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APP 4

**J M**

JOHN MOOREHERITAGE SERVICES

**H S**

**HISTORIC BUILDING ASSESSMENT**

**ON**

**21 AND 23 WALLINGFORD STREET, WANTAGE**

**NGR SU 39960 87900**

*On behalf of*

*Vanderbilt Homes*

**OCTOBER 2011**

## 21 and 23 Wallingford Street, Wantage

### *Historic Building Assessment*

#### SUMMARY

*A building assessment was carried out on the remains of 21 and 23 Wallingford Street, Wantage (NGR SU 39960 87900). Planning consent had been given previously for the renovation of these structures, but in initiating this work it was revealed that much of the structure was unsound (and in the words of the structural engineer the building has lost its structural integrity). In accepting the structural problems of the building (which is not the area of expertise for an architectural historian to comment on), this report sets out the apparent historical development from any surviving architectural details in complete acknowledgement that the damage to the building may be such that it can not be retained. The buildings probably originated in the 16<sup>th</sup> or early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, and have had considerable additions. Surviving steep roof pitches in certain places, timber framing, and a slight jettied overhang on the east facade indicates the early date. The front of both buildings was undoubtedly replaced with new shop fronts in the Victorian period.*

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

##### 1.1 Location

1.1.1 The two buildings are located in Wallingford Street, Wantage (NGR SU 39960 87900), a road heading east from the market square.

1.1.2 The local geology consists of Upper Greensand (BGS sheet 253).

##### 1.2 Commission

1.2.1 Rupert Churchill of Vanderbilt Homes commissioned this report.

##### 1.3 Aims of Investigation

1.3.1 Planning permission had already been agreed for the renovation of this non-listed building located in the conservation area of central Wantage. The aim of the investigation is to produce a short report in relation to a requested amendment to the planning consent already given. The alterations are sought due to the lack of structural integrity in the building that has developed over time, but must have principally occurred in the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries with the raising of the roofs and the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries with the insertion of the shop fronts and alterations made internally.

#### 2 BACKGROUND

##### 2.1 Designations

2.1.1 The building is not a listed building.

2.1.2 The building lies within the conservation area of the town of Wantage.



Figure 1. Rocque's map of 1761 showing the plots 21 and 23 on the north side of Wallingford Street .

2.1.3 There are a significant number of listed buildings in this conservation area of which those mentioned here occurred in the Market Place and Newbury Street. None were noted in Wallingford Street. Those in the Market Place include 1 & 2 (SU 39871 87865), 11 & 12 (SU 39815 87882), 20 (SU 39769 87900), 21 & 22 (SU 39757 87903), 23 & 24 (SU 39748 87901), 27 (SU 39732 87901), 3 (SU 39866 87873), and Barclays Bank 18 & 19 (SU 39780 87899). In Newbury Street the following structures are listed: 10 & 12 (SU 39847 87824), 14 (SU 39855 87792), 6 (SU 39852 87840), 8 (SU 39848 87832), Barclays Bank 18 & 19 (SU 39862 87854), and 21 (SU 39864 87692).

2.1.4 An assessment of central Wantage is given in the Buildings of England series but it does not mention this structure (Tyack, Bradley *et al.* 2010, 586-97).

## 2.2 History of Development

2.2.1 Roman coins have reportedly been found in western Wantage (VCH 1924, 319-332).

2.2.2 The name *Wanoingc* was used for three river courses, two in Berkshire and one in Dorset. Ekwall (1928, 433) suggested an Old English *wanian* to decrease, which was reiterated by Gelling (1973, 17-18). However, this interpretation is probably doubtful and a Brittonic name can be found that provides a better interpretation.

2.2.3 The settlement of *Waneting* is first encountered in the ninth century, 873 x 888, in the Anglo-Saxon will of Alfred the Great as preserved in the writing of *Aesser*. The estate and settlement at this time are part of the royal holdings of Wessex and was left by Alfred to his wife Ealhswith (Gelling 1979, no.28). The town of Wantage is claimed as the birthplace of King Alfred. Eadred 951 x 955 left the estates of Thatcham and Wantage to the nun's minster at Winchester (Gelling 1979, no.66). The estate in 1066 was held by King Edward and in 1086 is listed as a holding of King William (Morgan 1979, 1.9).

2.2.4 The crown held the manor of Wantage until the reign of Richard I (VCH 1924, 319-332).

2.2.5 The Church at Wantage was established before the conquest. The earliest indications of a church in Wantage are a payment of soul-secot in c. 950 (Gelling 1979, no.59). In 1086 Peter of Lichfield held 2/3 of the church along with 4 hides as part of his personnel estate (VCH 1924, 319-332; Morgan 1979, 1.9), William the Deacon held the other 1/3 with 1 hide.

2.2.6 Wantage claimed to have the status of a borough, but this is not historically considered to be correct (VCH 1924, 319-332). The town does, however, contain a number of tenements that could be considered to show burghage plot characteristics.

2.2.7 The buildings known as 21 and 23 Wallingford Street are shown on Rocques map of 1761 (see figure 1); if the back ranges are there it is not overly apparent although their lack of inclusion is no indication that they were not constructed at this time. The first series OS map of Wantage in Berkshire dated c. 1885 appears to show extensions on a number of buildings in the vicinity of nos. 21 and 23 (not illustrated).

## 3 DESCRIPTION OF 21 AND 23 WALLINGFORD STREET

### 3.1 Introduction and general description

3.1.1 The premises 21 and 23 are the remains of two properties that front onto Wallingford Street. The front range of the building is orientated east to west and is parallel and adjacent to the street, it is south facing. Behind this the structures continue as two ranges built at different times and with different styles. Illustrations of the buildings can be seen in Appendix 1, which includes a ground plan, elevations and internal floor levels from the previous planning application. These have not been annotated by John More Heritage Services due to time constraints.

### **3.2 The South or front elevation**

3.2.1 The ground floor is made of two shop fronts, both of a different style. The frontage of the left hand shop (no.21), as viewed from the road, contains a central door separating two large windows (probably 20<sup>th</sup> century), with a panelled nameplate and awning above. Below the windows is further panelling. On viewing, this façade was boarded up.

3.2.2 The building above this had two rows of two windows of a sash design. The nature of these sash designs was difficult to determine, but the upper sashes may have been early as pictures survive showing them propped open as opposed to being raised by a pulley system (early 18<sup>th</sup> century).

3.2.3 The right hand shop (no.23) also has a shop frontage, but this is lower in stature than its compatriot. The shop frontage has wooden trim and a black moulding above. The door is on the corner with a series of white posts with a twisted spiral design and a canopy, designed with a black corbel design. There is a large window set between the older shop fronts (the shop front is probably early 20<sup>th</sup> century, but could be later 19<sup>th</sup> century).

3.2.4 The first and second floors have a group of three sash windows each. The windows are set at a lower level than that of their neighbour, thus indicating that the floors in this building are probably of an earlier date.

### **3.3 The West elevations (Plate 4)**

3.3.1 The west elevation shows the end wall of the no.21 Front Range, there are no windows in this façade, just a lower brick wall, a rendered wall on the first floor and a weatherboard on the front wall. The roofline has a shallow pitch.

3.3.2 The central part of the west façade has two non-matching windows on the ground floor, the larger sash window has a square head and the slight window alongside it a segmental arch head and no sash window (possibly 18<sup>th</sup> century). The first storey is an attic build with two gabled dormer windows that are set in line with the windows below, and are like the windows below of two different sizes. The smaller windows are presumably older.

3.3.3 The back part of the west façade has a breezeblock wall of no note.

### **3.4 The North or rear elevation (Plate 1)**

3.4.1 The north façade has two gable ends that are formed by the backward extension of both properties. Both of these extensions are of a different design and presumably of a different date. The gable end of no.21 is two storey with an attic in which there is a window. There is a modern breezeblock extension on this side, with a gable end and weatherboard gable. The main and older gable has a small window light on the ground floor and wooden stairs leading to a first floor door. Alongside the door are the remains of a window. The gable is presumably old, but it is possible that the windows have been repositioned to take into account the late breezeblock extension. The gable on the older part of the building is covered in red tile.

3.4.2 The gable to the left on the rear of no.23 is a taller gable end with a steeper roof. An outbuilding once butted up against this wall, which has been demolished. The gable wall has a stagger in its line, and has two doors on the ground floor and a window and blocked window on the first floor. The blocked window was blanked off when the further extension was added. A lean-to exists between the two gables, which is probably part of no.23, as the roofline drains to the wall of no.21.

### **3.5 The East elevation (Plates 2 - 3)**

3.5.1 The east façade of the Front Range has a continuation of the shop frontage on the ground floor. Internally it is apparent that this frontage has been inserted into an older building as white metal posts support the building. It is this insertion that has created the lack of

structural integrity in the building. Above this is a bay window that has probably been inserted. This has four central window lights and one window light on each side. The upper wall of the gable end contains a jetty, or over hag, a feature associated with timber frame construction of buildings from the 13<sup>th</sup> century, although it is more likely that here a 16<sup>th</sup> century date is involved. The Buildings of England series notes two timber-framed jettied buildings in Wantage of which a pair are 71-73 Grove Street dated 16<sup>th</sup> century and No2 Market Place of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century (Tyack, Bradley *et al.* 2010, 595-6).

3.5.2 The roofline on the gable end is of interest as it shows alterations of phasing. The rear of the gable has a steep pitch, which is indicative of a date prior to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when thatch was used. The second storey was a later addition, and has a shallow pitch of either the very late 18<sup>th</sup> century but more likely the earlier 19<sup>th</sup> century.

3.5.3 The rear of the building is two-storey with a segmental arched mullion window below and a further similar flat-headed window below the eaves.

### 3.6 The Roves

3.6.1 The back of no.23 has steeply pitched roves indicative of an early date, the rear is covered with tiles. The front is shallow and covered in slate.

3.6.2 The front roof on no.21 is shallow but the ridge of the roof is at the same height as the neighbouring property, suggesting a similar early construction. The roof is covered with slate. The roof at the rear of the building has a more moderate pitch with dormers and may be of a slightly later date 17<sup>th</sup> or early 18<sup>th</sup> century.

### 3.7 The interior of no. 23 (Plate 5 – 6)

3.7.1 The ground floor to a large extent has been gutted, although it is apparent that a timber frame wall with brick infill survives along the line of the partition. This is the only original feature on this floor, the insertion of the shop fronts has undermined external walls and this has destroyed the structures stability.

3.7.2 In certain places upstairs fireplaces survive of later periods of renovation in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, although it is not apparent as yet if earlier fireplaces and chimneystacks survive behind them. The visible loft space also looks as if it masks timber framing of a later date.

### 3.8 The interior of no. 21

3.8.1 Only the ground floor of this building was observed as the upper floors were considered unsafe. The ground floor here had been gutted.

3.8.2 One can suspect that the insertion of the third storey has undermined the structural integrity of the roofline. If this is so it is difficult to perceive how this roof and upper storey can be maintained in a refurbishment.

## 4 ASSESSMENT (FIGURE 10)

### 4.1 Phase 1: 16<sup>th</sup> century

4.1.1 The earliest recognisable structure is probably a timber-framed building of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It is evident that the front part of no.23 may well be of this date due to the jetty in the east wall.

4.1.2 The front of no.21 probably has part of a timber-framed structure of the same date.

- 4.2 Phase 2: 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> century**  
4.2.1 The steep pitch on the back range is suggestive of the back range initially being of this date. The brick cladding or replacement walls are later.
- 4.3 Phase 3: 17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> century**  
4.3.1 The back range of no.21 may well be of this date.
- 4.4 Phase 4: 18<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> century alterations**  
4.4.1 The front facades were reworked in this period, and many of the surviving internal and external re-facing of no.23 probably date to this period.
- 4.5 Phase 5: 19<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> century**  
4.5.1 The insertion of the shop fronts and the gutting of the downstairs of the building.
- 4.6 Listed status**  
4.6.1 The building is not listed.
- 4.7 Historic and Architectural Assessment**  
4.7.1 The buildings contain features associated with the 16<sup>th</sup> century, but have seen numerous alterations from that period. These alterations have undermined the structural integrity of the building.
- 5 THE CURRENT PROPOSAL**  
5.1 The previous proposal was to renovate the building, but the new proposal is to demolish the structures, and rebuilding the structure to provide stability.
- 6 CONCLUSIONS**  
6.1 The structures in places contain indications of some age and development. The condition of the building is not great and the persistent removal of structural elements for the development of ground floor shops and the raising of the roofline has resulted in the buildings extremely poor condition evident today. These alterations have been carried out to a point where the structure is considered to have very little structural integrity.

**7 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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**Glanville**



**STRUCTURAL REPORT**  
21 & 23 Wallingford Street, Wantage

Issue 1: 15 November 2011  
Ref: TR290609/MW/DW/045



**1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 This report was compiled in order to make a structural assessment of No's 21 and 23 Wallingford Street based upon the existing approved planning application.
- 1.2 As part of the approved application we have now had the opportunity to review BHP's drawing No's 2413.101&102 which indicate the existing elements noted for removal/replacement/rebuilding.

**2.0 Description**

- 2.1 21 and 23 Wallingford Street are of a pair of semi-detached, three storey buildings thought to originate from the 16<sup>th</sup> -17<sup>th</sup> century. The Buildings are not listed, but are located in a Conservation area of central Wantage.
- 2.2 The buildings have undergone several major structural alterations in their life which include the removal of internal load-bearing walls to create open plan shop floors, alterations to the roof pitches, new masonry façades, and large openings in the ground floor walls to create the glazed shop front.
- 2.3 The buildings are typically constructed out of a combination of load-bearing timber frames and masonry walls, with timber floors and timber cut roofs.
- 2.4 The vacated buildings have undergone a soft strip in preparation for the approved refurbishment work which includes the part demolition of the single storey extensions to the rear of the plots. This planned demolition was terminated due to concerns that the main building is partly reliant on the single storey extension for overall stability, as such we understand the main building has subsequently been temporarily propped/shored.

### 3.0 Schedule Of Structural Defects

3.1 The following sections summarise the existing condition of No's 21 & 23 and highlights the summary of defects identified following a visual site inspection.

#### Roof Structure

- Original timbers displaying evidence of infestation, rot and severe deterioration.
- Primary structural timber members have failed.
- Primary structural members have been altered without obvious consideration for the structure.
- Inadequate timber repairs.
- Excessive deflections of rafters and purlins.
- Failed roof is exerting lateral forces onto supporting walls.

#### Floors/Ceilings

- Sub-standard supporting members.
- Areas of severe damp ingress.
- Sloping, undulating floors due to sub standard supporting structure.
- Uncoordinated structural layout with undefined load paths.
- Significant floating chimney breast without obvious adequate supports at 1<sup>st</sup> floor structure.
- Failed ground floor exposing concealed basement below.

#### Walls

- Movement evident in all walls with severe leaning, bowing and distortions.
- Severe cracking in external masonry walls.
- Varying settlement of walls at foundation level.
- General lack of connection between walls.
- Areas of severe damp.
- Inadequate structural supports to accommodate previous alterations.
- Critical cross walls have been removed.
- Areas of loose masonry with mortar joints in poor condition.

#### The Building

- Severe lack of stability as a result of the above.
- Building unsafe and hence has been subsequently propped/shored.

3.2 A more detailed discussion of the buildings structure is provided in Appendix A.

#### 4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 No's 21 & 23 Wallingford Street are structurally unsafe and as such have been temporarily propped/shored. The buildings have lost their structural integrity as the result of severe deterioration and major alterations that have not given consideration to the structural form. Consequently there is progressive movement throughout the buildings resulting in structural failures and many severely distorted and substandard members that are incapable of retention.
- 4.2 In any event, referring to BHP's drawings, only a few of the existing elements will remain as part of the permitted refurbishment. These are limited to the front masonry facade at 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floor level, the 1<sup>st</sup> floor external wall on the east elevation, and the ground floor external wall to the West Elevation.
- 4.3 The extent of works necessary to retain these external walls at the sides and above the new shop front are such that very little of the remaining external fabric will actually be or appear to be original. The degree of observed structural weakness and decay means that it is highly likely that further works of reconstruction will ultimately be required compared to that shown in red on the permitted refurbishment drawings. In this context the difference between what is permitted and total demolition and reconstruction is quite small. Even those elements of the building that could potentially be supported and retained will themselves need to be repaired and refurbished and will ultimately appear as new.