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**An Analysis of the Historic Fabric of  
Late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> Century Buildings  
in Ledbury,  
Herefordshire**

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**A Report Prepared for the  
*England's Past For Everyone Project*  
*Herefordshire*  
by  
Duncan James**



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**June 2007**

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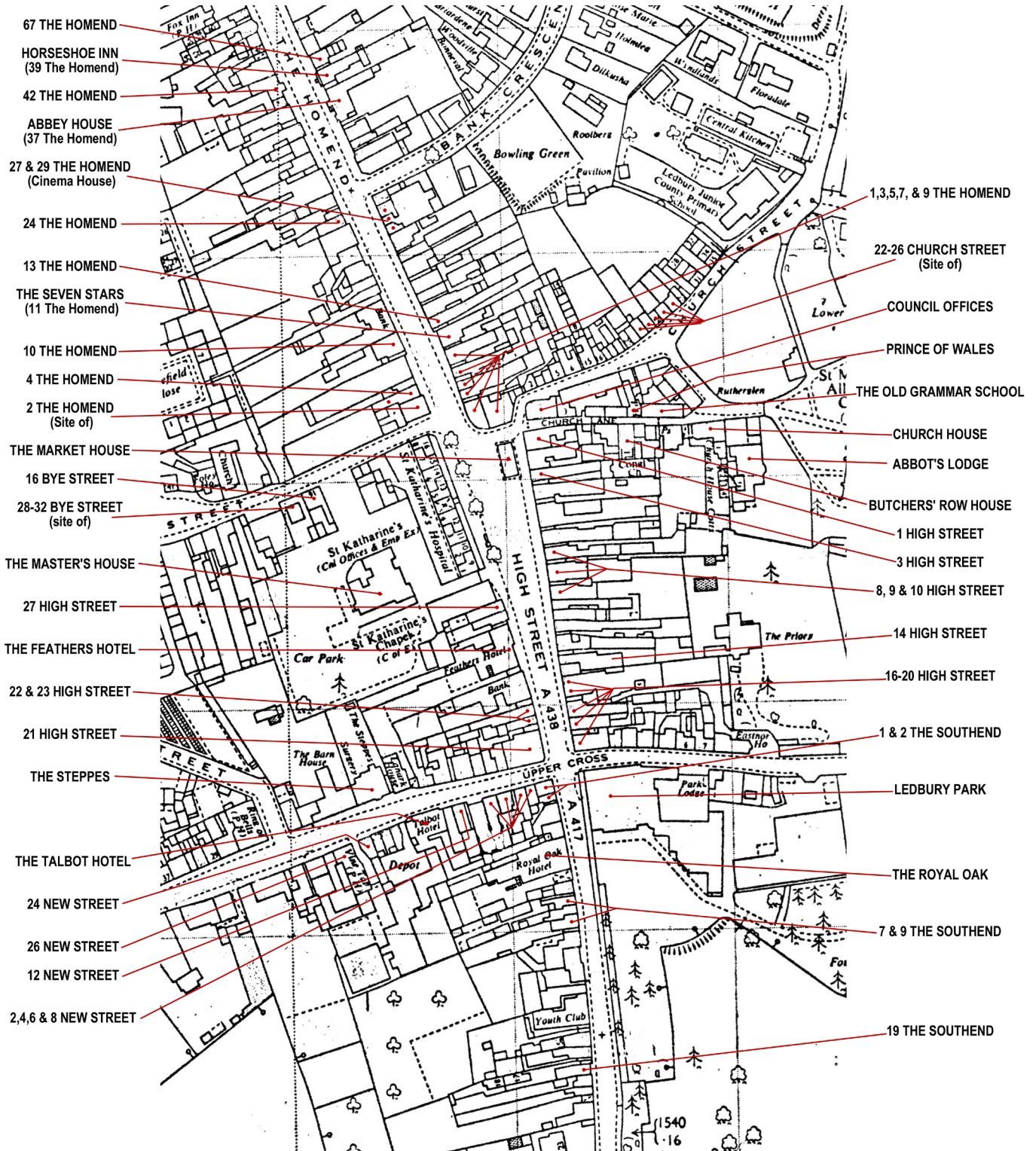
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## LEDBURY

Location of buildings in the central area  
dealt with in this report.



**The Buildings of Ledbury, Herefordshire, from the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century.**  
**An architectural and historical investigation.**

**1.00 Introduction**

This report was commissioned as part of the England's Past for Everyone project promoted under the auspices of the Victoria County History and sponsored by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Herefordshire Project is focussed on Ledbury and this report has been prepared in support of the first part of that project "Ledbury since 1558".

The value of a single, over-arching investigation of a whole settlement of buildings cannot be emphasised enough. It is an approach that makes it possible to understand the structural and stylistic interrelationship of the separate houses – especially if a broad chronological sequence can be established.

It is also of value to view the buildings over a short period of time since this makes it easier to make comparisons and to pick up on similarities of design, structure and layout; that has been an important aspect of this project.

It has also become an integral part of any investigation to note the quality of the timber used in order to look for clues concerning its growth (woodland management) and possible source. The methods used to convert the timber and any evidence of the carpenters' working techniques are also now part of any investigation. A note of carpenters' assembly marks must also be made and it is important to record any apotropaic marks and their position in the building. However, due to the wide scope of this project (i.e. the large number of buildings) it has only been possible to treat a few buildings in such detail.

**2.00 The Aims of the Report and Methodology**

Broadly speaking, the aim of this report is to record and interpret the architectural development of the central area of Ledbury in order to identify and categorise those that post-date 1558 through the examination of standing structures and the historic built environment.

The intention has been to seek a better understanding of the buildings that post-date 1558 in order to see what this might tell us about the history and development of the town following the seizure by the Crown of the lands of the Bishop of Hereford and their subsequent transfer to private hands.

More particularly it is concerned to address the following research points:-

1) When was Ledbury's 'Great Rebuilding'?

This has been investigated by identifying buildings of similar style and date and gathering documentary, stylistic and structural evidence.

2) Can the building phases be conclusively dated?

In the absence, thus far, of tree-ring dating, documentary sources and inscriptions have been used to date key buildings and by extrapolation establish a reasonably reliable dating framework for the rest of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century group of structures.

3) Was there a distinctive Ledbury style?

This has involved a detailed analysis of the decorative features of buildings in the study in order to identify aspects that mark them out allowing comparisons to be made with those on buildings of similar date elsewhere both within and outside the county, looking in particular at Tewkesbury, Hereford, Leominster and Ludlow.

4) What was the historic core of Ledbury like c. 1600?

A study of the burgage layout in association with drawing together the evidence for buildings standing at the time has been the means of producing a description of the centre of Ledbury in this earlier period.

5) Do the buildings of Ledbury represent the work of local builders working to a local vernacular tradition?

The means of answering this question has followed on from gathering details of the decorative and other features.

## **2.10 Project Outline**

The investigation has been limited to a study of buildings in the principal streets of Ledbury; namely, The Southend; High Street; The Homend; Bye Street; New Street; Church Street and Church Lane. In addition, some notice has been taken of the buildings along Worcester Road.

Since the project has involved the initial consideration of well over a hundred buildings it has only been possible to view a small percentage of the interiors.

## **2.20 Published Sources**

No in-depth studies have been published dealing with the secular buildings of Ledbury although a few of the timber-framed houses appear regularly in print including the Market House; the Feathers Hotel; The Talbot and Ledbury Park, frequently with inaccurate captions and dates.

However, for the purposes of this project it is very fortunate that a survey of the historic monuments in Herefordshire was carried out in the 1930s and the results published in three volumes between 1931 and 1934. [RCHM 1931-34]. Ledbury is included in volume II, which covers the eastern part of the county; it seems to have had a considerable amount of attention given, by three inspectors, to recording the buildings. The detailed results of their work can be found in the many sheets of notes and drawings made by them over twelve months and now lodged at the N.M.R. Swindon. [RCHM notes 1930]. Because they contain information about the interiors of buildings that may no longer be accessible or in a number of cases where buildings have been destroyed or lost, the present report makes extensive use of these records.

Pevsner, in his Buildings of England series, devotes about six pages to Ledbury although more than half of this deals with the church.[Pevsner, N. 1963. pp214-21].

Two indispensable books concerning Ledbury history and its buildings are by Joe Hillaby; the first, originally published in 1982 as the *Book of Ledbury* has been revised and retitled as *Ledbury, A Medieval Borough* [Hillaby, J. 1997]. The second is his detailed study of St. Katherine's Hospital, which is an important foundation that occupies a central site and role in the history of the town. [Hillaby, J. 2003].

A valuable pamphlet that packs a lot of information into just 24 pages and focusses on the architecture of Ledbury, is entitled *Ledbury Walkabout*. It is particularly useful for its notes by Stanley Jones on The Old Grammar School in Church Lane. [Wallis, J.D. & Wood, G.C.(n/d)]

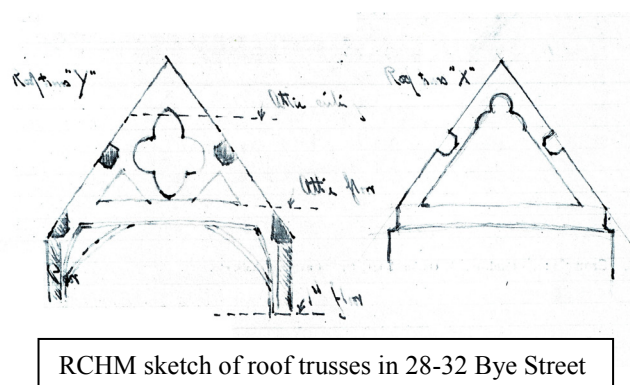
A limited amount of information on individual buildings has also been published in the Transactions of the Woolhope Club. [TWNFC]

### **3.00 The Lost Houses**

The RCHM inventory of the 1930s identified, within the central area of Ledbury (i.e. the area covered by the present report), a total of 88 buildings or monuments that were considered to predate 1714 and were therefore, according to their brief, candidates for recording. Over the last 75 years there have been inevitable losses but, with one exception, these have been relatively minor buildings. About 13 monuments (RCHM Nos. 37, 42, 53, 62, 63, 64, 72, 73, 74, 75 76, 77 & 79) which is some 15% of the total, have been demolished, with over half the losses taking place in Bye Street.

Elsewhere there has been a degree of attrition particularly with regard to the more vulnerable back-land structures where alterations and selective demolition have taken their toll. More recently the fire at the Seven Stars public house in The Homend caused inevitable internal losses although the building has been skilfully restored.

The most serious loss has been monument No. 74, the so-called *Bishop's Palace*, which had been divided into three tenements as 28-32 Bye Street. This was demolished shortly after 1945. It contained the remains of what appears to have been a 15<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed open-hall house with two trusses, both with cusped decoration and elements of what would have been the '5-



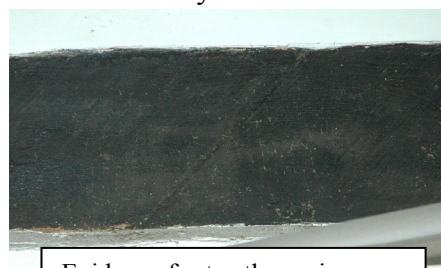
light hall window with mullions and ogee heads and foliated piercing above'. [RCHM 1932. pl. 22] The handwritten notes are not sufficiently detailed to make a secure reading of the layout of this building but it was obviously a significant house, especially in view of the site, apparently within the St Katherine's Hospital enclosure. The possibility that it may have served as accommodation for the visiting bishop following the abandonment of the formal palace after 1356 could just possibly account for its name although the suggestion that this was because 'a small fragment of the [earlier] structure may yet be seen in the wall of a cottage in Bye Street' [quoted in Hillaby 1970.p.26] is hardly credible especially since other hall-house components commensurate with a 15<sup>th</sup> century date, including cusped roof trusses, survived within the building. [RCHM notes. 1930].



#### **4.00 The Early Buildings – An Overview**

Although the brief for this project did not include investigation of the buildings that predate the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, it is relevant to summarise the surviving domestic structures from this earlier period if only to understand the different styles and techniques used in order to contrast them with those employed in Ledbury's later building phases.

Just six buildings fall into this category. Those that were available for close study all exhibit some feature that indicates that they belong to the 15<sup>th</sup> century rather than the late 16<sup>th</sup>/early 17<sup>th</sup> century. One of the most useful diagnostic clues lies with the method of timber conversion which, in the 15<sup>th</sup> century in Herefordshire, was by trestle-sawing rather than pit-sawing; the former left characteristic saw marks at an angle of 45 degrees in contrast to those made by pit sawing which are within 10 degrees of a right angle (ie. near vertical across the timber).



Evidence for trestle sawing on a timber in Abbot's Lodge.

The evidence of trestle sawing can alert one to the possible existence of an early building and in Ledbury this has been used where minor backland structures have been seen, as these tend not to have decorative features that can provide dating information.

#### **4.01 The Master's House** (next to St Katherine's Chapel). RCHM 2 HSM 16623 & 19873 NGR SO 7104 3765.

This is a late medieval, timber-framed open-hall house with cross wings at each end. Tree-ring dating has shown that it is built from timber that was felled in 1487 and so it would have been erected either in the same year or the following one. [Report forthcoming by Nottingham Tree-Ring Dating Laboratory]. It is a late example of a medieval hall house because in Herefordshire after about 1500 the preference was to build ceiled halls, with chimneystacks rather than an open hearth. [James, D. 2005. p.90] The hall range contains a spere truss, with cusping, at the lower end; a principal truss, with arch bracing to the collar, over the middle of the hall; and a further decorated truss at the upper end. There were also projecting oriels on both sides of the upper end of the hall and at the cross passage – the latter possibly forming porches. Both cross wings are of three bays. The hall roof has two tiers of curved wind braces. [Morriss, R. K. 2002].



The Master's House – north elevation

The primary structure is now virtually enclosed within 18<sup>th</sup> century and later extensions but the majority of the roof structure survives intact. [Hillaby, J. 2003. pp.107-114]

#### **4.02 Abbot's Lodge**, Church Lane. RCHM 7. NGR SO 7121 3771

Within this house, now obscured by many later changes, is a timber-framed medieval open hall house of similar form, though slightly smaller dimensions in plan and height, to The Master's House (q.v.) but probably of similar late 15<sup>th</sup> century date.

The hall contains a spere truss, with cusping, and a roof formerly with long, curved windbraces.

The principal arch-braced truss over the hall has been replaced by a later tie-beam truss. The three-bay service wing survives, later extended by another three bays, but the upper or solar cross wing has been removed, probably following the first phase of construction of the adjacent Church House (q.v.).

Abbot's Lodge was investigated by the BBC *House Detectives* programme in 1997 and the results, which illustrated a failure to understand the primary structure, were published in the companion book. [Austin, D., Miller, J. & Dowdy, M. 1997]. A more satisfactory, though brief, investigation was carried out by English Heritage (RCHM) in 1998 although this also failed fully to understand the primary structure.

The building is significant in respect of the present study because Church House was built in front, indeed, was a development of, the now lost upper, solar crosswing of Abbot's Lodge, a building which may then have been downgraded to a lower status function until, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century it was remodelled and rose once more in status. The two became separate units of accommodation, probably during the 17<sup>th</sup> century.



Abbot's Lodge – hall range – north elevation

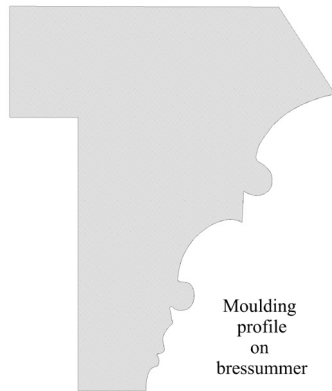
#### **4.03 The Old Grammar School**, Church Lane. RCHM 67. HSM 315. SO7117 3773.

This five-bay, timber framed, two-storey range, laid out on an approximate east-west orientation, is probably of late 15<sup>th</sup> century date. The figures of 1480 –1520 have been suggested. [Wallis, J.D. & Wood, G.C. p.5] It has a deep jetty along the south side. The building, which was restored in 1977/8 near to its original form, clearly had some public function rather than being purely domestic. It has been suggested that it may have been built as a guild hall and only later used as a grammar school [ Wallis, J.D. & Wood, G.C.]



The Old Grammar School looking N.W.

An unusual feature is the smoke bay at the west end, which may have had a service function; that and the position of the offset cross passage tends to support the proposition that the west end bay was the 'low' end of the building and that the east end bay, with its separate entrance, was the high end. This is in contrast to the published view. [v. Wallis, J.D. & Wood, G.C. pp 20-23 (by S.R. Jones) for further details.]

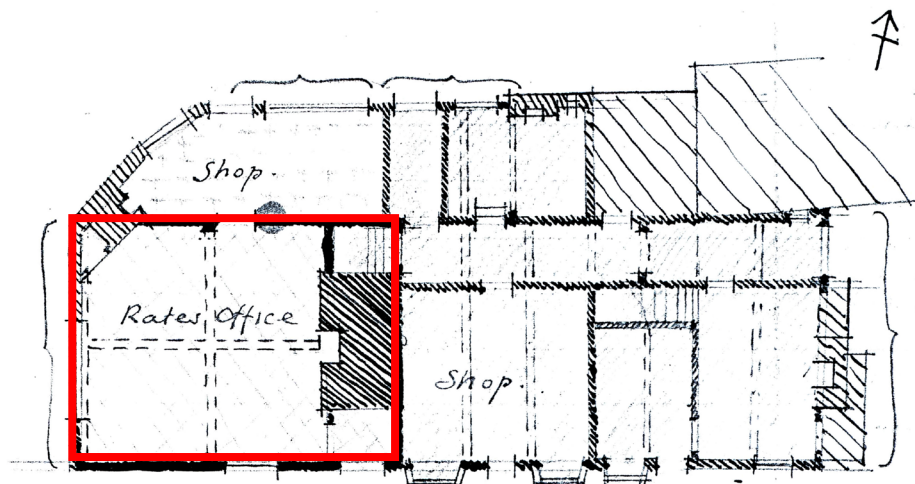


The Old Grammar School  
Church Lane, Ledbury.

The significant decorative feature along the jettied south front is the moulded bressummer [also illustrated in Small, T. & Woodbridge, C. 1930 – pl. 20] which has a similar profile to that on the building at the extreme west end of Church Lane (Council Offices – see below).

#### **4.04 Council Offices, 1 Church Lane.** RCHM 65. NGR SO 7111 3773

The two-storey timber-framed range now occupied by the Town Council is of two major phases. The two bays at the west end are the earliest, probably built in about 1500 whilst the east range was added about a century later. Both ranges are jettied along the south elevation and the west range jettied along the west end, now underbuilt in brick. The west range has a bressummer profile that is similar to that on the Old Grammar School, which suggests that they are of similar date although the Grammar School may be the earlier of the two. The moulding is similar to one dated to 1460-77 but since this is an example from a Sussex dais beam it should be used with caution. [Hall, L.2005. p.155] The west and south elevations have close studding. The windows are not original although the plain bracket under the sill on the south side is.



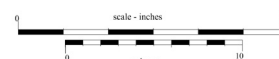
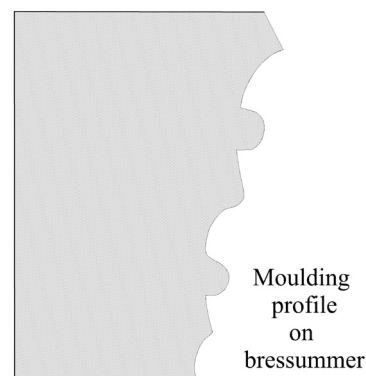
Sketch plan by the RCHM (1930) of No. 1 Church Lane, Ledbury.  
The early part of the building is outlined in red.

Along the north side of the range is a narrow two-storey extension but there is evidence to suggest that this was originally only a single storey lean-to and that it



enclosed the arcaded ground floor wall along the north side of the two end bays. It was later raised to two storeys and, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when the west end jetty was underbuilt the west end of the north side extension was cut back at an angle to ease the movement of traffic from the market place into Back Lane (the present Church Street).

When the eastern part of the range was added in about 1600, a chimneystack was inserted to form back-to-back fireplaces in both the new and old build. It is possible that there was no chimneystack in the west range as built. Other changes at this time include the panelling of the ground floor room and the decoration of one of the upper chambers with biblical texts. [Sanders, B.G. 1991] See also below (p. 45) where the later part of the building is dealt with in more detail.



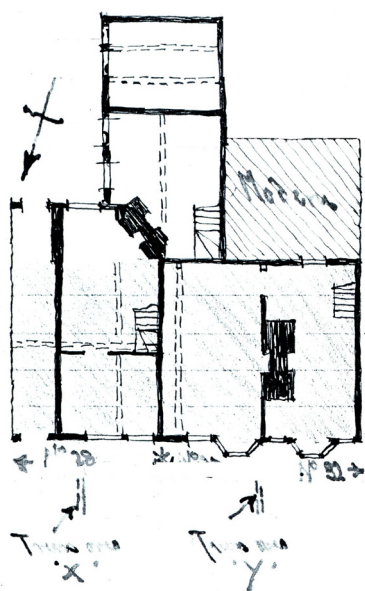
Council Offices  
Church Lane, Ledbury.

#### **4.05    28-32 Bye Street, 'Bishop's Palace', RCHM 74, NGR SO 7100 3769**

This building was demolished post-1945. From the photograph and ground plan made in the 1930s [RCHM notes. 1930] this appears to have been an axial hall house, laid out on an east west orientation parallel to Bye Street. The foliated-



28-32 Bye Street, Ledbury. C. 1930.  
North elevation.



RCHM sketch plan of  
28-32 Bye Street, Ledbury.

window  
in the  
north  
face was  
almost  
certainly the

hall window illuminating the upper end and it is likely to have extended below the mid rail on the site of what is, in the photograph, a doorway. It seems possible that the upper end was to the west and that the fragment of foliated truss at position "y" was over the upper chamber of the solar end. (See page 8 for sketch of trusses.) Whether the truss at "x" was over the middle of the hall or the remains of a spere truss is not clear although in view of the passageway shown on the plan through the east end of the building a spere truss is a distinct possibility.

From the RCHM plan the width of the hall was about 18ft (5.5m). Not shown on the plan is the adjacent building to the east (No. 26) which may have contained the remains of the service provision. A photograph, which includes No. 26, is on the hand written notes and shown above. [RCHM notes. 1930] v. also [Ward, T. 2005. p.24] for an image of the street scene.



**4.06 16 Bye Street** Not noted by RCHM. NGR SO 7101 3769

This is a small range set parallel to the road with a cross-wing at the east end. It is reported to have a roof of early date. [Wallis, J.D. & Wood, G.C. pp.14-15]. The building has been refaced in brick and a Victorian or later shop front has been fitted. The right hand side of the building can be seen on the left hand side of the photograph above of 28-32 Bye Street.



16 Bye Street. North elevation.

**4.07 233 & 235 The Homend.** RCHM 40. NGR SO 7095 3817

In the north gable end wall of this pair of tenements is a pair of steeply pitched cruck blades that are probably of 15<sup>th</sup> century date. It is suggested that they are either re-used material in a later building or relate to a lost building that stood to the north.

[RCHM notes. 1930] and [TWNFC XXXVIII, 1966. p.265-6].



233 & 235 The Homend

**5.00 The Late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> Century Buildings**

It is clear that there is a substantial survival of timber-framed buildings in Ledbury and that those that are visible (i.e. not hidden behind later facades) are of a single period that perhaps lasted little more than a generation. Many of them are major constructions both in terms of scale or display, or both, signifying a substantial investment within that period. They are buildings that were clearly carried out by men with considerable confidence in the economic future of Ledbury as they are not timid adaptations of the earlier buildings that occupied the burgage plots but examples of wholesale demolition and rebuilding.

Joe Hillaby, echoing the phrase of W.G. Hoskins refers to this period as The Great Rebuilding, 1570-1620 [Hillaby, J. 1997 Ch. 12 p93] and there is little reason to doubt that this took place in Ledbury although not all of Herefordshire experienced a similar episode. Weobley and Pembridge both underwent their 'Great Rebuilding' in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and thereafter little other than refronting and minor works. [James, D. 2002; James, D. 2004; James, D. 2007].

The buildings dealt with in the following section are those that show reasonable evidence for a late 16<sup>th</sup>/ early 17<sup>th</sup> century date. They are listed in the same order as the RCHM monuments as these are also conveniently arranged in street and number order.

Note: The term 'jowelled consoles' is used in this report to describe a form of console or bracket that has been shaped from the jowelled (or flared) top of the post that supports it rather than being made separately and tenoned and pegged into place.

**5.01    The Market House RCHM 3.**  
HSM 3219 NGR SO 7110 3771

This is a key central structure in the layout of Ledbury and an important visual symbol of the town but its year of construction has always been something of a puzzle to historians and, as a consequence, a wide range of dates has found its way into print.



The Market House. South-west elevation.

The statutory List Entry (of 1953) states that the Market House was begun c.1617 and finished after 1653. Pevsner has similar dates of 1617 and completed after 1655. The Herefordshire SMR has a date of c.1633 (which is actually when the very different Leominster Market House by John Abel was built) and this is, presumably, taken from the RCHM survey of 1930 [RCHM 1932 pp106-7]. It is interesting to see that the inspector's notes do not give this information but that it has been added, in pencil, in a different hand at the top of the card [RCHM notes. 1930]. Other sources have 1645 (the Frith Collection) and 1653 [Wallis, J.D. & Wood, G.C.] the latter, and the RCHM, attributing it to John Abel although there is no evidence for this and indeed the style of the building, and other factors, must surely rule out his involvement.

It is likely that Hillaby, using documentary evidence, is near the truth when he states that '... the Market Hall was begun in 1617 when John Phillips, clothier, bought a *'certain house in the High Street'* from Thomas Davis, alias Weaver, for £40. This was *'not the sole and proper money of him, the said John Phillips, but had been raised by the charitable contributions as well as of himself as of divers other well disposed persons, in trust to be used and employed for the erecting of a market-house and market-place for the use of the town of Ledbury forever'*. [Hillaby, J. 1997 p.101 quoting from the Charity Commissioners' Reports for Herefordshire (1819-37)] The market house was built but not completed when John Phillips died in 1655 so John Skyppe II and the other trustees decided in 1668 to redirect existing charity income towards its completion which was *'to make and build several rooms, lofts or corn chambers, over the market house; and also two staircases to go up into the same, and one or two shops underneath the lower staircase, with a room or rooms boarded over.'* [Hillaby, J. 1997. p.101].

This therefore seems reasonably clear. There were two phases to the construction of the building; it was begun in or after 1617 but only completed, largely in its present form, on or after 1668. The principal difficulty with this is that for a little over half a century it stood in an unfinished state so it is highly relevant to ask what was meant by 'unfinished'.

Recently (2006) the Market House underwent re-roofing and repairs to the bases of some of the columns and the attendant scaffolding allowed a close inspection to be made of the frame, in particular the ground-floor ceiling. This has provided important clues concerning the primary and secondary construction phases of the building.

### **Description**

Laid out on a north-south alignment, Ledbury Market House is timber-framed, with a six-bay open arcade on the ground floor and a single large chamber, also of six bays, on the 1<sup>st</sup>-floor. This chamber is jettied by about 2½ft (0.75m) on all sides, which

means that its north and south end bays are slightly longer than the rest. Above this there was formerly a substantial attic chamber although the joists and floorboards, though not the lateral beams, have been removed, exposing the roof structure.

The upper part of the building, which is 55ft 4in (16.85m) long and 27ft 4in (8.33m) wide, is carried on 16 tapering oak pillars braced at the tops by a total of 72 curved brackets. Dragon beams support the corners of the upper chamber. The pillars have ovolo mouldings on the corners and panelled sides and the bases are shaped in the form of plinths.

The upper chamber has small-scale chevron or herring-bone decorative bracing on the west and south elevations and small square framing on the back (east) face. The north end wall, which is the site of the former external staircase, has two long tension braces and a blocked doorway opening.

The present 19<sup>th</sup> century staircase beneath the arcade, cuts through a significant load-bearing beam; there is no evidence to show that there was ever a primary staircase in this position or sited elsewhere beneath the structure.

There are three twelve-light, mullioned and transomed windows in the west elevation and three of similar design (the southern-most one now blocked) in the east elevation. In the south elevation the two windows are also mullioned and transomed, with twelve lights, but they are set with sills at a higher level than those in the side walls. The north wall has a similar, single window that is set off-centre, and with a higher sill than those on the south end, due to the former external staircase that was, from evidence in the north end frame, fitted with a roof and was possibly also enclosed.

Both end gables have five-light mullioned windows presumably originally to illuminate the former attic.

There are seven tie-beam roof trusses, four of which have bracing in the form of triangular brackets beneath the high collars and there are short, raking struts from low down on the principal rafters to the tie beams. The central truss was never fitted with triangular brackets below the collar although it does have raking struts. The general impression is of a roof designed to form a clear storage area through the middle of the attic with enough headroom (c.6ft (1.83m)) to make it easy to use. The floor, although the joists and floorboards are missing, was also of substantial construction, almost identical to the layout and dimensions to be found at first floor level.

The roof has a double tier of threaded and chamfered purlins and there are straight windbraces, with modest chamfers, beneath the upper tier. There is no ridge purlin and the pairs of common rafters are linked at the tops with pegged bridled joints.

There are however, significant anomalies in the roof structure. The central truss which, as mentioned above, was never fitted with brackets under the collar, also has three redundant mortices in the upper (top) surface of the tie beam and some evidence of weathering suggesting that it may once have been on an outer face of the building. Possibly linked with this is the fact that the principal rafters in the south end truss have pegging for redundant mortices in the soffit, at and beneath collar level, that formerly housed a collar with brackets below. It is very possible that this is the former

central truss repositioned during what must have been an extensive alteration to the roof such as that which took place during phase II of the construction. (see below).

## The Construction Sequence.

The two major phases of construction are indicated by details within the framework.

### Phase I – c.1617

It is proposed here that this primary phase saw the construction of a single storey market building, probably standing, not on 16 pillars as at present, but 18, under a pitched roof with gabled ends. The roof overhung along the sides but not the ends of the building, which was thus approximately 50ft (15.25m) long although the purlins would have projected at each end, carrying the roof covering a little further and possibly finished with decorated barge boards.

The phase I roof trusses used the principal rafters and other components that survive in the present roof but not the present tie-beams as the existing ground floor ceiling beams formed the tie-beams for this earlier roof.

The evidence for this can be found almost completely hidden at the ends of the beams where there are redundant peg holes and mortices that formerly housed the ends of the principal rafters. In this phase the roof space would have been used for storage, with loading doors at one or both ends, and possibly an external staircase or ladder access.

The general form of the building would have been similar to the smaller and earlier example in Pembridge, dated to 1502-38 [Vernacular Architecture 34 (2003) p.103] which originally had gabled ends and a steeper pitch to the roof over the storage loft. Bromyard also had a single-storey market house although this was demolished in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This single storey covered market would have been a valuable feature in 17<sup>th</sup> century Ledbury and whether it had been designed to receive an upper chamber, that was then not added until half a century later, is not known.

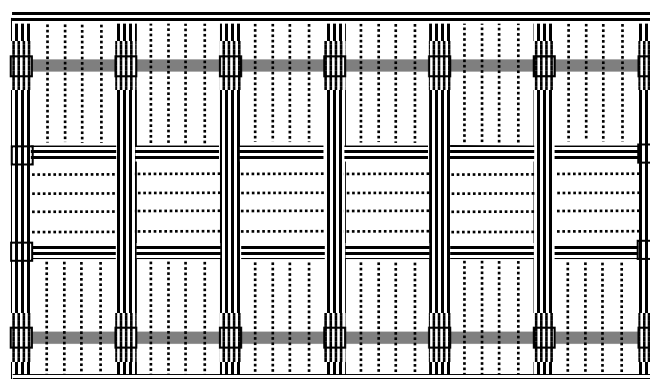


Diagram showing the **Phase-1** layout of beams and joists in the g/f ceiling of the Market House, Ledbury.

### Phase II c.1668

In this phase the upper chamber was added. It would have involved removal of the roof structure but leaving all the tie beams in place except those at the north and south ends; these would have been taken off and used in the new roof. This is because it had been decided to jetty the ends of the building, which called for a revised structure, including the insertion of four dragon beams. These were installed with the

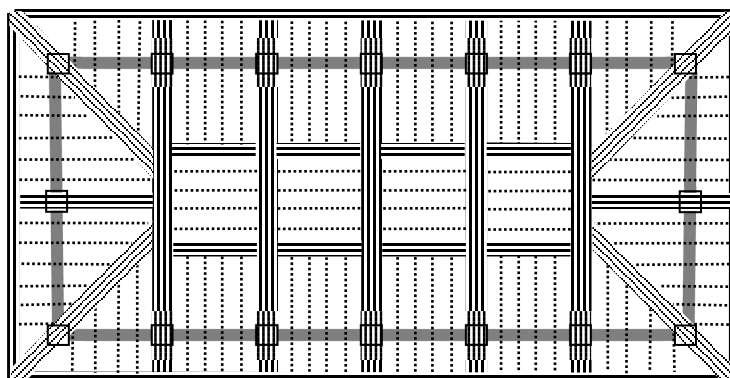


Diagram showing the **Phase-2** layout of beams and joists in the g/f ceiling of the Market House, Ledbury.

ends mortised into the transverse beams; to clear the way for this it was necessary to remove the pairs of axial beams at each end and plug the mortices. This meant removing the related columns and replacing them with a single column central to each end, supporting a new, central axial jetty beam. The dragon beams are, as noted in 1939 [TWNFC 1939 p.xxv] not oak but elm, confirmation, if it were needed, that the revised structure is not part of the primary phase. (The use of elm in buildings of the later 17<sup>th</sup> century is also quite common).

These modifications to the end bays also made it necessary to rearrange the floor joists and there are plugged mortices in the transverse beams that indicate their former positions.



Ledbury Market House.

The ground-floor ceiling showing inserted dragon beams and plugged beam and joist mortices.

The end jetty needed further support, which accounts for the additional brackets on the south and north faces of the corner posts, one of which, on the south-east corner post, overlays an incised flower – a feature of the primary phase. (There was formerly a similar, partially obscured motif on the south-west post but the present one is a 20<sup>th</sup> century replacement and the decoration was not copied.)

A further clue regarding the primary structure is that the bressumer on both sides of the building in the two central bays is made using a section of what is probably the phase I wall plate, which has been rotated so that the common rafter slots are hidden. Presumably it was not possible to reuse the entire length of the wall plate in this way because of the increase in the length of the building.



There are some features of the upper chamber that are inconsistent with the careful layout and quality of workmanship that went into the primary structure.

- a) There are re-used timbers in the rear of the frame.
- b) The chevron decoration on the west side has a number of inconsistencies.
- c) There is a lack of symmetry in the principal (west) elevation which suggests that in order to accomplish phase II it was necessary to make a number of compromises.

The roof structure was rebuilt using new tie beams in conjunction with the primary principal rafters, braces, struts, windbraces and most of the purlins since the end ones needed to be longer for the jettied end bays.

This second phase fits the description of 1668 (quoted above). The “lower” staircase would have been the one on the north end of the building, (for which there is evidence in the frame) with a shop underneath it. The second staircase would have been (probably) internal, leading up to the loft.

### **Later Alterations**

As mentioned above, the external staircase was removed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the present staircase inserted. Possibly at the same time the floorboards were replaced and this involved also replacing the joists in the central panels of the floor, and at the same time changing their alignment. The plugged mortices for the earlier joisting are clearly visible. It is not known when the loft flooring and joists were removed but this was also possibly in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Apart from this the work has been a matter of repairs both to the oak columns and the framing including the south end tie beam. The windows have also undergone extensive repairs and replacements.

### **5.02 Ledbury Park, The Southend.**

RCHM 4. HSM 3779 & 19901. NGR SO 7114 3756

This large complex of buildings dominates the centre of Ledbury and has been described by Pevsner as “*the grandest black and white house in the county and the only one to vie with the houses of Shrewsbury*”. [Pevsner, N. 1963. p.219]

The earliest part of this building, and of principal concern for this report, is the west range laid out on a north-south alignment on the corner of The Southend and Worcester Roads.

A number of factors, including documentary evidence, decoration and an inscription on interior panelling, indicate that the house was built in about 1590 by Edward Skyner.



Ledbury Park showing the principal west elevation..

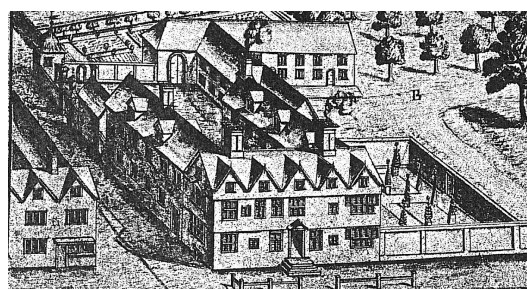


Ledbury Park. Inscription on panelling.

In his paper on the subject J.W.King [King, J.W. 1997, p.104] refers to Robinson for a construction date for Ledbury Park. This is from the line “*The house was built, as a tablet testifies, in 1595,.....*” [Robinson, C. J. 1872. p.167]. It may be that Robinson is quoting, inaccurately, the date on the panelling, or that there really was a tablet with 1595. However, on the assumption that the panelling belongs to the house it is unlikely that it would predate the building itself. Many of the later changes to the building were made after 1688 when the house came into the hands of the Biddulph family. [King, J.W. 1997, p.106]

The west range is heavily timber-framed with close studding throughout. As built it was two storeys high with five bays; from north to south, three large bays, one minor narrow bay then a larger bay on the southern end. Within the narrow bay is the principal chimneystack.

An early modification to the range was the addition of five attic gables, which, like the five attic gables on The Feathers Hotel, do not align with the bay divisions. They do, however, create a more symmetrical façade and one that was in place by 1733 as shown in an illustration of that date. [RCHM notes. 1930].



Ledbury Park viewed from the west in 1733

This drawing does indicate that there have been a number of modifications to the fenestration and from a study of the RCHM notes and the present condition of the frame it is clear that there is a great deal of new (probably later 19<sup>th</sup> century) timber both in and on the structure. It is also evident that many of the posts at both ground and first floor level had attached pillars that terminated at the bottom in arrow shaped motifs with, at the tops of the posts, shallow consoles carved out of the solid (jowelled consoles). This latter is a feature of Ledbury buildings. On Ledbury Park one of these survives at the north end of the building although the attached pillar has been removed.

The posts, consoles and other features on the west façade are later embellishments that are not dissimilar to the originals and they are still broadly faithful to the period, but they are bolder in execution and more robust in their effect. The later consoles project further than the originals and the posts stand forward of the surface.

These bold mouldings and consoles on the present façade were probably added in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and were possibly the work of the architects R.Coad and J.M. Maclaren who carried out the addition to the east end of the north wing and other works. (The design was illustrated in *The British Architect* in the Oct 8<sup>th</sup> issue of 1886).



Ledbury Park.  
Primary console on the north end of the west range.

It is also recorded that H. H. Seward carried out improvements to the building for J. Biddulph in 1820 but the scope of that work is not stated. [TWNFC 1956 XXXV p.179].



Ledbury Park  
Late 19<sup>th</sup> century additions.

A notable and characteristic Ledbury feature can also be seen alongside the two wide windows at ground and first floor levels on the bay at the south end. Here, on each side of the main windows there are small, two-light blocked windows with ovolo moulded surrounds and mullions.

On the west range the first and attic storeys project slightly and there are bressummers with double ovolo mouldings. The tie beams on the attic gables also project slightly and have single ovolo mouldings. The north end of the range is also jettied at first floor level. These are mouldings that belong comfortably to the probable date of construction (1590) and they are also used on a number of the ceiling beams inside the building. The finest ceiling beam mouldings are in the ground-floor north end panelled room; these have a double ogee and a central roll moulding and run-out stops.



Ledbury Park.  
One of a pair of small side windows on the west front.

### **5.03 Upper Hall** RCHM 5, HSM 15269, NGR SO 7134 3785

Upper Hall is the site of the *Over Hall* where the portionist attached to the parish church lived and it is likely that this former building belonged to an earlier phase than the late 16<sup>th</sup>/early 17<sup>th</sup> century. What occupies the site now is a very large brick house with a multitude of separate building phases, however, the earliest part of the building is considered to date from c. 1670 with the majority of the structure belonging to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. [RCHM notes. 1930]. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century it housed the grammar school and has recently been sub-divided into flats.

There is evidence for early stonework in the basement and other features that probably relate to the former building before it was remodelled first by George Skyppe (1633-90) who probably added the 17<sup>th</sup> century wing, then John Skyppe (1679-1764) who added the north wing. It was his son, also John, who rebuilt the central block in 1766. A drawing room wing was added in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. [Garnett, P.T. 1991] & [Hillaby, J. 1997. pp79-80]



**5.04    Lower Hall** RCHM 6, HSM 19900.  
NGR SO 7126 3778

This is the site of *Nether Hall*, the house of another portionist attached to the church. What stands today is all of 18<sup>th</sup> century brick although reset carved fragments, possibly of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, in one, formerly external wall were noted in the 1930s.  
[RCHM notes. 1930]



Lower Hall viewed from the churchyard.

**5.05    1 High Street** RCHM 8,  
NGR SO 7111 3772

This 16<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed building occupies the corner site at the meeting of High Street with Church Lane. It is of two storeys consisting of a short, close-studded range parallel to High Street and a formerly deeply jettied cross wing at the north end extending back along Church Lane. There is a 17<sup>th</sup> century range, which has been raised in height, abutting the east end of the cross wing.



1 High Street. West elevation.

The building occupies a burgage plot that appears to be slightly wider than those in the rest of the east side of High Street. According to the RCHM there are ceiling beams with hollow chamfers and stepped stops



1 High Street. Framing along the north side.

The cross wing has a small, blocked upper window on the north side. In the west gable is a large window that is a later, possibly 18<sup>th</sup> century, insertion made by cutting the tie beam. The present shop front, which embraces the entire ground floor west façade, is probably of early 20<sup>th</sup> century date. It replaced a lower, bow-fronted design, possibly of 18<sup>th</sup> century date.



Timber-framed building behind No. 2 High Street.

Also, close to this building, but to the rear of No 2 High Street (listed under the same RCHM number) is a late 16<sup>th</sup> /early 17<sup>th</sup> century timber framed building with lattice work framing in the gable.

**5.06 3 High Street.** RCHM 9. NGR SO 7111 3770

Although No. 3 High Street, with its 18<sup>th</sup> century brick front, like others in the row, probably contains timber framing, it is well hidden. However, to the rear there is a two storey timber framed building, of possible 16<sup>th</sup> century date, laid out on an east west alignment that appears to have an underbuilt jetty along the south side.

At first floor level in the east end of the building is a narrow blocked doorway with a doorhead that either led onto an external staircase or shows that the range continued in an easterly direction.



Outbuilding behind  
No. 3 High Street.

**5.07 8 High Street** RCHM 13 NGR SO 7112 3767

The brick front of this building with its stone quoins and deep moulded cornice belongs to the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century but it is a re-facing of what is probably an early 17<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed structure. [RCHM notes 1930].

This refacing, in effect underbuilds both first and second floor jetties, increasing the available floor space, especially at street level. The earlier building is indicated by the two gables visible above the parapet. Also, as Hillaby noted, it is possible to see, intruding into the upper part of the first floor windows, the unaltered floor level of the earlier house. [Hillaby 1997. p.94].

The RCHM noted two smaller timber-framed buildings, both “probably of early 17<sup>th</sup> century date”. [RCHM notes 1930].



8 High Street. West elevation.

**5.08 9 High Street** RCHM 14. HSM 15955 NGR SO7112 3766

When the RCHM visited the building in 1930 the now exposed timber framing on the front was hidden behind stucco, probably applied when the windows were inserted, possibly in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

This is either a late 16<sup>th</sup> century, or more likely an early 17<sup>th</sup> century, building of two bays and three storeys with two attic gables on the west front. The top storey is jettied and has an ovolo moulded bressumer in two sections with run-out stops. It is almost certain that the first floor was originally also jettied but it is now underbuilt with a modern shop front



9 High Street. West elevation.





9 High Street. West elevation – 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors.

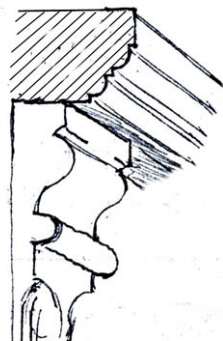
There is close studding on the front and in the gables and diagonal bracing in the corners.

The later sash windows are offset from the original window openings and cut into, and drop below, the primary sill levels.

The buildings on each side now partially enclose the corner posts particularly on the upper storey. The central post in the top storey has a modern pendant slightly below bressummer level but whether this is a copy of the original is not known.



9 High Street. West elevation - detail.



9 High Street.  
Detail of  
bressummer  
and console on  
building to rear.

To the rear of the building, not viewed for this survey but recorded by the RCHM, there was a small timber-framed building, jettied at first and second floor levels, the lower bressummer having a double ovolo moulding and posts with an attached pillar with a shallow console above, apparently cut from the solid. On the third storey there was an original window of four lights with moulded mullions and frame.

The RCHM also reported the existence of “*late 16<sup>th</sup> century panelling like that in Lord Biddulph’s house*” (i.e. Ledbury Park) [RCHM notes. 1930]

### **5.09    10 High Street** RCHM 15    NGR SO 7112 3765

Although the front of the building is plastered, and has large sash windows, this is a three storey timber-framed building laid out on a north-south orientation. The second floor is jettied and it is almost certain that the first floor was jettied before the installation of later shop frontage. There is evidence to suggest that it may also have been jettied on the rear of the building.

RCHM puts the date at early 17<sup>th</sup> century and noted that “*The landing at the top of the staircase has some wall lining of late 16<sup>th</sup> ce. Panelling similar to that in Lord Buddulph’s house and in No. 9 and a moulded cornice (presumably all reset) and a panelled door matching the panelling.*” [RCHM notes. 1930].



10 High Street. West elevation.

### **5.10    14 High Street** RCHM 17    NGR SO 7114 3762

Although there are some aspects of the main part of this building that suggest it may be early, there is one building to the rear that is early 17<sup>th</sup> century. It is a two-storey two-bay timber-framed range with heavy, stop-chamfered ceiling beams.



14 High Street.  
Building in rear garden.

### **5.11    16 High Street**    Not noted by RCHM    NGR SO 7113 3761

The evidence for the earlier configuration of this building come from the painting of 1820 (see below) which shows it to have been jettied at first and attic floor levels in line with its neighbours, Nos. 17, 18 and 19. This indicates that the present front with its fluted pilasters and Ionic capitals probably belongs to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and not, as suggested by RCHM, the mid-to-late 18<sup>th</sup> century. [RCHM notes 1930 – under RCHM No. 18]



16 High Street. Detail.



16 High Street. West elevation.



Whether any of the earlier building survives is perhaps less relevant for this study – the fact that there is evidence that this was, very probably, one of a row that belonged to the later-16<sup>th</sup> early 17<sup>th</sup> century is the important information.



A view of the High Street in 1820 showing numbers 16 to 20. [from Hillaby, J. 1997 – front cover]

**5.12 17 High Street** RCHM 18 HSM 16223 NGR SO 7113 3761

This three storey, timber framed building, which is of late 16<sup>th</sup> century date, has close studding on the front and a jettied top floor. It is almost certain that the first floor was also jettied although it is now underbuilt with a modern shop front. An alleyway passes through the south side of the building but this is probably a later alteration as the ovolo-moulded ceiling beams continue through into the present shop, which suggests that the ground floor was originally arranged as a single room. The building appears to have moved sideways away from the building on the north and ‘into’ the building on the south. The



17 High Street. West elevation.



southern corner post plus, in the case of the top storey one of the narrow vertical panels, have been lost.

Repairs and alterations have been made to the front.

The later, large, projecting first floor window is the same width as the original but has a much lower sill. And as indicated by the moulded window jambs the primary window did not project.



17 High Street. Peg hole and ovolo moulding indicate the position of the original window sill

On each side of the first floor window are small, additional windows, which are a feature of Ledbury buildings.

The close studding at this level has a mid-rail whereas the top storey has, in effect, two horizontal rails

The top storey jetty bressumer is decorated with a double ovolo moulding and under the jetty are four heavy

brackets that are later reinforcing additions.

The top storey possibly had a single central window (as originally on the first floor) but the two now fitted do match the 1820 image (p.25). Whether there were also small side windows, again as on the floor below, is hard to determine with certainty. The RCHM suggested that the house had “*been heightened in comparatively modern times*” [RCHM 1930 notes] but this is possibly a misreading of the evidence. That the building sported a pair of gables is almost certain and their removal may account for the later timbers below the eaves.



17 High Street. Side window with later brackets under the jetty.

There is a considerable number of new timbers below the eaves but these are replacements for lost material rather than a new construct. What the RCHM inspector J.W.Bloe did suggest is that the range originally “*evidently extended northwards but the next house, No. 16 was rebuilt in mid-to-late 18<sup>th</sup> century*”



17 High Street. Top storey.

times” [RCHM 1930 notes].

From the evidence of the 1820 image (v. p.25) this is almost certain and would have made this one of an impressive row on the High Street. The tithe map also shows No. 16 linked back to 17c in the yard and it is likely that both 16, 17 and 17c formed the King’s Arms, “*an important town inn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century*”. [Eisel, J. & Shoesmith, R. 2003]

### **5.13 17c High Street.** RCHM 18 NGR SO 7114 3761

This timber framed range stands on the east side of the yard behind Nos. 17 and 18 High Street. It is probably of late 16<sup>th</sup> century date. It consists of three bays and is two storeys high with an attic storey. The first storey appears to have been jettied along both sides of the building although it is now underbuilt. A section of exposed bressummer on the east side has a double ovolo moulding. Due to the underbuilding only part of the west side bressummer is visible but it appears to have a similar profile. A shaped bracket or console, which has been hewn from the top of the post, (i.e. it is attached) survives beneath the east side bressummer on the south side of the (later) alleyway through the south end of the building, indicating that the jetty was relatively shallow.



17c High Street. West elevation.

The beams on the ground floor and first floor are chamfered, with cut stops. From an RCHM drawing the attic roof has a double tier of trenched purlins. The truss shown has no tie beam but a high collar with vee struts above and long queen posts below forming a door frame. In addition there are raking struts from the principal rafters at lower purlin level that meet the base of the door frame. [RCHM notes 1930].



Cottage behind 17 & 18 High Street. North elevation

At the south end of the range a (later) passageway has been created at ground-floor level. Behind the south end of the range is a two-bay, two storey timber-framed cottage that is of 17<sup>th</sup> century date. It abuts the east side of the larger range and has been modified on one corner to clear the route for the later passageway.

**5.14 18 High Street** RCHM 19,  
NGR SO 7113 3760

This is a 19<sup>th</sup> century refronting or rebuilding of a timber-framed building. The 1820 image (p.25) shows this to have been a building of similar form to others in the High Street with a double gable and probably of late 16<sup>th</sup>/early 17<sup>th</sup> century date.



18 High Street. West elevation.

**5.15 19 High Street** RCHM 20 NGR SO 7113 3759

The RCHM considers this to be of early 17<sup>th</sup> century date, timber-framed and of two-storeys heightened by another storey. [RCHM notes 1930]. The refronting appears to be 18<sup>th</sup> century in date with a later shop front and one bay window.

The 1820 image (p. 25) shows this building refronted but with two gables still in place and a doorway to one side in the same position as at present. It seems highly likely that this building was originally jettied at first and second floors. As a further indicator of the primary date the ceiling beams are recorded as having ovolo mouldings.



19 High Street. West elevation.

**5.16 20 High Street** RCHM 21 NGR SO 7113 3758

This building is considered by RCHM to be fairly early 17<sup>th</sup> century [RCHM notes 1930]. The illustration of 1820 (p. 25) shows the building with a hipped roof and two, oddly low windows under the eaves. This looks very much as if it was part of a remodelling or refronting of the late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The engraving of 1733 (p. 19) illustrates this corner house showing two attic gables and a window in each. In more recent times the top storey has been raised to insert larger windows.



20 High Street. South-west elevation.



### 5.17 21 High Street RCHM 22 NGR SO 7111 3758

This is an impressive building on an important site, where New Street meets the High Street, on the north-west corner at the upper cross. In contrast to all the buildings along the east side of High Street, it occupies a single wide plot although one that is constrained in length by the burgages on the north side of New Street.

It is a single build and does not show evidence of having been occupied as two separate units.



21 High Street. South-east elevation.



21 High Street. Looking north. c.1820  
[from Hillaby, J. 1997 – front cover].

It is a substantial timber-framed building that appears to be laid out as four bays parallel with High Street with a lower wing running back along New Street. It is two storeys high with an attic storey. The first and second floors are jettied although the first floor jetty has been underbuilt and a modern shop front inserted.

The framing on the exterior is hidden behind stucco, applied when the building was remodelled in the late 18<sup>th</sup> / early 19<sup>th</sup> century and sash windows were inserted. The image of 1820 shows it much as it is today apart from the ground floor fenestration.

It is likely that before this remodelling there were four attic gables on the east façade and that these were removed when the eaves of the roof were raised slightly, at the front only, in order to insert the larger, attic storey windows.

The attics have interrupted tie beams with widely spaced queen posts. This is primary structure and clearly the attic was designed to be a practical storage space.

The main posts at first floor level have consoles and possibly other decoration, now heavily coated with stucco so that the consoles appear enlarged. Where the framing is visible inside the building the studs and rails are broad, with double pegging at the tops of the studs and ends of the rails.

Some carpenters' marks are visible inside on a cross frame; they are deeply cut with a race knife and use a double semi-circle along with Roman numerals. The semi-circles probably denote the floor level and a small, added line or marker, indicates the frame

position within the building. The first floor ceiling beams are over 12in (0.305m) wide, with broad chamfers and cut stops.

There is an alleyway through the building at the north end, which seems to be a primary feature, though now with a brick-arched entrance (part of the underbuilding) from the street with a dated keystone marked 1803.

On the line of the alleyway, at the rear of the building, is the site of the former doorway; the post on each side is missing but the doorhead, with ovolo moulding, is still in place.

It is likely that the building belongs to the late 16<sup>th</sup> century.

(Note: at the time of visiting the NMR in 2006 to view the RCHM notes there was a paper slip in the file stating that the RCHM material concerning No. 21 High street (RCHM 22) was missing).



21 High Street. Alleyway.

### **5.18 22 High Street** RCHM 23 NGR SO 7111 3759

The timber-framed building here has been remodelled, probably in the late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century by the use of stucco to hide the timber and the application of two pilasters with matching cornice at first floor level beneath the jettied attic storey. These may well hide attached pillars and the shallow consoles that are a feature the late 16<sup>th</sup> century work in Ledbury.

The central projecting window and the decorated barge boards may be a still later addition.

The building was originally jettied at first floor level but has been underbuilt.



22High Street. East elevation.



21 High Street.  
Detail of pilaster  
and cornice.



**5.19 23 High Street** RCHM 24,  
NGR SO 7111 3760

Although it is no higher than its three storey neighbour on the south side, this appears to be a timber-framed building of four storeys since the sloping site has allowed the ground floor to be inserted at a lower level. The present, modern shop front does to a certain extent disguise this as the upper part overrides the front of the first floor. Each floor is jettied although the first floor has been underbuilt.

The front timber framing is hidden by plaster but the ovolo-moulded bressummers and pendants are exposed. The gable has later, imitation framing and modern bargeboards.

At first and second floor levels there is a projecting window bay with a gabled roof and (later) bargeboards matching those on the attic.

The design of the pendants at the ends of the bressummers suggests a date in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.



23 High Street. East elevation.

**5.20 25 High Street.** The Feathers Hotel. RCHM 25. HSM 25994.

NGR SO 7110 3762



South range.

**The Feathers Hotel.**  
East elevation .

North range.

Until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the timber-framed front of this building was hidden by plaster that had been applied when it was remodelled and the sash windows inserted in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. There are two major phases, the south block being built in about 1560-70 [RCHM 1932. p.110] and the north block in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. It is stated that the north half used to be the Corn Exchange Hotel and *“its hall or entrance*



*lobby is still used as a small corn exchange”* [RCHM notes 1930, where the sketch plan and photograph show a doorway in the position of the third ground floor window from the north] [v. also RCHM 1932 pl. 149].



Feathers Hotel – decoration on posts at ground-floor level.



Feathers Hotel – decoration on posts at first-floor level.

The South Range is of three bays and four storeys, each level built with a shallow jetty. The front has close studding with a double rail set slightly above the middle of each storey. The attic storey, with its five gables, does not fit neatly with the three bays of the building and is reported to be a later addition carried out in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century [RCHM 1932 p.110]. In this respect it does perhaps follow (or lead !) the example on the nearby Ledbury Park.(q.v.)

The remarkable feature on The Feathers is the decoration on the principal posts at first and second floor level, which has survived in good condition, probably due to being covered for many years when the front was plastered and pilasters formed over the carved decoration. At the same time a deep moulded cornice was added at bressummer levels. This covering decoration was somewhat similar to that which survives on 22 High street (q.v.).

At ground-floor level, between the two later bay windows, is the “feathers” motif on one of the posts



Feathers Hotel – decoration on posts at second-floor level.

but this has been reset as the ground floor underbuilds and even projects forward of the first floor.

The North Range was clearly built to match the framing on the south range but it is only three storeys high but with loftier rooms so therefore of similar overall height. It is jettied at second floor level and was also jettied at first floor level but the jetty has been underbuilt in brick with fake framing on the façade.

The jetties have consoles that are relatively shallow as they are carved from the posts. There are six at both the second floor bressummer level and under the eaves.

The hipped roof is of late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century date. It is possible that the north range originally had gables.



Feathers Hotel – North range.  
Carved consoles under the jetty.

The primary moulding on the south range bressummers is based on the ovolo. Whilst the north range has ovolo mouldings but also with an ogee – similar to the bressummer on the later, east, part of the council offices in Church Lane (q.v.).

There are other minor internal decorative features but for dating purposes the external details will suffice for this report.

## **5.21 27 High Street** RCHM 26 NGR SO 7109 3764

Sited immediately alongside the chapel of St Katherine's, this three-storey timber-framed building is jettied to the east at second floor level and formerly also on the first floor although it is now underbuilt, with a modern shop front.



27 High Street – detail of bressummer and console.

The framing is not typical of Ledbury buildings in that it does not have close studding however, other features are similar to those found elsewhere in the town.

The second-floor bressummer has ovolo moulding and the decorated consoles under each end of the shallow jetty are carved from



27 High Street.  
East elevation.



the tops of the posts. The middle of this bressummer has a carved date of 1675 and the initial 'H' set within an oval. (The RCHM report this as 1695 but this appears to be a misreading) [RCHM 1932. p.110]. It is possible that these have been added later as the frame, consoles and mouldings suggest a date in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century although the inscription has been cut off along the lower edge and may have been a central feature of the original building. The mouldings on each side appear originally to have had run out stops acknowledging the inscription or possibly a central console. There is evidence that the inscription included two other initials in the lower part.



27 High Street – detail of dated inscription.

Elements of the first-floor jetty survive including a shaped post on the south side.

### **5.22 1 & 3 The Homend**

RCHM 27 NGR SO 7109  
3773

This 'D' shaped site contains a number of separate buildings which will be dealt with under this one heading.

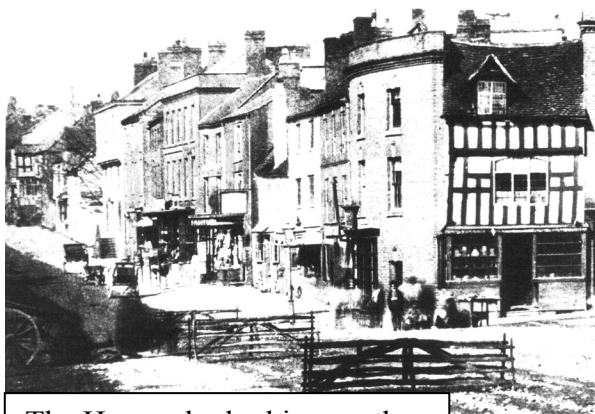
In earlier times what are now Bye Street and Church Street formed the principal cross road with the main north-south route. The site, which is at the lower end of the larger of Ledbury's two triangular market areas, is a clear example of market encroachment that has probably taken place as the New Street- Worcester Road 'Upper Cross' has grown in importance.



1 & 3 The Homend.  
South-west elevation.

It is also clear that this encroachment was fully in place by the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century marking the diminished importance of the east-west Bye Street-Church Street route by that time.

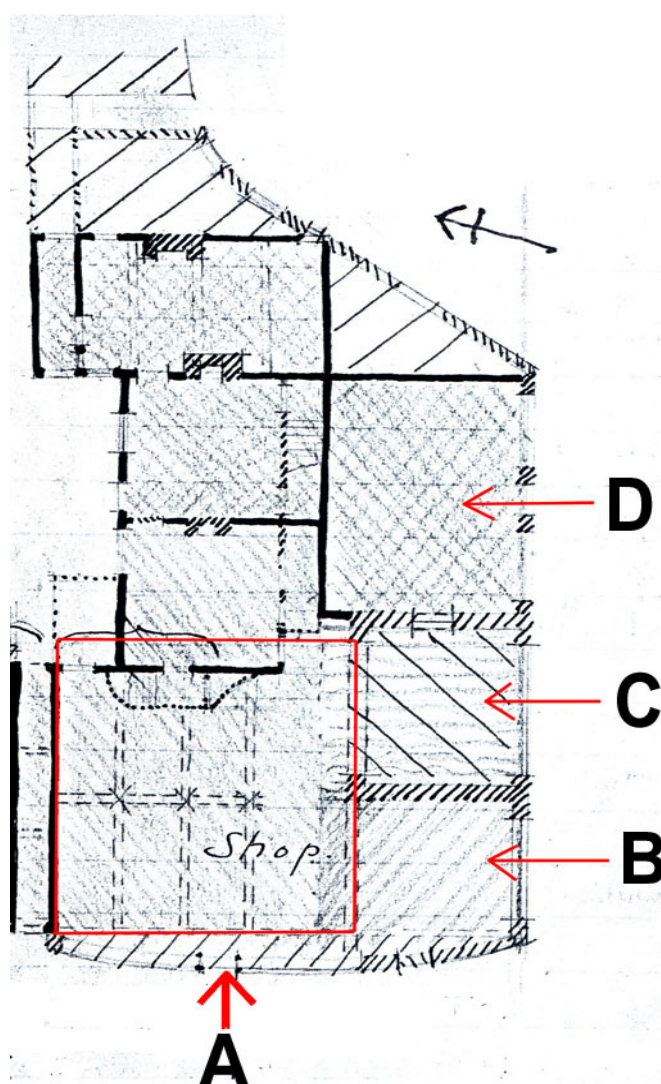
The buildings on this site have undergone many internal and external modifications but it is clear that No. 1, of three storeys, was formerly the area 'A' on the plan, as indicated by the



The Homend – looking north.  
A late-19<sup>th</sup> century photograph.



layout of the ceiling beams, recorded in 1930 but since removed. It may originally



Sketch plan of 1 & 3 The Homend showing layout of the group. (from RCHM 1930)

have had its principal façade on the south side towards the Market Hall and could therefore predate building 'B' which is certainly a timber-framed structure of c. 1600. The front is shown in a number of photographs and drawings of late 19<sup>th</sup> century date, [for example Hillaby 1997, p.20] which show a close-studded timber-framed building of two storeys, with an attic storey and a single dormer. There is a central window at first floor level with the characteristic Ledbury feature of small windows on each side. The attic storey has a shallow jetty and there are carved consoles at each end of the bressummer.

Building 'C' can be seen in an early 19<sup>th</sup> century engraving by T Ballard, [part of the Hereford County Library *Pilley Collection*, and illustrated in Hillaby 1997, p.125]. This shows a two storey structure but no timber framing is

visible.

Building 'D' is of brick and two storeys with attics.

As mentioned above, it is possible that building 'A' is earlier than 1600, a finding that may be supported by a detail from the RCHM notes of 1930 in which the bar stop-end on the chamfered beams is illustrated – a feature that may be a generation earlier than 1600.

The present appearance of the buildings on the site owes much to 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century refacing – starting with the curved brick front on the The Homend side of building A and the west side of B, followed by refronting of D, and finally, completing the composition, refronting of B.

**5.23**      **5 & 7 The Homend** (No. 5 formerly The New Inn) RCHM 28,  
NGR SO 7108 3774



7 The Homend – embedded primary structure.



5 & 7 The Homend – west elevation

Apparently, on the evidence of the continuity of the ceiling beams, RCHM states that Nos. 5 and 7 The Homend form one building of mid-17<sup>th</sup> century date. Part of the gable end framing is visible at the north end of the range indicating that it was originally two storeys high rather than the present three. The façade is work of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, by which time 5 and 7 had become separate buildings. There is a long 18<sup>th</sup> century range to the rear that was used as an assembly room. [Eisel, J. & Shoesmith, R. 2003. 187-196]. RCHM also noted the existence of an ovolo moulded 4-light casement window on the ground floor although this was not seen for the present report.

century, by which time 5 and 7 had become separate buildings. There is a long 18<sup>th</sup> century range to the rear that was used as an assembly room. [Eisel, J. & Shoesmith, R. 2003. 187-196]. RCHM also noted the existence of an ovolo moulded 4-light casement window on the ground floor although this was not seen for the present report.

**5.24**      **9 The Homend** RCHM 29    NGR SO  
7108 3775



9 The Homend – jetty post & jowelled console.

Useful evidence for the date of this building, which suffered damage from the fire at the adjacent ‘Seven Stars’ in 2001, is to be found in the alleyway at the south end of the building. Here there is a jetty post with an integral, moulded console (i.e. carved from the top of the post) and set back from the present front. The

carving has been mutilated but sufficient remains to provide some support for the RCHM statement that this timber-framed building is c.1600 in date. [RCHM 1932. p.110].



9 The Homend – West elevation.



The building was refronted probably in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. The odd projection above the two later oriel windows at first-floor level suggests that this may have been the former eaves level or possibly is an indication of a second-floor jetty.

**5.25    11 The Homend** (Seven Stars Inn).    RCHM 30.    NGR SO 7107 3776

This timber-framed, two-storey, late 16<sup>th</sup> century building suffered a disastrous fire in 2001 and clearly much of the original structure was lost. The framing on the front of the building survived along with the door



Seven Stars Inn.  
Doorframe.

frame. The south-west room was reported by RCHM to have a plaster ceiling with fleur-de-lys, rosettes and Tudor roses.

[RCHM notes 1930].

This is a two storey building with a first floor jetty that has been underbuilt and a small pentice created. The bressummer has a simple ovolo moulding as have the jambs of the main doorway. There are voluted brackets at the tops of the doorway jambs although these have been somewhat mutilated



The Seven Stars Inn. West elevation.

**5.26    13 The Homend** RCHM 31    NGR SO 7107 3777

This timber framed, three storey building has been re-faced and re-modelled and a later shop front inserted. RCHM saw some exposed framing and put the date at early 17<sup>th</sup> century.



13 The Homend

**5.27    27 & 29 The Homend**  
(Formerly Cinema House) RCHM 32  
NGR SO 7105 3782

Since it was visited by the RCHM inspector in 1930 this large building has had the 18<sup>th</sup> century stucco removed to reveal the timber framing. Built in about 1600 it is a three bay house laid out on a north-south axis parallel with the street. It has two storeys plus an attic storey that was raised in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to



27 & 29 The Homend – “Cinema House”.



incorporate sash windows. It seems likely that the house was built with three gables in the attic storey and that these were removed when the front (and the back) walls were raised in height. The original layout of the ground floor is uncertain, however, probably by the 18<sup>th</sup> century, there was a central principal doorway in place with a doubled flight of about eight steps leading up from street level. [Hillaby 1997 p.8 shows the house in the centre of the image.] This indicates that the ground floors in the building must have been lowered to their present levels.

On the assumption that there was a first floor jetty, the 18<sup>th</sup> century work would have involved underbuilding the front.



27 & 29 The Homend – “Cinema House”.  
Evidence for two of the small side windows.

The timber framing at first-floor level has close studding and a double row of horizontal rails. The three sash windows have been inserted in the primary window openings although the latter were both wider and had higher sills. On each side of each window there are blocked openings for small secondary windows.

At the top floor level there is close studding below the later sash windows. The rail above this studding is ovolo moulded and projects slightly; it is either the primary wallplate originally at eaves level or it formed the tie beam for a series of three gables. Above the close studding there is framing that relates to the raising of the roof in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.



27 & 29 The Homend – “Cinema House”.  
Plaster ceiling above the former staircase.

In the process of refronting in the 18<sup>th</sup> century the consoles under the second-floor jetty, which are carved from the tops of the posts, were in part hacked back. What remains is enough to indicate that they are similar in form and decoration to others in Ledbury. The bressumer at second-floor level has a double ovolo moulding.

ceiling now mostly in the south shop. The 18<sup>th</sup> century moulded cornice also survives at the present eaves level.

The 18<sup>th</sup> century features that remain are a moulded plaster ceiling high above the stairwell and a plaster

The 20<sup>th</sup> century re-modelling of the building included opening up the centre to create a foyer that led through to a cinema at the rear and inserting shop fronts on each side.

**5.28 37 The Homend** (Abbey House) RCHM 33. HSM 41925. NGR SO7103 3787

Built in about 1600, this timber-framed, two-storey building is set on a high rubble-stone plinth and laid out on a north-south alignment parallel with the street. It occupies a wide plot that may once have been larger. The south end of the range has been rebuilt in brick, with a two storey bay and to the rear of the north end of the range there is a later wing. On the front of the building is a narrow, two-storey projecting bay set on a high brick plinth.



Abbey House. 37 The Homend – west elevation.



Abbey House.  
Detail of  
jowelled console.

The framing of the range at ground-floor level is in the form of close studding with a single mid-rail whilst at first-floor level the studs, still with a mid rail, are more widely spaced.

The first floor has a shallow jetty along the west front with an ovolo moulded bressummer, beneath which are (or were) consoles carved from the posts in the Ledbury style.

Although the house has been the subject of much rebuilding a dating of c.1600, based on the primary elements in the frame, is a reasonably secure estimate.

**5.29 39 The Homend** (The Horseshoe Inn) RCHM 34 NGR SO 7102 3788

This three-storey timber-framed building is, like the adjacent Abbey House, set on a high plinth. It appears to be two bays long and there is a passageway through the south end. The ceiling beams on the ground floor over the south bay have wide chamfers. In the north bay is a ceiling beam with wide chamfers and stepped stops. A post inside the building between the bays retains evidence that it was a door jamb with provision for a door head. Little of the original framing is exposed although the core of the building is almost certainly 17<sup>th</sup> century in date.



Horseshoe Inn. West elevation



The front has imitation framing and the ground floor has been built out as a shallow pentice.

**5.30    67 The Homend**    RCHM 35    NGR SO 7102 3789

According to RCHM this is a 17<sup>th</sup> century building, probably of two bays, remodelled in the 18<sup>th</sup> century with a new brick front sporting four brick pilasters. [RCHM notes 1930]. It is likely that there was a central front door between the two central pilasters and that this was reached by means of a short flight of stone steps. There is an alleyway through the south end of the building where some of the (later) timber framing can be seen.



67 The Homend – west elevation.

**5.31    2 The Homend** (demolished)  
NGR SO 7106 3773

This site is now occupied by the Barrett Browning Memorial Institute (built 1892-6) but the building it replaced, judging from surviving photographs, was a substantial timber-framed structure of two-storeys and attics laid out on an approximate north-south axis parallel to the main road. It had square panelling and was three bays in length.



The building formerly on the site of 2 The Homend.

The end bays were each five panels long and the centre bay just three.

The ground floor had two shop fronts that probably underbuilt a shallow first-floor jetty. It is possible that the south end of the building was also jettied and that the ground floor brick wall seen in the photograph is underbuilding.

The top (attic) storey also has a shallow jetty on both east and south elevations. It was almost certainly designed for storage of goods, loading and unloading by hoist from wagons drawn up beneath the south end. The form of the end roof truss with its high collar and interrupted tie beam was probably used throughout the roof. (It is similar to those in the roof at No. 21 High Street).

What can be seen in the photograph is that there are shallow consoles under the bressummer to the attic storey and that these are almost certainly carved from the top of the posts. Although it does not have close studding this would befit its role as a working building and one that is recorded as being a tanhouse.



The Barrett Browning Memorial Institute.



**5.32     4 The Homend**    RCHM 41    NGR SO 7106 3774

This is an early 17<sup>th</sup> century timber framed house that was refronted in the later 18<sup>th</sup> century. [RCHM notes 1930]. A modern shop front has been inserted.

To the rear there is a 17<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed range that is visible from Bye Street. It was noted in 1930 as containing, in the east room, panelling and a fire surround of early 18<sup>th</sup> century date.



Timber-framed range behind 4 The Homend



4 The Homend

**5.33     10 The Homend**    RCHM 42    NGR SO 7105 3775

The previous building on this site, an early 17<sup>th</sup> century timber framed house with jettied first and second floors, remodelled in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, has been demolished since it was visited by the RCHM in 1930. [RCHM notes 1930]. A key feature to the dating was a console and moulded bressummer. Part of the lost building can be seen on the extreme right of the early photograph of 2 The Homend above. (q.v.).



10 The Homend today.

**5.34     24 The Homend**    RCHM 44    NGR SO 7103 3781

This is an early 17<sup>th</sup> century building that was remodelled in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. It is of two storeys and originally the first floor projected on a shallow jetty. The consoles under the jetty were cut from the top of the post and the bressummer had a simple ogee moulding. [RCHM notes 1930].



24 The Homend – east elevation.

**5.35**    **42 The Homend**    RCHM 50    NGR SO 7100 3788

This timber-framed, two-storey house is one of the most prominent in The Homend, principally due to the two-storey, jettied porch that stands well forward of the main front. This feature may be a slightly later addition to what is a relatively plain building with near square panels and a ground floor frontage with modern shop windows (introduced since the 1930s). There was formerly a carriageway through the south end of the building. Some remodelling took place in the 18<sup>th</sup> century when the large window with semicircular head was inserted in the front and sides of the porch.



42 The Homend – East elevation

**5.36**    **1 and 2 The Southend**    RCHM 54 & 55    NGR SO 7111 3756

When this was visited by the RCHM in 1930 the walls, mouldings and consoles were covered in rough-cast, since removed, so it is now possible to see far more detail.

Also, nos. 1 and 2 were described separately although, as suggested in the reports at the time, they are of single build although no. 2 (the southern bay) has been modified.



1 & 2 The Southend. E. elev.



This is a three bay, double pile range laid out on a north-south axis with one half of the north bay oversailing the footpath and supported on a row of four posts. It is of two storeys and above that is an attic storey with two gables to the north and two (originally three) to the east. The first and second floors are carried out on jetties to the north and east. There is a dragon beam under the north-east corner of the first floor.



**1 The Southend.  
North side arcade.**

The gable over the southern bay has been removed and the front built forward in timber framing, possibly still with a gable, and this has subsequently been modified by sweeping the roof forward to create a new eaves level at collar height.

The building does perhaps display on one structure all the characteristic features of Ledbury timber framing of c.1600. This is one building where it would be of considerable value to establish a fixed date by tree-ring dating as it would provide a key to so many others in the town.

Significant decorative and structural elements embrace the following:



**1 The Southend.  
Console on east elevation**

- a) the consoles, which are cut from the tops of the posts and, where exposed, have ovolo mouldings down the sides.
- b) the consoles along the arcade that are cut from the tops of the columns.
- c) the 'toothed' lower edge on the consoles.
- d) the jetty bressummers which have ovolo mouldings.
- e) the close studding with mid-rail.
- f) the attic gables.
- g) the 'eared' side windows.

The 'eared' side windows can be seen on the north end of the building. It is of interest to note that they are different sizes – those towards the middle of the façade are 50% wider than those on the outer edge.



**1 The Southend –blocked windows in north elevation.**



**5.37      The Royal Oak Hotel, 5 The Southend.**    RCHM 56. HSM 41921.  
NGR SO 7112 3753



**The Royal Oak Hotel, 5 The Southend.  
East elevation**

The late 18<sup>th</sup> /early 19<sup>th</sup> century brick front on the Royal Oak hides a timber-framed building probably built in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century. It is on an L shaped plan and was a two-storey building possibly with attics. There is a passageway through the south end and a carriageway through the north. Internal decoration, including panelling, suggests a late 16<sup>th</sup> century date. The panelling was identified by RCHM as of the same detail as that dated 1588 in The Master's House and 1590 in Ledbury Park. [RCHM notes 1930].

**5.38      7 The Southend.**    RCHM 57  
NGR SO 7112 3751

Using the heavy, chamfered beams inside as a guide the RCHM considered this house to have 17<sup>th</sup> century origins. The brick front is 'modern'.



**7 The Southend – east elevation**

**5.39      9 The Southend.**    RCHM 58    NGR  
SO 7112 3750



**9 The Southend – east elevation**

This is a narrow site with a timber-framed 17<sup>th</sup> century house that was altered and refronted in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The 18<sup>th</sup> century shop front has been lost. When the RCHM saw the building there was exposed timber framing at the back. It is possible that there was originally a gable to the front as the house seems to have been aligned on an east-west axis.

**5.40    19 The Southend.**    RCHM 60    NGR SO 7113 3744

This is an early 17<sup>th</sup> century timber framed building of very modest size. It is just two storeys high and probably two bays long. The ceiling beams in the ground-floor rooms have large stop chamfers. There is a brick arch over the passageway that leads to buildings behind.



19 The Southend – east elevation.

**5.41    22-26 Church Street** (demolished)  
RCHM 62, 63 and 64.    HSM 42656 & 42657  
NGR SO 7117 3777

This was a timber-framed row of two storey cottages in Church Street, demolished in comparatively recent times. The oldest were those with the jettied first floor (nos. 25 & 26) which the RCHM put at early 17<sup>th</sup> century. The jetty was carried on posts with shaped brackets at the top. Clearly these were modest houses and probably typical of many in the town, particularly along The Homend, that have been refronted and raised in height.



22-26 Church Street. Looking east

**5.42    Council Offices,** 1 Church Lane.    RCHM 65.    NGR SO 7111 3773

Earlier in this report the west end of this building was discussed briefly. It is a structure of c.1500 that awaits a more searching analysis than this project allows.

The east end of the range however, was probably built about a century later and is shown on the sketch plan outlined in red. It abuts the earlier range

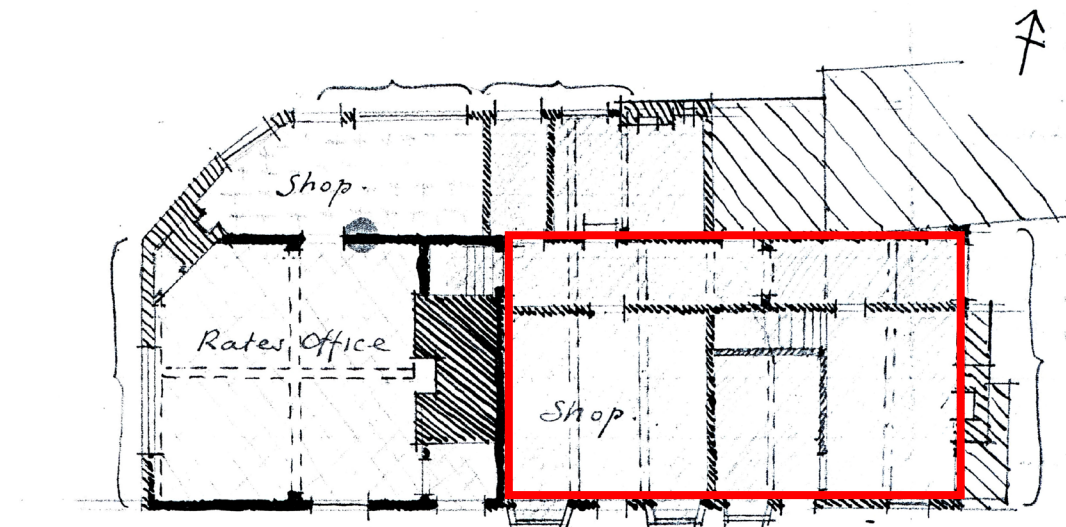
and in so doing utilises the large chimneystack between the two, creating a back-to-back fireplace. The newer building neatly copies the width and jetty and eaves height of the west range but the ridge height is slightly lower. There are also three dormer windows in the south pitch of the roof.



1 Church Lane – looking east.



Along the north side of the range is a complex series of two-storey gabled extensions facing on to Church Street.



1 Church Lane – with later phase outlined in red.

The date of the east range is indicated by the ovolo moulding on the bressummer and the style of the brackets, under the jetty and the window sills, with their ‘toothed’ decoration in the form of ‘v’ shaped notches. The windows on the south side have ovolo moulded mullions and transomes, and moulded sills.

As mentioned above, the earlier part of the building contains painted decoration and it could be argued that this may have followed the construction of the later range. Certainly on



1 Church Lane.  
Rear of building  
seen from  
Church Street.

either side of the fireplace it is painted over framing that is not primary structure but the result of later modifications related to the chimneystack – possibly even its insertion. However, the paintings can be dated with some confidence to c.1560

[Sanders, B.G. 1991] and it is almost certain that the later range post-dates this by as much as half a century.



1 Church Lane – window with  
bracket under sill. South side.



**5.43**     **Prince of Wales Inn**, Church Lane. RCHM 66. NGR SO 7116 3773

This inn occupies a site with frontage in both Church Street and Lane but the earliest part of the building is on Church Lane. Here there are two bays; that on the east is timber-framed and of two storeys with an underbuilt jetty on the south side facing the lane. This bay abuts the west end of the Old Grammar School and is probably 17<sup>th</sup> century in date.

The west bay of the inn was dismissed by the RCHM in 1930 as later than the east bay but although only a few of the jowel posts are visible, there is every indication that it is in fact earlier; it is part of the long range that now houses the public conveniences. Some of the external framing of this low range is visible and the broad dimensions of the timbers suggest that it may be 16<sup>th</sup> century in date.



**5.44**     **Church House**, Church Lane. RCHM 69. NGR SO 7119 3772



Church House. North-east elevation.

Church House is a remarkably complete, late 16<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed house. It consists of a four-bay range laid out on an approximate east-west axis with a slightly later wing abutting the back of the east end bay. The house has three storeys, the third one being an attic storey with four gables on the north front. There is a first and second floor jetty on the front elevation. The front door, which is positioned off centre below the second gable from the east, has a first floor projecting porch with faceted corners (semi-octagonal) and a gable above. It is supported by large, shaped brackets springing from the door jambs. There is an alleyway through the west end of the building.

The front has close studding with midrails. Changes have been made to the fenestration but there are some original windows in place with ovolo moulded mullions and transoms and with the small side windows that are a Ledbury feature. The consoles beneath the jetties are carved from the posts and have 'toothed' decoration. On the bressummers and other parts of the front there are ovolo mouldings.

The gables all have decorated barge boards.

The wing to the rear has a jetty along the west elevation and a moulded bressummer. A surviving console under the south end of the jetty is carved from the top of the post to a slightly different design than those on the front of the building.

As discussed briefly above, under the Abbot's Lodge entry, Church House has very probably evolved from that earlier building although it is now totally separate.



Church House.  
Jowelled console.



Church House – pendant on porch.



Church House – jowelled  
console on rear wing.



**5.45** **The Steppes**, New Street. RCHM 82. HSM 41923. NGR SO 7103 3756



The Steppes. New Street. South elevation.

When the RCHM visited in 1930 this timber framed house and the two-storey brick house (The Barn House) to the west, just visible on the left of the picture above, were in common ownership and formed a single large dwelling. For the purposes of this report only the timber framed part is relevant.

It was built in about 1600 and is of two storeys with an attic storey and two gables to the south front. The first storey and the gable storey are jettied and have ovolo moulded bressummers with consoles below. The gables are also jettied slightly at tiebeam level and there is an ovolo moulding along the lower edge. The front has close studding and both ground and first floors have a midrail. There is a brick chimneystack at the east gable end of the house, which is possibly a later addition as there is close studding on the east end and the chimney does interfere with this.



The Steppes.  
Console under  
first-floor jetty.

There is later coving fitted under the bressummers and a modern bay added to the front. The bargeboards on the gables are 'modern' (i.e. early 20<sup>th</sup> century) and have a pattern that is similar to the Church House bargeboards – which may also be 'modern'.



**5.46    2 New Street.** RCHM 83. NGR SO 7111 3756



2 New Street. N. elev.

This three-storey timber-framed house was built in about 1600 and appears to be laid out on a north-south axis with a gable fronting the road. It is jettied at second floor level and almost certainly had a jettied first floor

although this has been underbuilt with a later shop front that is set forward of the front of the building. The gable tie beam is also set slightly forward to create a shallow jetty. There are consoles at each end of the second floor ovolo moulded bressummer although whether they are cut from the top of the posts is not known. The ground floor has chamfered ceiling beams.

It is not clear whether it pre-dates or post-dates Nos. 1 & 2 The Southend, the adjacent building to the east.



1 The Southend and 2 New Street..

**5.47    4 New Street.** RCHM 84. NGR SO 7110 3756

Built in about 1600 this is a timber-framed building of two storeys with attics. Evidence for a shallow 9inch (c. 23cm) first-floor jetty survives behind the present 19<sup>th</sup> century shop front where there is a double ovolo moulded bressummer and the remains of a console carved from the top of the east-side jetty post. Running down the inner edge of the post is an ovolo moulding. (c.f. similar feature on 17 High St., 1 & 2 The Southend and Church House). The attic storey also has a shallow jetty. The front is hidden by rough-cast.



4 New Street.

**5.48    6 & 8 New Street.** RCHM 85. NGR SO 7109 3756



6 & 8 New Street. North elevation.

These two shops appear to be of one build and of 17<sup>th</sup> century date. The brick refronting and (probably) roof raising is 18<sup>th</sup> century work. There are stop-chamfered beams in the ceilings on both ground floor and, according to the RCHM, also on the first floor. [RCHM notes 1930].

**5.49    12 New Street.** RCHM 86. NGR SO 7107 3755

The RCHM concluded that this was an early 17<sup>th</sup> century, narrow building of two storeys, laid out along the burgage plot. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century it was raised in height and widened. The front to the street was originally jettied. [RCHM notes 1930].



12 New Street.  
North elevation.

**5.50    The Talbot Hotel.** New Street. RCHM 86. HSM 41922 NGR SO 7106 3754

The first phase of this building probably dates to the late 16<sup>th</sup> century when a two storey, timber-framed range was built parallel to New Street on an east-west axis, with a central chimney stack and back-to-back fireplaces. There were either three or four gables to the front. The timber framing was in the form of close studding on the north front. The ground floor west room is lined with dated panelling (1596) and there is a fire surround and overmantle of the period although the fireplace itself was removed when the base of the stack was cut through to create access.



The Talbot Hotel – North elevation.

In the second phase, early in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the building was extended forward and refronted, and a large semi-octagonal oriel added over the main entrance. The front doorway is something of a puzzle and may be the original door reset. It has what appears to be a cranked doorhead panel fitted to the top of the door which suggests that it has been removed from an earlier site – possibly when the refronting took place.



The Talbot Hotel – Inscription over door.



The Talbot Hotel  
Door surround with strapwork decoration.

There are the initials F, I, A, on the 'doorhead' and a date that is open to interpretation as it must have been damaged at some time. It now reads '1000' and could be 1600; 1606; or 1608. If it is reset from the primary structure, 1600 may be appropriate. The door jambs are in the form of pilasters and there is strapwork decoration across the top.

**5.51**     **24 New Street.** RCHM 87,  
NGR SO 7103 3754

This small 17<sup>th</sup> century single storey building with attics is timber framed, with a modern shop front. Behind the building, extending southwards, is a further timber-framed two storey outbuilding.



24 New Street – north elevation

**5.52**     **26 New Street.** (Former Vine Tap Inn) RCHM 88. NGR SO 7102 3753

The two phases of this 17<sup>th</sup> century timber framed building are clearly evident from the front gabled elevations. The wide east range is single storey with attics whilst the narrow west range is of two storeys. They may be contemporary structures. At some point the west side of the roof of the east range has been raised at the eaves to meet the higher eaves level of the west range. There is a later shop front. The RCHM sets the date at mid-17<sup>th</sup> century [RCHM notes 1930].



26 New Street – north elevation

**6.00**     **Discussion**

This research project has made full use of the data gathered by the Royal Commission for Historic Monuments during work in Herefordshire in the 1930s. With regard to Ledbury this has involved consideration of the records of 88 monuments and the transcription of c.30,000 words of the handwritten (often less than clear) notes held at the National Monuments Record, Swindon, in order to make the information readily accessible. It is possibly the first time that there has been the occasion to study the Ledbury section of this valuable resource thoroughly and this has been done alongside a reappraisal of the buildings themselves, a number of which now have more fully exposed structures.

What is clear is that the majority of the surviving timber-framed buildings exhibit features in common that indicate a date of construction within the period of c.1580 to c.1620. They are also, in the main, large buildings and typically three storeys high.

It is also apparent that those timber framed buildings that post-date this period and are mid-to-late 17<sup>th</sup> century are relatively minor structures of somewhat indifferent quality and generally no more than two storeys in height. They are also sited away from the centre of the town, in the suburbs of the north end of The Homend, west Bye Street, The Southend and in Church Street (formerly Back Lane).



Still later, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a lot of refronting and remodelling took place but relatively little by way of new build. Shell House, at 36 The Homend, is a modest example of totally new, early 18<sup>th</sup> century building, otherwise major building of the period is restricted to Upper Hall, Lower Hall and developments to the rear of Ledbury Park.

The building period of 1580 to 1620 was radical in that it must have involved wholesale demolition and rebuilding rather than the incremental modification and extension of earlier structures.

Where earlier buildings (i.e. 15<sup>th</sup> century) do survive, and only a few have, they are either away from the commercial centre or have ecclesiastical links: for example The Old Grammar School; Abbot's Lodge; and The Master's House.

There is a marked absence of early-to-mid-16<sup>th</sup> century buildings which, if they had been in place, would be expected to survive for the simple reason that by the period of Ledbury's rebuilding they would still have been in good condition and made with chimneys and ceilings rather than open halls and hearths, so not obvious candidates for replacement. A similar situation existed in Ludlow where a late 16<sup>th</sup>/early 17<sup>th</sup> century rebuilding also took place. [Moran, M. 2003. p.173]

## **6.10 The Dated Buildings**

It is possible that documentary research could uncover more information concerning the dates of the more important buildings in the town but experience shows that this is often problematic when considering structures at the vernacular level. It is usually a matter of tracing the successive occupants of a house in order to discover who built it and therefore when it was built, but this depends upon locating and following a trail of documentation that all too often simply does not exist.

There are a few buildings for which we do have reasonably reliable dates. Ledbury Park, formerly New House was built in about 1590 (Hillaby has c.1595) [Hillaby 1997. p.94]. The date of 1590 is from an inscription on the panelling, which is broadly supported by documentary evidence [King, J.W. 1997, p.104]. The panelling is significant as it is similar to dated panelling of 1588, which survives in The Master's House and is related to its later refurbishment.

The Feathers Hotel, which has more carved decoration on the facade of the south block than any other timber-framed building of the period in Ledbury, has been dated on stylistic evidence by the RCHM to 1560-70. The north block is somewhat later.

It is possible that The Royal Oak can be dated by its panelling, which is similar to the c.1588 & 1590 examples in The Master's House and Ledbury Park respectively; as is the panelling noted by the RCHM in No. 9 High Street although the timber framing on this building suggests that the house is perhaps somewhat later.

The evidence from panelling may also offer the key to the date of the first phase of building the Talbot Hotel where there is an inscribed date of 1596. This is, however, thrown into question by the date over what appears to be a re-set doorhead which either relates to the addition of the slightly later front or is a key date for the first

phase – however, since the carving is mutilated the number is a matter for speculation. It must have been a date in the sixteen hundreds rather than the fifteen hundreds, but other than that it is impossible to tell. Very careful removal of the paint could reveal the date or confirm that it is, as proposed by Hillaby, the year 1600. [Hillaby 1997.p.95].

One other dated building is 27 High Street; this has 1675 and initials, raised in an oval panel on the second-floor bressummer. Contrary to other views [RCHM notes 1930] this is almost certainly contemporary with the bressummer on which it is carved as the mouldings on each side are stopped. The oval panel was larger and has been mutilated by the insertion of the present window. Certainly the character of the front is different to the earlier buildings; there is no close studding, no evidence for ‘eared’ windows and the consoles are different in design with a somewhat debased scroll.

However, what is evident is that from this variety of sources there are dates that cluster around the 1590-1600 period and this may well represent the focal point of a major rebuilding in Ledbury.

## **6.20 The Details**

Below is a listing the principal features on about 40 of the buildings in this study. Those omitted are either minor buildings or ones about which little is known other than the raw fact that they are (or were) timber framed. The handful of fifteenth-century buildings is not included.

Note: The list refers to the original form of each building, which is not necessarily the present form.

With regard to the number of storeys, a ‘½’ is used to indicate an attic storey; this is defined as a top storey that does not offer full ceiling height due to the roof slope.

The list is not comprehensive because details on so many buildings are either missing or hidden, so where a box is left empty it may simply mean that the information is not available.

The listing is followed by notes concerning each category.

### 6.30 List of Principal Features

#### LISTING OF PRINCIPAL FEATURES IN TIMBER FRAMED BUILDINGS OF LEDBURY

	CLOSE STUDDING	SIDE WINDOWS	ATTIC GABLES	OVOLO PROFILE	JOWELLED CONSOLES	TOOTHED CONSOLES	POSTS SET PROUD + OVOLO	NUMBER OF STOREYS	JETTIED ?
Ledbury Park.	X	X	5	X	X	X	X	2 ½	X
1 High St.	X							2	X
8 High St.			2					3	X
9 High St.	X		2	X				3	X
9 High St. (building to rear)				X	X			3	X
10 High St.								3	X
16 High St.			2					2 ½	X
17 High St.	X	X	2	X	?		X	2 ½	X
17c High St.			2	X	X			2 ½	X
18 High St.			2					2 ½	X
19 High St.			2					2 ½	X
20 High St.			2					2 ½	X
21 High St.								2 ½	X
22 High St.			1					3	X
23 High St.								3 ½	X
25 High St ( Feathers). S.	X		5	X	X			3 ½	X
25 High St ( Feathers). N.	X			X	X			3	X
27 High St.				X	X	X		3	X
1 Homend.	X	X						2 ½	X
9 Homend.					X			3	X
11 Homend (Seven Stars).				X	X			2	X
27 & 29 Homend	X	X		X	X	X		2 ½	X
37 Homend.(Abbey House)	X			X	X	X		2	X
39 Homend (Horseshoe Inn)								3	X
2 Homend (site of)					X			2 ½	X
10 Homend (site of).					X			3	X
24 Homend.					X			2	X
42 Homend.								2	
1 & 2 Southend.	X	X	3	X	X	X	X	2½	X
19 Southend.								1 ½	
22-26 Church St (site).								2	X
1 Church Lane. (south block)	X			X	X	X		2	X
Prince of Wales Inn.								2	X
Church House.	X	X	4	X	X	X	X	2 ½	X
The Steppes, New St.	X		2	X	?			2 ½	X
2 New St.	X		1	X	?			3	X
4 New St.				X	X		X	2 ½	X
14 New St (Talbot).	X		4					2 ½	
24 New St.								1½	
26 New St.								1 ½	



### **6.31 Close Studding**

The close studding on Ledbury buildings is restricted to the principal elevations and includes a mid-rail as, for example, on Ledbury Park and Church House. It was widely used and there are 15 surviving buildings in Ledbury that have this decoration. It can be found elsewhere in buildings of a similar period such as the Saracen's Head Inn, Ross and Tower House, Bromyard, but nowhere else in the county is it applied in such a singleminded way to a group of buildings as can be found in Ledbury.

On one building, The Feathers Hotel (south block) there is what appears to be a double mid-rail in which there is a second rail above the midrail. This pattern is reminiscent of the effect created by the introduction of small side windows, on 1 & 2 The Southend and Church House for instance, where there is a second rail above the midrail. It is possible that there were small side windows on the Feathers Hotel and that these have been carefully hidden or simply that the pattern was inspired by seeing the buildings with side windows. This latter suggestion would imply that The Feathers is of somewhat later build than 1560-70.

What is apparent is that the later north block of The Feathers copies the spirit of the decoration on the south block but with wider spacing to the rails and, as a result, a less effective display.

### **6.32 Side Windows**

Although relatively few buildings in the town show evidence of this feature (and it is likely that others remain hidden behind later facades) the window count is quite high, viz. 6 buildings with about 15 main windows with 15 pairs of small windows set high up on each side. Most of these small windows are of two lights but some have three. Their exact function is not clear. It is possible that they were used to light a room sufficiently in order to obviate the need to open shutters on the main windows or they may have been used for ventilation or it could have been simply to allow more light in on dark days.

This feature is not unknown outside Ledbury. In Hereford, The Black Lion, Bridge Street is an example that had two main windows with small side openings. These are best seen in a photograph taken in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when the facing had been stripped back. [Collins, W. 1915 opp. p.93].

### **6.33 Attic Gables**

It is possible that some of the attic gables are later additions but without a detailed examination of the roof structures it is impossible to make a reliable assessment. The Feathers (south block) has five gables over a three bay building creating an uneasy structural relationship. Similarly, Ledbury Park has gables on the west front that do not 'fit' the layout of the bays.

To underline this point, an example of a 'neat' fit, in which the body of the building and the gables are perfectly integrated, is Nos. 1 & 2 The Southend, which has two gables on the north end and three (originally) on the east elevation perfectly matching the bay divisions and principal posts.

It is clear also that many gables were removed when buildings were remodelled and that this feature was, along with close studding, a prominent component of the street scene of c.1600.

Decoration in the gables typically made use of close timbering between the collar and tie beam, with simple vee struts above the collar.

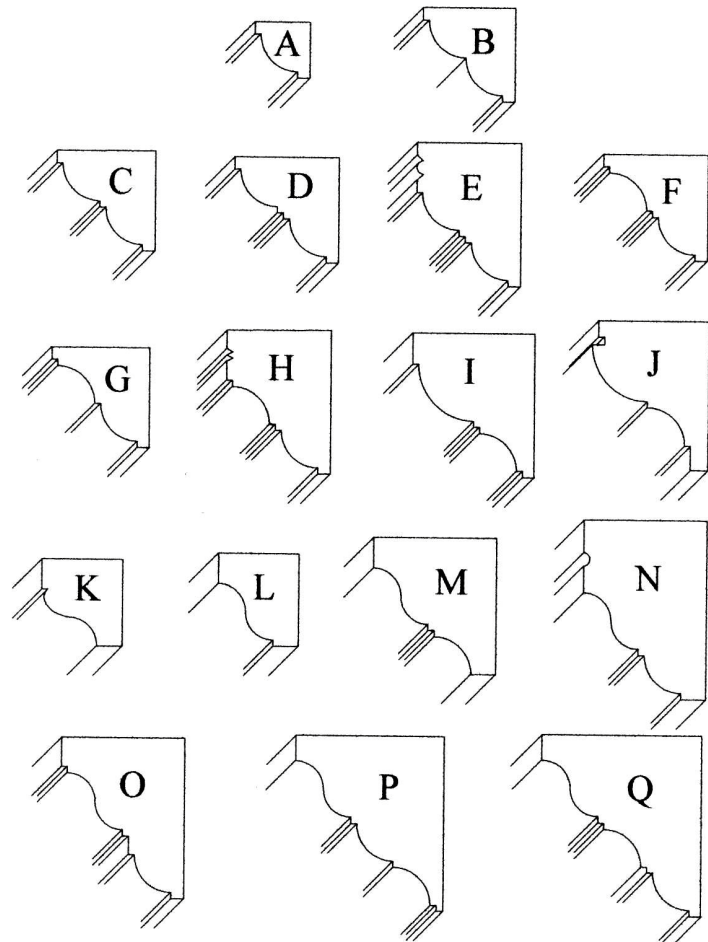
### 6.34 Ovolo Profile

This basic quarter-round moulding profile is widely used in the Ledbury buildings of c. 1600. It occurs on jetty bressummers, posts, door frames, window mullions and transoms, and ceiling beams.

On bressummers it is frequently elaborated to a double quarter-round or a quarter-round with a quarter-hollow (i.e. concave).

Perhaps the most easily seen is where it is used on the corners of the Market House pillars but both Ledbury Park and Church House use it in abundance.

At each end of the moulding it is usually finished with a simple run-out stop.



A)	Market House, pillars.	D)	Church House, 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor jetty.
	9 High Street, 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor jetty.	E)	27/29 The Homend, 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor jetty.
	17 High Street.	F)	1 The Southend, 1 <sup>st</sup> floor jetty.
	21 High Street, door frame.		17c High Street, 1 <sup>st</sup> floor jetty (west).
	27/29 The Homend, wallplate.	G)	27 High Street, 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor jetty.
	2 New Street, gable jetty.	H)	Church House, 1 <sup>st</sup> floor jetty
	The Steppes, gable jetty.	I)	Abbey House, 1 <sup>st</sup> floor jetty
	Church House, gable jetty.	J)	23 High Street.
	1 Church Lane (east), wallplate.	K)	24 The Homend, 1 <sup>st</sup> floor jetty.
	Seven Stars Inn, former 1 <sup>st</sup> floor jetty.	L)	10 The Homend, 1 <sup>st</sup> floor jetty.
B)	2 New Street, 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor jetty.	M)	The Feathers, (north range) jetty.
C)	9 High Street (rear building)	N)	1 Church Lane (east).
	17 High Street, 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor jetty.	O)	Church House (south wing) jetty.
	17c High Street, 1 <sup>st</sup> floor jetty (east).	P)	The Feathers (south range) wallplate.
	Ledbury Park, jetty.	Q)	The Feathers (south range) 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor jetty.
	The Steppes. 1 <sup>st</sup> floor jetty.		
	4 New Street, 1 <sup>st</sup> floor jetty.		
	2 The Southend, jetty.		

It will be seen that the most frequently used ovolo profiles are ‘A’, a single quarter round, and ‘C’, the double quarter round with central separator, a detail that makes the moulding far more effective than ‘B’ where the quarter rounds merge at the centre. A development or variation is the combination of ovolo profiles with the ogee, as in ‘M’ to ‘Q’.

What can be argued is that these moulding profiles effectively link these buildings, giving the impression that they represent a single interrelated body of work.

A similar exercise elsewhere in Herefordshire revealed that a particular moulding, which is found on the jetty support beams of buildings in Weobley, was used repeatedly throughout that village in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. This leitmotif, along with other features, has enabled a distinctive very local style to be identified and characterised. [James, D. 2007.]

### **6.35 Jowelled Consoles**

As mentioned earlier, the term ‘jowelled consoles’ is used in this report to describe a form of console or bracket that has been shaped from the jowelled (or flared) top of the post that supports it rather than made separately and tenoned and pegged into place.

This is the form in which the consoles are made on Ledbury buildings and the inevitable result is that the consoles are relatively shallow but very strong as they are made using a carefully selected piece of timber in which the direction of the grain is appropriate to its function.

It is possible that this limit to the size of the consoles limited the depth of the jetty but it is probably because at this date deep jetties were out of fashion.

A detailed recording of the size and design of these consoles falls outside the resources of this study but it is notable that about 50% of the consoles seen have a distinctive feature in common; that of ‘toothed’ decoration in the form of either a dentilled or zig-zag motif above and below the scroll.



A console shaped from the flared top of the post. Church House, Church Lane.

### **6.36 Posts set proud with ovolo moulding on the edge.**

On a number of buildings this subtle form of decoration is still to be seen. For it to be possible the post needs to be set proud of the wall surface by about 1-1½ inch in order to allow an ovolo moulding to be cut down the side. An example is illustrated at the



top of page 26 (17 High Street). Although it has been found in only four buildings these are all significant structures.

### **6.37 The Number of Storeys**

Most of the major buildings are 2½ or 3 storeys high. The attic storey is a common feature and the taller buildings are clustered in the central area – mostly in the High Street. The south block of The Feathers Hotel is the highest in terms of storeys (3½) although its neighbour to the south, 23 High Street, also appears to have 3½ storeys – due possibly to the sloping site.

### **6.38 Jettied Buildings**

The overwhelming majority of the buildings listed on the chart above are jettied although none of them have deep jetties. In Herefordshire, the prominent jetty of 24inch (0.61m) or more is common in 15<sup>th</sup> century buildings but by the late 16<sup>th</sup> and into the 17<sup>th</sup> century in Herefordshire they are becoming progressively less prominent – more a token gesture than a means of securing greater floor space in the upper rooms. For an example of a deep jetty of c.1450, see no. 16 Corn Sq., Leominster. [Hillaby, J. & C. 2006, p.246/7.] There are, however, exceptions and Ludlow retained a passion for prominent jetties well into the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

### **6.39 The Timber**

As a general observation the impression is that the timber-framed buildings that are the focus of this study were constructed using good quality oak and that, as indicated by the lavish use of timber, it was not in short supply.

It is thought that the supply of oak for buildings normally came from local managed woodland so it is relevant to consider where the timber might have been sourced. In the case of Ledbury this is not a difficult question because, to the east, on the rising land above the town is Coneygree Wood and to the north of that the smaller Dog Hill Wood. These areas, which harbour the remains of many charcoal burner's platforms and carpenters' saw pits, have probably been managed woodland at least since the 14<sup>th</sup> century. [*Pers. comm.* Tim Hoverd of Herefordshire Archaeology].

## **7.00 Conclusions**

There can be no doubt that Ledbury underwent a major rebuilding programme that began late in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. By about 1620 much of this renewal would have been complete, with a range of three storey close-studded buildings with gabled roofs along the east side of the main market area. On the west side most of the buildings in place today were there in 1620 although some of them (i.e. 21 High Street) would certainly have offered a different appearance without the present early 19<sup>th</sup> century makeover. The encroachment of the Butchers' Row area would have been in place as would the St Katherine's almshouses, then probably a timber-framed row on the site of the south arm of the present buildings, (the range built by Smirke in 1822) and, due to the proximity of the central butchery, not an ideal location. The Market House would have just been completed but only as a covered arcade with a storage attic; the upper part had to wait another fifty years.

Whilst it is tempting to suggest that a number of the buildings in Ledbury could be the work of one team of carpenters, it would need further very detailed recording in order to make a reasonably secure case. That the majority of Ledbury buildings of c.1600 represent a distinct and identifiable school of carpentry is, however, without doubt. Whilst the buildings exhibit general decorative and technical features that are, broadly speaking, identifiable as Herefordshire ‘ingredients’ the particular mix is to a distinctly Ledbury recipe.

This very local application of decorative and structural elements has been noted elsewhere in Herefordshire; in particular in Weobley for a series of 15<sup>th</sup> century buildings. [James, D. 2007] The reasons for this localisation of building styles and methods is likely to have been a product of the working radius of a team of craftsmen and their access to suitable stands of woodland along with the inherent conservatism of a skilled trade passed down through the generations. In the case of Ledbury the possibility of the manorial lord bringing influence to bear on the appearance of the town’s buildings should not be ruled out.

Making useful comparisons between groups of timber-framed buildings is difficult due to the fact that all too few meaningful groups have survived. Hereford, for instance, has lost a far greater percentage of its historic buildings than Ledbury, Leominster and Ludlow.

Although just out of the county in the south of Shropshire, Ludlow is in marked contrast to Ledbury for buildings of a similar period. There the element of display is abundant, with chevron ornament combined with curved bracing and deep jetties, the latter often with elaborately carved consoles. In Ludlow there is none of the dignified restraint of the Ledbury style.

Tewkesbury is another nearby manifestation of timber framing but here the buildings again have their own special features many of them influenced by commercial activity and space restrictions. The town was an inland harbour on a site constrained by rivers and flood plains forcing the occupants to build high and to use deep jetties to maximise upper storey floor space. Windows were also larger than those in Ledbury, almost embracing whole walls.

A final note concerns buildings on the east side of the High Street in Ledbury where, on the ground floors, so little of the original fabric has survived. This is due to the demands made by commercial activity but also because the floors have been lowered to improve access. This has had the effect of reducing the viability of the cellars.

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#### **Postscript**

There are a number of unavoidable omissions in this report. There was not time to investigate the former Butchers’ Row house, now a museum, in Church Lane and its near neighbour, Crispin House. Rutherglen, the former magistrates court and the house behind contain timber framing but these were not viewed. There is an early frame behind the Brewery Inn in Bye Street that would merit recording, as would the nearby 11-15 Bridge Street. However, it is likely that a study of these, although of great interest, would not materially change the broad thrust of this report.

It will be seen that there is no preamble to this report concerning the settlement site and its early development as it was felt that this issue is more than adequately covered in Joe Hillaby’s book on Ledbury [Hillaby, J. 1997].

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