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STRATFIRE PROJECT

Nos. 27/28 High Street, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire

Historic Building Record, 2023



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Historic England ref. 8452

Client Name: Stratford-upon-Avon Society

Site Name: Nos. 27/8 High Street, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire

NGR: centred on SP 20126 54888

Designations: Grade II Statutory Listed Building (LB ID 1187815)
Stratford-upon-Avon Conservation Area

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Cover image: Nos. 27/28 High Street; street frontage

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STRATFIRE PROJECT

Nos. 27/8 High Street, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire

Historic Building Record, 2022

Summary

The current document summarises the results of a programme of historic building recording undertaken in June 2022 at Nos. 27/8 High Street, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire. It has been undertaken as part of the STRATFIRE project, a four-year project, coordinated by the Stratford Society and grant funded by Historic England, designed to investigate a series of buildings in the centre of Stratford-upon-Avon, with a view to understanding how far the town's timber-framed building stock was affected by, and how it was rebuilt following a series of devastating fires around the turn of the 17th century.

*Nos. 27/8 High Street is a grade II listed building (LB ID **1187815**), located on the west side of High Street, c.30m north of the junction with Ely Street; it is centred on NGR SP 20126 54888. The extensive building complex occupies a composite, 'L'-shaped plan with frontages to both High Street and Ely Street, together with a series of service buildings arranged around two interconnected yards. The principal street frontage range, **Unit A** (Nos. 27/28; Bays I/II), is aligned parallel to the High Street, each frontage bay with an associated rear bay (Bays III/IV), while a two-storey, four-bay rear range (**Unit B**; Bays Va-VI) extends along the northern side of the rear yard behind No. 28. **Unit C** (Bays VIIa-c) comprises a western, in-line prolongation of **Unit B**, with **Unit D** extending perpendicularly from **B/C** to define two rear yards. **Unit E**, a mid- to late-19th-century introduction (c.1851-1874), occupies the western side of the rear yard extending southwards towards Ely Street, while **Unit F** (Bay X) comprises a three-bay range aligned parallel to and fronting Ely Street, with a carriage entrance to the yard to the eastern side thereof.*

Dendrochronological analysis has allowed for a reconsideration of the previously accepted evolution of the buildings to be made, based for the first time upon empirical evidence, and presents a significantly different interpretation.

*The earliest elements of the composite range are represented by a relic truss observed in a dead space within the rear wing of **Unit A** (No. 28), together with surviving elements of lateral walls related to the same building to the north and south sides of Bay II. Together, these elements imply an early range of two storeys beneath a roof aligned perpendicular to the High Street, a characteristic form for pre-fire buildings previously identified by Bearman and McDonald. Dendrochronology indicates a mid-15th century felling date (95.4% probability) for a number of component timbers of this primary frame, indicating that the early range pre-dated the Stratford fires of the late-16th century by over a hundred years. The associated rear range (**Unit B**) has been shown by dendrochronological analysis to be slightly later than the early frontage range, reversing previous interpretations, though reasonably only by a few decades, being constructed in the later 15th or very early-16th century, and thus also pre-dating the major fires.*

*Timbers from the southern section of the street frontage range (No. 27) were not sampled, while it has not been established, to date, at what stage the combined street frontage range (**Unit A**) was raised to its current height, and the heightened roof re-aligned parallel to the street, though surviving trusses over Bay IV are of 18th-/ 19th-century form, suggesting this significant modification may have occurred at a relatively late date.*

*Rear ranges to the High Street buildings and to the Ely Street frontage were not examined in detail. The three-bay building to Ely Street (Unit **F**) may represent an early structure, while the southern façade of Unit **C** (heavily modified internally) retains fabric of interest. Other elements of the complex reasonably represent later additions of the 18th and/or early-19th century.*

The Stratfire Project has allowed for a visual record of the timber-framed ranges of Nos. 27/8 High Street to be made. Dendrochronology has allowed for a thorough reconsideration of the evolution of the High Street frontage buildings, and significantly revises previous interpretations as to their origins and development.

STRATFIRE PROJECT

No.27/8 High Street, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire

Historic Building Record, 2022

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Project

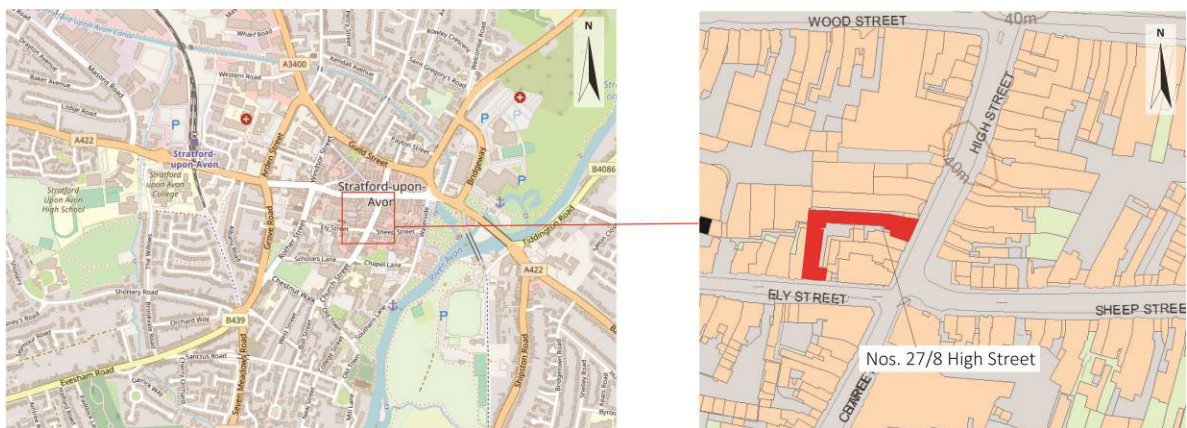
1.1.1 The **STRATFIRE** project, of which the current study forms a part, is a four-year project designed to investigate a number of buildings in the centre of Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, with a view to understanding how far the town's timber-framed building stock was affected by, and how it was rebuilt following a series of devastating fires around the turn of the 17th century. The project will have an initial focus on the houses of High Street and Chapel Street, but with the potential to expand to include Wood Street, Ely Street and Sheep Street. The current report relates to Nos. 27/8 High Street.

1.1.2 Site survey at Nos. 27/8 High Street was undertaken over the course of two visits, on 4th July and 21st September 2023.

1.2 The Site

1.2.1 High Street is located to the centre of the historic core of Stratford-upon-Avon in Warwickshire, on the west bank of the River Avon, aligned broadly north-east to south-west, perpendicular to the relic Roman road reflected by the alignment of Greenhill St./Wood St./Bridge St. Together with Chapel Street to the south, it forms part of what is known the town's 'historic spine'.¹

1.2.2 Nos 27/8 are located on the west side of High Street, c.30m north of the junction with Ely Street (see inset, below); it is centred on NGR SP 20126 54888 and lies at an elevation of c.40m AOD.



Nos. 27/8 High Street, Stratford upon Avon: site location plan

¹ See Bearman, 2013b.

1.3 Designations

- 1.3.1 Nos. 27/8 High Street lie at the centre of the Stratford-upon-Avon Conservation Area, designated by Warwickshire County Council in 1969 with boundary amendments in 1992, and have been included, since 1972, on Historic England's 'Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historical Interest' as a Grade II listed building (LB ID **1187815**), where they are described as follows:²

***Town house, now shop.** c1800 front to earlier building, probably c1600, with earlier rear range surviving 1595 fire. Brick and timber-frame with stucco cladding; tile roof hipped to one end and large brick stack to rear of ridge. 3 storeys with attic; 3-window range. Plain eaves. C20 shop front. Upper floors have windows with sills and sashes with wood architraves; 12-pane sashes to 1st floor, 6-pane sashes and one 2-light leaded casement; attic has 2 gabled dormers with 2-light leaded glazing. Rear has 2 gables and bow window to right of 2-storey wing with wall posts to ground floor and jettied 1st floor on flat joists; roughcast 1st floor with rafter ends visible. The building was originally part of the property of Thomas Rogers of Harvard House, with the range to rear of Nos 59 & 60 Ely Street (qv). (Bearman R: Stratford-upon-Avon: A History of its Streets and Buildings: Nelson: 1988-: 40).*

2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Published Sources

- 2.1.1 Nos. 27/8 High Street are not covered by any of the standard published reference works on Stratford-upon-Avon consulted as part of the current project (viz. Forrest, 1925; VCH, 1945; Bearman, 2007; Bearman and MacDonald, 2022).

2.2 Archival Research (Dr. Robert Bearman)

*A detailed programme of archival research has been undertaken by Dr. Robert Bearman (2024), and is reported in full at **Appendix A**; a brief summary of key points is presented here.*

- 2.2.1 The site of Nos. 27/28 High Street (together with No.26 'Harvard House', to the south) appears to have been owned as a single unit from the medieval period down to the 1660s; from c.1592 until the early 18th century, the owners were successive generations of the Rogers family (**Appendix A**, para. 1). Rentals were split between No. 26 and Nos. 27/28 from 1637-1703 (ibid. para. 20). In 1708, the property is recorded as the New Inn, occupied by one Joshua Phipps (ibid., para. 21).
- 2.2.2 The block of properties were inherited in 1798 by one Robert Bartlett of London.
- 2.2.3 A notice of sale of 1874 (see plan at §.2.3.2) describes Nos. 27/28 as 'two desirable brick and tiled freehold residences with capital front shops... together with extensive workshops, saw-pit, machine room, offices and outbuildings in the rear, and extending back to Ely Street. The back-buildings are further described as 'most extensive buildings and premises in the rear, consisting of a well-arranged 2-storey workshop, large machine room, newly erected chimney stack, wood-built shop, painter's shop, with arched vaults underneath, capital offices, containing 2 rooms on the ground floor with one above, together with other convenient out-buildings' (ibid. para. 24).

² <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1187815>.

2.3 Historical Views and Photographs

- 2.3.1 The Board of Health plan of 1851 (see inset below) illustrates the full extent of the complex; viz. High Street frontage block (Unit **A**) to the east, with rear ranges (Units **B/C**) extending westwards therefrom, flanking the north side of a rear yard. Unit **D** is shown as a transverse block extending southwards from the south side of Units **B/C**, defining the boundary between eastern and western yard areas. To the west, the western yard turns through 90°, extending southwards towards Ely Street, the latter fronted by Unit **F**, furnished with an access passageway to the eastern side. The western yard area between Unit **C** and Unit **F** was flanked by open gardens to the west at this date, prior to the construction of flanking range Unit **E**.



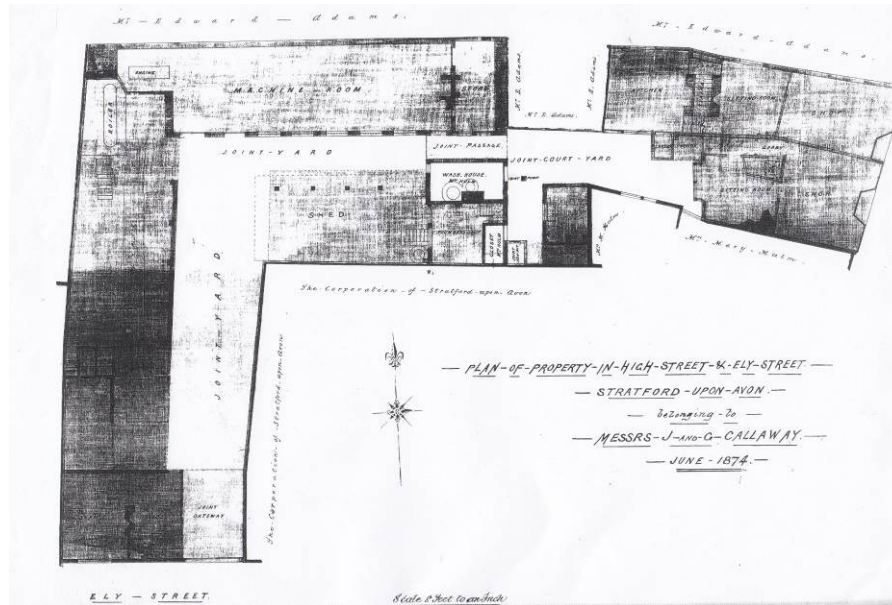
Extract of Board of Health plan of 1851
(letters denote ranges identified during current study; see §.3.1.2)

- 2.3.2 A plan of the High Street / Ely Street premises accompanying the sale notice of 1874 (§.2.3.2)³ is reproduced below. It is interesting to note that a square 'intrusion' into the ground plan to the rear of No. 28 High Street⁴ is annotated as in the occupation Mr. Edward Adams⁵ of the adjoining property (No. 29).

³ Plan prepared for Messrs. J and G Calloway; James Calloway is recorded as a joiner at the premises in c.1870 (Bearman, 1973).

⁴ Approximating to Bays Vb/Vc (Unit **B**) of the recorded building, as reflected by room **[F11]** at first-floor level (see Figure 4).

⁵ Adams is recorded as a stationer and printer at No. 29 High Street in 1853-1875 (Bearman, 1973).



Plan of extended High Street / Ely Street premises, 1874.

- 2.3.3 Two photographs of the late-19th century (inset below) illustrate the street façade much as survives today to upper levels, though with the ground-floor frontage clearly split into two discrete retail units (in c.1900; Stanley & Bolton, printers and stationers at No. 28, and Freeman Hardy & Willis, shoe and boot retailers at No. 28).⁶ The adjacent property to the north (No. 29 'Mercer's Croft')⁷ had yet to undergo its early-20th century, timber-framed re-fronting.

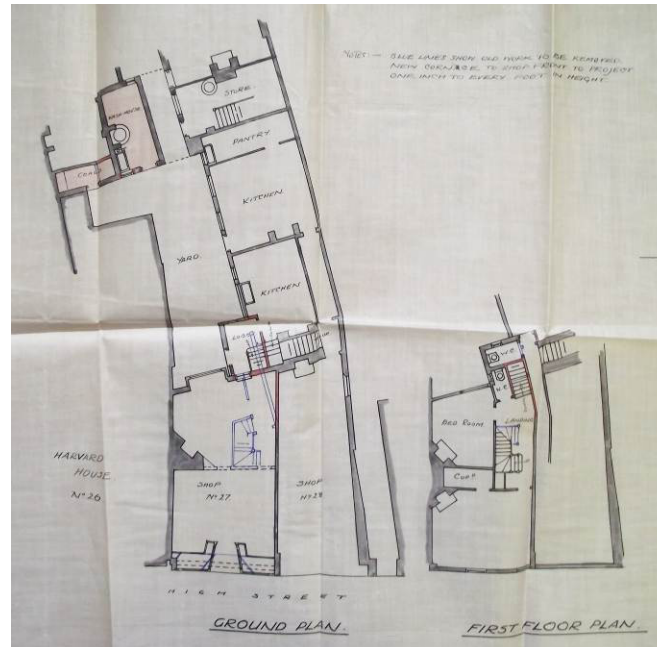


High Street frontage, 1870s; WCRO ref. CR1312 (Box 5) img.7006.



High Street frontage, c.1900; SBT SC2/8

⁶ Freeman Hardy and Willis were later to take over No. 27, recorded in historical photographs of 1914 (SBT-BRR59-3-74)

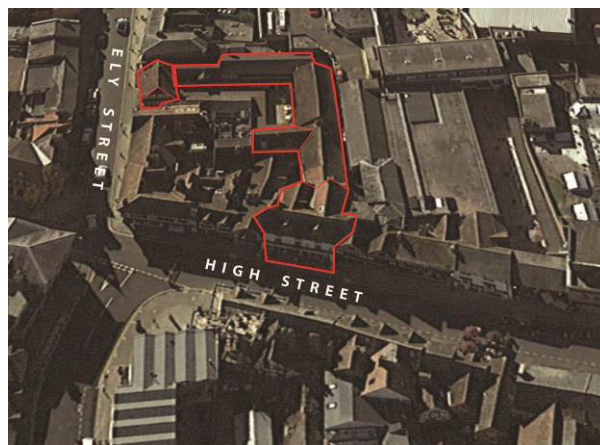


High Street frontage buildings: ground and first floor plans, 1909.

3 SITE / BUILDING DESCRIPTION

3.1 General Site Arrangements

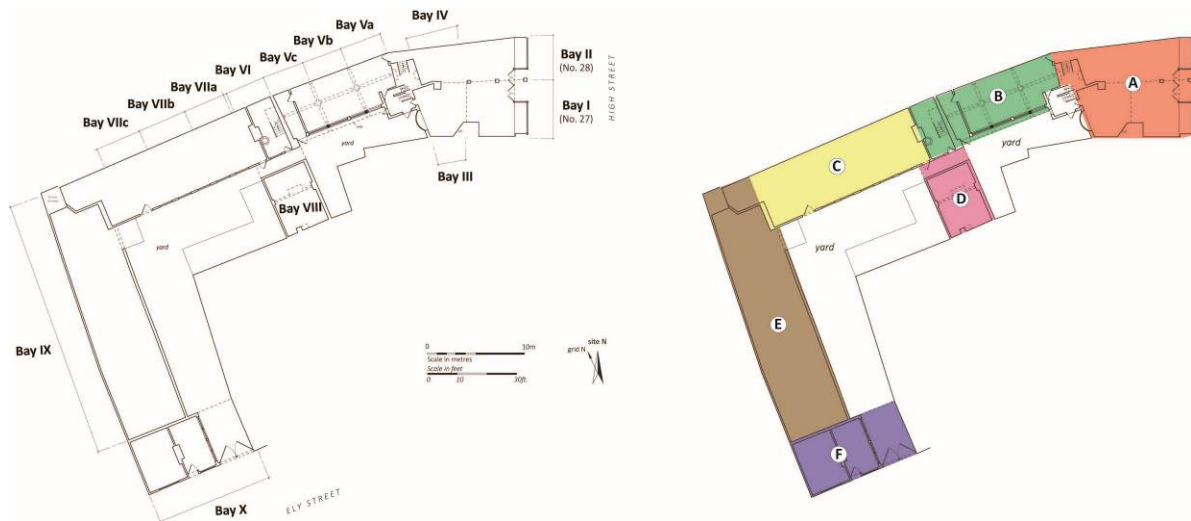
- 3.1.1 High Street lies in the heart of the medieval planned town, forming part, together with Chapel Street, of what is known as the town's 'historic spine', aligned broadly north to south. Nos 27/8 are located to the west side of the street, c.30m north of the junction with Ely Street (see inset below), and are centred on NGR SP 20216 54888.



Nos. 27/8 High Street; contextual view (aerial photograph) looking west (image © Google Earth).

- 3.1.2 The extensive building complex occupies a composite, 'L'-shaped plan with frontages to both High Street and Ely Street (see key plan below; Figure 1) and a series of service buildings arranged around two yards. The principal street frontage range, **Unit A**; Bays I (No.27) and Bay II (No.28), is aligned parallel to High Street, each frontage bay with an associated rear bay (Bays III/IV), and a two-storey, four-bay rear range (**Unit B**; Bays Va-

VI) extending along the northern side of the rear yard behind No. 28. **Unit C** (Bays VIIa-c) comprises a western, in-line prolongation of Unit B, with **Unit D** extending perpendicularly from B/C to form two rear yards. **Unit E** (Bay IX) occupies the western side of the rear yard extending southwards towards Ely Street, introduced during the later-C19th (not present on Board of Health plan of 1851 when the area is shown as gardens), while **Unit F** (Bay X) comprises a three-bay range aligned parallel to and fronting Ely Street, with a carriage entrance to the yard to the east side thereof.



Nos 27/8 High Street: Key plan: Bays (left) and Units (right).

3.2 Unit A: High Street Frontage Range

Exterior: High Street Elevation

- 3.2.1 The **east elevation** to High Street (Figure 3; Plate 1) is of three full storeys, and three window-bays beneath a pitched, slate-clad roof which oversails No.26 (Harvard House) to the south and No. 29 to the north. The ground floor is taken up by a late-C20th commercial frontage with plate-glass windows above tiled stall-risers with a wide, central recessed doorway; an off-centre column flush with the frontage reflects the former boundary between Nos. 27/28. Upper floors are stucco rendered with three superimposed, evenly-set windows, unhorned 6/6 sashes to first-floor level and 3/3 sashes/two-light casement to second floor. Two, two-light dormer windows break the roof slope over.

Interior: Ground Floor

- 3.2.2 The **ground floor** level of Unit **A** (Figure 3; Plate 2) comprises, essentially, a single unencumbered space [G1] (here designated [G1a] and [G1b] to reflect the historical sub-division into two shops, reflected by an alignment of boxed in columns), fitted out for commercial purposes (servery / dining area) with nothing of significance exposed. The sales particulars plan of 1874 shows Bays I and II as two shops, each with discrete, recessed access doorways from the street, while Bays III and IV are annotated as sitting rooms, heated by fireplaces within the south-east angle and west walls respectively; the plan of 1909 indicates that the partition between Bays II/IV had been removed by that date to create a single, larger commercial premises.

First-Floor Level

- 3.2.3 The **first floor** of the premises (Figure 5) is approached via two discrete stairs, one serving each of Nos. 27/28; straight-flight stair **A** (No. 27) is located within a small, brick-built rear extension to the west of Bay III,⁸ while Stair **B** (No.28) rises to the rear (west) of Bay IV. Stair **A** rises to landing [F1] at Bay I/IV while Stair **D** rises to passage [F5] extending across the south side of Bay IV.
- 3.2.4 The street frontage is subdivided on the bay division with room [F2] to Bay I (Plate 3) and [F6] to Bay II (Plate 4); the transverse partition wall between Bays I/II is of large-panel framing, formed of full-height studs (5ft. centres), in part with mid-rails (Plate 5), also observed on landing [F1] (Plate 7). Bays I and II are each lit by unhorned, 6/6 sash window to the east front; room [F2] was formerly heated by an angle fireplace to the south-west corner, while a wide, lateral chimney-breast projects at the centre of the north wall of [F6]. To the east of the latter, fragments of a timber-framed wall are exposed (Plate 6), comprising a wall plate and two vertical studs, set out at 3½ft. centres; the height of the wall plate is significantly lower than current ceiling level, and would appear to correspond broadly with that of a short section of early wall plate observed in the north wall of dead space [F7] at Bay IV (see below); dendrochronological analysis (§.4) indicates contemporaneity of these discrete elements, with significant implications for the early form of this range (see §.5).
- 3.2.5 Stair **C**, arranged on a compact open-well plan, rises from landing [F1] at the north-west corner of Bay I (Plate 8); reference to historical plans of 1874 and 1909 indicates that this stair formerly extended to ground floor level, prior to being superseded by Stair **A** in the early 20th century.
- 3.2.6 A feature of particular interest at first-floor level are the remains of an early timber truss (**T7a**), preserved within the dead-space [F7] at Bay IV, to the north side of passage [F5] (Figure 10a; Plates 9-11); viz. a cambered tie beam with lower studwork (with mid-rail), a surviving northern, splayed wall-post (Plate 10; with mortices for up-bracing to post and tie soffit), and a short section of wall plate extending eastwards therefrom; all timbers are heavily smoke-blackened.⁹ Principal rafters have been removed. A corresponding post within passage [F5] (hacked back) reasonably represents the southern wall-post of the same cross-frame. The implication is clearly for an early two-storey range, c.15½ft. wide, of ≥two bays beneath a roof aligned perpendicular to High Street. This is supported by the nature of the surviving trusses at attic level (**T6/T7b**) which appear to be of 18th- or 19th-century date, indicating a later raising of the structure.

Second Floor Level

- 3.2.7 The **second floor** of the building (Figure 5b) is approached via Stair **C** (Bay I/III; No. 27) and Stair **D** (Bay II/IV; No. 28); Bays I and II are interconnected via a doorway formed within the transverse partition. To the north, Bay II (No. 28) is occupied by a single room [S8] (Plates 12/13), opening off landing [S7] to the west, which is served by stair **D**. Room [S8] is lit by a 6/6 sash window to the east wall and was formerly heated by a projecting stack within the north wall; that the partition wall between [S7/8] abuts the chimney-breast indicates that this forms a secondary subdivision of a formerly larger room. The ceiling is underdrawn, supported on an axial, stop-chamfered beam, while the north and south walls include related wall posts and infill framing of small-scantling timbers (Plates 12/13). To the west of landing [S7], room [S9] (Plate 18)

⁸ Formerly a porch, modified to incorporate the stair in 1909 (see inset plan at §.2.3.2)

⁹ Dendrochronological analysis (see §.4) has established a mid-15th-century felling date for timbers used in this cross-frame.

occupies the full extent of Bay IV, lit by a window to the north lateral wall and formerly heated by a fireplace to the west; nothing of significance is exposed.

- 3.2.8 At Bay I, landing [S1] affords access to two rooms occupying the street frontage, [S3/4] to north and south respectively (Plates 14/15), each lit by a 3/3 sash window to the east; again, neither room incorporates fabric of interest. Stair C rises on a quarter-turn plan (Plate 19) to attic level, rising within a full-height space to the east of truss T4 (Plate 20).

Attic Level / Roof Structure

- 3.2.9 **Attic level** of Bay I (Figure 9) forms utilisable living accommodation, accessed via a vertical continuation of Stair C rising from landing [S1] (Plate 19) within a void flanking the east side of truss T4 (Plate 20), to landing/passage [A1]. The street frontage is subdivided to form two rooms [A2/A3], which share a common dormer window to the eastern roof-slope (Plate 22).
- 3.2.10 The attic level of Bay II forms a dead space, accessed via a ceiling hatch over landing [S7]. The roof is of a single bay defined by two trusses, T2/T3. Truss T2 was not exposed, while Truss T3 to the north (Figure 10a; Plate 25) forms the gable end of the roof structure over the adjacent property (No. 29); it is of tie and collar form, with regular close-studding above and below collar level, and is of clasped purlin form, with diminished principals above collar level. The incorporation of close-studding suggests that it was originally exposed, which accords with No. 28 having formerly been lower.¹⁰ The raised roof of Nos. 27/28 has been simply built up against this earlier gable truss, the ends of purlins of the Bay II roof structure (two to east, one to west) being simply supported by a curved timber applied to the framework of T3.
- 3.2.11 The roof over Bay III (partially visible within room [A5]; Plate 23) is supported on a single tier of side purlins (Plate 24); truss T5 to the west gable represents a recent reframing.
- 3.2.12 The roof over Bay IV is again supported on a single tier of side purlins, carried by two trusses (T6 and T7b; see Plates 26-28; evidently later insertions of 18th-/19th-century date), terminating in a brick gable to the west, with brick ridge-stack (Plate 28), and oversailing the Bay I/II roof to the east. Both trusses are of a simple tie and collar form; T6 has an interrupted tie beam (later modified with straining piece) to afford through access within the roofspace. In both trusses, principals are crossed and halved/lapped to the apex to support a square-section ridge piece (Plate 27).

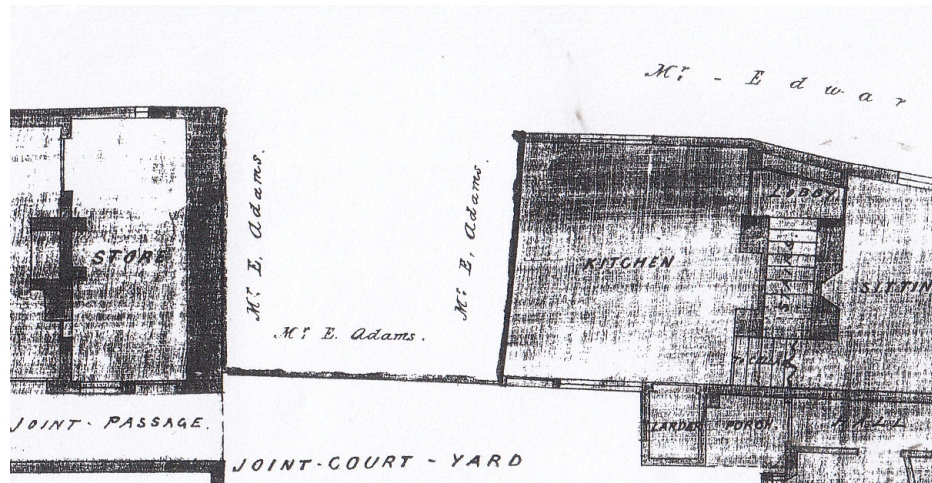
3.3 Unit B: Early Rear Range

- 3.3.1 **Unit B** represents an early, two-storey extension projected westwards from Bay IV (No. 28).¹¹ It is of timber-framed construction, the first floor being deeply jettied to the south towards the yard (Plates 29-31), and is of four regular, 14ft.-wide bays, here designated Va-Vc and VI (at lower levels, Unit B has been partly incorporated into Unit C, though the roof structure clearly extends over Bay VI to the west). The range is rectangular in plan, measuring 42ft. long (Bays Va-Vc; or 56ft. including Bay VI), 17½ft. wide at ground-floor level and 19½ft. wide to first-floor level, with a deep jetty to the southern (yard) side (Plate 30). The visible section of the ground floor southern wall to the yard retains principal jetty-posts, though the bays have been

¹⁰ Dating of timbers within the roof structure of No. 29 may thus have the potential to establish a *terminus post-quem* for the raising of No. 28.

¹¹ Dendrochronological analysis (see §.4) has established a late-15th-/ early-16th-century felling date for timbers used in this range.

infilled in brick beneath modern fenestration lighting the interior kitchen [G2] (Plate 29). Jetty-posts rise to a longitudinal jetty-plate (Plate 31), where projecting transverse beams (bull-nosed) are supported by curved brackets (largely replaced).



Detail of Unit B as shown on plan of 1874.

Ground Floor Level

- 3.3.2 Internally, the ground-floor level of Unit B (Baus Va-Vc; Figure 3) forms a single open space (Plate 32), save for a small closed off area to the west of Bay Vc, though reference to historical plans indicate that it was formerly subdivided transversely into two equal parts. Plans of 1874 and 1909 show the ground floor of the range as kitchens and pantry (a function it retains today) while, as noted above, the western half of Bay Vb and Bay Vc are shown on the plan of 1874 as comprising part of the accommodation of No. 29 High Street, occupied by Mr. Edward Adams (detail inset above). The ceiling of the combined space is underdrawn, with exposed spine beam (in bay sections) and transverse beams on bay divisions (Plate 33), all timbers being stop-chamfered. Little else of historical significance is exposed at this level. Bay VI to the west end of the range forms a discrete space at this level and, in its current plan, forms part of Unit C; it is thus described together with that range at §.3.4 below.

First Floor Level

- 3.3.3 **First-floor** level (Figure 5) is approached via Unit A, there being no direct vertical communication within Unit B. Bay Va, to the east end, forms an office room [F10] associated with the business premises of Unit A and little of significance is exposed. Access via [F11a] to the west, however, opens onto Room [F11] at Bays Vb/c, where extensive primary framing survives (Figure 11; Plates 34-39).
- 3.3.4 The southern lateral wall, towards the yard, is timber-framed, of close-studding with longitudinal braces rising from jetty-post to wall plate to either side of T10 (partly closed beneath tie beam level by a simple, boarded partition; Plate 37); transverse braces also rise from wall-posts to tie beams at T10/T11 (Plate 38). Blocked windows are evident at Bays Vb and Vc, of three and two lights respectively (Plates 34/5); both windows would appear to have been secondary insertions, however, with peg-holes in the wall plate over evidencing former close-studwork. The wall beneath T11 to the west side of Bay Vc, is formed of large-panel framing with brick

nogging infill (Plate 36); the location of a solid partition at this location is problematical, as evidence recorded within Bay VI to the west indicates that the latter formed an original part of Unit **B**. A secondary, boarded ceiling over is supported on two inserted beams, set into the brickwork of the north wall and simply lodged over the wall plate to the south wall (Plate 35).

Roof Structure

- 3.3.5 The **roof structure** over Unit **B** is formed of four bays defined by five timber trusses (**T8-T12**) from east to west. Trusses **T8/9** are not exposed, Bay Va being inaccessible at this level, while **T12** to the west has been incorporated into the roof space of Unit **C** (described with Unit **C** at §.3.4 below). Two trusses [**T10/11**] are thus exposed within the roof space [**S11**] over Unit **B**. Both are of collar and tie form with paired queen-struts rising from tie beam to collar, single-pegged (Figure 11a; Plate 40). As noted above, tie-beams are braced to wall-/jetty-posts at **T10/11** (Plate 38). The roof is carried by a single tier of clasped side-purlins, with longitudinal wind-bracing (Plate 40), principal rafters being diminished above purlin-level and splayed slightly at the apex (Plates 41/2). There is no ridge piece. Truss **T11**, to the west side of Bay Vc (Plate 43; also partly visible from [**F12**] to the west – Plate 51) is infilled with brick nogging; it includes two additional, inserted (unpegged) queen-struts between tie and collar, and a central king-strut rising from collar to apex.

3.4 Unit C: Later Rear Range extension

- 3.4.1 **Unit C** comprises a long, two-storey range occupying a rectangular footprint, c.48ft long (E/W) by 19½ft. wide (N/S), beneath a fully pitched, tile-clad roof, ranged against the north side of the rear yard, west of transverse range **D**. It is of three, regular 16ft. bays, here designated VIIa-VIIc from east to west. To the east end of the range, Bay VI has been incorporated into the building, though originally formed part of Unit **B** to the east (see above).

Elevation to yard

- 3.4.2 The yard elevation (Plate 44) is of two full storeys with a clear distinction between the fabric at ground- and first-floor levels. Ground-floor walling (Plate 45) is in hand-made brick, laid to a mixed bond, though of a regular English bond beneath cill level of a series of seven, regularly spaced windows (one/two? to west converted to doorways); the spacing of windows does not correspond with bay spacings as recorded internally, nor as expressed in the first floor of the elevation (see below). Fenestration comprises cast-iron multi-pane windows, set beneath segmental double-header arches; the quality of brickwork to the arches clearly indicates that the windows are secondary to the principal walling, while mortar 'smeared' over the jambs and cills suggests that they have been rather crudely cut in. First floor, by contrast, is of timber-framed construction, and clearly falls into three distinct sections, corresponding to the internal bay divisions. To the east, Bay VIIa (Plate 36) is framed in regular, full-height studwork with two levels of mid-rails, with inserted, iron-framed windows set between the two levels of rail; straight up-braces rise from wall-post to wall-plate to east and west. To the west, Bay VIIc (Plate 47) is broadly similar, with full-height studs and two levels of mid-rails, though a doorway has been inserted, served by an external, straight-flight stair, and the bay may have been truncated slightly to the west. The studwork of the central section of the elevation (Bay VIIb; Plate 48), however, is less regular in aspect, here with a single level of mid-rails, and with up-braces to east and west rising to support an original wall plate (obscured by a secondary face-plate) set significantly lower than that of Bays VIIa/VIIc. A series of short struts extend between the original plate and the eaves line of the unified roof.

Interior

- 3.4.3 The interior of Unit **C** was inspected only briefly due to issues with access/privacy. It would appear that the **ground floor** (Figure 4) comprises a single, unified space [G5], lit by the regular fenestration of the secondary brick yard elevation; it is annotated as a 'machine room' on the sales particulars plan of 1874 (inset at §.2.3.2). **First-floor** level (Figure 6) is accessed internally via Stair **E** at Bay VI, which rises as a straight-flight from [G4] to [F12] set against the framed wall beneath truss **T12** (Unit **B**), and via an external stair rising from the yard to the west end at Bay VIIc (Plate 48).
- 3.4.4 The **roof structure** over Unit **C** comprises three regular 16ft. bays, defined by four timber trusses (here designated **T13-T16** from east to west). Trusses **T13-T15** are similar, of dropped-tie¹² and collar form, with two tiers of side butt-purlins and square-section ridge piece, with longitudinal wind-bracing to each tier of purlins (Plate 49). Additional, long braces have been introduced extending between wall plate and apex of each bay, rising from west to east, while secondary raking struts have been inserted at **T14** rising from tie beam to principal at the level of the lower tier of purlins. Each bay incorporates an intermediate dropped tie. Gable truss **T16** to the west (Plate 50) is variant - of double-collar form with queen struts rising between tie and lower collar (x4), and between lower and upper collar (x3). To the east end of the range, two trusses (**T12/13**) were observed, set closely together; **T13** would appear to be as per **T14/15**, forming the east end of the Unit **C** structure, while **T12** (not clearly visible) is assumed to represent the western truss of the Unit **B** roof structure, up against which the Unit **C** structure was built.

Bay VI

- 3.4.5 To the east end of the range, Bay VI is somewhat anomalous and, while forming part of Unit **C** in its current arrangements, can be shown to have originally have formed the western end of a four-bay Unit **B**. This is evidenced in particular by the juxtaposition of two trusses (**T12/13**) to the east side of Bay VIIa (not clearly observed), and by the westwards continuation of the Unit **B** roof structure, observed over [F12] (Figure 11b; Plate 51). Bay VI accommodates Stair **E**, rising as a straight flight from [G4] to [F12]; the large-panel framing of the wall below truss **T11** is exposed to the east side of the stairwell (Plate 51).

3.5 Unit D: Transverse range

- 3.5.1 Unit **D** comprises a three-bay, two-storey structure, rectangular in plan measuring c.26ft. long (N/S) x 16½ft. wide (E/W), aligned perpendicular to and extending southwards from Unit **B/C**. To the north side of the ground-floor plan, a transverse passageway flanking the southern wall of Unit **B/C** affords through access between the eastern and western yard areas. The range is assumed to be a relatively late addition to the complex, though it is shown on the 1851 Board of Health plan (inset at §.2.3.1).

Ground Floor Level

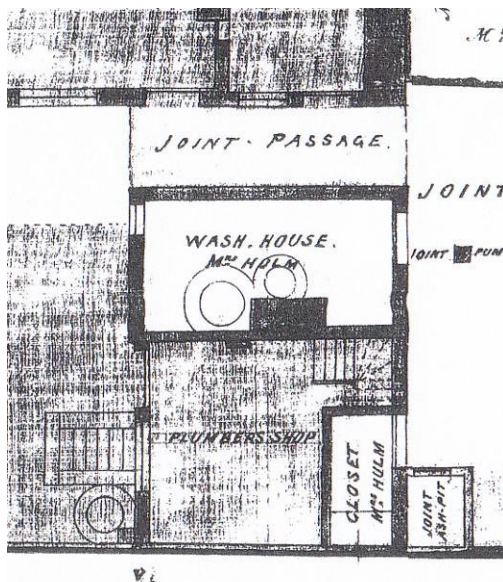
- 3.5.2 Ground-floor level was not inspected as part of the current study. It is subdivided on a principal two-bay plan, though the northern bay is partitioned transversely to form an access passage. The sales particulars plan of 1874 (inset below, left) indicates a wash house (with paired coppers and stack), accessed from the eastern yard and belonging to a Mr. Holm, to the northern bay, together with the transverse passage connecting the eastern and western yards. The southern half of the range was occupied by a Plumber's Shop (with internal

¹² The foot of principal rafters rest partly upon the wall plate and partly upon the jowled heads of wall posts.

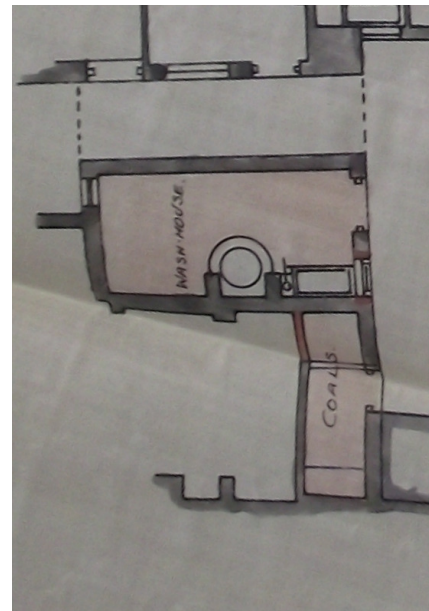
stair rising to first-floor level), accessed from the west from an open-sided shed within the western 'joint yard', and a small closet (again annotated 'Mr Holm'), accessed from the eastern 'joint yard'. The northern part of the range flanking the south side of Units B/C constitutes. The plan of 1909 (inset below, right) illustrates a wash house and coal store accessed from the east.

First Floor Level

- 3.5.3 First-floor level of the range is accessed from the north via Bay VI at the east end of Unit C, onto which it is fully open, and which is reached via Stair E; there is no primary vertical communication within the range, though a former stair is indicated in the north-east angle of the southern bay on the plan of 1874. The first floor comprises a single space [F15] with no transverse partition walls, though a brick stack rises centrally, formerly serving the ground floor wash house. The roof over the range is supported on standard king-post trusses with raking struts (Plate 52) of 18th or early-19th-century date, aligned on the central bay division and on the line of the southern wall of the transverse through passage.



Detail of Unit D from 1874 plan



Detail of Unit D from 1909 plan

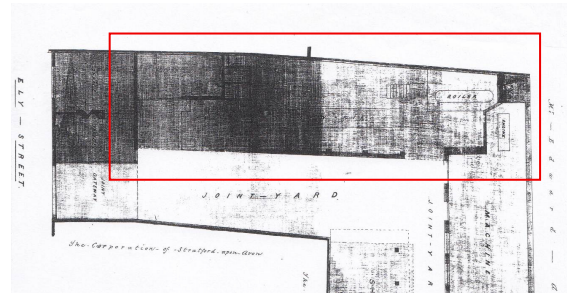
3.6 Unit E: C19th to western yard range

- 3.6.1 Unit E comprises a long, two-storey range, of 12 bays (here grouped together and collectively designated 'Bay IX') occupying the western side of the rear yard extending southwards towards Ely Street, where it abuts the rear of Unit F, and measuring c.87ft. long x 21ft. wide. It represents a late addition to the complex, introduced during the later-C19th, being absent from the Board of Health plan of 1851 (where the area is shown as occupied by gardens and a number of small, discrete structures; inset below left), though present by the time of survey plan of 1874 (inset below right). On the latter plan, it is annotated simply as 'shed' and, is shown to include a longitudinal saw pit and, to the north, a boiler, engine and associated chimney. The range accords with the 'large machine room, newly erected chimney stack, wood-built shop [and] painter's shop' described in the sales particulars of 1874 (see §.2.2.3). As a late addition to the complex, the building is of negligible

interest in the context of the 'Stratfire' project, and was thus not examined in any detail. Likewise, the interior of the building has not been inspected as part of the current project.



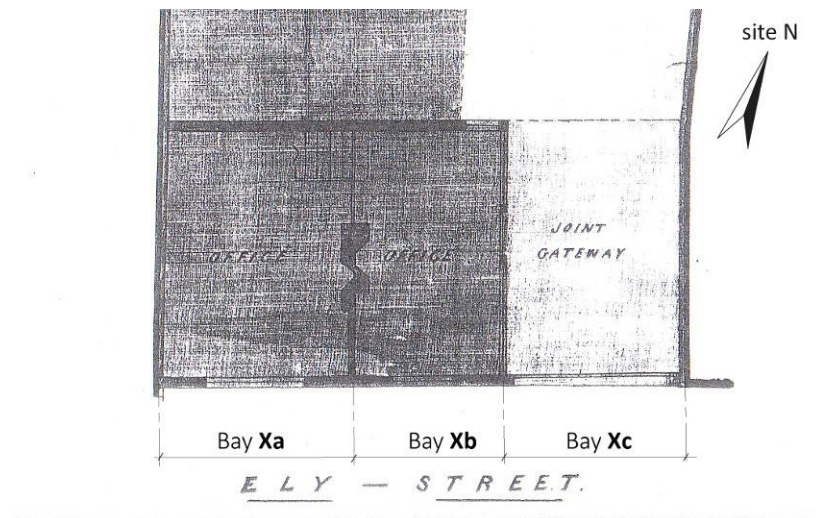
Area of Unit E as shown, largely undeveloped, on Board of Health map of 1851 (north to right of image).



Unit E, annotated as 'shed' on plan of 1874, with saw-pit, boiler house and chimney (north to right of image).

3.7 Unit F: Ely Street Frontage Range

3.7.1 **Unit F** comprises a three-bay building (here designated Bays Xa-Xc from west to east) occupying a rectangular plan aligned parallel to Ely Street, measuring c.40ft. long by 19ft. wide; it is of a single storey beneath a pitched, tile-clad roof aligned parallel to the street, half-hipped to the eastern elevation and abutting the three-storey No. 58 Ely Street to the west (Plate 53). A gabled eaves dormer rises above the western bay (Xa), lighting a utilisable attic space, while a tall, two-flue brick stack rises above the northern roofslope at the junction of the western two bays (Xa/Xb). The street elevation has been much modified to accommodate modern commercial use, with a recessed doorway at Bay Xb, and includes a 12½ft. wide cartway entrance to the east (Bay Xc), paved in blue engineering bricks and affording through access to the inner yard area (Plate 54). The eastern gable end is visible from the street, timber-framed of large panel construction, with straight up-braces rising from storey-posts to tie beam and queen-struts rising between tie and collar; the roof is carried by a single tier of side purlins.



Extract of sales particulars plan of 1874 showing arrangements of **Unit F**

3.7.2 The interior of the building has not been inspected to date. The sales particulars plan of June 1874 (extract inset above) illustrates discrete offices to Bays Xa and Xb,¹³ each with a window to the street and heated by opposing fireplaces within the shared transverse wall. Bay Xa is somewhat wider than Xb, measuring 14ft. and 11½ft. respectively, while the transverse ‘joint gateway’ at Bay Xc opens onto the ‘joint yard’ to the north. A flight of stairs is shown set internally against the rear (north) wall, at Bay Xa/Xb; the drawing is unclear and it is ambiguous whether this rises to the attic space over, or descends to a basement, though the description in the accompanying sales particulars would imply the former. The western flanking wall of the cartway entrance is shown as being glazed in 1874, reflecting extant arrangements.

4 TREE RING DATING

- 4.1 A programme of tree-ring dating (dendrochronology) was undertaken by Dr. Martin Bridge of the Oxford Dendrochronological Laboratory (ODL).
- 4.2 A total of 17 samples were taken in September 2023, all of oak (*Quercus* sp.); a summary is presented in tabulated form below (after Bridge and Tyers nd., Table 1); sample locations are identified on Figures 5-11.

Sample No.	Location	No. of rings	Date of sequence (AD)	Sapwood	Mean ring width(mm)	Mean sensitivity	Empirical felling date range (AD)	Ox-Cal derived felling date*
Front Rooms at First Floor								
sths01	Head beam to Bay I/II partition	51	1379-1429	---	2.53	0.22	after 1438	
sths02	East stud in north wall	41	---	?h/s	2.02	0.21	---	
sths03	Sill beam to partition wall	56	1374-1429	7	1.95	0.20	1431-63	1431-36
sths04	North post T7a	33	---	---	2.93	0.22	---	
sths05	Wall plate at T7a	36	1391-1426	h/s	1.84	0.18	1435-67	1435-60
sths06	Tie-beam T7a	33	---	---	3.23	0.20	----	
Attics								
sths07	South purlin in [A4]	29	---	---	3.41	0.15	---	
sths08	West tie beam in [A7/8]	60 (+70 NM)	---	---	2.69	0.23	---	
sths09	North purlin (truncated)	30	---	---	3.43	0.25	---	
Rear Section F11 and F12								
sths10	NW corner post, [F11]	52	1418-69	h/s	3.02	0.19	1478-1510	1477-99
sths11i	Mid-rail, W wall (inner rings)	35	---	---	1.53	0.29	---	
sths11ii	Mid-rail, W wall (outer rings)	22	---	h/s +17NM	1.10	0.29	---	
sths12	Axial floor beam	45	---	h/s	2.45	0.20	---	
sths13	Common floor joist	49	1399-1447	2.2NM	2.38	0.28	1454-86	
sths14	Truss T10 ; north post	58	---	14	2.63	0.18	---	
sths15	Truss T10 ; tie beam	62	1401-62	h/s	2.69	0.16	1471-1503	1470-93
sths16	Truss T10 ; south post	74	---	h/s	1.89	0.18	---	
sths17	Truss T10 ; north queen strut	61	1408-68	2	1.19	0.18	1475-1507	1477-1507

Key: h/s = heartwood/sapwood boundary; NM = not measured but ring count given in brackets. (*Ox-Cal date = 95.4% probability)

Table 1: Summary of Dendrochronology Samples (after Bridge and Tyers nd., table 1).

¹³ Presumably the ‘capital offices, containing 2 rooms on the ground floor with one above’ described in accompanying sales particulars (see §.2.3.2).

- 4.3 Several of the samples had relatively short ring sequences and were unsuitable for dating through conventional dendrochronology; cross-matching, however, was able to identify two groups of samples. Three timbers from the front range (Unit **A**) were found to be coeval, with a likely felling date range in the 1430s-1460s, while the rear range (Unit **B**) is probably a few decades later, with a likely felling date in the latter decades of the fifteenth century or very early in the sixteenth century. All timber was of local origin, with the younger group matching with other properties within Stratford-upon-Avon.
- 4.4 These results are significant and can be seen to be at variance with the previously accepted developmental interpretation of the building, with the Statutory List Entry (§.1.3.1), for example, describing a frontage range (re-fronted) of c.1600, with an earlier rear range pre-dating the fire of 1595. Thus the buildings as sampled can be seen to be significantly earlier than thought, with the early front range, represented by surviving timbers, dating to the mid-15th century.
- 4.5 A full summary and interpretation/discussion of the dendrochronology results will be presented in Bridge and Tyers, forthcoming (HE Res. Rep. XX/20XX).

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 Summary of Development

- 5.1.1 The premises at 27/28 High Street represent a complex group of buildings and have, in places, been subject to extensive phases of historical modification. Dendrochronological analysis undertaken as part of the Stratfire Project has allowed for a reconsideration of the previously accepted evolution of the buildings to be made, based for the first time upon empirical evidence, and presents a significantly different interpretation.
- 5.1.2 The earliest elements of the composite range are represented by the relic truss **T7a** observed in the dead space **[F7]** at Bay IV within the rear wing of Unit **A** (No. 28), together with surviving elements of lateral walls related to the same building to the north and south sides of Bay II. Together, these elements imply an early range, c.15½ft. wide, of two storeys beneath a roof aligned perpendicular to the High Street; such a range would have been of at least two (wide) or three (shorter) bays in length (east-west). Dendrochronological analysis indicates a mid-15th century felling date (95.4% probability) for a number of component timbers of this primary frame; with construction of the building normally undertaken within one or two years of felling, the early range can thus be seen to pre-date the Stratford fires by over a century. Bearman and MacDonald (2022, 7) have previously argued that many pre-fire properties were of one or two storeys only, with three-storey buildings often dating to the post-fire reconstruction period, and this would appear to be the case here (as also at No. 36 High Street, previously reported).¹⁴ The associated rear range (Unit **B**; Bays Va-VI) has been shown by dendrochronological analysis to be slightly later than the early frontage range (thereby reversing previous interpretations), though reasonably only by a few decades, being constructed in the later 15th or very early-16th century, and can thus also be shown to significantly pre-date the major fires of the late-16th century.
- 5.1.3 Timbers from the southern section of the street frontage range (Bay I) were not sampled, and the evolution of this section is less clear, while it has not been established, to date, at what stage the combined street frontage

¹⁴ The premises at No. 36 High Street (also investigated as part of the Stratfire project) originated as a two bay, three storey timber-framed range, aligned perpendicular to High Street and possibly jettied to its upper storeys. Dendrochronological analysis indicated a felling date of AD1463-1477 (95.4% probability) for a number of component timbers of the primary frame (Stratfire Report ref. 2022-002a).

range (Unit **A**) was raised to its current height, and the heightened roof re-aligned parallel to the street. Surviving trusses over Bay IV ([**A7**]) are of 18th-/ 19th-century form, however, suggesting this significant modification may have occurred at a relatively late date.

- 5.1.4 Rear ranges to the High Street buildings and to the Ely Street frontage have not been examined in detail. The three-bay building to Ely Street (Unit **F**) may represent an early structure, while the southern façade of Unit **C** (heavily modified internally) retains fabric of interest. Other elements of the complex reasonably represent later additions of the 18th and/or early-19th century.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The current project has allowed for a visual record of the timber-framed range of Nos 27/8 High Street to be made. Dendrochronology has allowed for a thorough reconsideration of the evolution of the High Street frontage buildings, and significantly revised previous interpretations as to their origins and development.

7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 7.1 The **STRATFIRE** project was originally proposed and established by Dr. Robert Bearman and has been generously grant-funded by Historic England (Project ref. 8452); at Historic England, thanks are extended to Ms. Cathy Tyers (Dendrochronologist, Investigative Science team), Ms. Shahina Farid (Scientific Dating Co-ordinator) and Ms. Victoria Carter (Project Officer, publications). The project has been developed by Dr. Nathaniel Alcock, Dr. Lindsay MacDonald and Mr. Jonathan Devereux, and is being administered by the Stratford Society. Dendrochronological sampling is to be undertaken by Dr. Martin Bridge of the Oxford Dendrochronological Laboratory (ODL), while architectural recording was undertaken by Mr. Ric Tyler MCI(f)A.
- 7.2 At Nos. 27/8 High Street, many thanks are extended to ...

Report prepared by:

Ric Tyler MCI(f)A
03.01.2026

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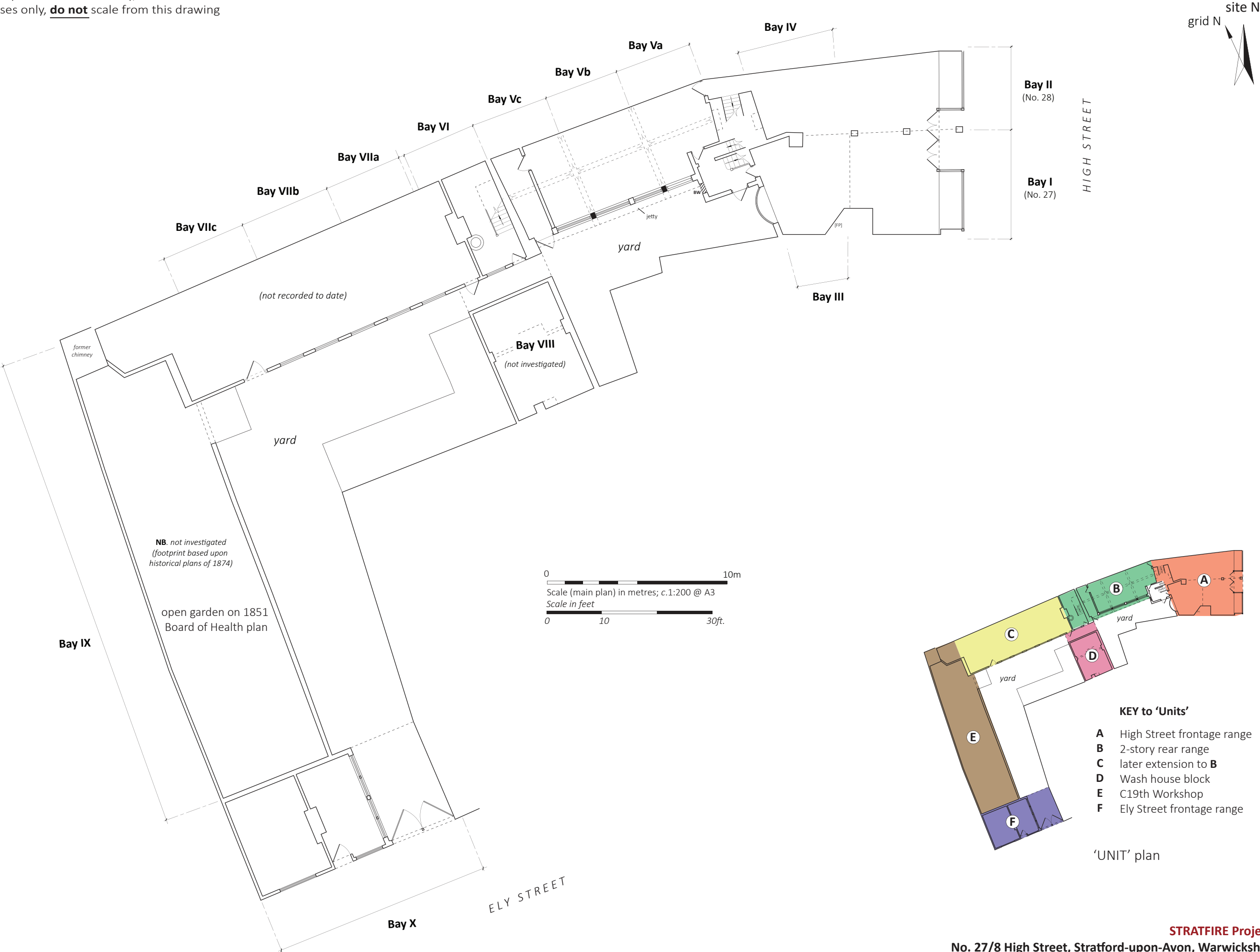
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NB. based upon third party and historical survey, enhanced on site for illustrative purposes only, do not scale from this drawing



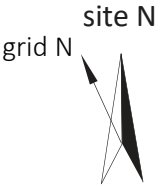
STRATFIRE Project
No. 27/8 High Street, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire
Figure 1: Overall property plan with 'Bay' divisions (main plan) and 'Units' (inset)

NB. for illustrative purposes only, **do not** scale from this drawing;
(based on third party survey, with additions/amendments)



STRATFIRE Project
No. 27/8 High Street , Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire
Figure 2: High Street elevation

NB. based upon third party and historical survey, enhanced on site
for illustrative purposes only, do not scale from this drawing

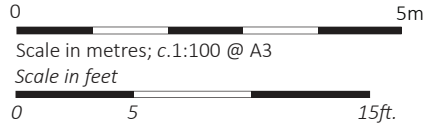
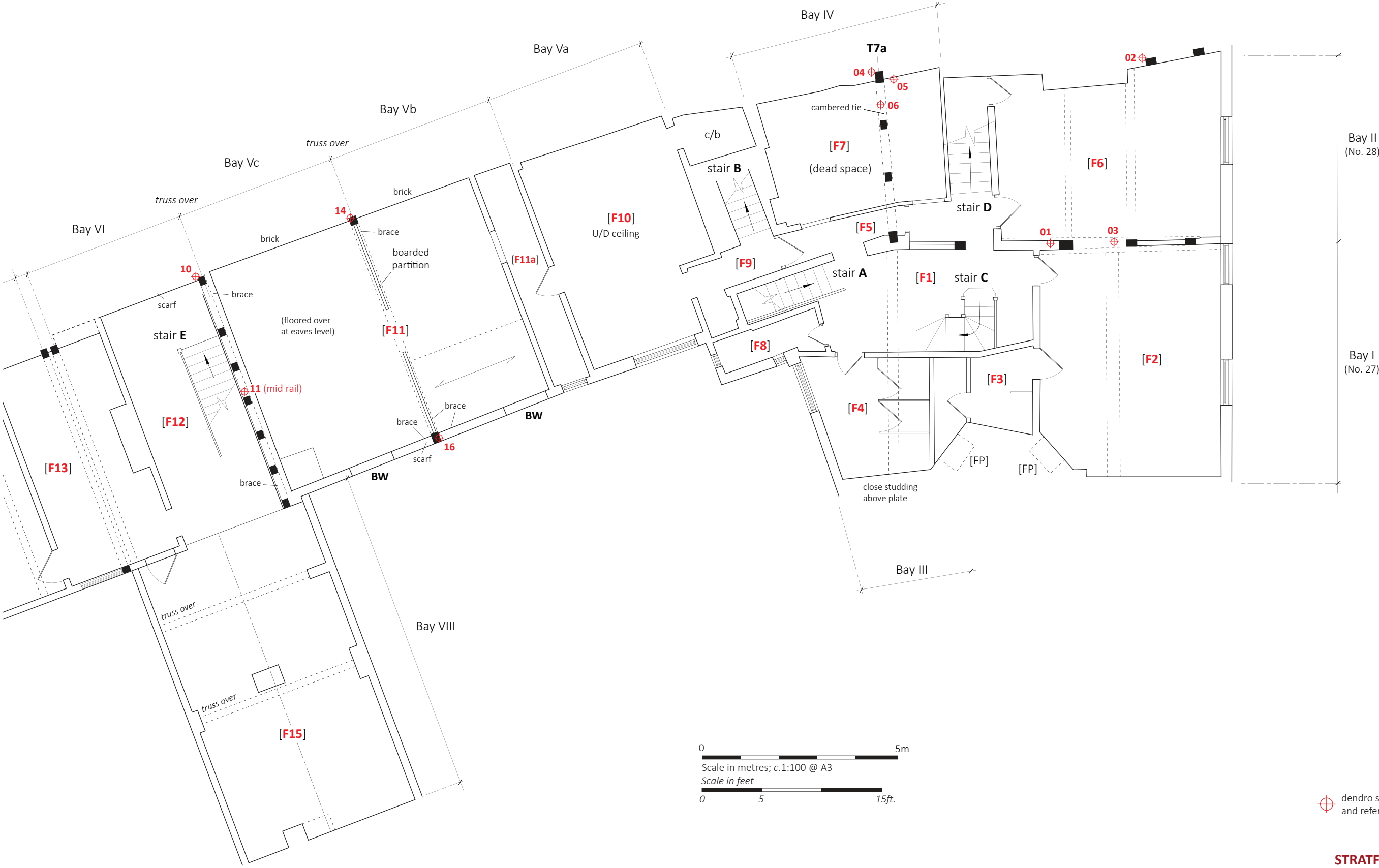
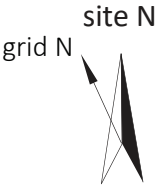


0 5m
Scale in metres; c.1:100 @ A3
Scale in feet
0 5 15ft.

NB. based upon third party and historical survey, enhanced on site for illustrative purposes only, do not scale from this drawing

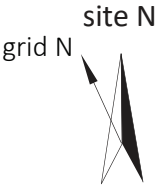


NB. based upon third party and historical survey, enhanced on site
for illustrative purposes only, **do not** scale from this drawing



⊕ dendro sample location
and reference code

NB. based upon third party and historical survey, enhanced on site
for illustrative purposes only, do not scale from this drawing



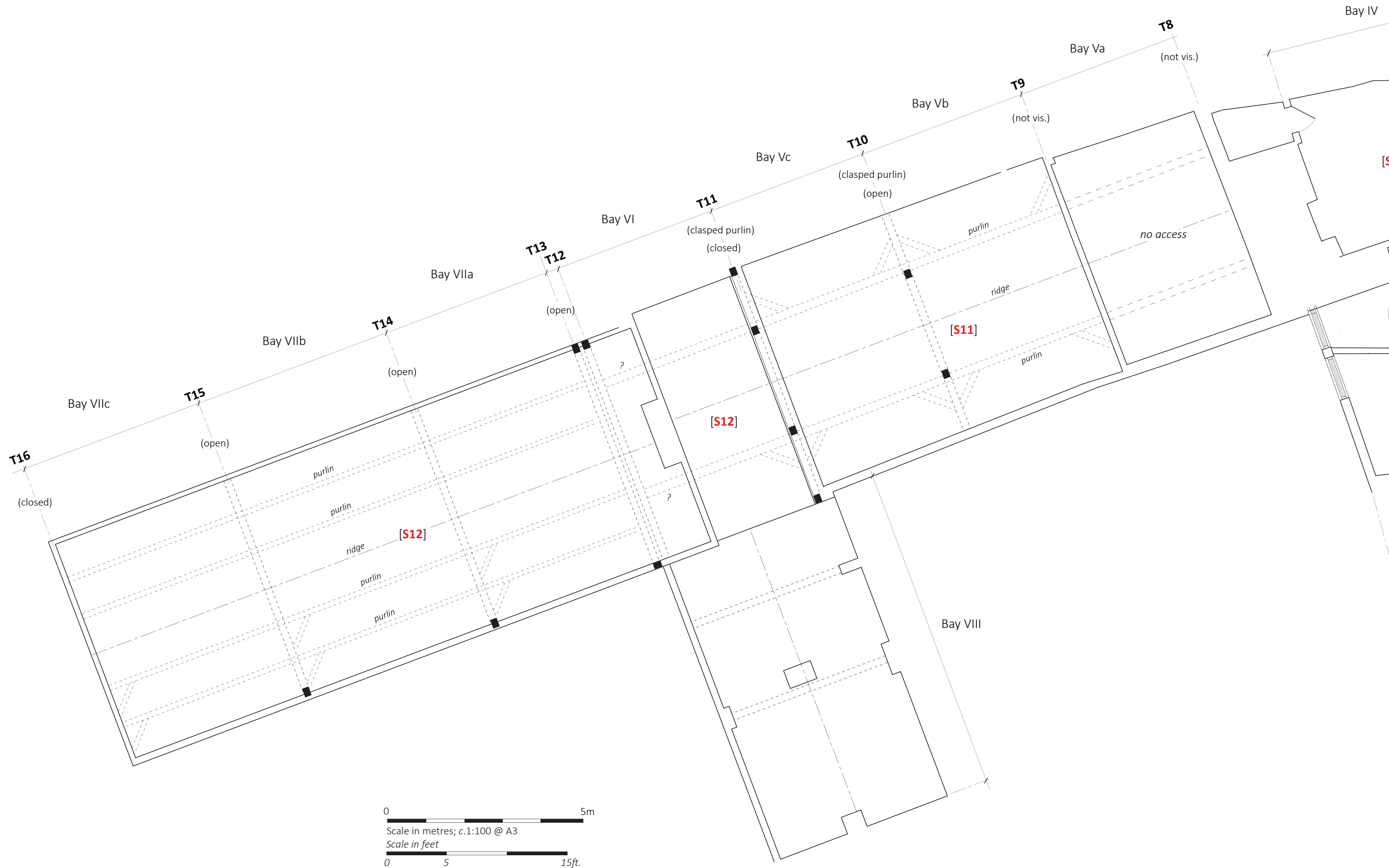
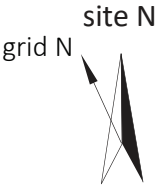


STRATFIRE Project

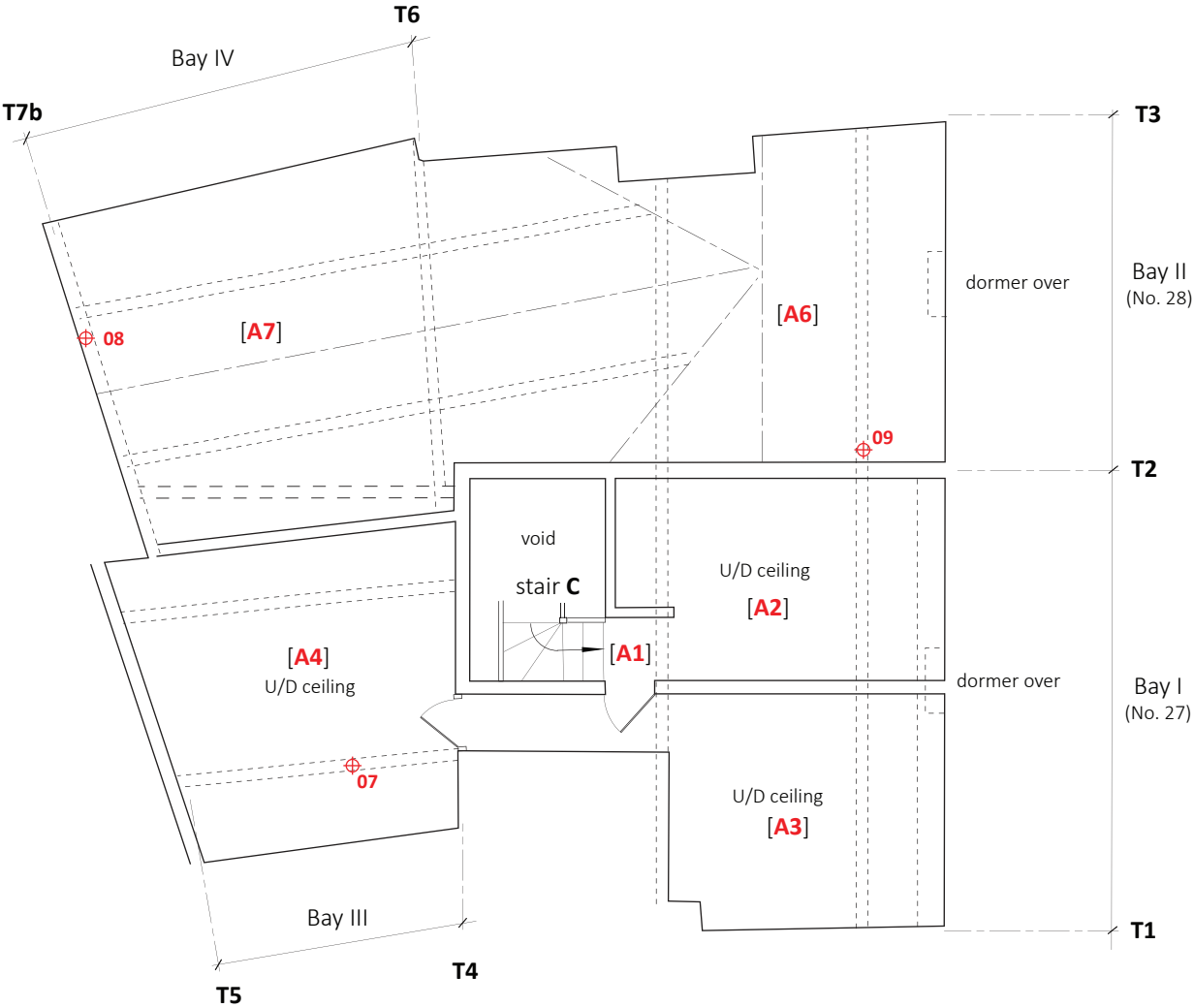
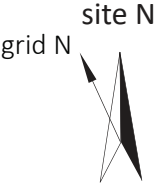
No. 27/8 High Street, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire


Figure 7: Second Floor Plan; front part (Units **A** and **B**)

NB. based upon third party and historical survey, enhanced on site
for illustrative purposes only, do not scale from this drawing

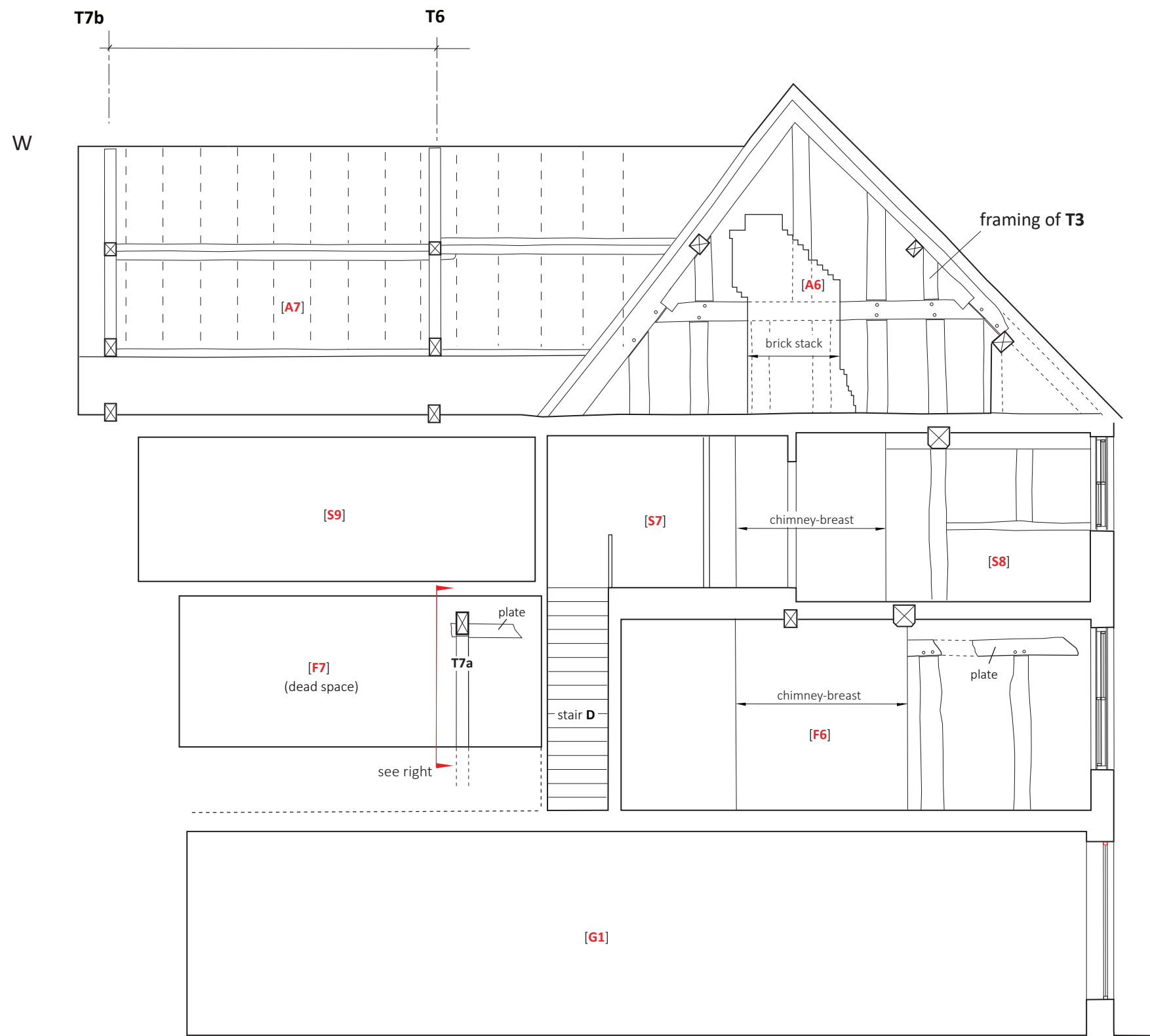


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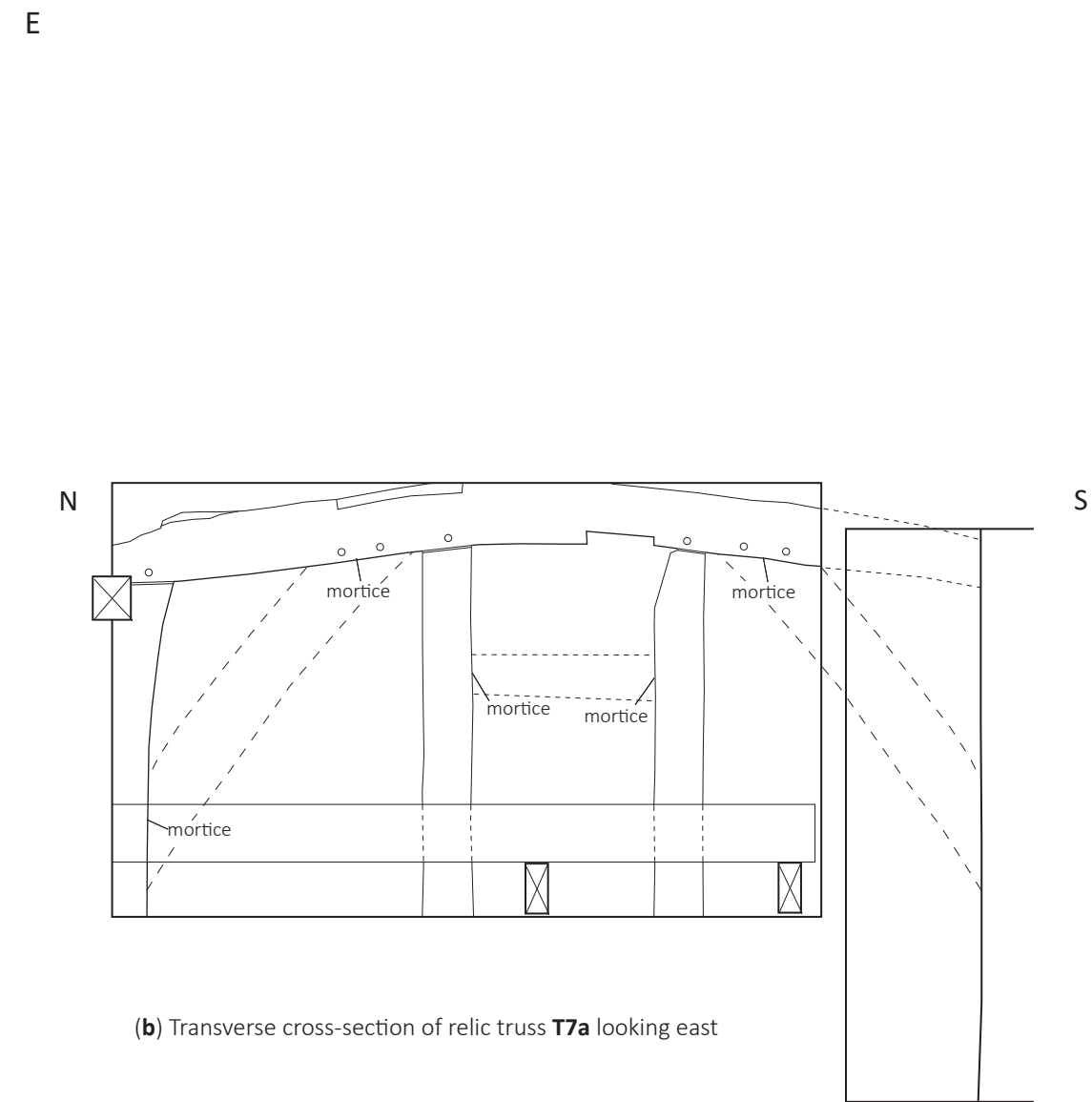
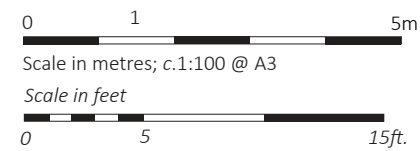


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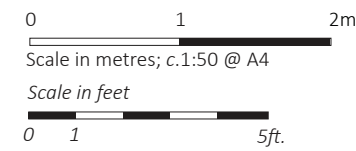
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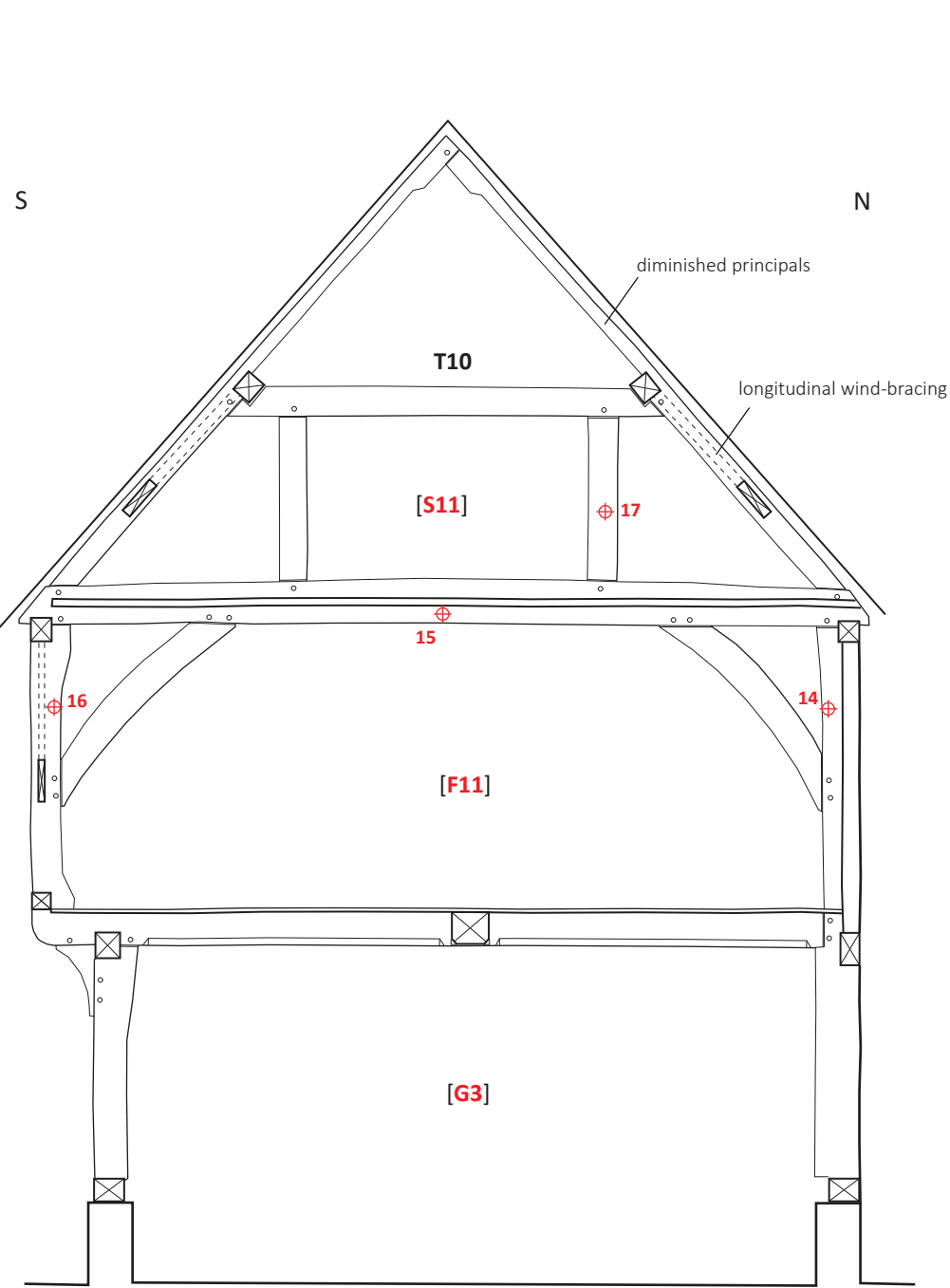
(a) Cross-section looking north at Bay II/IV



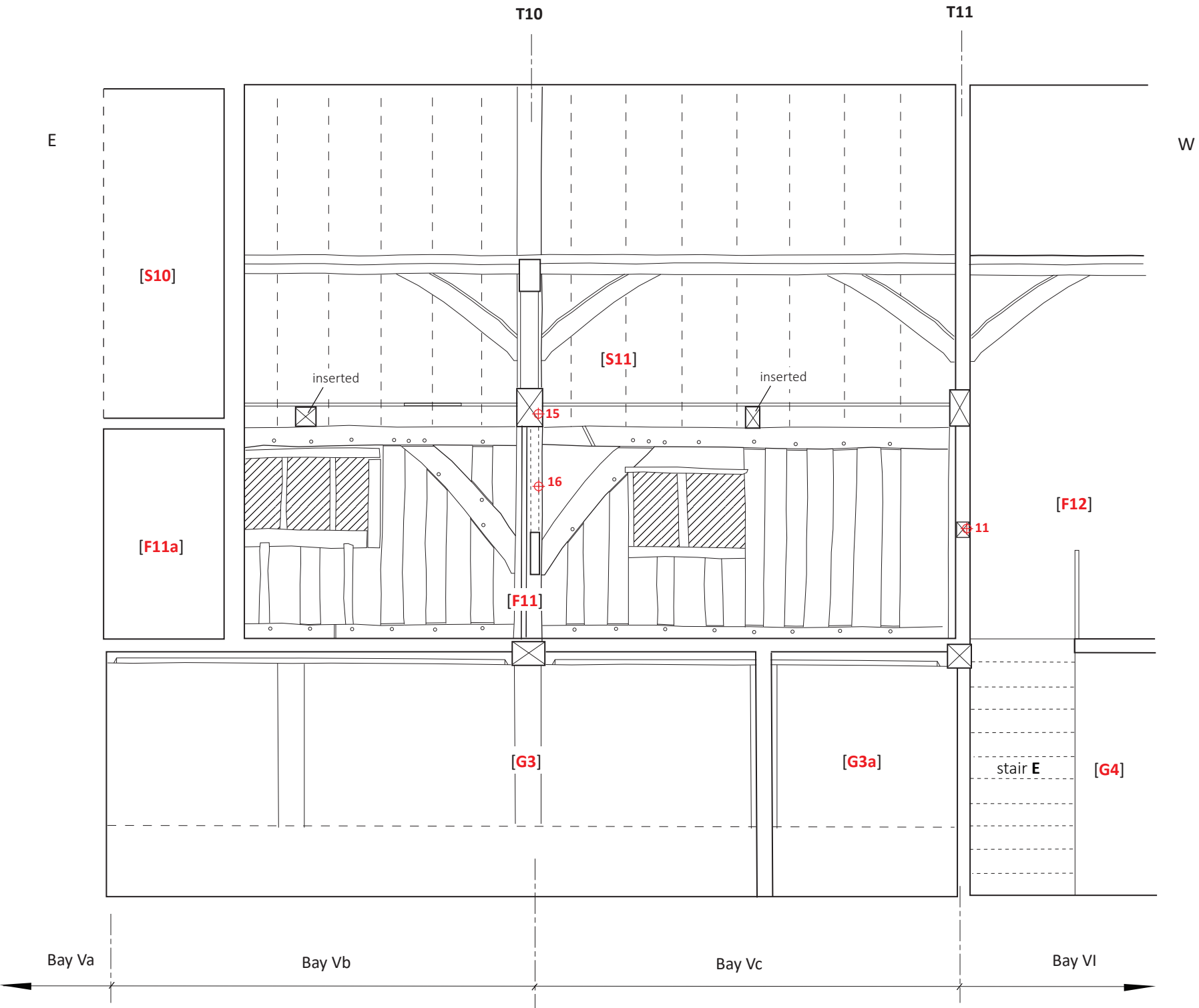
(b) Transverse cross-section of relic truss **T7a** looking east



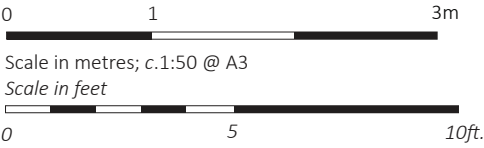
NB. based upon third party and historical survey, enhanced on site for illustrative purposes only, **do not** scale from this drawing



(a) Transverse cross-section looking west
(based on survey drawing by Richard Harris)



(a) Longitudinal (part) cross-section looking south



dendro sample location and reference code



Plate 1: High Street elevation.



Plate 2: Ground floor room looking north-west from Bay I [G1a] into Bay II [G1b]; boxed in columns reflect former boundary between Nos. 27/28.



Plate 3: Unit A (Bay I); first-floor room [F2] looking south-east.



Plate 4: Unit A (Bay II); first-floor room [F6] looking north-east.



Plate 5: Unit A, Bay II; framed partition between [F6] and [F2] (inserted door).



Plate 6: Unit A, Bay II; framing to north wall of [F6].



Plate 7: Unit A, Bay II; relic framing on landing [F1].



Plate 8: Unit A; base of Stair C rising to 2F level from [F1].



Plate 9: Unit A, Bay IV; relic truss T7a observed within dead space [F7], looking east.



Plate 10: Unit A, Bay IV; northern wall post / tie beam of T7a.



Plate 11: Unit A, Bay IV; heavy soot blackening to tie beam of truss T7a; NB. brace mortice.



Plate 12: Unit A, Bay II; room [S8] looking north.



Plate 13: Unit A, Bay II; room [S8] looking south.



Plate 14: Unit A, Bay I; room [S3] looking west .



Plate 15: Unit A, Bay I; room [S4] looking east.



Plate 16: Unit A, Bay III; room [S5] looking west .



Plate 17: Unit A, Bay III; room [S6] looking west .



Plate 18: Unit A, Bay IV; room [S9] looking north-west.



Plate 19: Unit A; Stair C rising from [S1] to attic level.



Plate 20: Unit A; truss T4 visible over Stair C.



Plate 21: Unit A, Bay I, passage [A1] looking west.



Plate 22: Unit A, Bay I; room [A3] looking north-east.



Plate 23: Unit A, Bay III; room [A4] looking west, with rebuilt truss T5.



Plate 24: Unit A, Bay III; room [A4] looking east.



Plate 25: Unit A, Bay II; truss T3 looking north.



Plate 26: Unit A, Bay IV; truss T6.



Plate 27: Unit A, Bay IV; apex detail of truss T6.



Plate 28: Unit A, Bay IV; truss T7.



Plate 29: Ground floor exterior (south) wall of Unit B.



Plate 30: Unit B; detail of deep jetty.



Plate 31: Unit B; detail of replacement bracket.



Plate 32: Unit B, ground floor room [G3] looking north-east.



Plate 33: Detail of axial and transverse ceiling beams over [G3].



Plate 34: Unit B; detail of close-stud walling at Bay Vb (south) with blocked secondary window.



Plate 35: Unit B; detail of close-stud walling at Bay Vc (south) with blocked secondary window.



Plate 36: Unit B; large-panel framing of Bay Vc (west); see also Plate 00.



Plate 37: Unit B; boarded partition at Bay Vb/Vc, looking east.



Plate 38: Unit B, bracing beneath T10(S).



Plate 39: Unit B, enclosed space at SW angle [F11].



Plate 40: Unit B, truss T10 looking south-west.



Plate 41: Unit B; detail of diminished principal at collar level, above clasped purlin (T11).



Plate 42: Unit B; detail of splayed principal at apex level (T11).



Plate 43: Unit B, truss T11 looking west.



Plate 44: Unit C looking north-west (view from 1F of Unit D).



Plate 45: Unit C; detail of ground-floor brickwork.



Plate 46: Unit C, Bay VIIa, yard elevation.



Plate 47: Unit C, Bay VIIc, yard elevation.



Plate 48: Unit C, Bay VIIb, yard elevation; note lower wall plate.



Plate 49: Unit C; roof structure looking east.



Plate 50: Unit C, Bay VIIc; gable truss T16 to west end of roof.



Plate 51: Unit B/C, Bay VI; infill beneath truss T11 and continuation of Unit B roof structure over [F12], looking north-east.



Plate 52: Roof structure over Unit D (room [F15]).



Plate 53: Unit F; Ely Street frontage with visible, half-hipped east elevation.



Plate 54: Yard to rear of Unit F, looking north.

APPENDIX A: Documentary History (Dr. Robert Bearman)

1. The site of Nos 26-28 High Street appears to have been owned as a single unit from the medieval period until the 1660s. From c. 1592 until the end of this period the owners were successive generations of the Rogers family, namely Thomas Rogers (1), who died in 1611, his son, also Thomas (2), who died in 1639, and then the latter's son, Edward Rogers, who died in 1679. Edward left two sons, Thomas (3) and Joseph, who both died in 1684/5. It was their sister Modesty who in 1707, with other family members, sold the property out of the family. Its documented history, both up to this point and then afterwards, has been meticulously recorded by N.W. Alcock in *The Harvard House, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire: the documentary evidence*, 2001. This present report is therefore confined to a discussion of the earlier history of the site, though a broader picture of the Rogers family is also provided.
2. This block of property was freehold, that is, held freely in return for an annual rent paid to the lord of the manor. In the borough charter of c. 1190 such plots had been liable to a 12d. for a burgage measuring c. 60 ft along the street. However, due to its width, Nos 26-8 High St was later rated at 24d. In the one surviving seventeenth-century rental at present known to have survived, for 1637, this sum, the only one in High St, was due from Thomas Rogers (2) (Kent History Centre, U269/E249/6). A Corporation lease, dated 1621, of a house also in High St, the present Garrick Inn (No. 25), describes it as bounded on the north by a tenement of the same Thomas Rogers, thus establishing the position of the latter (BRU 8/9/29). The initials carved on the front of No. 26 (Harvard House) – TR AR below WR – can therefore be taken to represent Thomas Rogers (1) and his wife Alice (parents of the Thomas Rogers (2) of 1621) and (probably) their son William Rogers, then aged eighteen.
3. Earlier leases of No. 25 High Street provide further information about its northerly abuttal, one of 1498 describing it as the house of Thomas Hannys in which William Jeffes then dwelt, and linking it to a lease of a cottage in Ely Stree (BRT 1/2/530). In 1472, this abutting property was said to have been held by John Hannys, and in 1460 the cottage in Ely Street, then held by Thomas Magottes, was bounded on the west by the 'door of John Hannys' giving rear access to his property in High Street, i.e. Nos 26-8 (BRT 1/3/125, BRT 1/2/401).
4. John Hannys and his son Thomas Hannys, both mercers, were leading civic figures. John, born in Hidcote, but of Stratford by 1437, was master of the Guild of the Holy Cross thirteen times between 1443 and 1468. His son Thomas, who inherited the bulk of his father's lands and tenements, joined the Guild in 1480 but, following his apprenticeship to Hugh Clopton, already in business in London, Thomas remained in the capital (*Register of the Guild*, 30-1). Under his will of 1502, he left sufficient money to the Guild to fund a row of almshouses in Church Street (*Stratford Wills*, i, No. 9). He was survived by his wife Philippa and daughter Jane who appears to have inherited the bulk of his Stratford property.
5. There is then a long gap in the data record before the property came into the possession of Thomas Rogers (1). Given that in 1637, the Rogers family was paying a chief rent for the property of 24d. (the only example in High Street: see Para. 2), it would be expected that a parallel entry could be found in the inquisition post mortem held in October 1590 after the death of the lord of the manor, Ambrose earl of Warwick. This particularises the chief rents payable by Stratford burgesses but, under High St, the only sum of 24d. (2s.) was due from George Gilbert (*Minutes & Accounts*, iv, 97). Though in a survey of 1580 Gilbert is listed as one of only thirty-eight gentlemen and freeholders in Stratford, no record other than the chief rent of 1590, links him with High Street (*Minutes & Accounts*, iii, 56). If he were buried in the town (as his wife Joan was in 1583) no entry was made in the burial register.
6. On the other hand, Thomas Rogers (1), the apparent freeholder in 1596, was appointed as one of the two headboroughs for the High Street ward in October 1592 (and reappointed in 1603). (*Minutes & Accounts*, iv, 164; vi, 273). It was customary for headboroughs to live in the wards that they supervised. If he had acquired the property from Gilbert it would therefore have to have been after 1590 (or possibly slightly earlier as listings of tenants could be out of date). If that were not the case, then one would expect Rogers to have featured elsewhere in the inquisition which he does not.

7. In some respects, Thomas Rogers (1) is a well documented figure, by trade a butcher but also with extensive interests in grazing and malting. The search for data on him is necessarily complicated by the commonness of his name. However, he may be the Thomas Rogers fined for infractions of the local bye-laws in 1560 and 1561 (*Minutes & Accounts*, i, 104, 117). He married Margaret Pace in January 1563 and ten children were born to the couple between November 1563 and February 1580. Margaret is then said to have died – though her burial is not recorded in Stratford – leading to Thomas’s marriage to Alice Calle by whom he fathered a further five children.¹ Thomas and Margaret’s eldest son Charles, born in March 1565, had married by 1593. He seems to have been a source of anxiety to his father (e.g., *Minutes & Accounts*, vi, 356, 360, 367) which may explain why it was his second son William whose initials (WR) were added to the plaque on 1596 concerning the rebuilding of No. 26 (Harvard Houser). William, born in June 1578, would have been nearly twenty years of age.
8. Thomas Rogers (1) apparently served the Corporation as ale taster in 1569, and then as constable in 1570, presumably the same man as was sworn constable again in November 1582 (*Minutes & Accounts*, ii, 29-30; iii, 100). He was then chosen to join the Common Council as a capital burgess but it was not until October 1585 that he agreed to serve (*Minutes & Accounts*, iii, 142, 157). Two years later he was appointed an alderman and briefly served as chamberlain in 1588/89 before his election as bailiff in 1589/90 (*Minutes & Accounts*, iv, 24, 46, 68). He was chief alderman for the year 1591/2 and then went on to serve as bailiff for the second time in 1595/6, the year of the second fire, and chief alderman again in 1597/8 (*Minutes & Accounts*, iii, 157; v, 41, 107). However, on 21 April 1609, ‘Mr Thomas Rogers by reason of great age and infirmity to bear the office of Alderman be with great allowance of his good desert of this place to be removed from the office of alderman’ (*Minutes & Accounts*, vii, 102). He lived for nearly another two years and was buried on 2 February 1611, still described as ‘one of the aldermen’.
9. Though his career in the Corporation’s service is well documented it is not easy to identify his place of residence prior to his occupancy of No. 26 High St. As explained above (Para. 6), from 1592 onwards this can be taken to have been in High Street but no document survives before that to place him anywhere in the town at all. Nor, except in the unsatisfactory case of George Gilbert (Para. 5), can anyone else be proposed as the occupier of Nos 26-8 High Street. However, in 1595, during the food shortages of the mid 1590, Rogers, then bailiff, was found to have ‘in his howse of his owne 15 quarters of mallte and 2 quarters of Barley’ and twenty belonging to his ‘sonne in lawe’ John Woolmer (*Minutes & Accounts*, v, 48). The compilers of the survey continued: ‘Wee are gyven to understand That besydes his Butchers trade which untill now of late hee allwaies used hee ys a buyer and seller of Corne for great somes; And with all usethe grazinge and buying and sellinge of cattell; And hathe in howshold xiii persons’. To help ease the shortage of grain he was ordered ‘To bringe to Stretford markett weekelye vi stryke of Rye’. He was also one of forty-five townsfolk bound in £100 against their making malt (*Minutes & Accounts*, v, 47). In another list of ‘byers of corne’ it was reported that ‘Mr Thomas Rogers on 30th October did buy a carte load of barley before it came to market and did forestall the market and did and say he will justifie it and careth not a turde for them all and theise word being spokinge the 28th day of November (*Minutes & Accounts*, v, 49). In the same survey it was noted that Rogers had been included ‘in the subsitty book and now he is got forth and payeth nothinge’. These listings place Rogers amongst leading civic figures. A household of sixteen would confirm that his property included more than No. 26 (Harvard House). In a later survey of February 1598, his holdings, now listed under High Street, comprised seven quarters of malt, four quarters of rye and two quarters of mill corn in addition to five quarters and three strikes of malt belonging to Ralph Hubaud (*Minutes & Accounts*, v, 138, 140). The reference to his inclusion in a ‘subsidy book’ is unclear but in payments of national taxation his goods in 1594 were valued at £6 but from 1598 at only £3 (TNA, E 179/193/235, 260a, 275).

¹ Certainly by 1596 her initials were given as AR on the details carved into the frontage of No. 26 High St on its rebuilding and when, in August 1608, she died, she was indeed confirmed as Alice.

10. One incident occurred during Thomas Rogers (1)'s lifetime which provides some information on the layout of the family's principal residence. It primarily involved his son Thomas Rogers (2), the latter's wife Ann and his sisters Rose and Frances (TNA, STAC8/228/3). Early in 1610, William Osborne, apparently apprenticed to the attorney Thomas Lucas, featured as plaintiff in a Star Chamber case against the members of the Rogers family listed above, alleging a physical attack on him in the Rogers' house as the result of a disagreement between him and Rose who did 'conspire, combine & confederate themselves together howe & by what means they might drawe your subject into the dwelling howse of the said Thomas Rogers in the night tyme' to carry out 'their divelish & wicked plott in beating & greevously wounding your said subject'. Osborne, having been persuaded to make this visit, was enticed into a 'back roome where your subject did then find the said Thomas Rogers, Anne his wife, Rose Rogers, Frances Rogers all being weaponed with piked staves, billes & pichforkes, having in their handes cordes ready to binde your subject'. Having locked the door, Osborne's adversaries 'did greevously & riotously with their said weapons beat, hurt & greevously wound your said subject giving unto your subject being so bound many greevous blowes, woundes and hurtes to the effusion of much of your subjectes blood & with their cordes & handes almost strangled your subject'. Henry Walker, the chief alderman who lived next door at No. 29 High St 'did then come to the howse of the said Thomas Rogers who then, having locked his utter door, did stand in the streete having the key theirow in his pocket'. Walker demanded that Rogers 'open the doore & declare unto him what was the occasion of this outcrys & whether they had any in his howse he meant to have murdered'. Rogers again refused him entry but Walker with the aid of passers by managed to break into the house. Nevertheless, Rogers 'came upon your subject and, notwithstanding that he was by him commanded to keepe your highnes peace ... again struck & greevously hurt your subject'.
11. Thomas Rogers (1), on his death in February 1611, left a will which has not survived though it was proved on 27 April 1611 by his son Thomas Rogers (2) as executor (Alcock, *Harvard House*, 4). In this capacity Thomas (2) was also summoned to the local court of record in 1612 concerning a bond his father had signed on 10 February 1609 to pay the vicar £20 by the following 1 May which neither he nor his son had done (BRU 12/2/4/33).
12. Thomas Rogers (2) was baptised on 11 June 1587 and had married Ann (not further identified) by 18 September 1610 when their first child, another Thomas (3), was baptised. This younger Thomas may be the Thomas son of Thomas Rogers buried on 19 July 1630 leaving Edward, baptised on 8 January 1615, as the eldest son. Two daughters followed, Lydia and Hanna, before the death of Roger (2)'s first wife. On 27 April 1624 Rogers took as his second wife Ann Cook by whom he had two further daughters, Ruth and Hannah. Little other biographical material survives for Thomas Roger (2), though soon after his father's death, under High Street, he was listed as a possible contributor to a subsidy and in a parish levy in 1618 he was rated at 3s. 4d., the second highest sum in High Street ward (*Minutes & Accouts*, vii, 192; *Vestry Minute Book*, 2).
13. Thomas Rogers (2) made his will on 27 August 1639 and was buried four days later (*Stratford Wills*, ii, No. 235). His wishes are expressed in a rather unusual form, with his house bequeathed to his wife Ann for life and then to his four daughters, Lydia, Alice, Ruth and Hanna until such time as his son Edward Rogers pay them £20 each, when it would revert to him. His personal estate followed a different route – to his wife for life and then to be divided between his five children. Edward, a bookbinder, married Mary Perkins on 29 November 1640 and his mother Ann was buried on 12 April 1648. His will was accompanied by a detailed inventory recording possessions in at least eight rooms in the main house (*Stratford Inventories*, ii, No. 209).
14. No document has survived to the effect that Edward paid this £20 to any of his four sisters but in Edward's will, made on 29 March 1679, it is clear that this requirement had been met, at least in part, giving him control of the freehold of most of the property. However, it is during this period that the combined freehold of Nos 26-8 began to break down. In Edward's will there are clear instructions as to the varied descent of several parts of the property, albeit that the end result would be that its component parts were likely to descend eventually to his

eldest son Thomas Rogers (3) (*Stratford Wills*, ii, No. 390). The gatehouse and 'backside', allowing access to the property from Ely Street, was left to his wife Mary for three years, as was a 'shop with the rooms therto belonging', then in the tenure of Philip Wilkins (and formerly of Francis Ferris) for her to use the rental income to pay off some of his debts. Both properties were then to pass to his daughter Modesty for a further eight years 'in lieu of a portion'. Only after these eleven years had passed, were the shop and rooms to pass to his son Thomas (3) and his heirs and the gatehouse to his younger son Joseph for life. As for the 'rest and residue of my house wherein I now live' this was bequeathed to his wife Mary for life and then to his son Thomas and his heirs.

15. However, this property now seems to have comprised Nos 27-8 only. According to the Hearth Tax returns, No.26, at least from 1664, was occupied by John Capp, followed by Thomas Capp, his brother, by 1674 (whose son, another John Capp, was occupier in the early eighteenth century) (WCRO, QS11/2, 5, 12, 41, 51; *Hearth Tax* (2010), 217). This evidence alone does not establish that the Capps also held the freehold of this property but, given that a property in the Capps' tenure was not mentioned by Edward in his will, nor in the wills of his sons (below, Paras. 16-17), it is more than likely that Edward had sold it off. His father's will (above, Para. 13) suggests some difficulty in providing for his daughters, and Edward himself, by March 1670, appears to have mortgaged the house in High Street where he lived to William Lyndon for £210, payable within three months of Lyndon's decease which occurred in March 1672/3 (*Stratford Wills*, ii, No. 356). Perhaps it was the sale of No. 26 which had helped him to pay off the mortgage on his dwelling house. Edward's will of 1679 (Para. 14) with its admission that he was not able to provide a marriage portion for his daughter, also implies straitened circumstances.
16. Mary Rogers, Edward's wife, was to live until 1705 outliving both her sons who died at more or less the same time, Thomas (3) in July 1684 and Joseph over the winter 1684/5. It was Thomas who made his will first, on 30 June 1684, leaving 'all that my house in Highe Street now divided from my greater house' to his sister Modesty and this 'greater house', occupied by his mother Mary for life, to his brother Joseph (*Stratford Wills*, ii, No. 443). He was buried on 8 July.
17. When, two months later, Joseph made his will on 27 September 1684 he left the house to which his mother was entitled for life, to his sister Ann wife of George Hunscombe, again for life and then to her issue (*Stratford Wills*, ii, No. 438). The final act in the story of the Rogers' ownership of the site occurred soon after the death of Mary Rogers, Edward's widow, in 1707. Later that year a document records the probable sale of the property from William Todd and Modesty [Rogers] his wife, Ann Hunscombe, widow, and Anne Blackett, widow, and Susanna Atty, widow, probably her nieces, to Joseph Smith (DR 134/41/11). Modesty would have been involved in this transaction as a result of Thomas Rogers' bequest to her of part of the property (Para. 16) and Ann Hunscombe and her family as a consequence of his brother Joseph's will (Para. 17).
18. In the context of the Stratfire project, and with Nat Alcock's detailed report of 2001 already in circulation, it is not necessary to trace the history of the building further. However, it is clear that, following Thomas Rogers' ascendancy at the time of the 1594/5 fires, the standing of his family was to decline over the next hundred years. This might be better explained after building analysis and dendrochronology of Nos 27-28 is carried out, albeit that its original timber-frame is hidden by later stucco, perhaps added c. 1800. Indeed there are aspects of the Alcock report on No. 26 that might be resolved, especially regarding the inventory of 1639 (*Stratford Inventories*, ii, No. 209).

Dr. Robert Bearman
10.07.2024

Later Occupation (from Alcock, 2001)

19. As well as Mary Rogers, two occupiers of Nos. 27/8 High Street are named in the suitor lists, viz. William Keyte, bookseller and Major (Maio) Mosley. The former is also recorded in a law suit in 1681-2, when he was sued for debt by Robert Clowell, a London bookseller, presumably money due for books supplied.² The latter must be the 'Mager Moseley' whose children Mary, Thomas and Martha were baptised in Holy Trinity Church in 1687, 1689/90 and 1691. He may also be the George Moseley with children Mary and Thomas mentioned in the 1703 will of Amphyllis Moseley of Drayton, widow (DR148/1/51) but beyond this, nothing is known of the family.

Eighteenth Century Owners

20. Full details of the ownership of 26-8 High Street only survive from 1798, but the sequence of chief rents shows the ownership and occupancy before this in outline. It appears that as a whole, 26-8 High Street paid 2s rent, which was split between 1637 and 1703 into 6d for No. 26 (Harvard House) and 1s 6d for Nos. 27/8; No. 29 paid 6d and its rents provide a useful marker delimiting those for nos. 26-8.

Date	Rent	Occupier	Ref.
1637		Thomas Rogers	PR59/53
1703		Mary Rogers, widow 2: Jos Shaw, Wm Todd	ER1/6, f.16v
1708	1s 6d	Jos (Shaw erased) Phypps ten. New Inn	f.27
1710-1715	1s 6d	Josh Phipps, New Inn	f.31v
1721-4	1s 6d	Josh Phipps at the New Inn	ER1/133
1729	1s 6d	Mr Bartlett	ER1/133
1732-3	1s 6d	Mr Bartlett	ER1/6, f.46
1734-1741	1s 6d	Mr Bartlett	
1742-47	1s 6d	Mr Ric Bartlett	
1766-67	1s 6d	Mr Jarvis his own	
1769-1776	1s 6d	Mr Jarvis for his own	
1772-74	1s 6d	Mr Jarvis for his own	
1797-1801	1s 6d	Ditto [Samuel Jarvis (now Bartlett)] [occ.] John Clewes	

Eighteenth Century and Nineteenth Occupiers

21. The first 18th-century occupier identified is Joshua Phipps, when the property became the New Inn. He was succeeded by Richard Bartlett, apothecary and then in 1765 by Samuel Jarvis, mercer; they (and probably Phipps as well) were both owners and occupiers. No. 27 seems to have been empty for much of the period, though it may have been briefly occupied by a Mrs Parsonage (1750 poor rate), and in 1800 William Jeffs, saddler, lived there.
22. Robert Bartlett, who inherited all the properties in 1798, lived in St Giles in the Fields in London. His brother-in-law, John Clews, and sister Bridget took over the mercer's business from Samuel Jarvis, and she was still in occupation in 1818 when Robert leased both properties to William Bolton, another mercer (DR325/376). This lease excluded the messuage occupied by Thomas Williams (No. 26) and also the malthouse and the stable in Swine [Ely] Street, both occupied by Thomas Sheldon (the owner of No. 29); Williams had a right of way along the yard and use of the pump, while Sheldon had access from Swine Street to the malthouse. Bartlett himself reserved the right to make a doorway from Mr Sheldon's garden into the little garden that was part of Bolton's lease, and to go through the garden to and from Swine Street. However, Bolton was

² Paul Morgan, 'Early booksellers, printers and publishers in Stratford-upon-Avon', *Trans Birmingham Archaeol. Soc.* 67(1951), 55, citing H R Plomer, *List of booksellers and printers ... 1668-1725*, Bibliog. Soc. 1922.

permitted to make alterations between Nos. 27 and 28, presumably either to combine them into one shop, or to let them off separately.

23. For the next 40 years, both properties were used as one, by Bolton (to 1833), by Charles Medlicott, mercer (1834-45), by Masters and Co. (1847) and by Murrell and Wilson, drapers (1850-55). Thereafter, they were divided again, with a varying series of occupiers. No. 27 was mostly occupied by printers and stationers, No. 28 firstly by James and George Callaway, builders, briefly by a tobacconist (1875-6) and then by Freeman, Hardy and Willis, boot and shoe makers, who bought both houses in 1905.

24. A notice of sale by auction of August 1874 described the premises as follows:

‘Two desirable brick and tiled freehold residences with capital front shops, situate and being Nos. 27 and 28 High Street in Stratford-upon-Avon, in the respective occupations of Mr. Thomas Kite and Messrs. Callaway, together with extensive workshops, saw-pit, machine room, offices and outbuildings in the rear, and extending back to Ely Street. No. 27 contains excellent cellar and kitchen in the basement, spacious front shop and sitting room, 4 chambers, 8 good attics and water-closet. No. 28 comprises large dry cellar, front shop, sitting room, kitchen, back kitchen, larder, drawing room, 4 chambers and water-closet. There are most extensive buildings and premises in the rear, consisting of a well-arranged 2-storey workshop, large machine room, newly erected chimney stack, wood-built shop, painter’s shop, with arched vaults underneath, capital offices, containing 2 rooms on the ground floor with one above, together with other convenient out-buildings.’

25. The sale was completed in January 1875, when Henry Walter Newton, ironmonger (‘Alderman Newton’) acquired the High Street property for £1150. On 17th Dec 1878, Newton was able to buy the curious square enclave that had apparently been part of No. 28 High Street for some considerable time.³ It comprised a room used as a back kitchen or wash-house and adjoining stable with lofts over.

Dr. Nathaniel Alcock
2001

³ The vendors were William Hutchings, auctioneer, Henry Downing, draper and Robert Lunn, gentleman, and the conveyance includes a schedule of deeds to be produced from 1855 to 1878; it had been inherited from Thomas Sheldon.