

Queen Anne Cottage and The Old Foundry 45 -47 Friday Street, Henley-on-Thames

Queen Anne Cottage Listed: House Grade II

Listing Entry: *Early C 18th colour washed brick, moulded string, projecting aprons, coved plaster cornice. Central door with wooden surround and moulded pediment. Sashes with thin glazing bars. Decorative plat band.*

Said to have been tanner s house to adjoining tannery at No.47



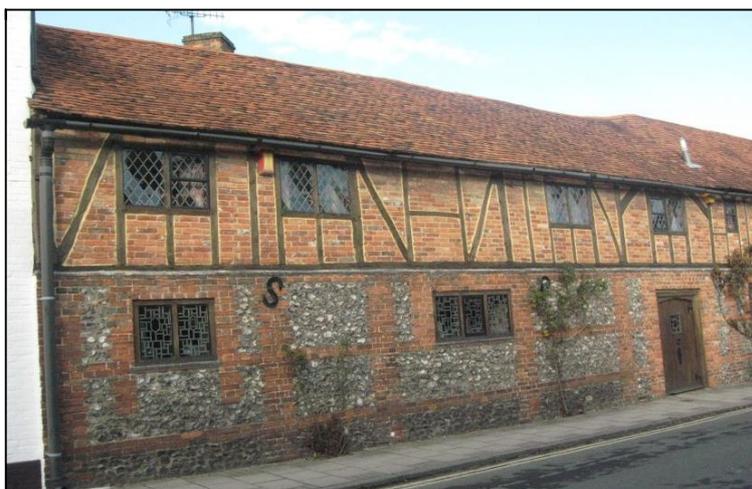
Photograph taken before restoration and changes were made in 1947/48



Queen Anne Cottage in 2014

The fine C18th brick frontage is now painted white but retains most of its original features. It is of double pile plan, with two steep west gables spanning its width. Earlier rear range at the back.

Old Foundry - listed for group value



The largely rebuilt, former industrial building, which had been badly damaged by fire, is now called The Old Foundry. It forms an attractive dwelling with modern rear and side extensions.

Photographs 1947/48

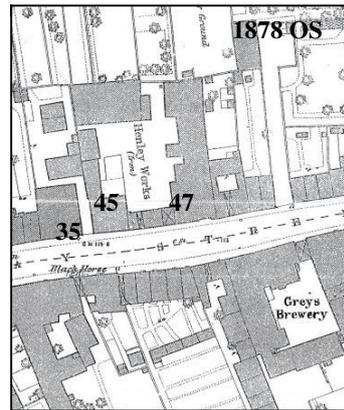
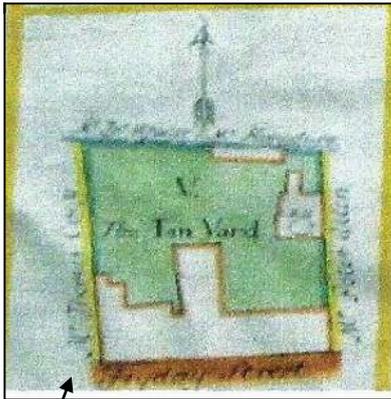


Fire damaged rear elevations of former forge/foundry buildings and Queen Anne Cottage.

Known History¹

Both buildings were formerly part of a very substantial tannery; Queen Anne Cottage is an C18th fronted house with earlier buildings at the back, whilst The Old Foundry, part of the former industrial buildings, would first have served the Tan Yard and then Rogers Henley Iron Works. The latter are still shown on the 1878 OS map, whilst its use as tannery is marked up on the map below left, taken from the Grammar School Charities properties map of 1726 (courtesy of Henley College)

¹ HAHG Journal No 17, 2002, A. Cottingham, for a detailed account of the history of these buildings, its occupants and owners.



1726 Map excerpt shows the buildings fronting Friday Street and the Tan Yard with some other buildings on the rear plot. Its north boundary is formed by the small stream (marked in blue and now culverted), once so vital for the essential tanning pits, of which there were 71 on the site in 1780 and 100 in 1859 (see below).

An inventory taken at the death of tanner John Bird in 1780² shows how wealthy he was. This explains the elegant Queen Anne frontage to the dwelling, but also allows us to do a virtual tour of the interior with its fine C18th fittings and furnishing. Some entries regarding the rooms, their contents as well as the vast stock in trade of the tannery are given below.

The Value of the Lease from the United Charity Schools was worth £271, the Stock in Trade £1.823 and the Household Goods £378 as appraised by William Bradshaw, carpenter and builder of Henley. Value of goods sold (money still owing) mostly consist of invoices for hides as well as large amounts of bushels of hair (taken from the hides prior to immersion in the tanning vats) and much in demand for all plaster and stucco work so extensively used in C18th dwellings.

The tour around the house carried out by sworn appraiser Benjamin Moorhouse started with the Chambers; three were fitted out with Walnut and Mahogany furniture, curtains and carpets and many other luxuries, whilst the man's chamber was a room with a stump bedstead with sacking bottom featherbed, it had a kitchen range, as well as being used for storing glass bottles, saddle, bridle and dried mint, bushels of rye and other odds and ends, i.e. the old kitchen-cum-storage room doubled up as servant's sleeping quarters.

Located at ground level were the Front Parlour, Back Parlour, Hall, Kitchen, Pantry, Ale Cellar, Small Beer Cellar and Brew House. The Front Parlour really shows what a wealthy C18th household looked like: there were six Mahogany chairs with damask covers; a pillar and claw dining table, side board, tea chest, mirror, window blinds, japanned plate warmer, Dutch coffee pot, tea pot, punch ladle, tobacco dish, a China set of 42 pieces, glass decanters, a walnut clock and so on described in much detail. The contents of this room alone were valued at £26 a substantial sum at that time.

² Inventory 1780 of John Bird, tanner of Henley. National Archives PROB 31/

Ann Bird, relict of John, would have been a wealthy widow indeed.

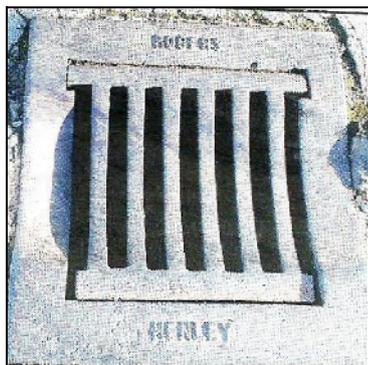
The last time the property is known to have been advertised as a tannery was in 1859. The Reading Mercury & Oxford Gazette announced *To be let with immediate possession a well arranged tan yard containing 100 pits, bark barn, mill house, engines and boiler house and other necessary outbuildings together with a twelve roomed dwelling house with counting house attached.*

An earlier advertisement of 1854 also mentions: *Two substantial and recently built cottages with a walled garden producing a rent of £17.7.0 . Three substantial and newly built cottages let to tenants at £19.10.0 p.a.* ³

The five cottages mentioned do not appear to exist any longer but may have been part of the back ranges shown on the above 1878 O.S. map and may account for the gap in house numbering now between Nos 35 and 45.

In 1869 and 1883 George Wilkins Clark is listed (Street Directories) as an engineer, iron and brass founder at the Henley Iron Works. From 1887 Rogers Brothers are listed as engineers, millwrights, iron and brass founders. From 1887 to 1907 Queen Anne Cottage is listed as the private residence of Robert Rogers. A Trade Directory of 1925-6 lists under engineers in Friday Street B C Barnett Ltd. 1935

R C Barnett Ltd are agricultural, steam, motor electrical and general engineer, general smiths and iron founders. ⁴



Cast iron drain cover
at Thameside
made by Rogers
Henley Ironworks -
still doing its job.

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³ A.Cottingham, Journal No. 17 HA&HG, p. 25/26

⁴ Ibid p.27