

Corner Shop, East Street, Rhayader, Radnorshire.

Corner Shop is an early-mid C17th, 2-bay, 1 ½ storey, stone-tiled, timber-frame structure of 3-tier square panels, situated gable-end on to East Street. It is at the crossroads in the centre of Rhayader opposite the site of the former market hall, in a prime trading position. It was one of two end-gable framed structures, shown in an old photograph, the other now replaced by a late-C19th brick building. They are shown separated by a wide central doorway and the other structure is slightly narrower and taller and probably later. The present plan retains doorway openings facing the rear half of this passage, suggesting it was formerly a 'U' shape plan of hall with cross-wings. At present Corner Shop is against a late C19th brick building with corresponding blocked doorways. The rear gable-end was also built against a pre-existing structure, as there is no evidence of timber framing or wattle in-fill, now with later brick infill.

The first-floor is supported by a spine ceiling-beam with chamfered and curved stops and plain square joists. The joists rest on the mid-rail plate and are morticed to the ceiling-beam.

The wall framing consists of principal-posts to each roof truss, with a mid-rail plate at first-floor level and a sill-plate at ground, providing a 5 panel width. The side walls have a similar rail and sill between principal-posts and vertical studs with short horizontal rails they form 4 panel widths of square wattle & daub. The front end-elevation's doorway windows and sill-plate have been reconstructed from surviving mortice and peg holes.

The front side-elevation has evidence for an original window opening in the rear bay, which has been cut into later for a doorway. A gabled dormer window above has its own tie-beam truss roof and wall-plates. Mortices & peg holes in the adjacent bay's wall-plate show that there were two gabled dormer windows. The gabled dormers are linked to the main roof by two rafters cut-back with a jointed piece between them to support a ridge-piece and each wall-plate is bird-mouth jointed to a common rafter (see photograph).

Later alterations to the side elevation include a stud removed below the wall-plate by the rear gable-dormer to make a loading door opening, defined by a modern stud. In the front bay a central stud has a rebate for a secondary window and a line of three mortices in the studs above the lower rail suggests, either internal shelves or some external surface or shelf.

The roofs front end-truss, central-truss and truss to former hall part have tie-beam and collars with raking-struts over collar and studs between collar and tie. They all have two pairs of side-purlins and a diagonally-set ridge-piece. The internal trusses each have an off-centre doorway interrupting the tie-beam. The interrupted tie-beam joint to the first-floor doorway to the former hall has a birds mouth joint as though fitted as an afterthought. The rear end-truss has only a tie-beam with raking struts and is not in-filled by wattle & daub.

The structure adjoining in East Street may have been a storied hall/kitchen with fireplace, set back from the present gable-end rather like a hall and two cross-wings. It was not uncommon to have a heated hall and unheated parlour wings. Similarly a stair to first-floor may have been in this now demolished part. The present rear stair is relatively modern.

Visited, Geoff Ward, 01/07/2005.