

49 Swan Street, Sible Hedingham, Essex. CO9 3RA.
Description and analysis of the timber-framed house. Surveyed 03 02 2014.

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2006 Google earth. Location of 49 Swan Street in Sible Hedingham.



2006 Google earth. Detail of the site showing the building under study.

Location.

49 Swan Street is located to the north of Swan Street opposite the junction with Alderford Street in the centre of Sible Hedingham, Essex. CO9 3RA. The land to the rear rises up rapidly creating a terraced garden. Listing NGR: TL7826833740.

Listing



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© Mr Frank Swift 2001.

IoE Number: 409089. Location: 49 SWAN STREET (west side) SIBLE HEDINGHAM, BRAINTREE, ESSEX. Photographer: Mr Frank Swift . Date Photographed: 21 August 2001.
Date listed: 07 August 1952. Date of last amendment: 15 October 1984. Grade II.

TL 7833 SIBLE HEDINGHAM SWAN STREET (West Side). 11/313 No. 49
(Formerly listed as house 21 6 62 north of The Swan Inn) . GV II.

House. Early C16 with later alterations. Exposed timber frame with plaster infill. Red plain tiled roof. Off centre left red brick chimney stack with moulding to base and three octagonal shafts. Two storeys and attics. Long wall jetty with moulded bressumer and six brackets. Three window range of small paned vertically sliding sashes with a smaller similar window to ground floor right. C20 single storey entrance porch to left return with red pantiled roof and board door, approached by steps. Six bays. Moulded and stop chamfered ceiling and bridging joists. Similar wall plates to central and left rooms. Inglenook back to back fireplace with stop chamfered straight beam over. Jowled storey posts. Two armed simple crown post roof. Arched braces to tie beams. Diamond mullion window. Various shutter grooves and mullion stops remain. Three rows of augered holes to left attic wall. RCHM 12.

Listing NGR: TL7826833740

Scope of this Report

49 Swan Street, Sible Hedingham has recently been purchased after the death of the previous occupant who lived in the house from the 1960's. The house has been sorely neglected and the interior subjected to several abandoned alterations. The current owner wishes to repair the house, reverse many of the random acts of dismantling and to convert the house into two dwellings. Prior to the 1960's the house was three dwellings with attached shops and buildings.

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This report records the fabric and analyses the building to EH/RCHME Level 3 to inform the proposed works and mitigate any necessary changes to restore the building. The building is a prominent landmark in the village and the current owner Mr Brian Day aims to sensitively repair the building to maintain its current appearance.

Description – External



Looking N down the hill towards 49 Swan Street mimicking the view from many historic photos.

General Description

49 Swan Street is a long-wall jetty house overlooking the curve in the road with exposed close studding on the roadside facade. The other walls are plastered over with a mixture of C19th and MC20th lime and cement render. In places the earlier scratch coats are visible. The house stands on a brick plinth. The rear of the house has a number of disjointed outshots some of which contain C19th brickwork. Most of the windows are flush fitted unhorned sash windows originally with small panes indicating they are C18th or EC19th.



The eastern elevation onto the road. The sash windows have been altered in the M-LC19th.

Eastern Elevation

The house presents a long wall jettied façade onto the main road and faces down Alderford Street, another main artery that leads to the water mill. The house is positioned for maximum exposure from any direction. The framing is of axe finished close studded oak infilled with wattle and daub and other more modern finishes. Some of the studs are recent, marked by a bandsaw and date to the conversion of the house in the 1960's to a single dwelling. There was a doorway at the southern end and another in the 3rd bay from the north (behind the telephone pole in the photograph).

There are two sets of matched sash windows set in the position of earlier openings but with deeper frames. The upper windows were originally 10/10 but they have been altered to resemble margin glazed upper sashes with larger lower panes. The lower windows were originally 15/15 sashes but have been altered in the same way. This would have been done in the C19th. There is one smaller 8/8 sash in the northernmost bay which appears unmolested but plans show this was put in post 1966.

The studwork has mortices for oriel windows in place of the large sashes on the ground floor which would have afforded a view up and down the road.

The roof is of small clay pegtiles and there is a three flue chimney stack (described later). The frame is raised on a plinth of red 60x110x240-50mm red bricks as a precaution against the damp. Close by is a large culverted stream that passes between the house and the Swan Inn under the main road. Historic mapping shows it once flowed over the road. The stream itself is immortalised in the story of 'Dummy' a mute tramp who was accused of witchcraft in 1863 and was thrown repeatedly into the stream. (See Appendix 1).



Detail of the bressummer and jetty brackets on the NE corner.

The bressummer for the jetty is moulded and is supported on small badly eroded brackets which all appear to be replacements (which is not uncommon). On the NE corner there are a number of mortices and chamfered rebates to indicate that other structures were attached in the past. Looking up at the jetty the underside of the floorboards can be seen scratch-coated with lime mortar.



Looking at the underside of the jetty. Note the scratch coated lime render.



The northern elevation.

Northern Elevation

The northern elevation has the flank of the original house and the side of a later outshot. Both have been finished in a cementitious render with bell drip courses over the windows and plain pargetted fields. The windows are LC20th casements with leaded lights and almost certainly came from the Rippers (later Premdor) factory just down the road.



Detail of the rear outshot.



The rear of the house is the western elevation. Looking NE.

Western Elevation

The western elevation is made up of a series of outshots from the original frame which is exposed above. The northernmost outshot contains the Laundry and is built of red 65x110x225-230mm red bricks pointed in grey cement. The exposed plinth is made of Flettons. The brickwork is M-LC20th in style. Laid in stretcher bond there are no closer bricks to the quoins or openings. The roof is laid with pantiles and had painted metal rainwater goods. There is a C19th style red brick chimney stack repointed in grey cement but bonded with lime mortar.



Detail of the Laundry outshot.



The series of outshots have older brickwork sections.

Adjacent to the Laundry is a long outshot ranged against the back of the house under a shallow pitched grey slated roof. This was erected during the 1960's works but also contains short sections of older red brickwork set in lime mortar. Above the roofline is a small stair-tower with two modern casement windows that match those on the ground floor. These large pane casements again probably came from Rippers factory.



Sample of a section of brickwork adjacent to the Laundry.

The walls of the outshot are constructed of handmade bricks and many have been reused in the newer sections. The older ones are laid in Flemish bond in a gravel rich greyish lime mortar and the quoins are finished with queen closer bricks. The design of the brickwork is organic with one outshot sprung off another. The bricks are undoubtedly from the village brickworks which proliferated in the C19th.



Detail of the central section of the rear of the house.

A small section of the close studded frame is visible above the outshots. There are two horizontally sliding sash windows (often called Yorkshire sashes) and a blanked off mullioned window. While the 6/6 window looks authentic the other appears to be a large pane sash lain on its side. It was not until the 1920's that windows incorporated landscape oriented panes.



Detail of the stair-tower and C20th French windows. Looking SE.



The southern elevation.

Southern Elevation

The southern elevation maximises the natural light and has windows for both floors and the attic room. The windows are E- MC20th leaded light casements. The wall is rendered in lath and plaster which photographs shows was undertaken by Mr Brooks post 1966.



Detail of the rear outshot built by Mr Brooks.



Detail of the C19th chimney.



Detail of the main stack.

The House has two substantial brick chimney stacks. That to the rear, now in the Laundry is of red 65x110x225mm red bricks set in lime mortar and of a pattern common in the C19th. It retains a single EC20th cannon barrel type chimney pot. The main stack has three axial linked octagonal shafts of thin red and purple bricks heavily buttered with grey cement. Originally they would have been taller with decorative caps but they have been rebuilt in the LC20th.



Looking down to the house from the terraced garden.



The rear of the garage and workshop. Looking E.

Close to the house is a small clapboard, timber-framed garage with a side annex for a workshop. This was erected in the 1960's or later (map evidence) and is of no historic interest.

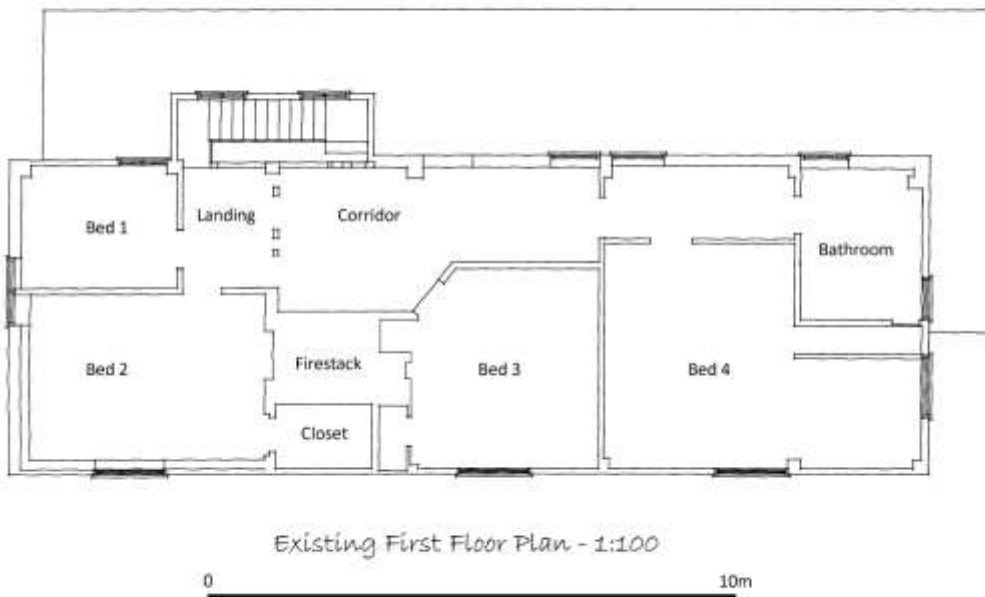
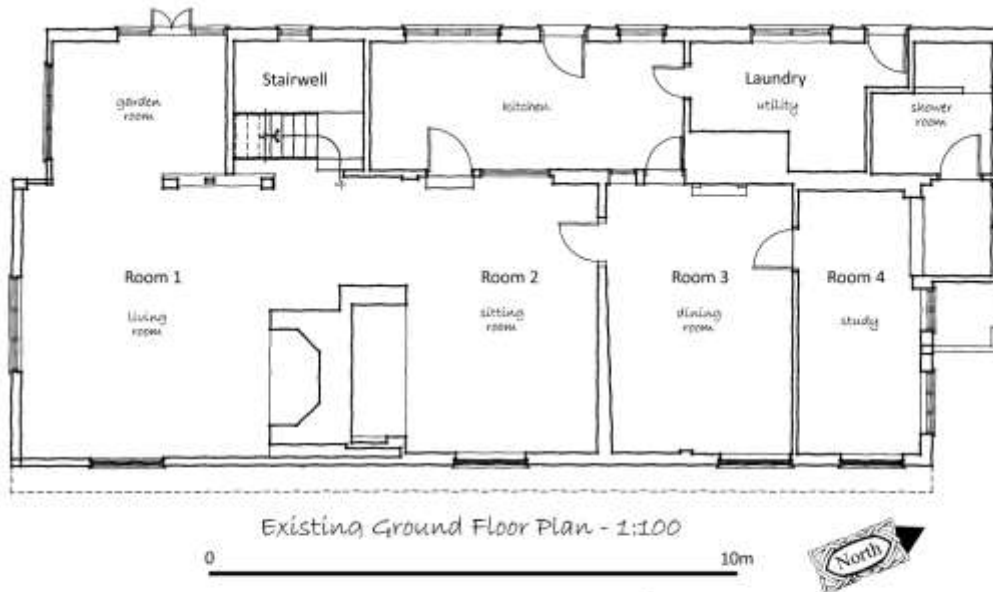


The front of the garage.



The rear of the garage block built up on the terrace. Looking NE.

There is a double garage built up on the terrace that now seems to serve the house behind. The author remembers this being built about 10 years ago much to the annoyance of many as apparently it did not have planning permission at the time.



Floor plan of the house naming the rooms.

Description - Internal



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Room 1 looking NW. Note the two phases of firestack.

Room 1 - Living Room.

Room 1 displays the remains of the original timber-frame in each wall and houses a large firestack in the NE corner. The frame is correctly pegged and framed with axe finished close studwork of 6.5-7in x 3.5x4in oak studs set at 16in centres. The northern dividing wall has been removed and the sawn off mortices indicate this was done quite some time ago.

In the SE wall, facing the roadside, is a large section of rebuilt wall adjacent to the firestack. Close inspection shows the top-plate is not pegged here and the sole plate is a later insertion. The studs are a modern infill using battens and EML (Expanded Metal Lath) concrete render. It is likely that originally there was an entrance porch.

Looking down the side of the firestack it can be seen that it has been plastered and lime-washed which would not have been possible when the stud wall was in place. In contrast the second firestack, opening into Room Two, has a ragged unfinished construction where it was evidently built after the stud wall was put in place. The lower part of the firestack in Room 1 is built of 60x110x240-50mm orange and purple handmade bricks with creased faces and soft arrises set in thick (20mm) sandy lime mortar. The bressummer is 8ft long and 1ft deep by 8in wide. Above the bressummer the brickwork is composed of 2in Tudor style red bricks, 50x100x240mm with creased faces and soft arrises. The wall has been limewashed and there are traces of a black painted design, in places using the orange of the brickwork to accentuate the now effaced pattern.



The painted firebreast of the firestack in Room 1.



The timber-framed floor above the fireplace. Looking NNW.

The ceiling above the fireplace has been altered to install a small hearth for the bedroom above. The original trimmer beam, moulded on only one side remains and other dissimilar joists have been placed in to support the granite hearth that has been further packed with roof tiles. One is a shortened original moulded joist but another is clearly a reused stud with wattle darts in its flank.



Looking S from the firestack at the sumptuously moulded ceiling.

The original ceiling is sumptuously moulded with 1ft square deeply moulded transverse main joists and 9in square bridging joists. The common joists are 6inx5in deep at 15in centres and roll moulded with runout stops. There are no visible carpenter's marks so it is likely they are on the upper surface. The floorboards are of 10in wide machined pine.



The area besides the two firestacks has a stair-trap later filled in.



Looking N, up at the ceiling besides the firestacks.

The dividing partition wall between Room 1 and Room 2 has had its studs sawn off but previously to that the moulded face of the main transverse joist has been hacked back. This would have been done in the Georgian era to allow lath and plaster finishes to be added to the stud walls and ceilings. The area created has a trimmer beam for a stair trap which has been later filled back in. The earlier floor is rebuilt from original wall studs (denoted by wattle darts) and the older section has oak floorboards while the later section has narrow pine joists and pine floorboards. One reused stud is painted in a similar way to the firebreast and is also chamfered as a door jamb would be.



Wall painting on a door jamb reused in the ceiling. Looking E.



Looking S in Room 2 at the later fireplace.

Room 2 – Sitting Room

The walls of Room 2 are concealed inside by lath and plaster but the ceiling structure is displayed and is a continuance of that in Room 1 and has the same features and dimensions. Again the room is dominated by a large brick firestack that is later and larger than the other. The bressummer is 10ft long by 11in deep and 9in wide and chamfered on the inner face. The fireplace is 8x4x5ft high and incorporates a wooded inglenook seat which appears original. The stack is built of orange and purple 60x110x240-50mm handmade bricks which have been repointed in modern grey cement.

The firestack although wider in the room has a chimney of the same size as the other that cants inwards so that the framed ceiling did have to be cut through. The NW flank has been lime plastered but the other end, as mentioned is unpointed and unplastered. It seems likely it has been built in the original entrance passage.



The bressummer has apotropaic marks and taper burns.

The bressummer has a number of apotropaic marks in the form of W or IXI and several taper burn marks. At the NW end (RHS) there are holes drilled for a turning mechanism.



Room 3 looking SE towards the Kitchen.

Room 3 – Dining Room.

Room 3 has lath and plastered and wallpapered walls with some modern wainscoting. There is a small EC20th brick fireplace that vents into the C19th chimney on the back of the house. The exposed ceiling show heavy, plain 6-7in wide joists set at 16-17in centres. The larger axial joist is 10in square and chamfered. The paucity of detail suggests this is the service end of the house. There is a former blocked doorway in the front wall.



Looking E at a former blocked doorway.



Looking E in Room 4. The walls have been much altered.



Looking NW in Room 4.

Room 4 – Study

The frame is exposed in the walls in Room 4 and it has been much altered and abused. There is a doorway with a pegged lintel but the jamb is clearly reused.



The pegged doorway looking into Room 3. Note the tapered door jamb.

Only half of the 6-7in studs appear correctly seated and there is a series of fixture holes that run across for shelves or counters. The doorway has been inserted or altered. The lintel has no peg for a central stud and the jamb has been radically sawn down. There are applied timbers to hold in the Rockwool insulation which is also held in with fencing wire strung across. The wall has been rebuilt in the LC20th and it appears there were two phases of doorway at the other end of the partition wall. There are some burn marks which appear electrical.



The mortice for the corner brace.



The doorway into the extension.

The principal corner post has a slot mortice for a curving brace set to the back of the post. This indicates the front wall has been rebuilt to house the sash window. There is a doorway broken through the outer wall to connect to a small lobby to access the downstairs shower room. The studs have been removed and a nailed timber bracket put in place. Like much of the house this area has been left unfinished.



The bracket in the Shower Room lobby.



The Shower Room is recently decorated and unfinished.

Room 5 – Shower Room.

The Shower Room is entirely modern in its decor, which is unfinished. Of interest is the oak boarded C18th/C19th style door and a free-standing C19th four panel door.



An early oak door has been used in the Shower Room. In the lobby is a C19th pine door.



Pine doors altered in the LC20th and screwed in place. Room 2/3 and then Room 3/4.

The doors on the ground floor are EC19th pine doors that have been altered with leaded lights. Other four panel doors lie around and it is likely but not certain they came from the house before the C20th renovations took place.



Looking N into the Laundry. The wall is the back of the Shower Room.



Looking SE in the Laundry. The bread oven or copper has been smashed out.

The Laundry is housed in the rear extension and from inside the roof can be seen to be recent. The walls are panelled with hardboard. The brick chimney stack has been hacked back and it is likely that a bread oven or copper was removed.



The Kitchen looking SW.



The Kitchen looking NE.

The Kitchen

The Kitchen is quite modern being a mixture of 1960's improvisation and 1980's fitted units and surfaces.



The rear stairwell and extension are entirely LC20th. Looking W.



Looking upwards from the rear extension at the original frame..

Stairwell and Rear Extension (Garden Room).

The rear extension and stairwell are entirely modern and unfinished. The original frame can be seen on the upper floor. The internal brace can be seen curving down.



Looking upwards towards the Landing. Note the two doorways for previous staircases.



Looking N on the Landing down the corridor. Note the door frame.

The Landing

The Landing has two previous doorways in the outer wall for earlier staircases. The house was once divided into three dwellings so it follows there must have been three staircases.



There are C18th style two panel doors into the southern bedrooms.

The Landing is part of the southernmost bay which originally would have been one open room separated by the firestack and the timber-framed wall from the rest of the house. Timber-framed, lath and plastered walls have been inserted to form two bedrooms each with C18th or EC19th two panel doors. The rest of the corridor still displays the frame.



The NW wall of the house in the corridor. Note the mullioned window and severed brace.



The frame in the SW corner of Bedroom 1.



The frame and two panel door in Bedroom 1.

Bedroom 1

The frame is exposed in Bedroom 1 and the heavy brace of the tie-beam can be seen. Secured with four pegs in the tie-beam and three in the jowled post, there was a series of spandrels on each truss stiffening the frame. A number have been removed causing the frame to rack slightly.



Looking SW in Bedroom 2. Note the window bisected by the inserted wall.



Looking N in Bedroom 2. The hobgrate appears genuine. Note the racked ceiling.

Bedroom 2

Bedroom 2 has authentic C18th or EC19th pine or oak wall panelling painted pink. An earlier scheme visible in the door frame to the closet indicates it was arsenic green. The fireplace is a hobgrate decorated in the Adams style and appears genuine.



Detail of the Adams style fireplace.

The timber fire surround has been altered in the C20th but the plain style would place it in the EC19th. This is the only room in the house that retains any period decor, the others having been stripped of the lath and plaster by the previous owner Mr Brookes.



The closet to the side of the fireplace shows the plastered firestack.

The closet has an earlier, smaller door frame. Inside, the flank of the firestack is plastered and the walls have battens for C19th coat hooks which have all been snapped off. When the fire was lit this little room would have been warm and suitable to keep clothes. Inside the brickwork has been altered to insert the fireplace and poor quality battens applied to support the panelled wall as one build.



The scantling wall forming the corridor. Looking N.



The Landing looking into Bedroom 3 and N down the corridor.

Corridor

Bedrooms 3 and 4 have been created by inserting a scantling studwork partition forming the corridor. This is a common LC18th or EC19th alteration to provide privacy in the rooms. (Scantling is poor quality narrow section timber sometimes just cut from the hedgerow).



Looking NE in Bedroom 3. The walls retain their wattle and daub.



Detail of the wattle and daub panels in the northern wall.

Bedroom 3

The scantling partition is lath and plastered on both sides but the original oak frame is exposed in the northern partition wall and still retains the wattle and daub panels which exhibit their structure. Horizontal ledgers split from branches are wedged in to the darts cut in the flanks of the studs. Vertical riven wattles are wedged in the grooves cut in the top and cill plates and then bound to the ledgers with bark withies. The panel was then packed with daub made from chalky boulder clay dug out of the garden and mixed with chopped straw and other organic material. This was then floated to a smooth finish and scribed with a diamond pattern to receive a lime render.



The fireplace has been altered in the C18th or EC19th.

Over time the wattle panels have shrunk back and it is likely they are the original ones rather than later replacements. The studs do not have nails for later laths and there are several blackened taper burn marks.

By contrast the other end of the room has been rebuilt to incorporate a small bedroom fireplace (that has lost its surround and original grate) and a pair of closets. The whole has been plastered over. The closet doors are C18th in style and have H hinges nailed to the frames.



Detail of the closet door hinges. Old wall paper marked 'Made in England'.

The closets were also wallpapered with Victorian or Edwardian style printed wall paper marked 'Made in England'. The floorboards were also rather loose implying they had been used to hide things and indeed a number of everyday objects were found in the voids.



Looking NE in Bedroom 4. The inserted bathroom is LC20th.



Looking SE in Bedroom 4.

Like the other bedrooms, Bedroom 4 has been created out of a larger single room of two bays. Today it contains a bathroom fabricated from machined studwork and plywood.



The axial beam and floorboards have mortices for earlier partition wall.

The bathroom was most likely constructed in the 1960's or early 1970's by Mr Brookes and later partly dismantled for redecoration. There is a series of small mortices in the floorboards and two larger ones in the axial joist of the ceiling to indicate the room was previously subdivided into smaller cells. The style of the design indicates this was done in the LC19th or EC20th when the house was divided into three dwellings. The decor of the room, part painted black part original implies the layout was retained at least until Mr Brookes ownership in the 1960's. The unpainted timbers are clearly axe finished and ceilings appear correctly framed.



The original finish of the ceiling timbers. Looking S.



Looking E inside the Bathroom.



Looking W in the Bathroom. The door is homemade LC20th.

Bathroom

The Bathroom is outfitted with sanitary ware common in the 1980's and 90's and can still be purchased today. The racking of the frame is evident in the ceiling.



Looking upwards SE into the South Attic.



Looking N in the South Attic. There is a blocked doorway.

South Attic

There are three attic rooms which were all originally interconnected and all inhabited at some point. Each one has a trimmer beam for a dormer window on the SE side.



Looking SE at the roof structure in the South Attic. Note the trimmer beam for a window.

The roof is a collar purlin roof with a central purlin supported on a king post with two curving braces. In the South Attic the braces have been removed but they remain elsewhere. The collars are side lapped and pegged and the rafters paired and numbered.



Carpenter's marks on the rafters.

The numbers, made with a race knife, are out of order but this is not surprising as the roof has been rebuilt several times. The heavy asphalt membrane shows the house was completely reroofed in the 1960's to 1980's and so most likely when Mr Brookes renovated the house. A few riven lath remain to show that the roof was also previously tiled.

There is a doorway into the next attic that was blocked up long ago with an inserted waney stud and lath and plaster and there is a short rail nailed to the wall that would have been part of the stair or ladder to get up to the room. Previously this room was lath and plastered throughout but it has all been stripped away. The current window is modern and older photographs indicate that there wasn't one here originally.



Looking S at the blocked doorway into the South Attic. The brickwork is the firestack.



The SE side of the firestack. Note the two builds.

Firestack

The two builds of the firestack can be seen in the bay between the attics. Also noted was the scratch coated wattle panels which are likely original to the house.



Looking N in the Central Attic. The lath and plaster has failed due to rusty nails.



Looking S in the Central Attic at the firestack and entrance landing.

Central Attic

The roof construction is consistent throughout. There is a small landing to allow access to both attics and a closet door into the void beside the firestack.



Looking S in the North Attic.



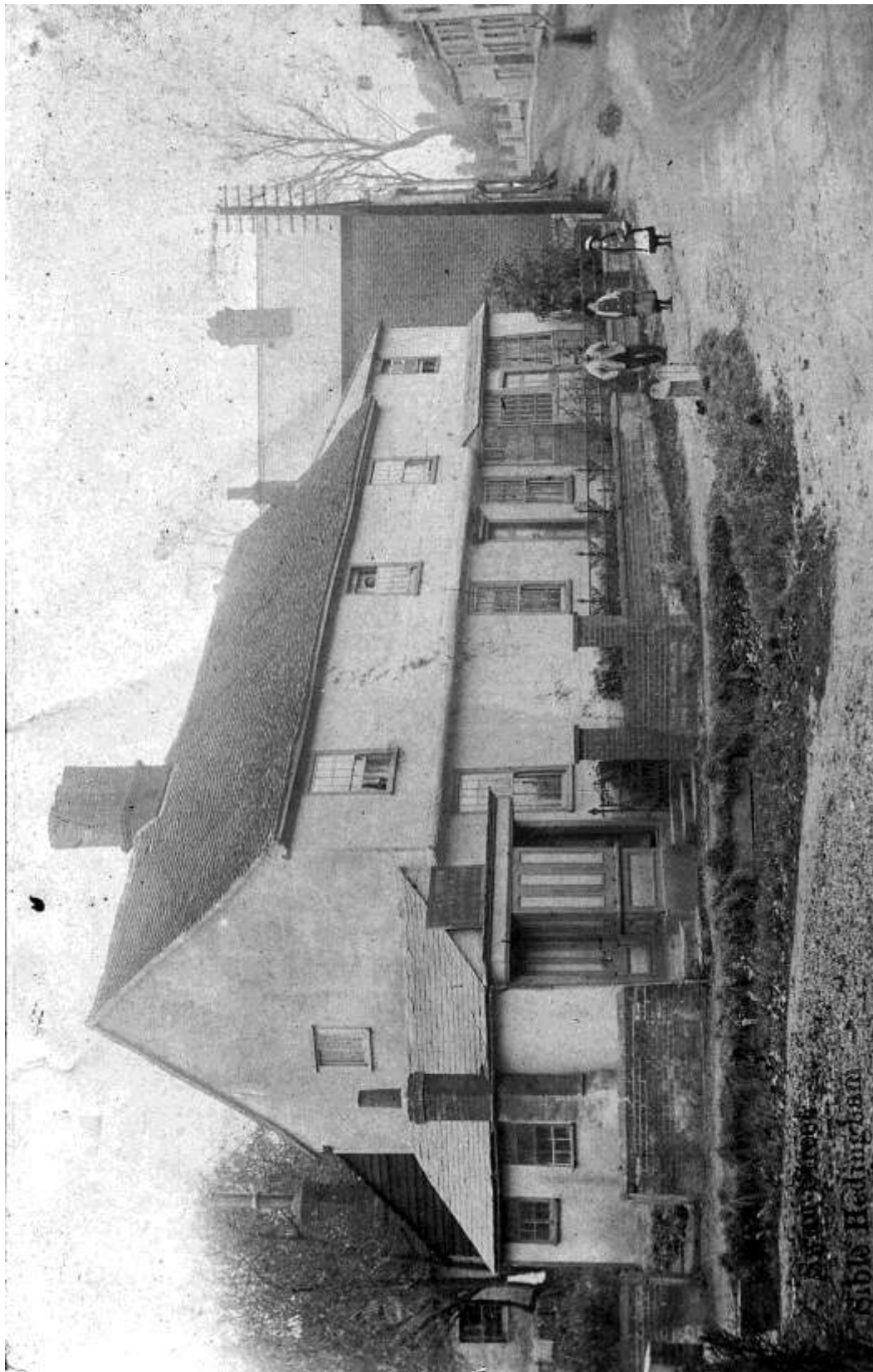
Looking N in the North Attic. Note the framing for a dormer window.

The North Attic

The North Attic is the most complete and originally had a dormer window and a window in the gable end. It must have been accessed from the north end through the current bathroom.

Historical Photographs

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49 Swan Street circa 1910. Looking NE.



EC20th. Note the brick house that was connected to 49 Swan Street.

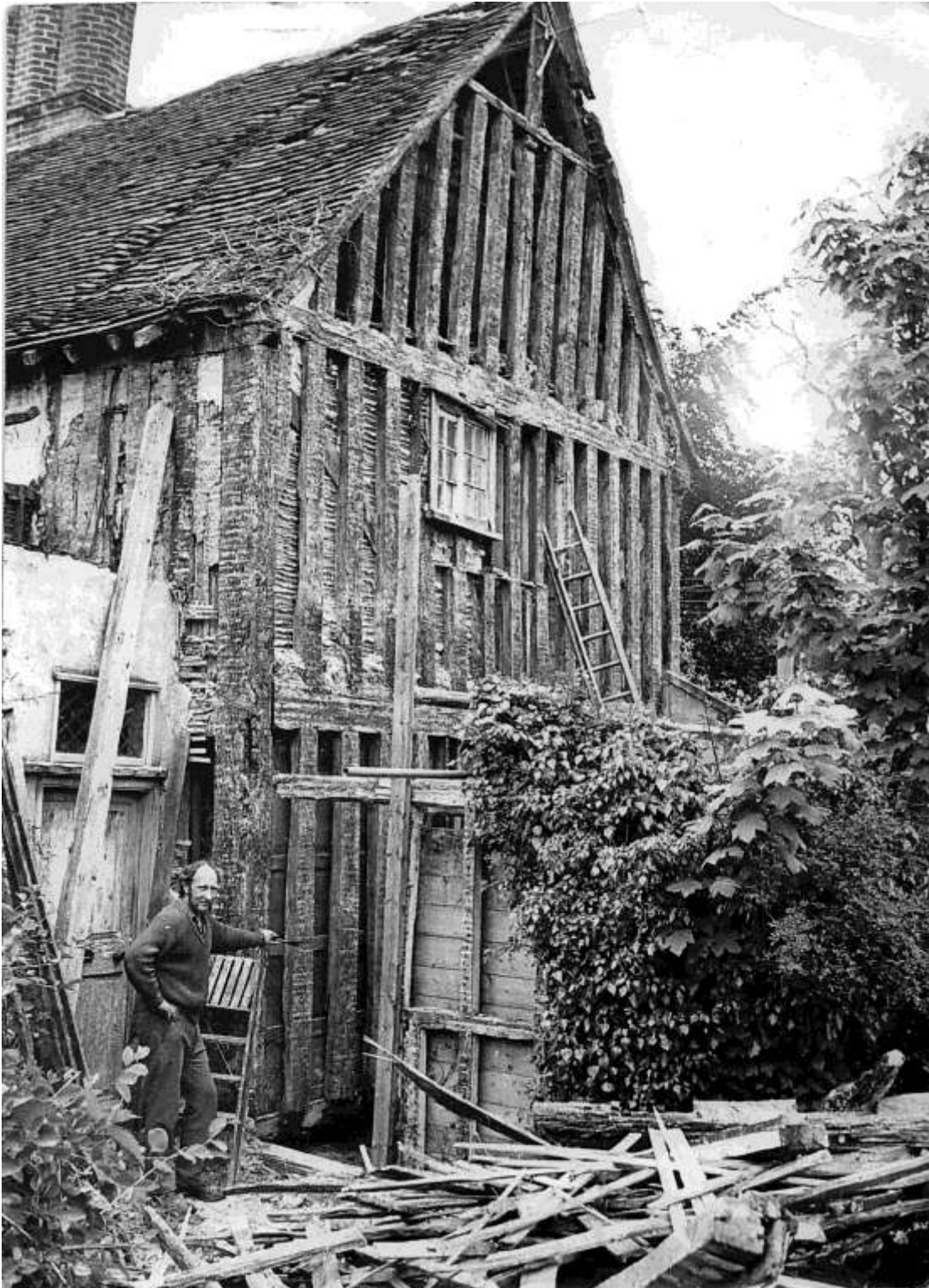


1955. Photograph showing the shop front and an invalid carriage.

A photograph of 1955 shows a small shop front added to the end of the building. Outside is the invalid carriage that belonged to the shoemaker who worked there. There is also another front entrance in the middle of the building.



1966. The house shortly before it was sold to Mr Brookes.



1967. Mr Brookes dismantling the old bookmakers' shop at the southern end of the house.

Topographical Survey from Maps



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1777 Chapman and Andre's Map of Essex.

49 Swan Street is clearly shown in position to the north of 'Dummy's' brook that runs across the road.



1840 Tithe Award Map. ERO D/CT 174B.

In 1840, 49 Swan Street is shown as an L-shaped building in Plot 1212. Owned by George Osborn, it had 6 tenants – William Amos, Benjamin Rule, Stephen Algar, Thomas Garrod, William Mead and William Osborn.



1876 First Edition Ordnance Survey.

By 1876, 49 Swan Street is shown divided into two equal units with adjacent buildings to the north. The southern unit has an outshot to the rear. The stream is shown as canalised along the length of Alderford Street.



1897 Ordnance Survey

By 1897 the house has been divided into three units and it becomes clearer that there are other outbuildings to the rear which must be situated up on the terrace. Another building, shown as a two storey brick house in photographs, has been built close to the road. A smithy is shown just to the north of the property.



1922 Ordnance Survey

There appears to be little change in plan since 1897. Another outshot has been added to the centre part of the house. The stream has been culvetted under the road.



1954 Ordnance Survey

The rear outbuildings have been removed.



1963 Ordnance Survey.

Between 1954 and 1963 the northern outbuildings were removed. The map also shows a separate cell at the south of the house. This was a shop entrance. At this time there was a shoemaker working in the shop.



2000 Google earth.

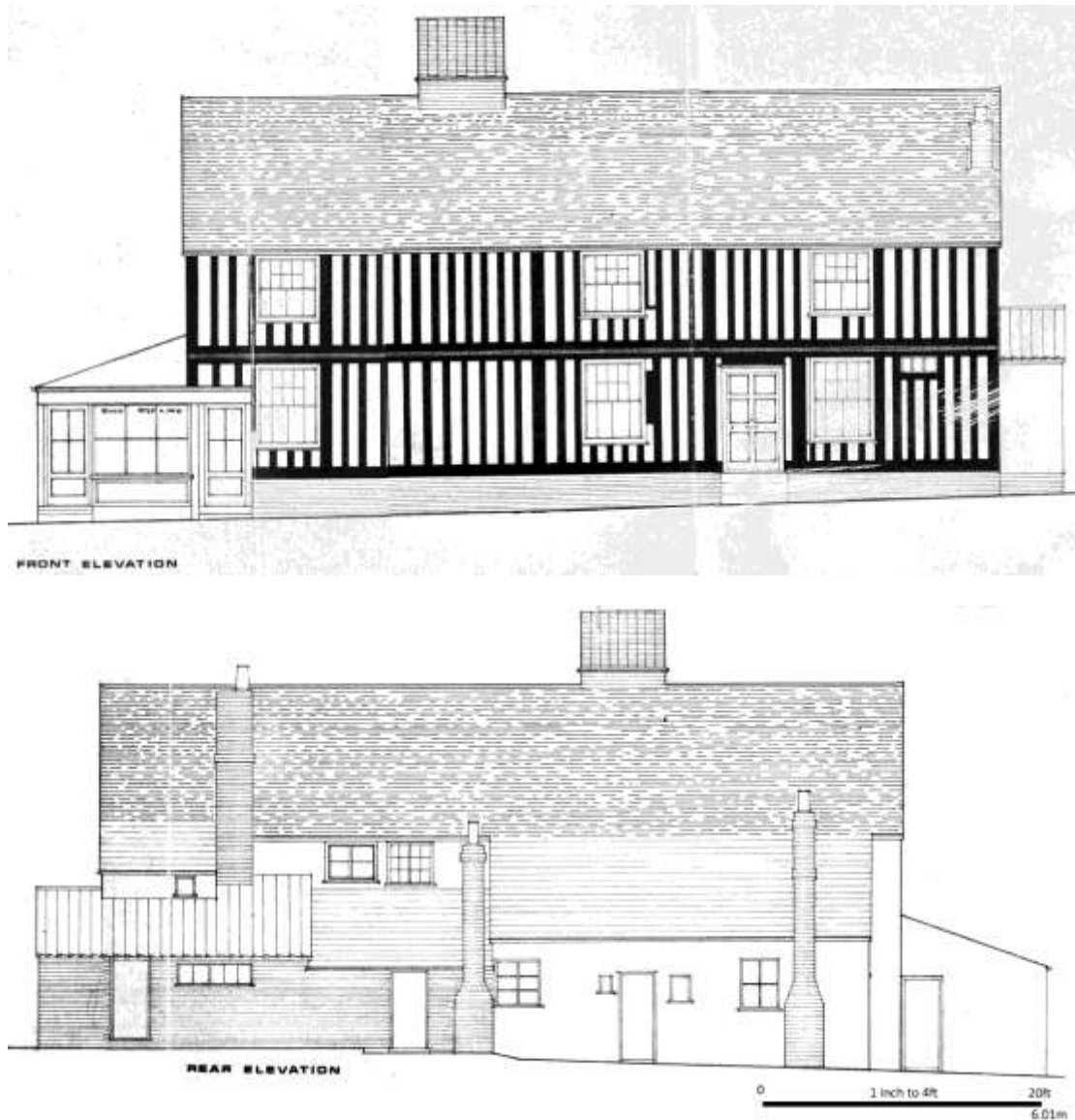


2005 Google earth.



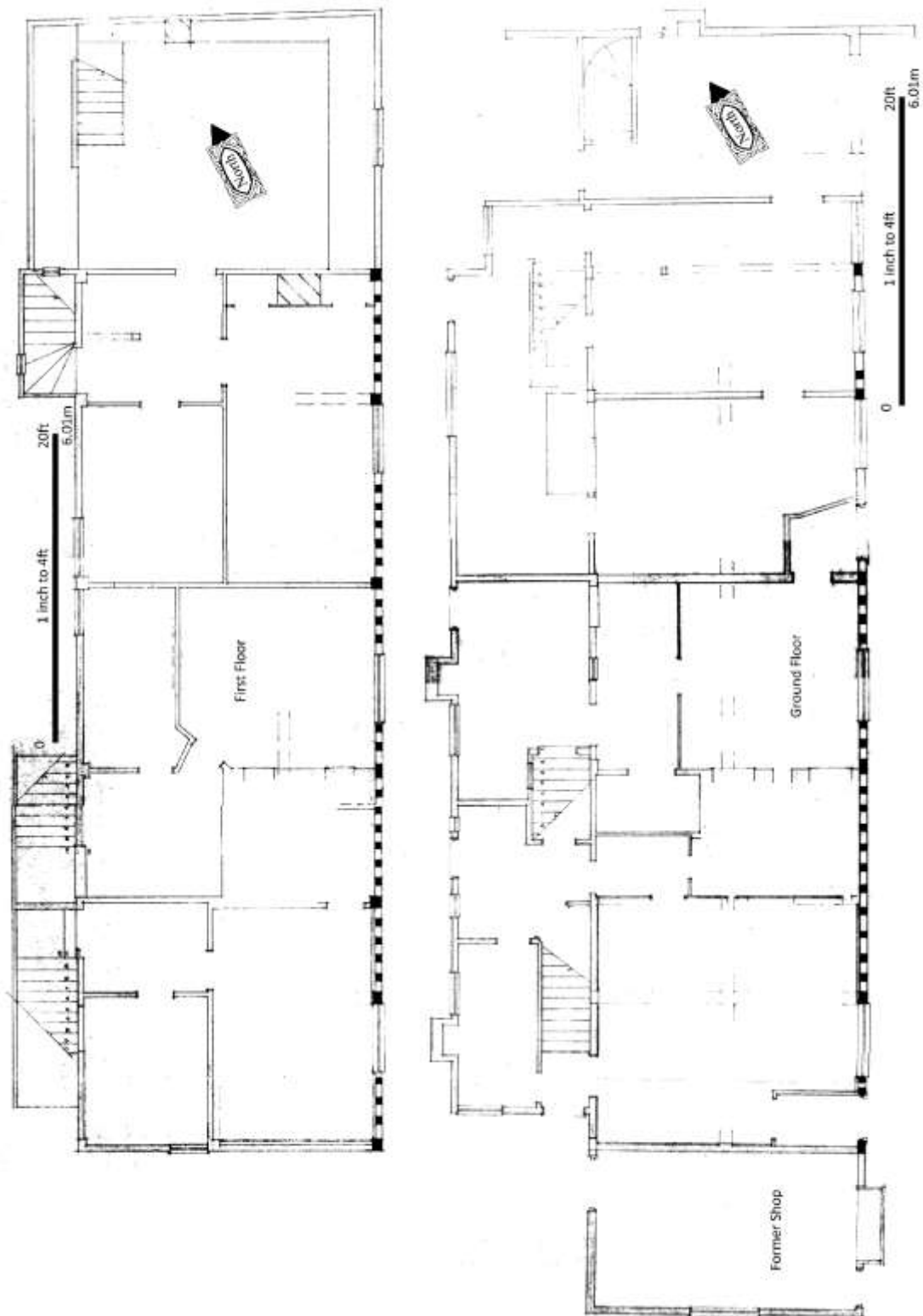
2009 Google earth.

The aerial photographs show the development of the backlands and the appearance of the double garage between 2000 and 2005.



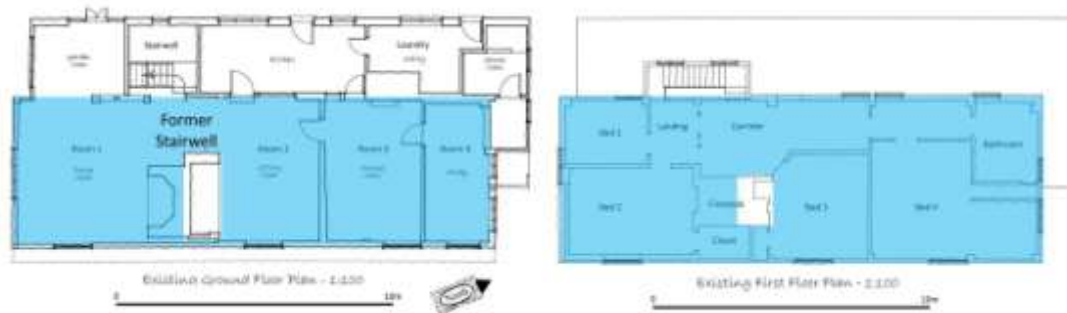
June 1966. Front and rear elevations.

After the fabric survey had been carried out a set of architect's plans made by Alan G Bragg of 20 High Street, Halstead, Essex were handed to the present owner. These show the form of the building before it was altered by Mr Brookes who bought it in that year.



June 1966. Ground and first floor plans by Alan G Bragg, architect.

Phasing and Discussion



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Phase 1 C16th. Circa AD1550. Original build.

The house is a long-walled jettied house of a common type that became very popular in the middle of the C16th. It was built as a prestige building on a commanding site at the junction of the major roads at the time and would have been ideally placed as an inn. Papers belonging to the present owner show that the house was willed as early as 1694 when it belonged to Henry Bateman. (Owner –pers comm).

The building has a solid frame of axe finished oak close studding, designed for external display but with internally trenched curving walls braces at the storey posts. The windows were originally mullioned on the first floor and oriel on the ground floor. The mortices for the frames are easily seen. There remains a single wrought iron window frame with diamond quarries and lead comes that must be the original design.

The building has 5 bays of varying widths allowing for two grand living rooms on the ground floor, either side of the firestack which is set in its own narrower bay. The other two bays form the service end.

The brickwork and framing indicates the firestack was originally only half its present size and open to the SW side only. Again this is a common configuration which would have allowed entrance from the front of the house into a passage that passes behind the heated brick wall of the fireplace. Though much rebuilt below the 8ft long bressummer, the upper section is made of 2in 'Tudor' bricks that have been lime-washed and then decorated with ornate black painted designs which with the eye of faith could represent human figures but are more likely intricate foliage as was favoured at the time. The bressummer itself is marked with Marian symbols and taper burns.

There is evidence that the walls were also decorated where a stud still bearing a pattern has been reused to close up the original stair trap just NE of the firestack. The studwork, now removed, suggests that Room 1 was connected through a doorway that ran beneath the stairs to the first floor. Room 1 was a private, high end room, well decorated with wall paintings and richly moulded ceiling beams. It also had a commanding view along the main road and down Alderford Street.

Room 2 was a reception room and similarly grand, with moulded ceiling beams and designed to impress. It is likely there was a spere's screen but there remains no evidence for this. Rooms 3 and 4 were service rooms and lack ornamentation with plain ceiling beams and lots of fixture holes to suggest shelves and cabinets attached to the walls.

The first floor was boarded with up to 13in wide oak boards, and curiously in Bedroom 3 they were run parallel to the common joists. While this is not particularly uncommon it is peculiar that only one room should be like this while the others are more conventional.

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It is likely there was a front porch to form a lobby. The front wall, adjacent to the firestack has been infilled with a new sole plate and more recent studs that are not pegged into the oak frame. This would also account for why the firestack is smoothed and plastered at this point. The owner reports finding several artefacts under the floor just here and entrances are popular places to lose small items such as coins and pins.



Phase 2. Circa 1600-40. Insertion of a second firestack.

Not so very long in the history of the house after it was built the second firestack was put in. It is significantly larger than the first and built of similar bricks to a similar inglenook design. Of interest is the fact that the brickwork against the south wall is ragged and not pointed, indicating it was built against the wall. This contrasts with the smoothly finished and plastered face of the other stack.

The fireplace incorporates a wooden inglenook seat which appears correct and a huge 10ft long bressummer with apotropaic marks and deep taper burns. Both fireplaces narrow quite dramatically and it seems unlikely that the upper rooms had their own fireplaces at this time unless they were dismantled later. Often the heated brickwork served as a storage heater.

The brickwork of the second fireplace has been completely repointed and repaired in sections in the LC20th. The bricks are 60x110x240-50mm in dimension and correspond with the lower section of the other fireplace. It may have been a general rebuild took place at the time.

Dating hand-made bricks of this period is difficult, more so because Sible Hedingham was a brick making district. The earlier stack has 'Tudor' style 2in thick (50mm) as well as the later 60mm thick bricks. A good estimate taking into account the other typological details of the second fireplace would be 1600-1640 but it could be later.



Phase 3. Circa but Pre 1777. New rooms and fireplaces. Stairtower.

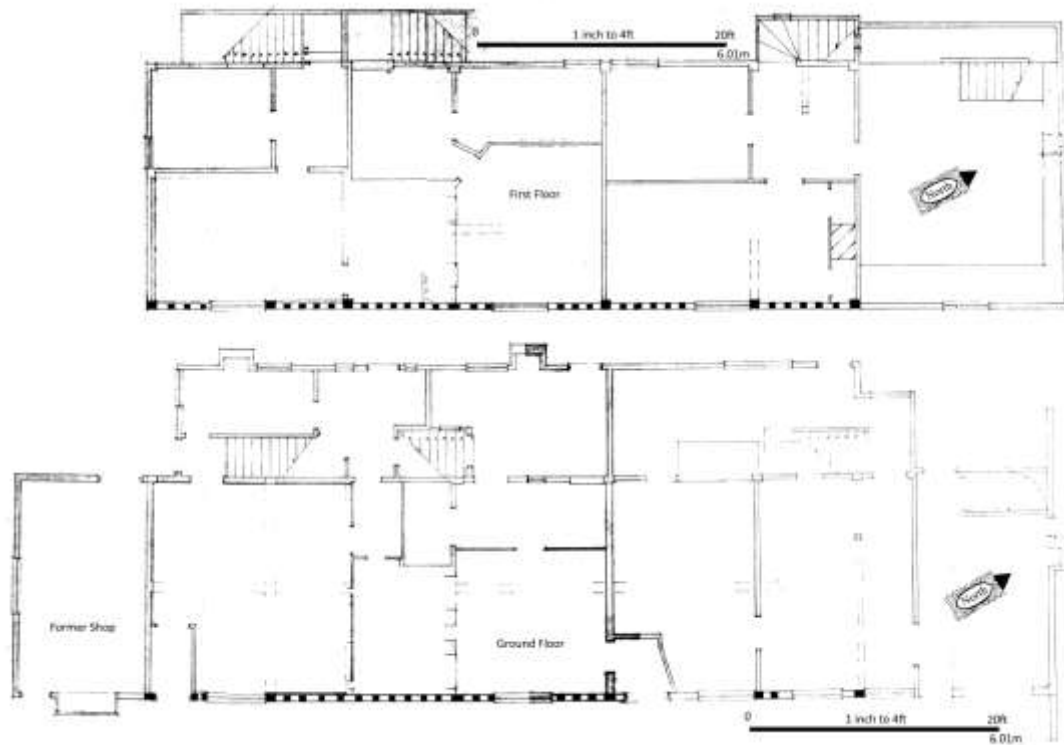
It is very unlikely that the house stood still between the C17th and C19th centuries but most of the evidence for development has been effaced. It is evident however, that the house underwent a major renovation near the end of the C18th when all the windows were replaced with unhorned sash windows and the interiors lath and plastered throughout to the fashion of the day. Most of these finishes have been removed but the ceilings remain in the attic rooms which would have been inserted at this time and had dormer windows to the front.

Bedroom 2 retains the most complete glimpse into this phase of activity. The walls are panelled with good quality oak or softwood panels (currently painted over) and an Adams style fireplace has been revealed in the uncovered fireplace.

The rear of the house was enlarged to incorporate service rooms and stair towers. By this time the original staircase had already been removed and a smaller one put in. This intermediate stair was removed and the stair-trap closed with a trimmer beam and narrow joists to form the Corridor. A partition wall was inserted to form a corridor with private rooms off. Previously occupants walked from room to room.

On the ground floor, there is a hand-made bracket supporting the frame in the doorway into the Shower Room lobby. The style and large clout nails suggest this was done at this time.

The Chapman and Andre map of 1777 appears to show the building at its current width with a large extension off the NW corner.



Architect's plan of 1966. Drawn by Alan G Bragg.

Phase 4. EC19th. The house is divided up for tenants.

It is fortunate that we have the architect's plans of 1966, drawn before Mr Brookes made his alterations. Here, we can see the provision for four staircases because the house had been enlarged.

The Tithe Award of 1838 shows that the house was owned by George Osborn and had 6 tenants – William Amos, Benjamin Rule, Stephen Algar, Thomas Garrod, William Mead and William Osborn.

The map evidence shows the house divided into two properties in 1876 and then three by 1897. By 1876 there were also adjacent outbuildings to the north which were again enlarged by 1897 and shown in photographs as a two storey brick building.

The remaining fabric of the outshots can be ascribed to the MC19th and consists of small sections of brickwork and the chimney in the Laundry which has been smashed out in part. The 1966 plan intimates this was done to insert a staircase above it.

On the southern end a scantling timber-framed shop was built by 1876 which was occupied in the C20th by a boot maker. Photographs also show that there was a shop front at the northern end and this can just be seen in the photograph taken in 1910 on page 44.



Phase 5. Post 1966 alterations by Mr Brookes.

The house was acquired by Mr Brookes in 1966 and plans made at that time to remove the outshots and add a rear wing. These plans were given permission but never carried out most likely because of the cost and the loss of the considerable utility offered by the outshots. (Owner –pers comm).

A superb photograph shows Mr Brookes having stripped the southern end of the house and in the midst of dismantling the boot mender shop. How much of the works were completed at that time is difficult to establish. It seems likely that with a young family he would have made the house as habitable and safe as possible.

He must have opened up the old fireplaces and revealed the Adams grate in Bedroom 2. The style of the work and use of cement pointing indicate this was done in the 1960's.

The Kitchen retains some older homemade fixtures but most date to the 1980's. The upstairs bathroom of light studwork and Essex board must also date from then and been upgraded in the 1980's or 1990's.

When Mr Brooke's wife died in the LC20th he lived with his son and between them they set about altering the house on a piecemeal basis with much work undone. Only the Kitchen and three bedrooms 2, 3 and 4 appear little altered while the other rooms have been stripped of their finishes and studwalls removed.

Upon Mr Brooke's death last year the work was abandoned and the house sold.

Significance

49 Swan Street is a significant landmark building first erected in the MC16th. The original frame is still visible although replaced in sections and the windows replaced with Georgian sashes that were later altered in the C19th.

Internally the building has suffered considerable abuse and it is hoped to rectify the partial dismantling and internal changes of layout with a sensitive renovation into two properties which would reflect its status in the MC19th.



Acknowledgements

I am indebted to Brian Day, the current owner for engaging me to record the building.

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Appendix 1.

Bury and Norwich Post. March 15th 1864.

THE HEDINGHAM WITCHCRAFT CASE

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Mr Fowke, a private gentleman from Sible Hedingham and one of the Guardians of the Poor of that parish, brought the case against Emma Smith the wife of a beer house keeper of Ridgewell and Samuel Stammers, a carpenter of Sible Hedingham, charging them with causing the death of an old man called "Dummy" under the following circumstances.

Dummy, who was deaf and dumb and about 80 years of age, had lived in a small mud hut near Sible Hedingham for the last 8 years and had been known in the neighbourhood for about 20 years, but his name and place of birth or his country were never known although he was generally supposed to be a Frenchman. His habits were peculiar and his inability to express himself otherwise than by grotesque gestures and was also very excitable caused him to be regarded by many as possessed of the power of witchcraft.

He was in the habit of travelling about the nearby villages gaining his livelihood by telling fortunes and was often consulted by young people on the locality as to their love affairs.

He usually wore two or three coats the number of which he increased according to the heat of the weather and two or three hats of different descriptions at the same time and was always accompanied by three or four small dogs.

He seems to have been an inoffensive old man and was treated with great kindness by the good families of the neighbourhood and as a source of merriment by the youthful and the idle.

Among the places the old man went to was the village of Ridgewell, a few miles distance of Hedingham and there he made the acquaintance of the prisoner Smith, at the beerhouse of her husband.

On the occasion of one of these trips to Ridgewell, the poor old man wanted to sleep at the prisoner's house and on her refusing he stroked his stick and used other threatening signs to signify his displeasure at her refusal.

Soon after this the prisoner Emma Smith became ill and was reduced to a low nervous condition and at once expressed her conviction that she had been bewitched by poor old Dummy and that she would not recover until she had induced him to remove the spell from her. She made several applications to him without effect and at last while labouring under great mental and nervous excitement she went from her home at Ridgewell to Sible Hedingham on the evening of the 3rd of August. 1863, and she met old Dummy at the Swan public house about a quarter of a mile from Dummy's hut.

They remained there for some time, she endeavouring to persuade him to go to Ridgewell with her and to sleep at her house and offering him three sovereigns to do so. Dummy

however refused to do so and drew his fingers across his throat implying that he was afraid of having his throat cut.

As soon as it became known that a woman from Ridgewell who had been bewitched by old Dummy was at the Swan, a great number of villagers flocked to see her and the Swan soon became a scene of riot and confusion and the old man was pulled and danced about, falling once or twice violently to the ground.

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The prisoner Smith still continued to urge the old man to go home with her, repeating she would give him three sovereigns and treat him well as she had been in a bad state for nine or ten months and that she was bewitched. After the closing of the Swan the parties moved outside with the prisoner Smith standing by the side of Dummy declaring that he should go home with her.

She then tore the old man's coat and struck him several times over the arms and the shoulders with a stick and kicked him and dragged him down to a little brook near the Swan and said "you old devil you served me out, now I will serve you out".

Smith then shoved him into the brook and when he was getting out the other side she went round over a little bridge and the other prisoner, Stammers, went through the brook and they pushed him back into the brook. He succeeded in getting out and went and sat down on a stone heap until the two prisoners dragged him towards the brook, one taking hold of him under the armpits and the other by the legs they threw him into the brook at a point where the brook is dammed up and was of some little depth, he remained struggling until one of the villagers called out that "If someone did not take the old man out he would die in a minute," the prisoner Stammers jumped into the water and pulled him out.

He lay on the grass for some time in a very exhausted state, wet and muddy, they eventually led him home to his miserable little hut where he lay in that condition in his wet clothes all night.

The only direct evidence of the throwing into the brook by the two prisoners was that of a little girl named Eva Henrietta Garrad, who is about ten years of age and who gave her evidence in such a way as to elicit from the learned Judge the observation that she was gifted with extraordinary power of intellect and cleverness of explanation he had ever met with and that he could conceive no possible reason to doubt the truth of her story.

On the morning of the 4th the old man was seen in his hut by Mr Fowke, still in his wet clothes and trembling violently. He was also a good deal bruised and screamed from pain when his clothes were taken off him. He was then under the direction of the surgeon and taken to the Union House at Halstead and placed under the care of Mr Sinclair the house surgeon where he remained until his death on the 4th of September last.

The post mortem examination showed that the lungs and the kidneys were much disorganised, the pericardium adhering to the heart and a suffusion of the lymph on the membrane of the brain indicating recent inflammatory action and the witness gave as his

opinion that he died from disease of kidneys produced by immersion in water and sleeping in wet clothes and in this opinion the witness was corroborated by another medical man who attended the post mortem.

For the defence it was contended that the evidence of the little girl could not be relied on and without it there was no evidence that either of the two prisoners threw the old man into the water and secondly there was not sufficient evidence that the death resulted from the immersion and that it might have resulted from some other injury the old man might have received by the falls the old man might have had in the tap room of the Swan public house.

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The learned Judge then summed up the case with great care and the Jury immediately found the prisoners guilty and they were sentenced to six months hard labour, the learned Judge said that he took in to consideration the mental condition of the female prisoner and the fact that when Stammers found that there was a danger he took the poor old man out of the water. The case lasted five hours.

Police records indicate that it was Superintendent Thomas Elsey who was informed of the assault on Dummy by Mr Fowke and had Dummy removed to the Halstead Workhouse where he died on the 4th September.

The police under the direction of Superintendent Jeremiah Raison began an investigation into the events of the 3rd August and, on the 25th September, Smith and Stammers were charged by Superintendent Elsey, before the magistrates at Castle Hedingham, with having "unlawfully assaulted an old Frenchman commonly called Dummy, thereby causing his death." The case had attracted much interest and the small courtroom was packed.

Witnesses to the events were reluctant to give evidence against Smith and Stammers, but several told the court the facts as are related above. Mr Sinclair, a surgeon to the Halstead workhouse, said that death was due to the treatment the old man had received. They were both committed to the next Assize court at Chelmsford.

This newspaper report is about this Assize court on March 8th 1864. which is remarkable for the fact that the star witness for the prosecution, Eva Henrietta Garrad, was only ten years old.

Although a harmless chap, poor Dummy played a dangerous game when he exploited the superstitions of the local people. He was certainly consulted by the young people about their love affairs; and when police searched his home they found numerous scraps of paper with various queries written on them. One such query read, "Her husband have left her many years, and she want to know whether he is dead or alive."



**ESSEX HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD
ESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY
SUMMARY SHEET**

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Site name/Address: 49 Swan Street, Sible Hedingham, Essex. CO9 3RA.	
Parish: Sible Hedingham	District: Braintree
Listing NGR: TL7826833740.	Site Code: N/A
Type of Work: Historic Building Recording	Site Director/Team: Barry Hillman-Crouch
Date of Work: 03 02 2014	Size of Area Investigated: 50x50m
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: N/A	Funding source: Owner
Further Seasons Anticipated?: No	Related EHER Nos:
Final Report: 49 Swan Street, Sible Hedingham, Essex. CO9 3RA. Description and analysis of the timber-framed house. Surveyed 03 02 2014. Barry J Hillman-Crouch MStPA DipFA BSc HND.	
Periods Represented: MC16th - C20th	
SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS: <p>The house is a 5 bay long-walled jettied house of a common type that became very popular in the middle of the C16th. It was built as a prestige building on a commanding site at the junction of the major roads at the time and would have been ideally placed as an inn. Papers belonging to the present owner show that the house was known as 'Reeves House' as early as 1694 when it belonged to Henry Bateman. The building has a solid frame of axe finished oak close studding, designed for external display but with internally trenched curving walls braces at the storey posts. The windows were originally mullioned on the first floor and oriel on the ground floor.</p> <p>Circa 1600-1640 a second larger firestack was paired up with the original. It is evident however, that the house underwent a major renovation near the end of the C18th when all the windows were replaced with unhorned sash windows and the interiors lath and plastered throughout. Bedroom 2 retains good quality oak or softwood panels (currently painted over) and an Adams style fireplace. The rear of the house was enlarged to incorporate service rooms and stair towers. By this time the original staircase had already been removed and a smaller one put in.</p> <p>The map evidence shows the house divided into two properties in 1876 and then three by 1897. By 1876 there were also adjacent outbuildings to the north which were again enlarged by 1897 and shown in photographs as a two storey brick building. To the south was a small timber outshut used as a bookmakers' shop. Architect's plans of 1966 show the provision for four staircases because the house had been enlarged.</p> <p>The house was acquired by Mr Brookes in 1966 and he stripped the house and dismantled the bookmakers' shop. He opened up the old fireplaces and revealed the Adams grate in Bedroom 2. The Kitchen retains some older homemade fixtures but most date to the 1980's. The upstairs bathroom of light studwork and Essex board must also date from then and been upgraded in the 1980's or 1990's. Only the three bedrooms 2, 3 and 4 appear little altered while the other rooms have been stripped of their finishes and stud walls removed.</p>	
Previous Summaries/Reports:	
Author of Summary: Barry J Hillman-Crouch MStPA DipFA BSc HND.	Date of Summary: 17 03 2014.