

2 – 3 BENCES LANE CORSHAM WILTS SN13 0DD

HISTORICAL ASSESSMENT

Creating first floor link, further minor alterations
and linking together outbuildings



2-3 Bences Lane

February 2026

Project ref 2601

We have been unable to find very much about the history of these cottages.

Bences Lane lies in the older northern part of Corsham, just off Pickwick Road, an area that developed around agricultural and quarrying activity. Much of the lane's build-up area dates from the late 18th to early 19th century, when Corsham expanded thanks to the Bath stone quarrying industry. Small cottages were built to house quarrymen and tradesmen serving the town and nearby estates.

The cottages almost certainly use locally quarried Bath stone, laid in ashlar or rubble courses, with stone slate roofs—a hallmark of Corsham's vernacular style.

Census records from the 1841–1901 period (accessible through Wiltshire Archives) show Bences Lane occupied primarily by quarry labourers, stonemasons, and agricultural workers.

Many such cottages were initially tied houses—either estate-owned or built by stonemason families. Later, they became freehold or rented properties as Corsham grew into a commuter town for Bath.



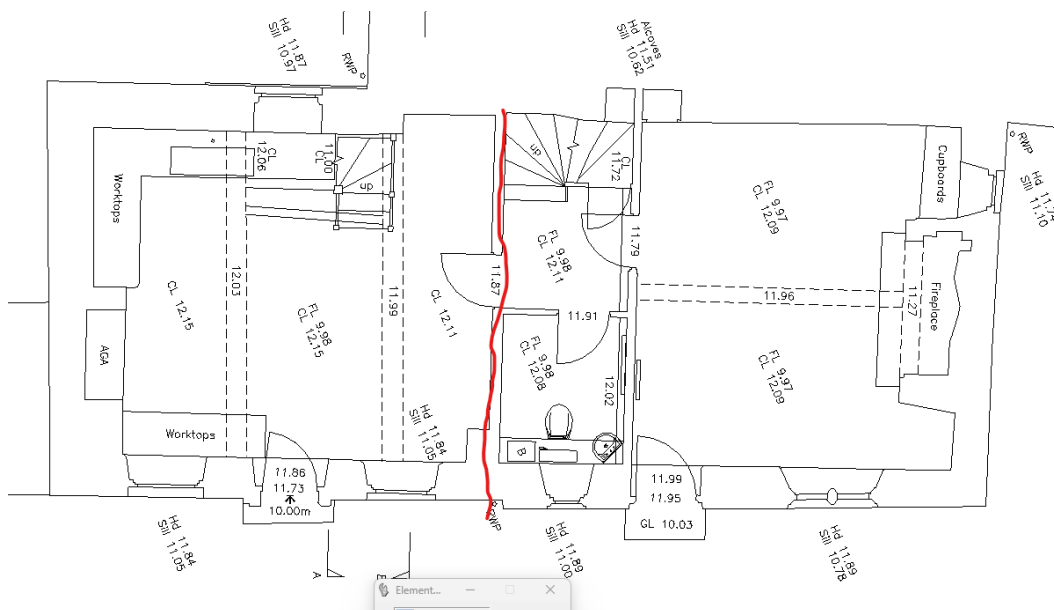
2 – 3 Bences Lane seen from the common, with no. 6 Bences Lane to the right

From an external appraisal of the buildings and adjoining cottage, we believe no.6 Bences Lane is the original 'house' and no's 2&3 were originally outbuildings. The junction between no's 2 & 3 has

undergone some changes. There is a distinct vertical corner to the left hand side of the original front door, but the roof over is a further 1.5m to its left (see below).

The road elevation of no. 2 appears to have been partially rebuilt at a different time to the original end gable wall. The stone used is from a narrower bed and the mortar quite different in composition. The alteration indicates that a chimney breast was added to the gable. Internally there is a genuinely aged fireplace not out of keeping with the cottage. It is possible the fireplace came from another building which was demolished, or perhaps from the opposite end of the cottage, before the cottage was amalgamated with no 3. This is all supposition but it is very clear the cottages have undergone quite a number of alterations, and as stated our belief is they originally started life as outbuildings. It is possible the cottage(s) were used as an early bakery.

The junction between the two cottages is very odd. The rear cottage, no. 3, has a lower roof to the side elevation, and one would normally expect to find a stone gable wall at this junction. In this particular case, the wall junction is 'weak' as can be seen on the survey. The gable wall junction has been mocked up using stone slates laid almost vertically to provide a weathertight junction. There is no evidence of stone gable on this line, indeed the junction is almost directly over a ground floor window to the kitchen. Further the small step to the side wall with the ashlar quoins, rather suggests that was the original 'cottage' end and lines through with the stairs:



Ground Floor plan with possible location of original end gable wall



The junction between the two cottages appears to land over the Kitchen window

The end of the cottage finishes approximately 1m from the neighbouring property to the rear, and a flying freehold belongs to the neighbours.

Further, the roof to no.6 has been extended over no's 2 & 3 as can be seen on the roof plan. The extension has 'lightweight' rendered walls to close off the spandrel rather than applying weight to the roof. It is however not entirely clear why or when this junction occurred, but we believe it was after the 'house' (6) and outbuildings, and was perhaps added to reduce the length of what is probably a problematic gutter between the two properties.



Junction between no's 2 & 3

All in all, this is a very unusual 'joining together' of two cottages and it is unlikely that the true explanation will be uncovered. However the joining together has resulted in a disjointed first floor plan.

2-3 Bences Lane has two independent stairs, an original one, and a more recent addition inserted presumably when the first floor above the present kitchen was converted to provide bedroom accommodation. The more recent stairs run across the rear window, significantly reducing light into the kitchen and are not authentic to the original building.

As the listing will demonstrate, the cottages are from local random coursed stonework in lime mortar, with Bath stone ashlar quoins, all under a stone tiled roof. Internally the roof is supported by a number of trusses, which have raised collars to permit clear circulation within the first floor. There is a horizontal tie to the truss on the junction between no's 2 & 3.

In the rear garden, accessed by going under the flying freehold, there are two outbuildings, with the northern most (larger) constructed over 10 years ago. The southern one is of greater age.



Outbuildings

Planning history

A quick check online revealed a Certificate of Lawfulness in 2024 regarding an outbuilding. ~there was a 1994 decision to permit 'internal alterations including opening fireplaces/reroof rear slope and demolish lean-to outbuilding alterations'. No further information is available.

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