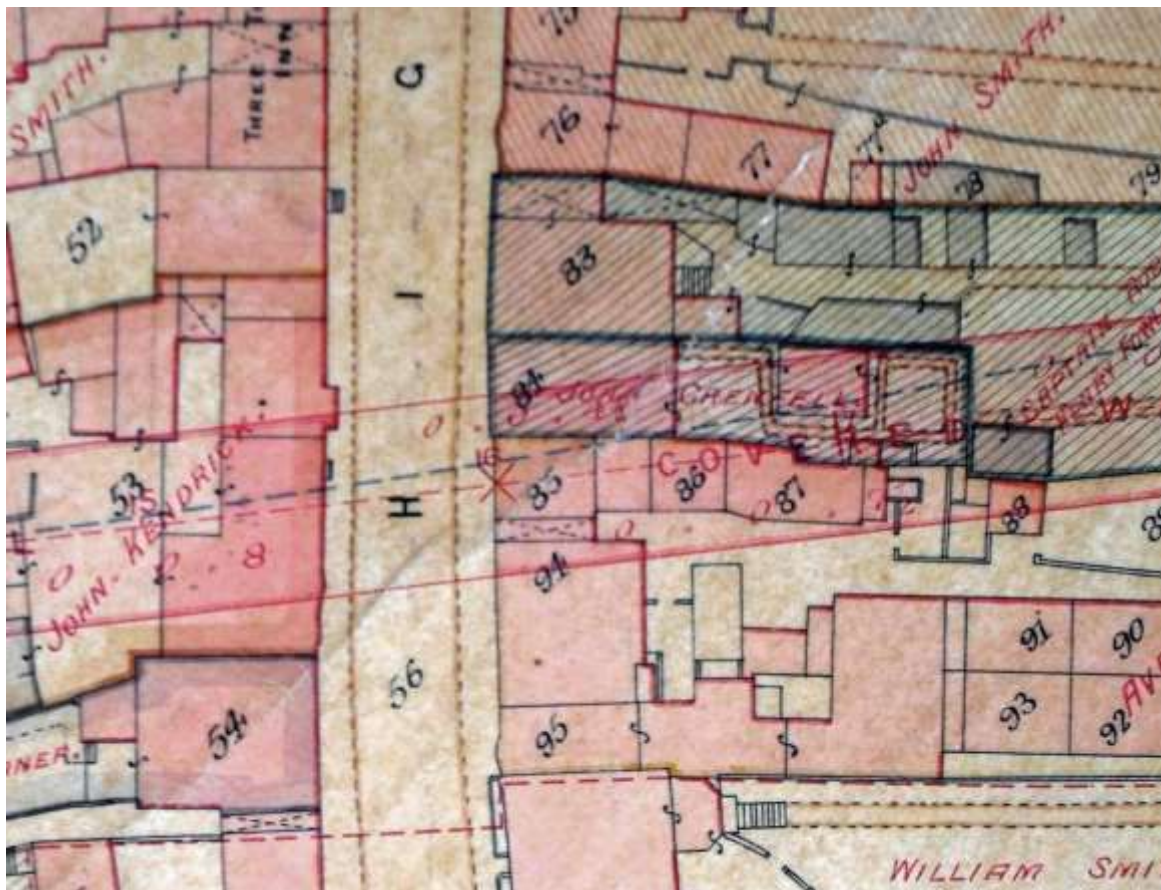


BUILDING HISTORY AT 30 HIGH STREET

By Roger Lea and Alan Howells

“Mr. Kempson occupied the White House – he was an auctioneer”, wrote Richard Holbeche in his *Diary* of 1894, recalling Sutton as he knew it in the 1860s. The White House is now 30 High Street, and was the subject of a planning application in 2011. The owner, Steve Hollis, wanted to refurbish 26-30 High Street to provide good quality shops and offices with an improved frontage in keeping with the character of the Conservation Area.

We were able to supply him with some historical background which he could use in support of his application. The *Diary* ignores 26 and 28 except to say that an old lady died there in a fire – these properties together with three cottages at the rear were demolished c1882 when the Lichfield Extension Railway was built underneath the site, and the site was left vacant for the next fifty years. When the present buildings 26 and 28 were built there is some evidence that the archway had large lockable gates, suggesting that it was intended only as a goods entrance to the property. Access to other land at the rear had always been via Old Bank Place, between 24 and 26, (this archway has now been converted into a shop).



Detail from the 1882 large-scale plan of High Street; No. 83 on the plan is now 30 High St.

Mr. Hollis invited us to look round the older building, 30 High Street. We could see from the roof timbers and the nature of the bricks that the building dated from the second half of the eighteenth century, and that the rear wing had once had a pitched roof. A nineteenth century photograph shows that there were two dormer windows facing High Street, and a colour slide

taken before the roof was replaced (1960s?) shows that the dormer windows had been replaced by skylights.



26-30 High Street in February 2011



30 High Street, showing the purlins resting on the brick gable and the exposed flues in the wall above the trap door.

We concentrated on the attic room on our visit, as the rest of the building had already been refurbished. The roof was modern except for the oak purlins which were supported by the brick gables; the dimensions of the bricks indicated an eighteenth century date. Also in the roof could be seen the rafters forming the end on the roof of the rear wing and the location of

a former dormer window. The chimney flues in the rear wall were exposed as a series of holes in the top of the rear wall.



30 High Street showing the rafters at the end of the former pitched roof of the rear wing.

