

CHAPTER 3: THE VILLAGE

A BRIEF HISTORY

All villages change with time and Wadenhoe is no exception. Nevertheless it has survived since 1793 (Enclosure Award) without losing its rural charm and character (*Figs 1 and 2*). Some of the changes are shown on the 1822 estate map kept in the Wadenhoe Trust office and mainly consist of rerouting roads, though this must have resulted in the demolition of a number of buildings.

ERIC DUFFEY

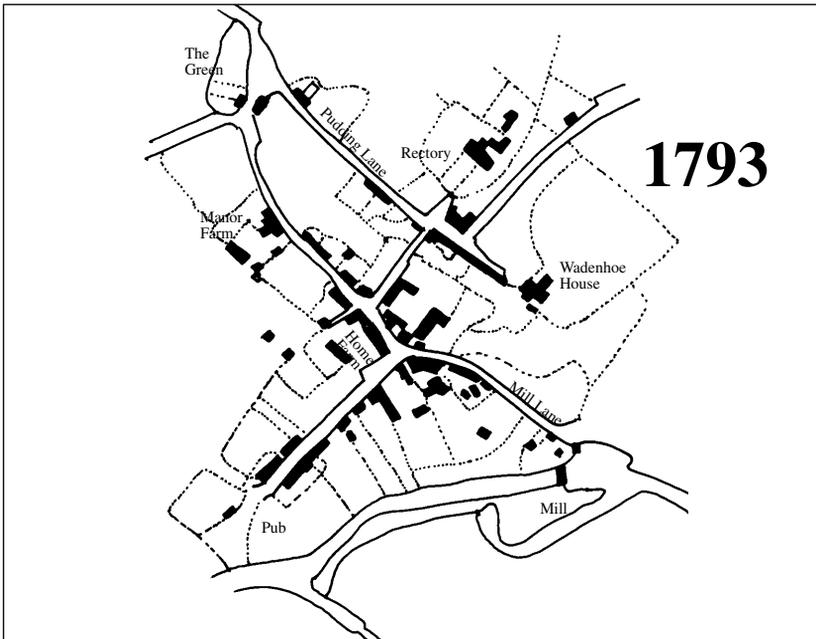


Fig. 1:
Sketch map of Wadenhoe in 1793 (drawn from the Enclosure Award map)

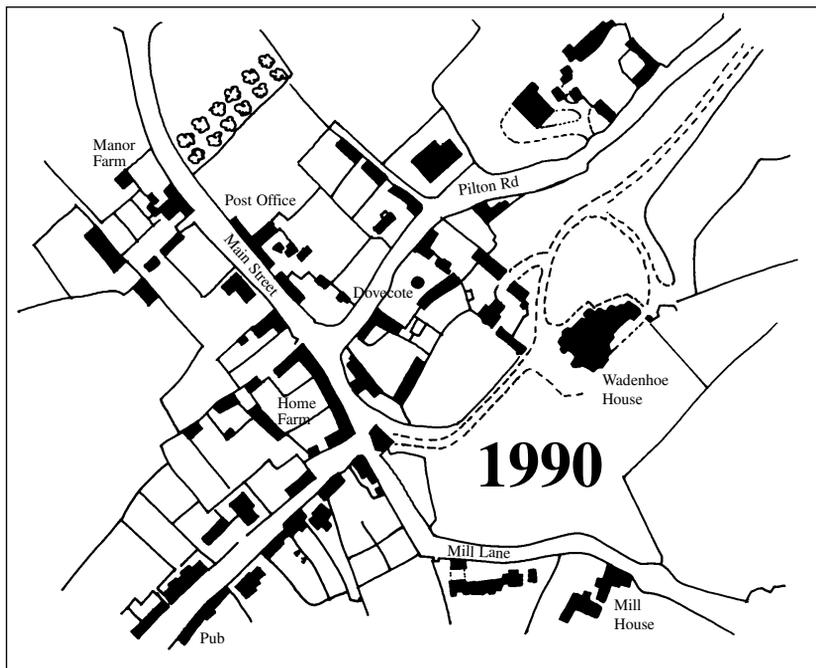


Fig.2:
Sketch map of Wadenhoe in 1990 (drawn from the Ordnance Survey map)

In 1793 and also in 1822 Pilton Road ended in a T-junction in the village, so that the traveller by coach could only turn left to Wadenhoe House or right to travel up Pudding Lane to reach Main Street by the Green. The continuation of Pilton Road to opposite Home Farm was so narrow that it seems that access was possible only by pedestrians. Some time after 1822, possibly about 1865 when the row of houses was built by the Green, the Pilton Road was rerouted to the north side of No. 24 and nearer to the Rectory. Previously it entered the village to the south side and turned right in front of No. 24. At the same time the narrow passage to Home Farm was widened to normal road width. With this change Pudding Lane remained to serve the group of houses (now Nos 22 and 23) and then became a footpath until it reached the Green.

Another change which probably resulted in even more buildings being demolished was the rerouting of Mill Lane. In 1793 this road appeared to pass on the north side of South Lodge and curved gently to the ford by the Mill. This change was made by 1822 and its purpose was probably to enlarge the area of land around Wadenhoe House. The new route to the south side of South Lodge starts in direct line with Main Street, turns left then right to form a 'dog-leg' before reaching the ford. The 1793 map shows many buildings along the old route, all of which have now disappeared.

The dovecote in the estate yard has sometimes been described as 17th century but it does not appear on the detailed 1793 map. In 1822 it is clearly shown on the estate map, so must date from about 1800.

The private drive into Home Farm provided access to the fields beyond up to 1822, and that between Nos 32 and 33 Church Street, which now serves only these houses, was a similar track in 1793. The 1822 map also shows buildings along the edge of the Green which have long disappeared. At the end of Church Street in 1793 there was a building in what is now the garden of Nene Cottage, and opposite was a boat house and channel up to it from the river. The newly rerouted Mill Lane had a bridge over it allowing access from the grounds of Wadenhoe House to wooded walks through an area which now forms the gardens of Nos 1 and 2 Mill Lane and along the bottom of the garden of Cergne House. Contrary to popular belief this route did not continue on to the footpath to the Church. By the 1884 Ordnance Survey the bridge over Mill Lane had gone, the boathouse at the bottom of Church Street remained but the channel was overgrown and the three buildings on the edge of the Green had disappeared.

From 1865 until pre-World War II, when a brick house was built (*The Spinney*) in Pilton Road, the village survived unchanged. Just before and after the war, cottages were demolished in Main Street and Church Street, and also one in Pudding Lane, damaged by a stray practice bomb. A strange token dated 28 June 1836 was found while this cottage was being cleared (*Fig. 3*). In 1952 a second new house (*Fairhope*-extended in 1996) was built in Pilton Road. From the 1970s much more change has taken place, as described elsewhere.

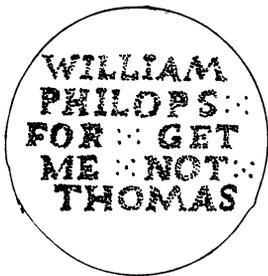


Fig. 3:

This token was found by Harry Brown under a window sill in the Pudding Lane cottage which was demolished after World War II. Perhaps it relates to a young man transported to Australia.



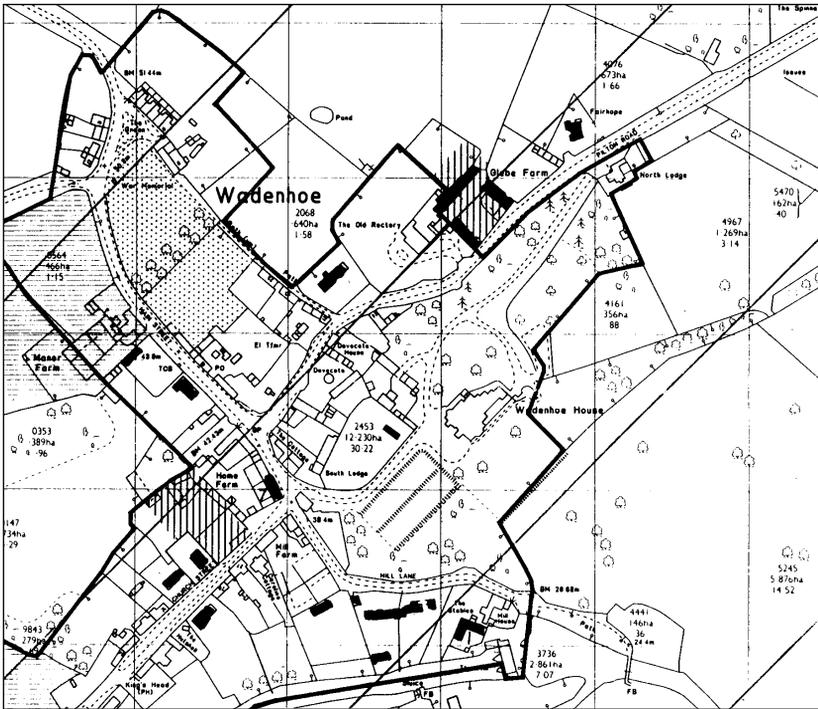


Fig. 4:
Wadenhoe in the late 1990s

The descriptions of the older houses are the result of an enjoyable day in 1997 studying the whole village. Apart from Manor Farm, the amount of time spent analysing any one building was less than 20 minutes and my observations should be treated with caution as additional documental evidence, or a more detailed survey, may change the ‘stories’ that the fabrics of the buildings reveal.

Looking at a village in such an intensive way brings out the ‘vernacular’ traditions of the area, especially in the use of materials. The local stone, an excellent limestone, dominates and would have been taken from the quarries around the Church and at the rear of Manor Farm. The use of reed as an underthatch and in floor construction indicates that this could have been used as a local thatching material. It is possible to see how thatch gave way to locally made pantiles. Collyweston slate was at first used for the major buildings and then became a fashionable material for the estate to use in the mid 19th century, for example, the terraced houses on the Green.

The control of the village by the Wadenhoe Estate is very evident and it is probable that without this restrictive element the village would have developed in a less attractive way. Although the survival of early houses in the village does not compare with other parts of the country it is slightly above average for Northamptonshire. In Wadenhoe, the vernacular buildings of the earlier periods tend to be long narrow buildings of one-and-a-half-storeys, which as they sink down the social scale are divided into smaller cottages.

Almost all of the houses in the village have been drawn especially for this book by DAVID MARSDEN



Nene Cottage

The builder of this small 18th century stone cottage had to contend with cutting the house platform into the valley hillside but had the advantage of being able to abut it to the existing adjacent cottage which saved building a wall. Only one of the two ground floor rooms had an inglenook fireplace, at the side of which was a small lobby for the front door. It was probably built for housing an agricultural worker's family with a kitchen, parlour and two bedrooms built within the roof. On the rear wall are traces of the limewash that formerly covered the stonework.

33 Church Street

Built in the 17th century as a four-roomed cottage, with a kitchen, central doorway and parlour on the ground floor, it was significantly extended at a later period to become a five bay building of one and a half storeys. At a later period still it was made a full two storeys in height. The numerous phases of this building, together with a considerable re-use of structural timbers saved in demolition work, makes this a difficult building to analyse.



31 and 32 Church Street

Over the last 200 years this stone-built terrace has been reduced from four houses to two by breaking through the internal walls and blocking off external doorways. In the end house there still survives the large kitchen inglenook fireplace with a very straight beam, typical of the 18th century. Some of

the more notable features of the terrace are the high internal ground-floor levels and the use of plinths that reflect the considerable changes in ground level.

The Kings Head

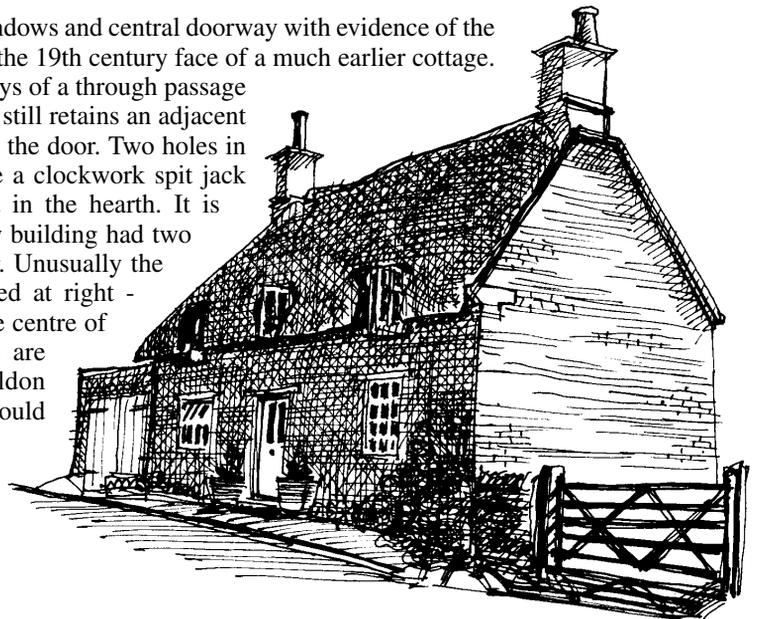
From the evidence of the room heights, Collyweston slate roof and quality of construction, it is probable that this building was built as an inn, or alehouse, before the Civil War. Although the front windows have been replaced and the building has been extended at the north end by an 18th century cottage and the south end by an extension, there is still a three-light stone ovolo mullioned window at the rear which proclaims its 17th century date. Inside the central floor beams have wide chamfers which terminate in bar stops close to the walls. The quality of these and the heavily

canted fireplace beam emphasises that this is a building of above-average status in the village. Regrettably the staircase separating the two ground-floor rooms was removed during recent alterations. This had a newel post which was ornately cut from a plank (splat construction) and finely incised with a geometric design, as was the handrail. The 18th century cottage tacked on to the north end of the building had a kitchen with a through passage on the ground floor and possibly a single bedroom above. In the centre of the inglenook beam is the scar caused by the constant use of rushlights in the same spot.



28 Church Street

The pleasing balanced façade of windows and central doorway with evidence of the former shop sign above the door is the 19th century face of a much earlier cottage. Inside there are the blocked doorways of a through passage and a large inglenook fireplace that still retains an adjacent pantry with a splat ventilator above the door. Two holes in the inglenook beam indicate where a clockwork spit jack was used to turn the rotating spit in the hearth. It is uncertain whether this 17th century building had two or three rooms on the ground floor. Unusually the stair to the upper floor was located at right - angles to the through passage in the centre of the building. The chimney stacks are stone-built square shafts of Weldon stone with moulded cornices that would have been a minor status symbol.



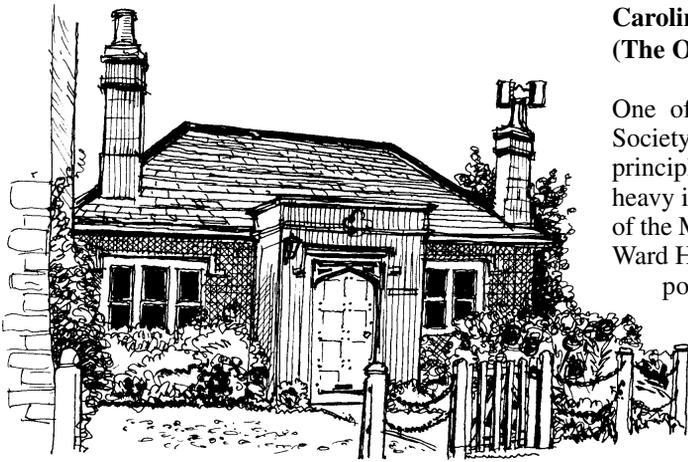
27 Church Street St Giles Cottage

This stone and thatched building is probably about 200 years old and is notable for having one front window at first-floor level. To compensate for this there are three eyebrow dormers at the rear. It still retains an inglenook fireplace with a very straight beam. Within the fireplace is a salt cupboard.



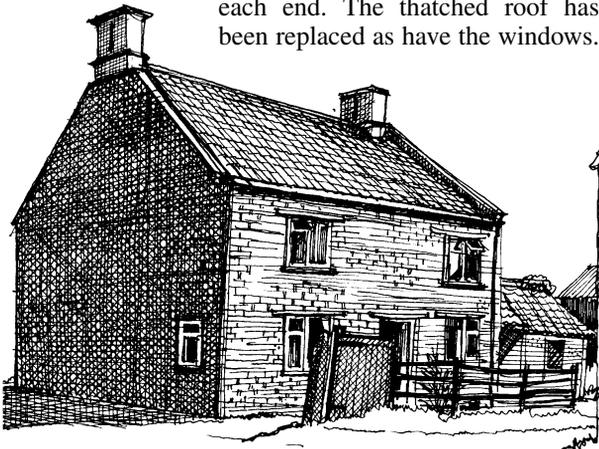
Caroline Cottage (The Old School)

One of the Schools founded by the National Society for the Education of the Poor in the principles of the established Church in 1839. The heavy involvement of Caroline Ward Hunt, Lady of the Manor, in the scheme is emphasised by the Ward Hunt coat of arms proudly exhibited on the porch in an exuberant cartouche. The building was stone-built in the Tudor style with a slate roof. Clearly the architecture was meant to impress on the pupils the role of Church and authority.



Mill Farm

The stonework on this two-storey farmhouse is of good quality with very thin mortar joints, known as ashlar stonework. As it was expensive it is used only on the principal elevation, which in this case faces onto the farmyard. This elevation is typical of the late 18th century with a balanced façade and chimney stacks at each end. The thatched roof has been replaced as have the windows.



On the Mill Lane frontage of the building is evidence for a large blocked window with well-cut stone jambs. Above the door is a fire mark. Attached to the south end of the building is a small two-storey extension with a Collyweston slate roof. There is an external staircase giving access to the first floor, which suggests it was a first-floor granary. However, the presence of a chimney stack indicates a different use. The farm buildings include a threshing barn, small barn and shelter shed. Dominating these is the stone threshing barn fronting onto Church Street which has a tall cart entrance from the street and a lower exit into the rear yard. The rear exits of barns were often lower as the carts leaving the barn were unladen and therefore did not require the height. Built within the main door is a high smaller door that may have allowed stooks of corn to be pitched into the barn from a waggon after the doors had been closed. At the base of the doors is a gap that was temporarily filled with boards. This

with boards. This allowed the doors to be opened whilst threshing was taking place, with the boards keeping animals out and the threshed grain within the barn threshing floor. The slits within the barn wall provided ventilation to the crops stored within the barn and the regularly placed small square holes are where scaffolding was placed during the

barn's construction. The small barn is stone-built and is open to the roof internally. There are pitch holes in the end and side walls. Adjacent to this is a shelter shed for cattle comprising a queen post roof covered with clay tiles. The original timber posts have been replaced in metal.

11 and 12 The Green

Two similar semi-detached cottages, each one-and-a-half storeys in height under a Collyweston slate roof with dormer windows. Both have inglenook fireplaces on the gable walls with the front entrance doors off lobbies adjacent to the stacks. The first-

floor construction is of plaster laid on a bed of reeds supported by the floor joists. In their present form the cottages are late 18th century workers' cottages and No. 11 retains contemporary features such as a fireplace lintel shelf supported on pegs and some hanging shelving in the pantry. However, the carving on the fireplace beam in No. 12 of a fleur-de-lis and rose, plus the survival of an 18th century corner china cabinet, indicates a building of higher status and earlier date. It is possible that both cottages were originally one building dating from the 16th century.



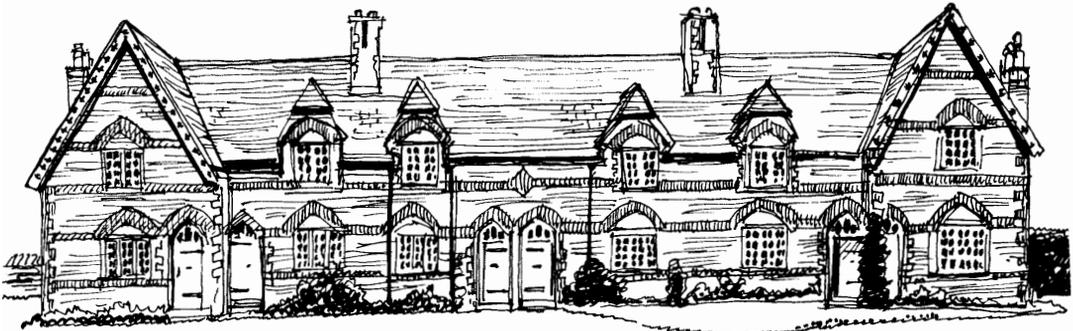
9 and 10 The Green

A pair of two-storey labourers' cottages built of stone about 1800 with Collyweston slate roofs and brick chimney stacks.

1 - 6 The Green

A terrace of houses built for estate workers in 1865. Designed to be decorative as well as functional, the architect embellished the corners, windows, eaves and doors with darker ironstone blocks, using a lighter limestone as the main walling material. Collyweston slate was used for the roof and a large date stone bearing the initials of a member of the

Hunt family was centrally placed to ensure that the good works of the family were appreciated. The houses provided excellent accommodation when compared to the accommodation of the majority of the labouring class at that period. Linking the cottages is a pebble path that is probably contemporary with the erection of the terrace.



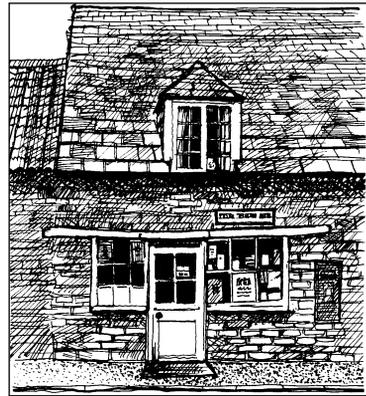
7 and 8 The Green

At first glance the similarities of construction of these buildings suggest that they are contemporary. Both are one-and-a-half storeys with Collyweston roofs, dormer windows, gable parapets and Weldon stone chimney stacks. However, the construction of the parapet suggests the houses were originally thatched and the location of a blocked rear door at the junction of the two buildings, together with the presence of a vertical joint at the front, indicates that No. 7 was an extension of the adjacent 17th century building. The curious small buttresses at the front of No. 8 are a secondary feature, as is the low dairy extension at the rear of the building.



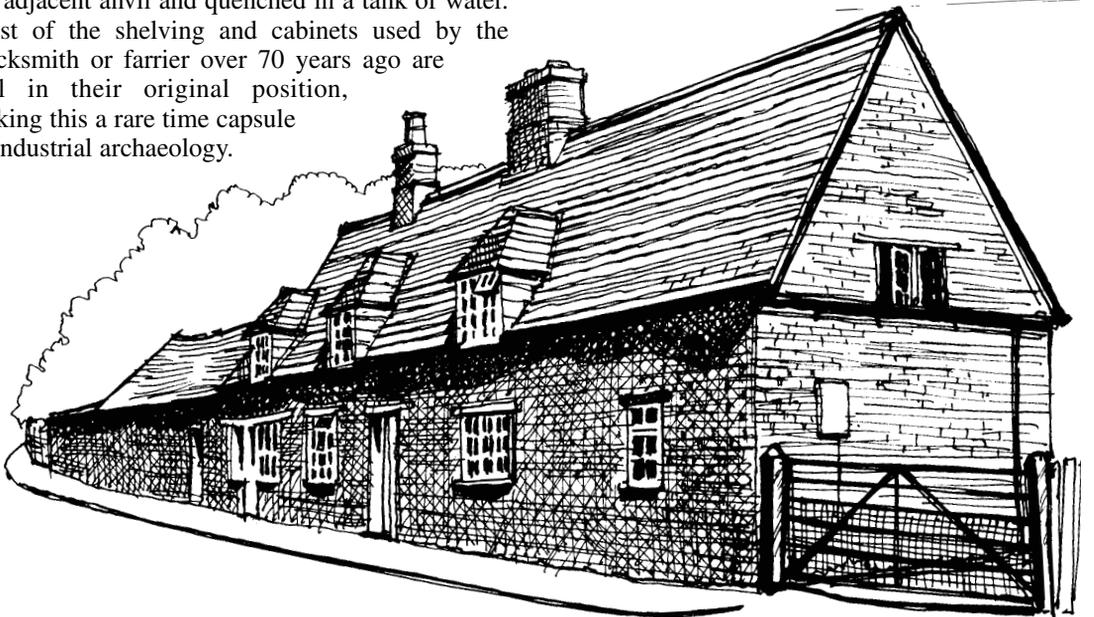
The Post Office, Main Street

Notice the 'Post and Telegraph Office' sign over the shop window. (See *Chapter 6 on the Chancellor Ward Hunt*).



The Old Forge, Main Street

Situated to the rear of the Post Office is a long single-storey brick forge building. It is partially built into the bedrock and the rebuilt flintwork of the front wall gives a false impression of date. Inside there are two brick furnaces with brick hoods and hand-operated bellows where the metal was heated in the coals ready to be shaped on the adjacent anvil and quenched in a tank of water. Most of the shelving and cabinets used by the blacksmith or farrier over 70 years ago are still in their original position, making this a rare time capsule of industrial archaeology.





14 and 15 Main Street, The Weather Vane

A modernised cottage with blocked doorways which is known from map evidence to be over 170 years old. To the rear is a small but well-constructed

pantiled outbuilding about two centuries old with a two-light casement window. The roof has tongued purlins that are pegged to the roof truss.

Manor Farm, Main Street

Built five years after the Spanish Armada in 1593, this stone and Collyweston slated house is one of the most complete examples of an Elizabethan house of the minor gentry in the County. It is a T-shaped building that sadly lacks the original entrance at the junction of main and rear wings but still retains the original ceiling beams and close-studded timber-framed partitions. On the ground floor along the road frontage are three parlours and in the rear wing a kitchen and service room. The far parlour has in raised letters on the ceiling beam the date 1593 and the word 'Jehovah'. This is superstitiously placed upside down in order to scare off evil spirits flying over the building. On the first floor are another five rooms, two of which have

ornate plaster overmantles of good craftsmanship dating from the early 17th century. The overmantle in the centre room is very large for such a small room and suggests that this was a first-floor parlour or reception room. One second-floor room was constructed in the roof space of the front range. The parlour fireplaces are stone-built with moulded four-centred heads and the large kitchen fireplace has a moulded timber beam with stone jambs. Surprisingly the staircase is very plain when compared to the high quality of carpentry in the rest of the house. Seventeenth century date stones on the gables of the building refer to two of several later alterations, one of which included the insertion of a cellar in the front range. To the rear of the building is a yard, which has a large stone threshing barn dating from the first half of the 17th century.



16 Main Street, The Thatched Cottage

Built into the gable of this building is a substantial 14th century stone window in a very worn state but which originally had two tall window openings surmounted by a central small cusped window. The lack of any other features in the building makes it uncertain as to whether this is a reused window or whether the building is of medieval date. It is understood that fragments of other windows have been found built into the masonry of the cottage.



Home Farm, Main Street

A large two-storey stone building dominated by a wide entrance door with a fanlight above. The stone-mullioned windows on the main elevation are very clean and sharp, suggesting that they are comparatively modern. There is a large two-storey extension to the rear and the building is roofed in Collyweston slates.

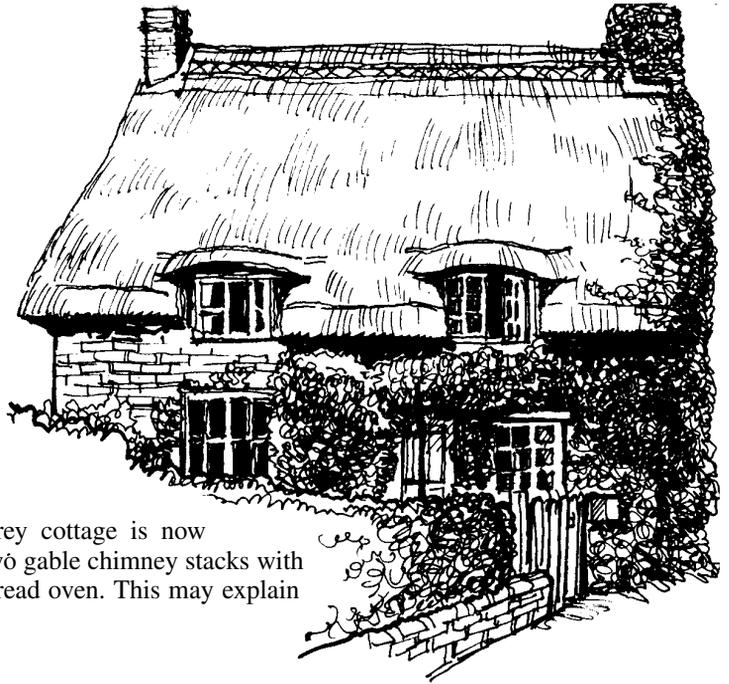


The Cottage, Main Street

From the exterior this appears to be several 18th century stone and thatched cottages forming a 'T'-shaped complex. On investigating the roof space a different history is revealed. This shows that it was originally a long building of five bays with an

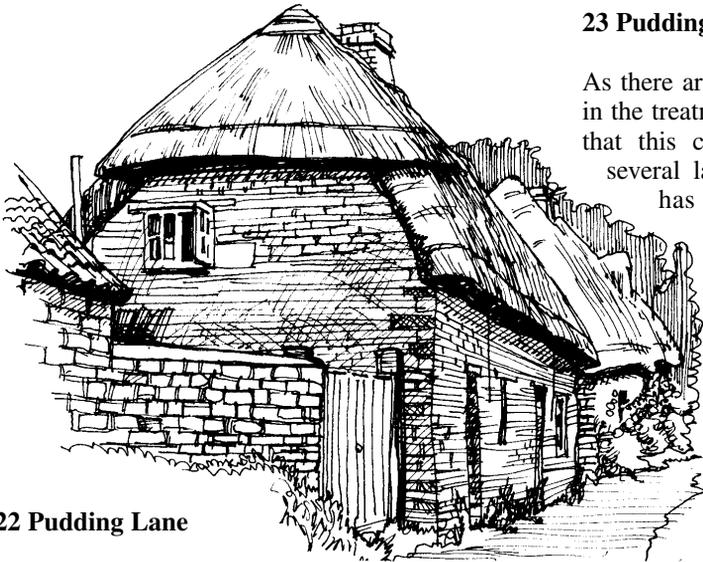
internal partition of stone where the fireplace is situated. The roof structure has a clasped ridge piece sitting on small collars immediately below the apex of the roof trusses. This form of construction together with thick stone walls suggests a late 16th century date. The building was extended towards the road at a later date and the tradition is that this section has been used as a public house and a butcher's shop. A wide stone shelf in this extension would have been suitable as a barrel stand.





21 Pilton Road

The 1680 date stone of this two-storey cottage is now hidden under Virginia creeper. It has two gable chimney stacks with the stack end onto the road having a bread oven. This may explain why this end wall is centrally 'kinked'.



22 Pudding Lane

Several features indicate that this one-and-a-half-storey cottage could be very early, i.e. very thick stone walls, a long thin window facing onto Pudding Lane which cuts through the first floor and a ground-floor fireplace with a corbelled hood rather than the more typical inglenook flue. The window could indicate that the cottage had an open hall, which, with the other features, suggests a medieval date. Typically of early houses it contains evidence to suggest it was a long building that was divided up into three labourers' cottages as it sank down the social scale and was returned to a single building at a later stage.

23 Pudding Lane

As there are blocked external doors and variations in the treatment of the ceiling beams it is probable that this cottage was created by amalgamating several labourers' cottages together. One room has a substantial 17th or 18th century inglenook fireplace and at the end of the building is an attached barn which may have been converted from an earlier cottage. In this barn the exposed roof has a reed underthatch.

24 Pilton Road

A two-storey stone building which from external appearance appears to be 18th century. The bay nearest the road may be an extension.



Dovecote, Pilton Road

From the evidence of old estate maps it would appear that this circular stone and Collyweston-tiled dovecote was built some time between 1793 and 1822. A very low south doorway leads to a poorly lit interior which still retains lath and plaster nesting boxes and a turning ladder (potence) to reach the nesting boxes (*Fig. 5*). It is possible that the dovecote was providing birds for sport (e.g. shooting) rather than for the table, but this cannot be proved by any local documentation.

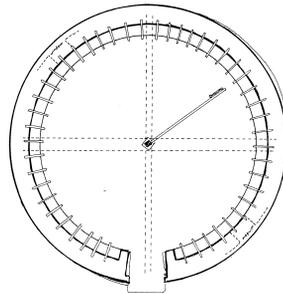


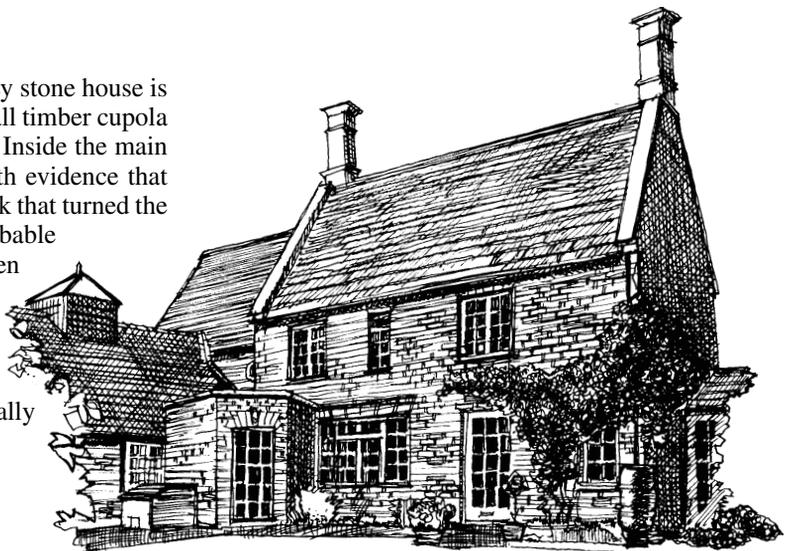
Fig. 5:
Section through

Wadenhoe Telephone Box

The telephone box in Main Street has Grade II listing, as have most of the old cottages, its location 'having been judged to be of special historic interest'.

Dovecote House, Pilton Road

Situated to the rear of this two-storey stone house is a single-storey extension with a small timber cupola which was the laundry for the hall. Inside the main house is an inglenook fireplace with evidence that the beam supported a clockwork jack that turned the spit on the hearth by cords. It is probable that the front of the house has been refaced with good-quality stonework, at which time a bulls-eye window was inserted. The deep parapets on the gables suggest that the building was originally thatched.





Wadenhoe House

This was not included in the August 1997 survey. The old part has a date stone 1657, but the house was extended in the late 18th century, and again in the mid-19th century by the Ward Hunts. It has

square coursed limestone with ashlar dressing and Collyweston and Welsh slate roofs. The surrounding buildings include stables and dovecote. The original laundry is now Dovecote House.

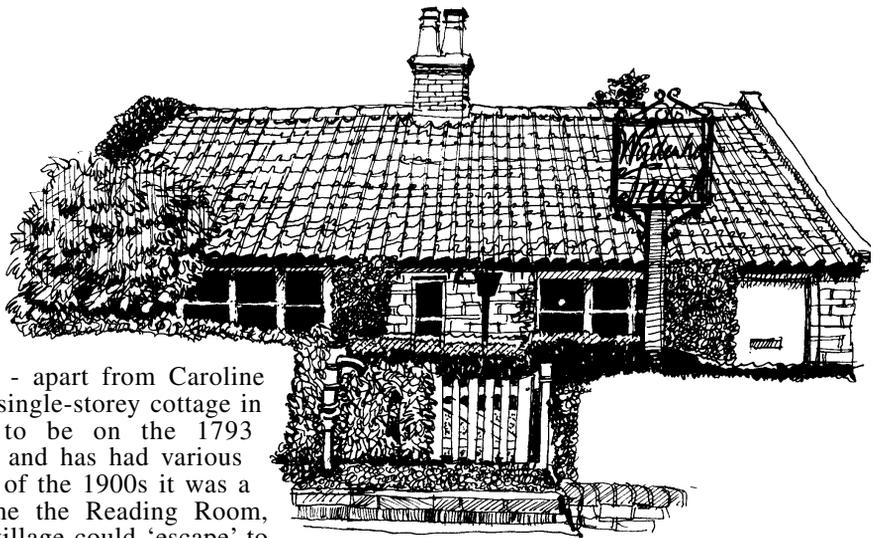


The Old Rectory

The Rectory is now a private house. It probably dates from the 18th/19th centuries and was remodelled by B. Browning in 1834. It is of square-coursed limestone with a Welsh slate roof.

The Estate Office and Annex

This building, with pantiled roof and now - apart from Caroline Cottage - the only old single-storey cottage in the village, appears to be on the 1793 Enclosure Award map, and has had various uses. At the beginning of the 1900s it was a cottage. It then became the Reading Room, where the men of the village could 'escape' to read newspapers in peace and quiet. During the Second World War it doubled as a base for the firewatchers, and then became Mary Ward Hunt's tack room. The Estate used half the building as their office, and in 1970 Helen Attewell established her Craft Shop in the other half (See Chapter 7, Part 1). When this



closed in the early 1980s, this half became known as the Choir Room, and at present, more prosaically, as the 'Estate Office Annex'. It is hoped to establish a small archives centre and

THE MODERN ARCHITECTURE:

Planning policy as it has and does affect housing

JOHN WYTHER

Wadenhoe is classed as a 'Restraint' settlement by East Northamptonshire Council, the most tightly constrained designation which in essence aims to prevent development of dwellings, unless it is for the re-use of appropriate existing buildings or for dwellings required specifically for agriculture, forestry or for 'affordable' housing (e.g. Glebe Court). In effect, this rules out any new infill housing. In practice, this policy is not particularly well upheld and there have been dwellings granted permission as though Wadenhoe were the looser 'infill' type of village.

There are policies in the District Local Plan such as the 'one-for-one' policy whereby existing dwellings could in some cases be demolished and replaced with a new dwelling. 'The Spinney' is such an example.

Much of Wadenhoe is designated a 'Conservation Area' and any demolition of buildings, walls or removal of trees in the area requires a special 'Conservation Area Consent'. Also several buildings are listed and any work, not just to the listed building itself, but to any development in the 'curtilage' of the listed building, also requires listed building consent.

Prior to the current Local Plan policy, it was generally permitted to 'infill' the village and the clutch of 1970s houses was built in this slacker regime. In many ways the late George Ward Hunt's control, as landowner, over approval of proposed housing development, was stronger than planning control. The irony is that with no bureaucratic planning control in past times, a more homogeneous vernacular architecture developed, restricted as it was by the limited palette of materials: stone, oak, slate and thatch.

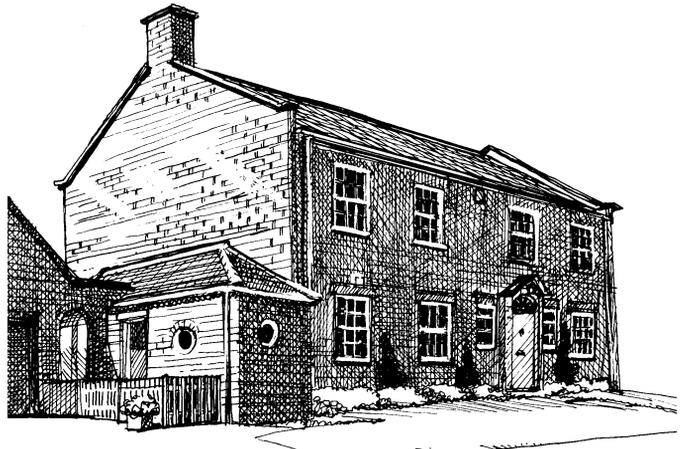


Pear Tree Barn, Main Street

This listed stone and Collyweston-slated building, formerly the stables to Manor Farm, was converted into a compact two-bedroomed dwelling for Mr Peter Hall in 1996. The original stonework, oak roof, structure and Collyweston slating were retained and adapted into the conversion. Care was taken to ensure that the agricultural quality of the building was domesticated as little as possible, e.g. chimneys are simple black steel flues and rooflights are traditional iron-framed.

Bearshanks House, Main Street

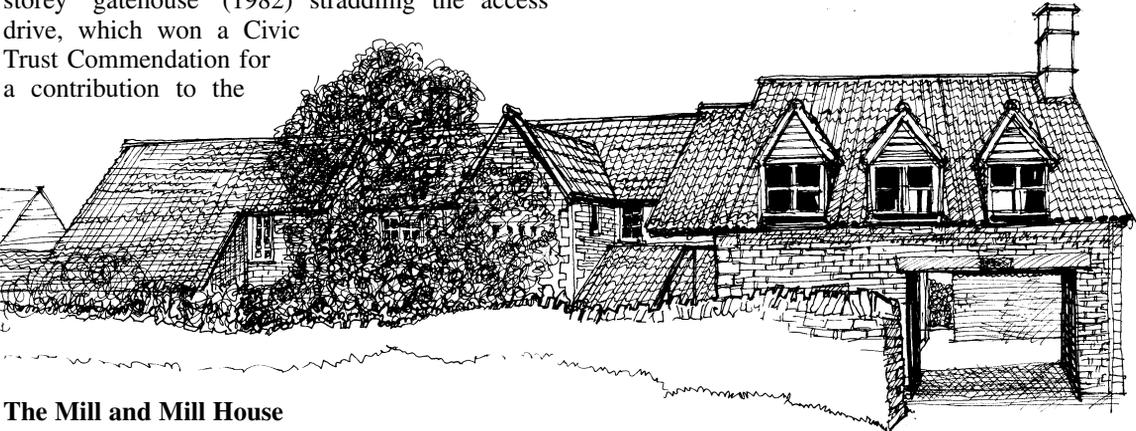
A natural stone house with more symmetrical, 'Georgian', proportions than other houses in the village. Built in 1772, the sliding sash windows and lower pitched slate roof are features found in the Old Rectory but otherwise not generally common in the village.



1 and 2 Mill Lane

A pair of houses, semi-detached, two full storeys in height with attic-habitable space on the second floors. The houses occupy the site of a former kitchen garden to Wadenhoe House and were constructed at the same time in 1972. These were the first houses in the village to be built in Bradstone masonry block, left unpointed. Roofs are steep-pitched with sand-faced concrete 'pantiles'. No. 1 has been much altered and extended from its original form, most later additions being in natural reclaimed oolitic limestone. They include a two-storey 'gatehouse' (1982) straddling the access drive, which won a Civic Trust Commendation for a contribution to the

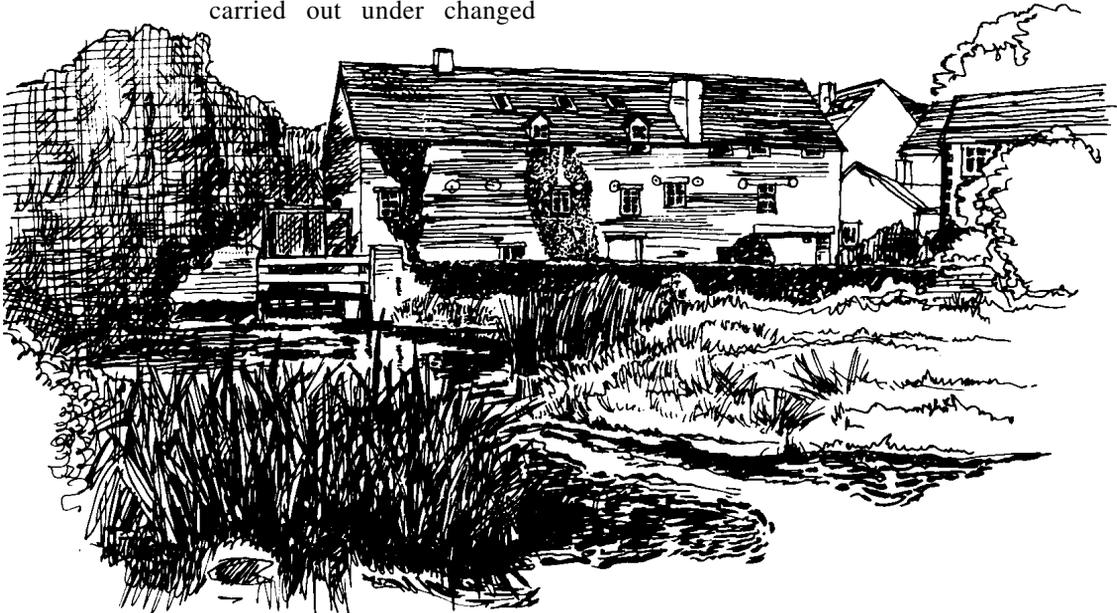
'Quality and Appearance of the Environment'. It has pantiles reclaimed from The Weather Vane in Main Street and a fine early 17th century chimney stack reclaimed from Weldon. Both Nos 1 and 2 have conservatory additions to the main house, and their gardens back onto the Mill Stream to Wadenhoe Mill. There is evidence remaining of the stone 'jetty' used by narrowboats to deliver grain to the Mill. The ancient dry stone wall to the river frontage remains largely intact and is protected by a covenant requiring it to be kept and maintained.



The Mill and Mill House

The Mill was converted in 1972 by Kit Martin. Windows were made just below the eaves, marginally altering its external character, and skylights let into the roof. New windows were made in old doorway openings on the ground floor and the stonework was repaired. Old stone slates found locally which matched the existing ones were used for the roof, and a new terrace was built over the water on the south side¹. Further alteration was carried out under changed

ownership in the 1990s, a large free-standing conservatory being built over the 1970s open-air swimming pool, and later another conservatory erected against the house. Stables were also constructed in the adjacent paddock. A stone and Welsh slate roofed L-shaped former stables to the Wadenhoe Mill was also converted in 1972 to a single-storey building.



**First-floor dwelling
in Home Farm Yard, Church Street**

Part of the 1992 first phase of the Wadenhoe Trust's conversion of the former barns to Home Farm included a small first-floor flat built into the roof space of the listed barn with its gable directly onto Church Street. The original buff clay corrugated roof tiles were re-used in the conversion.



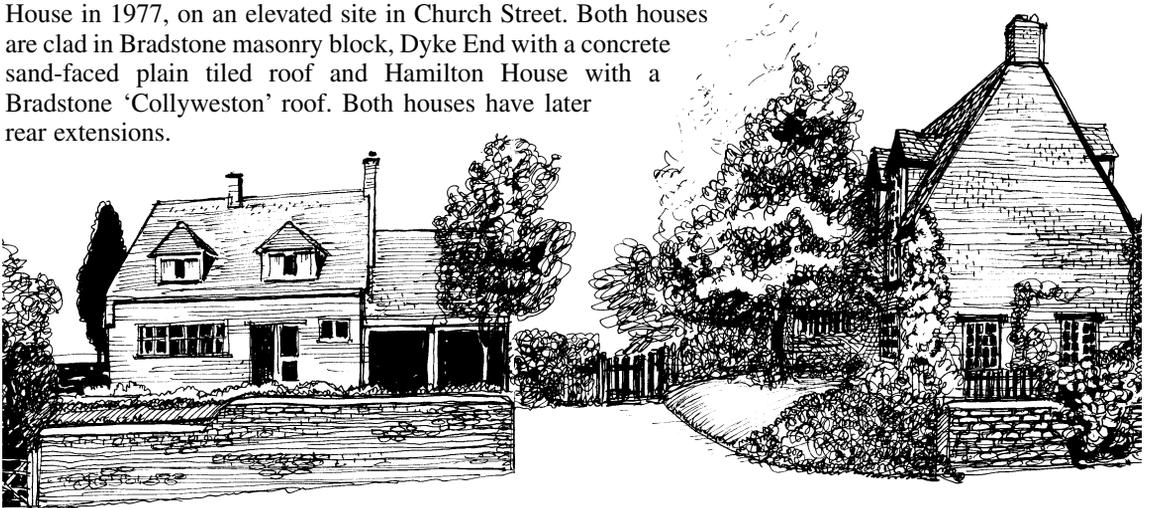
Cergne House, Church Street

This two-storey house was built in 1974, one of the last of the six building plots sold by George and Edna Ward Hunt. It is built of Bradstone with Cotswold - coloured concrete 'pantiles', and has a conservatory and first-floor balconies with fine views over the Mill Stream to Achurch.



Dyke End and Hamilton House, Church Street

A pair of two-storey houses; Dyke House built in 1973, Hamilton House in 1977, on an elevated site in Church Street. Both houses are clad in Bradstone masonry block, Dyke End with a concrete sand-faced plain tiled roof and Hamilton House with a Bradstone 'Collyweston' roof. Both houses have later rear extensions.



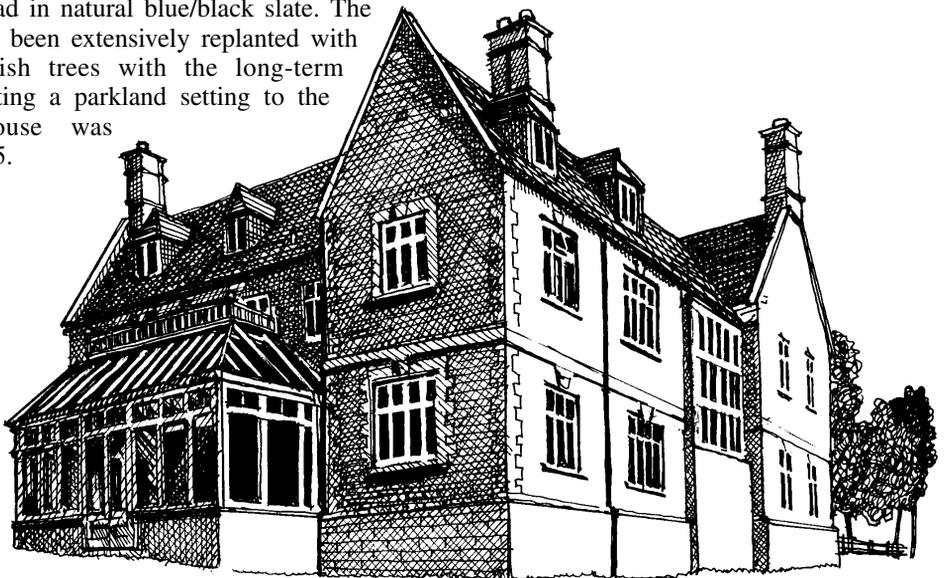
Navisford House, Pilton Lane

A stone built house with natural new red clay pantiles, dormered roof and rendered chimney stacks. Built on a former walled garden site by George and Edna Ward Hunt in 1982 when they moved from Home Farm House, the house has a typical long, relatively narrow plan form with steeply pitched roof. The dormers are simple lower pitched pantiled construction.



Longfield House, Pilton Lane

A substantial new house occupying a four-acre site which was formerly the smallholding area and house and garden of a modest 1950s house which was demolished to make way for the new dwelling. This house, which is on the outer fringe of Wadenhoe, would not normally have been permitted under planning policy but was allowed in this situation as a 'replacement', or 'one-for-one' house. The new house is built in natural Oundle quarry limestone laid as random-coursed rubble with cast 'stone' quoins, ashlar plinth, cills, lintols, string courses, coped gables and traditional chimney stacks. The roof of this three-storey house is a steeply pitched dormered roof clad in natural blue/black slate. The four-acre site has been extensively replanted with indigenous English trees with the long-term intention of creating a parkland setting to the house. The house was completed in 1995.



References

¹ *Architectural Press* (1980), p.146-7.

