



1 Church Street

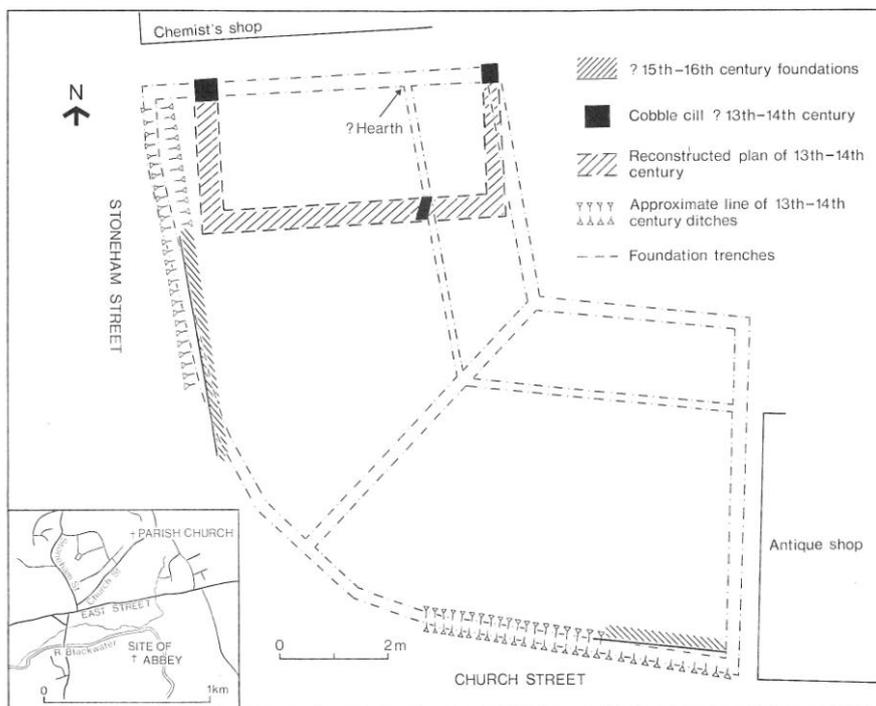
1 Church Street was recorded by Brenda Watkin in the 1990s when it was *Argentum Antiques*, and published by her in *Essex Archaeology and History* in 2004. Her account in that journal is given below. The property, now the Black Boy café, is important as a pair of shops built as speculative development to be rented out, the only well preserved buildings of this type in the town. The attempt made to tree-ring date it for the Discovering Coggeshall project was unsuccessful. Three samples were taken but they had few rings and could not be dated. The carpentry of the timber indicates that the shops were built in the 15th century.

In the 1575 rental, there is a marginal note that John Till, owner of the southernmost property on the east side of Stoneham at the Church Street junction, also had two shops in Church Street. However, the rental's account of the properties at the corner of Church Street and Stoneham (or what at this point is the corner of Market Hill and

Church Street) is not very clear, and in the analysis of it for the purposes of constructing the map, the two shops have been identified as belonging to John Till and Richard Browne. The shops are on a cramped site with very little adjoining land, a typical indication of market infill, and it is likely that they originated as a row of stalls built in the street and later rebuilt in the more substantial form in which they are found today. Inspection of the foundation trenches for the construction of the existing building to the west of no.1 Church Street in the 1980s suggested that there was evidence for roadside ditches along Stoneham and Church Street, possibly with wooden revetting to the their sides. The ditch in Church Street seemed to have been filled in when the shops at no. 1 were built.

Reference

Andrews, D.D. 1987 Coggeshall, Old Fire Station, *Essex Archaeology and History* **18**, 94-95.



1 Church Street, Coggeshall

Brenda Watkin

Introduction

The town of Coggeshall has grown up along Stane Street, the old east-west Roman road north of the crossing of the River Blackwater, and was well sited for trading with passing merchants and travellers, including those going to the abbey to the south of the town. A market charter was granted to the monks of Coggeshall Abbey in 1256, and this was centred on Stane Street at the junction of the roads from the abbey and those serving the northern part of the town and the church. The southern area of the market place, bounded by Bridge Street and the stream, is reported to have contained the stalls for the butchers and the 14th century market hall. This building still survives as the central core of The Cricketers public house. The northern triangle of the market

place widens out from Stane Street at the junction of East and West Street, enclosing the area now known as Market Hill with Church Street to the east and Stoneham Street to the north. No. 1 Church Street abuts the eastern edge of the market in a position where it could benefit from the market and passing trade. The road from the south crossed the River Blackwater and also provided a direct route between Coggeshall Abbey, the parish church and Earls Colne Priory.

The development of market places can still be seen in towns like Ludlow, Bury St. Edmunds and Saffron Walden, where the temporary market stalls, laid out in rows, were slowly made more permanent until they finish up as small but substantial timber-framed buildings. David Clark, in his overview of medieval shops, discusses the market stall and its derivatives explaining that whilst the market stall had to be open to inspection by town officials, it also has to provide a degree of security from theft for the trader's unsold goods. The stalls could range from simple wooden chests to covered and fronted booths, many of which, over time, became permanent features (Clark 2000). Leigh Alston in his research in Debenham has recorded two types of permanent market stalls that have survived, albeit with modifications through to the 21st century. One of 16th-century date contained two stalls within an open arcaded ground floor with a jettied second storey, whilst the adjoining building, also two storeys, was a row of three individual shop units of early 17th century date (Alston 1995).

History

Documents relating to 1 Church Street consist of wills, indentures and conveyances relating to The Corner House, The Black Boy sometimes called Plough and Sails, Argentum Antiques, and also a building to the east in Church Street.

The will of John Shetelworth, baker, dated 29 May 1758 and proved 10 October 1761 left to his son, Henry Shetelworth, baker, several messuages and tenements near the Market Place and in several tenures. Unfortunately none of the property is named. The will of his son, Henry Shetelworth, dated 16 December 1803 and proved 25 January 1804, left property divided between his brother-in-law, John Wright of Feering, farmer, son-in-law John Durrant of Great Coggeshall, collarmaker, and son-in-law John Adams of Finchingfield, farmer. The first property was known by the name of The Black Boy and included outhouse buildings, 'butters', stables, yards, gardens and premises in Church Street and then in the tenure of John Seex. Another property mentioned adjoined the Black Boy 'on the part of the west' in Church Street and comprised two tenements in the tenure or occupation of Robert Furlong and John Rainer.

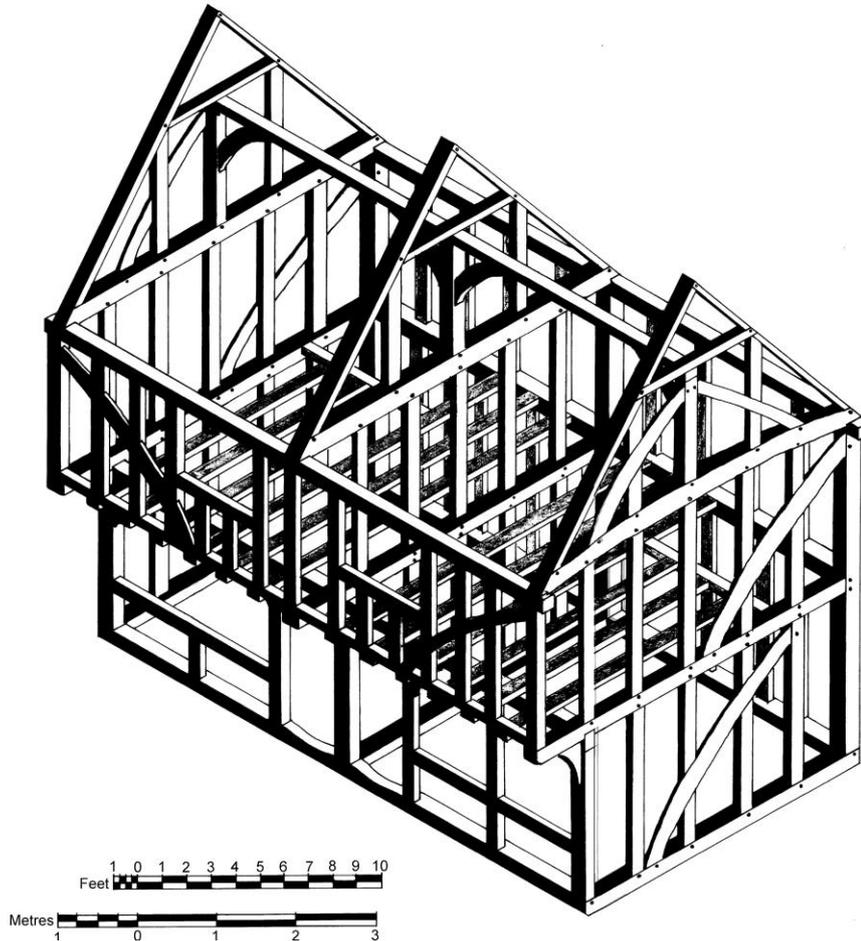
The Tithe Award for Great Coggeshall (ERO D/CT 87) dated 7 March 1854 recorded the landowner of the Black Boy Public House as John Richmond and the occupier Reuben Smith. During the late 1800s there were several conveyances of the property called the Black Boy within a very short period, with yearly leases on the property. For a period up to March 1889 it was owned by Messrs Beard and Bright who were brewers in Coggeshall. In 1896 the property was conveyed by Messrs. T. J. Adams of the Halstead Brewery to the Stamford Hill Brewery. By 1898 it had passed from Stamford Hill Brewery to The Brewery Stratford, and then from Mr. Fred Keep, Black Lion, High Street, West Ham to Mr. H. J. M. Simmons, draper. No doubt the fact that there were about twenty inns and beerhouses competing for custom played a

significant part in the demise of this public house, and provided an opportunity to Mr. Simmons (Simmons Bros. general drapery and millinery store was already in existence in Church Street in 1886, as noted in *The Coggeshall Year Book*). In February 1913, when Mr. Simmons had moved to Ramsgate, the property was conveyed to Mr. S. Simmons of Halstead, gent. A photograph, attached to the original Inspector's report, taken at the time of the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments (England) survey of Essex, in 1914, shows that the building was then occupied by the Colonial Meat Stores. When Mr. S. Simmons died on 26 March 1918, his niece, Susanna Annie Tyler, inherited the property and it was sold to the Smith family in whose ownership it remained until the sale in 1994 to Mrs. Diane Carr.

The Building

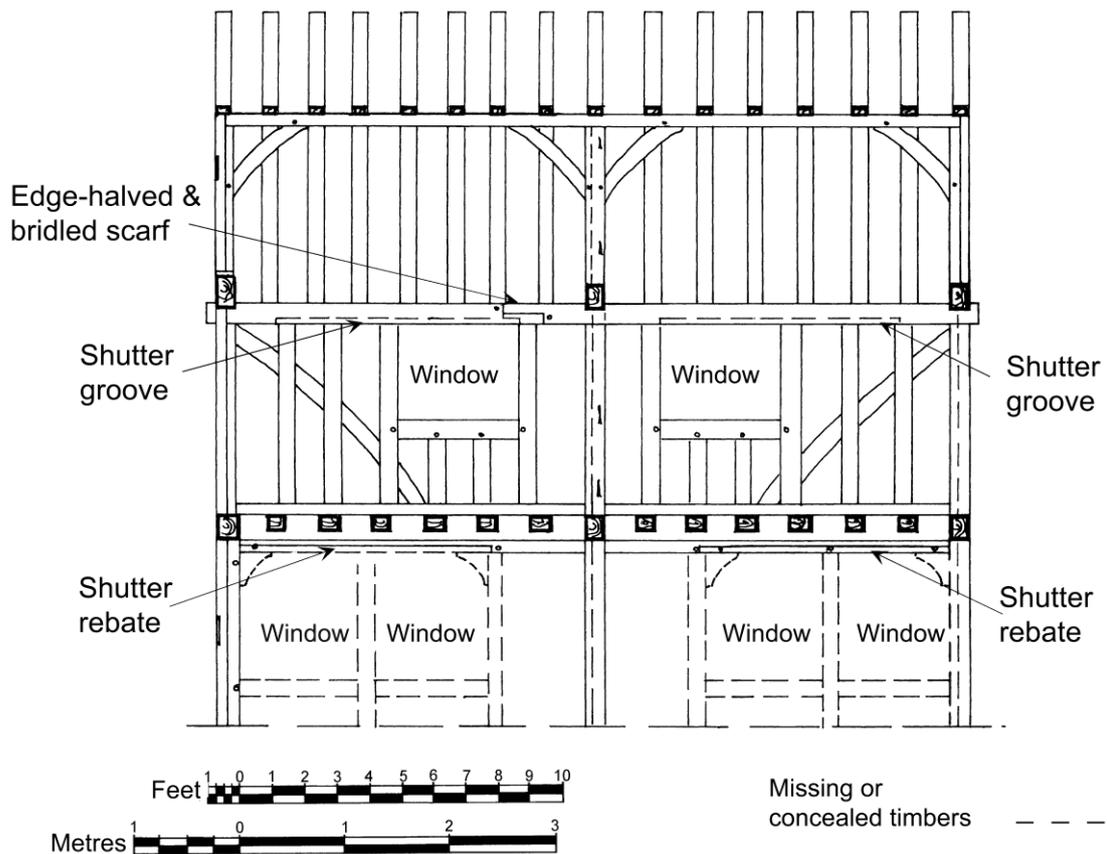
Despite the removal of walls and partitions the plan and form of the building can still be readily understood. It consists of two self-contained shop units each with an upstairs room jettied to the front facing Church Street (Figs 1 & 2). This form of a long-wall jettied building is much favoured for rows of shops and found in places such as York (Short 1979), Southampton (Platt 1973), and London (Schofield 1987), as well as in other towns in Essex.

The building is constructed from well converted oak in the traditional close studded style of the area, with tension braces expressed externally. At first glance the units appear to be a mirror image with the entrance doors against the central division flanked by two shop windows. However, with closer study, it becomes evident that internally the western unit would be 21ft 6in. x 10ft 6in. (6.50m x 3.32m) and the eastern slightly larger at 21ft 6in. x 11ft 0in. (6.50m x 3.35m). The additional length is only really noticeable by the use of an additional pair of rafters in the roof construction. The main difference is in the treatment of the shop windows as the western one is undivided, i.e. from corner post to door jamb, whilst on the eastern side a central stud defines two shop windows.



The timber frame of the pair of shops

The wall studs to the flank walls and central dividing wall average 6-6½ inches (150-165mm) wide by 4 inches (700mm) deep and are placed at 2ft 4in. (710mm) centres. The rear wall is of similar size studs at 1ft 6in. (450mm) centres. There is a tension brace, trenched externally, falling from the corner post on the western flank wall. However on the eastern wall the brace starts at the first stud leaving a gap of 2ft (610mm) that could have been used as an entrance for goods. A narrow ‘coffin’ door is frequently found on the front elevation of Essex shops (cf. Stenning 1985). It would allow goods to be taken into the rear area of the shop or, depending on the direction of the stair, directly upstairs if this was being used as a workshop. It also provides a clue to the layout of development within the town as it implies that there was a passage on the eastern side whilst there was continuous development to the west. The end wall frame of an adjacent building is visible on the west side of the ground and first floors where studs have been removed, and in an upstairs cupboard daub panels are visible. The daub is applied to vertical riven oak staves and where there has been a repair, hazel rods are used. This frame is the only remnant of the property between the Black Boy and Market Hill, which according to Beaumont’s *History of Coggeshall* was known as the Corner House in 1708. The building was recorded in the RCHM(E) survey of Essex (May 1914) and described as an L-shaped building of timber construction jettied on both fronts. A note that at the corner there was a mitre beam taking the joists of the overhang on both fronts suggests that there was a diagonal dragon beam at the corner, indicating the ranges were contemporary.



Longitudinal section looking south towards the street frontage from inside

Common floor joists are flat section and average $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches (190mm) wide by 4 inches (100mm) deep at 1ft 9in. (530mm) centres, jettied to the front, with no intermediate brace support, and housed into the rear midrail with central tenon joints. The midrails and central transverse beam are of similar width but 9inches (230mm) deep. The 5 inches (125mm) wide by 4inches (100mm) deep trimmer for a stair trap is housed into the side midrails and the fourth common joist. This provided an opening for a solid tread or ladder stair in the rear corner furthest from the door giving access to a single first-floor room

On the ground floor, the jetty plate, $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches (190mm) wide by 8 inches (200mm) deep, is exposed internally and mortices are visible for the door jambs, leaving central door openings of 2ft 6in. (750mm). A stud is placed centrally between the eastern door jamb and corner post forming two window openings that have braces, with angled entry, to the outer corners only. The western window also has braces to the outer corners but no central post. A rebate, 2inches (50mm) by 2inches (50mm), is cut into the lower internal face of the jetty plate running from the corner posts to the door jambs of each unit for shop shutters. Evidence has been found in Saffron Walden for a hook fixing that would have held the hinged shutter open during trading hours, but in this instance, although the underside of the floor joists contained many nail holes, a fixing position could be not identified. Externally, the plate was chamfered to

the inner face of the western corner brackets and from the eastern corner brackets to the central post, emphasising the window openings.

The first-floor rooms were each lit by a window in the southern elevation to Church Street, with shutter grooves in the underside of the wall plates. As modern windows have been inserted into the original openings, it was impossible to determine the profile of the mullions. The front wall plate is two lengths of timber joined by an edged-halved and bridled scarf, whilst the rear wall plate is one timber 24ft (7.3m) long. There is no evidence that the rooms were heated and no signs of smoke blackening on the timbers. They may have been used for storage although Brian Ayers found in his statistics for Norwich that 30% of upstairs rooms were used for working with 50% used for sleeping (Ayers 1994, 98). The problem of interpreting buildings without fireplaces is also discussed by J. T. Smith (1992, 143-5) The studding of the rear wall at first-floor level is at 710mm (2ft 4in.) centres, consistent with that of the flank walls. Were the closer studs on the ground floor a statement of status, or purely a practical way of giving more support to the rear midrail that had been weakened by the mortices cut for the common floor joists? Tension braces, falling from the corner posts, are trenched into the external face of the studs to the flank and front walls where the studs are again at the closer spacing of 1ft 6in. (450mm). The bay divisions are marked by unjowled posts; the tie-beams to the western side wall and central bay are flat whilst that in the eastern wall has a slight camber.

The roof is of typical paired rafter, crown-post construction with the braces 3in. (75mm) in width. The rafters have sawn faces internally showing that two have come from one tree rather than in earlier buildings where one rafter equates to one tree. It appears that the changes to the method of conversion take place after the Black Death due to the lapse in the regular management of the woodlands. The date accorded to the building in the list description is late 15th-century and the style of carpentry and the conversion of the timber are compatible with a mid to late 15th-century date.

Discussion

Limited documentary evidence gives an insight into the use and owners of the building during the 19th and 20th centuries. Unfortunately it does not give any insight into the original use, owners and tenants that would further the understanding of how this building functioned in terms of trade and use of the upper floor. However, in plan type, it conforms to the standard type of small shop unit that was being built and rented out as a commercial speculation. Its form is the natural progression from the temporary market stall and represents the first phase of permanent shop building. The long-wall jetty form of the building is typical of many urban examples, and in Essex can be found in the rear range to 6a East Street, also in Coggeshall, and 13-15 (formerly Bonds), North Hill, Colchester. The arch headed shop windows, so often depicted in early manuscripts, still survive in some instances and examples can be found at the Woolpack in Coggeshall and in towns such as Saffron Walden and Lavenham. However, the shop window defined by corner braces, as at 2 Church Street, Coggeshall, and the flat heads to the rear range of shops at 6a East Street, Coggeshall, are equally common. The purpose of the different styles is obscure but other examples of the corner braced shop windows have been noted at the George Hotel, High Street, Colchester, and The Village Shop, Lexden, in unpublished drawings by Richard Shackle. It may have differentiated between the various trades

and crafts but far more documentary research is needed to prove this theory. Why in this instance was there also the need to provide a single wide opening to the western unit whilst the eastern unit had a divided opening? Was this to make for a more flexible speculative development or were there already tenants and trades in view? What is certain is that this building represents a rare survivor of the type of medieval shop defined by David Clark in his article as A2a and on a par with rows of shops such as are to be found in York, London and Oxford.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Mrs. Dianne Carr for her forbearance in allowing me to survey the building whilst it was still in use as an antique shop (Argentum Antiques). This report would have been much less comprehensive without her enthusiasm and interest in the building and use of documents in her possession.

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The crown-post roof