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The Gatehouse, Caynton Manor, Edgmond, Shropshire: Building Investigation

Johanna Roethe

THE GATEHOUSE,
CAYNTON MANOR,
EDGMOND, SHROPSHIRE

BUILDING INVESTIGATION

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Cover image: The gatehouse from the north-west (DP220884)

SUMMARY

The gatehouse at Caynton Manor is the only intact survivor of a historic manorial complex. The building's two upper rooms have decorative plasterwork friezes similar to a group of several early 17th-century schemes in Shropshire. One overmantel features the arms of the Yonge family and the date 1635, which is probably the date of the building. Very little is known about the building's original context and use, or the house it served. Although in farm-related use for a long time, the gatehouse and its plasterwork survive relatively intact.

ARCHIVE LOCATION

Historic England Archive, The Engine House, Fire Fly Avenue, Swindon, SN2 2EH

DATE OF VISIT AND RESEARCH

The building was investigated in June 2018 and photographed in June and July 2018. This report was written in July 2018. It was updated in November 2018 to include a discussion on wall-hangings.

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INTRODUCTION

The assessment of the gatehouse was undertaken at the request of Stuart Mee, Listing Adviser. The building had been overlooked in previous listed building surveys and architectural assessments of Shropshire, although it lies in the curtilage of the grade II-listed Old Caynton Manor (National Heritage List for England (NHLE) 1054187). Until relatively recently, the gatehouse was in use as part of the farmstead but is now in poor condition and without use. This report informed a listing assessment by clarifying the building's history and development. The gatehouse was subsequently listed at grade II* (NHLE 1459113). This report has been updated since the listing assessment with a new interpretation of the battens below the plaster friezes, which probably supported wall-hangings.

Figure 1: Site plan of Caynton Manor with the house in green and the gatehouse in red (© and database right Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2018) Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024.)

The farmstead of Caynton Manor (also known as Old Caynton Manor) is located to the north-west of the village of Edgmond and just to the east of the river Meese. The road from the east approaches the farm via a distinctive kink of two right angles. The reason for this unusual road alignment is not clear, but may relate to the presence of the manorial site from an early date. The house is located to the south of the road with the farm buildings, including the gatehouse, to the east and south-east (Figure 1). There is a historic well to the south of the house.[1] The gatehouse's position relates to the approach to an older, long vanished house about which little is known. It is now surrounded by several farm buildings, two of which abut against its east and

south elevations. Based on map evidence, the Shropshire Historic Environment Record has tentatively identified the remains of a post-medieval park to the south of the farmstead.[2] Potential features of this include two former fishponds, a curving earthwork near Caynton Cottage, and areas of planting.

To the west, the road continues across the river to Old Caynton Mill (NHLE 1374387), an early 19th-century water mill which is described on historic maps as 'oil mill' and 'corn mill'. It may have been built on the site of an earlier corn mill which formed part of the medieval manor.

There are three extant houses in Shropshire whose names include the word 'Caynton'. The house on the same site as the gatehouse is now known as Old Caynton Manor (NHLE 1054187). Caynton House or New Caynton (NHLE 1367395) is about 1.1km to the north-east. Both are in the parish of Edgmond. A further house, Caynton Hall (NHLE 1222467) of 1803, lies about 20km to the south-east in the parish of Beckbury and was built by a member of a branch of the Yonge family who formerly owned Caynton Manor.[3] It has no direct connection to the other two sites and is mentioned here solely for the sake of clarity as Caynton House and Caynton Hall in particular are frequently confused.[4]

HISTORIOGRAPHY

The site and buildings of Caynton Manor have been little studied. No antiquarian or other detailed account of the house or gatehouse has been located during the research for this report, although the gatehouse's antiquity and plasterwork was acknowledged in 1912 by the local historian Henrietta Mary Auden.[5] According to Anthony Emery, Shropshire in general 'has not been well served by topographical writers', which may go some way to explaining why the site is not better known.[6]

Documentary evidence for the early house or houses at Caynton Manor is extremely sparse. There are no early maps or plans of the parish or estate in public archives. The earliest detailed documentary reference to a house at Caynton is an inventory of 1584.[7] There are numerous deeds for the manor from the 14th to the 19th centuries in the Shropshire and the Staffordshire Archives (the latter due to the purchase of lands by Lord Gower in 1739), but these have not previously been examined in detail, and their thorough analysis lies outside the scope of this assessment.

The main source for the manorial descent is an unpublished draft of the *Victoria County History* volume XII, part 1.[8] The early family tree of the Yonges up to 1623 is detailed in Grazebrook and Rylands's 1889 publication of the College of Heralds' visitation of Shropshire. A privately published family history of 1969 provides further detail about the Yonge family.[9]

According to a local tradition, which was first recorded in 1912, there were two successive houses which preceded the present farmhouse and one earlier gatehouse, all of which were destroyed by fire.[10] The first gatehouse is said to have burnt down with the first house and the current gatehouse was reportedly built on the same site. The second house is said to have been located to the north of the road and its site may relate to bricks found in that field during ploughing in the 20th century.[11] When this house burnt down, the current farmhouse is said to have been built on the south side of the road. However, there are no historical records to support any of these theories.

Around the time the current farmhouse was built, a new mansion called Caynton House was built on a different site, although the precise sequence is unclear as both houses are only dated approximately. Morriss has dated the earliest part of the extant farmhouse at Caynton Manor to the second half of the 18th century, although it contains some 17th-century fabric like roof trusses and parts of a staircase.[12] Caynton House has been dated to *c* 1800 in the list entry and by Madge Moran to *c* 1780-90.[13] However, it reportedly has rainwater goods dated 1747.[14]

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Caynton is first mentioned in 1198 when it was held by William of Caynton as part of the manor of Bolas. By 1598 it had become a manor in its own right but was still subordinate to the manor of Bolas. It belonged to the Caynton (or de Caynton) family until the late 14th century, when it passed by marriage to Thomas Yonge or le Yonge (fl. 1380-1414) who married Beatrice Caynton. Their wedding feast is said to have been held at Caynton in about 1372.[15]

Over the next centuries, the Yonge family flourished and several Yonges were members of parliament and sheriffs of the county. In the 16th century, William Yonge (died 1584) was a magistrate during the reign of Queen Mary (reigned 1553-58) and subsequently lost this office, presumably because he was a Catholic.[16] It is not known if he suffered any other punishment because of his belief. In about 1540 he acquired the manor of Calvington just to the north of Caynton Manor, which then descended together until 1784.[17] An inventory drawn up after William's death in 1584 contains the first known detailed documentary evidence of the house at Caynton. It was clearly a substantial building as the document mentions a number of rooms and ancillary buildings, including: the great parlour, the great chamber, the little parlour, the little closet, the great closet, the chamber next the great chamber, the little buttery, the hall, the cheese chamber, the new building, the other new building, the store house, the green chamber, the great buttery, the cage [?] chamber, the upper closet, the chamber next to the cage [?] chamber, the kitchen, and the larder.[18]

William's son, also William (baptised 1559, died 1597/8), married Susan or Susanna (died 1640), the daughter of Robert Corbett of Stanwardine, Shropshire.[19] The Corbetts were an influential family in Shropshire and their raven emblem (from French *corbeau* for raven) may be among the birds depicted in the gatehouse's plasterwork. William and Susan's son was William (baptised 1594, died 1647), the builder of the gatehouse. He married Elizabeth, the daughter of Roger Gough, alderman and mercer of Worcester.

Their son and heir was Philip (baptised 1620, died 1676), a Parliamentarian. He was one of eight MPs for Shropshire in 1654 and was re-elected in 1656. In 1659 he was one of two new knights for the shire.[20] After the Restoration he appears to have lived elsewhere: in Warwick in 1669 and at Market Overton in Rutland when he made his will.[21] In the Shropshire Hearth Tax Roll of 1672 he was assessed for only two hearths at his Caynton and Calvington estates, a remarkably low figure.[22] It seems clear that the substantial house described in the 1584 inventory was not included in the tax assessment, as it presumably would have contained a substantial number of hearths. This, together with Philip's residency elsewhere, has led some to speculate that the Caynton house had been demolished during or after the Civil War because of Philip's Parliamentarian sympathies, and that the family were living in the gatehouse.[23] This was not an unusual arrangement. For example, the diarist John Evelyn described in 1654 that Sir John Glanville lived in the gatehouse after his house at Broad Hinton in Wiltshire burnt down during the Civil War.[24]

As part of the research for this report, a group of deeds for Caynton Manor have been identified in the Staffordshire Record Office. It has not been possible to examine them for this project but according to the archive catalogue they document the sale of the manor house in 1739 to Lord Gower.[25] The sale included Caynton Manor House with 280 acres, Caynton Mill with a messuage and lands, and part of two messuages in Tibberton. Separate deeds document the sale by the Yonges to Lord Gower of the manor or half manor of Tibberton with eleven messuages and lands, several other properties and lands in Calvington, Clayton and Tibberton, and a £3 rent charge from Calvington Heath.[26]

By the second half of the 18th century, the manor was owned by the Briscoe family, who still owned it in the 1960s.[27] John Rocque's 1752 map of the county depicts a schematic group of buildings at 'Keynton', including one L-shaped building to the north of the road and two L-shaped buildings to its south (Figure 2). Bricks have been reportedly ploughed up north of the road in the late 20th century but there is no evidence that they belonged to the manor house or another building. Rocque's map also shows the current line of the road but with a continuation of the north-south stretch northwards towards 'Keynton Forge'. This northern part of the road which is now reduced to a track might be the explanation for the curious road alignment, although the map is highly schematic and other roads on the map bear little relation to the later road network.[28]

Figure 2: Detail from John Rocque's map of Shropshire, 1752, showing Caynton Manor (labelled 'Keynton') (Shropshire Archives)
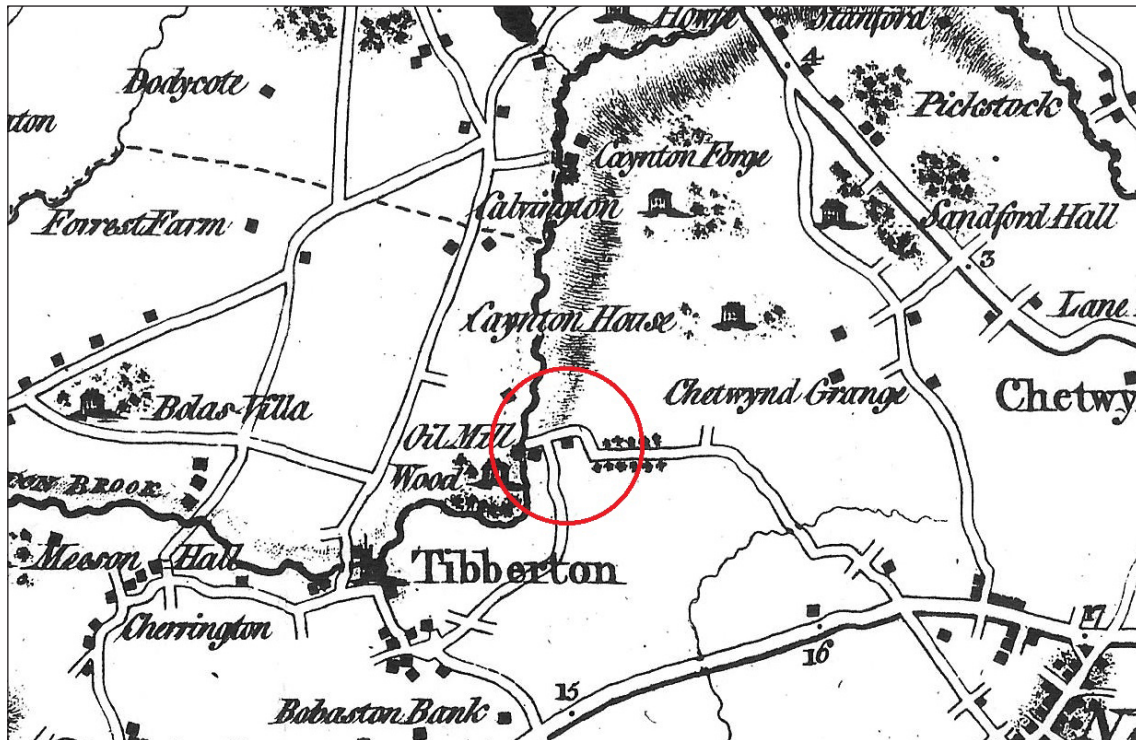
Figure 3: Detail from Robert Baugh's map of Shropshire of 1808 showing Caynton Manor (red circle) and Caynton House to the north-east (Shropshire Archives)

Robert Baugh's map of 1808, although less detailed and of smaller scale, shows no buildings north of the road at Caynton Manor (Figure 3). It shows the road approaching the 'kink' in the road from the west as tree-lined. Due to the small scale, the buildings on the site are collectively shown as one black square but this does not rule out the existence of any buildings north of the road by that date.

In 1829 William Briscoe bought the estate from the trustees of his cousin, also William Briscoe, who had died in 1828.[29] The plan which accompanies the sale particular shows the farmhouse and various ancillary buildings including the gatehouse (Figure 4). By then the main access to the house was no longer through the gatehouse and the arrangement of walls in front of the building's west elevation make it unlikely that it was still used as a through-passage at all. It is not clear if the two parallel lines to the south of the gatehouse depict walls or some kind of open shed. The sale particular describes the farmstead (number 32) as 'Old Caynton Farm-House, Buildings, Fold, Garden, Fold Bank, Watering Pit &c.' with an orchard (number 33) to the south.

Two large oblong ponds are depicted to the south of the farmstead, which survived into the second half of the 20th century. That to the east was parallel with the north-south stretch of the road, while that to the west was aligned north-west to south-east. It is possible that these were remnants of a former moat (see discussion below). However, the ponds may well be stockwatering ponds or fishponds; at the time of the tithe there were several other ponds near the river and further east, a number of which still survive, for example one just to the west of the river Meese at Wood Farm (Figure 4).
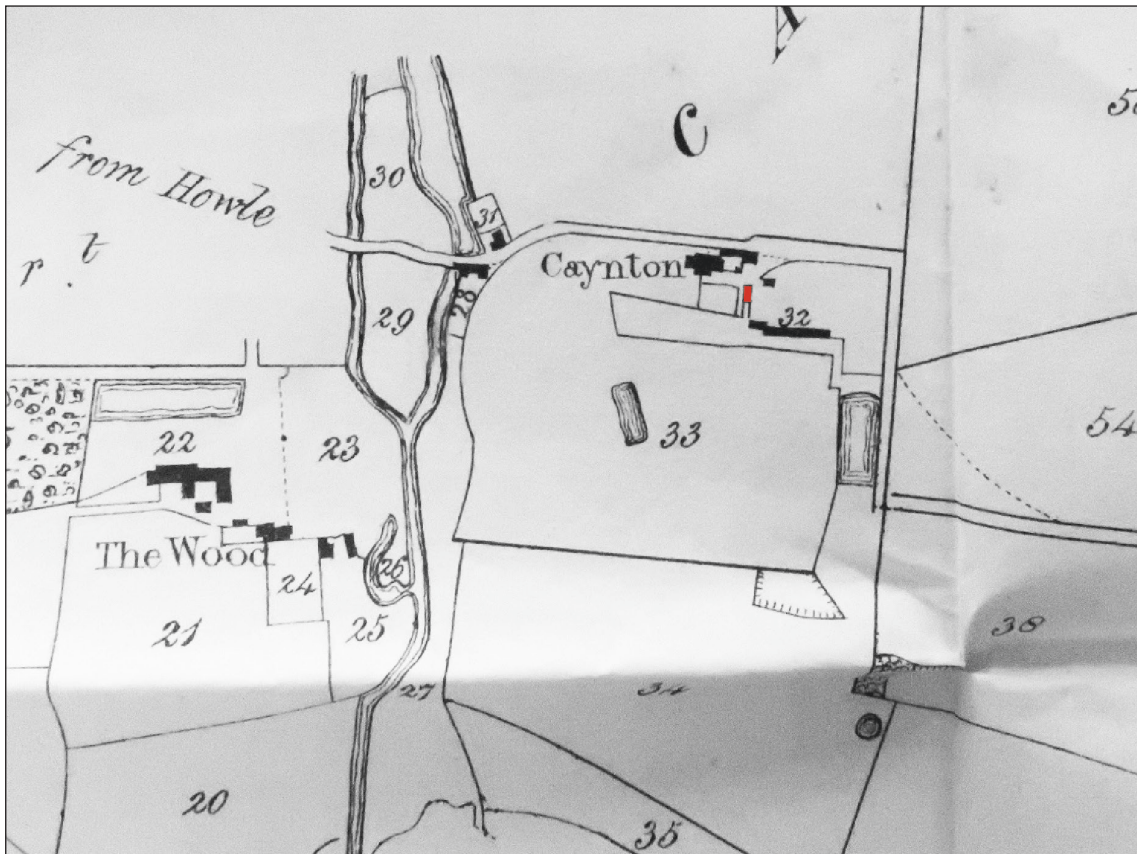
Figure 4: Detail from a sales plan of 1829 with the gatehouse highlighted in red (Shropshire Archives, 286/39/13)

Figure 5: Detail from the tithe map for Caynton in Edgmond parish, with the gatehouse highlighted in red (The National Archives, IR 30/29/120)
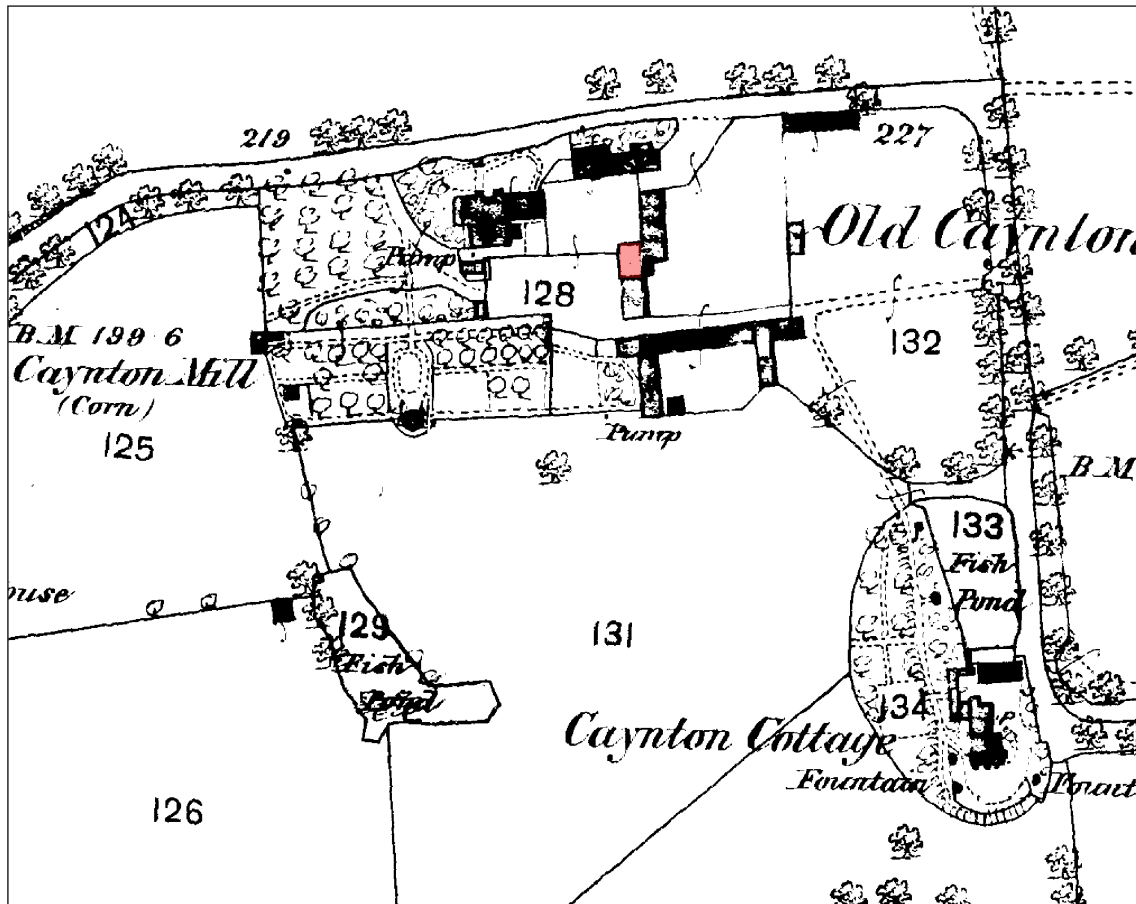
Figure 6: Detail from the Ordnance Survey map (map sheet Shropshire XXX.3) published in 1880, with the gatehouse highlighted in red (© and database right Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2018) Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024.)

By the time the tithe map of *c* 1841 was drawn up, more farm buildings had been erected, including two abutting the gatehouse to the north-east and south (Figure 5). Circular ponds had been created to the east of each of the oblong ponds. Between 1841 and 1880, there was relatively little change in the farmstead, apart from a few small-scale additions (Figures 5 and 6).

The Paddock family were the farmers at Caynton Manor from about 1841 to at least 1901, and members of the family lived at both Caynton Manor and Caynton House as tenants of the Briscoes.[30] By 1841, Thomas Paddock (born *c* 1791) was the farmer and, according to the tithe assessment, he was the occupier of both Caynton House and 'Old Caynton homestead'. He had been succeeded ten years later by his son, Thomas junior, who farmed 720 acres and employed 25 labourers. By 1861, he lived at Caynton House, while his brother William lived with his wife Louisa at 'Old Caynton House' where they farmed 360 acres and employed 12 men and three boys. By 1871, their acreage had increased slightly to 386 acres. By 1881, William had died but his widow and their son William junior continued to farm at Caynton Manor. Louisa is last found there at the time of the 1901 Census. Ten years later, she had moved to Newport, Shropshire, and John Henry Matthews lived at the farm. He retired a few years later and in 1918 and 1919 two sales of his livestock and
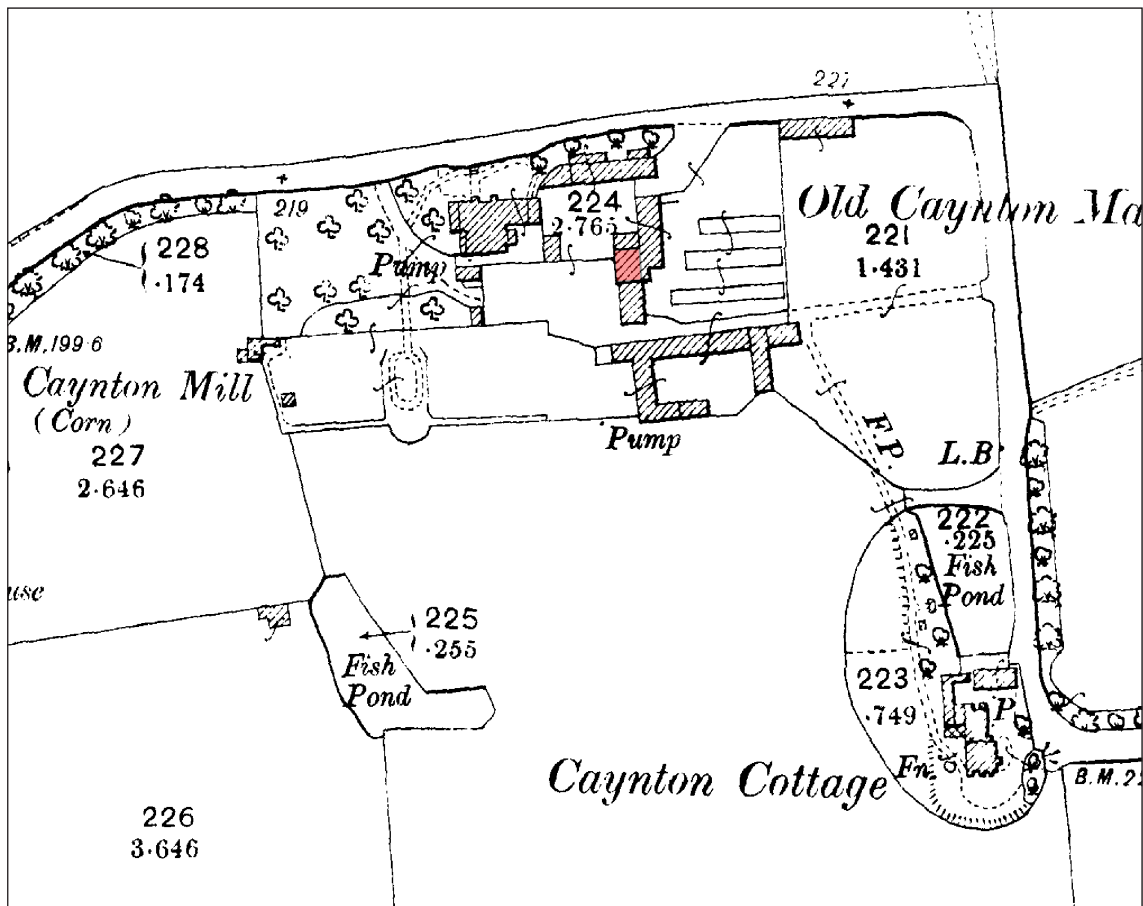
Figure 7: Detail from the Ordnance Survey map (map sheet Shropshire XXX.3) revised in 1901, with the gatehouse highlighted in red (© and database right Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2018) Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024.)

agricultural equipment took place.[31] By 1929, the tenant farmer was Mr F. Martin Furniss. The Furniss family subsequently bought the farm from the Briscoe family in the second half of the 20th century.

The general layout of the farm at Caynton Manor changed relatively little during the late 19th century, with only piecemeal additions (Figures 6-8). In November 1883, the *Wellington Journal* reported that a fire at the farm had started in one of the cowhouses.[32] No further details are known about this incident. By 1926, two large open barns had been built to the east of the gatehouse (Figure 8). One of them had been rebuilt or extended by 1969 (Figure 9).

According to map evidence, a building was built against the gatehouse's north elevation between 1880 and 1901 (Figures 6 and 7). Between 1926 and 1969, a large open-sided extension was built to the west. Both of these extensions have since been demolished.

In 1975, planning permission was granted for the erection of a 75 x 65 foot span steel-framed portal building.[33] In 1979, permission was granted for the change of use to dog boarding kennels.[34] This was renewed in 1980.[35] In 2016, planning

Figure 8: Detail from the Ordnance Survey map (map sheet Shropshire XXX.3), revised in 1926, with the gatehouse highlighted in red (© and database right Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2018) Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024.)

permission and listed building consent were granted for a rear extension to Old Caynton Manor and other minor alterations.[36] Amended plans were approved in 2017.[37]
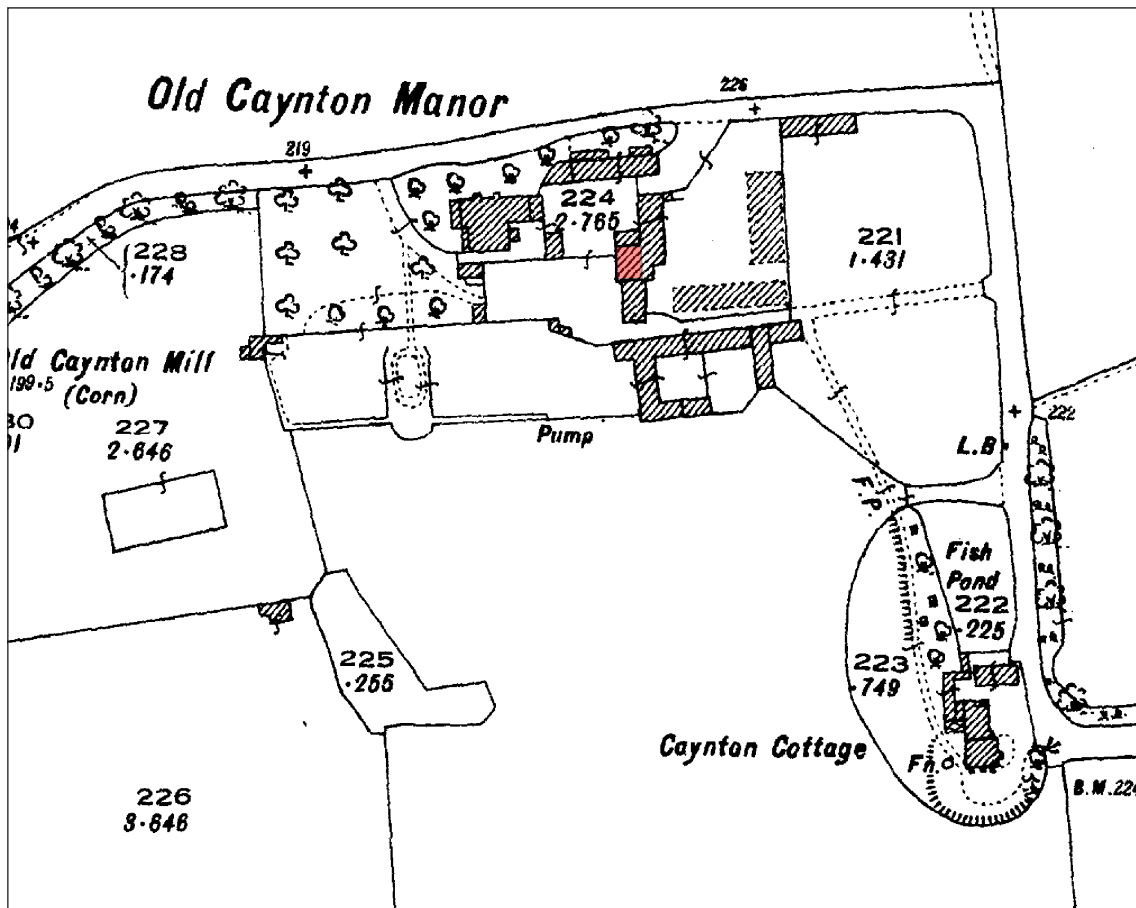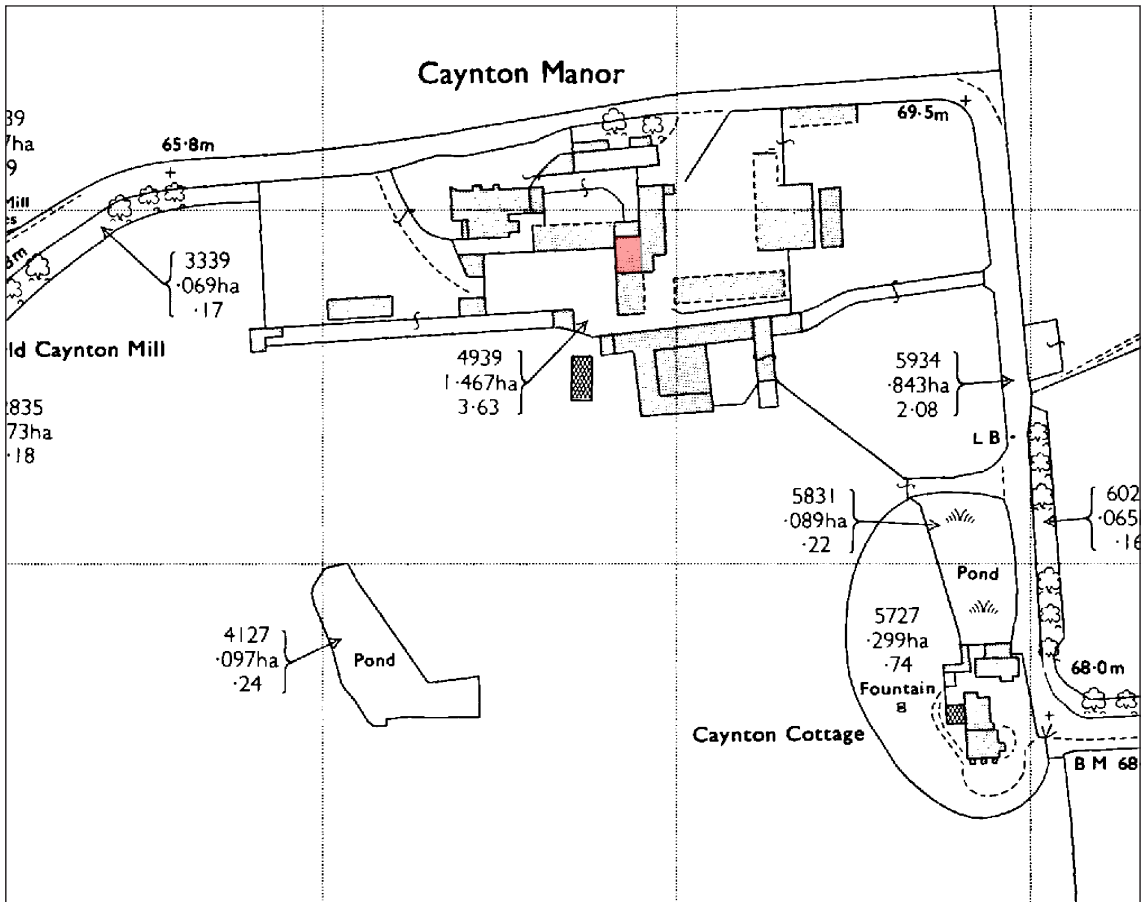
Figure 9: Detail from the Ordnance Survey map published in 1969, with the gatehouse highlighted in red (© and database right Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2018) Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024.)

BUILDING ANALYSIS

The following analysis describes the principal features assigned to each phase of the building's development. It is clear that after its construction the building has been subject to many alterations throughout its history. The extent to which these can be reconciled into definite phases is limited, as many of the alterations would have been piecemeal.

Figure 10: The west elevation (DP220882)

Phase 1: *Circa* 1635

This represents the principal phase of construction of the gatehouse. The date '1635' is part of an inscription on the overmantel of the first-floor south room. It is confirmed by stylistic features such as the window mouldings and the patterns and motifs of the plasterwork. Similar plasterwork can be found in decorative schemes of the early 17th century throughout Shropshire (see discussion below).

As constructed, the gatehouse was a two-storey, gabled building of brick laid in English bond (Figures 10, 11). Red sandstone was used for the base, the quoins, a frieze above the ground floor, window dressings, the arches of the passageway and the eaves cornice. On each floor of the long elevations were two windows with hollow-chamfer mullions. The ground-floor windows were of three lights, and

Figure 11: The gatehouse from the north-west (DP220883)

those above of four, with transoms. The sandstone is likely to have been quarried locally; for example, the 1901 OS map shows a sandstone quarry just to the north of Caynton House.[38] While this may not have been the source of the stone in 1635, it demonstrates the wider area's potential for sandstone quarrying.

The original roof was probably gabled, as now, with chimneys at either end. The presence of the stone cornice on the long elevations and what appears to be part of an original tie-beam against the north wall make a gabled building more likely than a flat roof with parapets.

A frieze with cabled fluting runs around the building, although stone erosion has abraded the detailing somewhat over time where it has been exposed to the elements. Its original form can be best seen on the south elevation where it has been protected by lean-to buildings (Figures 12, 13). Both the north and south elevations are relatively plain, although they have the continuous sandstone base and the frieze. Both have several scars from later, abutting buildings, including low-level disturbances at the centre of the elevations.

Figure 12: The south elevation with the best-preserved section of the fluted frieze (DP220869)

Figure 13: A detail of the frieze on the south elevation (DP220870)

Figure 14: The north jamb of the arch in the east elevation with a moulded impost and a recessed panel above a raised lozenge (DP220872)

The two outer arches sit centrally on the east and west elevations and are identical in detailing. The stonework is relatively plain albeit with a taller keystone at the top of the arch, voussoirs which may have had a simple chamfer, moulded imposts, recessed panels below the imposts, with bases of carved, raised lozenges (Figure 14). The only slight difference in decoration of the west and east elevations is a small truncated pendant to the keystone of the east arch (Figure 15). A third, shallower arch inside the central passage has large pintles on its west face (Figure 16). This face of the internal arch appears to have never had any impost mouldings, rather than losing them in a later alteration. The pintles are not original but are clearly historic and probably continued the presence of doors originally hung on this side. These features, together with the small pendant over the east arch, suggest that the gatehouse's outer elevation was to the east. The doors would have been hung on the west side of the internal arch, opening inwards.

Inside there were originally two ground-floor rooms, one on either side of the central gateway. They were accessed through doors at the west end of the passageway, which further strengthens the interpretation of the west elevation as the inner side, as they

Figure 15: The blocked east arch seen from inside with the keystone pendant (indicated by an arrow) (Rebecca Lane)

would be only accessible from inside the compound. The room to the south was originally heated although the fireplace was later remodelled, but there is no evidence of a fireplace in the north ground-floor room. A small archway from the western end of the passageway into the south room has a Tudor-style arch of sandstone (Figure 17). The corresponding access to the northern room must also have been at the western end of the passageway as the walling to the east is original and not interrupted by any former doorways. The precise original arrangement is unclear but may have included a separate access to the staircase.

It is not clear what form the original staircase took although it was probably in the north-west corner of the building as the first-floor joists do not run to the west wall on this side. There is no surviving evidence for an original attic access. The first floor was originally ceiled, so it is possible that the attic spaces were used. The attic could not be accessed during the site visit for this report and might hold further evidence.

Originally, as now, there were probably two rooms on the first floor, as well as an enclosed stairwell. The staircase would have led to a landing with doors into the main rooms. The two first-floor doors and their frames appear to be original. The doors are of plank and batten construction and have wrought-iron strap hinges, which are consistent with a date of about 1635. The hinges of the north-east door are of a round-end design; those on the south door with spearhead shaped ends.

Figure 16: The northern jamb of the internal arch seen from the south, showing the historic pintle and the lack of an impost moulding, both on the west (left) face (DP220867)

The doorframes are both moulded on their outer faces, although of subtly different designs, and are pegged into their respective partitions.

The north-east and south rooms have decorated plasterwork friezes and overmantels but the original plaster ceiling in the north-east room has been lost and that in the south room has been damaged and modified. The north-east room has a strapwork frieze of S-shapes, combined with an overmantel of a strapwork cartouche flanked by pilasters (Figure 18). The partition which divides this room from the north-west room runs very close up against the fireplace and overmantel. This awkward junction might be due to a later alteration, such as the moving east of the partition. It seems unlikely that the frieze originally ran along the west wall of the stairwell, as it does not show any cuts where it would have turned into the window jambs. On balance, and despite the awkward arrangement, it appears most logical that the partition is in its original position. While the beams, joists and some of the floor boards above the room appear to be original, the ceiling has been lost. The pattern of nailing on the underside of the ceiling joists indicates that this was originally a plaster ceiling suspended on laths, like that surviving in the southern room.

Figure 17: The archway into the ground-floor south room, looking southwest (Rebecca Lane)

Figure 18: The north wall of the first-floor north-east room with its fireplace and overmantel and the partition to the left (DP220855)

Figure 19: The first-floor south room, looking south-west (DP220850)

Figure 20: Detail of the plasterwork frieze on the south wall showing the repeating motifs of birds holding swags, S-shaped strapwork and a strapwork cartouche (DP220829)

Figure 21: The overmantel in the first-floor south room with the Yonge coat of arms (DP220827)

The south room has a more elaborate pattern of plasterwork, including S-shaped strapwork, some with human faces or dragons' heads, as well as flying birds, and pairs of birds holding swags (Figures 19, 20). The frieze continues on the window jambs. The overmantel in the south room is decorated with the Yonge family's coat of arms and the inscription 'WY 1635', flanked by two terms or terminal figures (human busts on a tapering pilaster, a common motif in classical architecture) (Figure 21). The family coat with its six combined arms is that recorded by the College of Heralds during their Visitation of Shropshire in 1623:

> Arms: Quarterly of six: 1, Or, three roses gules, YONGE [top left]; 2, Argent, seven lozenges conjoined, three, three, and one, ermines, HELSTOW [top right]; 3, Argent, a pale nebulae sable, KAYNTON [top centre]; 4, Sable, two shinbones in saltire argent, RANDOLPH [bottom left]; 5, Or, a fesse between three lions rampant gules, BANNERTON (?Bennarton) [bottom centre]; 6, Argent, a fesse (chevron) between three crescents gules, IPSTONES [bottom right]. Crest: A wolf passant sable.[39]

The plain plaster ceiling largely survives in the south room, albeit in poor condition. It seems likely that this is the original ceiling (with later patches), as the cornice is intact and shows no signs of interruptions from abutting beams, for example. The fireplaces of both of the main first-floor rooms are corbelled with a cyma recta cornice at the top; that in the south room also has an opening with a Tudor-style arch with a roll moulding (Figures 18, 19).

Both first-floor rooms have slim battens directly below the friezes, fixed with nails at more or less regular intervals (Figure 20). In the north-east room in particular there are also a number of projecting nails and at least one hook in the battens. Although not all of the nails are original, it seems likely that the battens were used to support wall-hangings, creating a richly decorative and colourful interior (see discussion below). Additional battens just above the door lintels were installed to hold the lower edge of a shorter piece of fabric in place. The presence of wall-hangings would also explain why the stud partition between the two rooms has been left in a relatively plain state, as this would have been originally hidden.

The attic could not be accessed at the time of the visit but the visible parts of the roof suggest that the trusses and rafters have been replaced but that the purlins might be older and re-used. Two of the visible purlins had empty lap joints, although not on the same alignment. A former tie-beam may also survive in truncated form against the north elevation.

Phase 2: 17th and 18th centuries

A relatively early change appears to be the blocking of the arch on the east elevation which marked the end of the gatehouse's use as a thoroughfare and the point when it was converted into an enclosed building. The arch was blocked with small, handmade bricks which may date from the 17th or 18th century (Figure 22). A small pegged timber window is set into the bricks; this is now bricked up as well.

Figure 22: The blocked arch in the east elevation with the later timber window frame (DP220876)

Phase 3: 19th century

According to map evidence, the farm buildings abutting the gatehouse to the east and south were built between *c* 1829 and 1841 (Figures 4 and 5). At that point the ground-floor windows of the east elevation were bricked up and their mullions removed.

Between 1880 and 1901, a building was erected against the north elevation. Its floor platform survives today and several scars and beam holes in that elevation appear to relate to this structure (Figure 11).

Conversion to farm use would also have obviated the need for an ornate and large staircase which would have taken up too much space. It seems likely that the original staircase was replaced with something smaller and more functional like the present ladder. Parts of the former gatehouse staircase may have been removed and installed in Old Caynton Manor, which has parts of a tapering splat balustrade consistent with an early 17th century date.[40] It is not clear if this was installed when the house was first built or at a later date.

A significant phase of alteration encompassed the reconstruction of the gable ends, and the replacement of most of the roof structure. The gables were rebuilt in brick laid in stretcher bond, and the roof rebuilt and covered with tiles. The south chimney was rebuilt but the north one was not. A window in the north gable suggests that the attic was then in use, probably accessed via a stair in the north-west corner of

the building (Figure 11). Although largely removed, some timberwork in this area may form part of this arrangement including part of a small post surviving hanging vertically from the ceiling of the first-floor north-west area. At the same time, the roof was rebuilt with king-post trusses of sawn timbers, although some elements of the original roof structure (particularly the purlins) may have been retained. The south fireplace on the ground floor was remodelled with a cast-iron grate.

The north room on the ground floor and the central passageway were at some point used as a stable. Both spaces were paved in brick paviours with drainage channels. A wider opening was created from the passageway into the north room, by demolishing part of the wall north of the central passageway as far as the central arch. It was replaced by a timber partition with a large door. Probably as part of these alterations, the north side of the pillar supporting the central arch was partially rebuilt in red brick with bull-nosed engineering brick to the north-west corner.

Phase 4: 20th and 21st centuries

Most of the more recent alterations appear to be of a piecemeal nature. The north-east room on the first floor has been most recently used for large water tanks. Pipes and wiring have been introduced in an ad hoc manner throughout the building. Between 1926 and 1969, a building was erected which abutted the north end of the gatehouse's west elevation. Since 1969, it and the building to the north have been demolished. More recently, a fire partly destroyed the building adjoining to the south and its roof was rebuilt using RSJ beams which are punched into the south elevation of the gatehouse, albeit probably reusing older openings (Figure 12).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The gatehouse as part of the wider site

Very little is known about the original layout of the site when the gatehouse was built, due to the scarcity of surviving documentary evidence and built remains, other than the gatehouse. It seems most likely that the gatehouse served as the main approach to the manor house, although it is not impossible that it was the gate to another feature, such as, for example, a courtyard or a walled garden. Gatehouses are occasionally found as part of walled gardens; the small Tudor gatehouse at Bramshott Place, Hampshire, is one such example. In either case, the gatehouse at Caynton Manor would have been flanked by abutting walls running north and south. It is possible that the scars at the centre of the north and south elevations relate to such a forecourt wall, although they would have been quite low. Alternatively, any forecourt walls may not have been bonded into the brickwork of the gatehouse and their removal left no major scar.

If it related to the house, it seems probable that the gatehouse was originally located close to and on axis with the manor house. According to John Goodall, until the 1650s gatehouses generally stood in close proximity to the building they served.[41] For example at the slightly earlier ensemble of *c* 1580-1600 at Upton Cressett, also in Shropshire, the gatehouse is only 25m to the south-east of the house and aligned with it. On that basis, one would expect the former house at Caynton Manor to have been to the west of the gatehouse, south of the road and slightly to the south of the current house.

Although the present house is generally dated to the late 18th century, it is possible that it has earlier origins. It contains 17th-century elements, such as parts of a staircase with tapering splat balusters and two roof trusses.[42] There are also curious features like the small blocked windows on the north elevation which may be remnants of older windows. There is said to be a mullioned cellar window similar to those at the gatehouse, although this was not mentioned by the building historian Richard K. Morriss in his report on the building in 2015.[43] A full investigation of the house, which was outside the scope of this assessment, might throw further light on this.

Other questions, which remain at present unresolved, concern the provenance of the fragments of early fabric on the site. A corbel crudely carved with a human face has been set into the gable of the building to the north of the gatehouse (Figure 23). Its provenance is unknown but it may have been found on the wider site. It seems most likely that it was set into the gable when the building was erected in the early 19th century.

A number of brick farm buildings, including those to the east of the gatehouse, have bases of three or four courses of large, carefully worked red sandstone blocks with tool marks (Figure 24). Some blocks show signs of chipping which may indicate that they were reused, although these are generally on the exterior and might be due to weathering or abrasion. The stones on the interior generally have sharper

Figure 23: The *ex situ* carved corbel on the west gable of the building to the north of the gatehouse (© Mark Furniss, reproduced with permission)

Figure 24: The sandstone base on the interior of the building attached to the east of the gatehouse (Rebecca Lane)

edges, yet a closer inspection shows that several differently sized stone blocks were used, sometimes even within one course. Such improvisation tends to support the theory that, like the carved corbel, they were in fact re-used from elsewhere. Several secondary sources have interpreted them as having come from earlier buildings or walls on the site and possibly the historic manor house.[44] Alternatively, they may be the *in situ* bases of previous farm buildings on the site, possibly timber-framed, which were later rebuilt in brick.[45] Any such earlier buildings were most likely constructed later than the gatehouse, which was clearly designed as a free-standing building, with windows in the long elevations and, probably, abutting boundary walls to the north and south.

The possible existence of a moat at Caynton Manor

Historic mapping shows rectangular ponds on either side of Caynton Manor, to east and west (see Figures 4-9). Neither exists now. The road passing the Manor makes two right-angled turns, forming two sides of a rectangle within which the Manor buildings sit. One of the ponds lay alongside the road to the east, the other would have formed part of the western side of this rectangular plot; some of the maps show this pond as L-shaped (see Figures 6-9), suggesting the possibility that it is the south-west corner of a moat. The question therefore arises as to whether Caynton Manor at one time had an enclosing moat, with the historically mapped ponds and the unusual road alignment being its only surviving signature. A brief search of the Historic England Archive has found no available specialist aerial photographs that would throw any light on the issue.

While Shropshire does not have as many moated sites as the neighbouring counties of Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire, they are not uncommon here; 117 were recorded in the 1970s.[46] Ian Burrow thought the upper figure should be 114, of which all but 9 were rectangular, 26 had manorial status and 5 had ecclesiastical connections.[47] The *Pastscape* database now returns 149 records for 'moat' in Shropshire and a further 16 in Telford and Wrekin but some of these are duplicated records and some are 'possible' sites only.[48]

If the road and mapped ponds at Caynton represent the edges of a moat it would have overall dimensions of about 200m east-west by 160m transversely. This would make it a very large moat, at the upper end of the size range of such monuments nationally. Most moats contain an area of less than 0.25ha and those that exceed this size form a very small proportion of the whole population.[49] According to the Ordnance Survey (OS) the average size of moats nationally is 76m by 60m.[50] The largest moat in Worcestershire, at Hunt End, Redditch, measures approximately 200m by 130m.[51] Moats of this size are generally associated with episcopal palaces or manors at the very highest aristocratic level of the social scale.

The nearest known moat to Caynton is that at Cherrington Manor House about 3 km to the south-west, which is also a relatively large moat.[52] According to the entry on the National Record of the Historic Environment its maximum dimensions are 130m by 160m but this seems to be an exaggeration; measurement from OS Mastermap suggests that 100m by 120m would be more realistic. Other large moats

in Shropshire include Acton Burnell Castle (at least 200m on its longest dimension), built by the powerful Robert Burnell, Chancellor of England, in the late 13th century, and Whitchurch 1 (100m by 80m), which enclosed a medieval hospital.

There are a large number of ponds in the area around Caynton according to current OS mapping, so no special reason necessarily needs to be considered for the presence of ponds at Caynton. The sharply angled turns in the road could be the result of the route going around a manorial *curia* that was not moated but was bounded in some other way, by a wall, bank or hedge.

In conclusion, while it is not inherently unlikely that there could have been a moat surrounding Caynton Manor the evidence at present available does not make a very strong positive case for it. The very large size of a moat suggested by the distance between the ponds and the layout of the road also makes its presence less likely.

Post-medieval domestic gatehouses

According to John Goodall, 'to European travellers before the industrial age, gatehouses were an omnipresent architectural form'.[53] They performed an important defensive function, excluding those who had no right of entry, and could be found in all major residential, urban, religious, military and institutional complexes. Madge Moran has estimated that there have been about 50 gatehouses from all periods in Shropshire, some of which survive at least in part and for some there is only documentary evidence.[54] She sums up their general development as follows: 'They seem to reflect a tradition of defence which had its origins in the 11th century, reached maturity in the 13th and 14th centuries, had become a token of fashion and prestige by the 16th century, was transmuted to timber-framing in the first half of the 17th century and abandoned after the Civil War.'[55] The national picture is similar, with smaller, less obtrusive gatehouses replacing in the early 17th century the tall and ostentatious ones of the Tudor period. According to Paula Henderson, 'by 1600 the gatehouse had been transformed from the most visible and imposing feature of the house and its setting to a decorative frill'.[56] The decline of the gatehouse after the Civil War was due to several factors. As they lost their defensive importance, they were increasingly replaced by smaller porter's lodges or just a gateway. Also, the house became a dramatic architectural showpiece in itself, which no longer needed a gatehouse to herald its importance.[57] Instead, it was more important to experience views of the house and its setting unimpeded by a gatehouse.[58]

In the early 17th century, as gatehouses increasingly lost their military importance, other considerations came to the fore, making the gatehouse a representative showpiece. The level of external decoration varied but some decoration could be found on most gatehouses of the early Stuart period, regardless of their building material. The classic example for this change is the gatehouse at Stokesay Castle in Shropshire, a highly decorative timber-framed building of 1640-41 which probably replaced an earlier stone gatehouse.[59] Early 17th-century gatehouses in Shropshire were frequently, although not invariably, timber-framed. Other examples include the Council House gatehouse of *c* 1620 in Shrewsbury, and the upper storey of the gatehouse at Langley Hall which was added in *c* 1606-7 to an earlier stone building.[60]

Brick or stone gatehouse could also be highly decorative. Externally, the gatehouse at Caynton Manor appears to be relatively plain, if compared to grander examples such as the brick gatehouse at Upton Cressett in Shropshire or the ornate stone gatehouse of *c* 1636-51 at Lanhydrock in Cornwall.[61] However, it has lost its original gables and chimneystacks and it seems likely that these would have added to the external decoration.

Decoration was not limited to the exterior of a post-medieval gatehouse and it is not unusual to find plasterwork in an upper room. For example, the two first-floor rooms at the gatehouse at Upton Cressett have ornate plasterwork ceilings contemporary with the building, which feature portcullises, Prince of Wales feathers and Recusant imagery. (The recording in 1957 by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England also mentioned plasterwork in the gateway but it is not clear if this survives today.[62]) Another early 17th-century example of decorative interiors can be found in the gatehouse at Skipton Castle in Yorkshire which was probably redecorated by Henry Clifford, 5th earl of Cumberland, in 1626-9. The ground floor was decorated like a grotto with shells and pebbles, while the upper room has a plaster frieze with the family motto, heraldic shields and grotesque creatures.[63]

The original use of the gatehouse

The main functions of post-medieval domestic gatehouses were to control access and as an architectural showpiece. According to Paula Henderson, 'the gate or gatehouse was the first opportunity for the owner to display pride in his or her family and achievements, loyalty to the crown or to present the decorative themes that would be repeated elsewhere in the house'.[64] No such external decorative features, like heraldic symbols for example, survive at Caynton but they may have been lost when the roof and gables were rebuilt. The main decoration of the elevations is the fluted frieze and there are no obvious missing features such as carved inscriptions, cyphers or dates. However, the coat of arms on the first-floor overmantel performs much the same function. No depictions of the manor house survive and it is thus impossible to judge whether the gatehouse's architectural style and detailing was intended to harmonise with that of the house, by for example displaying similar features. Indeed, while owners with substantial means may have rebuilt sites in totality, the piecemeal addition of a fashionable gatehouse to an earlier complex would also have been a likely process.

Typically, at least one room on the ground floor would have been for the use of the porter, with a door communicating with the gate passage. This might have been his lodging or just an office during the day. At Caynton, the south room on the ground floor was heated, and it seems likely that this was the porter's room. At least part of the north room would have been taken up by a staircase; the remainder appears always to have been unheated, but may have been used for storage or other non-domestic functions.

The upper rooms of late 16th- and early 17th-century gatehouses like those at Caynton and Upton Cressett were often heated by fireplaces and also internally decorated with plasterwork. These spaces were clearly too grand for servants'

accommodation and may have been intended for the accommodation of guests or family members. The latter category includes a use akin to a dower house. Paula Henderson quotes the early 17th-century example of St Catherine's Court in Somerset whose lease was left by John Blanchard to his son William while stipulating that the 'small parlour over the entry' should be for the use of his widow.[65]

Alternatively, the first floor of a gatehouse may have been in occasional use for pleasure and entertainment. Many had decorated upper rooms, which might have featured tapestries, wainscoting, painted decoration, and plasterwork friezes, ceilings and overmantels.[66] There is relatively little evidence on how these spaces were used but they seem to have been generally used for entertaining. For example, in the reign of James I the rooms in a gatehouse at Enfield (now in London) included dining and withdrawing chambers on the second floor.[67]

It seems likely that many functions of the early 17th-century gatehouses overlapped with garden buildings such as banqueting houses, summerhouses and belvederes.[68] Banqueting houses were a loosely-defined building type where light refreshments might be served, requiring only a view, for example of a garden, and proximity to the main house. They could be detached garden buildings or structures on the roof of the main house. A summerhouse was a related building type, although this was more usually a free-standing garden building. A famous example is the small circular brick summerhouse or garden pavilion at the Vyne, Hampshire, which has been dated by dendrochronology to 1630.[69] Few decorated interiors survive in Tudor and early Stuart garden buildings but accounts relate their original elaborate decorations. A plasterwork frieze and ceiling survives, for example, in the roof-top banqueting house at Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire (1590s).[70]

Other such occasional uses of gatehouses, particularly of those with more than two storeys, may have included those of gazebo or belvedere. The two-storey gatehouse at Lanhydrock is said to have been used originally as hunting lodge; it is axially located in front of the house and overlooks the surrounding park.[71]

The gatehouse at Caynton may have been used for any of these related and overlapping entertainment functions if it was located at the entrance to the manor house but would have been particularly reinforced if it was originally placed at the entrance of a walled garden. However, without a better understanding of the layout of the wider site it is difficult to establish how the gatehouse related to the other buildings formerly on the site.
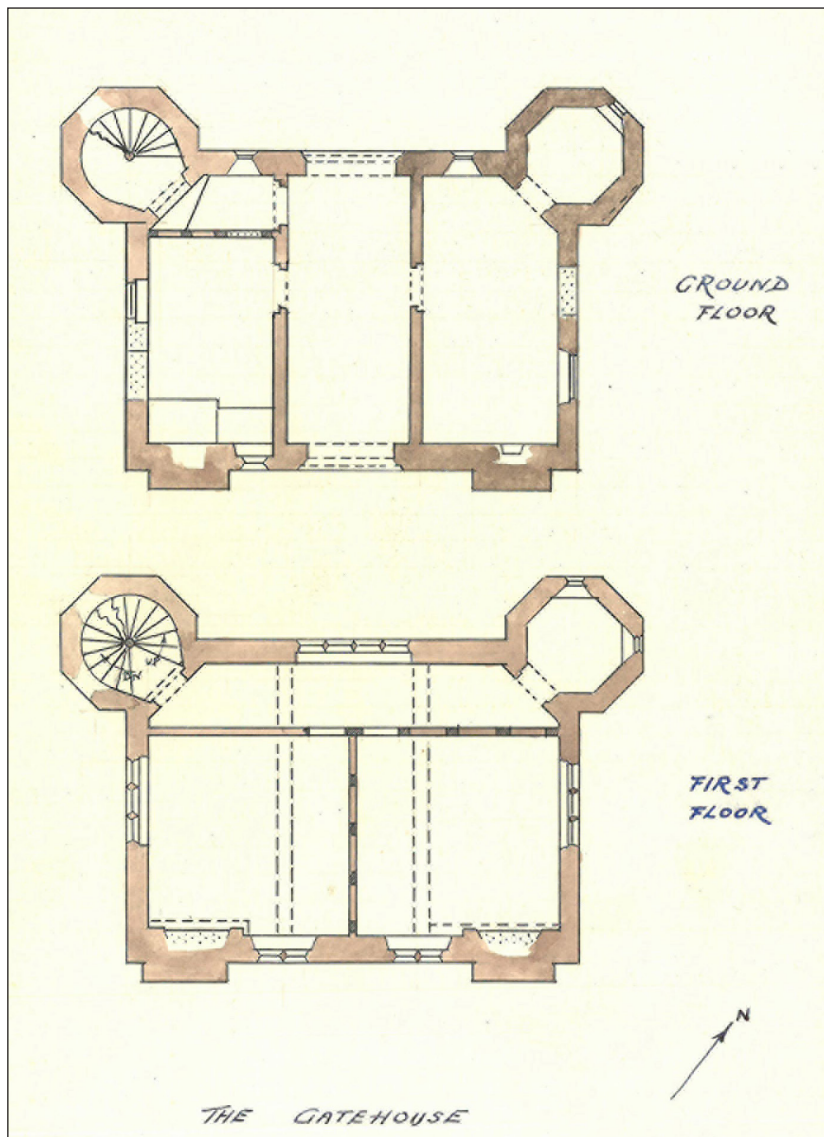
Figure 25: Plans of the gatehouse at Upton Cressett (Historic England Archive, BF032684)

The planform of the gatehouse

It seems likely that the original plan of the gatehouse at Caynton Manor was broadly similar to that of the slightly earlier gatehouse at Upton Cressett. Its plan survived relatively unaltered in 1957 when it was recorded by Royal Commission investigators (Figure 25).[72] The ground floor was divided into three spaces by brick walls flanking the gate passage, of which the east wall had been rebuilt. The west room was subdivided by an original timber-framed partition to create a small lobby to the stair in the west turret. The east and west rooms on both floors were originally heated by fireplaces. On the first floor, an original timber-framed partition divided the two main rooms from a narrow passage along the north. Although some details like the turrets differ from the gatehouse at Caynton Manor, the general layout is surprisingly similar, with two rooms on the ground floor flanking the passage, and two main rooms on the first floor.

Plasterwork in Shropshire

There appears to have been no systematic study of early 17th-century plasterwork in Shropshire so far. Nevertheless, it is clear that the plasterwork friezes in the gatehouse belong to a distinct local group of early 17th-century plasterwork.

According to the *Buildings of England* volume for Shropshire there were two earlier stylistic groups in Shropshire: The first group of ceilings have fields divided by thin ribs in geometrical patterns; the fields are decorated with leaf sprigs, fleurs-de-lys and running animals. These ceilings occur generally in houses dating from the 1570s-90s. The second group is nearly coeval (1580s-90s) and has similar elements but also words and mottoes.[73] For example, the plasterwork at the house and gatehouse at Upton Cressett belongs to this group.

The friezes at the Caynton Manor gatehouse belong to a third, slightly later group which features strapwork in high relief combined with large motifs, particularly animals. These schemes appear to date generally to the early 17th century. The near identical appearance of some elements and patterns suggest at least some kind of mutual influence and possibly even that the same plasterers worked on several of these schemes. Several examples in this group have plasterwork friezes with strapwork medallions or roundels alternating with birds holding tasselled swags.

Figure 26: The plasterwork in the drawing room at Benthall Hall, Shropshire; photographed in 1995 (Historic England Archive, BF94928)

For the medallions the same moulds appear to have been used in several schemes. The bird motif also appears in the plasterwork at Caynton Manor, albeit without the roundels.

The most complete schemes of this group are at Benthall Hall and Abcott Manor. The interiors of Benthall Hall were remodelled in the early 17th century by Lawrence Benthall (inherited 1633, died 1652), including the drawing room with its strapwork ceiling with enriched beams and a frieze (Figures 26-27). The frieze has repeating motifs of roundels filled with strapwork and an animal at its centre. The space between the roundels is filled with further strapwork on which two birds perch, holding tasselled swags which thread through the strapwork. The general pattern remains the same throughout the frieze but the size and shape of the birds varies and in one section a human face or mask is holding part of the swag.

Figure 27: Detail of the frieze at Benthall Hall, Shropshire; photographed in 1995 (Historic England Archive, BF94928)

Another example can be found at Abcott Manor at Clungunford, in a part of the house which has been stylistically dated to *c* 1620-30 (Figure 28).[74] The great chamber on the first floor of the east half of the north range has a frieze which is nearly identical to that at Benthall Hall, although there are small variations: the pattern of the strapwork is slightly different, the medallions are not filled with strapwork, and the birds are bending further forward.

A similar frieze was clearly planned in a first-floor bedroom at Reaside Manor, an early 17th-century manor house near Cleobury Mortimer, but only the roundels with the animals in relief survive today; they are said to be the only part which was actually completed.[75] A ceiling and part of a frieze at the Crown Inn (the former Raven Hotel) in Bridgnorth are also said to belong to the same group.[76] The list entry describes the ceiling decoration as 'strapwork ornament in panels bounded by beams'.[77]

A variation in the motif of the birds holding tasselled swags occurs in the 17th-century plasterwork frieze in the Old Council House in Shrewsbury (Figure 29). The

Figure 28: Detail of the plasterwork frieze in the first-floor great chamber at Abcott Manor, Clungunford, Shropshire (Historic England Archive, BF110302, 2K/08829)

Figure 29: Central section of the plaster frieze in the hall of the Old Council House in Shrewsbury, photographed in 1985 (Historic England Archive, BF035801)

building dates from the 15th and 17th centuries with early 19th-century alterations and additions.[78] The entrance hall has a Jacobean fireplace with overmantel, a deep plasterwork frieze on the wall opposite, and a stone ceiling boss over a window with the date '1634' whose authenticity has been questioned.[79] The room has been altered in connection with 19th-century subdivisions. Neither the wall with the frieze, nor that with the fireplace appears to be original, and both features must have been re-instated. The frieze features the bird motif but here much larger birds face outwards, not inwards, and there are no medallions and very little strapwork.

The motif of birds holding swags in the frieze at Caynton Manor appears to be most closely related to the plasterwork at Benthall Hall and Abcott Manor, due to their combination with strapwork. The Caynton example shows perhaps a greater degree of variation in the shape of the swags and the size and type of bird (Figures 20, 30-32). In general, the pattern is less complex, for example with tasselled swags which hang straight down and do not thread through the strapwork as at Benthall Hall, which also has a kind of cornucopia hanging from the swag (Figure 27).

The plasterwork at Caynton is the most northerly known example of the group, although more examples may yet await discovery. The Old Council House at Shrewsbury is to the south-west of Caynton, and further south are Benthall Hall and the fragment at Bridgnorth. Abcott Manor, and Reaside Manor are in the very south of the county, near the border to Herefordshire and Worcestershire, respectively.

Figure 30: Detail of the frieze on the north wall of the gatehouse's first-floor south room (DP220818)

Figure 31: Detail of the frieze on the north wall of the gatehouse's first-floor south room (DP220820)

Figure 32: Detail of the frieze on the east wall of the gatehouse's first-floor south room (DP220825)

The evidence for wall-hangings

There is evidence that the plasterwork was not the only kind of decoration in the gatehouse's first-floor rooms. It seems likely that they also featured wall-hangings, hung from nails or hooks in the battens directly below the friezes. The battens can be found in both rooms, with flush and projecting nails, and at least one hook (Figures 20, 30-32).

Another example for this combination of a plaster frieze and wall-hangings can be found at the Croft, Washford, Somerset, which has similar battens with projecting nails or hooks below a plasterwork frieze of the late 16th century.[80] While the wall-hangings do not survive, the batten and the hooks at the Croft have been convincingly identified as having originally supported a wall-hanging, probably a stained cloth.

Due to the higher status of the gatehouse at Caynton, its wall-hangings may have been either stained cloths or tapestries. Stained cloths were a cheaper alternative to woven tapestries, which they frequently imitated in their motifs and by letting the weave of the canvas shine through the paint. However, they were popular at all levels of society and a notable set of four cloths of *c* 1599-1600 survives in the chapel of Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire.[81] Nationally, stained cloths remained popular into the early 18th century, but in Shropshire references in probate inventories largely died out during the 17th century, although that is not necessarily clear evidence that they ceased to be used.[82] Research into the manufacture, distribution, methods of hanging and iconography of stained cloths are hampered by the lack of examples surviving *in situ*. A rare Shropshire example is the late 17th-century set of cloths in a wing of Munslow Farm, where they are framed and combined with panelling.[83] The Munslow stained cloths are closely related in their depiction of foliage to a group of hangings formerly found across England.[84] Only one set, that at Owlpen Manor in Gloucestershire, can still be found in its original building, although it has been moved to a different room.

Tapestries were a more expensive choice of wall-hanging. According to Paula Henderson, Tudor and Stuart inventories frequently mention tapestries in gatehouses. For example, an inventory of 1542 for the 1520s gatehouse at Sutton Place, Surrey, includes four pieces of 'verders [verdure, i.e. a tapestry depicting trees or other vegetation] paned with red and white' and depicting the Weston family's heraldic emblems and coat of arms.[85] Tapestries might also be found in banqueting houses. For example, in *c* 1585 Robert Dudley, the earl of Leicester, commissioned a set of tapestries for a banqueting house from the Sheldon workshops.[86] Like stained cloths, the subject matter of tapestries could vary widely, from purely decorative to depicting a narrative. Both types of wall-hanging performed the same functions: to provide colour and decoration but also to exclude drafts, offer some kind of insulation, and reduce condensation.[87]

Conclusion

The gatehouse probably controlled access to a forecourt in front of the manor house. A house was certainly extant by the late 16th century, and this may have been replaced at the same time as the gatehouse, although there is no definite evidence for this. The house was probably located to the west of the gatehouse and aligned with it. It certainly appears to have been destroyed, or at least not assessable, by the time of the hearth tax in 1672. The present house is generally dated to the late 18th century but it contains earlier fabric and may have earlier origins. A full investigation of the house might be able to clarify its date and evolution.

The upper rooms of the gatehouse were clearly high-status spaces, sumptuously decorated with plasterwork friezes, overmantels and, it seems likely, wall-hangings such as tapestries or stained cloths, but contextual study makes it clear that this is by no means inconsistent with a gatehouse structure. The first-floor rooms might have been in domestic use or as spaces for entertainment or taking refreshments. The plasterwork shares common features with several other early 17th-century ceilings and friezes in high-status houses in Shropshire, notably the motif of the birds holding swags. All known examples are found in the southern part of the county and south of Caynton but others may await discovery.

Many aspects of the original layout of the site are still unclear. An aerial investigation and/or geophysical survey could help locate any below-ground remains and illuminate the early history of the site. Apart from the potential locations of the manor house (or houses), this should also include the wider site, including the site of the two former ponds to the south. Further work on the gatehouse structure would also be highly likely to reveal more about its history. In particular an examination of the attic may reveal more about the original form and use of this space, specifically focusing on the partially truncated tie beam which appears to survive adjacent to the north elevation.

Notwithstanding the uncertainties about the use of the gatehouse and the form of the compound it was part of, it is clear that in its earliest form it provided high-status accommodation which must have formed a central part of the domestic arrangements for the manorial complex. The status of comparable examples of plasterwork reinforces the fact that this represented a significant investment on the part of the owner at the time, and the design and decorative forms used were clearly of the most fashionable form being used in Shropshire at the time.

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ENDNOTES

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4   See for example Morriss 2015, 12

5   Auden 1913, v

6   Emery 2000, 500

7   Staffordshire Record Office, B/C/11 William Yonge, 1584, www.findmypast. co.uk, accessed 22 June 2018

8   Cox 2002

9   Yonge 1969

10   Auden 1913, v

11   Information form Mrs Furniss

12   Morriss 2015, 33

13   Moran 2003, 441

14   Information from Mrs Furniss

15   Cox (ed.) 2002, 14; Yonge 1969, 2

16   Baugh (ed.) 1979, 60

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52 Historic England National Record of the Historic Environment 72429

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56   Henderson 2005, 71

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58   Goodall 2012, 22

59   Newman and Pevsner 2006, 611; Moran 2003, 22; Summerson 2009, 32

60   NHLE 1247157; Hillam and Groves 1993

61   NHLE 1053757 (Upton Cressett); 1157994 (Lanhydrock)

62   Historic England Archive, BF032684

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67   Ibid

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69   Howard 2010, 39; National Trust *Heritage Records Online* website, record 122055*0 / MNA129605, https://heritagerecords.nationaltrust.org.uk/HB-SMR/MonRecord.aspx?uid=MNA129605, accessed 22 June 2018

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