

The Old Hall, Walton, Leicestershire

Photographic Recording



understanding heritage matters

Dr Catherine Coutts

Archaeology Warwickshire Report No 1348
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*Working for
Warwickshire*

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Leicestershire

Commissioned by: Alana Field

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Summary

Photographic survey took place at The Old Hall, Walton, Leicestershire, ahead of the erection of an extension to the side/rear of the property. The house, along with Old Hall Cottage, which was originally part of the same house, is a Grade II Listed Building dating to at least the 16th century with timber-framing visible on the interior walls. It has, however, been externally, and in some areas internally, encased in later brickwork, giving it the appearance of a building of much later date.

1 Introduction

1.1 Planning permission has been granted by Harborough District Council and Listed Building Consent for the demolition of conservatory, erection of single storey rear/side extension and internal alterations to The Old Hall, Hall Lane, Walton, Leicestershire (Planning Refs. 13/00188 and 13/00189/LBC). Because the house is a Grade II Listed Building with its origins in the 16th century and the proposed conversions have potential to destroy, alter, damage or obscure elements of the historic building fabric and due to the potential for archaeological deposits to be disturbed or exposed by the work, it was a condition of planning permission that the applicant should secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work, in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, approved by the Planning Authority before work commenced. The work required is an Historic Building Photographic Survey, as defined by the brief and in accordance with English Heritage Guidelines (Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice, 2006) before any conversion works start, and a watching brief during groundworks on the site.

1.2 The photographic recording took place in August 2013 and this report provides the result of that. The project site code is WH13 and the accession number is X/A141.2013. The archive will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums on completion of the project.

2 Methodology

2.1 A photographic record was made on August 14th 2013, using SLR cameras with conventional (silver halide) film and a high resolution DSLR images taken as raw image files, converted to TIFFs. Flash was used for interior shots. Monochrome prints have been professionally processed by Ilford and will be included in the project archive. All prints have been labelled and cross-referenced to the negatives. Photographs have been taken at right angles to buildings where possible, using a metric scale.

4.3 An experienced historic building recording archaeologist carried out the building recording, using the 2006 edition of English Heritage's 'Understanding Historic Buildings, A guide to Good Recording Practice'. Photographic recording included the following:

- 1 general view/views of building's interior, exterior and setting with a 2m ranging rod or other scale on a selection of images.
- 2 buildings external appearance; oblique views and elevation views and any further views pertinent to the original design intentions of architect
- 4 overall appearance of principal rooms and areas
- 5 external and internal structural detail and decoration

- 6 machinery or plant, or evidence for its former existence
- 7 dates and inscriptions, graffiti etc
- 8 building contents or ephemera
- 9 copies of maps, drawings, views and photographs

3 Archaeological and Historical Background

3.1 The Old Hall is a Grade II Listed Building, located on Hall Lane, in the western part of Walton (Leicestershire Historic Environment Record number MLE11972). The Listed Building citation is as follows:

List Entry Summary

Name: THE OLD HALL THE OLD HALL COTTAGE

List Entry Number: 1295078

Location

THE OLD HALL COTTAGE, HALL LANE

THE OLD HALL, HALL LANE

County: Leicestershire

District: Harborough

District Type: District Authority

Parish: Kimcote and Walton

Grade: II

Date first listed: 07-Dec-1976

List Entry Description

SP 58 NE KIMCOTE & WALTON HALL LANE, Walton (south side)

1/12 The Old Hall and The 07/12/76 Old Hall Cottage

House, now two dwellings. C16, C17, C20 alterations. Timber-framing and brick, partly rendered. Steeply pitched plain tile roof with 2 ridge stacks and 1 gable stack. 2 storeys, cellar and attic. Medieval cellar said to be unrelated to the present building, beneath centre bay. North front: 3 bays, left bay clad in brick, centre and right bays rendered. From left to right: a 2-light casement, then a 3-light casement, then a single light window, then a doorway with C20 gabled hood on brackets, and part-glazed door, followed by a 2-light casement. Above from left to right: a 2-light mullion and transom casement, then 2, small 2-light windows, then a 2-light casement. All C20 windows, with flat arches. East gable end wall has C20 porch and casements, and shuttered access to attic.

INTERIOR: heavy main beams and joists, close studding. Re-used early C17 dogleg staircase with closed string, turned balusters, moulded newel with finial and moulded handrail. Earlier survey description refers to roof having substantial collars, tie beams and purlins, 1 truss with plastered infill and doorway.

Listing NGR: SP5939986902

3.2 At some time in the later 20th century a programme of renovation work took place at The Old Hall and an essay describing the building and various historic elements visible at the time, was recorded by Stanley Palmer. This is included as an appendix to this report.

4 Previous and potential impact

4.1 The Old Hall has undergone significant changes since it was originally built. It is considered likely that it was originally a hall house, with a central fire in the hall, which would have been open to the roof timbers. It is likely that the building was thatched, until the later 19th century, when the roof was replaced. The house was constructed as a close-studded, timber-framed building but this is no longer in evidence from the outside, as the house had been clad in brick externally in its entirety and internally in the kitchen and parts of the upstairs. The documented late 19th-century fire was apparently confined to the north-eastern part of the house. Major renovations have taken place in the later 20th century, including replacement of all windows and erection of the porch and conservatory at the rear.

4.2 The new extension and alterations to the layout of the house have the potential to impact on the historic fabric of the building and reveal archaeological features at the rear of the house. Ground reduction may expose evidence for an external entrance to the cellar, or provide some evidence that the cellar is, or isn't, considerably older than the house itself.

5 Discussion

5.1 The Old Hall has seen many changes to its structure over the centuries. At present the western part, along with Old Hall Cottage, is rendered, while the eastern third is exposed brick (Figs 2-5). The chimneys are off-set to the north of the apex of the roof, indicating they are later additions. The window frames are all replacements and the only window in an original position is the first floor window in the central part of the property. Other windows in the Old Hall are in the secondary brick openings, or are later insertions such as that on the gable at ground floor level (Fig 6). The upper window on the gable, which accesses the attic, is shuttered, while a first floor door opening has been replaced by windows (Fig 8).

5.2 The brickwork around the ground floor level and first floor to attic differs markedly (Fig 9). The upper bricks are generally dark red and in Flemish bond, with over-fired headers (Fig 10). The bricks are clearly hand-made in both sections but the lower ones are lighter in colour, set in an irregular bond, with modern mortar (Fig 11). This clearly indicates a rebuilding of the lower brickwork, but using reclaimed bricks. A small window in the rear wall has been blocked up with modern bricks (Fig 12).

5.3 Internally there are two rooms on the ground floor, a kitchen (Figs 13-16) and a living

room (Figs 17-24). The kitchen is floored with wooden floorboards (stone cellar below) and a stone hearth exists beneath the quarry tiles in the fireplace in its north-west corner (Fig 15), which now houses a boiler. The heavy ceiling beams are exposed.

5.4 The living room has a large inglenook fireplace, again in the north-west corner of the room. Close studding exposed along north wall (Fig 18), and east wall, with a small amount on the south wall (Fig 19). The cross beam has chamfer stops (Fig 20) and the insertion of the staircase in the corner of the room has required the chamfering of the leading edge of a ceiling joist (Fig 21). There are few period fixtures and fittings left in the building. Hooks set into one of the beams are of unknown purpose (Fig 22), while a stair-rail bracket in the former cross-passage (now toilet) indicates where the stair used to run along the south wall (Fig 23), from the kitchen, before the present staircase, with period newel post (Fig 24) was inserted.

5.5 The cellar door has been shaped to fit below the stair (Fig 25) and the stone cellar steps are worn and brick-patched (Figs 26-27). The cellar is a curious room, smaller than the kitchen room below which it lies, with walls constructed of rough, whitewashed, stone (Fig 28). The floor is now concrete, but Palmer (no date, see Appendix) states that at the time of his examination was of brick 'similar to those used in the hall section'. The cellar walling supports the area of the kitchen fireplace. The recess in the rear wall suggests a possible alternative entrance to the cellar from outside (Fig 29).

5.6 Upstairs the space has been divided into a bedroom, bathroom and passage in the north-east part and hall, stairs and two bedrooms in the south-west part (see Fig 52). The main bedroom, which occupies the northern part of the house, has a stone fireplace (Fig 30). The central ceiling timber is exposed, as are other timbers in the walls (Fig 31). The central beam has mortises visible for joists, suggesting the ceiling level has been raised (Fig 32).

5.7 The small rear bedroom shows little of its original structure other than a timber in the corner and above the window (Fig 33). The front bedroom, however, has exposed close studding (Fig 34), an original window mullion and beam, the latter with exposed mortises and a heightened ceiling (Fig 35). The dividing wall with the hall has infilled staves (Fig 36), while on the south-west wall there appears to be the recess of a fireplace (Fig 37).

5.8 In the upper hall, the balustrade is made up of a curious mixture of old and newer balusters (Fig 38) and the cross-beam shows a number of carpenter's marks incised on its upper surface (Fig 39). The dividing wall between the bathroom and hall has large structural timbers (Figs 40-41).

5.9 The attic is made up of two rooms, divided by a partition wall (Figs 42-49). There are 'exits' at both ends, one into the roofspace of The Old Cottage (Fig 42) and the other to the shuttered window on the gable end. The central partition is made up of massive structural timbers partly cut to create headroom for a doorway and with the walls created using painted lath and plaster (Fig 43). Only a small amount of this remains on the upper part of the room, where the replacement rafters can be seen (Fig 44). Windbraces can be seen in the south-western attic room, but not the north-eastern (Figs 45-47). The presence of painted lath and plaster (see also Fig 48) suggest that the roof space was used, possibly even as accommodation.

5.10 The large roof timbers themselves show no sign of the kind of smoke blackening which would be expected if they had been present in an open medieval hall and it is possible

that these timbers are not original, but are later replacements. Their substantial nature suggests an early date, however, and it would be interesting to compare dendro-dating of timbers in the close studding with those in the roof

Acknowledgements

Archaeology (Projects) Warwickshire would like to thank Alana Field for commissioning the work and for access to the property.

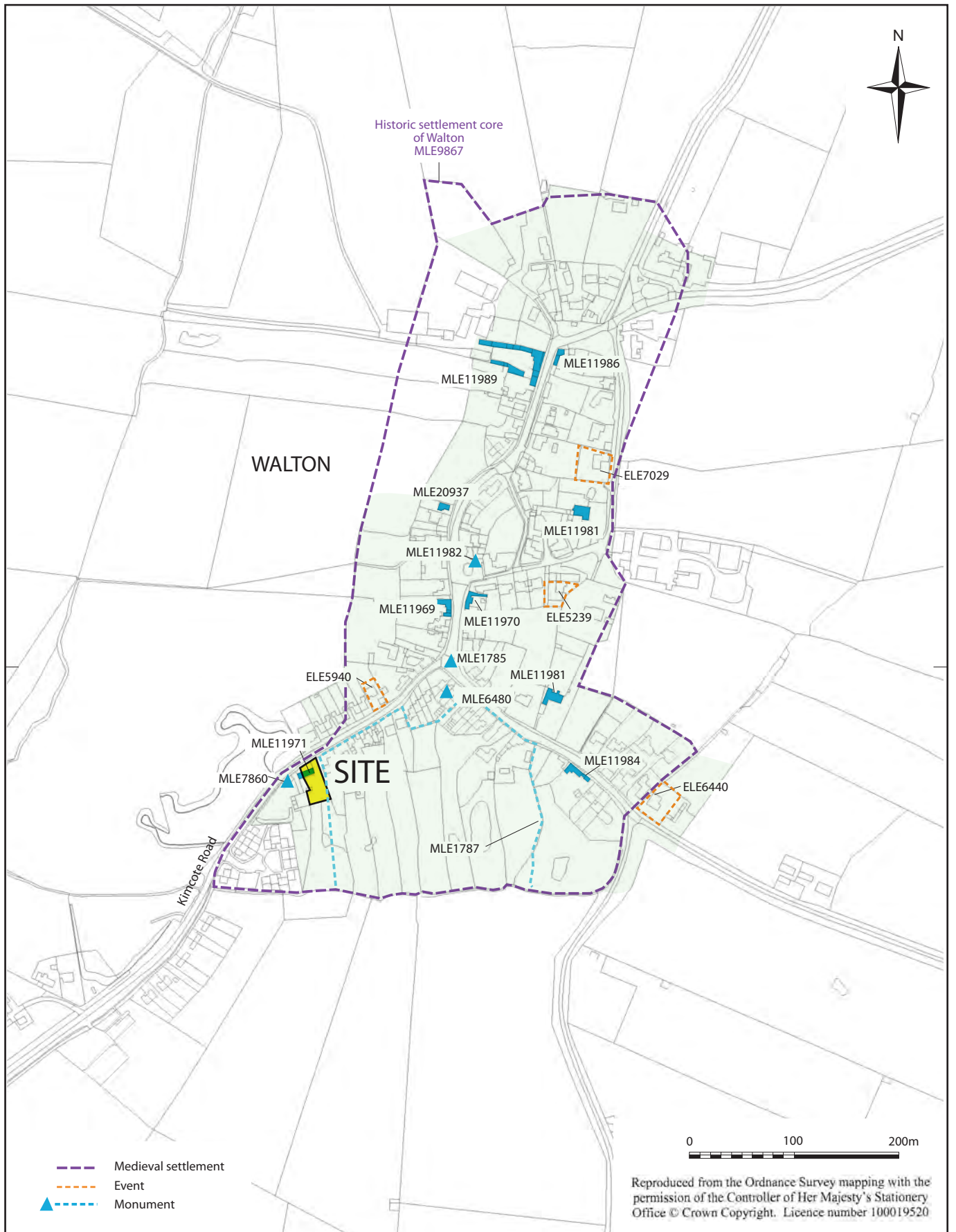


Fig 1: Site location



Fig 2: The Old Hall



Fig 3: Front of The Old Hall and Old Hall Cottage



Fig 4: Front of house, central section



Fig 5: Rear of house



Fig 6: Gable end of house with modern porch



Fig 7: Shuttered window in gable end



Fig 8: Window in former doorway in gable end



Fig 9: Rear of house showing change in brickwork between ground floor and first floor



Fig 10: Flemish bond brickwork in upper part of rear wall

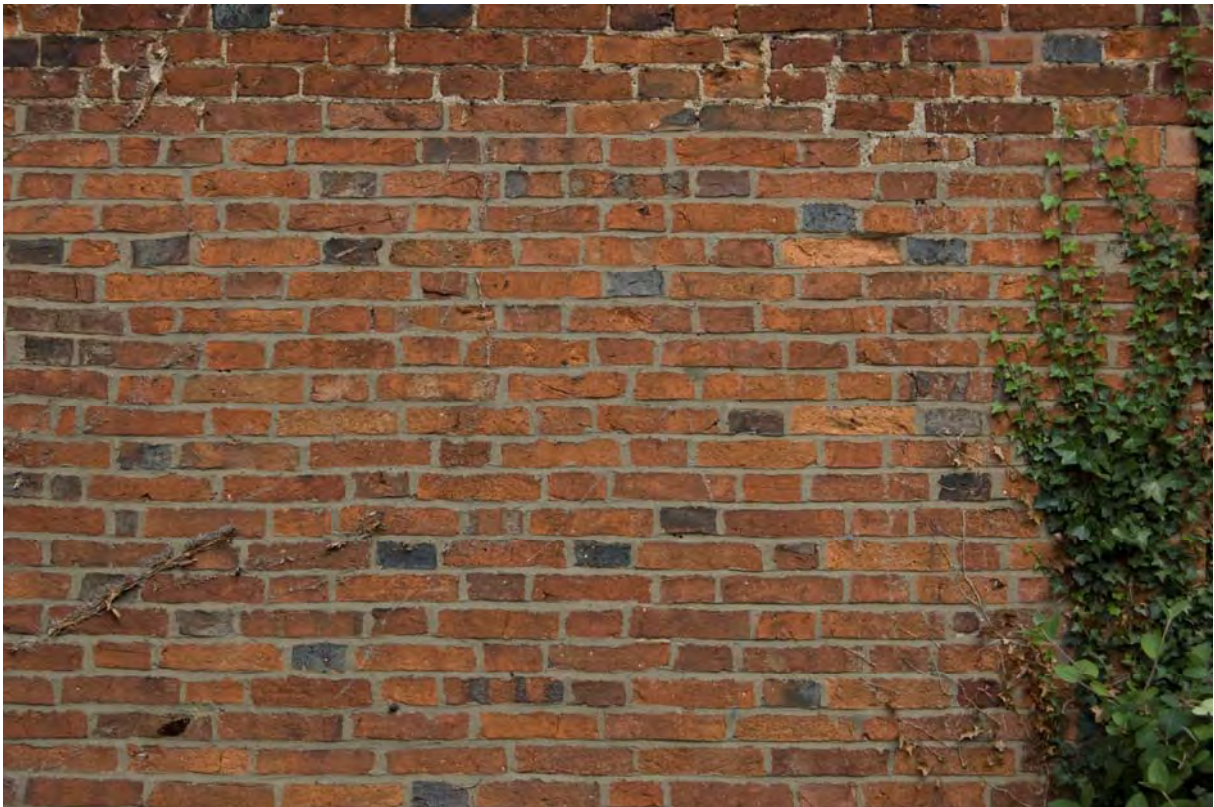


Fig 11: Brickwork in lower part of rear wall



Fig 12: Blocked window in rear wall



Fig 13: Kitchen



Fig 14: Kitchen, looking towards living room



Fig 15: Stone hearth beneath quarry tiles



Fig 16: Timber beams



Fig 17: Living room with inglenook fireplace



Fig 18: Close studding on interior wall



Fig 19: Close studding and inserted stair



Fig 20: Beam with chamfer stops



Fig 21: Chamfered side of beam



Fig 22: Hooks on beam



Fig 23: Blocked window and bracket for former stair rail on beam



Fig 24: Newell post



Fig 25: Door to cellar



Fig 26: Cellar steps, looking up

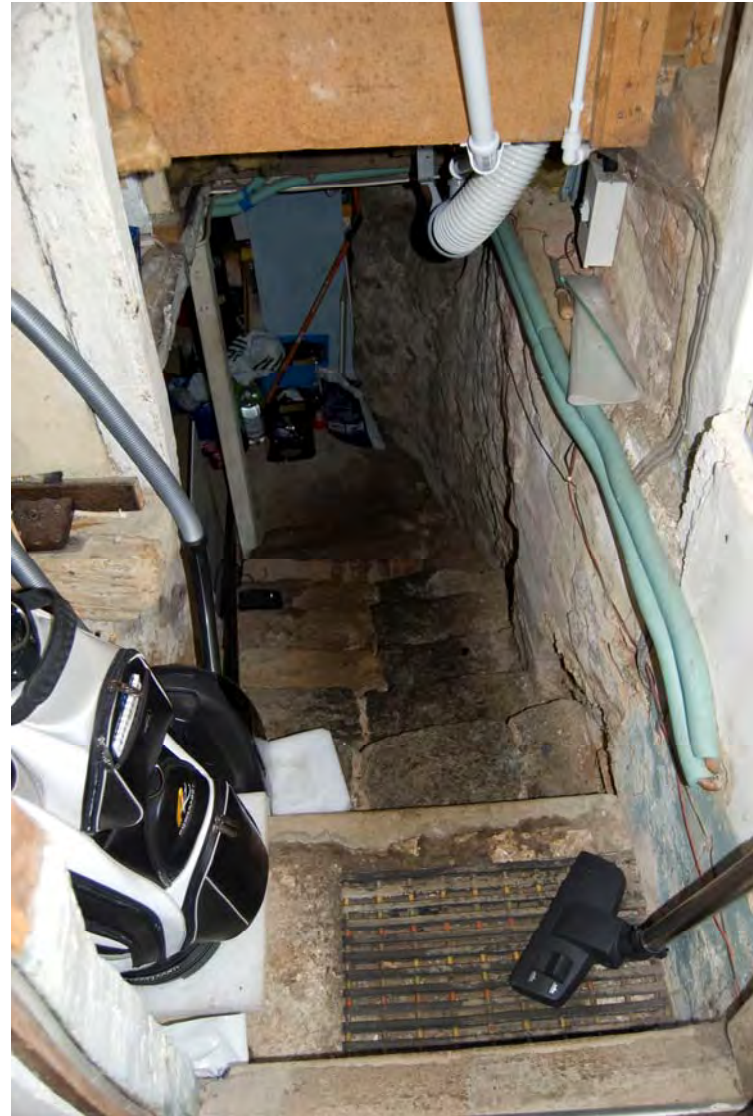


Fig 27: Cellar steps, looking down



Fig 28: Cellar, looking north



Fig 29: Cellar, looking south



Fig 30: Main bedroom with fireplace



Fig 31: Detail of timbers



Fig 32: Timber with joist holes



Fig 33: Rear bedroom



Fig 34: Front bedroom, close studding



Fig 35: Detail of timberwork



Fig 36: Staves in dividing wall



Fig 37: Recess of former fireplace



Fig 38: Staircase balusters



Fig 39: Carpenter's marks



Fig 40: Timber-framing in bathroom



Fig 41: Timber-framing in hall



Fig 42: Attic, brick chimney



Fig 43: Attic, central partition



Fig 44: Attic, upper roof timbers



Fig 45: Windbrace



Fig 46: Eastern side of roofspace



Fig 47: Windbrace



Fig 48: Lath and plaster



Fig 49: Old and new rafters

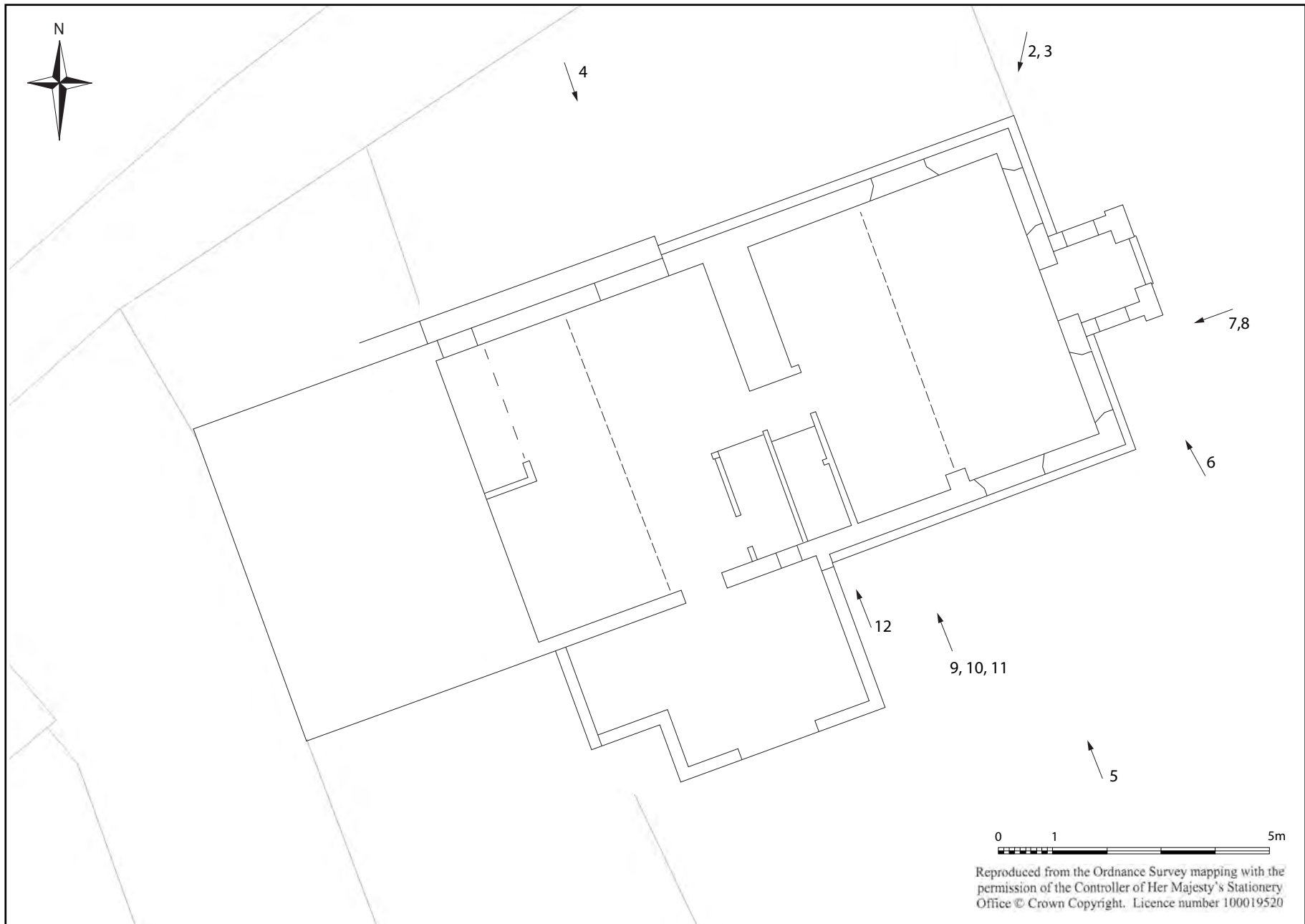


Fig 50: External photographs

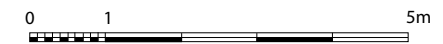
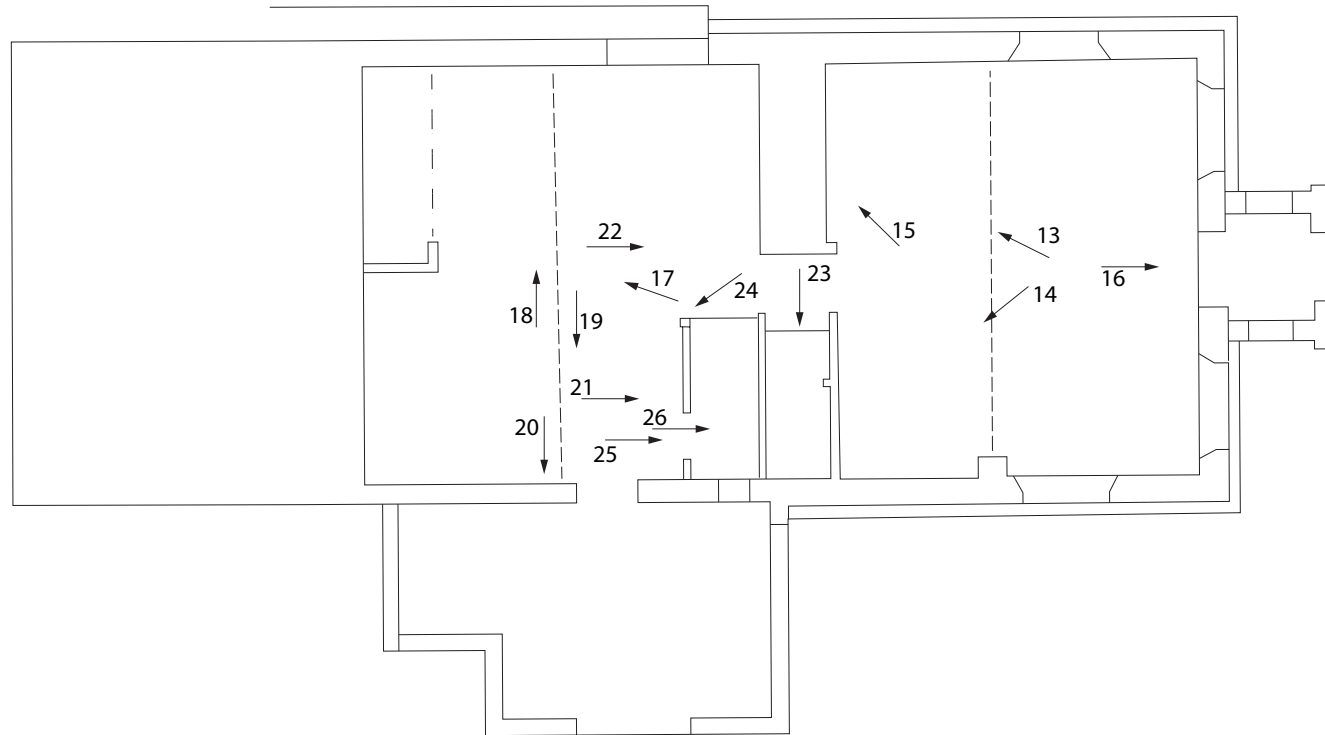


Fig 51: Ground floor photographs

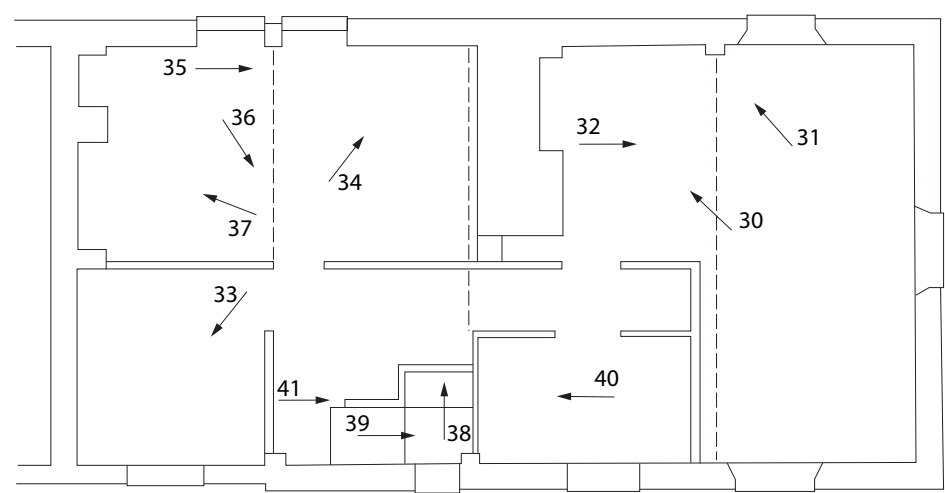


Fig 52: First floor photographs

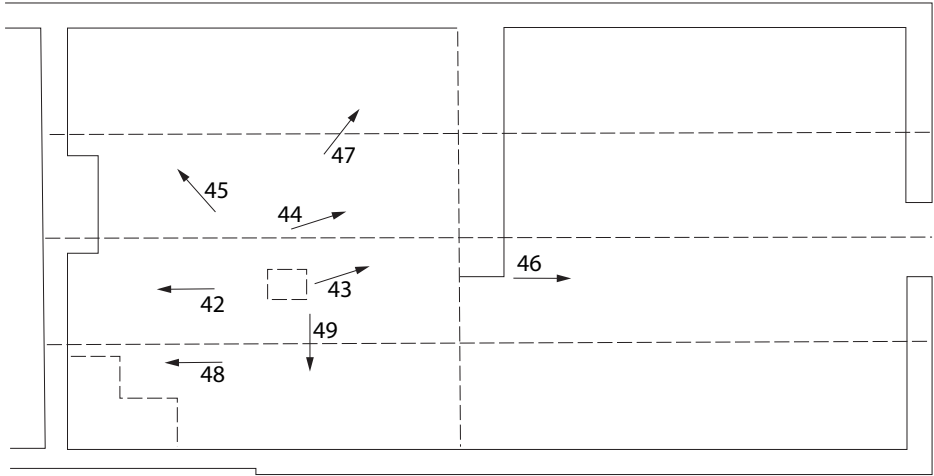


Fig 53: Attic photographs