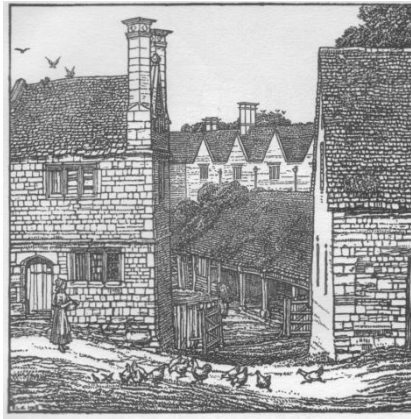


# The Landmark Trust

## OLD CAMPDEN HOUSE SITE HISTORY ALBUM

### East Banqueting House & West Banqueting House



## Volume I – RESTORATION OF THE BUILDINGS

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1999/2003

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## **THE EAST BANQUETING HOUSE & NORTH LODGE**

### **BASIC DETAILS**

**Listed: Grade II\***

**Built for: Sir Baptist Hicks**

**Date: c1615**

**Campden House destroyed: 1645**

**Acquired by the Landmark Trust: 1987**

**From: Mr Peregrine and Lady Maureen Fellowes**

**Architects: Andrew Brookes of Rodney Melville & Partners**

**Main Contractors: Linford-Bridgeman Ltd.**

**Opened as a Landmark: Autumn 1990**

**Winner of RICS Conservation Award 1991**

## **THE WEST BANQUETING HOUSE & THE ALMONRY**

### **BASIC DETAILS**

**Listed: Grade II\***

**Built for: Sir Baptist Hicks**

**Date: c1615**

**Campden House destroyed: 1645**

**Acquired by the Landmark Trust: 1998**

**From: Mr Peregrine and Lady Maureen Fellowes**

**Architects: Stephen Oliver & Andrew Brookes  
of Rodney Melville & Partners**

**Main Contractors: William Sapcote & Son**

**Structural engineer: Richard Swift**

**Archaeologists: Richard Morriss Associates**

**Opened as a Landmark: Summer 2003**

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## SUMMARY: HISTORY & RESTORATION OF THE BUILDINGS ON THE SITE OF OLD CAMPDEN HOUSE

Beyond the flamboyant gateway which forms the main entrance to Sir Baptist Hicks' Campden House are two pavilions, or banqueting houses. They stand at either end of a broad terrace, overlooking the bones of an extensive and elaborate formal garden. These buildings are all that remain of what was once one of the grandest of Jacobean houses, razed during the Civil War. Today it is one of the most important Jacobean sites in the country, its importance recognised by Scheduled Ancient Monument designation for the site as a whole and Grade II\* status for the banqueting houses and Almonry. These minor buildings serve as a reminder of the richness and quality of the 'great burned house' itself, and are also a notable collection in their own right.

The Hicks family originally came from Gloucestershire, but Baptist's father was a mercer in London and his mother ran a flourishing business as a moneylender. Baptist carried on and excelled in both activities, helped greatly by the position of his elder brother Michael, who was Secretary to William Cecil, Elizabeth's Lord Chancellor, and close friend of Robert Cecil who inherited his father's position. When James I came to the throne in 1603, Baptist provided much of the finance for King and Court's extravagant lifestyle. This canny move made him an immense fortune and led first to his knighthood and later to his being created Viscount Campden.

By 1610, Sir Baptist had bought the manor of Campden. Campden House itself was not started before 1613: until then Sir Baptist was busy building Campden House in Kensington. Like self-made men before and since, he wanted to indulge in a great show of magnificence, and was lucky to live at a time when the architecture of display was at its most dramatic. We do not know for certain what his house looked like, but an impression can be gained from some 18th-century views which are thought to be based on a single, contemporary, original. To judge from these, the result was all that Sir Baptist could have hoped. It is still reflected in miniature in the Banqueting Houses, which combine an eye-catching Jacobean roofline with confident if irregular Classical detail, to produce an effect which is both stately and delightful. There are grounds for suspecting that the designer may even have been John Thorpe, who designed Sir Baptist's London house when he was still plain 'Mr. Hix.' Sir Baptist also provided the town with its almshouses, market hall and water brought by conduit from Westington Hill.

The banqueting houses served as places of retreat for the family and their guests, to which they would withdraw at the end of the main afternoon meal, away from the rest of the household. In the fine rooms at terrace level they would drink rare and fine wines, and eat what we would now call dessert – dried fruit, small cakes and sweetmeats - while enjoying the outlook over the gardens and the surrounding countryside. Below, hidden by the fall of the ground and entirely separate from these upper rooms, were further rooms which in the case of the East Banqueting House at least, probably served as lodgings for servants. The light and glitter of a great house, especially when lit up by candles at night, was a favourite Jacobean spectacle and there are stories of how the lantern on the top of Campden House could be seen from far off. Never was this more true than on a night in 1645 when the Royalist garrison, withdrawing from the house which had served as their local headquarters, set light to it. "The howse (which was so faire) burnt" wrote one of them in his diary. In the light of the blaze Prince Rupert's army marched over Broadway Hill to Evesham.

It was never repaired. Gradually over the years its shell was raided for building stone, some reddened by the heat of the flames. Some found its way fairly soon into the Banqueting Houses whose open loggias were blocked to adapt them for humbler domestic use for the estate steward and, by the early 18th century, for a fruit farmer who planted orchards in the former gardens. Such gentle adaptation ensured that the site remains largely undisturbed to this day.

The manor descended continuously through the Noel family from Sir Baptist's daughter Juliana, who married Edward Noel in a classic alliance of ancient lineage with new money. The Noels had other estates, especially in Rutland, although their link with Chipping Campden persists until the present day: a descendant still lives in the former stableblock, long known as the Court House. In 1987, Lady Maureen Fellowes and her husband Peregrine granted a lease of the East Banqueting House and the gate lodges to the Landmark Trust. In 1998, they agreed to transfer the West Banqueting House, the Almonry and the rest of the house and garden site to Landmark's care.

### **RESTORATION OF THE EAST BANQUETING HOUSE AND GATEHOUSE**

When the Landmark Trust acquired the East Banqueting House in 1987 the building was in a very decayed state. The roof in particular was near to collapse, the west wall was bulging outwards, and the second floor was too dangerous to walk on. Much of the glass in the windows had been smashed and water was pouring down to the lower floors.

In the 1860s, the Earl of Gainsborough (Sir Baptist's great grandson became the first Earl under Charles II) comprehensively restored the East Banqueting House so that he could use it to review his local volunteers as they practised their manoeuvres on the Coneygree below. By the late 1980s, the roof had to be completely dismantled again and the nineteenth-century trusses repaired and put back. The existing stone slates were reused wherever possible. New lead parapet gutters replaced the old ones, which had perished completely, and new lead chutes and downpipes were provided on the back wall. The two leaning gables on this wall were cranked back to an upright position.

Both banqueting houses are built of local stone and roofed with stone slates. The stonework is particularly fine. In the East Banqueting House, some had been damaged by previous repairs using iron cramps, but as much as possible of the old carved stone was saved, and redowelled and fixed where necessary using non-corrosive materials. Where replacement was unavoidable, Guiting stone was used. One chimney had been plundered for a new hearth in the West Banqueting House in the late seventeenth century; this was replaced with a new copy. The terrace balustrade at the north end had been badly smashed. Many of the balusters survived, however, and were repaired and reinstated.

New window casements were made to a traditional design, with leaded lights and plain glass. The design of the new main doors was based on fragments of an earlier pair, which were found in a heap of rubble and probably dated from the late 17th century. The outer doors on the ground floor were repaired, but new oak doors were provided elsewhere.

In the main upper room, a new vaulted plaster ceiling was formed, similar to that which survives in the West Banqueting House. The cornice was also based on that in the other building. The walls were given a thin coat of lime plaster, and the floor is of wide oak

boards. The spiral staircase is also oak, its design based on the contemporary survival in the Almonry.

The arrangement of the East Banqueting House being already upside down, the best position for the kitchen was immediately below the main room on the first floor, with a bedroom beside it, and a bathroom and another bedroom on the floor below. These rooms, with their stone vaults and floors, are very much as they were, but without the graffiti that formerly adorned them.

To prevent damp on the lower floors, a land drain was dug round the garden side of the building. While this excavation was in progress, the retaining wall of the original terrace was discovered. Every care was taken to protect whatever lies below the surface of the garden: a special track of oak boards was laid while work was in progress to prevent damaging tracks from builders' vehicles, and no cars are allowed on the site.

An additional bedroom and bathroom is provided in the north lodge of the gateway. A later cottage and lean-tos behind were taken down, and the domes of both lodges repaired, where the joints between the stone had opened up and were letting in water. New gates were fitted, which allow passers-by a view of the garden.

The architect for the repairs was Andy Brookes of Rodney Melville & Partners, and the main contractor was Linford-Bridgeman Ltd. English Heritage gave a grant towards the cost. Work was completed in the autumn of 1990.

#### **RESTORATION OF THE WEST BANQUETING HOUSE & ALMONRY**

The West Banqueting House was in danger of imminent collapse when it came to Landmark, especially the stair turret. Application to the Heritage Lottery Fund, English Heritage and various charitable trusts was successfully boosted by Landmark's own appeal and work started in October 2001. Stephen Oliver and Andy Brookes of Rodney Melville & Partners again were our architects. Phil Semmens was site foreman for the contractors, William Sapcote & Son.

The West Banqueting House is smaller than its companion, being of two floors rather than three, but more of its interior survives. Some plasterwork of the ceiling of the upper room has survived since Sir Baptist's day, as do sections of the original plaster frieze, which showed a winged lion with a man's head. Where possible, these have been carefully conserved and pieced back together. Large sections of Jacobean wainscotting also survive at the head of the stair turret. This tower was built soon after the rest of the building (the floors did not at first communicate) and originally held a garderobe, although a staircase was inserted soon afterwards. The staircase had disappeared and a replacement had to be inserted. Like its companion, the building was altered substantially at an early date, when the windows and loggia were partly or wholly blocked with ashlar, presumably plundered from the ruins of the main house, and a Jacobean door and one smaller window inserted. Two of the barley twist chimneys had to be replaced.

The West Banqueting House has deliberately been left much as it came to us, so that it has a somewhat different layout from the East and reveals its later history as a domestic dwelling. Thus we have kept the rough studwork partition which divides the first floor chamber. To ensure privacy both for the Court House and for visitors to the East

Banqueting House, the loggia and some of the windows remain blocked, although those in the kitchen and north wall have been unblocked to provide more light.

The Almonry is an altogether simpler building than the banqueting houses, following the more traditional pattern of Cotswold architecture seen also in the former stables (now the Court House) and the contemporary Almshouses across the road. It is small in scale and restrained in detail, three storey with but a single chamber on each floor linked by a stone spiral staircase. Its original function has been the subject of much debate: it may have been the office of a household official although the carefully framed views from its first floor windows suggest it could have been intended as a garden pavilion. Equally, blocked arches in its basement wall and proximity to the 'bleaching garden' in early views have led to speculation that it could even have been a laundry. Later references suggest use as a hen roost or dovecote. The only certainty is that it was not built as an almonry, a whimsical name acquired in the 1930s, no doubt due to its proximity to the almshouses, and which we have kept.

In 1930, the Almonry was repaired by F L Griggs, renowned engraver and campaigner for Chipping Campden. The large fireplace on the ground floor is a later insertion but that on the first floor and the balustrade at the top of the stairs are original. It had no major structural problems when it came to us but still required a major overhaul of its fabric. Like the West Banqueting House, it has been re-roofed and the stonework repointed.

Court Barn, the surviving fragment of Campden House and Juliana's Gateway at the bottom of Sir Baptist's garden are also in the care of the Landmark Trust.



## THE BANQUETING HOUSES

### **Brief History**

The banqueting houses provide an example of the ornamental, even flamboyant, style of architecture favoured by Jacobean architects and patrons for their garden buildings. Both are embellished with strapwork parapets, basket finials and twisted chimneys, in a display that recalls the fantastic structures shown in engraved frontispieces to the works of Spenser and Sidney. This high London fashion must have puzzled local masons used to the more austere local architectural tradition. On the buildings that remain, this new-fangled embellishment is kept for the faces of the banqueting houses that looked onto his mansion and gardens. Their outward elevations, more visible to the outside world, present a more modest, gabled and traditional form. Like so much else about the site, they reinforce the impression that Sir Baptist was a master scene-setter, deliberately creating his own magical demesne.

The word 'banquet' would have held a different meaning for Sir Baptist than for us today. Rather than a sumptuous, many-coursed meal, a banquet at this period meant the dessert course at the end of a main meal, when the family and their guests would withdraw from the rest of the household for conversation, elegant diversion and, especially, the luxury of privacy in a house without corridors. Appreciation of one's own or one's host's property also figured largely. At Campden, a stroll through formal gardens of the latest fashion led to the elegant separate banqueting halls, where views of the gardens' symmetry, the main house, church, almshouses, town and surrounding countryside could all be appreciated, either from within or from the viewing balconies.

While they enjoyed the views, guests would drink fine and rare wines and nibble the small cakes, nuts, dried fruits and the crystallised sweetmeats and flowers that any lady of the house prided herself on providing from her store cupboard.

At first glance, the two banqueting houses appear identical twins, as they once were at terrace level. In fact, their plan, subsequent history and now restorations conspire to make them very different.

So that the main chamber could be entered directly from the gardens, both banqueting halls are, in a sense, upside down. Originally, both seem to have been open loggias, the arches unglazed and open. The internal walls would have been decorated with fine plasterwork and clad in wainscotting (remnants of both survive in the West Banqueting House).

The forms of both banqueting houses benefit from the topography of the site as formed by Sir Baptist Hicks. The East Banqueting House is in fact three storeys. The two floors below its main chamber are extensive enough to have served as lodgings for a member of the household - perhaps a relative or senior member of the household staff, a Sir Toby Belch or a Malvolio.

The ground floor of the West Banqueting House is a single large, stone barrel-vaulted chamber with two large fireplaces. We are not sure of its original function. At first, with its two large fireplaces, it was thought it might be a kitchen. However, such a large kitchen in a banqueting house is puzzling, given the sort of food typically consumed at the banquet course. Earlier houses often had separate kitchens away from the main house because of the fire risk, but the Thorpe plans (see Vol II) show "kyt"(chens) within the main house, as was increasingly so. An alternative view is that it may have been a second banqueting chamber. Certainly the fine vaulted ceiling of ashlar is of high quality for a kitchen, and there is some evidence that this room was panelled to eaves height like the one above. Perhaps this was a cosier "winter" banqueting chamber as a contrast to the open loggia above. Perhaps instead it formed a communal hall for servants on the estate.

After the main house was deliberately burnt down in 1645, both banqueting houses were converted for domestic use and it is possible to trace their tenants through the Hearth Tax returns (see Vol II). Tenants of the West Banqueting

House probably included William Harrison, Lady Juliana's steward and a key figure in the false murder trial in 1660-1 known as the Campden Wonder. The loggias of both banqueting houses were filled in with stone taken from the ruined house. Cotswold stone turns pink when subjected to heat and these purloined blocks stand out clearly even today.

In 1862 Earl of Gainsborough carried out a comprehensive restoration of the East Banqueting House so that he could use it as a grandstand from which to view his local volunteer militia practising their manoeuvres on the Coneygree. It seems it was already in a bad way, since the Earl had to replace the roof. He also re-opened the loggia, glazing it with plate glass. Serious dilapidation had again set in by the time Landmark became involved more than a century later. It may also be that the East Banqueting House was less altered and extended than the West, and for all these reasons it has proved harder to trace its evolution after the 1645 fire.

At the West Banqueting House, far more evidence remains of later adaptations. In its former loggia, a smaller doorway was inserted into the blocked central arch. Narrower, cruder stairs replaced a broader flight that presumably once led to the entrance – the roughness of the masonry beneath the current threshold suggests that it was never meant to be seen. A two-light stone window (perhaps also salvaged from the house) was inserted into the southernmost arch but later blocked. The two side elevations were identical originally. In both, a later transom was added perhaps when they were re-glazed. Later, the southern window was blocked completely (we have re-opened it). From the inside, the difference between the original and later sections of mullion and transom can be seen quite clearly. Quite apart from the crudeness of the insertions, the inserted sections have a broad channel moulding which matches the surviving windows of the main house. These too must have been salvaged from the ruins.

The West Banqueting House, not restored by the Earl, retains more traces of its conversion to humbler domestic use soon after the fire in 1645, when a second fireplace and chimney were inserted on the first floor (had you noticed that the

West Banqueting House has five chimneys to the East's four?) This chimney was plundered from the East Banqueting House, which had only three when we came to restore it in 1987.

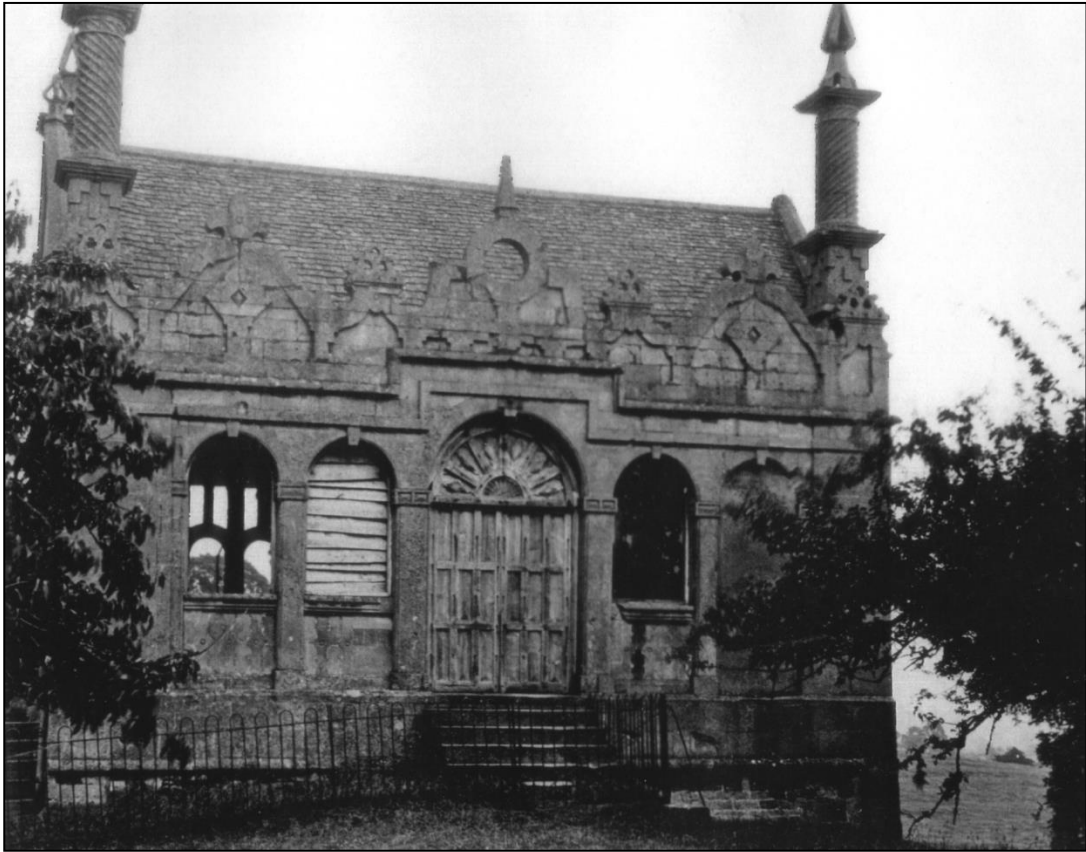
The chamber at terrace level was originally a single, symmetrical space. The roughness of the walls suggests that they were not, originally, meant to be seen but would have been covered by wainscotting, some of which survives at the head of the stairs. The plaster frieze, featuring a winged lion with the head of a bearded lion, seems to have run right round the room. Its repeating pattern was formed by pressing plaster into a mould, rather than by hand modelling. In the words of our architect, the frieze is a 'mannerist bodge': the window heads of the loggia had to be cut into the pattern. In the same way, the Jacobean craftsmen chopped back the keystones on the arcading to avoid interrupting the cornice.

The garderobe tower in the West Banqueting House seems not to be primary as its stonework is not fully keyed-in, but it was erected not long after the building itself. It would probably have held a stool box set a little below first floor level and in these early years there was no communication between first and ground floor levels. Probably during the domestic phase of the building's history after the fire, the tower was converted to take stairs. Evidence for this conversion remains in the form of carved horizontal and vertical slots, indicating where the earlier treads and risers lay.

In the course of restoration, the remains of the chute for the garderobe and a culvert were found beneath the west wall of the banqueting house. The chute had been blocked off with capping stones and filled in. Originally, this access point for waste removal may have been flushed through by running water in the culvert, brought in lead pipes from Sir Baptist's little conduit house beside the road up Westington Hill and across the fields to enter the grounds of the mansion site through Lady Juliana's Gateway, where a piece of pipe may still be seen. This water supply also served the almshouses (where there is still a tap in the wall, although the basin surround is later than Sir Baptist's day) and the town.

Later, a lean-to was added to the south wall of the West Banqueting House (which still bears the scar) which, from documentary records, seems to have held an extra hearth.

During the restoration of the West Banqueting House the north fireplace in the basement was unblocked and a large, shallow sink made of the local limestone discovered in the hearth. Our archaeologists speculate that this chamber may therefore have been used for some kind of light industry at some time. Certainly, such low-key uses must have come and gone as the banqueting houses gradually slipped down the social scale. Within living memory they were used to weigh and store apples from the orchards, many tally marks being found scratched on the wall. They were also both used for livestock at various points: when Landmark acquired the West Banqueting House, the ground floor chamber was being used as a lambing shed.



**The East Banqueting House in the 1920s.**  
*Copyright Q C Lloyd, RCHME*



**1988**

## RESTORATION OF THE EAST BANQUETING HOUSE & LODGES

**(completed in 1990)**

(Written by Charlotte Haslam, 1997)

### **Preparing the way**

When the Landmark Trust took on the East Banqueting House in 1987 it was in a sad state, as Christopher Dalton's photographs show. For many years it had been a secret destination for Campden's children. Some did no more than write their names on the walls; but others did great damage, smashing the windows and doors, knocking plaster off the walls, and generally speeding up the process of decay (though it was in fact a cow which gave the death blow - or shove - to the balustrade at the north end).

Most seriously, the roof was beginning to fall in, with several rafters hanging loose. The gutters had perished, the west wall was bulging severely outwards, while the gables on the east (field) side were leaning dramatically inwards. The second floor was too dangerous to walk on, and water was pouring into the lower storeys. Nothing remained of the ceiling or plaster decoration in the main room.

It was clear that a considerable task faced the architects, Rodney Melville & Partners. The job was allocated to John Bucknall (who had already supervised the repair of the Swarkestone Pavilion for Landmark), but six months into the main contract he changed hats, becoming Landmark's own Architectural Adviser, so finished the job as patron rather than architect. His place as architect was taken by Andrew Brookes, assisted by Tim Radcliffe.

The consulting engineers, Ascough & Associates, were closely involved from the start, as were the Landmark's Quantity Surveyors, Bare, Leaning and Bare; and an architect from English Heritage, which was to provide a grant for the repairs. Half way through the project, the whole site of Campden Manor and its gardens,



The East elevation before restoration.



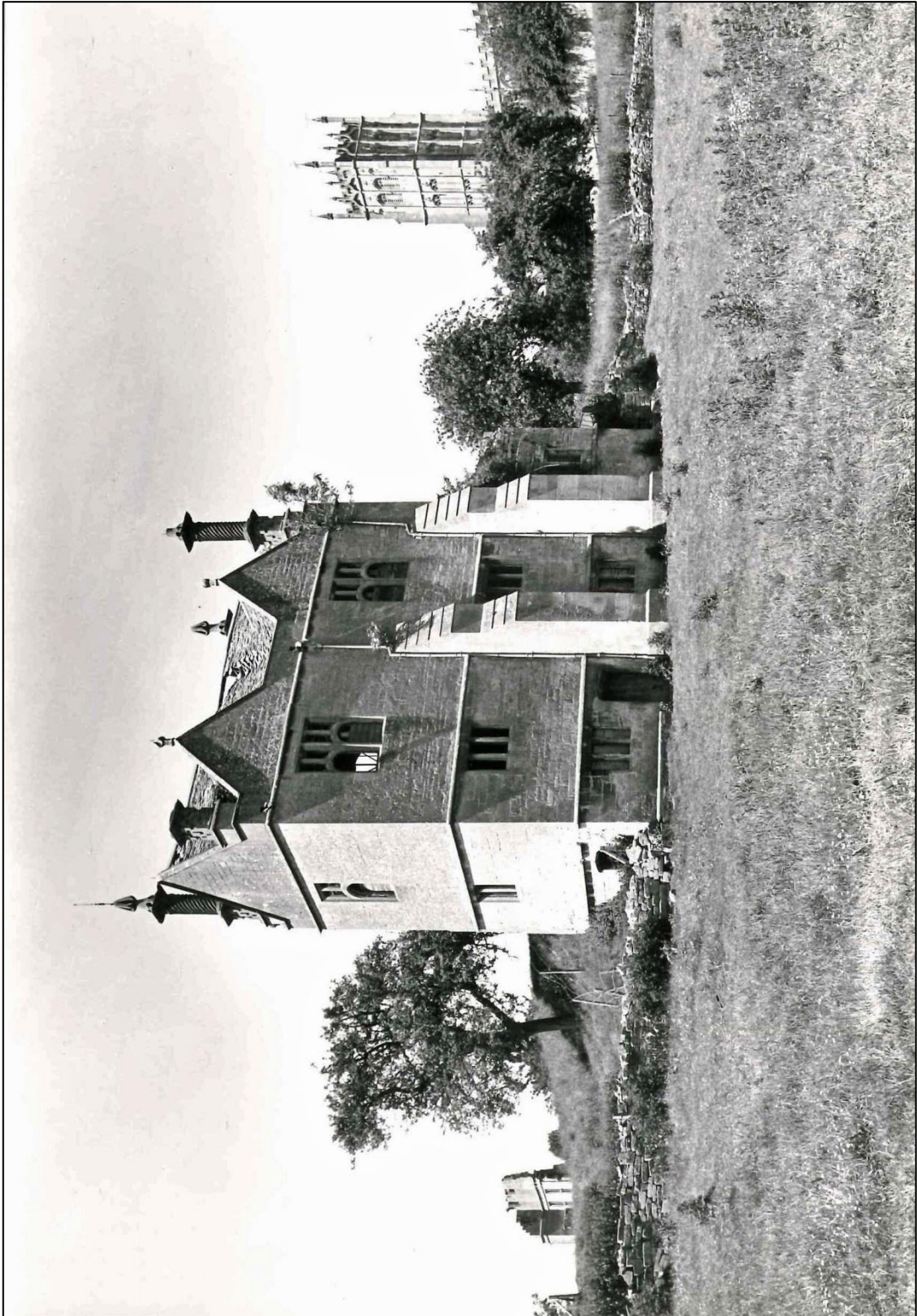
though not the East Banqueting House itself, was scheduled as an Ancient Monument, which bought in the Inspectors of that department too. Inevitably, the County Archaeologist and Conservation Officer were also involved. Such is the complexity of a major restoration project today.

Even more people were involved once work began. The main contractors were Linford-Bridgeman Ltd of Lichfield, who have great experience of work on historic buildings. A local contractor, Bonner and Milner, was brought in to slate the roof. The new glazing was made by Norgrove Studios, and Trumplers of Birmingham did the plastering. All the work took place under the experienced and capable eye of Dick Baker, the foreman, and John Hanmer, the site manager.

The underlying philosophy for the work was one of conservative repair. The intention was to save as much as possible of the existing structure, repairing the weaker and broken parts rather than renewing them altogether. New work was to be kept to the minimum, but where unavoidable, for the windows or the new staircase, it would be done in a traditional manner, and if possible taking its inspiration from neighbouring buildings.

The East Banqueting House is on the one hand a garden building, built purely for pleasure. At the same time, this sits on top of what John Bucknall has described as no more nor less than a traditional 17th-century Cotswold house, with a domestic character that continued into later centuries.

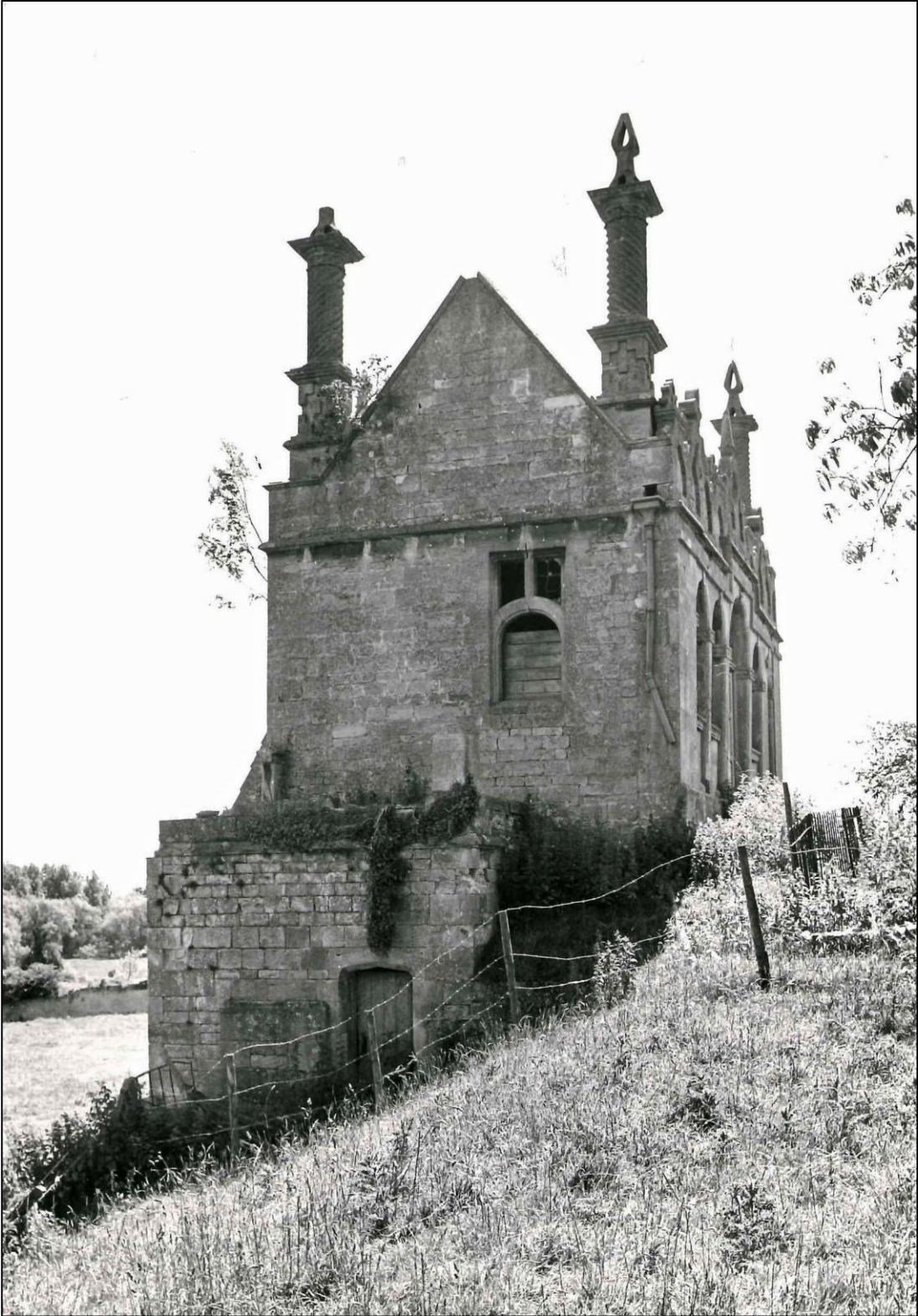
In converting the building into a Landmark, the aim was to keep both sides of the building's character in sight, and emerge with a good balance between them both. One particular stroke of luck was the discovery of a set of study drawings made by students of the Architectural Association in the late 19th century. These, with early photographs, were examined for evidence of details that had vanished since. At the same time, careful survey drawings were made of the main elevations to assess its present condition.



The rear elevation from the south east.



The south elevation.



**The north elevation.**

### **Work starts - external repairs**

The first priority was to make the building stable and weather tight. So, in 1989, it was enveloped in scaffolding, with a temporary tin roof and plastic sheeting to enable the work to go on in all weathers. The first step towards repair was to strip off the stone slates, and have a look at the state of the roof structure beneath. The rafters dated from the 19th century and were found not to be in too bad condition. Each one was taken off, repaired and then put back. But before that, the outward spreading movement of the walls themselves had to be solved.

The first plan had been to construct a concrete ring beam right round the wall head, but as it turned out there was no room for one. Instead, a continuous stainless steel angled plate was fixed to the stonework behind and beneath the wallplate, which does the same job of holding the building together at eaves level. In addition steel ties run across the building from front to back, replacing the iron ties that were there before.

Rather more tricky was the job of bringing the two stone gables on the east wall back to a vertical position. They could not be left as they were, because they were putting too much strain on the roof, and on the wall below. They first had to be carefully separated from the parapet wall on either side, by removing of a small section of masonry in each place, so that any pressure on the gable did not push the whole parapet over. A cradle of scaffolding was then constructed around each gable, and adjustable props braced against the inner face. Next came the most delicate manoeuvre of all, as the props were gradually lengthened, by turning the screw once every half hour. Little by little the wall went back into its correct position.

One of the main causes for the decay of the roof had been the failure of the parapet gutters. These were completely renewed, in lead, and new downpipes and shutes fixed on the back wall. The new hoppers at the top of each downpipe have on them the date of the repairs.



The roof had to be completely dismantled.

Once the roof had been secured and repaired, the covering of stone slates could go back. As many of the old slates were reused as possible, which in the end amounted to about half. These were made up with new from a quarry in the Cotswolds. Where the gables meet the main roof, there is no break in the slates, forming what is called a swept valley, a method traditional to stone-slate roofs.

Meanwhile masonry repairs were well underway. These divided into structural and ornamental. Like all the buildings at Campden, the East Banqueting House is built of fine Campden stone, from a long-closed local quarry. It is an oolitic limestone of extraordinarily good quality, which after several centuries has scarcely worn or weathered at all, retaining all the sharpness of its carved detail. However, both in the original construction and old repairs, iron cramps had been used to fix stones in place. Despite protection with molten lead, water eventually penetrated the joints and the iron corroded, and as it expanded broke the stone.

In the repairs, as much as possible of the original carved detail was retained. Even when broken it was fixed back in place with stainless steel pins that would not corrode. In the end less of the new Guiting stone was required than had been expected, but some sections of strapwork had to be completely replaced, as well as one entire chimney, and one of the flame-like gable finials. The single iron "flame" surviving on one chimney was carefully taken down and copied by a blacksmith for the others, before being refixed.

The walls also needed repair. Some stones were replaced, and some refixed. In the course of this work it was discovered that the south-west corner had already been rebuilt once. All defective pointing was raked out, and the building repointed where necessary, using lime mortar.



The top floor.



The terrace at the north end had been badly knocked about. Luckily, most of the balustrade actually survived, stored in broken bits in one of the other buildings, and could be almost entirely reconstructed. The old paving was in lias stone, which does not survive outside for long, and had indeed mostly perished. It has been repaved in a similar, but longer lasting, stone.

To solve the problem of damp on the lower floors, a deep ditch was dug around the building on the terrace side, a thick plastic skin laid next to the wall and a special filter drain laid. Then the cavity was refilled with gabions, large baskets of loose stones, which would allow the water to drain away more quickly.

While this excavation was in progress, an archaeologist was carrying out a dig of his own. This revealed the lower part of the original retaining wall of the garden terrace, which had collapsed, allowing soil and stone to spill over to lie at its foot. No attempt has been made to recreate the original form of the terrace exactly. However, as found, the ground fell away steeply to the right of the steps. It was felt that a level area was needed for just a few feet outside the building, to show its relationship with the great terrace. A new retaining wall was built up from the existing sloping ground, therefore, and the ground filled in behind it.

### **Making the Landmark**

The arrangement of the rooms within the Banqueting House was dictated by the existence of the main room on the top floor, which meant that the house was already upside down. The kitchen therefore had to go on the first or middle floor, with a bedroom beside it, and a bathroom and a further bedroom on the ground floor. The first floor has its own outside door, but it was felt that the introduction of a staircase to link it to the upper room was now permissible. The stair itself, which is built of English oak, is of a generally traditional design, with balusters based on those in the Almonry.



The top floor.

The upper floor has been the most completely transformed from its condition in 1987, with new oak floor, plaster on the walls and a new ceiling. This had originally been barrel vaulted, probably exactly like the West Banqueting House. When the 19th-century roof was put on, the ceiling was renewed at the same time, and because the new roof construction was different to the earlier one, the new ceiling had to be rather shallower. For the same reason, it is this shallower vault that has been reinstated.

No evidence survived of the plaster decoration of this room, except for the blocks for holding a cornice and architrave. When the terrace excavation was being carried out, a small section of plaster moulding was found. It is assumed that it had similar decoration to the West Banqueting House, however, with a plaster cornice, frieze and architrave, and it was resolved to put back a simplified version of this, leaving the frieze plain. Along the front of the building, above the windows, the frieze was left out altogether, and an extra moulding below the cornice instead. This was a slightly different solution to that arrived at by the Jacobean plasterer of the West Banqueting House, where the frieze simply runs round the windows when it has to. The plastering was done by Jeff Orton, who has been partly trained in Italy.

By this time, attention was turning to the detail of windows and doors. The existing double doors had been made in the 1940s, but pieces of the earlier ones were found lying in a heap of rubble. These show in a late 19th-century photograph, looking very venerable. They could well have dated from the late 17th century, which is when the building appears to have been closed in, from the original open loggia.

The fragments themselves were beyond saving, but the new doors were based on the same design. There was no trace of the fanlight, so it was copied from old photographs and drawings. The window casements of the loggia arches were also comparatively recent, and not of any particular merit. Since there is no

evidence to show what was there at any earlier date, their replacements make no claim to historical accuracy, but were designed to look agreeable. To make sure that the panes were to the right scale, panels of hardboard painted with the design were first of all put in the windows. When it came to glazing, more trial panels were put up, to ensure the right quality of glass.

The upper room was not, originally, heated, and it had no fireplace. A small stove seemed the appropriate alternative, its flue breaking into one of those formerly connecting with the fireplace in the bedroom.

The table in this room, found in an auction room in Cheltenham, apparently belonged to a former Headmaster of Eton College, C.A. Alington, who took it with him when he left. It appears to be made up from 16th or 17th- century fragments, probably in the 19th century.

On the lower floors, the inside wall, having been partly buried for so long, was too wet to take plaster. It will be several years before it completely dries out. A new wall was built inside it, therefore, the thickness of which can be seen where the stair rises into the upper room. The finishing of the lower rooms presented few problems. The floors remain as they were, and the walls have been given a thin coat of lime plaster. The outside doors have all been repaired, while inside the building, new doors have been made, to a traditional design.

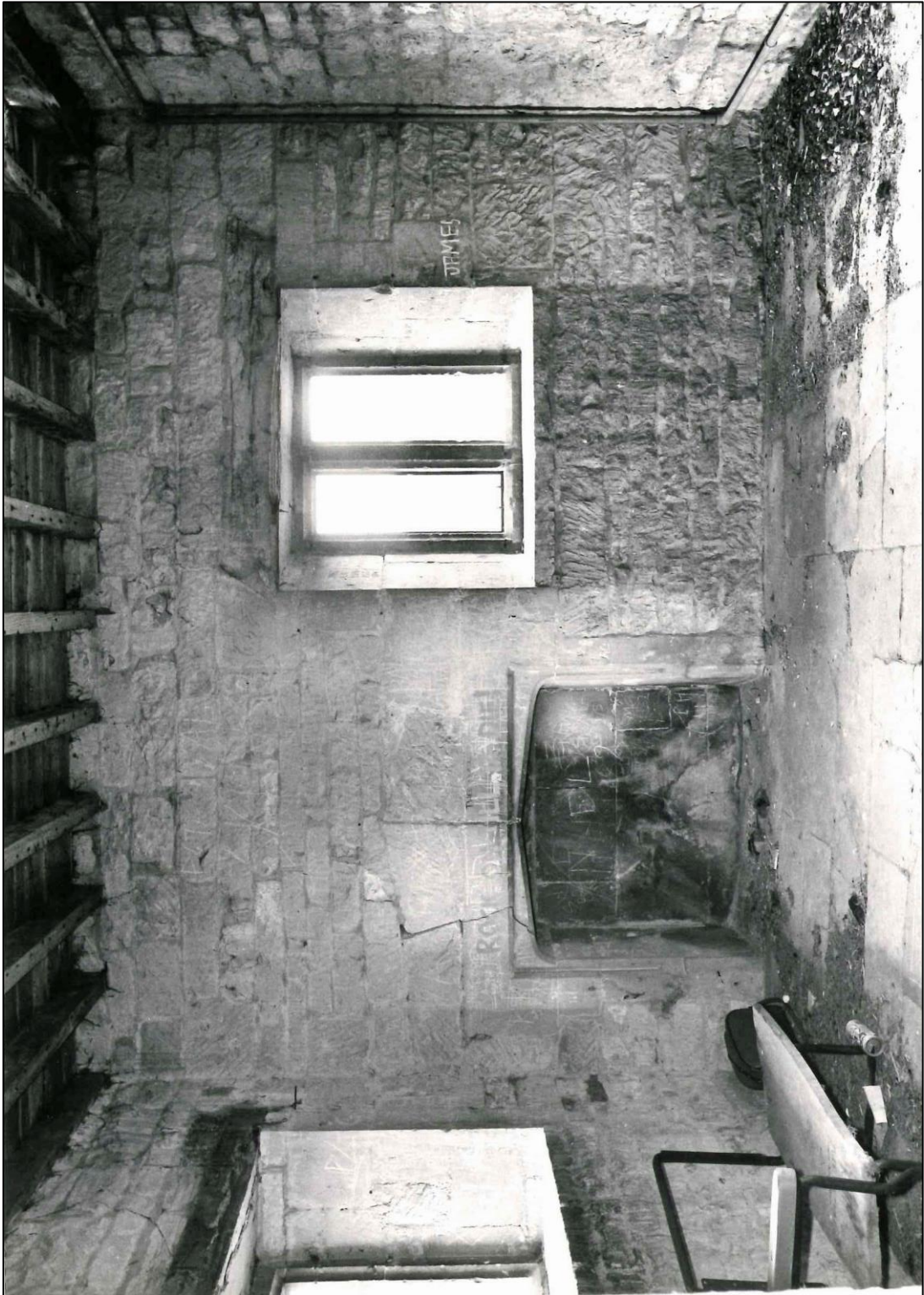
In recognition of a later phase of Campden's history, the furniture in the middle bedroom is all by Gordon Russell. It came from his own house, Kingcombe, the contents of which were acquired by Landmark on his death. John Evetts, the Landmark's furnisher, had been keeping these pieces until a suitable home turned up.



Looking north into the kitchen.



**The staircase up to the top floor is now in this corner.**



The twin bedroom on the middle floor.

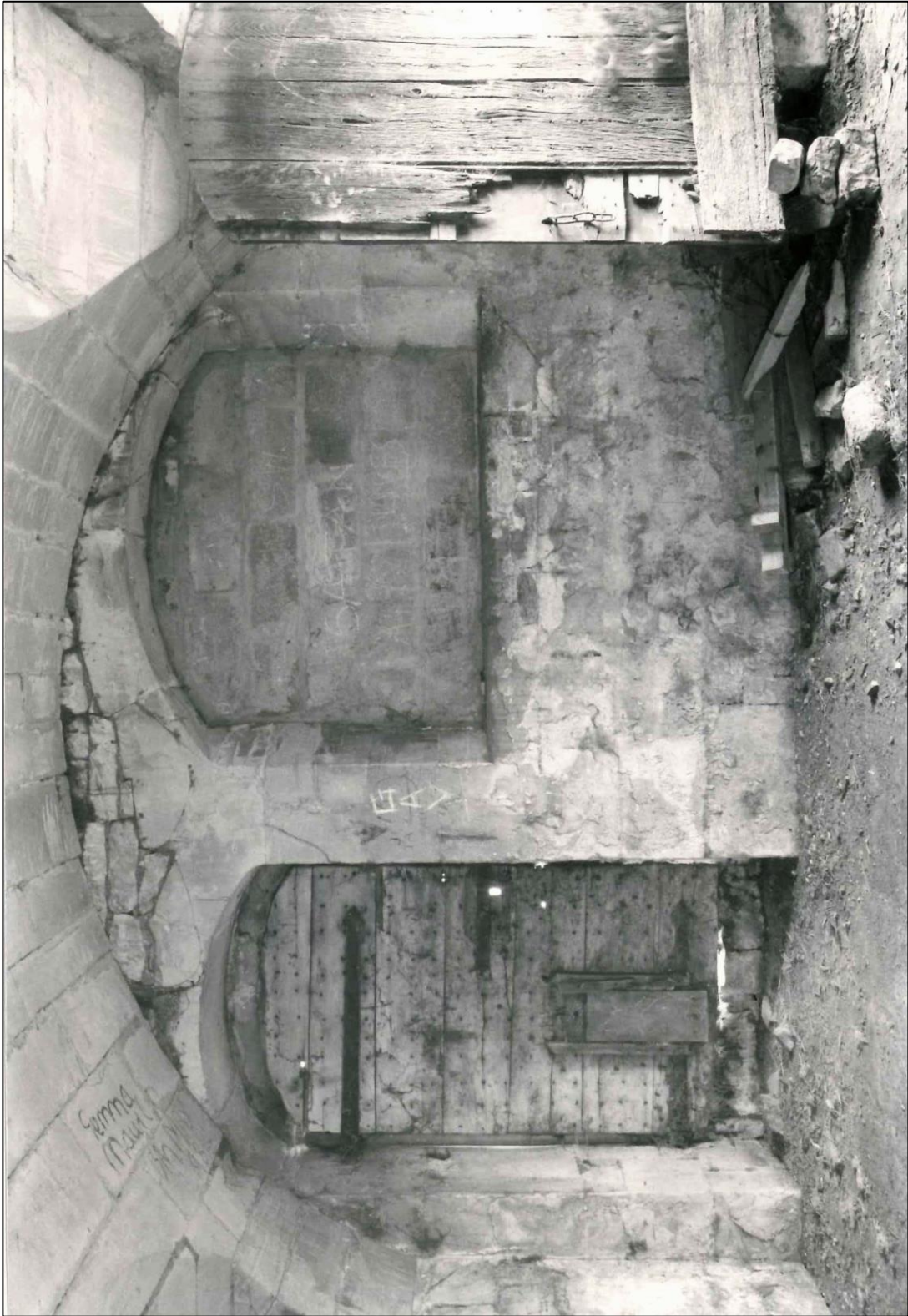


**Looking down to the lower floor.**

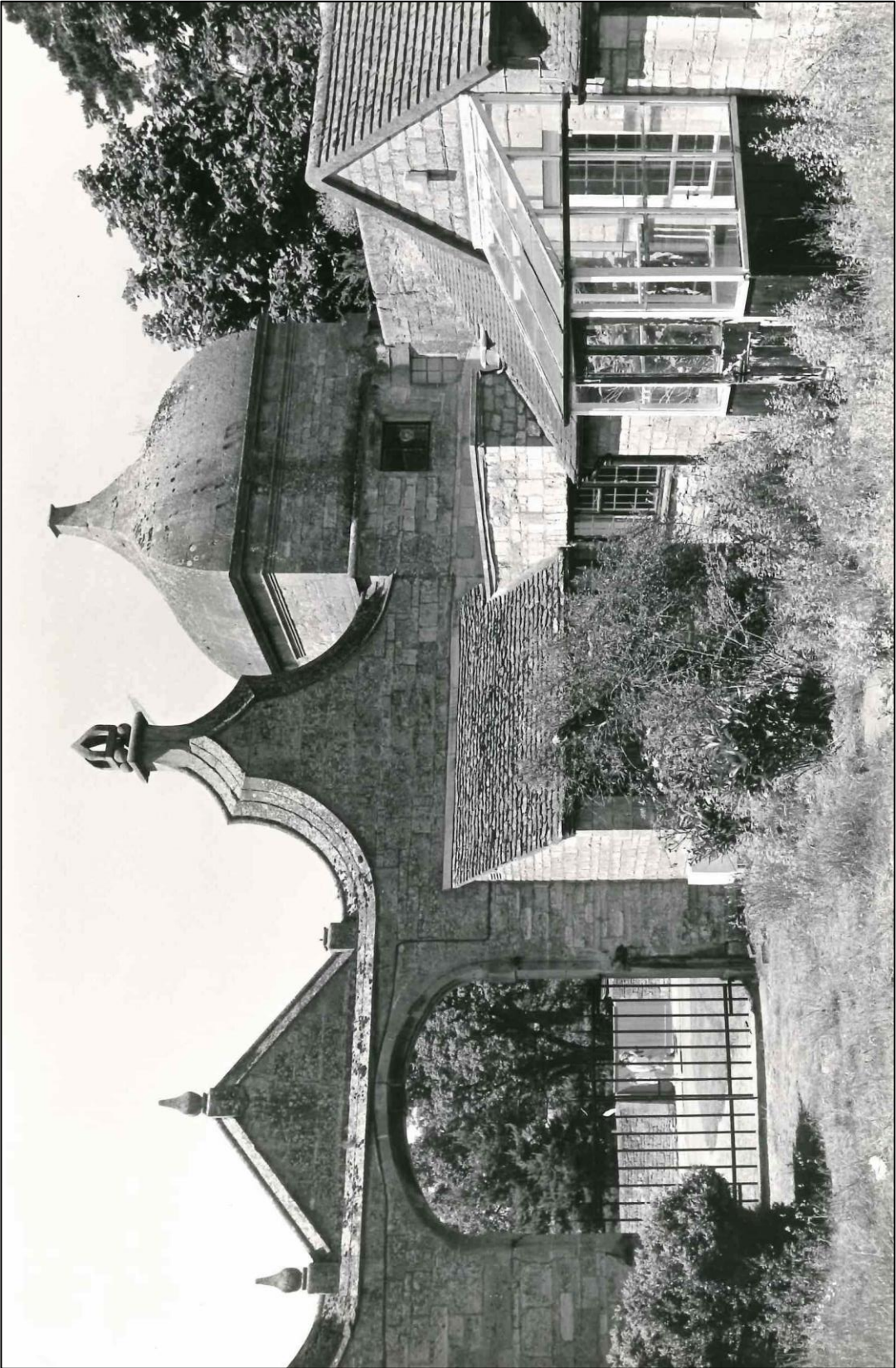




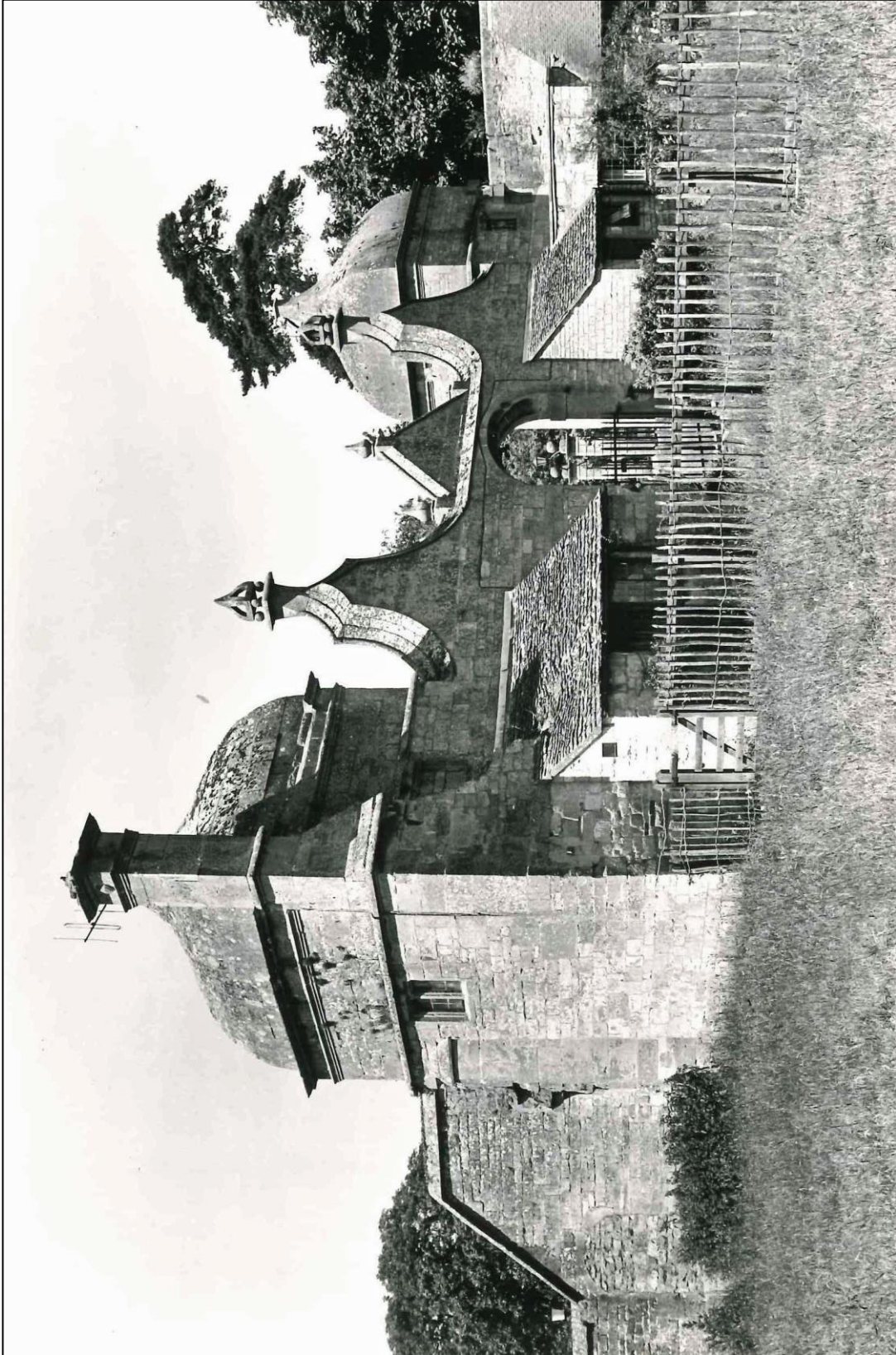
The bathroom.



The lower floor, now the double bedroom.



**An additional bedroom and bathroom has been added to the North Lodge.**



**The lean-tos and the cottage to the right were removed.**

### **The rest of the work**

The Banqueting House, not very surprisingly, had no services at all in 1987.

Water and electricity were both brought in underground, in a trench following the line of the path. It was obviously important to avoid disturbing the archaeology of the site, so the trench was kept as small as possible. Similar care was taken in the placing of a sewage tank. This went into the Coneygree, the medieval field to the east of the building, which belongs to the National Trust, and a special lease for the required plot was negotiated. So that none of the existing watercourses are disturbed or polluted, a septic tank was not used; instead all sewage is pumped into the main town sewer.

Care was also taken to protect whatever lies below the surface of the garden while work was in progress. A special track of oak boards strapped together with iron was laid from the gatehouse, so that contractors' vehicles would not churn up great tracks. For the same reason, all cars are now parked just inside the gates.

With the East Banqueting House we had acquired the more famous Gatehouse, with its pepperpot lodges. To the north of these a cottage had been added earlier this century. While entirely inoffensive, it was felt that the lodge would be better off without it, and once it had done good service as the site office, it was demolished.

The main problem with the lodges was that the stone domes were leaking badly. The work of frost and wet had over the years caused the overlapping joints to widen, so that in places the water was running straight through. In others, earlier repairs had been made with iron cramps, which, as on the East Banqueting House, was breaking up the stone. Finally, the walls were beginning to spread under the weight.

The last problem was solved by the insertion of a ring beam at eaves level in both lodges. Then new stone was carefully pieced in to the expanded joints, so that they are water tight once again. Old iron cramps were replaced with steel.

With the lodges watertight once again, it would have been possible to put a bedroom in each, but it was felt that eight would be too many for the rooms in the East Banqueting House itself. Just the North Lodge has been made habitable therefore. The door latches, which were there already, were made in Campden, probably to a design of Gordon Russell's.

The final problem was that of the gates themselves. In the 17th century, there would have been solid wooden doors, closing the whole archway. At the opposite extreme, there had in recent years, been some open iron gates there. The new gates are half way between the two. They provide some sense of privacy from passers by for those inside the site, but anyone who is really interested in seeing the buildings, can still peer in.

## RESTORATION OF THE WEST BANQUETING HOUSE

**(completed in 2003)**

Many of the problems we faced in the restoration of the West Banqueting House were identical to those encountered for the East, mainly resulting from the outward thrust of the barrel-vaulted chambers on the external walls (intensified by a roof structure that had become detached from the wall heads by decay) and the high levels of damp in internal walls buried below ground level. The pair make an interesting comparison of conservation practice and techniques more than a decade apart; reassuringly, we used many of the same approaches. However, the West Banqueting House differs in retaining much more of the evidence of its evolution since 1645 and this we chose to keep by adopting a conserve-as-found philosophy. We have not changed the plan of the building and nor, in time, will its external appearance have changed. Before and after plans here would reveal little of the painstaking work that went on from autumn 2001 to the spring of 2003.

The West Banqueting House had been maintained in a low-key way and was watertight, but the parapet walls on the rear stair turret were an inherent weakness and the turret was in danger of imminent collapse. Before work even began, emergency scaffolding had to be erected while we raised the funds to pay for the repairs. We worked from the foundations up. First the ground around the east wall was dug away to a depth of some eight feet to address the excessive dampness in this wall in the ground floor chamber. A perforated pipe was laid at the bottom and a fabric membrane inserted between the soil and the wall to protect the stonework. The trench was backfilled with gravel. This east wall is very damp and, as at the East Banqueting House, will take several years to dry out. The use of limewash internally will help this and, as ever, we accept that regular renewal of this sacrificial layer will be necessary.

**West Banqueting House before restoration**



**The ground floor of the West Banqueting House in April 1998 before restoration - during the lambing season!**





**The lower level showing the partially blocked west window (to the right) before restoration.**



**The lower level looking north.**



**The first floor before restoration.**



**Panelling surviving on the upper floor.**



**The collapsed staircase caused by water ingress.**



**Part of the wall and roof structure  
of the upper level.**



Two new chimneys were built on site in a traditional stonemason's bankers' shed, June 2002.



Chiselling the 'barley sugar' fluting on the new chimneys.



Original stone carving detail of the small *gotti* beneath the square plinths of the chimneys.

A large stone buttress was found beneath the steps (perhaps an attempt to deal with the thrust of the barrel-vaulting) and we had to dig below this to lay the drain. Unfortunately this has disproved for good local tales of treasure in secret tunnels beneath the terrace linking the banqueting houses and main house! It did, however, prove that the terrace was the result of a 'single landscaping event', in the words of our archaeologist.

The east wall had also bowed significantly and rotted rafter feet above equally decaying wall-plates meant that the wall had come adrift from the roof by some 12-15cm. Metal tie beams had been inserted in the past and the wall seemed stable so, in contrast with the treatment of a similar problem at the East Banqueting House, we decided not to crank the wall back to vertical, simply replacing the metal ties. Quite how far out of true the wall has moved is easy to read from the boxed-out west cornice on the inside. The rafters were given new feet and we cast a new concrete tie beam to give them something to sit on.

Apart from the wall plates, relatively few of the roof timbers needed renewal. The new stainless steel ties across the chamber are a measure we had hoped to avoid but decided their omission was too great a risk.

Close inspection of the characteristic 'barley sugar' twisted chimneys demonstrates the exceptional quality of their Jacobean craftsmanship. The fluted twist does one full turn over the height of the stack and the stacks are handed – in other words, the twist turns in each case towards the centre of the building. Even greater attention to detail was apparent from the scaffolding – who, from ground level, would notice the little *gotti* beneath the square plinths on which the basket finials sit?

Also at roof level, two chimneys were found to be beyond repair and had to be replaced. The work was done on-site in a traditional stonemason's bankers' shed. The shafts were carved in two halves, each divided into several slices and the



The roof undergoing repair.

fluting lined-out and chiselled by hand – no machine can do the job. John Brown, a joiner for Landmark who has worked on many of our buildings, was seconded to Sapcotes' masons during the project to learn something of their craft. He became sufficiently proficient over the months to be allowed to carve the base of one of the new chimneys.

Preventing birds flying down the chimneys had been a problem at the East Banqueting House and so a rather splendid steel 'Viking's helmet' now sits concealed in each. The numerate will also notice that one of the northern chimneystacks is purely ornamental.

Sections of the strapwork along the east parapet also had to be taken down and rebuilt, a matter of some pride to Sapcote's stonemasons. For a while the new stone is easily discernible but it will soon mellow and blend in. The building was re-roofed in the traditional diminishing courses: unfortunately we could only salvage sufficient stonetiles from both buildings to retile the Almonry entirely in these originals and the banqueting house roof was relaid using tilestones salvaged from a local school – a course we will only take if we are sure of the material's provenance.

The stair turret was falling away from the west wall and was found to have badly eroded stonework at its base so we underbuilt it from bottom to top. This process of deep packing and pinning banished the stone masons for weeks into a very tight scaffold, the repair's success testimony to their dedication. One of the blind gablets on the east elevation was taken down and rebuilt, the other simply repaired. All the stonework was thoroughly checked over and re-pinned to the main structure where necessary. However, in 2003 we did not use the stainless steel ties favoured in 1990. Instead less intrusive resin grouted ties were used. This involves drilling a narrow hole with a diamond drill, which is lined with a sheath into which grout is pumped. As the grout dries, the stocking is progressively tightened to form the tie. All the external pointing was carefully

checked and re-pointed where necessary. A slab over the flat roof above the stone vaulting of the turret has strengthened it and helped weatherproof a vulnerable area. The rear parapet above the tower was largely rebuilt and a missing centre section reinstated.

Our architects spent much time over the selection of stone for the external walls, from beds at the Guiting and Stanley quarries. The stone was all worked on site in a bankers' shed – a traditional sight, but still necessary today when stone has to be worked to match the irregularities of an old building.

Internally, we came under considerable pressure initially from the authorities to keep the original stone floor in the ground floor chamber, even though changes in ground levels made clear that this was not the original seventeenth-century floor, an impression reinforced by its roughness and the drainage channels cut into it. Many of the flags were so broken and uneven as to present a safety hazard. The whole floor was therefore numbered, recorded and lifted, which gave us the opportunity to lay underfloor heating above a damp proof membrane.

We then salvaged as many of the slabs as we could and laid them out in their original positions on tarpaulins outside. Using stone from Stanley's Quarry that was geologically matched as closely as possible, new flags were cut to replace those that were too damaged to reinstate. To avoid too crude a contrast between old and new, new edges were somewhat rounded off and the surfaces roughened a little, and then the whole floor was carefully relaid inside like a giant jigsaw puzzle, albeit at a level at which this particular floor never sat. However, our grant-masters were content.

This ground floor chamber, with its fireplaces at either end, may once have been partitioned. We also found evidence from ashlar set back some 25-30mm that it may originally have been panelled, suggesting that it may at first have fulfilled a purpose as polite as the first floor chamber. However, after humbler domestic use



in the late seventeenth century, archaeological evidence suggests that its use had changed radically by the nineteenth century.

The north fireplace had been blocked with masonry, which we removed (finding an upturned stone trough in the process). The lintel needed considerable pinning – a tricky operation which involved two builders standing with their heads up the flue for much longer than they would have liked. The flue is now blocked but ventilated. We also found a 19th-century brick and stone feature set into the floor in the north west corner, also suggestive of some light industrial use, perhaps requiring the quenching of hot metal. Areas of the west wall showed signs of cracking and discoloration consistent with exposure to strong heat – evidence perhaps of a rudimentary kiln or furnace.



**The view of the south-west elevation after restoration showing the unblocked west window and the re-blocked lower half of the window on the south.**

Stone blocks had dropped in the vaulting above the window over the sink and over the stairwell. These were re-pinned, in preference to dismantling and reconstructing them. The lower part of the other, larger window on this west wall in the kitchen had been blocked up to transom height and at first we planned only to re-glaze part of it, and to form a double height window of the top half of a doorway and its fanlight to the left of the fireplace on the southern wall. (This doorway must once have led into the extension built onto this south wall, whose shadow can still be read on the exterior).

However, the proportions of this tall window did not work and the room remained rather dark and depressing while the west window remained partially blocked. Our neighbours in the Court House unlocked this conundrum for us by very generously agreeing to allow the whole of the west window to be unblocked. This instantly transformed the room and it now acts as a reminder (albeit an anachronistic one) of why oriel windows were so successful a device. We therefore reblocked the lower half of our new window in the doorway (a change of heart that can also be read on the exterior).

Unusually, the large working fireplace feeds into two flues, leading into the chimneys at SE and SW corners. It also contains the remnants of a bread oven. The room is furnished in simple, modern oak furnishings in the local Arts and Craft tradition. The purpose of the niches in the west wall is not clear but they perhaps provided storage.

The door to the stairs is of oak and the only new door in the building. Architect Stephen Oliver performed a near-miracle in designing the new oak spiral staircase to fit into this tight stairwell (with hardly a straight surface in it) which is both pleasant to use and also complies with modern building regulations. In order to fit an electrical cupboard at the foot of the stairs and to insert a gas-fired boiler under the mezzanine landing where the box stool originally sat, our staircase does not follow quite the same line. The windows are original to the tower. Most of

the panelling at the top and the door are primary and may have come from the main house.

In the upper chamber, the fine diagonally laid stone floor is original, which we have gently repaired and beneath which we have cunningly laid the service ducts for the bathroom. We have unblocked some but not all of the windows, in particular leaving the arcade of the loggia blocked to afford visitors to both banqueting houses some privacy.

There were lengthy discussions about how we should reglaze the windows (all were boarded up when we found them). Precedents for both square and diamond leaded panes exist on Campden High Street. In the end we opted for squared panes for consistency with the East Banqueting House and as of arguably higher status. The windows were ordered and made when the mischievous sprite who presides over the restoration of historic buildings arranged for us to discover some fragments of greenish window glass and a few mangled scraps of lead under a floor slab in the SE corner. The lead was indisputably from diamond panes. However, the window under which it was found was the later insertion into the blocked arcading, later blocked in its turn. Was it another item salvaged from the main house? Or was it late seventeenth century work? We shall probably never know. The fragments and scraps have been deposited in the town archive and our panes are rectangular.

In keeping with the rustic feel this storey has developed, the windows have shutters rather than curtains, some of them old, others patched or remade of new oak. The ironwork is based on local examples and was made by Deacon & Little.

The door to the terrace was found stored in the basement and is seventeenth-century work. The quality of its applied moulding suggests it may well have come from the main house.



**Piecing together fragments of the decorative frieze below the cornice on the first floor.**



**The blackened eye of the winged grotesque was the only evidence of colour that remained and which we have reinstated.**

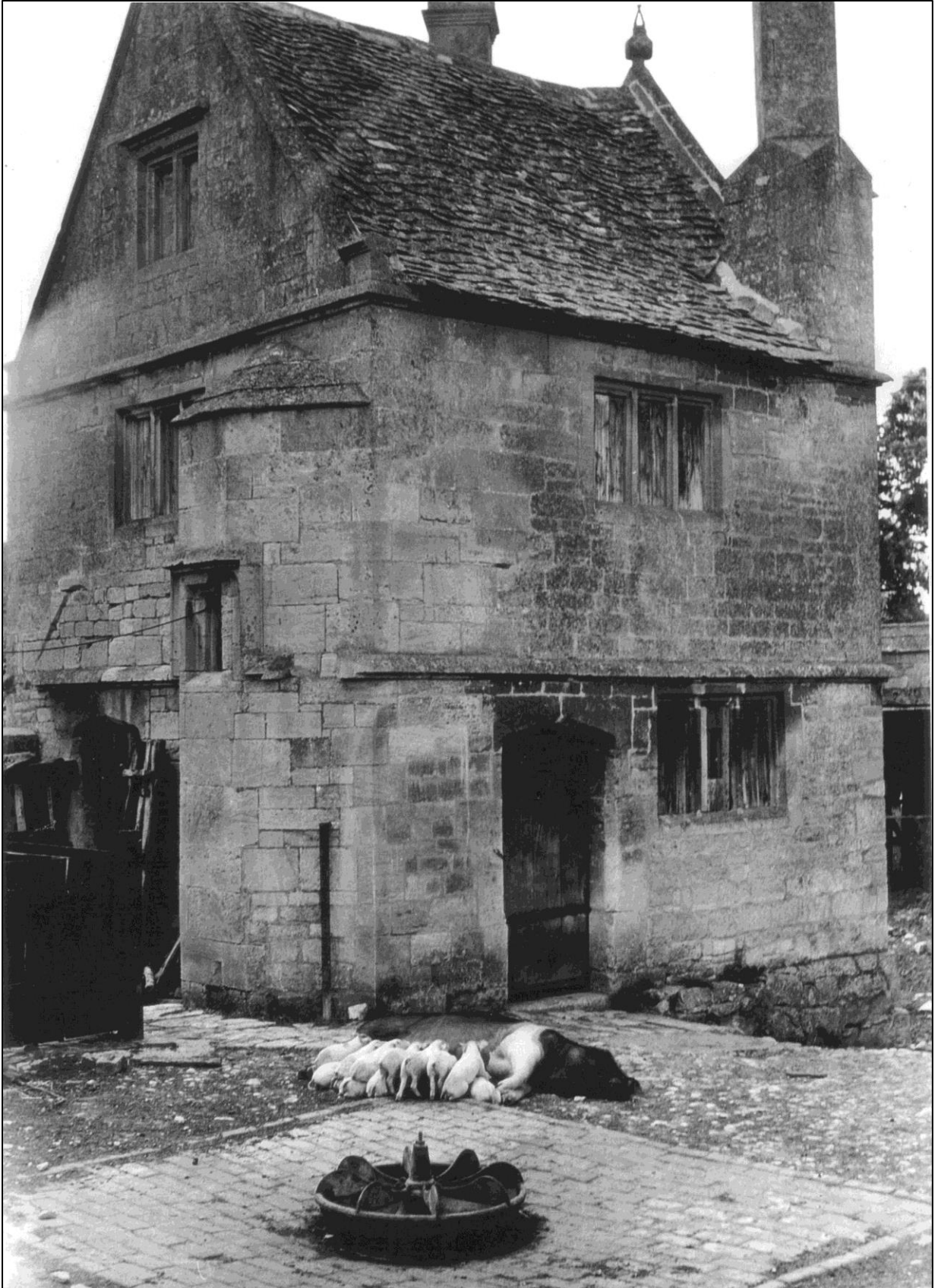
The ceiling on the first floor still had its original barrel vault (unlike the East Banqueting House where the Earl of Gainsborough had once again intervened). Unfortunately it was so decayed that it had to be replaced with new lathes and 3-coat lime plaster. The patchy plaster in the rest of the room is largely as we found it, limewashed over. The decorative frieze that runs around the cornice has been pieced together from pieces picked up off the floor or stored in boxes in the Fellowes' attic by conservator Ned Schaerer. The fashion of the day was for such plaster to be brightly painted, although the only evidence of colour that remained here was blackening of the winged grotesque's eyes, which we have reinstated. The cornice moulding is based on sections found on the floor.



**Drawing of the complete grotesque**

This polite decoration stands in strangely satisfying contrast to the crude lathe, plaster and studwork partition, not even keyed in at ceiling level, which probably dates to the conversion of the building for domestic use after 1645. The south face of the partition in particular bears much casual graffiti from apple pickers and naughty boys, all carefully recorded before being limewashed over. That on the back of the door has been left as a reminder of that period in the building's history.

Behind the bath, the new partition of oak has been lightly oiled, in common with all new joinery in the West Banqueting House. The fireplace (now blocked) was inserted soon after the first building phase. It rather spoils the symmetry of the original single chamber and its chimney stack has been similarly crudely positioned (and, we think, was pillaged from the East Banqueting House) but both are part of the building's varied past.



**The Almonry in the 1950s.**

## THE ALMONRY

### **Brief History**

The bird's eye views of the mansion all provide accurate representations of the Almonry, which appears as a significant element within the vista. The north elevation seems deliberately designed to be viewed across the boundary wall; its two finely moulded, diagonally set chimney stacks and gable finial complement those of the West Banqueting House when viewed from Church Street and the building forms part of the stately approach engineered by Sir Baptist.

Like the rest of the buildings on the site, the Almonry is of the first quality. Careful analysis of the eaves has shown that it originally had parapets, perhaps with decorative strapwork as on the banqueting houses. All corner and eaves quoins are finely dressed ashlar; the string courses and elongated chimney stacks are moulded with great precision. There appears to have been a deliberate interruption in the string course on the south east corner of the turret, perhaps indicating some former decorative feature now lost or that a wall continued south from this corner (as appears on the bird's eye view).

All this begs the question of the Almonry's original purpose. The name 'Almonry' implies that it was built as a dedicated outbuilding to the almshouse over the road. The two ground floor doors are interpreted as an entry and exit for parishioners collecting their allowances. If so, this would be a very rare secular example of an office more typically associated with pre-Reformation monastic foundations. The almoner was charged with collecting and distributing alms, which every religious house was under a duty to distribute. But an "almoner" in Sir Baptist's times would have been a somewhat anachronistic term, with unfortunate Catholic overtones.

In fact, the name 'Almonry' is more likely to have been a mid-20th century invention, based on its proximity to the almshouses. F.L. Griggs, exceptionally sensitive towards the care of historic buildings, calls the building "a Lodge" in his

correspondence with the SPAB in the 1920s. He nowhere uses the term "Almonry". Percy Rushen, conscientious Victorian antiquarian who wrote the standard reference work on Campden, comments around 1898:

In the curtilage and near the highway was a dove house, in front of which it was customary in olden times to distribute alms....The pavilions or banqueting houses at each end of the terrace, the gate lodges, the dove house and the offices do not seem to have suffered much if at all; but from the time of the fire no attempt has been made to rebuild or reinstate the mansion and therefore the buildings remaining have only been kept in sufficient repair to fit them for husbandry purposes".<sup>1</sup>

Again, Rushen nowhere uses the word "Almonry", despite the reference to almsgiving. A *Country Life* photo from 1916 shows the building as Rushen must have seen it - including a dovecote on the south elevation. Comparison of this photo with those of the 1929 repairs explains the differentiated weathering of this elevation. The same view today shows how little has changed since 1916.

The 1633 edition of Stowe's *Survey of London* published a list of Sir Baptist's benefactions, based on his will. This records in detail the building of the almshouses and the financial provision for their upkeep and allowances for the pensioners. Yet once again, there is no mention of a building dedicated to the distribution of alms, which contemporaries would surely have recorded.

What else might it have been used for? In the eighteenth-century bird's eye views, the building is clearly labelled "the laundry" (q) with the bleach garden (r) adjacent. Physical evidence to support this use exists in the conduit arches and drain in the basement, a large (if inserted) fireplace on the ground floor which could have been used for heating flat irons or boiling a copper, an airy room on the first floor for drying purposes and of course its proximity to the bleach garden. This was an area set aside for laundry to dry and bleach in the sun, often laid across hedges of lavender, rosemary or hyssop to scent the linen. Many landscape paintings of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century houses show the linen spread out to dry.

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<sup>1</sup> Rushen, p 152.



However, the quality of the building seems very high for a domestic office, even one intended to add architectural interest to the scene. The first floor chamber is especially well-finished, with its moulded fireplace and pleasant views from all four elevations. An unratified lease in the Exton papers which is dated 1691 describes "the Brewhouse.....the Bleaching Garden and the garden house standing therein...all of which Brewhouse etc. were part of the Great Burnt Manor House".<sup>2</sup> This is the closest to a contemporary reference; the first floor provides views of the almshouses and of the house which are unobtainable from elsewhere.

Perhaps it began as a garden house and became a laundry. Perhaps the ground floor was some kind of estate office from which servants or the poor from the almshouses could be paid - which might again explain the doors on both sides of the ground floor, giving access to both polite and service areas of the site. Mostly recently, the building was used as studio and storeroom. Whether or not it was ever used to distribute poor relief, the name 'Almonry' has now stuck.

The Almonry's cellar is intriguing. When we came to it, the cellar floor was cobbled with discernible drainage channels running around the four walls to a small drain in the north-west corner, beneath which was standing water. At first, we thought this was no more than standing water to be cured by better drainage but eventually concluded that it was in fact running water designed to run through the building. The floor level falls away diagonally to this corner. Two shallow blocked arches are apparent low down in the north wall. These are very similar to conduit arches which are still visible elsewhere in the wall surrounding the estate, and indeed they align almost exactly with one immediately east of the adjacent gateway into Church Street. This all led us to the conclusion that running water may well have through the cellar at some time, and is consistent with use as a laundry – perhaps all part of Sir Baptist's conduited water system. (As there is still quite often standing water in the cellar today and the floor is bare

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<sup>2</sup> Leicester Record Office 3214/135/15.

earth, we are sorry that we cannot allow access and the cellar is now kept locked).

Just outside the estate wall, opposite the Almshouses on Church Street, is a cart trough. Some say it was used for washing the wheels of dirty carts entering the High Street, or else to re-hydrate wooden cartwheels in warm weather to prevent their iron hoops working loose. It is empty now, although you can still see a large plug at the bottom. Perhaps water was somehow channelled through the Almonry's cellar, out under the wall onto Church Street and then down via the cart dip as required, but archaeology has failed so far to provide confirmation of this.

From the masonry, our archaeologist Richard Morriss suggests that the stair turret may have been an afterthought for a building originally designed to be square. It may even have been a change of heart during the actual building.

### Recent repairs: the Almonry and the SPAB

Chipping Campden has particularly strong links with the Arts and Crafts movement. The town was to be the adopted home of the Guild of Handicrafts from 1902. The Guild was led by C.R. Ashbee, an idealist and disciple of John Ruskin and William Morris. Some 50 craftsmen and their families made the move with Ashbee from the East End of London to the Old Silk Mill in Sheep Street and examples of their work are to be found in



**The cellar of the Almonry, showing the possible conduit arches built into the wall (now blocked) and drainage channel down the centre.**



**Church Street in the 1900s. The arch between the lodges in the gateway has been walled up and remained so after FL Griggs oversaw repairs in 1930. The cart trough has water in; note too the thatched cottage beside the gate lodges, seen at its gable-end. This cottage was demolished in the 1950s.**



many local churches and houses. As a group of craftsmen, the Guild eventually foundered after the Great War, when their idealistic intention of combining craftsmanship with husbandry became no longer tenable. However, the Guild still exists today, keeping the history of its origins alive. Descendants of the founder members still live in the town and the Silk Mill still stands, now home to a museum dedicated to the Guild and to the workshops of Harts the silversmiths. This family firm was founded by George Hart, one of the original guildsmen. (Today's craftsmen welcome visitors to their workshops, and stepping into the old Silk Mill is like stepping back a hundred years.) Meanwhile, around 1906 a Mr Pymment, one of the original guildsmen, took over the Silk Mill, still leasing it to individual members for workshops.

The relevance of this to the Almonry is that in 1929 it was repaired under the supervision of F L Griggs, architect, etcher and subsequent SPAB committee member. The SPAB correspondence files reveal this as an interesting example of how the principles of minimal intervention in historic buildings might be applied before these became widespread.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> SPAB 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Report June 1929, Notes on Cases, referring to the photos reproduced here :

“Chipping Campden, A Lodge of the Old House The house had been allowed to fall into a dangerous condition and the very considerable necessary repairs were placed by the owner in the hands of local builders, Messrs J W Pymment & Sons of Campden, who consulted our member, Mr F L Griggs ARA, as to the methods employed. A comparison of the photos is unfortunately prejudiced by the intensity of the one taken immediately after the repair which exaggerates the difference in tone between the old work and the new. The new which is practically all walling masonry, is carried out in chopped stone from the local quarry, and when inserted in old work this very rapidly assumes the same colour. Moreover the Committee considers it better to leave it to weather naturally than to tone it down artificially. The open joints were repointed with sand and lime mortar, cut flush with the surfaces.”



**Left: C R Ashbee, founder of the Guild of Handicrafts in 1900, taken by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1900.**

**Right: F L Griggs, architect, artist and benefactor of Campden; founder of the Campden Society and SPAB activist**



**Pyments' men building Griggs' house in Campden, Dover's Court, in the late 1920s. The same team may well have worked on the repairs to the Almonry.**

Under Griggs' instructions, in 1930 local builders Pymment and Sons undertook repairs to the stair turret. Pymment & Sons were the firm founded by the same Mr Pymment, builder and joiner, who had taken on the Silk Mill. (His firm is still in business today, under the same name although now in different ownership). According to sound SPAB principles, photos were taken before and after the repairs at Griggs' instigation.

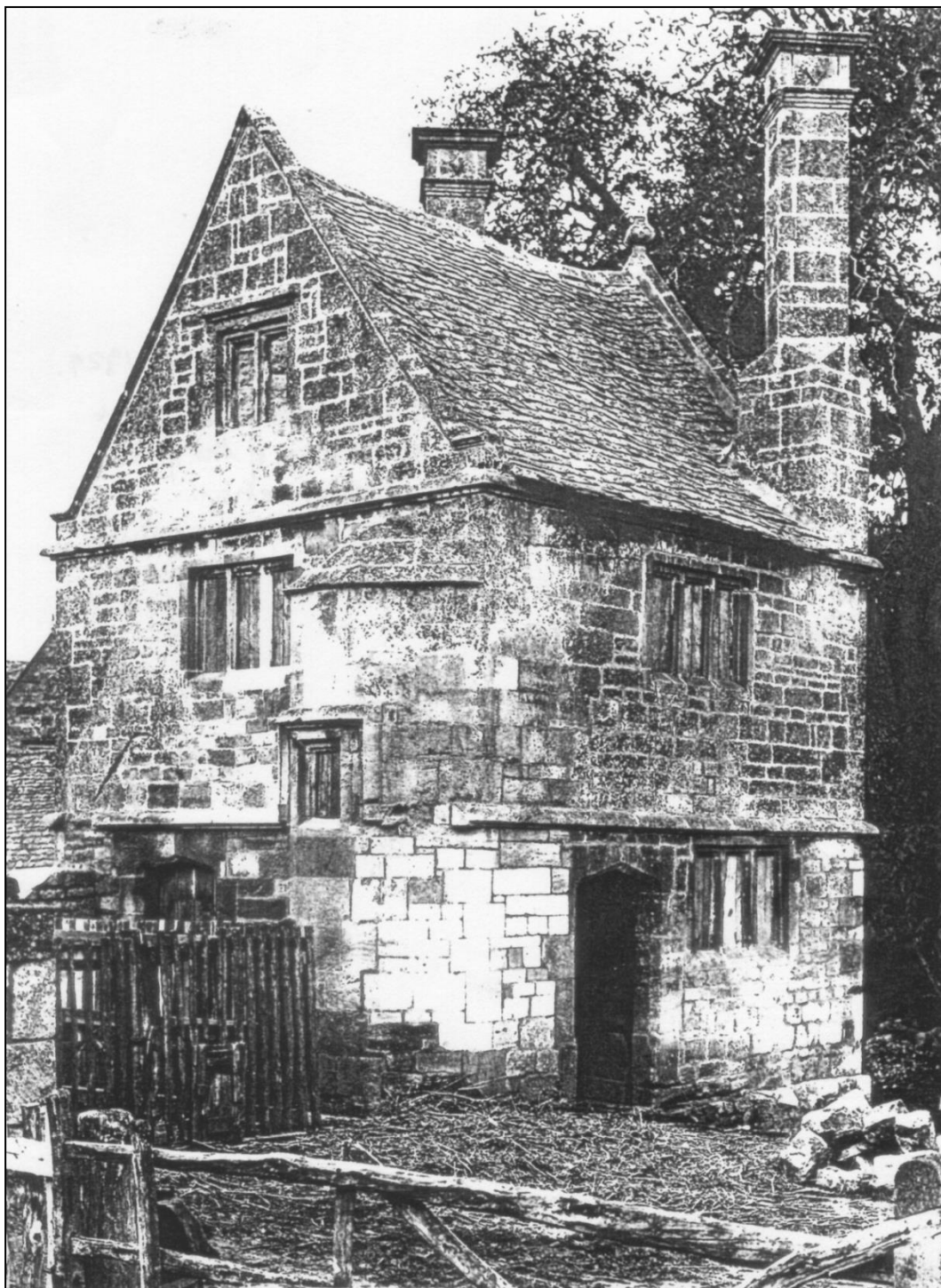
The photos show that the stair turret at ground level was almost completely rebuilt and the first floor window on the south elevation was reinstated. The shadow of recently removed accreted buildings is also apparent, a removal that may have accounted for the dangerous state of the stair turret. The first floor window in the south elevation also appears to have been almost completely replaced. Griggs was correct that the stone would tone down naturally, though his repairs can still be identified today on the stair turret.



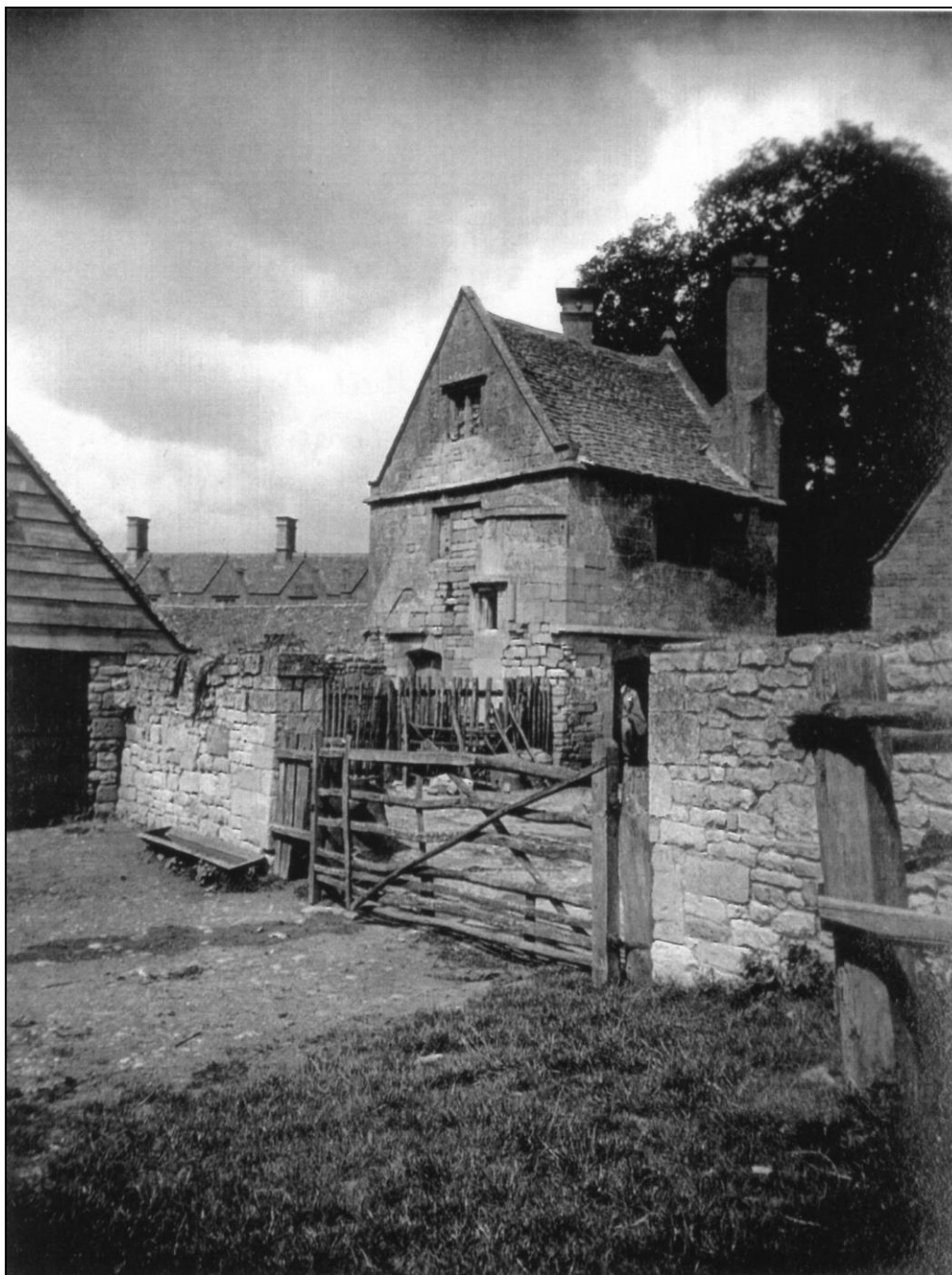
**The Almonry before its repair in 1929. The removal of the lean-to (see Fig 29) has made the dangerous state of the stair turret alarmingly clear.**

*SPAB Archives*





**The Almonry after repair in 1929. General repointing is apparent, as is the almost complete restoration of the first floor window in the south elevation.** *SPAB Archives*



The Almonry apparently at an interim stage of the repairs, since the blocks in the stair turret appear to be unpointed. Perhaps the figure lurking in the doorway is Griggs himself. The line of the fence leading south from the Almonry is interesting: the wall in the foreground that it joins is almost certainly primary and the fence not only follows the line of a wall shown in the bird's eye views but the little court formed in front of the building makes sense of the three doors at ground/basement level.

*RCHME*

## Restoration of the Almonry

Largely as a result of Griggs' repairs, the Almonry was relatively sound structurally when it came to us. Even so, it still needed a thorough overhaul of its fabric and so was shrouded in scaffolding for much of 2002, just like the West Banqueting House.

Its rafter feet had also decayed so that it required re-roofing, in the course of which we discovered that the building originally had parapets which, on its polite-facing east elevation at least, possibly carried strapwork similar to that on the banqueting houses. This suggested that the building had once been of higher status and also that it had been re-roofed in the past. It also explained the current, rather uneasy relationship between the roof and the eaves: there is no longer an internal gutter, merely a hole on the north wall to show where one once egressed. Sufficient tilestones were available from the banqueting house to re-roof the Almonry.

The decay of the roof structure from walls had again led to walls bowing outward, especially on the west, where a stress crack ran from top to bottom. Slips of new stone have been inserted and we hope the problem has now stabilised.

The north west chimney and the first floor fireplace it services are both primary. The north east chimney, although equally fine work, has blocks of fire-pinkened stone incorporated in it, raising suspicions that it is a post-1645 addition for the clearly inserted ground floor fireplace. The chimneys just needed re-pointing although the finial on the southern gable had to be replaced. New windows and glazing were inserted into the existing openings, the rectangular ones matching those used by Griggs in the South Lodge.



**The Almonry before restoration.**

In the basement, vertical breaks in the stonework suggest that its window was originally a door, which intriguingly gives the building exits on three of its four sides. The dip in ground level outside the window registers this earlier form and also the original ground level in the henyard which were once some 900mm lower than today.

Our original plan was to put a bathroom into the basement, perhaps lowering the floor level. However, it became clear that this room was just too damp; to excavate the floor would only have made matters worse on the local clay unless we had tanked the room out using modern methods and materials which are usually inimical to historic fabric. So the cellar has been left empty and the building in its current equilibrium with its surroundings (and some standing water at certain times in the year seems entirely normal!) The water, we found, seeps in under the east elevation and flows through the channels in the floor to leave under the west wall, although we have been unable to discover quite where it goes – perhaps one day a dowser will volunteer their services. Perhaps too our intelligent forbears utilised this natural drainage flow to form the pond in the henyard as shown in the bird's eye view.

The post in the centre of the basement has mortises for double-tenoned floor joists and has clearly been re-used from a substantial building – most likely from the burnt mansion.

Instead of this abandoned idea for a basement bathroom, we inserted a carefully designed cabinette with shower into the first floor chamber. The fine quadruple aspect is this room's chief glory and so as not to lose the view of the almshouses, the folding doors were designed and executed to the highest standards of craftsmanship so that visitors can still lie in bed and enjoy the view.

When we found it, this room was plastered up to the collar-ties (the small windows to be seen on the exterior suggesting a third storey seem always to



**The Almonry viewed from West Banqueting House during repair in April 2002.**



**Looking towards the SW corner of the Almonry.**

have been blind). This high ceiling left apparent the rather ugly arrangement of the flue inserted for the ground floor fireplace as well as the rather clumsy accommodation for the dome of the stair turret and so a new ceiling was made at its present height. New oak floors were laid in both first and ground floor rooms. The craftsmanship of the staircase and stair turret is striking - the precision of the treads (now worn in places), the newel post, the circular outer walls and especially the dome overhead. There is a fine pegged wooden banister, whose style, jointing and iron fixing all suggest it may be contemporary with the building. Certainly no apparent use since 1645 would support the later introduction of such fine work – unless it too was plundered from the main house after the fire.

The two doors to the outside are probably primary, now honestly patched where necessary. The door to the basement is new, as is the storage cupboard to the left of the fireplace. This fireplace is a later and crude addition, sitting uncomfortably with the window and clearly of a different order from the fine first floor one. It probably came when the buildings were being used for residential purposes in the mid to late-seventeenth century.

The boundary walls and changes in ground level are an important characteristic of the site as a whole, and nowhere more so than around the Almonry, where the polite areas merge into the service courts of the Jacobean complex. We have tried to respect these old demarcations wherever possible and to allow them to be read. So for example the present day wall to deal with the change in ground level between the Almonry and West Banqueting House lies on the foundations of an earlier one. Similarly, the solid fenced section of the boundary wall to the north of the West Banqueting House records an earlier opening, its slightly lower level a friendly concession from our neighbours. And originally, a wall ran from the NE corner of the Almonry to the boundary wall along Church Street, as shown by the breaks in the string course and plinth of both Almonry and barn. The remains of this wall are apparent in the wall of Court Barn, where an ogee-

headed door is also apparent. Footings of the wall lie below the surface and the wall is also shown on the bird's eye view (and perhaps continued south of the Almonry, leading off from the stair turret with its broken string course). The gateway we found between Almonry and barn is thus a later opening and we hope to close it up to reinstate an important division between the privacy and status of the main house and the humbler henyard (now the Landmark car park).

Overall, the banqueting houses, Almonry and lodges represent one of the most important and least altered set of garden buildings to survive for their period. Capability Brown was to copy the banqueting houses for the Jacobean revival at Burghley House in the 1760s, so their significance has long been recognised. We all find ourselves beneficiaries of Sir Baptist's taste for fine buildings and can share in the sentiments of the author of his epitaph on the extravagant tomb in St James's Church:

*Campdena Faelix Possides.... Ille Aedibus  
Decoravit Amplis Hortulis Nitidis Agrum Tuum*

(Oh fortunate Campden! He has decorated your fields with  
fine buildings and gardens...)

