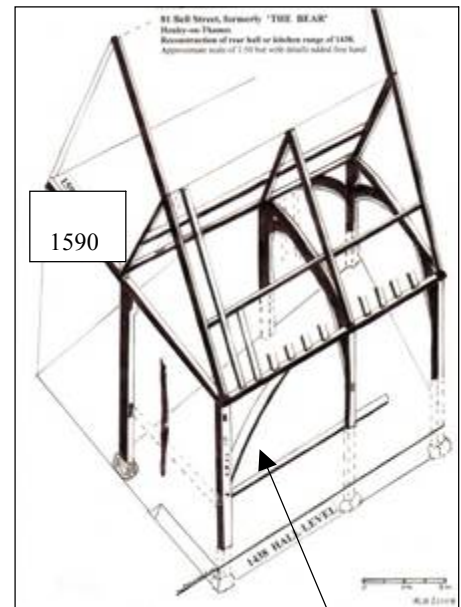
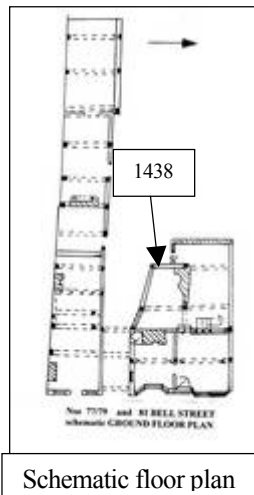


## Henley-on-Thames

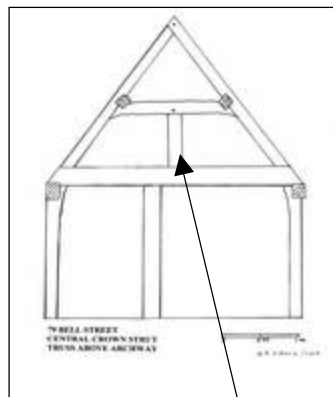
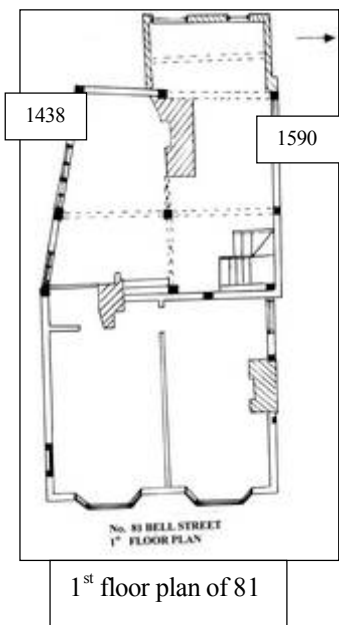
**Address 77/79 & 81 Bell Street  
Formerly 'The Bear Inn'**

**SU 761 829  
Grade II listed**

The former BEAR INN comprised the 4-gabled front range and two rear ranges. The latter can be accessed through the wide carriage arch. This now leads to only one yard and remnant of a former stable, but according to the 1878 map there were two yards, a number of service buildings and access to paddocks, sufficient to accommodate 78 horses in 1826 \*)



Drawing showing the 1438 two-bay hall and the 1590 sideways extension under a single, taller roof, now the rear wing of No. 81; i.e. the tall white gable shown on the left of the photograph of the rear yard.



One of the 8 crown strut trusses in the first-floor chambers at Nos. 77/79

**Notes on the history of the site:** A 1683 inventory of innkeeper John Dolton is the first historic evidence of the building; at that time reputedly in the ownership of the Stonors of Stonor Park. The inventory describes the five lodging chambers across the front range, very much as they are still today, as well as numerous other rooms. The kitchen was probably located in the formerly detached 1438 two-bay rear building, which may have been an open hall originally or built as a detached kitchen and substantially extended in 1590.

\*) For more detailed information about its history as an inn see A.Cottingham *The Hostleries of Henley*, pages 48-52.

### Notes on architectural details:

- A 4-bay building with gables to the street and a carriageway (much altered on its south side, when the shop at No. 77 was widened) to the rear yard located underneath the lodging chambers. These are being described in the Inventory as ‘the chamber over the gatehouse’ & ‘the little chamber’.
- The trusses of the southern part of the building (Nos 77/79 ) as well as the long 4-bay range behind are all of the crown strut type, probably mid C15th.
- A further 3-bay timber framed building forms an extension to this range, now No. 79a. It may have been built as a barn or stable originally.
- The street front section of No. 81 is of prob. early C17<sup>th</sup> date, and also retains the lodging chambers with the fire places described in the Inventory of 1683.
- This part is built over a contemporary basement with access from a low side door under the archway. A further access is through a large trap door in the stone floor of the carriage way.
- There is a modern staircase now in the medieval rear part of No.81, but there are indications that there was formerly a turned or newel stair attached to the central stack.
- The rear hall lays c 40cm below ground level and is separated from the front section by a gap of between 20 – 36 cm, which is only visible clearly in the attic, but can also be discerned from the outside as a narrow, lower roof section bridging the gap between both ranges – looking from the adjoining drive on the north side.
- The 1438 dendro-dated hall consists of 2 unequal bays, of 2.20 and 3.30 m. It was extended sideways in 1590 and re-roofed with double side purlin trusses, with high collars and lower interrupted collars supported by two sets of queen struts; all timbers are sooted. This indicates that the building continued to be used as some form of open hall/kitchen, or was part of it a smoke bay?
- The surviving jowl posts and plates of the 1438 hall are mostly visible at first floor level; there is also a heavily weathered corner post in the g.f. rear kitchen extension, the latter now covers the former outside wall.



No. 77

No. 79/79a through archway

No. 81 Bell Street

An Inventorie of ye goods and Chattells of **John Dolton**

Of Henley upon Thames in ye County of Oxford –  
**Innholder** deceased had taken and valued by John  
 Derby and John Beard of Henley aforesaid yeomen  
 The 19<sup>th</sup> day of December, Anno Dmi 1683.

		£. s. d.	
IMPRIMIS	his weareing and apparel	1 2 6	
	In Ready money	0 4 0	
Item	In ye <b>new Chamber</b> one feather bed 2 bouldsters ) 1 paire of blankets & coverlets & bedstead ) One table one Courtcoberd 2 chaires ) one truckle bed and one pare of an-Irons ) alsoe in the same roome curtins & valians belonginge )	4 17 6	
Item	in the <b>Little Chamber</b> one flocke bed 2 ) Feather pillows one blanket & bedstead ) With other furniture	1 00 00	
Item	in the <b>Chamber over the gate house</b> 3 flocke ) beds & bedsteeds with bouldsteres 4 pillowes ) and rugges one covered )	2 10 00	
Item	in the <b>Midle Chamber</b> 2 feather beds & bedsteeds ) one paire of curtains one courtcoburd, 2 tables ) 3 chaires one paire of anIrons fire shouffles & ) tongues 2 ruggs one paire of blankets ) 3 bouldsters and 2 pillowse )	7 00 00	
Item	in the <b>Chamber called ye Captains Chamber</b> 2 feather ) beds & bedsteeds with curtains & bouldsters 3 blanketts ) 2 ruggs one chaire one Table one form and one paire ) of Iron dogs )	4 15 00	
Item	in Lynnen 18 paire of sheets and ) dozen of knapkins )	4 10 00 1 15 00	6
Item	8 tablecloathes	1 10 00	
Item	10 pillowbears	0 10 00	
Item	6 towellis	0 2 00	
Item	one presse 2 cheste with other lumber	0 10 00	
Item	in plate	1 00 00	
Item	in ye halle 2 tables one form one )		

	Chaire one settle one paire of anIrons )	1 2 6
Item	in ye <b>Little Chamber below</b> one feather beed & beedstedd ) curtins & hangings one truncke one table one chaire one ) paire of sheets )	3 6 8
Item	in ye Brewhouse one furnish and other brewing vessels	4 6 8
Item	in ye kitchenge 30 dishes of pewter	3 17 0
Item	plates 2 dozen & ½	0 14 0
Item	more 12 flaggons	0 10 0
	More 6 chamber potts	0 6 0
	More one poote & three kittles & 3 skillets )	
	2 skimers one irone poote )	1 6 8
Item	one paire of grates fire shoffel & tongues	1 8 0
Item	one tables 3 chaire leather & 4 other )	
	One forme with other lumber )	0 9 0
Item	one Jacke 2 spitts 2 dripping pans )	
	9 poringers and one warming pan )	0 18 0
Item	in ye washinge house one table 2 tubbs )	
	One old furniss with other luber )	0 13 4
Item	2 lb of haye	2 10 0
Item	in ye sellar	
	11 hogsheds 5 tees 3 dozen of glasse bottles )	
	4 standes 2 pipes whereof 3 hogshed are full )	
	of beere and ye rest empty )	3 18 0
Item	in ye parlour one table one Courtcoburd one grate )	
	one paire of Anirone 6 leather chaires )	1 2 6
Item	2 base viols and harpe & one sittern one vileond	1 10 0
Item	one signe board	<u>0 5 0</u>
		totall
		<u>59 5 4</u>
Item	Rackes and Maingers beinge 24	<u>1 10 4</u>
		<u>60 15 4</u>

John Darby

John Beard

Exhibit etc apud Oxon 21 die Decembris 1683 per Elizabetham Dolton Relict et Administratricem omnium et singular bonorum etc pro vero etc qua hacterins etc sub protestatione de addendo et. Si etc.