

HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY, PARRS CLOSE, 19 CHURCH STREET, BINGHAM

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A survey of Bingham was carried out in 1586 for Sir Brian Stapleton, the then Lord of the Manor. After this ownership passed to the Stanhope family (Earls of Chesterfield) who owned Bingham until 1871. It then passed to the Earl of Caernarvon and eventually the Crown in 1925. On a survey of the Chesterfield estate in Bingham made in 1776 Parr's Close was a plot numbered 338, described as a house, garden and Home Close held by John Lee. Lee operated the mill at Tithby Road and the house was probably the tied cottage for the estate's miller.

At the time of the later Bingham tithing apportionment of 1840 (the earliest known detailed map of the town) the house was one of a small group numbered 3, held by William Hemstock. In the 1841 census he was listed as a miller, then aged about 70, living with his baker son William, aged 40, and his family. Neighbouring property No. 19 Church Street was then held by butcher / farmer James Horsepool who also had the adjoining house and a yard, buildings, and a warehouse or slaughterhouse at the back.

The younger William Hemstock was still in Parr's Close in 1851 and a neighbouring property was occupied by another miller, Joseph Askew Hemstock, who may have been his son. The building shown immediately north of the house on the 1841 tithing map may have been the neighbouring house as the Horsepools were still at No. 19 as late as 1861. At that latter date Parr's Close was occupied by William's widow Elizabeth and Joseph was still next door with an enlarged family. The Hemstocks had gone by 1871 and who then occupied the house is unclear. It is possible that coal dealer Anthony Nicholson, aged 53, and his family were there in 1901 and again in 1911.

How the house came to be called Parr's Close is not evident to this author. In 1776 there was a Samuel Parr and a Mary Parr (perhaps his mother) both resident on Long Acre West. In 1841 Samuel and Richard Parr, presumably father and son, were market gardeners on Moor Lane. There was a Jane Parr resident nearby on Cherry Street in 1841 but otherwise there is no obvious connection to the site of 19 Church Street.

BUILDING DESCRIPTION – EXTERIOR

Number 21 Church Street is at the cul-de-sac end of Church Street close to where Church Lane starts on the west side of the churchyard of the Church of St Mary and All Saints. The building faces south onto the street with a central entrance doorway and five modern windows (left). The east end is set behind a brick boundary and at the west end there is a side drive (right) and access to the rear garden.

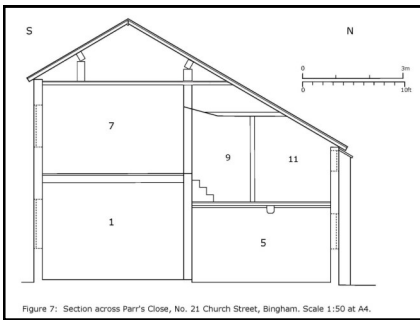
The building is two storeys high with an attic and end stacks. It may also have had a cellar but if so

this was not evident. It is principally brick-built but has stone dressings around the openings. All the brickwork at the back is painted white and parts of the side walling are painted or rendered over. The roof is covered with modern pantiles and slopes back from a ridge over the axis of the south part of the building (Figure 7, left).

There is some variation in the brickwork. The south frontage has bricks accurately laid in Flemish

bond to a chequerboard effect with lighter toned headers (above, left), the bricks being 2¾ inches (70mm) thick and up to 9¾ins. (248mm) long. Similar



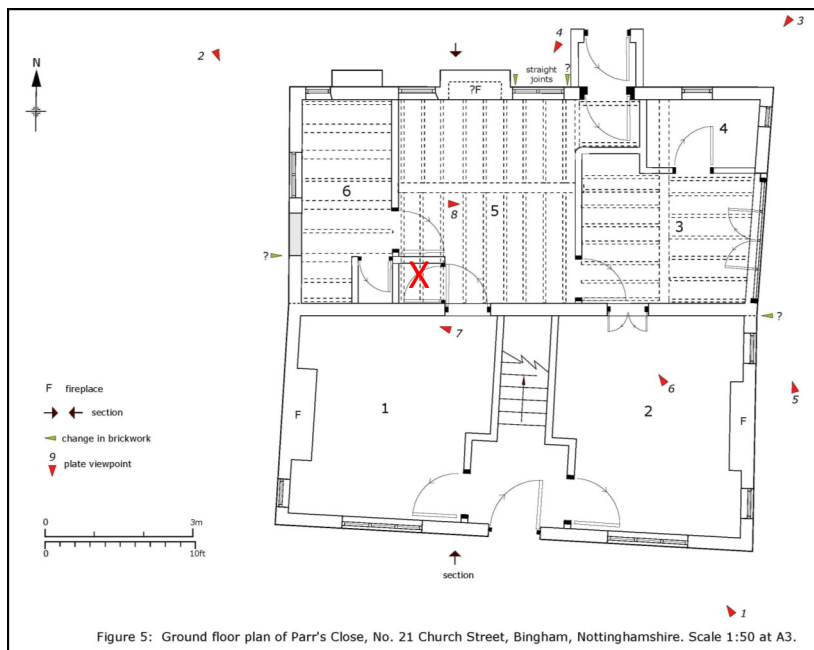


bricks can be seen along most of the two side walls, but with more variation in thickness and laid in no particular pattern; the odd lighter toned header can also be seen in places. Some thinner and earlier brickwork is evident in the north half of the building, where it occurs in almost all of the lower walling and about half of the upper walling.

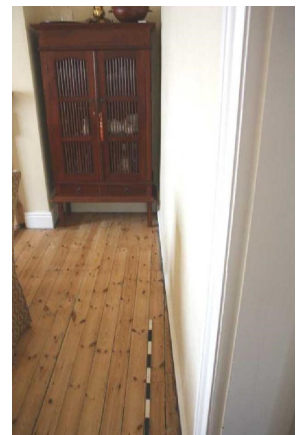
The building is double-pile in plan, consisting of two distinct ranges, one facing south onto the street, the other facing the garden to the north. The north side is of lower height and internally has correspondingly lower floor levels to those in the north range. The outer walling and the party wall are all a one brick length thickness. With the exception of the east side, the north range is of regular shape, whilst the south range is more irregular (Figure 5, below). Both ranges are roughly about 9.5m long and 4.5m across, together forming an irregular sub-square shape. The room widths vary between 4.2-4.5m (13½-14 feet).

4. BUILDING DESCRIPTION – INTERIOR

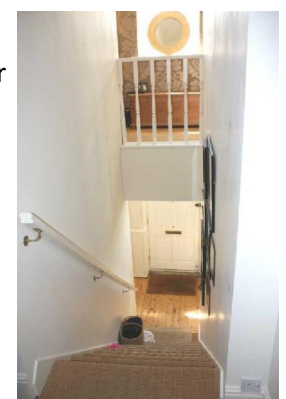
Excluding the entrance hall, the lower floor has six rooms of varying size. These are divided between two formal rooms in the south-facing front range and four in the less formal back range, that include two kitchens and a utility room. The irregular alignment of the south frontage wall in relation to the central party wall shows in the layout of the flooring in Rooms 1 and 2 (see survey pole indicator in photo, right).



The ground floor front rooms are tall in height, are well lit by front and side windows and both rooms have fireplaces set in the end walls. There is only one staircase, a straight flight that rises from immediately behind the front door to an enclosed landing in the upper part of rear range (see below right). Before about 1990 the main



staircase led from the north end of room 1 to the landing on the south side (now balustraded). Whether this was its original position or whether the current stairs are in the original position is not known. Until about 1990 a second, twister



staircase, removed to enable enlargement of the bathroom, connected the SW corner of Room 5 with the upper floor. ("X" on the plan above). It had old plank doors top and bottom.

The ground floor rooms to the rear have lower ceilings which are crossed by timber beams and joists, the pattern of which reflects a division of the range into three cells by half-brick thick dividing walls. That between Rooms 3 and 5 appears to have been largely rebuilt to accommodate a rear entrance (with an added

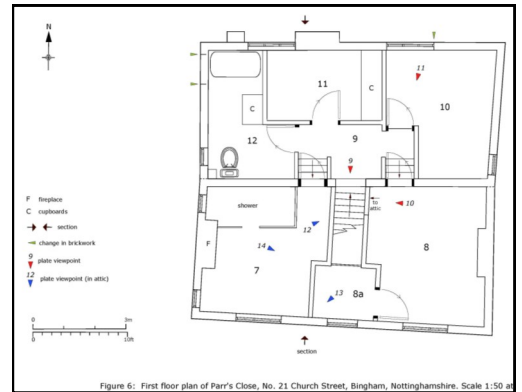




porch, which is later than the doorway, right) that has replaced a more centrally-spaced doorway, now partly blocked up and with a window (the position is shown by the arrowed straight joints, left). The central room was heated by a fireplace stack that projected from the north wall; this is no longer evident on the inner side, being hidden by kitchen units. The narrow west room, now a kitchen / utility room, has a smaller added stack at its north end,

again no longer used and blocked off.

The upper floor's plan (right) reflects that of the lower level, except that the north range's pattern appears to accommodate an enclosed landing hall which allows independent access to four bedrooms and a bathroom. Including the landing, these rooms are numbered 7-12 on Figure 6, right. Short flights of steps on the landing are needed as the front bedrooms are at a significantly higher level to the north rooms.



The attic is now reached through a hatch set in a cupboard in Room 8.

The roof space is principally over the south range with a catslide roof running down over the lower north range; the limited pitched space here is inaccessible. The roof consists of rafters and a single line of purlins on either side, supported on small brick pillars and dwarf walls on the south side which are on the same lines as walls at lower levels (left and right, below).



The roof has clearly been altered and part of the evidence are two redundant long beams with mortices showing that now run along the centre of the attic floor (arrowed, right).

The interior is today much modernised and refurbished. All the windows, doors and fireplaces have been replaced and only the exposed timbers inside the building are proof of its age. The attic has both old and replacement timbers. There is unlikely to be a cellar under the building.

INTERPRETATION

In the absence of dateable original fittings, dating the building largely comes down to map evidence, the house plan and the brickwork. The tree-ring dating has been not helped, with two common joists in the kitchen having rings from a currently undateable sequence and two purlins in the roof providing a remarkably early date of 1309. Most of the larger timbers now showing in the building have mortices or cut-out sections and are not in their original positions.

There is a high occurrence of reused timbers in both the north range of the building and within the roof of the south range. In Room 5 the cross-beam has two mortices with angled ends which suggest that this beam may be an upturned tie-beam which had angled braces, and has had its end sections cut off.



The 1776 survey provides no plan of the building and so the earliest known plan is that of 1840 (Figure 3). This gives the approximate full shape of the current building but lacking the north-east corner. There is no sign of a straight joint or change in the brickwork in the existing north elevation or east wall to suggest that the present corner has since been added.

The full shape is shown in the 1883 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 4), by which time an adjacent tenement had been reduced in length to provide an open space immediately east of the surveyed building. A later addition, since removed, was added that extended north from the north-east corner. The stain of its former roof-line still shows in the paintwork on the back wall.

The plan and the brickwork indicate a building of at least two phases of construction – the north range first, with the south range added later. The north range is of almost identical size to Seymour Cottage, No. 16, on the opposite side of Church Street, and like this building has an angled side wall whose alignment matches that of the western boundary of the nearby church. It does, however, lack a projecting stair turret. Also, unlike Seymour Cottage, the original building here is set back from the road and it may well be on the site of a yet earlier structure, some timbers from which were reused in its roof. Several other buildings in Bingham with suspected early originals appear to have been built away from the street frontage.

The original brickwork of the north range is of variable size, generally between 2¼-2½ inches (57-67mm) thick and 9-9¾ ins (229-238mm) long. It is irregularly coursed and appears to survive to its maximum height along the west part of the north façade and just at the north end of the west side, where two straight joints show clearly. On the east side (north end) the lower brickwork only survives to a height of c.3m where it is rendered over. Here the bricks may possibly be earlier in date to the rest of the lower brickwork, but this is uncertain. Most of the brickwork is almost certainly of 18th century date, most likely from the mid part of the century.

A painting from 1855 and a photograph from about the same time show the south range as a one and a half storey thatched cottage with and large windows in the west wall. Thus it is clear that the present chequerboard northern section of the house is a rebuild not a new build.

