

## SURVEY OF TWO PROPERTIES IN HIGH STREET, BURNHAM

JOHN D. BROADBENT, A.R.I.B.A., and A. H. PACKE

*Editor's Note: So much small property is being destroyed all over the county without proper photographic records or drawings before demolition that we are pleased to print a monograph on two such houses, Nos. 36 and 38 High Street, Burnham, prepared by Mr. John D. Broadbent, Architect, and Mr. A. H. Packe from the documentary angle. It is not suggested that these buildings are in any way exceptional: but the survey shows what can be done by careful examination and record, without which, if demolition should come, they would pass into complete oblivion. The village of Burnham in particular has suffered more than most from "improvement", which nowadays is almost synonymous with devastation, as a reference to the plan of Burnham on page 76 of the Royal Commission's South Bucks. Volume (1912) will show. The property now discussed is monument No. 11, pp. 76 and 77, to which detailed reference may be made. No. 36 is empty and in poor condition and is almost certain to be demolished. No. 38 is in good order.*

THE two properties under consideration do not appear from the street to be especially interesting. At the northern end (left in Photograph Plate V (a)—Projected Gable of Barn, outside) is a carriage entrance to the garage of W. J. Sands & Sons Ltd., to whom No. 38 belongs. The ground floor has been re-built in precise red brickwork with a new window to a room used as a branch of Lloyds Bank Ltd., while the upper part has been hung with clay tiling. Only the projected timber and plaster gable gives a hint of the structure behind. The date of the re-fronting has not been traced but is probably early in the present century.

Apart from the bank, the interior is used as two flats for staff of the garage. It is clear that these do not bear much relation to the original design of the buildings, but are the product of a maze of minor alterations throughout its history which would be impossible to chart accurately.

From an inspection of the inside, it is clear that the original structure behind the timbered gable was a two-storey timber frame (Plate V (b)—Interior Roof Structure) barn-like in layout and construction, consisting of posts, beams and queen-post trusses at wide spacing (13 ft.) with heavy purlins collared at centre span and knee-braced in the plane of the roof (B). There is nothing to suggest that this was built as a dwelling.

The framing is heavy and well jointed (Plate VI (a)—Interior-Ceiling of Second

Bay). The first-floor front bay is particularly strong and it would appear that the joists cantilevered over the original front wall to support the projected gable above. It is evident that the second bay was originally double storey. At a later date a trimming beam has been introduced and the floor joists of this bay span across the building. The underside of the roof rafters are here plastered to purlin level. (See Plate V (b).)

The front block has had a new roof built over it at higher level, though this does not appear to be later than early seventeenth century. The old roof so covered still retains much of its original lathing, from which it may be assumed that the original building was tiled rather than thatched. It is interesting to note that the earliest lease so far traced is to a lath-maker in 1593. The existence of these trades at all suggest a fairly general use of tiling, and tile-making was certainly general in South Bucks, from the fourteenth century onwards.

The south wall of the barn may well be partly original (Plate VI (b)—Exterior of South Wall). Apart from small quantities of Tudor brick, the wall is mainly flint, fragments of stone and large fragments of tile kiln which can be seen in the photograph. Around Burnham there are areas of clay and sandy gravel with chalk accessible only a few feet down, thus providing, together with abundant hardwood for burning to charcoal, all the raw materials for tile-making. The kilns were evidently of the tunnel type consisting of a continuous vault made of roofing tiles, which have here fused together and become partly vitrified.

After the erection of the original barn (Plate VII—Interior—Showing Peg Tiles on Straw on Split Oak Laths) the third and fourth bays were modified by the formation of a chamber with square vaulted ceiling of lath and plaster on rough cradling. (See long section in Key Diagrams.) Small windows were formed in both the north and south walls and both the east and west walls are rough framed and plastered on the chamber side only. The third queen post had to be modified to give adequate headroom in the room. It seems possible that this room may have been formed as a bedroom or withdrawing-room over the workshop. The only similar construction to which reference can be found is in a cottage attached to a Quaker Meeting House at Ifield in Sussex, which is also a sixteenth-century structure.

Presumably the ground floor (west) front of the building was timber framed but had to be completely replaced during the twentieth-century re-fronting. The east end does not appear to have been an external wall and it looks from the exterior that there was in fact one further bay which has since disappeared.

The north addition retains much of its original timber frame with stop chamfered beams of heavy section, but it has been so altered that little can be deduced from it. No doubt the opening from the street was used for coaches and wagons when the building was in use as an inn and brewery up to 1913. From the interior it would appear that the tile hanging of the first floor covers the original framing.

No. 36 lies to the south of the earliest building (Plate VIII—Exterior of No. 36). From documentary evidence this site may well have been in earlier occupation, and it is possible that the chimney stack at the south end, which is of

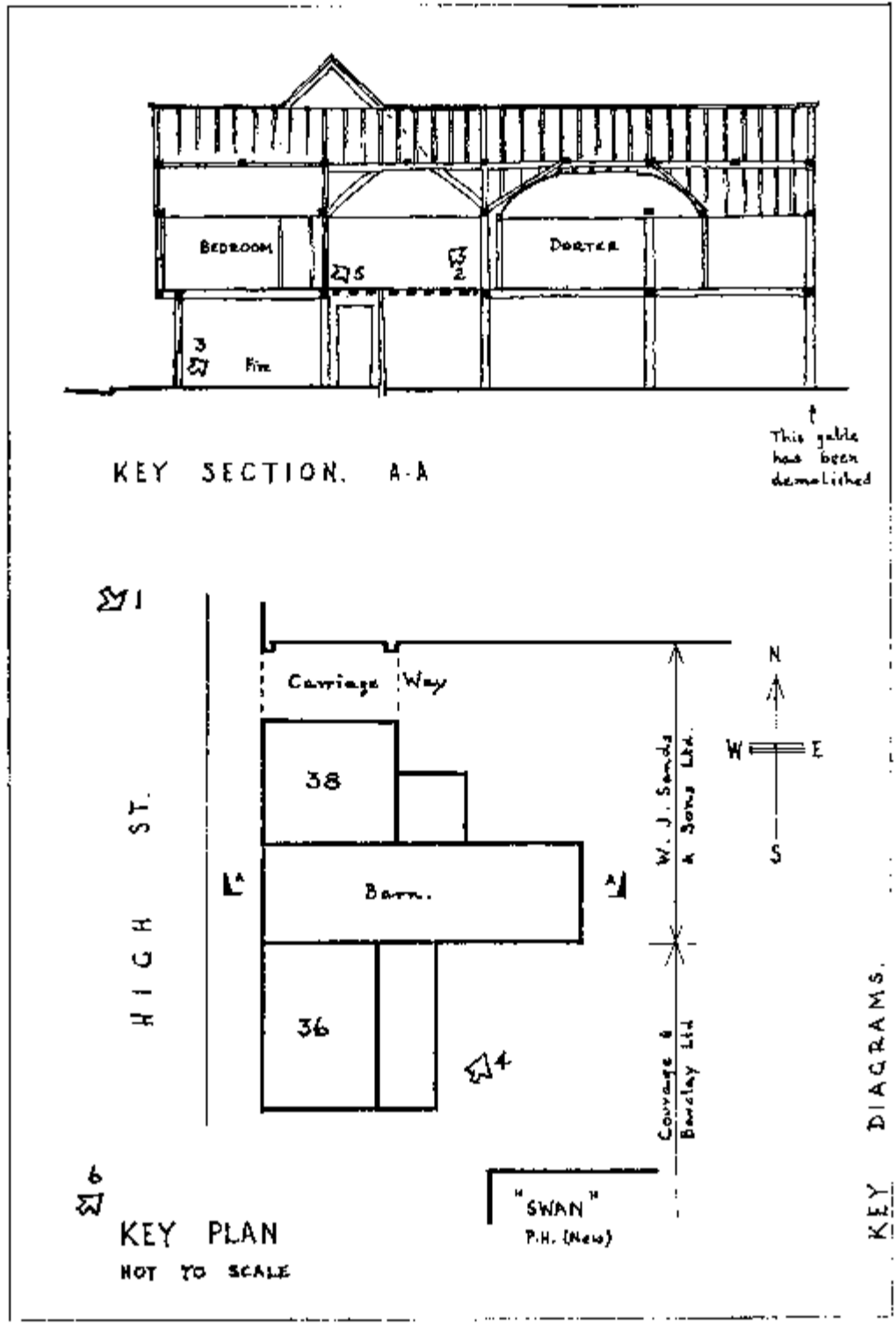




PLATE V (a).



PLATE V (b).



PLATE VI (a).



PLATE VI (b).



PLATE VII.



PLATE VIII.

very massive and irregular construction, may be part of an earlier timber-framed house though the south gable wall has been completely refaced with modern brickwork.

The house consists of a light timber frame with the upper floor projected beyond the lower over the street. The infilling seems to have been wattle and plaster originally, but has been replaced by 4½ in. thick brick nogging. No doubt at the same time the windows were replaced and the ground-floor openings enlarged. At a later date the roof has been extended at the rear over a single-storey annexe.

The roof of this house was extended over the adjoining barn of No. 38 when it was built and this was either done before or at the same time as the north wing of No. 38 was roofed.

No. 36 was evidently an inn for much of its life, at least until 1798, but there is a tradition that it was a butcher's shop and the small projected window and the fittings behind it are consistent with its use as a shop. It seems likely that the brick filling and windows were put in early in the nineteenth century, at the time of its conversion to this use.

We are indebted to Rex Wailes, Esq., F.S.A., M.I.Mech.E., who took the photographs under extremely difficult conditions.

These premises were formerly owned by Eton College, and the following particulars are taken from a calendar of Deeds belonging to Eton College, reference Vol. 38, *Burnham Deeds*.

No. 38 was formerly known as The Rose, and No. 36 as The Swan, and now as Old Swan Cottage and adjoins the Swan Public House.

- 1560 Counterpart lease, Eton College to Richard Joyse of Burnham, tailor, of a tenement and messuage called *The Swanne* with 5 acres in the common fields of Burnham and Hitcham for 21 years at a rent of 26s. 8d.
- 1579 Lease, *Swan* to George Tomesonne of Burnham, yeoman, of the same, for 21 years. Rent 26s. 8d.
- 1593 Counterpart lease, Eton College to William Durrant, lathmaker, of the *Rose* with garden and Backside and 2 acres in the common fields. Rent 17s. 10d. and 1½ bushels of malt for 21 years.
- 1616 Lease. Eton College to Thomas Jesson of Burnham, Innholder, of the *Swan* for 21 years at a rent of 17s. 10d. and 1 bushel 12 pecks of wheat or 12 bushels 1 peck malt or money equivalent. The lands leased with the messuage were 2 acres butting on Burnham Abbey called Drypond, 1 acre called Dewstraw, the Great Acre in Hitchamfield, 3 yard lands in Hitchamfield.
- 1629 Lease. Same to Alice Jesson, widow, of the *Swan* for 21 years at same rent.
- 1649 Lease. Eton College to Joan Sexton, widow of Burnham, of the *Swan* and land as in 1616 lease at same rent.
- 1651 Lease. Same to Alice Jesson, who had surrendered previous lease, of *Swan* and land as in 1616 lease at same rent.
- 1749 Lease, same to John Geall of Clewer, brewer, of the *Swan Inn*, for 21 years at rent as in 1616 lease.



- 18th cent. Leases of the *Swan* were granted from 1770 to 1798 to Henry Isherwood, of Windsor, brewer, always at the same rent as for the 1616 lease, except that in 1798 the rent in kind was 13 gallons 2 quarts of wheat or 110 gallons 1 quart of malt.
- 18th cent. Leases of the *Rose* were granted from 1742 for 21 years at a time until 1798 when Richard Howard, maltster, was granted a lease at a rent of 13 gallons 2 quarts of wheat or 110 gallons 1 quart of malt. This lease was renewed at intervals until 1833.
- 1833 Lease. Eton College to Mary, George and Thomas Howard, devisees in the will of Richard Howard, of *The Rose*.
- 1847 A similar lease granted, of the *Rose*.
- 1875 Sale by Eton College to William Edmund Brown and St. George Augustus Terry of *The Rose* with garden and backside on part of which a Brewery has been built with stables and kitchens, for £750.
- 1913 Sale by Fuller and Storey and Co. of The Bell Brewery, Maidenhead, to George Webster of Taplow. The premises then called the *Rose Brewery*. Mr. Webster covenanted not to use them as a Brewery. The price paid by Mr. Webster was £700 but it appears from this deed, which is in the possession of Barrett and Thomson, Solicitors, of Slough, that the premises fetched a larger sum, part of which was used to pay off a mortgage which Lloyds Bank held on them.