

The Historic Buildings of Mere

The Grange

The Grange was owned by the Duchy of Cornwall until 1896, and is thought to have been at one time the residence of the Bailiff of the Duchy. The form of its roof timbers suggested to an authority on medieval architecture, Dr. W. A. Pantin, that the house was built in the second half of the fifteenth century, and his conjectural reconstruction of the house in its original form shows that on the first floor there was probably an Upper Hall some 20 feet high, with two chambers and a loft, and, on the ground floor, a large Lower Hall of half that height, with Parlour, Buttery and the ancillary accommodations. The house has been considerably altered from time to time over the centuries, and it was skilfully divided into in 1938.

The Grange (though it did not receive that name until much later) was advertised in 1774 as being “a large and commodious Farm House with convenient outbuildings”. From Duchy survey maps these outbuildings are seen to have been substantially greater in area than the house itself, with which they formed a four-sided farmyard. The farmer whose lease was about to expire in 1774 was one William Wickham, and it was again a William Wickham who announced his intention to retire from farming and put his livestock up for sale there in 1843.

The next occupier was Charles Jupe, who demolished all the farm buildings behind the house and used most of the stone to construct the large building now bordering Dark Lane, which he put into use as one of his silk factories. With the closing-down of the silk industry in Mere in 1894, the factory remained out of use until 1906, when the Royal Wilton Carpet Factory Limited took a lease of it as a branch of their main factory at Wilton. This industry also closed down during the Second World War, and the building has since been used as a furniture depository. Its freehold was sold by the then owner of The Grange in 1919.

