

**Historic building recording  
at Folley Cottage,  
Bredons Hardwick Lane,  
Bredons Hardwick,  
Worcestershire**

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WSM 49784

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# **Historic building recording at Folley Cottage, Bredons Hardwick Lane, Bredons Hardwick, Worcestershire**

## **Introduction**

Historic building recording of a building known as Folley Cottage at Bredons Hardwick Lane, Bredons Hardwick, Worcestershire (SO 391290 235610; Fig 1) was undertaken at the request of Mr Roger Zygmunt of Building Commercial Ltd according to a written scheme of investigation provided by Martin Cook BA MifA and approved by Mike Glyde of Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service.

The project was undertaken in advance of the proposed demolition of the building and its replacement by two dwellings.

## **The documentary material**

Documentary research at the Worcestershire County Record Office took place on the 16th September 2013 and a search of the Historic Environment Record was commissioned and received on the 17th September 2013.

## **Historic mapping**

The earliest available map was the tithe map of Bredon of 1809 (Fig 2.1). This does not show the cottage, although a number of surrounding dwellings are shown, most of which have now been replaced. The first map to show Folley Cottage is the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1885. This could not be reproduced for reasons of copyright but it appears to show Folley cottage in its current configuration. With such a small building and at such a small scale (1:2500) it is difficult to be certain but it is possible that an earlier part of the building, at the north-western end, has been replaced by Phase 3 of the existing structure (see below). The other available mapping is that of the 1902 and the 1923 Ordnance Survey maps (Figs 2.1 and 2.2 respectively) and these show no significant differences to the 1st edition, save for the loss of some ancillary structures.

## **The Worcestershire Historic Environment Record**

An HER search was carried out on a 500m search area around the proposed development. The development site itself (WSM 43283) is an unlisted. 17th century dwelling, stone and timber-framed with roughcast rendering at first floor level. It has a modern slate roof. It lies at the northern end of Bredons Hardwick in a group of broadly contemporary and more recent buildings (Figs 29 and 30).

In the immediate vicinity of Folley Cottage the following buildings are recorded:

Halfway House (WSM 43276), an unlisted. 19th century dwelling of coursed stone with coped gables and tiled roof; Walnut Cottage (WSM 43277), an unlisted. 19th century dwelling of brick with a tiled roof. There is a later addition to the north-east end, and a late 20th century extension to south-west, both also in brick and tile. Honeysuckle Cottage (WSM 43278), an unlisted. 19th century semi-detached dwelling of brick with a tiled roof; Walnut Cottage (WSM 43279), an unlisted. 19th century semi-detached dwelling of brick with a tiled roof. 1-3 Manor Cottages (WSM 43280), three unlisted. 19th century dwellings in a row. Each has its own pitched roof, while a transverse pitched roof links the properties at the rear. They are of brick with tiled roofs. There are stone coped gables on the rear part of the building; the front is rendered with mock timber framing below the triple eaves. The Cottage (WSM 43281), an unlisted 19th century dwelling of brick with a tiled roof; 1 and 2 April Cottage (WSM 43282), an unlisted, 19th century semi-detached dwelling of brick with a tiled roof. There is a possible stone bread oven on the south side. An unlisted, single storey outbuilding at 3 Manor Cottages (WSM 43284) of the 19th century of brick with a tiled roof; Newton House (WSM 43285), an unlisted dwelling, rendered, and assumed to be 19th century brick construction with a tiled roof; Hill View (WSM 43286) an unlisted. dwelling, rendered, assumed to be 19th century, of brick construction with a tiled roof. There is a large 20th century brick and tile extension to the rear.

It is clear that the majority of the buildings shown on the historic mapping of the northern end of Bredons Hardwick (Figs 2.1 and 2.2) have been demolished and replaced during the 19th century

(unless an earlier structure was encased by extensions of this period). Folley Cottage is thus the earliest surviving building in this part of the village.

### **Information from the census**

The census for Bredon, Worcestershire was consulted. The census of 1841 and 1851, except for notable buildings, are indexed by parish and street only. Sometimes, only 'village' is stated as the location. This should come as little surprise. Few people who inhabited villages at this time would have been literate and would rarely, if ever, have received written communications. Their homes would have had no distinguishing features, such as names or numbers, for the census enumerator to record. Folley Cottage, even when it existed, is indistinguishable from all the other humble dwellings.

The census of Bredon for 1861, 1871 and 1881 are not available in the County Record Office. The census of 1891 is stored on microfiche. There are hundreds of these and there is no index. The equivalent document was searched on Ancestry.com. Again, only important buildings were individually identified.

## **The fieldwork**

### **General**

Fieldwork took place between the 23rd and 25th September 2013. It comprised a survey at 1:50 of the ground and first floors of the cottage, its four elevations and photographs as appropriate. The plans and elevations were annotated with historic information relating to the construction and sequence of development of the cottage.

### **The cottage – description and commentary**

#### *Phase 1 -1809-1885*

The survival of this phase is fragmentary and comprises the following elements (Fig 3.1):

- the core part of the south-east elevation (Figs 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5) of Cotswold, squared, semi-coursed stone, which forms a chimney
- a row of wooden posts and a head plate or rail (Figs 3.3 and 7) which form the remains of a timber frame building.

Careful examination of the south-east elevation (Fig 3.5) revealed a number of significant features. The first of these were two stones with sloping ends, at opposite ends of the elevation, at first floor level. The presence of these indicate the former underside of an earlier roof. This would have had a much steeper pitch to the existing roof. An attempt was made to remove the pebbledash at first floor level to confirm this. This attempt failed due to the hardness of the material but a further attempt, in the corresponding position inside the building, where the material to be removed was only plaster, succeeded (Fig 25). The removal of the plaster demonstrated that the line of the stonework followed the approximate position shown by the dashed lines on Fig 3.5 (south-east elevation). It is believed that this is *prima facie* evidence for the existence of a thatched roof during Phase 1 and for the building, during this phase, to have been single storey only. Supporting evidence comprises a 'shoulder' on the south-west face of the chimney (visible on Fig 3.5; south-east elevation and Fig 10, immediately adjacent to the scale bar). This would have accommodated the thickness of the thatch. Comparative material to support this hypothesis was not difficult to acquire. A cottage in Braunston (Northamptonshire) shows clear evidence of a process such as this (Fig 32). In connection with the former thatch, the sloping boards across the front of the south-west elevation (Fig 5) may be a relict feature, intended to support the thatch over the windows. Finally, it is possible that there was a window in the south-east elevation. The pattern of stones at its southern end (Figs 3.5 and 10) is reminiscent of such a feature. Some support for this comes from the cottage in Braunston where the presence of former windows is unequivocal (Fig 32).

The plan form of the cottage in this phase would have been a simple rectangle, probably divided into the two rooms defined by Phases 1 and 2. There is no specific evidence for this sub-division in Phase 1 as the two longitudinal beams that support the first floor (and thus provide clear evidence for this division in a later phase) are anachronistic in this phase. The original entrance was probably

at the eastern end of the south-west elevation, where an entrance remains to this day. Valhalla Cottage (Fig 31), in Long Marston (Warwickshire), although much altered, shows broad similarities with this layout.

*Phase 2 – mid to late 20th century*

This phase comprises the following elements (Fig 3.1):

- complete replacement of traditional timber frame infill materials with brick and/or cement mortar supported on a wire mesh (south-west elevation)
- complete removal of original framing materials and under-building with brick (especially north-east elevation but also north-west elevation and dividing wall)
- addition of the first floor and the stairs to reach it
- replacement of the original roof structure (but retention of the roofing slates)

Intrusive investigation and analysis of the south-west elevation (Figs 3.3, 6, 7, 8 and 9) demonstrated that there were no surviving traditional timber frame infill materials such as wattle and daub. Brickwork, where it was employed, was in stretcher bond (Figs 3.3 and 4). Otherwise, the infill was cement mortar supported on a wire mesh. Under-building with brick was particularly evident on the north-west elevation (Figs 3.4 and 13) which was also executed in stretcher bond. The use of brick in the replacement of the north-west elevation may be inferred from the pier supporting one of the first floor beams (Fig 3.1) which was of a dimension consistent with this form of construction.

It was not possible to determine the material in which the first floor was added as the pebbledash, which completely covered this element of the structure was particularly tenacious and would not yield to hand tools. However, it is reasonable to infer, by comparison with the building in Braunston (Fig 32), that this was also executed in brick.

The first floor was added by the simple expedient of supporting two beams centrally and longitudinally across the cottage. The mid-building support for both was obtained from the dividing wall between the two ground floor rooms. This is a further argument for this wall being of brick construction. The end supports were obtained from a brick pier (already referred to above) and from a carefully-made wooden bracket let into the stone construction of the chimney (Fig 21). The two beams had been reused. One had clearly been inverted and had vestigial remains of cut-outs for floor joists on its underside. The other was probably a little too short for its new situation; this evidenced by the presence of the wooden bracket which was necessary to enable the beam safely to span the required length. This same beam must have originally been from a building of some pretension as it had chamfers and chamfer stops (Fig 20). Also of a quality inconsistent with their current situation were the floor boards which were of widths difficult or impossible to obtain today (pers comm Roger Zygmunt; Figs 24 and 27).

The staircase is of simple dog-leg form within a wooden enclosure (Figs 3.1 and 22), located in the corner of the kitchen/diner.

The roof structure was of a simple principal rafter design with a ridge plate at the apex (Fig 28) and is of modern date.

*Phase 3 – late 20th century*

This phase comprises the following elements (Fig 3.1):

- erection of the bathroom/toilet and lobby
- cutting through part of the Phase 2 construction to provide access to the lobby

Phase 3 was constructed as a cavity wall design with an inner skin of breeze block and an outer of brickwork. It was then rendered in cement mortar (Figs 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 – north-west elevation, 4, 13 and 15). The interiors of the two rooms created in this phase (Figs 16 and 17) are unremarkable.

### **Graffiti**

Two pieces of graffiti were recorded, both on the south-east elevation (Fig 3.5 – south-east elevation). One of these, 'WF' (Fig 11), was of a higher quality being finely cut and with the letters having serifs. The other, 'HT' (Fig 12) was much cruder.

### **Dendrochronological dating**

The timbers relating to Phase 1 were fragmentary and, in the case of the head plate, where it was observed, were worm-ridden. Given that the building is dated to the 19th century by the two historic maps that straddle its appearance (the tithe map of Bredon of 1809 and the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1885) it was felt that the use of this technique was not appropriate.

### **Discussion**

True cottages were built for humble people such as labourers and those with little or no land. Many were self-build structures, improvised from whatever materials were to hand and any strict classification is impossible (Powell 1996). By the mid-19th century the sanitary conditions of much of the stock of cottages was causing concern to the government (Woodforde 1970). In 1842 the government first fully realized that at least three-quarters of all rural labourers' cottages were slums. Official reports became numerous and all were lists of horrors. Their most important effect was to shame bad landlords and to stimulate voluntary enterprise. The Builder magazine began printing designs for cottages, a service it continued for about forty years.

Although most cottages were little more than shanties, intended to be rebuilt every generation, this is clearly not the case with Folley Cottage which, even in Phase 1, was a well-found building. Typically, the ground floor of cottages was partitioned into two main rooms and this is so at Folley Cottage. Original windows in cottages were few and small. Those at Folley Cottage are of steel construction, probably dating from the 1930s and will have replaced the original windows of the mid 19th century. The fireplace and chimney are positioned on one of the gable walls which is a typical position when they are built of stone. Stone did not come within the reach of cottagers much before the middle of the 17th century. Even then it did so only in prosperous areas which also has suitable stone, such as the Cotswolds. The stone chimney at Folley Cottage is a grand feature and it is unfortunate that it is unknown how it came to possess it. However, it may be that Folley Cottage was an example of those dwellings built in response to the clamour in the mid-19th century against poor quality housing.

### **Assessment of the buildings' significance**

The cottage is likely to be the oldest surviving building in the northern end of Bredons Hardwick. However, it is clear from the map evidence that 'oldest' only means early to mid 19th century. In addition, the cottage has been extensively altered during the 20th century to the extent that its original form, as a single storey, two roomed, timber-framed, thatched building, is now almost lost. It is believed that the recording of this building prior to its demolition was the appropriate response.

### **Summary**

Historic building survey was undertaken at Folley Cottage, Bredons Hardwick Lane, Bredons Hardwick, Worcestershire. It was determined that the cottage, dating to the early to mid 19th century, was originally a timber-framed building with a stone hearth and chimney, of a single storey, with two ground floor rooms and having a thatched roof. It was substantially under-built in brick in the mid to late 20th century and a first floor added. Finally, in the late 20th century, an extension in cavity wall construction was added to its western end.

## **Bibliography**

Powell, C, 1996 *Discovering cottage architecture*

Woodforde, J, 1970 *The truth about cottages*

## **Acknowledgements**

The author would particularly like to thank Mr Roger Zygmunt of Building Commercial Ltd and Mr Mike Glyde of Worcestershire Archives and Archaeology Service for their kind co-operation.

## **Archive**

The archive consists of:

- 3 Annotated scale drawings
- 1 DVD-ROM
  - on which are recorded:
    - the text of the report
    - the illustrations for the report

It has been deposited at Worcestershire County Museum, Hartlebury.

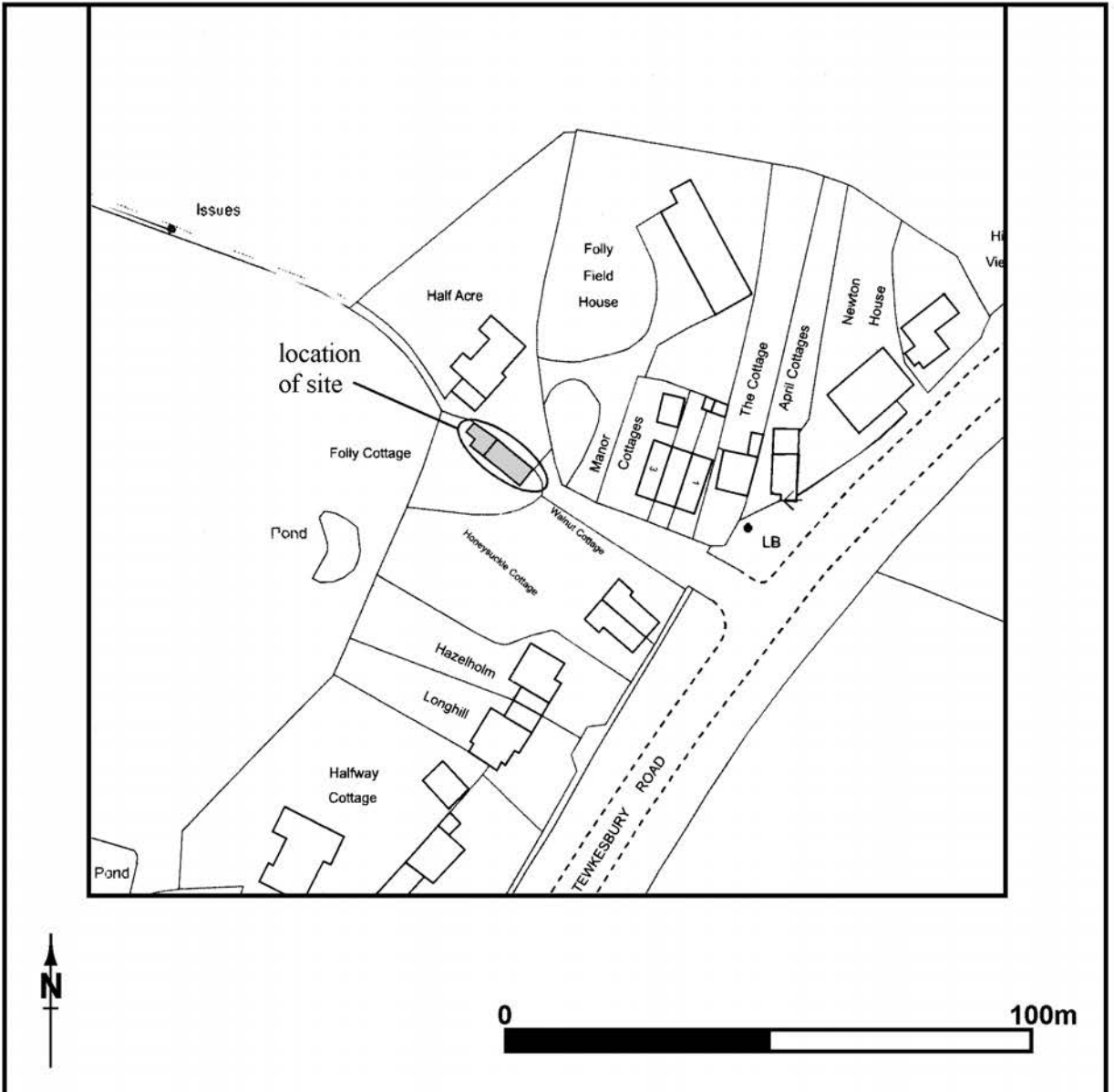
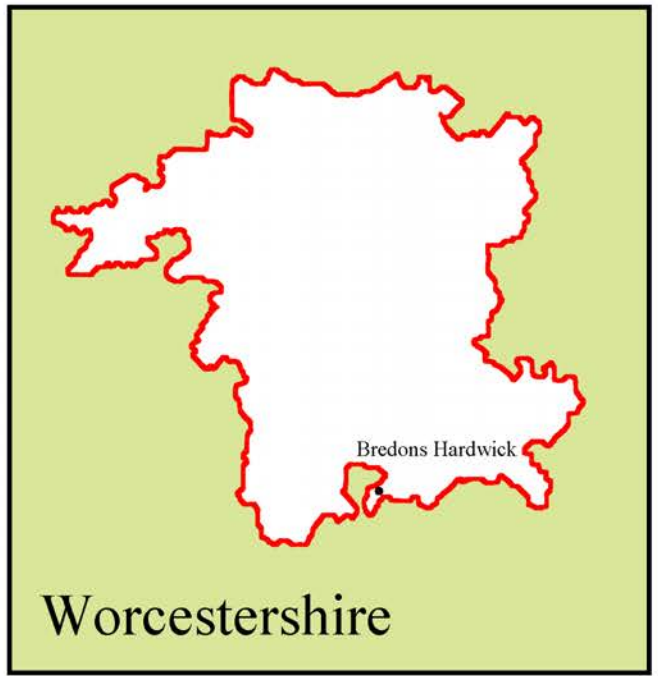
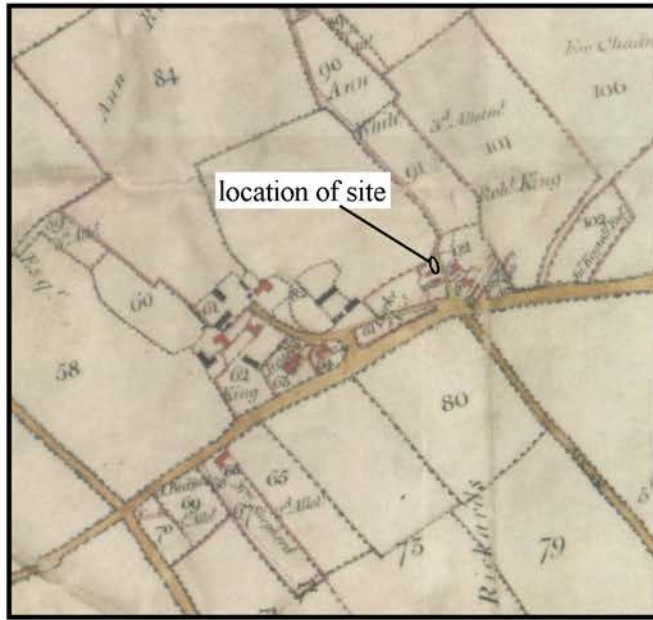


Fig 1: Location of site

1809



not to scale



1902

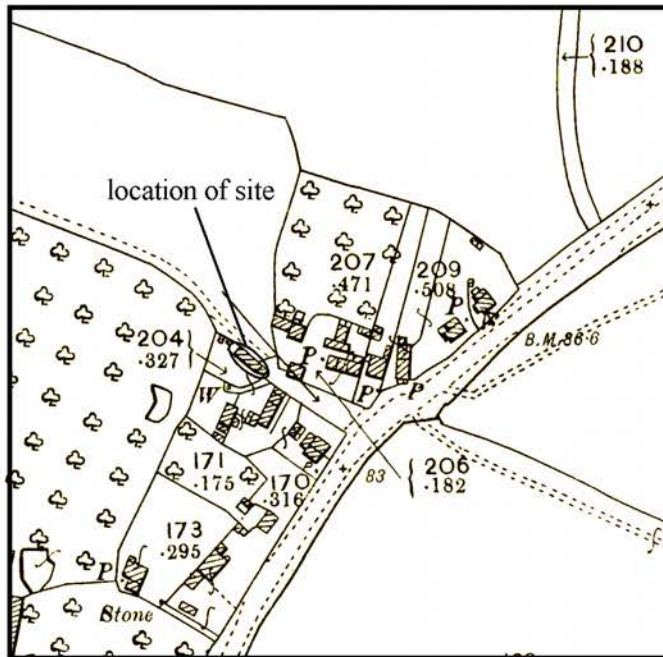


Fig 2.1: Historic mapping



1923

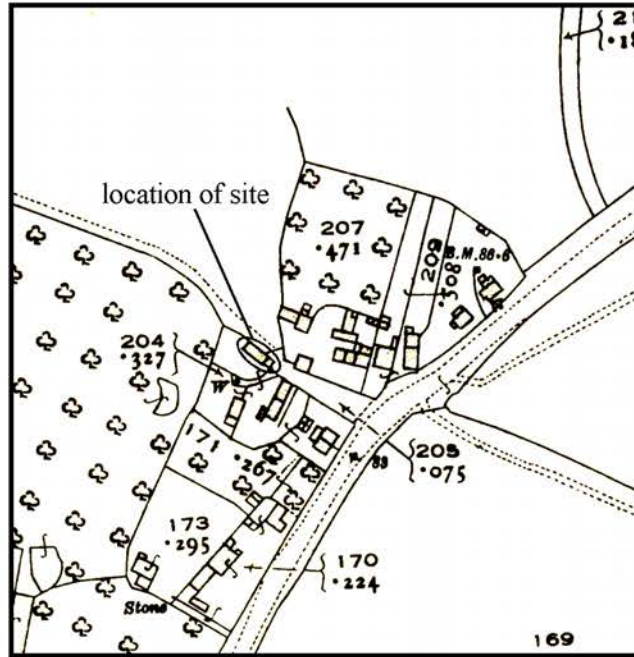


Fig 2.2: Historic mapping

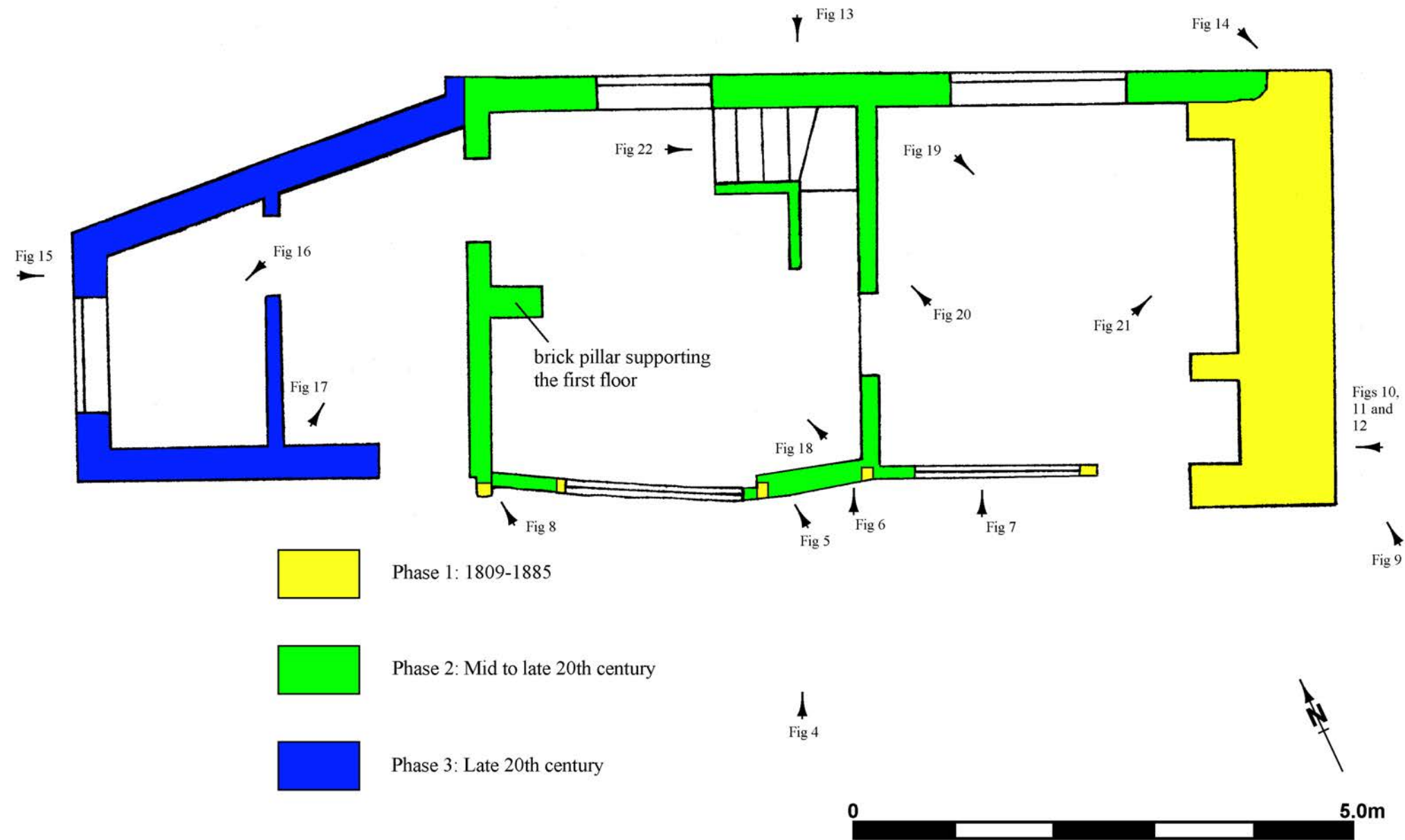
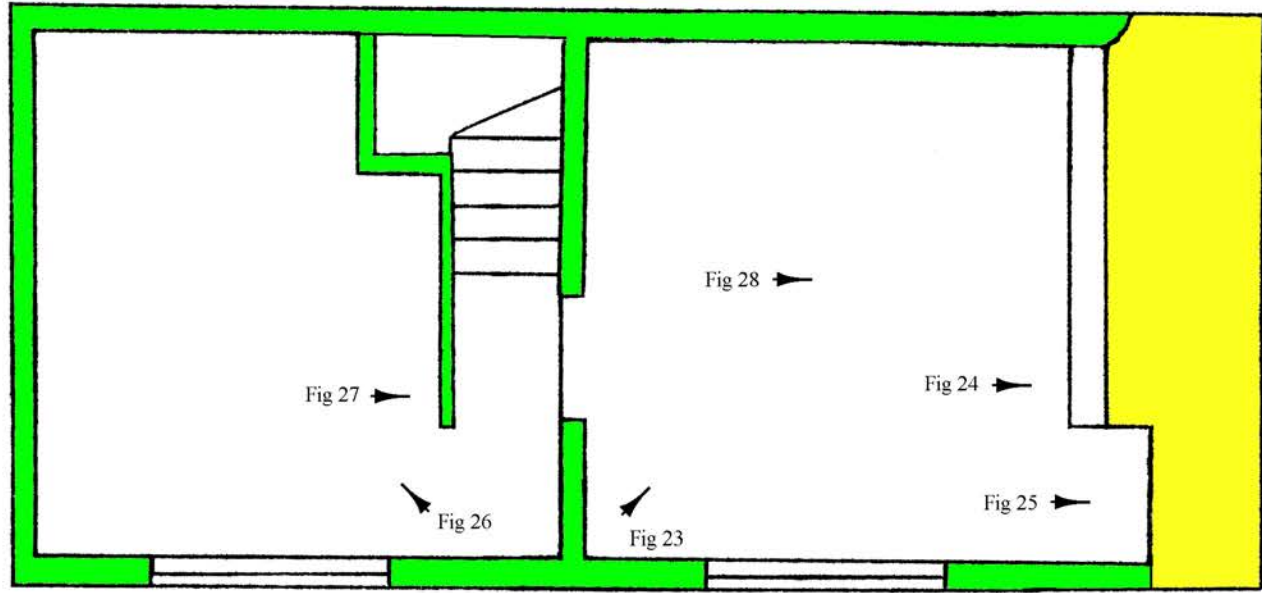


Fig 3.1: Ground floor



Phase 1: 1809-1885



Phase 2: Mid to late 20th century



Phase 3: Late 20th century



Fig 3.2: First floor

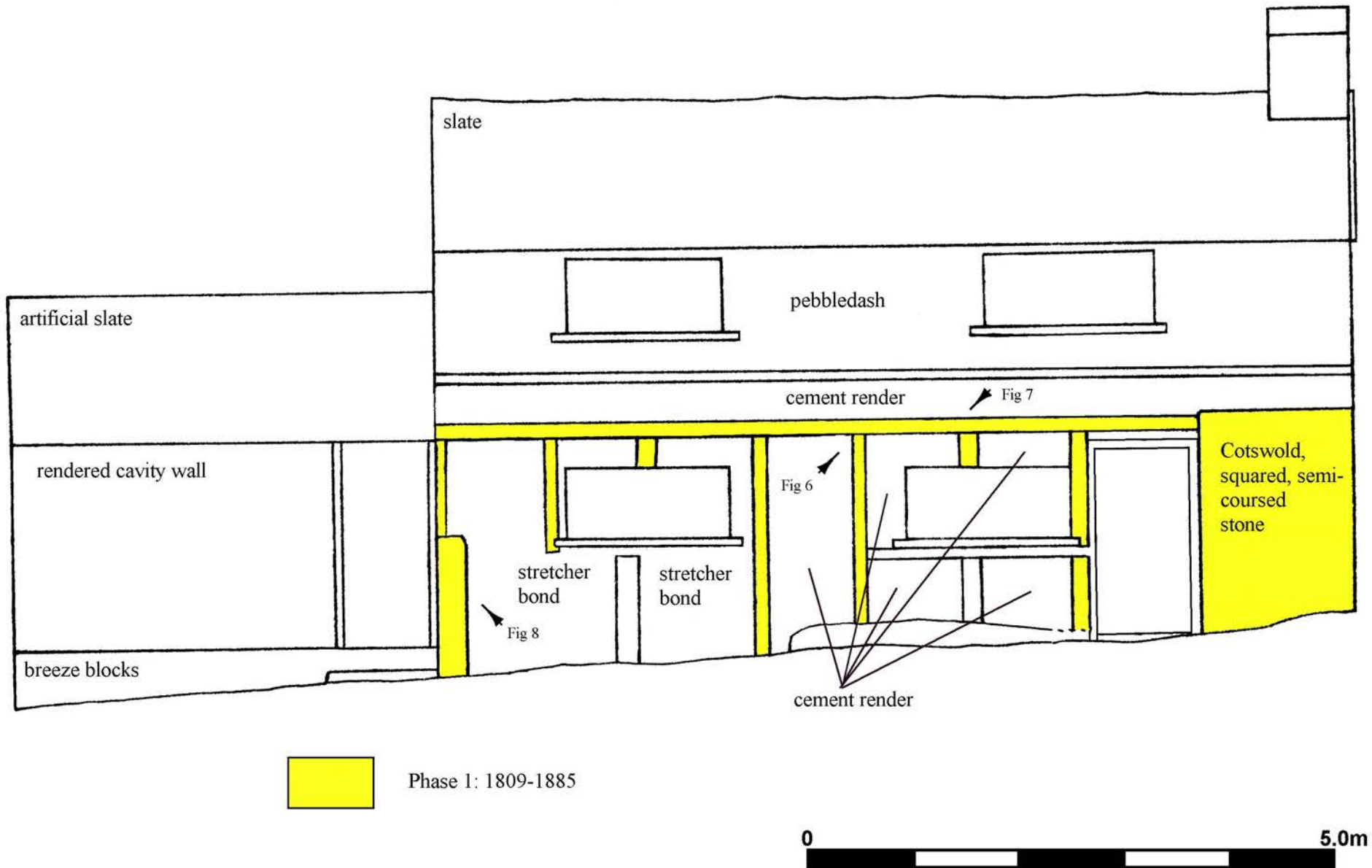


Fig 3.3: South-west elevation

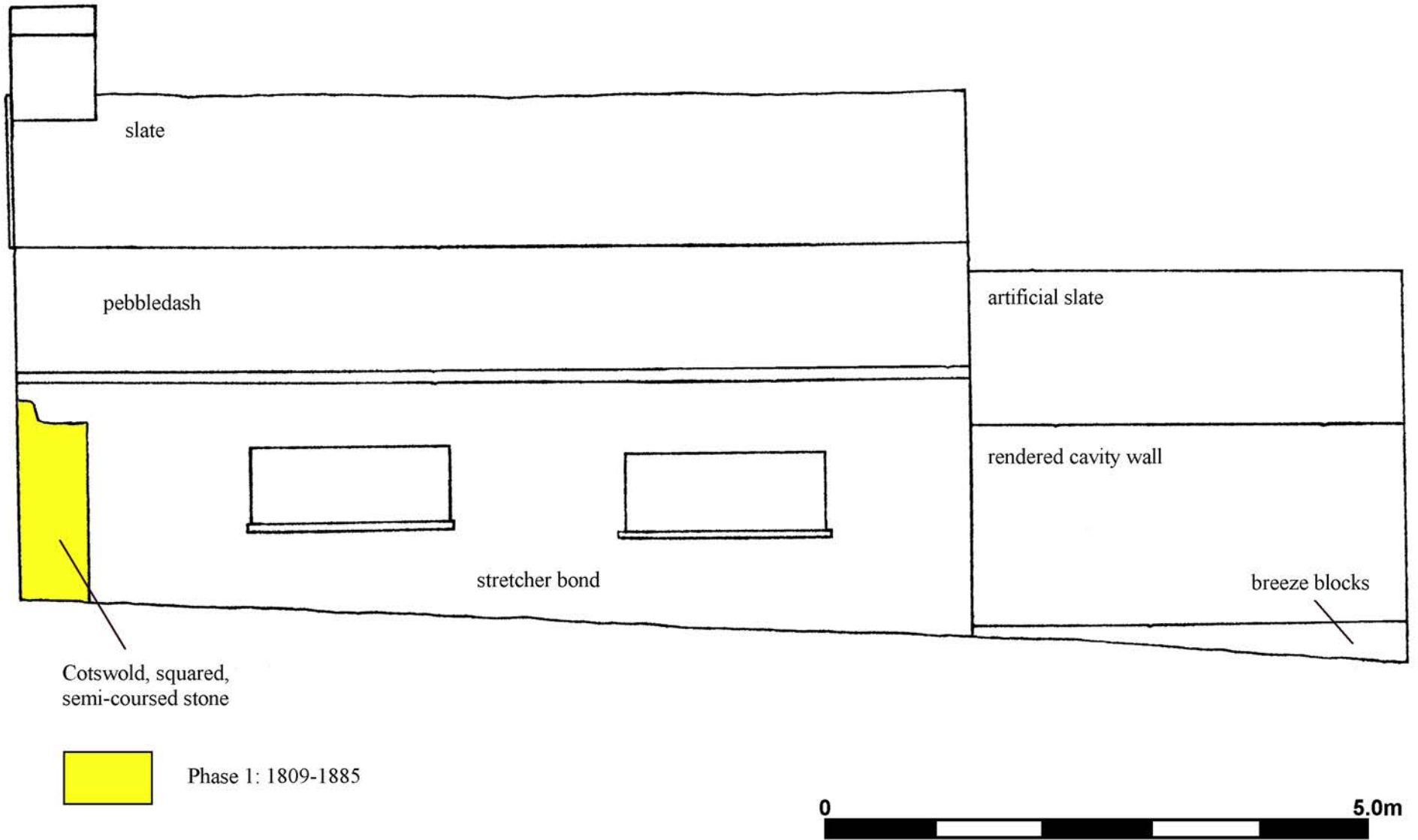
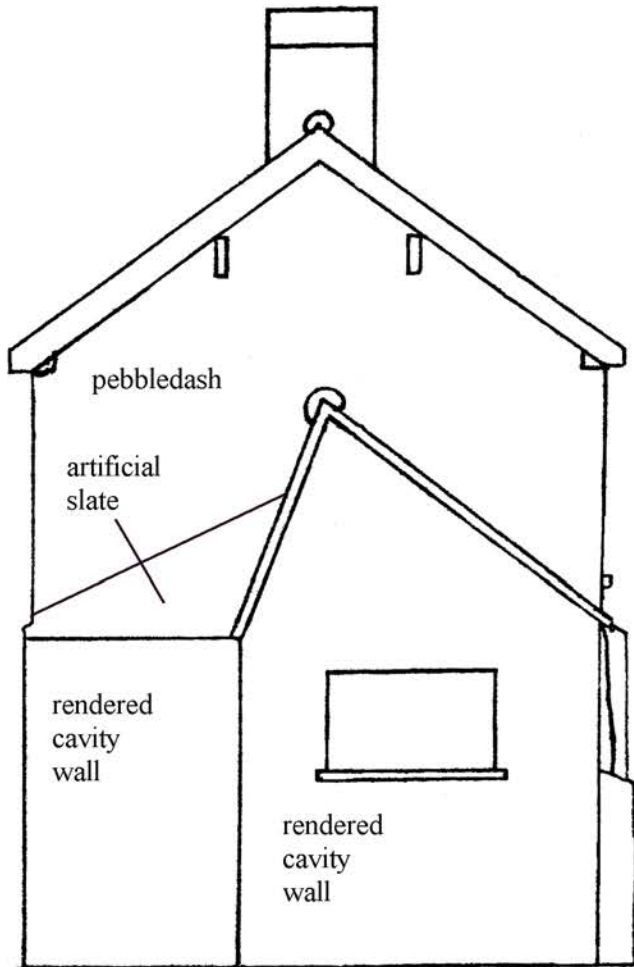


Fig 3.4: North-east elevation

North-west elevation



South-east elevation

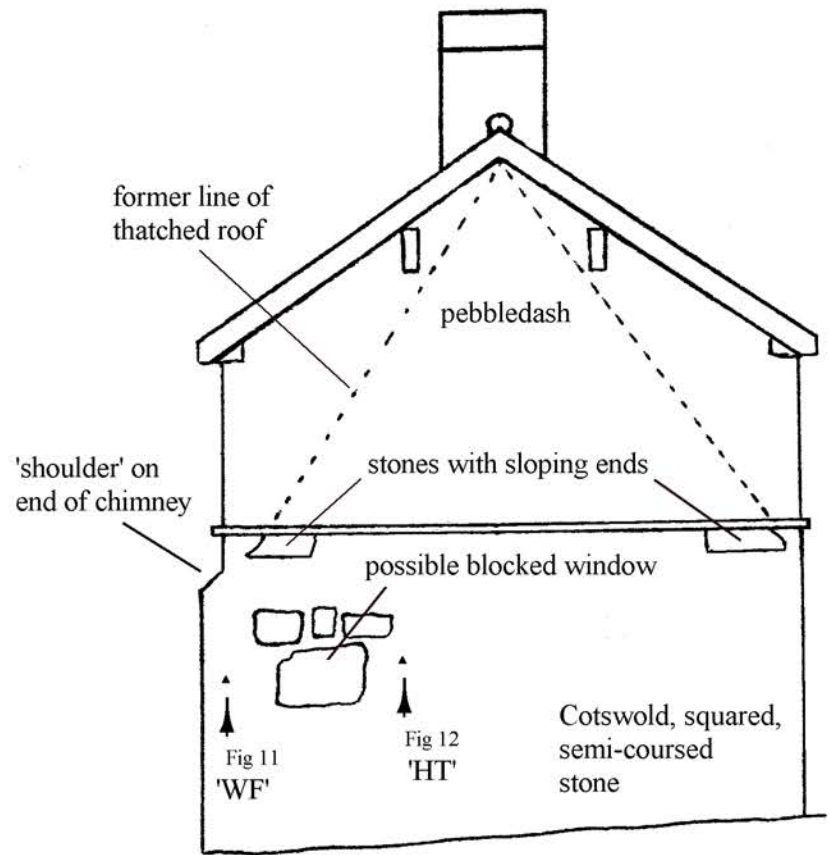


Fig 3.5: North-west and south-east elevations



Fig 4: South-west elevation



Fig 5: South-west elevation; detail of drip boards



Fig 6: South-west elevation; detail of square nut securing timber frame



Fig 7: South-west elevation; detail of head plate or rail





Fig 8: South-west elevation; detail of part of Phase 1 timber frame



Fig 9: South-east elevation



Fig 10: South-east elevation; detail of blocked window and stone with sloping end



Fig 11: South-east elevation; detail of graffiti 'WF'



Fig 12: South-east elevation; detail of graffiti 'HT'



Fig 13: North-east elevation

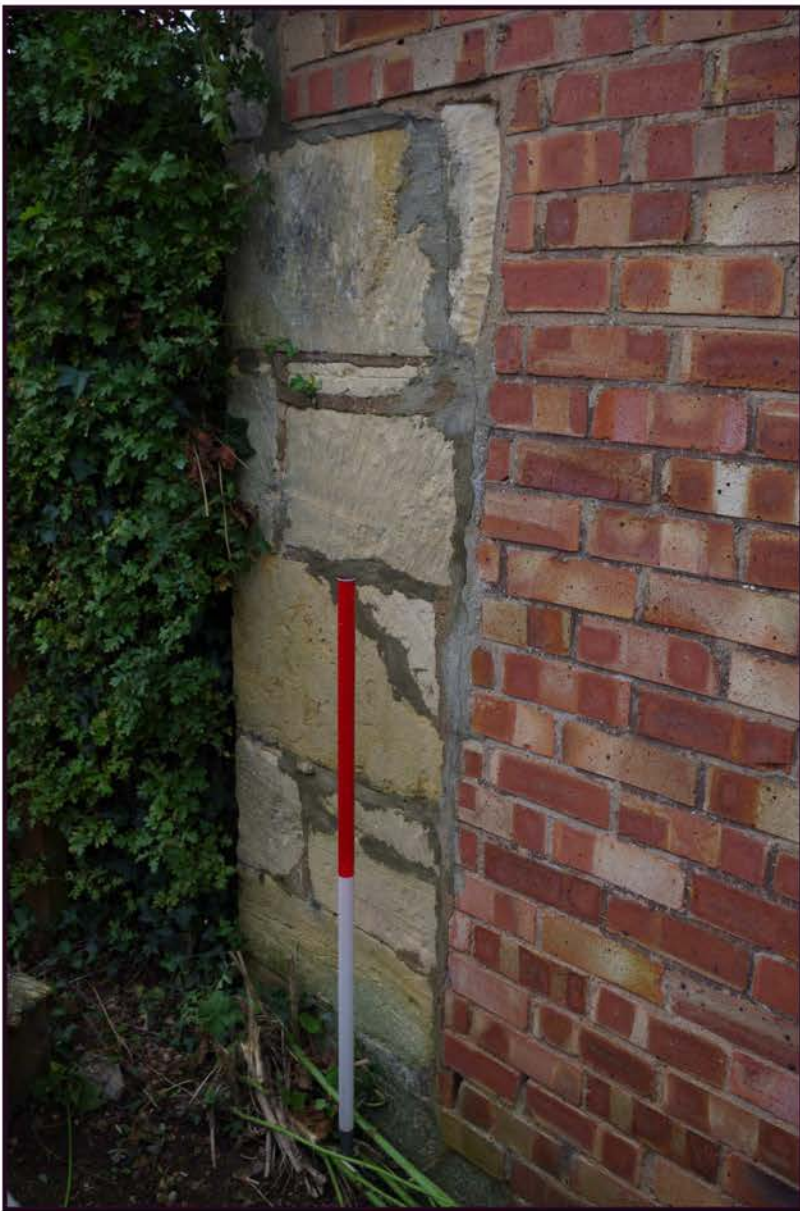


Fig 14: North-east elevation; detail of Phase 1 stone construction



Fig 15: North-west elevation



Fig 16: Ground floor; existing bathroom and toilet

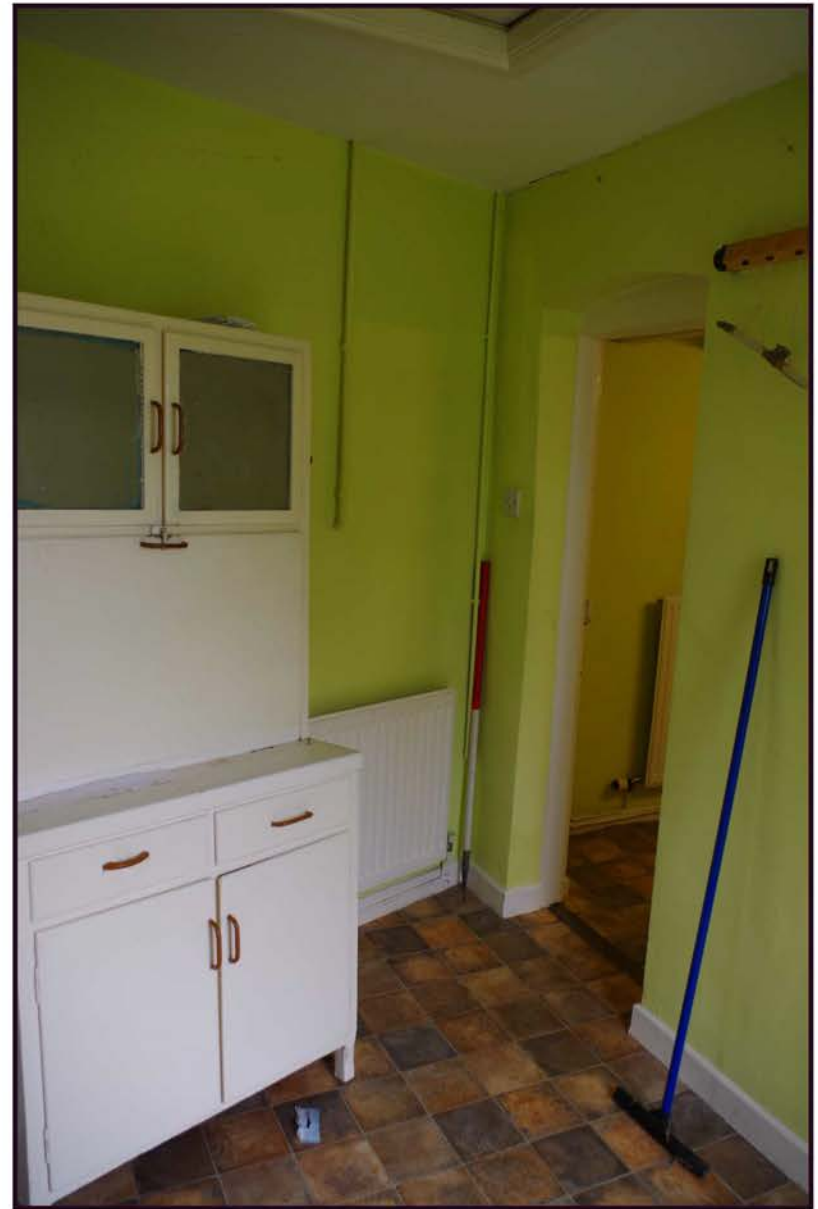


Fig 17: Ground floor; existing lobby



Fig 18: Ground floor; existing kitchen/diner



Fig 19: Ground floor; existing living room



Fig 20: Ground floor; existing living room; detail of ceiling beam, chamfer and stop



Fig 21: Ground floor; existing living room; detail of ceiling beam and support bracket



Fig 22: Ground floor; existing kitchen/diner; detail of stairwell





Fig 23: First floor; existing bedroom 1



Fig 24: First floor; existing bedroom 1; detail of floorboards (scale is 0.5m)



Fig 25: First floor; existing bedroom 1; detail of area of removal of plaster



Fig 26: First floor; existing bedroom 2



Fig 27: First floor; existing bedroom 2; detail of floorboards (scale is 0.5m)



Fig 28: Roof space; detail of modern timbers



Fig 29: View of Folley Cottage from the south-west



Fig 30: View of Folley Cottage from the south-east

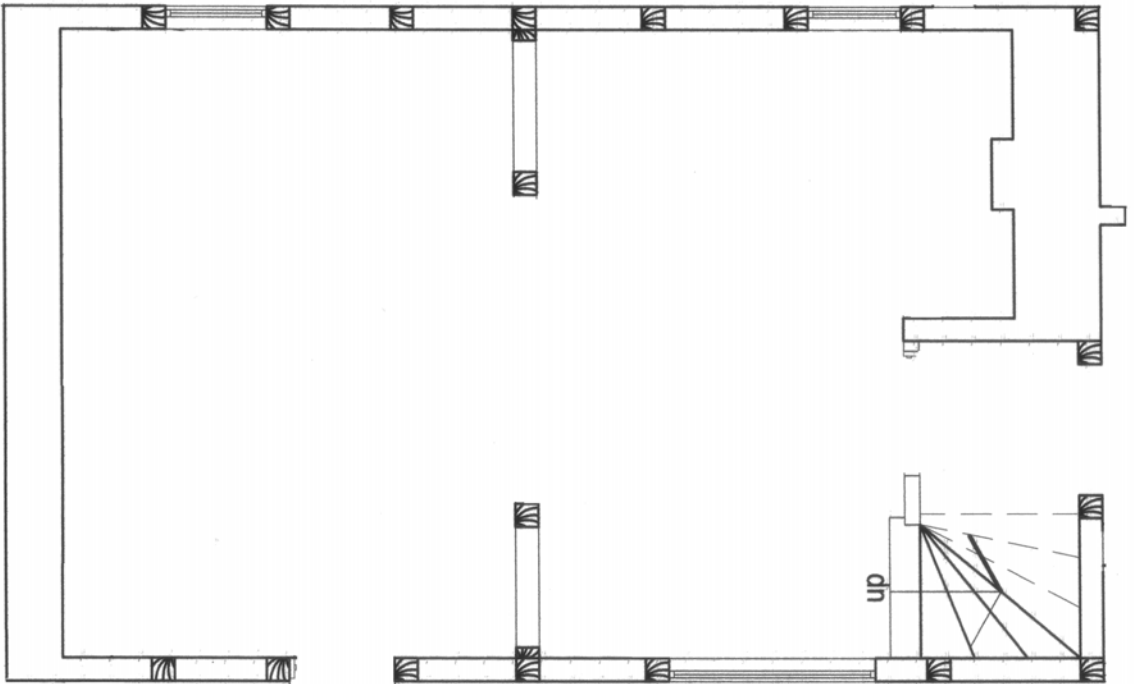


Fig 31: Comparative material; Valhalla Cottage, Long Marston, Warwickshire



Fig 32: Comparative material: cottage, Braunston, Northamptonshire