

## Investigations into history of Mr Fletcher's House (Toddington Florist)



How did this 1820 painting of Mr Fletcher's House by Thomas Fisher become the 2011 photo of same view below?

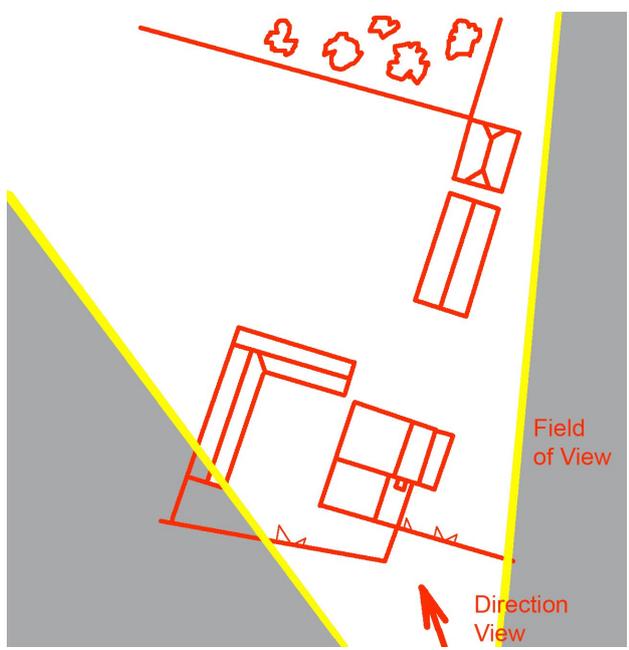
Initially they look so unrecognisable as the same property ! Although Steve Southin, who provided the above painting photo, was certain. I set out to investigate further



First I went to the Toddington Library to see if I could find where Mr Fletcher lived in 1820, nearest I could get was the 1861 census where I found 3 Mr Fetchers living in Toddington but only one fitted the part, William Fletcher, 9 Dunstable Street. He was a 70 year old farmer therefore would have been 29 when this painting was executed. Here is the census file:

		May Waldman	Wife	Thrs	
		Joseph Co	Son		5
		Frederic Co	Son		5
		Charlotte Briden	Sister		
50	1	Butch Champion	Head	Wid	
		Elixth Co	Son	Wid	
59	1	Lenisa M Co	Son	Wid	
		William Fletcher	Head	Wid	70
		Jane Co	Son	Wid	
60	1	John Papp	Head	Wid	22
		Mar Co	Wife	Wid	
		William Co	Son		4
61	1	William Valentine	Head	Wid	62
		Jan Co	Wife	Wid	
		Jan Co	Son	Wid	25

Next, being an architect, I imagined a scale plan of the property in the painting and the angle of vision of the painting as thus, Then rotated it and superimposed it on a Google Earth view:



It fitted with front smaller than present, we knew the front had been re-built and had been brought to the road as with many High Street Properties even my own.

Next we looked to the 1882 map and superimposed the same red plan:



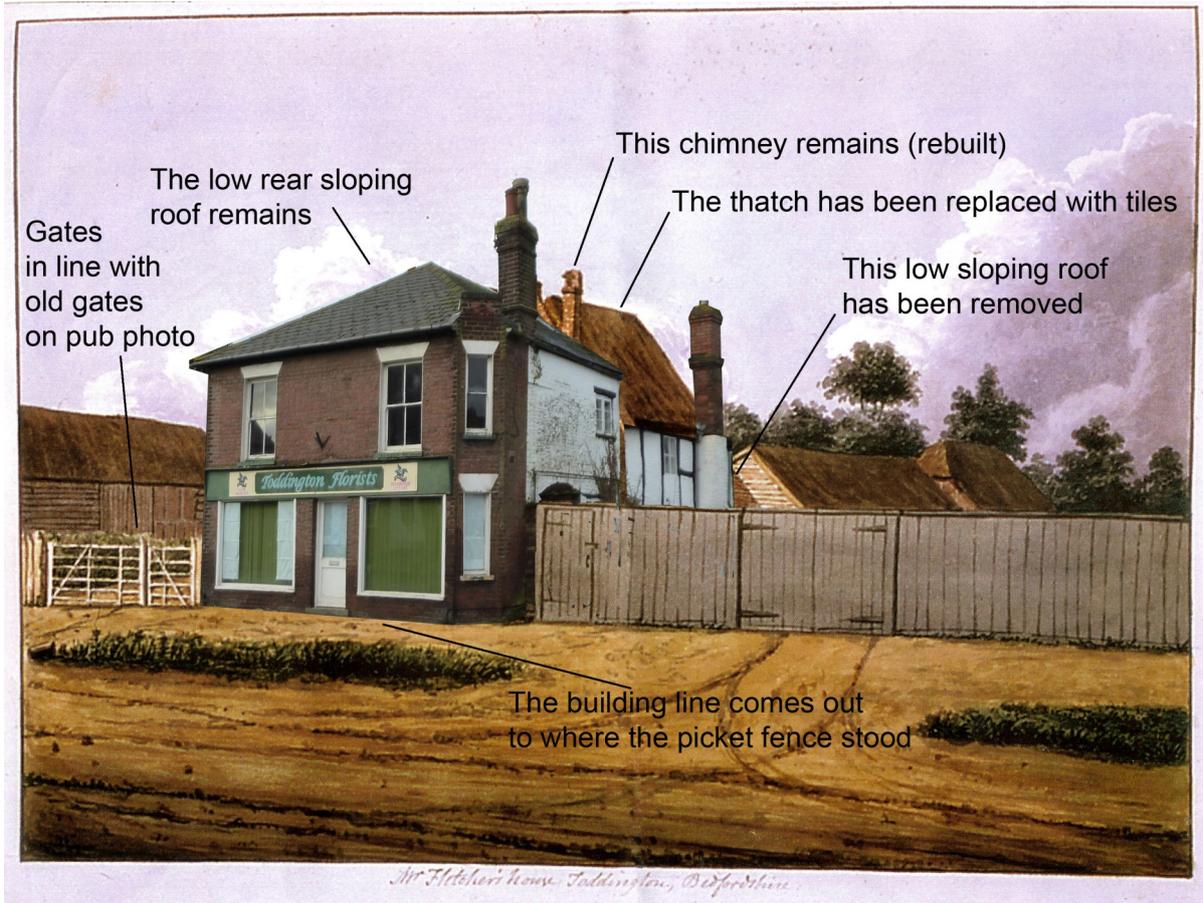
Again an excellent match. The rear line of trees boundary was a little out but the trees were there, just error in my estimate of depth.

Then we came to the old photo of when it was a pub. Although the gates on far left have been replaced they are identical to one passenger gate and one vehicular gate as shown on the left of the painting. We have another match!



On close real inspection one can see the right hand chimney is later bricks and has been added probably about 1870, such was the fashion. The nearest chimney is on the re-modelled front but the chimney to the right of this is showing on the 1820 painting in the same position.

Lets look at a mock-up of Fisher's 1820 painting and we can visualise how this all came about:



A photo of the out-of-sight rear sloping roof which used to carry through to the front on the 1820's painting.

Why can't you see the Bedford Arms to the left in the 1820 painting? Simple because it was not there! Colin Marriott told me it was built 54 years ago using old ships timbers and the 3 cottages it replaced were taken down. Yet it is listed as C17?

## The grade 2 listing

TL 0028 TODDINGTON HIGH STREET  
(west side)

20/10004 No 62  
Toddingon Florists

- II

House with shop premises. Circa C17, extended or partly rebuilt in C18 and C19. Rear wing timber-framed with brick infilling and steeply pitched plain tile roof with gabled ends; front range brick, partly painted and rendered and with hipped asbestos tile roof. Brick axial and lateral stacks. Plan: Circa C17 rear wing; the front block, now containing a shop, is an C18 extension or rebuilding, remodelled in the C19. Exterior: 2 storeys. 2-window C19 east front with C20 shopfront on ground floor and 2 4-pane sashes on first floor. Timber-framed rear wing with C19 casement windows with glazing bars; west gable end brick. Interior: Front room (shop) has chamfered cross-beam. Rear room in original wing has chamfered axial beam with step or truncated pyramid stops (now partly buried in wall plaster). In the roof only the timber frame east gable end or closed truss of the original building survives and the collar in the west gable end with the lower part of the principals below with what appears to be mortices for wind-braces; the purlins and common rafters have been replaced.

Listing NGR: TL0090428586