

THE STRATFIRE PROJECT

Nos 30, 31 High St, Stratford-upon-Avon

Documentary History (provisional) (Version 5.1.2025)

1. Introductory note

Neither No. 30 nor No. 31 High St is well documented in the early period although there is good evidence that No. 31 belonged to the Quiney family at the time of the fires of 1594/5 and also much to suggest that they also owned No. 30 as well.

2. No. 31

- 2.1 The neighbouring property to the north of No. 31 (formerly No. 32 High St but following its demolition now the entrance to Bell Court) was owned by the Guild of the Holy Cross and from 1553 by the Stratford Corporation. The descriptions of the southerly abuttal to surviving leases of No. 32 therefore provide a skeletal outline of the history of No. 31. This shows that in 1451 the property to the south of No. 32 (i.e. No. 31) belonged to John Hubaud, gentleman, adding in 1472 that Hubaud had let the property to Margaret Bull, widow (BRT 1/2/402, 502). The next available descriptions of this abuttal show continuity in the hands of the Quiney family, Richard (1) in 1539 and his son Adrian (1) in 1591 (BRT 1/2/586, 588; BRU 9/8/1). Significantly, the next holder of this abutting property, in 1619, is William Chandler (BRU 8/9/27), who married Adrian's grand-daughter in November 1603 (*Marriages*, 21). She was the daughter of Richard Quiney (2), who had predeceased his father Adrian (1) in May 1602 (*Burials*, 67). Adrian lived on until March 1607 (*Burials*, 75).
- 2.2 This sequence allows us to propose that the building on the site of No. 31 was in the hands of the Quiney family from at least 1530, in the person of Richard Quiney (1), passing to his son Adrian (1) (d. 1606) and then to William Chandler, by 1619, the husband of Adrian's granddaughter. The 'missing' generation would be represented by Adrian's son Richard (2) who died in 1602 predeceasing his father.
- 2.3. Some other evidence supports this descent of the property to William Chandler. Included in the churchwardens' accounts is a levy, mainly for the repair of the church, agreed on 13 April 1617 (*Vestry Minute Book*, 2). This lists sums due from nearly 300 inhabitants of the town, including, under High Street, an entry for William Chandler, assessed at 6s.
- 2.4 Another sequence of deeds can be used to improve on this outline. This relates to a property in Ely Street belonging to the Stratford Corporation which provided rear access to No. 31 High St. It stood on the now vacant space giving access to Bell Court and for convenience has here been styled No. 54a Ely St. Part of this property was known as the 'Back Gates', confirming its function as a rear access.

- 2.5 Being Corporation property, its occupancy can be traced in some detail. From 1536, it was subject to a 90-year lease granted to Richard Simons, when it was described simply as a barn (BRT 1/2/577). Rentals of 1574 and 1589 record Adrian Quiney (1) as the subsequent tenant and in 1596 the rent was paid by 'Mr Quiney' (either Adrian or his son Richard [why, if Adrian is mentioned later]) for a barn 'decayed by fire' (*Minutes & Accounts*, ii, 82-3; v, 74). Adrian's name is also listed for the Ely St property in 1598 and 1599 but by 1603 the rent was being paid by his daughter-in-law, Elizabeth Quiney widow of Richard Quiney (2), who seems to have managed family affairs in the period immediately after the fires (*Minutes & Accounts*, v, 127; vi, 74). Elizabeth continued to pay the rent until 1615/16. With the 90-year lease to Simons nearing its end, the Corporation agreed that 'Elizabeth Quiney widow shall hold ... the Barne, backsyd & gates at [---] yerely rent, And when they are pleased to Lett the same that she shall have the preferment of takyng the same before any other whatsoever' (*Minutes & Accounts*, vii, 380). Later that year it was let instead to her son-in-law William Chandler (BRU 8/6/12).
- 2.6 1615-16 was also the year that some sort of family settlement affecting the whole of the Quiney estate appears to have taken place. Thus Chandler took over the lease of No. 36 High St, another Corporation property, from Thomas Quiney, Elizabeth Quiney's son. This involved the agreement of another son, Adrian (2), who seems to have expressed some reservations (*Minutes & Accounts*, vii, 398, 427). At the same time Elizabeth Quiney agreed to the assignment of a Corporation lease of a garden in Chapel Lane to another son-in-law, William Smith (*Minutes & Accounts*, vii, 450). All this suggests that in around 1616 Elizabeth Quiney, with the agreement of her sons, Thomas and Adrian (2), had reached an agreement with her two sons-in-law to divide the family holdings between them, with Nos 31 and 36 High Street, and the premises in Ely St, passing to Chandler and a garden in Chapel Lane to William Smith. See Para. 5.1 as to whether this agreement also affected No 30.
- 2.7 There is further abuttal evidence relating No. 31. In 1655 the southerly abuttal to No 32 High St [i.e. No 31] is recorded as the house of William Lyndon (BRU 8/9/38) and by 1693 as a tenement of John Lacy (ER 3/5958; UR 6/1). This is paralleled in the tenancy of the rear access from Ely Street (No. 54a). Thus, by August 1631 William Lyndon was asking the Stratford Corporation to 'renewe his Lease in his owne name for the yeeres therin yeat to come of the Barne with the Appurtenances in the Swyne [Ely] Street, which he bought of Mr Chaundler' (BRU 3/2, p. 49). To this the Corporation agreed and a new lease was issued in March the following year (BRU 3/2, p. 49). By 1723 this had been taken over by John Lacy.

3. No. 30

- 3.1 There is also evidence that the Quiney family may have had interests in the house on the site of No. 30 (to the south of No. 31) as well, although direct documentary information is sparse. Indeed, the earliest indisputable evidence that this was the case occurs in the will of William Lyndon (*Stratford Wills*, ii, No. 380), buried on 25 February 1677, who left to his wife Mary all his properties (except for a house in High Street

where John Woolmer traded, and two houses in Ely Street (). This reserved High Street property was to pass to his wife Mary and then to be sold for the payment of the testator's debts and legacies. His other properties (including No. 31, as later evidence reveals and as indicated in Para. 2.7) were to pass to his wife Mary, and then to her son by an earlier marriage, John Lacy. In 1683, when Mary Lyndon (William's widow), under the terms of her late husband's will, sold the reserved High St property to her tenant John Woolmer, its northerly abuttal was named as the house of an earlier Mary Lyndon, widow of William's uncle, another William, in the tenure of Robert Fawdon, and in 1693 as a the tenement of John Lacy (ER 3/5958; UR 6/1). Also, his will recognises the interests for life of his aunt Mary Lyndon of Sutton Coldfield in the property let to Robert Fawdon, and this recognition was also applied to two further pecuniary legacies due under his uncle's will, to be paid but only after her own death which occurred 1685. Thus William Lyndon was the owner of two adjacent High St properties.

- 3.2. We can therefore turn to the will of William Lyndon, the uncle, dated 15 March 1670, for any indication that he too had previously held these two properties (*Stratford Wills*, ii, No. 356). In fact, he makes ambivalent references to what he possessed in High Street. He had had no children by a first or second wife and chose his nephew also William Lyndon (Para. 2. 1) to succeed for life to 'All that my Messuage or Tenement in the high streete in Stratford upon Avon aforesaid, together with the little houses or Tenements adjoyneing to the yard there (except as is herein hereafter excepted)'. On his death the property was then to go to William the younger's heirs. The exception referred to was a grant to his second wife Mary 'dureing the Terme of her naturall life or while she keeps her selfe a widdow all and singuler that parte of my Messuage aforesaid and roomes which was by mee heretofore sett by lease unto Larance Harwood'.
- 3.3 Whether this description covers what became Nos 30 and 31 High Street is unclear. Lyndon was already 'aged' when he made his will in 1671 which may account for some confusion. He seems, for example, to have interpreted an otherwise undocumented mortgage by Edward Rogers to him of Nos 27-28 High Street as a sale of the freehold which would, however, become void if Rogers were to pay £210 to meet some of the legacies which Lyndon mentioned in his will. This Rogers did, leaving him free to dispose of the property when he made his own will in 1679. Also Lyndon (1), since his second marriage, had evidently also fallen out with his nephew William Lyndon (2) which led to the addition of a codicil to Lyndon (1)'s will in 1672: not only had he found out that his nephew was 'very deceatefull and unfaithfull' but also that under his will of 1671 Lyndon (1) had failed to mention an eight-year lease made to William (2) of 'parte of my late dwelling house in High Street'. On his death, this lease would therefore pass for its duration to the testator's second wife Mary..
- 3.4 However, earlier than 1671 it is not easy to demonstrate that the houses on the site of Nos 30 and 31 were both in the possession of the this earlier William. He is not much in evidence in Stratford records before June 1625 when he was appointed surveyor of the highways. He may have come to Stratford to marry a widow, Ann Perkins, already with

a daughter Ann by her first husband, John Perkins. On their behalf, Lyndon sought the renewal of a lease of a property in Sheep St previously tenanted by Perkins. Lyndon continued in the service of the Corporation and was elected a capital burgess in 1636, a few years after his deal with William Chandler to acquire the rear access from Ely St to his property in High St (Para. 2.7). He was promoted to alderman in 1647 and served as bailiff for the year 1650/1. By 1667 his wife Ann had died and he took as his second wife another widow, Mary Mason of Sutton Coldfield where, after his term as mayor in the year 1668/9, he went to live. He was buried there on 14 March 1673. As a result, though we can be sure that No. 31 and its rear access to Ely St Street was sold by William Chandler to William Lyndon, we need to allow for the fact that it cannot be definitively established that the site of No. 30 passed in the same way (Paras 2.6; 2.7)

3.5 However, in the parish levy of 1617/18 (para. 2.3) under High St and within a line or two of one another, both William Chandler and his mother-in-law Elizabeth Quiney are listed, indicating that there may have been two near-by family households in the street.

Nos 30-31

4.1 No. 30 was sold off as a separate property in 1683, with No. 31 remaining in the Lacy family's hands until 1737 when it was sold to Richard Goode, a joiner. This division in ownership lasted into the twentieth century.

5.1 Conclusion

Only No. 31 (and the rear access into Ely St) is well established as a property once held by the Quiney family. Whether this included No. 30 can only be demonstrated with certainty from the time that William Lyndon made his will in 1673. Whether this joint ownership reached back to the time of the Quiney family is mainly based on the evidence cited in Para 3.5. It could, however, be argued that as part of the 1615-16 agreement (Para. 2.6.), when Chandler acquired the house now known as No. 31, Elizabeth was allowed to remain in No. 30 until her death in 1631. The family may then have agreed for it to pass to Chandler as part of the sale of other Quiney property to William Lyndon in 1655 (Para. 2.7).