



Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd

Modern living in an historic environment

**A Heritage Asset Survey of an outbuilding at
Baker's Cottage, 32 Church Street, Quanton,
Buckinghamshire**

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Summary

A small timbered and weather-boarded outhouse to the rear of 32 Church St, Quainton, appears to have been built from numerous and disparate re-used elements, some from box-framing (such as Baker's Cottage itself is constructed), but many later, but which may not have been brought together in their current location and configuration until as late as the 19th century. The building is dilapidated and may have been both a stable or other animal shelter and partly a butcher's meat store in the past.

Introduction and Background

Mr and Mrs Richards are applying to Aylesbury Vale District Council to redevelop a dilapidated timber outbuilding to the rear of their property at Baker's Cottage, 32 Church Street, Quainton, Buckinghamshire, HP22 4AP (NGR: SP7488 2017; Fig 1).



Fig 1: Site location (arrowed). Contains Ordnance Survey data ©Crown Copyright and database right 2015

The address lies on the south side of Church Street at the north-east extremity of the village which lies due south of Winslow. The name Baker's Cottage is said not to be significant in a former use to the property, but reflects an earlier owner's name.

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The property at the address is Grade II-listed since 1951 and is summarised as follows:

SP 7420 QUAINTON CHURCH STREET

(south side)

8/50 No. 32 (Baker's Cottage)

25.10.51

GV II

House. C17, altered. Timber frame with diagonal braces and colourwashed render infill. C20 tiled roof, brick chimney to rear. L-plan. One storey and attic, 2 bays to front. Ground floor has old leaded windows: one 3-light casement in wooden architrave frame to right, and 2 paired casements. Upper floor has C20 paired leaded casement in gabled eaves-line dormer to right. 4-panelled door in wooden architrave frame between right windows. Rear wing also has C20 leaded casements. Small tiled oven projection to centre of right side. C20 single storey extension to rear. RCHM II p.246 Mon. 12.

As can be seen, the outbuilding is not mentioned specifically but for the purposes of this report it is considered to be listed by curtilage and the same scrutiny has been directed to it as if it had been individually listed. Records equating to Level 2 have been created, in accordance with the recording levels in the English Heritage guidance document *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice* (2006).

Building Record

The timber outhouse is a slightly irregular rectangle, measuring c10m x c4m in plan and of three unequal bays. It is constructed from a timber frame of very varied quality, with a large number of waney-edged timbers and even simple, straight and bent branches, unworked. Many timbers are rotted and wasted; many more are clearly re-used from elsewhere.



Fig 2: The outbuilding from the north-east; scale 1m

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Fig 3: The outbuilding from the south-east; scale 1m

The floor is of partly-worn, irregular limestone flags and partly a replacement (or covering) in concrete, with a small area in brick.

The roof is corrugated tin and is a modern covering over the denuded remains of a former thatched frame, with empty mortises suggesting an even earlier superstructure in part, but which may not have existed on the current site. In height the building measures 3.67m from the ground to the underside of the ridge-plank. While the current south end gable is vertical, the timbers of a hip for its thatched predecessor survive behind it.



Fig 4: The angled frame which once supported the thatched hip of the south gable

Some 10-20% of the interior is not accessible as it has been boarded out in recent decades in packing-case timber as a separate, interior storage 'box' with its own entrance doors. A small,

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interior former earth-closet/privy with its own door, is also largely inaccessible as it has been both overgrown with ivy and lies hard up against the abovementioned storage box.

The exterior weather-boarding consists of numerous different covering episodes and very little is considered to be of any age. It is characterised by different thicknesses, lengths and uniformity. Overall it presents a picture of long-lived repair and patching-up.

The three bays, moving north to south, can be characterised thus:

Bay 1 is distinguished by two pairs of upright jowled posts which fit in a competently-worked mortise and lap-dovetail joint with the contemporary remains of a wall-plate and tie-beam, which is the standard assembly for box-framing, of which Baker's Cottage is a prime example (Alcock et al 1989). Here, the remainder of the truss it supported has been lost, either (most likely) when the assembly was moved from a previous location, or (less likely) when an early roof structure was replaced. Empty mortises in the top of the tie beam ends indicate the former principal rafter housings.

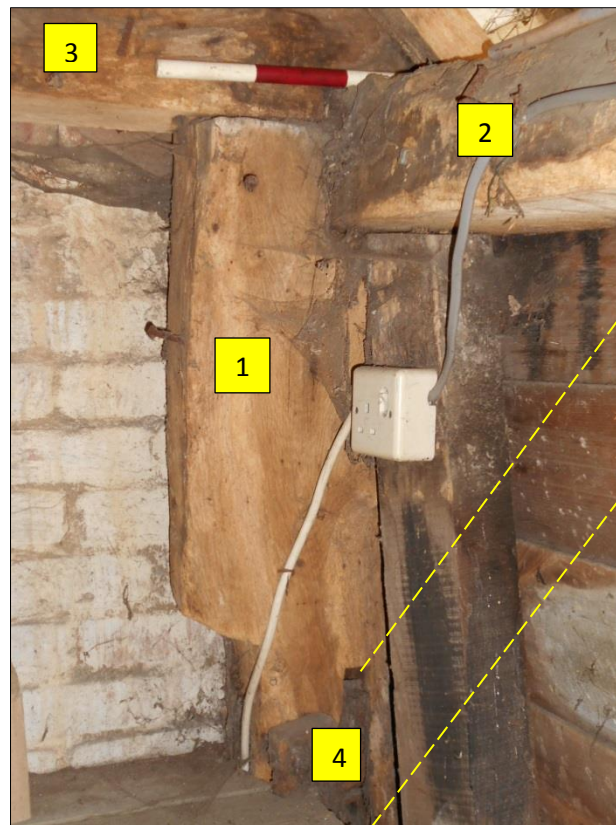


Fig 5: Bay 1, N E corner: upright jowled post (1); clapsed wall-plate (2); tie beam (3); empty mortise for diagonal upward brace (4 –brace dashed); scale 30cm.

Bay 1, at the north end stands hard up against the latest southward extension of Baker's Cottage. Bare nail-heads, protruding but out of sight, indicate that this was once weather-boarded and was therefore the north, exterior end of the outbuilding, the gap only closed up by southward extension of Baker's Cottage. Only the eastern upright of the end pair has survived intact, while the western one has been badly split away, with the grain, down the jowl. Upward straight diagonal braces are partly present to steady the frame, but some have been lost, the only evidence the empty mortises both in the uprights and the soffit of the wall-plates.

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The west side of Bay 1 is the only place (apparently) in the building where an original timber sole-plate survives. Elsewhere it has been replaced in brick, or concrete, or perhaps dispensed with (as not all areas at the foot of the walls are visible).

This bay sports a number of butcher's hooks on the wall plates, suggesting it may have been used to hang meat or game. In addition a rustic cleat is nailed to an intermediate upright on the west side which probably used to tie a rope for a pulley/hoist (now gone) mounted in the roof.



Fig 6: Bay 1 West side, butcher's hooks on wall-plate



Fig 7: Bay 1 West side, rustic cleat for fixing a hoisted weight

There is exterior weatherboarding applied to the pair of uprights which mark the division between Bays 1 and 2. This extends all the way to the former roof ridge, indicating a division of use which required total separation. A liberal use of lime-wash on the far side suggests that Bay 2 was used to house animals, probably stabling for a horse. This weatherboarding is far from expert, and between the bays includes a re-used oak floorboard!

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Fig 8: the weatherboarding right up to the ridge, dividing Bay 1 from Bay 2; looking south

Bay 1, and into Bay 2 is floored in worn limestone paving flags. On moving south through to Bay 2 (via an impromptu and not original doorway) the flooring changes to pitched limestone flags, not as easily cracked or dislodged. Only a small area of this survives, as most of the floor thereafter is concreted, but for a small area of bricks laid on bed.

Bay 2 has at some point been lime-washed and this survived on the weatherboarded dividing partition in part, backing onto Bay 1. On the western side a low outshut has been created in recent times by taking out an upright and building outwards; this is currently used as a wood-store. Above this the framing, including a mid-rail, not present elsewhere, suggests that formerly a shuttered window lay here.



Fig 9: Possible former window; outshut below; the midrail is sagging where its supporting upright has been taken out – the empty mortise remains in the soffit

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The current double doors which face east are formed beneath a relatively modern lintel, for which all external older details have been removed. Thus it cannot be stated whether there was originally an opening of any particular size or configuration in this bay; a doorway is assumed however.

A rustic peg, nailed to the tie beam is probably for hanging a horse-collar, suggestive of a former stabling function.

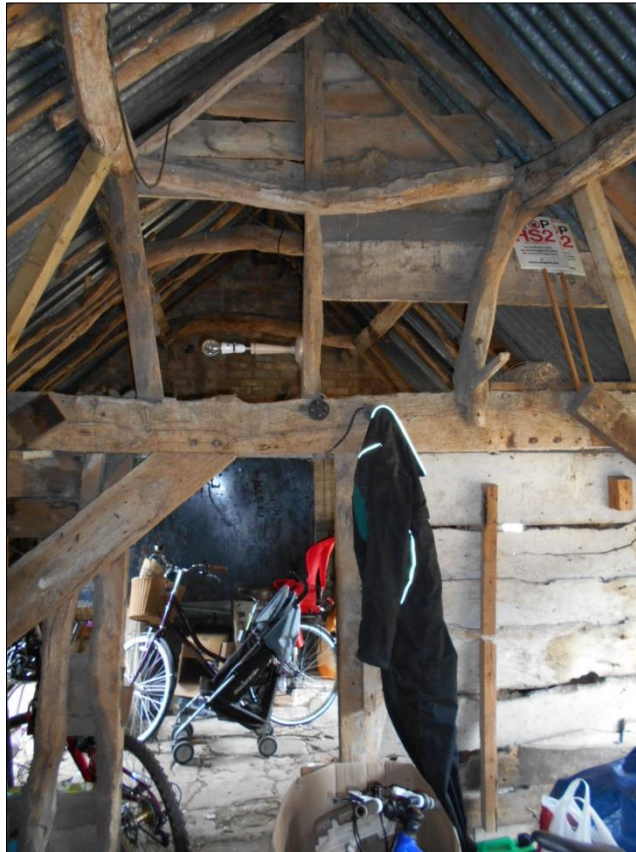


Fig 10: Bay 2, looking north through to Bay 1; note the lime-washed weather-board and the flagstones beyond



Fig 11: Rustic peg, possibly for hanging a horse collar

Bay 3 is only partly visible on the inside. What is clear is that it lacks any pretence of a deliberate frame in the style of Bays 1 or 2. Almost all of its timberwork (which is only partly visible) is very rustic, with only half-hearted squaring or dressing.

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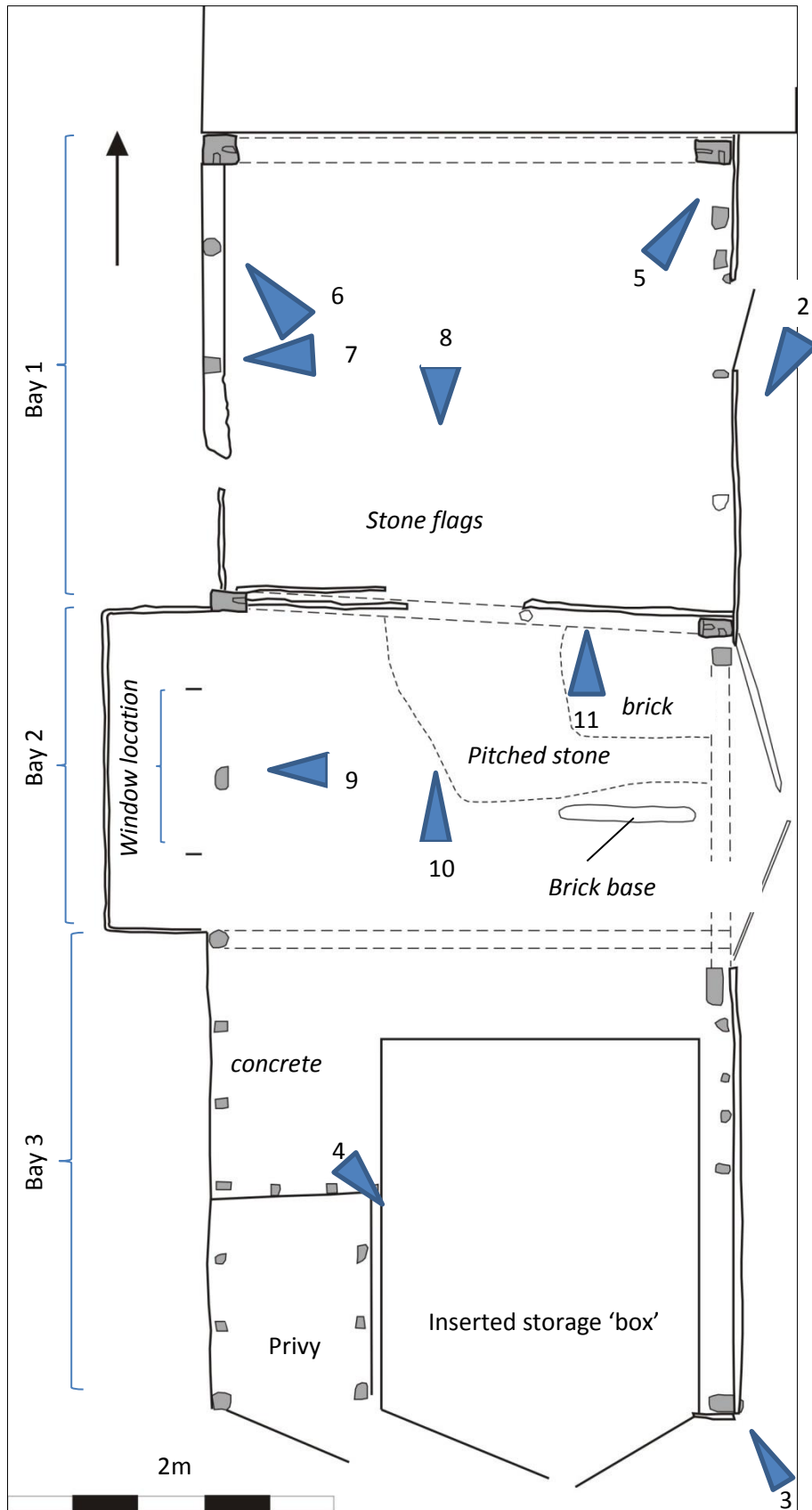


Fig 12: Plan of the outbuilding – note the irregularity; arrows and numbers show the location and direction of figure views above.

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Conclusions

This outbuilding at 32 Church Street, Quainton is a mixture of timber framing elements, probably put together from reclaimed parts of numerous other buildings, and perhaps brought together as late as the 19th century, although some individual elements (notably the denuded remains of box-framing) are probably a lot older. It is haphazardly-carpenetered and largely lacks a coherent narrative. It was formerly thatched and included a hipped gable on its south end. Only about a third of its early floor survives.

Interior lime-wash and a collar-peg suggest that Bay 2 was formerly used for keeping animals, possibly a horse, while a number of butcher's hooks and a cleat for a hoist might relate to the use of Bay 1 by a butcher. There is nothing to suggest (on the one hand) that both uses were contemporary or (on the other hand) that one preceded the other.

Although fully weather-boarded and roofed, elements of the building are nevertheless in a state of some decay. It is a rather denuded outbuilding which today bears only passing relevance to the cottage to which it remains related.

References

Alcock, N W, Barley M W, Dixon, P W and Meeson R A, 1989 *Recording Timber-Framed Buildings: an illustrated glossary*, CBA Handbook 5

English Heritage, 2006 *Understanding historic buildings: a guide to good recording practice*



IS Heritage, 20 May 2015