



Historic building recording at the Falcon Hotel, Castle Ashby Northamptonshire, May 2017

Report No. 17/89

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		OASIS molanort1-290727
Project title	Historic Building Recording at the Falcon Hotel, Castle Ashby, Northamptonshire, May 2017	
Short description	<p><i>MOLA [Museum of London Archaeology] carried out historic building recording of the Falcon Hotel, Castle Ashby, Northamptonshire during conversion and remediation works to the building. The building originated as a 17th-century inn and has been subject to alterations and extensions in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries. These alterations included the raising of two adjacent single cell blocks from single storey to two storeys in the mid-18th century and converting them for use as accommodation. Also recorded were an 18th-century stables and an 18th century coach house, both of which were subject to alterations in the 19th and 20th centuries.</i></p>	
Project type	Historic England Level 2, Historic Building Recording	
Previous work	None	
Future work	Unknown	
Monument type and period	17th-century Inn / hotel, with 18th, 19th and 20th century extensions and alterations	
PROJECT LOCATION		
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Site address	The Falcon Hotel, Castle Ashby, Northamptonshire	
NGR	SP 85995 59549	
Area	c550 sq m	
Height	79m aOD	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology)	
Project brief originator	Northamptonshire Assistant Archaeological Advisor	
Project Design originator	MOLA	
Director/Supervisor	Amir Bassir	
Project Manager	Amir Bassir	
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ABSTRACT

MOLA [Museum of London Archaeology] carried out historic building recording of the Falcon Hotel, Castle Ashby, Northamptonshire during conversion and remediation works to the building. The building originated as a 17th-century inn and has been subject to alterations and extensions in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries. These alterations included the raising of two adjacent single cell blocks from single storey to two storeys in the mid-18th century and converting them for use as accommodation. Also recorded were an 18th century stables and an 18th-century coach house, both of which were subject to alterations in the 19th and 20th centuries.

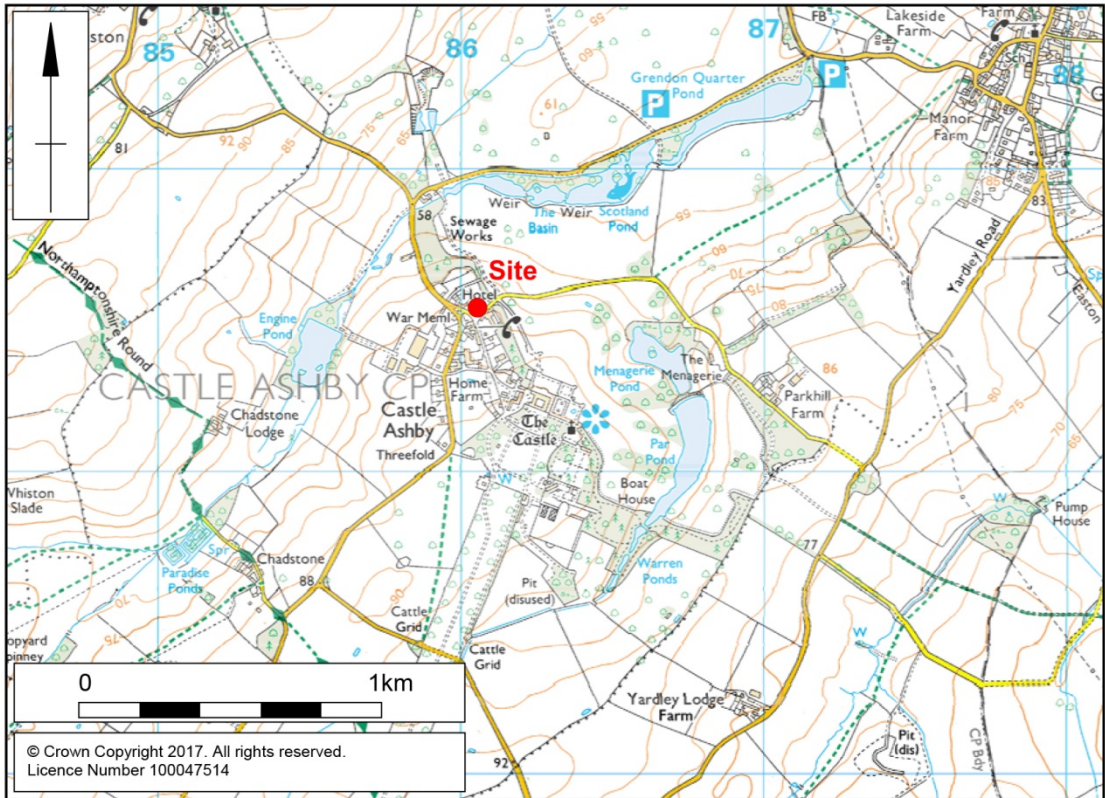
1 INTRODUCTION

MOLA [Museum of London Archaeology] was commissioned by Austin Newport Group to undertake a programme of historic building recording at the Grade II Listed Falcon Hotel, Castle Ashby, Northamptonshire (NGR SP 85995 59549, Figs 1 and 2). Recording encompassed the hotel and a former stables and coach house located at the east of the main building. Planning permission has been granted for the demolition of a 20th century toilet extension and erection of a single-storey kitchen extension to the rear of the hotel, as well as a number of alterations such as some re-fenestration and alteration of the internal partitioning (S/2016/1887/FUL). Separate planning permission has been granted for the renovation of the existing stables / coach house and conversion of this building to bedrooms (S/2016/1871/FUL). Both of these proposals are subject to a programme of historic building recording which has been defined by the Northamptonshire Assistant Archaeological Advisor as conforming to Historic England Level 2 guidelines.

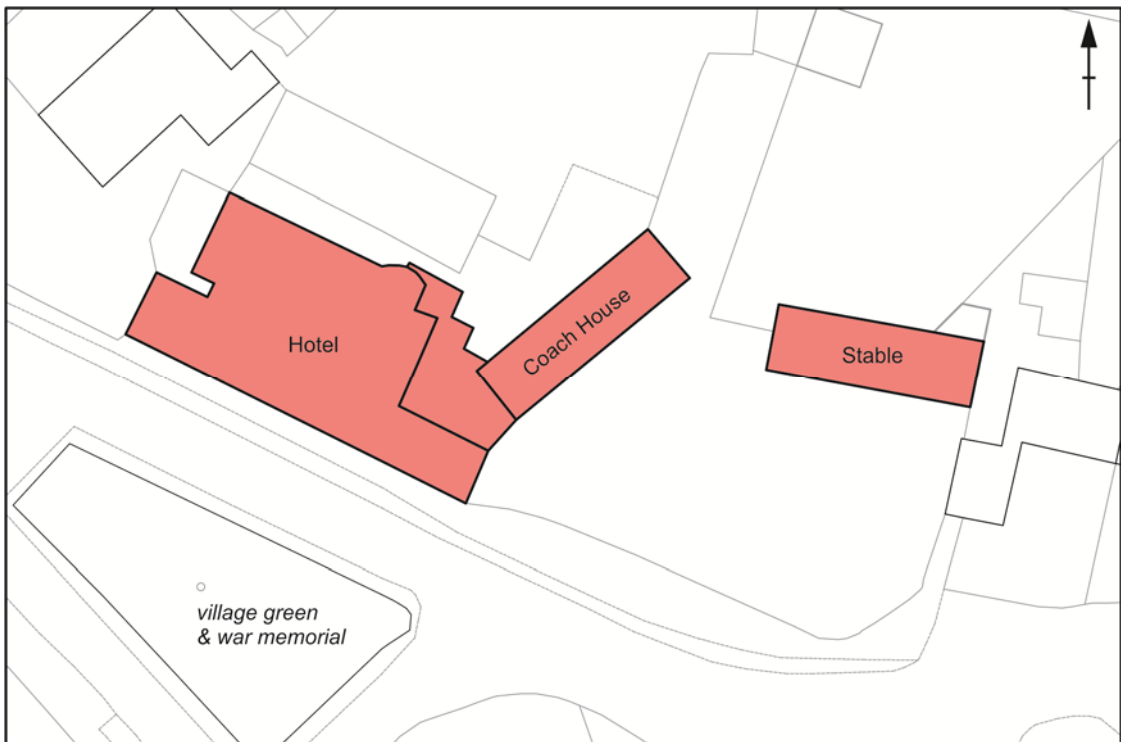
This report follows an approved Written Scheme of Investigation (MOLA 2017) which set out a methodology for archaeological recording in-line with Historic England Level 2 historic building recording (HE 2016). All works were undertaken in accordance with current guidelines (ClfA 2014a and 2014b) and Historic England (MORPHE) (HE 2015).

The hotel originated as a two-storey, three-bay 17th-century inn, with adjacent single-storey and single-cell blocks which may have originally served a non-domestic function such as stabling or storage. They were both raised to two-storeys in the mid-18th century and converted to accommodation. The site includes a stables and coach house which probably date to the mid-18th century and may be contemporary with the raising of the two blocks. The hotel was subject to internal refurbishment, including re-fenestration, in the early 19th century and a number of extensions were built at the rear of the building. Several of these extensions were replaced in the mid-late 20th century.

THE FALCON HOTEL, CASTLE ASHBY



Site location Fig 1



The recording area (not to scale) Fig 2

2 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The objective of Historic England (HE) Level 2 building recording is to provide an analytical record of an extant structure in accordance with the HE document *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (HE 2016). It provides a descriptive account of a building's origins, development and use.

Site visits were carried out on the 24th and 25th May 2017. Recording included the following elements:

- Establishing an accurate archaeological record of the buildings to Historic England Level 2 (HE 2016, section 5.3);
- An overall photographic survey of the exterior and interior of the buildings in their present condition comprising general and detailed shots. Photography was carried out using a Nikon D7200 DSLR equipped with Sigma 35-17mm and Nikon 18-70mm lenses. Files are in RAW with high quality JPEG duplicates. Where possible and appropriate 1m scales or smaller were included in all photographs;
- Detailed photographic recording of architectural and decorative features, and any features of historic interest;
- Measured drawn recording of the spine beams and joists, and other accessible elements such as the carved stone kneelers;
- Written notes on the buildings' construction, present and former use and, where appropriate, the buildings' past and present relationship to their setting in the wider landscape;
- Annotation of existing survey drawings to depict features of archaeological or architectural interest.

This survey has generated an archive of approximately 650 digital photographs of which a selection is used in this report for illustrative purposes. A number of the first floor photographs are converted to greyscale in this report in order to remove a green haze caused by green plastic roof sheeting.

The building is aligned north-west to south-east. For ease of description the principal elevations will be described using a site north, so that the primary south-west facing elevation is described as the south elevation and so on.

Building work had begun prior to this survey and included the removal of the roof tiles, stripping of the walls, removal of floor boards and the removal of several modern partitions. The removal of floor boards from several of the first floor rooms resulted in limited access to these areas. External photography, particularly of the main frontage, was limited by the presence of scaffolding and the ground floor windows had been externally boarded for the duration of the works and could only be recorded internally.

3 LOCATION AND TOPOGRAPHY

The parish, covering some 800 hectares, occupies a roughly triangular area of land S. of the R. Nene, which lies just beyond its N.W. corner. The S.W. part of the parish is a Boulder Clay table-land at around 100 m. above OD. Further N. the down-cutting of a number of streams has exposed areas of limestones, clays and silts, and a large area of Lias Clay, extending towards the R. Nene, between 45 m. and 55 m. above OD. A number of prehistoric and Roman settlement sites have been discovered within the parish, the majority on the higher Boulder Clay areas. As well as the existing village of Castle Ashby, situated on a spur in the centre of the parish, there are also the remains of the medieval hamlet of Chadstone, now largely deserted (RCHME 1979).

The Falcon Hotel is located at the northern extent of the village of Castle Ashby and fronts onto the Whiston-Castle Ashby Road. To the rear of the property are car parks and garden. The Castle Ashby Registered Garden surrounds the village around its north, south, and eastern sides, and the village is surrounded by enclosed fields to the west. The Hotel is located adjacent to a triangular green with a war memorial. A narrow wooded area leads north from the village, around the northern edge of the garden, towards Scotland Pond. The village is sparsely inhabited and the domestic residences are well-spaced and interspersed with large gardens.

The underlying geology of the village has been mapped as comprising the Blisworth Limestone Formation (BGS 2017). Castle Ashby House and Garden are situated on a level area of high ground, c85m aOD. The topography slopes away towards the north, east and south, and the linear lakes to the north of the village and in the Gardens are situated within lower lying folds of the landscape. The village itself descends down a gentle northward slope from 85m aOD to 65m aOD.

4 HISTORIC BACKGROUND

The Falcon Hotel is a Grade II Listed building (NHLE 1371262, listed 1988) and its listing description is as follows:

Hotel. Late C17 altered and extended C19 and C20. Coursed squared limestone, plain-tile roof, brick ridge and end stacks. 2-storey, 4-window range. Panelled door to right of centre in gabled timber porch. 2-light leaded windows to ground floor far left and to right of door to ground and 1st floors, otherwise similar 3-light windows; all have wood lintels. Stone-coped gables with kneelers. Lower 2-storey extensions to left and right, that to left with further C20 extension. Interior has chamfered spine beams and open fireplace with chamfered bressumer (HE 2017).

Castle Ashby is mentioned in the Domesday Book as *Ashbi* and takes its name from a castle which formerly stood here. Bridges mentions that the village is referred to in some ancient records as Ashby-David, from David de Esseby “*who was lord at the time of Henry III*” (Bridges 1791). It is noted by Bridges that in addition to the Earl’s seat, the village consisted of twelve houses at the time of his survey.

A documentary, map and image search was carried out at the Northamptonshire Record Office and the Local Studies Library, and the Castle Ashby Archive was also contacted. Unfortunately little documentary evidence relating to the building could be found. The earliest depiction of the site is Thomas Eyre’s map of 1791 which presents a simplistic view of the parish, showing buildings in block form (Fig 3). Castle Ashby House and the Church are seen, set in their landscape, with the avenue leading to it from the south. It is evident that buildings are present in the area of the hotel but it is not possible to make conclusions about the nature of these buildings. Bryant’s map of 1827 is also fairly

simplistic in its treatment of buildings but it can be seen that at least four individual buildings are present at the north of the village, in the vicinity of the hotel (Fig 4).

The earliest clear view of the site is the Tithe map of 1840 (NRO T.180, Fig 5). The hotel and stables are clearly depicted and are referred to in the apportionment award document which accompanies the map. The present form of the building is clearly recognisable and included the stable and coach house, as well as the extensions to the rear of the hotel. At the western end of the hotel is shown a small outbuilding. To the rear of the stable block there can be seen a small linear building which is shown on Ordnance Survey mapping of 1885 and 1900 but appears to have been demolished by 1950. A small pond is shown to the east of the hotel, next to the road. The pond is not shown any Ordnance Survey mapping. The tithe document lists the landowner as *The Most Noble the Marquis of Northampton*, and the occupier is given as *John Longstaffe*. The property is described as *Falcon Inn, Yard, Garden*.

The first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1885 (not reproduced) shows that by this date the hotel had been extended westward and a linear outbuilding had been constructed to the north-west of the hotel. A small porch-like structure is depicted against the western side of the coach house and the building appears to have been extended to the north. The porch is no longer shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1900 (Fig 8). By this date the linear outbuilding at the north-west of the hotel has doubled in size, presumably either re-built or replaced. The outbuilding has been either replaced or incorporated into the neighbouring property.

Historic newspapers provide an interesting insight into the function of the hotel and its social context. Throughout the 19th century the Falcon provided a venue for meetings, auctions and inquests. In February 1805 the Falcon was host to a meeting for the purpose of '*establishing an association for the apprehending and prosecuting robbers, thieves &c. by subscription*' (Northampton Mercury 1805). Notice was given in the Northampton Mercury of 8th February 1812 that the members of the Wymersley Association were requested to attend a meeting at '*the house of Mr Jonathan Howkins, known by the Sign of the Falcon in Castle Ashby*' (Northampton Mercury 1812). Other meetings are also advertised in later editions but a full list is not given here. In 1856 the Falcon was use to hold an inquest on the body of James Waite, a labourer who was found in a pond called Paradise Pond (Northampton Mercury 1856). On several occasions the Falcon hosted quarterly meetings of the members of the Sanitary Inspectors' Association (Northampton Mercury 1874). A variety of other functions and meetings are scattered throughout the newspapers of the 19th century, showing that the building played an important role in the local community.

Using county directories and other sources it has been possible to create a list of the building's occupiers from 1812 to 1940 (Kelly Directories 1847-1940):

Table 1 A list of the inn / hotel's occupiers between 1840-1940

Year	Occupier
1812 (NM 1812)	Mr Jonathan Howkins
1840 Tithe map	Longstaffe, John, Falcon Inn, Yard, Garden
1847	Longstaffe, John, "Falcon" & Farmer
1854 - 1869	Davies, David, "Falcon" & farmer
Whelan's County History, 1874	Davies David, Vict. Falcon Inn
1877	Davies Elizh. (mrs), Falcon, & farmer
1885	Fletcher Thomas, Falcon P.H

THE FALCON HOTEL, CASTLE ASHBY

1894	Wooding Charles Henry, Falcon temperance hotel
1898	Birch Eliza (Mrd), Falcon temperance hotel
1906 - 1910	Laurance Elizabeth (Mrs), Falcon temperance hotel
1920	Laurance Mary & Frances Misses, Falcon temperance hotel
1924 - 1936	Smith Chas Falcon temperance hotel
1940	Falcon Temperance Hotel (Fras. Hy. Henman)

Mr Longstaffe was the victim of a 'daring burglary' on 18th January 1849, during which he was:

alarmed by a noise below stairs, which led him to suppose there were thieves in the house. He went down with a loaded gun, and, observing a light in the hall, levelled his gun with intention of firing, when the gun was suddenly struck upwards, the light extinguished, and Mr. Longstaffe was seized by some persons who had been behind the door. A desperate struggle ensued in the dark, in the course of which Mr. Longstaffe was severely beaten and the villains effected their escape, taking with them the gun and a large quantity of property, including two great coats, a silver watch, money, plate, a gold ring, wearing apparel &c... They must have been in Mr Longstaffe's house a considerable time, as they drank a bottle of brandy, a bottle of gin, and part of some bottles of wine (Northampton Mercury 1849a).

Mr Longstaffe left the Falcon two months after this incident, for in the Northampton Mercury, 31st March 1849 is notification for the auction of 'Neat and modern household furniture, valuable dog, gun and effects' (Northampton Mercury 1849b). Among the items listed for auction were two mahogany four-post bedsteads, four tent bedsteads, seven feather beds, mattresses, mahogany dining table, mahogany chairs, oak dining table and chairs, cut wine decanter, various glassware and kitchen utensils, and an assortment of crockery and dairy utensils. The description here provided gives some measure as to the accommodation and comfort provided at the Falcon and suggests that it was well furnished and possessed of good quality furniture and goods. The Falcon was taken over by Mr David Davies in May of 1849, an event advertised in the Northampton Mercury in which it is stated:

David Davies (Successor to Mr John Longstaffe), respectfully informs the public in general, that he has entered upon the above Inn, and hopes, by strict attention to business, and a careful selection of the best articles, to merit a share of public patronage (Northampton Mercury 1849c).

Mr Davies was also the target of criminals in October 1870 when 'Thomas Smith, Yardley Hastings, and Edward Wyman, Chadstone, were charged with wilfully damaging a door, the property of David Davies, at Castle Ashby, on the 6th September' (Northampton Mercury 1870). The defendants, masons labourers and 'respectable looking young men', kicked off the lock and bolt of the door and were very abusive.

Mr Davies left the Falcon in March of 1883, at which time there was an auction of 'Surplus household effects, excellent brewing plant, saccharometer, hydrometer, two sets liquor casks, quantity glassware, capital donkey, pony spring cart, village cart, two sets pony harness, chaff machine, and numerous effects' (Northampton Mercury 1883). The brewing plant included a 'mash vat, cooler, two working vats, six large and sweet ale barrels, Thrall's brewing pails, hop sieves, saccharometer, Syke's hydrometer and book,

set of five capital oak liquor casks, with bass taps, set three stone ditto, oak bottle rack, new standard beer measures'. Although the county's infrastructure had begun to be improved by this period and large scale brewing was taking place, it is evident that it was still common place for inns to brew their own ales and were well equipped to do so.

From 1894 up to at least 1940 the hotel is listed in Kelly's Directories as a temperance hotel. The Temperance Movement was a 19th-century social movement which was a reaction against alcohol and the social problems associated with it. The movement grew against the backdrop of industrialisation and rapid population growth in increasingly crowded towns.

Two historic photographs were found during research, comprising a view of the rear of the hotel, c1915, and a view of the frontage, c1920 (Figs 7 and 8). The photograph of the rear of the building shows a number of interesting features which are of relevance to the development of the building and will be discussed later in this report. At present the rear of the building is largely dominated by modern extensions which replace a number of smaller stone-built structures visible on early Ordnance Survey maps and which can be seen on this photograph. These are shown to have comprised single-storey stone-built structures with tile roofs, possibly abutting the hotel. The larger of the buildings had two windows on its north wall and a brick stack projecting up from the end of the structure, possibly with a louvered top. It is possible that this may have been a brew house. Adjacent to this was a lean-to building built against the west side of the early-mid 19th-century cross-wing with bay window. It had a double door opening to the north through which curtains are visible, indicating a domestic use. A smaller lean-to can just be seen against the eastern side of the cross-wing. Two quite tall brick chimney stacks with clay chimney pots were located at the east and west sides of the cross-wing though neither remained at the time of recording. Other features shown on the photograph but no longer present are a small dormer window which appears to open into the hotel's loft space and a roof light at the western end of the central range.

A view of the south elevation dating to c1920 shows little difference to its current appearance (the modern extension at the west cannot be seen). The hotel's sign can be seen projecting from the eastern corner of the building. The hotel was, at this time referred to as the Falcon Temperance Hotel in the contemporary Kelly's Directory, whereas the sign advertises the Falcon Inn, and probably dated back to at the least the mid-19th-century when Mr Davies or Mr Longstaffe were the occupiers. The fenestration in the image appears to be the same which has been recorded. The front porch is a little different to the current one, though of similar dimensions and form and it is probable that the roof has been retained but the timberwork replaced. A picket fence separated the building from the dirt road. The picket fence and hotel frontage are also shown on a sketch of c1933 (Fig 9).



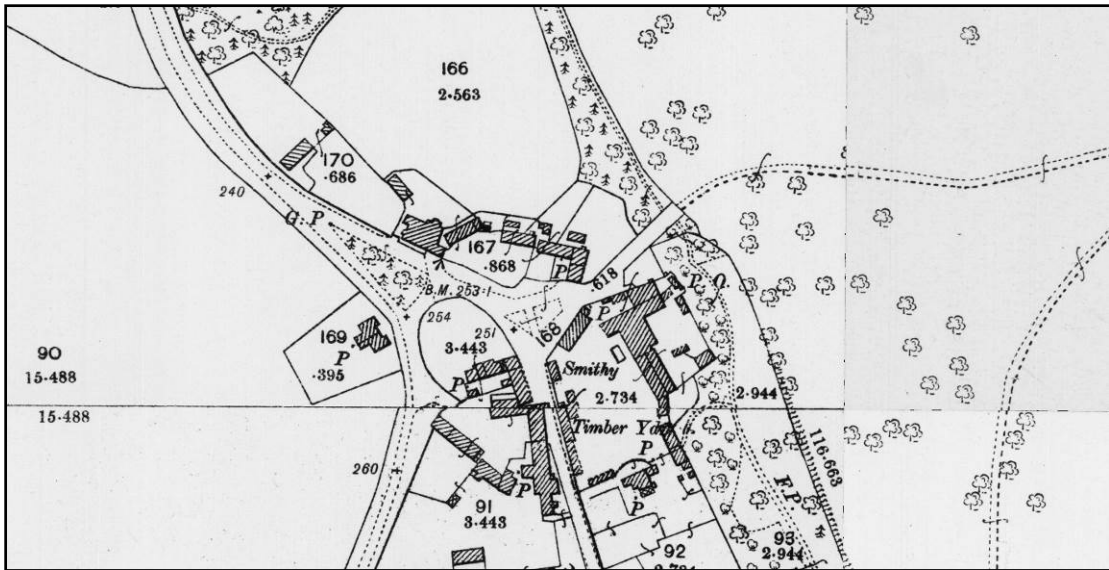
Thomas Eyre's map of 1791 Fig 3



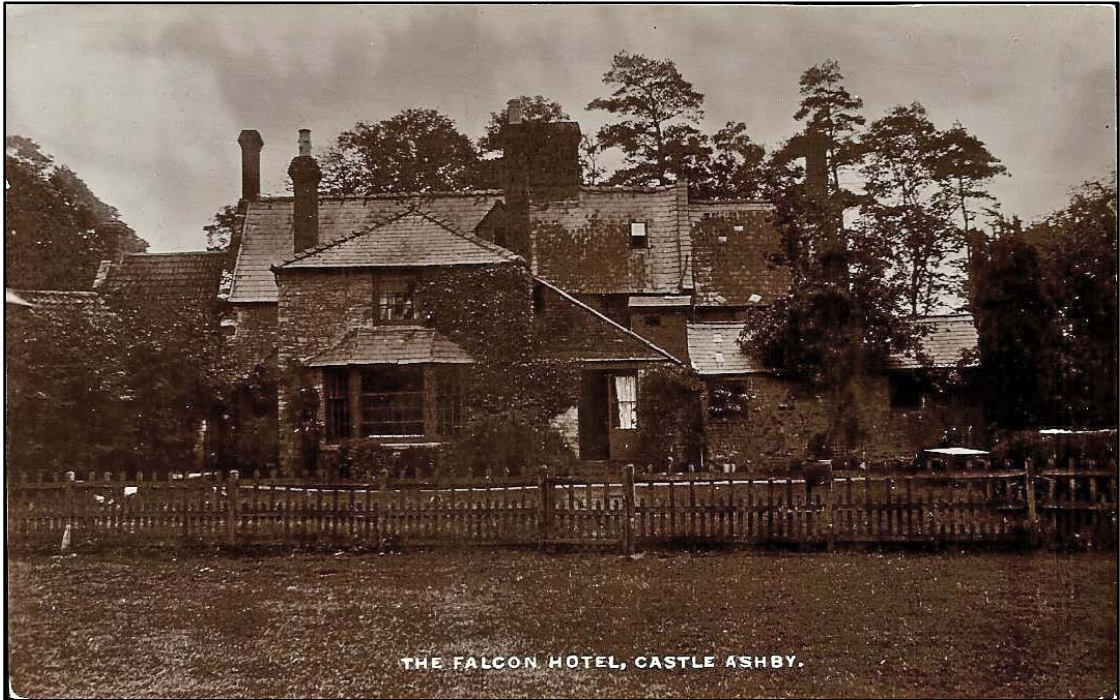
Bryant's map of 1827 Fig 4



Tithe map of 1840 (NRO T.180) Fig 5



Second edition Ordnance Survey map of 1900 Fig 6



View of the rear of the hotel, c1915 (Ebay 2017) Fig 7



Photograph of the Falcon, c1920s (NRO P/6072) Fig 8



Sketch of the Falcon, c1933 (N.C. Magazine, Vol VI, p226) Fig 9

5 BUILDING DESCRIPTION

5.1 Ground floor

The historic core of the hotel is comprised of a linear arrangement of three main blocks. The central block is a two-storey rectangular range with a central door, occupying a footprint of 13.3m x 5.6m. This range stands slightly taller than the surrounding structures and its roof is clearly defined by stone-capped gable parapets. This central range is flanked by smaller two-storey blocks, the block to the east having a footprint of 4.4m x 4.8, and that to the west measuring 4.4m x 5.7m. The east block presents a blank façade to the road, and the northern block has a window at ground floor and a smaller window at first floor. The three blocks are built of dressed and rubble coursed limestone bonded in lime mortar, with limestone and ironstone quoins at the corners and marking the joints between the buildings. An Ordnance Survey benchmark is carved into one of the ironstone quoins of the eastern block.

The central range has four windows at ground floor and four at first floor. Internally it is divided into three rooms at ground floor, G1-G3, and three rooms at first floor, F1-F3, these rooms being of roughly equal dimensions and overlying one another.

The principal entrance is through the central door to the east which faces the village green and war memorial. This is a six panelled door with moulded mullion and rails. On the inner face are a rim lock, a yale lock and sliding latches. There is a letter box in the lock rail. A five-light transom window is located above. Around the door is a porch which projects c0.7m from the wall. It has a tile roof and is constructed of white painted planks on a timber frame set onto a brick plinth. This porch replaces an earlier one which is visible on a historic photograph of c1920.

5.1.1 Room G1

The main door allows entry to the principal ground floor room, Room G1, which is a roughly square-plan space measuring 4.2m x 4.5m, and has an open-fireplace in the west corner. The east, north and south walls retained (though partly removed by the time of this survey), a simple 19th century scheme of wainscoting with skirting and dado rail. The walls were otherwise plain with no decorative embellishment. The room has a flagstone floor but this was covered by boarding in order to protect it during the works.

An open fireplace is located in the south-west corner of the room. The fireplace is 2.2m in width and projects 0.9m into the room. The hearth is elevated slightly above the floor and soot and blackening were evident on both of the hearth and internal walls. A substantial square-profile timber beam, c300mm in width spans the fire opening. A number of circular holes and linear cuts are in the outer face of the beam and the northern edge has been partly cut-away. The surface is also covered by an extensive scattering of small indentations, possibly *pecking* marks which aid in the retention of a plaster facing. A shallow stone shelf is located at the back of the fireplace and may once have projected further forwards.

Roughly central to the ceiling can be seen the underside of a timber spine beam which is supported at its western side by the corner of the fireplace. The beam has chamfered edges, with stops at the western end only. The beam continues through the western wall and into room G3.

In the south wall is a large recessed window with window seat and wooden shutters. The window is of three lights, each subdivided into eight panels by wrought iron glazing bars. The central light is side hung and has a wrought iron turnbuckle latch. A wrought iron security bar is located central to the window. The three lights are separated by a pair of wooden splayed mullions.

Adjacent to the external door is a stair landing with three stone steps leading down into room G2. In the landing there is a two light window; both lights are side hung with wrought iron glazing and separated by a wooden splayed mullion.

In the eastern corner of the room a doorway leads to a corridor which spans the width of the stairs and room G2 and leads to the covered lobby adjacent to the former coach house. This corridor is a somewhat haphazard arrangement which required the partial demolition of the eastern corner of the building and its rebuilding at an angle to accommodate a new door. Above the doorway and projecting into the corridor is a truncated timber beam with chamfered stops. The timber is clearly re-used but its purpose within the structure is unclear as it provides no support for the joists above. RSJs (rolled steel joists) have been positioned above the doorway. The creation of the corridor required the truncation of room G2 which was shortened and made good with a thin brick wall. A metal framed window with wrought iron glazing and timber lintel is located adjacent to the door. A defunct lintel is located a short distance above the door and it is likely that a former window in this position has been reduced in size. Within the corridor is a doorway with flag stone steps leading down to the cellar below the northern extensions. The steps also lead to another cellar entrance from the covered lobby.

5.1.2 Room G2

Room G2 measures 2.5m x 3.4m and has a reduced floor level compared to the surrounding rooms, with steps leading down from the stair landing. The reduction is marked by a red brick plinth that runs below the stonework of the walls. The floor is comprised of red coloured stone tiles. The north wall is comparatively thin and is formed of ½ length bricks. The former lath and plaster ceiling has been removed to expose the joists. A large spine beam spans the room between the east and west walls and the joists are secured to the beam with mortice joints and wooden pegs driven through the upper surface. The removal of floorboards in the room above allows a clear view of the joists and assembly or carpenter marks are visible. These comprise a continuous sequence of Roman numerals from I to VIII, with I being on the western joist adjacent to the stair. It was unclear if similar marks are present on the joists on the southern side of the main beam. It is assumed that matching assembly marks should also be present on the spine beam but they were not visible.

As noted in **5.2.1**, a chimney flue, inserted into the east wall, descends into this room. No fire opening is visible due to the plasterwork but a small ventilation panel in the eastern wall marks the position of the flue.

5.1.3 Room G3

This room has been heavily altered both in the early 19th century and in the 1980s. Two large openings were inserted through the western wall and have been blocked with breeze blocks shortly prior to this survey. A large opening was also created in the northern room to allow access to the north extensions and required the insertion of three RSJs above the opening to carry the wall above. The area behind the original chimney stack has been enclosed by a brick wall and within this space are located modern heating apparatus with a 19th-century fire surround and cast iron grate against the rear wall. A narrow, full height cupboard with moulded wooden surround and wooden shelves is built into the chimney stack at the corner of the room. The chimney associated with this fireplace and the adjoining fireplace in room G1 shows a vertical joint between the flues, indicating a widening of the chimney stack. The brickwork of the widened chimney is suggestive of an 18th-century date.

The spine beam and joists are exposed following the removal of the ceiling and the first floor boards. The beam is chamfered and smoothed on its visible underside but rough

on its hidden sides and upper surface which still retain some bark. The joists are bevelled at the terminus, with tenons to the main beam.

At the rear of the open fireplace is a haphazard and unsuccessful arrangement of timberwork designed to support the chimney stack which was further extended westward in the mid-20th century. The stack is located above the ground floor spine beam which has been given support by a cross beam that spans between the southern external wall and the short brick wall to the north. Additional joists have been added below the stack and concrete beams are located above these. The weight of the stack and its concrete beams have unsurprisingly proved too heavy for the structure to carry and the cross beam below the spine beam has split from the load. This has required the insertion of acrow props below the spine beam and the cross beam.

In the south wall is a recessed two-light window with splayed mullion, set within a wooden frame. The lights have wrought iron glazing dividing each into twelve panes. Both are side hung and have monkey tail stays and one has a monkey tail latch. Iron pintles within the frame indicate that the window formerly had internal shutters.

5.1.4 Room G4

Access to room G4 is through the covered lobby at the north-east of the hotel. The doorway has an exposed timber lintel and wooden frame, both painted dark green. The door had been removed leaving the iron strap hinges *in situ*. The room is square in plan, measuring 3.6m x 3.6m. The walls are bare and whitewashed. The east and north walls had until just prior to this survey been covered behind stud panelling which was removed to expose a brick fireplace in the east wall. The brick surround is much larger than the fire opening and on its northern side has an irregular join with the stonework. While it is common for a chimney stack to be built of brick in a primarily stone structure, the irregular join to the wall would suggest that this is perhaps a later feature. Alternatively, the flue is contemporary with the structure and the brickwork has been expanded perhaps as an irregular repair. At first floor level, in room F4, the flue is clearly defined, though due to the plastered wall, the extent of any adjacent brickwork is unknown. Above the first floor ceiling the flue is seen to contain perforated machine-made bricks of the early to mid-19th century. The external stack however utilises hand-made bricks with skintle marks which most likely date to the mid to late 18th century.

5.1.5 Room G5

This room has suffered from a large-scale loss of original walls, which have been demolished and replaced with brick and breezeblock so that only the southern wall is part of the original fabric. The room retains the original spine beam and joists, these being carried on RSJs installed above the later walls. In the east wall were, until very recently, two door openings into room G3 and these were blocked with breezeblocks shortly before this survey. The western wall has been almost fully removed and a staggered wall of breezeblocks has been built, with RSJs above to carry the joists. The north wall is partly brick built and partly in breezeblocks, with a door between the two. Mr Horton of Austin Newport Group has related that the breezeblocks replace a brick wall which has been recently demolished. RSJs span across the wall.

The southern wall is stone built with a modern plaster overlay, and the stonework is continued in a short return in the western wall. The inner corner of this wall has a brick infill over which RSJs and the joists are carried. The room's only window is located off-centre to the southern wall and is set within a splayed reveal. The window appears to be a modern imitation of the historic window type and where the plaster is fragmented, brickwork is revealed at the windows edge. It is likely therefore that the earlier window was replaced and the window opening altered or repaired in the 1980s.

The spine beam crosses the room from north to south and at its southern end is embedded in the stonework of the wall. At its northern end it is supported by an RSJ and has brickwork to each side, and breezeblocks above. The spine beam has chamfered stops at both ends and the demolition of the original north wall has exposed the terminus of the beam which would have been embedded in the wall. The beam is c170mm in width with chamfered underside edges and a rectangular profile c220mm in height. The joists are jointed to the upper part of the beam and several additional modern joists have been added. The detail of the joist joinery is unclear but it appears that they are secured to the top side of the spine beam by lap joints. The joists have a dark staining and may have formerly been painted black. The underside of the beam retains white paint. The room formerly had a lath and plaster ceiling. In the north-west corner of the ceiling is a possible trimmer joist which spans three joists with the central joist terminating at the trimmer. This arrangement probably accommodated the chimney flue which has been terminated at the ceiling level and originally descended into the room.

5.2 The first floor

The staircase rises to a curved edge landing which to the east steps up to room F1 and to the west steps up to a corridor that spans the length of the building to room F4, with doorways to rooms F2 and F3.

5.2.1 Room F1

Room F1 forms the easternmost room of the historic core of the building and is a roughly L-plan space which wraps around the staircase in the north-west corner of the room. The staircase is formed of lath and plaster clad stud partitions and rises to ceiling height with joists passing above it.

A tie beam spans between the north and south walls centrally to the room. The beam has a roughly rectangular profile with chamfered edges that follow the natural contours of the timber. The beam does not have stops but tapers out slightly where it meets the walls. Wooden rails are nailed to both sides of the beam, covering its full length, and the joists are secured to these rails. The joists are very roughly shaped lengths of wood, in many cases retaining large areas of bark and being shaped only on the undersides where the nails of the former ceiling remain. In the west wall, the joists are supported in joist pockets with bonding timbers above the slots. The pockets are overly large for the joist size and small wooden blocks are placed underneath each joist to keep them level. No joist pockets can be seen on the eastern wall and the joists are nailed to a beam which spans between the north and south walls. In an unusual construction choice, the joists, instead of being placed on top of the beam, are nailed to its underside thus rendering them incapable of bearing any load greater than the lath and plaster ceiling. It seems evident that the joists are not contemporary with the beam and the room as a whole. The thin width of the joists would suggest that they are 19th century in origin. The lack of joist pockets on the eastern wall raises questions about the form of the original ceiling, if indeed the room had a complete ceiling at all. The pockets in the western wall suggest that the room may have had a partial ceiling, perhaps up to the beam, however, it is also possible that they are later insertions. The beam itself does not appear to have any joist slots hence why the joists are secured to rails nailed into the beam; this is an easier option than cutting new mortise joints into a mature oak beam.

The removal of the ceiling has exposed the roof structure. The roof tiles had been removed prior to this survey and the roof covered with green sheeting. Centrally to the room is a principal rafter truss with the rafters rising from the central tie beam. At their

apex, the rafters are jointed together and secured by wooden pegs. The roof lacks a ridge piece. The rafters are supported on the back of two pairs of fairly substantial purlins to which they are secured by lap joints and wooden pegs. Timber wall plates atop the north and south walls carry the bottoms of the rafters.

A doorway has been inserted through the eastern wall to allow access to room F4. Simple panelling has been fixed within the opening. Adjacent to the door the wall plaster has been partly removed to expose a brick lined flue with clay flue pipe remaining *in situ*. The flue has been cut into the stone wall and evidently descends to the ground floor to serve a former fireplace. The bricks at the back of the brick shaft are blackened with a clearly defined line to the blackening, showing the extent of the flue. The brickwork within the flue appears to date to the late 19th century or early 20th century. Above the ceiling the flue is defined by a line of brickwork inserted flush with the wall and rising to the chimney. At the top of the gable the brickwork dwindles and the flue rises though reinstated stonework. The brickwork here appears to be of an earlier date to that within the flue, perhaps dating to the mid to late 18th century. The brickwork of the chimney is certainly 18th-century in date.

There are two windows in the south wall with the scar of a former partition between them indicating that the small space at the rear of the staircase was formerly enclosed from the main part of the room. The eastern window is set within a splayed recess which reaches to the floor. It is of three lights, two fixed with a central side hung casement. Each light has metal glazing bars to carry the individual panes of glass. The wooden mullions are square profile with moulding at the edges. A wrought-iron spiral handle catch is installed on the closing stile and a wrought-iron stay with spiral terminus is attached to the bottom rail.

The western window is of the same design but of two lights, the eastern, wooden-framed light being side hung from the mullion. A locking latch is fixed to the frame and the window has a small thumb catch secured by screws to the closing stile. Externally to the window a wrought-iron hook stay with twisted shank is attached to the bottom of the frame.

5.2.2 Room F2

Due to the removal of the floor boards this room could not be entered and was recorded through the doorway and window. The room is entered through the north corridor which is formed by a lath and plaster stud partition. The enclosed chimney flue projects into the room at the west and an arched doorway at the south allows passage into room F3. The walls are wallpapered and the underlying fabric was not visible. A spine beam or bressumer crosses the room's floor from the north-east corner of the chimney stack to the eastern wall where it is truncated to accommodate the stair. The upper face of the beam is flattened and the edges chamfered. The joists are shaped to match the chamfer angle and are tenoned into the sides of the beam and secured by wooden pegs. A few of the joists have assembly marks in the form of Roman numerals carved into their upper surface adjacent to the central beam. Although close examination was not possible, the numbering of these marks appears to be sporadic and not in sequence, and it is clear that many of the beams do not have marks. It is likely therefore that either the beams are re-used, or marked beams have been lost to repair and replacement.

The ceiling joists are carried by a central spine beam spanning between the north and south walls. The beam is white painted on its underside and has chamfered edges and stops. There are two joist schemes, one scheme consists of joists jointed at the top edges of the spine beam, and the other consisting of taller joists secured to wooden

rails which are nailed to both sides of the beam in an arrangement similar to that of room F1. The former ceiling was supported only by the secondary joists which project lower into the room and retain nails and nail holes for the ceiling.

The room has a single window and this is in the south wall and comprises a three light window, two fixed and a central casement. The window is set within slightly splayed reveals which descend to a window seat just above floor level. The window has chamfered wood mullions and a white painted wooden frame. The window panes are held within metal glazing bars.

5.2.3 Room F3

This room could not be entered due to the removal of the floorboards and was recorded through the window and a panel which has recently been cut into the corridor to allow access. The only doorway to the room at the time of recording was through room F2. On the east side of the room is the 1980s brick chimney stack, largely plastered over with no visible fire opening. The north-east corner of the room has been made good with stud partitions to enclose the room from the stair to the attic. The joists are carried on their eastern side by an RSJ in the chimney stack and on the western side they are notched and nailed to the underside of a wooden beam which spans the western edge of the room. These joists demonstrate the poor quality of later works as due to being nailed to the underside of the beam, they are not capable of carrying much load. It is surprising that the joists have not failed as they are carrying the floor of an attic room which appears to have been used as a rudimentary office or store room.

5.2.4 Room F4

This is a square-plan room measuring 3.7m x 3.7m and is located at the eastern side of the building, its northern wall offset from the line of the main building. The room is accessed from the west through room F1. The floor is at a slightly lower level than the adjacent room with a c0.15m step down at the doorway. The room is partly contained within the roof space and the eaves level is 1.5 from floor level, forming ledges on the north and south sides of the room to which the rafters descend. A crooked chimney stack is located against the eastern wall, passing down to the fireplace in room G4. Adjacent to the flue is a small two-light window, one fixed and the other side hung from the chamfered wood mullion. The glass panes are held within metal glazing bars which are secured by wire to wrought iron bars on the inside of the window. The casement light can be secured closed by two hooks with matching rings on the window frame.

The roof is comprised of a central principal rafter truss with a collar secured by lap joints and pegs midway up the truss. A secondary collar is located above this, tenoned and pegged into the rafters. At each side of the roof are pairs of in-line purlins tenoned into the sides of the principal rafters. The base of each principal rafter is joined to short lengths of timber which in turn are shaped and secured to curving saddles partly embedded into the top of the north and south walls. In contrast to some of the later examples of carpentry seen in the building, this arrangement is well executed and of a fairly good quality demonstrating good carpentry skill. Pairs of assembly marks are present at the joints of the principal rafters and the rafter bases, and the joint with the secondary collar and others may be present but were not visible. The assembly marks are in the form of chiselled Roman numerals from II to VIII.

The common rafters are pegged at the apex of each pair and are carried on the back of the purlins, coming to the rest on timber wall plates atop the north and south walls. There is no ridge piece between the rafters and primary lateral support is provided by the purlins. A lath and plaster ceiling was formerly secured to collars nailed between

the common rafters. The principal rafters are painted black up to the level of the former ceiling. The comparatively simplistic approach to the ceiling collars suggests that this is a later addition to the room. This is confirmed by the fact that the central ceiling collar is carried on additional short rafters timber nailed to the sides of the principal rafters.

In the north-west corner of the roof, two adjacent rafters have been cut short to accommodate the frame of a roof light.

5.2.5 Room F5

This room is of particular interest to this survey as it provides an insight into the development and phasing of the building. Unfortunately the north wall is almost entirely rebuilt in modern breezeblocks, some of this work having been carried out just prior to this survey in order to stabilise this part of the building. The room is entered from the north corridor where a door with brick jambs allows passage through the former external wall of the central block. The door has a timber lintel and short lengths of timber have been placed atop the truncated stone wall at the door's base.

On the east wall of the room can be seen the mark of a former gabled thatch roof, its apex rising just higher than the current eaves. The north side of the mark is truncated by the doorway. It is evident that this block was formerly a single-storey cell which has been raised to create an upper room. The joist pockets for the current ceiling are driven into the east wall and truncate the former gable. Again, these joists are nailed to the underside of the central ceiling beam.

The west wall is plastered and wallpapered below ceiling level. Centrally to the wall is a brick chimney stack which widens as it falls below the ceiling level. No fire opening is visible. The exposed brickwork comprises handmade red bricks, irregularly bonded, showing skintling marks, with lime mortar bonding between the courses and is most likely mid-18th century in origin.

The roof comprises a central principal rafter truss with collar, supported by pairs of purlins jointed and pegged to the principal rafters. The common rafters, lacking a ridge piece, are carried and secured on the back of the purlins. The ceiling joists form a later secondary addition to the room.

In the south wall is a wooden-framed two-light casement window set within a splayed reveal c1.1m in width. The sill, splays and lintel are clad with white painted boards with moulded edges. Each light has two chamfered wooden glazing bars and they are separated by a chamfered rectangular wooden mullion to which the casements are secured by spiral or monkey tail handled latches. The window also has a pair of monkey tail stays of wrought iron. The surrounding wall has a lath and plaster covering and several wallpaper schemes are visible.

Although the north wall has been largely replaced and repaired with breezeblocks, the earlier window has been retained. This is of a similar design as that in the south wall, and is a three-light window, each with a single central wooden glazing bar. Two of the lights are side-hung and have monkey tail latches, and presumably formerly had matching stays but these have been lost. The wooden lintel has been retained and a steel RSJ inserted above.

5.2.6 *The loft*

The loft space is accessed by a narrow dog-leg stair which wraps around the north side of the central chimney stack. There are two loft rooms occupying the space above rooms F2 and F3. The rooms were not entered due to concerns about the load bearing capability of the floors. Both rooms were sparsely furnished, containing electrical fuse and switch boxes and water tanks. The underside of the ceilings was covered with lath and plaster and the roof structure was not visible. The central chimney stack was also plastered and no further information about its structure could be gained in this space.

5.3 *The northern extensions and the cellar*

These comprise a two-storey, roughly square block built against the north side of the historic core of the building. The beginnings of this arrangement appears to have been in place by 1840 and other extensions were added on the western side by 1885 but were replaced and remodelled in the late 20th century.

At ground floor the extensions are effectively of three bays comprising a small store room at the east, a large central room with bay window, and a smaller room at the west. A cellar is located underneath the central room with access from the south-eastern corner through the modern covered lobby. The central bay has a hipped roof and the ground floor room projects forward by c3m from the eaves and has its own flat roof.

5.3.1 *The cellar*

In the south-eastern corner of the cellar are stone steps which branch out to the covered lobby and into the corridor adjacent to room G2. The stairwell and the cellar are constructed of coursed limestone rubble and the stairs are red brick with flagstone treads. Cement rendered raked plinths span the south, east and western edges of the cellar floor and the floor itself is also cement covered. At its northern end the cellar narrows and opens out into a brick-lined space below the ground floor bay window area. This area has latterly served as a bar.

Of particular interest is a blocked doorway located centrally to the south wall, positioned directly below the doorway at ground floor level. This former door is positioned so that it would rise into room G1 but the interaction with the room's floor could not be seen at the time of this survey.

5.3.2 *Room G6*

This room is accessed internally from the hotel through a panelled doorway inserted into the north wall of room G1. Adjacent to the door is a square window or hatch with moulded panelling to the opening. It is possible that both the door and window may predate the extension, formerly serving as external openings.

A secondary entrance is located into the north-west corner of the room. The northern area is defined from the main part of the room by short lengths of wall forming a wide opening and a reduced ceiling. A canted bay window, c4m in width, occupies most of the north wall, projecting c1m from the external face of the wall. The window is comprised of three horned sashes, the larger central window being 10 over 15 light and the flanking windows being 6 over 9. The bay has a slate tile roof with lead flashing and the ends of the rafters project slightly above the window frame. At the edges of the window opening are stone quoins and similar quoins are located at the corners of the walls. A circular flue below the window leads to the cellar. As discussed in **5.5** the bay window was originally set further back in the room but the ground floor level was extended northwards and the window reset in the late 20th century. While it

is fairly certain that the window is re-used, it is unclear if the bay roof is reused or was re-built to match the original.

The walls are of stone, both internally and externally, and the floor joists are carried in joist pockets in the stonework. The interior of the room is plastered and wallpapered but where the plaster has been removed towards the floor level, bonding timbers are visible in the stonework. The east wall retains a simple panel scheme and dado rail of the same design as that in room G1. A fireplace has been removed from the western wall, exposing the blackened brick flue and brick lintel. The lintel is supported by curved metal bands. A hearth is carried on the joists in front of the fire opening.

5.3.3 Room G7

The original extent of this part of the 19th-century extensions was half lost in the 1980s and the remainder, including the first-floor rooms, were almost completely demolished during works prior to this survey, leaving only those features against the eastern wall. It can be seen on the 1915 view of the hotel that this bay projected forward to the level of the adjacent bay and comprised rooms at ground floor with a lean-to roof space over, possibly providing storage space. The roof level was raised in the 20th century to allow for additional rooms at first floor.

The room was formerly plastered and several wallpaper schemes are evident on the east wall. A brick flue is built against this wall and descends to a brick fire opening at ground floor level. The fireplace has been removed, leaving a partial wooden surround. The fire opening has a brick arched lintel supported by metal bars.

5.3.4 Rooms F6 and F7

These rooms occupy the central bay of the 19th-century extensions and are separated from each other by thin stud partitions. A narrow corridor is located at the western side of F6 to allow access between the two rooms and the main part of the hotel. Floor boards had been removed from both rooms prior to this survey and the ceilings had been removed to expose the roof structure. Both rooms utilise thin floor joists laid on their sides and spanning between the east and west walls. The roof is fairly simple arrangement of pine king post trusses carrying the pine purlins and rafters, with a ridge piece at the apex. The roof is hipped at its northern end.

5.4 The roofs

The roof tiles had been stripped from most of the hotel prior to this survey and new sheeting and battens installed for the duration of the works. The tiles were retained and on site. The central part of the hotel and its two extensions share a common gable form of raised gable parapets with flat stone coping, flattened gable apex and carved kneelers. The brick chimneys are placed at the gable ends and the flues are partly incorporated into the stonework of the walls. Carved blocks of ironstone are utilised at the gable edges to join the smaller stonework of the wall to the angle of the roof.

The roof tiles are hand-made of fired clay, rectangular in plan with a shallow curvature from the centre to the long edges. The underside of the tiles retain remnant flaunching. The tiles were held to the battens by shallow nibs (sometimes referred to as batten lugs) pinched out from the clay when wet. The nibs are sometimes at the top edge of the tile and sometimes a short distance back, suggesting that the tiles may be from different sources or tiles have been re-laid as necessity dictated. The tiles are fairly uniform in size and do not appear to diminish towards the ridge. The ridge tiles are curvilinear in section, hand formed and also retain fragments of flaunching.

The coach house and stable block are covered with an unusual tile type which appears to be locally produced and limited to the village. These mould produced clay tiles, which are referred to as 'Castle Ashby Special Tiles' by Mr Horton, have straight raised pyramidal ridges with flat channels and a raised tongue or interlock. The bottom corner of each tile and its opposing upper corner are deliberately cut away at a 45° angle. Each tile has two nibs at the top edge of the flat channels. The tiles retain flaunching.

5.5 The modern extensions (Figs 63-68)

A large portion of the modern footprint of the hotel is comprised of modern extensions dating to the mid – late 20th century. At ground floor these extensions serve as dining areas, lavatories, kitchen and stores. At first floor they were used as bedrooms and ensuite bathrooms.

At the south the extensions are of two bays, each of a different phase, retaining the earlier roof line and matching the historic fabric. The join to the earlier building is marked by a rainwater chase with downpipe and the edges of the eastern bay are picked out with ironstone quoins. There is a three light window at ground floor and a two light window at first floor, both matching the existing historic fenestration. It is probable that the western bay is a later addition built against the side of a slightly earlier extension. The south façade is essentially blank with two small square windows to the upstairs ensembles. The two bays share a common roof but the tiles and ridge tiles on the western side have a subtly different colouration to those on the east and there is a slight ridge in the surface where the two extensions are joined. The interior of these bays was briefly examined and comprised breezeblock walls with no features of interest. The first floor rooms were not entered due to the removal of the floor boards. Again, these are modern and bereft of any features of historic or architectural interest.

To the north of the hotel are two large dining rooms with WCs adjacent, and bedrooms above. These wrap around the 19th-century extensions and their construction necessitated the removal of earlier outbuildings which are visible on the photograph of 1915. Dining room 2 is a gabled cross wing of brick and breezeblock with coursed stone rubble externally to match the historic fabric. The building is effectively independent and free-standing from the historic core. The construction of these appears to have had a detrimental impact on the historic fabric, particularly in rooms G5 and F5. Dining room 1 is single-storey, comprising a lightweight flat roof supported on brick stanchions and presenting a plank-clad, glazed stud partition to the north.

5.6 The stable

The stable block is located to the north-east of the hotel and coach house, facing onto the front yard and backing onto the large car park or yard at the rear of the hotel. At its eastern side the stable abuts a later stone boundary wall and the adjacent later house is built in close proximity to the stables, with only a narrow gap between them.

The stable is a rectangular building, measuring c18m x 5m, and aligned north-west to south-east against the former boundary between the *Falcon Inn* and *Home Close*. The building is single-storey with a loft and has 7 bays on its south elevation. No openings are present to the north. The primary building material is coursed limestone rubble with occasional ironstone rubble, with lime mortar bonding. The western bay is a 20th-century extension in brick set in Flemish garden wall bond.

The building has a continuous roof of Castle Ashby special tiles and is hipped at both ends. Pyramidal tiles are placed at the ridge and the hip edges. There are two dormer loft hatches on the south side of the roof, each with a hipped tile roof with lead flashing at the joins to the main roof surface. The sides of the dormers are clad with

overlapping planks. For safety reasons the loft space was not entered but some photographs were taken through the dormers. Beneath the tiled surface there is a layer of thatch, presumably for insulating purposes and to provide additional protection from water. Although only visible in a few areas where the thatch has fallen away, it appears that the tiles are laid on horizontal battens between the tiles and the thatch. Thin, closely-spaced rafters span between the wallplate and the ridge and are in turn supported by close-spaced horizontal rails nailed to the underside of the rafters. Mid-way up the roof pitch are purlins carried at one end by the central stone partition wall and supported near the hip on posts. It is unclear how the hip purlin is supported. The roof incorporates the western extension but the roof space could not be accessed and any alterations to the structure could not be observed. uPVC guttering was installed at the eaves with downpipes located on the north, west, and south walls.

Room S1, comprising the brick extension and latterly serving as a garage, is accessed by wide double doors which occupy the full width of the room. The doors are set within a white-painted frame and are framed and battened with plank cladding. The doors swing on external iron strap hinges. Both of the doors can be secured externally by means of a long fully removable steel bar which can be slotted into brackets at each side of the doors and secured by a padlock. Additional padlocking points are installed in the middle of the doors. The room itself is plain with no fixtures or fittings except a fluorescent light fixed to the underside of the ceiling beam. The eastern wall is the former external wall of the stable and comprises whitewashed coursed rubble. The brick-built walls were formerly whitewashed though this has faded. The floor is smooth concrete. The ceiling is formed of white painted boards atop white painted joists carried on timber wall plates.

Room S2 is accessed through a wide door of identical design to that of room S1. The room appears to have been a former tack room and wooden tack hooks are fixed to the west wall. No other stable fittings were evident. The walls are whitewashed stone. The east wall is not keyed into the north wall, instead appearing to butt against it. A joist plate spans the width of the wall at ceiling level and below this is another length of wood, also spanning the full width of the wall, into which is fixed a single hook with the empty of holes of a full row of hooks visible. A few more hooks are fixed to the underside of one of the joists.

Room S3 presents two bays to the south, comprising a single width door on the east, with a casement window adjacent. A dormer is located above the window. The door and window share a common joist, a black-painted square beam c3.5m in length. The door is ledged and battened, and swings on external strap hinges. The door is secured by an external sliding latch. The window has a white painted wooden frame and comprises two casement lights, each with moulded glazing bars. Although externally of brick, the door opening is comprised of red brick, chamfered at the corner.

The south-west corner of the room has a small stud and plank partition enclosing the space between the door and window. The partition had been partly removed prior to this survey. A coat hook was fixed to the corner post and a wooden tack hook projected from the west wall. The walls are painted black to a height of c1m and white painted to the ceiling. This is a fairly common paint scheme in stables. Modern selves are fixed to the north and west walls. The floor is formed of red brick.

The south elevation of room S4 is the same as room S3, with a single width door (though a little wider than that to S3), and a window with dormer over. Both the door and window have overly long lintels but these are not a continuous shared element. Below the thin upper lintel, the doorway has a more substantial lintel which fully crosses the adjacent stonework. The door is a top and bottom opening stable door with ledged bracing and strap hinges on the east side and a UNION rim lock installed on

the inner face. The window is half glazed and half louvered. The room could not be examined in detail due to the plastering of the walls and the presence of hotel furniture in the room. The joists are hidden by a plyboard ceiling through which the ceiling beam projects. The floor is largely concrete with diagonal grooves but on the south side of the room can be seen an earlier floor scheme of cobbles.

Room S5 has a single-width ledged and braced door with internal strap hinges and an external sliding latch and an internal rim lock. Against the north wall is a simple wooden feeding trough with iron tethering rings. The room has a cobbled floor. The top of the west wall projects slightly into the room and a beam spans the length of the room adjacent to the wall, supporting the joists. At the eastern side of the room the joists are placed directly onto the wall. In the south-east corner of the room is an east facing window. This is a crude and rudimentary element with metal glazing bars holding a plastic sheet. Thin, closely spaced bars are fixed by nails to the window frame. Except for the plastic glazing the window gives the appearance of antiquity but appears to be in a reduced opening. Given the generally good quality of fenestration on the building the provenance of this feature is unclear.

The south elevation presents a plain wall with no openings. The brickwork of the western extension is keyed into the earlier stone work by projecting courses in intervals of three. The construction of the extension has had a detrimental effect on the adjacent stone wall which has cracked and split at the join. The stonework is arranged in courses of irregularly alternating sized rubble, gradually diminishing in size towards the roof. A small lean-to brick shed or garage belonging to the neighbouring property is built against the eastern corner of the elevation and is enclosed from the Falcon Hotel's car park by a modern wood fence.

The initial construction date of the stable is uncertain and the building has no features that would provide a fixed date. It is likely to be of 18th century construction and probably contemporary with the coach house. The stable was extended, re-roofed and re-fenestrated in the mid-19th century. The exposed brickwork presents a mix of early machine made bricks of the early to late 19th century and hand-made late 18th century bricks. It is uncertain if the stable had been extended by 1840 and the work may have been carried out a little later than the main extensions to the hotel. The roof is formed of Castle Ashby tiles of the same type seen on the coach house and both seem to have undergone alterations at the same time. The dormers were added when the stable was re-roofed. The extent to which the south elevation has been modified is unclear as the stonework is not extensive enough to clearly show joins. The fenestration is likely to be largely of a single phase, though there is a suggestion that the door to S4 was re-set.

5.7 The coach house

The coach house is shown on the tithe map of 1840 and its earliest part was probably constructed in the 18th century. On the tithe map of 1840 the coach house is shown as comprising two parts; a rectangular building approximately half the length of the stables, and a narrower block at its north-eastern end, bringing the length of the building roughly to its present proportion. By 1885 the narrow block is shown as having been widened to match the larger block and a smaller extension was present at the north-eastern end. A small porch-like structure against the east elevation is also depicted on the Ordnance Survey map of this date. The porch is not shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1900. By the mid-1960s the coach house had been connected to the hotel by the covered lobby and was subsequently further extended by the construction of a store room which wraps around the northern end of the building, projecting outwards from the main line of the building. Much of the eastern elevation is obscured by dense ivy which covers the join between the earlier part of the building

and its extension. The join between the phases is however clearly evident on the roof. Internally the building has been modernised and the walls covered with plasterwork so that the historic fabric was not visible. The walls appear to have been faced with a thin cladding of brickwork which also forms the internal partitions. The roof structure is a simple rafter-and-tie construction and is clad with Castle Ashby special tiles with modern roof sheeting below. No historic fixtures or fittings were noted within the building. A bonding timber is visible in the southern gable, flush with the external stonework. This is unlikely to be a lintel as there are no obvious joins below.

6 DISCUSSION

The Falcon is, at its core, a three-bay two-storey structure typical of 17th and 18th-century Northamptonshire construction. Traditional medieval building plan continued to be implemented though by this time it was modified to provide greater comfort and privacy following the introduction of upper floors and enclosed fireplaces. The hotel sign claims a founding date of 1594 but the evidence for this date is unclear. The introduction of upper floors is generally considered to have begun around 1550 and the upper floor at the Falcon appears to be part of the original construction rather than a later addition. It is carried on a central spine beam which spans the full length of the building, though later truncated by the stair. It is suggested that the use of spine beams became general practice from c1600 (Wood-Jones 1963). The building utilises locally obtained materials such as the roof tiles. Post-medieval brick kilns are recorded in Castle Ashby and it is likely that the 18th-century brickwork is locally sourced (Ballinger 2004).

The building appears to have been built with a tile roof though it shares features often associated with thatched roofs of the same period, including stone-coped gable parapets and carved kneelers. These features can be seen on buildings throughout the 17th and 18th centuries. It is uncertain whether the eastern chimney is contemporary with the building or a later addition. The flue is built into the wall rather than housed in a separate chimney stack and where visible in the gable it is marked by 18th century brickwork. Trimmer joists in the floor adjacent to the flue would suggest that fireplaces were present at both ground and first floor levels, or that a chimney stack has been removed from within the rooms. The trimmer joists appear to be original to the arrangement rather than later alterations.

The open fireplace in room G1 appears to be original to the building and lacks a fire opening at first floor. The chimney was widened to accommodate an extension of the fireplace to the rear of the original in order to allow for the creation of a fire opening in room G3 and at first floor in room F3. The stack was again extended in the late 20th century but the work was carried out poorly with adverse effect to the historic timberwork.

The first floor ceilings are very poorly constructed with no allowance for load bearing capability, though two loft rooms are present. The roof is simple but well-built, lacking a ridge-piece and comprising principal rafters rising from chamfered tie beams at the top of the walls and connecting to each other by pegged tenons. The purlins are tenoned and pegged into the principals and the common rafters are joined to them with lap joints and pegs. The construction of the roof is in keeping with the spine beam and floor joists, demonstrates a good quality of construction which stands in contrast to the poorly implemented first floor ceilings.

The stair is a later addition to the building and its construction required the truncation of the spine beam. The walls that bind the stair at ground level appear to be original and it

is possible that the stair has been inserted into a former cross-passage, a common arrangement in buildings of this period and a continuation of medieval house plan tradition. It is possible therefore that the south-facing window of the stair landing may have originally been a door and that the current door may be a later insertion, though ivy on the wall prevents a close examination of the fabric in this area. The position of the original stair is uncertain.

The block on the western side of the building appears to be contemporary to the Inn at ground floor level and has been raised to two-storeys. The original gable line remains visible against the former external wall. It may have originated as a barn or stable and was enlarged and converted for rooms as the business expanded. The eastern block also appears to be contemporary at ground level and raised at first floor level. This is evidenced by a line of first floor quoins between the main building and the east block. The raising and conversion of these building most likely took place in the 18th century. The ground floor ceiling beam of the western block is chamfered with stops and the remains of a trimmer joist mark the former position of a fireplace. The ceiling beam of the eastern block is rougher and lacks chamfered stops. The room also lacks windows and it is probable that this room served a practical function and was not one of the guest rooms.

The hotel was subject to a large scale program of enlargement in the early 19th century, during which the building was extended northwards. The current fenestration most likely dates to this period. It can be inferred from documentary sources that the hotel was fairly prosperous during the 19th century and was well-furnished with good quality furniture.

The coach house and stable probably predate the 19th-century alterations and may have their origins in the 18th century, though they were both subject to alteration in the 19th and 20th centuries.

The hotel was subject to fairly intensive alterations and rebuilding during the 1960s and 1980s which resulted in the loss of the smaller 19th-century outbuildings at the north and the partial loss of historic fabric at ground and first floor levels of the historic core. Despite this, the building remains relatively whole and on its frontage at least, retains its essential character.



General view of the Falcon, looking north-east Fig 10



The eastern block Fig 11



Detail of quoins at first floor level, showing join between the east and central blocks
Fig 12



The central block Fig 13



The west block and later extensions Fig 14



The east facing gables of the eastern and central block Fig 15



Detail of stone coping and carved kneelers Fig 16



The central chimney, showing the widening of the original flue Fig 17



Detail of the roof tiles Fig 18



The open fireplace, room G1 Fig 19



Detail of window, room G1 Fig 20



Room G1, looking east, showing 19th-century wainscoting and doors to the stair landing and corridor Fig 21



The spine beam and joists, room G2 Fig 22



Overhead view of the spine beam and joists of room G2 Fig 23



Detail of assembly marks and joinery (image converted to greyscale) Fig 24



The floor of room G2, showing the brick plinth relating to the lowering of the floor
Fig 25



The fireplace of room G3 Fig 26



The west wall of room G3 Fig 27



Detail of the window, room G3 Fig 28



Room G4, looking east Fig 29



The covered lobby, looking west Fig 30



Entrance and window to the corridor adjacent to room G2 Fig 31



Detail of truncated beam with stops Fig 32



Room G5, looking north-west Fig 33



Room G5, looking south Fig 34



Detail of window, room G5 Fig 35



The ceiling of G5, showing trimmer joist Fig 36



The staircase Fig 37



Room F1, looking north-west (image converted to greyscale) Fig 38



The east wall of room F1 Fig 39



Detail of chimney flue in the east wall of room F1 Fig 40



Roof F1, looking south (image converted to greyscale) Fig 41



Room F2, looking south-west Fig 42



Detail of the spine beam and joists, room F2 (image converted to greyscale) Fig 43



Detail of assembly mark Fig 44



Room F3, looking south Fig 45



Room F4, looking east Fig 46



Detail of window, room F4 Fig 47



The roof structure of room F4 (image converted to greyscale) Fig 48



Detail of principal rafter base and saddle Fig 49



Detail of assembly marks on base of principal rafter Fig 50



Detail of collar joinery Fig 51



East wall of room F5, showing the mark of a former gable Fig 52



The west wall of room F5 Fig 53



Detail of south-facing window, room F5 Fig 54



Detail of remediation work around north-facing window of room F5 Fig 55



The 19th and 20th-century extensions, looking south-west Fig 56



The 19th and 20th-century extensions, looking south-east Fig 57



Stairs to the cellar Fig 58



The cellar, looking south, showing blocked door Fig 59



The cellar, looking north Fig 60



Room G6, looking south Fig 61



Detail of fireplace, room G6 Fig 62



The east wall of the 19th century extension, formerly G7 Fig 63



Detail of fireplace, room G7 Fig 64



Detail of first floor remediation works, south wall of F3 and F5 Fig 65



Room F6, looking east Fig 66



Room F7, looking north-east Fig 67



The east elevation of the coach house Fig 68



The coach house roof, looking north-east Fig 69



General view of the coach house interior Fig 70



The stables, looking north Fig 71



The stables, looking north-east Fig 72



The north elevation of the stables Fig 73



The eastern dormer / loft hatch Fig 74



Detail of the 'Castle Ashby Special' roof tiles Fig 75



The loft, looking north-east Fig 76



Room S2, looking north-east Fig 77



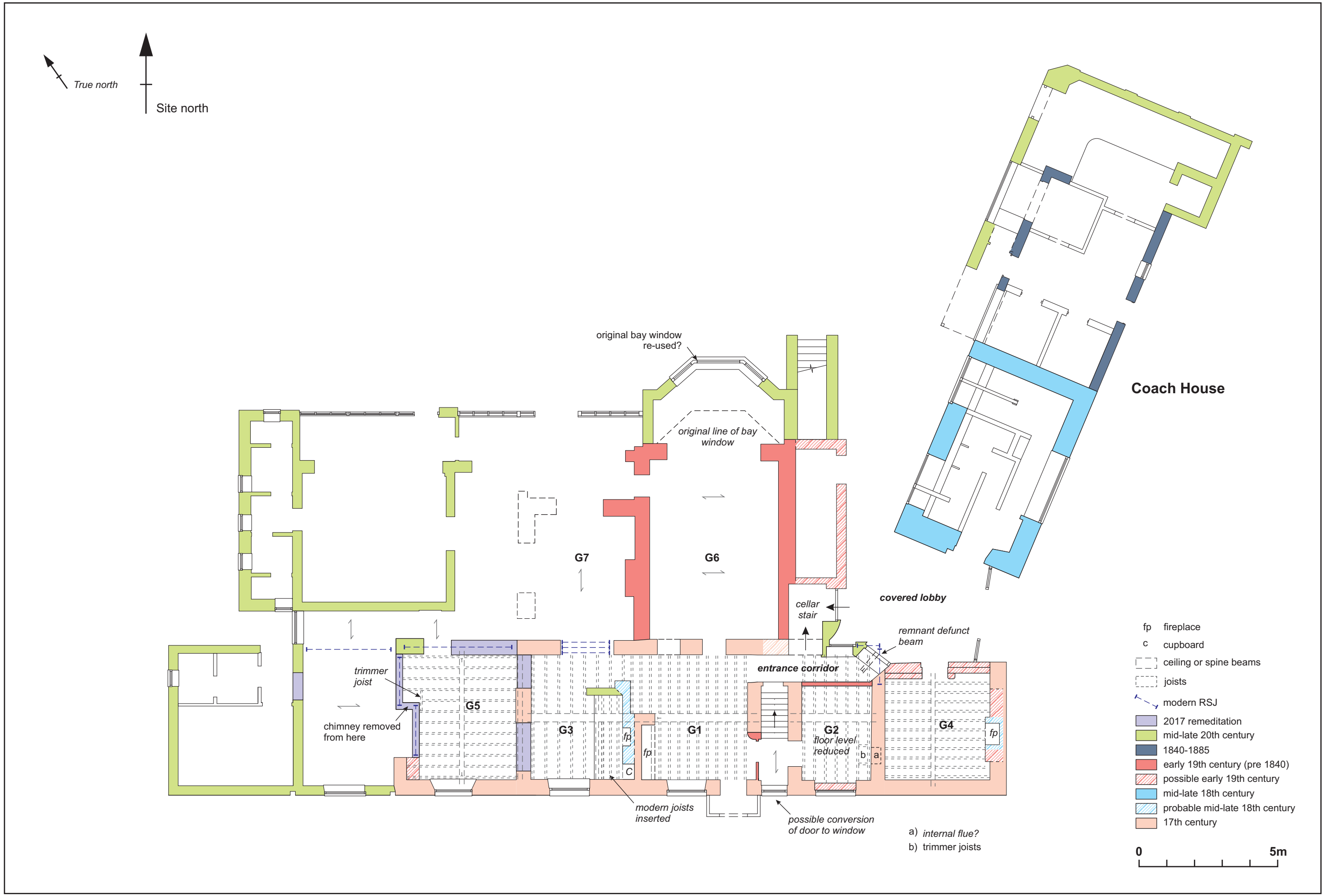
Room S3, looking south Fig 78



Trough in room S5 Fig 79



Detail of window, room S5 Fig 80





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