

The structural development  
of  
**THE COTTAGE, FRIETH HILL**  
HAMBLEDEN  
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE



K A Rodwell  
for  
JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

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**THE STRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT**  
**of**  
**THE COTTAGE, FRIETH HILL, HAMBLEDEN, BUCKS**

**Introduction**

This report describes the history and structural development of The Cottage, Frieth Hill, Frieth, Buckinghamshire (NGR SU 7949 9023), a grade II listed building. It was commissioned to fulfil a condition of planning consent for alterations and extensions to the house (09/05023/FUL). Historic building recording has been carried out in accordance with a brief from Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (1/8/09) and a *Written Scheme of Investigation* by John Moore Heritage Services (JMHS 21/8/09). The drawings used as a basis for the survey (Figs 6-7) were supplied by the architect, Richard Clark. The boundary wall to the west of the property included in the recording brief has already been rebuilt and is therefore excluded from the survey.

**History**

Frieth originated as a hamlet in the wooded hills three miles north-east of Hambleden and still lies within Hambleden parish (VCH 1925, 45-54). It developed as a village in the 19th century and a church was built as a chapel of ease to Hambleden in 1849 (Pevsner & Williamson 1994, 332). The Cottage is shown on Jeffrey's map of Buckinghamshire of 1760 and on the Tithe map of 1845 (Fig 1) when it stood in isolation with a garden to the west, owned by Elizabeth Lewis and occupied by Martha Barlow & M. Hobbs.

In 1869 the furniture making firm of West and Collier was established on land immediately to the north and west, as shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1921 (Fig 1). Initially they made chairs but diversified into church furniture of all kinds and remained in business until 1940 (Frieth Village Society 1981). They owned the Cottage which was two semi-detached dwellings until c.1970 (Friethhistory.org). In the late 19th century one of these was occupied by Mary Martin, a lacemaker and a photograph of a (rather dark) interior shows her at work by the fireplace (Fig 4; Frieth Village Society 1981). The eastern part of the building is said formerly to have had internal wattle and daub walls and the date of 1574 carved on the fireplace lintel in the main living room is reputed to be a 20th century introduction (Friethhistory.org). Undated earlier 20th

century photographs show the house with its present appearance (Fig 2) and there is a short description in the RCHM survey of Buckinghamshire (1912, 188, Mon 29).

## **Description**

### ***Exterior (Figs 2-3, 6-7)***

The house is detached and faces south onto the main village street, set back from the road behind a low brick wall and fence. The principal elevation is two storied and has a gable at the west end. This part of the façade is roughcast rendered and has a pair of wooden casement windows on the ground floor either side of a shallow pilaster buttress. There is a single window of the same type on the first floor and a blind flint roundel with a keyed brick surround in the gable. The eastern part of the elevation has a ground floor of flint rubble with brick dressings and four bays of timber framing on the first floor set back above a tiled offset. Three bays are infilled with thin herringbone brickwork; the end bay has with larger bricks in regular course. Two of the posts are decayed and one has been patched in cement. There is a three-light casement window on the ground floor with an outer wooden frame and a smaller two-light first floor window under the eaves. The roof is covered in old clay tiles.

The gabled east elevation is built of flint with brick dressings; it has an offset plinth and a string course at storey height. There is a casement window at first floor level and a three-light mullioned window with chamfered stone jambs on the ground floor. Adjoining this is the outline of a blocked doorway. To the north is a rear wing of 1½ storeys, also faced with flint as far as the door. A pair of substantial posts forms the jambs and the remainder of the wall is studwork nogged with brick. There is a small two-light casement next to the door, which is of late 19th century boarded type. The roof has a small gabled dormer and there is a chimney stack at the junction with the main range.

The north elevation of the rear wing is built of flint rubble to eaves level where there is a tiled offset. The gable is brick and has the timbers of a queen-strut roof truss outlined in cement. There is a projecting brick chimney stack on the north-east corner. The western return wall is brick-nogged studwork with a substantial corner post; this has a straight diagonal brace. In the angle with the main house there is a 20th century brick

extension with a cat-slide roof and the gabled west end is exposed brickwork in Flemish bond with wooden casement windows.

The west elevation is rendered and the only feature is a projecting brick chimney stack. To the north of this is a single-storey outbuilding with a lean-to roof; it is part weatherboarded and part brick with a door in the south wall and a window in the west.

### ***Interior (Figs 4-6)***

*Ground floor* - The house has an L-shaped plan and the principal external door leads into the kitchen in the rear wing. This has a low ceiling with a large axial beam and five pairs of old joists but other finishes are modern and the fireplace has been converted into a cupboard. A 19th century boarded door adjoining the stack leads into the main living room which has a large open fireplace in the north wall. This has brick jambs and a chamfered oak lintel carved with the date 1574 which is a 20th century introduction. There is a 20th century brick grate at the back of the hearth flanked by inglenook seats and wall niches. Against the east jamb there is a fixed wooden settle, also 20th century. To the west of the fireplace is an old boarded door to the stairs which has face-mounted strap hinges and a wooden latch. A shelved recess in the east wall marks the position of a former external door and there is exposed timber-framing, including a cill beam in the west wall. There is an old axial ceiling beam and a second beam supported by a free-standing post to the north which is a 20th century introduction.

A 20th century door leads to the west end of the house where there are two rooms with a common chamfered ceiling beam divided by a studwork partition. The front room has a 20th century brick fireplace with a deep cupboard alongside. The back room has an exposed jowled post in the north wall adjoining the window and part of a cill beam in the north-east corner.

*First floor* – a set of steep winder stairs adjoins the fireplace with access at the foot to a modern bathroom. A timber baulk forms the lowest step but the remainder are 19th century treads and risers without a handrail. At the head an old boarded door set in a timber-framed partition leads to the room over the kitchen. This has exposed purlins with pairs of downward-curved windbraces and is lit by a dormer.

The main south-east bedroom has exposed timber-framing including wall plates, tie beams and corner posts with straight braces; it is open into the roof which is fully plastered. There is a deep cupboard alongside the stack in the north wall but no fireplace. The reverse of the framing is visible in the adjoining south-west bedroom which has a blocked window recess in the west wall. The bedroom to the rear has no features of note. This range has an elm common rafter roof with a single tier of purlins and the east end of the building also appears to have a common rafter roof.

### **Structural development (Figs 6-7)**

**1** The oldest part of the house is the rear wing, now the kitchen and the attic above, which probably originated as part of a timber-framed hall, open through two stories. This is suggested by the ornamental windbraced roof and by the low ceiling heights which indicate that the floor is inserted. The room would originally have been larger, extending southwards into an area that was subsequently rebuilt. Stylistically this phase is not closely dateable; it was probably constructed in the first half of the sixteenth century but may be earlier.

**2** The timber-framed eastern half of the main range was rebuilt in the 17th century. It has two full storeys, a stone-mullioned window in the east wall and a large brick fireplace at the junction with the older range to the north. This was floored over and retained as a service wing. The 17th century roof to the main range does not survive.

**3** In the late 18th or early 19th century the west end of the house was rebuilt or extended in brick and in a separate building operation the timber-framing of the eastern half was refaced or infilled with flint rubble and brick and the roof renewed. At this time there was a door in the east gable wall. At some point in the 19th century the building was subdivided into two cottages and outshots were added on the north and west sides.

**4** In the earlier 20th century the eastern cottage appears to have been restored. Old timbers were exposed and new ones added. The big 17th century fireplace was opened up and given a new lintel bearing the date 1574 (the historical veracity of this is unknown) and a fixed settle built in front. As the property was then owned by the

furniture making firm of West and Collier this woodwork is likely to be their work. After c.1970 the two cottages became a single house.

## References

Frieth Village Society 1981 *Frieth: a Chiltern Village*

Friethhistory.org - [www.barksfield.vispa.com/FriethHistory/index.html](http://www.barksfield.vispa.com/FriethHistory/index.html)

JMHS 21/8/09 - *The Cottage, Frieth Hill, Frieth, Hambleton, Archaeological Watching Brief and Historic Building Recording Written Scheme of Investigation*

Pevsner, N, and Williamson, E, 1994 *The Buildings of England: Buckinghamshire*

RCHM, 1912, *An inventory of historical monuments in the County of Buckingham: 1, South*, Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments

Victoria County History 1925 *A History of the County of Buckingham 3*, 45-54

## List of figures

**Fig 1** Maps

**Fig 2** External photographs

**Fig 3** External photographs

**Fig 4** Internal photographs

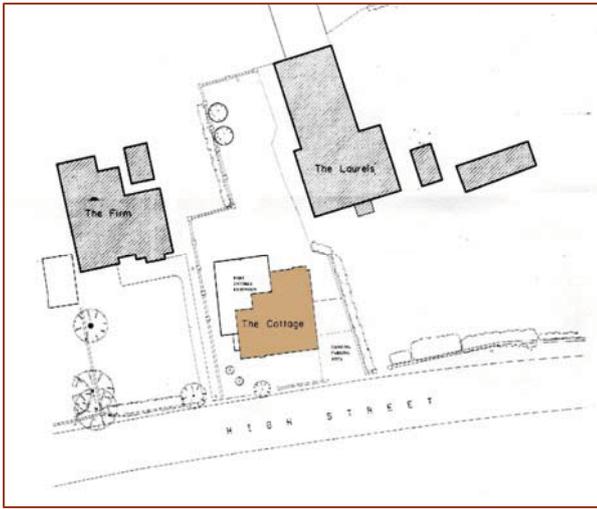
**Fig 5** Internal photographs

**Fig 6** Phased plans

**Fig 7** Phased elevations

## Appendix: Statutory List

SU 79 SE HAMBLEDEN FRIETH 3/71 The Cottage II House. Rear bay probably C16, with C17 bay to front and C19 extension to left. C17 bay has timber frame with herringbone brick infill exposed to first floor front, the ground floor and right gable rebuilt in flint and brick. More timber framing in rear wing. C19 bay is of brick, roughcast to front and left side. Old tile roofs, brick chimneys between older bays and to left. L-plan with small C20 extension in rear angle. 2-storey front range, lower rear bay of one storey and an attic. 2 bays to front, the left gabled. Left bay has paired wooden casements, 2 to ground floor, one to first floor, and blind flint roundel with keyed brick surround in gable. Right bay also has wooden casements, 3-light to ground floor, 2-light with glazing bars above. Rear bay has door, casement and small gabled dormer. Interior: timber framing survives in internal walls, the front bay with heavy diagonal wall braces; winder stair in line with fireplace. To rear of C17 bays rear bay has arched wind-braces and was possibly once an open hall. RCHM I p. 188 Mon. 29.

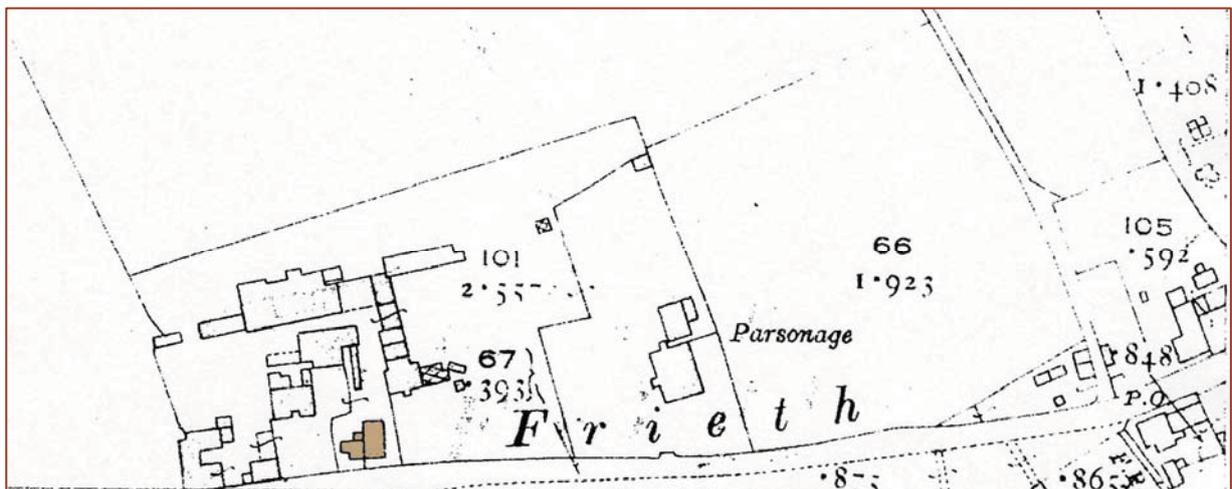
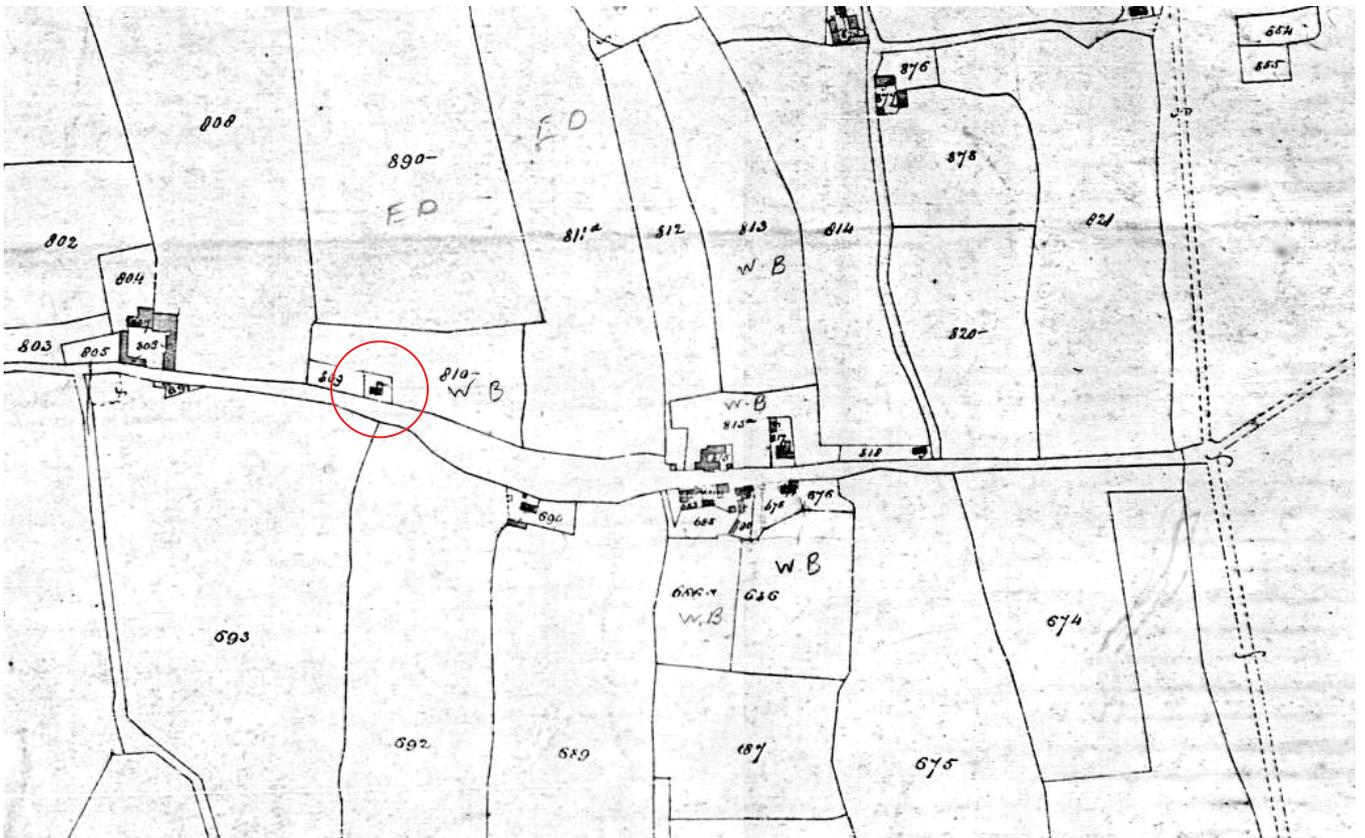


## Fig 1 Maps

Site plan

1845 Tithe map (Friethhistory.org)

1921 Ordnance Survey map; West and Collier's factory to north



*The Cottage, Frieth Hill, Hambleton, Bucks*



**Fig 2 Exteriors**

Old photograph of south elevation (undated; Frieth Village Society 1981)

South elevation

East elevation; blocked door behind vegetation

East elevation; timber-framed rear wing





**Fig 3 Exteriors**

(clockwise from above)

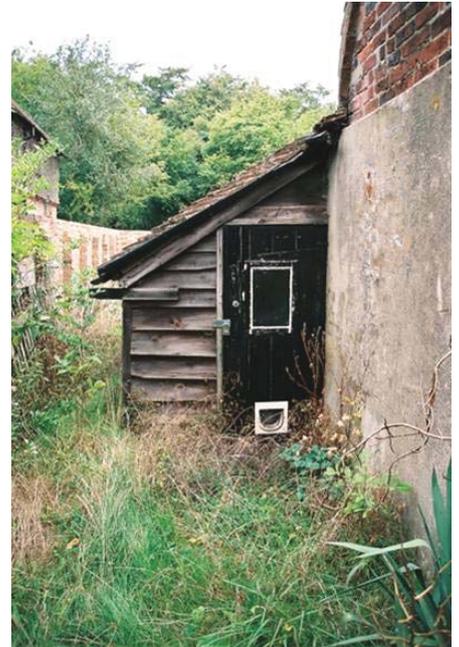
North elevation; brick & timber gable of rear wing

North elevation; modern outshot between ranges

Lean-to at west end

Timber framed west wall of rear wing

Timber framed west wall of rear wing; braced corner post





**Fig 4 Interiors**  
(clockwise from above)

Old photograph, c.1900 of Mary Martin, lacemaker who lived at the Cottage seated by a fireplace (Frieth Village Society 1981)

Sitting room looking north with restored inglenook fireplace and door to winder stairs

Timber framing in west wall of sitting room

South-west living room looking west

North-west room looking east



**Fig 5 Interiors**

(clockwise from left)

Door into first floor rear wing

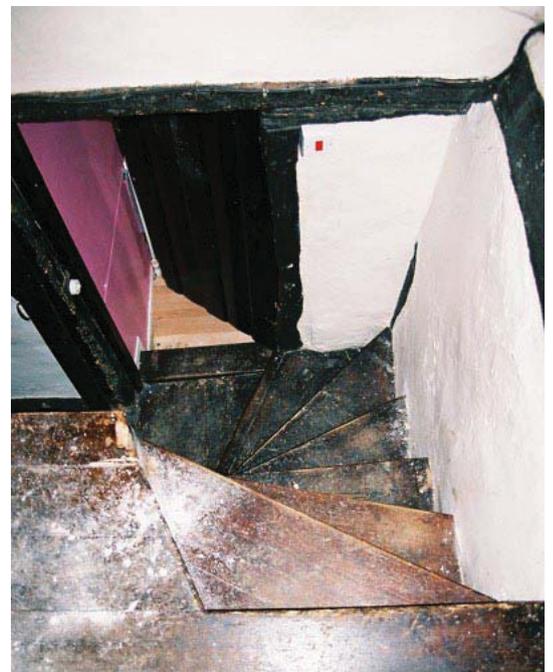
First floor rear wing, NE corner with curved windbrace & purlin

SW bedroom, framing in east wall

Top of winder stairs

SE bedroom looking south

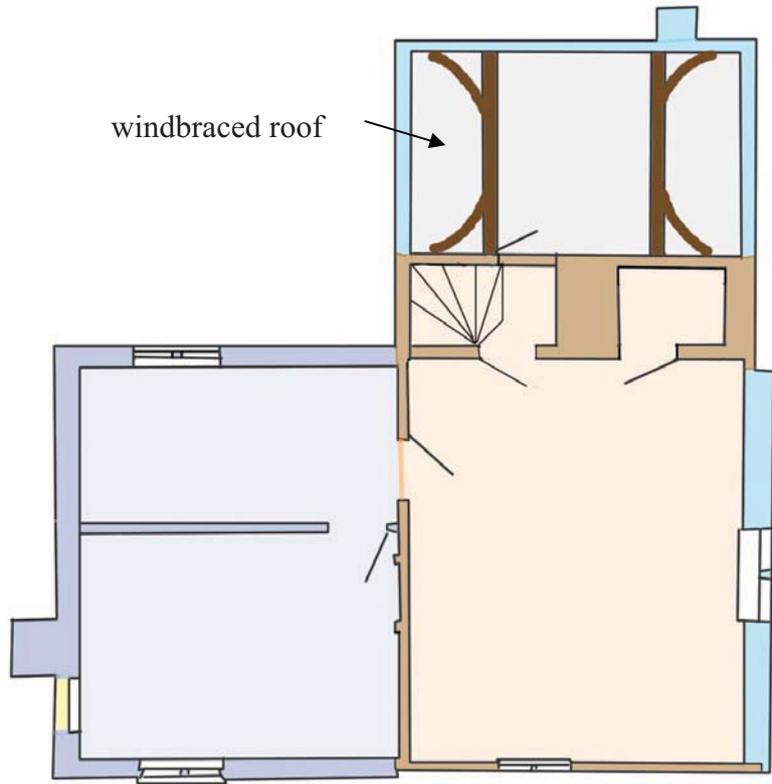
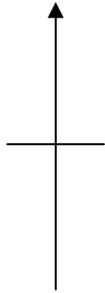
Foot of winder stairs



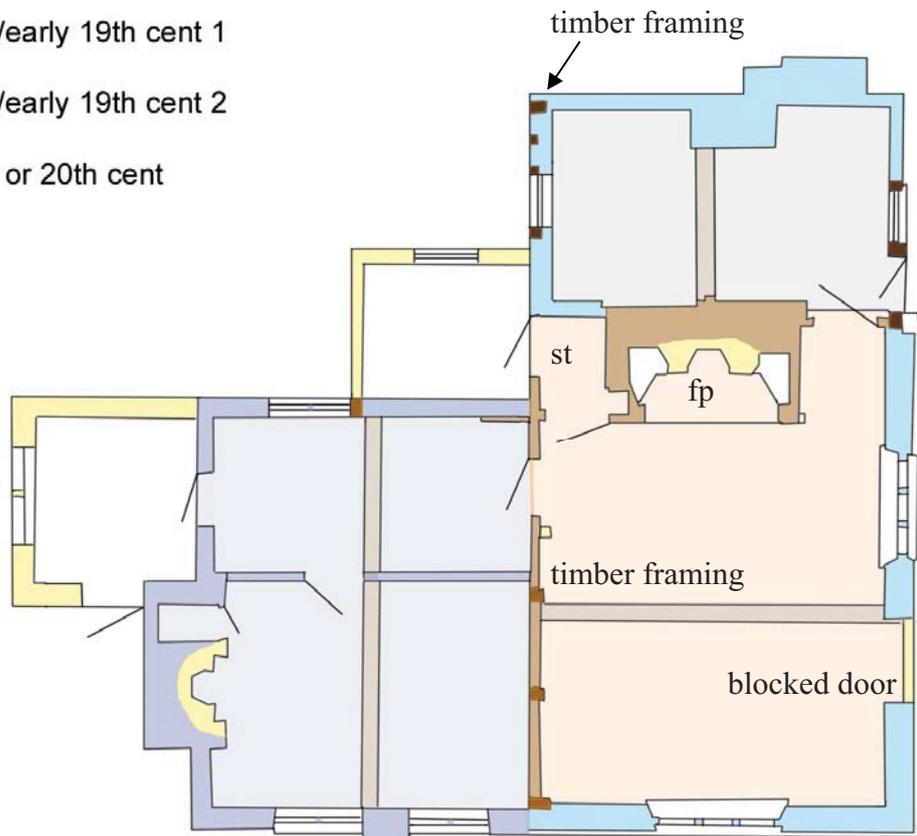
**Fig 6 Plans**

**First floor**

**Ground floor**



-  16th cent or earlier
-  17th century
-  ceiling beams
-  late 18th/early 19th cent 1
-  late 18th/early 19th cent 2
-  late 19th or 20th cent



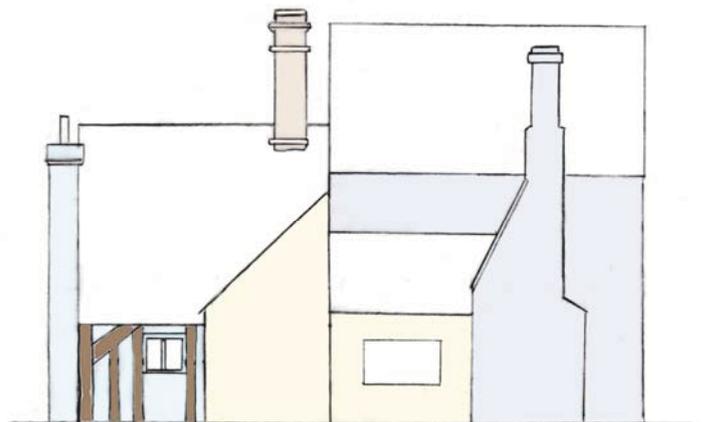
**Fig 7 Elevations**

**South**

**East**

**North**

**West**



-  16th cent or earlier
-  17th century
-  ceiling beams
-  late 18th/early 19th cent 1
-  late 18th/early 19th cent 2
-  late 19th or 20th cent