

Further notes on 57 Church Street, (The Crown Post), Harwich.

Following the initial report drawings came to hand that have enabled some further thoughts to be put to this complex. The survey drawings are those completed by Richard Shackle and Dave Stenning in 2006 when the building was undergoing an extensive restoration. Their drawings clarified numerous changes at this time including the removal of a dragon beam and underbuilding the side jetty. This has helped considerably to understand the RCHME photograph from 1922.

57 Church Street can now be described as comprising 2 small timber-framed units of the typical close studded style of the area with an interesting masonry structure providing the southern ground floor boundary wall. The rear unit is set out square and aligned W-E to this wall with the mid rail resting on it. The front

range, of parallelogram form is also aligned W-E but has the main south storey posts partially embedded in the wall and mid rail level with the top of the masonry wall. Given the awkward alignment of the frontage range to that at the rear and also to the wall it is suggested that it has been moved from another site.



Frontage in 2007.

The rear unit consists of a central bay flanked by two partial bays with a substantial jetty approximately 3'.0" wide to the north. Entry to the ground floor is via a doorway at the western end of the north elevation. This appears to coincide with a framed opening for stairs giving access to the first floor. The doorway has a plain straight head whereas the paired large windows to the ground floor central bay have moulded mullions with traceried heads. A framed opening in the floor opposite the windows in the central bay and against the masonry wall is taken as an indication that the room was heated, possibly by a hearth with timber stack.

At first floor the windows are of more utilitarian form with diamond mullions. Paired windows in the north elevation light the main chamber and a single mullion window gives light to the stairs enclosed by a partition at first floor. A later alteration is the insertion of an oriel window flanked by frieze lights in the south elevation. As this would compromise the original fire hood/stack for the building to remain heated alternate arrangements must have been made. At some stage the paired windows in the north wall were blocked.

The roof is of crown post form with paired rafters, collars and collar purlin. The cross quadrate crown post is four-way braced to rafters and collar. The brace to the east is a replacement. On the survey drawings the collar purlin is shown truncated to the west and elements of the frame beyond are missing.

The front unit is of two bay parallelogram form and jettied to the west and north. A dragon beam, shown on the survey drawings appears to have been removed during restoration and the north side jetty underbuilt. The former construction helps to explain the now visible offset axial beam.

Entry to the ground floor was again from the north adjacent to the rear range. It would appear from the survey drawings that most of the north wall was open apart from a small close studded section next to the arch headed doorway. The ground floor west elevation consisted of a range of three windows each with three moulded mullions and inset arched head between. A cellar under this unit was not surveyed.

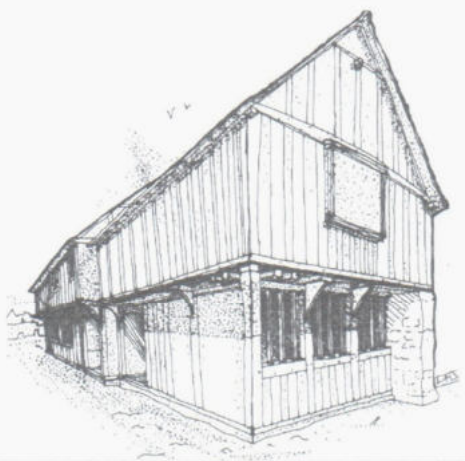


RCHME photograph taken in 1922 as the next door building was being demolished.

As the floor was incomplete it was impossible to determine the position of the stair trap to access the first floor. The two bay first floor chamber was lit by a central window in the west gabled wall. The roof was of typical crown post form.

SUMMARY

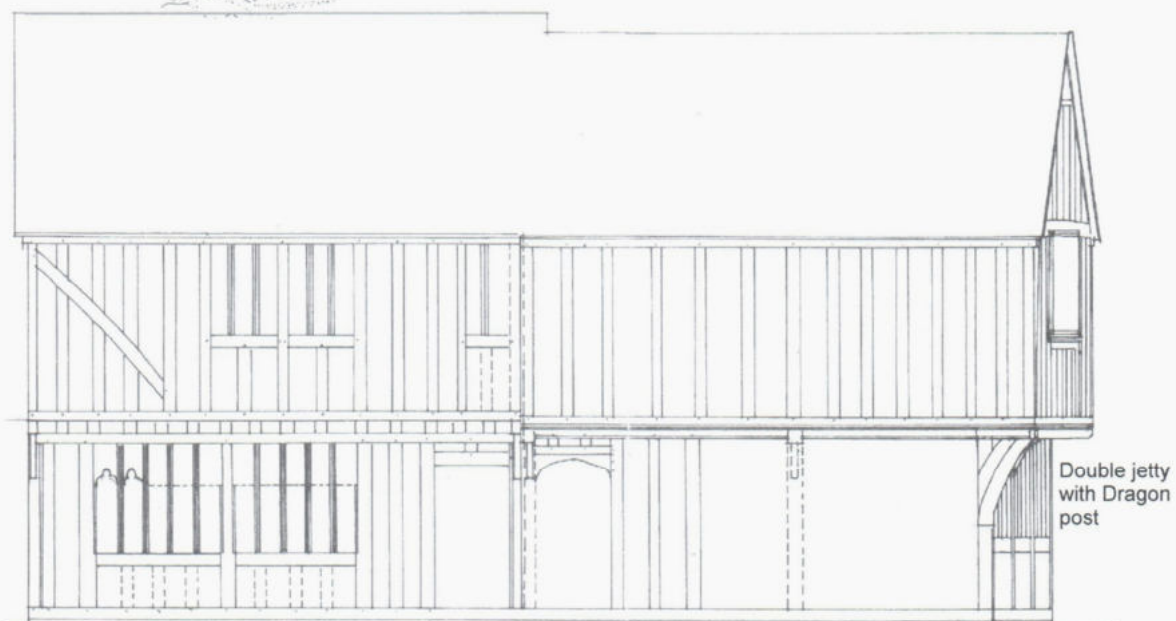
The survey drawings of 2006 show the rear unit as complete but the truncation of the collar purlin and missing framing to the west elevation make it difficult to assume this as definitive. (If it had extended forward it would make sense as a guild/public building) Did the original building length correspond to the existing length of masonry wall? As presented in the survey drawings the buildings can be described as having a commercial/public use. The rear unit perhaps as a prestigious showroom at ground floor where influential customers could be entertained in comfort with a workshop/store above. The front range of parallelogram form could have been a relocated market building from a site that would have necessitated this plan form. It would be very interesting to be able to survey the cellar and also establish the extent of the remaining length of masonry wall.



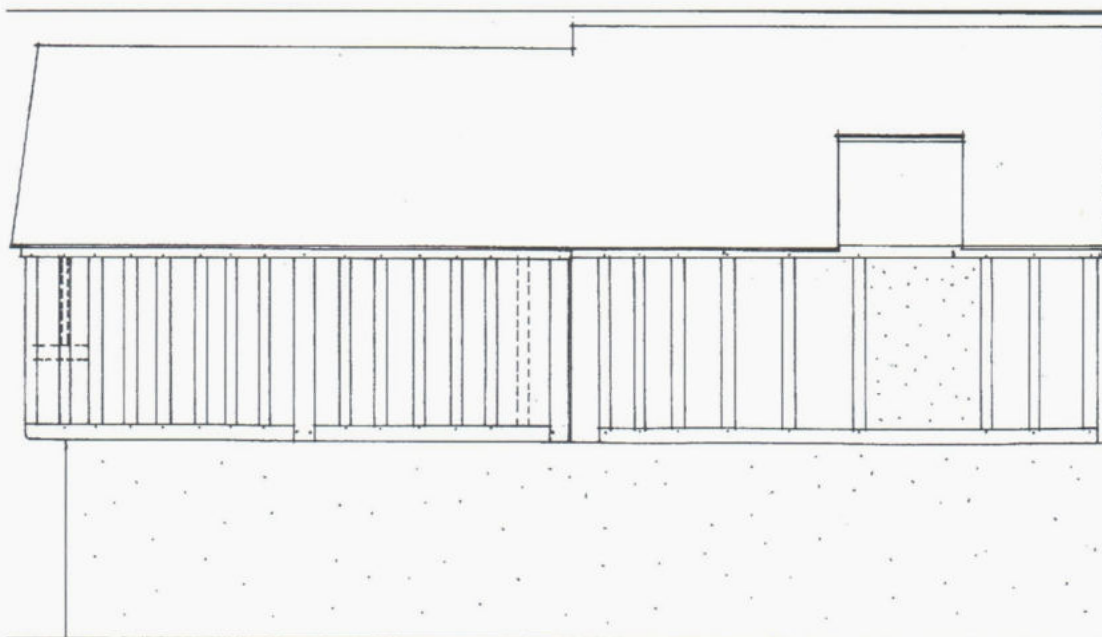
Crown Post, 57 Church Street, Harwich, Essex.

From drawings by Dave Stenning
and Richard Shackle in 2006.
Survey when major works carried
out to building

Suggested re-construction after
the later front building is built.



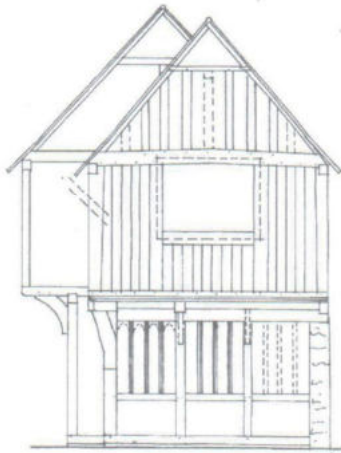
North face elevation shown with jettied side access.



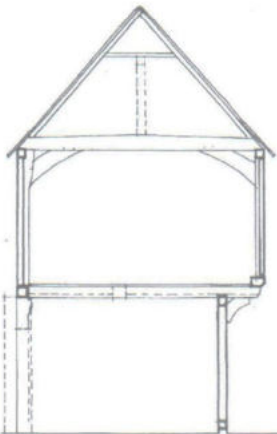
South face elevation shown with ground floor solid walling and position of fireplace.

From drawings by Dave Stenning and Richard Shackle in 2006.
Survey when major works carried out to building

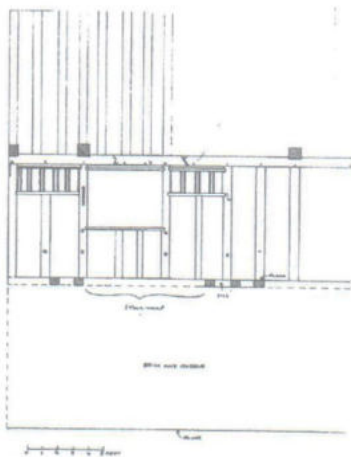
Crown Post, 57 Church Street, Harwich, Essex.



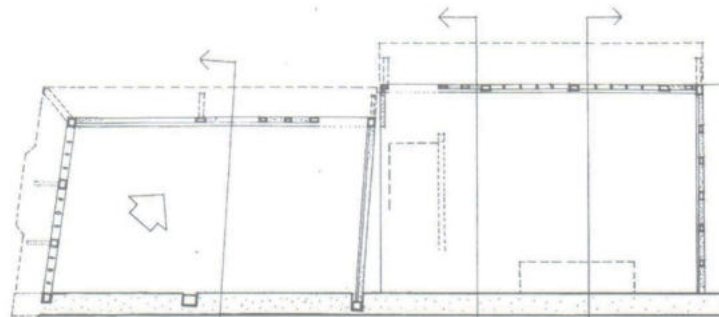
West Elevation re-constructed.



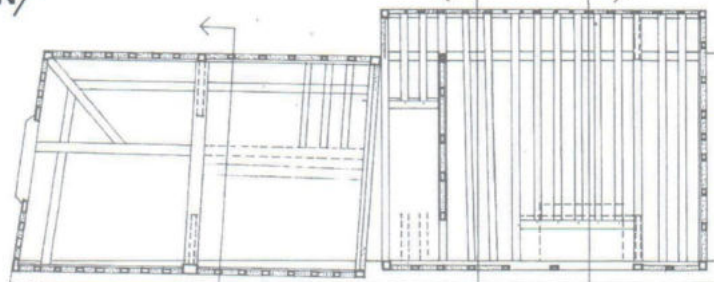
Section of rear range looking east.



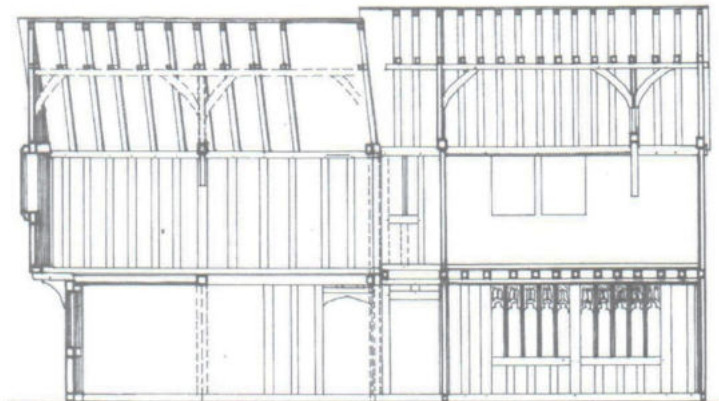
Later window changes in south wall of rear range



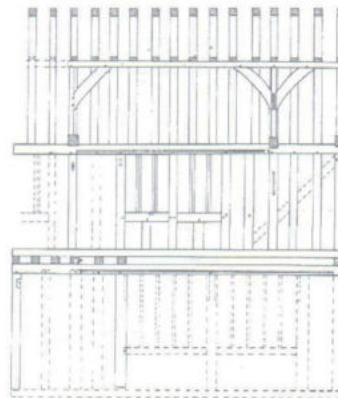
Ground floor plan showing original jetties.



First floor plan showing original jetties.



Long section looking north



Earlier window in north wall of rear range blocked when new build to north