

**65 Friday Street
Henley-on-Thames
The Doll s House**

Grade II listed
described as: *17th or earlier .*

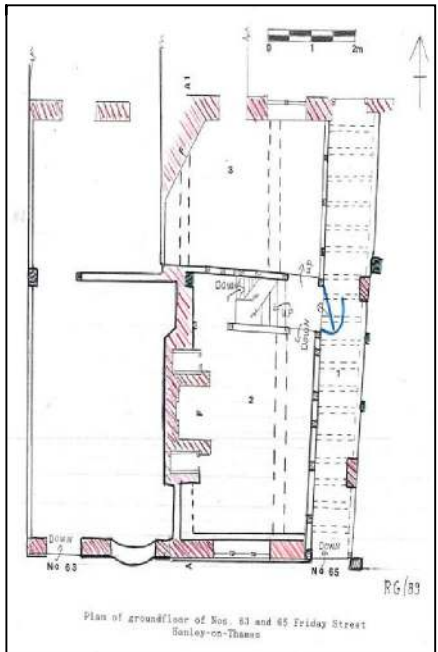
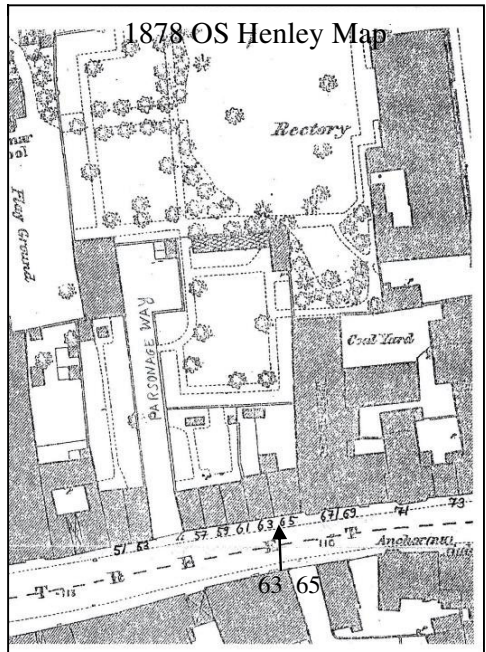


For more details please see H.A.&H.G. report No. 59/1989.

The Census Returns tells us that the house was occupied in 1901 by:

- Elizabeth Hayes, widow, age 59;
- Fanny M. Norman, daughter, single, 31;
- Edward Eaton, boarder, 20, single, gardener, worker.

The house is attached to the side wall of No 63, as can be seen from the evidence of the two timber posts and a long brace exposed in the west wall, which clearly belong to the medieval timber framed structure of the adjoining No 63. On the east side projects the heavy framing of Old Timbers at Nos. 67/69 Friday Street. Both Nos 63 and 67/69 clearly predate The Doll s House , which appears to have been erected in an existing gap between the two medieval houses; access to the back is still preserved by retaining a long side corridor, where the entrance door to No. 65 is found. The door location alone indicates that the pre-existing conditions necessitated a very unusual access arrangement.

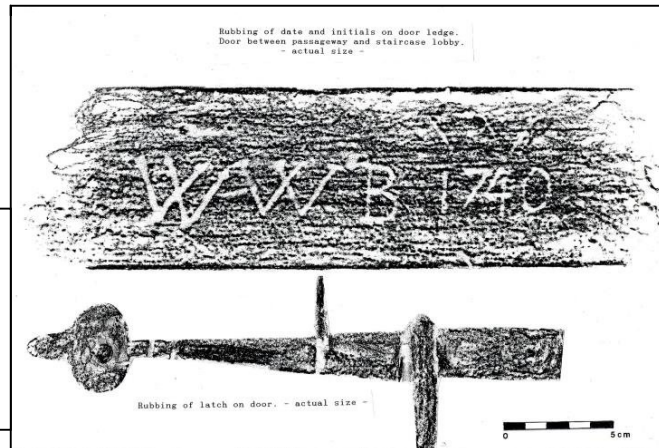


Description of the building:



Left: This wall post with jowl head and long wall brace are part of the frame of No. 63, but now forms the west wall of No. 65. The heavily weathered timbers show that this east flank of the chambered wing of No. 63 had been left exposed for a considerable time (the photograph is not sharp enough to show the heavily grooved surface of the oak beam caused by long term weathering) before it became the internal sidewall to a new house.

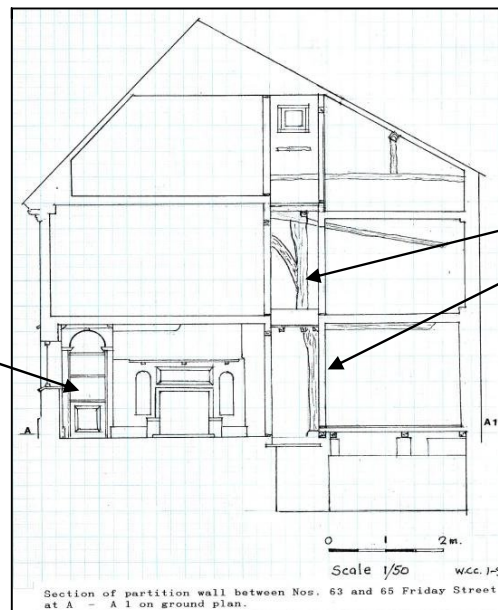
Right: The 1740 date and initials are carved into the central timber ledge of the entrance door to the dwelling, which is located in the side passage. The wrought iron latch is part of the door furniture.



In plan it is a double pile house, but the section drawing (below) with its asymmetric roof shape shows that the rear part is an addition. The house occupies a narrow wedge shaped gap between its earlier neighbours, measuring 4.10 m at the street widening to c. 4.80m at the back. The tiled roof is supported by a wide bracketed eaves cornice. The shallower, later roof at the back is slated.

The internal walls, where they are visible in the passageway are timber framed, of small scantling, with brick infill. The exterior is rendered. Only the west wall has substantial timbers, which belong to the medieval adjoining chamber block of No. 63.

The front room has a modern brick fireplace, but set in simple panelled surrounds with a bracketed mantel piece, built in cupboards and a display cabinet with classical C18th pilaster detailing, below left.



Section showing how the building was extended under a raised roof at the back (right hand part of the drawing).

It also shows the heavy timber posts in the west wall, at ground and 1st floor levels, which are important structural elements of the adjoining chamber block of a larger medieval building, now lost.

The location of the attractive built-in display cabinet is shown in its position in the parlour of the house, its principal ground floor room.

Conclusion:

There is evidence that much of the north side of Friday Street was built by the mid/late C15th with timber framed houses of three or more bays fronting the street.

Adjoining this modest house on its east is the substantial Old Timbers at 67/69 & No. 71, which together consist of a four bay house, all jettied with very large scantling floor joists and very large posts with integrated brackets, indicating that it was built to support substantial first floor storage facilities.

On the west side only a chambered bay survives, now No. 63, of what may have been a medieval hall and crosswing; this putative hall has since replaced by the existing three mid 19th C. brick cottages at Nos 57-61.

An apparent gap (access to rear yards ?) between these two substantial timber framed buildings was eventually filled by the barely 4 m wide Dolls House , very likely at the time when much re-ordering of existing larger houses was going on in Friday Street elsewhere too, to provide modest single bay cottages for the growing labour force in the C18th. Other subdivisions took place at Nos.31/33 and 51/53, both substantial timber framed houses of C15th or C16th dates.

Architectural details such as the moulded dentil cornice, the slight scantling square panels visible in the side walls of the passageway, the panelling and open fronted display cabinet of the sitting room as well as the plank and ledge doors all indicate an C18th C building date. The date of 1740 on the main plank and ledge door may confirm this, however doors can easily be moved from other locations. The Listing Entry suggest that the horizontal timber embedded in the front wall may be the bressumer of a jetty, but this is clearly wrong, as there is no evidence of a jetty. It is more likely a plat band often seen in early brick buildings, or a pentice to throw water off the render.

The Bradshaw family, builders, developers and town council members, are frequently documented in connection with various properties in Friday Street and their conversion or rebuilding to create small dwellings in the mid C18th ; may be this house, fitted into a gap in the street, is also part of their work. However, the WWB 1740 has yet to be fitted to a particular member of the clan. However, it fits with other mid C18th building work when there was clearly a shortage of affordable housing for workers.

The change from being a desirable location for substantial commercial premises of the Henley entrepot trade to create accommodation for labouring families seems to have been well on its way in the mid C18th. The C19th to early C 20th Census Returns confirm the profession of most of its inhabitants as labourers. - The Doll s House is no exception; Widow Hayes having to make both ends meet by renting out a room, is a very common practice seen in other small houses in this street at that time.