INNS AND INNKEEPING IN NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE: 1660 - 1815

Annika McQueen
Wolfson College

Faculty of Architecture and History of Art
Department of Building History
University of Cambridge

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Editorial Conventions

In direct quotations from contemporary sources, the original spelling and capitalisation has been retained. Modern punctuation has been inserted in the case of lists.

Old Style dating in contemporary sources has been addressed by the use of a slash date separator where the New Style dating equivalent is uncertain e.g. 1684/5.

Currency is in pounds (£), shillings (s) and pence (d): there were 12 old pence to the shilling, 20 shillings or 240 old pence to the pound.

Unless otherwise attributed, all drawings and photographs are the work of the author.

Measurements in drawings by the author are in metres.

This dissertation contains plans and drawings which are best viewed digitally.
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Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used throughout this dissertation:

- BARS - Bedfordshire Archives and Records Service
- BHO – British History Online
- BL - British Library
- BM – British Museum
- BMLHS – Baldock Museum and Local History Society
- HALS - Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies
- HHS - Hitchin Historical Society
- HLHC – Hertfordshire Local History Council
- HP – Hertfordshire Publications
- HRS – Hertfordshire Records Society
- LMA - London Metropolitan Archives
- LWL – Lewis Walpole Library
- NHM – North Hertfordshire Museum
- OS – Ordnance Survey
- RCHME – Royal Commission of the Historic Monuments of England
- TNA - The National Archives
- TPM - The Postal Museum
- VAM – Victoria and Albert Museum
- VCH – Victoria County History
- WL – Wren Library; Trinity College, Cambridge
Chapter 1: Introduction

Previously overlooked by historians across the disciplines of architectural and socio-economic history, the inn has, in recent years, begun to receive the research attention it deserves. One-time stalwarts of the community, surviving inn buildings from the medieval and early modern periods pepper the towns and cities of England. Many former principal inns retain a hospitality function, and some are still engaged in the business of providing accommodation and victuals, if not good cheer. Where the function has been lost, the building often remains, offering architectural clues as to its former purpose. The buildings in which lesser inns operated potentially survive in smaller numbers yet may be discovered with research and a trained eye. Once identified, extant former inn buildings can offer an insight into form and function. If the opportunity to examine surviving documentary sources in combination with extant buildings arises then a chance to test these ideas pertaining to form and function and gain an understanding of understanding of material culture and urban life as it was conducted centuries ago is presented. This dissertation capitalises on such an opportunity.

By analysing surviving probate inventories of known innholders, combined with (where extant) architectural evidence from standing buildings that suggest they correspond to the inventories studied, it has been possible to create a window into the operation of urban inns in north Hertfordshire during the long eighteenth century, here defined as 1660-1815. This research will address the lack of a study that focuses on urban inns in north Hertfordshire and supplement the wider research that has been undertaken on the form and function of urban inns and on innkeeping lifestyles in England. Prior to this study much published work on inns and innkeeping in Hertfordshire has focused on individual towns or the better-researched south and east of the county, examining the religious centre of St Albans or the relationship between the county town Hertford and its commercial rival Ware.

The focus period of the long eighteenth century has been chosen for two principal reasons. The first the paucity of surviving primary source material prior to this period for inns in this geographical area. The second is that inns underwent wide-ranging change during this period. The boom in stagecoach travel, growing economic prosperity and the rise of consumer culture are instrumental to the changing form and function of the inn during the long eighteenth century. Urban inns have been chosen as the focus of this study, as opposed to rural or a mixture of rural and urban, due to the greater volume of
surviving documentary sources for the chosen region that is concerned with urban inns. ‘Urban’ is defined for the purposes of this paper as settlements with ‘contiguous built-up areas’.¹

In order to paint an effective picture of innkeeping in north Hertfordshire within the limits of this study a detailed case-study approach centred on identified historic inns, with corresponding surviving probate inventories, will be adopted. It has been argued that probate inventories do not allow us to reconstruct building plans as they fail to provide unambiguous evidence as to how rooms were connected within buildings.² The argument hinges on the fact that this lack of concrete evidence disallows the use of Hillier and Hanson’s more sophisticated analysis of domestic space, which analyses how movement was channelled and constrained.³ Despite being unable to recreate building or floor plans with certainty, generating conjectural reconstructions allows us to investigate the form an inn building may have taken and understand how it might have functioned within its environment. It must be remembered, however, that all the conjectural plans featured in the case studies represent only one interpretation of the probate and architectural evidence.

In order to generate conjectural room location, floor plans for the inns detailed in the case studies and probate inventories will be interrogated in combination with other surviving documentary sources and cross-referenced, where possible, with evidence from extant standing buildings. The probate inventories will be examined for information that can suggest room location and use through the insight they provide into the moveable contents. The data will then be assessed for indicators of where a case study inn may lie on the hierarchy from principal to lesser, the use of space on the inn site and the status of differing spaces on the site, and what can be learned of the material wealth and consumption of the innkeeper and his or her patrons.

The three north Hertfordshire case studies are based in the neighbouring towns of Hitchin and Baldock. Two are in Hitchin: a historic market town and considered the regional centre of north Hertfordshire. The remaining case study is in Baldock, a market town which re-emerged as an urban centre during the medieval period.

² Overton and others, p. 122.
³ Overton and others, p. 122.
The first case study focuses on the Sun Inn, Hitchin, and the 1754 ‘Inventory of the goods, chattels and stock in trade late Mr George Westwood’s deceased, now Mrs Elizabeth Westwood’s at the Sun Inn’. The Sun Inn building is still extant and operating as an inn, however, internal access to the building was limited. Therefore, the majority of the assessment contained in the case study is based on external observations and documentary evidence.

The second case study is based on the 1746 probate inventory of the innholder Edward Marshall, which it will be argued relates to the White Horse Inn, Baldock. The inn burnt down in the nineteenth century and the remains of the tap room were incorporated into a rebuilt public house on the same site. This is still in operation and known as the Old White Horse. Both the Sun and the White Horse were considered the principal inns of Hitchin and Baldock respectively during the long eighteenth century. The definition of a ‘principal inn’ and its clientele will be examined in due course. The span of a mere eight years between the surviving probate inventories attributed to these inns has allowed comparisons to be made, with some intriguing results.

The third case study is based in Hitchin and relates to buildings known as the Red House and the Red Cow. It offers an opportunity to examine whether the documentary sources and extant building can provide enough evidence to indicate a lesser, third-tier inn operating in the earlier part of our focus period. Through analysis of the 1684/5 probate inventory of John Heady (innholder), other documentary sources and extant architectural evidence it will be argued that the inventory corresponds to the Red House and that there is some suggestion that it was operating as an inn during this period, potentially in conjunction with the building formerly known as the Red Cow. The former Red House and Red Cow buildings are still extant in Hitchin Market Place, albeit now in mixed retail and residential use. Internal access to the buildings was strictly limited to the retail sections open to the public, therefore, the majority of the assessment contained in the case study is based on external observations and documentary evidence.

The combination of case studies adopted for this dissertation provides the prospect of examining both principal and lesser inns during the focus period and interrogates and tests the limits of a range of documentary sources ranging from the indisputable to the suggestive.

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4 The Sun Inn is now known as the Sun Hotel. I will refer to it as the Sun Inn throughout the dissertation.
5 ‘Inventory of Contents of Sun Inn at Hitchin, Herts.’, 1754, TNA - Austin and Marshall Papers, J90/439.
6 ‘Edward Marshall, Widower, Innholder of Baldock, Hertfordshire. Probate Inventory, or Declaration, of the Estate of the Same, Deceased, with Account’, 1746, TNA, PROB 31/278/817.
Chapter 2: The Victualling Hierarchy

Prior to commencing a discussion on the historiography of inns it is important to define the different types of establishment that comprised the victualling hierarchy, bearing in mind that such definitions are not absolute and have shifted over time; alongside their relative statuses.

The origins of the ale-house can be traced to Saxon times when the ale-stake was used to show that ale surplus to that household could be bought. The ale-house developed from certain households producing better ale, resulting in that location being patronised by others. The ale-house evolved over the centuries and by the sixteenth century comprised largely humble premises that offered simple food, beer and or ale to working people of the lower and lower-middling orders. Such premises were not polite spaces and did not routinely offer accommodation.

Taverns were the next step up on the hierarchy and were differentiated from ale-houses by serving wine and food, (by the seventeenth century beer and ale also), and they offered more privacy than the ale-house. As such, taverns could attract a better class of customer than the common ale-house: those employed in the professions, what have been referred to as the ‘non-productive classes’ (poets, wits, actors, politicians etc – such people were not thought to routinely patronise ale-houses or inns) and the gentry. By the eighteenth century polite women were also able to visit taverns. Similarly to ale-houses, taverns did not routinely offer accommodation, differentiating them from inns. The tavern also tended to be an urban establishment, could be fairly luxurious and was purely associated with meeting the wants of its patrons who visited in their leisure time, as opposed to the needs of a traveller or patron transacting business required at an inn.

Inns were distinct from ale-houses and taverns, both in the history of their development and their offering to patrons. In the medieval period the church played a central role in the establishment and running of hostelries for travellers, pilgrims and visitors to ecclesiastical sites. Such establishments provided accommodation and food, evolving into early inns. Their signs mostly portrayed religious

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8 Corballis, p. 12.
10 Haydon, pp. 30 and 174.
12 Haydon, pp. 171–73.
13 Haydon, p. 171.
14 Haydon, pp. 18–19.
symbols or themes e.g. the Seven Stars, the Cross and the Crossed Keys. Post-Reformation, these long-established inns were taken into private hands. In the long eighteenth century, inns remained distinct from ale-houses and taverns due to their usually large size, their fashionability and their ability to offer wine, ale and beer, together with ‘quite elaborate food and lodging to well-heeled travellers’. For the purposes of this dissertation an ‘inn’ is defined using this description, with the proviso that inns were also patronised by the local ‘better sort’ and gentry. Many inns evolved during the coaching era from the late seventeenth to the first decades of the nineteenth century to additionally provide stagecoach travellers and those employed in the business of stagecoaches with services and fresh horses.

Despite the victualling hierarchy categories of inn, tavern and ale-house being recognised in statute and common law from the sixteenth century, with premises licences and obligations being defined for landlords, in reality such absolute distinctions did not always exist. Nonetheless, historians have commonly defined a ‘hierarchy of victualling’ that places inns at the top of the pile with taverns and alehouses below. After the Reformation, however, the term ‘ale-house’ began to change slowly to ‘public house’, potentially affecting some taverns and smaller inns too.

The subject of English inns enjoyed popularity from the late-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries but the numerous works produced in this period tended more to nostalgia than to historical enquiry. The limits of this paper do not permit in-depth discussion of the works, but it can be said that Harper’s early-twentieth century ‘Old Inns of Old England’, and the architect A. E. Richardson’s work first published in 1934, ‘The Old Inns of England’, are cases in point. Both are enjoyable, lively reads which certainly pique the reader’s interest and a certain desire to seek out more information on the examples contained in the books. However, they were not written as a scholarly works and thus contains little verifiable content.

17 Clark, p. 5.
19 Clark, p. 5.
Since the latter decades of the twentieth century scholarly interest in the history of what we now think of as the ‘pub’ has been steadily increasing. A ‘History of the English Public House’ by H.A. Monckton, published in 1969, was followed by ‘The English Alehouse: A Social History 1200–1800’ by Peter Clark in 1983 and ‘The English Pub: A History’ by Peter Haydon in 1994. Such works have been complemented by a growing body of journal articles and research papers; one key example is ‘Inns, innkeepers and the society of later medieval England, 1350–1600’ by John Hare.

Hare argues that by 1400 clear patterns of inn provision had emerged in England and states that by 1379, most of the inns of 1600 already existed.\(^{23}\) There was already an established hierarchy of towns by this point: the provincial capitals and county towns with ten to twenty inns, the market towns with two to five, and the small towns with one.\(^{24}\) Recently Matthew Cooper has contributed to our wider understanding of the medieval inn via his regional study on Kent, discussing the factors that contributed to the rise in innkeeping including a shift in cultural preferences towards privacy and the degree of institutional ownership and construction.\(^{25}\) Cooper additionally draws out the value in identifying small and middling inns, which is pertinent to the third case study of this dissertation.\(^{26}\)

Clark argues that the years after the Restoration marked the ‘golden age of the inn and its buildings, boosted by the growth of coaching and other upper-class business’.\(^{27}\) Clark continues by stating that by the eighteenth century ‘we can distinguish between splendid county inns – often in the heart of town and catering for the landed aristocracy and the like; secondary inns, also large but marginally less exclusive and serving the urban elite as well as the gentry; and market or carrier inns, the most numerous group, smaller and involved in inland trade’.\(^{28}\) Investigating whether this three-tiered distinction between inns can be found in Baldock and Hitchin will be discussed further in due course.

Haydon does not overly dwell on distinctions between the alehouse, tavern and inn in the introductory sections of his work. Rather, he discusses the argument that many medieval inns were built as investment opportunities by university colleges and ecclesiastical orders, and due to an increasing desire for privacy altering the role of the hall in inns.\(^{29}\) He continues by discussing the notion that an


\(^{24}\) Hare, p. 497.

\(^{25}\) Cooper, pp. 83–85.

\(^{26}\) Cooper, p. 85.

\(^{27}\) Clark, p. 7.

\(^{28}\) Clark, p. 7.

\(^{29}\) Haydon, pp. 33–36.
association with wagons and carting gave the inn its characteristic layout as horses and carriages cannot reverse.  

Monckton reinforces a hierarchical distinction between inns, taverns and alehouses in his work, yet he does not discuss the distinguishing factors, focusing instead on the development of legislation and commerce in connection with the public house through the centuries. Brandwood, Davison and Slaughter in their work ‘Licensed to Sell’ defer to the view that ale houses, taverns and inns were distinct entities.

The work of Clark, Haydon and Monckton must be considered alongside that of W.A. Pantin. As Cooper comments, inns were considered by Pantin on their own terms as buildings with informative plan forms, stylistic details and a distinctive typology: Courtyard type or Gatehouse type. The plan form of Courtyard inns was described as setting the main buildings back from the street, ranged along or around a courtyard. Conversely the Gatehouse or Block type plan form sites the main range and principal rooms directly on the street and incorporates a gateway as a prominent feature; a rear courtyard is present but houses minor buildings.

It can be seen that both plan types identified by Pantin contain the same elements essential to the functioning of an inn in early modern period: a hall, parlours, chambers and service rooms or areas including kitchens, buttery, cellars, stables etc. An additional consideration of inn plan forms as opposed to private houses, was the requirement for access to multiple guest chambers. This was usually facilitated by the use of galleries and/or external staircases. The level of accommodation provided in inns was dependent on the status of the inn. Principal inns offered very comfortable and well-appointed chambers whilst lesser, third-tier inns would have offered more basic facilities. It is likely that all inns, regardless of status, offered a selection of chambers at varying levels of comfort. This hypothesis will be further explored in the selected case studies.

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30 Haydon, p. 36.
34 Cooper, p. 14; Pantin, pp. 167–79,(Fig. 9.1 and Fig. 9.6).
35 Pantin, p. 168.
36 Pantin, p. 168.
37 Pantin, p. 168.
Pantin reminds us that inns evolve over time and some surviving inns can be regarded as a mixture of the two plan types. This possibility will be discussed further in our first case study focusing on the Sun Inn, Hitchin. Baldock, for example, is a small town and Clark suggests these were more likely to contain Courtyard type inns. Clark asks us to consider how relevant this typology is, however, when the function of the rooms is the same and the ability to interpret the site as an inn is unaffected.

Janet Pennington pioneered a research approach that combined vernacular architecture and maps, records and personal examination with the geology and topography of inn and tavern sites. This approach was applied over the course of several years to create a study of West Sussex urban and rural inns and taverns, focusing on the period 1550-1700. Extensive surviving probate inventories for West Sussex allowed Pennington to select case studies and gain an insight into inn function and innkeeping lifestyles, augmenting evidence gleaned from other sources, particularly the extensive estate records available for the area. The case-study approach detailed in Pennington’s work was informative and adapted to inspire the smaller-scale research approach taken in this dissertation.

An example of recent scholarship on the subject, Daniel Maudlin draws our attention back to the tiered system of inns, where the ‘principal inn’ was at the centre of elite urban life during the eighteenth century, proving a flexible, neutral space for business or pleasure. Drawing on newspaper advertisements from the eighteenth century, Maudlin illustrates the use of language intended to lure this group, ‘such as the “best wines” or the fashionability implied by “recently fitted up”’. Hare argues that the innkeepers themselves were part of an elite who were often of longstanding importance in their communities and who were among those who dominated the government of small towns. Maudlin notes an interesting contradiction to social ordering in that, as a business, the early modern elite inn provided a liminal space in society for a large number of female innkeepers (often widows). This will be examined further in the second case study, which focuses on the property of the widowed Elizabeth Westwood, an innkeeper at the Sun Inn, Hitchin.

38 Clark, p. 19.
39 Cooper, p. 19.
41 Pennington, p. 12.
43 Daniel Maudlin in James and others, p. 97.
44 Hare, p. 497.
45 Daniel Maudlin in James and others, p. 97.
Maudlin continues by stating, in agreement with Clark, that ‘a history of inns as spaces of sociability and travel suggests a more nuanced picture wherein ‘inns’ catered for all ranks but that not all inns were the same as there was a rigid social classification of establishments’. Such a hierarchy will be considered further via the third case study selected for this dissertation, the Red House and the Red Cow. How we might choose to define a third-tier or lesser inn, the form such buildings might have taken, how they functioned and what type of people the innkeepers and clientele were will be discussed accordingly.

Scholarly interest in the study of inns appears to be increasing across numerous historical disciplines and much interesting and valuable work has been carried out. Maudlin argues that life in the eighteenth-century town cannot be truly understood without understanding the inn. This argument concerning the vital role that principal inns played in oiling the cogs of everyday urban life could be extended to include the long eighteenth century and diversified to consider the role of lesser inns.

There remains considerable scope for further research on the inn, particularly what has been termed the numerous ‘backstage’ areas in which those employed at the inn lived and worked, and the form and function of inns that did not meet the criteria before being considered ‘principal’. The next chapter will introduce the historical and topographical background of Hertfordshire and the urban inn, setting the scene for the case studies that will follow.

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46 Daniel Maudlin in James and others, p. 97.
47 Maudlin, p. 1.
Chapter 3: Hertfordshire - Historical Development and the Urban Inn

Medieval towns, in Hertfordshire as elsewhere, possessed very varied plans but all had the essential feature of a central market place.\(^49\) Places such as Hitchin, St. Albans, Ware and Royston were established by the fourteenth century as regular collecting points for barley and malt heading for London.\(^50\) By the early-sixteenth century Hertfordshire was awash with small towns, maintaining one of the densest urban networks of any English county.\(^51\)

Hertfordshire’s urban fortunes across the second and third quarters of the sixteenth century appear to have been mixed, but do not reflect the general urban decline that has been suggested by some historians.\(^52\) Slater and Goose note that the growth and marketing of agricultural produce benefitted towns during this time that were easily accessible from the Great North Road, such as Baldock in the north of the county as well as those situated on the River Lea, particularly Hertford and Ware.\(^53\) The most widespread additional function of Hertfordshire towns, aside from marketing agricultural produce, was to provision traffic passing along the county’s major thoroughfares.\(^54\)

Terry Slater has produced a very useful map depicting Hertfordshire towns, boroughs and markets in relation to the medieval main roads.\(^55\) This map clearly shows the origins of the routes, whether prehistoric, Roman or medieval, and demonstrates the geographical relationships between the towns of Hertford, Hitchin, Baldock and Stevenage and their positions on key routes towards London. Ermine Street (the old A10) was the premier north-south road of medieval England, yet an alternative route to Barnet and then on to Baldock or Hitchin gained prominence during the fourteenth century.\(^56\)

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\(^51\) Terry Slater and Nigel Goose, ‘Panoramas and Microcosms: Hertfordshire’s Towns through Both Ends of the Telescope’, in *A County of Small Towns - The Development of Hertfordshire’s Urban Landscape to 1800*, ed. by Terry Slater and Nigel Goose (Hatfield: HP, 2008), pp. 1–26 (pp. 10–11).

\(^52\) Slater and Goose, p. 10.

\(^53\) Slater and Goose, p. 10.

\(^54\) Bailey, p. 53.

\(^55\) Terry Slater, ‘Roads, Commons and Boundaries in the Topography of Hertfordshire Towns’, in *A County of Small Towns - The Development of Hertfordshire’s Urban Landscape to 1800*, ed. by Terry Slater and Nigel Goose (Hatfield: HP, 2008), pp. 67–95 (fig. 4.1).

\(^56\) Bailey, p. 53.
Street (the later A5) through St. Albans was one of the main routes to north-west England.\(^{57}\) The importance of passing traffic to the economies of Hertfordshire’s towns is reflected in the proliferation of inns and taverns.\(^{58}\)

Analysis of contemporary documents has suggested that expansion occurred across Hertfordshire between the 1560s and 1580s followed by setbacks that lasted into the early-seventeenth century, with growth resuming around 1640.\(^{59}\) However, by the end of the seventeenth century it was those towns in the Lea Valley or in close proximity to London that fared best.\(^{60}\) By the late seventeenth century St Albans had stagnated and lost its place amongst the country’s leading towns whilst Hertford and Ware prospered.\(^{61}\) Hertfordshire shared in the urban growth associated with eighteenth century England but, unlike most other English counties, Hertfordshire did not produce a town of truly regional significance. Rather, it was a county of small towns: the same seven that led the way in 1663 were still the leading towns in 1801.\(^{62}\)

J.T. Smith has commented that ‘the several main roads radiating from London ensured that Hertfordshire was well provided with inns but variations in route from time to time caused the decline of some places and the rise of others, and the inns with them’.\(^{63}\) As early as 1577 St. Albans had 20 percent of the inns in the whole county and by 1686 the town could offer 719 beds and stabling for 1411 horses.\(^{64}\) Hitchin, Baldock and Stevenage are mentioned in a 1756 survey of inn beds and stabling facilities in Hertfordshire but no figures were included in the survey for these towns, suggesting it was known that facilities existed here but they were not visited by the appraisers.\(^{65}\) This is particularly frustrating as the date of the survey is almost contemporary with the main primary source material for two of the case studies in this dissertation. The inclusion of figures for numerous Hertfordshire towns in the south and west of the county could suggest that the Great North Road was not as important a route.

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\(^{57}\) Bailey, p. 54.
\(^{58}\) Bailey, p. 54.
\(^{59}\) Slater and Goose, p. 10.
\(^{60}\) Slater and Goose, p. 10.
\(^{61}\) Slater and Goose, p. 11.
\(^{62}\) Slater and Goose, p. 11.
\(^{64}\) Smith, *English Houses 1200-1800*, p. 170.
\(^{65}\) ‘Inns and Ale-Houses: Return of Accommodation for Men and Horses.’, 1756, TNA, WO 30/49.
The histories of Hitchin and Baldock, including their buildings, have both been variously covered by amateur and professional publications, including Jolliffe and Jones’ historical gazetteer on Hertfordshire inns and public houses. Yet, as Pennington comments, it was not produced as a regional study, highlighting the scope for further research. The histories of the towns of Hitchin and Baldock, from which the three case studies are drawn, will now be briefly discussed.

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Hitchin

Hitchin is a large market town owned by the Crown since before the Conquest. The town derives its name from the Hicce a small tribe eventually absorbed into the kingdom of Mercia. At this location the chalk of the Chiltern Hills is separated from the continuing but lower chalk ridge to the east by the Hitchin Gap, a deep glacial valley. Howlett informs us that the soils are light and well drained with sand, gravel and pockets of boulder clay largely overlying the chalk.

The town is sited on the Great North Road close to the important east-west route of the Icknield Way and was established as a market town by 1086/7. A place described by Williamson as being of ‘ancient importance’, the town is one of the oldest continually inhabited towns in the county and could be described as the historic centre of north Hertfordshire. Hitchin is dominated by the great market place, like other towns in Hertfordshire including Stevenage, Baldock and St Albans, shown clearly on a plan of Hitchin, surveyed by Attfield and Neale for Hitchin Vestry in 1816 and copied by Henry Merrett in 1818. Originally a mesne borough, Hitchin was considered a place of ‘urban’ character by c.1200.

The streets of the town have been described by Fitzpatrick-Matthews as forming a ‘grid pattern based around the River Hiz, a pattern that survived virtually unchanged until the nineteenth century’. Sun Street and Bucklersbury show the original end of the funnel-shaped market place, with infill buildings (the oldest dating from the fifteenth century) between the two streets forming an irregular building line.

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70 Howlett, p. vii.
71 Howlett, p. vii.
73 Williamson, p. 30.
76 Attfield and Neale, Plan of Hitchin (Hitchin Vestry, 1816), North Herts Museum.
78 Fitzpatrick-Matthews, p. 36.
79 Fitzpatrick-Matthews, p. 36.
Bridget Howlett’s edited and translated version of ‘The Survey of the Royal Manor of Hitchin 1676’ has been invaluable in explaining the confusing nature of administrative structures in Hitchin, namely that the manor of Hitchin, the township of Hitchin and the parish of Hitchin were none of them coterminous. The Manor of Hitchin Rectory was granted to the Master, Fellows and Scholars of Trinity College, Cambridge by Henry VIII. By 1700 Hitchin was ‘reputed the second Town in the County for the number of Streets, Houses, and the Multitude of Inhabitants’, according to Sir Henry Chauncy. By circa 1670 Hitchin is recorded as having a population of 2400 and is described as benefitting from the expansion of internal trade in the decades after 1570.

In 1725 Daniel Defoe described Hitchin as ‘a large market town particularly eminent for its being a great born market for wheat and malt, but especially the first, which is brought here for London market’. He went on to state that ‘the road to Hitchin and thence to Bedford, though not a great thoroughfare for travellers, yet is a very useful highway for the multitude of carriages’. The town did not receive much attention, however, in Emanuel Brown’s ‘Britanica Depicta’ of 1720, failing to be favoured with a town write-up. Nonetheless, Hitchin’s growing population, topographical advantage and location near to the Great North Road and other major routes ensured that its inns thrived during the long eighteenth century.

Hitchin’s early inns were located either on or close to the former market square, now known as Market Place. Fitzpatrick-Matthews states that of the historic commercial buildings still standing in Hitchin, inns are the most distinctive. Such first and second-tier inns will now be described and have been marked on a Google My Maps for ease of reference. Thought to be one of the oldest inns still providing hospitality, the Red Hart at 28-9 Bucklersbury, probably dating from c.1490 when it first appears in the records. This ancient inn was not known for being important to the coaching business, thus it was likely to be a lesser, third-tier inn during the long eighteenth century. Thought to pre-date the Red Hart

80 Howlett, p. ix.
81 Howlett, p. 3.
85 Defoe, p. 435; in Howlett, p. ix.
87 Fitzpatrick-Matthews, p. 31.
89 Fitzpatrick-Matthews, p. 31.
with an earliest documented reference of 1450, the now demolished Angel Inn formerly located in Angel Street (now Sun Street) had internal fabric dated to the fifteenth century, and was Hitchin’s principal inn until it was eclipsed by the Sun. The latter, established by the 1570s, is still a hotel and the subject of our second case study.

Other known early inns in this area include the Swan, located on the north side of the former market square, from 1539 to 1884. Known for its entertainment and traders plying their wares in the yard, the Swan was largely demolished in the late nineteenth century. Its former size and location may have made it a second-tier inn, after the principal Sun. The Artichoke was located at 8-12 Market Place, almost adjacent to St. Mary’s Church. Sections of the former inn building remain, parts of which date to the fifteenth century. It is unclear when the inn was first established, although it does appear on a plan of 1812.

The former market square was also the reputed site of the Maidenhead Inn, of which little is known, the Six Bells, demolished in 1868, and the Pelican, long-since disappeared. The Rose and Crown was established in the market square by 1720, on the site of the former Six Bells. It is currently unclear whether this establishment was operating as an inn or a tavern. Further research would be required to establish where exactly these former inns (if evidence exists that they meet our definition of an inn) sat within the inn hierarchy of Hitchin. What can be inferred is that a location on the market place would have lent a degree of status to these establishments.

The Red House and the Red Cow, currently numbers 2 and 2a Market Place and number 4 Market Place respectively, date from the late sixteenth to seventeenth centuries. It will be argued in the third case study that these buildings were potentially operating as a small inn during the long eighteenth century. Joining the Swan in second-tier status, the Cock Inn was located on the High Street (formerly named Cock Street). Severely truncated in the mid-twentieth century, the current Cock is but a small remnant of the former inn. As of late 2019, the premises are no longer operating as a pub but remains in

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91 Jolliffe and Jones, p. 78.
92 Gadd and Pigram.
93 Gadd and Pigram.
96 Gadd and Pigram.
hospitality use as a restaurant. An inn is thought to have existed on this site since medieval times, although the oldest parts of the current remaining structure are sixteenth century. The Cock was probably a prominent inn before and during the long eighteenth century, located on a key approach to the market place and with a street named for it. Also eligible for second-tier status, The George Inn is located on Bucklersbury in a late-medieval building which has the remains of a large open hall. However, there is no architectural evidence that this building was built as an inn rather than being adapted to this purpose later. The former site of the Falcon Inn in the late seventeenth century, this site is described by Smith as an ‘inn of some importance in the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries’. A smaller tavern or possible inn was the Red Lion, also formerly located on Bucklersbury. Thought to have been established in 1740, the building is now in retail use.

Lesser, third-tier inns were traditionally located in the Bancroft area of Hitchin. Such establishments catered for drovers, those buying and selling livestock and those whose other employ related to the nearby cattle market, held here until 1903. Such inns included the Crown, said to date from 1654, the White Lion from 1753, and the Troopers Arms from 1734-1870. Whether these establishments would meet the definition of an ‘inn’ adopted in this dissertation is debatable. All three buildings were demolished between 1899 and 1966.

98 Smith, English Houses 1200-1800, p. 152.
99 Smith, Hertfordshire Houses, p. 92.
101 Gadd and Pigram.
103 Gadd and Pigram.
Baldock

The area around Baldock was an important settlement, considered to be of ‘urban’ character, during the Roman period. Part of the minister parish of Weston, Baldock was established as a market town by 1189. Existing Roman roads crossed the prehistoric Icknield Way, creating a prime spot for a market. The Knights Templar planned the town as an entity around a crossroads, creating two market places. This was made possible by diverting two existing roads, which met at right angles, and St. Mary’s Church was erected between them. Williamson has suggested that these natural advantages may mean the Knights Templar, who established Baldock in 1140, developed a settlement with an existing market function.

By the early-sixteenth century Baldock had a population of around 500 people. Malting and brewing became the town’s main industries in the eighteenth century. At one point the Great North Road ran directly through the town resulting in a very wide High Street. Such an easily accessible location made the town a natural choice for those breaking their journeys or arranging meetings or events, all of which helped the inns to thrive. Slater reminds us that ‘as at Royston […] many of the large regular plots in the centre of the town were occupied by inns in the early modern period, some still retaining building fabric dating from the end of the sixteenth century’.

The sites described below are marked on a map published by Slater and identified as ‘inns’. The sites referred to by Slater have been marked and named on a Google My Map for ease of reference. Slater identifies the Cock as a coaching inn site on his map, which is debatable, and also marks another two sites as coaching inns. As Slater does not identify individual inns marked on his map and no obvious

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104 Heighway, p. 75; Slater, p. 78.
105 Slater, p. 78.
106 Williamson, p. 38.
107 Williamson, p. 44; Slater, p. 78.
108 Slater, p. 79.
110 Williamson, p. 44.
111 Nigel Goose, ‘Urban Growth and Economic Development in Early Modern Hertfordshire’, in A County of Small Towns - The Development of Hertfordshire’s Urban Landscape to 1800 (Hatfield: HP, 2008), pp. 96–126 (p. 106); Table 5.2.
112 Slater, p. 80.
114 Slater, p. 80.
115 fig. 4.6 Slater, p. 79.
reference is made to any such inns on these sites in the documents sourced thus far, further research would be required to ascertain which potential inns are referenced.

Well-located next to St. Mary’s Church, the former market place and the cross-roads of the High Street, Norton Street (now Church Street), Hitchen Street (now Hitchin Street) and Whitehorse Street, the earliest reference to an inn in Baldock is to the George (formerly the George and Dragon). The George is a common inn sign known to have medieval origins.\(^{117}\) This certainly is the case here, as the first reference to ‘le George’ in Baldock is recorded in 1465.\(^{118}\) Another known early inn, the Talbot, was located on the crossroads where Whitehorse Street met two London roads. Raban Court, thought to been built c.1540, is the current name of the extant structure, although an earlier inn is believed to have existed on the site prior to its construction. The Talbot closed in the eighteenth century, unable to compete with the White Horse located opposite.\(^{119}\) Established from at least 1635,\(^{120}\) it is likely that the major factor that caused the White Horse to become the principal inn was the advantage it held due to having a larger corner plot site on an important crossroads. This allowed it greater space to expand and offer more facilities to passing trade than the George. The White Horse will be discussed in further detail in the corresponding case study.

The pressures that the George faced in being on a small site are demonstrated in surviving documents. In the late-seventeenth century John Crosse, the innholder at the George, paid £3 annually to the Rector of Baldock in order to lease an area of the churchyard to enlarge the stables.\(^ {121}\) Nonetheless, despite these pressures and competition from the White Horse, the George enjoyed a distinguished patronage in the late-seventeenth century. It was visited by the Quaker, George Fox, and perhaps also Samuel Pepys, who mentions staying overnight at the town but neglected to name the inn.\(^ {122}\) Fashionably re-fronted in the late-eighteenth century, the George remained competitive in Baldock until the mid-nineteenth century. At this point the inn closed its doors for a period and the White Horse had also ceased to operate.\(^ {123}\)

\(^{117}\) Pennington, p. 160.
\(^{119}\) King, p. 4.
\(^{123}\) King, p. 4.
The Rose and Crown, the third inn of prominence in Baldock during the coaching era, would appear to have taken over as principal inn at this time. Located near the George on Whitehorse Street, the earliest known reference to this inn is 1672. A number of coaches called here including the ‘heavy Lincoln’, and Oundle, the inn becoming the post and excise office after the White Horse closed. The building survives and now operates as a restaurant.

The White Lion, formerly known as the King’s Head, requires mention as one of Baldock’s earlier inns remaining in operation as a public house. Located on the High Street, it is said to have been founded in the seventeenth century and, from at least the early-nineteenth century, a wagon ran twice weekly from the inn to London. The White Lion was formerly an establishment of considerable size, with stables that ran back to Park Street. It seems likely that the White Lion was a second-tier inn during the coaching era, after the first tier comprising the White Horse, the George and the Rose and Crown, all of which were concentrated around cross-roads and located in a straight-line.

The Cock has been identified as another potential inn still operating as a public house. Located on the High Street, the earliest reference to the establishment is in 1694. Alongside the survivors, Baldock has its fair share of long-since disappeared inns, including the Bull; ‘the houses in Church Street and Norton Street are mostly of the seventeenth-century [...] including the Bull Inn and the Checkers, said to once be located at 28 Whitehorse Street and dating from 1673’. Blackhorse Mill, which once stood just to the north of Baldock before the town boundary was reached, was said to be the site of an inn but is more famous for once being the home of the so-called Baldock Beauty in the eighteenth century.

The Great Northern Railway arrived at Hitchin and Baldock in 1850, decimating the trade associated with the once-prosperous coaching business. Initially, the railway connected Hitchin and Baldock to larger national markets and boosted grain and malt production. Eventually, however, these one-time

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124 Jolliffe and Jones, p. 9.
125 Ryder, p. 9.
126 Ryder, p. 9.
127 King, p. 4.
128 Jolliffe and Jones, p. 7.
130 William Blyth Gerish, Collection, HALS, D/EGr/10.
local products suffered through cheaper imports and the town’s traditional malting and brewing industries and associated buildings began to slowly disappear, with many inns suffering a similar fate.\footnote{Howlett and Bradford-Best, p. 161.}
Chapter 4: The Sun Inn, Hitchin

Figure 1: The Sun Inn, Hitchin, April 2019. Front elevation and main entrance, Sun Street. Looking east.

The Sun Inn is located in the centre of Hitchin, on Sun Street, near the Market Place (see Google My Maps). The inn’s location on one of the routes radiating from the old market square is significant and will be discussed further later. Jolliffe and Jones have suggested that the Sun was built next door to the Angel Inn around 1550, noting that the inn was in the ownership of Trinity College by 1575.

R. L. Hine has stated that, by the late-sixteenth century, the court leet of the Manor of Hitchin adjourned to the Sun. It has been challenging, however, to find surviving documentary references to an inn on this site known by the name of the Sun in the later-sixteenth century or the first half of the seventeenth century. In a survey dated 20 June 1638, the ‘site’ of the Sun is not referred to as an inn, or by the name

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133 Google, ‘Hitchin - Google My Maps’, ‘Location of Sun Inn’ layer.
134 Jolliffe and Jones, pp. 78 and 83.
of ‘the Sun’. It is described as being ‘on the south side of the Angell’ and as ‘1 tenement now in tenure of George Woodley and abutteth on St Mary’s Street towards west and on river towards east…’. It seems unlikely that the author of the 1638 survey would refer to the Angel by name and not the Sun if it was operating as an inn at this time. In fact, the first located reference to the Sun Inn is in a ‘Survey of the Rectory and Parsonage of Hitchin’ dated 20 April 1650. Here it was described as ‘a certain inn called the ‘Sunne’ in the tenure of John Hurst’ which was on the ‘south side of the tenement called the Angel’. Thus pre-1650 there is scant documentary evidence of the Sun operating as an inn on its present site.

The Angel dated from at least 1450 and was considered Hitchin’s principal inn. Hine has stated that, in the late-sixteenth century, ‘in the great white chamber […] of the Angel, sat the Commissary or Surrogate in his Court of the Archdeaconry of Huntingdon’. This court sat simultaneously with the court leet at the Sun, demonstrating that during the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries both inns were utilised for important functions and neither had gained supremacy.

Joliffe and Jones state that, as the Sun gained favour over the Angel, the street name changed from Angel Street to Sun Street. Gadd and Pigrim state that the Sun had superseded the Angel as principal inn by 1620 and the name change from Angel Street to Sun Street occurred ‘gently’. However, the names ‘Angell Street’ and St. Mary’s Street appear interchangeably in the seventeenth century. St Mary’s Street was used in a survey of 1638, yet in another survey of 1676, the street was referred to as ‘Angell Street alias St Mareys Street’. The interchangeable use of the two street names continued into the eighteenth century, with it being referred to as ‘Angell Street’ on a map published in 1700, but as ‘St. Maries Street’ in a terrier of 1707.

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138 ‘Survey of the Rectory and Parsonage of Hitchin’.
139 Jolliffe and Jones, p. 78.
141 Hine, II, p. 293.
142 Gadd and Pigrim, p. 6.
143 ‘Survey, 1638, 42 Hitchin 14’.
144 ‘Law and History Relating unto Hitchin Portman and Forreigne in the County of Hertford.’, 1725, NHM, HM: 7143; in Howlett, p. xi.
The Sun survived the coming of the railway to Hitchin in 1850 and the inevitable challenges which the end of the coaching era brought to the town’s inns. It can be ascertained that the Sun did not escape completely unscathed, however; a letter requesting a rent reduction was written by the innkeeper William Hill in 1864, citing the negative impact of the railway.\textsuperscript{147} This paper’s length does not permit debate as to how the Sun managed to survive when many of the town’s other inns disappeared during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, it is clear that its ownership by Trinity College well into the twentieth century, its ability to adapt to changing circumstances and its location near the High Street and Market Place, yet not directly on either, were all factors. In 2019 the Sun stands alone on Sun Street, its centuries-old neighbour the Angel having been demolished in 1956.\textsuperscript{148}

\textbf{The Sun Inn, Hitchin - The operation of a principal urban inn in the mid-eighteenth century}

George Westwood was innkeeper at the Sun in the mid-eighteenth century and was appointed deputy postmaster of Hitchin in 1737 by the Royal Mail.\textsuperscript{149} In 1748 he acceded to the role of postmaster at the request of the Duke of Bedford, the leaseholder of the Sun Inn.\textsuperscript{150} Westwood died in 1754 and his widow, Elizabeth, appointed postmistress.\textsuperscript{151} The position of postmaster or postmistress was usually occupied by innkeepers during this period and is one indicator that an inn held principal status within the locale.\textsuperscript{152}

A probate inventory was drawn up relating to the moveable goods at the Sun in October 1754;\textsuperscript{153} listed are stated as being ‘Mr George Westwood’s deceased now Mrs Elizabeth Westwood’s’.\textsuperscript{154} A widow continuing her late husband’s inn business was fairly usual during this period.\textsuperscript{155} It would appear that

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{147} William Hill, Letter, 1864, Wren Library, Trinity College Cambridge, 42 Hitchin 79a.
\textsuperscript{149} Royal Mail, Microfilm, 1737, ll. 155–56, TPM, British Postal Service Appointment Books, 1737-1969; POST 58.
\textsuperscript{150} Royal Mail, Microfilm, 1748, p. 155, TPM, British Postal Service Appointment Books, 1737-1969; POST 58.
\textsuperscript{151} Royal Mail, Microfilm, 1754, p. 193, TPM, British Postal Service Appointment Books, 1737-1969; POST 58.
\textsuperscript{153} ‘Inventory of the Sun Inn’.
\textsuperscript{154} ‘Inventory of the Sun Inn’, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{155} W. Branch Johnson, p. 12.
\end{flushright}
Elizabeth ran the Sun solo for four years, until her marriage to William Marshall in 1758. The Sun was run by the Marshalls until 1774.

The goods listed in the inventory give us an insight into the material wealth of George Westwood and an idea of the status held by Westwood and his wife Elizabeth. However, it must be remembered that the assessed value of moveable estate is a crude method of measuring social position. The absence of an accompanying probate account, (such documents inventoried and totalled any debts owing by or to the deceased) results in any assessment of the Westwoods’ actual wealth and status remaining speculative.

According to Weatherill’s analysis of probate inventories 1675-1725 the mean total inventory value for innkeepers and victuallers was £155. Even allowing for some inflation with the passage of an extra twenty-nine years the total inventory value for the Sun in 1754 was just under five times as great as the aforementioned mean value at £747 7s 6d, indicating an inn of considerable status. The inventory of Westwood and the goods listed at the Sun will be compared in detail with that of Edward Marshall at the White Horse in Chapter 5.

The 1754 inventory assessors produced a detailed document pertaining to the Sun, allowing a unique insight into the layout, room usage and status, and material consumption of patrons and landlords of an urban inn in the mid-eighteenth century. Before attempting conjectural plans based on the route suggested in the inventory it is important to consider the surviving architectural elements and any historic plans of the site.

The extant building suggests that by circa 1700 the Sun was a hybrid of a Courtyard and Gatehouse type inn. The principal street range (Fig.1) with its imposing façade was rebuilt around this date in high-quality brick with decorative window dressings whilst older timber framed ranges extended around a courtyard, suggesting the latter typology. However, the Assembly Room was, and remains, located

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157 Royal Mail, Microfilm, 1774, p. 29, TPM, British Postal Service Appointment Books, 1737-1969; POST 58.


159 Weatherill, Consumer Behaviour & Material Culture, p. 188, Table 8.4.

160 ‘Inventory of the Sun Inn’, p. 6.

towards the rear of the inn more akin to the courtyard typology. It is likely that the Sun evolved over time, first built as a Courtyard type inn in the late-sixteenth century before renovation in a Gatehouse style at the turn of the seventeenth century.

A detailed block plan of 1812 survives, which demonstrates the layout of the inn site at that time, fifty-eight years later. The neighbouring Angel, a second-tier inn by this period, can be seen in the plan covering a much smaller adjacent site. The plan demonstrates that at that time the Sun had two entrances from different streets, both capable of handling vehicles, a clear indicator of its principal status. It is clear that by this period the Sun enjoyed a very large site replete with service ranges, outbuildings, gardens and a bowling green for recreation.

Utilising architectural evidence from the extant building, the 1754 probate inventory, the 1812 plan, and cross-referencing with a modern plan from 2016, it has been possible to create simple conjectural floor plan layers for the ground, first and second floors of the inn. These plans have been superimposed in layers on to the current footprint of the Sun Inn site on Google My Maps, and an accompanying schedule of inventoried spaces created (Fig.2). Buildings ancillary to the main ranges have not been included due to the length of this paper and a need to limit the analysis. Attempts to mitigate layout changes post-1754 and loss of historic fabric have focused on considering the order in which the rooms were recorded in the inventory and other information provided pertinent to the location of rooms; for example, ‘Garrett next the Angel’. The inventory also usefully notes a ‘total above stairs’, making it possible to identify which rooms are on the first and ground floors respectively.

In the majority of cases it has not been possible to identify the exact location of a former room or space on the conjectural floor plan map layers. A double-ended arrow has been used to indicate the possible location of a series of rooms, numbered according to their inventory number and detailed in the schedule (Fig.2). An analysis of the locations and relative status of the rooms and spaces described in the 1754 inventory and appearing on the conjectural plans will now follow.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number on Inventory and Conjectural Plans</th>
<th>Inventoried Room Name</th>
<th>Inventoried Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1st Garret next the Angel</td>
<td>£3 4s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2nd Garrett</td>
<td>£3 18s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3rd Garrett</td>
<td>£2 15s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4th Garrett</td>
<td>15s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>£8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Lion</td>
<td>£10 10s</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Crown</td>
<td>£8 12s 6d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Bedford</td>
<td>£15 15s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Moon</td>
<td>£9 17s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Star</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Closets</td>
<td>£1 4s</td>
</tr>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Assembly Room</td>
<td>£20 18s 6d</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Room over Scullery</td>
<td>£4 10s</td>
</tr>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Room over New Parlour</td>
<td>£3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Dining Room</td>
<td>£3 9s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>New Parlour</td>
<td>£2 18s 6d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Rose</td>
<td>£5 4s 6d</td>
</tr>
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<td>18</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Gatehouse Parlour</td>
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<td>Hall</td>
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<td>Bar and Closet</td>
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<td>Brewhouse</td>
<td>£80 2s 16d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Bowling Green and Garden</td>
<td>£5 10s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 2: Schedule to Conjectural Plans of Sun Inn, Hitchin, 1754. Based on 1754 Inventory*

The location of each chamber or room within all the conjectural floor plans have been suggested by taking into account the inventoried value of each space, the order it appears in the inventory, whether its contents evidence a hearth being present, and if such a space could logically exist alongside neighbouring spaces with regard to its function and status.

The higher status rooms known to be ‘below stairs’ according to the 1754 inventory, have been located in the front-facing principal range on the conjectural ground floor map layer e.g. the Dining Room, the New Parlour and the Rose. The order of rooms assessed in the inventory suggests that a Post Boys Room was located near or adjacent to the Gatehouse Parlour (Fig.2). Architectural evidence suggesting
a former blocked-up opening, possibly a second door, is present in the gatehouse of the Sun (see ‘historic fabric analysis’ Google My Maps layer). This could be taken as further support for this hypothesis, despite a principal range not traditionally housing rooms for servants.

The service rooms of the Sun in 1754 are suggested as being located in the right-hand courtyard range on the conjectural ground floor plan. This location was chosen due to the order the rooms appeared on the 1754 inventory (Fig. 2) suggesting that the route taken by the assessors progressed into this range after the gatehouse spaces. The extant architectural evidence further supports this suggestion, as its largely unimproved, clearly timber-framed appearance is strongly suggestive of a service function when compared with the remodelled principal, street-facing range and the left-hand courtyard range which has clearly been remodelled during the long eighteenth century (Fig. 3). The latter range contained the Assembly Room at the rear, to be further discussed later.

The landlady Mrs Westwood’s room, the ‘Mrs Room’,\textsuperscript{165} is the second highest status room by inventoried value (Fig. 2) yet due to its number placing it after the Gatehouse Parlour and the Hall, its location has been suggested in the ground floor plan as within this service range. Such a location close to the gateway would make sense as it would allow easy management of the staff and comings and goings at the inn. although Maudlin suggests that it was more usual for innkeepers’ apartments to be on the first floor.\textsuperscript{166}

The Mrs Room is listed as containing, one sack-bottom bedstead, green ‘harateen’ curtains, one feather bed, a bolster, two pillows, two blankets, a quilt, a ‘beauro-bookcase’, a chest of drawers, a table, a swing glass, a chair, a stool, window curtains, two shutters, a grate, a marble slab, Dutch tiles, an ‘alarum’ and paper hangings.\textsuperscript{167} The contents of this inventory listing confirm that Elizabeth’s chamber was high-status and comfortable, indicators being the presence of a grate to indicate it was heated and green ‘harateen’ bed curtains. Harateen was a type of camlet fabric, popular in the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{168}

The 1812 plan provides additional evidence for the right-hand courtyard range being in service function. The plan details that Henry Crabb had taken over ‘a brewery’ located in this range, highly likely to be

\textsuperscript{165} ‘Inventory of the Sun Inn’, para. 21.
\textsuperscript{166} Maudlin, p. 21.
\textsuperscript{167} ‘Inventory of the Sun Inn’, para. 21.
\textsuperscript{168} Pamela Claburn, \textit{The National Trust Book of Furnishing Textiles} (London; New York, N.Y., USA: Viking in association with the National Trust, 1988), p. 246.
the ‘Brewhouse’ listed in the 1754 inventory. A structure survives in this location, thought to be part of the former service range, and is likely to be the said former Brewhouse (Fig. 10.a). The double-height first floor and central placement of the windows are further indicators of prior industrial use.

![Figure 3: Sun Inn, (a) right-hand courtyard range (b) left-hand courtyard range. Looking west (April 2019).](image)

The 1812 plan depicts hostelry stables adjacent to the brewhouse. The 1754 inventory lists a number of rooms likely to have been located within this range and thus it is suggested on the Google My Map conjectural floor plan layers that this section was not used for stabling at this time.

A notable feature of inns is the provision of a superior space or spaces within.\(^{169}\) Such spaces were usually heated and enjoyed superior decoration and high-quality moveable goods. Historians have discussed the location of rooms within buildings as conferring status. In a principal inn the accommodation chambers on the first floor were usually considered superior to accommodation provided on the ground floor. This is seen to be the case at the Sun in 1754, as the majority of high-status accommodation spaces previously discussed in the inventory are ‘above stairs’; the only exception being Mrs Westwood’s room located on the ground floor.

This brings us onto further discussion of the conjectural first floor plans of the Sun. It is suggested by the 1754 Sun inventory that the Bedford chamber was the highest status of the named chambers at the inn and thus it has been located in the principal street-facing range on the conjectural plan (Fig. 10). The chamber was named for the dukes of Bedford, the leaseholders of the Sun Inn during the long eighteenth century.\(^{170}\) The inventory lists its contents as one sack-bottom bedstead, blue camlet

\(^{169}\) Pennington, p. 75.

curtains, three pairs ditto window curtains, blue hangings, one feather bed,\textsuperscript{171} bolster and pillow, three blankets, one quilt, one corner cupboard, eight cane chairs, one glass, one dressing table, one pair of brass headed [fire-]dogs, one brass fender and fire shovel, and two pairs of bellows.

The first indication that this chamber contains prestigious furnishings, is the presence of the high-status feather bed with 'blue camlet' curtains. Camlet, a fabric made from worsted and hair, was favoured for upholstery as it was hard-wearing but was more expensive when coloured and figured.\textsuperscript{172} The high status of the room is indicated further by references to a dressing table and corner cupboard in the inventory description. Such extra furniture is not listed in the majority of other chambers at the Sun.

The presence of hearth-related equipment in the inventory for this chamber is noteworthy. Not all named chambers are listed as containing hearth equipment.\textsuperscript{173} This strongly suggests that not all chambers were heated and counters Branch Johnson’s statement pertaining to St Albans inns that all chambers were heated. It also indicates that named chambers were not automatically higher in status than other spaces and we must look to inventoried contents and attributed value to guide our judgement. The fact that the Bedford chamber was heated, therefore, is one indicator of it being a higher status space at the Sun. The listing of brass as the material of the hearth-related objects is of further importance,\textsuperscript{174} an indication that the Bedford was a first-tier chamber. Of the other chambers at the inn that contain hearth equipment, the material of hearth-related equipment is omitted from the inventory description for all except the Sun chamber; where a pair of 'iron doggs' is listed.\textsuperscript{175} This suggests that the cheaper, largely unnoteworthy iron alternative was probably in place in all such second-tier rooms.

Although insufficient when used in isolation to prove status, the final indicator available to us to verify the status of the Bedford chamber is the value attributed to its contents in the inventory of 1754. The assessed value of £15 15s is considerably above the majority of other chambers at the Inn and confirms its status as the premier accommodation room (Fig.2).

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\textsuperscript{171} A 'feather bed' referred to a mattress. Such a mattress was high-status and would probably have been used with a sack-bottom bedstead.

\textsuperscript{172} Clabburn, p. 242.

\textsuperscript{173} I use the term 'named room' or 'named chamber' in this dissertation to denote rooms given a name unrelated to their function or location within the building e.g. Rose, Unicorn, Paper.

\textsuperscript{174} 'Inventory of the Sun Inn', p. 2.

\textsuperscript{175} 'Inventory of the Sun Inn', p. 1.
Following on from the Bedford and Elizabeth’s Westwood’s room, the rank of the remaining accommodation spaces becomes apparent through further analysis of the inventory. The assessed value of the Lion chamber at £10 10s,¹⁷⁶ suggests that it was the third-ranking chamber in the inn; part of a second tier after the elite accommodation spaces of the Bedford and Elizabeth’s room. This is confirmed through the description of green harateen curtains in the chamber, as were found Elizabeth’s chamber. The Sun chamber appears more extensively furnished, containing an additional chest of drawers and a large chest,¹⁷⁷ yet is only valued at £8 (Fig.2).

As has been discussed, it cannot be taken for granted that a named chamber or a higher attributed inventoriable value automatically translates to higher status. The listed contents of a chamber must confirm its status when cross-referenced with others and its location is taken into consideration. The Moon and Star chambers, both apparently lacking a hearth, have been suggested as being located further back in the right-hand courtyard range, above the service rooms; despite the Moon’s inventoried value being greater than the Sun and Crown chambers (Fig.2).

One discernible difference between the Moon and Crown chambers is that the former contains two bedsteads, one sack-bottom and one cored. Sack-bottom bedsteads were generally considered to be superior to cored bedsteads,¹⁷⁸ suggesting one may have been intended for a lower-status traveller. Each ‘bed’ (mattress) was feather, however, suggesting that a lower-status traveller may have been a lower-status family member rather than a servant. Nonetheless, given that the bed and its accoutrements are cited as usually being the most valuable of moveable household goods in the first half of the eighteenth century,¹⁷⁹ the presence of an extra bedstead in this chamber must logically account for the difference in value attributed to the two rooms. The question must now be asked as to whether the Moon chamber was superior in status to the Crown, given its extra bedstead and higher inventoriable value. The Crown contains a ‘glass’ (looking glass) and hearth-related equipment, in contrast to the Moon, which contains neither, suggesting that the Crown was in fact the more comfortable chamber and thus of higher status.

¹⁷⁶ ‘Inventory of the Sun Inn’, para. 6.
¹⁷⁷ ‘Inventory of the Sun Inn’, para. 5.
¹⁷⁸ Weatherill, Consumer Behaviour & Material Culture, p. 161; For an example of a high-status eighteenth-century bedstead which is known to have originally had a sacking-bottom see Unknown, Bed – Chinoiserie, 1760, VAM – Furniture and Woodwork Collection, Museum Number: W.451:1-1922 <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O126222/bed-unknown/>.
The Crown chamber additionally contained green ‘Chin’ curtains.\(^\text{180}\) In the case of the Sun chamber, the curtains were described only as ‘Chin’ curtains, but the omission of the colour was probably an oversight. ‘Chin’ is defined as a type of brocaded silk fabric originating from China according to *Fairchild’s Dictionary of Textiles*.\(^\text{181}\) The window curtains in the Crown are recorded as linen, a fabric that declined in use in the eighteenth century as cotton became readily available.\(^\text{182}\) Nonetheless, the presence of silk brocade bed curtains and a sack-bottom bedstead in the Crown further suggests that it held a reasonable level of status.

The Star chamber appears to have the lowest status of the named chambers in the inventory, indicated by its apparent lack of a hearth and sparse contents of one corded bedstead, one feather bed, a bolster, two blankets and one rug.\(^\text{183}\) Notably, it is also the only named chamber which lacks window or bed curtains listed in the inventory. It could thus be deemed to belong to a fourth-tier of accommodation rooms at the Sun Inn. This fourth-tier could also be said to contain further rooms which are evidently for guests but are not named chambers. It has been previously pointed out that named chambers do not necessarily equate to higher status within an inn and this is borne out by the Star chamber appearing to be considerably less comfortable and containing less furniture than the ‘Room over scullery’, which is listed as containing one sack-bottom bedstead, yellow curtains, one feather bed, a bolster and pillows, two blankets, one quilt, paper hangings, one table, six chairs and window shutters.\(^\text{184}\) As both chambers apparently lack a hearth and the latter is recorded as being much more comfortably furnished, the only indicator that the Star could possibly be considered higher status is the fact that it is named.

Perhaps the rationale for having such a comparatively meanly furnished, yet named, chamber was that it was situated close to those of clearly better rank such as the Moon, Bedford and Crown. Perhaps this room was given a name to imply a greater level of status than it had in reality. It may have been intended for higher-status servants or lower-ranking family members accompanying their betters or elders at the inn. The humblest guest room at the Sun, if moveable contents are considered, would appear to be the unnamed ‘Room over new parlour’. This space is listed as containing two corded bedsteads, one feather bed and bolster, one straw bed and mat and two pairs of old curtains.\(^\text{185}\) In

\(^{180}\) ‘Inventory of the Sun Inn’, para. 7.
\(^{182}\) Definition of ‘linen’; Tortora and Merkel, p. 326.
\(^{183}\) ‘Inventory of the Sun Inn’, para. 10.
\(^{184}\) ‘Inventory of the Sun Inn’, para. 13.
\(^{185}\) ‘Inventory of the Sun Inn’, p. 14.
terms of bedding hierarchy, a straw bed was near the bottom. Another room containing two beds of different quality and status is again suggestive of demand from mixed parties i.e. a principal traveller with greater status than their companion.

It is now pertinent to assess the second floor conjectural plans of the Sun. Habitable attic spaces, known as garrets, were generally considered the least prestigious spaces within a building due to their cramped and often ill-lit nature. When the 1754 inventory is analysed, however, a more complex picture emerges. Despite none of the listed garrets being heated, three had moveable contents attributed a value greater than the ‘Star’ chamber and the ‘Room over New Parlour’, being valued at £1 10s 6d and £3 respectively (see Fig.2). Although the Star and Room over New Parlour lacked hearth equipment, their location on the first floor was thought to indicate higher status than a garret. However, the majority of the garret valuations contradict that hypothesis.

The inventoried contents of the garrets ranged from comfortable to lower-end. The ‘2nd Garrett’ listed contents including a sack-bottom bedstead, feather bed, ‘stuffd’ curtains and ‘stuff’ hangings, whilst the ‘4th Garrett’ contained a corded bedstead, green curtains, brown hangings and three chairs. Even the latter has arguably more comfortable furnishings than the ‘Star’, a named chamber. The contents of the Sun garrets and the relatively high values of three of these spaces, challenges previous ideas about the relationship between location and room status in principal inns.

Having discussed guest accommodation in detail, we must turn briefly to the space which was arguably the jewel in The Sun’s crown: the Assembly Room. Located on the first floor of the inn in 1754 according

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187 ‘Inventory of the Sun Inn’, para. 2; Clabburn, p. 255; ‘Stuff’ refers to a wool or worsted fabric, likely to be a type of camlet.
188 ‘Inventory of the Sun Inn’, para. 4.
to the inventory and confirmed in the 1812 plan, the room remains in situ today as the Function Room (fig. 4).

As Maudlin has discussed, the adaptation of an older inn to include this fashionable gathering space was considered one marker of a principal inn in the mid-eighteenth century. In towns such as Hitchin, where the only assembly room was located at an inn, it provided further confirmation that this building was truly part of the polite landscape, a member of ‘the set’.189 The inventoried contents of the Assembly Room at the Sun in 1754 were attributed with the greatest value of any space on the site at £20 18s 6d.190 The inventoried contents exude luxury and display,191 including a large pier glass, a ‘branch’ (chandelier), brass sconces, a mahogany table and interestingly a ‘chimney board’.192 The latter was a panel designed to seal hearths against draughts and soot in the summer and this is the only occasion when one occurs in the inventory.193

Older principal inns were continually altering their configurations and spaces as fashions changed in order to maintain their appeal.194 This was certainly true of the Sun, for which the Duke of Bedford

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189 Maudlin, p. 9.
190 ‘Inventory of the Sun Inn’, para. 12.
192 ‘Inventory of the Sun Inn’, para. 12.
194 Maudlin, p. 21.
commissioned a ‘new’ assembly room in 1770.\textsuperscript{195} This document reveals the ambitious alterations proposed, including the division of the old assembly room into two rooms, a staircase to be added between the old and new assembly rooms and even the incorporation of a water closet, the latter’s inclusion being highly innovative at this point.\textsuperscript{196} Decoration is detailed as, ‘inside dado chair high stuccoed above [...] plain modillion cornice at top and cornices round 2 places in ceiling where the chandeliers are to be fixed’.\textsuperscript{197} The instructions given by the Duke clearly demonstrate the accuracy of Maudlin’s comments that inn refurbishments in the eighteenth century invoked the rules of Classicism to assure polite guests that ‘social rules and norms would also be adhered to’.\textsuperscript{198}

This case study has analysed documentary and architectural evidence connected with an extant inn known to have held principal status in the mid-eighteenth century. The following case study will seek to interrogate the evidence that suggests the now disappeared White Horse Inn, Baldock was of similar status during this period.

\textsuperscript{195} Agreement, 1770, BARS, R Box 761.
\textsuperscript{197} ‘Agreement for Assembly Room, Sun Inn’.
\textsuperscript{198} Maudlin, p. 16.
Chapter 5: The White Horse Inn, Baldock

Located at the crossroads of Whitehorse Street, Station Road, Royston Road and Clothall Road in Baldock, the earliest known reference to the White Horse Inn has been quoted as a deed relating to its then neighbour the Crowne, dated 1635, despite Joliffe and Jones quoting a later date of 1681.

The former inn’s location provides the first hint of its previous principal status. Situated on a key junction, this placed the inn directly on routes heading east towards Royston and on to Cambridge and Newmarket, and on those heading further north, such as to Stamford, Lincoln and York. The inn was thus well-patronised by coaches and individual travellers.

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200 HALS 67011 and 67017 quoted in Heritage Network, The Old White Horse PH, Station Road, Baldock, Herts (Royston: Heritage Network Education and Publishing, March 1998), p. 3, Baldock Library, LS 986.2581; based on research carried out by Brendan King and Jane Havercroft of the then Baldock Historical Society.
201 Joliffe and Jones, p. 10.
202 Roberts, Thompson and Co., ‘General Coach Offices, White Horse Inn, Fetter Lane, and Cross Keys Inn, Wood Street, 2 Doors from Cheapside, London.’ (Sabine & Son, Shoe Lane, 1806), Yale University, LWL <http://hdl.handle.net/10079/digcoll/2782285>.
203 Blyth Gerish, sec. Inns; p.12.
It is suggested that the former Talbot Inn (once located directly on the aforementioned junction) ceased to operate from the early-eighteenth century. It was almost certainly competition from the White Horse inn, almost directly opposite, that caused this demise. A similar example is discussed in the case study on the Sun, Hitchin, regarding its relationship to its former neighbour, the Angel. It was thus not uncommon for inns to be located close to each other, taking advantage of an identified key location, and subsequently for one inn to usurp its neighbour’s supremacy.

The second clue to the inn’s former principal inn status is the main street leading to its location from the former Great North Road bearing its name (Whitehorse Street). Competing inns such as the Rose and Crown were also sited on the same street, yet the White Horse was associated with the thoroughfare, indicating its supremacy within the locale. The generous corner plot and subsequent size of the former inn site is a key indicator of how the White Horse became the principal inn of Baldock in the long eighteenth century.

The George, located next door to St. Mary’s Church, the former Market Place and at the junction of the former Great North Road, Whitehorse Street and Hitchin Street, would at first seem the more likely candidate for principal inn status. This is because it seemingly formed part of what historians have termed ‘the set’, market place, church, civic buildings and a principal inn. The George’s site having been apportioned from the churchyard suggests that its origins are ecclesiastical, but this early advantage was fast tempered by the location limiting the size of its plot. As a consequence, it was unable to offer the bowling green enjoyed by the White Horse and most probably had less accommodation or function space.

The White Horse prospered during the long eighteenth century and was arguably the principal inn in Baldock during this period. The inn covered a large corner site pre-1760. An approximate indication of how the inn’s footprint altered from the mid-eighteenth century to the present day is demonstrated via Google My Maps.

204 An early-seventeenth century building, suggestive of a Courtyard type inn, converted to residential use and now known as Raban Court.
205 King, p. 4.
206 Slater identifies other potential inn sites along Whitehorse Street, yet does not name them. It requires further research to identify these sites. Slater, fig. 4.6; p.79.
After 1760 further neighbouring buildings and land were leased to accommodate the growing requirements of the inn.  

John Byng (later fifth Viscount Torrington) stayed here in or before 1793, however, the index to the Diaries suggests that Byng abandoned the White Horse in favour of the George; perhaps indicating standards had begun to slip. By 1839 the White Horse had decidedly declined in status, the majority of coaches now commencing from rival inns the Rose and Crown and the George, or the Post Office. The railway came to Baldock in 1850 and initiated a steady decline in the town’s inn business. By 1851 the ‘Post Office Directory’ had no entry listed for the White Horse, and the Baldock Tithe Map Award of 1850 referred to the site as ‘Late White Horse Inn’. After re-opening, the inn eventually succumbed to tough trading conditions, closing in 1864.

The inn building became a school after it ceased trading but suffered a fire circa 1865 in which the major part of the building was destroyed. The White Horse was rebuilt as a ‘tap’ on the original site, with an 1866 address of North Road, differing from the previous principal entrance (and address) of White Horse Street. The nearby Engine public house was not in operation until 1871.

It has been suggested that a proportion of the original building survived and was incorporated into the existing structure. I would be inclined to agree with this theory as there is evidence of architectural features that pre-date the later-nineteenth century in the existing building fabric. Notably, there is an old clay-tile roof, small irregularly spaced windows in the side elevation, what appears to be a lower timber-framed range behind the re-built street-facing range (see Fig.5.b), and the remains of an older wall with previous timber lintels and bricked-up openings behind this. The address for the White Horse, now listed as a public house, changed once more to Station Road by 1922, after a section of the North

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209 King, p. 5.
214 Blyth Gerish, p. 12.
215 Jolliffe and Jones, p. 10; W. Branch Johnson, p. 30.
219 General Register Office, Census, 1871, TNA, RG 10 - Records of General Register Office.
220 Heritage Network, p. 4.
Road was renamed. Known as the Old White Horse by 1929, this former inn tap is still operating as a public house.

Figure 5(b): Above: timber-framed range, from the north, extending back from main Station Road front.

Left: Close-up of small, irregular windows in side-elevation of main range and old tiled roof. Facing north.

Photos taken from the current car park to the public horse, on Whitehorse Street.

Edward Marshall and the White Horse Inn, Baldock - The operation of a principal urban inn in the mid-eighteenth century

Edward Marshall was an innholder residing in Baldock at the time of his death in the 1740s. It has proved impossible thus far to locate the will that accompanied Marshall’s probate inventory and account, dated 23 November 1746. We can learn from the inventory and account that his son, also called Edward Marshall, was the heir and administrator of his estate. From a surviving eighteenth-century trade card we can ascertain that either Edward Marshall or Edward Marshall Jr was the innholder of the White Horse, Baldock. As the design closely aligns with similar local inn trade cards originating from the same bequest and dated to the 1760s, it is likely to be post-1750 and thus designed for Edward Marshall Jr. The trade card information is given further weight by evidence from Marshall Jr’s will that he carried on the family business of innholding.

Edward Marshall’s probate inventory and accompanying account are tantalisingly comprehensive. The level of detail contained within provides a fascinating insight into the organisation of the now-lost inn: the spaces it contained, the moveable objects within those spaces and suggest a route through the inn taken by the probate assessors. It will now be discussed how Marshall’s inventory can be used in combination with other documentary sources, such as prints and maps, to aid understanding as to what form the White Horse buildings may have taken during the long eighteenth century and to subsequently produce conjectural floor plans.

A view of the White Horse, dated to the eighteenth century, is the only representation currently discoverable. An archaeological report dates the view to circa 1790 but does not elaborate on the evidence. The original was not viewable due to fragility, therefore, this image was viewed on microfilm, rendering it impossible to ascertain the actual colouring. As with all artwork depicting buildings, a critical eye must be employed as such works may not depict what the building looked like in reality but rather a representative view. However, this particular depiction comprises several encouraging elements that suggest it could lean towards accuracy rather than fancy.

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224 I will refer to the heir of Edward Marshall as Edward Marshall Jr, or Marshall Jr, for ease of reference.
228 Unknown, View of White Horse Inn, HALS - Oldfield Collection, Volume 1 - D/ED/1/499.
229 Heritage Network, fig. 3.
The view shows the front, principal elevation of the Inn. The main range is shown with a pedestrian entrance to the right of the recessed section, as are part-views of other building sections or outbuildings to the right and left. We know the main entrance to the inn was from Whitehorse Street and the presence of a pedimented front door and inn sign depicted in this view confirms this. Gates to the left of the elevation are depicted with a trackway, suggesting this was a possible entrance for coaches.

An encouraging aspect of the artwork is that the building does not appear to be represented in an idealised manner. Firstly, the architecture of the inn is shown rather as a believable mix of styles and periods. The main style shown appears to be late-seventeenth century or early-eighteenth century. The main range is very likely to be of brick as this was the favoured material for polite façades in the east of England during the long eighteenth century and is prolific in such buildings in Baldock. One strong indicator of such a date is the hipped roof with dormer windows and a modillioned cornice.231 The large central chimney stack is a further suggestion that a late-seventeenth century date could be correct.232 The string course across each level, early sash windows and two main floors of apparent equal height suggest that they may have been an early-eighteenth century modification.233

Secondly, the inn is depicted as having an asymmetrical principal façade, its main front door off-centre to the right and the building plan appears to be of a main range with two projecting gabled cross-wings. The cross-wings themselves are also not symmetrical, the right-hand being narrower, with a lower roof and fewer windows. The hall and cross-wing plan became outmoded as the seventeenth century progressed.234 This plan form, in combination with the aforementioned eighteenth-century features aforementioned, is suggestive of an older building modified over time.

We know there was an inn operating under the sign of the White Horse 1681 at the latest but it is likely that an inn was operating on this strategic site earlier than the late-seventeenth century. A building section or outbuilding, which appears timber-framed, is depicted to the right of the aforementioned view, indicating different functionality and status from the main range. The asymmetrical nature of the principal façade could also suggest an earlier structure that could not be adapted in a symmetrical manner. However, it must also be considered that outside of large urban centres it was not uncommon

for asymmetrical buildings to be constructed during the late-seventeenth century; provincial builders
not wholly adhering to the newly-fashionable architectural rules. The existence of this view can help
us to understand what architectural form the principal façade of the inn may have taken in the late-
seventeenth or early-eighteenth century. The height of the roof is suggestive of a double-pile plan when
contrasted with the height of the single-pile wings.

The Tithe Map of 1850 proved the earliest large-scale map or plan of Baldock. The copy available at
the country record office is fragile and much faded. Thus, it was only permissible to view a digitised CD-
ROM copy. The map shows the White Horse Inn encompassing a large corner plot, comprising a large
main inn building, yard and what are probably outbuildings and stables. Two entrances are shown to
the site on the map: a narrower entrance from Whitehorse Street and a wider entrance from the former
North Road.

Utilising the 1850 map to obtain a template of the Inn’s footprint, conjectural plans of the ground, first
and second floors have been suggested (figs.6-9), utilising the 1746 inventory, the aforementioned
painting and other documentary sources As the majority of the inn burnt down in the nineteenth
century, and no detailed plans exist, as in the manner of the Sun Inn, Hitchin. Aside from this, the
greatest difficulty in attempting to compose the conjectural floor plans for the White Horse, lay in the
inventory order of spaces and the lack of notation by the assessors, as to the division between above
stairs and below stairs spaces.

Due to the nature of the task in dealing with a largely disappeared building and the only usable map or
plan for the task post-dating the 1746 inventory by just over a hundred years, it has been impossible to
identify any locations with precise accuracy. Thus, as with the conjectural plans of the Sun Inn, locations
of a series of chamber or rooms within all the conjectural floor plans of the White Horse have been
suggested by taking into account the inventoried value of each space, the order it appears in the
inventory, whether its contents evidence a hearth as present and if such a space could logically exist
alongside neighbouring spaces with regard to its function and status. The suggested locations are
shown using double-ended arrows and spaces are numbered according to their 1746 inventory
designation. A schedule informed by the inventory accompanies the drawings (Fig. 9).

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235 Calloway, Cromley, and Powers, p. 50.
236 Unknown, ‘Baldock Tithe Award’.
The painting and the 1850 map depict a plan form conforming to a Courtyard type inn, as defined by Pantin.²³⁷ This is additionally congruent with the inn’s location on a generous corner plot. The presence of such an imposing principal façade, however, suggests that the White Horse site could have been thought of as a hybrid between a Courtyard and Gatehouse type plan; yet the façade notably did not appear to contain a gateway or passage.²³⁸ Due to the inventory not specifying which spaces were ‘below stairs’, commonly accepted locations (for inn plan forms) have been adopted where necessary. Thus, the Dining Room and parlours, have been sited on the ground floor; part of the usual ‘parlour-kitchen’ combination (Fig.6).²³⁹ Interestingly, the Back Parlour and the New Parlour both contained bedsteads,²⁴⁰ which was unusual by the mid-eighteenth century and certainly for an inn of the White Horse’s status.

It is unknown where the staircase in the White Horse was sited, however, its position within the inventory suggests it was central to the building. Thus, an entrance lobby has been suggested in the floor plans with a central staircase (figs.6-7), also congruent with historians’ assessment that this was the favoured position in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, though towards the end of the period the rear of the building was gradually favoured;²⁴¹ thus the accuracy of this placement cannot be made with confidence.

The extent of the building depicted in the aforementioned view as an apparent one-storey structure (to the right of the principal range, differentiated by its appearance to suggest a service function), has been approximately identified on drawings (fig. 6-8) informed by the 1850 Tithe Map. Service rooms and spaces are suggested as located partly in this area of the site, including the ‘Brewing house’; the placement of which is in agreement with conjectural plans of the site created by Brendan King,²⁴² and places the brewing house adjacent to other service areas; suggested as common for the period by Johnson.²⁴³

²³⁷ Pantin, pp. 168–69.
²³⁸ Pantin, pp. 167–68.
²³⁹ Maudlin, p. 21; Pantin, p. 172.
²⁴² Heritage Network, fig. 2; King, p. 5.
Remaining service rooms are suggested as being located across the Bowling Green, in another wing towards the back of the site (Figs.6-8). This is due to the order such rooms are recorded on the inventory and the likelihood of such areas being located away from the principal range.\textsuperscript{244} After the entry for ‘Yard House’, which it is suggested as potentially the last room within the wing facing onto North Road, the assessor appears to move upstairs as a ‘Middle Chamber’, ‘Phair Head Chamber’ and ‘Lower Room’ are then inventoried (Fig.9). These being spaces of reasonable status, one named, it seems unlikely that such spaces would be located on the ground floor, nor above a Yard House.

Thus, it is suggested that the assessors crossed the Bowling Green and re-entered the principal range, proceeding upstairs to assess first floor rooms on the right-hand side of the staircase before ascending to assess the Kitchen. Confusingly the ‘Unicorn’ and ‘Masters Room’ are then inventoried; the former almost certainly an upstairs room due to its contents and value (Fig.9). Assuming that the assessor did not record the Kitchen in a random place having made an error, potentially there was another staircase that led to the Unicorn and Masters Room, although the latter could also have existed downstairs. Remaining service areas and stables are suggested as being located in the ancillary buildings on the inn site (figs.6-7). Garrets are located on the second-floor conjectural plans (Fig.8) in the principal range, by virtue of their name signifying an attic-location and their order in the inventory.

The principal range is suggested as the location of the highest-status ‘named’ spaces (Figs.6-7). The inventory lists no fewer than ten, as follows: Rose, Swan, Dolphin, ‘Blew’ (Blue), Yellow, Paper, Queens Arms, Princes Arms, ‘Phair head chamber’ and Unicorn.\textsuperscript{245} (Fig.9). As the qualifying word ‘chamber’, usually taken to denote an upstairs space, is not consistently present in the inventory, such spaces are suggested as being on the first floor if the contents confer status and provision for sleeping. Pennington notes that the presence of named chambers in an inventory is a certain indicator that the building or site under assessment was an inn and the more named chambers present, the greater its status.\textsuperscript{246} However, named rooms were also common in larger houses. Thus, it is the number of such named rooms that is the stronger indicator of an inn.

With ten named spaces it is clear that the White Horse was of principal inn status. Our previous case study, the Sun, had four fewer such spaces in an inventory of 1754.\textsuperscript{247} If Pennington’s assessment were applied as a means of comparison between the two principal inns this would result in the White Horse

\textsuperscript{244} Matthew Johnson, p. 171.
\textsuperscript{245} ‘Probate Ed. Marshall’.
\textsuperscript{246} Pennington, p. 73.
\textsuperscript{247} ‘Inventory of the Sun Inn’.
being considered the superior. The number of named spaces alone is too crude a status signifier, however, as other factors would require comparative analysis and discussion of a length not permitted by this paper. Some broad comparative contrasts and correlations can be noted, however, between the Sun and the White Horse through examination of the two probate inventories. Detailed discussion of the moveable contents of spaces and other recorded assets at the two inns will form the next section of this chapter.
Figure 6: Conjectural Plan of Ground Floor: White Horse Inn, Baldock, 1746. Based on 1850 Tithe map.
Figure 7: Conjectural Plan of First Floor: White Horse Inn, Baldock, 1746. Based on 1850 Tithe map.
Figure 8: Conjectural Plan of Second Floor: White Horse Inn, Baldock, 1746. Based on 1850 Tithe map.
<table>
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<th>Number on Inventory and Conjectural Plans</th>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Swan</td>
<td>£15 11s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Upper Hall</td>
<td>£15 6s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Staircase</td>
<td>7s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>New Room</td>
<td>£6 14s 6d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Left Hand Room</td>
<td>£6 14s 6d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Closet</td>
<td>£3 14s 6d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Right Hand Chamber</td>
<td>£15 3s 6d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Dolphin</td>
<td>£1 7s 6d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Blew (Blue) Room</td>
<td>£10 10s 6d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Yellow Room</td>
<td>£10 19s 6d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Paper Room</td>
<td>£9 15s 6d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Queens Arms</td>
<td>£14 11s 6d</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Princes Arms</td>
<td>£17s 6d</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Dining Room</td>
<td>£5 15s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Kitchen Parlour</td>
<td>£2 15s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>New Parlour</td>
<td>£15 18s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Back Parlour</td>
<td>£1 8s 6d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Front Parlour</td>
<td>£10 1s 6d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Little Kitchen</td>
<td>£8 16s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Bar</td>
<td>£1 7s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Laundry</td>
<td>£1 13s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Yard House</td>
<td>£4 9s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Middle Chamber</td>
<td>£2 3s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Phair Head Chamber</td>
<td>£2 10s</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Lower Room</td>
<td>£3 14s 9d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Kitchen</td>
<td>£50 19s 6d</td>
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<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Unicorn</td>
<td>£5 19s 6d</td>
</tr>
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<td>32</td>
<td>Masters Room</td>
<td>£5 19s 6d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Scullery</td>
<td>£6 3s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Brewing House</td>
<td>£39 6s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Bowling Green Cellar</td>
<td>£10 10s 6d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Great Cellar</td>
<td>£9 9s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Bowling Green</td>
<td>£3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Stables</td>
<td>£18 4s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9: Accompanying Schedule to Conjectural Floor Plans. Based on 1746 inventory data.\(^{248}\)

\(^{248}\) ‘Probate Ed. Marshall’. 
**Marshall’s White Horse and Westwood’s Sun: A comparison of principal inns in the mid-eighteenth century**

Of the named chambers at the White Horse, four have contents valued at over £10, just trumping the Sun (for inventory details see Fig.2; Chapter 4). The contents of the Swan chamber were attributed the greatest value at £15 11s (Fig.9). This is on a par with the highest ranked chamber at the Sun, the Bedford, with contents assessed just above at £15 15s. This strongly suggests that the Swan was the highest-status named chamber at the White Horse and thus would be reserved for the highest class of guest.

This is borne out by its contents, which included two sacking-bottom bedsteads with green ‘Cheney’ furniture. Also known as ‘Philip’ or ‘China’, the origin of the name ‘Cheney’ appears unknown but it is believed to have been a worsted-cloth similar to Camlet, known for its bright colours and use in upmarket upholstery in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Georgian architect John Wood the Elder discussed the lodging houses of Bath in 1742 thus: ‘With Kidderminster Stuff, or at best with Cheyne, the Woollen Furniture of the principle Rooms was made’. The Swan chamber additionally contained two feather beds, a dressing table, a glass, a ‘close stool’, six cane chairs and hearth equipment. The presence of the latter is an indicator of status, as is the presence of sacking-bottom bedsteads and feather beds. Cane chairs were indicative of the ‘good taste’ expected of a best chamber.

The Swan was arguably the highest-status named chamber, yet it is very closely followed by the Upper Hall, valued slightly lower at £15 6s (Fig.9). The inventoried contents of the Upper Hall are almost identical to that of the Swan, save for the number of cane chairs present being eleven as opposed to six and an additional oval and Dutch table; suggesting that this was a considerably bigger room but of equally high status. The presence of bedsteads and their accompanying furniture in the inventory confirms that this was a room partly used for sleeping. The naming of this room on the inventory as the Upper Hall, however, suggests that it was not simply a guest chamber in the manner of the named

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250 Clabburn, p. 251.
251 John Wood (the Elder), *A Description of Bath*, 2nd edn, 2 vols (London, 1769), Gale Eighteenth Century Collection Online, CW107939075; Cited in Clabburn, p. 251.
252 A close stool was an early form of portable toilet.
254 ‘Probate Ed. Mars’hall’, sec. 5.
255 Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour & Material Culture*, p. 161; For an example of a high-status eighteenth-century bedstead which was known to originally had a sacking-bottom see Unknown, *Bed - Chinoiserie*.
rooms. It appears that this room may have functioned as a great chamber, with certain characteristics of a private space yet with the capacity and furnishings to receive and entertain multiple guests.256

Having one such multi-functional, high-capacity room is in keeping with an urban principal inn of the long eighteenth century, which would have required such a gathering space for the use of high-status clientele.257 The use of the term ‘Upper Hall’ for this space harks back to the earlier days of the inn, which we know existed from at least the late-seventeenth century. The Sun Inn, also a building originally dating from the seventeenth century, and likely earlier, contained a room called the ‘Hall’ in 1754.258 However, we know this to have been the ground floor as the inventory assessor records it after his ‘total above stairs’.259 The Hall at the Sun, based on its sparse inventoried contents, does not appear to have been used as a comfortable space for inn-goers to linger or gather. Rather, the inventoried contents suggest it was a heated room, with some tables, chairs and a bench, but mostly with a storage capacity. This is in keeping with a remodelled ‘ancient’ inn in the eighteenth century, where the hall was passed through by guests in order to reach parlours or the stairs.260

As seen in the previous case study, the Sun underwent further internal remodelling to meet the expectations of the polite eighteenth-century inn-goer, with an Assembly Room present by 1754.261 The White Horse could not boast an Assembly Room but some re-modelling of the inn is suggested by the inclusion of a New Room and a New Parlour on the 1746 inventory.262 The White Horse is recorded as having four parlours in total at this time, all with hearths, the Front Parlour and the New Parlour being high-status and comfortably furnished.263 The Back Parlour is listed as containing a bedstead, unusual by this point in the eighteenth century,264 and another suggestion that the White Horse was adapting more slowly to new patterns of room usage than might have been expected for a principal inn at this time.

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256 Overton and others, pp. 133–34.
257 Maudlin, p. 21.
258 ‘Inventories of the Sun Inn’, para. 20.
260 Maudlin, p. 21.
261 ‘Inventories of the Sun Inn’, para. 12.
264 Overton and others, p. 133.
By comparison we know the Sun had two parlours, the New Parlour and the Gatehouse Parlour, the name ‘New Parlour’ again signalling re-modelling and improvement at this inn. Neither parlour at the Sun contained bedsteads, indicating that the transition away from the use of such rooms for sleeping had fully occurred here. Yet neither parlour at the Sun was as comfortably furnished as the principal parlours at the White Horse and they were inventoried at a much lower value than the latter. Both inns had heated dining rooms listed in their inventories, demonstrating the move towards this specialist room type by the mid-eighteenth century.

The considerable variance in the status and use of parlours at the Sun and White Horse and the continued use of a space in the manner of a great chamber at the latter whilst the former adopted the use of an assembly room, suggests that space usage and hierarchy in principal inns was more fluid in the eighteenth century than has been previously been suggested. It would appear that older inns adapted at different paces and utilised their newer and older rooms in a variety of ways to meet the expectations of the polite inn-goer.

The existence of a probate account in the case of Edward Marshall adds vital qualifying information to the inventory’s material wealth record and allows insight into the management of his finances. This ensures much greater accuracy in attempting to establish the true wealth and status of Marshall and an inn such as the White Horse. According to Weatherill’s analysis of probate inventories 1675-1725 by occupation the mean total inventory value of innkeepers and victuallers was £155. Allowing for some inflation with the passage of an extra twenty-one years, Marshall’s inventoried total of household goods, plate, stock in trade and ready money value in 1746 was assessed at over eight times more at £1265 2s 1d, suggesting very substantial material wealth.

Clear evidence of this material wealth can be found in the inventory descriptions and attributed values for items such as linen, plate and the contents of the cellars. Drinking had very strong social purposes in the long eighteenth century and was often undertaken in public places such as inns. The 1746 inventory listing ten cellars, of which numerous were dedicated to wine and beer, provides further assurance that the inventoried building was indeed an inn and arguably a very substantial one. The Sun

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265 ‘Inventory of the Sun Inn’, paras 16 and 19.
266 Overton and others, p. 132.
267 Weatherill, Consumer Behaviour & Material Culture, fig. 8.4, p.188.
inventory details provision on a similar scale: six cellars with drink-related names including a ‘wine cellar’, ‘upper wine cellar’, ‘beer cellar’ and ‘small beer cellar’, in addition to a wine vault and a storehouse for beer.\textsuperscript{270} Although the contents of the individual cellars at the White Horse are itemised, mostly with reference to equipment, the bulk of the alcohol is covered in a separate section. This lists an extraordinary volume and selection of drink, with an assigned value of £444 7s 5d.\textsuperscript{271} almost three times greater than the total inventoried value of alcohol and related items recorded at the Sun.\textsuperscript{272}

Beer and ale account for nearly half the value at the White Horse, inventoried at a volume of six thousand three hundred and eighty-four gallons.\textsuperscript{273} Considering that the inventory records a brewhouse and much associated equipment on the White Horse site,\textsuperscript{274} it can be assumed that the inn was producing a considerable volume of this stock, as was The Sun which is also recorded as having a brewhouse and associated equipment on site.\textsuperscript{275} This level of production is another example of self-sufficiency and indicates a principal inn.

The White Horse inventory lists ‘Some’ tea and coffee in the same section as the alcoholic selection, suggesting this was not a large amount but nonetheless necessary to the operation of the inn. The Sun inventory makes no mention of tea, coffee or chocolate, yet lists copper utensils and china mugs for consumption, demonstrating that inventories vary in what the assessors deem it necessary to record.\textsuperscript{276} Elsewhere in the White Horse inventory there is mention of tea chests, tea pots and kettles and china in the Kitchen, chambers and parlours.\textsuperscript{277} The Kitchen and Little Kitchen also contained coffee pots and a coffee mill.\textsuperscript{278} The latter room also contained chocolate and the New Parlour four chocolate cups.\textsuperscript{279}

Weatherill noted in her study of inventory samples dated up to 1725 that utensils for hot drink occurred in only seventeen percent of inventories attributed to innkeepers and victuallers.\textsuperscript{280} However, as tea and coffee started to become products of mass consumption by the 1740s, it is not unsurprising that the White Horse and Sun had a considerable number of such utensils recorded in 1746 and 1754

\textsuperscript{270}‘Inventory of the Sun Inn’, paras 38–44.
\textsuperscript{271}‘Probate Ed. Marshall’, sec. 56.
\textsuperscript{272}‘Inventory of the Sun Inn’, paras 38–44.
\textsuperscript{273}‘Probate Ed. Marshall’, sec. 56.
\textsuperscript{274}‘Probate Ed. Marshall’, sec. 34.
\textsuperscript{275}‘Inventory of the Sun Inn’, para. 28.
\textsuperscript{276}‘Inventory of the Sun Inn’, paras 25 and 48.
\textsuperscript{277}‘Probate Ed. Marshall’, secs 22, 30, 31 and 32.
\textsuperscript{278}‘Probate Ed. Marshall’, secs 23 and 30.
\textsuperscript{279}‘Probate Ed. Marshall’, sec. 20.
\textsuperscript{280}Weatherill, Consumer Behaviour & Material Culture, p. 188; Table 8.4.
respectively. This similarity of provision further suggests that the White Horse was of least equal status to the Sun, its drink provision assisting with the cultivation of a polite environment in which all members of the middling and upper strata of society felt comfortable.

Marshall’s probate account details a large number of debts owed to him, suggesting he was acting as a local moneylender and selling a wide variety of items on a significant scale, including alcohol in bottles and casks, pigeons and faggots. Items were often recorded as ‘sold and delivered’ in this section, suggesting that Marshall was using the inn site, its facilities and staff to run a retail business. It was usual for innholders to have multiple occupations and it has been suggested that by-employment was common for large-scale consumers of material goods such as Marshall.

The concept of a principal inn site in the long eighteenth century comprising a multitude of buildings including a brewhouse and gardens, a bowling green and orchards contributes further to the idea of such an inn being able to operate on a largely self-sufficient basis within its locale and provide a multitude of services for travellers. The buildings and spaces listed on the 1746 inventory certainly suggest that this was the case at the White Horse, Baldock. In addition to what we understand as the main inn building and cellars there was a yard house, brewing house, bottle house, bowling green, hay yard, corn chamber, barn and stables listed as being on the site (Figs.6-9).

The barn included a (post) chaise, harness, one mare and two horses, clearly for the use of patrons. This concurs with evidence from a mid-eighteenth century trade card for either Edward Marshall or Edward Marshall Junior at the White Horse, advertising ‘four wheel post chaise at four pence per mile’ as being available for hire. The inventory for the Sun more explicitly reveals that it too offered such a service, listing a ‘post boys room’, ‘two post chaise and harness’ and six horses. The stables at the White Horse are listed as having a cow, the barn lists hog troughs, and the bowling green is listed as having a rabbit locker; Quail cages additionally appear at various points. Such a site is strikingly similar to others.

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282 Maudlin, p. 16.
284 Overton and others, p. 151.
285 Gadd and Pigram, p. 7; Maudlin, p. 6.
287 ‘Trade Card - Edward Marshall; White Horse, Baldock.’
288 ‘Inventory of the Sun Inn’, paras 18, 34 and 35.
to that recorded at the Sun in 1754, listed as constituting a brewhouse, bowling green and garden, dove loft, corn loft, barn, yard, cellars, store house and wine vault in addition to the main inn building.\textsuperscript{290} However, the Sun appears to have been slightly better equipped, as its yard listing included eight hogs, pigeons, ducks, fowls, and a henhouse.\textsuperscript{291}

With the inclusion of debts received by the executors, the total gross worth of Marshall’s estate rises to £1333 10s 6d.\textsuperscript{292} The debts owed by Marshall, bequests and charges detailed in the discharge of the probate account resulted in the assessor reaching a figure of £921 6s 3½ d.\textsuperscript{293} The debts owing to Marshall give an insight into the many uses of inns and their importance as community hubs during the long eighteenth century. One intriguing entry reads: ‘Received of the Constable of Baldock for the use of the Guard Room for the Dutch soldiers - £2 2s’.\textsuperscript{294}

The net total of the estate’s worth after the discharge figure is subtracted from the aforementioned gross value placed on the estate aforementioned, is a very healthy £412 4s 2¼ d. It is clear that the income Marshall was generating from his tripartite business of innholding, moneylending and retail was of a level commensurate with a principal inn and arguably afforded him considerable status; as further confirmed by the apparel worn by Marshall and his wife Ann, assessed at £13 14s 7d and £23 6s respectively.\textsuperscript{295}

The probate inventories of Edward Marshall and George Westwood, in combination with other documentary sources, have enabled detailed analysis and comparison of the form, function and operation of two North Hertfordshire principal inns in the mid-eighteenth century. The innkeeping lifestyles of Marshall and Westwood, their wealth and status, was also discussed through their respective inventories and probate accounts (where surviving). The next chapter will seek to establish whether architectural and documentary evidence can be interrogated in order to identify lesser inns in the long eighteenth century.

\textsuperscript{290} ‘Inventory of the Sun Inn’.
\textsuperscript{291} ‘Inventory of the Sun Inn’, para. 37.
\textsuperscript{292} ‘Probate Ed. Marshall’, sec. 56.
\textsuperscript{294} ‘Probate Ed. Marshall’, sec. 56.
\textsuperscript{295} ‘Probate Ed. Marshall’, sec. 56; Berg, p. 239.
Chapter 6: The Red House and the Red Cow, Hitchin

Figure 10: Left - Former 'Red House', 2 and 2a Market Place, Hitchin; Right - former 'Red Cow', 4 Market Place, Hitchin. Looking north east (April 2019).

The final case study, the Red House and the Red Cow, Hitchin, is much less clear-cut than either the Sun or the White Horse; this makes the assessment of the documentary sources and surviving buildings all the more interesting. The surviving sources additionally allow us an insight into late-seventeenth century innkeeping in Hitchin, an earlier section of our focus period than our prior case studies. Whilst investigating the former Red House (currently numbers 2 and 2a Market Place) and the former Red Cow (currently number 4 Market Place) it became apparent that, although it is likely that these two neighbouring buildings have existed as distinct entities for a considerable length of time, in the late-seventeenth century they may have operated together as a small inn.

If the Red House and the Red Cow were operating as a small inn during the long eighteenth century it would definitely have been as a third-tier inn. Principal inns and their second-tier competitors have been well-defined and discussed in this paper but how can we define a third-tier inn? Distinct from taverns which could not sell food, a third-tier inn during this period could be defined as a smaller establishment than a principal or second-tier inn, catering for the lower-middling sort; small parties and
individuals rather than coach passengers. Such inns were still comfortable yet, without the need to attract gentry and people of fashion, such inns did not have to be a slave to taste. Small-scale courts or events may have been held at such inns. The evidence that exists to confirm or refute the hypothesis that the Red House and the Red Cow were operating as such an inn, will now be discussed.

The buildings formerly known as the Red House (2 and 2a Market Place) and the former Red Cow public house (4 Market Place) are located in a prominent location in the centre of Hitchin, directly on the old market square and close to the High Street and St. Mary’s Church. The location of the former Red House and Red Cow and other early inns (including The Sun) known to have existed on or near the former market square, 296 have been marked on a Google My Map for reference. 297 The former Angel Inn would also have been in existence, neighbouring the Sun, as discussed in a previous case study. The above inns are but a small selection of the inns and taverns that existed in Hitchin during this period. Others, such as the Maidenhead Inn, are rumoured to have existed on the former market square but their location is unknown.

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296 Smith, Hertfordshire Houses, p. 93.
Evidence derived from extant buildings

It is now pertinent to assess the evidence that can be ascertained from the extant buildings that the former Red House, in possible conjunction with the former Red Cow, were operating as an inn in the late-seventeenth century under the tenancy of John Heady. J.T Smith has described number 2 and 2a Market Place, the former Red House, as surrounding a small courtyard. An access point for travellers arriving at an inn would have been of importance; therefore, the existence of a courtyard, albeit a small one, is a promising indicator.

Smith further noted that ‘the front (S) range incorporates a timber-framed building of two storeys, perhaps of the late 16th century, of which some evidence remains on the first floor [...] an internal chimney-stack may be coeval [...] To E of the courtyard a short timber-framed range was probably built in the late 16th century and incorporates a chimney-stack of that date’. This evidence of a pre-seventeenth century structure ties in with the 1591 Rental of the Manor of Hitchin returns which describe a house called the ‘Read House’ as being on this site. ‘Read House’ possibly refers to ‘Red House’; however, as such a name would normally refer to a brick house, a timber-framed structure with this name does not fit well. The architectural evidence does not support an earlier brick structure on the site either, rather suggesting a timber-framed building re-fronted in brick in the mid-eighteenth century.

It could potentially be the case that the Red House existed on its current site from the late-sixteenth century and the building currently known as 4 Market Place was actually an extension to this building, built and/or tenanted by John Heady in 1676. The 1676 date for the construction of 4 Market Place is given by Smith in his assessment of the building, mentioned as being carved into the tread of the internal staircase. This would tie-in with a period of improvement to the Red House undertaken by Heady.

Smith describes 4 Market Place, the former Red Cow, as being ‘of brick, of three storeys and semi-attics with a gabled street front’, noting that the semi-attics have always been used as warehouse space.

298 Smith, Hertfordshire Houses, p. 92.
299 Smith, Hertfordshire Houses, p. 92.
301 Smith, Hertfordshire Houses, p. 92.
302 Smith, Hertfordshire Houses, p. 92.
303 Smith, Hertfordshire Houses, p. 92.
This use of attic or garret space adds weight to the suggestion that this building was utilised for commerce from the start, which potentially includes innkeeping. Smith notes that in the mid-eighteenth century 4 Market Place had a small block added to the north west.\textsuperscript{304} During this period Smith felt that improvements were also made to the neighbouring Red House; the south range was heightened to three stories and refaced in red brick with blue headers.\textsuperscript{305} Improvements being carried out to both the Red House and Red Cow buildings around the same time could suggest that they were held by the same person during this period, potentially operating together as an inn. Eighteenth-century documentary evidence provides a further suggestion of the Red House operating as an inn and potentially in conjunction with the Red Cow. A terrier of Hitchin Manor details that by 1730 John Bradley held the Red House ‘where the court is held […] freehold 1s 2d.’\textsuperscript{306} Inns acted as community hubs in the long eighteenth century and providing a venue for various courts was one such common function.\textsuperscript{307}

It has been stated that by 1731 Robert Crofts held inns known as the Red Cow and the Red House and left them to his son Richard in 1763.\textsuperscript{308} This is a further suggestion that rather than being two separate entities, the Red House and the Red Cow could have operated as one inn in neighbouring buildings. Another possibility is that the name the Red House gradually evolved into the Red Cow, and the 1731 reference cites two names for the same inn. It was not possible to trace this cited documentary evidence at the time of writing.

\textsuperscript{304} Smith, \textit{Hertfordshire Houses}, p. 92.
\textsuperscript{305} Smith, \textit{Hertfordshire Houses}, p. 92.
\textsuperscript{306} ‘Terrier of the Manor of Hitchin’, 1727, p. 19, HALS, 64356.
\textsuperscript{307} Maudlin, pp. 3–5.
\textsuperscript{308} Gadd and Pigram, p. 29.
John Heady, the Red House and the Red Cow

John Heady inherited his tenement of the Red House from his uncle, a yeoman also called John Heady, in 1662. It can be discovered from surviving probate account evidence submitted as part of a dispute over his estate that John Heady Senior did not manage his financial affairs well. The surviving account details desperate debts of £500, causing an almost £50 shortfall in available funds to pay the deceased’s debts and bequests. There is no indication in surviving documentary sources that Heady Senior was operating as an innkeeper yet, as he has been described as a yeoman, listing another occupation would have been superfluous and does not necessarily mean he was not acting as such.

John Heady appears to have managed his affairs better than his namesake, as shall be discussed below. We can ascertain from surviving documentary evidence that in his lifetime he was occupied as an innkeeper and a tailor. As has been discussed in previous case studies, dual occupation was commonplace for those in the innkeeping trade in the long eighteenth century. Heady’s tenement of the Red House is confirmed in a 1676 survey thus: ‘John Heady holds one freehold messuage in the Market Place called the Red House in which he lives... lately held by John Heady lately deceased, uncle of John Heady’.

We are fortunate that Heady’s 1684/5 probate inventory survives, although no surviving account accompanies it. The document does not make it clear whether the building being inventoried is the Red House but as Heady is not listed as holding any other property in the 1676 Survey, it is likely that it refers to this building. We cannot be certain of this, however, as Hitchin was comprised of several manors during this period and Heady may have held property elsewhere. However, an internal architectural element was noted as surviving at the former Red House by Smith that potentially provides further evidence of Heady’s association with the building. Smith notes that a first-floor fireplace was added to [a] timber-framed range, ‘to E of the courtyard’ with a ‘fireback bearing the initials I H M and a date probably read as 1670’. This is almost certainly the fireplace, and detached

309 I will refer to this John Heady as John Heady Senior in this case study for ease of reference.
310 ‘Will of John Heady’, 1662, TNA, PROB 11/309/188.
311 ‘Dellow v Mason - Personal Estate of John Heady, Hitchin, Hertfordshire.’, 1663, TNA - Court of Chancery: Six Clerks Office: Pleadings before 1714, Mitford, C 8 242 119.
312 ‘Probate Inventory of John Heady, 31 January 1684/5’, HALS, AHH/57HW1-71 - 57HW71; ‘Will of John Heady’, 1682, HALS, AHH/57HW1-71 - 57HW71. I am grateful to Bridget Howlett for alerting me to these sources and for sight of her inventory transcript.
313 Howlett, p. 59.
314 Smith, Hertfordshire Houses, p. 92.
fireback, shown in an undated and unnamed photograph in the Blyth Gerish Collection,\(^{315}\) and possibly located in the ‘Chamber over the shop’ as suggested by Heady’s 1684 inventory.\(^{316}\)

The plastered surface is described by Smith as ‘additionally irregularly covered with plaster devices of various kinds […] fleur-de-lys, thistles, a Tudor rose, a crown and stars’.\(^{317}\) Aside from the fleur-de-lys referencing the long-standing claim to the French throne, the heraldic connotations of thistles accompanying a Tudor rose could reference the Stuart succession in 1603. Thus, the plasterwork is likely to considerably pre-date the 1670 date described in the fireback.

An early-seventeenth-century date for the plasterwork does not necessarily discount the addition (or renovation) of a fireplace later in the century. This possibility is strengthened by analysing the 1663 Hearth Tax return. The 1663 return lists that Heady had three hearths, and the evidence from the aforementioned 1684 inventory suggests that no more than three hearths were present. If we take the view that the Hearth Tax return was correct in this instance and cross-reference this figure with evidence from the standing structure, it is plausible that the 1670 date present in the fireback dates from an upgrading of the existing hearth rather than the insertion of a completely new hearth. In his discussion of this feature Smith states that the first-floor fireplace was inserted in the late-seventeenth century.\(^{318}\)

In accordance with the documentary evidence this could have occurred slightly earlier than Smith’s estimate, i.e. in the early 1660s, thus three hearths would have been present at the Red House during the 1663 Hearth Tax return. Heady’s wife was named Mary and the initials ‘I H M’ Smith potentially refer to John (‘I’ as per the Latin Alphabet) and Mary (‘M’) with their surname of Heady (‘H’) in the middle. A room with such ornate internal decoration suggests a higher status room within a possible inn, but certainly a best chamber irrespective of building type.

It is now pertinent to consider what other evidence exists that the Red House was possibly operating as an inn. In the absence of named chambers on Heady’s inventory one possible indicator of an inn is present. Pennington advises that a high-status bedchamber on the first floor, usually heated, with good

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\(^{315}\) William Blyth Gerish, Collection, HALS, D/EGr/48.

\(^{316}\) ‘Probate Inventory of John Heady, 31 January 1684/5’.

\(^{317}\) Smith, Hertfordshire Houses, p. 92.

\(^{318}\) Smith, Hertfordshire Houses, p. 92.
furnishings and plenty of chairs indicating what would today be called a function room, is a strong indicator that an inventoried building was operating as an inn.  

The ‘chamber over the shop’ is arguably the highest-status chamber in the building recorded in Heady’s inventory on account of it being heated and the only chamber containing window curtains and a looking glass. The chamber additionally contained a table and ‘joyned stooles’ and an illegible number of chairs, indicating possible function room use. The value of the moveable goods within this chamber was listed at ‘£6 15s 0d’, the highest value of any chamber not used for storage. Pennington points out that a chamber’s ‘status can also be seen from the valuation’. However, as has been discussed in the case studies focussing on the Sun and the White Horse, this indicator should not be utilised in isolation to determine status.

Pennington continues to list further possible inn indicators, such as plenty of drink storage containers including hogsheads, firkins, kilderkins, tierces, barrels and runlets for ale and beer, and large numbers of spits, chamber pots and candlesticks. Only limited indicators are present in Heady’s inventory. In the ‘Kitchin’ five spits and six tin candlesticks were present and in the ‘chamber over the shop’ two pewter candlesticks were noted; not a particularly large number. A ‘seller’ is listed in Heady’s Red House, which contained, amongst other items, three ‘barrrels’. This is not a great quantity, however, and may have been used for domestic consumption.

Pennington discusses the presence of a shop and shop chambers as indicating a dual occupation for the building. We know definitively from Heady’s inventory that this was the case with the Red House which included a ‘chamber over the shop’. It has been suggested that the ground floor of 4 Market Place possibly functioned as a shop in the seventeenth century due to the length of the front rooms. There is therefore some possibility that the now separate buildings were functioning together as an inn with a shop operating from the ground floor of both.

319 Pennington, p. 75.
320 ‘Probate Inventory of John Heady, 31 January 1684/5’.
321 ‘Probate Inventory of John Heady, 31 January 1684/5’.
322 Pennington, p. 75.
323 Pennington, p. 75.
324 ‘Probate Inventory of John Heady, 31 January 1684/5’.
325 Pennington, pp. 75–76.
326 Smith, Hertfordshire Houses, p. 92.
In order to ascertain whether further indicators are present that the Red House was operating as a small inn, possibly with the current 4 Market Place additionally forming part of the operation, it is necessary to compare John Heady’s inventory with other relevant studies. Branch Johnson undertook a study of fifty probate inventories of innkeepers, mostly of St. Albans, between 1610 and 1684.\textsuperscript{327} Johnson states that the inventories studied represent a cross-section of the trade and that it is possible to build an approximate picture of the middling Hertfordshire inn during this period.\textsuperscript{328}

Before comparing a possible inn inventory from Hitchin with those studied by Branch Johnson it must be remembered that St. Albans was not representative of the average Hertfordshire town in the seventeenth century. Indeed, by the 1520s it had a population in excess of 2000, ranking it amongst the top thirty towns in the country.\textsuperscript{329} Slater and Goose have pointed out that this population denoted a town of the ‘second rank’, according to Clark and Slack’s hierarchy and set apart from other market towns in the county.\textsuperscript{330} By 1577 St. Albans had 20 percent of the inns in the whole county and by 1686 the town could offer 719 beds and stabling for 1411 horses.\textsuperscript{331} In contrast, Lionel Munby analysed information from fifty-six wills made by residents of Hitchin between 1604 and 1698, in which only sixteen people were listed as engaged in milling, malting, brewing and innkeeping.\textsuperscript{332}

Jean Davis has made use of the Auditors of Land Revenue records, which give details of the Hertfordshire properties held by the Crown after the Restoration from which quit rents were demanded.\textsuperscript{333} The Land Revenue records relating to property in St. Albans list the inn name, rent due and tenants from 1662 to 1806. In her article ‘Old Inns of St. Albans’ Davis reinforces the pre-eminence of St. Albans inns during the late-seventeenth century, pointing out that the White Hart and the Flower de Luce paid higher quit rents than the majority of other hostelries, and she reminds us that Branch Johnson describes the extensive buildings, courtyard and grounds of the former, and the official patronage of the latter.\textsuperscript{334}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{328} Branch Johnson, p. 16.
  \item \textsuperscript{329} Slater and Goose, p. 10.
  \item \textsuperscript{330} Clark and Slack, pp. 8–10; in Slater and Goose, p. 10.
  \item \textsuperscript{331} Smith, \textit{English Houses 1200-1800}, p. 170.
  \item \textsuperscript{332} Lionel Munby, ‘Hitchin in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries’ (unpublished, 1986); Cited in Howlett, p. ix.
  \item \textsuperscript{333} Jean Davis, ‘Old Inns in St Albans’, \textit{Hertfordshire’s Past}, 9 (1980), 2–5 (p. 2).
  \item \textsuperscript{334} Davis, p. 2.
\end{itemize}
Branch Johnson highlights that in his study only two inventories of very prominent innkeepers mention a ‘dyning parlour’. Heady’s inventory makes no mention of any room with the title ‘parlour’; rather, there is mention of a ‘Hall’ and various ‘chambers’. Branch Johnson comments on the inventories he studied that: ‘Parlours...showed greater elaboration in their furnishing and all medium-sized and large inns had more than one’. The lack of such a room in Heady’s inventory suggests that the Red House would have been judged a small inn, if indeed it was one.

In fact, Heady’s inventory lists only three chambers with obvious sleeping facilities, identified by the inclusion of a ‘bedstead’. One of these chambers could have been for the use of Heady, which would leave only two chambers available to let out. Branch Johnson argues that the quality of an inn was judged by its chambers, mentioning the use of named chambers such as ‘Crown’ and descriptions of lavish furnishings in inventories.

Beard informs us that in the seventeenth century provincial furniture was mainly of oak, of traditional joined construction, conservative in style. This is borne out by Heady’s inventory as the chambers that list ‘a bedstead’ could be described as conservatively and traditionally furnished. For example, the contents of the ‘chamber over the shop’ included a bedstead, bedding curtains and valances, a table and joined stools, chairs, a cupboard, a looking glass, two pewter candlesticks and three window curtains and rods. No wall coverings, chair upholstery or bedding material are listed. A similar pattern is repeated throughout Heady’s inventory, in contrast to the inventories examined by Branch Johnson, which apparently frequently mention painted cloths or wainscot wall coverings and coverlids of damask, arras or sarsenet (thin silk) for beds.

The lack of named chambers and conservative furnishings adds further weight to the argument that the Red House was considerably humbler than those studied by Branch Johnson. Could this mean that the snapshot concerning middling inn keeping was very different in seventeenth-century Hitchin than it was in St Albans? Here it is helpful to reference the work of Lorna Weatherill, who has utilised criteria...

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335 Branch Johnson, p. 16.
336 ‘Probate Inventory of John Heady, 31 January 1684/5’.
337 Branch Johnson, p. 17.
338 ‘Probate Inventory of John Heady, 31 January 1684/5’.
339 Branch Johnson, p. 17.
341 ‘Probate Inventory of John Heady, 31 January 1684/5’.
342 Branch Johnson, p. 18.
set by Dr Vivien Brodksy Elliott to create a table of social-status hierarchy table based upon a sample of probate inventories in England dating from 1675–1725.\textsuperscript{343} The work of Mark Overton et al. on seventeenth-century probate inventories is additionally worth referencing as it includes Hertfordshire-specific data.\textsuperscript{344}

John Heady’s inventory of 1684 gives the total value of his household goods at what is inferred to be the Red House as £53 8s 4d.\textsuperscript{345} When this total is compared with Weatherill’s data this figure would place Heady almost equal with the highest category of ‘Gentry’, who Weatherill found to be enjoying a mean household goods total of £55.\textsuperscript{346} This raises the question of whether the relatively high value of Heady’s household goods detailed in his inventory was unusual. Weatherill explains that those in the ‘dealing trades’, such as innkeepers and shopkeepers, often had access to considerable resources and many were keen consumers, a high proportion owning new and decorative household goods.\textsuperscript{347} However, Overton et al. state that the median value for Hertfordshire inventories studied covering the period 1660-89 was approximately £51.\textsuperscript{348} Thus, if we analyse John Heady’s probate inventory against the findings of Weatherill and Overton et al., he would appear to be typical of a man of his period.

Weatherill additionally creates frequency data sets for the household objects commonly found in her inventory sample, generating percentages of items across the consumption hierarchy and usefully breaks this down further by profession in Table 8.4.\textsuperscript{349} This table demonstrates that ‘looking glasses’ (mirrors) are found in 70 percent of Innkeepers’ and victuallers’ inventories,\textsuperscript{350} despite such items being novel and expensive during this period.\textsuperscript{351} Heady’s inventory lists a ‘looking glass’ in the Hall and Chamber over the shop, aligning him with the large majority of innkeeping inventories within Weatherill’s study.\textsuperscript{352} Weatherill’s findings illustrate the heightened requirement, borne of their profession, for innkeepers to create atmosphere in what Weatherill describes as the ‘front stage’ areas of a building, such as the hall.\textsuperscript{353} Branch Johnson’s study of St. Albans innkeepers’ inventories describes

\textsuperscript{343} Weatherill, \textit{Consumer Behaviour & Material Culture}, p. 168; Table 8.1.
\textsuperscript{344} Overton and others.
\textsuperscript{345} ‘Probate Inventory of John Heady, 31 January 1684/5’.
\textsuperscript{346} Weatherill, \textit{Consumer Behaviour & Material Culture}, p. 168; Table 8.1.
\textsuperscript{347} Weatherill, \textit{Consumer Behaviour & Material Culture}, p. 179.
\textsuperscript{348} Overton and others, p. 140; Table 7.1.
\textsuperscript{349} Weatherill, \textit{Consumer Behaviour & Material Culture}, p. 188; Table 8.4.
\textsuperscript{350} Weatherill, \textit{Consumer Behaviour & Material Culture}, p. 188; Table 8.4.
\textsuperscript{352} ‘Probate Inventory of John Heady, 31 January 1684/5’.
\textsuperscript{353} Weatherill, \textit{Consumer Behaviour & Material Culture}, p. 189.
looking glasses as unusual until late in the seventeenth century, suggesting that Heady’s Red House was perhaps not so humble after all.\textsuperscript{354}

Window curtains were unusual before 1725,\textsuperscript{355} and this is borne out by Weatherill’s data, in which they occur in only 40 percent of innkeepers’ and victuallers’ inventories.\textsuperscript{356} Heady’s inventory lists two window curtains and rods in the hall and three window curtains and rods in the chamber over the shop.\textsuperscript{357} Here Heady’s moveable goods mark him out as standing above the majority of his fellows in the social rank denoted by his trade. They are also evidence of early adoption of new goods and typical of the ‘dealing trades’ that top Weatherill’s consumption hierarchy.\textsuperscript{358} Clearly, he was concerned with the presentation of his hall at the Red House, what Weatherill calls the ‘front stage’ area of his inn. Two further items listed in Heady’s inventory are of note and set him apart from others of his social rank. Firstly, equipment for making hot drinks is listed – ‘4 brass kittells’ (kettles). Such equipment only occurs in 17 percent of the inventory sample studied by Weatherill where the occupation of innkeeper or victualler is listed.\textsuperscript{359}

Not all of the chambers in Heady’s inventory mention equipment for use with a hearth. The chamber over the shop is listed as containing ‘two pairs of andirons, a fire shovel and tongs and one pair of bellows’.\textsuperscript{360} The chamber over the kitchen is listed as containing similar equipment.\textsuperscript{361} Of the remaining rooms, only the hall contains hearth equipment, giving a total of three hearths.

Heady’s Hearth Tax return of 1663 records the building inferred to be the Red House as having three hearths, suggesting that he had not added any hearths to the building inferred to be being the Red House by 1684/5.\textsuperscript{362} John West has stated that Hearth Tax returns can be unreliable but if used with caution can provide useful additional detail.\textsuperscript{363} It is notable that this suggests that not every room at the Red House had a hearth, including the middle chamber, which was utilised for sleeping.\textsuperscript{364} As we have discovered in previous case studies, however, even principal inns had unheated accommodation

\textsuperscript{354} Branch Johnson, p. 18.
\textsuperscript{355} Weatherill, \textit{Consumer Behaviour & Material Culture}, pp. 7–8.
\textsuperscript{356} Weatherill, \textit{Consumer Behaviour & Material Culture}, p. 188; Table 8.4.
\textsuperscript{357} ‘Probate Inventory of John Heady, 31 January 1684/5’.
\textsuperscript{358} Weatherill, \textit{Consumer Behaviour & Material Culture}, p. 185.
\textsuperscript{359} Weatherill, \textit{Consumer Behaviour & Material Culture}, p. 188; Table 8.4.
\textsuperscript{360} ‘Probate Inventory of John Heady, 31 January 1684/5’.
\textsuperscript{361} ‘Probate Inventory of John Heady, 31 January 1684/5’.
\textsuperscript{362} ‘Untitled’, 1663, TNA, E179/24.
\textsuperscript{364} ‘Probate Inventory of John Heady, 31 January 1684/5’.
rooms in the mid-eighteenth century. Thus, Branch Johnson’s earlier statements based on his St. Albans study that all inn chambers were heated is proved not to be the case, for either principal or lesser inns.365

Ultimately no certain conclusions can be drawn about whether the former Red House was operating as an inn, either independently or in conjunction with the former Red Cow, in the late-seventeenth century. The construction of the former Red Cow is dated to 1676, the date of one key documentary survey source. This may account for the Red House appearing in the survey but not the Red Cow. Another inconsistency lies in the Red House, located via documentary sources as occupying the site currently numbered 2 and 2a Market Place, being referred to by that name in documentary sources from the late-sixteenth century yet being appraised as being of a timber-frame construction, refaced with red brick in the eighteenth century. Usually a name such as ‘Red House’ would refer to a brick building, and typically an early instance of brick construction in any given locality.

Equally, we cannot be certain that John Heady’s probate inventory referred to the building known as the Red House, as the name is not explicitly stated in that document. We can infer that this is the case, however, as the 1676 survey states that he resided in that property. The inventoried rooms and material goods suggest the building inferred to be the Red House could have been utilised as an inn and we know one of Heady’s occupations to have been an innholder. However, the lack of obvious indicators, such as named chambers, undermines this evidence. The inventory also suggests that it is an appraisal of the Red House only and does not include moveable goods inside the neighbouring Red Cow, which existed in 1684. If the two properties were operating together and were both held by Heady you might expect both to be included. However, there could be numerous reasons for the omission of this building in a probate assessment.

What this case study does provide is a fascinating snapshot into the material wealth of the middling sort in late-seventeenth-century Hitchin and potentially an insight into the functioning of a small urban inn at this time. Compared with the rich surviving documentary and architectural evidence for principal urban inns in the long eighteenth century, the operation of smaller inns is conversely less well-documented and understood. This case study has demonstrated why this continues to be the case and the challenges historians must seek to overcome in the hope of widening identification of such inns.

365 Branch Johnson, pp. 16–17.
Chapter 7: Conclusion

Addressing an identified gap in current research, this dissertation aimed to further understanding about urban inns and innkeeping in north Hertfordshire during the long eighteenth century. Through the analysis of three case studies a picture of urban innkeeping in north Hertfordshire has begun to emerge, ranging from principal inns to potentially third-tier, lesser inns.

The first case study, the Sun Inn, Hitchin, related to an extant building acknowledged as a former principal inn, still operating as a hotel on the same site. A detailed probate inventory dating from 1754, not known to have been the subject of previous historical research, was discovered for the innholder George Westwood. Together with a large-scale block plan of the inn dating to 1812, this inventory was instrumental in allowing conjectural floor plans of 1754 to be superimposed on to the latter plan. The conjectural floor plans in combination with the probate inventory and extant inn buildings, allowed analysis of the form, function, and spatial and material hierarchy within a principal inn site during the mid-eighteenth century. The evidence uncovered largely supported previously understood definitions and functions put forward with regard to such principal inns.

The second case study, the White Horse Inn, Baldock, related to a large former inn of which only a small section remains. Having all but burnt down during the nineteenth century, and not enjoying the same extensive surviving records as the Sun, the discovery of a detailed probate inventory and account of 1746 for the innholder Edward Marshall proved exciting once a convincing link to the White Horse was established. This inventory, also not thought to be the subject of previous research, provided a valuable insight into the form, function and status of this once landmark inn and the lifestyle of its innholder. An 1850 tithe map of Baldock was utilised to provide a template from which conjectural floor plans were created based on the 1746 probate inventory descriptions and other documentary evidence, in a similar manner to the first case study.

The inventory details and conjectural plans for the White Horse were analysed and compared with the broadly contemporary 1754 inventory and plans relating to the Sun Inn. This process of conjectural reconstruction, analysis and comparison with a known, extant, principal inn, made it possible to prove that the White Horse Inn was probably the principal inn of Baldock in the mid-eighteenth century and perhaps for a much longer period. There is also scope for further research into comparisons between the White Horse and the George, for which a good number of early modern records survive, and other
contenders such as the Rose and Crown. The idea that towns had more than one principal inn in the long eighteenth century has been raised before, most recently by Maudlin.366

This dissertation has discussed the idea of inns inhabiting a tiered structure, with principal inns jostling for position within the first tier. Inns did not necessarily cater for exactly the same clientele either across or within a tiered hierarchy. The first-tier principal inns all catered for the top ranks of polite society, yet different professions and groups favoured different establishments according to personal taste and/or connections. The fortunes of establishments could rise and fall over time, the White Horse declining in status during the nineteenth century whilst the Sun remained resplendent.

The comparison of the White Horse and the Sun inns additionally made it clear that no two principal inns functioned in exactly the same manner, despite being in neighbouring towns. The Sun with its elegant principal façade, location in a town thought of as the regional centre for north Hertfordshire and prior association with the dukes of Bedford and Trinity College, Cambridge, might have caused the researcher to believe that any such comparison with the White Horse would find the latter wanting.

This turned out to not be the case, with the inventory and account of Marshall at the White Horse demonstrating the very considerable material and actual wealth generated by his portfolio of occupations. It could be argued that the financial success of the White Horse was partly due to an extensive passing trade of well-heeled London travellers at a volume that perhaps eclipsed the Sun, Hitchin. In order to verify such a hypothesis further work comparing inn locations with changes in road usage (including sections of roads), ownership and maintenance, e.g. Turnpike Trusts, would be required. The comparison between the Sun and White Horse inns during the mid-eighteenth century made in this dissertation does demonstrate that each principal inn was a product of its unique environment, adapting to the needs and tastes of its patrons as and when required.

The third case study examined the evidence that a 1684/5 probate inventory for the innholder John Heady related to the Red House (now extant as 2 and 2a Market Place) in Hitchin, located on the former market square. During the course of analysing the probate inventory, other documentary evidence and the extant building, the possibility was mooted that the Red House may have functioned alongside the neighbouring former Red Cow, 4 Market Place, as a small, third-tier inn during the long eighteenth century. Although it was not possible to prove this hypothesis correct, this case study was particularly effective in demonstrating the limitations of attempting to identify smaller inns from the

366 Maudlin, pp. 1–2.
aforementioned evidence. It is not surprising that smaller inns are under-identified and under-researched in contrast to principal inns due to the difficulties posed by scant surviving documentary or architectural evidence.

The first two case studies discussed in this dissertation have particularly highlighted the beguiling detail that probate inventories and accounts can contain. When archives yield up such inventories (particularly, as in the case of Westwood and Marshall, that appear not to have been the subject of previous academic work) the potential for research pertinent across historical disciplines is exciting. As probate inventories are considered relatively rare after 1720, the meticulous 1746 and 1756 probate inventories which survive for the White Horse and the Sun respectively are two fortunate discoveries. The inventories offer much further scope for research than the limits of this paper could accommodate, such as detailed analysis of the ‘backstage’ areas of inns, their form, how they functioned and were furnished, not to mention the rich descriptions of furniture items, such as beds, in innkeeping inventories, which could inspire further analysis as markers of status and material wealth.

The insights presented in this dissertation allow us to keep building a rounder and more nuanced picture of urban innkeeping during this period, complementing the growing body of academic work. It is hoped that this dissertation has begun to clarify the innkeeping picture for north Hertfordshire as a small-scale, local study adding to the existing regional work on the subject. As a former linchpin of daily life in polite society, the urban inn was once overlooked by researchers but is now rightly becoming recognised as a rich source of data across historical disciplines.
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