

No. 36 High Street, Stratford-upon-Avon

Documentary History (28.05.2024)

1. In 1553 Stratford-upon-Avon was granted the status of an incorporated borough and, under letters patent issued by Edward VI, was granted 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. 36 High Street. 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 information on the site in the medieval period.
2. The seventeenth-century leases of the property issued by the Stratford Corporation are as follows:
 - i) 19 September 1612: to Thomas Quiney of a tenement now or late in the tenure of Thomas Rutter for 21 years at an annual rent of 20s. (BRU 8/9/18).¹
 - ii) 20 August 1616: to William Chandler, mercer, on the surrender of a lease to Thomas Quiney (Chandler's brother-in-law), of a tenement in the tenure of Thomas Quiney, for 17 years at an annual rent of 20s. (BRU 8/9/23).
[This was by way of an exchange between Chandler and Quiney whereby 1 High Street and 36 High Street changed hands.]
 - iii) 1 June 1618: to Richard Castle, mercer, on the surrender of a lease with 16 years to run, of a tenement in High St in his tenure, for 61 years at an annual rent of 20s., measuring 16 feet along the street, 16 feet at the back, and in length 58 feet (BRU 8/9/26).
 - iv) 23 June 1672: to William Hiccocks, butcher, on the surrender of a lease to Richard Castle, mercer, of a messuage in his tenure for 41 years at an annual rent of 20s. with measurements as in (iii) above (16' x 58' x 16': BRU 8/9/39).
 - v) 10 January 1707 to John Hunt of Birmingham and Joseph Smith of Stratford, for 41 years at an annual rent of 20s. with measurements as in (iii) above (16' x 58' x 16': BRU 8/9/47).

The measurements in the last three leases correspond almost exactly to that given in a survey of the Corporation property in 1613 when the property, then in the tenure of Thomas Quiney, was said to be 16½ feet along the street, and running back 60 feet to a rear boundary, also 16½ feet wide (BRU 15/12/119).

3. Previous to 1612, Thomas Quiney's mother, Elizabeth Quiney, had been paying a rent of 14s. to the Corporation for this property. This allows for its identification with the property in an earlier survey of 16 January 1597/8, then held for the 14s.-rent by Adrian Quiney, Elizabeth's father-in-law (*Minutes & Accounts of the Stratford-upon-Avon Corporation*, v, p. 130).² This is confirmed by an early marginal note that the property was the same as the one held by Adrian Quiney's grandson Thomas for 21 years but at an increased rent of 20s.
4. The 1596/7 survey also records the terms under which Adrian Quiney held the property, namely by a lease of 80 years at a rent of 14s. to Thomas Atwood alias Taylor, on 10 February 28 Henry VIII [1536/7]. At that date the property was owned by the Guild of the Holy Cross but long leases of this sort, in Stratford as elsewhere, were nearly always carried over - in this case, on

¹ All subsequent references to manuscript sources are to archives held by the Shakespeare Centre Library and Archives.

² Between these dates the rent was paid by Adrian's son Richard Quiney, Elizabeth's husband, who had died in May 1602.

the suppression of the Guild in 1546 and the grant of its property to the Corporation in 1553. In the interval the rent was paid to the crown.

5. However, this claim cannot be confirmed by contemporary documentation. A lease to Thomas Taylor (alias Atwood), chapman, of a tenement in High Street for an annual rent of 14s. does survive in the records of the Guild of the Holy Cross (BRT 1/2/599) but it is dated 18 September 1543 and is for 30 (not 80) years.
6. This anomaly may be explained by the fact that in 1544 Richard Quiney, Adrian's father, had been granted a long lease (90 years) of another High Street property (BRT 1/2/607). Over the years, some confusion may therefore have arisen. Indeed, in 1615 another Adrian, Thomas Quiney's elder brother, was asked to bring to the next Council meeting the deeds by which he was evidently claiming an interest in the property on the site of No. 36, recently leased to his brother (BRU 2/2, p. 298; above, Para. 2, i-ii).
7. According to the rentals of Guild properties, Thomas Taylor had been paying this annual rent of 14s. for the property since at least 1514 (BRT 1/3/149-51). The next earliest rental is for 1500/01 but at that date a 14s.-rent is not recorded in High Street. However, a comparison of these two rentals for High Street properties indicates that Taylor's annual rent of 14s. is represented in the earlier rental by the 5s. paid by Roger Paget for a tenement called the Clockhouse (BRT 1/3/148). This identification is supported by evidence in Para. 9 below.
8. The Clockhouse is first mentioned in 1421/2 but by the 1460s its condition had become a matter of concern. For instance, it was listed, with other properties, as yielding a 'decayed' rent of 3s. instead of 5s. 8d (BRT1/2/79, 81-2, 130-1) . However, in 1472, the Guild leased the property to a wealthy mercer, Roger Paget, on the understanding that he would rebuild it (BRT 1/2/406). Paget was the master of the Guild that year, one of eleven terms that he served in that capacity between 1468 and 1489. At the end of his last term it was recorded that he had spent £210 17s. 9d. on repairs or new buildings on Guild lands (BRT 1/3/99; Bloom, *Register of the Guild of the Holy Cross*, p. 31). His lease of the rebuilt Clockhouse was for 50 years, together with an obligation to find and maintain at his own cost a warden to look after the bell and clock. Seven years later the clock itself was removed to the market cross which then stood at the corner of High Street and Wood Street (BRT 1/3/90).
9. The properties abutting on the Clockhouse are named in Paget's lease (then a routine way of identifying its location in the street): namely, between a tenement of John Hannys in which Paget was living and a tenement of William Harewell, formerly of Roger Yardley, on the other. These are very similar to the abutments to the property leased to Thomas Taylor in 1543, lying between the land of Thomas Hannys and the land of John Harewell, supporting the proposal made in Para. 7 that the properties can be regarded as one and the same.
10. This lease would have expired in 1522 but Paget died, c. 1500, and by the date of the next surviving rental Thomas Taylor was the new tenant, paying 14s. (Para.7). A new lease had presumably been granted, at this increased rent, to reflect Paget's building work but this has not survived. Nor does Paget's will.
11. Thomas Taylor (alias Atwood) lived until 1543/4. No inventory of his goods survives, nor is his burial recorded but he left a will dated 21 October 1543, proved on 19 May 1544. This is discussed in some detail by E.I. Fripp, in his *Shakespeare Studies* (Oxford, 1930, pp. 1-7) who concludes that Atwood was a man of considerable means.
12. The text of the will is published in *Stratford-upon-Avon Wills* (ed. Appleton and Macdonald, i, No. 32) from which we learn that the lease of the house where he lived was left to his wife Elizabeth for life.
13. The 14s.-rent to the Guild was taken over by William Whateley, the son of Thomas Whateley, one of the overseers of Taylor's will. His last recorded payment was in 1548 (BRT1/3/152-3). By

1561 the rent was being paid by Adrian Quiney (*Minutes & Accounts*, i, p. 111), son of Richard Quiney, the other overseer of Taylor's will, and it was still in Adrian's possession in 1596/7 (Paras. 3-4)

14. Other documentary evidence of substantial building work concerns the re-fronting of the building in brick carried out in the 18th century. The first mention of this proposed alteration occurs in April 1751 (BRU 8/9/56) when a lease of the property from the Stratford Corporation to Samuel Tissell, for 21 years, was endorsed: 'to new front the house with brick' but with the term of years given as 41 years. This was evidently a reminder to incorporate these terms into a new lease to the Tissells drawn up in December 1758 (BRU 8/9/57). This includes a clause to the effect that the building was to be re-fronted in brick, as required by an order in the minute book: 'At this hall Mr John Tissell hath agreed for a lease of the house he now lives in in the High Street for a term of forty-one years ... & covenants to new front the said house with brick' (BRU 2/6, p. 321).
15. However, it is by no means certain that this work was immediately or effectively carried out. An undated elevational drawing survives showing in its essentials the building as it appears today (**Fig 1**). But at BRU 15/18/32 there is an estimate, dated 4 November, 1796, for the repair of the same house in High St, viz. 'to take down part of the front foundations where they have given way; rebuild the same in a more substantial manner; building new cellar steps into the street and sufficient brickwork to support the bressumer & front part of the house that has sunk down. Putting up two substantial door jambs under the middle in order not only to carry the doors and windows but to support the weak and decayed part of the house, putting shop windows & door according to the plan; pair of oak & frame flat to cellar steps. Repair the side walls and floor of the front cellar and shop above ditto & plastering to shop; Repair the plastering to all the bedrooms, kitchen, pantry etc. Build part of the side which is decayed in the back cellar. Pave the floor & repair the staircase & pump (?) & plaster all rooms internally. To repair the roughcast outside the house, brick up ... that are decayed; pave all the yard making new cellar window & frame new lead & repair other windows a new door and case to yard, painting all the outside of windows & doors all the front windows properly repaired & painted inside & outside. Stripping part of the roof & repairing the rest; ... the lead gutters in a proper & workmanlike manner and do as much repairs as will be completed for the sum of £55 10s 6d.'"
15. Documentary evidence therefore indicates substantial rebuilding on the site soon after 1472, consistent with the dating by dendrochronology of surviving timbers to the period 1463-1477 (Martin Bridge and Cathy Tyers, *36 High Street, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, Tree-ring Dating of Oak Timbers*, Historic England>: Research Report Series 96/2022). . Re-fronting in brick would have postdated 1758 but perhaps was as late as 1796.
16. In addition to leases listed in Para. 2, later leases have been identified as follows:
 - i) 16.4.1751: to Samuel Tissell, for 21 years, at an annual rent of £4 10s. 0d. with measurements as in 2 (iii) above (16' x 58' x 16': BRU 8/9/56).
 - ii) 13.12.1758: to John Tissell, for 41 years, at an annual rent of £4 10s. 0d. with measurements as before (BRU 8/9/57): see also Para. 14 above.
 - iii) 3.9.1823: to Thomas Coles and Charles Coles, endorsed with plan (**Fig. 2**: BRU 8/9/75).
 - iv) 11.3.1902: to Alfred Parkhouse and Gathorne Ashfield (BRR 10/69).
 - v) 11.3.1930: Lennards Ltd (BRR 10/85).
 - vi) 22.5.1947: Lennards Ltd (BRR 10/107).
 - vii) 1.6.1953: Lennards Ltd (BRR 10/124).
17. The identical measurements of the property in this succession of leases (Paras. 2, iii- v; Para. 16, i-iii), and the plan of 1823, establish continuity into the 19th century. The Board of Health plan of 1851 at 1:528, and the 1886 OS town plan at 1:500, further confirm the link with today's No. 36 High Street.

18. The hereditament was numbered 353 in the 1910 valuation (IR58/89235, hered. 353) and was listed as owned by the Stratford Corporation and occupied by the Public Benefit Boot Co. on a 14-year lease at a rent of £40. It was further described as a red brick and tile building containing one room at the top, three rooms on the first floor, a shop and two store rooms on the ground floor and a small yard at rear.
19. A summary history of the property is to be found in Robert Bearman, *History of the Streets of Stratford-upon-Avon: High Street*, 1973. This is of limited availability and now out of date but a copy is kept at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. This draws on data assembled by evening-class students in 1971 and 1972, which is held on cards also available at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

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Images courtesy of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust



Fig 1. Undated elevation proposed for No. 36 High Street (BRU 15/18/64).

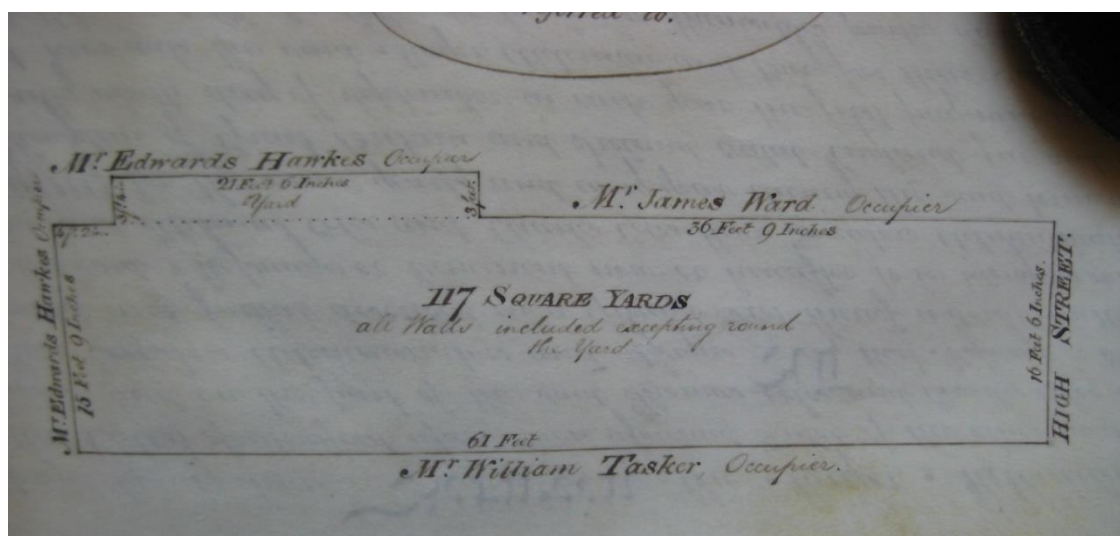


Fig. 2 Plan endorsed on lease of No. 36 High St, 1823 (BRU 8/9/75)