



**VCH Oxfordshire Texts in Progress**

## **Chipping Norton**

### **Town Buildings**

Chipping Norton is a town of limestone houses capped by stone-slate roofs, both materials reflecting the widespread availability of local building stone.<sup>1</sup> Masonry building seems to have been established from the Middle Ages, with timber used chiefly for floors, roofs, and sometimes framing above ground-floor level.<sup>2</sup> Roofs were typically built with framed trusses before the 18th century, in contrast to nearby villages such as Hook Norton where the A-frame derivation of the raised-cruck truss was dominant.<sup>3</sup> Surveys and tree-ring dates have revealed a number of 15th-century structures encased within later houses,<sup>4</sup> the surviving early buildings being mainly hall-houses oriented broadside along the street frontage, as at Burford and Henley, although narrower plots such as those on topside probably had gable-end houses.<sup>5</sup> No early structural evidence for shops is known, but the High Street or upper market place (where most were probably located) contains an undercroft of c.1400 which may have functioned as a tavern, and the former White Hart inn retains part of its 15th- or early 16th-century rear courtyard range.<sup>6</sup> The 16th and 17th century are otherwise only modestly represented in surviving fabric, although this includes evidence of back-plot development.

The main post-medieval transition began c.1720 when houses were re-fronted or (more typically) their front ranges entirely rebuilt, a process visible especially on High Street and Market Place where locally sourced rubble walling gives way to ashlar-faced façades.<sup>7</sup> Roof construction also changed in the 18th century when butt joints moved from through-tenon to loose-tenon type. Nineteenth-century and later houses, mainly terraces and semis, are concentrated in developments beyond the town's historic core, many still in stone, but

<sup>1</sup> For local stone quarrying: below, econ. hist. Thanks are due to Paul Clark and other members of the Chipping Norton buildings group for their comments on earlier drafts.

<sup>2</sup> *Cat. Anct. Deeds*, V, A. 11316 (quarry mentioned 1416); Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 37. Cf. *VCH Oxon.* X, 29 (Banbury); XIV, 33–4 (Witney); A. Catchpole et al., *Burford: Buildings and People in a Cotswold Town* (2008), 61–6.

<sup>3</sup> R.B. Wood-Jones, *Traditional Domestic Architecture in the Banbury Region* (1963), 14–15, 52, 65–6, 101, 187, 225, 228–30; below, Hook Norton, bldgs.

<sup>4</sup> For the Chipping Norton building survey project: Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 7–8.

<sup>5</sup> Catchpole et al., *Burford*, 58–9; *VCH Oxon.* XVI, 50–1; Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, frontispiece, for topside.

<sup>6</sup> Below, commercial bldgs.

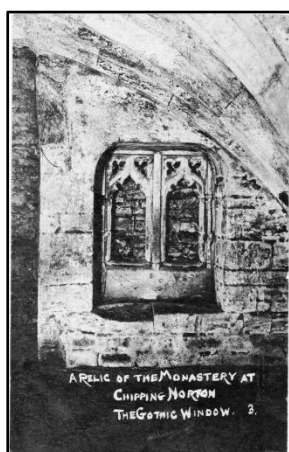
<sup>7</sup> Ashlar may have been locally sourced given that much was replaced in the 20th century due to weathering: superior freestone from quarries such as Taynton, Heythrop and Glympton may well have lasted longer. For use of Bath stone at the lower Bliss mill: below, this section (industrial buildings).

with brick and Welsh slate appearing especially after the arrival of the railway in 1855.<sup>8</sup> Major industrial buildings include the former Bliss tweed mill of 1872–3, still a prominent landmark from the Worcester road immediately south-west of the town. Religious buildings are separately discussed below.

## Domestic Buildings

### *Houses to 1550*

Amongst the town's earliest secular structures is a late 14th- or early 15th-century vaulted undercroft below 20 High Street (a building of mainly 18th-century date), which was most likely let for use as a tavern.<sup>9</sup> The building above (as at 109 High Street in Burford and Tackley's Inn in Oxford) may have been largely domestic, however,<sup>10</sup> an early post-medieval phase being represented by possibly early 16th-century trestle-sawn timbers in its front range's ground-floor ceiling.<sup>11</sup>



An old photograph of the undercroft below No. 20 High Street.

Several 15th-century houses have been identified elsewhere in the town centre, the most substantial survival (tree-ring dated to 1424 x 1456) lying behind the 17th-century frontage of No. 8 Market Street in the market place's north-western corner. Smoke-blackening of one side of the central truss indicates an open hall which may have originally extended into neighbouring No. 7, and a cross passage marked by parallel ceiling beams terminates at a

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<sup>8</sup> Below, this section; for local brick production, below, econ. hist.

<sup>9</sup> Below, commercial bldgs: inns.

<sup>10</sup> Catchpole et al., *Burford*, 70; W.A. Pantin, 'Tackley's Inn, Oxford', *Oxoniensia* 7 (1942), 80–92; J. Munby, 'J.C. Buckler, Tackley's Inn and Three Medieval Houses in Oxford', *Oxoniensia* 43 (1978), 128–37.

<sup>11</sup> V. Hubbard, J. Marshall and P. Clark, '20 High Street' (OBR Rep. 345, 2020).

fine pointed-arch stone doorway. A large first-floor chamber above the services was apparently contemporary with the hall, since the truss (partly exposed there) lacks smoke-blackening. The chamber's stone fireplace may have been inserted in the late 15th or early 16th century,<sup>12</sup> the date of a moulded arch on the other side of the wall in No. 9, which most likely marks a ground-floor fireplace sharing the same stack.<sup>13</sup> Possibly the house belonged to the town guild or to a medieval chantry, since by 1618 it had passed (along with several such properties) to Sir William Cope.<sup>14</sup>



Nos. 1–5 Spring Steet.  
(Photo by OBR).

The nearby Chequers (whose main east–west roof has been tree-ring dated to 1444 x 1476) apparently formed a two-bay house, which probably included a hall and chamber floored over at some later stage.<sup>15</sup> Nos. 1–5 Spring Street, over the road, appears to have begun as a larger four-bay house more akin to No. 8 Market Street, its main street-side range incorporating (exceptionally) a raised-cruck truss, and a separate fully framed truss tree-ring dated to 1444 x 1477. Smoke-blackening of the framed truss's north side suggests a ground-floor open hall, while a contemporary first-floor hall to the south of two (or possibly three) bays is indicated by the timberwork of the ground-floor ceiling. Such a first-floor hall might have been useful in a church house, but nothing is known of the house's ownership

<sup>12</sup> V. Hubbard et al., '8 Market Street' (OBR Rep. 243, 2021), noting the presence of a high-quality roof featuring three tiers of curved windbraces; Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 159–65; *Vernac. Archit.* 47 (2016), 70.

<sup>13</sup> V. Hubbard et al., '9 Market Street' (OBR Rep. 323, 2021).

<sup>14</sup> Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 48–9.

<sup>15</sup> V. Hubbard, 'The Chequers' (OBR Rep. 335, 2021); *Vernac. Archit.* 47 (2016), 70; Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 122–3. The Chequers became a pub only in the 18th century.

before the early 16th century when it was bought by the wealthy widow Joan Mitton (d. 1530) to provide rental income for an obit.<sup>16</sup>

To the south-east, in an area of later-medieval market infill, No. 3 Middle Row was probably the service end of a multi-bay hall house which included the neighbouring No. 4.<sup>17</sup> At the market's south-eastern corner, Nos. 1 and 1A Market Place contain moulded ceiling beams tree-ring dated to 1422 x 1444,<sup>18</sup> while two high-quality late 15th-century stone doorways (both with traces of ochre colouring) survive reset in a 19th-century summer house behind No. 18 Market Place.<sup>19</sup> Beyond the market area in West Street, Gloucester abbey's late 15th-century rectory or 'parsonage' house (now known as The Manor House) sits well back from and at right angles to the road. In 1504 the tenant was required to build a chimney, perhaps prompting the creation of an upper storey and of a new north staircase, the latter lit by a small, probably Perpendicular round-headed window. On the ground floor, a round-arched 3-light mullioned window in the south bay is similar in style to windows in the guildhall, tree-ring dated to 1514 x 1520.<sup>20</sup>

More fragmentary 16th-century evidence survives in the rear wing of No. 15 Market Place, including a chamfered stone hearth surround.<sup>21</sup> At No. 6 Church Street, located between the parish church and grammar school, re-used moulded timber lintels suggest the possibility that this could have been a 16th-century (or earlier) building, albeit much altered in the 19th century.<sup>22</sup> Possibly 16th-century moulded ceiling beams have been found (amongst other places) at The King's Arms (18 West Street), No. 9 Middle Row, and to the rear of No. 20 High Street.<sup>23</sup>

### **Houses c.1550–1700**

Probate evidence shows that hall-based houses remained the norm in the second half of the 16th century. Most halls had a hearth, often the only one in the house, and some at least were probably medieval structures still open to the roof. By 1600 many houses (perhaps a

<sup>16</sup> V. Hubbard et al., '1–5 Spring Street' (OBR Rep. 348, 2022); *Vernac. Archit.* 48 (2017), 83; Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 171–2; OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 178.26.

<sup>17</sup> V. Hubbard et al., '3 Middle Row' (OBR Rep. 328, 2021).

<sup>18</sup> V. Hubbard and P. Clark, '1 & 1A Market Place' (OBR Rep. 401, 2022); Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 144–6.

<sup>19</sup> Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 153–6.

<sup>20</sup> Gloucester Cathedral Library, Register C pt 1, ff. 45v.–46v.; NHLE, no. 1052600 (The Manor House; all NHLE info. accessed Nov. 2021); Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 41; below, public bldgs (guildhall).

<sup>21</sup> V. Hubbard et al., '15 Market Place' (OBR Rep. 326, 2022).

<sup>22</sup> V. Hubbard and J. Marshall, '6 Church Street' (OBR Rep. 197, 2017). This building became attached to the grammar school in the late 16th cent.

<sup>23</sup> Info. from OBR.

majority) had chimneys and first-floor rooms, however,<sup>24</sup> and some larger houses included a hall, parlour, kitchen, buttery, and shop, all with rooms above. Poorer households still made do with a hall and chamber.<sup>25</sup> The 16th and earlier 17th century apparently saw little new building,<sup>26</sup> presumably reflecting loss of wealth from wool trading, and in some places existing houses were subdivided to supply cheaper accommodation, notably in Spring Street and even in Market Street, where the by now old-fashioned housing stock was cut off from the market place by Middle Row. On the other hand, modest prosperity was reflected in interior updating, including insertion of moulded fireplaces and window glass (widespread by the 1590s). The success of local farmers was expressed in the construction of farmhouses on the fringes of the town and beyond, including No. 70/72 College Place, West Street.<sup>27</sup>

The best known 17th-century domestic building is the Church Street almshouse founded by Henry Cornish (d. 1650), date-marked 1640. Set behind a stone gateway on a levelled site, the coursed-rubble row, single storeyed with attics, comprises eight gabled tenements converted to four in the 1950s, featuring nine tall ridge stacks and three- and two-light stone-mullioned windows.<sup>28</sup> At The Chequers (still then domestic accommodation) a north-south range was added c.1613–18, its stone-mullioned windows and gable end similar to others of the period,<sup>29</sup> while at No. 15 Market Place a 17th-century house survives behind a frontage of c.1790.<sup>30</sup> Other building apparently took place on New Street, where Nos. 63–5 have a datestone of 1635, and No. 8 (one of a row of houses at the top of the street) is dated 1687.<sup>31</sup> The Blue Boar on Goddards Lane seems to have begun as three separate one-bay units, indicated by thick stone dividing walls of probably early 17th-century date,<sup>32</sup> while late 17th-century re-roofings were carried out at No. 1 Middle Row (which has earlier features), and at the front range of the rectory house (c.1680).<sup>33</sup> The street-front

<sup>24</sup> There is a suspected 16th-cent. chimney stack at Nos. 63–65 New Street; for archaeol. indication of a fire hood: Chambers, 'Excavations at No. 12 Market Place', 213.

<sup>25</sup> Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 59–61; Hubbard et al., '1–5 Spring Street', blocked Tudor-arched timber doorway indicating flooring of hall; OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 153/3/16 (Wm Trout, 1587); 131/4/23 (Wm Hayes, 1587); 58/2/23 (Eleanor Simkin, 1589).

<sup>26</sup> Late 16th-century roof trusses in The Fox Hotel apparently represent an extension to Nos. 1 and 1A Market Place: P. Clark and V. Hubbard, 'The Fox Hotel' (OBR Rep. 325, 2022).

<sup>27</sup> Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 61–4; NHLE, no. 1284046 (College Place); above, devpt of town; below, urban econ. hist.

<sup>28</sup> NHLE, nos. 1182730 (1–4 Almshouses) and 1052651 (gateway and walls); Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 55–6; below, social and polit. hist.

<sup>29</sup> Hubbard, 'The Chequers'; *Vernac. Archit.* 47 (2016), 70.

<sup>30</sup> Hubbard and Marshall, '15 Market Place', which notes remains of a probably 16th-cent. mullioned window in the south party wall (poss. remaining from the demolished Unicorn inn).

<sup>31</sup> NHLE, nos. 1284148 (No. 63 New Street) and 1284128 (Old George House Antiques); Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 77, 225–7, 232.

<sup>32</sup> Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 120–1; NHLE, no. 1284373 (The Blue Boar, mentioning reset 1683 datestone).

<sup>33</sup> *Vernac. Archit.* 51 (2020), 105–6; 48 (2017), 83; Brooks, *Pevsner N&W*, 261. (Rectory ho. now called The Manor House.)

range of No. 44 West Street, dendro-dated to 1680 x 93, has a lobby entry plan and central stack.<sup>34</sup>



The Cornish almshouse on Church Street.

### **Houses c.1700–60**

The prosperous period after 1700 saw an increase in building work, reflected in the presence of larger numbers of masons, slaters, carpenters, and glaziers.<sup>35</sup> Older houses were re-roofed and internal arrangements reorganised. Cooking in halls gave way to the use of dedicated kitchens, and beds were transferred to heated upstairs chambers; in better-off households the hall became a dining room and the parlour a sitting room. In many cases these changes brought little in the way of external alteration, but the most affluent owners invested in fashionable classical-style façades which typically involved buildings being heightened to three full storeys and a dormered attic, and in some cases their frontages moved forward. The new architectural style was adopted especially on High Street (where the great majority of houses had been re-fronted by the later 18th century), and to a lesser extent elsewhere around the market place.<sup>36</sup>

The 1720s in particular saw much work in the Baroque style of Blenheim Palace, Heythrop Park, and Ditchley Park.<sup>37</sup> Innkeepers were in the vanguard, notably John Crutch at The Talbot, who c.1720 created a (now replaced) seven-window façade with a recessed

<sup>34</sup> *Vernac. Archit.* 52 (2021), 73.

<sup>35</sup> Below, econ. hist. Para. based on Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 79–84, 90–7.

<sup>36</sup> Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, Fig. 1.

<sup>37</sup> Brooks, *Pevsner N&W*, 254.



three-window central part.<sup>38</sup> Of similar date is No. 7 High Street which, with its rusticated ground-floor stonework, Doric pilasters, and frieze of triglyphs and metopes, is amongst the town's finest façades.<sup>39</sup> The former White Hart inn, which has the date 1725 on a rainwater head, incorporated a recessed centre with an arched entrance giving access to the rear courtyard and stables,<sup>40</sup> while a tall 18th-century house at the south end of Middle Row, featuring ground-floor Venetian windows, first-floor pilasters, and an attic dormer, may have been the 'Roundabout House' rebuilt in 1722, but later demolished.<sup>41</sup> Early examples of the new style beyond High Street include Nos. 9–11 West Street (dendro-dated to the late 1720s), with its dentil cornice; the 'thoroughly Vanbrughian' remodelling of part of the Crispes' New Street mansion house to create the King's Head inn (most likely carried out by the tenant, Edward Fell); and – at a small scale, and rather incongruously inserted into older buildings – the façade now spanning No. 1 Market Place and the neighbouring Fox Hotel.<sup>42</sup> High-quality interior decoration on the first floor of No. 7 High Street includes fine plasterwork incorporating dentil and shell cornices and a stucco overmantel,<sup>43</sup> while No. 1 Market Place was fitted out with wainscot-fielded panelling, dado, and window seats.<sup>44</sup>



The former King's Head inn, New Street.

<sup>38</sup> Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 92–3.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. 94–7.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. 98–9; OHC, POX0594265 (c.1900); below (commercial bldgs: inns).

<sup>41</sup> Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 130–1 and Fig. 1.

<sup>42</sup> NHLE, nos. 1198029 (No. 9 West Street); 1052600 (The Manor House); 1183106 (Lochalsh Needlework); Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 75–6, 80–1; Brooks, *Pevsner N&W*, 261–2; Clark and Hubbard, 'The Fox Hotel'; Hubbard and Clark, '1 & 1A Market Place'; above, landownership, manor houses.

<sup>43</sup> Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 96 (photos).

<sup>44</sup> Clark and V. Hubbard, 'The Fox Hotel'.

Not everyone followed the new fashion, however, especially beyond High Street. Many existing houses retained their gables, dormers and bays, notably on Market Street, and some new-builds, too, were in a more traditional vernacular style. Nos. 10 and 10A Middle Row, the former 'new erected' by the mason John Paty (d. 1718), and the latter added in 1720 by his son, had a shared façade featuring stone-mullioned windows and a continuous drip mould similar to those of the Church Street almshouse, while 10A also acquired a distinctly old-fashioned timber-framed jettied extension at the rear.<sup>45</sup>

### **Houses 1760–1840**

The late 18th century saw further addition of classical-style ashlar façades, notably on the market place's lower side, where three-storeyed examples include Nos. 15 and 16 Market Place.<sup>46</sup> No. 16 (its ground floor probably altered when it became a bank in the late 19th century) has rusticated quoins, a bracketed cornice over the first-floor windows, and moulded window surrounds, the first-floor central window pedimented, and with an unusual bull's eye window in the attic storey. The house is likely to have been first remodelled around mid-century (judging by the roof structure) and the top stage of the façade subsequently added c.1790. At that time No. 15 was converted to feature two ground-floor Venetian windows flanking a hooded central doorway, sash windows to the first and second floors, corner pilasters, and a parapet with moulded cornice. Of broadly similar date is No. 15 High Street on the market place's upper side (now also a bank), its middle floor dominated by a projecting Venetian window with Ionic capitals and fluted abaci.<sup>47</sup> Early 19th-century houses include the three-storeyed (but rather plainer) No. 4 West Street, whose three-bay main range has a shallow pitched roof, projecting eaves cornice, and finely jointed ashlar, its adjoining corner porch surmounted by contemporary ironwork.<sup>48</sup> North-east of the town centre Rock Hill House was built around the same time and has been much added to,<sup>49</sup>

<sup>45</sup> V. Hubbard and J. Marshall, '10 and 10A Middle Row' (OBR Rep. 332, 2017); NHLE, no. 1052631 (Nos. 10 and 10A Middle Row); Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 77–8; OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 145/2/32 (John Paty, 1718); BOR1/5/A1/1, f. 7.

<sup>46</sup> Hubbard and Marshall, '15 Market Place'; V. Hubbard et al., '16 Market Place' (OBR Rep. 334, 2019). See also Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 150–6, claiming conversion of each from two cottages and dating to c.1780, and NHLE, nos. 1052623 (15 Market Place) and 1183153 (Nat. West Bank [No. 16]).

<sup>47</sup> NHLE, no. 1368162 (Barclays Bank).

<sup>48</sup> Ibid. no. 1284068 (Antiques); Brooks, *Pevsner N&W*, 261.

<sup>49</sup> Robson's Oxon. Dir. (1839); <https://thelondonbroker.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Rock-Hill-House-Brochure.pdf>. Formerly a second house (used as a private school) shared the name Rock (Hill) House (e.g. TNA, HO 107/879, census 1841).



while on Church Lane The Elm was extended before c.1840 to create a garden front facing away from the road.<sup>50</sup>



No. 15 High Street.

Such houses were occupied by wealthy traders or professionals: High Street in particular housed the more substantial craftsmen, tradesmen, publicans, and innkeepers,<sup>51</sup> and in 1842 that and the wider market area were described as 'one long and tolerably handsome street'.<sup>52</sup> Lower down the social scale, however, accommodation became increasingly cramped as the population grew. Sub-division of houses continued and the lower side of Middle Row developed into a jumble of houses, workshops and pigsties,<sup>53</sup> while in High Street (and elsewhere) several backyards were built up with low-quality housing, mainly by the owners of the main street-side properties.<sup>54</sup> Black Boy Yard, behind No. 14 High Street, contained a row of single-cell structures at the Albion Street end by c.1840.<sup>55</sup> A surviving photograph shows them to have been low, one-up, one-down stone-

<sup>50</sup> Town Map (c.1840) and summary of deeds, both in Chipping Norton Museum; OS Map 1:2,500, Oxon. XIV.11 (1881 and later edns); *Sale Cat., The Elm* (1910): copy in Chipping Norton Museum; Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 70, 177 (mis-dating additions to late 19th cent.).

<sup>51</sup> TNA, HO 107/879.

<sup>52</sup> *Pigot & Co.'s Oxon. Dir.* (1842). Cf. Brewer, *Oxon.* 494–5; above, devtpt of town.

<sup>53</sup> Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 76–9.

<sup>54</sup> Above, devtpt. of town.

<sup>55</sup> Town Map (c.1840); OHC, Far LII/vii/2 and 17–18, mentioning 12 cottages by 1876.

built cottages sharing a single pump.<sup>56</sup> Similar overcrowding was evident at Guildhall Place, behind Horse Fair (at what is now Portland Place), and behind the Red Lion at the south end of the High Street;<sup>57</sup> such densely built-up settings suffered (as later evidence shows) from damp, stale air, and inadequate sanitation.<sup>58</sup>

### **Suburban Housing 1840–1914**

From the mid 19th century most new domestic building was concentrated outside the historic core, as the town slowly expanded.<sup>59</sup> A few larger houses built for wealthy inhabitants included The Mount (1869) erected for solicitor Henry F. Wilkins on part of the former castle site.<sup>60</sup> Vaguely Gothic in style it includes pointed doorways, large gable-end chimney stacks, and a turret and full-height bay topped by a pyramid-like roof with tall finials.<sup>61</sup> Near the bottom of New Street the mill owner William Bliss (d. 1883) rebuilt his early 19th-century family home for £5,000 in 1862, adding bay windows, a cast iron veranda and a long stone-built conservatory; the updated interior, arranged over three storeys, included a 'noble' entrance hall, bed and dressing rooms, marble and cast iron fireplaces and decorative plasterwork.<sup>62</sup> The house and outbuildings including a coach house were demolished in 1978 to create Dunstan Avenue.<sup>63</sup> Penhurst (set back across the road) was built in 1869 for £7,000 by Banbury builders John and Thomas Davis for William Bliss junior and his sister Annie and their families, comprising a 'stolid' semi-detached pair of three-storey villas with double-height bays, now used as a care home.<sup>64</sup> Both Penhurst and The Mount retain their gatehouse lodge.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Chipping Norton Local History Society, *Around Chipping Norton in Old Photographs* (1987), 16.

<sup>57</sup> Town Map (c.1840).

<sup>58</sup> e.g. OHC, BOR1/25/C/10 (incl. Guildhall Place, where there was a single shared tap); BOR1/25/N/6.

<sup>59</sup> Above, devtpt of town.

<sup>60</sup> C. Kirtland, *Brief Memorials of the Early History of Chipping Norton* (1871), 48; TNA, RG 10/1457; VCH Oxon. II, 323; *Sale Cat.*, *The Mount* (1985): copy in OHC, mentioning datestones on house and lodge; *Oxford Times*, 18 Oct. 1988.

<sup>61</sup> Sale particulars (n.d.) at [www.struttandparker.com/properties/new-street-6](http://www.struttandparker.com/properties/new-street-6), accessed Sept. 2021.

<sup>62</sup> OHC, Acc. 2585 (incl. photocopy of Wm Bliss' c.1877 handwritten history of his woollen manufactory and of *Sale Cat.*, *Bliss Tweed Mills* (1893), incl house; R. Evans, 'Dunstan House, Penhurst and the Upper Bliss Mill', *Top. Oxon.* 20 (1975), 5–8, mis-dating orig. house to c.1840; TNA, IR 58/65147, no. 712, listing 8 bedrms c.1910. For photos: Chipping Norton Local History Society, *Chipping Norton through Time*, 74; Chipping Norton Local History Society, *Around Chipping Norton in Old Photographs*, A Second Selection, 63.

<sup>63</sup> *Chipping Norton News*, April 1978. For the adjacent upper mill: below, industrial bldgs.

<sup>64</sup> *Oxon. Weekly News*, 22 Dec. 1869; *Sale Cat.*, *Bliss Tweed Mills* (1893): photocopy in OHC, Acc. 2585; TNA, RG 10/1457, no. 266; Brooks, *Pevsner N&W*, 262. The pair, formerly called Monks' Dene, were apparently extended sideways before 1893: OS Map 1:2,500, Oxon. XIV.11 (1881 and 1901 edns).

<sup>65</sup> TNA, RG 10/1457, nos. 267 and 269; VCH fieldwork, Oct. 2021.

Middle-class residences included detached houses, semis, and terraces, most of them stone-built (though with some use of red brick), and with Welsh slate roofs. Three-storeyed terraced examples of rubble stone with ashlar quoins and window openings include Nos. 30–34 West Street (all three built by local farmer and developer Frederick Guy c.1876)<sup>66</sup> and Nos. 14–24 West End (formerly ‘Sunnybank’), a long row with doric porches and an 1868 datestone.<sup>67</sup> Nos. 38–42 West End are three tall brick houses with stone window sills and decorative stringcourses incorporating purple bricks.<sup>68</sup> Some nearby houses on The Leys feature ashlar window openings, gable barge boards, and roof ridge crests.<sup>69</sup> Substantial but plain ‘villa’ houses on Blenheim Terrace (Leys Approach) included two sitting rooms, kitchen and pantry, four bedrooms and a housemaid’s closet on the landing, as well as good front and rear gardens; the occupants in 1871 included a draper, an auctioneer, and an inland revenue officer.<sup>70</sup>

Purpose-built working-class houses were of similar construction and many also of three-storeys, although in some cases facilities such as wash houses and WCs were shared. Examples include the two Alfred Terraces (built before 1866) and Paradise Terrace (1870s) at West End.<sup>71</sup> Houses on the Alfred Terraces had a kitchen, scullery, sitting room and three bedrooms, while those on Paradise Terrace had four bedrooms.<sup>72</sup> Lodge Terrace (built before 1866, apparently by brewer William Hitchman) east of Albion Street comprised ten houses each with a sitting room and kitchen plus two bedrooms and attics, the occupants in 1891 including a photographer, coachman, cloth workers, and laundresses.<sup>73</sup> Well-built houses erected by William Bliss II for his employees included examples on Diston’s Lane characterised by drip moulds and steeply pitched ornamented porches, the larger houses

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<sup>66</sup> OHC, Far XLVII/1–4; VCH fieldwork, Oct. 2021.

<sup>67</sup> Brooks, *Pevsner N&W*, 261.

<sup>68</sup> VCH fieldwork, 2021. No. 38 may be a slightly later addition judging by its different fenestration and side passage.

<sup>69</sup> VCH fieldwork, 2021. Cf. OHC, BOR1/25/Y/35, plan and section of semi-detached houses for D.R. Simms (1906), incl. decorative boards and ridge tiles.

<sup>70</sup> *Evesham Standard & West Midland Observer*, 7 May 1892; TNA, IR 58/65144, nos. 493–7; RG 10/1457.

<sup>71</sup> *Sale Cat., Properties of Wm Bliss Execs.* (1889): copy in Chipping Norton Museum; H. Hurrell, ‘Improved Workers’ Houses at Alfred Terraces, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire’, typescript report in Chipping Norton Museum; *Oxford Jnl* 15 Aug. 1874 (‘Pest House’ closes, site of Paradise Terrace); *Sale Cat., Nos. 6, 7, 8 & 9 Paradise Terrace and No. 7 Alexandra Square* (1939): copy in Chipping Norton Museum.

<sup>72</sup> TNA, IR 58/65144.

<sup>73</sup> *Sale Cat., Chipping Norton... Stone-Built Dwelling Houses* (1893): copy in OHC; TNA, RG 12/1179.

intended for mill foremen.<sup>74</sup> Holyoake Terrace on The Leys built by the Co-op in 1910 is unusual in being of red brick, the eight houses having ground-floor bay windows.<sup>75</sup>

### ***Housing since 1914***

From the 1920s–30s the housing stock was improved both by slum clearance in the town centre (particularly of cramped cottage yards), and by piecemeal introduction of council housing and of small-scale private developments.<sup>76</sup> A small group of surviving 1921–2 council houses on the Churchill Road designed by Oxford architect William Daft are stone-built, Welsh slate roofed, three-bedroomed semis each with a parlour, living room, scullery, larder, fuel store, and WC.<sup>77</sup> Adjacent houses (now demolished) built for the council in 1927–8 by the Universal Housing Company of Rickmansworth were of reinforced concrete.<sup>78</sup> By 1931 brick replaced stone in semis at Brasenose Villas (on The Green and Burford Road), three-bedroomed parlour-type houses which incorporate ground-floor double bays capped by single span tiled roofs forming a covering over the front door,<sup>79</sup> and a few years later in the Hailey Road, Avenue and Crescent non-parlour type houses designed by Eric Lambert of Bridport with ground-floor bathrooms and steep central gables.<sup>80</sup>

By 1939 the Chipping Norton and Woodstock joint regional planning committee expressed a preference for building in stone (which was of ‘permanent value’) rather than brick (to be rendered), and for Stonesfield roof slates or at least plain concrete tiles or blue-grey clay tiles. ‘Alien’ natural slate was to be avoided since towns with slate roofs were ‘the most depressing of all places to live in’.<sup>81</sup> To reduce costs post-war council housing overseen by a borough architect mainly utilised concrete roof tiles and pale red or brown brick, although a few more concrete houses were built,<sup>82</sup> as well as prefabs (on Hailey Road)

<sup>74</sup> OHC, BOR1/5/A1/5, 11 March 1881; *Sale Cat., Properties of Wm Bliss Execs.* (1889): copy in Chipping Norton Museum, incl. 27 houses on Diston’s Lane; D. Lewis, *Diston’s Lane, Chipping Norton* (2006 edn), 17; Chipping Norton Local History Society, *Around Chipping Norton in Old Photographs, A Second Selection*, 40; VCH fieldwork 2021.

<sup>75</sup> OHC, BOR1/25/Y/23; Chipping Norton Local History Society, *Chipping Norton through Time* (2009), 82.

<sup>76</sup> Above, devt of town.

<sup>77</sup> OHC, BOR1/25/Y/11; BOR1/25/E/1; VCH fieldwork, Oct. 2021. Nos. 45–59 Churchill Rd.

<sup>78</sup> OHC, BOR1/25/C/7–8. There are further concrete houses on Walterbush Road: <https://www.andrewsonline.co.uk/properties-for-sale/house-for-sale-in-walterbush-road-chipping-norton-oxfordshire-ox7/51435>.

<sup>79</sup> OHC, BOR1/25/C/8; BOR1/25/D/8; BOR1/25/A2/2; Chipping Norton Museum, photo of 1938; VCH fieldwork, Oct. 2021.

<sup>80</sup> OHC, BOR1/25/Y/31–2.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid. RDC9/5/A3/1.

<sup>82</sup> <https://www.andrewsonline.co.uk/properties-for-sale/house-for-sale-in-walterbush-road-chipping-norton-oxfordshire-ox7/51435>; OHC, BOR1/25/R/5 (Walterbush Road); BOR1/5/A1/10, 27 May 1949 (Orlit houses). For architect: e.g. BOR1/5/A1/10 (1949).

which survived into the 1970s.<sup>83</sup> Neat semis at Cotswold Crescent (1947–52) bear the town council's crest, while each of the three rows of Cotswold Terrace houses (1951) carries a central pedimented gable.<sup>84</sup> Numerous private houses built on the roads radiating out of town in the 1960s were acknowledged to be 'in scale', but were nevertheless judged to lack 'charm' or 'intimacy'.<sup>85</sup>

Later council and private developments were of mixed quality. Late 1970s stone-walled council houses and bungalows on Dunstan Avenue blend in well with older buildings on New Street,<sup>86</sup> while contemporary houses such as those on Cornish Road are of drab brown brick and dark brown tile-fronts. Finsbury Place (c.1980), a private development off New Street, comprises nondescript three- to four-storey pale brick houses and flats behind two stone houses converted to offices.<sup>87</sup> Of the later social housing projects Edward Stone Rise (1996) is an example of well laid out stone-fronted houses.<sup>88</sup>

Recent additions include a few low-rise flats, amongst them the plain gabled stone and Welsh slate blocks at Norton Green Court (McCarthy Stone, 2002), Kingstone Court (McCarthy Stone, 2006), and Vernon Court (Cottsway Housing Association, 2017),<sup>89</sup> while at Parkers Circus (George Wimpey, c.2006–8) groups of three-storeyed yellow brick and rendered townhouses with tall gabled ends cluster around a circular green space.<sup>90</sup> Nearby Watson Place (McCarthy Stone, 2018) is a U-shaped stone, render and Welsh slate block of retirement flats, incorporating chimneyed gables and varied skylines.<sup>91</sup> Cotswold Gate, Burford Road (Bellway Homes, completed 2019) has many yellow brick houses with Welsh slate roofs.<sup>92</sup>

Some redundant industrial or institutional buildings have been turned into housing. Conversion of the former Bliss tweed mill north-west of the town, closed in 1980, was carried out successively by two separate developers, both of whom went into receivership, using

<sup>83</sup> OS Map 1:10560 (1955), SP32NW; 1:2500, SP 3026 (1971); Eddershaw, *Chipping Norton*, 125; Chipping Norton Local History Society, *Chipping Norton through Time*, 18.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. BOR1/25/R/5; VCH fieldwork, Oct. 2021.

<sup>85</sup> *Oxford Mail*, 23 June 1972. For photos: Chipping Norton Local History Society, *Chipping Norton through Time*, 24; Chipping Norton Local History Society, *Around Chipping Norton in Old Photographs, A Second Selection*, 44.

<sup>86</sup> For praise of Dunstan Ave: *Chipping Norton News*, Nov. 1979 and April 1981.

<sup>87</sup> VCH fieldwork 2021; above, devpt of town.

<sup>88</sup> Eddershaw, *Street Names*, 16–17; *Chipping Norton News*, Nov. 2000; VCH fieldwork 2021.

<sup>89</sup> <https://housingcare.org/housing-care/facility-info-84477-norton-green-court-chipping-norton-england>; <https://www.onthemarket.com/details/5163914/>; *Witney Gazette*, 20 Dec. 2006; *Chipping Norton News*, June 2017; <https://www.cotswoldjournal.co.uk/news/15244437.new-homes-opened-following-launch-in-chipping-norton/> (accessed April 2022).

<sup>90</sup> *Sale Cat., Blissfield Gardens* (2006): copy in OHC; VCH fieldwork 2021.

<sup>91</sup> <https://housingcare.org/housing-care/facility-info-162351-watson-place-chipping-norton-england>; [www.mccarthyandstone.co.uk/retirement-properties-for-sale/watson-place-chipping-norton](http://www.mccarthyandstone.co.uk/retirement-properties-for-sale/watson-place-chipping-norton) (accessed Sept. 2021).

<sup>92</sup> <https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/17432628.cotswold-gate-chipping-norton-almost-finished/> (accessed March 2022).



architects Burrell Foley Associates and latterly Bennett Curry Partnership.<sup>93</sup> The former workhouse and Cotshill Hospital (renamed Norton Park) was converted into housing for Regalian Homes by the Percy Thomas Partnership in 1995–6. The redevelopment included the central and administrative blocks and the disused chapel, but various ancillary buildings were demolished.<sup>94</sup> The later 20th and early 21st century also saw much restoration of older houses,<sup>95</sup> including a brutal amputation in 1972 of the roof and dormers at Lodge Terrace by a Banbury builder to create affordable family homes.<sup>96</sup>

## Commercial and Industrial Buildings

### *Inns and Taverns*

The town's earliest surviving commercial structure is probably the late 14th- or early 15th-century stone-vaulted undercroft below 20 High Street, which like similarly ornate undercrofts in other towns was most likely let as a wine tavern, rather than being used merely for storage. Though no longer visible externally it was accessed down steps from the street, leading to a stone doorway flanked by two traceried windows with ogee-headed arches, one two-light and the other single. The vault's ribs spring from moulded corbels depicting human and animal heads. The medieval building above apparently stood proud of its neighbours, the entrance to the undercroft perhaps marked by a walled enclosure.<sup>97</sup>

The town had at least one inn by the 1420s,<sup>98</sup> but the earliest structural remains are those of the former White Hart (No. 16 High Street), which may have been purpose built as an inn, and occupies a wide (c.3½ perch) plot assembled possibly from more than one burgage tenement. Running back along the plot is part of a well-preserved 15th- or early 16th-century jettied timber gallery, which gave access to a number of rooms and was partly open-sided, looking down into a courtyard. Original doors, mullioned windows, and shutter hinges remain in situ, along with red and green paint perhaps from an early decorative

<sup>93</sup> *Banbury Gazette*, 8 June 1989; *Witney Gazette*, 9 April 1992. Burrell Foley Associates subsequently became Burrell Foley Fischer.

<sup>94</sup> OHC, BOR1/17/Y/1 (1904); S. Brown, *Cotshill Village: A Unique Opportunity to Develop a Major Cotswold Market Town Site in Partnership with the Local Community* (1987); *Banbury Gazette*, 5 Oct. 1995; *Witney Gazette*, 9 Nov. 1995; *Property Post*, 17 July 1996; OS Map 1:25000, sheet 191 (2015 edn); below, this section.

<sup>95</sup> e.g. *Oxford Mail*, 23 June 1972, restorations 'towards the church'; local information.

<sup>96</sup> *Banbury Guardian*, 13 Apr. 1972.

<sup>97</sup> V. Hubbard, J. Marshall and P. Clark, '20 High Street' (OBR Rep. 345, 2020); Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 104–5; SMA (1983), 69. For comparable examples, Catchpole et al., *Burford*, 70; W.A. Pantin, 'Tackley's Inn, Oxford', *Oxoniensia* 7 (1942), 80–92; J. Munby, 'J.C. Buckler, Tackley's Inn and Three Medieval Houses in Oxford', *Oxoniensia* 43 (1978), 128–37.

<sup>98</sup> Below, urban econ. hist.

scheme. By 1633 the inn had eight heated chambers, its other rooms including a hall, parlour, kitchen, brewhouse, tap-house, and wine cellar (possibly the surviving high-quality vaulted cellar at the front of the building).<sup>99</sup> By 1662 there were 14 hearths, and in 1675 the best chamber (perhaps in the central two bays on the first floor) had matching red carpets, bed curtains and chair coverings. The Cheshire, Hereford and Worcester chambers were named from coaching stops. Surviving 17th-century fabric includes wood panelling and stone fire surrounds.<sup>100</sup>



The timber-framed gallery at the former White Hart inn.

Other inns are known only from documents and photographs. In 1615 the Talbot at Nos. 3–4 High Street, later replaced by the Co-op, seems to have had six lodging chambers, along with a ‘chapel’ and hostelry chambers, a hall, and a parlour, kitchen, and brewhouse. By 1662 there were 11 hearths, and it too had luxurious furnishings including carpets and woven chairs, and rooms named from coaching destinations.<sup>101</sup> The Swan at No. 2 West Street (documented from 1608) had five lodging chambers in 1668, as well as a hall, two

<sup>99</sup> D.R. Clark, ‘White Hart Hotel, High Street, Chipping Norton’ (OBR Rep. 7, 2003) suggests an 18th-cent. date for the surviving vaulted cellar.

<sup>100</sup> Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 97–101; Simons et al., ‘A Late Medieval Inn at the White Hart Hotel’, incorrectly citing inventories of 1615 and 1694 relating to The Talbot; OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 12/4/8 (Ric. Coleman, 1633); 76/1/31 (Ric. Allen, 1675).

<sup>101</sup> OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 55/3/4 (Thos. Rainsford, gent., 1615); 171/5/28 (John Pettipher, gent., 1694); Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 93. For the Talbot’s re-fronting c.1720, above (domestic bldgs).

parlours, and a cellar full of beer and cider,<sup>102</sup> while the Crown & Cushion or Katherine Wheel, a substantial house converted to an inn c.1615, had eight hearths in 1662, but is now much rebuilt.<sup>103</sup> Inns also supplied stabling for horses, accessed from the street presumably through archways similar to the later surviving examples at the White Hart and (in a later façade) at The Crown & Cushion.<sup>104</sup> Horse feed bought by the king's messengers at the town in 1530 was most likely supplied at an inn.<sup>105</sup>

In the 18th and early 19th century innkeepers not only re-fronted their premises in fashionable style<sup>106</sup> but updated and expanded their accommodation. The Swan was enlarged before 1706 from c.8 to 12 main rooms, including a club room, and was equipped with impressive cellarage.<sup>107</sup> The White Hart acquired new first-floor wall panels either when it was re-fronted c.1725,<sup>108</sup> or when the ground-floor room arrangements were altered in the 19th century, and a vaulted brick basement was built under the north part of the main street-front range. Limestone-block outbuildings with floors of limestone cobbles or slabs were erected in its rear courtyard in the 18th century or 19th century, structures surviving there in 2005 including two-storeyed stables with stall divisions and hay racks, and open-sided cart sheds.<sup>109</sup>

By c.1910 the town's better inns (some now styled 'hotels') contained commercial rooms, market rooms, and indoor WCs; the Crown & Cushion 'family and commercial hotel' was especially well appointed having in 1895 a 'considerable number' of bedrooms (and by 1911 an indoor bathroom), sitting, dining, entertaining, smoke, coffee, commercial and stock rooms, with a 'capitally' fitted bar, and supplying catering for large dinners. Ordinary pubs (and some inns) centred around tap rooms and smoke rooms. The back yards of the better inns contained stone (or brick) stabling and coach houses, the Crown & Cushion boasting loose boxes for hunting gentlemen, and offering vehicles and horses for hire. Pub yards and gardens had outdoor urinals and WCs as well as timber pigsties and other outbuildings with galvanised roofs.<sup>110</sup> Later alterations included a 1930s blocking up of the archway at the White Hart (reversed in 2005),<sup>111</sup> and 1960s rebuilds of the Crown and Cushion Hotel and

<sup>102</sup> R.F. Taylor et al. (eds), *Cal. Court Bks of the Borough of New Woodstock 1607–22* (ORS 65, 2007), 8; OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 37/4/18 (Ric. Jacquest, 1668).

<sup>103</sup> Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 57, 105–8.

<sup>104</sup> Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 107 (early 20th-cent. photo).

<sup>105</sup> *L&P Hen. VIII*, IV, 2916.

<sup>106</sup> Above (domestic bldgs).

<sup>107</sup> Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 201; OHC, MSS Wills Oxon. 37/4/18 (Ric. Jacquest, 1668); 133/2/42 (Eliz. Harrison, widow, 1706); 168/4/14 (John Jacquest, 1713), mentioning club room. 'New' and 'old' cellars were mentioned in 1706: OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 133/2/42.

<sup>108</sup> Clark, 'White Hart Hotel, High Street, Chipping Norton'; above (domestic bldgs).

<sup>109</sup> Simons et al., 'A Late Medieval Inn at the White Hart Hotel'.

<sup>110</sup> *British Industries Business Review* (1895), 33; TNA, IR 58/65140–65151.

<sup>111</sup> Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 98–9.

Bitter and Twisted (No. 1A Middle Row, formerly the 'Bunch of Grapes' wine and spirits house).<sup>112</sup>

### **Industrial Premises and Mills**

By the 18th century back-plot service buildings were well represented, including workshops, forges, brewhouses and malthouses, the last two types presumably stone-built.<sup>113</sup> The back yard of the Diston farmhouse on New Street included a large malthouse (mentioned in 1735) with barley and malt garners, as well as a kiln, kiln-house, cistern, screening room, barn, and lean-to.<sup>114</sup> The tannery on Diston's Lane included tanning pits and (over the road) bark storage sheds added c.1862.<sup>115</sup> Small warehouses for agricultural produce included the wool-factor Edward Witts's storehouses at a farmhouse in Spring Street,<sup>116</sup> and a corn warehouse built on the lower side of Middle Row in 1824.<sup>117</sup>

Three significant manufacturing premises were established in the 19th century. In 1831–3 William Hitchman (d. 1881) built extensive premises including three large malthouses east of Albion Street, close to an off-licence and offices established by his father James in 1796 at No. 2 West Street (the former Swan inn).<sup>118</sup> In 1849–50 he added a brewery plant,<sup>119</sup> and by 1890 the 'substantially built'<sup>120</sup> brewery mainly of stone and slate included a tall buttressed brewery building with a water tower and chimney, three long ranges of malthouses (one with an attached brick-built engine room) and a cooper's workshop, plus open-sided cart sheds and stabling.<sup>121</sup> The maltings were partly destroyed by a fire in 1922, and the brewery chimney was demolished in 1948 (brewing having ceased in 1933). The whole brewery site was cleared for housing c.1970, but the West Street buildings survived and were ultimately converted mainly to residential use (including Hitchman Mews).<sup>122</sup>

<sup>112</sup> Brooks, *Pevsner N&W*, 260–1.

<sup>113</sup> OHC, MS Wills Oxon 66/4/10 (Wm Thomas, gent., 1674); TNA, PROB 11/668/101 (Thos. Day, tailor, 1734); PROB 11/744/182 (John Pagett, gent, 1746).

<sup>114</sup> OHC, E442/D/10; Far XXVIII/1.

<sup>115</sup> Lewis, *Diston's Lane*, 10–13; Chipping Norton Museum, summary of deeds for 34 Diston's Lane; photograph album 21 (WI), p. 56, remains of tan yard.

<sup>116</sup> Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 52, 70, 72, 168, 176, 201; above, this section.

<sup>117</sup> OHC, SL 17/3/2D/5.

<sup>118</sup> *Oxf. Jnl*, 29 Oct. 1831 and 5 Oct. 1833; Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 201–2, noting extensive cellars under No. 2 West Street; *Chipping Norton News*, March 2021; below, econ. hist.

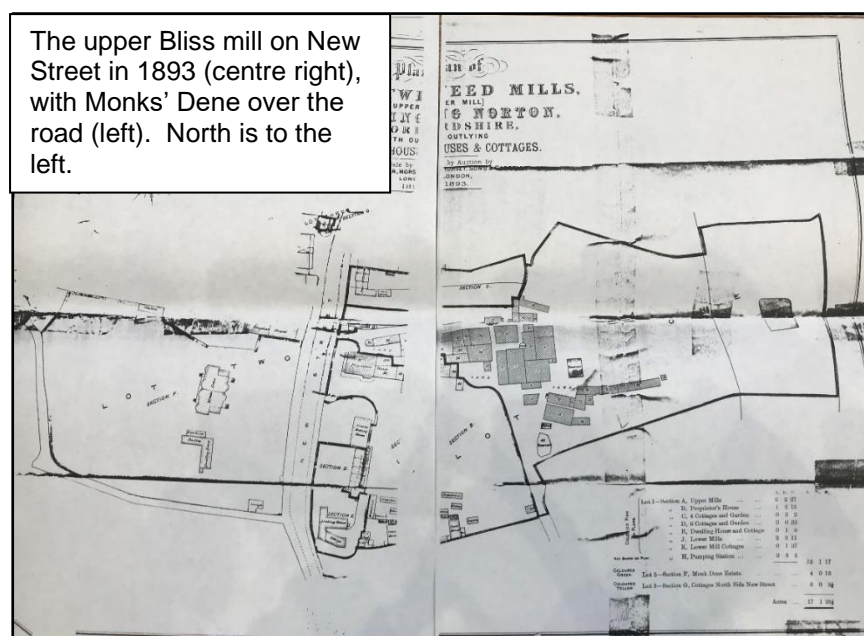
<sup>119</sup> *Oxford Chron.* 6 Apr. 1850.

<sup>120</sup> *British Industries Business Review* (1895), 33.

<sup>121</sup> Sale plan (c.1890) in Chipping Norton Museum, which also contains a drawing of the tower and a sale poster which repositions the buildings (both undated). For a description of c.1910: TNA, IR 58/65150, no. 1044.

<sup>122</sup> *Chipping Norton News*, March and April 2021; OS Map 1:2,500, Oxon. XIV.11 (1971 and 1988 edns), the former still showing some brewery buildings east of Albion Street.

In the textile sector William Bliss I introduced factory-type production when he set up his 'upper mill' for carding and spinning on New Street in 1804 and a 'lower mill' for fulling and spinning on the Common in 1810.<sup>123</sup> At New Street he built a residence in front of old cottages, converted a malthouse to a wool loft, and erected a building for carding machines turned first by hand and then by horses attached to an upright shaft in the room below. William Bliss II made substantial additions, including a power loom shed built in 1851 when steam machinery was introduced.<sup>124</sup> By c.1880 the site comprised several irregular groups of stone, brick and iron-framed buildings: in the north, attached to the proprietor's house, was a burling house, plus shearing, specking and finishing shops, and a warehouse onto which a long north (New Street-facing) wing had been built in 1862 as a warehouse for finished goods and an office for the proprietor and his clerks.<sup>125</sup> A central group comprised the main



gabled mill buildings of five storeys with an engine house and external stair tower, water tank and belfry. To the east were sheds and smiths', carpenters' and fitting shops; to the south boiler and economiser houses, hand loom house, stonemason's shop, and a long range of single-storeyed shearing and racking rooms, and a detached 100 ft tall brick chimney. Several reservoirs supplied water. The burling house and finishing shops, a detached coal store, the boiler and economiser houses, and the southern part of the shearing and racking

<sup>123</sup> Below, econ. hist.

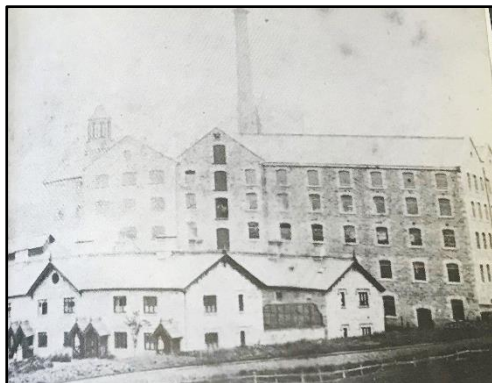
<sup>124</sup> Photocopy of Wm Bliss' c.1877 handwritten history of his woollen manufactory, in OHC, Acc. 2585.

<sup>125</sup> P. Flick, 'Fire and Fortune in Chipping Norton', *Country Life*, 19 Dec. 1985, fig. 1 (illustration of c.1880); *Sale Cat., Bliss Tweed Mills* (1893); OS Map 1:2,500, Oxon. XIV.11 (1881 edn).



rooms were demolished in the early 20th century as production focused on the lower mill. Later clearances were completed in 1978.<sup>126</sup>

The lower mill on the common started as a converted flour mill with a waterwheel on the ground floor and machinery above. William Bliss II rebuilt and greatly enlarged the mill in 1855–6 at a cost of over £15,000, equipping it with new steam machinery.<sup>127</sup> A railway terminal was built to the north-east to bring in coal and wool. The main 5-storeyed rubble stone building was given an L-shaped plan, its long (6-bay) range running parallel with the retaining wall of a new (or refurbished) dam. A privy tower with water tank and belfry probably drained into the tailrace under the building, while a structure attached to the south-east next to the chimney was probably the boiler house. Windows were of cast iron with many small panes, and modest Italianate architectural embellishments included wall piercings resembling weapon loops in tower and chimney shaft, those in the former acting as ventilators and those in the latter being blind.<sup>128</sup> Also of this phase (or soon after) were three two-storeyed buildings: a dye-house (now demolished), a fireproof office and oil store, and a third structure possibly housing willeying machines. A manager's house and site office were located by a new gated north-east entrance.<sup>129</sup>



The lower mill before the fire of 1872, with workmen's houses in the foreground.

Major enlargement took place in 1863–5 at a cost of £35,000 when the main mill was extended on a long north-west to south-east axis, and a beam engine house and external north-east stair tower added. The double-depth extension was supported by hollow iron columns and reinforced timber tie beams. Capable of accommodating new machinery installed transversely, the building could be described as 'one of the most complete mills of

<sup>126</sup> OS Map 1:2,500, Oxon. XIV.11 (1900 and later edns); *Chipping Norton News*, April 1978.

<sup>127</sup> OHC, Acc. 2585. Following based on H. Hurrell, *The Bliss Mill Chipping Norton: Industrial Lancashire in the Cotswolds* (1996).

<sup>128</sup> Hurrell, *The Bliss Mill*, fig. 11.

<sup>129</sup> Manager's house shown in Chipping Norton Local History Society, *Around Chipping Norton in Old Photographs*, 32.

this description' in the country.<sup>130</sup> A two-storey stone-built weaving house with four skylighted roofs was built on the north-east side, along with boiler and economiser houses next to the railway siding. Two gabled terraced rows of workers' houses were erected on the south-west side, and a gas works set up further west.<sup>131</sup>

When the main building was destroyed by fire in 1872<sup>132</sup> it was replaced in just a year by an architecturally ambitious new mill designed by George Woodhouse of Bolton and built by J. and T. Davis of Banbury using the Woodhouse and Potts system of iron framing and multiple concrete-filled brick vaults.<sup>133</sup> The opulent 55-m. long and 19.5-m. wide structure was intended to be 'worthy of... the reputation of the firm',<sup>134</sup> and has been said to resemble 'an overgrown Renaissance palazzo'. The first four storeys have segment-headed windows, the fifth paired arched lights, all topped by a balustraded parapet (hiding a three-span roof) and square corner towers.<sup>135</sup> On the east front, the corner towers project to match a 50-m. high round Tuscan chimney and domed stair tower located outside the structural framing. The concentric format of chimney and stairs was an established industrial design,



The grand new mill completed in 1873.

here making best use of the restricted space within reach of the economiser house (for connection to the chimney flue).<sup>136</sup> Of neatly-dressed local stone pointed with Bath stone quoins, the exterior features moulded and plain string courses. Internally the walls were lined

<sup>130</sup> OHC, Acc. 2585; *Oxon. Weekly News*, 14 Feb. 1872.

<sup>131</sup> Hurrell, *The Bliss Mill*, fig. 12; *Sale Cat., Bliss Tweed Mills* (1893); Chipping Norton Local History Society, *Around Chipping Norton in Old Photographs, A Second Selection*, 59–61.

<sup>132</sup> *Oxon. Weekly News*, 14 and 21 Feb. 1872; OHC, POX0168903.

<sup>133</sup> Hurrell, *The Bliss Mill*, 32; *Oxon. Weekly News*, 12 Feb. 1873; NHLE, no. 1198094 (Bliss Tweed Mill); Eddershaw, *Chipping Norton*, 91–2. S.C. Jenkins, B. Brown and N. Parkhouse, *The Banbury & Cheltenham Direct Railway* (2004), 244 (c.1905 photo).

<sup>134</sup> *Oxon. Weekly News*, 12 Feb. 1873.

<sup>135</sup> *Sale Cat., Bliss Tweed Mills* (1893); Brooks, *Pevsner N&W*, 262.

<sup>136</sup> Hurrell, *The Bliss Mill*, 32.

with brick and the stairs fitted with Warwickshire blue stone flags on cast-iron ornamental risers.<sup>137</sup>

Several ancillary buildings, including the manager's house, survived the fire.<sup>138</sup> The stone shell of the burnt weaving shed was restored, and the existing boiler and economiser houses refurbished. A timber and glass burling house on dwarf stone walls and iron columns was added to the weaving house's north-east elevation. Before 1893 the easterly row of terraced houses had been replaced by a wool-store and dye-house extension, and further changes accompanied the introduction of electricity for lighting (in 1904) and machinery (in 1910) including the replacement of the second row of houses with a two-storey fireproof willey house.<sup>139</sup> A large single-storeyed north-lit weaving shed was erected close to the burling house's north-east elevation in 1920 and the original weaving house converted to a warping house. Later additions included a water-softening plant close to the boiler house.<sup>140</sup>

When the complex was converted to luxury residential accommodation completed in 1993 the main mill was divided into 35 apartments.<sup>141</sup> Many internal features were retained, including exposed beams and brick vaulted ceilings, English Heritage subsidising repairs to the chimney, dome and exterior stonework.<sup>142</sup> The original weaving house (finally used as a yarn store) was converted to eight cottages ('Warping House Cottages'), and the old manager's house (latterly offices and a canteen) became two houses ('East and West Lodge'). The weaving shed became undercover parking and the willey house was incorporated into a leisure complex ('Woolhouse Cottage'). Other ancillary buildings were demolished to open up the site.<sup>143</sup> Landscaping incorporated a restored mill pool, although the district council insisted on revisions to a scheme judged 'more suitable for a seaside resort than a Cotswold town'.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> *Oxon. Weekly News*, 12 Feb. 1873.

<sup>138</sup> Para. based on Hurrell, *The Bliss Mill*, 6. For manager's house: POX0168892, centre right.

<sup>139</sup> R. Evans, 'The Bliss Mills and the Bliss Family in Chipping Norton, 1758-1920', *Top. Oxon.* 20 (1975), 11.

<sup>140</sup> J. Sykes, *Bliss Tweed Mill: A Guide for Its Future Use* (1980), 4.

<sup>141</sup> *Independent*, 18 Sept. 1992; *Witney Gazette*, 7 Oct. 1993. For the site c.1980: *Sale Cat.*, *Bliss Tweed Mill, Worcester Road, Chipping Norton* (n.d.): copy in OHC.

<sup>142</sup> *Sale Cat.*, *Bliss Mill* (1989): copy in OHC; *Sale Cat.*, *Bliss Mill* (1992): copy in OHC; *The Times*, 30 Aug. 1989; *Independent*, 18 Sept. 1992.

<sup>143</sup> OS Map (2022), online via Edina Digimap; *Bliss Tweed Mill, Chipping Norton: A Feasibility Study* (1985), fig. 12.

<sup>144</sup> *The Times*, 30 Aug. 1989; *Witney Gazette*, 11 Feb. and 18 March 1993.

## Shops and Banks

Little is known of the size or layout of early shops, but a painting of c.1800 shows shop fronts of varying kinds, some with multi-paned bay windows, others with pentice roofs encroaching into the street (of a type documented in the 18th century).<sup>145</sup> Old-fashioned bay windows were still being constructed c.1840,<sup>146</sup> and survived long after,<sup>147</sup> but gradually more ambitious frontages appeared. An early example was that constructed for Thomas Rolls at Nos. 1–3 West Street (then No. 4 Market Place) in 1857. The now-lost three-storeyed Italianate Bath-stone frontage, included massive column plinths, dark marble columns and gallery-like upper floors, the second storey with round-arched window openings.<sup>148</sup> At least around the marketplace flat plate-glass shop fronts shaded by awnings were common by the late 19th century.<sup>149</sup>



Thomas Rolls' heavily pillared 1857 shopfront (fourth building from left), with Manchester House (1919) to the right. Photo from Chipping Norton Museum.

The most exuberantly glazed shop was A.A. Webb's c.1886 'glass walled' three-storeyed addition to his existing premises at No. 13 Market Place, demolished in 1969 to widen New Street,<sup>150</sup> while on the High Street the Co-operative Society demolished and

<sup>145</sup> [https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/chipping-norton-oxfordshire-42641/view\\_as/grid/search/keyword:chipping-norton/page/1](https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/chipping-norton-oxfordshire-42641/view_as/grid/search/keyword:chipping-norton/page/1). For licensed encroachments, e.g. OHC, BOR1/5/A1/1–2.

<sup>146</sup> OHC, BOR1/5/A1/3, 2 Sept. 1839.

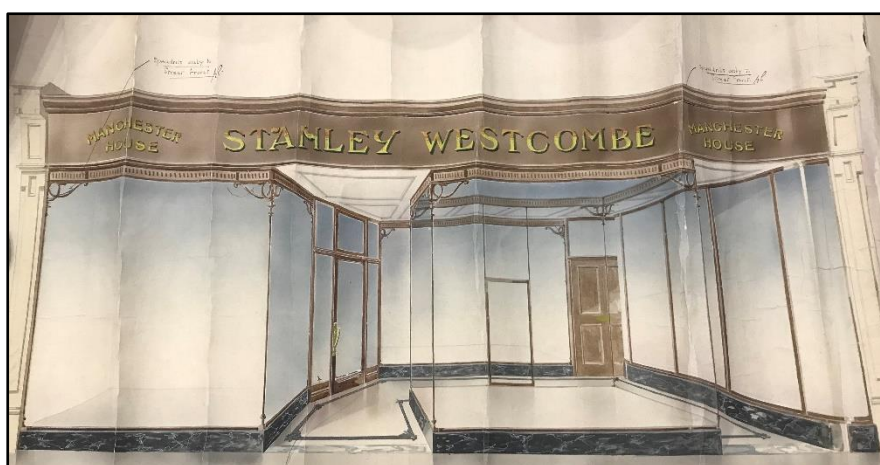
<sup>147</sup> e.g. *ibid.* POX0191580; POX0191567.

<sup>148</sup> *Oxf. Jnl* 18 Oct. 1857. The architect, 'Mr Edmonstone', might possibly have been James Edmeston (1791–1867) or his son of the same name.

<sup>149</sup> OHC, POX0078589 (1887); POX0159961; POX0594265; *ibid.* BOR1/5/A1/5, 10 July 1891; BOR1/5/A1/6, 10 Sept. 1900.

<sup>150</sup> Chipping Norton Museum, summary of No. 13 Market Place deeds; *The Architects' Jnl* 8 Nov. 1967, p. 1157; Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 93; Chipping Norton Local History Society, *Around Chipping Norton in Old Photographs*, 15, 18–19, 22; J. Howells et al., *Images of England: Around Chipping Norton* (1999), 11.

rebuilt Nos. 3 and 4 in 1890 as a store with hall above. In mixed Renaissance style by Ewen Harper it includes a steep and flamboyantly carved central gable above a shallow curved bay.<sup>151</sup> At No. 5 Market Place (Manchester House) London shopfitters E. Pollard and Co. installed for Stanley Westcombe a plate glass shopfront with a central floor to ceiling display cubicle and open entrance lobby c.1919.<sup>152</sup> A grand branch of the Metropolitan and Birmingham Bank (later an HSBC branch) by H.G.W. Drinkwater was built at Nos. 18–19 Market Place in 1891–2. In Renaissance Tudor style its three central bays are slightly recessed between columned flanking bays. The rear banking hall was lit by two glazed domes and includes stained glass by William Pearce Ltd.<sup>153</sup>



Stanley Westcombe's Manchester House glass shopfront of 1919, later replaced. (Plan in OHC, BOR1/25/Y/39).

Interwar buildings in the town centre include H.E. Seccombe's fine 5-bay Neo-Georgian West Street post office built by Alfred Groves & Sons of Milton-under-Wychwood in 1931. The Bath ashlar building features a central pedimented Gibbs doorway and hipped roof chimneys, with decorative carvings by J.H. Cribb, including gate-pier pineapples. Inside was a ground-floor public office and sorting office with telephone exchange, basement storeroom and engineering workshop, and upper-floor staff rooms and caretaker's flat; decorative features were of panelled oak and bronze, including a fine bronze grill on the 'massive' public counter.<sup>154</sup> The Co-operative Society was responsible for several buildings, notably its 1935 'streamlined grooved Deco' hardware department with metal window frames by L.G. Ekins at Nos. 1–3 West Street (replacing Rolls' Italianate 1857 frontage).<sup>155</sup> Around that time it also built a bakery on Albion Street (its former site now the entrance to a car

<sup>151</sup> Brooks, *Pevsner N&W*, 260.

<sup>152</sup> OHC, BOR1/25/Y/39; photo in Chipping Norton Museum.

<sup>153</sup> Brooks, *Pevsner N&W*, 259–60; Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 153.

<sup>154</sup> Brooks, *Pevsner N&W*, 261; Chipping Norton Museum, unidentified cutting; Chipping Norton Local History Society, *Around Chipping Norton in Old Photographs*, 20.

<sup>155</sup> Brooks, *Pevsner N&W*, 260 (listing it as Market Place); Chipping Norton Local History Society, *Chipping Norton through Time*, 7 (giving Market Street).



park), re-fronted its No. 7 West Street butchery department (now a café) in rubble stone, and c.1939–40 erected a tall delivery warehouse on Cattle Market offset behind its High Street store. Further up the hill from the warehouse were earlier stable buildings, subsequently adapted for delivery vans but now demolished.<sup>156</sup>

The demolition of the New Street-Market Place corner in 1969 left a ‘gaping hole’ or ‘bomb site’ in the town centre, eventually filled by an architecturally disappointing food store.<sup>157</sup> On the High Street and elsewhere garish modern shop windows were installed,<sup>158</sup> and Manchester House’s innovative frontage was replaced to increase internal floor space c.1965.<sup>159</sup> More positively, the façade of the 1890 Co-op store on the High Street was retained when the site was converted to a shopping arcade called Withers Court in 1994.<sup>160</sup> The later 20th and early 21st century also saw the conversion of some shops and offices to domestic accommodation.<sup>161</sup> Earlier conversions include the King’s Head Inn, which was



The New Street-Market Place corner in 1971. A.A. Webb’s ‘glass-walled’ shopfront lies demolished.

made into seven flats by Kingham farmer John Bruce in 1963, the exterior being little altered.<sup>162</sup> A prominent addition to the north end of Spring Street is the Premier Inn, a four-

<sup>156</sup> Chipping Norton Local History Society, *Chipping Norton through Time*, 48, 53, 80; OHC, BOR1/25/A2/3 (rebldg rear of butchery dept. 1937); BOR1/26/Y/5 (alters to stabling at Cattle Market site, 1915); RDC9/5/A3/1 (new warehouse, 1939–40); *Chipping Norton and District Co-operative Society Limited, Report and Accounts Half Year Ended March 4, 1961*: copy in Chipping Norton Museum (photos).

<sup>157</sup> OHC, CC3/4/C11/141 (CPRE corresp.); *Oxford Mail*, 23 June 1972; *Chipping Norton News*, June 1980; Howells et al., *Images of England: Around Chipping Norton*, 25; B. Morris and A. Watkins, *Images of England: Chipping Norton, Volume II* (2003), 83. Demolition included Nos. 11, 12 and 13 Market Place, followed in 1971 by No. 14 (the Unicorn Inn, probably a 16th-cent. or earlier building: Historic England Archive, 4793/50 (photo) and Hubbard and Marshall, ‘15 Market Place’).

<sup>158</sup> *Oxford Mail*, 23 June 1972; Chipping Norton Local History Society, *Chipping Norton through Time*, 12, 14–15.

<sup>159</sup> Info. from Jan Cliffe.

<sup>160</sup> Chipping Norton Museum, second Co-op folder.

<sup>161</sup> Chipping Norton Local History Society, *Chipping Norton through Time*, 41; *Witney Gazette*, 3 March 1994; *Oxford Mail*, 26 Feb. 1994.

<sup>162</sup> *Banbury Guardian*, 5 Sept. 1963.

storey timber-framed and stone clad building with double-pitched Welsh slate roofs completed in 2016.<sup>163</sup> The M&S Foodhall on Trinity Road combines Cotswold stone and timber cladding.

## Public and Institutional Buildings

### *The Guildhall*

The two-storey stone guildhall (later town hall) located on a sloping site at the northern end of the market area in Middle Row is a complex structure of several phases.<sup>164</sup> The main building comprises slightly mis-aligned north and south ranges separated by a central stone wall rising through the attics to the roof. The three-bay gable-roofed north range has mullioned windows with Tudor-arched heads at first-floor level on the east and west, and a decorated ground-floor stone doorway on the east front. The roof and first floor timbers of its central part have been tree-ring dated to 1514–20.<sup>165</sup> The two-bay south range (which has a hipped roof) is largely an 18th-century addition or rebuild, although the north range may once have encompassed part of it. The northern end of the north range was extended in the 18th and 19th centuries. Substantially rebuilt central and southern rear (western) ranges may be of early origin and connect the building to surrounding structures in the ‘guildhall island’ (formerly including Nos. 11–19 Middle Row) whose development overlaps with that of the guildhall itself.<sup>166</sup>

The guildhall was erected in an area which had already been built up by the 15th century.<sup>167</sup> Its position a metre in front of the Middle Row building line to its south may reflect the survival of earlier structures behind it, some of which may be intended in the 1607 description of the guildhall as ‘the houses, rooms and buildings called the town hall’. Possibly these included an earlier undocumented guildhall, from which just possibly the east front doorway was recycled, given its stylistically 15th-century appearance. In 1770 it was claimed that the Horse and Groom pub (No. 19 Middle Row, demolished in 1961) south-west

<sup>163</sup> *Chipping Norton News*, Feb., April and May 2015, Dec. 2016; <http://allisonpike.com/chipping-norton-premier-inn-2/>

<sup>164</sup> Section based on P. Clark et al., ‘The Guildhall’ (OBR Rep. 468, 2022), incl. transcript of Thos Rayson’s 1937 report (with compass points corrected). For other accts: J. Steane and D. Aylwin, ‘The Guildhall’, *SMA* 14 (1984), 64–5, 67; Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 36, 135–40; NHLE, no. 1052632 (Guildhall).

<sup>165</sup> *Vernac. Archit.* 47 (2016), 70.

<sup>166</sup> OS Map 1:2,500, Oxon. XIV.11 (1881 and later edns); Clark et al., ‘The Guildhall’, appendix V.

<sup>167</sup> Above, this section.

of the guildhall had been built on land where ‘part of the town hall formerly stood’.<sup>168</sup> The thickness of the guildhall’s west wall (apparently built as two separate not quite perpendicular halves) compared to other surviving early walls may reflect strengthening against the slope and perhaps the partial reuse of other structures possibly including in the building’s rear extensions and south end.<sup>169</sup>

The layout of the guildhall in the 16th and early 17th century can be tentatively reconstructed from documents<sup>170</sup> and surviving fabric. Its centrepiece was a first-floor chamber which would have occupied at least the centre-north part of the surviving building. It was used as a meeting room fitted with benches and had an ‘upper end’ where the burgesses sat. The ground-floor was evidently closed (judging by the east door) and included a corridor leading to a rear door the lintel of which survives. The main ground floor room seems to have been leased to a tenant, as in 1612, when a local baker’s lease of the rest of the building was cancelled by the commission for charitable uses. Access to the first floor must have been via a staircase, most likely located in or next to the corridor, or beyond the rear door in the rear centre range. This probably cramped arrangement apparently prompted the commission’s order that a covered external staircase at the (then) south end of the east front be erected for more ‘convenient’ access to the upper hall.<sup>171</sup> The position of that staircase may possibly be marked by the reduced wall thickness below the window left of the door.<sup>172</sup> If so this suggests that the hall (or an anteroom to it) extended an extra bay south before subsequent internal reorganisations. No clear evidence for an early hearth or chimney has been found.



The guildhall, viewed from High Street.

<sup>168</sup> Chipping Norton Museum, summary of deeds for No. 19 Middle Row; OS Map 1:2,500, Oxon. XIV.11 (1881 and later edns); OHC, Picture Oxon. POX0185797.

<sup>169</sup> Clark et al., ‘The Guildhall’, 38 notes the possibility that the southern part of the west wall, which alone has an internal batter, is earlier than the eastern part.

<sup>170</sup> Especially TNA, C 93/4/1; STAC 8/112/1; STAC 8/162/7; C 21/C34/12.

<sup>171</sup> Chipping Norton Museum, transcript of 1612 decree of commissioners of charitable uses (original lost).

<sup>172</sup> Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 136.

The southern range was apparently substantially built or re-built in the mid to later 18th century, when much work was done on the whole building. Features of that period include new window openings, a northwards extension with a now lost crenelated chimney plus north door and stairs, and internal alterations to room layouts, heating, and ceilings. A wide basket-arched ashlar opening in the east front of the north range may have served the town fire engine (mentioned from 1767). Alterations to the south range, including construction of its hipped roof, may have been made after it was sold separately from the rest of the guildhall c.1772. By 1776 the range (including its attic) was used as a house belonging with the yard behind to the owner of the Horse and Groom. The ground floor or cellar of the central rear range may have been the area used as the town lock up.<sup>173</sup>

'Repairs' to the north range were carried out in 1828 and internal rearrangements made after it was sold in 1842, including the removal of the lock up and fire engine store, and the establishment of a reading room on the upper floor in 1860.<sup>174</sup> Nineteenth-century features are found throughout the building. The south range was divided into two dwellings c.1835 and from c.1852 sometimes three. Major renovation of the north range was carried out in 1901–3 after it returned to town council ownership and a technical institute was established.<sup>175</sup> The eighteenth-century north wall was rebuilt in order to fit in lavatories and a new straight flight of stairs rising from wooden block flooring. The ground-floor windows were re-formed, and the first-floor chamber ceiling raised to its present height. The north range's upper room was used as a lecture theatre and the lower as a carpentry workshop. After the technical institute moved out in 1936 the upper room was used as a public library (from 1941 the town clerk's office) and the lower room leased to St John's Ambulance Brigade. The south range was acquired by the town council in 1937 and eventually combined with the north to supply administrative space.<sup>176</sup> In 1954–6 No. 15 Middle Row and its store shed were demolished and a small flat-roofed public library built at the north end of the guildhall's west side.<sup>177</sup> Ownership passed in 1974 to the new West Oxfordshire District Council, which latterly used it as a public information point.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Below, town politics and local govt.

<sup>174</sup> OHC, BOR1/5/A1/2; *Oxf. Jnl* 4 Feb. 1860; below, town politics and local govt.

<sup>175</sup> *Oxon. Weekly News* 9 Dec. 1903 (for sanitary arrangements); below, politics and local govt; education.

<sup>176</sup> TNA, ED 37/1023, Chipping Norton Museum, summary of deeds for 11, 12 and 13 Middle Row.

<sup>177</sup> *Banbury Advertiser* 19 Feb. 1941 and 16 June 1954.

<sup>178</sup> Below, local govt (borough property).

## Market Houses

A tiled market house with eaves and eleven 'great posts' mentioned in 1608<sup>179</sup> was allegedly built by the townspeople around the 1540s, apparently using proceeds from the sale of two church bells.<sup>180</sup> If so it probably replaced a medieval predecessor standing in the early 16th century: otherwise the guildhall would presumably have been built with an open lower storey for market use like the Burford Tolsey (1525) and many other guildhalls.<sup>181</sup> A single probably 17th-century pillar apparently from an open-sided market hall survives outside the present-day town hall (where it was installed in 1955).<sup>182</sup> The pillar, which is eight feet high with a moulded base and capital, matches the pillars shown on early depictions of a small stone-built market hall, which was replaced in 1842. A 'new' (or perhaps renovated) market house was mentioned in 1708, and was apparently replaced c.1723.<sup>183</sup> The steeply pitched hipped stone slate roof shown in a painting of c.1800 was replaced soon after with a flat leaded roof.<sup>184</sup>

## Town Hall

The construction of a new and much larger town hall on the site of the market house in 1842 changed the face of the town centre.<sup>185</sup> Built shortly after the corporation was reformed under the 1835 Municipal Corporations Act it represented townsmen's aspiration for a grander focus of civic government than the old guildhall. The cost (c.£18,000) was met by public subscription, the sale of town property (including the guildhall), and a substantial loan from Oxford MP J.H. Langston of Sarsden House (4 miles south of the town).<sup>186</sup> The project took some years to achieve and included abortive plans in 1836 for a new 'town hall and market house' designed by George Wilkinson and J.M. Derick.<sup>187</sup> The final building followed plans by G.S. Repton for a Palladian-style temple with a large central Tuscan Doric portico

<sup>179</sup> TNA, STAC 8/112/1; STAC 8/162/7; C 22/332/42.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid. C 22/332/42.

<sup>181</sup> For the Burford Tolsey: Catchpole et al., *Burford*, 49.

<sup>182</sup> Above, devpt of town.

<sup>183</sup> OHC, BOR1/3/F1/1; BOR1/5/A1/1, f. 22.

<sup>184</sup> NHLE, no. 1052625 (stone pillar and base of wayside cross); J. Grantham, *Chipping Norton Town Hall Past & Present* (2007), 2–9; Rosen and Cliffe, *Making*, 49–51, 91 and figs. 1 (mis-dating painting to the mid to late 18th cent.), 22 and 45; [https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/chipping-norton-oxfordshire-42641/view\\_as/grid/search/keyword:chipping-norton/page/1](https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/chipping-norton-oxfordshire-42641/view_as/grid/search/keyword:chipping-norton/page/1) (dating painting to c.1825).

<sup>185</sup> Above, devpt of town.

<sup>186</sup> OHC, BOR1/5/A1/3, esp. 17, 21 and 31 May 1841, and 7 Feb. and 19 Aug. 1842. For the political context and Langston's involvement in the town: below, social and political hist.

<sup>187</sup> OHC, BOR1/5/A1/3, 16 and 31 May 1836.



on the east front and pediments to the north and south ends.<sup>188</sup> The portico (which because of the steeply sloping site gave access only to the upper level) and six-panelled door are flanked by round-headed niches in the slightly projecting end bays. The west front has nine pilastered bays, each lit by a sash window, with Doric pilasters and niches to the end bays. The north and south ends have similar pilasters and sashes, the former carrying a bellcote added in 1849 to accompany an illuminated clock below;<sup>189</sup> both have contemporary iron railings.<sup>190</sup> The upper level (which included a hall and council chamber) is Ashlar-fronted, the lower podium squared rubble. The round arched podium was originally open on three sides and supplied space for a butter and poultry market, the town fire engine, bells, a weighbridge and (from 1852) a lock-up with cells and a constable's room.<sup>191</sup>



Chipping Norton's fine Palladian-style town hall.

The lock-up became redundant when a separate police station was built in 1865, and the following year the lower floor was enclosed and reconfigured to supply a reading room for the literary institute, along with a courtroom with private room and kitchen facilities for the county court judge. The works included the building of a stair case and addition of water closets.<sup>192</sup> In 1889–90 a gallery was inserted in the upper hall to provide extra seating,<sup>193</sup> and a gents' cloakroom, kitchen and public convenience were added to the ground floor in

<sup>188</sup> Para. based on NHLE, 1183188 (Town Hall); Brooks, *Pevsner N&W*, 257; *Gardner's Oxon. Dir.* (1852); Grantham, *Chipping Norton Town Hall*.

<sup>189</sup> OHC, BOR1/5/A1/3, 9 Nov. 1849 and 7 Feb. 1850; Grantham, *Chipping Norton Town Hall*, incl. extracts from *Banbury Guardian*, and subscribers); C.F.C. Besson, *Clockmaking in Oxfordshire, 1400–1850* (Oxford, 3rd edn, 1989), 34, noting later replacement with electric clock.

<sup>190</sup> Some or all of the railings were installed in 1845: OHC, BOR1/5/A1/3, 14 Feb. 1845.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid. e.g. 19 Nov. 1842, 26 May 1843, 12 May 1864; below, econ. hist.; policing. The fire engine was moved to a purpose-built engine house in 1878: below, this section.

<sup>192</sup> OHC, BOR1/5/A1/3, 9 and 21 Nov. 1865; Grantham, *Chipping Norton Town Hall*, 16–20; below (other instit. bldgs).

<sup>193</sup> OHC, BOR1/26/Y/2 (plans and contract); BOR1/5/A1/5, 7 and 13 Dec. 1889, 21 Jan. 1890.

1939 (replacing earlier urinals).<sup>194</sup> A fire destroyed the roof and much of the interior in 1950; restoration work completed in 1952 included the insertion of new sash windows and a stage in the upper hall, and the relocation of the council chamber downstairs.<sup>195</sup> Later works included the insertion of a disabled ramp to the upper hall (in 1991) and improved facilities in the lower hall including new flooring and improved toilets and enlarged kitchen (2003).<sup>196</sup>

### ***Chipping Norton Union Workhouse (later Cotshill Hospital)***

The stone and slate roofed workhouse (later the Cotshill Hospital) between the Banbury and London Roads was built in 1836 to plans by George Wilkinson.<sup>197</sup> Its design was very similar to Wilkinson's workhouse in his native Witney, completed the same year. The main structure comprised four three-storey wings in the form of a saltire meeting at an octagonal central block topped by a large cupola (replaced after a fire in 1911). Now demolished east and west wings were single storeyed. The classical nine-bay mainly two-storeyed administrative block to the west (originally attached to the west wing) has tall chimneys, finer stone courses, and a heavily rock faced plinth. The square-headed sashes of the outer bays contrast with the round-headed windows and doorway of the inner three. A simple stone chapel by G.E. Street with trefoil-headed lancet windows was added to the end of the east wing in 1856–7.<sup>198</sup> The grounds were cultivated as garden plots and a miniature farm by the inmates, with a farmyard located in a disused quarry.<sup>199</sup>

In 1910 the administrative block and west wing contained a hall, boardroom, lavatory, porter's accommodation, receiving ward and bath, master's office, stores, and master's apartment above. The central block housed the kitchen and scullery, while the dining hall was in the east wing. The north-east wing had a women's day ward, a store room, and a chicken house; the south-east wing included the children's ward, bath, WC, lobby, and storerooms for milk and potatoes. The men's day room and bath, WC were in the north-west wing (to which was attached a well pump shed), and the boys' day ward and workshop in the south-west wing. Ancillary buildings to the north and south housed respectively a two-

<sup>194</sup> Ibid. BOR1/25/A2/3; Grantham, *Chipping Norton Town Hall*, 28–9.

<sup>195</sup> Grantham, *Chipping Norton Town Hall*, 33–41.

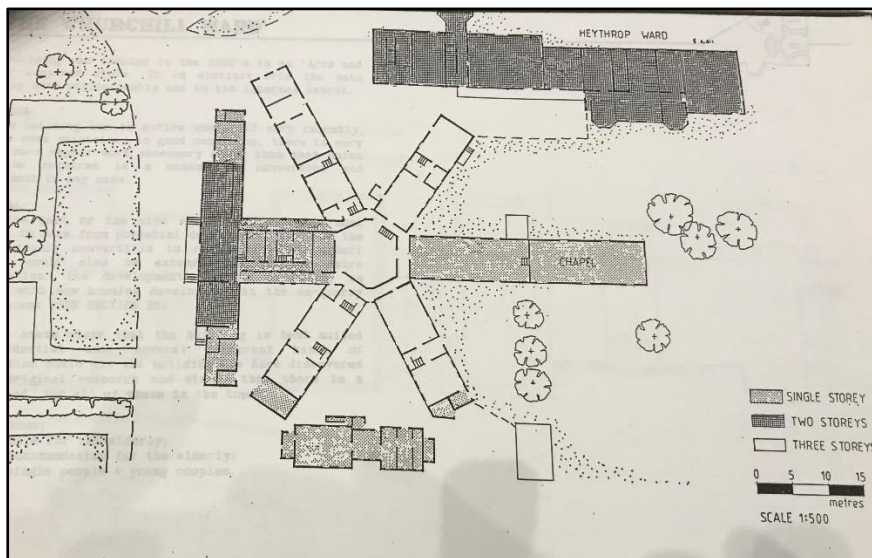
<sup>196</sup> Ibid. 42–5.

<sup>197</sup> For descriptions: Brooks, *Pevsner N&W*, 258 (incorrectly claiming six three-storey wings); NHLE, no. 1052602 (Cotshill Hospital); S. Brown, *First Options: An Initial Study into the Re-Use of the Cotshill Hospital Site for the Community of Chipping Norton* (1986); Brown, *Cotshill Village*. <http://www.workhouses.org.uk/ChippingNorton/> (accessed April 2021).

<sup>198</sup> OHC, Oxon. Health Archive, COT 6 A1 (photocopy of undated design drawing); COT 5 A1 (1985 exterior and interior photos); NHLE, no. 1368157 (chapel at Cotshill Hospital).

<sup>199</sup> A. Sutton (ed.), *The Complete Diary of a Cotswold Parson: The Diaries of the Revd. Francis Edward Witts, 1783–1854*, VII (2009), 533 (1845).

storeyed infirmary and single-storeyed services (a laundry, drying room, WC, and shed).<sup>200</sup> In 1904 the infirmary (the later Heythrop Ward) had been greatly extended eastwards (and its western end demolished) to include a women's ward, labour room, lying in ward and nurses' bedrooms.<sup>201</sup> The resulting structure, which included a south-facing veranda, has been described as a 'confusing architectural conglomeration'.<sup>202</sup>



The Cotshill site  
in the late 1980s.

Change of use to a public assistance institution in 1929 was followed by the erection of the new Arts and Crafts inspired three-storeyed gabled casual ward (the later Churchill Ward) to the north-west in 1936.<sup>203</sup> A nurses' home near the London Road was built two years later,<sup>204</sup> the administrative block altered internally in 1939,<sup>205</sup> and a men's day room added to the casual ward in 1946.<sup>206</sup> Internal updating and rearrangements following conversion to a National Health Service hospital for the mentally handicapped in 1948 included the fitting out of the Heythrop Ward with an industrial therapy room, and later (in the 1970s) the extension of the Churchill Ward.<sup>207</sup> On conversion of the site to housing in 1995–6 a columned entrance porch was added to the main doorway of the administrative block. The Churchill and Heythrop wards were demolished along with the main building's

<sup>200</sup> TNA, IR 58/65140, no. 92.

<sup>201</sup> OHC, BOR1/17/Y/1–3.

<sup>202</sup> Brown, *First Options*, 14, 17; OHC, Oxon. Health Archive, COT 5 A1 (incl. views of infirmary, 1985); COT 2 A5 (1967 plan).

<sup>203</sup> OHC, BOR1/25/A2/3; *ibid.* Oxon. Health Archive, COT 2 A13, showing 1936 datestone.

<sup>204</sup> OHC, BOR1/25/A2/3.

<sup>205</sup> OHC, Oxon. Health Archive, COT 2 B1.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.* COT 2 A1.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.* COT 2 A2–A4 (1951); A5 (Heythrop Ward, 1967); A12–A16 (incl. Churchill Ward extension).

east and west wings, detached buildings to the south, and the nurses' home (though the 1957 staff houses next to Rockhill Farm survived).<sup>208</sup>

### **Other institutional buildings**

Other institutional buildings on the town's outskirts include J.M. Derick's classical-revival style ashlar Catholic Holy Trinity church on the London Road (also of 1836, extended in 1888), which is somewhat similar to the town hall. The ambitious, pinnacled Early English Baptist chapel on New Street (1862–3) by Gibbs, Thompson and Colbourne of Stratford-upon-Avon is likewise of ashlar, whereas the Italianate Methodist chapel on West Street (1867–8) by William Peachey of Darlington and the 'mildly Gothic' gabled police station<sup>209</sup> (1865) near the junction of the Banbury and London Roads by William Wilkinson are rock-faced. Tudorbethan is represented by the rubble stone Masonic hall on Over Norton Road (1898) by A.J. Rowley of Oxford which has a large buttressed bay and pedimented entrance with esoteric carvings, the first-floor temple featuring a vaulted plaster ceiling. On London Road the former Oddfellows' hall (1909–10) by Hipkiss & Stephens of Birmingham is built of stone in 'Tudorish' style. A rare brick structure on Spring Street is the small Salvation Army barracks (1888–9) by G.G. Wallace of Northampton.<sup>210</sup>

South of town, on the Burford Road, is the compact brick fire station (1969) by county architect A.E. Smith which blends in to its sloping site. The frontage includes a reset 1878 datestone from the old engine house demolished in 1976.<sup>211</sup> To the north-east, on the London Road, is the Henry Cornish Care Centre (2010–11) by Carless and Adams of Slough. A large vernacular-style stone and render building it includes tall glazed entrances with pointed slate roofs. The attractively designed nearby Health Centre (2014–15) by GVA Bristol includes much glazing and a large covered entrance shaded by a metallic sun screen, as well as timber cladding and render.<sup>212</sup>

<sup>208</sup> Ibid. COT 5 A1 (1985 photo of entrance); BOR1/5/A1/17 (27 May 1957, staff hos.); OS Maps, various edns.

<sup>209</sup> Built by Jones and Sons of Oxford: OHC, QSE/2.

<sup>210</sup> H.M. Colvin, *Biog. Dict. British Architects 1600–1840* (3rd edn, 1995), 1139 (Derick); Brooks, *Pevsner N&W*, 256–8; Chipping Norton Local History Society, *Chipping Norton through Time*, 49 (police station); Chipping Norton Local History Society, *Around Chipping Norton in Old Photographs*, 25 (Masonic hall), 30 (Oddfellows' Hall); OHC, BOR1/26/Y/3 (Masonic hall plans); BOR1/26/Y/1 (Salvation Army plans); BOR1/26/Y/6 (Oddfellows' plans); below, relig. hist.

<sup>211</sup> OHC, BOR1/26/L/2 (1877–8); Brooks, *Pevsner N&W*, 258; *Oxford Mail*, 23 June 1972 and 19 March 1976 (incl photo); *Chipping Norton News*, Feb. 1979.

<sup>212</sup> Brooks, *Pevsner N&W*, 258.