

*BIRMINGHAM UNIVERSITY
FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT*

**Site of 66 High Street,
Kingswinford, Dudley**

B.U.F.A.U.



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Kingswinford, Dudley**

by
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STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE SITE OF, 66, HIGH STREET, KINGSWINFORD (S.M.R. 7204)

THE BRIEF

The purpose of this report is to provide an independent identification and interpretation of the feature that stands within the garden of No. 66, High Street, Kingswinford and to offer an opinion on the significance of the structure within a local, regional and national context.

The research was based on a visit to the Planning and Leisure Department of Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council on Tuesday, 7th July to consult documentary, map and photographic evidence relating to the site, and to meet Peter Boland, Dudley Borough Principal Conservation Officer. This was followed by further desk research and an inspection of the feature itself on Friday, 10th July and a meeting with the owners, Mr and Mrs Marshall.

THE SITE AND STRUCTURE

The site is located within Dudley Metropolitan Borough at the Village, Kingswinford, O.S.Grid SO 38934 289205. The feature is in the garden of 66, High Street, on the west corner of High Street and the Village.

The feature in question is an approximately five metre square space surrounded by a brick wall. The local brick walls range from brick-red to a blue/black in colour. The double thickness walls are constructed in a variant of stretcher bond with sandstone coping stones.

The walls are of varied height. The **East Wall** at approximately 63 inches, (19 courses) in height, is the tallest. The coping stones on this wall have a straight edge on the inside and a sloping end on the outside. The wall has two three quarter height buttresses on the inside and two full height buttresses on the outside. A lime mortar mix has been used in the construction of this wall, although the bricks have been repointed with cement in places at a later date. The exterior brickwork has also been substantially repointed. Much later brickwork has been added in the southern corner of the wall to incorporate, according to information received from the owners, a post box which no longer survives.

The **North Wall** is approximately 51 inches (15 courses) in height. The coping stones survive in position for approximately two thirds of the length of the wall but are missing for the final third in the north-east corner. An extra three courses of brickwork, with a partial coping stone, approximately 14½ inches in width, exist in the far corner of the wall - suggesting that the wall may have been reduced in height at sometime. The brickwork in this wall has been substantially repointed with a cement based mortar. Traces of white paint can be seen on the internal facing of a handful of the bricks.

The **West Wall** is approximately 54 inches (15 courses) in height with similar coping stones. The wall is one course lower in the north west corner, though retaining its coping stones. Once again, the wall has been substantially repointed with cement mortar. There are traces of white paint on the internal facing of some of the bricks.

The **Southern Wall** was more complicated; photographic evidence shows a narrow gateway near the south west corner and the construction of brick pillars in part of the wall. By the time of the site visit and inspection this wall had been demolished.

A number of other observations on the structure can be made:

- * There is evidence of an iron 'latch' on the inside of the **east wall**, about 12 inches from the ground near the line of the (now missing) **south wall**.
- * The brick infill between the two internal buttresses on the **east wall** is clearly a later addition.
- * Part of the **west wall** also appears to have been infilled at a later date.

Overall, the brickwork suggests a structure which is probably 18th century in origin, though with later modifications at different periods.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND - MAP AND DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

The site of the feature appears on the 1824 William Fowler plan of the parish of Kingswinford. It is also shown on subsequent maps, including the Ordnance Survey Maps of 1882, 1903, 1919 and 1938. On each of these maps, the position of the feature can be readily appreciated in relation to the Village Green and named structures such as St Mary's Church, the Cross, the lychgate and the Courthouse Inn. The fact that the feature in question is not specifically named in these maps gives no indication, one way or the other, of its use.

A review of relevant secondary sources provides significant evidence as to the existence of an animal pound within the vicinity of the site. 'Notes on Kingswinford History', (1974), Dudley Teachers Centre, p.21 states that the activities associated with the village pound were included in the Customs of the Manor of Kingswinford, whilst in the Land Tax Returns of 1735 the lord of the manor, Lord Dudley, was said to pay 1 shilling for each of "Ye Court House" and "Ye Pound". This suggests the existence of an 18th century pound in close proximity to the Court House, but does not itself give a positive indication of the exact location of the pound.

Other secondary sources are more enlightening as regards the precise location of the pound. U.A.Beddell's 'A Historical Sketch of the Parish of Kingswinford' of 1887, states that, "Near the Churchyard, on one side of the village green, may be seen the pound, now fast falling into decay". Whilst P.E. Chandler stated in an article entitled 'Kingswinford 300 Years Ago', in *The Blackcountryman*, (1988), Vol. 21. No. 2, p.40 that, "...conveniently nearby on the green were the pinfold, where straying animals were kept until reclaimed."

Certainly, more contemporary commentators associate the pound very clearly with the particular feature in question. John Sparry, writing in

The Blackcountryman, Vol. 31, No. 2 (1998), p. 21, states...." Now back and have a look at St. Mary's Church from the main road. The little brick built animal pound is still there, to the left." A former resident of Kingswinford, Mrs Holloway, also identifies the brick structure as the village pound " I lived in 9, Ketley Road, Kingswinford, from 1940 - 1956 and well remember my grandmother's regular visits. She often spoke of her days at The Pound, especially the horses which were rounded up, stating that the owners had to pay a fee to reclaim their animals."

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In my view, the feature in question was undoubtedly built to impound animals. This opinion is based, firstly on the evidence of the structure itself. Although pounds could be constructed of many different materials (stone, brick, timber etc.), they are not easily confused with other types of structure due to their distinctive character. The typical components of a brick built animal pound are a four-sided enclosing wall with stone coping. There was usually a single entrance into the enclosure, sometimes with brick pillars. Most animal pounds were open (i.e. without a roof). All of these components can be observed, or in the case of the demolished south wall, surmised from photographic evidence, at the feature in question.

The other main reason for concluding that the structure was a pound is its location. The structure forms part of a combination of buildings and structures, including the village green, the Church and former Court House - the latter two being statutorily listed buildings. Although pounds could be located anywhere in a village, the most common sites include on or near the village green, close to the church, at road junctions or close to a lock-up or court house. All of these criteria apply to the location of this particular structure.

B.M.W. Dobbie, in his Catalogue of Pounds, published in 1979, identified between 240 and 250 examples in a good or fair condition, and a further 150 to 160 further examples of the remains, or the recorded sites of pounds. The West Midlands Sites and Monuments Record lists over 20 pounds distributed over a wide region, including Coventry, Walsall and Sandwell - but only one site in Dudley, where the pound no longer exists. In my view, the local and regional significance of this particular pound lies not only in the fact that it is a rare survival within the Borough, but most importantly, in the context of the wider conservation area and the pound's physical and spatial relationship with the companion structures set around the former Village Green. The survival of such a complex is of tremendous local significance.

Within the national context, a pound which was complete in terms of areal extent, standing to its original height and in fine condition, would be described as a "good" example. There is no doubt that, viewed on a national scale, the demolition of one wall has been seriously detrimental to the historic integrity of the pound at Kingswinford. However, the Group value of the pound - its association with surviving church, inhabited village, manor, road system and court house - would be rated "high", based on the criteria used in the selection of monuments of national importance.