300 acres.¹⁵ The manor was held by Peterborough Abbey from the 10th century until the Dissolution; after that its ownership was complicated until it settled down by the mid-18th century, thereafter belonging three-fifths to the Watsons of Rockingham Castle (for a period Marquesses of Rockingham) and two-fifths to the Dukes of Montagu and their descendants the Dukes of Buccleuch, of Boughton House.¹⁶

Kettering received a market charter in 1227, and within the next century expanded eastwards into what was called the Newland.¹⁷

The historic parish church (St Peter and St Paul) is 15th century with a tall spire.¹⁸ A manor house (now museum) survives just off the Market Place,¹⁹ the successor to the hall built by Abbot Walter in the mid-13th century,²⁰ but there were serious fires in the town in 1744 and 1766, meaning that much old fabric was lost.²¹ While the town is in an area known for stone buildings, brick was being made by the early 18th century, and was widely used in post-fire rebuilding.²² The Market Place was remodelled in the 1780s and 1790s, and the common fields were enclosed in 1804.²³

Kettering's position on the convergence point of two main roads to London, meant that it was well placed to prosper from increased road traffic and commerce, and improved wayfaring. The establishment of turnpike roads from Market Harborough to Brampton, Huntingdonshire (1751-2) and later from Rockingham to London via Kettering, Olney and Knotting (1755) vastly improved connections between Kettering and the rest of the country.²⁴ This in turn, drove the development of inns and hostleries to service the growing transport network. The nearby George Inn first appears in 1712, and by 1762 was the stopping point for stage wagons and postal coaches to and from London several times per week.²⁵

The town expanded greatly over the half century after the railways finally came in 1857, sufficiently for four new Anglican churches to be built between then and 1926.²⁶ The population was 12,631 in 1801, 17,962 in 1851, but 49,918 in 1911 (in 2011 it was 93,475).²⁷ The best-known family of 19th century Kettering were the Gotch's, originally shoemakers and then bankers. One of them was the architect and architectural writer J A Gotch (1852-1942), the first man practising in the provinces to become President of the RIBA.²⁸ Much of the town centre was rebuilt in the half century before the Great War, often to Gotch's designs. Among public buildings are a Carnegie Library and an art gallery.

From the 17th to the 19th centuries the town had been a centre of woollen manufacture (the last procession on the festival of St Blaise, patron saint of the industry, was in 1829), but the weaving of silk and ribbons was also important.²⁹

There is ironstone under the town, in which iron ore is found. A possibly Roman iron-smelting furnace was discovered near the junction of Gold Street and the High Street, and at the end of the 19th century ore was exported to Wales, Derbyshire and Yorkshire, as well as some being smelted locally.³⁰

However, from the late 18th century the principal industry, as in much of Northamptonshire, was shoe- and boot-making, a development of the tanning and leatherwork trades in the larger East Midland towns.³¹ Originally restricted to Northampton itself, boot-making came to Kettering and other parts of the county owing to heightened demand during the American Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars.³² In time the town came to specialise in cheap riveted boots for labourers.³³

The industry expanded after the coming of the railway; and by 1870 there were 20 substantial manufacturers, who built factories and workers' houses in brick terraces north and east of the town centre.³⁴ This expansion coincided with the growth of mechanisation, but until the end of the century much production was still by outworkers, at first in their houses but from the 1860s onwards in purpose-built 'barns' (workshops) at the end of their gardens (a Kettering speciality).³⁵ The industry almost died out after the 1960s owing to cheap foreign imports, although Timpson's had built a modern, edge-of-town factory as late as 1922, and Loake's continue to produce high-end shoes.³⁶

As a spin-off, shoemaking machinery was made in the town in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and also agricultural implements.³⁷

DOCUMENTARY HISTORY

For such a prominent building, there are few documentary records available for the Royal Hotel, particularly with regard to historic floor plans and internal alterations. As such, the ownership, occupation and structural development of the Royal Hotel is only partially traceable through known documentary sources. The best evidence relates to the sale of the building in 1896 by the Dukes of Buccleuch which provides detailed plans of the building before it was extended.³⁸ Further evidence has been drawn from town plans, maps, images of the wider town, commercial records and those published sources referred to in the 'Previous Assessment' section.

The earliest available map of Kettering is the Finch Hatton map of 1587, which was produced as part of a survey of the 'Manor howse of Ketteringe [sic]' (Figure 6).³⁹ Although the map is illustrative in character, the principal landmarks such as St Peter and St Paul's Church and the manor house broadly correspond to their physical locations, and the street pattern is discernible against modern Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping.



Figure 6: Finch Hatton map of Kettering, 1587. [Northamptonshire Archives FH272-7]. Approximate location of the Royal Hotel indicated by the red arrow.

The arrangement of buildings which make up Market Place broadly corresponds to later, more accurate maps of the area, though there are some key differences. Most notably, the Finch Hatton map depicts the row of houses which occupied the centre of Market Place until the late 18th century. This row of houses was known as Rotten Row and divided the sheep market from Butcher Row.⁴⁰ Butcher Row occupied the upper (eastern) half and the sheep market was located in the lower (western) half. The sheep market is preserved in the name of Sheep Street which led to it from the south; presumably this is where sheep were driven into the market. Rotten Row

was described as comprising ‘12 shops with chambers over them, very irregularly built and all thatch’.⁴¹ The condition of the Row and its close proximity to the front-ages of other shop premises made them unpopular with their neighbours. They were pulled down sometime between 1785 and 1789.⁴²

The White Hart

As discussed earlier in this report, the Royal Hotel has its origins in an earlier coaching inn on the same site known as the White Hart. Very little is known about the form of this building, nor when it was first constructed. It first appears in the manorial court records sometime after 1700.⁴³

The only known depiction of the building which provides any detail is a partial outline provided on a 1785 plan of Market Place (Figure 7).⁴⁴ This plan depicts Rotten Row, described on the plan as being ‘about to be taken down’ and the old market hall, identified as the ‘Squire’s Hall’, a note on the plan tells us that this building was also taken down in 1806. Bull (1908) records that proposals were put forward to rebuild the market hall but that the inhabitants of Market Place petitioned for it to be left as open space.⁴⁵

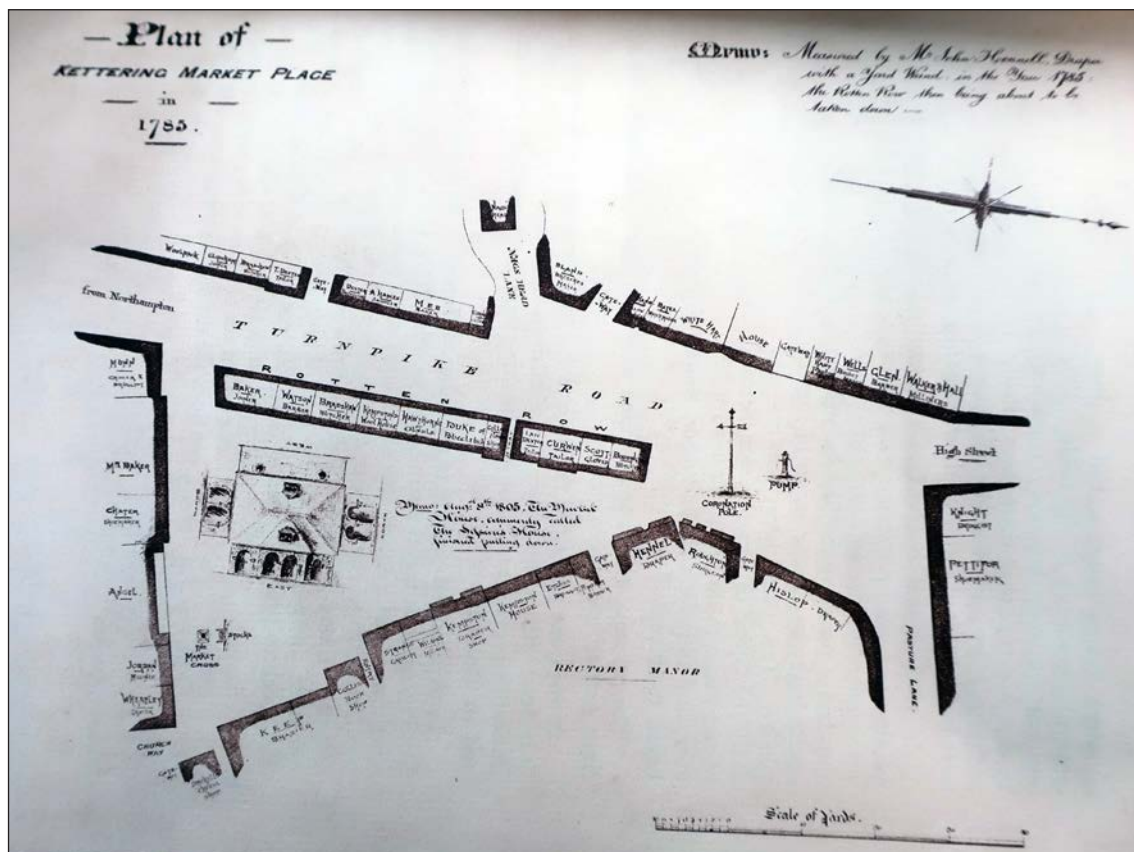


Figure 7: Plan of Kettering Market Place. ‘Measured by Mr John Hennell, draper with a yard wand in the year 1785. The Rotten Row then being about to be taken down’. Reproduced in *Souvenir of the Kettering Charter of Incorporation*, 1938, 31 [Northamptonshire Archives NTV/KET18].



Figure 9: Detail from Thomas Eayre's Plan of the town of Kettering, 1791 [British Library BL01005013961]. No. 29 – White Hart Yard, indicated by a red marker.

The White Hart is again recorded on Thomas Eayre's Town Plan of Kettering, published in 1791 (Figure 9). This plan was clearly surveyed before the removal of Rotten Row in around 1789, as this is still depicted alongside the market hall building. It identifies plot number 29 as 'White Hart Yard' which incorporates all the buildings which front Market Place and which follow the line of the road into Nags Head Lane/West Street. This may indicate that these buildings are all within single ownership, albeit occupied by separate tenant shopkeepers as shown on the 1785 plan. The footprint of the building is not entirely dissimilar from the existing building. The building ranges depicted behind the main frontage are presumably stabling associated with the hotel.

Eayre's plan indicates that by 1791 the street plan of the town centre was largely fixed, and where buildings are known have been taken down and rebuilt after this date, such as is the case with The Royal Hotel, these seemingly maintained the footprints of earlier buildings.

Finally, the White Hart is recorded on Robert Smith's 1826 plan of Kettering, which is itself an updated version of an earlier plan drawn in 1804 by a Mr Eagle (Figure 10). This plan is important because it shows that by 1826, the footprint of the hotel more closely corresponds to the existing plan form. Most notably in that the front elevation projects outwards onto High Street at its northern end and features a pair of bay windows.

The rest of the buildings are only shown as blocks and any breaks in the building line, for example to provide access to the courtyard, are not shown. However, this suggests that by 1826 the White Hart had been rebuilt, or at least reorganised from the form suggested by the 1785 plan of Market Place, and had, at least partially,

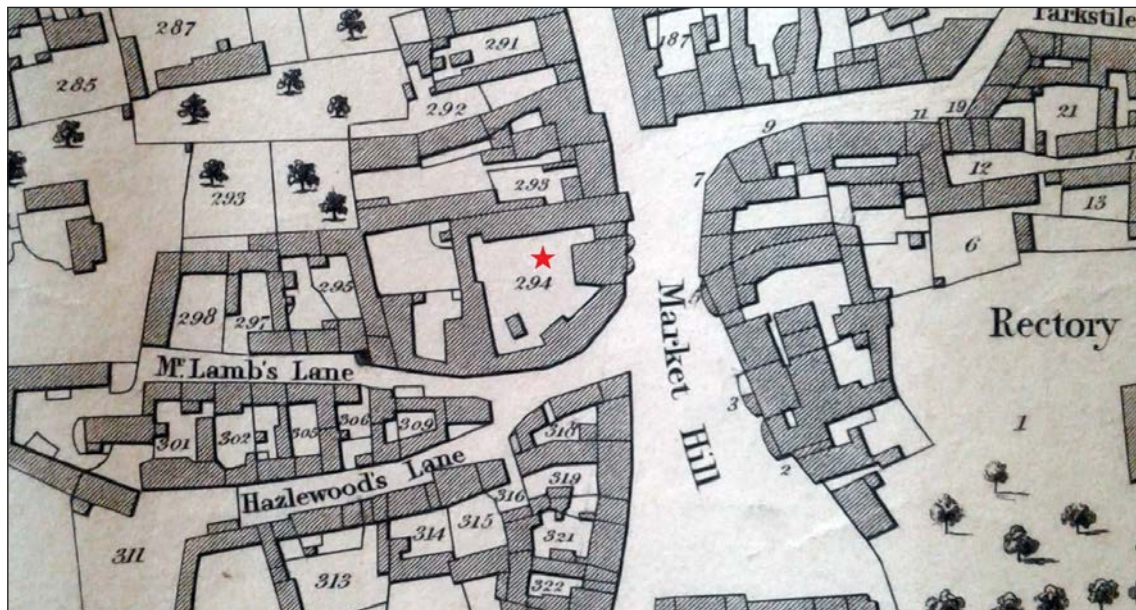


Figure 10: Detail from Robert Smith's Plan of Kettering, 1826, the location of the hotel is indicated by the red marker. [Boughton House Archive, uncatalogued rolled map. Used with kind permission of the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry KT]

absorbed the smaller shop units to either side. The timing of the alterations to the footprint of the hotel coincide with wider improvements to Market Place taking place in the early 19th century.

Writing in 1908, but referring to the White Hart as it was in 1832, Frederick Bull described it as:

A very respectable inn, with a substantial though old-fashioned front, good stabling and a large assembly room where the elite of the district used periodically to meet – its balls and assemblies being quite important events and matters of no little interest and pride to the town.⁴⁶

In 1835 Charles Dickens visited Kettering. At the time he was employed as a writer for the *Morning Chronicle*; his first regular paid salary for writing. Dickens was visiting the town to cover the events of the 1835 by-election, and some sources report that he stayed at the White Hart during this time.⁴⁷

The Dukes of Buccleuch

The Royal Hotel was in the ownership of the Dukes of Buccleuch from 1834 until 1896. The Boughton House Archives confirm that the fifth Duke (Walter Francis Montagu Douglas Scott, 1806-1884) purchased the White Hart in 1834.⁴⁸

Both it and the George Hotel were purchased that year as a political base for the Tories in the town. At that time the young Duke had political ambitions and he later served in Sir Robert Peel's government.⁴⁹

There is surviving correspondence to the Duke of Buccleuch from Thomas Marshall, Edward Bates, John Carrington, J Davis Gotch and others regarding 'the great advantage, they conceive, would accrue to the Conservative cause, would His Grace consent to purchase the White Hart'.⁵⁰ They also note 'that the same should not get into the hands of the Whigs, considering it the most eligible situation both as to trade, election and posting, having all the advantages of room that might be required to make it a first rate inn or hotel.' And that they 'will establish subscription if Duke declines'.⁵¹

The J Davis Gotch mentioned above is John Davis Gotch (1802-1870), who was the uncle of the noted architect John Alfred Gotch (1852-1942). The Gotch family were prominent in Kettering for a number of years, largely as boot and shoe manufacturers, and bankers.⁵² Census records for Kettering in 1851 record that J. Davis Gotch was employed as a 'banker, tanner, furrier and shoe manufacturer'.⁵³

The Duke subsequently agreed that negotiations should commence and an inventory of fixtures at the White Hart was undertaken by John Carrington and Edward Bates.⁵⁴ The inventory provides us with a list of the rooms at the White Hart. This included a kitchen and back kitchen, a brewhouse, a large assembly room with seven chandeliers, a dining room and bar, as well as rooms for the proprietor Mr Roberts and also for Miss Roberts, who presumably was a relative. Note that the inventory only identifies three 'sleeping rooms', but also named rooms: the 'Blue Room' and the 'Lilley Room', which may indicate higher-status accommodation than the standard 'sleeping rooms'.⁵⁵

The White Hart was renamed the Royal Hotel in 1844 following a visit to the town by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert.⁵⁶ Although several anecdotal sources refer to the Queen staying the night at the hotel, this would appear to be slightly inaccurate.⁵⁷ A description of the Queen's visit to Burghley House, seat of the Marquesses of Exeter, was published in December 1844.⁵⁸ This document describes the visits made to several Northamptonshire towns as part of a royal progress in November 1844. From this it appears that although the Queen and Prince Albert certainly made use of a suite of rooms at The White Hart on the 12 November, their Majesties and their entourage departed Kettering that same afternoon to continue on their progress to Burghley House and did not stop overnight.⁵⁹

Bull also makes reference to Queen Victoria's visit, stating that 'the White Hart, in honour of the occasion and by reason of the Queen entering its doors, was thereafter called the Royal Hotel'.⁶⁰ The suite of rooms used by the Queen and Prince Albert will have likely long since been lost following the reordering of the hotel in the late 19th century.

The 1878 extension

It is assumed that it was the fifth Duke of Buccleuch who prompted the extension of the hotel in 1878, although to date no plans or other documents have yet been found in association with the rebuilding works. The date of 1878 is provided on a date stone located on the northern-most gable of the hotel.

Smith's map of 1826 suggests that the extent to which the building was extended in 1878 is less than has previously been suggested.⁶¹ Comparison between the 1826 plan and the 1886 Town Plan of Kettering does not suggest substantial changes to the footprint of the building (Figure 11 and see Figure 10). The main changes seem to have been located in the courtyard where there appears to have been new stabling constructed. It also appears that the hotel was extended backwards from the corner fronting Market Place, perhaps adding the angled gable and the long room behind. This also presumably added the Neo-Jacobean front elevation, including the Dutch gables and covered porch. While the extent of any demolition of the older buildings cannot be established from the map record alone, it would appear that the 1878 works either re-fronted or rebuilt the hotel largely on its existing footprint.

It is noteworthy that at this date, part of the site now occupied by the Royal Hotel remained in use as a separate shop unit. Specifically the building fronting West Street (see Figure 11), which census records indicate was occupied by Mr Brewer, a fishmonger.⁶² The same census returns for 1881 records that at the time the Royal Hotel was occupied by its proprietor Thomas Richardson (53), along with his much younger wife Eliza (31), their five sons and one daughter. Other occupants of the hotel identified included a cook, a waiter, a housemaid, a chambermaid, a head nurse and under-nurse, and a parcel's boy.⁶³



Figure 11: 1886 Town Plan of Kettering 1:500 scale (detail) [© and database right Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2022) Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024]. Red marker indicates the hotel, yellow marker relates to Mr Brewer's shop premises.

Connection to John Alfred Gotch

The attribution of the 1878 works to J A Gotch by Pevsner and Bailey has been found to have a number of inaccuracies during the course of this research.⁶⁴

Firstly, the attribution to Gotch in 1878 is disputed by Dr Roy Hargrave. Dr Hargrave, who wrote his PhD thesis on *The Life and Works of John Alfred Gotch*, has confirmed that J A Gotch did not establish a practice in Kettering until 1879 - a date supported by the Gotch ledgers - and that he was in fact residing and working in London in 1878.⁶⁵ Furthermore, he notes that no record for the construction or rebuilding of the Royal Hotel is recorded within Gotch's ledgers, which are held at the offices of Gotch Saunders and Surridge Architects. A single entry for the Royal Hotel is recorded within Gotch's ledgers; that of a reference to a fee of £195 for plans, specifications and superintending alterations and additions to the Royal Hotel in 1889. The client is identified as 'Buccleuch'.⁶⁶ The fact that Gotch is recorded as acting as superintendent for the alterations to the hotel suggests that these works were carried out, although their extent is unclear.

Publications by Gotch, Saunders and Surridge make no reference to works to the Royal Hotel, and themselves give the date of 1879 for the establishment of J A Gotch's architectural practice in Kettering.⁶⁷

Secondly, the assertion in Pevsner that the form of the building as it turns the corner (onto West Street) is 'typical of Gotch' also appears to be slightly inaccurate. Historic maps and plans indicate that the existing 1878 building did not extend fully around the corner. The existing south-west range fronting West Street, which includes the slender oriel window, was added to the building between 1896 and 1899. If this corner extension was the work of Gotch, it appears that this is not recorded in his ledgers.

In 1882 Gotch became surveyor to the Kettering urban district council and would become known as 'the man who built Kettering'.⁶⁸ It seems likely that the attribution to Gotch has also been influenced by the proliferation of his works throughout the town coupled with the date of the hotel's reordering being so close to Gotch's return to Kettering to establish his own practice. It may also have been due to Gotch's subsequent work on the building, although in fact this is likely to have been relatively minor.

Comparison between The Royal Hotel and nearby Gotch buildings on Market Street show some similarities between the buildings in terms of materials and scale. However, the 1878 section of The Royal Hotel is stylistically much simpler than Gotch's other buildings. Key details such as moulded string courses, raised and moulded pilasters and Jacobean-style polygonal chimneystacks are missing. In addition, the stone mullioned and transomed windows of the hotel are far simpler in character than those on nearby Parkstile Chambers or 19-21 Market Street, for example.

While it has not been possible to identify an alternative architect for the reconstruction of the building in 1878, in this instance, it is the lack of evidence of a connection with Gotch which prompts the conclusion that this is not a building by him.

The hotel remained in the ownership of the Dukes of Buccleuch for over 60 years. The sixth Duke (William Henry Walter Montagu Douglas Scott, 1831-1914) was presumably responsible for commissioning Gotch to undertake the unspecified alterations and additions to the building in 1889, which are recorded in Gotch's ledgers.⁶⁹ However, no further information has been found to illuminate what these alterations refer to.

1896 sale

By 1896, the Dukes of Buccleuch had decided to sell both the Royal Hotel and also the George Hotel, which is located further to the south along the old turnpike road, known as Sheep Street.

The sales particulars provide us with the earliest complete plans for the hotel, and the earliest known photographs of the building. The hotel is described in the sales catalogue as comprising:

- Public dining or market room (31ft x 15ft)
- Coffee room
- Large commercial room
- Private smoke bar (15ft x 14ft)
- Private bar and office
- Three drawing and sitting rooms
- Bathroom, four WCs and a lavatory
- Kitchen and accessories
- Wine, spirit and beer cellarage, attached wine and spirit vaults with access from Market Hill.
- Extensive stabling for 76 horses, two coach houses, three lofts, harness room, boot hole and bottle room around a large yard.
- Fishmongers shop and house comprising shop, two sitting rooms, kitchen, scullery, four bedrooms and a rear yard. In the occupation of Mr Brewer.

The building plans which accompanied the sale of the hotel in 1896 show few changes in the footprint of the hotel and stables since the 1886 Town Plan, save for a small office extension on the rear elevation of the main building (Figures 12 - 16).

They do, however, provide us with far greater understanding of the interior layout of the building, the accommodation provided for the proprietor (located in the north wing of the building) and the range of services offered by the hotel.

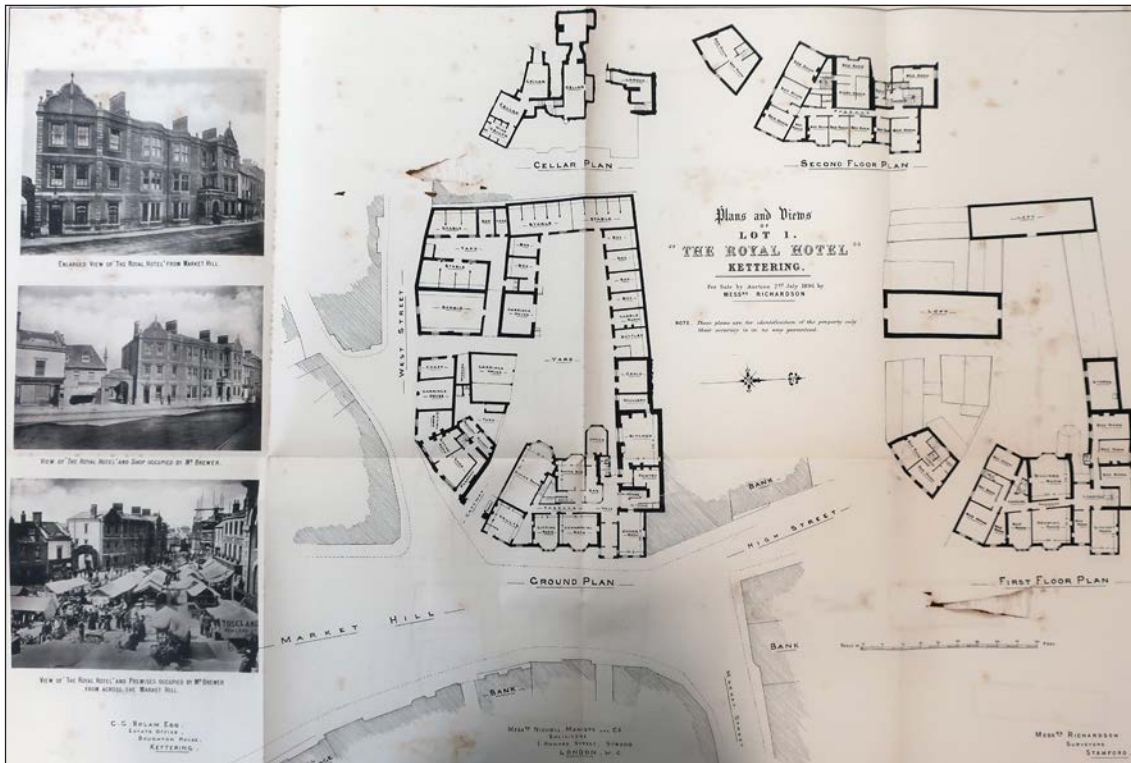


Figure 12: 1896 Sales particulars. [Boughton House Archive, uncatalogued sales particulars. Used with kind permission of the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry KT]

The plans also provide a greater level of clarity regarding the arrangement of the stable blocks to the rear. In 1896 the stables comprised two carriage houses (a further carriage house was attached to Mr Brewer's shop and accessed from West Street), along with an extensive suite of stables and horse boxes enough to house 76 horses. The stables were largely single storey under pitched roofs, with three lofts above the larger of the stable blocks and the saddle room. In addition to the arched gateway leading from Market Place, a second entrance provided access from West Street. This secondary service entrance appears to broadly correspond to the location of the existing courtyard entrance.

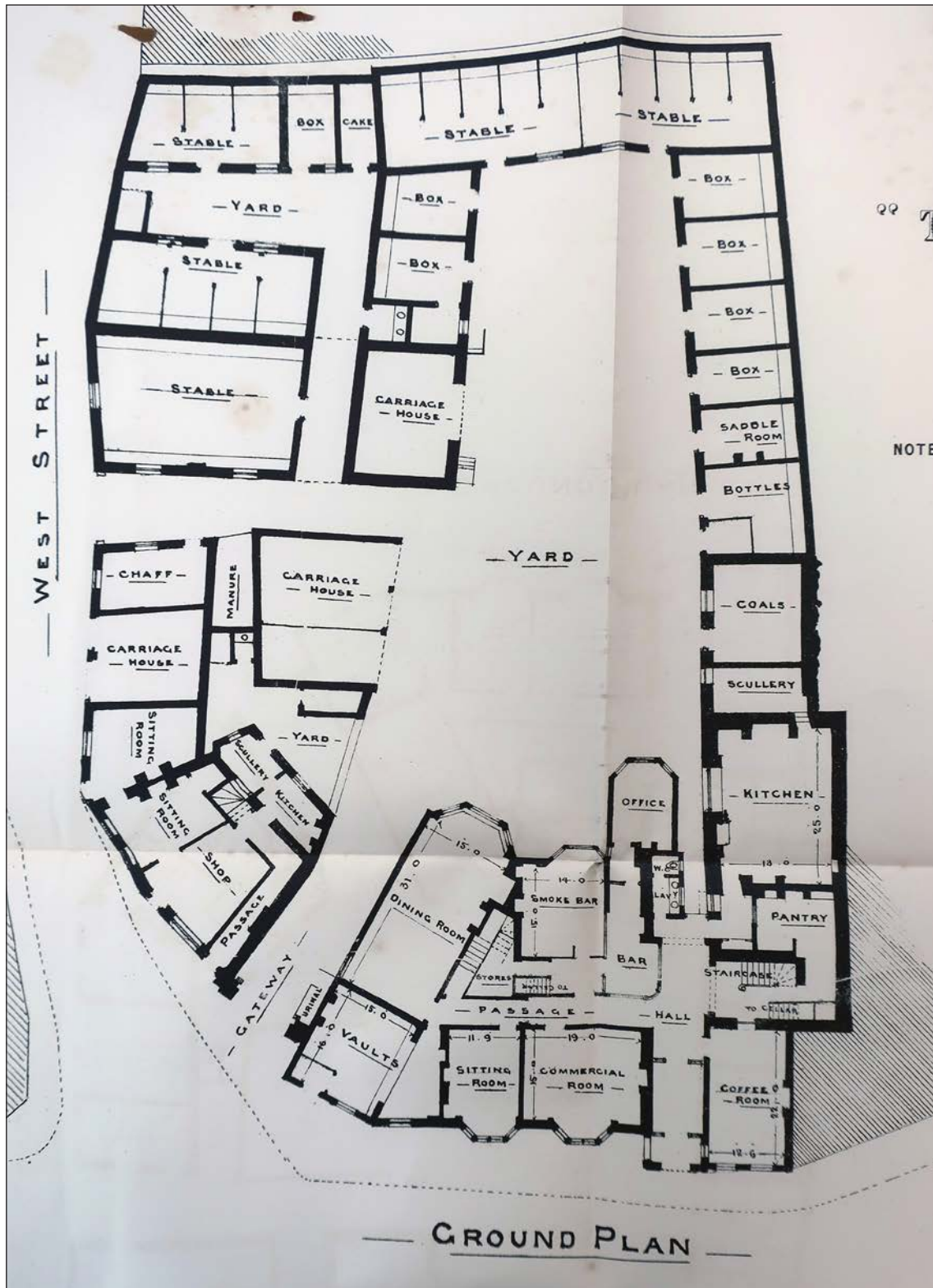


Figure 13: 1896 sales particulars, detail of the ground floor. [Boughton House Archive, uncatalogued sales particulars. Used with kind permission of the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry KT]

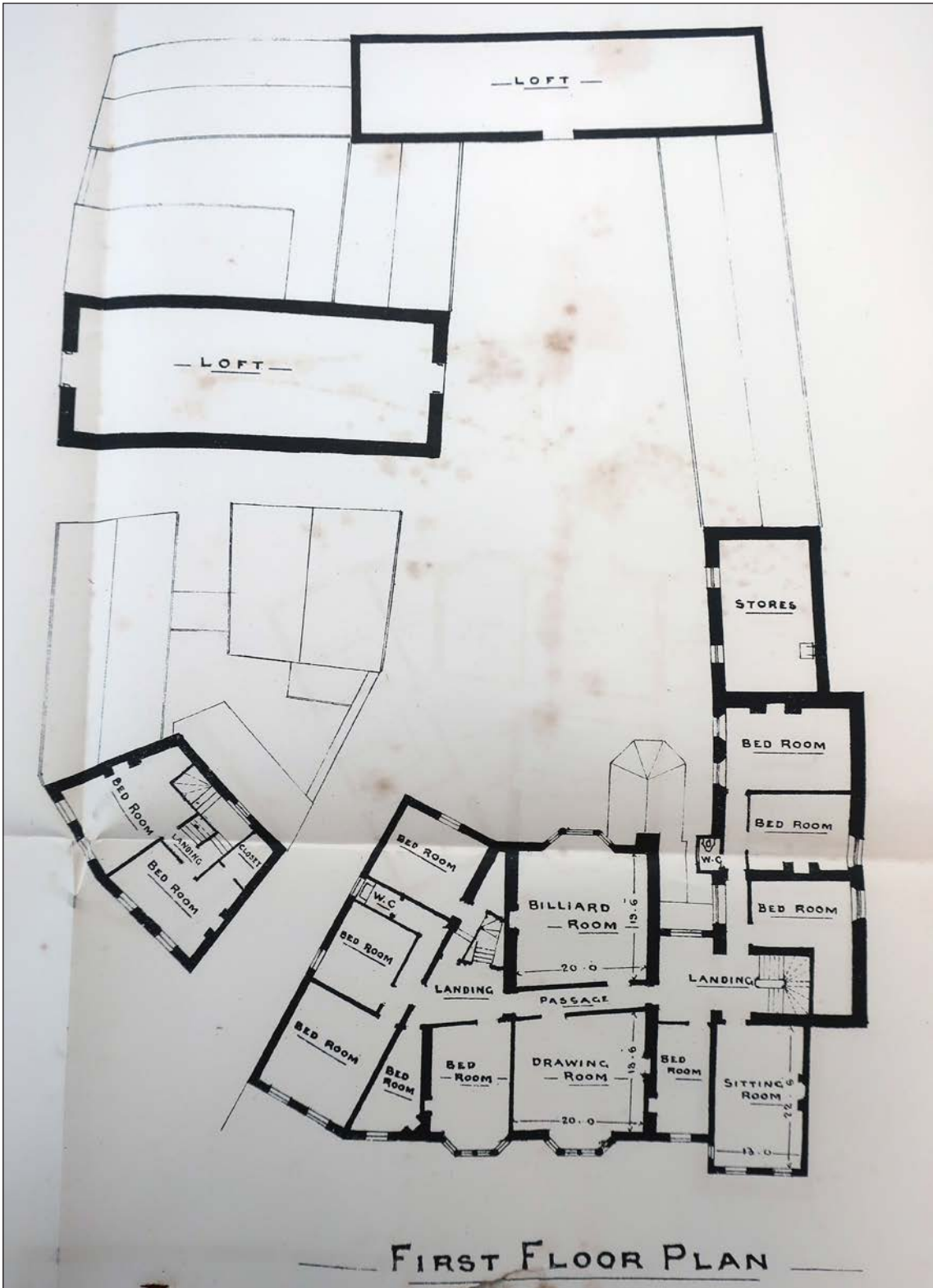


Figure 14: 1896 sales particulars, detail of the first floor. [Boughton House Archive, uncatalogued sales particulars. Used with kind permission of the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry KT]

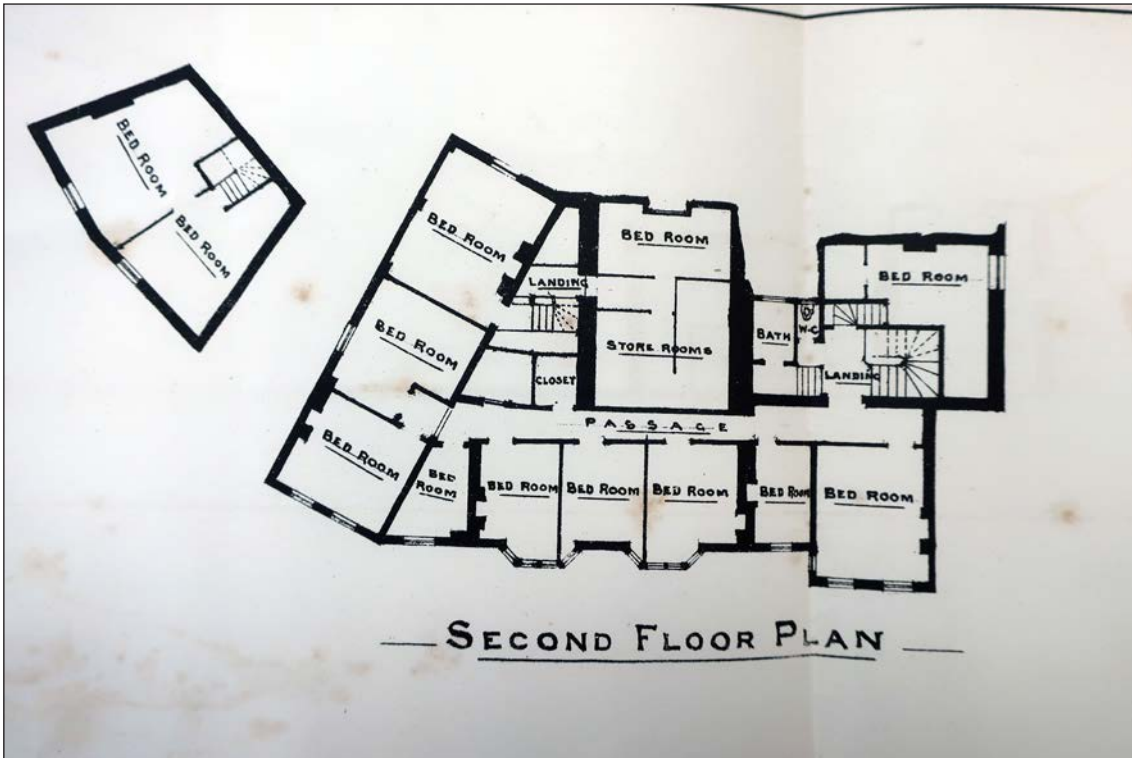


Figure 15: 1896 sales particulars, detail of the second floor. [Boughton House Archive, uncatalogued sales particulars. Used with kind permission of the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry KT]

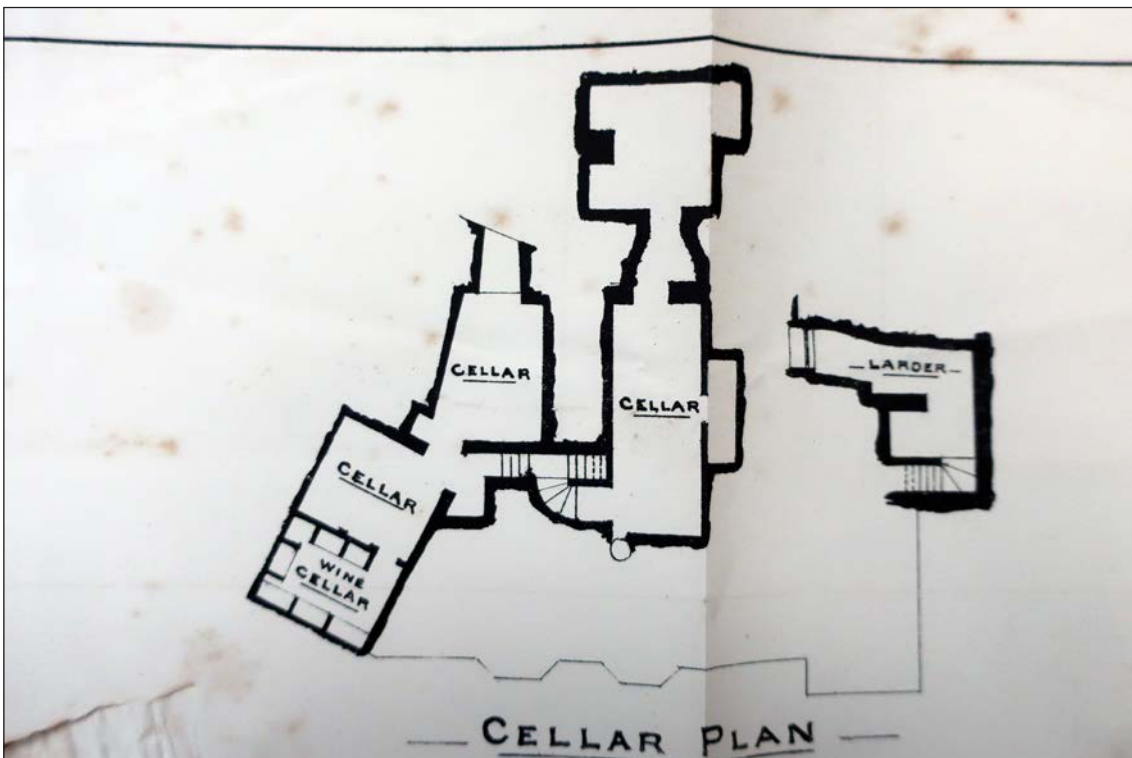


Figure 16: 1896 sales particulars, detail of cellars. [Boughton House Archive, uncatalogued sales particulars. Used with kind permission of the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry KT]



Figure 17: 1896 sales particulars, detail of the elevation to the Market Place, showing Mr Brewer's fishmonger's shop to the left-hand side of the archway. [Boughton House Archive, uncatalogued sales particulars. Used with kind permission of the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry KT]

The photographs which accompanied the plans show the only known image of Mr Brewer's shop (Figure 17). Although only partially visible, the shop, which was rendered with a steeply pitched roof, appears to be stylistically earlier in date than the hotel, and possibly represented an 18th century building. No images were provided of the stables but given the extent to which these were rebuilt so soon after the sale, it is possible that they too were remnants of the earlier hotel. This is, however, purely speculative.

A newspaper article in the *Daily Chronicle* records that the hotel was sold to Messrs P Phipps and Co, later known as Phipps Brewery, for £13,300.⁷⁰

Phipps Brewery – extensions 1896-1899

Soon after the sale, the new owners started extensive works to extend the hotel and stables. This demolished Mr Brewer's shop and extended the hotel around the corner onto West Street. This is shown on the 1900 OS map of Kettering which was surveyed in 1899 (Figure 18).

Again, it has proven difficult to identify the architects for these extension works. Inspection of the building fabric reveals that the extensions to the hotel building were done very sympathetically and extreme care was taken to match the bricks and brick-bond, stone dressings and mouldings to the earlier 1878 building. Given that at



Figure 18: 1900 1:2,500 scale OS mapping (surveyed 1899). [© and database right Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2022) Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024].

the time of the sale, the building had been rebuilt only 18 years before, it is possible that the same architect or builder was employed to extend the building.

It is clear however, that the side and rear extensions to the building were completed by 1899. Therefore, the assertion in Bailey and Pevsner that the side and rear additions were completed by Blackwell in 1925-6 is a mistake.⁷¹ No plans of the Royal Hotel are recorded within the Blackwell & Co. collection held by Northamptonshire Record Office. However, there is an index entry for 'side wings with GSS' to the George Hotel in 1925-6, 'GSS' in this instance referring to the architectural firm of Gotch Saunders and Surridge. Discussion with Bruce Bailey, co-author of the 2013 revised Pevsner publication has revealed that an editorial error has led to the entry for the George Hotel being conflated with that of the Royal Hotel.⁷²

By the time of the 1900 OS map (surveyed 1899), the hotel is shown to have been extended and the stables to the rear have been altered to include a further range of buildings to the west of the older stable ranges (*see* Figure 18). The hotel extensions occupied the former site of Mr Brewer's shop and the former carriage entrance to the stables. No more detailed plans have been found, so broad conclusions can only be drawn from the map record. It would appear that the extensions included the addition of the former billiard room (now restaurant) and what is now the conference room at the rear of the building.



Figure 19: 1896 plan overlain onto 1900 1:2500 scale OS mapping, showing the new stable block added c. 1898 to the west of the site [© and database right Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2022) Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024]. Note, not to scale.

Comparison of the 1896 sales plan and the 1900 OS map, shows the extent of the changes to the rear of the hotel (Figure 19). Much of the old yard had been filled in by the addition of the billiard room and conference room at the back of the hotel. Mr Brewer's shop had been demolished, along with the stable block fronting onto West Street and the carriage house behind to accommodate the new wing of the hotel. Part of the stable ranges, albeit minus the old carriage house, remained in place at this date in the centre of the courtyard.

A stable block had been added to the site adjacent to the older L-shaped stable block. It was constructed onto land previously occupied by stalls and stables belonging to the hotel (south range), but also a collection of smaller buildings which are shown on earlier maps to have been previously outside of the hotel's plot (west range). This suggests that Phipps & Co. had purchased additional land to the west and had replaced the buildings on that site in order to building the existing stable block. This new block was abutted by a range of buildings on its western elevation and this corresponds to the building scar still visible on this elevation today (Figure 20).



Figure 20: Scar from demolished building on the western elevation of the existing stable block, Dec. 2019
[© Historic England, Hannah Good]

When it was first constructed the stable range did have three Dutch gables. The central form of these gables matched those on the hotel. However, the middle and westernmost gable were taken down in 2017 after concerns were raised about their stability and the risk posed to those using the public highway below.

It is clear from the 1900 OS map that the demolition of the old stable ranges and Mr Brewer's shop allowed for West Street to be widened and improved from the narrow lane seen on earlier mapping. Examination of the houses opposite the existing stable block reveals the bricks on the front elevations of numbers 23-25 West Street appear to be of similar size, colour, date and brick bond to those on the stable range (Figure 21). Sills and keystones are also made from the same pale coloured stone used on the stable block. This could indicate that these buildings were re-fronted at around the same date as the new stable range was being built, perhaps as part of wider improvements to the street.

By the time of the 1926 OS map (surveyed 1924), further demolition had taken place to the rear of the hotel (Figure 22). The older L-shaped stable block had been removed and replaced with a rectangular building in the centre of the yard. This was seemingly attached to the existing c. 1898 stable block by an open-sided, roofed structure. This is illustrated more clearly on an image of Market Place taken in 1952 (Figures 23 and 24) which shows these buildings behind the hotel.



Figure 21: Numbers 23-25 West Street [© Historic England, Aimee Henderson]



Figure 22: 1926 OS map of Kettering revised 1924 OS 25in (detail) [© and database right Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2022) Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024].



Figure 23: Market Place and the Royal Hotel (c. 1952). [Northamptonshire Record Office ACC-1972-218-P-6172]



Figure 24: Detail showing metal roofed buildings to the rear of the Royal Hotel viewed from the tower of the Church of St Peter and St Paul (c. 1952). [Northamptonshire Record Office ACC-1972-218-P-6172]

These metal roofed structures were likely added to create garaging at the rear of the hotel and marked a shift from horses to cars as the primary mode of transport for visitors and guests. It is notable that the hotel was being advertised by the RAC for its good provision of garaging from as early as 1913.⁷³

The OS mapping available after 1926 up until 1967 offers very little detail to indicate changes to the hotel buildings. The 1967 OS map, however, does provide greater detail and shows that, externally at least, few changes had taken place to the overall footprint of the buildings (Figure 25). The 1967 OS also shows that the metal-roofed structure shown on earlier maps and the 1952 photograph, had been extended to abut the rear of the hotel building. The dotted lines used to demarcate its north and south walls on the OS map indicate that this was an open-sided structure. This almost certainly corresponds to the partially ruinous, metal and asbestos-roofed structure which remains today.

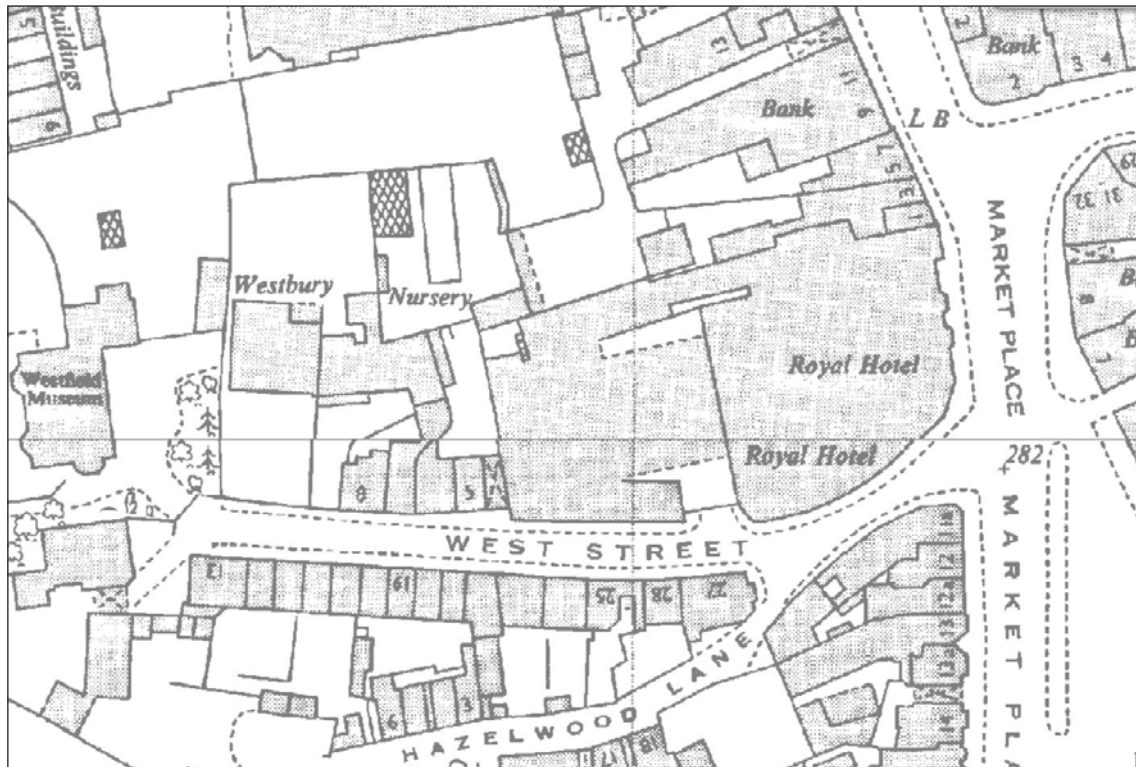


Figure 25: 1967 OS map of Kettering, 1/1250 scale (detail) [© and database right Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2022) Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024].

OS mapping after 1967 provides little detail as to external changes to the building after that date. Archival records held in the Northamptonshire Record Office show the northernmost range of the building as it was in 1979 along with proposal drawings for works to the former kitchen and laundry rooms.⁷⁴ This reordering seemingly took place alongside wider alterations to the hotel's dining facilities which are alluded to by Tony Smith in his book *20th Century Kettering: A Book for the Millennium*.⁷⁵ Smith describes, albeit briefly, that in 1979 the former billiard room was refitted into a carvery and also makes reference to the reordering of the kitchen facilities located in the northernmost wing of the building.

These alterations included the removal of the historic copper and brickwork benches from the former laundry (now the walk-in freezer), and the huge fireplace on the west wall of the former kitchen, (now seemingly used for storage) was broken out to create a double doorway leading to a dry store and the new kitchen.

A further alteration took place sometime after 1982, when the ornate late 19th-century shopfront was removed from the West Street elevation to allow the creation of a nightclub in the ground floor and cellar of the hotel (Figure 26). A small fraction of the stained glass of this shopfront has been preserved, albeit in an altered state in the existing bar area.



Figure 26: Location of lost shopfront (now nightclub entrance), replaced with multi-paned windows and recessed entrance door post-1982 [© Historic England, Aimee Henderson]

Alterations to the building which have taken place since the late 20th century are recorded in the planning records for Kettering which are held by North Northamptonshire Council. These include the removal of glass and timber from the glazed atrium in the stable courtyard and the addition of wind bracing to the remaining steel structure.⁷⁶ The reasons given for this are safety concerns from falling glass.

Further planning applications were logged in 2010 to turn part of the building into a delicatessen, and to install a lift into the main reception area next to the northern staircase.⁷⁷ However, while consent was granted it does not appear that these alterations were ever carried out.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

For the purposes of this report the building will be discussed in two sections: the hotel and the stable block. Please note that during visits to the site it was not possible to access all areas of the hotel including the bedrooms as these were occupied by guests, and the stable ranges are in a semi-derelict condition and are unsafe to access. The following section does not discuss every room in detail and does not provide a detailed gazetteer of the building's internal spaces, but instead aims to highlight key spaces, fixtures and fittings from each phase of the building's history. Detailed, existing floorplans to scale have not been provided.

The following analysis describes the principal features associated to each phase of the buildings' development.

The Royal Hotel

The main hotel building was constructed in multiple phases, and has undergone substantial extensions since its construction, particularly to the side and rear. The earliest externally visible phase of the existing building dates from 1878, as identified by a date stone on the northernmost gable. Internally, inspection of the built fabric suggests the remains of an earlier building is preserved within the 1878 building.

More recently modern uPVC windows have been inserted into the West Street elevation, including in the lower portion of the oriel window.



Figure 27: The Royal Hotel [© Historic England, Aimee Henderson]

Phase I – mid-18th century

A firm date for the construction of the original hotel on this site has not been found. The White Hart is first mentioned in the documentary record sometime after 1700

and the building is recorded on Hennell's plan of Market Place in 1785 (see Figure 7). It seems probable that the hotel was constructed in response to the burgeoning road network which was developing around Kettering by the 1750s. The White Hart, and later the Royal Hotel, appears frequently in trade directories after 1841 and in the local press as a key stopping point for mail coaches and stage waggons transporting goods and people to and from London. However, although the White Hart was clearly a prosperous and well-connected coaching inn, very little evidence regarding the physical appearance or character of the earliest phase of the hotel has been found.

Phase II – c. 1785-1826

Almost all visible traces of the mid-18th century hotel appear to have been subsumed by later building works. However, it would appear from fabric preserved within the northernmost wing of the building that some earlier fragments remain hidden behind the later façades.

Smith's 1826 plan of Kettering shows that the footprint of the building had been altered since Hennell's plan of 1785 (see Figures 7 and 10). Although the date of this alteration is unknown, by 1826 the section of the building fronting High Street had been reordered or reconstructed to a footprint similar to that which survives today. This includes the paired bay windows and the projecting northern gable fronting High Street.

Externally, when viewed from the private courtyard to the rear of numbers 1-7 High Street, the northern elevation of the hotel is partially visible (Figure 28). The three-storey former service range is constructed from ironstone rubble, with some visible timber beams. This extends as far as the former kitchen, which contained a fireplace (that subsequently has been broken out into a pair of double doors). This fireplace would have been serviced by the chimney which remains in place on the gable end of the three-storey section.



Figure 28: North elevation as seen from the courtyard of numbers 1-7 High Street [© Historic England, Aimee Henderson]

When looking at the 1896 plans of the building (*see* Figure 12), although not drawn to scale, the walls of the northern wing are noticeably thicker than walls in other parts of the building. This is repeated on more recent scale plans of the building.⁷⁸ Most of the internal walls are concealed behind plaster and later decorative finishes. However, some areas of exposed fabric are visible, notably within the cellar and above suspended ceilings in staff areas on the north side of the building.

Examination of what is visible confirms the external evidence that the walls of the north wing are built from ironstone which, in Kettering, generally indicates that a building is earlier in date than those built in brick.⁷⁹ Note that opening up works to expose fabric in other areas of the building have not taken place to confirm if there are other areas with stone-built walls. This wing of the hotel historically contained the service range of the building, including the kitchen, pantry and accommodation for the proprietor and other live-in staff at first- and second-floor level.

Below ground level, the hotel has two separate cellars, both of which are partially constructed with rubble stone walls and thus appear to date from this phase of work – albeit with later alterations in brick. The main cellar is accessed via stairs leading from the existing bar/lounge. The smaller, second cellar (which was identified on later plans as being used as a larder) was accessed from a separate staircase in

the north wing, this would have provided easier access from the, then, kitchen and pantry.

Other than the stone walling, very little visible evidence of this earlier phase of the building survives. With one exception. The northern staircase of the hotel, where it runs from first- to second-floor level, is clearly earlier in date than other internal fixtures and fittings (Figures 29 and 30). It should be noted that the staircase has been truncated and altered to meet a much later solid handrail which leads from the first to the ground floor.

The staircase, which is an open string design with stick balusters supporting a slender, steeply pitched handrail is early 19th century in character. Although there is always some degree of variation in terms of how and when designs came in and out of use or fashion, the use of stick balusters, the simple wave-like pattern on the stair string brackets, and the shape of the handrail all suggest that this staircase dates from the early 19th century, perhaps around 1810-1830.⁸⁰ This would coincide with the change in the building's footprint as seen on the 1826 plan of Kettering.

The staircase is of modest design but is well executed, particularly in the mahogany handrail which has been carefully carved and fitted together. The handrail is damaged at its lowest end, where it terminates and meets the later handrail. Presumably in its original form the staircase continued down to ground floor level, where it may have originally terminated in what is known as a curtail step; where the handrail turns around on itself to end in a spiral. This arrangement is suggested by the 1896 plans.

The assumed date of this staircase is significantly earlier than the date of 1878, which is given on the datestone on the exterior of this section of the building but is too late to be associated with the suggested earliest iteration of the building around the mid-18th century. Therefore, it is most likely to be a remnant of the alterations which took place between the 1785 and 1826 plans of Kettering, when the building was still known as the White Hart. By the time of the 1878 reordering of the building, this area was given over to services and housing for the proprietor and staff, which is likely why this earlier staircase was not replaced.



Figure 29: North staircase [DP311984]



Figure 30: North stair, second-floor landing when viewed from below [© Historic England, Aimee Henderson]

Phase III – 1878 alterations

As discussed above, no detailed plans of the 1878 works have been found, and it is unclear how much of the earlier 1785-1826 building was retained when the 1878 alterations took place. Certainly, the building owes much of its external appearance and decorative character to this phase, but the extent to which earlier fabric may be concealed behind the 1878 elevations is unknown. For this reason, this phase is referred to as alterations rather than ‘rebuilding’.

The 1878 building comprises the front six bays of the hotel fronting the corner of Market Hill and the High Street. As discussed earlier in this report, the architect for the 1878 reordering works is not known, despite previously being attributed to J A Gotch. For plans of the 1878 building, please refer to Figures 13-17.

The principal (east) elevation of the hotel is broadly symmetrical in that it has a Dutch-gable to either end with two central bay windows. However, this has been arranged to conform to the shape of the site, so that the southern gable is canted to face Market Place, and the northern gable projects forwards onto the High Street. The projection of the northern gable appears to accommodate the earlier stone-built building which is preserved within the fabric of the north wing. This phase added the covered porch and Dutch gables to the building and, it would appear, also added

the long room which extends back at an angle from the corner of Market Place which currently contains the bar and servery area for the adjoining (later) restaurant.

The existing brick and dressed stone elevations fronting High Street date from this period. It is also presumed that the stone mullions were added to the bay windows at this date. On the south gable, the left-hand window (when facing the elevation from Market Place), was originally a doorway, but this has been carefully blocked up to convert it into a window.

The date of the alteration is preserved in a date stone on the northern gable of the hotel (see Figure 4). A further relief stone carving above the porch bears the royal coat of arms of the United Kingdom, a reference to the name of the hotel (Figure 31). The porch is executed with paired ionic pilasters on each corner with round arches in between. The pilasters support a simple entablature with plain frieze and dentil cornice. The roofs are pitched and are set slightly back behind parapets to reduce their visibility from ground level.



Figure 31: Carved coat of arms above the entrance porch [DP300772]

To the rear and extending westwards from the three-storey, stone-built former service range is a two-storey range which is constructed from brick, and whose western elevation is finished with white glazed bricks (see Figure 28). Today this contains the modern kitchen and walk-in freezer. Beyond that a single storey block extends further into the rear courtyard, but the interior of this building was not accessed. These are also constructed from brick. Examination of the external fabric, coupled with the 1896 plans, suggests that both the two-storey and single storey ranges were also added to the building in around 1878.

By overlaying the 1896 plan onto modern OS mapping, it suggests that most, if not all of the rear stable blocks have been lost since the sale of the building in 1896 (Figure 32). Some fabric may be retained inside the extant northern range. The overlay also suggests that the existing plot extends further westwards than in 1896.

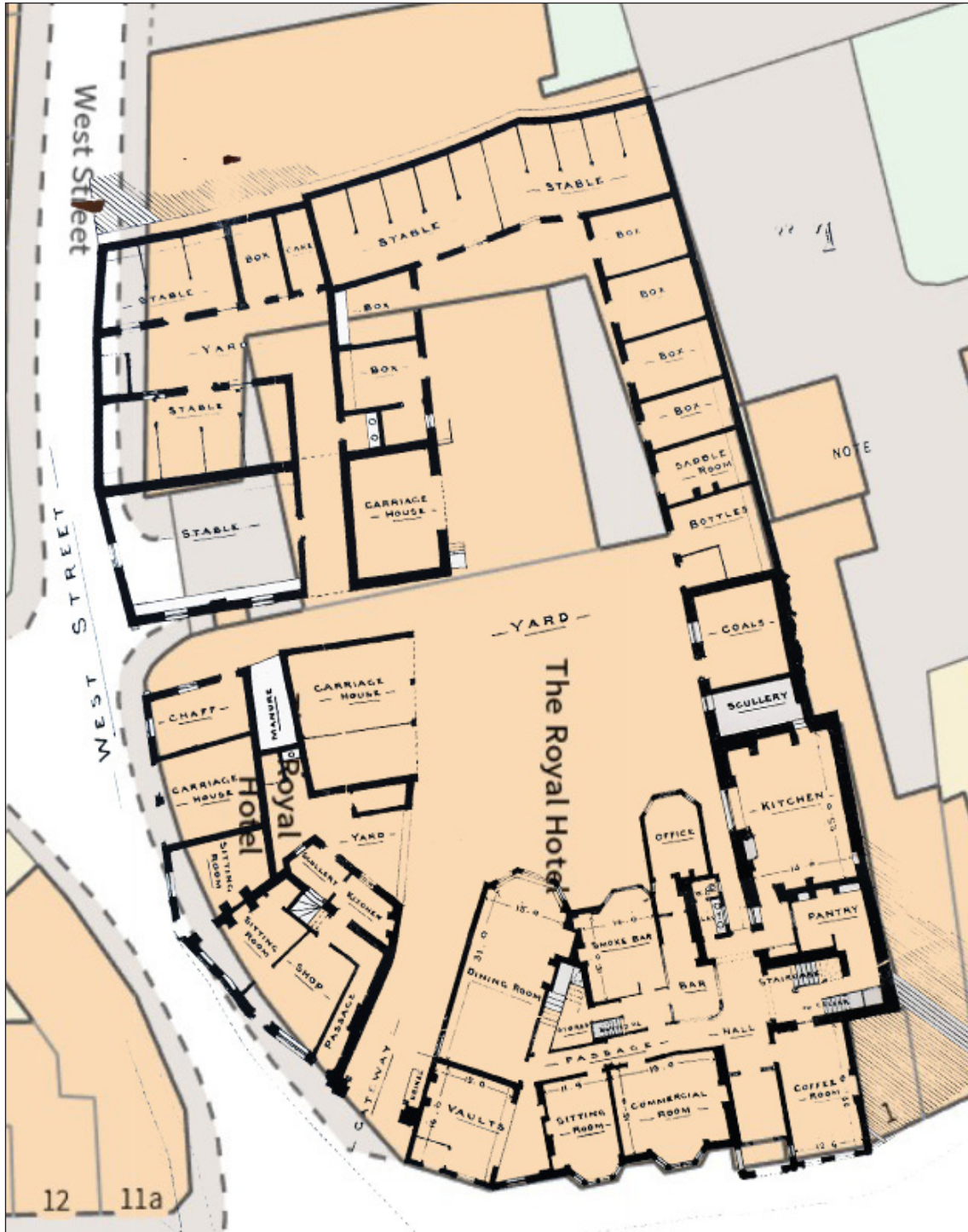


Figure 32: 1896 plan, overlaid onto modern OS mapping [© Crown Copyright and database right 2022. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence Number 100024900]. Note, not to scale.

The building has undergone substantial extensions to the rear and side since the end of the 19th century, and it appears that most of the internal decorative fabric from the 1878 phase of the building has been lost.

At ground-floor level, the existing restaurant servery area, which is located behind the southern gable retains a late 19th century interior. However, this has been modified, as originally this room featured a large bay window at its north-western end which would have looked out onto the rear courtyard. Similarly, the existing female WC and corridor areas were originally fitted with bay windows looking out onto the courtyard.

Above ground-floor level, the hotel offered a large drawing room overlooking the High Street with a billiard room to the rear, again featuring a large bay window looking out over the courtyard and stables. As mentioned previously the northern wing was used for service areas and to house the proprietor, his family, and the rest of the staff. The rest of the first and second floors were given over to guest bedrooms and storage space.

At one time, the hotel featured an ornate barrel-vaulted entrance corridor leading from the entrance porch. No evidence of this corridor survives, save for one poor quality image taken in 1911 (on display in the hotel lobby). The corridor ceiling was removed at some point after 1911. It is not clearly identified on the 1896 plans of the building, and no further historic plans have been found which show the building after it was extended. Therefore, it is not known whether this related to the 1878 rebuilding or to works carried out by Phipps Brewery after 1896. However, given that it would be extremely difficult to retrofit such a corridor into an earlier arrangement, it is more likely to date from the construction of this area of the building in 1878 and to have been lost in subsequent alterations.

Phase IV – 1896-1899 extension

After the hotel was purchased by Phipps Brewery in 1896, the building was substantially extended both to the side and rear. No plans or other records relating to this phase of works have been found during this investigation. Conclusions regarding this phase of the building are drawn from the map record and from examination of existing built fabric.

This phase saw the main hotel building extended around the corner on to West Street, adding a further Dutch gable onto the western end of the building, before curving round into the rear courtyard. It further extended the rear of the building adding the former billiard room, now restaurant, and the large conference room. Note that the large multi-paned windows on the West Street elevation are later insertions replacing the now lost late 19th-century shopfront.

This phase also included works to alter the main cellar which on the 1896 plan were shown to be accessed from what is now the bar area and extended under the rear of the hotel and underneath the courtyard. The 1896-99 alterations reorganised the

cellar access, realigning the cellar stairs so that they could be accessed from beneath the new staircase which is located next to the current bar/lounge.

One of the principal features added to the building during this phase was the slender oriel window on the West Street elevation. This oriel window is an elegant design with slim stone mullions and curved window frames and glazing (Figure 33). The frames and glazing have been removed, and the mullions have been partially obscured on the lower half of the window, where uPVC windows were inserted in the 21st century. Elsewhere, the moulded stone architraves on the windows from the 1878 east elevation have been replicated on the windows of the west elevation and this continues along the entire frontage to the courtyard entrance. The windows themselves are a mix of historic, possibly original, timber framed sliding sash windows and later uPVC replacements.

Like the porch on the east elevation, the oriel window features carved stone panels. These are classical in style depicting winged lions, urns and figures surrounded by floriate elements executed in high relief. The name 'Royal Hotel' is picked out in black on the central panel.



Figure 33: Oriel window on the west street elevation [DP300995]

Originally the 1896-1899 extension included an ornate shopfront fronting Market Place. This shopfront led to 'the vaults' of the hotel, presumably this was a public bar. The shopfront was removed sometime between 1982 and 1991.

Historic images indicate that the shopfront had a tiled stallriser and bow-fronted, stained glass windows (Figures 34 and 35). A recessed entrance door provided access to 'the vaults' without having to go through the main hotel building. Stone pilasters with moulded corbels to either side of the timber shopfront supported a painted fascia giving the name of the hotel, 'the vaults' and in later images, this carried the branding for 'Phipps Ales'. It appears the shopfront continued further along the elevation to West Street, with simpler, multi-paned windows and the same tiled stallrisers. Since the shopfront was removed, only the stone corbels and pilasters remain.

Similar tiles to those on the lost shopfront also appeared inside the building. Notably, within the 'vaults' a small section of brightly coloured Majolica tiles survives inside what is now a corridor linking the existing hotel bar to the former 'vaults'. In this location the tiles are only on one wall and the cornice in the corridor appears to have been cut. This suggests that these tiles may have once formed the back wall of a larger room and that the eastern stud wall was inserted later turning this into a corridor. The designs on some of the tiles in the corridor match those in the restaurant suggesting they are from the same phase of the hotel's development.



Figure 34: RAC Postcard showing The Royal Hotel, 1913. [Northamptonshire Record Office, Phipps Brewery Photos/1913]



Figure 35: Photograph of c. 1940 showing the former shopfront. Note the blocked side windows compared to the 1913 image above. Note also the alteration of the ground floor window in the gabled bay into a door by 1940. [Northamptonshire Record Office, Phipps Brewery Photos/364-372]

Unlike earlier phases of the building, it appears that substantial internal fixtures and fittings from the 1896-1899 extensions remain inside the building, albeit having undergone some alterations.

One of the main surviving features is the principal staircase leading from the bar. The staircase replaced an earlier staircase shown in the same location on the 1896 sales plans. The existing staircase has been reordered to incorporate the cellar stairs which are accessed via a panelled screen.

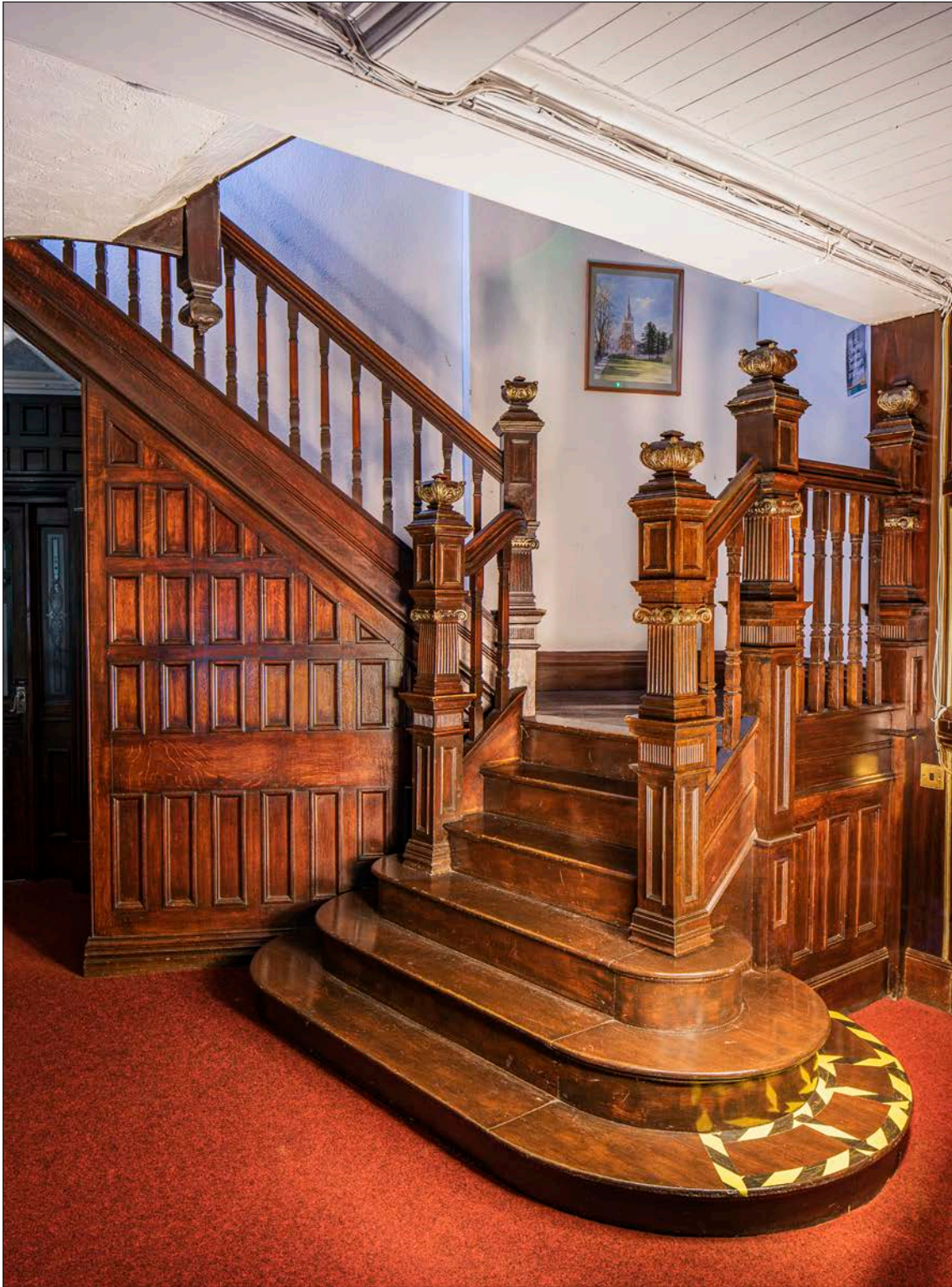


Figure 36: 1896-1899 staircase, bar area, ground-floor level [DP311884]

The existing bar area itself is fitted out with a late 20th-century bar. However, it does incorporate two fragments of the old external shopfront. These have been altered to reverse the RH monogram so that it is inward facing. The windows have lost some sections of painted glass and have also been fixed with extra lead comes to repair broken sections.

Opposite the existing bar area is a seating area which today is a single open space containing the two bay windows looking out onto High Street. In 1896, this room was divided into two separate rooms – a sitting and commercial room. Sometime after 1896, these rooms were opened into a single room as exists today. The pair of fireplaces at either end of this room are not believed to date from the 1896-1899 extension, as their style does not match those of other fireplaces elsewhere in the hotel. They are both assumed to be later replacements.



Figure 37: Salvaged stained glass, note the monogram has been reversed from its original position. Some sections of painted glass have been lost. [DP311979]

A significant number of cast-iron radiators are preserved in the corridors and other public areas of the hotel including the restaurant and conference rooms (Figures 38 - 40). These are all ornate designs and a number of them are identified as being 'Beeston Decorated' radiators. The radiators in the conference room are larger and in a different, more ornate design than those in the corridors. Large areas of parquet flooring are also preserved under carpeting throughout the corridors of the 1896-99 extensions and also in the eastern end of the restaurant.



Figure 38: Cast iron 'Beeston Decorated' radiator, example from the restaurant, [DP311973]

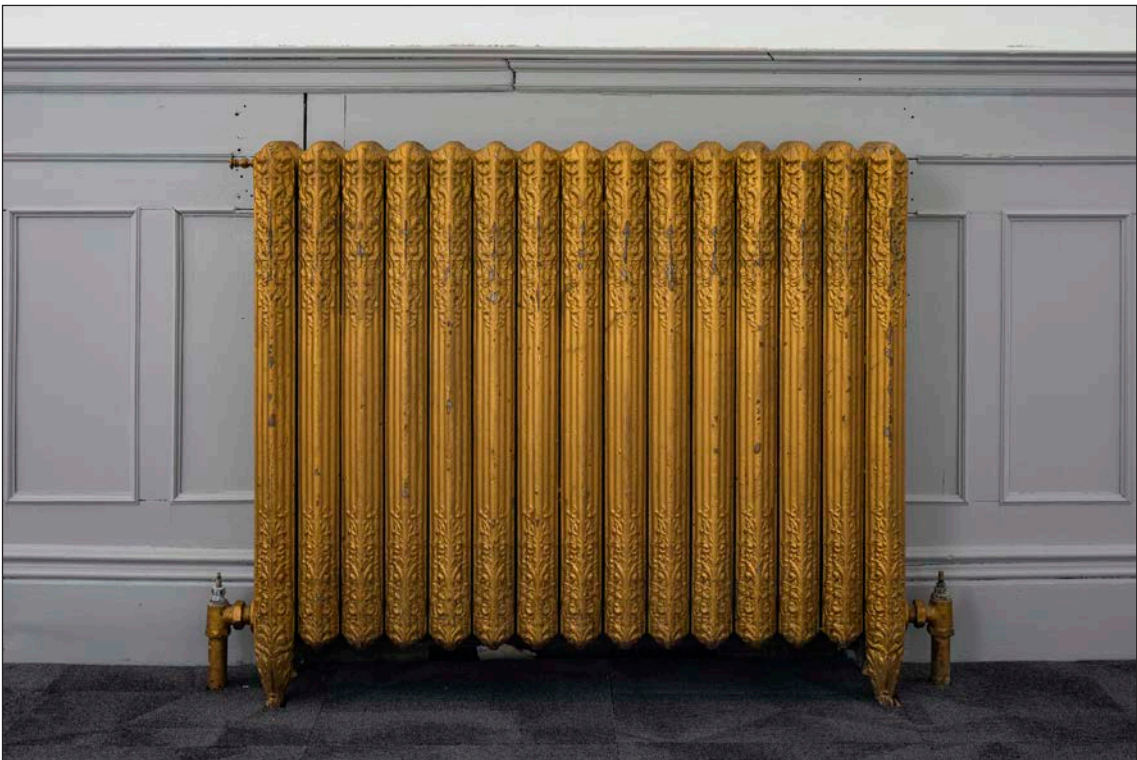


Figure 39: Cast iron radiator from the conference room [DP311975]

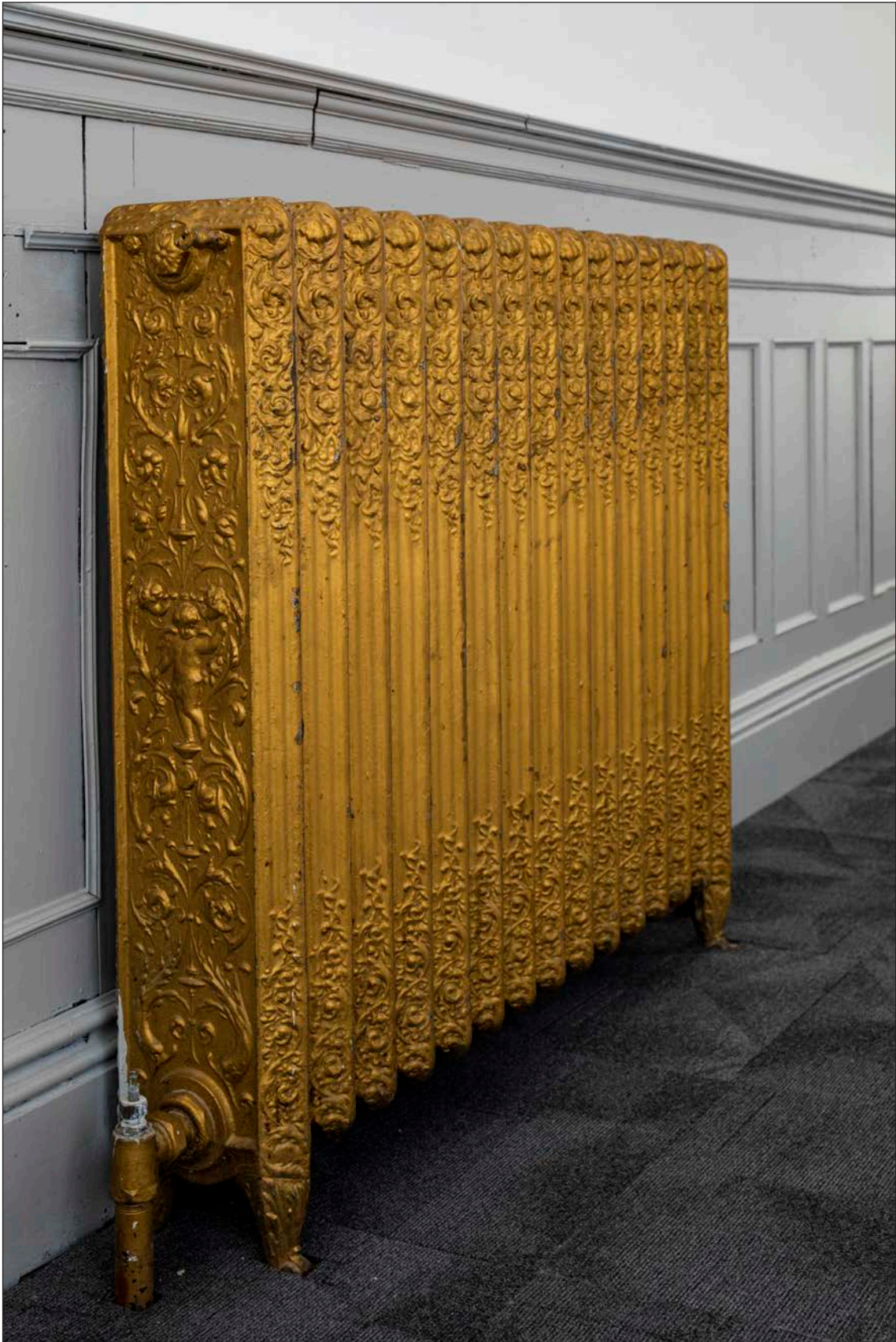


Figure 40: Conference room radiator, end design [DP311976]

The former billiard room, which now functions as the hotel's main restaurant area, features a striking, vaulted glass ceiling lantern (Figure 41). The glazing on the lantern is transfer printed rather than painted glass as is seen on the glazing salvaged from the shopfront. Externally the glazed lantern has been enclosed within a later roof to prevent rainwater leaking into the interior.

The restaurant is also notable as it contains a nearly complete fit out by Birmingham bar fitters, Gaskell and Chambers (Figures 42-45). Gaskell and Chambers were probably the largest firm of bar fitters operating during the late 19th century. Unfortunately, their Birmingham premises were destroyed in the Second World War and most of their early records were lost, so specific records relating to the Royal Hotel have not been found. Gaskell and Chambers may also have been responsible for the lost shopfront, as this shared design elements such as tiling with the interior fit out.

The surviving features at the Royal Hotel include an ornate fire surround set into an arched recess and half-panelled walls divided by classical pilasters. The room is edged with upholstered benches around the perimeter with push buttons to gain the attention of the staff. The arrangement of the benches reveals the historic use of this room, which until the mid-20th century contained billiard tables in the centre, these would have been top lit by the central glazed lantern. Note that in one corner, the benches have been rearranged to create an enclosed booth.

The benches and panelling are continued in the eastern half of the restaurant, closest to the bar/servery area. The bar itself is a later replacement. Almost identical benches were located in the Grade II* listed Red Lion pub in Handsworth (now closed).⁸¹

The design of the stained-glass window from the bar/servery area, is used for the windows on the first- and second-floor corridors of the 1896-1899 extension. They lend visual interest to the otherwise more muted public areas of the hotel. Beyond the dining room, bar and conference rooms, the ground-floor areas of the 1896-1899 extensions have been largely stripped out and almost all historic features have been removed. However, the ceiling of the 'vaults' (more recently the Emporio Bar) does preserve a small fragment of historic decoration. Majolica tiles are used extensively in the restaurant to cover the walls and ceilings, (this will be discussed in more detail below). Within the former 'vaults' a section of the ceiling retains Majolica tiles, though these have been coated with black paint. The presence of these tiles on the ceiling suggests that these spaces, when occupied by the 'vaults', had high-quality tiled decoration, perhaps similar to the bar fittings seen elsewhere on the ground floor. Unfortunately, most evidence of this has been lost.



Figure 41: Glazed roof above the restaurant [DP311850]



Figure 42: Restaurant (former billiard room) [DP311846]



Figure 43: Benches in the east end of the restaurant [DP311855]



Figure 44: Service button in the restaurant [DP311863]



Figure 45: Gaskell and Chambers Ltd, label on restaurant benches [DP311972]

Another notable feature of the Royal Hotel restaurant is the extensive use of tiles, not only on the walls, but also on the ceilings (Figure 46). The use of brightly coloured tiles is a feature of Victorian and Edwardian pubs in Birmingham, so much so that they are often referred to as the 'tile and terracotta' pubs.⁸² The White Horse, Congreave Street, now demolished, included a fit out by Gaskell and Chambers and was noted for the fact that the ceiling was tiled instead of the more common use of paper or Anaglypta (a brand of paintable, textured wall coverings made from paper or vinyl).⁸³ For hotels and pubs, tiles had an obvious advantage in that they are hard-wearing, colourful and easily washed down.



Figure 46: Majolica tiles on the walls and ceiling in the restaurant [DP311971]

Tiles survive in other parts of the hotel, notably in the corridor leading into the toilets next to the restaurant, and also in the corridor which links the bar area to the former 'vaults', more recently known as the Emporio Bar nightclub (Figure 47).

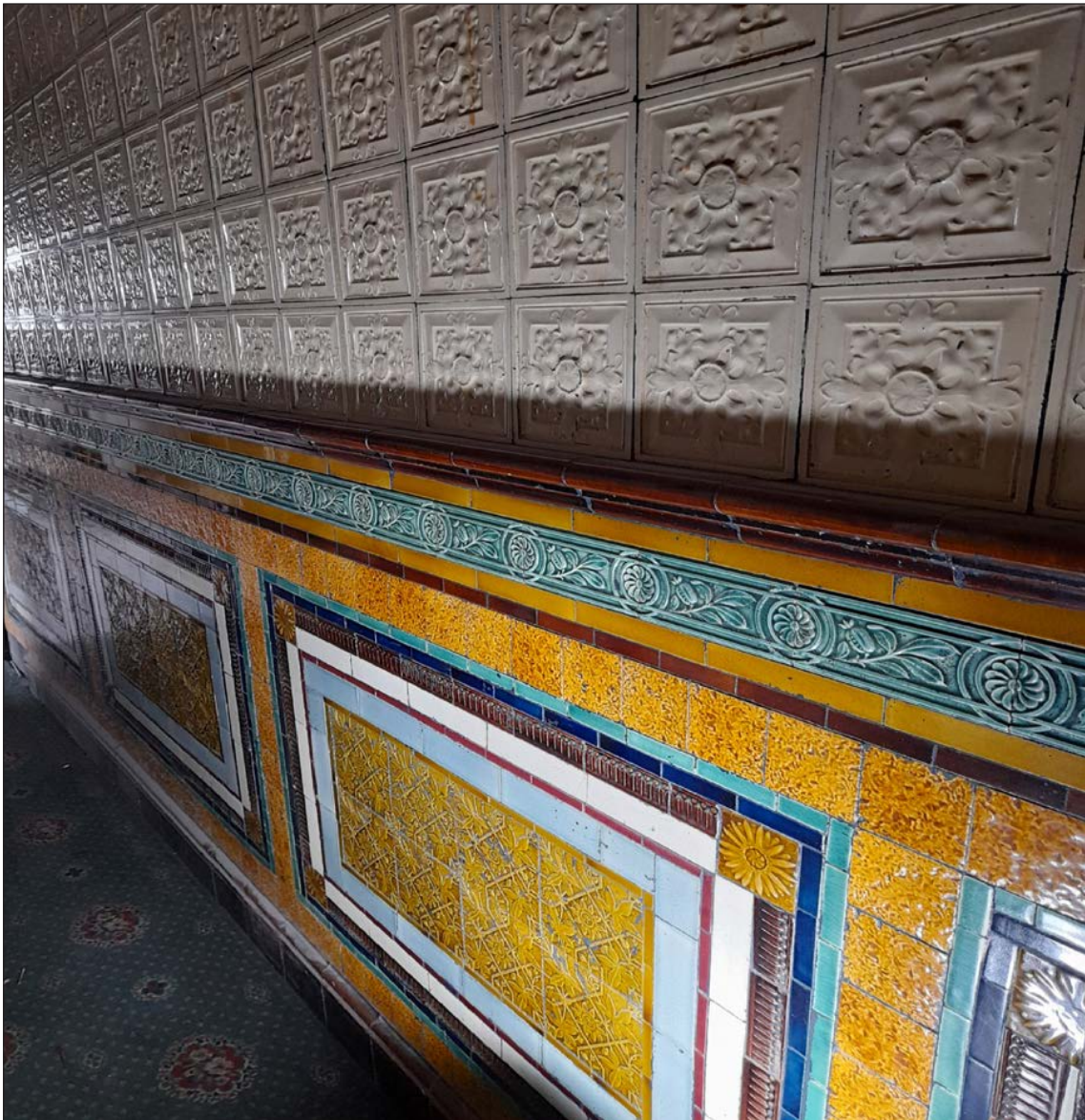


Figure 47: Majolica tiles in the corridor leading from the bar to the former nightclub [© Historic England, Aimee Henderson]

The 1896-1899 extensions also included the addition of the large conference room to the rear of the building (Figures 48 and 49). It seems likely that this originally functioned as a ballroom or as a space for assemblies. Like the adjoining restaurant the conference room originally had a central glazed roof light, but this has been covered over internally with plastic sheeting and its exact form is unknown.

The decorative scheme in the conference room is lighter than that used in the restaurant. This is likely because the restaurant, as a former billiard room, was originally viewed as a more masculine space, whereas a ballroom would have been open to female guests and therefore was suitable for lighter, more feminine décor. Nevertheless, the historic panelling and two fireplaces in the conference room make use of the same classical designs seen elsewhere in the hotel. The timberwork has been painted over with emulsion paint, so the original colours are not known. The

fireplaces incorporate mirrored over-mantels and tiled surrounds. Unlike the tiles used elsewhere in the hotel, these tiles are not Majolica but instead are transfer printed with floral designs depicting lily of the valley.



Figure 48: Conference room [DP311871]



Figure 49: Fireplace from the conference room [DP311876]

Phase V – 1979 kitchen and restaurant refit

By the 1970s the existing kitchen, which was still, at that time, located in the oldest part of the building, was no longer suitable to meet the needs of a modern hotel. Drawings by Gotch, Saunders and Surridge and held in the Northamptonshire Record Office reveal that changes were made to relocate the kitchen from its historic location (now a meeting/storeroom) into its existing location in the rear wing of the hotel (Figure 50).

This not only installed a much larger walk-in freezer in place of the old laundry, which required the removal of the historic copper and sink, but also converted the historic kitchen into a small dining room. This room is now used for meetings and storage. The earlier kitchen in the north wing had originally contained two substantial fireplaces on the east and west walls. These presumably would have once housed large cooking ranges. Both of these were knocked through; the west fireplace to create a double doorway leading between the new kitchen and dining area, and the east fireplace and chimney breast were completely removed to open up the room making it more suitable for a dining area.



Figure 50: Existing kitchen [© Historic England, Dale Dishon]

Phase VI – c. 1980 to present

Since the 1980s a number of changes have been undertaken to the hotel, most of which have been concerned with alterations to the windows. The most significant change was the removal of the Victorian shopfront from the West Street elevation, and its replacement with modern multi-paned double glazing (see Figure 26). This took place sometime between 1982 and 1991. No planning records have been found associated with the removal of the shopfront, but it appears that its removal was viewed as a controversial decision with local residents.⁸⁴

The loss of this shopfront removed a significant feature from the hotel and substantially altered the West Street elevation and the appearance of the building

when viewed from Market Place. Small fragments of the leaded glass windows have been preserved in the bar, and one broken window is located in the storerooms of the hotel.

Photographs taken in the early 20th century show that there appear to have been several notable changes to the principal elevation of the hotel fronting Market Place. On the northernmost bay, to the north of the porch a single large picture window has been inserted at ground floor level. This replaced a pair of windows as shown in early 20th century photographs. It is not known when these windows were altered, but it is most likely to have been in the latter part of the century. In addition, the chimneys also appear to have been reduced in height.

At some point in 2018-19, uPVC windows were installed into the oriel windows fronting West Street. Other windows along the hotel's long principal elevation have been replaced with uPVC double glazing on a seemingly piecemeal basis.

Stable block

The building referred to in this report as a stable block is located to the rear of the main building (Figure 51). It is linked to the rear elevation of the hotel by a suspended metal roof which covers the central courtyard space.

The courtyard ground level is significantly higher than that of the street, and the stable block has been constructed to allow for this change in level as the street slopes towards the west.

The south elevation of the stable block is constructed from red brick with stone dressings and is two storeys in height, with an additional level under the western end of the building, where the ground slopes away towards the street, and seven bays long. The stable block echoes the main hotel range in the use of banded brick pilasters to demarcate the bays of the building, replicating the stone pilasters on the main building. The design of the external elevation of the stable block also makes use of Dutch gables similar to the main building. Historically there were three gables on the stable block (Figure 52), but due to concerns about public safety arising from unstable masonry, two of these were taken down in 2017 under local authority supervision.

The views of the internal elevation are obscured by heras fencing and also later alterations to install timber cladding at first floor level. This covers the entire south and western elevations above first floor level when viewed from inside the courtyard (Figure 53). It is not known whether this cladding covers over historic openings associated with the use of the building as a stable, for example openings for taking in hay. At ground floor level, older openings appear to have been substantially widened, particularly in the south and west ranges where steel beams have been inserted to support the wider openings. Otherwise, those few window and door openings which can be viewed from inside the courtyard do not appear to have undergone substantial alteration, though some have been covered over with plywood.



Figure 51: Stable block to the rear of the hotel (south elevation), July 2021 [© Historic England, Aimee Henderson]



Figure 52: Courtyard from West Street showing the lost gatepost and removed gables, 1991, RCHME [Historic England Archive ref. AA91/03877]



Figure 53: Stable, interior courtyard [© Historic England Dale Dishon]



Figure 54: Stable block, west elevation, July 2021 [© Historic England, Aimee Henderson]

The western return is plain but retains a scar of a now-demolished range which extended westwards at right angles from the rear of the stable block (Figure 54).

The design of the stable block is noticeably different to that of the main hotel range, although it echoes the Dutch gables and is constructed from similar materials. The banded brick pilasters, the shape and design of the windows and the stone mouldings differ from the main hotel building. However, a stylistically simpler design would not be unusual for a service range.

This difference in design could suggest that the two buildings were completed as part of different phases of construction. However, map evidence confirms that both the extension of the hotel and the stable range were both added to the site between 1896 and 1899. Instead it seems more likely that the stable block was designed as a simpler, less extravagant building than the main hotel. Stylistic elements such as the use of pilasters, here executed in brick rather than stone, and the use of Dutch gables are repeated, but overall the building is altogether simpler and of lower architectural status, as is appropriate for a service wing. This would account for the difference between the two buildings.

The development of the stable blocks is less complicated than the main hotel building. Most of what is visible today was constructed in three phases, and the principal brick structure dates almost completely from the 1896-1899 extensions to the hotel building. It is possible that some elements of the pre-1896 stables survive within the northern range of buildings at ground-floor level, but these are likely to be fragmentary. Inspection of the interiors of the stable buildings have not taken place because of safety concerns.

Phase I – 1896-1899

The existing brick-built stable ranges were added to the hotel after the sale to Phipps Brewery in 1896. As evidenced by the map record, it seems that Phipps bought additional land to the west in order for them to extend the western wing of the stables. This range is two storeys in height when viewed from inside the courtyard, but when viewed from outside of the site it become clear how much the building had to be built up to compensate for the change in ground level (*see* Figures 51 - 54). At this time the earlier L-shaped 1878 stable block was retained inside the courtyard. An entry in the *Stamford Mercury* records that in June 1899 'the tender of Mr W J Payne of Kettering has been accepted for the new stables at the Royal Hotel.'⁸⁵ Construction must have commenced very soon after this, as the new building is recorded on the 1900 OS map (*see* Figure 18).

The buildings are built from brick, but it is notable that different brick bonds are used on the southern and northern elevations of the building. The street-facing south and east elevations are built in Flemish bond to match the main hotel building, but the courtyard-facing north and west elevation are constructed in English bond.

The 1896-1899 stable block encloses the central courtyard which retains stone setts at the eastern end and continuing out onto West Street. This is the only surviving early road surface in the conservation area.

Phase II – 1909-1926, accommodating the motor car

It is interesting to note that almost immediately after buying the building and adding the large stable block, it seems that Phipps quickly recognised the potential of catering to guests with motorcars. Shortly after constructing the long western range, they took steps to partially cover the courtyard space with a glazed roof and by 1909 were advertising the stabling and garage facilities available at the hotel which included 'an engineer and petrol'.⁸⁶

The addition of the glazed roof structure necessitated the removal of the older, smaller range of stable buildings which remained from before the 1896 sale. This, it seems, was replaced with a small building in the centre of the courtyard, which is shown on OS maps from 1926 (*see* Figure 22). The glazed roof is somewhat strange in that its design incorporated a single skin brick wall at first-floor level, supported on what appears from ground level to be an iron or steel girder, which links the roof to the eastern elevation of the west stable block.

Although the interior of the stables was not accessible, it appears from viewing the building from the courtyard that the ground floor of the western stable range has been adapted to create bays for car parking. This required the insertion of steel lintels into the south and west ranges to create wider openings able to accommodate motorcars. Rounded glazed bricks on the corners of the walls demarcate wide bays suitable for garaging. The glazed bricks continue into the bays to create a washable surface. Close examination of this fabric has not been possible, so it is not clear when these elevations may have been altered to accommodate the new wider openings, but it may have coincided with the construction of the glazed structure.

An alternative interpretation for these buildings is that the large western range referred to in this report as a stable block, was in fact designed with the motor car in mind. The Motor Car Club (MCC) was founded in 1896 by Harry J Lawson and Frederick R Simms.⁸⁷ By 1901 the motor car was still a luxury item, but it was an established, if controversial, phenomenon. Cars were still generally used for pleasure, rather than business, although they were becoming increasingly popular with regular daily travellers such as doctors. There were 23,000 cars on Britain's roads by the end of 1904, and over 100,000 by 1910.⁸⁸ It is noteworthy that a requirement for car storage was recognised by hotels as early as 1896; in Brighton car storage was provided behind the Hotel Metropole at Nye's stables.⁸⁹ Morrison and Minnis record that early parallels were drawn between stables and garaging and that at first, neither the term 'garaging' nor 'parking' were commonly applied to car storage, with the terms 'storage' or even 'stabling' being used.⁹⁰ From 1899 *The Autocar* published approved lists of hotels with garaging facilities for guests, though unfortunately it has not been possible to find a copy of these lists with an entry for the Royal Hotel. This was continued by *The Automobile Handbook* (later *The RAC Yearbook*) from

1904.⁹¹ Research by Morrison and Minnis in 2012 reports that the single storey garage which was attached to the rear of Warne's Hotel, Worthing in 1902, was hailed as 'the oldest hotel garage in England' by 1925.⁹²

Examination of the fabric of the stables was, as discussed above, limited by lack of safe access to the building. However the evidence of alterations to existing openings indicates that the building was adapted after its construction. In addition, examination of the 1900 OS map (*see* Figure 18) would suggest that before the demolition of the earlier stable block in the centre of the courtyard, there would simply not be enough space to accommodate the early motorcars. The reference to W J Paynes tender for 'new stables' in 1899 rather than for 'motor stabling' also strongly suggests that this building was intended for stabling for horses.⁹³

It is almost certain then, that the stables were added by Phipp's Brewery by 1899, but then were very quickly converted for use for motorcars. This had clearly taken place by the publication of the 1926 OS map (*see* Figure 22), and perhaps before 1909, when adverts for the Royal Hotel's garaging began to appear.⁹⁴

As is the case with the main hotel building, a general lack of documentary evidence and plans for the stable blocks and extensions from this period means that it is difficult to draw concrete conclusions regarding the development and use of these buildings. However, the position of Kettering at the heart of several major routes to and from London seems to have made it a feasible investment for Phipps to provide garaging so early on in the 20th century.

Phase III – c. 1950-1967

At some point between 1950 and 1967 the building in the centre of the courtyard was demolished, and the courtyard was covered over by a further metal roof (Figure 55). This roof abutted the rear wall of the main hotel and enclosed the majority of the courtyard under metal or glazed roofs. This roof remains in place today.



Figure 55: Roofs over the courtyard, viewed from the hotel fire escape.[© Historic England, Aimee Henderson]

Phase IV – 1967 to present

The map records do not show any significant changes to the stable buildings since 1967. Though alterations to window and door openings appear to have taken place in the northern range, lack of access to the fabric, and a dearth of documentary records makes it difficult to draw clear conclusions over when these alterations took place. It seems likely that openings were blocked or altered to suit the needs of the hotel, but no planning records before 1999 have been found.

Planning records for Kettering which are held by North Northamptonshire Council record that in 2002 glazing was removed from the 'glazed atrium' in the stable courtyard following concerns about its safety. Wind bracing was also added to strengthen the remaining steel structure.

A further change is noted to have taken place sometime after 1991 when the west gatepost leading into courtyard was removed. The existing gateposts leading into the courtyard have been partially demolished. Originally, there was a gatepost on the western side of the opening which matched the existing post on the east side (see Figure 52). The reason for this is not known, but it is possible that it suffered damage from passing vehicles which necessitated its removal.⁹⁵

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The building has been assessed in line with the criteria outlined in *Conservation Principles*.⁹⁶ This document sets out a process for assessing the heritage significance of a place and allows for the considered management of change within the historic environment.

The Royal Hotel is one of the most prominent buildings in the Kettering Conservation Area. The long curving frontage is a distinctive element of Market Place and the buildings have important links to the development of the town as a centre for commerce at the heart of the burgeoning road network in the East Midlands.

Evidential value

The Royal Hotel and its adjoining stable block are the result of multiple phases of development since the early 19th century, and possibly earlier. The main hotel building owes much of its present character to the works of 1878, which have strongly influenced the style of the later 1896-1899 extensions and to a lesser extent the materials and design of the stable blocks.

Evidence of the earliest phase of the building is preserved within the fabric of the north wing, although this is largely concealed behind later decorative finishes. The northern staircase is the only surviving decorative feature which pre-dates the 1878 rebuild. This staircase has been truncated at ground level, but its character is preserved at first- and second-floor levels. Later remodelling works have influenced the character of the interiors, and in the case of the 1896-1899 extensions, the character of both the internal and external spaces very much look backwards to the 1878 reordering. Classical style detailing in the interior echoes that on the High Street, Market Place and West Street elevations.

Documentary evidence for the phases of development of the hotel has been sparse and largely reliant on the map record. Therefore, the evidential value to be gained through opening-up works or more detailed survey and assessment of the built fabric has the potential to greatly increase our understanding of the building's development.

Access to the stable block was limited due to the building being unsafe to enter, and as such broad conclusions have been drawn about its development based on the map record alone. Careful opening works may help to illuminate if any early fabric from the pre-1878 stables survive in the north wing, but even if this is the case this will almost certainly be fragmentary and incomplete. The alterations to the stable blocks to incorporate car garaging and the metal roofing is evidence of the gradual shift from horse to car transport during the early 20th century.

Historical value

The Royal Hotel offers an insight into the development of a provincial hotel which has its origins in a much earlier coaching inn. The development of the hotel is intrinsically linked to the development of the road network which turned Kettering

from a market town into an important stopping point for mail coaches and stage wagons.

In its earlier iteration as the White Hart, the building served as an important local venue, perhaps more as a stopping point for coaches and for the hosting of social events in its assembly room than as a hotel. This importance was recognised by the Dukes of Buccleuch and it was the fifth Duke who would prompt the 1878 works which would lend the buildings much of their present character and form.

The association with the Dukes of Buccleuch ended in 1896 with the sale of the building to Phipps Brewery. However, the social aspect of the hotel continued into the late 19th and early 20th century, with the addition of the billiard room and ballroom/conference rooms and, as evidenced in the local press, the hotel continued to host auctions and major social events into the 20th century. This appears to have reduced since the mid- to late 20th century.

The hotel also bears a notable association with Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, whose visit to Kettering, and to the hotel itself, is preserved within the name of the hotel and the carved royal coat of arms on the front elevation.

The transition from inn to hotel – at least at the top end of the market – is the development from the simple accommodation of travellers to the provision of a wide range of cultural facilities such as a ballroom or assembly room and this is evident in the development of The Royal Hotel.⁹⁷ In the case of the Royal Hotel, as with many establishments, the 20th century has seen a shift to focussing on overnight accommodation for travellers and the large social spaces have been generally repurposed for other uses.

It is notable however, that the survival of interior spaces is less common. These are prone to regular upgrading and permanent fixtures are often lost. In this regard, the Gaskell and Chambers bar fittings, albeit surviving in an altered condition, are important for their historical association with a prominent Birmingham company, and also for the link to the past cultural and social facilities offered by the hotel.

The conversion of the hotel's stabling in the early 20th century to provide graging facilities are an important part of the historic development of the buildings. Although it has not been possible to definitively establish the date at which the 1899 stable building was converted to garaging, it seems likely that this took place within a decade of their construction. This represents a significant investment on the part of Phipps Brewery and reflects both wider national trends for accomodating in relation to motor travel and also the importance of Kettering's position on the rapidly expanding 20th century road network.

It has not been possible to identify any notable architects for the hotel, and the only builder it has been possible to identify is W J Payne who constructed the stable block in 1899. Very little information has been found regarding W J Payne, though the company tendered for various projects in Kettering in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. As such, no important historic architectural associations are known to

exist. The previous incarnation of the building (the White Hart) purportedly hosted Charles Dickens and Queen Victoria. However, only fragments of the earlier hotel, which they would have visited, remain inside the building today.

Aesthetic and Architectural value

The Royal Hotel is one of the most prominent buildings on Market Place and its location on the corner makes it one of the key buildings in views from Market Place towards the High Street. The exterior of the hotel has been heavily influenced by the 1878 reordering works and the extensions to the building in 1896-1899 were carried out with extreme care to match the extension to the earlier building.

Although it is very unlikely that the 1878 reordering or the 1896-1899 extensions are associated with J A Gotch, the scale, materials and character of the hotel is coherent with other Gotch buildings in the surrounding streetscape. As such the hotel makes a marked contribution to the character of the conservation area.

The stable blocks are of simpler architectural style than the main hotel building but have a strong presence on West Street because of their scale and the almost monolithic quality of the tall, largely plain brick elevations. The loss of the gables from the stable block has lessened the visual link between the hotel and this range of buildings, although they could be reinstated. Within the courtyard, the metal roofs are architecturally linked to the development of this space for garaging and reflects an early shift from transport by horses to the motor car. Surviving stone setts in the courtyard and onto West Street are a rare survival in this part of Kettering and make a contribution to the aesthetic character of the wider streetscape.

Internally, while the principal spaces such as the restaurant (former billiard room) and conference room preserve the character of the 1896-1899 extensions and are evidence of the opulence and quality of the hotel's former interiors, the majority of the hotel's interiors have undergone extensive decorative alterations. These have removed or covered over many of the historic features.

However, beneath suspended ceilings, later carpeting and paint finishes, key decorative elements such as the two staircases, fireplaces, cast-iron radiators, parquet flooring, tiling, and concealed building fabric hints at the earlier decorative finishes. Where these decorative elements survive, they are of high aesthetic value and should be considered as key elements of the building's significance.

The completeness of the Gaskell and Chambers interior in the restaurant area reflects the architect's or builder's use of catalogue furniture and fittings, coupled with hard wearing and bright tiles to create a unified decorative scheme for what was the billiard room and bar. This was repeated elsewhere in the building, as evidenced by surviving tiles and photographs of the lost shopfront.

The use of a major Midlands company of bar fitters reflects the slow movement of decorative styles out of cities and into more provincial towns. In the case of the restaurant and bar area, the use of dark-coloured wood panelling, Majolica tiles and

heavy, rich fabrics creates an interior common to pubs in Birmingham but, in this case, within a prominent provincial hotel. This space in particular is in stark contrast with the stripped-out interiors found elsewhere in the hotel.

Further research is needed to understand how rare a survival the Gaskell and Chamber's interior is. Certainly, it seems a more common feature of Birmingham pubs, but these themselves are under threat in some cases. Furthermore, it is not known how rare it is to find such an interior outside of Birmingham.

Communal value

Hotels are unusual in that they are public buildings, containing social and entertainment spaces, but their services are usually open only for use by guests and travellers. As such, they may be appreciated both by local communities but also those from further afield, for whom the hotel may have been a key feature of the town they know.

In the case of the Royal Hotel, the restaurant and conference spaces have traditionally only been open to guests and visitors rather than the local community. The main public entertainment space was focussed on the historic shopfront and the public bar (the 'vaults') behind it. This was removed and replaced after 1982 with a nightclub. Both the public bar and the nightclub will have been used by local people and as such they will hold a place within the communal memory and shared sense of place.

The prominence of the hotel's location on Market Place does make it likely to feature in the communal sense of place for Kettering, and there seems to have been local interest when the shopfront was removed from the West Street elevation. The stable blocks to rear of the hotel building are inaccessible to the public but are visually prominent on West Street. As such, despite their inaccessibility they will hold some communal value in the sense that they dominate views along West Street, particularly on approach to Market Place.

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ENDNOTES

- 1 Pevsner and Bailey, 2013, 361
- 2 NHLE 1051660
- 3 Donald Insall Associates, 2007
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- 5 Pevsner and Bailey 2013, 361
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- 40 John Bridges 1791 quoted in Greenall 2003, 73
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