

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

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

**Owners:** 6 different owners/  
tenants respectively

**Street and House name:** 58, 60, 62/64, 66, 68, 70-74/76,  
& 78 New Street

Ruth Gibson

**Date:** March 2007 - June 2008

**Listing grade and entry text: Gd II**

*‘C15th, C16th and C17th range ( with later alterations ) stretching back from street along an alleyway reached by Tudor arched entrance between the two C15th cottages on the street. Nos 60-74 represent the late building up of the burgage plot of No. 58. The whole group forms a very interesting medieval remnant.*

*Street façade timber framed with brick and plaster infilling. Old tiled roof. 2 storeys, 2 windows, those of 1<sup>st</sup> floor leaded casements, ground floor has 2 small projection bay windows, probably C18. 2 doors. Tudor arch over entrance passage to rear. Nos 60-74 at the rear appear to be small freeholds of 2 storeys with, originally 1 room on each floor.’*

N.B. The above description makes several assumptions, which cannot be sustained. The most obvious one is that the rear cottages (Nos. 70, 72, 74/76) are clearly not medieval, but date from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Their double pile plan, hipped roofs as well as the date stone of **1823, J. Strange**, affixed to the front of No. 70 confirm this. J. Strange was a member of a well established local builders firm. These cottages do not form part of this recording, other than having been identified as a 19<sup>th</sup> century addition to the earlier group at the rear of this burgage plot.

The numbering of the cottages as well as attribution of names is also wrong in the List with regard to No. 58, which is ‘Anne Boleyn Cottage’ and No. 78 (not No. 76 as per Listing Entry), which is ‘Tudor Cottage’, not the other way around. Throughout the report I shall refer to the existing numbering and names.



**North facing front elevation with Tudor Cottage on the left and Anne Boleyn Cottage on the right. The off-centre passageway is located below Tudor Cottage**

**Known History:** The building is known to have been a P.H., The 'Barge Pole' in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (see research by A. Cottingham in 'The Hostelryes of Henley'). A photograph of pre-1897 New Street shows the cottages very much as they are today with their jetties and small oriel windows on each side of the central passageway. The east gable of No. 78 'Tudor Cottage' at that time adjoined a terrace of other small houses, which had no exposed timber framing, slightly higher eaves and a shallower roof pitch, indicating a later building date. They were demolished when the brewery expanded its premises and created a street access for its rear yards soon after the photograph had been taken.

Nothing is known so far about the builders or early occupants of these dwellings, but what the historic fabric and subsequent alterations, additions and extensions may tell us. More information may come to light in the course of the present Victoria County History Project documentary research.

**Map ref., date of 1<sup>st</sup> map, type of plot.** The group is shown on the First O S Map of 1878 very much in their present form. The New Street range occupies the street frontage of a c.8.50m wide plot, which runs back to the rear burgage plot boundary of Hart Street properties. The latter are part of the 12<sup>th</sup> century planned town and it is possible, that the New Street plots were carved out of the originally longer Hart Street ones. Since New Street is documented by c. 1300 this development along a possible former back lane would have taken place quite early on.

**Type and use of building:** 6 residential cottages

**Plan form/position in street:** Nos 58 and 78 form two bays, built parallel to the street. They are separated by an off-centre passageway, located underneath the first floor of No. 78. Both these bays have been extended at the back with roofs at right angles to the front one.

The one bay No 60 is located behind No. 58 under a roof of the same pitch; its two stacks adjoin each other, but are clearly not contemporary. The two-bay No 62/64 is one house and located directly behind/south of No. 60, although slightly wider and with a taller, more steeply pitched roof indicating an earlier building date.



**Rear elevation of 78 on the r.h. On the l.h. are Nos 60, with 58 just inside the passage; its bathroom occupies the space above under the roof slope of No 78 as a truly 'flying freehold'**



**East, front elevation of No. 60, its brick stack adjoins that of 58, just visible behind the white rendered rear stack of No 78; The central stack on the tall roof behind is that of the adjoining 'Rose & Crown' PH**

No. 62/64 predates the single bay cottage of No. 60 as its own, wider north gable truss forms the south gable of No. 60. The same happens at the other end, where the timbers of its own south gable have been used to create the north gable wall of No. 66. The heavily weathered timbers visible inside No. 66 show that these had been exposed externally for several centuries before being enclosed by the new semi detached cottages which make up Nos. 66 & 68. These are both one up, one down cottages with a central, shared stack. They form the last of the long timber framed range behind Anne Bolyen Cottage.



South facing gable of No. 64, seen from inside No. 66. NB the heavily weathered timbers

### Description of the individual buildings which make up the group

#### Nos 58 Anne Boleyn Cottage and 78 Tudor Cottage

The two storey timber frame of the front range consists of mainly tall, rectangular panels. Those of the first floor are jettied out over the g.f. by c 24". The jetty joists appear to be laid flat but vary somewhat in depth and may be square cut as part of their depth is hidden under the ceiling plaster. Their average size is 6" by 4 1/2", The average gap between them is 12 - 13".

The ground floor is divided by the off-centre entrance passage to the rear. Note the small square panels on the left h. side and the tall, rectangular panels on the r.h. side, the latter is the lower part of the **closed truss**, which is also visible at first floor level in No. 58.



1<sup>st</sup> floor, closed truss of east wall



Entrance passage with plain four-centre arch

There are small oriel windows, which may be modern replacement of an earlier ones, and a doorway on each side of the passageway with late 19<sup>th</sup> century plank doors, which have ornamental, long strap hinges of Arts and Crafts influence. Both doorways are reached by stone steps; that of No.78 is located higher, above the timber sill up 3 steps, whilst the doorway of No. 58 has been cut through the sill beam. There are basement windows below the two oriels to the two separate cellars, that of No. 78 is quite large, covered with an ornamental grille and appears to have been the main access to the PH cellar.

The passageway entrance has a plain 4-centre door head, set between a post, which forms part of the timber frame of the west bay, and a much wider post on the east side, which seems an addition or a possible repair. This appears to have been the original entrance doorway to the building, prior to it being split into two separate dwellings. The presence of a substantial timber sill beam on the east side indicates that this door always led into a through passage, although the existing timber stud wall built on the sill beam is of slight scantling square framing, which appears to be of 18<sup>th</sup> cent. date and may replace a timber screen to the cross passage, when first built.

There are two windows to the passageway in the rear section of No. 58; a side door is located just at the end of the front range between the timber posts, which make up the rectangular panels of the side wall. There are no openings in the west side wall of No. 78, only a bulge in the render, which conceals the large corner stack, very likely part of an 18<sup>th</sup> century addition.

The windows are small leaded lights at first floor level in iron frames set directly into the timber framing.



**Front 1<sup>st</sup> floor window in No. 58**

The east gable of the front range is visible from the entrance drive to Brakspear's brewery yard, but it has been heavily restored/rebuilt with modern brickwork, which was probably necessary when the adjoining cottages were demolished. Only the mid rail of the gable timber frame is clearly visible as well as some narrow studs at first floor level. The lower roof of the later rear extension can be clearly seen from here, located at right angles to the front gable.

## The interior of No. 58, Anne Boleyn Cottage

The front g. f. bay has its ceiling joists (6" by c. 4 1/2") exposed, tenoned into the wide axial beam (10" by 6"). The bay measures 4.05 m across by 5.30m depth. There is a large ingle nook type fire place located at the rear wall which has, however, lost most of its early fabric and appears to be held up by slight timber members such as the narrow bressumer, a bench end, boards and a brick jamb on one side. Steel straps inside it support the substantial brick flue and fire place in the room above. There is no doubt, that the ground floor F.P. was as substantial as the first floor one, but has undergone considerable alterations, which left only a shell standing.

The ceiling beams next to the stack are interrupted by a trimmer beam with narrow joist inserted, where an opening, very probably for the earlier stairs had been located.



**Inglenook in front room**

The rear room is 3.50m deep and also has a large F.P. The straight staircase with winder at the bottom is also accommodated in this bay set against the back wall of the front F.P. The ceiling joists are of narrow scantling with evidence of re-used timbers.



**Rear g.f. fire place built against south gable wall**



The rear bedroom has a traditionally framed gable wall, although of lighter scantling, with the stack from the ground floor rising against it and then disappearing behind the tie beam to the outside of the gable wall.

A very low door under the valley gutter between Nos. 78 and 58 gives access to a modern bathroom located over the through passage and under the rear roof slope of No. 78. ( See photograph on page 2)



The front bedroom has a substantial, 2" 'Tudor brick' fire place with a hearth and flue to one side, which allows plenty of space for the main flue from the ground floor fire place to be accommodated.

Visible behind the stack are the rafters of the steeply pitched roof and one of the wide curved wind braces. These are found in pairs in both back and front parts of the roof.

The close-studded west gable wall is just visible on the right. This forms the boundary to the adjoining 'Rose & Crown' P.H.



**Close studded east gable wall with long brace**

There is a cellar located under the ground floor front room, accessed by trap door and modern stairs. It has been tanked and totally renovated and retains no original features apart from the street access opening.

### **The interior of No. 78**

The front g.f. room is only 3m wide, with the adjoining through passage taking up a further metre. It has the same type of ceiling joists as No. 58, tenoned into the central spine beam and jettied over the front. The spine beam continues into the corridor ceiling.

The staircase to the first floor and cellar is located at the back within this room, reducing its size further. There is no fire place and no sign of a former one. The stairs to the cellar have an attractive curved brick and flint wall. The cellar itself has been modernised, probably tanked and no early features remain.

The rear extension has narrow, sawn ceiling joists and a corner stack, probably brick built but now plastered. The corner position is typical for late 18<sup>th</sup> century fire places and may indicate the date for this rear extension. The narrow scantling rafters of the room above also indicate that date range.

The first floor front room has been altered much more than that of its neighbour, where the large front room, which occupies the entire bay, allows good views of its original framing. Here an attic room has been inserted into the south part of its roof structure, apparently replacing a former gallery, and the landing and staircase to the attic have reduced its floor space, leaving only a narrow front bedroom. However, what is visible of the framing shows that the construction is the same throughout the building; close studded trusses with queen struts and clasped purlins, wide arch braces from wall posts to tie beams.

The rear extension has narrow, machine cut joists showing its late 18<sup>th</sup> cent. construction.

**No. 60**



This appears to be a traditionally timber framed building of one bay with first floor accommodation in the attic. It has a large brick-built inglenook type fire place with timber bressumers resting on narrow brick jambs, built at the back of that of No. 58. The bressumer is marked with rushlight burns. Whilst the spine beam is substantial and has a chamfer with stops visible at the north end, the ceiling joists are roughly cut with signs that some of them are re-used. Opposite the entrance door is a turned staircase with cupboard below which rises next to a space, which forms part of the adjoining Rose & Crown PH ( see plan ).

At first floor level it becomes apparent that this one-bay cottage has been inserted between two earlier buildings. The truss of the building on the south side is visible, although with some difficulty due to dividing walls and the fact that the gable of No. 62/64 is broader and that only part of its queen posts, collar and tie beam can be seen here. An additional collar and purlins for supporting the rafters of No. 60 have been added to this earlier gable. The timber framing of the north gable is not visible. The low roof pitch as well as the use of recycled timbers suggests a c. 1700-1750 date for this small building, which may have been built as an extension to No. 58.



**South gable wall attached to its neighbour**



**The different roof pitches of Nos. 60 & 62/64**

**Nos. 62/64 - now one house**

This is a two-bay building, which was turned into two cottages with modest central stack and back-to-back fire places. One staircase, which still exists, was inserted in front of the stack, the second seemed to have risen from the corner of the g.f. room judging by the location of the short trimmer beams in the joists there. All joists are roughly cut from quarter timbers.

The construction of the two gables shows many similarities to the New Street front range, except that this building was not jettied and may not have had an upper floor originally.

Both gables have timbers of large scantling and good quality in their cambered ties, queen struts and clasped purlins. However, the central truss has a most oddly shaped, bendy tie beam, which contrast sharply with the other two gable ties, all consistent with what one would expect to find in a timber framed building of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Whilst the main wall posts are substantial the studs that make up the front wall are of narrow scantling. The first floor leaded lights have been inserted between the rails and studs in the traditional manner. There is now only one entrance door to the property, but there would have been two previously. Neither the door nor the larger windows appear to be original to the building.



**Front/east elevation of No. 62/64**



**The 'bendy' tie beam snaking through the central first floor rooms.**



**Ceiling in north g.f. living room  
pos. second hand ceiling joists**

Much of the interior of this cottage appears much later than its end trusses, wall frames and wide plinth, large posts and steeply pitched roof suggest. Whilst the former could be contemporary with the front range, the narrow wall studs may be no earlier than 18<sup>th</sup> century, certainly the small stack, ceiling and stairs are unlikely to be earlier. Is it possible that this two-bay building was a contemporary, detached service building to the jettied house fronting the street? It may have been open fronted and may not have had an upper floor. All timbers are heavily painted so give no clues through smoke blackening or similar of a former possible use. The 'bendy' tie beam is certainly not something one would expect to see in a late medieval dwelling.

**Nos. 66 and 68**

Only No. 66 has been visited. –

This is a purpose built semi with central two flue-brick stack and an entrance door with adjoining window for each of the two small dwellings. Externally the framing consists of narrow studs and horizontal rails creating rectangular panels, infilled with bricks. This late framing was probably originally not exposed, but rendered or weather boarded.

Each cottage consists of a g.f. room with fire place (removed in No. 66) and an upstairs room within the attic, which in No 66 is reached by a steep staircase attached to the gable wall. Its most impressive internal feature is the substantial, heavily weathered gable in its north wall, which is the external gable wall of No. 64. All other timbers are narrow and appear machine cut. A building date around the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century is stipulated for this modest semi, built towards the end of the timber framed tradition.



**Nos. 68 and 66**

**No. 64**

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Nos 58 and 78 is a two-bay, one room deep timber framed house with cross passage, jettied at the street front, which would have once been commonplace in the medieval town, but is now a rare survivor of a typical late medieval house, i.e. c. 1500.

It appears to have had a chimney stack and two fire places in the ground and first floor rooms of the west bay from the start, but one cannot rule out that their had been an open hall at the back originally, which would have provided the heated space of the house. The c. "2 brickwork of the stack indicates early fire places in the front range; unfortunately the original staircase has not survived, but judging by the former opening in the western room was of the companion ladder type. The cellar stair, accessed from Tudor Cottage looks like a 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> century brick and flint construction, which may be the date that the cellar was inserted below the high stone plinth of the timber framed building. However, it is also possible that the building always had a cellar, something one cannot assess any more. The cellar was probably divided when the house was divided into two cottages, something that may have occurred when population pressure of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries brought about the construction of several additional one-room dwellings in the back yard.

Only Nos 62/64 appear to be of a similar date to the street frontage range and may have been some kind of service building, a stable, a store or even a kitchen.

The building may owe its survival to the fact that it was in use as a public house and that the through passage lent itself for turning the rear plot into ancillary accommodation for the growing urban population. There were several of such densely built up rear yards in the town, one just across the road called Ffloyds Yard, which however was demolished when Brakspear's built their new malt houses.

© Ruth Gibson, BA IHBC  
10 July, 2008



**No 78**

**Tudor Cottage**

**No 58**

**Boleyn Cottage**

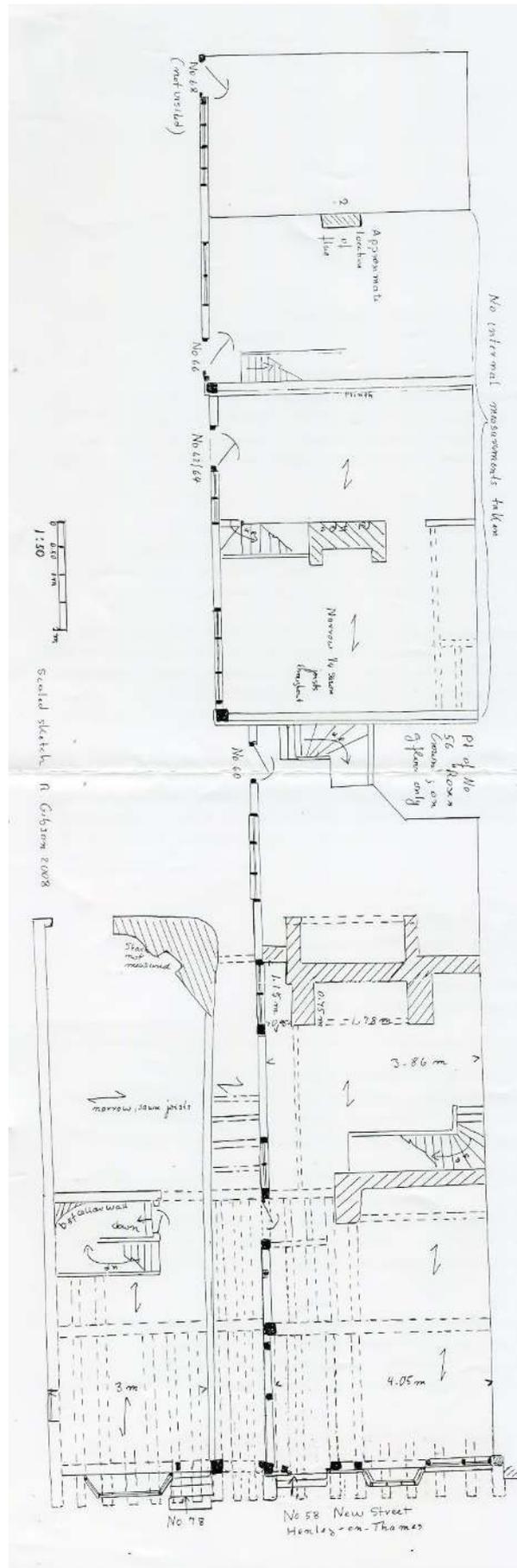


**East wall of No 78**

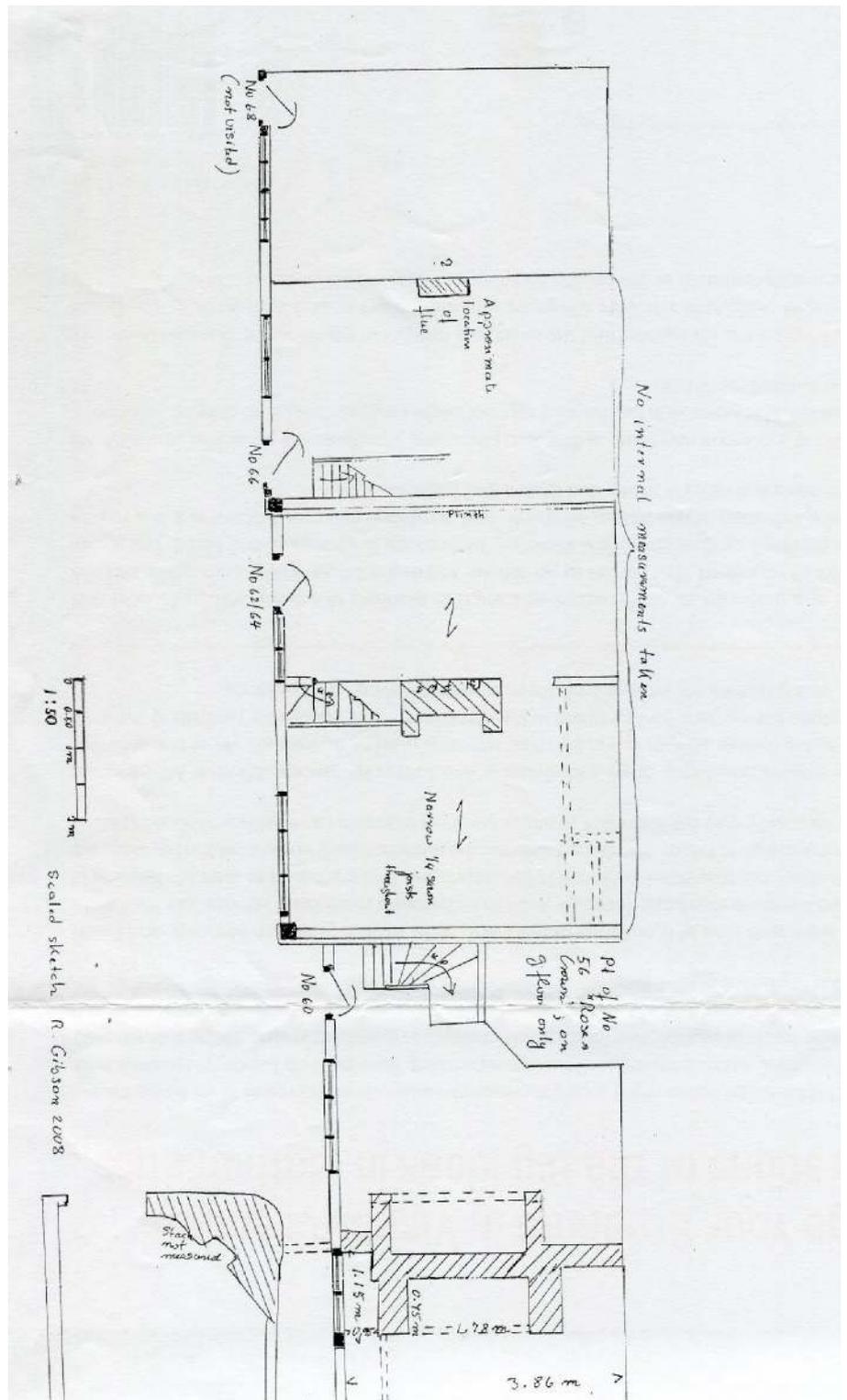


**58 & 78 New Street  
as seen from New Street**

# Plan of cottages not to scale



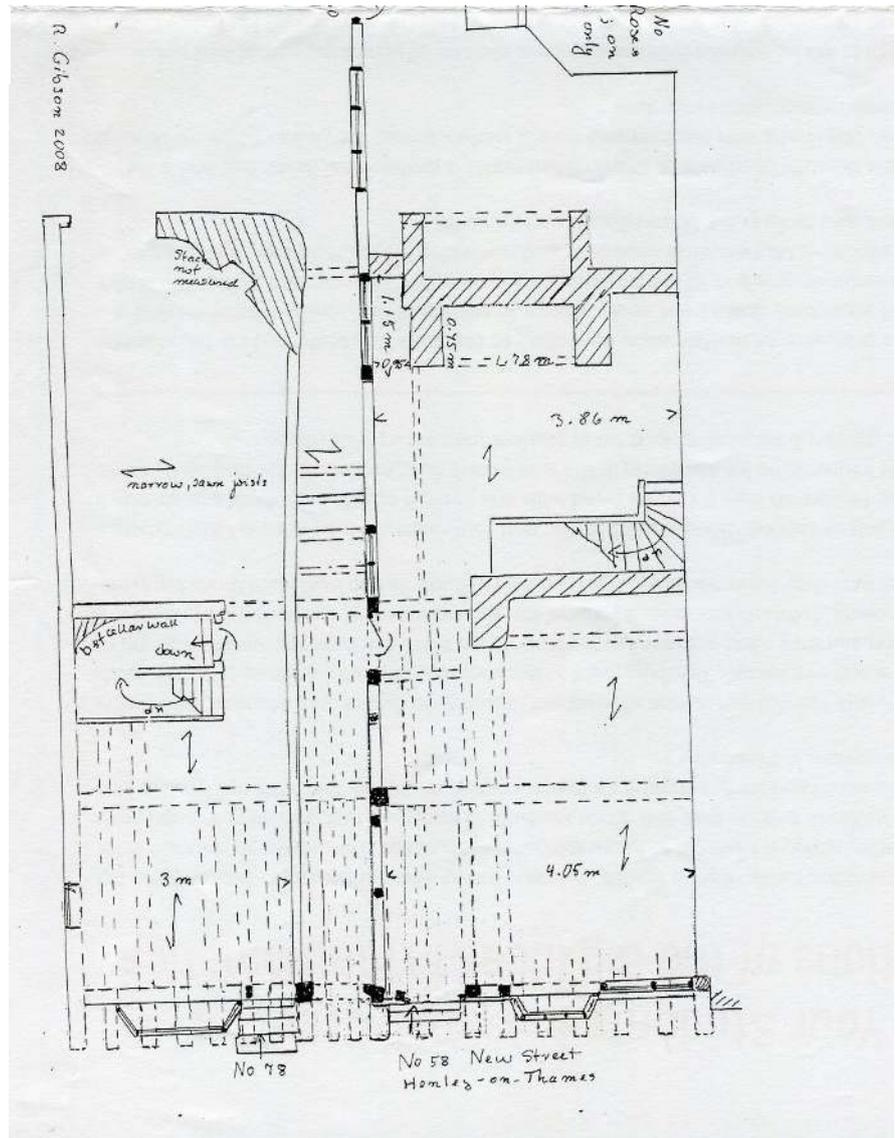
# Plan of cottages to scale



Scaled sketch

R. Gibson 2008

Plan of cottages to scale



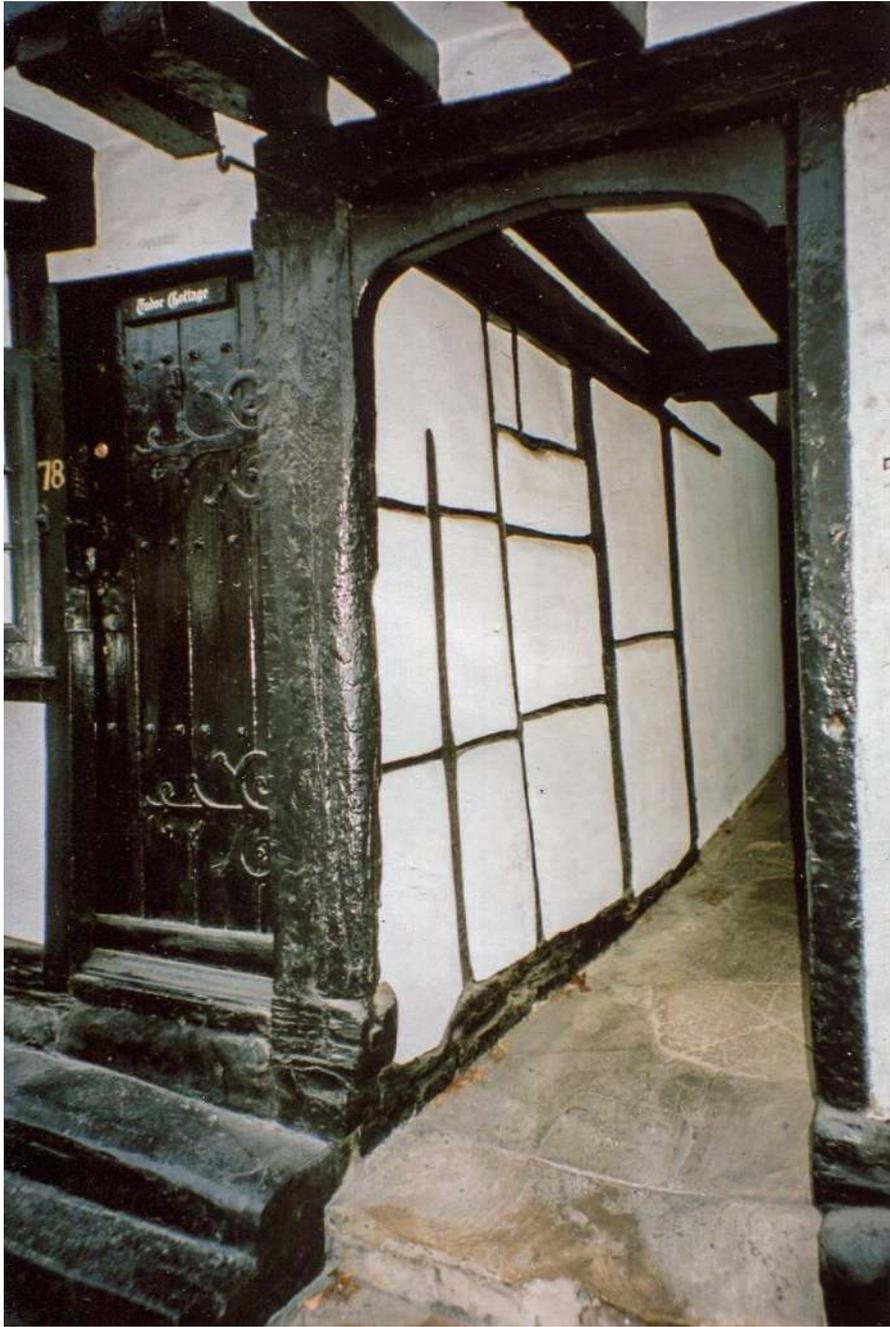
**Nos. 58 – 78 New Street with rear ranges**

Compare close studded trusses of No. 64 (a two-bay bldg. in the back range) and that of the truss between Anne Bolyen and Tudor Cottages at the front. Their construction is very similar and may date to c. 1500. All other rear cottages are 1700 or later.



**No 78 New Street**

**No 58 New Street**



**Passageway between 58 & 78 New Street**



No 68

No 66

No 64 - 62

2 17 06 R.G

**Rear – south/east elevations**



**No 62/64**

**No 60**

**No 78 New Street**

**No 60**

**No 58**

**No 62/64**

**No 78**





**70 - 76 New Street - built in 1823**

**Date Plaque at 70/72 New Street  
dated 1823, J Strange - builder**



**STRANGE family**

John Strange Senior apparently came to Henley from Caversham  
He was landlord of the Kings Arms *circa* 1791 – 1809 (see Ann's book pp148-9)  
I have seen in other notes his name attributed to the building of Henley workhouse  
*circa* 1790  
He was buried in Henley 28 November 1809 aged 62

Regarding his marriages see his descendants' family trees

John Strange Junior appears to be the son of John Senior and Anne, apparently baptised  
in Caversham – the family starts being baptised in Henley in 1780.  
He is in the directories of 1823 and 1830 as a bricklayer of New Street.  
He was also landlord of the Rose & Crown in New Street *circa* 1812 – 1842 (see  
Ann's book pp 198 – 200)  
1842 directory lists a number of Stranges in the area , including a John Strange ,  
brickmaker, Marlow Road, Henley. In this directory there is a different name at the  
Comp Farm brickworks.  
He was buried in Henley 14 Feb 1845 aged 67  
I couldn't see any mention of either John Strange (pere ou fils) in the HAHG booklet  
on the bridge, but it is extremely non-inclusive. The Michael Strange is very likely  
correct.

One of John Strange Junior's sons was William Copeland Strange, who appears in  
directories 1847 – 1854 variously as bricklayer, plasterer and slater – then, according to  
the family history, went bankrupt. In 1869 he reappears as "Architect & Surveyor and  
Surveyor to Local Board". I am a bit confused by the fact that two daughters of  
William Copeland Strange and Elizabeth were baptised in Sept 1868 – when he was  
apparently 63 (though they could have been adult baptisms!) He, the father, was  
described as "Surveyor".



Interior of No 66



**No 66 built  
against gable  
wall of No 64**

**South gable wall of No 64,  
heavily weathered,  
seen from inside of No 66,  
which was built against the pre-existing  
gable of No 64**

**Heavily weathered  
former exterior gable  
timbers of No 64/62**





**58 New Street east closed truss**



**No 58 New Street – 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, South Room**



**Anne Boleyn Cottage  
58 New Street**



**58 New Street**



**58 New Street**  
**First floor fireplace, 2 inch bricks**



**No 56 New Street**

**First floor windows, north wall iron casements, fixed and opening lights**



### **56 New Street**

**Mortis and tenon joint between plate and axial beam, ground floor, front room, east wall**



No 60

Stack of No 60 ↑ Stack of 58 ↑ Stack of No 78 ↑



Double Stack belongs to No 60 & 58  
 Large stack with two flues serves central fireplaces in No 58, 'Anne Boleyn Cottage'

Nos 62 and 64

**58 -78 New Street**



**Roofs of 58 – 78 New Street looking south from Tudor Cottage**

## Survey Notes

### VERNACULAR BUILDINGS RESEARCH HENLEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL GROUP

Parish/County: Henley-on-Thames

Mr. Halsall owner 576190  
Owner/Occupant: Chris tenant

#### Street and House name:

Nos 8 New Street  
'A. Boleyn Cottage'

Listing grade and entry text:

Grade II

(15<sup>th</sup> / 16<sup>th</sup> , 17<sup>th</sup> ranges)

Tel No: 0791 252 4738

Recorder:

Ruth Gibson

Date: 25.3.08 18<sup>30</sup>

Known History: Pt. of P.H. , Borge Pole (See A.Cott. 'Hostellers of Henley')

Summary: possible first building date and use, datable alteration and additions

Pt of 2 bay bds with central passage under 'Tudor' arch

Map ref., date of 1<sup>st</sup> map, type of plot: 1878 map

#### Type and use of building:

Plan form/position in street: Front range runs parallel to street, addit. rear range at right angles (ded roof)

Description of front elevation ( height, windows, entrances, shop front etc):

Timber framed, jettied. Door, 2 steps up to it.

Walling material:

(Brick including brick sizes, bond, colour; timber frame type; render or stucco; stone types and finishes)

Timber framed. Posts have spigot heads. Curved wall braces

Roof shape: pitched roof

Roof covering: tiled

Also a F.P. in back wall  
of rear ext., 1st & 1st floor

Cellar: Small, totally renovated, tanked. Brick steps tiled  
floor at two levels. Deep floor houses wash machine, access to  
front windows

Fire places: (location and type) At back wall of front range. G.F deep FP but with  
hardy on brick pier to support Tuckor brick F.P. above (c178" bricks)

Stairs: (location and type) Turned & straight run up behind stack within  
rear part

Upper Floors: Front Bedroom. Queen strut trusses, clamped purlins  
Curved wall & wind braces  
Sign in bulk ties of former cock loft type of arrangement

Brick stack 17/8", struts beam  
Closed truss on east side

Open queen strut truss on west side

Back bedroom & landing occupy rear extension.

Measurements of 1st floor front room:

4.15 m across ie bay width  
in centre

< 5.80 m Stack 0.90 deep >

Depth of room from stack wall to front of bay

Attic: Roof structure - trusses, special features if any

1st floor. Queen strut, clamped purlins, curved, lg. windbraces,  
Truss on west side appears to be open, the east one is closed,  
clearly demarcating a wall (Now bonded wall between Nos 58 & 78)