

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Former Eagles Inn Cressage Shropshire SY5 6DE



Client: Mr Joe Nugent: Brownshore management Ltd

Prepared by: Garry Featherstone BSc. (Hons) Cert Ed. MCIOB

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1. Summary

1.1 Introduction. The former Eagles Inn is located central to the core of Cressage, sitting predominately on the corner of the busy junction of Harley Road and Sheinton Road in a residential area close to local amenities. The Inn appears to be from the 19th century with a tiled terracotta roof and large brick chimney stacks with white painted pebble dashed walls and tile overhanging courses to the first-floor levels on the front of the property facing the main road. The added extensions or façade treatments hide a Tudor timber frame building and its interlinked components that would date from the mid to late 17th century or potentially earlier due to a vaulted cellar or similar built in stone and brick.

Shropshire Council have identified the building as a non-designated heritage asset.

Access is not permitted inside the building without express permission from the owner due to structural issues within the building and concern for health and safety, however, can be readily viewed externally from the roadside, adjacent car park and entrance.

1.2 Statement of significance: The former Eagles Inn as survey evidence suggests is a much altered and extended timber framed Tudor building from the 17th century. Victorian or possibly earlier Georgian extensions were added during the last 250 years that have drastically altered the shape, size and functionality of the early Tudor style building.

The significance of the former Eagles inn lies primarily due to the largely intact but altered Tudor timber framed building hidden behind alterations and later façade additions and would have been one of the few buildings present during the early settlement and scenscape of Cressage.

- The timber framing is largely intact and preserved above 1st floor level due to alterations and covering protecting the structure.
- The prominent position of the building is significant to the early development of Cressage with listed buildings similar in structure and age in proximity to the building.
- The building has been identified as an early farmhouse before becoming an alehouse.

2. Assessment of values.

2.1 The heritage asset and values: Ordnance survey maps indicate a building on the site as early as the 1750's forming part of the localised community village and buildings. Evidence suggest an earlier timber framed building in keeping with structures in the locality of similar age in or around the mid-17th century or earlier.

2.2 Changing shape: The building has been radically modified from the 17th century timber frame T shaped double fronted structure that is hidden from the outside, with brick extensions and alterations from probably Georgian and Victorian times. It would be reasonable to assume when the building changed from agricultural use into an Inn or alehouse an extension or alterations were made between 1750 and 1820 with 1 ½ storey extension to the south and smaller pitched roof extension to the east elevations. Further modifications and 1 ½ storey extensions with dormer windows including roof coverings made between 1820 and 1880 to the east or rear of the building. The ordnance survey map from 1883 clearly defines the outline of the structure as it stands today and apart from fenestration and small alteration works during the 1980's can assume most of the change took place before 1883.

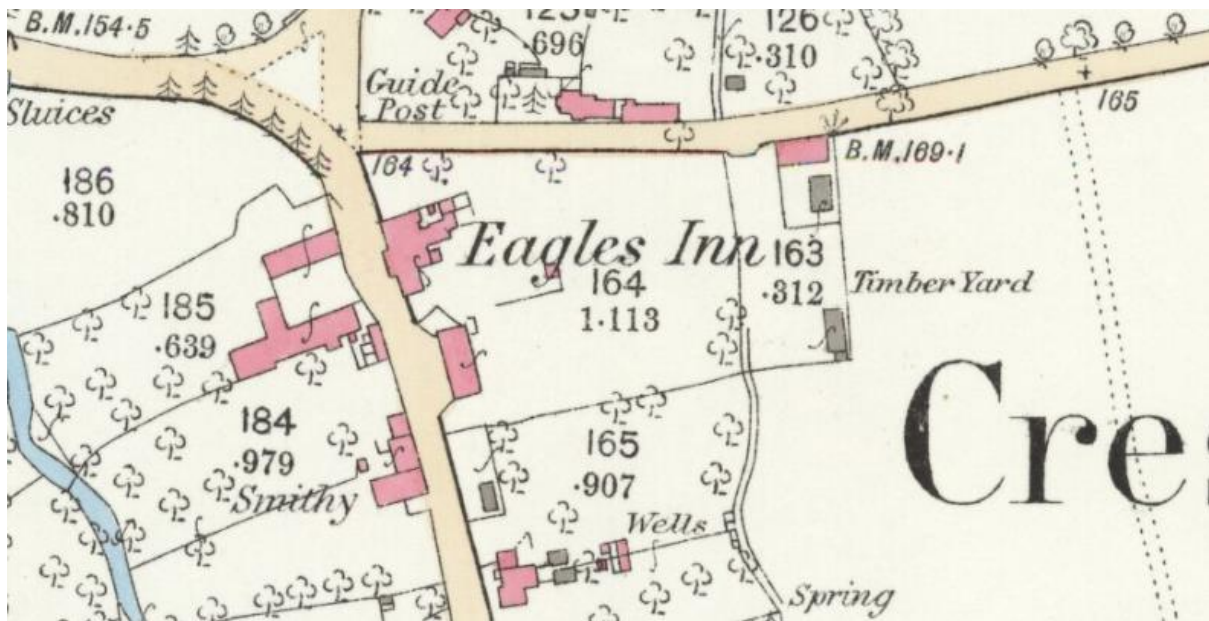
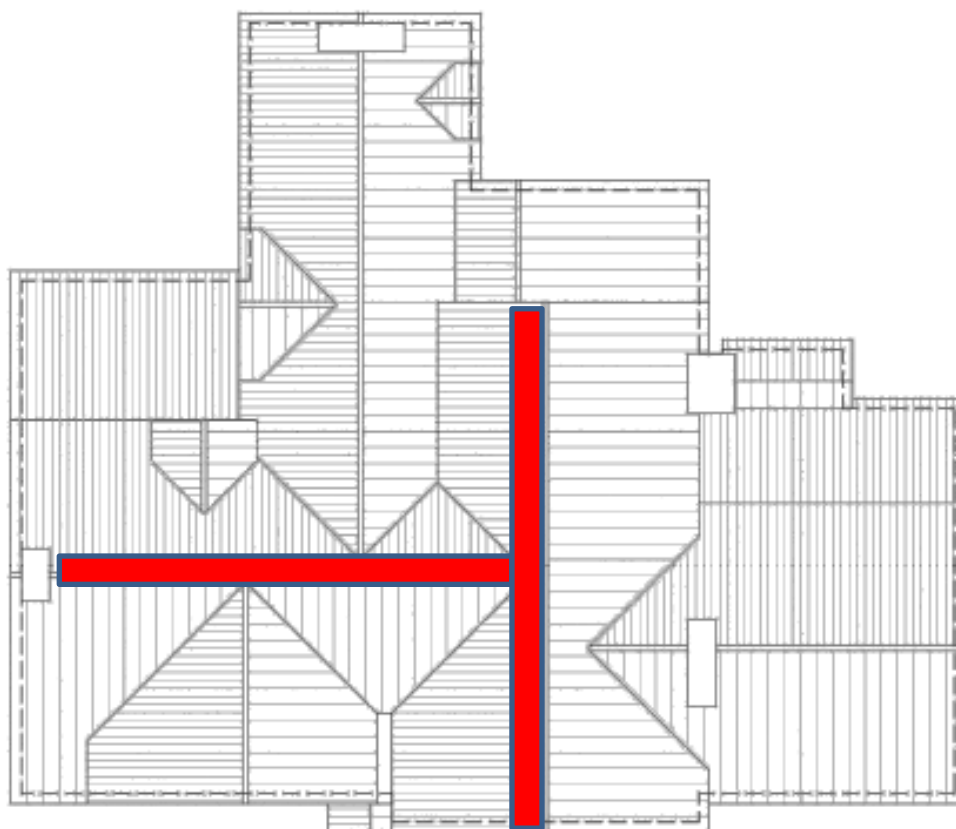


Fig 1: Ordnance Survey published 1883 depicting the Eagles Inn outline as it stands today.

2.3 The Street scene: The building is the most imposing and prominent at the crossroads junction central to Cressage due to the changes and extensions over the centuries. It sits in a pleasant mix of buildings and greenery typical of a small Midlands' village. There is a nucleus of buildings scattered around the building, some red brick Victorian type or earlier and modern build. More notably are dwellings constructed similar in date and style to the Inn namely the Grade II listed Finger Post Cottage and Gate House Cottage approximately 40 to 50 metres to the North East. There are several other listed buildings from the same era, intermingled with the modern structures close by that can be assumed to have been part of early Cressage along with the former Inn. To the South approximately 120 meters stands the prominent Christ Church built in 1841, standing on the site of a former Church of Saint Sampson with evidence from panelling inside the Church from 1635, dating the older church to around the same period as the former Inn.

2.4 Architecture and Historic features: Due to the changing shape and alterations over the centuries the historic architecture is difficult to distinguish from street level, however evidence can be sought with a bird's eye view of the roof that gives indication of the period of alteration. A typical T shaped box timber framed structure familiar to the Midlands with another large dormer possibly added to the front in the 17th century. This cannot be determined at present and only further analysis would date the timber structure yet appears to be from the same period as the original box frame structure.



Roof Plan



Fig 2: 17th century T shape Tudor box framed building ridge line indicated to the roof plan.

There is little in the way of any architectural features to be identified to the external envelope although further investigation may find or date historical evidence. All window frames and doors are from recent times or 20th century with only some features from the red brick Victorian alterations remaining that may be original like cast iron guttering, fascia and barge boards to the gable ends. The red brick chimney stacks are noticeable features to the building standing tall and prominent within the setting. The chimney stack to the Georgian southern extension sits prominent and shows evidence of being rebuilt just above ridge line later and look similar in appearance to other stacks. The stack at the North end gable end can be logically assumed built at the same time or during the Victorian alterations on the inside face of the box frame.

3. Assessing the significance.

3.1 Contribution to the area: The building as it stands has not changed in appearance since the mid 1980's therefore its setting has not changed for at least a generation in life and Town Planning terms. At present the deteriorating condition of the building is having a detrimental effect to the setting and residents of Cressage. The property struggles to fit in well with the other buildings in or around the area mainly due to the varying shapes and periods of construction pushed together in a random configuration. The front of the building is adjacent to Harley Road with only the white pebble dash reflecting an early period complimenting Finger Post Cottage and red brick Victorian extensions having a sympathetic connection with other properties in the area. The overhanging tiles to the front distract the viewer from the surroundings and do not pay homage to the building's heritage. The building sits alone in its surroundings not really fitting in with other simpler properties in the area. It has been altered beyond recognition and appears too large and irregular in the present peaceful streetscape.

Little documentary or photographic evidence has been identified of how the building looked before the façade treatments of the 1980's as this may have made the building gel more into its settings if the box framing was exposed on front elevations. The reason that the tile hanging, and render was added to the front elevation was possibly to blend the appearance the building unifying the southern extension with the Tudor box frame. Only further intrusive investigation would reveal or add significance to the building and aid understanding of the character within its setting.

4. Design Concept.

4.1 Faculties in deciding a concept: The property has lain empty for several years and been subject to at least two planning applications and an appeal that have been refused on heritage grounds. Efforts have been made to bring the Inn back into use but to date have been unsuccessful. Structurally the building is starting to fail, and evidence of wet, dry rot and beetle infestation have been discovered threatening the core of the historic asset. The building does not function or flow internally due to uneven floors and differing levels and fragmented layout of rooms making it difficult for alternative or commercial function. If remedial works were carried out, structural work would require extensive alterations, removal or repairs to structural members removing history and form of the building. As the building has not been designated any listing status a non-designated asset lends a different strategy of thinking to a proposal.

4.2 Proposal: There is opportunity to deconstruct and strip the building back to its beginnings recording every element to learn from the past. Salvaged materials would be stored, protected, logged and upcycled into the thoughtful design of a new dwelling or dwellings in Tudor style construction interwoven with modern construction methods. The new buildings would give the opportunity to use the same footprint of the existing building yet could be moved slightly back from Harley road allowing for safe pedestrian access and help alleviate blind spots at the crossroads junction in the centre of Cressage. There is also opportunity for heritage crafts to be incorporated into the build, as the main structures would be of the box Tudor frames and require specialist knowledge that could offer training to repair and rebuild, keeping traditional skills active in the area.

5. Impact:

5.1 Significant Impact: There would be a significant impact to the area during deconstruction and rebuild yet that would be counteracted by sympathetic traditional design and positioning of the new building or buildings. The proposal would amount to total loss of the existing structure as it stands, however rebuilding with the upcycled materials brings back a more aesthetically and colourful street scene and historic view to that corner of Cressage centre.

6. Conclusion:

6.1: The reality: This statement is only a preliminary document based on the time and resources available and not exhaustive. Further evidence and information will need to be sought to fully understand the building and its history. The reality lies in the fact that the former Eagles Inn at Cressage is now suffering from neglect, rot and vandalism combined with the difficulty in finding an alternative use. There is no definite timeline of how quickly a building will deteriorate, however after a recent condition survey, evidence suggests the older historic timber inner core of the building is under threat due to the deteriorating condition. In practical terms and evidential terms, this non-designated heritage has started to structurally fail and may be lost unless an appropriate course of action is not sought in the very near future.

Garry Featherstone. Building Surveyor BSc. (Hons) Cert Ed. MCIQB

References:

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