

Oak Cottage, Royston Road, Wendens Ambo, Essex. CB11 4JY.
Description and analysis of the Cottage and Stable. Surveyed 15 06 2016.



2006 Google earth. Location of Oak Cottage



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

Location

Oak Cottage, Royston Road, Wendens Ambo, Essex. CB11 4JY. (Formerly known as Hawley Bishops). The house is centred on NGR: TL5054136258 and the stable is 10m to the east.



SUMMARY SHEET

Site name/Address: Oak Cottage, Royston Road, Wendens Ambo, Essex. CB11 4JY.	
Parish: Wendens Ambo	District: Uttlesford
NGR: TL5054136258	Site Code: N/A
Type of Work: Historic Building Recording	Site Director/Team: Barry Hillman-Crouch
Date of Work: 30 06 2016.	Size of Area Investigated: 100x100m
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: N/A	Funding source: Owner
Further Seasons Anticipated?: No	Related EHER Nos:
Final Report: Oak Cottage, Royston Road, Wendens Ambo, Essex. CB11 4JY. Description and analysis of the Cottage and Stable. Surveyed 15 06 2016. Barry J Hillman-Crouch MStPA DipFA BSc HND.	
Periods Represented: C16th - C20th	
SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:	
<p>Oak Cottage retains a C16th firestack and timber-frame floor in its western half and a C17th firestack and timber-framed floor in the eastern half. The roof has elements from a C16th collared roof and a C17th offset butt purlin roof. At the back of the house is a C16th brick well, 4ft in diameter and 10ft to the water.</p> <p>The building was massively remodelled in the MC18th with new walls, floors, partitions, fireplaces and an outshot housing a new staircase (now removed). A stair tower was added to the northern side and the roof structures reassembled from the older ones to create an inline if stepped roof. A bread oven was added in the EC19th.</p> <p>The house was extended and modernised in the MC20th with a tile hung and weather-boarded exterior and the interior was completely redecorated by an antiquarian who rehoused many fake and authentic items of furniture including panelling and doors. He also renamed the building Hawley Bishopp after a famous C17th Venetian glass maker from London whose products are highly collectable.</p>	
Previous Summaries/Reports:	
Author of Summary: Barry J Hillman-Crouch MStPA DipFA BSc HND.	Date of Summary: 02 09 2016

Listing



© MR RICHARD JEMMETT

IOE NUMBER: 415589. LOCATION: OAK COTTAGE, ROYSTON ROAD
WENDENS AMBO, UTTLESFORD, ESSEX. PHOTOGRAPHER: MR RICHARD JEMMETT
DATE PHOTOGRAPHED: 19 OCTOBER 1999. DATE LISTED: 22 FEBRUARY 1980
DATE OF LAST AMENDMENT: 22 FEBRUARY 1980. GRADE II.

1.

5222

Oak Cottage

TL 5036 35/789

II

2.

C16 timber-framed and plastered house, completely refronted on the north front in the C20. Two storeys. The upper storey is tile hung and the ground storey is faced with rustic weather-boarding. Roof tiled, half-hipped at the east and west ends, with gambrels. There is an original central chimney stack with diagonal shafts. (RCHM 6).

Listing NGR: TL5054136258

Scope of this Report

This report describes and analyses the two buildings to English Heritage Level 3 as outlined in Historic England. Understanding Historic Buildings – A guide to good recording practice. 2016. Page 22.

At the time of the survey the building had been emptied and opened up in sections including the floors which were failing.

Description – External – Oak Cottage



Oak Cottage. Northern Elevation.

North Elevation

The timber-framed House has two distinct historic parts. The building is divided by a large brick firestack built in two parts with later alterations. The diagonal shafts are C19th/C20th replacements. The eastern half of the roof steps off the lower western half and is wider. The eastern half has gablets with a half hip to the east and a plain gable to the west. Inside it can be seen that the eastern roof is a truncated offset butt purlin roof, the sawn off part being used to build the roof for the steeply pitched eastern extension.

The western roof has a half hip and gabled end and the roof is extended over a one and a half storey stair tower. All the roofs are clad with clay peg tiles. The building has been restyled in the 1950's with tile hung upper storey and weather-boarded ground floor. The leaded quarry glass casements are also believed to be installed in this period and are varying types. The previous owner was a collector of 'antiquities' and this explains the many types of doors and windows in the house.



Oak Cottage. Southern Elevation. The roof is being cleaned by pressure washer.

Southern Elevation

The southern elevation is cement rendered on lath and EML (Expanded Metal Lath) and pargetted. There are two rather incongruous LC20th extensions (shown on the 1970 Ordnance Survey).

On the southern side the two roofs are more aligned and lack the large step. The eastern half is however taller and wider. The western half has a collared roof in near complete but reordered condition (indicated by the sequence of carpenter's marks).



LC20th extension shares the same pargetting as the main building.



The southern elevation of the MC20th additions.



The 'Tudor' well at the back of the main house.

Of interest against the back wall of the main house is a deep well built of 2in thick Tudor style bricks. MC20th pipework implies it was still in use until the LC20th. It is approximately 4ft in diameter and the water level is at approximately 10ft down.



The western elevation.

Western Elevation

The western elevation of the main house is clad with LC20th weather-boards characterised by bandsaw marks and fixed with French nails. To the rear (south) of the house is a LC20th extension under a clay tiled roof. Of interest is small flat roofed cubicle fitted with C20th casements with historic stained glass emblems and old glass. These were fitted by the previous owner who dealt in historic glass and left large stocks in the garage. The house was previously called Hawley Bishopp's – a famous C17th Venetian glass maker from London whose products are highly collectable.



The stained glass in the extension.



The western elevation.



LC20th addition to the eastern elevation.

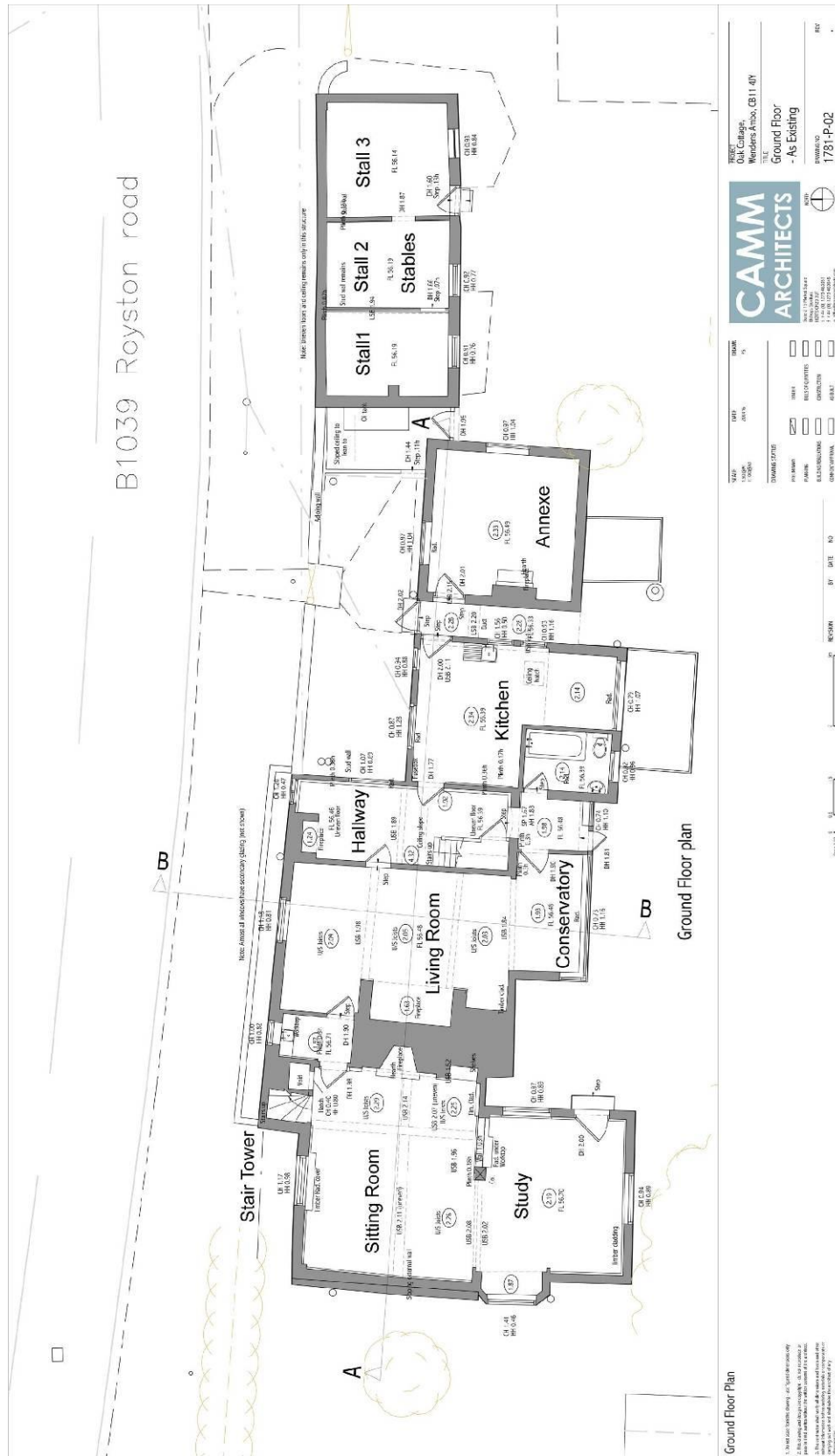
Eastern Elevation

The eastern elevation has a single pitch lean-to falling from eaves height again clad with clay peg tiles. A narrow, tall MC20th chimney stack rises near the north end. Built against the lean-to is an independent MC20th single celled brick building used as a Kitchen. Part of its volume has been used to provide a downstairs bathroom. This appears on the 1970 OS along with another free-standing brick building set at right angles to the other. This appears to be a separate dwelling perhaps used as a granny annexe.



Barry Hillman-Crouch
Design & Recording Services

Description – Internal - Ground Floor



2016. Ground plan naming the rooms.



Looking W in the Study.



Looking NW into the Sitting Room. The former exterior wall is pargetted.

Study

The Study is a MC20th room constructed of concrete rendered Fletton brickwork that was subsequently battened and panelled with a variety of C16th linen fold and fielded panels by the previous owner. The doors were also made from reused panels. The pre 1970's pargetting has been preserved on the back of the timber-framed house.



Looking E in the Sitting Room.



Looking W in the Sitting Room.

To the west of the firestack the timber-frame is of a C16th building with moulded transverse and axial beams and a collared roof in near complete condition (indicated by the sequence of carpenter's marks). The north and south walls contain some original studs but large sections have been removed for windows and openings. The western wall has been completely replaced with a M-LC18th style primary braced, interrupted nailed studwork wall. The frame has been raised on a much repaired brick plinth and the floors dug out.

The first floor frame has a chamfered, unstopped 12x9in axial main joist connected to a 9x10in transverse joist with chamfer and cyma stops. The flat 6x4in common joists are axe finished without chamfers set at 19in centres. There is a trimmer beam for the fireplace.



Detail of the fireplace in the Sitting Room.

The ground floor fireplace is built in exact measurements of feet (9ft wide with 5x7feet opening) with 2in Tudor style bricks of 50x110x230mm. The section above the bressummer has some piers of 60x110x220mm red bricks which have replaced the studwork of the earlier frame. The fireplace has been reduced in size with MC20th Flettons set in grey cement. To the RHS (south) is a poorly constructed brick dome bread oven which is operated from the other side and was previously panelled over with C19th studwork side nailed into rebates and lath and plastered over.



Looking down either side of the MC20th brickwork reveals inglenook seats.

Looking behind the inserted brickwork there are earlier inglenook seats with timber tops.



The base of the winder stair in the stair tower.



Looking down the stair tower

On the northern side is a stair-tower built of interrupted studwork in the style of the C18th which carries up into the roofspace. The hand-made treads and risers appear authentic and have been lath and plastered on the underside. The interior lath and plaster has been removed exposing the studwork in the style of the LC20th.



Looking S in the Living Room.



Looking W in the Living Room. The bread oven is to the LHS.

Living Room

In the Living Room the firestack is built of 55x110x210mm Tudor style bricks with an inexact fireplace of 7ft6in x 5ft4in and is clearly a separate structure. The bressummer is 9ft9in and has a 9x8in section with a rough dressed chamfer. The floors have been excavated in the past to insert the MC20th suspended timber floor.



C18th fire crane.



C.1800 oven door.



Frogged bricks in the bread oven dome.

The fireplace has an elegant wrought iron fire crane of Georgian characteristics having a butterfly adjustment nut. Earlier ones have rivets and pins. It is correctly housed in the brickwork. In the southern side is a cast iron door for the bread oven. This is an elegant component with hand wrought curved pintle hinges and a latch with a spooned terminal and spheres on the pinch handles.



Domed interior of the bread oven.



Daubed exterior of the domed oven.

The bread oven has a design typical of c.1800 -1820 and the loose bricks (still encased in the daubed insulation) have frogged bricks.



Looking N in the Hallway.



Looking S in the Hallway.

Hallway

The Hallway is in the lean-to outshot on the east of the building. The exposed timber frame is of heavy section and scantling studwork cut for nailed interrupted studwork. There is a C20th chimney for a central heating boiler. The straight staircase is MC20th and the simple construction is exposed in the understairs closet.



The roof above the Hallway

The roof structure of the Hallway is visible through a closet door in the room above. The main structure has been reused from a much older butt purlin roof with later narrow section 3in elm rafters and C20th 2x4in machined softwood rafters. The breathable membrane indicates the roof was retiled in the last 30 years.



Looking N in the Hallway roof. Main frame.



Looking SE at the stairwell wall.

Other details seen in the roof void show the grey cemented brickwork of the C20th chimney and the MC20th lath and plasterwork of the stairwell. Here the laths are of orange cedar and the studs are a variety of reused, machine cut timbers fixed across a raking strut. In contrast the wall of the main frame is of EC19th style nailed interrupted studwork with pitsawn finishes and rose-headed clout nails securing the interrupted studwork. The laths are riven chestnut and some of the studs are quarter poles.



Looking E into the C20th Kitchen.



A Victorian letterbox has been part covered.



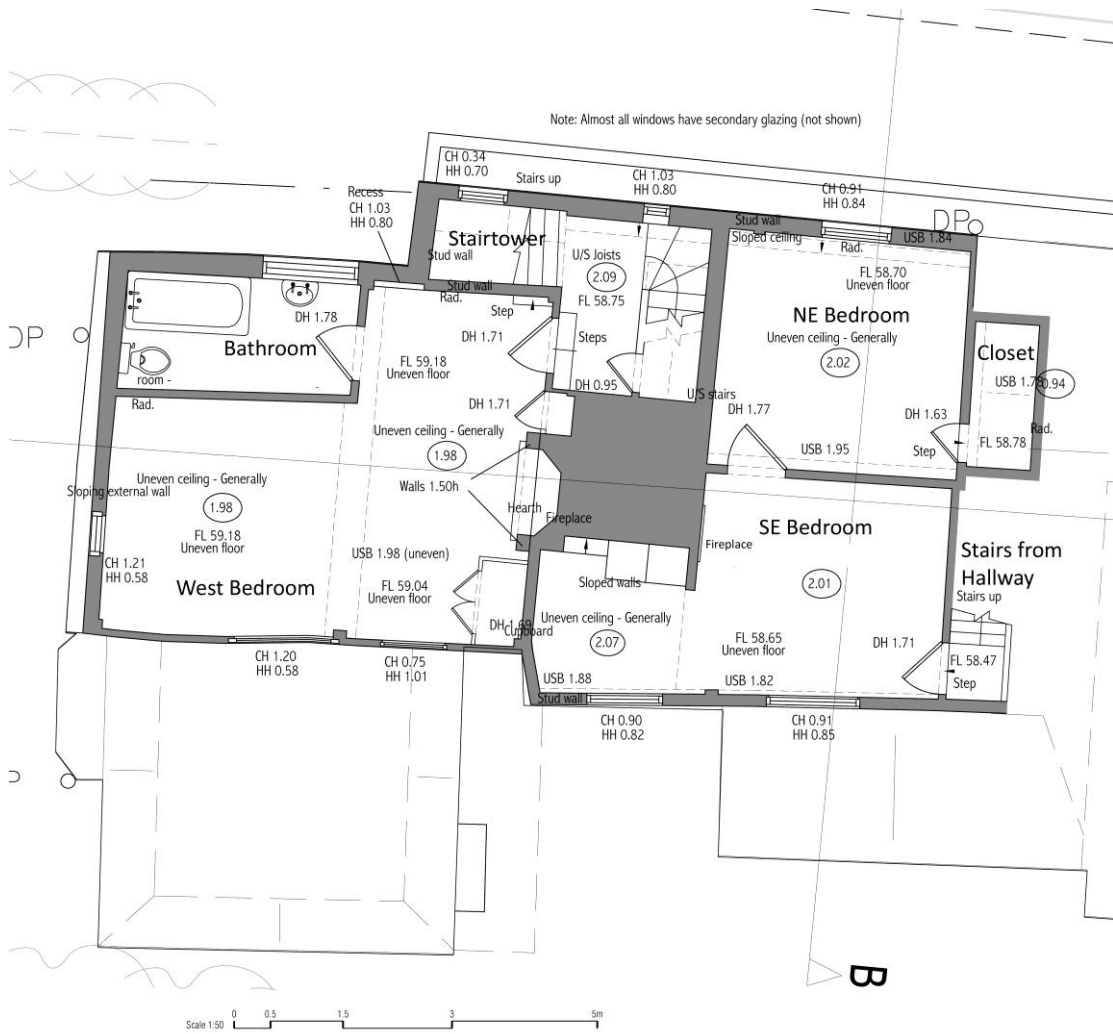
Fire damaged roof structure.

Kitchen

The Kitchen is a MC20th building built up against the eastern wall of the Hallway frame. The interior is plain and the floor is concrete. Some of the volume is taken up for a WC that is accessed from the Hallway. Of interest is a Victorian letterbox beside the Hallway door indicating this was once a front door. There is another in the northern end of the Hallway which is C20th and put there because it is nearest to the road for postal deliveries by van.

The simple structure of the roof is made of machined pine and is heavily blackened indicating a fire in the past.

Description – internal – First Floor



First Floor plan

2016. First Floor as existing naming the rooms. CAMM Architects.



The West Bedroom looking SW from the landing.



Bathroom inserted into the West Bedroom displaying curved spandrel in the studwork.

West Bedroom

The West Bedroom occupies the western half of the building and displays the heavy studded frame in the north and south walls and the interrupted stud frame in the western wall. The room has been divided with C20th studwork to create a bathroom and the partition clearly passes over the original 10-12in oak floorboards. Here also is seen a larger curved spandrel for the storey post to the tie-beam in the western wall. Much of the lath is cedar repairs.



Looking E in the West Bedroom.



Detail of the fireplace.

The fireplace has Tudor style brickwork with an exposed bressummer. The back of the 3ft9inx3ft9in fireplace has been altered to accept a hobgrate fireplace with larger 60-65mm thick bricks which is a common MC18th or later feature. Despite a close inspection no apotropaic marks were found on any of the bressummers.



The dividing partition of the eastern side of the building.



Looking W in the NE Bedroom.

NE Bedroom

The eastern side of the building has been divided by a EC19th style interrupted studwork partition. The landing also has a EC19th style partition which supported the attic stairs which have been entirely replaced with LC20th machined softwood. A former doorway was closed up with plasterboard.



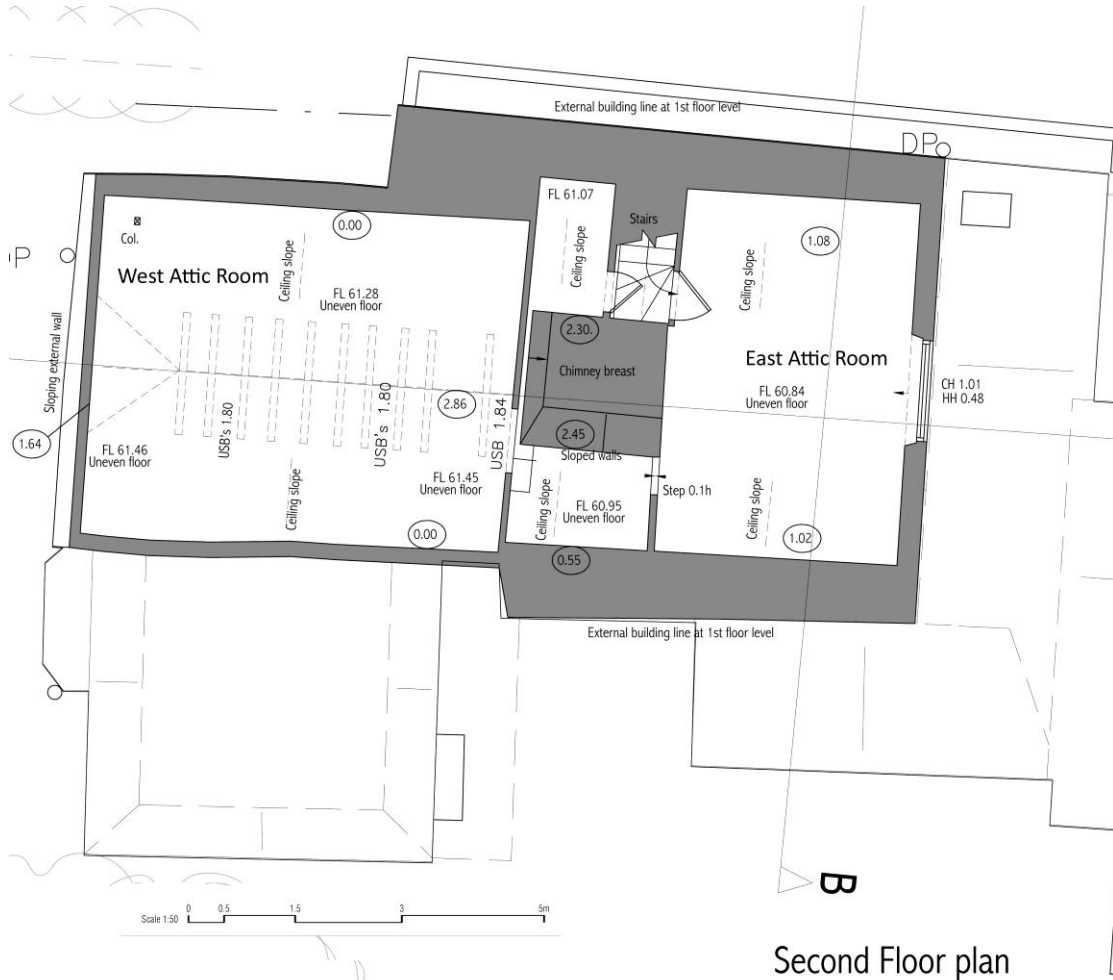
Looking SE towards the Hallway stairs in the SE Bedroom.



Looking W in the SE Bedroom. Note the inserted C19th fireplace.

Whereas the West Bedroom has a large C16th style fireplace on the eastern side there is only a small 2ftx2ft7in high inserted opening under an iron strap in the SE Bedroom. Here the narrow on edge joists seen in the NE Bedroom are hidden by lath and plaster. The wall frame is of C18th style interrupted studwork.

Description – internal – First Floor



Second Floor plan

2016. Attic Floors as existing naming the rooms. CAMM Architects.



The roof structure of the Eastern Attic Room looking SE.



The offset butt purlin roof on the south side of the room.

Eastern Attic Room

The Eastern Attic Room reveals the structure of an EC17th style offset butt purlin roof. The heavy purlins are morticed into the side of the 5x5-6in principal rafters and offset to ensure strength at the terminals. The room was previously lath and plastered to the collars and limewashed.



The north side of the butt purlin roof.

The pitsawn paired rafters, which are morticed into the purlins, are largely reused and many have nails in their flanks from where they have been turned from being flat rafters to on their edges. The roof represents only part of the original frame and the purlins have been cut short at the hip end skewed upwards to reach the cambered tie-beam. The purlins at the western end are thicker at 8x5in rather than 6x5in. There are two side-nailed 6x3in collars and nail marks from where the ceiling joists have been removed. Small ashlar posts attached to each rafter are actually joist hangers and are side nailed in place to the slender 2.75-3x4in deep joists. No carpenter's marks were found.



The firestack from two angles looking W.

The firestack appears to have had a fireplace that has been blocked up and there is a straight vertical joint on the northern (RHS) side. The bricks may be blackened due to a chimney fire which affected the thin skin more than the main body of the stack.



Looking W in the West Attic Room.



The collars of the paired rafters.

West Attic Room

The West Attic Room has the exposed roof structure of a collared roof with paired 5x3in rafters numbered out of order at the apex and above the 5x4in collars with a race knife or thin blade. The roof has been reassembled from reused rafters showing lap joints for collars lower down the rafters. The collars are all renumbered using a chisel point at the lap joints. Some of the rafters and the studs in the western wall are sooted but most are clean.



Reused rafters in the roof space. Looking NW.



The room has been blanked off from the firestack. Looking E.

This space was not made habitable. There is no fireplace and the floor has no boarding and is insulated with daub over the widely spaced joists. The lath and plastered partition wall is EC19th in character. Of interest is a brass cam for a servant's bell fixed by the wall.

Description – external – The Stables



The northern elevation of the Stables.



The eastern elevation of the Stables.

Northern and eastern elevations

The Stables is built from the remnants of a longer range of buildings that are outlined on the Ordnance Survey (1 to 10000 series) up until at least 1938 and are altered by 1960. This makes it easier to understand the piecemeal construction and many repairs. There are a variety of brick sizes and many are obviously reused but in the main they are 65x110x225mm. Many panels are rebuilt with brick and flint rubble.



Southern elevation with new thatched roof.



The western elevation seen from the house.

Southern and western elevations

The southern wall is executed in panels of flintwork outlined in red brick. There is a doorway with red brick quoins which has been reduced in width with a stud and diagonal lath and plasterwork. There are three windows under rough gauged brick arches. Two have plain casements while a third has a top hung 6 pane frame. The western wall is lath and cement rendered while the eastern is weather boarded with C20th boards fixed with French nails.

The roof has been recently thatched and inside has been largely rebuilt with recent graded softwood.

Description – internal – The Stables



Looking W in the Stables.



Looking E in the Stables

The roof has been comprehensively rebuilt with machined softwood stamped GS 1691 – General Structural Licence No1691.(BS EN 14081). A variety of quarter poles have been retained including some from a silver birch. At the eastern end a panel of studwork with wattle and daub infill has been retained and marks the division between two roof designs.



Detail of the wattle and daub panel. West side.



Change in the roof structure in the end bay. Looking S.

The wattle and daub panel has horizontal legers tied to vertical riven rods with hessian string. This feature dates the panel until after the 1820's when hessian began to be imported into England.



Lath and plastered partition wall between Bays 1 and 2.



Lath and plastered partition wall between Bays 2 and 3.

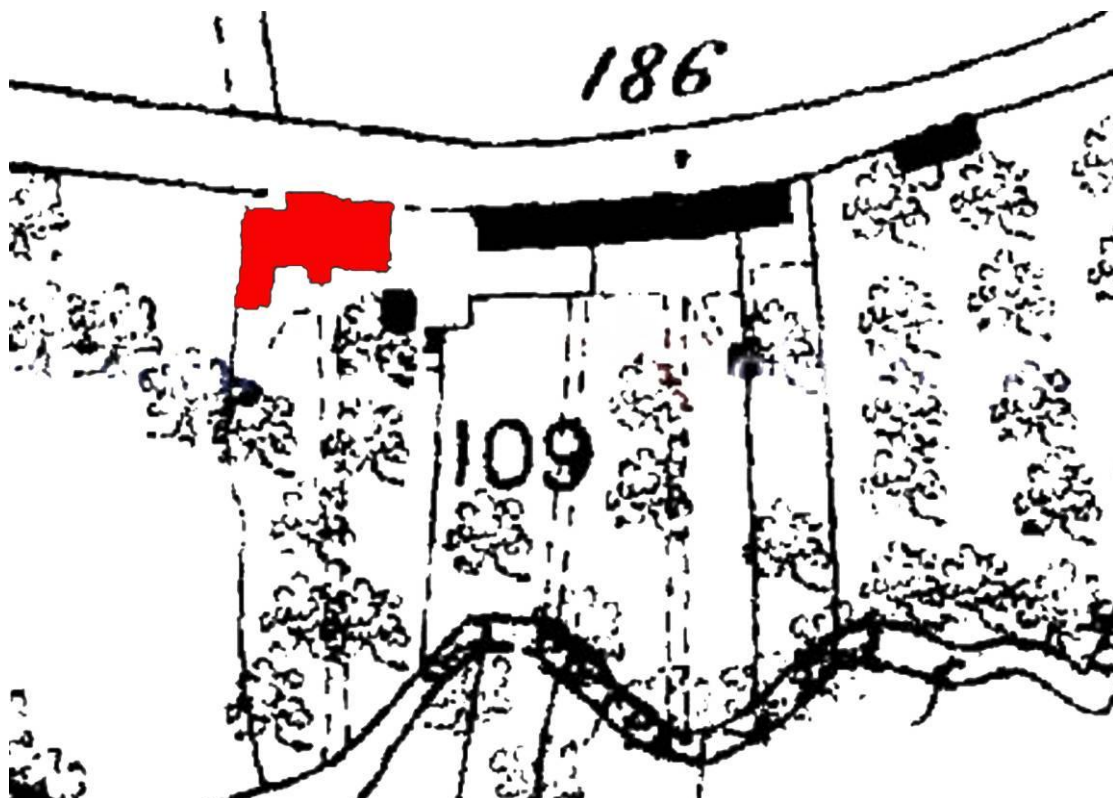
There are three bays divided by scantling studwork partition finished with lath and plaster on one side only. The work is more than likely MC20th and the panels do not connect with the walls, which are freshly repointed or the top-plate of the repaired roof. The wear on the brick paved floor indicates these were used as stables but no fixtures remain.

Topographical Survey from Maps



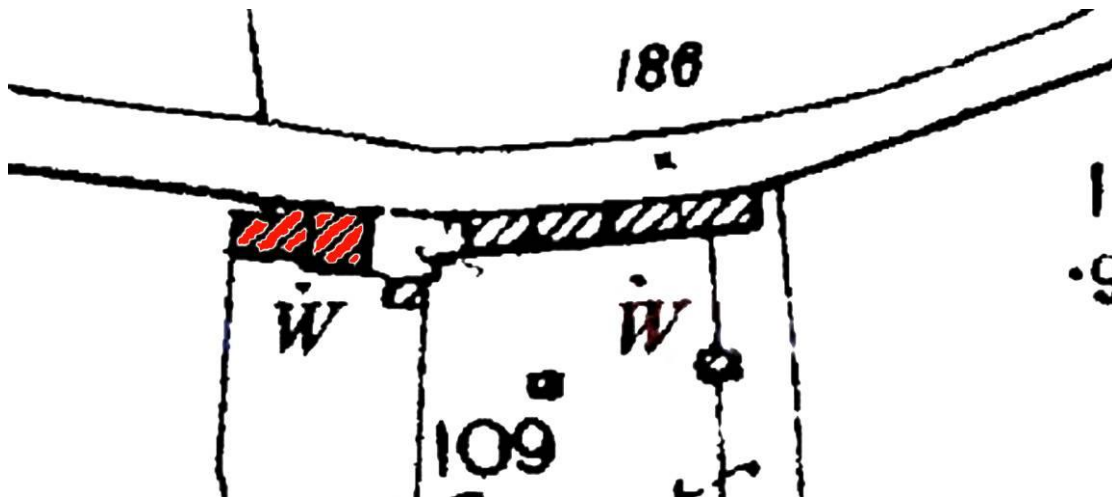
1777 Chapman and Andre's Map of Essex.

In 1777 the property is shown divided in two with an enclosure around both halves. A second property is to the east where the Stables is today. There is no Tithe Award Map for Wendens Ambo available.

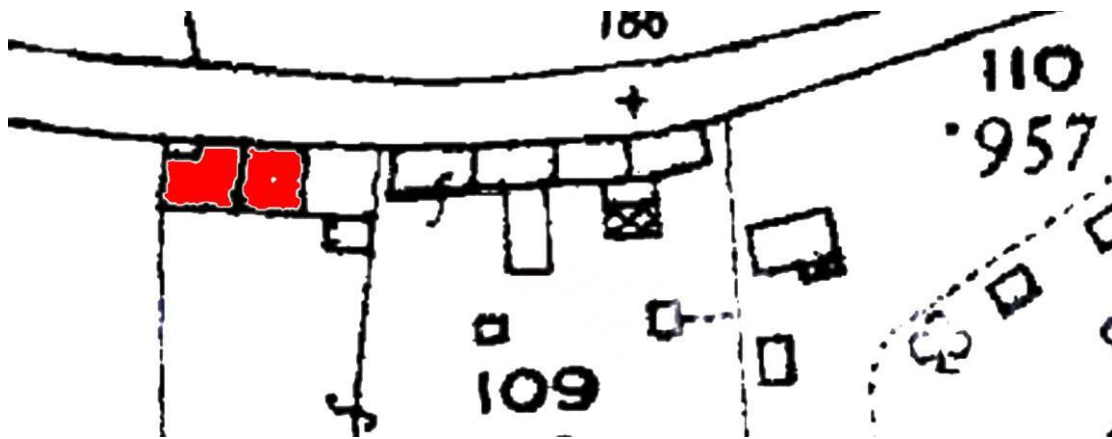


1877 First Edition Ordnance Survey.

In 1877, the house is shown much larger than today. The Stables is the end cell of a range of buildings.

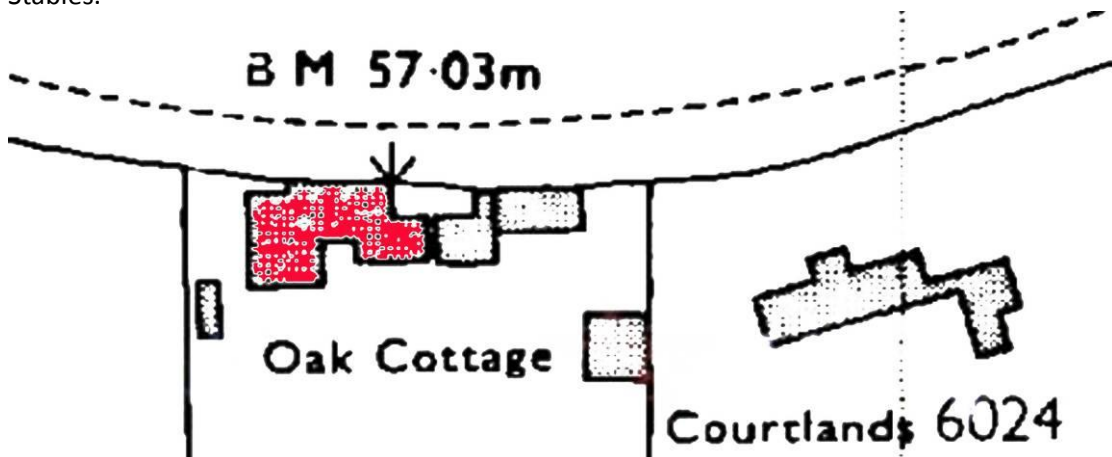


1897 Ordnance Survey.



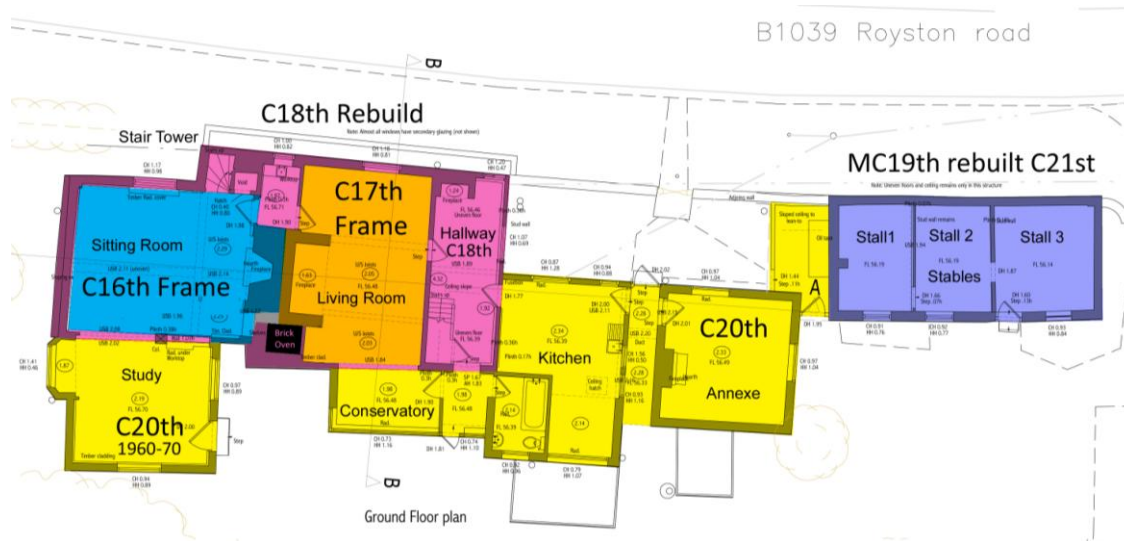
1921 Ordnance Survey.

The 1877 OS does not show the building divisions but the later editions show the buildings as two dwellings. There is also a terrace of dwellings, one with a greenhouse, in place of the Stables.



1970 Ordnance Survey.

Phasing and Discussion



General phase plans identifying the build sequence.

Caveat.

In phasing the building it is apparent that much of the earliest historic fabric has been reused and realigned. In fact only the firestacks and the floor structures embedded in them can be seen as reliable. The walls, ceilings and roof structures have been completely rebuilt.

Phase 1. C16th frame and firestack.

The western half of the building has a Tudor style brick firestack with a large 5x7ft inglenook fireplace on the ground floor and a more modest but appropriate fireplace on the second floor. The 50x110x230mm bricks are characteristic of the C16th when large scale brick production meant more modest and rural buildings could have firestacks built.

The frame of the first floor has axe finished plain common joists housed in chamfered main joists set in the brickwork. The walls retain some heavy 4-6in wide studs but in the main they have been removed. The roof above has paired rafters remodelled from a collar purlin roof, a few of which are sooted, but not enough to indicate the presence of a former open hall.

At the back of the house is a C16th brick well, 4ft in diameter and 10ft to the water.

Phase 2. C17th frame and added firestack.

The second firestack was built up against the first using slightly larger 55x110x210mm and a similar sized but imprecise 5ft4inx7ft6in fireplace. An upstairs fireplace was not incorporated. The first floor frame has twin main joists and common joists with chamfers and cyma stops. The design of the frame would indicate that the room was built as a cross-wing in the C17th but the building has been later remodelled to have an inline, if somewhat stepped, roofline. The roof structure has a C17th offset butt purlin roof which has been severed and rotated and the offcuts used to build the Hallway in the next phase.

Phase 3. C18th rebuild.

The building underwent a massive rebuild replacing all the walls with nailed interrupted studwork, erecting the stair tower and adding the Hallway outshot. The characteristics of the heavy timbers and crude work would suggest this was done in the MC18th. Also pointing to this is the conversion of the fireplaces to receive hobgrates, a type of fireplace made of cast iron from the 1720's onwards.

Most of the exposed timbers are peppered with nails for lath and plaster (since removed) which would have been the fashionable decor for the Georgian house.

The roof structures on both sides of the firestack have been completely rebuilt. On the western side the collar purlin roof has been dismantled and new collars set higher in new lap joints, each collar being numbered differently to its reused rafter pair. The roof has also been hipped. On the eastern side is the offset butt purlin roof which has been cut down about one third along its second bay and jointed awkwardly to a cambered tie-beam to align the two rooflines, again with a hip. The short rafters in the offset butt purlin roof are of varying sections and of reused and rotated timbers.

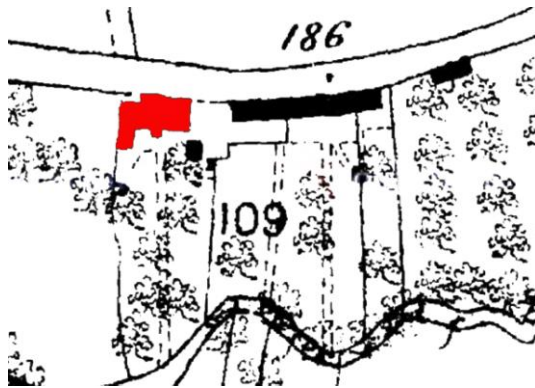
The roof of the Hallway also has a cut down butt purlin roof of the same design and characteristics. The Hallway is a common Georgian feature, increasing the utility accommodation and providing for a grander staircase. The East Attic Room may also have been put in during this period but the original staircase has been removed and the lath and plaster stripped out so it may be later. The West Attic Room was never made habitable and the ceiling is insulated with daub.

Phase 4. EC19th Bread Oven. New partition walls.

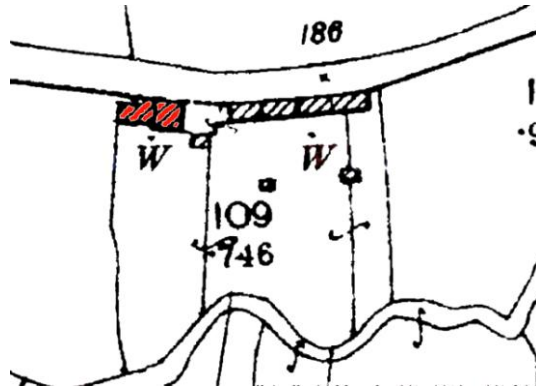
Bread ovens became popular additions in the first 30 years of the C19th built to similar designs using proprietary components. Often they can be built into existing firestacks to use the flues. In Oak Cottage, the bread oven door is within the inglenook implying there would also have been a range stove instead of an open fire (which would burn the cook). The bread oven itself has a well made cast iron door with wrought iron furniture. Tellingly the oven bricks are frogged, a feature that only becomes common at the very end of the C18th.

Also in the inglenook is a Georgian firecrane, distinguished by its butterfly nut adjustment. While the firecrane is undoubtedly authentic it seems unlikely it would have remained in use while the bread oven was operating. It may have been folded back out of the way, or more likely is a feature added in the C20th by the antiquarian who lived in the house.

Some of the wall partitions upstairs have thin scantling frames of EC19th design and it very likely the interior was reordered in this period. There is a brass bell cam up in the attic to summon the servant



1876 OS Map.

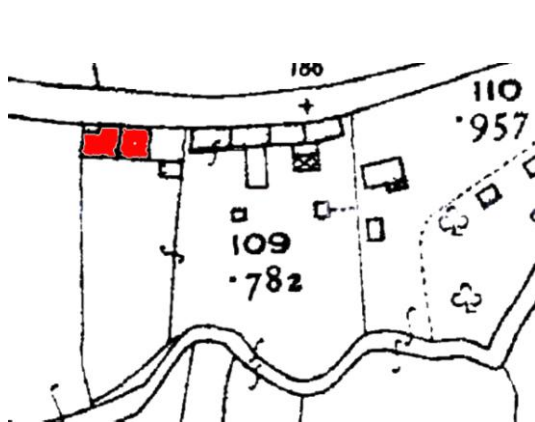


1896 OS Map.

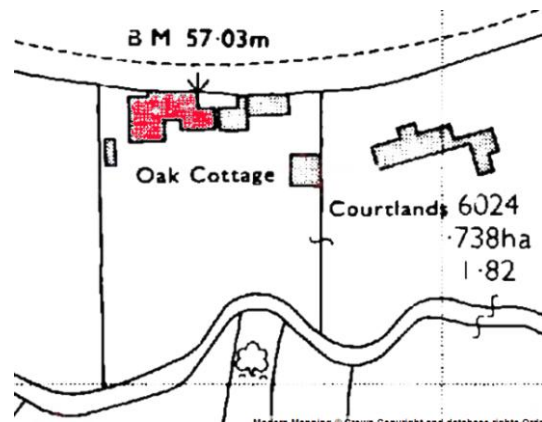
Phase 5. MC19th. The Stables.

The little remaining historic fabric of the Stables indicates it would have been erected in the MC19th at the time of the Victorian High Farmers who were particularly fond of flint panelled buildings. Unfortunately there is no existing 1840 Tithe Award Map but the 1876 Ordnance Survey shows a row of four similar sized buildings with garden plots with paths down to the river. It may be supposed these were cottages and agricultural buildings.

The mapping also indicates that prior to 1876 the house has an extra western wing which was removed by 1896 by which time it is shown divided into two properties.



1921 OS Map.



1970 OS Map.

Phase 6. MC20th additions.

The building was considerably altered in the MC20th by the addition of the Study, Conservatory and the Kitchen. Map evidence suggests the changes were made between 1938 and 1960 and would have been incremental. The exterior of the House is 1950's in style with anachronistic tile hanging and replacement weather-boarding. The windows, doors, staircases and internal decor was implemented by the former owner who was an antiquarian, glass maker and carpenter

By the time of the 1970 OS map the Annexe was also built and the remaining buildings attached to the Stable had been removed.

Significance

Oak Cottage retains a C16th firestack and timber-frame floor in its western half and a C17th firestack and timber-framed floor in the eastern half. The roof has elements from a C16th collared roof and a C17th offset butt purlin roof. At the back of the house is a C16th brick well, 4ft in diameter and 10ft to the water.

The building was massively remodelled in the MC18th with new walls, floors, partitions, fireplaces and an outshot housing a new staircase (now removed). A stair tower was added to the northern side and the roof structures reassembled from the older ones to create an inline stepped roof. A bread oven was added in the EC19th.

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Acknowledgements

I am indebted to Peter Stretton of CAMM Architects for recommending me and engaging me to record the building. The drawings were supplied by CAMM Architects.

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