

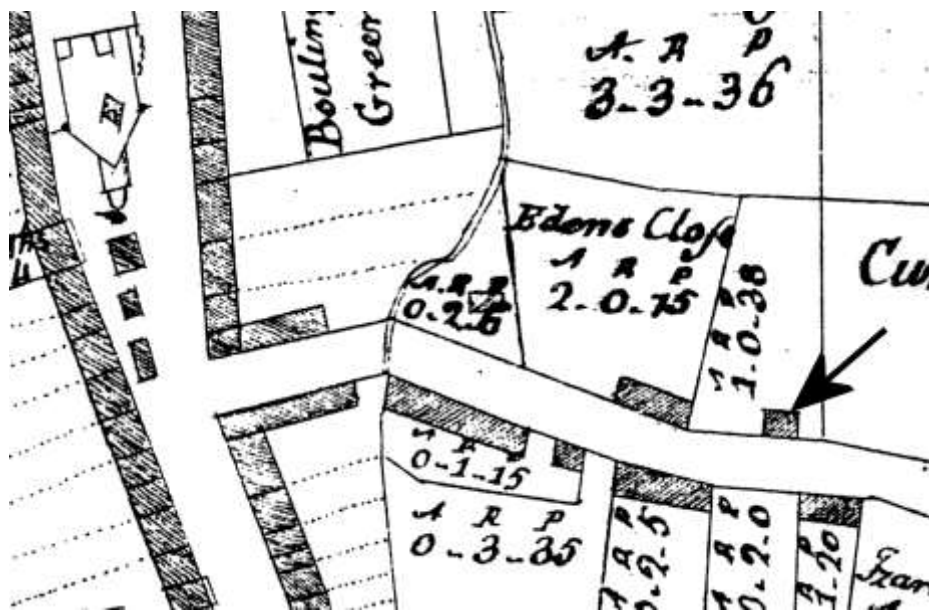
CAMPDEN'S WORKHOUSE

It is very possible that Campden had a workhouse or poorhouse in the 1600s but no record has yet been found. In 1723 the Workhouse Test Act, also known as Knatchbull's Act, was passed, establishing a rule that a person who wanted to receive poor relief had to enter a workhouse and undertake a set amount of work. The test was intended to prevent irresponsible claims on a parish's poor rate.

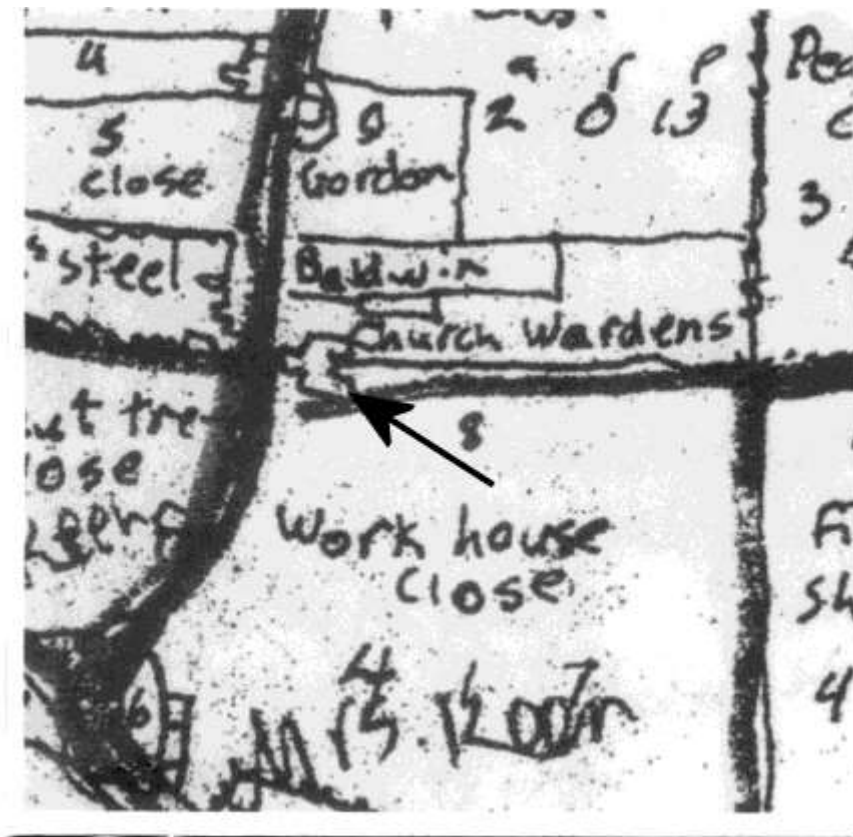
At a vestry meeting for the parish of Chipping Campden on 28th April 1724 it was agreed that

'the overseers of Campden shall employ workmen to putt the house in repaire ... for a workhouse and the moneys expended in repaires to be raised by the Poores Rate and likewise that the Overseers shall raise moneys according to the late Act of Parliament directly to pay for this workhouse and we do appoint Mr William Eden and Mr Nathan Izod Overseers to see that the repaires be fairly done'.

The new Act allowed churchwardens to hire a house 'for the maintenance and settling to work of the poor'. Any poor people refusing to be housed there would be denied relief.



This section of the 1722 map of the Countess of Gainsborough's Estates shows a building (arrowed) in a lane that is now Sheep Street. Although it is a sketch map it seems likely from subsequent evidence that this is the location of the building that was rented by the Churchwardens. Entries in the Overseers' Accounts show that £2.12s annual rent was paid for the building in the following years. The Churchwardens appear to have taken full possession as repairs were regularly made and in 1742 a workshop was built.



A second estate map of Campden, drawn in 1818, shows a building now within a plot of land apparently owned by the Churchwardens and adjoining 'Workhouse Close' where farm animals could have been kept (the Overseers' Accounts show sales of animal hides as income for the Workhouse). The building has a different shape to the usual domestic dwellings and it seems very likely that it was extended to cater for growing need.

The Poor Law Amendment Act was passed in 1834. One of the conditions of the Act was that workhouses were to be built in every parish or, if parishes were too small, in unions of parishes. Campden became part of Shipston Union and when the Union workhouse was ready in 1835 the Campden inmates were transferred, leaving empty the building in Sheep Street.

Canon Edward Kennaway, who became the Vicar in 1832, was particularly conscious of the need to educate the children of the parish and it appears that he was personally subsidising the costs of the Infant School. 'because there are about one hundred and forty children in the Infant School and the cost of educating each is about fourpence a week'. He may have seen the empty building as a potential source of funds, because on 1st Nov 1836 a Resolution was passed by the Ratepayers of Chipping Campden on 'the best mode of disposing of the Workhouse belonging to the said Parish'. It was resolved unanimously that 'the Parish Workhouse with outhouse and land be sold by Public Auction or Private Contract.'

The Guardians of the Parish were requested to apply to the Poor Law Commissioners (in London) for approval. However, there was a problem: under the terms of the

1834 Act the proceeds of the property sale did not belong to Campden parish but to Shipston Union, and for two years application forms and letters were exchanged between the Charity Commissioners, the Guardians of Shipston Union and the Campden Churchwardens resulting, in October 1838, in a letter of refusal signed by Sir Edwin Chadwick, Secretary to the Commissioners. A letter dated 2nd Nov 1838 from Shipston Union to the Poor Law Commissioners referred to 'property supposed to belong to the Parish of Chipping Campden A similar application was made to the [Shipston] Board of Guardians which they refused to forward both because they considered the proposal could not be entertained and because approval was doubtful from evidence that it was not parish property of such a character as to admit of the interference of the Guardians'.

The Churchwardens must have been expecting this response as Canon Kennaway was already exchanging letters with the Earl of Gainsborough's agents. On 12 Jan 1838 a letter was sent by John Bridges, for the Earl of Gainsborough, with a draft agreement with blanks for amounts to be paid. Lord Gainsborough would build cottages on the site using workhouse materials. 'The cottages when erected are to be charged with £....pa (sic) as an endowment for the Infant School'. Vestry agreement must have been given, for an Agreement was made on 27th September, 1838 between John Keen, agent to the Rt. Hon. Lord Barham (who was acting for his father) and William Stanley of Campden, builder, on the other.

'...the said William Stanley does agree to build twelve cottages on a piece of land known as the Workhouse Gardens, the property of the Rt. Hon. Lord Barham for the sum of eighty one pounds per cottage, agreeable to plans drawn by Mr. Kendall of Kineton The present building known as the Old Workhouse to be taken down at the expense of the builder with all outbuildings thereto belonging and the materials appropriated to his use, a proper allowance for the same having been made in the amount of the estimate.'

The location and story of Campden Workhouse can now be understood: the workhouse was demolished and the stone was used to build eight, rather than twelve, cottages now known as Gainsborough Terrace. Initially, according to the 1841 and 1851 censuses, the row of cottages was called Mount Pleasant – perhaps to remove the taint of workhouse stone!

There are still some mysteries to be solved: the Churchwardens were still paying rent for the Workhouse in 1799: an entry on 24 March shows that £2.12s was paid to Mr Hall for 'rent of the workhouse' - the same amount that was being paid fifty years earlier. Yet the Land Tax records for Campden at this time do not list Mr Hall or the Churchwardens – the building was probably exempt from tax. More research is still to be done on the Vestry Minutes for this period and it may become clear as to who owned the land and buildings, but by 1836 the Churchwardens had certainly assumed ownership. The agreement with Lord Gainsborough was apparently only in relation to the use of the land on which the cottages had been built, for which he was to pay an annual rent towards the upkeep of the Infant School, but even this arrangement continued to be debated in a series of letters, with a settlement in 1843.

The problem surfaced again in 1870 when the new Earl of Gainsborough refused to pay the annual rent charge of £10 for the land and the Churchwardens had to seek legal advice. As no deed had ever been prepared relating to the ownership of the land it was difficult for the Churchwardens to prove their case. Ownership was key to future use of the workhouse land and again the crucial documents relating to final agreement are not so far found in the Record Offices. However, the land where the workhouse had stood, together with the cottages and Workhouse Close were purchased by Albert Wilkinson from the Gainsborough estate in 1922 and then sold to Percy Rushen in 1924. The child of a family living in Gainsborough Terrace in the 1940s has a memory of a man (she thinks it was Mr Rushen) coming to collect the rent, dressed all in black 'looking like a crow'.

Gainsborough Terrace has had some alterations over the years but the view of the row and the outbuildings behind give us some sense of their original state – though no workhouse graffiti has been found!