

Stile House, Stile Lane, Lyme Regis

Graham Davies & Richard Wells, 2017

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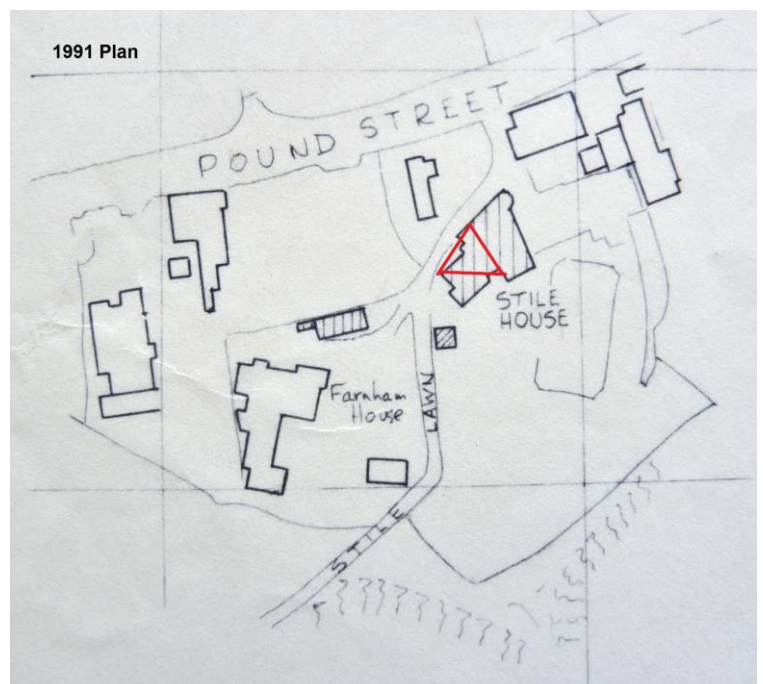
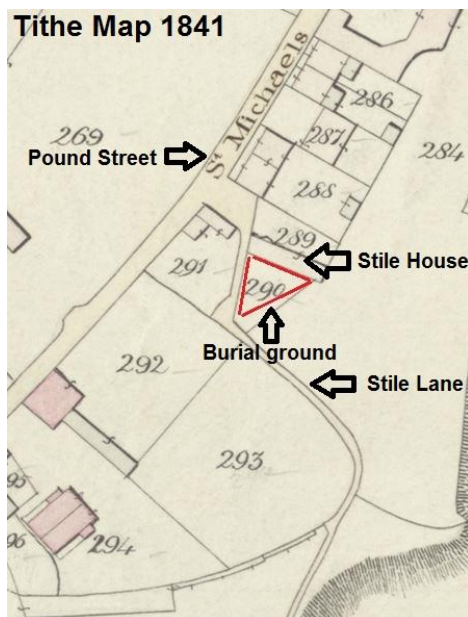
The Stile House site can be traced back to two adjoining dwelling houses in 1657, occupied by John Grubham and Elizabeth Silvester respectively, located in a 'plott of ground conteyning one yeard of land' (a square rod) situate in Pound Street, with the said street and a 'little lane called Stile Lane' on the NW and SW sides, and with the lands of the heirs of Richard White deceased on the SE, and the lands of John Parrett, gent, on the NE

Stile House Hotel 1982

The house, as we know it today, has its Georgian origins in the 1790s, if not earlier. In an indenture of 1797, William Poole sells the two Pound Street houses, each with a yard of land, 'On which said premises Giles Davie has lately made many alterations and erected new buildings'. The deeds indicate a later date for the house as a single entity, possibly as late as 1817, when the sale of the house is described as 'now in the occupation of Mistress Hughes and commonly known as Stile Lane House'.

Richard Wells, will deal with the architectural features of the building in appendix B, but in summary, it would appear that Giles Davie built a Georgian House on the site of the earlier houses, to which extensions have been added over time, beginning with the semi-circular gable end, built before 1824.

Of particular interest is that a part of today's house is situated over the former Quaker burial ground. The location, not to scale, is shown below.



The 'Declaration of Indulgence' for dissenters was published in 1687, and read in all churches in 1688. The Lyme Regis Quakers acquired a plot of land off Stile Lane in 1688 for use as a burial ground, at virtually the earliest point they could, without risk of persecution.

In 1851, Henry Waring, former town clerk, purchased the burial ground, with the proviso that for ten years no ground would be removed or disturbed where interments had taken place. He had the wall taken down to widen Stile Lane for a carriage way to his house, South Cliff (today's Farnham House).

The burial ground was sold in 1864, and again in 1867 for £76, when it was described as 'a yard in Stile Lane, now used as a mason's yard', occupied by T Hoare at £2 p.a. rent of 4 perches extent.

Giles Davie built Stile House to take advantage that Lyme Regis was becoming recognised as a 'watering place' from the 1790s. It is likely that the inhabitants of the house during the early part of the 19th century were short or long term tenants rather than the owners themselves.

The following timeline is not complete and may not reflect the full term of any particular occupancy.

1830 The Miss Rankins' Establishment, for the board and education of young ladies, will re-open on Monday, the 26th July.

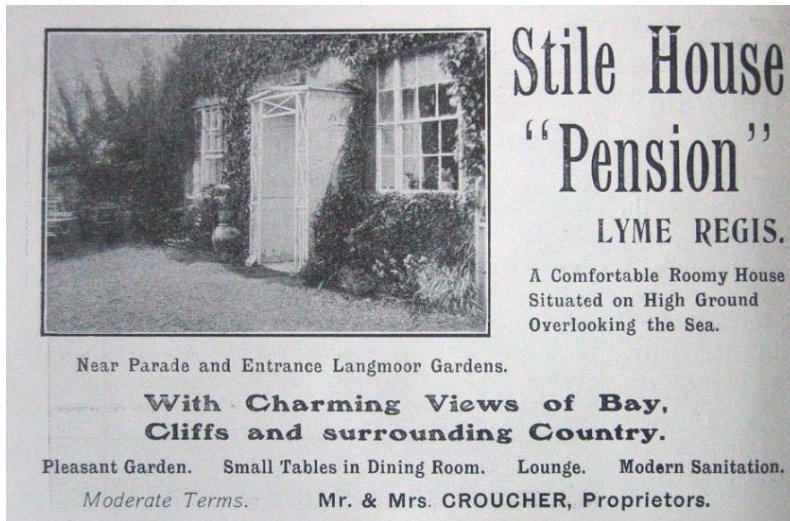
1831 To be let furnished a family house called Stile House, containing a drawing room, 28 feet by 21, large dining room, eight bed-rooms, servants' hall, butler's pantry, and all necessary offices, with hard and soft water, and commanding an extensive view of the sea. Apply to Mr Prosser, Lyme.

1848-65 Lieut John G Sarsfield Moore, RN - Lyme Regis Borough magistrate
1869-89 Walter Banfield Wallis - corn merchant, miller & maltster
1889/90 Frank Morris - tenant of Walter B Wallis
1895 Robert William Hillman - solicitor

1907 - Radford and Radford have been instructed to sell by auction at their offices in Broad Street the old-fashioned detached marine residence known as Stile House on May 28th.
The ground floor contains: Fine hall, spacious and lofty dining room, library, pantry, wine cellar, store closet, kitchen and scullery, coal cellar.
First floor: Fine drawing room with south aspect, 4 bedrooms, WC, bathroom (h & c), with servant's sink.
Second floor: 5 rooms, water laid on and servant's sink.
Tiled curtilage at rear, with entrance to back door from Stile Lane, contains: wash house, dry store, WC and coal shed.
The main entrance through folding gates enters on a gravelled terrace with grassed front, containing tool house and heated glass conservatory 30 feet long.
Drainage on modern principles; excellent water from town supply.
Apply for further particulars to H E Griffith Esq, solicitor at Fleet Street, London.
Announcement of sale, dated Atlas Assurance Office, Lyme Regis, April 23, 1907.

1907 - On May 28, at Messrs Radford and Radford's auction rooms, a freehold marine residence at Style Lane, known as Stile House, was offered for sale. No bid was received, and consequently the property was withdrawn.

A change in direction for the house, becoming a full time boarding house, pension and hotel throughout the 20th century until it was converted into flats in the early 1990s.



Stile House
"Pension"
 LYME REGIS.

A Comfortable Roomy House
 Situated on High Ground
 Overlooking the Sea.

Near Parade and Entrance Langmoor Gardens.

**With Charming Views of Bay,
 Cliffs and surrounding Country.**

Pleasant Garden. Small Tables in Dining Room. Lounge. Modern Sanitation.
Moderate Terms. Mr. & Mrs. CROUCHER, Proprietors.

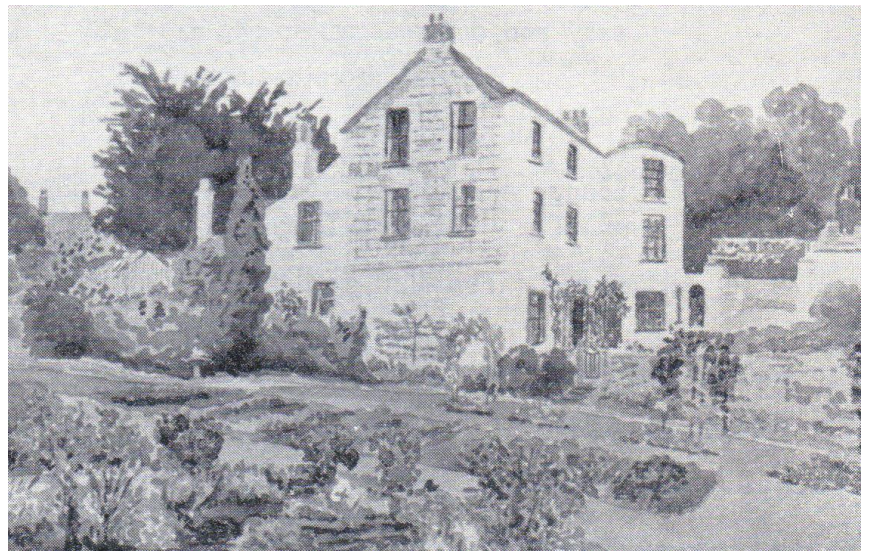
1911-19 Walter & Beatrice Croucher

1911 Census -
 Walter Croucher (45), lodging house keeper.
 Beatrice Croucher (47), wife, assistant lodging
 house keeper.
 Jennie Murray (50), sister-in-law, assistant
 lodging house keeper.
 Annie Champ (20), servant.
 Mary Molloy (27), servant.
 The following single ladies were all boarders
 and of private means: Florence Margaret
 Wright (54), Mary Wedd (66), Frances Emma
 Poole Draper (56), Edith Harrison (58) and
 Mary Harrison (56).

1922-32 Ernest James Leeming (called the 'Pension' during this period).

In the 1930s, the Stile House Hotel was described as being on high ground overlooking sea, with comfortable rooms, excellent cuisine, pleasant garden and electric light. Terms from 10/6 per day or 3 gns per week.

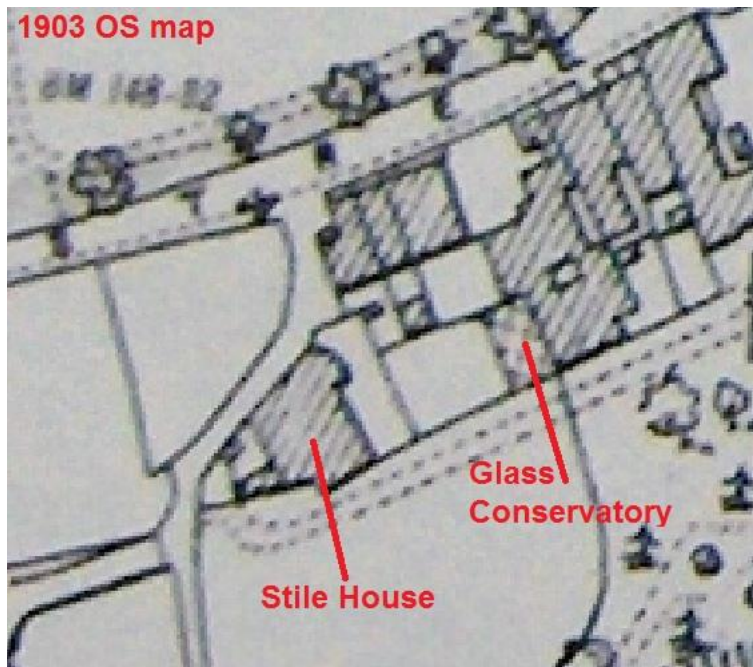
1934-39 Ernest James Leeming.
 1945-47 Adeline Wallis.
 1949 Dorothy Bellamy
 1950-63 Ernest Thomas
 1967-70 James E Hart-Thomas
 1974 George C Harris
 1983 Mrs L M Rogers



Picture in 1959 advert for Stile House Hotel

Appendix A

CONSERVATORY



In the 1907 auction details for the sale of Stile House we find,

The main entrance through folding gates enters on a gravelled terrace with grassed front, containing tool house and heated glass conservatory 30 feet long.

The 1903 OS map shows the site of the said conservatory at the eastern end of today's car park.

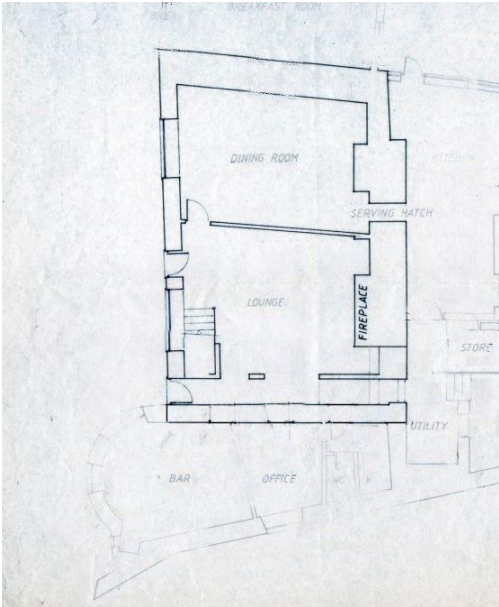
Appendix B

HOUSE DETAILS

Stile house faces roughly north onto Stile Lane, a small access lane off of Pound Street, Lyme Regis. The building has had considerable modernisation, conversion and extensions. On first inspection from the outside it appears to be a late Georgian gentleman's town house with a conventional parapet concealing the roof and Victorian extension on the north side with multiple 20th c. extensions to the west side. The property is now multiple units and therefore access to the entire building was not possible, the roof space in particular is likely to show if there was a chimney in the original north or west wall and also what the roof space layout was before that extension.

The original building was erected towards the end of the 18th century and comprised a 3 floored building facing east with a central doorway with windows above and to the south side. The door is flanked by two large sash windows on the ground floor. What was originally believed to be a Victorian extension to

the north end was in fact built shortly after the initial build as is evident from the 1824 Drayton survey map of the area.



The building itself, as defined by the original (thick) walls found within the building shows an unusual outline in that the structure is not square as was the conventional design of buildings of this period and style. The original east front and west rear walls are parallel and the north wall forms a conventional right angle to both. however, the south wall is at an angle, the east wall being the longer. The layout, for a Georgian building of the period, is also unconventional in that usually upon entry through the front door the visitor would be faced with a stair case rising up to the floors above (the more imposing the better) and reception or living rooms to the left and right of the front door / hall. However, this house has the stair to the right upon entry situated on the north wall. As is common, the lower section of stair is elegant, once out of sight it becomes much plainer. The rails are of a similar pattern and underneath the white paint may be hardwood, but the balusters become square instead of carved.

It is likely that this was the original stair position as in the north wall when ascending the stair blocked in window apertures can be found. There is also a cupboard on the first floor stair return which was not accessible. However there is one feature that could suggest alteration: that is the large window cuts into the stair just visible in the picture. Was the window enlarged / altered or the stair modernised? This might suggest that originally this was a small reception room, entered from the front door, running north-south with a room to its west side and a full depth room to the south. As there has been much alteration it cannot be seen if there were any windows to the west walls, it is highly likely that there were some.



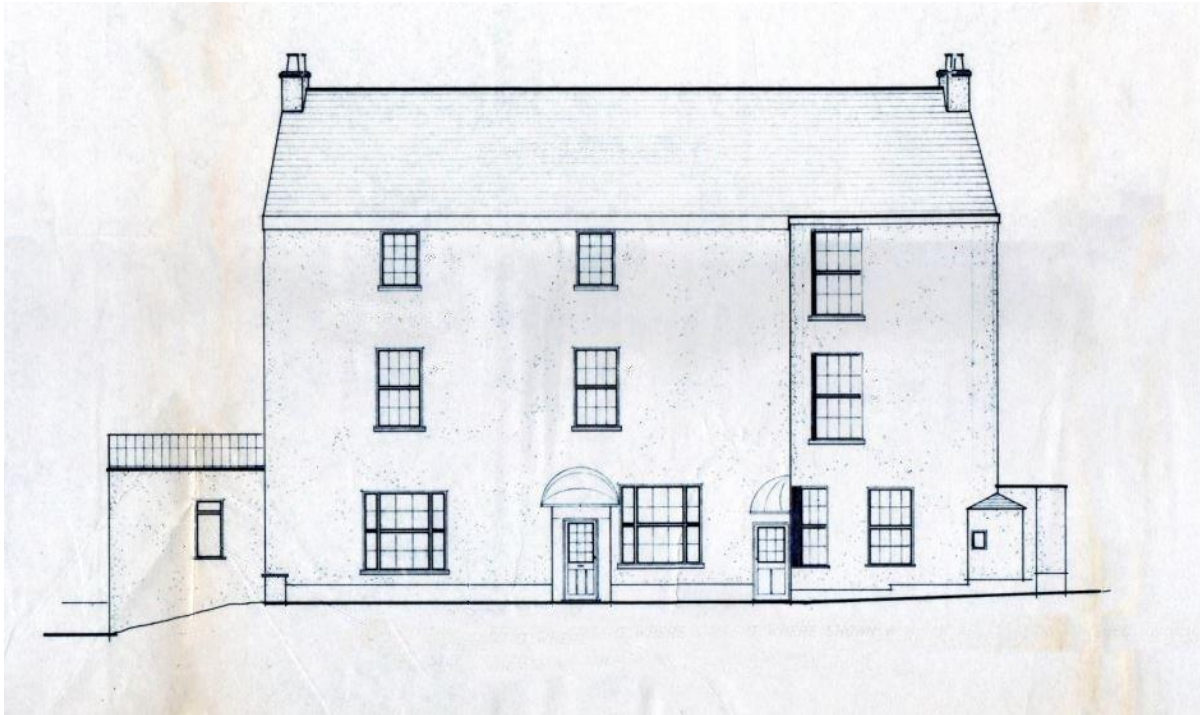
The extension already mentioned was erected shortly after the original building was completed (see above). It could be that the design of the main building planned that there would be an extension, as that houses of this period tend to be very balanced proportionally, if this was designed to be a conventional late Georgian gentleman's house the doorway would have been central to the original shape, with three horizontal rows of windows evenly spaced vertically. There are no traces of the windows being re-sited. Looking at an impression of what the building **Stile elevation 1**

may have looked like before the extension it is clear that there is no balance whatsoever and no room for another set of windows to the right of the front door. [Stile elevation 1]

Looking at the front elevation now, and ignoring to some extent the curve of the extension, the matching windows near to where the curved section of this extension joins the west elevation gives that balanced

picture [Stile elevation 2]. Again it can be seen that this extension does not follow the line of the earlier wall and is at an opposing angle to the off-set front wall.

Stile elevation 2



The small door by the extension passes to the wall side and beneath the stair case, so could originally have been a servants' entrance.

It is not uncommon to have a kitchen extension / out building in this period, so it may well be that the present kitchen is built on the footprint of an earlier one, if so this might explain the lack of windows on the west side.

As already stated, it was not possible to see the upper floors to see if there were any clues as to the layout of the early building.

References

Stile House deeds, Dorset Heritage Centre, D. 1937/1-24
1841 Tithe map of Lyme Regis
Lyme Regis Museum Research Team's Digital Archive
Invitation to visit part of the house by flat owners