

**REVIEW OF A STRUCTURE TO THE REAR OF
THE CARPENTERS ARMS, LACOCK.**

Carried out, 5th August 2025



Figure 1: The Carpenters Arms, Church Street façade – date unknown.

*An independent assessment of the historic relevance and authenticity
of the structure bounding East Street, to the rear boundary of the curtilage for The Carpenters
Arms (shown above) which faces Church Street, Lacock.*

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BACKGROUND:

This report has been generated as a result of a request by CEO, Adrian Gott of Stonegate to provide an opinion on the relevance, integrity and authenticity of a structure that lies within the Curtilage of the Grade II Listed Building (Reference 1363933) listed on the 20th December 1960, being The Carpenters Arms, Church Street, Lacock. As with all listed buildings, any object, structure or feature attached to it or on the land within the curtilage of the main feature (in this case the public house facing Church Street, shown in Figure 1) and present previous to 1st July 1948, is included as part of the listing and therefore subject to the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the associated guidelines for decisions on alterations, changes and developments or the removal of restrictions. The structure concerned lies to the rear of the plot and is on the very edge of the curtilage of the listing and abuts the neighbouring property.

The main building is undergoing a major recovery and refurbishment following what has been an extended period of many decades of poor maintenance, incorrect use of materials (for example, cement in lieu of lime based mortars which has led to the erosion of the original stone work) and removal of some original features. This however is now being corrected, with an agreed plan of renovation and recovery.

The issues surrounding the owner's proposal to develop the site to offer sufficient guest accommodation and to secure the commercial viability of The Carpenters Arms, requires an understanding of the relevance of the structure to the rear of the property as to its functions, authenticity and age.

This report is the opinion of the author and was compiled following a site visit and discussions with Stonegate on 5th August 2025. During the site visit there was no attempt to remove fabric of the building to gain access to structure beneath modern coverings or finishes for validation.

CONTENTS:

1. Description of current structure as seen on 5th August 2025.
2. Possible purpose, function and age of the structure through time.
3. Analysis of the Structure.
4. Conclusions.
5. Considerations.

1. DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT STRUCTURE:

The general state of the building shows considerable rotting to both the cladding and structures at eaves level (see Figure 3). The state of the structure abutting the neighbouring property cannot be assessed as there is no visibility due to its proximity to the wall of the adjacent property as seen in Figure 2. Externally the current building presents as a horizontal timber clad structure two storey building that abuts the neighbouring property (see Figure 2 as viewed from East Street) with minimal or no air gap and may rely on the neighbouring structure for lateral support against collapse. The valley between the two buildings cannot be seen but is a potential trap that could be causing rot demonstrated on the exposed eave as shown in Figure 3. The visible side of the structure facing the “courtyard” (see Figure 3) is similarly timber clad with four, “2-over-2” glass paned window frames (three together as shown from the inside in Figure 4). To the upper storey (see Figure 1) there is a boarded-up access door/hatch, above a “6-over-4” window facing East Street.



Fig. 2 timber clad street aspect



Fig 3 – inwards facing aspect

Internally (see Figures 4 and 5) there are black painted horizontal beams with bolted extensions either resting or tied into vertical timber supports. The space above has recently been exposed by the removal of ceiling board revealing and empty “loft” space. The vertical wall timbers are accompanied by applied angled timbers but these do not appear to be tied in structurally to the vertical timbers and appear to mimic Tudor style cross-brace structures as shown in Figure 6.



Figure 4 showing windows



Figure 5 showing bolted cross beams

The wall infill between the black timbers is a combination of rendering and plasterboard concealing various brick and stone “wall” structures as shown in Figure 6. These appear to be using recovered stone and bricks using modern cement mortars.



Figure 6

2. POSSIBLE PURPOSE, FUNCTION & AGE OF THE STRUCTURE, THROUGH TIME:

From the current form of the structure, it is unclear for what purpose it was originally created or used. The listing date of 1960 predates by a large margin the current structure as documents and plans drawn up in April 1985 show the conversion from what is described as a “garage” to the structure evidenced today. There is also evidence within the local community that the previous structure was completely pulled down circa 1985 and replaced by what is now present. This means that when the property & land were listed in December 1960, the structure that would have been observed, is not what is seen today.

Referring to the original listing made in 1960, the only references given relate to the main building. If there was another significant structure within the curtilage (this structure?) then this would have been detailed in the listing. Whatever was present was not considered to warrant a reference. This would have been the norm for sheds, minor outbuildings, lean-to's, bothies etc.

2. ANALYSIS OF THE STRUCTURE.

An initial site visit and observations of the current structure indicates that today's building lacks continuity of chronology and therefore is unlikely to have any significant historic honesty. This is evidenced by the following:

1. The crossbeam timbers at ceiling height (Fig 4) have bolted extensions and are machine finished timbers, possibly to have been “recovered” from another source. The method of construction and support do not reflect any degree of craftsmanship or conventional structural method of any known period, with a crude attempt in places to replicate Tudor timber framing (chronologically not relevant).
2. The wall vertical timbers could also have been “recovered” and re-used as the spacing does not look right from a structural strength viewpoint. Without removal of surrounding material the method of linking with the crossbeams is unknown.
3. The way these crossbeams ends are supported on the vertical wood struts do not appear to reflect known methodologies for build methods relevant through the period of the main building.
4. The diagonal wall plates as shown in Fig 6 do not appear to be tied into the vertical struts and appear to be a cosmetic rather than functional structure.
5. The pitch/frequency of the cross beams appears not to be established by normal structural requirements and their load bearing ability and the tying to the verticals looks minimal (impossible to confirm without removing material).
6. The wall facing onto East Street has modern bitumen DPC (damp proof course) with the use of recovered bricks abutting a stone remnant as shown to the lower left of the wall (see

Figure 6 below). This extends across the whole wall. This indicates a replacement/creation of the structure above this level and therefore is of little age archaeologically.



Figure 6 Modern DPC and recent brickwork.

7. The windows let into the side wall facing the main building (Figures 3 and 4) are compatible with the 1980's, indicating that these were introduced during the circa 1985's pulling down and rebuild of the structure.
8. The external wood cladding appears to have been applied as a means to conceal a variety of building materials forming the wall structures, rather than a sympathetic presentation to the streetscape.
9. The roof is a framed structure supporting red coloured pot/ceramic tiles which do not match with the stone tiles that form the covering of the main building. It is not therefore compatible nor sympathetic with the related structures within the listed curtilage. It is assumed that this roof was installed circa 1985.
10. The aspect this structure presents to East Street (see Figure 2) does not match or reflect any of the other buildings structures in this ancient part of Lacock Village, indicating that it was not a considered development.

3. CONCLUSIONS:

On initial observation there is sufficient concern that the structure as seen today has not been an integral part of the historic development of the site in parallel with the main building. Over time it has lost or concealed its origins. With this “known” discontinuity in the development of this structure, what is present today would indicate that it offers a lack of historic integrity and thus, lacks historic significance. Its creation of a garage at some time and then the closing of the access to the garage (around 1985), demonstrates that this has had a “modern” function (garaging of a car or motor vehicle) and thus was (and has) only a minor significance in relation to the main building.

The methods of construction and possible apparent use of recycled materials in a somewhat haphazard structural way, would conclude that this structure did not exist in this or similar form when the building was listed in 1960. Its pre-1985 manifestation declared use as a “garage” may be what was present in 1960 at listing, but not requiring noting. This implies that what was created was for the storage of an automobile, and therefore required little subtlety or robust construction as would be required for a dwelling or building to be occupied by people. Its predecessor is unlikely to have been a coach house or similar as the main building was not a coaching stop. (Historically there are some references to it being an Inn, which implies travellers’ use).

Maybe what is below the footings of some of the walls may identify or refer to a previous structure but this clearly would no longer offer any historic value or significance to justify keeping the current structure.

4. CONSIDERATIONS:

Whatever is done to this structure, serious consideration should be given to removing any risk of potential deterioration of the adjacent building in East Street due to the lack of air gap between the buildings.

Should it be agreed that the site be developed, then a record should be made of the structure during its removal and any below ground archaeology be subject to a watching brief.

Credentials of the author:

A chartered engineer and Fellow of the I.Mech. E., holds the Diploma in British Archaeology gained at Oxford University, Kellogg College in 2004. Whilst Chairman of the Buildings & Monuments Committee for the Wiltshire Archaeological & Natural History Society (Wiltshire Museum), for many years, was also Statutory Consultee for the Council for British Archaeology (CBA) for all Wiltshire Listed Building and Scheduled Monument Planning applications over this time.