

**Historical Building Recording at Willow Cottage  
Mill Road Battsford  
Suffolk**

Grid Reference: TM 023 541  
Planning Application No.: 3489/14  
HER No.:TBA  
Oasis No.: 212369

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**Historic Building Recording:  
Willow Cottage  
Mill Road Battsford  
Suffolk**

*Archaeological Record*

Grid reference: TM 023 541

## Summary

This report provides a written and photographic record (English Heritage, level 2) for a fire damaged cottage known as Willow Cottage, Mill Road Battsford Suffolk (Listed building id: 1182699), prior to its rebuilding work.

## 1. Introduction

1.1 This report provides a written and photographic record at English Heritage (2006) level 2 for a fire damaged cottage (Listed building id: 1182699), known as Willow Cottage Mill Road Battsford Suffolk. It has been prepared to a brief designed by the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council (Dr Richard Hoggett) Archaeological Officer, ref: *Brief for Historic Building Recording at Willow Cottage Battsford Suffolk*, (dated the 15<sup>th</sup> of June 2015) and is intended to fulfil a condition of planning permission to rebuild the property.

1.2 This report is accompanied by a CD containing a full photographic record in the form of 6 megapixel digital images (Appendix 1) and includes printed photographs of key features of the building and its environs (Appendix 2). Each digital and printed photograph is described in the appendices. The CD also contains this report in MS Word format. The building was inspected and recorded on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July 2013, when the accompanying photographs were taken – a scale has been used where possible, being a two metre scale staff.

## 2. Planning background

2.1 The Local Planning Authority (LPA) has granted planning consent conditional upon an agreed programme of historic building recording work taking place in accordance with this Written Scheme of Investigation. The SCCACT brief states that : *'This application concerns restoration works to the Grade II listed Willow Cottage following its damage by fire. The house is of 18th-century origins and is timber-framed and thatched. As such, the house is Heritage Asset under the terms of the NPPF and requires archaeological recording prior to its restoration.'*

2.2 The planning application, 3489/14 , was granted by Mid Suffolk District Council, for the restoration of the building. In order to ensure that satisfactory arrangements are made for the investigation, and recording of the site, its buildings and setting, and to comply with Policy of the Council's Local Plan, the decision notice states *“.No works to the building the subject of this permission shall be commenced until a programme of building recording and analysis (of the barns) has been secured and implemented in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which shall have previously been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Reason - To secure the inspection and recording of any features or other matters that may be of historic interest or importance that may be lost in the course of the approved works.”*

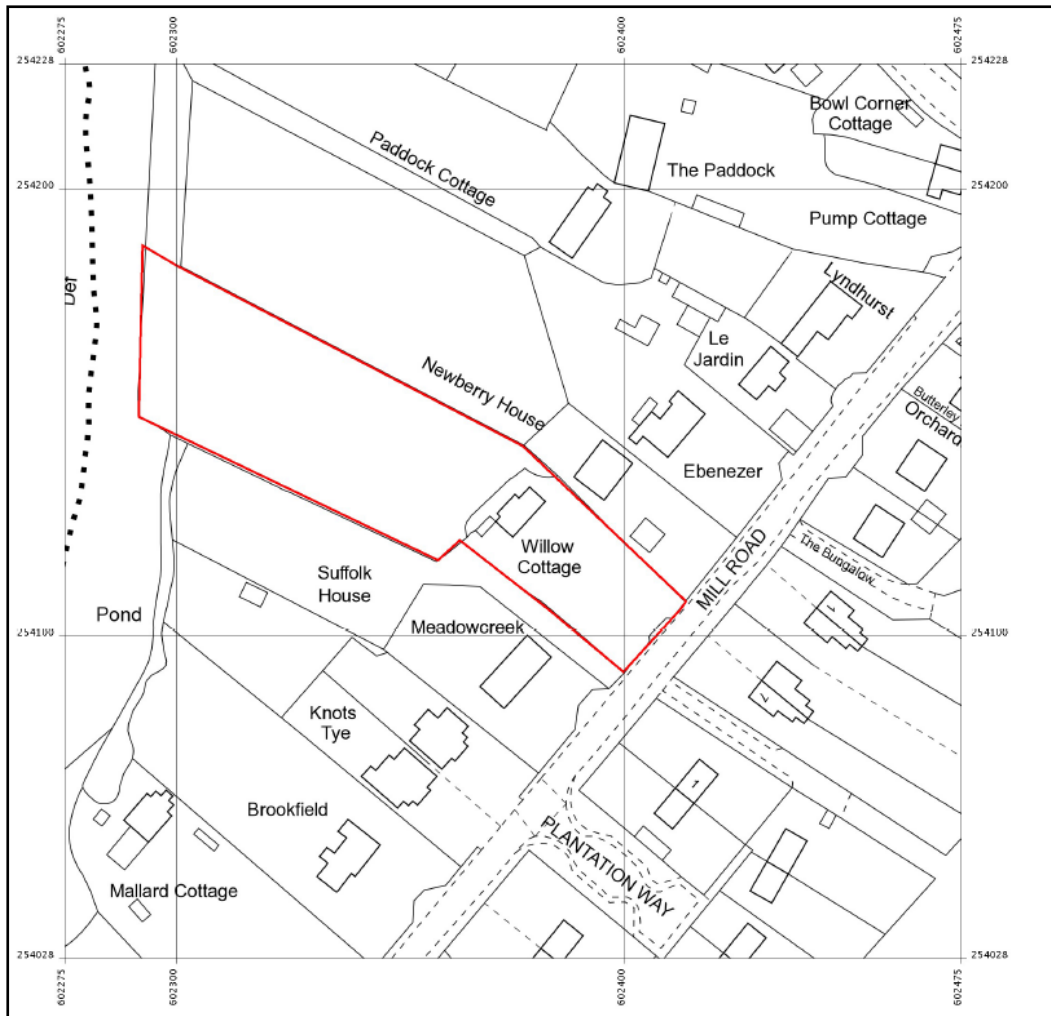
### 3. Site location and Description

Grid Ref: Grid Ref: TM 023 541



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**Figure 1. Battsford and Willow Cottage location**



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**Figure 2. Block plan showing Willow Cottage and position in Battsford village**

Battsford is a village in mid-Suffolk, within the jurisdiction of Mid Suffolk District Council, It is situated 4 miles south of Stowmarket.

## 4. Archaeological and Historical Background

### 4.1 Archaeological Background

The house is of 18th-century origins (further study has shown it to be of 17th c. origin) and is timber-framed and thatched. As such, the house is Heritage Asset under the terms of the NPPF and requires archaeological recording prior to its restoration.'

#### 4.2 Historical Background

4.2 The Domesday book describes Battsford as *Beteforda*, the entry for this village is: "1 free man, Godric, under the patronage of Harold, held 10 acres. Always 2 oxen. (Morris, J, 1986).

The origins of the name Battsford comes from 'Batts-fud' sometime 'Basforth' which translated means ford of the bat; the ford in question would have been at the bottom of Hascot Hill where the road crosses the 'Bat Stream' rising from the ancient 'Lady Well' in the adjoining parish of Badley. (Birch, M, 2003)

By the mid-19th c., William White in his directory of the county stated: Battsford contained 520 souls, 1542 Acres of land, skirted by a rivulet, which runs eastward to the Gipping. It is in two manors called St John's and Battsford Hall. The St John's alludes to St John's Manor, being the site of a Hospital of the Knights of St John of Jerusalem and was tithe free'' William White (recorder of the county in 1844).

### 5. Cartographic Evidence



*Figure 3. Hodkinson's map of Battsford, 1783 with location of Willow Cottage*





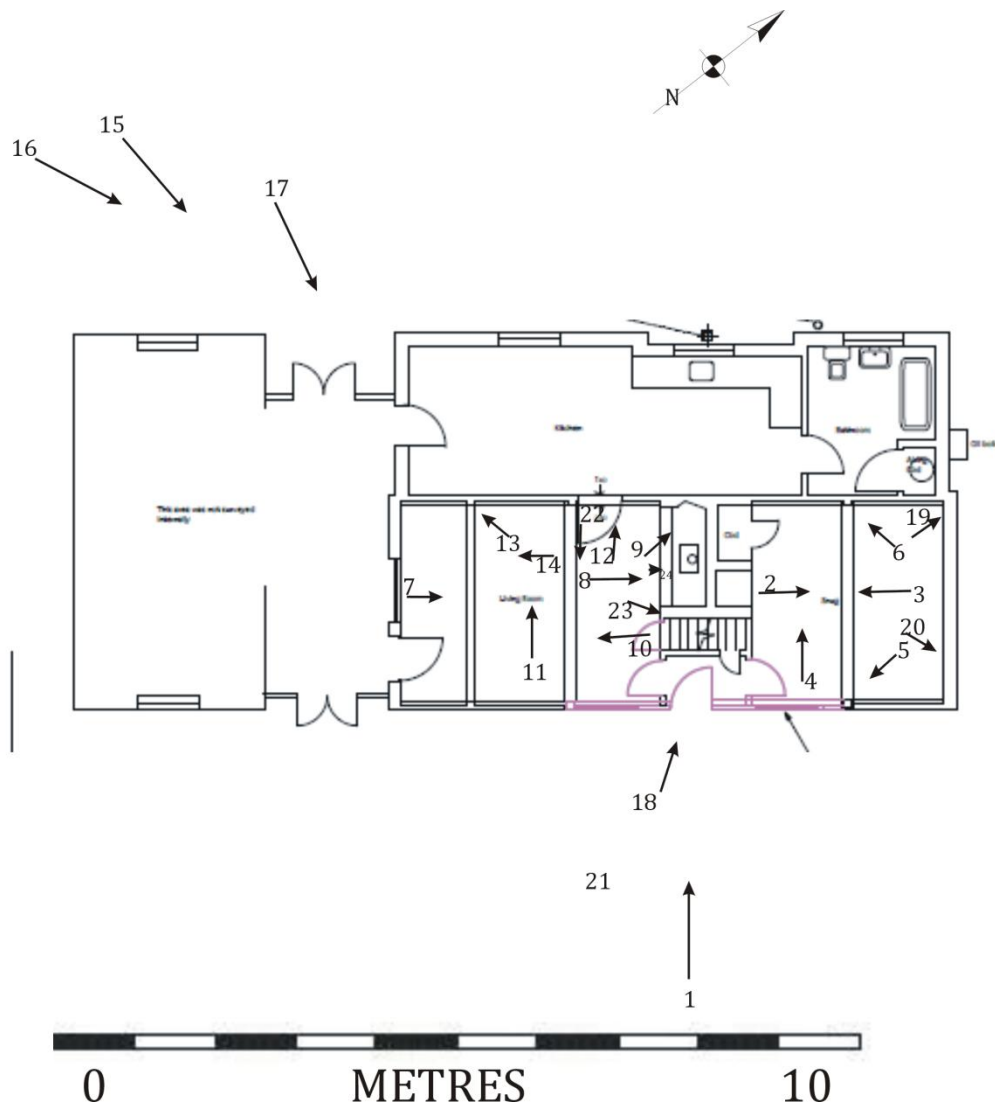
## 6. Methodology

6.1 A level 2 (English Heritage 2006) photographic record was undertaken to a brief designed by the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council (Dr Richard Hoggett).

6.2 A visual inspection was carried out and notes were taken on the features, construction and dimensions of the building. Measurements were taken externally and internally and a scale plan was drawn at 1:50. A series of photographs were taken externally and internally. The photographic record comprised of digital, black and white print and colour transparencies.

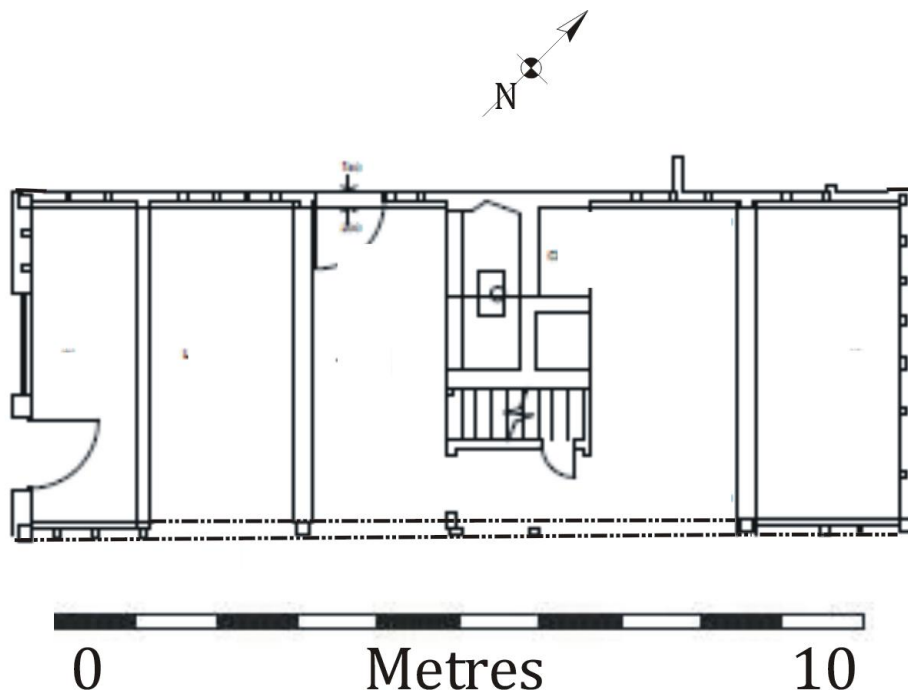
6.3 From the evidence presented, an interpretation of the building's function, form and date was made.

6.4 Within the report, all image references refer to the digital images as listed in appendix IV.



**Figure 7. Existing plan of building with extensions (photographic key)**

## 7. Building Analysis



*Figure 9. Original Plan of Willow Cottage*

### ***Building Overview and Historical Evidence***

Willow Cottage is typical of the small farm house, commonly called a cottage in the eastern region of England. It is of the *lobby entrance plan* type, which echoes the earlier medieval plan with a central chimney stack, sometimes inserted into the screens passage, with a hall to one side and a parlour to the other; the hall often having an added bay as a service room or buttery as in this case, thus creating three bays. Willow Cottage was built as a later development of these types and two-storied throughout, probably during the mid-later 17th century. The chimney stack is off-set to the hip of the roof allowing for a larger bay to the left side being the hall or main living room with a service room beyond (plt. ). In this example, the service room has been removed to create an open-plan effect, thus enlarging the space as a living room. Originally the room to the right of the stack would have been the parlour or best room (plt. ) with a smaller fireplace than the hall to provide for heating only; the main fireplace in the hall was where all of the domestic chores were carried out such as cooking and baking, etc. The service room beyond the hall was used as storage for perishable foodstuffs such as meat, dairy products, etc and was not heated. The evidence for this room having been removed is the addition of the later wall posts (modern) supporting a later joist, also modern (plt. ), less substantial from the main bridging beam in the hall, which is decorated with a chamfer and drawn-out stop of a pyramidal design. This form of decoration was not normally seen beyond the early 18th century in simpler houses or indeed some of the better ones. The upper storey is non-existent which has been destroyed by fire, so dating evidence from the roof is not available.

However, enough of the ground floor survives to give an indication of its age and function. The wall construction is typical of the mid-later 17th century using a combination of nails and pegs to form joints. The bridging beam in the parlour is fairly substantial and also incorporates the same decoration of a chamfer and drawn -out stop (plt. ), not normally seen in 18th century houses. The position of the chimney stack also denotes a 17th century origin; by the early 18th century it was becoming common to place chimneys on to the gable-ends of the house. The fireplace bressummer beam or lintel in the hall (main fireplace) has an added decoration of a chamfer and plain stop (plt. ), which is more uncommon than on the joists and is an added feature to the norm (plt. ). The brickwork (plt. ) in the fireplace is consistent to a 17th c. date, however, a cast-iron oven door placed to the left side of the inner fireplace appears to be a modern embellishment. A central recess in the back of the fireplace was to incorporate a smaller hearth during the Victorian period with the remainder having been filled in at some stage; the fashion today is to reopen the original expanse of the original hearth as we see here.

Cottages of this form are quite common in East Anglia, and their survival is a testimony to the carpenters good construction methods. They were generally built by the less wealthy class of farmers or smallholders, yet ' they were probably the homes of yeoman or husbandmen, and not the 'cottagers' of the landless labourers' (Cunningham, P, 1980).

According to the listed building report a small cupboard was extant at the time of the survey, which was dated as being 1770 with several other initials. The compiler suggested this was probably the date of the house (LB id. 1182699). Unfortunately, this feature no longer survives and is likely to have be an 18th century addition, a time when accessories such as bread ovens and side cupboards and shelves were often added to fireplaces.

## 8. Context and Setting of the Building

As already mentioned, Willow Cottage sits at the western end of what was once a linear-shaped green (plt. ), which disappeared during the early eighteenth century when the roads were also changed, and presumably widened and improved as part of the enclosure act. The cottage's position over-looking what would have been the green is a typical placement, allowing easy access for any grazing animals kept by the house owner or small-holder. The cottage actually stands in Battsford Tye, a neighbour to Battsford. The name Tye in Battsford Tye is explained by the following article:

*'A Tye is a village green of sorts - it was intended for grazing cattle. At one time, farmers would take their cattle long distances to markets - possibly hundreds of miles. Along the way, they would need to stop somewhere where the cattle could graze and rest. It was in the interests of villages to provide Tyes, because the farmer (and assistants) would also need to stop and rest, thus using local services, inns, etc. Because of this, a separate settlement often grew up around the tye, with its own inn, shops, houses, etc. Several good examples survive of this - Battsford and Battsford Tye, for instance. Sometimes, the Tye village and original village grew into each other, creating a ribbon development along a road - most notably perhaps, Barking and Barking Tye. Barking Tye is supposed to be the largest of Suffolk's Tyes' (www.suffolkchurches.co.uk - an alternative guide to the churches of Suffolk.)*

Willow Cottage forms part of the *Tye* mentioned above, which means it may have played some part in providing a resource for travellers or drovers in some way.

## 9. Interpretation and Conclusion

Among the dating evidence and diagnostic features within Willow Cottage are the decorated bridging beams and fireplace typical of the mid-late 17th century, a time when East Anglia enjoyed a level of prosperity, a testimony to this being the number of houses like Willow Cottage surviving from this period in the countryside as well as in towns.

Willow Cottage is a typical example of one of these houses, built on a lobby entrance plan consisting of two principal rooms within three bays, which accommodated the parlour, hall and service room. The interpretation as a whole is only based on the ground floor level with the upper floor no longer extant. The evidence gained from the ground floor though is sufficient to draw a conclusion as to its original function as a yeoman's house and possibly something extra as a *Tye house* and its date.

## 10. Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to Phil Stroud Associates for allowing access to the property and funding this report. The site work and report were completed by Dennis Payne BA (Hons) ACIfA

## Bibliography

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**Cunningham, P (ARIBA). (1980) How Old is Your House? Alphabooks, Sherbourne**

**Rumble, A. R. (ed.), 1986, *Domesday Book, vol. 34: Suffolk*, (2 vols. Phillimore)**

**White, W. 1844, *History Gazetteer and Directory of Suffolk (1970 ed.)*, David and Charles (Publishers) Limited South Devon House Railway Station Newton Abbot Devon**

### **Sources:**

**The Suffolk County Council Historic Environment Record, Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds Suffolk**

**The Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich**

### **Maps & Documents Consulted:**

**Hodskinson's map of Battsford Tye, 1783**

**Tithe map of Battsford Tye, Suffolk records Office ref:**

**Enclosure map of Battsford Tye, Suffolk Records Office ref:**

**The Ordnance Survey of 1880**

## Appendix I: Black and White Photographic Archive in Report

Table 1: Black and White Photographic archive (Full photographic archive on accompanying CD)

Print No.	Description: Willow Cottage	Taken from	Date
			25/06/15
1	<i>Front elevation</i>	South-east	
2	Interior parlour end gable wall	South-west	
3	Interior of parlour towards small fireplace	North-east	
4	Interior parlour, rear wall	South-east	
5	Bridging beam detail (parlour)	North	
6	Bridging beam and principal post (parlour)	South-east	
7	Hall, towards fireplace	South-west	
8	Hall, fireplace detail	North-east	
9	Fireplace oven false door	South	
10	Hall towards end gable wall	North-east	
11	Hall rear wall - studwork detail	South-east	
12	Door post (remnant) to rear of hall	North-east	
13	Later wall post and tie-beam in position of removed service room wall in the hall	North-east	
14	Detail of later timberwork at service room position	North-east	
15	Rear prospect of cottage	North-west	
16	Chimney stack detail	North-west	
17	Cottage end gable wall	North-west	
18	Lobby entrance	South	
19	Parlour clamp for upper floor support detail	South-west	
20	Parlour, wattle and daub wall as exposed	North-west	
21	Top plate as removed	n/a	
22	Waney bridging beam in hall	North-west	
23	Brick detail in hall fireplace	South-west	
24	Hall fireplace bressummer/lintel detail	South	

## Appendix II: Index to Colour Slide Archive in Report

Table 2 Colour Slides (Full Photographic archive on accompanying CD)

Print No.	Description: Willow Cottage	Taken from	Date
			25/06/15
1	<i>Front elevation</i>	South-east	
2	Interior parlour end gable wall	South-west	
3	Interior of parlour towards small fireplace	North-east	
4	Interior parlour, rear wall	South-east	
5	Bridging beam detail (parlour)	North	
6	Bridging beam and principal post (parlour)	South-east	
7	Hall, towards fireplace	South-west	
8	Hall, fireplace detail	North-east	
9	Fireplace oven false door	South	
10	Hall towards end gable wall	North-east	
11	Hall rear wall - studwork detail	South-east	
12	Door post (remnant) to rear of hall	North-east	
13	Later wall post and tie-beam in position of removed service room wall in hall	North-east	
14	Detail of later timberwork at service room position	North-east	
15	Rear prospect of cottage	North-west	
16	Chimney stack detail	North-west	
17	Cottage end gable wall	North-west	
18	Lobby entrance	South	
19	Parlour clamp for upper floor support detail	South-west	
20	Parlour, wattle and daub wall as exposed	North-west	
21	Top plate as removed	n/a	
22	Waney bridging beam in hall	North-west	
23	Brick detail in hall fireplace	South-west	
24	Hall fireplace bressummer/lintel detail	South	



## Appendix III: Index to Digital Images in Report:

Table 3 (full photographic record on accompanying CD)

Image No.	<b>Description: Willow Cottage</b>	Taken from	Date 25/06/15
1	<b><i>Front elevation</i></b>	South-east	
2	Interior parlour end gable wall	South-west	
3	Interior of parlour towards small fireplace	North-east	
4	Interior parlour, rear wall	South-east	
5	Bridging beam detail (parlour)	North	
6	Bridging beam and principal post (parlour)	South-east	
7	Hall, towards fireplace	South-west	
8	Hall, fireplace detail	North-east	
9	Fireplace oven false door	South	
10	Hall towards end gable wall	North-east	
11	Hall rear wall - studwork detail	South-east	
12	Door post (remnant) to rear of hall	North-east	
13	Later wall post and tie-beam in position of removed service room wall, from the hall	North-east	
14	Detail of later timberwork at service room position	North-east	
15	Rear prospect of cottage	North-west	
16	Chimney stack detail	North-west	
17	Cottage end gable wall	North-west	
18	Lobby entrance	South	
19	Parlour clamp for upper floor support detail	South-west	
20	Parlour, wattle and daub wall as exposed	North-west	
21	Top plate as removed	n/a	
22	Waney bridging beam in hall	North-west	
23	Brick detail in hall fireplace	South-west	
24	Hall fireplace bressummer/lintel detail	South	

## Appendix IV: Digital images



*Plate 1. Willow Cottage from the road*



*Plate 2. Parlour end gable wall studwork*



*Plate 3. Small fireplace in parlour (partilly concealed)*



*Plate 4 . Parlour wall studwork detail*





*Plate 5 Bridging beam chamfer detail and drawn-out stop in parlour*



*Plate 6. Bridging beam and principal post detail in parlour*



*Plate 7. The hall towards the fireplace*



*Plate 8. Fireplace in the hall*





*Plate 9. Recessed oven (modern)*



*Plate 10. Hall through to open up service room*



*Plate 11. Rear wall of hall and service room (on the left)*



*Plate 12. Rear wall doorway post (truncated at ceiling height)*





*Plate 13. Later division between hall and service room*



*Plate 14. Detail of storey post and joist support at service room division*





*Plate 15. Rear prospect of Willow Cottage*



*Plate 16. Chimney stack as revealed*



*Plate 17. The end gable wall to the left through modern connecting passage*



*Plate 18. Lobby entrance (front)*





*Plate19. Detail of clamp supporting upper floor in parlour gable end wall*



*Plate 20. Wattle and daub wall fabric as revealed in the parlour*

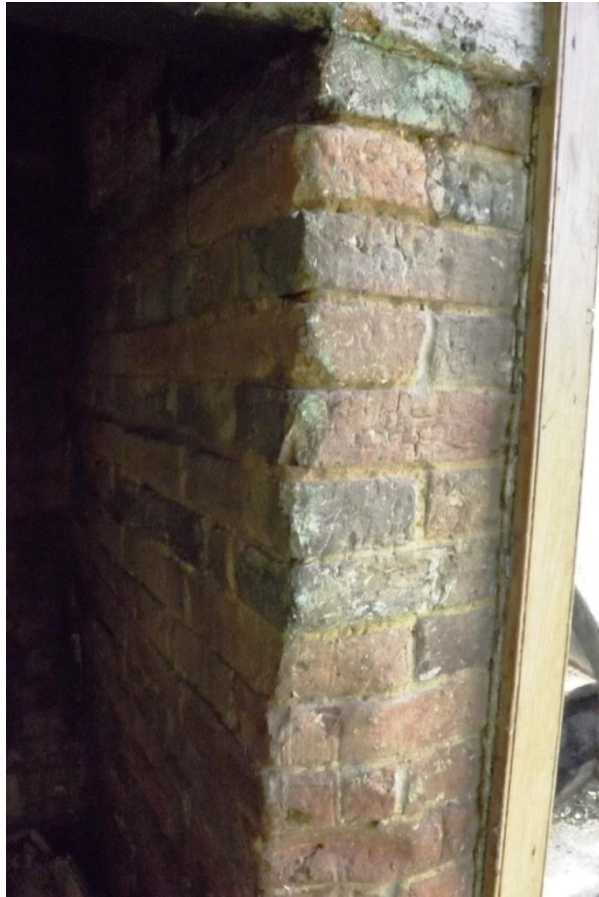


*Plate 21. The wall plate (as removed)*



*Plate 22. Waney bridging beam in the hall*





*Plate 23. Fire place (hall) brickwork detail*



*Plate24. Fireplace bressummer beam chamfer and stop detail in the hall*

