

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

Parish/County: Henley-on-Thames, Oxon
Street and House name: 60 & 62 West Street

Recorder:
Ruth Gibson
Dates: 8.2.08 and 18.4.13

Listing grade and entry text: Gd II Nos 60 and 62

17th/18th cottage with altered façade. Red brick with grey headers, steeply pitched old tiled roof with rendered gable end. 2 storeys and basement, 2 windows each, western one on first floor blank. Sashes to No. 62 and leaded reproduction casements to No. 60. Flights of steps to side doors, No. 60 has wooden porch.



Map ref., date of 1st map, type of plot. Very long burgage plot on 1878 map. Now reduced in length (sold for car parking behind West Lane Health Centre) and divided into two small gardens.

Type and use of building: Two dwelling houses

Plan form/position in street: Nos. 60 and 62 are a semi detached house, each of one bay, built parallel to the street (total length 6.56 m) . At the rear each has a single bay, slightly lower timber framed extension, built at right angles to the front range.

Description of front elevation (height, windows, entrances, shop front etc): See listing entry for main features. – The most unusual feature of the building is the fact that the ground floor is located c 1 m above a tall basement. This basement has a narrow front window for each of the houses, partly behind the brick steps, which lead up to the porches. Both the B&F work and the steps with porches are later than the main brick work, which mainly consists of 2 3/8” bricks. The blue burnt headers and red stretchers of the front façade are laid in Flemish bond and produce a chequer work effect. The flat window arches of the mezzanine floor are of fine gauged red bricks; the first floor windows are located directly below the dog-toothed eaves brickwork.

The brickwork, which dates to approximately 1800 appears to cover or replaces an earlier timber framed front wall. The basement windows and flint work around them very likely replace doors accessed directly from the street (there is no sign of an original access to the basements in either house – the present ladder steps in the back bays are accessed by small hatches in the floors, which are little suited to serve a major storage facility).

Description of rear elevation: The rear are dominated by 20th century 2-storey extensions, but one can glimpse the earlier, one room, 1 ½ story rear wings behind both. These rear gables show traditional queen post trusses with clasped purlins with stretcher course brick infill.

Roof: The main roof is steeply pitched and runs parallel to the street. The rear roofs are also steeply pitched and run at right angles to the front range. All have old clay tiles.

Stacks: A large central stack rises from the rear roof and serves both properties, probably serving 2 fireplaces per house originally.



View looking south showing the two rear gables of the back extensions with their traditional tie beams, collars and clasped purlins.

The wide stack, which rises from the back of the front roof appears to be of a size to have accommodated four flues for two fire places per house.

Rear gables and central stack of 60 and 62 West Street

Internal evidence

Cellar: The cellars under the front rooms, now accessed through hatch next to the brickwork of the stack in the rear room. No 60 has brick, flint and chalk block walls *check dividing wall and ceiling joists ? No 62 has yet to be visited.*

Both now only have small windows to the south/front, partially blocked by the external brick steps.

Ground Floor is a mezzanine floor: Small brick porches are located c. 1 m above street level, accessed by brick steps. Inside the ceiling joist and axial beam are of substantial scantling (7 ½ by 8 “) with an 1 ½” chamfer and lambs tongue and bar stop. Some changes to the joist in front of the F.P. show later alterations or that they are second hand.

There is a large brick fire place set diagonally across the rear corner of each of the ground floor rooms, together forming a square (see ground floor plan below), mostly of 2” bricks. The ceiling joists next to the brick stack area are showing a re-ordering, which indicates changes to the location of the fire places The timber bressumer across the F.P. at No. 60 is a second-hand timber with unrelated mortises from a different use, however that at No. 62 may be original .



No. 60: Corner brick fire place in G.F. Axial ceiling beam with chamfer and stop



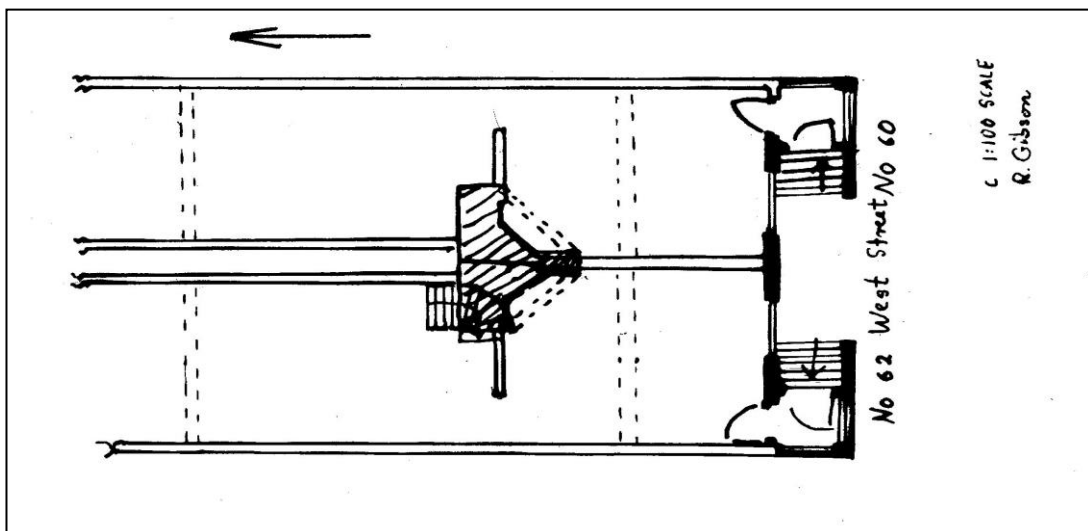
Front room of No. 62 with corner F.P.



Rear room; stairs built against the stack

The rear extension contains a further room on both floors. The modern companion ladder type stairs rise from there. Next to it is a probably rebuilt brick stack, which appears to form the rear of the front room fire place, but may also have contained a F.P. for the back room.

At ground floor level most of the rear/north g.f. walls have been removed to create a through access to the modern, single storey kitchen extensions. (See sketch floor plan below)





No 60, left: First floor, front bedroom. Stud wall between Nos. 58 and 60 West Street
 Right: First floor, view of roof rafter of front range resting on the wall plate, seen from the back bedroom.

Upper Floors of No. 60: The front bedroom allows a view of the framing in its east wall, which adjoins No. 58 West Street directly. This consists of thin, tall studs with long diagonal braces, some re-used, usually associated with lack of good quality timbers and 18th century framing. – The visible small area of roof exposed, however, shows part of a traditional timber frame with a wall plate and flat laid rafters.

There are no timbers exposed in the upper floor of No. 62.

Attics: *yet to be investigated , it is said that the first floor attic still continues through to No. 62 check attic for more info. on rafters, trusses of both ranges to help assess the age of this building.*

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The basements and location of the first floor timber framed building high above street level is a very interesting feature of the two building, which may have once been commonplace in the steeply rising West Hill. Only one other building, Market Cottage at No. 16, has a similar tall basement with evidence of direct access from the street and a ground floor raised over a very substantial brick and flint foundation wall.

The location of both properties on the north side of the former upper market place is significant as it indicates a trading connection and need for easy access to storage facilities

The substantial axial beam with chamfer and lamb's tongue and bar stop as well as the flat laid rafters indicates a building date of mid 17th century; however the narrow timbers and raking struts in the first floor wall appear more typical of the 18th century. The corner brick stack is also typically found in 18th C buildings, but could have been inserted when the house was updated/sub-divided into two cottages, if it started as a two-bay timber framed house.

NB No access to No. 62 or the planned visit of the roof space in No. 60 has been possible, therefore the investigation remains inconclusive as to the age of the buildings.