

**VERNACULAR BUILDINGS RESEARCH  
HENLEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL GROUP**

**Parish/County:** Henley-on-Thames

**Owners:** Mr. & Mrs.  
W. Timlett until July 2007

**Street and House name:**  
61 Market Place

**Tel No:**  
**Recorder:** Ruth Gibson  
**Date:** 9.7.07



**Listing grade and entry text:** **Grade II** *'18<sup>th</sup> century façade to an older building; built as one house with No. 59. Stucco band, coved wood cornice, door & carriageway entrance''*

NB: The Listing Entry is not correct, as this is a complete, double pile, 18<sup>th</sup> century building, not just a façade. It does not conceal an earlier building. It was built together with No. 59 as one development, but as two dwellings, in fact an early semi. The interior layout as well as

documentary evidence support this. The ground floor windows, front door and carriage entrance are, however, alterations, which were carried out after it had been purchased by the Waldens.

**Known History:** It has previously been in the ownership of Waldens of Henley, Builders, whose workshops lay behind Nos 61 and 63, where Empstead Court, a modern development has recently been built, reducing the former c 190 feet long garden ( see 1878 O.S. map) to no more than a patio and parking spaces.

Sales particulars of 25.11.1937 advertise it as Lot 8; the title deeds going back to a conveyance of 26.3.1919 between Anna Elizabeth Corbold and Alfred Henry Simmons. The description of the ground floor rooms in the particulars and those existing today do not tally, suggesting major alterations between 1937 when Messrs Waldens, Builders took it over, and now. (Also see below under Internal Evidence)

Research into the deeds of the Baptist Church and adjoining Melbourne House, at Nos. 55 – 57 Market Place have shown that neighbouring No. 59 was for a considerable time in the same ownership as the two former, which had a malt house, a hop kiln and a considerable amount of land, orchards and hop fields attached to them.

A map attached to a lease between T. & R. Tyrell (the owners) and William Dobson, dated 1826, also shows No. 61, which adjoins Nos 57/59 (the two buildings referred to in the lease) to the west. The annotation on the map describes it as '*House and Gardens in the occupation of Mr. Nash*'.

An earlier, lengthy document of 1779 concerning John Tyrell with regard to the buildings at Nos. 55/57 (now the church and Melbourne House) refers to two further messuages adjoining and '*lying above of the said last messuages*', which strongly suggests that the document refers to Nos. 59 & 61, as they directly adjoin Melbourne House to the west. It continues to say that they are in occupation of Mrs. Brand and Mr. Lysett and that the two messuages were built by John Tyrell, deceased, father of the above John Tyrell, who had inherited all four properties as well as others in the town.

Although this does not give us a precise building date, we know it could have been not long before 1779. It also tells us who the owner and first builder was and that the building was constructed as two separate premises, to be let by the Tyrrells, a property owning family from Hambleden. A 1750 – 1770s building date can therefore be stipulated.

**Discussion of building date, datable alteration and additions:** Mid to late 18<sup>th</sup> century (see above for documentary evidence). The façade with pilasters and key stones indicates the influence of classicism and a second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century building date, whilst the interior's full wall panelling on the ground floor is more in keeping with an 18<sup>th</sup> century fashion, which was coming to an end in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. The stair case is of the open-well type, rebuilt from g.f. to first floor, but probably original from first to second floor. The upper stairs with their closed string, traditionally turned balusters, and simple square newel posts topped with a round moulded cap are quite plain and very similar to the upper stairs of No. 59, where unfortunately the lower stairs have also been rebuilt.

The large carriage entrance is a 20<sup>th</sup> century alteration (confirmed by Messrs Waldens, who purchased the property in 1937 and who needed access to the back yard). This led to the loss of

part of the ground floor accommodation as well as that of the rear conservatory. What is now the entrance hall would have formerly been the study with F.P., the entrance hall would probably have been a narrow corridor running from front to back ( as it does in No. 59) with the lounge on the r.h. side. The position of the front door and the existence of the small windows do not fit the original room lay-out. The small sash windows flanking it have horns and wide glazing bars, unlike the Georgian ones at first floor and do not look right in an 18<sup>th</sup> century house in a prestigious location in the town. It is likely that the entire g.f. façade was rebuilt, when the large passageway was inserted, giving the door a new position and flanking it with two small 'Victorian' sash windows. Being able to re-use the existing bricks, since they had been bedded in lime mortar, made it possible for the skilled craftsmen of Waldens to recreate a front which blends well with its surroundings. Only close examination of the brick work confirms that it has been disturbed.

## RECORD OF THE EXISTING BUILDING

**Map ref., date of 1<sup>st</sup> map, type of plot:** Shown on the first OS Map of 1878 on a long, but narrow burgage plot of 190 feet. However, there is no sign on the map of the large through passage, which existed for a time, as the two large lintels at the rear (now blocked ) and front (above the folding doors) testify. Since a conservatory is shown at the back just where the passageway was, it indicates strongly that the through passage was constructed after 1878.

**Type and use of building:** Dwelling house, formerly Waldens offices and flats above, probably built as the home of a professional with an office or study directly off the entrance hall ( as per 1937 Sales Particulars).

**Plan form/position in street:** Parallel to street, double pile house

**Description of front elevation ( height, windows, entrances, shop front etc):** The house forms a terrace with neighbouring No. 59 from which it is separated by a broad pilaster, a feature repeated at each corner of the terrace. It is three storeys tall with flat roofed, three-light dormers in the roof. It is brick built with stuccoed string course and key stones set into the flat window arches. The front door is an eight-panel door (the top 2 panels having been replaced with glass) with flat door hood on curved brackets; two steps lead up to it. It is flanked by two narrow sash windows with four over two panes, with horns. The first floor windows have 10 over 10 panes, no horns.

It is interesting that the windows of No. 61 are quite different in sizes to those of its eastern neighbour, although they are of the same period, with the exception of the small g.f. windows because of their horns (usually post 1850s). This may mean no more than that they have been replaced, as their rubbed brick arches with key stones are original and match all others on both houses. However, the Sales Particulars indicate that the position of the front door may have been changed and with it possibly the two small front windows, which are too small to have served principal g.f. rooms.

On the right hand side is a large double door to a garage, formerly a passageway to the back. This was inserted by the former owners, Messrs Walden to access the back yard.

**Walling material:**

**(give brick sizes, bond, colour; timber frame type; render or stucco and finishes)**

Flemish bond brick work with tuck pointing. Some burnt/grey bricks are used. Quoins and window surrounds are in red bricks. All windows have rubbed brick arches and stuccoed key stones. The tall floor to eaves brick pilasters are emphasised by the use of red bricks and grey headers in their centres.

**Roof shape:** It appears to be M-shaped and hipped at the west end, but a roof top inspection shows that it has three roofs; the eastern section is constructed in an M-shape with the western part running from front to back. This creates a valley, closed off at the western end.

**Roof covering:** Hand made clay tiles

**Chimneys: Location on roof and materials:** Brick stack of probably 3 flues (only one chimney pot now) rises from the back of the roof close to the lead valley. A further stack of probably 2 flues is located at the centre of the western hip, close to the wall of neighbouring 63.

### Internal evidence

**Cellar:** A substantial former coal cellar (now a laundry room – tanked ) is located below the front room, now accessed from it by a balustraded staircase, an arrangement which is unlikely to be original, as cellar stairs were usually tucked out of sight and were very utilitarian and plain. Plans dated 2002 from Messrs Waldens show that the former ladder stair and trap door to the basement was replaced with the existing one.

**Ground Floor:** The lay-out of the ground floor has been much altered and it is difficult to work out its original room divisions. The front door leads directly into a spacious, open plan entrance hall, which has a fire place in the back wall and floor to ceiling wall panelling with dado rail. This might have been the ‘study with fire place’ described in the 1937 Sales Particulars, but the space must also have incorporated the *Entrance Hall*, unless the position of the front door was also changed.

Now the spacious entrance hall gives access to the open well staircase at the back (west side) and beyond are the kitchen and dining room, both open plan, but separated by folding doors. The dining room has an attractive corner cupboard set into the rear wall, but strangely not into a corner. This corner cupboard with its attractive curved shelving is of the same type as that seen at No. 59 on the first floor.

Where then was the lounge? In 1937 it was not on the first floor as now, where it occupies a rear bedroom. – The lounge with F.P. must have occupied the space of the present garage or former through passage. The mention of a conservatory, which is also shown on the 1878 map attached to the back wall, where the lintel and new brickwork still show where the former passageway was, confirm that the room next to it was not a through passageway at that time. Messrs Walden confirm, that the through passage was created early on during their ownership; the brickwork returns at the front are so well executed that the alterations are not obvious.

**Fire places: (location and type)** All fire places are located in the eastern part of the house, served from the principal stack. There is a brick lined F.P. with simple panel surround in the front ground floor room, matching the room’s panelling. The fire place in the rear first floor room, now used as a lounge has a simple, classical timber surround with modern cast iron Regency hearth. A further fire place is located in the front attic bedroom; it has a plain timber

surround with shelf and a small hob iron grate. - There are no fire places in the western part of the house, although the Sales Particulars tell us that there had been 3 fireplaces plus range on the ground floor and 3 fire places at first floor level. (The fire places, served by the western stack would have been removed when the archway passage was put through the building)

**Stairs:**

The stair case is of the open-well type, but rebuilt from g.f. to first floor and may not be in the original location. However, all the details of the earlier, upper stairs have been faithfully copied. These include turned balusters with tapering columns, on unturned square section per column, set into a closed string with square newel posts topped with round moulded caps, an unusually plain example of its kind.

The hand rail is of the toad back type, which was in use throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The photograph shows the upper part of the stairs.



**Upper Floors:** The first floor front bedroom has panelling up to dado height and a cornice. All doors here are of the two-panel type, a typical 18<sup>th</sup> century door, usually found on the first floor for the more important bedrooms. The second floor bedrooms have sloping ceilings. They have a mix of panel doors and plank and ledge doors with strap hinges, hung on pintels. These different doors seem to indicate a hierarchy in the users of the top floor bedrooms, that is if they are original.

**Attic: Roof structure – trusses, special features if any**

The attic floor runs at collar level and one can only see the apex pegged rafters in the loft, no principals. The valley between the two roofs is accessible through a hatch, it is lead lined and from there one has a good view of the roof scape of both houses, which differs. No. 59 is a slightly narrower building and does not have a roof section running north-south as No. 61 and which closes the valley off on the west side.