

AUDLEY END HOUSE,  
SAFFRON WALDEN, ESSEX  
SUPPLEMENT TO AUDLEY END STABLES  
HISTORIC BUILDINGS REPORT

Pete Smith



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## **SUMMARY**

This supplementary report has been compiled in response to a request for further information from Andrew Hann, Senior Properties Research Historian in Research & Standards, Properties Presentation, about a number of minor buildings, which form part of the stable complex at Audley End House. These include the New Coach House, the Tack Room and the Steam Engine House, plus the surface of the stable yard.

## **CONTRIBUTORS**

Andrew Hann

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

English Heritage staff at Audley End, and staff at the Essex County Record Office. Amanda Atton for her assistance in preparing this report and Kathryn Morrison for editing and assistance.

## **ARCHIVE LOCATION**

NMR Swindon

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2009

## **CONTACT DETAILS**

English Heritage

24 Brooklands Avenue

Cambridge

CB2 8BU

Pete Smith; 07730-050988; [peter.smith@english-heritage.org.uk](mailto:peter.smith@english-heritage.org.uk)

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## I. The New Coach House

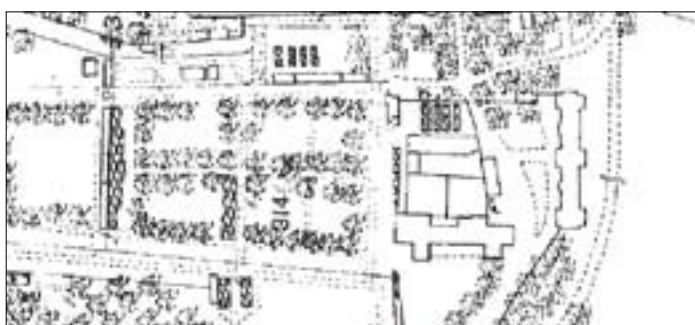
The new coach house (fig. 1) is situated on the north side of the present stable yard. It does not appear on any of the 18<sup>th</sup> century surveys or garden plans, though it does appear on the Ordnance Survey Map of 1877 (fig. 2). It was therefore probably built for the 5<sup>th</sup> Lord Braybrooke and designed by his architect, Richard Hussey. The brickwork and the architectural detailing are similar to the gardener's house which is dated 1875.



*Fig. 1. The New Coach House probably designed by Richard Hussey c.1875.*

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This detached building is constructed of brick in a variety of bonds. There is evidence under the eaves that this building was originally lime-washed. It has a slightly projecting central gabled section with a broad segmental arched doorway and double plank doors. Either side are single similar though slightly smaller segmental arched doorways with double plank doors. In the gable above the central archway is a three-light brick mullion window with graduated and pointed lights and leaded diamond panes. There are similar windows in the gables to the east and west, which each have a three-light casement window as well. The rear façade (fig. 3) is blank with a tall external brick chimney stack which served a forge in the western section of the building. This stack is not keyed into the rear wall suggesting that it is a later addition. It is stepped with cut brick off-sets; the upper section of this stack has been rebuilt and extended.



*Fig. 2. A detail of the Ordnance Survey Map of 1877, showing the New Coach House and the Tack Room.*





Fig. 3. The north and west fronts of the New Coach House showing the external brick chimney stack to the former forge.

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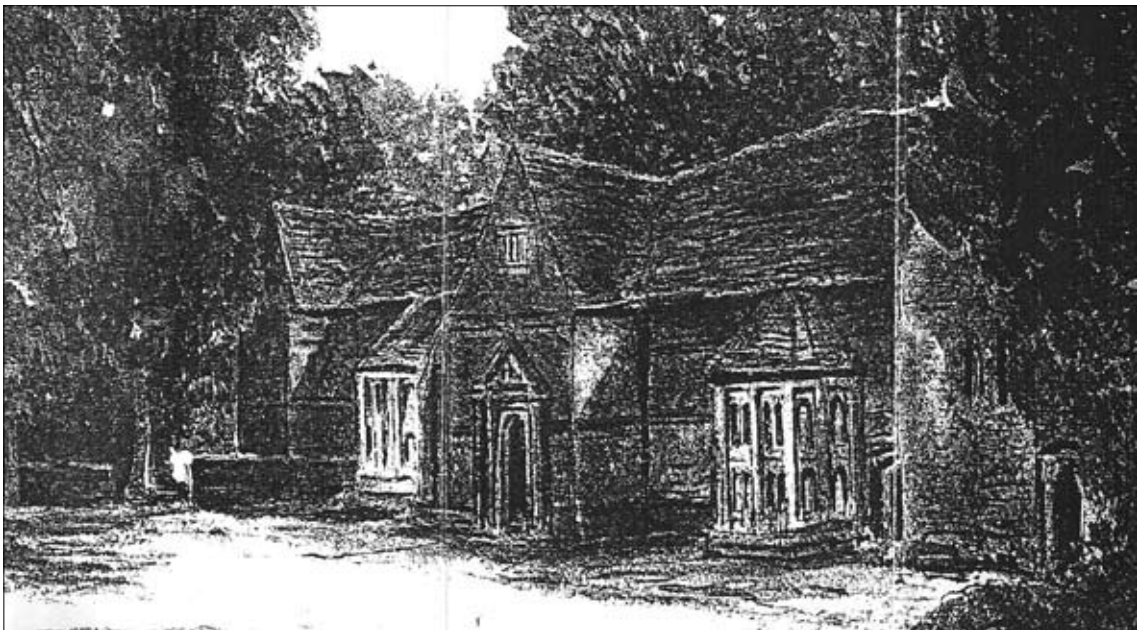
Fig. 4. The interior of the New Coach House converted into a motor garage in the early 20th century.

© Pete Smith

The building is divided into three internally. The central section with its large doors was intended to house grand coaches. It has a concrete floor and the walls are lined with plank panelling. The eastern section was presumably designed to house smaller coaches or possibly carts. It has a brick floor and an attic. The western coach house appears to have been converted at sometime into a forge or smithy, though only the chimney breast survives as evidence of this (fig. 4). The brick floor has a central 'inspection pit' which was inserted in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century for the servicing of motor cars. The walls are lined with plank panelling and there are fitted cupboards and work benches along its western wall; these too were presumably added when it became a motor house. There is a permanent ladder against the eastern wall giving access to an attic. The double doors to all of these coach houses are embossed 'MOW' suggesting that they were renewed in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century after Audley End became the property of the Ministry of Works.

This new coach house is prominently sited immediately opposite the north front of the main stable building, and the architectural details, especially the brick mullion windows were consciously designed in imitation of the original stable. This relatively plain and functional late 19<sup>th</sup> century building contributes successfully to the larger group of buildings which form this stable yard.

## 2. The Tack Room



*Fig. 5. Louisa Neville. Watercolour view of the Stable Yard and north front of the Stable Building c. 1840.*

*Reproduced by courtesy of Essex Record Office*

This small brick building is situated on the east side of the stable yard and it is attached to the walls which define the boundary on this side of the yard. This small building does not appear on any of the surveys or garden plans that survive from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, though it does appear on the Ordnance Survey Map of 1877 (fig. 3). This building is not visible on the watercolour view of the stable yard painted by Louisa Neville in 1840 (fig. 5). The building appears therefore to date from the middle years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



The sections of boundary wall on this eastern side of the stable yard are not aligned, and the tack room which adjoins the south wall at its south-east corner and the north wall at its north-west corner forms a link between them. In fact the front wall of the tack room incorporates the part of the north boundary wall that is made of flint and burnt bricks and which dates from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. (This wall has small round brick arches built into its lower sections approximately every 5 metres, one of which is incorporated into the tack room walling.)



*Fig. 6. The west front of the Tack Room.*

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The single storey tack room was constructed in two phases; the larger southern section and a small addition to the north. It has a plank door and a three-light casement window, similar to the casement windows surviving on the coach house (see above), on the west front (fig. 6). The south front has a single plank door; the north front has a plank door and a two-light window and the east front has a small window and a single external chimney stack. The building has a plain tile roof.

Internally this building is divided into three rooms. The additional northern room, only accessed from the north, now contains a W.C. The remaining two rooms which formed part of the original building are divided internally by a timber partition wall. The smaller northern room, accessed from the west doorway, which appears to have been a storeroom, now contains oil storage tanks. The larger room to the south (fig. 7) is accessed from the south doorway. It has a fireplace on its east wall with a stone fireplace (fig. 8) which may well have been re-used, and an iron basket-grate which may well also have been re-used. This east wall has had its plank panelling removed though the timber ties buried in the wall, to which the former panelling was attached, are clearly visible.



*Fig. 7. The interior of the Tack Room.*

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*Fig. 8. The fireplace in the Tack Room.*

© Pete Smith





*Fig. 9. The scars for fittings to support saddles in the Tack Room.*

© Pete Smith

On the surviving plank panelling on the north wall there are the scars of two rows of round headed fixings and the scars of saddles which once sat upon these fittings (fig. 9). Probably further fixings to support other pieces of riding tackle once existed on the lost panelling on the east wall. All this confirms the suggestion that this was the tack room before the later tack room was inserted into the western end of the coach house within the main stable building in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (see main report pages 16 and 44).

### **3. The Steam Engine House**

The steam engine house (fig. 10) is a lean-to structure attached to the north wall of the house at the south end of the barn range, on the west side of the stable yard. It was built as part of a longer lean-to structure originally, which extended further to the north. The lean-to to the north had its roof removed when the house was converted in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, though its walls still survive. The final section of this lean-to survives further to the north.



*Fig. 10. The Steam Engine House.*

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Fig. 11. The interior of the Steam Engine House.

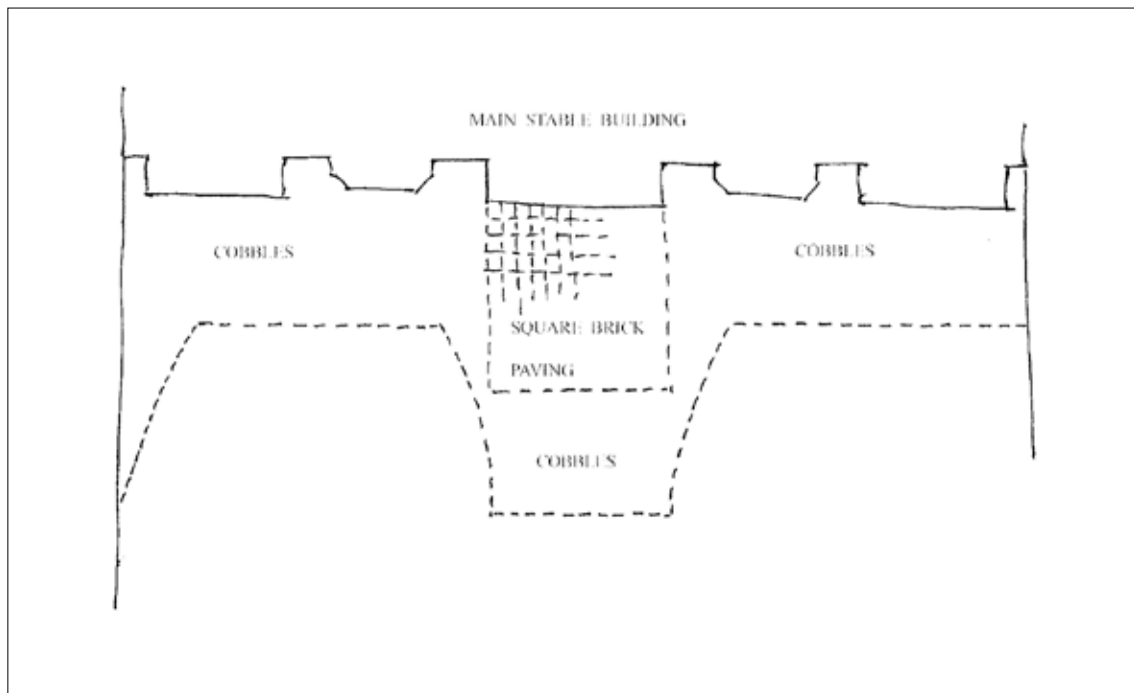
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The steam engine house consists of two brick side walls with a very large opening occupying almost its entire eastern front. The side walls and the small sections of walling to the east front are constructed of large bricks laid in Flemish Bond. It has a single pitch corrugated iron roof and a concrete floor. The walling against which this building is built is 17<sup>th</sup> century brick walling, part of the barn demolished in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. There is no surviving evidence of a chimney stack, nor is there any evidence of footings for an engine (fig. 11). The roof was replaced in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The building appears to have been in use for vehicle storage for many years. It contains a 20<sup>th</sup> century oil storage tank.

#### 4. The Stable Yard

The surface of the stable yard immediately in front of the north façade of the main stable building is cobbled. This cobbled surface projects forwards in front of the main double doors and at the eastern end. The central section immediately in front of these double doors, is paved with square bricks (fig. 12). The remainder of the yard appears to have a hard-packed Macadam gravel surface which most likely dates from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Ordnance Survey Map of 1877 shows a layout with individual drives in front of each of the three gabled projections (fig. 2), but there is no surviving evidence suggesting that this layout was ever completed.



*Fig. 12. Sketch plan showing the brick and cobbled surfaces of the stableyard.*

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