

Concrete houses built by Northumberland Estates circa 1900

- Little London -



Appletree and Mayland Cottages



Cheynes Cottage, later Foxton



Brookfield



Block Cottages, later Jacquin & Hideaway Cottages

- Water Lane, Albury -



Downs & Pilgrim Cottages



Water Lane

Farm Cottage

1985 correspondence on concrete buildings between architect Lyndon F Cave and Dr Maurice Burton, chair of Albury History Society, with notes by Secretary Caroline Martin and reference to photographer Bob Casbard who took these slides in August 1976, excepting Block Cottages photographed in February 1984.

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4.I.85.

Dear Dr Burton,

You will not know me, but when you have read this letter I hope all will be plain.

Some months ago I had a letter published in 'Country Life' asking for information about concrete built houses and cottages, dating from the period before the first World War. My interest in the subject started as a result of reading in a builder's price book of the 19th century, which I collect due to my interest in the history of building, that such houses could be built for £100 each and that semi-detached pairs were quite suitable for farm worker's cottages.

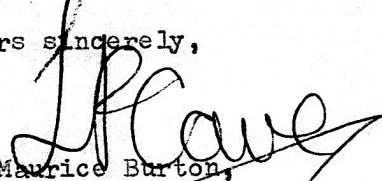
This particular book was dated 1874 and as you may know such price books, used by builders to prepare estimates, only include costings for fairly common types of construction so that if concrete was included for building cottages these must have been fairly common.

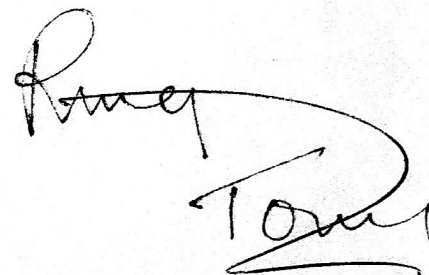
In due course I received a letter from a Captain New, who is now in Dubai although he did own 'Applletrees Cottage' in Little London, Albury near Guildford. This was one of a pair of such cottages and he felt such there were others in the area. At his suggestion I wrote to the present owner of the cottage who telephoned me today about the subject - her name is Mrs Santson and it was her who pointed me in your direction.

It appears that you know all about local history and may have investigated the building of these concrete cottages and have a photograph of at least one of them. Could I trouble you to send me any information you have about these concrete cottages, and others you know of. I intend to compile a list of surviving examples of this type of building for the use of people interested and send a copy to the R.I.B.A. library for reference purposes. Also I will of course acknowledge any help given by individuals if details are ever published.

Since starting this investigation I have found groups in mid Wales, Norfolk, Essex, as well as elsewhere in the Guildford area. These groups appear to be in places where either the local landowner, or builder, was interested in the use of what was then an experimental material although cheaper than brick to build with. The earliest examples date from the 1860s - or at least as so far discovered - any help you can give me will be very much appreciated and I hope you do not mind me troubling you in this way,

Yours sincerely,


Dr Maurice Burton,
Weston House.
Albury.
Guildford.
Surrey.


R. M. Jones

Concrete houses

Lyndon F. Cave, R.I.B.A.,
~~Architect~~,
24, Portland Street,
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11 January 1985.

Dear Mr Cave,

Thank you for your letter of January 4, regarding concrete-built cottages, I shall be happy to help but it may be a while before I can assemble and send photographs and notes. I must disclaim the fullness of knowledge on local history implied in your letter, but we have the next best thing, a knowledge of local people who have special skills to offer or who will take photographs.

I shall be writing again in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Appletree Cottage - (Semi) Little London
Concrete Stairs, Ceilings - probably a mixture
of other material,
Built before the turn of the century
according to Tony Atborne, whose
father was born there 85 years ago -

Lyndon F. Cave, R.I.B.A.,
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15 August 1985.

Dear Mr Cave,

My apologies for being so long in sending you details of concrete houses, as promised in my letter of January 11 last.

It seems there are two pairs of semi-detached houses in Little London, a hamlet or subvillage in the parish of Albury. Both were built about 1900 or just prior to 1900 (we have to rely on the memories of ancient inhabitants for this!). Both were (probably) built by the Northumberland Estate (now the Albury Estate Ltd.) that owns most of the land in Albury, probably as an experiment.

One pair, the individual cottages of which are now named Appletree Cottage and Mayland Cottage, and both have a concrete staircase and concrete ceiling. The other two, nearby, were originally called Block Cottages and were re-named Jacquin Cottage and Hideaway Cottage. These have wooden staircases. I believe each cottage cost £100 to build.

Do you need photographs of these? So far our most enthusiastic photographer has been fully occupied with other things but I will pursue the matter with him if necessary.

There is talk of another pair in Water Lane on the other side of the village of Albury but so far I have been unable to locate them.

After the above was written the former secretary of our History Society, whose speciality is studying old houses, lent me the enclosed 35mm transparencies. They are part of the Society's collection taken a few years ago in an endeavour to have a photo of every house in the parish. I must therefore

/ask you

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8.10.85.

Dear Dr Burton,

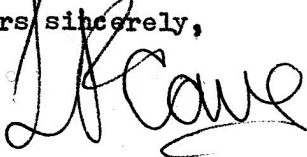
Thank you for your letter, dated as long ago as 15th August, together with some colour transparencies which I am now returning. As would be expected these show the concrete houses being very similar to other examples elsewhere in the country although the amount of concrete used for interior fittings obviously varies. Some houses having concrete floors and staircases, some just having concrete external walls.

Since I started collecting information last autumn I have discovered examples in all parts of the country, there being many more surviving examples than I thought possible. Thank you for all the trouble you have gone on my behalf and I can now identify the dwellings as I imagine the hamlet is so small there should be no problems over this if I ever get a chance to pay a visit.

From the pictures it is obvious that local knowledge is required to establish how the houses were built as from the outsides the buildings would look like normal rendered brickwork and nothing else. The information you gave me is useful as when I wrote to the Estate Office nothing was known about these concrete houses as all documents and plans which might help had been 'destroyed' as being of no real use. Had this not been the case I might have found out a look more.

If you hear of any more examples of such houses in the Albury area, or elsewhere, please send me brief details of their location, etc. If it is not too much trouble I feel that photographs of the concrete houses would be useful, and now that I have mentioned these the Local History Society might also like some. If you can persuade your photographer to do these for me some I would be very grateful,

Yours sincerely,



Dr Maurice Burton,
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Guildford.
Surrey GU5 9AE.

Downs Cottage, Pilgrims Cottage, Water Lane. *
Jacquin Cottage, 2 Block Cottages, Little London
Farn Cottage, Water Lane. *
Appletree Cottage and Taylors Cottage, Little London
Brookfield, Brook
Foxton, Brook.

* These are
rendered and
could be block.

Bob I don't know if you want to do anything about this - it does
seem rather cheek. Maurice gave it to me without comment.

- 2 -

ask you to return them in due course, but perhaps your viewing of them will enable you to tell me if you want photos of our concrete houses, and which, and how many. I will then try to get someone to take them for you.

The note, over the signature 'Carol' came with the transparencies. Carol is the former secretary referred to above.

Yours sincerely,

6 slides

Foxton - Brook

Brookfield - Brook

Jacquín and 2 Block Cottages - Little London

Appletree Cottage and Mayland Cottage - Little London

* Farm Cottage - Water Lane

* Downs Cottage and Pilgrim Cottage - Water Lane

* These appear to be rendered, no I don't know if they are concrete or not.

Carol