

40-41 High Street, Oxford



Buildings Analysis



Oxford Archaeology

May 2003

Client Name: C. Müldür

Issue N^o: 1

OA Job N^o: 1669

NGR: SP 518 062

Coleman Hicks Partnership

**40-41 High Street,
Oxford,
Oxfordshire**

**HISTORIC BUILDING ASSESSMENT
AND RECORDING**

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGY

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Prepared by: Rosemary Wheeler
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Checked by: Julian Munby
Position: Head of Buildings Archaeology
Date: May 2003
Approved by: Julian Munby
Position: Head of Buildings Archaeology



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Oxford Archaeology

Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford OX2 0ES
t: (0044) 1865 263800
f: (0044) 1865 793496

e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk
w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk

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40-41 High Street, Oxford, Oxfordshire

HISTORIC BUILDING ASSESSMENT AND RECORDING

SUMMARY

A building assessment and recording was carried out at 40-41 High Street, Oxford, on 5th March 2003. The analysis was carried out to aid the granting of planning permission and listed building consent for a programme of building works. The building works are to unify two currently separate properties (coffee house and picture gallery) and to create a new opening within a thick party wall. Due to the historic nature of the building (listed grade II) the listed building consent was granted by Oxford City Council with a condition that a programme of building investigation be undertaken prior to the start of building works. The current document details the building analysis results. The party wall consisted of ashlar masonry, C18th in appearance.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Coleman and Lisk, to undertake a building assessment and recording of 40-41 High Street, Oxford, Oxfordshire, (NGR: SP518062). The assessment took place on 5th March 2003, (Figure 1).

1.1.2 The proposed works include the unifying of two properties, and the creation of an opening between the two, (Figure 5).

1.2 Aims and objectives

1.2.1 The aim of the assessment was to provide a record of the party wall, prior to alterations, in accordance with planning permission guidelines for the listed building consent.

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 The building investigation was initially to be undertaken in a 3-phased programme.

1.3.2 *Phase I* was entirely non-intrusive and consisted of consulting the known documentary and historical material on the site as well as making an initial on-site assessment/inspection of the wall.

1.3.3 *Phase II* consisted of the removal of small sections of plaster from the wall to see the construction beneath. The render removal was carried out by the building contractors.

1.3.4 *Phase III* was to consist of an archaeological watching brief undertaken during the works to create the new opening. Again, it was thought unnecessary to carry out a watching brief due to the low level of works being carried out.

- 1.3.5 The recording was primarily of a photographic nature using 35 mm film (black and white prints and colour slides). Additional photographs were taken using digital camera. A measured sketch elevation was made of the west wall of No. 41, where the modern render had been removed.
- 1.3.6 A site archive including the photographs, negatives, plan, elevation, site notes, the current document and other documentary material will be deposited with the Oxfordshire Museums Service or any other agreed body.
- 2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**
- 2.1 The site**
- 2.1.1 The site is located on the north side of High Street, and the corner of Queen's Lane. (Figure 1). The site consists of three properties, Nos. 39, 40 and 41. The block of buildings is Grade II listed (1485/415).
- 2.1.2 Nos. 39 and 40 had been combined from 1970, to form the current "Queen's Lane Coffee Shop". No. 41 was occupied by a print and map sellers.
- 2.2 Architectural Background**
- 2.2.1 Pevsner refers to the buildings as "medieval stone and timber" with the second floor dating to the Eighteenth Century (Pevsner 190). The RCHM entry refers to Nos. 39-41 and No 2 Queen's Lane as one house, of three storeys, with attics and cellars. The walls were of timber frame, with a slate roof (RCHM 163).
- 2.2.2 In the early Seventeenth century, No. 41 was extended to the north, and the entire south front was replaced in the Eighteenth Century. No. 41 also features a Seventeenth century oriel window with five lights, and linen-folded panelling of the Sixteenth Century (RCHM 163).
- 2.2.3 The High Street consisted of shops along the street front, with halls, cellars and solars behind. This was characteristic of streets of medieval Oxford. A number of the halls were academic, established prior to the formation of formal colleges. One such hall near this site was St. Edmund Hall, referred to in the old name for Queen's Lane, changed in 1751 (VCH Oxon IV, 33).
- 2.2.4 Loggan's map of 1675 shows a property on the corner of High Street and Queen's Lane, consisting of a short range along the High Street front, and a long range extending back along Queen's Lane. This was typical of properties along main town streets, where space was at a premium, (Figure 3).
- 2.2.5 Beside this property, there appears to be a square tower of three storeys, approximately where the current Nos. 40-41 are today. This tower is not shown on Agas' map of 1578, (Figure 2) or on later Eighteenth century maps (Figures 3 and 4).

- 2.2.6 In the 1852 Gazetteer Directory of Oxfordshire, by Gardner, No. 39 is listed as a "manciple of St. Edmund Hall", No. 40 was a tobacconists and No. 41 was a booksellers and publishers (VCH Oxon IV, 99).
- 2.2.7 A new quad was built in 1967-8 by Queen's College, called Queen's Lane quad, which backed onto the north side of the block of buildings, containing Nos. 39-41 (VCH Oxon IV, 99), (Figures 3 and 4).
- 2.2.8 Repairs were carried out at the same time, to the Eighteenth century elements on the High Street frontage (VCH Oxon IV, 99).

3 DESCRIPTION

- 3.1.1 The west wall of No. 41 was partially stripped of its modern render and plaster, in the area to be opened. The wall beneath contained ashlar masonry, forming what appear to be quoins, 0.5 x 0.3 x 0.3m. The quoins feature key marks to which render was applied, (Plate 1, Figure 6).
- 3.1.2 To the north side of the quoins, the wall was constructed of limestone rubble, while to the south, there is a separate wall, butting the quoins. It was impossible to see the construction of this southern wall, as it was coated in render.
- 3.1.3 There was a roughly square hole in the northern rubble wall, 0.26 x 0.3m in measurement. This revealed red brick behind the rubble, on the west side of the wall.

4 SUMMARY

- 4.1.1 The quoins found in the wall indicate the external corner of building No. 40. This indicates that this east external wall of No. 40 was converted to a party wall between Nos. 40 and 41. There may have even been a small alley between the two properties at one time.
- 4.1.2 The hole in the rubble wall may have been made as a slot in which to insert a timber, but appears too low down to be a floor joist.
- 4.1.3 The bricks visible behind the rubble may be a skin of an internal wall of No. 40. However it is possible that it is part of a chimneystack, seen in the second floor of No. 41 (pers. comm. R. Harfield).
- 4.1.4 The south front of the buildings was constructed of timber frame and plaster infill, and was constructed in the Eighteenth Century (RCHM 163).
- 4.1.5 The original internal structure of the house is hard to determine, as a result of all the alterations (RCHM 163).

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1.1 The proposed opening between Nos. 40 and 41 will potentially cut through the quoins found. If they form the corner of an external or major load-bearing wall, this might affect the structural integrity of the building, (Figure 5).

- 5.1.2 If the bricks found behind the rubble wall are part of the chimneystack between Nos. 40 and 41, then the proposed opening will also cut through the chimney, again affecting the structure of the building.

Rosemary Wheeler
Oxford Archaeology
May 2003

APPENDIX I BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

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RCHM (1939) *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in the City of Oxford*. Royal Commission on Historical Monuments. HMSO. London.

Sherwood J and Pevsner N (2001) *The Buildings of England. Oxfordshire*. Penguin Books. London.

The High, Oxford (07/01/2003) *39-41 High Street Oxford*,
www.oxfordbusiness.info/high/tour/north/039-40.htm

VCH (1964) *The Victoria History of the Counties of England: A History of the County of Oxford*. Vol. iv. Oxford University.

Maps

Ordnance Survey Landline Plus Digital Tile SP5106SE.

Ordnance Survey 6 :1 mile 1st edition (1878) Oxon.

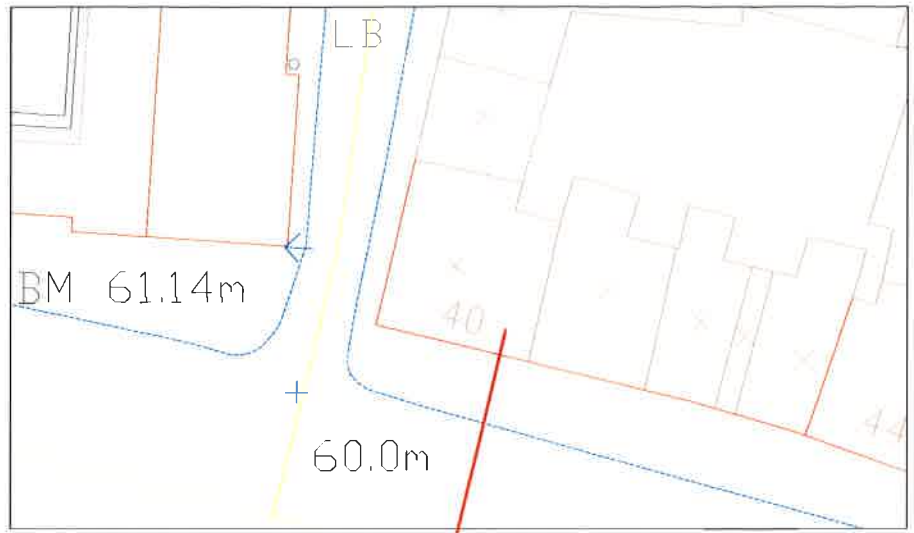
Hoggar's map, 1850. Copy at Centre for Oxfordshire Studies.

Faden's map, 1789. Copy at Centre for Oxfordshire Studies.

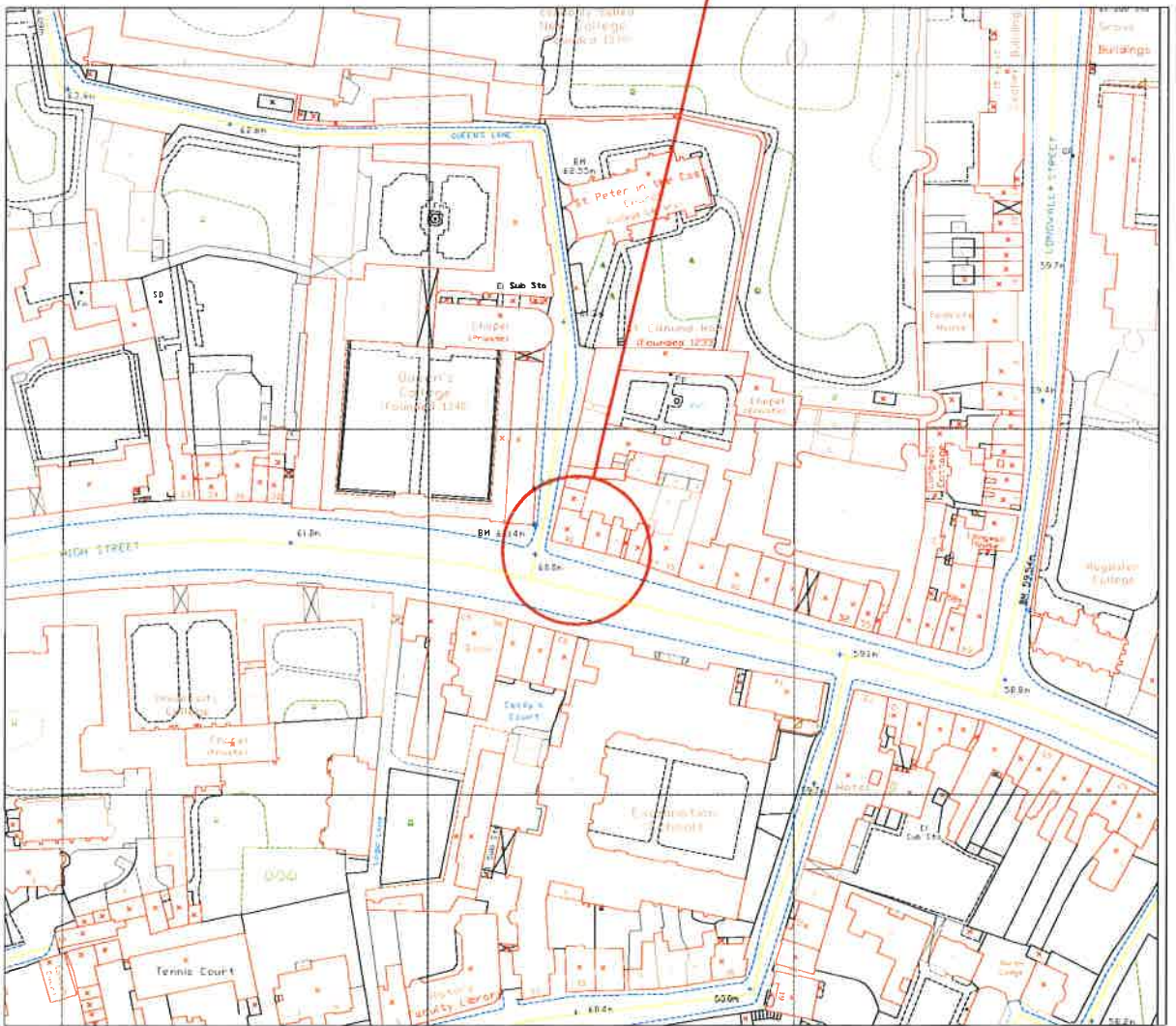
Williams' map, 1733. Copy at Centre for Oxfordshire Studies.

Loggan's map, 1675. Copy at Centre for Oxfordshire Studies.

Agas' map, 1578-88. Copy at Centre for Oxfordshire Studies.



not to scale



OS Superplan 1:2500

Scale 1:2000



Figure 1: Site Location

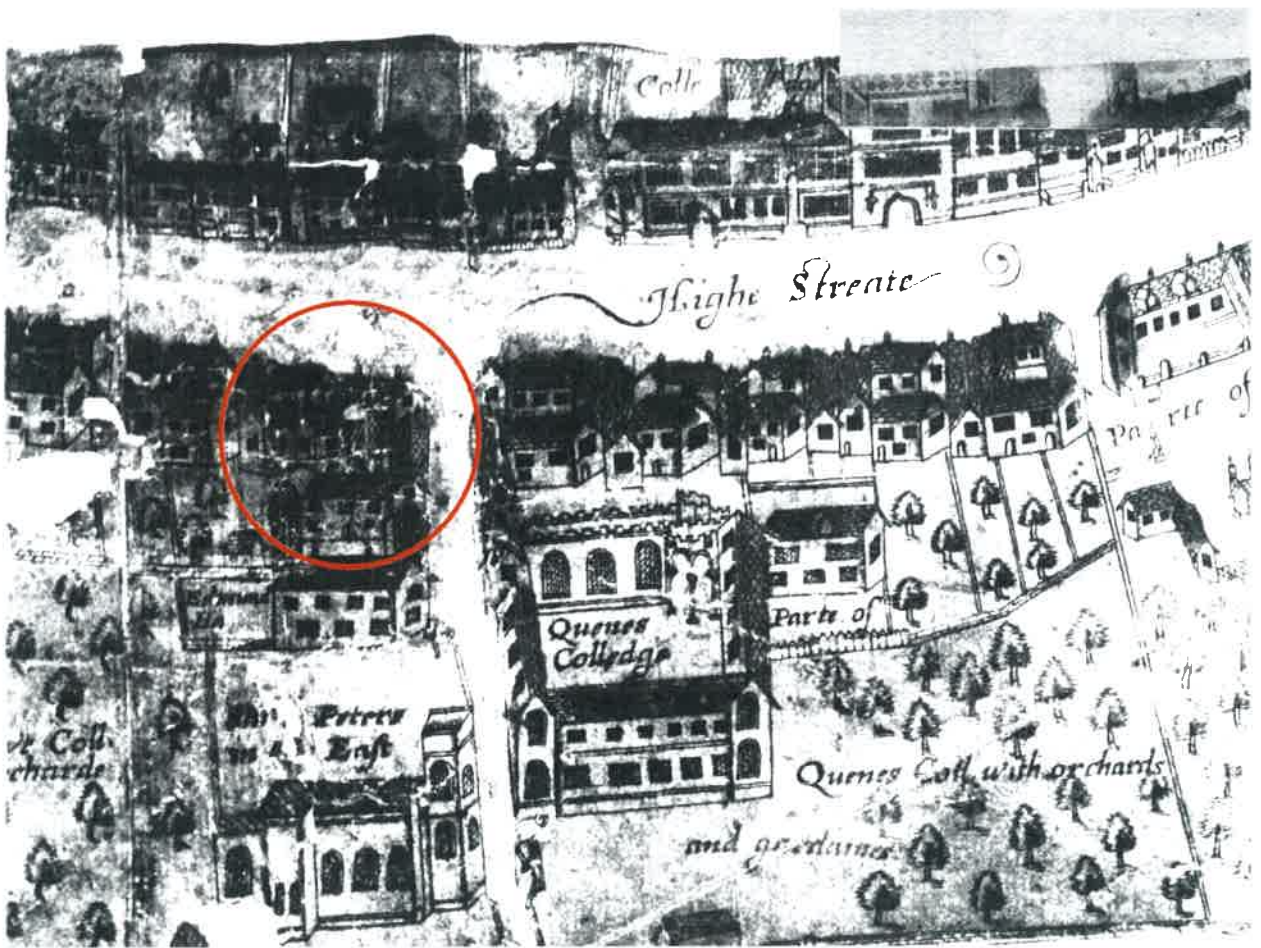


Figure 2: Agas' map of 1578, showing back ranges of High Street buildings.

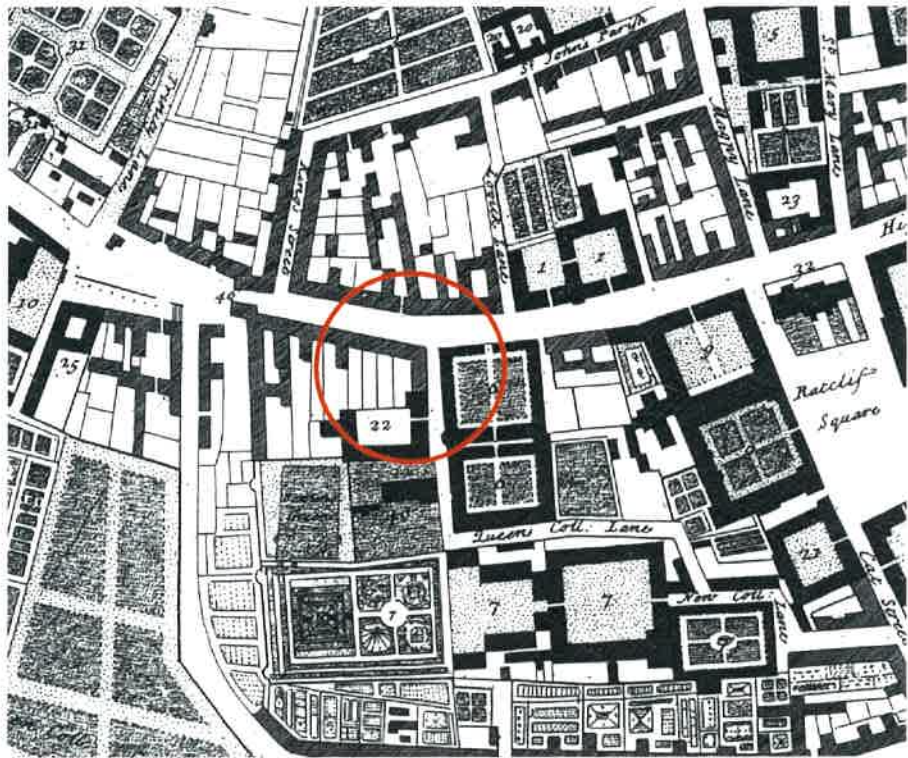
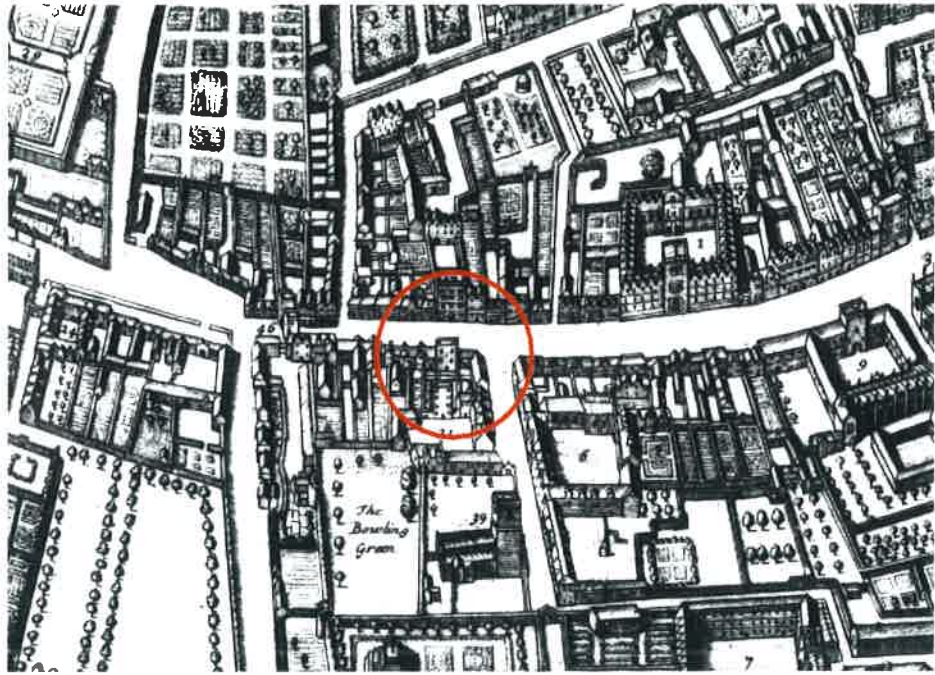
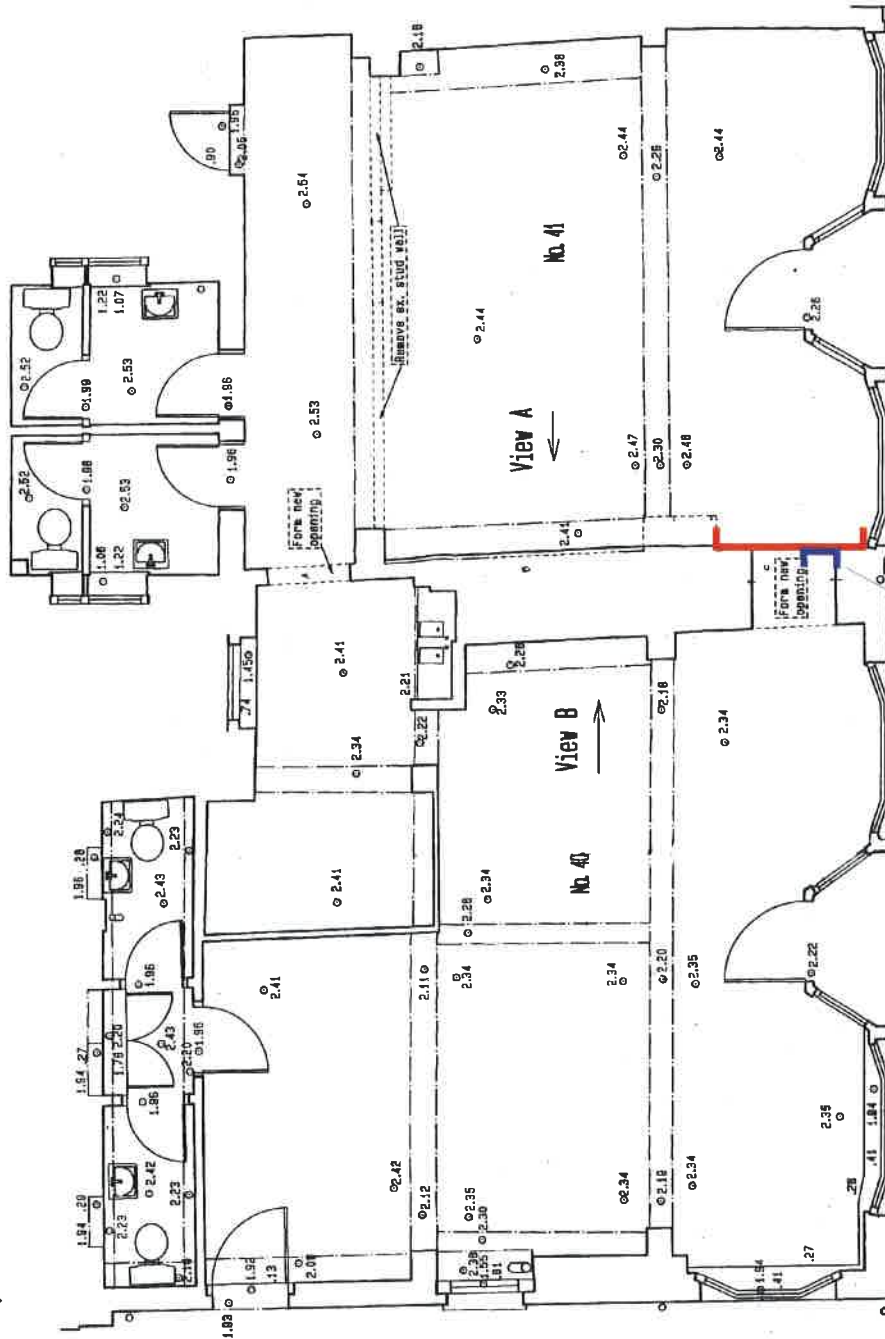
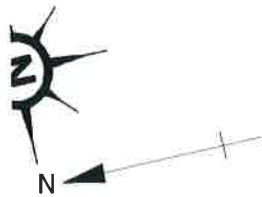


Figure 3: Loggan's map of 1675 (top) and Williams' map of 1733

High Street

C plasterboard or panelled
M plaster

Proposed Ground Floor Plan



location of sketch elevation

approx. width of ashlar blocks

not to scale

Figure 5: Proposed ground floor plan of buildings.

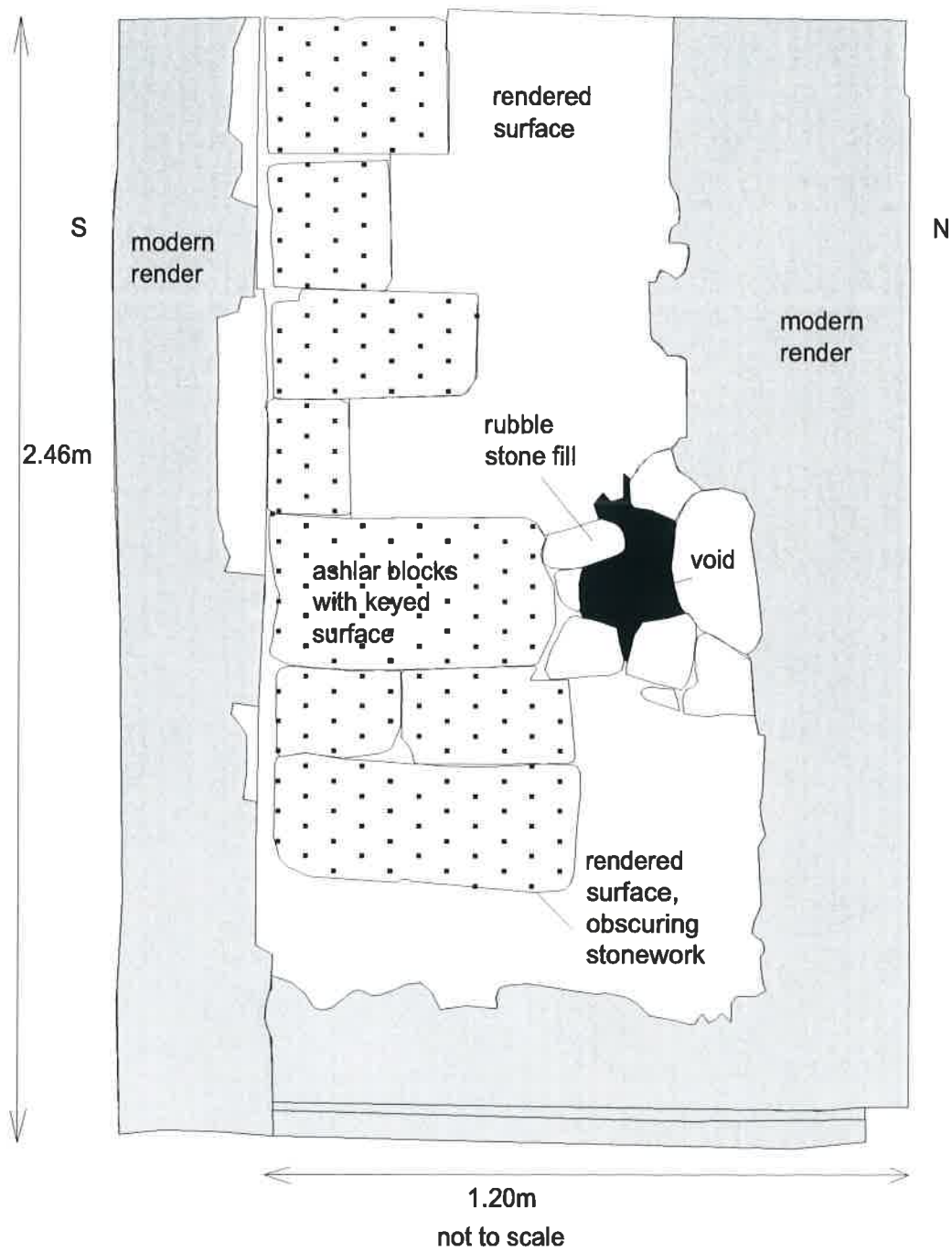


Figure 6: Measured sketch elevation of blocked doorway.



overall view of west wall of No. 41



west wall



hole in wall

Plate 1: West wall of No. 41 High Street



Oxford Archaeology

Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford OX2 0ES

t: (0044) 01865 263800
f: (0044) 01865 793496
e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk
w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk



Oxford Archaeology North

Storey Institute
Meeting House Lane
Lancaster LA1 1TF

t: (0044) 01524 541000
f: (0044) 01524 848606
e: lancinfo@oxfordarch.co.uk
w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk



Director: David Jennings, BA MIFA FSA

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