

THE STRATFIRE PROJECT

No. 25 High Street, Stratford-upon-Avon (The Garrick)

Documentary History (version 21.3.2025)

1. In 1553 Stratford-upon-Avon achieved the status of an incorporated borough and, under letters patent issued by Edward VI, it was given the properties in the town previously held by the suppressed Guild of the Holy Cross. This was principally to provide the newly-appointed borough council with an income to support the provision of a school and almshouses, earlier the responsibility of the Guild. These properties included the building occupying the site of No. 25 High Street (now the Garrick Inn). Surviving leases and rentals provide a more or less continuous record of the occupants of the site thereafter. Similar records of the Guild of the Holy Cross provide additional information on the site in the medieval period.
2. An important aspect of the site is the dog-leg feature which gives the property a link to and from Ely Street (**Fig 1**). For the period to which this report applies, it accommodated a cottage sometimes let out as a separate unit but often together with the house on the site of No. 25 High Street. It is here referred to as No. 60 Ely Street.
3. Another feature of interest is the rectangular extension (labelled C in the Building Archaeology report) into the property next door (Nos 23-4). (**Fig. 1**). An explanation for this will be proposed in the documentary report on this neighbouring property.
4. There is a body of documentary evidence to indicate that a building on this site was severely damaged during one of the fires of 1594 or 1595. However, it is possible to trace the history of the site back into the years that it belonged to the Guild of the Holy Cross and this could be relevant to the history of Nos 23/24 next door. The occupancy of No. 25 is therefore presented here in summary form.
5. A building on this site can reliably traced back to Guild rentals of 1446, 1450 and 1452 when it was tenanted by John Pebworth, a barber, for an annual rent of 12s. (BRT 1/3/121, 122, 123). He was followed by John Smith, a carpenter, 1456-60 (BRT 1/3/ 124, 125), Richard Clark, 1463-6, a scrivener (BRT 1/3/127, 128, 129) and Alice Peynton, 1468 (BRT 1/3/130). Alice may have married Thomas Corbet, a barber, as in 1472 the Guild issued a lease of the property to him and Alice his wife for their lives at the rent of 12s. (BRT 1/2/400). At this time, the cottage in Ely Street is listed separately, William Castelyn in occupation in 1468 and 1469 (BRT 1/3/130-1) followed by Robert Darker (BRT 1/3/132-3). The annual rent was 20d. but this was raised to 4s. in 1475 when payment of the rent became the responsibility of the tenant of the main house. Thomas Corbet must have died in 1481/2 as he is followed in the rentals by his wife Alice (BRT 1/3/140-1). A new tenant, granted a lease of 31 years in 1498, was Reginald Shredley but when, in 1546, the Guild was suppressed and its property granted seven years later to the Stratford Corporation, the principal tenant of the property was Christopher George (BRT 1/3/153; *Minutes & Accounts*, i, p. 7).
5. By this date the lease to Shredley had expired and a new tenant, Thomas Deege, alias Gethen, a weaver, was allowed to occupy the property by the year. In 1557 Deege was required to 'well and sufficiently repair the tenement he lives in High Street before the feast of St John Baptist' (*Minutes & Accounts*, i, p. 77). In 1580 He was eventually granted a formal lease for 21 years at the annual rent of 18s. (BRU 8/9/3). On the same day, the cottage in Ely Street was

formally separated from the main house and let for 21 years to Philip Greene for an annual rent of 6s. (BRU 8/6/4).

6. Thomas Deege and Philip Green were still tenants when the fires of 1594 and 1595 occurred and there is good evidence that one of these affected the buildings on the sites of both No. 25 High Street and No. 60 Ely Street. By 3 July 1595, Deege either unwilling or unable to bear the cost of rebuilding, assigned his lease to William Smith, a mercer, and on 5 September the Council not only agreed to this but recommended Smith be granted a new lease of the premises for 31 years on the payment of an entry fine of £5 (later reduced to £2 at Master Greville's request) and at the former rent of 18s. (BRU 8/9/3; *Minutes and Accounts*, v, p. 39). On 17 October 1595 Philip Greene surrendered his lease of his little tenement in Ely St and the Council then agreed that William Smith should have a lease of this property as well for 31 years 'paying for that yearly as Philip Greene before paid': i.e. 6s. As a postscript it was agreed that said William Smith would build upon the ground according to indifferent articles betwixt this House [i.e., the Corporation] and him to be agreed upon' (*Minutes & Accounts*, v, p. 42). Deege was admitted to the almshouses on 27 October 1596 but died less than three months later. His widow Tomasin was then admitted to the almshouses and was more fortunate in attracting as a second husband William Gilbert, the curate, whom she married in September 1598 (*Minutes and Accounts*, v, 91, 98).
7. On 9 January 1596, the chamberlain, in his account for the previous 12 months, records the payment of 2s. 6d. for 'five Dayes worke at Teiggess house after the fyre' (*Minutes & Accounts*, v, p. 79) and in January 1598 Richard Quiney gave £8 to Philip Green out of the fire-relief money he had been authorised to collect in Suffolk and Norfolk (*Minutes & Accounts*, v, p. 135).
8. On 30 April 1599, a survey of Corporation property describes the High Street property as: 'William Smith a tenemente new builded, tiled, and a lettinge out with a tenemente into the Swine Strete tiled, containinge on the Highe Stret side [---] baies, in the yarde [---] baies [---], in Elie Stret [---] baies' (*Minutes & Accounts*, vi, p. 72).
7. William Smith, to whom Deege had assigned his lease, had paid 40s. towards his entry fine (*Minutes and Accounts*, v, 78) and in the chamberlains' accounts submitted in January 1596, 1598 and 1599, each recording expenditure over the previous 12 months, William Smith is duly recorded as paying the agreed annual 24s.-rent for the two properties (*Minutes and Accounts*, v, 74, 116-17, 127, 130; vi, 72). Moreover, in a survey of April 1599, William Smith's house in High Street was recorded as 'new builded' (above, Para. 8). However, despite the resolution back in September 1595 that William Smith be granted a new lease (above, Para. 6), this did not immediately happen.
8. Instead, over the years 1600-06 it was William Smith's brother Roger who paid the 24s.-rent, as recorded by the chamberlains (*Minutes and Accounts*, vi, 9, 110-1, 173-4, 211-12, 280-1, 315-16, 355-7) and it was not until 9 January 1607 that it was agreed at a Council meeting 'that a Lease shalbe made to Roger Smyth of the howses sometyme in Thomas Teggs occupacion & burnt downe; & in respect of the sayd Rogers great charge in reedifyeing he is to have yt from michaelmas last for 31 yeres at 24s. yerely rent, And the Fyne to be only 3^s 4^d

in respect of his great Charge in buyldynge & the rent for Terplys heires'¹ (*Minutes & Accounts*, vi, p. 395). Nearly ten months later, on 20 September, a new lease was eventually sealed (BRU 8/9/13).

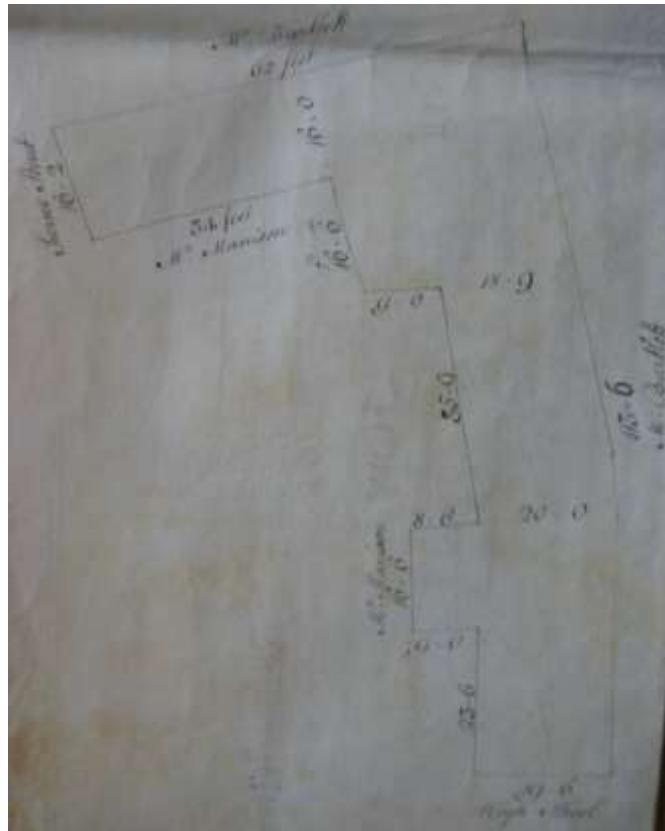
10. There are thus two candidates for the rebuilding, either William Smith or his brother Roger. They were the sons of a prosperous mercer, William Smith, who lived as a tenant of the Stratford Corporation, at an annual rent of 12s., at what is now No. 1 Henley Street, a timber-framed building with a later stuccoed frontage. William the elder had died in June 1600 and, though he made a will, the distribution of his considerable estate must have been subject to a settlement which has not survived (Macdonald & Appleton, *Stratford-upon-Avon Wills*, i, 241-2; *Stratford Inventories*, i, No. 98). His wife Agnes who, it is to be assumed, continued to live at the Henley Street house, died in February 1601 and for the remainder of that year, her son William, junior, is recorded as paying the 12s.-rent (*Minutes and Accounts*, vi, 175). In fact, he remained the Corporation tenant of the Henley Street house until his own death in 1626 (*Stratford-upon-Avon Wills*, i, 378).
11. What would seem to have happened, then, is that the family, in the name of William Smith (carefully described as junior to distinguish him from his father, also Wiliam) had quickly taken advantage of the 1594/5 fires to obtain a rebuilding lease for No. 25 High Street (with its dog-legged access from Ely Street) where William Smith would be settled. However, on his parents' deaths in 1600 and 1601, this lease was assigned to William's younger brother, Roger. William junior then moved to No. 1 Henley Street, if he had ever left it. Rebuilding in High St appears to have been at least under way by April 1599 (Para. 8) although the blanks in the description may indicate that it had not been completed by then. It was therefore Roger who, in 1607, was eventually granted a formal lease with its reference to earlier building work (Para. 8; BRU 8/9/13). As for the tenement in the opening to Ely Street, a subtenant (Richard Williams) is recorded in January 1605 (*Minutes and Accounts*, vi, 316), establishing with some certainty that a building had by then been erected, though the ambiguous term 'tenement' had been used in the rentals from 1601. Dendrochronological examination of surviving oak timbers could not date them more closely than 1588-1610.
12. The earliest document to give measurements is in a survey of Corporation property dated 7 July 1613 when it is described as 'contaynyng on the Hie strett side, 19 foote; the leng[t]he inwardes, 109 foote; the bred[t]he backwardes, 28 foot d'; and one other tenement in Yele Strett parcell of and belenging to the same, the street side is 16 foote; the leng[t]he inwardes, 33 foote; the bredht [sic] backwardes, 15 foote' (*Minutes and Accounts*, vii, 285). This is to be compared with measurements given on a lease of 26 November 1621 where the frontages are broadly similar (High Street, 19ft 2ins; Ely Street, 16ft 6ins) but with only the depth of the Ely Street property specified, namely 58' (BRU 8/9/29).
13. Subsequent leases of the property were to:
 - i) Francis Smith [son of Roger Smith] of London, haberdasher, 25 February 1630/31, with measurements as in the lease of 26 November 1621 (BRU 8/9/32).
 - ii) Charles Holland, 26 March 1688, with identical measurements (BRU 8/9/46).

¹ This is the earliest reference to a link between No. 25 High St and the payment of this rent charge, amounting to 6d, but it may be connected with the rectangular extension into Nos 23/4 referred to in Para. 3. It will therefore be discussed in the documentary report on that property.

- iii) William Walford, 20 December 1721, with measurements much as before (i.e. 19'3" on High Street and 16'6" on Ely St with a depth of the latter as 58', but adding that the property reached back from High Street 92'3" (BRU 8/9/50).
 - iv) John Walford, 4 October 1762, with measurements as in 1721 (BRU 8/9/59)
 - v) Thomas Barratt, 16 November 1818 (BRU 8/9/72). This bears a measured plan with the following dimensions:, High Street frontage, 19' 6"; depth from High St, 113' 6", Ely St frontage 16'2", depth from Ely St 62' **(Fig 1)**
14. The Hearth Tax returns record 4 hearths.
 15. Its use as a tavern cannot be traced back beyond the tenancy of William Walford who first occurs as a shoemaker in 1708 but by 1718 had become the landlord of the Reindeer.
 16. In the early nineteenth century (date to be established), the elevation to High Street was refronted in brick **(Fig. 2a)**. No drawings have yet been traced that show the building's earlier appearance.
 17. The property is numbered 339 in the 1910 valuation (TNA, IR58/89235, hered. 339) and is described as red brick and tiled from the street, but otherwise 'old (very)' and comprising two attic rooms, '2 bedrooms, the "Oak Room" used by "David Garrick" ' at first floor, and bar, snug, tap room, coffee room, office etc. at ground floor.
 18. Good plans exist for alterations in 1913 when the brick facade was replaced with the present timber-framed frontage (BRR 50/71) **(Fig 2b)**. The Board of Health plan of 1851 at 1:528, and the 1886 OS town plan at 1:1500 **(Fig 3)** present the buildings in the context of the relevant streets.
 19. A long-standing rectangular intrusion into the property to the south (Nos 23-4) may be linked to an early rent charge. This will be discussed in the documentary history of Nos 23/4 High Street (Para. 3).

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**Fig. 1: measured plan of 1818 (BRU 8/9/72).
High St is at the bottom of the image and Ely
(Swine St) in the top left corner**



Fig 2. Alterations in 1913: High Street elevations before and after (BRR 50/71)

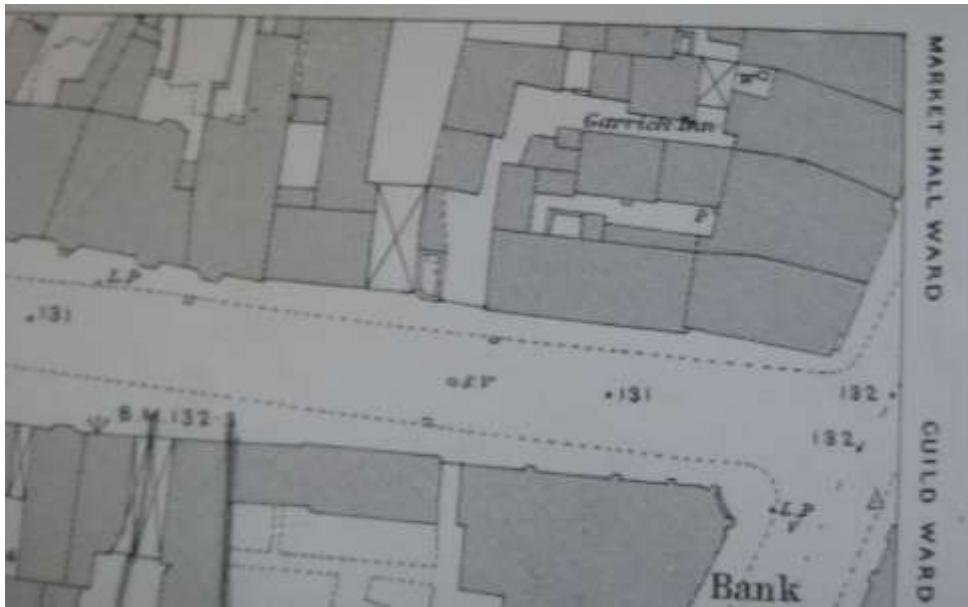


Fig. 3: 1886 Ordnance Survey Town Plan