New Place; Stratford-upon-Avon.
Shakespeare’s ‘Medieval Residence’

William Mitchell
Where is New Place?

The Birthplace

Site of New Place
Finding New Place
New Place revealed

This diagram's appearance reveals the street, the gate, and entrance, at the corner of Chapel Lane / the chapel, for which it is said the Bridge over stream. Besides this part of the house gate, there was before the house itself (then Shakespeare's home) within a little court yard, grass growing there - before the real dwelling house, this outside being only a long gallery for infirmaries.
Hugh Clopton’s ‘Grete House’

Hugh Clopton 1440-1496

- Belonged to an influential Warwickshire family
- Merchant of the woolstaple
- Became Alderman, Sheriff, Member of parliament and Lord Mayor of London
Hugh Clopton’s ‘Grete House’

Schematic Plan

Grand medieval house.

Built around a courtyard.

Open hall set back from the frontage.

Frontage let as shops.
A Walkthrough of New Place

The front range and cellar (Shops and chambers)
The courtyard

Mid to late sixteenth century pits

The well
The Open Hall Building

Comparative interior example; The Commandery, Worcester
Open Halls
15th Century Background

The Commandery, Worcester
Ightham Mote, Kent
Gainsborough Old Hall, Lincolnshire
The Screens Passage

The oven (within the Buttery/Bake-house)

The storage tank (within the Pantry)
The Kitchen (brew-house)

Hearth and Vat bases
An almost identical hall house

Both late fifteenth Century in origin
The house after Hugh Clopton

- 1496-New Place left to Hugh Clopton’s Great Nephew William Clopton (1481-1521)
- 1521-William Clopton dies. New Place left to his wife Rose
- 1543-1549-New Place let to Thomas Bentley at which time it is described as being ‘in great ruyne and decay and unrepyryd’
- 1563-William Bott purchases property
- 1567- Site purchased by William Underhill for £110
- 1583- New Place abandoned by William, William Underhill’s son after ‘family misfortunes’
- 1583-1597-Unknown ownership (abandoned?)
William Shakespeare’s Renovations

• In 1597 Shakespeare purchased New Place, for himself and his family for £60 (probably double this)

• Stratford-upon-Avon was a four day ride by horse from London, so he is very likely to have lived between these two places from this time.

• 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).
Shakespeare’s purchases

- Shakespeare’s ownership 1597
- Shakespeare’s ownership 1602
Shakespeare’s Renovations

Late 16th to early 17th century ceramics recovered from construction cut
Tudor Brick Pit c.16th-18th century
Excavated in 1922
Shakespeare’s Long Gallery
Continued use of the Hall
Comparative houses

The Shakespeare Hotel, Stratford

Tudor House, Long Itchington, Warwickshire

New Place
Shakespeare’s motivations

- Symbolic associations
- Pursuit of status
- Desire for investment
- Obligation to his family
Symbolic associations and pursuit of status

- Hugh Clopton - merchant’s house, Influence of New place within the town, Shakespeare’s mercantile connection.
- The courtyard inn and performance space possibilities.

Performance being held at a courtyard inn
Artefacts

Pins

Spindle Whorl

Loom weight

Textile working Bobbin

Thimbles

Cottage industries
Artefacts

16th/17th century lead tokens

16th century
Rose and crown
Half groat

15th century
Neuremborg
Jeton
Artefacts

17th century ceramics

Bead/ button making and buttons

Dice

Eye glass frame

Instrument tuning pegs

c.17th century cribbage peg
Thank you for Listening

Book now available:

Finding Shakespeare's New Place:
An archaeological biography.

Edmondson, Colls and Mitchell
Manchester University Press

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