



Suffolk House
Off Wash Road
Fosdyke
Lincolnshire



HISTORIC BUILDING REPORT

**Suffolk House
Off Wash Road
Fosdyke
Lincolnshire**

June 1991

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Suffolk House, off Wash Road, Fosdyke, Lincolnshire

File Contents

Report

Plan

35mm photographs

ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF ENGLAND

Lincolnshire

Fosdyke: Suffolk House, off Wash Road

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SUMMARY

Suffolk House is a brick building of two storeys and attic dating from the early-mid 18th century. It probably incorporates timbers re-used from an earlier building. The use of a stair bay gives the plan an unusual length for a building of only three rooms. The flooring pattern over the ground floor is also unusual, cross-beams being employed in two rooms very close to chimney stacks. Cross and spine-beams are of heavy scantling and have quarter-round mouldings; they are, therefore, probably earlier than the house, and the fact that they do not fit well within the present building confirms their re-use. The original building had three heated rooms on ground and first floors and an unheated attic. The unconventional plan, the known use of the building as an inn at one stage, and the position immediately beside the former sea bank and on the bank of the River Welland make it possible that the building had a non-domestic use originally, being built perhaps as an inn at a river crossing. In perhaps the late 18th or early 19th century a single-storeyed kitchen wing was built at the rear of the building. This was later converted to a forge. A small single-storeyed office was added to the front elevation probably in the late 19th century.

DESCRIPTION

Phase 1; the original building

Suffolk House is a brick building of early-mid 18th century date. It is of two storeys and attic, is aligned north-south, and has a hipped roof to the north and a gabled roof to the south, the latter probably the result of an alteration. Brickwork is in random bond, now painted. There is a projecting brick band over the ground-floor openings on east, north and west walls. The roof covering is asbestos replacing the original thatch.

The present lobby entrance against the southern stack is unlikely to be original. It opens into the southern cell, although a

modern plank screen shelters the room at this end from the entrance area. It is probable that the original entrance lay slightly to the north and opened into the stair bay, and that the later addition of the office necessitated the creation of a new doorway in the present position. Brickwork within the stair bay is confused and one straight joint (see plan) may indicate the position of an original door jamb.

The ground floor probably comprised a hall and two parlours originally. The hall, the central room, was heated by a large fireplace, now reduced in size, in the north wall. Part of the timber bressumer over the fireplace opening survives and is partially visible. Removal of part of the side wall of the stack has revealed the internal flue construction, which is seen to have a single large flue strengthened by brick arches bonding front and back walls. The hall has cross and spine-beams, the cross-beam set close to the stack. This arrangement may be connected with the need to support a projecting stack on the first floor. The beams have quarter-round mouldings but there are no stops at the beam ends. The junction of the beams is not well contrived and it is likely that the timbers were re-used from an earlier building. The absence of evidence for service rooms in the original building suggests that the hall acted as a kitchen with a cooking hearth.

At both ends of the house was a heated parlour. The northern parlour is featureless, the beams here being cased and the fireplace being blocked. The southern parlour has a small fireplace with a timber bressumer, cut in the 19th century when a larger fireplace was inserted. This later fireplace has itself now been removed. The ceiling beams over the parlour are similar in arrangement to those in the hall and again the use of a cross-beam close to the stack may be explained by the need to support stack and hearthstone in the chamber over. Again the beams are moulded and again their junction is poorly contrived, the moulding not continuing smoothly around from one beam to the other. At only one point, at the east end of the cross-beam, is there a stop to the moulding. As in the hall, therefore, the evidence of the ceiling beams possibly indicates the re-use of earlier timbers.

Between the southern parlour and the hall lies the stair. This occupies the western two-thirds of a narrow bay, the remainder forming a small closet. The stair is of dog-leg form and has square newels, closed string, moulded handrail and turned balusters, most now removed; the balusters have a plain tapering shaft above an urn. The stair appears to fit well within the stair bay and may be presumed to be in its original position. The fact that it occupies only part of the bay precluded lighting from the east, and thus the stair hall must originally have been lit from the west. On the ground floor this may have been by means of a fanlight over the doorway, but on the first floor an oak-framed cross window survives on the landing.

The original pattern of circulation on the ground floor is difficult to reconstruct. The plan shows two straight lines of north-south circulation, with doorways, most open but one blocked, at east and west ends of all internal dividing walls. The western doorways are all likely to be original, since the main entrance lay on this side, and the existence of a pegged and chamfered oak door frame to the east of the hall stack suggests that the eastern line of communication may also be early or original. This feature of the plan and the great length given by the use of a stair bay raise the question of whether the building had a non-domestic use originally, perhaps as an inn at a crossing point over the River Welland where it entered the sea. The building might have provided heated public rooms on the ground floor and heated and unheated rooms on the upper floors. The first floor of the building has few features of interest. Central and southern rooms are heated today. The southern room has a fireplace with a timber bressumer. The bressumer has a quarter-round moulding but the stops to the moulding lie beyond the line of the present fireplace opening. It is likely, therefore, that the bressumer has been re-used. The central chamber has a tapering brick stack projecting into the room. Ceilings over the first floor have beams and joists of varying quality within each room, indicating considerable alterations. The plan of the first floor repeats that of the ground floor, with doorways at both east and west ends of the internal dividing walls.

The stair rises to the attic, which provided unheated space for storage and perhaps sleeping accommodation. Within the attic the brickwork of the south gable appears to be of later date than in the rest of the house; this is confirmed externally, for the south wall alone lacks a string band over the ground floor. It is possible that the south wall is a partial rebuild, and this might explain why the roof is gabled rather than hipped at this end. The roof is of common-rafter form, with every fourth or fifth pair being heavier to allow it to carry a collar clasping the side purlins.

Phase 2: the addition of the kitchen wing

In perhaps the late 18th or early 19th century the building was enlarged through the addition of a single-storeyed wing to the rear. The wing is of brick and has a pantile roof; brickwork is in English Garden Wall bond. The gable fireplace survives and has a large opening beneath a timber bressumer. The bressumer supports the tapering brick stack. Part of the fire area is occupied by an oven. The wing thus provided a cooking hearth and formed either the main kitchen or a back kitchen, bakehouse and brewhouse.

Phase 3: later work

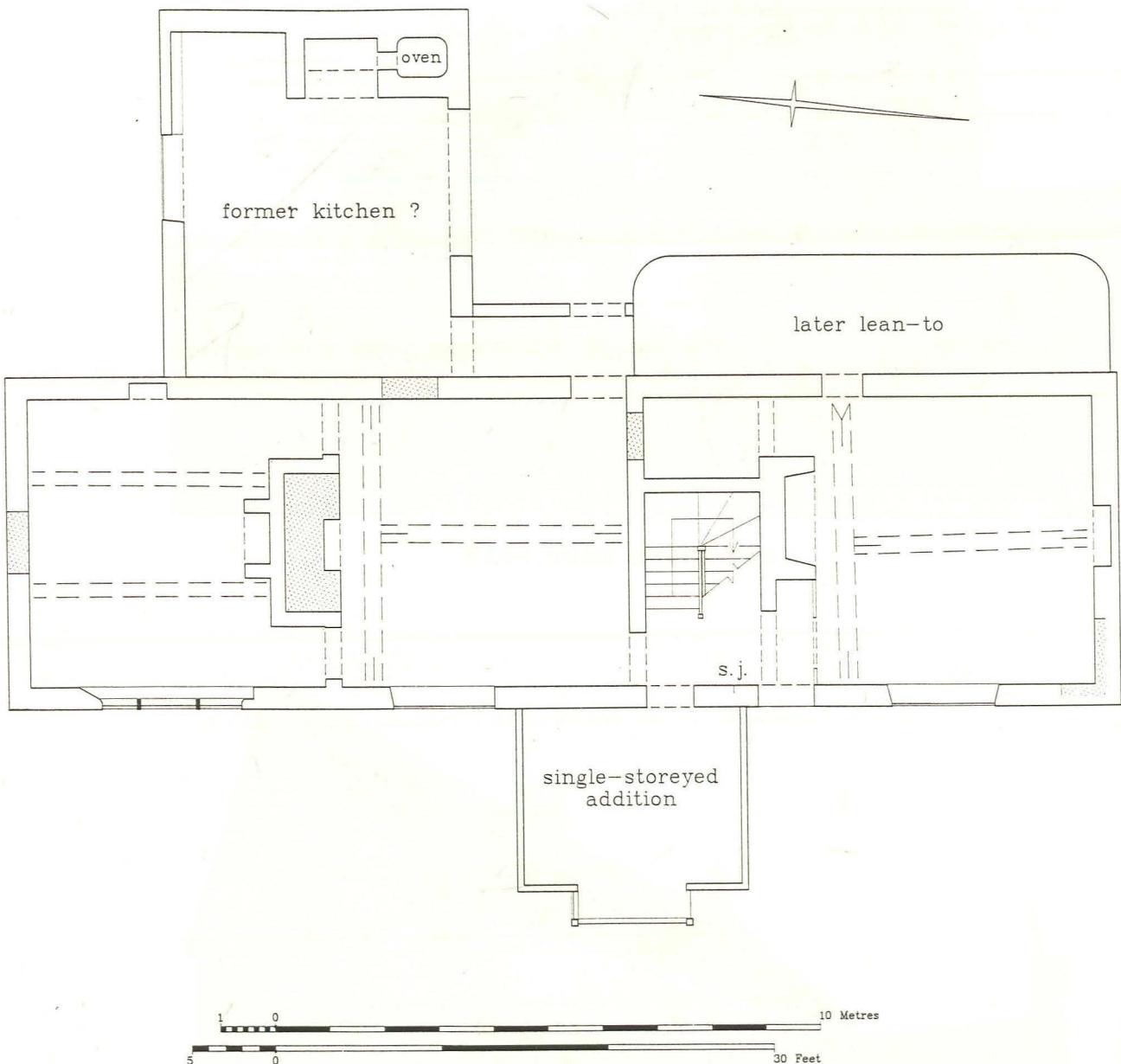
Various later additions and alterations have been made to the building. The kitchen wing was converted to a forge, perhaps in the late 19th century; part of the bellows mechanism survives next to the stack. Also probably in the late 19th century, a single-storeyed addition was made at the front, probably blocking the original doorway and necessitating the creation of a new entrance. The addition is of brick and provides a single room heated by a fireplace and lit by a bay window. It may have been built as an office. At the rear a small single-storeyed lean-to was built at the south end of the building probably in the 20th century to provide extra service space.

Visited: Colum Giles, Bernard Thomason, Roger Thomas,
26 March 1991

Report: Colum Giles

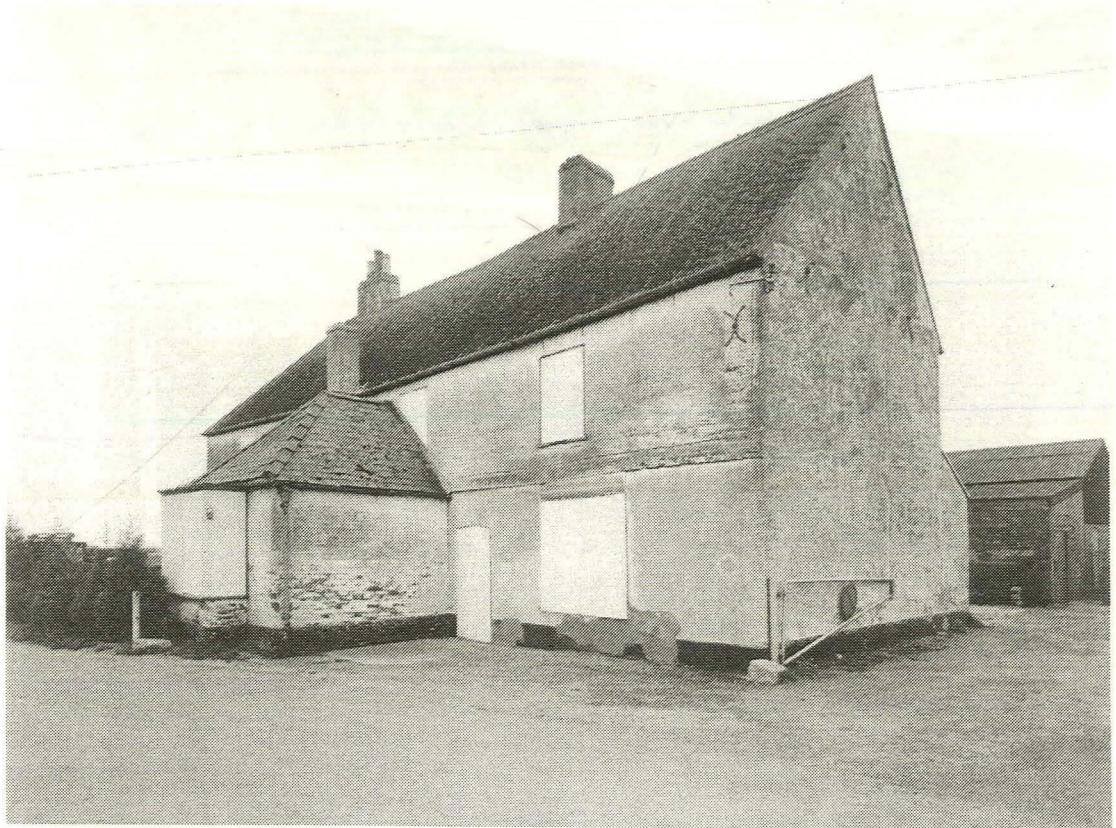
Plan: Bernard Thomason

Large-format photography: Roger Thomas



Suffolk House, Fosdyke, Lincolnshire.
Ground-floor plan





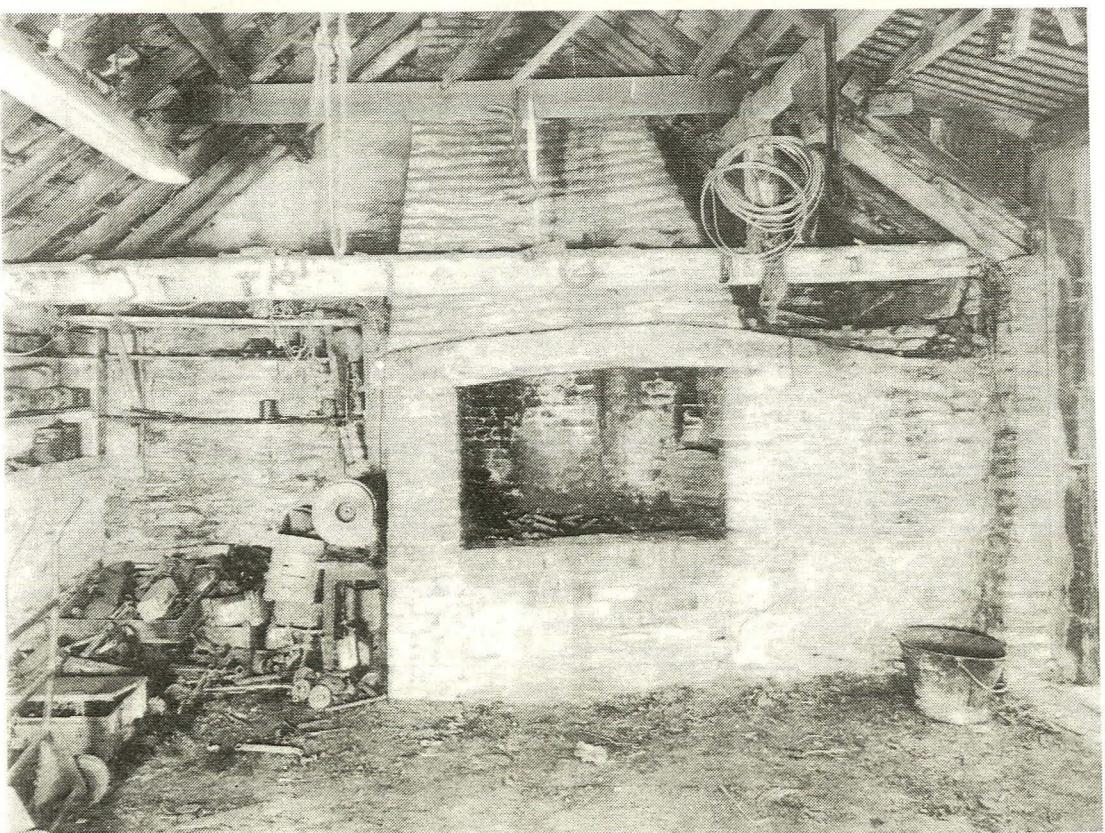
View from south-west



View from south-east showing added kitchen wing



First floor, central room, view to north



View of kitchen wing showing fireplace, oven and
later forge fittings



View of stair, ground floor

