

Foxton Hall

Foxton Hall is not shown on a sale plan of 1856 concerning the sale of Foxton House Estates. It is not mentioned on the 1861 Census but is identified with a housekeeper in residence in the 1871 Census.

In 1856 the land, Lot 6, is described as part of Welbore's Farm with "allotments of first-rate pasture land, running up to Foxton Station. The area nowadays covering all the west side of Station Road from the war memorial to the A10, along the A10 to the garage, then to the back of the houses on the High Street to join and include all of the Press site.

From the abstract of title details in a sale in 1904 it is likely that William Ward Asplen bought this Lot in 1856, as the Rev Selwyn was recorded in the 1861 census as the resident of Foxton House, and the 5 members of the Asplin [sic] family and their 2 servants were recorded as resident on the High Street.

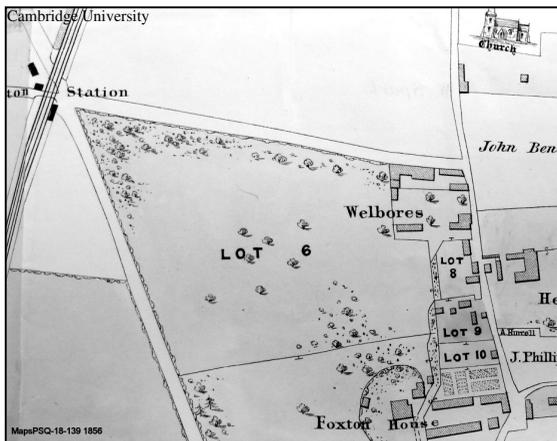
The most likely residence for the Asplen family in 1861 was Welbore's farm house with its 7 bedrooms and 3 attics.

William Ward Asplen is known to be residing in Foxton Hall in 1872 when his address was given when he was taken to court. On the 1881 census his residence is listed as on the High Road i.e. the A10, so almost certainly in Foxton Hall.

In 1904 the site, covering the same area as above was up for sale again as the Foxton Hall Estate. The Hall is clearly defined on the plan as within freehold Lot 1 and is described as standing in well timbered park with fine elm and groups of ornamental timber together with a small farmery (Wildbores [sic] Farm) and cottage. The Hall is described in detail:-

"Foxton Hall is a substantial brick and slated residence, approached from the main road by a winding carriage drive through shrubbery with well grown shrubs and conifers and contains:-

On the Ground Floor, Vestibule Hall 31 ft by 12ft 11 ft high warmed by large radiator, small business room, dining room 21 ft by 18ft 11 ft high, with bay window, panelled with old oak with carved frieze and pilasters and old oak carved window cornices, handsome carved and inlaid old oak mantelpiece, Drawing Room, 21 ft by 18 ft 11ft high with 4 ft 6 in bay window with door leading into Conservatory, fitted with white marble mantelpiece, Morning Room, 18 ft by



16 ft well lighted and fitted with white marble mantelpiece, Servants Hall 21 ft by 16 ft fitted with kitchener and Butlers sink with hot and cold water and lavatory.

On the First Floor, which is approached by a well-lighted wide staircase with easy flights;

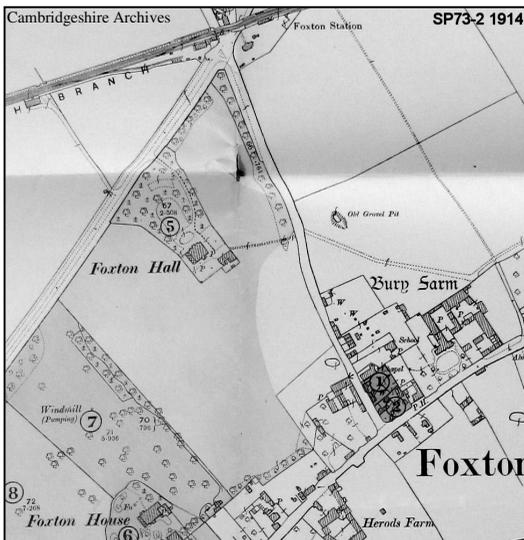
Bedroom 21 ft by 18 ft, with bay window and Dressing Room adjoining; Single Bedroom adjoining; Bedroom

18 ft 6 ins by 15 ft 3 in, with bay window and Dressing Room adjoining; Bedroom 18 ft

6 in by 16 ft 3 in; Bedroom 16 ft 3 in by 14 ft; Bathroom with hot and cold supply of soft water from large high level supply tank containing 1,000 gallons;

Housemaids Closet and W.C.; the bedrooms are all 9 ft 3 in height, well lighted, cheerful and command pleasant views.” The Second Floor and Domestic Offices in the semi-basement are also described in detail and the Large Conservatory and Vinery at the side of the house are mentioned. The Hall and grounds occupy about 2 acres and the park 17 acres. It is interesting that a telephone connects the two bedroom cottage near to the Hall.

The vendor is not specifically identified but is likely to be William Ward Asplen who died in 1895 It was said by Rowland Parker that Welbore’s farm house was demolished by W. W, Asplen in 1879, who removed a black oak fireplace and wainscot to install in his new house, Foxton Hall. The buyer was William Briggs who built the University Tutorial Press on the site of the Welbore’s farm, and the Press houses in 1908.



Foxton Hall in 1914

In 1914 the Hall, in the leased occupation of the Venerable Archdeacon E.F. Miller, was again up for sale as lot 5 in a sale of the Foxton Estate. The same piece of land, excluding the Press and Press houses, is marked on the plan but is not given a lot number.

Briggs sold the Hall to Cuthbert Foster who is recorded at Foxton Hall in the 1920 and 1921 electoral roles, replaced by Ada and Albert Brown on the 1931 role. In 1922 John Lawson bought the Hall which was sold in 1935, after his death. In 1939 the Hall was used as a care home with 6 residents, 2 nurses, a cook and 2 domestic servants, but an unknown owner. It was bought by the Air Ministry at some point for use in Russian language training for the Cold War in conjunction with Cambridge University. In about 1953 Alan Bennett probably spent some time there as part of his National Service. Other members of that course described it as; "...in some respects well up to the standards of a middling country-house hotel, with a bar, a library, a dining room, a tennis court, and a distractingly attractive housekeeper; and even though maybe two or three men found themselves sharing a bedroom, it was at least a decent size". They noted that the plaques on the bedroom doors included 'Daffodil' and 'Tulip' amongst others. In 1951 the occupier is given as Wm. Dick with HM Treasury as rate payer from Feb 1952. It was sold for £8,100 in 1958. In 1962 it was being used by Dr H. Hurst to study his new technology for inserting a liquid damp-proof course into buildings. In 1984, in the process of being converted to a hotel, there was an explosion and fire which burnt the building down. It has been rumoured that this fire may have made it easier to build the current building. A new building was erected in about 1989 which is currently used for educational purposes.