Finding Shakespeare’s New Place; Interpreting the evidence

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Site Location

Site of New Place
What did we already now?

- Large quantity of documentary research
- Primary Sources
- A previous ‘archaeological excavation’
Documentary evidence

‘Praty house of Bricke and tymbre wherm he (ie Hugh Clopton) lived in his latter dayes and dyed’
-John Leland (1540)

‘Besides this front or outward gate there was before the house itself (that Shakespeare lived in) within a little court yard grass growing there, before the real dwelling house. The outside being only a long gallery for servants’
-George Vertue (1737)

‘...there was a brick wall next to the street, with a kind of porch at that end of it next the chapel, when they cross’d a small kind of green court before they enter’d the house, which was bearing to the left and fronted with brick, the plain windows, consisting of common panes of glass set in lead, as at the time’. -Rev. Joseph Greene (1767), from an account of New Place in 1682-3
1597- ‘de uno mesuagio, duobus horreis, et duobus gardinis’
(one messuage, two barns and two gardens).

1598- ‘pd to mr Shaxspere for on lod of ston xd’.
Money paid by the corporation of Stratford to Shakespeare

1602- ‘de uno mesuagio, duobus horreis, et duobus gardinis et duobus pomariis cum pertinciis’
(one messuage, two barns, two gardens and two orchards).

Messuage= dwelling house, outbuildings and land

The estate fine for New Place
The purchase and excavation of the site of New Place

- Site purchased in 1861 by Halliwell-Phillipps after formation of a Trust
- Conducted archaeological excavations at New Place in 1862
- Excavations were directed by Hunt Halliwell-Phillipps supervised from a distance
Halliwell-Phillipps
Photographic and illustrative evidence 1864
One of the wells (there are three on site). ‘Old flat 18th century candlestick’, and clean drinkable water found at the bottom of the well
Only find attributed to Shakespeare’s New Place was a knife- found in the spoil heap.

Other items **supposedly** from New Place:

- Key found on site by a gardener in 1828
- Wood panelling now in the Falcon Inn over the road
- A sun dial- and lock

Fragment of decorated window glass

Glass jug
After the excavations

19th century finds;

A fob seal,

Queen Victoria memorabilia
Halliwell- the conservator?
What problems were caused by previous investigations of the site?

• Biased assumptions and assertions
• Historical evidence leading the archaeology
• Missing evidence
• Difficulties in interpretation
Previous occupation of the site.
Ancient origins
Medieval burgage-(founded c1196- Bishop of Worcester). Frontages were lined with plots of land (burgages) measuring, 3½ perches in width (57.75 feet) and 12 perches (198 feet) in depth.
An earlier 13\textsuperscript{th} century timber building
Location of thirteenth-century timber framed building (entirely removed during the construction of New Place)
What did this 13\textsuperscript{th}/ 14\textsuperscript{th} century house look like?