

BUILDINGS OF CHIPPING CAMPDEN

NEW DOVER'S HOUSE

Griggs Close, Back Ends, Chipping Campden GL55 6AB.

History:

New Dover's House (formerly known as Dover's Court) was built between 1927 and 1937. The building was designed and the construction supervised by Frederick L Griggs. Building work was largely complete by 1930 when the Griggs family took occupation. Work continued, albeit slowly, until 1937.

Each craftsman who worked on the project was hired individually by Griggs and Joseph Warmington oversaw the day to day works. He in turn was supervised by Norman Jewson.

The house is widely acknowledged to be the last great Arts and Crafts house built. Fig 1.



Fig 1. West Range

When Griggs bought the site the boundary extended to the West to include fields on the Hoo and then to the East including Berfield Cottage and access to the High Street at Leysbourne. The site included an old barn, a gardener's cottage and an orchard.

During the mid 1970s the site was reduced to the main house and walled garden and a development of four residential houses were built to the West adjacent to Back Ends.

In 1971 the West wing of the house (in the foreground in Fig 2) was badly damaged by fire and was rebuilt in 1973 to truncated plan dimensions. The rebuilding was undertaken by local builders, Pyments and followed the Arts and Crafts style.



Fig 2. The West Wing in the foreground.

Description:

The building is listed Grade II *.

The plan is a slightly irregular 'U' and is styled as a typical gabled Cotswold style house. The floor area of the house is approximately 588 sq m (6,329 sq ft).

The roof covering is graduated limestone (Oolitic) slate (from Charlbury) over purlins and rafters with gable ends.

The external walls are built in coursed, squared and dressed local stone (Oolitic) of varying heights with the exception of the west face of the South wing, which is a half timbered box and jettied gable. Fig 3.



Fig 3.

The lights (windows) are leaded with stone mullions and hood moulding over.

The random coursed rubble stone buttress to the East wing is all that remains of the barn.

Throughout the interior are architectural features typical of Arts and Crafts style including oak doors, wide elm floorboards, flagstone floors, exposed joists and beams and hand made ironwork.

Beneath the North East corner is a small cellar with groined vaulted ceiling. Seven of the leading stonemasons have carved their initials on the stone in the centre.

The materials used in the construction were highest quality with hardwood (elm and oak) liberally used throughout. Many fittings are handmade in the traditional manner.

Some stone appears to have been exposed to intense heat (red colour) suggesting it may have been salvaged and reused from after the 1971 fire or some may have originated from Campden House, which was destroyed by fire in the 17th century. Fig 4.



Fig 4.

Features of architectural interest:

1. Exposed putlock holes (used during construction for the support of scaffolding and usually filled after construction) have remained to encourage nesting birds “in return for their singing” (Griggs). Fig 5.



Fig 5.

2. A date stone (dated 1927) over the door to the East wing engraved with “DHP” signifying “Dovers House Press”. Fig 6.



Fig 6.

3. The basement is constructed with an arched groined vault, which consists of segmental arches with simple chamfers (similar to the chapel at Rodmarton Manor). The stones are shaped to the size of bricks. The floor is stone paved.

4. Some walls are built to a vertical batter (incline inwards) of 1 inch to every 12 to 16 feet in order to create perspective. Therefore each course was dressed separately to different dimensions. (Edward Lutyens used this method of construction on the Cenotaph in Whitehall).

References:

The above was compiled with reference to the following:

1. The Architecture of Dreams; (Chapter 7) by Jerrold Moor and published by Clarendon Press Oxford. ISBN 0-19-817407-1.
2. The Buildings of England: Gloucestershire 1: The Cotswolds: David Verey and Alan Brooks. Yale University Press.
3. Hamptons International website www.hamptons.co.uk - New Dover's House.
4. Visit to the building on the 27th August 2012 and a guided tour by the current owners Mr and Mrs Jeremy Ryan-Bell.

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Roger Johnson
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