



**Historic building recording
at an outbuilding at The Old Vicarage
Husborne Crawley, Bedfordshire
Level 2
February 2022**

Report No. 22/021

Author: Lauren Wilson

Illustrator: Carla Ardis



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Project Manager: Lauren Wilson

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Author: Lauren Wilson

Illustrator: Carla Ardis

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Kent House
30 Billing Road
Northampton
NN1 5DQ
01604 809 800
www.mola.org.uk
business@mola.org.uk

STAFF

Project Manager: Lauren Wilson BA MA ACIfA

Fieldwork and text: Lauren Wilson

Illustrations: Carla Ardis PhD

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THE OLD VICARAGE, HUSBORNE CRAWLEY

	same studwork as elsewhere.		
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Historic building recording at an outbuilding at the Old Vicarage Husborne Crawley, Bedfordshire Level 2 February 2022

ABSTRACT

MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) was commissioned by Solstice Architects, on behalf of Mr Giles Lang, to undertake a programme of historic building recording at The Old Vicarage, Husborne Crawley. This was required prior to works being undertaken on an outbuilding (Planning Ref. CB/21/00038/FULL) in line with demolition and erection of a replacement building.

The outbuilding has been constructed with various elements of timber, but using a single constructional method. These include some elements of oak, some timber with evidence of multiple nails (for lath and plaster), and some timber with empty notches and mortises, all of which suggest a previous purpose before their use in their current position in this building. However, evidence of multiple repair and replacement isn't forthcoming and as result much can be dated to the original construction.

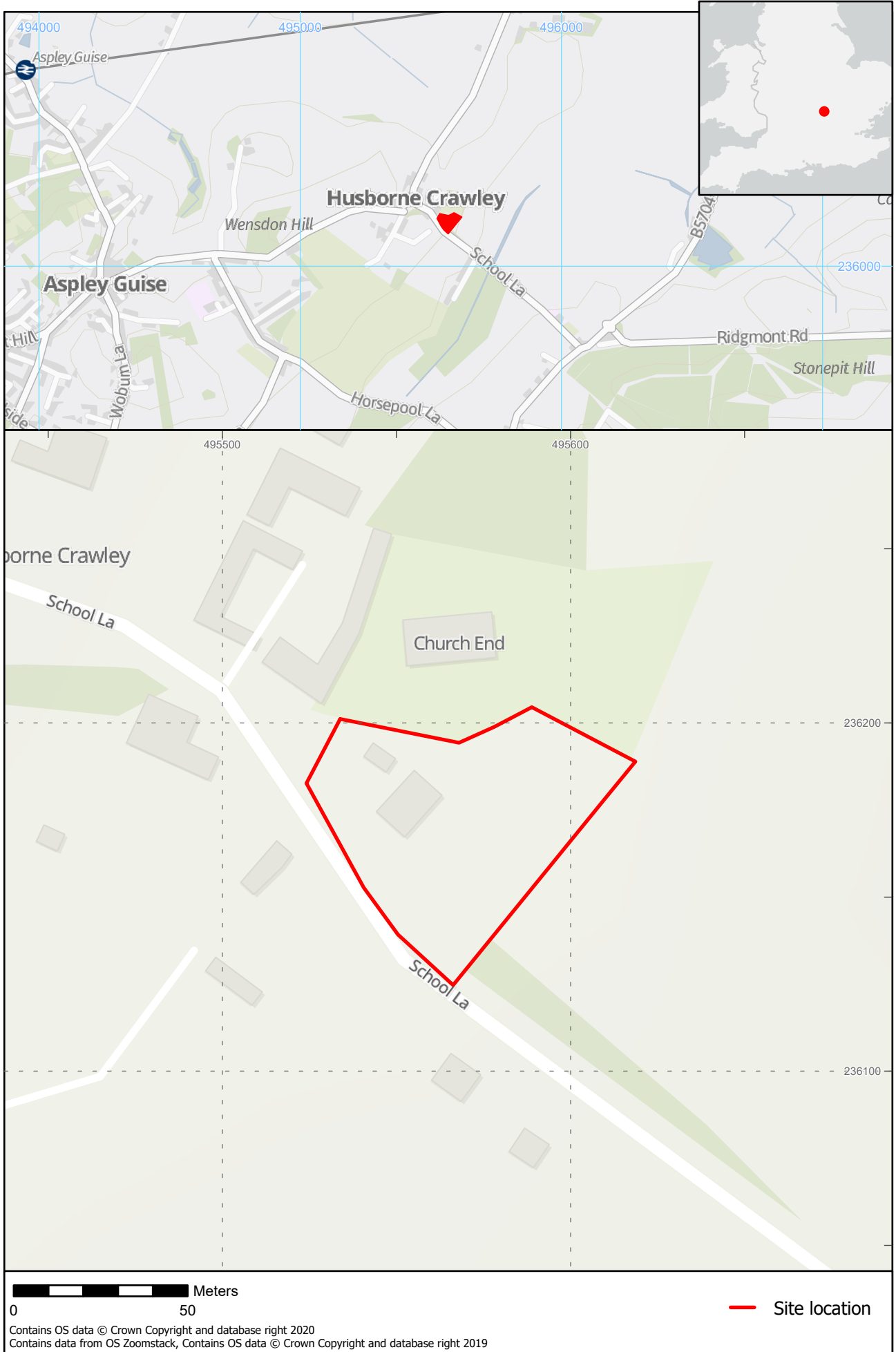
The original construction comprises the L-shaped areas and it is clear these areas were used for utilitarian functions, indicated partly by the brick flooring. Store C indicates usage as a stables, the usage of the other areas may have been multi-functional. The date of this phase is difficult to be certain of, but the scantling and carpentry would certainly suggest a 19th-century date. The datestone on the house of 1851 would certainly provide appropriate context for its construction.

The flat-roof outshot is a clear modern insertion, likely mid-20th century in date. This removed the north wall of Store A which was likely of the same studwork as elsewhere.

1 INTRODUCTION

MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) was commissioned by Solstice Architects, on behalf of Mr Giles Lang, to undertake a programme of historic building recording at The Old Vicarage, Husborne Crawley (NGR SP 95545 36191, Fig 1). This was required prior to works being undertaken on an outbuilding (Planning Ref. CB/21/00038/FULL) in line with demolition and erection of a replacement building.

The site comprises an outbuilding immediately adjacent to The Old Vicarage, a property on raised position to the immediate south of the parish church and north of School Lane. The Old Vicarage has a construction date of 1851 and is a moderate dwelling of multiple ranges in red brick with multiple decorated gabled and a peg-tile roof. The outbuilding lies to the north-west and is weather-boarded and roughly rectangular in plan due to a modern flat-roof extension infilling the return of a previously L-shaped plan form.



Scale: 1:1,500

Site location Fig 1

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location, geology and topography

Husborne Crawley lies 5.6km south-east of Milton Keynes within the county of Bedfordshire. The M1 motorway lies 1.3km to the north and surrounding villages include Aspley Guise and Woburn Sands. The Vicarage lies within Church End, part of the widely dispersed village. Within Church End the site lies on the eastern outskirts of the settlement, which appears sparsely spread across School Lane to the east, and Church End to the west.

The geology of the area comprises Woburn Sands Formation; a sandstone which dominates to the south and south-west. This formation lies within a larger area of Oxford Clay formation; a mudstone.

Topographically the local area can be summarised as undulating and the Vicarage site in particular is notable as it stands on a plateau of high ground which rises gently towards the church but falls suddenly to the south towards School Lane. In the wider environs higher ground lies to the south-west of the settlement towards Crawley Park and Wensden Hill.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The objective of the Historic Building Survey was to fulfil the need for a recording of the built heritage assets within the site to a Level 2 standard, as described in the Historic England guidance document *Understanding Historic Buildings* (Historic England 2016). This was set to address the buildings' structural and architectural detail and archaeological evidence, to produce a complete record of the building before the commencement of the proposed work with the aim of elucidating its use and structural history. The specific objectives and research aims of the historic building recording were defined in email correspondence with the Conservation officer, Jonathan Prosser.

Thus the historic building recording had the following main components:

- Undertake a photographic record of the building. The photographic record to include detailed and general shots of the interior and exterior fabric, where this could be safely done;
- Investigate, analyse and describe the fabric of the building before the commencement of the proposed work with the aim of elucidating its use and structural history, and record and analyse the resulting evidence for this history using applicable archaeological methods;
- Study readily available documentary sources for the history of the building and the site. The level of historic documentary research was limited to keeping the depth of the recording as a Level 2 survey, and;
- Report the results in a suitable form, publish a summary and register the report through the Historic England OASIS form, with the LPA and ADS.

4 METHODOLOGY

All work was carried out in accordance with Historic England specifications in *Understanding historic buildings: a guide to good recording practice* (Historic England 2016) and the Chartered Institutes for Archaeologist's *Standard and guidance for archaeological investigation of standing buildings or structures* (CIfA 2014).

4.1 Physical investigation

The buildings were inspected on the 14th February 2022. Physical investigation of the building was carried out on site before the proposed intervention to the original fabric of the building. This aspect of the investigation aimed at elucidating significant details regarding fabric, function, or the elements, methods/order of construction and development. As far as was possible all accessible areas were recorded.

4.2 Written records

Handwritten descriptive notes were produced on-site to record the findings of the physical investigation. The notes recorded details such as the fabric, form and function of the structure, along with evidence of any alterations and development over time. The written account comprises the building's construction, present and former use and where appropriate, the building's past and present relationship to its setting in the wider landscape. No comments were made on the buildings current structural integrity and suitability for reuse during rebuilding, as this lies outside of the remit of this report.

4.3 Documentary research

Formal detailed historical research was not within the remit of this report. Provision was made for sufficient initial documentary research in order to enable the overall research aims to be realised but these were not extensive and were limited to existing secondary material (Fig 2).

4.5 Photographic records

A photographic record of the building was made during the investigation. Photographs were taken using a Nikon D7200 (24 megapixels) with an 18-105mm and wide angle 10-20mm lens. This survey has generated an archive of approximately 101 digital photographs of which a selection is used in this report for illustrative purposes (Figs 3-39) and their locations recorded on sketch plans.

4.4 Drawn records

MOLA was supplied with measured survey drawings of floor plans, elevations and sectional elevations of the building produced by Solstice Architects. These drawings were annotated on site with information relating to the historical significance of features and are reproduced as part of this report (Fig40).

4.5 Organisation of the report and conventions

The building is orientated north-west to south-east, but for simplicity the building is described as orientated east to west in the text. All maps and plans in the report show true north. Measurements may be given in both metric and imperial

measurements where appropriate.

4.6 Site archive

The project archive will include all materials retained (or the comprehensive record of such materials as referred to above) and all written, drawn, and photographic records relating directly to the investigations undertaken. It will be quantified, ordered, indexed and internally consistent before permanent transfer to a suitable repository.

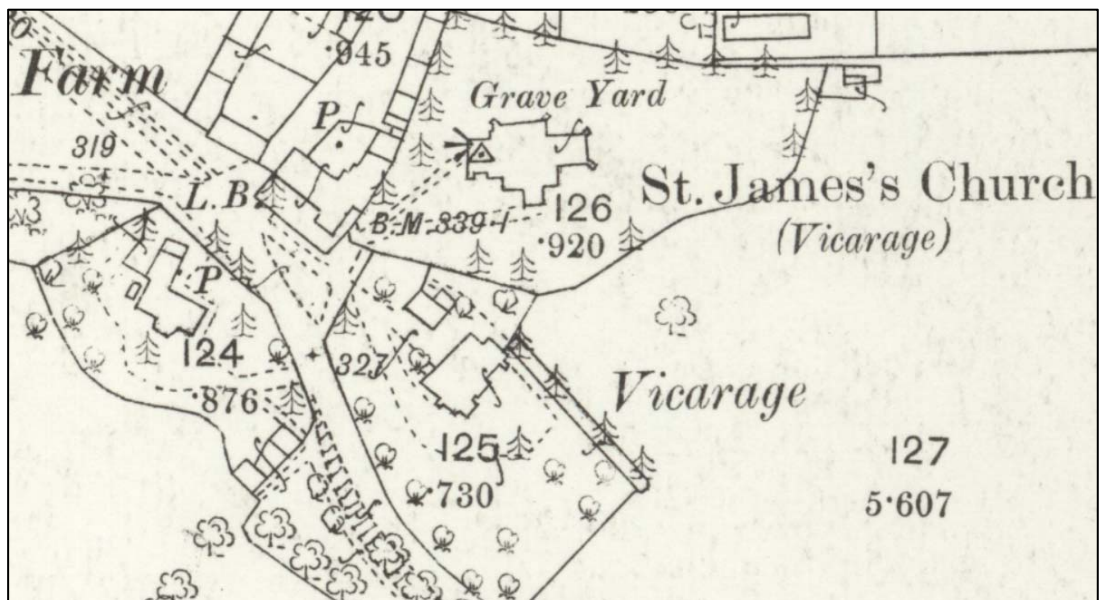
5 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The majority of the following information was taken from the desk-based assessment (2020) submitted as part of the planning application and available from the planning website.

The area developed from three manors recorded by Domesday in 1086 and all within the immediate vicinity of the site. The first was called Brays and was held from the early 15th century, the manor house survives as Manor Farmhouse adjacent to St James Church. The second, granted before Domesday, became Crawley Manor 290m to the south-west. The third merged with Crawley Manor in 1579 and the manor house reportedly stood south-west of the School Lane but was demolished by the Duke of Bedford in 1821.

A Vicarage is first recorded in 1220 in the Chronicle of Dunstable, and again in 1607 in an inventory of church property. This stood abutting the churchyard to the north-west and comprised a four-bay timber building. There was a timber and thatched barn with three bays. By the 18th century the Vicarage was in a state of disrepair and in 1709 there was a petition to sell the buildings materials. Having been without a Vicarage for some time Husborne Crawley had been consolidated with the rectory at Aspley (Edward Cassey and Co. 1862, 119), the Duke of Bedford erected the current house in 1851, and a datestone on its western elevation records this. The bills of the building are held at the Bedfordshire and Luton Archives in the Russell archive. Directories record that from 1871 this was occupied by the Rev. Richard Shepherd MA of St Mary Hall, Oxford (Kelly Directories 1890, 73).

The construction of the Vicarage is recorded on the Ordnance Survey map of 1883 (Fig 2). This illustrates the house within a generous plot which is lightly wooded and shielded to School Lane to the south. The outbuilding lies to the north-west in an L-shaped arrangement with the north range depicted as a separate construction. A boundary line extends from the north-west corner to the property boundary with the graveyard to the north.



Ordnance Survey map 1883, sheet Bedfordshire XX.16 Fig 2

From 1900 the vicarage was held by the Rev. Albert Rust MA of Selwyn College, Cambridge (Kelly Directories 1910, 112), but in 1914 this was taken over by the Rev.

Alfred Edmund Sasse MA of St Mary Hall, Oxford (Kelly Directories 1914, 114). The Ratings and Valuation Act of 1925 recorded a trap house, a stable used as a shed, and a wood shed all lay outside.

The property was sold in the late 1970s for £39,000 to D.K. and P.W. Bednall and M.C. and B.M.C. Champion as a private residence. It was subdivided into two dwellings which were reunited in 1983.

6 THE BUILDING

6.1 Exterior

The Vicarage is an unassuming building approached up a sloping driveway past the impressive Manor Farmhouse and the lych-gate entrance to St James Church. It is a Victorian house in red brick, decorative bargeboards to the gables, and a peg-tile roof. The outbuilding lies to the west upon entry to the forecourt which now houses parking and construction materials.

The building is timber-framed with weather-boarding to the exterior and a clay peg-tile roof (Fig 3). The historic ranges are L-shaped in plan with a pitched roof extending east-west and a return to the east end, which extends northwards. This has then extended with a flat-roof range to the north-west infilling the return and creating a rectangular form.



The outbuilding upon entering the site with the Vicarage behind, looking east Fig 3

6.1.1 South elevation

This elevation faces the driveway to the west of the main house and comprises the principal elevation of the building. There are two large double doors flanking a central single door with a window to the west (Fig 4). The weather-boarding, where measured along this face, were between 12.75cm and 17cm wide and comprised softwood. Above the peg-tile roof rises with much moss to blue ridge tiles.

The single central door is boarded with a simple moulded frame, though heavily painted, and retains a Bakelite-style doorknob and keyhole. The threshold timber is much weathered and below bricks are exposed. The window to the west has a heavily painted timber frame with simple sill and comprises modern safety of a single fixed light. Both double doors are timber, boarded with modern ironwork. Both examples sit on pintles with long strap hinges, but their pintle brackets differ.



South elevation of the outbuilding, looking north Fig 4

6.1.2 West elevation

This end is all weather-boarded with a straight joint to the north where the front range and flat-roof extension meet (Fig 5). There are bricks exposed to the base which are of poor red/orange fabric with a buff mortar. There is a single window to the front range, of timber with a surround and sill. It has upper multi-light glazing below a cambered arch and a lower timber sliding grille. There is a matching example to the east gable end which has been previously called a Duke of Bedford window.



West elevation of the outbuilding, looking east Fig 5

6.1.3 East elevation

As mentioned above the east end mirrors its western counterpart with weather-boarding and an off-centre window (Fig 6). Some of the weather-boarding has failed and exposes part of the internal timber-frame including some studwork. The weather-boarding is softwood and several pieces show mechanical saw marks. To the gable the wall-plates sit proud of the weather-boarding.

To the north, the north range extends with its own pitch roof with lower ridgeline. Where the weather-boarding meets there is a straight joint and it is clear the weather-boarding to the north has been notched around the existing.

The north range elevation retains a door and window. The door has a simple moulded frame and is boarded with a robust metal handle, of some age. The window has a timber surround with two lights with plain glazing.



East elevation of the outbuilding with north range extension, looking north-west

Fig 6

6.1.4 South elevation

This elevation comprises the end gable of the north range, and flat-roof outshot elevation (Fig 7). Both are weather-boarded and plain. The boards here measure between 11.75cm-14cm in width and are heavily painted. The lower boards have evidence of straight mechanical saw marks, but there are some circular examples too.



The north elevation of the outbuilding, showing the north range and flat-roof outshot, looking south Fig 7

6.2 Interior

The outbuilding is divided into three main stores to the south (A-C) whilst the north range contains a separate room (D) and the flat-roof infill creates an extension to Store A but is described as its own space (E) (Fig 40).

There is some commonality to the construction of the historic ranges. The walls comprise studwork, sometimes above a sole-plate, and rise to a wall-plate. There is no pegging visible and there are examples of downward braces which cut through the studwork to which it is nailed. There is an over compassing treatment of roof structure replacement which makes identifying areas of original construction difficult.

6.2.1 Store A

Store A lies to the west and is entered via one of the wide double doors seen on the south elevation. Upon entry from the exterior there is a concrete threshold but the remainder of the floor comprises red bricks laid flat with some minor damage (Fig 8), the bricks measure 22cm by 10.5cm (8½inches by 4inches). There is a timber-frame stud wall to the west with a window, a weather-boarded wall to the east which gives access into the adjacent Store B, and the north wall has been removed to allow access into the flat-roof Store E.

The doors are ledged and braced to the rear and are modern (Fig 9). They are framed by two historic studs and a wall-plate. However, a modern lintel has been inserted which cuts the eastern stud at the top. The wall-plate retains empty mortises for studwork, either indicating a previous use, or that these wide double doors are a later insertion. The doors take up most of the wall, but a slender area of the weather-boarding can be seen to the west.



The brick floor to Store A, looking south Fig 8



South wall of Store A, showing double doors, looking south Fig 9

The west wall comprises studwork above a course of worn red bricks (Fig 10). There are eight studs, two outer posts, and a downward brace to the north. The wall-plate has an empty mortise but no corresponding bridging joist, and there is no evidence of a matching mortise on the opposite wall. The window is as described externally and interrupts two studs below (Fig 11). Above the wall-plate several studs rise to the roof. Two of these support purlins which simply rest atop these studs, there is one in each pitch. The rest of the roof is not visible as it has been boarded with modern softwood boards.



West wall of Store A, showing studwork, looking north-west Fig 10



The window to the west wall of Store A, looking north-west Fig 11

The east wall comprises weather-boarding that has been white-washed and retains little of interest (Fig 12). This sits above a course of red bricks. To the south a single doorway gives access into Store B, which has a higher floor level.

To the north this wall has been affected by the addition of the flat-roof extension to create Store E (Fig 13). The studwork has been removed and all that remains is a modern softwood frame and a wide, open aperture.



East wall of Store A with weather-boarding and access into Store B, looking north-east Fig 12



North wall of Store A which has been altered with the addition of Store E further to the north, looking north-west Fig 13

6.2.2 Store B

Store B is the central area accessed via the single door seen on the south elevation, and via its adjoining Stores A and C. The floor comprises red bricks laid flat which measure 21.5-22cm by 9.5-11cm (8½inches by 3¾ - 4¼inches) (Fig 14). The walls comprise timber studwork and there is a partial loft over the northern part of the room.



Brick floor in Store B, looking south Fig 14

The area is entered via the door noted above, this is ledged to the rear with strap hinges on modern brackets (Fig 15). This also retains a long iron security bar for internal use. There is an early/mid 20th century lock case and evidence that the door has been re-hung within the same frame. The frame sits within two studs with outer examples and corner posts. These rise from the brick floor to the wall-plate. One has been cut above the door and the window to the west also interrupts a single stud, which only survives below.



South wall of Store B, looking south Fig 15

To the west the rear of the weather-boarded wall seen in Store A is visible. There are nine studs with corner posts and a downward brace descending from roughly centre towards the north (Fig 16). Several of the studs retain evidence of former use in a lath and plaster partition with multiple sequences of nails, or nail holes. One retains a scribed timber mark (Fig 17). These rise to a wall-plate and above this there is a closed partition comprising studwork and boards to the rafters (Fig 18). Two wider studs support purlins, the same as seen in Store A, one has notches indicating a former use elsewhere.



West wall of Store B, looking north-west Fig 16



Timber mark at the top of a stud on the west wall, looking north-west Fig 17



Partition above the wall-plate to the west wall of Store B, looking north-west Fig 18

The north wall also comprises studwork with a downward brace descending from the west corner post (Fig 19). A modern bench has been created and sits abutting the wall. To the east the studs are covered by an area of boarding.



Studwork and shelf to the north wall of Store B, looking north Fig 19

This boarding continues onto the east wall to a height of c0.75m and seems to comprise various quality timber (Fig 20). Here it perhaps covers an area of lost studwork seen within the adjacent store. Otherwise, the east wall comprises studwork and a downward brace descending from the north. The studwork rises from a sole-plate flush with the brick floor. To the south a six-panelled door gives access

into Store C. This sits on a long iron strap hinge with moulded recessed panels and an iron catch. Above the wall-plate the closed partition matches others to the west (Fig 21).

The roof above the area is partly obscured by the loft, created by planks of timber and old doors. Common rafters rise over the backs of the purlins to a ridgeboard. The quality of the commons is noticeably poorer than the timber used elsewhere and has likely been replaced in the mid/late 20th century.



East wall of Store B, looking north-east Fig 20



Closed partition above the wall-plate on the east wall of Store B, looking north-east Fig 21

6.2.3 Store C

The furthest eastern store also retains a brick floor with bricks laid on end measuring 21.5 - 22.5cm by 6cm (8½ - 8¾inches by 2½inches), there is noticeable damage to the floor towards the southern end (Fig 22). The walls all comprise timber studwork and there is weather-boarding to the west. The space is entered from the south via a second set of wide double doors, and from Store B to the west. There is a loft over the northern part of the room.



Brick floor in Store C, looking south Fig 22

The double doors match those to Store A and are ledged and braced to the rear with a modern lintel below the historic wall-plate (Fig 23). However, here two historic studs form the jambs. To the west, the wall-plate has a scribed timber mark on its face (Fig 24).

The west wall is weather-boarded and has suffered damage to the north-west where the underlying studwork is visible (Fig 25). Four studs and the corner post are exposed, with a downward brace. The door to Store B has a wrought-iron handle to this face. The weather-boarding extends above to the closed partition.

Boarding also partly obscures the north wall where a hay rack and potential former trough survive (Fig 26). The wall retains a downward brace descending from the north-east corner post around which the boards have been cut. The boards are nailed to underlying studwork which is exposed to the base where the boarding has failed. Here the rear of the weather-boarding seen in Store D can be seen. There is a long horizontal supported on posts which might suggest a former trough. Above a hay rack survives with diamond-profile bars and bowed upper rail.



South wall of Store C with double doors, looking south Fig 23



Scribed timber mark to the face of the wall-plate on the south wall of Store C, looking south-east Fig 24



West wall of Store C, looking north Fig 25



North wall of Store C with hay rack and trough, looking north-east Fig 26

To the east wall a series of studs and downward brace continue the carpentry tradition (Fig 27). To the east the tie-beam retains a series of notches to its face that appear to have been only semi-completed. Between two of the studs to the south is set the other window seen externally (Fig 28). The northern stud is oak, rather than the usual softwood, and is much weathered. The window has lost its sliding vent grille and has been replaced with an additional two-light insertion, clearly reused from elsewhere. Above the tie-beam the studs rise in the same arrangement as elsewhere.



East timber stud wall to Store C, looking north-east Fig 27



Window in Store C with part of another window inserted over the lower grille, looking north-east Fig 28

The roof above this store is the same as to the adjoining Store B. The south purlin retains a notch, and a scribed timber mark to its soffit (Fig 29). To the north the abutting roof over Store D can be seen with a ridgeboard supported on rafters but not correspond to the main roof in any way.



Timber mark to the south purlin in Store C, looking south Fig 29

6.2.4 Store D

This space is entered individually of the other stores via the south-east elevation. It has a concrete floor, which may have been laid over an earlier brick surface, and timber-framed walls. There is weather-boarding to the south wall and the room is open to the roof where a simple roof structure is exposed.

The door it is entered via is ledged to the rear with a wrought-iron catch and modern lock case above. It is hung on strap hinges. The window adjacent is set within a simple timber frame with a curled window catch of some age. Otherwise the timber frame comprises corner posts and four full studs, although they have been utilised as the window/door jambs (Fig 30). A bench stretches across the wall below the window.



East wall of Store D showing door, window and shelf, looking south-east Fig 30

To the south the wall is weather-boarded in softwood (Fig 31). To the upper section the boards retain multiple examples of circular saw marks. Above the level of the tie-beam the boarding has been left unpainted but rises to the apex (Fig 32).



Weather-boarding to the south wall of Store D, looking south-west Fig 31



Weather-boarded gable to the south wall of Store D, looking south-west Fig 32

The west wall comprises seven studs with two diagonal braces descending from the corner posts (Fig 33). The corner post to the north is oak and clearly historic displaying weathering from a previous exterior positioning. The carpentry here is simple with the wall-plates notched over the post (Fig 34). The braces cut the studs

as in Stores A-C and they vary in scantling. There is no sole-plate but they all rise to a wall-plate.



The timber-framed west wall of Store D, looking north-west Fig 33



Corner post, wall-plate and tie-beam to the north-west corner of Store D, looking north Fig 34

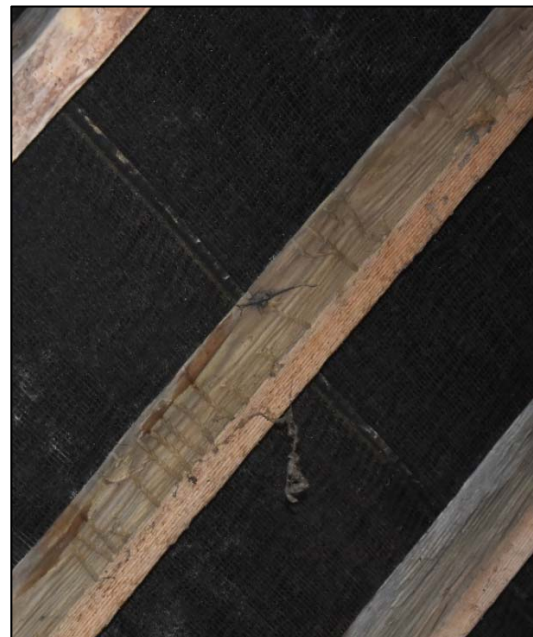
To the north there are eight studs with a more robust central post (Fig 35). The studs vary in scantling and are cut by two diagonal braces descending from the corner posts. There is no sole-plate but a single course of bricks to the north replace this, some studs descend directly onto the concrete, and a modern insertion to the east

perhaps attempts to rectify this. Above the tie-beam there are seven studs all slender which rise to the rafters.



Timber studwork to the north wall of Store D, looking north-west Fig 35

The roof structure is simple and there is a single truss spanning the space. This comprises a tie-beam from which two posts rise and support a purlin in each pitch. The common rafters are all slender and rise to a ridgeboard at the apex. There are several examples of timber marks (Fig 36) including the tie-beams south face, one of the common rafters in the west pitch, and the tie-beam to the north wall.



Timber marks on the south face of the tie-beam (left) and common rafter to the west pitch (right) in Store D, looking north-west Fig 36

6.2.5 Store E

Store E comprises the flat-roof extension to Store A that extends northwards. The building of this area necessitated the removal of the north wall of Store A.

The area has a concrete floor, timber studwork to the west and north walls (Figs 37-38) and the weather-boarded former exterior wall of the north range to the east (Fig 39).

The timber is of regular scantling, all softwood, and is slender. A single course of bricks form the foundation of the west studwork, a brick dwarf wall of four courses lies to the north. The studwork had downward braces from the north-west corner post.



West studwork wall in Store E, looking north-west Fig 37



North studwork wall in Store E, looking north-east Fig 38

The ceiling comprises north-south extending softwood joists, there is water damage to the north-east corner of the space.



Former exterior weather-boarding to the north range, now housed within Store E, looking east Fig 39

7 CONCLUSION

The outbuilding represents a mid-19th century utilitarian building that appears to have been constructed with various ad hoc elements of timber, but using a single constructional method. There are several clear phases of later additions that have been identified.

What survives of the earliest primary construction includes much of the wall-framing in Stores A-C, the brick floors where they survive, and some fixtures and fittings. There are some elements of oak, timber with evidence of multiple nails (for lath and plaster), and timber with empty notches and mortises, all of which suggest a previous purpose before their use in their current position in this building. The ventilation windows to Stores A and C may also fall within this category. The timber has been utilised in a box-frame method with downward braces used for additional support. The carpentry is rudimentary, as would be expected from this type of building. It is clear these areas were used for utilitarian functions, indicated partly by the brick flooring. Store C indicates usage as a stables, the usage of the other areas may have been multi-functional. The date of this phase is difficult to be certain of, but the scantling and carpentry would certainly suggest a 19th-century date. The datestone on the house of 1851 would certainly provide appropriate context for its construction.

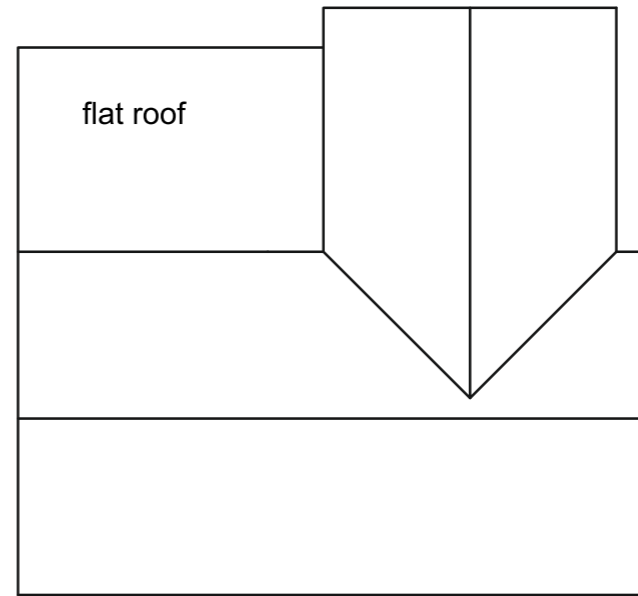
Within these areas the roof has been almost entirely replaced with modern timber, perhaps within the last 60 years. There are also areas of weather-boarding that suggest replacement. There is some evidence of repair and replacement but this is limited, as result much of the timber-frame can be dated to the original construction, but most has clearly been re-utilised from elsewhere.

The flat-roof outshot is a clear modern insertion, likely mid-20th century in date. This removed the north wall of Store A which was likely of the same pattern of studwork as elsewhere.

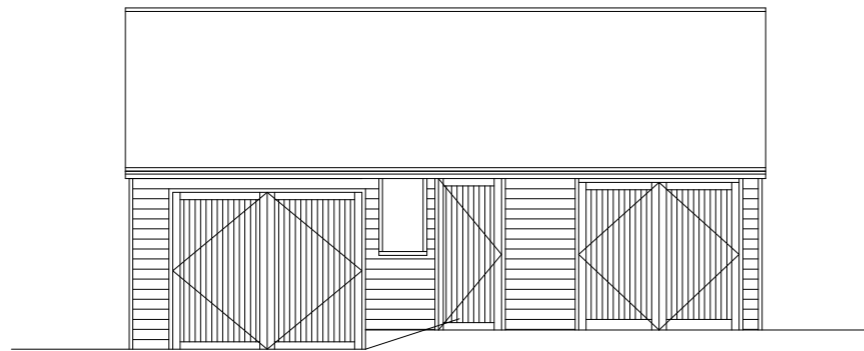
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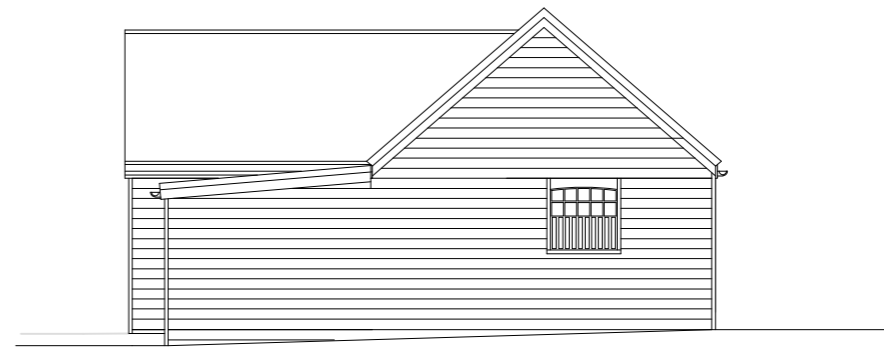
FLOOR PLAN



ROOF PLAN



SW ELEVATION



NW ELEVATION



SE ELEVATION

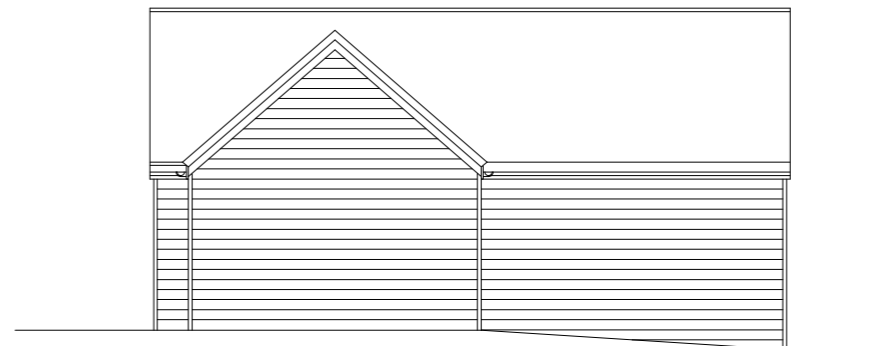


Photo number and location

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MOLA

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MOLA
Kent House
30 Billing Road
Northampton
NN1 5DQ
01604 809800
www.mola.org.uk
business@mola.org.uk