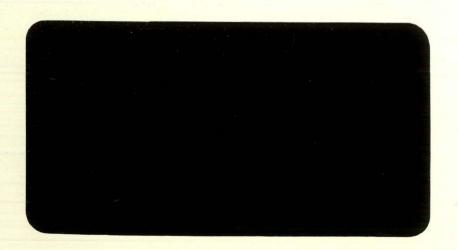
Build



Thornholm Grange
Kellet Gate (off)
Low Fulney
Spalding
Lincolnshire

November 1995

Lincolnshire County Council
Archaeology Section
12 Friars Lane
LINCOLN LN2 5AL
TEL. 0522 575292 FAX: 0522 530724



ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF ENGLAND

HISTORIC BUILDING REPORT

Thornholm Grange Kellet Gate (off) Low Fulney Spalding Lincolnshire

November 1995

Crown Copyright

National Monuments Record Centre, Kemble Drive, Swindon SN2 2GZ Tel: (01793) 414600 Fax: (01793) 420728

ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF ENGLAND

Lincolnshire NGR: TF 2712 2235

Spalding NBR No: 39821

Thornholm Grange, Kellet Gate (off), Low Fulney

(also known as Vetchery Farm, Low Fulney House and Offices of the Land Settlement Association)

SUMMARY

The settlement at Thornholm originated as a grange or vaccary of Spalding Priory in the late 13th or early 14th century. The earliest identifiable phase of the present building probably dates from the 15th century. This is a brick structure of two storeys and three bays with a vaulted ground floor. It is oriented roughly north-west to south-east (treated in this report as north-south). The south and central vaulted bays survive intact, and there are fragmentary remains of the northern bay, including a possible section of the north wall. One chamfered stone jamb of the original entrance remains, located in the west wall of the central bay. A large fireplace in the east wall of the central vaulted bay, formerly served by a shouldered stack, may be contemporary.

In the late 16th century the building was extended and partially rebuilt to provide domestic accommodation on two storeys plus attics. A fourth bay, or possibly a cross-wing, was added at the north end, and a stair was incorporated in a gabled projection on the east side of the added bay. The external walls of this phase are characterised by a brick eaves decoration resembling a stylised form of machicolation. A brick stack was constructed at the junction of the extension and the northern vaulted bay. The stack incorporated fireplaces on all three levels on the north side, and on the ground and first floors on the south side. The central and southern vaulted bays were apparently retained as service accommodation. The original entrance in the central bay was probably replaced or supplemented at this time by an entrance against the inserted stack (now occupied by a window).

Few external alterations of substance appear to have occurred between the late 16th century and 1823, the date of a watercolour depicting the building, but joinery details suggest some internal refurbishment in the 18th century. Probably in the mid to late 19th century the north addition was extensively rebuilt. In 1936 the building was acquired for the offices of the Land Settlement Association. Numerous doorways and windows were altered or inserted, and the north wall of the stair projection was rebuilt at this time.

REPORT

Thornholm Grange lies approximately two kilometres east of Spalding and the River Welland on flat alluvial land rendered fertile by artificial drainage. The area was one of a number reclaimed for agriculture by the Benedictine monks of Spalding Priory under the direction of Prior Clement of Hatfield in the late 13th and early 14th centuries. There are said to have been traces of a moat and fish pond associated with the site.

The medieval building

The present building is of brick construction with roofs of Welsh slate and pantiles, and consists of four bays on a roughly north-south axis. The earliest identifiable phase appears to have been a three-bay, two-storeyed building, with the ground-floor bays each containing a quadripartite two-centred rib vault composed of chamfered bricks. The brickwork of this phase is of a reddish purple colour and includes a large quantity of sintered and vitrified bricks. There are also numerous green-glazed bricks randomly distributed both internally and externally, possibly indicating a willingness to use kiln waste on a building of modest status. The southern and central vaults survive intact, together with the south gable and the east and west walls; a shouldered buttress projecting east of the gable is probably also original, but confirmation of this is prevented by the presence of render on the east and south elevations.

The north side of the central vault is now closed by a secondary brick cross-wall, but the transverse rib which this butts up against is chamfered on both sides, suggesting that the central vault was originally open on this side to a third vaulted bay. In its present unvaulted form the northern bay is of almost exactly the same length as the two surviving vaulted bays and the west wall continues for this distance at a uniform 91cm thickness. It is possible that a fragment of the original north end wall and of the brick core-work of the vault survive in the north-east corner. A short length of wall east of the inserted stack is 91cm thick and may represent the easternmost portion of the north wall. The possible core-work projects south and west of the north-east corner, in a space which has been walled off subsequently and which contains a small brick-lined well. The relationship of this core-work to the dimensions of the northern bay is not entirely clear, though this may result from the distortion which seems to have occurred in the east wall at this point.

The building was originally entered on the ground floor via a west doorway in the central bay. The chamfered stone north jamb survives intact, and incorporates a blocked draw-bar socket. It is also associated

¹ A contemporary chronicler recorded that 'he established the manor of Thornholm with the dyking and raising of the lands, both here and at Wykeham, and elsewhere in various places' (quoted in H E Hallam, Settlement and Society: A Study in the Early Agrarian History of South Lincolnshire [Cambridge, 1965], 153).

² Press cutting, dated 10 March 1931, in National Buildings Record file.

with the springing of a brick relieving arch over the door on the inside, the remainder of which has been lost in later alterations. Opposite this entrance, on the east wall of the central bay, there is a large brick-arched fireplace. This incorporates bricks of a similar character to those in the remainder of the vaulted building, suggesting that it may be an original feature. A watercolour of Thornholm Grange, dating from 1823, shows a shouldered stack on the external wall in a position corresponding to this fireplace, and it is possible that this stack also served a first-floor fireplace originally. No clear evidence was found for original fenestration, though the east window of the southern bay, which dates from the 1930s in its present form, appears to respect the position of a much earlier window shown in the 1823 illustration.

Evidence for the date of this building is to some extent contradictory. The presence of green-glazed bricks and the form of the ribs would tend to suggest a 15th century date, but the comparative steepness of the two-centred vaults could conceivably indicate a 14th century date. It is likely that the vaulted ground floor functioned as an undercroft to higher status first-floor accommodation. Since the ground floor is vaulted it is likely that access to the upper level was either by an external stair or was from an adjoining range of which no trace now remains.

The late 16th-century rebuilding

Probably in the second half of the 16th century the medieval building was enlarged and rebuilt to provide domestic accommodation on two storeys plus attics. The principal work belonging to this phase is at the north end of the medieval building. It is likely that the original north gable was dismantled to allow for the construction of a large stack. The fireplaces heated ground and first-floor rooms in the original northern bay, where the vault was replaced by a joisted ceiling, and rooms on all three levels in an added bay to the north. This phase is dated by the form of the timber fireplace lintels which survive in the stack. These are chamfered with depressed triangular heads. At the same time a short gabled projection containing a stair was constructed on the east side of the added bay. Relatively little remains of the external walls of this phase: the south, and most of the east wall of the stair projection, and fragments of the east and west walls of the added bay. The brickwork of the east wall and the stair projection is characterised by a stepped decorative brick band just below eaves level. The evidence for fenestration suggests the possibility of more than one 16th-century phase. The 1823 watercolour depicts a number of what appear to be stone three-light mullioned windows on the east elevation, including one on each of three levels in the stair projection.3 All of these have been lost in later alterations and the surrounds removed. An original first-floor window (now blocked) remains in situ in the surviving fragment of the east wall. It has a chamfered brick surround. The brick west jamb of a second first-floor window survives in

³ The original, entitled 'The Vetchery belonging to the Abbey of Spalding', is at the Spalding Gentlemen's Society.

the south wall of the stair projection.

It is possible that the added north bay extended westwards in the form of a cross-wing. The 16th century fabric of the west wall extends only about a metre and a half north of the medieval building, and terminates at a straight joint which steps back to the south low down, as though respecting a plinth returning westwards. The position of this return is surprising, however, since it would imply that the lost part of the cross-wing was narrower than the surviving bay.

The extent and disposition of the accommodation in this phase point to a house of some distinction. The original entrance into the central vaulted bay appears to have been replaced or supplemented at this time by a doorway (now a window) further north in the west wall, opening onto the stack. This suggests the likelihood that the added north bay or wing contained the highest status rooms, including a parlour and heated chambers on two floors, while the rebuilt north bay of the vaulted building functioned as a housebody. Both the parlour and the housebody are spanned by chamfered axial beams which are structurally dependent upon, and contemporary with, the stack. The two remaining vaulted bays seem to have been retained as service accommodation, the large fireplace already noted in the east wall serving a large kitchen. A single-light window in the south gable is an insertion probably of late 16th or early 17th century date. The stone surround has a hollow chamfer, rebate and ovolo moulding, and contrasts with the brick surround of the only window clearly contemporary with the late 16th century rebuilding. A large blocked opening in the west wall of the southern bay, spanned by a chamfered timber lintel internally, may also be contemporary.

Later Developments

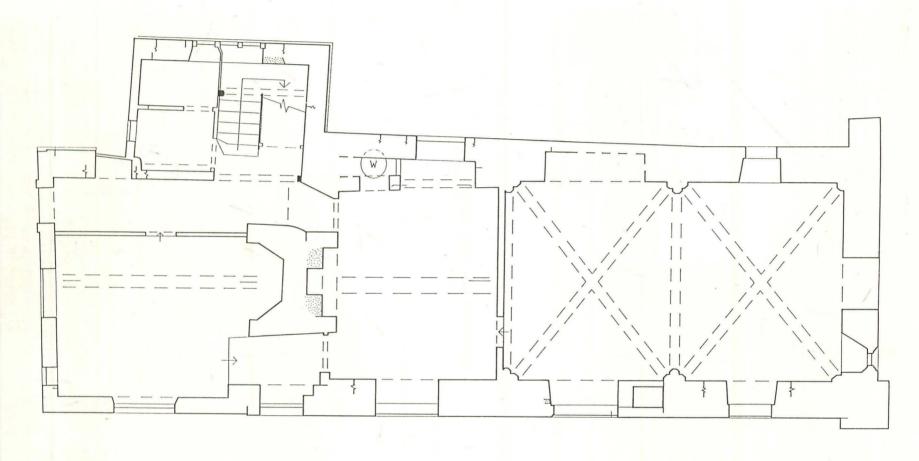
Probably in the mid to late 19th century (by which time the building was functioning as a farmhouse) the north gable and most of the west wall of the added north bay were rebuilt. This appears to have been accompanied by the refenestration of the west elevation, which retains a number of sash windows of this date. The shouldered stack on the east elevation was dismantled and replaced by a smaller stack rising from the wall thickness, and serving a small contemporary first-floor fireplace in addition to the earlier ground-floor one. The east gable of the stair projection also appears to have been partially rebuilt at this date, involving the loss of the mullioned windows, and the southern vaulted bay was reduced in height to a single storey.

In 1936 the Land Settlement Association established a colony at Low Fulney for the resettlement of unemployed people on smallholdings. Thornholm Grange was acquired as an office building. A Numerous windows, and a number of other features, were inserted or altered at this time, and are characterised by the use of rusticated fletton bricks and tile-

⁴ Neil R Wright, Spalding: An Industrial History (Spalding, 1973), 27.

nib decoration.

Visited by Robert Hook, Adam Menuge & Keith Findlater May 1991 Report and plan: Adam Menuge Large-format photography: Keith Findlater



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

THORNHOLME GRANGE Low Fulney Spalding Lincolnshire







Surveyed: May 1991 Drawn scale: 1:50

1 of 1 Drawing no:

NGR: TF 2712 2235 39821

NBR No:



View from the south-east, showing the buttressed south bay

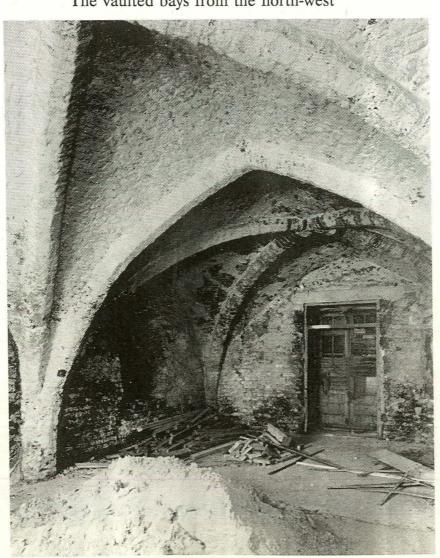
View from the south-west

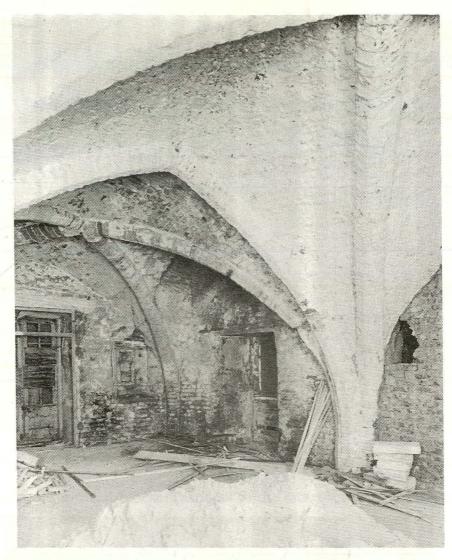




View from the north-east

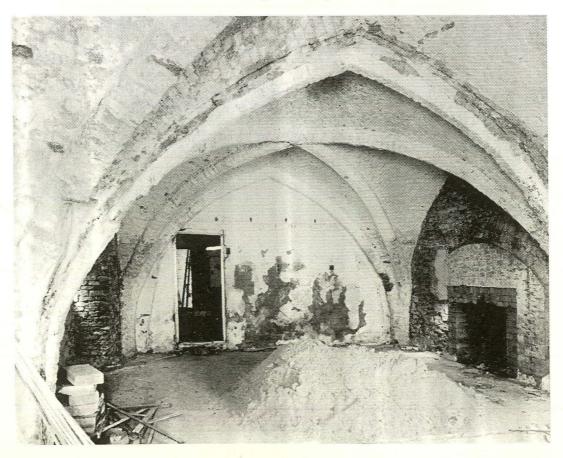
The vaulted bays from the north-west





The vaulted bays from the north-east

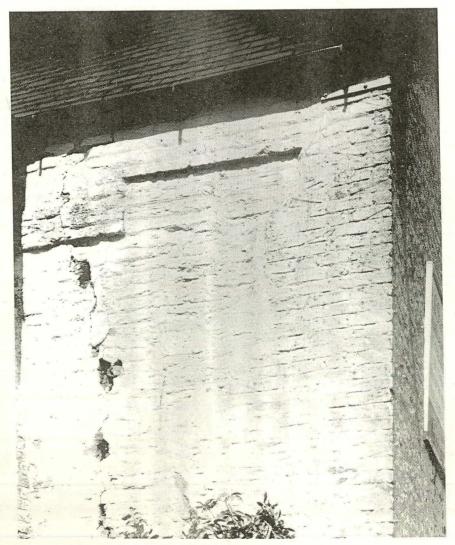
From the south-west, showing the fireplace in the central bay





Brickwork in the vaulted bays, showing sintered and glazed bricks

Eaves decoration and blocked window of the late 16th-century rebuilding





The ground floor of the formerly vaulted north bay from the south-west, showing the inserted stack and ceiling

The inserted stack at first-floor level, from the north-east





The inserted stack at first-floor level, from the south-west Blocked attic-floor fireplace, from the north-west





The higher first-floor level over the central vaulted bay, from the northwest

