



One of the houses in Hagley which was recently surveyed by the author and others. It is considered to have been started in about 1600.

CHAPTER 9

HOUSING IN HAGLEY

A cursory examination of housing in Hagley, West Hagley and Blakedown after the elimination of the 20th century estates would suggest that there is nothing before the late 18th century and that the main materials are red brick with roofing tiles and slate on a 70/30 split. There are no timber-frame houses to be seen in Hagley, unlike five out of six of the neighbouring parishes.

In 1994 a survey was undertaken to record all domestic dwellings that were shown on the first edition of the 6" Ordnance Survey map and were still in existence. As a check for the total, the 1881 census figure of 286 occupied houses was used and by examination of all dwellings a figure of 167 (58%) had survived the 112 years. Each dwelling was placed in one of six categories.

Large detached houses usually had a better quality finish and stood in larger gardens.

Small detached houses sometimes had pretensions to grandeur but also took in farms and other isolated buildings whose occupiers worked close by.

Semi-detached described as the "same" meant that they were an exact pair. Those described as "different" indicated one of the pair was larger than the other, suggesting a difference in status between a craftsman and his assistant, or the owner and his tenant.

The same definitions are used for terraced housing.

A summary of the survey is shown in the table below.

HOUSE TYPE	HAGLEY	WEST HAGLEY	BLAKEDOWN	TOTAL
Detached , large	17	3	1	21
" small	13	12	22	47
Semi-detached				
same	24	5	10	39
different	11	5	4	20
Terraced, same	0	4	16	20
different	13	4	3	20
TOTAL	78	33	56	167

While 42% of the housing stock from 1882 had been lost by 1994, it is considered that these losses were fairly uniform across all categories and in the three parts of the parish.

The figures reflect the arrival of the railway in 1852 with stations at West Hagley and Blakedown. Completion of the field enclosures in 1830 and 1832 encouraged an increase in population and also a change

in its distribution. Checking the tithe map with the 1882 O.S. map confirms these moves. Another important event was the development of the Springbrook forge with its 150 employees, but even if there were a number of employees who were fathers and sons from the same family, simple arithmetic suggests that quite a large number travelled from outside the parish to work.

Even with the changes in the middle of the 19th century it is seen that nearly half the dwellings were still in the original village centre and certainly the vast majority of the large detached houses remained in the vicinity of Hagley Hall.

This survey set out to obtain information that was readily available to anyone standing in the road. Helpful occupiers sometimes gave the recorders an opportunity to look at interesting internal features but this additional information hardly amounted to a full building survey. However, opportunities did arise to carry out detailed work on two buildings.

The first⁸⁰ was a small vernacular house in Church Street, which the owners demolished and then rebuilt on the same site in a similar style. Originally it had been intended to renovate and modernize but the more investigation work that was carried out, the more obvious it became that the initial plans were not practical.

The building was not old in historical terms. Map evidence placed it between 1837 and 1882. Brick sizes 9" x 4½" x 3" suggest it is post-1850 when the Brick Tax was finally repealed.

With the full co-operation of the owners, each stage of the demolition was recorded. Analyzing the results it is very probable that the house was developed in five stages. In the main living area only one wall was 9" thick i.e. 2 bricks, and the other walls, both internal and external were only 4½" thick and relied on two chimneys to achieve something approaching stability. It is no wonder that demolition was the only acceptable course of action.

Part of the preparation for the new building revealed a pit some 2m (6'6") deep x 1.8m(6'0") dia. It is thought that this was probably excavated to get to a water supply running in a thin seam of gravel.

The second⁸¹ opportunity to occur was in Hall Lane. The building presents a Victorian façade to the road with some later modifications. The owners were seeking any historical information that would enable them to date their home and approached the writer. There was little information readily available and the earliest record was the 1838 tithe map and schedule which indicated a building divided into two

⁸⁰ Pagett et al. Report to S.M.R. ref.H.W.C.M. 21274

⁸¹ Pagett, Dunn, Field Report to S.M.R ref.H.W.C.M.24395

dwellings. As a way of expanding the information an architectural survey was carried out with the following results.

The building had been developed over seven phases, from the early 17th century to c1935. Sandstone footings in much of the front half of the building suggested the first two phases of a timber-framed building. Examples of wattle and daub were found in more than one room and the trusses above the older part of the house showed that they had been partially modified to accept a new roofline in the 19th century.

The three chimneystacks showed evidence of changes and extensions and the house was extended backwards to provide more than double the floor area.

These two examples of domestic dwellings that, initially, appeared quite ordinary and straightforward turned out to be very interesting. Of the 167 houses that survived from 1882 to 1994 not too many would be expected to have more than one or two phases of development but there are, no doubt, several more with brick facades covering timber framing and roof trusses that have been used more than once.

While there may be discoveries to be made it is regrettable that at least five farm houses and the associated buildings have been lost and are unrecorded. The sites are now covered by housing estates and it is only old maps that show the former use of this land.

In the future more statistics will be produced endeavouring to provide an explanation of how people were housed and how the houses were built. It is hoped the above notes will be of some use.