



Historic Building Features at 1 High Street

By Roger Lea

The Sutton Coldfield Local History Research Group undertook a project to make a historic building record of 1 High Street. The full report of this is deposited in Sutton Coldfield Library. As part of this project, over 200 photographs were taken, some of which may prove useful for comparison when other buildings come to be studied.

The building was constructed of stone in 1623, after a previous timber-framed inn had burned down. In places, the original stone walls were exposed, showing that local sandstone had been used. On the second floor, the interior stone wall of the north gable encases a massive tie-beam and the principal rafter. On the outside of this wall



is a large protruding stone chimney, but ancillary buildings made it inaccessible for close inspection.

The stonework was also exposed on the east wall, where there was a bricked-in window frame. The stone window frame was moulded, and it had moulded mullions, but the sill was missing. Once again, it was not possible to get very close, but details of the window could be studied on the high quality digital photograph.



The chimneys on the second floor also had exposed stonework, the upper part of the chimneys being of brick.

The purlins (beams which support the roof) were trenched into the principal rafters, as shown here. (The tenon of the tie beam has been pulled out of the mortice joint due to the movement of the building, breaking the pegs which had secured it – the building has been stabilized since).



The detail of the

junction of the roof of the wing to the main roof could only be seen by torchlight, standing on



a ladder, so flash photography gave a better view. We were so busy measuring that we failed to notice

the carpenters marks until our third visit – this reads IIIIV, being the ninth stud in the wall framework. The stud is fastened with a mortice and tenon joint secured by a peg; the studs in the other partition walls were nailed into position.

On the first floor the exposed timbers were



chamfered, but in places decay had weakened them,



necessitating the use of metal brackets



At the top of the street wall there was a gap where details of the eaves could be seen. On the outside was the stone cornice, then the top of the Georgian brick façade, then the stone wall with a decayed wall plate on top of it, and this was lined on the inside by a wall of bricks placed on their sides. Some of the bricks which had been removed were stacked on the floor, these were narrow bricks dating from about 1700 with the characteristic diagonal mould mark.





The owner, Kimberley Kong, is proud of the building and is restoring it sympathetically, as can be seen in the handsome staircase.

(Roger Lea presented a copy of the report to Kimberley Kong, and the archival version to Marian Baxter, on December 17th 2008)

