

**Archaeological Mitigation Strategy for
Proposed Alterations To Bridge Cottage,
Uckfield, East Sussex**

Prepared by David Martin, FSA, IHBC, MIFA.

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PROPOSED ALTERATIONS TO
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1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 In 1980 Bridge Cottage was under threat of demolition, but was saved by a joint fund-raising venture which resulted in its acquisition by Uckfield Town Council who firstly licensed and subsequently leased the building (excepting the northern lean-to annexe) to Uckfield and District Preservation Society (hereafter UDPS). In February 1997 Archaeology South-East (the commercial wing of University College Field Archaeology Unit, Institute of Archaeology) were commissioned by UDPS to undertake an Archaeological Interpretative Survey of Bridge Cottage. The purpose of the survey was to inform the society regarding the age and development of the building in order to assist them to achieve their objectives of creating a Heritage Centre within the building and displaying the building to the public. The recording work was carried out by David and Barbara Martin, Historic Buildings Officers with Archaeology South-East, on 19th February 1997 and the ensuing report was revised on 28th October 1997 in order to take into account additional data. The interpretative survey was subsequently augmented by a successful programme of tree-ring dating analysis carried out by Dr Martin Bridge of the Institute of Archaeology, University College London. After much consideration, UDPS have formulated a proposal which, if implemented, will fulfil their original aims and secure a future for the building. [For a more detailed account of the background and details of the proposals see 'BRIDGE COTTAGE, UCKFIELD. Alterations and Extensions: Design and Access Statement' dated November 2006, prepared by W.A.S. Chartered Architects.] Throughout the formulation of the proposals, advice with regards to the building's significance and historical/archaeological sensitivity has been offered by David Martin of Archaeology South-East. In January 2007 an initial draft of this mitigation was prepared using the planning application drawings [W.A.S. Chartered Architects' drawing numbers UD.06.164/P10 dated Nov 06; UD.06.164/P11 dated Nov. 06; UD.06.164/Sk23 dated Aug 06, revised 6th Nov 06; UD.06.164/PO3A dated Nov 06; and W.A.S. Chartered Architect's Design and Access Statement dated Nov. 2006]. Since then the scheme has been further worked up in preparation for an application for Listed Building Consent, and the comments contained in the initial draft mitigation have been taken into account by

W.A.S. in refining the proposals. It is against this background the present Mitigation Strategy relating to the proposed alterations has been formulated.

- 1.2 The mitigation strategy which follows addresses the effect that the proposed alterations will have upon the historical fabric and the archaeology of this listed standing building. It also suggests strategies for minimizing the impact where the proposals will impinge upon features which are considered to be of historical/archaeological significance. In general, it does not address either the design aspects or the aesthetics of the proposals. The proposed alterations which are addressed by this mitigation strategy are as indicated in W.A.S.'s Design and Access Statement dated Nov. 2006 and as shown in the following W.A.S. drawings:

UD.06.164/LBC 104 dated 21/5/07;
UD.06.164/LBC 107 dated Dec 06;
UD.06.164/LBC 109 dated Dec 06;
UD.06.164/LBC 120 dated June 07;
UD.06.164/LBC 121 dated June 07;
UD.06.164/LBC 122 (undated);
UD.06.164/LBC 123 dated June 07;
UD.06.164/LBC 124 dated June 07;
UD.06.164/LBC 130 dated Dec 06;
UD.06.164/LBC 132 dated June 07.

A set of 'as existing' drawings (UD.06.164/LBC 04 & 20-22) were made available for inspection, as too was a location plan (UD.06.164/LBC 100) and details of proposed new joinery (UD.06.164/LBC 131). Copies of the 'as existing' drawings have been added to the site archive as a record of the structure, but otherwise the above listed additional drawings are not considered by me to be germane to this present mitigation strategy.

- 1.3 It should be stressed that the assessment which follows is my considered view based upon the findings of the Archaeological Interpretative Survey. The assessment is offered based upon my knowledge and experience of such buildings accumulated over 40+ years and is intended as advice. Many of the views which inform the conservation of historical buildings are to some extent subjective – particularly with regards to more recent extensions and alterations – and thus it should be stressed that there is no guarantee that the opinions expressed within this document will be endorsed by the local planning authority.
- 1.4 Given below is a brief overview of the findings of the interpretative survey and programme of tree-ring dating. For a full account of the building see the full report prepared by David and Barbara Martin of Archaeology South-East (Report No. 1274 Revision 1, dated 1997). For a publish note regarding the tree-ring dating see 'Vernacular Architecture **36**, (2005) 73.
- 1.4.1 Bridge Cottage is a large single-aisled 'wealden' hall house built from timbers felled during the spring of 1436. Although only listed grade-II, it is

considered by me to be a building of considerable significance on account of its size and the former presence of a rear aisle. It also represents an early example of the use of close studding. The hall is of two open bays and was entered at the southern end by an overshot cross passage incorporating a wide central opening protected by draught speres. Beyond, to the south, was the usual service area with a large first-floor chamber extending over both the services and the cross passage. At the high end of the hall was a parlour with chamber over, but these have been demolished, as too has the rear aisle (see below). The hall was served by a bay window and there appears to have been a garderobe incorporated into the south wall of the service chamber.

- 1.4.2 Due to structural failure the rear aisle was removed during the late-medieval period and the rear section of the hall truss was adjusted to suit the new arrangement.
- 1.4.3 Many alterations were carried out during the 16th, 17th and, particularly the early/mid 18th century. Most of these cannot be sequenced and, due to the extensive use of second-hand material, some cause problems of dating. The 16th-century modifications include adjustments to the wide spered opening between the hall and overshot cross passage, the construction of some form of primitive heating system (probably a smoke bay) within the southern bay of the hall, insertion of a floor into the hall, reconstruction of the bay window, raising of the level of the ground floor, and inserting a new first floor within the service bay. Later alterations (mostly 18th century) include demolition of the northern parlour bay and its replacement by a lean-to outshut, though these two actions may not have been carried out simultaneously. Brick chimneys were added into the southern bay and northern outshut, the external walls were brick underbuilt and weatherclad above, a lean-to outshut was added along the southern end of the rear wall (incorporating a new staircase), the southern hip was replaced by a half-hipped terminal, and there were general modifications to the internal layout.
- 1.4.4 During the late 18th and 19th centuries the property descended the social scale and was eventually sub-divided into two cottages (see Plate 2 in W.A.S. Chartered Architect's Design and Access Statement dated Nov. 2006). This was accompanied by much sub-division of the internal spaces, achieved by inserting timber stud partitions. There have been other subsequent alterations of a more minor nature.
- 1.4.5 During the 1970s the building was under threat of demolition, but this threat was lifted in the early 1980s. As noted in 1.1 above, most of the structure is now in the care of UDPS, though the northern outshut is separately owned and has been subjected to considerable rebuilding. During the second half of the 20th century there have been many alterations to the interior of the main body of the house. These

modifications entailed dismantling most (but not all) of the partitions inserted when the house was divided into cottages and the selective stripping off of late lath-and-plaster coverings in order to reveal the structure beneath. There have been a number of repairs and 'restorations', some carried out on an *ad hoc* basis, others more organized. The more organized repairs were largely (but not exclusively) concentrated within the ground-floor area of the medieval hall. Here, the once open section of the hall has been returned to a single large, relatively low room. As part of this operation the brick floor was relayed and the ground-floor part of the rear wall was largely rebuilt in modern brickwork. Much of the inserted first-floor joisting over the hall was stripped, repaired and replaced, retaining the original timbers and configuration within the northern bay, but with some repair and modification within the southern bay. The rear staircase leading out of the hall was rebuilt and a new attic stair was inserted into the southern service bay. The rear outshut has been fitted out as a cloakroom area.

2. THE MITIGATION STRATEGY

- 2.1 The circumstances which saved Bridge Cottage from its threat of demolition in the late 1970s and early 1980s have been outlined above, as has the building's subsequent transference to 'semi-public' use as a heritage asset and centre for occasional fairs, exhibitions and meetings. Today the structure stands as a cultural island, hemmed in on the south by the River Uck, on the east by the busy modern High Street (from which it is separated by a small paved yard) and on the north and west by a modern shopping centre. Over the period since 1983 the piecemeal repairs and modifications have resulted in the partial stripping out of fabric associated with the late 18th/19th-century cottage phases of the building. This work was deemed necessary in order to reveal something of the building's early phases of construction and to make the ground-floor area more workable as a 'community space'. Despite the preservation society's best efforts, there has to date never been sufficient finance to achieve the original aims and objectives for the building which, in consequence, is maintained to an adequate, but poor standard. There is no doubt in my mind that the building is neither used nor shown to its full potential. It is my opinion that the present scheme has the vision to breath new life into the building by a carefully thought through programme of alteration, conservation and repair which will allow the structure to be utilized in a number of ways whilst maintaining its historical and archaeological integrity. To achieve this in a meaningful way there will be need for compromise, and minimal loss of historical fabric will be inevitable.
- 2.2 It should be noted that the interpretative survey carried out in 1997 was commissioned by UDPS in order to help inform the process of securing a future for the building without damaging its historical fabric through ignorance of the structure's past development and significance. I can

confirm that both UDPS and W.A.S Chartered Architects have consulted with me throughout the process of formulating the proposed alterations and have taken note of my views in their preparation of the present scheme. Throughout the process the long-term preservation of the building has been the prime concern, though it would be naive (indeed irresponsible) to pretend that commercial viability has not been taken into account.

- 2.3 The mitigation strategy which follows has been prepared with the observations made in 2.1 and 2.2 in mind. It sets out to justify change where this impinges upon historical fabric and indicates how impact upon the fabric can be minimized. As noted in paragraph 1.2 above, such aspects as design and aesthetics of the proposed alterations primarily fall outside the remit of this mitigation strategy, which therefore concentrates on the archaeology and historical aspects of the building.
- 2.4 The mitigation strategy addresses the proposed alterations on an area-by-area basis, identifying the rooms by the names given in Drawing Nos. UD.06.164/LBC 120.

3 PROPOSED ALTERATIONS AT GROUND-FLOOR LEVEL

3.1 MEETING ROOM [GF1] (Ground floor of medieval hall)

3.1.1 Form new door opening (DG2) through northern wall of room

This proposed new opening is intended to link Meeting room GF1 to entrance area GF3 located within the present northern outshut. The wall in question is a modern, late 20th-century brick wall with the bricks currently exposed to view within GF1. The wall stands immediately to the rear (north) of the medieval moulded dais beam. The beam contains within its soffit evidence indicating the design of the original dais panelling which once formed the wall beneath the moulded beam. I suggest that in the interests of clarity (to prevent any misunderstanding) qualification is added to the drawing or a detail drawing is provided which clearly states that the moulded beam will in no way be altered by intrusion of the proposed doorway. Provided this is done, cutting a door through the modern brickwork will have no bearing upon historically sensitive fabric.

3.1.2 Form new hatch through rear (western) wall of room, linking to new kitchenette (GF5)

As with 3.1.1 above, the wall into which this hatch is to be intruded is modern late 20th-century brickwork, in this instance with the bricks exposed to view both internally and externally. At the head, at the approximate level of the first-floor joisting (but extending down beneath the joisting) is the (assumed late 15th-century) side girt introduced when the rear aisle was removed. The drawings indicate that the southern side

of the hatch will be formed by the principal post of the hall truss. Cutting the hatch through the modern brickwork will have no effect upon historical fabric, though I feel qualification should be made indicating that neither the extant side girt nor the principal post of the hall truss will in any way be damaged by the formation of the hatch. I would also recommend that both the soffit of the side girt and the side face of the principal post be left exposed so that the face of these timbers and the mortices they contain can be seen. This would mean fixing the folding hatch onto the kitchenette side of the wall.

3.1.3 New door (DG5) to existing entrance at base of stairs

This door is required in order to comply with safety regulations, particularly in respect of fire escape. The location is depicted in Drawing No. LBC 120 and further details are shown in Drawing Nos. LBC 109 and LBC 122. These indicate that the proposal is to fit the new frame 'beyond main beam and post' so as neither to damage nor hide significant historical fabric. I consider this to be a particularly sensitive part of the building in that this is one of the points where the evidence for the aisle is clearest - the high-level principal post sits on the moulded beam. By moving the frame clear of these elements, as proposed, I am happy that the new frame will cause no damage to areas of significance.

3.1.4 Revisions to door and frame (DG10) to existing entrance to cellar

In order to accommodate the revised stair-1 layout (see 3.6 below) and with fire regulations it will be necessary to make modifications to DG10, leading to the cellar. This opening and its door is of relatively late, but of traditional construction and appearance, but is not in my opinion of great significance to the building. This general area (including Stair 1) was the subject of discussions on site between the architect, UDPS and myself aimed at formulating a strategy which would minimize impact upon the significance of the structure. The proposals as relevant to the doorway involve lowering the level of the existing stone threshold to the opening, modifying the door head by lowering its level, adjusting the height of the existing traditional door, fireproofing it, and refixing it, all as indicated in Drawing No. LBC 132. Given the importance of achieving an adequate stairway which meets fire regulations, without damaging other significant structural elements (see 3.6 below) the proposed modifications are considered by me to be an acceptable compromise, retaining the character of the opening when viewed from within Meeting room GF1.

3.2 MEETING ROOM/EXHIBITION [GF2] (Ground floor southern room)

3.2.1 New door to existing opening DG4

As indicated in 'Detail B', Drawing No. LBC 109, this door is to be fitted 'to

existing opening'. The only modification to this will be the addition of fire stops. As the opening is, in any case, of no historical significance, it is my opinion that this proposal is entirely acceptable.

3.3 STORE ADJACENT GF2 (Immediately to north of southern chimney)

3.3.1 Block 2no. doorways to form store.

Of the two doorways proposed for blocking the western (between the store and the rear outshut) is not of historical significance, but the northern one (between the store and Meeting Room GF1) is sited within the highly significant truss at the low end of the hall. Of particular interest, the soffit of the crossbeam over this opening shows part of the mutilated mortice for the removed spere post. It would be good to keep this exposed, and to this end discussions were held on site. The proposed scheme as developed by the architect is shown in Drawing No. LBC 109, Details A and B. As indicated, the proposed blocking will be achieved by inserting a new stud partition standing free of the southern face of the opening, thereby causing no damage to significant historical fabric, whilst leaving all archaeologically significant features fully exposed to view. In my opinion, this is a satisfactory solution to the concerns outlined above.

3.4 ENTRANCE [GF3] & DISABLED TOILET [GF4] (Within northern outshut)

3.4.1 Minor modifications to achieve revised layout

This internal space was fully modernized in the 1980s and now shows no historical features. Therefore, it is my view that the minor alterations shown in this area will have no effect upon historically sensitive fabric.

3.5 KITCHENETTE [GF5] & REAR LOBBY (Within new rear outshut)

3.5.1 Construction of new lean-to outshut extending northwards from existing outshut, extending along rear of medieval hall.

Given the proposed uses to which the building is to be put, there is a need for an adequate kitchenette area in order to provide light refreshment. It was to meet this requirement that a modest northward extension to the existing rear outshut was proposed by UDPS. The initial proposed form of the outshut was subsequently modified in order to meet the following conservation issues:

- The outshut as proposed was to be the same width as the existing outshut, which at this point is stone built. It was felt essential that the original corner quoin of the existing outshut should continue to be easily recognizable.
- The exposed timberwork within the present rear wall of the medieval building is in a very weathered condition and will need major repair

in the future if it is left exposed to the elements. The timberwork in question is partially of c1436 date and partially relates to the wall which was formed when the rear aisle was removed (assumed to have been during the late 15th century). The present condition of the timberwork has been of concern to me for some time, especially in respect of the northern principal post of c1436 date, which incorporates vital mortice evidence in respect of the lost rear aisle.

- The initial proposals for the building included the formation of a first-floor doorway through the northern wall of the hall chamber in order to gain access to the proposed northern first-floor room (FF4). Admittedly the panel which would need to be removed represents a post-medieval replacement, but it was felt by me that the intrusion of this doorway would, nonetheless, diminish the visual impact of this wall. From the point of view of UDPS this method of access to FF4 was inconvenient in that it meant that room FF4 would not be able to be utilized when the hall chamber (Public Room FF1) was in use. A re-designed rear outshut would allow independent access to FF4 without any damage to historical fabric.

With the above points in mind the proposed rear outshut was redesigned narrower and longer than previously. By so doing, the new design achieved the following conservation objectives:

- Makes the proposed addition visually distinct from the existing rear outshut, leaving the north-eastern quoin of that outshut fully exposed to view.
- In shape it mimics, albeit to a greater width, the outline of the former medieval rear aisle, thereby allowing the public to visualize more easily the original form of the building.
- Allows the vulnerable exposed timbers within the rear wall of the building to be protected from the elements, thereby avoiding further decay through weather, which would require major replacement of fabric in the future. Within the building the timbers will remain exposed to view, allowing their appreciation by the public and allowing the evidence to be inspected by students of vernacular architecture.
- Provide a convenient method of access to the proposed archive room (FF4) without causing damage to historically sensitive fabric.

The above gives in outline the gains which will be achieved by the revised design for the proposed rear outshut. The only identifiable potential damage which the addition of the outshut could cause to historically sensitive fabric is as follows:

- There is potential for damage where the new western external wall meets the existing end wall of the extant section of outshut.
- Care needs to be taken where the rafters of the new outshut are supported by the existing wallplate of the medieval building
- Consideration needs to be given to the method adopted to prevent

the new outshut from spreading.

I offer the following recommendations:

- Regarding the former of these three, I suggest the use of a designed butt joint between the proposed and existing walls.
- With regards to the support of the rafters at the existing wallplate, in the initial draft of this mitigation strategy I recommended that a detail drawing is produced to indicate how this is to be achieved without causing damage to either the wallplate or the existing rafter feet. This has now been addressed in Section D-D, Drawing LBC 124 and by a note in the kitchenette, Drawing LBC 120, Ground Floor Plan.
- With regards to preventing spreading, in the initial draft version of this mitigation strategy I recommended that, if possible, this be achieved by carefully designing the proposed modern internal partition so as to fulfil this function. This issue has been addressed by the current set of LBC pans in such a way that spreading will be prevented without causing any impact upon sensitive structure.

The foundation for the proposed addition has the potential of disturbing buried archaeological deposits, and almost certainly the construction of the floor slab for the extension will cause some damage to the buried foundations of the rear aisle of c1436. These foundations were uncovered by UDPS in the 1980s, so it is known that they exist, though the records appear to have been lost. These latter issues will need to be addressed and are further discussed below (see 3.9).

3.6 STAIR 1 (Within rear outshut)

3.6.1 Reconstruct stairs to revised design, including trimming existing floor joists

There are a number of issues which relate to present stair 1. The stair rises from the medieval hall (Meeting Room GF1) to the first floor of the building and is the only means of access to the first floor. The issues can be summarised as follows:

- The storey height on the half landing is very low
- Headroom at the top of the stair, beneath the existing medieval wallplate, is dangerously low for a stair in public use
- To comply with fire regulations a lobby needs to be formed at the base of the stairs, requiring an intrusive structure to be built into the corner of Meeting Room GF1.

A meeting was held on site between UDPS, the architect and myself in an attempt to overcome these problems without causing unacceptable damage to historically sensitive fabric. Although the present stair is located upon the site of an earlier stair, inspection of the staircase showed it to be of modern date. When the original stair was inserted a bulkhead was formed at the bottom in order to gain adequate headroom at this

point, and the top of the stair was intruded partially into the hall chamber. The evidence relating to these latter two points is still extant, though there has been some modification subsequently. The floor joists adjacent to the head of the stair are lodged into position and some are new.

Armed with these facts, I accepted that replacement of the stair was not, in my view, a problem, with the following provisos:

- No adjustments were made to the extant elements of the bulkhead arrangement over the foot of the stairs
- The northern side wall of the lower flight should, I felt, be retained as far as possible as evidence of the original form of the stair.

Because the arrangement of the lodged floor joists adjacent to the head of the stair has been altered in modern times, I agreed that, in my view, further adjustment of the lodged joists in this area in order to allow the upper flight of the stair to land further east than now would not be an issue: it would allow the medieval wallplate to remain in its current form. Except for forming a new opening (see 3.6.2) the stair enclosure would remain in its original form.

Details of the proposals as developed by the architect are given in Drawing No. LBC 132. I can confirm that these address my concerns voiced on site and, in my opinion, will cause no damage to significant fabric.

3.6.2 Form new opening between Stair 1 and passage to south

The formation of this opening is an essential part of upgrading the building to required safety standards, particularly in respect of fire escape. Below tiebeam level the wall does not incorporate any visible architectural features of note and therefore the insertion of this door opening will not, in my opinion, cause damage to significant features. Drawing LBC 109 shows that it is intended to retain the tiebeam in its present form, without it being cut, so there is no issue in this respect. It is my recommendation that the area of disturbance be kept to an absolute minimum and that the necessary opening up be carried out under an archaeological watching brief in order to ensure that an adequate record is made of any features of interest which may be uncovered.

3.7 **PASSAGE WITHIN REAR OUTSHUT** (To rear of southern chimney)

3.3.1 Form new opening in southern wall of rear outshut

In order to provide adequate fire escape without causing damage to highly sensitive structure elsewhere within the building, it will be necessary to form a new fire escape door within the southern wall of the rear outshut. This method of achieving fire escape from the building has been pursued

in the past and involved me preparing a mitigation strategy. It was (I seem to remember) granted Listed Building Consent, though I no longer have details on my files. The proposed insertion of this opening, as detailed in Drawing No. LBC 130, will require blocking an existing high-level window (of no great age), removing a short length of walling, and cutting through the existing tiebeam of the outshut. The cutting through of the tiebeam (which is a reused timber and relates to one of the less important later phases of the building) is unfortunate, but I accept that, under the circumstances, it is unavoidable if the building is to fulfil its intended function (regarding which see Section 1 above). In mitigation, following discussions on site it was felt that the best solution would be to leave the two cut ends of the retained section of tiebeam exposed to view and re-position the removed section above the new door opening. This would make clear the action taken during the alteration to future students studying the building and would preserve all existing data. With regards cutting an opening through the brickwork below the tiebeam, the eastern jamb is shown in the architect's drawings respecting an existing straight joint. Drawing No. LBC 130 states 're-form reveals with salvaged brick as necessary to suit bond'. Contrary to this comment, I would recommend reusing the existing joint as the eastern jamb (if possible) and forming the western jamb with a stone cutter or similar so as to cause as little damage to the brickwork as possible, whilst at the same time making clear that the opening represents a later intrusion. [Reforming the jambs reusing bricks from the removed part would require cutting back further than necessary into the existing brickwork: it would also make it difficult (or impossible) to ascertain the age of the opening in the future].

3.8 TOILETS [GF6 & GF7] (Within existing rear outshut)

3.4.1 Revised layout of rooms to form new toilets

The proposals in this area involve minor alterations to the existing layout of the modern (late 20th-century) internal walls and therefore have no impact upon historically sensitive fabric.

3.9 GROUND FLOOR GENERALLY

3.9.1 New construction to floors of all ground-floor rooms

The proposals as indicated in the drawings involves the installation of a new floor slab incorporating under-floor heating. This is shown extending throughout the building and into the proposed rear outshut extension. The drawing indicates that it will involve removing the existing brick floors (totally relaid in the late 20th century) and excavating below this level in order to achieve the necessary formation. It is known from previous investigations undertaken by UDPS that an earlier floor level exists approximately 500 mm below the existing floor (see ESRO HBR1/1274,

revision 1). The records of this floor no longer exist and it is not known for certain that the floor relates to this building: it could relate to a previous structure upon the site. What this and the UDPS investigations carried out in the area of the rear aisle demonstrate, however, is that buried archaeological deposits do survive upon the site. These deposits could hold vital evidence about the building, particularly with regards to a possible fixed dais bench, the location of the hearth (or, given the nature of the changes which have occurred, perhaps hearths), the width of the overshoot cross passage, and the layout of the service rooms. Given the potential for the recovery of extra data, it is my recommendation that the ground level is lowered to the required formation level as part of an archaeological excavation undertaken to professional standards by specialist below-ground archaeologists with adequate knowledge of the medieval period and the issues which need to be addressed. It is further recommended that the below-ground archaeologists work closely with local medieval buildings specialists in order to adequately link the below-ground features to the above-ground structure. At the end of the programme of archaeological investigation a full report would need to be prepared and deposited with the main archive.

4 PROPOSED ALTERATIONS AT FIRST-FLOOR LEVEL

4.1 FF1, PUBLIC ROOM (Hall Chamber within first-floor part of medieval hall)

4.1.1 General philosophy regarding the proposed work in this area

The philosophy which underpins the proposals for this area has been led by special circumstances, namely the train of events which resulted in the building being saved from threat of demolition, the building's current setting within a busy commercial town centre, the extent of the alterations which have been made to the interior during the late 20th century, and the building's intended future use. The proposals for this part of the structure are far reaching and are more intrusive than would normally be supported by me. However, it is my opinion that in this instance the above circumstances not only warrant such alterations, but serve the building's long-term interests. If the building is to have a secure future, proper maintenance is essential, and this relies upon an adequate viable use. The building is of sufficient calibre to serve as a natural educator of the public with regards to the worth of our built heritage and, furthermore, its location within the town works to its advantage in this respect. In order to attract the public into the building it is essential that it is shown off to its best advantage, looks well cared for, and has spaces which can be used viably.

The upper part of the hall (which in post-medieval times became the hall chamber) was once the building's principal display space, but this effect has been totally hidden by subsequent alterations. Currently it is divided

into a maze of small compartments: viz. a dark, cramped landing area, a cupboard area, a relatively small rectangular southern room, and a somewhat larger northern room which incorporates the upper part of the bay window and a fireplace, but does not extend across the full width of the building. Furthermore, the south-western corner of this latter room is divided off to enclose a steep, effectively unusable attic stair. Above the entire area is the sooted medieval roof, complete with its freestanding crownpost. This roof-space is only safely accessible through the southern garret room and is not viable as an area for public access.

Some elements of the building's medieval fabric in this first-floor area have been exposed to view as a result of selective stripping-out work undertaken by UDPS in the early years of the 1980s. The result of these various actions is a confusion of medieval structure and late 18th/early 19th century cottage phase. Elsewhere within the building the cottage phase has been removed and thus this phase in the building's development has been totally compromised. What survives from this period is considered by me to be of no architectural worth in its own right, though it should be stressed that one partition does contain features which are of vital importance in that they inform about lost medieval fabric. The wall in question is the regular-stud partition inserted against the northern face of the hall truss during the late 18th century. When it was first inserted the arch braces were *in situ*, and as a result the curve of the truss's arch is preserved as a shadow on the partition. Subsequently, the braces were removed and the southern face of the partition was plastered, hiding the shadow: it was only the removal of the plaster by UDPS which brought the feature to light. The shadow is essential evidence in that, taken with the integral nib on the tiebeam and a small fragment of brace trapped at floor level against the western post, it allows full details of the hall truss to be accurately reconstructed with total confidence.

Given the fragmentary nature of the late phases of work within the hall chamber, removal of the late-phase partitions and the ceilings from within this space will restore this part of the building to the large and stunningly impressive space it once was. It would create a public function room which would entice people into the building and, by so doing, educate them regarding the nature of our late-medieval built heritage. Almost all the fabric which would be removed relates to the late (seriously damaged) phases in the building's history: the only loss of fabric which I consider to be of a sensitive nature is the section of ceiling to the north of the hall truss.

The individual elements of work which would need to be carried out to achieve UDPS's vision for this area are dealt with in 4.1.2 to 4.1.9 below.

4.1.2 Remove north-south aligned partition on landing at the head of stair 1

This partition forms part of the late alterations to the building. In order that the wall is not lost without record it is recommended that the details of the plaster coverings and timber studwork be archaeologically recorded during demolition (by means of photographs, record drawings and description) and that the record be added as an appendix to an up-dated version of the interpretative survey (ESRO HBR1/1274).

- 4.1.3 Remove 2no. partitions within northern bay of hall chamber. One partition is aligned north-south and forms the western wall of the main chamber in this area, the other is a short east-west partition forming a closet area in the northwest corner of the chamber.

As with 4.1.2 above, these partitions form part of the late alterations to the building. In order that the walls are not lost without record it is recommended that the details of the plaster coverings and timber studwork be archaeologically recorded during demolition (by means of photographs, record drawings and description) and that the record be added as an appendix to an up-dated version of the interpretative survey (ESRO HBR1/1274).

- 4.1.4 Remove existing attic stair 3

As with 4.1.2 above, this stair and its enclosing walls form part of the late alterations to the building. In order that the features are not lost without record it is recommended that the details of the stair, adjacent plaster coverings and timber studwork be archaeologically recorded during demolition (by means of photographs, record drawings and description) and that the record be added as an appendix to an up-dated version of the interpretative survey (ESRO HBR1/1274).

- 4.1.5 Reinststate arch braces of hall truss and remove partition beneath existing tiebeam of hall truss.

The justification for reinstating the missing arch braces of the hall truss is the fact that the form, shape and the profile of the moulding on both timbers is known from the visible outline on the later partition, the profile of the integral nib on the tiebeam, and the fragment of brace trapped at floor level beside the western principal post. It is therefore possible to precisely replicate the missing braces in green oak and fit them into the existing redundant mortices. It is my recommendation that the existing fragment of brace be incorporated into the reinstatement (fixed back into its original location) as further evidence that the replacement braces are a faithful replica. I recommend that details for fixing the braces are agreed with the local authority conservation officer, but would suggest integral tenons at one end of each brace and slip tenons at the other. In order that the evidence upon which the curve of the replacement braces is

based is not lost, and that the details of the inserted partition are likewise not lost without record it is recommended that the plaster coverings and timber studwork be archaeologically recorded during demolition (by means of photographs, record drawings and description) and that the record be added as an appendix to an up-dated version of the interpretative survey (ESRO HBR1/1274).

4.1.6 Remove existing ceiling within southern bay of hall chamber

From the details visible, this section of first-floor ceiling is of late date, yet forms part of the history of the building. In order that it is not lost without record it is recommended that the details of the plaster coverings, timber joisting, and associated jointing be archaeologically recorded during demolition (by means of photographs, record drawings and description) and that the record be added as an appendix to an up-dated version of the interpretative survey (ESRO HBR1/1274).

4.1.7 Remove existing ceiling within northern bay of hall chamber

This section of ceiling is of greater antiquity than the other features which it is proposed to remove and is, in my opinion, the only loss of historically sensitive fabric which will be caused by the proposed alterations to this part of the building. Currently only the central girder and intermediate spur crossbeam (extending back westwards from the girder) is visible, the joisting being hidden from beneath by a plaster ceiling. The details are typical of the late 16th or, more likely early 17th-century. The loss of this ceiling is regrettable, but is, in my opinion, to the overall advantage of the building and its future. Removal of the ceiling is essential if the architectural impact of the space is to be restored. Needless to say, it would be negligent to lose the ceiling without adequate record. It is therefore recommended that the details of the plaster coverings, timberwork, and associated jointing be archaeologically recorded during demolition (by means of photographs, record drawings and description) and that the record be added as an appendix to an up-dated version of the interpretative survey (ESRO HBR1/1274).

4.1.8 Repairs to existing roof over hall chamber, including repairs to existing southern partition

One of the footbraces to the southern partition crownpost has been cut through to insert a doorway, a few rafters have been cut to insert (since removed) dormer windows, and two of the headbraces to the crownposts have been removed. It is recommended that the missing sections of timber be carefully repaired using green oak and that the missing braces likewise be reinstated. It is, I feel essential that these repairs be carried out in a totally sympathetic manner and therefore I recommend that full details be agreed with the local authority conservation officer prior to

commencement.

4.1.9 Treatment of existing timbers and wall finishings within Public Room FF1 and associated roof area

An essential element of the building's medieval character is the intact soot encrustation which survives, not just at roof level but also on the first-floor framing and daub panels. In the case of the roof, the differential soot encrustation on the freestanding crownpost forms part of the evidence for the primitive heating system incorporated into the building during the medieval/post-medieval transition. Although I accept that any very loose soot will need to be removed with a soft brush, it is my opinion that otherwise all soot encrustation (at both first-floor and roof levels) be retained. Discussions with UDPS confirm that this is an opinion with which they are fully in agreement. **Regarding this, I notice that a general note on Section C-C, Drawing No. LBC 121 states 'All timber frame members are to be cleaned . . . with a stiff-bristled brush to remove dust, but leaving ghosting of removed features'** The same note occurs on other drawings. **My concern is that this statement is somewhat generic and could lead to the accidental removal of the soot encrustation. I would also question whether a 'stiff-bristled brush, if used too energetically, might remove some of the encrustation. I feel this issue is important and requires further clarification.** Given that one important use of the room is likely to be wedding receptions and some other uses are also likely to be formal occasions involving focussed activities undertaken at one or other end of the room, the possibility of incorporating discrete removable screens was discussed, acting as a reredos to the focal point. In this way the vulnerable soot encrustation would be protected in the relevant area of activity. I consider this suggestion deserves serious investigation.

4.1.10 Lift boards to floor and re-lay levelled

Drawing No. 164/LBC 120 states 'lift boards recording positions & re-lay well cramped up and level; fill in old partition lines as necessary with new oak boards; refer to architect for decision regarding any boards deemed unsuitable for good, level floor'. These boards have already been relayed in the past by UDPS and therefore this statement causes me no worries. However, I am unclear regarding how much levelling is envisaged and how this is to be achieved, and thus recommend either further qualification or discussions as appropriate with the local authority conservation officer.

4.1.11 New window [frame] at south end of east wall.

The existing window frame is not of antiquity. My only concern is that the new frame be fitted without modification to the existing timberwork

surrounding the opening. I recommend that, when the existing window is removed the opportunity be taken to obtain a record of any currently hidden details of historical/archaeological significance, and that these be added to the existing archaeological report on the building.

4.2 ANTE ROOM FF2 (Medieval service chamber)

4.2.1 Lift boards to floor and re-lay levelled

Drawing No. 164/LBC 120 states 'lift boards recording positions & re-lay well cramped up and level; refer to architect for decision regarding any boards deemed unsuitable for good, level floor'. As in FF1, these boards have already been relayed in the past by UDPS and therefore this statement causes me no worries. However, I am unclear regarding how much levelling is envisaged and how this is to be achieved, and thus recommend either further qualification or discussions as appropriate with the local authority conservation officer.

4.2.2 New window [frames] in east and south walls.

The existing window frames are not of antiquity. My only concern is that the new frames be fitted without modification to the existing timberwork surrounding the openings. I recommend that, when the existing windows are removed the opportunity be taken to obtain a record of any currently hidden details of historical/archaeological significance, and that these be added to the existing archaeological report on the building.

4.3 STAIR 2 (Leading to southern attic room)

4.3.1 No alterations are shown to this area

4.4 ARCHIVE ROOM FF4 (New room over northern lean-to outshut)

4.4.1 Remove existing lean-to roof and form new first-floor room

The proposals in this area involve major alterations to the external appearance of the building. Currently there is an end lean-to outshut in this area. This replaces the original two-storeyed c1436 parlour bay. The drawings indicate that it is proposed to retain the ground-floor walls of the outshut, but to remove the roof and replace it with an upper storey and roof (framed independent of the medieval work) thereby giving essential archive space for the collections of the UDPS. In effect, in terms of appearance the proposals involve re-introducing the missing medieval parlour bay, thereby, in essence, restoring the building back to its former extent. The proposals make no attempt to suggest that the new work accurately replicates the constructional detail of the original - indeed the form of roof terminal chosen is a half hip - a type of roof terminal not used

locally during the medieval period. [The half hip at the southern end is a c1700 alteration which replaces the original hip at this end].

The changes in external appearance these proposals would cause to the listed building fall outside the remit of this mitigation strategy. Personally I have no strong views regarding the aesthetics of these proposals (compare Figures 4 and 5 in the Design and Access Statement). The addition has been designed so as to be independent of the historical frame and will therefore not impact upon historically sensitive fabric. The major loss will be the clasped-side-purlin roof over the outshut. Allegedly this was much repaired and partially rebuilt when this part of the building was modernized in the 1980s, though I have been unable to gain access to this roof void to confirm this point. I feel it essential that a full archaeological record of the roof be made prior to its demolition, and feel it imperative that any mortices in the end frame of the medieval structure be recorded at the same time. As with the records mentioned elsewhere in this mitigation strategy, I recommend that the fabric be recorded by means of photographs, record drawings and description and that the record be added as an appendix to an up-dated version of the interpretative survey (ESRO HBR1/1274).

5 PROPOSED ALTERATIONS AT SECOND-FLOOR LEVEL

5.1 ROOF VOID SF1 (Roof over Public Room)

[For alterations in this area see 4.1 above]

5.2 ATTIC ROOM SF2 (Attic room within southern bay)

5.2.1 No alterations which will affect historically/archaeologically sensitive structure are planned to this area

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