

Report and Documentary History for
**Cordwainers, 2 Bicester Road, Long Crendon,
Buckinghamshire**

Site Code: LON-E

from

The Medieval Peasant House in Midland England

by

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Fig. 1. View of Cordwainers from the south.

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Oxbow Books

LON-E: CORDWAINERS, 2 BICESTER ROAD, LONG CRENDON, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE (Also known as 14 The Square, and formerly called Corner Cottage)

Grid reference: SP 6942 0862 Survey Date: September 1989 By: D. Miles

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Acknowledgements: This report has been compiled using notes provided by Catherine Murray. The owners of Cordwainers have kindly allowed access to their deeds.
Documentary history by Nat Alcock and Eric Sewell, building on the work of John Chenevix Trench†.
For court roll and documentary source references, see the primary bibliography of primary sources:

Abbreviations:

- CBS Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies
- Rousham Rousham (Cottrell-Dormer) archive; T-numbers refer to Long Crendon deeds.
- SGC St George's Chapel, Windsor, archives
- TNA The National Archives

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

PHASE 1: Cordwainers is a two-bay cruck house (originally probably of at least three bays) set at right angles to The Square and running parallel to the High Street. The surviving bays make up a two bay open hall, evidenced by the blackened roof timbers. The central cruck truss has a saddle apex (type 'C'). A sample from this first phase has been dated by dendrochronology to 1447.

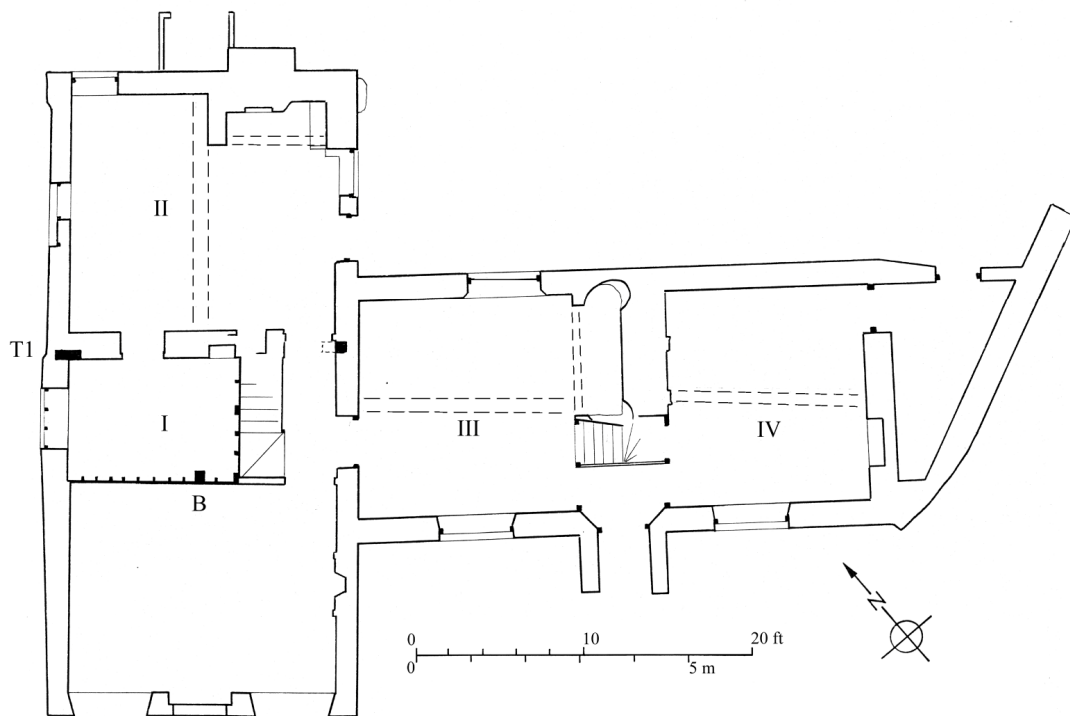


Fig. 2. Plan, showing truss and bay numbering.



Fig. 3. View of Cordwainers from the east in 1954 (Photo: Eric Sewell Collection)

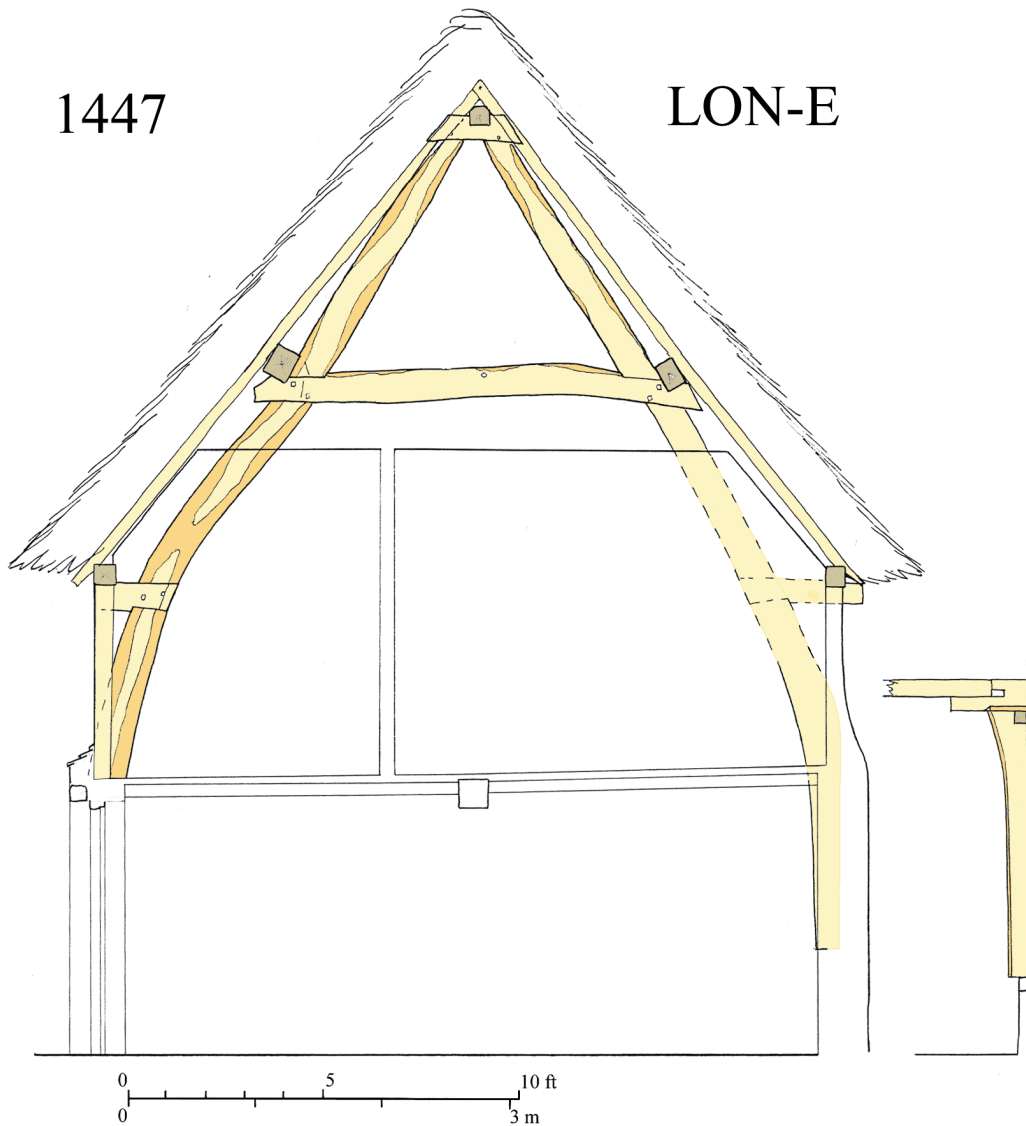


Fig. 4. Section of Truss T1 from east. Inset: Support of inserted beam in bay I at B.

PHASE 2: Somewhat before 1700, a two bay wing which incorporates the present dining room (bay III) and the study (bay IV) was built at right angles to the hall. This range is of coursed rubble limestone, now rendered and lime-washed and with a thatched roof. It is of one storey and attic with central

chimney stack and lobby entry plan with a winder staircase directly within the front door. Both the staircase and main fireplace serve bay III which became the new hall for the house, leaving the old hall perhaps as a kitchen. Bay IV would have been a parlour or ground floor chamber. Both rooms upstairs were originally unheated.

LATER PHASES: During the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century, bay II was altered considerably. Included in this work was the rebuilding of the ground floor and gable end walls in coursed rubble limestone, the construction of a new chimney stack in the gable wall, and the insertion of an upper storey. If there was another bay beyond bay II, it most likely disappeared at this time. In the mid nineteenth century the front wall of bay I was demolished and replaced with a tall 2-storey brick block.

STRUCTURAL FEATURES

PHASE 1: Hall Range: In bay II, most of the original timber-framed walls survive on the upper storey, complete with wall plates and some wattle and daub panels, though the pattern of framing is unclear. The central open cruck (truss T2) is virtually intact (partly concealed on the north side). The blades are of elm, boxed heart measuring 11 by 8½in, and the southern blade has a slight ogee curve. The apex is of type 'C' in which the top of the blades tenon into a saddle. This in turn supports a square set ridge, which notched over the saddle. The purlins measure 6-7 by 8-9in and are of elm, as is the collar on which they are supported. The wall plates are supported on cruck spurs which are again of elm. They apparently engage the cruck studs, but these are hidden behind plaster.

The original roof only remains over bay II, that in bay I having been totally lost in the phase 3 rebuilding. The ridge is 5½in square and is jointed with a straight splay scarf three quarters of the way along from truss 2. This indicates that it did extend into a third bay. In bay I, it now projects no more than 6in, and has been sawn off recently. On the south pitch of the roof, six original rafters (4½ by 2½-3in, at 1ft 6in centres) remain along with the thatch and laths, all of which are smoke blackened.

PHASE 2: Both bays III and IV retain their original roof trusses which are all of elm. They are of tiebeam and collar construction with queen struts supporting the collars. They are set in the gable end and on either side of the central stack. Assembly marks are visible on one of the trusses in bay IV. The first floor joists are all concealed but the axial beams are 9-10½in wide with 2in run out chamfers.

A large fireplace faces bay III with a substantial timber lintel, chamfered with ogee stops. The inner reveals have seat alcoves with elbow niches and modern wooden seating. The fireplace in bay IV is a later eighteenth century chimney inserted in the corner against the main stack. This chimney is built of very narrow bricks (probably reused). The main chimney terminates above the roof in a rectangular shaft of narrow bricks with a small ovolo cornice.

PHASE 3: BAY II: The inserted floor is supported on an 8in axial beam with a narrow chamfer, and the joists are of irregularly cut elm of varying widths, some being quartered. The fireplace in the gable end has a heavy timber lintel but has been much altered. The left jamb has been rebuilt in brick, with a nineteenth century bread oven inserted into the rear wall, which projects to the outside where it is covered by a lean-to tiled roof. The adjacent ground floor window is a former doorway and has a reused wooden lintel with mortice and peg holes.

DENDROCHRONOLOGY

For dendrochronology abbreviations see page facing Introduction.

Sampling Comments: Initially three samples were taken through coring by Robert Howard. Although many other timbers were complete to the bark edge, all were of elm and were therefore not sampled. None of the three cores taken had more than 22 rings and they were therefore useless for dating. During the survey, a ½ in slice was cut off from the severed end of the ridge which was from the same timber as sample LON-E02. This slice has 52 rings with complete sapwood and gave a felling date of 1447. As the sample showed obvious signs of shrinkage after conversion, it was most probably used within a year of felling.

TREE-RING SAMPLE RECORD AND SUMMARY OF DATING

Sample Code	Sample Location	Total Rings	Sapwood Rings	FMR Date	LHR Date	LMR Date	Date Cat
LON-E01	Ridge piece, first section	52	20C	1396	1427	1447	5
LON-E02	Ridge piece, second section	11 NM	—	—	—	—	—
LON-E03	Saddle	12 NM	—	—	—	—	—

Site sequence: (sample 1 only), 52 rings long matched at 1396-1447 with *t*-values of 5.3 (NORTHANTS), 4.5 (OXFORD), 4.3 (S.ENG), 3.9 (E.MID), 5.6 (STC-A SQ01), 6.5 (LON-D S001).
 Estimated felling date: **1447**.

DOCUMENTARY HISTORY

Summary

This cottage has a T-shaped plan, the head comprising the medieval range, the stem probably 17th century. Its history can be traced from the mid-16th century as a Windsor copyholding. In 1699, the stem of the T was split off as a separate holding, although somewhat later, the two parts were recombined. The main holding had its own farmhouse, perhaps built in around 1600. It was enfranchised in 1827 (Fig. 4, plot 68a) as part of the enclosure award, and the house and croft were sold off in 1886. Cordwainers house was held by the Gibson family until 1897, and it was enfranchised in 1919.

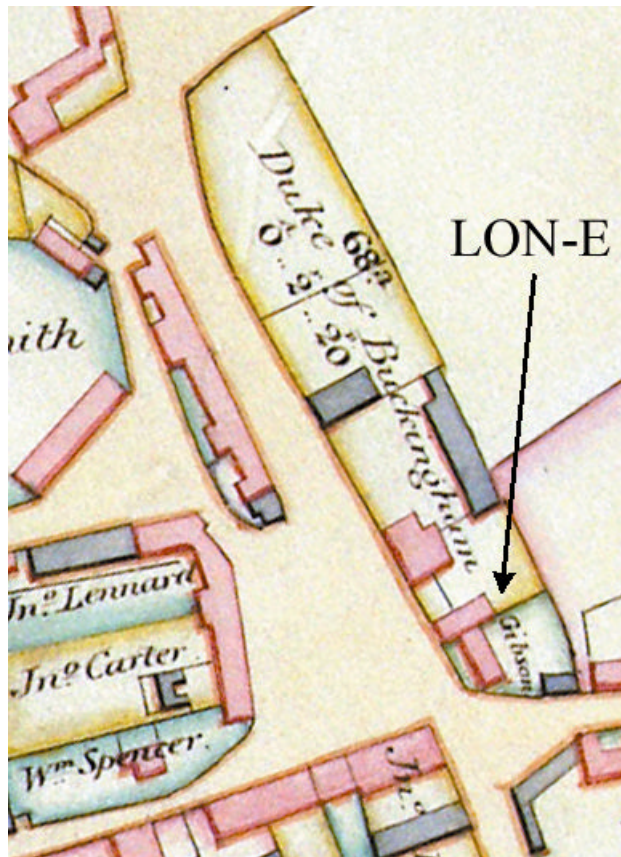


Fig. 5. Part of the 1827 map of Long Crendon (CBS IR/95/Q).

Court rolls: main holding

The main part of the property (68a on the 1827 map) can be followed through from 1559 (possibly 1534), in the hands of the Ridge and Cozens families until it was transferred to Joseph Cox in 1675. The Ridge family were prominent in the village, Roland held a lease of the Windsor demense from 1552 and

was the brother of Richard Ridge, the last Abbott of Notley, who became vicar of Cholsey, Oxon; Roland is mentioned in the latter's will and in his own will described himself as a husbandman.¹

Joseph Cox was not apparently a Long Crendon resident before the 1670s, when he and his wife Mary had two children baptised.² He received a yardland by the surrender of John Cozens in 1675, which appears to be that in his tenure in 1699.³ The holding was acquired by Richard Randolph in 1740, and sold to George Grenville of Wootton Underwood in 1767; in 1827, it was the only copyholding of the Duke of Buckingham (the grandson of George Grenville). At enclosure, he received allotment 113 in lieu of the yardland, and the commissioners also used their powers under the Act, to enfranchise the croft (plot 68a) and yardland, awarding the Dean and Chapter of Windsor allotment 68, in lieu of their rights.

A new farmhouse (the later Strattons) had been built on the croft, perhaps in about 1600 (judging from its timber-framing), and presumably thereafter the old house was converted to a cottage. In 1886, the farmhouse was sold to Herbert Dodwell, and immediately re-sold to John Oakley, librarian, of Elim Cottage, Eton; at this period, the house was used as the village post office.

Court roll entries

1559: Roland RIDGE died, holding messuage & 1ydl (W); he had no son and Tho KARY gent received the property from the hand of the lord. This may well be the Windsor tenement formerly in the occupation of William Batyn, to which Roland Ridge was admitted in 1534, but the court roll entry does not identify it as including a yardland.

1561: Thos KARY (KYRYE), messuage & 1ydl (W), surrendered to the use of John RIDGE senior; he and his eldest son were admitted.

1586: John RIDGE died, holding 1 ydl (W) [messuage not mentioned]; John Ridge, son and heir admitted.

1621 *John Ridge died. His will includes the bequest to his kinswoman Margerie Towersey of 'my black brasse pann at my house in the Smith End & 1 paire of sheetes'.*⁴

1627: Bridgitta RIDGE, widow of John R,⁵ surrendered tenement & 1 ydl (W). Robt COZENS admitted.

1661 Robt COZENS died, messuage & 1 ydl (W). John COZENS son and heir

1675: John COZENS surrendered 1 ydl to use of Joseph COX, admitted.

1719: Joseph COX senior, messuage & 1ydl, surrendered to Jos COX jnr, son, adm.

1740: Joseph COX, messuage & 1ydl, surrendered to use of Ric RANDOLPH, adm.

1756: Richard RANDOLPH, cottage & 1ydl, surrendered to use of will

1767: Richard RANDOLPH, messuage & 1ydl, surrendered to use of Rt Hon George GRENVILLE, adm.

1771: George GRENVILLE of Wootton Underwood died, messuage & 1ydl (W), surrendered to Geo GRENVILLE gent, son, adm.

1803 Windsor Survey: Marquis of BUCKINGHAM

¹ SGC, CC 120,349. 'Mr Wilson's Book', pp.82-86. Both Ridge wills are in TNA, PROB 11/40.

² CBS, PR134/1. However, members of the Cox family had been in the village since the 1550s.

³ This entry neither mentions the messuage nor identifies the lordship. However, no other surrenders or admissions are recorded for John Cozens or Joseph Cox at a period when the rolls are almost complete.

⁴ CBS, DAWe: 28 211. The court roll for this year is missing. Bridgitta died in 1638; Robert Cozens was her son. In her will [DAWe: 31 316] she bequeaths to Mary Cozens (daughter of Robert) the bedstead in the chamber over the milkhouse.

⁵ John Ridge married Bridget Cozen on 10 September 1610.

1815: George Marquis of BUCKINGHAM, 1ydl to which adm 1772, surrendered to Ric Mq of BUCKINGHAM son, adm.

1824: Abstract of Claims: Duke of BUCKINGHAM Messuage or farmhouse & homestead, home close & 1ydl occ by Chas DUDLEY.

1827 Enclosure: Duke of BUCKINGHAM

The subsidiary part of Cordwainers

In 1699, Joseph Cox (holding a messuage and a yardland), surrendered a shop and an adjoining bay of building with an orchard or garden to the use of Owen Gibson of Long Crendon, collar-maker, and Sarah his wife. It was described (in Latin) as:

A shop [*officinam, Anglice a shoppe*] and one bay of building [*unam mensuram structurae, Anglice one bay of building*] adjoining the shop, late in tenure of a certain Widow Spindler and pertaining to the said messuage, and all that orchard or garden adjoining the same shop and bay, adjoining a croft in the possession of William Cannon lying to the NE; the street to the SE and SW; and a straight line continues beside the south-east gable of the said shop & bay to the said croft on the north-south [*Boreazephirale, (sic)*] part of the same [*meaning of final phrase somewhat uncertain*].

Clearly, this description matches the stem of Cordwainers, a two-bay structure set in a small croft at the corner of High Street and Bicester Road. However, by 1827, the croft had been enlarged, rather than ending at a line running from the south-east gable to the adjoining croft; more importantly, it appears that this property had been re-combined with the original house, although it is not clear when this happened.⁶

The property passed through the hands of successive members of the Gibson family until 1897, and is identified as belonging to ‘Gibson’ on the 1827 map (Fig. 4). Both Richard & William Gibson were named as collar makers in 1798; by 1833, the latter had become a harness-maker.⁷

Court roll entries for Cordwainers or its subsidiary part

1699: Joseph COX surrendered a shop, etc (as above) to the use of Owen Gibson of Long Crendon, collar-maker, and Sarah his wife.

1751: Owen GIBSON died [buried 1750], tenant of Windsor lordship, heir Wm Gibson admitted.⁸

1777: William GIBSON died, holding messuage (W), John Gibson, son & heir, admitted.

1788: Death of John Gibson, Owen GIBSON, brother, admitted to messuage (W).

1788: Wm GIBSON admitted on death of John GIBSON messuage (W) occ by Ric GIBSON.

1788: John GIBSON died [collar-maker in his will, CBS], messuage (W), occ by Ric GIBSON, William GIBSON nephew, admitted.

1803 Windsor Survey: Wm GIBSON, in the tenure of Wm GIBSON.

1827 Enclosure Map: GIBSON.

1833: George GIBSON only son & heir of William GIBSON, harness maker, admitted to messuage (W) formerly John GIBSON, Richard GIBSON and William GIBSON.

1847: Wm GIBSON, messuage etc, surrendered to George GIBSON, son..

⁶ The shading of the map suggests that this part of Cordwainers was held by the Marquis. However, in the pre-enclosure Abstract of Claims (CBS, D78/11), the Marquis included only a messuage, not a cottage, and, the enfranchisement map clearly includes both parts of the cottage.

⁷ *Posse Comitatus*. The first Owen and his grandson, Richard Gibson were also substantial farmers, the former subtenant of a messuage and two yardlands held of All Souls by Thomas Cannon, the latter tenant of a farm paying Land Tax of over £5.

⁸ Owen, son of Owen & Dorothy Gibson, was born in 1672. and his first child, William, was born in 1698. The registers give no indication of another generation in the period 1699-1750.

- 1860 Windsor Survey: George GIBSON admitted 1847, messuage formerly Joh GIBSON then Richard GIBSON now George GIBSON.
- 1875 Windsor Copyholds: Messuage or tenement with appurtenances late occ Wm GIBSON, copyholders Wm GIBSON, Geo GIBSON 1847, Wm Spiers GIBSON 1875.
- 1891: Wm Spiers GIBSON (d.1883) holding a messuage (W), Geo Aubrey GIBSON his son, admitted.
- 1895: Geo Aubrey GIBSON, grocer, messuage occ by Ric GIBSON then Wm GIBSON late Wm Spiers GIBSON now Mrs GIBSON, surrendered for £200 to Geo Sotham gent of Gatwick, Surrey.
- 1898: George Aubrey GIBSON of 34 South St, Isleworth, tobacconist, for £280, baker, surrenders to Thomas Alfred RAY, messuage (W). formerly Ric GIBSON, then Wm GIBSON, lately Wm Spiers GIBSON now Mrs GIBSON.
- 1919: Enfranchised (with plan, Fig. 6): For £46 13s 6d, granted to Thomas Alfred RAY (admitted 13 Oct 1898), previously occupied by Ric GIBSON, then Wm GIBSON, Wm Spiers GIBSON and Mrs GIBSON late of Tho Alfred RAY, now occupied by Isabel Huntley RALPH.

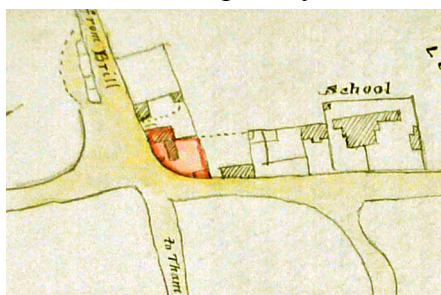


Fig. 6. Enfranchisement plan for Cordwainers (coloured red) (from Court Book)

Building Evidences

In the Hearth Tax, John Cozens is listed with three hearths, but presumably this relates to the main farmhouse, rather than Cordwainers

The descriptions of the two properties in the 1803 Windsor Survey are:⁹

Marquis of BUCKINGHAM, thatched house of wattle and daub occupied byBUCKLE in tolerable repair with a small garden. Rest of premises and 1ydl occupied by Chas DODWELL consisting of a thatched stone stable in indifferent repair and thatched barn of wattle & daub in good repair.

Wm GIBSON good tenement and collar-maker's shop of wattle daubed and thatched in good repair in the tenure of Wm GIBSON.

In the 1910 Valuation, the two holdings were described as:

[Cordwainers] Hereditament 307. Owner /occupant Jas M RALPH, part brick & stone, part mud & thatch [corresponding respectively to the stem and the head of the T], 3 rooms & kitchen, 3 beds, dressing room. 13 poles. Good position. 4d quit rent.

[Strattons] Hereditament 337: Freehold. House, shop, workshop of stone 4ft from ground, plaster & thatch has a stone ground floor and timber frame first floor] 3 bed, sitting, kitchen, passage. Shed of plaster & thatch. Earth closet at end of garden. freehold, owned by Alice Whitney, occupied by William Shrimpton.

⁹ Items 7 and 23 in SGC. CC 120,130.