



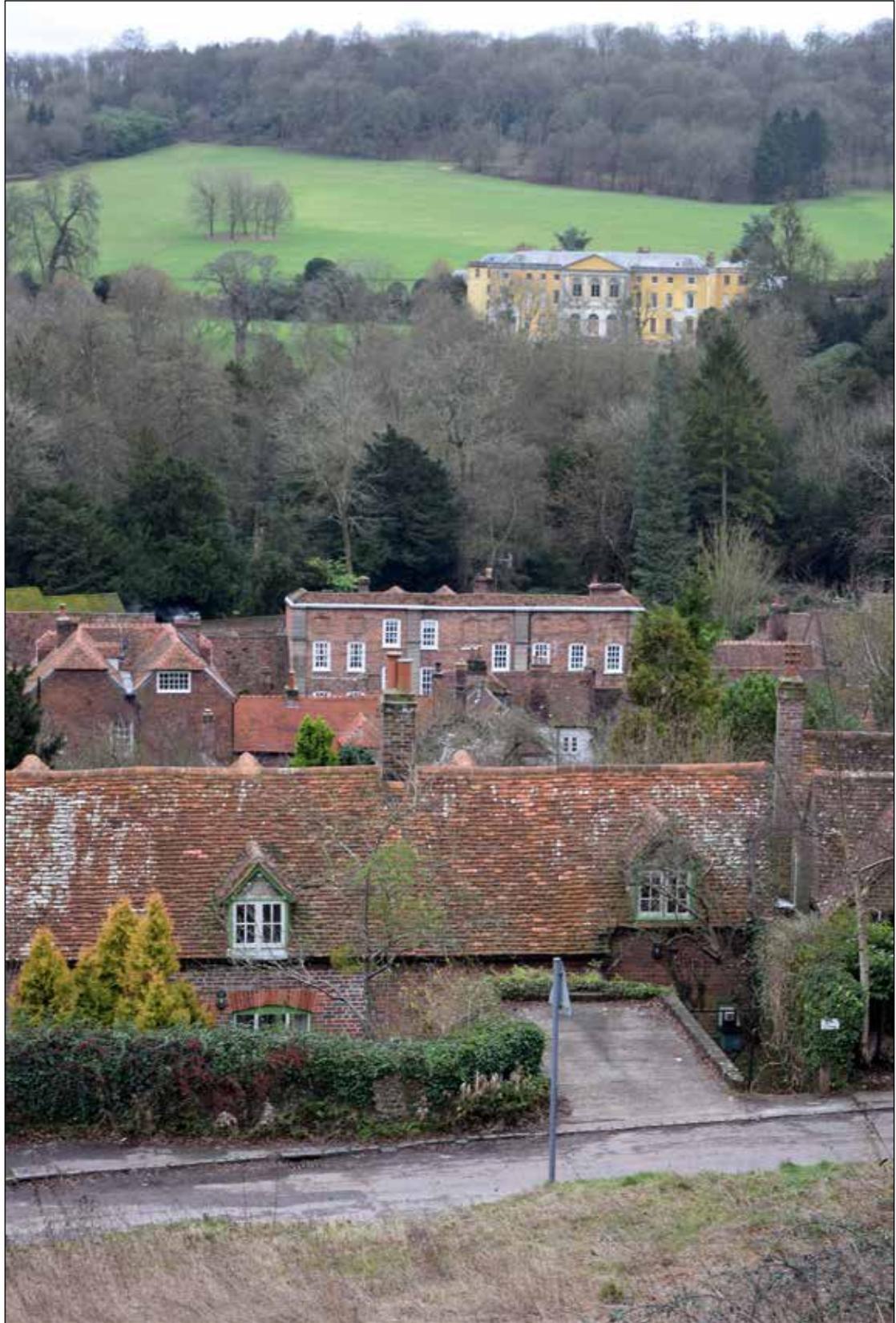
NATIONAL TRUST

WEST WYCOMBE VILLAGE



VERNACULAR BUILDINGS
SYNTHESIS STUDY

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WEST WYCOMBE VILLAGE: VERNACULAR BUILDINGS SYNTHESIS STUDY

SUMMARY

West Wycombe is a small, highly picturesque village in the Chilterns with a remarkably well preserved historical character whose form has evolved through numerous factors over a long period. Many of the buildings are now owned by the National Trust and a major refurbishment of the properties has allowed an investigation into the surviving historic structures.

There is evidence of Romano British settlement in the general vicinity but the overall layout and form of the current village suggests that it may have been a planned medieval township with regular burgage plots either side of the High Street. The earliest of the surviving village buildings date from the second half of the 15th century and it is clear that there was a major period of building works in the early to mid 16th century from which many structures survive.

The village is located immediately outside the landscaped grounds of West Wycombe Park, the important 18th-century seat of the Dashwood Family and within a stone's throw of the main house itself. It forms the estate village and it appears that the Dashwood's undertook a substantial programme of upgrading works, particularly refacing many of the timber framed largely 16th-century buildings in brick to give the village a more fashionable character.

The prosperity of the village in the 18th and 19th centuries was largely reliant on the coaching trade and the chair making industry. West Wycombe was located at a convenient location on the main road between London and Oxford and numerous inns were established in the village to provide accommodation, stabling and provisions for this passing trade. The village also formed part of a wider area known as the chair-making capital of the world and census returns in the 19th century illustrate the extent to which this dominated local employment.

The history and interest of the village has often been overshadowed by that of the Dashwood's West Wycombe House, with the village barely mentioned in some histories of the house and it does not appear that the Dashwoods took a close interest in the village.

The late 19th century and early 20th century was a period of economic difficulties for the Dashwoods and there was little money available for maintaining the parkland, let alone the buildings of the village whose condition had become very poor.

In 1929 the Dashwoods decided to sell the village and from this came the remarkable story of the conservation of West Wycombe. The bulk of the village was purchased by The Royal Society of Arts (RSA) as part of campaign to preserve cottage architecture which must have been controversial at the time but which had high profile backers in government. The buildings were bought through a public fund-raising campaign in an effort to preserve the village as a whole and stimulated by fears for the loss of rural England by the pace of urbanisation.

The RSA undertook a substantial programme of conservation repair works in the village and then passed the buildings to the National Trust in the early 1930s.

The National Trust have recently undertaken another substantial programme of refurbishment works on many of the village buildings and as part of this Oxford Archaeology has conducted investigations to record previously hidden parts of the buildings' historic fabric. The main works have focused on roof structures which have been uncovered to allow the insertion of insulation and this has provided the opportunity for a close examination of

the historic timber structures.

Individual reports have been produced detailing the investigations of individual buildings while the current document is intended to be a synthesis study, drawings together the findings of the overall work and providing a summary of the evolution of the village.

The project has also been informed by a series of dendrochronology samples taken from targeted buildings during the works.

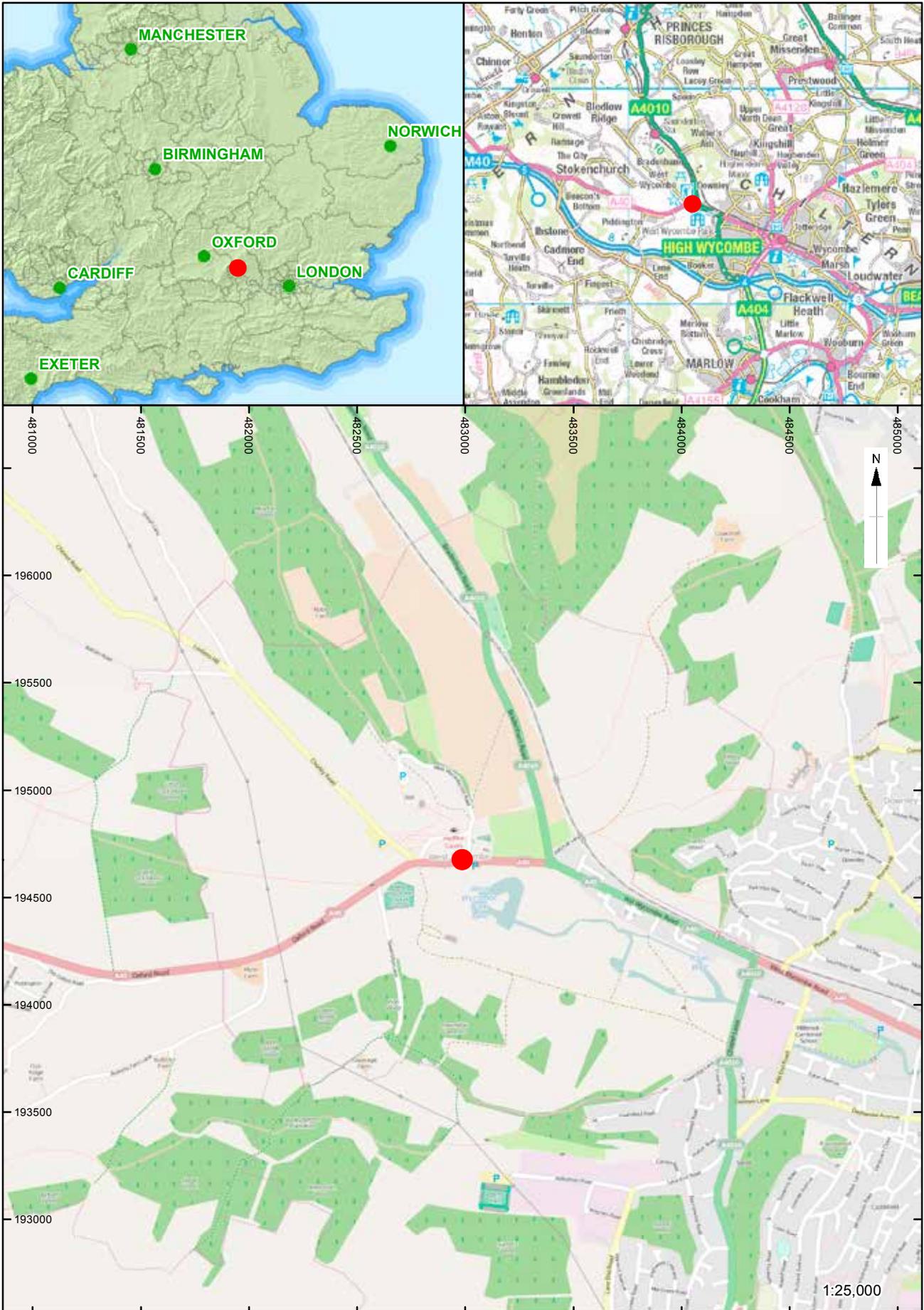


Fig. 1 West Wycombe location plan
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WEST WYCOMBE VILLAGE: VERNACULAR BUILDINGS SYNTHESIS STUDY

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

1.1.1 West Wycombe is a village largely owned by the National Trust and managed as a tied/let village. Between 2012 and 2014 repair works were undertaken to many of these buildings and this provided an opportunity to investigate the construction and history of these structures. Oxford Archaeology were commissioned by the National Trust to produce individual reports on the particular buildings investigated as well as a wider thematic study examining the history of the village and of the collection of vernacular buildings. The current document forms this wider thematic study.

1.1.2 The main works in the current refurbishment programme have included various elements such as upgrading of services, repairs to gutters etc. but the main element has focused on the roof structures. The roofs of the main buildings have been stripped of tiles to allow the insertion of insulation. This exposure of the roof structures has allowed the close examination and recording of these structures.

1.1.3 The National Trust owns c50 tenanted buildings in the village and c23 of these are listed. There is one Grade II* building (Steps House) owned by the National Trust while the others are listed at Grade II.

1.2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1.2.1 Oxford Archaeology are grateful to the Dashwood Estate for granting permission to reproduce the c1698 map and the 1767 West Wycombe Town map (Figs 2 & 3).

1.3 GENERAL AIMS OF THE STUDY

1.3.1 West Wycombe village forms a collection of vernacular buildings from a range of dates and with various historical functions and the current project provides a rare opportunity to undertake a single overarching study of a settlement such as this. The project has intended to enhance understanding of both the individual buildings investigated and of the overall evolution of the village. Particular attention has been paid to identifying similarities between structures of different ages as well as highlighting evidence to show how constructional techniques or structural design in this area has evolved over time.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

1.4.1 The current programme of historic building investigation works have been undertaken in the form of a watching brief, targeted on buildings while historic fabric has been exposed during the refurbishments. The main recording has largely focused on roof structures because these have provided the principal opportunity where large areas of historic structure has been exposed but some more limited recording has also been undertaken during internal works. The recording has been targeted on the buildings of greater historic interest and not all roof works have been monitored. The recording consisted of sketched drawings of exposed roofs, photographs and analytical descriptions.

- 1.4.2 Vernacular Building Surveys (VBS) were undertaken on many of the buildings in the early 1990s and these have provided the existing baseline knowledge to which the current watching brief recording has been added. The VBS reports provide much valuable information on the history of the structures and evolution of the village but they were not prepared with the benefit of the exposed roof structures or dendrochronology evidence and an important element of the current project has been to interrogate their assessments.
- 1.4.3 Stand-alone reports have been produced on the following buildings:
- No. 2–9
 - No. 11–13
 - 29–30
 - 32–33
 - 40–41
 - 48–49
 - 57–58
 - Black Boy Cottage
 - Crown Court (No. 24–28 & 34–35)
 - Steps House
- 1.4.4 Dendrochronology sampling was undertaken on a number of buildings in the village by the Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory and this has provided useful data on a small number of buildings and on the wider evolution of the village.
- 1.4.5 The West Wycombe project has also included a considerable element of research undertaken by volunteers and overseen by Oonagh Kennedy of the National Trust. This information has been passed to OA and has been invaluable in the current study. This research included consultation of census information, historic maps, the mid 19th-century tithe apportionment, trade directories, the NT SMR data, the Bucks Historic Environment Record, oral history transcripts, historic photographs and material from the Royal Society of Arts archives.

1.5 STRUCTURE OF THE CURRENT DOCUMENT

- 1.5.1 The current document divides into three distinct sections other than this introduction:
- The first main section is intended to provide an archaeological and historical background to the village (sections 2–4);
 - The second main section is intended to be more analytical and to look at what we learned in the current project (5–9);
 - The third main section forms a gazetteer of the buildings investigated, both those for which detailed recent investigations have been undertaken and those for which Vernacular Building Surveys were undertaken in the early 1990s.

1.6 SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF THE VILLAGE, PARK AND CONSERVATION AREA

Village

- 1.6.1 West Wycombe village is located in the southern Chilterns (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) at the confluence of four valleys and it is just sufficiently detached from the western edge of the urban sprawl of High Wycombe to retain the character of a distinct village. The village forms a remarkable collection of vernacular buildings and there are no significantly intrusive 20th-century buildings although the fact that

the High Street now forms the busy A40 road out of High Wycombe means that the village character is compromised by a constant flow of traffic.

Designations

- 1.6.2 The large majority of the village buildings are listed at Grade II, with four at Grade II* and they are all within the West Wycombe Conservation Area. The four main village buildings which are listed Grade II* are the Church Loft, Furniture Factory, Dower House and Steps House although this excludes the Cave and the Lodge which are both on the edge of the village and also listed Grade II* but which can be seen as slightly separate to the village.
- 1.6.3 As well as the relatively small village centre the Conservation Area also includes the formal parkland immediately to the south, the wider estate beyond this while to the north is the steep West Wycombe Hill overlooking the village which includes the later 18th-century Dashwood family Mausoleum and the Church of St Lawrence. The tower of the church survives from the 14th century but the nave was rebuilt in the 1760s. As well as fine views of the village roof tops the hill also affords important views towards West Wycombe House and along the A40 towards West Wycombe. At the foot of the hill is the cave (the 'hell fire caves') which were created in the 18th-century as part of works to improve the same road towards High Wycombe.



Plate 1 Dashwood Mausoleum



Plate 2 Dashwood Mausoleum

Village

- 1.6.5 West Wycombe Village is a compact group of buildings principally extending to either side of the High Street and along one side of Church Lane. Immediately to the north of the historic buildings along the main thoroughfare the village saw some modest expansion, particularly in the later 19th and 20th centuries, but wider development has been partly prevented by the fact that the village centre is hemmed in by the parkland to the south and the steep hill to north. Including the later 19th-century expansion the village is bounded by a road (West Wycombe Hill Road) which encloses the historic medieval burgage plots.
- 1.6.6 The village buildings which face onto the High Street include several historic inns such as the George and Dragon, the Swan Inn and the Black Boy (now longer an inn), as well as high status timber-framed buildings from the 15th and 16th century (Church Loft, Apple Orchard and No. 44–7) and more humble dwellings such as No. 59. There are several distinct groups of multi-phase dwellings (No. 2–9, 19–22a, 52–56), a Georgian town house (No. 50a) and an unusual but high quality Queen Anne house (Steps House). At the west end of the village is a former malthouse and at the east end is Crown Court.

West Wycombe House

- 1.6.7 The main West Wycombe House to the south of the village began as a much smaller house of which little is now visible. The core, brick-built house was constructed by the 1st Baronet, probably soon after he took sole ownership of the estate in 1706. The original door of the south front of the house, which dates to c1710, was relocated to the Temple of the Winds in the grounds when the south front was constructed.
- 1.6.8 Influenced by his Grand Tours of Europe, in particular the considerable time he spent in Italy, the 2nd Baronet (Sir Francis Dashwood) substantially extended and remodelled the house from around 1735 with much of the work executed by John Donowell. The central bay of the hall of the current house is identifiable as the hall of the original house, the bays to either side of this were opened up and supported on columns. The external appearance of the house now is much as it was when completed around 1771.
- 1.6.9 The Ionic hexastyle west portico is the later entrance to the house, and the first view of the house from the drive. Around 1765, Robert Adam designed the new entrance to stand in place of the service buildings which had been demolished, however, Sir Francis used a similar design by Nicholas Revett and the portico was completed in 1771.
- 1.6.10 The Palladian north front looks out over the park and towards the hill with the mausoleum and church. The three central bays project, with a rusticated basement and a central pediment on four engaged Ionic columns and was completed in the early 1750s.
- 1.6.11 The south front, completed c1760, consists of a double superimposed colonnade with Tuscan columns to the ground floor and Corinthian to the first floor and decorated with frescoes to the ground floor ceiling and the east wall. This was the original entrance of the house, with the former drive leading from the lodges at the east of the village.
- 1.6.12 The Doric tetrastyle east portico is decorated with frescoes to the wall and ceiling and was built around 1754. The asymmetry of the portico has been disguised by planting large trees to either side of the portico.
- 1.6.13 Technologically, the house was influenced both by his studies of classical architecture and modern methods, for instance, the house was heated by a Roman style hypocaust system and yet modern fireproofing was provided by sheets of copper between the ground and first floors of the house.
- 1.6.14 Internally, the house has undergone more alteration than the exterior, although the previous Baronet worked to remove the layers of later décor to many of the rooms and restore where possible the former schemes with input from the National Trust.



Plate 3 West Wycombe House

Formal Gardens

- 1.6.15 The gardens are themselves listed as a registered Park and Garden and comprise pleasure grounds, landscaped park, woodland, lakes and numerous ornamental buildings. The River Wye has been altered in places and was dammed to create the man-made lake in which there are three islands. Mock sea battles organised by the 2nd Baronet took place on this lake and cannon balls dredged from the bottom are on display in the house.

- 1.6.16 The pleasure grounds cover 18ha within the park and contain decorative buildings, many of which are listed. Sir Francis, 2nd Baronet, originally had more buildings, mostly follies and temples, constructed, however Humphry Repton removed several excess buildings and statues in the 1790s, including a spire from a cottage which was in the guise of a mock church of St Crispins.



Wider estate

- 1.6.18 Beyond the formal parkland the Conservation Area continues south and east across a large part of the wider West Wycombe estate and this area includes various listed estate buildings, largely of 18th-century date, including the Sawmill House, Park Farm, the Round House and Flora's Temple.

Plate 4 West Wycombe Park

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND (PRE c1450)

2.1 GEOLOGY, TOPOGRAPHY AND LANDSCAPE

- 2.1.1 The village of West Wycombe lies along the A40 between Oxford and High Wycombe, there running along the bottom of a valley. From West Wycombe eastwards is also the route of the River Wye, the source of which lies c1km north-east of West Wycombe. At either end of the village the A40 has junctions with other roads from the north, Chorley Road at the west end and the A4010 Bradenham Road to the east. Both of these roads also follow valley bottoms and between them is the steep promontory of West Wycombe Hill above the north side of the village. The highest point of the hill lies at c155m OD. The valley bottom lies at c85m OD.

- 2.1.2 On the south side of the village is West Wycombe Park, which includes a small area at the corner of the A40 and Chorley Road and then extends eastwards for about 1.5km, stretching across the valley and the slopes of the hill to the south.

- 2.1.3 The geology of the area is Chalk. In West Wycombe Park there is a band of alluvium associated with the River Wye, which has been incorporated into the landscaped park.

- 2.1.4 West Wycombe Hill, West Wycombe Park and the higher parts of the surrounding hills are well-wooded. Most of the rest of the surrounding landscape is covered with large, arable fields. In the east is the urban sprawl of High Wycombe, which now extends to the east end of West Wycombe Park, with more ribbon development eastwards along the south side of the A40.

- 2.1.5 West Wycombe is situated in a prime location for settlement, in a river valley with good access to natural resources and well draining soil.

2.2 PREHISTORIC PERIOD

- 2.2.1 In the northern Part of the park close to the south side of the Wye, a flint blade of Mesolithic or Upper Palaeolithic date (Buckingham County Council HER) was found and provides the earliest evidence for activity to date.

- 2.2.2 There is a limited amount of evidence for activity during the prehistoric period, mainly limited to findspots. Lithic finds have included a barbed and tanged arrowhead (NHRE

UID248702) was found on the northern side of Church Hill and a small Neolithic polished axe was recovered at Towerage, to the south-west of West Wycombe Park (NHRE UID248829). Bronze Age metalwork was found by metal detectorists to the north-east of church hill (Buckinghamshire County Council HER) and along with the arrowhead highlights a possible focus of activity here pre-dating the hillfort (see below).

- 2.2.3 The only possible monument of Bronze Age date identified is a mound located at the junction of the A40 and Towerage Lane (NTSMR MNA130948). The mound has not been excavated and its location on the valley floor would be unusual for a burial mound and hence it is also recorded as a possible park landscape feature such as a folly.
- 2.2.4 Arguably the most visually prominent site in West Wycombe is Church Hill (now the site of St. Lawrence Church and the Dashwood Mausoleum), the earlier site of an Iron Age Hillfort and scheduled monument (NTSMR MNA131073). The hillfort is situated at the south end of a spur overlooking the Wye Valley. The enclosed area is oval in plan and measures 120m by 100m. It is enclosed by a rampart of earth, flint and chalk rubble with a ditch and outer bank surrounding it. The original entrance was probably on the south side of the monument but has been disturbed by the construction of The Dashwood Mausoleum. The hillfort has been dated to the 2nd century BC.
- 2.2.5 The archaeological features on Church Hill to the north of the village formed part of a landscape survey undertaken by English Heritage in 2000–2001.
- 2.2.6 On the southern face of Church Hill are a series of lynchets (NTSMR MNA131094), representing the remains of an Iron Age field system. Similarly in the southern part of West Wycombe Park remnants of a 'celtic' field system (NTSMR MNA131068) are recorded and may suggest that an extensive area encompassing a large part of modern West Wycombe was farmed during the Iron Age.

2.3 ROMAN PERIOD

- 2.3.1 In the Roman period a growing body of evidence suggests that a settlement of third to fourth century date was located at West Wycombe alongside a Roman Road that extended from London to Stokenchurch, broadly following the line of the present A40.
- 2.3.2 Two sites have now been identified for the locations of Roman inhumation burials, both near to the proposed route of the Roman road. The excavation of part of an inhumation cemetery at Portway and associated work took place just outside the eastern limit of West Wycombe Park, south of the A40 (Farley and Wright, 1979) and 1981). This work identified the remains of 16 individuals suggesting a cemetery here, of which the total size is not known. A bone sample provided a radiocarbon date in the mid to late Roman period. A further four burials have been identified at 40 Church Lane to the north of the High Street, towards Church Hill, and date to the late 3rd Century (Northamptonshire Archaeology, 2010). The remains of settlements are yet to be found, although the presence of these two cemetery sites suggests a settled community of mid to late Roman date (Marshall, forthcoming).
- 2.3.3 Despite the lack of structural remains of a villa of Roman date from West Wycombe numerous find spots suggest a high status settlement focus to the south of the Road in the grounds of West Wycombe Park where large finds assemblages have been found. During dredging of the lake in 1991 features including pits and ditches were identified and artefacts recovered included large amounts of pottery of 3rd to 4th century date, tegulae, brick and tile, suggesting the possible location of a villa, close to the postulated location of the medieval manor site (Marshall, 2008). The dredging also uncovered a hoard of hundreds of Roman coins, possibly a votive offering related to the River,

the assemblage has been dated to AD 353 (NTSMR MNA130950). Other find spots from the park area include metal detectorist finds of unspecified 'Roman metalwork', and more finds of pot and tile (Buckinghamshire County Council HER). A possible roadside settlement site is suggested by a small excavation (TVAS, 2008) undertaken at West Wycombe Road that identified the remains of a well that had been backfilled in the 2nd Century and four postholes that may indicate structural remains.

2.4 EARLY MEDIEVAL PERIOD

- 2.4.1 The place name of West Wycombe is first recorded in AD944–6 (Marshall, 2015) but evidence for activity prior to this is scarce. However, a small number of findspots of Anglo-Saxon date attest to activity in the vicinity along with Saxon place names. A silver penny of Offa (AD757–796) (Buckinghamshire County Council HER) was found in the grounds of West Wycombe Park and Saxon metalwork was recorded as found by metal detectorists on the eastern slope of Church Hill (Buckinghamshire County Council HER).

2.5 MEDIEVAL PERIOD

- 2.5.1 By Domesday Wicumbe (West Wycombe) was a manor assessed as being of 19 hides, with land for 23 ploughs. In the demesne were 5 hides with 3 ploughs. There were 7 serfs, 3 mills (worth 20 shillings) and with one fishery of 1000 eels. The woodland was assessed as large enough to feed 1000 swine. In total it was worth 15 pounds. Rolls dating from the 13th century (VCH, 1925) onwards show that for administrative purposes the manor was divided into 10 tithings (VCH, 1925), the names of some of which are still used, for example Toweridge and Wycombe which represents the current extent of the village. The manor was held by Stigand (1047–70), the Bishop of Winchester and was in the hundred of Desborough. Desborough Iron Age hillfort has been proposed as the hundred meeting place although this is disputed due to its too small size (Marshall, 2015) The Bishops of Winchester held the manor until 1551.
- 2.5.2 A rental roll of 1350 suggests the effect the Black Death had on the economy of the village with an inscription 'deficit of rent on account of the pestilence' associated with more than 40 names (VCH, 1925) with the same recorded in 1389 suggesting that this was an ongoing loss (VCH, 1925). Rolls name many tenants holdings throughout the medieval period some of which are described in the Victoria County History and are not repeated here, however in some cases these provide information on possible sites and monuments and in such cases are mentioned below. This provides information relating to the layout of the medieval village.
- 2.5.3 The present church of St Lawrence (NTSMR MNA130946) stands on the site of a medieval church situated within the earthworks of the Iron Age Hillfort on a platform of Norman date. The lower part of the west tower also dates to the Norman period (Pevsner and Williamson, 2000). The remainder of the tower dates from the 14th century and the chancel is 13th century in date. Pottery sherds of 13th to 14th century date have been found by grave diggers working in the cemetery. In 1251 manorial rolls attest to the expenses of enlarging the 'chapel' by 10ft, adding new windows and whitewashing (VCH, 1925) and this may relate to the date of the chancel.
- 2.5.4 Three mills are mentioned in Domesday and although no remains have been identified their location is almost certainly within the present West Wycombe park due to the route the River takes through it. A memorial in the church to Hugh Darrell of Mill End (d.1667) states that his ancestors held Mill End for upwards of 400 years and other information from the early 14th century onwards suggest that the family held significant amounts of land in the parish. A location for the fish pond mentioned in Domesday is recorded in English Heritage's National Record of the Historic Environment (formerly

the National Monuments Record) to the west of Sawmill House and may be remnant in the waterway currently present at the site. The fish-pond of Pitmill is mentioned in 1400 (VCH, 1925). Margery Mill was rented in 1457 and was said to be in a ruinous state at this time (NTSMR MNA130493).

- 2.5.5 Documentary sources dating to 1324 suggest that the manor also had a dovecote for 200 doves, which may also refer to the same building mentioned in rolls of 1301–2 (VCH, 1925).
- 2.5.6 Some elements of the 15th century timber framed buildings remain in the fabric of extant buildings along the High Street and Church Lane indicating that a village settlement had grown up around these two streets from at least this date. Before this the Domesday records suggest that the settlement consisted of the manor house and dispersed farmsteads around it. The partially surviving 15th century buildings include the Church Loft, the Sweet Shop and the Old Vicarage. The Old Vicarage, situated to the east of the southern end of Church Lane was originally a priest's House in the early to mid 15th century (Marshall, forthcoming). Adjacent to the old vicarage is the grounds of The Old House Yard, at the junction of High Street and Church Lane is postulated to be the site of the medieval manor house, although this is not supported by archaeological evidence (Marshall, forthcoming). The original manor house is discussed further below.
- 2.5.7 The Church Loft was erected by the monks of Bisham Priory after 1417 and recent dendrochronology has shown that it dates from c1465.
- 2.5.8 The remnants of a medieval field system is recorded at several locations and was recorded in part by the English Heritage survey of Church Hill in 2000–1 (English Heritage 2000–1). On the slopes of Church Hill ridge and furrow (NTSMR MNA131084) was identified overlying the extant late prehistoric field system. Further ridge and furrow was recorded in the grounds of West Wycombe park (NTSMR in the location of the lawn to the north of the house and the area to the east of the lake. As well as remnants of a raised trackway, paths and possible hollow ways are defined by ditches and low banks pre dating the park. One possible pre park routeway through the woodland is defined by a ditch and bank on an alignment that when extended to the north-east would join the path alongside The Swan Inn and may have medieval origins. Other hollow ways are recorded on Church Hill (English Heritage 2000–1) (NTSMR MNA131086) at the base of the eastern slope and on the western side a series of hollow ways (NTSMR MNA131089) extend for some distance north into Hearenton Wood, the eastern boundary of the woodland is partly defined by a bank and ditch, possibly with medieval origins. Quarrying (NTSMR MNA154686) has been identified on the slopes of Church Hill and this may be related to chalk quarrying for the construction of medieval buildings.
- 2.5.9 The layout of the medieval pre-enclosure field system can be seen on a manorial map of c1698, where houses are shown fronting the north and south sides of the high street and part way up both sides of Church Lane. Burgage plots can be seen extending to the rear of properties on the north side of the High Street. Some of these can be seen on the 1876 Ordnance Survey first edition map such as that extending back from 50a High Street. Some of these are still visible as boundaries shown on the modern OS. The pre enclosure medieval field layout is also depicted on the c1698 map showing the smaller fields (some long and thin) the characteristic layout associated with manorial tenure. Some of these boundaries can be tied to modern boundaries and pathways.



Fig. 2 Extract from c1698 map of the Manor of West Wycombe

3. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (POST-MEDIEVAL AND MODERN PERIODS)

3.1 THE MANOR OF WEST WYCOMBE

- 3.1.1 As outlined above the Manor of West Wycombe belonged to the See of Winchester from the time of the Domesday Book until 1550 or 1551 when it was granted to Sir Henry Seymour by his nephew, Edward VI. With the subsequent changes of monarch and favour, the manor was to be restored to the See of Winchester in 1558, although this did not take effect following the death of Mary I and soon reverted to Seymour. (VCH, 1925)
- 3.1.2 Since at least the fifteenth century the manor was tenanted by the Dormer family. In 1602 Robert Dormer, later 1st Baron Dormer, bought the freehold of the manor. In 1628 his grandson, also Robert Dormer, was created Earl of Carnarvon and the manor continued to be held by the family (VCH, 1925). The family's wealth had been affected by the Civil War, and in November 1670 Charles, 2nd Earl of Carnarvon, sold the estate to Thomas Lewis.
- 3.1.3 Lewis, also Lewes, was an Alderman of London and married to Elizabeth, the daughter of Francis Dashwood, a saddler and turkey merchant and fellow Alderman. Thomas Lewis died in March 1696 and directed in his will that the manor of West Wycombe should be sold to pay off mortgages to his wife's brothers, Sir Samuel Dashwood and the younger Alderman Francis Dashwood. It was conveyed to the Dashwoods in July 1698, and in 1706 (by then Sir) Francis, an importer of silk, bought out Samuel's share and settled on the estate (Dashwood, 1987).
- 3.1.4 The original pre-18th-century Manor House was probably located much closer to the village than the current one (evidence for the site of the earlier house is discussed in Marshall, 2008). The manorial map of c1698, although the scale of the house is exaggerated, shows a brick house to the south of the village, set on the plot of land immediately behind the gardens of the properties along the southern side of the road, now covered in trees. The field to the south of this appears to contain a tree-lined

avenue, although it is not clear from where this leads and the map implies the house is oriented with the entrance towards the village.

- 3.1.5 The building shown appears to be of red brick, indicated by the stylised mortar joints to the elevation; what appears to be a darker plinth is probably an attempt at shading as a similar treatment has been given to the depiction of the church. The roof is hipped with a large central dormer window with two smaller dormer windows to either side and a chimney at each end. The house is symmetrical, with the upper storey having five windows and the ground floor having a large central door with two windows to either side. The door appears to have a large classical surround with pillars to either side and an elaborate pediment above.
- 3.1.6 The depiction of the architectural detail on the map is stylised and damaged, however, it is possible to infer that the house may have been built fairly soon after the manor transferred to the Seymours in 1550/51 or possibly in 1602 when the Dormer family wished to emphasise that the estate which was once their long-term tenancy was now in their ownership.
- 3.1.7 No other contemporary descriptions survive, but Langley, in 1797, described the 'ancient' house as being of brick and of 'no great extent'. He compares the appearance as being similar to that of Toweridge, a small manor near West Wycombe bought by the 3rd Baronet in 1794, however, the farmhouse which survives there no longer resembles the house depicted on the c1698 map, if in fact it is the building referred to.

3.2 THE BARONETS

- 3.2.1 The account below of the Dashwood Baronetcy is based largely on information contained in *The Dashwoods of West Wycombe* by Sir Francis Dashwood.
- 3.2.2 West Wycombe is the seat of the Dashwood Baronetcy. Francis Dashwood had been given a knighthood by Queen Anne in October 1702 and on the 28th June 1707 he was created a Baronet, the Dashwood Baronetcy being the Premier Baronetage of the Baronetage of Great Britain.
- 3.2.3 Sir Francis Dashwood, 1st Baronet, was born in 1658. He married four times, his second wife, Mary, was the daughter of the 4th Earl of Westmorland and 11th Baron Le Despencer, and with her he had his eldest surviving son. Soon after he settled on the estate he built West Wycombe House and began to purchase properties in the village and surrounding areas. From 1708 to 1712, Sir Francis was MP for Winchelsea. He died in November 1724.
- 3.2.4 Arguably the most infamous of the Dashwoods, Sir Francis Dashwood, 2nd Baronet, was born in December 1708. Not yet 16 when he inherited the estate and baronetcy, Sir Francis embarked on several Grand Tours of Europe, returning to take up a career in politics in 1741. His travels would heavily influence his remodelling of his estate, described later, and the Church. Like his father, he continued to acquire properties in the village and continued to expand by developing the land along Church Hill.
- 3.2.5 Sir Francis was a founder of the Dilettanti Society which still promotes the Arts, although he is best known for his exploits abroad and most famously for founding a Hellfire club, The Knights of St. Francis of Wycombe. Their meetings were held at Medmenham Abbey until 1766 when they reputedly moved to the caves on West Wycombe Hill. These caves, with their tunnels, caverns and a mock river Styx, had been extended from an ancient chalk quarry into the hill between 1748 and 1752 by local unemployed labourers who Sir Francis paid a shilling a day; the quarried material was used to improve the road to High Wycombe. Sir Francis had failed to put through his Poor Relief Bill in 1747 to encourage voluntary works such as this to relieve the

unemployed, however, in this case the project may have doubled as the construction of yet another fashionable folly.

- 3.2.6 In 1763 he entered the House of Lords as Lord Le Despencer and held the position of Postmaster General from 1766 until his death in 1781. Benjamin Franklin, his American counterpart, was a frequent visitor to the house during this period. Although Sir Francis was married, he left only illegitimate children.
- 3.2.7 The baronetcy then passed to Sir John Dashwood-King, the half brother of Sir Francis. The 3rd Baronet was 65 when he inherited the title and spent little time at West Wycombe. He died in 1793 and was succeeded by his son Sir John Dashwood the 4th Baronet who again cared little for West Wycombe. He attempted to sell the house in 1806 and by 1847 he was bankrupt. In 1847 he died leaving the estate heavily in debt and the village neglected.

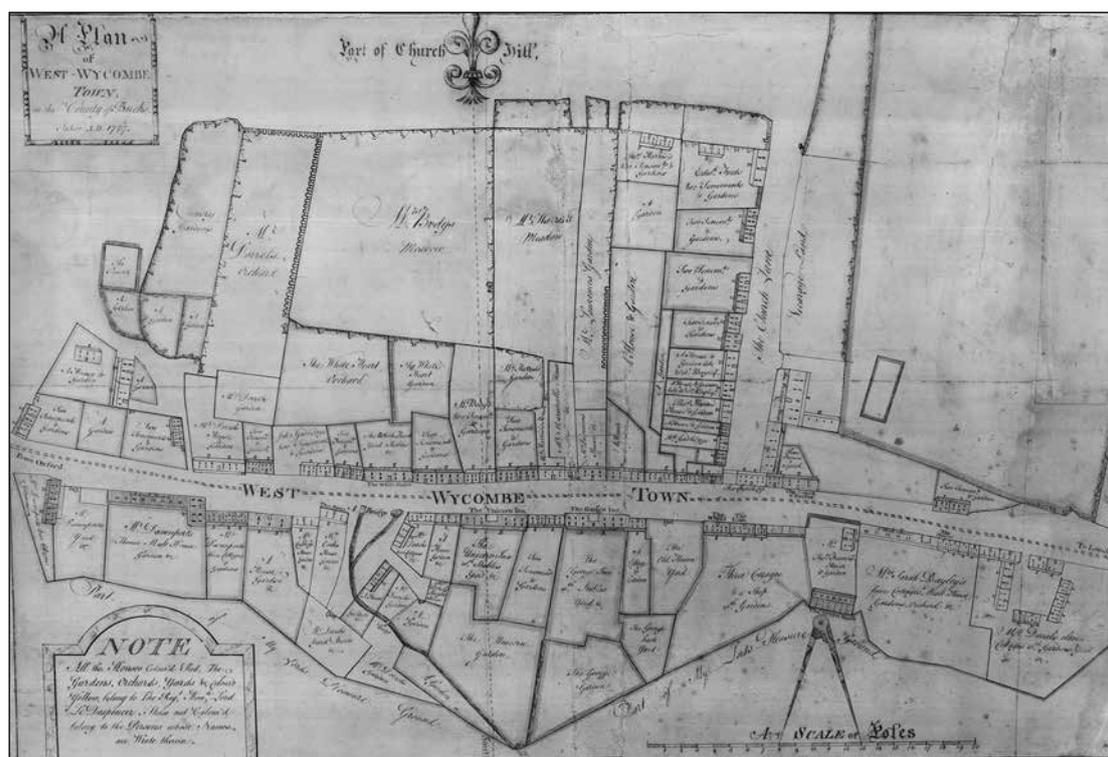


Fig. 3 1767 Town map of West Wycombe

3.3 18TH-CENTURY WEST WYCOMBE VILLAGE

- 3.3.1 Mary Everett's study of 18th-century West Wycombe was based on extensive documentary research of sources such as deeds, wills, manorial papers, rent books etc. and this has provided a valuable illustration of how the village functioned at this time. It has also identified two particular periods when the Dashwoods followed a policy of building up the estate and gaining greater control of the village. These periods of development were between 1710 and 1724 when the first baronet started building the house and between c1750 and 1780 when the second Baronet extended the estate.
- 3.3.2 In each of these periods property in the village was gradually acquired and then leased to the villagers. Among the property acquired at this time were the three important inns (The George, the Black Boy and the Unicorn) which were each purchased between 1712 and 1767, as well as the Plough alehouse. The Blacksmiths shop was acquired in 1751 and land known as Old House Yard was bought in 1778 (Everett, 1993).

- 3.3.3 A good impression of the form of West Wycombe village in the mid 18th century is provided by A Plan of West Wycombe Town from 1767 (Fig. 3). Similarly to the c1698 estate plan this again shows a village with a well-developed street frontage along the High Street, and along the west side of Church Lane, but unlike the previous c1698 map it is now possible to identify individual village buildings. Indeed many of the buildings such as inns are labelled and the plots all clearly state the number of tenements and whether they are cottages, houses, stables, yards etc. The plan also shows which plots formed part of the Dashwood's (Lord Despencer's) estate and which did not.
- 3.3.4 The plan is accurate in terms of showing individual plots of land and showing where buildings fronted the High Street but it is not a metrically accurate representation of the village in the way that the Ordnance Survey produced 100 years later and it does not appear to generally show rear ranges behind the street-front buildings. Distinct steps in the street frontage are accurately shown such as in Building 2-9 and 40-41 Church Lane and it's likely that the gaps between buildings also reflects the actual frontage.
- 3.3.5 Buildings are shown schematically in elevation and with the large majority of buildings their form is clearly representational rather than an accurate illustration. Cottages are shown with a standard two-storey form with central front door, central chimney and windows to each side.
- 3.3.6 Some cottages or houses are shown slightly larger than others and this may partially reflect the form of the buildings and some are shown with two or even three bays to each side of the central door rather than the standard single bay. It is curious to note however that the larger buildings are not always those with more bays.
- 3.3.7 The main type of building shown on the plan with a distinctly different form to the cottages are two malthouses, both on the south side of the High Street towards the eastern and western ends of the village. These two buildings are each shown as single storey ranges with regular arrangements of small windows. The larger malthouse is towards the west and operated by a Mr Davenport who is also shown as owning several cottages on adjacent plots and a yard. The malthouse towards the eastern end of the village is owned by Mrs Sarah Bayley and the building on the street front is shown with a covered passage way through to the yard at the rear. It is interesting to note that these two industrial structures are located on the edge of the village.
- 3.3.8 Similar covered passages for wagons and horses are also shown within the two main inns of the village, The George Inn and The Unicorn, and this is one of the very few architectural features of the village buildings where the plan can be relied upon to provide at least some indication of the buildings' form.
- 3.3.9 The number of inns in the village is one of the most striking features of the plan and it illustrates how important the coaching trade was to West Wycombe, at this convenient stopping point on the main road between London and Oxford. There seems to be eight inns shown on the plan (see Fig. 13). As mentioned above the two largest appear to have been the Unicorn and the George, at the centre of the village on the south side of the High Street, and these were presumably the principal coaching inns but there were also a series of slightly smaller ones. Also on the south side of the road was the Swan Inn, the Wheel, the Lion and the Chequor while on the north side of the



Plate 5 George and Dragon Inn

road was the Coach & Horses and the White Heart (as spelt). The plan shows that the largest inns, the George, the Unicorn and the White Heart have stabling in the rear yard for the coach horses but there is no mention of such facilities in the other smaller inns. Some of them may have had less formal stable ranges to the rear but at least some of these inns are likely to have been converted from houses to benefit from the 18th century growth in the coaching trade.

- 3.3.10 It is interesting to note that Crown Court at the east end of the village, whose courtyard form suggests it may have historically been a coaching inn, is not shown as such. Indeed, compared to the principal inns at the centre of the village Crown Court is located in a slightly isolated location, some way out and an unlikely location for a coaching inn. It is of course possible that it was an inn but failed to prosper due to this isolated position.



Plate 6 Crown Court

- 3.3.11 Other structures shown on the 1767 plan include a slaughterhouse ('Mr Dorrel's Slaughterhouse') to the rear of No. 13 and a large greenhouse overlooking Lord Le Despencer's pleasure grounds.
- 3.3.12 Other features of interest on the plan include a stream which is shown apparently passing under the High Street and continuing south in the yard to the east of the Swan Inn. This stream has now been diverted to pass around the south side of the village.
- 3.3.13 Also of interest is a plot of land to the east of the George Inn labelled The Old House Yard and it may be that this name refers to the former (pre-18th-century) manor house whose exact location is not known although the c1698 plan shows it on the south side of the village.

3.4 WEST WYCOMBE TRADES AND INDUSTRIES

Chairmaking in West Wycombe in the 18th and 19th centuries

- 3.4.1 By far the most historically important industry in West Wycombe has been chair and furniture making. The centre of the industry was High Wycombe, which was described in the 19th century as the chair making capital of the world and West Wycombe shared in this specialised trade. A useful summary of the furniture making trade in the Wycombe area is provided on the local history section of the council's website (wycombe.gov.uk/council-services/leisure-and-culture/local-history/furniture-making-in-high-wycombe). The information below is largely taken from this.
- 3.4.2 There is reference to a turner in the parish register of High Wycombe from the 1680s and in 1725 Daniel Defoe commented on the 'vast quantity of Beechwood' grown in this area and the diverse uses to which this was put 'particularly chairmaking and turnery wares.' Windsor Chairs are the most famous product of the trade and although chairs with spindles had been manufactured before, the first recognisable Windsor Chairs appear to have been made in Buckinghamshire in the early 18th century. The church records of West Wycombe from 17 December 1732 make mention of the purchase of a 'Wins. Chair' (presumably a Windsor Chair) for the vestry.
- 3.4.3 There is little evidence of chair making in the village on the 1767 plan but this is likely to be a reflection of the nature of the trade at this time and the fact that it was undertaken on a small scale basis, often by an individual working on his own, rather than

communally in a larger scale factory. It also appears that at this time the trade was largely focused on producing chair parts to be sent to London to be assembled rather than the complete manufacture of finished chairs.

- 3.4.4 Turners were often itinerant workers who lived in the villages such as West Wycombe and either worked in rough shelters in the woods or small sheds nearer home. They would purchase stands of trees from estate owners and then convert them, often with a pole lathe, to chair parts before selling them to factory owners.
- 3.4.5 As mentioned above there is a single storey building shown on the 1767 plan which is identified as a shop (ie workshop) and this may have been a chairmaking shop. This is on the approximate footprint of No. 22, immediately east of the Wheel and Lion Inns and it is shown with a central wagon passage to the rear yard. The location adjacent to two inns may suggest that it was a blacksmith's shop but it seems more likely that it would have been labelled smithy than shop.
- 3.4.6 The importance of the chair making trade in West Wycombe at the end of the 18th century is demonstrated by the Posse Comitatus, compiled in 1798 in response to the Napoleonic Wars to gather information on the number of men in different areas aged between 15 and 60. The Buckinghamshire Posse Comitatus records 18 chairmakers in West Wycombe, twice the number of any other comparable trade, as well as others in related trades (two turners, nine carpenters, three wheelers and one lathreenter). The village was still predominantly agricultural, with 24 farmers listed and the largest entry in the list was that of labourers (presumably anyone without a particular trade) of whom there were 141 listed. In the wider borough of High Wycombe and in the parish of West Wycombe there were more than 50 chairmakers listed in the Posse Comitatus.
- 3.4.7 The extent to which chairmaking must have dominated local trade and industry is even more evident in the evidence of the 1851 census which shows a total of 95 chairmakers in the village, vastly more than any other trade. The census also lists other individuals in related wood trades including cabinet makers, a carpenter, chair turners, wheelwrights, turners, master turners and sawyers.
- 3.4.8 The census also includes evidence to show how the trade was growing and evolving with larger scale enterprises as the list includes a chairmaker's agent, a chairmaker's clerk and a chairmaking master (employing four men and three boys). Clearly there was a chairmaking factory at this time in the village, as well as a large number of other chairmakers who either worked outside the village or were operating as itinerant workers, and it seems that this factory was almost certainly at the west end of the village in the former malthouse. The 1849 Tithe Map lists a chairmaker's yard and shop, occupied by Mrs Mead at this location immediately west of No. 2 High Street and although there are a number of workshops listed (at least four) none are described as chairmakers shops. These other workshops tend to be smaller buildings in the yards or gardens behind street-front houses.
- 3.4.9 There is again no explicit sign of chairmaking in the village on the 1876 Ordnance Survey map. There are no factories or chair works labelled although there are a large number of small detached buildings in gardens and yards, some of which were presumably use for small scale manufacturing or turning. The 1876 map also shows a large new complex on the south side of the road, not shown on the 1849 Tithe map, which is likely to have been a chair works. This appears to have been a purpose built courtyard complex with three similar ranges around a yard and a wagon entrance at the centre of the north range. This complex is not labelled on either the 1876 or 1898 maps but it is shown as a chairworks on the 1921 map and thus is assumed to have had this function since its construction in the mid 19th century. This was at No. 23 High Street, approximately mid way between the George and Dragon and Crown

Court. A photograph taken in the 1920s showing this yard behind the street front was published in *Country Life* (23 January 2013) and it shows various two-storey weatherboarded yards with a carriage way from the High Street and open fronted ground floor bays along the west range. The photo also shows piles of timber in the foreground. Additional photographs were taken by Millar and Harris in 1931 (copies held in the National Trust's archive). The factory was demolished in the 1960s when the village hall was built.

- 3.4.10 There is also little sign of chair works on the 1898 map but we can be confident that a new purpose built factory had by this date been constructed towards the southern end of Church Lane (east side). The factory is not labelled on the 1898 map but we can see that a new structure had been constructed here, replacing a slightly different group of buildings on the 1876 map. This newly built structure is the Furniture Factory which is now listed Grade II* and is the only surviving furniture manufactory in the village. It is interesting to note that this building is said to have replaced a previous building used to manufacture furniture which was destroyed in a fire (VBS) so it may be that some of the buildings shown here in on the 1876 map were also related to chair or furniture making. The previous ranges may have been small workshops in a domestic setting rather than a purpose built manufactory.
- 3.4.11 The oral history testimonies taken by the National Trust also reflect the importance of chairmaking to West Wycombe. Miss Daphne Hickman who was born in 1923 tells of her father who worked in the chair factories after being demobilised after the First World War. Miss Hickman reports that there were periods of boom and bust for the chair factories and her father moved between them. The testimonies are also interesting in that there are several mentions of how local children used the backs from chairs with paraffin on the runners to go 'sledding' in summer time down West Wycombe Hill. The testimonies mention that a lady would hire out these 'chair sledges'.
- 3.4.12 The auction particulars show that there were two chair factories in the village in 1929. There were the two works that have previously been mentioned: one on the south side of the High Street (No. 23) in the tenancy of Mr A Abbott and one in Church Lane operated by Mr Giles (No. 38)

Other industries

- 3.4.13 There are individuals listed in the census employed in various other trades such as blacksmiths, shoe makers and bakers but these are very small in number and the impression is that these were largely to serve the village itself rather than forming part of a wider trade. As mentioned above there were two malthouses in West Wycombe in the 18th century, one at each end of the village, so this was clearly a trade of some importance.



- 3.4.14 One very interesting statistic of the 1851 census is the fact that 34 individuals are listed as lace makers and therefore after chair making this is by far the second largest trade undertaken in West Wycombe. The census returns show that the lace workers were very largely (or entirely) women and clearly this was a domestic trade undertaken by women and girls in the home to supplement the family's income. Parts of Buckinghamshire formed a centre of the lace making industry and this was clearly an important local trade which can be easily overlooked. No doubt this is largely due to

Plate 7 Malthouse at west end of village

its domestic nature so there were no local factories that can be identified or large scale employers with archive records. It is interesting to note that there is a house called Lacemaker's Cottage towards the west end of the village. Mary Everett's study of 18th-century West Wycombe reports that although machine made lace began about 1835 there was still a lace school at Lane End in the late 19th century.

- 3.4.15 The 1798 Posse Comitatus lists six men as paper makers and although this is a relatively small number it is of interest due to the fact that south Buckinghamshire was one of the country's most important paper-making regions. Paper-making had been undertaken on the River Wye from the early 17th century and by 1700 High Wycombe was a key centre of the industry specialising in high quality white paper (Everett, 1993). Mary Everett reports that there were a number of West Wycombe families involved in the industry: Richard Swain who had owned the Swan in the 1730s was described as a paper maker as was (later) his son in law William Cubbidge. Thomas Francis who owned a house on the south side of the street was bequeathed a paper mill in West Wycombe in 1770. Francis was still recorded as a paper maker and miller in the Universal British Directory in 1794. There were at least three paper mills shown on the c1698 West Wycombe estate map, each located to the east of West Wycombe towards High Wycombe and as mentioned above there were also three mills mentioned in the parish in the Domesday Book.

Brickmaking

- 3.4.16 Another interesting trade to consider in relation to West Wycombe is brick making, particularly in the 18th century when so many of the houses in the village were being re-fronted in brick and other brick buildings were being erected on the estate including the stuccoed brick West Wycombe House. Buckinghamshire is known to have been an important brick-making region and there were numerous clusters of brickworks in particular areas with suitable clay throughout the Chilterns. One of the most important brickmaking centres in the southern Chilterns was at Nettlebed to the south-west of Wycombe.
- 3.4.17 There are no men in West Wycombe village listed as brickmakers in the 1798 Posse Comitatus or in the 1851 census and the village does not appear to have been an important centre for the trade but there are known to have been at least two brick kilns on the West Wycombe estate. One of these was near Avering Down Farm towards the north-west and one was on Downley Common in the north-eastern part of the estate (www.chilternsarchaeology.com/16th_to_18thc.htm).
- 3.4.18 Downley Common is just to the north-east of West Wycombe village and it was originally a subsidiary parish of West Wycombe. It was also still part of the West Wycombe Estate into the 18th century and a kiln is shown on Downley Common on the manorial map of 1767 (not the town plan included in the current project). Downley Common is reported to have two types of clay which suitable for brickmaking: clay with flints and the Reading Beds clay and it is likely that most or all the bricks for the 18th-century buildings in West Wycombe came from these kilns or others on the estate.
- 3.4.19 Although there were no brick makers listed in Posse Comitatus the manufacture of bricks, especially in the 17th and 18th century before the start of larger industrial scale manufacture, was often a seasonal occupation for itinerant labourers and it may be that some men who were making brick did not consider it to be their principal occupation. The clay would be dug up and left exposed over the winter and then it was made into bricks and fired in kilns the following summer. Kilns would often be temporary or ephemeral structures constructed close to where they would be needed, often on estates such as West Wycombe.

- 3.4.20 Farming was also a seasonal occupation and it may be that some of the men listed in Posse Comitatus as farmers were also involved to some extent in brick making.

19th-century chapels

- 3.4.21 An interesting aspect of the village in the 19th century, reflecting wider social trends of the time are the number of chapels constructed in this period.

- 3.4.22 In 1808 a Congregational Chapel was constructed on raised ground on the north side of the High Street, concealed to the rear of the street-front properties and accessible via a passage. This fine building follows the local vernacular with flint walls with brick dressings and a tile-covered hipped roof. It is listed as an independent chapel in the 1849 Tithe apportionment and is still labelled as a Congregational Chapel on each of the OS maps from 1876, 1898 and 1921.



Plate 8 Wesleyan Chapel

- 3.4.23 A Wesleyan chapel was constructed towards the southern end of Church Lane, apparently in 1815 (suggested by a mason's inscription on the front wall) and this is again of flint walls with brick dressings and a tile-covered hipped roof. This was still a Wesleyan chapel in the 1849 Tithe map but in 1894 it was superseded by the construction of the larger Methodist chapel facing onto the High Street towards the western end of the village.



Plate 9 Methodist Chapel

- 3.4.24 In 1875 St Paul's Church was constructed at the east end of the village to provide a more accessible place of worship (especially in bad weather) than St Lawrence's on the hill. St Lawrence's is said to have been known as the summer church and St Paul's as the winter church.

3.5 LATER NINETEENTH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY

The Dashwoods and the estate in the later 19th and early 20th century

- 3.5.1 Sir George Henry Dashwood, 5th Baronet succeeded to the title in 1849 and although the family was heavily in debt and the estate neglected Sir George favoured West Wycombe and decided to embark on a major campaign of refurbishment funded by the sale of other properties owned by the family. For the first time since 1781 West Wycombe became the family's principal residence (Dashwood, 1987).
- 3.5.2 Sir George died in 1862 without issue. His widow had a life tenancy on the house and lived at West Wycombe for a further 27 years causing the baronetcy to pass along the line of succession with little influence on the estate or village. The 7th Baronet was a sheep farmer in New Zealand. When Sir George's wife died in 1889 the estate was in a neglected state and the family's finances were dwindling due the long agricultural depression and sustained low agricultural prices. The financial difficulties of the family were compounded when Sir Edwin Dashwood, the 8th Baronet, returned from New

Zealand to claim the seat, but found that Lady Dashwood's heirs were claiming the house's contents and family jewellery. To raise funds the house and estate were mortgaged in 1892 and then after the 8th Baronet died in 1893 the 9th Baronet, Sir Robert Dashwood, launched a costly legal case against Lady Dashwood's executors. The case was lost and it was necessary to raise funds by denuding the estates woodlands and selling the family's London home.

- 3.5.3 Sir John Lindsay Dashwood, the 10th Baronet, was born in 1896 and succeeded to the title in 1908. He fought in the First World War, returning to a neglected and heavily indebted West Wycombe. Very little maintenance had been carried out to either the house or village for sixty years. He decided to sell the house and park in July 1922 but the sale was cancelled after little serious interest was shown. Many of the contents had been sold the previous year, of which several pieces were bought back by the 11th Baronet.
- 3.5.4 In 1925 he had given the hill, apart from the Mausoleum, to the National Trust and in March 1929 he decided to offer the village for auction to pay for the renovation of the main houses. The village was instead purchased ahead of the sale by the Royal Society of Arts with the aim of refurbishing the buildings and donating the properties to the National Trust, (detailed further below).

West Wycombe village in the later 19th and early 20th century

- 3.5.5 Despite the Dashwood's financial difficulties there were a number of important buildings constructed in the village in the last quarter of the 19th century. These were largely of a social or communal nature and in the open areas away from the High Street. Among these was the large new school built in 1875 towards the north-western corner of the village to replace the much smaller previous school. At the eastern end of the village a new church was constructed (St Paul's) also in 1875 apparently to provide a more accessible place of worship than St Lawrence's on the hill to which there was no road. The chair factory towards the eastern end of the village also survives from this period. Map evidence confirms that it was constructed between 1876 and 1898 and the Conservation Area Appraisal dates it to 1887. Another prominent building constructed towards the end of the 19th century was the new Methodist chapel towards the west end of the High Street which was built in 1894.
- 3.5.6 The modest investment in new buildings in the last quarter of the 19th century does not appear to have continued in the first quarter of the 20th century and comparing the 1921 and 1898 OS maps suggest that few buildings were constructed in this period. The school was enlarged and some other minor extensions were undertaken to several other buildings but not like the new structures in the previous quarter.
- 3.5.7 The 1921 map gives a good indication of the layout of the village in the early 20th century but a clearer impression of what it was like to live there is provided by the various oral history testimonies collected by the National Trust in recent years as well as a number of historic photographs taken in this period and the memoirs of Captain Hill. Captain Hill was an estate manager at West Wycombe from c1929 after the Dashwoods sold the village and he had first-hand knowledge of the condition of the buildings prior to the sale.
- 3.5.8 'The rather charming little cottages in Crown Court, for instance, backed on to the dirtiest stables I have ever seen... There was in Crown Court or rather the block of cottages in Crown Court, a very charming looking cottage that was bigger than the tenant required so he let off a part of it to the young married couple, who had two rooms neither of which could under any stretch of imagination be termed habitable; here their first child was born. There was hardly a decent garden; the water supply was from shallow wells, too often within a few inches from the gully into which

discharged the scullery sink, and it only required a little obstruction for the scullery sink to overflow into the wells. There was no drainage system except a very inadequate sink drainage which gave endless trouble. Many of the cottages were overcrowded; to quote one case, a Father and Mother and seven children lived in what was not very much better than a three roomed house, two small bedrooms with a sitting room downstairs – one of the bedrooms was neither water nor wind tight. Another family of four lived in a cottage with one bedroom and one little sitting room’.

- 3.5.9 Living conditions in the village are also illustrated by some of the oral history testimonies collected recently by the National Trust. Mrs Sheila Negus who was born in 1925 tells us of her grandmother who had 13 children (3 of which didn't survive) and brought them up in a two-bedroom cottage with no running water. They had a WC at the end of the garden and a man came to remove the waste.

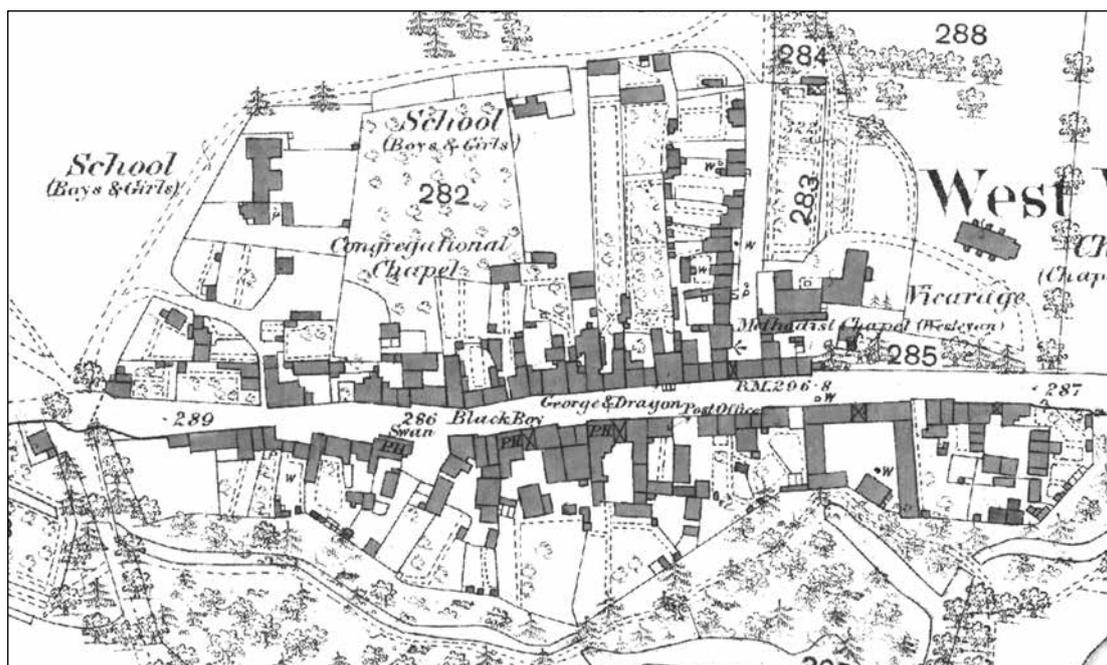


Fig. 4 First edition Ordnance Survey map of West Wycombe village (1876)

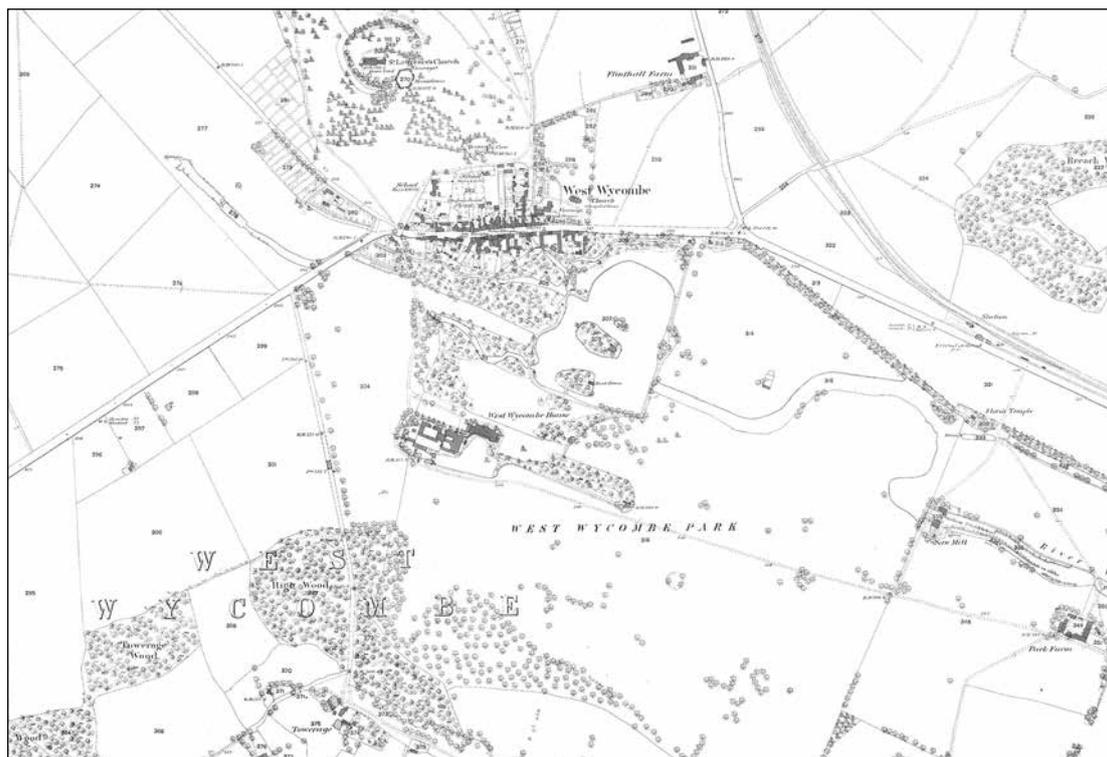


Fig. 5 First edition Ordnance Survey map of part of wider estate (1876)

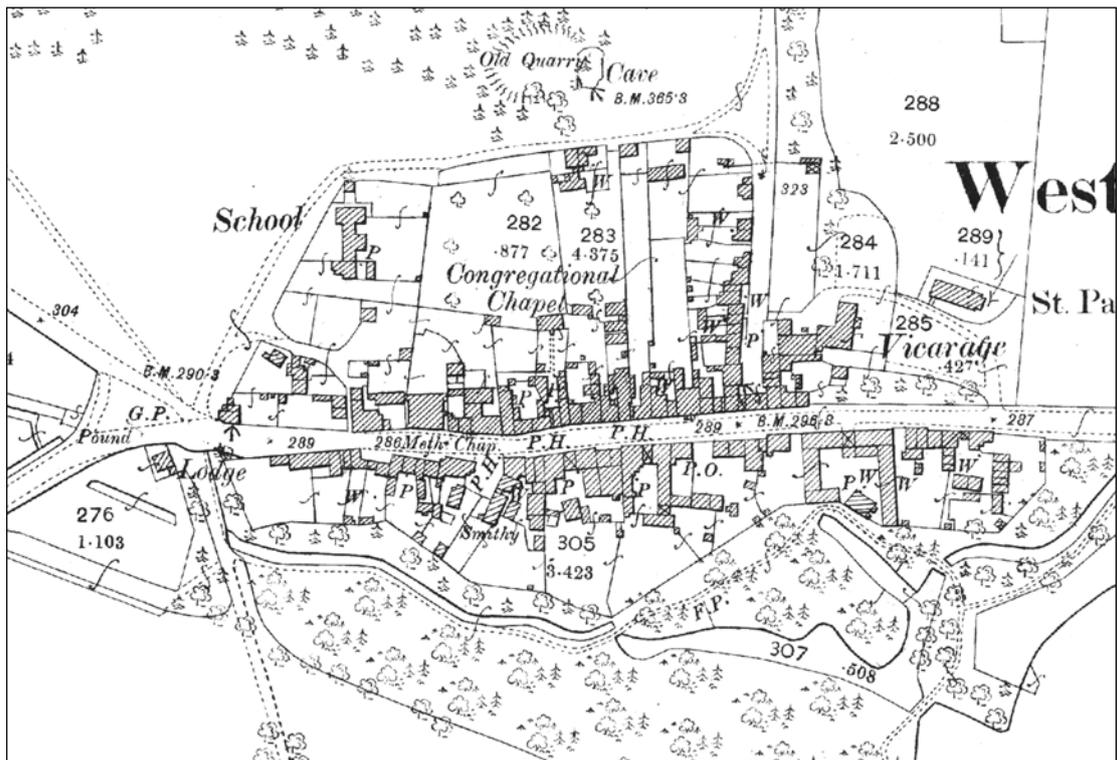


Fig. 6 Second edition Ordnance Survey map of West Wycombe village (1898)

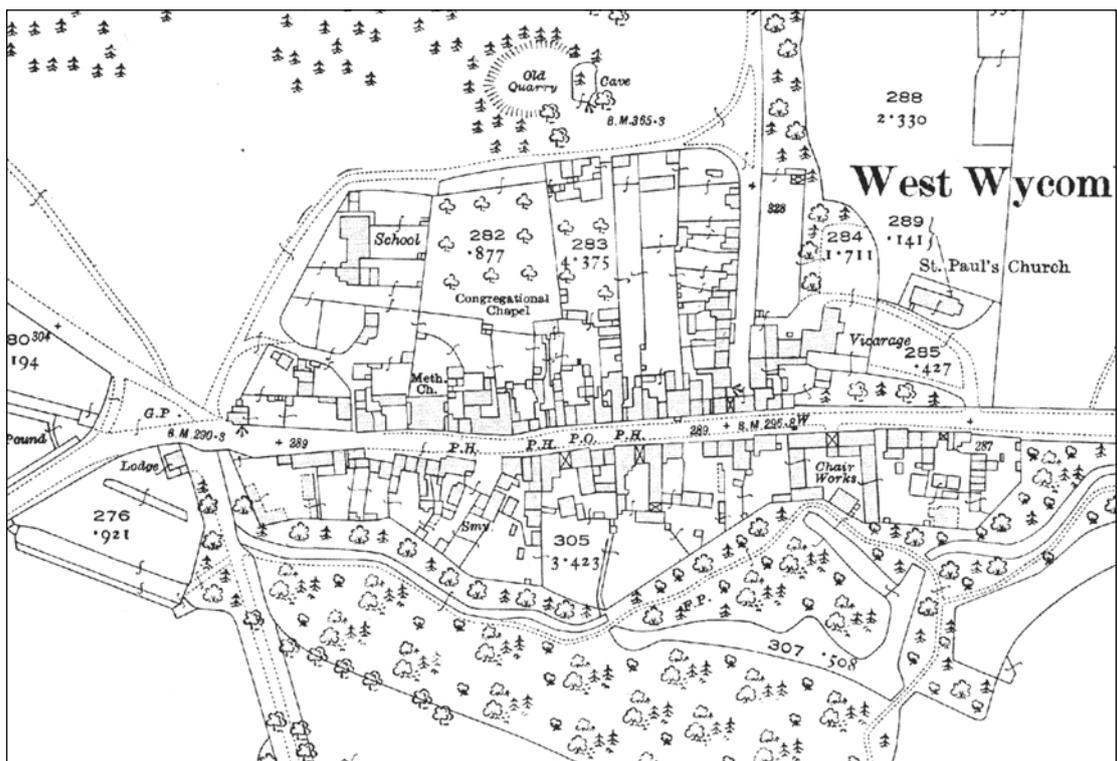


Fig. 7 1921 Ordnance Survey map of West Wycombe village

4 TWENTIETH CENTURY PRESERVATION OF WEST WYCOMBE VILLAGE

4.1 INTRODRUCTION

4.1.1 The village of West Wycombe has numerous areas of significance including its vernacular architecture, its picturesque character and its relationship with the adjacent West Wycombe Park but one of the most interesting elements of its history is the story of its preservation in the 20th century.

4.2 ACQUISITION OF THE ESTATE BY THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF ARTS

4.2.1 As detailed above the late 19th and early 20th centuries had been a period of economic difficulties for the Dashwoods and there had even been unsuccessful moves in 1922 to sell West Wycombe House and Park. In March 1929, the estate's property in the village was offered for sale by auction in 60 lots and three sub-lots including 52 cottages, three inns, two chair factories, a disused school, the shop, the post office and land. The properties had been neglected for decades and as detailed elsewhere they were dilapidated and insanitary (Memoirs of Captain Hill, undated).

4.2.2 In 1927 the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) had established a fund for preserving ancient cottages (discussed at length below at section 4.3) and although the fund had allowed some modest purchases by 1929 they were keen to acquire an entire village. The RSA heard about the sale of West Wycombe and a week ahead of the auction, the RSA negotiated the purchase of all the properties in the village from Sir John Dashwood for £7200 (Gieler, 2014). The purchase of the village was achieved with a loan of £3500 from the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and it appears to have been controversial within the RSA with the proceedings of a special meeting on Feb 27 1929 alluding to strong differences of opinion within the society (RSA Journal, Mar 15 1929). The fact that the village was to be auctioned in so many separate lots meant that there was a great danger of the buildings passing into the ownership of numerous individuals and losing its cohesion and character. The preservation of this overall character of the village was a particular aim of the RSA's purchase and a reason for the en-masse acquisition.

4.2.3 The RSA aimed to preserve, whilst upgrading, the existing cottages and also converting other buildings to dwellings where possible, including the Black Boy Inn and the garage in the yard, now Black Boy Cottage. Mains water and connection to the mains sewer would be provided to all and electricity to those tenants who could afford it.

4.2.4 Some useful insights into the period of the RSA reconditioning are provided in the unpublished memoirs of Captain Hill: 'An Account of the History of West Wycombe from the time The RSA purchased it until it was handed over to the National Trust'. Captain Hill was a National Trust agent and who had also been involved in the village during the RSA's works and his account covers various interesting aspects including the condition of the village before the sale, the attitude of the villagers, the financing of the works and some of the practicalities of the reconditioning.

4.2.5 Captain Hill's memoirs give the impression that when the RSA first acquired the village they had little idea what they had taken on or how to manage property. Captain Hill alludes to initial mistakes but after this, on the recommendation of SPAB William Weir was appointed as the architect appointed to oversee the reconditioning. William Weir who was an important figure in the first half of the 20th century who particularly specialised in the repair of historic structures. As a young man Weir had worked in

the studios of Philip Webb who was a leading light of the Arts and Crafts movement and a founding member of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB). By the early 20th century Weir was also a campaigner in support of SPAB and in the first quarter of the century he oversaw repairs to numerous important historic buildings. One particularly high profile project was the restoration of Tattershall Castle in Lincolnshire which had been on the brink of being sold to an American, who planned to dismantle the tower and transport it across the Atlantic, before being saved by Lord Curzon (discussed further below).

4.2.6 Among the difficulties that Captain Hill discusses was a three-year long saga in getting the sewer for the village, apparently complicated by the extension of the Borough of Wycombe and disputes over which body should be responsible for the work. Captain Hill also discusses the regular uncertainty during this period of finding the money to pay for the reconditioning and how sometimes works would be slowed to allow funding to be raised. The SPAB are reported to have 'come to the rescue and enabled the RSA to finish'.

4.2.7 The RSA leased the commercial premises on repair leases in order to preserve funds and increased the, albeit controlled, rents to the current tenants. It was their intention to ultimately hand the properties over to the National Trust with no debt attached.

4.2.8 An account by Weir in the RSA's Journal dated August 18th 1933 details the results of the 'reconditioning' of the West Wycombe properties. At that point, 32 of the cottages had been refurbished with 20 partially completed. The house then known as the Manor House, now Steps House, two inns and the village shop had also been completed and tenanted.

4.2.9 In addition to the provision of utilities, the comprehensive work to the cottages included new concrete or ventilated timber ground floors due to widespread damp, insertion of damp proof courses and repointing. The roofs were repaired and any wasted tiles replaced with a similar specification and insulation was provided by a layer of straw beneath the relaid tiles. Additional windows were added to several properties. The gardens were fenced and paths relaid, rubbish was cleared and even posts for washing lines were installed. Outhouses were also added or existing ones renovated.



Plate 10 Outhouse to rear of No. 32-33

4.2.10 Internally, new ranges and ceramic sinks were fitted and coppers removed to purpose-built wash houses in the yards. Baths were fitted to the larger cottages with 'modern sanitation' (ie WCs) fitted in place of earth closets. The cottages were stripped of limewash and paper and distempered and painted throughout.

4.2.11 Mr Weir admits in his paper that it was unfortunate that no photographs of the interiors of the cottages were taken before work began.

National Trust acquisition

4.2.12 In 1933 the refurbished village was acquired by the National Trust for £18,000 with only a little work outstanding. Captain Hill's memoirs gives the impression that the although the original intention had been to give the village to the National Trust completely refurbished and debt free the expense of the works meant that the idea was proposed to offer it to the trust before the works were entirely completely and before the debt had been entirely eliminated.

- 4.2.13 Previous to this the acquisitions of the National Trust had largely been open spaces, monuments or small individual buildings and the purchase of West Wycombe must have represented something of a gamble or a new departure. They had never acquired a village or anything like such a large group of buildings as at West Wycombe but their financial position had gradually improved and they were in a position to accept the offer. Indeed considering the rental value of the refurbished properties it probably represented a sound investment and it proved to be the first of many similar acquisitions of villages or hamlets such as Styal in Cheshire and Lacock in Wiltshire (Jenkins, 1994).
- 4.2.14 Captain Hill's memoirs state that despite the increased rents in the village the tenants were instrumental in making the reconditioning a success and that 'the life in the village has been made more pleasant than before'. Captain Hill discusses the characters of the village (publican, parson, schoolmaster etc.) and says 'of the sinners, the numbers have been reduced for I know of at least three who have become entirely reformed characters since the character and the condition of their dwellings have been reformed'.

Mid and later 20th century

- 4.2.15 During the Second World War, West Wycombe House was used variously as a convalescent home and storage for the Wallace and Witt Collections (Dashwood, 1987). The servants' wing was used as barracks. In 1943 West Wycombe Park, including the house, was given to the National Trust with the agreement that the family could remain tenants there. Sir John died in 1966.
- 4.2.16 Sir Francis John Vernon Hereward Dashwood, 11th Baronet was born in 1925. In 1951 and 1952 he carried out extensive structural work to the 'Hell-Fire' Caves and opened them as a tourist attraction to raise money. He and his wives carried out a number of repairs and improvements to the décor of West Wycombe House during his tenancy in order to recreate the appearance of the interior as it was first built. He died in 2000.
- 4.2.17 The current, 12th Baronet is Sir Edward John Francis Dashwood, born in 1964. He and his family live in West Wycombe House which they lease from the National Trust. The park and the ground floor of the house are opened at various times during the summer months. The house and gardens have also been used extensively as a location for both film and television since the 1980s.

4.3 CONSERVATION AND HERITAGE MOVEMENTS IN THE LATER 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURIES

- 4.3.1 One of the many interesting aspects of the history of West Wycombe is the acquisition of much of the village by the Royal Society of Arts towards the end of the 1920s and the fund established by the RSA for the protection of cottage architecture. It is useful to briefly consider how this concern for vernacular cottage architecture fits into the wider growth of the built heritage conservation movement, particularly in the later 19th and early 20th centuries.
- 4.3.2 Interest in historic buildings and sites is clearly not a modern phenomenon. In the 18th century wealthy young men such as Francis Dashwood of West Wycombe would travel around Europe studying the classical remains of antiquity and sites such as Stonehenge have long been investigated by antiquarians. From the mid 19th century there were flourishing antiquarian societies (local and regional) studying historic remains but towards the end of the 19th century there developed a wider movement more concerned with the protection and conservation of historic buildings and sites. This movement was largely prompted by fears over the impact of industrialisation and the contemporary trend for over-zealous Victorian 'restoration'. A particular concern was the impact on the country's ecclesiastical architecture of the great number of

extensive church restorations spurred by the religious revival in the mid 19th century and the attempt to return the buildings to how they may have looked in the medieval period.

- 4.3.3 Among the earliest individuals to discuss this issue was John Ruskin, the hugely influential critic who argued in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849) that the restorations being undertaken amounted to 'destruction' and that ancient buildings should be preserved together with their accumulated history. For Ruskin the age of a building was its greatest glory.
- 4.3.4 In 1855 Ruskin persuaded the Society of Antiquaries to circulate a memorandum setting out his views on 'restoration' and he also proposed that a committee be formed for the preservation of ancient monuments. At this stage the movement appears to have made little significant progress but in 1877 the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) was formed and this can perhaps be seen as the birth of the modern built heritage conservation movement. Ruskin was an early member of SPAB but the main driving force in the establishment of this society was William Morris, together with Philip Webb and others, who produced the original manifesto establishing the society's views promoting sensitive repair over insensitive restoration. The society, which included many influential people as members disseminated their views widely through articles and began campaigning against particular proposals for the restoration of individual buildings across the country.
- 4.3.5 In the years after the establishment of the SPAB there were a number of stalled attempts to pass legislation related to the protection of historic sites but in 1882 The Ancient Monuments Protection Act went through parliament. General Pitt-Rivers was named as the first Inspector and although it was something of a landmark act, its powers were very limited and did not cover any habitable buildings. It entirely covered prehistoric monuments and required the consent of the owner before the monument was taken into guardianship.
- 4.3.6 During the later 1880s and early 1890s various attempts were made to establish a new campaigning conservation body, principally to protect landscapes (urban and rural) from widespread redevelopment and in 1895 the National Trust was formed. Its principal purpose was the preservation for the nation lands of natural beauty, historic tenements, furniture and pictures and although it operated in the voluntary sector it had strong links to government with many MPs on its board of members.
- 4.3.7 Unlike the SPAB the National Trust was intended to be an organisation that acquired land or sites, either through donation or purchase, and then held them for preservation. A small number of ancient buildings were taken on by the trust but it appears that it proved easier to raise funds for the acquisition of open spaces of natural beauty than historic buildings and in their early decades these types of sites, including large parts of the Lake District, formed the large majority of their holdings (Jenkins, 1994).
- 4.3.8 The buildings that the Trust did acquire in this period were almost entirely modest properties, often reflecting the council members interest in vernacular architecture although in 1907 the Trust did take over Barrington Court, a large country house in Somerset. This appears to have been over-ambitious and it wasn't until the 1930s that the Trust again took on a site beyond the scope of their usual open spaces, monuments or small buildings (Jenkins, 1994).
- 4.3.9 Following the 1882 Ancient Monuments Protection Act further acts were passed in 1900 and 1910 to slightly extend the scope of protection and then three years later these were extended again and consolidated in the important 1913 Ancient Monuments Act. For the first time this afforded protection to some of the country's most important historic buildings and established the principle that the owners of these types of buildings were

not at liberty to do entirely as they like to their historic properties. It was particularly prompted by Tattershall Castle in Lincolnshire which had been purchased in 1911 by a consortium of American businessmen who were planning to remove and ship the historic stone fireplaces from the building back to the United States. There were even fears that the whole structure might be dismantled and relocated across the Atlantic but this was averted at the last moment when Lord Curzon acquired the property. It is interesting to note that following his purchase of Tattershall in 1912, Lord Curzon undertook a programme of repairs to the building and these were led by William Weir, the important architect who specialised in the repair of ancient buildings and who oversaw the RSA's works at West Wycombe in the early 1930s.

- 4.3.10 The 1913 Act empowered the Office of Works to create a list of nationally important 'scheduled monuments' for which it became a crime to damage. The act also meant that the Office of Works could now issue compulsory preservation orders covering buildings of sufficient historic interest.
- 4.3.11 By the outbreak of the First World War the field of built heritage conservation had been revolutionised from where it had been 40 years earlier. By this time there appears to have been an understanding and acceptance that the state had a role to play in protecting historic monuments, including privately owned properties, and that these buildings contributed to the nation's shared heritage.
- 4.3.12 In the 1920s, in the aftermath of the First World War, there was a surge of interest in the countryside and the field of heritage conservation developed further with a number of bodies or organisations being formed. The Ancient Monuments Society was founded in 1924 and in 1926 the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, a lobbying group funded by a number of benefactors, was formed. There were fears over the impact on the countryside and on traditional villages of suburbanisation made possible by the increase in car ownership.
- 4.3.13 Among the most influential commentators from this period include Sir Clough Williams-Ellis who wrote *England and the Octopus* and who worked with The National Trust. It is interesting to note that Williams-Ellis was the guest speaker at the West Wycombe Furniture Manufacturers' Federation annual dinner in 1930 and he said that due to the conservation of West Wycombe the village would become 'a great shrine of pilgrimage' (RSA Journal, vol. 78)
- 4.3.14 Another interesting campaign from the 1920s which formed part of this conservation movement and which is very directly related to West Wycombe is the Fund for the Preservation of Ancient Cottages which was established by the Royal Society of Arts in early 1927. This movement, which led to the acquisition of West Wycombe Village is now relatively little known, was evidently a high profile campaign backed by very influential individuals and the speakers at the inauguration conference on Wednesday 26th January 1927 included the Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin, the Speaker of the House of Commons and various other MPs. The fund is an illustration of how in this country heritage conservation has historically often been led by the voluntary (non-governmental) sector but backed by important figures within government. In some other countries there has in the past often been a much larger direct state involvement in heritage preservation.
- 4.3.15 The proceedings of the conference were published in the *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* (11 February 1927) and this provides a clear impression of the aims of the movement, the social concerns which had prompted the establishment of the fund and the optimism held by the campaigners for the good that the movement would bring.

- 4.3.16 The fund was set up with the overall aim of acquiring, restoring and leasing cottages, the preservation of which they believed had been neglected in favour of public buildings and Cathedrals. Rather than preserving cottages as museum pieces, they chose buildings which were capable of being converted to habitable dwellings to modern standards.
- 4.3.17 The speakers at the 1927 conference discuss with passion the importance of preserving historic cottages as well as the distinctive regional identities. In eulogising the humble cottage Stanley Baldwin states 'it has an appearance in the country of spontaneous and natural growth, wholly lacking in those abortions of red brick and slate which have arisen with such alacrity over the face of the country since the industrial era began'.
- 4.3.18 It would be easy to mock the somewhat rose-tinted view of the countryside that was put forward at the conference, especially in view of the squalid living conditions at this time in many villages such as West Wycombe, but another principal aim of the movement was also to upgrade these types of historic buildings and make them good places to live for their occupants. The intention was not to create historical curiosities or museum pieces; the organisers of the fund wanted them to be good quality houses but retaining historic character.
- 4.3.19 It is interesting to note that the speakers at the conference and the organisers of the fund were conscious of the limitations of existing legislation and that cottages were excluded from the scope of the Ancient Monuments Act or any other legislation.
- 4.3.20 Although the speakers at the 1927 conference express their concerns for preserving the humble cottage they imply that at this stage there was considerable uncertainty over how the fund would function, what types of property would be acquired, how they would be managed, the anticipated scale of the fund and what the movement would lead to. There was clearly a general aspiration to establish a fund with contributions or subscriptions from individuals and this would be used to preserve cottages which could be passed on but the details of this were unclear. There are suggestions that the fund might be used to establish a 'central, impartial, well-informed and, let us hope, well-equipped body.. to supplement the good will and efforts of the local authority'. This implies that some within the movement felt that the fund should also form a lobbying or an advisory body.
- 4.3.21 On 15 March 1929 the RSA held a further important meeting concerning the fund, this time presided over by Ramsay MacDonald (who would become Prime Minister in June of this year), which mentions two acquisitions through the fund: the Thomas a Becket Cottages near Worthing and Arlington Row at Bibury in the Cotswolds. However, the main purpose of the meeting appears to have been to set the ambitions of the fund higher and to purchase a complete village. This village was clearly to be West Wycombe although it does not appear to be specifically named in the proceedings of the meeting. The RSA's purchase of West Wycombe is discussed further above at section 4.2.
- 4.3.22 The purchase and reconditioning of West Wycombe village exhausted the RSA's cottage architecture fund and although this has not been fully researched in the current project it appears likely that the fund was wound down at this point. The funding of the reconditioning following the purchase of the village in March 1929 cannot have been helped by the Great stock market crash of October 1929 and the subsequent depression which must have reduced contributions to the fund.
- 4.3.23 One of the interesting developments in the 1930s was The National Trust's change of direction to help preserve country houses. The last years of the 19th century and the years up to the First World War had seen the start of the collapse of the established system of large-scale estates with country houses that had dominated the English

countryside for centuries sold off piecemeal. This was partly caused by falling income from agriculture and the steep rise of death duties and it accelerated in the inter war period with numerous estates or country houses sold piecemeal. In the 1930s there were moves for the National Trust to take a more active role to prevent this and a 'Country House Scheme' was developed whereby estates and houses could be given to the nation (the National Trust) in lieu of death duties but the families could remain living there as tenants. In 1937 the National Trust Act related to this scheme was passed and this marked the most significant change of direction thus far in the Trust's history

- 4.3.24 The system of listed buildings to protect a much wider sphere of historic buildings than those already protected by scheduling had its origins in the Second World War when there were fears of widespread destruction from German bombing. Experts such as architects and members of SPAB prepared lists of buildings which would warrant rebuilding for their heritage value if they were destroyed. These lists were then developed further in the post-war period and listed buildings legislation was included in the Town and Country Planning Act 1947. The legislation was initially relatively weak and it was only through amendments to the act later in the century that more rigorous procedures were put in place and the current status of a listed building was achieved with full statutory obligations of care and conservation.

4.4 LISTING OF WEST WYCOMBE BUILDINGS

- 4.4.1 Another interesting part of the story of the preservation of West Wycombe village is the mass listing of most of the village buildings in January 1954. Almost all the buildings facing the High Street or Church Lane were listed in a single phase and there was clearly an attempt to help preserve the village as a whole, rather than merely preserving individual buildings. Conservation Areas, which are intended to preserve the character of areas, were not introduced until 1967.

- 4.4.2 The large majority of the buildings were listed at Grade II but four buildings in the village were listed at Grade II*: the Church Loft, the Dower House, Steps House and The Furniture Factory. This excludes several other Grade II* (or Grade I) listed buildings which are more closely related to West Wycombe House rather than the village (Hellfire Caves, the Lodges, the Mausoleum, St Lawrence's Church). The Grade II* listing of the Church Loft is unsurprising for its early date and perhaps similarly the high listing of the Dower House and Steps House is unsurprising for their architectural status in the village but the Grade II* listing of the Furniture Factory is more noteworthy.

- 4.4.3 The listed status of the Furniture Factory clearly reflects the historical significance of furniture making (particularly chairs) in West Wycombe and the fact that it is the last workshop of this type in the village rather than due to the age of the building or any architectural significance. The building was constructed in the last quarter of the 19th century or the first quarter of the 20th and it has a plain form.

- 4.4.4 For this industrial building to have been given a Grade II* listing, higher than numerous fine timber framed buildings in West Wycombe, in 1954 is particularly surprising due to the lower appreciation of the significance of industrial buildings at this time. In the later 20th and 21st centuries it is common for landmark industrial buildings to be listed at Grade I or II* but in the mid 20th century it must have been very rare and reserved for iconic structures whose significance is beyond dispute. It seems like a very progressive step and it may have



Plate 11 Furniture factory

reflected an understanding that the factory would be much more vulnerable to change than the houses.

- 4.4.5 It may also have been a controversial decision to give this building a higher grade than structures such as the Apple Orchard, especially when the building was barely 50 years old and there must have been many local people still living in the village who had grown up with the furniture factory as one of the most recently built structures in West Wycombe. There may even have been people who remembered it being built.
- 4.4.6 The high grading for this building have been partly due to an apparently wrong interpretation that it could be a much altered 18th-century building whereas it strongly appears that it was entirely rebuilt around the turn of the 20th century.
- 4.4.7 The one unlisted building which has been included in the current study is Flint Cottage, the former village school constructed in 1839. This has not been fully investigated by OA but a National Trust Vernacular Building Survey was produced in c1993.

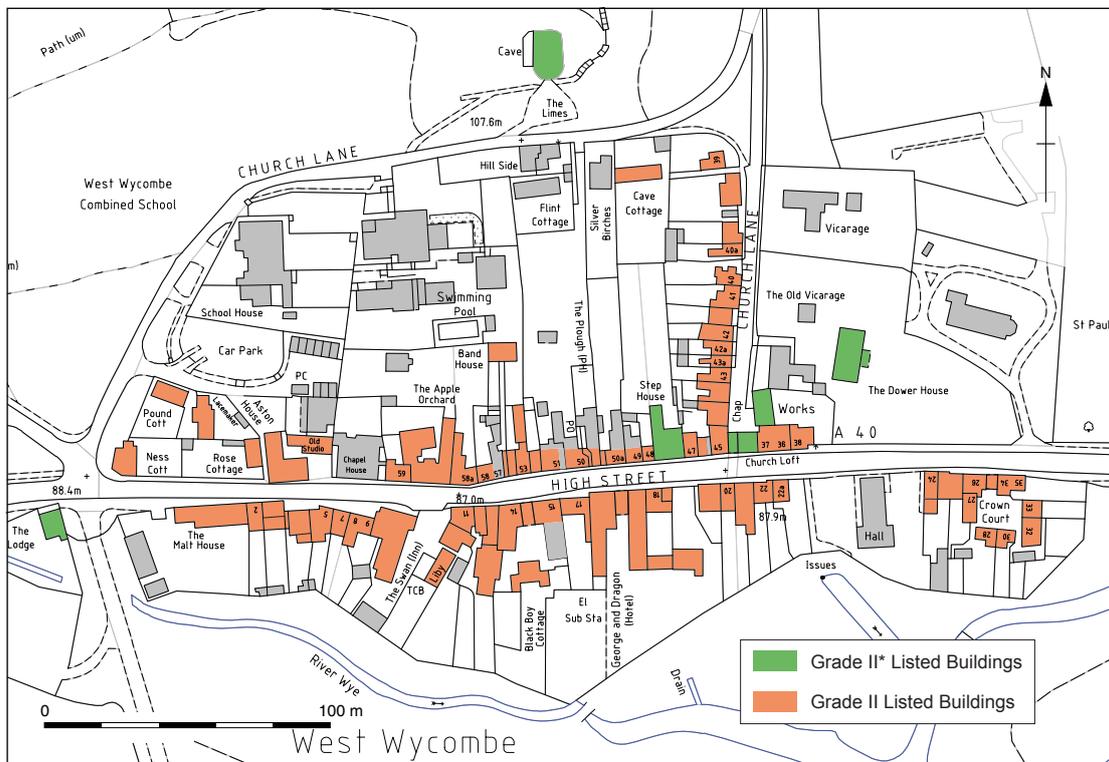


Fig. 8 Listed Buildings in West Wycombe

5 SUMMARY OF DENDROCHRONOLOGY SURVEY

5.1 GENERAL DISCUSSION

5.1.1 As referred to above the project has included dendrochronology works to assess and sample some of the buildings. For a limited number of buildings this has been extremely useful in confirming their dates of construction or growth and it has also enhanced in the understanding of other buildings where they share some features from the dated structures. When dendrochronology sampling works successfully by providing a consistent felling date from a number of timbers it provides an invaluable piece of evidence in understanding any historic building. Conventional ways of assessing the date of a building are inevitably subjective and can only provide an indication of date

but tree-ring dating can sometimes show with near certainty the date that a building was constructed in.

- 5.1.2 The dendrochronology survey in the current project has been particularly useful in understanding the Crown Court complex at the east end of the village and No. 2–9 at the west end. A number of samples were taken from the main Crown Court range facing the High Street and extending to the south with the rear projection. This work appears to have confirmed that No. 24/5 at the western end is the oldest element of the complex although its date is still slightly uncertain. A set of samples were taken in 1999 from which one sample taken from the two-bayed jettied cross wing to the east provided a date of 1450/1. A mid 15th-century date would be consistent with the form of the building (believed to have been an open hall) but the fact that it was from a single timber means that a note of caution should be applied to this date. A series of other samples from slightly different parts of this structure were taken both in the 1999 works and the recent investigations and these provided a consistent date of c1531/2. It may therefore be that the 1450/1 date is a red herring or it may be that it does represent a fragment of the original building but the structure was substantially enlarged and modified in c1532. This building was not refurbished in the recent project and Oxford Archaeology have not investigated it. Other samples have also shown that the rear projection was added to this building in c1657.
- 5.1.3 The dendrochronology work at Crown Court also included several samples from the carriage arch (No. 35) which provided a date of 1543 for this structure. From this we can also conclude with a reasonable level of confidence that the gabled building immediately to the west (east half of No. 25) predates 1543 and was probably built between 1532 and 1543. In the VBS the rooms that this structure incorporates were numbered 25B, 25E, 25H, 25I, 25J, 25K. Samples taken from the eastern section of this group (Room Nos 34A-I in VBS) shows that this later range was built in the 1640s and dendro suggests that the roof of the rear range (Room Nos 27A-G in VBS) dates from c1561. Some archaeological evidence suggests that this roof may have been reused from a different building so it may not mean that this range was constructed in c1561.
- 5.1.4 The sampling of the group of structures at the west end of the village focused on Nos 3–4 and the results suggested that number 3 was the earliest structure, constructed in 1554 and then the front range of No. 4 was added the following year in 1555. The rear wings of both these structures were probably added in 1569 or shortly afterwards.
- 5.1.5 In addition a separate piece of sampling has also recently been undertaken on the Church Loft which is not a National Trust property and has not therefore been part of the recent refurbishment. This sampling was funded by the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society and provided a felling date of 1465. This confirms the 15th-century date which has been previously suggested for this structure.



Plate 12 *The Apple Orchard*



Plate 13 *The Apple Orchard*

- 5.1.6 There were three buildings where samples were taken but these failed to provide a felling date (Black Boy Cottage, No. 5 and No. 6) and there were two further buildings which were assessed as part of the project but where no suitable timbers were identified for dendrochronology (see Table below).
- 5.1.7 As indicated above there have been several separate phases of dendrochronology sampling in West Wycombe over the last 2 decades which gradually builds up the understanding of the village and there remains great potential for further work in the future. Some particularly interesting buildings which it would be valuable to sample would include the Apple Orchard, the George and Dragon, The Old Vicarage and Nos 45–46.
- 5.1.8 The full results of the dendrochronology sampling is included at Appendix 1 but the table below provides a short summary.

Table summarising dendrochronology samples from West Wycombe

Building assessed or sampled	Dendrochronology results
No. 24 High Street	1531–2 for a stud frame in main (north) wing 1655/6 and 1656/7 (South wing)
No. 25 High Street	1531–2 for various timbers (previous work in 1999) Another sample from this building also dated to 1450 but this was a single dated sample so it should not be heavily relied on
No. 27 High Street	1560/1 (3 out of four windbraces)
No. 34/35 High Street	1640s (various floor joists)
Crown Court carriage arch	1543
The Church Loft	1465 (this sample was taken recently but it was not part of the current National Trust project)
No. 40–41 Church Lane	1753 (for a rear wall plate) 1688 (joist) These dates somewhat confusing and some further thought and interpretation will be needed.
No. 4 High Street	1554/5 (western half of Front range samples. The dendrochronologist believes that the likely construction period is probably during 1555) 1565/6 and 1568/9 (Rear wing)
No. 3 High Street	1547 (spring) – Two principal rafters (samples 5 & 6) 1554 (spring) – Three common rafters (1, 2, & 3) 1565–6 (winter) – Rear wing – window jamb / post (sample 8) 1568–9 (winter) – Rear wing rafter (sample 9)
11–13 High Street	No suitable timbers (insufficient rings)
32–33 High Street	No suitable timbers (insufficient rings)
36 High Street (Sweet Shop)	Samples taken but did not date
Black Boy Cottage	Samples taken but did not date
No. 5 High Street	Samples taken but did not date
Lake bed at West Wycombe park	On 3 March 2006 two samples were taken from timbers in the lake bed at West Wycombe park and these dated to 1712–1716.

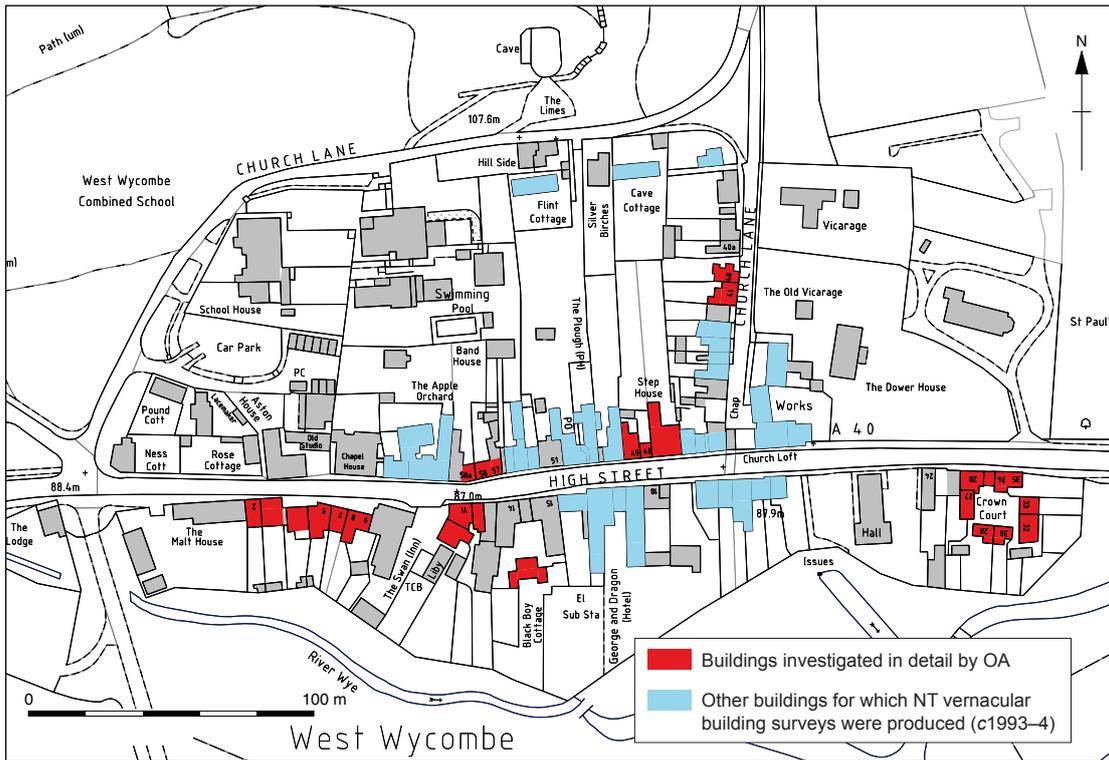


Fig. 9 Buildings investigated in West Wycombe

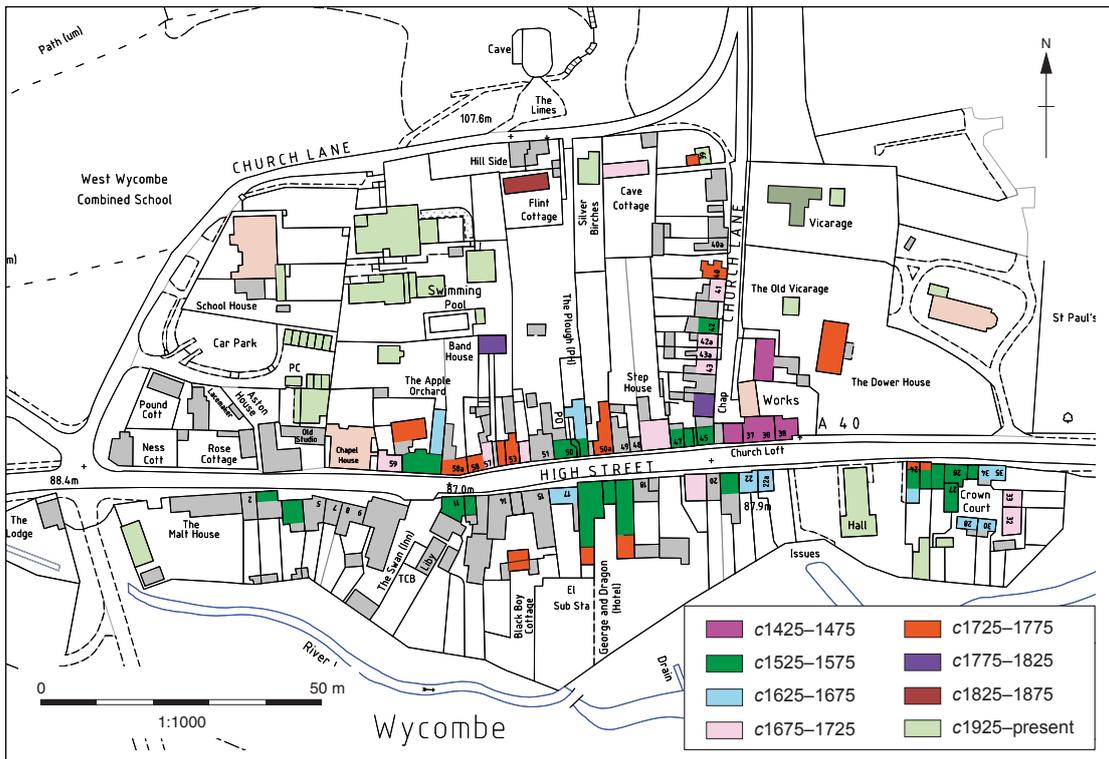


Fig. 10 Evolution of the village from dates of existing buildings

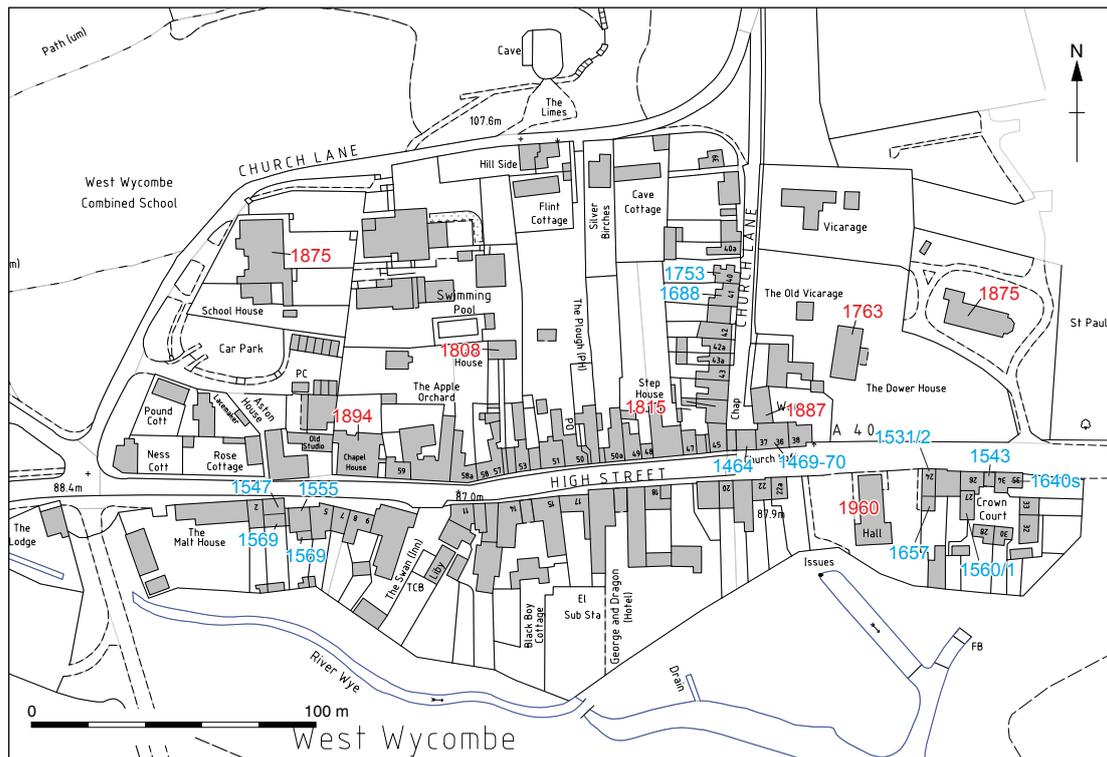


Fig. 11 Known dates of buildings in West Wycombe

6 DISCUSSION OF RECENT INVESTIGATIONS AND LOCAL BUILDING TECHNIQUES

6.1 INTRODUCTION

6.1.1 One of the principal aims of the recent investigations into the buildings of West Wycombe village has been to highlight common constructional techniques between buildings and thereby enhance understanding of the vernacular architecture of this area. As detailed elsewhere the recent investigations have focused on those buildings being refurbished and particularly parts of those buildings where significant or substantial areas of previously hidden historic fabric has been exposed. With almost all the buildings investigated this has meant a close examination of the roof structure while it was uncovered and therefore this discussion looks particularly at the roof types in the village. The discussion has also been informed by the National Trust's Vernacular Building Surveys from the early 1990s which looked at the buildings holistically but the main analysis looks at features exposed in the recent works.

6.1.2 This section starts with a general discussion of the evolution of the main types of buildings and this is followed by a more detailed analysis of the roof types found in the buildings recently investigated as well as a summary table and a brief discussion of the external form (or character) of the buildings of the village (Section 7).

6.2 GENERAL SUMMARY OF EVOLUTION OF BUILDINGS

6.2.1 The buildings of West Wycombe village form a fine collection of vernacular structures, unusually well preserved due to the foresight and actions of various conservation bodies through the 20th-century. The buildings range in date from the very late medieval period (mid 15th century) through to the 20th century and they provide an illustration of the local building techniques from this part of the Chilterns. Some

techniques have evolved from the earliest buildings while others have remained relatively consistent over the course of several centuries.

- 6.2.2 The earliest houses in West Wycombe, including two apparently from the 15th-century (The Old Vicarage and No. 36–38 High St) would largely have had open halls with a hearth in the floor and a vent in the high roof with further rooms to each side. However the oldest building in West Wycombe, the Church Loft, is not thought to have been a hall house and instead appears to have been divided into four shops from its original construction. The village appears to have expanded considerably in the first half of the 16th century and several of the buildings from this period were also open-hall houses including No. 24. Another building of interest in relation to open halls is the rear range of Crown Court (ie No. 27) which has smoke blackened roof timbers suggestive of an open hall which have been dated by dendrochronology to 1560/1. Other evidence in this building suggests that the timbers may have been taken from a different building so although the current No. 27 may not have been an open-hall house the roof may have come from one, probably in the village.



Plate 14 Rear of Church Loft

- 6.2.3 These relatively early buildings were all timber framed and the higher status structures frequently incorporated projecting jetties to the front as well as mouldings to visible timbers within the open hall or to the front. The Church Loft has jetties to the front and rear (with moulded bressemeres) and other examples of jetties from the 16th-century phase include two probable merchant's houses: the Apple Orchard and No. 44–47. These merchant's houses appear to have had dual functions with storerooms for goods and/or shops on the ground floor as well as domestic quarters on the upper floor. The jettied upper floor was arranged with an open-hall with side rooms for sleeping and other functions such as a counting house. These merchant's houses in West Wycombe also incorporated contemporary ranges to the rear which are likely to have functioned as work shops.



Plate 15 The Apple Orchard

- 6.2.4 An elaborately moulded beam survives in No. 24 Crown Court which it is believed would originally have faced into an open hall on its west side (ie now the site of the village hall) and moulded roof timbers survive in the Old Vicarage and the Church Loft. These early timber framed buildings incorporated relatively close studding to walls, wattle and daub panels and relatively thick section timbers to posts or principal floor joists.
- 6.2.5 In the post-medieval period smoke bays, upper floors and permanent chimneys were incorporated into new buildings and inserted into pre-existing open halls. An example of a smoke bay in West Wycombe can be found in No. 42–43 Church Lane. These later 16th and 17th-century buildings were also generally timber framed although the framing was simpler and with smaller sections of timber more sparingly used than in medieval structures. The studs in these



Plate 16 Wattle and daub in No. 11

buildings were more widely spaced than in earlier structures and they were less likely to incorporate the more decorative details such as mouldings to beams or braces facing the open halls. There are however several 17th-century buildings in West Wycombe which incorporate jetties.

- 6.2.6 Also in this period partitions or panels began to be formed from lath and plaster, rather than the earlier wattle and daub, and the laths used were relatively wide compared with those used in later periods. There is an interesting example of part of a surviving early lath and plaster panel in Crown Court where rather than being nailed to studs as in conventional lath and plaster, the laths were woven around staves similarly to as would be found in wattle and daub. This small section is towards the apex of a formerly external gable at the east end of No. 34 (ie Building B in Crown Court study) which has been dated by dendrochronology to 1543. This seems to represent something of a period where lath and plaster was slowly replacing wattle and daub but with the two techniques interweaving (quite literally in this case).
- 6.2.7 It appears that in West Wycombe the use of timber framing as the principal structural form for new buildings began to be phased out in the mid to later 17th century although timber framing would still have been widely used at this time and some time after, especially for more minor buildings. The Vernacular Building Survey for No. 16–17 High Street considered that this building dated from the mid 17th century and is probably the earliest surviving structure built from the outset in brick. By the 18th century all the new buildings of any significance in West Wycombe were either of brick or flint and as discussed elsewhere many of the previous timber framed buildings were then refronted in brick.

6.3 ROOF STRUCTURES

- 6.3.1 Although there is some variety in the type of roof structures in the buildings of West Wycombe there are strong similarities between the roofs of different buildings and it has been possible to identify a clear local form which most of the buildings broadly follow. By far the most common roof type found in the buildings investigated has been the Queen strut truss roof with a single tier of purlins to each slope, clasped between collar and principal rafters. The clasped purlin roof, where there is a single purlin to each slope, set within adjacent rebates in the collar and principal rafters, is a common form of roof found widely across the 'Lowland Zone' (the south and east of England) from c1500 through to the 19th century.
- 6.3.2 There are significantly earlier examples of clasped purlin roofs, including the mid 13th-century Cressing Temple, and some were constructed in the 'Highland Zone' (the north and west of the country) but these are exceptions to the rule. Prior to c1500 the crown post roof was the predominant type of roof structure in lowland England but as discussed elsewhere there are relatively few buildings in West Wycombe which pre-date 1500 so we cannot say whether crown-post roofs were common in the village in the medieval period. The one building which suggests that crown posts may have been widely constructed in the village is the Church Loft (discussed further below).
- 6.3.3 In the clasped purlin roof the principal rafters are set at the same level as the common rafters in contrast to some other roof types where the purlin is set on the principal rafter and therefore the common rafters have to be set at a higher level than the principals. In addition the fact that the purlin is beneath the principal rafter in a clasped purlin roof means that the principal rafter does not have to support the purlin and therefore the principal rafters do not have to be as large as is necessary in some other roof types. Indeed in a clasped purlin roof the principal rafter can be of broadly similar thickness than the common rafters. This is certainly true in the buildings of West

Wycombe where many of the buildings seem to have consistent runs of rafters for the full length of the building with little to easily distinguish the principal rafters, particularly when the tie beams and collars are obscured by ceilings.



Plate 17 Clasp purlin in Crown Court

- 6.3.4 The clasp purlin roofs have closed trusses with tie-beam, collar and queen struts and these are found in the West Wycombe buildings investigated from the 15th century (Old Vicarage) through to the 18th century. The closed trusses in the Old Vicarage were those either side of the arch-braced open truss which would have been above the open hall. It is perhaps worth mentioning here that the struts in these trusses between tie-beam and principal rafter are known as queen struts rather than the slightly different queen posts. In truss terminology the term queen post is usually reserved for one of a pair of posts in a truss that directly supports a purlin rather than a collar or rafter.
- 6.3.5 A minor but interesting feature of the clasp purlin roof is that the depth of the principal rafter is narrowed or halved above the collar to allow the purlin to be slipped into the rebates when the truss is already in-situ. It is usual for the principal rafter to remain halved up to the apex but sometimes there is merely a shorter trench cut in the principal to allow for the purlin to be inserted and the rafter returns to full depth up to the apex. One example of this in West Wycombe is in the roof of the rear range of Crown Court (No. 28 Crown Court).
- 6.3.6 As the clasp purlin roofs are found so widely in West Wycombe from the 15th century through to the 19th century it is not possible to gain an accurate indication of a building's date merely from the identification of this overall type of roof. When there are no dendrochronological dates or documentary evidence to provide a firm date of construction then other constructional features in the roof can provide at least some indication of when a building was constructed. Windbraces, which are commonly found in many of the buildings at West Wycombe, set beneath the purlin, can act as one such diagnostic indicator because the older braces (eg 15th or 16th century) tend to be longer and more curved than the later ones (later 17th or 18th century). Also, in the later roofs wind braces are sometimes used more sparingly and an interesting example of this at West Wycombe is the eastern section of the Crown Court range facing the High Street (ie No. 34/5 High Street). This range was constructed in the 1640s and it just has braces on one side (both slopes) of each bay whereas the adjacent range from the 1540s has them on both sides of each bay.



Plate 18 Wind braces in Crown Court



Plate 19 Wind braces in Crown Court

- 6.3.7 Another good diagnostic indicator of the date of construction of a roof is whether the common rafters are set horizontally (ie wider than they are tall) or vertically. Rafters from the 15th to 17th century are set horizontally (and the earlier they are the 'flatter' they are likely to be) but those from the 18th and particularly the 19th century the rafters are much more likely to be set vertically. Setting the rafters horizontally in this way meant that waney timbers could be used whereas such members could not be set vertically. Very waney rafters were found in many of the roofs investigated at West Wycombe although there were relatively few which retained bark.
- 6.3.8 The same principal can also be applied to floor structures where earlier joists are generally set flatter than later ones. Rafters from the later periods (especially 19th and 20th century) are also likely to be machine sawn (thus producing more regular section sizes) and from these later periods the roofs will almost certainly have a ridge piece. Few main roofs from the 19th or 20th centuries have been closely investigated in the current project, although of course many repair works were undertaken in the 1930s so in the current work the examples of this type of roof, with machine-sawn softwood rafters and ridge pieces, have largely been limited to extensions and dormers. In the large majority of roofs investigated at West Wycombe the pairs of rafters (often very waney) are pegged at the apex without a ridge piece.
- 6.3.9 The presence of distinctly cambered collars or tie-beams is also a characteristic of early (15th century) roofs and there are good examples in West Wycombe at the Old Vicarage and No. 36–38. The relative scarcity of cambered members such as these in later buildings may be due to most suitable trees having already been used or them being particularly valued and therefore less common in vernacular buildings. It is known that in the 17th and 18th centuries there was an increase in competition for timber supplies from ship builders and iron smelters.
- 6.3.10 One obvious indicator of an early building is the presence of a series of smoke blackened rafters from a former open hall. Smoke blackened timber such as these can be found in the 15th-century Old Vicarage and it is known that this was an open hall but it is interesting to note that the smoke blackened rafters are not above the hall so they must have been reset and relocated. There are also smoke darkened timbers above the rear range of Crown Court (No. 27) but evidence suggests that this roof was reused from a different building so it is not thought that this was an open hall.
- 6.3.11 Another simple characteristic which can provide some indication of the date of a roof is that inferior timbers from smaller trees can more often be found in later roofs (eg 18th century) than earlier ones. For example some of the purlins at No. 32–33 West Wycombe were formed from whole tree trunks rather than halved or quartered and similar features were also noted at No. 40–41 and No. 52. It is likely that this is at least partly due to the fact that more humble structures with inferior timbers wouldn't survive from earlier periods rather than indicating that all structures prior to the 17th century were constructed with higher quality wood.

Examples of non-clasped purlin roofs

- 6.3.12 The examples of clasped purlin roofs in West Wycombe are so numerous (see table below) that rather than discussing each one individually it is perhaps easier to list those which are not clasped-purlins queen-strut roofs. The Church Loft from 1465 is particularly interesting because it is the one early roof whose form is clearly distinct from the other pre-19th-century roof structures. Indeed in terms of illustrating the evolution of roof construction it may be that the Church Loft roof represents a late example of an earlier roof form which was once prevalent in the village. This has queen-strut trusses but the roof incorporates a crown plate (or collar purlin) which is an important characteristic of earlier crown post roofs which were largely replaced by clasped purlin roofs. Similarly the trusses incorporate inner arched struts which



Plate 20 Church loft roof structure

meet at the crown plate and again this is the only example of this found in the buildings recently investigated in West Wycombe. The Church Loft roof has two tiers of butt purlins (not clasped) and two tiers of curved wind braces beneath the purlins.

- 6.3.13 Another building with an interesting roof which is slightly different to most in West Wycombe is No. 40–41 Church Lane. This building has been much altered since its original construction but it retains an open cruck frame to the centre of the building and butt purlins. Dendrochronology has tentatively suggested a possible date of c1688 for this structure although the roof form would suggest a roof slightly older.



Plate 21 Roof of No. 40–41

- 6.3.14 A further interesting form of roof is found in the east range of Crown Court (No. 32–33). This roof incorporates two purlins to each slope (very unusual for West Wycombe) and the trusses incorporate distinctive curved members beneath the collar which sandwich the lower purlin together with the principal rafter. The National Trust Vernacular Building Survey interpreted these to mean that the building was a much altered cruck house of possible early to mid 15th century date whereas the current investigation considers that they are more likely to curved inner principals. Curved (or cranked) inner principals are a characteristic feature of a particular roof form found widely in this general area (South Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Berkshire) with a particular concentration in the Wycombe district. Studies of this roof type suggest that the earliest examples are from the mid 17th century but they are most commonly found in the mid to late 18th



Plate 22 *Truss with clasped inner principals (No. 32–33)*

and they can be found in 19th century buildings (Clark, 2004). It is likely that number 32–33 was constructed in the late 17th or early 18th century.

- 6.3.15 The upper purlins of No. 32–33 are clasped between principal rafter and the collar similarly to those found commonly in other buildings in West Wycombe and the purlins appear to be scarfed immediately to the north of each truss with two pegs adjacent to the principal rafter/curved inner principal. The roof of the 18th-century Black Boy Cottage also incorporates cranked inner principals.
- 6.3.16 In the 19th century there were significant changes in the general field of roof construction, due in part to technological advances, although this is not a principal area of West Wycombe's significance and other than small extensions there few substantial buildings from this period have been examined in the current study. Indeed no major building from this period has been investigated in the recent refurbishment works although in the 1990s a National Trust Vernacular Building Survey was produced of the late 19th-century Furniture Factory which provided some information on the roof there. The roof is formed with composite trusses comprising softwood principal rafters and a central metal tie-rod, typical for a late 19th-century industrial structure.
- 6.3.17 A minor but interesting feature of some vernacular roofs which has been noted in West Wycombe are small holes known as rafter holes which are formed in one side of sequences of rafters, towards their base. These holes are c3cm in diameter and they project most of the way through each rafter but not entirely through.
- 6.3.18 Rafter holes such as these are a recognised feature of many historic buildings and they have been the subject of some speculation in a number of articles (eg Further Thoughts on Rafter Holes by BH Johnson, *Archaeological Journal*, 1987). It is believed that they may have related to the initial temporary setting out of the roof timbers on

the ground before all the joints are firmly fixed together and the holes probably had small ties to temporarily hold the roof together.

6.3.19 Rafter holes were noted in the 15th-century Church Loft and No. 34–35 Crown Court (Building B) which was constructed in 1543 and it is interesting to note that with the Crown Court example these holes all face towards the central line of the building so in the eastern half of this building the rafter holes are on the western side of the rafters while in the western half they are on the eastern side. Presumably the framework was erected working out from the centre.



Plate 23 Rafter holes in Crown Court

6.3.20 As with almost any group of historic buildings a range of carpenter's marks have been noted in the investigations at West Wycombe. These marks were almost entirely Roman numerals and either scribed with a race knife (eg No. 11–13 and No. 34–35 Crown Court) or formed with a chisel (No. 40–41). In general earlier carpenter's marks tend to be longer and inscribed whereas later ones from the 18th and 19th centuries are often smaller and formed with a chisel. The carpenters marks in Building 57–58 have scribed lines added to the Roman numerals and these indicate the intended orientation of the member.



Plate 24 Carpenter's marks (No. 40–41)

6.4 SUMMARY TABLE SHOWING VERNACULAR FEATURES OF THE MAIN VILLAGE BUILDINGS

6.4.1 This table is intended to provide an outline summary of the main vernacular features of the buildings either recently investigated by Oxford Archaeology or for which a Vernacular Building Survey was previously produced by the National Trust. It is very much a summary and is not intended to be an exhaustive list. The entries in the table are ordered chronologically to help the identification of any evolution in building techniques.

Summary table showing vernacular features of the main village buildings

Build	Date	Features
Old Vicarage	Early to mid 15th	Open hall and decorated arch-braced open truss. Slightly cambered tie beam and cambered collar. Single clasped purlin to each slope with Queen Strut trusses. The central truss over the hall was a jointed cruck with sharply cranked collar close to apex and mouldings. Regular windbraces to each bay.
Church Loft	1465	Timber framing. Jettied upper storey to front and rear supported by curved brackets. Queen strut roof trusses but with crown plate (or collar purlin) and inner arched struts which meet at the Crown Plate. Two tiers of butt purlins (not clasped). Moulded underside to tie-beam. Two tiers of curved wind braces beneath purlins. Rafter holes identified towards the feet of the common rafters.

Build	Date	Features
36-38	1469-70	Timber framed with jettied gable. Trusses with cambered tie, collar, queen struts, a single tier of clasped purlins to each slope and pairs of wind braces beneath the purlin.
Building E in Crown Court	1531-2 (?)	Timber framed with jetty to front. Queen-strut trusses with a single tier of clasped purlins to each slope. Large principal rafters and cambered collars. Wind braces but only one now visible.
Building D in Crown Court	Pre 1543	Timber framed. Queen-strut trusses, clasped purlins and wind braces.
42 Church Lane	Early to mid C16th	Queen post trusses, chamfered clasped purlins
Apple Orchard	Early to mid 16th century	Timber framed with jetty. Curved wind braces, queen strut trusses with single clasped purlin to each slope and high collars.
Building B in Crown Court	1543	Double windbraces Box frame Clasped purlins Roman numeral carpenter's marks (race knife I think) Rafter holes on N slope rafters (in West bay of 34). Scarfed purlins at the truss junction
No. 3	1554	Timber framed building with clasped purlins, queen-strut trusses and wind braces
No. 4	1555	Timber framed building with clasped purlins, queen-strut trusses and wind braces
11-13	Mid C16th with later extensions	Primary building timber framed with queen strut trusses, clasped purlins, single tier of wind braces and cambered collars. Also scribed Roman numeral carpenter's marks. An extension possibly from the mid 17th century is cruder with yokes to trusses, thick ridge piece and no wind braces.
Plough Inn and Post Office	Mid C16th	Timber framed, wattle and daub. Originally it was a small 2-storey cottage.
21	Mid C16th	Queen strut trusses, clasped purlins, wind braces, wattle and daub infill, wall painted to look like brickwork.
George and Dragon	C16th	Gallery in rear accommodation range with jetty. Main timber-framed structure with wind braces in the roof.
Crown Court Building C.	1560/1	Relatively straight wind braces
No. 2	Late C16th-early 17th	Timber framed. Butt-purlins jointed to principals (not clasped like most buildings). Probably were queen-strut trusses but not visible (or in-situ). Tie beam and high collar.
16-17	Mid C17th	Probably built as a brick structure from the outset although apparently re-fronted in 18th century nonetheless.
Building A in Crown Court (34-35)	1640s	Rafters run over clasped purlins. Jettied box frame. Rafters laid flat Sparing use of single wind braces in bays rather than pairs - indicative of slightly later date I think (construction being simplified) Also the wind braces are pretty straight. Not very curved which again implies a later date. The 1640s block may be quite an interesting example of a relatively late timber framed building.
48-49	Early-mid C17th	Timber framed. Queen-strut trusses with single purlin to each slope. Straw found in roof from 1930s works
29	mid C17th	Rafters pegged over purlin. Apparently no wind braces (but poss hidden) No ridge piece Queen struts Refaced timber framing
19	Mid-late C17th	Timber framed but external walls apparently entirely replaced by brick in 18th century.
22-22a	C17th	Timber framed and jettied front

Build	Date	Features
42a/43a	Mid-late C17th	Queen strut trusses, clasped purlins and no ridge piece.
57-58	Mid-late C17th	Rafters running over purlins Building re-fronted in brick. – flemish bond with blue headers
52	Mid-late C17th	Use of whole small trees for purlins (rather than quartered/halved larger ones).
No. 40-41	1688 ??	Cruck Butt purlins Roman numeral carpenter's marks Building refaced Use of whole small trees for purlins (rather than quartered/halved larger ones).
59	Late C17th	Timber framed labourer's cottages
Cave Cottage	Late C17th	Timber framed labourer's cottages. Simple trusses with raking struts. Single tier of diagonally set purlins. Posts with jowled heads and braces from post to tie.
Cave Cottage	Late C17th	Timber framed building encased in brick in 18th C. RSA using hand made roof tiles on a bed of wheat straw. RSA using handmade tiles and reusing dormers
32-33	Late C17th or early 18th.	Curved inner principals 2 purlins rather than one to each slope. (butt purlins??) use of windbraces in occasional bays rather than consistently through the building, and the windbraces are short and straight extensions added in the 1930s works, timber framing refaced or replaced and lengths of timber (packing pieces) added on top of rafters to re-profile the roof line. Purlins scarfed immediately to the north of each truss with two pegs Rafters laid flat Use of whole small trees for purlins (rather than quartered/halved larger ones). No ridge piece
Steps House	c1700	Brick building.
43 Church Lane	1722	Brick building
20	Early C18th	Small brick building
39	Mid C18th	Small flint cottage with brick dressings
50a	C18th	Little of the structure is visible (and none of the roof).
Black Boy Cottage	C18th	Brick walls from outset. Trusses with low collars and cranked inner principals.
30	Late C18th or early 19th	Straight wind brace, Ridge piece Nailed rafters
Flint Cottage	1839	Flint walls with brick dressings. Queen strut trusses
Furniture Factory	Late C19th or early 20th	Weatherboarded workshop

7 RSA RECONDITIONING WORKS IN THE 1930S

7.1 INTRODUCTION

7.1.1 As detailed elsewhere one of the interests of West Wycombe village is the preservation and reconditioning works undertaken by the Royal Society of Arts in the 1930s. This interest is partly due to the RSA's cottage fund and how the work fitted into the wider contemporary heritage movement but the details of the conservation work undertaken

are also of some interest. The works were overseen by the important architect William Weir who specialised in conservation projects and they show both a sensitivity to the nature of the buildings and an understanding of the importance of following vernacular traditions. A good summary of the works is provided in an article by William Weir in the Journal of the Royal Society of Arts from August 18th 1933.

- 7.1.2 It is not intended here to list all the works undertaken at this time to all the buildings but there are certain common themes or types of repair.

Roof works:

- 7.1.3 William Weir described the chief structural work undertaken as ‘the renewal of the ground floors and putting the roofs in water tight condition’. The works to the roofs included removing the tiles, repairing or replacing failing rafters and renewing the battens with strips of fir. One of the most common aspects of the 1930s work which has been identified has been the 1930s attempts to counter sagging roofs by adding piles of battens or thin strips of wood to the backs of the sagging rafters. There are sometimes as many as five separate strips of timber in each pile with each layer slightly longer than the one above so that the pile is highest where the sag of the original rafter is greatest. There are some examples of slight variation to this approach to countering sag such as in No. 34/5 Crown Court where tapering single lengths of timber were used instead of piles of individual strips. It is interesting that this general approach illustrates the conservation ethics of the 1930s works which favoured repairing the existing historic structure rather than replacing it with modern rafters.

- 7.1.4 The roof tiles were generally relaid on a bed of straw and much evidence of this has been found in the recent refurbishment works. This tile bedding did not generally survive intact in the roofs but there were many fragments of the straw on rafters and in the attic spaces. This use of straw to bed roofing tiles is a vernacular technique common in the Chilterns and mentioned in the Chilterns Conservation Board’s Chilterns Design Guide (Roofing Materials). This Design Guide states that it was usual in the Chilterns for roof tiles to be laid on a material such as straw or hay to help exclude draughts and make the roof resistant to the danger of driven snow. The Guide also states that there are accounts of moss sometimes being used in the Hughenden Valley.

- 7.1.5 The specifications for works to the buildings states that the existing roof tiles should be carefully stacked and where possible reused. This again illustrates the sensitive approach to works with the intention of repairing but maintaining the historic character of the buildings.

Other external works

- 7.1.6 Various other external works were undertaken including repointing and repairing brickwork, limewashing brick walls and repairing windows.

Internal works:

- 7.1.7 The damp paved floors were relaid with a foundation of concrete on hard core and walls were extensively whitened. Boarded floors were also closely examined and either replaced, repaired or ventilated as necessary. The interiors saw numerous minor areas of refurbishment such as new draining boards, partitions and ladders as well as more substantial alterations such as the formation of new bathrooms in larger houses.

- 7.1.8 The 1930s works in several of the buildings included the use of a type of boarding called ‘Maftex’ insulate boarding. This appears to be a thermal insulating board which was also structural and which was formed from the roots of the licorice plant. Maftex appears to have been a new material from the 1920s and promotional material suggests that it could be used in stud partitions, external walls (with cladding over), roofs

(beneath tiles) etc. Maftex is specified in the specification for works to Cave Cottage in a series of large new gables proposed. William Weir's account of the reconditioning from 1933 states that Maftex board was used throughout in place of plaster for ceilings and partitions.

Garden buildings:

7.1.9 A common feature of the buildings in West Wycombe are outhouses in many of the gardens of the cottages. These are sometimes old structures from the 19th century which were enlarged or partially rebuilt in the 1930s works but there are some purpose-built ones entirely dating from the 1930s. William Weir's account of the works from 1933 states that 'washhouses and wood-houses in most cases have been erected in the gardens and washing coppers removed from the cottages'. In an account of the reconditioning works from 1932 Captain Hill, the RSA's agent, also speaks with pride at the 'decent washhouses' in Crown Court which had replaced the 'dirty old stables'.

7.1.10 A rapid examination has been made in the current works of some of the external outhouses including a good row to the rear of No. 2-9 beyond a shared passage and built against a flint boundary wall. These have flint and brick walls and they appear to be older structures altered in the 1930s works. The sheds are well-built structures and they generally have a woodshed and a main shed. The sheds formerly incorporated washing coppers but these appear to have now been very largely or entirely removed. The chimneys however from the coppers frequently survive. The wood appears to have been fuel for the coppers.



Plate 25 Outhouse to rear of No. 2-9

8 EXTERNAL FORM AND GENERAL CHARACTER OF BUILDINGS OF WEST WYCOMBE

8.1 INTRODUCTION

8.1.1 West Wycombe is a highly picturesque village in the bottom of a Chilterns valley and its strong historical character is created partly through the way that the buildings have gradually evolved over time and also through the consistent use of a limited number of local building materials such as timber, brick, flint and tiles. The buildings are generally of a broadly consistent size (two storied) and share many common features to each other but they are far from uniform in appearance and it is this variety within a vernacular framework that creates the character of the village.

8.2 WALLS

8.2.1 Although many of the buildings in West Wycombe are timber framed, or have timber framed cores, the dominant constructional material in the village is local orange/brown brick, particularly in the buildings facing the High Street. Brick is used in a range of ways including: as the principal structural material in some buildings (eg Steps House and No. 50a); as brick nogging infill to timber framing (eg No. 6); as fully refaced earlier buildings (discussed further below) and of course in the many chimneys in the village. The bricks are generally an orange/brown colour although the exact shade varies and as referred to above in the historical background it is likely



Plate 26 Brick building in Church Lane



Plate 27 Aston House

that these bricks were largely or entirely manufactured in kilns on Downley Common or others on the West Wycombe estate.

8.2.2 The main areas of brick walling in West Wycombe tend to be laid with Flemish bond and there are several examples of distinctive, decorative Flemish bond using blue headers and red stretchers. These examples include Aston House towards the west end of the village and No. 40–41 Church Lane. Most of the brick buildings facing the High Street have been colour washed.

8.2.3 As detailed elsewhere a considerable number of the timber framed buildings were refaced in brick in the 18th century, as part of a major investment in the village and a modernisation of the buildings by the Dashwoods. In previous centuries brick had been an expensive material used principally on grand houses and in the Georgian period, by when it had become cheaper, it remained fashionable. West Wycombe village relied on the coaching trade and presumably the re-facing of the buildings along the High Street in the 18th century was closely related to the need to attract passing customers by remaining up to date.

8.2.4 Another interesting and similar example of this attempt to appear modern has been found at No.21 High Street where the removal of cement render from the front elevation in 2010 revealed a section of the front external wall which had been painted to look like brickwork. This building was used in the 18th century as an inn (the Red Lion) and presumably the 'fake brickwork' was intended to attract trade by giving the elevation a consistent modern appearance.

8.2.5 The use of flint as a constructional material in walls is one of the most distinctive vernacular features or characteristics associated with the Chilterns and there are many examples of this in West Wycombe village, often combined with brick quoins and dressings. Examples of buildings where flint is the primary material used in the walls include the malthouse at the west end of the village, the two early 19th-century chapels, the rear range of Crown Court (ie No. 27), 39 Church Lane and the rear of No. 53 High Street. However it is interesting to note that the flint buildings tend to be rear ranges behind



Plate 28 Flint outhouses

the High Street or buildings such as the malthouse at the very end of the village and almost none of the most prominent buildings facing the main stretch of the High Street are faced in flint. The one exception to this is No. 59, the small cottage between the Apple Orchard and the Methodist Chapel, and the fact that this particularly humble

dwelling is of flint is perhaps indicative of how flint would often have been associated with lower status buildings.

- 8.2.6 In any town or village such as this the higher status buildings would have been grouped along the High Street or towards the centre but this may have been particularly true in West Wycombe due to its reliance for a long period on the coaching trade where there would have been considerable importance placed on attracting passing travellers. With these types of buildings the front range facing the High Street would have been more likely to have been of brick with the rear ranges sometimes of flint.
- 8.2.7 The one dramatic exception in the village to this idea of flint being a lower status vernacular material is the Dower House at the eastern end of the village which is a very high status building built in 1763 and which is faced in knapped flint with unknapped flint dressings. Something of a distinction can be drawn however between the use of flint as a cheap material in humble vernacular buildings and its extensive, but essentially decorative, use in the Dower House. The use of flint in the Dower House is similar to its use in various 18th-century park buildings such as temples, bridges and of course the great mausoleum on the hill.
- 8.2.8 The 'Conservation Area Character Study' states that 'by the mid 17th century it (ie flint) was beginning to be used on domestic buildings, cut and knapped, and dressed with brick'
- 8.2.9 The Chilterns Conservation Board's 'Buildings Design Guide' states that although flint has been a basic building material for centuries 'it was only towards the end of the 18th and into the 19th centuries that it was much more commonly used, often for domestic construction'.
- 8.2.10 Flint is also very widely used in West Wycombe to form boundary walls with brick piers or in the plinths of timber framed buildings.
- 8.2.11 An interesting constructional theme of the village noted in the recent project has been the cumulative growth of a number of walls. For example the west wall of the rear extension of Steps House has five phases, apparently having originated as a property boundary wall, and there is similar phasing to the rear of No. 48-49. Here the boundary wall with No. 50 (in rear extension) is partly of flint at the lower level and above this is a wall plate from the extension and then above this is brickwork.

8.3 ROOF TYPE/COVERING

- 8.3.1 The roofs are almost entirely covered with peg tiles (the main exception being the 1894 Methodist Chapel) and they are generally gabled either facing the High Street or running parallel with it. There are however also a number of hipped roofs, generally to buildings of 19th or 20th-century date, which add to the variety of the village. The eaves are visible to almost all the buildings although a small number of exceptions include two buildings facing each other at the centre of the village: the George and Dragon and No. 50a which each have their eaves hidden behind 18th-century brick parapets.
- 8.3.2 The backs of roof tiles were examined during the recent works for markings or graffiti but none was found.
- 8.3.3 Many of the roofs incorporate small dormers to illuminate the attics or upper floors and this is a common feature found widely in the Chilterns. A number of these were added in the RSA's 1930s works but there are older examples and there is also evidence of dormers sometimes having been moved in the 1930s works from one slope to another.

Some of the dormers break the eaves (eg No. 59) while others are higher up the slope (eg Apple Orchard and Steps House).

8.3.4 The chimneys in the village are of brick and they are generally relatively plain although some more decorative examples can be found in the Apple Orchard and No. 2-3 where the brickwork in the quoins is pronounced and this is extended towards the top to form an arch.

8.3.5 The stacks in the former open halls are secondary insertions, probably dating to the 17th or 18th century when the building was upgraded and even with some of the buildings which were



Plate 29 Dormers to Black Boy Cottage

constructed with a chimney the current stack has been at least partially rebuilt. The stacks are generally set on the ridge or at the gable but sometimes they are halfway down a roof slope. This can often be indicative of the addition of an outshut roof extension. There are a small number of buildings which retain smoke blackened rafters although not intact examples of open-hall roofs. The Old Vicarage was an open hall and has smoke blackened rafters but the timbers are not in the section of the building where the hall was located suggesting that the rafters have been dismantled and moved. Blackened rafters are also found in the rear range of Crown Court (No. 27) but again evidence suggests that these have been reused from elsewhere.

8.4 WINDOWS

8.4.1 The buildings of the village incorporate various types of window including sashes and casements and it is hard to generalise about their form. Some windows are taller than they are wide while others are slightly wider and many ground floor windows in the brick (or refaced) buildings are beneath segmental brick arches.

8.4.2 One interesting feature found widely in the village are external timber shutters fixed to either side of the windows. Numerous buildings facing the High Street have these at ground floor including the Swan Inn, No. 2-9, No. 19-20, Steps House. There are also many glazed oriel shop-front windows and a number of unusual 'Yorkshire' horizontal sliding sash windows (eg No. 40 Church Lane and 17 High Street).

9 GROWTH OF WEST WYCOMBE FROM EXISTING BUILDINGS

9.1 INTRODUCTION

9.1.1 It is interesting and useful to consider the growth of the village from the known or suspected dates of construction of the surviving buildings.

9.1.2 As detailed elsewhere the recent dendrochronology work has provided reasonably definitive dates for several buildings, as well as more tentative dates for others, while the dates of a range of other structures are already documented or known from features such as date stones or similar inscriptions. The buildings with known documented dates are almost



Plate 30 Date stone to No. 43 Church Lane

entirely of 19th-century date (or later) and often communal structures such as chapels, churches or schools. In contrast the dendrochronology work has principally been useful in providing dates for the earlier buildings, largely due to the buildings targeted for this type of analysis.

- 9.1.3 Although we do know the date of construction of a good number of buildings these still represent a relatively small proportion of the overall number of buildings in the village and therefore this analysis has also been based on the assessment of the date of the many other buildings for which National Trust Vernacular Building Surveys were undertaken in the early 1990s.

9.2 AIMS AND LIMITATIONS

- 9.2.1 This section is intended to provide an indicative summary of the growth of the village, highlighting the main periods of growth, rather than a highly detailed or comprehensive analysis. This section has listed the original construction of buildings but it has not attempted to follow this by including subsequent extensions, refacings or other building works.

- 9.2.2 Clearly work would have been undertaken in the 'quiet periods' identified but probably generally on a smaller scale.

- 9.2.3 Clearly the picture of the growth of West Wycombe that this provides is incomplete in various ways such as the fact that it is only based on the surviving buildings but it does provide useful clues to the evolution of the village, especially when considered alongside other evidence such as documentary sources and archaeological remains.

- 9.2.4 In addition the extent of the dendrochronology works has been limited and this may have skewed the analysis to some extent because only some of the known older buildings have been sampled. There is scope for a lot of further dendrochronology work in the future and it's likely that if it was possible to sample every building then the analysis presented here would be quite different.

- 9.2.5 To simplify the analysis of the evolution of the village from the existing buildings we have divided the last 600 years into eleven distinct periods and then placed the buildings whose age is known (or speculated) into the relevant time period. The time periods are all 50 years long other than the last one which is from 1925 to the present.

- 9.2.6 The results are summarised in the table below and shown on Figures 9–10.

9.3 RESULTS OF ANALYSIS

- 9.3.1 The first 50-year period, including the oldest known buildings in the village is from **1425 to 1475** and this includes three buildings in a distinct cluster at the eastern end of the village. Two of the structures (the Church Loft and the immediately adjacent No. 36–38) each face the High Street and each has been dated by dendrochronology to the 1460s (albeit with 36–38 the dendro dating is more tentative than for the Church Loft). The other building in this first group is the Old Vicarage which has not been investigated in the recent works, and from which no dendrochronology samples have been taken, but which has been tentatively dated by the VBS to the early to mid 15th century.

- 9.3.2 The distinct grouping of these earliest three buildings so close to each other is clearly of interest and suggests the possibility that the medieval settlement was focussed on this area, at the junction with Church Lane. The lane would have led up to the medieval church on the hill that was replaced in the 18th century by the current Church of St

Lawrence. As outlined above it is believed that the Black Death in the mid 14th-century had a particularly devastating effect on West Wycombe and this had an ongoing effect on the village for much of the rest of the century. It may be that the three buildings identified here from the 1425–1475 phase represent part of a period of recovery when West Wycombe began to grow again.

- 9.3.3 No buildings have been identified as surviving from the next 50 year period, from **1475 to 1525** but there are a large number from the following period, from **1525 to 1575**. From the evidence of the surviving buildings this mid 16th-century period strongly appears to have been a time of prosperity and growth for West Wycombe. In the current study 12 buildings have been identified as either definitely or apparently having been built in this period including four that have been relatively firmly dated by dendrochronology. This group of buildings includes several structures that would have been relatively high status dwellings such as the Apple Orchard and No. 44–47, each of which are suggestive of having been merchant's houses. This period also includes the George and Dragon and although this coaching inn was substantially overhauled in the early 18th-century it does appear to have been a large, important building from its original construction.
- 9.3.4 The buildings from this phase are relatively evenly distributed along the High Street, on both sides of the road, and there is also a building from this period towards the centre of Church Lane. As outlined above the cluster of buildings from the earlier period (1425–1475) may suggest the focus of a medieval settlement around the junction with Church Lane but the distribution of buildings from the mid 16th-century suggests that by this point the village had spread right along the High Street.
- 9.3.5 At least three of the distinct structures that form the Crown Court complex at the eastern end of the village were constructed in this period. These buildings face the High Street and at their western end they include what appears to be the truncated rump (No. 24) of what was probably a high status house with an open hall. Crown Court is now slightly detached from the main buildings of the village but it seems highly likely that this does not reflect the historic form and that when it was first built the large gap immediately west of Crown Court, extending up to No. 22a, would have been fully lined with buildings. Crown Court may well always have represented the eastern end of the settlement (the c1698 map suggests this) but it is unlikely to have been somewhat isolated as it is now. The area west of Crown Court now houses the modern village hall but previously it has been occupied by a large chair works and malt house.
- 9.3.6 The apparent building boom in West Wycombe in the mid 16th century is of interest but so is the next 50-year period from **1575 to 1625** from which only a single existing building appears to survive (No. 2). As stated above this is no doubt a simplistic analysis and some new buildings will have been constructed at this time but it does strongly appear that following the busy mid 16th-century phase there was a much quieter period when far fewer new buildings were built.
- 9.3.7 The following 50 year period (**1625–1675**) also appears to have been relatively quiet with only four buildings in the current study apparently having been built at this time (one from dendro) and none of these structures being particularly large or high status.
- 9.3.8 The period from **1675 to 1725** includes the point at which West Wycombe estate was acquired by the Dashwoods and probably related to this there is a significant increase in the buildings known to have been constructed. The new buildings includes relatively modest structures replacing previous buildings or filling gaps between existing structures as well as grander buildings such as Steps House, a fine Queen Anne building which is considerably grander than the other buildings in the village. It is also useful to note that this was the period in which numerous old timber framed buildings were

re-fronted in brick (not detailed in the table below), presumably as part of a concerted campaign to remodel the Dashwood's new village in the Georgian style.

- 9.3.9 As outlined above Mary Everett's study of 18th-century West Wycombe, included extensive documentary research and she identified a distinct phase of development between 1710 and 1724 when the first baronet started building the house and this development work extended into the village. There appears to have been a policy at this time of building up the estate and gaining greater control of the property in the village. Everett also identified another similar phase between c1750 and 1780 when the second Baronet extended the estate.
- 9.3.10 The relatively high level of development continued in the following 50 year period (1725–1775), again with a mixture of humble dwellings (eg No. 9 Church Lane), infill blocks and a relatively high status Georgian town house (No. 50a). The fine Dower House was also constructed in this period although this may be considered slightly detached from the main village and it has not been studied in detail in the current project. It is likely that a number of buildings were again refaced in brick in this period.
- 9.3.11 In contrast to the previous century there appears to have been far less new buildings constructed in the next 50 years (1775–1825) probably due at last partly to the death of Sir Francis Dashwood in 1781 and the passing of the baronetcy to Sir John Dashwood-King, the half brother of Sir Francis who spent little time at West Wycombe. Indeed it wasn't until 1849 that West Wycombe again formed the principal home of the Dashwoods and by this time the estate is said to have been neglected. The only two buildings identified in the current study as having been constructed in this period are two chapels which reflecting wider social trends of the time. These were a Congregational Chapel constructed in 1808 and a Wesleyan chapel in 1815
- 9.3.12 This trend continued in the following 50 year period (1825–1875) with the only identified building being the village school (Flint Cottage) constructed in 1839.
- 9.3.13 The later 19th and early 20th century (1875–1925) was a period of economic difficulties for the Dashwoods and it is known that they undertook little work in the village but this was a time when there were a number of important new buildings constructed in the village. These were largely of a social or communal nature including a new school built in 1875, a new church towards the east end of the village also in 1875 and the chair factory in Church Lane probably constructed in 1887. The new Methodist chapel towards the west end of the High Street was built in 1894.

9.4 SUMMARY

- 9.4.1 The evidence of the distribution and survival of the buildings at West Wycombe tentatively suggests that there may have been a medieval settlement principally focused on the junction between the High Street and Church Lane and that in the mid 15th century several new buildings were constructed, possibly at a time when the village was recovering following the Black Death a century earlier. In the mid 16th century there appears to have been a more substantial period of growth and prosperity when many new buildings were constructed along the full length of the High Street, including several high status houses. The following 100 years appears to have seen far fewer new buildings erected but the late 17th and early 18th centuries was a period of investment and growth, presumably linked to the Dashwood's acquisition of the estate. This growth continued in the mid 18th century, coinciding with the 2nd Baronet (Lord Le Despencer) who invested heavily in various areas of the West Wycombe estate. The evidence of the surviving buildings suggests that this investment ended suddenly, probably related to the death of Lord Le Despencer and the passing of the Baronetcy to Sir John Dashwood-King who spent little time at West Wycombe. Sir John's successor, the 4th Baronet also cared little for West Wycombe and it wasn't until he died in 1849

that West Wycombe returned to being the family's principal residence. The first half of the 19th century is also known to have been a period of financial difficulties for the Dashwoods and this appears to be reflected in the relative lack of investment in the village.

- 9.4.2 The later 19th century was a period when the main new buildings constructed were of a communal or social nature such as schools, chapels, churches and factories.

Table grouping existing buildings by date of construction

50 year period	Date of construction (Dendro, date stone or indicative from VBS)*
1425–1475	The Old Vicarage (VBS) Church Loft built (1465) No. 36–38 built (1469–70)
1475–1525	NONE
1525–1575	No. 11 (house) No. 21 (house) (VBS) No. 42 built (house) (VBS) No. 44–47 built (high status merchant's (?) house) (VBS) Apple Orchard (high status merchant's (?) house) (VBS) Plough Inn and Post Office built (house/cottage) George and Dragon (large inn) (VBS) Building E (No. 24 etc.) in Crown Court (1532) Building D (No. 25) in Crown Court Building B (No. 34) in Crown Court built (1543) No. 3 (1554) Front range of No. 4 (1555) Rear wing of No. 4 (1569)
1575 – 1625	No. 2
1625–1675	No. 16–17 constructed as brick dwelling (VBS) No. 22–22a built (VBS) No. 29–30 built (VBS) Building A Crown Court (1640s) No. 48–49
1675–1725	No. 19 built (VBS) 32–33 built No. 42a/43 built (VBS) No. 52 built (VBS) No. 57 built (VBS) No. 59 built 9VBS) Cave Cottage built (VBS) Steps House Possible construction of Building 40–41 (1688) No. 43 built (1722)
1725–1775	Numerous buildings refaced in brick. No. 8 Swann Inn No. 5–7 No. 42 refaced in brick (1735) No. 20 built (VBS) No. 39 built (VBS) 50a built (VBS) No. 53&56 built (VBS) No. 58a (VBS) Black Boy Cottage built Extension to Building 40–41 (1753) Dower House
1775–1825	Congregational chapel or Band House (1808) Wesleyan Chapel (1815)
1825–1875	Flint Cottage constructed as village school (1839)

50 year period	Date of construction (Dendro, date stone or indicative from VBS)*
1875–1925	Furniture Factory (VBS) Main school St Paul's Church Methodist Chapel
c1925–present	Village Hall

*The dates from dendrochronology are shown bold.

Where the date of construction is an assessment taken from the Vernacular Building Survey this is shown as (VBS).

10 DISCUSSION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF WEST WYCOMBE VILLAGE

10.1.1 West Wycombe is a small village in the southern Chilterns with a varied history and numerous areas of significance. The National Trust, who now own most of the village, have recently undertaken a major refurbishment of many of the buildings and this has provided an opportunity to investigate further the historic vernacular structures and to enhance the overall understanding of the evolution of the village. The investigations have also included dendrochronology which have helped confirm the date of construction of various buildings. Individual reports have been produced on those buildings and the current document forms a synthesis study to pull together the wider findings of the work.

10.1.2 Perhaps the main significance of West Wycombe village is as a well-preserved collection of vernacular buildings which have seen very little intrusive 20th-century development and remain as a coherent historic settlement. The earliest surviving buildings appear to date from the third quarter of the 15th century and they form a significant cluster of buildings close to the junction of the High Street and Church Lane. Dendrochronology samples from two of these buildings, the Church Loft and No. 36–38, suggest that they were constructed in the 1460s while the third, the Old Vicarage has so far only been dated on stylistic evidence. The Church Loft is a particularly impressive and prominent building with surviving jetty, extensive timber framing and carriageway through to Church Lane.



Plate 31 Church Loft

10.1.3 The current project has confirmed that although there are a small number of surviving buildings from the second half of the 15th century the main phase from which there remain a large number of buildings is the early to mid 16th century. This appears to have been a time of considerable prosperity for West Wycombe with several high status buildings surviving including possible merchants' houses. Perhaps the best surviving example of a former merchant's house is the Apple Orchard which is another impressive timber framed building towards the west end of the village where the jettied front survives intact.

10.1.4 Far fewer buildings survive from the late 16th century and much of the 17th century but there is another major phase of in the 18th century, coinciding with the period when the Dashwood family had acquired the estate of West Wycombe and were

investing large sums of money in constructing the house and landscaped park. The village is hemmed in by the parkland of West Wycombe and the house is little more than a stone's throw away so it would be hard for the Dashwoods to ignore and they appear to have made some attempt to mould it into a fashionable Georgian village. At this time many of the older timber framed buildings were refaced in brick and there is even evidence of some historic framing being painted to look like brickwork. These 18th-century improvements may have been partly an attempt by the Dashwood's to enhance the appearance of a part of their estate but the works may well also have been related to the village's reliance at this time on the important coaching trade. West Wycombe was located on the principal route between Oxford and London and although the village was at a convenient location at the mid point of the journey there was no doubt competition from other villages to encourage coaches to break their journeys there.

- 10.1.5 The importance of the coaching trade in the 18th century is reflected in a map of the village from 1767 which indicates no fewer than eight inns in West Wycombe at this time. Several of these were houses or other types of building converted to inns to profit from the trade (eg the Coach and Horses at No. 36–38 and the White Horse at the Apple Orchard) rather than custom-built coaching inns. The village's two principal coaching inns, The George and Dragon and the Black Boy (or Unicorn), are close to each other at the centre of the village and although each were heavily refurbished in the 18th century they are older buildings, apparently having been constructed as inns in the 16th century. Each of these structures is an important reminder of the coaching trade, particularly with their distinctive, central carriage entrances, and the front range of the George in particular towering over its neighbouring buildings.
- 10.1.6 The current work has helped confirm the nature of a range of vernacular building techniques in this part of the Chilterns, particularly the roof forms, and highlighted the similarities between a great many of the roofs. Prior to the 18th century almost all the buildings were timber framed, sometimes with jetties, and generally with clasped-purlin roofs with queen-strut trusses. These roofs generally incorporated wind braces which tended to be longer and more curved in the earlier buildings and more sparingly used in the later buildings. A smaller number of buildings had different types of roof including No. 32–33 and the Black Boy Cottage which incorporates curved inner principals and the Church Loft (not directly part of this study) which has a variation of a Crown Post type roof.
- 10.1.7 Numerous other interesting features were recorded across the buildings including fragments of wattle and daub or early lath and plaster, carpenter's marks and evidence of the widespread re-use of timbers from previous buildings. The nature of the RSA's 1930s repairs are also of some interest and various common features were noted such as the use of straw as a bedding material for roof tiles and the use of distinctive use of stacks of battens used in the 1930s works to counter sagging rafters
- 10.1.8 Another key area of interest for West Wycombe is the story of the 20th-century preservation of the village and how it fits into the wider heritage conservation movements of the time. At the end of the first quarter of the 20th-century West Wycombe was a squalid, insanitary village which had been neglected and ill maintained for much of the previous 50 years. This neglect, which was largely due to the Dashwood's financial difficulties in this period, meant that the village had avoided any potential insensitive development which could have damaged its historical character. When the village was offered for sale by the Dashwoods in 1929 its historic fabric was very much intact (albeit neglected). The early 20th century, and particularly the period following the First World War was a time when concern for the conservation of heritage was growing rapidly and a series of initiatives or new laws were launched to help protect the country's natural and built heritage. One of these movements was a fund started by the Royal Society of Arts to save threatened historic cottages and in 1929,

just when the Dashwoods decided to sell West Wycombe, the RSA were looking to acquire just such a historic village. The RSA's acquisition prevented the ownership of the village from being widely dispersed and their extensive reconditioning works over the following 4 years were undertaken to conserve both the fabric of the historic buildings and character of the village but also to upgrade the buildings and make them decent places to live. In this respect it is interesting how the recent refurbishment by the National Trust has mirrored the previous reconditioning by the RSA.

- 10.1.9 It is also interesting how many of the aspirations of the RSA's fund remain in tune with modern ideas of heritage conservation. The desire to retain the more humble cottage and the distinctiveness of regional vernacular architecture remains a current issue today and does not now seem remotely unrealistic. One difference however is how the money for the fund was intended to be raised. Today such a fund is likely to target grant funding or the Heritage Lottery Fund rather than subscriptions from private individuals.
- 10.1.10 Once the RSA's reconditioning was substantially complete the buildings were sold to the National Trust and this represents another area of West Wycombe's interest as this was a pioneering acquisition for the National Trust. It was the first of a number of villages acquired by the Trust whereas previously they had concentrated predominantly on open spaces, monuments and small isolated buildings.
- 10.1.11 The village is also of interest for its relationship with West Wycombe House and Park and with the Dashwood family. The main house has overshadowed the village in many previous studies of West Wycombe and there is something of an impression that the Dashwoods did not generally take a close interest in the village despite their close proximity to each other. This impression is partly based on *The Dashwoods of West Wycombe* by Sir Francis Dashwood (1987) which is an interesting and informative read but barely mentions the village (even the sale to the RSA) but it is also based on a number of oral history testimonies from the 20th century which suggest that there was not a close relationship. Mary Everett's study of 18th-century West Wycombe has also found that the Dashwoods attendance at the monthly vestry meetings in the village were very infrequent.
- 10.1.12 The current project should not be seen as 'the final word' on West Wycombe and there remains much to be learned. Detailed archival research of the Dashwood family papers would be likely to reveal valuable information on their relationship with the village and works to the buildings.
- 10.1.13 Other areas for future study should include analysis of plot boundaries and research to establish when the plots were set out and whether it was a planned layout. Further historical research would be beneficial to examine key questions such as what stimulated the growth of the village during the 100 years between c1450 and c1550.
- 10.1.14 Further dendrochronological work should be undertaken when the opportunity arises, particularly on structures such as *The Old Vicarage*, *the Apple Orchard*, *the George and Dragon*, Nos 36–38 and 45–46.
- 10.1.15 There also remain many buildings whose evolution is not well understood and historic building watching brief investigations should form part of any significant intrusive works or refurbishments. When areas of previously hidden historic fabric are exposed in future refurbishment works watching brief recording should be undertaken. Artefactual evidence also holds potential for helping to understand the use of the buildings. An example of this has been the leather-working waste found in 56–57 High Street which suggests a former use of the building.

10.1.16 Similarly the area holds a wider archaeological potential for all periods and below-ground archaeological investigations or watching briefs should be undertaken during significant intrusive works with the potential to uncover buried remains

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APPENDIX A: DENDROCHRONOLOGY REPORT

Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory Report 2015/4

The Tree-Ring Dating of Buildings in the village of West Wycombe, Buckinghamshire

Dr D W H Miles FSA and Dr M C Bridge FSA

Summary:

LIST 107: WEST WYCOMBE, 25 High Street (SU 830 947)

a) East cross wing *Felling date: Winter 1450/51*
First floor joist rear bay 1450(25C). *Site Master* 1384-1450 wwa7 ($t=7.1$ MAGDALN1; 6.3 MDM; 6.0 MDM9)

b) West range *Felling dates: Winter 1530/31, Winter 1531/2, Spring 1532*
Tiebeam 1531(19C); Purlin 1531(28¼C); Strut 1530(19C); Joist 1531(25¼C); Stud 1531(20C); Axial beam 1531(7¼C). *Site Master* 1395-1531 WWYCOMB1 ($t=7.8$ SOUTH; 6.7 MASTERAL; 6.6 MC19)

25 High Street consists of two timber-framed buildings. From the two-bayed jettied cross wing to the east, only one timber dated, all the rest of the timbers being very fast grown and unsuitable for dendrochronology. Whilst the 1450/51 felling date is consistent with the architectural style of the building, some caution should be used in interpreting this as a construction date for the cross wing. The adjoining close-studded range to the west probably replaced a hall range in 1532. An elaborate moulding just inside the western elevation suggests that it too was a jettied building re-faced in brick. Dating commissioned by Gary Marshall for the National Trust. (Miles and Worthington 2000, *VA* 31, list 107)

LIST 255: WEST WYCOMBE, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE, DENDROCHRONOLOGY PROJECT: PHASE ONE

Dr Daniel Miles and Dr Martin Bridge

The National Trust acquired most of the village buildings in West Wycombe in 1934 after they had been carefully restored and refurbished by the Royal Society of Arts from 1928 onwards. Of the 50 or so buildings they own, 23 are listed. They range in date from the late fifteenth through to the nineteenth century with a predominance of sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth-century buildings. The Trust is currently undertaking a major refurbishment of these buildings, employing Oxford Archaeology to record and interpret exposed roof structures and the Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory to undertake the tree-ring dating of the buildings. The programme is expected to be carried out over the next three years.

1. WEST WYCOMBE, Crown Court (SU 8310 9465)

(a) No. 35 (Carriage arch) *Felling dates: Winter 1540/41 and Winter 1542/43*

(b) No. 27 (Roof) *Felling dates: Winter 1560/61 and Spring 1561*

(c) No. 35 (Bays west of carriage arch)

Felling dates: Winter 1640/41, Winter 1645/46, Spring 1647 and Spring 1648
(a) Joists 1542(34C, 21C), 1540(28C), 1539(15) (b) Collar 1560(22C); Principal rafter (1/2) 1560(20C); Windbraces (4/5) 1560(15C, 15¼C, 16C, 26C), 1558(33+1-2CNM); Purlin (0/1); Partition stud(0/1). (c) Transverse beam 1640(19C); Floor joists 1647(16¼C), 1646(13¼C), 1645(12C), 1643(9), 1629(3); Axial beam 1647(20¼C); Transverse beam (0/1). *Site Masters* (a) 1476–1542 wwe12 ($t=5.6$ GREYSCTA; 5.6 BURFRD7; 5.6 FFINNANT); wwe3 1466–1542 ($t=6.2$ REDLION; 6.0 LYDBURY; 5.9 COMBE2); 1407–1540 wwe4 ($t=6.3$ BRRYCTFM; 6.0 OVERTON3; 6.0 MOTISFNT); (b) 1508–60 WWC ($t=7.3$ GREENHAM; 7.0 BEDSTONE; 6.6 MEDMNHM1); 1495–1560 wwc138 ($t=4.9$ BOWDLER2; 4.6 GUILD; 4.4 CALLGHTN); (c) 1550–1647 WWB ($t=10.5$ MASTERAL; 9.4 HANTS02; 8.9 SARUM12).

The Crown Court complex lies at the eastern end of the High Street and is clustered around a central courtyard entered from a carriage arch off the High Street (which formed the route from High Wycombe to Oxford and at one stage hosted no fewer than eight inns or alehouses). It comprises a group of timber-framed buildings (nos. 24–26 and 34–35) extending along the High Street which were originally jettied, and behind this east (nos. 32 and 33) and west (no. 27) ranges running back from the High Street at right angles. The south side of the yard is closed by a group of seventeenth-century cottages re-fronted in brick and flint (nos. 29 and 30). The phasing is complex and analysis is at an early stage. It is hoped that further internal investigation will improve our understanding of its development. Dating carried out in 2000 of no. 25 (on the west side of no. 26) produced felling dates of 1450/51 and 1532 (*VA* 31, list 107). Elaborate moulded timbers (revealed in 1994) in no 24 at the west end are probably late fifteenth-century (unsuitable for dating).

The earliest dated phase reported here is the carriageway, whose joists produced dates between winter 1540/41 and winter 1542/43 (a). A date of 1561 has been obtained from the roof of the west courtyard range (b). These timbers were noted to be comprehensively smoke-blackened, though they appear to have been re-used as the blackening extended to the tips of the rafters beyond the wall plate. No. 35 produced a 1640/41 felling date for a transverse beam in the westernmost bay adjacent to the carriage arch, and other first floor timbers form the remaining two bays to the east slightly later, felled between 1645/46 and 1648 (c). There does not appear to be any discontinuity in the wall plates, which would suggest that the 1640/41 date comes from a stockpiled timber. (Miles and Bridge 2013, *VA* 44, list 255)

2. **WEST WYCOMBE, The Church Loft** (SU 8301 9467)

Felling date: Very early spring 1465

Wall plate 1464(20¼C); Tiebeams 1438(h/s), 1436(h/s). *Site Master* 1438–64 WWD (*t* = 8.3 WC_KITCH; 8.2 MASTERAL; 7.8 SOMRST04).

Situated on the north side of the High Street, the Church Loft is believed to be one of the oldest buildings in West Wycombe village. It is a four-bay two-storey building with an off-set carriage arch through one of the bays providing vehicular and pedestrian access into Church Lane, running north from the High Street. The Churchwardens' accounts contain frequent entries for repairs taking place at the Church House, as it was called in the seventeenth century. It was built to accommodate the business of the church within the parish and would have housed the vestry court. On the ground floor were four small 'cells' or rooms which are thought to have housed pilgrims travelling from Oxford to London and Canterbury – a deeply incised cross in one of the main frame posts is thought to have held a crucifix. Few timbers were suitable for dendrochronology, and the only one with sound sapwood produced a date of 1465 which is consistent with the felling date ranges of the two internal tiebeams. The roof has queen struts with braces to the collars. The Buildings Recording Group attached to the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society is currently researching and investigating the building and have generously funded the dating. (Miles and Bridge 2013, *VA* 44, list 255)

LIST 264: WEST WYCOMBE, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE, DENDROCHRONOLOGY PROJECT – PHASE TWO

Dr Daniel Miles, Dr Martin Bridge, and Gary Marshall

The National Trust has continued with its programme of sampling vernacular buildings in the village of West Wycombe. The programme is expected to be completed in 2014, and the first year's results can be found in *VA* 44, List 255. The results suggest a major phase of building construction in the 1530s to 1550s, with the village extending in a westerly direction. Rear ranges to these buildings were added in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The rear range of No. 5 West Wycombe was sampled but failed to date.

1. **40–41 Church Lane** (SU 8301 9474)

(a) First-floor joists (possibly re-used)

Felling date: Winter 1688/89

(b) Roof reconstruction

Felling date: Spring 1753

(a) Joists (1/2) 1688(16C); (b) Wall plates (1/2) 1752(17¼C). *Site Masters* (a) 1626–1688 wwf4 (*t* = 6.5 FLTASQ01; 6.1 HFDBSQ01; 6 STOWE6); (b) 1696–1752 wwf2 (*t* = 6.1 CL_CHG; 5.4 CHSTLTN2; 5.1 HANTS02).

Located on the west side of Church Lane these two adjoining properties comprise a four bay brick building which probably started out as a two-bay timber-framed cottage (No. 41) with a re-used cruck-framed roof. The building retains evidence of complex changes of high-quality brick construction and the principal east elevation was raised in height in the second half of the eighteenth century when it was also extended northwards (No. 40). Trusses of

probable seventeenth-century construction were unsuitable for dating. Interpretation of these limited results is difficult, but the later date may relate to the northerly two-bay extension (No. 40), whereas the dated joists in the same bay may be re-used. (Miles and Bridge 2014, *VA* 45, list 264)

2. **3–4 West Wycombe** (SU 8287 9464)

Felling dates: Spring 1547, Spring 1554 and Summer 1554

Rafters 1553(22¼C, 21¼C, 16¼C), 1541(14+5-10C NM); Principal rafters 1546(22¼C, 17¼C); Transverse beam 1553(13½C); Corner post 1548(16); Centre posts 1541(7+3NM), 1538(8); Axial beams 1550(9), 1548(8+5C NM). *Site Master* 1464–1553 WWG (*t* = 9.6 HFDBSQ04; 8.5 LYDBURY; 8.4 HANTS02).

See following entry.

3. **4 West Wycombe** (SU 8287 9464)

(a) Western half of front range *Felling dates: Spring 1554, Summer 1554 and Winter 1554/55*

(b) Rear Wing *Felling dates: Winter 1565/6 and Winter 1568/9*

(a) Principal rafters 1554(23C, 22C); Purlin 1553(18¼C); Transverse beam 1553(24½C); Rafters (0/4);

(b) Centre stud 1565(12C); Rafter 1568(25C); Axial beam (0/1); Centre post (0/1). *Site Master* (a–b) 1470–1568 WWH (*t* = 8.7 WWG; 8.6 HARPSDN1; 8.1 MDM12).

Located on the southern side of the west end of the High Street Nos. 2–9 form a group of mid-sixteenth-century two-storey timber-framed buildings, re-faced with brick in the second half of the eighteenth century. As No. 24 at the east end of the High Street (next), they were probably built as merchants' houses with jettied frontages facing onto the street. The roof structure suggests that Nos. 3–4 is the earliest element of the range, as confirmed by the dendrochronology. The eastern half of the front range of No. 4 was constructed almost immediately afterwards. The rear wing (b) of No. 4 was added in 1568/69 (with one stud felled a few years earlier). (Miles and Bridge 2014, *VA* 45, list 264)

4. **24 West Wycombe (Crown Court)** (SU 8300 9465)

(a) North range *Felling dates: Winter 1531/32 and Winter 1532/33*

(b) South Wing *Felling dates: Winter 1655/56 and Winter 1656/57*

(a) Moulded front girt 1532(21C); Rear girt 1531(25C); Stud 1523(18); Moulded window jamb re-used as collar 1531(27C); (b) Stud in partition 1655(30C); Purlins (1/4) 1656(22C); Tiebeam 1656(29C). *Site Masters* (a–b) 1373–1656 WWJ (*t* = 9.3 CGFA; 8.7 ORACLE4; 8.4 REF3).

This is the westernmost of a group of adjoining timber-framed properties dating from the first half of the sixteenth century. These appear to have been high-status two- and three-storey buildings, originally with jettied frontages, perhaps built as merchants' houses. Major building works in 1995 exposed a timber frame in the external-facing west elevation of No. 24, which may have formed the east bay of a truncated building. Elaborate mouldings on its ground floor rail suggest that it faced onto an open hall or a parlour with chamber above. The date of 1531–2 for 25 West Wycombe (*VA* 31 (2000), 91) suggests that it was part of the same phase of construction; both incorporate close studding. (Miles and Bridge 2014, *VA* 45, list 264)

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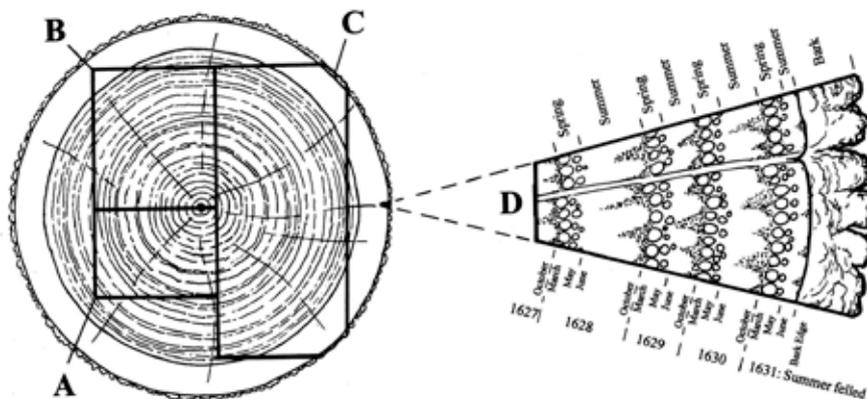
How Dendrochronology Works

Dendrochronology has over the past 20 years become one of the leading and most accurate scientific dating methods. Whilst not always successful, when it does work, it is precise, often to the season of the year. Tree-ring dating is well known for its use in dating historic buildings and archaeological timbers to this degree of precision. However more ancillary objects such as doors, furniture, panel paintings, and wooden boards in medieval book-bindings can sometimes be successfully dated.

The science of dendrochronology is based on a combination of biology and statistics. Fundamental to understanding how dendrochronology works is the phenomenon of tree growth. Essentially, trees grow through the addition of both elongation and radial increments. The elongation takes place at the terminal portions of the shoots, branches, and roots, while the radial increment is added by the cambium, the zone of living cells between the wood and the bark. In general terms, a tree can be best simplified by describing it as a cone, with a new layer being added to the outside each year in temperate zones, making it wider and taller.

An annual ring is composed of the growth which takes place during the spring and summer until about November when the leaves are shed and the tree becomes dormant for the winter period. For the European oak (*Quercus robur* and *Q. petraea*), as well as many other species, the annual ring is composed of two distinct parts - the spring growth or early wood, and the summer growth, or late wood. Early wood is composed of large vessels formed during the period of shoot growth which takes place between March and May, which is before the establishment of any significant leaf growth, and is produced by using most of the energy and raw materials laid down the previous year. Then, there is an abrupt change at the time of leaf expansion around May or June when hormonal activity dictates a change in the quality of the xylem and the summer, or late wood is formed. Here the wood becomes increasingly fibrous and contains much smaller vessels. Trees with this type of growth pattern are known as ring-porous, and are distinguished by the contrast between the open, light-coloured early wood vessels and the dense, darker-coloured late wood.

Dendrochronology utilises the variation in the width of the annual rings as influenced by climatic conditions common to a large area, as opposed to other more local factors such as woodland competition and insect attack. It is these climate-induced variations in ring widths that allow calendar dates to be ascribed to an undated timber when compared to a firmly-dated sequence. If a tree section is complete to the bark edge, then when dated a precise date of felling can be determined. The felling date will be precise to the season of the year, depending on the degree of formation of the outermost ring. Therefore, a tree with bark which has the spring vessels formed but no summer growth can be said to be felled in the spring, although it is not possible to say in which particular month the tree was felled.



Section of tree with conversion methods showing three types of sapwood retention resulting in **A** *terminus post quem*, **B** a felling date range, and **C** a precise felling date. Enlarged area **D** shows the outermost rings of the sapwood with growing seasons (Miles 1997, 42)

Another important dimension to dendrochronological studies is the presence of sapwood. This is the band of growth rings immediately beneath the bark and comprises the living growth rings which transport the sap from the roots to the leaves. This sapwood band is distinguished from the heartwood by the prominent features of colour change and the blocking of the spring vessels with tyloses, the waste products of the tree's growth. The heartwood is generally darker in colour, and the spring vessels are blocked with tyloses. The heartwood is dead tissue, whereas the sapwood is living, although the only really living, growing, cells are in the cambium, immediately beneath the bark. In European oak (*Quercus robur* sp), the difference in colour is generally matched by the change in the spring vessels. Generally the sapwood retains stored food and is therefore attractive to insect and fungal attack once the tree is felled and therefore is often removed during conversion.

Sapwood in European oaks tends to be of a relatively constant width and/or number of rings. By determining what this range is with an empirically or statistically-derived estimate is a valuable aspect in the interpretation of tree-ring dates where the bark edge is not present (Miles 1997). The narrower this range of sapwood rings, the more precise the estimated felling date range will be.

Methodology: The Dating Process

All timbers sampled were of oak (*Quercus* spp.) from what appeared to be primary first-use timbers, or any timbers which might have been re-used from an early phase. Those timbers which looked most suitable for dendrochronological purposes with complete sapwood or reasonably long ring sequences were selected. In situ timbers were sampled through coring, using a 16mm hollow auger. Details and locations of the samples are detailed in the summary table.

The dry samples were sanded on a linisher, or bench-mounted belt sander, using 60 to 1200 grit abrasive paper, and were cleaned with compressed air to allow the ring boundaries to be clearly distinguished. They were then measured under a x10/x30 microscope using a travelling stage electronically displaying displacement to a precision of 0.01mm. Thus each ring or year is represented by its measurement which is arranged as a series of ring-width indices within a data set, with the earliest ring being placed at the beginning of the series, and the latest or outermost ring concluding the data set.

The principle behind tree-ring dating is a simple one: the seasonal variations in climate-induced growth as reflected in the varying width of a series of measured annual rings is compared with other, previously dated ring sequences to allow precise dates to be ascribed to each ring. When an undated sample or site sequence is compared against a dated sequence, known as a reference chronology, an indication of how good the match is must be determined. Although it is almost impossible to define a visual match, computer comparisons can be accurately quantified. Whilst it may not be the best statistical indicator, Student's (a pseudonym for W S Gosset) *t*-value has been widely used amongst British dendrochronologists. The cross-correlation algorithms most commonly used and published are derived from Baillie and Pilcher's CROS programme (Baillie and Pilcher 1973), although a faster version (Munro 1984) giving slightly different *t*-values is sometimes used for indicative purposes.

Generally, *t*-values over 3.5 should be considered to be significant, although in reality it is common to find demonstrably spurious *t*-values of 4 and 5 because more than one matching position is indicated. For this reason, dendrochronologists prefer to see some *t*-value ranges of 5, 6, or higher, and for these to be well replicated from different, independent chronologies with local and regional chronologies well represented. Users of dates also need to assess their validity critically. They should not have great faith in a date supported by a handful of *t*-values of 3's with one or two 4's, nor should they be entirely satisfied with a single high match of 5 or 6. Examples of spurious *t*-values in excess of 7 have been noted, so it is essential that matches with reference chronologies be well replicated, and that this is confirmed with visual matches between the two graphs. Matches with *t*-values of 10 or more between individual sequences usually signify having originated from the same parent tree.

In reality, the probability of a particular date being valid is itself a statistical measure depending on the *t*-values. Consideration must also be given to the length of the sequence being dated as well as those of the reference chronologies. A sample with 30 or 40 years growth is likely to match with high *t*-values at

varying positions, whereas a sample with 100 consecutive rings is much more likely to match significantly at only one unique position. Samples with ring counts as low as 50 may occasionally be dated, but only if the matches are very strong, clear and well replicated, with no other significant matching positions. This is essential for intra-site matching when dealing with such short sequences. Consideration should also be given to evaluating the reference chronology against which the samples have been matched: those with well-replicated components which are geographically near to the sampling site are given more weight than an individual site or sample from the opposite end of the country.

It is general practice to cross-match samples from within the same phase to each other first, combining them into a site master, before comparing with the reference chronologies. This has the advantage of averaging out the 'noise' of individual trees and is much more likely to obtain higher *t*-values and stronger visual matches. After measurement, the ring-width series for each sample is plotted as a graph of width against year on log-linear graph paper. The graphs of each of the samples in the phase under study are then compared visually at the positions indicated by the computer matching and, if found satisfactory and consistent, are averaged to form a mean curve for the site or phase. This mean curve and any unmatched individual sequences are compared against dated reference chronologies to obtain an absolute calendar date for each sequence. Sometimes, especially in urban situations, timbers may have come from different sources and fail to match each other, thus making the compilation of a site master difficult. In this situation samples must then be compared individually with the reference chronologies.

Therefore, when cross-matching samples with each other or against reference chronologies, a combination of both visual matching and a process of qualified statistical comparison by computer is used. The ring-width series were compared on an IBM compatible computer for statistical cross-matching using a variant of the Belfast CROS program (Baillie and Pilcher 1973). A version of this and other programmes were written in BASIC by D Haddon-Reece, and re-written in Microsoft Visual Basic by M R Allwright and P A Parker.

Ascribing and Interpreting Felling Dates

Once a tree-ring sequence has been firmly dated in time, a felling date, or date range, is ascribed where possible. For samples which have sapwood complete to the underside of, or including bark, this process is relatively straight forward. Depending on the completeness of the final ring, i.e. if it has only the early wood formed, or the latewood, a *precise felling date and season* can be given. If the sapwood is partially missing, or if only a heartwood/sapwood transition boundary survives, then an *estimated felling date range* can be given for each sample. The number of sapwood rings can be estimated by using a statistically derived sapwood estimate with a given confidence limit. A review of the geographical distribution of dated sapwood data from historic building timbers has shown that a 95% range of 9-41 rings is most appropriate for the southern counties of England (Miles 1997), which will be used here. If no sapwood or heartwood/sapwood boundary survives, then the minimum number of sapwood rings from the appropriate sapwood estimate is added to the last measured ring to give a *terminus post quem (tpq)* or *felled after* date.

An alternative method of estimating felling date ranges has recently been developed (Miles 2005) which runs as a function under OxCal (Bronk Ramsey 1995; Miles and Bronk Ramsey *in prep*). Instead of using a simple empirical estimate for a particular geographical location, one model was found to be suitable for the whole of England and Wales. With the methodology set out by Millard (2002), Bayesian statistical models are used to produce individual sapwood estimates for samples using the variables of number of heartwood rings present, the mean ring width of those heartwood rings, the heartwood/sapwood boundary date, and the number of any surviving sapwood rings or a count of those lost in sampling. Using the suite of calculation and graphical plotting functions in OxCalInput and OxCalPlot (Bronk Ramsey *in prep*), the area of highest probability density for each sample can be graphically displayed to any of three confidence levels. The addition of surviving sapwood to the equation narrows the felling date range for each sample, although the outer end of the range shifts slightly later, more noticeably on those samples with higher sapwood counts. An empirically-derived stock-piling factor added to the ranges produced also helps to make the estimated felling date ranges

more representative for the actual latest common felling date, from which a construction date can then be extrapolated.

This new method of predicting sapwood ranges has resulted in over 94% of the samples tested producing felling date ranges narrower than the 36-year empirical estimate currently used. About a quarter of the samples tested showed an improvement with a range of 24 years or less. Conversely, some 4.5% of the samples tested produced a range larger than the empirical range, but again these ranges are more representative of the actual sapwood found.

However, it has been found that some unusual samples do not fit the model well. These include samples which have exceptional or sudden variation in mean ring width, such as might be found in pollarded or managed timber. Sometimes a tree will exhibit a sudden drop in mean ring width toward the end of its life, resulting in more sapwood rings being present than might be suggested in the faster-grown heartwood. Additionally, samples which have come from small timbers converted from larger, slow-grown trees would have a much larger number of heartwood rings than were actually present in the sample. Some examples of heartwood ring counts of 25 years or less with a narrow mean ring width are good indicators of this situation, as were observations made during sampling. Samples with these characteristics should be excluded from such analysis.

A particularly useful feature of OxCalPlot is the ability of producing combined felling date ranges for a group of samples comprising a single phase of building. Here, two samples combined can reduce the individual felling date ranges from about 30 to about 20 years. By including more samples within the combined phase, this 20-year range can be reduced to half or even less, depending on the number of samples in the phase. Thus felling date ranges for combined building phases have the potential to being reduced by as much as a two-thirds or even three-quarters of the individual empirically-derived felling date ranges (Miles 2005).

Some caution must be used in interpreting solitary precise felling dates. Many instances have been noted where timbers used in the same structural phase have been felled one, two, or more years apart. Whenever possible, a *group* of precise felling dates should be used as a more reliable indication of the *construction period*. It must be emphasised that dendrochronology can only date when a tree has been felled, not when the timber was used to construct the structure under study. However, it is common practice to build timber-framed structures with green or unseasoned timber and that construction usually took place within twelve months of felling (Miles 2006).

Details of Dendrochronological Analysis

The results of the dendrochronological analysis for the building under study are presented in a number of detailed tables. The most useful of these is the summary **Table 1**. This gives most of the salient results of the dendrochronological process, and includes details for each sample, its location, and its felling date or date range, if successfully tree-ring dated. This last column is of particular interest to the end user, as it gives the actual year and season when the tree was felled, if the final ring is present, or an estimated felling date range if the sapwood is incomplete. Occasionally it will be noted that the felling date ranges may not coincide with the precise felling dates. This is nothing to be overly concerned about so long as these are not too far apart. It must be remembered that the estimated felling date ranges are calculated at a 95% confidence level, which means that statistically one sample in 20 will have felling dates which actually fall *outside* the predicted range.

It will also be noticed that often the precise felling dates will vary within several years of each other. Unless there is supporting archaeological evidence suggesting different phases, all this would indicate is either stockpiling of timber, or of trees which have been felled or died at varying times but not cut up until the commencement of the particular building operations in question. When presented with varying precise felling dates, one should always take the *latest* date for the structure under study, and it is likely that construction will have been completed for ordinary vernacular buildings within twelve or eighteen months from this latest felling date (Miles 1997).

Table 2 gives an indication of the statistical reliability of the match between one sequence and another. This shows the *t*-value over the number of years overlap for each combination of samples in a matrix table. It should be born in mind that *t*-values with less than 80 rings overlap may not truly reflect the same degree of match and that spurious matches may produce similar values.

First, multiple radii have been cross-matched with each other and combined to form same-timber means. These are then compared with other samples from the site and any which are found to have originated from the same parent tree are again similarly combined. Finally, all samples, including all same timber and same tree means are combined to form one or more site masters. Again, the cross-matching is shown as a matrix table of *t*-values over the number of years of overlap. Reference should always be made to **Table 1** to clearly identify which components have been combined.

Table 3 shows the degree of cross-matching between the site master(s) with a selection of reference chronologies. This shows the county or region from which the reference chronology originated, the common chronology name together with who compiled the chronology with publication reference and the years covered by the reference chronology. The years overlap of the reference chronology and the site master being compared are also shown together with the resulting *t*-value. It should be appreciated that well replicated regional reference chronologies, which are shown in **bold**, will often produce better matches than with individual site masters or indeed individual sample sequences.

Figures include a bar diagram which shows the chronological relationship between two or more dated samples from a phase of building. The site sample record sheets are also appended, together with any plans showing sample locations, if available.

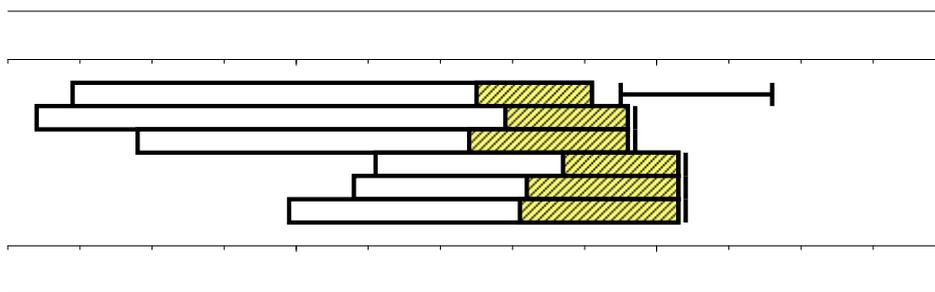
Publication of dated sites are published in *Vernacular Architecture* annually, and the entry, if available, is shown on the summary page of the report. This does not give as much technical data for the samples dated, but does give the *t*-value matches against the relevant chronologies, provide a short descriptive paragraph for each building or phase dated, and gives a useful short summary of samples dated. These summaries are also listed on the web-site maintained by the Laboratory, which can be accessed at www.Oxford-dendroLab.com. The Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory retains copyright of this report, but the commissioner of the report has the right to use the report for his/her own use so long as the authorship is quoted. Primary data and the resulting site master(s) used in the analysis are available from the Laboratory on request by the commissioner and bona fide researchers. The samples form part of the Laboratory archives.

Summary of Dating

No. 3 West Wycombe

Six timbers were sampled in the roof space of No. 3: (**wwg1** – **wwg6**). Six other timbers were taken from the adjoining roof space of No. 4. Once components of **wwg3** and **wwg4** were combined, all were combined with samples **wwg8**, **wwg10**, and **wwg12** from No. 4 to form the site master **WWYCOMB2**. This 90-ring site master represented the timbers used to construct the roofs of Nos. 3 and 4 West Wycombe. Two principal rafters (**wwg5** and **wwg6**) from the central truss were dated to the spring of 1547, whilst three rafters from No. 3 (**wwg1**, **wwg2**, and **wwg3**) spring 1554.

Samples **wwg7a** and **wwg7b** matched with samples **wwg9** and **wwg11** at consistent relative positions, indeed sample **wwg7a** matched so well with sample **wwg11** that they must have originated from the same parent tree. All were combined to form the mean **wwg7911** did match weakly at 1553 with the reference chronologies and a *t*-value 4.63 with **WWYCOMB5**, but not strongly enough to justify its inclusion within any of the reference chronologies.

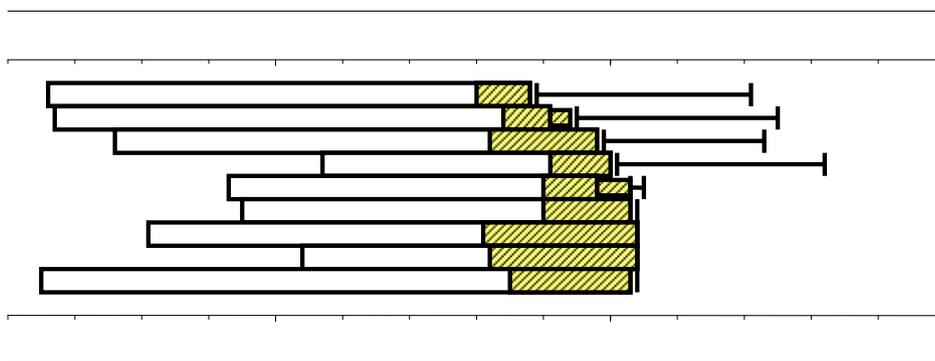


Samples from the front range of No. 4 **wwh4**, **wwh5**, **wwh12**, and from the rear wing of No. 4 **wwh8**, and **wwh9**, all matched together to form the 99-year site master **WWYCOMB3**, spanning the years 1470-1568.

Sample **wwh7** matched sample **wwh12** with a t -value of 4.99, and a t -value of 4.72 with the site master **WWYCOMB3**. Because it did not match the other samples particularly well, it was not included in the above site master.

To conclude, the samples from the front range of No. 4 produced a felling date of **summer 1554** for a transverse beam, and two precise felling dates of **winter 1554/5** for two principal rafters from the smoke bay truss. Sample **wwh7** from a purlin gave a precise felling date of **spring 1554**. This structure seems to be slightly different, i.e. not the same roof structure as that from No. 3, which gave a slightly earlier date of **spring 1554**, suggesting that No. 3 was built first, using two stock-piled principal rafter from **spring 1547**, and that within a year No. 4 was constructed, up against No. 3.

However, the rear wing of No. 4 was constructed even later, with a centre stud **wwh8** being felled in the **winter of 1565/6**, and a common rafter **wwh9** being felled in the **winter of 1568/9**. None of the other timbers sampled from the rear wing cross-matched, therefore the dendrochronology would suggest that the rear wing was constructed in or shortly after **1569**.



No. 5 West Wycombe (Rear Wings)

Little suitable material was available for sampling here, three samples **wwi1**, **wwi2**, and **wwi3** were all sampled with between 39 and 56 growth rings, two with bark edge. Unfortunately none matched each other or dated individually.

No. 11-12 West Wycombe

Nos 11 and 12 were assessed for dendrochronological potential from below before the roofs were stripped. There was a tiebeam in No. 11 that looked suitable, and might have had bark edge. There were a number of upstairs timbers in the small rear wing that also might have had some potential. In No. 12, the rear wing had a series of reused very early joists that might have had some potential although bark edge dates might well be problematical. The front range had little dendrochronological potential.

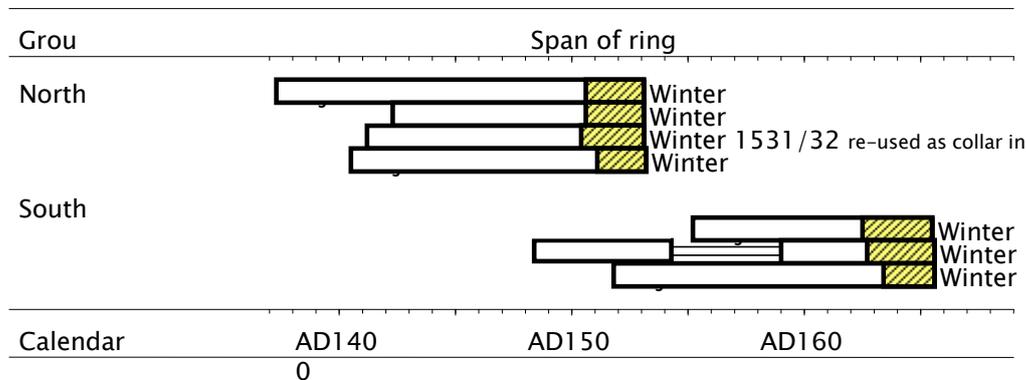
When the roofs were stripped, the timbers there were assessed, but no suitable timbers with sapwood or good rings were noted. Unfortunately access was not possible inside the buildings so no timbers in either No. 11 or No. 12 were sampled.

No. 24 Crown Court

Access was permitted to both the lower floors and the roof structure of this building which greatly assisted in sample collection. There was on inspection two sections – the North Range which with a moulded girt and close-studding, appeared to be the earlier, and the South Range which certainly appeared to be later.

From the front range four timbers were sampled: a moulded front (west) girt, a rear girt, and two studs. These all matched together along with a moulded window jamb reused as a collar. These all produced precise felling dates of **winter 1531/2** or **winter 1532/3**. Thus it would appear that the north range was constructed in **1533** or very shortly thereafter. These were combined to form the 284-ring site master **WWYCOMB4** spanning the years 1373-1656.

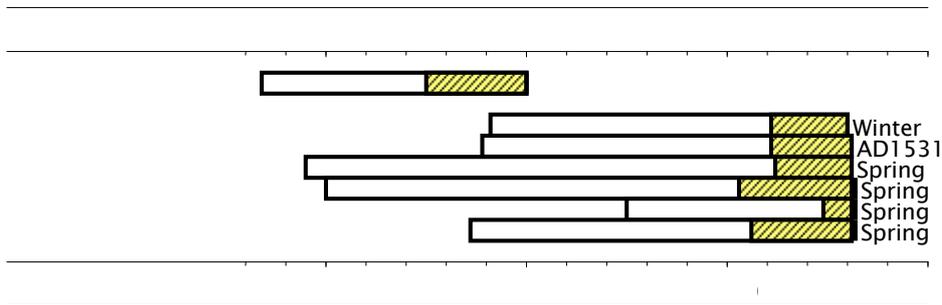
One purlin and a tiebeam also from the south range both produced a precise felling date of winter 1656/7 which represents the erection of the southern-most bay of this range, resulting in the removal of a primary phase window. Three other purlins with poor ring counts and bark edge failed to date.



No. 25 Crown Court

This building (close studded extension) was sampled in 2000, and identified six timbers dating to the winter of 1530/31, winter 1531/2, and spring 1532. Four of these were combined to form the 137-ring site master **WWYCOMB1** spanning the years 1395-1531. Two other samples, **wwa4** and **wwa6** dated weakly individually and were found to be coeval, but the matches were not strong enough to be included in the site master. This dating is so close to the dating obtained from the north range of No. 24 that it must be the same construction phase, being constructed in **1533** or very shortly thereafter.

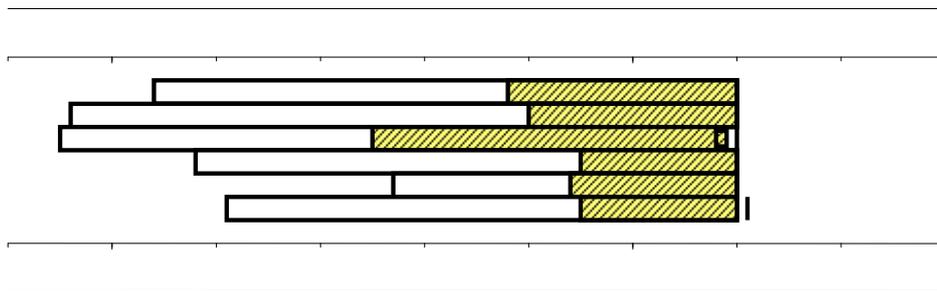
The Cross wing to No. 25 was also sampled. Only one joist was suitable (**wwa7**) whilst the other samples had too few rings. This joist was found to have been felled in the **winter of 1450/51**.



No. 27 Crown Court

Ten timbers were sampled from the upper part of this building. Three timbers matched sufficiently well to combine into the 53-ring site master **WWYCOMB5**, which dated well, spanning the years 1508-1560. Three other timber, **wwc1**, **wwc3**, and **wwc8** were combined to form the mean **wwc138** with excellent matches. However, this site master did not match sufficiently well to include in the site master.

One windbrace was found to have been felled in the **spring of 1561**, whilst three other windbraces, a collar, and a principal rafter were all found to have been felled in the **winter of 1560/61**. This would suggest that this roof was constructed originally in **1561** or shortly thereafter.



Black Boy Cottage, Crown Court

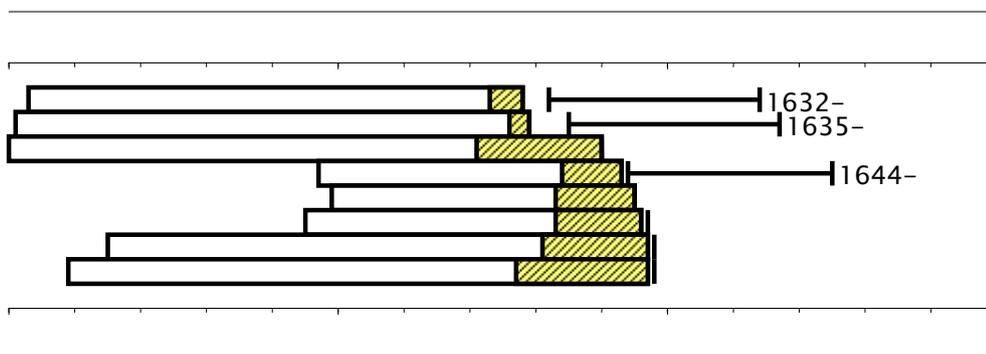
Four timbers were sampled in the roof space of the cottage. The timbers were all very slow grown and all contained complete sapwood. Even though some of the samples had fewer than average ring counts. However, no outstanding site master could be constructed, and no individual dating was obtained for any of the samples.

No. 34-35 Crown Court

Eight timbers from the interior lower floors of this building were obtained. The roof structure did not have any real potential for dating. All eight timbers were found to match each other and were combined to form the 98-ring site master **WWYCOMB6** which dated, spanning the years 1550-1647.

Four timbers including three floor joists and an axial beam all dated with felling dated of **winter 1645/6**, **spring 1647**, and **spring 1648** were obtained for this eastern-most range. Other associated timbers without complete sapwood give felling date ranges consistent with these felling date ranges.

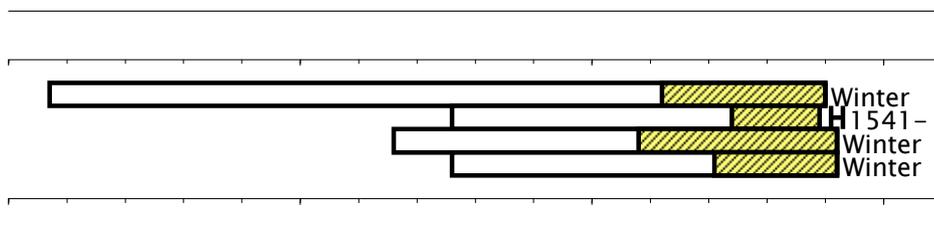
One timber however, a transverse beam, gave a felling date of **winter 1540/41**. It is possible that this relates to the range to the west near the cart passage which might have been slightly earlier. A straight joint was noted in the wall plates above this point. No other suitable timbers were found within this building and access as denied for the building on the west side of the carriageway so it was not possible to obtain any other confirmative dating.



No. 35 Crown Court

Access was given to sample some four joists to the carriage way under No. 35. All joists but one retained bark edge, and all three gave precise felling dates of **winter 1540/41** or **winter 1542/3**. This would suggest that these joists and carriage way was formed in **1543** or shortly thereafter.

None of the timbers matched each other, with the exception of **wwe1** and **wwe2** which were combined to form the mean **wwe12**, and were not formed into a site master. Instead in each sample was dated individually, which produced excellent cross-matches with the reference chronologies.

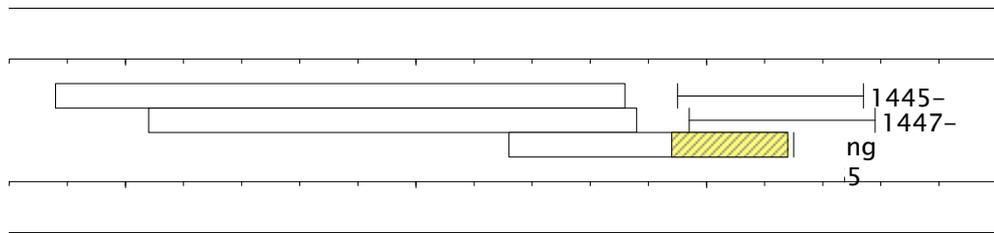


No. 36

Two jetty joists were sampled from this building shortly after the jetty had been repaired. The building had previously been assessed for dendrochronological potential. Little suitable timbers were noted, and the main roof had evidently been reconstructed. One of the joists appeared to have dated to the fifteenth century but did not have high or unique enough *t*-values to be conclusive. It had been hoped to take further samples from the building but that opportunity was not granted, and a sample from the jetty beam was also assessed to be unsuitable by Gary Marshall and therefore no confirmatory work could be undertaken.

Church Loft

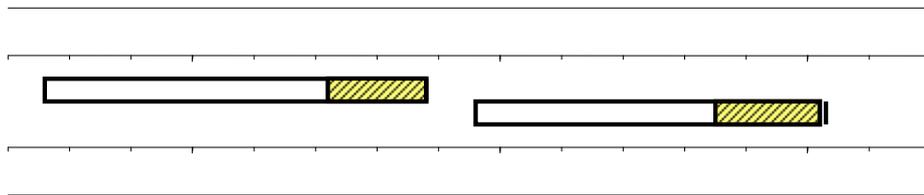
This building was assessed for dendrochronology. The ground floor timberwork as well as that on the front and rear elevations of the building, and the cart way, was all very fast-grown material, with little or no sapwood. This was very disappointing for possible dating. The top floor was also inspected, but again had poor dendrochronological potential due to most of the timberwork being fast-grown together with the need to move a large number of exhibits to allow access to inspect the timber. The two central tiebeams did have good ring potential, but only a heartwood/sapwood potential so only a sapwood range could be provided. These were nevertheless sampled as they could be sampled with minimal disruption to the museum. However, on excavating an area at the back of the museum a section of what appeared to be primary wall plate with bark edge was sampled, and despite having only 49 rings, it did match with the two tiebeams associated, and did retain bark edge. This a 127-ring site master **WWYCOMB7** was constructed which dated, spanning the years 1338-1464. As the wall plate retained bark edge, sample **wwd3** could be shown to have been felled in the **spring of 1465**. It is likely that the building was constructed in **1465** or shortly thereafter.



No. 40-41 Church Lane

This building was undergoing re-roofing work and the roof timbers were examined once uncovered. None of these showed any potential for dating, due to the timbers being either elm, pine, or fast-grown material. Other timbers appeared to be of reused material. The inside was then inspected and only a few timbers were found to be of any potential – two sections of wall plate and two joists adjacent in an upstairs back bedroom. One of the joists (**wwf4**) dated, spanning the years 1626-1688. One of the wall plates adjacent (**wwf2**) also dated, spanning the years 1696-1752. Both timbers had bark edge, giving felling dates of **winter 1688/9** and **spring 1753** respectively.

Unfortunately too little of the structure of the building could be seen and it was unclear whether these timbers represented reuse of earlier material, or represented a repair phase. Certainly if the interior of the building were to be opened up thoroughly, then a more comprehensive programme of dendrochronology should be embarked upon.



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Table 1: Summary of Tree-Ring Dating

WEST WYCOMBE, BUCKS

Sample number & type	Timber and position	Dates AD spanning	H/S bdry	Sapwood complement	No of rings	Mean width mm	Std devn mm	Mean sens mm	Felling seasons and dates/date ranges (AD)
No. 3 West Wycombe									
* wwg1	c 1 st rafter E of T4, N side	1511-1553	1537	16/4C	43	2.23	0.50	0.185	Spring 1554
* wwg2	c 4 th rafter E of T4, N side	1508-1553	1532	21/4C	46	1.41	0.86	0.263	Spring 1554
wwg3a	c 5 th rafter E of T4, N side	1475-1529	1529	H/S	55	1.62	0.60	0.178	
wwg3b	c ditto	1504-1553	1532	21/4C	50	1.79	0.99	0.196	Spring 1554
* wwg3	Mean of wwg3a + wwg3b	1475-1553	1531	22/4C	79	1.81	0.73	0.189	Spring 1554
wwg4a	c 8 th rafter E of T4, S side	1469-1526	1523	3	58	1.49	0.51	0.179	
wwg4b	c ditto	1483-1541	1527	14+5-10C NM	59	1.55	0.55	0.200	1545-66
* wwg4	Mean of wwg4a + wwg4b	1469-1541	1525	16	73	1.53	0.53	0.198	
* wwg5	c N principal rafter T3	1464-1546	1529	17/4C	83	1.77	0.64	0.241	Spring 1547
* wwg6	c S principal rafter T3	1478-1546	1524	22/4C	69	1.18	0.80	0.203	Spring 1547
No. 4 West Wycombe (Front range)									
wwg7a	Transverse beam T2 (ww401a)	-	-	9	44	2.52	0.88	0.235	
wwg7b	ditto (ww401b)	1495-1553		13/2C	59	2.42	1.23	0.289	Summer 1554
* wwg8	N corner post T1 (ww402)	1476-1548	1532	16	73	2.14	0.41	0.167	1549-73
wwg9	Axial beam Bay 1 (ww403)	1493-1548		8+5C NM	56	2.84	1.18	0.227	
* wwg10	Centre post T1 (ww404)	1467-1541	1534	7+3 NM	75	1.91	0.80	0.203	1545-75
wwg11	c Axial beam in No. 4 (W building - 10)	1507-1550	1541	9	44	2.52	0.86	0.224	1551-82
* wwg12	c Centre post E end truss RH (W building - 11)	1466-1538	1530	8	73	2.04	1.05	0.244	1539-71
* = WWYCOMB2 Site Master		1464-1553			90	1.80	0.47	0.165	
wwh1	c 1 st rafter from E end, S side	-	-	19C	38	0.96	0.28	0.161	
wwh2	c 2 nd rafter from E, S side	-	-	12/4C	36	3.29	0.71	0.164	
wwh3	c 3 rd rafter from E, S side	-	-	10C	26	2.44	0.60	0.200	
* wwh4	c S principal rafter smoke bay truss	1481-1554	1531	23C	74	1.18	0.77	0.244	Winter 1554/5
* wwh5	c N principal rafter smoke bay truss	1504-1554	1532	22C	51	1.14	0.54	0.206	Winter 1554/5
wwh6	c 1 st rafter E of smoke bay truss, N side	-	-	12C	22	2.68	0.89	0.199	
wwh7	c S purlin	1465-1553	1535	18/4C	89	1.48	0.51	0.165	Spring 1554
* wwh12	c Transverse beam in No. 4 (E building - 07)	1470-1553	1529	24/2C	84	1.82	0.76	0.194	Summer 1554

Key: * † § = sample included in site-master; c = core; mc = micro-core; s = slice/section; g = graticule; p = photograph; 1/4C, 1/2C, C = bark edge present, partial or complete ring; 1/4C = spring (last partial ring not measured), 1/2C = summer/autumn (last partial ring not measured), or C = winter felling (ring measured); H/S bdy = heartwood/sapwood boundary - last heartwood ring date; std devn = standard deviation; mean sens = mean sensitivity

Sample number & type	Timber and position	Dates AD spanning	H/S bdry	Sapwood complement	No of rings	Mean width mm	Std devn mm	Mean sens mm	Felling seasons and dates/date ranges (AD)
No. 4 West Wycombe (Rear wing)									
* wwh8	c Centre stud S wall	1518-1565	1553	12C	48	1.93	0.99	0.197	Winter 1565/6
* wwh9	c 2 nd rafter from S, W side	1526-1568	1553	15C	43	1.90	0.53	0.189	Winter 1568/9
wwh10	c Axial beam rear bay (ww405)	-	-	H/S	81	1.82	0.74	0.211	
wwh11	c Centre post S gable end (ww406)	-	-	H/S	82	1.08	0.60	0.213	
* = WWYCOMB3 Site Master		1470-1568			99	1.72	0.70	0.163	
No. 5 West Wycombe (rear wings)									
wwi1	c (ww2)	-	-	31C	56	1.26	0.38	0.154	
wwi2	c (ww5)	-	-	15C	39	2.16	0.77	0.139	
wwi3	c (ww6)	-	-	7	49	1.56	0.72	0.207	
No. 24 Crown Court, West Wycombe (North Range)									
wwj1a	c Moulded front (west) girt	1405-1508			104	1.62	0.87	0.253	
wwj1b	c ditto	1458-1532	1511	21C	75	1.64	0.73	0.275	Winter 1532/3
* wwj1	Mean of wwj1a + wwj1b	1405-1532	1511	21C	128	1.69	0.85	0.251	Winter 1532/3
* wwj2	c Rear (east) girt	1373-1531	1506	25C	159	1.34	0.59	0.235	Winter 1531/2
* wwj3	c Stud in partition on staircase	1552-1655	1625	30C	104	0.70	0.29	0.227	Winter 1655/6
wwj4a	c Stud in attic east truss	1423-1523	1505	18	101	1.04	0.33	0.168	Winter 1531/2
wwj4b	c ditto	1499-1531	1507	24C	33	0.83	0.15	0.151	Winter 1531/2
* wwj4	Mean of wwj4a + wwj4b	1423-1531	1506	25C	109	1.00	0.32	0.165	
No. 24 Crown Court, West Wycombe (South Wing)									
wwj11	c NE purlin	-	-	23C	61	1.60	0.73	0.197	
wwj12	c SE purlin	-	-	16C	38	2.75	1.13	0.281	
wwj13	c NW purlin	-	-	14C	42	2.71	0.74	0.185	
* wwj14	c SW purlin	1518-1656	1634	22C	139	0.77	0.35	0.166	Winter 1656/7
* wwj15a1	c Tiebeam centre truss	1483-1542			60	1.09	0.68	0.207	
* wwj15a2	c outer section	1590-1656	1627	29C	67	0.82	0.37	0.190	Winter 1656/7
* wwj16	c Moulded window jamb reused as collar	1412-1531	1504	27C	120	1.01	0.33	0.174	Winter 1531/2
* = WWYCOMB4 Site Master		1373-1656			284	1.01	0.48	0.177	

Key: * , †, § = sample included in site-master; c = core; mc = micro-core; s = slice/section; g = graticule; p = photograph; ¼C, ½C, C = bark edge present, partial or complete ring; ¼C = spring (last partial ring not measured), ½C = summer/autumn (last partial ring not measured), or C = winter felling (ring measured); H/S bdy = heartwood/sapwood boundary - last heartwood ring date; std devn = standard deviation; mean sens = mean sensitivity

Sample number & type	Timber and position	Dates AD spanning	H/S bdry	Sapwood complement	No of rings	Mean width mm	Std devn mm	Mean sens mm	Felling seasons and dates/date ranges (AD)
No. 25 Crown Court, West Wycombe									
Cross-wing									
wwa7 c	1 st joist from W rear bay	1384-1450	1425	25C	67	1.86	0.82	0.260	Winter 1450/51
Close-studded extension									
wwa1a c	Tiebeam T1	1406-1511	1511	H/S	106	1.25	0.36	0.177	
wwa1b c	ditto	1395-1531	1512	19C	137	1.13	0.40	0.174	
* wwa1	mean of wwa1a + wwa1b	<i>1395-1531</i>	<i>1512</i>	<i>19C</i>	<i>137</i>	<i>1.22</i>	<i>0.37</i>	<i>0.167</i>	<i>Spring 1532</i>
* wwa2 c	Front lower tiebeam E bay	1400-1531	1503	28½C	132	0.98	0.42	0.154	Spring 1532
* wwa3 c	stud under E end tiebeam	1441-1530	1511	19C	90	1.43	0.64	0.218	Winter 1530/31
wwa4 c	1 st floor joist E bay	1436-1531	1506	25½C	96	0.97	0.69	0.184	Spring 1532
* wwa5 c	1 st floor stud	1439-1531	1511	20C	93	0.89	0.35	0.158	Winter 1531/2
wwa6 c	Axial beam E bay	1475-1531	1524	7¼C	67	4.56	1.55	0.176	Spring 1532
* = WWYCOMB1 Site Master									
No. 27 Crown Court, West Wycombe									
wwc1 c	Collar centre truss partition	1504-1560	1538	22C	57	1.98	1.25	0.229	Winter 1560/61
wwc2 c	Partition stud	-	-	21C	75	0.70	0.35	0.179	
wwc3 c	E principal rafter centre truss	1496-1560	1540	20C	65	2.11	1.38	0.238	Winter 1560/61
wwc4 c	W principal rafter centre truss	-	-	4	53	2.43	0.68	0.219	
wwc5 c	E purlin N bay	-	-	6	39	3.29	1.54	0.200	
wwc6a c	SE Windbrace, S bay	-	-	H/S	21	2.11	0.35	0.197	
wwc6b c	ditto	-	-	H/S	22	1.93	0.32	0.164	
* wwc7 c	windbrace	1511-1560	1545	15¼C	50	1.79	0.51	0.187	Spring 1561
wwc8 c	windbrace	1495-1558	1525	33+1-2C NM	64	1.29	0.99	0.169	(Winter 1560/61)
* wwc9 c	windbrace	1508-1560	1545	15C	53	1.63	0.55	0.153	Winter 1560/61
* wwc10 c	windbrace	1527-1560	1544	16C	34	1.20	0.35	0.171	Winter 1560/61
wwc138	Same-tree mean of wwc1 + wwc3 + wwc8	1495-1560	1534	26C	66	1.89	1.18	0.188	Winter 1560/61
* = WWYCOMB5 Site Master									

Key: *, †, § = sample included in site-master, c = core; mc = micro-core; s = slice/section; g = graticule; ¼C, ½C, C = bark edge present, partial or complete ring; ¼C = spring (last partial ring not measured), ½C = summer/autumn (last partial ring not measured), or C = winter felling (ring measured); H/S bdry = heartwood/sapwood boundary - last heartwood ring date; std devn = standard deviation; mean sens = mean sensitivity

Sample number & type	Timber and position	Dates AD spanning	H/S bdry	Sapwood complement	No of rings	Mean width mm	Std devn mm	Mean sens mm	Felling seasons and dates/date ranges (AD)
Black Boy Cottage, Crown Court									
wwk1	c North principal rafter	-		18C	83	1.16	0.53	0.228	
wwk2	c North inner curved principal rafter	-		19¼C	62	1.35	0.56	0.182	
wwk3	c South principal rafter	-		17C	83	1.36	0.59	0.211	
wwk4	c South rafter above chimney	-		25½C	38	1.82	0.87	0.122	
No. 34-35 Crown Court, West Wycombe									
* wwb1	c Floor joist 2/7 N side E bay	1597-1643	1634	9	47	2.91	0.70	0.161	1644-75
* wwb2	c Floor joist 3/7 N side E bay	1595-1646	1633	13¼C	52	2.30	0.69	0.176	Spring 1647
* wwb3	c Floor joist 4/7 N side E bay	1551-1629	1626	3	79	1.55	0.41	0.177	1635-67
* wwb4	c Floor joist 7/7 N side E bay	1599-1645	1633	12C	47	2.07	0.50	0.171	Winter 1645/6
* wwb5	c Transverse beam T2	1553-1628	1623	5	76	1.99	0.65	0.213	1632-64
* wwb6	c Floor joist 2/6 N side Bay 2	1565-1647	1631	16¼C	83	1.64	0.59	0.180	Spring 1648
wwb7a	c Transverse beam T3	1550-1639	1622	17	90	2.04	0.77	0.170	
wwb7b	c ditto	1586-1640	1621	19C	55	1.79	0.71	0.150	
* wwb7	Mean of wwb7a + wwb7b	1550-1640	1621	19C	91	1.99	0.78	0.164	Winter 1640/41
* wwb8	c Axial beam Bay 2	1559-1647	1627	20¼C	89	2.69	1.49	0.251	Spring 1648
* = WWYCOMB6 Site Master		1550-1647			98	2.07	0.41	0.140	
No. 35 Crown Court, West Wycombe (Carriage Way)									
wwe1	c 1 st joist from E, N side	1476-1542	1521	21C	67	1.82	0.67	0.246	Winter 1542/3
wwe2	c 2 nd joist from E, N side	1476-1539	1524	15	64	2.08	0.90	0.157	1541-2
wwe3	c 6 th joist from E, N side	1466-1542	1508	34C	77	1.73	0.50	0.154	Winter 1542/3
wwe4	c 7 th joist from E, N side	1407-1540	1512	28C	134	0.71	0.47	0.243	Winter 1540/41
wwe12	Mean of wwe1 + wwe2	1476-1542			67	1.96	0.67	0.172	

Key: *, †, § = sample included in site-master; c = core; mc = micro-core; s = slice/section; g = graticule; p = photograph; ¼C, ½C, C = bark edge present, partial or complete ring; ½C = spring (last partial ring not measured), ¼C = summer/autumn (last partial ring not measured), or C = winter felling (ring measured), H/S bdry = heartwood/sapwood boundary - last heartwood ring date; std devn = standard deviation; mean sens = mean sensitivity

Sample number & type	Timber and position	Dates AD spanning	H/S bdry	Sapwood complement	No of rings	Mean width mm	Std devn mm	Mean sens mm	Felling seasons and dates/date ranges (AD)
No. 36 West Wycombe (Sweet Shop)									
ww1	c 2 nd jetty joist from West	-		7+10C NM	59	2.05	1.18	0.315	
ww2	c 3 rd jetty joist from West	-		19C	61	2.59	1.00	0.267	
Church Loft, West Wycombe									
* wwd1	c W tiebeam (T4)	1354-1438	1438	H/S	85	2.50	0.63	0.167	1447-79
* wwd2	c E tiebeam (T3)	1338-1436	1436	H/S	99	2.34	0.51	0.164	1445-77
* wwd3	c NE wallplate	1416-1464	1444	20 $\frac{1}{4}$ C	49	1.91	0.64	0.236	Very early spring 1465
* = WWYCOMB7 Site Master		1338-1464			127	2.32	0.58	0.163	
No. 40-41 Church Lane, West Wycombe									
wwf1	c Rear wall plate Bays 2-3	-		18 $\frac{1}{2}$ C	87	0.82	0.35	0.235	
wwf2	c Rear wall plate Bays 3-4	1696-1752	1735	17 $\frac{1}{4}$ C	57	1.17	0.27	0.135	Spring 1753
wwf3	c 1 st joist from rear, Bay 3	-		11 + 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ C	32	2.68	0.88	0.181	
wwf4	c 2 nd joist from rear, Bay 3	1626-1688	1672	16C	63	1.09	0.23	0.158	Winter 1688/9

Key: *, †, § = sample included in site-master; c = core; mc = micro-core; s = slice/section; g = graticule; p = photograph; $\frac{1}{4}$ C, $\frac{1}{2}$ C, C = bark edge present, partial or complete ring; $\frac{1}{4}$ C = spring (last partial ring not measured), $\frac{1}{2}$ C = summer/autumn (last partial ring not measured), or C = winter felling (ring measured); H/S bdry = heartwood/sapwood boundary - last heartwood ring date; std devn = standard deviation; mean sens = mean sensitivity

Explanation of terms used in Table 1

The summary table gives most of the salient results of the dendrochronological process. For ease in quickly referring to various types of information, these have all been presented in Table 1. The information includes the following categories:

Sample number: Generally, each site is given a two or three letter identifying prefix code, after which each timber is given an individual number. If a timber is sampled twice, or if two timbers were noted at time of sampling as having clearly originated from the same tree, then they are given suffixes 'a', 'b', etc. Where a core sample has broken, with no clear overlap between segments, these are differentiated by a further suffix '1', '2', etc.

Type shows whether the sample was from a core 'c', or a section or slice from a timber's'. Sometimes photographs are used 'p', or timbers measured *in situ* with a graticule 'g'.

Timber and position column details each timber sampled along with a location reference. This will usually refer to a bay or truss number, or relate to compass points or to a reference drawing.

Dates AD spanning gives the first and last measured ring dates of the sequence (if dated),

H/S bdry is the date of the heartwood/sapwood transition or boundary (if present). This date is critical in determining an estimated felling date range if the sapwood is not complete to the bark edge.

Sapwood complement gives the number of sapwood rings. The tree starts growing in the spring during which time the earlywood is produced, also known also as spring growth. This consists of between one and three decreasing spring vessels and is noted as *Spring* felling and is indicated by a ¼ C after the number of sapwood ring count. Sometimes this can be more accurately pin-pointed to very early spring when just a few spring vessels are visible. After the spring growing season, the latewood or summer growth commences, and is differentiated from the preceding spring growth by the dense band of tissue. This summer growth continues until just before the leaves drop, in about October. Trees felled during this period are noted as *summer* felled (½ C), but it is difficult to be too precise, as the width of the latewood can be variable, and it can be difficult to distinguish whether a tree stopped growing in autumn or *winter*. When the summer growth band is clearly complete, then the tree would have been felled during the dormant winter period, as shown by a single C. Sometimes a sample will clearly have complete sapwood, but due either to slight abrasion at the point of coring, or extremely narrow growth rings, it is impossible to determine the season of felling.

Number of rings: The total number of measured rings present on the samples analysed.

Mean ring width: This, simply put, is the sum total of all the individual ring widths, divided by the number of rings, giving an average ring width for the series.

Mean sensitivity: A statistic measuring the mean percentage, or relative, change from each measured yearly ring value to the next; that is, the average relative difference between one ring width to the next, calculated by dividing the absolute value of the differences between each pair of measurements by the average of the paired measurements, then averaging the quotients for all pairs in the tree-ring series (Fritts 1976). Sensitivity is a dendrochronological term referring to the presence of ring-width variability in the radial direction within a tree which indicates the growth response of a particular tree is "sensitive" to variations in climate, as opposed to complacency.

Standard deviation: The mean scatter of a population of numbers from the population mean. The square root of the variance, which is itself the square of the mean scatter of a statistical population of numbers from the population mean. (Fritts 1976).

Felling seasons and dates/date ranges is probably the most important column of the summary table. Here the actual felling dates and seasons are given for each dated sample (if complete sapwood is present). Sometimes it will be noticed that often the precise felling dates will vary within several years of each other. Unless there is supporting archaeological evidence suggesting different phases, all this would indicate is either stockpiling of timber, or of trees which have been felled or died at varying times but not cut up until the commencement of the particular building operations in question. When presented with varying precise felling dates, one should always take the *latest* date for the structure under study, and it is likely that construction will have been completed for ordinary vernacular buildings within twelve or eighteen months from this latest felling date (Miles 2006).

Felling date ranges are produced using an empirical estimates using the appropriate estimate (Miles 1997). However, these can sometimes be reduced using a new sapwood estimation methodology which uses the mean ring width, number of heartwood rings, known H/S boundary date, and the number of surviving sapwood rings, if present (Miles 2006). These are used after the empirical range and are shown in brackets (OxCal followed by date range). Combined felling date ranges for a phase of building is shown at the end of the phase to which it relates.

Table 2: Matrix of *t*-values and overlaps for same-timber means and site masters

Components of timber wwg3		Components of timber wwg4		Components of timber wwj1	
<i>Sample:</i>	wwg3b	<i>Sample:</i>	wwg4b	<i>Sample:</i>	wwj1b
<i>Last ring</i>	1553	<i>Last ring</i>	1541	<i>Last ring</i>	1532
<i>date AD:</i>		<i>date AD:</i>		<i>date AD:</i>	
wwg3a	$\frac{2.58}{26}$	wwg4a	$\frac{10.12}{44}$	wwj1a	$\frac{22.34}{51}$
Components of timber wwj4		Components of timber wwa1		Components of timber wwc138	
<i>Sample:</i>	wwj4b	<i>Sample:</i>	wwa1b	<i>Sample:</i>	wwc3 wwc8
<i>Last ring</i>	1531	<i>Last ring</i>	1531	<i>Last ring</i>	1560 1558
<i>date AD:</i>		<i>date AD:</i>		<i>date AD:</i>	
wwj4a	$\frac{7.93}{25}$	wwa1a	$\frac{14.35}{106}$	wwc1	$\frac{8.01}{57}$ $\frac{6.96}{55}$
				wwc3	$\frac{8.66}{63}$
Components of timber wwb7			Components of timber wwe2		
<i>Sample:</i>	wwb7b		<i>Sample:</i>	wwe2	
<i>Last ring</i>	1640		<i>Last ring</i>	1539	
<i>date AD:</i>			<i>date AD:</i>		
wwb7a	$\frac{6.76}{54}$		wwe1	$\frac{3.64}{64}$	
Components of mean wwb7911					
<i>Sample:</i>	wwg7b	wwg9	wwg11		
<i>Last ring</i>	1553	1548	1550		
<i>date AD:</i>					
wwg7a	$\frac{2.71}{44}$	$\frac{5.40}{42}$	$\frac{24.13}{44}$		
	wwg7b	$\frac{4.07}{54}$	$\frac{2.75}{44}$		
		wwg9	$\frac{4.75}{42}$		

Table 2 (continued): Matrix of *t*-values and overlaps for site masters

Components of site master **WWYCOMB2**

<i>Sample:</i>	wwg2	wwg3	wwg4	wwg5	wwg6	wwg8	wwg10	wwg12
<i>Last ring date AD:</i>	1553	1553	1541	1546	1546	1548	1541	1538
wwg1	$\frac{2.86}{43}$	$\frac{4.20}{43}$	$\frac{3.53}{31}$	$\frac{1.52}{36}$	$\frac{2.30}{36}$	$\frac{4.30}{38}$	$\frac{1.22}{31}$	$\frac{2.53}{28}$
wwg2		$\frac{3.67}{46}$	$\frac{2.59}{34}$	$\frac{2.98}{39}$	$\frac{3.61}{39}$	$\frac{4.62}{41}$	$\frac{1.86}{34}$	$\frac{2.55}{31}$
wwg3			$\frac{6.01}{67}$	$\frac{2.75}{72}$	$\frac{3.63}{69}$	$\frac{3.94}{73}$	$\frac{2.46}{67}$	$\frac{2.93}{64}$
wwg4				$\frac{3.60}{73}$	$\frac{5.84}{64}$	$\frac{4.54}{66}$	$\frac{3.81}{73}$	$\frac{3.60}{70}$
wwg5					$\frac{5.63}{69}$	$\frac{4.55}{71}$	$\frac{4.02}{75}$	$\frac{4.38}{73}$
wwg6						$\frac{4.43}{69}$	$\frac{2.92}{64}$	$\frac{3.62}{61}$
wwg8							$\frac{4.11}{66}$	$\frac{4.57}{63}$
wwg10								$\frac{5.04}{72}$

Components of site master **WWYCOMB3**

<i>Sample:</i>	wwh5	wwh12	wwh8	wwh9
<i>Last ring date AD:</i>	1554	1553	1565	1568
wwh4	$\frac{1.74}{51}$	$\frac{3.26}{73}$	$\frac{3.31}{37}$	$\frac{2.81}{29}$
wwh5		$\frac{3.79}{50}$	$\frac{4.38}{37}$	$\frac{2.60}{29}$
wwh12			$\frac{2.59}{36}$	$\frac{4.08}{28}$
wwh8				$\frac{2.51}{40}$

Table 2 (continued): Matrix of *t*-values and overlaps for site masters

Components of site master **WWYCOMB4**

<i>Sample:</i>	wwj2	wwj3	wwj4	wwj14	wwj15a1	wwj15a2	wwj16
<i>Last ring date AD:</i>	1531	1655	1531	1656	1542	1656	1531
wwj1	$\frac{1.21}{127}$	$\frac{0.00}{0}$	$\frac{2.59}{109}$	$\frac{0.81}{15}$	$\frac{2.58}{50}$	$\frac{0.00}{0}$	$\frac{2.73}{120}$
wwj2		$\frac{0.00}{0}$	$\frac{3.37}{109}$	$\frac{0.13}{14}$	$\frac{2.06}{49}$	$\frac{0.00}{0}$	$\frac{7.34}{120}$
wwj3			$\frac{0.00}{0}$	$\frac{4.12}{104}$	$\frac{0.00}{0}$	$\frac{3.80}{66}$	$\frac{0.00}{0}$
wwj4				$\frac{2.94}{14}$	$\frac{3.23}{49}$	$\frac{0.00}{0}$	$\frac{3.85}{109}$
wwj14					$\frac{2.62}{25}$	$\frac{5.06}{67}$	$\frac{0.00}{14}$
wwj15a1						$\frac{0.00}{0}$	$\frac{1.36}{49}$
wwj15a2							$\frac{0.00}{0}$

Components of site master **WWYCOMB1**

<i>Sample:</i>	wwa2	wwa3	wwa5
<i>Last ring date AD:</i>	1531	1530	1531
wwa1	$\frac{4.51}{132}$	$\frac{4.66}{90}$	$\frac{4.88}{93}$
wwa2		$\frac{2.70}{90}$	$\frac{3.01}{93}$
wwa3			$\frac{6.15}{90}$

Components of site master **WWYCOMB5**

<i>Sample:</i>	wwc9	wwc10
<i>Last ring date AD:</i>	1560	1560
wwc7	$\frac{3.93}{50}$	$\frac{8.56}{34}$
wwc9		$\frac{8.57}{34}$

Table 2 (continued): Matrix of *t*-values and overlaps for site mastersComponents of site master **WWYCOMB6**

<i>Sample:</i>	wwb2	wwb3	wwb4	wwb5	wwb6	wwb7	wwb8
<i>Last ring date AD:</i>	1646	1629	1645	1628	1647	1640	1647
wwb1	$\frac{5.77}{47}$	$\frac{3.30}{33}$	$\frac{6.48}{45}$	$\frac{2.41}{32}$	$\frac{2.44}{47}$	$\frac{2.64}{44}$	$\frac{4.39}{47}$
wwb2		$\frac{3.20}{35}$	$\frac{4.88}{47}$	$\frac{0.37}{34}$	$\frac{1.59}{52}$	$\frac{1.81}{46}$	$\frac{3.43}{52}$
		wwb3	$\frac{4.20}{31}$	$\frac{2.92}{76}$	$\frac{7.41}{65}$	$\frac{3.33}{79}$	$\frac{2.24}{71}$
			wwb4	$\frac{1.77}{30}$	$\frac{2.05}{47}$	$\frac{2.67}{42}$	$\frac{4.61}{47}$
				wwb5	$\frac{2.29}{64}$	$\frac{5.28}{76}$	$\frac{0.63}{70}$
					wwb6	$\frac{4.93}{76}$	$\frac{3.90}{83}$
						wwb7	$\frac{2.54}{82}$

Components of site master **WWYCOMB7**

<i>Sample:</i>	wwd2	wwd3
<i>Last ring date AD:</i>	1436	1464
wwd1	$\frac{6.52}{83}$	$\frac{1.99}{23}$
wwd2		$\frac{4.12}{21}$

Table 3a: Dating of site master **WWYCOMB2** (1464-1553) against reference chronologies at 1553

<i>County or region:</i>	<i>Chronology name:</i>	<i>Short publication reference:</i>	<i>File name:</i>	<i>Spanning:</i>	<i>Overlap:</i>	<i>t-value:</i>
London	Hampton Court	(Miles et al 2007)	HMPNTNCT2	1498-1633	56	7.50
Shropshire	Shropshire Master Chronology	(Miles 1995)	SALOP95	881-1745	90	7.56
Oxfordshire	Harpsden Court, Harpsden	(Miles et al 2009)	HARPSDN1	1413-1571	90	7.57
Southern England	Southern England Master	(<i>Bridge 1998</i>)	SENG98	944-1790	90	7.75
Oxfordshire	Bodleian Library	(Miles and Worthington 1999)	BDLEIAN4	1436-1570	90	8.07
Great Britain	British Isles Master Chronology	(Haddon-Reece and Miles 1993)	MASTERAL	404-1987	90	8.32
Hampshire	Hampshire Master Chronology	(<i>Miles 2003</i>)	HANTS02	443-1972	90	8.45
London	Breakspear House, Harefield	(Arnold and Howard 2010)	HFDBSQ04	1497-1610	57	8.55

Table 3b: Dating of site master **WWYCOMB3** (1470-1568) against reference chronologies at 1568

<i>County or region:</i>	<i>Chronology name:</i>	<i>Short publication reference:</i>	<i>File name:</i>	<i>Spanning:</i>	<i>Overlap:</i>	<i>t-value:</i>
Oxfordshire	Bodleian Library	(Miles and Worthington 1999)	BDLEIAN4	1436-1570	99	6.50
Great Britain	British Isles Master Chronology	(Haddon-Reece and Miles 1993)	MASTERAL	404-1987	99	6.91
Oxfordshire	Greys Court, Rotherfield Greys	(Miles et al 2009)	GREYSCTA	1319-1618	99	6.91
Oxfordshire	Granary Cottage, Henley	(Miles et al 2008)	HENLEY4	1420-1549	80	7.26
Southern England	Southern England Master	(<i>Bridge 1998</i>)	SENG98	944-1790	99	7.36
Oxfordshire	Lower Harnes, Rotherfield Greys	(Miles et al 2008)	LHERNESI	1470-1566	97	7.38
Oxfordshire	Sturups, Mapledurham	(Miles and Haddon-Reece 1994)	MDMI2	1366-1557	88	8.12
Oxfordshire	Harpsden Court, Harpsden	(Miles et al 2009)	HARPSDN1	1413-1571	99	8.61

Table 3c: Dating of site master **WWYCOMB4** (1373-1656) against reference chronologies at 1656

<i>County or region:</i>	<i>Chronology name:</i>	<i>Short publication reference:</i>	<i>File name:</i>	<i>Spanning:</i>	<i>Overlap:</i>	<i>t-value:</i>
Great Britain	British Isles Master Chronology	(Haddon-Reece and Miles 1993)	MASTERAL	404-1987	284	7.65
London	White Tower, Tower of London	(Miles 2007)	WHTOWR7	1463-1616	154	7.74
Hampshire	Berry Crt Farm, Nether Wallop	(Miles et al 2003)	BRRYCTFM	1429-1579	151	7.75
Oxfordshire	Harpsden Court, Harpsden	(Miles et al 2009)	HARPSDN1	1413-1571	159	7.77
Shropshire	Fulway Cottage	(Miles and Haddon-Reece 1994)	FULWAY	1397-1639	243	7.97
England	Ref3 Master Chronology	(Fletcher 1977)	REF3	1399-1687	258	8.39
Berkshire	Oracle Site, Reading	(to come)	ORACLE4	1468-1611	144	8.66
Shropshire	Abcott Manor, Clungunford	(Miles and Worthington 2002)	CGFA	1422-1545	124	9.26

Table 3d: Dating of site master **WYCOMB1** (1395-1531) against reference chronologies at 1531

<i>County or region:</i>	<i>Chronology name:</i>	<i>Short publication reference:</i>	<i>File name:</i>	<i>Spanning:</i>	<i>Overlap:</i>	<i>t-value:</i>
Hampshire	Hampshire Master Chronology	(Miles 2003)	HANTS02	443-1972	137	6.19
Southern England	Southern England Master	(Bridge 1998)	SENG98	944-1790	137	6.27
England	Ref3 Master Chronology	(Fletcher 1977)	REF3	1399-1687	133	6.55
Oxfordshire	Greys Court, Rotherfield Greys	(Miles et al 2009)	GREYSCTA	1319-1618	137	6.84
Great Britain	British Isles Master Chronology	(Haddon-Reece and Miles 1993)	MASTERAL	404-1987	137	7.00
Herefordshire	Little Brockhampton Gatehouse	(Nayling 2001)	LBG-T10	1368-1543	137	7.08
Southern England	South Master Chronology	(Hillam and Groves 1994)	SOUTH	406-1594	137	7.75
Berkshire	Oracle Site, Reading	(to come)	ORACLE4	1468-1611	64	7.95

Table 3e: Dating of site master **WYCOMB5** (1508-1560) against reference chronologies at 1560

<i>County or region:</i>	<i>Chronology name:</i>	<i>Short publication reference:</i>	<i>File name:</i>	<i>Spanning:</i>	<i>Overlap:</i>	<i>t-value:</i>
Hampshire	Hampshire Master Chronology	(Miles 2003)	HANTS02	443-1972	137	6.19
Southern England	Southern England Master	(Bridge 1998)	SENG98	944-1790	137	6.27
England	Ref3 Master Chronology	(Fletcher 1977)	REF3	1399-1687	133	6.55
Oxfordshire	Greys Court, Rotherfield Greys	(Miles et al 2009)	GREYSCTA	1319-1618	137	6.84
Great Britain	British Isles Master Chronology	(Haddon-Reece and Miles 1993)	MASTERAL	404-1987	137	7.00
Herefordshire	Little Brockhampton Gatehouse	(Nayling 2001)	LBG-T10	1368-1543	137	7.08
Southern England	South Master Chronology	(Hillam and Groves 1994)	SOUTH	406-1594	137	7.75
Berkshire	Oracle Site, Reading	(to come)	ORACLE4	1468-1611	64	7.95

Table 3f: Dating of site master **WYCOMB6** (1550-1647) against reference chronologies at 1647

<i>County or region:</i>	<i>Chronology name:</i>	<i>Short publication reference:</i>	<i>File name:</i>	<i>Spanning:</i>	<i>Overlap:</i>	<i>t-value:</i>
East Midlands	East Midlands Master	(Laxton and Litton 1988)	EASTMID	882-1981	98	7.32
Oxfordshire	Oxfordshire Master Chronology	(Haddon-Reece et al 1993)	OXON93	632-1987	98	7.60
Oxfordshire	St John's Barn, Oxford	ODL	STJBARN	1576-1673	72	7.69
London	White Tower, Tower of London	(Miles 2007)	WHTOWR7	1463-1616	67	8.31
London	London Master Chronology	(Tyers pers comm)	LONDON	413-1728	98	8.44
Wiltshire	Salisbury Cathedral	(Miles et al 2004)	SARUM12	1556-1703	92	8.90
Hampshire	Hampshire Master Chronology	(Miles 2003)	HANTS02	443-1972	98	9.42
Great Britain	British Isles Master Chronology	(Haddon-Reece and Miles 1993)	MASTERAL	404-1987	98	10.45

Table 3g: Dating of site master **wwycomb7** (1338-1464) against reference chronologies at 1464

<i>County or region:</i>	<i>Chronology name:</i>	<i>Short publication reference:</i>	<i>File name:</i>	<i>Spanning:</i>	<i>Overlap:</i>	<i>t-value:</i>
Southern England	Southern England Master	(<i>Bridge 1998</i>)	SENG98	944-1790	127	7.26
Hampshire	Hampshire Master Chronology	(<i>Miles 2003</i>)	HANTS02	443-1972	127	7.42
Oxfordshire	Oxfordshire Master Chronology	(Haddon-Reece et al 1993)	OXON93	632-1987	127	7.45
Oxfordshire	New College Oxford	(Miles and Worthington 2006)	NWCOLLG1	1271-1396	159	7.45
London	London Master Chronology	(<i>Tyers pers comm</i>)	LONDON	413-1728	127	7.77
Somerset	Somerset Master Chronology	(Miles 2004)	SOMRST04	770-1979	127	7.80
Great Britain	British Isles Master Chronology	(Haddon-Reece and Miles 1993)	MASTERAL	404-1987	127	8.23
Berkshire	Windsor Castle kitchen	(Hillam and Groves 1996)	WC KITCH	1331-1573	127	8.25

Table 3h: Dating of site master **wwa7** (1384-1450) against reference chronologies at 1450

<i>County or region:</i>	<i>Chronology name:</i>	<i>Short publication reference:</i>	<i>File name:</i>	<i>Spanning:</i>	<i>Overlap:</i>	<i>t-value:</i>
Oxfordshire	Oxfordshire Master Chronology	(Haddon-Reece et al 1993)	OXON93	632-1987	67	5.30
Hampshire	Abbots Barton	(Miles and Worthington 1998)	ABTSBRITN	1387-1559	64	5.38
London	Hampton Court	(Miles et al 2007)	HMPINCT1	1376-1525	67	5.41
Oxfordshire	Princes Manor, Harwell	(Miles et al 2006)	PRINCES2	1355-1497	67	5.58
Oxfordshire	Queens Head, Crwmarsh Gifford	(Haddon-Reece et al 1989)	QUEEN2	1352-1454	67	5.97
Oxfordshire	Pithouse, Mapledurham	(Miles and Haddon-Reece 1993)	MDM9	1340-1454	67	6.03
Oxfordshire	Mapledurham Medieval Chron.	(Oxford unpubl)	MDM	1278-1457	67	6.28
Oxfordshire	Magdalen College, Oxford	(Miles and Worthington 2000)	MAGDALN1	1321-1476	67	7.12



NATIONAL TRUST

WEST WYCOMBE VILLAGE



GAZETTEER OF
HISTORIC BUILDINGS

MARCH 2015

WEST WYCOMBE VILLAGE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

GAZETTEER OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS

INTRODUCTION

The current document forms a select gazetteer of historic buildings in West Wycombe village and forms part of a wider investigation of the village during the recent refurbishment by the National Trust (2012–2014).

The buildings included in this gazetteer are essentially all those for which detailed recording was undertaken by Oxford Archaeology during the refurbishment as well as those other buildings for which the National Trust previously undertook Vernacular Building Surveys (VBS) in c1993–4. The one other building which is included in the gazetteer is the Church Loft even though it has not been recorded by OA and there is no NT VBS. This has been included partly for its historic importance and partly because it has been recently investigated by the Building Recording Group of the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society.

For the buildings where OA has not undertaken recent recording the gazetteer entries are based almost entirely on the relevant VBS from c20 years ago so it is possible that some significant alterations may have been undertaken on the buildings which are not mentioned.

There are a number of important historic buildings in the village which are not included in the gazetteer because they are either not owned by the National Trust or there is no Vernacular Building Survey. These include the Dower House and St Paul's Church. West Wycombe House itself has also not been included because the principal focus of this study is the village.

The entries in the gazetteer generally follow the system used in the Vernacular Building Surveys where a single VBS was sometimes produced for distinct groups of buildings rather than for every individual dwelling or address. Therefore, for example there are single gazetteer entries for 52–56 High Street and also for the group of structures that forms the main Crown Court group (24–28, 34–35 Crown Court). The one exception is No. 59 High Street, a small cottage which is included in the VBS for the Apple Orchard but it seems more appropriate to include it here as a separate gazetteer entry.

The gazetteer entries are all intended to be summaries of the buildings and a fuller understanding will be gained by reading the various Vernacular Building Surveys, and where relevant the stand-alone reports on individual buildings produced by OA on the recent recording works.

The gazetteer includes a standard format for each building with a range of fields including:

- Summary
- Building name
- National Grid Reference
- Listed status
- Work in current project
- Location
- Map evidence
- Description and evolution of building

Table 1: Summary of Historic Buildings in West Wycombe

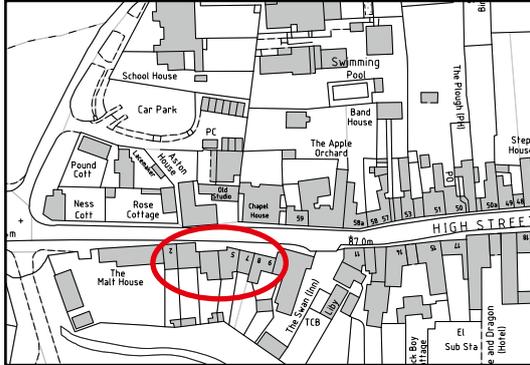
	Address	Summary
1	2–9 High Street	Numbers 2–9 High Street form a complicated row of buildings towards the western end of the village which has grown and evolved in a number of phases with the earliest buildings being of early 16th century date. (HBSMR Nos 154724, 154752, 154725, 154749, 154750, 154751, 154712)
2	Swan Inn	The Swan Inn was probably constructed as a public house in the early 18th century to profit from the important coaching trade. It would have been rather smaller than the main older coaching inns (the George and the Black Boy) but it is partly of interest as it remains in its primary use. A large rear extension was added in the 1930s.
3	11–13 High Street	The earliest part of this building appears to be a timber-framed, 3-bay structure facing the High Street, probably dating from the mid 16th century. There are various later extensions to the rear including one from the early to mid 17th century. (HBSMR No. 154719)
4	14–15 High St	This building forms the former Black Boy coaching inn which was constructed in the 16th century. The building was timber framed but it was re-fronted in brick in the 18th century. It has the classic form of a coaching inn with a front block and two rear ranges.
5	16–17 High Street	This building appears to have been constructed in the mid 17th century as a brick dwelling and it was then refaced in the early 18th century. There is no evidence of an earlier timber-framed core to the building. (HBSMR No. 154719, 154713)
6	19–22a High Street	No. 19–22a is a group of four historic buildings which were constructed at various stages from the mid 16th to the mid 18th century. They have been substantially altered since and part of the group was for a period the Lion Inn. A scheme of imitation painted brickwork has previously been uncovered on part of the front elevation. (HBSMR No. 154714)
7	24–28, 34–35 Crown Court	This group of buildings appears to comprise five distinct historical structures and it has gradually grown eastwards along the High Street, and south-eastwards to form Crown Court. Dendrochronology suggests that the three earliest ranges each date to within c15 years of each other in the 1530s and 1540s while the easternmost range was added in the 1640s. The rear range is less clear because although dendrochronology has given a date of c1561 for the roof there is evidence to suggest the building may be later and that the roof of No. 27 was reused from elsewhere. (HBSMR No. 150971, 154718)
8	29–30 Crown Court	This relatively modest building comprises two small distinct dwellings with the earliest (No. 29) probably having been constructed in the mid 17th century and the later one (No. 30) added as a single storey structure in the late 17th or early 18th century. The later part of the building was then raised in height in the late 18th or early 19th century. (HBSMR No. 154709)
9	32–33 Crown Court	This timber framed building on the east side of Crown Court is believed to have been constructed in the late 17th or possibly very early 18th century. The roof incorporates a number of curved timbers which have previously been tentatively interpreted as cruck blades but in the current work it is thought that it is more likely that they are curved inner principals. (HBSMR No. 154710)
10	36–38 High Street	This is an important, early timber-framed building at the eastern edge of the village, part of which may have been constructed in the later 15th century although it has had various later alterations including the addition of a brick façade in the 18th century. (HBSMR No. 154715)
11	39 Church Lane	Small flint cottage (with brick dressings) constructed in the early to mid 18th century which was greatly expanded in the mid 20th century. (HBSMR No. 154754)
12	40–41 Church Lane	Modest cottage/s which have evolved in various phases since their original construction, probably in the 17th century. The building was timber framed with the roof incorporating an open cruck but the structure was enlarged and refaced in brick in the 18th century. (HBSMR No. 154708)
13	42–43 Church Lane	A row of three distinct buildings of which the earliest (No. 42) is probably a timber framed structure constructed in the early to mid 16th century and refaced in brick, probably in 1735. The central part (No. 42a/43a) was probably built in the mid to late 17th century and the southern element (No. 43) then added in 1722. (HBSMR Nos 154711, 154721, 154722)
14	44–47 High Street	This is an important building towards the eastern end of the village which is now four tenancies but it would originally have been a single high status dwelling. It is very similar to the Apple Orchard and was probably originally a merchant's house. The main interest of this range is the survival of most of primary timber framing and wattle and daub panels. (HBSMR No. 154716)

15	48–49 High Street	Building 48–49 originated as a pair of small timber-framed cottages probably constructed in the early to mid 17th century on the current footprint of No. 49. These were extended to east (No. 48) in the mid 18th century and at the same time the older building was refronted. In the mid or later 19th century the two dwellings in No. 49 were combined to form a single house and various improvements were undertaken by the RSA in the 1930s works. (HBSMR No. 154707)
16	50a High Street	Attractive, brick Georgian town house probably constructed in the 18th century. (HBSMR No. 154705)
17	52–56 High Street	The earliest part of this range is the eastern bay (No. 52) which was constructed in the mid to late 17th century but which has subsequently been significantly altered. The western part was built in a single phase in the early to mid 18th century. (HBSMR No. 154717)
18	57–58a High Street	This building comprises two elements: a small western section and a larger eastern section. The VBS felt that the western section was probably the oldest element of the complex, having been constructed in the mid to late 17th century with the larger range added in the early 18th century. However, the recent exposure of the roof structure suggested that the roof of the main eastern range was probably earlier than that of the small west range. (HBSMR No. 150970)
19	Apple Orchard	The Apple Orchard is among the more significant buildings in the village having probably been constructed in the mid 16th century as the timber framed house of a merchant of some status. Much of the framing survives including a good example of a jettied front and the building is one of the relatively few mentioned in the village in the RCHM Monuments of Buckinghamshire (p.319). It was later converted to a coaching inn and has been used more recently as a shop. (HBSMR No. 154700)
20	59 High Street	No. 59 High Street is a good example of a small cottage, contrasting with the larger and much higher status Apple Orchard immediately to the east and also to the Methodist chapel immediately to the west. It was constructed in the late 17th century. (HBSMR No. 154755)
21	Cave Cottage	Cave Cottage was constructed in the late 17th century as a pair of timber-framed cottages. This was then converted to a single dwelling, probably in the later 18th century and encased in brick. (HBSMR No. 154695)
22	Black Boy Cottage	Black Boy Cottage was constructed in the 18th century as a coach house for the Black Boy Inn on the High Street. It was then converted to domestic use as part of the RSA's works in the early 1930s. (HBSMR No. 154694)
23	Steps House (No. 47)	Steps House was listed Grade II* in 1954 as 'The Manor House'. This, combined with the grand architectural features and good quality finishing such as the penny-struck pointing to the brickwork of the front elevation, gives an indication of the status of the building within the village. (HBSMR No. 154720)
24	Flint Cottage	Flint Cottage was originally constructed in 1839 as the village school but it has now been converted to a cottage. (HBSMR No. 154699)
25	Plough Inn and Post office	This is an important group of timber framed buildings which were probably first built in the mid 16th century and although there have been many secondary alterations the building does retain significant elements of the original structure. (HBSMR No. 154704)
26	Old Vicarage	The Old Vicarage is one of the most significant and possibly the oldest surviving house in the village, with the VBS dating it to the early to mid 15th century. (HBSMR No. 154723)
27	The George and Dragon	The George and Dragon is one of the most significant buildings in the village, principally due to its size and status clearly illustrating the historic importance of the coaching trade to West Wycombe. The building also retains a number of important historic features, particularly a gallery in the rear accommodation range. The building is believed to have been constructed in the 16th century and it was then greatly expanded to its current form in the 18th century. (HBSMR No. 154703)
28	Furniture Factory	This was a purpose built furniture factory constructed in the late 19th or early 20th century. Although it is much less old than many other buildings in the village it is of historic interest due to the importance of chair making in West Wycombe. Due to this interest the building is listed Grade II*. (HBSMR No. 154698)
29	Church Loft	The Church Loft is one of the most historically significant buildings in West Wycombe and this is reflected in its Grade II* listing. It has long been thought likely that it is the oldest surviving building in the village and recent dendrochronology suggests that it was probably constructed around 1465. The significance of the building lies partly in its late medieval date but also in its historic character and exposed timber framing with jetties to front and rear. (HBSMR No. 150966)

BUILDING 1: NO. 2-9 HIGH STREET

Summary

Numbers 2–9 High Street form a complicated row of buildings towards the western end of the village which has grown and evolved in a number of phases with the earliest buildings being of early 16th century date.



NGR: SU 82864 94649

Listed status: Grade II

Location

Numbers 2–9 High Street form a distinct group of buildings on the southern side of the High Street towards the western end of West Wycombe.

Work in current project

Recording during roof strip and some internal works. A stand-alone report has been produced (February 2015) which includes a more detailed analysis of the building than this gazetteer entry.

Dendrochronology analysis has provided felling dates for several samples in Nos 3 and 4 and this suggests that number 3 was the earliest of these two structures, constructed in 1554 and then the front range of No. 4 was added the following year in 1555. The rear wings of both these structures were probably added in 1569 or shortly afterwards.

Map evidence

The buildings are relatively easily identified on the 1767 map to the west of the Swan Inn. The map shows a continuous row of buildings on the street front and with no structures to the rear. Nos 2 and 3 appear to have formed the eastern end of a long malthouse along the street front with the large square yard to the rear labelled Mr Davenport's house, malthouse, garden etc Mr Davenport also owned the two plots to the west of this and also that to the east which appears to have comprised the current Nos 4–6 (labelled Mr Davenport's three cottages and gardens on the map). Nos 7 and 8 appear to have been a structure shown as a larger building on the map and labelled 'A House and Garden while No. 9 appears to have been a smaller structure labelled Mr Cabbage House, Garden etc

The 1767 map shows that the buildings were largely part of the Dashwood's (Lord Le Despencer's) estate other than No. 9 at the eastern end.

Information from the 1849 Tithe Map and the 1851 census confirms that this remained a row of cottages occupied by Charles Bristowe (No. 2), Henry Hussey (No. 3), Richard Auger, a boot and shoe maker (No. 4), Matthew Auger a retired former shoe maker (No. 5) and James Biggs a brick layer (No. 7: two cottages). The plot of No. 8 included two cottages and it was empty while No. 9 was a much larger property occupied by William Goodchild, a baker, and

his family which included 7 children. No. 9 was described as a house, garden and outbuildings whereas the others are all described as cottages and gardens.

Description and evolution of building

No. 2–9 High Street is an important range of buildings that has grown in a large number of phases from the mid 16th to the 20th century. The Vernacular Building Survey, which also covered the Swan Inn, divided it into 16 distinct structures, including various minor outshuts or projections to the rear of the complex.

The main buildings are two storied with tile-clad roofs and although the older parts of the complex are timber framed the front of the entire range is now essentially of colourwashed brick. The front elevation incorporates a number of steps and kinks reflecting the overall evolution of the range. The rear elevation is also largely of brick although several secondary outshuts have been constructed to this side as well as other gabled projections.

The earliest two structures are to the west of the main central kink in the range and comprise a three-bay structure (Block R in the VBS) which is now partly obscured behind a 17th-century gabled projection and a smaller structure (Block P in VBS) which formerly continued further to the east. Recent dendrochronology samples suggests that Block R was constructed in c1554 while the slightly lower block P to the east was constructed in c1555.

Each of these buildings is timber framed and the roofs have queen-strut trusses, clasped purlins and wind braces similar in nature to other buildings in the village from this period. What appears to be a blocked first floor window has recently been exposed in the eastern gable of Block P, now abutted by the 18th-century Block L. These two earliest ranges are now both within No. 3–4 although the numbering along this part of the High Street no longer respects the original footprints of the buildings.

To the rear of Block P is an early timber-framed extension which recent dendrochronology works suggest was probably constructed around 1569. The removal of the tiles from a much later catslide roofed extension to the west (Block C) has revealed the largely intact remains of a primary timber-mullion window together with early lath and plaster to the panels. The window has been blocked with wattle and daub which appears to be much earlier than the outshut extension that blocked it. It may therefore be that this outshut replaced a previous similar building on this footprint which blocked the window.

To the west of the earliest surviving range is a further structure (Block S or No. 2 High St) of probable late 16th century date although this is now entirely obscured from the street front by two gabled projections (Blocks T and U) which were probably added in the 17th century. This structure incorporates a large stack at the east end in a half-bay to heat both Block S and the original Block R. Unusually the roof of Block S has butt purlins rather than clasped as are found widely in West Wycombe.

The eastern half of this group of buildings (not including the Swan Inn) comprises two main brick-built street-front ranges which were probably both of 18th century date. To the west is Block L (No. 5–7) which the VBS considered to be of mid 18th century date while the range to the east (Block F, No. 8) was dated to the early 18th century by the VBS. The roof of Block F has not been examined in the current project but that of Block L has. This has queen-strut trusses with butt purlins. At each end of this roof the purlins are supported on trusses set immediately inside from the primary brick gables.

To the rear of Block L there are three gabled projections, constructed in the late 18th or early 19th century; two are faced in flint while the other is of brick.





No 11-13 West Wycombe Sketched roof plan

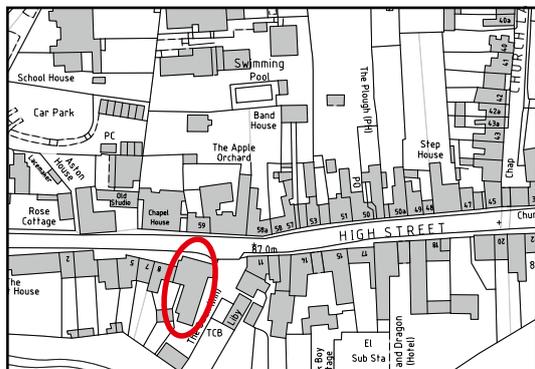
	Phase 1: Mid 16th Century
	Phase 2: Mid 17th century
	Phase 3: 19th Century
	Phase 4: 20th Century

Not to scale

BUILDING 2: THE SWAN INN

Summary

The Swan Inn was probably constructed as a public house in the early 18th century to profit from the important coaching trade. It would have been rather smaller than the main older coaching inns (the George and the Black Boy) but it is partly of interest as it remains in its primary use. A large rear extension was added in the 1930s.



NGR: SU 82894 94640

Listed status: Grade II

Location

The Swan Inn is located on the south side of the High Street, towards western end of the village. It is at the east end of the row of structures that forms numbers 2–9.

Work in current project:

No detailed investigation in current project

Map evidence

The c1698 map shows the village with a well developed street frontage facing the High Street and although it is not generally possible to identify individual buildings, or accurately depict their form, it is possible to identify the location of the Swan. This is due to its position immediately west of the distinctive break in the frontage. There is a building shown here but it is unlikely to be an accurate depiction of the actual building on the site at this time.

The 1767 map shows the building labelled as The Swan to the front and Mr Cook's House, Garden etc to the rear. The map indicates that at this date the building was not owned by Lord Le Despencer.

In the 1849 Tithe & Apportionment the building is also listed as The Swan Inn & Yard with William West as the proprietor. William West is also listed in the 1851 census with 6 people occupying the building.

The first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1876 shows the building labelled as the Swan public house and to have included a main front range, a rear projection towards the western end and a further detached building to the rear. The 1898 map again labels it as a public house (although with the name not shown) and the main change to the footprint shown is that the attached rear range had been truncated or replaced. The 1921 map shows the same arrangement as the 1898 map.

In the RSA schedule from 1929 the Swan Inn is shown to have been leased by Ashby's Staines Brewery and the building included a tap room, a bar parlour, a sitting room, a kitchen, a cellar, four bedrooms and two attics.

Description and summary of interpretation

The Swan Inn divides into several distinct blocks:

- The main range facing the High Street
- A subsidiary range facing the High Street
- A small projection at the south-west corner hidden from the public faces of the building
- A main rear range facing the yard to the east
- A small rear projection at the end of the above range
- A set of garages at the southern end of the yard.

The main range facing the High Street is a two storey, four bay wide brick building with modillion cornice, shuttered windows, old tiled roof and chimneys at each end. This range is likely to have been constructed in the early 18th century as an inn and the Vernacular Building Survey identified evidence (a partially obscured former opening in the east gable) which suggested that the roof space may originally have been used as an attic floor. The roof was not investigated in the VBS.

To the east of the main range is a single storey, hipped roof brick structure located at the junction between the High Street and the side yard. This also has shuttered windows, old tile roof and colourwashed brick. This block was probably added in the early 19th century.

The small rear projection at the south-western corner of the property is a brick outshut to provide additional storage space and it was probably constructed in the early to mid 19th century. As detailed above there is a projection at this location shown on the late 19th and early 20th-century Ordnance Survey maps.

The main rear range is a two-storey, painted brick structure with a tile-covered hipped roof. It was constructed in the 1930s (post 1932) and replaced a previous detached block which is shown on the 1921 OS map. The main elevation of the range faces the open yard to the east and it has regular fenestration as well as a large bracketed porch to the ground floor entrance.

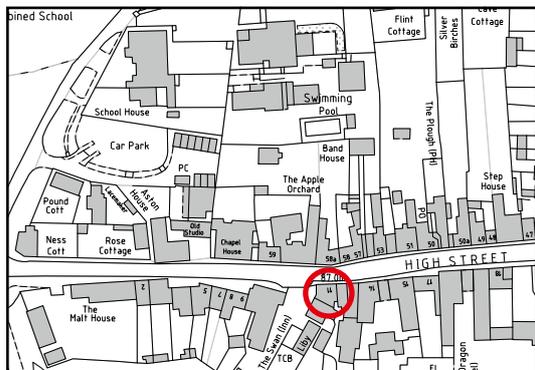
The smaller single-storey extension at the southern end of the main projection is also of painted brick and with a tile-covered hipped roof. It was also probably added in the 1930s.

At the southern end of the yard is a substantial, detached set of garages, possibly of 1930s date, with horizontally sliding doors, brick walls and a tile-covered roof. Presumably these were constructed for people stopping at the Swan Inn (although this hasn't been confirmed) and this is clearly of interest for a village whose history has been closely linked to the coaching trade. It brings a clear sense of historical continuity.

BUILDING 3: NO. 11-13 HIGH STREET

Summary

The earliest part of this building appears to be a timber-framed, 3-bay structure facing the High Street, probably dating from the mid 16th century. There are various later extensions to the rear including one from the early to mid 17th century.



NGR: SU 82915 94648

Listed status: Grade II

Location

No. 11–13 is on the south side of the High Street, towards the western end of West Wycombe and opposite the Apple Orchard.

Work in current project

Recording during roof strip and some internal works. A stand-alone report was produced (Feb 2013) and this includes more information and a more detailed analysis of the building than this gazetteer entry.

Map evidence

The 1767 map shows the buildings adjacent to the outflow of the stream beneath the road, and with a small yard labelled Mr Dorrel's two cottages. Both the 1767 plan and the 1849 Tithe Map distinctly show the south-west range of this group as being separate from the street front buildings and we can assume that the current roof in this area, which stretches around the corner to link the two buildings, post-dates these maps. It is also interesting to note that neither map shows the southward projection that today forms No. 13. The 1767 map shows that this was not part of the Dashwood's (Lord Le Despencer's) estate.

The 1849 Tithe Map and the 1851 census shows that in the mid 19th century there were chair makers living in Nos 11 and 12 (and 14): Henry Harris, Daniel Smith (and Jabez Harris in No. 14).

The 1876 OS map confirms that the corner range had been constructed by this date and the later OS maps do not show any clear significant evidence relating to the development of this building.

Details from the RSA acquisition of the village show that at this time in c1930 No. 11 included a post office and shop as well as a 3-bedroom dwelling while No. 12 was a single bedroom dwelling.

Description and evolution of building

Nos 11–13 The High Street comprise four bays along the street front and several extensions to the rear. The current investigation has broadly confirmed the construction phases suggested in the Vernacular Building Survey with the earliest section being the three easternmost bays

along the street front range (ie No. 12 and the eastern half of No. 11). The evidence in the roof appears to confirm that this was a distinct three-bay building with queen strut trusses, clasped purlins, a single tier of wind braces, cambered collars and a chimney stack towards the centre of the building. The braces also have scribed (not chiselled) Roman numeral carpenters marks. The VBS suggests a date of the early to mid 16th century and the evidence of the roof would broadly support such a date (albeit with the mid 16th century appearing more likely than the early 16th). The junction between this building and No. 14 to the east tentatively suggests that No. 14 probably pre-dates No. 12.

The second phase of the building is the rear projection to No. 12 which was probably constructed in the early to mid 17th century although it is noticeable how this is a cruder, lower status construction than the street-front range. It incorporates a wide range of types of rafter and a lower status building is suggested by the yoke, the thick ridge piece and the lack of wind braces. The trusses of this rear extension (ie No. 13) have clasped purlins, a yoke beneath thick ridge piece, principal rafters which are diminished above the purlin and a collar with a clear groove in the upper face for staves. At the northern end of this section of roof is a chimney stack which divides No. 12 from 13 and which is constructed from old bricks (17th–18th C) although it appears the stack was widened on the east side with another flue and then removed.

The roof of the western part of No. 11 (ie the north-western corner) is suggestive of a 19th century date and this supports map evidence which suggests that this corner range was constructed sometime between 1849 and 1876 to connect No. 11 with the building to the south-west.

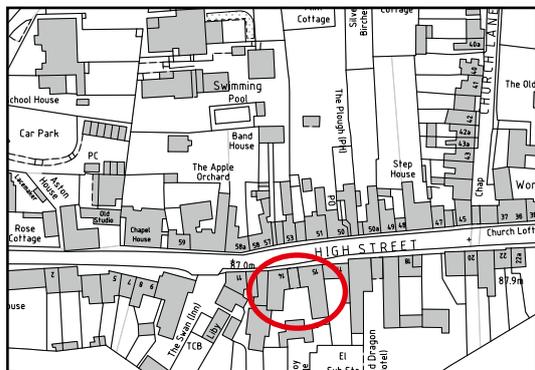
There are two small rear extensions to the western side of No. 11. The northern extension is the smallest and appears to be 20th century in date. A larger extension lies to the south and although the roof was only partially uncovered this structure probably dates to the 19th century.



BUILDING 4: 14–15 HIGH ST (BLACK BOY YARD)

Summary

This building forms the former Black Boy coaching inn which was constructed in the 16th century. The building was timber framed but it was re-fronted in brick in the 18th century. It has the classic form of a coaching inn with a front block and two rear ranges.



NGR: SU 82939 94649

Listed status: Grade II

Location

Number 14–15 High Street, known as the Black Boy Yard, is located on the south side of the High Street towards the centre of the village and only divided from the George and Dragon to the east by a single property. No. 14–15 is now four separate tenancies but historically these together formed a coaching inn which was known at various times as the Black Boy Inn and the Unicorn.

Work in current project

No detailed investigation in current project

Map evidence

The 1767 map shows clearly the building as a coaching inn (The Unicorn Inn) with a central carriage entrance through to the rear yard. There are no buildings shown to the rear but the plan is labelled 'The Unicorn Inn with Stables, Yard etc'. The building is shown with the same form as the nearby George.

Various directories from 1790 onwards also confirm that this was an inn, known as the Black Boy (and at some times as the Unicorn) and at least part of it was still an inn when the village was sold in 1929.

The building is shown with a very similar form on each of the Ordnance Survey maps (1876, 1898 and 1921) and labelled as a public house. On the 1876 map it is also shown to have been the Black Boy but the name is not shown on the two later maps.

Description and summary of interpretation

The layout of the Black Boy Yard is that of the classic coaching inn with a long main range facing the High Street and two rear ranges either side of a stable yard, accessed through a central carriage entrance in the front block. There is also a former coach house (Black Boy Cottage) on the fourth side of the yard but this is covered by a separate entry in this gazetteer.

The front range was constructed in the mid 16th century as a timber framed, three storey building with wattle and daub infill panels. The building was five bays wide and the front was jet-tied at first floor level. The National Trust Vernacular Building Survey says that there is some

evidence to suggest that the western part of the ground floor may originally have been an open hall.

In the mid to late 17th century a two-storey, lean-to gallery with outshut roof was constructed along the rear of the front range and the carriageway was raised in height. This also necessitated the raising of the floor height of the room above the carriageway. More substantial alterations were then undertaken in the early 18th century when the front was rebuilt in brick, the jetty being underbuilt and large windows added at ground floor. Numerous internal alterations were also undertaken in this period to create new rooms served by fireplaces and to increase ceiling heights.

As stated above the building was still operating as an inn in 1929 but following the RSA's reconditioning the inn closed and the building was divided into various new uses. The ground floor of the main range became two shops and the village reading room while the first floor became two flats.

The primary roof structure survives in the main range and comprises large queen post trusses with diagonally set clasped purlins and long curved wind braces. Only some of the wind braces survive in-situ and many of the common rafters have been doubled up or replaced. In common with many of the buildings at West Wycombe the common rafters are of a similar scantling to the principal rafters.

The eastern rear range is a two storied timber framed range with a jetty facing the yard and it was also probably constructed in the 16th century. This range would have provided accommodation at 1st floor. In 1929 the range housed a stables at ground floor and a hayloft above. During the preparation of the Vernacular Building Survey there was no real access to the roof but from the limited areas that were visible it appeared that there were typical queen-post trusses with clasped purlins.

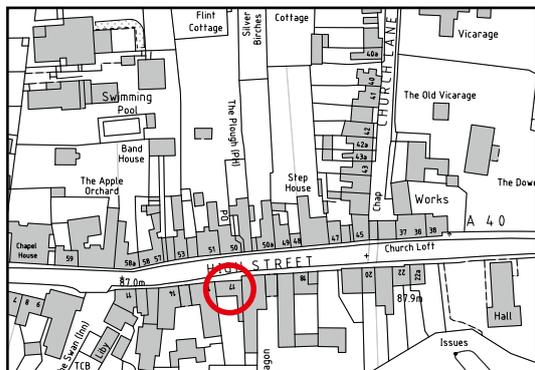
The west range is largely an 18th-century reconstruction of a previous 16th-century structure. It was a service wing, possibly providing a kitchen at ground floor and sleeping accommodation at first floor. It would presumably originally have been timber framed but little of this structure now survives.

Within the rear yard there is also a further outbuilding (distinct from the Black Boy Cottage which has a separate gazetteer entry) which was probably constructed in the 18th century.

BUILDING 5: NO. 16-17 HIGH STREET

Summary

This building appears to have been constructed in the mid 17th century as a brick dwelling and it was then refaced in the early 18th century. There is no evidence of an earlier timber-framed core to the building.



NGR: SU 82954 94652

Listed status: Grade II

Location

No. 16–17 is now a single property on the south side of the High Street, close to the centre of the village and sandwiched between the village's two main coaching inns: the George and Dragon and the Black Boy (or Unicorn)

Work in current project

No detailed investigation in current project. This gazetteer entry is based on the Vernacular Building Survey.

Map evidence

The 1767 map shows two properties on the site of No. 16–17 forming part of the continuous street frontage. There is a yard to the rear labelled 'Two tenements and gardens'. The map shows that this was part of the Dashwood's (Lord Le Despencer's) estate.

The 1849 Tithe Map and 1851 census shows that in the mid 19th century the two buildings on this site were occupied by Samuel Hawes (Tithe plot No. 706) and Widow Whiten (Tithe plot 707).

The first edition OS map of 1876 shows the two properties on the street front and another single larger range to the rear which extended the full width of the plot. The same arrangement is shown on the 1898 map but by the 1921 OS map the rear range is no longer shown.

Description and evolution of building

No. 16–17 High Street is a two storey building with attic floor illuminated by two dormers. The front is constructed from painted brick, set on a flint base with brick dressings and with a brick string course at first floor level. There are wood mullion windows at first floor and various windows at ground floor including two horizontal sliding sashes. Although the building was historically two properties these have been converted into a single dwelling and there is a single door to the front. The roof is set between two larger adjoining buildings and it is clad in clay tiles. There is also a Sun Fire insurance plaque to the front.

The front wall is relatively thick and the brickwork is suggestive of an early 18th century date while the brickwork in the thinner rear wall is more likely to be from the mid to late 17th century.

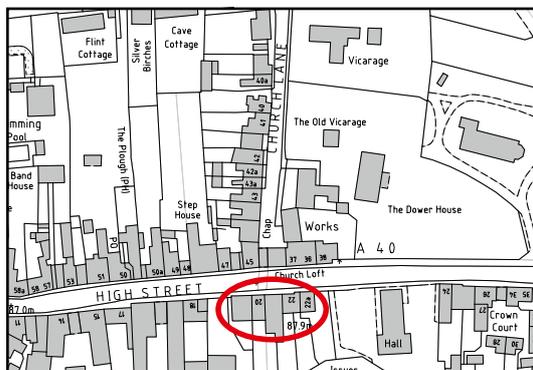
The Vernacular Building Survey considers that the original building was probably a brick structure constructed in the mid 17th century, possibly as a single dwelling, and that the front was then refaced in the early 18th century. There appears to be no evidence of a timber-framed core.

In the 18th century the front appears to have been refaced, and the possible single dwelling divided into two, and then in the 19th century the roofspace was converted into an attic. In c1976 the building was then converted back to a single house.

BUILDING 6: NO. 19-22A HIGH STREET

Summary

No. 19–22a is a group of four historic buildings which were constructed at various stages from the mid 16th to the mid 18th century. They have been substantially altered since and part of the group was for a period the Lion Inn. A scheme of imitation painted brickwork has previously been uncovered on part of the front elevation. (Report describing observations arising from repairs to 21–22 High Street, West Wycombe Village, Marshall, 2010)..



NGR: SU 83010 94657

Listed status: Grade II

Work in current project

No detailed investigation in current project. The description below is therefore based entirely on the National Trust's Vernacular Building Survey.

Location

No. 19–22 is a distinct row of buildings on the south side of the High Street, in the eastern half of the village and immediately opposite Church Lane.

Map evidence

The 1767 map shows a row of three properties on the site of 19–22a High Street with a large rear garden labelled 'Three Cottages and a shop with Gardens'. The western building on the street front is labelled The Wheel while the central one is labelled The Lion. These buildings are roughly equal sized and to the east is a smaller cottage about half the size of the others. To the east of this there is a long range with a wide central door but without windows or chimneys and this was presumably the shop (ie workshop) referred to in the description.

The 1767 map shows that this was part of the Dashwood's (Lord Le Despencer's) estate.

The 1849 Tithe apportionment and the 1851 census show that in the mid 19th century No. 19 (Tithe plot 711) was a house building and yard occupied by James Morris, a wheelwright. Nos 20–21 were occupied by James Mead and William Hughes while No. 22 (Tithe plot 714) was a house and garden occupied by Edmund Barlow a chairmaker.

The first edition OS map of 1876 shows the block comprising a series of distinct properties and the main difference from the 1849 map is that there is a large extension shown to the rear of No. 21. The map appears to show that part of this range of buildings included the post office at this date.

Description and evolution of building

This group is formed from four distinct buildings, each one two storied and covered with a tiled roof, although the interiors and layouts of tenancies have been altered without respecting

the original property boundaries. It is easier to understand the group if they are described in terms of these four buildings rather than the modern property numbering.

Building 1 is the structure at the eastern end of the row and now comprises all of No. 22a together with a part of the first floor of No. 22. This building was originally constructed in the 17th century, against the older Building 2 to the west and it had a timber-framed structure and a jettied front but secondary alterations have significantly altered the form of the building. In the early 18th century the front wall was stepped forward and the roof on this side was extended down in a catslide form to a low eaves just above the ground floor windows. Various internal alterations were also undertaken at this stage and also in a later 20th century refurbishment.

Building 2 is the adjacent building to the west and it includes all of No. 21 as well as the western end of No. 22 which became part of this tenancy in the early 18th century when Building 2 was operating as the Lion Inn. This building, which is believed to have been constructed in the mid to late 16th century is timber-framed and the front includes a gable (a secondary addition) with projecting oriel window of 18th century date. The VBS reports that the front originally had a jetty but this has been replaced by a brick front. To the rear the building includes a relatively early timber-framed southern extension. The roof above the front range is a typical queen-post truss roof with clasped purlins and wind braces. In 2010 a watching brief was undertaken during external works to the building including the removal of cement render from the front elevation. This uncovered various features of interest including timber framing, wattle and daub infill, earlier window openings and an interesting section of wall painted to give the appearance of brickwork. This fake painted brick was uncovered at first floor level to the front of No. 21 and it was presumably intended to give a regular character to the elevation which had evolved with timber framing and brick nogging. As noted above the VBS reports that the building was used as the Lion Inn in the 18th century and the use of a decorative device such as the fake brickwork to give the building a superficially modern appearance would be most likely in a building such as this trying to attract passing trade. In the 18th century many timber-framed buildings in West Wycombe were refronted in brick to make them look modern and presumably the fake brickwork was a similar but cheaper approach.

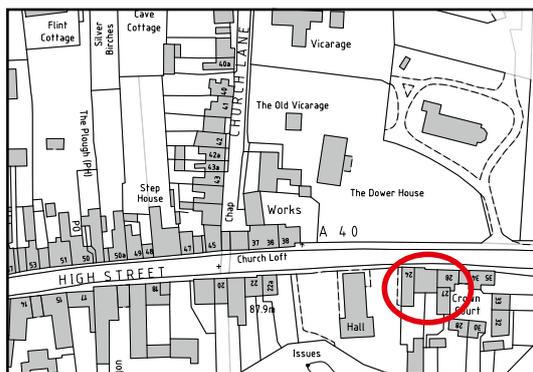
Building 3 comprises all of the front part of No. 20 and the easternmost segment of No. 19. This was the latest element of the complex having been added in the early 18th century as a small brick building between the pre-existing timber-framed neighbouring buildings, apparently as a bakery and shop. It was a small structure, consisting of a single room on each floor and on the ground floor there are two bread ovens. There is a rear extension which was added in the later 20th century.

Building 4 is at the western end of this small group and comprises most of the tenancy of No. 19. It appears that the building was originally timber framed and constructed in the mid to late 17th century but in the 18th century the framing in the external walls were almost entirely removed and replaced by brickwork so that relatively little survives of the primary building. There is a rear lean-to which was built in the late 19th or early 20th century and then altered in the later 20th century. The roof has been heavily rebuilt.

BUILDING 7: CROWN COURT (NOS 24-28, 34-35)

Summary

This group of buildings appears to comprise five distinct historical structures and it has gradually grown eastwards along the High Street, and south-eastwards to form Crown Court. Dendrochronology suggests that the three earliest ranges each date to within c15 years of each other in the 1530s and 1540s while the easternmost range was added in the 1640s. The rear range is less clear because although dendrochronology has given a date of c1561 for the roof there is evidence to suggest the building may be later and that the roof was reused from elsewhere.



NGR: SU 83096 94661

Listed status: Grade II

Location

Crown Court is a distinct group of buildings at the east end of West Wycombe and these buildings (Nos 24–28 and 34–35) are the main structures facing onto the road.

Work in current project

Recording during roof strip and some internal works. Stand-alone report produced (February 2015). There have been several previous watching briefs on these buildings, notably during the refurbishment of no.25 in 1999 (Marshall, forthcoming) and during the refurbishment of No. 26 in 2010 (Marshall forthcoming). The timber frame in the west elevation of No. 24 was recorded in 1996 (Hunn and Marshall, 1999)

Map evidence

The 1698 map is not accurate enough to be able to identify the individual buildings of the village but it does show the High Street with a well developed street frontage apparently extending east as far as Crown Court. The courtyard ranges behind the street frontage that forms Crown Court are not shown on the c1698 map although it is believed that they had been constructed by this date.

Crown Court is easily identified on the 1767 map with four ranges around the court and an entrance from the High Street in the same location as the current carriage way. The Crown Court complex is labelled 'Mr Dorrels, eleven cottages with gardens and yard'. Those eleven cottages comprise two street-front properties to the east of the carriage entrance (now Nos 34–35), two to the west of it (now 24–26), two to the western rear range (now No. 27), two to the southern rear range (now 29–30) and three to the eastern rear range (now No. 32–33).

The Tithe Map of 1849 suggests that the tenancy boundaries had changed slightly since 1767 with regard to Crown Court and in particular everything to the west of the carriage entrance (ie the buildings that are now Nos 24–27) were part of a larger group of structures which extended to the west rather than forming part of the Crown Court complex. This tenancy (No. 719 on the plan) comprised a House, workshop and garden in the occupancy of Thomas Harris. The

building that is now 34–35 High Street was shown on the Tithe Map as a cottage occupied by Widow Bryant (No. 720). It is interesting to note that the range that is now No. 27 is shown as having been detached from the adjacent street-front range (No. 26) and also this same range is shown with a long westward projection.

The first edition OS map of 1876 shows Nos 34–35 to the east of the carriage arch are shown with extensions to the rear of No. 34 while to the west of the arch there is a run of four adjoining properties which can be traced as today's Nos 24–26. The map shows the building that is today No. 25 as comprising two distinct elements or properties. The rear projection (today's No. 27) is shown as having been divided into three elements.

The 1767 map shows that all the Crown Court buildings were not part of the Dashwood's (Lord Le Despencer's) estate.

Description and evolution of building

Crown Court is among the most interesting complexes of buildings in West Wycombe and it is also one where our understanding of its evolution has been most clearly clarified by the current investigation. This is an area of the village where the dendrochronology sampling has proved particularly informative by producing a number of clear dates relating to most of the distinct structures in the complex.

The phasing and evolution of the Crown Court group which was suggested in the Vernacular Building Survey, which had neither of the benefits of dendrochronology or exposed roof structures, has been significantly altered in some areas and confirmed in others.

The recent investigation of Crown Court suggests that this group divides into five distinct historical structures which only partially relate to the current property divisions and that Crown Court has spread gradually eastwards along the street front and south-eastwards with the two detached ranges around the courtyard.

The earliest part of the complex is the building at the western end (ie No. 24 and the eastern half of No. 25 High Street). This was a relatively high-status timber-framed building with jettied front, constructed in c1532 possibly as a merchant's house. The current structure appears to be the truncated eastern bay of a larger building that extended west into the car park, possibly facing onto an open hall or parlour with chamber above. In c1657 an extension was constructed to the rear of this range. This range has not been recorded in the recent works but in 1996 an investigation was undertaken during the reconstruction of the west elevation facing the car park. This revealed high quality mouldings to parts of the primary timber frame which probably faced into a former open hall.

It appears that within a decade or so after the construction of the possible merchant's house in c1532 a new building was added adjoining to the east (the eastern half of No. 25). This timber framed structure was smaller although by no means humble and with a jettied gable facing the street which survives largely intact today with brick nogging infill.

Then in 1543 a new three-bay building (No. 26 and the western bay of No. 35) was constructed to extend the group eastwards along the street front. Archaeological evidence strongly suggests that this structure post-dates the adjacent building to the west. The external timber framing has been significantly altered and a carriage way inserted (or heightened) although in places the internal framing survives well.

The next stage in the evolution of the complex is less clear because although the roof of the rear range (Building C) suggests that it was built in c1561 there is evidence to suggest that the roof was dismantled and reused from a different building. This evidence is partly the fact that the walls are of flint rather than timber framed, and it does not appear to be refacing, but it is also partly the nature of the smoke-blackened timbers does not seem to match this building the smoke blackening on the rafters extends beyond the eaves onto the exterior of the building)

Therefore the next main constructional phase after the 1543 building may be a phase from the 1640s when Crown Court was again extended to the east with a new 3-bay range (34/35). This building was again timber framed and although it follows many vernacular traditions of the earlier ranges it does exhibit features or evidence which are diagnostic of a slightly later date. One example is the sparing use of wind braces and the fact that the wind braces are relatively short and straight. The primary timber framing largely survives although the front elevation has solid brickwork at ground floor level.

The rear elevation is dominated by a large brick chimney stack which appears to be primary to the 17th century building as well as a single storey brick lean-to which is constructed around it and may have been added in the 18th century.

Also in this general mid 17th century period the southern extension to the original block (Building E) was constructed (in c1657) and also probably Building 29–30 to form the southern range of Crown Court. The eastern detached range (Building 32–33) was probably added in the later 17th century.

If, as discussed above, Building C was not constructed in c1561 then it seems most likely to have been built in the 18th century and therefore the last main structure to have been added. A rear range on this footprint is however shown on the town plan of 1767 so it presumably pre-dates this. This range (No. 27) is a two-storey building with gabled, tile-covered roof and the walls are all constructed from relatively consistent flint with brick dressings.



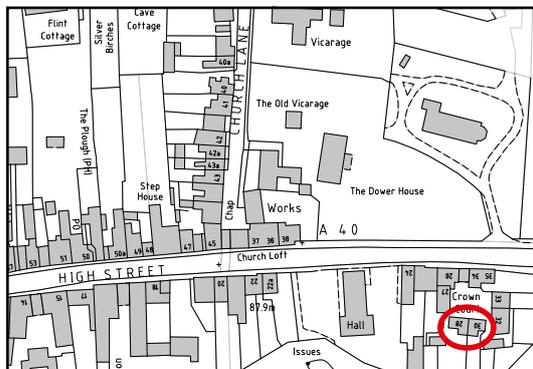


Nos 24-28 and 34-35 Crown Court
Roof plan showing phasing

BUILDING 8: NO. 29-30 CROWN COURT

Summary

This relatively modest building comprises two small distinct dwellings with the earliest (No. 29) probably having been constructed in the mid 17th century and the later one (No. 30) added as a single storey structure in the late 17th or early 18th century. The later part of the building was then raised in height in the late 18th or early 19th century.



NGR: SU 83102 94641

Listed status: Grade II

Work in current project

Recording during roof strip and some internal works. Stand-alone report produced (February 2014). A previous watching brief of the interior when the walls were dry-lined was undertaken in 2009 (Marshall, forthcoming)

Location

Crown Court is a distinct group of buildings at the east end of the village, on the south side of the High Street and No. 29–30 forms the south range of the courtyard behind the street-front ranges.

Map evidence

The c1698 map does not show any buildings in the location of No. 29–30, behind the street front ranges, but this is likely to be due to the schematic nature of the map rather than because the buildings had not yet been constructed.

The 1767 estate map shows Crown Court clearly at the eastern end of the village with four ranges around a square yard and two properties (each one shown as being two storied) on the footprint of No. 29–30. Crown Court is labelled 'Mr Dorrels. Eleven Cottages with Gardens, Yard'. A pair of two-storey cottages is shown on the site of 29–30 Crown Court with a broadly similar form to today. Crown Court was not part of the Dashwood's estate at this time.

The Tithe Map of 1849 again shows the building with a simple rectangular plan and apparently adjoining number 27 at its west end. The map appears to show the building as a single dwelling rather than divided into two and the apportionment appears to just show James Keen (No. 722) as the occupier.

The first edition OS map of 1876 shows the building as two properties and there appears to be some form of an outbuilding to the rear, slightly detached from the main No. 29–30. It is interesting to note however that the footprint of the building on the plan appears wider than the current building (other than the existing 20th century extensions to the rear). The 1876 plan suggests that Nos 29 and 30 were each broadly square in plan whereas today they are each distinctly rectangular (again excluding the later extensions). Presumably this means that there

were previous extensions pre-dating the current ones. A similar arrangement is shown on the 1898 and 1921 maps

Description and evolution of building

Building 29–30 is a rectangular plan building with a tile covered gabled roof and a chimney stack at each end. The building originated as two distinct structures and this is apparent from the main north elevation facing Crown Court where the east half (No. 30) is constructed from flint with brick dressings and the west half (No. 29) is entirely of brick, replacing or obscuring a timber frame. Each cottage is two storied and has two rooms at each floor in the main building as well as secondary rear ancillary extensions.

The investigations in the current project have entirely focused on the roof and they have largely confirmed the phasing previously suggested in the Vernacular Building Survey (VBS). The works have confirmed that the roof over the west half of the building is earlier than that over the east half and that this side was probably constructed in the mid 17th century. A brick gable in the roof space at the centre of the current building, with a formerly external eastern face confirms the phasing or constructional sequence of the two halves.

The roof of No. 29 has a simple form with 20 pairs of irregular common rafters, laid horizontally and pegged over a single waney purlin to each slope. The purlins are supported by a truss, with tie-beam and queen struts, although this is only visible inside the building and was not inspected in the current investigations.

The primary rafters largely survive to the front slope of No. 29 but those to the rear have been largely replaced by secondary members. The west half incorporates two roof dormers, one of which was probably added in the RSA's c1930 works but the other of which was probably of 19th century date. Similarly to elsewhere at West Wycombe there are many areas where the roof slope has been raised slightly by the addition of thin layers of packing timbers fixed to the backs of the rafters. These were presumably from the early 1930s refurbishment works by the RSA and were added to counteract the sag in the roof.

There are two rear catslide-roofed extensions to No. 29, each of which are clearly 20th century in date and the removal of the roof tiles from one of these has exposed a small section of the primary timber framed rear wall of the main cottage. This comprises a stud immediately adjacent to the south-west corner of the building and two further posts or studs which are each interrupted by a diagonal brace. There is brick nogging to this section of timber frame painted white.

The VBS speculated that No. 29 may originally have been single storied and possibly constructed as a stable but no evidence was found for this in the more recent investigation.

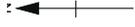
The east half of the building (No. 30) was constructed as a single storey dwelling, possibly in the late 17th or early 18th century and it was then raised in height, up to the same level as No. 29, either in the late 18th or even early 19th century.

The roof above No. 30 is also a relatively simple structure and superficially it has a similar form to the west half with 19 pairs of rafters running directly over a single purlin to each slope. However, there are various pieces of evidence to confirm the later date of this side of the building including the fact that the rafters are nailed to the purlin, the more regular nature of the purlins and the fact that there is a ridge piece with the rafters overlapping and resting on top of this structure. The use of the ridge piece is indicative of this section of roof being later than the adjacent structure although it is a relatively early form of ridge piece. The fact that the ridge-piece is roughly square in section, and therefore shaped similarly to a rafter, shows that this roof is earlier than if the ridge was a tall thin timber sandwiched between the heads of the rafters found typically in 19th and 20th century buildings.

There is a large dormer window in the rear slope which was added in the 20th century (almost certainly the 1930s works).

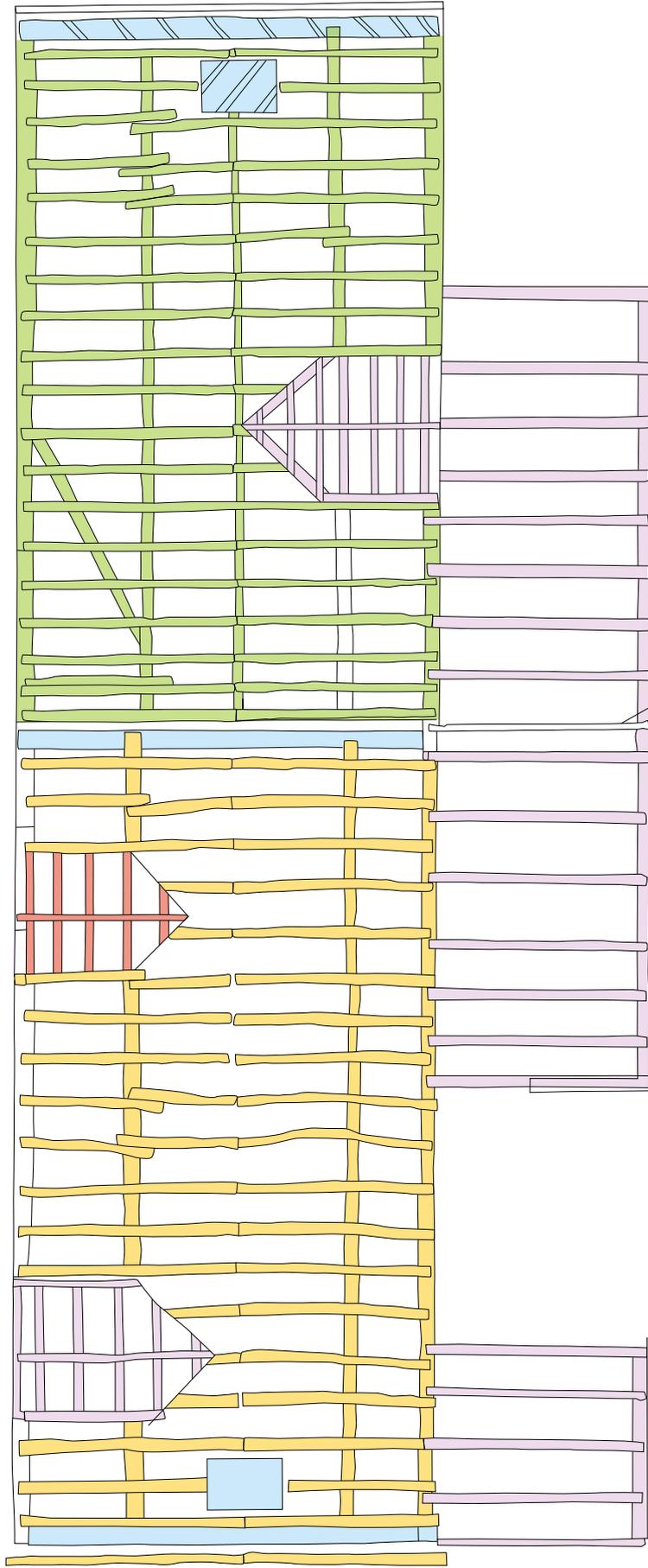
The catslide roofed extension to No. 30 is of 20th century date and it can be seen to be slightly later than that to No. 29 (although they are both of broadly similar date) by the fact that the east face of the western extension (No. 29) is weatherboarded even though it is adjoined by the extension to No. 30.





No 30

No 29



	Mid 17th century roof raised and reconstructed, possibly in mid 18th century reusing mostly old rafters
	Late 18th century raising of older building
	Probably later 19th century
	1930s RSA works
	Brick (gables and chimney stacks)

Not to scale

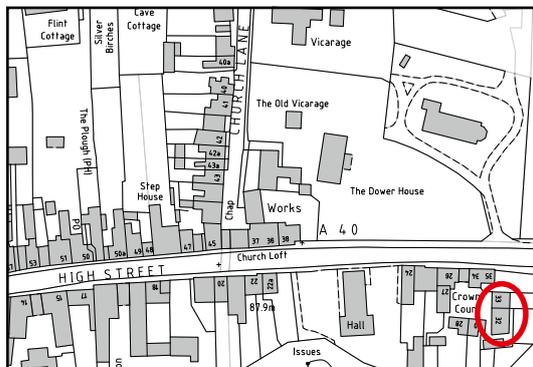
Weather Board

Figura 5: Plan of roof of building showing phasing

BUILDING 9: NO. 32-33 CROWN COURT

Summary

This timber framed building on the east side of Crown Court is believed to have been constructed in the late 17th or possibly very early 18th century. The roof incorporates a number of curved timbers which have previously been tentatively interpreted as cruck blades but in the current work it is thought that it is more likely that they are curved inner principals.



NGR: SU 83116 94647

Listed status: Grade II

Work in current project

Recording during roof strip and some internal works. Stand-alone report produced (May 2014). The building's timbers were assessed by Dan Miles from the Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory for their suitability for dendrochronology but they were considered to be too fast growing for the tree rings to be able to provide a felling date.

Location

Crown Court is distinct group of buildings at the east end of the village, on the south side of the High Street and No. 32–33 forms the east range of the courtyard behind the street-front ranges. This area was described as the slum of West Wycombe prior to the RSA's refurbishment works in c1930.

Map evidence

The c1698 map does not show any buildings in the location of No. 32–33, behind the street front ranges, but this is likely to be due to the schematic nature of the map rather than because the buildings had not yet been constructed.

The 1767 estate map shows Crown Court clearly at the eastern end of the village with four ranges around a square yard and three properties (each one shown as being two storied) on the footprint of No. 32–33. Crown Court is labelled 'Mr Dorrels. Eleven Cottages with Gardens, Yard'. Crown Court was not part of the Dashwood's estate at this time.

The Tithe Map of 1849 again shows the building with a simple rectangular plan and the apportionment appears to just show John West (No. 724) as the occupier of the cottage and garden and Sir George Henry Dashwood MP as the owner.

The first edition OS map of 1876 shows the main rectangular plan building of 32–33 divided into four components (four properties?) and an extension to the rear of the block to north of centre. There is at least one outbuilding shown to the rear of the property, against the boundary wall to the east of the plot.

A broadly similar arrangement is shown on the 1898 and 1921 maps except that the building is now shown divided into five blocks (presumably five properties).

Description

No. 32–33 Crown Court is a two storey building with gabled, tile-covered roof. It is timber framed with flint rubble and red brick nogging. There are single storey, weatherboarded lean-to extensions at the northern and southern ends which were almost certainly constructed in the c1930 refurbishment.

The west elevation faces into the court and is an intriguing constructional patchwork that provides much evidence of alteration since its original construction. The main construction is a timber box-frame from which most of the framing survives in the central and southern bays with brick nogging infill from various phases and some sections of the framing replaced or altered.

The east elevation (rear) of the building was also timber framed but it has now been much altered and the wall of No. 32 appears to have been virtually entirely rebuilt in brick and flint. Some of the historic framing does survive in the northern bay, (ie the wall of No. 33) including two full height posts at the south-east corner of No. 33 (the junction with No. 32).

The main roof, which is three bays long and divided by four trusses, appears to comprise two main phases: the historic roof which survives largely intact (albeit with a severe sag) and the extensive works undertaken as part of the 1930s refurbishment which comprised adding new rafters on top of the old ones to counter the sag.

The common rafters are laid flat and the waney primary rafters appear to be pegged to the purlins although in most cases this is obscured by the secondary nailed softwood packing rafters on the top. There is no ridge piece and the rafters are tenoned at the apex.

One of the interesting features of the roof is the use of curved (or cranked) inner principals in three of the four trusses. These members, which sandwich the lower of two tiers of purlins, are beneath the principal rafters and they are tenoned to the underside of the collars. Curved inner principals are a characteristic feature of a particular roof form found widely in this general area (South Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Berkshire) with a particular concentration in the Wycombe district. Studies of this roof type suggest that the earliest examples are from the mid 17th century but they are most commonly found in the mid to late 18th and they can be found in 19th century buildings (Clark, 2004).

The NT Vernacular Building Survey report interpreted these curved members as pairs of cruck blades and almost the only surviving elements of a late medieval hall house on this site but in the more recent study it is thought that they are more likely to be curved inner principals and forming part of the 17th or 18th century building.

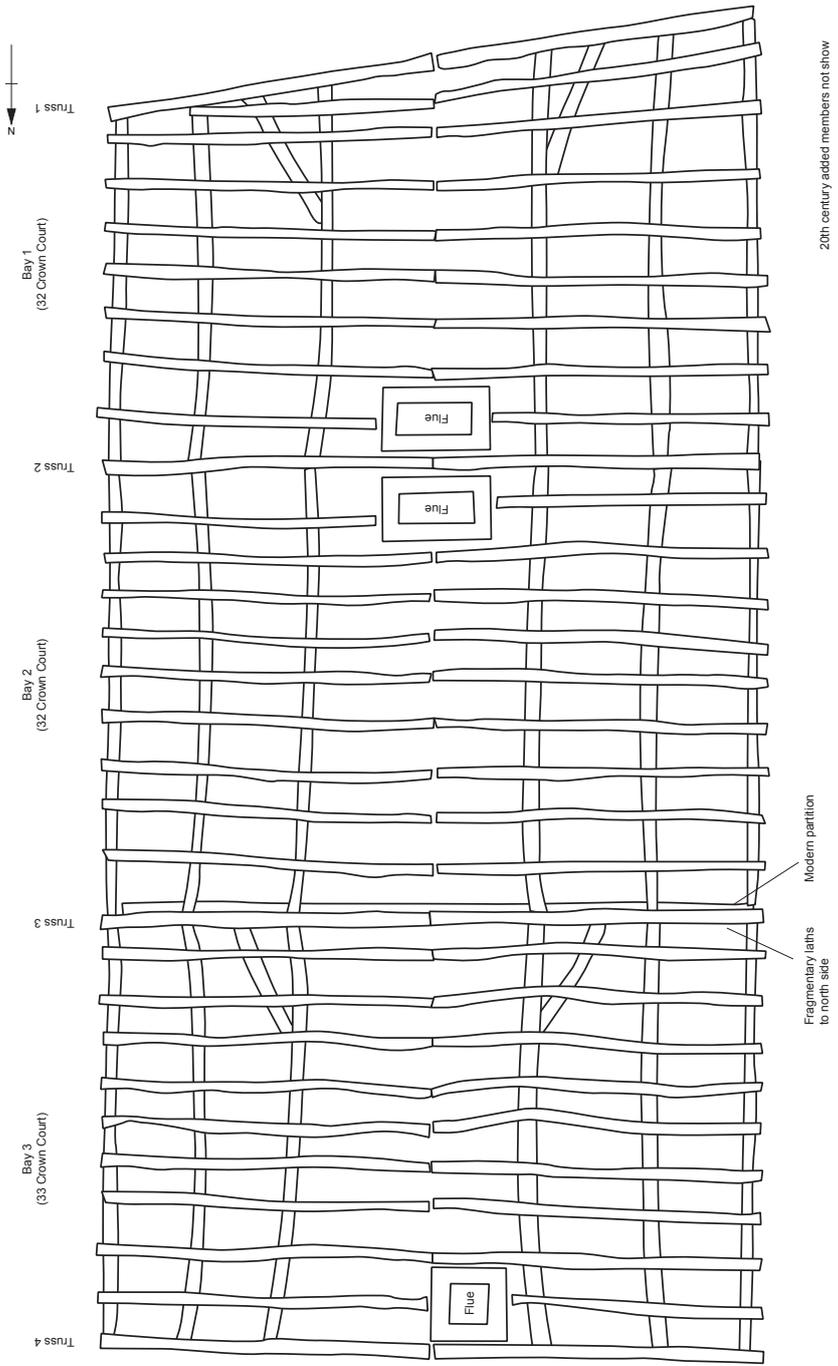
The upper purlins of the building are clasped between principal rafter and the collar and the purlins appear to be scarfed immediately to the north of each truss.

There are short, straight windbraces on the north side of two pairs of trusses but the sparing use of these and their short length is suggestive of a slightly later date of construction than other wind braces in the village as is the use of whole small trees for purlins (rather than halved or quartered larger trees).

The southernmost truss is different to the others and this may reflect some map evidence which suggests this end of the building was formerly squared rather than being skewed as it is now.

At the end of the garden of No. 33 there is a well built brick outbuilding and a small weatherboarded outbuilding in the garden of No. 32.

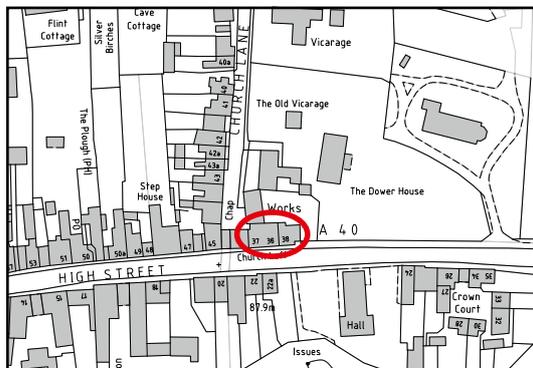




BUILDING 10: NO. 36–38 HIGH STREET (SWEET SHOP)

Summary

This timber-framed building at the eastern edge of the village is believed to have been constructed in the early 16th century and has had various later alterations including the addition of a brick façade in the 18th century.



NGR: SU 83030 94675

Listed status: Grade II

Work in current project

No detailed investigation in current project. The information in the description below is taken entirely from the National Trust's Vernacular Building Survey from c1993–4.

Location

No. 36–38 is the easternmost group of buildings on the north side of the road and it adjoins to the east side of the Church Loft and also adjoins to the south side of The Furniture Factory.

Map evidence

The 1767 plan shows a row of buildings on this site and a small yard to the rear labelled 'three houses and yard'. At the west end of the row there is a small cottage and to the east of this there is a larger building, probably two former cottages combined into one, which is labelled The Coach and Horses. Presumably this was a relatively small inn established to benefit from the 18th century growth of the coaching trade.

It is interesting to note that the map also shows a large dwelling facing Church Lane which apparently adjoined to the rear of the High Street range. The current building at No. 36–38 is believed to incorporate parts of that Church Lane structure.

The 1767 map also shows that this building was part of the Dashwood's (Lord Le Despencer's) estate.

The 1849 Tithe Map shows that the site comprised two plots: No. 664 which was a house and garden occupied by John Walker and No. 665 which was a house occupied by William Stevens. This map confirms that the plots were owned by Sir George Henry Dashwood.

The first edition OS map from 1876 shows the main range fronting the High Street divided into three roughly equally sized properties. Both the 1898 and 1921 OS maps show the eastern property with a similar plan to the 1876 map but the layout to the rear of the western property (and to a lesser extent the central property) had been altered. This probably related to the construction to the Furniture Factory immediately to the north.

Description and evolution of building

No. 36–38 is a three bay, two-storey building facing the High Street which is timber framed and clearly of early date. The VBS suggested an early 16th century date and more recent dendrochronology tentatively suggests that part of it may have been constructed as early as 1469. The building has undergone various subsequent alterations and additions.

The main building has a gabled tile-covered roof with two internal brick stacks dividing the three bays but in the western bay, facing the High Street, there is a jettied gable which was a secondary addition, probably added in the mid or late 16th century to raise the status of the building. The western of the two stacks is probably original while the eastern one was probably added in the early 18th century.

The building is timber framed but similarly to many other buildings in the village it was re-fronted in brick in the mid 18th century.

The building is entered through a doorway in the south wall of the central bay and this was almost certainly the original entrance into the main hall of the primary building. The western bay was probably originally the service end at ground floor with solar above at first floor, while the eastern bay would have formed the parlour at ground floor. The central and eastern bays would have had lesser chambers at first floor.

The four original trusses survive with cambered tie beams, collar, queen posts and principal rafters. There is a single tier of clasped purlins to each slope and pairs of wind braces in each bay beneath the purlin. Only the apex of the western bay was accessible during the National Trust's VBS and here the common rafters had been replaced.

To the rear and east of the main building there are several secondary additions including what appears to have been the southern end of a formerly longer range which extended along Church Lane. This structure includes a two-storey timber framed block immediately adjoining the western end of the rear of the main house and also a further lower room to the north of this which is effectively a cellar due to the slope of the ground and which is now beneath a part of the later 19th century Furniture Factory. The building from which these elements survive was probably constructed in the mid to late 16th century and it may have been a large separate house or it could have been a large service range for the house facing the High Street.

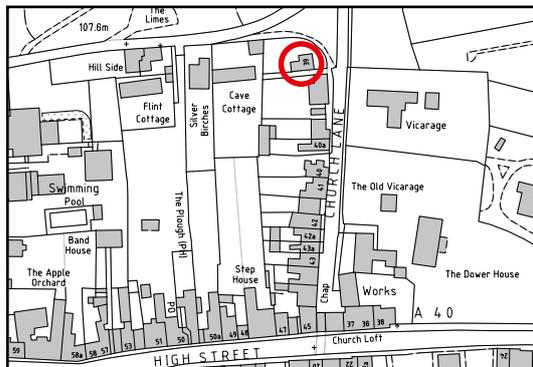
Other smaller extensions were added along the rear of the main building in the 19th century including a stair turret, an outshut, and a lean-to to the eastern end.

Two unusual features which have previously been noted in this building are a series of brick-framed niches in the cellar which may have been candle positions from when it served as a cellar, and the first floor bedroom fireplace (Gary Marshall pers comm).

BUILDING 11: NO. 39 CHURCH LANE

Summary

This was constructed as a small flint cottage (with brick dressings) in the early to mid 18th century and it was greatly expanded in the mid 20th century.



NGR: SU 83004 94775

Listed status: Grade II

Work in current project

No detailed investigation in current project. The description below is therefore taken entirely from the National Trust's Vernacular Building Survey.

Location

No. 39 Church Lane is at the northern end of Church Lane at the angle where the lane meets West Wycombe Hill Road.

Map evidence

The 1767 map shows a free-standing building in this location sharing a large yard with the adjacent building facing Church Lane. The shared plot is labelled 'Edward Fords two tenements and gardens' and the map shows that at this date this plot was not part of the Dashwood's (Lord Le Despencer's) estate.

The 1849 Tithe Map shows the building with a plain rectangular plan on a small plot numbered 649 in the apportionment agreement. The agreement shows that plot 649 was occupied by William Smith.

The 1876 OS map shows the building with a projection to the west while the 1898 OS map suggests that the building was divided into two properties.

An undated specification survives for refurbishment works to be undertaken to the building for the RSA under the supervision of William Weir. It is interesting to note that this appears to just be for a refurbishment of the existing building rather than for a substantial enlargement which is known to have been undertaken at some point in the mid 20th century.

A plan showing proposed improvements at 39 Church Lane date 1956 shows that the enlargement had been undertaken by this date.

Description and evolution of building

No. 39 Church Lane was originally constructed in the early or mid 18th century as a small cottage but it was then considerably expanded some time in the mid 20th century (apparently at some point between c1930 and 1956). Due to the sharp slope of the ground it has a prominent location and overlooks part of the village.

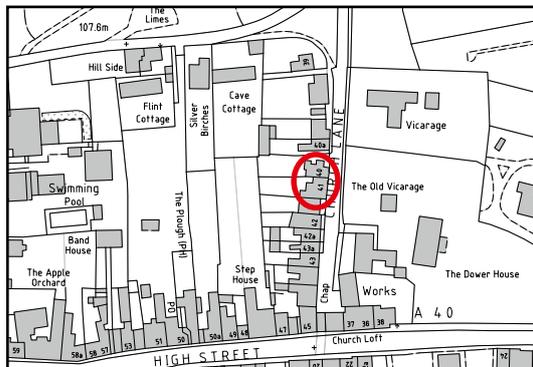
The original 18th century 2-up, 2-down cottage forms the western part of the current house and is constructed from flint with brick dressings and a gabled, tile covered roof. There is a primary projecting chimney stack in the west gable and the original stairs were probably located within an alcove adjacent to this. In the mid or later 19th century a single-storey privy was added to the west side and a further outshut.

The mid 20th century extension was added to the east side of the building, to more than double the previous footprint, and now forms the main part of the house.

BUILDING 12: NO. 40–41 CHURCH LANE

Summary

No. 40–41 Church Lane has evolved in a number of phases but the original building appears to be of 17th century date and it incorporates an open cruck roof.



NGR: SU 83010 94729

Listed status: Grade II

Work in current project

Recording during roof strip and some internal works. A stand-alone report has been produced (January 2015) which contains a more in-depth analysis of the building than this gazetteer entry. Internal elevations, including construction joints in the north and south walls, were recorded as part of a watching brief undertaken in 1999 (Marshall, 1999)

Location

No. 40–41 is close to the centre of the western side of Church Lane.

Map evidence

The 1698 map is not accurate enough to be able to identify individual village buildings but Church Lane is clearly visible with buildings shown lining each side of at least the southern part.

The 1767 estate map is more detailed and No. 40–41 strongly appears to be shown as two adjoining properties within a wider plot labelled 'Two tenements & Gardens'. The building was part of the Dashwood's estate.

The Tithe Map of 1849 shows Church Lane with an almost continuous row of buildings on the west side but it is harder to positively identify No. 40–41 than on the 1767 map. No. 40–41 appears to be plots 653 and 654 (Occupiers Widow Steel and James Plumeridge; Owner Sir George Henry Dashwood King MP).

The first edition OS map of 1876 is the earliest map to provide a dimensionally accurate representation of the village and this shows 40–41 Church Lane as two properties, each one with rear extensions. The maps of 1898 and 1921 each show a very similar arrangement with no significant differences in the footprint of 40–41 Church Lane

Description and evolution of building

Building 40–41 is a two storey brick building (with timber framed origins) with a gabled tile covered roof and rectangular plan. It has evolved in a complex series of phases which are illustrated by the patchwork of brick in the east elevation facing Church Lane as well as the southern gable.

The original building is believed to have been constructed in the 17th century as a timber framed cottage, four bays long and with an open cruck to allow first floor access between the central bays.

In the early 18th century the front elevation and side gable walls were refaced in Flemish bond brick and at some point before 1767 the building was divided into two properties. At some point in the mid or later 18th century the eaves of the eastern side of the southern property were raised to form a full 2nd floor and the evidence of this is clearly visible in the southern gable where there is a scar from the earlier steeper roofline.

The building was extended by a bay to the north, possibly in the late 18th or early 19th century, and the eaves of this property were then raised to match those of the southern property, possibly in the mid or later 19th century.

Various extensions and projects were added in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Dendrochronology has been recently undertaken on the building although only two samples provided dates and these results are inconclusive in terms of how they relate to the evolution of the building. A joist in the original building provided a felling date of 1688 and thus this could represent the original date of construction. However, the cruck would probably suggest a slightly earlier 17th century date and it may be that the joist was a secondary replacement.

Dendrochronology has also given a date of 1753 for a section of wall plate at the rear of the building and this could represent the date of construction for the northern bay. The sample was not taken from the northern bay but it is in a section of roof that may well have been replaced at the same time as the construction of the northern extension.

Perhaps the main interest of the building lies in the way that it has evolved in distinct phases and the recent works on the roof have uncovered much evidence of this. The primary, probably 17th century rafters survive to the west slope of the original three bays but the eastern slope was re-profiled in the 18th century to raise the eaves on this side of the building and the rafters here have almost all been replaced. The primary purlin on this slope partly survives, together with a small number of redundant rafters, preserved within the roof space beneath the higher roof. The primary rafters retain Roman numeral carpenters marks which appear to be the same as carpenters marks noted on the first floor joists in a previous watching brief in 1999. The butt-rafter nature of this roof is unusual for West Wycombe where it is more common to find rafters passing directly over the purlins.

In the secondary northern bay the 18th century rafters survive on the west slope (primary to this bay) together with secondary rafters on the east slope from when the eaves were raised and the roof rationalised across the main building.

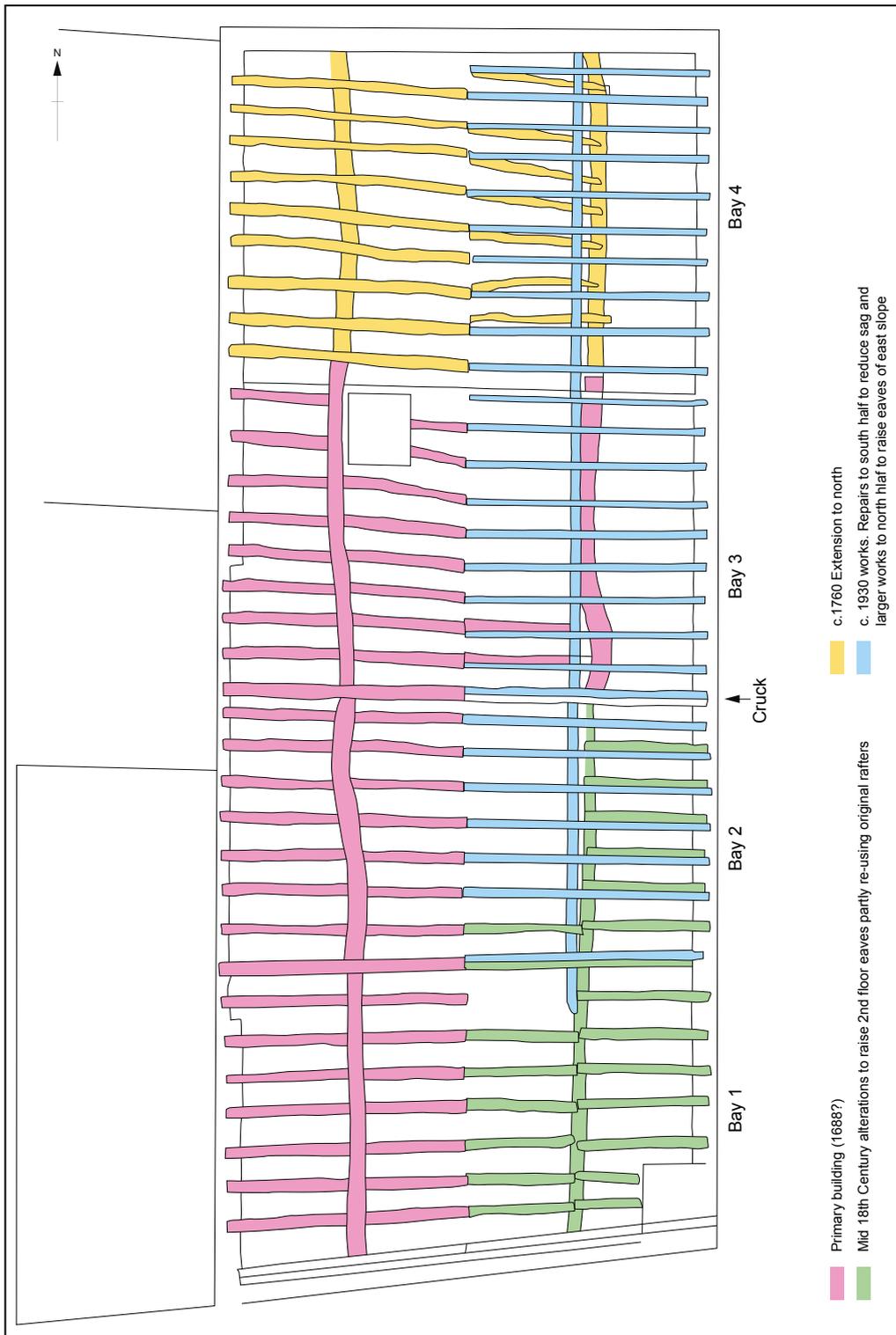
At the centre of the roof is the open cruck of probable 18th century date although only parts of this are visible in the roof space.

One interesting aspect of the roof is the fact that the northern ends of the two purlins from the primary buildings appear to be scarfed as if the roof formerly extended northwards.

Another interesting feature is found towards the apex of the southern gable where there is a series of seven apparently infilled holes set in distinctive stepped pattern. The pattern is similar to what can be found in a dovecote or dove loft but there is no evidence of there ever having been any nesting boxes within the roofspace for doves. The thin nature of the wall, a single brick thick, also makes it unlikely that these 'holes' were ever open and it seems more likely that it was some sort of a decorative feature rather than ever having been a dovecote. It may be that there was originally a pattern formed in the gable with a distinct material (different coloured bricks or stones) but that these were removed, possibly in the 1930s works, and the holes infilled with red brick. The pattern of 'holes' may have been associated with what appears to

be an infilled former window below them in the wall with chamfered brickwork around the edge.





The original building has been much altered but various elements remain including parts of the timber framing and a partition wall that it appears would have formed part of a smoke bay or timber-framed chimney serving an open hearth against the gable wall. The roof has queen post trusses with massive chamfered clasped purlins and early rafters appear to survive.

In the late 16th century a timber-framed rear extension was added and in the 18th century various internal alterations were undertaken in addition to the brick re-fronting. The main staircase with moulded rails probably dates from c1740. Twentieth century changes have included the refurbishment or conversion of the attic and the construction of a new set of stairs from the first floor to attic

No. 42a/43a (the central dwelling) originated as a small timber-framed house which was probably constructed in the mid to late 17th century but which has now been significantly altered and divided into two dwellings. Evidence of a previous building on the site survives, particularly a former roof line which is apparent against a brick wall in the roof space of the current building. The 3-bay roof has typical queen post trusses with clasped purlins and no ridge piece. The joints have long projecting pegs.

In the early 18th century the building was re-fronted in brick (Flemish bond with glazed headers) and there are two roughly inscribed bricks in the elevation which suggest that this probably took place in 1735. There is also a fire insurance plaque on the front elevation. Other works which were probably also undertaken in the early 18th century and may be contemporary with the re-fronting include the apparent rebuilding of the main chimney and the division of the cottage into two small dwellings. Each dwelling has a front door together with a single window at each floor level and they also each have a single storey rear wing which was added in the mid 20th century.

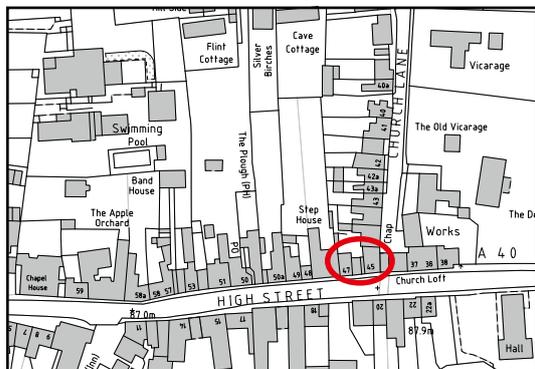
No. 43 (the southern dwelling) is a tall three-storey (plus attic) brick building which appears to have been constructed in 1722 to entirely replace a previous building on the site. There is no evidence of timber framing in the structure and the date of construction is provided by a datestone in a blind window in the front elevation.

The internal layout of the building remains largely as first constructed with two rooms at ground and first floor, a chimney against the south wall and staircase against the western half of the north wall. A rear wash-house and utility range was added in the first half of the 20th century (probably the RSA's 1930s works).

BUILDING 14: NO. 44–47 HIGH STREET

Summary

This is an important building towards the eastern end of the village which is now four tenancies but it would originally have been a single high status dwelling. It is very similar to the Apple Orchard and was probably originally a merchant's house. The main interest of this range is the survival of most of primary timber framing and wattle and daub panels.



NGR: SU 82997 94674

Listed status: Grade II

Work in current project

No detailed investigation in current project. The description below is therefore based entirely on the National Trust's Vernacular Building Survey. An earlier watching brief during internal works was maintained in 2007 when the internal elevations were recorded (Marshall, forthcoming)

Location

No. 44–47 is on the north side of the High Street and stretches around into Church Lane immediately to the west of the Church Loft.

Map evidence

The 1767 plan appears to show the range divided into three properties immediately to the west of The Church Loft. These have very small rear yards but the plots are not labelled and there is no northward return shown on the corner of Church Lane as there is today. The lack of this return can be assumed to be a reflection of the schematic nature of the map rather than an accurate representation because the building at this location (ie No. 44) had been constructed by this date. These buildings were part of the Dashwood's (Lord Le Despencer's) estate.

The layout of dwellings on the 1849 Tithe Map broadly corresponds with the current arrangement with two distinct properties to the west (ie what are today Nos 46–47) separated from an eastern block by a passage. The apportionment shows that at least part of this plot (Tithe No. 668) was occupied by John Aldridge and John Woodley

The first edition OS map of 1876 shows five distinct blocks: three roughly equally sized buildings facing the street front and two rear structures: a large building adjoining the western street-front range and a smaller one between the eastern range and the chapel on Church Lane. A broadly similar layout is shown on the 1898 and 1921 OS maps although on each of these there is a narrow passage shown through to the rear yard, on the eastern side of the central property.

Description

This building today comprises four tenancies although it would originally have been a single high-status dwelling, probably constructed in the mid 16th century as a timber-framed merchant's house. The building is very similar in design and style to the Apple Orchard.

The building is a four bay wide, two storied, rectangular plan range with a peg tile covered roof and the original timber framing (with secondary timber infill) is visible at first floor level facing the High Street. This framing was originally jettied but the form of this has been lost by the infilling of the lower half of the elevation in secondary brickwork. The brickwork to the front elevation, both within the timber frame panels and beneath the former jetty, was probably added in the 18th century.

The building has a box frame with splayed-head main posts and braces between the posts and the undersides of the tie-beams. The roof of the main building has queen-post trusses of large dimensions with a single diagonally set purlin to each slope clasped between the posts and a slightly cambered collar. There are pairs of wind braces in each bay to both slopes. The primary timber frame largely survives and there is wide studding to panels.

At ground floor level there would originally have been a shop and storeroom while the first floor would have been domestic accommodation for the merchant's family. The first floor rooms would originally have been open to the roof and the central room would have been a first floor hall.

In the mid 17th century a timber-framed, single storey service wing (probably a kitchen) was added to the rear of the eastern part of the building. This was open to the roof and now occupies No. 44. The rear (west) side of this structure has exposed timber framing and brick infill while the front (east) side has rendered brickwork above a flint and brick plinth. The roof of this range has queen-post trusses and has been reused from elsewhere.

In the 18th century fireplaces were inserted into Nos 45 and 46 and it appears that by this period the ground floor rooms were in domestic use.

BUILDING 15: NO. 48–49 HIGH STREET

Summary

Building 48-49 originated as a pair of small timber-framed cottages probably constructed in the early to mid 17th century on the current footprint of No. 49. These were extended to east (No. 48) in the mid 18th century and at the same time the older building was refronted. In the mid or later 19th century the two dwellings in No. 49 were combined to form a single house and various improvements were undertaken by the RSA in the 1930s works.



NGR: SU 82976 94671

Listed status: Grade II

Work in current project

Recording during roof strip and some internal works. Stand-alone report produced (February 2015).

Location

No. 48–49 is on the northern side of the High Street close to the centre of the village.

Map evidence

The buildings are shown on the plan of 1767, as a single large house and a yard simply labelled 'A house'. The map implies that this would have been one of the larger houses in the village at this time and the plot was part of the Dashwood's (Lord Le Despencer's) estate. The plan does not show any buildings to the rear but the plan is likely to be schematic in this respect rather than an accurate depiction.

The 1851/2 tithe award show No. 48 listed as two houses and gardens and No. 49 listed as house. The two gardens sit directly behind both houses.

The 1876 OS map shows the building as already divided into two houses with extensions to the rear which have the same or similar footprint to the current building layout. There is a division shown between 48 and 49, with No. 48 being the smaller property. The 1921 OS map again shows two properties with an extension to the rear of no 49. There is also an outbuilding to the end of the rear garden behind No. 49 which remains in situ today.

Description and evolution of building

Number 48–49 High Street is a relatively modest brick-faced building located between two higher status structures to either side (Steps House and No. 50a). The earliest part of the building is the two-bay west block (now No. 49) which originally formed two dwellings and was probably constructed in the early to mid 17th century. This was then re-faced in brick in the 18th century, in common with many other buildings in West Wycombe.

The eastern bay (now No. 48) was a brick structure added in the early to mid 18th, probably at the same time as the re-facing of No. 49. The elevation has a dentillated eaves, small porches

over the two doorways and segmental-arch lintels over ground floor windows. The two dwellings share a brick stack and there is a bricked up former doorway towards the eastern side of No. 49. This would formerly have been the entrance to the central cottage prior to it being combined with the western part of this building. As stated above these two dwellings were combined prior to 1876.

There are two single storey extensions to the rear of No. 49 which obscure the primary rear wall. One of the extensions contains the staircase for the property and a small chimney stack.

The two rear extensions appear to have been in place by the 1876 OS map although it is possible that the north western extension that runs adjacent to No. 50 was subsequently rebuilt (possibly during the 1930s works). The presence of flint walling with brick quoins confirms an earlier outbuilding in this location. This flint walling is present within the lower level of the party wall between No. 49 and 50 with indented brick quoins to each end. On top of the flint wall is a horizontal wallplate which extends between but not beyond the quoins.

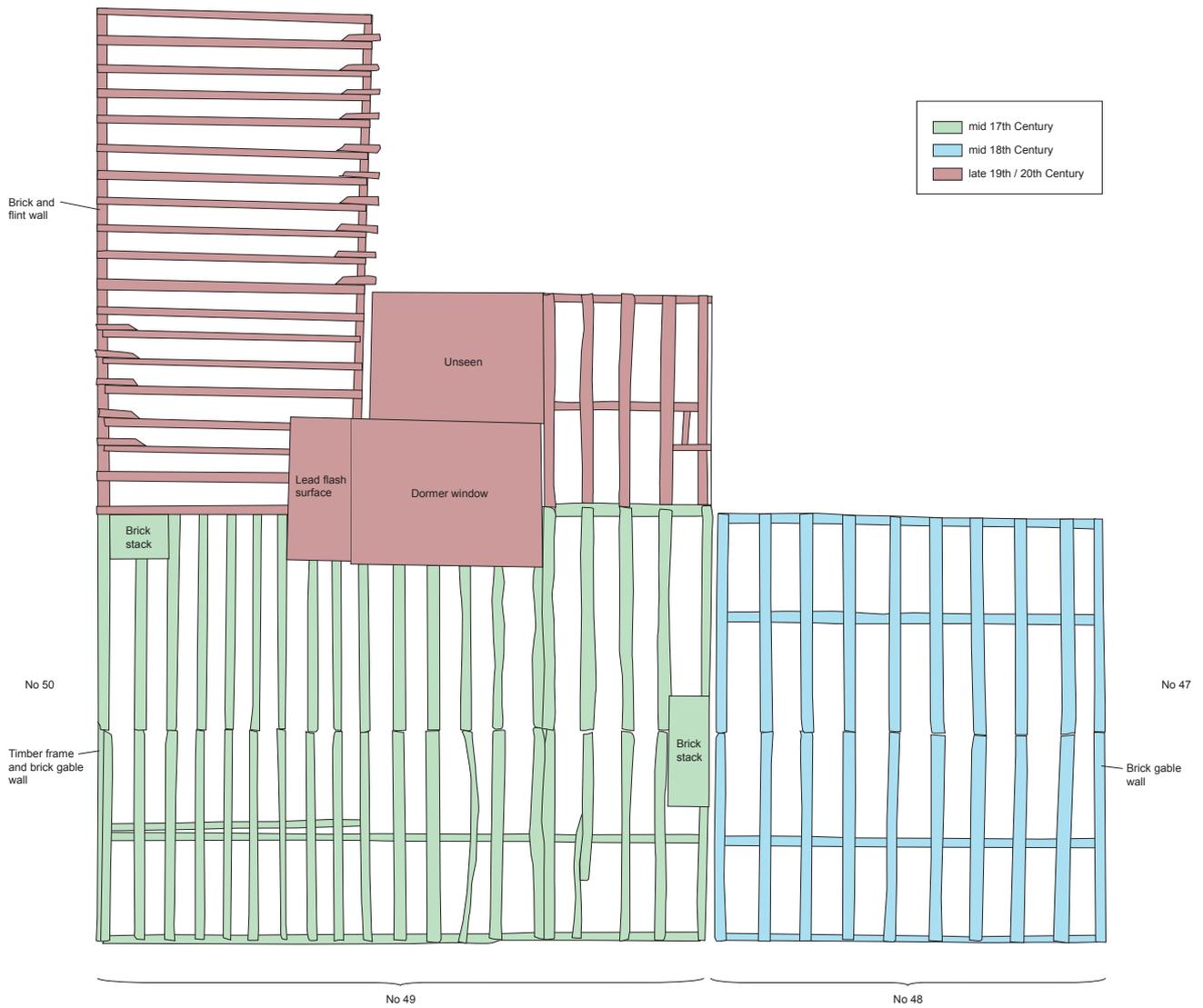
Various improvement works were undertaken by the RSA in the 1930s and then by the National Trust in the 1950s. These included the repositioning of the stairs and the conversion of the coal store to form a bathroom in the westernmost block.

The roof above the western part of the building (No. 49) is two bays wide and comprises queen post trusses with pegged timbers and clasped purlins. Some rafters are original while others have been replaced, probably largely in the 1930s refurbishment. The roof has a ridge-piece and two intermediate 'spreading collars' with birds mouth ends set between the purlins, intended to counter the sagging roof.

The section of roof above the eastern bay (No. 48) is clearly later than that seen in No. 49 with the rafters being more evenly spaced and regularly sawn. The rafters are attached to a vertically set plank ridge piece and they are rebated to sit on the purlins. The trusses are pegged queen post as seen in No. 49. At the join of the two properties the trusses sit side by side. There are occurrences of straw and acorn husks within the roofspace. This is likely to be the remains of insulation used in the 1930s works.

The roof above the central rear extension to No. 49 is largely formed from 20th century timber but there are two sections of rafter that are potentially reused from elsewhere.

The north western rear extension to No. 49 is a single storey brick lean-to. The roof has recently been replaced and this appeared to be of 20th-century date with softwood machine sawn rafters.

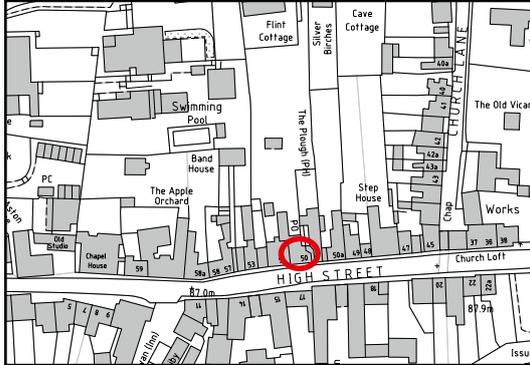


48–49 High Street
Plan of roof showing with key phases

BUILDING 16: NO. 50A HIGH STREET

Summary

This appears to have been built as an attractive, brick Georgian town house, and although the Vernacular Building Survey speculated that it might be of 17th century date the current project feels that an 18th century date is more likely.



NGR: SU 82967 94670

Listed status: Grade II

Work in current project

No detailed investigation in current project. The description below is therefore based entirely on the National Trust's Vernacular Building Survey.

Location

No. 50a is on the north side of the High Street, close to the centre of the village. It is immediately opposite the George and Dragon.

Map evidence

The 1767 map shows No. 50a as a house which was not part of the Dashwood's estate and with a garden labelled 'Mr Lawrence's House'. To the north of this is a long garden labelled Mr Lawrence's Garden which extends right up to West Wycombe Hill Road. Presumably when the medieval village was originally established the area between the High Street and West Wycombe Hill Road would have been largely or entirely divided into a series of long burgage plots but by 1767 the only one that seems to have fully survived was that behind No. 50a.

On the 1849 Tithe Map it is shown with a street-front range and a narrower rear extension. The apportionment agreement shows it as plot number 645, a house, beer shop and garden, occupied by John Wingrove and with the narrow plot extending from the High Street right back to West Wycombe Hill Road. A broadly similar arrangement is shown on the 1876 OS map as well as on the 1898 and 1921 OS maps although on these three maps there is also a building shown at the northern end of the long plot.

Description and evolution of building

One of the key areas of interest of No. 50a High Street is the possibility that it is one of the earliest buildings in the village constructed from the outset in structural brickwork. It is also stylistically unusual for the village, with the appearance of a moderately high status Georgian town house.

The VBS suggests that the building appears to date from the end of the 17th century although the front elevation is more suggestive of a Georgian date and the listed building description states that the front is 19th century. The VBS does not clearly indicate why it feels a late 17th century date is more likely.

The building is two storeys tall, plus an attic and it has a gabled, tile-covered roof slightly higher than the two adjacent buildings with two dormer windows.

The front elevation of the building is of regular Flemish bond brick with painted string courses at the two floor levels and a parapet which hides the eaves. There is a central front door, reached from the pavement by two steps, and with a simple bracketed doorcase. There are 8-over-8 sash windows to either side at each of the two main floor levels with good quality square-headed gauged brick lintels. The glazing bars are relatively wide and the panes small, suggesting an early Georgian date, but the jambs are recessed behind the face which suggests a later date (eg 2nd half of the 18th century).

The elevation has several tie-bar plates at floor levels and towards the west edge of the front there is a doorway to a passage which leads to the rear yard.

The building has an L-shaped plan with a street-front building and a service range projecting from the eastern half of the rear. A staircase is positioned at the angle of the L-shaped plan. This L-shaped plan is believed to be primary although the rear range has been extended, possibly in the later 18th or early 19th century, with further structures continuing northwards along the plot. These secondary extensions include stables and a lean-to which may once have been a scullery but which was converted into a washhouse with copper and chimney.

The main street-front building comprises a single room at ground floor, although this is believed to have formerly been two rooms divided by a hall, and two rooms at first floor.

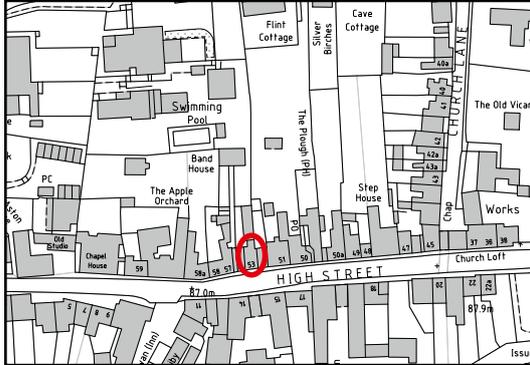
The ground floor of the service wing comprises what would originally have been a kitchen immediately north of the stairwell with a large fireplace and a pantry at the northern end. This block has two rooms at first floor.

No access was possible to the roof structure during the preparation of the Vernacular Building Survey in c1993.

BUILDING 17: NO. 52–56 HIGH STREET

Summary

The earliest part of this range is the eastern bay (No. 52) which was constructed in the mid to late 17th century but which has subsequently been significantly altered. The western part was built in a single phase in the early to mid 18th century.



NGR: SU 82936 94672

Listed status: Grade II

Work in current project

In the current project the roof of the rear range (No. 54–55) was stripped and repairs were undertaken. However this was one of the later parts of the complex and recording was therefore not undertaken. The description below of the building is taken from the National Trust's Vernacular Building Survey. A watching brief to the interior was carried out in 2004 during the renewal of wiring and plumbing (Marshall, 2004).

Location

No. 52–56 is on the north side of the High Street in the western half of the village.

Map evidence

No. 52–56 is shown on the 1767 map as comprising two properties within a single plot labelled 'Mr Body's two tenements and gardens'. These were not part of the Dashwood's estate and it is interesting to note that to the north of this is a very large, separate square-plan area labelled Mr Body's Meadow which today forms the site of the village primary school.

The 1849 Tithe Map appears to show two main buildings or plots on this site. The main building on the street front is plot No. 675 (two houses and gardens occupied by Jeremiah Harman & John Langley) while also on the street front is a smaller property (plot No. 674: a house and passage) occupied by William Auger. Interestingly the third plot (No. 676) is a detached building recessed well behind the street front and this is listed as an independent chapel.

The 1876 and 1898 OS maps both appear to show this complex divided into two main properties each with a street-front range and rear projections. By the 1921 map the eastern property has been divided into two.

Description and evolution of building

This building has grown in a number of phases and now comprises four separate but adjoining properties. On the street front there is a row of three dwellings (Nos 52, 53 and 56), each with its own secondary rear extension, and also to the rear there is also a longer range which comprises No. 54/55.

Each of the street-front dwellings is two storied (plus attic) and is a single bay wide by two rooms deep. The fronts are of painted brick while the rear walls are largely of flint with brick

dressings and the roofs are covered in tiles. At the western end of the row is a passage through from the street to the rear yard.

The earliest part of this street-front row is believed to be the eastern bay (No. 52) which has been much altered but which appears to have been constructed in the mid to late 17th century as a single storey timber-framed dwelling. Elements of this structure survive although the building was raised in height in the later 18th century and the roof appears to have been substantially overhauled in the modern period.

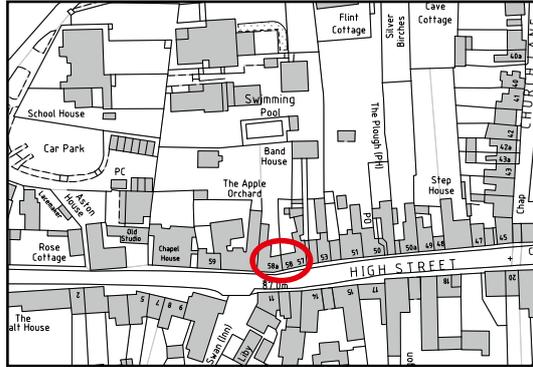
The two bays to the west of this (No. 53 & 56) were constructed in a single phase in the early to mid 18th century to form two brick dwellings. Also in the later 18th century small flint and brick extensions were added to the rear of the street-front ranges and then in the early 19th century the larger rear range (54–55) was added as a pair of cottages. The roof of 54–55 is of 19th or early 20th century date. This area was exposed in the recent works and although it was not formally recorded OA understands that its character and form was suggestive of a 19th century date.

It is of note that during works in 2004, significant quantities of leather working waste were found beneath the floorboards of No. 56 High Street indicating that part of this property had been used as a cobblers shop (pers. com. Gary Marshall - National Trust).

BUILDING 18: NO. 57–58 HIGH STREET

Summary

This building comprises two elements: a small western section and a larger eastern section. The Vernacular Building Survey felt that the western section was probably the oldest element of the complex, having been constructed in the mid to late 17th century with the larger range added in the early 18th century. However, the recent exposure of the roof structure suggested that the roof of the main eastern range was probably earlier than that of the small west range.



NGR: SU 82920 94667

Listed status: Grade II

Work in current project

Recording during roof strip and some internal works. Stand-alone report produced (July 2013). A watching brief was carried out over repairs to a fireplace in room 57F in 2000 (Marshall, forthcoming).

Location

No. 57–58 is on the north side of the High Street, in the western half of the village and immediately east of the Apple Orchard.

Map evidence

The 1767 map shows No. 57–58 as two houses with a shared garden labelled 'Two tenements and gardens'. This plot was part of the Dashwood's estate.

The 1849 Tithe Map shows an extension to the rear of plot 675 which may be that of No. 57 and the first edition OS map of 1876 shows a series of extensions to the rear of both properties. A line is shown dividing No. 57 and 58 which probably indicates that the structure was divided into two at this time. The 1921 OS map shows a further subdivision within the properties indicating the use of the small west block as separate accommodation.

The Tithe Award lists John Cock as the occupier of the present 58a and Thomas Mead in the neighbouring building. Thomas Mead is listed as a shopkeeper in the Piggotts' Directory of 1830 indicating that No. 57 was in use as a commercial property at this time. John Cock is listed as a saddler which suggests the presence of a saddlery in 58a. This is particularly interesting as small amounts of leather working waste were recovered from room 58a/J following lifting of floorboards (NT Finds No. FNA6021). This is possible waste from saddle making or from a cobblers workshop.

Description and evolution of building

Nos 57–58a is a two storey building (with attic) with a continuous clay tile-covered roof. The front (south elevation) is constructed from bricks laid in Flemish bond with blue headers while the rear elevation is formed from flint with red brick dressings. There is a clear straight joint to both front and rear between the main and west block fabric

The building incorporates a distinct kink in its plan where there is a slight step in the alignment of the road. The larger section (No. 57 and part of 58) is to the east and includes a narrow extension to the rear of the eastern end while the smaller section is to the west (No. 58a) and includes a full width extension to the rear.

The Vernacular Building Survey speculated that the small western part of the building was probably the oldest section, constructed in the mid to late 17th century between two existing buildings. The VBS then suggests that the main eastern range was probably built in the early 18th century to replace a previous building on this footprint.

The examination of the roof structures during the recent works however suggested that the roof of the larger eastern range was older than those above the smaller west block which could mean that the phasing for the two blocks put forward within the VBS is incorrect. The roof of the main (east) range was more suggestive of a 17th century date, with later alterations, while the more regular timbers in the west block are suggestive of a slightly later date (early 18th century).

In the mid 18th century the large eastern block appears to have been divided into two tenements (suggested by structural evidence detailed in the VBS and the 1767 plan) with extensions added to the rear. Both the eastern section and the smaller western section were re-faced in brick in the 18th century but in two separate phases of work. This work included the creation of door openings in their current location.

In the early 19th century the two tenements in the eastern part of the eastern range were united into a single dwelling (as today), possibly in commercial use. The west block contains a large window and pentice cover which indicates its former use as a shop in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

The recent examination of the roof showed that the roof of the small west block comprises regular rafters running over a single purlin to each slope and nailed to it. The purlins are supported by the brickwork of the gable walls to each end. The rafters are flat to the roof and tied together with a bridle joint and wooden peg at the apex. There are carpenter's marks at the apex of the timbers that have been inscribed on the east face using a race knife. The marks are in the form of Roman numerals and some of these have added scribed lines, commonly known as tags, which would normally be used to indicate the side of the building the rafter should be on - in this case the northern rafters have the additional markings. The numbering appears consistent suggesting these rafters form part of the primary roof structure for this block, with the occasional modern looking timbers dating to later repairs.

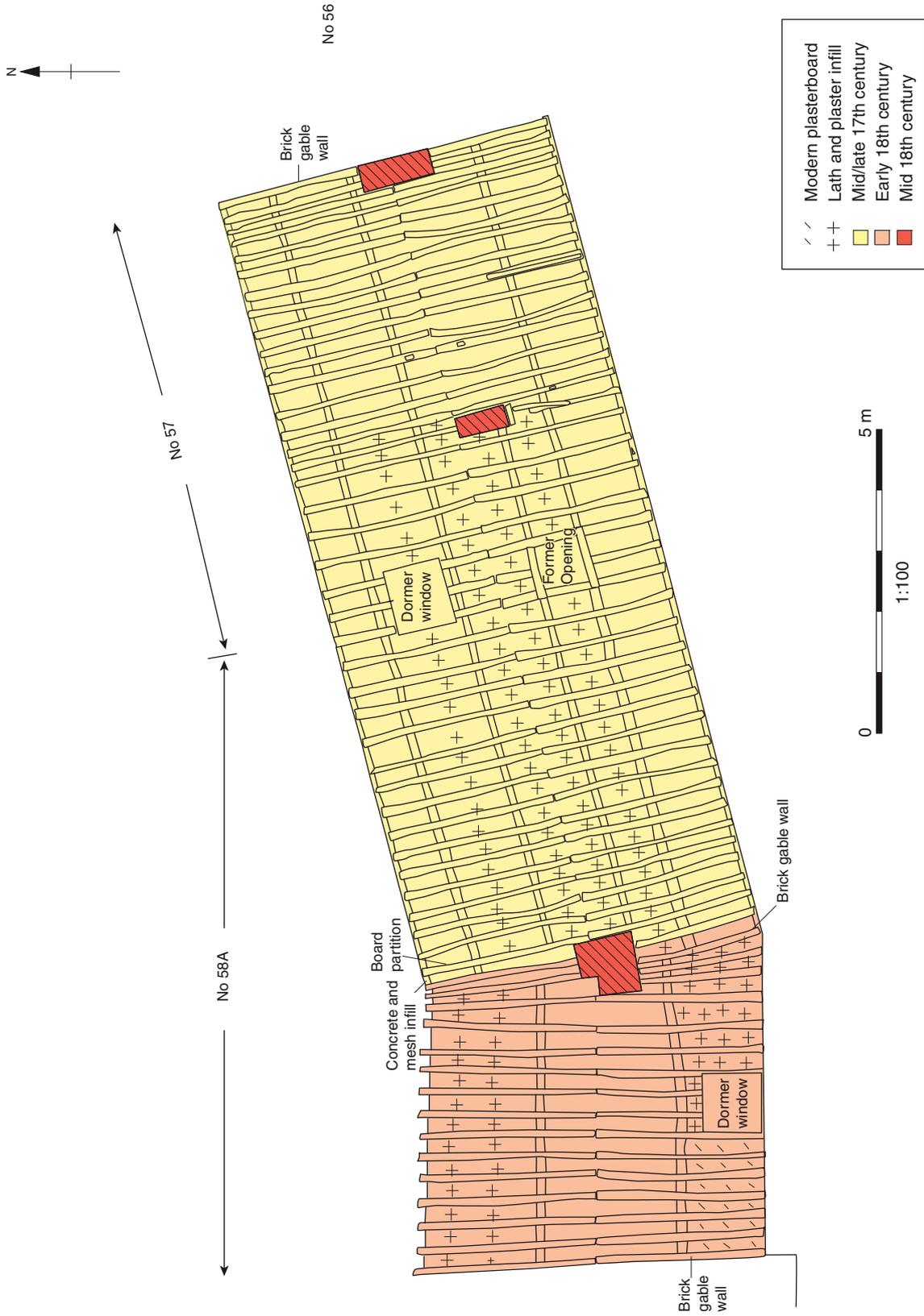
The rafters in the larger eastern block are primarily of the same type as seen in the west block roof structure but they are less uniform in appearance and include several obvious reused timbers. This section includes similar Roman numeral carpenter's marks but they are not on all rafters and they do not all run sequentially indicating there has been reuse of the early roof timbers. Also, the marks appear on the west face of the timbers indicating this roof forms a separate construction sequence to the roof of the west block.

Amongst various debris within the open roofspace there is a quantity of organic straw material which may originate from the 1930s refurbishment works in which roof tiles are known to have been laid at least sometimes on a bed of wheat straw. Straw was also found beneath floor boards.

During the works several floorboards were lifted within the central first floor room (ie western room in east range) which revealed a central principal joist along the spine of the range. This continues east into the adjacent room but at the west end the joist terminates c35 cm before the current end of the room and carpenter's marks to the joist show that it has not been truncated. Therefore the room must have been slightly extended.

Large quantities of straw and other organic material was found beneath floorboards, similar to in the roof space and possibly forming a rudimentary attempt at sound insulation. Other items found include a fragment of cut leather, part of a possible leatherworking tool and the sole of a child's shoe.



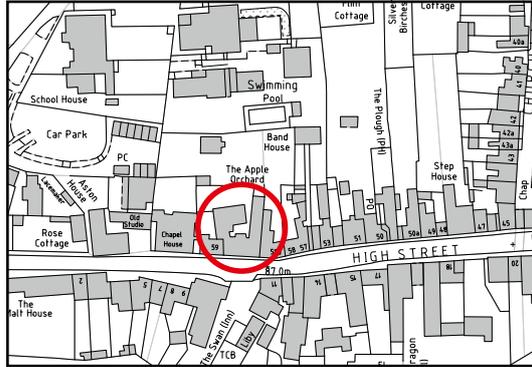


The Apple Orchard

BUILDING 19: THE APPLE ORCHARD

Summary

The Apple Orchard is among the most significant buildings in the village having probably been constructed in the mid 16th century as the timber framed house of a merchant of some status. Much of the framing survives including a good example of a jettied front and the building is one of the relatively few in the village mentioned in the RCHM Monuments of Buckinghamshire. It was later converted to a coaching inn and has been used more recently as a shop.



NGR: SU 82904 94666

Listed status: Grade II

Work in current project

No detailed investigation in current project. The description below is therefore based almost entirely on the National Trust's Vernacular Building Survey (from 1993–4). Alterations to an internal fireplace were recorded in 1988 (Wainwright, 1988)

Location

The Apple Orchard is a complex of buildings on the north side of the High Street, towards the western end of West Wycombe.

Map evidence

The 1698 map is not accurate enough to be able to identify many individual village buildings but the north side of the High Street is shown with a continuous frontage and this would no doubt have included The Apple Orchard.

The building now known as The Apple Orchard is shown on the 1767 map and labelled The White Heart Yard and Stables etc The main inn building facing the street front is also labelled The White Heart but it is not shown with a carriage arch like the Unicorn and the George on the opposite side of the road. To the north of the main yard are two associated areas: to the west is the White Heart Orchard and to the east is The White Heart Garden. The White Heart formed part of the Dashwood's (Lord Le Despencer's) estate.

The 1849 Tithe Map shows The Apple Orchard although the map implies that at this date there were no rear ranges on this plot behind the buildings facing the High Street. The buildings shown appear to be divided into three houses.

Directories show that in the 1930s the building was in use as tea rooms while in 1948 part of it was a guest house and part was used by an antiques dealer. When it was listed in 1954 it was still a guest house. It is now a shop (fine furniture and unusual gifts).

Description and evolution of building

The Apple Orchard is among the more significant buildings in the village having probably been constructed in the mid 16th century as the timber framed house of a merchant of some

status. The ground floor probably formed store rooms for the merchant while the upper floors formed the private domestic rooms.

The complex comprises the main range facing the street front together with several rear extensions located around a small courtyard. To the western side of the property there is a passage for pedestrians through to the yard which was formerly wider.

The main building is two storeys tall, with an attic and a tile-covered gabled roof. It has a large chimney stack towards the eastern end (a secondary insertion) while the timber-framed south elevation, facing the High Street, incorporates a jettied upper storey and timber mullion windows. The ground floor would also originally have been timber framed with wattle and daub infill but the framing here has been replaced by secondary brickwork and modern shop-front glazing.

The ground floor layout has been much altered to reflect the modern use of the building as a shop but it appears that it would originally have comprised a wide principal room flanked by two smaller spaces each one half the width and a further to one end.

The first floor would have comprised a large hall, open to the roof with exposed curved wind-braces and with private chambers flanking. Significant works were undertaken in 1988-9 including overhauling windows, repair some timber framing, repair panels.

The roof of the main range has queen post trusses with a single purlin to each slope clasped between high collars and the principal rafters.

The main two-storey rear range, projecting to the north from the eastern part of the original building, is also timber framed and it was added in the mid 17th century, probably as a kitchen with additional accommodation above. As referred to above it is known that by 1767 the building had been converted to a coaching inn and it may well be that the mid 17th century addition of this range represents the date of the conversion.

To the northern side of the small yard there is a single storey range called the barn which was constructed in the early to mid 18th century and which has been overhauled in the later 20th century. Blockwork was added to the inner faces of the ground floor walls and a first floor was inserted.

In the later 18th or early 19th century the main northern projection at the eastern side of the complex was extended.

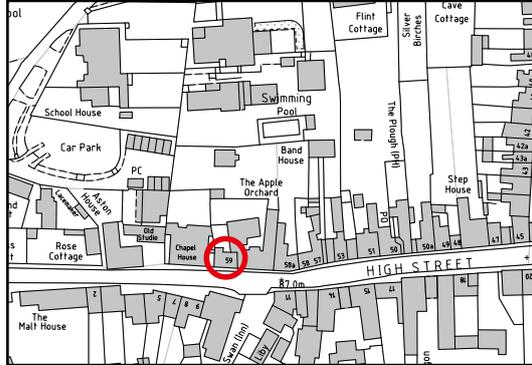
In the 19th and 20th centuries the building has been in use as a succession of shops and commercial premises. The survival of a bread oven suggests that one early use may have been as a bakery.



BUILDING 20: NO. 59 HIGH STREET

Summary

No. 59 High Street is a good example of a small cottage, contrasting with the larger and much higher status Apple Orchard immediately to the east and also to the Methodist chapel immediately to the west. It was constructed in the late 17th century.



NGR: SU 82904 94666

Listed status: Grade II

Work in current project

No detailed investigation in current project. The description below is therefore based almost entirely on the National Trust's Vernacular Building Survey (from 1993–4). The VBS of this building is included in the same report as that of the Apple Orchard.

Location

No. 59 High Street is located on the north side of the High Street, towards the western end of West Wycombe and immediately west of the Apple Orchard.

Map evidence

It is relatively easy to identify the building on the 1767 map because the White Heart (ie the Apple Orchard) is labelled so the building immediately to the west is clearly No. 59. The map shows the building divided into two small dwellings and labelled 'two tenements and gardens'. The building is shaded and therefore it belonged to the Dashwood's (Lord le Despencer).

The 1849 Tithe Map is not a metrically accurate survey and towards the western end of the High Street it becomes difficult to identify buildings with certainty. However, it appears that the current No. 59 High Street was plot 680 on the Tithe Map and the apportionment shows that it was a house occupied by Solomon Russell.

The building is shown on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey Map as comprising two dwellings with the south-eastern corner projecting distinctly beyond the front of the adjacent Apple Orchard. This distinct step is not shown on either the 1898 or 1921 OS maps and it seems most likely that it related to some reconstruction of the south-west corner of the Apple Orchard rather than alterations to No. 59.

Description and evolution of building

No. 59 High Street was constructed in the late 17th century as a pair of very small labourers' cottages and it has subsequently been converted into a single dwelling. The building appears to have been timber framed with wattle and daub panels, some of which survives in the west gable and it was then encased in brick in the 18th century.

It is a small rectangular plan building with tile-covered gabled roof. It is single storied with an attic floor. The front (south) elevation is of painted flint with brick dressings, a brick plinth and

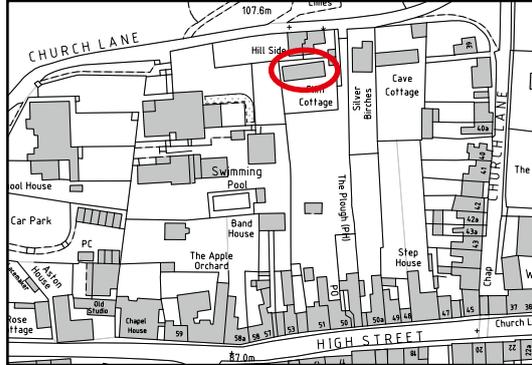
wide segmental arches over two windows. There are two doorways with small porches and these formerly served the two cottages although only one remains in use as the building is now a single dwelling. There are two dormer windows in the south slope of the roof and these are believed to have been added in the early 18th century (and subsequently repaired).

To the rear each of the two former cottages has a small extension, added in the early 18th century, one and a half storeys tall. In 1970 a refurbishment was undertaken which returned the building to a single dwelling.

BUILDING 21: CAVE COTTAGE

Summary

Cave Cottage was constructed in the late 17th century as a pair of timber-framed cottages. This was then converted to a single dwelling, probably in the later 18th century and encased in brick.



NGR: SU 82975 94770

Listed status: Grade II

Work in current project

No detailed investigation in current project. Limited photographs were taken of the upper part of the roofspace by the National Trust in February 2015.

Location

Cave Cottage is located on the northern edge of the village facing West Wycombe Hill Road. It is located between Flint Cottage and 39 Church Lane.

Map evidence

Cave Cottage is shown on the 1767 map as two cottages facing West Wycombe Hill Road (labelled 'Thomas Harris's two tenements and gardens'). The plan shows that the plot with Cave Cottage was not part of the Dashwood's estate at this date.

The building is again shown on the 1849 Tithe Map, by now extending west up to the plot boundary and with a rear (southern) projection in the eastern half of the building. The apportionment shows that this plot (No. 646) was occupied by John Plummeridge. By this date the previous pair of cottages had clearly been converted to a single dwelling.

The Ordnance Survey maps of 1876, 1898 and 1921 all show Cave Cottage with a plain rectangular plan and without the rear projection shown on the 1849 map.

A conveyance document shows that 'Cave Cottage and premises' was sold on 28 February 1928 and the same document also lists William John Brooks, a wheelwright of West Wycombe as one of the parties in the sale. Presumably the property was being sold to the RSA (although this is not clear from the transcript seen in the VBS) and WJ Brooks was the tenant.

Description and evolution of building

Cave Cottage is a rectangular plan, two storey building (upper storey and attic) with a timber framed structure that was encased in brick. The tile-covered roof is gabled to the east and west ends and three large weatherboarded gabled dormers have been added to the south elevation.

The original timber framed building is believed to have been constructed in the late 17th century as a pair of cottages with each cottage comprising a single room on each of two floors and heated by a stack at each end of the building.

It was converted to a single dwelling in the later 18th century (post 1767) and it was possibly at this point that it was encased in brick (Flemish bond) similarly to many other timber framed buildings in the village. Also in the later 18th century (or possibly early 19th) the building was extended to the west

Two primary roof trusses survive with tie-beam, collar, principal rafters, raking strut between tie and rafter. The original gable truss at the west end of the building was truncated to allow access to the secondary western extension and secondary posts added either side of this opening. There is a single tier of diagonally set purlins.

Parts of the building's original timber framing is visible internally including posts with jowled heads and braces between the sides of posts to the soffit of the tie-beam.

Substantial repair works were undertaken in the 1930s following the RSA purchase of the village although it is interesting to note that the refurbishment of Cave Cottage was undertaken in 1934, after the transfer of the village to the National Trust. The specification for works however was again produced by William Weir so clearly he continued to work at West Wycombe for a period even after the transfer to the National Trust.

The 1930s works included the addition of an internal WC and connecting to the mains sewer, various internal works including the removal of a brick oven and stack and overhauling the roof. The roof tiles were stripped and then re-laid with battens bedded on wheat straw. Replacement hand-made tiles were used when necessary.

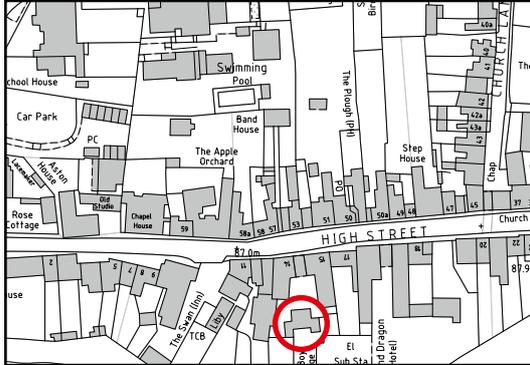
The roof works also included the construction of the three large gabled dormers to the south front, using weatherboarding on Maftex insulate boarding. Existing dormers were also removed and relocated in the building.

Cave Cottage also has two further buildings at the site: a 19th century privy and a probable 19th century garden building located against a garden wall and which is said to house the entrance to a cave.

BUILDING 22: BLACK BOY COTTAGE

Summary

Black Boy Cottage was constructed in the 18th century as a coach house for the Black Boy Inn on the High Street. It was then converted to domestic use as part of the RSA's works in the early 1930s.



NGR: SU 82940 94627

Listed status: Grade II

Work in current project

Recording during roof strip and some internal works. Stand-alone report produced (August 2014). Samples were taken for dendrochronological analysis but these were not able to produce a felling date.

Location

Black Boy Cottage is located on the south side of West Wycombe, in the yard behind No. 15 High Street.

Map evidence

Black Boy Cottage was originally constructed as a coach-house to the rear of what was a coaching inn called both 'The Unicorn Inn' and 'The Black Boy and Unicorn' in documents from 1767, and by 1808 'The Black Boy'. When the RSA acquired the estate, the Inn's licence was relinquished and the coach-house converted to domestic use.

The building does not appear on the map of 1767, however, no outbuildings are shown on this map and the description written on the plot states "The Unicorn Inn with stables, yard etc" as does the description for The George Inn and The White Heart [as spelled] nearby and so it is feasible that the coach-house was standing by this point.

A map-regression through the 25 inch Ordnance Survey maps indicates the demolition of an extension to the rear of the property by 1921, as detailed in the VBS report which surmises this could have been a bothy associated with the addition of the chimney in the late-nineteenth century (Figs. 3 & 4).

The plan of the Black Boy Inn in 1932 shows the building was still referred to as a coach-house at the time the licence was relinquished.

During the mid-twentieth century a one and a half storey brick-built extension was added to the east of the building.

Description and evolution of building

Black Boy Cottage is believed to have been constructed in the 18th century as a coach house built to serve the Black Boy coaching inn and various small extensions were then added in the

19th century. The building was then converted to domestic use in the RSA's early 1930s works which included the blocking of the original carriage entrance. A further extension was then added in the mid 20th century to the east of the main block.

The main primary range of the cottage is a rectangular-plan, two-storey block while to the east of this is a one-and-a-half-storey wing, projecting beyond the main block to the rear. A single-storey lean-to is against the west elevation with a single-storey block joining the south of the lean-to.

The main block is of brick, with the remaining original brickwork in Flemish bond with vitrified headers to the front elevation. Much of the brickwork in all elevations is later infilling and alteration, with the side elevations mainly of flint. In the front elevation, there was formerly a wide carriage entrance but this has been infilled, with further infilled areas and insertions of later features being apparent in all elevations. A projecting brick string course extends around the building at storey height with an additional projecting string course above eaves height to each gable.

The roof of the main block is plain-tiled, with ceramic ridge tiles. Two gabled dormers are to the rear elevation as is a brick chimney stack.

The front door is set within the area of infill of the carriage entrance under a flat brick head. The adjacent window, a reused early-eighteenth century sash, is below a shallow brick arch. The other openings have lintels consisting of several courses of tiles laid flat on top of one another.

S-shaped tie-plates are in the front and rear elevations; cross-shaped tie-plates are in the apex of the gables.

The roof of the main block has been examined in the recent project and this has confirmed that although the majority of the rafters appear to be original, most of the other elements of the roof appear to have been constructed from reused timber

The roof consists of 16 pairs of common rafters, supported by two purlins to each slope and with trusses at each end and to the centre of the building. The trusses comprise pairs of principal rafters, tie beams, low collars, and cranked inner principals similar to those found in 32–33 Crown Court. The cranked/curved principal is characteristic of (although by no means exclusive to) the area of South Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire, used for approximately a century either side of the construction of this building, and most often utilised in agricultural buildings.

The roof was overhauled in the RSA's 1930s works including the addition of dormers and the insertion of packing pieces and other members to reduce roof sag. Straw was also used in these works as an insulating material (in common with other buildings in the village) and evidence of this remains in the roof.





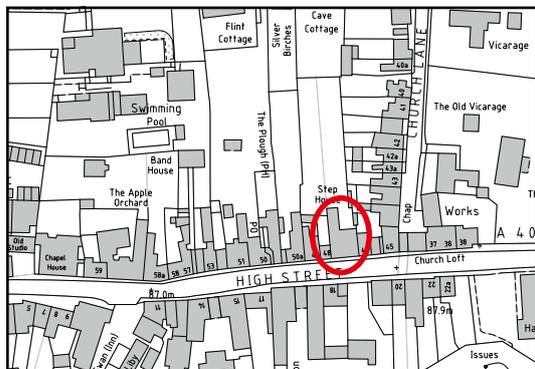
Figure 5: Plan of roof showing phasing and key features

Black Boy Cottage
Plan of roof showing phasing and key features

BUILDING 23: STEPS HOUSE (47 HIGH STREET)

Summary

Steps House was listed Grade II* in 1954 as 'The Manor House'. This, combined with the grand architectural features and good quality finishing such as the penny-struck pointing to the brickwork of the front elevation, gives an indication of the status of the building within the village.



NGR: SU 82987 94672

Listed status: Grade II*

Work in current project

Recording during roof strip and some internal works. Stand-alone report produced (July 2014).

Location

Steps House is located on the north side of the High Street, just to the east of the centre of the village.

Map evidence

A Plan of West Wycombe Town of 1767 show the house in an identical stylised form to the surrounding properties and without any indication that this building was particularly high status. It is shown connected to a long garden although this is kinked or stepped so that it was largely behind the building immediately to the west.

The Tithe Map of 1849 may imply the property was at this point two dwellings. Plot 670 is detailed as "Two houses and a yard", with the owner listed on the Apportionment as Sir George Henry Dashwood M.P. and the tenants listed as William Mead and William Bowler.

A map regression through the Ordnance Survey maps indicate that the footprint of the building has not changed since 1876 (Figs. 4 & 5).

Description and evolution of building

Steps House is a two-storey brick building (plus attic) with a square, double pile plan and hipped, tile-covered roof and central valley. The front elevation facing the High Street is five bays wide and constructed from exposed brick at first floor and painted brick at ground floor. The bays have 6-over-6 sash windows at each floor other than a central blind window at first floor and a central doorway at ground floor, flanked by pilasters and reached by a flight of stone steps.

The ground floor windows have shutters to each side and a coved corner cornice above them while there is a deep eaves to the hipped roof which gives the building an usual Queen Anne appearance. The first floor windows have flush frames while they are beneath segmental arch lintels and have red brick quoins.

The building is likely to have been constructed around 1700 and the basic structure has not changed substantially since although internal alterations have included the removal of a spine wall and the rearrangement of staircases. In the mid to late 19th century a single storey rear utility extension was constructed.

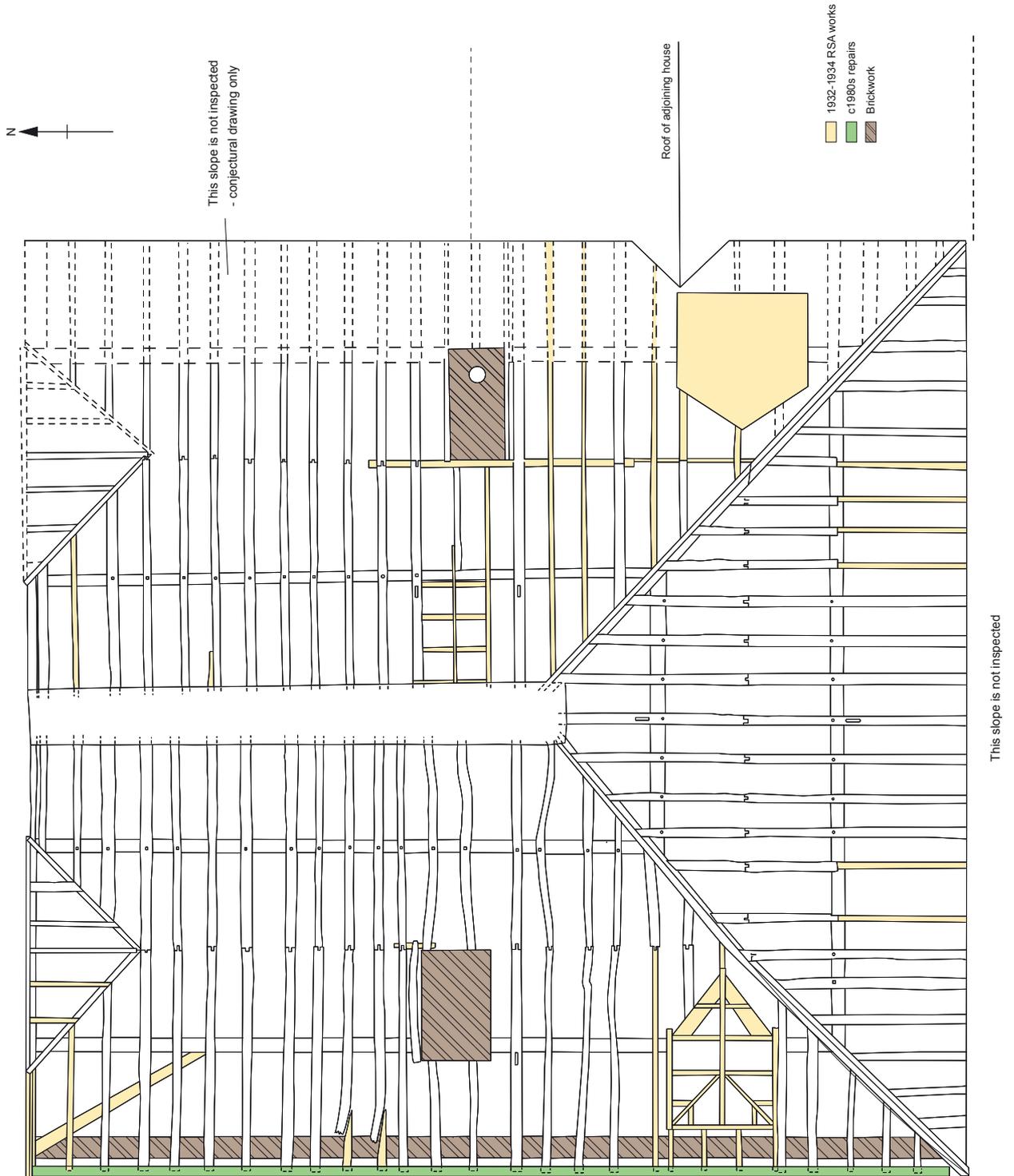
The roof comprises four hipped ranges around a central valley and each range has a single purlin to each slope with the rafters pegged to the purlin. Those to the rear wings use square wooden pegs while there are round wooden pegs to the front. The rafters are laid horizontally.

The ranges of the roof have principal rafters and in the areas examined the primary collars have been removed. The timber appears to be of fairly high quality, as befits a higher status building and although occasional rafters retain a waney edge, the majority are square, even, pit-sawn timbers.

Various repairs and alterations have been undertaken, probably largely in the RSA's 1930s works.

There are currently dormers in the east and west facing slopes of the roof, and one in the west facing return between the wings to the rear of the property but none to the front. However historic photographs show that there was formerly a dormer to the front which was probably removed in the RSA's 1930s work and from the recent investigations it seems likely that the current dormers to the sides were added in this period. Evidence recently exposed in the roof suggests that there was formerly a second dormer to the front but that this was removed prior to the historic photographs.





Steps House
Plan of roof showing phasing and key features

The original part of the building retains its primary queen post trusses and the well finished nature of the trusses suggests that there was probably originally a ceiling at collar height.

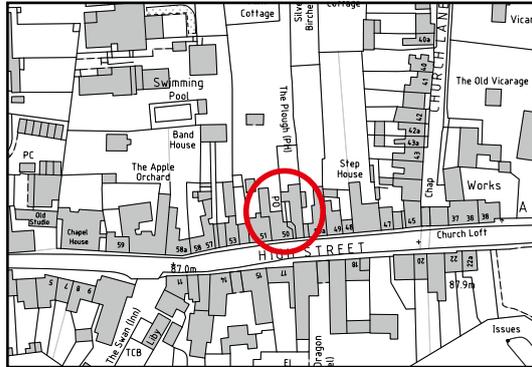
When the building was converted to a dwelling, possibly in the late 19th century partitions were inserted beneath the two trusses and other rearrangements made. These included a new fireplace to heat the central living room, a new lobby the addition of French windows and an external set of steps to the south side of the building.

The site also includes a small late 19th century, weatherboarded ancillary structure with wash-ouse and privy. When the VBS was written in 1994 the base of the copper and chimney stack survived.

BUILDING 25: PLOUGH INN AND POST OFFICE

Summary

This is an important group of timber framed buildings which were probably first built in the mid 16th century and although there have been many secondary alterations the building does retain significant elements of the original structure.



NGR: SU 82950 94672

Listed status: Grade II

Work in current project

No detailed investigation in current project. The description below is therefore based entirely on the National Trust's Vernacular Building Survey from 1993–4.

Location

The Plough Inn and Post Office are located on the north side of the High Street (Nos 50–51) close to the centre of the village.

Map evidence

The 1698 map is not accurate enough to be able to identify many individual village buildings although there is a continuous street frontage shown on the north side of the High Street which would have included the site of the Plough and post office in the current study.

The 1767 map appears to show this group of structures as three houses: to the west side there are two buildings in a yard (labelled two tenements and gardens) and to the east is a single building (Mr Harris's House etc) with a narrow yard at the rear leading to Mr Harris's Meadow. The colouring on the elevations suggest that the western buildings were part of the Dashwood's West Wycombe estate but the eastern one was not.

On the 1849 Tithe Map the Plough and Post Office building in the current study also appears to be shown divided into three plots: 672 & 673 (the Plough) and 644 (the post office). No. 672 had two houses and a garden and was occupied by Mary Hester and Robert Rolfe while plot 644 was a house and orchard occupied by Edward Dobson.

The first edition OS map of 1876 shows it as a large complex of ranges, apparently divided into five properties and with several substantial rear ranges. The 1921 OS also shows a broadly similar arrangement.

Description and evolution of building

This is an important group of timber-framed structures which was probably first constructed in the mid 16th century and which retains many original features such as timber framing, wattle and daub and early fireplaces. The growth of the group is complex and as detailed in the VBS a fuller understanding will only be gained through intrusive investigations where hidden parts of the fabric are exposed.

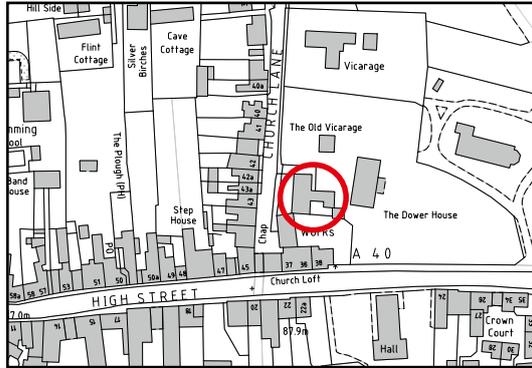
The group is two storeys tall with a tiled roof and 18th century front largely formed from colour-washed brick. The original building is likely to have been a small 2-storey cottage on the street front with a timber framed smoke bay at the east end. The front range of the Plough was extended to the rear in the early 17th century and the group then incorporated a small carriage entrance to allow access to the rear.

In the late 17th and early 18th centuries various alterations were undertaken to the two existing buildings and these included changes to create a new central building.

BUILDING 26: THE OLD VICARAGE

Summary

The Old Vicarage is one of the most significant and possibly the oldest surviving house in the village, with the VBS dating it to the early to mid 15th century.



NGR: SU 83029 94700

Listed status: Grade II

Work in current project

No detailed investigation in current project. The description below is therefore based entirely on the National Trust's Vernacular Building Survey from 1993–4.

It is useful to note that the building has been subject to more intensive investigation than most of the other buildings in the village. The Vernacular Building Survey undertaken in c1992 included an intrusive element where targeted areas of fabric were removed in an attempt to enhance understanding of the building. Then in 1996 further watching brief was undertaken during repairs. (The Old Vicarage, West Wycombe, report on the archaeological watching brief undertaken during the course of repairs Gary Marshall, March 1996 and Report describing a soakaway at the Old Vicarage, West Wycombe Village, Gary Marshall May 2008).

Location

The Old Vicarage is located on the east side of Church Lane immediately north of the Furniture Factory.

Map evidence

The c1698 map is not accurate enough to be able to identify many individual village buildings but there is a distinct group of structures on the east side of Church Lane in the area of The Old Vicarage.

The Old Vicarage is shown on the 1767 plan facing Church Lane and with a long east-west range to the rear, similarly to the current layout. The elevations are not coloured and this indicates that they were not part of the Dashwood's West Wycombe estate.

Neither the building nor the plot are easily identifiable on the 1849 Tithe Map but they are clearly shown on the 1876 and 1921 OS maps. On each of these maps the building is shown connected to the main vicarage slightly to the east and forming part of a larger complex than today. The main north-to-south range appears to have had the same footprint as today but there are differences in the adjoining buildings immediately to the east.

Description and evolution of building

The Old Vicarage is one of the most significant and possibly the oldest surviving house in the village, with the VBS dating it to the early to mid 15th century.

It was originally built as a two-storey, timber-framed house with an open hall and decorated arch-braced open truss. It had a rectangular plan and was four bays long with the open hall in the central two bays. At each end was a 2-storey accommodation or service bay and there was a screens passage across the building on the south side of the hall. The main entrances into the building remain in their primary location at either end of this passage. The timber frame is visible on the exterior with limewashed brick nogging and the roof has an irregular ridge and eaves.

A primary cross frame divides the passage from the service rooms in the southern bay and although this has been altered somewhat the primary form in this area is clear. The cross frame includes corner posts and braces between these and the underside of the tie-beam. The two southernmost trusses survive comprising a slightly cambered tie beam and cambered collar, a single clasped purlin to each slope supported by queen struts. The internal truss was infilled with wattle and daub (smoke blackened), although only fragments of this now survive.

The original floor structure, with primary wide oak floorboards survives in southern bay, covered by later boards.

The central truss over the hall was a jointed cruck with elaborately splayed post heads and a sharply cranked collar close to the apex of the truss. The underside of the collar was deeply moulded to match similarly moulded archbraces from storey level. This truss partially survives although the eastern archbrace was removed, probably in the 18th century, to allow greater headroom when a new staircase was inserted. There are regular wind braces to each side of each bay

The roof has many smoke blackened rafters, particularly in the southern bays but surprisingly not in the central one which had the open hall. This would suggest that at some point the roof has been refurbished and the rafters from the central hall have been repositioned. This is also supported by the fact that there are carpenter's marks to many rafters but they do not follow a clear pattern. The carpenter's marks are Roman numerals, 2 inches in length and created with a deep cut saw.

There are terriers from 1607 and 1639 (reproduced in VBS) which describe the roof as 'unlofted (i.e. open to the roof) but at some time before the 1647 terrier an upper floor was inserted into the hall and a large chimney was constructed on the north side of the cross passage.

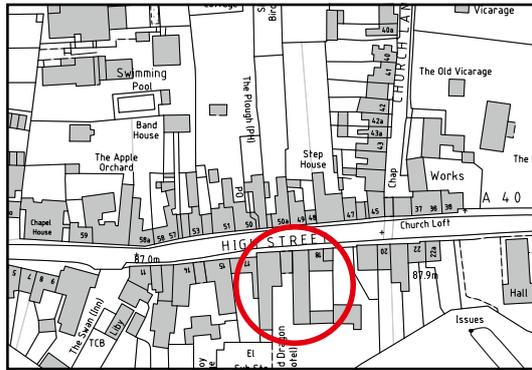
In contrast to the southern bay the original timber-framed northern bay was demolished, probably in the later 18th century, to allow the construction of a larger brick-built bay and therefore the interpretation of the original form of this bay is slightly conjectural. The roof is clearly secondary and the primary timber framing has been entirely lost. This 18th century phase also included a number of internal alterations including the insertion of a new staircase and this necessitated the removal of the eastern archbrace from the hall.

In 1860 a school was being held in the building, with nearly 50 pupils and during the first world war the building housed three families of Belgian refugees.

BUILDING 27: THE GEORGE AND DRAGON

Summary

The George and Dragon is one of the most significant buildings in the village, principally due to its size and status clearly illustrating the historic importance of the coaching trade to West Wycombe. The building also retains a number of important historic features, particularly a gallery in the rear accommodation range. The building is believed to have been constructed in the 16th century and it was then greatly expanded to its current form in the 18th century.



NGR: SU 82969 94654

Listed status: Grade II

Work in current project

No detailed investigation in current project. The description below is taken almost entirely from the National Trust's Vernacular Building Survey from 1993–4.

Location

The George and Dragon is located close to the centre of the village on the south side of the High Street.

Map evidence

The VBS includes research of leases and other documents at the Buckinghamshire Record Office which confirm the long history of the building as an inn. The earliest is the will of Andrew Hunt from 1667 which confirms that at this date he owned the George Inn in West Wycombe and another lease from 1692 referring to 'the Inne at the sign of the George where Elizabeth Spencer widow now dwelleth'. There are numerous leases and mortgages from various dates between 1709 to 1712 and it appears that the property was acquired by Sir Francis Dashwood in 1712.

The George and Dragon is shown on the 1767 plan (then called the George Inn). The plan shows it as a large building and the fact that the building is coloured indicates that it was part of the Dashwood's West Wycombe estate. There are no buildings shown to the rear but there is a large carriage entrance at the centre of the main elevation and there is a large yard behind the inn labelled 'The George Inn with Stables, yard etc'.

Description and evolution of building

The George and Dragon is a dominant landmark on the south side of the High Street with the front elevation significantly taller than the surrounding buildings. It is also one of the most historically significant buildings in the village, partly due to it being the last surviving major coaching inn in West Wycombe to remain in its historic function. It is thus a key illustration of the trade which was of such importance to the village, particularly in the 18th century and the VBS describes the survival of the 16th century gallery in the rear range as being of regional and national importance.

The overall building has a U-shaped plan with a principal range fronting the High Street and then long projecting ranges to the rear either side of a yard.

The building's principal range facing the High Street is a four storey building with rectangular plan, hipped roof partly hidden behind brick parapet, regular sash windows on upper floors, four full height brick pilasters and a central square-headed carriage arch to provide access to the rear yard. This building has the classic appearance of an 18th century coaching inn but this hides earlier origins for both this front range and buildings to the rear.

As detailed in the VBS it is not possible to provide a definitive analysis of the phasing of the complex without intrusive investigation but some indication is given below using the block numbering from the VBS.

Block 1 is the large, brick-faced range which fronts the High Street, forming the main public face of the inn, and together with the contemporary Block 3 this structure is believed to include the earliest parts of the overall building. As might be expected with the main block this is the most heavily altered part of the complex but it retains some timber framing at ground floor and in a partition wall at first floor as well as in the carriage entrance, which is an enlargement of the original.

The current brick elevation dates from a large scale rebuilding of the inn from c1720 and although this replaced (or encased) the previous timber-framed jettied front of the inn it is of historic interest in its own right, partly due to its scale illustrating the apparently flourishing coaching trade in the early 18th century. The new elevation was at least double the height of the previous range and the carriage entrance also enlarged. Elements of the primary internal layout survives as does the primary rear wall at first floor, within the enlarged 18th century building.

There are bay windows at ground floor and sash windows above which are likely to be 19th century (or later) replacements. The front elevation is believed to have been stuccoed in the 19th century but this was largely removed or repaired as part of the RSA's c1930 works.

Block 2 is a narrow gallery range adjoining Block 1 to the rear which may have been constructed in the later 17th century and was considerably altered in the 1720s improvements. This block allowed access to the rooms within Block 1 and passes over the carriage entrance.

Block 3 is the main primary accommodation wing that projects to the rear on the western side of the complex. This is perhaps the most significant part of the overall complex, particularly due to it retaining a largely intact original first floor gallery, constructed on a jetty. Much of the primary timber framing survives intact in this wing together with wattle and daub panels. As mentioned above Block 3 is believed to be contemporary with Block 1 and to have formed the earliest part of the overall building, probably constructed in the mid 16th century.

The western elevation facing the yard retains its primary timber-framed jetty although this has been slightly obscured by partially under-building and secondary cladding obscures the timber-framing at ground floor. This block also retains its primary roof structure with wind braces intact.

Block 3 was repaired in the 1930s works including the replacement of the stairs and the infilling of some panels.

Block 4 forms the northern part of the rear projection on the east side of the yard and it is likely to have been constructed in the mid 16th century as a stables or store range. It is timber framed and much of this survives to the upper parts of building although less survives at ground floor. It has a rectangular plan and is single storied with an attic

The east wall of this range has been largely reconstructed in brick but there are two and a half timber-framed panels which probably illustrate the original form of the whole wall.

The primary roof is largely intact and this matches that of Block 3 suggesting that Block 4 is either a part of the original mid 16th century building or a very early addition.

Block 5 is a brick stair range to the rear of Block 1 and is a secondary addition to the complex but it appears to pre-date the 1720s works.

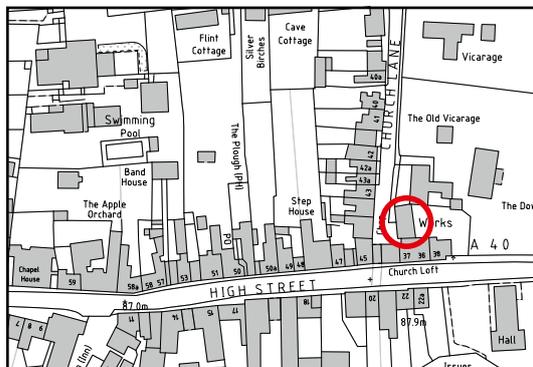
Block 6 is a one and a half storey structure which forms the southern part of the rear range on the east side of the yard. It appears to be a brick and flint structure of 18th century date and part of the roof appears to have been constructed with a series of trusses reused from an earlier building. The VBS speculates that it could be that these trusses were taken from the original 16th century street-front range when this structure was remodelled in the 1720s.

Another part of the roof is later still and appears to have been reconstructed in the 1930s works.

BUILDING 28: THE FURNITURE FACTORY

Summary

This was a purpose built furniture factory constructed in the late 19th or early 20th century. Although it is much more recent than many other buildings in the village it is of historic interest due to the importance of chair making in West Wycombe. Due to this interest the building is listed Grade II*.



NGR: SU 83020 94687

Listed status: Grade II*

Work in current project

No detailed investigation in current project.



Location

The Furniture Factory is located on the east side of Church Lane, towards the south end and immediately behind the Sweet Shop (36–38 High St).

Map evidence

A long building is shown on the 1767 plan on a broadly similar footprint to that of the current furniture factory, to the south-west of the vicarage and facing the yard immediately behind the Church Loft. The fact that the building is coloured indicates that it formed part of the Dashwood's West Wycombe estate.

The Tithe Map of 1849 shows a house and garden on this site occupied by Widow Avery.

The first edition OS map of 1876 shows a number of buildings on this site but their plan is very different to that of the current Furniture Factory whereas the new factory building is clearly shown on the map of 1921. It is possible that some element of the older building was incorporated into the factory but map evidence strongly suggests that the building was entirely reconstructed in the late 19th or early 20th century.

It is known that EMF Brown, the firm who occupied the building in the 1950s when it was listed, made, restored and repaired chairs. The factory had previously been occupied by William and Herbert Giles and in 1977 it was bought by Mr Hinds. It is now occupied by the furniture makers Browns of West Wycombe.

Description

This was a purpose-built furniture factory constructed in the late 19th or early 20th century.

It is a three storey building with a simple rectangular plan form and a gabled, slate covered roof. The west elevation facing Church Lane is easily recognisable or 'read' as an industrial workshop with a central external timber staircase, weatherboarded upper two storeys, long

horizontal lights at first floor and regular fenestration at the brick ground floor with segmental arch lintels.

Although the interior has not been inspected in the current project the VBS states that the ground floor is divided into two main rooms either side of an east-west passage. The first floor is entirely open plan around the central staircase while the second floor is also largely open plan but with some smaller rooms in the south half.

The roof is divided into four bays by three probably primary, composite trusses typical for around the turn of the 20th century with principal rafters and a vertical metal tie rod at the centre of the truss.

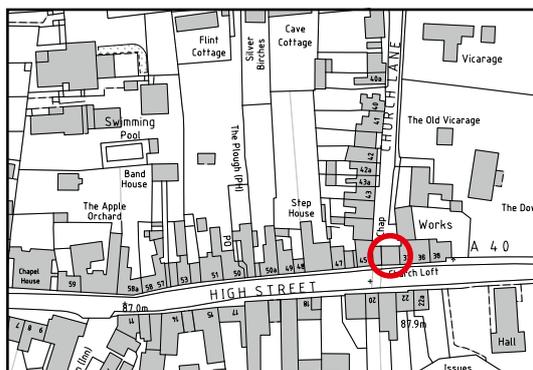
It is interesting to note that The Furniture Factory is Grade II* listed, one of only four buildings in the village with such a high listed status. This clearly reflects the historic importance of chair making and furniture making in West Wycombe (and the wider vicinity) but it is surprising, particularly considering the fact that it was listed in 1954 when the heritage significance of industrial buildings was far less appreciated than today.

The official name of the building in the listing is 'Workshop (furniture Factory) Adjoining No. 37 High Street on North and Occupied by EMF Brown'. The building is now the only surviving furniture factory in the village and the clearest monument to the industry which was historically often undertaken on a small scale in domestic premises.

BUILDING 29: THE CHURCH LOFT

Summary

The Church Loft is one of the most historically significant buildings in West Wycombe and this is reflected in its Grade II* listing. It has long been thought likely that it is the oldest surviving building in the village and recent dendrochronology suggests that it was probably constructed around 1465. The significance of the building lies partly in its late medieval date but also in its historic character, its exposed timber framing with jetties to front and rear and its function (ie as a building for administering church affairs).



NGR: SU 83020 94687

Listed status: Grade II*

Work in current project

No detailed investigation by OA in the current project although it has been studied by the Buildings Recording Group of the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society.

Location

The Church Loft is located towards the eastern end of the village on the north side of the high Street. It incorporates a carriage way through it allowing access to Church Lane.

Map evidence

The Church Loft is shown and labelled on the 1767 plan with a similar layout to today with a street-front block and covered passage leading to The Church Lane. On the 1849 Tithe Map the building has the plot number 666 and churchwardens as the occupiers. The Church Loft is shown with the same plan on the 1876 and 1921 OS maps.

The history of the building has been researched and will be detailed in a forthcoming article by Gary Marshall to be published in Records of Bucks (West Wycombe Village: an archaeological appraisal of the Church Loft and village buildings).

The church warden's accounts suggest that significant alterations were undertaken in the 1670s which may have included the blocking of a ground floor passage through the building at its eastern end. The date of 1676 is carved on a post together with two sets of initials which are almost certainly those of John Parker and Peter Chalfont, the churchwardens at this date. Presumably the date and initials were added to mark the major phase of alterations.

In the early 20th century the building underwent an extensive refurbishment led by the noted architect William Caroe, a significant figure in the contemporary conservation and arts and crafts movements.

Also in the earlier 20th century (possibly following Caroe's refurbishment) the building appears to have been used as a Sunday School. It is now used by the parish as a community meeting room and store.

Description and evolution of building

The Church Loft is a two storey tall, three-bay wide building of timber frame construction with brick infill of various dates replacing the primary wattle and daub panels. The roof is clad in old tiles and towards the west end there is an 18th century bell turret with bell dated 1668. There is a covered carriage passage through the building in the western bay providing access to Church Lane and above this on the south elevation is a projecting clock which is believed to date from the mid 19th century. On the west side of the covered passage is a set of weather-boarded parish lock-up rooms.

Both the front and rear elevations are jettied at first floor level, supported by curved brackets to each post, and incorporate a moulded bressumer with studs above. Beneath the bressumer on the front (south) elevation the ground floor includes two doorways and a series of leaded-light windows. These windows and doors all appear to be insertions or replacements added in the refurbishment undertaken in c1912–14. At first floor level there are also leaded-lights within the brick nogging infill although they appear to pre-date Caroe's refurbishment and some could survive from the 1670s works.

It appears that the building would originally have had a continuous band of glazing across the front and rear, between the studs.

An interesting set of features on the front elevation includes the carved (and rebated) outline of a removed former crucifix against one of the primary posts together with a crudely scalloped sarsen foundation stone immediately beneath. The stone is believed to have been used by travellers passing through the village and stopping to kneel and pray by the crucifix.

The interior now comprises a largely open-plan room at each floor level although the ground floor would originally have been divided into four small rooms, two to the front and two to the rear. The VBS speculated that there may have been an additional carriageway to the north on the eastern side of the building but the evidence for this is inconclusive. The rooms may have formed individual shop units or possibly habitable rooms for parishioners or lodgings for travellers. The wattle and daub partitions which created these rooms were removed in Caroe's early 20th century alterations. The eastern bay, which may originally have formed a passage to the rear is now another room served by a fire place.

The first floor hall remains closer to its primary arrangement and the impressive roof structure survives largely intact and on display. The roof structure consists of queen strut trusses with two tiers of butt purlins (not clasped like so many other buildings in West Wycombe) supporting common rafters which are carried over the backs of the purlins. The two central trusses have a large tie-beam (moulded undersides), collar, queen struts between collar and tie and two inner arched struts almost meeting close to the central point of the underside of the collar. There are arched braces between post and tie and two tiers of curved wind braces beneath purlins.

An interesting detail noted in the roof was the presence of small augured holes to one side of each rafter towards their base. These are known as rafter holes and are a recognised feature found in many vernacular buildings. It is thought that the holes would have been created during the initial setting-out stage on the ground when the correct spacing of the roof was being determined.

